

# **MECHFORCE**<sup>®</sup>

**QUARTERLY**

**VOLUME 5, ISSUE 1**

**\$4.00**



- **Origins and Gen Con Reports**
- **MWII to MW3 Character Conversions**
- **BattleTech<sup>®</sup> Miniatures soon to be Discontinued**

**FASA**  
CORPORATION

# MECHFORSCE QUARTERLY

## VOLUME 5, ISSUE 1

### CONTENTS

Roleplaying 'Mech@ Combat, p. 3  
An exclusive sneak peek at MechWarrior@'s Guide to Solaris VII.

Death From Above, by Jean Rabe, p. 4  
Conventions, contributors and submissions, oh my!

Decipher to Purchase FASA, p. 5  
Read the official version of the news.

Discontinued 'Mech Miniatures List, p. 6  
Find out which 'Mechs you need to have!

Quantum Bandits, by Mark "Jaeger" Garlauskas, p. 7  
Let's take a fresh look at an old MechForce chapter.

Origins and Gen Con Conventions, p. 10  
Take a look at the winners of these tournaments!

Star Dogs, by Janet Pack, p. 13  
A washed-out MechWarrior discovers his chance to be a hero—  
with the help of his four-footed friends.

The Hidden Wars, p. 17  
The BattleTech developers take to the field.

News Flash, by Warner Doles, p. 18  
Our correspondent reports on an exciting Internet slugfest  
between the FASA crew and the BattleForce IRC Strike Force.

MWII to MW3 Conversions, p. 20  
Rules for converting your MechWarrior II characters to the new  
version of the MechWarrior roleplaying game.

Mountains from Styrofoam, by Melvin Frank Darbe, p. 24  
Don't want to shell out the big bucks for prepackaged terrain?  
Buy some Styrofoam and make your own mountains and lakes.

The Fifth Succession War Continues, p. 26  
What has occurred in the Inner Sphere in the past 3 months?

MechForce Top 50, p. 29  
The top 50 ranked BattleTech players ... are you on the list?

Roll Call, p. 30  
Where are the chapters?

BattleTech Licensee Release Schedule, p. 31  
Find out what is new under the sun for BattleTech.

### ATTENTION WEB USERS

In the near future, the all-new MechForce portion of the FASA website will be operational. This section will include boards that allow BT fans to post their own stories, scenarios and designs, and contact other players. Other features will include files for all published record sheets that you can download, and the capability to input your ranked battles on-line. New members will also be able to sign up on the website.

When the website activates, all current MechForce members will receive passcodes for the site. If you are currently active on-line, you can help us send your password by e-mailing your full name and MNA# to [fasamna@aol.com](mailto:fasamna@aol.com).

### ATTENTION MAIL ORDER

The VWE-produced patches are no longer available for order. In addition, we have only limited supplies of all Tyco toys.

### NOTE

Most of the contents of each MechForce Quarterly are created by BattleTech fans. By necessity, this information cannot undergo the same rigorous continuity checking as FASA's sourcebooks. Because we wish articles to appear as they are written, we make no attempt to bring them into line with the published continuity.

Unless otherwise stated, none of the material that appears in MechForce Quarterly is considered part of the BattleTech universe. Also unless otherwise noted, all game rules, weapons and equipment in the MechForce Quarterly are considered Level 3.

### MECHFORSCE QUARTERLY CREDITS

Precentor Tau III	Jean Rabe, Editor
Precentor Chi III	Stacy Nielsen
Design and Layout	John Bridegroom
Primus	Bryan Nystul
Precentor Martial	Randall N. Bills
Precentor ROM	Dan "Flake" Grendell
Cover Art	Mark Gibbons



# MECHWARRIOR'S GUIDE TO SOLARIS VII PREVIEW

## ROLEPLAYING 'MECH COMBAT

What would a trip to Solaris VII be without a visit to the BattleMech duels, either as a participant or a spectator? Well, the following rules add BattleMech combat to the MechWarrior, Third Edition game with enough danger and excitement to keep any 'Mech duel fan coming back for more!

These rules fully integrate BattleMechs and other vehicles into MechWarrior, Third Edition play. Note that, unlike the Vehicular Combat rules found in MW3, these rules are based on the MW3 game system rather than the BattleTech system, and as such the BattleTech game is not needed to play. All you need is a BattleTech record sheet for each 'Mech and vehicle in the game.

By adding BattleTech-scale units to the MechWarrior game, all units in play—from characters on the ground to pilots in their 'Mechs—can participate using the same rules. This streamlines and simplifies play, and the gamemaster can run a combat in gigantic BattleMechs or tanks the same way he would run personal combat, with or without miniatures and hexmaps.

It is important to note that these rules are not intended to replace BattleTech as a tactical combat game. Just as the MW3 rules are not really an infantry-level tactical combat game, these rules are most appropriate for those times when the characters are engaged in a brief skirmish inside vehicles, or when vehicles are part of the opposition. A "stand-up fight" is probably best resolved using the BattleTech rules and the MechWarrior conversions found in the main rulebook.

Using this system, combat is resolved using the MW3 rules and played as a roleplaying situation: the gamemaster establishes the scene, often with only a brief description of the area and the opposition. Then, battle is joined, but it flows as a sort of narrative, rather than a strict simulation of the battle as in BattleTech. The exact positions of 'Mechs and characters on the battlefield need not be tracked, but rather the general positions stated either verbally or sketched out on a sheet of paper, showing available terrain and other features. Rather than determining line-of-sight following strict rules and using a measuring tape, a player can simply state that his 'Mech is "taking cover behind those rocks."

As in personal combat, it is up to the gamemaster to adjudicate such situations and keep the game moving along. There will be some cases where the gamemaster will have to adjudicate special situations, since we don't have space to cover every eventuality here (after all, we already have a 160-page book on 'Mech combat: it's called the BattleTech Master Rules).

Simply put, use these rules to run 'Mech combat like personal combat. Use the BattleTech rules if you want to run 'Mech combat more like a wargame.

### Common Terms

Nearly all rules that apply to BattleMechs apply equally to conventional vehicles such as tanks. For clarity, the rules refer to 'Mechs throughout, even when a rule applies to 'Mechs as well as vehicles. If a rule applies only to BattleMechs or conven-



tional vehicles, it will either be self-explanatory (tanks have no arms to damage, so critical damage rules for arm actuators do not apply) or the rules will specifically say so. In any cases where it seems to be unclear, assume the rule applies to both groups unless it cannot.

### A Note to BattleTech Players

BattleTech players should be aware that these rules are not a direct and literal translation of the BattleTech board game. Certain elements have been altered or simplified to play more easily and work more smoothly with the MW3 system, as well as to offer more options for roleplaying. Differences between the two systems are intentional and were included with good reason. If you want to play standard BattleTech using MechWarrior characters, then continue to use the Vehicular Combat rules found on page 126 of the MW3 rulebook.

Certain rules and equipment were left out of these rules for simplicity's sake, most notably the various kinds of special missile munitions. Enterprising gamemasters should have no trouble adapting these rules for use with MW3 following the example set by the rules here and in the BattleTech Master Rules.

Note that none of the rules in this section should be viewed as official BattleTech rules. Players who adapt some of the rules herein for BattleTech play should consider them Level 3 optional rules.





# DEATH FROM ABOVE

## CONVENTIONS ARE GOOD FOR THE SOUL

I'm convinced of that—conventions being good for the soul. My husband and I help put on a convention each June called Milwaukee Summer Revel. Aside from it being a chance to essentially throw a grand gaming party for all of our far-flung friends, it's a chance to do some good, and feel good in the process. This past Summer Revel we offered a variety of charity events and held a charity auction.

The end result?

We raised more than \$3,300 for the Humane Society of Wisconsin and the Kenosha County Humane Society. Pretty impressive given that our con is small, drawing a mere 125 role-players, board gamers, and miniature fans.

Presenting the checks made our day. It was a treat to watch the shelter workers' eyes pop open and stammer their "thank yous." There are few things better to do with your free time than helping worthy organizations while having fun.

We'll try to do it again next year—raise money at our convention. Maybe we'll even make one of our BattleTech events keyed to our charity. Hmmmmmm.

If you are involved in putting on a convention, consider helping a local organization. It's easy. Just designate a tournament or two as a "benefit event," and the money you collect is turned over to your charity. Conventions across the country do this, including one in Denver, Colorado called BenCon. All of its profits are divided between a couple of organizations. This summer they raised more than \$9,000.

Aside from "doing good," conventions are great for seeing friends. I got to meet several MechForce contributors at Origins, held in Columbus, Ohio over the Fourth of July weekend. And I got to watch several BattleTech games. The dealer's room was rather impressive, and there was a nice display from Ral Partha. I got a chance to chat at length with Ral Partha employees and to thank them for sponsoring a painting competition at Summer Revel. It was also an opportunity to pick up a well-dressed troll figure for Shadowrun.

Okay, enough of conventions. How about some of you guys write in with your own con experiences?

### MechForce Contributors

I've started asking authors to include a bit about themselves with their submissions, and several have complied. Here's some information on a few of this month's contributors.

Melvin Frank Darbe: He's a retired Navy Petty Officer, working full time as a Software Manual writer for mips DATALINE America, Inc. He has written all of their software manuals since 1993. Additionally, he won the 1996 Fiction Writer's Award at Mesa College and published a short story "Resurrection Man" in Visions, a magazine printed by San Diego City Mesa College.

Janet Pack: She lives near picturesque Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, and shares a home with two adorable and some-

times demanding cats. She's the author of dozens of published short stories in the DragonLance line for TSR Books, in Andre Norton's Cat Fantastic anthologies, and in DAW Books' anthologies. She's a chef, a costume designer, an actress in local theater productions, and she's a fan of Mike Stackpole's BattleTech novels.

Warner Doles: He has played BattleTech since the game came out way back when. (He still has the original books, too!) He lives in Burlington, NC, and has been married to a lovely lady named Patty for the past ten years. They have one daughter. Warner is in Loren Coleman's next BattleTech novel as himself, as he won the charity auction last year.

Markus Garlauskas: He's an Army ROTC Cadet and a senior at Kent State University. His hobbies include military history, competitive shooting, writing, and wargaming.

Jason Schmetzer: Jason is a student at Ball State University in Indiana, studying creative writing. He lives with his wife, Adrienne, and tries to persuade people to buy his scribbling. So far he's been somewhat successful.

The next time you submit something to MechForce, include a paragraph about yourself so the rest of the membership can meet you.

### Submissions

I've been taking submissions over the Internet for several months, and things have been going relatively smoothly. However, several contributors are still missing an important element—their name.

When I get a submission with no name attached—frequently E-mail addresses such as Word-O-Blake-13 and Atlas don't provide a clue—I am forced to delete them. I can't print something unless I know who wrote it.

Sometimes submissions come in as attachments, which is the most preferable. However—here comes that wonderful three-syllable word again—the attachments don't have the authors' names on them. Please, Please, PLEASE, if you want your submissions to be considered put your name and address within the E-mail message and your name as a byline on the submission attachment. It's just a few extra keystrokes and it could mean the difference between getting published and getting deleted.

On a humorous note: I recently received an E-mail submission from an author who apologized for not having time to spell-check his submission. He said I'd have to live with his misspellings. Yeah, right. MechForce receives many quality submissions, too many to have to "live with" laziness.

Use your name. And a spellchecker or a dictionary. Those things take you farther faster.

Take Care,

Jean

# PRESS RELEASE

The following press release announced the intention of Decipher Inc. to purchase FASA Corporation. Warren Holland, Decipher's Chairman & CEO subsequently publicly stated Decipher's plan that "the creative and product development staffs of FASA and Ral Partha will remain essentially intact in Chicago and Cincinnati." We all remain dedicated to continuing the high quality of the BattleTech game line and universe now and in the future.

**Friday, July 23, 1999**  
**Norfolk, Virginia**

Decipher Inc. of Norfolk, Virginia and FASA Corporation of Chicago, Illinois jointly announced today that they have signed a letter of intent for Decipher to acquire FASA and its subsidiary, Ral Partha. The purchase is expected to be completed within 60 days.

Warren Holland, Chairman & CEO of Decipher Inc. stated, "We admire the innovation and quality that FASA and Ral Partha bring to the wonderful gaming properties they have created. With the acquisition of this highly-regarded industry giant in role-playing and miniature games, Decipher is very excited to be extending our product range deeper into the adventure gaming genre." Speaking on behalf of FASA, CEO Mort Weisman commented, "The nature of, and the changes in the adventure gaming industry mean that this union between the preeminent collectible card game company and one of the oldest and most respected role-playing and miniatures gaming companies will create a major force in this industry. Decipher's strengths in product development, the web, marketing, and their solid financial resources will combine perfectly with the innovation and imagination that FASA has harnessed in the creation of our gaming worlds."

Founded in 1983, Decipher Inc. is a worldwide leader in the collectible card game industry. Decipher is dedicated to The Art of Great Games®. The company's product lines include the Star Trek™ customizable card game, Star Wars™ customizable card game, Young Jedi™ collectible card game and more. In addition, Decipher's Specialty Products Group produces leading games such as How to Host a Murder®, How to Host a Teen Mystery™, Girl Power™, Pente™, Scratchees™, Rumors™ and more. Visit [www.decipher.com](http://www.decipher.com) for additional product and tournament information, news, contests and interactive features.

Founded by Jordan Weisman and L. Ross Babcock III, FASA Corporation has been creating successful new game worlds since 1980. The current line includes BattleTech®, Shadowrun®, VOR: The Maelstrom™ and Crimson Skies™. FASA has successfully licensed its games for novels, computer games (MechCommander™ and the MechWarrior® series), virtual-reality games, miniatures, toys, a television series, a card game and more. Additional product information can be found at [www.fasa.com](http://www.fasa.com).



# DISCONTINUED MINIATURES



All of the 'Mech miniatures on this list will become unavailable from Ral Partha as of October 1st, 1999. They will be resculpted and re-released as time goes on.

