# COMMANDO
## [QUARTERLY]

- **Painting Shadowrun Miniatures**
- **15 Tips for Shadowrun GMs**
- **Bodyguard of Lies**
- **Explorer Corps Survey**
- **Prometheus Unbound**

# COMMANDO [QUARTERLY]

# CONTENTS

**All writing herein is speculative and non-canon.**

# EDITOR'S CORNER

**Welcome to the FanPro's Commando Quarterly. First I would like to thank all of you for keeping the pressure up so that we could be here. Thank You All.**

You will notice we have some changes here at FanPro's Commando Quarterly. First off we have a minor change in the name — FanPro's Commando Quarterly. This is because we will now bring you information and articles about all the different games produced by FanPro. We will bring you articles and stories about Classic BattleTech, Shadowrun and Dark Eye from the FanPro Commandos that run these games. We will also have listings for what FanPro is looking to have out for the quarter and what Conventions the Commandos will be running events at. For now we will be covering mostly Classic BattleTech and Shadowrun as these are more familar, and we are currently looking for people to become Dark Eye Commandos. As Dark Eye expands we will bring more items for this game system also. FanPro Commandos run events at your local store (Firebase) and Conventions so please check them out.

Now let me introduce myself. I am Anthony "shadhawk" Hardenburgh, FanPro Commando #86 and I am the senior editor of FanPro's Commando Quarterly.

One of the first items of business, is to thank Scott "Clutch" Taylor for giving me the opportunity of running the FanPro's Commando Quarterly and getting to do something new at the same time. I am looking forward to working with all the good people that make up FanPro's Demo Team.

They — not me — will be doing all the real hard work: the stories and articles you will see within this project. Last off in the thank you department I would also like to thank all the FanPro Commandos that worked on the previous Commando Quarterly, if not for work they did before, I would not be able to do this now. Thank You, my fellow FanPro Commandos.

FanPro's Commando Quarterly is brought to you by your FanPro Commandos
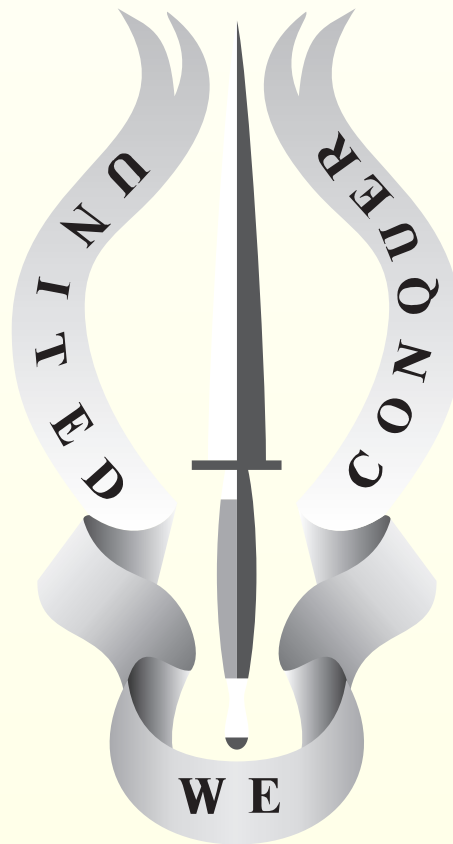
## DEPARTMENTS

**What's on Deck:** We'll cover what is due out from FanPro for the quarter for all the different game systems.

**Event Happenings:** We'll list the Conventions that the FanPro Commandos will be running events at for the up coming quarter.

**Metal Madness:** These articles will be all about minis and making terrain. We will give you a list of what Iron Wind Metals is looking to have out for the quarter, plus we will have painting and modeling how to's, as well as bringing you how -to articles on 3D terrain.

## Classic BattleTech

**Explorer Corps Surveys:** Here we will give you data of the different worlds of the Inner Sphere and Clan space.

**CBT Intel:** These will be recaps of Classic Battletech events from your local stores and cons.

**Battle ROMs:** Classic Battletech fiction from the battle lines by your FanPro Commandos.

**Explorer Corps Surveys:** Here we will provide data on different worlds of both the Inner Sphere and Clan home worlds, brought to you by our master cartographer Aaron " Gravedigger" Polleya. These surveys are speculative and as such are not canon.

## ShadowRun

**The Run:** The latest street line on what went down in the local cons and stores.

**Trid Time:** Shadowrun fiction from the street by your FanPro Commandos.

## Dark Eye

As Dark Eye expands we will bring more items for this game system as well.

There is an important resource on the bottom of every right-hand page — www.commandohq.com, the FanPro Commando Website. Please visit our website to find other players in your area, listings of our "Firebases" — local game stores or venues that carry and run FanPro games, and local Commandos who support FanPro by running demos and events for you. On-site registration means you will be immideatly notified any time your local commandos schedule an event in your area, and registration is a requirement to participate in the yearly premier Classic BattleTech event, the Martial Olympiad.

# What's On Deck

## THE DARK EYE®
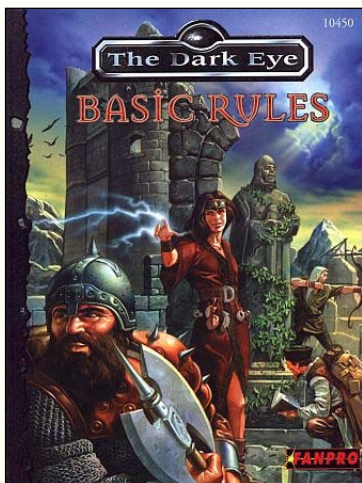
**The Dark Eye® - Stock #: FPR 10450**

A New World from the Old World...

The Dark Eye is based on the brand-new fourth edition of Das Schwarze Auge, Germany's premier fantasy role-playing game since 1983. The detailed, elegant rules are a product of nearly 20 years of constant development. The game world, Aventuria, is as richly detailed, developed from literally hundreds of game adventures and supplements. Now, embark on the exploration of a lifetime, the discovery of the richest, most complete role-playing setting of all time, now available in English for the very first time!

Make Your Mark on the World of Aventuria!

The world of Aventuria awaits you! This core rulebook allows you to play a character chosen from a background of 8 cultures (human, elven and dwarven) and 12 professions (from rogue to warrior to magician). It includes a detailed yet easy attribute and skill system, a quick combat system and the basic rules for sorcery. It also features a short primer on Aventurian geography, politics, history and religion, as well as 8 archetypal characters for easy access to an endless world where fantasy and reality meet.

**Witching Hours/
The Secret of the Blue Tower™ - Stock #: FPR 15001**

Two introductory adventures for players new to The Dark Eye and its world, Aventuria. In The Secret of the Blue Tower, the heroes come into possession of a mysterious map that leads them to explore catacombs beneath a city in search of a repository of ancient knowledge accumulated by a wily magician. In Witching Hours, the heroes are drawn to the village of Millington, where for some months various hauntings have descended upon the villagers, driving them away from their homes.

**The World of Aventuria™ - Stock #: FPR 15002 (Coming in 2005)**

The World of The Dark Eye!

Includes all the realms and provinces of Aventuria, plus its cities and rulers. Articles deal with sports and cuisine, astrology and education, armies and navies, heraldry and printing presses. Features rules for travel, transport and trade, plus poisons, illnesses and healing herbs. Also includes detailed descriptions of more than 100 NPCs. A living world!

## SHADOWRUN®
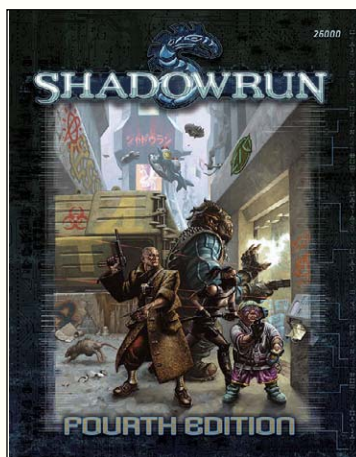
**Shadowrun, Fourth Edition® Stock #: FPR 26000 (August 2005)**

The Shadows Have Evolved.

The year is 2070. The world is not only Awakened—it's wired. Cyber and bioware implants make your meat body better-than-flesh, while the wireless Matrix enhances your perceptions with hyper-real senses. Deals are made in steel and lead more often than gold or nuyen; success and failure live only a razor's edge apart. Creatures of myth and legend walk the streets, while the arcane skills of spellslingers are in high demand. Above it all, monolithic megacorps bleed the world dry, sabotaging each other in covert cutthroat competition as they go to war over the bottom line.

You're a shadowrunner, a street operative, scratching out a living on the mean sprawl streets. You may be human, elf, dwarf, ork or troll. From lethal street samurai to well-connected info brokers, spell-slinging mages or code-cracking hackers. No matter what, you're a professional—corporate pawn or "deniable asset," you get the job done.

Shadowrun, Fourth Edition offers a completely new rules system that is simple, integrated and accessible. The state-of-the-art has also been advanced, introducing a new level of augmented reality, new gear, new magical discoveries, and more.

This hardcover rulebook contains all the rules gamemasters and players need to create characters and ongoing adventures set in the popular Shadowrun universe. Note that the Shadowrun, Fourth Edition will replace the Shadowrun, Third Edition rules set. Source material from previous editions will still be compatible.

**Loose Alliances™ - Stock #: FPR 25006 (New in 2005)**

Loose Alliances gives us a look at the special interests of Shadowrun, the groups and organizations that count shadowrunners among their members as well as employees. It includes dozens of eco-groups, anarchists, neo-communists, archaeological relic hunters, magical groups, religious movements, and DIY crime outfits.

### Shadows of Asia™ - Stock #: FPR 25007 (New in 2005)

Shadows of Asia covers the whole of Asia, from the fractured Middle East to the economic powerhouse of Japan. Political intrigues, corporate struggles, magical phenomena and more are presented for dozens of countries, including the cold war between the Japanese megacorps and their Pacific Prosperity Group rivals.

### System Failure™ - Stock #: FPR 25014 (New in 2005)

The year is 2065, and all is not well. Apocalyptic terrorists strike around the world, a struggling megacorp makes a drastic decision to stem off impending doom, and an AI thought to be dead rises again. System Failure gives players and GMs the details leading up to and following these dramatic, world-shaking events, providing numerous scenarios for runners to play a role in the biggest shakeup the Shadowrun universe has seen in decades.

### SR4 Gamemaster's Screen™ - Stock #: FPR 26002 (New in 2005)

This 4-panel GM Screen provides handy and useful charts for playing Shadowrun, Fourth Edition. Comes with a 32-page gamemaster aide for creating short scenarios, including a selection of readyto-run plot hooks.

### On the Run™ - Stock #: FPR 26003 (New in 2005)

This introductory adventure for Shadowrun, Fourth Edition throws the players into the seething underworld conflicts of the year 2070. Includes detailed advice for gamemasters or players.

### Street Magic™ - Stock #: FPR 26004 (New in 2005)

The advanced magic book for Shadowrun, Fourth Edition. Details the nature of magic and its effects on society in the year 2070. Also contains advanced rules for alternate magic traditions, initiation and metamagic, enchanting, new spells and adept powers, the metaplanes of astral space, and a host of magical threats. Street Magic contains everything the players and gamemasters need for magic in SR4.

# CLASSIC BATTLETECH®



### CBT Boxed Set- Stock#: FPR35010

Strap yourself into the ultimate suit of armor: the BattleMech®. Thirty feet tall and weighing up to a hundred tons, this humanoid engine of destruction is a walking arsenal with enough firepower to level a city block. The Classic BattleTech® game system takes you into the world of the 31st Century, where war has become a way of life. In command of the most powerful machine on the battlefield, your MechWarrior® fights to take a planet or lose an empire.

The introductory game in the Classic BattleTech line, the Classic BattleTech box set hurtles you onto the battlefields of the 31st century. This box contains everything needed to play.

### Interstellar Players™ - Stock#: FPR35003

Interstellar Players™ describes the most powerful and influential people, organizations and entities behind the scenes of the Classic BattleTech® universe.

### Mercenaries Supplemental II™ - Stock#: FPR35025

Includes additional rules for mercenary creation such as non-BattleMech Unit Tech Levels, special renegade and freelancer mercenary paths, along with rules for playing in different BattleTech eras, from the Star League and Succession Wars to the present day.



### Dawn Of The Jihad™ Stock#: FPR35023

Two centuries in the making, November 3067 sees the culmination of work begun by Primus Conrad Toyama of ComStar: to lead mankind to the light...by any means necessary.

Dawn of the Jihad hammers and shakes the Classic BattleTech® universe to its foundation, describing the opening year in a decade's long struggle for the very survival of humanity. The series of events presented in this book unfold in a rolling format, allowing readers to immerse directly into the action as never before. Players of both Classic BattleTech and Classic BattleTech RPG™ will also find framework rules to run almost any type of campaign set in this chaotic time.

### Jihad Hot Spots: 3070™ - Stock#: FPR35026

Jihad Hot Spots: 3070 continues the stunning events revealed in Dawn of the Jihad, using the same rolling format and immersing readers directly in the action as never before.

### Map Set Compilation 2™ - Stock#: FPR35012

Classic BattleTech Map Set Compilation 2™ compiles the maps from BattleTech Map Sets #5, and #6, planetary assault maps from BattleForce 2™, and mapsheets from BattleSpace™; twenty-two maps in all.

### MapPack: Solaris VII™ - Stock#: FPR35002

MapPack: Solaris VII provides information on the gaming world and the stables that run it, and also includes new Level 3 weapons and equipment, as well as ten previously published Solaris VII maps.

### Historical: War Of 3039™ - Stock#: FPR35014

The first in a new series, the Historical: War of 3039™ campaign sourcebook details the action involving every line unit in this pivotal war. Includes wave maps, full regiment listings and campaign rules.

### Technical Readout: 3055 Upgrade™ - Stock#: FPR35006

Classic BattleTech Technical Readout: 3055 Upgrade™ presents 'Mechs built using technology from MaximumTech, Revised™, as well as MapPack: Solaris VII™. Upgraded in appearance and technology, the designs first presented in the Solaris VII box set and Solaris: The Reaches are now back in print. Additionally, updated text including new variants and notable MechWarriors is also provided.

### Technical Readout: 3058 Upgrade™ - Stock#: FPR35015

Contains previously lost 'Mech and vehicle designs, new 'Mechs, tanks, hovercraft and more. Updated to the current timeline of 3067.

### MaximumTech, Revised™ - Stock#: FPR35013

Maximum Tech is packed with dozens of Level 3 optional rules, including new weapons and equipment, expanded rules for vehicles and infantry, double-blind rules and much more!

Originally printed by FASA in 1999, MaximumTech, Revised will be corrected and reprinted by FanPro.

### Lostech™ - Stock#: FPR35004

Includes descriptions and Classic BattleTech RPG™ game rules for over one hundred items and equipment, detailed treatment of powered battle armor and a technical readout covering twenty different battle armor.

Originally printed by FASA in 2000, Lostech will be corrected and reprinted by FanPro.

### Classic BattleTech RPG™ - Stock#: FPR35030

Formerly known as MechWarrior, Third Edition, this rulebook contains all of the material you need to run a roleplaying game in the exciting BattleTech universe.

Originally printed by FASA in 1999, Classic BattleTech RPG will be corrected and reprinted by FanPro.

### Classic BattleTech Handbooks

Each volume in the Classic BattleTech Handbook series is filled with the essential histories, politics, culture and industrial complex that makes up the Great Houses of the BattleTech universe; includes rules for personal equipment, creatures, campaign ideas and more for both Classic BattleTech and Classic BattleTech RPG.

*Handbook: House Steiner™ (Available Now) - Stock#: FPR35001*

*Handbook: House Marik™ (2005) - Stock#: FPR35019*

*Handbook: House Davion™ (2005) - Stock#: FPR35024*

# IRON WIND METALS RELEASES
# FOURTH QUARTER 2005

### Week of 10/3/05
**New Classic BattleTech – Aerotech Strships**
20-026  Farragut Battleship — $10.95

**New Classic BattleTech – 3055 Re-Design**
20-340 Kraken (TRO 3055 U) — $10.95

**New Classic BattleTech – Solaris VII**
20-366 Juggernaut — $10.50

### Week of 10/17/05
**Classic BattleTech – Vintage Classics Return**
20-372  Hornet Mech — $5.95

**New Classic BattleTech – 3055 Upgrade**
20-368  Viper Mech — $9.95

**New Classic BattleTech – Dark Age Mechs**
20-369  FireStarter — $7.50

### Week of 10/31/05
**Classic BattleTech – 3050 Re-sculpt**
20-373 Dasher Omni Mech — $6.95

**New Classic BattleTech – 3055 Upgrade**
20-370  Baboon Mech — $6.50

**Classic BattleTech – Vehicles**
20-371  Light SRM Carrier (2) — $8.50

### Week of 11/7/05
**Classic BattleTech –  Pack**
20-xxx  Kurita Heavy Lance — $29.95
(No-Dachi, Daikyu, Kintaro, and Wolverine, plus a Kurita Medallion)

### Week of 11/14/05
**Classic BattleTech – 3050 Re-sculpt**
20-376 Koshi Omni Mech — $6.95

**New Classic BattleTech – Solaris VII**
20-374  Prowler — $8.50

**Classic BattleTech – Vehicles**
20-375  Gladius Medium Hover Tank  (2) — $8.50

### Week of 12/5/05
**Classic BattleTech –  Pack**
10-029 Clan Ghost Bear Medium Star — $34.95
(Contains: Grizzly, Dragonfly A, Black Hawk Prime, Ursus, Clint IIc, plus a Ghost Bear Medallion.)

### Week of 12/19/05
**New Classic BattleTech – AeroTech Star Ships**
20-027  Avatar Heavy Cruiser — $10.50

**Classic BattleTech – Vintage Classics Return**
20-377  Flashman Mech — $9.50

**New Classic BattleTech – 3055 Upgrade**
20-378  Peregrine — $7.50
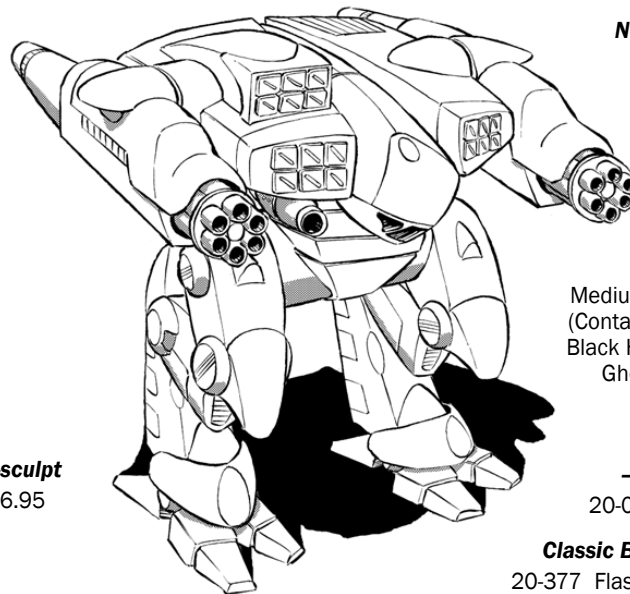
# EVENT HAPPENINGS

## FANPRO COMMANDOS CONVENTION LISTINGS

### NECRONOMICON

www.stonehill.org/necmain.htm
**Email:** grendel@stonehill.org
**Where:** Tampa, Florida
**Dates:** October 28 — October 30
**Location:** Hyatt Regency Downtown
**FanPro Games:** Classic Battletech

### PENTACON XXI

www.pentacongames.com
**Email:** games@pentacongames.com
**Where:** Fort Wayne, Indiana
**Dates:** November 4 — November 6
**Location:** Grand Wayne Center
**FanPro Games:** Classic Battletech

### U•CON

www.ucon-gaming.org
**Email:** ucon-info@ucon-gaming.org
**Voice-Mail:** (734) 930-6363
**Where:** Ann Arbor, Michigan
**Dates:** November 4 — November 6
**Location:** Student Union at UoM
**FanPro Games:** Classic Battletech, ShadowRun.

### GENCON SO CAL

www.gencon.com
**Email:** events@gencon.com
**Phone:** (800) 529-EXPO (3976)
**Where:** Anaheim, California
**Dates:** November 17 — November 20
**Location:** Anaheim Convention Center
**FanPro Games:** Classic Battletech

### DREAMATION 2006

www.dexposure.com/d2006.html
**Email:** dreamation@dexposure.com
**Where:** East Brunswick, New Jersey
**Dates:** January 19 — January 22
**Location:** The East Brunswick Hilton
**FanPro Games:** Classic Battletech

### TEMPLECON 2006

www.templecon.com
**Email:** Questions@templecon.com
**Where:** Providence, Rhode Island
**Dates:** January 27 — January 29
**Location:** Holiday Inn on Atwells Avenue
**FanPro Games:** Classic Battletech

# FIREBASE LISTINGS

## UNITED STATES

### ARIZONA

**The Game Den Games & Gifts**

1239 E. McKellips RD
Mesa, AZ 85203
Mesaman22@aol.com
Commando: Joel "Joel47" Agee

**Game Depot**

3136 S McClintock DR
Suite 13
Tempe, AZ 85282-8001
morfeld@visitalk.com
Commando: Joel "Joel47" Agee

**Game Nightz**

9617 N. Metro Parkway W.
(MetroCenter Mall)
Phoenix, AZ 85051
Commando: Joel "Joel47" Agee

### CALIFORNIA

**Frontline Games**

905 West Texas Street
Fairfield, CA 94509
Edge1945@aol.com
Commando: Scott "Edge" Duncan

**Game Empire**

7051 Clairemont Mesa Blvd
Suite 306
San Diego, CA 92111
Commando: Alex "Grendel" Lam

**Game Towne**

3954 Harney St
San Diego, CA 92110
GameTowne@yahoo.com
Commandos:
Alex "Grendel" Lam
Larry "Senior GM" White

**Great Escape Games**

1537 Howe Ave Suite #200
Sacramento, CA 95825
gartl1@pacbell.net
Commando:
Robin "JT Havoc" Brush

**Hobbytown USA**

3069 W. Bullard Ave
Fresno, CA 93712
mreindl@attbi.com
Commando: Mark "Marius" Reindl

**Lucy's Hobbys**

300 S. Court St
Alturas, CA 96101
lucerhob@hdo.net
Commando:
Robin "JT Havoc" Brush

**Riverview Hobby Shop**

215 Robert Lane
Bakersfield, CA 93308
Commando: Mark "Marius" Reindl

**Scenario Game
& Hobby Shoppe**

37120 Fremont Boulevard
Fremont, CA 94536-3606
chuckkw@pacbell.net
Commandos:
Robert "Hardcase" Owens
Frank "BT_Snipe" Diaz

### COLORADO

**Hobbytown - South**

839 N. Academy Blvd.
Colo. Springs, CO 80909
spitfire05@adelphia.net
Commandos:
Mike "Archangel" Wheaton
George "Skyhigh" Blouin

