COMMANDO
[QUARTERLY]

- **Making a Statement**
- **Q&A with Randall Bills**
- **Last Painter Standing**
- **Poison Ghosts**
- **Sword and Dragon - Preview!**

UNITED WE CONQUER

COMMANDO [QUARTERLY]

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CORRECTION: Last issue's 20 Questions Puzzler
was written by Andrew Norris

All writing herein is speculative and non-canon.

EDITOR'S CORNER

Welcome to the 2nd Quarter of 2006. For the new readers welcome and I hope that you like what we have for you, for the returning readers glad to have you back.

Well this is the third issue of the new CQ and things are still rolling along. I guess we are doing something right.

To start off we here at theFanPro Commando Quarterly would like to welcome Frank "BT Snipe" Diaz to the team, he will be our proof reader. We also want to welcome Paul Sjardijn as the new Commando Coordinator. Paul: welcome and we hope to see some of your work here in the CQ. We also want to say good job to all the players and Commandos that finished the Jablonski Cup. Here is the list of the top 10.

1	incrdbil2 (KS, USA) *Clan Wolf*	290
2	Peregrine (PA, USA) *Clan Goliath Scorpion*	272
3	Jeyar (VT, USA) *Taurian Concordat*	268
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5	Dragon Lord (WI, USA) *Draconis Combine*	199
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10	BearClaw_Leader (OK USA) *Clan Ghost Bear*	177

Great job and lets see what this year brings for the Martial Olympiad.

On to new things, first off it looks as if the new version of ShadowRun is in stores and Classic Battletech will be getting a hole new look in the 3rd quarter of this year. On the SR front FanPro gave the game a good makeover and from what I have seen from the SR Commandos a great new environment for ShadowRun Missions, Denver is the City for the players to "get dirty". The new SRMs will be running at both Cons and local Fire Bases so keep your eye on the Commando Site for the when and were. CBT is getting a major facelift this year and a bit of a name change. The new name makes a bold statement about the way the game is going. Classic BattleTech Total Warfare. This alone tells you things are going to get loud. FanPro made the announcement on February 6th of the re-branding and what will be changing. They also have given out the first of what will be many FAQ's on what this will mean for the game system. So with all the new things going on at FanPro the only thing I have to say is keep your eyes and ears open as more new and great things will be coming down the pipe for both these great game systems.

Now that we are in the 2nd quarter of '06 we are getting close to the summer convention season, when all the big cons run and many people travel to participate in the major events that FanPro has planned. We also have a large number of local conventions that will be running and I will recommend that you should check them out. I say for you to check them out because you do not need to travel as far (not counting the lucky people that live close to the major cons) and the people running (commandos and players) events at these cons do a lot of work to bring them to you. Also, while talking about places to play, keep your local store in mind — we Commandos run events in-store (firebases) so that we all have local places to do what we love: play games. We have a list of the cons that the

Commandos will be runing events T h e first quarter we also received news that Argent Fire will be back. I look foward to the return of AF as the CQ will be working with them in the future. I also know the Argent Fire is looking for both staff and writers, so if you want to add to a Mecha based e-zine here's your chance.

On a personal note I would like to thank the people a Exodus-Road.com for giving support for Deamation (and for their last minute help getting parts out to us for use in last issues Bounty Hunter article—Ray). They took a step up and gave support without anyone asking. Thank you very much.

Well to end this I want to thank a lot of people that are working very hard to keep the games we all love going strong. To start FanPro, if they had not steped up all these games would not be as strong as they are today. Battlecorps, they are giving CBT and SR a place to get both fiction and product for the games. Iron Wind Metals, if it were not for them none of us would have our metal crack. They have been very supportive of CBT and still have the older SR minis so we can run the shadows in 3D. Fighting Piranha Graphics, makers of fine decals for us less talented people. The people that hold our local conventions. The local cons are fun places to get to meet new people. Last off the local stores that have the games on the shelf for us when we walk in. Keep in mind without any of these people we would not have our fun.

On to the Quarterly.

Anthony "Shadhawk" Hardenburgh
FanPro Commando #86

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

SHADOWRUN®

On the Run™ - Stock #: FPR 26003

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

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.

Runner Havens™ - Stock #: FPR 26005

This first core setting book introduces the players to two of the world's premier shadowrunner sprawls: Seattle and Hong Kong. Each city is described in detail for a shadowrunner's point-of-view, covering key topics such as the balance of power, corporate and underworld affairs, places to see, strange magics, and key features of interest. A wealth of plot hooks are also included. Four other runner-favored cities—Cape Town, Caracas, Hamburg, and Istanbul—are also covered in lesser detail, and gamemaster advice is provided for transforming any specific urban locale into a shadow hotspot.

CLASSIC BATTLETECH®

Classic BattleTech RPG™ - Stock#: FPR35030

Formerly known as Mech-Warrior, 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.

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.

Technical Readout: Vehicle Annex™ - Stock#: FPR35022

Covers the support vehicles behind the militaries of every faction, as well as a slice of everyday life in the BattleTech® universe. The full gamut of the BattleTech universe, fully illustrated for the first time.

IRON WIND METALS RELEASES SECOND QUARTER 2006

Week of 4/10/06

3050 Resculpt
20-386 Man O War Omni Mech— $9.95

3055 Upgrades
20-389 Hitman Mech — $7.50

AeroTech Star Ships
20-030 Atreus Battleship — $10.95

Week of 4/27/06
3067
20-390 Fortune W.A.V. — $7.50

Vintage Classics Return
20-782 Packrat LRPV (2) — $7.50

AeroTech Star Ships
20-031 I.S. Dropship Asst. I — $9.50

(1 each Leopard, Union, Conquistador, and Rose Drop Ships and bases)

Week of 5/8/06
AeroTech Star Ships
20-032 Bonaventure Corvette — $8.50

3060 Resculpt
20-391 Hauptman Mech — $10.95

Vintage Classics Return
20-886 Vulcan Mech — $7.95

Week of 5/22/06
Solaris VII
20-392 Tsunami — $7.95

3050 Resculpt
20-393 Gladiator Omni Mech — $10.95

AeroTech Star Ships
20-033 Clan Dropship Asst. — $10.95
(1 each Broadsword, Union C, Arcadia, Sassanid, and Overlord Drop Ships and bases)

Week of 6/12/06
Mech Pack
10-031 WoB Mech Pack I — $19.95
(Contains 1 each Redshift, Initiate, and Legacy mechs, plus WOB medallion)

Solaris VII
20-394 Colossus Mech — $10.95

AeroTech Star Ships
20-034 Volga Transport — $10.50

EVENT HAPPENINGS

FANPRO COMMANDOS CONVENTION LISTINGS

THE GREAT CANADIAN BAYCON

www.greatcanadianbaycon.com
Email: baycon@interlynx.net
Phone: (905) 516-4904
Where: Hamilton, Ontario
Dates: April 28 — April 30
Location: Ramada Plaza Hotel, 150 King St. E
FanPro Games: Classic Battletech

CLEVELAND GAMERS GAME DAY

www.warhorn.net/clevelandgamers
Email: jmd15@cwru.edu
Where: Cleveland, Ohio
Dates: April 22
Location: Warzone Matrix
   4704 Rocky River Dr
FanPro Games: Shadowrun

RECON

www.hmgs-south.com
Email: chuck@hmgs-south.com
Where: Tampa, Florida
Dates: April 28 — April 30
Location: Busch Gardens Comfort Inn
FanPro Games: Classic Battletech

RISING PHOENIX CON

www.willworkfordice.com
Email: AndrewV@WILLWORKFORDICE.COM
Where: West Allis, Wisconsin
Dates: May 6 — May 7
Location: Tommy Thompson Youth Center
FanPro Games: Classic Battletech

DRUMS ALONG THE MAUMEE #7

www.hmgsgl.com/drums.htm
Email: Drums@hmgsgl.com
Where: Toledo, Ohio
Dates: May 19 — May 20
Location: The Toledo Plaza
   2340 South Reynolds Road
FanPro Games: Classic Battletech

MARCON

www.marcon.org
Where: Columbus, Ohio
Dates: May 26 — May 28
Location: Hyatt Regency
   350 North High Street
FanPro Games: Shadowrun

OASIS

www.warhorn.net/oasis19/
Email: GRuiz6@cfl.rr.com
Where: Orlando, Florida
Dates: May 26 — May 28
Location: Sheraton World Resort
   10100 International Dr.
FanPro Games: Shadowrun

ORIGINS

www.originsgames.com
Where: Columbus, OH
6/29-7/2/06
Location: Greater Columbus
   Convention Center
FanPro Games: Classic Battletech,
   Shadow Run, The Dark Eye.
Special Vendors: FanPro LLc,
   Iron Wind Metals

DEXCON 9

www.dexposure.com
Where: East Brunswick, New Jersey
Dates: July 12 — July 19
Location: East Burnswick Hilton
FanPro Games: Classic Battletech

NEW FIREBASES

UNITED STATES

ALABAMA

Legion Comics
3248 Cahaba Heights Rd
Birmingham, AL 35243
BhamCBTCommando@aol.com
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Chihuahua" Thompson

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anthony@giambastiani.com
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Brent "Rolande" Buckalew

Game Kastle
19 Washington Street
Santa Clara, CA 95050
matt@gamekastle.com
Commando:
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The Game Zone
2302 E. Colorado Blvd.
Pasadena, CA 91101
www.thegamezone.net
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110 s prospect avenue
Hartville , OH 44632
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Fantastichobby@aol.com
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Chris "Fate's Toy" Snider

*Gary's Games
and Hobbies*
8539 Greenwood Ave. N
Seattle, WA 98103
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7515 Mount Lawn Rd.
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john@vesivus.com
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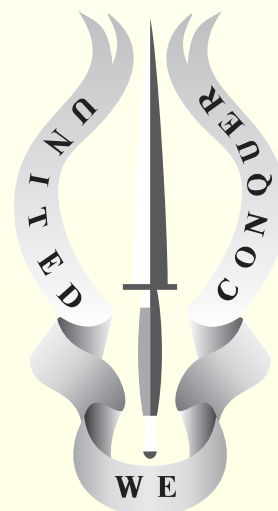Rod "Warrior" Klatt

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BLASTING BICSON

The technology race amongst the corporations has been fierce. New advances seem almost like daily occurrences, as each of the AAA megacorporations battle with each other for technological supremacy.

As Cross collapsed with the Matrix of old, Bicson Bio-medical was snatched up by Ares Macro-technology. Using this newly obtained medical resource, they are working on making state-of-the-art cybernetic implants that are shielded from outside frequencies, attuned to the user's assigned frequency. Neo-Net is very interested in this new technology and is making considerable progress, but Ares is winning the race.

Neo-Net seeks to stop Ares' research dead in its tracks, but the research is happening in a Bicson hospital; one that is public and where many high-class patients are taken. Unable to afford a PR nightmare, Neo-Net has instead hired runners to infiltrate the hospital, find anything to do with the project and destroy it. They will need to be careful about both the Knight Errant Security, as well as nearby Lone Star presence, due to the public nature of the hospital.

SCENARIOS

Meeting Mr. Johnson

What's Up Chummer?

The team is contacted through their usual channels to meet with Mr. Johnson at Club Penumbra at 8PM. The club is it's usual loud and busy self, with the who's who of local celebrity at the party. Mr. Johnson has a private booth in the VIP area, where he conducts the meeting.

The team is asked to get inside the Bicson Bio-Medical facility in Everett, where high profile customers are taken, and track down a project that is being worked on somewhere inside.

The job is to get inside, find project KX-9601 and destroy anything to do with the project. Collateral damage is an extremely bad idea and will have consequences.

Tell it to them Straight

Standing outside the Penumbra, you can hear the loud bass of the dance music rattling the nearby windows, as the lineup of club-hoppers stretches down the street. The Penumbra is always a busy spot, regardless of the day of the week. But tonight DJ I.C. was spinning the tunes, so fans were lining up to pay the cover fee to hear the music and rub shoulders with celebs that had come out to see the famous Ork DJ.

A word to the doorman gets you past the front door without waiting in line, or with a cover charge. The vocal protest of those waiting in line for hours is barely heard over the blast of electronic music from within the club.

At the club's VIP section at the back, several isolated booths are available and one has the name Johnson displayed over the armored glass doorway. Mr. Johnson waits inside the booth, where sound dampening blocks out almost all the music, but the glass shield allows the club floor to be observed. Mr. Johnson is a Caucasian human in an expensive grey suit and glasses. Everything about him is heavily manicured, including his demeanor.

With the team gathered, Mr. Johnson begins, "(Ladies and) Gentlemen, I won't waste your valuable time, so I will get right to the point. My employer wants you to run a little sabotage for us. Your target is the Bicson Bio-Medical facility in Everett. It is a public, yet expensive hospital facility where Ares Macrotech sends their high profile customers. Security is moderate, but the bureaucracy is worse. Somewhere in that hospital is a research lab, where they are developing a secret cybernetics project codenamed KX-9601. I want any data and tangible goods associated with that project destroyed. Leave no trace of it in their systems to be recovered. You are to minimize collateral damage. If you show up for payment with the authorities on your heels, nobody will be there to meet you. Payment for these services will be 16,000¥ apiece. Any questions?"

The GM should have the Johnson answer any questions as honestly as possible, but he won't reveal whom he represents. The most he can be negotiated up to is 20,000¥ each, half up front.

Behind the Scenes

Mr. Johnson's real name is Anthony Dillenger and is a long time black bag recruiter for Neo-Net (specifically Transys NeuroNet). He has dealt with runners often enough that he is comfortable and trusting of the runners and knows the ins and outs of the biz. He has been ordered to buy Neo-Net some time in the cybernetics race and he has fallen back on the one resource he knows best.

Mr. Johnson/Anthony Dillenger

Attributes

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	E	Ess	In	IP
3	2	3	2	4	5	4	4	3	5.9	7	1

Active Skills: Computer 4, Etiquette (Corporate) 4(6), Negotiations 4, Pistols 3, Unarmed Combat: 3

Mr. Johnson Legwork Results:

Appropriate Contacts:
Matrix, Corporate, Street
(-1 modifier)

Success	Results
0	Who?
1	He's a Neo-Net rep, I think. Definitely not a Japanacorp…
2	He's the local Neo-Net guy. His record is spotless, from what I'm told.
3	The guy's real name is Anthony Dillenger. Been working the shadows for years without a blemish on his rep.
4	A lot of up-and-coming Neo-Net black baggers don't like him, 'cause he never screws up.

Knowledge Skills: Ares Corporate Policy 4, AAA Politics 4, Seattle Fixers 4, Psychology 5, Negotiations Training 3

Cyberware: Datajack

Mr. Johnson is a Caucasian businessman with brown hair and eyes. His is dressed in a crisp suit, designer leather shoes and gold-trimmed glasses. He is clean-shaven, has salon-groomed hair and a manicure. Despite his pretentious appearance, he speaks the language of the shadows very well and knows the biz very well. Because of his familiarity with the biz, he's a hard man to negotiate with.

While the Johnson is forthcoming with any info he has, the team may choose to investigate the Johnson to learn about his reputation.

Pushing the Envelope

The only thing that could complicate things is if the runners start a fight in the club, or someone decides they want a piece of the runner (old adversary, or a disgruntled club patron, who the runner jumped in ahead of). A public brawl could bring in Lone Star and complicate meeting the Johnson.

Debugging

If the team starts a fight in the club, the Johnson might up and leave, hoping to recruit a less violent team for what will probably be a covert op.

At the Hospital

What's Up Chummer?

The Everett Bicson Clinic is technically a public hospital, but patients have to either be close to Ares, or be fairly wealthy to afford treatment at the hospital. In that regard, both Ares Security and Lone Star have a presence here in order to protect the patients. The hospital is a bustling hive of activity, so slipping inside may be fairly easy, but avoiding being noticed when accessing restricted areas will likely cause problems.

Tell it to them Straight

The Everett Bicson Clinic is a very busy place, where the wealthy come for treatment in relative privacy, as opposed to the major hospitals in Seattle. With wealth comes security. Patients don't want outside influences bothering them during their stay, so Ares security is present in the building at all times. Being a public area, Lone Star also has jurisdiction should something occur in the building.

While there are fire exits around the outside of the building, the main entrance is the cul-de-sac at the building's center.

Behind the Scenes

Most of the people in the building are innocent civilians, working as doctors and nurses, or visiting injured loved ones. Guards are posted at most checkpoints for visual recognition, since most locks only require a card key to bypass. Should things go poorly, the stats for security are below:

Ares Security

Attributes

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	E	Ess	In	IP
4	4(6)	4(5)	3	3	3	3	4	3	3.4	7(8)	1(2)

Skills: Pilot Ground Vehicle 3, Computer 3, Negotiations 3, Unarmed Combat 3, Pistol 4, Automatics 3, Shadowing 3, Athletics 3, Corporate Policy 3, Ares Employees 3, Firearm Maintenance 3, Security Procedures 3

Cyberware: Cybereyes (Rating 3 with Low Light, Flare Comp and Thermographic Sight); Smartlink; Wired Reflexes; Muscle Toner II

Gear: Ares Predator IV; Armor Vest (6/4); Commlink (2/3   /2/2)

The Ares soldiers are well trained and have substantial modifications, since they often have to guard some high profile clientele. They don't wear bulky armor or carry large weapons to avoid alarming patients, but sub-machineguns are available, should they need to be deployed.

Standard procedure for security is to radio for backup at the first sign of a threat and if the threat is confirmed, Lone Star is contacted. They will then negotiate the surrender of the threat, or at least contain them to avoid injuring patients.

Map Legend

Certain abbreviations are used to signify the style of security measure in place in any given room:

C## - represents a camera, relaying audio and video data back to room number ##

KP# - a keypad style lock of rating #

C<letter># - A Cardkey style lock. The letter represents the level of clearance required, where "a" is the highest and "z" would be the lowest. A rating "b" card will open doors of "b" rating or lower, but not "a" rated locks. The lock is of rating #.

PS# - A palmprint scanner of rating #.

1 - Recovery. C07 observed. This is where people who've had recent surgery recover before being returned to their rooms.

2 - Operating Rooms. KP5 protected and C07 observed. Emergency surgeries, Implant surgeries and repairs, etc are performed in this room (many with Ares' will in mind). The keypads on the doors are used if a surgery needs discretion and/or secrecy.

3 - Cyber-Implant Storage. Cc4 protected and C07 observed. All cyberware on-site ready for implantation is stored here until the patient is in the operating room. Most of the implants are for replacing lost limbs or organs.

4 - Supply Room. Standard key lock. The room contains non-medical supplies, such as cleaning materials and tools for fixing broken gurneys, etc.

5 - Rooms. C07 observed. All in patients are assigned to one of these rooms. There are up to patients per room, plus one bathroom in each.

6 - Medical Supplies. Cc4 protected and C07 observed. Extra bandages, bed sheets, syringes, medicines, etc for in patients are stored in this room.

7 - Security. PS5 and Ca6 protected. There are always security forces on duty, as a hospital never sleeps. All security cameras are fed through this room.

8 - Employee Lounge and Cafeteria. C07 observed. Off duty security and medical personnel sit down in here to read a book, watch the trid or grab a bite to eat.

Implant Wing. Dotted line is a security door that has a Cb5 lock on it.

I1 - Automated Cyberware Construction. Cb5 protected and C07 observed. Automated machines work busily in assembling smaller pieces of cyberware and attaching them to parts mostly assembled. The finished parts are collected and sorted at the far end of the room.

I2 - Labs. Cb5 protected and C07 observed. Two of the labs work on Bioware, the others on Cyberware. The Cyber labs have technicians soldering together the synaptic relays inside cyberlimbs, while hackers jack into the system to ensure the translation codes for each unit are correct. The Bioware labs, are filled with doctors in white Ares smocks studying the vats that grow the biological enhancements, and making sure things are within tolerance. Some of the vats have client numbers on them (DNA matched implants).

I3 - Bioware Stasis. Cb5 and C07 observed. This room is rather cool, and is full of smaller culture vats, each one holding some form of biological implant. Most are sorted by implant, but some are indexed by client number.

Research Wing. Dotted line is a security door that has a Ca6 lock on it.

R1 - Research Labs and Libraries. Ca6 protected and C07 observed. Numerous terminals adorn the room where scientists can access the database for read only interaction with any saved file. To access any file for changes, a password is required as well as a palm scan (PS5) corresponding to the accessing hacker.

R2 - Terminal room. Ca6 protected and C07 observed. The computers in this room hold everything. The file the runners want, as well as many others. The entire patient database for the hospital is on here as well. The runners must be careful that they don't destroy the hospital files, or patients may die due to their interference. The room is equipped with a gas fire suppression system, so it is ill advised to blow up a computer.

R3 - Simsense Labs. Ca6 protected and C07 observed. These rooms have several simsense rigs for both hackers and non-hackers. Once the planning stages are done they need to test the model. The model is loaded into the rig and the person steps in and discovers what it would be like to have the implant installed in a virtual reality. The runners may try this to ascertain why the Johnson wants this non-descript limb design (It has several features built into it, such as quickness and strength boosts, as well as shielded wireless broadcasting)

Pushing the Envelope

Any number of things can go wrong on a run like this. Perhaps another runner team is doing an extraction of a patient and security is heightened when their run goes awry. Perhaps a biological agent is released in the hospital and the building is locked down. GMs are encouraged to use their imagination.

Debugging

If gunfire breaks out, or the runners are discovered in some way, it is quite likely the run will be failed, or the runners will at the very least not get paid. If the runners can complete their mission and escape the hospital, an opportunity for a car chase can happen and the runners can try and lose any pursuing corporate security or Lone Star officers.

PICKING UP THE PIECES

Depending on how the runners conducted themselves over this course of events, their reputation might be on the line. If the run was executed cleanly, there is the possibility that Ares will award them with additional bonuses. If the run is sloppy, but complete, their payment will be cut back. If they lead Lone Star to the meet point, Ares leaves them hung out to dry.

Awarding Karma

Award Karma according to merit of the character's actions, there are some bonuses the players can receive:

+1 if they destroy the data on the computer servers

+1 if they erase the simulation

+2 if they complete the mission without being detected.

BICSON BIO-MEDICAL

Burgton, Xolara
Solaris VII
20 May 3067

A guy walks into a bar on Solaris VII... I know, "Where's the punchline?" you're asking. I'll get to it in due time, trust me.

Anyway, the bar in question is Pluto's Hangar, though it probably should be called Pluto's Dung Heap or something to that effect. The proprietor likes to advertise the dump as a "MechWarrior bar." Just what this city needs, another rat infested hole-in-the-wall that thinks it's the next Thor's. Must be a couple hundred joints just like it in Silesia alone, each one of 'em pretty much indistinguishable from the next. Same stale beer, stale conversation, stale piss smell that hits you like a Gauss round when you walk through the front door. Same dark woodwork designed to hide the lack of regular cleaning. Same shitty, decade-old music blaring through cheap equipment that sounds like it's piped in through the plumbing. Pluto's is that kind of place. It was perfect.

But enough about the rat hole. Let's talk about the rat. See him? Over there in that dark little corner booth. The big, dumb-looking ape with the toothy grin and the Tamar topknot. Yeah, that's the guy.

Gustav Sturm, that's what he calls himself these days. Nice ring to it, don't you think? Positively Teutonic. Helps with keeping up his masquerade as a Lyran 'Mech jock. His real name's far less imposing. He's Jonas Wilton and he's no Lyran. He hails from Nihau in the Free Worlds League, and he's never served a day in the Steiner military. He's just another failed merc who came to this rock hoping for a chance to make a quick score. So far it's working out for him. That's about to change.

So how do I know all this when even his pirate pals don't? Let's just say I have almost limitless resources. In fact, one of 'em, my associate Walt, is sitting in that dingy little booth with Jonas Wilton right now attempting to buy, steal, or otherwise worm his way into their little circle. And no, his real name is not "Walt." I just happen to like how it sounds. It suits him. He looks like a Walt.

