

INCOMING! (Letters to the editor)

[Editor's Note: *I got a large amount of mail after Issue #3 was out for a while. Much of it was concerning WEB RPG and the files, so I've included a reply below with a lot of what I'm hoping will be helpful information. On a side note, the author of the OPENING SHOTS Article had someone come up to him at school and challenge his C-3 Company. Heh, I guess the magazine is really getting around, mostly thanks to sites like Solaris 7. Thanks, Sky-high!]*

Even though I have only briefly looked over the first issue I must say I am extremely impressed by this work. I am only dissappointed that I haven't had time to read it all the way through, or the other two issues that are out. The scenarios are excellent, and the stories behind them really add a bit of life to them. Anyway, I just thought I would take a brief moment to compliment you on all the hard work that you have put into these issues. Thank you for providing me with something new and entertaining for BattleTech.

John Goodman

Thanks for the generous praise, John. After noting the demise of several periodicals and a lack of interesting lead-in backgrounds (if that make's sense?) in the official scenario packs (the last good scenario pack IMHO was 'The Battle for Twycross'), I felt players were about due for some interesting stuff. Glad you like the effort so far.

I just got home from work, downloaded Battletec #3, and read it! It was really great, especially the Wolverine profile (THANKS!). The content is again fantastic and you deserve a round of drinks for you AND your staff! I know that you are looking for contributions for your site and want to help out in some way!

I have a lot of the BattleTech stuff typed into my computer and would be more than willing to send you everything I have. All the text files are written in either Word or Excel.

The database files are written using Microsoft Works 4.0, but I'm trying to transfer everything to Microsoft Access.

I was also wondering about something. You have a section for "Mech of the Month", but what about Vehicles, Aerospace Fighters, Dropships, Warships (Jumpships are just TOOOOOOOO boring)? I realize this is asking for a lot, but it might offer a little break from Mechs occasionally! Anyway, just a thought. One more thing, have you thought about having a monthly contest for Mech designs? Maybe each month pick a weight class and print two designs that are sent in to you?

Start with a light design, then a medium design, etc etc, then after you get six of each design pick a "Best of Best" for the year? Then each year change the era the Mech must be designed in; 3025, 3050, 3055, 3062, etc. (What can I say, I'm excited. It's good to see another publication about BattleTech!) Well, I better get going, I have rambled on for too long and the sun is coming up soon! Once again thanks for bringing BattleTech alive again!

Larry Leslie
a.k.a. *Highball*

Just this very issue, The Vehicle War-Book makes its debut. Thanks for all the great ideas, Larry. Writing a new vehicle's fluff text is a nice break from trying to make published Stock Mech reviews interesting.

Who ever wish's to contribute, with a few columns from moi, represent the entire staff (seems to be about two-three people per issue). However, I DO drink Samuel Adams...(or Guinness when I want that 'scum from the bottom of an oak keg' taste. ☺)

As for the 'Best of the best', well, that's something that's highly subjective to the battlefield terrain and your tactical style. However, please feel free to throw your favorite designs this way for world-wide evaluation (and I do mean world, I just got a letter from a guy in Hungary...see below).

I am interested in getting a copy of BattleTec #1. I tried going through Telethon's web-site but

I kept getting a message saying that the page could not be displayed. I would be ever so grateful if you could send me a copy. I don't know if you got a copy of Keith's article "Hi-Tech Battletech" that I transcribed, so I've attached a copy. Thanks

Steven R

Tell Keith I really enjoyed reading his work. If he's of a mind for it, I wouldn't mind putting it in here as a very large article. You can find all four issues at:

<http://www.iserv.net/~jeffkwr/Issue1.zip>

<http://www.iserv.net/~jeffkwr/Issue2.zip>

<http://www.iserv.net/~jeffkwr/Issue3.zip>

<http://www.iserv.net/~jeffkwr/Issue4.zip>

Hi Jeff,

My name is Robert Brim, I go by Atticus Longwalker. I have been reading your issues since you started and I love them, as do anyone else I send them to. I noticed some people are already looking for back issues (kind of amazing when you only have 3 issues total).

What I would like to propose to you is this: I would like to take your e-zine, and have it as a web page on the news site I am running (<http://news.maxgaming.net>). Of course everyone would still have your downloadable version available, I am not asking for exclusive coverage. :-)

What would this accomplish? Well, what I am wanting to do is provide an online way for people to view your ezine without having to download a file (just an alternative for those extremely paranoid about viruses - macro and otherwise), and providing a place to have the back issues available for download and online viewing.

Of course we would not take any credit whatsoever for your work... it remains yours and yours alone.

I am also offering my editing services, as I am an editor. If you are interested in any of this, please let me know.

Robert Brim

(longwlkr@maxgaming.net)

P.S. I have a personal site at <http://www.mercs3055.com/~atticus> that I feel is equal to if not better than chaos-march's.

Help yourself. That goes for everyone else, as well. This e-zine was meant to be read by everyone who likes battletech. All the distribution we can get will help promote our hobby. Just share your advertising dollars from adds on your site with a charity, since this mag can't be used to make money. ☺

Hi Jeff

I read your newsletter and was interested in the WEBRPG. It is a real nice program and works real well. I was also interested in the maps and mechs that you made and would like to check them out. If you could send me the URL to download them from, I would really appreciate it.

Thanks for the info
Ian Moore

PS Your newsletter is great.

Your wish is my command. So let it be written, so let it be done!

[EDITOR'S NOTE:

<http://www.iserv.net/~jeffkwr/WEBBTECHMaster%20folders.zip>

*The URL above is the master folder full of the map, minis and terrain folder and the dice macros. These files **cannot** be viewed except in WEB RPG, as they are Java specific files. Unzip them to your WEB RPG folder. Once you are in WEB RPG, go to the file tree that is on the left of the chat room (oh yes, there's chat) and right click (command click for Mac) on the item called 'Workbench Folder', then choose load. That will let you load from your hard drive the folders.*

NOTE: *These master battletech files are very large in bandwidth and can lag your game out. I suggest you open the file when your alone in WEB RPG room, select the mechs, maps and minis you need for an upcoming game, save*

them to a new folder and save that folder to your hard drive under the game's name. That way, when you're ready on game day, you won't have those major lag folders full of unneeded maps for the scenario.

WEB RPG is great, but this version can freeze or crash with Java memory errors at times. However these are infrequent unless you have many things in the file tree and have many users in the room. The new version is supposed to be much friendlier, and is due out the 24th of March 2000. To that end, I suggest you save the battlefield map to your hard drive after every full movement phase (or mid phase if a huge fight).

Keep ICQ open so you can communicate if one person freezes. **HINT:** if the game seems to freeze but your mouse moves, touch the **JRE** button on your Windows taskbar, that will usually unfreeze it after a second. **JRE** is a dos box that appears and must stay open (minimized usually) for WEB RPG to run.

Once you have a mini and map selected, double-click the mini. After a few seconds it will open and show you 6 mechs facing the various sides of a hex. Merely tap a new facing image with a click from your mouse, go to the board and choose paste to put it in the hex you want. Delete the old facing and you have mech movement. Your opponent(s) will see the image on their map too, and can watch you move it.

On the map itself is a button called toolbox. This controls the way images show up (so you can put mech images over terrain, and not under...these are already pretty much taken care of on the master-maps I've made, so don't really mess with this option until you've decided to make a map of your own). Miniatures can be in JPEG or GIF format. Only use JPEG if you don't plan on using the transparency wand to make things like white backgrounds around mechs disappear. JPEG is often smaller, though, so it's handy if you plan on (GOD FORBID) illegally scanning FASA battletech maps into WEB RPG files.

Once you have a miniature and all its facings made,(NOTE: 50 degrees free rotation in a paint program will make mechs face the correct angle for the non-up/down hex sides), post them to

your web site. Then open WEB RPG, 'copy' the blank mini I threw into the Mech Master Mini folder, right click on it to 'Properties', and place the URL of your miniature from your site in the appropriate slot.

Once you 'save', you can now use your mini as a playing piece. One last note: "Saving" a property of any mini while on WEB RPG with a 'save' button means you only saved it for that session. To truly save maps and any folders you made, you must right click on them and choose the SAVE option...that will let you save the files to your hard-drive.

You can also right click a mech on the map and choose visibility. This lets you hide a unit (great for hidden unit set up). However, the room host can always see all images, so if you are going to use hidden images, best you host the game. If he saves the map and opens it in his own room, he can see the hidden units, so beware. ☺.]

WOW!!!!

Just found the 'zine, Issue # 3. I'm drooling over it. I found it in a roundabout manner and can't locate any of the previous issues (if they are available on-line). Are they and would you point me as to the direction or address to look?

Your fan!

E. Haste

Heh. Don't ruin your computer...drool tends to do that. See the above reply for the URL to back issues. I'll have an official Battletech site when I get off my ass and make one...

Hey dude...I am producing a new web page called PRI and my mission is to let people get from me (or have a link so they can get it) any program designed to make Battletech easier to play.

I can easily place a link to WEB RPG, but I have hesitated because I don't have any battletech files for it and don't know where to

find them. Would I be able to "obtain" any of your files and post them on my site?

My site addy is:

<http://www.crosswinds.net/~medron/>

Thank you very much. I enjoy reading Battletec...now when is that Warhammer review coming....;-)

Medron Pryde
Steel Command League
scl.steelcommand.com

See the above instructions. Nice site, by the way. Electronic Cardboard?

Dear sir

Just a little note of thanks for your hard work on your battletech newsletter. How can a true fan get the two back issues? Keep up the good work...hell...FASA should be paying you.

Lt. Ken Taube

From your mouth to FASA's wallet. Actually, I do have an idea for a submission for a FASA Battletech project, but with eight projects per year, maximum, newbie submissions have about as much chance of surviving as a fart in a whirlwind. Still, there's no hurt trying...Nystul did think the WEB RPG screen shots I sent him were interesting...