20-636 BSW-X1 Bushwacker  
20-644 PTR-4D Penetrator  
20-648 DMO-1K Daimyo  
20-651 Hunchback IIC  
20-652 Kraken  
20-656 APL-1M Apollo  
20-668 DRT-3S Dart  
20-672 Shadow Cat (Omni)  
20-701 SPR-H5 Sparrowhawk  
20-702 CSR-V12 Corsair  
20-703 STU-K5 Stuka  
20-770 AXM-1M Axman  
20-772 CES-3R Caesar  
20-774 BL-7-KNT Black Knight  
20-797 WR-DG-02FC War Dog  
20-799 Flight Bases (6)  
20-805 FLE-15 Flea  
20-806 Hunter Missile Tank (2)  
20-807 Striker Armored Car (2)  
20-808 Pegasus Light Hover Tank (2)  
20-809 MAL-1R Mauler  
20-810 HTM-27T Hatamoto-Chi  
20-812 RVN-3L Raven  
20-822 Demolisher Super Heavy Tank (2)  
20-823 Kurita Infantry (8mm) 84 pieces

20-824 Davion Infantry (8mm) 84 pieces  
20-828 Savannah Master Hovercraft (4)  
20-845 AS7-D Atlas  
20-847 AWS-8Q Awesome  
20-848 ON1-K Orion  
20-849 CN9-A Centurion  
20-850 FS9-H Firestarter  
20-852 CPLT-C1 Catapult  
20-853 PNT-9R Panther  
20-854 HBK-4G Hunchback  
20-856 ZEU-6S Zeus  
20-857 UM-R60 UrbanMech  
20-860 VTR-9B Victor  
20-861 JM6-S JagerMech  
20-862 STK-3F Stalker  
20-863 CP-10-Z Cyclops  
20-864 HCT-3F Hatchetman  
20-865 COM-2D Commando  
20-866 JVN-10N Javelin  
20-867 ENF-4R Enforcer  
20-868 DRG-1N Dragon  
20-869 JR7-D Jenner  
20-871 VND-1R Vindicator  
20-873 SDR-5V Spider  
20-875 ASN-21 Assassin  
20-876 DV-6M Dervish  
20-882 BNC-3E (BNC-S) Banshee  
20-888 GHR-5H Grasshopper  
20-891 WLF-1 Wolfhound  
20-896 HGN-732 Highlander



# THE QUANTUM BANDITS

## A NEW LOOK AT AN OLD CHAPTER

by Mark "Jaeger" Garlauskas

*The Quantum Bandits Regiment is a BattleTech players' organization that has recently reestablished its chapter membership in MechForce. Some of the Quantum Bandits fictional exploits were featured in Issue 1, Volume 2 of MechForce Quarterly in a short story called "Night of the Red Star." MFQ had an opportunity to interview the Chapter leader of the Bandits, Markus "Jaeger" Garlauskas, recently. The following is a summary of that interview.*

**MFQ:** The Quantum Bandits is one of those chapters whose meeting place is on the Internet. Is it true most of your members have not met each other in person?

**Jaeger:** Yes, that's right. We have several local subgroups that gather for games, and we do try to meet other Bandits when we travel to conventions near their homes. However, most of us have never met in person. We are spread over eleven states, so it is a little difficult!

**MFQ:** So, how many Bandits are there?

**Jaeger:** I'm sorry, that's classified. (Laughs.) Actually, we have nineteen who are currently active, and another five or so in the 'reserves' who are less involved. Most of the latter aren't MechForce members, but we're working on that.

**MFQ:** With so many members in so many places, how do you keep in touch and play games?

**Jaeger:** Our main means of communication is our web page. The page contains a wealth of information on the Quantum Bandits, our structure, and our history. This gives us a real sense of unity. The page also has two message forums, one for planning and conducting games and another for general role-playing, storytelling, and shooting the breeze. We also use E-mail for running the operations of the unit. Most of our actual gaming is done on IRC (Internet Relay Chat). In the past, we've also played games on AOL chat, GameStorm, and GEnie. Way back when we started, we used the bulletin boards of Prodigy. That was when Internet E-mail was just coming into use.

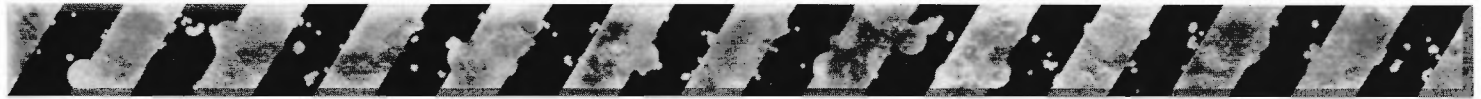
**MFQ:** That means your organization has been around for quite a while. When was it formed?

**Jaeger:** The exact date is "lost in the mists of antiquity," but it was sometime in the winter of 1991. Unfortunately, none of the founding members are still around to tell us exactly when. I didn't join the unit myself until the early summer of 1992.

**MFQ:** That's nearly eight years, quite a long time for such an organization to last. To what do you attribute your longevity?







Jaeger: Dedicated members. Most of our success has been due to a core group of people who love the unit and the game of BattleTech. Sometimes a member of that core group drops out of sight for a while, but we all keep coming back. There's a lot more to it than that, though. We're a tight group.

MFQ: What do you mean?

Jaeger: We're not just a bunch of people who happen to play BattleTech. We have come to know each other pretty well, especially those who have been around for the past seven years. We also have a different kind of organization. Notice I keep calling us a "unit."

MFQ: Could you explain why?

Jaeger: That's what we are. We function like an Internet version of a real military unit. The Regiment is broken down into Companies and Lances, each with its own commander. Every member of the Bandits is assigned to a position in one of those units on our table of organization. The remaining slots are filled with fictional non-player characters (NPCs). Every person in the Bandits also holds a rank commensurate with his or her responsibilities and experience, and has an opportunity to earn promotions. We even run an Officer Candidate School to prepare people to be leaders in the Bandits.

MFQ: So what's the point of having these positions and ranks? What do they actually mean other than nifty sounding titles?

Jaeger: Well, they relate to the members of the unit in two ways, in the sense of the fictional Quantum Bandits' mercenary unit, and in the sense of the Quantum Bandits as a gaming group. In the first sense, they're a very important aspect of role-playing and writing the history of the Quantum Bandits. Our structure gives everyone a point of reference for role-playing how their character fits into the Bandits and relates to everyone else. They also play a big part in who is responsible for what in our games. The commanders are really responsible for leading their companies in combat, for example. The company commanders also have less glorious jobs, like picking what spare parts and ammo to take on a mission.

MFQ: Interesting. How do those positions relate to the real-world Quantum Bandits?

Jaeger: The command structure is an efficient means to keep the unit moving forward. Most volunteer organizations are pretty disorganized and rely on a handful of folks to do most of the work. Not in the Quantum Bandits. In the Bandits, the senior officers do the higher-level planning—they write the rules by which we are run, coordinate everyone's efforts, and keep everyone motivated. The junior officers and the enlisted personnel take care of the details, like choosing 'Mechs for their units, and working on their Company's own web pages. Information is also easier to distribute through this chain of command.

MFQ: Sounds complicated. Does it really work?

Jaeger: It works, not always perfectly, but it works. It's certainly a lot better than putting all the responsibility on one leader, or just letting the proverbial chips fall where they may. An organization the size of the Quantum Bandits is not a simple thing to run. It helps that many of our core people have some kind of real military experience—either in ROTC or on active duty. The rest usually get brought up to speed pretty quickly. Teaching each other is a big part of what we do.

MFQ: So, do you recommend this approach for other groups?

Jaeger: Well, it has its strong points and its weaknesses. I think it requires a certain kind of people, and it is uniquely suited to the BattleTech experience we enjoy. If you want to do more in the BattleTech universe than just play the game, I recommend it. If you want to get some of the positive experience of being in a combat unit without actually getting shot at, there's nothing better. However, I will admit that some people do not like the restrictions it puts on them. Bandits are expected to make it to meetings and function under a chain of command. Some say this is not fun. I disagree. I see the Bandits like a weekend sports team. You have to show up for practice regularly and listen to what the coach tells you if you want to play in the big game. The QB is no different.

MFQ: What sorts of activities does your unit participate in?

Jaeger: Besides recruiting, publicizing, and the administrative things that keep the QB moving, we have a variety of activities designed to be fun and rewarding for our members. We do a lot of role-playing, writing, and gaming. Our most common activities are "sims" or small scale BattleTech skirmishes fought over IRC between two or a few players.

MFQ: Anything involving the entire unit at once?

Jaeger: Yes, but they're less common because it is a lot more involved to get twenty-some people together on something. We have a "Regimental Formation" about once a month on IRC, where we plan our activities, evaluate the past month, and recognize outstanding achievements. The senior staff also meets on a weekly basis for more administrative matters. At both meetings, we end them by adjourning to the Regimental Tavern to shoot the bull. These meetings help keep us feeling like a unit and give us a chance to get to know each other.

MFQ: What about actual games with the whole unit?

Jaeger: We try to hold a large-scale game involving the entire Regiment, or at least most of it, about every three or four months. These games are carefully recorded and become a part of the "historical" information on the Quantum Bandits in the BattleTech universe.

In the past, we've played some play-by-E-mail games and post-by-turn games on our message forum. They get tedious after a while when it takes weeks to finish a fight, so we try to stick with IRC games or more freeform role-playing on the forums. In our role-playing on the forum, we try to concentrate



on player decisions, storytelling, and keeping the action moving. These things are more important than the details.

MFQ: Sounds interesting. What was the most unusual thing you've ever done with the Quantum Bandits?

Jaeger: I once game-mastered a really fun training battle between our 2nd and 3rd Battalions on IRC. We used a system loosely based on BattleForce, with each player commanding a lance of their battalion. To add realism and an element of the chaos, I ran it as a double-blind game, and kept it moving as fast as possible. Players were forced to make decisions rapidly, often based on what turned out to be incomplete knowledge. The result was phenomenal. It ended up as a six-hour slugfest lasting into the wee hours of the morning. But it was great fun and everyone learned a lot about the importance of good reconnaissance, communications, and maintaining a reserve. It was also a great morale booster for the units involved.

MFQ: Sounds like it! So, what does the future hold for the Quantum Bandits? Any more big games coming up?

Jaeger: Well, we are a little bit behind the FASA time line, and we want to get caught up. The Regiment is about to participate in Operation Bulldog. We've been assigned a role in the attack on Hanover, and it's going to make for the largest game we have ever had. It will be a complex, integrated campaign, using MechWarrior, BattleSpace, BattleForce 2, and BattleTech. We are going to use E-mail and the message forums to determine the big picture, and then when units actually get into action, we are going to game it out on IRC.

MFQ: Any plans for more submissions to MFQ?

Jaeger: We've got a few projects in the works, and a few already submitted. In the past, we found a lot of our material was too long for the MFQ format or required knowledge of the QB to be meaningful, so we had a hard time shoehorning our work into submissions. Most of these pieces have been posted on our web page or printed in our own newsletter instead. I think we've learned the best way to write for MFQ is to write for MFQ, not to take what you've already written and adapt it. So, expect to see more from us.

MFQ: Can you offer any other advice for other online chapters?

Jaeger: Certainly. The most important thing I would say is to keep in touch with each other. Plan activities on a regular basis. As with any organization, if you're not communicating or meeting to do something fun regularly, interest can die very quickly. That's especially true on the Internet.

The best sort of games to run are ones that include both bulletin-board type segments and "live" games over a chat system. The bulletin board segments keep everyone involved and interested between games in planning and role-playing, while the speed of "live" games is much more satisfying to players than slow turn-by-turn games.

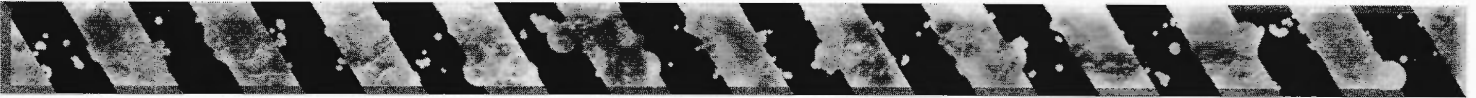
Most of all, just remember that it is supposed to be fun for everybody. Get into the role-playing, and be sure to spread around the recognition—everyone likes to be the hero.



MFQ: If our readers are interesting in checking out the Quantum Bandits, how would they go about finding out more information? Are you accepting applications?

Jaeger: Our web page address is <http://www.ida.net/biz/iceman/index.htm>. The page contains a wealth of information on the QB. We welcome all MechForce members to stop by and check us out, even if they're not interested in joining. Applications can be directed to me at [JaegerQB@aol.com](mailto:JaegerQB@aol.com) or to our Executive Officer, [Iceman@ida.net](mailto:Iceman@ida.net).





## ORIGINS AND GEN CON

The Origins convention went well for FASA. We released both the BattleTech Field Manual: ComStar and Wings Over Manhattan (for Crimson Skies). We also ran the traditional BattleTech Open, which had 50 participants. This was the first year that we allowed vehicles to be used in the Open. Not only did many people avail themselves of this opportunity, the winner of the Open used a vehicle in every round!

Gen Con is the “granddaddy” of gaming conventions and this year it lived up to its title. We released VOR: The Maelstrom, a new sci-fi table-top miniatures game, Shadowrun Quick-Start Rules and MechWarrior, Third Edition. With all this, we ran more demo games at our booth than any previous year in FASA’s history: BattleTech; MechWarrior, Third Edition; Shadowrun; Crimson Skies and VOR: The Maelstrom. Of course, this required us to build another terrain table—a river valley—to demo BattleTech; the Factory demo table was used to demo MechWarrior. In addition, people got their first look at the Palisades BattleTech collectible toys—which will be on sale by Christmas—and Armorcast’s resin Mad Cat (Timber Wolf)—already on sale—and the prototype of the Vulture (Mad Dog). And to top it off, for the first time since 1992, we had a new backdrop: several crimson-coated growlers—huge beasts from the VOR game—loping towards the viewer with outstretched claws. Needless to say, with the backdrop measuring 25 x 50 feet, this left an indelible impression on every attendee.

Of course, you can’t talk about Gen Con, without mentioning the tournaments. As many of you know, last year the miniatures were located in what most players described as “The Hole.” Located in the basement of one of the arenas, it was small, hot and very loud. However, this year the miniatures were given the entire floor of Bruce Hall, where there was plenty of room and a lot of air conditioning—I actually found myself chilled several times. And next year, we hear that the miniatures area might actually be included in the main hall! Imagine that!

As for how many, what was run and so on, here we go. The BattleTech Open had 56 participants and the Grand Melee had 20. As usual, both the Gunslinger and Trial of Bloodright tournaments filled their 32 slots, and this year we also ran 2 ToyTech games—in previous years the first game had filled quickly, leaving a number of people unable to play. The fourth annual MechForce Challenge also took place, with Dave Low winning the right to face Bryan. Bryan’s “big blue dice” failed him, though, as Dave chopped the head off of Bryan’s Grasshopper

on the second turn! Needless to say, it did not go well from there, but Dave was a very gracious winner. And of course, as always, many other games were run by non-FASA-affiliated groups—thanks to all those unsung heroes!

