

BATTLETECH™



PRIMER



A UNIVERSE OVERVIEW

BattleTech is a science-fiction “space opera” set in the factional, militarized universe of the thirty-first century. Humanity has spread to the stars and spawned titanic interstellar empires, each controlling hundreds of worlds across a combined region of space stretching more than a thousand light years.

Following the rise of six Great Noble Houses, a mighty Star League was forged, heralding a golden age of prosperity.

However, treachery undermined the Star League and led to the murder of the First Lord and the fall of House Cameron. The rulers of the remaining five Great Houses each proclaimed themselves the new First Lord of the crumbling Star League, and thus began the Succession Wars.

For twelve generations, armies of BattleMechs have clashed across more than 2,000 colonized planets of the Inner Sphere, visiting such destruction on humanity’s technological capabilities that old, scavenged ‘Mechs often outperform newly built models.

The year is 3025, and the scars of the Third Succession War remain a fresh memory across the entire Inner Sphere. All five Houses have paused their military campaigns in hopes of rebuilding their armies and rediscovering part of their lost technological base.

Whether wet-behind-the-ears recruits or grizzled veterans, mercenaries are the wild card that can tip the balance in combat. These MechWarriors run the razor’s edge between legend and destruction, and possess the necessary skills and the right amount of luck to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat.

THIS is BattleTech.

BATTLETECH ERAS

The *BattleTech* universe is a living, vibrant entity that grows each year as more sourcebooks and fiction are published. A dynamic universe, its setting and characters evolve over time within a highly detailed continuity framework, bringing everything to life in a way a static game universe cannot match.

However, the same dynamic energy that makes *BattleTech* so compelling can also make it confusing, with so many sourcebooks published over the years. As people encounter *BattleTech*, get hooked and start to obtain sourcebooks, they need to know where a particular sourcebook is best used along the *BattleTech* timeline.

To help quickly and easily convey the timeline of the *BattleTech* universe—and to allow a player to easily “plug in” a given sourcebook—we’ve divided *BattleTech* into six major eras.



STAR LEAGUE (2005-2780)

Ian Cameron, ruler of the Terran Hegemony, concludes decades of tireless effort with the creation of the Star League, a political and military alliance between all Great Houses and the Hegemony. Star League armed forces immediately launch the Reunification War, forcing the Periphery realms to join. For the next two centuries, humanity experiences a golden age across the thousand light-years of human-occupied space known as the Inner Sphere. It also sees the creation of the most powerful military in human history.



SUCCESSION WARS (2781-3049)

Every last member of First Lord Richard Cameron’s family is killed during a coup launched by Stefan Amaris. Following the thirteen-year war to unseat him, the rulers of each of the five Great Houses disband the Star League. General Aleksandr Kerensky departs with eighty percent of the Star League Defense Force beyond known space and the Inner Sphere collapses into centuries of warfare known as the Succession Wars that will eventually result in a massive loss of technology across most worlds.

BATTLETECH: Harebrained Schemes’ BATTLETECH is set at the end of this era, specifically starting in 3025.



CLAN INVASION (3050-3061)

A mysterious invading force strikes the coreward region of the Inner Sphere. The invaders, called the Clans, are descendants of Kerensky’s SLDF troops, forged into a society dedicated to becoming the greatest fighting force in history. With vastly superior technology and warriors, the Clans conquer world after world. Eventually this outside threat will forge a new Star League, something hundreds of years of warfare failed to accomplish. In addition, the Clans will act as a catalyst for a technological renaissance.

MechWarrior Online: Piranha Games’ *MechWarrior Online* is set in this era.



CIVIL WAR (3062-3067)

The Clan threat is eventually lessened with the complete destruction of a Clan. With that massive external threat apparently neutralized, internal conflicts explode around the Inner Sphere. House Liao conquers its former Commonality, the St. Ives Compact; a rebellion of military units belonging to House Kurita sparks a war with their powerful border enemy, Clan Ghost Bear; the fabulously powerful Federated Commonwealth of House Steiner and House Davion collapses into five long years of bitter civil war.



JIHAD (3068-3080)

Following the Federated Commonwealth Civil War, the leaders of the Great Houses meet and disband the new Star League, declaring it a sham. The pseudo-religious Word of Blake—a splinter group of ComStar, the protectors and controllers of interstellar communication—launch the Jihad: an interstellar war that will ultimately pit every faction against each other and even against themselves, as weapons of mass destruction are used for the first time in centuries while new and frightening technologies are likewise unleashed.