**Complete Games and Hobbies**

326 N. Tejon St.
Colo. Springs, CO 80903
gamer326@rmi.net
Commando:
Mike "Archangel" Wheaton

**Gamer's Haven**

5640 N. Academy
Colo. Springs, CO 80918
xen3@hotmail.com
Commando:
Mike "Archangel" Wheaton

**Bonnie Brae
Hobby Shop**

3421 S Broadway
Englewood, CO 80110
Commando:
Joel "Septicemia" Steverson

**Marshak's House of Fantasy**

256 Linden Street
Fort Collins, CO 80524-2424
marshaks@frii.com
Commando: Kevin "Joskney" Roof

**The Dragon's Eye**

412 Grand Mesa
Unit One
Grand Junction, CO 81503
katylainsae@yahoo.com
Commando: Harry "Truhart" Oxford

**The Dragon's Den**

605 W. 29th Street
Pueblo, CO 81008
Stormwolf3000@hotmail.com
Commando:
John "Taz_Term" Tiffany

**Alternate Universe**

410 W. 24th
Pueblo, CO 81003
altuni3@tokyo.com
Commando:
John "Taz_Term" Tiffany

**Valhalla's Game Center**

6161 W. 44th Ave
Wheatridge, CO 80033
Loki@valhallas.com
Commando:
Joel "Septicemia" Steverson

### CONNECTICUT

**Citadel Game Store**

537 Long Hill Rd.
Groton Ct. 06430
860-445-0641
citadel.games@sbcgobal.neth
Commando:
Anthony "Shadhawk" Hardenburgh

**Omni Comics and Cards**

732 Silas Deane Highway
Wethersfield, CT 06109
adeptus@ribhus.com
Commando: Doug "Stray Cat" Smith

### FLORIDA

**Brooms And Books**

8120 121st Ave East
Parrish, FL 34219
sales@broomsandbooks.com
Commando: James "Bear I" Brown

**Borderlands Comics
and Games**

10230-11 Atlantic Blvd
Jacksonville, FL 32244
osohok@attbi.com
Commando:
Douglas "Silvermane Wolf" Riley
Stephen "s514" Meyer

**Dragon Star**

1607-D North Nova Rd
Holly Hill, FL 2117
dragonstargames@bellsouth.net
Commando:
Douglas "Silvermane Wolf" Riley

**Dragon's Lair Games**

5118 South State Road 7
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33314
dragonslairgames@aol.com
Commando: Ray "Gideon" Arrastia

**Sanctuary Games & Books**

1200 Edgewood Ave S.
Jacksonville, FL 32205
emip@attglobal.net
Commando:
Douglas "Silvermane Wolf" Riley
Stephen "s514" Meyer

**Sci-Fi City**

6006 East Colonial Dr.
Orlando, FL 32807
Commando: Ray "Gideon" Arrastia

**Sunshine Roleplayers**

7921 Bird Road
Miami, FL 33155
rpgs@bellsouth.net
Commando: Ray "Gideon" Arrastia

**TATE'S Gaming Satellite**

4554 North University Drive
Lauderhill, FL 33351
alanleipzig@yahoo.com
Commando: Ray "Gideon" Arrastia

**War Dogs Game Center**

2777 University Blvd W
Jacksonville, FL 32217
devin@sgtsniff.com
Commando:
Douglas "Sislvermane Wolf" Riley
Stephen "s514" Meyer

### GEORGIA

**Georgia Tech Student Center**

350 Ferst Drive NW
http://www.studentcenter.gatech.edu/
Atlanta, GA 30332-0458
immaculateimage@hotmail.com
Commando:
Russell "Toecutter" Timm

**The War Room**

5950 State Bridge Rd
Suite 130
Duluth, GA 30097
store@thewarroom.com
Commandos:
John "Pacer" Nelson
T.J. "Halcyon" Austin
Thomas "Fusion Gun" Ricks
Mark "Wolf Clan" Ruppert
Russell "Toecutter" Timm

## IDAHO

### Dark Horse Games

2226 W Main
Boise, ID 83702
Commando: Chad "loki" Walker

## ILLINOIS

### Castle Perilous Games

715 S. University Ave
carbondale, IL 62901
castlep@AOL.com
Commando: Kevin "Corsair" Collier

### Dizzy Dugout

Highway 159 and Main St.
Collinsville, IL 62234
Commando:
Michael "Tikibelly" Kehoe

### The Fantasy Shop-
### Fairview Heights

10850 Lincoln Trail
Fairview Heights, IL 62208
Commando:
Michael "Tikibelly" Kehoe

## INDIANA

### GameCon South Bend

Century Center
120 South Saint Joseph Street
South Bend, IN 46601
info@gameconsouthbend.com
Commando: Aaron "Bear" Gregory

### Game Preserve  - Greenwood

1551 E. Stop 12 Road
Indianapolis, IN 46227
gwstore@gamepreserve.com
Commando: Jason "Banzai" Byers

### Game Preserve -
### West Lafayette

On the Levee in Wabash Landing
305 Brown Street
West Lafayette, IN 47906
tmstore@gamepreserve.com
Commando: Jason "Banzai" Byers

### The Keep

4734 Parnell Ave
Fort Wayne, IN 46825
carynus@verizon.net
Commando: Aaron "Bear" Gregory

## KANSAS

### Dreamcatcher

1016 North Washington
Junction City, KS 66441
drmchr@oz-online.net
Commando:
William "incrdibil" Pennington

### Patch and Crow's Nest

1800 Claflin Ste. 202
Manhattan, KS 66502
products@patchandcrowsnest.com
Commando:
William "incrdibil" Pennington

## LOUISIANA

### Tom's Triple Play

170 Old Minden Road
Suite 19 B
Bossier City, LA 71111
esavell@sport.rr.com
Commando: Jonathan
"MadDogMaddux" Andrus

## MASSACHUSETTES

### The Compleat Strategist

201 Mass Avenue
Boston, MA 02115
lsanto@rcn.com
Commando:
Brian "Pimp Daddy B." Guarnieri

### Danger Planet Games

36 Spruce Street
Waltham, MA 02453
swordbrethren@yahoo.com
Commando:
Brian "Pimp Daddy B." Guarnieri

## MAINE

### Greenhouse Games

269 Water Street
Gardiner, ME 04345
thecancerman@hotmail.com
Commando:
Robert "Ranger" Marden

## MICHIGAN

### 21st Century Comics
### and Games

515 East Grand River
East Lansing, MI 48823
willi558@msu.edu
Commandos:
Charles "IronSphinx" Wilson
Aaron "Gravedigger" Pollyea

### Blue Dragon

45581 Mound Road
Shelby Twp., MI 48317
sarrath@bluedragongames.com
Commando:
Robert "Bostwick" Strathmann

### Fortress Games

425 Albert Ave.
East Lansing, MI 48823
Commando:
Joseph "Frater Innominatus"
Whittington

### MechJock

5671 North Westnedge
Kalamazoo, MI 49004
propwash@mechjock.com
Commandos:
Charles "IronSphinx" Wilson
Glenn "Lobsterback" Hopkins

### Pandemonium

1858 Middlebelt
Garden City, MI 48135
brandonp@gr-lakes.com
Commando:
Timothy "Khan Joseph Mallan"
Piazzi

### Riders Hobby

42011 Ford Rd
Canton, MI 48187
inefficiency@aol.com
Commando:
Timothy "Khan Joseph Mallan"
Piazzi

### R.I.W. Hobbies

29116 Five Mile Rd.
Livonia, MI 48154
riwhobbies1@aol.com
Commandos:
Glenn "Lobsterback" Hopkins
Robert "Bostwick" Strathmann
Joseph "Frater Innominatus"
Whittington

### TC Paintball

132 West Main Street
Gaylord, MI 49735
wberry@tcpaintball.com
Commando:
Tom "Steelpimp" Heath

### Titan Games

637 Capitol Ave SW
Battle Creek, MI 49015
orders@titangames.com
Commandos:
Charles "IronSphinx" Wilson
Aaron "Gravedigger" Pollyea

## MINNESOTA

### Source Comics & Games

1601 West Larpenteur Ave.
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**Genesis Games & Gizmos**
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**Game Universe**
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# SENILITY, MADNESS, AND MINIS

**A Shadowrun Primer for New GM's and Minis**                    **By Brian Guarnieri**

Being a GM is a bit like being a Clown, Supervillian, story teller, monkey, and a DJ. You've got to keep the beat going, entertain, and create on the fly. It's not always easy, and sometimes downright difficult. It doesn't make it worse when a player not paying attention stands in an inopportune place only to bitch when they're chosen as a target for oncoming bullets. Players declare they're hiding behind a crate only to find that the crate is filled with something non-bullet resistant. I once had a player unload a massive spell at a drone only to bitch and complain that the drone fired back nearly killing him. He declared he was hiding out of sight behind the door. The other players snickered at him as he protested the stream of lead. The map I had didn't lie. Showing that his miniature was in clear LOS and that in order to cast the spell he'd have to be in LOS and that there wasn't something to duck behind. Later members of the group had a chuckle at his protests, only confirming the player was out of line…

Running a game is a balancing act. I find that miniatures and maps don't lie. They can sometimes be open to interpretation but they don't outright lie. So with Desert Wars and more CBT's turning to SR for gaming I write this as a synthesis article between two genres of gaming: miniature wargaming and role-playing games. Although I don't play Classic Battletech anymore it was the first "wargame" type of game I played so I have more in common with you folks than you know. (I played from 1986 to 1992) So I think the operative question is how do wargames and role-playing games intrinsically relate?

Before I begin I think I need to help you understand a bit about my background. I took a long hiatus from gaming in College.

Between working for a Microsoft technical support contractor and getting a degree I gave up gaming. This hiatus was severed a couple of years after I moved up to Boston. A college friend introduced to me to Napoleonic's and other early 19th century warefare. Shortly later I was hooked again in trying out some unmentionable popular sci-fi wargames out of England. It was that movement towards wargamming that I started thinking about my old Shadowrun games. One of the big pushes came from Randy Milholland's comic www.somethingpositive.com that moved me back towards my old game, Shadowrun. I missed the old sneaky dragons, Harlequin, and spell slingers. Almost like you miss an old friend you've not visited for a long time. The reintroduction to surge, Deus, and other events made me realize that Shadowrun didn't die but was still thriving in a post Collectable Card Game / MMORG (Massive Multiplayer Online Roleplaying Game) market. If anything were to kill the roleplaying game I thought it would be a combination of Card board crack and Computer games. I had no idea that wargaming had thrived so well during the E-commerce boom. It was wargamming that led me back to the roleplaying game.

Ironically the roleplaying game finds it's origins with the old Chainmail system originally put out by TSR (Gary Gygax & Don Kaye) in the early 1970's. The original rules reinacted simple skirmish and formation medieval combat. Then Dave Arneson got the idea of adding dungeons & magic to the game. One thing led to another and before any one realized the original Dungeons and Dragons boxed set went to print some time around 1974 (the year I was born ironically.) It is in this

historical irony that the progression of Roleplaying from wargame is tightly linked. Even though now D20 and Dungeons and Dragons has no more to do with wargaming than crack cocaine at a narcotics anonymous meeting the link is still there. Wargaming and roleplaying games are tied together invisibly. [1] It is my opinion that the flow can reverse itself partially creating a miniatures based game that can be used within a roleplaying game.

When I started running Shadowrun again it struck me that the game essentially needs a wargame type setup in order for combat to resolve in a proper manner. Miniatures really were needed to figure out what sort of combat would occur and how. I remembered the old urban Shadowrun scenery that FASA had and realized that DMZ was a joke but having maps and scenery could add a fun dimension to the game. I dusted off some of my old Warhammer 40k buildings and other props and large scale maps to simulate urban terrain. My players liked how combat resolved and liked the custom maps I printed. At every demo or home game I held the reception was good. In store games enticed a positive response from players and passerby's. It was almost as if I had taken the game and moved it to the "next level".

I urge seasoned GM's to read this piece with an open mind and hope it will encourage others to write articles that show and explain how they've taken Shadowrun to "the next Level" providing what Emeril calls "Turning it up a notch" or "BAM!".

### How do print and create my maps?
I previously used a plotter at my former employer's site. I was not a "happy" employee so while working the evening

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1. It seems like yesterday when I was at a Catholic middle school. Teachers had organized and encouraged parents to attend meetings on Satanism and the ties to Dungeons and Dragons. For a complete history of AD&D check out Wikipedia.org  (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TSR%2C_Inc.)

shift I thought to myself, "That plotter is just sitting there collecting dust". So with a copy of Visio 2002 I started making maps and found that I liked it. It's a great tool if you can "acquire it from your employer" or "educational institution". It's a tad expensive if you're going to buy it, but it's a great tool. I've even met a GM who used Excel to draw scale maps using simple shapes. AutoCAD is another great application but has a bit of a learning curve. Any application that allows you to create buildings should work fine. I would check your local software store and see if there are any applications that have "home planning" usability. Originally Visio was designed for home architecture and planting and cost around $40. Of course Microsoft bought it and turned the price up a bit. Some Microsoft Enterprise versions of Office 2003 get Visio 2003 included. Check with your local IT manager and see if you might have access. It has many commercial uses where any kind of building, logic or technology needs to be mapped out in a sequential logical manner. (I've even used it for flow charting my games before writing them out.)

Maps are advantageous because they can be printed and rolled up for easy storage taking up far less space than traditional wargame scenery. (Most of which I keep down in the basement.) They additionally fit easily in a tube for easy transport. The only problem though is finding a cheap commercial method to print maps. Two options are a local printer, or using tape and printing out lots of 8"x11" pictures and taping them together. (Visio allows this and will automatically print your map in 8"x11" sections if you don't have a plotter.)

Sizes for my maps vary by use. I have designed my maps so that most can fit on an average American breakfast table. Say no bigger than three feet by three feet. When laying out a building it's best to focus on "key" areas of a building. It's logistically difficult to create an entire building to scale for 25mm miniatures. Additionally you want your maps to fit on what ever gaming table you might be using.

Some insane folks like myself enjoy making maps and don't mind putting them together. It's sort of an acquired taste. Even if you don't have a plotter you can scale your maps and print them on 8"x11" paper making them hand-outs for players.

### How do you provide scale?

I tend to use a scale rated at around 1 meter = 1 cm or 1 meter = 1 inch. It just depends on the size of the room I'm interested in portraying on my map. I personally don't like squares but hexes are okay. One of the nice things about being a Claasic BattleTech player is that you probably have lots of maps. So if for some reason you want to portray woodland or other area a CBT map can work very well in a pinch. Just remember to mentally change the scale. I make templates for explosions ect., on transparent overhead transfers.

One issue with scale is the Shotgun. I created a shotgun template based on the stepping and yoke to find the different angles. When I applied the template the shotgun with a yoke rated at two, it turned into a boom stick of Evil Dead proportions. One of the problems is that the choke doesn't properly account for lesser damage and spread as rounds leave the gun in proportion to the scale. So when a round does hit someone it tends to have a very powerful and wide area of effect. For combat in wide open areas it balances out but in a building where ranges are very short it becomes very deadly.

### What miniatures do you use?:

That's sort of sore subject. The best answer would be I use what ever miniature I can get my hands on. I officially promote and focus my best painting on my Iron Wind Metals (aka Ral Partha) minis but I paint anything. I love Reaper miniatures (monsters), some Cyberpunk Rafm, and "other" companies whose names I shall not mention. My rule is if it looks okay and the size is okay use it. I usually base my miniatures on a round or square bases. Some of the square bases I use are between 20mm x 20mm to 25 mm x 25mm. I like using bases because they allow for easier pickup and movement. Not to mention you don't want folks touching the body of the minis as they tend to rub off paint. One thing to keep in mind is that the official Ral Partha Shadowrun minis are true 25mm scale. Popular sci-fi/fantasy miniatures tend to be 28mm or 30mm. The only fantasy line that I know of that is true 25mm are the Perry Twin's Lord of the Rings figures. The Perry's are a popular sculpting duo who have sculpted for a variety of Historical and Fantasy companies. You can also check out the Wargames Foundry, Iron Wind Metals, and Copplestone Castings for ideas or products. (Disclaimer: These companies are mentioned out of personal bias and are not part of an exhaustive list.)

### But I hate painting Minis?

If you play Battletech, then you're used to painting miniatures. There are innumerable numbers of other substitutes but I like Shadowrun brand minis because they have *lots* of detail. They're not as big as many competitor minis but Iron Wind metals has a full line. The Ral Partha (Iron Wind Metals) miniatures tend to be a tad smaller in scale (true 25mm) but they have *tons* of detail. They can be a bit tedious to paint but not so much more than other existing Battletech miniatures. Painting for me is a Zen like experience requiring concentration and relaxation. I actually mellow out when I paint. If my hand starts to shake a few beers helps to mellow me a bit too. It's a great way to wind down from a day dealing with people at the office.

After you start to get into your style and groove I think you'll agree that it's a lot easier than you think. The key is to develop tricks that you can use to speed things up a bit. Don't forget either that you're not a paid professional painter. Do your best job but if you start to find that it's getting tedious cut down on the detail a bit. You have to pace yourself or you'll burn yourself out. If your not enjoying yourself, put down your paints, walk away and have a beer. Still having problems painting then maybe you need a short or extended break.

### Bits, Bits, and Bits, you can never have too many

The next step for any interested parties is to find a nice bits box. Once you start getting good with minis you can start playing around with bits. Bits are little odds and ends that you find that you can cut, glue, weld, paste, press, or punch into other bits to make interesting "props" for the game. I discovered the power of bits when I got into wargamming. Bits can really help make some interesting scenery. Need to make a street spirit of some sort? Bits are your answer. I can't say enough about bits. When you partake in the collecting of bits you turn controlled insanity into a pastime. You wouldn't believe the things I take home. If the folks at work only knew they'd think I was crazy. In way it is. You take some interesting little object made out of plastic, metal or gravel. Save it in a little box you keep other bits in that you may some day use or decide not to use. I think insanity comes when your basement transforms into a small scale dump of odd tidbits and what not. Of course your wife will demand that keeping such bits is in itself an early sign of morbidity. Additional threats of divorce will ensue as she contends that you are showing more signs of early senility.

### Why should I start using minis?

If you're going to do store or convention type of events then eye candy is where it's at. I've read so many posts by the Classic BattleTech folks who talk about folks coming by they're games saying,

"Wow that's a great game what is it?" I remember that was the first thing I noticed when I picked up my first BattleTech box set in 1986. My first thought was, "Wow there's no GM and look at the Robotech Mecha!" (There was a company that made some really sweet plastic models that we used early on.) Eye candy is a large part of a war game and is something many games have unfairly evolved away from. Every time I crack open my carrying case and bring out the "the boys" as I call them folks take a look. Since FanPro has stopped distributing promotional material all we have now is eye candy. Eye candy initiates that most dangerous of questions: "What game is this?" Having a horde of well painted miniatures is almost like having an ice breaker ready to go.

One caveat here is to use minis only when necessary which means primarily combat or sneak and maneuver type of situation. (I usually have them stacked in front of my GM screen until they're needed.) Don't go overboard unless the adventure your running calls for it. Then "go to town". Sometimes a really nasty looking miniature will make players take notice. It's not till after the game that I tell the players the true force or nature of the spirit.

I love minis, it's something physical I can look at and show off to friends and it brings a nice aspect to my games. If your first try at painting doesn't turn out like you want don't worry there's always more minis to paint. The most important rule is to try and have fun. If painting becomes work then maybe miniatures aren't for you. Besides you already have a day job and don't need another.

Many old school AD&D and D20 folks might scoff a bit when running a game. I've found for the most part having a nice spread of miniatures at any demo will raise eyebrows. It's a great way to introduce folks to Shadowrun and get them involved. You'll find that they really do kick the game up a notch.

# 15 TIPS FOR NEW SHADOWRUN GM'S

Recent events have lead to a morphing of roles within the Classic BattleTech commandos. Here's a small tip sheet for new or returning GM's. These tips are not exhaustive and are based on my individual experience, however limited as they may be. I'm hoping more and more Classic BattleTech Commando's make it over to the dark side of gaming with the Fourth Edition release of Shadowrun. I've put these tips together as more of an illustration of suggestions rather than hard cut and dry rules. Take from it what you will, but try not to take it too seriously. I'm writing this as sort of a welcoming of the Classic BattleTech commando's to the Shadowrun side of the game and hope many more join us. I hope you find Shadowrun as entertaining as I do. So without further ado here are 15 tips and tricks that I think will benefit new GM's. And remember there is PoWeR in the DaRk side...

### 1 Don't worry if you make a mistake — wing it.

Shadowrun is a game; if you make a mistake the FanPro police won't mame and kill you. Hell when I started up 3rd edition I ran spell drain totally wrong until one of my players corrected me and I looked up the rule. You don't have to know every rule, or quote every page. (Although some Dumpshockers probably could, but they're uber-Otaku.) Don't worry about looking up every rule update, focus on keeping the flow of the game moving. Next game you can make any alterations that need to be corrected. If you're surprised by your players and were not expecting a particular action or they did something completely unconscionable just wing it. A large part of running the game is just running the game and winging things as you go. Don't worry if the game didn't work out as planned just keep going. Players are the incarnation of chaos. Don't look at improvisation as something bad, performing on the fly keeps things from getting boring for you and the players. The players are invariably going to do something completely unexpected, just roll with it. Improvisation isn't easy but the more you do it the better you get. If the players do something to maliciously destroy the game like shoot everyone, kick'em out of the game and chide them for being Trekkies and living in their parents' basement.

### 2 Details, details, details, there can never be enough details.

Sometimes creating NPC's takes a little detail to flesh out the personality, drive, and quirks a NPC has. Organizations are made of people usually in a hierarchical relationship with many NPC's. Flesh out the organization by creating NPC's and their hierarchy. (If you have time, create an org chart for "Company or Division X". The detail helps you lock down who the power players are and who the clueless underlings are. This gives the organization a shape and form. Every organization or corporation has folks at the top and folks on the bottom. (See number four for more detail.)

I prefer when creating a game to have a good bit of detail already pinned out. I like to visually think about the areas where players are going to be and see if I can pull from real world examples for details to make up such places. One area that I get lots of ideas from are the old run down parts that every city has. The ghetto's of Mission Hill in Boston, the old abandoned factories and mills of Everett. I like to think back to the experiences and history a particular area had and try to picture it. I ask myself, "What is this area trying to tell me?" Is this an area that has a story to tell? Is the old Revere Waterfront still echoing with the laughter and vaudeville performers of yesteryear? Good science fiction I think focuses not on the new but on the old. It's taking those aspects from the old and reworking them a bit so they provide for new interpretation. (Case in point Blade Runner, "The future is old.") What do the towns and places have to tell us? Pretty much anywhere we live now will be the old face of yesteryear in 2064. Everything new is old, everything old is new. I like using history to build that mental and psychic impression that I draw upon for details in my world. This can be how an old home smells or the impressions an old neighborhood has. In general it's good to ask yourself these kinds of questions when making a home or place the characters enter into. Have your game sketched out. Ask yourself, what kind of story are you trying to tell? Is it a mystery, action based, horror or a mixture of many genres? What's the relationship to the players and does it involve any of the characters background or contacts? How will the game flow and fit together? Basically you can break this down into the basic questions Who, What, When, Where, and How? Often all you need is a flow chart other times have every room worked out ahead of time helps a story flow more coherently.

### 3 Try to make campaigns realistic and well thought out.

When creating a game I like to really think about the protagonists involved. I like to have a well thought out arc and to link my games together with key clues as part of an intertwined campaign. Each clue the characters find only creates more questions till the players learn what's really going on. I like to involve the players and keep them stimulated and curious. I've found campaigns tend to last longer if they see a bigger picture starting to form. If your story arc is somewhat or generally planned out you can map key events and how they occur. This helps add to the overall mood of the campaign. If your plot is planned out you can build energy in the plot culminating in a climax. This builds a more interesting experience for both GM and players. Remember that organizations and corporations have a project time line that is often pushed blatantly forward. (When project deadlines are cemented and draw near, Runners may be the Corporations last resort.) The players many times are caught in the cross fire in a plot they might scarcely understand but playing a key role.

### 4 NPCs should have realistic selfish motivations.

Personally I like realistic NPCs. I find myself constantly trying to make NPCs interesting and realistic. There's a great history and personality creator in the old Cyberpunk 2020 book. If I'm having writers block I'll

usually use some of they're charts to get ideas for creating interesting NPCs. I have to give Mike Pondsmith kudos for his creation system. When creating NPCs I like to start out with what their relation is to the game. Are they contacts, or are they actual protagonists in the big picture? When protagonists are organizations or corporations it's a good idea to sketch out the entity and the entities involved. Creating a realistic structure is helpful when creating power plays, struggles, and general intrigue.