Hey Jeff,

I wanted to remind you that I'm the same guy who wrote that flawed Raijin review. My web site? It's called Defiance Industries of Hesperus II located at

<http://msnhomepages.talkcity.com/hobbyct/btechfan/>

Perhaps you could review it for Issue #4. Issue 3 is great! I just wish I'd had the chance to correct that review of the Raijin.

Thanks,
Jonathan Easter

Sorry about the missing credits, Jon. I'll amend the Issue #3 ZIP when I have the time. (Which will also include adding the legal mumbo-jumbo so this mag don't get sh-t-canned before it takes off. I'll check out your site as well. Thanx.

Dear Jeff,

I am a subscribed guy on Solaris7, although with a different name (SC. Les Snuka). I am from Hungary, Europe. I play, read and organize Battletech. I would like to share my first Battletech experience with you and your readers of Battletec (BTW: I like it very much!). Hereby I attached the article I wrote on it in a zipped Word file.

Regards and Lasers up!

Nice to see our fellow warriors in Europe are in to battletech. I've seen a few German sites, but this is the first I've heard from Hungary. Thanks for the 'Opening Shots' material.

G'day,

I'm writing for two reasons. Firstly, to congratulate you on the incredible 'zine. Secondly, with a few questions regarding playing Battletech on WebRPG.

Recently, while casually surfing the net, I chanced back upon Solaris 7. Lo and behold, an excited news post announced the arrival of Issue 3 of Battletec. "What's this? I thought to myself. I downloaded it out of curiosity and to my surprise, it was a quality piece of publishing.

I quickly sought out the first two issues and saw that they were of a similar quality. Jeepers, I thought to myself, this is the best thing since I led two stars of Clan mechs into a BIG MINEFIELD. The results were the same, my world was suddenly filled with a lot of heat and excitement. I'm eagerly awaiting Issue 4 and the bundle of joy that it will most assuredly bring.

Now, to the second question: I've downloaded the Web RPG and installed it. It works fine but me and a few mates who wish to play Btech online are wondering how we get this to work

for us? You mentioned something about some mini's? What are these and where?

Keep up the good work and 'May the spirit of Kerensky be with you always'

A Fan.

I take it you hail from Down-Under ☺. Thanks for all the great comments. Read the above last few letters for details on the minis. Maybe I'll see you guys online sometime, if the time difference permits. As for good work, I'll keep the torch burning if you keep reading by it.

OPENING SHOTS:

HUNGRY BEARS FROM HUNGARY

SCpt. Crane Tseng
231st Battle Unit
Clan Ghostbear
My first B'Tech games

I've always been a great fan of MechWarrior-2, Ghost-Bear Legacy, Mercenaries, and MechWarrior-3: Pirate's Moon. I tried to find someone to play with, to share ideas and experiences. One day in the office I've been surfing the web and found a Hungarian B'Tech mailing list started recently. I subscribed to it.

After reading some incoming mails I found that I dropped into a B'Tech Board Game Fan society. Nice guys, although under my solahma age of 30. I asked them about the board game since I have never heard about it. They kindly explained me the basic rules, so I went out and bought a Boxed Set No.1.

Now I had a basic understanding on the rules! I also asked one of my colleagues if he wanted to play along. After making a good appointment we met in my (now former) bachelor flat. We rolled out one of the maps, chose two 'Mechs (to be honest we both prefer the Clans, so we used two Clan machines), took out our 'Mechsheets and started to play. Of course we made mistakes, like:

- the damage suffered player rolled where the damage was taken

- we did not bother on piloting/gunnery skills, etc.

After the first successful battle (actually the next day) we were invited to the moderator of the mailing list to play against real B'Tech players. That was fun! We created our first 'mechs with the BMD. Since we were all Clanners, we played three scenarios: Rookies (that's us) vs. Elite's; Trial of Position for my colleague (He wanted to join the Clan Jade Wolf. He had no rank, so we set up him a ToP) and a Trial of Refusal against the accusation of being a Jade Wolf. Naturally the scenarios took place in reversed order... ☺

The first Trial (of Refusal) took place in a Davion Solaris7 arena. A rookie (me) and a Star Captain (the list moderator) were the raisers of the issue, SomY (my colleague) and another guy with long B'Tech experience were the challengers of the statement. We were with a Summoner and a Dire Wolf, they were with a Warhammer IIC and a Warhawk. They lost... My lucky, virgin hands...

The second trial (for SomY's position in the Clan Jade Wolf ;->) was a misery for him. SomY drove a Stormcrow, I drove a Stormcrow either. The other testers drove a Mad Dog and a Warhawk. In the third round I hit SomY with my SRM6 in the head. He fell, got unconscious, lost the trial. After introducing the Ter Rochak-rule (he had another opportunity) SomY started again. Killed my 'Mech, but got killed by the Mad Dog. He earned the MechWarrior rank.

The scenario took place in the Liao Solaris 7 arena (a dungeon). This was Rookies vs. Elites. I drove a Stormcrow with my favorite UAC/20, SomY the Summoner with ER PPC. The enemy: I don't remember, nearly the same weight. Since the Clan ROE was not introduced, we could play well. We shared the opponents with SomY, after shooting on one we changed. It was fun! We won. After the last shots, SomY betrayed me and hit me with his ER PPC from 4 hexes into my head. I blasted...

Now I am a StarCaptain in the Clan Ghost Bear. My favorite 'Mechs are the Summoner, Stormcrow, Executioner and the mighty Warhawk. I lead a special unit called the 231st

Battle Unit ("Who-lost-in-the-Storm"), we are stationed on the planet Jaltz, in the Wistyx system.

Good Hunting, MechWarriors!

SCpt. Crane Tseng
231st Battle Unit
Clan Ghostbear

THE VEHICLE WAR-BOOK

This new feature will highlight new vehicle designs being produced across all holding in the Inner Sphere and Clan space. Submissions to this feature should have a good background and fluff text to explain what purpose the vehicle serves.

PROWLER Scout Tank

Inner-Sphere Level 2 Vehicle

Weight: 35 Tons

Movement: Tracked

Cruise: 7

Flank: 11

Engine: 245 XL	9.0	
Control:		2.0
Power Amplifiers:		0.0
Lift Equipment:		0.0
Heat Sinks: 15	5.0	
Internal Structure:	3.5	
Turret:	0.5	

Armor: *Ferro-Fib* 4.0 (72 pts.)

Armor Distribution

Front: 17

Sides: 15/15

Rear: 10

Turret: 15

Weapons & Ammo:

ER-Large Laser(Turret) 5.0
Medium Laser (Front) 1.0

TAG (Turret) 1.0

C-3 Slave (Body) 1.0

Beagle Probe (Body) 1.5

Guardian ECM (Body) 1.5

COST:

BV:

CREW: 3

OVERVIEW:

The *Prowler* was designed to fill the roll of an advanced technology forward spotter and scout tank with the additional ability to counter enemy scout units equipped with probe equipment. Yo-Jimbo Enterprises of Galtor-3 presented their proposal the DCMS Procurement General. The new way of thinking inspired by Coordinator Kurita within the Combine military permitted the Procurement General to study the design proposal and led to a remarkably quick order for 300 of the stealthy little tanks.

Yo-Jimbo had already started retooling one of their hovercraft lines to produce the tank, and the first *Prowler* rolled off the assembly line six months before Operation Bulldog, precisely enough time for the Combine units to integrate the new tanks into their standard tactical protocol. In short order, the *Prowler* proved its value as part of C-3 equipped companies, specializing in lances where the *Prowler* was teamed with the new *O-Bakemono* Arrow-IV battlemech.

CAPABILITIES:

Most vehicle production companies tend to stay away from massive heat-generating weapons, due to the difficulty in balancing weight specifications and combat ability. Yo-Jimbo built the *Prowler* with nothing but energy weapons, incorporating the Flash-Fire Mark-2 Extended Range large laser. The famed Martel medium laser was chosen for the front-mounted secondary weapon almost all tanks carry. This allows the tank to roam far from support and supply bases, gives the scout remarkable range and a punch most targets can't ignore.

The Burrows-Ives Extra-Light engine is incredibly quiet, and the soft dura-plast mountings inside the tank's track-guards make the *Prowler* as stealthy as a tank can get. The addition of the Guardian ECM allows the tank to hide even from units equipped with Active Probes. Conversely, enemy recon units find it difficult to hide from a *Prowler*, due to its own active probe.

Typically, a solitary *Prowler* will scout a hostile area, locate buildings or other targets and hide. The advanced sensors allow the *Prowler* to then call in Arrow-IV rounds from its company once darkness has fallen. In order to fend off light mechs and other scout vehicles, the *Prowler* relies on its considerable speed and excellent armor. If engaged by faster units, such as hovercraft and VTOLs, DCMS tactical doctrine advises finding cover in areas these units cannot traverse, such as wooded terrain and buildings. The ER-Large Laser usually allows the *Prowler* to effectively engage pursuing units, while keeping its distance at flank speed.

While highly effective for its design purpose, the *Prowler* does suffer from many of the same dilemma that plague most reconnaissance vehicles. Due to its extended time in the field, space aboard the *Prowler* is a premium. Crew comfort in the tiny tank was definitely a secondary consideration. Also, the cooling and ventilation systems are very dated, being of the least expensive kind in order to keep the overall cost of the vehicle down. The advanced electronics aboard a *Prowler* are very expensive, making an otherwise avoidable loss of one tank unacceptable. Often, only the most experienced crews are assigned a *Prowler*, since the Combine demands the expensive tank return in the shape it was issued.