With the new tournament rules, we saw both vehicles and some unusual ‘Mechs. For me, the highlights were two Gunslinger games, where a Bishamon and Ti Ts’ang both defeated a Wraith! It’s always good to see some of the more unknown ‘Mechs do well against the classics.

In the end, whether it was the air conditioning, the players or the judges—most likely a good combination of all three—the tournaments ran more smoothly than any previous time I can remember. I would personally like to thank the judges of the FASA BattleTech tournaments—Christoffer Trossen, Christopher Smith, Brian Gruber, Dan “Flake” Grendell, Rich Cencarik and Andrew Bethke—as well as all the players. Thanks for making this my best Gen Con yet. Hope to see you all next year!

Randall N. Bills  
Precentor Martial

### GEN CON TOURNAMENT WINNERS

#### BattleTech Open

1st Place: Stephan Watts  
2nd Place: Jesse Stockwell  
3rd Place: Alan Gopin

#### Gunslinger

Scott Hopkins

#### Trial of Bloodright

Frank Crull

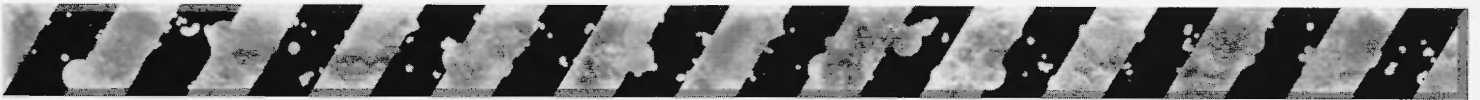
#### MechForce Challenge

Dave Low

#### ToyTech

1st Game: Holly Locurito  
2nd Game: Michael Dingeldej





**ORIGINS  
BATTLETECH  
OPEN  
WINNERS**

From left to right:

**Third Place:**

Brent Jacobs

**First Place:**

Al Dos Santos

**Second Place:**

Dave Low

Bryan Nystul



**GEN CON BATTLETECH OPEN WINNERS**

From left to right: **First Place:** Stephan Watts,

**Second Place:** Jesse Stockwell (not shown),

**Third Place:** Alan Gopin, with Bryan Nystul.



**GUNSLINGER WINNER**

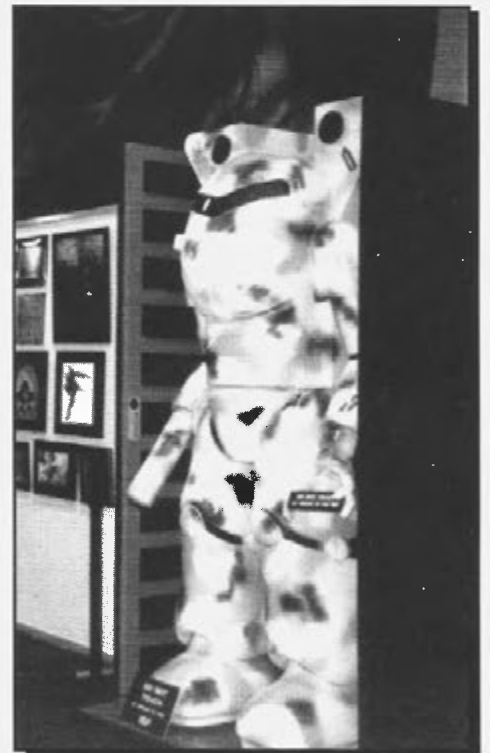
Scott Hopkins



FASA GEN CON BOOTH AND GROWLER BACKDROP



FASA TOURNAMENT TROPHIES



FRED, THE ELEMENTAL





# STAR DOGS

## UNCOVERING INTRIGUE ON KHALTEN

by Janet Pack

"Hell dogs, Mama!"

Pete Rekion's dark eyes leapt from the placid view of his five hulking associates' backs to the source of the scream. The boy stood outside a shelter made from pieces of broken steelex stolen from the recycle pile behind one section of the nearby 'Mech factory. The child's fist now stuffed his mouth, muffling his terrified mewling.

"Nah, youngling, these're star dogs," Rekion grated in a voice that the twenty-nine other Peace Keepers on the continent of Lurthiol likened to the rasp of sliding a charge cartridge into a blaster. He wanted to say more to comfort the child, but as usual the words faltered and died.

The Garimbul Tarjun canines, ears pricked toward the boy, dug their thick paws against the pocked, cracked service road that lanced from the factory through the forcefield gate, crossed a redolent bog locals called a stream, then bisected the fungus-like slum where the boy stood. It terminated further on at the tiny shuttleport where the few supplies needed by the factory were flown in.

Five sets of massive shoulders and hindquarters prepared to drive the dogs toward the intriguing sound in a rush that threatened to drag their Keeper along despite his muscled bulk. The boy wailed louder, volume increased by the regard of the pairs of large, intent eyes. The Garimbuls whined chorus to his screech. Pete touched each tether one by one and spoke softly, controlling and calming.

"Quiet there, hush, back now, there's no threat," he crooned to his quadruped friends. Seeing the beast's ears flick backward in response to his rough tones always caused a stir of wonder in his mind. Despite not hand-raising a single pup in this bunch, his quintet all liked and respected him. It showed in their attitudes, in their behavior. This alone caused the other Peace Keepers puzzlement and some jealousy.

After not quite making the final cut as a Mech Warrior, Rekion had been assigned to his home world of Khalten, where the Wolf Clan governed the continent called Caluny and the Zaling-Doremy Dynasty ran the other, named Lurthiol. Because of his combat training and his affinity for animals, Pete had been assigned to the Peace Keepers, a security unit made up of men like himself from Caluny who were "loaned" semi-permanently to the royal siblings in return for the rights to build three factories near natural resources in Lurthiol.

After assignment, Rekion had taken the time to walk the kennels again and again searching for young animals with a certain tilt to their heads, a peculiar curious expression, just that lift to their ears. He didn't understand why he needed dogs with those traits, still wasn't certain why he had insisted on them. But he was very satisfied with his associates: each dog from a different litter, each dog dissimilar in coloration. Of all the Peace Keepers now working in Lurthiol, he and his cadre formed the only true team.

Pete loved his dogs, as only a sensitive individual who'd known battle training without amenities of family or pets could. And within the sanctuary of his heart he knew they loved him in return. That knowledge was his soul's treasure, a jewel gleaming within an otherwise harsh life.

Peace Keeper Kulshaw had reared his own pups since their weaning, and claimed his dogs would soon savage or kill him. Severit had been crippled by two of his: Danrian, the Voice of the Zaling-Doremy ruler brats, had forcibly retired him from traveling as unfit for the job. Severit now limped through the boring regimen in the Kennels at the capital city Lurcy where young Garimbul Tarjun, Selvernong, and Kaxia breeding bitches brought higher prices than any Peace Keeper claimed for a lifetime's work.

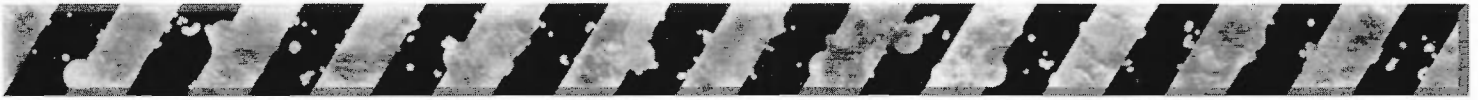
Any of the breeds could be devious and mean. Rekion figured himself lucky. His Garimbuls were intelligent, even somewhat thoughtful, with an unusual curious streak that made them poke their muzzles into every available cranny and investigate every stone they passed. As far as he was concerned, his friends were a cut above the norm.

That his dogs didn't abuse him or each other gave Pete peculiar standing among the other Keepers. During the few weeks of each year he made his required sojourn at the Royal Kennels for updates and retraining, he tried to ignore whispers and taunts about himself and his inquisitive companions. That was difficult for him. Peace Keepers were supposed to be steel-hard, quick to anger, and immune to banal emotions like curiosity, love, and hurt. They formed the backbone of the Royal's ground security forces, rooting out criminals and delivering them to puppet courts spaced around Lurthiol for the inevitable swift justice of the death penalty. The Zaling-Doremy regime tolerated no pleas for mercy.

Pete wrinkled his broad copper-hued brow. He himself possessed curiosity and affection like the animals surrounding him. Perhaps he was different from other Keepers, just as his dogs exhibited traits slightly different from others of their breed. He put that thought away to worry at another time—his dogs were still restive and demanded his attention.

"Quiet, Valis. Hush, Zeth and Quinty," he muttered. "We're just supposed to pass through this place. Make an impression." He smiled grimly, an ugly expression matching his cracked voice. "You know, the usual intimidation procedure. I'll have to report these shelters. Probably built last night, and no one's had time to do anything about them yet."

Such slums sprang up between one eyeblink and the next on access roads to factories, outside town boundaries, anywhere dispossessed people could bring attention to their plight. Those injured on the job, fired, or accused of various infractions constantly wandered the country if they were able; others died of starvation, disease or often both. Rekion hated this part of his job. He reported the slums to the Royal Beautification Project. Their thugs moved in with 'dozers and blasters, eradicating life forms within a given perimeter as well as the temporary settlement itself.



He tugged steel-gray Quinty back into line by his leash and received a snort of protest. Pete and his Garimbul Tarjuns continued down the road, all inhabitants of the slum except the youngster having gaped and fled.

"My boy!" the mother shrilled, darting from the shelter, an ill-fitting factory uniform flapping about her bony frame. "Those dogs eat children!" The unhealthy-looking female snatched the child inside, halting his howl. Rekion caught the glint of her fearful eyes peering at him from a crack. He spared her a look. The eyes vanished.

The Peace Keeper hid a brittle smile. Though he owned a fearsome title and could paralyze most Lurthiolans with a scowl, he was little more to the Zaling-Doremy rulers than an ugly dog himself. Much of his and his canines' savage reputation was rumor created by their Information Commission mainly to incite fear. The thought made him spit forcibly between the space in his upper front teeth. It splattered against another ramshackle shelter and dripped into the recently-disturbed dirt beneath. He didn't want to be responsible for the deaths of the poor people in the slum.

"Damned Zaling-Doremys," he cursed, hoping he wouldn't have to pay later in some manner for taking the rulers' names in vain. Stories of such always made their way back to the capitol of Lurcy. Punishments were meted from there too, sometimes years later, long after he who uttered the curse had forgotten. "Earthquakes and storms on their House."

He would like to meet some of the people who ran from him, tell them that his dogs were nosy instead of bloodthirsty. But he didn't know how to quell people's fright. He'd been taught only fighting as a boy, and the care of dogs since failing the selection process for MechWarriors five years ago when he turned nineteen. Pete Rekion had little knowledge of the words that might ease fear from those who fled from the sight of him and his canines.

Another thought thinned and lifted his lips, an expression much like a snarl. He'd gleaned tidbits of interest in rebellion from careful conversations with other Keepers as they passed on their routes. Someday soon when a leader they could trust surfaced, they'd overthrow the spoiled Zaling-Doremy in favor of the Wolf Clan. The Peace Keepers might even start the battle themselves. After all, they knew intimately what layers of security the rulers kept wrapped around themselves—Keepers had designed those protective tiers, and constantly tested them and the fighters picked for the positions.

For an instant Rekion visualized himself as the leader of the insurrection, he and his hounds giving guidance and courage to others in the fray against the grasping rulers. Then the big man shook his head. True, he was the only Keeper on speaking terms with most of the others, but that gave him neither the ability nor the license to consider himself their commander. He didn't want the position anyway: those who changed things had to make uncomfortable decisions, and got headaches from tensions no one person was meant to bear. He'd seen that happen often enough to Tanglear in Lurcy. Head of the Zaling-Doremy security force, formerly the Coordinator of Peace Keepers, that man always seemed to be on the verge of an implosion.

Valis pulled his leash and stopped, head turned to look back over one shoulder. Pete met the dog's liquid eyes. Understanding passed between them. The animal had needed direct contact with his master rather than finger twitches along

the thick leads. With a grunt of satisfaction, the ferocious-looking Garimbul faced forward again, content now to pace beside his companions.

The Keeper nodded. The animals surrounding him would assist if he served in a war against Lurthiol's rulers. He relished a vision of his dogs running down and dispatching the deposed royalty. A fitting end to a dynasty of brother and sister who considered the continent their toy, never kept their contracts, and treated the Wolf Clan worse than the gilt and embroidered footrests beneath their thrones.

"Hey, Sanzen!" Rekion tried to correct a dog pulling to one side. "Come on!" The animal insisted, his rust-colored head hidden behind the slum's central woodpile, long thick tail held in a taut curl quivering with curiosity. He growled, then whined and set his feet, pulling the others out of line.

"What?" Pete leaned forward as he rounded the stacked wood and jerked back in surprise. "What're . . . uh . . ." As usual, words atrophied before he could speak them.

Unafraid, a pretty gold-and-cream woman of about his own age regarded the dog, then him. "Is it all right to give him a scratch?" she asked.

Rekion stared. She knew enough about working dogs to ask permission! He cocked an ear toward his four-legged associates. Their growls were short and in the upper register, giving him only warning of a stranger. His dogs felt no threat from this woman and obviously wanted her attention.

"Uh, yeah. Sure. All right. Be gentle, dogs." He loosened his hold on their leads.

She reached long fingers toward Sanzen and scrubbed his chin. The animal sighed with pleasure and closed his eyes as the rest of the dogs crowded around her. Seated on the ground and leaning against the woodpile, she laughed softly with delight while trying to share her attention between five monsters.

Six including himself, Pete thought.

"Well met," the female gave an old-fashioned greeting that slid naturally from her tongue. Her laugh reminded the Keeper of a scintillating waterfall spangled by a rainbow he'd seen once on Caluny during training in the mountains. "Always wanted a big dog. You've got five of them." She lifted sky-eyes to his, leaning her head against Valis's flank and gazing directly at a man few dared to view. "If I had just one this big, then I could maybe ride in a cart. Can't afford a scooter right now."

He tore his eyes from her unusually open face, a rare thing in Lurthiol, and glanced down the rest of her body. A well-worn coverall, probably discarded by someone at the factory, bagged over most of her thin figure. Deformed feet and ankles were bare. Rekion looked at the near-shapeless lumps with the eye of a warrior trained to assess battle injuries: crushed bones that hadn't had the benefit of medical expertise. Likely nothing had been done except wrapping them in cloth. His gut lurched when he thought about the pain she'd had to endure.

