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MECHFORCE[®]

NORTH AMERICA

QUARTERLY



FASA
CORPORATION



BATTLETECH TALK

FASA'S "BATTLETECH GUY" SPEAKS OUT

WHAT'S THE "DEAL" WITH THE TCG?

Ever since **Magic: The Gathering™** hit the scene, players immediately started asking us about doing a **BattleTech** trading card game (TCG). Some begged us to do one, while others begged us *not* to do one.

By the time you read this, the **BattleTech** trading card game will be a reality. It seems everyone is curious, but there are many unanswered questions and concerns. So, if you are one of the many **BattleTech** boardgame players wondering if you should spend your hard-earned cash on the **BattleTech** TCG, read on!

Q: When's the game coming out, who's producing it, and how much will it cost?

The card game should have hit stores on November 7, 1996 (before you received this magazine).

The card game is being produced by Wizards of the Coast (WotC), publishers of **Magic: The Gathering (M:TG)**, under license from FASA. The game will be sold in 60-card starter decks and 15-card booster packs. To play the game, each player will need a starter deck, which also comes with a rulebook and a die. Each starter deck has a suggested retail price of \$8.95; each booster pack has a suggested retail price of \$2.95.

Q: I'm worried that the card game won't faithfully represent the BattleTech universe. What level of involvement did FASA have in the game's creation?

Throughout the creation of the game, various key FASA staffers kept in touch with their WotC counterparts to ensure the game stayed true to the look, flavor, and rich history of the **BattleTech** universe.

Several early designs were considered back in 1995, one of which came directly from FASA. Ultimately, WotC decided to put Richard Garfield, creator of **M:TG**, on the project personally. Using the previous designs and FASA's library of **BattleTech** books for inspiration, he designed the game himself. He brought an early version of the game to FASA's offices for a few days to show us how it worked. At that point, **BattleTech** co-creator Jordan Weisman and I got a chance to play the game and put our two cents in. FASA folks continued to play the game throughout its development.

It is important to note that it was never FASA's or WotC's intention to make the card game a simulation of the **BattleTech** board game, nor was the card game to be a card-based version

of the board game. The design goal was always to make a trading card game based on the **BattleTech** universe. The most important thing was to ensure that the **BattleMechs**, characters, and great Houses and Clans retained their flavor from the universe, but in the context of an entirely new medium: the TCG. In this regard, FASA was instrumental in helping WotC meet that goal.

Q: When is the game set?

After some debate, we agreed the best setting for the game would be in the midst of the Clan invasion, circa 3050. There are many reasons for this, not the least of which was that the Clans have become very popular since the release of the **MechWarrior® 2** PC game by Activision last year. We wanted to make sure the 'Mechs and characters were recognizable to **BattleTech** players of all types. For my part, I wanted to make sure we included as many of the major, popular characters as possible, such as Hanse Davion, Natasha Kerensky, and Justin Xiang Allard. If the game was set in the current 3057 timeframe, many of these characters would be dead.

Q: What's the scale of the game?

The player has no clearly defined "role" in the card game, although in some ways he acts as a high-ranking general or House leader. Cards represent individual 'Mechs, as well as characters, battle maneuvers, sneaky plans, and various battlefield and political resources. The player's deck is his "Stockpile," from which he draws forces to wage war on his opponent. A single game of the TCG consists of many individual battles, and represents an extended campaign, as opposed to the skirmish scale of the **BattleTech** board game.

Q: What 'Mechs will be in the game? How does the game play?

Space limitations prevent me from going into too much detail about the game's specifics. The game will include more than 100 different **BattleMech** cards, with abilities translated directly from their board game stats. I worked closely with WotC R&D staff to ensure that the 'Mechs had abilities in the card game that were comparable to the way they play in the board game.

To help represent each 'Mech's abilities, they have various special powers including Overheat and Alpha Strike. A favorite



of mine is the Missile ability, which represents LRMs. Using this ability, you can strike your intended target even if you are blocked, representing the LRM's indirect fire and long range abilities. However, the Missile damage is dependent on a die roll, like in the board game. You could score a big hit, or your missiles could be duds!

Movement speed and Initiative are also very important factors in the game, although they work quite differently than in the board game. Although the game is fairly simple at its core, these factors introduce a wide variety of tactical possibilities, both in playing the game and deck building.

Q: Now the most important question: Do the 'Mechs look cool?

Oh, yes! I've seen thousands of TCG cards from dozens of games, and I would say that, on the average, this game has the best art of any of them. Some of my favorites are the *Centurion* by Dave Seeley and the *Zeus* by Clint Langley. Many **BattleTech** artists contributed to the card game as well, including Jim Nelson, Jeff Laubenstein, Joel Biske, Tom Baxa, and Doug Chaffee. FASA art director Jim Nelson worked closely with WotC to ensure the game had the BattleTech "Look". Never before have there been so many wonderful pieces of **BattleTech** art in one place.

Q: So, what do you really think of the BattleTech TCG?

I think the game turned out great. I heartily recommend it to any fan of **BattleTech** as quick-playing alternative to the board game, or as another window into the vast tapestry of the **BattleTech** universe. I'm really looking forward to tearing open booster packs and hunting for the elusive *Daishi A* and *Natasha Kerensky* cards, for that killer combo that will finally blast Randall out of the water. See you on the battlefield, MechWarrior!

For more information about the **BattleTech** TCG, contact Wizards of the Coast. You can visit their web site at <http://www.wizards.com>, e-mail questions to CUSTSERV@Wizards.com, call them at (206) 624-0933, or mail them at P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707.

Death From Above by Jean Rabe — 4

We're looking for a few good articles—with names and labels attached.

Fit to Print by Mike Nelson — 5

This veteran MechForce author shares his experiences and words of advice.

Border Run by Chris Hussey — 6

Try your hand at this fast-paced MechWarrior/BattleTech adventure.

Salvage by Gerald Hall — 8

Gaining spare parts can be downright deadly!

Trial of the Righteous by Samson Okalaw — 12

Sometimes the winners lose, especially in Ningpo.

Lock-N- Load by Stacy Rieckermann — 15

Reminder of the new ranking system.

The BattleTech Museum by Randall Bills — 15

Next stop on the tour.

Return to Cathay Nights by Chris Hussey — 18

Here's our final installment in the saga of Cathay Policeman Than DeYoung.

The Silver Sabers by Mike Paul — 21

This Connecticut MechForce Chapter likes to brawl in the streets.

Roll Call — 22

Chapter listing for MechForce North America. Start one today.

Ranking Scores — 23

The final showing of the old scores.

PWL-R6 Prowler by Gabriel Gong — 24

50 ton Inner sphere 'Mech.

BattleTech Contest — 26

From the Pages of the Gallant Defense of Mankind

by Precentor Martial Randall Bills — 27

Widow's Web by Mike Nelson — 28

Read about Kesmai's Multi-player BattleTech online game.

A Taste of Chaos by Jared Niedenthal — 30

Colonel Night embarks on Operations Guerrilla.

Release schedule for Ral Partha — 32

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Precentor Tau I: Jean Rabe, Editor

Precentor Chi I: Stacy Rieckermann, Designer & Layout

Primus: Bryan Nystul

Precentor Martial: Randall Bills

Inside art: Joel Biske

Cover art: Les Dorscheid



Making it Labeled and Legible

FROM ABOVE

It's been a while since I've asked for submissions. My file cabinet drawer has

been pretty full—stuffed to overflowing would be a better term. But after filling several issues of MechForce Quarterly and recently sending many submissions back for a rewrite, it's not so full anymore. In other words, I'm asking for more submissions. This is your chance to contribute to the magazine and MechForce North America—and your chance to see your words in print.

I asked one of our regular contributors to write about his experiences with submitting, and that article appears on the opposite page. Mike's been published several times now, and he's got a few more pieces in the file drawer waiting to be scheduled. Follow his advice, don't give up, and you'll be added to MechForce's ranks of published authors.

What are we looking for? No 'Mechs, okay? At least not for a while. We've got quite a few, and we don't want to publish more than one an issue. You'll have a lot better chance of getting published if you write something else. However, if you think you have a fantastic design that merits our consideration, send it to MechForce 'Mech Designs at FASA.

We're looking for scenarios. Scenarios are always in demand. One that has a short bit of fiction in front of it serves to make the scenario a little more interesting.

We're looking for articles on MechForce Chapters. Tell us what you're up to, how you formed, where you meet, and whether you challenge other chapters.

We're also looking for advice we can share with MechForce members. What's the best way to deploy infantry, and what should they be armed with? Give us some tips on using jump-capable 'Mechs. Got some experience with staging massive battles? If so, share it with us. Do you have some words of wisdom to share about one-on-one 'Mech bashes? And how about using terrain and weather to make things interesting? We haven't seen any submissions about combat without 'Mechs—you know, just using tanks, infantry, and the like. What about a few articles dealing with uneven odds—such as what light 'Mechs can do to stay alive against vastly superior forces. The Silver Sabers' article about city fighting has us intrigued. Let's see some more articles about battling among buildings. Creating buildings would make for good reading, too. Do any members fashion buildings, rubble, mountains, and the like for 3-D games? You get the idea. Now get to work at your keyboard.

Letters from MechForce members indicate they enjoy fiction. Let's take that a step further—if you

submit fiction, include MechWarrior statistics for one or more of the characters, a scenario to recreate the action, or other information that can be used in the game. Many members have been asking for more MechWarrior material, too. The article in this issue by Chris Hussey is the last MechWarrior piece in the file cabinet. That's a strong hint to write something featuring the MechWarrior game. Some members want articles that give them tips on playing in convention games and MechForce-sanctioned events. Others have asked for advice on selecting miniatures to paint. And more than a dozen are hoping we'll print more new weapons and equipment.

Of course, we can't print any articles on these great topics if you don't write them.

Now, let's discuss for a moment how to send us your articles. If you write on an IBM-compatible computer, we'd love getting a disk along with your article. Your submission will probably see print faster that way—simply because it's easier for us to edit. Make sure you label the disk. *Please, please, please label the disk.* Put your name on the disk—and your address if it will fit. I have far too many black, unlabeled disks in my file cabinet. We can accept WordPerfect files and any ASCII files. Some authors just stick an unlabeled disk in an envelope and send it off. No letter. No paper copy of the submission. No hint at what's on the disk. No chance we're going to stick these in our computers.

If you use a computer other than an IBM-compatible, just send a paper copy of your article (I type about 80 or so words a minute, so it doesn't take me that long to input an article).

Make sure you put your name on the submission. *Please, please, please write your name on the submission.* You'd be surprised how many authors just stick their submission in an envelope with no name anywhere but on the return address. Sometimes that return address is too difficult to read—whether because the author scribbled it too quickly or because he used a marker and it rained inside the mailbox. We will not print submissions from contributors we can't identify.

There, that about covers everything. We look forward to reading your submissions. Send them to MechForce Quarterly, PO Box 779, New Munster, WI 53152.

Take Care,
Jean



FIT TO PRINT

WRITING FOR MECHFORCE QUARTERLY

BY MIKE NELSON

At one time or another, most gamers think seriously about writing. It might be penning something as simple as a favorite 'Mech design or as complex as the history of a planet. Whatever the case, once you get the bug, writing is something you just have to do. I have yet to play a game, especially something like **BattleTech**, where I do not start dreaming up all sorts of stuff.

In early 1995 I learned that **MechForce North America** was going to be run in-house by FASA and that there would be a quarterly magazine. I'd done several **BattleTech** record sheets of various sorts, so I packaged them up and submitted them. The first issue of **MechForce Quarterly** was already in the works, so I knew my stuff would not be in it. When the magazine arrived and the editorial asked for specific types of submissions, I decided to try my hand at writing—just to see if I could do it. Everything I had done up to this point were record sheets.

I submitted a 'Mech design (SCT-45 *Scout*) with a brief history, and they liked it and scheduled it for publication. Things were pretty good as far as I was concerned! Then somewhere down the line, and I really don't remember when, I started talking to the **MechForce** people. I had been learning the ins and outs of the Internet. After using Web Crawler on AOL to run a search on **BattleTech**, I was astonished to get back more than a hundred listings. Bursting with energy, I told the **MechForce** editor about everything out there on the Net. You see, the editor lives in a technology-challenged area and doesn't have local Internet access. I was going on and on, kind of like I am doing now, when she stopped me cold.

"Mike, why don't you write an article about it?"

Stunned, I stalled and tried to think of an answer. A little voice inside my head started yelling, "Hello! An editor of a magazine just asked you to do an article and you're *thinking* about it? What do you think you should say? Naturally, I agreed to give it a shot, though I wondered just what I had gotten myself into. After a pep talk from my wife, I turned on the computer and went surfing. After about three days of looking at sites, writing notes, and burning up a lot of money in on-line time, I paddled back into shore. I felt that there was enough material for several

issues, especially with a quarterly magazine.

So, with a great deal of self-doubt on my part, I crafted a proposal for a regular column that discussed **BattleTech** sites on the Internet and sent it off. A moment of teaching here—the waiting for a reply is the hardest part. Don't beat yourself up while a proposal is gone. Write something else in the meantime. If you do good work, and you know you do good work, the positive results will eventually come back to you.

Anyway, after beating myself up waiting, the return letter came. I have to say that this was and still is one of the high points in my life. The editor liked the idea and wanted me to start working on the column right away. Talk about exhilaration! A regular column! What more could a writer ask for?

So here I am. I've had a couple of *Widow's Webs* published. I've published a 'Mech description and have submitted several more articles, most of which I'm hoping will see publication somewhere down the line. The record sheets I originally submitted haven't seen print, and maybe they never will. But who cares? In addition to **MechForce Quarterly**, I've been published in a fanzine a couple of times.

I guess that brings me to the point of all of this—encouragement. If you think you have what it takes to write something other people would like to read—then write. If you're sitting there reading this and thinking to yourself, "I can write as well as this Bozo," then go for it! And if you get a rejection or two, don't give up. I repeat, never give up!

Pull those old scenarios you threw together out of that box in the closet and read them again. They might require a lot of rewriting, but, hey, nothing good is easy. I typically rewrite an article at least five times (one of which was completed while on the back of a fire truck chasing a brush fire this past summer). I mulled this particular piece around in my head for a couple of weeks before I wrote anything down.

So write already. It's the only way you are ever going to find out if you have what it takes. Good Luck! Oh, I almost forgot, I did the same **BattleTech** search using InfoSeek last night on the net. The count is up to 486 references. Must be something in the air.

Border Run

A Job Offer for a Few Good MechWarriors

by Chris Hussey

This **MechWarrior/BattleTech** adventure can take place on any world near the Lyran Alliance/Clan border or within the Arc Royal Defense Cordon. It is designed for a group of four to six player characters, with at least two MechWarriors among them. The game master is encouraged to alter the adventure as desired to fit within his or her current campaign.

EVENT 1: THE MEET

The characters are approached by a man in commoner's clothes. He has a simple employment offer—either in line with their current assignment or contract, or as a sidetrack if they are “between contracts.”

If the player characters are interested, the man leads them outside, where they will enter an elegant hoverlimo. Inside is Veron Teller, an independent trader who operates along the border worlds. He says he recently came across some valuable cargo—a cache of weapons and ammunition that belonged to a mercenary unit. Veron plans to make a run across the Clan border to sell the weapons to resistance fighters in the Jade Falcon Occupation Zone. He wants the characters to simply act as security when the trade goes down.

