

MECH WARRIOR[®]

DARK AGE

SNEAK PEEKS

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Atlas

Tactics and Secrets: Dereck Hasbani pilots one of these awesome assault 'Mechs. As a Swordsworn unit, this 'Mech boasts enormous damage values and offensive special equipment like Streak Missiles and Alpha Strike to make short work of any targets within range. Players are cautioned against using the Atlas too aggressively, though. A poor heat dial makes pushing hazardous, and the Atlas' high point cost means support units will likely be sparse. With its Hardened Armor and slow speed, it is best to let the fight come to you. Shrug off initial enemy attacks and make effective counterattacks. Consider an Alpha Strike only if you can afford to be shutdown for the three turns it will take to vent back to startup.

History: "HQ, have we locked the target yet?"

"Roger, Dereck. Should be coming up for you right now." Dereck saw the red target lights blink to life on his comp screen. From his blind behind the hills a klick away, he fired volley after volley of Streak Missiles toward the pirate haven. Once he got confirmation that he'd hit his target, he started moving toward the camp. Hasbani had been hunting the pirates for the past month. Now they had made off with some heavy armor and a BattleMech.

Hasbani stepped his 'Mech into the smoking remains of the pirate enclave. If there'd been survivors, they'd scurried away; Atlases inspire that kind of fear. Rebellions had ended with just the appearance of one of these planet-shaking war machines.

Hasbani used his IR sensors to scan the smoking ruins, a task made more difficult by the planet's foggy atmosphere. Spotting a flash of red-lighted movement, Hasbani back-stepped his 'Mech, feeling a jolt against the knee from the missing Hatchetman's giant axe.

"Where the hell did that come from?" he said. Surprise turned to concern when he realized his ambusher had sheared away his lower sensor array. He was lucky to still be walking. Turning slowly, Hasbani tried to spy the next attack. A sudden blow spun the Atlas around, clipping the 'Mech's left shoulder. Dereck rode the attack and, spinning, let loose at close range with his surviving heavy laser.

"Yeah baby! Like it like that!" Dereck whooped as he blasted away the smaller 'Mech's Jump Jets. Glowing with heat and heavily damaged, the Hatchman turned to flee into the shadows and fog. "I don't think so, pirate!"

Hasbani fired his Gauss Rifle. A direct hit! He watched as the Hatchman was engulfed in a series of explosions that burned away the fog.

"Hasbani, you still copy?"

"Copy, HQ. The area is secure. Enter when ready. I'm not going anywhere. Over." Watching the burning remains of his attacker, Hasbani shook his head. No one goes one-on-one with an Atlas.

Designer's Note: In its first incarnation, this assault 'Mech proved to be dramatically under-costed for its strength in play. Heavily armed and armored, a vastly larger battleforce of smaller units was unable to put a dent in the Atlas before it was destroyed piecemeal. Changes in the weighting of high attack, damage and defense values brought the point cost of the Atlas into line with its capabilities. Also, refinements to the game mechanics for heat accumulation on 'Mechs limited the amount of damage output a single 'Mech could produce, again tipping the scales in favor of a combined-arms battleforce of many smaller units.



Black Hawk

Tactics and Secrets: As a medium 'Mech, the Black Hawk is a versatile unit. It is competent at many missions, but it excels at none of them. Your tactics with this 'Mech will depend on the variant you deploy. The green variant has powerful offensive abilities and the best range of any of the Black Hawks, giving it stand-off capabilities. An early Alpha Strike with this 'Mech will deliver an awesome 8 clicks of damage to a target at a range of 12 inches! Equipped with Agility and no long range weaponry, the veteran Black Hawk is an infighter. Good speed and Jump Jets special equipment permit this 'Mech to stay close to the opposition where it can deliver the most damage. The elite version of this 'Mech has outstanding balance with both ballistic and energy weaponry. Use this 'Mech in a battleforce where a truly versatile medium 'Mech is required to deal with a wide variety of threats.

History: Ektra Nova Cat stood motionless amid the chaos in the hangar. In front of her stood the Black Hawk OmniMech—her Black Hawk. Technicians crawled all over it, hard at work preparing it for battle: the Trial to take place later that day. She was oblivious to the surrounding turmoil, instead visualizing her imminent combat while studying her 'Mech.

Ektra admired the Black Hawk's aggressive angular lines. Her excitement intensified as she envisioned herself behind the controls, moving effortlessly in the fury of the fight: nothing could stop her. This 'Mech represented all the values the Spirit Cats held in high regard: durability, survivability—and awesome energy-based weaponry! Her 'Mech bristled with lasers.

Ektra still marveled at her success within the Omicron regiment. She had been a MechWarrior for little more than a year before she achieved this Black Hawk BattleMech in a recent Trial of Position victory. Her ability in a 'Mech was only outdone by her successful political maneuvering within her regiment. None of her Trial requests had ever been refused, nor had she ever lost one. Each victory led to greater recognition for herself while strengthening her reputation within her unit. A victory in this Trial of Grievance would definitely lead her to a promotion out of the Omicron regiment and into the veteran Purifiers unit. After that, she would pursue the next step in her ambitious career—achieving her Bloodname.

Designer's Note: The Black Hawk grew out of the initial generic medium 'Mech used in the initial alpha testing of MechWarrior: Dark Age. With a point cost of only 111 points, it was clear that the weighting of the special equipment and combat values of this 'Mech needed to be revised to balance its obvious strength in the game with an appropriate point value. The resulting Black Hawk variants maintained the original design's strengths—high speed, attack and damage values, strong offensive special equipment—but offered them at more accurate point values between 147 and 160 points.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=36935



Clan battle armor

Tactics and Secrets: Fast and well-armed, Clan Battle Armor is another effective offensive infantry unit. With a top speed value of 10, this unit is made for speed. A modest range gives it the potential for ranged attacks, but it really shines once it is in base contact with opposing 'Mechs. Equipped with Flamers, Clan Armor can do some serious damage to a 'Mech with just a single hit. Very few 'Mechs can withstand the two clicks of heat a successful Flamer hit delivers without some discomfort! A wise player will plan the movements of his Clan Battle Armor in order to channel the movement of his opponent's 'Mechs.

History: Three squads of Clan Battle Armor closed in on Hamish's Modified MiningMech, zigzagging to avoiding its Short Range Missiles. The Highlander growled in frustration. Such superior infantry wasn't uncommon in the Republic, but he'd never seen it in the possession of Dragon's Fury units before. When had Tormark gotten the equipment, much less the personnel trained to use it?

The Highlander let loose with his Autocannon. A hail of ballistic fire sent three of the armored warriors spinning to the ground, but too many escaped. Soaring into the air with their Jump Jets, they closed with furious speed, firing their arm-mounted Flamers. Backing away from the oncoming squads, Hamish began giving ground.

He laid about with his massive, stone-cutting chain-saw, but could only watch as the 'Mech's heat indicators rose dangerously high. Helpless in disbelief, the Highlander watched as the Clan Battle Armor swarmed and cut into his 'Mech. Awash with fire, the 'Mech's Heat Sinks overloaded and the 'Mech came to a shuddering halt.

Hamish punched the ejection release and gritted his teeth as he was catapulted out of the cockpit, jets of flame tracking his descent. Landing hard, he recovered fast and took off. Without his 'Mech, he was easy meat for the Clan Battle Armor.

Designer's Note: The first battle armor used for internal play testing was equipped with Pulse weaponry. At the time, Pulse was a ranged version of Hand-to-hand Weaponry, inflicting 1 six-sided die of damage to a successfully hit target! With a bit of luck, a formation of "power armor", as it was called, was able to destroy a heavy 'Mech with shocking regularity. Clearly, this had to change. In search of an alternate ability to use, we decided to add Flamers. Flamers gave the battle armor a distinct advantage against 'Mechs, but their use required battle armor be in base contact with the 'Mech. The result was an aggressive but balanced unit design which later became the Clan Battle Armor.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=36983



ForestryMech MOD

Tactics and Secrets: This is the fastest of the notoriously slow IndustrialMechs. The addition of a medium autocannon to this already potent close combat unit gives this 'Mech exceptional versatility. It is one of the few 'Mechs with a vent rating of 3, allowing it to be used repeatedly over several turns and quickly cool back to its full capabilities. Park it in hindering terrain where Camouflage will add +2 to its defense value.

History: This IndustrialMech, the latest model in a long line of Earthwerks Ltd. forestry products, was a company mainstay during the Golden Age of Peace, creating a strong income stream after many years of lucrative arms production. With the outbreak of conflict, the ForestryMech was easily modified for combat and profitable arms sales. In fact, the ForestryMech, Modified was available so quickly, many are suspicious of Earthwerks' involvement in the recent hostilities.

Designer's Note: The ForestryMech, Modified shaped up to be a great unit. The ForestryMech was used as the base IndustrialMech during Alpha testing, and many of the principle game mechanics such as charging, shutting down and venting were developed through the use of this balanced 'Mech. Originally designed at 90 points, removing an additional shutdown slot on the heat dial brought the ForestryMech, Modified to just over 100 points.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=36567



Gnome battle armor

Tactics and Secrets: All ranks of Gnome Battle Armor come equipped with Reactive Armor. This special equipment reduces the damage sustained from ballistic ranged attacks by 1 click, adding to the survivability of this unit. A very well-balanced unit and effective for its point cost, Gnome Battle Armor in formation will give any opponent cause for concern. Its ballistic weaponry make it equally effective against opposing infantry, vehicles or 'Mechs. Defense, mobility and firepower: Gnome Battle Armor has it all.

History: Invitation to the elite Amaterasu regiment has only two requirements: the designate must be the best at her occupation and she must be a woman. Ona Kozoma is indeed the best at her particular occupation, making her an ideal addition to the regiment's Gnome Battle Armor, especially at point. An Adept of kendo before her calling to the Dragon's Fury army, Ona's focused use of ki, the natural energy surrounding all things, gives her unmatched situational awareness in combat. Guided by this gift, Ona will prove invaluable to the Regiment and to Katana Tormark.
--Quarterly Review Notes, Sho-sa Tomi Nagawa

Designer's Note: Like many units in MechWarrior: Dark Age, the Gnome Battle Armor is an example of a unit whose capabilities are largely affected by its faction affiliation. The point values for each of the green, veteran and elite units only differ by a single point, yet each unit has dramatically different capabilities in game play. The green Highlander unit is defensively strong, the veteran Swordsworn unit is equipped with long range and high damage output, and the elite Dragon's Fury unit is fast and offensively strong. The unit balance and strong faction associations of the Gnome units will be appreciated by both players and fans of the BattleTech universe alike.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=36752



Hatchetman

Tactics and Secrets: As an in-fighter, the Hatchetman excels in the tight confines of a city fight. It lacks the blinding speed of other medium 'Mechs and needs the cover of hindering and blocking terrain to conceal its advance into base contact. Use Jump Jets to make a beeline for the enemy. Once there, a whopping 10 clicks (gasp!) of axe-wielding Hand-to-hand weapon special equipment ensures a quick demise to any opponents. In the absence of favorable terrain, the Hatchetman can be called upon for its stand-off capabilities, as well; it sports decent medium-range ballistic weaponry to fill this order.

History: "Negative, Alpha One! Complete your circuit or I'll keep you out there all night! You copy, Alpha One?"

Sergeant Collins copied, all right. After his last performance infraction, the Captain threatened to reassign his light 'Mech to someone else. All Collins wanted to do was call it a day and punch out, but what choice did he have?

"Copy, Cap. Alpha One out."

Great. Another 20 minutes in this derelict city. Talk about back-water assignments. Glancing up, Collins caught sight of a red glow out of the corner of his eye...

The sheer force of the attack stunned Collins. Instinctively, he spun his 'Mech to the right as the enemy descended upon him from above. Titanium grated on Endo Steel as his left leg actuators severed, leaving his 'Mech lame and listing. Looking up, he saw his adversary clearly: a menacing Hatchetman 'Mech, its huge, gleaming axe in a sweeping backswing.

"Sweet mother of..." Collins raised his 'Mech's left arm to shield him from the blow.

The axe guillotined down, severing his 'Mech's left arm at the shoulder and following through to leave a terminal rent in his light 'Mech's torso.

Time to punch out, indeed.

Collins reached frantically for the ejection handle...

Designer's Note: This Classic BattleMech is a fan favorite. With its wicked axe ready for hand-to-hand combat, the Hatchetman can really deliver the damage. One of the initial focuses of MechWarrior: Dark Age was to promote a spirited close combat system. As important as combined arms combat is to MechWarrior: Dark Age, we wanted to give players the ability to pair off their 'Mechs, throw down the gloves and go toe-to-toe! The IndustrialMechs, with their whirling saw blades and mining drills, captured the concept of lethal in-fighting 'Mechs beautifully. With the close combat angle determined, the choice of the Hatchetman as an initial BattleMech entry was a given.

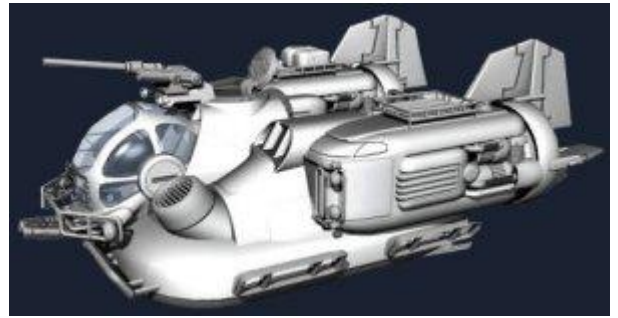
Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=36855



HumHov

The High Mobility Multi-Purpose Hover Vehicle (HMMHV) or HumHov is a multi-purpose armored personal carrier designed to rapidly deploy an infantry squad to almost anywhere on the battlefield.



Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=34180

JESII Strategic Missile Carrier

Tactics and Secrets: This awesome vehicle needs to be carefully protected and deployed to make best use of its offensive might. Given the high movement rates of units in MechWarrior: Dark Age, the long range of the JESII alone is not enough to keep it safe. Streak Missiles broaden the possibilities of this missile carrier. Blocking terrain can be used when preparing the battlefield to channel your enemy's attacks without limiting the lines of fire of this unit. Another tactic is to use it behind a screen of friendly units to prevent an opponent from closing to base contact with the JESII. Once opposing units get that close, the JESII is at a severe disadvantage. Its long minimum range prevents it from attacking units in base contact; its slow speed makes it difficult to re-establish a safe range cushion. Keep the enemy at arm's reach, though, and this unit can definitely win the day!

History:

Not again. Another of his 'Mechs wrecked.

The missile strike had been sudden and devastating. There had been no warning as the incoming missiles appeared arcing over the surrounding buildings and slammed into "Skullcap" Garrett's new light 'Mech. He had engaged his Electronic Camouflage, but it had proven useless against the incoming Streak Missiles. Ultimately, it had been his 'Mech's advanced—and essential!—ejection system that had saved him.

Now "Skullcap" lay hiding in the rubble of this urban wasteland, his smoldering 'Mech dimly illuminating the bombed-out city block. He planned to lay low and report on the unit composition of the force that had assaulted him. The other members of his unit were still out there and needed to be informed of this danger.

A single vehicle came into view. It was stacked high with four—no, six LRM 20 racks! Skullcap had heard rumors about the JESII Missile Carrier, but couldn't believe any vehicle could have so many missiles. It crept forward and entered the park on the far side of the street. Suddenly, it spun to the left and quickly elevated its racks bristling with missiles. In a blaze, the vehicle sequentially fired its ordinance, launching a seemingly unending string of missiles high into the night sky. Loose debris flew in the wake of the fiery back blast, and "Skullcap" choked on dust as he followed the volley of missiles arcing over the nearby buildings. Once clear of the surrounding buildings, the missiles' trajectories violently altered as the missiles zeroed in on acquired targets.

After seeing this awesome display, "Skullcap" knew that his scouting was complete. This single vehicle had smashed his 'Mech.

Designer's Note: The JES II was the focus for the development of the indirect fire rules. Its long maximum and minimum ranges allowed testers to determine the utility of this attack mode when used in an extreme case. An early rules set had the target's defense increased by 2 but only a single click of damage was inflicted if it was hit. Increasing the defense modifier to plus 3 and the damage to a maximum of 2 clicks made the ability more attractive to players. Later, with the addition of the Streak Missiles special equipment, the JES II became well worth its costly price tag.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=36966



Legionnaire

Tactics and Secrets: Don't fall into the trap of using this aggressive-looking 'Mech too aggressively; its poor heat dial doesn't permit aggressive use. Use the Legionnaire more as you would use a light 'Mech: to scout and harass, as opposed to getting into prolonged combat with opposing medium 'Mechs. Unfortunately, the Legionnaire's firepower will often mean it gets dragged into such encounters. Use your orders judiciously and try not to push this 'Mech. Make use of its long range to avoid counter-fire. Avoid making Charge attacks with the Legionnaire unless the target has a very high priority; an ammunition explosion on an overheated full-strength Legionnaire will tear it apart and likely lose you the battle.

History: "Skullcap" Garrett hid from the 'Mech's view, evaluating his options. Information about the newly designed Legionnaire was too scarce and valuable for him to leave this encounter without more data. But Skullcap knew that if there were survivors then, for the Legionnaire, this encounter was unfinished.

In Skullcap's mind, this encounter was over before it started. With blinding speed, the Legionnaire had ambushed his patrol and quickly destroyed the light vehicles under his command. After that, with no speed advantage over the Legionnaire, his own light 'Mech was quickly dismantled by the medium 'Mech's overwhelming firepower. Now all he hoped to do was survive and report what he had seen. Time to do some recon.

Flipping his visor to IR mode, Skullcap poked his head up from his hide-out and was surprised by the strength of the Legionnaire's heat signature. Even a few short minutes after the engagement, he'd have expected the 'Mech to cool more significantly. He'd have to get back to HQ to report his findings.

Designer's Note: This awesome-looking BattleMech begged to have awesome stats. From a play-balance standpoint, though, it is important to have a unit with some subtle weaknesses as well as obvious strengths. The Legionnaire favors offensive might over longevity in battle; it packs a huge punch, but doesn't manage heat well. Like all units in MechWarrior: Dark Age, players will be rewarded for discovering the best uses for this 'Mech.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=36791



M1 Marksman tank

Tactics and Secrets: The M1 Marksman is a powerful and well-balanced tank. In all of its green, veteran and elite versions, it possesses Armor Piercing special equipment. This equipment allows the Marksman to ignore a target's defensive bonuses. Hardened Armor and Heavy Armor, both of which are defense special equipment that reduce damage, are completely ignored by a ranged combat attack from the Marksman. Combined with its excellent range, the Marksman is aptly named and should be used to eliminate opposing forces at maximum range to reduce the likelihood of return fire.