Anyway, Walt's really more than my "associate". He's more like my "number one son." He's been with me longest, even though he's still young, and he'll most likely take over the business when I retire or end up on the wrong end of a field-grade laser. He's a great field operative. He's got that "everyman" sort of look that gets him into places and helps him blend into situations where I never could. And he's smart, too. A mechanical genius. In fact, he started as my personal tech. Not a great MechWarrior yet, but we're working on it, and he's catching on fast. Of course, he does have the advantage of having me as his instructor.

And me, you ask? Heh. You don't know me. You think you do, but you don't. You've heard the stories, read the e-books, seen all the cheesy holovids, but that's not the real me. No one knows the real me. But seeing as I'm coming up on retirement, and I'm in a generous mood today, I'll let you in on a secret I never tell anyone. Excited? Honored? Scared? All of the above? Good. You should be.

My name is Vic Travers.

You know me better as the **Bounty Hunter.**
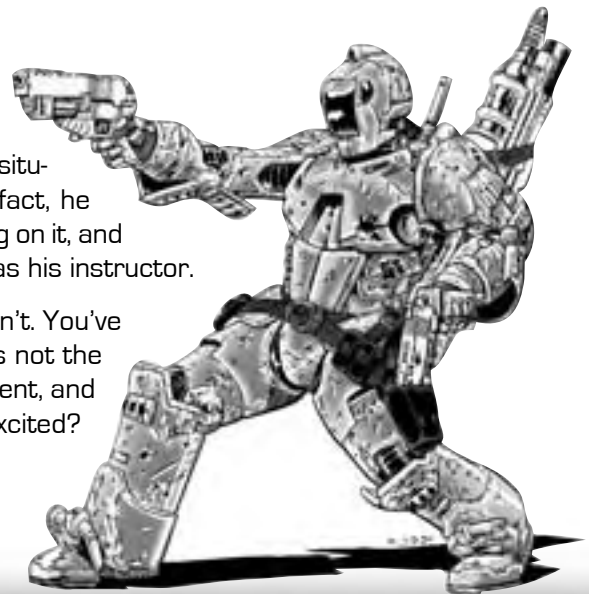
AN UNKNOWN PAST

By Jason Mallory

Last moments of the Matrix, 2064

Kada Sanchez sat in her room playing trideo games. She was trying desperately to avoid boredom, but she wasn't having a lot of luck with the fighting game she was playing.

Kada lived with her parents in a modest home just outside of Los Angeles. Her parents were employees of Novatech; her Dad was a security decker and her Mom was an accountant. Someday, she hoped to work for the company too.

Dropping her simdeck, the 14 year old walked to her Mom's home office and leaned on the doorframe. "Hey Mom..." she said, "I'm bored...any chance I can get a lift to Erica's place?"

"Give me a second hon," Kada's mother said. "That sale I was telling you about is going to start soon. I just need to buy some of this stock and then I'll be right with you." Linda, Kada's Mom, was a Native American woman who was approaching 50, and radiated a certain beauty. Her smile could end any argument. It was this smile she flashed at Kada as she rigged up her cyberdeck. She was getting ready to buy Novatech stock during their Initial Public Offering.

Kada rolled her eyes, sighed with dramatic flair and dragged her heels down the hallway. She plunked herself down on the floor and scooped up her deck again. She was on her fifth combat when she heard her mother screaming from her office.

It wasn't a scream of surprise, or fright. It was prolonged agony.

Kada forgot her game and tore down the hall. She found her mother writhing in pain with the plug jacked into her temple. Kada had been told that if she ever saw her parents acting that way to pull the plug. But the sight of her mother thrashing around and grasping her head tightly, froze her in her tracks.

Her mother's body twitched and bucked with each spasm as electricity fired into her brain. Kada could see an amorphous face on the monitor attached to her mother's deck. While the icon didn't look human, she imagined she made out a malicious grin.

Her mother's body suddenly went rigid, eyes opening wide before slumping into her chair. Kada watched the monitor go to static. A lazy curl of smoke rose from between the keys of her mother's cyberdeck and blood slowly dripped from her nose.

A tear rolled down Kada's cheek as she stared dumbstruck at her mother's limp form. Feeling weak and numb, she could only stand in the doorway, looking blindly at the weathered chair her Mom called her second home.

As tears began to fall more freely, Kada finally managed a faint whisper.

"Mom?"

* * *

Seattle, 2069

"Hey, Willy!" Kada called, "I'm home."

"Ya want a medal?" the ork asked from his workshop.

Kada smirked as she flopped into a threadbare couch and flipped on the trid.

Any visible sign of her father's Hispanic heritage was easily concealed; she appeared as Native American to the untrained eye. She was now an attractive, lithe woman with a lightly reddish hue to her tanned-looking skin. Her black hair hung in a ponytail down just past her shoulder blades. She wore a rock T-shirt and tattered jeans, both of which required a run in the washing machine or an incinerator.

She had just found a good game of Urban Brawl (and the Screamers were actually winning), when Willy strolled in from the basement. "Found a job yet?" he asked.

Willy was old, especially for an ork. Probably in his mid fifties...Kada wasn't exactly sure. He was her godfather and he had taken her in when her parents had been killed in the Crash of 64. His white and wispy hair was almost nonexistent. He walked with a cane due to a bad car accident roughly a year before the Crash. He spoke with a pronounced Scottish accent, especially when under pressure. Considering the man never served in the military, he certainly was a big fan of camo print, since he was rarely seen in anything else.

"Not yet. I figure a good one'll come along soon..."

The ork grunted. "You think this is a free ride, kid? You want the nuyen for all your little excursions, you're gonna have to make some. You think I'm made of money?"

"Are you?" Kada asked, with a playful smirk.

"Funny...I don't remember your parents being smartasses...I don't know where you get it from..."

"I've learned from the best, Uncle Willy," she said with a wink.

The ork smirked, finally shrugging off his gruff exterior. "A pretty girl like you shouldn't be sitting around watching Urban Brawl, when you could be out making a small fortune somewhere."

"Do you know how hard it is to break into the corporate business sector? I had connections at Novatech until they were forced to amalgamate... now I have nothing."

"Here," Willy said, tossing her an optical chip.

"What's this?" Kada popped the chip into the Sensei Commlink strapped to her forearm. It showed a credit balance of a few hundred nuyen and an appointment.

"I do know how hard it is to break into the corporate sector. That's why I pulled a few strings and got you a meet with a local exec at Evo. At least if you work there, I won't have to worry about you working with racist bigots..."

Kada sprang to her feet and nearly tackled the old ork as she hugged him. Willy grunted as she collided. "Thank you so much. I won't let you down, I promise."

"I know you won't. The money is for you to buy a suit...can't show up in a T-shirt and jeans to this kind of thing..."

"I'll go shopping for the suit right now," Kada said before bounding out the door.

"That girl will be the death of me," Willy said, with a smirk before returning to the basement.

* * *

Kada sat fidgeting in front of the dwarf that sat in the desk across from her. She felt the interview was going well, but the dwarf sat, his face emotionless, as he ran a background check on her. The man drummed his fingers on the desk; the noise was boring its way into her head, little by little. She wanted to get up and move around, do anything that wasn't just sitting and listening to rhythmic drumming and the hum of the HR guy's commlink.

"Well," the man said, finally lowering the 3-D hologram, "Everything looks great, Ms. Sanchez. If you would look over these last few issues, I think you would make a good addition to the Evo team."

Kada's face broke into a wide grin. She had made it! The dwarf walked around his desk and handed her a datapad, which she began to peruse. She ran over the terms of the position and soon the smile dropped from her face.

"Is there a problem, Ms. Sanchez?" the HR guy asked.

"It says in here that I am required to use virtual reality..."

"That is correct."

"Isn't it possible to do the job without it?"

"While it is possible, we require a certain standard and quantity of work each day and the only way that criteria can be met, is with the speed immersed interactivity provides. Whether you choose to install a datajack, or use trodes are up to you."

Kada met the man's perplexed stare for a moment before returning her eyes to the pad. After a heavy sigh, she set the pad down on the man's desk. "I guess I won't be taking the position..."

"I assure you, the electronics we use are of the highest quality. There is no risk to you."

"I'm sure my parents were told the same thing..."

The dwarf reflected on her background and tried to defuse her fears. "What happened to your parents was a fluke. Without a tangible backbone to the Matrix, there is no risk of anything of that caliber ever happening again."

Kada felt a tear slide down her cheek as she replayed in her mind her mother's demise; an event brought on by a simple cable willingly plugged into her brain. It had been a safe piece of cyberware that had become a vehicle of death. Any time she considered plugging into the Matrix, she was overcome by an anxiety attack, a sense of nausea and a cold feeling all over. She couldn't do it.

"I...I'm really sorry. I can't..." Kada said, with new tears rolling down her cheek.

The dwarf sighed and nodded. "I'm sorry to hear that. I wish you well, Ms. Sanchez."

Kada shook the man's offered hand and walked out of the office, not looking forward to seeing her Uncle's reaction.

* * *

Kada cried on the living room couch, while Willy stood nearby, leaning heavily on his cane.

"Buck up, Kada. You're stronger than this."

Kada looked up and glared at Willy. "What do you mean by that?"

"You're crying over a job. There are plenty more."

"But, won't datajacks or trodes be a requirement for anything worthwhile?"

"Probably," Willy said, "So that means you have to do one of two things: defeat your fear of the Matrix, or find work that doesn't require it."

Kada sat and thought for a moment, studying her honorary Uncle. "You don't have a datajack...what did you do before you retired?"

"Don't go there, lassie... you want nothing to do with my old lifestyle."

Kada was a little surprised by Willy. He didn't usually block her so obviously. "Why? I don't really know anything about you before I came to live with you...?"

"There's a reason for that. It's better for you if you don't know."

The ork turned and walked down into the basement and soon, she heard his tools running. She had been told not to go downstairs when she was younger. Kada sat and thought about her godfather while she flipped through channels on the trid. Strengthening her resolve, she stood up and walked to the basement door. She had, of course, snuck a peek a few times and didn't see what the big deal was, but each time Willy hadn't been there. Perhaps, if she saw him working, she would get an idea.

She crept down the old wooden stairs as best she could and peered around the corner.

Willy was nowhere to be seen.

Perplexed she continued forward. She heard a saw spin up briefly, as if cutting though something. She went to the nook where the power tools were and there was no sign of Willy. The saw spun up briefly once more, totally unmanned. She walked over and saw that it was set up for remote operation.

She continued exploring the basement, learning that almost everything in her godfather's workshop was rigged for remote operation. As she looked around, she saw no signs that any of the tools had been used. No wear on the blades and no sawdust. Everything was pristine.

She was getting more and more confused, when she saw the pegboard where all the tools hung. Well-oiled hinges showed that the tool rack swung out from the wall. She grasped the board and it lightly swung away, revealing the wall behind it. At first she thought little of it, but she soon noticed the outline of a doorway set into the wall.

"A secret room?!"

She ran her fingers around the edge of the door and tried to find purchase to pull the door open. The heavy door offered no answer as to how to open it, but she noticed a rectangular panel beside the doorway. It was colored to match the beige paneling on the wall, but it was some form of translucent glass. She ran her hand over it and light shone through as something scanned her hand. She recoiled from the door, hoping that it would open.

The door burst outward with a wild-eyed Willy, who quickly leveled a massive pistol at her head. Kada recoiled in fear from her godfather, who looked like a different person at the far end of the weapon.

Willy sighed and reeled in the gun. "Jesus, girl! Are you trying to get yourself killed?"

"What the hell is this, Willy?" Kada said, still not fully recovered from the shock of her caregiver coming at her with a gun.

"Something you were never to learn about..." Willy said.

"Why do you need to keep me in the dark? I'm a grown woman now, Willy. I can take it."

Willy glared at his adopted daughter for a long while before he sighed and let his shoulders droop. "Yer sure about this?"

"Yes. I want the truth, Willy."

Willy stepped back into the secret room, leaving the door open behind him. The heavy door appeared to be made of thick metal, with masonite on the outside to blend with the rest of the basement. Kada stepped across the threshold, into a different world.

The cozy-yet-beaten lifestyle present in Willy's house was nowhere to be seen. The room was metallic and draped in wires. Powerful commlinks lined the desk that was set into the wall and storage compartments dotted the walls.

"What is this?" Kada asked, as she looked around the cybered bunker.

"This is my job, lass," Willy said.

"You said you retired..."

"Aye that I did, from one job. This was the job I started when the old one finished."

"What was your first job?" Kada asked with hesitation.

Willy walked over to a storage compartment and pulled the doors open. Inside was lined with guns and ammunition. "I was a shadowrunner, Kada."

Kada looked at her godfather with shock. "A shadowrunner?! Like on the trid?"

Willy laughed and shook his head. "No, not like on the trid. These trid shows either glamorize the work, or denounce it, while we're likely somewhere in between. It's not glamorous. In reality, we are freelancers, doing the work others won't soil their hands doing themselves."

Kada walked over and touched the guns that Willy had shown her. She had never held the fearful devices before and she examined them closely. Many looked similar, but the subtle differences probably meant something to Willy. "Have you ever...you know...killed anyone?"

"Several people, I'm afraid. Comes with the territory. We always tried to avoid casualties in the biz, but when company employees are willing to die for the latest bit of wiz gadgetry, people fall in the crossfire. I lost a lot of good friends..."

Kada saw the remorse on Willy's face and reflected on all the stories she had been told about shadowrunners. "Bloodthirsty killers, only interested in themselves" was how Novatech educators had summed them up during her youth. However, she had been living with a runner for five years and found that to be incredibly false.

"So, why'd you stop?" Kada asked.

"Ya mean, aside from age? The accident that gave me this…" Willy said, holding up his cane.

"You let a car accident stop your career, after being shot at for years?"

"Nah…your father told you about the accident, right?"

"Bits and pieces," Kada said.

"What he said was that I was in a car accident. What he didn't say was that the car accident was due to a run gone bad. Lone Star was shooting at us and managed to place a lucky shot into the skull of Gears, our rigger. The car crashed and flipped a few times. Those of us that were conscious pulled ourselves from the wreckage crawled away and tried to get into the sewers. We had just gotten to a manhole cover when I took a round to my left knee," Willy said, tapping his cane against his weak knee for emphasis. "It already hurt like hell, but the bullet tore it to bits. Our troll friend…what was his name…?"

Willy concentrated on his memory, but Kada sat in slack jawed awe on the edge of a desk. She had lived with this man and not known anything of who he really was.

"Damn my old mind…can't remember. He died fighting the cops, buying the mage and me time to escape. She healed my gunshot, so I could at least walk and we made it out of there. The pay was good, and I managed to buy myself a couple doses of Leonization. Otherwise, I'd be dead by now…"

"Why didn't you get a cybernetic replacement for your leg? You don't have to use a cane," Kada said.

"Cybernetics and me don't mix, lassie. My body has a habit of rejecting it. So, I just had them patch it up as best they could."

"You retired because you had a limp? Kind of a poor reason…"

"Anything that could slow me down is a liability. Couldn't take the risk. That and I had just lost most of my best friends because of some faulty information. My heart just wasn't in it anymore," Willy said, sorrowfully.

Kada felt bad for her godfather. She knew what it meant to lose one's best friends. Upon thinking of her parents, she looked up at Willy with a questioning look.

"I thought runners and corporate workers were supposed to hate one another. How did you and my Dad get to be friends?"

Willy smirked. "C'mere… I wanna show you something."

He walked over to a small storage box tucked away in the furthest corner of his office. He reached down into it and brought up a heavy metal case. Setting it on the desk, he motioned to Kada. "Go on. Open it."

Kada threw the latches off and lifted the lid. Inside was an old cyberdeck; unlike any she had ever seen. "This is an old Fuchi deck…but just barely. What happened to it?"

"It's heavily customized… it was one of the best decks I've ever seen put to use."

"I didn't know you were a decker…" Kada said. "How did you do it without a datajack?"

"I'm no decker. I get by, but you couldn't pay me enough to get involved in the hazards of hacking a powerful system. This was your father's old deck."

Kada looked at Willy, trying to gauge if he was joking. "What?"

"Your Dad was a runner too, Kada. Before you came along, anyways."

"There's no way my Dad was a shadowrunner. He was a loyal corporate decker."

"Not always. When we were younger, we thought being a runner would be totally wiz and we saved up our money to get into the biz. I got into guns he got into computers. After nearly getting killed the first few times out, we realized how hard the work was going to be and smartened up. Your father didn't like being shot at, and he got shot at a lot, since he was always the one cutting through the corp.'s code and stealing their stuff. Since he really couldn't move when plugged in, he was an easy target. By the time he hit thirty he'd had enough. He hung up his bulletproof vest and went looking for legit work. Shortly after being picked up by Novatech, he met your Mom. Then there was no going back."

"I can't imagine someone giving up running for a desk job…I mean, they seem like the total opposite of one another," Kada thought aloud.

"Your father struggled for a few years. He often complained of being bored and wanting to be in the field again. But his growing infatuation with Linda kept him punching the clock. Ultimately, your mother beat out the call of the shadows and you were born. I have to say, I was reluctant to take on the role as godfather…I never wanted kids."

"Then why did you?"

"It was so important to your Dad that I honor him in that way. I figured I would have died long before him, since I had a shorter lifespan and I continued to work as a runner. I thought I'd get out of the arrangement without having to take care of a whiny little brat."

"Hey…" Kada said, stung by Willy's words.

"If it's any consolation, I have no regrets. You've been very good to me, lass."

Kada smiled. "I didn't even know my own family… if you hadn't told me, I would never have known…"

Kada glared down on the cyberdeck that had belonged to her father. She wanted to heave the deck to the ground and smash it to bits. It was because of those damned contraptions that her parents were dead.

Sensing Kada's thoughts, Willy walked over and closed the deck case and returned it to its old storage spot. "Kada, your family's death was a freak accident. Nothing like it could ever happen again."

"How do you know?" Kada asked.

"Well, I've done a lot of homework on the subject. I'd say the odds are pretty damned good that it won't happen again."

Kada looked at her godfather. "Homework?"

"What, you think you were the only one upset by your family's death? I spent a great deal of effort to try and find someone to blame."

"And?" Kada prodded.

"And it's hard to put the blame on any one entity. I suppose the only guilty party still around is a terrorist cell named Winternight. Don't know much about them, but I know they were ultimately the ones that brought down the Matrix."

"They killed my parents?"

"Nope...an AI got loose in the ECSE during the Novatech IPO and did some horrible things to people. Your folks witnessed him firsthand and paid the price."

"What was it called? The AI."

"It was named Deus. Do you remember the Renraku Arcology shutdown?"

"C'mon, Willy...I was like...nine years old," Kada said, rolling her eyes.

"Tryin' to make me feel old?" Willy said with a smile, "Regardless, it was the same deal. Deus somehow got out of the Arcology and rebuilt in the Matrix. Thankfully, if there was one advantage to Winternight destroying the Matrix, is that they killed that thing once and for all."

"Where is Winternight now?"

"Dunno. Up until '65, most people didn't even know they existed. They're everywhere and nowhere at the same time. Regular enigma stuff."

Kada sat in thought for a moment and then snapped out of it, taking stock of her surroundings. "If you're not a runner anymore, then what is all this?"

"I'm not a runner anymore, but I'm still in the biz. Over thirty years in the biz, you make a few friends. I'm what's called a fixer now."

"You find runners work..."

"You pick that up from the trid? At least they got something right..."

"Willy..." Kada said, eyes staring forward in thought, "would you be willing to show me some stuff?"

"What kinda 'stuff'?" Willy said, with a frown. "Anything I could show you would border on the illegal side and if nothing else, get you into trouble. Shadowrunning is an unforgiving profession and I don't want to introduce you to that brand of hell."

"You have such a low opinion of the job, yet you did it for thirty years?"

"At first I convinced myself it was cool. Almost believed it for a few years. Then by the time I realized the raw deal I was getting, I was so far in that I really couldn't do anything else. Don't get yourself into the same trap."

"I'm not saying I want to become a shadowrunner. I just want you to teach me some things. Now that I know what you do for a living, what happens if someone comes after you and learns of your family ties? I'd like to be able to give them a run for their money."

"I've been careful so far, haven't I?" Willy retorted.

"What if someone is more careful?"

Willy hung his head and took a deep breath. "You aren't going to let this go, are you?"

Kada simply locked her gaze onto Willy's and he implicitly knew the answer. The damned girl could be so bull-headed when she got her mind set on something...

"Fine, you want to be all bad-ass, that's your choice. Who am I but the voice of experience..."

"Willy, I just want to be able to protect myself and currently I can't. Maybe you can use all your bad experiences as a runner to teach me something important."

Willy dropped himself into his captain's chair. "If you are adamant about doing this, I will make some calls."

"What do you mean?"

"I'm a little old to be sparring with you or taking you down to the shooting range. But I know a few people in the biz that'd be capable of showing you a few things. So sit down, while I contact some friends."

Kada did as she was told. She watched Willy work, as he contacted several anonymous parties and conversed sub vocally with them. She hoped she was making the right decision, but something in the back of her mind told her she had. She had shadowrunner in her blood, even if she had only just come to realize it.

"OK..." Willy said, shutting down the commlink, "I've set up a few appointments for you. One is with a gentleman named Recoil. He will show you how to use those."

Kada followed Willy's gesture toward the gun locker. "He's going to teach me how to shoot?"

"You want to be able to defend yourself, right? Recoil is a Japanese gentleman and is very particular about how he does business. Speak only when spoken to and always stick a 'san' at the end of his name when you speak to him. It's a sign of respect."

"All right."

"The other appointment is with a man named Patch. He's a surgeon of sorts. He's going to have to make some improvements to your meat."

"Cybernetics?! I don't want any..."

"This is something to consider in the future. There's no need for it currently. But, when or if the time comes, I've given him instructions not to install a datajack under any circumstances and to listen to your desires. You need something, Kada. You're a pretty young thing and you're smart enough. But, I'm sorry to say, if you went toe to toe with a troll, he'd snap you in half. We're talking speed and durability improvements. No one will mess with your grey matter, I promise you."

Kada sighed and resigned herself. If she was going to do this, she supposed that Willy's experience shouldn't be shrugged off. "All right... I'll see your doctor friend."

"If you're serious about doing this, it only makes sense. The training will be hard and the surgery will likely be painful. Hopefully when it's all said and done, it will be enough to convince you that shadowrunning is not the best course of action for you."

* * *

Outskirts of Renton, 2070

A man in a crisp suit sat patiently at a table in a private VIP room as loud dance music blasted in the club outside his door. It was almost time for the job to begin, as minor as it was. A simple courier mission...anyone could do it. Still, he had contacted his fixer of choice to see if the ork had anyone able to take the job. The fixer had said he had a new runner that would be more than capable of taking the job and completing it to his satisfaction.

The door opened, shaking him from his bored stupor and allowing the deafening roar of the club inside his sanctuary for a brief moment. The woman that strode in seemed composed and professional. Her long black hair was pulled back in a series of tiny braids, each with a small Native charm around the tip. Her skin was a tanned reddish hue of possible Hispanic or Amerind descent. She had a cigarette perched between her lips as she removed her armored jacket and draped it over the back of the chair opposite him.

She wore urban camouflage pants and combat boots with a simply grey T-shirt. A tattoo of a band of arrows encircled her right arm; it was a symbol of protection. The Medicine Man's eye, a series of layered diamonds, adorned the back of her left hand. In many Native tribes it was a customary symbol of wisdom. A commlink was strapped to her left forearm, discreetly powered down for the duration of their dealings. He sized her up and while she seemed fairly small, she appeared to be fit and muscular. The presence of two holsters under her arms didn't surprise him, but he was pleasantly surprised when she surrendered the weapons to his bodyguards without being prompted. She removed her sunglasses to reveal natural brown eyes. They conveyed an aura of confidence and told him that she was ready for this and would do what was required. He smiled. She would do nicely.

The woman offered him her hand. "Good evening, Mr. Johnson. I am Inquisitor. Let's get down to business, shall we?"

MAKING A STATEMENT

By
Jason "Insomniac" Mallory

After some down time from the last run (or doing whatever they want if they're new), the team's fixer(s) calls them with a new offer of work. If the runners are interested, the meet is at *Jim's Souvlaki Pit* in Tacoma, at 10PM.