DARK AGE (3081+)

Under the guidance of Devlin Stone, the Republic of the Sphere is born at the heart of the Inner Sphere following the Jihad. One of the more extensive periods of peace begins to break out as the 32nd century dawns. The factions, to one degree or another, embrace disarmament and the massive armies of the Succession Wars begin to fade. However, in 3132 eighty percent of interstellar communications collapses, throwing the universe into chaos. Wars almost immediately erupt and the factions begin rebuilding their armies.

THE INNER SPHERE CIRCA 3025

Inner Sphere: General term used to describe a region of space roughly one thousand light-years across, composed of more than two thousand populated planets, with Terra (Earth) at the center. This area is further divided into geopolitical regions, where one power or another holds sway. For most of the centuries since humankind took to the stars, the vast majority of these worlds have belonged to one of the five Great Houses. Smaller powers have come and gone over this same time period. Any world or geopolitical power outside the Inner Sphere is said to lie in the Periphery, considered the frontier of the known universe.

—*Encyclopedia Galactica*

HOUSE STEINER (LYRAN COMMONWEALTH)

Over the centuries, business acumen has turned the Commonwealth into an industrial powerhouse, but often results in “social generals”: nobles with little combat expertise. Today’s Lyran MechWarriors place their confidence in Archon Katrina Steiner—whether leading a war or negotiating a trade agreement, her warriors will march at her side.

RULER:	Archon Katrina Steiner		
GOVERNMENT:	Constitutional Monarchy (with German Feudal stylings)		
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Tharkad City, Tharkad		
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S):	English and German (official), Scottish Gaelic, Italian, French		
DOMINANT RELIGION(S):	Christianity (Protestant), Judaism, Islam		
Inhabited Worlds	443	Founding Year	2341
		Currency	Kroner

COMSTAR

A pseudo-religious order in control of Terra and dedicated to the preservation of technology and maintaining a neutral control over the Inner Sphere’s communication network.

RULER:	Primus Julian Tienpo		
GOVERNMENT:	Corporate Confederacy (with mystical trappings)		
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Hilton Head Island, Terra		
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S):	English (official), others by realm of birth		
DOMINANT RELIGION(S):	Word of Blake		
Inhabited Worlds	1	Founding Year	2785
		Currency	C-Bill

HOUSE MARIK (FREE WORLDS LEAGUE)

Its greatest strength, the forging of disparate empires into a whole, is also its Achilles heel as internal conflicts have wracked the League for centuries. And yet Free Worlds League MechWarriors—like the current Captain-General Janos Marik—have a knack for bringing order out of chaos; an adaptability that results in the confidence to rise over any obstacle.

RULER:	Captain-General Janos Marik		
GOVERNMENT:	Parliamentary Confederacy (operating under military rule)		
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Atreus City, Atreus		
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S):	English (official), Spanish, Greek, Romanian, Urdu		
DOMINANT RELIGION(S):	Christianity (Catholic), Judaism, Islam		
Inhabited Worlds	333	Founding Year	2271
		Currency	Eagle

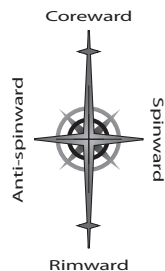
LEGEND



MAXIMUM JUMP: APPROXIMATELY 30 LIGHT YEARS

Map compiled by COMSTAR.
From information provided from the COMSTAR EXPLORER CORPS
and the STAR LEAGUE ARCHIVES on Terra.

© 3025 COMSTAR CARTOGRAPHIC CORPS





HOUSE KURITA (DRACONIS COMBINE)

During the Star League era, Urizen Kurita II steeped the Combine in the culture and heritage of Japan and its samurai code of *bushido*. That legacy rests upon the Five Pillars of society. The MechWarriors of the Pillar of Steel have always represented the pinnacle of service to House Kurita and its current embodiment in Coordinator Takashi Kurita.

RULER:	Coordinator Takashi Kurita		
GOVERNMENT:	Autocracy (Japanese feudal stylings)		
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Imperial City, Luthien		
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S):	Japanese (official), Arabic, English		
DOMINANT RELIGION(S):	Shinto (official), Buddhism, Islam		
Inhabited Worlds	412	Founding Year	2319
		Currency	Ryu

HOUSE LIAO (CAPELLAN CONFEDERATION)

For half a millennium, duty to the State—and its current Chancellor, Maximilian Liao—has been lauded and respected, bringing out the best in society. And none garner more respect and admiration than Liao MechWarriors, whose unshakable nationalistic pride and tenacity have met setback after setback with determination and grit.

