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THE MAGAZINE OF COMBAT IN THE THIRTY-FIRST CENTURY



TRUCE !

BattleTechnology

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by Steven Hess
Field Modification Kits
by James Greeson
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By Hilary Ayer

About the Cover: Although the Steiner Emblem is still clearly visible on this *zaibatsu* orbiting Carse, the manufacturing facility and the planet it circles have belonged to the Jade Falcons since May 3051.

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Opening Shots

We had the May issue just about ready to go to press when we got notice that a battle had begun on Tukayyid, and that the stakes of the battle were to be Terra itself, or a fifteen year truce for the Inner Sphere. The battle began on May first; it did not end until the twentieth. Most of the planet had been evacuated, so the battle ranged over mountain, plains, seas, beaches, and deserted cities. We held the issue for long enough to bring you the results. As you now know, ComStar won. We have a truce.

WE HAVE NOT ACHIEVED PEACE.

Please, please, continue efforts to catch up with the Clans. Continue to devise new tactics and training. Keep integrating new technology. Continue to produce all the new weapons, vehicles, and materiel we possibly can. It would be so easy to tell ourselves that the Clan Wars are over.

The war is just beginning.

If the Clans understood psychological warfare, they might have done this on purpose. Just when the Inner Sphere was beginning to gear up to defeat them, just as Federated Commonwealth units rescued Kuritan prisoners, and Kuritan garrisons were pulled from the Davion border to fight their mutual enemy on the border. The Archon requested of a commercial magazine, *BattleTechnology*, to publish a course of training scenarios so that all Inner Sphere MechWarriors could work through the same problems. Just when we managed to forget our differences, forget our financial problems, and truly commit ourselves to the fight, we are given the enormous and joyous shock of knowing that **THEY AREN'T KILLING US TODAY**. It would be so easy to relax that effort.

It would also be fatal.

We have a truce. We have fifteen years until they come at us again. As one of our writers points out, that does not mean fifteen years, plus a month or so. I would expect to see JumpShips poised to strike at midnight, May 20, 3067. The Clans place a high importance on keeping one's word. But they regard us citizens of the Inner Sphere as something akin to vermin who infest the real estate which is their family home. If they were inclined to mercy, which is dubious, it would not be toward us. Nothing is more certain than that they will come for us again.

If we are worthy to be the descendents of our worthy ancestors, we will use these fifteen years. We will be ready to meet them. We will give them a fight they will never forget. And we will defeat them. Over and over, if we have to.

In this issue:

One of our more enterprising journalists, Alberich Hoffman, got accredited for this epic campaign by getting on board a ComStar DropShip by delivering a company's worth of free pizza (charged to our account, of course), and then begging. So it is that we have a quick report to file for you (page 3) and an odd side note. Hoffman went to The Nagelring, graduating in 3049. He included a cryptic note. "What would you say if I told you that I'd seen a classmate in Natasha Kerensky's Wolf Spiders Cluster?"

We haven't yet had an answer to my challenge to the Clans as to why they don't think the Ares Conventions are binding on them. I am perfectly willing to print any replies we receive.

We kept all of the articles on fighting the Clans, the Redcoat Renegades story of raiding the Clans-held world of Bjarred for technological intel, the Snowwire Regiment's Field Task Forces, etc. Enjoy them.

And enjoy the breathing space we get before we go again into most deadly battle.

— Hilary Ayer, Terra, June 3052



BattleTechnology News Service

Clans Duel ComStar; We Win a Truce

Tukayyid, May 20, 3052

Tukayyid was a minor world in the Skandia province of Rasalhague. It is owned by a conglomerate of agrocombines which grow cereal crops on its wide plains. It has several major types of terrain, ranging from the plains to high mountains. The other main 'owners' are religious communes, which control areas in the mountains and on the coasts. One major religious center is actually under the sea. The population is small, and either very rich or under vows of poverty. The first group were responsive to financial arrangements, while the second group agreed to allow their world to become a battleground in the interests of peace. ComStar evacuated all but essential personnel; one of the four cities was declared a neutral zone, where essential services to the world could be maintained. The Clan Council and ComStar set up a fund to repair damage after the war. Tukayyid would belong to the winner; the population to be resettled at the winner's discretion.

Since both sides had been boasting that in an all-out fight they could make sausage out of each other, the Precentor Martial had little trouble getting an agreement out of the IlKhan and his council. They would each commit an agreed-on force to an all-out war on Tukayyid. If the Clans won, they got Terra. If ComStar won, the Inner Sphere got a fifteen year truce during which Clans forces agree not to attack us.

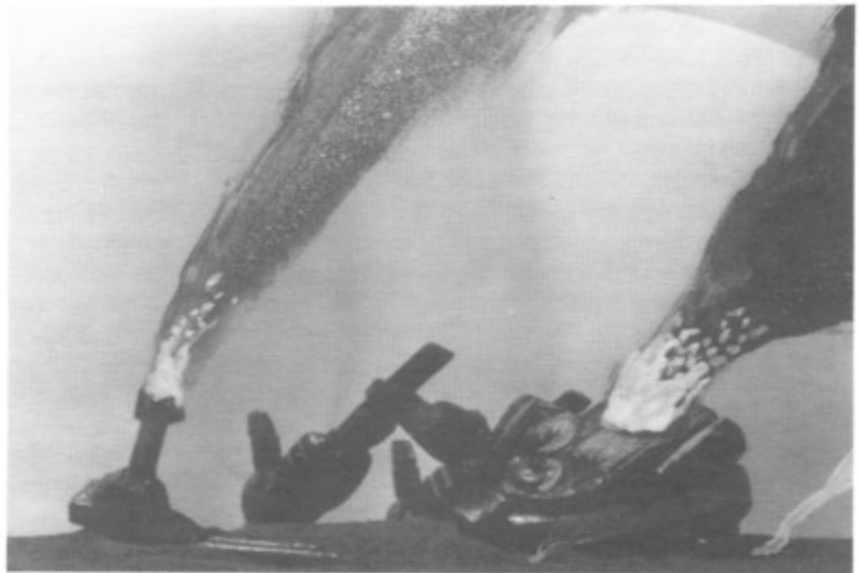
The battle ended today after twenty days of bitter and expert fighting.

Other publications will cover every aspect of the Tukayyid War exhaustively. Let us simply give you the numbers. Seven Regiments of the Smoke Jaguars, three from the Diamond Sharks, four from the Ghost Bears, three from the Nova Cats, three from the Steel Vipers, and six from the Wolf Clan took part in the battle. Numbers for the Jade Falcons are unconfirmed. Although IlKhan Ulric of the Wolf Clan was in ultimate charge of the battle, he was forced to

bid away an early arrival of his own Clans forces to keep the balance of honor in his army. Against them were twelve ComStar Armies, with three more in reserve. Precentor Martial Anastasius Focht's strategy seems to have been predicated on the observation that the Clans are trained for quick, decisive, limited battles. He therefore forced an extended fight, keeping Clans forces on the run, using up ammunition and supplies, wearing them down.

In the end, Clans forces suffered a 35% death rate overall. ComStar forces lost 30%. "It was a ghastly war of attrition," explained the drawn-faced Precentor Martial. "The only excuse for such a slaughter is that it was necessary. The Inner Sphere has to have the time." The Precentor Martial gave his interview on the battlefield near the Pozoristu Mountains, insisting that reporters record the terrible carnage that was the cost of this battle.

The Precentor Martial intends to remain in-system just long enough to witness a 'Blood Name Rite' at the invitation of the IlKhan, then he takes a fast JumpShip to Terra. No doubt he has a lot to report to Primus Myndo Waterly.



A Plea to the Inner Sphere

The BattleMech, lord of the battlefield. The master of firepower and ruler of destruction. Truly the king of the hill. The hill no longer hosts the BattleMech. The hill has been conquered and the OmniMech now rains supreme over the hill of the Inner Sphere.

Let any who dare try to take it from him.

We dare to try.

Millennia ago knights rode upon horseback clothed in suits of chain armor, galloping about delivering destruction to any foolish enough to oppose them. Those chain-suited knights soon fell to a new knight. Sheathed in burnished steel from head to toe, these new champions stalked the battlefield undefeated by any lesser knight.

Centuries later the great war tanks of the second world war were the monarchs of the battlefield. Their great cannons, thick armor and iron willed crews struck terror in the hearts of any that opposed them. Yet like chain knights they to fell to a new king. The flying tank-killers like the old A/10 Thunderbolt soon held the battlefield in its menacing grip. These heavy machines of war carried the firepower of an army and could destroy a small city in minutes.

The battle for the crown of war continued, eventually the tank-killer fell to the fusion powered fighters and tanks of the Terran Alliance. Finally the Terran Alliance's weapons fell to the first of the longest reigning monarch of the hill of war, the BattleMech. Over six hundred years has the 'Mech stood undefeated as king. No one ever imagined that something could topple the BattleMech reign as easily as the first Mackie toppled the fusion powered tanks of so long ago. And yet the OmniMech Sword of the Clans has swept through the Inner Sphere, dominating the very heart of our society in two short years. Morale crumbles, resolve just fades away as these giants supported by a new kind of knight, the Elemental, crush any resistance as the first atomics crushed Kurita's homeland in the 20th century. How can we win when even the great Wolf's Dragoons, heirs of the Clan, barely stand against the weakest Clan on Luthien?

When these fears begin to grow, when the odds mount against us, and hope seems to be a thing of the Star League which spawned these tyrants we must look to our history and remember. Remember Prince Henri of France, greatest knight of the 15th century, whose sword was unbeatable and armor unbreachable. Remember

that he was felled by a single arrow...

The Battle of Agincourt 1422, six thousand French knights fell upon the tired army of King Henry V of England. Five hundred weary knights in simple chain to the thousands of steel plated knights of the French army fresh upon the field of battle. It mattered not that these English knights were backed by two thousand loyal troops.

What was mere infantry to the massed French army. They were but harmless 2000 bits of fodder to the steel fury of France, 2000 Welsh longbowmen fodder bits. When the haze of battle cleared that day half the French army lay dead upon the field while only 23 English had fallen.

Yes it is true that a knight was the strongest and best protected warrior of his day, but he was not invincible. Tank-killers could level small cities and BattleMech can lay waste to whole planets. But remember one arrow, one shoulder rocket, one aerospace fighter can end any tyrant's reign. So too can we, the people, end the reign of the OmniMech and his kin.

The Clans are here and mean to stay, so we must learn to accept and defeat these invaders. We of the Inner Sphere must look to the history they have spurned to find the seeds of their destruction. We must sow these seeds and nurture their growth for they are our greatest hope. On Twycross we won the day through the seeds of an ancient art. Kai Allard-Liao set of the charges in that pass at the sacrifice of his own 'Mech, but the gain was the annihilation of one of the Jade Falcon's best units. Even the rocks and hills of our planets are arrows with which we can fell this new armored warrior. The Clans choose to fight us in ritualistic Duels dripping with ceremony. "Well I say thee nay (no)!" as Henry V would have said. We must not bow to their tactics, we must make our own, and use them wherever and whenever needed. We are all warriors fighting for the freedom of our lands. Our ancestors conquered the Inner Sphere; we can defeat those who would steal it from us.

I speak to you not as a Davion to reader, but as citizen of the Inner Sphere to all its other citizens. Even if it is only for a short time let us set aside the centuries of bickering as Wolf's Dragoons and the Kell Hounds did on Luthien. In the spirit of unity let us bring together the many styles and tricks of the Inner Sphere into one book. Like the One

Book of the church let us compile all we know, as people with a millennium of history, into one great tome of fighting knowledge.

Let every soldier, 'Mech pilot, Aerojock, tanker, Tech and common man stand as equals in this fight to save our every planet or star we call "Home". If the mighty Com Star can throw aside its trappings to fight than can we not all throw aside the past to defend the Inner Sphere and the home of all mankind Terra?

Remember that one arrow is like a single pebble in the machine, destroying it before any one is the wiser. PEOPLE of the Inner Sphere I say that we must be a trillion pebbles raining down upon the Clan invaders. let us show them our...

Editors Note: The letter ends here. This is the last thing ever written by Eion McCleary, Professor Emeritus, New Avalon Institute of Science. On May 7th of this year Professor McCleary died of heart failure while writing this letter he simply title "A Plea". Professor McCleary was a member of the NAIS staff since the Institute opened. His driving personality will be missed by the staff and students of that institution. "No one feels the loss of one of this school's (NAIS) founding teachers as much as I do." Major-General Jeremiah Davion, Commander of NAIS told the press

At BattleTechnology we solemnly raise a glass in honor of a man who gave us no less than forty articles over the last quarter century. From his CEF simulation program to the lost Star League letters of John Davion his contributions will be missed. Surely the home office will never be the same with out his annual visit and Three Card Drax games (Mr. Thorkillson, you still owe him 2500 C-bills!). The entire staff stands behind the things Eion wrote in his final letter. We plan to continue his fight for unity of at least those people who have nothing to lose. Mercenaries, we have a new Guild forming on Outreach; let us use it as a common ground to share our skills. Let us forge that great book of tactics he wanted.

BattleTechnology intends to expand its Outreach office to meet the demands of this new ERA, the complex will be christened the Eion McCleary Building. We wish we could do more for you, Eion, so give us time.

Teacher, Scientist, Writer, Friend we will miss you
Marcus Killebrew,
BattleTechnology



In Memoriam:
Eion McCleary
PHD/MA/BA('Mech
Engineering), PHD/
MA/BA(Military
Tactics), PHD/
BA(History), MA/
BA(Physics), Ma/
BA(Human Cul-
ture),
BA (Classical
Literature.)
Born
October 7th
2967;
Died
May 7, 3052

BattleTechnology News Service

Teniente: Fox's Child Saves Dragon's Heir!

March 21, 3052, Fort Ian Training Ctr, Port Moseby, Federated Commonwealth

One of the most dramatic missions of the last three centuries goes into training phase today. A unit of Federated Commonwealth Troops, The Revenants, an experimental reinforced battalion of fifty BattleMechs made from the remnants of the Tenth Lyran Guard, began training for a mission into Draconis Combine space. The Tenth Lyran Guard, traditionally the Steiner family unit, is no stranger to raiding the Dragon. But this time, the unit isn't going to tweak the Dragon's Tail. It's going to rescue the Dragon's Heir.

Prince Hohiro Kurita is behind the lines in a desperate fight on the planet Teniente. There are no troops available as relief in this sector; Kuritan forces are worn too thin from the fight for Luthien. Princess Omi Kurita asked a friend for help. The friend is Prince Victor Steiner Davion, commander of the Revenants. Rumor has it that Prince Victor allowed the MechWarriors of his unit to vote as to whether they were willing to risk their lives for the Hohiro Kurita. The grim realities of the last two years' desperate fight against the Clans has shown MechWarriors of both Houses that neither force will win if they fight alone. The Revenants have agreed to fight. It will also be a test of the unit's capabilities; the Revenants have been training for irregular hit-and-run tactics.

This mission does not violate any promises to keep FedCom troops out of Draconis territory because it is being performed at the direct request of one of the Royal House, a lady who will someday be Keeper of the House Honor. In practical terms, Teniente is not part of the Combine any more, but part of the growing Smoke Jaguar Occupation Zone. In emotional terms? Well, we suppose it's a Dragon planet until the last of its defenders surrenders or escapes. Or dies.

BattleTechnology's Alyson Brune is allowed along as an observer on two conditions. Nothing is to be published until the mission is completed. And MechWarrior Brune is training on the same simulators that the Revenants use. She will serve as an alternate 'Mech pilot should someone be injured in battle, leaving a useable 'Mech. Aside from the JumpShip crew members, the Revenants have no noncombatants on this mission.

March 24, 3052, Fort Ian Training Ctr, Port Moseby, Federated Commonwealth

Alyson Brune here, filing a quick update before we take ship for Teniente. The Revenants is an impressive unit, and it is impressively equipped. Both as a veteran of the Clans fighting and or Jaime Wolf's special tutoring on Outreach, Prince Victor has fine-tuned the specs of his unit to a perfect fighting machine.

The Revenants are a reinforced battalion of fifty-odd BattleMechs, organized into a fire support company, an



BattleTechnology News Service

assault company, and two fast-response 'Sprint' companies. Prince Victor's command Company is one of these Sprint companies..

Prince Victor's Daishi was a present from Colonel Wolf. Other unusual BattleMechs in the unit are Marauder IIs, Axmen, Hornets, and Imps. The 'normal' BattleMechs of the unit, every one of which is a survivor of the heavy fighting on Alyina where Kai Allard-Liao was killed, have all been refitted with the best and newest weapons packages. The Crusader simulator package I am assigned to work with is equipped with 2 Magna Longbow-15 LRM Launchers, 2 Hovertec Streak SRM-2 Pods, 2 Intek Medium Lasers, 1 Lindblad Shotgun Anti-Missile System, and a LFN Lindblad Machine Gun. Streak in particular is a whole new ballgame. I have to learn to think where my opponent is going to want to *be*, as opposed to where he is going to want to *fire*.

May 4, 3052, Teniente, Smoke Jaguar Occupation Zone, Draconis Combine

We are actually two days from entering atmosphere and plans are complete. It seems that ComStar is aiding the Clans, so we are going in as ComStar ships. I'm in the 'ComStar DropShip *Valiant Wisdom*'. Because we don't know the exact location of Prince Hohiro, we are to enter the system, get the news feeds, send a message in a code we're certain that the Kuritan intelligence services started busily changing as soon as they had given it to us, and ...there must be more to the plan than that. There must be.

May 5, 3052, Teniente, Smoke Jaguar Occupation Zone, Draconis Combine

How did Prince Victor know? How *could* he have known? Our disguise turns out to be the perfect one; for some reason, in an undeclared campaign, ComStar is *fighting* the Clans in this system. We have pinpointed Prince Hohiro's position by simple deduction. There's heavy fighting in the Comprador foothills which is not covered in any of the ComStar situation briefing feeds! He can't have more than a company left.

May 5, 3052, Teniente, Smoke Jaguar Occupation Zone, Draconis Combine

The luck gods that sometimes help madmen must be with us! ComStar assigned us a LZ close enough to do our rescue. I'm dictating this from a 'Mech recovery transport; I got pressed into service because I used to work for a rescue unit during Summer vacations. We've seen a bit of action just now; Prince Victor personally ordered us in to pick up two disabled 'Mechs which the pilots would not abandon. We got in close enough to hear the radio account

of the rescue. As Prince Victor's lance advanced down toward the plain, we heard his radio call, "Whoever got that Thor, thank you very much!" and Prince Hohiro's voice on the Pesht Regulars frequency that we've all been using, "It was my pleasure, Victor Davion."

(later) We've got our guests safe. The mission is to get in-system, accomplish our mission, and leave. No heroics. Nobody wants to abandon the people of Teniente. Nobody has a choice. We haven't won a war here, but we've struck a blow. That's all we can hope for here and now.

May 14, 3052, Teniente System Transfer Orbit, Smoke Jaguar Occupation Zone

I am transshipping here to accompany Prince Hohiro and his men to Luthien. Once they have touched ground on their capitol planet, I am free to file this report. Prince Hohiro is still walking with a limp from the battle, but his men's morale is excellent. The two princes parted with a lot of friendly banter. Prince Victor was even invited to accompany Prince Hohiro to Luthien for the welcoming festivities. There was much speculation as to which intelligence service head would explode loudest and longest if the invitation were to be accepted.

While I am glad to report a successful conclusion to the mission, I am torn at leaving my comrades of the Revenants. My copy editor is the first to know that I have added my request to the growing waiting list of MechWarriors waiting for a slot in the Revenants. Prince Victor's aide, Galen Cox, says that I have a good chance.



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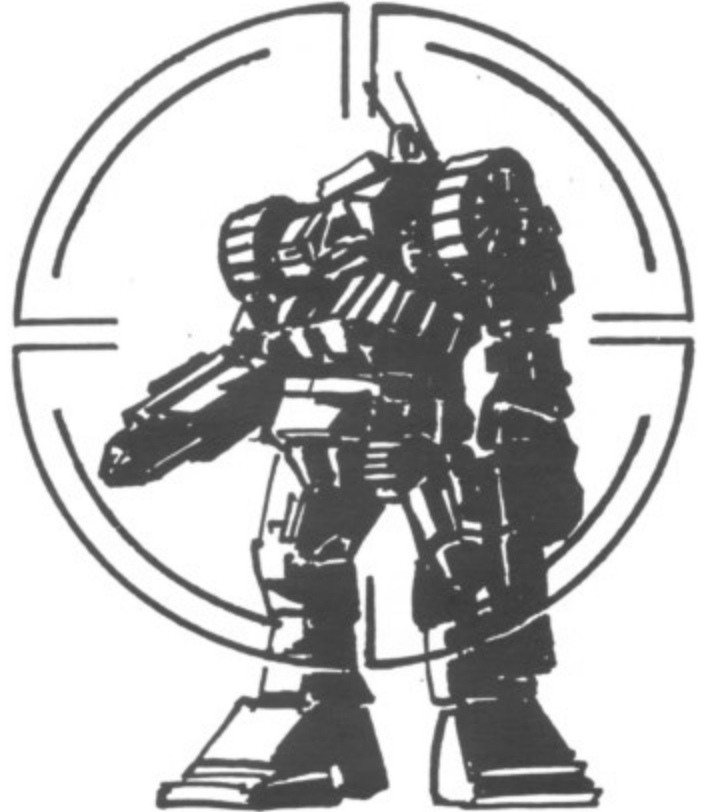
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BattleTechnology News Service

Tenth Lyrans Guard Fights On Kai Allard-Liao Survives

Summer, May 30, 3052

As the fair-fight duel on Tukayyid was entering its second day, May 2, 3052, ComStar seems to have begun a second, clandestine, counter invasion on certain planets, combined with zone-wide clandestine interdicts disguised as 'equipment failures, affecting Rasalhague in particular. The Federated Commonwealth seems to have had no military difficulties, although commercial and civilian communications were disrupted. This situation lasted for a week, then, just as abruptly, it ended.