History: *Tai-i* Takadama rested on the still-smoking machine gun of her M1 Marksman tank. As she surveyed the scene from her cupola, it was clear that nothing remained of the Security detachment her platoon had ambushed. She spoke into the comm to the rest of her battleforce. "Outstanding work, warriors! Our success here will pave the way for many great victories!"

Her warriors had operated with surgical precision. Her tank's Heavy Gauss Rifle easily sliced the two enemy tanks to ribbons; her battle armor units sprung from hiding once the remaining opposition had exposed its flank and focused on eliminating her tank. Takadama still marveled at the M1's precise firepower and defensive resilience. Despite the vicious counterattack, her tank remained unscathed. It was truly the weapon of a samurai.

"Today we have not only honored ourselves. Today, we have honored all of the Dragon's Fury!"

Designer's Note: A favorite figure of many of the internal testers (and this designer, too!), the M1 Marksman begged to be given aggressive combat values. While this is a new vehicle to the BattleTech universe, it is sure to be popular due both to its angular good looks and hard-hitting combat abilities.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=36730



MiningMech MOD

Tactics and Secrets: The MiningMech Modified is a typical IndustrialMech. Inexpensive to field, it sports a ballistic weapons system and lethal Melee weapons to deliver massive damage in close combat. In MechWarrior: Dark Age, energy weapons only deal a single point of damage to infantry units with a successful hit. The ballistic weapons on the MiningMech Modified allow it to be effectively used against infantry units at range, and add to its utility in any battle force.

History:

Bannson Universal Unlimited Corporate Communication
Confidential

To: Jacob Bannson, CEO

From: Rob Matheson, VP, Strategic Planning

Jake, I'm following up on this morning's meeting. In an emergency, augmenting our arsenal by modifying IndustrialMechs at the plants could help us protect corporate interests. It would be easy, and we'd have the advantage of surprise if we need it. The MiningMech is a good example: it was designed specifically with an armored shell for protection from hostile environments; we should test the shell for its resistance to weapons fire. The MiningMech's small surface area was designed to minimize heat gain in super-heated magma vents; this feature could offer us advantages in combat as well. I'll do the follow-up with Goddard in Testing and Turner in R&D.

Designer's Note: IndustrialMechs are often overlooked by players new to MechWarrior: Dark Age. This is a big mistake. While not as flashy and well-known as BattleMechs such as the Atlas and the Catapult, the IndustrialMechs are still 'Mechs in all ways. They can double their speed value (a run move), they can readily traverse all terrain save blocking terrain, and they accumulate heat when pushed as opposed to taking damage like non-'Mech units. All this 'Mech versatility and goodness comes at a relatively low point cost and make the IndustrialMechs a bargain.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=36707



Mobile Tactical Command HQ

Tactics and Secrets: In a standard 300-point game of MechWarrior: Dark Age, a Mobile HQ is a gambit. On average, the player will get an extra order to give to units every three turns. This is an undeniable advantage but often a player will find the extra order wasted, since he has no spare units to which the order can be given. For this reason, an HQ will have a much bigger impact in larger games or as part of a battleforce with many low-cost units.

History:

What a day.

"Skullcap" Garrett had narrowly escaped death, slogged all night through leech-infested swamps, and was finally within a few minutes of rendezvousing with his regiment's Mobile Tactical Command HQ. At that point his day would really get tough; he'd have to explain to the Major why he'd lost his 'Mech.

Skullcap couldn't see the HQ anywhere. Because of the vehicle's powerful electronic camouflage, his sensors wouldn't pick up the HQ until he acquired visual contact. Skullcap suspected the HQ had been shadowing him the whole time. Hey, he thought, lose a 'Mech and you have to do your penance.

Emerging from a nearby grove of trees, the Mobile HQ came to a halt mere inches from the bewildered MechWarrior. The rear door swung open, revealing the interior of the vehicle aglow with displays and sensors. Six technicians monitored the jungle of communications equipment inside the vehicle. If anything moved within a few miles of their position, they'd know about it.

"Tough day at the office, Skullcap?" Major Carlson's asked. With a sigh, Skullcap climbed aboard and began his debriefing.

Designer's Note: During testing, the question came up again and again: how much would you pay to have an extra order every third turn? The Mobile HQ provided the solution to this question, since it is nothing more than a vehicle with nominal combat values and slots full of Command. Originally, this vehicle had no attack value. An internal tester commented that it would be representative of the BattleTech universe if, in a pinch, the Mobile HQ could throw caution to the wind and make a Ram attack. The rest is history....

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=36838



Purifier battle armor

Tactics and Secrets: Purifier Battle Armor's strengths are speed and hitting power. Getting the first shot is vital to this unit, since its poor defense value won't protect it from enemy fire. Make use of blocking terrain to cover the Purifier's advance, and then attempt to flank the opponent. This maneuver will protect your units from a counter-attack. Use a formation move with Jump Jets to keep three or more units together for an effective ranged combat formation attack following your move.

History: Seventy years after its initial production, Purifier Battle Armor remains a prominent fixture on the battlefield—and is vital to Republic offensive forces now more than ever. While Stone's Reformation resulted in the decommissioning of the majority of the BattleMechs, Battle Armor production at companies such as Paragon Defense, Brevard Industries, and WaveShield Technologies (recently acquired by Bannson Universal Unlimited) flourished. Relatively inexpensive to produce and maintain, Republic agencies favored the Purifier to outfit their ranks for policing purposes. The Purifier's mimetic armor—armor that changes color to match the surrounding terrain—was a perfect fit for the clandestine operations occasionally necessary to maintain peace in the Republic of the Sphere.

Designer's Note: Infantry in MechWarrior: Dark Age was a concern from the beginning of the development process. It was important to provide the Battle Armor with a definite utility in the game despite its relatively low point cost. The Purifier units provided speed and good damage potential with an initial damage value of 2, but lacked mobility when in formation. This deficiency was a result of Jump Jets being modeled after the Mage Knight ability, Flight, which prevented formation moves using the ability. Permitting Jump Jets to be used in formation moves fixed this problem and gave Battle Armor the desired feel in the game.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=36681



Shandra Advanced Scout Vehicle

Tactics and Secrets: This cheap vehicle has definite staying power due to its initial slot of Decoy. As an optional ability, Decoy can be canceled if a weak attacker targets the Shandra; otherwise, Decoy gives a 50/50 chance that an attacker's successful hit will miss instead. Make a run for your opponent's deployment zone, and Decoy gives the Shandra a great chance of getting there to accumulate some victory points!

History: Even in times of peace, scouts are needed to keep an eye on what your untrustworthy neighbors are doing. The Shandra is equipped with a Guardian ECM Suite and constructed of energy absorbing materials to minimize its radar echo-simple, low tech solutions that remain unchanged from the Shandra's original design 65 years ago. When hostilities began, it was an easy conversion to up-gun the Shandra by adding a SRM-4 launcher.

Designer's Note: The "Sakade," as it was originally known, had limited usefulness in the early Alpha testing cycle. Sure, it was fast and cheap, but so what? Once the victory conditions were tweaked to involve a third victory condition involving occupation of an opponent's deployment zone, the Shandra became a game winner.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=36658



SM1 Tank Destroyer

Tactics and Secrets: The SM1 Tank Destroyer is a potent but very specialized vehicle. With its high damage values, Armor Piercing special equipment and good maximum range, the SM1 is all about offense. It is, however, easily defeated due to its modest defense values. Also, its 4-inch minimum range means that opposing units can get inside its reach and safely attack the SM1 without fear of retaliation. To prevent this fate, be sure to use other friendly units to support the SM1, or use its high speed and hover speed mode to easily disengage from an opponent and re-establish a safe range cushion.

History: Angus watched as the values updated on the panel display showing ambient atmospheric conditions. He tapped his gunner's shoulder and pointed to the readout. His gunner made adjustments to compensate for the minor but vital change in the barometric pressure just registered.

Earlier in the day, the gunner had bore-sighted the intersection of the roadway, guaranteeing a successful strike on any targets foolish enough to travel this key crossroads. All that was required now was to monitor the weather and update the targeting systems. And wait for a target.

That was the way SM1 crews saw everyone, Angus thought to himself. As targets.

Angus had positioned his SM1 Tank Destroyer on the edge of the marsh. With the engine off, the hovercraft had settled into the muck and now laid low in the tall rushes, completely concealed.

The crew knew the drill. Wait for a target. Engage the target, firing a single lethal shot. Before the long barrel of the Type 10 Ultra Autocannon 20 had even completed its recoil, the engine turbines would be spooling up. Seconds later, with the hover skirt inflated, the SM1 would make a quick retreat across the marsh, evading pursuit. Hit and run.

But first, there was the wait....

Designer's Note: Even before actual specific units were being play tested, the idea of a vehicle with a single, huge weapon in a limited-arc mounting was in the mix of generic test units. With its aggressive, offensive nature, this vehicle type fits the MechWarrior mold perfectly. The SM1 has more slots of Armor Piercing special equipment than units costing more than twice its point value. Even after taking some punishment, it can still deliver the damage.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=36882



Spider

Tactics and Secrets: The Spider is an infighter. Its assortment of melee special equipment and short range values means it must be close to opposing units to be effective. Because it is a light 'Mech with low defense values and an unfriendly heat dial, the Spider can be difficult to successfully deploy against heavier opponents with long ranges. The Spider is best used to attack vehicles, preferably in close combat where the vehicle may not be able to return fire due to minimum range restrictions. Avoid Charge attacks with this unit. Even a fully-cooled Spider will require a heat effects roll after a Charge attack.

Maintenance Report

Technician: Talon Sgt. E. Fairlane **Dock #:** 14A

BattleMech	IndustrialMech	Vehicle	Battle Armor
<u> X </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Unit: SDR-5V Spider, The Brotherhood

VIN: NII-1200-30-834036B20L193 **Prod. Date:** Qtr 3, 2655

Date in: Oct. 8, 3132 **Date out:** Oct. 12, 3132

NO.	OP.	DESCRIPTION	QTY.	LABOR
1	R&I	Pitban LFT-10 system	1	4.0
2	R&I	R/L Leg Myomers	4	2.0
3	R&I	R/L Hip Myomers	4	3.0
4	Repl.	Heat Sink	3	4.5
5	Repl.	R Nav Light	1	0.5
6	Repl.	R Beam Focus Tube	1	5.0
7	Rpr.	Durallex Light Armor	11	5.5
8	Subl.	Hazardous Waste Disposal	1	1.0

Subtotals ==> 25.5 Units

Comments: Next Heat Sink replacement will require complete Heat Exchange Grid recalibration: 24 Labor Units. Suggest MechWarrior Greer apply more self-restraint in combat.

Designer's Note: The Spider is a great example of the degree of variation available in the MechWarrior: Dark Age game system. The point values of both the Green and Elite versions differ from the Veteran unit by a mere two percent, but each unit is dramatically different from the others. By presenting players with a variety of viable options for selecting units, battleforce creation and game play are left in the hands of the players, not the game designers. We wouldn't have it any other way.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=36900



AgroMech Mk II

Unit: AgroMech Mk II

Unit Num: 061 - 063

Tactics and Secrets

The AgroMech MKII is useful in its simplicity. Run up to an opposing unit, grab a hold with one hand, then use the cutting blades of the other arm to chew up the target. With a lucky roll, 6 clicks of damage will gut most units. The Green Spirit Cat's unit has a strong defense, though it loses Rapid Striker early. The Swordsworn's Veteran version is slightly slower than the other AgroMech Mk IIs, but does have better overall attack stats. Use the Bannson's Raiders Elite unit with Infiltrate to get into close combat early in the game.

History

It's better than being Dispossessed, Matthew Prague told himself bitterly, not for the first time today alone. Try as he might, even as he hid in the shadows of the treeline, waiting for his prey and listening to the sounds of a not-too-distant firefight, the MechWarrior simply could not convince himself that he did *not* hate his 'Mech. It was too small, too slow, too underpowered, and underarmed--but it was just what he deserved after losing a prized *Black Hawk* to the stinking Spirit Cats two days ago.

His rambling train of thought was cut off by the rhythmic *whomp* of an approaching 'Mech. Inwardly, Prague sagged in defeat. He was hoping the enemy would move through his flank only with some hovetanks, or maybe some power armor--anything but a freaking 'Mech. Nevertheless, he tensed around his controls, ready to attack or run, based on the enemy's mass.

Then Prague stifled a cynical laugh as another AgroMech sprang into view, bursting through the opposite treeline at a run. *Oh, man! How's this for cruel irony?*

Powering up to a run himself, Prague burst forth from his own cover, and charged toward the Spirit Cat 'Mech, raising his AgroMech's arms high. The Spirit Cat, catching the motion off to his flank, practically stumbled to a halt, raising his own 'Mech's ungainly arms in acceptance of the challenge.

To hell with formalities! Prague told himself and raced ahead. The Spirit Cat met him halfway, swinging out with his 'Mech's right arm to deliver a punch aimed at Prague's cockpit. Rotating his torso instinctively, Prague raised his own AgroMech's left arm, instinctively thumbing the trigger to fire a spread of lasers. Instead, the loud whir of the combine filled his ears, and he mentally cursed himself for forgetting what he was driving.

The Spirit Cat, however, suddenly found himself on the receiving end of a lethal combine attack. The enemy 'Mech's offending fist, then its entire arm, ripped off upon contact with the combine's blades. Stunned, Prague swung his arm forward, driving the combine into the Cat's torso. Shredding through the plate armor easily, the combine found vital interior systems almost as flimsy. With a shudder, the Spirit Cat 'Mech froze as its gyro housing shattered. As Prague pulled back the combine, which began to slow to a stop, the enemy 'Mech stumbled back and fell.

"Huh!" Prague said as he looked at the wreck. "I could get used to this, after all."

Designer's Note

IndustrialMechs fill an important roll in the fiction of the **MechWarrior** universe. Forced into service in the initial period of conflict following the beginning of the Dark Age, these 'Mechs represent a faction's determination to succeed with the tools available. In game play, however, they are generally dismissed as ineffective due to their absence of ranged weaponry. While IndustrialMechs lack the versatility of BattleMechs, we hope players see them as practical and inexpensive units--in addition to their obvious visual panache!

Angus Drummond

Unit: Angus Drummond--*Mad Cat II*

Unit Number: 91

Point Cost: 267

Tactics and Secrets

The much-anticipated return of the *Mad Cat II* is at hand! This classic 'Mech boasts the impressive numbers everyone has wanted to see: 5 clicks of primary energy damage, 3 clicks of secondary ballistic damage, and a whopping 23 defense with Heavy Armor. Carrying around that much armor makes the *Mad Cat*'s heat dial a little sensitive, but a skilled MechWarrior will be able to handle it. Move the *Mad Cat II* to the center of the field and let loose!

History

Angus Drummond closed his eyes and inhaled the scent of burning pine as he sat on the grass in the heart of the woods. The heat of the blaze warmed his face, arms, and legs, which were left exposed by the cooling vest and shorts he wore. Somewhere behind him, however, he heard a tinny voice, emanating from the discarded neurohelmet he'd left atop his *Mad Cat II*'s right foot.

Opening his eyes, Angus fought to bottle up the spark of rage at the interruption, and instead rose to stamp out the flames with his boot. Walking calmly to his helmet, the Spirit Cat MechWarrior caught only the trailing edge of the message.

" . . . to your 'Mechs. Hostile forces are en route."

"Gamma One here," Angus said into the microphone as he climbed the rope ladder to his cockpit. "What is the situation, Star Commander?"

"Star Captain!" the other voice said. "We were unable to reach you. What . . ."

"Never mind that," Drummond snapped. "I requested a sitrep."

"Aff, Star Captain. We have a significant hostile force moving into the Lang-tze Valley area. Estimating one mixed company of armor and infantry, with one BattleMech in support."

Drummond nodded, even though the other officer could not see. "Mobilize Alpha Vehicle Star to intercept, and call in Gamma Strike. I am in Lang-tze; I shall engage the enemy force and hold the line here."

"Star Captain! Is that wise?"

"It is my order, Star Commander. Carry it out."

As he cut the channel, Drummond fully turned his attention to starting up his BattleMech's massive fusion engine. A feminine--yet totally mechanical--voice spoke softly to him, requesting his command phrase to yield total control of the avatar of war.

Drummond looked out at the extinguished bonfire and smiled. "I am the Bringer of Light," he said. "The hour of purification is at hand."

"Access code recognized," the *Mad Cat*'s computer told him. "Fight with honor, Angus Drummond."

Designer's Note

No single 'Mech invokes more emotion than the *Mad Cat* does. The assault version, the *Mad Cat II*, is no exception. Creating the stats for such a revered unit without disappointing its ardent fans was a formidable task--and one we didn't take lightly! By combining the best of the Spirit Cats' tendencies and the mechanical prowess of the *Mad Cat II*, a very competent unit was created. Players are sure to scramble for this awesome 'Mech.

Antonia Chinn

Antonia fields the huge *Thor* for the Dragon's Fury. Combining both energy and ballistic damage, Antonia's *Thor* should be the heart of any force. Streak Missiles and Jump Jets provide her the ability to attack her foes where they hide, and Reactive Armor provides protection against common ballistic ranged attacks. Back up Antonia with supporting units and infantry.

History

Cutting her jump jets at exactly the right moment, Antonia Chinn braced herself against the spine-shattering shock, as her 70-ton machine slammed down onto the low-slung form of the enemy Joust medium tank. Already damaged by her earlier barrage, the weakened armor of the Swordsworn vehicle crumpled beneath her, but she tried not to think too much about the lives of the men crushed inside.

Mercifully, the stuttering autocannon and missile fire that peppered her machine's armored hide--fired by an enemy *Centurion* just one hundred meters away--kept her focused on moving.

"Lousy Snake bastard!" shouted a male voice in her helmet speakers as she lit her jump jets again and sailed behind the cover of a nearby hill.

Antonia ignored the taunt, and instead brought her 'Mech to a full run. The heat in her cockpit, spiked by two jumps in rapid succession, was already beginning to fade as her cooling systems engaged, raising gooseflesh on her exposed arms and legs. Swiveling her torso to the left, Antonia covered the charging *Centurion* with her crosshairs and snap-fired all her lasers at once. The gooseflesh vanished as a wave of searing heat flooded her cockpit for several seconds, and her vision swam before her.

The shot, however, had its desired effect. A series of super-hot beams slashed open armor all across the *Centurion's* arms and torso. The Swordsworn 'Mech swayed for a moment, reeling from the hits, but regained its balance and charged after her. Another burst of autocannon fire tracked Antonia's path, but the Davion MechWarrior, either thrown off by rage or damage, managed to catch only the soft earth.