RULER:	Chancellor Maximilian Liao		
GOVERNMENT:	Dictatorship		
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Zi-jin Cheng (Forbidden City), Sian		
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S):	English and Chinese (Mandarin, official), Chinese (Cantonese), Russian, Hindi		
DOMINANT RELIGION(S):	Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism		
Inhabited Worlds	207	Founding Year	2366
		Currency	Yuan

HOUSE DAVION (FEDERATED SUNS)

Seven hundred years since its formation, the current First Prince Hanse Davion, known as “The Fox”, views the Federated Suns as a bastion of liberty. Embracing that call, Davion MechWarriors—proud members of the Federated Suns nobility—are eager to spread the blessings of Davion freedom throughout the Inner Sphere.

RULER:	Prince Hanse Davion		
GOVERNMENT:	Constitutional Aristocracy (Western European feudal stylings)		
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	New Avalon City, New Avalon		
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S):	English (official), French, German		
DOMINANT RELIGION(S):	Christianity (Catholicism), Buddhism, Judaism		
Inhabited Worlds	509	Founding Year	2317
		Currency	Pound

THE STAR LEAGUE

HOUSE CAMERON

TERRAN HEGEMONY

Terra, birthplace of humanity, was also the home of House Cameron, which rose to lead the mighty Terran Hegemony, an equal rival to the five other Great Noble Houses of the Inner Sphere.

Yet Ian Cameron had a vision of a united humanity and after decades of skilled diplomacy in 2571 he forged the Star League. All six Great House leaders became the High Council of the League, with Ian made "first among equals" as First Lord.

After failing at diplomacy with the Periphery States, First Lord Cameron forced them into the Star League during a war that would last two decades, cementing centuries of hostilities between the Inner Sphere and Periphery that survive to this day.

Regardless of its troubled beginnings, the next two hundreds years would see a golden age of peace, prosperity and advancements unheralded in human history. It would also give rise to the greatest military ever known, the Star League Defense Force.

Despite such prosperity, greed, envy and betrayal would ultimately undo mankind's greatest achievement. Stefan Amaris, the Usurper—ruler of a subjugated Periphery State—instigated a Periphery revolt in 2765. This pulled the lion's share of the SLDF to the edges of the Star League, while the Great Houses secretly expanded their private armies. Then in 2766 the Usurper—and those in-league with him—assassinated every noble member of House Cameron and in the resulting chaos took control of the Terran Hegemony.





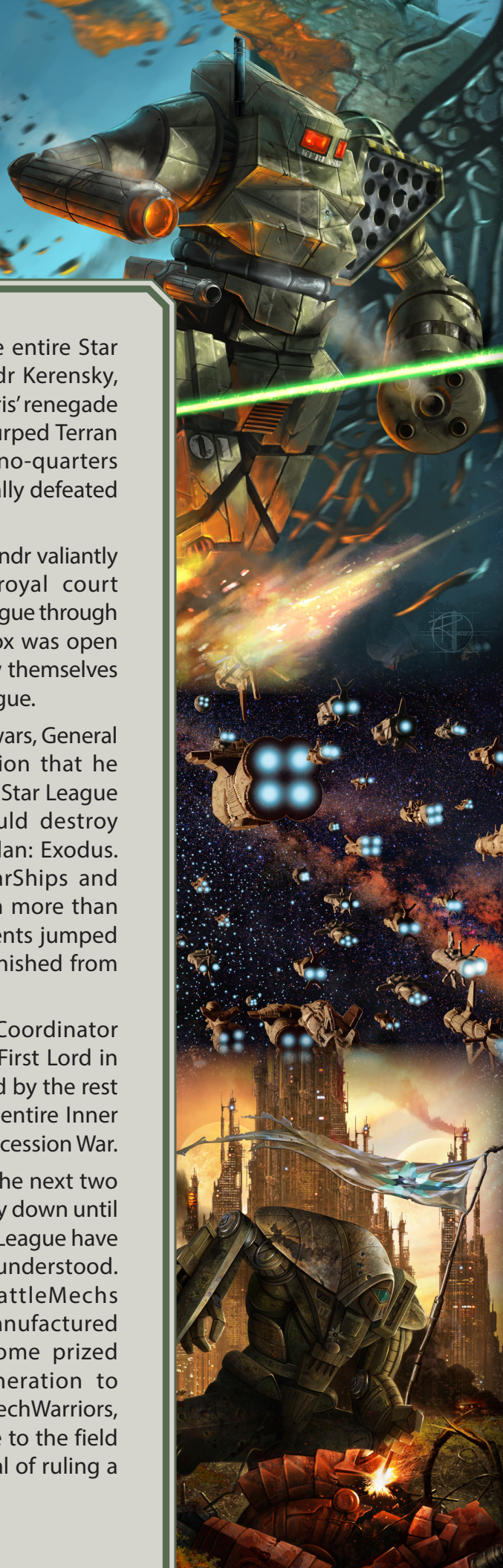
Commanding General of the entire Star League Defense Force, Aleksandr Kerensky, immediately waged war on Amaris' renegade Periphery State and then his usurped Terran Hegemony, fighting a terrible no-quarters war. In 2780 the Usurper was finally defeated and Terra liberated.