During that unexplained lapse, ComStar attacked the Clans and the remnants of the 10th Lyrans Guard on Alyina. The honorable enemies made common cause against a corrupt Precentor and reconquered the world for the Jade Falcons after a joint force shattered the ComStar fortress at Valigia. The Jade Falcons repaired a Tenth Lyrans DropShip, supplied a captured JumpShip, repaired or provided 'Mechs for all the MechWarriors involved, and sent them off with comradely expressions of goodwill.

The senior officer of the surviving elements of the Tenth Lyrans Guard was Kai Allard-Liao, who apparently survived as a ComStar bounty hunter, at one point collecting the bounty on his own assumed identity. He fought in a Clans Elemental suit, then as a MechWarrior. His family BattleMech, *Yen-lo-Wang*, was refurbished courtesy of a Jade Falcon repair facility.

This story is not datelined April Fool's. BattleTechnology sources have checked and doublechecked this story. The Leopard-Class DropShip Leonidas is circling in a planetary orbit around Summer II even as we write this. Our staffers have flown around the DropShip, and Kai Allard-Liao gave a press conference today. His Centurion did indeed fall off a cliff while entangled with a Clan OmniMech. He attributes his survival to a freak underwater shelf and the fact that the Clan 'Mech landed on the bottom.

We're ready to believe anything now.

Romano Liao Slain

May 9, 3052 Sian, Sian Commonality, Capellan Confederation
Citizens of the Capellan Confederation waked today as their viewscreens were compulsorily overridden for a sad announcement.

The throne of House Liao was shown empty and bloodied, then the stern face of the Chancellor's son, Sun Tsu Liao, replaced it on the screen.

"Citizens of the Confederation, your Chancellor is dead, slain by her own hand, worn with toil to the point of madness after decades of warring with that adder, her sister, beguiled by The Fox, Hanse Davion. Forty days of official mourning will be observed. I will not leave you like frightened and alone like fatherless children. I will put aside my grief for my mother to assume the duties of your Chancellor. The official Coronation will be held as soon as the days of mourning are ended.

My sister Kali and I take comfort from your prayers."

May 7, Sian, Sian Commonality, Capellan Confederation
Vid disk left in the mail slot of BattleTechnology's office:

"I warned Romano not to seek harm to my dear ones. She has many times attempted our lives. I did not take action until her assassins slew my mate this January. Her life and the life of her mate were forfeit. I took them, as was my right. There was no squad of assassins. I did it with my own hand.

"Ask not who I am or what the name of my beloved; my name is legion. Her crimes have cried out for revenge." The voice is still without a reliable ID; it may have been put through a voice modulator. The picture showed nothing else but a bloody knife.

We will devote a more extensive coverage to House Liao' civil wars in our next issue. To show some of the hatred which Chancellor Romano has inspired over the years with her senseless acts of violence, BattleTechnology follows this announcement with four pages detailing what House Liao has done to just one unit, Khorsakov's Cossacks.

If the new Chancellor is to be a viable political figure in today's war-ridden realities, let him take warning from the story of Gregory Khorsakov.

Colonel Nikolai Khorsakov

Khorsakov's Cossacks

Tharkhad, March 3051

BattleTechnology: Thank you, Colonel, for this change to inform our many readers about your regiment, and for spending the time with us.

Khorsakov: You're very welcome. I'm glad to have the opportunity to enlighten you. Please ask your questions.

BT: Well, then. In spite of being Capellan by birth, you have served the Federated Suns cum-Commonwealth during most of your career. Would you please explain this?

Khorsakov: Of course. We were involved in the 3025 attempt by Liao to take the planet Atlas. This was our second-ever mission, and I suppose we were a bit cocky. Anyway, the attempt fell apart, and we were left, rather abandoned, on-planet. The Capellan Hussars still may have the DropShip, unless Colonel Ridzik took it back.

BT: You knew Colonel Ridzik?

Khorsakov: Certainly I knew him. My father commanded the third battalion of Stapleton's Iron Hand in those days.

BT: So you were abandoned on Atlas?

Khorsakov: Yes. We managed to talk our way into an honorable surrender, and the chief Davion representative. Durham-Davion I think, indentured us into service for two months. We ended up working for the Federated Suns for nearly ten years, and never had cause to regret it.

BT: Could you tell us where your unit took off to, when you were stationed on Edwards in mid-26?

Khorsakov: The military planners used us in a readiness test of the Command Circuit, and we went on maneuvers on Moncure. We stayed there about six weeks as I remember.

BT: Sir, the Moncure authorities have no record of your unit ever being on Moncure. How do you explain that?

Khorsakov: We were dropped secretly on-planet, and told to avoid contact with the locals. Why, they didn't tell us. I obeyed their orders. Should I not have?

BT: No, sir. You did the right thing apparently. Could you tell me where you were stationed during the Fourth War?

Khorsakov: We were shifted to the Draconis border just before hostilities broke out, and saw action on various

planets along the frontier.

BT: What about the New Aberdeen invasion attempt?

Khorsakov: That's interesting. I received orders from our liaison officer, Thomas Davion, to assault New Aberdeen. We were actually in-system, only two hours from drop, when we got the first information that the war was over. Since we had come in under comm silence, and the first message come from the local Draconian commander, we ignored it. Finally the local Precentor convinced us that the war was over. By that time, we'd dropped the 'Mech regiment, a hot drop, and had launched the fighters.

The Precentor earned her pay that day, let me tell you. She finally convinced us to stand in place, and the Draco CO to let us pack up and leave peaceably. I thought Thomas might have a stroke right there.

BT: What about earlier, I mean the Tannil raid?

Khorsakov: That's fairly embarrassing, even now. Not that we failed the mission; oh no, we apparently did too well.

We got orders that the Second Arkab was massing to try to break up Galahad '27, and that we were to 'rattle their cage', as Thomas put it. He had further orders, but didn't share them with us. I didn't concern myself too greatly about them. Anyway, we hit the Arkab. As you know, they're primarily a raid/recon unit. In spite of their greater mobility and numbers, we destroyed completely at least 30 'Mechs, crippled 25 more and nearly wiped out the armor battalion they had. All because of unclear orders.

Later Thomas told me that seriously damaging 20 or more 'Mechs would have been enough.

BT: Is this the action where you captured the Battlemaster that ended up given to the Prince?

Khorsakov: Yes. We took the 'Mech in the closing action of that battle and I claimed it as salvage. We were sent to New Avalon for some reason. It being the Christmas season, which I did not observe at the time, the idea struck me that to give the Prince the 'Mech would be very appropriate, since he had been very good to us during our service to him.

BT: The rest of your first tenure with the Suns was largely garrison work, was it not?

Khorsakov: Yes. We finished service on 1 March 3039 and signed up with Marik, primarily as a Periphery guard. The FWL wanted to give the pirates out there a reason not to come into their territory. We were shifted around a lot. I think we stayed on eight different planets, five of them within the old Andurien borders.

BT: How did service with Marik compare to Davion?

Khorsakov: First, let me say this: I have no dislike of the FWL, or any officer or member of the Marik family. That said, service there was not nearly as pleasant as with Davion. I think we were seen as a Davion regiment, and I can't really blame them for that. Thomas saw us as simply another of his mercenaries, but his subordinate generals never trusted us. They even put one of their officers in charge over us. In return, though, we got a really sweet deal on equipment.

BT: What about the Death's Head Regiment? Wasn't there a problem with them?

Khorsakov: There was. They had been pulled off of us, way back at Atlas, by Count Durham-Davion. Apparently they deeply resented his action, and had waited to get back at us. They tried a sneak raid, acting like pirates; we finally won the battle. The feud is resolved.

BT: You then worked for the Magistracy of Canopus.

Khorsakov: Training their forces to respond to the attack of a coordinated RCT assault. They're pretty good at it, too.

BT: What about their lifestyle?

Khorsakov: (After a silence.) It is their choice. If they choose, and they do, to live with the morals of so many alleycats, who am I or anyone else to judge them? I did not like having to raise my children in that cultural environment. Hopefully it won't mar their development.

BT: Who was your next employer?

Khorsakov: A Periphery commercial concern.

BT: Is that all?

Khorsakov: (tersely) Yes.

BT: Now your unit is with the Federated Commonwealth. For how long?

Khorsakov: The contract runs through five years. I plan to retire to Warlock at that time. My son Aleksandr will take command then.

BT: Colonel, your regiment carries some very unusual equipment, such as the DropShip *Appledorn*, some of the armored vehicles and tanks, to name but a few. Would you care to enlighten our readers on this point?

Khorsakov: Well, as I've said before, the *Appledorn* is a reconfigured Mammoth-class DropShip. Whoever did the work did a superlative job of retrofitting.

The other vehicles are fairly prosaic, such as the Type 14 APC. It's a simple personnel carrier. The Storm Tank provides long-range artillery and direct fire support, from the same vehicle. We find the combination hard to beat. The Defender is simply another tank design.

(Ed. Note: These vehicles are not manufactured on

any known world of the Inner Sphere.)

BT: What about your oddly configured infantry regiments?

Khorsakov: They came to us in their present form, and I have had no reason to change their organization. They've given outstanding service over the years.

BT: What about the Clan invasion?

Khorsakov: I can't say much about them, because I really don't have enough information to give you an intelligent opinion.

BT: Has any House ever asked you to become a House regiment?

Khorsakov: Yes. The Federated Commonwealth approached us three times between January '30 and November '37. St. Ives asked about it twice during the same time frame.

BT: What about the FWL?

Khorsakov: Never. They never accepted us, really. I personally think they were glad to see us leave their territory.

BT: Do you have stipulations barring service against the FWL?

Khorsakov: No. Generally we do that for a former employer who has treated us well, but they, well, it's hard to put this in words that won't sound so harsh, they never treated us as much different from the pirates we were holding off of them.

BT: Have you ever considered working for Rasalhague?

Khorsakov: Not likely. Not meaning offense, I would never consider working there. The concept of restrictive compounds is grossly offensive, and some of our people have short reins on their tempers. I don't think we could manage with that kind of mistrust from an employer.

BT: Is there any possibility of ever working for House Liao?

Khorsakov: (visibly angry) Not while that witch Roman-the-Damned Liao is alive, or any over her sort. That's a fairly stupid question, you know. Her father ordered my whole family killed on a whim, and Romano has attempted to carry out the sentence. One day she'll drown in the blood she's spilled. I hope I'm there to watch.

BT: Er, yes, I see. Well, Colonel, this has been most informative and I'm sure our readers will be most interest in hearing about your unit. Thank you again for your time.

Khorsakov: My pleasure, and my regards to your editors. *It was only when this interview and the documents on the next pages reached our officesthat we found out why the Chancellor of House Liao was so angry with us. (Our office on Sian has been shut down more often than it's been allowed to be open these last five years!It wasn't just because of the controversila interview we published with her; it was because we had profiled the Cossacks. Gosh, and here we thought it was our native charm...*

More of Khorsakov's Cossacks or Why the Chancellor Doesn't Like Us

Fifteen years ago, Chancellor Romano Liao began to refer to BattleTechnology as 'the snake-pit of lies and deceit'. We had no idea what had caused her to be quite so annoyed with us; there had been one of the usual sort of incidents when she threw one of our reporters off of Sian, threatening his life, but that's why we pay our Sian staff extra!

In the same issue which held the interview with the new Chancellor Romano, we printed a unit description for Khorsakov's Cossacks, a unit then under contract to the Federated Commonwealth. We did not know that the Chancellor has a special reason to dislike the Cossacks. An officer of the Cossacks who asks us to respect his anonymity sent us the following two documents. The first is the speech the Chancellor gave upon ascending the throne. The second is Colonel Nikolai Khorsakov's reply.

Citizens!

I greet you in the name of the illustrious Liao and the glorious Capellan Confederation!

This is a momentous occasion. I regret to report to you, my people, the untimely passing of our beloved Chancellor, Maximilian. He passed quietly in his sleep and knew no pain, though I am certain that his final thoughts were of you, the citizens of the great and wondrous Confederation.

Despite this grievous blow, you are not without leadership in these trying times. By consent of the Prefecture and acclamation of the military, I am named Chancellor of the Capellan Confederation. To use the phrase coined by my late father on the death of Tormax, "The Chancellor is dead. Long live the Chancellor."

I will command the Confederation by the best light given me by Mother...the Korvin Doctrine, always mindful of my duty to you, my people, to give you the strong, decisive, government you know you want, and which you have always supported in times past. I will expect this same unstinting support now and in the future. In return, you will have my abiding love and motherly guidance when you walk in the ways I direct, my firm but caring correction when your steps falter, and my loving discipline when you stray.

Remember always that enemies circle us, impatiently waiting to take advantage of any transitory weakness or divisiveness among us. Never forget the rape of the Confederation by the evil Ghost-Fox, Hanse Davion, eight years ago, nor the eternal predations of the so-called Free Worlds League. To ensure the strength of our military, I am shortly to issue a series of directives concerning temporary measures to shore up our military economy, and revitalize the civil sector. To accomplish these noble goals, I call upon you, my subjects, for great sacrifices. You have given much for the state; now, I say, give more! We must all sacrifice, temporarily, the gratification of our personal goals to the greater good of the Capellan State.

Together, citizens, we will surmount the obstacles confronting us, and, like the mythical phoenix of old, arise more powerful, more unified than ever before.

I am

Romano Liao,

Chancellor of the Capellan Confederation,

Mighty Sword of the Confederation, Sun of Union, Excellent Provider to Her People, Serene Highness of Tikonov and St Ives, Laureate of Universal Reason, Phoenix of Faithful Duty, and Jade Empress of the Marches.

Nikolai Khorsakov,
Colonel, Khorsakov's Cossacks
Bora, Sarna March,
Federated Commonwealth
June 25, 3036

To: Romano Liao, Limp Sword of the Confederation, Sun of Discord, Excellent Tormentor of Her People, Utter Tyrant of Sian, Laureate of Abyssal Ignorance, Worshipper of Satan, Daughter of Beelzebub:
My Dear Lady(?) Chancellor,

It is with great regret that I am informed of the passing of your gather, Mad Max. Regret that he didn't die, as I had hoped, under the heel of my Atlas. As you know, at least in your more lucid moments when you approach functional reality, Max had my father and entire immediate family murdered for no other reason than that my formation had been indentured by the AFFS, a common practice in more civilized regions of the Inner Sphere.

Perhaps I should have expected no better from a ruler who routinely murders his own subjects in wholesale lots. From you, I expect a continuation of this genocidal policy, perhaps even its acceleration.

I will tell you a story of Bora, my regiment's current station. When we arrived, just after the Fourth Succession War, the populace behaved as so many whipped curs, conditioned by generations of life in your family's evil empire. It took two and a half years, and great patience to convince them that we did not expect concubines to be provide us, nor slave labor. Medical facilities were nonexistent since your retreating forces destroyed them in a fit of spite. We had them rebuilt, and are now restoring the spirit of these formerly downtrodden people. So much for life in the Confederation.

It is my considered opinion that were it two hundred and fifty years ago, Kerensky might have turned and snuffed out your sickening nest of vipers before leaving the Sphere. He did not, and untold millions have suffered under the depravity of your ancestors' misrule.

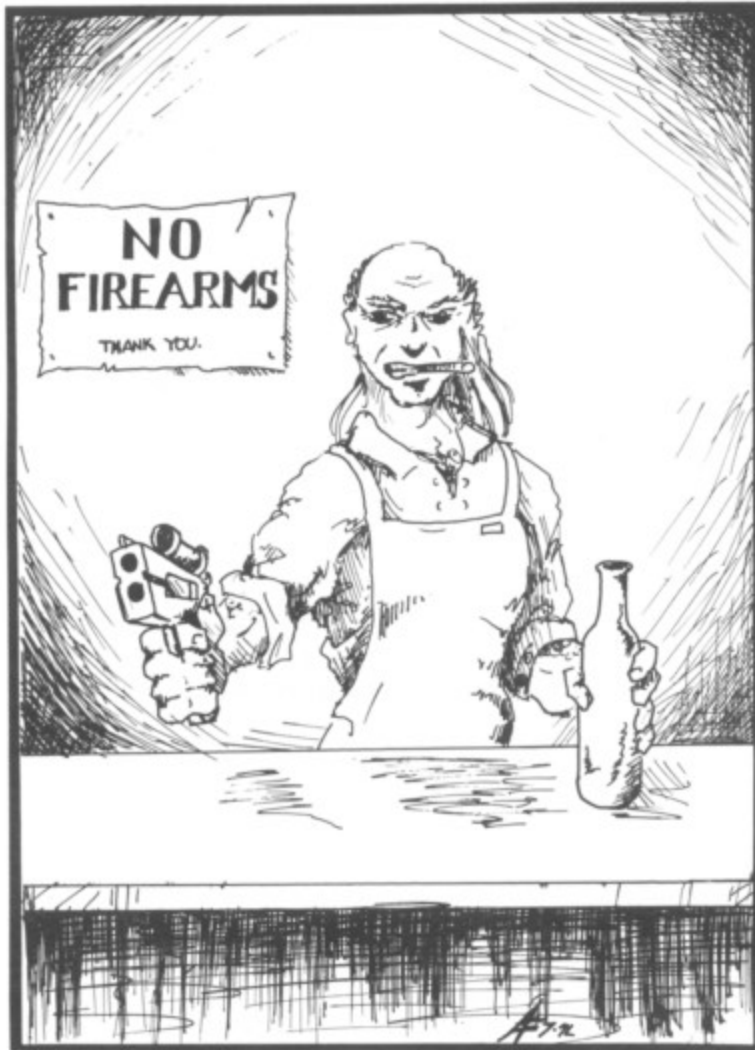
You and you father are the inheritors of the spiritual tradition of Attila, the Borgia, Hitler, and Stalin, up through Amaris the Betrayer, with the worst aspects of the old Spanish Inquisition thrown in for good measure, You deny the people even the privacy of their beliefs. Be warned: every state in history that has tried this has fallen. Yours will too.

In years to come, some great ruler in the Inner Sphere will have had quite a bellyful of you and your noxious fomentations. He or she will then move to destroy you. We will be there, and I swear on the grave of my father that my regiment will be there when Sian falls. To that ruler, I now pledge my service in his crusade, regardless of contract.

Some will fear your reprisals for this letter. I say; do your worst. No mortal force will compel my retreat from this stance. Pray to the devil whom you worship that you be spared the reckoning that surely approaches.

With Eternal Hatred,
Nikolai Khorsakov

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A Tale of the Cobalt Coil

Sometimes, being totally screwed can seem to offer peace of mind. After all, if things are roiled up beyond all possible redemption, what else can possibly go wrong? Thinking like that's very dangerous. Once you come to the conclusion that things are as bad as they can possibly get, the universe takes note and figures out some way to make things worse. You'd think I'd have learned that by now. But it was an understandable oversight. Here I was, coming out of over a decade of retirement to take on a lance of *Yakuza* killers just so their homicidal boss, Toma Sakuro, the local *Oyabun* of the Neon Orchids, could have a good time proving how much better a 'Mech pilot he was than any ex-Lyran. And it was all really my fault. I blundered into a scam Toma was running, skimming Yak money to pay for his excesses by killing his own bag-men. I couldn't prove a thing and Toma had made it clear that if I breathed my suspicions to anyone, I and all my friends were history. With the power of the *Yakuza* behind him, I was sure he could carry out his threat. The only thing holding him back was me and a nearly-

junked BattleMech named Apshai. Not a happy situation, I'm sure you'll agree. And though I didn't know it, things were about to get worse.

Three weeks had passed since Toma and I last saw each other. In one more week, we'd be at war, each trying to pound the other to scrap. If it had been just the two of us,

The times are unbalanced. Several factors in our lives which we thought were set have had to change. BattleTechnology tries not to run serial stories, but this climactic episode in the history of our favorite bar was just too good to pass up. For those of you who like to save all the parts of a serial before you begin to read it, be warned; this is part two of three.

I wouldn't have been too worried. Toma piloted a Grand Dragon named Sudden Death. Apshai was a Marauder, a good solid war machine that's got fifteen tons of raw mass over a Grand Dragon. But it was more than just Toma, it was his lance. I had to deal with a Griffin, a Dervish, and a Wyvern as well. Things looked grim, but I had a few things going for me. Tannian's news-service had swung a deal for an arena space, cutting Toma in for forty percent of the net sales and vid rights. I got twenty percent and the rest for expenses. What Toma hadn't noticed was that we were booked into the Factory, the Marik facility in the Montenegro District, and the terms called for separate starts. Each 'Mech entered at a randomly selected point. Toma's lance would have to try to link up inside. I'll bet he torched a few behinds over that oversight. But the biggest thing I had in my corner was my friends, the regulars at the Cobalt Coil. If I survived this, it would be thanks to them.

I had the best tech crew you could find on this or any planet. Ling MacCormack was heading the team and she was working miracles on Apshai. All the damage left from the retreat of Severn so long ago was repaired, and they had moved on to modification. Where they were wrangling the new hardware is anybody's guess. I won't say they stole it, but I sure didn't have the C-bills to cover all the toys.

And it was an impressive list of toys. All the old heat sinks were gone, replaced by the new freezers. Ling made good on her promise and the two arm-mounted medium lasers were upgraded to pulse lasers. As well, they managed to fiddle with the old Vlar fusion engine to up the power out-put by about twelve percent. Apshai was fitted with a new computer system and Donovan programmed it himself, lifting and modifying a bunch of software from his shuttle. By the time he was done, I had a new set of broad banded sensors and a state-of-the-art target acquisition system. But the hardest thing to take was the loss of the old autocannon. Ling pointed out that where I was going, the old Whirlwind autocannon would just be a liability and by doing away with it, we could also dump the ammo bin so I wouldn't worry about it exploding from heat buildup. I fretted for a while, then said okay. The autocannon went, replaced with a Diplan HD Heavy Laser. Ling said the freezers would compensate for the additional heat. But I still worried. When I had time.

You see, Sarah had appointed herself my trainer. I had no say in the matter. She set up a grueling regime of exercise, simulation-runs, and practice in Apshai whenever the old girl wasn't being torn apart by the techs. It was like being in the academy again, only this time I was a lot older and less resilient. The few hours of sleep I got each night were a godsend. But even then, I couldn't really escape.