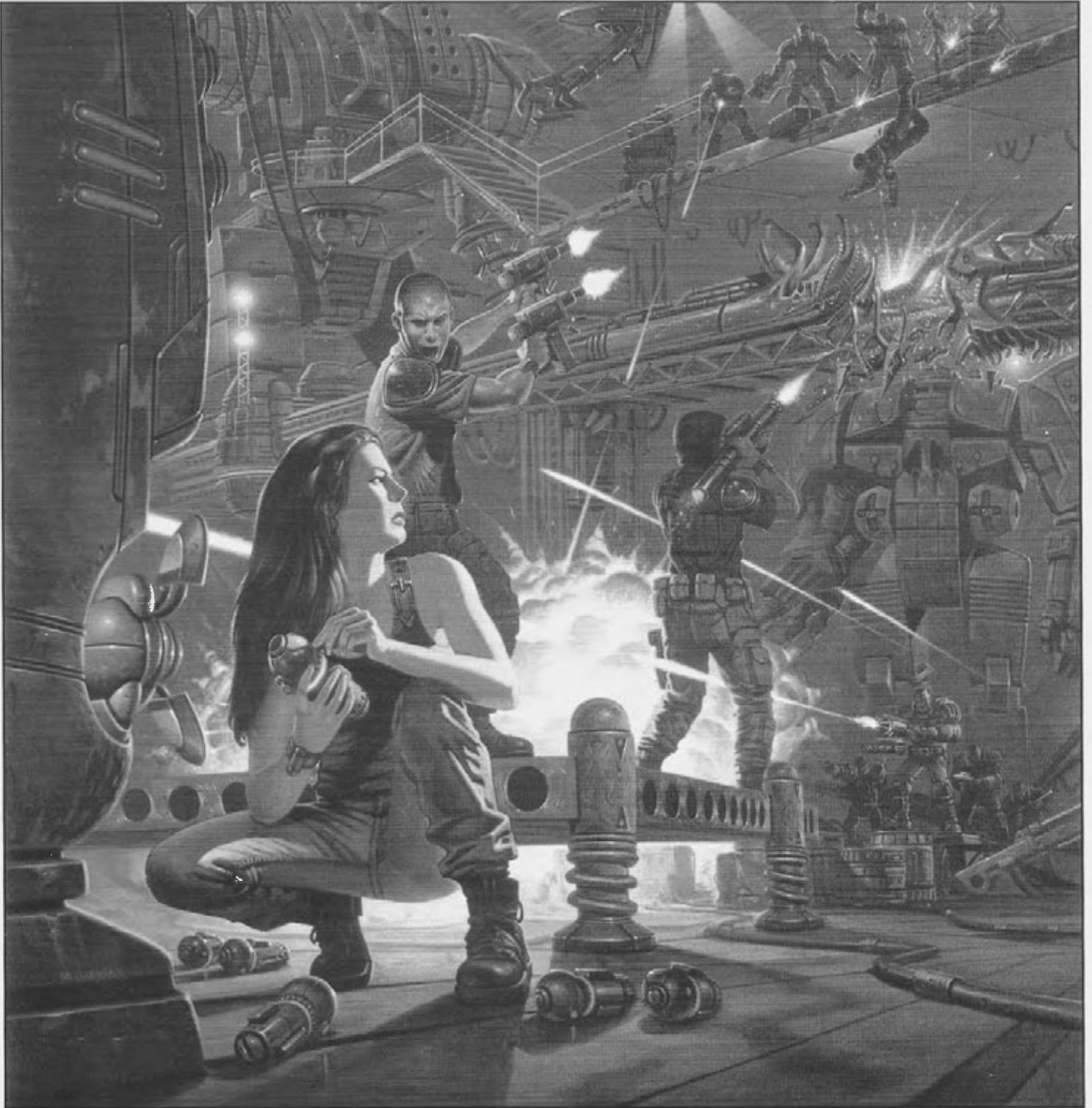
And here she sat among feared Garimbul Tarjuns talking to a Peace Keeper, smiling and speaking as though he were a fellow factory worker she'd known for months. Pete felt his usual reticence buckle under her disarming warmth and dignity.

"You're not afraid." It was a statement rather than a question.

She shook her bright head. "Not of your group. Other dogs and Keepers would be a...a different matter."

"You know us?"





“By reputation.” She looked sideways at him. “And an unusually good reputation it is, considering the others.”

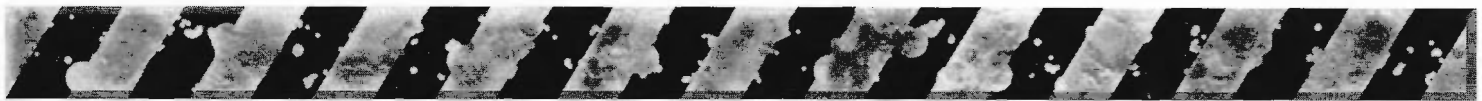
“Your feet. Industrial accident?” he asked, then flogged his mind for being so blunt about a possibly sensitive subject. “Sorry.”

She nodded, affected by the question but conquering her qualms. “Yeah. Little more than a year ago.”

“Happen here?” He nodded toward the 'Mech factory, thinking that her supervisor had screwed up badly not to give this woman even minimum treatment after such trauma.

“No. At the Lurthiol arms factory.” She frowned but her eyes sparkled, allowing him to see the beginnings of many secrets. “Bet you didn’t know about that.”





Rekion shook his head slowly, feeling stunned as if he'd run head-on into a steelex wall. He'd been sweetly and properly set up. By whom he didn't yet know, but that name or names would come if he was patient. His curiosity howled after more information.

"We could talk in my truck," the Peace Keeper said quietly, watching as she scratched his dogs. Bauri stepped in her lap, and she laughed again, hugging the barrel ribcage furred with brown and amber. The dog turned and slapped a soggy kiss on her ear.

"Right here is better." Fending the insistent animals off with her hands, the woman declined her head toward the factory. "Eyes and ears belonging to security in there are likely from Caluny." She squinted up at him. "I trust them more than Lurthiolans. And I think you understand why."

"I do," he agreed, beginning to get an inkling of the import of this matter. "The dogs are confusing the scene."

"Good, you're a quick study. I figured you'd be, told the others so. Those leads will be a tangle when we finish. Look stern, as if you're collecting data about my injuries." She ducked Zeth's whipping black tail and took a moment to gather her thoughts.

"I used to work for the Zaling-Doremy sibs," she stated flatly. Rekion could hardly hear her over the activity of his dogs. "In the Information Commission."

He winced. "Known as propaganda anywhere else."

"True. Leave it to those royal pains to come up with an unassuming euphemism for a misinformation service. I worked there for a couple of years and loved it. At the time, I loved the Royals, too. Then I got too close to some details they didn't want anyone except a chosen few to see. Like how they were setting up a secret underground ammunition plant with the eventual goal of decimating the Wolf Clan and taking over Caluny for themselves. The old Manifest Destiny excuse."

"Can you prove this?" Pete felt as though a portable cannon had gone off close to his ears. They rang, and he wasn't certain of what he'd just heard.

"Of course. I kept copies. They're in a safe place . . . several safe places. Just in case." She moved one foot beyond Quinty's questing nose and winced. "But it cost me my feet. I was betrayed when a friend found out what I'd done and reported me. When the Royal rascals found out what I knew, they threw me into the work force there as an ammunition packer. The accident was staged, I'm certain. After that, I was 'retired,' thrown out, and left to starve."

"And you are. Starving, I mean." Pete fished a ration bar from the pocket of his dark gray jacket, held it out to her. "This isn't much, but they're not bad."

The woman sucked in a deep controlling breath of air laden with the scents of mud and rot and the dogs' humid panting. "If it doesn't short your own ration."

"I've got more in the truck. Water, too."

"Thank you." She took the bar. Rekion watched her hands shake as she tore off the wrapping and bit off a chunk of food. Her face turned toward the sun in ecstasy as she chewed. "Better than fallis meat baked in brandy." She took her time swallowing, making the food last as long as possible. Pete hoped he looked patient.

"I've been lucky," she continued. "A person associated with a group who wants to depose the royal brats found out where I was, and allowed me to join." The woman took another smaller bite, then carefully wrapped the remainder of the rations for later. She tucked it in her left sleeve pocket, the one without a hole. "My information, if taken to the right people, will start a war. I'm important now. I have been eating a little when the group finds throwaways or is smuggled some excess, but no unwanted person in Lurthiol eats regularly."

"Do you know of a grave around here with a woman's body about your size?" Pete's mind whirled with plans. If he could just get her or her information to Maquis, the head of Wolf Clan in Caluny. That would mobilize them, give the Clan an advantage. He and his Garimbuls would be the first team in line to volunteer, bringing war and hopefully an end to the Zaling-Doremy Dynasty.

The woman's eyes widened into his, then she followed his reasoning and relaxed. "You want a McGuffin from the body hills. Yes, there are several."

"Anything closer to the shuttleport?"

"Sure. I'll show you—"

Rekion stopped her with a gesture, called his dogs to heel, and began untangling their leads. Reluctantly the canines padded away from the woman's unstinting attention as the Peace Keeper lowered his voice. "I'm going to carry you to my vehicle. Act like you're growing weaker, but remember to tell me where that grave is. I'll dig up a woman, then bury her remains instead of yours when you 'die.' There's a storm front that'll be here in a few hours and should hide the evidence. You can ride in Zeth's travel crate with a blanket over it in the back of the truck until we can get your information and return to the shuttleport. I've got friends there who'll help us get to Caluny. The crate'll be cramped, but it's the best I can do."

She nodded. "I've had experience hiding in small places."

"You're a brave woman." Pete couldn't believe he said that. The words had leapt from his mouth before he realized he'd said them aloud.

"I'm only doing what's necessary." The sunshine of her smile warmed him, even as clouds massed above. "You're the brave one, and your dogs, too." Sanzen stretched his neck from behind his master and gave her hand a slurp that soaked the cuff of her coverall. "The information is—"

"No. Tell me only what you have to, just in case." He squatted, gathering the woman against his chest. She felt no heavier than the light hand cannon he'd once trained with. Her bones lay sharp against his arm, her head felt feather-light against his shoulder. "Just point me in the right direction."

She laughed quietly. "South for now. We chose well, we outcasts did. Not only a brave man, but a wise one, too. There is one thing you might like to know before we go any farther."

Pete started walking toward his vehicle with the woman in his arms and the huge dogs pacing ahead, feeling more excited and fulfilled than he had since he'd tested to become a MechWarrior. The right future was finally beginning for him and his best friends. "What's that?"

"My name's Tiryllia," she whispered. "Tiry for short."



# THE HIDDEN WARS



Clockwise starting bottom center: Scott Johnson, Randall Bills, Rob Feehan, Jeff Morgan, Bryan Nystul, Christopher Smith and Rich Cencarik  
(Not shown: Christoffer Trossen taking picture, Rick Remer and Theodore Penn).

## BRYAN AND RANDALL ACTUALLY PLAY GAMES!

by Randall N. Bills

### BATTLETECH

On Saturday, July 3rd, following the completion of the BattleTech Open at the Origins convention in Columbus OH, 10 players—including Bryan and I—ensconced ourselves in a large hotel suite around 11:00 PM. After some discussion, the teams were organized and 2 Stars of 'Mechs clashed across 4 mapsheets. Early on, Team 1—Bryan, Randall, Jeff, Chris and Chris—had incredible luck, as we chose our first DL (Designated Locust) for concentrated fire and landed most of the Star's firepower on the CT of the Stormcrow E. Needless to say, Theodore's 'Mech fell quickly. In the course of the game, however, Team 2—Scott, Rob, Theodore, Rich and Rick—made a good comeback and it was a brutal fight to the end. But when the dust settled, Team 1 walked away with 2 'Mechs still functional. It was one of the most enjoyable BT games I have played in recent memory and I hope to have a repeat next year. Thanks guys!

## THE SUCCESSION WARS

As gray traces of dawn tinged the eastern sky, 5 players—men of BattleTech—emerge from the building's shadow. Such was the state of affairs at 6:30 am on August 8th, as Bryan, Steve, Flake, Troy and I finished up an almost 7 hour game of The Succession Wars. Though final victory was not achieved, House Liao had showed its usual propensity for devilish cunning, allowing Houses Steiner and Marik to capture each other's capitals, while Houses Kurita and Davion battered each other senseless, before making its move. At 6:30 AM, it was pretty obvious that unless the fates were kind, House Liao would be victorious. For Bryan and I, it was déjà vu, as we had first met in Arizona at the Hexacon game convention during the summer of '95 and had played an all night Succession Wars variant that I had created. It was a great game, and something that none of the players had done in years, but I doubt it will occur again for at least another four!



Clockwise starting bottom center: Randall "Precentor Martial" Bills, Stevebob Pitcher, Troy "Trashborn" Allen, Dan "Flake" Grendell and Bryan "Primus" Nystul  
(Christoffer "Bones" Trossen taking picture).



## NEWS FLASH...

### FASA CLASHES WITH BATTLEFORCE IRC

by Warner Doles

Tempest Stryker here, senior reporter for ComStar's News & Record for the BattleForce News Reporting Bureau.

I recently witnessed a battle between the elite warriors of FASA's assault team and the BattleForce IRC Strike Force. It was waged on the obscure planet of Styk in the Chaos March and was joined at 19:00 hours Saturday and bitterly fought until the early morning hours on Sunday.

This is how the clash progressed.

FASA's defending forces were elements of the ComGuards and St. Ives Compact militaries. They were up against a newly-formed mercenary unit called Stryker's Strike Force under contract from the Capellan Confederation.

After making a high run from the jump point, the Union Class DropShip Bull Run, carrying the Strike Force, made planet fall about 18:45. The mercenaries rushed out of the 'Mech bays looking for targets of opportunity. This team consisted of a mixed force of BattleMechs. Alpha Lance consisted of an ON1-1M Orion, NSR-FC Nightstar, WLF-2 Wolfhound, and a TR-1 Wraith. Bravo Lance consisted of a VTR-9B Victor, TR-1 Wraith, MS1-OC Men Shen, and an ALB-3U Albatross.