For the next four years Aleksandr valiantly moved from royal court to royal court attempting to salvage the Star League through diplomacy. And yet Pandora's Box was open and each Great House leader saw themselves as the new master of the Star League.

Foreseeing a cycle of deadly wars, General Kerensky came to the conclusion that he must deny the Great Houses the Star League weapons with which they could destroy humanity. He enacted a bold plan: Exodus. On 5 November 2784, 402 WarShips and 1,349 transport JumpShips with more than six million soldiers and dependents jumped into the Deep Periphery and vanished from the Inner Sphere and history.

With the brakes released, Coordinator Minoru Kurita declared himself First Lord in December 2786, quickly followed by the rest of the Great House leaders. The entire Inner Sphere erupted into a savage Succession War.

Three Succession Wars over the next two centuries would grind technology down until the accomplishments of the Star League have become lost entirely or barely understood. Thus, preserved ancient BattleMechs perform better than rarely manufactured new machines and have become prized possessions passed from generation to generation. Yet still the noble MechWarriors, knights of the Inner Sphere, take to the field of battle for their liege lord's goal of ruling a reborn Star League.



HOUSE DAVION (FEDERATED SUNS)

In the chaos that followed the collapse of the first interstellar government, the Terran Alliance, Lucien Davion formed the Federated Suns with a combination of diplomacy and force of will.

A native of the planet New Avalon, and a son of one its ambassadors, Lucien swayed the leaders of twenty worlds to join their fates to his to create the Federated Suns in 2317.

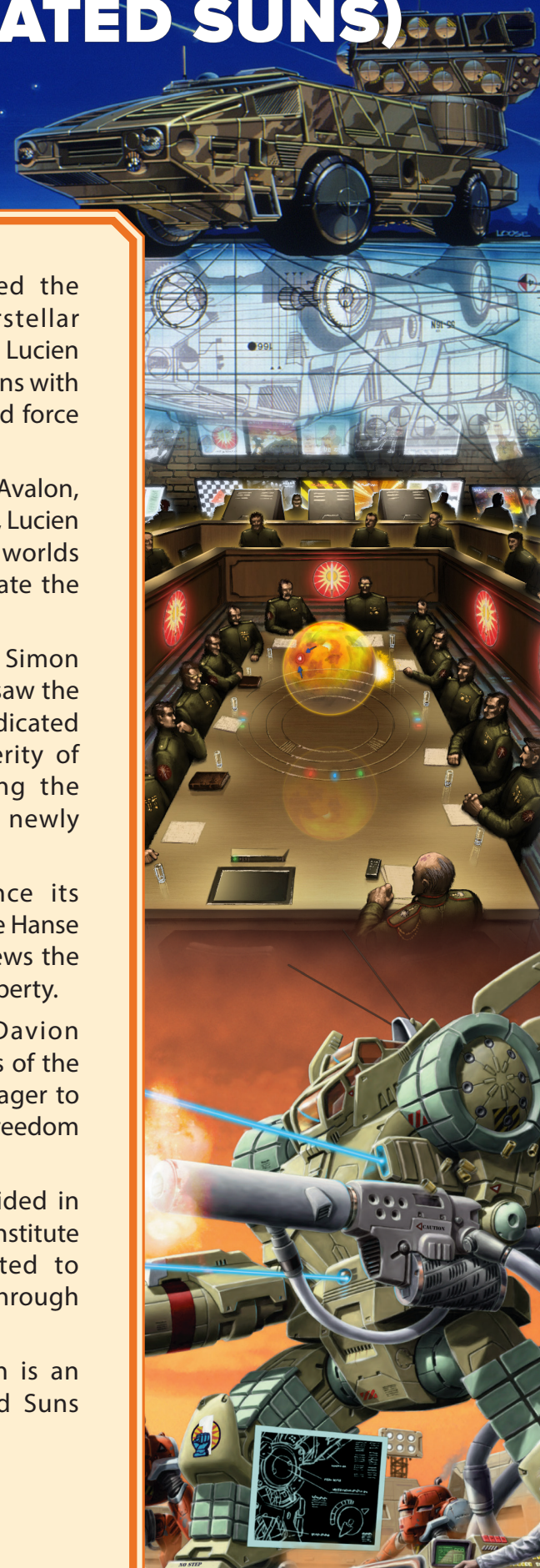
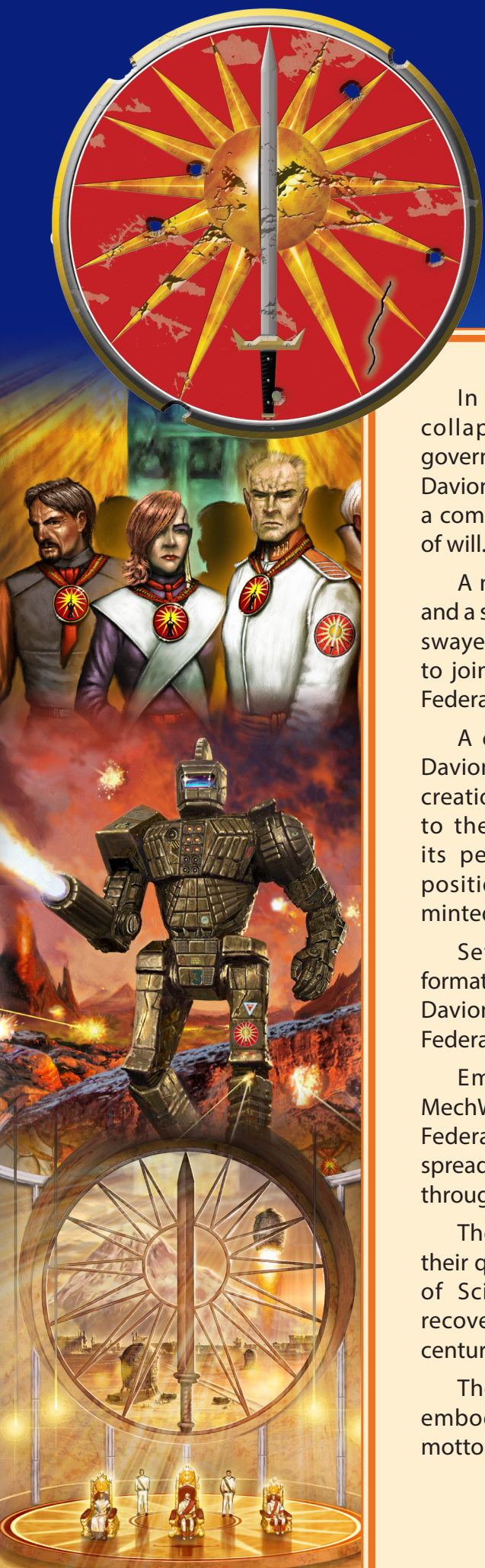
A century and a half later Simon Davion rose to power and oversaw the creation of a feudal system dedicated to the protection and prosperity of its people and to maintaining the positions of those within its newly minted nobility.