Flesh out important NPCs and important background NPCs who pull the strings. It's a good idea to create a good detailed write up about contacts the characters have lots of interaction with. This helps them become real for the players. Folks are going to have skeletons and things they hide. Hell, some have down-right self destructive habits. Personas and personalities are complex. Life isn't usually black and white, NPCs shouldn't be either. (I've met all kinds of folks who at one point are the life of the party, only to find later they've had a schizophrenic breakdown and a dark past.) Many times it's our faults that make us interesting. It's those things that make us stand out that others see and equate with a personality. Frequently good friends do things that go beyond logic and loyalty. It's during those divisive times that we as individuals either support friends or re-evaluate our relationships. Contacts are the same way. Folks in power who have influence might call upon characters to do some really heinous stuff. (Possibly a Mr. Johnson cuts up a teenage prostitute and needs the characters to dispose of the body in exchange for a favor with a large megacorp. Who would have thought he was the East Coast VP of Ares Operations, "Go figure".) You get the idea. As people we have faults. We as individuals have a capacity for good or bad — it's the combination of both that makes characters and NPCs interesting. In Shadowrun everything and everyone is grey or black. There are some light souls out there, just not in the sewers.

### 5 Sometimes you have to ignore the dice, they lie anyways: Luck vs. Accountability.

Every now and then the dice just don't go the way you want at a very, very, inopportune time. If it's going to kill the game, or destroy the plot then it's not a bad idea to flub the rolls. If the players earned the rolls outright and rolled fairly in combat and killed the evil master mind dark mage then let him die.

If they got a lucky shot on someone or something that could cause problems in the game then ignore the rolls. Maybe they have an unknown benefactor. The core problem is, the plot possibly needs to be re-thought out. Important people tend to stay out of the action when they can pay underlings to take a bullet for them. I've had a couple of protagonists die in a hail of badly rolled dice even after spending karma for a re-roll. Unless a body is properly taken care of, I'll bring NPCs back for future games as a "Hey I've got friends too Puta!" Every now and then getting lucky adds to the drama of the situation. This isn't always a bad thing. Surprises for the GM keeps the GM on their toes and makes the game more interesting for all.

**NOTE:** If a Decker is trying to combat an uber-A.I. in a matrix showdown, I don't care how much karma they've earned. That Decker is going to be the next resident at Meadow Acre's retirement home for the indigent and disabled. (I see a lobotomy in your future!) You just have to think about balance and "If this NPC dies is it really all that important?" If a player really starts to mess with the wrong people the character has to deal with the consequences. I'm not about to go and tell some Mafioso wannabe that his pants are ugly and the gold chain around his neck looks like something Donny Osmond might wear. I don't want folks with firearms knowing who I am. If players brazenly do something stupid then players may be dealt with in a particularly vicious manner. One thing my players always forgot to wear when going into corporate facilities, the ubiquitous ski mask. The Decker gets most of the pay data but isn't able to fix the vid's, it's only later that the players mugs are on the evening news and Lonestar is looking to question them. Luck and consequence need to be dealt with, players must be accountable for their actions for good or bad. (Note this goes for Riggers as well.)

### 6 Take your time, only one person can speak at once.

At conventions especially tables have a way of growing in proportion and size. When dealing with large groups of runners it helps to have folks take turns talking and acting. I usually go clock wise or counter clock wise in non combat situations. In smaller home-grown groups this isn't so much an issue but with larger groups come semblance of order is needed. Your players will thank you for it.

### 7 Don't worry about being a Ham.

When running NPC's I like to portray some very dysfunctional folks. One favorite is the drunk alcoholic Russian who turns out to be the player's pilot. Only later do they find out he installed a level 4+ autopilot system. I tend to ham it up a bit. The world of Shadowrun has always been sort of cartoonish in my mind. Magic, gunfire, and combat tends to be fairly dramatic and cinematic. Having a hammy NPC only makes sense. I've noticed that wargamers tend to be a bit more discreet when playing when compared to the Roleplaying crowd. The only problem is that acting a bit weird comes with running a game. If you don't ham it up you might be missing out on a fun opportunity to act and exaggerate the action. There's nothing more fun than a large hyper active troll looking for Crack or is addicted to BTL's. When you're hooked on BTL's the real world and the virtual tend to blend together in many odd and disturbing ways. It's the GM's job in a sense to portray folks who aren't flying on two or even one pistons.

### 8 You've got to get rid of the Decker if he's slowing things down.

I like the matrix, the plot lines and even the old story in Virtual Realities 1.0. The problem is that action tends to be very fast and very furious. The matrix tends to occur at a speed far greater than the outside world. So easily two and a half hours of gaming might only equate to lest than a minute in real time. This and the problem that all the players are not in the matrix makes that one Decker stop the flow of the game. The best way to integrate the Decker is if the others in the game need to make a food run or take some other break. Then you might be able to sneak a quick decking session. The Mr. Johnson's Black Book has a nice reduced rule set for decking but I've found it easier to relegate Deckers to NPC's.

### 9 The Mr. Johnson only lies, it's your job to screw over the characters.

Surprises are a good thing. The Mr. Johnson is always going to screw the players over at some point. Isn't that why they're runners? Shadowrunners in the darkness of the sixth world are expendable assets. On occasion they become more of a liability and have to be liquidated. It happens and players always hate it. Mr. Johnson might sell the players out for his or her own gain? Who knows? Maybe that Mr. Johnson is just a pawn working under someone higher up in the corporation? (What? We're working for a low level accounting manager?)

Intrigue is a part of the game and what makes the game so interesting. Invariably the players are going to get the old knife in the back at some point. It happens, will happen, and will continue to happen. Remember though that there's a cost tied with everything. Make sure when the players get the shaft or barrel it's for a good reason that ties well into the needs and context of the story. Screwing over players just to screw over players is silly. Even in the underworld there's a level of professionalism. You start from the street where an everyday pusher would sooner sell your organs to a street doc than look at you. You move up the ladder slowly. Just be mindful of who the players are dealing with. Even the big boys liquidate assets. Especially if there's a large monetary gain. Ultimately motivations for deceit can be broken down into one of two things: power or money, and the lengths that a Mr. Johnson or individual will go depends on those two attributes. A great movie that demonstrates this is Tom Clancy's "Clear and Present Danger".

### 10 Know your audience, occasionally hack and slash is a good thing.

Every now and then players want less intrigue and more hack and slash. Knowing your players a little before the game is a good idea. In general I've found kids don't like really complex plots overall. That's not a bad thing, hell many adults just like to blow off some steam enacting fantasies about killing hapless co-workers and supervisors. It just sort of comes with the territory. Especially if you're running an intro game a little or a lot of violence is a good thing. One of my favorite games to run for newbies is my, "Night of the Zombies". (That's where I discovered that SR shotguns are a zombies natural predator.) I wanted something kind of fun and pulpy and zombies are a great way to unleash some hidden hostility. Ironically, every time I run this game players ignore the 20 zombies prostate on the ground. Coincidently they're all pointed toward the large column of light, beaming up into the night sky. This never seems to bother the players till after they figure out what's going on. "...Uh, guys, I think we're going to have to fight our way out of here."

### 11 Have fun; but it can be more fun writing than it is running.

The trick is to have fun while running too. I like to ham up my NPCs and really delve into their quirky nature. Think about all the corpses a street doc might have to dispose of and the lasciviousness of Tamenous ghouls. Try to make things more than they are and exaggerate a bit. The whole point of doing this is really so you can have fun with the game.

### 12 Take notes during the game for future reference.

Often you have to make up NPCs on the fly. Having notes to refer back to can be handy when trying to add more detail to a NPC for later use. (Usually first meetings are just impressions anyways, it's not till later that we really learn about someone and who and what they are?)

### 13 Props — you can never have too many!

Actually you can, but that's beside the point. I like turning my games into a little bit of a live action game around a table. Props are the perfect way to do this. They can really be just about anything. Say starting off the easiest are forms, pictures, scraps of paper, news articles anything you can use. You might create some scream sheets for a download type newspaper print out similar to older games. You can create multimedia pieces, music, video, what ever floats your boat. I've created scream sheets, maps, old match cases, bits of a receipt...hell, the pictures you find when you buy a picture frame could work. A prop is anything you make, buy, steal, scavenge, or put together to represent something in a game. Good places to look are Goodwill stores, arts and crafts shops or what ever you're looking for. The sky's the limit when dealing with props. Ideally the prop should fit in with the plot of the game but it could be something to throw off the players as well. One prop idea was the ichor of Roth-Shogoth which is molasses I poured into an empty water bottle. It gave a nice viscous consistency. Players look at it in the bottle and they're first reaction is, "This doesn't look healthy, drop everything". Props are just fun. I've heard of one guy who rebound an old Webster's dictionary to make it a Tome of unholy knowledge. (Who ever thought the secrets of evil would be in alphabetical order.) Props are fun and really spice up a game.

### 14 Come to games prepared with well thought-out scenarios.

Some GM's can run a whole game on the fly completely unprepared. In high school I played with a Call of the Cthulu GM who ran games completely on the fly and did it well. (To give props where they're due, Don Fergoso in TX is a great example of an improvisational GM.) I like to plan out my games, clues, links and game flow about a week before the game. If I have time, I'll go in and fill in notes on NPC's and other events in the game. I tend to use a meta-flow chart to map out the game and where hopefully I would like it to go. You don't have to write a thirty page book but just having the basic stats down, notes on flow and NPCs and key events is usually enough. If you have time, maps are always fun to hand out to players.

### 15 Behold the power of the Pimp! Encouraging interesting PC's is your job.

I never get to play. I mean I never get to play, *ever*. I'm always the GM. (I think that's one reason I like wargaming so much, no GM's.) So from time to time to stave off nostalgia I'll make out a character or two. One such night was the birth of Master Spanker aka Mr. Ivy. I based him on the DVD "American Pimp", having got a good deal of enthusiasm from the DVD. So after buying 5 level II Ho's, other gear and drugs, Master Spanker was part face, part pimp, and part drug dealer. Since I didn't have a chance to play him in normal game play he turned into a NPC. One night I had a new player sit in who needed a character and saw the pimp. From there the magic happened. For some reason the Pimp is the ultimate clown. Take every bad Blaxploitation film from the 1970's, add a little bit of Blackula and JJ from Good Times and you get Master Spanker. Ironically the first player to play the Spanker was a kid from Sri Lanka who you would never have guessed would open up as a Pimp. (He has a very clean almost British accent.) He took being a Pimp to a new and greater level. Even when his character was out gunned he grabbed both pistols and opened up Hollywood style. I gave him extra karma for that since he was fighting a pretty butch set of drones. Now at every convention there's at least one player who play's the Spanker. The point of this is to illustrate that breaking the mold when making a character with style and purpose is more important than substance. Creativity does not come from being a munchkin but putting out a character with that "extra" touch of style. Characters that **stand out** help give the players a level of depth to focus on and act upon. Creating a personality and a history for new players helps them get into the mood of the game. Never underestimate the power of stereotypes.

# Painting Shadowrun 25mm Miniatures

**MY HUMBLE APPROACH**

BY BRIAN GUARNIERI



What can I say about painting miniatures? It's part mania and part enjoyment, although it's best to focus on the enjoyment part. It's enjoyable seeing a lifeless silver figurine slowly change and take on a life of its own. This metamorphosis is a slow and steady process that requires patience. If you take anything away from this article then let it be patience. You can't rush painting. I've found every time I start to get antsy I tend to make mistakes. The key to quick painting is patience.

The second and third elements of good painting are an eye for neatness and order. If you paint something in the proper order you can get away with a little splotch here or there. If you try to keep your painting neat and paint in a well thought out order you'll paint more quickly and with better results. Mistakes are going to happen, there's nothing you can do about that. The thing to remember though when deciding the order you paint makes all the difference. It acts as a built in buffer so that you paint over splotches in later steps.

I hope to illustrate and explain how I bring those three attributes to painting miniatures: patience, neatness and order. There's no set law about how to paint or even a proper manner on how to paint. Everyone paints in their own style. My style is a fusion of historical painting techniques (Based on Kevin Dallimore's Foundry Painting System), and little tips and tricks I've picked up from painting Games Workshops miniatures. If I could describe my style it would be, "Using as many short cuts to get the best result for the least amount of work". I think the most shocking revelation of my post graduate years was that there's never enough time. So you want to get as much as you can out of what precious little free time you may have.

Four categorical items you'll need to paint miniature are paints, brushes, primer, and a good clear coat. Iron Wind Metals makes a great assortment of miniatures and paints. They even carry the old Ral Partha historical miniatures. I can't say enough good things about Iron Wind Metals and Robin Hamm. They've really taken on the job of living up to Ral Partha's US line of miniatures. Other companies that I use for monsters primarily are Games Workshop and Reaper miniatures. Reaper's fantasy monsters are an excellent buy for your money. And you'd be helping all my old friends back in Denton Texas continue with a great product. (Excluding any CAV support of course.)



## Paints

Paints are a very personal product. Some folks like Valejo or Games Workshop paints. I tend to use a mixture acrylic GW, Foundry, and Valejo and old Armory paints. It's good not to focus on just one set brand of paints. I like to have a fairly varied palate. The Wargames Foundry makes a great paint set now but you have to buy them in packs of six at twenty dollars per pack. (1 bottle = 3.40 w/tax).

## Brushes

Brushes vary with company. I tend to go to hobby stores and AC Moore to get many of my brushes. I usually pay anywhere from 3.50 to 5.00 a brush tops. Professionals swear by the high-end ten dollar brushes. I've found that brushes designed for hobbies can last a year or more and do a good job. There are many sizes and shapes. I prefer very fine pointed bristles and I usually have a number of differently-sized dry brushes. The sizes I prefer are 15/0 and 10/0. Again, you'll have to experiment to see what brushes you like. Games Workshop sells brushes but I'm not a personal fan of their brushes.

## Primer and Clear coat

You always *always* **always** want to check the relative humidity before priming or clear coating. I always do a test swatch before spraying anything. The humidity and temperature can really affect how the primer or clear coat adheres on the miniature. Always test spray on a sheet of paper.

There all kinds of spray paints that can be used. Krylon's Ultra Flat Black is okay and they make an awesome flat grey primer. I prefer black for priming. Sadly, Games Workshop's black primer is my favorite at $7.00 a can. (Krylon will run you around $3.00)

For more robust and less tempera-mental primers go with Krylon. For clear coat I'd go to a hobby/arts and crafts and buy a good flat clear coat. Some satin or semi glosses still tend to give a glossy texture. One trick is to use a high gloss and then let it dry and spray a very flat finish on over it to get

rid of the gloss. This gives a very good texture and helps protect the mini. Games Workshop and Testors makes a nice clear coat. The rumor in the GW Outrider community is that GW uses Krylon to manufacture their primers. So you may be paying more for a brand name.

*Tools*

It may seem silly but you'll need tools. Primarily the tools are used for customization or removing mold lines and flash. When a miniature is poured lines and flash will appear on the miniature. When the

molten metal is poured there are air channels that allow air to leave the space inside the mold. This helps the miniature to form without defects. Sometimes flash forms when metal moves inside these air channels. It's easy to get rid of with a simple clipper. Mould lines require a file type of tool and can be a little tricky to remove. Pictured below are tool examples I use.

*Priming*

Priming should be performed outside if at all possible and at a relative humidity of no higher than 50%. When spraying I like to

take long strokes and take many light passes. You don't want to spray on too much primer at once or it will fill in the detail on the miniature. I use double sided tape to a card board base so I can prop move the miniature around in a circle. You'll want to have something behind the miniature or you'll get primer speckling the surface behind the miniature.

After you've finished priming your miniature you're ready to start painting. Listed below is a step by step guide to help you paint your miniature quickly and cleanly.

## PREPERATION

First remove any and all flash from the miniature. After removing any mold lines score the bottom of the miniature with a hobby knife, glue to a base and prime.

## BASING

Bases come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. There are many manufacturers. Listed on your left are some examples of bases I've used in different projects. Save the token all are commercially available through http://www.litkoaero.com.

## TOOLS

On your left are some tools I use for cleaning up miniatures. A good set of files, metal and nail files, a utility knife and clippers are always a good idea. I could spend at least 30,000 words on all the different and useful tools for modeling and miniatures, so this is the short list. My wife is a manicurist so I've got a never ending supply. You can find all the tools at your neighborhood Home Depot.

## MOUNTING AND PAINTING SURFACE

I prefer to use a disk and double sided tape or mounting putty to keep my miniature steady and easy to hold. Of all the mounting surfaces I prefer the disk to be the most useful. (Games Workshop 50mm circular base.) You could just hold the miniature and paint it but I personally prefer using the disks. A pack might run you $5.00 at your local Hobby store.

## PRIMING EXAMPLE

I prefer Black for priming but you can choose any one of many colors available. You will want to fill in silver bits with black paint (or the color of your choosing) because you can never prime the miniature completely.
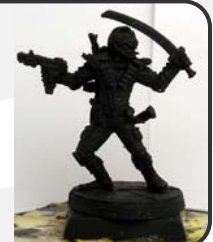
## PAINTING EXAMPLE: STEP 1

I start out by dry brushing the silver and metal bits first. I like GW's bolt metal and black ink or watered down black paint to fill in areas I may have accidentally painted over. (This also works if you want to darken metal as well.) To accent edges I use a silver paint on areas like the edge of a sword or to bring out detail on some really groovy cyberware.

(Dry-brushing requires you wipe off most of the paint from your brush and rub it over the bits you want to look metallic.)

## STEP 2

When painting areas like the face I use a three or four layer system. I start with dark brown filling in all the flesh bits.

## STEP 3

Then I add a lighter flesh color staying away from cracks and low points in the face. Followed by the lightest fleshy color to highlight. If you want to go uber-highlight you can use an even lighter fourth layer for a"vat grown skin" look. Remember the top most layers will have the least amount of coverage as it is a "highlight".

## STEP 4

When painting 25mm miniatures I start with the inner-most areas and work out. I started on the turtleneck by painting the base dark green, then goblin green followed by a bright camo green.

## STEP 5

I painted the coat collar purple to give it a scifi-ish campy look followed by the base coat in a blue. I added some "bone" white or off white to the purple to get the lighter tones. (Some colors are excellent when adding bone white. Never use pure white as it causes the color to be "powdery" in texture.

## STEP 6

Adding a little bone white to the blue I "dry brushed" the area with three or more lighter shades to tone up the area. Dry brushing the clothing with a lighter shade gives it a worn look. I painted the pants a dark navy blue and dry brushed highlights with shades of turquoise to give the pants a worn blue jeans look.

## STEP 7

Here I started the frilly bits. I figured this had to be a leather/furry thing so I started with a dark brown, and dry brushed a lighter reddish brown followed by a yellow brown. The effect came out fairly well. If needed you could add some bone white to the yellow brown to lighten it up a tad. (Highlights help the mini stand out on the table.)

### STEP 8

I painted the boots and the knee pads next. I wanted the boots to be different than the brown boots so I focused on red browns for the boots and yellow browns on the knee pads. I highlighted the boots section by section with a thin highlight so each section sticks out when you look at it. I did a top highlight on the knee pads to show wear and tear.

### STEP 9

For the clips I painted them a dark green then working up I painted in a small rectangle a lighter cammo green followed by a very light cammo green creating a rectangle leaving dark bits where they snap together.





### STEP 10

I painted the rifle butt and the sheath a dark brown using subsequent lighter reddish brown for high lights. I added a little bone white to the brown to create a nice reddish brown highlight creating the lines that go along the sheath giving it shape. I used a bronze and a bright copper to highlight on the bands to help make them stick out a bit.

### STEP 11

Finally for the grenades I made them shiny and red so they'd stick out a bit so it's easy to see them. Really they should be green or black but this is a stylin Street Sam who wants guards to know what they're up against. Below is the image of the finished miniature. I spiffed up the base a bit but more on basing in the next Commando Quarterly.



### DEFINITION: DRY BRUSHING

Dry Brushing is simply the act of wiping off excess paint from one's brush and lightly brushing across a surface to extenuate the natural texture of the material. Use less pressure to on ever subsequent lighter shade. The brightest highlight should have the least amount of paint and pressure.



### DEFINITION: PAINT BY LAYERING

Layering is a simple and quick way to fool the eye into thinking an area has been highlighted. On very small areas on a 25mm miniature paint is applied going from dark to light. Each layer is lighter than the first painted on with less area. Ideally only three layers are needed but it's not difficult to add an extra layer or two if you have time or want to expand the shading out.





**FINAL RESULT**

# BODYGUARD OF LIES

*"In wartime, truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies."*
— *W. Churchill, 20th Century Terran Statesman*

The FanPro Commandos present sitreps and short fiction based on the campaigns of this world-wide speculative event set at the Dawn of the Jihad.

# YANCE I

*by Anthony Hardenburgh*

**Caph**
**Chaos March**
**1 August 3067**

In a small run down bar two individuals sat at a table. The small device that sits in the middle of the table will make it hard for any to over hear the conversation but they talk in low voices anyway.

"So my brother, how was your trip to Fletcher?" Asks the older of the two men.

"It went very well, my brother. I have found just what we need for the job at hand," states the young man.

The older man looks around the bar. "This is very good news. Very good news indeed So how long before it starts?"

"I have the transport in progress and things should start in a week or two." The younger man passes a disk to the older man.

The older man looks at his charge. "Good. I would like you to join me at the next meeting to brief the others."

"As you command my brother. When and where?" The young man is a bit startled.

"In two days I will send for you." The older man gets up.

At that one of the two figures reaches for the small device, stows it in his jacket, stands up and takes his leave. The young man sits for bit thinking of his plan and how it was progressing. After he finished his drink he took his leave of the bar.

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**Caph**
**Chaos March**
**3 August 3067**

Deep under the HPG station on Caph in one of the high security rooms a meeting is in progress. With a dozen members of Word of Blake's ROM here this is a very important meeting.

"My Brothers and Sisters, with Blakes vision revealed to us through our Blessed Precentor Martial we were all given assignments by Precentor ROM Kernoff . Today I need reports on your progress so I may inform the conclave of the fulfillment of our Blessed Founders will." said the Precentor VII Harris. "So who will start."

"I shall." A woman in her late 30's stands. "Precentor as you know my team has been given the planet Fletcher as our assignment." The short, dark haired woman looks to the three others sitting at her table. "So far we have been able to make some progress in to the Mercenary Hall and also with a few minor officials of Fletcher's Goverment." She looks at the table and picks up a folder. "This is a full report of what we have done so far. At first glance it may seem that we have not done much. But as we have to do this so that our wayward Brothers and Sisters do not notice our work, things must progress slowly." Adept Novik brings the folder to the Precentors desk and sits down.

"Thank you Adept." Precentor Harris nods to the Adept. He skims the report. "Your work and the work of your team for the Blessed Blake will be noted." The older gentleman smiled at her. "Both the Precentor ROM and I do understand how difficult your assignment is." Looking at the file once more. "From what I see in this report you have done well. Keep up your good work". Looking at the other two tables. "So who is next."

"We shall be next Precentor." A full figured, tall red haired woman stands. "Precentor, My team has been tasked with finding able body recruits for the Militia. So far that job has been slow because we do not want ComStar or the Great Lords to notice our work. When the time for Blake's vision to be revealed we will be able to do so. We have found many that are willing and have made arrangements to move them. They will be of use for our needs." She looks to a member of her team and he hands her a disc. "As you will see we have been able to show many that Blake's is true home they have been looking for." She walks around the table and hands the disc to Precentor Harris. "We have moved slower due to ComStar interference, but we are still on target." Harris loads the disc she and she continues. "The Chaos March is a good place for us to recruit new members ..... The biggest problems are keeping ComStar and the Great Lords from seeing the number of new recruits that we are getting."