If the characters agree to the assignment, Veron says they will leave in two days and offers them 75,000 C-bill equivalents—which will be paid after the mission is completed. The price can increase up to 90,000 by using opposed Negotiation skill rolls (Veron's modified Negotiation skill roll is 3+). The price can change in 5,000 C-bill equivalents for each Margin of Success (MOS) that the bargaining character has above Veron's. Veron will pay no more than 20,000 C-bill equivalents up-front.

GM BACKGROUND

Veron's story is not completely true. He stole the weapons from one of the terrorist organizations that is currently operating on the planet. However, he has made runs across the Clan border, and has often illegally sold items to resistance fighters. The Lyran Alliance has outlawed unsanctioned supply runs to resistance fighters, and such activity is dealt with stiffly.

RESEARCH

If the characters do some checking on Veron, his business, or the weapons, they must make Streetwise or Protocol skill rolls where appropriate.

Inquiries about Veron will require Protocol skill rolls and will yield the following results. Check the attempting characters'

MOS:

0: “He's an independent trader who often makes runs in this region.”

1-2: “I've heard of him. He's had some questionable dealings in the past, but no serious run-ins with the law that I can remember.”

3+: “Veron is a shrewd businessman who will do what it takes to close a deal. He often makes unsanctioned runs across the Clan border and sells weapons to resistance fighters, instead of just giving them the supplies.”

Inquiries about the weapons shipment requires a Streetwise skill roll. Check the attempting character's MOS:

0: “I have no idea what you're talking about. Get out of my face!”

1: “All I've heard is that he didn't find it or buy it.”

2: “He got the weapons here, but he stole them. From whom though, I don't know.”

3+: “Veron stole the weapons from a local terrorist organization that is trying to overthrow the government. They know he did it, and they want the weapons back.”

COMPLICATION—TERROR STRIKE

The terrorists have been watching Veron. They believe that the characters are regular employees of his, and they have decided to kill the characters before moving onto Veron to get their weapons back. The terrorist strike team will likely attack at night when the best opportunity presents itself, such as when the characters are the farthest from the 'Mechs and other heavy weaponry.

TERRORISTS (5)

Attributes: BLD 4 (8+), REF 5 (7+), INT 4 (8+), LRN 4 (8+), CHA 3 (9+)

Characteristics: Athletic 9+, Physical 9+, Mental 10+, Social 11+

Skills: Blade 3 (6+), Interrogation 2 (9+), Small Arms 3 (6+), Stealth 4 (5+), Unarmed Combat 3 (6+)

NPC Edge: 2

Equipment: SMG (Range 1-3/4-7/8-10; Damage 3D6), Pistol (Range 1-2/3-4/5-8; Damage 2D6+3), Club (Dmg 1D6+2)

The terrorists will interrogate any survivors to find out where Veron is staying. If things go bad for the terrorists, they try to flee by vanishing into the shadows.

Border Run

EVENT 2: THE DEAL

When the day to leave arrives, Veron asks the characters to load their 'Mechs into his DropShip. They will lift off for the border. If the characters confront Veron about his illegal dealings, he will simply shrug it off, saying that he is not alone in such deeds. If the characters do not wish to work for him, they don't have to. Veron can find help elsewhere. "Besides, the weapons were stolen from terrorists, who would have used them to harm innocent civilians. Wouldn't it be better to use the weapons against the Clans instead?" If the characters try to report Veron to the authorities, he may seek revenge later. See Loose Ends below.

After two and a half weeks of uneventful space travel, the characters arrive at their destination—a small, desolate moon in an uninhabited star system across the Clan border. Veron tells them the resistance DropShip should be arriving soon. He wants the characters in their 'Mechs in case there is any trouble.

After several hours, a DropShip begins to close. It lands near Veron's DropShip. This second DropShip is unmarked, and two 'Mechs will exit the ship. The DropShip belongs to the resistance fighters. They are here for the deal, and they brought their own 'Mechs as a precaution. The characters are free to monitor the deal as it goes down.

However, just as Veron and the resistance fighters are concluding the deal, several 'Mechs emerge onto the field and attack. These are second-line models belonging to the Clans. A Jade Falcon Watch team heard news of the trade and is attempting to capture both the resistance fighters and the trader involved with their supplying. The Clan warriors attack both the characters' 'Mechs and resistance fighters' 'Mechs.

Veron tries to escape immediately, but it will take 1D6+2 turns for his ship to get underway. He tells the characters to hold the Clanners off until his ship is ready, then they'll all leave. The resistance fighters' 'Mechs can help the characters, but they are trying to escape as well. It will take the resistance DropShip 1D6 turns to get underway. The resistance fighters will not communicate with the characters or stretch their necks out to save them if they are in a jam—they are more concerned with escaping than defeating the Clans in this particular battle.

The characters must fight a retreating action back into the DropShip. Fortunately, Veron has used a pirate point, and his JumpShip is only three hours away. With luck, the characters might be able to escape. If both DropShips escape, consider Veron's deal satisfactorily completed.

For this encounter, the game master can use any two **BattleTech** mapsheets, with the following restrictions:

1: There are no woods hexes, as the satellite has no atmosphere. Any woods hexes can be considered clear or rough terrain.

2: The area surrounding the mapsheets is relatively rocky, which allowed the Clan 'Mechs to hide while the parties arrived.

3: If the game master is feeling particularly devious, he or she can use the rules dealing with fighting in a vacuum and low gravity (the gravity of the satellite is .70 standard). These rules

are found on pages 90-91 of the **BattleTech Compendium: The Rules of Warfare**.

Resistance Fighters

Lt. Phyllis Hansen, (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), ENF-4R
Enforcer

James Handen (Piloting 2, Gunnery 4), PXH-1
Phoenix Hawk

(Both 'Mechs have 20 random points of damage, divided up into five-point groups. Roll 2D6 using the front/rear BattleMech Hit Location Table, re-rolling any head hits and ignoring any critical hits.)

Clan Warriors

Star Commander Shefus (Piloting 3, Gunnery 2),
Warhammer IIC

MechWarrior Jillann (Piloting 3, Gunnery 3), *Rifleman IIC*

MechWarrior Manata (Piloting 4, Gunnery 3), *Vixen*

MechWarrior Demeter (Piloting 3, Gunnery 3), *Vixen*

MechWarrior Shellai (Piloting 3, Gunnery 3), *Hellhound*

(All these 'Mechs are in perfect condition)

ENDGAME

If the mission succeeds, Veron will pay the characters the agreed amount. If the mission failed, however, Veron pleads poverty and pays the characters half. He may pay the characters in merchandise, rather than cash. This could be anything from foodstuffs, to spare parts for farm equipment. The characters can force Veron to make full payment, but he will plot revenge against them.

As far as AP Awards go, each character should earn no more than 3 for the mission, plus any individual awards for role-playing.

LOOSE ENDS

Veron: Depending on the outcome of the mission, Veron might either hire the characters again for future missions, or seek revenge. The traders resources are limited, however, and he will only keep it up for so long. Veron has many other merchant friends and other contacts in the region, and he can use these contacts to help trash the characters' reputations, making their lives miserable.

The terrorists: If the characters soundly trounced the terrorists, the organization decides to retaliate. This could be anything from attacks on their 'Mechs and equipment, to sabotage, to chasing them down in the streets of the planet's cities.

The Clan Watch: If the characters showed exceptional skill in the skirmish with the Watch 'Mechs, the Jade Falcon Watch might decide the unit is worth observing. The Clan will track the characters' unit while it is stationed on the border and gather as much information on them as possible.



Salvage!

A Scenario of Arms and Combat

by Gerald Hall

From: Word of Blake Agent Michaela (Adept Rho)
To: Precentor Alicia Taylor
Subject: TekTeam operational patterns

Greetings, Precentor Taylor:

You asked me to gather information about TekTeam operations from the archives. As we feared, heretics destroyed most of the data. However, I was able to find reports from an engagement involving a TekTeam unit during the Fourth Succession War. We cannot determine the exact location of the engagement.

BEGINNING OF REPORT

The two senior TekTeam technicians hunkered down next to the ravine as the thunder of autocannon shells landing nearby shook the ground.

"John, what are we going to do now? They promised us some help twenty minutes ago, but here we are, all alone, and with no way to get the salvage or even to get out here alive."

"Don't worry, Harry. I'm sure Dr. Kam is going to send someone over soon. He knows just as well as we do the importance of any salvage we can acquire—especially something as valuable as that CRD-3L *Crusader* sitting just below the edge of the ravine. He just has to be careful so our employers don't catch wind of this and claim it for themselves."

John caught a glimpse of something flashing overhead. A sharp, low pitched sound filled the air.

"What's going on?" yelled Harry as the sound of cannon fire changed its direction.

More explosions rang out as the brush a dozen meters in front of them erupted into flame. The scouting team had to quickly retreat to cover as a stray missile exploded nearby. However, within a few moments the only sounds were of the aircraft hovering overhead and the triumphant yells of "Yee-Ha!" being broadcast from the incoming aircraft.

"Look! Friendly air!" John pointed to a pair of Warrior Attack Helicopters that slowly lowered themselves to a vertical landing about a hundred meters away. A few seconds later, a pair of Karnov UR transports landed next to the team's skimmer and off loaded a squad of infantry and a pair of heavy transport

vehicles. One of the pilots climbed out and started toward John and Harry.

"What did you think of our show?" the pilot asked. "We had to use a dogleg approach to keep anyone from finding out where we were heading. That slowed us a little. We still made quite an impression on those two Liao 'Mechs."

"You almost made a very permanent impression on us with one of your stray missiles on that last strafing run," Harry grumbled. "A little closer and we would have been in the same shape as those 'Mechs out there."

"Don't worry about it now," the pilot chuckled. "Besides, things could have been a lot worse. We almost loaded our SRM launchers with inferno rounds, but decided against it in case we ran into a Liao fighter patrol. You would have been cooked where you stood."

A number of techs had started to climb out of the transport trucks and Karnovs with their repair gear. Two had already descended to the *Crusader* lying down below the ledge when the TekTeam SAR unit's *Griffin* and *Stinger* arrived.

"It's about time you 'Mech jocks finally showed up to give us a hand with those big, ugly hunks of metal!" yelled Harry.

"Hey! You know it's much less expensive to bomb whatever's in the way than to fix our 'Mechs after we've tangled. Our two 'Mechs weren't enough to take them on."

"You were scared!" Harry taunted.

The radio crackled as the first reports from the salvage team came in.

"The cockpit on the *Crusader* has been badly crushed. It looks like it fell on its head after going over the edge of the ravine. We'll have to pull it up in sections and load it onto the trucks. There's also the remains of a *Jenner* down here—its arms and legs. It looks like its ammo blew when it landed down here. There's a great big footprint on what's left of the cockpit dome. Its lasers are still intact, and we might be able to salvage some armor and a couple of heat sinks."

"So the *Crusader* tried to kill the *Jenner* with a little Death From Above," John speculated. "You'd think the *Crusader* simply would have outgunned the *Jenner* in a stand-up fight. In fact, I would have thought the *Jenner* would have been trying to jump on the *Crusader's* head instead."

100 Tons of Snow



Happy Holidays
from
MechForce North America!



John got his answer when the salvage team reported that the *Crusader* was out of ammo. "I should have known from the missile exhaust residue that was all over the *Crusader*. Fortunately for us that may be the reason why it didn't explode, too. I guess the *Crusader* pilot figured at that point he was out-gunned by the *Jenner* and tried a desperate act. He just didn't figure on falling on his head afterward."

Fifteen minutes after the first Karnov landed, sections of the *Crusader* started appearing above the edge of the ravine with assistance from the two TekTeam 'Mechs.

"We have to hurry, guys. If our employer finds out we've been picking up salvage and not reporting it, we'll be in big trouble," one of the techs advised as he climbed out of the ravine.

"It will be worth it if we can get this *Crusader* repaired and incorporated into the SAR's security team," John pointed out. "I already have some ideas on how to incorporate some of the *Jenner* salvage into the *Crusader* to make it suitable for our needs. Besides, who knows how much salvage the Davion troops kept us away from that we had a perfect right to?"

"Can anyone check to see if the aero jocks left anything for us to salvage after they did their little bombing run?" Harry called to some of the techs. "We should get as much as we can for our trouble." He recalled that all of their trouble had started when a Liao *Vindicator* and a *Blackjack* had chanced upon the TekTeam salvage party working behind the lines. While the TekTeam 'Mechs had superior mobility, they were outweighed by more than a dozen tons by 'Mechs that could also engage them at longer range with autocannons. All the TekTeam 'Mechs could do was to delay the Liao 'Mechs long enough for the TekTeam to send in some air support. Because of the value of TekTeam's services to the Davion forces, sometimes their commanders would look the other way while the TekTeam obtained salvage above their contractually-stipulated amount. This was not one of those times.

Four hundred meters away lay the wreckage of the two Liao 'Mechs. Conventional HE bombs and the Warriors' SRMs had ripped open the 'Mechs' armored shells in several places. The real damage had been done when infernos covered the 'Mechs with a sticky, fiery coating which eventually touched off their remaining ammunition. Since both 'Mechs' ammunition had been stored in their center torsos, practically everything other than the equipment in their limbs was a loss.

"Not much to be found here, boss," a technician called out. "Let's concentrate on the *Crusader* and the *Jenner*. That way, if the Davions drop by to check on us, we will already have left with the good parts and can tell them that we were just checking out the wreckage of the other two 'Mechs."

"Over an hour and no sign of Federated Suns troops yet," Harry said. "We need another fifteen minutes or so to finish the job with the *Crusader*. We've already gotten everything that we can salvage from the *Jenner*, and it's been loaded on the Karnovs."

"House Davion tanks headed this way. ETA ten minutes."

"We won't be able to finish the job before they get here," John said.

"Yes we will," Harry cut in. "I have an idea to slow them until we can finish loading the Karnovs." That said, Harry left with the infantry on a skimmer and with one of the heavy cargo trucks. When he came within sight of the Davion tanks, he stopped and deployed the infantry as though they were hunting for mines.

The Davion command frequency suddenly lit up with radio traffic for the salvage team as the tank unit commander stopped his company and asked what was going on. "We were here on a salvage mission when one of our 'Mechs hit a mine," Harry relayed. "The Liao forces have laid minefields all over the place. We think there's a large minefield directly between you and our position. We were lucky we had some Karnovs to bring in a couple of infantry squads so we could clear our way through the minefields. Hold your position and we will work our way toward you. It shouldn't take more than thirty minutes or so to clear a safe path through the field. Can you wait for us?"

"Affirmative, but don't take too long," warned the Davion commander.

Harry grinned that the commander had bought his story. Twenty minutes later, Harry saw the Karnovs fly off low to the ground, heading toward the TekTeam DropShip. At almost the same time, a message came in from one of the orbiting *Shilones*.

"It looks like a Liao 'Mech company is heading your way. They don't have any heavies, but there's still a lot of firepower coming at you. You better get out of there quick because we are running low on fuel. See you at the DropShip."

Both of the Warriors were already preparing for liftoff by the time John, Harry, and the infantry had gotten back to the other truck.