Seven hundred years since its formation, the current First Prince Hanse Davion, known as "The Fox", views the Federated Suns as a bastion of liberty.

Embracing that call, Davion MechWarriors—proud members of the Federated Suns nobility—are eager to spread the blessings of Davion freedom throughout the Inner Sphere.

These brave warriors are aided in their quest by the New Avalon Institute of Science, which is dedicated to recovering technologies lost through centuries of warfare.

The crest of House Davion is an embodiment of the Federated Suns motto "By Freedom's Sword."



HOUSE KURITA (DRACONIS COMBINE)



Raised in a military and social tradition dating back more than six centuries, Shiro Kurita believed himself destined to rule and in 2303 launched the first full-scale interstellar military operation in history.

After a decade-and-a-half of hard-fought battles, self-proclaimed Coordinator Shiro Kurita formed the Draconis Combine consisting of fifty-one star systems.

Centuries later, during the Star League era, Urizen Kurita II would further steep the Combine in the culture and heritage of Japan and its samurai code of *bushido*: he believed the Dragon—the Draconis Combine—was destined to rule the Inner Sphere.

That legacy, built across generations, rests upon the Five Pillars that make up the Draconis Combine: Gold representing the government, Teak for society and culture, Ivory for philosophy, Jade the Economy and of course Steel for the military.

The MechWarriors of the Pillar of Steel have always represented the pinnacle of service to House Kurita and its current embodiment in Coordinator Takashi Kurita.


The Sun Zhang MechWarrior Academy is the largest of its kind in the Inner Sphere, instilling that martial tradition into the finest MechWarriors alive, creating equal parts respect and fear throughout the Inner Sphere.

Academy graduates—like all of the Draconis Combine—proudly display the emblem of House Kurita, embracing its motto “Honor the Dragon.”