Antonia stopped her run just short of another hill, spun back around to face the *Centurion*, and locked her Streak missile launchers on its humanoid form. Thumbing her trigger, she sent a series of missiles slamming into the wounded 'Mech's chest. One found the magazine for the boxy, torso-mounted LRMs and exploded. As a fireball engulfed the entire machine, transforming a once-powerful avatar of destruction into 50 tons of flaming wreckage, Antonia let out a sigh of relief, though realizing it was only temporary.

Two more enemies of the Dragon down, she thought, how many more worlds left to go?

Designer's Note

This designer has a sweet spot for heavy 'Mechs. Faster than assault 'Mechs and often equally durable and well-armed, heavy 'Mechs can do it all. In testing, the *Thor* usually had an order token on it for the entire game. Quality combat stats and special equipment combined with a vent rating of 3 makes it easy to use the *Thor* effectively turn after turn.

Hatchetman

Unit: *Hatchetman*

Unit Num: 082 - 084

Tactics and Secrets

All three ranks of the *Hatchetman* initially look the same. All three are equipped with Jump Jets, enabling you to land a powerful death from above attack for 6 damage. The *Hatchetman* can then attack the next turn with Hand-to-Hand special equipment, causing even more damage. The choice then becomes do you roll for the extra damage, or do you take the default 3?

History

[Drill Sergeant]: "All right, you bunnies, listen up! On your screens you should now see the star subject of today's lesson: Recognizing and Fearing the BattleMech! Which one of you pukers can tell me what this vehicle is? Cadet Mulvanney?"

[Mulvanney]: "Sir! It is a *Hatchetman*, sir!"

[Drill Sergeant]: "Excellent, Cadet Mulvanney. Now, since you're so astute, can you tell me what its capabilities are?"

[Mulvanney]: "Sir! Uh, the *Hatchetman* is a Steiner 'Mech, and . . . "

[Drill Sergeant]: "I didn't ask for its Hades-bound biography, Cadet! Cadet Lansig, what can the *Hatchetman* do in combat?"

[Lansig]: "Sir! *Hatchetmen* come in various configurations, but most feature a close-range multiton hatchet that is used to cleave hostile units or clear other obstacles. Typical backup weapons include lasers and possibly an autocannon, sir!"

[Drill Sergeant]: "Outstanding, Cadet Lansig! Now, tell me what you will do when you face one in the field while piloting your Fox AC?"

[Lansig]: "Sir! With all due respect, I would try to keep it at arm's length and open fire, sir!"

[Drill Sergeant]: "Wrong, puke! Your Fox can't hope to take down one of these beasts, and you'll still be in range for its return fire! Heroism gets you dead, people! If ever you face a BattleMech in the field, and it's looking your way, the correct answer to this question is to call for help and haul ass! You got me, maggots!?"

[Cadet Class]: "Sir! Yes, sir!"

Designer's Note

MechWarrior: Fire for Effect introduces many new 'Mechs and vehicles to the Dark Age. It also provides a chance to release previously Unique 'Mechs as Common BattleMechs for other factions. The *Hatchetman* is a natural choice for this duty due to its popularity among **BattleTech®** fans. Altering the *Hatchetman's* weaponry and special equipment ensures that the new version of this 'Mech is both visually and functionally different from the original version in **MechWarrior: Dark Age**.

JESIIE missile carrier

Like the JES II, this LRM-armed vehicle is meant for a supporting role, attacking from the rear or indirectly. For its price, it has solid attack and damage statistics, and can take out weak or damaged units cost efficiently. Of special note is the Dragon's Fury variant, because its Evade makes it much more resistant to infantry harassment.

History

Manufacturer: Joint Equipment Systems

Mass/Type: 60 tons/Wheeled Missile Support Unit

Armament: 4 LRM 15-racks, 2 machine guns

Analysis

The JES III is the third model of the popular JES series of armored missile transports manufactured by the Alshain-based Joint Equipment Systems. The design intent is to improve upon outmoded SRM and LRM carriers that sacrificed too much battlefield survivability in favor of cost considerations. This model features four heavy LRM racks, which are controlled by twin semi-independent gunnery stations, allowing this unit to deliver effective support fire concentrated either against one target or multiple points in an enemy formation. Balancing the excellent speed of the original JES with the hard-hitting power of the JES II was apparently the main goal of Joint Equipment Systems in developing this vehicle.

OEM Recommendations

Preliminary tests have shown that the vehicle does indeed address both mobility and survivability issues, while simultaneously offering a solid enough punch to threaten or destroy light- and medium-weight battlefield units. It is not advisable, however, to deploy such vehicles solo. Missile transports, by their very nature, are too specialized to bring into battle without infantry support for defense and BattleMech or attack vehicle support for offense.

POA Recommendations

Suggest we consider the potential for upgrading the mobility a bit more. Two machine guns won't discourage enemy infantry, but an overland speed better than 50 clicks per hour should. Apart from that, I say we look into some purchases!

Designer's Note

This unit is an answer to the two extremes of JES vehicles available in **MechWarrior: Dark Age**. The original JES Missile Carrier offers great speed, but its range is limited, while the JES II Missile Carrier has tremendous range but limited mobility. The JES III is a more balanced unit with modest combat values but greater overall utility, providing players with new options for their battleforces.

Kage battle armor

Unit: Kage Battle Armor

Unit Num: 019 - 021

Tactics and Secrets

The Kage provides a solid armored infantry to base your formations around. It is fast and jump-capable like most battle armor, has decent attack and defense stats, and deals a reasonable amount of damage for its cost. Late Camouflage and relative longevity help make the Kage good at escaping certain death or tying up units for a while.

History

Point Commander Lana Nova Cat crouched low in the underbrush, her fellow troopers following suit without a word or gesture. On the lonely, winding road ahead, the clanking rumble of treads announced the approach of her quarry: a pair of J100 recovery vehicles, escorted by a pair of Shandra scout cars. Switching to increased magnification, the young Spirit Cat Elemental could not suppress a grim smile as she saw the vehicles come into the clear, all bearing the insignia of the Steel Wolves. Her muscles tensed as she sensed the moment to strike drawing even closer.

So, she thought, you Wolves think you are so powerful that you cannot be touched? You have underestimated my Clan far too often!

As the vehicles rumbled ever closer, Lana's muscles drew tighter, coiling like steel springs. Her heart pounded in her ears, and she measured time with every beat. Once she gave the word, the Point would spring into action, as would her companions on the other side of the road. The targets were already picked, and none of them stood a chance.

One more heartbeat, and she could almost smell the fumes from the nearest Shandra's exhaust. Only 30 meters separated her from her target. *Now!*

Igniting her Kage's jump jets with a deafening roar, Lana shouted into her commline the phrase that would claim one more victory for the Spirit Cats:

"Purifiers, attack!"

At the apex of her leap, Lana grinned and swung her Tsunami Gauss rifle in line with the Shandra's tail gunner. With a single pull of the trigger, she ripped away the flimsy flak armor he wore, and left his body limp at his controls. Below her, the rest of her squad emerged on their own jets, ready to pounce on their hapless prey.

Designer's Note It is typical for players to have limited options when designing their armies in a new collectable game. As the first expansion for the **MechWarrior: Dark Age** game, *Fire for Effect* fleshes out the available arsenals of all the factions. Kage Battle Armor provides the Bannson's Raiders and Spirit Cats factions with a light battle armor unit previously unavailable to them. Expect all factions to benefit from the newly available quantity of units.

Katsu Moriyama

Unit: Katsu Moriyama--*Crimson Hawk*

Unit Num: 087

Point Value:155

Faction: Republic of the Sphere

Tactics and Secrets

A Republic of the Sphere unit, this *Crimson Hawk* commands respect on the field. The Hawk leads the charge with Jump Jets and Brawling, enabling it to cross over any hazardous terrain and then get in close. It's secondary energy weapon also has a solid 10 inch range with two targets, making the *Crimson Hawk* deadly against other 'Mechs. Katsu's Hawk also boasts strong defenses, first Hardened and then Heavy Armor. Couple this with a decent heat dial, and Katsu can control the field!

History

"Damn! This guy's good!"

Grayson Lonz stared across the field, watching the *Crimson Hawk* as it swung to counter the hoverbike squads he sent in to harass it. Almost immediately, he regretted the choice when the Republic 'Mech swatted aside two hoverbikes with its lasers and delivered a powerful kick to a third.

The Hawk swung back around to face him as his distraction limped away, marching through the remains of a flame-gutted JES it had already demolished. Once again, Lonz noticed with despair that the 'Mech bore little, if any, damage. His own battered *Centurion* could not make the same claim after this hard-fought battle.

"*Centurion* pilot," a voice boomed in his ears, hard and infused with ultimate authority. "Your forces are scattered and your 'Mech is crippled. You are outnumbered, outgunned, and outclassed. Surrender now, and we will show you the mercy of Republic law. Fight on, and the technicians will be extracting your corpse from the remains of your Blake-forsaken BattleMech."

Lonz looked again at his consoles. His heat indicator was still dangerously high, and his autocannon was a twisted lump of metal wasting space on his right arm. All he had left were the missiles, and the *Crimson Hawk* was already too close for those.

"Who are you, Knight?" he asked, stalling for a few more second's time. *There has to be a way.* . . .

"I am the voice of The Republic," Lonz heard the man say. "I am one sworn to end the war that people like you think you have the right to unleash upon the citizens of these worlds. And if you raise your weapons one more time, I will be your angel of death. Power down now, however, and I will be your salvation."

There was no refuting that icy tone, Lonz knew. And worse still, the Knight's 'Mech now stood just a few meters away, close enough for him to see the other man's eyes, hard and determined. Scrawled just below the Knight's canopy, Lonz read the name "Moriyama." But what kept the sweat beading on his brow had less to do with the heat in his cockpit at that moment than the thought of what the Hawk's lasers, still menacingly pointed at his cockpit, would do if he did not comply. *No choice.* . . .

"All right, Sir Moriyama," he said, hoping the honorific would convey his sincerity, "I surrender."

Designer's Note

Part of the challenge of designing a set is maintaining the proper presentation of the factions across the set and within the game system as a whole. As the set that introduces the Republic's Knights of the Sphere to players, it is important that *Fire for Effect* represent the Knights in the proper light. In its appearance and combat values, the *Crimson Hawk* does just that. Its appearance makes a powerful statement on the battlefield, and its competent stats and special equipment reflect the abilities of a MechWarrior who leads by example.

Kym Nova Cat

Subject: Kym Nova Cat (excerpt from dossier file)

Kym Nova Cat is a solid, dependable MechWarrior, which is to say that to the Clans, she is a major disappointment--a mediocre warrior at best, destined to fill the ranks of the solahma without leaving a mark on the Remembrance on her way out. This cursory dismissal of her abilities has haunted Kym, who has yet to earn a proper Bloodname as she draws ever nearer to the age when most Clan warriors are considered too old to be of any use. She defeated only one opponent during her first Trial of Position, graduated from training as a MechWarrior, and has since managed to rise only to the rank of Star Captain.

Research: This warrior seems ill-motivated. Is there a possibility of turning her?

--C045

Thought Control: Our analysis seems to say no. Though her superiors do not seem fond of her, this Nova Cat appears content in her station, and enjoys the loyalty of the troops in her command. She is more like a cog that knows and accepts its duty.

--S094

Research: *Giri* before *ninjo*, hmm? A pity. She would have made a fine addition to our cause.

--C045

Long Tom artillery

Unit: Long Tom Artillery

Unit Num: 040-042

Tactics and Secrets

Long Toms provide decent support fire for a reasonable cost. They are a bit inaccurate, however, tending to drift to the sides, and can target only one location. Still, their outstanding 40" range allows you to attack almost any unit on the board, and all variants have some kind of defensive system, making it hard to retaliate against them. The Bannson's Raiders Green Long Tom is equipped with Camouflage and Decoy, making it a tough target to hit. The Veteran Highlander's unit is a solid mix of defense and offense, combining Armor Piercing and Reactive Armor. The Swordsworn elite version boasts better over all stats and Electronic Camouflage.

History

Captain Paul Willis of the Scheat Planetary Guard brought his MiningMech MOD to a slow walk as soon as he came over the rise. Beside him, Lieutenant Raul Marcezska kept pace with his AgroMech MOD. Almost instantly, the assessment of the field flashed in Willis' mind, but it was Marcezska who gave it voice.

"Whomever these raiders were," Marcezska grumbled in the commline, "they had to be pretty stupid to field nothing but tanks."

The valley was littered with the remains of tanks, only a handful of which bore the SPG logo. The majority, he surmised, belonged to the unidentified raiders, who packed up and fled the moment he and Marcezska hit the field. Passing by a ruined Scimitar, its broken hull still pouring oily black smoke into the sky, Willis gave a dead raider tank a swift kick, knocking it over to one side.

"Looks like you boys missed all the fun," remarked Lydia Vandier, the armor company commander in the field.

"Guess so, Lieutenant," Willis chuckled. "They split before we even had LOS, ey?"

"Yup. High-tailed it north. I'd say they're halfway back to their LZ by now."

"All the same, I think we should . . . wait, did you say north?" A chill of dread came over Willis. "Their LZ is to the east!"

Before another word could be uttered, a short, high-pitched whistle preceded the sudden explosion of Marcezska's AgroMech. Two more explosions tore open the earth close by, each one shaking Willis' MiningMech.

"Artillery!" he shouted. "Scatter! Scatter! Enemy force is fielding Long Toms!"

Designer's Note

The Long Tom is the epitome of ranged combat; nothing on a standard battlefield is safe from its reach. The arrival of this new artillery to the battlefield is sure to challenge players. Mobility is paramount when facing an opponent with big guns, and the design team is in favor of anything that keeps the game fast and dynamic. Move it or lose it!

Maxim Mk2 transport

Unit: *Maxim Mk2 Transport*

Unit Number: 31-33

Tactics and Secrets

The largest of the transport vehicles, the *Maxim Mk2 Transport* can carry either full formations of infantry or an entire vehicle. All three currently fielded models add a unique set of abilities. While the Steel Wolves made their vehicle resistant to long-range attacks, and the Highlanders have their usual Heavy Armor, the Dragon's Fury transport likes to retaliate with Improved Targeting and it's 19 defense.

History

The entire raid went to pot the second McGuffin set off that blasted trip wire. If I hadn't been there myself, I wouldn't have believed it, but there it was. And now, all those years of training and battlefield experiences were simply washed away with the blast of a single directional mine.

The Dragon's Fury infantry are good, I'll give them that. Within seconds of the explosion, they had a full platoon in the field, swarming out from the objective, complete with battle armor backup. I ordered the medics to get moving, and picked up McGuffin myself--damned if I was gonna leave anyone behind. Mikey was already on the channel calling for the extraction, and I remember thinking, Good, kid. Optimistic to the bitter end.

We'd gotten maybe a hundred meters or so away from where that damned tripwire was before I started hearing the rattle of MG fire at my back. How the "Snakes" managed to miss me, I'll never know, but it became clear as all hell we didn't have a fraggin' prayer at that point. Glancing over my shoulder, just to be sure, I saw one of those horrible black battlesuits coming around the hill. It was an older suit design, and still had the dings from some forgotten firefight, but it moved well enough and carried a big enough gun for me to know better than to tempt fate.

Turning back, I let loose what was left in my clip before throwing the M&G aside and giving up all pretense of a "fighting retreat." McGuffin grunted something on my shoulder, but I couldn't hear him over the sound of weapons fire and my own heart pounding.

Then I saw the sweetest thing I could have imagined at that moment: three floating bricks that could only be the Maxims we rode up here in. Flying up on those air skirts, with those Hoversecs blazing away, the explosions behind me made me run that much harder.

The tank jock who coasted up closest to me presented me with an open hatch; I gratefully tossed McGuffin into it and leaped after. Fischer, one of the squad medics, hopped in right beside me, handing me his own M&G so I could lay down a little extra cover fire. Looking back, I didn't even see the armored beast I swore was on my heels all this time, so I settled for keeping back some Snake PBIs instead.

My pulse kept racing even as the hatch closed down, but damn did it feel good to be alive. Looking over at Fischer, though, and catching that defeated look in his eyes, I suddenly realized that McGuffin couldn't make that same claim.

Designer's Note

Transports are a new game feature that become available in **MechWarrior: Fire for Effect**. They aren't as glitzy as 'Mechs or artillery, but we expect them to be popular with players. The Maxim is the game's heavy mover, capable of transporting either three infantry units or a single vehicle. All Maxims are intentionally provided with combat values and special equipment to assist them in support of their passengers, making them valuable front-line units.

SRM Team

Equipped with antitank weaponry, these foot troops are an asset for commanders facing a heavily armored enemy. Their precision and Armor Piercing make them very good at going solo against light targets, or spearheading formation attacks against tougher units. Bannson's SRM teams have the added benefit of being able to deploy far into the battlefield to launch surprise attacks.

History

[Crane]: Victoria Crane here, reporting to you live from Moslabad, Langdon Province, where, just hours ago, a standoff with 'Mech-equipped terrorists has come to a surprising end with the intervention of Bannson Universal security forces. With me is Sergeant Trasko, who commanded the daring, nighttime strike credited with breaking the terrorists' grip on the Moslabad Water Treatment facility. Sergeant, what happened out there tonight?

[Trasko]: Well, Miss Crane, with the cooperation of the Moslabad Civic Council--and the local authorities, of course--we obtained valuable intel. on the positioning of the terrorists' key elements--a stolen MiningMech and two armored vehicles--which they had been threatening to employ against the water purification plants here. Armed with that knowledge, it was a simple matter to infiltrate the main sewage lines with select squads of SRM and rifle teams. Using a secure channel, we coordinated our strikes to produce maximum damage to the hostile forces and minimize the collateral damage.

[Crane]: You make it sound easy, Sergeant.

[Trasko]: Oh, it was nothing of the sort. The SRM teams had the toughest time with the terrorists' 'Mech, which required two or three volleys to take down. Fortunately, its pilot was fairly inexperienced and the machine already in a state of disrepair, making precision targeting easier. By contrast, the two armored cars we hit were quickly disabled.

[Crane]: And the terrorists not riding in heavy machinery? How did you handle them?

[Trasko]: Without their heavy machinery, they didn't really have a prayer.

Designer's Note

Players new to **MechWarrior: Dark Age** often overlook infantry units. Given the varied appearance and utility of *Fire for Effect* infantry, we hope that will change. One design goal was to provide players with more options for their infantry units when used in combination with transports and other units. Although SRM teams feature the offensive might of small vehicles, they are frail and will require support to be used effectively.