"We're not going to be able to avoid those 'Mechs. The only way that we're going to make it is if we combine all of our available forces with the Davion tanks to fight them," Harry said. "All we need to do is get rid of some of the faster Liao 'Mechs and let the tanks handle the rest. Our infantry is armed with SRMs and heavy lasers, so they can make an impression on a light 'Mech. And the Warriors still have nearly a full load of ammunition."

As instructions were relayed between the remaining TekTeam units and the Davion tank commander, the first of the Liao 'Mechs came into sight. The WSP-1L *Wasp*, with its distinctive SRM-4 mounting, drove headlong into the midst of the tank formation before coming under fire from the entire unit's guns. The *Wasp* was only able to fire one salvo before it was struck down. The TekTeam 'Mechs darted to the south in a flanking maneuver intended to catch the Liao 'Mechs in a cross-fire. The infantry squad moved to a hilltop with a commanding view of the entire battlefield.

Salvo after salvo of LRMs rained on the main body of the Liao 'Mech unit as it closed on the Davion tanks. The Liao force was not without its own means of striking back. A Galleon light tank was hit by autocannon fire from a *Blackjack*, and a *Vulcan* blew up in an oily pyre of burning fuel.

Harry ran to the camouflaged skimmer and radioed the Warrior flight leader. "Go for the small boys. If you hit them from

the rear, you have a better chance of bringing them down. Then strike at the *Phoenix Hawk* and the *Griffin*. Take 'em down, and we'll salvage 'em."

Within seconds, a thump-thump sound bore in from the rear of the Liao formation as the Warriors made its next strafing run. Eight missile contrails ended at the rear of a Liao *Wasp*, bringing it down in a ball of smoke and flying armor shards. Shortly, a Liao *Stinger* narrowly escaped the same fate by dodging into a clump of trees as missiles blasted all around it. Still, it suffered some damage.

"We're almost out of fuel and ammo! We'll have to return to the DropShip to rearm and refuel immediately," reported the Warrior flight leader.

"Can you make one more pass before you go?"

"We'll try. I think a Liao *Phoenix Hawk* is trying to work its way toward the hilltop our infantry is spotting from. We'll try to discourage it a little on the way out."

Each of the Warriors selected one 'Mech and salvaged their last SRMs at their targets' rear armor. Numerous explosions threw dirt and armor fragments around as several of the missiles found their mark. When the dust had cleared, the Liao 'Mechs were retreating at full speed.

The remainder of the Liao 'Mechs were engaged in a vicious battle with the Davion tank company. Already half of the tanks were heavily damaged or destroyed along with most of the Liao 'Mechs. The TekTeam 'Mech detachment's flanking maneuver had caught two of the Liao 'Mechs unaware of the threat to their rear. The TekTeam missiles and energy beams lanced through their thin rear armor and into the vitals of their machines. The surviving Liao 'Mechs were caught in a cross-fire, and only the *Phoenix Hawk* and the *Ostsol* which fled after

being attacked by the Warrior flight survived.

The Davion force had lost all of their Striker light tanks as well as one each of their Vedette and Galleon tanks. The TekTeam 'Mechs had suffered very little damage.

"TekTeam detachment commander," called the Davion company commander on the skimmer's radio. "What is your status?"

"I guess you're referring to me," Harry answered. "We've got to salvage what we can from these wrecks before the Liao forces come back with more troops. Our contract says that we can collect a bigger share since we had to go into combat. Is there anything that we can do for you?"

"We could use a little assistance from your techs in getting some of our vehicles up and running."

"Certainly. I'm going to make a call to our DropShip for more technical and transportation assistance. They'll send enough to take care of you as well as our salvage efforts. After all, we're being paid to assist in repairs to damaged Davion equipment."

The Karnovs soon returned with more transport vehicles and technicians inside. And within minutes, salvage reports started streaming in.

"It looks like only one of the 'Mechs is worth salvaging to incorporate in our unit—the *Griffin* downed just northeast of here. There are a couple of other 'Mechs we're going to bring back for spare parts."

"We did okay today," Harry observed.

"I'd say we just got lucky," John said.

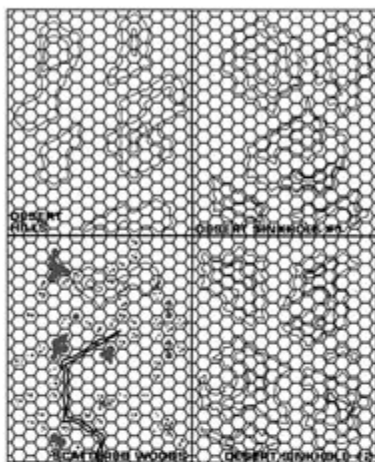
"Roger that!" several technicians called practically in unison.

END OF REPORT



GAME SET-UP

Lay out the **BattleTech** maps as shown. Use the Desert Hills and Scattered Woods maps from **BattleTech Map Set 2** and both Desert Sinkholes from **BattleTech Map Set 3**.



DEFENDER

The defenders include the TekTeam SAR forces and the Davion Tank Company Lances.

Davion Tank Company First Lance

- 2 Hunter Light Support Tanks (Piloting 5, Gunnery 4)
- 2 GAL-100 Galleon Light Tanks (Piloting 5, Gunnery 4)

Second Lance

- 2 Vedette Medium Tanks (Piloting 5, Gunnery 4)
- 2 Bulldog Medium Tanks (Piloting 5, Gunnery 4)

Third Lance

- 4 Striker Light Tanks (Piloting 5, Gunnery 4)

TekTeam SAR (Salvage, Acquisition, & Repair)

- Bryan Thaldar (Piloting 3, Gunnery 3), GRF-1S *Griffin*
- Becky Smythe (Piloting 3, Gunnery 3), STG-3G *Stinger*
- 1 Squad SRM Infantry—Mechanized (7 Men)

Air Support Team

- 2 H-7 *Warrior Attack Helicopters*

Deployment

The Defender places his units any where with in 10 hexes of the Eastern edge of either Desert Sinholes map.

ATTACKER

The attacker is a Liao 'Mech Company, headed by Captain Wendy Denier.

Liao 'Mech Company, First Lance

- Captain Wendy Denier (Piloting 4, Gunnery 2), VND-1R *Vindicator*
- Bruce Gerald (Piloting 3, Gunnery 3), CDA-3C *Cicada*
- Stephen Cacciatore (Piloting 2, Gunnery 4), GRF-1S *Griffin*
- Buddy Corey (Piloting 3, Gunnery 3), STG-3R *Stinger*

Second Lance

- Commander Aaron Osutki (Piloting 4, Gunnery 2), BJ-1 *Blackjack*
- Marcus Erick (Piloting 3, Gunnery 2), CLNT-2-3T *Clint*
- Elden Foilles (Piloting 3, Gunnery 3), VL-2T *Vulcan*
- Hank Elsworth (Piloting 3, Gunnery 3), WSP-1A *Wasp*

Third Lance

- Commaner Margaret Wipple (Piloting 3, Gunnery 2), WSP-1L *Wasp*
- Anita Graves (Piloting 2, Gunnery 3), LCT-1L *Locust*
- Vera Luna (Piloting 3, Gunnery 4), PXH-1 *Phoenix Hawk*
- Thom Anders (Piloting 3, Gunnery 3), OTL-4D *Ostsol*

Deployment

The attacker enters anywhere along the Eastern edge of either the Desert Hills or Scattered Woods map on the first turn.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The defender is considered the victor if he is able to rout the Liao 'Mechs. The attacker is considered the victor if he can destroy the defending units.

Special Rules

Each Liao 'Mech begins the battle with 10 points of damage that was received in an earlier battle. Prior to play, roll twice on the Front/Rear BattleMech Hit Location Table. For each roll, assign 5 points of damage to the indicated location. Ignore any criticals that may occur due to this initial damage. Any additional criticals that occur—in the damaged locations—during the game, are resolved using the normal **BattleTech** rules for critical damage.

The Davion Warrior Attack Helicopters are out of AC ammo and only have 10 rounds of SRM ammo left.



Trial of the Righteous

The Casualties Mount in Ningpo

by Samson Okalow

Missiles fired from the *Stalker* and rocketed ahead in search of a target. They impacted against a *Vindicator* in a series of grim white flashes. Already damaged from previous hits, the machine crashed to the ferrocrete.

"It's finished," reported MechWarrior Idege, his words almost washed out by static interference. "Ningpo has fallen."

"Bravo Six, Bravo One. Confirm again, Bravo Six," demanded a crackling but imposing female voice.

Idege paused, scanning his monitors for signs of enemy activity. His sensors picked up nothing among the charred ruins of Ningpo City, capital of Ningpo. If a pilot stirred in the confines of the metal coffin that was the *Vindicator* smoking in the distance, it was in the afterlife. "Clear. All clear."

"Bravo One here. Stand down, people. Nadir Sector cleared. All units status check on me, code zero, zero, zero. Wash-down and repairs to Comp Sector. War's over," the woman announced.

A chorus of cheers was audible in broken radio-speak. The unleashing of countless energy blasts, particle cannon discharges, and ambient ECM continued to garble transmissions even though the fighting had ceased. Idege could hear the beginnings of the post-battle cries—the whooping, cheering, and trash talk. Like spiders carefully constructing their webs, war stories were being spun.

It sickened him. In the heat of this moment, the absence of his voice wouldn't be missed. And in the heat of this moment, in that space after the last shell had fallen and the last enemy unit was reduced to its component atoms, Ningpo's fallen gave up their spirits.

A profound sense of dread fleetingly passed over Idege. What was there in that final kill? He should have turned and marched back to camp, but he continued to stare at his fallen enemy. He moved closer.

One hundred and ten meters out the *Vindicator* suddenly lunged upward, a wraith wearing tails of black smoke. Trailing shreds of its mangled cannon arm, it crunched forward alongside a lone, partially-destroyed hotel on its left.

"You're dead," Idege whispered as exhaust trails from his 'Mech's snub-nosed, white-capped missiles obscured his vision and rolled down upon the *Vindicator*.

The *Vindicator* pinwheeled sideways, crushing more of the hotel. Idege moved purposefully forward, riddling the burning enemy unit and the building around it with laser fire. The *Vindicator* was dead. Again.

Idege was breathing hard. Scanning the area for the second time, a blip appeared on his monitor. There, in the wrecked building shadowing the fallen 'Mech. Someone was in the hotel. A civilian! Idege had thought the buildings in this section abandoned. He pushed his *Stalker* ahead until the *Vindicator* lay at his feet. Looking through his viewport, he could see nothing in the building where perhaps four of eight floors had collapsed, telescoping into each other. Finally, his sensors detected a human on the top floor.

Almost at cockpit level, stood a young woman beside what looked like a fused mound of smoking human remains. He pressed ZOOM. Her clothes were shredded. Her close-cropped black hair was mostly burned away, and her dark skin was horribly singed. "Mother," she mouthed, looking at the burnt corpse near her.

* * *

The 3rd Davion Guards were now in control of Ningpo—or what was left of it. Idege's unit, the seven remaining members of Bravo Company, were assigned to the last sector captured—Nadir.

Idege sat on a pile of rubble nearly two storeys high, watching as blank-faced foot soldiers, assault rifles dangling loosely at their sides, milled about below. He'd seen cities devastated by war before. He'd been party to that devastation on several occasions. But this time . . .

"Idege!" That was Captain Warner.

Idege looked down at the stocky woman. She was pale, but covered in streaks of Ningpo's soot and grime.

"I want a word with you."

"Yes, sir," he replied, as he easily, if lethargically, made his way down the rubble.

"You're slipping, Idege."

"Sir?"

"I'm not going to mince words. You hesitated. And hesitating will get you killed." She was referring to his combat perfor-

mance. He'd been slow with his last fire assignments.

"I'd like to explain," he began.

"I know," she said. "Something happened to you after that first mission in Nadir Sector. What was it?"

Her stare was penetrating and Idege badly wanted to look away. He had a moment to think when the ground was rattled by the lumbering passage of a massive *Demolisher* assault tank. They both looked at it, waiting for the noisy vehicle to pass. The tank's commander, riding "top-up," gave the duo the thumbs-up sign.

"It wasn't really anything, sir. Just some jitters, I guess."

She stepped closer, coldly studying him. "No jitters allowed, Idege. I think you've had it—which doesn't bother me except that you've got lancemates. And if you hesitate, you're going to get them killed. When you're assigned a mission, you do it. Understand?"

Idege knew she'd caught that glint of fear in his eyes. He knew he was finished as a combat soldier. But Captain Warner had still guessed wrong.

"You killed somebody," she declared, staring at him and reaching yet another level of insight into the soldier squirming in front of her. And then suddenly it was over as she turned and walked away. "War is death, Idege. Deal with it."

* * *

"Sergeant Aron wants a word with you, Idege," said Vickers into the gloom of the barracks.

Idege turned on his hammock. He hadn't really been sleeping. He'd had trouble sleeping since his encounter with the burned woman in Nadir Sector, and he couldn't get the corpse out of his dreams. "What's up?"

"Don't know but he looks serious, if you know what I mean."

Swinging out of bed, Idege slipped into his boots. The ground underneath shook with the passing of some 'Mech. Idege sighed. "Aron's not in charge of anything 'cept mail," he mused aloud. "And there's no way I'm getting any mail here, since no one knows I'm stationed here."

It was daylight outside—or what passed for it in the chemically polluted sky above Ningpo. He waited for a lance of battle-scarred APCs to pass before crossing the street on his way to the ops center, a huddle of prefabs two blocks over. He felt he should have been more worried about Sergeant Aron calling him, but he was feeling oddly distracted. Once he even stopped abruptly to look around, peering into the smoky gloom for an unseen follower.

Momentarily, Idege found himself at the AUX COMM tent. Sweeping aside the gray camouflage door flap, he entered the harshly lit room.

"Sit," commanded the stern voice of Sergeant Aron. Stout and muscular, Aron sat behind a small forest of primary and auxiliary communications monitors and intelligence screens. It was a large tent and several other officers worked quietly

behind similar stations elsewhere inside.

Idege sat on a hard chair and looked across at the hawkish Sergeant. "Sir," he said.

"Did you break deployment regs? Let others know your assigned location?" asked Aron.

"No, sir."

Aron paused. "Then how did we get mail for you?"

"I don't know, sir," Idege replied. He hoped Aron could sense his sincerity.

Aron rose and marched around to a point somewhere behind Idege. "You know, if you've been communicating with the locals, you may have committed an offense."

"Yes, sir," said Idege. His mind raced. Who? "But I'm telling you it's . . ." He turned in his seat to look at the Sergeant.

Aron turned away and moved to the doorway. Holding back its flap, he squinted into the muddy daylight. "Idege, you see that monitor on your left? Press a key. The mail you received—it was electronic."

"Yes, sir," Idege said, as he leaned toward the keyboard. He pressed a key and the screen refreshed to display the prompt, "VIEW MAIL? Y/N."

His finger hovered over the "Y" key, but he hesitated.

"What's really interesting, Idege, is the nature of the transmission. This ops center's communications are self-contained—no links to Ningpo's comm grid. In fact, Ningpo's grid was destroyed in the fighting. The mail's ID data shows transmission via land-line. *From* Ningpo. Can't even get a proper trace on it. It's almost like ghosts in the machine."

"Then maybe the MPs should investigate," Idege offered, his voice wavering. He noticed his finger was still poised over the keyboard. A 'Mech stomped past, shaking the ferrocrete.