"These problems my sister shall be rectified." He looks at the information on his screen. "Keep in mind Adept Evens that Precentor Kernoff has others working to help your mission also." Looking at the information once more. "You and your team are doing a wonderful job and with Blake's truth on your side you shall continue to do so. Thank you."

"Well I guess that I am next." The young man in his late 20's sitting at the last table by himself. "First off I will thank Adepts Novik, Evens and their teams for the help they have given me so far." The average height, brown haired man looks to the other two tables and nods. "As you know sir I have been working on a way to keep the Draconis Combine from looking too close into our work here ." He looks down at the table and his notes. "I have come up with a plan, using Yance I to force the Dragon to keep their attention here." He picks up a copy of his report and walks to the Precentor. "As we all know many others are now at work to keep the Great House Lords looking in other directions as we get ready to bring Blake's Vision to the Inner Sphere. Some of our Brothers and Sisters will use force and others will use guile." He hands the file to the Precentor and looks at the others in the room. "At this point in time we do not have the martial resources to bring about Blake's will. So I shall use to things we do have. Money and technology."

"We have talked of your plan Adept Jones, so why do you not give the others here some insight." The Precentor looks at the file. "They will need to know so that they will be able to help you better in the future."

"As you wish sir. What I have done so far is to recruit some Mercenary units to raid Yance I. These units are just above Pirates themselves so the local government will look at them as such. The way this is setup we win no matter what happens. If the units I have hired for this job work well I may recommend them for our militia. What I am looking for from them is that they cause the companies to hire security for their Yance I operations. Thus we will be able to place some of our own forces on planet. Then we will be able to cause tension between these security forces and the planets defence force. When this comes to a boil one of two things will happen. The Draconis Combine will send in a large garrison force or the local government will ask us for help. If the DCMS sends in units

the people of Yance I will look on this as a occupation force and resist, giving us a way to place more "security" forces. If they ask us for help — due to the fact we have helped many Chaos March worlds in this type of situation — we have a way to place our own Peace Keepers." He looks over the others and sees they now know how they have helped in his operation. "I may be looking to all of you for help in the future if things do not work with the forces now in play. As of now things look good." He sits down at his table.

"Like all things we do for the Blessed Blake time is the key, so keep up your good work and at the proper time Blake's will shall be done." The Precentor looks to his charges "May Blake keep you all safe."

\* \* \*

Fletcher
Chaos March
1 December 3067

Two men sit at a table having drinks.

"You know if we keep doing this people will talk" the young man smiles at the older man at the table.

"As long as they only say good things, let them talk." The older man smiles back.

"So why did you ask me here, I still have much work to do."

"You work so far have been most impressive and we need you here."

"With all due respect, a few success over the last three months will not complete my work."

"You have laid some very good ground work so far, but your talents are need here."

"I was told by you and others that the ..... "Job" ..... here was well in hand." Looking at the old man with questions all over his face.

"We have had some... set backs. You are needed here. This is all I can tell you at this time." The older man gives him a stern look

"Who will take over for me on the other job?"

"I do not know. Like you my son, I too take orders. I was told that you will now take over things here and someone will replace you on the other job." He gives the younger man a look of understanding. "You are looking at this all wrong. You have been asked to finish this because you have what is needed to see it done. Also your work on Yance I is progressing well so someone can take your place. You also need to keep in mind that what happens here is more important to our work."

"I do understand... It's just I do not like leaving things half done, that's all" he looks to the older man with a sad face

"I under stand that. But at this time will have to finish what you have started. You will have to accept this."

## JIHAD AND THE MAKING OF NEW GHOSTS

*by Frank Diaz*

Quentin IV, Al Na'ir Prefecture
Dieron Military District
Draconis Combine
3 November 3067

Quentin IV is an industrial border world that has changed hands many times throughout the Succession Wars, and it is once again caught in the middle of another tug of war. The ultimate prize being Steel Valley, where most of Quentin's 'Mech factories and R&D facilities are located at. The neighboring areas will once more serve as the stage to determine the fate of Quentin IV. The citizens know that war can break out at any time and they think that the experiences of the previous Succession Wars have prepared them well for all armed conflicts. But nothing could be further from the truth. The Word of Blake is bringing a holy fire that will shake the planet and it's people to the core and nothing will ever be the same again.

The 10th Ghost's primary mission is to garrison Quentin IV and try to get back to full operational strength. Not an easy feat when you are dead last in the DCMS Procurement Department's list of priorities. The 10th is basically comprised of three rival yakuza gangs. The 10th was originally
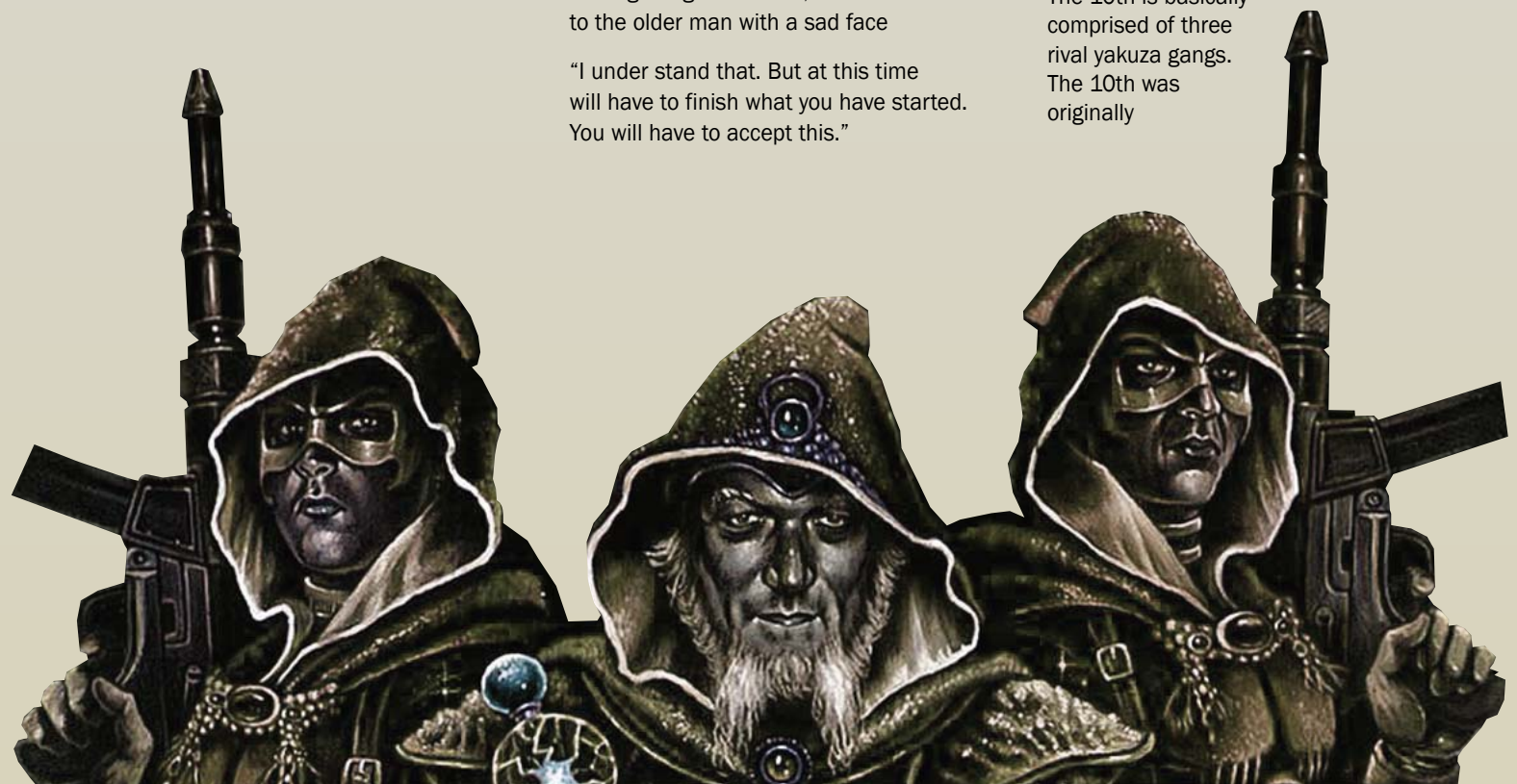
formed, by combining two rival yakuza gangs, but the feud that has existed between the two rival gangs has never ceased to this day. Then in 3057, the 8th Ghost unit was added to the 10th, thus adding a third yakuza clan to an already volatile unit. The 8th was forced to merge with the 10th after it had been reduced to one battalion during the Smoke Jaguar attacks on McAlister. To make matters even more confusing and disharmonious within the 10th is that the troops are being led to believe that there is a fourth yakuza gang operating in their midst. This fourth and fictional yakuza gang is represented by the command staff, which are in actuality instructors from the Sun Tzu School of Combat.

The Command Staff's plan was to unite the two rival gangs together as they faced and dealt with a common enemy, the fictional yakuza gang that is in charge, but the plan has not worked so far. The three yakuza factions have never been further apart than they are now.

They choose to identify themselves by painting blue, flickering flames over the light grey with dark grey striping base paint scheme that is on their mechs or vehicles. The first two yakuza clans paint the blues flames either on their left or right side depending on their affiliation, with third yakuza clan just painting the upper torso in blue flames. By visibly claiming their clan loyalties, as they have, only serves to keep the 10th from coming together, to operate as the veteran military unit that it can be.

The ongoing rivalries have caused some very serious lapses in judgment within the chain of command. Like vital intel not being shared between the departments, especially during their "down time". Other examples include critical supplies or parts not reaching their proper destination, or the inexplicable amount of MIA's or AWOL's within the ranks. Especially when all involved know, that all those missing troops never had any reason to leave their yakuza clan. This self-sabotage of the 10th may very well be their undoing.

This breach in the Dragon's Armor on Quentin IV is all that the Word of Blake needed to get a foothold on Quentin IV. The WOB faction has managed to infiltrate some mercenary units from an outfit called The Snake Stompers. The mercs were brought in under the guise of Comstar/SLDF Units. No one from the 10th had been able to confirm which units they were or much less if these arriving forces

had been cleared with the DCMS chain of command. Everything was happening so quickly that no one had time to think about just stopping and confirming the legitimacy of these new forces. Which is exactly what The Snake Stompers and their employers had planned for — for there to be utter confusion, a muddled response, and best of all the ability to bribe some of the 10th's personnel to look the other way. By the time the 10th notice the inbound dropships coming in at a High G burn rate, it was too late. The alarm in Batan had sounded too late to be of any service to the defenders of Batan. The 10th's 3rd Battalion was crushed and the rag tag units of its survivors were driven out of Batan that very night.

There is no unit in the entire inner sphere that dislikes the Dracs as much as The Snake Stompers do. So much so, that they would have accepted this contract and any of its terms from the devil himself! The Stompers are a veteran outfit that has taken on some tough contracts in its time, including a very notable scrap with the Wolf Dragoons on this very planet back in 3023 under the employ of House Davion. The Snake Stompers were the perfect unit to hire, they have the experience, they have the proper motivation (a complete hatred for the Dracs), and best of all, they know this planet very well. The 10th will have its hands full or quite possibly have their heads handed to them on this planet.

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**Fasholt Military Defense Barracks**
**Quentin IV, Al Na'ir Prefecture**
**Dieron Military District**
**Draconis Combine**
**7 November 3067**

Sho-Sa Brian Minako sat quietly in his cell gathering his thoughts and centering his ki, as he waited for his captors to come for him once more. He wasn't quite sure if they were beating on him for the fun of it or if they were after some specific piece of information, but for the moment they were content on asking him for his name and only his name. He knew that was how they were planning on breaking him, by first getting him to answer one very simple and innocent question. Which of course would only lead to more "simple" and "innocent" questions. He knew that they already had most of his information, quite possibly down to his shoe size, but they continued to beat on him none the less. He gathered that it was all part of the process of breaking him down. All he had to do to stop the beating was to answer the one simple question and give his name. He could not;

to do so would mean that he was now theirs and that they had broken him.

Sho-Sa Minako dragged his thoughts away from his current predicament and reflected back to only a few days ago. A few days ago?!! How can that be? It feels like a lifetime ago. He remembered how the day started with the regular staff meeting, if it wasn't for the local pastries and the coffee he knew would never have enjoyed attending any of the meetings. Sho-Sa Minako was a Tai-i then, the Sho-Sa ranking was a field promotion after fighting had started and ended in Batan. Chu-Sa Komieto Ryohara and most of the senior command staff was either KIA or MIA, so Brian assumed command of what was left of 3rd Battalion and led them out of the city during the early hours of the next day with the cover of night still on him.

The fighting had begun after a few hours of losing control of Batan Spaceport. At first no one could understand why the Com Guards/SLDF forces had commandeered the spaceport. They were not accepting any messages nor were they providing any answers to their actions. Luckily before all communications were blacked out from the spaceport, two messages did managed to get out. One was a message indicating that there were some inbound dropships and fighters coming in at high G's and the second message was the holo image of an insignia of "a boot stomping on a snake". The image looked like it came from deep within one of the dropships that had first landed, but the insignia spoke volumes all on its own. It could only mean that a mortal enemy of the Draconis Combine had managed to infiltrate their planet. Was it possible the Combine was being betrayed by Comstar? Or could this be the action of the mysterious splinter group calling itself the Word of Blake? A radical schizoid group that had betrayed Comstar from within and then had taken over Terra. They are the only other group that could actually pass off for being a real Comstar unit and give The Snake Stompers the aid they needed to invade Quentin IV.

By mid-afternoon the fighting had been at its most ferocious, with both sides paying for their sins with a pound of flesh. By the time evening began to settle in on Batan, it was very obvious to Tai-i Brian Minako that the 10th Ghost, 3rd Battalion would not survive the night if they stood in the city. They were still not fighting as a cohesive unit despite the fact they were fighting for their survival. Instead of fighting in their assigned lances and companies and providing proper support to one another, they all reverted to grouping themselves per their

yakuza clan colors. It was a disastrous instinctual reaction that the Snake Stompers took advantage of through out the earlier part of the fighting. They just began to hunt and pick them off, one small group at a time.

At around 2000 hours Tai-i Minako had decided to take it upon himself round up whatever surviving forces were in Batan. He had not heard from, nor was he able to contact anyone in Command Central. His company had not faired so well in the fight so far and he suspected that that was the case with the other two companies of 3rd Battalion. He was down to 4 'Mechs, including his, and 5 'Mech-warriors. Akiko had lost her *Battlemaster* while attempting to save them from a murderous crossfire ambush that the Snake Stompers had setup. As soon as he could he would have to get her back in a 'Mech. She was one 'Mechwarrior he did not want sitting out the rest of this fight. She was one of those rare individuals that seemed to be born to pilot a 'Mech. Her 'Mech moved and fought so smoothly that you almost forgot it was 'Mech, and the real feat was that she could maintain this level of skill even when the 'Mech's heat levels were in the red and it was suppose to be moving sluggishly. It was a sight to see and he was glad to have a warrior of this caliber in his unit.

Four and half-hours later it was confirmed. He was the Senior officer of what was left of 3rd Battalion. He had also managed to round up almost all of the surviving units, and the ones that were still out in city, he had at least managed to get word to them (via runners or whatever else was available to him). As of this moment all units remaining out in the field were to stay put, they would be providing cover/diversion for their exit by creating as much chaos as they could in less than an hour. After creating all this havoc they were to get out of Batan ASAP and make their way towards Fasholt.

He looked around the scrap yard he was in and surveyed what he had to work with. He had his AS7-D *Atlas* still and the techs

were able to salvage a CGR-1A1 *Charger* for Akiko. He now had a pair of *Chargers* (CGR-1A1 and CGR-3K), a pair of PNT-9R *Panthers* and a pair of WTH-1 *Whitworths* to go along with a STG-3R *Stinger*, WSP-1K *Wasp*, PXH-1K *Phoenix Hawk*, and a TBT-5N *Trebuchet*. Ancient machines for sure, but his 'Mechwarriors were a veteran group that knew how to make the most of their mechs. It was time to get everyone ready to move.

His first thought, after getting his mech ready for action, was he had to get out of Batan and out of jamming range of the Stompers. He had to get word to Fasholt and warn them of the invading force's arrival. Just as he was completing his thought, the first of the explosions that would serve as a temporary distraction for the Stompers began to ring throughout Batan. He could see in the direction of the Spaceport that there was a heavy concentration of explosions there. Good, he thought, keep those bastards pinned down for a little while.

Tai-i Minako had ordered all support personnel to get out and moving ahead as fast as possible. The mechs would provide them cover as they exit the city. The plan was to go around the Fire Rift area, no one in his or her right mind would purposely travel through there. The area was geologically unstable with lava pits and active volcanic vents that spewed out hot gases and ashes along with dark billowing smoke. The amount of heat generated in the Fire Rift area was enough to tax the heat sinks of any walking mech. Magscan would also be useless in this area due to the amount of ore that saturated the mesas, spires, and most of the other rock formations that adorned this hellish landscape. The other, lesser known, fact

about this area, is that there are random communication blind spots. The why and how is still a matter of study, but some theorized that it had to do with the random magnetic phenomenon that had recently been discovered in the area. The Rift was no place to be conducting any type of military action. Minako thought of a small prayer to himself, may the Ancestors' Spirits watch over anyone foolish enough to go into battle in this area, as a cold dread fell over him.

Minako stole a quick gaze up to the stars and saw the bright lights that were headed to the planet and he knew that the 10th's aerospace assets had been unsuccessful in stopping the invading forces dropships from landing in Batan's spaceport. It was time to put more distance between his unit and the fallen city.

During the early hours of dawn Sho-sa Minako had received his field promotion and his new set of orders from Fasholt. All noncombatants and support personnel including any armor units where to make their way to Fasholt as expediently as possible. Just as he had feared, he and his new mech company were to hold the Fire Rift area and prevent the Snake Stompers from achieving the most direct route possible to Fasholt. He knew that orders from Fasholt were right. That the Stompers hatred bordered on fanatical behavior and that despite the dangers that the Fire Rift area posed, the Stompers would use it to get to Fasholt. Especially if it meant they could kill more DCMS troops that much sooner.

Sho-sa Minako rounded up his 'Mech-warriors and relayed their new orders to them. They went over all intel available to them about the Fire Rift area, some areas were very well mapped out, but most of it had not been properly explored from the ground level. Footing was key — he did not want to lose anyone to a lava pit. That was no way for a warrior to die. They need to find a good spot to ambush the Stompers, he needed more time to set up a proper defensive position, but he knew he only had a matter of hours at best. They quickly made their way towards the Fire Rift area and as they got closer he could feel the heat begin to build up in his cockpit, he suspected this would be considered a cool breeze to what was to come from inside the rift. "Ancestors please watch over us", was all Sho-sa Minako could say before entering hell's vestibule.

# HOME OF ENLIGHTENMENT

*by John Hudson*

Main Street
Halstead Station III, Ashio Prefecture
Dieron Military District
Draconis Combine
08 April, 3068
2100 hours

The candles almost give this prison a softer, more civilized look. On first impression, this place does not look like a prison, but what would you call being placed on a planet with a poisonous atmosphere to "atone for the stain on your honor"? I would call it a prison. The Combine calls it Halstead Station.

I am supposed to dwell on the fact that I failed my warriors, my command, and the Combine. I have been here for over six years.

Thinking. Waiting. Atoning.

You would think that I would accept my fate more gracefully, but I cannot help this feeling of frustration that I have at my condition.

My crime you may ask, my "Stain on my honor"?

I was a progressive in the company of rigid traditionalists. I accepted and embraced the Kanrei's ideas while my contemporaries in the 6th Benjamin Regulars kept with Coordinator Takashi Kurita's views.

The rice paper doors slid open with a low hiss, which is almost inaudible.  But if all you had to do was pace back and forth for the past six years, you kind of key on things out of the ordinary. Although, even as aware as I was to what was going on, I still had to strain to hear the near silent footfalls approaching me.

"Tai-i Miyamura Kiyoshi, please forgive my intrusion."

"Please, do not address me by that title, for I feel that I do not deserve it."

I turned to see who my "visitor" was, and I saw a woman of mixed parentage dressed in the traditional yukata with matching obi. Her dress and the way that she addressed me in the traditional manner, as opposed to the way everyone else in the Inner Sphere addresses each other, told me that she was raised in the traditional ways.

"Please accept my apologies Miyamura-san, it was not my wish to intrude on your meditations."

"You are not intruding on anything but endless boredom. Please, how may I be of service?"

She pursed her lips and seemed to almost look straight through me. She was a lovely woman, with long straight reddish-blonde hair pulled back into a simple but functional bun. A slight amount of makeup highlighted her ice-blue eyes. In an earlier time, she would have been called Eurasian. Now she is called citizen.

"What I need, Miyamura-san is a few brave souls willing to lay their lives down for the Dragon."

"Some would question the reliability of using flawed soldiery to serve the Dragon when there are better resources available."

"Ahh, but who else would do a better job but one who has nothing to loose, but everything to gain."

"Including one's honor and self-respect?"

"Hai!"

"Tell me, why should I get my hopes up? I mean, after six years of "reflection" on this airless rock, why should I follow you blindly to "glory and honor"?"

"My name is Sachi Tani, and I represent the Internal Security Force in the Ashio Prefecture."

She then showed me an official looking card to the dreaded ISF, who is charged with rooting out any plot against the Combine. Now I wondered, what would bring the ISF to this little garden spot in the universe?

"So, How can my miserable life serve the Dragon and the people of the Combine?"

Again, I got this feeling like she could look right through me. I have to admit, with those cold ice blue eyes that she probably got whatever information she was looking for. And right now, I think that she was looking for my allegiance.

"What I need from you and some of your compatriots is your help in ridding the Combine of a dire threat. We have a situation in another system involving the Black Dragon Society. They are rising up and are planning to overthrow Theodore Kurita and replace him with someone more "tradition-bound". If they succeed, they will regress the Combine back to the Succession War era."

"But why us?"

"Because we know that you support the policies of the Coordinator. You have proved it for six years here. By doing this, we will be able to help you clear your honor and restore your good name."

"Please excuse my ignorance, but why would the Internal Security Force need with a few honorless ronin. I would think that the ISF would be able to take care of this problem themselves."

"True, but the Coordinator wants to make a special statement to the Black Dragon Society. By using you, He will send a message once and for all that his ways are the best for the Combine, that he cannot change to suit times, then we doomed."

I turned to her, looked her right in the eye. I could see any deception in her and I always considered myself to be a good judge of character.

"It would be my honor to protect both the Coordinator  and the people of the Combine. What do I have to do?"

"I have a lance of 'Mechs in Bay 4. You and three companions will pilot them to the DropShip that will be here in five days. After that, you will be taken away from here, off to meet the Black Dragon Society."

"Is that it, there has to be more to it than that?"

"You are correct, because the Black Dragons do not want you to leave from here, the local force will try and prevent you from leaving. Do not misunderstand me; you are no good to the Coordinator dead. You must get away with all of your lives."

"I understand, but how will we recognize our mechs?"

"Trust me, you will."

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Mech Bay 4, Main Street
Halstead Station III, Ashio Prefecture
Dieron Military District
Draconis Combine
13 April, 3068
1615 hours

Well, she was right, we did recognize our 'Mechs. There they are, four pristine 'Mechs representing the best that the Combine has to offer. And the reason that we recognized them is because they were painted in the colors of the 6th Benjamin. Our old unit. How ironic that we would be wearing the colors of the 6th Benjamin, the unit that said we had no honor, to defend the Combine against one of the most deadly threat that the Combine has seen.

We started looking over the 'Mechs. I swear that the Lynx in front of me was my old machine. As I climbed up the ladder into the cockpit, all of the old feelings started to come out again. The pride in myself and in the Combine for the ability of man and machine coming together as one, an avatar of war that acts on the will of the people. This is the greatest honor that has ever been bestowed on me, to pilot this machine for the glory of the Combine.