ConstructionMech Mk II MOD

Unit: ConstructionMech MkII MOD

Unit Num: 089	Point Value: 85	Faction: Highlanders (G)
Unit Num: 090	Point Value: 85	Faction: Mercenary (G)
Unit Num: 091	Point Value: 88	Faction: Spirit Cats (V)
Unit Num: 092	Point Value: 91	Faction: Republic of the Sphere (E)

Tactics and Secrets:

If you thought you chose this MOD for its ranged combat abilities, think again! The ConstructionMech MkII MOD is equipped with Flamers to enhance its close combat prowess but offers no ranged combat potential. To make best use of this 'Mech, you have to get up close and personal! Charge into base contact with opposing light or medium 'Mechs; this unit's decent attack values give you a good chance of success. On your following turn, push the MOD to use its Flamers to heat up your prey! For its economical point cost, the ConstructionMech MkII MOD offers great value.

History:

I know what you're thinking. Now that I can run my 'Mech up to sixty-five kilometers an hour without kissing my canopy to the dirt and use the articulated cargo hoist to pick up that hovercar, I can use my flamer, right? Time to burn something! Calm down there, eager beaver. You may have mastered some things, but the flamer is a 'Mech-class weapon and it can be dangerous with a capital D. Though it might be cool to swivel the barrel up to peer down the hole, I can't stress enough not to do this. With an average temperature above 5,000 degrees, the flamer can ruin anybody's day very, very quick. Of course that makes it perfect for ruining someone else's day, so point it at your enemies and pull that trigger!

—Excerpt taken from the 1st edition of the *Brainless Guide to Piloting® the ConstructionMech MkII MOD* (self-published)

Design Note:

Usually, a modified IndustrialMech is an opportunity to give ranged combat capability to a close combat 'Mech. In the case of the ConstructionMech MkII MOD, however, Flamers enhance its close combat abilities without introducing a ranged combat option. Rather than creating a new variation with added versatility, this modification creates a specialized close combat 'Mech. By using special equipment specific to each faction--like Hand-to-Hand Weapon, Brawling, and Grapple--players can choose from a variety of units to suit their playing styles.

Ghost

Unit: Ghost

Unit Num: 109	Point Value: 138	Faction: Steel Wolves (G)
Unit Num: 110	Point Value: 138	Faction: Highlanders (G)
Unit Num: 111	Point Value: 144	Faction: Republic of the Sphere (V)
Unit Num: 112	Point Value: 150	Faction: Spirit Cats (E)

Tactics and Secrets

This cost-effective 'Mech is sure to see lots of game play! Three of the four variations represent factions with strong defenses (Highlanders, the Republic of the Sphere, and Spirit Cats), giving these *Ghosts* a good chance to survive in battle. In addition to its solid defenses, a variety of offensive options are available. Choose between Pulse, Anti-Personnel, Alpha Strike, and Brawling to gain the offensive might your battleforce needs to succeed. Watch for a vent rating of 3 on the Spirit Cats variation; it will allow you to use it aggressively without concern of overheating.

History

The cascade of fine graphite that suddenly showered down sent tech James Yuen into a coughing fit, despite the small re-breather he wore.

"Stone's blood! I'm going to kill her!" he managed to cough out while backing away from the exposed arm of the *Ghost*. Unable to see for a moment, he reached out several times before he grabbed the hand railing on the high gantry.

"You okay, sir?" astech Josephine Bolin asked as she hurried over, her footfalls on the metal grating echoing in the large 'Mech repair bay.

After several lungfuls of blessed air, he managed to speak again. "I'm going to kill her. She can't even take care of my *Ghost*. If she can't do that, how is she going to take care of herself? I should just put her out of misery."

He took the proffered water bottle from Josephine and squirted it all over his face to wash off the last of the graphite that had spilled out of the shattered casing of the lower arm actuator—damage resulting from a recent skirmish with Dragon's Fury forces. He then took a swig, which he spit out, and then a final long draught.

"I think your sister might have something to say about you calling 'Dark Shadow' 'yours.'"

He grimaced at the stupid name. "I don't care. I'm sick and tired of her bashing my *Ghost*."

Josephine's blue eyes seemed to sparkle with the humor of the situation—a humor he didn't see. "Isn't that what combat is about?"

"Combat is one thing, but this? You saw the armor plating on the lower forearm over the actuator housing. Was she bashing down trees with it? There was no autocannon or laser damage. If she keeps this up, I'm going to ban her from piloting my *Ghost*." With that, he pushed his re-breather back into place and waded back into the intricacies of fixing the BattleMech.

His BattleMech.

James tried to ignore the soft laughter behind him.

Design Note

Because of its increased dial depth, a medium 'Mech is able to convey a faction's attributes more prominently than a light 'Mech can. The four variations of the *Ghost* demonstrate their factions' inherent strengths and weaknesses, and provide players with a wide selection of choices when constructing a battleforce for a standard game. As a general rule, a combined-arms approach consisting of 50 percent 'Mech assets and 50 percent support units (infantry and vehicles) gives new **MechWarrior: Dark Age** players a good starting point for constructing a balanced battleforce. The *Ghost* costs between 138 and 150 points, making it a good fit as a single 'Mech in a 300-point game.

Marat Deleportas

Unit: Marat Deleportas – Sphinx

Unit Num: 120	Point Value: 255	Faction: Spirit Cats
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Tactics and Secrets: The Sphinx is a hard-hitting heavy 'Mech worthy of its Spirit Cat heritage. This amazing 'Mech is fast, well-armored and features massive damage output both at range and in close combat. Its deep combat dial and forgiving heat dial promise it battlefield longevity. Players fielding this 'Mech should be concerned about its high point cost. At 255 points, supporting the Sphinx will be a challenge in a standard game. Besides its high point cost, its lack of ballistic weapons is only marginally offset by its quintuple energy attack capabilities when targeting infantry units. Against infantry, it's better to be in base contact where Marat's Rapid Strike abilities can be brought to bear.

History:

"Star Captain, we have a 'Mech in trouble."

Star Captain Marat Deleportas was walking his 'Mech from the burning ruins of his enemies—enemies of the Spirit Cats.

"Acknowledged, Command. Who is calling for help?"

"Unconfirmed, Star Captain. The pilot hasn't called in or responded to our transmissions, but the 'Mech's signature identifies it as Star Captain Nostra's."

"She knows better than to get trapped like that! I am on my way Command. Alpha Striker One out!" Turning to the coordinates downloaded to his 'Mech, Marat's *Sphinx*, "Eternal Spirit," began pounding its heavy mechanized legs in a crushing sprint to defend his sibkin.

Miles later, Deleportas stood on top of the sloping valley wall, letting his 'Mech cool from the dangerous heat level raised by his sprint. Below him, Nostra's *Crimson Hawk* fired its jump jets, dancing backward and away from its pursuers in an uncanny display of piloting, all the while firing its two heavy lasers. Marat knew that his sibsister could handle the tanks; he would take out the *Hatchetman*. Checking his heat levels, the Star Captain called out, "I can not let you have all the fun with these *surat*, Liz!"

Heavy arms pumping and legs churning into the sloping hills, the Spirit Cat charged into battle. The *Hatchetman's* pilot turned in time to be blinded by an enormous outpouring of laser fire from the *Sphinx*. Racing into close combat, Deleportas easily blocked the swinging hatchet and immediately returned a stunning blow that turned the opposing 'Mech away from him. Raking the enemy 'Mech with laser fire, Marat knew that he and his sibkin had this fight in hand.

"Freebirths! We are not simple Combine pawns—you fight Spirit Cats!"

Design Note: Creating stats for a unit is closely tied with its appearance and overall mass. The goal is to have a player using the unit in a game feel as though the unit looks and feels right. Since Unique units work to the strengths of the faction they are assigned to, the Sphinx's enormous laser arsenal and heavy armor made it a natural for the Spirit Cat faction who favor energy weapons and battlefield survivability.

Marcel Thennes - Wolfhound

Unit: Marcel Thennes – Wolfhound
Unit Num: 116
Point Value: 170
Faction: Republic of the Sphere

Tactics and Secrets:

A Republic of the Sphere unit with a 360-degree arc and a 14-inch range?! You bet! Although mobile and well defended, Marcel is costly for a light 'Mech. Avoid toe-to-toe engagements with comparably costed 'Mechs; if they land a blow, their bigger damage values will endanger the *Wolfhound*. Make sure you put some fast harassers with this unit to keep the enemy in your sights and off guard. This is a strong unit, but it can't do all the work on its own. A combined-arms approach is suggested. Send in some Hoverbikes to herd the enemy into range. Call in the artillery to get opposing heavy tanks moving.

History:

A signature light 'Mech of the Lyrans state—though sold to The Republic as well—the *Wolfhound* debuted during the Fourth Succession War as a counter to the Draconis Combine's *Panther*. It is fast, efficient, and rugged for its size, and is built as a walking laser battery for long-distance, long-duration combat. Highly efficient heat sinks keep the *Wolfhound* mobile and effective even during heavy action, all but ensuring its battlefield superiority.

Design Note:

High-end light 'Mechs are fun to design. They are fast and well-armed for their weight, giving them an aggressive dial. In the case of this Knights of the Sphere unit, it was important to represent its durability while maintaining its modest point cost. Camouflage special equipment and Reactive Armor are both powerful abilities that operate best under certain conditions. Presenting a player with these conditional abilities keeps the unit's point cost modest while offering the player an opportunity to make his or her unit more effective by using it under the optimal conditions.

MHI Crane heavy transport

Unit: MHI Crane Heavy Transport

Unit Num: 069	Point Value: 38	Faction: Steel Wolves
Unit Num: 070	Point Value: 38	Faction: Bannson's Raiders
Unit Num: 071	Point Value: 40	Faction: Mercenary
Unit Num: 072	Point Value: 42	Faction: Spirit Cat's

Tactics and Secrets:

The MHI Crane Heavy Transport has a higher point cost than the Lamprey VTOL. The increased point cost gets you a VTOL transport with a capacity of 2 and a deeper combat dial. The transport's marginal attack and damage values might prevent you from engaging close to opposing units, but its survivability makes "hot drops" an option. Because it has no repair markers until the fifth click, repairing the Crane is sensible. Judicious unit selection, order allocation, and figure placement make a two-member close combat formation an option right after disembarking the Crane's infantry passengers.

History:

Crane, wafting petal
Metal sheathed death, disgorges
O-bakemono

(Haiku lasered into the armor of a destroyed Crane Heavy Transport by an unknown Dragon's Fury warrior)

Design Note:

Because it was designed as the air-transport workhorse, it is important that the Crane have both the capacity and the durability to perform this duty. Capacity is easy. 2 is the magic number, because the sculpt doesn't lend itself to the vehicle passengers that capacity 3 permits. Durability is represented by both a relatively deep combat dial and an absence of repair markers. Once the basic profile is in place, application of faction traits results in the final figures. As always, offering players a variety of figures with contrasting abilities at comparable point costs is the Design Team's primary goal.

Padilla artillery tank

Unit: Padilla Artillery Tank

Unit Num: 037	Point Value: 49	Faction: Steel Wolves (G)
Unit Num: 038	Point Value: 49	Faction: Bannson's Raiders (G)
Unit Num: 039	Point Value: 53	Faction: Highlanders (V)
Unit Num: 040	Point Value: 56	Faction: Republic of the Sphere (E)

Tactics and Secrets:

While it is similar to the Thumper Artillery from *Fire for Effect*, the Padilla offers a wider selection of useful special equipment and capabilities for its increased point cost. For starters, all Padilla Artillery Tanks have multiple shot capabilities; this offers the flexibility to either widen the area of the artillery barrage or focus it on a single battlefield location for increased damage to fewer units. Speed and defense special equipment provide added survivability. This feature is welcomed since the Padilla's modest range values required it to be placed close to opposing units to be effective. Reactive Armor and Heavy Armor can be effective when artillery units square off in counterbattery artillery duels.

History:

I know you've all heard it before. Come on. Say it with me: "BattleMechs are kings of the battlefield." That's right, kings. And MechWarriors take that to heart. Lording it over us poor mud sluggers; they're gods made flesh. Right?!

Well, good to see the tincanner's propaganda machine still works like a charm. For you shmucks nodding your head, I'm giving you about three days to rethink that attitude before I tear you a new one and throw you out of this fine establishment!

'Mechs may be kings, kiddies, but let me tell you that artillerists hold one big, long damn sword. And when you unsheath a blade like a Padilla, even MechWarriors in their tin cans better watch out or they'll get cut down quicker than a retreating Capellan.

You'd better believe it!

—Excerpt from the first day of artillery class, Tikonov School of Military Discipline

Design Note:

The goal of the Padilla Artillery Tank was to create a versatile vehicle with modest artillery capabilities. Faction assignments were chosen to provide an artillery unit to factions lacking them, and the unit designs worked to the strengths of the chosen factions. The Steel Wolves unit boasts improved range and ballistic damage; the Bannson's Raiders unit has Infiltrate and Camouflage; the Highlanders unit has beefy defense values and Reactive Armor; and the Republic of the Sphere unit has both strong defensive and offensive abilities. We hope that players see these units as accurate extensions of each faction's combined-arms forces.

Po II heavy tank

UNIT: Po II Heavy Tank

Unit Num: 049	Point Value: 35	Faction: Spirit Cats (G)
Unit Num: 050	Point Value: 35	Faction: Highlanders (G)
Unit Num: 051	Point Value: 38	Faction: Steel Wolves (V)
Unit Num: 052	Point Value: 41	Faction: Republic of the Sphere (E)

Tactics and Secrets:

Don't let the affordable point cost of the Po II Heavy Tank fool you. This tank packs a punch. Both the Spirit Cat and Highlander versions have Heavy Armor to protect them from incoming fire. The Steel Wolves version trades in the formidable defenses for a higher damage value with Armor Piercing special equipment. Taking the first shot is vital for this offensive version of the Po II. The top-of-the-line Republic of the Sphere version features high defense values and Camouflage special equipment. Park this unit in hindering terrain to improve its defense value, and use its Improved Targeting to snipe at opposing units.

History:

The sky's blue.

It sounds strange, but when I popped the hatch, letting in blessed, cool air, the arcing cobalt dome was so crystal clear and pristine that I couldn't wrench my eyes away. Silent tears of relief flowed. I was going to live. The battle had been worse than any before.

Hell. Fire. Brimstone. Every Sunday school image came back to haunt me.

Grasping the edge of the hatch, I slowly eased out onto the top of the Po and actually managed to look away from the beckoning depths overhead. The armor was caked in dirt, and hardened rivulets of previously liquefied armor crisscrossed the front where lasers had struck. Blackened patches and gouges attested to the hammering of autocannon rounds that had sought to kill.

The Po felt solid. Even after all its abuse, it had once again brought victory, safety.

The garish reds faded from vision, replaced by the cool wash of blue. Achingly pure blue. Another battle won. Another battle to be won tomorrow.

Always another battle.

Design Note:

One of the beauties of the **MechWarrior** game system is the variety of units that can be created using the system. Compromising the power of one quality while strengthening another maintains play balance, and also establishes discrete profiles for the factions within the game. For instance, when designing a Highlanders unit, the initial focus is in depth of dial and superior defense values. Speed and damage values are compromised to bolster a Highlander unit's battlefield survivability. Players will realize that units of different factions play differently, and will gravitate toward the factions that suit their style of play.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=37703

SRM Battery

Unit: SRM Battery

Unit Num: 005	Point Value: 11	Faction: Mercenary
Unit Num: 006	Point Value: 11	Faction: Spirit Cats
Unit Num: 007	Point Value: 14	Faction: Steel Wolves
Unit Num: 008	Point Value: 17	Faction: Swordsworn

Tactics and Secrets:

With slow speed values and a relatively short range, the SRM Battery can be difficult to keep close to the action when deployed on its own. Paired up with friendly transports, however, the inexpensive SRM Battery truly shines. Pick the variant that will perform the function lacking in your battleforce. The Mercenary and Swordsworn versions offer Armor Piercing special equipment to bring down well-defended opposing units. Anti-Personnel attacks are the specialty of the Steel Wolves SRM unit, while the Spirit Cats unit provides Camouflage for use in a defensive formation in hindering terrain.

History:

Dear Katie,

You wouldn't believe what happened to me last week.

We're still holed up on Ronel and the blasted Swordsworn attacked for the umpteenth time. Our lead positions were overrun for a moment and it looked like they'd finally carry the day. However, my short-range missile battery platoon managed to hold the line just long enough for Captain Clarkeston to redeploy our right flank and we pushed the vermin back.

Course you're probably board stiff reading this, sis, but the Captain actually announced that I'd get a medal for my actions. Courage under fire...wish the mates who lost their lives could wear this medal as well.

Who would of thought, eh? Wish dad could've seen this day.

Course you won't see this letter for months, but I write them any ways.

Give the kids a hug.

Love,
Tom

Design Note:

The goal in creating the SRM Battery units was to have a diverse range of useful units while maintaining the common traits of poor movement values, weak defense values, and strong damage values. Each faction's version plays to the strengths of the faction. Ballistic special equipment is much more varied than energy special equipment for infantry units, because both Alpha Strike and Grapple are seen only on 'Mech units. In testing, SRM Battery units proved to be frail but cost effective.

Arnis Drummond

Unit Name: Arnis Drummond – *Dasher II*

Unit Num: 114

Faction: Spirit Cats

Point Cost: 160

Tactics and Secrets:

The *Dasher II* is an excellent medium 'Mech to put up against other 'Mechs. With Evade to protect against ranged attacks, and Agility to cut down damage from close combat attacks, this 'Mech is practically guaranteed to stick around and haunt your opponent for a long time. Thanks to combined Agility and Evade, you'll be using this 'Mech for all your combat needs, be it close or ranged. Add in a forgiving heat dial and the ability to hit three targets with a ranged attack and you might consider making the *Dasher II* your 'Mech of choice.

History:

In the darkness, a thousand un-trod paths
 Beckon our blindness, sirens for stopped eyes.
 With courage unshaken, grasp Ways of Seeing,
 Sniffing paths for truth, claws unsheathed; questing the light.
 Liz Nostra through a dozen battles, a true Nova Cat warrior,
 Victory – steps closer down the path . . . refuge!
 Her victory on the shoulders of warriors great and small,
 He from Blood House Drummond,
 Who reminded the Cats of their Dragon heritage.
 Enemies abound,
 Allies stretch their hands across the darkness.