"Military police censors already cleared this mail for viewing. They want you to see it," Aron finished. "View your mail."

Idege slammed his open palm down onto the keyboard. The screen refreshed line by line, gradually uncovering a sharp, 3-D color image. At first he saw only splotches of black. But then the image sharpened.

Surrounded by the blasted superstructure of some broken hotel was a small pile of charred wood and steel. More terrifying was the similarly charred and carbonized body of what was once a human, arms locked behind what was perhaps a piece of wood running perpendicular along its back. The face was burned beyond recognition. Printed beneath the picture like some headstone inscription were the words: "You will pay."

* * *

Idege was relieved when the military tribunal investigating abuses by Fed troops on Ningpo got underway. At the time, he hadn't thought much of the actions of MechWarriors Poole and White during the ferocious city battle. After helping bring down a *Battlemaster*, Idege had marched his *Stalker* several fire-blackened streets west to help Poole's lance silence one of the last remaining pockets of 'Mech resistance. But even as he neared, watching a modest 10-storey apartment complex col-

lapse as White's *Warhammer* ploughed directly through its lower floors, Poole was warning him off. Maybe it was odd that only seconds before both had been frantically calling for assistance. Of course, with the speed of combat anything was possible.

Idege had kept his *Stalker* coming, knocking aside small concrete-potted shrubs lining the street and squashing other vehicles flat. On Orchestra Street, White's towering, damaged *Warhammer* stood facing the fallen apartment complex, the smoke and dust from its collapse now expanding in every direction so thick they all had to switch to IR to maintain visuals.

"We'll mop up and rejoin the thrust," White had told Idege. "We'll let the infantry down below check for survivors."

And Idege, his pulse pounding from the exertion of combat, pushed his foot pedals and stomped forward to his final battle in Nadir Sector, noticing several blue points of heat on his IR screen suggesting the infantry White mentioned.

Only they weren't infantry. As the board of inquiry was subsequently told, both White and Poole had opened up with their entire arsenals, turning the apartment complex, its surrounding environs, and more than one hundred unarmed civilians into a pitted and fused lake of glass.

Now it was three p.m. and the trial was over for the day. The partially-damaged library in which the proceedings were held was one of Ningpo's few buildings to survive the battle. When the military men exited the building, a small clutch of civilians awaited. They all shouted at once, demanding answers. A platoon of military police kept the crowd away.

Idege spotted one woman whose gaze suddenly caught and transfixed him. Just above her left temple was the outline of some triangular shape, discolored skin beneath short black hair. "You killed my mother!" she hissed.

The survivor from the hotel, Idege realized. "It wasn't my fault. I was firing on the *Vindicator*!"

"You killed my mother," she repeated. With that, she turned and ran down the street, scampering over the rubble and twisted steel girders, and disappearing into the ruins of Ningpo.

* * *

"Have you ever read the Bible, sir?" Idege sat on the foot of his *Stalker*, his back to Captain Warner, who stood leaning against its ankle.

"Not really."

"There's this one part where it's talking about how the good man will suffer more than the bad man."

"Yeah," the Captain acknowledged, watching the dark shapes of two fighters on CAP cruise by in the distance.

"It's something about a trial for the righteous man. To see if he can take it and not break."

"C'mon, get in your machine," she ordered. "You're out on patrol. Early. Ride ought to clear your head."

Idege climbed up to his cockpit, past dozens of peeling unit ID numerals, NO STEP and DANGER decals. The paint was blistering off from combat temperatures that had reached hun-

dreds and even thousands of degrees Celsius. The machine hummed, and a luminous strip of blue light suffused its misshapen head area at the cockpit. The menacing *Stalker* reared up like some giant, deformed carrion bird, and Idege looked out across the skeleton city of Ningpo.

Idege knew Captain Warner would recommend him for a discharge after this was over. He remained in the unit only because there were no other qualified pilots for his machine. But they were on garrison duty now, awaiting the call to jump into the next wave of invasions. By then a replacement would be found, either another MechWarrior who'd had his 'Mech shot out from under him or some fresh-faced cadet from the reserves. Then he would be sent back home in disgrace.

His 'Mech moved forward on hydraulics, myomer bundles for muscles and tempered metal for feet. He was patrol No. 393. Back home, in Fed space—where the growing conflict was already being described as the Fourth Succession War—news holos would be beaming over the civility with which their side had waged war. Fed troops had gone out of their way to avoid unnecessary civilian casualties, they'd say. Smiling men and women with perfect teeth would hover in front of censor-approved backdrops attributing it all to the decency of Fed society.

There would be no talk of the macabre CRD's—civilian recovery details—soldiers digging through debris to disinfect and "wash down" pockets of the rotting dead. And they lay dead in the thousands. Between the massive cannons of 'Mechs pounding the defenders and the terrible impact of aerospace fighter bombing and strafing runs, even those who had managed to get into bomb shelters had merely found another place to die.

Idege grimaced. "War isn't fair" went the saying. Back at the base, Poole and White awaited court-martial—if the army didn't need their services in a war that could only grow more vicious.

It occurred to Idege that he should be bitter. But then, war wasn't fair. He could say a significant part of him accepted that—which made getting out of the impregnable cocoon that was his *Stalker* so much easier. In the settling evening, the burned out frame of the doorway beckoned to him like the gateway of an earlier time. He climbed down his 'Mech and toward it.

Idege couldn't see anything inside the doorway, which opened into the shell of a building that sagged comically sideways. He would be a fool to enter that yawning maw and risk being swallowed forever. Still, he took a step. And through the shadows he saw a woman with a triangular mark on her face. She raised a piece of jagged steel, and he felt the metal slice through his cooling vest. He fell, joining the victims of Ningpo.



LOCK-N-LOAD

Greetings from Headquarters!

This year at the 1996 GEN CON® Game Fair the FASA **BattleTech** team announced that the 1997 GEN CON Game Fair would see the first annual **BattleTech** World Championship Tournament. The slots for this tournament will be filled by the winners of each **MechForce** Regional Tournament, with the final slots being filled by the winners of the other major events throughout the year. This is a **MechForce** Members only tournament. You must have a current membership with a **MechForce** branch to participate.

In addition, this year at GEN CON, a new tournament—The **MechForce** Challenge—was born. This tournament, ends with the top player facing off against Bryan—the **BattleTech** guru—will be run every year with a different set of rules.

Finally, as most of you know, we are going to be making some changes next year. We are currently in the play test stages of a completely new Battle Value System, which will be released in the Spring. At that time, a new International Manual will be released, which will be distributed to all the members of **MechForce North America** and **MechForce UK**. This means that all the members of any **MechForce** organization will be using the same ranking system, allowing everyone to be ranked worldwide. Unfortunately, this will require us to start everyone's rank back at 1,000.

If anyone has questions please write to me at FASA, c/o **MechForce**, 1100 W. Cermak, B305, Chicago, IL 60608.

Have fun!

Precentor Chi I
Stacy Rieckermann
MechForce Operations

The BattleTech Museum

With your curator Precentor Martial Randall Bills

BattleTech, the game we all know and love, celebrates 12 years of fun and excitement this year. As we look back over those years, we realize that it has been **BattleTech's** fans who have allowed the game to expand and grow beyond anything we could have hoped. As I mentioned in issue 6, I am currently conducting a tour of *The BattleTech Museum*. The reason for the Museum's existence, and this tour, is to give you—the fans—the opportunity to see and appreciate products and ideas that you might have never imagined. So please, enjoy the tour, and more importantly, enjoy **BattleTech**!

Exhibit 2: FASA Products & Novels

Our next stop on the tour is the *Product Exhibit*. This exhibit lets the players see the vast array of **BattleTech** products that have been published by FASA Corporation, as well as those novels published for the **BattleTech** universe. Feel free to pick up the flyer located on the wall—the next article in this issue—which gives you a complete checklist for every

BattleTech product as well as a chronological list of the **BattleTech** novels.

Since 1984, FASA has produced: 20 **BattleTech** scenario packs, 5 MechWarrior adventure packs, 10 assorted rulebooks, 23 sourcebooks, 10 box sets, 4 map sets, 9 record sheet books, 8 **BattleTech** Technical Readouts, 10 **BattleTech** patches, 34 novels—12 of which were originally published by FASA, and finally about a half a dozen to a dozen other game related products. (**I did not count revised or 2nd editions when I was calculating those numbers.) The shelf groans under such weight, no?

Does everyone have a flyer...Good, then let us continue...

FASA BATTLETECH PRODUCTS

STOCK	NAME	YEAR	STATUS	STOCK	NAME	YEAR	STATUS		
[]	1604	Battledroids	1984	Out of Print	[]	1665	Objective Raids	1992	Out of Print
[]	1604	BattleTech 2nd Edition	1985	Out of Print	[]	1666	Bloodright	1992	Out of Print
[]	1604	BattleTech 3rd Edition (Thin Box)	1992	Out of Print	[]	1667	BattleTech Record Sheets Vol. 5 Vehicles	1992	Out of Print
[]	1604	BattleTech 3rd Edition (Thick Box)	1994	Out of Print	[]	1668	BattleMech Record Sheets: 3055	1992	Out of Print
[]	1604	BattleTech 4th Edition	1996	In Print	[]	1669	McCarron's Armored Cavalry	1992	Out of Print
[]	1605	Tales of the Black Widow's Company	1985	Out of Print	[]	1670	Mercenary's Handbook: 3055	1993	Out of Print
[]	1606	The Fox's Teeth	1985	Out of Print	[]	1671	MechWarrior Companion	1995	In Print
[]	1607	MechWarrior: The Role Playing Game	1986	Out of Print	[]	1672	Null Set	1992	Out of Print
[]	1608	CityTech	1986	Out of Print	[]	1673	Intelligence Operations Handbook	1993	Out of Print
[]	1608	CityTech 2nd Edition	1994	In Print	[]	1674	BattleMechs: Plastic Miniatures	1993	Out of Print
[]	1609	AeroTech	1986	Out of Print	[]	1675	BattleMech Recognition Cards	1993	In Print
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[]	1615	BattleTech Blueprints (Folded)	1991	Out of Print	[]	1684	The Fall of Terra	1996	In Print
[]	1616	The Mercenary's Handbook	1987	Out of Print	[]	1685	Tukayyid	1994	Out of Print
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[]	1619	DropShips and JumpShips	1988	Out of Print	[]	1689	The Falcon & The Wolf	1995	In Print
[]	1620	House Kurita (The Draconis Combine)	1987	Out of Print	[]	1690	BattleTech Compendium: R. of W.(HC)	1994	Out of Print
[]	1621	House Steiner (The Lyran Commonwealth)	1987	Out of Print	[]	1690L	BattleTech Compendium Limited Edition	1994	1,000
[]	1622	House Marik (The Free Worlds League)	1988	Out of Print	[]	1691	BattleTech Compendium: R. of W.(SC)	1994	In Print
[]	1623	House Davion (The Federated Suns)	1988	Out of Print	[]	1692	The Periphery	1996	In Print
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[]	1625	BattleTech Reinforcements	1987	Out of Print	[]	1695	BattleTech Record Sheets: 3025 & 3026	1996	In Print
[]	1625A	BattleTech Reinforcements (Book Only)	1991	In Print	[]	1696	BattleTech Record Sheets: 3050	1996	In Print
[]	1626	BattleTech Manual: The Rules of Warfare	1987	Out of Print	[]	1697	First Strike	1996	In Print
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[]	1630	The Star League	1988	Out of Print	[]	8602	The Sword and the Dagger (Novel)	1987	Out of Print
[]	1631	Wolf's Dragoons Sourcebook	1989	Out of Print	[]	8603	BattleTech Technical Readout: 3025	1986	Out of Print
[]	1632	Camo Specs	1988	Out of Print	[]	8603	Technical Readout: 3025 (Revised)	1996	In Print
[]	1633	PlasTech	1988	Out of Print	[]	8604	The Spider and the Wolf (Graphic Novel)	1986	Out of Print
[]	1634	NAIS 4th Succession War Military Vol. 1	1988	Out of Print	[]	8605	Mercenary's Star (Novel)	1987	Out of Print
[]	1635	NAIS 4th Succession War Military Vol. 2	1988	Out of Print	[]	8606	BattleTech Technical Readout: 3026	1987	In Print
[]	1636	BattleTech Reinforcements 2	1990	Out of Print	[]	8607	The Price of Glory (Novel)	1987	Out of Print
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[]	1643	Rhonda's Irregulars	1991	Out of Print	[]	8614	BattleTech Technical Readout: 3050	1990	Out of Print
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[]	1649	BattleMech Record Sheets Volume 3	1990	Out of Print	[]	8619	BattleTech Technical Readout: 3055	1992	Out of Print
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[]	1664	ClanTroops	1991	Out of Print	[]	8712	Federated Commonwealth (Patch)	1990	Out of Print