HISTORY:

The Genyosha, Ryuken, Galledon Regulars and the Proserpina Hussars have all received *Prowlers*. On Asgard, the Genyosha used the tank's scout abilities to screen suspected Smoke Jaguar staging areas. On Edo, the Ryuken savaged the 7th Jaguar Dragoons with preliminary Arrow-IV strikes, many of them tagged in by *Prowler* crewmen. Of the 56 *Prowlers* that were part of Operation Bulldog

and its follow-up waves, only 11 scout tanks were lost to clan enemies, despite the hazardous nature of their duties. This is a sound testament to the durability of this versatile little tank.

SMALL UNIT ACTIONS

All or nothing...

"I must protest, Star Commander. We are far from our designated posting. This is a serious breach of conduct."

His subordinate's voice was beginning to grate on Star Commander Roak's nerves. For the last two hours, Mechwarrior Borak had taken every opportunity to remind his commander of the unorthodox actions the solahma star was engaged in.

"Are you a warrior, Borak, or an old woman to carry on so? For the last time, I am in command of this star. You are merely to follow my orders. Is that understood?" To be truthful, Roak would just as soon settle the matter in a Circle of Equals here and now, rather than listen to more of Borak's complaints. True, Borak's mech was exactly the same type as his commander's and the rest of the star, a *Hunchback IIC*, but it was the warrior who made all the difference in such even-matched battles.

Roak knew he and the others were all past their prime, but even now he was still more of a warrior than Borak had ever been, even in the spring of Borak's youth. After a moment, Borak continued.

"Yes, my ovkhan. I merely wished to give you every opportunity to change our present course."



“Of course. Any good warrior would do the same. But we must consider; there are Inner Sphere warriors on this planet. Command tracked a *Leopard* class dropship that deviated from the main enemy force’s course, possibly due to engine trouble incurred in the atmospheric battle.

If that is so, there is only one place they can land with any hope of success, and that is on the flat ridge one kilometer from our present position. We will find the enemy ship, engage any enemy combat vehicles, and capture the dropship. This will bring us the honor that has eluded us in the past.”

“But what of our orders to guard the ammunition bunker? It may be that the *Leopard* suffered no trouble and the depot is its assigned target. Is it wise to leave our posts and hunt these raiders? What if they are even now breaking into two groups and circumventing our formation?”

It was entirely possible Borak was correct. But they were all old warriors, deemed almost useless to their clan. None had exhibited any proficiency at teaching and so were denied even a roll in training future sibkos. In another year, even the honorless *Hunchback II-C* mechs would be forbidden them, and they would have to find a place among the common foot soldiers, therein to wait for a death without meaning.

To that end, Roak decided it was not even worth calling his decision a gamble. There was simply no other choice that offered the aged clansmen a chance for glory or honor. For, if the raiders were truly attempting to destroy the ammunition depot, they would bring mechs both lighter, faster and with LRM support to rain destruction on the depot from the safety of the thick jungle. The slower *Hunchbacks* would have no chance at successfully defending the site, and further dishonor would be heaped upon the solahma warriors.

“Star Commander, I am picking up a large reading on my magnetic scanner. It can only be

the *Leopard*, sir.” Mechwarrior Kunit reported from his right-point position.

“Aff, Kunit. All points go to ‘hot’ status with all weapons. Pattern ‘Y’. Enter the clearing at top speed.” The five *Hunchback II-C* battlemechs smashed through the forest as fast as the foliage would allow them. As the lead two mechs in the ‘Y’ formation broke out onto the plain, the left *Hunchback* was met with a trio of glowing particle beams. The 50-ton machine’s headlong momentum was instantly nullified and overcome.

The ravaged *Hunchback* stopped as if it had run headlong into a granite cliff-face. Another half second and the clan battlemech was pushed back and down by the beam’s hellish impact. Roak could not be certain, but the lightly armored *Hunchback* most likely had taken serious internal damage.

“Right lead, what is the composition of enemy formation?” Even as he requested the right ‘Y’ *Hunchback*’s evaluation, Roak slammed the jump pedals down to the floor of his mech’s cockpit, bracing as the jet’s powerful thrust vaulted his mech up through the forest canopy, over treetops and above the edge of the clearing. From his altitude, Roak could see the smoking and damaged hull of the *Leopard*.

Between his advancing troops and the dropship stood two Inner Sphere battlemechs and a ‘lance’ of heavy tanks. As he started to descend into the meadow, Roak smiled. He had been right. Live or die today, his peers must honor his decision to bring the fight to the enemy.

SITUATION:

The *Devil’s Brigade* mercenary unit suffered considerable damage in its first and only attempt at raiding Ghost-Bear worlds when it attempted to raid Jezersko. The unit met stiff fighter resistance during its burn in-planet. The unit’s *Leopard*-class dropship, modified to carry a lance of heavy vehicles and two mechs, was forced to belly-land in a field surrounded by dense jungle terrain. The dropship’s occupants, the Devil’s Brigade’s L-Z guard, survived the ‘landing’ with no damage.

Unfortunately, the Inner Sphere unit ditched close to a hidden ammo depot and a star of old mechwarriors who garrisoned the site and who were close to forced-retirement. The mercenaries

had barley debarked the remains of their dropship when they were set upon by glory-hungry clan enemies bent on death in battle.

SETUP:

Lay out two fairly open terrain maps with minimal hills, long edge to long edge. Designate one map as north, the other as south. Treat all water hexes as clear terrain. There is other no special terrain or weather conditions for this scenario.

ATTACKER:

The attacker is a solahma star of Clan Ghost Bear 241st PGC mechwarriors piloting *Hunchback II-C* battlemechs. All five clan battlemechs enter from the southern map's bottom long-edge on Turn #1. The clan mechwarriors may not retreat from this battle.

Solahma Star:

Star Comm Roak (G: 3/P: 4) *Hunchback II-C*
 MW Gerri, (G: 4/P: 5) *Hunchback II-C*
 MW Borak (G: 4/P: 5) *Hunchback II-C*
 MW Riktor (G: 4/P: 5) *Hunchback II-C*
 MW Kunit (G: 4/P: 5) *Hunchback II-C*

All clan warriors follow Level 1 the rules of engagement for this battle, hoping to gain as much honor as possible. Apart from other factors, this means the *Hunchbacks* may perform no physical attacks on their enemies. Furthermore, to capture daring gun-camera footage as evidence of their worthiness, these solahma warriors include vehicles in the dueling, and will not fire at a tank with more than one clan battlemech each turn.

Defender:

The defender is the Landing Zone Security Element of 'The Devil's Brigade' mercenary battalion, composed of two 3025-tech battlemechs and 4 heavy mixed-tech vehicles. The Defender sets up first anywhere on the north map. The defender may not use hidden units. The *Leopard* has landed to the north of the northern map. The *Leopard* dropship's power systems are not functioning and no weapons may be fired in support of Inner Sphere units.

Landing Zone Security Mech Element

Lt. Lexxana Zattlin (G: 3/P: 4) AWS-8Q
Awesome
 Sgt. Aries Stanaslov (G: 4/P: 5) WVR-6M
Wolverine

Landing Zone Security Vehicle Element

Sgt. Brubaker (G: 4/P: 5) *Challenger* Heavy Tank
 Crp. Edick (G: 4/P: 5) *Alicorn* Heavy Tank
 Pvt. Jones (G: 4/P: 5) *Rommel* Heavy Tank
 Pvt. Peacock (G: 4/P: 5) *VonLuckner* Heavy Tank

VICTORY CONDITIONS:

The Clan warriors are fighting for honor. Each destroyed I.S. vehicle or mech earns the clan players 1 victory point. Any breach of Level-1 clan engagement rules removes **two** victory points. The Inner Sphere warriors earn 1 victory point for each clan mech destroyed. Defeating a clan unit in a Zellbrigen duel nets the I.S. warrior an additional victory point above that gained for destroying the unit.

Any Inner Sphere unit that retreats off the map reduces the Inner Sphere's victory point total by one point per unit that flees. The side with the highest victory points at the end of Turn #15 (or the turn where all of one side's units are destroyed or flee [I.S. only]) wins the scenario.

VARIANTIONS:

If the Clan unit is having an impossible time winning, move the engagement rules to Level 3, or drop their Gunnery/Piloting Skill to that of standard clan warriors (G: 3/P: 4). Conversely, if the Inner Sphere side is getting turned into fertilizer repeatedly, replace any two vehicles with medium or light class mechs.

MECH OF THE MONTH

Mad Cat/Timber Wolf

I've played battletech almost from it's inception, and was aware of it back when it was Battle-Droids (curse Lucas and his trademarks!),

but had no idea what the game was destined to become, or that I would play it. In that time, I've battled in many games vs. some great, and some not so great, players. Many had their homemade mechs, and some used stocks.

Now, I've seen every type of mech imaginable (from massive-engine'd, weaponless and armorless nuke-rules suicide mechs to old tech 2/3 MP mediums), but none really struck me as being the epitome of what a mech should be. That is, until I got groin-kicked by a *Mad Cat*.

I don't care what anyone says. Apart from the targeting computer & pulse stocks like the *Turkina 'B'*, *Viper* and *Goshawks* (some would call them munchy), there's no other stock mech out there that has the power and versatility, or has inspired the dread of the *Mad Cat*.

Some mechs might do more damage (the *Night Gyr*, etc...the *Madcat's* pod space is no bigger than the *Vulture* and actually smaller than the *Loki's*) and some might be faster, but none of them combine such speed, fire power and MASSIVE amounts of armor like this nightmare. The soldier's comment in the Wolf Clan sourcebook ("What's it like fighting the Wolf? Imagine Lightning with legs, catastrophe with genius or just plain hell on wheels") must have been taken after the guy saw a *Mad Cat* in action.

Without a lucky as hell shot, you just can't take down this mech before it dish's out horrible damage to your units. I can remember opening up the TRO: 3050 first printing after I'd read Lethal Heritage. "Where's that *Mad Cat*? The one that bagged Phelan? Kick ASS! Look at the cover. WOW! "***Look at the weapons this thing carries!***" etc, etc.