—*The Remembrance* (Spirit Cats), Passage 2, Verse 3, Lines 1–10

Design Notes: The *Dasher II* is equipped with a deadly combination in the **MechWarrior: Dark Age** universe: Evade and Agility. Formerly available only on a few Limited Edition figures and the Unique *Mongoose II* in *Death from Above*, this combination is now available to the Spirit Cats at a reasonable cost, which should make it a tempting choice for standard games. With the included three targets on its primary weapon, it should also be formidable against infantry units despite its energy damage type. Overall, the *Dasher II* is one of the more well-rounded 'Mechs in the game.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=38184

Danai support vehicle

Unit Name: Danai Support Vehicle

Unit Num: 049 (Green) **Faction:** Republic of the Sphere **Point Cost:** 43

Unit Num: 050 (Veteran) **Faction:** Stormhammers **Point Cost:** 44

Unit Num: 051 (Veteran) **Faction:** Steel Wolves **Point Cost:** 45

Unit Num: 052 (Elite) **Faction:** Liao **Point Cost:** 46

Tactics and Secrets:

A reasonably priced artillery piece, the Danai Support Vehicle is a harassing unit good at keeping your opponent on the move. It has a higher-than-average defense for an artillery piece in its point-value range, so even though it may seem you don't get enough bang for your points, the Danai will take a bit more punishment than some other artillery units and give your opponent something to think about when prioritizing targets. A case in point is the Republic of the Sphere version, which has a liberal sprinkling of Heavy Armor to aid its survivability.

History:

. . . that's the biggest load of crock spewed since Sun-Tzu Liao first came to Canopus and seduced the Magestrix with trinkets of high technology and bars of C-bill gold. For five hundred years we've stood proud of the fact that our ancestors left the cesspool of the Inner Sphere to create a better life. And when the Inner Sphere couldn't stand our progress and came to conquer us, we fought for 20 long years against the Star League – the greatest army the human race has ever assembled! And yet a man bearing gifts and a secret smile won us over more securely than ten Divisions of BattleMechs could do in two decades. All the Magistracy of Canopus had to do to win such grand prizes was to send her youth to die on foreign soil.

And now this affront. Emma Centrella, the Magestrix who signed away our freedom and forced her second daughter to soil herself by mixing blood with Liao, also sent her first daughter to serve with the farcical second Star League, alongside House Liao forces. Danai Centrella, a true warrior and ever one to follow orders regardless of their stupidity, went along and ended up two thousand light-years from home, dying to stop the Clan threat that had nothing to do with us. Buried and forgotten on far-off Strana Metchy in the Clan homeworlds. And how do we honor such a sacrifice? The Capellan Confederation has dared to use this magnificent warrior's name on a vehicle, as though we don't see it for the ludicrous political ploy that it is. Even worse, the Danai Support Vehicle has even been seen among Canopian forces.

What has the Alliance done for us? We've seen the butchering of the once-proud Taurian Concordat under the Trinity Alliance, sacrificial lamb to the Trinity Alliance. We are next! With a Liao-Centrella on our throne, there can be no doubt. We must dissolve the Alliance, no matter the cost.

—Excerpt from a Death to the Alliance rally speech

Design Notes:

The Danai Support Vehicle, in all its incarnations, lives up to its name. The Stormhammer and Steel Wolf versions accomplish this through Armor Piercing, while the Liao and Republic of the Sphere versions work through their armor types and defense abilities. The Liao version includes Point Defense and a reasonably high speed, making it a possible escort for moving infantry into position before bombarding opposing forces. The Republic of the Sphere version has Heavy Armor to prolong its life. At a cost of between 43 and 46 points, the Danai may be just the artillery piece for those who don't ordinarily use artillery.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=38130

Glory fire support tank

Unit Name: Glory Fire Support Tank

Unit Num: 73 (Green) **Faction:** Swordsworn **Point Cost:** 81

Unit Num: 74 (Veteran) **Faction:** Bannson's Raiders **Point Cost:** 86

Unit Num: 75 (Veteran) **Faction:** Liao **Point Cost:** 86

Unit Num: 76 (Elite) **Faction:** Republic of the Sphere **Point Cost:** 91

Tactics and Secrets:

Tired of Marksmen and Behemoths? Never fear, the Glory Fire Support Tank is here. Finally, a heavy-hitting tank with a 0 minimum range and 360 degree front arc! Just let those pesky infantry units try to stop this monster. While each Glory Fire version is capable of dealing heavy damage, their sturdiness differs. The featured Swordsworn version carries the highest amount of possible targets at three, or pick out that one pesky unit and use Streak Missiles to deliver between 3 and 4 clicks of damage. They'll have nowhere to run and nowhere to hide.

History:

And this, ladies and gentlemen, is what provides the Glory Fire Support Tank with its devastating punch. Mounting a Mydron Tornado Rotary AC/5, there's very little on the battlefield that this weapon cannot eliminate with extreme prejudice.

The rotary autocannon (RAC) was originally perfected by the technical wizards at the New Avalon Institute of Science. The RAC is based off of a stock "light" autocannon design, which adds additional barrels, along with a robust breech and loading mechanism, to drastically increase rate of fire. Though the maximum range of a RAC is considerably less than other types of autocannons of the same caliber, the increase in damage potential is enormous, providing it with the capacity to deliver one of the most devastating volleys of lethal firepower currently available to modern battlefield troops.

Design Notes:

A heavy-hitting assault vehicle, the Glory Fire is not as affected by basing infantry units thanks to its 0 minimum range. The assault tank that continues to be useful even after encountering infantry and other vehicles will definitely give players new choices in force construction. The speedy Bannson's Raiders version with Armor Piercing will probably find its way into quite a few battleforces, perhaps even paired up with a repair vehicle because of the Raider's trait of few-to-no repair markers. The Republic of the Sphere version with Hardened Armor that becomes Heavy Armor further down the dial probably will also see a lot of play.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=38037

Gus Edgington

Unit Name: Gus Edgington – *Mad Cat II*

Faction: Mercenary (Hansen's Roughriders)

Point Cost: 272

Tactics and Secrets: It's not your average *Mad Cat* . . . it's not even close. This missile-stripped version offers up Armor Piercing with up to 5 damage *and* Alpha Strike capable of dealing 10 clicks of damage in a single successful shot. You might not think that Alpha Strike is worth it, but with a vent of 3 and a chance to restart right after that venting, you might give this 'Mech another look. Add Jump Jets for excellent mobility and a few clicks of optional single-use Decoy, and you just might consider putting this monster in your standard battleforce.

History:

The scent was strong.

Looking up at the towering *Mad Cat* that filled the repair bay on the DropShip *Far Horizons*, ovKhan Jesup Hammod smiled. Like a giant metal insect pinned and splayed to a mad scientist's lab table, the *Mad Cat* had massive sections of armor plating removed, while both arms and the boxy missile launchers that provided its famous profile were all missing, currently being replaced with another load out. A swarm of technician castemen scuttled across its legs, installing the latest generation of experimental jump jets. Having reached a Sea Fox clearing house world, it was time to field test the extensive modifications.

Through all of the lubricant, burned metal of arc welding, and stale air of a ship long in the void, he could almost taste the scent. The scent of potential. The scent of a deal half-finished, but ready to pluck from the vine, fully ripened, in the near future.

A presence manifested, but he waited several long minutes before acknowledging Star Captain Jasmine. Even after a nod, the hulking Elemental remained silent.

Distracted and now slightly irritated, Jesup spoke. "What is it, Star captain?"

"I did not mean to intrude, ovKhan," she responded, her gentle voice in stark contrast to her almost two and a half meters.

"Neg, Star captain. Of course you meant to intrude or you would not have placed yourself next to me, quiaff?"

"Aff, ovKhan. Aff."

"Then speak your mind."

"I don't understand why we dealt with these upstart Steel Wolves. Why did we waste precious time dealing with such fallen outcasts, only to obtain a design we have in plenty. How does this help our Aimag, or even Skate Khanate?"

Jesup tried not to wince at Jasmine's inability to see the potential. After all, regardless of her spectacular Trial of Position, she was only 18. "You call the Steel Wolves outcasts, quiaff?"

"Aff, ovKhan. Of course."

"Yet, do not some Clans consider us outcasts, while the rest treat only lightly with us?"

"That is different."

"No," he said, turning fully toward her. He had to raise his voice as the sound of hammering suddenly echoed loudly through the bay.

"It is no different. An enemy is an enemy only if both sides choose him to be so. An enemy cannot stay one if he is not treated as such. More importantly, all enemies have potential, something you can use. While they certainly will try to use you in return, the idea is to be the one used least. That is the key to the deal."

The work suddenly dropped to a minimum threshold; Jesup lowered his voice and continued. "Of course we have our own *Mad Cats*. Of course we spent time and potential income by diverting to her call. Yet she is a Kerensky and has already proven that like all of her blood, she will grab fate by the throat, master it, and ride it to greatest, all the while shaking the pillars of the Inner Sphere. And here, at the very beginning, when she is just now beginning her rise, I have done her a favor. A small favor, no doubt. But a favor nonetheless. Remember, it is potential we look for. As she rises, that potential rises with her. When the time is ripe, I'll come calling and the favor will be due . . . with interest."

Design Notes: This *Mad Cat II* assault 'Mech is designed to be focused on one enemy at a time. Removing the missile racks gave the perfect opportunity to introduce a very focused 'Mech to the **MechWarrior: Dark Age** universe, and the strategic placement of a possible restart on the heat dial should make the use of its Alpha Strike very appealing to the player who feels lucky. In the creation of Unique units, the pilot of the unit is also taken into account, and the hard-hitting *Mad Cat II* is a definite compliment to the personality of Gus Edgington.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=37937

MiningMech Mk II MOD

Unit Name: MiningMech MkII MOD

Unit Num: 89 (Green) **Faction:** Spirit Cats **Point Cost:** 86

Unit Num: 90 (Veteran) **Faction:** Stormhammers **Point Cost:** 96

Unit Num: 91 (Veteran) **Faction:** Liao **Point Cost:** 96

Unit Num: 92 (Elite) **Faction:** Steel Wolves **Point Cost:** 106

Tactics and Secrets:

It might look funny, but with a 180 degree front arc, and melee *and* ballistic abilities, you just might find yourself overlooking the lower speed value of this IndustrialMechMOD. Toss in a long ballistic weapons range (10 to 12) and it just won't matter how fast this beastie moves. The featured Steel Wolves unit has Armor Piercing and Reactive Armor to help ward off return fire from ballistic weapons. The Stormhammers version also brings Anti-Personnel to the mix, which should put some more fear into any infantry units that encounter the MiningMech MkII MOD on the battlefield.

History:

24.7 INDUSTRIALMECHS AND JURY-RIGGING

...many such IndustrialMechs require extensive (and expensive) facilities for a complete overhaul of the effected structural region for such modifications. Though the foamed aluminum (wrapped in silicon carbide monofilament) and encased in titanium steel internal structure is specifically designed to support the bulk mass of the entire 'Mech, as well as survive 'Mech-class weapon damage, they are surprisingly weakened by ill-conceived modifications that drastically alter and/or redistribute the mass and change load bearing points. As such, the jury-rigging of specific IndustrialMechs as the Forestry, Agro and Mining cannot be easily undertaken. However, with its squat and well-balanced frame—not to mention an over-large gyroscopic devise that includes a redundant set of carbon nanotube-reinforced tri-rings—(all needed to haul anything from sand to rocks to soil without compromising its balance) the MiningMech MkII Mod is designed as though its engineers envisioned weapons jury-rigging. This stable platform allows the diligent student (and a simple tool shop) to simply cut off the backhoe bucket and spot weld a weapon of his choosing; too large a weapon, however, will still create stress fractures in the internal structure, as well as actuator degradation, leading to complete immobilization. The truck bed, naturally, presents the finest platform of any IndustrialMech for weapon jury-rigging. The most common and easily accomplished rigging, are a series of single-shot rocket launchers, spot welded into place, with a simple spooled wire firing mechanism fed into the cockpit...

—Excerpt from the 29th Edition of the *Zhanzheng de guang* Terrorist Handbook

Design Notes:

Definitely one of the most interesting modified IndustrialMechs, this one lends itself to ballistic damage, though it is hampered by the lower speeds of MiningMechs in general. Extending the ballistic range helps compensate for the speed to an extent, and the addition of Camouflage to the Liao version and Heavy Armor on the Spirit Cats variation will keep it in the game until it can do some good. It should also be interesting to see what sort of use the unmodified version of the MiningMech MkII will be put to thanks to its transport capacity of 2.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=38000

Salamander battle armor

Unit: Salamander Battle Armor

Unit Num: 021	Point Value: 22	Faction: Dragon's Fury (Green)
Unit Num: 022	Point Value: 25	Faction: Liao (Veteran)
Unit Num: 023	Point Value: 25	Faction: StormHammers (Veteran)
Unit Num: 024	Point Value: 28	Faction: Spirit Cats (Elite)

Tactics and Secrets: The Salamander Battle Armor is your one-stop-shop for capturing and taking over pesky opposing 'Mechs. Jump Jets will make sure they get exactly where they need to go. Use Flamers to heat up opposing 'Mechs, shut them down, and then, after a brief rest, use the Salamander's Bypass to take them over. A trade of between 22 to 28 points for a possible 100 or more is a pretty good one, and definitely worth the calculated risk. The Dragon's Fury version features an incredible speed of 10, which helps ensure that opposing 'Mechs have no place to hide.

History: So there I was. Gripping my Thunderstroke in sweaty hands, wishing for a Kurita PPC to wash my throat of a week's worth o' sand, and this insect attacks me, spewing flames. I tell ya. Laugh all you want, bud, but Blake's Blood, an insect came up over the rise. Dirt flying and flames shooting out all over. Sun might as well have risen from its dark grave. Bright as noon all of a sudden. Could feel the hair on my scalp a burning and the grilled stink of my own flesh searing to the barrel of the Thunderstroke and fillin' my nostrils up till I gotta puke. I seen a lot a them power suits; high a mighty sons a bitches with no rights to calling themselves foot sloggers. But this Salamander . . . never seen nothing like it, nor since. Course, with half an arm, not much use to the mighty Republic army, so probably won't see it again. Good riddance, I says. Good riddance.

Design Notes: The Salamander Battle Armor is a fairly well-known unit in the BattleTech universe. Its straightforward equipment really lends itself to demonstrating the actual stat differences and strong points between the factions: Dragon's Fury is faster, Spirit Cats have longer lasting values, Stormhammers have a higher attack value, and Liao has a deeper dial for survivability. A decently priced unit, the Salamander Battle Armor should find a home in many battleforces that enjoy taking down opposing 'Mechs, or even battleforces that are geared toward fighting off infantry units.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=37973

Shun transport VTOL

Unit Name: Shun Transport VTOL

Unit Num: 69 (Green) **Faction:** Liao **Point Cost:** 44

Unit Num: 70 (Veteran) **Faction:** Highlanders **Point Cost:** 47

Unit Num: 71 (Veteran) **Faction:** Dragon's Fury **Point Cost:** 47

Unit Num: 72 (Elite) **Faction:** Stormhammers **Point Cost:** 50

Tactics and Secrets:

A two-capacity, well-armed transport for all your infantry-dropping needs! For about one-sixth of a standard game point total, you too can reap the benefits of a highly mobile, energy weapon – equipped harassing transport. Whether it's dropping off infantry where they're needed or heating up 'Mechs, the Shun Transport is sure to find a good home in your battleforce. The featured Stormhammers unit includes Pulse and Improved Targeting, which should make it especially helpful in covering any dropped-off units until you position them where you want them. Add in Decoy and you have one versatile VTOL.

History:

Dear Jean,

I almost didn't come back this time. The fighting on {deleted} was beyond anything I thought I would ever see in my lifetime. I got into the Triarii because I loved the uniform; loved the way it made me feel; loved the way you looked at me as I strutted around. I got to see dozens of worlds in The Republic and always with open arms from people glad to see us. Happy to hear me recite the propaganda I'd been taught so faithfully to regurgitate. A shiny toy soldier on the {deleted} invisible strings. Then {deleted} came and our fancy uniforms didn't seem so fancy; I've not worn a clean one in weeks. As far as I can tell, we were on the forefront of an initial {deleted}, with the {deleted} striking like the hammer of the gods. Blake's blood, Jean! Joey's face disappeared right next to me. Karla died twitching in my arms, crying for her mom. When the Shun showed up, its rotors clawing at the thin atmosphere, braving ground fire to evacuate us . . . I've never been so happy to see anything in my life. Don't mean to hurt your feelings, but it's the honest truth.

I've been put on permanent bed rest for now, but there are rumors circulating that every available male will be put back into the fighting. If we can't push {deleted} back, they'll wash into the rest of {deleted} like a {deleted} plague. Gods, I wish I could feel your breath on my cheek right now. Your fingernails scratching the palm of my hand. I only hope I see you before {deleted} washes us all away. I'll write again when I can.

Love,
Geoff

Design Notes:

The Shun Transport VTOL introduces VTOL transport technology to three new factions (Dragon's Fury, Stormhammers, and Liao), increasing their mobility and allowing you to explore some different force combinations. Two units have Evade, making it viable to entrust infantry units to them. The Highlanders Shun Transport VTOL, complete with both Evade and Heavy Armor, should definitely see some play. The Dragon's Fury variation showcases that faction's general higher mobility by starting with a 19 speed, and is also augmented with Evade.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=38064

Targe

Unit Name: Targe

Unit Num: 109 (Green) **Faction:** Bannson's Raiders **Point Cost:** 139

Unit Num: 110 (Veteran) **Faction:** Steel Wolves **Point Cost:** 149

Unit Num: 111 (Veteran) **Faction:** Stormhammers **Point Cost:** 149

Unit Num: 112 (Elite) **Faction:** Liao **Point Cost:** 159

Tactics and Secrets:

If you're in the market for a medium 'Mech that can deal decent energy or ballistic damage and can't multitask very well, you should definitely consider the *Targe* for your force. With decent speeds on every version, respectable ranges, and a wide variety of defense special equipment across the ranks, you'll be able to overlook the single-target – mindedness of the *Targe*. The featured Liao version has Armor Piercing to start out with along with some Hardened and Heavy Armor, which helps this 'Mech stick around to get the job done.

History:

People say art is subjective. I can agree with that. I mean there's a huge cult following for Reginald Starling, but I look at his work and want to lose my lunch that the guy made a pile of money and gained notoriety over such crappy paintings. But hey, tomato, tomato, right? Most people agree that music's the same as well. What some swoon to, other vomit to.

But what few people understand is that a 'Mech is just the same. Sure, there are some 'Mechs that have left their mark and nothing will dislodge them. The *Warhammer*. The *Atlas*. The *Mad Cat*. But for many designs, it comes down to personal taste. Personal preference. I know plenty of people take one look at my *Targe* and can't help but burst out laughing. Kind of ungainly. Large for its weight. None of the sex appeal of many other designs like the *Crimson Hawk* or *Spider*. Kind of like me. And for some, even if they were great pilots, those same guys would be so set on hating the *Targe*, they'd do worse than a hip actuator gone bad and a wonky gyro in combat. But me and my *Targe*, we make a team. It comes alive in my hands, and I can do things that other MechWarriors can't believe. That's because I respect my *Targe*. It knows it and it lets me drive it for all it's worth, like a good thoroughbred looking for respect from its jockey. I give it; it gives it back; and we both *demand* it from any enemy.