I was a little rusty with the handling of the Lynx. After all, it had been six years since I had piloted a 'Mech. But I was sure that it would come back to me soon enough. We formed up, and marched out of the mech bay, into a beautiful but deadly world. For you see, even though Halstead Station is a mineral storehouse that supplies the Combine with many things needed to keep the Combine running; it is a deadly world with an atmosphere that is mainly poisonous gasses, unfit for human life.

As we headed to landing pad two, the communication crackled to life.

"Unknown 'Mech lance, turn around and stand down or be destroyed."

"Well, this is getting better by the moment."

Just then, my sensors started picking up movement to our Northeast. One... two... three... and four. The self proclaimed Planetary Defense Force. I think these machines were left over from when Hanse Davion invaded Halstead Station many years ago. But they were still deadly if they breached our compartments.

"Gentlemen, our liberty is at hand. The only thing that stands in the way is that lance of mechs. Be careful and we will be sipping sake on the way out of this system tonight. If not, at least we died reclaiming something that we had all along, our honor."

"Banzai!"

# THE KERVIL CAMPAIGN

*by Jason Weiser*

Kervil, Al Na'ir Prefecture
Dieron Military District
Draconis Combine
April — May 3068

The choice of Kervil as a target in the early days of the Jihad did confuse a lot of observers at first. Many were left wondering, why. It mined several heavy metals easily available throughout the Inner Sphere and the only other attraction was an old Star League fortress that had been shattered in the Aramis War.

But Word Of Blake knew better, they noted that the League fortress was more than that, something the Kuritans hadn't realized. The fortress was also a depot for the SLDF Mapping Agency, and had hyper accurate charts of many worlds throughout the Inner Sphere and Periphery. It had data on jump points not used in hundreds of years.

But more ominously, what Kervil mined was important. It was the Draconis Combine's primary source of fissile materials. It was something that the Combine did not advertise.

And thus, Kervil became a target for Blake's ambition.

In early 3068, labor trouble broke out on Kervil and the local mining concerns hired a few small mercenary units to bust heads and keep the mines open with scab labor. What the mining concerns did not know was that the units were really in the pay of the Word of Blake. Otherwise, the planetary militia commander would have wondered how 'Mechs and vehicles might have been of use against striking miners.

When hostilites again broke out between the Combine and Suns, the Blakists struck, and brought in more forces, specifically a battalion of Herman's Hermits to sew things up tight.
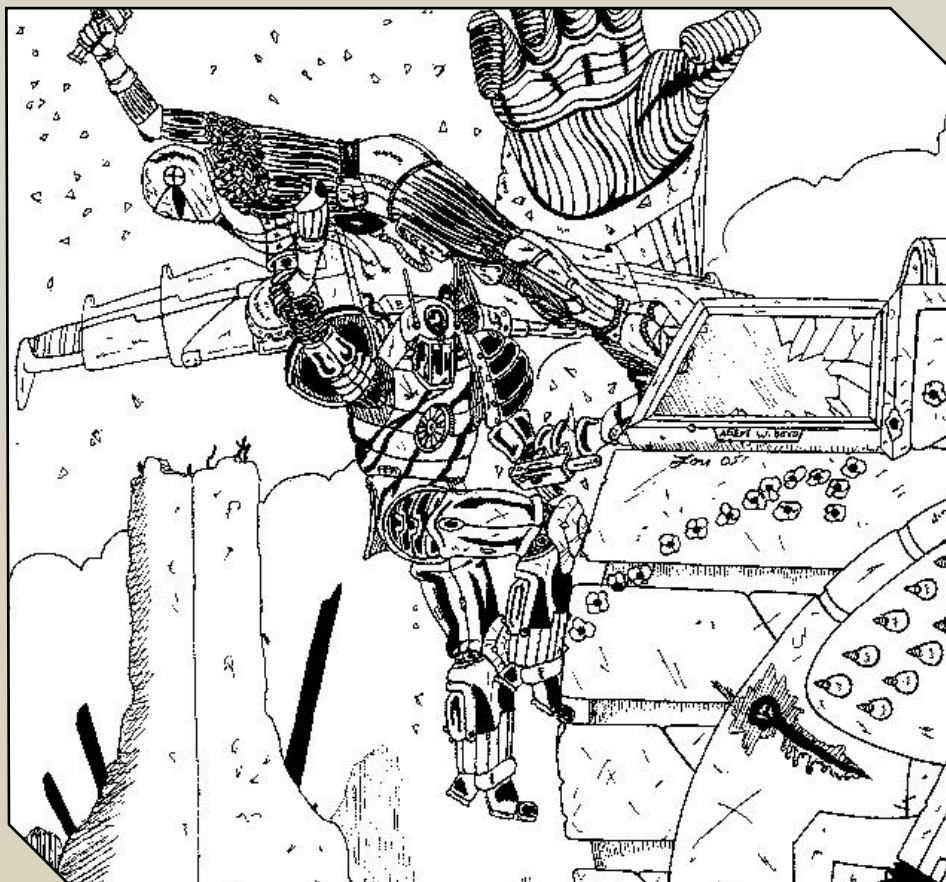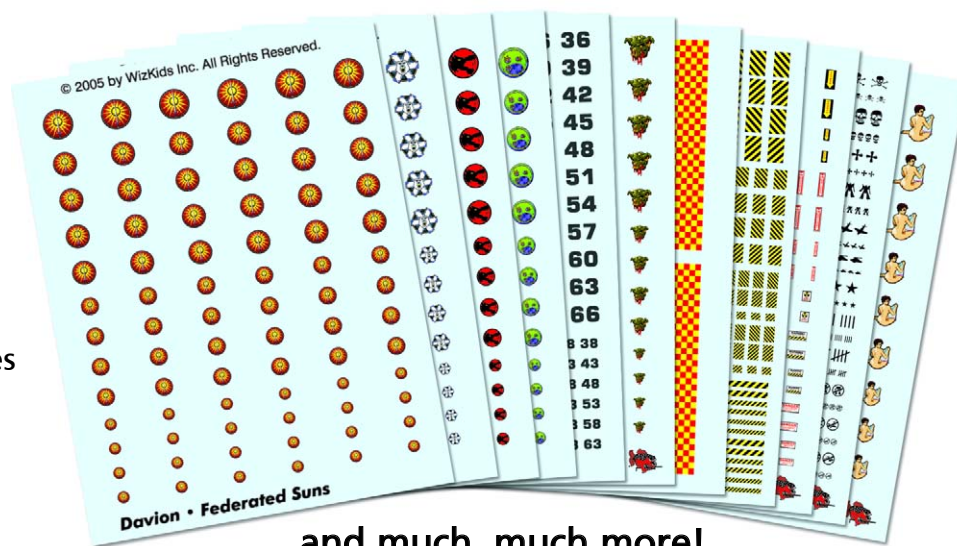
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# KICK THE CAN

Anti-Mech tactics for PBI in Battletech, Part 1 — By Jason Weiser

In the Battletech universe, the PBI is often at a seeming loss against 'Mechs, often in a situation not dissimilar to the infantryman of World War Two when confronted with an enemy tank. In both cases, weapons and tactics were brought to bear to deal with the problem. The focus of this article is unarmored infantry and how they have adapted to deal with Battlemechs on the field of battle. These tactics were not developed easily, or immediately and often, were done so at considerable cost to those doing the discovery of their effectiveness.

With the advent of the BattleMech, military thinkers were confronted with a situation that mirrored the development of the tank some 520-odd years before. Unfortunately for the infantryman, the 'Mech was more versatile, and more maneuverable, not to mention, larger than a tank. Many 25th and 26th Century military theorists echoed early 20th century thought about the tank and said 'Mechs were "nigh unstoppable".

By the end of the 2500s, almost every major government in the Inner Sphere had 'Mechs and was using them, which made the infantryman's lot even worse, in some houses, such as Liao, where 'Mechs were at a premium, the near-seeming impotence of Infantry against 'Mechs was frustrating. With the Age of War raging, Liao was suffering badly at the hands of her neighbors, and the 'Mech forces needed to be preserved as much as possible.

It was a Capellan infantry officer, a Commander Ying Yao, who began to attack the problem of infantry and 'Mechs. Though his work *A Footsoldier's View of Modern War* has been criticized as full of proverbs and somewhat obtuse to non-Capellans, especially in the translated versions, it was the first book to seriously tackle the idea of how Infantry should handle 'Mechs.

To Yao, preparation of the battlefield was vital. Special anti-'Mech commandos were to be selected for their "cunning, bravery and skill in handing of explosives and heavy weapons". Yao suggested that these units were permanent and to be formed at the battalion level to be committed where 'Mechs were likely to approach, but where the terrain favored infantry. If the terrain did not favor infantry work at close range, then mines and barriers were to be used to canalize the 'Mechs into somewhere more favorable.

As for weapons, Yao favored the use of the shaped charge, noting that LAWs and SRMs had the best chance for infantry to hit a 'Mech and then get away, but he also discussed the principles of "close range engagement" as he described it. He discussed the use of smoke against 'Mechs, and using small arms to distract enemy 'Mechs away from the approaching "attack party".

But, the Strategios did not embrace his theories, and Yao was passed over for promotion, and was soon retired to the Home Guard on Bella I. It was very fortunate for him, as a Marik raid soon hit the world, and Yao got a chance to prove his theory, his "Special Attack Company" killed an entire lance of light 'Mechs, but the casualties were horrific, Some 60% of the unit was killed, including Yao, who was awarded the Cluster of Conspicuous Heroism, posthumously, of course.

And his theories languished until the Reunification War.

Just before the Star League came crashing into the Taurian Concordiat, military leaders among the Taurians were casting about to look for ways equalize matters between them and the 'Mech-heavy Star League forces about to come crashing into the Concordiat. One Taurian located a copy of *A Footsoldier's View of Modern War* in a used bookstore on New Vandenberg. Luckily for the Taurians, he was the aide of the then head of the TDF.

The commander of the TDF ate up the lessons from the book, and for the first time, anti-'Mech infantry was trained and fielded on a large scale. These units were at first, a rude shock to the Star League forces and some credit the invention of these units with prolonging the conflict by two years.

Tactics were refined and soon, the Star League had to bring in their own infantry to screen their 'Mechs, or use a lot of Firestarters and Vulcans. Urban fighting as the Reunifcation War wore on, became even more hellish than was normally the case, with entire cities being lit aflame or shattered under the blows of 'Mechs and tanks performing "Recon by Fire" to flush Taurian fanatics. Casualty rates among
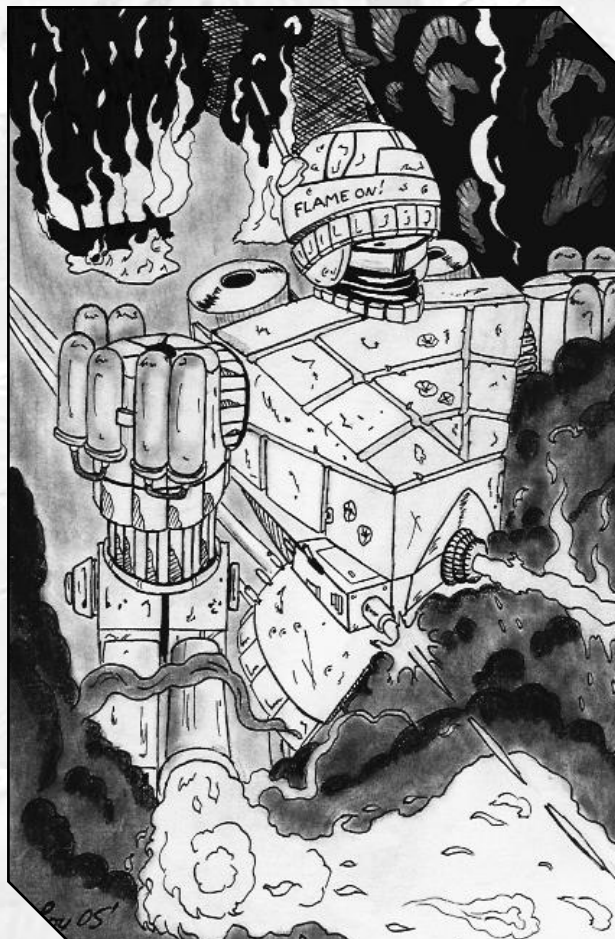
infantry on both sides skyrocketed. Mines came into widespread use on the Taurian side, and soon spread to the other Periphery states as a dangerous slide away from the "niceties" of the Ares Conventions took place.

By the time the war ended, it was calculated that a third of all 'Mechs and vehicles lost on the Star League side had been killed by infantry operating in close quarters. Worse, Aramis' men took note and incorporated the Taurian tactics into their own training syllabi. It was not long before the Great Houses followed suit. One problem, however, was infantry cooperation with friendly 'Mechs. In Veteran and Elite units, this was not as much of a problem, or in Star League RCTs where the infantry and 'Mechs often operated together. In green units however, the 'Mechwarriors would often shoot at every footsoldier they saw in built-up environments, especially as "Close Attack Platoons" (the term for them in the period) would often don enemy uniforms to suck in 'Mechs to kill.

This became a big problem for Star League infantry during the Aramis War as casualties mounted among SLDF troops and standards to some extent, degenerated as well meaning but hastily-trained recruits filled both the ranks of the 'Mechwarriors and infantry. Among Aramis troops, it became even more pronounced, but small units of Aramis "shock troops" held out such as the well known example of the 343rd Aramis Rifles ("The Bloody Bayonets") who held out in Helen's capital city for months and their prolific commander, Hans Meyer, who accounted for some 10 'Mechs himself with SRMs and satchel charges, and a new, uglier contraption. Officially known as the "Anti-'Mech Magnetic Mine, Handheld", it was known to both sides as the "suicide special" and the "super lunge mine". It suited the desperate mindset of the Aramis forces well. It was a magnetized mine that was a conical shaped charge with stand-off poles meant to insure the proper stand off distance for the mine. It was supposed to be a 5-7 second fuse after the pull igniter at the base of the mine was triggered, but due to spotty manufacturing quality, often, the mine would either not detonate at all, or worse, go off soon after the fuse was activated.

After the Aramis War, and with the departure of Kerensky, the specter of total war descended on the Inner Sphere. The First Succession War, with combatants from the Aramis War on all sides, saw the anti-'Mech tactics of the infantry developed to new heights. But, as the number of 'Mechs began to drop, infantry anti-'Mech

tactics began to change from an emphasis on killing the 'Mech to inflicting tactical immobility and/or capture of the target 'Mech. More use was made of smoke and CS gas in an attempt to "blind and smoke out" the 'Warrior. Often these would fail, as half-trained infantry would often underestimate the quality of a 'Mech's NBC suite.

One of the more favored tactics was using Anti-'Mech grenades (Shaped Charge grenades with a parachute like drogue) or "sticky bombs" against the upper-half of the 'Mech in an attempt to hit the cockpit. This was rarely successful, but if used to distract a 'Mech from another assault team closing with it, it often helped score a successful kill. Soon, another tactic arose, "Plinking"; This was a sniper team with a heavy anti-material rifle who would engage the sensor blisters and open components and it was more meant to distract the target 'Mech from something far nastier down the road. Often, with green 'Mechwarrirors, it worked well, but older, cannier warriors soon knew these sniper teams were the prelude to something worse.

Soon, as specialty equipment wore out, or was lost, improvisation became the name of the game, everything from packing peanuts being stuffed in Heat Sinks as was tried by Capellan troops against Davion 'Mechs on Chesterson in 3012 to a more successful "PAK front" as developed by then Colonel Katrina Steiner on Odessa in 3002. Her use of salvaged 'Mech weapons by infantry proved that the idea was possible, if a bit awkward. Her use of an ancient form of anti-tank defense, that was unexpected by the Kuritans, their initial arrogance losing them 3 'Mechs in the first volley.

But these examples are few and far between by the time of the 3rd War. By then, a neo-feudal order of battle had descended over the Inner Sphere, Infantry was for the most part, to be cheap garrison troops and messily out of the way, and not provide a threat to their "betters". Infantry training throughout the Inner Sphere soon became little more than "A short course in how to die" as one Marik wag put it. Very few realms spent much time or money to train infantry properly, and the Mercenary market often had private infantry units not lasting very long.

But one man, Grayson Death Carlisle, changed all that.

Carlisle's story is well known and doesn't bear repeating here. What does is the fact that overnight, he brought back the idea that not only can infantry be dangerous,

but well used Infantry can turn a battle. The GDL's infantry was trained to a very high standard indeed and often-shocked enemies and employers alike with its effectiveness. GDL infantry units used tactics that had not been used in centuries. Why? Because until the GDL came along, many units were simply not well equipped enough or well trained enough to attempt the well-choreographed ambushes that were a hallmark of GDL infantry operations.

By the time the Clans came, the Inner Sphere as a whole was relearning what was lost and infantry training standards were becoming more in line with attempting some of the more basic anti-'Mech tactics. But, the Clans would prove a rude awakening to many Inner Sphere commanders. One that would prove difficult to overcome as the Clans marched towards Terra.

One of the more pernicious problems was that of Elementals. Often used by Clan commanders to screen their 'Mechs from Inner Sphere infantry, it was difficult if not impossible to take them down with infantry weapons. To combat the threat, more support weapons began to appear at the squad and platoon level to handle the threat, and "plinking" was brought back. Unfortunately for Elementals, their V-shaped vision ports proved to be excellent aiming points for snipers. Enhancements and combat drugs aside, these could not cure a 7.62mm, 58-grain slug to the head. Other tactics were to lure Elementals into blind alleys and cul-de-sacs, and then detonate large command detonated mines below them, or collapse a building on top of them. This did not always work as some forgot Elementals could jump.

Comstar proved to have come up with a fairly nasty tactic for defeating the elemental menace that was copied throughout the Inner Sphere; it was called "Toad Calling". Basically, a Comstar infantry force would ambush a Clan mixed force at long range. The Clan commander would send his elementals to hunt down the freebirths and the Elementals would charge off, Often, they would then be lead into an ambush of vehicles and 'Mechs, with prepared counter-mobility obstacles and anti-tank mines liberally emplaced. The Smoke Jaguars were particularly prone to falling for this tactic.

By the time of the Fedcom Civil War, all houses had mature anti-'Mech doctrines to handle the threats of 'Mechs on the battlefield. How these doctrines were implemented, and how they affected weapons employment and development is another matter...

# Quarterly Puzzler:
### by Charles Wilson
## Interstellar Players
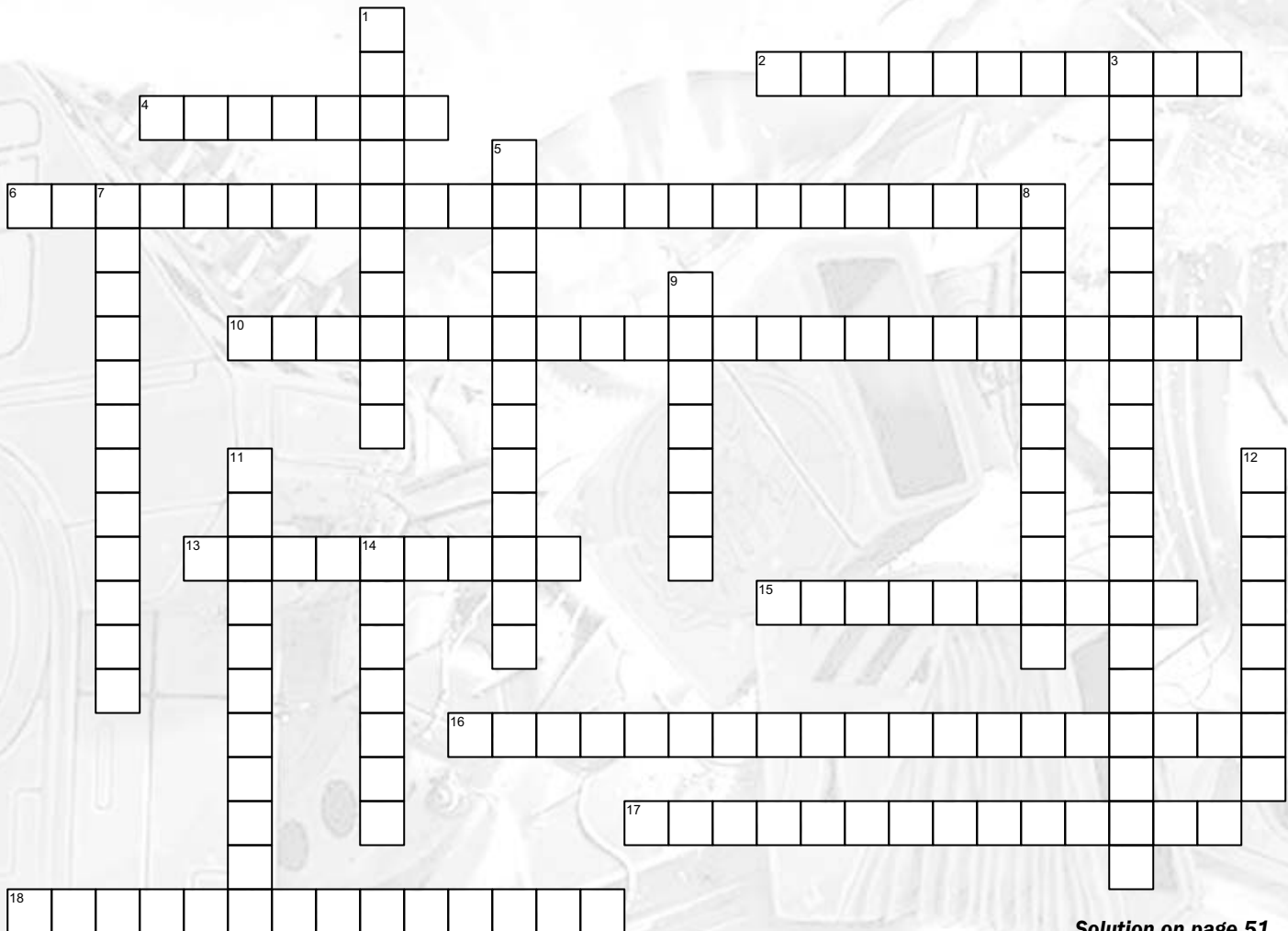
www.CrosswordWeaver.com

*Solution on page 51.*

## ACROSS

2  Cyberized Word of Blake assassins

4  Shiloh-based, anti-technology puritans

6  Commonwealth veterans who engage in politics and assassinations

10  Non-profit group of archeologists

13  Genetically altered spheroids and ex-Clanners hiding for survival

15  Ancient group of power brokers

16  Federated Suns nobles and soldiers trying to prevent their nation's decline

17  anti-Free Worlds League anarchist group

18  ex-Clan warriors who have been hiding for centuries

## DOWN

1  Militant group of Taurian-based colony founders

3  Interstellar corporate conglomerate

5  Generational warrior for hire

7  Religious group that almost collapsed upon the Clans arrival

8  Militant Word of Blake sub-faction

9  Lost world last seen in Marik space

11  Pirates searching for religious artifacts

12  Rasalhague expatriates

14  Pseudo-religious cult whose cover is 'lessening thesuffering of others'

# JANUARY'S LANCERS

## Carnival of Chaos

by Lou Myers
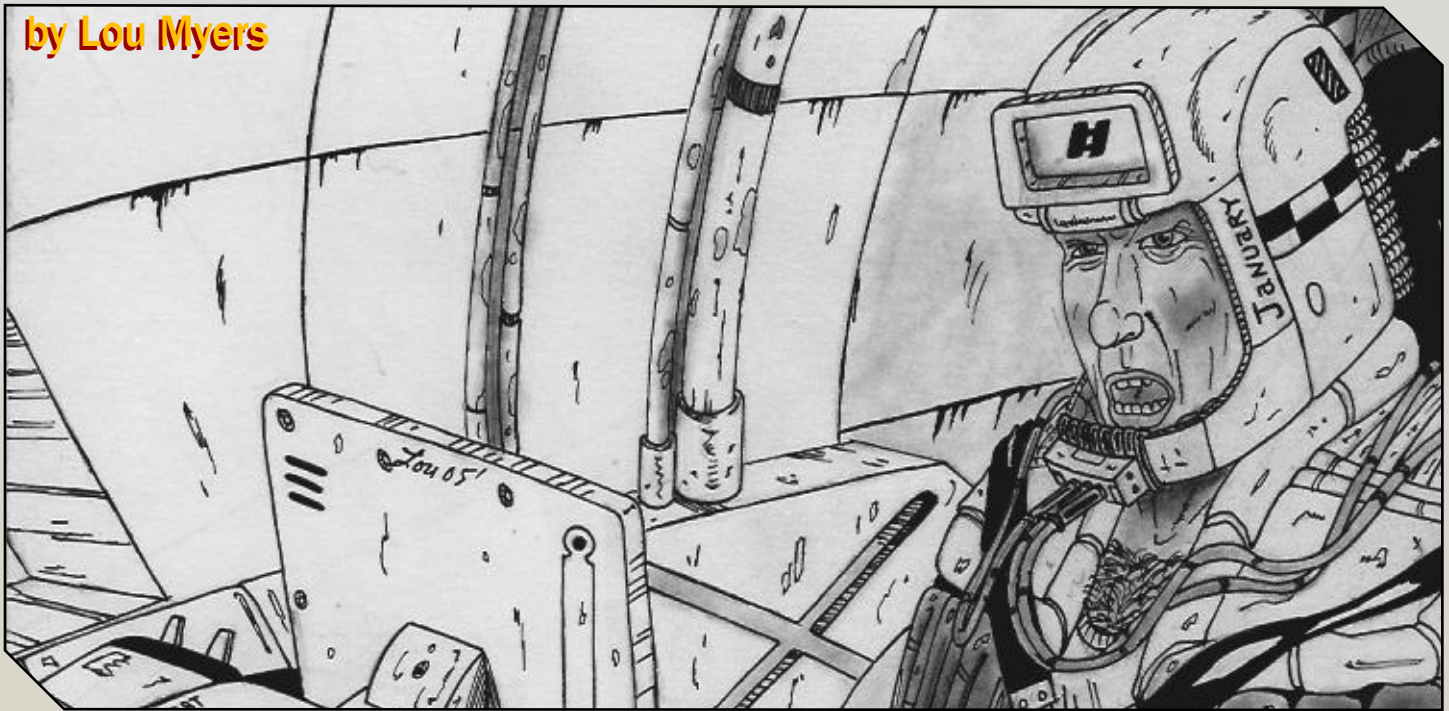


**Highway One**
**Kerioth, Styk**
**Styk Commonality**
**18 December 3058**
**0944 hours**

The fledgling Styk Government rejected the Capellan's "Invitation to return" to the Capellan Family. But upon Sun Tzu Liao's election as First Lord of the newly reborn Star League, Sun Tzu now had a *proper* response at his disposal. Answering the Styk Commonality's rejection of his offer, he sent in Canopian Peacekeepers in the later part of December. The 1st Canopian Light Horse dropped onto Styk and hit the ground running, determined to keep the peace "Capellan Style". Styk Government forces escaped the capitol and held up at Kerioth, 20 miles west. Within a day the Canopian's hit Kerioth hard and slaughtered the government troops and burned the city. Those civilians not killed in the fighting had fled.