VARIANTS:

I normally save the variants for smaller individual reviews after the most common version is reviewed and some tactics discussed. However, I'm not going to do that with the *Mad Cat*, mostly because it's been my experience that the Primary *Mad Cat* is hardly ever played (as opposed to everyone's favorite, the 'A'...slap me if I'm totally off on this point).

Also, the very nature of the Omni-mech means there is no set tactic for their use, since they are easily refitted with new weapons in a very short time due to modular weapons systems. Therefor,

tactics will follow Omni-mechs after a variant designation.

MAD CAT PRIMARY:

This mech was the first Omni to appear in the novels, and is a good fighter at every range. Twin ER-Large Lasers provide the best sting in the game over 23 hex, and let you inflict damage virtually anywhere on the battlefield (Hey, who DOSEN'T remember their first game when someone told them they were in range 25 hexes away? I know *my* jaw dropped and I demanded proof from the weapon's chart).

The closer-ranged weapon package seems an odd mix to me, but it reinforces the already potent ranged damage style this mech is geared toward. A weapons engagement envelope that can strike at five (25/21/15/12/3) increments seem highly unusual compared to the majority mechs that have two or three range maximums (i.e. Archer at 21/9, Battlemaster at 18/9/3 etc). The Primary is a tough fighter, but suffers several flaws. Like the *Vulture*, the twin LRM-20 racks have a measly six shots each. Dropping a medium laser for one more ton would have jacked up the load to 9 shots for the *Mad Cat's* two most powerful weapons.

Likewise, that extra ton would have allowed greater flexibility with ammo types, allowing you to pummel those dishonorable I.S. free-births with some of their own medicine, like Swarm and Thunder munitions...the Primary also suffers from major heat problems when it fires more than half it's weapon compliment. Still, with the ability to indirect fire and some of the best effective ranged weaponry in the game, there's no place to hide from the primary.

Primary TACTICS:

Keep your range and use your speed to wear down those hordes of free-birth antique mechs. Hold the LRM barrage till you need a max of 8 to hit (might require you to sit still, say, behind cover). Once the ammo runs dry, close to 15 hexes, which will put you in mediums for the twin ER large and long for the mediums. Most likely, your foes will be at long range at 15. When the foe's sufficiently weak, go get him.

ALPHA:

Ah. Truly, the *Mad Cat* 'A' is the Rolls Royce of battlemechs. The "A" variant packs serious long-range firepower, and the heat sinks to use it. Twin ER-PPC's will allow you to chop heads faster than a executioner on Riddilen. And it only gets worse for the enemy in close when you hose him down with deadly accurate triple medium pulse lasers.

Those nice holes the PPC's and pulses left are ripe for follow-up hits from the 'A's Streak SRM 6. A massive 21 double heat sinks keep you smiling while most of the firepower tenderizes your opponent, but even these won't control the smell of scorched wiring if you fire everything and run. Another good point for the 'A' (all the *Mad Cat* types, in fact) is the tendency to spread the weapons around the chassis. This lets you avoid the armless = weaponless problems many clan machines suffer.

'A' TACTICS:

Though the 'A' has powerful ranged attacks, it is NOT the primary and should not fight the same. The 'A' works best at medium ranges, where its most accurate weapons, the 3 pulse lasers, can offset the range penalties and still add lethal damage to the PPC attacks. If you plan on getting somewhere and cooling down, throw in the old Streak attack as you go.

If they don't lock, then you don't get any hotter anyway. This is the mech to take when you're in doubt of the opposition. Light's and mediums are hit-able with the pulses, and the heavies and assault are meat for the PPC's.

S&S: Why bother piloting anything else under 80 tons?

'B' Variant:

Well, even the Clans are not immune to making at least one unwanted stepchild of a mech series, and the 'B' *Mad Cat* curls my guts to look at. Omni-mech designers usually load up all the Heat Sinks they can cobble into the mech's engine, since the production models

chassis is unchangeable once the initial components are hammered together.

For some mechs, like the *Thor*, this is an advantage. Likewise, for 90% of the *Mad Cats*. The 'B', however, takes poor advantage of the 15 base heat sinks. At least, poor if you don't plan on taking engine hits right away. At a full run, this thing generates a mere 22 heat if all it's weapons fire. Don't fire the small pulse and this thing is impossible to overheat even if you take two engine crits.

That might seem great, but when you look beyond the gauss rifle" low heat, there" a reason for this. Most of this mech's weapons plain suck. What bizarre thinking went into this variant? A gauss rifle is always nice, but the paltry 8 rounds the brain-dead designer 'generously' allotted you seldom make it worth the weight on the 'B'.

Then you get the joy of watching a tiny swarm fire out from your LRM-10. But the single ton of ammo you have for this weapon WILL do more damage, because they wasted a two tons arming the LRM and the laughable SRM 4 with Artemis IV FCS's. Heh. Should have went with an extra ton of gauss if you ask me (but who did, right?). The one saving grace of this mech is the large pulse laser housed in the left arm. At least that will augment the gauss for 8 turns...

On its own, the 'B' might make a respectable weapon system to take to that Trial of Grievance you're going to have to go through after calling the 'B' designer's favorite mech a pile of dung within his ear shot. Otherwise, take an *Uller* Primary before you climb aboard this ill-conceived Omni-mech (wreck?).

'B' Tactics:

Though the name of this variant also stands for its quality grade, you can still do considerable damage before your ammo's depleted and those 4 *Stingers* tear you up. Watch for enemies coming at you from the gauss arm's flank, as the linked pulses on the other arm will shoo them away from that flank. Play the range game before you're bone-dry, then close to where the (gulp) small pulse can annoy them after their Inner Sphere AMS totally destroys your SRM 4 spread. Other than that, try ejecting...

S&S: Get the hammer out so you can smash all your Battletech minis to vent all that anger generated by the laughter of your Inner Sphere foes...

‘C’ Variant:

The ‘C’ comes across as a Poor-Man’s Primary. It downgrades the LRMs, keeps the scorching ER-large lasers, and throws out almost all the good close-in crap in exchange for an Ultra AC-5. Pardon me, but it strikes me that changing out a lot of good-hitting stuff for a weapon that averages five damage, can jam, and suffers a minimum range, borders on retardation.

True, the Clans love nothing more than a good ranged fight, but the mediums gave the Primary a much more powerful bite at almost the same range. Not to mention the fact this variant must be the one that’s responsible for putting more Clan warriors in the sickbay with heat stroke than any other Clan machine this side of the *Super Nova*.

The LRMs will last a bit longer than the Primary’s, though they are not practical to fire in conjunction with the ER-large lasers. They could have done wonders putting the ER’s in separate arms as well. Thank god they spent the C-Bills to throw in the CT ER-medium. As it is, if you’re piloting one of these, watch out for cunning warriors taking advantage of your right flank with the right arm’s Ultra’s minimums.

‘C’ Tactics:

There’s little to distinguish this variant’s tactics from the ‘B’s. Perhaps the best tactic is to tell your *stravag* C.O. you want an ‘A’...

S&S: Maybe earplugs will stop yet more laughter...

‘D’ Variant:

At first glance, this machine seems to pack about the same punch as the ‘A’, and there’s no doubt the ‘D’ can put just as much of an arse-whipping on you if you get too close. While not as accurate at medium ranges as the ‘A’, the horde of Streaks that successfully lock you are

sure to generate a few snake-eye crits. And don’t even talk about how fast this thing will chew up vehicles.

It’s also a bad idea to approach this thing from behind, as two of the four Streak 6’s are aimed rearward. With plenty of ammo to spare (45 shots), you’ll be firing rockets at people all day (hey, your bound to miss a few lock-on rolls, so the launchers will last longer than the 10-12 rounds the ammo suggests). This is especially nice with the new any-arc firing rules they re-instituted in the BMR.

For ranged killing power, those scary twin particle cannons can give your target his final headache. Watch the heat, though. The ‘D’ is unforgiving of poor heat management, and ammo explosions are never fun, even for the Clans.

‘D’ Tactics:

This design is murder at any range, provided the rolls are 6 or less to hit, since streaks that don’t lock are effectively worthless. Just don’t get an itchy trigger finger if you’ve got Ele’s mounted over the SRM ports...

If you’re worried about lots of vehicles or being surrounded, maybe the ‘D’s all around fire will make you feel better.

S&S: A must-have for missile and crit-roll freaks. Ranks right up there with the 4 LB-10X AC *Annihilator* for slowing down a game with a lot of small-damage, crit-producing rolls...also makes life tough for those Inner Sphere tankers...

‘H’ Variant:

First, let me say I’m not at all impressed with Heavy Lasers. These things belong on obsolete second-line assault mechs, not the front-line fighters. Still, a head-chopper is a head-chopper, even if you suffer an automatic -1 penalty. The ‘H’ carries a large Heavy laser in each arm. Unfortunately, the 18 double heat sinks just don’t allow you to move and fire both with out a hike up Heat-Trail.

The ‘Good’ news? You get two nice LRM-20’s and all the ammo you can stomach. With the ER-small added as an after thought, you can do great long and mid-ranged damage. The four tons of LRM ammo let you pack a few custom rounds

for thundering or swarming the your unwashed I.S. cousins.

'H' Tactics:

Range, range, range! If they get smart-alecky and come in close, hold your ground and give them a double dose of Heavy Laser Head-Choppin'...provided you don't miss because of the -1. Not the best *Mad Cat* to have by any means, but a tyrant that still demands respect, especially in prolonged ranged firefights.

S&S: Anything in a pinch. And you're sure to do all the pinching if you have a hot pilot and the enemy can't stay out at 16 hexes for some reason...