It was the dreams. At first, it was basic nightmares, Apshai and I dying under the guns of Toma's killers. Then, other elements crept in. I began to see Kio, his dead face

accusing as if he knew I'd fail in my vow to set things right. No matter what I did, he'd still be dead. Then, the 'Mech battles began to change. I'd be stalking Toma's Grand Dragon through dark city streets, crashing through buildings in a mad rush to kill him, look down, and see that I'd just smashed the Coil and it was filled with the broken bodies of my friends. I'd wake to Toma's haunting laughter to return to training, seeking solace in exhaustion. It didn't work. The dreams still came, and now they held flashes of that last retreat of Severn. The voices of my dying command screaming in the baking hell of Apshai's over-heated cockpit as I fired barrage after barrage at a relentless enemy. It's a miracle I survived that battle, or a curse. But I digress.

Under Sarah's strict tutelage, I felt myself approach my old fighting trim. My reactions were slower and the eyes not as sharp as they once were, but a lot came back. Unlike some, I hadn't let myself go to seed once I retired. It showed. I'd never be the man I was at twenty five, but then, I never expected to be. And as Sarah pointed out, I had one other advantage: neither Toma nor any of his lieutenants had any real war-zone experience. I wondered if it would be enough as the day crept closer.

That's one thing about time; no matter how much it seems to drag, it still passes. Suddenly, it was the day before the fight, and the preparations were done. Apshai was battle-ready; at least, as ready as she was going to be. She looked like a new 'Mech. All traces of the previous damage erased by replacement armor. The freezers made bulky protrusions and the torso mounted large laser looked too stubby in comparison to the old autocannon. Apshai was freshly painted, her armor covered by a subtle, asymmetric mix of black, white, and gray. At first I'd protested the color scheme; then someone showed me a computer 'vid of the camouflage pattern set against interior shots of the Factory, the arena where the fight was to take place. Apshai seemed to vanish into the shadows. I stopped complaining. Glossy black praying mantises were painted on each side of the cockpit, copying Apshai's old call-sign, and someone had painted a couple of bottles graced with three x's and a full beer mug on one leg, their idea of a joke. I let it ride and took pride in that barman's symbol. You see, Apshai was much more than she ever was when I fought for the Commonwealth. Now, she was the extension of the pride and concern of all my friends. A hell of a lot was riding on this lop-sided duel.

That's the kind of cheerful thoughts that were running through my mind as I went through yet another cockpit simulation run the evening before the duel. I was wired into my neurohelmet, linked through a special computer that Sarah found somewhere, programmed to mimic Apshai's performance profile. I was fighting my way through simulations of Toma's lance when the scenario suddenly ended. Sarah's voice came over the com-link, asking me to come

out and meet someone. Instantly, I was suspicious, thinking Toma may have opted for a little eleventh hour sabotage, so I cut the computer link to Apshai, enabled the weapons, and took a peek out the view screen. Sarah was standing over by the control console where she'd been running the simulation. There was only one other person in the warehouse, an elderly, austere woman in red ComStar robes. Her iron-grey hair was pulled back into a simple ponytail, accentuating the sharp lines of her face and her prominent widow's peak. As if sensing my gaze she looked up at the cockpit ten meters above her. My heart lurched as I recognized her. It was Raythan, the ComStar Precentor of Solaris VIII, someone even more dangerous than Toma.

I unplugged the helmet and set it on the rack behind the pilot's seat before popping free the web restraints and exiting the cockpit. The ladder down from Apshai seemed impossibly long, and yet it took no time to climb down. That red robed figure just watched, her face expressionless except for the ghost of a smile on her lips that was noticeably absent from her eyes. I felt like a lab animal as I walked across the cracked cement.

A few meters away, I stopped and bowed. Sarah's expression was blank, but I read the tension in her body. She knew something was up, but didn't know how to react. I sympathized.

"Precentor, I am honored by your visit." My words sounded remarkably composed.

Her laughter was sharp and brittle.

"I doubt that very much, or my reports on you are wildly inaccurate." The shadow smile still curved her lips, and I saw a decidedly predatory glint to her eyes. "I have some interest in this contest and have already done some small service in assuring its equitable conclusion."

I remembered how an anonymous benefactor had come up with a license to allow me to fight a heavy 'Mech in a sanctioned gaming commission area just when it looked like Toma and I were going to have to take out 'Mechs into an abandoned district to slug it out in an illegal 'Mech duel. That license opened a lot of doors and the advance on the 'vid rights to the sanctioned battle financed Apshai's restoration. It looked like I'd found my hidden friend. Now came payback time.

Somehow, I felt sure Raythan read my thoughts in the play of expression across my face. I never was much of a card player.

"I am indebted to you and thank you for your charity." I emphasized the last word to make it clear I hadn't asked for her help. The slight tightening of her mouth told me I'd scored a point.

"Quite. Now, I have an offer, one I'd like to make in private." The flick of her eyes at Sarah made her intentions obvious. Sarah bristled with anger. Her reconstructed hand unconsciously clenched on a ceramic mug, and before I

could react, the mug shattered in a spray of chips. Sarah relaxed her hand and white dust sifted from the fingerless black gloves she wore. I wondered if it has been an accident.

"I'll be outside if you need me." Sarah's voice was as cold as deep space as she walked out, her spine rigidly straight.

"An interesting woman," Raythan said once Sarah was gone. "Do not undervalue her loyalty."

"I never set value to my friends. They are each priceless." Again the twitch kinked the corner of her mouth.

"Quite right, and I applaud your wit if not your wisdom. Now to the matter at hand. I have some interest in the 'Mech battle you are about to undertake."

Her words triggered an icy tingle up my spine. I remained silent, waiting for her explain.

"As you may have guessed, I secured the license under which you will fight. I ask nothing for it in return. I also helped secure your use of the Factory for your duel and assured the random entrance of all participants." A wintery smile crossed her lips for a moment. "I am sure Toma was not pleased over that development. Again, the help was freely given since it was not offered or asked for. This, however, has a price." She set a micro-optic disk on the console before me. In the florescent light, the ten-centimeter disk sparkled like a captive rainbow in its envelope. At last, I found my voice.

"What is it?"

"Something that doesn't exist. An original floor plan of the Factory. A trifle out of date. Still, perhaps it's the edge you'll need to balance Toma's advantage. It is not cheating to use, no provision prohibits you from employing maps of the arena. This one just happens to be better than anything else available."

My mouth was as dry as a dehydrated martini.

"What's it cost?"

"A favor, nothing more. At some point, I will come to you and ask for something, I do not yet know what. And you will do it for me."

"I'm not a hired killer."

"My dear man, I know. Assassins are far easier to come by than true men of honor. And that is what you are. You may hide behind the facade of the aloof bar-keep who only watches the world, but you can not change the man inside. I believe that when I come to you, you will listen, and if you judge it proper, and fair, you will do as I ask. That is a rare commodity in these war-ravaged years. Consider." She picked up a heavy crimson cloak from the empty chair and set it around her shoulders. Without a backward glance, she walked out.

The glimmering disk caught my gaze. I picked it up and wondered how something so small could be so heavy. For a while I simply stared at it, then slipped it into a jacket

pocket. I could always return it un-opened. Then, with nothing better to do, I sat down and switched on the small computer terminal, logged in and took a look to see if anyone had sent me E-mail while I was in the simulator. After skimming through the usual assortment of junk advertising, obscene electronic graffiti, and chain letters, I ran across one with the Neon Orchid symbol for a return address. The icy tickle was back on my spine as I triggered the read command. Toma's ugly face materialized on the screen, and I was again struck by how much He looked like a toad. While he spoke, he grinned and toyed with his wispy mustache.

"My esteemed opponent," he said, disgust dripping from each word. "On this, the eve of our honorable battle, I thought I might offer something to quicken your tired, marital blood. I know it has been many years since you and Apshai have fought, long years that must have taken their toll on the both of you. This will make my task all the easier, perhaps too easy. People will say you threw the fight to save your precious bar. To forestall that, I am telling you that if you lose tomorrow, I intend to forcibly procure the Cobalt Coil and have it demolished, or perhaps run it as a massage parlor or a tattoo emporium." He chuckled, vastly amused by his own wit. "By telling you this, I'm assured you will fight as well as a broken-willed, tattered old man can. Until we meet on the killing ground..."

Toma's image faded, replaced by the glowing pink orchid. I hardly noticed. Rage clogged my throat. Blood pounded in my head, hammering like a war drum. I turned toward Apshai, intent on marching her into Toma's fortress and leveling the nest of snakes. When I was done, nothing would grow for generations. As I grabbed the first rung of the ladder, I sensed an icy, sulfur-tainted wind. Raythan must have forgotten to shut the door. But I'd seen it close. I turned, and the door stood open, letting in the night air. It cooled my temper, and I released the ladder. This was not the way. Even if I succeeded, I'd still bring down the wrath of the Yakuza. The only way out was to beat Toma at his own game.

"We'll do what we can, old girl," I said to Apshai. She didn't answer, but the night wind seemed to chuckle.

Later, back at the Coil, at what was billed as a pre-victory party, I sat surrounded by friends listening to each give me advice on how to win the duel. I smiled and nodded while mixing drinks, but the voices all blended into a single roar. The weight of the disk hung on me like a lead cloak. I couldn't stop thinking about it, its promise and its cost. How much is a soul worth now-a-days? Would I sell mine?

I can tell what you are thinking; why agonize over the malfing question? Take the data, use it, and pay the bill when it comes dues. After all, it's ComStar you'll owe, not some black-hearted bandit lord. But you see, I don't trust ComStar. I never have. I can't tell you why because I never

had any hard evidence, just shadow and circumstance. Still, they play their own game. Those that see them as the last bastion of hope for the darkening Inner Sphere are deluding themselves. I didn't want to put myself blindly in their debt. But the only other choice was to possibly throw away all the people who went to the wall for me. Most of them staked a lot on their fight: their time, their money, and their hope. How could I let them down? My eyes kept drifting to the pocket that held the disk.

At last, it was closing time. I locked up, balanced the books, and stepped out into the rain-slick streets. Sarah was waiting for me.

"Thought I'd walk you home in case Toma decides to jump the start time." her hazel eyes flicked across the dark streets, hunting for *Yakuza* assassins.

I wanted to tell her of Toma's threat so that someone would be ready if I failed. I held back. This was my fight, I'd already taken too much from her.

We walked in silence, each lost in our own thoughts. When I reached my flat, she went in first to make sure it was clear. She made no comment at the austere decor. I never was one for keeping mementos, they remind you of too much. A moment of awkward silence fell as we each waited for the other to say something. She looked at me with those young-old eyes, a single strand of dark hair across her forehead. I wondered what she saw when she looked at me.

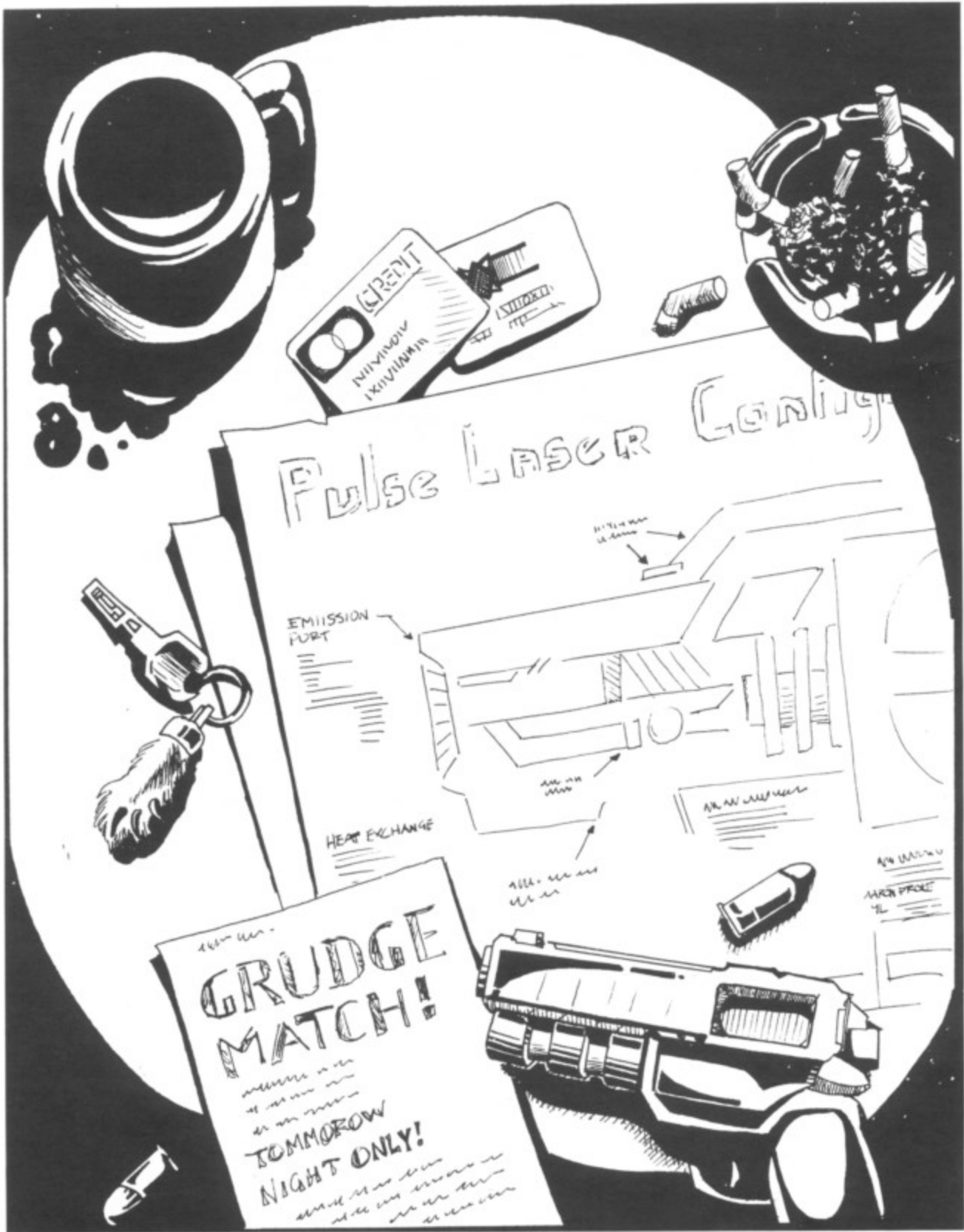
"By ten hundred at the warehouse then?" her words were soft, filled with questions I couldn't answer.

I nodded.

"Yeah, we'll run the final system check and then I'll give you a lift to the factory." I dropped my gaze to the floor. "I want to thank you for what you've done. If I've got any prayer of pulling this off, it's due to your help, and the help of the rest."

My words died in a vague, awkward gesture as I struggled to find a way to express what I felt. Then she smiled and I thought she was the most beautiful woman I'd ever seen. With a sudden lunge, she embraced me and buried her head against my chest. I felt her shake with a repressed sob. Then she looked up, her eyes bright, passionate fire. She was gone before I reacted, the soft click of the door marking her exit. I stood like a teenage fool, staring at the doorway, her kiss tingling my lips. She didn't come back. It was hard to fall asleep that night, and when I did, the dreams returned.

"All power linkages show full capacity," the phantom voice whispered in my ear. It was Apshai's voice, the sound of her onboard computers speaking through the neurohelmet, telling me all systems were powered up and ready to go. I sent out the signal to arm all weapons and watched the indicators on the HUD spring to light. The



computer ran through all the targeting cross-hairs in sequence, letting me know all weapons were on-line, then switched them off. They would pop up whenever I asked for them. Apshai had dual processors, voice activated and neural-interface command. I ran a last check down the indicators, confirmed engine output, then switched on the exterior speakers.

"This bus is leaving." My amplified voice boomed through the warehouse. Sarah waved and scrambled up the ladder to the cockpit. I turned on the radio and triggered open the rolling doors while Sarah strapped into the tiny seat behind my command couch.

"Solaris City Traffic Control, this is Jansfield, S, requesting ground clearance along route..." I paused to look at the notes clipped to the arm rest of my seat. "12-98B-141. My Marauder is on its way to the Marik arena for special exhibition bout delta stroke delta eleven. I repeat, I am requesting clearance."

The vid screen lit up, showing the face of a city militia man.

"Jansfield, S, you are cleared to bring your Marauder through by route 12-98B-141. Do not deviate from your path or you may be assessed civil penalties to all roads, buildings, or other private or city property. And good luck on your bout, warrior, the odds are running fourteen to one against you."

With a surge of myomer muscles, Apshai strode from her tomb. Rain drizzled on the armored hide, streaking the view ports and vapor curled around the banks of freezers. I was enthralled. For the first time in a decade, I was piloting my 'Mech. She moved like part of my body, the seventy-five ton monster responding to my thoughts as she paced through the rain slick streets. Behind me, I heard Sarah murmur in admiration, whether for my piloting or the job of restoring Apshai I couldn't say. To test it, I switched on the telemetry program Donovan provided and superimposed the information over a vid map of the city. A gold spark marked Apshai's position, a blue neon line traced the appointed route to the arena. The kilometers passed and soon, the bleak silhouette of the Marik factory loomed out of the mist.

For those of you unfamiliar with The Factory, let me describe it. Once, it was a factory that built shuttlecraft. It's huge, about two kilometers long by nearly one kilometer wide. It was built to accommodate industrial 'Mechs, with giant ramps, massively reinforced floors and gaping, hangar spaces. Dueling 'Mechs have turned the inside into a maze of broken concrete and twisted steel. Some people swear by it, as arenas go. I just know it has seen some of the most savage exhibition bouts ever stage on Solaris. I felt sure this contest was going to set a new standard. Toma had stacked the deck in his favor. It was up to me outplay him.

On my side was Apshai. She was bigger than any one of Toma's lance. But if they ganged up on me... At least we would all enter the factory from randomly selected points. I just had to find my four opponents before they linked up.

As I passed through the final blocks to the factory, I ran into the reception committee. It was the gang from the Coil, complete with huge mylar banners to show their encouragement. Even Stasberg, the owner, was out, standing there while the rain destroyed her carefully lacquered hair. She must have had money riding on bout. Sarah crowded beside me to watch through the view screens while we passed. I stopped, executed an awkward bow and continued on to the cheering of my friends. That did a lot to lighten my spirits. As I entered the staging area, my spirits plummeted. The *yakuza* lance was drawn up in perfect military order, Toma's Grand Dragon flanked by his lieutenants' machines.

"Don't let it rattle you," Sarah said as she unstrapped. "We all have faith in you. Someone asked me to give this to you, sort of a good-luck charm." She pulled a worn circuit board from the pouch at her side. As best I could tell, it was a BattleMech master fire-control link.

"What's this?" I turned the board over in my hands, wondered if something so old could still function.

Sarah shrugged.

"I was supposed to tell you it's from Shadak, part of his old 'Mech. Now let's get down so the judges can check your machine."

My scalp crawled as I set the board on the couch. I wondered which one of the Coil regulars Shadak had entrusted this relic to before he died. I was willing to wager it came from his sergeant's old 'Mech, the one that saved Shadak's life on Svenson's Drift. Perhaps it would bring me luck.

I climbed down from Apshai, and let the gaming officials into her. Sarah wished me luck one last time and left the field. She would watch the bout on vid back at the Coil. I watched her walk away, my spirits settling into my boots. The gaming commission inspectors were checking Apshai. They were supposed to make sure no one cheated by bringing in an illegal 'Mech. I always wondered what constituted an illegal 'Mech in open category fighting, something like disguising an Atlas as a Stinger, I suppose. Most likely, it was just tradition, the meaning lost to the past. I just hoped they wouldn't spot the boot-legged telemetry computer. I realized I was fretting about the fight but felt powerless to stop it. Then things got worse.

While I waited in the drizzling rain, I spotted a pair of people walking across the wet ferrocrete. One was Toma. The other I didn't recognize. Toma now looked like an oversized toad stuffed into a cooling vest with the Neon Orchid Emblem on the breast. His companion was a small, grey-haired man of Asian ancestry, somewhere between forty



and a hundred years old. He wore a simple business suit and his face expressionless. Not hostile, only neutral. I wondered if he were an associate of Toma's. Then I noticed something odd. By his body language, I saw that Toma was afraid of this man. They stopped two meters from me.

"Jansfield-san," This time, Toma's bow was deep and respectful though I saw an angry glint in his eye. "I have the honor of presenting my *Oyabun*, Kito Hasiha. He requested I introduce you."

I bowed to the two men.

"I am honored that one so high deigns to interest himself in the minor exhibition we are to stage. It seems it would hardly be worth your notice." My words cut into Toma, and I saw him stiffen with repressed rage. Kito didn't react, and it took all my will power not to flinch under his unblinking gaze.

"Other business brought me to Solaris," Kito said, his words soft and measured. "Fortuitous timing, since I consider this bout quite important." His gaze swung to Toma who puffed with pride. "I am most interested in the outcome of this duel."

He turned to walk away. Toma sneered and followed. I didn't collapse though my knees felt damn rubbery. Just what I needed, the attention of a Yak Lord whose servants I was about to try to kill. As I said, the universe loves making a bad situation worse.

The judges cleared all five 'Mechs, so I mounted up. As I strapped in and set my helmet, I kept looking at the drive of my navigation computer. Raythan's disk was in the pocket of my seat. I remembered the look of my friends, cheering and waving their banners as I passed. Even the old lady came out to urge on her bartender. I thought of the Coil, and those who spun tales of their lives, and what would happen if Toma won. The disk called. I answered. With sudden resolve, I peeled off the outer wrapping and slotted the disk. The ComStar logo blazed on the screen as it automatically downloaded its maps into my NavComp. Even after the symbol faded, it burned in my mind.

The radio crackled to life as the voice of the announcer filed my cockpit.

"Marauder, license number MAR-124-5, you are cleared to enter The Factory. Proceed to staging area B, and follow the lighted trail to your assigned entrance point. The bout will begin in thirty Terran standard minutes. Remember, you are being monitored and live-broadcast. . . Please proceed to your entrance points. Gentlemen, warriors, gamesmen, we wish you luck, and may your aim be true."