Jim's Souvlaki Pit, Tacoma

Jim's Souvlaki Pit is a small hole-in-the-wall Greek restaurant, with faded yellow walls and poor lighting. The open kitchen has the same décor as the rest of the restaurant, except the paint is heavily smoke and grease stained. The smell of souvlaki and tzatziki sauce is heavy in the air, mixed with burnt grease from the deep fryer. Despite the fact that the door says "Sorry, we're closed", you find the door unlocked. Jim seems not to notice you until you walk up to the kitchen counter. He's not surprised to see you.

"Evening, (ladies and) gentlemen. Take a seat."

Jim starts setting up food in front of each runner, as if serving customers like normal.

"Some close friends of mine have some problems they would like you to take care of. Your fixer has told me that you've built a sturdy reputation for yourselves thus far and I appreciate that quality in the people I contract. Here is what I require:

You may have seen on the news that one Manuel Cordova managed to dodge some pretty heavy smuggling and possession charges due to a minor glitch in the system, not long ago. The Columbian bastard is back to his old tricks and making life for my friends difficult. To make matters worse, he seems to be working with some low-life in the Ciarnello family and this simply will not suffice. What I require is three small tasks. Manuel Cordova must die. That low-life

drug smuggler will pay the debt he should have paid in prison. I want his death to be a very public statement. His boat and everything on it should be destroyed. Also, a smack in the face to the Ciarnello family would be a great boon to my interests. No one needs to die, but if one of their businesses were to suddenly fall onto hard times, it gives my friends opportunity to gain ground.

For these favors, I offer you 20,000¥. Do we have an agreement?"

The most Mr. Johnson will budge is 25%.

The Employer

Mr. J may be a cook in a Greek restaurant, but he is also a front man for the local Vory. His storeroom is half full of food and half full of contraband brought into the plex from Vladivostok and Hong Kong. While not a powerful man, he knows a lot about the city's underbelly and always protects his interests. All of the profits from his restaurant (known for its great souvlaki) go right back into the Vory. Most within the Vory only know him as Jim, though his real name is Hector Anders.

Note, if the runners completing this task took part in freeing Cordova and there is some evidence that the runners were involved, this run is a test by the Vory to see if the runners have ties to the Cartels. If there seems to be loyalty between the two sides, the Vory will put plans in motion to eliminate the Cartel's edge (aka the runners).

The Matrix

The restaurant is clean. The Matrix node is typical of a restaurant, with a viewable menu and list of all the various

specials. Jim's commlink is not active. The backroom, where all the contraband is kept, is locked away behind signal dampening doors. The only thing relevant the runners may find in the Matrix is the Johnson's real name and several weak accusations of criminal ties, but nothing that has been anymore than circumstantial.

Orgullo Pacífico

One part of the job is the destruction of Cordova's boat. His ship is moored in the Tacoma harbor. It is called the Orgullo Pacifico (Pacific Pride) and is one of the few boats in the water in January. It is heavily armored and is designed more for outrunning the police than looking pleasant. With the level of armor on the hull, no subtle means of sinking will work. Fire and explosives will probably be the only solution the runners come up with (but reward creativity).

The docks are mostly deserted, with only a few unlucky dockworkers on site to make sure nothing goes awry. At the first signs of trouble, Lone Star will be contacted and a few squad cars will show up shortly thereafter. The runners will likely want to deal with the boat quickly and leave before the police arrive.

The Opposition

While light, the main opposition will be Lone Star. The boat is guarded by a handful of Cartel thugs with silenced SMGs. Use the Triad thugs from the SR4 core book for the Cartel members. If the runners are still in the docks by the time the Star arrive, use the stats for the Lone Star officers in the SR4 core book. There will be few Star officers at first, but if spotted and recognized as runners, reinforcements will arrive quickly.

The Matrix

The harbormaster computer is accessible fairly easily, since it is Active. The front end shows which slips are available in the spring, the price for rentals of the slips and winterization costs for ships. Breaking into the records can reveal which ships are on which dock and even where the patrolling rent-a-cops are in the yard at any given time, since their commlinks are tied into the network. The network is Rating 3.

The Orgullo Pacifico also has an active transponder, which shows the last several ports of call, serial number and registered owner (Manuel Cordova). The boat's rating is a 3 except the firewall, which is a 4.

Manuel Cordova

Manuel knows he is not safe and is keeping a very low profile. He is living out of cheap hotels, underground facilities and armored cars. When he does go in public, he goes with a loyal entourage of bodyguards (mercenaries). He does his best to remain in crowded public places, so should anyone try to kill him, there is the chance someone will take the bullet for him and Lone Star will catch the culprit (considering they always seem to be fairly close to him).

Manuel has a tight schedule. He spends a lot of time on the commlink, brokering narcotics deals and arranging local distribution. The local Mafia family is looking at cutting into the Yakuza trafficking profits and they have made a deal with Cordova to that end.

Let the runners have fun with this. The only condition on Cordova's death is that it has to be public (aka lots of witnesses), so whether they gun him down on busy streets, use a car bomb, or whatever, let them pursue that lead. Don't make it easy for them, however.

Manuel is paranoid. He doesn't drive himself, but has a different rental car every day, heavily armored and inspected by his men before being picked up. If he doesn't have to leave his hidey-hole, he won't (unless a phone call is intercepted and tracked). If the runners are willing to

wait (no real timeline for the wetwork), he will meet with a few of his street dealers to ensure they are well stocked. He never goes to his boat (not enough people) and sends emissaries in his stead. Cordova will be meeting with Mafioso in a mob-run casino and then spend some of his hard-earned drug money on the floor. If the runners open fire and kill Cordova in the casino, it kills two birds with one stone. The casino's business will fall quickly, knowing that their security is "lackluster".

The Opposition

The main opposition facing the runners will be Cordova's hired bodyguards. They are trained professionals and they aim to defend their [Note: Not sure if we should change the word to paycheck] paycheque. They are armed with smartlinked Uzis and armored vests and have several cybernetic enhancements. The GM should give them abilities comparable to the runners, including a possible magician. Depending on when the runners choose to attack, Lone Star may be dispatched, adding another wrinkle to the mess.

The Matrix

Cordova keeps his commlink in Hidden mode (Passive, if he absolutely has to) and hangs around in crowds, so finding his commcode in a pile of signals will be tricky. If his commcode is found, the team's hacker can track him with an agent/sprite and possibly eavesdrop on his conversations. Provided Cordova's hired hacker doesn't find the agent, at which point, Cordova will go into hiding.

The Matrix can reveal where Cordova's registered residence is (they'll find it empty and unlived in) and where his boat is (if they haven't dealt with it first). The police keep a close eye on the place and if the runners break in, they may find themselves in a tight spot with the police.

Ciarnello

The Ciarnello family deals mostly in white-collar crime, but has a few groups of

people in the vice industry. Of course, they are being badly outpaced by the Yakuza and Triads and want to step up their operations in that area. Cordova's connections and desire to be invisible fit well with Ciarnello's needs, so an alliance was made.

The runners won't likely be able to target any of Ciarnello's higher operations without the proper connections, which leave his street level operations the most likely target (although if the runners are able to expose a corrupt lawyer/accountant, by all means, let them run with it). The runners can target anything from prostitution rackets to drug dealers to underground casinos (Cordova can be found in one of these casinos, if timed right...see above section). This is an opportunity for the players to tap into contacts and/or raise hell. Let them have fun with it, but every action has repercussions. If they really hurt the Mafia, the Mafia will try to hurt them back...

The Opposition

The opposition here should be obvious. The mob won't take kindly to their operations being hit and will likely strike back, unless the runners are extremely careful. Use the Triad thug stats in SR4 for any Mafia Soldatos they encounter.

The Matrix

Mafia rumors are all over the Matrix... the runners simply have to filter through them to find which are speculations and which are facts. The Matrix can be used for distractions, false leads and legwork. Improvise!

Delivery

Cordova's death will be on the news, as well as the runners other nightly activities. So long as they themselves did not get on camera, they will be paid in certified cred. The runners will likely want to lay low if Cordova's bodyguards were still alive to investigate their employer's death and/or the Mafia searching for those that slapped them in the face.

Quarterly Puzzlers

SHADOWRUN
in 2071 Missions
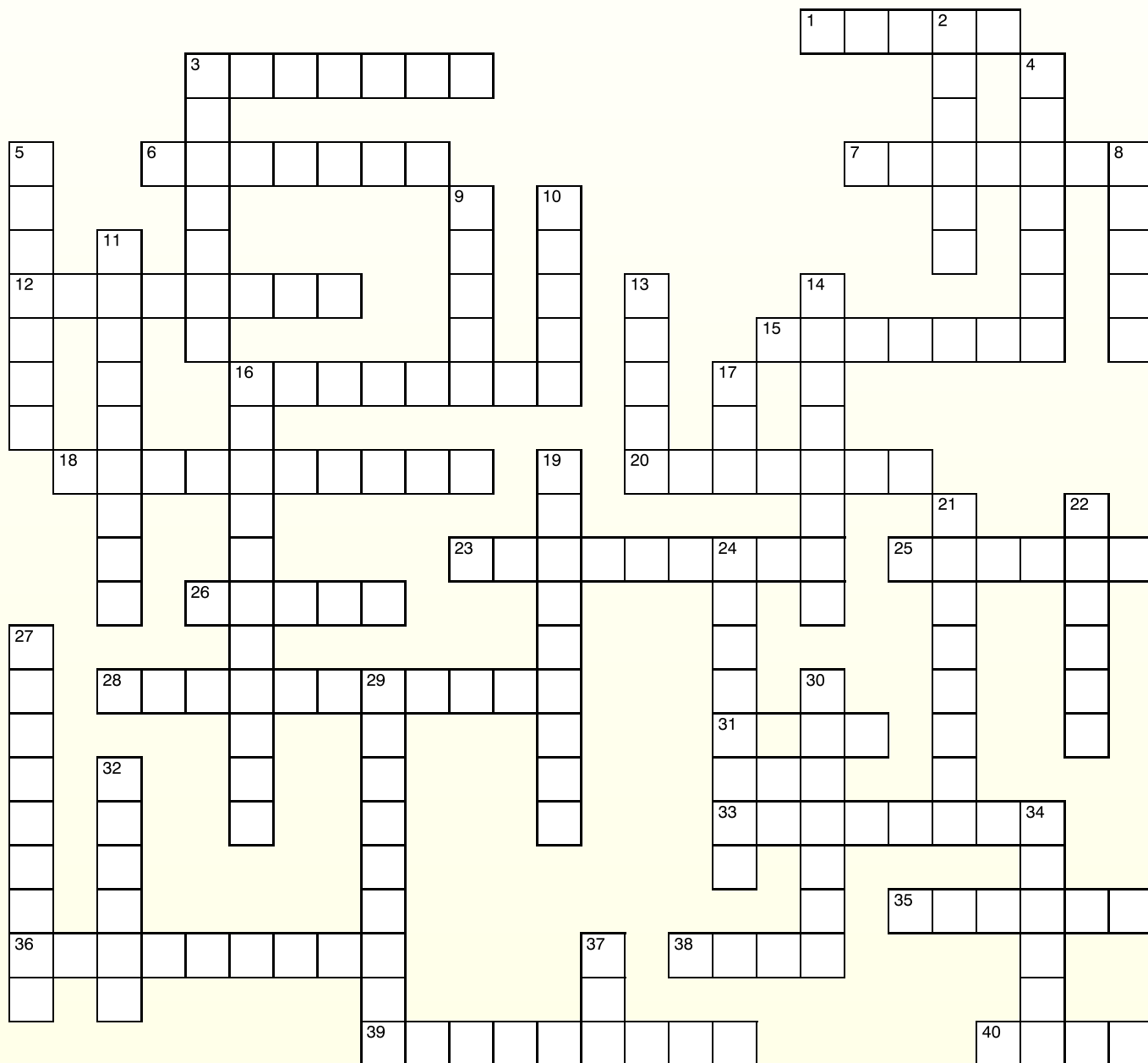
ACROSS

1   SRM3 "Free" Fixer
3   Demolition Sponsor
6   Gambler's Goal
7   Park's Principal
12 It was Lost
15 Viral Marketeers
16 Ghoul Group
18 Keeb language
20 Orange Queen
23 Location Mafia Family
25 It just keeps crashing
26 Location nation
28 Doll Maker
31 Cutting Edge
33 Magicians and Adepts
35 Strings are attached to
36 Russian Crime Bosses
38 Location nation
39 Oh Won Oh Ate
40 Formerly known as GM

DOWN

2   The Golden Boy
3   Parliament Coyote
4   Recon Target
5   Fork Fixer
8   The Scribe
9   Victim of the harvest
10 Former Big 10
11 Double Cross Target
13 The _ World
14 EMTs
16 Oh Too Oh Six
17 Location nation
19 SRM3 Opponent
21 Briefing Meeting Site
22 Dark "Vampire"
24 The Cops
27 Held the Keys
29 It's not virtual, it's _
30 Bell Tolls Fixer
32 Location Clan
34 SRM4 Location
37 Location nation

BATTLEMECHS
CIRCA 3025

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I L Z T L K R N F N P S H A D O W H A W K E R H W F H U N C H B A C K H M
F M X T H G I N K K C A L B P T N F W T E L N C V L L Q T T K R M K B U L
P I P M N O I R U T N E C Z N Z P T Q H J I T E B Y B N E H E A L N O S C
Q T R L W V F H A T C H E T M A N N S G S L T M C V Y N Y D R E N M M S D
R R R E Q U I C K D R A W C O Z M N L S O Z F N R A R M U P K L K Z B A L
R E D A S U R C T R P K K S C V A K A B T M L A T O T A K F X F W Z A R M
Q B X R A T L A S G Y C T T D B G S R H Q P T B H J R A G N L V T N R K A
N U T L I Q A N B V W S H K X R S E U W K N H R L A R F P H A T D N D Y R
D C L K K F R R M M C G Z A E A D G G K X D K U M B Y C L H E C Q G I M A
R H X V H H L N T O Z Y Z D R N L Z R E H T N A P L D O T K R K L N E T U
Y E D M Q E O E U E N X N D U G W G R R E D I P S R S X C C R A N U R H D
N T T C Q I R T M P R A M H R M E M B R L M T S A T H O L T D H C X V C E
Y N K S P L M M C A L F T A H N M R N B B F T G S C R T X R T E K T K Q R
N M D R A A R A E H N J N D L L O C U S T A O O M C K B N K T R G G S H I
Q C O M C M T B G S X N E W C R V L T L L N F C I C A D A T V M R D U T I
Y C L K H A E I N F Z R R N H F E H M K N X C K K E J A R C H E R R E R S
S P I I P L H L G C V G F Q B L K G E L R L M C I L E L H T K S X K Z O H
Z E H U N S O W T I K Y M M R F Y R N W G H R R R W N B K C K I B X W W O
E N L O R T K N S T N T O L E C N A L I K M Y O B N N N Q Z G E I M R F T G
X T G N E I R H G R A E T N M V N T F C T K W M T T E X R T L M E C T I U
C R B P B N V N N B X B V G Z I H R P M L S W N E C R J P K D C R M T H N
A O S O M G I M M M O K Q A R N N W Q A X W O O J R I K Q K R Y L E P W M
L T P R T E D X F B C W D M R D Q R V G Y C J M L Q C V Y O H W X R G R R
I A O A X R M K H A K T Q K G I N N W V L W P N H V X U F W P S A W V A N
B N L T Z F V N J A G C R G G C T C E A K N F H G M E N R B J D R Z C N J
U I C N Y Z D K N R W F K C R A M R F Q N B N R O C E R J Y M N C G O N T
R M Y I W M C K N H T K Z H M T N L N R J O A H H E W G I J R U B G R I M
W R C K L A F I R E F L Y A B O T J L A E S E E E K N N Z N K O A F T H N
Z E W O L Y F K X J Q V L M A R L G V T S M R L M T Y I B B E H R F S I A
G T H B D K Z H K Y P E P P R R N E H H F M M J E T I N X J V F C R O L M
O X C Y Q N Q X P L R S K I C P L O O Z E F M A V M X L I H V L G P Z A H
L E F T Q M A R W D X O X O P I R P W S R N V Y H W A R P L A O N W H T S
I M N T P T W M L C M O T N N N P L I Y D Q H T B R L H R O R W I Z H O A
A K J K G N X B M L L G N G V E L I I L A W E S O M E A L C Q H E K R V R L
T L O R I O N J D O Y N F H R X I E N I T O L L I U G W M C H T M L T G F
H T J W A S P L A M C O K N I F F I R G X Z R T Z L E N I T N E S P A L V
M J Y N L H K K F L T M S A L G W O L L A G L G R F X T K K J V W P Y M M
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Find the words in the grid. When you are done, the unused letters in the grid will spell out a hidden message. Pick them out from left to right, top line to bottom line. Words can go horizontally, vertically and diagonally in all eight directions.

Annihilator	Enforcer	Jenner	Shogun
Archer	Excalibur	King Crab	Spider
Assassin	Exterminator	Kintaro	Stalker
Atlas	Falcon	Lancelot	Stinger
Awesome	Firefly	Locust	Stinger LAM
Banshee	Firestarter	Longbow	Thorn
Battlemaster	Flashman	Mackie	Thug
Blackjack	Flea	Marauder	Thunderbolt
Black Knight	Gallowglas	Marauder II	Trebuchet
Bombardier	Goliath	Mercury	Urbanmech
Cataphract	Grasshopper	Merlin	Valkyrie
Catapult	Griffin	Mongoose	Victor
Centurion	Guillotine	Orion	Vindicator
Chameleon	Hatchetman	Ostroc	Vulcan
Champion	Hermes	Ostscout	Warhammer
Charger	Hermes II	Ostsol	Wasp
Cicada	Hermes III	Panther	Wasp LAM
Clint	Highlander	Phoenix Hawk	Whitworth
Commando	Hoplite	Phoenix Hawk LAM	Wolfhound
Crab	Hornet	Quickdraw	Wolverine
Crockett	Hunchback	Raven	Wyvern
Crusader	Hussar	Rifleman	Zeus
Cyclops	Imp	Scorpion	
Dervish	Jagermech	Sentinel	
Dragon	Javelin	Shadow Hawk	

POISON GHOSTS

Part 2
By Dave Baughman

Somewhere in the North Sea
Piedmont, Dieron Military District
Draconis Combine
19 March 3068

Albert Jensen massaged his aching temples as he looked out over the deck of his ship, *Aqua Dream*, as his eyes passed over the ragged hole at the base of the conning tower his frown deepened. Jensen was worried, even though *Isu* had a large industrial crane on its foredeck, the damn Yaks were refusing to pull that dud artillery shell out of his hull.

And what if its not a dud? he thought. *What if my damn bridge blows up tomorrow?* Sighing deeply, Jensen pulled out his clipboard and started working on his latest dispatch to *Isuginchaku-maru*.

"Chikush?," he muttered to himself, "I hate working with a headache."

Shin Narita Airport
Saint Lawrence Island
Piedmont, Dieron Military District
Draconis Combine
19 March 3068

Ten minutes ago the little propeller driven scout plane had come to a smooth landing on the main landing strip, neatly dodging a patrolling 'Mech that clearly was looking everywhere, but up. Now, *Sho-sa* Matsuya was sticking a gun in the pilot's face.

"What do you mean, you couldn't sight them? We know where that damn transmission came from and they can't have gone far in two days in those damn tubs!" He snarled, spraying the short militia pilot with spittle.

"Matsuya-sama," she started to reply, doing her best to not obviously flinch away from the black pistol that was poking into her right cheek.

"You saw them! You saw them and you didn't report it! Traitor! *Yariman!* Tell me where they are now, or you'll regret it!"

The *gunsho* hardened her glance at her Sun Zhang interrogator and replied coldly, "I saw noth-".

Matsuya cut off her reply with an eight-millimeter slug.

Onboard Isuginchaku-maru
Somewhere in the North Sea
Piedmont, Dieron Military District
Draconis Combine
20 March 3068

"Jensen-*kanch*? *wa doko*?" said Kurakumo, as he pressed the phone to his head with his shoulder and he gestured his exasperation Nagumo, *"Hai. Hai, wakata,"* he finished. Hanging up the phone, he then looked back to his colleague and gave a slight roll of his eyes.

"He's not coming. Apparently, Captain Jensen is not feeling well today, and can't be bothered attending our unimportant little meeting," said Kurakumo, now directing his voice more towards Al-Ghambi than Nagumo.

Other than Jensen, all of the captains were there along with the principals of the Saint Lawrence escape operation. Timothy Seidler was there also, with an armload of printouts jammed into a manila folder on the table in front of him. The tech wasn't looking too good and judging from the way his eyes seemed to be sinking back into his skull, Kurakumo assumed that the tech was not getting enough sleep.

"*Yare*, *yare*," muttered Nagumo as he shook his head, "very well, we can't wait for Jensen. Seidler-san, please begin your report."

Seidler stood, the general slump of his body making him look like a puppet, and started his report, "As we discussed three days ago, we started running out of time the minute we activated the virus in the satellite system. I have prepared a report on our options, but I want to warn you ahead of time none of them are good."

Shiro-Bosatsu Technology Center
Senbutsujima Island
Piedmont, Dieron Military District
Draconis Combine
20 March 3068

If not for the tank tracks through the elaborately manicured stone garden in its foreground, an observer might mistake the Shiro-Bosatsu Technology Center for a run-down ancillary building of the main temple complex. However, even though the APC had now moved on, anything beyond a cursory examination would reveal a more distressing sight.

From the far side of the island, gunshots were still ringing out. Adept Liu frowned at the sound, which was so inconsistent with the atmosphere of peace that permeated the entire island, but he understood the need for secrecy. After the disaster at Mount Olympias, the task force could not afford any more setbacks.

A high-pitched creak caught Liu's attention as he passed under the arch of the technology center. Glancing up, Liu quickly located the source of the noise; apparently the concussions from the January takeover had damaged the gold *manji* set just below the roof, and now the

gilded swastika looked like it was about to fall off the building.

Liu's frown just deepened, not because he would have to go through the trouble of getting someone to take down the manji before it took someone's head off, but because he already regretted the amount of damage the building had taken.

Hiding something like this behind a temple, Liu pondered, *what were they thinking?*

Onboard Polar Nymph
Somewhere in the North Sea
Piedmont, Dieron Military District
Draconis Combine
20 March, 3068

Ilari Lukin took his eyes off the horizon for a second to look over the small fleet on whose periphery *Polar Nymph* was floating.

He couldn't help wondering if they or rather Kurakumo's guerilla outfit had played their hand too early. Apparently the satellite system was still in chaos, but the sighting of a small observer plane the day before had worried everyone.

Lukin couldn't shake the suspicion that the invaders, the Blakists if Mann was right, were already closing the trap on their little outfit.

Lukin frowned as his binoculars passed over the nearby *Aqua Dream*. A dozen men were involved in some sort of scuffle on the top deck. As he watched, a burly sailor was knocked off the deck backwards falling straight into the icy water.

Keying his mike, Lukin said, *"Aqua Dream, Polar Nymph*. We're seeing a man overboard, please respond."*

Bridge, Aqua Dream
Somewhere in the North Sea
Piedmont, Dieron Military District
Draconis Combine
Midnight, 21 March, 3068

"-Repeat, this is *Polar Nymph*, please respond *Aqua Dream*!" crackled the radio, finally prompting Captain Jensen to uncurl from the floor. Hunched over, he shuffled to the radio station and pushed the mangled corpse of his first mate Watanabe from the chair.

"This… is… shut up! Shut up!" he shouted into the mike before launching into an unintelligible tirade.