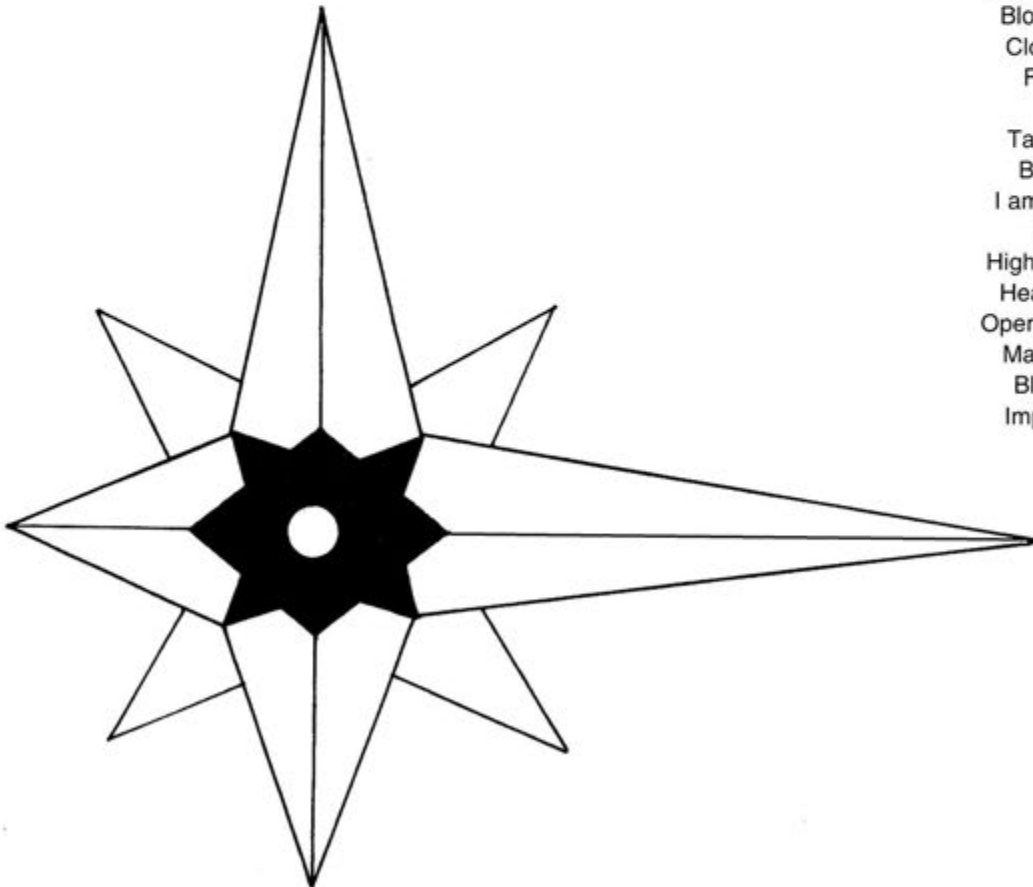
BATTLETECH NOVELS


FASA NOVELS PUBLISHED BY ROC

<i>STOCK</i>	<i>NAME</i>	<i>YEAR</i>	<i>STATUS</i>	
[]	LE 5158	Way of the Clans	1991	In Print
[]	LE 5164	Bloodname	1991	In Print
[]	LE 5194	Mercenary's Star (Reprint)	1992	In Print
[]	LE 5200	Falcon Guard	1991	In Print
[]	LE 5217	The Price of Glory (Reprint)	1993	In Print
[]	LE 5219	Natural Selection	1992	In Print
[]	LE 5221	Decision at Thunder Rift (Reprint)	1992	In Print
[]	LE 5224	Wolf Pack	1992	In Print
[]	LE 5309	Ideal War	1993	In Print
[]	LE 5312	Main Event	1993	In Print
[]	LE 5315	Blood of Heroes	1993	In Print
[]	LE 5335	Assumption of Risk	1993	In Print
[]	LE 5337	Far Country	1993	In Print
[]	LE 5364	D.R.T.	1994	In Print
[]	LE 5383	Lethal Heritage (Reprint)	1995	In Print
[]	LE 5384	Blood Legacy (Reprint)	1995	In Print
[]	LE 5385	Lost Destiny (Reprint)	1995	In Print
[]	LE 5429	Close Quarters	1994	In Print
[]	LE 5441	Bred for War	1995	In Print
[]	LE 5446	I am Jade Falcon	1995	In Print
[]	LE 5489	Highlander Gambit	1995	In Print
[]	LE 5490	Tactics of Duty	1995	In Print
[]	LE 5530	Star Lord	1996	In Print
[]	LE 5528	Black Dragon	1996	In Print
[]	LE 5529	Impetus of War	1996	In Print
[]	LE 5531	Malicious Intent	1996	In Print
[]	LE 5532	Wolves on the Border (Reprint)	1996	In Print
[]	LE 5533	Hearts of Chaos	1996	In Print
[]	LE 5534	Operation Excalibur	1996	In Print
[]	LE 5535	Heir to the Dragon (Reprint)	1996	In Print

BattleTech Novels in Chronological Order (The order in which you should read them)

Sword and the Dagger
 Decision at Thunder Rift
 Mercenary's Star
 The Price of Glory
 Warrior: En Garde
 Warrior: Riposte
 Warrior: Coupe
 Wolves on the Border
 Heir to the Dragon
 Lethal Heritage
 Blood Legacy
 Lost Destiny
 Way of the Clans
 Bloodname
 Falcon Guard
 Wolf Pack
 Main Event
 Ideal War
 Natural Selection
 Assumption of Risk
 Blood of Heroes
 Close Quarters
 Far Country
 D.R.T.
 Tactics of Duty
 Bred for War
 I am Jade Falcon
 Star Lord
 Highlander Gambit
 Hearts of Chaos
 Operation Excalibur
 Malicious Intent
 Black Dragon
 Impetus of War





Return to Cathay Nights

Soldering Loose Ends

by Chris Hussey

I'll make a long story short. I was after a bad Cathay cop. I thought I had him, then I found out that he probably wasn't the only one involved. This whole thing was bigger than life and twice as ugly—and the information on the bad guys was stored on a computer I left behind several days ago during a firefight in the Black Hills. I almost got killed. A friend bailed me out of the fire, then in turn she got all shot up and ended up in the hospital. She's still there. Needless to say, it hasn't been the best week. To top it off, I forgot to pick up my son, which made my ex-wife mad.

I was on my way now to pick him up—this time for sure. He lives with my ex, Kelley. Will's a great kid, but I sometimes have a hard time relating to him. He is a teenager, after all, and like Kelley, Will never could adjust to my life.

My ex lives in Silesia, the Lyran sector of Solaris City. I pull up in front of Kelley's digs. It's a company-owned condo. Nice place. But what do you expect from a junior exec with Nashan Corp.? Me? I live in a dive near the border with the Black Hills in the International Zone.

Fortunately, I had the chance to shower and shave before coming over. I even put on clean clothes. The bullet wound I took in the shoulder is still hurting, but healing well, thank you. I can at least use my arm now. I buzz the door and her maid answers. Sure wish I had a maid.

"Hello Mr. DeYoung. It is good to see you again."

Dale's a nice lady. She used to live in the FRR, but lost her world to the Clans. She also calls me 'Mr. DeYoung' all the time, and that makes me feel old.

"Is Kelley around?"

"Of course, Mr. DeYoung. She is expecting you. William is here as well. Wait right here."

Dale bustles off up the stairs and leaves me alone in a living room about the size of my apartment. I do not look forward to talking with Kelley. It's way too painful. See, I'm still hung up on her. She divorced me. Couldn't stand worrying if I'd ever come home at night, she said, or if she'd get "the call."

"I didn't think you'd make it this weekend either."

"Nice to see you, Kelley." I turn around and face her. She's looking better than ever.

"Is she okay?" I know Kelley is referring to Mary, my good friend and one-time lover who's still in the hospital. Kelley is no big fan of Mary—always been honked that I ran to Mary right after the divorce.

"The doctors say she'll pull through." I take off my coat to expose my own souvenir of the past week. "My wound's also healing—thanks for asking."

Kelley doesn't say anything. She just stares. Her face reads shock, then embarrassment, then her face turns to anger. She notices I'm wearing my shoulder holster, and it's filled.

"Than! Why are you wearing that thing?"

I'm not really in the mood for this. "How many times am I going to have to tell you I need to keep this with me? I'm a cop." I throw my coat on and head for the door. I see Will coming down. I'm still steamed, but I try to cap it. "Hey, son, what's up?" He gives an obligatory smile. Going to be another fun weekend, I see.

"Ready to go?" Will nods, then heads out to the car. I look back at Kelley before I step out. "I'll have him back on Sunday night, okay?"

Kelley nods. "Than, I'm sorry about Mary—about you, too. Take care of yourself."

* * *

Will and I are cruising back to my place when my car phone goes off. This had better be good, since I'm supposed to be off duty for the next week. It keeps ringing, so I finally pick it up. The voice on the other end is so damn soft, I can barely make it out.

"Than, it's me, Ling."

Phillip Ling. An on-and-off friend at the Cathay PD. Last time we met, the friendship was off. That's when this whole thing started.

Return to Cathay Nights

"Why the whisper?"

"Shut up and listen, Than. Your stunt the other day made waves. We got to talk—now."

This is just what I don't need. I had Will with me.

"No can do, Ling. Like you said before, it's not my problem."

Ling's whisper jumps a notch. "It is now. You honked off a lot of people. Meet me at Finn's in Kobe."

Before Ling hangs up, I cut him off. "Make it the KinKade, in Cathay. Half an hour." This is not good. First, I thought I had put this whole escapade behind me, but no. Some friggin' Cathcops and gang members feel they need to have revenge. Plus, I've got my son with me. I need to spend time with him, and now Ling is pushing me back into the fire. I shouldn't go, but my brain decides otherwise. I probably shouldn't have picked the KinKade, especially since it's located right in Cathay, but it's a good place to keep Will safe. For those of you who don't know, the KinKade is the best holoentertainment center around. The hologames and virtual reality tanks are the best in the Inner Sphere. More adults go there than kids. Speaking of kids, Will starts talking.

"So, we going on a meet?"

"Not hardly. Someone feels the need to talk, so I'll let him for a bit, then lose him."

"Mom was right. It's always your job first, isn't it?"

"No, my job is not always first, but this guy's a friend. I owe it to listen to him." Man, I really don't need this. "Look, Will, this will only take a few minutes. We've got some good time ahead of us this weekend, and I promise I won't blow it." Will just nods.

* * *

We're at the KinKade, and Will is tearing it up in a 'Mech simulator. He's good. Probably could cut it as a MechWarrior. Not that I would enjoy that vocation for my son, but if it is what he wants. . . . I'm downing some orange juice when I spot Ling. He's in his civies and looks pretty nervous. He tries his best to slink over. His rail thin body gets planted across from me at my table and he leans in.

"Boy, you sure did it this time, Than."

It's funny, but I really don't know what I did. The only thing I ever suspected was that a Cathay cop was supplying heavy personal weapons to a triad gang. Judging from the way Ling's talking to me, I must have been close to something bigger, whatever it is. "What can I say, Phil? Just doing my job, I guess."

Ling snorts. "Yeah, you did a job, all right. You have no idea how many toes you stepped on."

Well, he's right, I don't. I know that Sergeant Jimson of the Cathay PD was my first suspect, but that's it. "So how many more beside Jimson are there, Phil?" Phil seems to wince at Jimson's name. At least I know Jimson is involved for sure.

"Jimson wants you dead." Ling kind of chuckles. "So do others."

"That's not surprising. Look, Phil, do you have something important to tell me? I'm really busy."

Ling starts getting real serious. "I have some information for you. It's very useful."

My paranoia kicks in and notices that Phil has both hands under the table. The same paranoia also notices his shoulders moving. He's going for a weapon.

"Actually it's a message." Ling begins.

I frown. He's in on it. I'd hoped otherwise. I throw what's left of my OJ in Ling's face. He rocks back, which buys me enough time to reach over and clock him in the face. He's flying back, and I'm on him before he's down. "You're a traitor, Ling! I thought you were one of the good ones!" Ling looks groggy, but just as I'm about to hit him once more for good measure, there's a clap of thunder and a sharp whiz past my head. Great, Ling brought friends.

I fly away from Ling and dive into a booth, fumbling for my Python. I can't see who did the shooting. My shoulder tells me it doesn't like all this movement. Then chaos breaks loose. The KinKade is always packed with people, and when these people become aroused, say by a gunfight, there's much commotion.

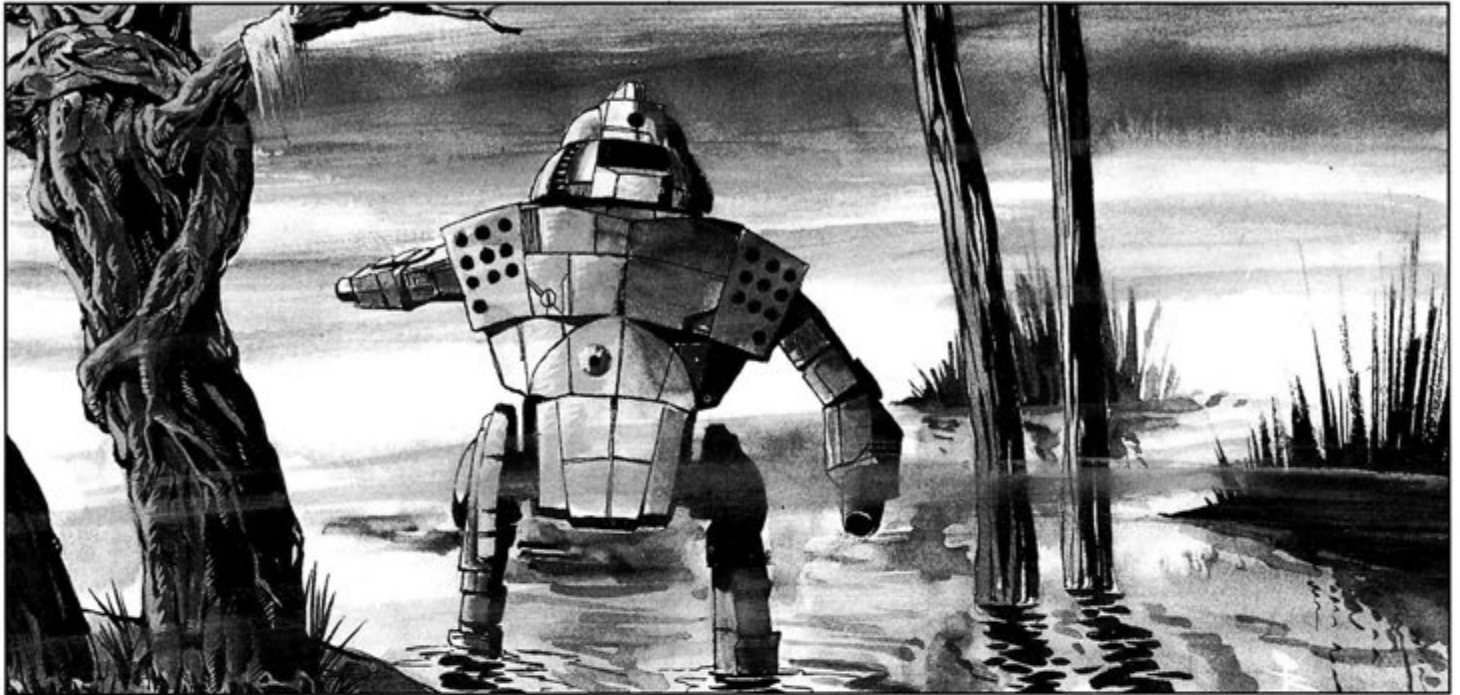
I keep low, still looking for the yahoo who took a shot at me. I'd love to bust Ling right now, but I've got other things to think about—namely my son. I force my way through the people to where Will should be. He's in an enclosed pod, and relatively safe.

Then I see him. Jimson's standing about four meters to my left. He's got an auto pistol out, and he looks ready to stitch a big tattoo across my bod. I dive into some chairs. The chair next to me becomes a large pile of toothpicks, and my face is sprayed with splinters. In a crouch, I move away as quickly as possible, still trying to reach Will and get out of here. I bump right into another one of Ling's cronies. He's not a Cathcop, though. He lives and breathes Triad. His fist easily finds my face.

I'll say this for fake wood tables, they don't hurt as much when your head smacks into them. I shake some of the stars from my head, just in time to see the big ganger coming at me. And I realize something else too, I'm still holding my Python, and I use it. A well-placed shot to the knee crumples him.

Time to move. Another spray of bullets just misses me, and I dive for cover again, firing while flying. I know my shots don't hit anything but real estate, but they make Jimson duck. Most of the patrons are gone by now, and I have no idea if Will was with them. I poke my head up with the Python leading. There's Jimson. We see each other and fire. His shot goes low, but mine gets a howl. I hit him in the leg.

I hear a series of curses, then some shuffling. He's trying to leave, and I can't let him do that. When I poke my head up again, I catch him going out the door. I come around the corner of the entrance low, just in case. Jimson's not there. Sticking to the wall, I go where I think he went. Jimson's got to have a car around here somewhere. I reach the end of the



building and am at the mouth of the alleyway when it starts to rain. Great. Great ambush spot, too. I wait, then look down. There's some blood.

"It's over Jimson! Just give it up!" I shout down the alley.

No answer. He's going to make me come in after him. Fine. I go in low again. Real slow. I'm a good cop. I passed all the training, have a strong service record and all that. But sometimes, just sometimes, you forget some things. And of course, you forget them at the worst possible time—like now. I'm doing my best to be cautious and stealthy, but I forgot to do one thing—look up.