With a lurch, Apschai started forward. Across the courtyard, I saw Toma's lance break up and head for their own individual entrance points. Unbidden, an ancient quote surfaces in my mind.

"We, who are about to die, salute you!"

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To Archon Melissa Steiner Davion
My Lady,

To answer your request for suggestions on how to handle the Clans, I must say that, as my esteemed colleague, M.P. Hoare has pointed out, rigid adherence to classic battle doctrines will be the death of us. All of us.

Hoare has made several very good points which deserve serious study. I would think that smaller units would derive the greatest benefit from such a configuration, however. A large formation, such as Wolf's Dragoons or the Eridani, would be hard-put to acquire the armor units necessary.

However that may be, in my humble opinion, unless we can narrow or eliminate the Clan's technical edge, we should pay serious attention to armor. Tanks in sufficient numbers are the equal or perhaps the better of a *smaller* Mech formation. Our regimental wargames, and training situations within the Magistracy of Canopus, have shown this time and again. In ancient times, the Soviet tank armies, while never used in formal warfare in Europe after the Hitler War, were the terror of Europe, and forced the Western Powers into insane levels of military expense (like the Soviets). If nothing else, the tanks can soak off the Clan armored infantry. My formal suggestion regarding armor is that we spare no effort to upgrade our armor units, perhaps to the pint that three tanks would be the tactical equal of a frontline Clan OmniMech. If other service branches must *temporarily* slighted on new equipment, so be it.

Our situation is not one in which we can rest on our reputations, confident that these will deter our enemies. Indeed, the Clans seem to be drawn to greater effort by an opponent's high reputation.

A further proposal, and one that goes perhaps beyond the bound of your request, my Archon, is that a formal unified Inner Sphere command staff be established, to share information about the Clans, and to oppose them as one force. I realize that this will raise howls of indignation in my place, some of them very high, but do we really have the choice.

I do not suggest the complete unification of the various House militaries. It would be folly to try. What I have in mind, however, is a joint command set up by donations of personnel, material, troops and basing areas, by particularly the three Houses presently under direct attack. The remaining Houses could easily provide logistical and supply support. This joint command would be able to draw units from the various armies available to them, and provide local intel and staging support at least. The forces deployed under this command would then be available when and where they were most needed; for example, a Federated Commonwealth Regimental Combat Team could be sent into the Dieron District of the Draconis Combine for operations or into the Free Rasalhague Republic to shore up its defenses. Or a regiment of the Sword of Light could attempt to liberate Federated Commonwealth worlds occupied by the Jade Falcons.

Such an operation would be extraordinarily difficult, not least politically. However, if one considers the alternative, probable defeat and enslavement for all time to come, then the political pill may become more palatable to those who sit back and laugh when they hear of a new Draco world under attack or fallen, or who pray for more Federated Commonwealth worlds to be taken.

We must learn to work together, or the Clans' task will be that much simpler.

— Name Withheld by Request

Ed Note: The author is the leader of one of the Federated Commonwealth's major mercenary formations. Because of the political nature of much of this article, he wishes to remain anonymous. We agree with him that politics is not the proper province of a mercenary, but we are all now fighting for our very way of life.

Taking War Back to the Clans

The windy world of Twycross was lost to the Jade Falcon Clan in June of 3050.

In early September, the Tenth Lyran Guard and elements of the Kell Hounds came to take it back. Intelligence sources indicated that frontline troops in OmniMechs would have already left the world to be held by a garrison. The garrison would be in top-condition conventional 'Mechs; against the best troops in the Inner Sphere, they would have even odds. The raid was considered a chance to test Federated Commonwealth troops against the Clans. It turned out to be more of a test than anyone had imagined.

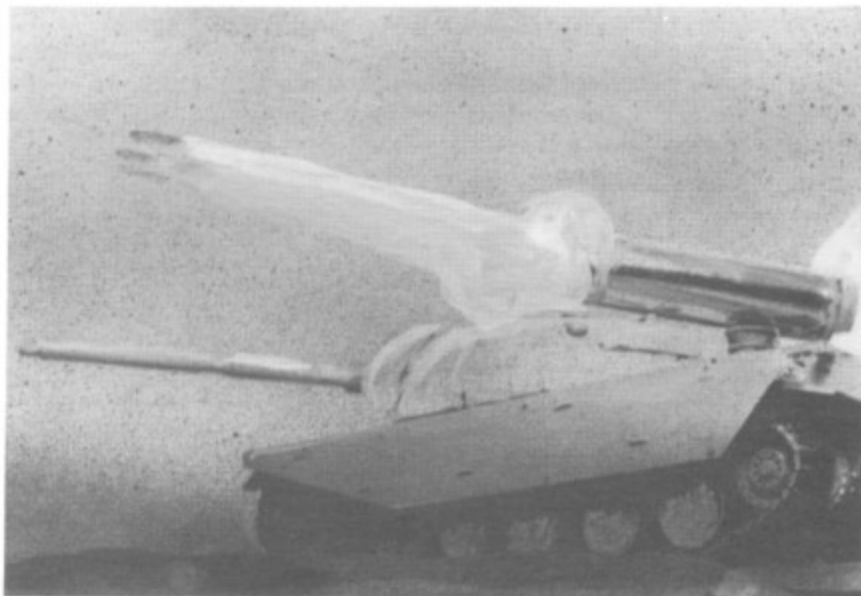
At first the fight went well. The Tenth Lyrans' superior knowledge of the terrain weighed evenly against the Clan's superior weapons. The wave of the conquerors spread toward the Great Gash near The Cloisters, when they got a nasty surprise. Frontline troops were still on the planet — and they were ready to take up the fight. The elite Falcon Guards joined battle with the Tenth Lyran Guard at the Gash.

We learned two valuable lessons at Twycross; one was that planets *can* be taken back from Clans forces, at least from garrison troops. The second is that, one-on-one, the Inner Sphere BattleMechs piloted by our very best *could* take on frontline Clans troops and win.

That same September, Hohiro Kurita used the Clans own system against them. The Smoke Jaguars were holding Wolcott with garrison troops. The *Yuutsu* (Blue Devils) — formerly known as the *Genyosha* — took the planet easily. Kuritan Intelligence realized that Clans tacticians gave an inordinate amount of credence to a *unit's* battle record, but paid very little attention to an *individual's* battle record. When the Smoke Jaguars' Galaxy Commander gave formal challenge to the planet, Hohiro offered the battle

records of the individuals, and admitted that the *Yuutsu* had been created from other units. The challenge was accepted; the terms were: possession of the planet with no further attempt by the force involved to retake it, and, if the Draconis Combine force won, they would be supplied with an OmniMech and four BattleSuits for study.

To the Smoke Jaguars' utter surprise, the Kuritans won. The Smoke Jaguars had underestimated their opponents and bid too low. Although Wolcott is now far behind enemy lines, and although Wolcott is being used as a staging base for Kuritan forays, the Smoke Jaguars have kept their word even after their return; so have the other Clans troops in this sector. The knowledge gained from this engagement: it is possible to use the Clans own assump-



tions against them. Thanks to Hohiro Kurita, the Inner Sphere has had a year to study the Clans' weapons and armor.

October 31, 3050 is a date that should be remembered. A single Aerospace fighter, Kaptan Tyra Miraborg, showed

us that a single courageous individual can make a difference against Clan forces. As the planet Radstadt was being lost to the formidable Wolf Clan, this pilot for the First Drakons had taken critical damage. She chose to make a suicide dive into the largest of the invader JumpShips, taking as many as possible of the invaders with her.

The ship she chose was the flagship, Dire Wolf. She managed to take out the bridge. Wolf's Dragoons' information officer made us aware that Tyra killed the IlKhan, leader of all the Clans, with her deathblow. The Clans withdrew their frontline troops back to their home systems to elect a new Khan, leaving only their planetary garrisons. Their assault on the Inner Sphere halted for more than eleven months. These crucial eleven months have given us vital time to study their weapons and tactics, and to come up with our return tactics. One brave woman bought us this time.

Rhonda Snord seems to have fared best of all. Snord's Irregulars' Intelligence realized that a Star League Defense Forces base had been hidden in the Dark Nebula; they did not know the coordinates to the base. Further research suggested that an undisturbed Star League Astronomical Station on Apollo had a high probability of containing the coordinates. The problem was that Apollo was deep in the Jade Falcon's Territory.

The Irregulars accomplished their raid on Apollo with minimal losses. In fact, they proved that even an OmniMech will go into heat shutdown if you kindle a forest fire around

it! Snord's forces had to leave some of the duplicate data chips behind. A Cluster of the Jade Falcons' primary troops came after them into the Dark Nebula.

But Rhonda got there first, gaining possession of a planetoid-wide Star League Defense Forces Base. The Dark Wing Cluster of the Jade Falcons followed a week later. By then, Rhonda's techs had a scant handful of the Star League weapons up and working. She challenged the Dark Wing to a 'Trial of Possession', winners to gain all — ships, 'Mechs, people, and the base itself. The battle was fought, first on the planetoid's surface, then in the empty warehouses of the base.

Snord's Briefing Officer required a careful approach — and an astonishing number of PPC cocktails—before he explained their tactics to *BattleTechnology's* reporter. "Flexibility is the key," he told her, laying one finger owlishly against his nose. "Predict where they are going to take a stand — and mine that location. Predict how they will respond to a certain tactic — and then have a weapon pointing where they will not be looking. The tougher the Clans troops are, especially front line Crusader Troops like the Smoke Jaguars and the Jade Falcons, the more they will act in predictable ways...except for the Wolves, of course."

No amount of drinks would buy the secret of just how Snord's Irregulars know so much about Clans tactics, or about the differences in tactics from one Clan to another.



Field Modification Kits New Life for Old 'Mechs.

by Gregory Keid-Thorn

With the recovery of so many lost Star League technologies, the newest generation of BattleMechs are attaining levels of combat efficiency not seen in the Inner Sphere for three centuries. With the NAIS's research, the now famous Grey Death memory core, and ComStars 'loan' of League 'Mechs to House Kurita, units are able to move faster, hit harder, and take more punishment at the same time.

While on the tactical level this is good news, especially in light of the Clan invasions, it is creating a system of haves and have-nots amongst warriors. Elite house units and wealthy mercenaries are able to afford the extremely expensive new machines, while low ranking units and small mercenary outfits have to rely upon obsolete equipment. For house units, it means being left out of the action; for mercs, it's the difference between picking up a contract or...

The answer for commanders trapped in these situations is field upgrade kits. While expensive, they are not nearly as expensive as new 'Mechs, and they allow the use of existing chassis. For some out-of-production 'Mechs like the Clint or the UrbanMech, it is the only way to make the vehicles survivable on the modern battlefield.

Modification kits are packages of replacement parts and weapons that are custom built to fit around an existing design. Despite the misnomer, upgrades are not done 'in the field'. The process requires a full repair facility with 'Mech repair cradles, well trained technical personnel, etc. Ideally this is provided by the manufacturer, but most major repair ports can jury-rig the necessary components.

The Suppliers

Various states provide varying degrees and types of upgrade kits, below is a rundown on what is currently available as of mid-3052:

Draconis Combine

House Kurita appears to be concentrating almost exclusively upon building new machines. Those few kits made utilize the most advanced technology available, but they are

only made for 'Mechs produced in the Draconis Combine, and are only sold to the DCMS and long-term contracted allied units. Non-Kurita mercenaries should look elsewhere

Federated Commonwealth

With the combined industry of the Federated Suns and the Lyran Commonwealth, effectively every type of kit is made, and any type of kit may be purchased. The only limiting factors are price, and the rarity of enhanced Particle Projection Cannons. Once the needs of the military are met, suppliers are at liberty to sell to mercenaries.

Capellan Confederation

Liao defense industries have yet to recover from the Fourth Succession War. Confederation factories are limited to building a few 'Mech types and only a dozen types of modification kits with minimal enhancements. Find another source unless you're stuck there. (Editors Note: This could change with the new Chancellor!)

Free Worlds League

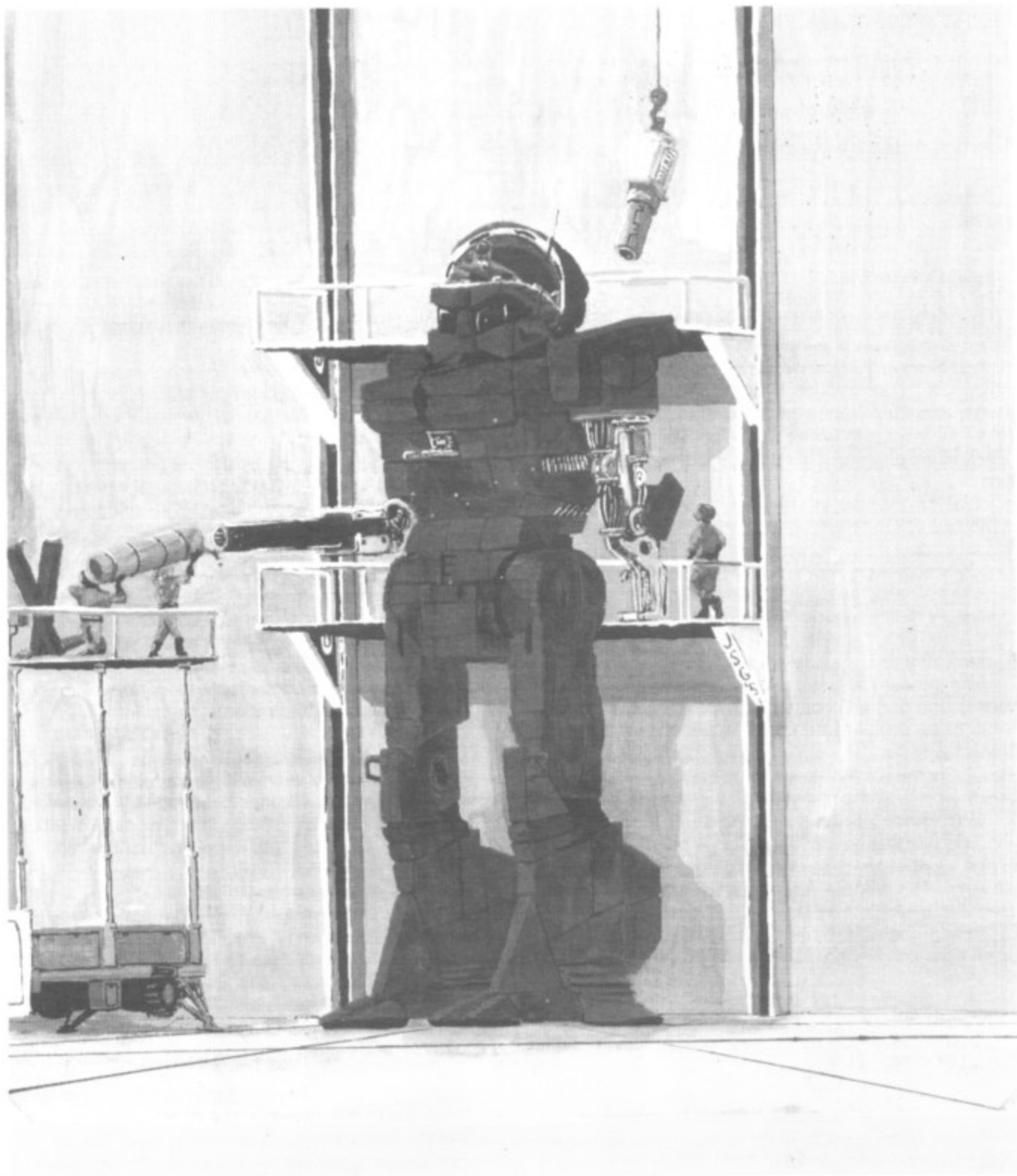
House Marik competes with the Federated Commonwealth as the largest producer of upgraded 'Mechs. While they lack some of the higher tech items, no other producer offers kits as inexpensively as League manufacturers do.

Free Rasalhague Republic

Before the Clan invasions, most of its upgrade kits came from Houses Steiner and Kurita. The limited output of the Republic itself was split between export and home consumption. Besides losing half its worlds to the Clans, Rasalhague also lost nearly all of its 'Mech factories. The remaining industries have been preoccupied with churning out full 'Mechs.

The Periphery

Occasionally Star League caches in the less-explored parts of the Periphery yield new Star League 'Mechs and designs. Larger states like the Magistracy of Canopus and the Taurian Concordat are beginning to produce limited



amounts of enhanced equipment, but they have nothing to compare with the Inner Sphere.

The Process

(Ed Note: The FASA Corporation is coming out with the official stats for these kits next year. These approximations are optional house rules which will be replaced when the technical update comes out.)

To determine what the price of a specific modification kit will be, consult with a manufacturer's agent, but for an approximate price a reference book with a current equipment price table can be used.

The first step is to strip out all the equipment to be replaced, calculating the newly freed-up tonnage. This includes weapons, armor, etc. Next, choose new weapons and electronics to replace the old. Exchange armor with either ferro-fibrous or reshaped conventional types. Decide if the rebuilt 'Mech will carry jump jets and calculate accordingly. It is wise to use items similar to the old design as, even when reprogrammed, computers have a harder time dealing with radically different weights and characteristics.

CASE and MASC systems present special problems to modifications. Because of structural changes, CASE cannot be built into center torsos. MASC can be added, but it is not always satisfactory.*

Despite what you may have read, extra 'large' engines and endo steel structure cannot be built in because of the enormous structural changes it would entail. Similarly, power plants can be downgraded to make room for weapons, but over-sized engines cannot be added for the same reasons as the XL engines cannot. It has been tried, but results are temporary at best.

After adding everything up and ensuring the thing will be able to walk after you have tinkered with it, multiply the total price of all new equipment by 3 plus the House Modifier. This approximates the cost of altering the 'Mech and new parts, as well as labor and transport fees.

Example: The owner of a MAD-3R Marauder can't afford a new or a larger 'Mech, so has decided to buy an upgrading kit. The kit he decides upon simply improves his old weapons, armor, and heat sinks, while adding jump jets to boot. The total package will only cost him 4,893,750 C-bills, as opposed to 11,544,829 C-bills for a new 'Mech of comparable quality. He had the kit delivered to him somewhere in Steiner space, and now has a surprise waiting for the next MechWarrior who sights his 'old' Marauder.

While upgrades will not make a 'Mech made up of old parts the same as a new 'Mech, it can put a unit on an equal footing with an older type of 'Mech with enhanced technology.

These so-called OmniMechs the Clans drive put a new wrinkle into the problem. Apparently, they can put enhanced Inner Sphere BattleMechs to shame. If so, there is

not much you can do with old 'Mechs, besides attacking in large numbers, such as the Allies did on certain fronts during the Second Terran World War.

Even if you have access to the new 'Mechs, having a reserve of upgrades can make a difference when trying to hold the line when the Clans come over the hill.

House Modifier Table

House	Price Modifier
Davion	x 1.8
Kurita	x 2
Liao	x 2.3
Marik	x 1.5
Periphery	x 2.2
Steiner	x 1.6

*Simulator Notes:

When an added MASC system is activated, the maximum speed is reduced by one point, and the failure threshold is increased by 1.

Gregory Keid-Thorn inherited his father's unit, the Thorn Birds, and commanded it for thirty four years. After retiring, in 3049, he went on to form Phoenix Defense Industries, a corporation that uses spare 'Mech parts and battlefield salvage to manufacture upgrade kits for the Federated Commonwealth and others. His daughter Christina currently commands the unit from the family Zeus.

BattleTechnology Personals





















20TH AVALON HUSSARS 25TH REUNION has been rescheduled. Did you drop with the White-And-Gold through Styk, Second Try, and Tsinghai in the Fourth War? Reunion now scheduled for Truth, Sarna March, standard November 30, 3055. Veterans transport available through AFFC at large discounts. Come show the young guns how the oldsters got it done without all that fancy extended-range pulse LB Swarm stuff. Special Guest: Hpt. Gen. Jack Roberts, current 20th AH RCT CO.

AUTOGRAPHED COPY OF COLONEL JAMIE WOLF'S "The Clans: Who? Where? Why?" for sale. Minimum bid 2500 C-bills. Accepting bids until standard January 1 3053. Heartbroken, must sell. Send bids to Box 39, BTM.

EVIL LIVES IN METAL MOCKERIES OF THE HUMAN FORM. Save yourselves while you can. Cast off the influences of the Metal Abominations, be rid of your BattleMechs, donate your ill-gotten profits, and ask for forgiveness. Remember: Many are chosen, but few are paying attention at the crucial moment. We are here to help. Please contact the Wildmon Sect at ComStar 9354-A-894-WILDMON.



Sub-Unit Composition

-  1 x Kangaroo, 1 x Wombat, 2 x Wallaby
-  1 x Kangaroo, 2 x Wombat, 1 x Wallaby
-  1 x Kangaroo, 1 x Wombat, 2 x Boomer
-  1 x Kangaroo, 1 x Wombat, 1 x Wallaby, 1 x Bandicoot
-  1 x Joey, 1 x DwF Wombat, 1 x Bandicoot, 1 x Striped Bandicoot
-  1 x Joey, 3 x Kookaburra
-  3 x Field tank, 1 x Support tank [all 4/6; 75 tn tracked]
-  4 x Assault tank [all 4/6; 75 tn tracked]
-  3 x AntiBattleMech hover, 1 x AntiAirCraft hover [all 8/12; 50 tn hover]
-  4 x Engineer vehicles [all 5/8; 50 tn tracked]
-  3 x MASH hover, 1 x Cargo hover [all 8/12; 50 tn hover]
-  3 x Cargo hover, 1 x AntiAirCraft hover [all 8/12; 50 tn hover]
-  4 platoons x 28 men each
-  4 x Sniper mobile artillery, 1 x Cargo carrier, 1 x AntiAircraft [all 3/5; 100 tn tracked]
-  4 x LongTom mobile artillery, 1 x Cargo carrier, 1 x AntiAircraft [all 3/5; 100 tn tracked]
-  4 x Arrow IV mobile artillery, 1 x Cargo carrier, 1 x Imp antiaircraft [all 3/5; 100 tn tracked]
-  4 x Skye Rangers, modified HiScout Drone Carriers [all 4/6; 75 tn tracked]
-  4 x Gryphon scout tank, modified Pegasus [all 9/14; 35- ton hover]
-  4 x Savannah master scouts [all 413/20; 5- ton hover]
-  4 x infantry carrier, 3 x Cargo carriers, 1 x AntiAircraft [all 8/12/ 50 ton hover]. 112 Techs, AsTechs, equipment. May also carry 1 x Infantry company.