He screamed until his throat was raw, but it didn't make the pain in his head and neck go away. Not for a second.
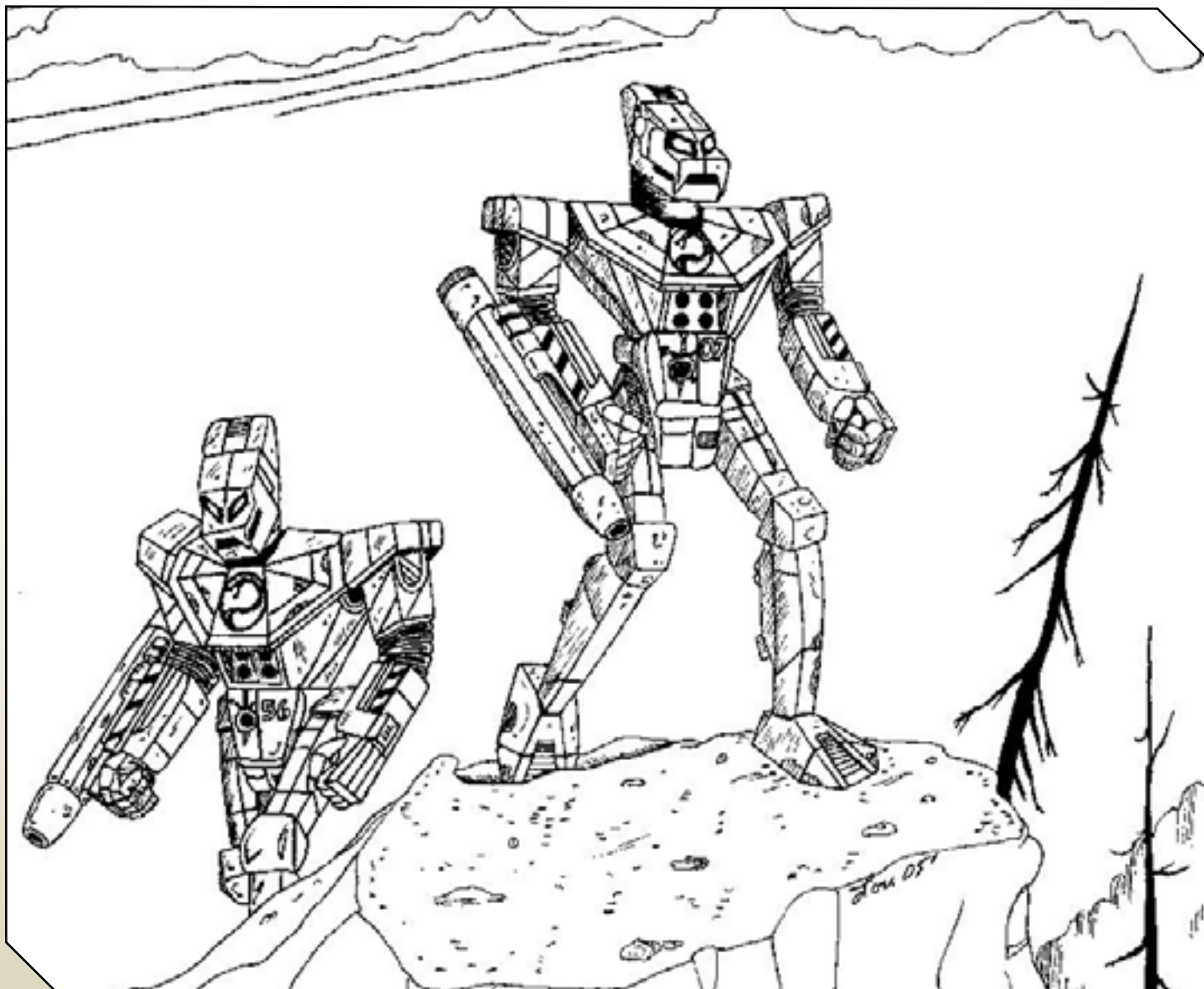
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Q&A:
TOTAL WARFARE
An Interview with Randall Bills

William J. Pennington (CQ): I'm talking with Randall Bills, lead developer for *Classic BattleTech* and the mastermind behind its new iteration and rebranding. How are you doing today Randall?

Randall Bills: Pretty crazy, as ever. Just got the kids down and having just gotten the Painting Miniatures section of Total Warfare off to editing, I'm tackling the Creating Scenarios section before Scrubs comes on.

CQ: Now down to the questions. Will the Total Warfare rules include major changes to CBT rules?

RB: The core structure of the Classic BattleTech game has remained essentially unchanged for 20 years. That makes Classic BattleTech one of the most successful game systems ever published. That speaks of the strength of the system. As such, the core rules remain untouched.

RB: However, while the core rules remain the same, the introduction of so many different and varied rules expansions over the years has made its presentation and playability confusing at times. As such, we've torn away the exterior of the BattleTech rules down to the bedrock and rebuilt it, making sure that every rules aspect that has been added over the years is one hundred percent integrated into the system as a whole from top to bottom.

CQ: Will there be any changes in the effective strength of vehicles or other unit types against 'Mechs?

RB: Keeping in mind that 'Mechs will always reign supreme, specific (and some times extensive) rules changes have been made to other units, such as infantry, not simply to clarify their use, but to ensure they are desirable and fun to play on the battlefield.

CQ: Will Total Warfare include aerospace and warship rules? Will it be a reprint of Aerotech 2, or replace it with new rules?

RB: Aerospace units are integrated at a level never-before-seen in a Classic BattleTech rulebook; akin to how other units are currently integrated in the BattleTech Master Rules, with relevant rules directly in the Combat section, an integrated Aerospace Movement chapter and so on. They will include rules up to and including DropShip rules, however Warships will not be considered standard tournament appropriate rules, so will be dealt with in Tactical Operations.

CQ: Will the use of the Faction Lists be incorporated into Total Warfare?

RB: No. In fact, the actual printed lists will likely not appear in any future book. However, the use of said faction lists will be detailed in Strategic Operations, with the lists available on-line (and updated as appropriate).

CQ: Will any of the current level 3 rules make it into Total Warfare? If so, which ones?

RB: As of Total War the levels are being done away with. With the publication of the Support Vehicle Construction Rules in Combat Equipment, it was becoming clear that units were too often crossing the boundaries between previously established Levels; a strain already visible, but taken beyond the pale at that point. Instead, rules are defined as tournament appropriate and non-tournament (or advanced). To help simplify this matter, any rule weapon/equipment that is not appropriate for tournament play

will not be found in Total Warfare, but will instead appear in Tactical Operations. With that said, there is a short list of around a dozen pieces of equipment/weapons from Maximum Tech that will be made 'tournament legal,' and will appear on the new variants in Technical Readout: 3050 Upgrade.

CQ: Will there be new equipment?

RB: Yes. Total Warfare will include a selection of brand new weapons and equipment (this is in addition to the weapons and equipment previously considered Level 3 (i.e. originally found in Maximum Tech) that will appear in Total Warfare/TechManual and be legal for tournament play).

CQ: Will the Force Balancing Rules become part of the basic rules set? By that I mean, BV, BV 2.0, or an equivalent "points" system (as well as taking into account disparity in the number of units) for one-off games or scenarios.

RB: While the Battle Value system is mentioned in the Creating Scenarios section of Total Warfare, it will actually appear in Classic BattleTech TechManual. As such, while it is suggested as a solid way to help balance forces, it is not a 'rule' that players will be required to use it.

CQ: Will Battle Value still be used? Will it be the previously mentioned BV 2.0, or the current version?

RB: A new system (the Battle Value 2.0 system mentioned in my BattleChats) is being worked on for inclusion in TechManual.

CQ: Will Heavy Metal pro be affected by any of these changes?

RB: Unlikely. The changes that are being made to the rules, in general, do not affect the construction rules in any way. However, Rick is involved in all levels of the playtesting and so is aware of potential changes coming that might affect HMPro (beyond the changing of the BV system, of course).

CQ: Will equipment in the Technical Manual be divided between tournament and optional play?

RB: If equipment and weapons are not tournament legal, they will not appear in the Technical Manual, but will instead appear in Tactical Operations. For example, artillery is not tournament appropriate and so will not appear in either Total Warfare or TechManual, but will instead appear in Tactical Operations (where they'll receive a nice expansion, clarification and integration of rules).

CQ: Will TRO's still be the format for new 'Mechs being released Or will the Tech Manual and future products replace them with a combined Rules/'Mech/record sheet format?

RB: At the current time, the plan is for future Technical Readouts to stay in the same format as what has gone before and is still in current print.

CQ: Will TRO's and Record Sheet books still be made in the current format?

RB: While new record sheets will look slightly different as we move to make them more user friendly, you will be able to use any older record sheet exactly as is with the new rules set.

CQ: Will there ever be a large size, hardback master TRO?

RB: No.

CQ: What will the default era and tech level of the new boxed set be?

RB: The Classic BattleTech Introductory Box Set, barring a change of cover art and some small nips and tucks, has all the same content, art and wording as the current Classic BattleTech boxed game...but now with plastic miniatures! That means that while the history section covers up to 3067, the 'playing era' of the box set is set at 3049; i.e. starting technology (or what was previously referred to as Level 1).

CQ: Will all of the starter books be set in the current era, or in different ones such as 3025, or during Operation: Klondike??

RB: Each Starterbook is specifically designed to tie-in to a specific set of products, while focusing on a specific period of time. Starterbook: Sword and Dragon is designed to tie in to the Classic BattleTech Introductory Box set and TRO: 3025 and so the 'playing era' of the book is 3049. The next book planned in this series is Starterbook: Fist and Falcon and will specifically tie in to Total Warfare and Technical Readout: 3050 Upgrade, with the 'playing era' of the book focused during the Clan Invasion of 3050 to 3052. Further books will follow in the same rough format, with most of the 'playing eras' roughly focused on the current timeline.

CQ: What is the era/tech level of the units in the currently described starter book?

RB: The Characters & scenarios will be as of 3049, however, the history will cover up to the current timeline.

CQ: What era will the Universe Book be set in? Will it include new items, units? Will characters inside have MW3 write ups? Will it have updated unit strengths for all factions?

RB: It will not have updated faction strengths...that is what Field Manual: Updates is for (and what perhaps a future Field Manual will cover towards the end of the Jihad). Additionally, new units will not appear in the Universe book. As for the specifics on the book,

I prefer to defer on that for a while as we work to get Total Warfare and the TechManual up and then I can start letting that book 'out of the bag,' so to speak.

CQ: You say the Classic Battletech RPG system will be streamlined, what does this mean? Will it replace the lifepath system, or revise the core mechanics?

RB: Simply way too early to go into that type of detail at this point.

CQ: Will the Strategic Operations book include BattleForce 2 rules, or an updated version of those rules or the large scale strategic game featured in Combat Operations?

RB: Undecided at this time, but some or all of those may be found there.

CQ: Are the miniatures similar to the prior plastic miniatures in scale and detail, or multi-part/assembly miniatures? Will they be sold separately from the box set?

RB: This is still being determined.

CQ: Can we look forward to more plastic miniatures? Will they be pre-painted?

RB: No and no. Plastic miniatures will only be found in the new base box set and they will come un-painted.

CQ: What can you say to players who just bought some of the latest books, like combat Operations or the BMR revised, or even mercenary FMs? Will they be rendered out of date or the rules obsolete?

RB: As described above, the core mechanics of the game have not changed. Anyone who has played will be able to pick up Total Warfare and be up and running in short order. That rules changes that have occurred have been done within the framework of the existing rules, keeping the appropriate aesthetics for each unit time and the game as a whole in mind at every step.

While these rulebooks will supersede previous rulebooks (as happens each time Classic BattleTech published a new rulebook), all other sourcebooks are absolutely still valid and compatible. For example, the construction rules (for those units with entries in published Technical Readouts) have not changed; provided the record sheet is correct, of course, you can sit down with your favorite record sheet straight out of an 80's FASA Record Sheet book and play.

Finally, while some rule books will be superseded, it will take approximately two years to publish all six core rulebooks. With that in mind, players should get plenty of use out of any rules expansions they may have just purchased.

CQ: What's the release schedule for these new core books?

RB: Classic BattleTech Total Warfare will publish in August, while Classic BattleTech TechManual will publish in October. Starting in 2007, the rest of the core rulebooks will follow: Classic BattleTech Universe, Classic BattleTech Tactical Operations, Classic BattleTech RPG, Revised and Classic BattleTech Strategic Operations.

CQ: How will this rebranding and all the new books announced affect the current release schedule? Almost every book waiting in the wings right now has me absolutely salivating for it, From Brush Wars, to the Vehicle Annex, and above all the House Handbooks.

RB: Part of all of this has been me steping back and taking a very hard look at how I've generated schedules and readjusting them from the ground up, with more time allocated for printing and so on. A new revised schedule will post soon to cbt.com. The Handbooks do enough to delay themselves. The amount of research for each book takes more time than originally planned, and of course, we won't skimp on the quality.

CQ: Thank you Randall for taking time out of your busy schedule to chat with us.

RB: No problem. Just banging the Creating Scenarios section into shape, so I could use the break.

LAZARUS INBOUND

by Lou Myers
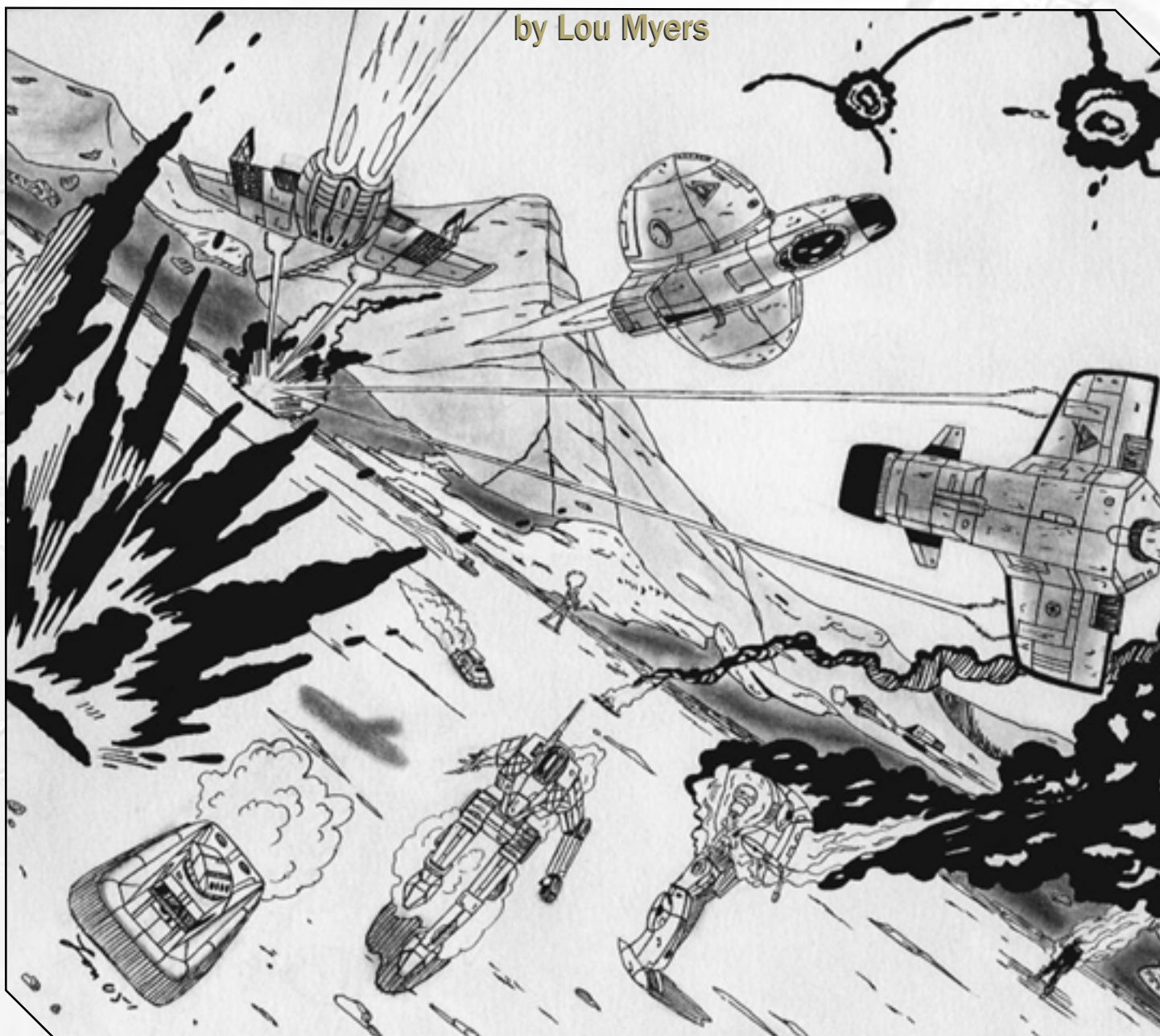
**Harloc, Sian Commonality,
Capellan Confederation,
Autumn, 3068**

The fighting on the ground was truly desperate for the defending Capellan troops. Having dug into their positions to fight to the last, the Capellans endured both frontal assaults and flanking attacks for days after the Davion forces landed. Dogged in their determination to hold out, the Capellan troops showed great tenacity although their casualties were mounting. That was until the Davion's unleashed hell, which was in the form of a 48-hour long continuously sustained rolling artillery barrage that blasted and splattered the brave Capellan defenders. When the last shell exploded and the deafening silence fell over the smoky moonscape that was the Capellan line, hell let slip loose the Dogs of War.

The shocked and numbed Capellan survivors spotted what they thought were poltergeists in the gray smoke, they quickly realized that the ghosts were advancing Davion 'Mechs. That is when they began disgorging fire and death on them. Someone in the clear ordered a "General Retreat" from the shattered Capellan side and the ancient, but dreaded tune to all Capellan troops played over every comm-channel, "Bear Over the Mountain". As the disgusted and defeated Capellan troops retreated before the advancing mighty Davion troops, one of the Capellan officers refusing to give up ordered an air strike.

"On my position!" was his last order. Capellan air traffic and control received the dying officers message and they honored his final order.

"Lazarus, this is Mary One, copy?"

"Mary One, this is Lazarus, copy!"

"Redirect to Map 5, coordinates M-7105738. Copy?"

"Lazarus to Mary One Roger. Redirect to Map 5 coordinates M-7105738"

"Lazarus, Almighty calls for rain. Copy?"

"Roger Mary One, Lazarus will rain on Almighty!"

"Roger that Lazarus."

Kirov's flight rolled east to bring "rain". Kirov could see the entire Capellan line retreating, like ants in a pell mell. He could see the Fed rats arising from the smoke like devils chasing prey, with guns flashing and Capellans dying. "What a mess." He thought.

"Not one of our CAPs could penetrate their fighter screen to hit and silence their artillery! Damn!"

Kirov began to drop his bomb-laden *Transgressor* altitude and gave his order. "I'm giving you girls 500 feet and straight and level. Do not drop until I give you the order. Understand? A hail of "confirmed" filled Kirov's comms. Kirov then ordered, "Do not disperse. We have ten seconds to rain. Do not disperse!"

Passing over the retreating troops and burning hulks Kirov counted down aloud. "5, 4, 3, 2, 1! Drop ordnance, drop ordnance." Kirov's *Transgressor* let rain his bomb load and so did the rest of his flight.

The rain of death scattered and fell into the midst of the Davion advance. Terrific explosions tossed, tore and obliterated the advancing Davion BattleMechs. As Kirov climbed his *Transgressor* to altitude, three explosions rocked the fighter. Flak had torn a hole his right fuselage and wing. The damage wasn't fatal, but serious and it screwed up his control.

A panicked voice called out "Leader One! Leader One! We lost number three! Three is down!"

Kirov responded. "Did he bail?"

"No Sir!" the response returned.

Flak was getting heavier and closer as Kirov and his flight climbed. Kirov could hear pings of shrapnel against his fighter. His throat tightened and then he spoke.

"Come about and give them a strafing run. We'll last longer against the ground pounders then we will against this flak!"

In one great swoop Kirov and his flight went in. Flak exploded about them menacingly close and very intense. Kirov led the way with his *Transgressor* through the fiery death like a brave knight charging a dragon. As Kirov dropped his cross hairs on the lead *Rifleman* he shouted to his men, "Make every shot count!" And he let fly his large lasers.

Kirov's flight opened up as they swooped over the Davion horde. Two of the Davion 'Mechs fell. Two of the Capellan fighters, trailing fire from hits, slammed into the battlefield and exploded. Kirov's target, the *Rifleman*, lurched forward from two laser hits to its chest as he sped over it. The burning Davion 'Mechs from the bombing run passed underneath him, Kirov drew no comfort from their deaths.

"Another pass!" He shouted.

The remainder of the flight, three fighters counting his, climbed to 300 feet and turned about. Like Blood Ghulls chasing Prairie Cats, Kirov's flight went in for one more pass. The *Rifleman*'s RAC 5's blazing away like a gunfighter of old slammed its slugs into Kirov's already wounded *Transgressor.* Fuel spewed and flames skidded over the fuselage. Smoke started to filled his cockpit. Kirov was dying. The *Rifleman* began to bolt away to avoid Kirov's dying fighter.

"No! No! You are not getting away!" Kirov shouted.

As Kirov's life was leaving him through suffocation, he strained his stick left and pushed his fatally wounded *Transgressor* into a spin. Just as he closed his eyes, Kirov felt a thump. The *Transgressor* slammed into the *Rifleman* and both exploded into flames and flying sparks, the two war machines intermingling in a fiery death.

The End

VICTORY AT
TEMPLECON

Rosemoor Ballroom
Providence Holiday Inn
Rhode Island, United States
27 January 2006

TempleCon is a new convention in fact this was their first year. So, when I planned my slate of events for this con I knew putting on a big production could be a bit of a risk. On the other hand, my discussion with the organizers suggested that TempleCon might draw a pretty good turn out comparable to some of the work I had done in 2005. In the end, I decided to take a risk and put together a large scenario driven campaign, the Battle of Twycross.

Things kicked off on January 27th with a round of "the Grinder" for warm up. For those who haven't experienced it, the Grinder is a special event that uses the larger MechWarrior minia- tures on an oversized map. In TempleCon's case, we used the Seacoast BattleTech Society's enormous "Scrapyard" map from the Solaris VII map set. The four way battle that played out was fast paced, nasty, and more than a few times some poor 'Mech got boxed in along the corridor that runs down one side of the map... invariably ending with a messy death for its driver.

Following the Grinder we all broke for lunch, where we met up with Andrew "BaronScituate" Thompson, who would go on to bravely take the Inner Sphere side on every single battle of the upcoming campaign.

The campaign started at 1:00 pm with "The Beast is Loose," the first scenario in the Twycross scenario pack. In this scenario a Jade Falcon Trinary tears through a reinforced company of green Tycross TMM militia, thanks to heavy bidding only eight OmniMechs actually went into battle: Masakari, Man O' War, Mad Cat, Three Thors, and two Lokis. In spite of this handicap, things were ugly.

The Inner Sphere team (Andrew Thompson, Debra "KumonryuRae" Atkinson, James "Sabre" Bernard, and myself) set up a whole map away from the Clan. I had (not entirely seriously) suggested we deploy our units right on top of the Clan and in retrospect I realize this would have been the best decision. Because of their distance and relatively low skill level, the Inner Sphere team ended up engaging the Falcons piecemeal and never really got to concentrate their fire on the enemy.

The Clanners (Korac "The Barbarian" MacArthur and a fellow named Brian whose last name I did not catch) pretty much stood their ground, limiting their maneuvers to their home map. Because the IS team could not match the Clanners at range, they

were basically forced to close, and the conservative defensive strategy the Falcons used just made things worse for the militia. When we called the game on time at 5:00 PM, the Clan had won on points, but it was clear they were about to go in for tough times. The Inner Sphere forces were on the verge of all piling into the Falcon home map.

After a break for dinner, we reconvened for "The Harder they Fall." I switched off with Brian, putting Korac and myself as the "villians[1]." This time, the Inner Sphere team got to ambush the Clanners, and by the end of the bidding process the Falcons no longer had any active probes on their team. Korac and I scoffed at this, however, since our plan was to charge in headlong and blitz the IS team.

Initially, our strategy worked. We plowed through the forward-deployed fire lance that initially opposed us, and we quickly demolished any hidden 'Mechs that showed themselves to challenge us. Our momentum slowed somewhat as we broke into the second map and the IS team started concentrating fire, however, and when the game ended the Falcons advance had slowed significantly.