HOUSE LIAO

(CAPELLAN CONFEDERATION)



Franco Liao rose to leadership as the Federated Suns and Free Worlds League threatened the worlds of the Capellan Zone. The nascent yet powerful Great Houses posed a threat to Capellan worlds that had to be countered. There could be only one solution: unification.

Immediately upon the formation of the Capellan Confederation in 2367, Davion troops occupied the capital. Franco, like all Chancellors since, made the brutal choice to survive: an orbital bombardment destroyed the enemy, and his own capital city.

That "the state is all" thinking reached a new apex in 2505. Kalvar Lorix wrote "The Lorix Creed," a tract naming the MechWarrior as the pinnacle of military and social evolution; such thinking swept the rest of the Inner Sphere.

Half a millennium later the peoples of the Capellan Confederation take pride in the fact they must earn their citizenship. Duty to the State and its current Chancellor, Maximilian Liao, is lauded and respected, bringing out the best in society.

And none garner more respect and admiration than Liao MechWarriors, whose unshakable nationalistic pride and tenacity have met setback after setback with determination and grit.

Such dedication has given rise to the Death Commandos, the elite among the elite; the Chancellor's personal command. Expert in all forms of warfare, they represent the pinnacle of dedication to the State.



HOUSE MARIK

(FREE WORLDS LEAGUE)

MARIK

In 2271 the Marik Commonwealth, Stewart Confederation, Principality of Regulus, and Federation of Oriente united to create the first Great House: the Free Worlds League.

Led by Juliano Marik as Captain-General, its formation sparked imperialism that spread throughout the Inner Sphere, eventually leading to six Great Houses.

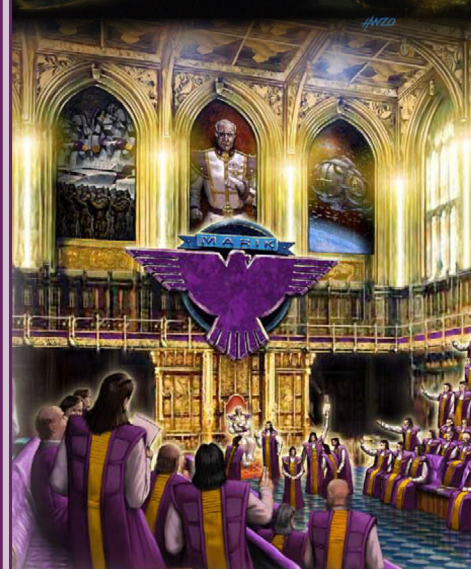
While its greatest strength, the forging of disparate empires into a whole, is also its Achilles heel as internal conflicts wracked the League for centuries.

And yet Free Worlds League MechWarriors—like the current Captain-General Janos Marik—have a knack for bringing order out of chaos; an adaptability that brings confidence to rise over any obstacle.

Balancing conflicting loyalties between home provinces and the larger nation, the military has only grown stronger, its MechWarriors and soldiers proud of their service and their oftentimes civil disobedience.

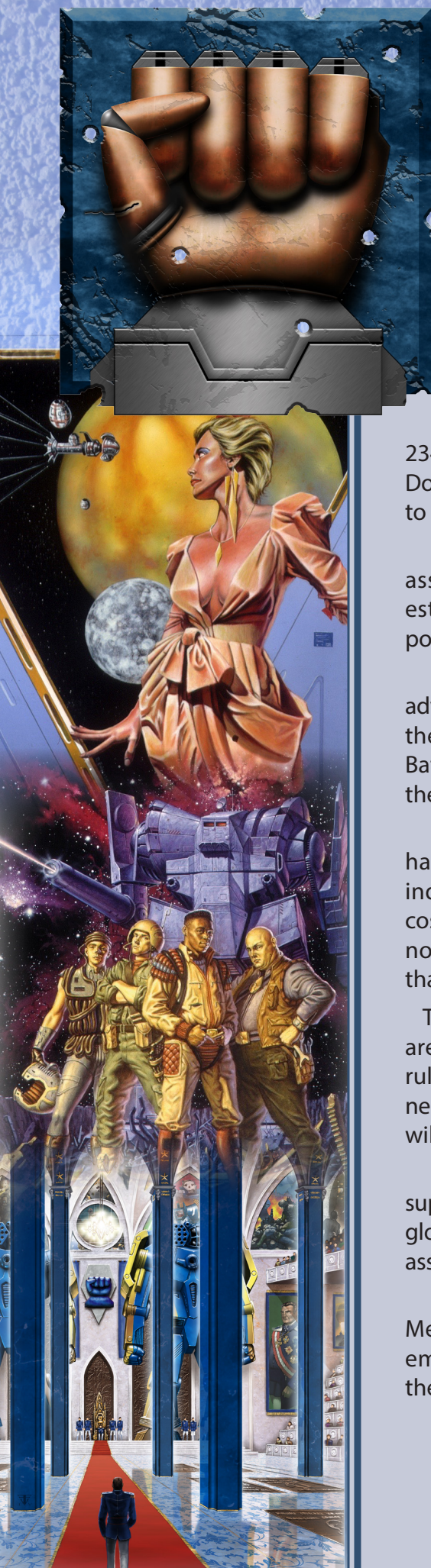
That confidence and adaptability results in a level of tactical experimentation not often seen in the other Houses, such as the use of aerospace assets in unusual roles, or the quick adoption of re-emerging technologies and BattleMechs thought lost since the collapse of the Star League.