—Excerpt from the interview "The 'Common' MechWarrior"

Design Notes:

A well-rounded medium 'Mech, the *Targe* features excellent long-range abilities for its secondary ballistic weapon as well as a respectable range for its primary energy weapon. Every version of this particular unit carries some sort of defense special equipment, whether it's Reactive Armor on the Steel Wolves unit or the Hardened to Heavy Armor on the Bannson's Raider, Stormhammer, and Liao variations, so it won't be going down easy. Though the heat dial can be difficult to manage properly, this 'Mech should still be considered for any focused battleforce.

Arrow IV artillery tank

Unit Name: Arrow IV Artillery Tank

Unit Num: 069 **Faction:** House Liao **Point Cost:** 47

Unit Num: 070 **Faction:** Dragon's Fury **Point Cost:** 49

Unit Num: 071 **Faction:** Steel Wolves **Point Cost:** 49

Unit Num: 072 **Faction:** Swordsworn **Point Cost:** 51

Tactics and Secrets

The Arrow IV Artillery Tank is similar across its versions. It's a reliable source of damage in a 2" radius. Plus, none of the versions drift straight backwards, so it's a safe unit to use as cover while moving up ground forces if you're careful about where you're firing. The range of the Dragon's Fury Arrow IV is only 24", but all of the others are 30". Damage for Liao starts at 3, while the others start at 2, but the Dragon's Fury and Steel Wolves also have single-use Anti-Personnel, and the Swordsworn have Armor Piercing. Attack values start at around 8, and the artillery target number is decent, often requiring only a 10 to hit. All but the Swordsworn version have Camouflage, and the Steel Wolves and Swordsworn also have some Heavy Armor. Because these units have only a handful of missiles, every click has a repair marker, so be conscious of that from the start.

History

MISSION

Provide flexible, secondary artillery support for combined-arms formations.

DESCRIPTION AND SPECIFICATIONS

The Arrow IV assault vehicle is an artillery weapon system that supplements cannon artillery fire by delivering a single weapon's load of target-specific munitions in a short time against critical, time-sensitive targets.

The basic warhead is a standard area effect weapon that provides firepower on target identical to most tube-fired artillery. The submunition warheads provide the vehicle with its true flexibility, allowing specific effects to be tailored to any battlefield condition and target. Though lacking the range of cannon artillery, its flexibility makes it an invaluable addition to any command's assets.

– Excerpt from *Weapon Systems: Republic Armed Forces 3133*

Design Notes

As an artillery tank, this unit had to fill a couple of roles. First, it had to be an effective, if not uberpowerful, artillery piece with decent mobility and defense. Second, it had to be an effective vehicle. Although its nonartillery range is fairly limited, the unit does have the ability to repel infantry and some larger units, making it useful in slowing down and injuring infantry as well as some vehicles and 'Mechs, all for around only 50 points.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=38655

Chee Yun

Unit Name: Chee Yun – *Ti Ts'ang*

Unit Num: 118 (Unique) **Faction:** House Liao **Point Cost:** 182

Tactics and Secrets

Chee Yun in the *Ti Ts'ang* makes for an elite Liao unit. That alone should make it interesting to Liao players because there haven't been many elite Liao 'Mechs yet. Chee Yun's primary attack has a range of 8 and a damage of 4 and two targets to start, plus a secondary melee attack with a damage of 2, with the possibility of increasing by 1 or 2 with positive heat effects. The heat effects can also speed up the 'Mech by a couple of points, so Chee Yun can have a speed value of up to 10, in addition to Jump Jets. The 'Mech starts with a 20 defense and has a dial that's fifteen clicks deep with only one repair marker (on the fifth click, after losing Jump Jets) and no salvage. To top it all off, Chee Yun has a 270-degree front arc and a 12 attack value to start.

History

King of the Earth's womb!

Savager of worlds.

Cleaver of foes.

I am become death as a metal god,

eclipsing Sol in brightest night.

Enemies flee . . .

Fear.

Terror.

Horror.

Oblivion.

Desolation.

Ecstasy in communion,

we join as lovers to vanquish all.

– Ode from *Memoirs of a Janshi: BattleMech Poetry*

Design Notes

Chee Yun's design was motivated by a desire to create a 'Mech that was powerful on its own, but that also had an excellent pilot/warrior at the helm. This is reflected by a barebones 'Mech whose faction abilities and positive heat effects offer variety. With the right player, Chee Yun is most frightening because it's capable of dealing 2–3 damage until its last click – its fifteenth.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=38661

Garrot superheavy transport

Unit Name: Garrot Superheavy Transport

Unit Num: 45 **Faction:** Swordsworn **Point Cost:** 27

Unit Num: 46 **Faction:** Bannson's Raiders **Point Cost:** 30

Unit Num: 47 **Faction:** House Liao **Point Cost:** 30

Unit Num: 48 **Faction:** Dragon's Fury **Point Cost:** 33

Tactics and Secrets

This inexpensive VTOL has a 3 capacity. The application is obvious: Load up a big vehicle and move it across the board. The Swordsworn version has a 10 speed with Evade for a single click. The Bannson's Raiders unit has a 12 speed as well as three clicks of Decoy, so it has a good chance of surviving long enough to deliver its payload. The Liao version has a 10 speed and a better defense value than the first two vehicles. These three units have a range of 6 and damage value of 1, so they can defend themselves, albeit poorly. The Dragon's Fury version has the highest speed, with a 14 with Evade for five clicks (until it becomes salvage). Although this VTOL, like many, is pretty fragile, it offers some options for moving more powerful pieces around the field more quickly.

History

Emergency Field Report

Filed: 82034

Signed: Lt. Colonel Jobs

The loss of depot J3E can be attributed primarily to the Raiders' access to several Garrot superheavy transports. Though our forces acquitted themselves admirably considering the circumstances, they could not compensate for the Raiders' ability to rapidly redeploy their heavy armor. Two separate counterstrikes were foiled by such redeployment, at a critical loss of personnel and equipment. Knowing it was only a matter of time before the destruction of my command – and the loss of the depot regardless – I ordered a complete withdrawal in a blitz breakout, a maneuver that succeeded only due to the destruction of one Garrot, thus limiting the Raiders' ability to respond. I take full responsibility for this decision and its consequences.

Design Notes

Capacity 3 VTOLs are dangerous and controversial to design. Regardless, the Garrot Superheavy Transport does what it was designed to do: move vehicles. But because it was designed to move heavy cargo, it's not the fastest thing in the air. That means it's pretty easy to hit and surprisingly easy to knock out of the sky. While all the versions are useful, the Dragon's Fury unit is the fastest and most reliable – of all the versions, it should see the most play.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=38628

Melicien Tetro

Unit Name: Melicien Tetro – Longbow

Unit Num: 121 **Faction:** Highlanders **Point Cost:** 261

Tactics and Secrets:

Melicien Tetro's *Longbow* is a real powerhouse. With its 14 range, 5 damage, and Armor Piercing, it can sit a comfortable distance away and hammer on opponents, plus it can split the damage among four targets. If a unit manages to get within its ballistic attack's 3-inch minimum range, it has a short-range (6") energy attack for 2 damage. Of course, you could also just clobber the offending unit in melee. Defensively, the Highlanders have armored up this *Longbow* so that it has a 20 defense and Hardened Armor that gives way to Heavy Armor after four clicks. The *Longbow* is a full 17 clicks deep, so it'll be around for a while. The heat dial is also very forgiving, with no negative modifiers and only minor effects.

History:

Joshua moved across the 'Mech repair bay like oil on water (he'd tell you he was harder to see and twice as slick), slipping in and out of the darkest shadows. The full moon shafted down pillars of hated light through the half-dozen open windows some 12 meters above the ferrocrete floor, creating zones Joshua avoided like the plague.

His sneak suit was good, but not that good.

For a moment, he felt the urge to glance at his chronometer, but he knew it was just past 2:00 A.M. and the party at the barracks was getting its second wind. It never ceased to amaze him how quickly discipline slid when a group of local women and booze showed up at the door.

Reaching his destination, Joshua gazed up at the towering metal giant that filled his vision. With its upper reaches lost in darkness, a momentary shiver slid down his spine at the thought of the giant leering down at him, scintillating metal teeth filling a smile to send children screaming in horror for their mommies.

He shrugged it off with disgust and unlimbered a length of rope with a tri-hook at the end, wrapping it in cloth to dull any sound it might make. Dropping the line to the ground, he quickly measured out a length and began a quick spin. With practiced ease, Joshua spun it up into the darkness. The click of its impact, even with the cloth covering, sounded like a weapon's discharge in the graveyard quiet of the repair bay and he froze; long heartbeats later he let out an explosive breath. His actions were still quieter than attempting to scale the scaffolding around the 'Mech, which would rattle like corrugated aluminum siding in a high wind.

Tugging it taut – he knew he'd landed it the first time – he began shimmying up the line. The small bulge of pentaglycerine at his back brought a warm comfort; after he put it in the cockpit (using stolen codes), the *Longbow* would be decapitated, rendering it useless for long months as they tried to procure a replacement.

The Highlanders were so high and mighty, believing that all would welcome them with open arms and help them fight to save The Republic. The Campbell woman and her brood clutched the body fiercely but refused to smell the stench of death so plain to everyone else.

Joshua smiled. Time to open their senses.

Design Notes:

Melicien Tetro's *Longbow* gives the Highlanders their most serious firepower to date. It's a big investment at 261 points, but with the ability to attack up to four targets, a 10 attack value to start, and 5 damage for four clicks and Armor Piercing for nine clicks, it's definitely worth it. Add in its incredibly good heat dial and its defensive equipment, and this 'Mech becomes the Highlanders' new beat stick.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=38569

MHI Defense AA tank

Unit Name: MHI Defense AA Tank

Unit Num: 061 **Faction:** Bannson's Raiders **Point Cost:** 49

Unit Num: 062 **Faction:** Swordsworn **Point Cost:** 56

Unit Num: 063 **Faction:** Steel Wolves **Point Cost:** 56

Unit Num: 064 **Faction:** House Liao **Point Cost:** 63

Tactics and Secrets

The MHI Defense AA Tank is a respectable addition to any Bannson's Raiders, Swordsworn, Steel Wolves, or Liao battleforce. Its anti-aircraft (AA) capabilities will strengthen each of the factions, especially considering its relatively inexpensive cost. The first three versions have 12 range values, so they can fire at VTOLs up to 24" away, while the Liao unit has a range of 10, allowing it to target VTOLs up to 20" away. With damage values of 4 or 5 and Armor Piercing in most cases, the MHI Defense AA Tank should be a real threat to anything in the skies. Reactive Armor or Heavy Armor just sweetens the deal.

History

"Next time I see me a worker from Michaelson I'm going to tear him a new one!" A huge belch erupted after the statement and pilot Greg Johanson swayed on the bar stool.

"And why would you feel the need to do something like that?" the barkeep responded, his obvious boredom barely hidden by the gallons of Stewart Brewmasters already imbibed. Then again, in the seedy establishment, lit by only a few bare bulbs that failed to keep the shadows at bay, the only two other occupants that filled the half-dozen tables were either even more drunk or passed out.

"Cause those saps need to fly against the monsters they make. They think they're just making a car or something. Slap goes the wrench. Tighten the last bolt. Send it out to the field. Don't matter who buys it. They've done their work. Off to the brats and the chain, but stop off at the skin show first." Greg tipped back and actually managed to defy gravity as his whole body leaned out alarmingly from the bar stool, and he slammed back the last of the thick liquid; the creek of the wood sounded as though sudden structural collapse was imminent.

"And they're not making cars, I take it?"

"No! Vehicles to kill me. That's what they're making. There I was, my sweet Balac ripping at treetops and carving up Cat vehicles like cheese (hehehe, get it, cheese and a Cat), when suddenly I'm shaking like the Lord God Himself just grabbed my 'copter with His hand. First eye blink 'fore I could figure a damn defense tank was flaking me. Gone wet myself 'fore second eye blink, the dashboard lights up like a whore painted for a deal, and then I'm crashing through trees. Next thing I know, sun's up, hot as hell, Julia's dead and already stinkin' . . ."

Greg began to weep and banged the table for another drink. He began to talk again but it came out as drunken, incoherent blubber.

"Hey, buddy, what did you say?" asked the bartender, for once sounding like he actually cared.

Greg looked up through a scar-filled face, making no attempt to wipe away the snot and tears that marred his visage.

"I said, next time I see me a worker from Michaelson I'm going to tear him a new one!"

Design Notes

This is the first AA unit for Bannson's Raiders, only the second for the Steel Wolves and Liao, and the third for the Swordsworn. These additions should increase the ability of these factions to cover the battlefield. And those pesky VTOLs will really have something to worry about when they see big Armor Piercing damage headed their way; no more of this 1 or 2 damage – now they have to worry about 4 or 5, which really ought to put a crimp in their style. Their defense values are respectable, starting at 19 to 20 with some defense special equipment in some cases, but damage is really where it's at with these units.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=38587

Mortar squad

Unit Name: Mortar Squad

Unit Num: 005 **Faction:** Dragon's Fury **Point Cost:** 12

Unit Num: 006 **Faction:** Swordsworn **Point Cost:** 16

Unit Num: 007 **Faction:** Bannson's Raiders **Point Cost:** 16

Unit Num: 008 **Faction:** Steel Wolves **Point Cost:** 20

Tactics and Secrets

These incredibly cost-effective artillery units have damage values of 2, and the Swordsworn, Bannson's Raiders, and Steel Wolves versions even have some Anti-Personnel to make them more effective. Their nonartillery ranges are limited to 4 for everyone except the Steel Wolves, who have a 6 range, but their artillery ranges are 16, 18, 18, and 22 (Dragon's Fury, Swordsworn, Bannson's Raiders, and Steel Wolves, respectively). The Dragon's Fury, Swordsworn, and Steel Wolves also have Camouflage, so placing them in hindering terrain will help them survive a bit longer – their defense values are low and their dials aren't deep. Instead of Camouflage, the Bannson's Raiders get a starting click of Evade in addition to a 2-inch blast radius (versus 1 inch for everyone else).

History

Poor bloody infantry they may be, but any mudslingers with a several kilometer range that can lob two dozen rounds a minute, with warheads strong enough to destroy a light tank and wreak havoc with BattleMech armor with a direct hit, cannot be ignored – much less laughed at.

– Opening paragraph of the "Mortars" chapter of *Tactics of Infantry*, required reading by all MechWarriors at the Northwind Military Academy.

Design Notes

The key with the Mortar Squad was to balance usefulness with power. Because they're just a couple of soldiers with a mortar, they had to have a short dial, low defense, only a fair attack, and the ability to deal damage – but not too much damage. These limitations made it important to give them bonuses to make them stand out, and their Anti-Personnel, Camouflage, and Evade special equipment was the answer.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=38686

Phoenix Hawk

Unit Name: *Phoenix Hawk*

Unit Num: 097 **Faction:** Swordsworn **Point Cost:** 110

Unit Num: 098 **Faction:** Stormhammers **Point Cost:** 119

Unit Num: 099 **Faction:** Liao **Point Cost:** 119

Unit Num: 100 **Faction:** Bannson's Raiders **Point Cost:** 128

Tactics and Secrets

With its multiple clicks of Jump Jets, "mobility" is the watchword for the *Phoenix Hawk*. "Long range" also applies, because every version has a primary attack with a range of 10 and a secondary attack with a range of 14, neither with a minimum range. The Stormhammers' 'Mech is a little slower than the others, but it makes up for some of that with positive heat effects and 3 damage with Pulse. The other versions of this 'Mech are straightforward, with steady combat values for a low price.

History:

FULL SHOT (SPECIAL EFFECTS) showing Liao *Phoenix Hawk* as it launches over an apartment building into the large central park (you can see a flock of geese killed, as well as a children's play gym demolished). It immediately fires its large laser into the nearest building, causing it to explode.

ANGLE ON SMALL COPSE OF TREES ON OTHER SIDE OF PARK as a troop of Triarii Protectors infantry set a towed autocannon. Infantry commander Jok Keller is talking into his headset. Though you cannot hear what is said over the explosion of the building; he is looking toward an alley that is equidistant between him and the *Phoenix Hawk*.

ANGLE ON ALLEY OF BUILDING ADJACENT TO PARK featuring a squad of Achilles battle armor moving stealthily to the alley's mouth and viewing the *Phoenix Hawk*; obviously they are preparing to move on the 'Mech.

FULL SHOT of the *Phoenix Hawk* firing its large laser on another building.

CLOSEUP of Jok Keller patting a soldier on the shoulder and receiving a thumbs-up from the man as they finalize the setup of the towed gun. The group of soldiers pulls back as the gun is trained on the *Phoenix Hawk*, and Jok moves farthest away.

ANGLE ON THE *PHOENIX HAWK* as it kicks in a preschool.

EXTREME CLOSEUP of Jok, with a determined but noble look on his face, reaching up to his earpiece.

JOK KELLER (voice torn as though he does not wish to fight): "Strike! Take down this Liao 'Mech that comes to kill our children!

{{Script excerpt from a recently released Republic holovid, *Valiant Stand*, which has been lambasted by watch groups for its blatant Republic propaganda.}}

Design Notes

Competent pilots and solid design give the *Phoenix Hawk* a good reputation, so we created these four 'Mechs to reflect that. All the *Phoenix Hawks* are light on special equipment, but make up for it with a minimum 10 attack value to start and excellent range values. The Swordsworn has a vent of 1 and the Stormhammers have only a four-click heat dial – so both of them will need to watch their heat closely – but the Stormhammers really come out ahead with their special equipment and positive heat effects. The Liao and Bannson's Raiders versions are a lot of 'Mech for the points because you don't have to pay for many special abilities to get a 'Mech that's eight or nine clicks deep.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=38639

Raider Mk II

Unit Name: Raider Mk II

Unit Num: 089 Faction: Spirit Cats **Point Cost:** 106

Unit Num: 090 Faction: Bannson's Raiders **Point Cost:** 114

Unit Num: 091 Faction: Stormhammers **Point Cost:** 114

Unit Num: 092 Faction: House Liao **Point Cost:** 122

Tactics and Secrets

This well-armed, inexpensive 'Mech is useful at range and in close combat, and for only a bit more than 100 points, it's got surprisingly good combat values. While the Green version, which belongs to the Spirit Cats, is limited because of their ballistic weapons inefficiency, it's capable of dealing good damage in close combat with either its Hand-to-Hand Weapon special equipment or its triple-strength myomer (TSM). The Veteran Bannson's Raiders version is excellent, with a 9 speed, 11 attack, 20 defense with Evade, and the benefits of TSM fairly early in its heat dial, allowing it to attain a 10 speed and deal up to 4 damage in close combat. The Stormhammers' Veteran version is a little slower and doesn't have TSM, but it starts with a 10 attack and Improved Targeting (which it has for five clicks) along with Hand-to-Hand Weapon in close combat or 2 damage Armor Piercing with three targets at range. Its main drawback is its unforgiving heat dial. The Elite Liao version resembles the Bannson's version, with a 9 speed and 11 attack, but its defense is 19 with Hardened Armor for a couple of clicks. It also has Hand-to-Hand Weapon, a ranged attack with two targets, and TSM to speed it up and increase its damage in close combat. Also, like the Bannson's 'Mech, the Liao version gains Jump Jets a few clicks after it loses its ranged attack.