The IS team wasn't idle either, boldly, they immediately revealed their lance of fire support vehicles (including a Schrek), which they moved forward onto the first map to support their 'Mech lance. At one key point, the Schrek not only pulled off a difficult minimum-range shot on a running Vulture but actually put two of the three PPCs into the Vulture's head. Taking the machine out of action for the rest of the campaign.

At the end of "The Harder They Fall," the Falcons were still winning, having scored a major victory in this scenario. However, the price of their aggressive tactics was the loss of a warrior and the crippling of several 'Mechs. Moreover, the IS team was starting to get more comfortable with the idea of closing with the superior Clan OmniMechs and trying to overwhelm them at point- blank range. These tactics would prove extremely effective during the large battles of day three.

Our last game of the day was "The Terrible Toads," a quick lit- tle scenario where a recon lance has to break through a screen of elemental infantry. When I say 'quick' and 'little' I really mean it. This scenario plays out on just one map and only took about five turns to complete. Maneuvering was paramount, and Jim Bernard and I chased Brian and Andrew all over the map before they finally gave us the slip.

And that was day one... the surprise decision of the bulk of the players to take the IS side was a bit of a kink - the scenarios were really balanced to be played from the Clan side, and were

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[1] Its actually kind of funny how this happened - when I designed the campaign and its scoring mechanism, I had planned for almost everyone to play on the Clan side. With most people playing Inner Sphere, I had to revise the way things were scored quite a bit.

extremely tough for the Inner Sphere. Luckily for the IS they had the leadership of some excellent players, and despite difficulty of the missions they made a good showing.

Day Two - 28 January

Day two started out with Matthew "RogueCommander" Cahoon's Solaris Melee Challenge, which was a load of fun. Unfortunately, I died a humiliating death fairly early in my second round; having just returned from the repair bay, my center torso got TAC'd by a large laser. Surprise, surprise three crits, all of them to my engine. Suffice it to say that was "it" for my Zeus.

After the Melee wrapped up, it was back to the Twycross campaign. The big scenario for the day was "Requiem for a World," where the Falcons have to break into an armored spaceport. Michael "JaegerWolf" Ramirez joined us for this scenario and won command of the Falcons through some bold bidding - he bid down from a Trinary to just one 'Mech Star.

The idea of one Star facing off against a full company of IS 'Mechs, most of them heavies, seemed pretty mind boggling to me on this one, but Mike pulled it off. Along with Korac "The Barbarian," Mike blasted right through the IS defenders and seized the objective in only six turns. There weren't many kills, but it was an impressive example of mobile warfare tactics in action.

The IS team did their best to hold off the massive Falcon onslaught, but they maneuvered as if expecting a stand-up fight. When Mike didn't give it to them, they got left in the dust. Of all the battles at TempleCon, this was undoubtedly the most dramatic Falcon victory and ironically it was also the least violent.

After "Requiem," most of the BattleTech gang was ready for a rest - having played all day on Friday and then risen early for the Solaris Melee, all but a couple crashed for the night and skipped the last mission. Andrew and Brian, however, had a score to settle. They had tied on an earlier mission, and needed to determine a winner. The winner of the two would have a shot at the Con's BattleTech trophy.

They broke the tie by playing "The Last Hurrah," a small but very violent scenario where a pair of Inner Sphere 'Mechs have to square off against a couple of second-line Clan warriors. The battle was good and tough, including a bizarre moment where both Clan 'Mechs tried to kick Andrew's Wolverine and both fell over. Adding insult to injury, both of their pilots took wounds and one passed out. In a testament to Brian's ability, however, this seemingly devastating turn of luck didn't end the game for him. In fact, he turned things around and won the match when all was said and done.

Day 3 - 29 January

After two days of getting pounded by the Clan team, it was time for the Inner Sphere to get its revenge with the Tenth Lyran Guard RCT arriving on Twycross, the Clanners would no longer be facing green militia troops. The first event of the day was "Vengeance on the Plains," where a company of Inner Sphere heavies and assaults charged out of a fierce sandstorm to bushwhack a Binary of second-line 'Mechs.

Building on the lessons they hard learned in the first two days, the IS team didn't hesitate to get close to the Clanners. Each player, commanding a lance of 'Mechs, chose one Clan target to concentrate fire on. Even though the IS team took losses, they gave it back in equal measure to the Clans. When the game ended at noon, the IS had won its first "big scenario" victory of the campaign.

Then came the final fight: "Showdown," the pivotal battle at the Great Gash featured in the novel Lethal Heritage. As they did in the previous battle, the IS team deployed their 'Mechs as far forward as possible, and were in contact with the Clanners almost immediately. This was a big risk, since they had a very real chance of losing many or even most of their 'Mechs when they set off their bombs and collapsed the canyon.

The Clans didn't hesitate in engaging, clashing under heavy fire at the center and the right flank, while the heavyweight storm unit on the left flank made a beeline for the middle maps. Despite ambushes by hidden assault tanks and infantry - and the loss of several 'Mechs - the Clan left flank was pushing into the middle of the battlefield by turn three and preparing to cut across the back of the IS 'Mech line in an enveloping maneuver. The fighting remained intense at the center and right, with mechanized elementals wading into the fray to support the OmniMechs. By turn four, the IS was still going strong (having by now destroyed almost a full Star of Clanners), but the left flank was failing, and a Star of heavy and assault 'Mechs was on the verge of hitting the IS team in the back.

The game ended on turn five with most of the fighting still taking place on the line between the eastern maps and the center maps. Had the fight continued for another five hours, there's no telling how it would have ended, but with the ballroom closing down and the Con wrapping up, the game ended with a decisive Inner Sphere victory.

Running (and playing in) the Battle of Twycross was a blast, even though the turnout was slightly smaller than I had hoped for. We still had a good player base for every game, and thanks to an excellent combination of aggressive and sportsmanship play, it seemed that everyone had a great time.

LAST PAINTER STANDING

Last Painter Standing is a grueling, multi-round painting contest which only the world's best painter can survive! The contest is sponsored by **www.TheMiniaturesPage.com** (an excellent online resource for the miniature gaming hobby) and **Iron WInd Metals**.

In the beginning, dozens of contestants from across the globe submitted photos of their work and a written statement explaining why they should be chosen as Finalists. In three rounds of balloting, the readers of TMP selected nine finalists.

Now, each finalist has received a unique selection of 'Mech minis. The readers of TMP determine a painting theme for each round. The Finalists then must select one of their available models, paint it according to that theme, and submit a write-up and photographs before the deadline. The readers of TMP then select one Finalist each round to eliminate from the contest.

The miniatures on the following pages are from the first round. The theme chosen was "junkyard". Check out TMP to watch the contest unfold.

In the end, there can only be a single painter left standing...

ROB "COAT OF ARMS" HOOPER

Salamander by Coat of Arms
www.displacedminiatures.com/robh/

"Pounder" took stock of the situation, his 80-ton Salamander looking very much the worse for wear, once tidy paintwork now burned and blasted to a dirty grey, his RT LRM20 a blackened hole and the shattered arm a mess of broken metal and plastisteel cables. The exploding LRMs had torn off a chunk of the armoured carapace and peppered the torso of the Mech with metal fragments, the one which shredded the right hand laser coming closer to the cockpit than he wanted to think about. At least the score of AC hits to the right leg had not penetrated so he was still mobile, still able to walk back to the refit facility... still in the game.

WILLIAM "SOUNGURU" BURT

After the creation of the Republic of the Sphere, Devlin Stone's ideas for peace seemed to be working. The Inner Sphere had finally achieved a peace that it had not known for 100's of years. One way this was achieved was to destroy, mothball - or in some cases, hide - the most powerful weapons of war - the Mechs.

When the HPG network collapsed, there was a rush to find and reactivate these awesome weapons of war. War had once again come to the Inner Sphere. Kelly Johnson's planet was under attack by a rogue merc unit, and something had to be done. Many had heard of the great Tessen that was still standing on the plains south of the city - a final monument to the end of war. The Tessen had been standing there for years... so long, that the elements had begun to take their toll on the mighty beast. All of the paint had long since faded away and the mech was in bad shape, but if it could be reactivated, then Johnson could begin the hunt for the pirates that had attacked his world and extract some payback. The hunt began on the rain-soaked junkyard south of the city.

Tessen by Sounguru
www.fairchildsmechworks.com

DAVID "HAUPTMANN" FANJOY

Matador by Fanjoy
www.heavygauss.com

JIMMY "JJPENS77" LIVINGSTON

Hoplite by JJPens77
www.theminichopshop.com

BEVAN "PAINTINGPLODDY" DAVIES

Flea by PaintingPloddy

ROSS "SAVAGE COYOTE" HINES

Brigand by Savage Coyote
www.camospecs.com/Artists.asp?ArtistID=1

RAYMOND "ADRIAN GIDEON" ARRASTIA

UrbanMech IIC by Adrian Gideon
www.fightingpirannhagraphics.com
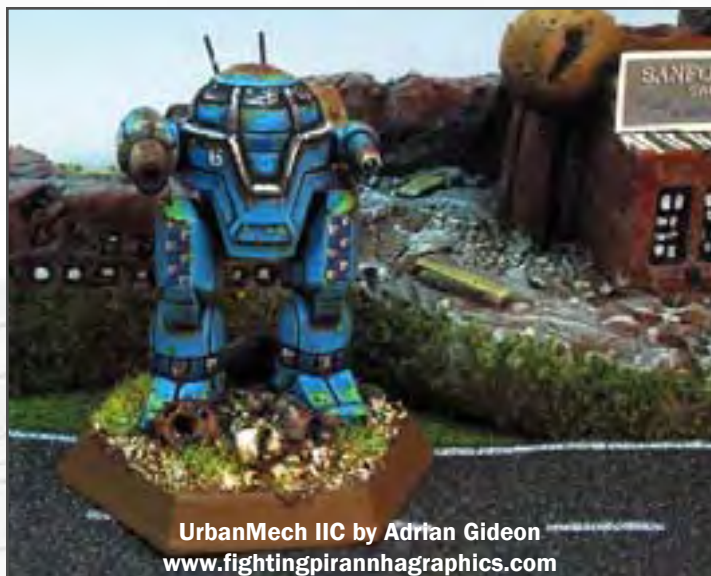
The UrbanMech IIC was one of the first upgraded 'Mechs created by Clan Coyote, around the same time as they were developing OmniMech technology. Here we see an example of an UrbanMech IIC in Clan Coyote colors. However, these pictures raise many disturbing questions, as the Clans would never discard a piece of equipment is such a fashion. But that's not the worst of it. This dejected BattleMech has been sitting on this Junkyard lot on Nyserta since 3042 - 8 full years before the Clans ever made contact with the Inner Sphere.

"In the end, there can only be a single painter left standing..."

RYAN "B1BFLYER"

Beowulf by B1BFlyer
www.camospecs.com/Artists.asp?ArtistID=21

CHRIS "KHAINE" LITTLE

Garm by Khaine

Caught behind enemy lines, and no way to fix his Garm, Doran had to do some drastic measures to repair his mech! He praised the gods that that headshot was only glancing and didn't totally penetrate his cockpit, or he would have surely been done for. Luckily for him and his comrades, even though his mech's leg had been blown off, along with his one arm; an enemy mech scrapyard was near his original target. With the front lines moving further away each day, they have taken the chance to salvage what they could from an Omnimech and a crashed aerotech fighter that had been ditched here unceremoniously. With only one leg, of which the knee has started seizing, and needed to be braced, it was going to be a long trudge home back to the barracks!

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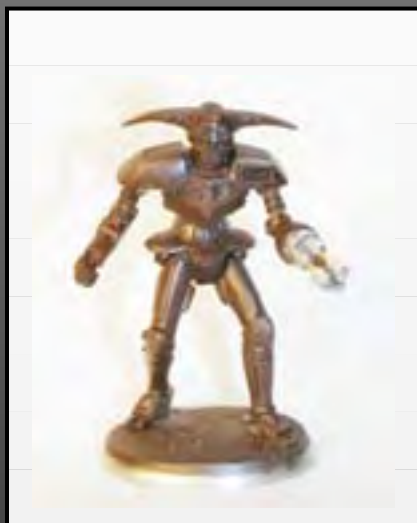
20-389 Hitman Mech

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20-391 Hauptman Mech
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WK GAMES

EXPLORER CORPS SURVEY

ALTAIR

CAPH

EPSILON ERIDANI

FLETCHER

28 February 2006
Lansing, Michigan
North America
Terra

The Blake Protectorate has been expanding ever since the start of the Jihad in late 3067. What started as 19 worlds has expanded far beyond that. They have taken worlds from every Successor State and most of the Chaos March. From Solaris to Tikonov, from Zion to Kessel the Word of Blake has gained control of some of the oldest worlds and most contested worlds during the era of the Succession Wars.

These worlds have some of the most detailed histories, most are found in the original House sourcebooks made by FASA. If they are not found there, there has been information published about them in the post-jihad era of the Dark Ages.

But what about right before the Word of Blake Jihad? These worlds were humanities first steps into the stars, so why can't we know a little more about them? So in a quick pause from detailing worlds in the Great Houses of the Inner Sphere I have turned my stellar cartography skills inwards towards Terra.

In this issue of the Commando Quarterly we'll be detailing the worlds of Altair, Caph and Epsilon Eridani. All 3 of these are named after real stars in our night sky.

Altair is the brightest star in the constellation of Aquila the Eagle and the 13th brightest star in the sky. The name itself comes from an Arabic phrase meaning "The Flying Eagle."

Caph is the second brightest star in the constellation of Cassiopeia. Its name is also taken from an Arabic phrase meaning "The Outstretched Hand." In real life Caph is a Yellow White Giant. But the old House books state that Caph, in the Battletech universe is a Yellow Main sequence star just a little cooler then our own Sun.

Epsilon Eridani is an interesting star to say the least. This was the first star, in 1960, to be searched for intelligent life broadcasting radio signals. It has also gained quite a bit of fame in recent years as being one of the many stars found to have a planet circling it. It is assumed to be a Gas Giant that has 0.86 times the mass of Jupiter and circles at 3.3 AUs away from its star. Unfortunately it has a highly elliptical orbit making it unlikely that any planets would survive in the stars habitable zone, but we can always hope that some jump-ship in the late 21st century will prove us all wrong. In real life Epsilon Eridani is an Orange Main sequence star, much cooler then our sun. In the Battletech universe it is an Orange Sub Giant, bigger then our sun, but still cooler.

I also want to give you all a small peak into how I name planets and their moons. When stars are named after real stars I often go back and research who has done studies on that star, or who first named it, if there is a person known. In a lot of cases with bright stars, they were named by Arabic astronomers. Often these names have something in mythology or legend that I can trace.

I often put these legends or tales into the names of the planets that circle that star. For example, in the Altair system I have named one of the planets "Stymphpalus". Stymphalian Birds had claws made of brass. They had migrated to Lake Stymphalus in Arcadia to escape a pack of wolves. Later Hercules came and scared them away after making a noise and firing an arrow at them. This was one of his twelve tasks.

But in Roman times many constellations were related to these myths. Sagittarius is firing an arrow twords the constellation that Altair is in, Aquilia. And these constellations where often thought to represent a battle between good and evil. So I felt that the two legends would work well together. And I'm not the only one to think that if you look online.

I hope that you enjoyed a little look into how I choose names and what I do with the planets.

Good gaming!

Aaron "Gravedigger" Pollyea
Commando #91

ALTAIR

STELLAR DATA

Astronomical Code:	HIP 500081
Star:	Altair
Stellar Type:	F7III (Yellow-White Giant)
Mass:	4.20 Solar Masses (8.3538e30 kg)
Radius:	4.26 Solar Radii (2,964,960 km)
Luminosity:	25.1 Solar Luminosity (9.764e34 ergs/sec)
Lifespan:	1.6733 Billion Years
Current Age:	1.1736 Billion Years
Current Status:	Slightly Unstable

PLANETARY SYSTEM DATA

Planets:	5
Rocky Worlds:	5
Gas Giants:	0
Major Asteroids*:	17
Minor Asteroids*:	188
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.

ALTAIR I

Common Name:	Herakles
Mean Orbital Radius:	0.9822 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	60.0882 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	3.08 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.09
Perihelion:	0.89380 AU
Aphelion:	1.07060 AU
Period:	177.8314 Standard Days
Mass:	6.5143e23 kg (0.1090 Earth)
Radius:	3751 km (0.4597 Earth)
Density:	6.17 g/cm^3 (1.1239 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	0.5166 G's
Rotational Period:	41.12 Hours
Axial Tilt:	17.70 degrees
Atmosphere:	Vacuum
Composition:	None
Hydrosphere:	None
Mean Temperature:	515K
Moons:	0

ALTAIR II

Common Name:	Alya
Mean Orbital Radius:	1.6127 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	46.8935 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	5.38 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.04
Perihelion:	1.54819 AU
Aphelion:	1.67721 AU
Period:	1.0251 Standard Years
Mass:	3.1326e24 kg (0.5242 Earth)
Radius:	4998 km (0.7836 Earth)
Density:	5.99 g/cm^3 (1.0911 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	0.8550 G's
Rotational Period:	23.91 Hours
Axial Tilt:	17.30 degrees
Atmosphere:	Thin (0.4438 Earth Standard)
Composition:	Carbon Dixoide Nitrogen Sulfur Dioxide
Hydrosphere:	None
Mean Temperature:	423K
Moons:	4

ALTAIR III

Common Name:	Tarazed
Mean Orbital Radius:	2.5565 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	37.2449 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	6.15 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.01
Perihelion:	2.53094 AU
Aphelion:	2.58207 AU
Period:	2.0459 Standard Years

Mass:	1.0021e25 kg (1.6769 Earth)
Radius:	7647 km (1.1990 Earth)
Density:	5.35 g/cm^3 (0.9745 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	1.1684 G's
Rotational Period:	36.60 Hours
Axial Tilt:	16.07 degrees
Atmosphere:	Thick (34.4731 Earth Standard)
Composition:	Carbon Dioxide Sulfur Dioxide Methane Nitrogen
Hydrosphere:	None
Mean Temperature:	381K
Moons:	0

ALTAIR IV

Common Name:	Stymphpalus
Mean Orbital Radius:	4.2840 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	28.7716 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	12.38 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.06
Perihelion:	4.02696 AU
Aphelion:	4.54104 AU
Period:	4.4380 Standard Years
Mass:	2.7692e23 kg (0.0463 Earth)
Radius:	2379 km (0.3730 Earth)
Density:	4.91 g/cm^3 (0.8944 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	0.3336 G's
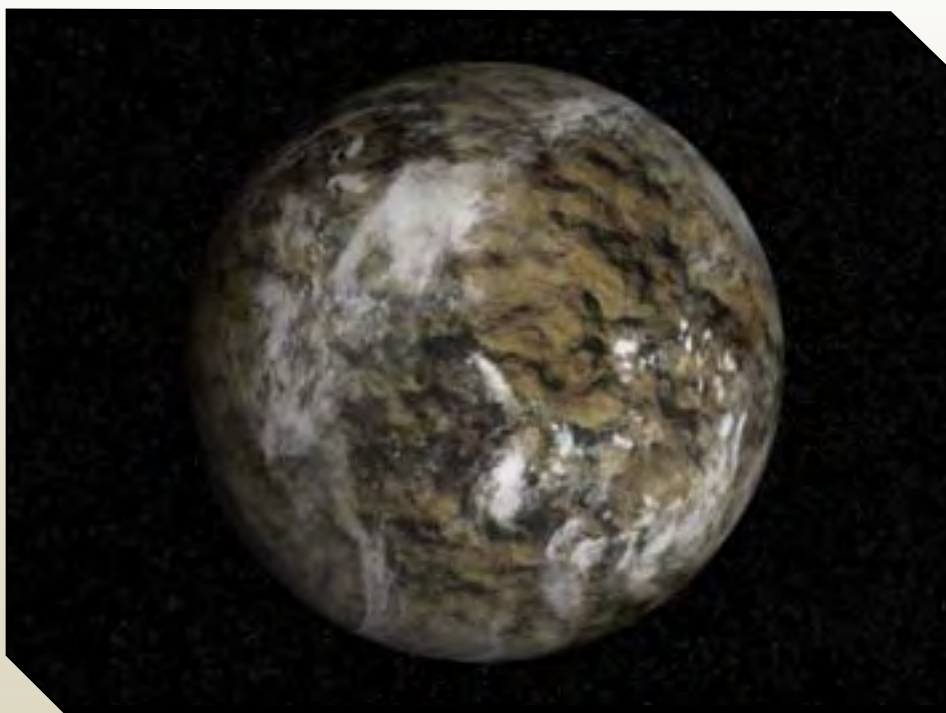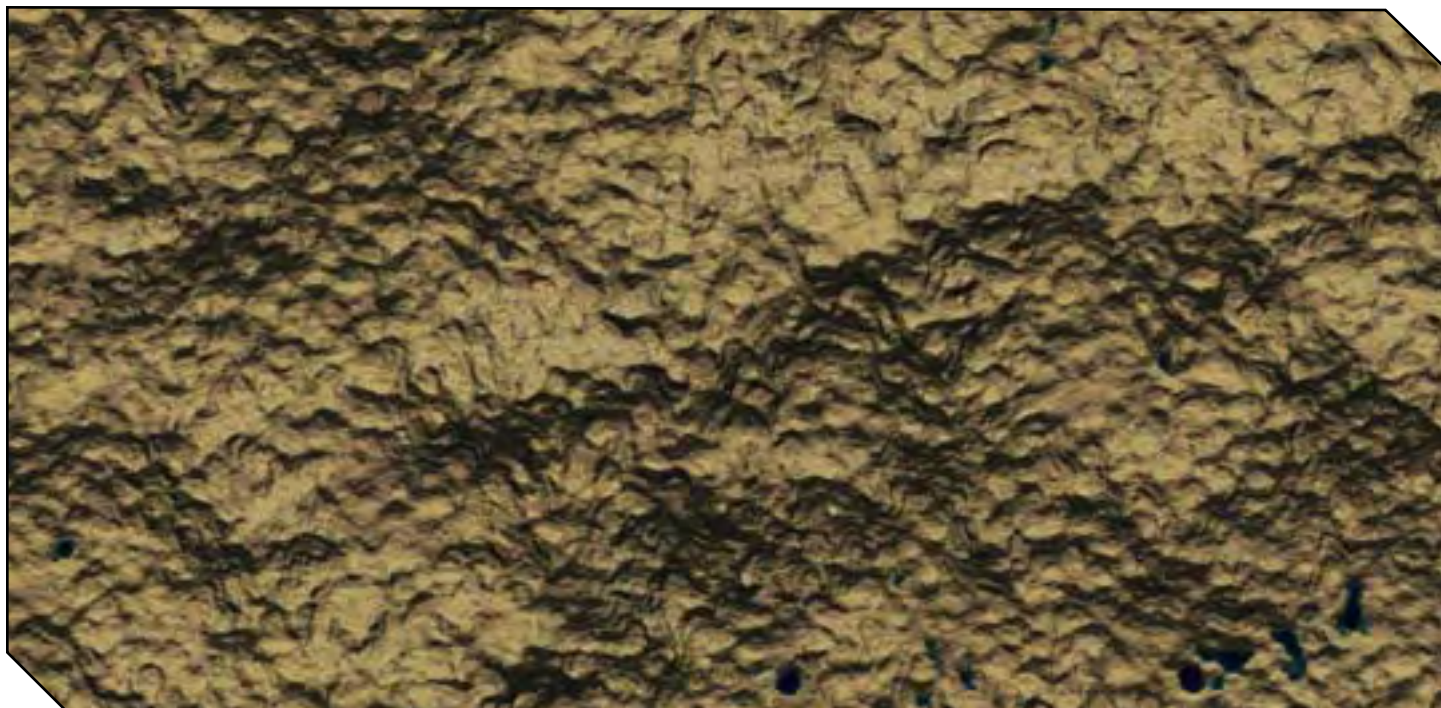
Rotational Period:	24.90 Hours
Axial Tilt:	26.74 degrees
Atmosphere:	Vacuum
Composition:	None
Hydrosphere:	None
Mean Temperature:	308K
Moons:	2

ALTAIR V

Common Name:	Altair
Mean Orbital Radius:	5.1884 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	26.1440 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	0.00 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.01
Perihelion:	5.13652 AU
Aphelion:	5.24028 AU
Period:	5.9152 Standard Years
Mass:	8.2691e24 kg (1.3837 Earth)
Radius:	7505 km (1.1767 Earth)
Density:	4.67 g/cm^3
	(1.0437 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	1.0009 G's
Rotational Period:	27.30 Hours
Axial Tilt:	12.55 degrees
Atmosphere:	Standard
	(1.0583 Earth Standard)
Composition:	Nitrogen
	Oxygen
	Neon
	Argon
	Carbon Dioxide
	Water Vapor
Hydrosphere:	Water
Mean Temperature:	301K

PLANETOGRAPHY

Total Surface Area:	707,801,139.01 km^2
Land Surface Area:	665,333,070.67 km^2
% coverage of Hydrosphere:	06%
Satellites:	Olgar (225 km radius)
	0.7675 Day Period

ECONOMY

Natural Resources:	Iron
	Titanium
	Silicates
Processed/ Manufactured Goods:	Products of the Kurita Combine
	Munitions Corporation
	Refined Metals
	Altarian Medicinal Water

POPULATION

Population:	3,643,243,029 (As of 3067)
Population density (km^2):	5.4758 (Over all land surface)
Urbanization:	92.8136%
Ethnic Groups:	Middle Eastern (40%)
	Asian (30%)
	European (15%)
	African (10%)
	Other (5%)
Religion:	Islam (35%)
	Judeo-Christian (25%)
	Buddhist (25%)
	Other (15%)
Labor Force:	Agriculture (5%)
	Education (15%)
	Industry (35%)
	Service (35%)

	Other (10%)
Planetary Militia:	1 Battalion of 'Mechs
	1 Battalion of Armor
	3 Lances of Conventional Fighters
	1 Regiment of Infantry

NOTES

Altair is a large, dry planet beneath a very unstable sun. The cause of the sun's frequent solar storms and violent flares is unknown, but such activity shuts down communications, sometimes for two months or more. Unsurprisingly, Altair has been raided often throughout it's history.