The entire highway — all four lanes — of it was choked with refugees heading north away from Kerioth. Cars, trucks and buses filled with terrified civilians crawled along, amidst more terrified civilians carrying what they could on foot as Kerioth burned behind them.

Watching from his Atlas in the woods left of Highway One, Captain Robert January keyed his COM link. "I do not frakkin' understand! Why were we ordered to hold?"

Lieutenant Jessica Endicott, his XO calmly answered, "Bob, we have three sets of orders here. The latest one, we are following is Ambassador Dartain's to hold outside Kerioth until re-enforcements arrive."

January scoffed, "You didn't tell me it was Dartain! Why isn't the Prime Minister or the General giving orders?"

Jessica held her breath for a moment, then blurted out "Reports say the PM has been captured and the general is MIA. Dartain is in charge of this cluster dance."

January voiced his disgust. "Dartain is a Lyran court fop.'' Jessica agreed with humph. January moaned, "We're screwed."

Jessica's voice then launched into a tone of pure anxiety. "Bob, we have a communiqué from Colonel Whistler, the CO of Red Dawn. He wants you on comms now!"

Bob's ears tingled. "OK, put'em in."

His comms crackled and whined as the link hit. "Captain January!?" The gruff voice of Colonel Whistler tore across the link.

"Yeah Jacob, go ahead." January answered as he began noticing blips dead ahead on his tracking computer. The civilians began running in panic.

"DAMN IT! There isn't any game plan here at all. All the government cheeseheads are bolting for the door and no one in their god forsaken military is answering the phone! I say we split this rock, ASAP!!!"

January's targeting screen began to I.D. the blips. One Raven 3L, one Firestarter H, two Spider 7Ms.

The Firestarter began torching the fleeing the civilians. Bob felt his stomach get sick. "JACOB!" he shouted, "These periphery bastards are murdering civilians! You wanna cut and run go ahead but, me and my Lancers are going to protect these people and crush these scum!"

Colonel Whistler shouted back over his com link. "That's happening everywhere. Damn it Bob! Don't let your heart get into the way! Bug out! Bug out now!"

January punched his armrest. More and more blips were appearing. "Jacob, I got a break out of murdering Canopians in front of me! Your ten clicks away from me and you can back me up if you want! If not, I'll see you in hell!"

# EXPLORER CORPS SURVEY

YANCE I

HALSTEAD

STATION III

KERVIL

# YANCE I

## STELLAR DATA

| | |
|---|---|
| Astronomical Code: | HIP 502099 |
| Star: | Yance I |
| Stellar Type: | G2V (Yellow Main-Sequence) |
| Mass: | 1.00 Solar Masses (1.9890e30 kg) |
| Radius: | 1.00 Solar Radii (696,000 km) |
| Luminosity: | 1.01 Solar Luminosity (3.928e33 ergs/sec) |
| Lifespan: | 9.9010 Billion Years |
| Current Age: | 3.7098 Billion Years |
| Current Status: | Stable |

## PLANETARY SYSTEM DATA

| | |
|---|---|
| Planets: | 8 |
| Rocky Worlds: | 5 |
| Gas Giants: | 3 |
| Major Asteroids*: | 16 |
| Minor Asteroids*: | 78 |
| Asteroid Belts: | 1 |

*Major Asteroids are defined by Comstar as asteroids above 500km in radius. Minor Asteroids are above 50km in radius. Most systems have countless asteroids smaller then this, and thus are not listed here.

## YANCE I

| | |
|---|---|
| Common Name: | Agrador |
| Mean Orbital Radius: | 1.0059 AU |
| Mean Orbital Velocity: | 29.7185 km/sec |

| | |
|---|---|
| Orbital Inclination: | 0.00 degrees |
| Orbital Eccentricity: | 0.01 |
| Perihelion: | 0.99584 AU |
| Aphelion: | 1.01596 AU |
| Period: | 1.0089 Standard Years |
| Mass: | 3.6308e24 kg (1.0907 Earth) |
| Radius: | 6472 km (1.0147 Earth) |
| Density: | 5.74 g/cm^3 (1.0455 Earth Standard) |
| Gravity: | 1.0609 G |
| Rotational Period: | 21.00 Hours |
| Axial Tilt: | 31.39 degrees |
| Atmosphere: | Standard (1.1640 Earth Standard) |
| Composition: | Nitrogen |
| | Oxygen |
| | Argon |
| | Carbon Dioxide |
| | Water Vapor |
| Hydrosphere: | Liquid Water |
| Mean Temperature: | 278K |

## PLANETOGRAPHY

Total Surface Area: 526,364,851.59 km^2
Land Surface Area: 173,700,401.02 km^2
% coverage of Hydrosphere: 67%
Satellites: Alyssa (1647 km radius)
14.7237 Day Period
Clytenbestra (1608 km radius)
44.7283 Day Period
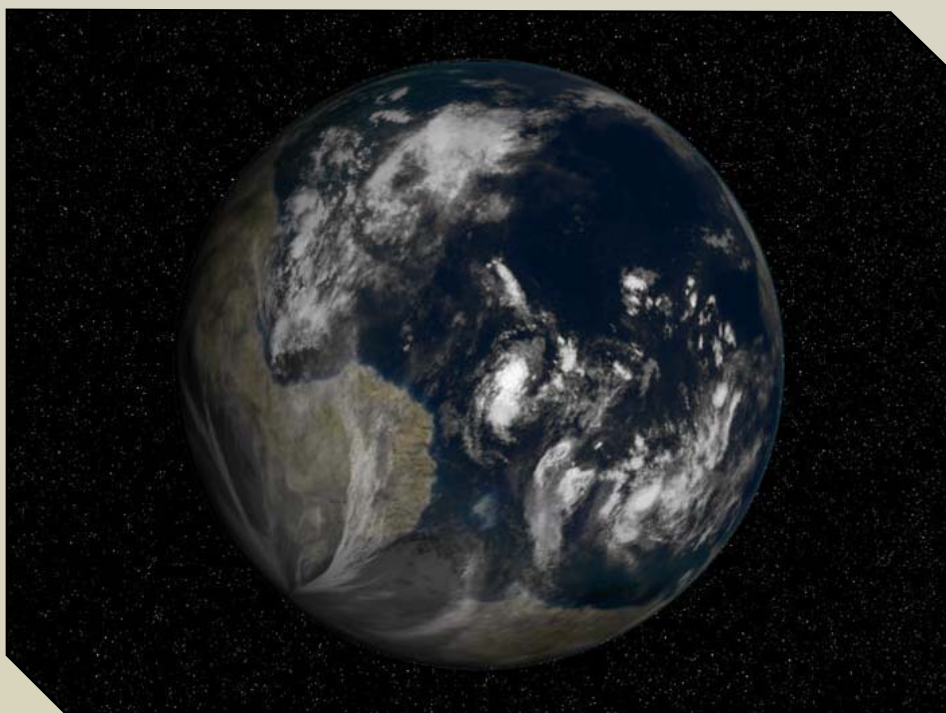
## ECONOMY

| | |
|---|---|
| **Natural Resources:** | Iron |
| | Nickel |
| | Coal |
| **Processed/** | |
| **Manufactured Goods:** | Industrial Sand |
| | Refined Metals |
| | Food Products |

## POPULATION

| | |
|---|---|
| **Population:** | 2,712,680,446 (As of 3067) |
| **Population density** | |
| **(km^2):** | 15.6170 (Over all land surface) |
| **Urbanization:** | 15.8513% |
| **Ethnic Groups:** | European (75%) |
| | Asian (20%) |
| | Other (5%) |
| **Religion:** | Judeo-Christian (85%) |
| | Buddhist(10%) |
| | Other (5%) |
| **Labor Force:** | Agriculture (35%) |
| | Education (5%) |
| | Industry (15%) |
| | Service (25%) |
| | Other (20%) |
| **Planetary Militia:** | 1 Company of 'Mechs |
| | 2 Companies of Armor |
| | 2 Lances of Conventional Fighters |
| | 1 Battalion of Infantry |

## NOTES

The colonists who settled Yance I — dubbed Agador by its inhabitants — were anti-technologists, mostly of Amish descent, who sought to create a world free of the ravages of widespread industrialization and commercialization. Putting aside their beliefs long enough to plan, finance and undertake a relocation from one world to another, these settlers came to Yance I, assured that they would find a new land to their liking.

Yance I was a terrestrial world of diverse climates, with open, hilly bands of fertile soils in the temperate zones, a mix of jungles and deserts in the equatorial zones, and frozen tundra and glaciers in the polar reaches. However, what went unnoticed in the first planetary surveys was the dominant animal life form.

No sooner had the settlers made planetfall and founded their first colonies than their imported livestock — and even a few of the colonists — began to succumb to attacks by a predator called the black reaper. This aggressive, feline-like mammal, similar in many ways to the Terran puma, but almost half again as large and with a large, spiked, prehensile tail, roamed the plains of the primary continent of Paradiesland. The settlers at first tried to wall in their lands to keep out the reapers, but the powerful beasts broke through or leapt over their wooden constructs, causing massive damage. Relocation also failed to work, as the reapers, attracted to the new food source, simply followed them.

In desperation, the mostly pacifistic colonists resorted to primitive firearms, only to find the reapers' hides resistant to such weapons. The colonists were forced to turn to modern technology to control the animals, bargaining with traders from nearby worlds for heavier weapons, including automatic rifles and laser weapons. These concessions to advanced technology saved the colonists but eventually eroded the pilgrims' way of life.

Over the following centuries, Yance I's population gradually became more modernized, a transition that caused no small degree of conflict between the orthodox and progressive populations and led to the relocation of the traditionalist settlers to the neighboring continent of Neuhoffen.

The ascendance of the Terran Hegemony and its incorporation of Yance I led to the further industrialization of Paradiesland, including the establishment of a small arms factory for SLDF infantry weapons. Meanwhile, Neuhoffen became a haven for those seeking escape from the evils of modern life, virtually left alone while the rest of the world entered the Golden Age of technology.

The years under Combine rule saw even more turmoil for Neuhoffen residents, forced into increasingly smaller enclaves by the Kuritan rulers, who saw a better use for the minerals in the mountains of the continent.

## YANCE II

| | |
|---|---|
| Common Name: | Yance II |
| Mean Orbital Radius: | 1.9834 AU |
| Mean Orbital Velocity: | 21.1641 km/sec |
| Orbital Inclination: | 3.40 degrees |
| Orbital Eccentricity: | 0.09 |
| Perihelion: | 1.80489 AU |
| Aphelion: | 2.16191 AU |
| Period: | 2.7933 Standard Years |
| Mass: | 3.7761e23 kg (0.0632 Earth) |
| Radius: | 2531 km (0.3968 Earth) |
| Density: | 5.56 g/cm^3 |
| | (1.0128 Earth Standard) |
| Gravity: | 0.4019 G |
| Rotational Period: | 41.65 Hours |
| Axial Tilt: | 48.87 degrees |
| Atmosphere: | Vacuum |
| Composition: | None |
| Hydrosphere: | None |
| Mean Temperature: | 170K |
| Moons: | 0 |

## YANCE III

| | |
|---|---|
| Common Name: | Yance III |
| Mean Orbital Radius: | 5.6357 AU |
| Mean Orbital Velocity: | 12.5554 km/sec |
| Orbital Inclination: | 4.23 degrees |
| Orbital Eccentricity: | 0.08 |
| Perihelion: | 5.18484 AU |
| Aphelion: | 6.08656 AU |
| Period: | 13.3789 Standard Years |
| Mass: | 2.5273e27 kg (422.9123 Earth) |
| Radius: | 83137 km (13.0350 Earth) |
| Density: | 1.05 g/cm^3 |
| | (0.1913 Earth Standard) |
| Gravity: | 2.4930 G |
| Rotational Period: | 37.30 Hours |
| Axial Tilt: | 35.93 degrees |
| Atmosphere: | Ultra Thick (Gas Giant) |
| Composition: | Hydrogen |
| | Helium |
| | Methane |
| | Ammonia |
| Hydrosphere: | None |
| Mean Temperature: | 97K at cloud tops |
| Moons: | 13 |
| Rings: | Inner: 88,206 km radius |
| | Outer: 116,145 km radius |

## YANCE IV

| | |
|---|---|
| Common Name: | Yance IV |
| Mean Orbital Radius: | 10.5146 AU |
| Mean Orbital Velocity: | 9.1920 km/sec |
| Orbital Inclination: | 1.01 degrees |
| Orbital Eccentricity: | 0.07 |
| Perihelion: | 9.77858 AU |
| Aphelion: | 11.25062 AU |
| Period: | 34.0949 Standard Years |
| Mass: | 9.4756e23 kg (0.1586 Earth) |
| Radius: | 3409 km (0.5345 Earth) |
| Density: | 5.71 g/cm^3 |
| | (1.0401 Earth Standard) |
| Gravity: | 0.5559 G |
| Rotational Period: | 20.99 Hours |
| Axial Tilt: | 37.41 degrees |
| Atmosphere: | Vacuum |
| Composition: | None |
| Hydrosphere: | None |
| Mean Temperature: | 75K |
| Moons: | 3 |

## YANCE V

| | |
|---|---|
| Common Name: | Yance V |
| Mean Orbital Radius: | 17.5035 AU |
| Mean Orbital Velocity: | 7.1243 km/sec |
| Orbital Inclination: | 1.67 degrees |
| Orbital Eccentricity: | 0.09 |
| Perihelion: | 15.92819 AU |
| Aphelion: | 19.07882 AU |
| Period: | 73.2297 Standard Years |
| Mass: | 2.6647e24 kg (0.4459 Earth) |
| Radius: | 5067 km (0.7944 Earth) |
| Density: | 4.89 g/cm^3 |
| | (0.8907 Earth Standard) |
| Gravity: | 0.7076 G |
| Rotational Period: | 31.74 Hours |
| Axial Tilt: | 19.15 degrees |
| Atmosphere: | Vacuum |
| Composition: | None |
| Hydrosphere: | None |
| Mean Temperature: | 59K |
| Moons: | 1 |

## YANCE VI

| | |
|---|---|
| Common Name: | Yance VI |
| Mean Orbital Radius: | 26.3648 AU |
| Mean Orbital Velocity: | 5.8049 km/sec |
| Orbital Inclination: | 12.95 degrees |
| Orbital Eccentricity: | 0.01 |
| Perihelion: | 26.10115 AU |
| Aphelion: | 26.62845 AU |
| Period: | 135.3745 Standard Years |
| Mass: | 1.6841e27 kg (281.8025 Earth) |
| Radius: | **70446 km (11.0452 Earth)** |
| Density: | 1.15 g/cm^3 |
| | (0.2095 Earth Standard) |
| Gravity: | 2.3136 G |
| Rotational Period: | 19.89 Hours |
| Axial Tilt: | 6.52 degrees |
| Atmosphere: | Ultra Thick (Gas Giant) |
| Composition: | Hydrogen |
| | Helium |
| | Methane |
| | Ammonia |
| | Carbon Dioxide |
| | Water Vapor |
| Hydrosphere: | None |

## YANCE VII

| | |
|---|---|
| Common Name: | Yance VII |
| Mean Orbital Radius: | 37.4612 AU |
| Mean Orbital Velocity: | 4.8698 km/sec |
| Orbital Inclination: | 6.62 degrees |
| Orbital Eccentricity: | 0.01 |
| Perihelion: | 37.08659 AU |
| Aphelion: | 37.83581 AU |
| Period: | 229.2834 Standard Years |
| Mass: | 5.3484e24 kg (0.8950 Earth) |
| Radius: | 6472 km (1.0147 Earth) |
| Density: | 4.71 g/cm^3 |
| | (0.8579 Earth Standard) |
| Gravity: | 0.8706 G |
| Rotational Period: | 15.43 Hours |
| Axial Tilt: | 22.24 degrees |
| Atmosphere: | Vacuum |
| Composition: | None |
| Hydrosphere: | None |
| Mean Temperature: | 39K |
| Moons: | 1 |

(continued at top)

| | |
|---|---|
| Mean Temperature: | 47K at cloud tops |
| Moons: | 14 |
| Rings: | None |

## YANCE VIII

| | |
|---|---|
| Common Name: | Yance VIII |
| Mean Orbital Radius: | 53.7638 AU |
| Mean Orbital Velocity: | 4.0650 km/sec |
| Orbital Inclination: | 8.70 degrees |
| Orbital Eccentricity: | 0.01 |
| Perihelion: | 53.22616 AU |
| Aphelion: | 54.30144 AU |
| Period: | 394.2166 Standard Years |
| Mass: | 9.6674e26 kg (161.7705 Earth) |
| Radius: | 53117 km (8.3282 Earth) |
| Density: | 1.54 g/cm^3 |
| | (0.2805 Earth Standard) |
| Gravity: | 2.3361 G |
| Rotational Period: | 35.11 Hours |
| Axial Tilt: | 31.84 degrees |
| Atmosphere: | Ultra Thick (Gas Giant) |
| Composition: | Hydrogen |
| | Helium |
| | Methane |
| | Ammonia |
| | Sulfur Dioxide |
| Hydrosphere: | None |
| Mean Temperature: | 33K at cloud tops |
| Moons: | 11 |
| Rings: | Inner: 67,828 km radius |
| | Outer: 76,995 km radius |

# HALSTEAD STATION III

## STELLAR DATA

| | |
|---|---|
| Astronomical Code: | HIP 500794 |
| Star: | Halstead Station |
| Stellar Type: | M4II (Red Bright Giant) |
| Mass: | 15.50 Solar Masses (3.0830e31 kg) |
| Radius: | 675 Solar Radii (469,800,000 km) |
| Luminosity: | 4760 Solar Luminosity (1.85e37 ergs/sec) |
| Lifespan: | 0.0326 Billion Years |
| Current Age: | 0.0222 Billion Years |
| Current Status: | Very Unstable |

## PLANETARY SYSTEM DATA

| | |
|---|---|
| Planets: | 8 |
| Rocky Worlds: | 4 |
| Gas Giants: | 4 |
| Major Asteroids*: | 17 |
| Minor Asteroids*: | 173 |
| Asteroid Belts: | 1 |

*Major Asteroids are defined by Comstar as asteroids above 500km in radius. Minor Asteroids are above 50km in radius. Most systems have countless asteroids smaller then this, and thus are not listed here.