Key to Next Page

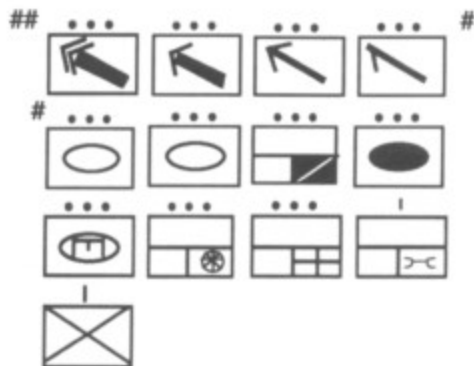
John Force and Margarie Force are the basic field unit. Mitsou Force acts as the reserve and defense of the ground base. AeroSpace units are tasked for Air superiority. Ground support is handled by Mitsou Force.

Depending on specific mission requirements, the Mitsou Force will fluctuate. In addition to the organic artillery, John and Margarie Forces can call on one Long Tom each for Fire Support, and up to 3 if required.

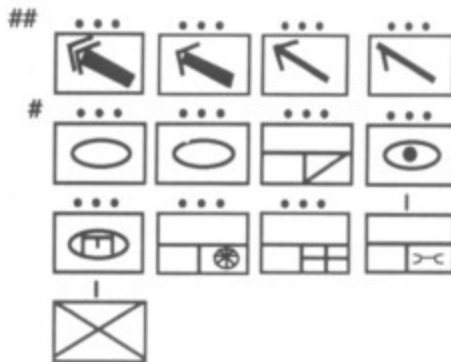
High guard is supplied by 40 AeroSpace fighters, releasing the six Overlord DropShips to act as ground support. Elimination of enemy AeroSpace assets are of prime importance.

**Letters to the Archon Continued:
Snowfire Regiment's
Field Task Forces**
text next pages

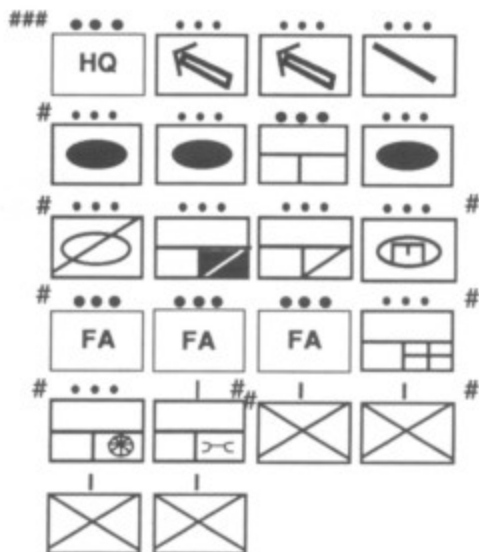
John Force:



Margarie Force:



Mitsou Force:



t Commander
Denotes Task Force Commander
Denotes Task Force Subcommander
FA Denotes Fighter (Assault)
dedicated to Ground Support

Letters to the Archon Continued: Snowfire Regiment's Field Task Forces

Type: BMR-100 Boomer		
Tonnage:		100.0
Equipment		Mass
Internal Structure:		10.0
Engine:	300 XL	9.5
Walking MP:	3	
Running MP:	5	
Jumping MP:	3	
Heat Sinks:	12 (24)	2.0
Gyro:		3.0
Cockpit:		3.0
Armor Factor:	304	19.0

	<i>Internal Structure</i>	<i>Armor Value</i>
Head	3	9
Center Torso	31	45
Center Torso (rear)		16
Right/Left Torso	21	31
Right/Left Torso (rear)		11
Right/Left Arm	17	34
Right/Left Leg	21	41

Weapons and Ammo	Loc.	CS	Mass
C3 Slave Computer	H	1	1.0
Guardian Suite	LT	2	1.5
Medium Laser	LT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	CT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	RT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	RT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	RT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	LT (R)	1	1.0
Medium Laser	RT (R)	1	1.0
Gauss Rifle	RA	7	15.0
Ammo (32)	RT	4	4.0
Gauss Rifle	LA	7	15.0
Ammo (32)	LT	4	4.0
Jump Jet	RL	1	2.0
Jump Jet	LL	1	2.0
Jump Jet	CT	1	2.0

RA & LA both lack lower arm and hand actuators
(able to 'flip arms')

Tons RA LA D R MP Special

While MP Hoare's letter (BT 16) is a good basis for discussion of anti-Clan tactics, empirical field trials suggest a mixture of BattleMech/Armor/Artillery ratio of 4:3:1 rather than the original suggestion of 1:1:0. By increasing the base size to a 'demi-battalion' of two reinforced companies, this allows the task force commander to be able to deploy his/her force as the situation requires. With the organic artillery USED FOR INTERDICTION, it should be possible to defend against battalion level of opposition, and to go on the defensive once the attackers are bloodied. The Snowfire Brigade has operated quite successfully using combined arms techniques since 3018. The equipment possibilities of today allow for the specialization of units necessary for good combined arms tactics.

I've appeared to have taken a 'defensive' frame of mind in this letter. It is intentional. What with the ability of our foes' BattleMechs (speed, etc), and the noted behavior of the pilots so far, it is to OUR advantage to let them 'attack'. Once they are bloodied, experience has shown that we are capable of mounting a counterattack that defeats them.

Yet perhaps the most important factor is the 'Human' one. This factor may indeed be the most critical one. The Clan MechWarriors are the pinnacles of what MechWarriors should or can be. They are the best INDIVIDUAL FIGHTERS the Inner Sphere has or will see. For that is what a Warrior is, a highly skilled INDIVIDUAL fighter. And that is why they will ultimately fail. They lack the discipline and the ability for group coordination. Please not that I'm NOT saying that it occurs; it does occur infrequently. The strength of the Federated Commonwealth forces is that of her SOLDIERS, a group of disciplined fighters working TOGETHER. While we still suffer from a technological gap, our equipment, with combined arms techniques made possible by the discipline of our SOLDIERS, shall gain us victory.

Brigade Sgt-Mjr Wolfgang Tracon
Historian, Snowfire Brigade

Field Task Forces

The basis of the Snowfire Brigade is the Field Task Force (FTF); the size of this force is a reinforced BattleMech Company and a reinforced mixed Armor Company. While specific operational demands will cause a change in committed reserves, the core of the FTF remains constant. This allows for unit cohesion, familiarization, and training, all of which are vital for successful combined arms operations.

Ignoring the organic support units (Supply, Service, Security, and Medical) the basis of each task force is:

- 11 Assault BattleMech (4/6/4)
Modified BattleMaster chassis
- 5 Medium BattleMech (5/8/5)
Modified Wolverine chassis
- 8 Tanks & 75 ton) (4/6/T)
- 4 Hover Tanks (50 ton) (8/12/H)
- 4 Sniper Artillery (3/5/T)
Changes to 2 Sniper, 2 Arrow IV

Possible quick response reinforcements include:

- 1-3 Long Tom Artillery
(1 dedicated, an additional 1-2 possible)
- 0-6 AeroSpace fighters (Ground Assault Version, modified 85 ton)

Continues

Type: KGR-00 Kangaroo
Tonnage: 85.0

Equipment **Mass**

Internal Structure: 8.5

Engine: 340 XL 13.5

Walking MP: 4

Running MP: 6

Jumping MP: 4

Heat Sinks: 13(26) 4.0

Gyro: 4.0

Cockpit: 3.0

Armor Factor: 256 16.0

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	9
Center Torso	27	42
Center Torso (rear)		11
Right/Left Torso	18	28
Right/Left Torso (rear)		8
Right/Left Arm	14	28
Right/Left Leg	18	33

Weapons and Ammo	Loc.	CS	Mass
Gauss Rifle	LA	7	15.0
Ammo (32)	LT	4	4.0
Guardian Suite	CT	2	1.5
C3 Master Computer	RT	5	5.0
Medium Laser	RT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	RT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	RT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	RT (R)	1	1.0
Medium Laser	LT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	LT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	LT	1	1.0
Small Laser	H (R)	1	0.5
Jump Jets (2)	RL	2	2.0
Jump Jets (2)	LL	2	2.0

Tons	RA	LA	D	R	MP	Special
85	16	27	13	3	45	ECM

Type: KGR-W0 Wombat

Tonnage: 85.0

Equipment		Mass
Internal Structure:		8.5
Engine:	340 XL	13.5
Walking MP:	4	
Running MP:	6	
Jumping MP:	4	
Heat Sinks:	14 (28)	4.0
Gyro:		4.0
Cockpit:		3.0
Armor Factor:	256	16.0

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	9
Center Torso	27	42
Center Torso (rear)		11
Right/Left Torso	18	28
Right/Left Torso (rear)		8
Right/Left Arm	14	28
Right/Left Leg	18	33

Weapons and Ammo	Loc.	CS	Mass
C3 Slave Computer	H	1	1.0
Medium Laser	RA	1	1.0
Medium Laser	RA	1	1.0
Medium Laser	LA	1	1.0
Medium Laser	LA	1	1.0
Medium Laser	CT (R)	1	1.0
Medium Laser	CT (R)	1	1.0
Artemis IV FCS	RT	1	1.0
LRM 15	RT	3	7.0
Ammo (LRM) (32)	RT	4	4.0
CASE	RT	1	0.5
Artemis IV FCS	LT	1	1.0
LRM 15	LT	3	7.0
Ammo (LRM) (32)	LT	4	4.0
CASE	LT	1	0.5
Jump Jets (2)	RL	2	2.0
Jump Jets (2)	LL	2	2.0

Tons	RA	LA	D	R	MP	Special
85	13(1)	13	13	3	45	-

Snowfire BattleMech lances have one command 'Mech, one fire support 'Mech, 1 close assault 'Mech, with the fourth 'Mech either an additional fire support or the close assault version. With the basis of an HQ lance, a 'Mech company, a mixed armor company, and an artillery lance, the possible permutations of attack/defense options can be quite interesting. Please note that the small (relative) size of the Snowfire Brigade allows for dedicated units, with specialization that is required for proper combined arms techniques. Each lance (armor or 'Mech) is able to operate as a supporting unit, not as four prima donnas. This theory extends down to the support units.

Using combined arms techniques instead of conventional military TO&E enables the task force commanders to more fully exploit the abilities of their units. The organic artillery can be used to interdict an approach path or escape route; the fast hovercraft allow for quick reinforcement or sudden flanking moves; the tanks can be used to stiffen the defense or snipe at defenders. While the 'Mech is still necessary, it is no longer the 'Queen of the Battlefield'. It is still important as a valued element, but it is no longer a solo performer.

It is interesting to note that the combination of 'Mechs and tanks, properly utilized, will have enemy 'Mechs shooting at friendly 'Mechs as primary targets, shooting at tanks only if no 'better' targets are available. With tanks almost the equal of 'Mechs, this can be a FATAL error. It is not unlike looking out for sharks and ignoring the barracuda. Infantry PROPERLY equipped, lead, and supported is extremely useful for defensive situations. Enemy priorities tend to be BattleMechs first, then Armor, then Infantry. Infantry units cannot maneuver quickly enough for today's battlefield, but they are still valuable. Infantry can spot for artillery while remaining hidden, closely supported with 'Mechs, a mix of Infantry and Armor can be used to defend, deny, or block an opposing force.

Editor's Note: The Snowfire Regiment's Field Task Forces will feature prominently in *Combined Arms: the Mid-31st Century Solution*, a Fall '52 release from the Mech-At-Arms series, Tomachevsky Press, Exeter.

Type: KGR-WA Wallaby

Tonnage: 85.0

Equipment Mass

Internal Structure: 8.5

Engine: 340 XL 13.5

Walking MP: 4

Running MP: 6

Jumping MP: 4

Heat Sinks: 21 (42) 11.0

Gyro: 4.0

Cockpit: 3.0

Armor Factor: 256 16.0

	<i>Internal Structure</i>	<i>Armor Value</i>
Head	3	9
Center Torso	27	42
Center Torso (rear)		11
Right/Left Torso	18	28
Right/Left Torso (rear)		8
Right/Left Arm	14	18
Right/Left Leg	18	33

Weapons and Ammo	Loc.	CS	Mass
C3 Slave Computer	H	1	1.0
Guardian Suite	LT	2	1.5
ER Large Laser	RT	2	5.0
Large Laser	RT	2	5.0
Medium Laser	RT (R)	1	1.0
ER Large Laser	LT	2	5.0
Large Laser	LT	2	5.0
Medium Laser	LT (R)	1	1.0
Small Laser	Head (R)	1	0.5
Jump Jets	RL	2	2.0
Jump Jets	LL	2	2.0

Tons RA LA D R MP Special
85 11 22 13 4 45 ECM

Type: KGR-000 Joey

Tonnage: 55.0

Equipment Mass

Internal Structure: 5.5

Engine: 275 XL 8.0

Walking MP: 5

Running MP: 8

Jumping MP: 5

Heat Sinks: 12 (24) 2.0

Gyro: 3.0

Cockpit: 3.0

Armor Factor: 176 11.0

	<i>Internal Structure</i>	<i>Armor Value</i>
Head	3	9
Center Torso	18	26
Center Torso (rear)		9
Right/Left Torso	13	20
Right/Left Torso (rear)		6
Right/Left Arm	9	16
Right/Left Leg	13	24

Weapons and Ammo	Loc.	CS	Mass
Large Laser	RA	2	5.0
C3 Master Computer	RA	5	5.0
Guardian Suite	LT	2	1.5
Beagle Probe	LT	1.5	1.5
Medium Laser	RT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	RT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	RT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	LT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	LT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	LT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	LT (R)	1	1.0
Jump Jets (2)	LL	2	1.0
Jump Jets (2)	RL	2	1.0
Jump Jet	CT	1	0.5

Tons RA LA D R MP Special
55 13 20 10 2 55 ECM AEP

Type: KGR-BCT **Bandicoot**
Tonnage: 55.0

Equipment **Mass**
Internal Structure: 5.5
Engine: 275 XL 8.0
 Walking MP: 5
 Running MP: 8
 Jumping MP: 5
Heat Sinks: 15 (30) 5.0
Gyro: 3.0
Cockpit: 3.0
Armor Factor: 176 11.0

	<i>Internal Structure</i>	<i>Armor Value</i>
Head	3	9
Center Torso	18	26
Center Torso (rear)		9
Right/Left Torso	13	20
Right/Left Torso (rear)		6
Right/Left Arm	9	16
Right/Left Leg	13	24

Weapons and Ammo	Loc.	CS	Mass
ER Large Laser	RA	2	5.0
C3 Slave Computer	H	1	1.0
Guardian Suite	LT	2	1.5
Beagle Probe	RT	1.5	1.5
Medium Laser	RT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	RT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	RT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	LT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	LT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	LT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	CT (R)	1	1.0
Medium Laser	RT (R)	1	1.0
Jump Jets (2)	LL	2	1.0
Jump Jets (2)	RL	2	1.0
Jump Jet	CT	1	0.5

Tons	RA	LA	D	R	MP	Special
55	13	20	10	2	55	ECM AEP

Type: KGY-BCS **Striped Bandicoot**
Tonnage: 55.0

Equipment **Mass**
Internal Structure: 5.5
Engine: 275 XL 8.0
 Walking MP: 5
 Running MP: 8
 Jumping MP: 5
Heat Sinks: 10 (20) 0.0
Gyro: 3.0
Cockpit: 3.0
Armor Factor: 176 11.0

	<i>Internal Structure</i>	<i>Armor Value</i>
Head	3	9
Center Torso	18	26
Center Torso (rear)		9
Right/Left Torso	13	20
Right/Left Torso (rear)		6
Right/Left Arm	9	16
Right/Left Leg	13	24

Weapons and Ammo	Loc.	CS	Mass
Gauss Rifle	RA	7	15.0
Ammo (Gauss Rifle) (24)	RT	4	3.5
C3 Slave Computer	H	1	1.0
Medium Laser	LT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	LT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	LT	1	1.0
Jump Jets (2)	LL	2	1.0
Jump Jets (2)	RL	2	1.0
Jump Jet	CT	1	0.5

Tons	RA	LA	D	R	MP	Special
55	11	18	10	4	55	-

Type: KBA-01 Kookaburra
Tonnage: 30.0

Equipment **Mass**
Internal Structure: 5.5
Engine: 240 XL 6.0
 Walking MP: 8
 Running MP: 12
 Jumping MP: 8
Heat Sinks: 10 (20) 0.0
Gyro: 3.0
Cockpit: 3.0
Armor Factor: 104 6.5

	<i>Internal Structure</i>	<i>Armor Value</i>
Head	3	9
Center Torso	10	14
Center Torso (rear)		5
Right/Left Torso	7	9
Right/Left Torso (rear)		5
Right/Left Arm	5	10
Right/Left Leg	7	14

Weapons and Ammo	Loc.	CS	Mass
C3 Slave Computer	H	1	1.0
Beagle Probe	LT	1.5	1.5
Medium Laser	RT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	LT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	CT	1	1.0
Small Laser	CT	1	0.5
Jump Jets (2)	LL	2	1.0
Jump Jets (2)	RL	2	1.0
Jump Jets (2)	CT	2	1.0

Tons	RA	LA	D	R	MP	Special
30	7	11	7	2	85	AEP

Type: KGY-WBT Dwarf Wombat
Tonnage: 55.0
Equipment **Mass**
Internal Structure: 5.5
Engine: 275 XL 8.0
 Walking MP: 5
 Running MP: 8
 Jumping MP: 5
Heat Sinks: 10 (20) 0.0
Gyro: 3.0
Cockpit: 3.0
Armor Factor: 176 11.0

	<i>Internal Structure</i>	<i>Armor Value</i>
Head	3	9
Center Torso	18	26
Center Torso (rear)		9
Right/Left Torso	13	20
Right/Left Torso (rear)		6
Right/Left Arm	9	16
Right/Left Leg	13	24

Weapons and Ammo	Loc.	CS	Mass
C3 Slave Computer	H	1	1.0
Medium Laser	RT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	LT	1	1.0
Medium Laser	CT	1	1.0
LRM-15	LT	3	7.0
Ammo (LRM) (16)	LT	2	2.0
LRM-15	RT	3	7.0
Ammo (LRM) (16)	RT	2	2.0
Jump Jets (2)	LL	2	1.0
Jump Jets (2)	RL	2	1.0
Jump Jet	CT	2	0.5

Tons	RA	LA	D	R	MP	Special
55	12 (1)	18	10	4	55	-

100 Ton Tracked Vehicles

The base construction of each vehicle is the same.

	Base	
Tonnage:	100	
Cruise: 3		
Flank: 5		
Engine: Fusion	300XL	14.25
Cockpit/Control:		5.0
Heat Sinks: 10	0.0	
Internal Structure:		10.0
Base Tonnage: 29.25		
Base Cost: 6,150,000 C-bills		

Turret:		0.5
Added Heat Sinks: 5		5.0
Armor:		15.0
F/S/R/T	48	
Package Tonnage: 70.5		
Cost:		14,825,000 C-bills

Cargo Carrier

Weapons:		
5 Medium Lasers	(T)	5.0
Turret:		0.5
Added Heat Sinks: 5		5.0
Armor:		14.0
F	48	
F/S/R/T	44	
Package Tonnage: 70.5		
Cost:		13,005,000 C-bills

Then add one of the following packages:

Sniper Mobile Artillery

Weapons:		
Sniper (F)	20.0	
Ammo	20.0	
4 Medium Lasers	(T)	4.0
Turret:	0.4	
Added Heat Sinks: 2		2.0
Cargo:	10.0	
Armor:	14.0	
F	48	
S/R/T	44	
Package Tonnage: 70.4		
Cost: 13,752,000 C-bills		

Anti-Air or Anti-Mech

Weapons:		
2 PPCs	(T)	14.0
6 Medium Lasers	(T)	6.0
LRM-5	(F)	2.0
Ammo (48)		2.0
TAG	(T)	1.0
Turret:		2.0
Added Heat Sinks: 28		28.0
Armor:		15.5
F	56	
S/R/T	48	
Package Tonnage: 70.5		
Cost:		14,302,000 C-bills

Long Tom Mobile Artillery

Weapons:		
Long Tom	(F)	30.0
Ammunition (100)		20.0
4 medium Lasers	(T)	4.0
Turret:	0.4	
Added Heat Sinks: 2		2.0
Armor:		14.0
F	48	
S/R/T	44	
Package Tonnage: 70.4		
Cost:		14,212,000 C-bills

Improved Anti-Air or Anti-Mech

Weapons:		
2 Gauss Rifles	(T)	30.0
Ammo (80)		10.0
5 Medium Lasers	(T)	5.0
TAG	(T)	1.0
Turret:		3.5
Added Heat Sinks: 5		5.0
Armor:		16.0
F	64	
S/R/T	48	
Package Tonnage: 70.5		
Cost:		14,775,000 C-bills

Arrow IV Mobile Artillery

Weapons:		
Arrow IV	(F)	15.0
Ammo (150)		30.0
5 Medium Lasers	(T)	5.0

- Lances and their composition
 4 Gryphon Scout Tank — Modified Pegasus
 4 Savannah Masters
 Requirements:
 3 Kookaburras
 3 Joey
 4 Bandicoot
 2 Striped Bandicoot
 2 Dwarf Wombat
 8 Kangaroo
 8 Wallaby
 10 Wombat
 4 Boomer
- 8 (4) Sniper (100 ton) @ 13,752,000 C-bills
 4 Long Tom (100 ton) @ 14,211,000 C-bills
 4 Arrow IV (100 ton) @ 14,825,000 C-bills
 3 Cargo (100 ton) @ 13,005,000 C-bills
 3 AA/M (or Imp AA/M) (100 ton) @ 14,302,000/
 14,755,000
- C-bs
 12 ENG (50 ton) @ 2,599,668 C-bills
 6 Field Tank (75 ton) @ 12,178,650 C-bills
 2 Support Tank (75 ton) @ 12,322,625 C-bills
 4 Assault Tank (75 ton) @ 12,055,750 C-bills
 9 AM Hover (50 ton) @ 2,050,668 C-bills
 8 AA Hover (50 ton) @ 2,174,688 C-bills
 9 M.A.S.H. Hover (50 ton) @ 6,529,668 C-bills
 21 Cargo Hover (50 ton) @ 1,829,668 C-bills
 4 Scout Tank (75 ton) @ 5,000,000 C-bills
 4 Scout Tank (35 ton) @ 1,428,334 C-bills
 4 Scout Craft (5 ton)
 6 Inf Carrier (50 ton) @ 1,918,668 C-bills
 8 Pursuit (30 ton)
 18 Fighter Bomber (65 ton)
 18 Fighter Heavy (85 ton)
 6 Fighter Assault (85 ton)
 2 Transport (Mk VII Landing Craft, 100 ton, Steiner
 Conversion, speed 5/8, Cargo: 55 ton)
 1 ST-46
 1 S-7A

75 Ton Tracked Assault, Field, and Support Tanks

The base construction of each vehicle is the same.