"DeYoung. Do you have any idea what you've done?"

My hands go up as I turn around. There's Jimson all right. Hanging from a small walkway stretching over the alley. He starts to gloat. "That computer you stole will set our operations back months. We'll get it back, don't worry about that."

What did he say? Get it back? They don't have the computer? This is great! Last I thought, Mary and I were forced to leave it in some greasy spoon in the Black Hills when bullets started flying. I just figured that it was taken. It must be still there. Time to play along.

"Sorry Jimson. The data in that hard drive will do more than set you back, it's going to shut you down. You wouldn't believe all the names listed in the files."

"Too bad you won't be around for the trials." Jimson smiles and pulls the trigger. Click.

Oh, this is too good. I react before he does. The walkway is only about one meter above me, so I leap for it. Jimson tries the gun again. No good. Instead of trying to kick me off, he runs. That gives me enough time to get up. I plant a solid punch in his gut. "That's for my shoulder." I plant another in his gut.

"That's for being a bad cop."

He's down, but I'm not done yet. I stand him up. "And this is for Mary." I slam my fist into his face. Jimson flips over the railing and smacks on the pavement. I'm down and checking him. He's still alive, but he's definitely got some broken bones. I fetch my Python and start to bandage Jimson's leg wound. I can't let him die. That'd be too easy on him.

"Back off, Than." It's Ling.

"Dad!"

I whip around, my Python leading. Ling's holding Will, gun to his head. "You should have just stayed out of it, Than. Put the gun down." He presses the barrel of his pistol deeper against Will's temple.

I don't have time for this, so I pull the trigger. Will's covered with blood, but I know it's not his. Ling's on the ground. I've a good aim. I hear the sirens in the distance, but I know it's not over. Those are Cathay PD sirens. I holster the Python and grab Will. He helps me carry Jimson to my car. We're gone before the cops arrive.

We were able to recover the computer we thought we'd lost. The boys at HQ are sorting through the files to see what's really there. Jimson's recovering under armed guard. Assuming he lives to stand trial, he's bound to do plenty of time. And all those above him running whatever operation they were running? They'll never see justice. Not in Solaris City. Jimson's their fall guy. An Oswald, we call him.

Mary's coming out of the hospital tomorrow, and she's going to be staying with me while I find her a new place. I've got to get home and clean. My place is a mess.



The Silver Sabers

A CONNECTICUT CHAPTER IS ON THE MOVE

BY MIKE PAUL

Hello MechWarriors! I'd like to report a new chapter in Connecticut called The Silver Sabers. We haven't been around long, but we're active. We're gaining new members—and we still need more. The Silver Sabers is a merc unit a little under battalion strength, with transportation, 'Mechs, vehicles, etc. We need advice—you know, what jobs to take, what to spend C-bills on, who are the best people to work for, that kind of stuff.

Most of our members are between the ages of 13 and 15. We're all very devoted to our unit and the **BattleTech** game, but we still haven't worked out all the kinks of Chapter life. We play regularly, and we always have fun.

On a recent mission, The Silver Sabers battled in the city. We learned a lot about urban combat as a result, and we'd like to share our views with the other chapters.

The Sabers' Dos and Don'ts of Urban Combat

Make sure that a lot of your 'Mechs can jump, or at the very least can maneuver well. 'Mechs with jump capability have an advantage in the city. In particular, if your 'Mech is between 65 and 100 tons, dealing out some Death from Above while you're fighting downtown is not at all a bad idea. While you're moving around between buildings, take time to stomp on small 'Mechs and vehicles that belong to the enemy.

Don't forget that you can get pinned down in a city more easily than you can out in the field. So always keep your eyes open for escape routes—you might be saving your 'Mech and your life.

Vehicles are okay to use in cities for sniping or recon. You can also use them to herd enemy troops toward 'Mechs waiting in ambush. Use tanks for this purpose. 'Mechs are too valuable to designate for this kind of operation, and infantry move too slow to handle herding effectively.

We're sure most of you will agree that infantry is useless in the open. But in a city, infantry is priceless. Platoons can hide almost anywhere and are protected by buildings, rubble, and fallen 'Mechs.

Our weapons of choice to use in an urban environment are ultra-autocannons, SRMs, and lasers. Ultra-autocannons can be quite damaging, as with their high rate of fire they can destroy most opponents in a few rounds. Lasers are the best all-around weapons—use them at your discretion in the vicinity of buildings and other obstacles. SRM launchers can do a lot of damage in close-up combat on the streets.

Stay away from PPCs. They are at a disadvantage because their short range is six hexes, and you'll need to target things closer than that. However, if you disengage some of the PPC configurations, as detailed in the tactical handbook, there are no range restrictions. If your 'Mechs have LRMs, consult the hot load section in the **BattleTech** Tactical Handbook to get rid of the range limitations.

Flamers are good for burning buildings and creating smoke. The inferno is also a great choice, because in one shot you could overheat a 'Mech, destroy a vehicle, or take out an infantry platoon.

As far as which 'Mechs to use. Well, that's personal choice. However, a normally-weak *Wasp* or a *Locust 1S* (you know, the one with two SRM-2s) can become a deadly foe and send even the biggest 'Mechs running.

We hope these tips will make your campaigns in an urban environment more fun. Remember that there is no reduction for property damage. In other words, don't be afraid to burn a city to the ground!

ROLL CALL

Arizona

Waterloo's Old Guard
William Hall
226 North Hobson St #A12E
Mesa, AZ 85203-7935

B.C. Legion

Steve Zai Pitcher
1898 E Aspen Dr
Tempe, AZ 85282

Arkansas

The 344th Night Rangers
Tee Harris
15905 Settlement Rd
N. Little Rock, AR 722132

Connecticut

The Silver Sabers
Mike Paul
434 Cold Springs Dr
Westbrook, CT 06498

Florida

Steel Typhoon
Roy F. Falco
8727 NW 3rd. Court
Plantation, FL 33324

Bushi Seishin

John Arroyo
3278 Oaklake Place
Winter Park, FL 32792

Georgia

Blue Oyster Calvary
Michael Williams
13 National Blvd
Rossville, GA 30741-3321

Illinois

Robinson Renegades
Neal Dean Daugherty
401 N Jefferson
Robinson, IL 62454

Kansas

Ghost Wolves
Frank Stolze
c/o The Gate Keeper
2615 SW 21st
Topeka, KS 66604

Kentucky

The Nightstalkers
Ron Purvis
912 Leawood Sq
Frankfort, KY 40601

Maryland

Mergner's Mercs
Henry E. Mergner 1
18948 Ebbtide Circle
Germantown, MD 20874

Maine

The Rats
Mitchell Bixby
217 Reservoir Rd
Lunenburg, MA 01462

Lucifer's Bananas
Scott Johnson
16 Fenno St Apt 2
Cambridge, MA 02138

Nebraska

Mechkota Warriors
Robert Huntsman
1004 Haverford Dr
Papillion, NE 68046

New Jersey

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

North Carolina

Knights of the Black Moon
Ronald Corcoran
212 Adams St
Kernersville, NC 27284

Oklahoma

Titanium Tigers
Peter Von Groot
107 E. Miller #3
Stillwater, OK 74075

Pennsylvania

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

Felix's Head Hunters

Brian Woolever
3409 Jones Blvd.
Easton, PA 18045

South Carolina

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

Texas

Minnesota Tribe
Scott Hensch
2439 NE Loop 410 Apt 1607
San Antonio, TX 78233

Lone Star 1st Armored Cavalry

Lone Star Comics
511 East Abram
Arlington, TX 76010

13th TX Regimental Combat Team

Gregory P. Reynolds
12343 Hunters Chase # 814
Austin, TX 78729

Dark Wolves
Derek Montemayor
Rt4. Box 235E
Lock Hart, TX 78644

Blazing Fist of Defiance

James Lytle
573 Plaza Ct.
Harker Heights, TX 76548

Virginia

Norfolk Light Artillery Blues
Charles Lee Jr.
1300 W. 39th St.
Norfolk, VA 23508

Washington

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

Wisconsin

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

The Star Riders

Jeffery Hatcher
9745 W. Reichert Pl.
Milwaukee, WI 53225

Wyoming

20th Polar Bear Attack Cluster
Erik Ostresh
812 1/2 Custer
Laramie, WY 82070

Military

Thors Hammers
John Garibotte
PSC 80 Box 12319
APO, AP 96367

Canada

Paladins of Chaos
Ean Stott
General Delivery
Williamsford, Ontario N0H-2V0
Canada

The Ice Dragoons

Water Illman
RR#3
Chatsworth, Ontario N0H 1G0
Canada

Chaos Warriors

Robert Shewing
Box 31 RR#5
Oshawa, Ontario L1H 8L7
Canada

Australia

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

Ranking Scores

NAME		Ranks	ID Numbers	NAME		Ranks	ID Numbers
William	Ransdale	3569	59	Brian	Nolen	1020	A190
Gabriel	Gong	3539	1425	Geoff	Swift	1018	776
Robert	Binkley	3141	677	Jacqueline	Molloy	1016	A186
David	Low	3014	643	Jeff	Havens	1007	1223
Sam	Lewis	2765	0005	Andrew	Gryn	999	1344
Kenneth R.	Reno	2743	79	Christopher	Robers	990	326
Fred	Gill	2666	A154	Mark	Bodkin	981	A124
Reid	Wilson	2362	311	Joseph	Richardson	978	450
Jason	Martin	2081	912	Ken	Armentrout	972	859
Michael	Martin	2081	52	Jeremy	Barker	969	89
Rich	Cencarik	2017	260	Ladrado	Dregdusis	968	A150
William	Hall	1972	84	Michael	Manning	966	A182
Leslie A.	Streeter	1919	49	Emil	Bran	957	433
Peter	Von Groote	1901	51	Wayne	Byers	952	A129
Robert	Huntsman	1577	1273	Craig	Gulledge	935	904
Doug	Roach	1530	823	Scott	Jamison	935	262
Jeremy	Gioede	1484	674	Scott	Bitner	934	A123
Kenneth	Lemons	1432	99	Rob	Owens	934	1655
Robert	Binkley	1418	678	Howard	Hill	931	65
Daniel	Lassige	1418	263	Crystal	Ritchie	925	A196
L. Derek	Evans	1388	845	George H.	Holmes	923	85
Bryan	Seminara	1386	A208	Ken	Taube	921	809
Ean R.	Stott	1378	A215	Ted	Peoples	920	1283
Ean	Stott	1378	1649	Owen	Anderson	917	A116
Susan	Huntsman	1343	A166	Chris W.	Mette	915	1239
Ronald	Corcoran	1338	373	Darrell	Castillo	915	1241
Tom	Fisher	1328	1274	Dallas	Dopko	905	1592
Denby	Cluff	1283	A137	Cara	Jensen	902	A169
Sam	Johnson	1280	1404	Kelly	Roberts	902	A198
David	Gameau	1272	A152	Mike	Sebastian	897	A207
Henry E.	Mergner	1260	68	Robert L.	Seitz	894	171
Hobert B.	Rupe	1252	A201	Gaetano A.	Girone	876	1141
Stephen	Watts	1251	97	Gene	Abshire	876	A109
Steve Zai	Pitcher	1249	15	John	Davis	874	A143
Dale	Aitken	1246	A115	Brian	Jones	874	A170
Tony	Arciero	1240	A117	Richard	Hamer	874	867
Geoff	Hatten	1226	1577	Temuchin	Tillman	872	A218
Craig D.	Cummings	1222	A142	Troy	Adler	869	A112
James T.	Klint	1219	1271	Evan	Couche	866	A139
Gary	Griess	1181	1138	Dan	Grendell	860	972
Larry	Mortley	1167	A188	Smith W.	Self	856	369
Gary	Wayne	1160	1263	Alex	Craig	856	1121
Jonathon P.	Chitwood	1149	A135	Glenda	Burns	856	1120
Stephen	Burns	1144	1119	Troy	Allen	839	1319
Rick	Seidl	1134	667	Winter	Guité	837	1044
Michael	Connors	1130	A138	Trevor	Chapman	824	A133
Nathaniel	Dickson	1121	654	Michael B.	Polk	803	371
Michael	Jacobs	1119	1238	John W.	Mantooth	802	A183
John P.	Lynch	1117	207	Scott	Crandall	779	A140
Aaron	Russell	1114	A202	Edward	Brownlow	769	642
Henry	Penninkilampi	1104	A193	Robert F.	Motsinger	753	374
Carl	Scheu	1102	1245	Leonard L.	Martin	750	675
Kevin	Brown	1090	A127	Steve	Illman	745	A168
Scott	Cole	1068	542	Lee	Hilt	728	A164
Dave	Vance	1065	1390	Grant	Pratt	727	1275
Gina	Adler	1064	A113	Greg	Mortley	687	A187
Martin	Stock	1055	A214	David J.	Vanden Noven	652	676
Charles	O'Banion	1046	851	Richard	Darr, Jr.	652	261
Tim	Ratliff	1045	372	James	Brown	600	1276
Bryan	Detamore	1040	64	Michael	Gratton	576	A156
Andrew	Chataway	1040	A134	Chris	Logan	426	141
				John	Bard	363	72

Gabriel Gong

PROWLER

Mass: 50 tons

Chassis: Corean Model KL 77 Endo Steel

Power Plant: GM 250

Cruising Speed: 54.0 kph

Maximum Speed: 86.4 kph

Jump Jets: None

Jump Capacity: None

Armor: StarGuard III

Armament:

1 Johnston Parti-Cannon PPC

4 ChisComp 39 Medium Lasers

2 Harpoon-6 Short Range Missile Launchers

Manufacturer: Achernar BattleMechs

Primary Factory: New Avalon

Communications System: Achernar Electronics HICS-11

Targeting and Tracking System: Federated Hunter

OVERVIEW

At the start of the Clan-Inner Sphere truce, the Federated Commonwealth High Command needed to reallocate its BattleMech forces. Front-line regiments had priority to receive both new 'Mechs and field upgrade kits to bring recovered technology against the clans. In addition, improved forces were needed to deter the growing threats of the Free Worlds League and the Capellan Confederation.

As a result of such troop repositioning, industries and key planets throughout the Federated Commonwealth would be left under defended or defenseless. What was needed was a fast-track production of capable defensive BattleMechs.

CAPABILITIES

The new 50-ton 'Mech uses little recovered technology; endo steel internal structure and ten double heat sinks to save weight for weapons systems. Armed with a Johnston Parti-Cannon PPC, the *Prowler* can dish out consistent damage at long ranges. However, it can also be deadly at short range as well. When the fighting gets in close, four ChisComp 39 medium lasers and two Harpoon-6 short range missiles launchers will devastate the enemy target. Sound combat tactics will ensure that the heat buildup will never reach critical levels. Furthermore, 10 tons of armor give this medium 'Mech very good protection.

DEPLOYMENT

Still rare, the *Prowler* looks as if it will join the *Watchman* as the backbone of the Federated Commonwealth's militia system.