'S' Variant:

Ouch. I've got mixed feelings about this mech. I love it, but I also know it's an ammo-box that can overheat if used wrong. Apart from the 'Pryde' *Timber Wolf* (too personal a mech to be called a true variant for review purposes) that appeared in 'Tukkayid' (or the one in the MF: UK scenario pack, 'Inbound' used by the same Falcon), the 'S' is the sole published variant that mounts jump jets. And it sure as hell has enough pulses to keep hitting when you use the jets.

What amazed and annoyed me was the use of far too many SRM 6 launchers. Two would have been more than enough. In fact, an anti-missile system or two and a Active Probe or ECM would have worked wonders for a variant supposedly designed for city fighting.

'S' Tactics:

You sure don't want this thing getting anywhere behind you, which is exactly the tactic to use most often with this beast. I've used this variant the most when my commander needed maneuverability his 'A' couldn't provide, and apart from the heat, I've never been disappointed.

The 'S' is the best in-fighter of the *Mad Cat* series. Don't waste time sniping with the single large pulse unless the battle's really small. The intimidation factor of this jumping arsenal is enough to make veteran players act with unusual

caution when fighting against the 'S' in the city or other movement-impeding areas.

I'm sure Solaris warriors would kill their mothers (and their rival's mothers as well...what the hell, they'd probably do it for a *Cicada*) for a chance to compete in a Class 5 arena with a *Mad Cat* 'S'. When engaging other brawlers like the *Gyr* with the Ultra-20, hang back and fight a pulse war. Use that extra 1 jump MP to make him fight on your terms. If he's loaded for long range, close to where jets and SRMs will make a difference.

I managed to take down a certain player's commander's Ghost Bear *Masakari* 'C' with this baby the first time I got behind him. The 'A' wouldn't have let me get there.

S&S: A great weapons load-out on a highly mobile, heavily armored beast. Bait for rangers, though, so demands constant cover.

House Rules:

Well, there's not much to write about for the House Rules for the newer TROs. You can well-imagine the *Mad Cat* suffers few disadvantages and enjoys many advantages (unless you believe that bunk about not being able to keep up with its star-mates. You know the one...it's in the fluff text for that awful mech touted as the *Mad Cat*'s replacement...)

OVERALL RATINGS(from 1-10)*:

Mad Cat Prime:	=	7
Mad Cat 'A':	=	9
Mad Cat 'B':	=	3
Mad Cat 'C':	=	5
Mad Cat 'D':	=	7
Mad Cat 'H':	=	6
Mad Cat 'S':	=	8

[*Note that this rating is based on an over-all comparison of mechs from a similar tech era. Also bear in mind that the rating applies to mechs of roughly the same weight class. A '6' rated mech of heavy design might or might not be a match for a '6' rated medium mech. The number rating from this gazette is not meant to replace BV, but to provide the reader with some feel of how the mech stacks up when comparing its inherent strengths and weaknesses.]

THE 4TH WAR

Giest Peninsula Dam

Kawich,, Capellan Confederation

08:45 AM, July 6th, 3028

You know the feeling you get when things are TOO quiet? Well, that's about how I feel right now. The place is supposed to be crawling with tanks, but I'll be damned if I can see any. We're here on Kawich as part of the infiltration force that's supposed to soften the Capellans for a bigger main thrust. With all that such missions entail, it's no surprise we're supposed to blow a large dam to isolate the militia's ground tanks. Some fool Liao ordered them to wait here on the Giest Peninsula. What the hell was he thinking? You never bottle up your ground-pounders like that.

We blow the dam, and his forces are trapped on the small tip of this planet's biggest continent. Well, after a HALO night drop with chaff pods and ungodly ECM, we pretty much landed right where we were supposed to. That dam stood out like a neon sign, all big and ghostly white in the moonlight. Timor's lance is scouting the approach right now, but so far it's a cakewalk. That's what's got me spooked. Ah. Timor's hailing on tight beam.

"What's up, Probe-1?"

"Heh. Your gonna *love* this. The target's garrisoned by all of a whopping four *Scorpion* light tanks."

I almost laughed, if it hadn't been the real deal. *Scorpions* are as low as you can get in the tank-crew profession. Under gunned, under armored and slow as hell, you're days were pretty much numbered if you got shackled with *Scorpion* duty. A lot of malcontents ended up there, and a lot died there.

"I don't know, Tim. You get any other readings? Anything? I mean background static, too. Anything at all?"

"Nada, boss. The *Scorps* are it as far as my snoop-gear can tell. But infantry are hard to spot with *any* sensor gear. And this *would* be the place to use them."

I had to agree with that...there were a lot of places for boot-sloggers to hunker down around

the area. Lots of boulders that were drained clear of their sediment due to run off from the dam.

"Riggs, you got that satellite link hooked in yet?"

"Yeah boss. The valley's *real* pretty... hehe. Hell, I might build a house up there on--"

"That's enough. Just patch me in."

The feed took a second, but pretty soon a morning visual of our location popped in. Thank god for geo-sync orbit satellites. The morning sun negated any thermal blur we might have made, so visual was all there was. I can barely make out our units and I know right where we are. Still, something bugged me.

"Riggs, can you give me access to past visuals? Like midnight or there about?"

"What for?"

"Just do it, damn it. That's an order." I growled. Within another two minutes some stills flashed on my vis-box. Nothing.

"Give me thermal."

Bingo! Four large red plumes, which could only be mech fusion engines, and a bunch of smaller yellow ones dotted the screen. The little ones were definitely infantry. Where the plumes from the mechs stood, there were now suspiciously large boulders or other flotsam from the dam's run-off.

"Okay, people! Drop your c—ks and grab your socks. Liao's on to us and it's game time!" I yelled, 'Patch in to channel 00-3. Assigning you each your targets as you download...."

SITUATION:

Elements of Special Actions Unit *Bravo* were assigned to eliminate Target #4 before the opening invasion of Kawich. Target #4 was a large dam constructed on the Fu-Shaun River built to provide hydrodynamic power and irrigation control to the peninsula's lowlands. Maneuvering through a highly dangerous night drop with heavily shielded battlemech drop pods, the SAU successfully navigated the drop almost on top of their objective.

Unusual caution on the SAU's leader's part prevented disaster. It was later learned that a Maskarovka sleeper agent had managed to get word to House Liao of the mission prior to the SAU's landing. What was supposed to be a

Capellan ambush was quickly turned around by the crack SAU mechwarriors.

SETUP:

Lay out two fairly open terrain map sheets, short edges touching.



Designate a short end as east. That end is completely blocked by the level 10 high dam. The north and south edges (the long sides of the maps) are also blocked by level 10 valley walls. Lay out 15 counters representing boulder piles. Treat these as Level 1 rough hexes. All woods hexes are considered light. The defender sets up first. The attacker enters from the west on Turn #1.

ATTACKER:

The Attacker is SAU *Bravo*, one of several insurgent units that received little notoriety (though their commanders said *any* notoriety was too much) after the war. These skilled mechwarriors are also trained demolitions experts and have extensive experience in Black Opps.

Command Lance:

C.O. (*Name Classified*) VCT-9A *Victor* (G: 2/P: 3)
 Agent Green GRF-3N *Griffin* (G: 3/P: 4)
 Agent Red GHS-4 *Grasshopper* (G: 3/P: 4)
 Agent Blue HTC-3F *Hatchetman* (G: 3/P: 4)

RECON LANCE:

Lt. White PHX-1D *Phoenix Hawk* (G: 2/P: 3)
 Agent White VLK-1A *Valkyri* (G: 3/P: 4)
 Agent Brown STG-3R *Stinger* (G: 2/P: 3)
 Agent Black LCT-1V *Locust* (G: 3/P: 4)

The Recon lance enters the western edge of the map on Turn #1. The Command lance enters the western edge on Turn #3. The SAU's goal is to destroy the dam. To accomplish this, a total of 400 pts of damage must be inflicted to one hex. Three rounds after this is accomplished, the dam collapses and all units on the dam map are

destroyed, on round 5 after the destruction, all units who have not retreated off the west edge are considered destroyed.

DEFENDER:

The defender is House Liao's Third Confederation Reserve Cavalry, assigned to ambush the Davions. The Liao player sets four counters on the map, representing his 'hidden' battlemechs. Write down the type of mech on the bottom of the counter and place each on a rubble hex at least 10 hexes away from any other Liao battlemech, but do not reveal the model to the Davion player.

Thus, the Davions know the location of the battlemechs, but not what mech is in each location. What the Davions do NOT know is the location of four *Hetzer Wheeled Assault Guns*, or the foot platoons of infantry (3 SRM, 3 MG) hidden among the rocks. Because of the nature of the ambush, the *Hetzers* are only considered to be in improved positions while in their starting hexes.

If and when the *Hetzers* leave their starting rough hex, that hex will again fall under normal terrain restrictions (i.e. the *Hetzers* may not move back into their starting hex, as it is now a normal rough hex). The lance of *Scorpion* Light Tanks starts adjacent to each other two hex rows away from the dam.

Hetzers may start in any rough hex (including those containing mechs or infantry). Infantry may start in any space. The Liao battlemechs may not open fire until one of their number is first fired on, any unit comes within 10 hexes of their position, any other friendly non-mech unit (including the dam) is fired at by the Davion force, or four rounds have elapsed.