History

File: Jacob's Ladder

Section: 77R42q

Security Level: Delta Green

Authorization: Jacob Karlson

This is a summary review of the Jacob's Ladder project.

On 7 April 3131, this office received an order, countersigned by Jacob Bannson, to begin an assessment of the feasibility of building a BattleMech. Due to the extreme security measures that this office felt necessary to implement during the feasibility assessment stage of the project, a full report didn't reach Mr. Bannson's hands until 23 October. On 2 November, Mr. Bannson met with me, along with those directly involved: Ben Keller, Denise Harlson, Jim Harding, Susan Lollar, and Kit Smithson. Following that meeting, Mr. Bannson's directive was to proceed with Jacob's Ladder – build a BattleMech.

Our current facility was simply beyond the scope of such a project, and so we were moved to a remote location. On 2 February 3132 at a newly constructed underground facility, the project started in earnest.

The next year and a half would see triumphs and spectacular failures in equal measure. Jim Harding, much to our anguish, perished in an explosion following our eighth unsuccessful attempt to balance the plasma field within a military-grade fusion reactor. (Like all of us, Jim had no family to speak of, so only we are left to remember the man and his accomplishments.)

By September 3133, it had become painfully obvious that our facility was simply not capable of producing a military-grade fusion reactor. Though all other aspects of the project had exceeded expectation on all levels, it became apparent that almost two years had been wasted in building a 'Mech that would be able to house only an internal combustion engine.

Though I personally submitted numerous requests for a salvaged fusion reactor, the reply was always the same: Salvaged engines are used to replace damaged reactors on existing BattleMechs. Our task was to build a brand-new BattleMech from the ground up. A task we have failed.

Nevertheless, what we have created is a BattleMech in every aspect, except it mounts an internal combustion engine (colloquially known as a "lowtech 'Mech"). The *Raider MkII* should not be confused with a modified IndustrialMech: It has a standard internal structure, as opposed to the double-weight, reinforced structure of IndustrialMechs. In fact, our team has managed to perfect numerous systems that previously were considered prototypes, such as the jump pack and the light autocannon.

The attached videos graphically demonstrate that not only can the *Raider* hold its own against some light BattleMechs, but more importantly, it is also far superior to any modified IndustrialMech currently in use.

This, I believe, is still a measure of achievement, and the *Raider* (we have begun to move forward with full, though limited, production – this facility was never designed with mass production in mind) can and will support Bannson troops in the field. Nevertheless, in the end, my team failed to achieve our directive, and so I'm tendering my resignation effective immediately.

{{Intercepted message; video was corrupted beyond recovery>>> }}

Design Notes:

This machine was an attempt to make an internal combustion 'Mech as much like a BattleMech as possible – sort of a mini-BattleMech. It worked. These 'Mechs aren't the most powerful things in the world, but they're effective and pack a punch on par with some of their larger counterparts. They're limited by their choice of weapons – no energy weapons and their ballistic weapons eventually run out of ammo – but they're still useful and economical. They also benefit from being able to attack at range early in the game and then up close for better damage once their heat dials warm up. Triple-strength myomer shows up on heat dials as a positive effect (+1 for example), but otherwise functions just as the current heat effects do.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=38616

Caria Gordon

Unit Name: Caria Gordon – *Storm Raider*

Unit Num: 115 **Faction:** Dragon's Fury **Point Cost:** 135

Tactics and Secrets

At 135 points this *Storm Raider* comes with a 180-degree arc, Full Strike, Evade, and a starting defense of 18. Much like the *Tiburon*, to start you may want to keep it at a distance to allow Evade to be effective and to give your Armor Piercing a chance to soften up potential targets. More aggressive players will run it in close to any troublesome formations and use Full Strike to cut several targets down to size. Once you close with the enemy, Hardened Armor comes into play to help this machine stay in the fight for the duration. With a heat dial that starts showing effects only on the third click and no negatives until the fourth, this could be 135 points well spent for some quick mobilization.

Design Notes

MechWarrior players who dabble in the **Mage Knight** universe will recognize Full Strike as a variant of Sweep; it makes targets of all opposing units in the front arc of a Full Strike unit. Because the *Storm Raider* is a light (and lightly armored) 'Mech, a priority was to protect it until it got close enough to do its job. Evade seemed the way to go, with Hardened Armor later on to keep it in play. As ranges in **MechWarrior** seem to continue to increase, melee 'Mechs need a little something extra to keep them competitive, and Full Strike fills that role.

Elements of Style: Clan Jade Falcon, Part 1

The Concept to Production of the Shrike Assault BattleMech

by Vic Bonilla

Part 1

Design Statement

Because Jade Falcon believes that they are the "purest" of the Clans, they have designed their military vehicles with a unique style, both to emphasize their beliefs and to differentiate themselves from everyone else. The image behind this style is a metal bird of prey, ready to strike with armored feathers.

When we began to design the **MechWarrior: Dark Age – Falcon's Prey** expansion, I was charged with re-envisioning the Jade Falcon 'Mechs. During the early days of **BattleTech**, most 'Mechs were distinctive to their factions, but those distinctions began to blur as the designs cross-pollinated as the universe evolved. So I had to create a new design to serve as the signature style for Jade Falcon. The base would be the Shrike.

I started with **Classic BattleTech** sourcebooks, such as **BattleTech: The Clans** and **MechWarrior's Companion**, and then staged frequent meetings with Randall Bills, who has extensive knowledge of Clan philosophy. The "form follows function" rule came to the fore during this process, especially because the Falcons were revitalizing their military forces during the 3110s; it was a perfect time to have new technologies emerge – the Falcons would not sit idle during the approximately 60 years of peace.

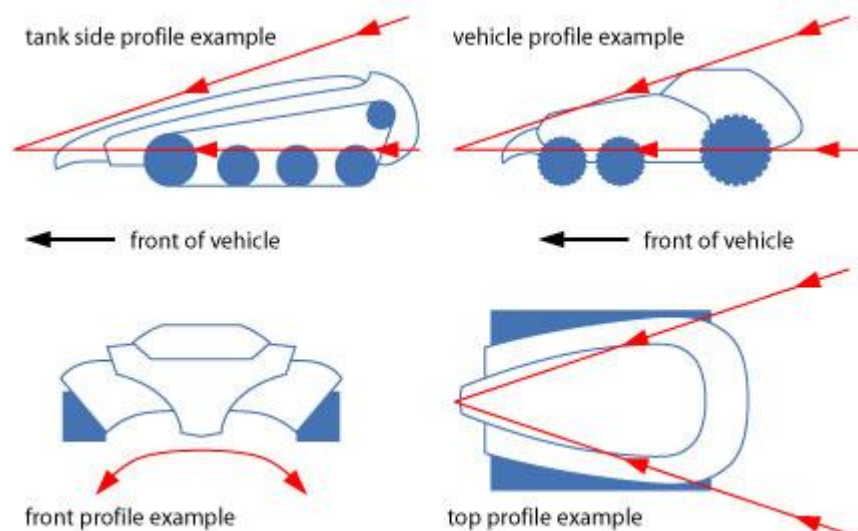
For inspiration, I looked to the Web, books, magazines, other artists, nature, and even movies. The primary sources were pictures of falcons and the profile of their heads and how birds spread their wings to cool off. This would provide the basis for the new heat-sink technology.

One image that jumped out was on the cover of **BattleTech: The Clans**. There a MechWarrior was depicted with dermal implants that resembled distinctive tribal tattoos. Certain civilizations like the Aztecs and American Indians used war paint and masks similar to the implant patterns to terrify their enemies.

From there the research also led me to one of my favorite artists, Roger Dean, and his amazing balance of thick and thin forms and positive and negative space (<http://rogerdean.com>), and another artist, Feng Zhu, for his unique approach to industrial design (<http://artbyfeng.com>).

During this process, I forged three key design rules around which the Jade Falcon visual style would follow.

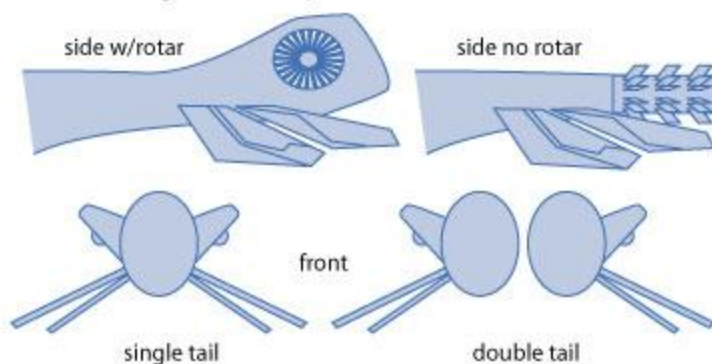
1. **"Strike" Profile:** The vehicle should look like it is moving forward even when standing still. The vehicle should slope down toward the front, creating an aggressive shape that always moves forward and hooks down like a beak. The treads and wheels should also have a downward slope to accentuate the shapes. Below are some shape examples. Note that the vehicles have multiple levels stacking up and backward. Because the Jade Falcons value honor, they tend to meet enemies head on, so the turrets of their tanks are fixed forward to face the enemy eye to eye. This lends itself very well to the designs because the turret rotation is removed.



2. **Falcon Shapes:** The Clan has incorporated the following shapes into their vehicles.

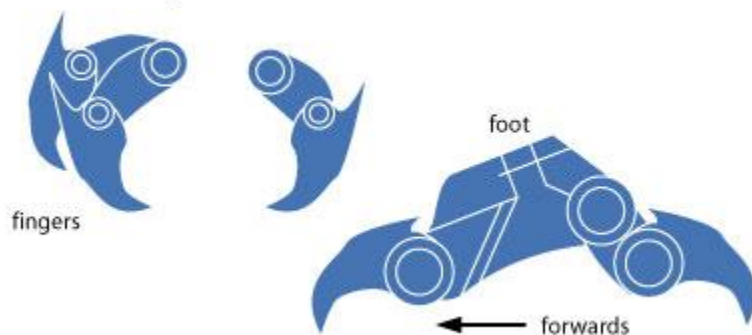
- **Profile:** Unit profiles should be of a falcon. This shape will make the vehicles appear that they are always moving forward, ready to strike. It also lends itself to an organic flow that creates a sense of speed. The front profile image (above) simulates a falcon with its legs extended.
- **Tail:** VTOLS should reflect the tail of a falcon. See examples below.

VTOL tail configuration example



Talons: Inspire the housing of energy weapons and cannons. Similar to jewelry, the cannons will be held in stylized claws. The talons are also a good reference when making hands and feet for 'Mechs.

Talon claw examples



3. Techno Wings and Enhanced-Imaging Dermal: The tattoo-like patterns on Jade Falcon warriors are actually enhanced-imaging dermals. These are the foundation for the techno wing designs featured on hull plating and heat vanes for both 'Mechs and vehicles. The wing designs need a combination of thin-thick line weights and positive-negative areas to achieve balance. Vehicles hulls should be seamless, with the exception of the techno wings, which may have raised surfaces that can be dry brushed to accentuate them. 'Mechs may also have these designs as part of their armor and raised surfaces. Techno wings may also be used for designing heat vanes on 'Mechs and VTOLs ala the Zeus or jump jet directional surfaces. But instead of being straight back, they can be mounted on the shoulders like wings. They should not, however, resemble anime mecha wings, which are often bigger than the mecha themselves. Note how the wings are splayed spider-like, below.



Techno wing design example



hull plating example



Now we put all that research into practice. The tattoo designs were used for two main items:

- Creating the shapes for the new Jade Falcon heat vanes. The wings' primary function is to dissipate heat faster than any other previous heat-sinks. This is reflected in the heat dials on the *Eyrie*, *Gyrfalcon*, and *Shrike*. Their secondary function is to provide stability and maneuverability during death from above attacks – hence the wing articulation.
- Providing the designs for 'Mech and vehicle hulls as armor plating.

Taking a page from tribal warfare, the 'Mechs and vehicles embodied their falcon namesake, inspiring awe and fear in separating themselves visually from all other Clan units. Their talons signified a slight change in their strategies, as they borrowed Inner Sphere tactics for death from above and melee attacks.

The final touch was inspired by an old French rifle called a chauchat modele (circa 1915), which had an unusual clip design.

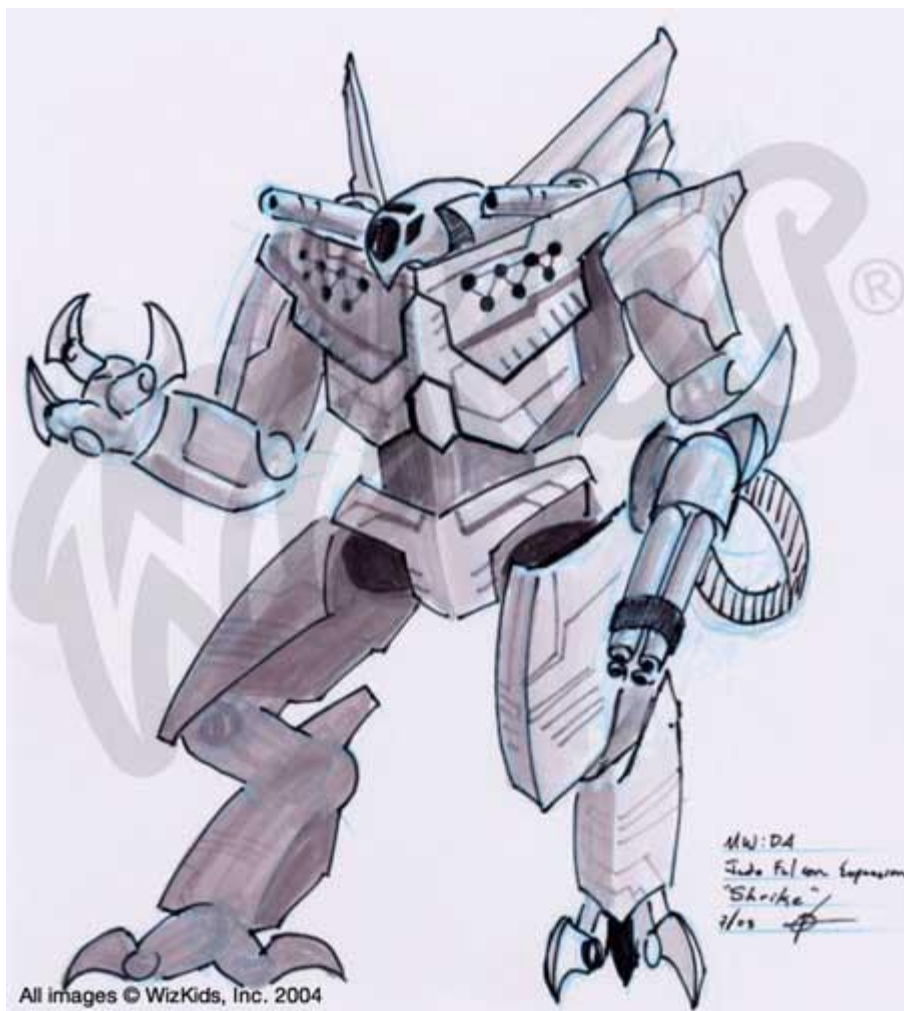
This might seem to be an awful lot of work just to get some cool looking 'Mechs. But it was necessary to provide a unique visual style. With it, we developed the *Shrike*, from which other Jade Falcon 'Mechs would be derived. The research also provided other sculptors a style on which they could base their work, allowing the Jade Falcon 'Mechs to not only look like they came from the same factory, but also the same Clan.



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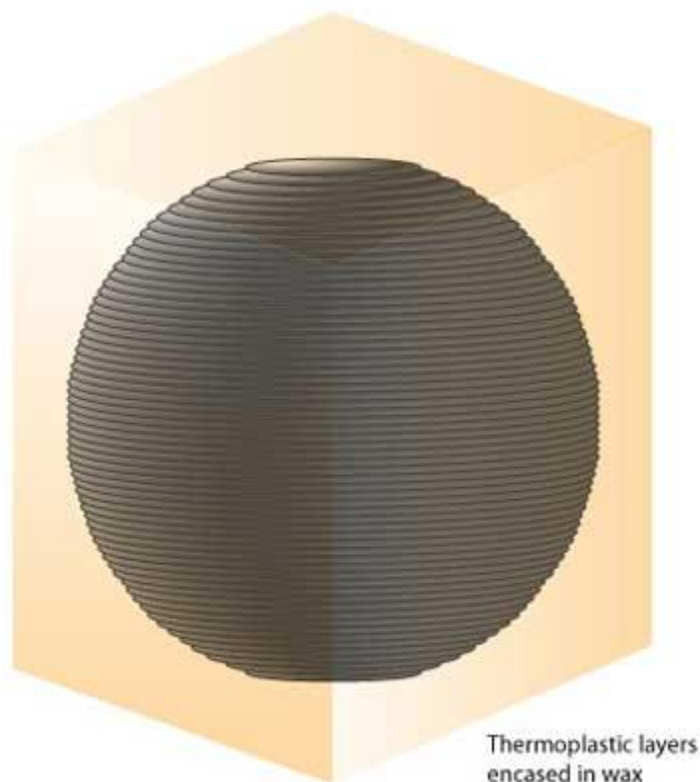
MW5 "Falcon's Prey"
Shirley Ann H. Hark

Elements of Style: Clan Jade Falcon, Part 2: Sculpting and Printing in 3D

The Concept to Production of the Shrike Assault BattleMech

by Vic Bonilla

After the final design has gone through approvals, the next step was to decide what medium the 'Mech would be sculpted in. Up until this point WizKids had always done 'Mechs using the traditional hand-sculpted method: with carved plastics, putty, resin, and found objects. The vehicles, however, were created in a 3D program called Rhino3D (<http://rhino3d.com/>) an industry standard program for Rapid Prototyping. Rhino3D is an application for creating NURB models (Non Uniform Rational B Spline). I won't go into the nitty-gritty of it, but it basically creates 3D models with excellent surface continuity and accuracy. Once the model is built it is sent to a 3D printer, a SolidScape T66 (www.solid-scape.com), which lays down micro-thin layers of thermoplastic surrounded by a wax. The result is similar to a Puzzle-3D.