Type: **Prowler**

Technology Base: Inner Sphere

Tonnage: 50

Equipment		Mass
Internal Structure:	Endo Steel	2.5
Engine:	250	12.5
Walking MP:	5	
Running MP:	8	
Jumping MP:	0	
Heat Sinks:	10 [20]	0
Gyro:		3
Cockpit:		3
Armor Factor:	160	10

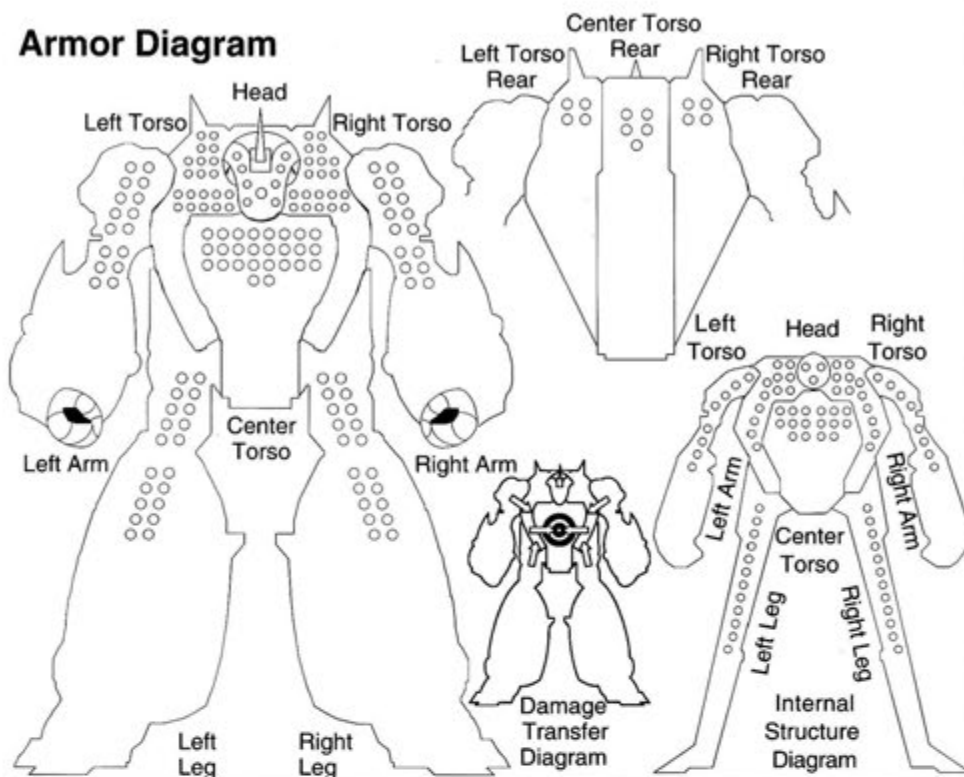
	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head	3	9
Center Torso	16	26
Center Torso (rear)		5
R/L Torso	12	20
R/L Torso (rear)		4
R/L Arm	8	16
R/L Leg	12	20

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
PPC	RT	3	7
Medium Laser	RA	1	1
Medium Laser	RA	1	1
Medium Laser	LA	1	1
Medium Laser	LA	1	1
SRM 6	LT	2	3
Ammo (SRM) 15	CT	1	1
SRM 6	LT	2	3
Ammo (SRM) 15	CT	1	1

BATTLETECH

BATTLEMECH RECORD SHEET

Armor Diagram



Mech Data

Type: **PWL-R6 Prowler**
 Tonnage: **50**
 Movement Points
 Walking: **5**
 Running: **8**
 Jumping: **0**

Technology Base:
 Inner Sphere
 3055

Weapons Inventory

#	Type	Loc	Ht	D	Mn	S	M	L
1	PPC	RT	10	10	3	6	12	18
2	Medium Laser	RA	3	5	0	3	6	9
2	Medium Laser	LA	3	5	0	3	6	9
2	SRM 6	LT	4	2	0	3	6	9

Ammo Type	Rounds
SRM 6	30

Total Single Heat Sinks: 10

○○○○○○○○○○

Auto Eject

Operational Disabled

Warrior Data

Name: _____
 Gunnery Skill: _____ Piloting Skill: _____

Hits Taken	1	2	3	4	5	6
Conscious #	3	5	7	10	11	Dead

Heat Scale

30	SHUTDOWN
29	
28	Ammo Explosion, avoid on 8+
27	
26	Shutdown, avoid on 10+
25	-5 Movement Points
24	+4 Modifier to Fire
23	Ammo Explosion, avoid on 6+
22	Shutdown, avoid on 8+
21	
20	-4 Movement Points
19	Ammo Explosion, avoid on 4+
18	Shutdown, avoid on 6+
17	+3 Modifier to Fire
16	
15	-3 Movement Points
14	Shutdown, avoid on 4+
13	+2 Modifier to Fire
12	
11	
10	-2 Movement Points
9	
8	+1 Modifier to Fire
7	
6	
5	-1 Movement Points
4	
3	
2	
1	
0	



Left Arm

- Shoulder
 - Upper Arm Actuator
 - Lower Arm Actuator
 - Hand Actuator
 - Medium Laser
 - Medium Laser
- 1-3
- Endo Steel
 - Roll Again
 - Roll Again
- 4-6
- Roll Again
 - Roll Again
 - Roll Again

Left Torso

- SRM 6
 - SRM 6
 - SRM 6
 - SRM 6
 - Endo Steel
 - Endo Steel
- 1-3
- Endo Steel
 - Endo Steel
 - Roll Again
 - Roll Again
 - Roll Again
 - Roll Again
- 4-6

Left Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Endo Steel
- Endo Steel

Critical Hit Table

Head

- Life Support
- Sensors
- Cockpit
- Roll Again
- Sensors
- Life Support

Center Torso

- Engine
 - Engine
 - Engine
 - Gyro
 - Gyro
 - Gyro
- 1-3
- Gyro
 - Engine
 - Engine
 - Engine
- 4-6
- Engine
 - Ammo (SRM 6) 15
 - Ammo (SRM 6) 15

Engine Hits	○○○
Gyro Hits	○○○
Sensor Hits	○○○
Life Support	○

Cost 4,493,001

Right Arm

- Shoulder
 - Upper Arm Actuator
 - Lower Arm Actuator
 - Hand Actuator
 - Medium Laser
 - Medium Laser
- 1-3
- Endo Steel
 - Roll Again
 - Roll Again
- 4-6
- Roll Again
 - Roll Again
 - Roll Again

Right Torso

- PPC
 - PPC
 - PPC
 - Endo Steel
 - Endo Steel
 - Endo Steel
- 1-3
- Endo Steel
 - Roll Again
 - Roll Again
 - Roll Again
 - Roll Again
 - Roll Again
- 4-6

Right Leg

- Hip
- Upper Leg Actuator
- Lower Leg Actuator
- Foot Actuator
- Endo Steel
- Endo Steel



BATTLETECH[®]

CONTEST

FASA Corporation is pleased to announce the second in an ongoing series of writing contests. This contest is for aspiring authors and **BattleTech** fans who would like to write for **BattleTech**. The best three entries will be posted on the **BattleTech** page of the FASA website. Each winner will receive a prize (see below) and the opportunity to write for an upcoming **BattleTech** product.

The contest consists of : an essay and 10 trivia questions concerning **BattleTech** game rules and events in the **BattleTech** universe. To be considered, an entry must include both parts.

If you've ever wanted to contribute to the **BattleTech** universe, this is your chance! Send your written submission today!

SECTION ONE: ESSAY

Choose one of the following topics and write a 1,000-word essay.

1. The effect of Myndo Waterly's Primacy of ComStar on the Inner Sphere.
2. Explain **BattleTech** to someone who has never played the game.

SECTION TWO: TRIVIA

Answer each of the following trivia questions as completely as possible.

1. Who is Thomas Marik?
2. Explain the military organization of the Clans.
3. What was Operation Scorpion?
4. On what planet is Skobel MechWorks located and what types of military units does it produce (name each unit).
5. Who is Noble Thayer?
6. What was Project Gemini?
7. What is a C3 computer? Explain how it would be used in the game.
8. You are constructing a Clan OmniMech. So far, you have installed one LB 10-X autocannon in the right arm and one ER large laser in the left arm. How many critical spaces do you have left in each arm?
9. You are playing a **BattleTech** game. During the Combat Phase of the current round, the 'Mech you are piloting takes 47 points of damage. In addition, the 'Mech takes one gyro critical hit, two lower-leg actuator critical hits and one foot actuator critical hit. Your MechWarrior's Piloting Skill is 5. What would the target number be for your Piloting Skill Roll(s) to avoid falling?
10. Give complete **AeroBattle** game stats for the *Jagatai* OmniFighter.

BattleTech Contest Prizes




First Prize: One (1) copy of next upcoming **BattleTech** product; a **BattleTech** T-shirt

Second Prize: **BattleTech** T-shirt

Third Prize: 1996 **BattleTech** poster, signed by the artist

CONTEST RULES

1. No purchase necessary to enter.
2. Only one entry per person. Employees, agents or contractors of FASA Corporation, and their immediate families or relatives, are not eligible.
3. Send entries to: **BattleTech** Contest, Attn: Bryan Nystul, FASA Corporation, 1100 W. Cermak Suite B305, Chicago IL 60608. To be eligible, all entries must be completed fully. All entrants must include their names, mailing addresses and telephone numbers. Entries must be received by January 10, 1997. No electronic submissions accepted. No submissions will be returned. The winning entries will be posted on the FASA website by February 3, 1997. Winners also will be notified by mail.
4. Winners will be chosen by FASA Corporation in its sole discretion, based upon the content and style of the essay and the number of correct answers to the trivia questions. Each winning entrant must consent to and grant permission for use of his/her name and likeness by FASA Corporation for promotional purposes without additional compensation. All winning materials become the sole property of FASA Corporation and may be used by FASA Corporation for any purpose. Future submissions remain subject to FASA Corporation's standard submission procedures. Winners of the **BattleTech** Contest are not guaranteed to have future submissions accepted for publication by FASA Corporation.
5. By participation in this contest, entrants agree to be bound by the Contest Rules and the decisions of FASA Corporation.
6. Void where prohibited by law.



From the pages of the 'Gallant Defense of Mankind'

The Precentor Martial asks for your help!

Hello, fellow MechWarriors and **BattleTech** players. I had the honor of writing the new **MechForce** Manual that you received several months ago. I tried to streamline and improve the way **BattleTech** tournaments are run. Overall, the feedback I have received from members who have run the tournaments at conventions, has been very positive. However, some players have expressed concerns about certain aspects of the tournaments. Because I wish to improve on the current rules, I am asking for opinions and suggestions from you.

The first overriding concern of most players is the use of the targeting computer/pulse combo during tournaments that use the Clan technology base. I understand that the freedom to choose how and with what forces you will fight is a large part of the thrill of participating in the **BattleTech** tournaments. In addition, targeting computers and pulse lasers are a part of the game. However, we want to do more than make sure everyone has an enjoyable time at the tournament; we also want the game to be decided more by tactics than by the luck of the dice. I realize that any dice-based game has a large luck factor involved, but the pulse/TC combo seems to amplify it out of proportion.

Another problem is players who employ the "run & hide" tactic. Once again, each player—during the course of a game—decides his own tactics. Many times, the need to "run & hide" will arise. However, there have been cases of abuse where a player will run just into range with a weapon, score points on the target by hitting the opponent, and then hide for the rest of the game. Though this tactic may obey the letter of the rules, it does not obey the spirit. The winner of a **BattleTech** tournament should not be the person who "hides" better than anyone else. **BattleTech** tournaments are run to decide who is the finest warrior—who bested every opponent he faced in *combat*!

Third, many players expressed concern about the fact that there was no grading of Piloting and Gunnery Skills for lighter 'Mechs. In years gone by, an Assault 'Mech was given 6/5 Piloting and Gunnery Skills respectively, grading down each level to give a light 'Mech 3/2 Piloting and Gunnery Skills. My concern over this—and the reason I removed skill grading from the current tournaments—is best expressed in an example. Currently, the *Turkina B* is considered one of the best 'Mechs in the game. In the **Trial of Bloodright** tournament run at GEN

CON® Game Fair this year, half the players utilized this 'Mech. Skill grading, however, would have allowed someone to take a *Ryoken A* with a 4/3 against a *Turkina B* with a 6/5. I would take the *Ryoken* any day—or imagine the *Vixen* or *Peregrine* with a 3/2. I felt this mechanic could be unnecessarily unbalancing to **BattleTech** tournaments.

Next year **MNA** will become part of an International **MechForce**. We have looked over Europe's **BattleTech** tournament rules and found only one major divergence from the current **MNA** tournaments: the selection of maps. Current **MNA** tournaments are run using only the standard **BattleTech** maps. In Europe, before beginning play, each player chooses any one of the 24 **BattleTech** maps published by FASA. This means that both players come to the table and lay out a different map. In addition, they use two maps for both the **Gunslinger** and **Trial of Bloodright** tournaments, instead of the one map we use in our tournaments. This adds a lot of diversity and surprise to the game.

In conclusion, I am asking for your help. Because I know that you are the ones playing in these tournaments, I am asking you what you think about these various concerns. Do you think the targeting computer should be banned from the **Trial of Bloodright**? Should rules be imposed that could penalize—or possibly disqualify—a player if he is not fighting in the game? Should a version of skill grading be added back into the **BattleTech** tournament rules? Would you like the new tournament rules—which will be published in the new **MechForce** Manual coming out next year—to include the ability to choose your own map? Do you prefer to play the **Gunslinger** and **Trial of Bloodright** tournaments on a single map, or would you prefer two? Although the final decisions on these subjects are mine and Bryan's to make, I would appreciate any suggestions and comments you might have.

If you have suggestions or comments on these topics, please contact me. You can write FASA directly—ATTN. Randall Bills—or e-mail me at FASAINfo@aol.com. Hope to hear from you soon!

The Widow's Web

by Mike Nelson

"The smell of sweat trickling down your neck from under the bulky neurohelmet fills your cockpit. Outside, it's well below freezing. Inside, it's all nerves and heat. The steady hum of the fusion engine vibrates through the ejection seat into your back. Glittering readouts light up the darkened interior telling you you've made a successful drop to the planet's surface. Nine meters below, snow swirls in the gale force winds at the feet of your humanoid BattleMech. Suddenly, alarms ring throughout your helmet as sensors pass the message: Enemies are approaching!"

So begins the newest **BattleTech** adventure on the Web, Multi-Player **BattleTech: Solaris**. Produced by Kesmai Corporation under license from FASA, MPBT: Solaris is probably one of the greatest adventures you will find. As of this writing (October 18, 1996), MPBT Solaris is in the final stages of the testing. In the Open Beta Test, Kesmai opened the game to all comers on the Internet. The Open Beta provides Kesmai with an unlimited testing ground and players with an unparalleled opportunity to experience the cutting edge of the Internet.

The first step toward playing the game is meeting the system requirements. You must have Windows 95 (Sorry all you Mac users!). Then visit Kesmai's Web site, which is at <http://www.kesmai.com/>. Download the front end software and figure out which Internet Service Provider you are going to use to access the game.

So once you have done all of that and installed the software, you are ready to go!

I know it sounds strange, but it was a major rush for me the first time I saw the opening of the game. Seeing a *Catapult* in all of its glory and having some stirring music playing in the background is quite the thing. The anticipation definitely starts building at this point. Don't touch anything for a second or two, just go along for the ride.