The planet's underground rivers are the reason that a few areas do support vegetation. Around these green patches cluster the three billion inhabitants of the planet. Mining is a major industry, with five iron ore deposits and one titanium ore deposit presently being mined.

The curious water in certain portions of the planet has given rise to the planet's second biggest firm, the Long Life Company. Headquartered in the city of Bonanza, this company grows certain herbs in "Altarian Medicinal Water"(as they call it) so that the herbs may be used in teas. Initially set up some 200 years ago, it now produces sophisticated chemical medications and hospital equipment, but still derives a good profit from its 'Tree of Life', 'Hands of a Loving Mother', and 'Secret of a Bull's Virility' tonics.

CAPH

STELLAR DATA

Astronomical Code:	HIP 500360
Star:	Caph
Stellar Type:	G5V (Yellow Main Sequence)
Mass:	0.94 Solar Masses (1.8697e30 kg)
Radius:	0.91 Solar Radii (633,360 km)
Luminosity:	0.772 Solar Luminosity (3.00e33 ergs/sec)
Lifespan:	12.1920 Billion Years
Current Age:	5.0988 Billion Years
Current Status:	Stable

PLANETARY SYSTEM DATA

Planets:	7
Rocky Worlds:	5
Gas Giants:	2
Major Asteroids*:	15
Minor Asteroids*:	45
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.

CAPH I

Common Name:	Al Sanam
Mean Orbital Radius:	0.1486 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	73.0835 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	5.36 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.07
Perihelion:	0.13820 AU
Aphelion:	0.15900 AU
Period:	22.1206 Standard Days
Mass:	1.3114e25 kg (2.1945 Earth)
Radius:	8238 km (1.2916 Earth)
Density:	5.60 g/cm^3 (1.0200 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	1.3175 G's
Rotational Period:	42.10 Hours
Axial Tilt:	12.23 degrees
Atmosphere:	Thick (70.1328 Earth Standard)
Composition:	Carbon Dioxide Nitrogen Chlorine Ammonia
Hydrosphere:	None
Mean Temperature:	872K
Moons:	2

CAPH II

Common Name:	Al Nakah
Mean Orbital Radius:	0.4173 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	43.6118 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	5.40 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.03
Perihelion:	0.40478 AU
Aphelion:	0.42982 AU
Period:	104.0978 Standard Days
Mass:	4.5684e24 kg (0.7645 Earth)
Radius:	5842 km (0.9160 Earth)
Density:	5.47 g/cm^3 (0.9964 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	0.9126 G's
Rotational Period:	18.33 Hours
Axial Tilt:	38.55 degrees
Atmosphere:	Standard (0.9261 Earth Standard)
Composition:	Nitrogen Argon Carbon Dioxide
Hydrosphere:	None
Mean Temperature:	372K
Moons:	3

CAPH III

Common Name:	Caph
Mean Orbital Radius:	0.8471 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	30.6099 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	0.00 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.01
Perihelion:	0.83863 AU
Aphelion:	0.85557 AU
Period:	301.0726 Standard Days
Mass:	5.9305e24 kg (0.9924 Earth)
Radius:	6327 km (0.9920 Earth)
Density:	5.59 g/cm^3 (1.0182 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	1.0101 G's
Rotational Period:	32.31 Hours
Axial Tilt:	12.74 degrees
Atmosphere:	Standard (1.0685 Earth Standard) Tainted (Radiation)
Composition:	Nitrogen Oxygen Argon Water Vapor Carbon Dioxide
Hydrosphere:	Water
Mean Temperature:	282K

PLANETOGRAPHY

Total Surface Area:	503,043,489.85 km^2
Land Surface Area:	291,765,224.11 km^2
% coverage of Hydrosphere:	42%
Satellites:	Lupis (828 km radius) 7.3674 Day Period Felis (589 km radius) 35.8849 Day Period

ECONOMY

Natural Resources:	Iron Magnesium Titanium
Processed/ Manufactured Goods:	Refined Metals Medical Equipment Plastics
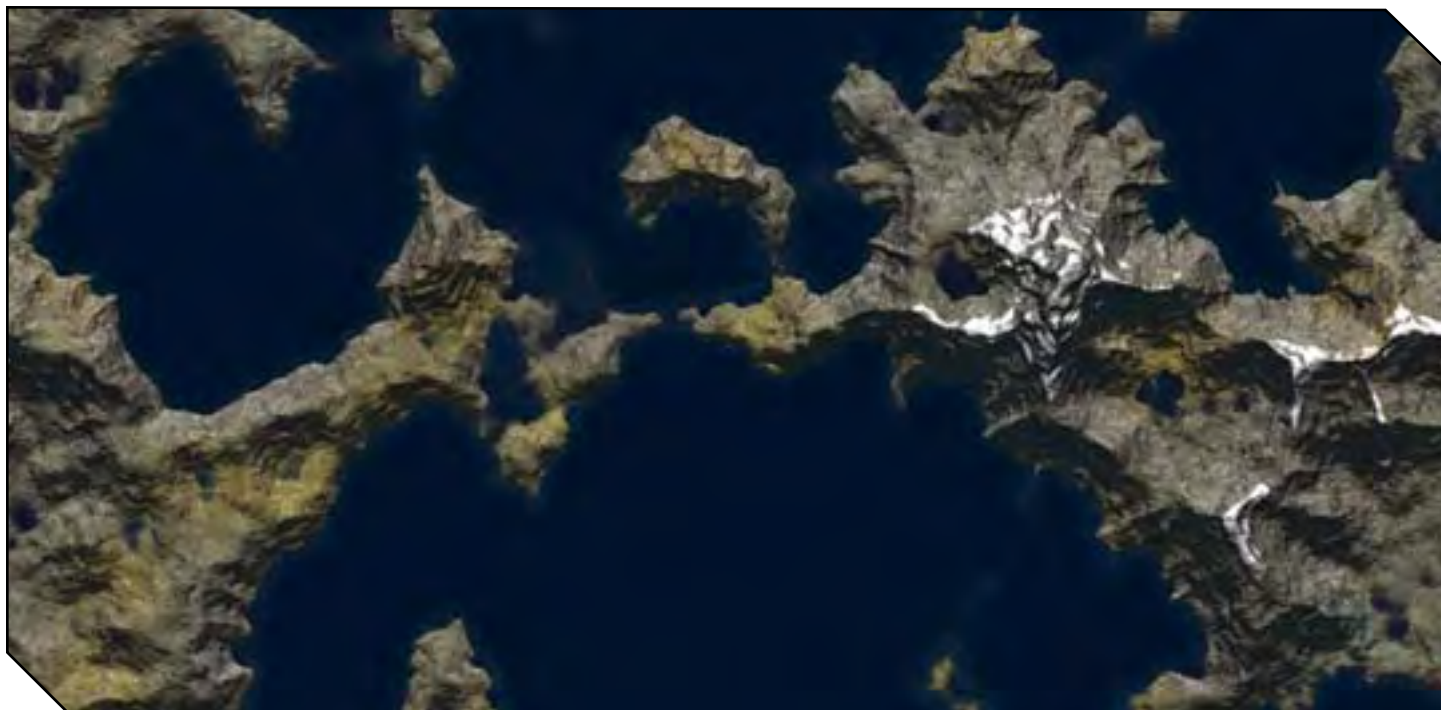
POPULATION

Population: 1,341,258,594 (As of 3067)
Population density
(km^2): 4.5970 (Over all land surface)
Urbanization: 79.8564%
Ethnic Groups: European (35%)
Asian (30%)
African (30%)
Other (5%)
Religion: Judeo-Christian (25%)
Islam (25%)
Taoist (20%)
Buddhist (10%)
Sikhism (5%)
Other (25%)
Labor Force: Agriculture (10%)
Education (20%)
Industry (25%)
Service (25%)
Other (20%)
Planetary Militia: 1 Battalion of 'Mechs
1 Battalion of Armor
3 Lances of Conventional Fighters
1 Regiment of Infantry

NOTES

Caph was one of the first worlds that Human space explorers settled after the Kearny-Fuchida drive made interstellar space travel possible. During the Star League era, Caph was a center for advanced engineering research. Indeed, much of the original theory behind the newly invented BattleMechs was developed at the famed Caph Institute of Technology. Caph was also famous for successful medical research and for the development of important new techniques in the field.

With the fall of the Star League, Caph became the center of bitter fighting between the Draconis Combine, the Capellan Confederation, and the Federated Suns. In 2787, the Fifth Battle for Caph became one of the few instances where three realms battled one another on the same planet. The Federated Suns was the eventual victory on Caph, however.

What House Davion inherited was a planet full of ruins and radiation zones. Ninety-nine percent of all the world's buildings had been destroyed, and the little remaining arable land had suffered from the effects of combat. Only now is the planet slowly recovering, with a growth in population and the construction of a few small factories. Even more important is that Caph's location makes it the ideal site for offices and warehouses of many Federated Suns trading companies interested in dealing with the rich Lyran Commonwealth. With the recent alliance between the two realms, this planet's usefulness and importance can only grow greater.

The capital city of Caph is Aswan.

CAPH IV

Common Name: Schedar
Mean Orbital Radius: 5.3128 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity: 12.2227 km/sec
Orbital Inclination: 6.27 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity: 0.09
  Perihelion: 4.83465 AU
  Aphelion: 5.79095 AU
Period: 12.9557 Standard Years

Mass: 4.4917e27 kg (751.6254 Earth)
Radius: 99154 km (15.5463 Earth)
Density: 1.10 g/cm^3
(0.2004 Earth Standard)
Gravity: 3.1149 G's
Rotational Period: 33.59 Hours
Axial Tilt: 2.18 degrees
Atmosphere: Ultra Thick (Gas Giant)
  Composition: Hydrogen
Helium
Ammonia
Methane
Water Vapor
Carbon Dioxide
Hydrosphere: None
Mean Temperature: 93K at cloud tops.
Moons: 18
Rings: Inner: 104,158 km radius
Outer: 168,089 km radius

CAPH V

Common Name: Ebtisamah
Mean Orbital Radius: 10.6184 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity: 8.6457 km/sec
Orbital Inclination: 9.78 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity: 0.06
  Perihelion: 9.98130 AU
  Aphelion: 11.25550 AU
Period: 36.6071 Standard Years
Mass: 3.9295e27 kg (657.5522 Earth)
Radius: 96933 km (15.1980 Earth)
Density: 1.03 g/cm^3
(0.1876 Earth Standard)
Gravity: 2.8514 G's
Rotational Period: 21.79 Hours
Axial Tilt: 0.42 degrees
Atmosphere: Ultra Thick (Gas Giant)
  Composition: Hydrogen

	Helium
	Ammonia
	Methane
	Water Vapor
	Carbon Dioxide
Hydrosphere:	None
Mean Temperature:	69K at cloud tops
Moons:	17
Rings:	Inner: 99,008 km radius
	Outer: 115,880 km radius

CAPH VI

Common Name:	Al Hamat
Mean Orbital Radius:	18.3288 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	6.5805 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	14.41 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.09
Perihelion:	16.67921 AU
Aphelion:	19.97839 AU

Period:	83.0190 Standard Years
Mass:	1.7000e23 kg (0.0284 Earth)
Radius:	2080 km (0.3261 Earth)
Density:	4.51 g/cm^3
	(0.8215 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	0.2679 G's
Rotational Period:	29.78 Hours
Axial Tilt:	39.82 degrees
Atmosphere:	Vacuum
Composition:	None
Hydrosphere:	None
Mean Temperature:	54K
Moons:	1

CAPH VII

Common Name:	Mubis
Mean Orbital Radius:	29.4822 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	5.1886 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	3.63 degrees

Orbital Eccentricity:	0.06
Perihelion:	27.71327 AU
Aphelion:	31.25113 AU
Period:	169.3621 Standard Years
Mass:	4.5039e24 kg (0.7537 Earth)
Radius:	6044 km (0.9476 Earth)
Density:	4.87 g/cm^3
	(0.8871 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	0.8406 G's
Rotational Period:	43.40 Hours
Axial Tilt:	33.87 degrees
Atmosphere:	Thin
	(0.1264 Earth Standard)
Composition:	Helium
	Nitrogen
Hydrosphere:	None
Mean Temperature:	42K
Moons:	2

EPSILON ERIDANI

STELLAR DATA

Astronomical Code:	HIP 500626
Star:	Epsilon Eradani
Stellar Type:	K2IV (Yellow Sub Giant)
Mass:	1.60 Solar Masses (3.1824e30 kg)
Radius:	4.65 Solar Radii (3,236,400 km)
Luminosity:	7.25 Solar Luminosity
	(2.82e34 ergs/sec)
Lifespan:	2.2069 Billion Years
Current Age:	1.5563 Billion Years
Current Status:	Stable

PLANETARY SYSTEM DATA

Planets:	10
Rocky Worlds:	7
Gas Giants:	3
Major Asteroids*:	13
Minor Asteroids*:	92
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.

EPSILON ERIDANI I

Common Name:	Rana
Mean Orbital Radius:	0.7689 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	41.9170 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	2.02 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.06
Perihelion:	0.72277 AU
Aphelion:	0.81503 AU
Period:	199.5620 Standard Days
Mass:	4.3251e24 kg (0.7237 Earth)

Radius:	5754 km (0.9022 Earth)
Density:	5.42 g/cm^3
	(0.9872 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	0.8907 G's
Rotational Period:	42.53 Hours
Axial Tilt:	42.49 degrees
Atmosphere:	Standard
	(0.6286 Earth Standard)
Composition:	Carbon Dioxide
	Nitrogen
	Argon
Hydrosphere:	None
Mean Temperature:	525K
Moons:	3

EPSILON ERIDANI II

Common Name:	Zaurak
Mean Orbital Radius:	1.8811 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	26.7990 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	7.05 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.10
Perihelion:	1.69299 AU
Aphelion:	2.06921 AU
Period:	2.0922 Standard Years
Mass:	1.5906e24 kg (0.2662 Earth)
Radius:	4061 km (0.6367 Earth)
Density:	5.67 g/cm^3
	(1.0328 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	0.6576 G's

Rotational Period:	22.20 Hours
Axial Tilt:	2.13 degrees
Atmosphere: Thin (0.4217 Earth Standard)	
Composition:	Sulfur Dioxide
	Methane
	Chlorine
Hydrosphere:	None
Mean Temperature:	258K
Moons:	2

EPSILON ERIDANI III

Common Name:	Hatzes
Mean Orbital Radius:	2.5889 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	22.8437 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	12.85 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.01
Perihelion:	2.56301 AU
Aphelion:	2.61479 AU
Period:	3.3779 Standard Years
Mass:	2.6107e23 kg (0.0437 Earth)
Radius:	2234 km (0.3503 Earth)
Density:	5.59 g/cm^3
	(1.0182 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	0.3566 G's
Rotational Period:	12.13 Hours
Axial Tilt:	24.58 degrees
Atmosphere:	Vacuum
Composition:	None
Hydrosphere:	None
Mean Temperature:	327K
Moons:	2

EPSILON ERIDANI IV

Common Name:	Epsilon Eridani
Mean Orbital Radius:	3.1667 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	20.6548 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	0.00 degrees

Orbital Eccentricity:	0.01
Perihelion:	3.13503 AU
Aphelion:	3.19837 AU
Period:	4.5697 Standard Years
Mass:	6.6558e24 kg (1.1138 Earth)
Radius:	6544 km (1.0260 Earth)
Density:	5.67 g/cm^3
	(1.0328 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	1.0597 G's
Rotational Period:	21.29 Hours
Axial Tilt:	2.11 degrees
Atmosphere:	Standard
	(1.0450 Earth Standard)
Composition:	Nitrogen
	Oxygen
	Argon
	Carbon Dioxide
	Water Vapor
Hydrosphere:	Water
Mean Temperature:	284K

PLANETOGRAPHY

Total Surface Area:	538,141,450.94 km^2
Land Surface Area:	91,484,046.66 km^2
% coverage of Hydrosphere:	83%
Satellites:	Minori (627 km radius)
	41.8847 Day Period

ECONOMY

Natural Resources:	Water
	Manganese
	Cobalt
Processed/	
Manufactured Goods:	Refined Metals
	Products of Kressly Warworks
	Industrial Chemicals
	Food products

POPULATION

Population:	2,558,214,084 (As of 3067)
Population density	
(km^2):	27.9635 (Over all land surface)
Urbanization:	47.8725%
Ethnic Groups:	European (55%)
	Asian (20%)
	African (20%)
	Other (5%)
Religion:	Judeo-Christian (55%)
	Hindi (15%)
	Atheist (10%)
	Islam (10%)
	Other (10%)
Labor Force:	Agriculture (20%)
	Education (20%)
	Industry (25%)
	Service (25%)
	Other (10%)
Planetary Militia:	1 Battalion of 'Mechs
	1 Battalion of Armor
	3 Lances of Conventional Fighters
	1 Lance of Aerospace Fighters
	2 Battalions of Infantry

NOTES

Epsilon Eridani's prime location in the Sarna March made it a valuable crossroads for much of the merchant traffic that flowed through the Terran Corridor. The commercial boom that followed the Forth Succession War made Epsilon Eridani a business and cultural mecca, which in turn made it a prime target for reconquest by the Capellan Confederation. At the time of the invasion, this planet's garrison consisted of the Epsilon Eridani SMM, a green unit with

unclear loyalties. Though nominally loyal to the Federated Commonwealth, the unit's commander, Leftenant General Pierre Benton, owed his first allegiance to his homeworld.

Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao's earlier efforts to set up Liaoist cells on Epsilon Eridani largely fell flat, and so he had limited resources to call on once the invasion of the Sarna March began. The few Liaoist rebels, however, caused damage far out of proportion to their numbers. A series of well-planned bombings killed hundreds of civilians and created a serious crisis for the planetary government. As Epsilon's leaders dithered, Leftenant General Benton grew increasingly frustrated with their inaction. Unable to sit and watch his world crumble around him, Benton took matters into his own hands with brutal efficiency. Within three weeks, no Liaoist presence to speak of remained alive on the planet. Instead of praising Benton, Council President Gloria Freeman saw the Leftenant General's actions as a flagrant disregard for the government and ordered him to surrender his unit to government commanders. Benton refused. Calling the Council "a gang of frightened bureaucrats unfit to govern a compost heap," he ordered his militia forces against the capital city of Madison. Cheered on by the local people Benton and his militia seized the capital without bloodshed and arrested the council leaders. Benton then publicly addressed Epsilon Eridani's citizens, telling them he had temporarily suspended the Council and taken charge of the planet until new elections could be held. He further declared Epsilon Eridani independent of any Successor State for as long as he remained in control, "because our rulers from the Great Houses have not done well by us. Therefore, I believe we must do right by ourselves." Benton renamed the militia the Eridani Guards, and handily won a popular election two months after independence.

Under Benton's leadership, Epsilon Eridani continued to be a haven for interstellar commerce in the troubled Chaos March, where groups from various worlds can trade and cut deals. The city of Dori on Epsilon E'' northern continent has become the planet'' largest trading center. Heavy industry also continues to thrive; the new Kressly Warworks factory on the southern continent, long a minor producer of military vehicles, produces its first BattleMech model, the Lineholder.

Epsilon Eridani has a pleasant, if damp, climate. Few of the world's frequent rainstorms ever become true thunderstorms. The southern continent contains large regions of swamplands, while the northern continent is drier and rockier, as well as containing large areas of hinterlands. The northern continent is also host to infrequent, but spectacular, thunder tempests.