	Base	
Tonnage:	75	
Cruise:	4	
Flank:	6	
Engine:	Fusion	300XL 14.25
Cockpit/Control:	4.0	
Heat Sinks:	17	7.0
Internal Structure:	7.5	
Armor:	15.0	
	F	48
	S/R/T	48
Base Tonnage:	47.75	
Base Cost:	6,279,000 C-bills	

Then add one of the following packages:

	Assault	
Weapons:		
Gauss Rifle	(T)	15.0
Ammo (40)		7.0
5 Medium Lasers	(T)	5.0
Turret:	2.0	
Cargo:	10.0	
Package Tonnage:	27.0	
Cost:	12,055,750 C-bills	

	Field	
Weapons:		
PPC	(T)	7.0
LRM-15	(T)	7.0
Ammo (LRM) (46)		6.0
Medium Laser	(T)	1.0
Small Laser	(RS)	0.5
Small Laser	(LS)	0.5
Small Laser	R	0.5
Turret:	1.5	
Added Heat Sinks:	2	2.0
Package Tonnage:	27.0	
Cost:	12,322,625 C-bills	

	Support	
Weapons:		
2 LRM-15	(F)	14.0
Ammo (56)		7.0
5 Medium Lasers	(T)	5.0
Turret:	0.5	
Package Tonnage:	26.5	

50 Ton Hover Vehicles

The base construction of each vehicle is the same.

	Base	
Tonnage:	50	
Cruise: 8		
Flank: 12		
Engine: Fusion	175	10.5
Cockpit/Control:		2.5
Heat Sinks: 10	0.0	
Internal Structure:		5.0
BaseTonnage:	23.00	

Then add one of the following packages:

Infantry Carrier

Weapons:		
4 Medium Lasers	(T)	4.0
Turret:	0.4	
Added Heat Sinks:	2	2.0
Cargo: 4 Platoons Infantry		12.0
Armor:	14.0	
F	32	
S/R	24	
T	32	
Package Tonnage:	26.9	
Cost:	1,918,668 C-bills	

Cargo Carrier

Weapons:		
3 medium Lasers	(T)	3.0
Turret:		0.3
Cargo:		15.0
Armor:	14.0	
F	32	
S/R	24	
T	32	
Package Tonnage:	26.8	
Cost:	1,829,668 C-bills	

M.A.S.H.

Weapons:		
3 medium Lasers	(T)	3.0
Turret:		0.3
Hospital Equipment:		18.0
Armor:	14.0	
F	24	
S/R	16	
Package Tonnage:	27.0	
Cost:	6,529,668 C-bills (5,000,000 is medical equipment)	

Arrow IV Artillery

Weapons:		
Arrow IV	(F)	15.0
Ammo (25)		5.0
Armor:	14.0	
F	40	
S/R	24	
Package Tonnage:	27.0	
Cost:	2,606,668 C-bills	

Anti-Air

Weapons:		
6 Medium Lasers	(T)	6.0
LRM-5	(F)	2.0
Ammo (48)		2.0
TAG	(T)	1.0
Turret:		0.6
Added Heat Sinks:	8	8.0
Armor:	10.0	
F	56	
S/R/T	48	
Package Tonnage:	26.6	
Cost:	2,174,668 C-bills	

Anti-'Mech

Weapons:		
2 Large Lasers	(T)	10.0
Turret:		1.0
Added Heat Sinks:	6	6.0
Armor:	10.0	
F	44	
S/R	24	
T	44	
Package Tonnage:	27.0	
Cost:	2,050,668 C-bills	

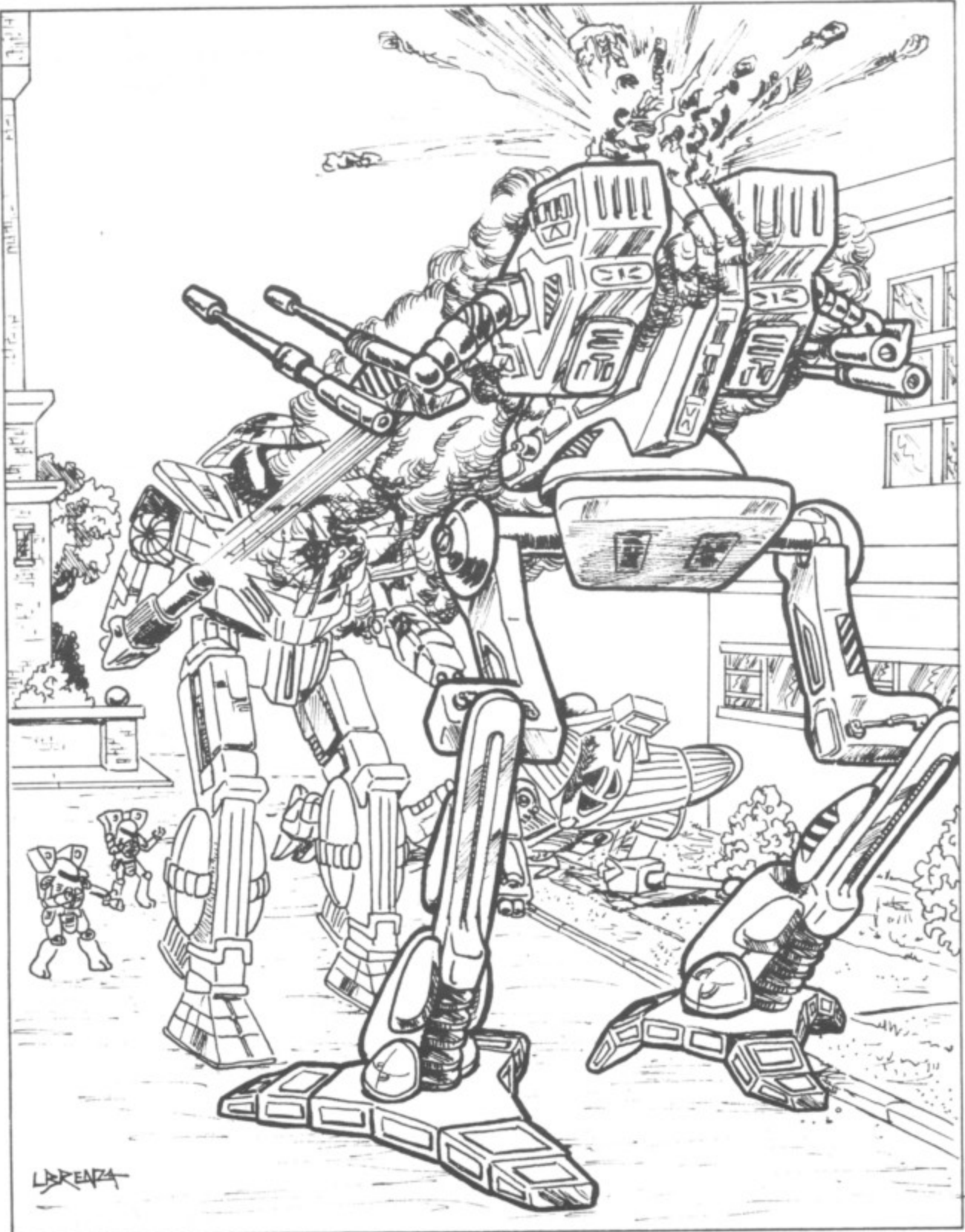
(Ed Note: We suggest that replacement of the Omni175 engine with a VOX165 would be a viable and legal construction, and would reduce the total engine tonnage by 1.5 tons, while maintaining the desired maneuverability of the design. No matter how good a deal you're getting from Omni, this is a serious consideration).

Sky Ranger High Scout Drone Carrier (Tracked Vehicle)

Type: Sky Ranger		Mass
Tonnage:		75 Tons
Cruise:	4	
Flank:	6	
Engine: Fusion	300	28.5
Control:		4.0
Heat Sinks:	10	10.0
Internal Structure:		7.5
 Armor:		 11.0
<i>Location</i>		<i>Armor Value</i>
Front		48
Side		32
Rear		24
Turret		40
Turret:		0.3
3 Medium Lasers:		3.0
Small Laser:		0.5
Sensor/Comm Gear:		5.0
Drone Carrying Bay:		15.0
	3 Tracked Drones, 3 Hover Drones (Drones As per Technical Readout)	
	Final Cost including drones: 5,000,000 C-bills	

Gryphon Scout Hover Tank

Type: GRY-01 Gryphon		Mass
Tonnage:		35.0
Internal Structure:		3.5
Engine:	140	7.5
Cruise:	9	
Flank:	14	
Heat Sinks:	15	5.0
Lift:		3.5
Cockpit/Control:		2.0
Armor:		8.0
<i>Location</i>		<i>Armor Value</i>
Front		32
Side		24
Rear		24
Turret		24
Weapons and Ammo	Loc.	Mass
Sensors	(F)	1.0
2 Medium Lasers	(T)	2.0
1 Small Laser	(T)	0.5
Turret		0.5
Cargo*		1.5
* In Future, addition of Beagle Active Probe or TAG		



LAENZA

The Run of the Redcoat Renegades

This story was received at the ComStar Alpha Station of Dieron, by way of Luthien, in the Draconis Combine on June 28th 3050. The anonymously handwritten diary was accompanied by a generous tithe in the name of Our Blessed Order with the following request: that it be published in the ComStar Monthly Reader, and made generally available to the citizens of the Inner Sphere. While ComStar is not in the practice of granting every petitioner's request, the information presented in the diary was of a suitable vital nature that it was decided by certain members of the First Circuit that it merited publication. What follows is the complete, unedited transcript as received by ComStar on the date mentioned.

*From the Offices of Precentor Dieron
New Denver City, Dieron, DC July 25, 3052*

Those who've seen the Clans fight up close will bear this record out, and those who haven't will fear to believe it. As God is my witness, every word is the truth.

I'm a mercenary who has fought for a dozen different flags since I came of fighting age, so what I don't know about 'Mechs and mercs isn't worth knowing. Most mercs hate the Draconis Combine, especially those who sympathize with Wolf's Dragoons and the treatment they received at the hands of the Coordinator a few years back. My policy has always been that holding a grudge is just bad business, and the *Kanrei* pays well for reliable *bushi*. The band I was with had done well enough so we could fight where we pleased (rumor had it that Captain Rhodes was independently wealthy), and the fighting was good in the Combine after the War of 3039. We called ourselves the Redcoat Renegades, but you probably never heard of us. We never carried more than a company of 'Mechs on our roster at any one time.

Our captain was Ricky Rhodes. Captain Rhodes would have been older than God if God were a MechWarrior. You've never seen a more ancient character climb into the cockpit of a 'Mech. The first time I met him, I kept expecting him to have a cardiac arrest. He and I jawed for two hours over serious drinks while he thought over signing me up for the Renegades. Rhodes used to tell me how he used to wear a blade which he said had been presented to him by Coordinator Hohiro Kurita back in 3001, but the weight got to be too much on his old bones. He still handled a laser pistol like a twenty-year old gunslinger. Rhodes had moments of humor, but he was generally mean-spirited,

stubborn, and very professional. As long as I knew him, he'd never been beaten in a fair fight. That's all that a mercenary who enjoys waking up in the morning really wants from a leader.

Captain Rhodes hired only the best, since he could afford the most elite MechWarriors of the Inner Sphere. That kind of warrior doesn't come around looking for work every day, but Rhodes had connections to most of the best merc units, connections on Outreach and Galatea, and he'd even talked a few House warriors into taking early retirement to join him. Lieutenant Savich, for example, was a LCAF officer from the Isle of Skye who had decided that he didn't like working for the Fox and his brood. He could have been a Colonel in any unit in the Inner Sphere, but he liked Ricky's style. Besides, the Renegades weren't likely to be working for the Federated Commonwealth any time soon.

I joined up with the Renegades in the summer of 3041, coming off of a five year tour with Hansen's Roughriders. I'd liked working for the 'Riders, but there had been a serious misunderstanding which made my departure the best plan for all concerned. Rhodes was auditioning recruits on the capital world of the Free Rasalhague Republic, Rasalhague itself. From what I heard later from other Redcoats, I beat out a captain from the Proserpina Hussars and a Twenty First Centauri Lancer major to get my spot. I didn't have a 'Mech, but Rhodes didn't seem even to consider that. In fact, the minute I signed the Standard Mercenary's Agreement, Captain Rhodes asked me, right out of the blue, what kind of 'Mech I had always wanted to pilot. Incidentally, the SMA states that the mercenary agrees to fight, even to die, for the unit as long as he draws a steady paycheck.

Well, the thought of choosing from any 'Mech design in the Inner Sphere was totally alien to me. I had been Dispossessed twice, through no proven fault of my own, mind you, or Rhodes and I wouldn't have been having such a pilot conversation. I'd have been glad to find myself in any cockpit. Naturally, I thought I had misunderstood him, so I asked what kind of work the unit usually did.

"Reconnaissance in force," said Captain Rhodes.

"Oh," I said, thinking that I understood him now, "The best recon 'Mech I ever piloted was a Locust with the machine guns taken out to make room for an SRM short rack. But I'd settle for a Locust in the standard configuration if you've got one lying around."

"Boy," Captain Rhodes said, looking me square in the

eye, "I ain't talking about juked-up toy 'Mechs and joy rides through unfriendly neighborhoods. Where you're going, a Locust wouldn't last you three seconds. I'm talking firepower and mobility. Old tech or new tech. If it can be got on the open market, that's great. If it can be got with special permission from a House arsenal, then I've got a few favors I can swap. If it can't be gotten from anywhere but the other side of the Sphere, that'll take a little longer, but I'll find you one. Now, what's your pleasure?"

"You must be kidding, sir!"

"Don't waste my time, boy. At my age, time's the one thing I can't afford. Pick something over sixty tons and let's go find a dealer."

I was starting to feel cocky, or maybe it was the ninth 'Hague-style PPC he'd treated me to. So I got up my nerve, took a deep breath, and gushed out:

"I'll take a Guillotine. Seventy tons, jump jets with 120-meter range, five lasers, an ER large and four mediums! SRM six-pack, and CASE with twelve tons of ammo over an Endo-Steel skeleton. It's produced exclusively by Irian BattleMechs Unlimited for the Free Worlds League."

When he hesitated, I dug out the wrinkled promotional photo I'd been keeping in my wallet and handed it to him. I held my breath, waiting for the refusal which was sure to follow.

"Oh, yeah," he said, holding it in his yellowish fingers and nodding his bald head, "...one of those. Good choice, actually. You might have saved yourself some trouble and picked a 'Mech that's seen service since Kerensky knocked heads with The Usurper. But I've always let my people have all the rope they need to hang themselves, which hasn't happened yet. I know a guy who's got connections on Atrous. It'll take a couple of months, depending on the winds of trade between Irian and Rasalhague. In the meantime, I'll send for simulator data from a unit that's worked for the Marik recently and you can get to work."

I couldn't believe my ears. This guy could have been Saint Nicholas and the Easter Bunny rolled into one, if either of those bums could transport BattleMechs across borders like Ricky Rhodes. I was still a little skeptical, but that faded as soon as I strapped myself into a simulator loaded with the latest technical readouts on the GLT-5M Guillotine. It was then that I found out what I had gotten myself into.

The Guillotine was one of those rarest breeds of 'Mechs; a heavy with jump jets. Most pilots wouldn't even attempt to control such a monster, and everyone lived in terror of meeting things like this on the battlefield. But that was just what appealed to me about them. I'd met pilots of GrassHoppers, Quickdraws, and Catapults. I even once met the pilot of the Victor, once the king of the 'flying heavies' before Jaime Wolf started distributing Marauder II's to his buddies in Miller's Marauders. The Guillotine combined mobility and firepower in a way that made it the

ideal machine for its weight class.

All of this made it extremely difficult to get a handle on. I spent weeks learning to jump and fire six weapons simultaneously. By the time I could make it around the holographic obstacle course without somersaulting and crushing the cockpit, Rhodes was sneaking enemy 'Mechs into the training session. The first time I crossed the finish line inside of the time allowed, Rhodes had a company of Locusts standing there waiting for me. I guess it was his little joke, because they tore me to pieces while I was still trying to bring the ER large laser mounted in my left arm to bear. In time, I was able to evade the whole company as it pursued me from start to finish, sniping at me from behind hills and trees. Once I even managed to take out half of them without missing a step.

So Rhodes dumped a company of Wolverines into the picture, and I found that I couldn't stand and fight if I wanted to get away in one piece. Even though they were faster than me, I learned to split them up and tag them as they chased after me until I finally lost them. Once I'd mastered that, Rhodes sent in one more company, this time BattleMasters. I was lucky to survive five seconds with an assault battalion out hunting me. Once I got out of their sight, though, I learned to use natural cover to cloak my process. After three months, I was able to cross the finish line without firing a shot in return. Rhodes handed me my unit insignia and walked me out to the 'Mech bay he'd been renting. That was the first time I actually saw the BattleMech that I'd been piloting in my dreams.

After my inaugural test run, I asked Rhodes why he'd made the tests so nearly impossible. I had never experienced that level of training in any of the merc units I'd worked with before. I wondered what he was trying to train me to do.

"Reconnaissance in force, boy. Reconnaissance in force," said Captain Rhodes.

Over the next nine years, I learned exactly what "Reconnaissance in force" meant. Ricky Rhodes and his Redcoat Renegades were an elite BattleMech commando outfit, and that made us the most specialized until in the Inner Sphere, next to larger units like Wolf's Dragoons Seventh Kommando and the now defunct Capellan Death Commandos. We charged a high fee, but there were plenty of politicians ready to pay our price when important lives or state security were on the line. Our unit had the virtue of being a total unknown outside of the highest echelons of government. One notable job we pulled involved a raid on the Capellan world Grand Base to interrupt Chancellor Romano Liao's plans to sack and burn a certain world in the St Ives Compact. Our appearance unnerved her elite House Units so much that the deaths of culpable subordi-

nates were still being reported two years after the raid.

Our tactics so impressed *Kanrei* Theodore Kurita that he hired us to raid Santander's World to teach the pirate king a lesson. Before we could carry out that mission, worlds began falling silent on the Periphery; heads of government got very worried, and wanted any intelligence available. The problem was that no useful intelligence was coming from the units who had been forced to beat a hasty retreat in the Rasalhague Republic, Federated Commonwealth, and Draconis Combine. Almost simultaneously, Captain Rhodes received requests from three different top officials to attend them on their home worlds. Rhodes decided to make the short hop to Luthien to talk shop with the *Kanrei* first.

May of 3050 found the borders of the Combine closer to Luthien than anyone had expected. The capital of the Draconis Combine was in an uproar over the heir to the Dragon's capture on Turtle Bay, but Rhodes seemed confident that Theodore would deliver his son in short order. Captain Rhodes held private conference with both the *Kanrei* and the Coordinator, the latter out of respect for their past relationship. In the end, it was decided that the Renegades would visit the world of Bjarred in the Pesht District, presently under the thumb of the Smoke Jaguars. Bjarred is approximately six jumps from Luthien, meaning that our unit's JumpShip couldn't arrive in-system until August, by which time the Clans could have reached Albiero at their current rate of progress. So the *Kanrei* arranged a command circuit which ideally would have us back on Luthien by the end of June.

As always, the mission was "Reconnaissance in Force". To facilitate our arrival on a Clan-occupied world, the *Kanrei* signed a mercenary AeroSpace company, with whom the Renegades had worked successfully before, and a Leopard-CV class DropShip. In addition, we picked up a Leopard class DropShip two jumps out from Bjarred, which was intended to transport any Clan 'Mechs we happened to find lying around on Bjarred. Included in the crew of this ship were four gentlemen with interesting tattoos and similar accents who assured us that there wasn't a 'Mech security system in existence that they couldn't penetrate.

Making the run to the planet was a snap. I've got only one word for the Clan second line fighter jocks: ineffectual. They sent an air battalion out to deal with our arriving AeroSpace contingent, which included a lance each of Stukas, Reivers, Slayers, Chippewas, and Shilones, plus the Union, Leopard, and Leopard-CV class DropShips. Since we never saw anything but those weird designs which first appeared, I figure we wiped out their whole air contingent on arrival. Bjarred was already a subdued world, so

the Smoke Jaguars' interstellar battlewagon, the one that roasted Edo on Turtle Bay, was off creating mayhem somewhere else, just like we'd hoped.

We lost three fighters and a few weapons systems on our DropShips in achieving air superiority, but we were then able to scout and drop bomb loads with impunity. The bombers dusted the airfield outside of Kango, the capital city, just to keep the ground forces busy. We don't now whose property it was, but we figured that the Clans would foot the bill for the dozen or so DropShips that we plastered. In the meantime, the Renegades made an orbital insertion into the low hills to the north of Kango and proceeded to enter the city.