When you start the game for the first time, you will be asked to pick the "handle" that you will be known by on Solaris and go through a basic tutorial. It will tell you the ins and outs of Solaris. You also need to download the game manual. I repeat, download the game manual. There are way too many people who try to play without it. I do not mind helping someone learn, but if it is obvious they have not even read the manual, well, my patience starts to wear thin.

Once you are through all of that, the first screen that you will see is where you will do most of your non-battle interaction in MPBT. And interact you will! This game breaths interaction!

The whole top half of the screen is set up as a real time chat area. This is where you will talk, plan, organize, and do just about anything else that can be thrown into the mix. Below that, you will find icons where you can set up the sounds, configure controls, move around Solaris, and do several other

things that are too numerous to mention here.

By clicking on the Tram icon at the bottom of the screen, you are taken to a map of Solaris City. Here, you can select from at least 25 locations, each of which has at least five arenas to fight in.

Arenas are where all of the fighting takes place. Well, at least all of the fighting that takes place in 'Mechs. Sort of the meat and potatoes of the whole game. There are two kinds of arenas, Practice and Sanctioned. You go into practice arenas to do just that. Singly or in teams, this is where you learn the ropes of the game.

Dropping in (which is a term you will learn once you start playing) by yourself gives you a chance to go up against the drones. The skill level of drones changes from battle to battle. You just have to wait and see. Sometimes I think that some mysterious programmer has dropped into the game in the guise of a drones, just to make my life miserable.

You can also drop into Practice Arenas with a team. In fact this is how you are going to get your education. It is one thing to maneuver against drones, it is quite another to go up against living, breathing opponents. Just when you think you have all of the possibilities down, someone shows up with a new twist and surprises—no—blows you away!

Sanctioned Arenas are where metal meets metal, where you will win fame and fortune or die trying. In Sanctioned Arenas you earn points for victories or lose points for defeats—which move you up and down in the ranking tiers. It is as simple as that. I have heard all sorts of formulas as players tried to explain how the points system works. Suffice to say that it does work and you have to live by it.

Teams, stables, Clans—whatever you want to call them abound on Solaris. They add a sense of belonging, an *esprit de corps* if you will. I belong to the Wolverines, which currently boasts a membership of more than 25. There are other teams who have been around much longer and have more members though. "The Bloody Clans" have a history that goes back five years or so to Genie and the original on-line **BattleTech**.

All in all, the experience is incredible. As usual, I cannot do it justice on this page. It will soon be available for a fee on several of the different large service providers. Look for it on AOL, CompuServe, and Earthlink to name a few. The price ranges from \$3.00 down to \$2.00 per hour, depending on the service you use.

So come on over and play. I will be in there someplace as Seaweed, so drop by and say hi. Or better yet, drop by and we will go a couple of rounds.

"Now, let me see," Seaweed mutters to himself. "Where did I put that neurohelmet?"

First Strike™ out in December

GET INTO THE GAME!

*"All troops, into your 'Mechs! This is not a drill—repeat, this is **not** a drill!"*

First Strike is a unique **BattleTech** book created especially for players new to the game. It features thirteen ready-to-play scenarios that require only the contents of the boxed game to play: 9 scenarios for **BattleTech, Fourth Edition**, including a 3-part mini-campaign; 3 scenarios for **CityTech, Second Edition**, featuring battles from the Clan invasion; and one huge scenario that combines them both in a titanic struggle for survival!

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BATTLETECH®



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by Jared Niedenthal

A Taste of Chaos

The Slayers Risk Everything in Operation Guerrilla

Colonel Jay Night stood at the foot of his *Berserker* and watched the mass of orange light slowly consume the horizon. He sighed and rubbed his weary eyes. It was the middle of the night, and the spreading glare stood out in striking contrast to Elgin's inky sky. Night shook his head. Another raid. This time on Elgin's militia barracks in the Northwest. He yawned and went back to his bunk to catch some sleep. They were going to have to do something about these raids.

* * *

Two days later Colonel Night sat patiently in his *Berserker* and waited. Operation Guerrilla would begin soon. His unit, the Mechslayers, had fought the Clans for a while before coming here. They had taken time off to rest and rebuild, and they were nearly up to full strength when this war broke out. The 'Slayers had received numerous contract offers from planets in the Chaos March, but the one from the planet Elgin had been the best. Their campaign on Elgin wasn't supposed to have taken this long. But who could have foreseen the problems?

Instead of bringing a full 'Mech battalion, Night had only been able to bring a company. The unit's only JumpShip had developed some kind of malfunction in its drive system and could not move until it was fixed. The repairs were only supposed to have taken a week, but it had been nearly a month before he had gotten word from the ComStar HPG station that the rest of the Mechslayers were coming. Meanwhile, he had been forced to search frantically for a Jumpship heading this way. When he had finally found one, the price for passage had been exorbitant.

The rest of the 'Slayers should be arriving in about a week. He desperately needed the rest of his aerospace contingent to deal with these Liao raids.

Shortly after the 'Slayers had landed, the militia organized itself and began a massive push that destroyed most of the invading Capellans. But the surviving invaders had set up an airbase in the labyrinth of mountains and forests in the north. The Liao guerrillas had 'Mechs up there, but it was their aerofighters that had unmercifully harassed the 'Slayers and militia. The 'Slayers only had two aerospace fighters on the planet—and they were tied to the spaceport. The only other thing the FedCom forces had that could fly was a Ferret VTOL.

Yesterday a Jumpship arrived, and there was no doubt to what forces were on that ship—more guerrillas. It was too early for the rest of the 'Slayers. A merchant would have sent some kind of IFF transmission. And thanks to Katrina Steiner, the Federated Commonwealth didn't have any ships to strike back with—yet.

The 'Slayers knew the guerrillas had a *Cyclops* in their arsenal. And it was a well-known fact a *Cyclops* could perform orbital communications. If the *Cyclops* had communicated with the JumpShip, the new invasion force would undoubtedly want the guerrillas to establish a safe landing zone. So, Jay had sent most of his troops to the spaceport in the hopes of tricking the Capellans into thinking he was worried about them landing there. Even if the *Cyclops* hadn't communicated with the JumpShip, Colonel Night had reason to believe the guerrillas would attack. Ever since the raids had started, the 'Slayers had kept careful track of them. The number of raids had been slowly decreasing over the past two weeks—along with the estimated number of bombs dropped and ammunition expended. It was the 'Slayers' belief that the Capellans on Elgin needed supplies.

Every time Night moved his forces the guerrillas seemed to know. If he moved more than half of his troops back to the spaceport, their aerial reconnaissance would surely know. And he was about to present them with a target so tantalizing they couldn't pass it up. Night left only a single lance of 'Mechs to guard one of Elgin's largest supply dumps.

Colonel Night snapped back to attention when a pair of 'Mechs went racing past the building he was concealed in. It had begun.

* * *

Captain Tayo Narom stared in astonishment at the report he had just received. A fire had started in the grain silos east of here, and two enemy 'Mechs left to help with the fire fighting efforts. What a stroke of luck! Instead of a lance of 'Mechs guarding the supply dump, there would be only two. He had orders to establish a safe landing zone for the Liao DropShips that were coming, and he desperately needed any supplies he could find. His aerospace support wasn't here yet, but no matter—he would start the attack early. Resistance would be light.

A Taste of Chaos

His 'Mechs could handle it. He gently urged his *Cyclops* forward and gave the order to attack.

* * *

Colonel Night waited patiently, concealed in the building. The supply cache consisted of three warehouses stockpiled with various types of ammunition and other reserves. It was situated between two hills. In front of him lay the forests and mountains of the northwest, and behind him stretched the vast grasslands that made up Elgin's heartland—and that were now charred. His men had deliberately set the fire in the grain silos. The economy of Elgin was based almost entirely on agriculture. Jay figured the guerrillas would never think the 'Slayers would risk the silos when this year's crop had already been crippled. The risk had better be worth it.

Suddenly he detected a 'Mech moving outside. In response, his *Berserker* crashed through the wall as if it was made of paper. The startled *Shadow Hawk* tried to turn, but it was too late. The *Berserker's* hatchet whistled through the air and sliced through its head and lodged in its upper torso. Colonel Night pulled his hatchet out and turned as the *Shadow Hawk* slowly toppled backward.

A *Vindicator* observed what happened and charged forward, PPC blazing. The PPC bolt struck the *Berserker* in its left leg—bubbling away over a half a ton of armor. Night targeted the *Vindicator's* center torso. After a battle with the Clans he had reconfigured his *Berserker* with Clan weapons. A Clan tech who was his bondsman had installed a pair of ER PPCs and some medium lasers. The PPCs and lasers created a giant crater in the *Vindicator's* chest.

The *Vindicator* was still for a moment, thick black smoke boiling from it, then its fusion reactor exploded. Night's lance-mate, Ryan Erickson, rounded the hill on the left, his *Thunder Hawk* already having dispatched a *Vindicator* of his own.

A *Stinger* leaped onto the hill and fired its medium laser. The laser melted some armor on the *Thunder Hawk's* left arm, but did no serious damage. The *Thunder Hawk* raised its left arm and fired its Gauss rifle. The shell hit the *Stinger* square in the chest, lifted it off the hill and slammed it back into the earth. The *Berserker* and *Thunder Hawk* moved forward.

"Sir, I've got four enemy 'Mechs off to the right—300 meters."

Night had detected them too, and he moved toward them. A Karnov UR transport lifted off prematurely and sped off into the horizon. Let it go, Night reminded himself. The enemy 'Mechs opened fire. A *Warhammer* lashed out with both PPCs. One missed, but the other bore into the *Berserker's* chest armor.

An *Archer* took a step back as 40 long-range missiles leapt into the air and impacted on the *Thunder Hawk*.

Despite the damage they'd suffered, the two Mechslayers were able to return fire. The *Thunder Hawk's* three Gauss rifles found their mark on the *Archer*, and Night's *Berserker* peppered a *Cyclops*.

The two 'Slayer' 'Mechs circled behind the Capellans, cutting off their retreat route. The *Warhammer* tried to turn, but it was too late. A Gauss rifle shell ripped through its back, and the *Warhammer's* ammo blew sky high. Confused, the *Archer* and *Cyclops* withdrew.

Night urged his 'Mech to a run and triggered his ERPPCs. The *Cyclops* staggered back as the ERPPCs burst into its center torso. Noticing the *Cyclops* was limping badly from his first salvo, Night engaged his MASC. The *Berserker's* lasers burst into the *Cyclops's* center torso, ravaging its gyro. His last friendly 'Mech destroyed, and his own failing, Captain Tayo Narom signaled defeat and ejected.

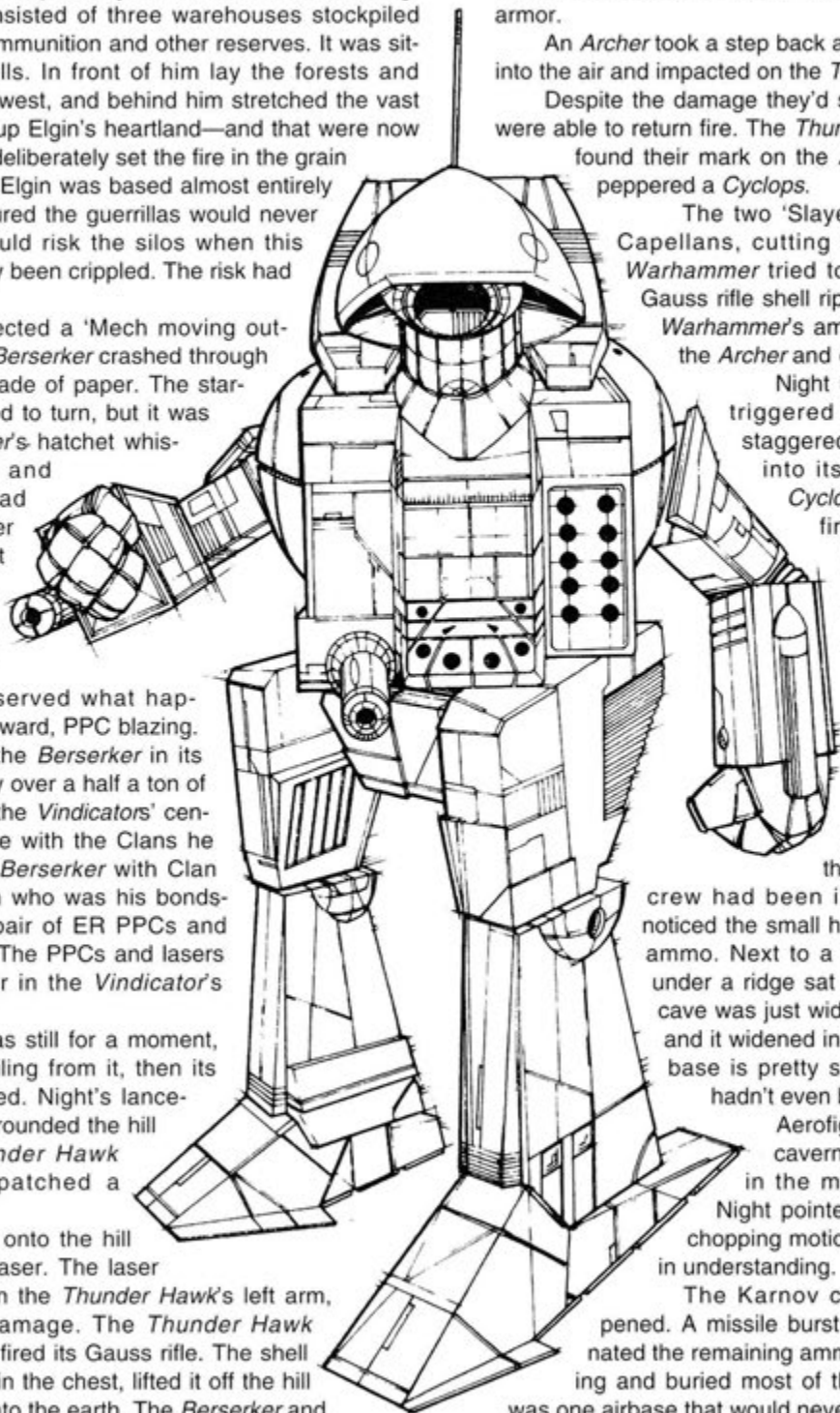
* * *

The Mechslayer's elite commandos had finally found the hidden airbase. The Karnov crew had been in such a hurry they hadn't noticed the small homing beacon attached to the ammo. Next to a river and ingeniously tucked under a ridge sat the airbase, the mouth of the cave was just wide enough for a fighter to fit in, and it widened inside. The Liaos must feel their base is pretty secure, Night observed—they hadn't even bothered to post guards.

Aerofighters lined both sides of the cavern, and the Karnov was parked in the middle, its crew unloading it.

Night pointed at the Karnov and made a chopping motion with his hand. Ryan nodded in understanding.

The Karnov crew never knew what happened. A missile burst into the cargo bay and detonated the remaining ammo. The explosion was deafening and buried most of the fighters and soldiers. That was one airbase that would never function again.



RAL PARTHA RELEASES

December

Nexus
Hankyu
Shootist
Yellow Jacket Gunship

January

Bandit Hovercraft
(Includes sprues for multiple variants)

Mackie
Thunder Hawk
Baboon

February

Nothing scheduled.

Happy Holidays!



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