As they entered the valley of Salwain, the combatants maneuvered into position. Arrayed across from the mercenaries were some old 'Mechs that had been upgraded, and a few that were right off the assembly line. Lance Able consisted of an AWS-9Q Awesome, BTZ-3F Blitzkrieg, CBR-02 Cobra, and a SCB-9T Scarabus. Lance Baker was made up of a HEL-3D Helios, BJ2-OF Blackjack, RTX-OF Raptor, and a BSN-3K Bishamon.

The mercenaries came in from the south, formed a line, and advanced as one—having placed their heavy and assault 'Mechs in the middle and their light and medium 'Mechs on the wings.

The FASA forces held the northern part of the field, hugging the mountains and placing two 'Mechs—the Cobra and the Awesome—at their highest peaks for fire support. Then they deployed most of their forces behind the mountains for cover, and sent out the Raptor and Bishamon to scout out the approaching mercenaries.

Seeing what the defenders were planning, the mercenaries executed a left oblique maneuver, having the Men Shen, Wraith, and Victor anchor the right flank of the force. The Wraith and Wolfhound of Alpha Lance moved up on the left to within range of the enemy and began receiving fire from the Cobra perched on the peak about six hundred meters away. The Wolfhound was also struck, receiving minor damage. In the center of the line, the Orion, Nightstar, and Albatross occupied a small cluster of hills, with the Orion on the highest ground.

The Orion soon had range on the Bishamon that had begun scouting for the heavier units hanging back. The Orion opened fired and scored two solid hits from its LRM 20 and LB-10X. After the smoke cleared, it was evident that the Bishamon had suffered some critical damage to its engine. There was a gaping

hole in its center torso, and metal was fragged in a few other locations, including its head.

In retaliation, the Cobra and Blackjack fired on the Orion, but missed and wasted their ammunition. The Nightstar and Albatross opened up on their targets—the Nightstar on the Cobra, and the Albatross on the Blackjack. Both scored some hits, but nothing that would drop their enemies.

Meanwhile, on the right flank of the mercenaries' line the Wraith and the Men Shen were engaging the Scarabus and the Helios.

The Helios opened fire from about six hundred meters on the Men Shen, but to no avail. At the same time, the Scarabus moved to attack the Men Shen with support from the wounded Bishamon and the Helios. After some maneuvering from both sides, neither could gain the advantage, and both exchanged fire causing minimum damage.

Using their heavy units, the mercenaries moved forward, shortening their battle line and drawing the defenders into the open. At the same time, they positioned their left wing up and forced the defender's lighter units to move to the right of the Strike Force. Only the Raptor and Cobra stayed their ground.

The Strike Force engaged, forcing the defenders to either move or be destroyed.

The Wraith and Wolfhound, supported by the Nightstar, jockeyed to the northeast in an attempt to cut off the Cobra and Raptor. And once the mercenary forces closed, the fireworks began.

The Cobra turned its fangs toward the Wolfhound, with support from the Raptor and the Blitzkrieg that had come across the field to stop their forces from being cut off. The Wolfhound had suffered horrendous fire, but had survived only on luck and the determination of its pilot.

The Wraith and Nightstar attacked the Cobra, causing minor damage and making the pilot realize there were other targets out there. Meanwhile, the Wolfhound returned fire as it was being ventilated by the Blitzkrieg.

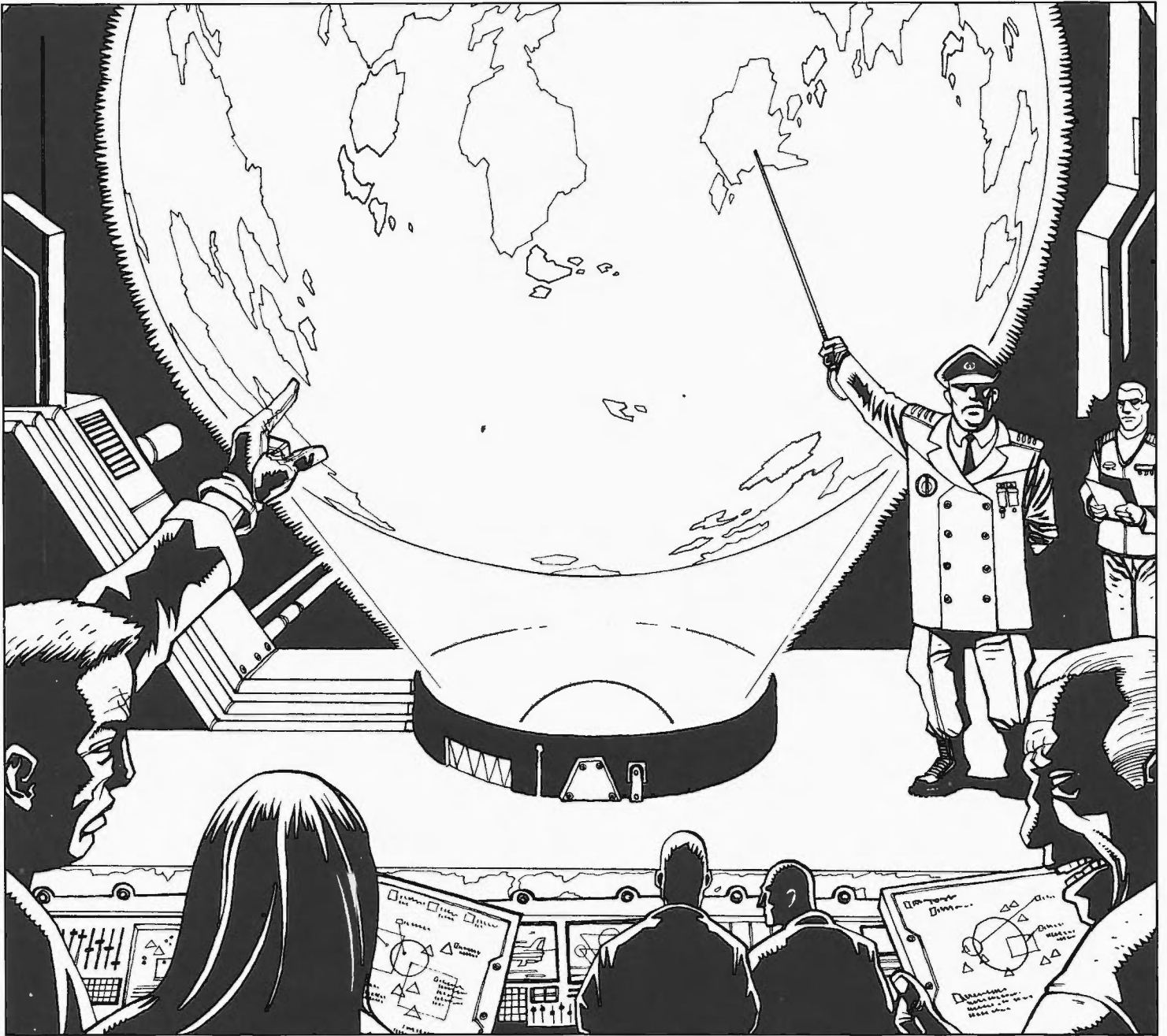
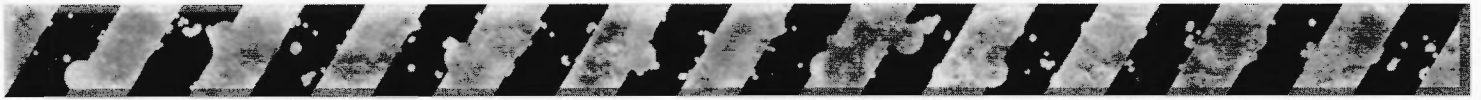
The right flank of the Strike Force was turning into a stalemate until the Men Shen moved up to assault the Scarabus and burned nearly a ton of armor from it. Then the Awesome unloaded on the Men Shen from its lofty perch.

Amid the smoke and fire, the Wraith trundled back to allow the Men Shen to withdraw to a more defensible position. And the Scarabus moved in to take advantage of what it thought was a wounded 'Mech. It caught a fusillade of hate from the Wraith and the Men Shen for its trouble. The Scarabus had intended to use its axe on the Wraith—and though it did strike with the blade, the trouble it received for this action nearly cost its arm.

It was becoming apparent that the battle would be won or lost in the middle of the line. The Albatross had been assaulted with combined fire from the Helios that had moved up to support the Blackjack and the wounded Bishamon. The Albatross faltered, but regained its feet and returned fire on the Blackjack, unleashing its entire arsenal of long range weapons and nearly destroying the Blackjack's gyro.

The Strike Force pressed the defenders using the weight of their 'Mechs, herding them into the northwest part of the valley.





The biggest clash came on the far right of the mercenaries' line. The Wraith and the Men Shen had caught the Scarabus in a murderous cross fire, and the Albatross having maneuvered closer added its barrage to support the two embattled medium 'Mechs. The fire was too much for the Scarabus.

The defenders suffered major damage on two more of their 'Mechs, with some light damage on the rest. The mercenaries sustained major damage on the Wolfhound and the Albatross—though neither 'Mechs were knocked out of action.

In the end, both sides withdrew—neither claiming victory. It was this type of battle that was going on throughout the Chaos March since the split in the Federated Commonwealth.

The above battle was the first online combat waged by FASA and BattleForce, and it drew quite an Internet crowd. Thanks to the following folks for participating:

Strikers Strike Force: Phil Benton, Chas Borner, Camille Klein, Dave Smith, Frank Tillman, Orkin Man, Derek Evans, Archer, KaliYama, Paul Sjardijn, and Ben Brown.

FASA Force: Bryan Nystul, Chris "Bones," Randall Bills, Dan "Flake" Grendell, and Herb.

# MWII TO MW3 CONVERSIONS

Guidelines for converting your MechWarrior™, Second Edition characters to MechWarrior, Third Edition

There are two ways to make MechWarrior, Third Edition (MW3) versions of your favorite MechWarrior, Second Edition (MWII) characters. The best way is described in Using the Life Path, while a less fun method (but perhaps quicker and more “accurate”) is to make a Direct Conversion. Regardless of the system used, equipment is easy enough to convert. Simply use the MW3 rules for the same equipment, rather than the MWII rules. If there are no rules yet for a particular piece of gear, the gamemaster can base its abilities on a similar item from the Equipment section (MW3, pp. 129 to 157).

We assume that by this point you have already read the new Game Concepts and Character Creation rules (MW3, pp. 13 to 61), so you should have a pretty good idea how the new system works and know what the Attributes, Skills and Traits represent. (If you haven't read that yet, go back and read it now; we'll wait.)

Gamemasters should note that this conversion material is intended to provide guidelines only, not hard-and-fast rules. The goal of converting your players' characters into the new game should be to preserve their abilities and flavor as they make the transition into the new edition. Please feel free to alter these guidelines as you see fit in order to accomplish these goals for your players.

## USING THE LIFE PATH

The recommended way to bring your MWII characters into the new edition is to use the MW3 system as it was intended, using the Life Path to create Attributes, Traits and Skills appropriate to the character's background and previous gaming experience.

Starting with the appropriate Affiliation, run each character through the standard character generation system, with the following exceptions.

## PATH LIMITS

Unlike the usual starting character, you can continue to choose Paths beyond the normal limit of eight in order to duplicate as closely as possible the character's actual gaming experience during MWII play. Continue to choose Paths that match the character's career until the gamemaster and player agree that the Life Path and ending age match (as closely as possible) the character's history.

Note that the abilities generated in this way will replace advances gained through AP and Skill Point expenditure.

## EVENTS

Because an existing character has a pre-defined background story, it doesn't make sense to generate Events randomly. Instead, the player may simply choose an appropriate Event for each Path (with the gamemaster's permission, of course).

## TRAITS AND SKILLS

Using the Life Path may not grant the character all the Traits and Skills that he needs to match his abilities from MWII.

During the Finishing Touches stage of the process, you may add additional Skills in excess of the usual limits (with the gamemaster's permission).

## DIRECT CONVERSION

A less “organic” method than using the Life Path system is to directly convert Attributes, Skills and so on from MWII terms to MW3 terms. The MW3 game system is significantly different from its predecessor. As such, an exacting mathematical conversion between them is not possible. However, using the following guidelines and the gamemaster's judgment, you can update your MWII characters to MW3 terms.

## AFFILIATION

Every character in MW3 must choose an Affiliation. It should be a relatively simple matter to choose an appropriate one for each character based on his background. Make a note of any Bonus Traits or other factors related to the chosen Affiliation (MW3, pp. 26 to 32).

## ATTRIBUTES

The range of normal human Attributes changed from 1 to 6 in MWII to 1 to 9 in MW3. In addition, the number of Attributes increased from five to nine, and there are no longer any Characteristics.

First, find the MWII Attribute used as the source for the new Attribute on the Attribute Equivalency Table (use the average of RFL and ITN, rounded up, to find the source for Reflexes). Then, cross-reference the MWII Attribute rating to find the MW3 Attribute value on the Attribute Value Conversion Table. For exceptions to this procedure, see the following two sections.

## ATTRIBUTE EQUIVALENCY TABLE

MW3 Attribute	MWII Source
Strength	BLD*
Body	BLD*
Dexterity	RFL
Reflexes	(RFL + ITN) ÷ 2
Intelligence	LRN
Willpower	ITN
Charisma	CHA
Edge	*
Social Standing	*

\* See special rules

## ATTRIBUTE VALUE CONVERSION TABLE

MWII Rating	MW3 Value
1	2
2	3
3	5
4	6
5	7
6	8
7	9
8	10





### Strength and Body

Both these Attributes are derived from the MWII Build Attribute, but not using the same direct conversion as other Attributes. You can choose to take both Attributes at 1 point lower than listed on the Attribute Value Conversion Table, or one at the listed value and one at 2 points lower than listed. For example, a character with BLD 5 (which converts to 7 in MW3) could choose to have both Strength and Body of 6, or could choose to have one at 7 and the other at 5.

### Edge and Social Standing

Neither of these Attributes have direct equivalents in MWII. The gamemaster will have to use the Attribute Table (MW3, p. 55) and his best judgment to arrive at reasonable levels for these. In the case of Edge, the character's MWII Edge can be used at least in part to determine the Edge Attribute; because there is no upper limit to MWII Edge, a direct conversion is not possible. Compare all the characters' Edges in the group, and give the characters with the most Edge higher Edge Attributes.

### TRAITS

All of the Advantages in MWII can be converted directly into positive Traits from MW3, though the gamemaster will have to determine the exact level of each Trait (note that MWII Reputation converts to Good Reputation).