Captain Rhodes was riding his BNC-Banshee at the head of the company, a top-of-the-line 'Mech purchased recently from the Federated Commonwealth. Unlike just about every MechWarrior in the Sphere, Rhodes changed his 'Mech as often as he changed jobs. He favored factory-condition 'Mechs to blooded ones, and the ones he returned from battle with usually received a higher resale price. In the case of the Banshee, the FedCom designers were hoping that with Ricky's stamp of approval on it, the previously unpopular design would have an easier time making sales.

Lieutenant Juan Jaco, his second-in-command, drove a CP 11-A Cyclops which carried the DCMS's latest innovation, a C3 computer. To make room for it in the Cyclops, Jaco had downgraded his LRM 10-rack to a 5-rack and dropped a ton of ammo. This gave the Redcoats' command lance the fire coordination which would give us an advantage in spread-out fighting. The equipment links required that the Banshee drop the small lasers in chest and forehead, Havermack's BLR-3M BattleMaster dropped a medium laser from its right side, and Butcher's CGR-3K Charger downgraded a pulse laser to a standard laser.

The fire lance was led by a CRD-5M Crusader. Filling out the lance was an RFL-5M Rifleman, and ARC-4M Archer, and an ON-1M Orion. I was Lieutenant Savich's wingman, which placed me in the rearguard of the Rapid Advance Team (RAT). At the head of the RAT was a GHR-5J Grasshopper and a MAD-5D Marauder. Then came Savich's VTR-9K Victor and my Guillotine. Our heavy lance was fully jump-capable, and that had surprised more than one enemy lance over the years.

The plan was for the RAT to advance by twos, one 'Mech protecting the advance of his wingman, while command and fire lance held open an escape route through the hills. We entered the city's outskirts without challenge, just sending a few civilians scurrying indoors. I was grateful to see no evidence of a massacre like that which occurred on Turtle Bay, for which the *Kanrei* promised to make the Smoke Jaguars pay dearly. Civilians rarely knew what to make of our 'Mechs when they appear suddenly and in unexpected places. We weren't exactly waving the red and



black banner of the Dragon. The red and blue crest our 'Mechs bear is virtually unknown, so they may have thought we were a new Clan.

MAG scan is useless in a modern city, and Infra-red can be thrown off by industrial facilities. We relied on satellite imaging, tight-beamed to us from the Cyclops, but that soon was blocked by the outlying buildings. So we navigated by the roadmaps programmed into our 'Mechs by Combine techs, looking for the city's armory. The immediate plan was to sneak in and steal some Clan 'Mechs, then liberate a few upstanding citizens and take them back to report to their master on Luthien.

The shifty types we had brought along to pull the job were riding in the jump-seats behind the RAT pilots. They wore unconnected cooling vests and neurohelmets in anticipation of the theft. We turned the last corner and came in sight of the armory. Before us was the 'Mech yard, where

four machines stood idle. Two were Clan designs common to the Smoke Jaguars, known as Koshi and Daishi to the Combine High Command, but the other two were well known in the Inner Sphere, a Phoenix Hawk and an Ostscout. I will explain later how we acquired the nomenclature and technical data on Clans that I will use hereafter. The unit appeared to be a command lance, since the one hundred ton Daishi was probably a battalion commander's 'Mech, and the light 'Mechs were his scouts. I didn't know it at the time, but Clan lances are called Stars and consist of five 'Mechs, or points, instead of the usual four. One of the 'Mechs in this Star was missing, but I had other things to worry about just then.

Walking patrol in the yard were about ten of the powered suits, called Elementals, which already had a bad reputation for tenacity in battle. Seeing the Grasshopper and Victor appear, they sounded an alarm and began to

swarm towards us.

The lead 'Mechs flinched at seeing the insect-like attackers and leaped away from the flying infantry. When I turned the corner, I saw the Lieutenant tag a suit with a pulse laser, but the thing just shook it off. The Grasshopper lived up to its name, never stopping long enough for the tiny metallic claws of the defenders to catch on. I triggered a full salvo of lasers and SRMs, and was astonished to see only a pair of SRMs find targets. Soon I was hopping around like the others, trying to get out of the range of their small lasers and the SRM rounds which erupted on every side. The closeness of the buildings made it impossible to avoid their weapons and still provide fire support for my lancemates.

I had leapt the standing Clan 'Mechs and was trying to split the two points of infantry when I spotted a fifth Clan 'mech moving fast down a side street toward the fight. I had broad shoulders, backward-canted legs, and a protruding torso assembly. It was what we now call a Vulture. I radioed a warning to the Victor, but then two more points of infantry appeared to either side of me so that I was surrounded on three sides. The Marauder leapt expertly through the air to take the pressure off my front quarter. A well-timed kick by one of its claw-like feet sent one of the little buggers arrowing through a Savings and Loan.

I tried a kick myself when a suit got too close but I slipped and sent my 'Mech crashing to the street. I had plugged one of their men or they would have been quicker to swarm. In the meantime, the Victor had leapt a building to bring it face to face with the astonished Vulture. I say astonished because the Vulture pilot, who must have been a little inexperienced with non-simulated combat, triggered all his weapons simultaneously. Large and medium pulse lasers melted armor from the Victor's chest and left arm. Only half of a rack of the Vulture's two LRM 20s impacted the assault 'Mech, even though the Clans don't seem to have any problem targeting LRMs at close range. The Victor returned fire with its Gauss Rifle, medium pulsers, and SRM quad rack, exposing the Vulture's left torso to internal damage.

The Lieutenant was surprised then, to see the Vulture freeze as its computer automatically shut down the fusion reactor to deal with the incredible heat buildup. Every MechWarrior knows that when an enemy 'Mech freezes, you stop, take aim at its head, and make a quick end to it. Lieutenant Savich had a number of kills to his name, so he did just that. The Gauss Rifle took the head off cleanly, and then the lasers just made a mess of the torso. But two previously undetected points of Elementals had seen the Victor about to finish off one of their own and popped up behind the preoccupied machine, appearing in its blind spot.

At close range, the suits' small lasers shredded the armor on the Victor's back and arms, opening holes which

soon were followed by a score of SRMs. The Lieutenant dived to the street after taking the full laser barrage and managed to avoid most of the deadly fire blossoms, which detonated instead on the headless Vulture and caused it to topple. The Victor then made a hasty exit through an adjacent building in the attempt to reach its command.

By now, the Marauder and Grasshopper were teaming up to swat down swarming Elementals point by point. I extricated myself from a nasty position by leaning on the jump jet pedals, then my Guillotine joined them in a trio. We would surround a group of five suits and pick them apart with laser and PPC fire, then step on any survivors. One managed to avoid the feet of the Marauder and Grasshopper only to make a pleasant squish under my 'Mech's toes. We polished off the remaining suits this way, but not before taking hits on every surface.

When the Victor appeared from the building standing across from the armory, it was covered in Elementals trying to claw their way into every surface. The assault 'Mech had lost a jump jet from missile damage to its back, but otherwise it was intact. The Lieutenant had to be careful not to scorch his own armor as he turned his arm lasers to burn off the parasites. We leapt, literally, to his aid and began pulling the suits off him. The Grasshopper took one and threw it a hundred meters distant before it righted itself on jets and returned to attach itself to the Victor's face plate. With a measure of frustrated deliberation, the Hopper recaptured the Elemental and kneeled, holding the struggling form between its fingers while the Marauder stepped on it.

Having finally seen the last of the defenders, we walked our savaged 'Mechs over to stand next to the waiting Clan 'Mechs. In a flash, the *yakuza* were out of the hatches and leaping the gap to land atop an enemy 'Mech's head. We waited nervously, with the siren still sounding, while the gangsters trained in high-tech street crime broke the codes which protected the Clan 'Mechs and powered up their fusion engines. I was told to watch the armory, and I almost missed a soldier climbing out of a sewer grate. With incredible agility, he scrambled to the top of the Daishi; I barely had time to give the *yakuza* warning. We waited even more tensely then, prepared to blow the assault 'Mechs head off should our men be incapacitated and the Daishi be used against us. Then the *yakuza* radioed, with a great deal of hostility toward me personally, that the soldier, who was actually an officer, had been subdued and was now providing information on operation of the 'Mech. As I listened to the muffled screams in the background, I did not doubt that the enemy officer had discovered how persuasive a modern DCMS warrior could be.

Once the machines were powered-up, we began making our way back through the city to the waiting Renegades. Almost as an afterthought, the Grasshopper picked up an Elemental whose suit had merely been melted

and encased around him. We couldn't afford to involve our new 'Mech acquisitions in combat, for knowledge of Clan technology had top priority for the *Kanrei*. Even the Ostscout contained enough valuable information on Clan electronic warfare that it had to be preserved at all costs. Secretly I hoped that the *yakuza* were as competent in 'Mech fighting as armed robbery, because I feared that the need for these unscathed 'Mechs would arise shortly. The Daishi slowed our unit down dangerously, but of all the 'Mechs it was the greatest prize, and the one which would instill the greatest fear in our enemy if it departed with us.

We started receiving the Cyclops's satellite reconnaissance, and knew that we had passed the first test. But an enlargement of the telemetry showed that at least a company of 'Mechs had picked up our trail, and were organizing the hunt back at the armory. Among them was

fitted with Target Acquisition Gear by the Clans, but it was faster than any 'Mech in the Inner Sphere and capable of relaying data on enemy positions through the satellite link. So Rhodes sent it ahead to ensure that the drop zone was unoccupied and sent the Phoenix Hawk and the Koshi to follow it as quickly as possible. With our forces thus spread out more effectively, the Charger took point, and the company raced on.

Bjarred is a barren world with a scorching sun that permits no standing water on the surface. Instead, the planet is crisscrossed by vast underground waterways over which the world's inhabitants have built their cities. Growing above these subterranean rivers are forests of greenery which contrast sharply with the mountainous terrain. The forests crowd these narrow strips of moist soil in such a dense fashion that 'Mechs could cross them but slowly.

The road we were following to the mines was actually an extinct river that had been dry for thousands of years, causing all its vegetation to wither and leave a wide, barren scar. At one point the road intersected and crossed a healthier forest where man had made and maintained his own road at great expense.

Five minutes into the run, the Ostscout radioed its first contact, the five-'Mech lances of Pumas and Black Hawks, each lead by a Koshi, ap-

proaching from the east. This was confirmed by our own Koshi operating its Clan-made Active Probe, which meant that our Koshi had in turn been spotted. The scout lance easily evaded the pursuit, which was slowed by the Black Hawks. Instead, the Jaguars turned to intercept our company. They reached the road we were on and raced headlong toward us. The danger now was that they would either force some of us to stop and engage or they would pursue us closely and pick us apart from behind. We closed ranks around the Daishi and prepared to receive them.

At the speed we were closing the distance between us, the change from extreme to close range would be a matter of seconds. The Clan Pumas opened up with paired PPCs on our point 'Mech, who responded with a flight of LRMs. The Koshi pilots weren't as adept as their lance mates and their own LRMs went far too wide. But the Charger was savaged, first by the coruscating lightning bolts and then by the incredible arrays of medium lasers on the Black Hawks. The Charger was stripped from head to toe and only managed a laser strike in return.

By this point, the company had achieved firing range and our skill was quite a shock to the Jaguars. The Charger, as I mentioned before, was tied in to a Command/Control/Communications computer mounted in the Cyclops which

Almost as an afterthought, the Grasshopper picked up an Elemental...

what appeared to be another Daishi and some Masakari. The Rapid Advance Team and the unit designated Team Delta broke from the cover of the buildings and hit top running speed, heading for the hills. As we passed the first rise, Captain Rhodes' Banshee rose and began running along my right side, while the Cyclops flanked me on the left.

Ahead was the fire lance, running as quickly as the rest of us, and pounding an unmistakable trail into the rocky soil. We were all headed for a large mining operation ten kilometers to the north. Because of the Clan assault 'Mech, it was going to take us eleven minutes to reach the kilometer-wide, man-made valley where Rhodes had told the DropShips to pick us up. Eleven minutes gave any faster 'Mechs that the Clans had nearby a chance to engage us, but we couldn't afford to slow down and fight them on even footing. If we did, the Smoke Jaguars could anticipate our destination and lay an ambush, but not before destroying our DropShips and stranding us on this backwater planet. If worse came to worse, I thought, Rhodes would order us to abandon the Daishi and leave the warrior to destroy the 'Mech and himself.

Observing the machines newly added to his company, Rhodes decided that it would be a waste not to take advantage of their capabilities. The Ostscout was unarmed,

enabled the command lance to target the lead Black Hawk as if at close range. Captain Rhodes struck with Gauss Rifle and PPC, the Cyclops with Gauss and LRMs, and the BattleMaster with its PPC. The Hawk's right arm disintegrated, along with most of its chest. The engine must have taken hits, because the machine turned white hot on infra-red and crashed to the ground.

The RAT Lance, which was following closely on the heels of the Charger, pumped Gauss slugs, lasers, PPCs and LRMs into the lead elements, shearing the arm off a Puma. I was bouncing all over the road, trying to target the Black Hawks which turned to attack the Daishi. One turned his back to me and I got a clear back shot, with little effect. The Orion and Rifleman halted before the charging Hawks to prevent their having a clear shot at our prize. The Hawks poured their full firepower into the weaker Rifleman, sending rivers of molten armor pouring into the rocky soil and causing engine damage. In response, the pair of heavies pumped the new LB 10-X shotgun shells and double-fire Ultra autocannon shells into the lead Hawk, piercing its armor in a dozen places. The command lance then teamed up through the C3 links to ravage the remaining Black Hawk, which sustained gyro hits and went sprawling. All the missile-equipped 'Mechs in the company joined in the secondary attack which sent hundreds of LRMs raining down on the first fallen Black Hawk, blasting bits of high-tech 'Mech junk all over the road.

A Koshi drifted too close to Lieutenant Savich on jump jets, trying to reach the Daishi. The Victor, rotating on crimson jets of super-heated mercury, speared the light Clan 'Mech mid-flight, dead center, with its Gauss Rifle. I won't even mention what the Marauder, Grasshopper, and Charger were doing to the more lightly armored Pumas, who seemed to drop like flies.

Through all this, the Daishi never missed a stride and remained nearly undamaged. The *yakuza* was having trouble targeting the strange Clan weapons, but had managed to deal out some punishment to a desperate Puma which had disintegrated trying to impede its progress. The faster 'Mechs lagged behind to finish off the Jaguar scouts and then caught up to the company. Our Rifleman and Charger wouldn't survive any more head-on attacks, but we still had several 'Mechs in mint condition, including mine. The Archer took point because of its healthy armor. Things were looking up as the mine valley drew closer and closer with each passing second.

When the Ostscout radioed that an ambush had been detected ahead, my heart sank into the floor. I started getting that cold and clammy feeling which always precedes a hairy fight. I knew that if we could break through this last barrier, we were home free. That was the biggest 'if' I'd ever 'iffed'.

A Clan lance of heavy Smoke Jaguar 'Mechs had set up

a defensive position in the forest through which our road crossed before it rose into the mountains where the mine was located. A new danger chose this moment to occur to me. If the Clans had any artillery pieces in range of the mine, the lance ahead could spot the DropShips as they landed and call down fire, ending this mission in quick order. We couldn't just bypass; we had to rub that lance out. I told Captain Rhodes what was on my mind and, as usual, he was three steps ahead of me. Just for good measure, the Cyclops reported that the battalion which had been pursuing us since we left Kango was still three kilometers behind us. That meant a three-minute margin between reaching the DropShips and blasting off. Now we had two enemies, the Smoke Jaguars and time.

Rhodes committed our remaining AeroSpace fighters, which were operating out of the orbiting Leopard-CV, to slowing down our pursuit, giving us the time to deal with the blockade. The fighters harassed the Smoke Jaguar battalion, bombing and strafing. They took losses from the heavy return ground fire and were forced to withdraw. All in all, they bought us about two minutes, which was a blessing in itself.

We took up an arrowhead formation, with our Archer and Charger at the point, three 'Mechs fanned to either side, and four 'Mechs running close alongside the Daishi. The scouts had been allowed to bypass the ambush unmolested. Perhaps the Clan pilots didn't think we were aware of them and didn't feel like wasting ammo on small fry. We knew the 'Mechs were hidden in the forest ahead, but the data we had was a couple minutes old when the gigantic stands of ancient timber began to crowd us on both sides of the road.

I was on the left side of the arrowhead formation, running directly alongside the dense foliage. My first indication of the trap came when a Ryoken stepped out of the unexceptional patch of forest I had just passed and maneuvered behind the four guard 'Mechs. We were taken totally by surprise, but our formation still made it difficult for the Jaguars to get a clear shot. The BattleMaster and Banshee triggered their rear-firing lasers, but the response of the Ryoken and Masakari was more potent. A fire bloom erupted on the hunched back of the Daishi as it blundered madly forward trying to escape its tormentors. The thick armor protected it from the first salvo of PPCs and lasers, but its legs and back were bared in places. Two Vultures then appeared where the forest ended ahead and began lobbing LRMs over the head of the Archer in an attempt to reach our prize.

The Archer was well-equipped to fight a long-range duel and answered in kind, its Artemis IV Fire Control System causing better-than-average missile hits which the Vultures could not match. The left wing swept forward to deal with the road block, while the jump-capable right wing

leapt to place itself between the rear-guard Jaguars and the Clan assault 'Mech. Captain Rhodes and Havermack surprised the attackers by back-peddalling to place the Banshee and BattleMaster behind the two Ryoken and the Masakari. That maneuver put the Jaguars in a deadly crossfire. The less intimidating Crusader anchored the other end of the crossfire, so the Jaguars pounded it mercilessly. But the heavy 'Mech had been undamaged to begin with; it survived their assault without serious injury. The Rifleman, with its obvious battle scars, made another tempting target as it zigzagged across the road. But the ancient veteran of all great battles proved itself once again by suffering only some engine damage and a frozen right shoulder when the Masakari showed it some attention.

The Orion tagged a Ryoken with a NARC homing missile, another new invention which improved the performance of the Fire Lance's missiles. The Ryoken suffered under a hail of homing missiles but its partner dashed its way through our defenses to put a full brace of lasers in the side of the Daishi. The 100-ton 'Mech stumbled under the fire and gouged a deep crater in the road where it fell. Despite our best efforts, the battle was on the edge of being lost. The *yakuza* pilot struggled to get the machine upright while we made one last attempt to save it. The Vultures squatted and launched their missiles, feasting on the fallen prey.

Showers of missiles rained down on the Daishi, which had briefly regained its feet only to lose them altogether. The Ryoken, with its last dying breath, poured pulse laser fire into the burning carcass. The Masakari did not join in the harvest, for it had shut down after spitting one last lightning bolt curse at the BattleMaster, which subsequently claimed its head. The Daishi split in the middle as the unshielded fusion reactor melted its way through a thousand years of technological development and exploded. The *yakuza* and his prisoner were killed in an instant. The Vultures, having overloaded their heat sinks with the final assault, were savaged by the Archer and Charger. In the process, the Charger suffered; its leg was blown off by a lucky shot. The pilot of that triumphant, and extremely hot, Vulture then decided that the day had been won. He popped his canopy and sailed high over the trees on his escaping command chair.

We completed the run to the mine and boarded our DropShips in under five minutes, leaving only the one-legged Charger and a dozen 'mech kills behind to mark our passage. When the pursuing battalion of Smoke Jaguars finally arrived, it was just in time to see two crimson columns of fire rising into the sky, far beyond the reach of their vengeance. All our 'Mech pilots were safe, and we had managed to steal one Clan 'Mech and two Clan-modified 'Mech designs.

We had captured only one prisoner of war, the hapless

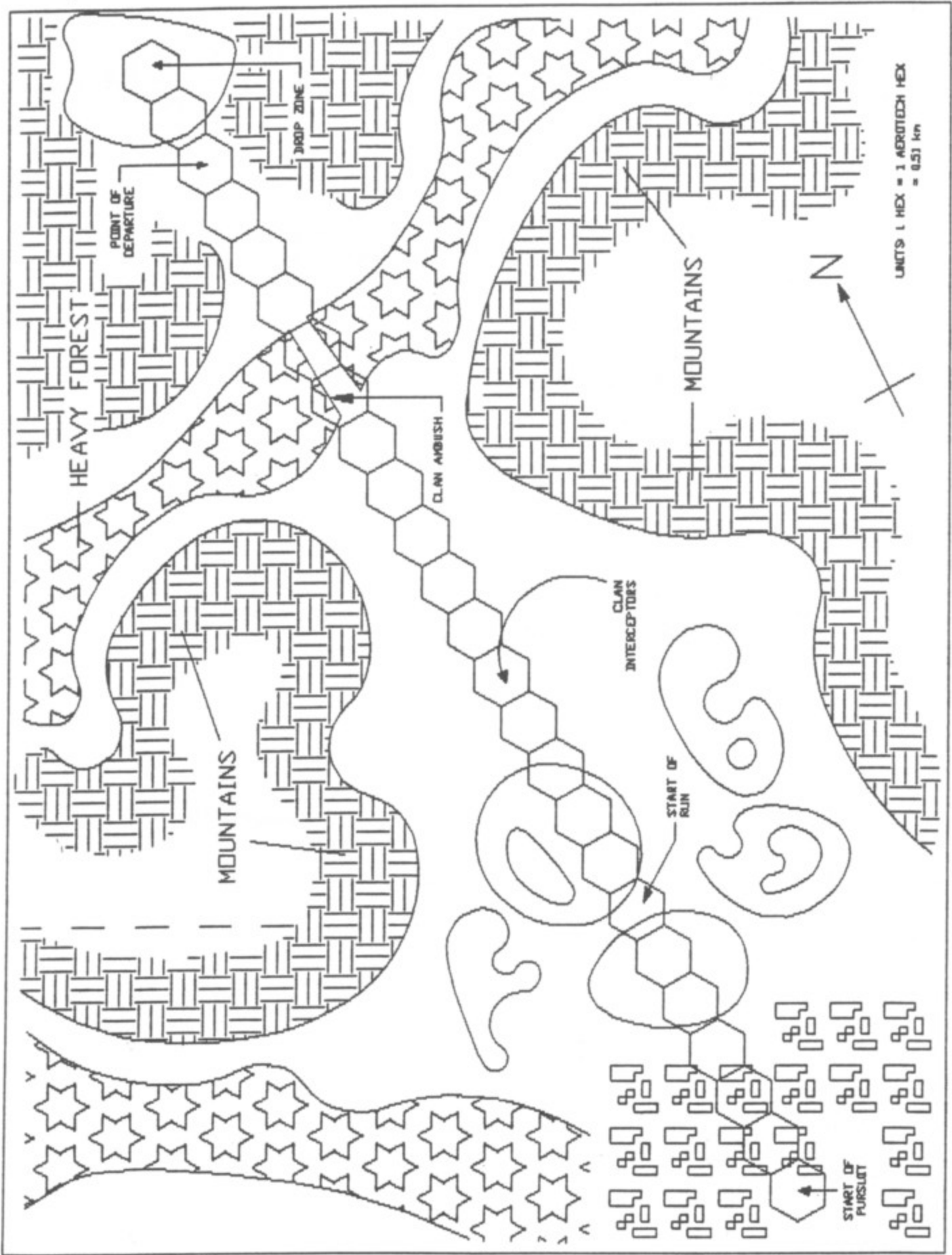
Elemental who had been picked up by the Grasshopper. I suppose that the ISF, the Combine security force, got some information out of him, despite being a pretty tough customer. I guess you'd have to be a real tough guy to attack BattleMechs with just a couple tons of titanium on your back. Anyway, he was impressed enough with the Renegades' performance that he told us the names of the 'Mechs we had beaten. He seemed to think that we owned him because we had beaten him in a fair fight. You can imagine his disappointment when the ISF agents showed up and carried him off without a word of protest from Captain Rhodes.