Riding on the wings of the Marik eagle, such versatility encapsulates the Free Worlds League motto “United We Stand.”



HOUSE STEINER

(LYRAN COMMONWEALTH)



The Lyran Commonwealth was founded almost as a business merger in 2341 from the realms of the Protectorate of Donegal, Federation of Skye and Tamar Pact, to be ruled by a Council of nine Archons.

Eventually Katherine Steiner would assume sole Archonship in 2408, firmly establishing House Steiner as a dynastic powerhouse.

Always acutely aware of competitive advantage—even on the battlefield—when the Terran Hegemony developed the first BattleMech, agents of House Steiner stole the secret plans in a daring raid.

Over the centuries that business acumen has turned the Commonwealth into an industrial powerhouse, but often at the cost of “social generals”: soldiers with more noble lineage and business connections than tactical or strategic expertise.

Today’s Commonwealth MechWarriors are confident of Archon Katrina Steiner’s rulership. Whether she is leading a war or negotiating a trade agreement, her warriors will march at her side.

In return for such support, these supremely capable MechWarriors bask in the glory of a wealthy realm and the new, often-assault-class BattleMechs at their disposal.

In the Lyran throne room, two BattleMechs flank the Archon throne and the emblem of House Steiner, exemplifying their motto “Indomitable Will.”



MERCENARIES



Since organized warfare began, soldiers of fortune, mercenaries, have marched alongside troops owing fealty to one lord or another, buttressing kings or toppling empires.

In 3025, the Great Houses—exhausted after generations of war—have turned to mercenary outfits to continue their Machiavellian political agendas.

Some mercenaries have histories dating back centuries, none longer than the Northwind Highlanders, the current incarnation of the Scottish regiments of ancient Terra.

Others are recent, improbable stories, like the Kell brothers arriving on the world of Galatea in 3010 with an inheritance and no experience. Yet despite all naysayers they have forged the Kell Hounds into one of the most effective mercenaries fighting today.

For mercenaries, contract objectives can be anything from garrison duty on a backwater world, protecting a rare bit of lostech during transport, or a hot drop into the teeth of the enemy during a border invasion.

Regardless of the background or the Great House they contractually fight for, a commander has to scrounge the battlefield for spare parts to keep his force in fighting shape.

Negotiating contracts via the Mercenary Review Board with the Great Houses is almost as treacherous as the battles to be fought.

Bad deals or poor performance can leave merc's trapped on a distant planet without JumpShip transport, reinforcements, or even supplies.

Despite all these hardships, a mercenary commander knows that business is booming and C-bills and glory await the leader brave enough to seize it... and smart enough to survive it.



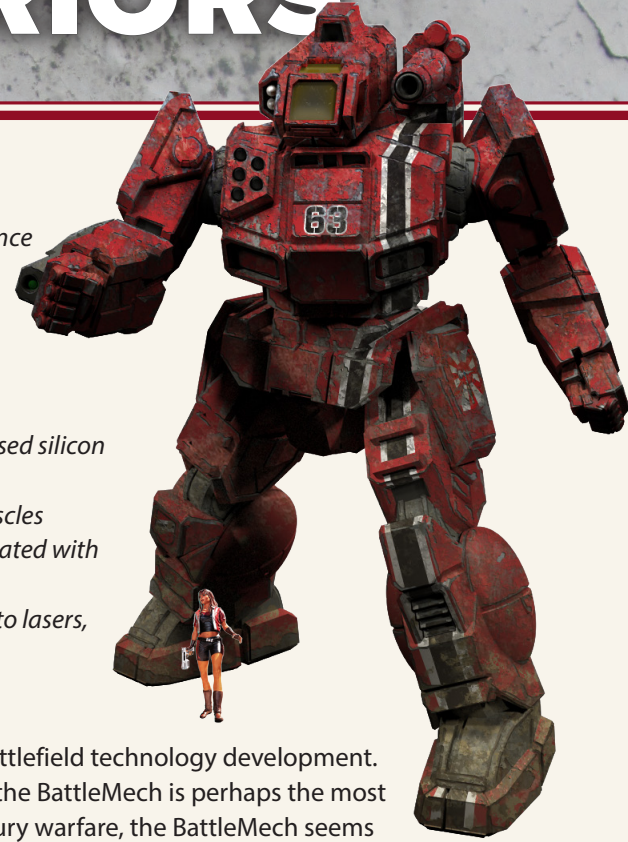
BATTLEMECHS & MECHWARRIORS

BATTLEMECHS

—Excerpts from a promotional pamphlet originally distributed by Defiance Industries of Hesperus, Lyrans Commonwealth, 3007