There are far more Traits in MW3 than there were Advantages in MWII. The player and gamemaster will have to work together to decide if the character should have any of the new Traits (positive or negative) based on his background and experiences.

### SKILLS

Converting your character's skills is probably the most difficult part of this process, and will require a healthy dose of judgment on the part of the gamemaster and plenty of cooperation from the player. It is unlikely you will feel your character's skill list is precisely the same after the conversion process. MechWarrior, Third Edition is a different game, so this discrepancy is only natural. The point here is to get the two versions of the character as close as possible without worrying too much about making an exact replica. Because the game works differently, you probably don't need an exact replica anyway.

The first step is to determine into which MW3 skill (or skills) each of your MWII skills will convert. The Skill Equivalency Table lists skills that have changed from MWII and their equivalents in MW3. Note that if a skill has the identical name and function in both games, it has not been included on the table.

Many skills now have integral subskills which did not exist before, including Bureaucracy, Protocol, Streetwise and Tactics. Choose appropriate subskills based on the character's background and experience.

There are several new skills that have no equivalent in MWII. These include Animal Handling, Fast Talk, Free Fall, Intimidation and Sensor Operation. In these cases, the gamemaster should decide if a character should continue to have these skills or not. (See the Sensor Operation Skill, below).

Once you have determined the skill to which an existing skill will convert, you then determine the MW3 Skill Bonus for

the skill. This is done by adding 10 to the Skill Target, and then subtracting the Skill Level. Find the result on the Skill Bonus Conversion Table to find the MW3 Skill Bonus. If the character had Natural Aptitude with the skill in MWII, add 1 to the final Skill Bonus. (Do not apply this if the character gained Natural Aptitude after being converted, such as trueborn Clan characters.)

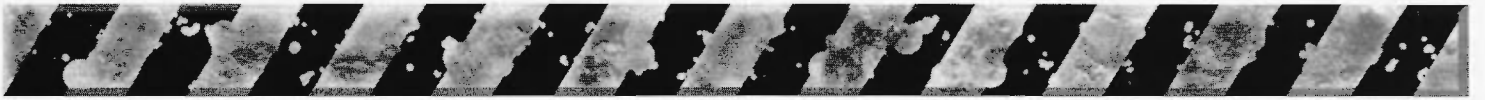
For example, a character with Acrobatics at Skill Level 3 with a Skill Target of (6+) would have a MW3 Skill Bonus of +1 (10 + 6 - 3 = 13, which results in a +1 on the table).

### SKILL EQUIVALENCY TABLE

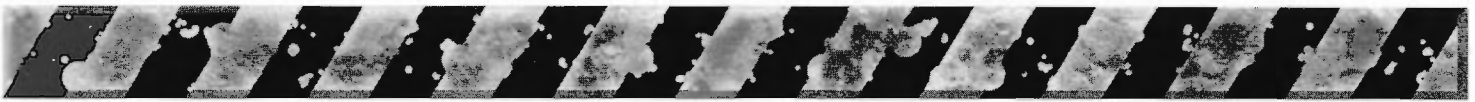
MWII Skill	Equivalent MW3 Skill(s)
Alternate Identity	Alternate Identity (Trait)
Blade	Blades; Staffs; Whips
Drive/Ground	Piloting/Hover, Tracked, Wheeled
Drive/Naval	Piloting/Naval, Sub
Gunnery/Aerospace	Bombing; Gunnery/Aero*
Gunnery/Artillery	Artillery
Gunnery/BattleMech	Gunnery/Humanoid*
Gunnery/Battlesuit	Gunnery/Humanoid*
Gunnery/Conventional	Gunnery/Conv.*
Gunnery/Spacecraft	Gunnery/Space*
Impersonation	Acting
Medtech	First Aid; MedTech; Surgery*
Navigation	Navigation/Jump Drive*
Piloting (any)*	Sensor Operations*
Piloting/Aerospace	Piloting/Aero, Aircraft, VTOL
Piloting/BattleMech	Piloting/'Mech, Quad
Piloting/Spacecraft	Piloting/Aero, Jump, Spheroid
Small Arms	Pistols; Rifles; Shotguns; Submachine Guns
Special Interests	Academics; Arts; Interests; Languages*
Technician/Aerospace	Technician/Aeronautics, Fusion, Jet, Mechanics, Support*
Technician/BattleMech	Technician/Fusion, Mechanics, Myomer, Support, Fusion*
Technician/Battlesuit	Technician/Mechanics, Myomer, Support*
Technician/Electronics	Technician/Comms, Electronics*
Technician/Mechanic	Technician/ICE, Mechanics, Rotor, Support*
Technician/Spacecraft	Technician/Aeronautics, Fusion, Interplanetary, Jump Drive, Support*
Technician/Weapons	Gunsmith; Technician/Ballistics, Lasers, Missile*
Tinker	Engineering
Unarmed Combat	Brawling; Martial Arts*

\*See special rules below.









## SKILL BONUS CONVERSION TABLE

### 10 + MWII Skill Target

minus MWII Skill Level	MW3 Skill Bonus*
15 or higher	+0
13 to 14	+1
11 to 12	+2
9 to 10	+3
8	+4
7	+5
6	+6
5	+7
4	+8
3	+9
2 or lower	+10

\* Add 1 to the Skill Bonus if the character had Natural Aptitude in MWII.

## DIVIDING SKILLS

Most of the skill names stayed the same from one edition to the next, but in some cases what was once one skill has become several skills in MW3. For example, the Small Arms Skill has essentially fragmented into the Pistols, Rifles, Shotguns and Submachine Guns Skills. This will be a fairly easy transition if your group was using the Specializations rules from the MechWarrior Companion (MWC, p. 13).

The way to handle this is to take the Skill Bonus for the skill and divide it among the multiple skills that are found in MW3, using your Specialization (if any) as a guide.

If you simply want to choose a single skill from among those available, convert it normally. Your character does not have any of the other skills. If you want more than one of the skills listed, the Skill Bonus is reduced by one for each skill chosen after the first.

For example, a character needs to convert the Small Arms Skill. He has figured that his Skill Bonus would be +3. If he wants to choose only one of the four skills listed under Small Arms, such as Rifles, he simply has a +3 Skill Bonus with Rifles. Instead, he can choose to have a +2 Skill Bonus with two of the skills instead, or a +1 Bonus with three of them, or a +0 bonus with all four.

Of course, this is a very coarse conversion, and the gamemaster is welcome to alter it in any way he feels is fair to the player.

Medtech is a special case, because each skill is progressively more complicated; rarely would a character have Surgery and not First Aid. To represent this, the skill is converted as First Aid. If you want MedTech Skill, add that skill first (reducing the Skill Bonus for both by 1). If you want Surgery, take that second (reducing all three Skill Bonuses by 2). Note this means you cannot choose to have Surgery Skill unless your Skill Bonus in Medtech was at least +2.

Note that Special Interests are not divided using these rules (see Special Skills, below).

## COMBINING SKILLS

If you have multiple skills that equate to the same MW3 skill, use only the highest resulting Skill Bonus from among all such skills.

For example, if a character has both Engineering and Tinker in MWII, these both convert to Engineering in MW3. If the char-

acter's converted Skill Bonus in Engineering would be +1 but his Skill Bonus in Tinker converted to +2, the actual Skill Bonus in the MW3 Engineering Skill would be +2 (the higher of the two).

## SPECIAL SKILLS

Some skills are unusual and require a bit of additional explanation to help you convert them accurately.

### Gunnery

There are actually three distinct Gunnery Skills in MW3: Ballistic, Laser and Missile. These are further divided into vehicle-specific subskills as shown on the Skill Equivalency Table. Use the Dividing Skills rule (above) to determine your character's Skill Bonus with these three skills for each of your character's Gunnery Skills.

### Navigation

The Navigation Skill in MWII was exclusively used for calculating hyperspace jump points. In MW3, there are Navigation subskills for air, land, water and interplanetary space as well. There was no equivalent skill to these in MWII, so the gamemaster should decide if the character should have any of these subskills. Use the Occupational Fields List (MW3, pp. 53 to 54) as a guide depending on the character's job and training.

### Piloting and Sensor Operations

Sensor Operations is a new skill that has no MWII equivalent, but it is vital to the operation of any advanced vehicle, including a BattleMech. If a character has any Piloting Skills, also give him the Sensor Operations Skill with a Skill Bonus equal to the lowest Piloting Skill Bonus among them.

### Special Interests

What was once the Special Interests Skill is now divided into four categories. It should be a simple matter to decide in which category a skill belongs. For example, a character who had SI/Oil Painting would now have Art/Oil Painting. Do not divide the Special Interest Skills as you would other skills that show multiple MW3 equivalents, unless you feel the skill should be divided for some reason.

### Technician

There are several more subskills for the Technician Skill, and they are now divided by task, rather than vehicle type. Use the Dividing Skills rules to determine Technician Skills, but also apply your judgment; some characters might need a few extra points of Skill Bonus to accurately reflect their technical skills.

### Unarmed Combat

Unarmed combat ability has been divided into the Brawling and Martial Arts skills, and Martial Arts is further divided into several subskills to reflect specific styles. You should choose an appropriate subskill from among these to fit your character's background and training; formally trained fighters should have some form of Martial Art, while those who learned to fight through the school of hard knocks should have Brawling, instead. Rarely should a character have both, or multiple Martial Arts subskills, unless the gamemaster feels it is appropriate. In that case, use the Dividing Skills rule.



# MOUNTAINS FROM STYROFOAM

## BUILDING TERRAIN FOR BATTLETECH SKIRMISHES

by Melvin Frank Darbe

BattleTech is essentially a boardgame played out on a hex grid map. And the hex grid makes it easy to set up a game anywhere. The nature of the game, however, has always lent itself to playing on a 3-D miniature layout. The BattleTech Compendium introduced a simple set of miniature rules, while the release of BattleTech Master Rules expanded the miniature section, allowing for full-blown miniature combat.

Of course, miniature combat can be expansive and expensive.

Elaborate terrain pieces sold by various companies can be quite costly in comparison to a set of hex maps. However, the real advantages of using terrain pieces far outweigh the problems. And if you make the pieces yourself, you'll save time and have something to be proud of. Although you can mix and match hex maps, the pieces themselves remain the same. However, by using a half-dozen simple terrain pieces—such as hills, forest, water and rough terrain—you can vary your 3-D map so that no two battles are ever fought on precisely the same battlefield. Add pavement, roads, bridges and buildings, and you can make terrain a critical part of tactical planning.

Many of you might be familiar with model railroading. Similar techniques are used to make the miniature terrain there, though there are important differences. A model railroad is a static display made to look as real as possible. Though trains run around the features, those features are not designed to be touched or handled.

Miniature terrain, on the other hand, must be made for ease of handling—with the idea that the sections will be touched, used, and have heavy miniatures moved across their surfaces. The absolute realism of model railroad terrain is not desired, because it is not practical. Making a piece of terrain look good, while easing play, is the ideal for miniatures' terrain.

### Scale and Terrain Types

As stated on page 92 of the Master Rules, the scale for miniature combat is "1 inch = 15 meters," with each level of elevation equal to six meters. The type of terrain found in miniature combat is the same as you would see on a hex map.

### Clear

Clear terrain is simply the flat surface of the table where your battle takes place. In miniatures rules, flat terrain can be left bare, covered with a cloth, or you can make flat terrain boards from Styrofoam. Except in unusual battles, the largest part of the terrain will be clear.

### Hills

Hills are the most versatile terrain feature. They can be from one to six levels high, have sloped or steep sides, and be covered with rough terrain or be forested. Hills are the simplest

terrain feature to make and can be use effectively in any battle. Five or six hills of different types are all that are necessary.

Hills are made easily with layers of Styrofoam, painted green and covered with grass from any railroad or model shop.

### Light and Heavy Forests

BattleTech forests are commonly in the "light" and "heavy" varieties. Forests are second only to hills in versatility. They can be used to break line of sight and force units to move around them or slow a unit and make it easy to pick off. Whether light or heavy, there must be enough room between trunks to move a miniature and its base (one inch).

Trees can be made by hand with wood and lichen—available in bags from railroad and hobby stores. The process is of making trees is time consuming, and if you're in a hurry, you might want to simply buy packages of trees from railroad or modeling stores.

Tree stands can be made with thick cardboard, or half-inch thick Styrofoam cut in irregular shapes. Light forest stands have trees glued three inches apart. Heavy forest stands can be made by gluing trees one inch apart.

### Water Features

These come in many different forms—rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, swamps and oceans. Swamps and other level-0 water features can be built up with thin layers of foam or cardboard, then painted in muddy greens and blues. Deeper water features, such as ponds, rivers, and lakes, must be fashioned so that the depth of the water can be read at a glance. Paint the levels of water in different colors of blue. You can also model a river, pond or lake with layers of thick cardstock or half-inch foam. Cut a hole in several cardboard or Styrofoam sheets and glue them together. Extra detail can be added by creating underwater features, such as kelp forests, rough hexes, and even submerged buildings.

### Roads and Bridges

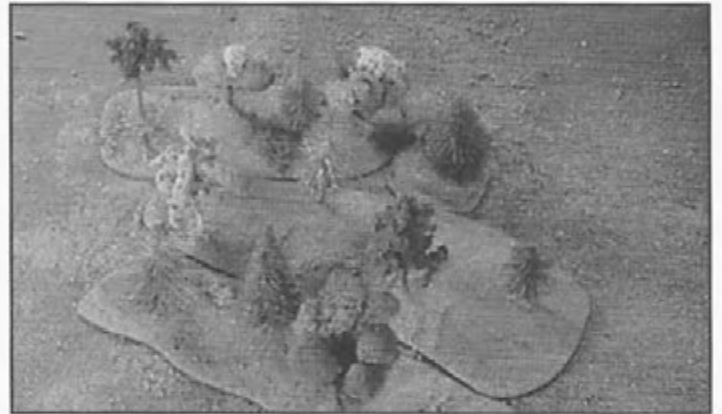
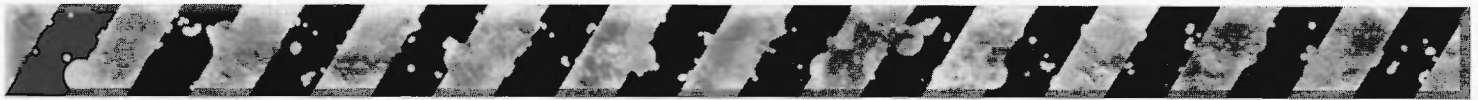
Roads and bridges can often be used to advantage in combat and movement. Thick cardstock or half-inch Styrofoam, cut to the right length with the edges sloped, makes excellent roads. Bridges can be built from scratch using plastic or wood. A quicker alternative is to buy railroad bridges from any model railroad store. Bridges built to N-scale work perfectly on the gaming table.