Third Confederation Reserve Cavalry:

Capt. Tong Luew *Cataphract* (G: 2/P: 3)
 Sgt. Prax Drew *MAD-3L Marauder* (G: 3/P: 4)
 MW LinYue CNT-9A *Centurion* (G: 4/P: 5)
 MW Irons CPLT-1A *Catapult* (G: 4/P: 5)

Vehicle Lance #1:

Lt. Pierce *Hetzer W.A.G.* (G: 3/P: 4)
 Sgt. Brown *Hetzer W.A.G.* (G: 4/P: 5)
 Pvt. Gates *Hetzer W.A.G.* (G: 4/P: 5)
 Pvt. Whune *Hetzer W.A.G.* (G: 4/P: 5)

Vehicle Lance #2:

Lt. Lee *Scorpion* Light Tank (G: 2/P: 3)
 Sgt. Taigu *Scorpion* Light Tank (G: 4/P: 5)
 Pvt. Jeebs *Scorpion* Light Tank (G: 3/P: 4)
 Pvt. Kindel *Scorpion* Light Tank (G: 4/P: 5)

Infantry Company:

3 Platoons of SRM Infantry
 3 Platoons of MG Infantry

Victory Conditions:

The Davions win a decisive victory if they destroy the dam and escape with at least four functional mechs. They win a minor victory if they destroy the dam and retreat with less than four mechs. Any other result is a failure (the bridge must be destroyed to achieve any kind of a victory).

The Liao player can only win a major victory, and only by successfully defending the dam. Loses to the Liao forces are irrelevant if they can keep the Davions from destroying the dam, so there is no minor victory possible for the Capellan player.

CAMPAIGN CORNER:

The following series of battles were actually fought in my house campaign. Forgive any major deviations from 'official' sources you may find. The current series deals with a T.o.A. we played out among the Smoke Jaguars, of which one faction was assisted by Clan Nova Cat (no, they helped the bad guys).

*Dropship 'Jaguar Pride', Turtle Bay
 Smoke Jaguar Occupation Zone
 4 December, 3058*

Galaxy Commander Jin Mehta leaned back into the comfortable judge's seat, a smug grin etched across her scarred face. She thumbed the black medallion, the Jaguar Clan's marker for Dezgra, between her thumb and forefinger. Assembled around the half-crescent bench, similar to the one found in the audience chamber

of the Grand Council, were other shadowy shapes. Mehta knew them all, and whether she admired, hated or feared them, they, like herself, were all true-born, blood-named warriors of Clan Smoke Jaguar.

All save one.

While she held nothing but contempt for Clan Nova Cat, Jin was thankful for one of their warriors. After all, it *was* Star Captain Price Hardo had brought the necessary evidence needed to make tonight's pleasant diversion possible. Even so, two empty chairs separated the Nova Cat warrior from his nearest Jaguar counter-part. Jin scanned the darkened chamber, watching the shapes quietly confer in a dozen conferences.

All knew the outcome of this Trial of Grievance even before evidence would be presented. The 4th Jaguar Dragoons would be labeled Dezgra...disgraced.. and it's members disbanded and sent to separate garrison units, or even better, if Jin could make it possible, relegated to non-warrior castes. Judging by the significant amount of hostility present in the chamber, the Galaxy Commander thought the latter highly possible.

The interior of the room had been deliberately designed to make accused persons feel isolated and small. A single shaft of light beamed down onto the chamber's central floor, below the council bench. The only reflection in the room rebounded from the crimson and yellow Smoke Jaguar symbol emblazoned on the floor. From this location, a person's judges could only be vaguely seen in the red glow given off of each council member's data-screen.

Even the area to the rear of an accused person offered no sanctuary, for two Jaguar Elementals, unarmored but no less impressive, guarded the great doors to the council. These fearsome bailiffs were only evident after a person walked into the hall, their strategic locations a warning the person on trial should not attempt a hasty egress, especially without the council's permission. Glancing at his chronometer, Jin stood with a gesture for silence. Angrily, she scanned the room.

"It is past the appointed time! Star Captain Torc further dares to show his slight regard for our customs, even before this tribunal! I immediately call for-" Before Jin could finish her rhetoric, the chamber doors opened with

authority, catching even the battle-seasoned Elementals off guard. In strode yet another Elemental, this one, however, was fully armored in his fearsome power-suit.

The bright red unit designation "4th" could clearly be seen on the suit's shoulder guards. Clapsed in the suit's talon-like right claw was a small black box, a portable comm device that would project holo-images from the distant battlefield to any area without a proper holo-tank. All of the council had risen at the armored trooper's entrance.

"What is the meaning of this outrage, elemental?", Jin snarled, " You know well that no form of battle gear is to be brought into this court!"

The giant seemed to study the other Jaguar warriors, pausing only briefly when it noticed the Nova Cat warrior. Then, with almost gingerly grace, it set the comm box on the council floor, and stepped back a pace. After a brief flicker, a holo image sprang into being above the box, distorting and then fully filling one third of the hall.

"Greetings, Galaxy Commander. I trust I am not too late?" The image of Star Captain Torc gave the slightest sarcastic smile.

"Outrageous!" Jin growled, with such vigor she nearly plummeted the fifteen feet to the hall's floor. "Star Captain Torc, I demand that you surrender yourself to your subordinates immediately. This stunt of yours will cost you dearly! Your command, certainly. Perhaps even your life!" Jin was livid, effusing each syllable with hatred, and the warriors in the chamber echoed her feelings with curses.

"I am afraid not, Galaxy Commander. I have no intention of losing anything, specially to a pride of mewling kittens such as yourselves. I have been aware of this concentrated effort to abolish the 4th Jaguar Dragoons even before Lyndel Showers was killed. I have neither the patience nor the desire to play the silly games Epsilon Galaxy's upper echelon has been noted for.

Pass whatever judgments you wish gentlemen. I will follow it up with the proper demand for a Trial of Refusal. I merely wished to make my presence felt, beseeching any true warriors present to study the 4th's impressive battle honors. Take this into account when you vote for the Trial odds."

Jin had grown coldly calm, slowly shaking her head.

"No, Star Captain. This goes beyond any mere Trial of Grievance. Your effrontery cannot go unpunished. Because of your unit's continuous disregard for orders, your unauthorized dalliances into Nova Cat space, and your failure to completely destroy the Kurita mercenary unit you have continuously struggled against, I must now call not for a Trial of Refusal, or even Absorption, but a Trial of Annihilation! How vote we all?"

Jin turned to the council, hurrying the vote faster than strict protocol required. The image of Torc waited patiently for the tally, his face unreadable. After reading the total, Jin slowly turned toward the hologram. A smile broadened across her face, the leer of a shark.

"It is unanimous. You and your unit shall be destroyed, Star Captain Torc. I will dispatch our nearest units. You will not escape." Torc regarded Jin with the look an unimpressed instructor gives a sibko member who fails his first mech-walk exercise.

"I have already told you, Jin Mehta, I do not plan to do anything you suggest. My forces are already in place. As I am the hunted, it is my right to choose the time and location of the Trial. I will communicate their positions and disposition immediately." The image started to fade, then sprang to life again.

"One last thing, Star Commander. The mercenaries you speak of...they fought with honor. They displayed more skill than any unit we have battled, Inner-Sphere or clan. They were the best. They could not destroy us. Neither will you. Remember this well, Jin. If you set down on Hanover, I will turn your omni-mech into your funeral pyre. Bargained well and done, Galaxy Commander. Star Captain Torc out."

The image faded, and the Dragoon elemental picked up the box, saluted, about-faced and exited the chamber amidst shouts and curses. Undaunted, Jin turned to the assembled warriors.

"Sons and daughters of the Jaguar, and the wronged unit of our brother in Clan Nova Cat, let the bidding begin..."

*Northern outpost #12, Hanover
Smoke-Jaguar Occupation Zone
12 December, 3058*

Snow blew over the canopy of Star Commander Blarney's *Warhawk*, hissing like the serpent he thought of as he watched it slither in the wind's touch. He settled back into the Omni-mech's command couch, staring pensively at the primary monitor.

"It is getting worse, as predicted. Aff, bondsman Gimp?" There was a brief pause, then slight static impinged on Gimp's reply:

"Aff, Star Commander. I am having difficulty even maintaining a sensor lock on the Miner Mech decoys. My last data-link with the weather satellite indicated a significant increase in intensity in our sector. In a few moments, we will be in the heart of a blizzard."

Blarney listened to the wind a moment more. He knew the opposing 7th Jaguar Dragoons were excellent warriors, but even he was skeptical the enemy would attempt a combat drop in such severe conditions. A well-clothed man would last no more than an hour in the gale outside, and with the scant garments all mechwarriors wore, ejection in the middle of combat here would be the same as dying in an exploding mech.

Blarney examined the 4th's battle strategy again. His star had had over a week to plan their defense, and not one hour had been lost. Outpost #12 was located far above the Arctic Circle of Hanover, an environment enshrouded year round with deep snow and hurricane force winds.

Surprisingly, the horseshoe shaped valley where Outpost #12 was located allowed small clumps of hardy indigenous trees to take seed, especially near the base of the bowl, where conditions were just slightly more hospitable. The former Kuritan residents had carved a series of mines out of the granite of the valley's central slope. Blarney had used the Miner Mechs to carve ten-meter deep trenches from the scattered clumps of trees to the fang-like mouth of the cave.

There were small inclines in the trenches that led from the pines, concealing the 4th's Omni's below the waist. The trees effectively covered the tops of the war machines, especially after snow had formed drifts overnight. Sturdy wooden planks covered the trenches, preventing snow from filling them. These in turn had been sown with small demolition explosives that would clear away the planks and allow the 4th's mechs free movement through the deep snows.

The three biggest mechs of the star, Gimp's bird-like *Marauder IIC*, mech warrior Fozzy's *Turkina* and Blarney's own *Warhawk* were strung out in a hidden line at approximately 150-meter intervals, providing the assault mechs with interlocking fields of fire. The two Omnis were configured with energy weapons to take advantage of the frigid temperatures. Even the *Marauder* would gain from the cold, firing all its weapons that warmer temperatures would have prohibited.

In addition, each assault mech was assigned a point of Elemental battle armor, painted in the traditional winter camouflage. Within the mouth of the mine, which was also rigged with demolition charges, Star Commander Pyra waited in ambush, her *Night Gyr* configured for lethal close-in battle. Mechwarrior Donnel's *Storm Crow*, with a similar weapons package, waited in the shadows to the left of the mine's mouth. Two more points of Elementals had also concealed themselves in the inky blackness.