- Standing from seven to sixteen meters tall, and weighing from twenty to one hundred tons
- Powered by an armored and shielded fusion reactor
- Skeleton of honeycombed, foamed aluminum core wrapped with stressed silicon carbide mono-filament and sheathed by a rigid, titanium-steel shell
- Locomotion generated via bundles of polyacetylene-fiber myomer muscles
- Protected by aligned-crystal steel over a layer of boron nitride impregnated with diamond monofilaments
- Mounting a swath of powerful weapons from charged particle beams to lasers, missiles to rapid-fire autocannons
- All at the command of the noble elite, the MechWarriors

The modern BattleMech is the end result of more than 3,000 years of battlefield technology development. Combining awesome destructive power and unparalleled maneuverability, the BattleMech is perhaps the most complex machine ever produced. The undisputed master of thirty-first century warfare, the BattleMech seems destined to reign supreme for centuries to come.



MECHWARRIORS

As soon as the first BattleMechs dominated the battlefields of the twenty-fifth century, the humans that piloted these awesome machines gained a power and influence well beyond what other soldiers on the field could command. An entire social class soon formed around those who piloted these increasingly important war machines. These so-called MechWarriors, the modern incarnation of knights, were given the monumental task of defending their homelands and their rulers. As with the Middle Ages of Europe, these MechWarriors were given honors in exchange for service. Some even received royal titles, conveying authority over entire worlds. Such honors usually had the direct effect of instilling utter loyalty toward whoever bestowed them.

BattleMechs have waxed and waned in rarity and numbers as the technology and production infrastructure to build and maintain them suffered during centuries of extended warfare.

During those eras when BattleMechs transitioned into rare commodities, many became owned by the MechWarriors who pilot them, with many 'Mechs having been passed down to a MechWarrior from their parents or relatives. Competitions within such families to see who will gain the right to become the next generation's MechWarrior—and thus the effective leader of that family—are fierce and brutal, with siblings taking sides and asking for no quarter.

BattleMechs that are not passed down are typically the property of the military, in which they serve with MechWarriors filling a roster slot in the military—or mercenary—force's structure.



BATTLETECH

SUCCESSION WARS



TECHNICAL READOUT: SUCCESSION WARS

Technical Readout: Succession Wars is the perfect “first Technical Readout” companion to the *Game of Armored Combat* box set. This volume features some of the most common ‘Mechs from the Age of War to the Succession Wars. Each machine is illustrated in detail, and accompanied by a description of its history, capabilities, game stats, along with their most famous pilots.

BATTLEMECH MANUAL

Using the most up-to-date rules text, the *BattleMech Manual* has been designed from the ground up to cater to the *BattleTech* player wanting to engage in an all ‘Mech battle. Includes a variety of optional rules, terrain and more.

Welcome to the most table-usage-friendly *BattleTech* rulebook ever published!

BATTLETECH

BATTLEMECH MANUAL



BATTLETECH

TOTAL WARFARE



TOTAL WARFARE

Total Warfare expands on the rules presented in the *BattleMech Manual*. All the rules for various units that have a direct impact on the deadly battlefields of the thirty-first century appear in a unified rules set: from BattleMechs to ProtoMechs, Combat Vehicles to Support Vehicles, infantry to aerospace fighters and DropShips. *Total Warfare* provides the most detailed and comprehensive *BattleTech* rules set published to date—the perfect companion for standard tournament play.

ALPHA STRIKE: COMMANDER'S EDITION

Alpha Strike is the streamlined and fast-playing rules for *BattleTech*. Developed for the modern tabletop miniatures wargamer, these rules take an entire evening of board-game *BattleTech* and condense it down to an hour, while retaining all the great flavor of giant BattleMechs clashing across alien worlds. You can also use any of your miniatures—whether from *A Game of Armored Combat*, *Ral Partha*, *Iron Wind Metals* or *MechWarrior: Dark Age*—to leap right into the action!

BATTLETECH

ALPHA STRIKE