### Buildings

Buildings are the most difficult terrain feature to create. N-scale or Z-scale buildings from railroad stores will work. Such buildings are, however, the most expensive terrain feature. They rarely have a science fiction look, being made to fit relatively modern ages. These buildings can be modified, but a cheaper and more visually impressive method is available.

Many electronics pieces, such as stereos, radios, computer components, and the like, come in Styrofoam packages that are formed with curves and shapes that resemble futuristic build-





ings. These pieces can be modified with card stock and other pieces, then painted and made into buildings that look like those in comics and science fiction movies.

Windows and doors can be cut from thin cardstock, then glued to the Styrofoam. VTOL landing pads, communication arrays, and even weapons' emplacements can be scratch-built or bought as part kits from hobby stores.

### Rubble

Rubble is plentiful in ruined cities and on old battle grounds. Stands of ruins can be made from half-inch Styrofoam cut in the shapes of battered walls pocked with craters and finished with small stones or cat litter. Rubble pieces hinder movement and often block line of sight for combat units and are ideal pieces for any battle ground.

Rough ground can be found anywhere in the Inner Sphere and is simple to make with rocks and twigs. Also, Styrofoam pieces can be cut and shaped into rocks then glued onto stands.

### Equipment

The best material for miniature terrain is light, cheap, and easy to cut or mold. Though almost anything found around the house can be used to make good, realistic terrain, Styrofoam is the most common and versatile. Styrofoam sheets in 4' X 4' and 4' X 8' can be bought at building supply stores in the insulation section. For BattleTech, one-half inch or three-quarters inch is ideal.

Terrain features need to be covered with a water-based acrylic paint. Any building supply store carries cans of flat acrylic paint that can be mixed to match almost any color you would need. A quart of paint will cost slightly more than two or three one-ounce bottles of water-based model paint. You will need green for grassy features, light or medium gray for rocky surfaces, and browns for desert terrain. A single color of each will work, but it is best to have three colors of each type in varying shades—i.e., tan, light brown, wood brown.

White glue is used to bind the Styrofoam pieces. Note that white glue should be used exclusively, as super glues and other glues will dissolve Styrofoam. Toothpicks can be used to hold pieces in place while they dry. A knife or wire cutter is used to cut the Styrofoam pieces. Wire cutters can be found at hobby shops or flower shops.

Sandpaper of several grades is useful for smoothing the edges after the Styrofoam has been cut. Finally, water-based wood filler or a similar material is very useful for modifying terrain pieces.

### Safety Tips

When building terrain, you should work in a well-ventilated, area, away from open flames. Styrofoam dust, caused by sanding, is flammable. A cutting board, available from sewing shops, should be used on tables and desks to prevent accidental damage.



# THE 5TH SUCCESSION WAR CONTINUES...

**—COMPILED BY PRECENTOR  
MARTIAL RANDALL N. BILLS**

Dateline: 30 June 3051

—Excerpts from transcripts of a recent ComStar news broadcast from Hilton Head Island, Terra

Our top story continues to be the war that is ravaging every part of the Inner Sphere. Though some had hoped that the lull of several months past was a sign of coming peace, they were sadly mistaken. The last few months have seen a dramatic increase in the conflict, which has now reached even humanity's cradle.

Several weeks ago, forces from the Word of Blake Militia launched lightning assaults against the Glen Valley Castle Brian and outlying defenses in Australia. With the element of surprise and several key ComStar defections, Word of Blake has gained control over all of Australia. Though this turn of events is disheartening, we are confident that Precentor Martial Focht will soon push our lost brethren from our shores.

In another shocking series of events, we have just received word that the supreme leader of the invading Clans, ilKhan Leo Showers, has been killed in combat against Inner Sphere forces. We hesitate to speculate on the long-term ramifications of this event, but we do have reports of inter-Clan fighting, something that has not occurred to this point. We can only hope that this will continue, giving our beleaguered House brethren a little breathing room.

As for the rest of the Inner Sphere, let's go to our reporters, many of whom continue to risk life and limb to bring you the most current situations.

—Excerpt of transmission from Marduk

<Reporter> When Captain Dave Barton, commander of a mercenary unit of some renown, resigned his commission and was accepted into the Armed Forces of the Federated Commonwealth, there was some muttering in AFFC circles about nepotism. In a stunning series of moves, however, Lieutenant General Barton spearheaded an attack that drove straight into the teeth of the Combine advance, and has recaptured eighteen worlds: Tallmadge, Crossing, Benet III, Wapakoneta, Lima, McComb, Royal, New Ivaarsen, Lucerne, Rochester, Clovis, Doneval II, Le Blanc, Dobson, Xhosa VII, Klathandu IV, Breed and Marduk. Though we were unable to speak with Lieutenant General Barton, this reporter has no doubt that we have not seen the last of him.

—Excerpt of transmission from St. Ives

<Reporter> As of the first of July, the worlds of Randar, No Return, Relenov, Denbar and Indicass have all fallen to the AFFC. These conquests of Capellan worlds are under the direct command of Lieutenant General Richard Darr, Jr. These attacks, however, did not distract him from capturing the final prize of the St. Ives Compact: the world of St. Ives. Though Lieutenant

General Darr was not available for questions, we have Hauptmann William Hall on hand. Hauptmann?

<Hauptmann William Hall> The conquest of the St. Ives Compact is complete, and already this has allowed us to divert much-needed resources to other fronts. Our continued success against the Confederation and new assaults against the Snakes is proof of that.

—Excerpt of transmission from New Delos

<Reporter> The current war against the Free Worlds League is still favorable for the Federated Commonwealth, as another four worlds—Ling, Gomeisa, Sorunda and New Delos—fell in the last month. Though our contact, Hauptmann Carl Szczerski, was unavailable for questions, there can be no doubt that the war will continue for the foreseeable future.

—Excerpt of transmission from Woodbine

<Reporter> The worlds of Woodbine, Kountze and Winfield fell to the Outworlds Alliance as forces were shifted for the attack against the Draconis Combine.

—Excerpt of transmission from Taurus

<Reporter> Battalion Chief-Sergeant Jason Blanchet, to what do you credit the Concordat's recent success?

<Battalion Chief-Sergeant Jason Blanchet> Though we have had success against the Capellan Confederation by taking the world of Corodiz, it is against the AFFC where we have shown our strength again. Though many will point out that the fall of Grossbach, Perdition, Amber Grove and Hyalite only occurred because of the AFFC's commitment elsewhere, our soldiers know the truth.

—Excerpt of transmission from Canopus IV

<Reporter> "Slow and steady wins the race," appears to be the plan of the Magistracy of Canopus. Once again, a single world, Horatius, was captured in the last three-month period.

—Excerpt of transmission from Wasat

<Reporter> As brother continues to fight brother, the Lyran Alliance once again launches attacks against Federated Commonwealth worlds: Van Diemen IV and Wasat. Hauptmann?

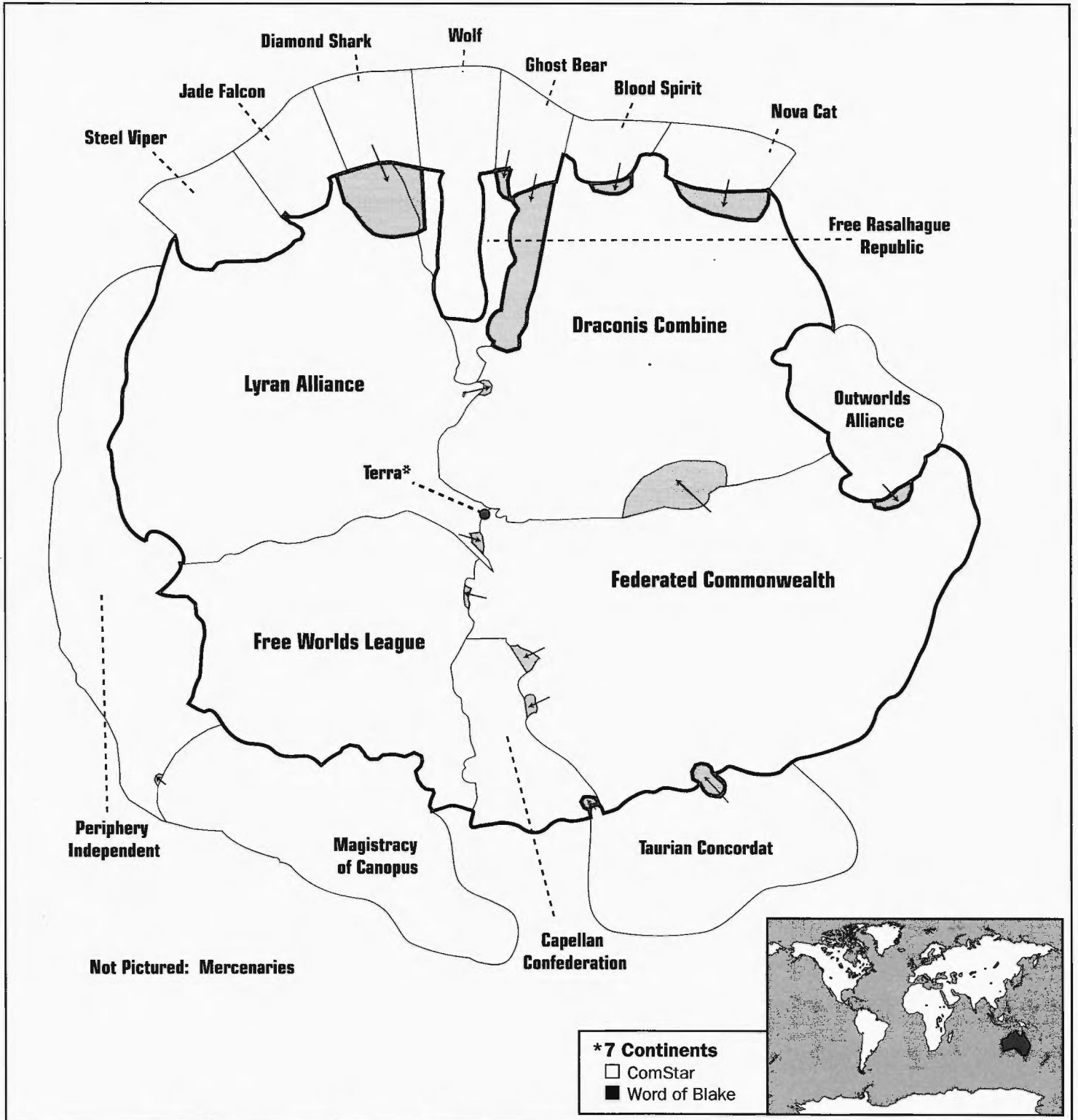
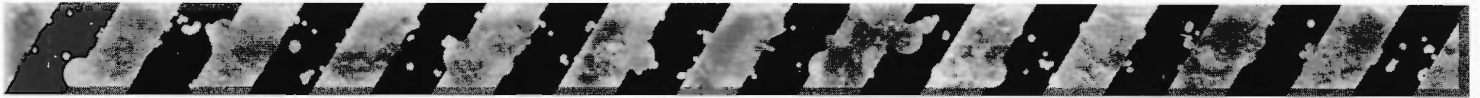
<Hauptmann Robbie Turner> How can we be blamed? They are the aggressors and have always been. Through political manipulation we were dragged into the Fourth War and the War of 3039. And now, while the FedCom sits pretty, the Clans are ravaging our borders. Brothers...ha!

—Excerpt of transmission from Buckminster

<Reporter> Hauptmann, do you think it is wise to attack the Combine?

<Hauptmann Barbara Turner> Absolutely. They have shown, as they always do, that they have only conquest in mind, and their capture of dozens of our worlds only underlines that point. With the attack of the AFFC and the sudden lightning onslaught of





# THE STATE OF THE WAR IN THE MECHFORCE UNIVERSE

DATELINE: 30 JUNE 3051



the Ghost Bear Clan, we felt the time was right to attack. Capturing Camlann, Shionoha, Aubisson and most importantly Buckminster, will show the Snakes that we are no longer ripe for the taking!

—Excerpt of transmission from Twycross

<Reporter> Your statement, Star Colonel?

<Star Colonel Larry McClanahan> The Diamond Shark is loosed in the currents of the Inner Sphere and we will not stop until the blessed shore is in sight. With the conquest of Here, Bensinger, Apollo, Toland, Steelton, Icar, Chateau, Persistence, Winfield, Wotan, Derf, Trell I, Maxie's Planet, Romulus, Butler, Twycross, Seiduts, Planting, New Caledonia, Verthandi, Csesztreg, Harvest and Ridderkerk from both the Lyran Alliance and the Free Rasalhague Republic, know that blood is in the water.

—Excerpt of transmission from Alshain

<Reporter> We have been broadcasting through pirate HPG channels for days now, though we have no way of knowing if this is getting through. Regardless, we continue, in the hopes that our information will help the Inner Sphere repulse the Clan invaders. As far as I can tell, the following Combine worlds have fallen to a lightning onslaught by Clan Ghost Bear: Nykvarn, Garstedt, Polcenigo, Jezersko, Schuyler, Courchevel, Soverzene, Thessalonika, Kaesong, Sheliak, Alshain, Tinaca, Marawi, Halesowen, Stemwerde, Kiamba, Krenice, Meilen, Toffen, Mannedorf, Eguilles, Setubal, Maule and Ardoz. They have also invaded the Rasalhague worlds of Damian, Holmsbu and Pinnacle.

—Excerpt of transmission from Luthien

<Reporter> There are many within the Draconis Combine—most notably, those whose worlds border the Federated Commonwealth as well as the occupation zones of the Ghost Bear and Nova Cat Clans, and have seen their worlds captured—who are contemplating sedition against the Gunji-no-

Kanrei Rich Cencarik. However, I would be remiss in my duties if I did not point out that the two sectors of space that have previously presented the Combine with the greatest threat, our borders with the Outworlds Alliance and Clan Blood Spirit, were heavily fortified. Though the Outworlds Alliance probed our defences, no worlds were taken. And as for Clan Blood Spirit, though the worlds of Staplefeld and Coudoux fell, the Spirits actually launched a massive assault all along our border and only the tremendous build-up of forces prevented the loss of dozens of worlds. With so many enemies barking at the gate, the Kanrei had to choose which mutt to put down—and I believe he chose correctly.