The plan called for the 4th Dragoons to hold their fire until all three outer-ring mechs could concentrate their fire on a single enemy, more than once if possible, and then fade out of sight toward the mine entrances. Between the 4th's mechs and the perimeter fence surrounding the compound was a vast field of thick whiteness, snow drifts nearly as deep as a mech's hip.

Such terrain was impossible to navigate at anywhere near a mech's maximum speed, and even the lightest machine could become hopelessly bogged down if the pilot were foolish. The heaviest mechs would suffer even more. Such slow moving units made excellent targets. The interior of the base itself was constructed of half a dozen reinforced buildings, surrounding a large propane and diesel tank/generator.

An icy road led off into the howling winds and white no-man's land on the opposite side of the compound. The base's hovercrafts, the most feasible vehicles for such environments, were stacked like cordwood outside the main gate, effectively blocking easy access to the base. The conditions could hardly be better for the 4th's battle-plan. Now, all that was missing were the 7th's mechs to shoot up.

Blarney permitted himself a smile. His star-mates were a very deadly composite of warriors, and he had enjoyed many successes with them since the Smoke Jaguar clan had began the

invasion, but somewhere in the back of his mind, he felt an ominous foreboding. Un-clan-like as it may have been, the Star Captain seemed to be suffering the most severe case of pre-battle jitters he had ever experienced.

Twice, he felt the urge to have the unit stand down, intending to site the weather as a logical reason preventing the coming battle. Both times, he suppressed the feelings with an almost super-human effort. *'I have seen too many battles to be labeled a coward. I do not understand my unease now'* he thought.

Suddenly, the M.A.D. flashed repeatedly on the *Warhawk's* tactical display screen, dispelling his gloomy thoughts.

"Dragoons, it seems the 7th intends to show after all. Remember, this is a trial of annihilation. Dueling rules do not apply. Stick to the battle plan." A series of affirmatives squelched through Blarney's comm set. Star Commander Pyra and Mechwarrior Donnel also acknowledged from within the caves.

Blarney studied his mech's screens, attempting to decipher the location of the approaching enemy. He frowned for a moment, perplexed by the readout.

"Dragoons, apparently at least half of the 7th have decided to drop regardless of weather conditions. I mark four mechs entering the lower atmosphere. Chaff from their re-entry cocoons is working. No I.D. yet. I also read three more ground-bound mechs entering sensor range beyond the other side of the compound."

"Aff, Star Commander. Sensors relate two mediums and one heavy mech. A *Huntsman*, *Black Python*, and one design I am unfamiliar with. Its seismic vibrations place it between forty and fifty tons. Snow cushioning makes exact weight imprecise"

"Confirmed, bondsman Gimp. It seems we are enough of a disgrace to send an obsolete mech like the *Python* against us. We will teach these Surats the meaning of humility."

Out of the blowing mists, the four dropping mechs appeared like misty apparitions. Each pilot compensated for the gale winds with masterful, almost unnatural, precision. The lead mech, another *Warhawk*, landed with a muffled *'whump'* in the thick snow surrounding a copse of trees one hundred meters from the road, and its star-mates followed suit, landing less than fifty meters apart.

Blarney had to admire skill that could manage a close-order combat drop in such conditions. From across the compound, other gloomy figures emerged from the swirling whiteness. The bird-like silhouette of the deadly *Black Python* was the most identifiable. The heavy mech smashed through a wall of snow surrounding the icy roadway, turned toward the main gate and its pile of hovercraft, and promptly fell foreword as the pilot lost his balance on the unexpectedly icy pavement.

Recovering quickly, the mech carefully rose to its feet, now heading for the perimeter fence with noticeably more caution. Three steps from the barrier, the *Python's* star-mates opened fire, reducing the obstruction to molten slag that hissed when it touched the snow. The *Black Python* continued foreword without breaking stride and entered the compound, it's arms tracking back and forth, covering any places an enemy mech could possibly hide.

When no attacker materialized, the machine waited for the other members of its force to arrive. In short order, a *Huntsman*, *Nova* and the two swiftest mechs, a *Storm Crow* and a new *War-Wolf* Omni-mech, safely navigated the perimeter. The squads of battle-armor attached to each of these machines made no attempt to deploy.

The 7th's two most powerful mechs, the *Warhawk* and a *Timber Wolf*, had a rougher go of it. The snowdrifts played havoc with the heavier machine's advance, causing them to fall a good distance behind their companions. With an almost casual motion, the gun pods that were the *Timber Wolf's* hands came up. Twin streams of charged particles lashed out like lightning bolts, tearing through and igniting the huge propane tank near the center of the encampment.

A monstrous fireball rose up as super-hot tongues of flame lashed out, engulfing three of the buildings in a blazing firestorm. The adjoining diesel tank blew as well, showering the area in petroleum.

"It would appear the 7th can only make war on buildings." an anonymous voice blurted over the 4th's channel.

"Do not jest yet, mechwarrior. Note that the 7th's lightest mechs carry points of Elementals. They will be dangerous should they make it to the mines. It seems the bidding for this force was won by the Nova Cats. The unusual mech you

detected bears their markings, and appears to be directing the 7th's actions."

As Blarney spoke, the entire force of enemy mechs fired and reduced the closest building to a heap of burning rubble.

"Obviously, they suspect entrenched Elementals.", Gimp noted.

Now with a contemptuous gait, the *Nova* bolted forward along the inner fence line. The *War-Wolf* to the right of the fifty-ton machine also advanced, jogging toward the middle of the camp. The *Nova* continued forward, skirting the outer edges of the burning buildings, until it caught direct sight of a trio of Miner Mechs.

Instantly, both arms of the clan machine came up and a dozen medium-class lasers tore into the closest Miner. With no armor to speak of, and only a huge mining drill in the right arm, the Miner Mech could hardly resist such a furious assault. The industrial machine seemed to hunch over in pain for the briefest moment, before its upper torso suddenly erupted into a shower of ruined metal.

In less than two seconds, the entire upper body of the machine had been reduced to vapor. The legs remained standing for only a second longer, before crashing into the burning building in front of them. The *War-Wolf* rounded the opposite corner of the same building and paused, as if trying to understand what had occurred.

Unfortunately for the *War-Wolf*, both he and 7th Dragoon *Nova* had just entered the primary weapon range of all three of the hidden 4th Dragoon assault mechs. Star Commander Blarney brought the *Warhawk's* quad PPC's up and foreword. The high winds prevented any chance of a hit with missile fire, so only the PPCs were on line.

"This one is mine, 4th. Save your fire for the *Nova*." As soon as the golden dot in his sights pulsed, all four particle beams coalesced on the hapless *War-Wolf*. Range and conditions prevented all four from hitting their mark, but the two beams that connected both struck home dead center on the medium-weight machine.

The first stripped the Ferro-fibrous armor away like a whiplash across bare skin, and the second cored straight through the engine and gyro, blowing a gold rimmed hole out the mech's back armor, rudely dislodging the Elemental trooper who clung there.

Like an exhausted man, the monstrous machine seemed to go limp, then simply collapsed in on its self. As if they were fleas leaving a burning dog, the other Elementals leaped away into the snow...

SITUATION:

Rogue 4th Smoke Jaguar Dragoons have determined they would be better served breaking off from their poorly managed Clan, when it was determined that certain high-ranking personnel were determined to destroy the unit for past slights incurred by the unit's dead former commander.

Star Captain Torc 'mis-jumped' his unit into Nova Cat space during war exercises. What followed were several Trials of Possession for Clan Nova Cat jump-ship and drop-ship assets, as well as raids on Nova Cat supply depots. After successfully completing these initial raids over a three-month period, the 4th returned to its posting on Hanover, there to complete final tasks before departing clan space completely.

The Nova Cats, however, sent a courier into Smoke Jaguar territory, demanding that the Jaguar upper echelon do something about the raids. This action completely flabbergasted the Jaguar command, which had no idea what the 4th had been up to. Rather than laugh at or deride the Nova Cat emissary, as would have been the case if any other Jaguar unit was concerned, Jin Mehta used the raids as an excuse to deal with the upstart unit once and for all.

SETUP:

NOTE: The following scenario is very detailed. Inexperienced players may wish to simplify it. This scenario works best when the attacker does not know where the defender's units are or that Ishiyama Solaris maps are going to be used.

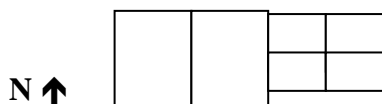
Lay out two battletech maps, with the white sides facing up. The smaller four maps are Ishiyama maps from the Solaris Boxed Set. These should be set so that the southwestern small map has the small lake on it and what can pass as a mine opening. All the Ishiyama maps

should be linked to at least two of their smaller kin.

If these are unavailable, use any hill maps but consider all hills to the solid rock of mind shafts. Level 0 terrain has a ceiling 2 levels overhead, making jumping here impossible for non-Elementals. There is an underground lake on the southwestern small map, with a small bridge that must be crossed to enter the caverns.

This lake is Level 1 deep, and both the cave entrance and this bridge are rigged with explosives (the bridge has a CF of 50). The tunnel entrance here can be collapsed as long as a friendly unit has LOS to the opening. Any mech caught in the collapse (i.e. in the hex) on a weapons fire phase when the opening is detonated will take 20 damage in 5 pt clusters to the front chart.

EACH elemental in the hex takes 5 points of damage. Buried mechs and Elementals can free themselves in 2 turns. Firing at a buried Elemental or mech is at a +2 bonus to hit.