The *Kanrei* was not displeased with our results. He told Captain Rhodes that there would be other opportunities to capture the enemy's machines. I was afraid that would not happen before many more lives had been lost. Our superiors refused to consider the mission anything but a success, the first (unofficial) success against the Clans by any military organization in the Inner Sphere. I guess that's something.

Theodore Kurita has more plans for us, too. He wants to strike back at the Smoke Jaguars where it will hurt the most. He wants to set a trap for the battlegroup that massacred civilians on Turtle Bay. Catching it will require some more 'live' reconnaissance, if you take my meaning. That's where the Renegades come in. The *Kanrei* says, with only the smallest hint of humor, that Stefan Amaris whispered something to him in his dreams. Wouldn't it be funny if Kerensky's navy fell for the same trick twice? I shouldn't talk like that; grudges make for bad business.

I'd like to end this by saying that I am going to swear off of Guillotines. That 'Mech was nothing but bad luck from the word 'go'. I talked to the Captain about it, but he still says that I should make up my own mind. I think he knew it all along. For the future, I'm thinking along the lines of something sharp, something sweet, and something special. Anyone got an Axman for sale? Name your price.

Map on opposite page is a computer simulation from the tactical computer files of the Redcoat Renegades. BattleTechnology thanks the Redcoats and Captain Rhodes for permission to print.



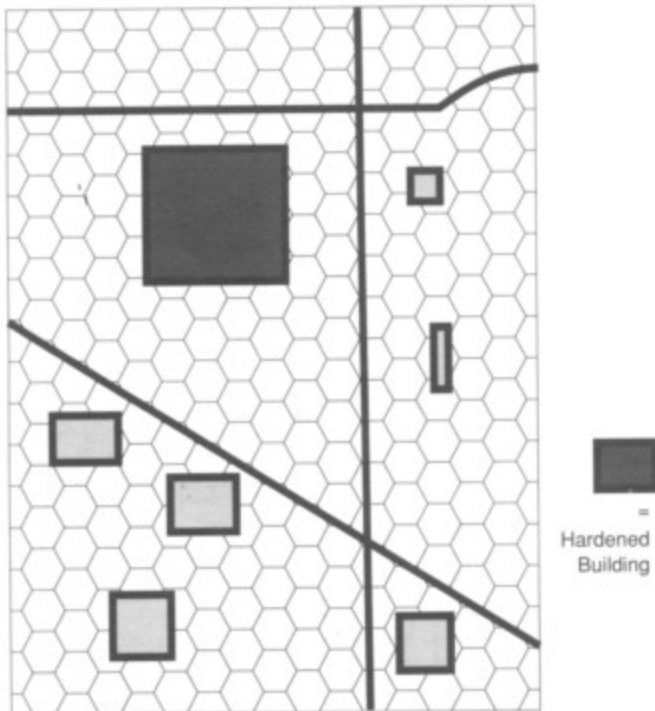
BattleTac Simulator

Renegades' Run

General Background: In May 3050, a mercenary unit in service to the Draconis Combine conducted a reconnaissance mission on the world of Bjarred. Formerly a member of the Pesht District of the Combine, Bjarred had been an early casualty of the Coordinator's war against the Smoke Jaguars, a Clan with a reputation for ruthlessness, as evidenced by the massacre on Turtle Bay. Far behind the invader's front lines, it was thought that Bjarred would prove an ideal world for the *Kanrei's* new stroke against the Clans. The mercenaries sent to pull the job were an elite company of commandos known to only a few as the Redcoat Renegades. The identity of the Smoke Jaguar cluster defending Bjarred is known only to the ISF, but it is certain that a front-line unit had been left behind to deal with unexpectedly fierce popular uprisings.

Game One

Game One Background: The Rapid Advance Team (RAT) of the Redcoat Renegades entered the city of Kango minutes after dropping into the low hills to the North. With most of the world's defenders occupied by the aerial bombardment taking place at Kango's spaceport, the RAT easily penetrated the city and reached the armory which served as the command base for the Smoke Jaguar cluster.



Four of the command star's five 'Mechs were inactive and easily stolen. The fifth 'Mech, which was walking sentry, put up a fight, along with the star of Elementals guarding the armory, but the RAT managed to escape with their prizes.

Game One Setup: Use the map from CityTech and place a hardened building at the center to represent the armory. Sprinkle buildings around in a general pattern but leave room for the four parked 'Mechs in front of the armory.

Defender: Security Star, and the sentry for the Command Star of the unknown cluster

Five points of Elementals armed with small lasers

Vulture (primary) Piloting: 4, Gunnery: 4

Defender Deployment: The defender must place the four 'Mechs he is guarding (*Daishi, Koshi, Phoenix Hawk, Ostscout*) on the North side of the armory in close formation.

Two points of Elementals must stand watch at the feet of the BattleMechs. The defender may arrange his remaining Elementals in any pattern. He may declare two of his Elemental points to be hidden infantry. The *Vulture* must begin the game on the South side of the city, at least six hexes from the armory toward the south edge of the map. The *Vulture* is the last unit to be positioned on the board.

Attacker: The RAT lance of the Redcoat Renegades Lieutenant Savich, Elite, *VTR-9K Victor* Piloting: 3, Gunnery: 1

RAT # 2, Elite, *GLT-5M Guillotine* Piloting: 4, Gunnery: 3

RAT # 3, Elite, *MAD-5D Marauder* Piloting: 3, Gunnery: 3

RAT # 4, Elite *GHR-5J Grasshopper* Piloting: 2, Gunnery: 3

Attacker Deployment: The attacker places his units after the Elementals have been positioned. The attacker may place his 'Mechs no closer than three hexes north of the armory.

Victory Conditions:

Defender: Prevent even one Clan 'Mech from being stolen.
Attacker: Capture all four Clan 'Mechs without taking losses. The Clan 'Mechs can only be captured after all enemies in the immediate area have been destroyed. This does not include hidden infantry who have not attacked by game's end. Each RAT 'Mech contains two pilots, the second being a *yakuza* who has skill in stealing 'Mechs by cracking their passcodes.

Game Two

Game Two Background: Having stolen four Clan BattleMechs, the Redcoat Company begins its run to a mine several kilometers north of Kango. Upon arrival, they will board their DropShips and escape with their prizes. Between the company and their DropShips are two Smoke Jaguar Stars who hope to slow the company, allowing the pursuing battalion to gain ground on them.

Game Two Setup: Place three BattleTech maps upside down and end to end. As the maps unfold, the middle crease divides each map into four sections. Looking at the maps from the side, designate the leftmost two sections to be south, and the rightmost sections to be north. There are no terrain features in this scenario.

Defender: Three lances of the Redcoat Renegades and Team Delta

Command Lance

- Capt Ricky Rhodes, Elite, *BNC -3E Banshee*
Piloting: 1, Gunnery: 1 Optional: Remove small lasers, place C3 link in head
- Lt Juan Rico, Elite, *CP 11-A Cyclops*
Piloting: 2, Gunnery: 3 Optional: Downgrade LRM 10 to LRM 5, Drop 1 ton of LRM ammo. Install C3 link
- Havermack, Elite *BLR-1G BattleMaster*
Piloting: 3, Gunnery: 3 Optional: Remove medium laser, place C3 link in head
- Butcher, Elite *CGR-3K Charger* Piloting: 2, Gunnery: 3
Optional: Downgrade pulse laser to standard place C3 link in head, install NARC homing missiles in LRM racks

Fire Lance

- Fire #1 Elite, *CRM-5M Crusader*
Piloting: 2, Gunnery: 3
Optional: Install NARC homing missiles in LRM racks
- Fire #2 Elite, *ON 1-M Orion*
Piloting: 1, Gunnery: 3
Optional: Install NARC homing missiles in LRM/SRM racks
- Fire #3 Elite, *RFL-5M Rifleman*
Piloting: 3, Gunnery: 2
- Fire #4 Elite *ARC-4M Archer*
Piloting: 4, Gunnery: 2

Rapid Advance Team

as described in Game One. If Game One was not played, then allocated 20 to 120 (2D6 times 10) points of damage randomly to RAT 'Mechs in five-point lots. Deduct 2D6-2 rounds of ammunition from each weapon.

Team Delta
Yakuza, Green, *Daishi* (Primary)
Piloting: 4, Gunnery: 7

Attacker:

Two Reconnaissance Stars of the Smoke Jaguars

Recon 1

- 1A, Green, *Koshi* (Primary) Piloting: 4, Gunnery: 6
- 1B, Regular, *Black Hawk* (Primary)
Piloting: 5, Gunnery: 4

1C Regular, *Black Hawk* (Primary)

Piloting: 4, Gunnery: 4

1D Regular, *Puma* (Primary) Piloting: 5, Gunnery: 4

1E Green, *Puma* (Primary) Piloting: 6, Gunnery: 5

Recon 2

2A, Regular, *Koshi* (Primary) Piloting: 3, Gunnery: 4

2B Regular, *Black Hawk* (Primary)

Piloting: 4, Gunnery: 5

2C Regular, *Black Hawk* (Primary)

Piloting: 3, Gunnery: 4

2D Green, *Puma* (Primary) Piloting: 5, Gunnery: 5

2E Green, *Puma* (Primary) Piloting: 6, Gunnery: 6

Deployment: The defender positions his units anywhere in the two sector agreed on as being south. Alternate placement with attacker. The attacker positions his units anywhere within the two sectors called north. At the start of the game, neither side should be able to reach the other with long-range weapons.

Victory Conditions:

Defender: Move the Daishi off of the north edge of the map in under twelve turns, or destroy all attackers.

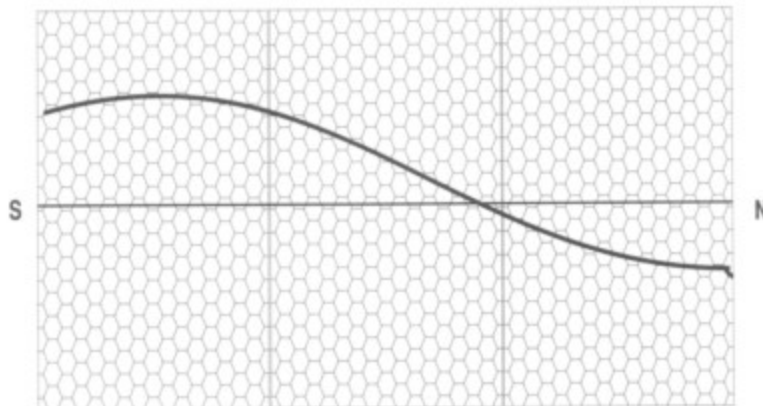
Attacker: Prevent the Daishi from leaving the field of battle. If you can hold the Renegades for twelve turns, then they will be caught by the pursuit forces of your cluster and destroyed.

Special Rules:

One BattleMech may provide partial cover for another by placing itself in the line-of-sight to an attacker. The attacker may either target the interfering 'Mech normally, or attack the covered 'Mech at a -3 penalty 'to hit'.

Game Three

Game Three background: Having broken through the re-



WHAT NOW,



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**ANALYSIS OF BATTLEFIELD
TACTICS AND STRATEGY.**

A Matter of Priorities

**Lesson:
The Dreaded
'Field Test'**

Stated Objectives

"What Now, MechWarrior? is a wargame prepared as a set of training exercises by order of Archon Melissa Steiner Davion as part of an ongoing effort to merge the military doctrines of the former Federated Suns with those of the Lyran Commonwealth. The Archon has requested that *BattleTechnology* reprint selected scenarios from ever-expanding lists of cases so that other allies in the fight against the Clans may benefit from the experiences of the past. The scenarios presented are versions of historical battles along with the decisions of the unit commanders. The scenarios are intended to be used to prompt discussions. Each of the participants offers their recommended actions at each of the decision points, then the group discusses the relative strengths and weaknesses of the offered solutions. In *BattleTechnology's* test of the workability of this method, we discovered that such discussion are apt to become quite heated, so we recommended that they be conducted in a relaxed, informal atmosphere conducive to the free exchange of opinions. (We also recommend that qualified medical staff be located nearby.)

It is worth noting that there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers to the problems presented. The historical information simply shows how one commander handled the situation problem. Someone may well come up with a better solution. The information contained within these scenarios is not classified or considered militarily sensitive.

BattleTechnology magazine wishes to thank Captain Roquan of the New Avalon Military Information Center for his help in providing the information presented in this article. Copies of standard simulator programs are available for 100 C-bills from your BattleTechnology software distributor. Please include the scenario name and programming language you want when ordering.

A Matter of Priorities

You have been given command of a lance of light BattleMechs that are being sent on a deep penetration raid. Your objective is to destroy a small manufacturing facility in an urban setting on a world held by an enemy House. During your mission briefing, you receive the mission particulars.

The target is an optical system plant that is involved with producing small pulse lasers. You need to destroy a single reinforced concrete building approximately one quarter of a kilometer long. Intel indicates that only light infantry security troops are present at the site. The planet you are landing on is close to Terran Standard with an average temperature of 22° C and is far enough from active war zones so it should have only light anti-Mech defenses. Your DropShip should be able to land within five kilometers of the target and no AeroSpace forces are expected. It sounds easy to you, and you wonder why a lance of BattleMechs are being used on this assignment. In the next part of the briefing you find out.

You'll be piloting your venerable Jenner, a good serviceable machine and an excellent choice for city work. You have a Wasp assigned to you, recently outfitted with pulse laser technology. The other two 'Mechs are both Javelins, seemingly an odd choice to destroy a manufacturing facility. Then you find out that both Javelins carry twin Streak SRM systems in their left torsos. You are informed that part of your mission is to field test the effectiveness of the Streak systems. This makes you wonder if perhaps there may be more involved than you are being told. What now, MechWarrior?

(Recommended discussion items: The suitability of the 'Mechs for the assigned mission, what sort of information the officer should request, status of the pilots, evaluation of the mission priorities)

Historical: The lance commander requested additional recon data and had her request denied. She found that the two Javelin pilots were R&D staff with minimal battlefield training, though the Wasp pilot was a veteran from a top line mercenary unit under long term contract. During her transit out to the target system, she spent her time hacking into the Wasp's onboard system, finding that Intel indicated the 85% possibility of a force of Light 'Mechs being present at the target city.

During the transit to your target, you spend the time getting to know your lance mates. You find nothing to contradict your first impressions. You also manage to find out that there is an 85% likelihood of encountering enemy 'Mechs within the target city. Though you're not too enthused about leading green troops (R&D techs, at that) into combat, you have little choice.

Your jump into the target systems goes as planned, and after six hours of insystem travel you land on the planet's surface. As the cargo bay doors open, you see the city, looking just as it did in the recon photos you were shown. Most of the buildings are of concrete and steel construction, tending to be approximately twenty meters high, though some are over one hundred meters high. You have about six hours of daylight left, and a light rain is falling, obscuring visual observation. The Wasp pilot informs you that you are 4.2 km from your target on a 15% east from planetary north bearing. The streets seem deserted, and no moving vehicles are visible. Ground troops from your DropShip are setting a defensive perimeter. What now, MechWarrior?

(Recommended Discussion Items: Effect of rain on sighting and heat dissipation, 'Mech placement for the advance, optimal course to reach objective, the use of jumping as opposed to walking to move through unknown urban setting.)

Historical: The unit leader instructed the Wasp pilot to serve as forward scout, ranging out about four blocks. She took a position twenty meters in front of the two Javelins, figuring that if they were all moving forward, they were less likely to be ambushed from behind. The Wasp was instructed to jump as needed while she and the Javelins walked. This was based on her assessment of the experience level of the Javelin pilots. She selected a course of 20% east of north in an effort to disguise their true objective.

You have set your 'Mechs in the formation described above, and are proceeding through the seemingly deserted streets. You have covered about three kilometers towards your goal, and there have been no signs of enemy resistance. The scouting Wasp continues to report all clear. You round a corner and proceed up a long avenue. Suddenly, twin impacts rock your 'Mech. It feels like a pair of missile hits in your back armor. What now, MechWarrior?

(Recommended discussion items: Initial response to a sneak attack from the back or flank, Mission objectives and defense of the Javelins)

Historical: The commander turned with all weapons ready. Nothing was there but the two Javelins. A hurried radio conversation revealed that one of the Javelin pilots had gotten bored and was practicing with locking the Streak System on the Jenner's back. He accidentally hit the fire control while the system was locked. The commander told the pilot to stop playing with his weapons and to keep formation. The 'Mechs continued their advance.

After administering a surgically brief dressing down to

the over-enthusiastic Javelin pilot, you continue your mission. Soon the crackle of small arms fire announces your arrival at the objective. As slugs bounce harmlessly off the armored skin of your 'Mechs, you tear through the chain link fence that blocks access to the manufacturing facility. The building looks as you were told in the briefing, and none of the defending troops seem to be armed with anything larger than automatic rifles or light machine guns. What now, MechWarrior?

(Recommended discussion items: How best to destroy the objective, possible problems from the defenders, guarding your back and flanks while attacking the building)

Historical: The commander had the Wasp cut a few holes into the building with its laser while she scattered the defenders. Once that was completed, she had the Wasp watch for approaching units while she and the Javelins began work in earnest on the building.

Plumes of smoke rise from the expanding sear of rubble that once was a pulse laser manufacturing facility. The building is about three-quarters demolished; still the heaviest weapon that has been brought to bear on you are a few truck-mounted lasers. The two Javelin pilots are happily jabbering about the effectiveness of the Streak systems and wishing for a mobile target. They get their wish. The squat silhouettes of two UrbanMechs waddle into view from approximately due north. At the same time, the Wasp radios that something big is closing fast from the south, blocking off retreat. The UrbanMechs fire their autocannons, and though the first barrage only adds to the rubble around you, you know that it will only get worse. What now, MechWarrior?

(Recommended discussion items: Relative mission priorities, the need to evacuate before additional enemy units arrives, using green troops in combat)

Historical: The commander ordered the Wasp to assist the two Javelins with the UrbanMechs, then to evacuate in four minutes, or when either Javelin took substantial damage or both UrbanMechs were destroyed. She went to investigate the bogie closing from the south, to clear the line of retreat. The Wasp engaged the UrbanMechs, giving the Javelins time to close to SRM range.

With the Wasp leaping madly across the battlefield, drawing the fire from the two UrbanMechs, the Javelins close to optimal range and begin firing with their SRMs. You tune out their radio chatter to deal with your own appointed task. You Jenner rises on a column of super-

heated steam and arcs over a line of buildings. The landing jars you and your magnetic sensors wail. Lumbering around a corner less than fifty meters away is a hulking Vindicator, the charging coils of its arm mounted PPC glowing blue. Before you can react, artificial lightning rips from the Mech's particle projection cannon and blows apart the building behind you. What now, MechWarrior?

(Recommended discussion items: Use of terrain when fighting a single foe in close quarters, mission objectives with regards to evacuation, how best to fight a single target that's larger and better armed)

Historical: The commander knew she had to disable the Vindicator to withdraw her unit. She decided to try to knock out the Vindicator's jump capability. By jumping at random, and firing off flights of SRMs, she was able to distract the Vindicator pilot long enough to target her opponent's legs with her lasers. After approximately 120 seconds of combat, the Vindicator fell, its right leg shot away.

The Vindicator collapses, its right hip now ending in a tangle of broken cables and shattered 'Mech bones. Your Jenner has lost its right arm and your armor is breached in the center torso and right leg, and nearly gone on the head. The Wasp pilot informs you that one of the UrbanMechs is down and both Javelins have sustained non-critical levels of damage. His sensors indicate two more targets closing from the east, most likely new 'Mechs. What now, MechWarrior?

(Recommended discussion items: Deciding when to run, overall mission objectives, damage assessment to the unit)

Historical: The commander ordered an evacuation of the unit before the new 'Mechs could arrive. She jumped back to help the rest disengage from the last UrbanMech and their combined fire took the UrbanMech down. They used their jump jets to evacuate, and reached the DropShip without further incident. Once back from the mission debriefing, she lodged a formal protest for the lack of information she was given and attempted to resign her commission. Her resignation was refused and she was given a commendation and promotion.

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Items for review or information about new products for inclusion in this column may be sent to:

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BattleTechnology Regrets

In *BattleTechnology #18*, MechWarrior Steven Hess is incorrectly credited with the article on new UrbanMechs which is actually the work of Gerald Hall. Mr Hall and Mr Hess will both appear in *BattleTechnology #20*, so readers will have a chance to appreciate the work of each.

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