—Excerpt of transmission from Echo

<Reporter> Though I have tried to gain access to Nova Cat personnel, all I have accomplished is wasted days in the heat of Echo's hot summer. However, I do have a statement which was broadcast all across the worlds currently conquered by Clan Nova Cat.

<Nova Commander Rhonda McClanahan> Ad Duwayd, Kamarod, Brihuega, Chorley, Qandahar, Brailsford, Slaithwaite, Algate, Leyland, Chapineria, Echo—these worlds have become part of the Path of the nova cat. Let the vision be clear before us and guide our steps forward to the enlightenment of all Inner Sphere worlds.

• • •

The map on the next page represents the current state of the Fifth Succession War as of 30 June 3051. These results were tallied by factoring MechForce member participation in ranked battles and the total number of members in each affiliation group. The gray-shaded areas represent sections of that affiliation's territory that have fallen to an enemy in the last quarter.



# MECHFORCE TOP 50

The following list includes the top 50 ranked players in MechForce, including their ranks and affiliations, as of June 30th, 1999.

<b>NAME</b>	<b>RANK</b>	<b>AFFILIATION</b>	<b>STANDING</b>
Rich Cencarik	Tai-shu (Gunji-no-Kanrei)	Draconis Combine	2896
Steve Massey	Star Colonel	Blood Spirit	2164
Larry A. McClanahan	Star Colonel	Diamond Shark	2007
Thomas Ropers	Captain	Mercenary	1957
Richard Darr, Jr.	Leftenant General	Federated Commonwealth	1896
Dave Barton	Leftenant General	Federated Commonwealth	1643
Carl Amedio	Preceptor	Outworlds Alliance	1629
Bob Legro	Nova Captain	Fire Mandrill	1614
Rhonda McClanahan	Nova Commander	Nova Cat	1356
Loren Coleman	Subcommander	Capellan Confederation	1329
William Ransdale	Nova Commander	Ghost Bear	1297
Roland Edward Geisler	Hauptmann	Federated Commonwealth	1293
Greg Swanson	Sergeant	Mercenary	1287
Carl Szczerski	Hauptmann	Federated Commonwealth	1275
David Low	Hauptmann	Lyrans Alliance	1275
Robbie Turner	Hauptmann	Lyrans Alliance	1268
M. Jason Trent	Nova Commander	Ghost Bear	1259
Jacques Zabatany	Subcommander	Capellan Confederation	1250
Reid Wilson	Nova Commander	Diamond Shark	1250
William Hall	Hauptmann	Federated Commonwealth	1250
Buster McCall	Sho-sa	Draconis Combine	1244
Debbie Trent	Lieutenant, Senior Grade	Free Worlds League	1230
Bryan Nystul	Nova Commander	Ghost Bear	1220
David Szczerski	Hauptmann	Federated Commonwealth	1206
David Rozelle	Sergeant	Mercenary	1203
Barbara Turner	Hauptmann	Lyrans Alliance	1195
Peter Grubb	Leftenant	Federated Commonwealth	1190
Terrance Haas	Adept I	ComStar	1189
Jason Blanchet	Battalion Chief-Sergeant	Taurian Concordat	1185
Edward Williams-Wilken	Star Corporal	Magistracy of Canopus	1180
Tim Croyle	Leftenant	Federated Commonwealth	1158
Solomon Goren	Leftenant	Federated Commonwealth	1157
James "Spider" Welch	Acolyte X	ComStar	1152
Joshua Ayers	Star Commander	Smoke Jaguar	1150
Jeff Smith	Star Commander	Ghost Bear	1139
Christopher Smith	Commander	St. Ives Compact	1135
Daniel Cotte-Sanchez	Star Commander	Diamond Shark	1131
Brian Gruber	Subcommander	St. Ives Compact	1128
Kevin K. Unash	Force Leader	St. Ives Compact	1127
Dan "Flake" Grendell	Adept I	Word of Blake	1120
Jason Webster	Lance Sergeant	Taurian Concordat	1120
John P. Lynch	Corporal	Mercenary	1117
Rick Cox	Corporal	Mercenary	1116
Randall N. Bills	Nova Commander	Blood Spirit	1113
John Kielman	Acolyte X	Word of Blake	1108
Randy Ko	Corporal	Mercenary	1107
Rick Remer	Star Captain	Coyote	1094
Michael J. Shields	Star Commander	Wolf (in Exile)	1092
Mark Swanson	Star Commander	Wolf (in Exile)	1089
Jim Grimmett	Star Commander	Steel Viper	1088

# ROLL CALL

## Arizona

Waterloo's Old Guard  
William Hall  
6445 S. Maple Ave #1058  
Tempe, AZ 85283-0536

## California

405th Raider Detachment  
Mark Tranthan  
1566 Pine Ave. #208  
Long Beach, CA 90813

Four Horsemen of the  
Apocalypse

John Hall  
10707 Jamacha Blvd. Sp. 194  
Spring Valley, CA 91978-1823

## Colorado

High Plains Drifters  
Greg Swanson  
828 Hamilton  
Sterling, CO 80751

## Florida

Lone Wolves (Internet)  
David Rozelle  
2690 Drew St. #803  
Clearwater, FL 33759

Steel Typhoon

Roy Faló  
6555 W. Broward Blvd. Unit  
105  
Plantation, FL 33324

## Illinois

Busse Irregulars (Based)  
Thomas Ropers  
480 Eagle Dr. #303  
Elk Grove, IL 60007

K.G.B. Section 42  
Steve Massey  
218 W. River St.  
Bourbonnais, IL 60914-1836  
Noldor42@keynet.net or  
Ahab42@Aol.com

## Indiana

The Priests Of Peril  
David Barnes  
2516 Brookside Pkwy. N. Dr.  
Indianapolis, IN 46201  
jdfalcon@aol.com

## Massachusetts

Lucifers Bananas  
Scott Johnson  
16 Fenno St Apt 2  
Cambridge, MA 02138

## Montana

Mittlemarch Crusaders  
Robert Hamilton  
5412A Chestnut St.  
Great Falls, MT 59405

## Missouri

1st Confederate ACR: Terra  
(Internet/Based)  
Jeff Smith  
11417 Manchester Ave.  
Kansas City, MO 64134  
vlad@idir.net

## New Jersey

Betty's Brigade (Internet)  
Ed Karl  
340B Monroe Ave  
Kennilworth, NJ 07033  
ekarl@idt.net

The Inquisition  
William Ransdale  
75 West St  
Trenton, NJ 08611-1145

## North Carolina

Omega Galaxy (Internet,  
Aligned)  
Warner Doles  
927 Graham St.  
Burlington, NC 27217-6061  
tempest\_stryker@hotmail.com

## Ohio

8th Alshain Rangers  
Kevin Grimm  
5323 Warren Ave #1  
Cincinnati, OH 45212

Quantum Bandits Regiments  
Markus Garlauskas  
20550 Ball Ave  
Euclid, OH 44123-2778

## Pennsylvania

Steel City MechWarriors  
Rich Cencarik  
155 Bellwood Dr  
Munhall, PA 15120

## South Carolina

Green Dragoons (Based)  
Dan E. Clark  
7671 Northwoods Blvd. Suite 5  
North Charleston, SC 29406

## Tennessee

Blackthorn's Firestorm Legion  
(Based)  
Mark Amoroso  
Blackthorn Gamecenter  
1430 Highway 70 E.  
Dickson, TN 37055

Black Wind Lancers (Aligned)  
Keith Ruhl  
1802 Ashmore Ct.  
Mt. Juliet, TN 37122

## Texas

Gerard's Raiders  
Scott Sveter  
2605 Lohse Rd  
Killeen TX 76543

MechWarrior Guild  
Darrell Castillo  
2419 W. Colorado  
Dallas, TX 75211

Blazing Fist of Defiance  
(aligned)  
James Lytle  
573 Plaza Ct.  
Harker Heights, TX 76548

San Antonio MechWarriors  
Guild  
Craig Gulledge  
11810 El Sendero  
San Antonio, TX 78233

## Vermont

Fianna Rangers  
Jason Blanchet  
RD#2 Box 976  
Underhill, VT 05489

## Washington

Craig's Commando's  
Alex Craig  
33261 22nd Ct SW  
Federal Way, WA 98023

## Wisconsin

141st Amaris Dragoons

"The Singapore  
Longshoremen" (Based)  
Chris Trossen  
Adventure Games Plus  
735 S. 108 st.  
West Allis, WI 53214

Black Sheep  
David J. Vanden Noven  
P. O. Box 156  
Evansville, WI 53536-0156

Davion Heavy Guards  
(Internet)  
Winter Guité  
2716 Blackbridge Ave  
Janesville, WI 53545

Kenosh Cavaliers  
Mykal Antczak  
1902 53rd St. Upper  
Kenosha, WI 53140

The Star Riders  
Jeffery Hatcher  
9745 W. Reichert Pl.  
Milwaukee, WI 53225

## Military

Thors Hammers  
John Garibotte  
PSC 557 Box 3721  
APO, AP 96379

## Canada

Chaos Warriors  
Robert Shewring  
Box 31 RR#5  
Oshawa, ONT L1H 8L7  
Canada

Ice Dragoons  
Walter Illman  
RR#3  
Chatsworth, ONT N0H 1G0

## Australia

Adelaide Periphery Raiders  
Edward Brownlow  
c/o Tactics  
38 Currie St  
Adelaide, South Australia 5000

The Black Watch  
Jeffrey Welfare  
51 Fairfield Rd.  
Guildford, NSW 2161



# BATTLETECH LICENSEE RELEASE SCHEDULE

## RAL PARTHA BATTLETECH MINIATURE RELEASES

Ral Partha has just released a series of large 'Mech miniatures—approximately 3.5 inches or 90mm tall. The first four are the Atlas, Zeus, Mad Cat (Timber Wolf) and Vulture (Mad Dog) and are on sale now in kit form for \$29.95. In another month, they will be available built and blackened, with the price TBA. By Christmas, an additional four 'Mechs will be on sale. These are available only through mail order.

### September

Arctic Wolf  
Yeoman  
Chevalier Light Tank  
Blitzkrieg

### October

Ha Otoko  
Jinggau  
Sirocco  
Wyvern IIC

### November

Myrmidon Medium Tank  
Demolisher II Heavy Tank  
Hachiman Fire Support Tank  
Ishtar Heavy Fire Support Tank

### December

Athena Combat Vehicle  
Ti Tsang  
Yu Huang  
Predator

## BATTLETECH PC COMPUTER GAMES

Check out the following websites in the coming months for additional information: [www.mechwarrior3.com](http://www.mechwarrior3.com) (MechWarrior 3) and [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com) (MechCommander). Additionally, check out [http://zone.msn.com/msn\\_home.asp](http://zone.msn.com/msn_home.asp) for a chance to win a copy of MechWarrior 3, signed by Jordan Weisman, as well as other cool prizes.

### MechCommander Gold \$29.95 Sept

Along with the complete MechCommander game, MechCommander Gold adds the following features: 6 new 'Mechs, 10 new weapons, 12 new single player campaign missions, 3 stand alone missions (with support for Mplayer and the MSN Gaming Zone), player configurable difficulty setting, a new waypoint navigation system, ammo conservation fire and best of all, a fully featured mission builder. There will be a \$10 rebate coupon for MechCommander owners.

### MechWarrior 3: Pirates Moon Dec

This will be the first expansion for the MechWarrior 3 computer game, which will include the following highlights: 6 new 'Mech chassis, 20 missions, improved AI, fog and ambient light, exotic terrain, night missions and enhanced multi-player support.

## ARMORCAST BATTLETECH RESIN RELEASES

Armorcast has begun to release a line of incredible, fully-detailed resin 'Mechs at 1/60th scale. Check out [www.armorcast.com](http://www.armorcast.com) for more information.

Already Available	
Mad Cat (Timber Wolf)	\$115

October	
Vulture (Mad Dog)	TBA

## PALISADES MARKETING BATTLETECH COLLECTIBLE TOY RELEASES

Palisades Marketing is proud to release a line of collectible BattleTech toys—approximately 6 to 7 inches tall—that come in action poses, fully painted and detailed, including damage. Check out [www.palisadesmarketing.com](http://www.palisadesmarketing.com) for more information.

Available mid-December through hobby retailers, as well as retail stores such as Musicland and Babbages.

Mad Cat (Timber Wolf)	\$14.95
Atlas	\$14.95

The second series, which will also include the Vulture (Mad Dog) and Awesome, will release in first quarter 2000 to mass market, appearing in such stores as Kay Bee and Toys 'R' Us.

## MISCELLANEOUS

In the coming months, we will post announcements to our website concerning BattleTech T-shirts as well as decals for use with the Ral Partha BattleTech miniature line. Stay tuned at [www.fasa.com](http://www.fasa.com).



# FASA RELEASE SCHEDULE

**Roar of Honor**                      **5768**                      **\$5.99**                      **Sept**

Angela Bekker is a rising star in Clan Ghost Bear. Devoted to duty and honor, she is relentless in the pursuit of flawless victory—a prime example of Clan excellence in mind and body. When she receives orders to form a new Tertiary from scratch, to be stationed on the planet Toffen at the edge of Ghost Bear space, she jumps at the chance to have her own command.

A MechWarrior novel for BattleTech, written by Blaine Lee Pardoe.

**By Blood Betrayed**                      **5769**                      **\$5.99**                      **Oct**

Harley Rassor is a simple farm boy in a complex techno-universe—more than happy to work the land of planet Slewis with his father. His restless older brother left to join the elite merc corps, Able's Aces...and paid with his life. Now, Harley's father wants him to join the fight—and learn what happened to his brother.

A MechWarrior novel by Blaine Lee Pardoe and Mel Odom.

## MechWarrior's

**Guide to Solaris VII**                      **1716**                      **\$18.00**                      **Nov**

Adventure awaits on the game world of Solaris VII, where death is a sport and the stakes are your life! The first in a series of MechWarrior's Guides, this book combines source material, complete information for campaigning on Solaris VII, detailed 'Mech dueling rules and a full length adventure for MechWarrior, Third Edition.

A sourcebook for MechWarrior, Third Edition.



# FASA

CORPORATION

1100 West Cermak Road  
Suite B305  
Chicago, IL 60608

BULK RATE  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Melrose Park, IL  
PERMIT NO. 50

57 P6 \*\*AUTO\*\*ALL FOR ADC 945