Place 6 2-hex Level 2 buildings in the center of the two large maps. These are Medium and each has 40 CF. A 15 hex square chain fence surrounds the compound. A 3 hex wide plowed road leads from the center of west fence side to the edge of the board. Anyone stepping on this slick path is not subject to bog-down (see below) but must make a piloting skill check when running on any part of it, or a Pilot Check at +1 penalty when jumping onto it.

There are 9 light wood hexes within 3 hexes of the East edge of the eastern map. The 4th Dragoons may use these woods as hiding places. Assume there is a direct line from these woods to the mouth of the caverns. Any fire at mechs in these trenches is at partial cover. Mechs in the trenches are not subject to bog-down.

Units that travel cross-country are subject to bog-down. The defender has four Miner Mech decoys to place wherever he wish's. Miner Mechs have no weapons, though they can be used to lure the 4th's enemies into vulnerable positions. These units should be placed on the board with dummy counters. Do not reveal a

Miner Mech's true nature until an enemy unit has LOS and is within 10 hexes of the dummy counter.

This scenario also uses High Winds and Cold Weather. All long range weapons fire is at -2. All medium range fire is at -1. All Missile Weapons are at -4 to missile hit chart. A result less than 2 mean no missiles hit. Streaks use the normal charts for regular SRM's to determine how many hits. Each mech's heat sinks shunt 50% greater heat. (20 DHS would negate 60 heat!) Mechwarriors out in the cold take 1 pilot hit each round (and must make a consciousness roll) until a friendly unit moves into their hex.

ATTACKER:

The attackers are elements of the 7th Jaguar Dragoons and 44th Nova Cat Cavaliers. Half of these mech units may make a combat drop anywhere on the map. Normal descent rolls are made with a +2 modifier due to the storm. All non-dropping mechs may enter from the western side of the maps on Turn #1. Elementals may not combat-drop in this scenario.

7th Jaguar Dragoons

St.Cpt. Bemire Showers (G: 2/P: 3) *Masakari 'C'*
 MW Ditz (G: 2/P: 3) *Mad Cat 'A'*
 MW Sancho (G: 3/P: 4) *Ryoken 'C'*
 MW Kurn (G: 3/P: 4) *Viper*
 MW Samo (G: 3/P: 4) *BlackHawk Primary*

PC Owen + 4 Elementals (Mounted on *BlackHawk P*)
 PC Thiger +4 Elementals (Mounted on *Ryoken*)

44th Nova Cat Cavaliers

St.Cpt. Rezo Wirth (G: 1/P: 3) *Nibori-Nin 'B'*
 MW Gangue (G: 3/P: 4) *War-Wolf Primary*

Defender:

The defenders are elements of the rouge 4th Jaguar Dragoons. Seeing that their clan had become a perversion of what the Jaguar stood for, this unit has decided to follow its own vision of the clan way. To avoid endless pursuit, the unit has decided to fight for what it believes in. If successful, the unit will be relatively free of harassment as it makes its way out of Clan space, since the Trial will confirm their decision.

4th Jaguar Dragoons

Star Com. Blarney (G: 2/P: 2) *Masakari* Primary
 MW Gimp (G: 2/P: 3) *Marauder IIC*
 MW Fozzy (G: 3/P: 3) *Turkina 'B'*
 St. Com. Pyra (G: 2/P: 3) *Night Gyr 'A'*
 MW Donnell (G: 2/P: 4) *Ryoken 'A'*

PC Higen + 4 Elementals
 PC Jarrs + 4 Elementals
 PC Togen + 4 Elementals

Victory Conditions:

This is a Trial of Annihilation. The last surviving mech wins. Historically, since the campaign was open-ended, the 7th Dragoon players managed to limp the *Viper* away with a water-filled left-leg that breached when the bridge collapsed and he hit the icy lake. The 4th suffered the loss of the *Masakari* from a cockpit hit. In all other aspects, it was a crushing defeat for the Nova Cats and the 7th. A minor note is the replacement of the player's custom Lightning Omni-mech with the *War-Wolf*, for which I have statistics.

The *Nibori-Nin* also replaced a mech called the Radius, again for which I have no statistics, though I recall the weights were similar. The pilot names have been changed to protect the Ryan, the goofy player. I don't think Star Trek fans would cotton to my head shooting of a clan warrior named Star Commander Worf...

Special Equipment:

NAME: WAR-WOLF (*Mako*) Omni-mech
 TONNAGE: 50
 TECHNOLOGY LEVEL: Level 2 (Clan)

WALK: 7
 RUN: 11 (14)
 JUMP: 0

ENGINE: 350 XL 15.0
 GYRO: 4.0
 HEAT SINKS: 10 (20) 8.0
 INTERN. STRUCTURE: 2.5 [ENDO-STEEL]
 ARMOR: 164 pt. 8.5
 [FERRO-FIB]

H: 9

CT/(R): 23/8
 ST/(R): 16/8
 ARM: 15
 LEG: 23

FIXED LOCATIONS:

X2 MASC LL (2.0 tons), 3 Endo LA, 4
 Endo LT, 3 Ferro RA, 4 Ferro RT, 2 XL per
 Side Torso

PRIMARY WEAPONS/EQUIPMENT:

Large Pulse Laser	RA	6.0
Large Pulse Laser	LA	6.0
ER Med. Laser	H	1.0
ER Med. Laser	CT	1.0
Double Heat Sink (1)	RL	1.0

BV: 1,822
 \$: 14, 813, 751

'A' WEAPONS/EQUIPMENT*:

Streak SRM 6	RA	3.0
Streak SRM 6	LA	3.0
ER Med. Laser	RA	1.0
ER Med. Laser	LA	1.0
AMS	H	0.5
SRM Ammo	RA	1.0
SRM Ammo	LA	1.0
AMS Ammo	CT	1.0
Jump Jets (3)	RT	1.5
Jump Jets (3)	LT	1.5
Jump Jet	CT	0.5

BV: 2, 109
 \$: 16, 165, 626

'B' WEAPONS/EQUIPMENT*:

LRM-15	RA	3.0
LRM-15	LA	3.0
ER Med. Laser	H	1.0

ER Med. Laser	CT	1.0	
Artemis IV FCS	RA	1.0	
Artemis IV FCS	LA	1.0	
LRM Ammo (16)	RA	2.0	
LRM Ammo (16)	LA	2.0	

BV: 1,943

\$: 15, 790, 626

'C' WEAPONS/EQUIPMENT*:

Medium Pulse Laser	H	2.0	
Medium Pulse Laser	RA	2.0	
Medium Pulse Laser	RA	2.0	
Medium Pulse Laser	LA	2.0	
Medium Pulse Laser	LA	2.0	
AMS	CT	0.5	
AMS	CT	0.5	
Targeting Computer	RT	2.0	
AMS Ammo (24)	LT	1.0	
Double Heat Sink	LT	1.0	

BV: 2, 199

\$: 14, 905, 626

'D' WEAPONS/EQUIPMENT*:

ER Medium Laser	H	1.0	
ER Medium Laser	CT	1.0	
ER Medium Laser	CT	1.0	
Ultra AC-10	RA	10.0	
Ultra AC Ammo (20)	RA	2.0	

(* No lower arm/hand actuators. The 'D' is missing the actuators in its RA only.)

OVERVIEW:

The Clans call this new design, first introduced in 3056, the *War-Wolf*. The Inner Sphere has dubbed it the *Mako*, due to its incredible bursts of speed. It first made its appearance in Clan Wolf along side the *Fenris* omnimech, acting as

fire support for fast recon and flank stars. Fast, heavily armed and armored, the *Mako* fills several design gaps its sister mech suffers. The Wolf Clan designation for this mech is the *War Wolf*.

Capabilities:

The Primary variant of the *War-Wolf* is the most common, relying on energy weapons to let the mech run far afield in its assigned duties. Twin Large pulse Lasers let the *War-Wolf* provide accurate cover fire for its recon brethren, providing a punch most other recon machines cannot match.

The 'A' variant is a dedicated city fighter, equipped with a host of short-range weapons and jump jets. The support version of the *War-Wolf* provides accurate LRM fire, over thirty missiles in a barrage. Artemis Fire Control increases the accuracy of these missile attacks. Twin ER-medium lasers act as standoff weapons when the missiles run out.

The 'C' Variant is pure close-attack mech, utilizing 5 medium pulse lasers slaved to an advanced targeting computer and sporting twin anti-missile systems to swat down infantry and vehicle missile attacks. In addition, this mech has the feared arm-flip capability.

The 'D' variant of the *War-Wolf* uses the rarely seen Ultra AC-10 and a trio of ER medium lasers. This machine suffers from limited ammunition and limited punch with the three lasers, and is thus seldom used.

Deployment:

So far the *War-Wolf* has been spotted with Clan Wolf, Clan Nova Cat and the late Smoke Jaguar Clan. It is unknown if other clans field this design.

Battle History:

The *War-Wolf*'s of the 351st Battle Cluster of Clan Wolf were instrumental in helping recon stars scout out Jade Falcon positions during the Refusal War. During the battle of Bresno Pass on Wotan, Star Commander Acex destroyed two *Hellhound* battlemechs and severely crippled a *Night Gyr* before his *War-Wolf* was destroyed.

His valiant action earned a brief mention in the Wolf Clan Remembrance, as the recon mechs of his star returned vital information about Falcon mech locations and disposition.

Variants:

None, although the Smoke Jaguars have re-named the mech the *Iron Tiger*.

PARTING SHOTS:

Well, that's another Issue under the bridge. Next month will see the return of the Web Sites column...you should have enough of them to browse over in the letters column till then. I'd like to take the time to say thanks to all the letter-writers.

They inspire this stuff like nothing else. Drop me a line and share your thoughts about anything mech-related. As always, I could use some good mech reviews, scenarios and vehicle submissions. Till then, may you never receive a point blank shot from a hidden *Viper* in your rear-arc...

Steiner defenders on Sudeton in the early days of the invasion, awaiting another thrust by the Falcons...



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