## HALSTEAD STATION I

| | |
|---|---|
| Common Name: | O'Reilly |
| Mean Orbital Radius: | 15.4697 AU |
| Mean Orbital Velocity: | 29.8353 km/sec |
| Orbital Inclination: | 7.71 degrees |
| Orbital Eccentricity: | 0.08 |
| Perihelion: | 14.23212 AU |
| Aphelion: | 16.70728 AU |
| Period: | 15.4546 Standard Years |
| Mass: | 1.6260e24 kg (0.2721 Earth) |
| Radius: | 3929 km (0.6160 Earth) |
| Density: | 6.40 g/cm^3 (1.1658 Earth Standard) |
| Gravity: | 0.7181 G |
| Rotational Period: | 11.99 Hours |
| Axial Tilt: | 11.94 degrees |
| Atmosphere: | Very Thin (0.0054 Earth Standard) |
| Composition: | Sulfur Dioxide Carbon Dioxide |
| Hydrosphere: | Molten Silicates |
| Mean Temperature: | 886K |
| Moons: | 0 |

## HALSTEAD STATION II

| | |
|---|---|
| Common Name: | Boyle |
| Mean Orbital Radius: | 48.3542 AU |
| Mean Orbital Velocity: | 16.8754 km/sec |
| Orbital Inclination: | 7.76 degrees |
| Orbital Eccentricity: | 0.02 |
| Perihelion: | 47.38712 AU |
| Aphelion: | 49.32128 AU |
| Period: | 85.4054 Standard Years |
| Mass: | 2.0431e27 kg (341.8881 Earth) |
| Radius: | 72499 km (11.3670 Earth) |
| Density: | 1.28 g/cm^3 (0.2332 Earth Standard) |
| Gravity: | 2.6502 G |
| Rotational Period: | 23.74 Hours |
| Axial Tilt: | 24.91 degrees |
| Atmosphere: | Ultra Thick (Gas Giant) |
| Composition: | Hydrogen Helium Sulfur Dioxide Carbon Dioxide Water Vapor |
| Hydrosphere: | None |
| Mean Temperature: | 515K at cloud tops |
| Moons: | 14 |
| Rings: | None |

## HALSTEAD STATION III

| | |
|---|---|
| Common Name: | Halstead Station |
| Mean Orbital Radius: | 130.7395 AU |
| Mean Orbital Velocity: | 10.2628 km/sec |
| Orbital Inclination: | 0.00 degrees |
| Orbital Eccentricity: | 0.01 |
| Perihelion: | 129.43211 AU |
| Aphelion: | 132.04690 AU |
| Period: | 379.7033 Standard Years |
| Mass: | 1.8424e24 kg (0.3083 Earth) |
| Radius: | 4499 km (0.7054 Earth) |
| Density: | 4.83 g/cm^3 (0.8798 Earth Standard) |
| Gravity: | 0.6206 G |
| Rotational Period: | 22.50 Hours |
| Axial Tilt: | 23.04 degrees |
| Atmosphere: | Standard (1.6815 Earth Standard) Unbreathable |
| Composition: | Argon Cyanide Neon Water Vapor Ozone |
| Hydrosphere: | Water |
| Mean Temperature: | 262K |

## PLANETOGRAPHY

| | |
|---|---|
| Total Surface Area: | 254,355,920.17km^2 |
| Land Surface Area: | 152,613,552.10 km^2 |
| % coverage of Hydrosphere: | 40% |
| Satellites: | None |

## ECONOMY

| | |
|---|---|
| Natural Resources: | Radioactives Iron Bauxite |
| Processed/ Manufactured Goods: | Refined Metals |
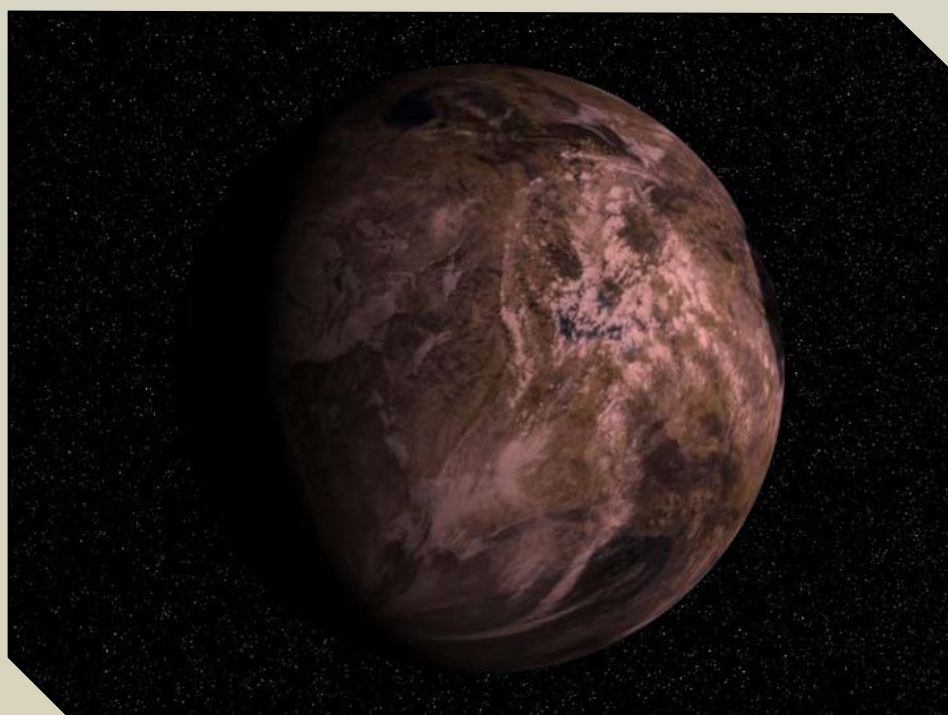
## POPULATION

| | |
|---|---|
| **Population:** | 88,184 (As of 3067) |
| **Population density (km^2):** | 0.0006 (Over all land surface) |
| **Urbanization:** | 100.0000% |
| **Ethnic Groups:** | Asian (65%) |
| | Middle-Eastern (20%) |
| | African (10%) |
| | Other (5%) |
| **Religion:** | Buddhist (50%) |
| | Islam (40%) |
| | Other (10%) |
| **Labor Force:** | Agriculture (5%) |
| | Education (5%) |
| | Industry (50%) |
| | Service (35%) |
| | Other (5%) |
| **Planetary Militia:** | 1 Lance of BattleMechs |
| | 2 Battalions of Infantry |

## NOTES

The founding of Halstead Station traces back to the early days of human expansion, when the growing Ozawa Mercantile Association sought to ensure its dominion of the coreward and spinward region of the galaxy, through a chain of stations under its complete control. Unfortunately, the system chosen for one of the way stations lacked one small requirement: a habitable world.

Because it was rich in minerals, particularly in the asteroid belt and on the third planet, a poisonous rock encased in a deadly argon-cyanide atmosphere, the system could not be ignored as a candidate.

Engineers under the command of Geoffrey Halstead, one of the Association's more visionary directors, established Halstead Station in 2207 and renamed the world after their new colony.

Halstead Station, more than merely a domed settlement on a poisonous wasteland, was actually a labyrinth of underground tunnels; huge surface and subsurface storehouses; and massive, environmentally sealed habitats that when completed, covered nearly three percent of the tiny planet's surface. When the growing Draconis Combine finally crushed the Ozawas, Halstead Station, as one of the Association's few surviving facilities, fell into the hands of House Kurita, which quickly assigned a significant portion of the ever-expanding facilities to military use.

Over the centuries, Halstead Station has seen use as a military supply base, a maximum-security prison, and a place where dishonored soldiers were sent to reflect upon their mistakes. Though Halstead Station continued to expand as extensive mining drilled out more under-ground tunnels, the quality of life for its inhabitants gradually began to decline.

The world is most famous for the events of 3013, the so-called Battle of Halstead Station. At the very beginning of Prince Hanse Davion's reign, the MIIO reported that Combine construction crews had

stumbled across the ruins of a Star League-era university housing a huge, unopened vault. Realizing how important the contents of that vault might be, Hanse rushed ahead with the raid plans and decided to personally lead the attack.

What was planned as a simple objective raid, turned into a month long battle, but luck was with the young Prince, however. When Prince Davion's BattleMechs broke into the vault, he and his men found rows upon rows of books and computer memory cubes. Hanse and his troops carried off as many of the books as time would permit, burning what they could not carry. Unofficial sources say that over three thousand books and other materials were taken away from the vault, most of them on highly technical subjects.

The Halstead Collection, as it came to be known, formed the centerpiece of the Prince's ideas for the New Avalon Institute of Science. Today, the Halstead Collection is housed in the NAIS in an environmentally controlled library.

## HALSTEAD STATION IV

| | |
|---|---|
| **Common Name:** | Zumbro |
| **Mean Orbital Radius:** | 175.9641 AU |
| **Mean Orbital Velocity:** | 8.8462 km/sec |
| **Orbital Inclination:** | 3.73 degrees |
| **Orbital Eccentricity:** | 0.01 |
| Perihelion: | 174.20446 AU |
| Aphelion: | 177.72374 AU |

Period: 592.8847 Standard Years
Mass: 6.5386e26 kg (109.4150 Earth)
Radius: 48246 km (7.5644 Earth)
Density: 1.39 g/cm^3
(0.2532 Earth Standard)
Gravity: 1.9152 G
Rotational Period: 28.26 Hours
Axial Tilt: 35.03 degrees
Atmosphere: Ultra Thick (Gas Giant)
Composition: Hydrogen
Helium
Methane
Ammonia
Water Vapor
Hydrosphere: None
Mean Temperature: 249K at cloud tops
Moons: 11
Rings: None

## HALSTEAD STATION V

Common Name: Dockery
Mean Orbital Radius: 267.3619 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity: 7.1766 km/sec
Orbital Inclination: 6.12 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity: 0.08
Perihelion: 245.97295 AU
Aphelion: 288.75085 AU
Period: 1110.4102 Standard Years
Mass: 2.0251e27 kg (338.8655 Earth)
Radius: 77968 km (12.2245 Earth)
Density: 1.02 g/cm^3
(0.1858 Earth Standard)
Gravity: 2.2712 G
Rotational Period: 12.80 Hours
Axial Tilt: 44.42 degrees
Atmosphere: Ultra Thick (Gas Giant)
Composition: Hydrogen
Helium
Methane
Ammonia
Water Vapor
Hydrosphere: None
Mean Temperature: 226K
Moons: 16
Rings: Inner: 78,427 km radius
Outer: 82,971 km radius

## HALSTEAD STATION VI

Common Name: White
Mean Orbital Radius: 377.6258 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity: 6.0387 km/sec
Orbital Inclination: 7.24 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity: 0.08
Perihelion: 347.41574 AU
Aphelion: 407.83586 AU
Period: 1863.9173 Standard Years
Mass: 3.7598e27 kg (629.1462 Earth)
Radius: 99543 km (15.6072 Earth)
Density: 0.91 g/cm^3
(0.1658 Earth Standard)

Gravity: 2.5870 G
Rotational Period: 21.11 Hours
Axial Tilt: 13.27 degrees
Atmosphere: Ultra Thick (Gas Giant)
Composition: Hydrogen
Helium
Methane
Ammonia
Water Vapor
Hydrosphere: None
Mean Temperature: 190K at cloud tops
Moons: 7
Rings: Inner: 103,305 km radius
Outer: 111,429 km radius

## HALSTEAD STATION VII

Common Name: Linn
Mean Orbital Radius: 462.7460 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity: 5.4551 km/sec
Orbital Inclination: 10.09 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity: 0.01
Perihelion: 458.11854 AU
Aphelion: 467.37346 AU
Period: 2528.4139 Standard Years
Mass: 1.4575e24 kg (0.2439 Earth)
Radius: 4127 km (0.6471 Earth)
Density: 4.95 g/cm^3
(0.9016 Earth Standard)
Gravity: 0.5834 G

Rotational Period: 37.96 Hours
Axial Tilt: 9.04 degrees
Atmosphere: Vacuum
Composition: None
Hydrosphere: None
Mean Temperature: 166K
Moons: 0

## HALSTEAD STATION VIII

Common Name: Dorr
Mean Orbital Radius: 579.6127 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity: 4.8742 km/sec
Orbital Inclination: 9.58 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity: 0.09
Perihelion: 527.44756 AU
Aphelion: 631.77784 AU
Period: 3544.3858 Standard Years
Mass: 8.4334e24 kg (1.4112 Earth)
Radius: 7845 km (1.2300 Earth)
Density: 4.17 g/cm^3
(0.7596 Earth Standard)
Gravity: 0.9343 G
Rotational Period: 16.25 Hours
Axial Tilt: 44.43 degrees
Atmosphere: Vacuum
Composition: None
Hydrosphere: None
Mean Temperature: 155K
Moons: 3



*Hanse Davion, First Prince, 3013.Halstead Station III, in orbit post-raid.*

# KERVIL

## STELLAR DATA

| | |
|---|---|
| Astronomical Code: | HIP 501000 |
| Star: | Kervil |
| Stellar Type: | K3V (Orange Main Sequence) |
| Mass: | 0.70 Solar Masses (1.3923e30 kg) |
| Radius: | 0.71 Solar Radii (494,160 km) |
| Luminosity: | 0.162 Solar Luminosity (6.30e32 ergs/sec) |
| Lifespan: | 43.2099 Billion Years |
| Current Age: | 7.8809 Billion Years |
| Current Status: | Stable |

## PLANETARY SYSTEM DATA

| | |
|---|---|
| Planets: | 3 |
| Rocky Worlds: | 3 |
| Gas Giants: | 0 |
| Major Asteroids*: | 13 |
| Minor Asteroids*: | 265 |
| Asteroid Belts: | 0 |

*Major Asteroids are defined by Comstar as asteroids above 500km in radius. Minor Asteroids are above 50km in radius. Most systems have countless asteroids smaller then this, and thus are not listed here.

## KERVIL I

| | |
|---|---|
| Common Name: | Kulho |
| Mean Orbital Radius: | 0.1344 AU |
| Mean Orbital Velocity: | 68.0228 km/sec |
| Orbital Inclination: | 6.19 degrees |
| Orbital Eccentricity: | 0.04 |
| Perihelion: | 0.12902 AU |
| Aphelion: | 0.13978 AU |
| Period: | 21.4953 Standard Days |
| Mass: | 6.0120e23 kg (0.1006 Earth) |
| Radius: | 2891 km (0.4533 Earth) |
| Density: | 5.94 g/cm^3 (1.0820 Earth Standard) |
| Gravity: | 0.4904 G |
| Rotational Period: | 14.97 Hours |
| Axial Tilt: | 30.38 degrees |
| Atmosphere: | Vacuum |
| Composition: | None |
| Hydrosphere: | None |
| Mean Temperature: | 444K |
| Moons: | 4 |

## KERVIL II

| | |
|---|---|
| Common Name: | Kervil |
| Mean Orbital Radius: | 0.4503 AU |
| Mean Orbital Velocity: | 37.1623 km/sec |
| Orbital Inclination: | 0.00 degrees |
| Orbital Eccentricity: | 0.01 |
| Perihelion: | 0.44580 AU |
| Aphelion: | 0.45480 AU |
| Period: | 131.8247 Standard Years |
| Mass: | 1.1459e25 kg (1.9175 Earth) |
| Radius: | 7871 km (1.2341 Earth) |
| Density: | 5.61 g/cm^3 (1.0219 Earth Standard) |
| Gravity: | 1.2611 G |
| Rotational Period: | 14.75 Hours |
| Axial Tilt: | 17.05 degrees |
| Atmosphere: | Standard (1.4603 Earth Standard) |
| Composition: | Nitrogen Oxygen Methane Carbon Dioxide Argon |
| Hydrosphere: | Water |
| Mean Temperature: | 280K |

## PLANETOGRAPHY

| | |
|---|---|
| Total Surface Area: | 778,519,847.35 km^2 |
| Land Surface Area: | 77,851,984.73 km^2 |
| % coverage of Hydrosphere: | 90% |
| Satellites: | Mahol (638 km radius) 4.4334 Day Period Honkala (1291 km radius) 23.8407 Day Period |

## ECONOMY

| | |
|---|---|
| Natural Resources: | Magnesium Manganese Petroleum |
| Processed/ Manufactured Goods: | Petrochemicals Refined Petroleum Products Refined Metals |

## POPULATION

| | |
|---|---|
| Population: | 13,120,752 (As of 3067) |
| Population density (km^2): | 0.1685 (Over all land surface) |
| Urbanization: | 69.1884% |
| Ethnic Groups: | European (45%) Asian (45%) African (5%) Other (5%) |
| Religion: | Buddhist (50%) Judeo-Christian (35%) Hindi (10%) Other (5%) |
| Labor Force: | Agriculture (15%) Education (20%) Industry (30%) Service (20%) Other (15%) |
| Planetary Militia: | 1 Lance of BattleMechs 2 Regiments of Armor (mainly Hovercraft) 1 Regiment of Infantry |

## NOTES

With water covering almost all of its surface, and the remainder given over to ten large island masses and an
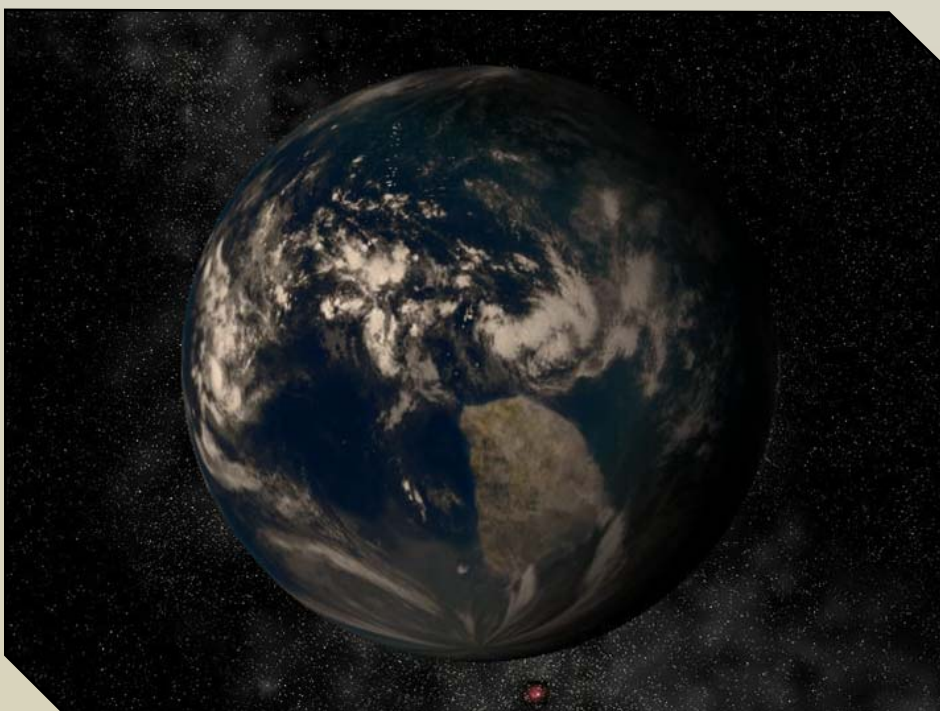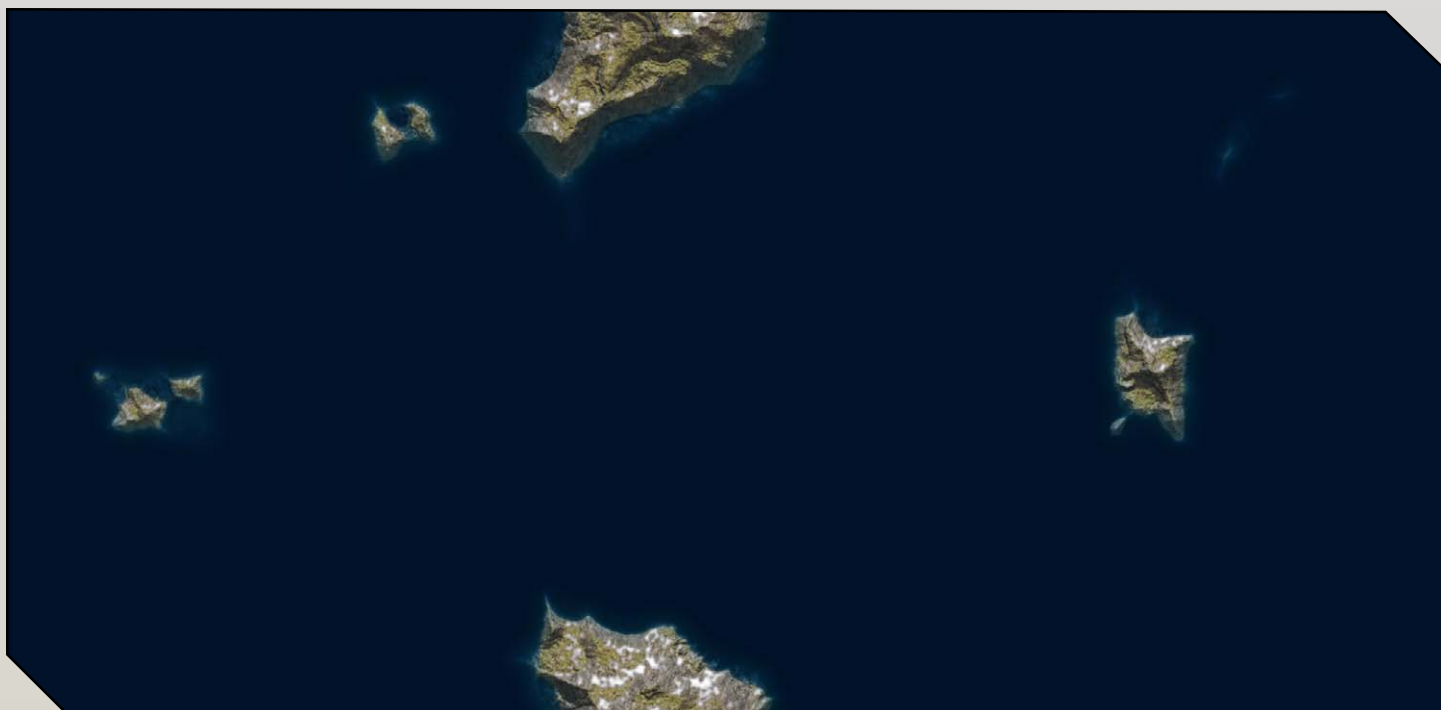
assortment of smaller chains dominated by volcanoes, Kervil was quickly established as a mining world. Industries geared toward locating and exploiting the valuable metals churned up by lava flows arose within a decade of the planet's colonization. The Ozawa Mercantile Association, a collective of merchants that dominated the region before the rise of House Kurita and the Draconis Combine, took a liking to Kervil and its vast metal deposits. Through negotiations with the local government, the Association established its own offices, outposts, offshore mining rigs and orbital processing centers, maximizing the efficiency of Kervil's mining operations in exchange for almost exclusive access to the refined metals.

When the Dragon crushed the Association, these facilities, some damaged by Kuritan attacks, came under Combine control. At the peak of the Star League, Kervil's metal industry and orbital refineries became a major producer of ferro-fibrous armor and endo-steel, used extensively in the manufacture of BattleMechs and other military vehicles. It was perhaps for this reason that forces sympathetic to the Outworlds Alliance attacked Kervil during the Reunification War, attempting to demolish the distribution centers on the planet's surface after crippling several orbital factories.

A small BattleMech unit stationed on Kervil, part of the SLDF's 138th BattleMech

Division, was all that stood between the renegade forces and total destruction. The woefully outnumbered SLDF troops put up a brave fight, first with hit-and-run attacks and later with an assault against one of the renegade DropShips, while waiting for reinforcements to arrive. Still outnumbered nearly 5 to 1, however, the defenders were forced to fall back to Fort Steel, their main base near the planetary capital of Iron City.

For three days they held out against a siege by angry renegades; then the enemy troops overwhelmed them and destroyed the fort and its defenders to the last 'Mech and soldier. This stand, likened to the battle for the Alamo on Terra, ultimately achieved its goal, as the departing renegades ran full-on into SLDF reinforcement troops on their way out of the system, losing the entire raiding force to the guns of SLDF WarShips. The brave SLDF defenders who died at the Battle of Kervil are still remembered today: Fort Steel's remains are a historic site open to tourists year-round. This battle, as it happens, was the only major military action seen on Kervil; even the SLDF liberation from Amaris the Usurper was comparatively bloodless. The planet was virtually ignored throughout the Succession Wars, save for some minor raids that destroyed the advanced armor metal plants in orbit and several military-grade metal refineries on the surface.

Today, despite these losses, mining and metallurgy remain Kervil's greatest

industries. Iron City, still the planetary capital, is located on Greater Domain, Kervil's largest island continent. Greater Domain and seven other large island masses — Brahn, Northland, Satella and Lesser Domain in the north and Bellas Major, Bellas Minor and Karnophia in the south-support the majority of the planet's population and industries. The north polar continent of Freiholt and the equatorial continent of Infernus are sparsely settled, due to the extreme cold and lack of minerals on Freiholt and the chain of active volcanoes on Infernus.

| KERVIL III | |
|---|---|
| **Common Name:** | Sarkivaara |
| **Mean Orbital Radius:** | 3.2276 AU |
| **Mean Orbital Velocity:** | 13.8808 km/sec |
| **Orbital Inclination:** | 26.70 degrees |
| **Orbital Eccentricity:** | 0.01 |
| Perihelion: | 3.19532 AU |
| Aphelion: | 3.25988 AU |
| **Period:** | 6.9306 Standard Years |
| **Mass:** | 3.6206e24 kg (0.6059 Earth) |
| **Radius:** | 5703 km (0.8942 Earth) |
| **Density:** | 4.66 g/cm^3 |
| | (0.8488 Earth Standard) |
| **Gravity:** | 0.7590 G |
| **Rotational Period:** | 26.35 Hours |
| **Axial Tilt:** | 42.39 degrees |
| **Atmosphere:** | Vacuum |
| Composition: | None |
| **Hydrosphere:** | None |
| **Mean Temperature:** | 90K |
| **Moons:** | 3 |

# PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

by Ray Arrastia

**Ray Arrastia shows step by step how he modified and painted Victor's Prometheus for the Origins 2005 Camospecs Online Diorama.**

My inspiration for this project was twofold. First off there's all the wonderful work done by Chris Lewis, and his official OmniMech renderings, which can be found on his web page, **www.thudgun.com/BTech/Omnis.html**. He's finally given a consistent view of what all the OmniMech configurations look like, and after all these years, they finally *make sense*. The Prometheus configuration is pretty radical from the Prime, so I wanted to make sure that Vic used that in the final battle of the FedCom Civil War. After going through Endgame, I see that the weapons loadout is mentioned several times, and it did indeed match the Prometheus configuration.