EPSILON ERIDANI V

Common Name:	McArthur
Mean Orbital Radius:	6.3969 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	14.5325 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	5.49 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.03
Perihelion:	6.20499 AU
Aphelion:	6.58881 AU
Period:	13.1200 Standard Years
Mass:	2.2095e24 kg (0.3697 Earth)
Radius:	4810 km (0.7542 Earth)
Density:	4.74 g/cm^3
	(0.8634 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	0.6511 G's
Rotational Period:	42.55 Hours
Axial Tilt:	18.46 degrees
Atmosphere:	Thin (0.1415 Earth Standard)
Composition:	Nitrogen
	Methane
Hydrosphere:	None
Mean Temperature:	167K
Moons:	1

EPSILON ERIDANI VI

Common Name:	Paulson
Mean Orbital Radius:	13.6904 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	9.9338 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	5.51 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.05
Perihelion:	13.00588 AU
Aphelion:	14.37492 AU
Period:	41.0775 Standard Years
Mass:	2.5976e27 kg (434.6792 Earth)
Radius:	86445 km (13.5536 Earth)
Density:	0.96 g/cm^3
	(0.1749 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	2.3700 G's
Rotational Period:	37.84 Hours
Axial Tilt:	17.08 degrees
Atmosphere:	Ultra Thick (Gas Giant)
Composition:	Hydrogen
	Helium
	Ammonia
	Methane
	Carbon Dioxide
Hydrosphere:	None
Mean Temperature:	117K at cloud tops.
Moons:	19
Rings:	Inner: 97,817 km radius
	Outer: 180,542 km radius

EPSILON ERIDANI VII

Common Name:	Cochran
Mean Orbital Radius:	23.2554 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	7.6219 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	6.23 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.10
Perihelion:	20.92986 AU
Aphelion:	25.58094 AU
Period:	90.9423 Standard Years
Mass:	3.7392e26 kg (62.5705 Earth)
Radius:	40538 km (6.3559 Earth)
Density:	1.34 g/cm^3
	(0.2441 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	1.5514 G's
Rotational Period:	26.21 Hours
Axial Tilt:	35.84 degrees
Atmosphere:	Ultra Thick (Gas Giant)
Composition:	Hydrogen
	Helium
	Ammonia
	Methane
	Carbon Dioxide
Hydrosphere:	None
Mean Temperature:	93K at cloud tops
Moons:	14
Rings:	Inner: 45,649 km radius
	Outer: 86,249 km radius

EPSILON ERIDANI VIII

Common Name:	Quillen
Mean Orbital Radius:	37.2613 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	6.0214 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	9.93 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.01
Perihelion:	36.88869 AU
Aphelion:	37.63391 AU
Period:	184.4452 Standard Years
Mass:	2.2751e27 kg (380.6980 Earth)
Radius:	79770 km (12.5071 Earth)
Density:	1.07 g/cm^3
	(0.1949 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	2.4376 G's
Rotational Period:	21.69 Hours
Axial Tilt:	20.63 degrees
Atmosphere:	Ultra Thick (Gas Giant)
Composition:	Hydrogen
	Helium
	Ammonia
	Methane
	Carbon Dioxide
Hydrosphere:	None
Mean Temperature:	71K at cloud tops.
Moons:	10
Rings:	Inner: 84,932 km radius
	Outer: 165,671 km radius

EPSILON ERIDANI IX

Common Name:	Thorndike
Mean Orbital Radius:	50.4899 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	5.1728 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	6.71 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.05

Perihelion:	47.96541 AU
Aphelion:	53.01440 AU
Period:	290.9290 Standard Years
Mass:	2.9670e24 kg (0.4965 Earth)
Radius:	5486 km (0.8601 Earth)
Density:	4.29 g/cm^3
	(0.7814 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	0.6721 G's
Rotational Period:	31.59 Hours
Axial Tilt:	21.03 degrees
Atmosphere:	Very Thin
	(0.0143 Earth Standard)

Composition:	Helium
Hydrosphere:	None
Mean Temperature:	62K
Moons:	5

EPSILON ERIDANI X

Common Name:	Pheaton
Mean Orbital Radius:	66.1662 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	4.5186 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	3.25 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.02
Perihelion:	64.84288 AU
Aphelion:	67.48952 AU

Period:	436.4500 Standard Years
Mass:	5.9319e24 kg (0.9926 Earth)
Radius:	7439 km (1.1664 Earth)
Density:	3.44 g/cm^3
	(0.6266 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	0.7308 G's
Rotational Period:	17.36 Hours
Axial Tilt:	12.68 degrees
Atmosphere:	Thin
	(0.0821 Earth Standard)
Composition:	Neon
Hydrosphere:	None
Mean Temperature:	53K
Moons:	0

FLETCHER

STELLAR DATA

Astronomical Code:	HIP 500675
Star:	Fletcher
Stellar Type:	G4V (Yellow Main Sequence)
Mass:	0.95 Solar Masses (1.8896e30 kg)
Radius:	0.93 Solar Radii (647,280 km)
Luminosity:	0.814 Solar Luminosity
	(3.17e33 ergs/sec)
Lifespan:	11.6708 Billion Years
Current Age:	8.1585 Billion Years
Current Status:	Stable

PLANETARY SYSTEM DATA

Planets:	10
Rocky Worlds:	8
Gas Giants:	2
Major Asteroids*:	11
Minor Asteroids*:	135
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.

FLETCHER I

Common Name:	Sharon
Mean Orbital Radius:	0.0452 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	136.6462 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	7.54 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.09
Perihelion:	0.04113 AU
Aphelion:	0.04927 AU
Period:	3.5986 Standard Days
Mass:	3.3154e23 kg (0.0555 Earth)
Radius:	2346 km (0.3678 Earth)

Density:	6.13 g/cm^3
	(1.1166 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	0.4107 G's
Rotational Period:	86.3674 Hours
	Tidally Locked
Axial Tilt:	8.45 degrees
Atmosphere:	Vacuum
Composition:	None
Hydrosphere:	Molten Silicates
Mean Temperature:	1116K
Moons:	0

FLECTHER II

Common Name:	Angling
Mean Orbital Radius:	0.0862 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	98.9494 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	15.35 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.09
Perihelion:	0.07844 AU
Aphelion:	0.09396 AU
Period:	9.4775 Standard Days
Mass:	3.6802e23 kg (0.0616 Earth)
Radius:	2496 km (0.3913 Earth)
Density:	5.65 g/cm^3
	(1.0291 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	0.4028 G's
Rotational Period:	10.23 Hours
Inclination:	10.08 degrees
Atmosphere:	Vacuum
Composition:	None
Hydrosphere:	None
Mean Temperature:	802K
Moons:	0

FLETCHER III

Common Name:	Pemberthy
Mean Orbital Radius:	0.2031 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	64.4632 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	26.32 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.02
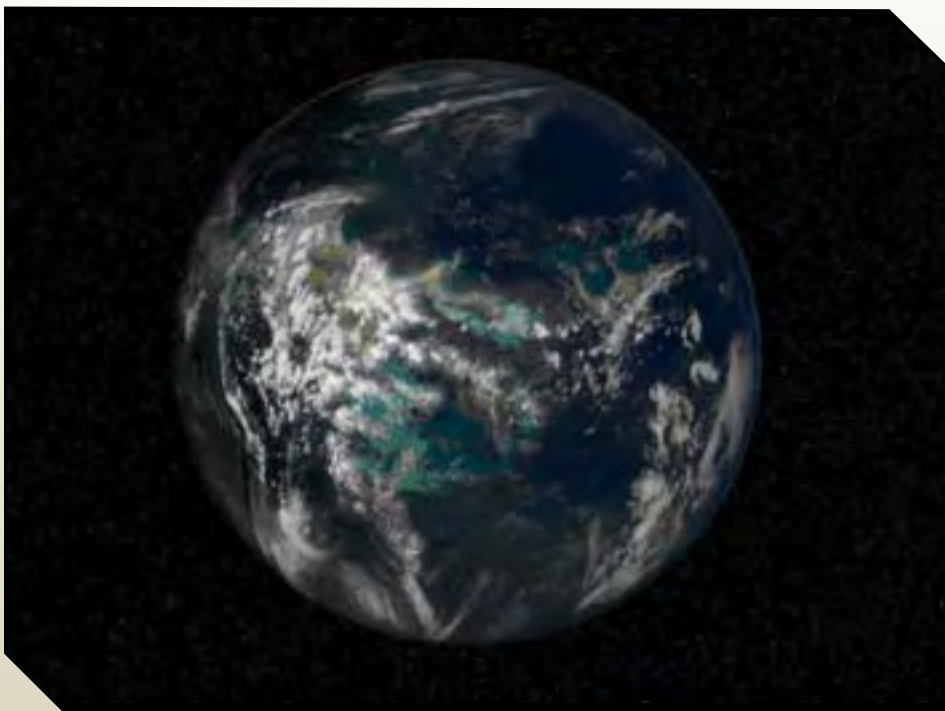
Perihelion:	0.19904 AU
Aphelion:	0.20716 AU
Period:	34.2765 Standard Days
Mass:	2.6890e23 kg (0.0450 Earth)
Radius:	2226 km (0.3490 Earth)
Density:	5.82 g/cm^3
	(1.1166 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	0.3700 G's
Rotational Period:	30.35 Hours
Axial Tilt:	40.62 degrees
Atmosphere:	Vacuum
Composition:	None
Hydrosphere:	None
Mean Temperature:	507K
Moons:	1

FLETCHER IV

Common Name:	Tent
Mean Orbital Radius:	0.4826 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	41.8189 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	13.94 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.05
Perihelion:	0.45847 AU
Aphelion:	0.50673 AU
Period:	125.5486 Standard Days
Mass:	1.2059e24 kg (0.2018 Earth)
Radius:	3743 km (0.5869 Earth)
Density:	5.49 g/cm^3
	(1.0000 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	0.5869 G's
Rotational Period:	23.56 Hours
Axial Tilt:	9.40 degrees
Atmosphere:	Thin (0.1773 Earth Standard)
Composition:	Carbon Dioxide
	Nitrogen Dioxide
Hydrosphere:	None
Mean Temperature:	320K
Moons:	0

FLETCHER V

Common Name:	Moorestown
Mean Orbital Radius:	0.8501 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	31.5088 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	4.23 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.04
Perihelion:	0.81610 AU
Aphelion:	0.88410 AU
Period:	293.5189 Standard Days
Mass:	1.2859e24 kg (0.2152 Earth)
Radius:	3857 km (0.6047 Earth)
Density:	5.35 g/cm^3
	(0.9745 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	0.5893 G's
Rotational Period:	13.97 Hours
Axial Tilt:	36.88 degrees
Atmosphere:	Thin (0.2753 Earth Standard)
Composition:	Carbon Dioxide
	Nitrogen
Hydrosphere:	None
Mean Temperature:	249K
Moons:	3

FLETCHER VI

Common Name:	Michelson
Mean Orbital Radius:	1.4124 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	24.4449 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	4.16 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.06
Perihelion:	1.32766 AU
Aphelion:	1.49714 AU
Period:	1.7222 Standard Years
Mass:	2.0135e24 kg (0.3369 Earth)
Radius:	4717 km (0.7396 Earth)
Density:	4.58 g/cm^3
	(0.8342 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	0.6170 G's
Rotational Period:	37.50 Hours
Axial Tilt:	14.46 degrees

Atmosphere:	Vacuum
Composition:	None
Hydrosphere:	None
Mean Temperature:	188K
Moons:	2

FLETCHER VII

Common Name:	Fletcher
Mean Orbital Radius:	2.0162 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	20.4597 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	0.00 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.01
Perihelion:	1.99604 AU
Aphelion:	2.03636 AU
Period:	2.9372 Standard Years
Mass:	1.2265e25 kg (2.0524 Earth)
Radius:	8023 km (1.2579 Earth)
Density:	5.67 g/cm^3
	(1.0328 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	1.2992 G's
Rotational Period:	22.05 Hours
Inclination:	24.71 degrees
Atmosphere:	Thick
	(3.6943 Earth Standard)
Composition:	Nitrogen
	Oxygen
	Argon
	Carbon Dioxide
	Water Vapor
Hydrosphere:	Water
Mean Temperature:	280K
	Terraformed from 160K

PLANETOGRAPHY

Total Surface Area:	808,878,791.32 km^2
Land Surface Area:	80,887,879.13 km^2
% coverage of Hydrosphere:	90%
Satellites:	None

ECONOMY

Natural Resources:	Aluminum
	Helium
	Manganese
Processed/	
Manufactured Goods:	Refined Metals
	Noble Gases
	Products of FlameTech

POPULATION

Population:	512,409,754 (As of 3067)
Population density (km^2):	6.3348 (Over all land surface)
Urbanization:	15.9441%
Ethnic Groups:	European (40%)
	Asian (40%)
	African (10%)
	Other (10%)
Religion:	Buddhist (65%)
	Judeo-Christian (20%)
	Atheist (10%)
	Other (5%)
Labor Force:	Agriculture (10%)
	Education (25%)
	Industry (25%)
	Service (20%)
	Other (20%)
Planetary Militia:	2 Companies of 'Mechs
	2 Companies of armor
	1 Lance of conventional fighters
	1 Regiment of infantry

NOTES

Originally a frozen ball of water ice and noble gases, Fletcher was scouted by the Terran Hegemony as a suitable world to mine for aluminum and other common metals. It wasn't until the Ice Rushes of the later expansionary era that Fletcher was put to more use as a source of water ice.

Fletcher was then settled by many workers mining the ice. Just before the Star League formed Fletcher was terraformed so the ice around the equator started to melt. With further advances in terraforming technology allowed the seas to almost completely melt away except at the poles.

Fletcher's dense atmosphere and constant cloud cover keep it damp and chilly. The Terran Hegemony established several arms factories on Fletcher, including StarCorp Industries, Caletra Fighters, Yelm Weapons, and Flame Tech. These companies produced the *Highlander* BattleMech, the *Swift* fighter, the *Nightshade* VTOL, and various laser and flamer systems. Although part of the Terran Hegemony, Fletcher became the burial ground of Aliesha Liao, a Capellan Chancellor still famous today as the author of the Ares Conventions. The Hegemony insisted on burying Aliesha in Hegemony soil for her contributions to civilizing warfare.

Since her death, other Capellan Chancellors have chosen burial on Fletcher. House Liao quickly claimed Fletcher after the fall of the First Star League. However, with the exception of Flame Tech, House Liao lost Fletcher's factories to battle damage inflicted during the First Succession War, and Fletcher became little more than a self-sufficient funeral world. Fletcher stayed under the Capellan flag until the Fourth Succession War, when it was briefly part of the Tikonov Free Republic before reverting to Federated Suns control. In the events leading up to the Federated Commonwealth Civil War, Fletcher descended into anarchy along with many neighboring worlds in the so-called Chaos March.

FLETCHER VIII

Common Name:	Merritt
Mean Orbital Radius:	6.9255 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	11.0393 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	7.54 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.06
Perihelion:	6.50997 AU
Aphelion:	7.34103 AU
Period:	18.6989 Standard Years
Mass:	1.5365e27 kg (257.1070 Earth)
Radius:	69987 km (10.9732 Earth)
Density:	1.07 g/cm^3
	(0.2113 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	2.1387 G's
Rotational Period:	36.10 Hours
Axial Tilt:	38.59 degrees
Atmosphere:	Ultra Thick (Gas Giant)
Composition:	Hydrogen
	Helium
	Methane
	Ammonia
Hydrosphere:	None
Mean Temperature:	85K at cloud tops
Moons:	13
Rings:	Inner: 78,174 km radius
	Outer: 96,006 km radius

FLETCHER IX

Common Name:	Meads Landing
Mean Orbital Radius:	12.0916 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	8.3546 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	5.26 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.03
Perihelion:	11.72885 AU
Aphelion:	12.45435 AU
Period:	43.1384 Standard Years
Mass:	1.8673e27 kg (312.4719 Earth)
Radius:	72704 km (11.3992 Earth)
Density:	1.16 g/cm^3
	(0.2113 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	2.4086 G's
Rotational Period:	35.56 Hours
Axial Tilt:	36.19 degrees
Atmosphere:	Ultra Thick (Gas Giant)
Composition:	Hydrogen
	Helium
	Ammonia
	Methane
Hydrosphere:	None
Mean Temperature:	66K at the cloud tops.
Moons:	15
Rings:	Inner: 78,129 km radius
	Outer: 97,969 km radius

FLETCHER X

Common Name:	Nells
Mean Orbital Radius:	19.1986 AU
Mean Orbital Velocity:	6.6303 km/sec
Orbital Inclination:	12.77 degrees
Orbital Eccentricity:	0.09
Perihelion:	17.47073 AU
Aphelion:	20.92647 AU
Period:	86.3063 Standard Years
Mass:	1.2505e25 kg (2.0925 Earth)
Radius:	8841 km (1.3862 Earth)
Density:	4.32 g/cm^3
	(0.7869 Earth Standard)
Gravity:	1.0908 G's
Rotational Period:	38.83 Hours
Axial Tilt:	15.59 degrees
Atmosphere:	Vacuum
Composition:	None
Hydrosphere:	None
Mean Temperature:	54K
Moons:	3

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TACTICAL NUMBERING SCHEMES

By Jason Weiser

How many times have you played *Battletech* and have gotten into an argument on what you were shooting at? Someone would ask who your target was and you would say "that blue Warhammer." Only to discover that there are two blue Warhammers on the opposing side! Ok, so now what? You then you go out and buy a number pack or two from FPG or some other manufacturer. Ooops! What's this, you've got two #33s out there! What would you say if I could tell you a way to give your 'Mechs a system where there would be absolutely no confusion over who's shooting at who? It's flawless and takes little thought, and it can give your 'Mechs an identity to boot. Real life armies have been using this system for years. Interested? Then follow me!

Tactical numbering systems are as old as armored warfare, even the British numbered their tanks at Cambrai in 1917. The systems weren't refined until the Germans came along in World War II. You see, the *Reichswehr* (later to be the *Wehrmacht*) that we all know and love discovered something; that it is darn difficult enough to control tanks when everybody is screaming over the same battalion radio net for "Tank 3", but when you have three "tank 3's" in the same company you have a recipe for chaos. Hence, the Germans began to paint two digit numbers on their vehicles, soon to be expanded to three. They made them somewhat prominent and sometimes made the numbers different colors. It seems complicated at a glance, but if you knew the system you could figure out which battalion, company, and even platoon that particular vehicle belonged to, or even if the vehicle was a command tank. (They kept two digits, don't worry guys; I'll be explaining the system and some other systems). The Soviets copied and modified the system post-war, but the Soviets never had as uniform a system as the Germans.

The Americans used a different system, by where the vehicle was assigned a letter and a two-digit number corresponding to its place in the company, if it was battalion or higher, it was simply "HQ". The Americans tended to put their numbers on the bumpers and still do to some extent today (hence the parlance, "bumper numbers"). Certain numbers were reserved, like 66 for Company and Higher Commanders, and 55 for XO's. The number 1 vehicle would always be the platoon commander. It's a simpler system, and still in use in many NATO nations today, and it's fun to use.

So how do these systems work? Glad you asked (Otherwise, what's the point of this article, eh?). We'll be going over 3 systems today, the WWII German system, which while it seems complicated, really isn't. We'll also be looking at the Soviet and American systems which are pretty simple as well.

All of these systems seem arcane at first, and you might be confused, but don't be. By the end, you'll be saying, "Why the hell did I never think of this!" It keeps your units organized, and there really will never be a dispute over who's being shot at.

THE GERMAN SYSTEM

The German numbering system of World War II is quite simple really; it just seems complicated. First thing to keep in mind is that there are three numbers involved. (See Figure 1)

Figure 1:

121

As you can see above, there is a three digit number, the first number corresponds to the company the 'Mech belongs to. In this case, the 'Mech belongs to the First Company. The second number is the lance the 'Mech belongs to, in this case, the second lance. Finally, the third number is the 'Mech's position in the lance, which is one, which means he is the lance commander. Pretty simple huh? But what about Company and higher commanders, well, this is where it gets a touch complicated, but come along! It's not that bad. The nice thing about this system is it allows a lot of variation (The Germans did historically). For example: (See Figure 2)

Figure 2:

R01

In this case, the R means that the 'Mech belongs to the regimental command lance or company, or what have you. "0" means there is no company affiliation (no command company then) and "1" means it's the first 'Mech in the lance (aka the regimental commander). For battalion commanders simply replace the "R" with "I", "II", or "III" in Roman numerals so as to signify first, second, or third battalion.

See how simple this is? So how flexible is it? Pretty, you can make the numbers different colors per regiment (for those of us out there who have multi-regiment collections) or you can add a fourth number to the front for Battalion affiliation (though that wasn't very common). All in all, it's flexible, and easy to use.

THE SOVIET SYSTEM

The Soviet system is somewhat borrowed from the earlier German system, but in fact, the Soviets often arbitrarily assigned vehicles numbers, though just as often, they did so as part of a pattern.

In the typical pattern, the first digit would refer to the battalion, the second it's company and the third, the vehicle's place in the Platoon. An example of this is shown below:

Figure 3:

112

In this example, the vehicle belongs to the first battalion, first company and is the second vehicle in the company. Soviet doctrine, with three vehicles to a platoon and ten to a company, doesn't exactly fit BT organizations, but one could see the adaptability of this extremely simple system.

One can even mark high level unit commanders in the system. An "*" placed after the number or *bort* in Russian (*Bort* being Russian for side) denotes a battalion commander, a "+" denotes a company commander and a "++" denotes a platoon or lance leader.

THE AMERICAN SYSTEM:

The American System is also quite simple, and I have also simplified it a lot here so as to allow us to get through this in not such a bewildering fashion. The system was implemented during the Second World War, and has been modified over the years, but has essentially remained the same, and is very flexible (It's the system I use). For a breakdown of the system, I refer you to Figure 4:

Figure 4:

A-22

Ok, the above refers to a 'Mech in Alpha Company, second platoon and second 'Mech in the platoon. Remember 66 is for company commanders and 55 for their XO's. What about higher echelons? Just consult Figure 5.

Figure 5:

HQ-33

In this case, the 'Mech is part of the unit HQ lance/company/what have you. It's in the third battalion's command element and the third 'Mech in the lance. Remember 66 and 55 are still the numbers for the unit CO and XO, and at this point, the American system usually uses symbols to signify higher echelon affiliation (battalion and regiment) so you can use polygons, triangles and the like. But, to be honest, unless you plan on putting a battalion plus on the table, the company stuff is just fine.

Now, the hard part!

So, now that you know the system, how do I use it? Ok, come up with an intended TOE for your mechs, or not (if not, just make sure not to give two mechs the same numbers or letter/number combo). Get some letter and # decals (FPG is nice, and there is I-94 Enterprises, which I swear by, they have letters and they're compatible with the numbers and they come in a variety of colors).

Be sure you apply to your 'Mech letters/numbers that will be legible and be in a natural place (In other words, Black numbers/letters on a black surface is a no-no). Also keep in mind that in many places, the numbers must complement the camouflage, blazing orange neon numbers on a nice forest green camo is not only going to ruin the effect, it's going to give enemy gunners the mother of all aiming points. The front of the legs are a good place, as is the lower center torso. In any case, keep track of what numbers and letters you have used and remember that by the thirty-first century somebody is bound to have come up with even more systems. So be imaginative, as long as it allows you to point out a mech without any confusion, and helps you organize them, then go for it. Give this system a try, it sounds better when you refer to "Romeo-44" (R-44) than "that blue Archer" and EVERYBODY knows to which you refer!

HAPPY 'MECHING!!!!!

SWORD AND DRAGON

PREVIEW:

HOW TO PAINT THE FOX'S TEETH AND SORENSON'S SABRES

By William S. Burt

I want to start this by saying thanks to Fanpro for developing a great book to get new players into the game. This book is going to be a wonderful starter tool for new players to get the feel of a game we all love. Also I would like to thank Randall for giving me the chance to help in this endeavor and Ray for letting me have the chance to show you what I have done.

With that in mind I went about painting the miniatures in the book in such a way that will be easy to duplicate and reproduce. This style will give you great looking miniatures on the table while you are trouncing your fellow players. As with all paintjobs keep trying until you are happy with the results and like what you have done. So lets get started.

The Fox's Teeth

Step 1: With any mini, one of the most critical steps is prepping the mini for paint. Here I have assembled a Jager Mech for paint after removing any flash and mold lines. The base is filled with spackle. I then let that dry and using some water proof glue I layed a layer of craft sand down to give the base some texture. Once it is dry wash the mini in warm water and dish soap to remove the oils from casting and any loose sand from the base.

Step 2: My next step was to prime the mini, since the Fox's Teeth use a sandy base coat I primered it with Krylon brown primer. This is to give me a good base to build the color of the base layer. White would have been too bright and black would have muddied the base color up.

Step 3: To achieve the shade of base that I wanted for this mini I used Folk Art Teddy Bear Tan #419 thinned 1 part paint to 2 part distilled water. This gave me a real thick wash that was brushed over the entire mini. make sure that the coverage is even and that no puddles form.

Step 4: Bringing up the panel lines are our next step. Making what is called a magic wash with brown ink I washed the entire mini. Magic wash is 40 drop brown ink, 40 drops of distilled water, and 20 drops of Future Floor Polish.

Step 5: Once the wash is dry dry brush the mini with the original Teddy Bear color. This can be a heavier than usual dry brush. The only thing to avoid is to try and stay out of the panel lines.

Step 6: Dry brush the mini with a lighter tan than the Teddy Bear. I used another Folk Art color #953 Camel. You want this

dry brush to be lighter and try to hit the high points more than anything else.

Step 7: Wash the mini again with your brown magic wash. you may want to thin it a little for this step. you do not want as heavy a coverage as last time.

Step 8: Camo patterns can be a personal choice for you but I went with a line type

pattern. Using Scorpion Green by GW I laid down a random pattern from the feet up and down the arms. I know you are going man that is bright!! Don't worry we will tone it down as we go. I want a bright solid base so the camo does not wash out in the final work.

Step 9: Go back over the same lines you just created with a light pale green I used Reaper Master Paints olive green for this step. Allow some of the scorpion green to show in places.

Step 10: Once again go over the same lines this time with a green ink. I personally used FW Inks Olive Green. It is a transparent ink that I like a lot.