My other big influence was the Endgame cover by **Frank Gambino**, which depicts Victor Steiner-Davion's Daishi at the final battle of New Avalon. While fighting on the military field at the base of Mount Davion, the fairy-tale Davion Palace is clearly visible in the background, from which Katherine is surely watching. The colors of the image are simple yet striking, the overall yellow-orange hue thrusting the blue Prometheus out at you. The emotions the image conveys, for me, are quite strong.

While the paint job is quite simple, is it really appropriate? Going solely by the text, you can be 99% certain that Victor employs a 10th Lyran Guard scheme in the final battle, as it is specifically stated that he painted his machine thus for the final campaigns. However, taking the cover art into account, one could read between the lines and justify this other look for the assault on New Avalon. Victor donned a decidedly Davion uniform to start his campaign against Kat, yet Vic has never been a part of the Davion military, being mainly raised, trained, and serving in the Lyran half. But this act served to introduce himself, after a fashion, to the Davion people and military in this conflict, to
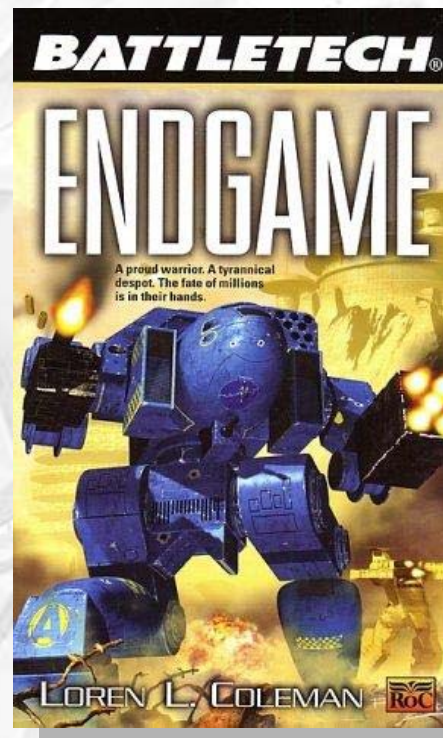
remind them of his Davion half - and to remind them that he is his father's son.

This same reasoning can explain this new paint scheme. Upon landing on the capital of the Federated Suns, it is quite plausible that Vic would paint his machine in something neutral — something neither FedSun or Lyran, yetsomething that would, again, be reminiscent of Hanse, while still playing to all the Lyran and FedSun units on all sides; this scheme at once brings to mind the old Davion Guards, the Lyran Royal Guards, and the hybrid FedCom RCT. He may not be able to restore the unified nation that his parents hoped to create, but he can save both nations from the tyrannical rule of his matricidal sister.

Yet, as the men and women of the 10th Lyran Guard know — and as we can see from the nose of the Prometheus — Victor Steiner-Davion will always be a Revenant.
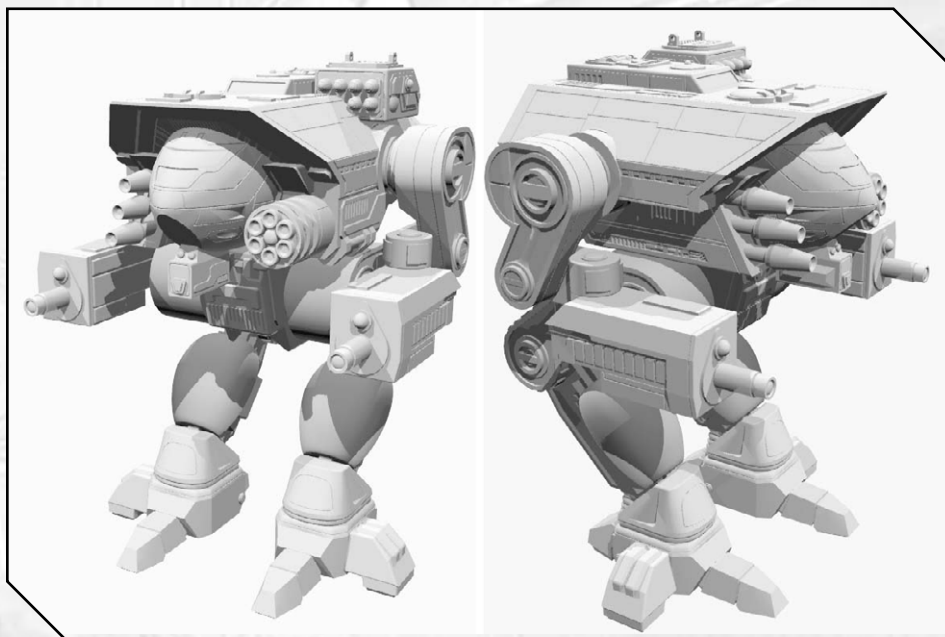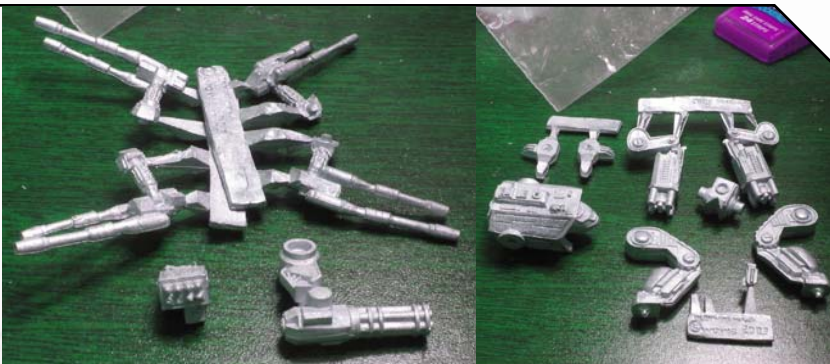
### Preparation

Gather all the parts we need for the project:
- Dire Wolf / Daishi
- 2 pair of Mad Dog / Vulture arm sprues
- Hellbringer / Loki SRM pack
- Stormcrow / Ryoken  Ultra AC20 arm

De-sprue the parts, file away mold lines and clear off any flash. Wash the mini with warm water and a little dishwashing soap.

## THE ARMS

The arms would take a bit of work, as we're not just switching the weapon loadout, but also the shape of the arm itself. The Prometheus configuration is one of the few Daishi configurations that has a lower arm actuator, and I wanted to make sure I correctly displayed that.

### Step 1

I used a dremel to saw off the weapons at the "wrist", leaving the forearm block bare at the front. I then filed it as smooth as possible (and it may be necessary to use some brown stuff to fill any irregularities in your handiwork). Next, saw the forearm block off from the elbow, so that the block is flush at the back. Trim back as much of the remaining elbow forearm until its nearly flush with the upper arm.



### Step 2

A little detail I had to contend with was the teardrop shaped panel on the front of the forearm. I would have liked to have cut it from plasticard, but the thinnest I had seemed a hair too thick. So I created a template on my pc, and printed it out on thick paper card. I cut the tears from the template, selected the 2 cleanest ones, and glued them to the front of the forearms.



### Step 3

Time for more drilling. Drill holes for pinning into the elbow and the forearms. For best fit, the hole in the forearm should be at the top inside corner — the final result should have the arm and elbow meet flush on the inside, with the bulk on the outside. Also, drill a hole into the shoulder pegs, as we'll also be pinning the arms to the torso. Glue the forearms to the elbows, and let the glue cure.



### Step 4

Cut off two 2mm-2.5mm lengths from a 3.2mm plastic rod, these will be used as the lower arm actuators. Cut off two ~7mm lengths from a 2mm plastic rod, these will be the laser barrels. Drill one end of the laser barrels slightly, to create the barrel itself. Drill and pin the other end. To create a little more detail to the barrels, I wrapped the rear 4/5 of the barrel with masking tape, so it looked like a smaller cylinder within a larger one. Also, using a small hole punch (1.5mm-2mm), punch out two "rivets" from thin plastic card (.5mm or less).



### Step 5

Drill a hole into the front of the forearms, near the center of the "circle" part of the teardrop - and glue the lasers. Glue the "rivet" as far up the teardrop as possible. Glue the "actuator" on top of the forearm, on the rear inside corner. Use brown stuff to make the connection of elbow, actuator, and forearm as smooth as possible.
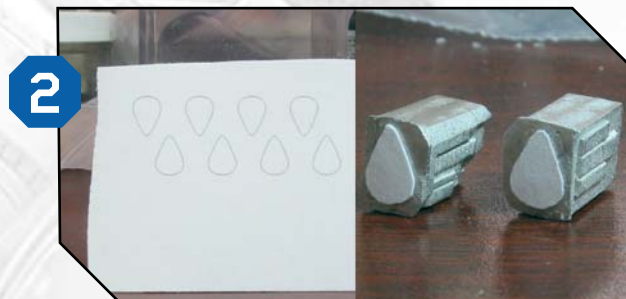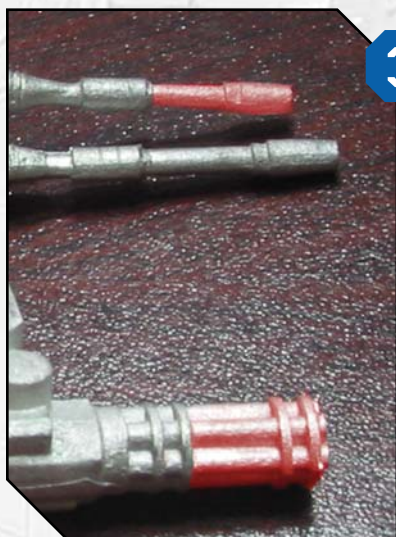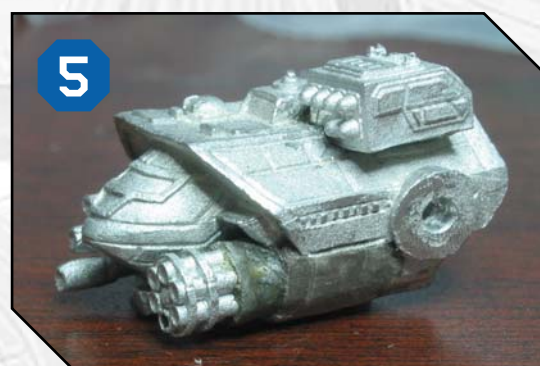
## THE TORSO

While I had the most trepidation about the torso, it turned out to be fairly straightforward.

### Step 1

I used various tools to widen the missile slot to accept the SRM 6 launcher. Keep test fitting to make sure it sits snug and level.

### Step 2

Cut down the front of the mini's left torso so that it's vertical as opposed to angled. Use brown stuff (I used 1/3 green stuff in the mix) to build up the lower, outer left torso so its flush with the overhang. I followed the contour of the rear torso, so that the torso comes down straight, then angles under the 'mech. Fill in the front of the torso to make sure it's flat.

### Step 3

Cut off the small laser from the Vulture arms as shown. Even though large lasers are called for, the large would be too hard to work with, so we're using the mediums. Cut the AC20 off as shown. Drill a pin into the back of the AC20 to pin it to the torso later.

### Step 4

Drill 3 holes into the front right torso. These holes need to be large enough to accept the (medium) laser barrels from the Vulture. Try to space them out as even as possible, and keep the holes vertically aligned. Drill a hole into the left torso, to accept the pin from the AC20. Also, take this opportunity to drill holes into the shoulder sockets to accept the arms. Test fit.

### Step 5

Test fit the lasers. You'll find in order to achieve that "stepped" effect, you'll need to either trim down some lasers, or deepen the holes. Take your time with this to get it right. Test fit the AC20 to make sure it doesn't overextend the torso. You may have to file away some of the nose/center torso to allow the AC to fit snugly. Glue the weapons to the torso (including the little empty "pod" that goes under the nose), and clean up with green/brown stuff.









## THE LEGS

Now, I've always disliked how in the video games they change the look of the 'Mechs, sometimes slightly, sometimes drastically. Conversely, I've always been happy when CBT miniatures follow established artwork as closely as possible, such as the new Omni sculpts by Drew Williams and Chris Lewis. However, when trying to pose an Omni in a dynamic or moving pose, one suddenly realizes why the video game artists make some of the changes they do. See, the OmniMechs can't really walk. I studied the artwork and chopped up a fair amount of miniatures, and studied stills and animation from the various computer games. The way the TRO3050 art sets up most OmniMech's legs (and thus the way the minis have been sculpted) does not allow for proper movement — in many cases they can't even torso twist without crashing their arms or weapons into their hips. Oh well, lets try to fake it.

## THE LEGS (CONTINUED)

### Step 1
Drill holes into the waist to simulate the largest of the 'Mech's breaches.

### Step 2
Bend open right leg to allow for a walk/run stance. Use brown stuff to smooth out any mold lines on the legs, and also to rebuild the (now) cracked joint in the right leg. Glue legs to feet.

### Step 3
Glue the legs to the waist in a walking/running position. Make sure to test fit the stance you want with the torso and the arms, and see if you have clearance. Use some putty to hold everything in place while the glue cures.

### Step 4
Fill a hexbase as per your liking. I didn't do anything fancy, I just filled the base with green stuff. Affix the legs to the base with glue or epoxy, depending on how you filled it. Once again test fit everything, to make sure the mini is level.
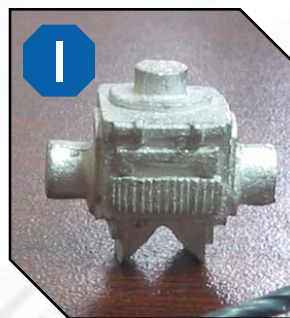
## PAINTING

Wait a day for all the glue and epoxy to cure. Glue all the components together, but leave the arms off for ease of priming/painting. I attach the arms (via their shoulder pins) to some plastic rods for ease of handling. The image on the left shows the mini with the arms test fitted prior to this.

### Step 1
I used black primer for this miniature. I use black because it leaves you with negative space anywhere you wish *not to* or *can't* paint. The best primer I've found is a black lacquer spray — its extremely thin and forgiving. I left the miniature to dry for several hours, and then gave it an overall drybrush of white. What this does, is make an underlying layer of light and shadow for my paint to layer over.

### Step 2
I apply 3 very thin layers of my base color. Each layer I apply, I move farther away from the panel lines or dark areas. I used a 50/50 mix of Vallejo Magic Blue and Imperial Blue. You could substitute these with IWM's True Blue and Dark Blue, GW's Enchanted Blue and Regal Blue, or any generic true/sky blue and dark/purple blue, respectively.

### Step 3
Next I applied a series of light washes. The first wash was applied to the miniature overall, but each successive wash was restricted more and more to the dark areas, until the final wash was just in the panel lines and recesses. For the wash I used the standard "magic wash" formula, colored by an equal mix of Black and Imperial Blue. This, combined with all the previous steps, creates a great deal of depth to the miniature.

## Step 4

Now, to make the miniature really "pop", I did some basic highlighting. I lined all the panels and edges with straight Magic Blue. I could have taken some extra time to build up layers or blend into the underlying paint, but I feel the previous steps created enough overall depth, and this step now serves to sharpen the details. I did however do some highlight blending on some of the curved areas, to match the cover image. After doing the blue areas, I cleaned up and repainted all the non-blue areas black. I then highlighted the true black areas (the forearms and the torso weapons) with Shadow Grey (a dark blue-grey).

## Step 5

For the next step I decided to do all the yellow detailing, including decals (custom decals provided by **www.fightingpirannhagraphics.com**). Some people prefer to gloss coat the mini for better decal adherence, I find this isn't *always* necessary, especially in this case, since my previous use of Future Floor Wax in the "magic wash" achieved the same effect for me. First off were the "A"s on the ankle guards, and the "A"s on the hip joints (while not visible on the Endgame cover, they are on the Storms of Fate cover). Next up I placed the yellow checkers on the shin armor, and on the side torsos, taking care to match both torsos as best as possible, considering their now-different surfaces. Matching the yellow from the decals, I painted a thin ring of yellow onto the torso shoulders.



## Step 6

Continuing on, I placed a custom revenant decal on the nose, and applied a smattering of warning decals on the miniature. All decals had 1 or 2 coats of decal solvent applied. The most arduous thing to paint on the whole miniature was the yellow lines on the side ports. I took my time, and cleaned up any over painting with Imperial Blue. I roughly painted the AC a rust metal color, then drybrushed gunmetal, followed by a light silver drybrushing. I jeweled the laser ports where possible, and jeweled the visor a brown orange, to contrast the blue. To give the missiles depth, I painted them a light gray, with white tips. Any exposed machinery was painted in various metallic colors, while circuitry was painted in bright primary colors. Finally, paint chips were applied all over to match the cover. These were achieved simply by painting the desired areas black, then painting that gunmetal, leaving part of the black paint exposed. Some edges were highlighted with silver.

## Step 7

By the time I got to the base, I was pretty tapped out for ideas, so the resulting base if rather simplistic, but shouldn't detract from the mini itself. I might revisit the base in the future. I painted the base an earthy color, also making sure to lightly drybrush the feet and legs with this color. I glued on a mix of green and earth flocking, and threw in a small lichen patch/bush for some contrasting color. I then painted the rim of the base black. The miniature was then tripled sealed, once gloss, twice flat.

# Cat & Mouse: Part 1
## A CAMPAIGN FOR I-CON 25

by John Hudson

**Hall of the First Circuit**
**Tukayyid City, Tukayyid**
**14 February, 3068**
**1030 Standard**

The rapid-fire clicking of the guard's heels was enough to drive Victors thoughts to distraction.

My, how the mighty have fallen. From all of the technology the Star League had to offer on Terra, to this. Basically, just a glorified bivouac. A temporary situation, so they said. For a temporary situation, it looks pretty permanent to me.

"This way Precentor Martial, they are waiting for you."

The doors opened to reveal a simple room with a large conference table surrounded by ROM agents. This is the Inner Sanctum for Com Star, the First Circuit. There are six men and women in the First Circuit; one for each Great House in the Inner Sphere. The sixth person is Precentor Rom, head of the intelligence agency. There is only one person missing from this meeting of the First Circuit. The Precentor Marshal of Com Star. Victor Steiner-Davion.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, please excuse my tardiness. There have been some interesting reports coming across my desk lately."

"Are you talking about the reports that I have been sending to you? The ones about all of the activity that has been popping up in the Draconis Combine and Lyran Alliance for the past year?"

"Excuse me, Precentor Marshall Davion, but what do you mean activity in the Lyran Alliance?"

"First Precentor Tharkad still cannot use my full name, harping on the Davion side of my family."

"Well Precentor Tharkad, there has been reports of unusual activity on the planets of Ryde, Izar, Cameron, New Kydo, Lyndon, Gallery, Rahne, Halfway, and Lyons. In the Draconis Combine we have received reports of more unusual activities on Kessel, Moore, Kervil, Skondia, Piedmont, Lambrecht, Kaus Media, Yance I, Kimball II, Dabih, and Halstead Station."

"Precentor Martial, that is only a partial amount of that report. There have also been reports from Fairfield, Bryceland, and Barlow's End in the Federated Suns; Oliver, Augustine, Irian, Concord, Uhuru and Amity in the Free World League. Even Old Kentucky in the Capellan Confederation has been busy."



"So Precentor ROM, according to your reports, their seems to be an increase in strange activity throughout the Inner Sphere. How is this different from anything else that you have been reporting?"

"Well, honestly Precentor New Avalon, just that all of these occurrences are within one jump of the Chaos March. I have a bad feeling about this. My gut tells me that all of these incidents are tied together somehow. I just cannot prove it, just yet."

"What do you think you will need to clarify your "gut feeling", Precentor ROM?"

"For one thing Precentor Atreus, information. We have a dead spot in the Chaos March when the HPG Station on the Planet Fletcher was destroyed. Without it, we lost a good portion of intelligence in that region."

"What do you suggest that we do about that?"

"We need that HPG Station to be operational once again, Precentor Luthien. Also, we could also rebuild the Star Corp, Caletra Fighters and Flame Tech factories. We need those factories to help us replenish our forces."

"If we need to rebuild the HPG Station on Fletcher, then I propose that we do it. What say you Precentors?"

"Luthien votes yes."

"New Avalon votes yes."

"Tharkad votes yes."

"Sian votes to abstain."

"Atreus votes to abstain."

"What says you, Precentor Rom and Precentor Martial?"

"We need that information, so I vote yes."

It is interesting how both Sian and Atreus abstained. They could have voted no. I wonder what they are up to?

"Well, we could use those arms factories. Ever since we lost Terra, we have been having a hard time filling in under strength units. So Precentor Martial votes yes."

"Then we have a majority. We will send the 12th Construction Battalion to Fletcher to rebuild the HPG Stations and the arms factories. Is there any more business...no? Then this meeting is concluded."

As the meeting broke up, I felt a gentle pressure on my arm. It was Precentor ROM.

"Walk with me a minute Victor."

We left the meeting room and started down the hall, I had a feeling that Precentor ROM wanted to get something off his chest.

"Victor, I have something to say, and I want it kept between us. These incidents that are happening throughout the Inner Sphere, I think that the Word of Blake is involved, somehow."

"Can you prove it?"

"No, not yet. But I think I am heading in the right direction. You see, the reason I brought up Fletcher is to set a trap. I think that there is a leak in the First Circuit."

"And by getting the First Circuit to vote on Fletcher, you hope to trip up the leak."

"Correct."

"So how can I help?"

"I figure that when the Word of Blake hears that we are rebuilding Fletcher, they will react accordingly."

"By sending a force there to either prevent it, and take the planet for the Wobbies."

"Again, correct. What I need from you is a little insurance."

"Insurance, how?"

"If you sent, say a level IV to protect our Construction Battalion, in secret, I think they can handle whatever the Word of Blake throws our way."

"I think I've got the perfect unit. The 11th Division. It is a Level IV Beta. I think that they can handle just about everything."

"Don't they have experience fighting the Jade Falcons?"

"Yes, they do, so the Word of Blake should be no problem for them."

"There is one more thing to tell you about Fletcher. It is something that is not well known. There is a hidden Star League Castle Brian on Fletcher. We cannot let the Word of Blake get it, Victor. We just cannot."

"I will inform the commander of that. Do you know the location of the Castle Brian?"

"All the records say is that it is in the mountains somewhere. I will have some more information for you as soon as the Eleventh hits Fletcher."

Well then Precentor ROM, consider it done."

"Thank you, Victor."

# Quarterly Puzzler Solution

The crossword solution grid contains the following answers:

- FARLOOKERS
- EXITURI
- BROTHERHOODOFCINCINNATUS
- MANEIDOMINI
- ONESTARFAITH
- INTERSTELLAREXPEDITIONS
- BOUNTYHUNTER
- JARDINE
- GREENGHOST
- GENECASTE
- COTERIE
- ILLUMINATI
- SIXTHOFJUNE
- RIANCORPORATION
- JARNFOLKLKBAL
- DAVIONWARRIORSCABAL
- SCOURGEOFDEATH
- MINNESOTATRIBE