Step 11: Seal the mini with a light coat of matte sealer this is to lock the ink in place, if you used a standard acrylic paint then the sealing is not needed. Once the seal is dry wash the mini again with your thinned brown magic wash.

Step 12: Okay we are getting close paint all metal parts with a flat black this is to give the pop needed to the metals on the mini.

Step 13: Paint all of the metal parts in the appropriate metal colors. I used steel for the joints, gunmetal for the guns of course and Reaper Master Paints Scorched Metal for the heat sink vents.

Step 14: Wash all of the metal parts with a thin black magic wash.

The rest is up to you I added some battle damage and decals provided by Fighting Piranha Graphics. Completed the base and I now have a good looking mech to squash my friends and enemies alike. I hope you enjoyed and do not find this to hard to follow if you would like to paint up your own Fox's Teeth minis.

Sorenson's Sabers

Step 1: Is to get the mini ready for paint. We are going to use the Mongoose for this, a light and fast mech without a lot of complicated details. Get the mini glued together and on to a base. I like to let mine dry for 24 hours to make sure all of the glue bonds are strong. Now build up the base, I used spackle and sand glued to that after it was dry to give it some texture. Once that is done wash the mini in warm water and dish soap. Do this very gently and quickly if you used white glue to hold your sand on for it will wash it off. I recommend some kind of waterproof glue for the sand. Also make sure you add the antenna in the build

process now. I forgot them and had to add them later on and that was a hairy moment if I messed up it would have set me all the way back to the beginning. To add the antenna cut 2 bristles from a toothbrush and drill out the antenna holes with a micro drill. Dip the end of the bristles in superglue and place in your holes. When dry cut to length using a sharp pair of scissors.

Step 2: Is to get the mini primed you want to use white to get the red to really

pop which we will tone down a little later. Remember it is always best to use a couple of light layers of primer instead of one heavy one to cover the mini. Make sure you do get the entire mini covered.

Step 3: Now since we know this is a Sword of Light unit we need a base of red to build from. I used a transparent red ink from FW Inks to lay down my base layer. The reason that I like to use inks for the base is that they dry smooth and tight to the mini. They also will settle naturally into the low areas giving you some instant shading. The only drawback is that you will need to seal the min with a very light layer of matte sealer or the ink will bleed into the next layers of paint you lay down.

Step 4: We need to define the panel lines and bring up the highlights a little. The quick and easiest way to do that is a wash. I use a washing system called magic wash. 40 drops of ink to 40 drops

of distilled water and 20 drops of future floor polish. I mix this up and keep it around since it will do several minis before I need to mix up a new batch. This will be a heavy wash so if you need a lighter one just mix in a little more water in a small mixing container for that one project.

Step 5: Lay down a another layer of the transparent red ink. Make sure your wash is completely dry before adding the ink layer. Seal again with a light layer of Matte sealer to lock the ink down.

Step 6: Now dry brush the min with a medium red. I used Reaper Master Paints Blood Red. Then apply another wash using your magic washed thinned with a little more water.

Step 7: Start the detailing of the mini. Paint all metallic areas with a flat black this will bring out more shine in the metallic paints. This is also the point when I realized I had forgotten the antenna. So if you remembered to add yours paint them black also.

Step 8: Now paint all of the areas that you applied the black paint to. I used Reaper Master Paints Scorched metal for the heat sink vents. Games Workshop Boltgun metal for the lasers and Armory Steel for the joints.

Step 9: Alright we are almost there. Apply a light coat of matte sealer to the mini to help lock the metallic paints down. Now once that is dry wash the joints, vents and guns with your thinned magic wash. Also dry brush very lightly with a final layer of the Blood Red again.

Now you have the basic mini done all that is left is to detail it out. I added some battle damage, decals, painted the crossed out Kurita logo on the arm, and painted in the cockpit with a dark blue. Good luck with a little practice you will have a nice looking Sword of Light unit to trounce your friends with.

Cat & Mouse: Part 3
A CAMPAIGN FOR I-CON 25

by John Hudson

Communications Room, HPG Station
Royce, Fletcher
12 October, 3067
1616 hours Standard

There was the jarring sound of the buzzer, just demanding entrance into Adept Pennywhistle's consciousness. She hit the switch that opened the portal. In walked two people, both wearing the uniform of ComStar Mechwarriors, instead of the normal robes worn by all. The first one to enter was a woman of average size and build; the second was a well-built man. The woman was wearing the insignia of a Precentor; the man had no insignia whatsoever.

"Good afternoon Precentor, how may I help you?"

"Adept, what is the status of the incoming bogies?"

"Well Precentor, we have four *Overlord* class, one Assault *Triumph* class, a number of *Intruder* and *Mule* class dropships as well."

"Sound like a full blown invasion, doesn't it James?"

"Aff Precentor Sharron Tang, I would say a full galaxy, would you not?"

"Actually it would be a level IV, and I bet dollars to donuts it's the Word of Blake coming at us. Any transponders active on those dropships adept?"

"No sir, just that they are military."

"Well, I guess that Focht was right about the Wobbies coming for us. I think it is time to welcome our "guests" properly. Adept, could you route a signal to their ships, but make it look like it was coming from somewhere else?"

"It would take a little work, Precentor Tang, but it is possible."

"Then do it."

DropShip Blake's Shining Light
Zenith Jump Point, Fletcher
12 October 3067
1618 hours Standard

"Precentor Endicott, we have a communication coming from the planets' surface."

"Please route it up here, Commander Stone."

"Yes sir."

"...to the commander of the inbound task force, this is Precentor Sharron Tang of ComStar's 11th division, please respond..."

"This is Precentor Trenton Endicott of the Word of Blake's 5th Division. To what do we owe this communication?"

"Well Precentor, we are tracking an invasion fleet, and we wanted to inquire about the intentions of said fleet."

"Our intentions are to restore order to Fletcher after the brutal slaying of the legally appointed President and our Precentor. If you will be as so kind to stand down, surrender all of your equipment, we will allow you transport of your personnel off planet. If you do not, we will be forced to terminate your command — Permanently."

"Well, Precentor, let this Batchall proceed. With what forces do you plan on invading with?"

"Batchall? This is not some Clan negotiation that you are so fond of playing out! This is a total extermination of your command! I will hammer you with every 'Mech, tank and personal that I have until you are wiped from existence! I will eradicate you from existence! You had your chance, now suffer the true and righteous wrath of Blake's Justice!"

"Very well, where do you plan on planet fall, and do you request Safecon?"

"You Fool! I will land wherever I want! And there is nothing that you or your pitiful division can do to stop it! The Holy Warriors of Blake need no assurances from a heretic like you!"

"OK. See you on the ground. And bring your A-Game. You'll need it..."

"Why you impertinent little —"

"The communication has been broken off, Precentor."

"Commander, Get us on the ground at the SpacePort as soon as you can."

"Yes sir! Helm increase burn, Communications, inform the fleet to comply with the Precentors orders."

Communications Room, HPG Station
Royce, Fletcher
12 October, 3067
1622 hours Standard

"Well, That went well."

"Precentor, What was that Clan stuff you were spouting?"

"I have to admit as well, Precentor Sharron Tang, that I did not understand why you gave those Freebirths a decent Batchall?"

"Well James, it was mainly psychological. I wanted them to react to me. This way they are fighting on our terms, not theirs."

"I think I understand. This way they do not know what they are going to face."

"Exactly, James. Now they will be impatient. And impatient Warriors make mistakes."

"Indeed. Brilliant Precentor Sharron Tang. You would have made an excellent Khan."

"Thank you James. But I am glad that you are on our side. There is no one in this Division that can make that *Masakari* of yours dance the way that you can."

"It is a *Warhawk* Precentor Sharron Tang."

"Tamaytoes, Tomatoes, it's all the same to me."

"Yes Precentor Sharron Tang."

"Adept, Get the air wing on the line. Since they blew off safecon, I guess we should make their planet fall a living hell."

* * *

ComStar 11th Division's H.Q.
Royce, Fletcher
15 October, 3067
0530 hours Standard

"I am Glad that all of you are here for this meeting. As you are aware of, we are about to be assaulted by Word of Blake Forces. Luckily, our Aerospace was able to scatter their DropShips so they will not be landing all in one area. But, on the flip side, that means that we have to find them before they find us. We will split up the division into level III's and search out the Word of Blake landing zones. You will send out a recon level II to track down the enemy forces. We need to know what they are up to so that you can plan your strategies accordingly. Once we pin them down we can bring in the rest of the Level III and sweep them away. This is it people, the beginning of the end. You have your assignments, let's be careful out there."

* * *

Precentor Sharron Tang split up the 11th Division in order to find Word of Blake's 5th Division. When making the

approach to Fletcher, the Word of Blake's forces were split up by the unrelenting attacks by the ComStar air wing. They landed in three different drop zones. Precentor Tang sent out three recon level II's to find them. The Never Surrender III-alpha stayed in Royce. The Kiamba Calvary III-beta was sent to the wooded area outside Royce. The Full Moon III-

gamma was sent out to the desert. The rest of the division was scattered throughout the continent. Once the enemy forces are found, then the Division had orders to bring in the rest of the level III's forces to engage the Word of Blake Forces.

* * *

DropShip Blake's Shining Light
Assault Orbit, Fletcher
16 October 3067
1345 hours Standard

Precentor Trenton Endicott stood by silently as the Adept made his way toward him. From the look on her face, the news must not be good.

"Precentor Endicott, we have no contact with the *Illustrious Truth* and the *One Faith*. It seems that there is a lot of jamming going on, and we cannot punch through it yet."

"Well Adept, why do you think you cannot communicate with the other DropShips?"

"I think that ComStar must be nearby."

"I agree. Now what do you think we should do about that?"

"Precentor Endicott, I do not presume to know your will sir, but I would send out our forces and hunt them down."

"Your presumption is correct, Adept. Send out the order for our Recon lance and find those Heretics. Stop that jamming, and get my command back in touch."

"Yes sir."

"And Adept..."

"Yes sir?"

"When you find them, I want the rest of the Level III to hammer them into the ground!"

* * *

As soon as the ComStar level II recon units came into contact with the Word of Blake units they jammed them hard. The Word of Blake came back with their entire level III force after the recon force. While Word of Blake was getting their act together, the recon lances sent out for their reinforcements. So when the Word of Blake came out to fight what they thought was just a recon force, they came against a level III all ready for them to fight. So the forces were pretty well even.

* * *

Monolith Gorge
Plains of Desolation, Fletcher
29 October, 3067
1438 hours, Standard

Sharon Tang shifted her neurohelmet along the padding on her cooling vest.

"I have been in the cockpit for too long. My neck and shoulders are sore as hell. But, if we do not get some breathing room soon, this will seem like a picnic."

Through the cockpit glass of her Guillotine she could see her command approaching from all directions.

"Well, all of the chicks coming home to roost. I guess I should start playing the Mother Hen."

"Attention to all units of the Wing Clippers, this is Mother Hen. Form up by company and head out through the gorge. We will set up H.Q. in the valley beyond the plains here. Hopefully, Word of Blake will give us a little breather."

"Neg, Precentor Tang. I do not think that we will have that breather. My sensors are recording both seismic and magscan readings at about three kilometers to our southwest."

"James, how long do you thing we will have before contact with the Enemy?"

"Two to three minutes, tops."

"Well, let's see what we can do to slow them down a bit, shall we? All units of the ComStar 11th Division, it has been

my honor and privilege to lead you through thick and thin. But, as the old bard once said, once more into the breech, my children. Wing Clippers, fall in by division by the left echelon. Artillery, I want you to drop a barrage on coordinates 46 by 32. And pour it on."

As the division started forming up into battle lines, the familiar freight train sound of artillery shells overhead screamed into each and every cockpit.

3 klick's Southwest of Monolith Gorge
Plains of Desolation, Fletcher
29 October, 3067
1442 hours, Standard

Precentor Trenton Endicott kept his eyes on his sensors of his *Toyama* as he led the level IV across the plains towards the enemy. He was the tip of the spearhead driving right for ComStar's heart.

"Precentor Endicott, I have multiple readings ahead. I count over 100 units heading for the gap in the mountains."

"All units press forward! We have them now! We cannot let the heretics escape."

"Wait a minute...I think they are slowing down...yes, they are! The dogs are actually forming up to do battle! Can you believe it?"

"Outstanding! Deviants, True Vision, I want you to spread out and keep abreast of Sleight of Hand."

Mouth of Monolith Gorge
Plains of Desolation, Fletcher
29 October, 3067
1445 hours, Standard

"Here they come boys and girls, look sharp. Artillery, on my command fire for
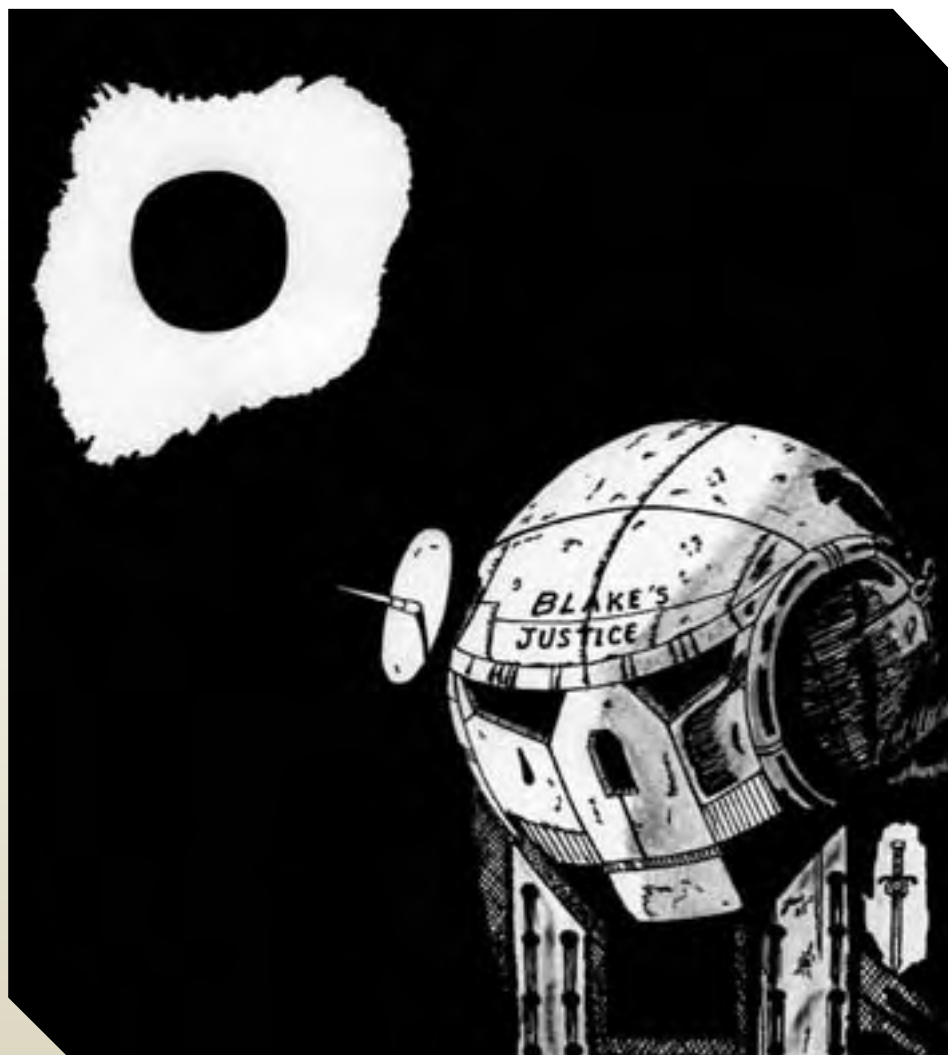
effect...hold it...hold it...hold it...NOW, let them have it!"

* * *

Precentor Sharron Tang reformed her command after inflicting the most damage to the Word of Blake forces. By retreating into the mountains she hoped she would get a little breathing room to rest, regroup, and rearm. But Precentor Trenton Endicott smelled blood in the water and pressed his attack. Endicott knew that this would be the end — the objective was in plain sight. He thought ComStar was falling back to the "Castle Brian" to regroup. He could not allow that to happen. For once ComStar ensconced themselves in the Old Star League fortress, nothing would be able remove them. So he called for a final charge to wipe out the enemy. But Sharron Tang knew how to think on her feet. She called for an artillery bombardment in the hopes to slow down the Word of Blake. It worked too well.

Endicott paniced and played his trump card — The Guarded Knowledge*, a* Lola*-class WarShip.*

* * *

Mouth of Monolith Gorge
Plain of Desolation, Fletcher
29 October, 3067
1637 hours, Standard

All around the group was the total destruction of war. BattleMechs, the ten meter tall avatars of war, were thrown around broken. It looked like a child's temper tantrum all around the battlefield. The ground, torn up almost beyond recognition, was testified to the awesome power of a WarShip. Not more than twenty meters away lie the remains of what

looked like a clan *Warhawk,* the body split open like a rose in bloom. There were 'Mech parts and armor scattered all over the landscape.

In the middle of this carnage was a contingent of Word of Blake Militia, surrounding a prisoner. The prisoner, broken and bleeding, knelt waiting for the final play.

Into this group stormed Precentor Trenton Endicott. As he approached, you could almost see the righteous anger boil off of him like a storm cloud.

"Well, well, well. What do we have here? The commander of the high and mighty ComStar, laid out in front of me like a penitent child. Well, where are your lofty clan ways now? Where is your command? I will tell you. Here! Here they are, fertilizing this miserable planet! And for what? For a stinking RPG Station, that's what! You have lost your entire command Tang, for nothing! NOTHING!!!"

Sharron Tang looked at Endicott with malice in her eyes.

"If you are going to berate me, the least you can do is introduce yourself."

Endicott chuckled out loud. He looked to the left, and then to the right, and backhanded Sharron Tang right across the face.

She picked herself off the ground, spat out some blood collecting in her mouth, and stared daggers at the collected group.

"I see that they are still teaching manners back at home."

"Home...HOME...YOU HAVE NO CLAIM ON TERRA, HERETIC!"

Endicott brushed the hair out of his eyes and took a moment to collect himself.

"Well Tang, it is over. About the only thing left is a little information that you can provide me. Just a little thing really."

"And what, pray tell, is this little thing, Precentor?"

"Nothing really, just a location."

"Location, of what? Did you lose something and can't find it?"

Again, Endicott chuckled out loud. He then fixed Tang with a withering glance.

"No, not what I lost. What you were going to find. Tell me Precentor, where is the Castle Brian?"

Blake's Blood! They actually believe that there is a Castle Brian here. I have to let Focht know this. Well, I need a little diversion. This is going to hurt in the morning...

Sharron stood up. She looked Endicott right in the eyes and started to laugh.

"You have got to be kidding me, right? A Castle Brian? Why not just say that you are looking for Blake's Second Coming! A Castle Brian...don't you know? Anything that was built by the Star League here was ground to pulp over 300 years ago! And I thought you were intelligent!"
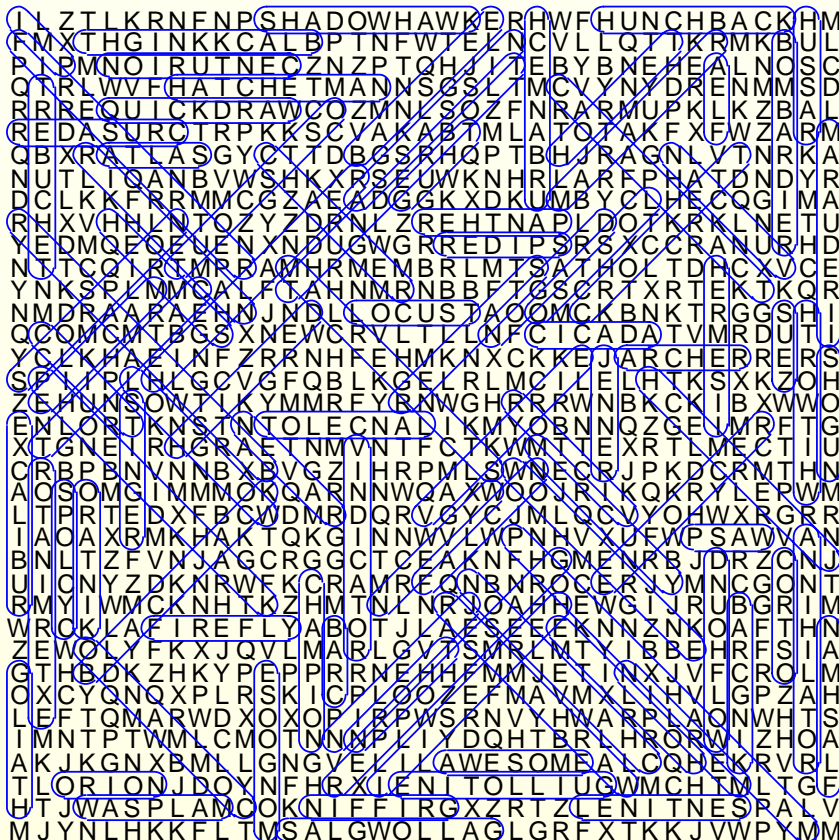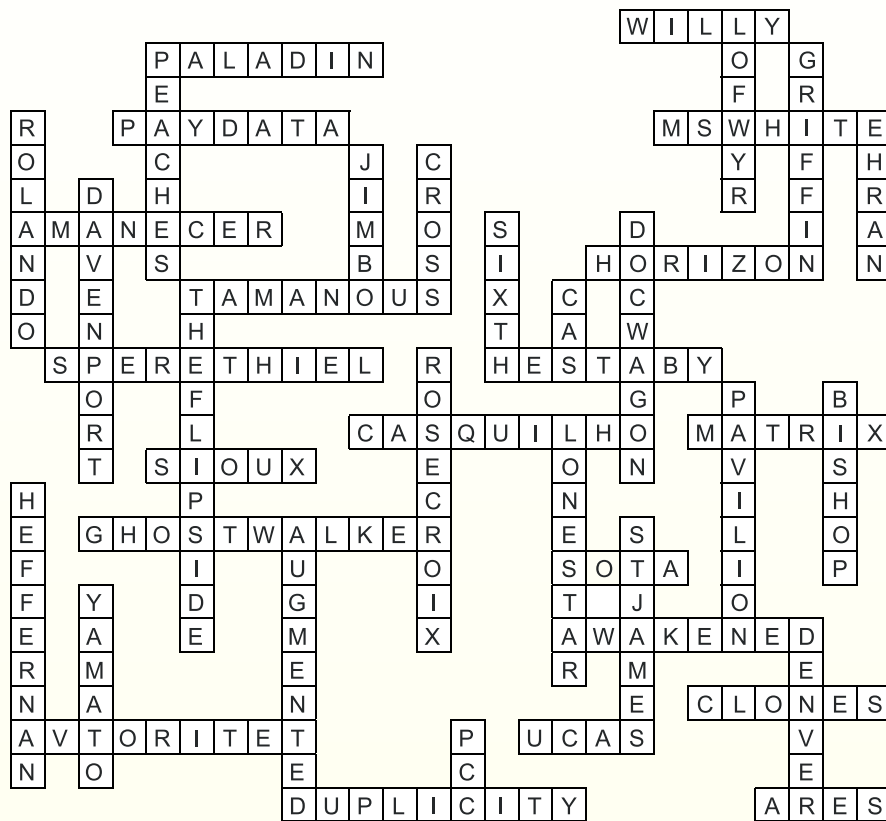
A cloud seemed to gather around Sharron Tang as Endicott gathered himself. Like a snake striking a field mouse, Endicott punched Tang right in the solar plexus. Sharron doubled over and fell to the ground. As she rolled around trying to catch her breath, Sharron activated a transmitter hidden in her belt. Endicott pulled out a laser pistol and shot Sharron Tang in the head. As the blood congealed around the body of Sharron Tang, the RPG station back in Royce picked up the signal that was sent out. The tech relayed the signal out to Tukayyid. In two weeks time, the message reached Focht.

Word of Blake looking for Castle Brian...

-finis-

Next Issue: Cat & Mouse Scenarios

Quarterly Puzzler Solutions

Next Issue:

"The Money Was Right..."