It was decided to have the Shrike be the first 'Mech to go through the entire 3D print process to production. This will also serve as a learning experience to streamline the process if it was worth doing.

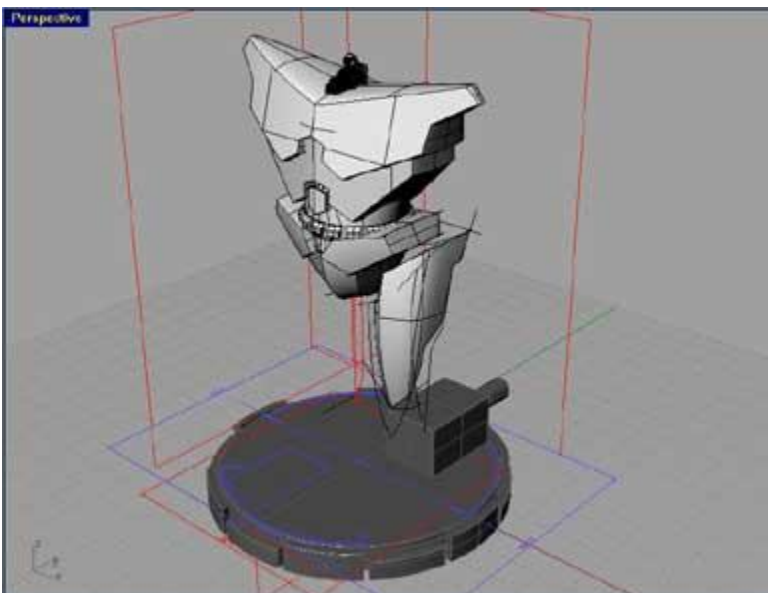
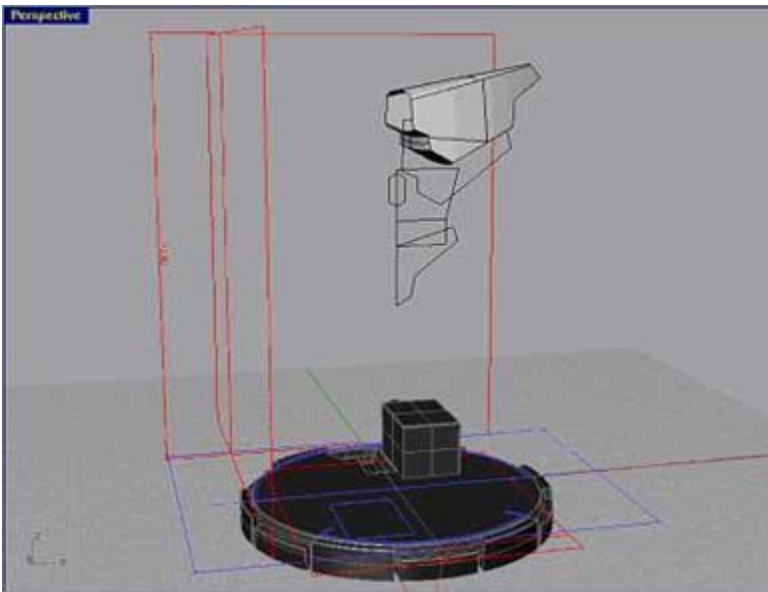
The first part is to build the Shrike in Rhino. With NURBS modeling you create featureless surfaces that have no thickness. These won't print, so the final model would not be able to have any open surfaces and had to be water tight, with no leaks. Below is the beginning of the torso, hollow. For it to be printed the torso would need to be solid.

Remember: Always start with general shapes and work towards the details. With any medium one must never start with details because you can get hung up on them and never finish the piece.

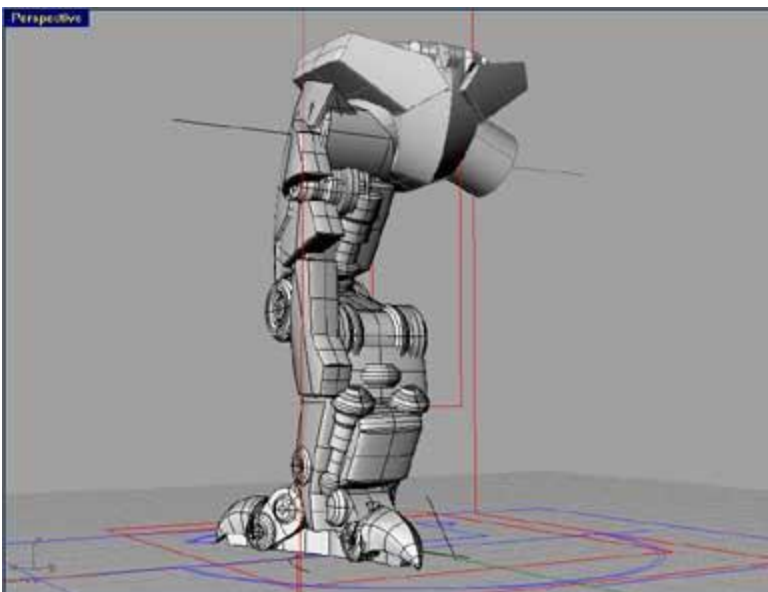
Two things were always in mind during the construction:

- Location and number of articulation points, namely the upper arms, torso, and wings. This is vital since the final piece will be around 71mm tall not including the wings.
- Can this fit in a booster pack without any problems or bulging?

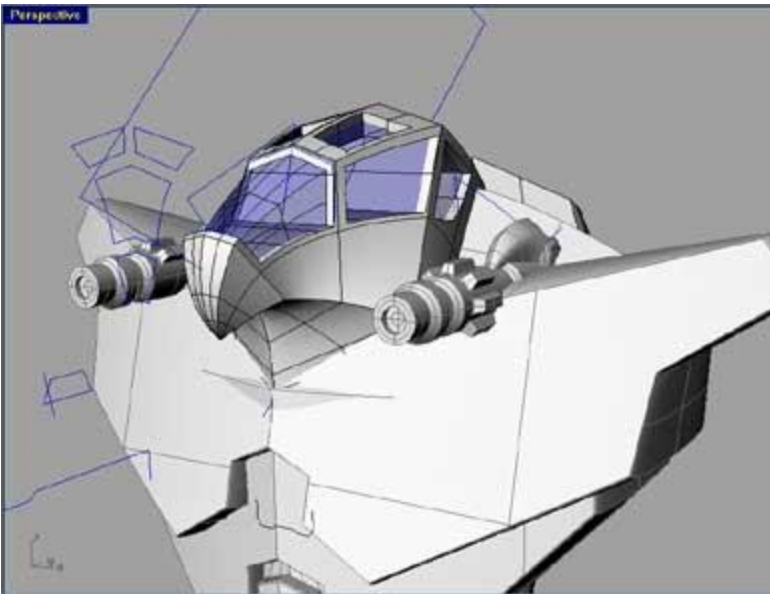
First the torso and hips. You can see a pilot has been placed here to keep proper scale as well as a mockup of the base and heat dial for foot placement.



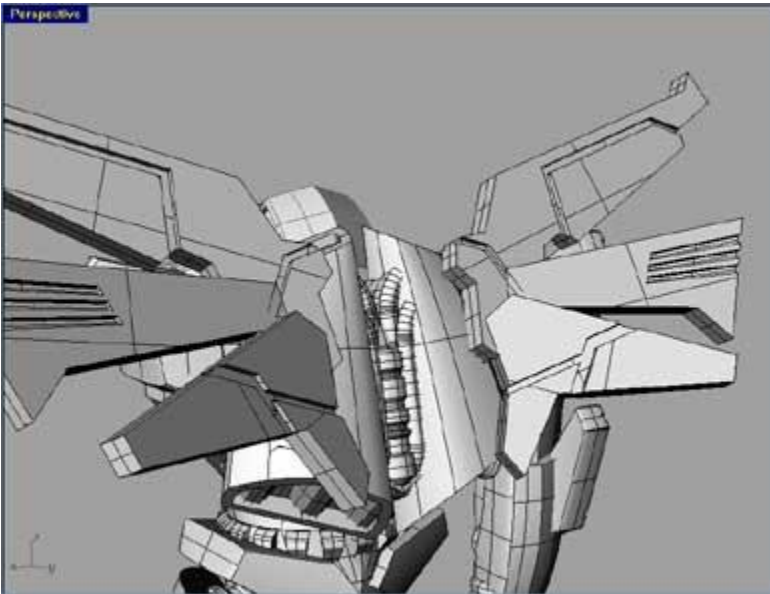
Then the legs. One leg can be mirrored for the opposite side. You can see now that the general shapes and a few details.



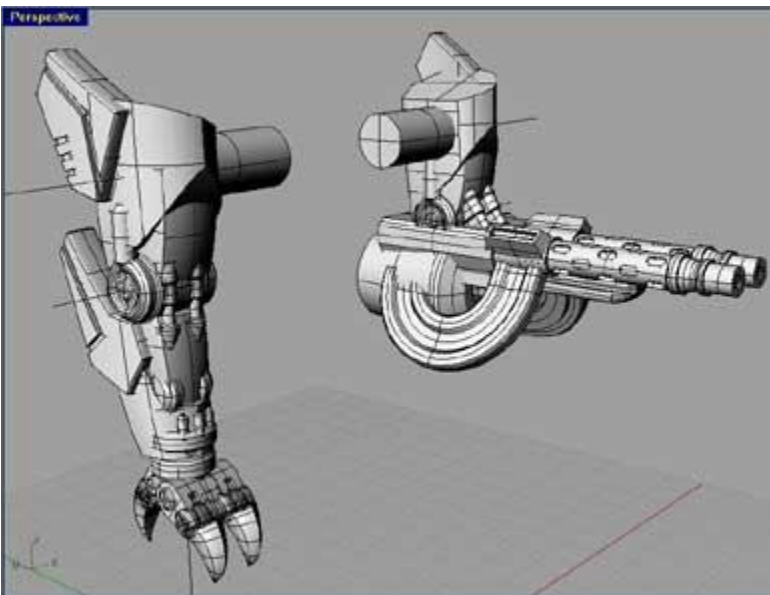
Next is the head:



Then the jump pack and wings. The wings took some work since I was only able to give them one point of articulation each.



And finally the main weapon and the controversial ammo feed/clips.



The final details were adding the tattoo-like etchings into the surface of the torso and legs. This will serve as guides for painting.





Once the model is complete and approved it is separated into pieces: torso, legs, arms, hips, head, jump pack, wings. These pieces are then fused into solid surfaces. Example: The arms with talons are comprised of 38 individual parts, each with its own surface. These must be fused into one continuous surface with no seams or open spots (again, water tight). This is can be very time consuming if this is not taken into account while building the model because you might have to recreate problem areas.

The next step is for the model parts to be laid out and translated into a file format that can be printed out. Once the printer is calibrated it begins to print layer by layer.



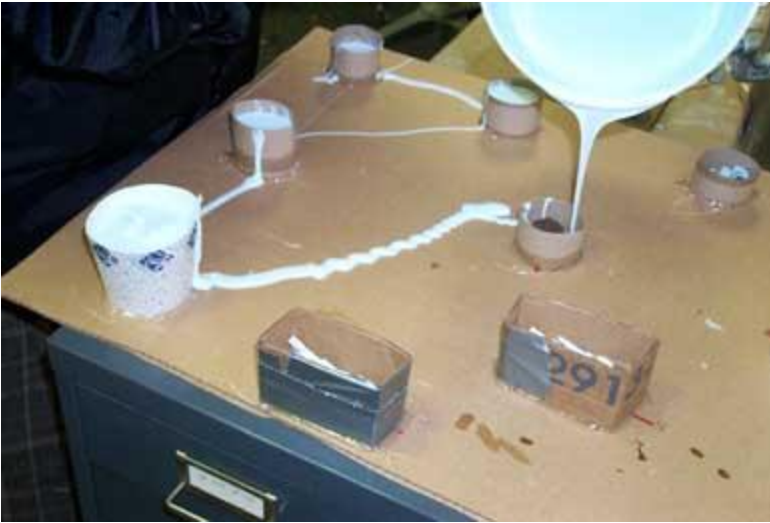


And below is the final sculpt fresh from the printer. The sculpt, in green, is encased in an orange wax which will be dissolved in a solvent solution.



The next step is to create molds and castings. Once the final sculpt has the wax removed it is very brittle and would not survive too long, so a master mold must be created. The pieces are placed into individual containers and flexible silicon is poured into the containers and left to dry. The dry molds are cut open and the original brittle sculpt is removed leaving a negative master mold. Below the Shrike parts are molded with several other vehicles and parts.





Once the master molds are cut and cleaned a two part resin is poured into the mold cavities. They are then placed into a vacuum chamber and all excess air is removed from the resin. Once the resin cast dries it can be removed from the master mold for cleaning and the details can be sharpened up. Since the printer lays down layers of thermoplastic the final positive cast contains striations that will be cleaned up and smoothed out. These are particularly noticeable on curved surfaces. Several casts are made: one to be the "tooling master" and a few others for paint masters.



Elements of Style: Clan Jade Falcon, Part 3: Final Painting, Production, and Post Production

The Concept to Production of the Shrike Assault BattleMech

by Vic Bonilla

Now that the casts are completed only one set of casts are cleaned and polished as carefully as possible becoming the "tooling master" while the other two sets are cleaned as well but not scrupulously detailed. The tooling master will be used by the factory to create special resilient molds of the 'Mech for mass production. The last two casts are called "paint masters" which our painter will use to create specific paint guides for the factory to follow. Below is a sculptor cleaning the tooling master.



And these sculpts were created to depict the articulation on the wings. This cast was stained with a dark wash to emphasize detail:





A swatch is created by the painter to choose the best color combination and amount of color to be used. In the case of the Jade Falcons we wanted paints that were a slight departure from what was done in the past, to make it really stand out from the rest of the previous factions. The colors were grey steel for the main hull and three different greens to indicate rank:

- Green unit: flat green
- Veteran unit: dark metallic green
- Elite unit: light metallic green

Here is a sample swatch and the painter starting on the Shrike:





Remember the etchings that were designed into the sculpts? They provide a guide for the painters when applying the paint.

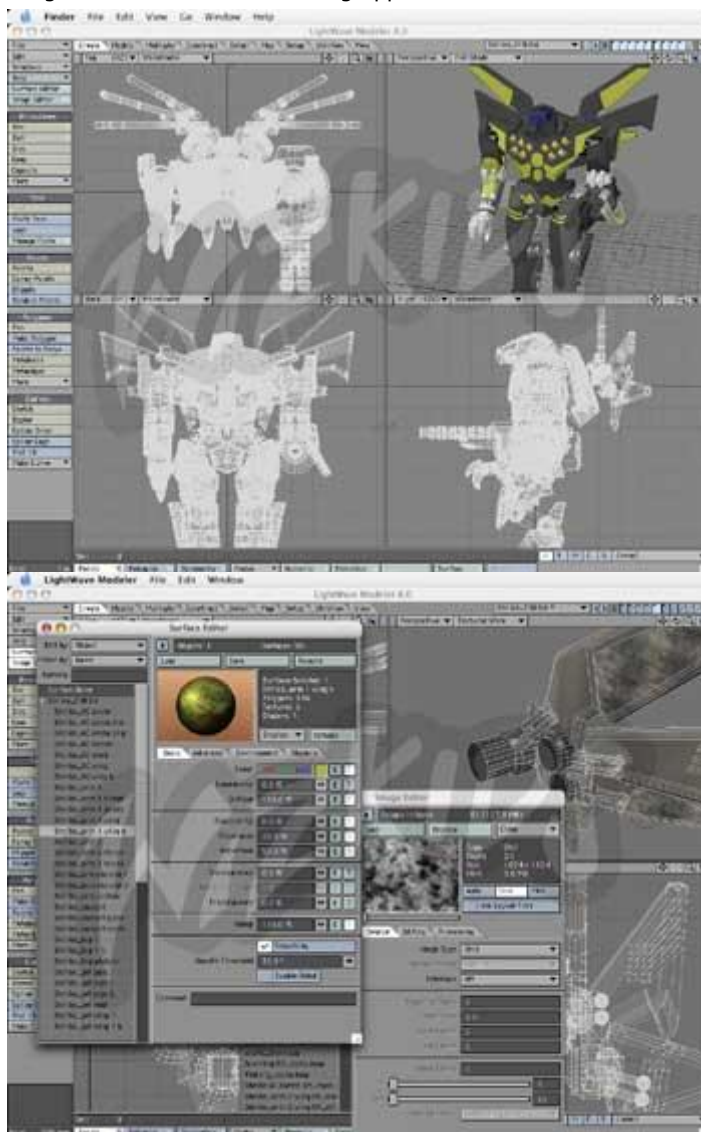
After the paint masters are approved they are also sent to the factory for paint reproduction. Below is a final sample that is sent to us to check the quality of the sculpt, the placement of paints, emblems, and the dial. Once this is approved the factory begins mass production.



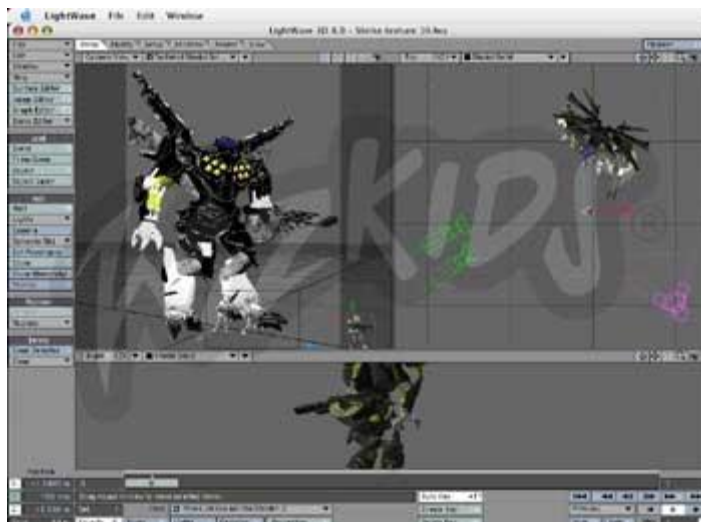
While the final miniatures are being produced the next step is to translate the Rhino model into another 3D application, LightWave 3D (<http://www.newtek.com>). LightWave is a cross-platform industry standard 3D software that is used in movies, television, and other mediums. WizKids uses this LightWave for all MechWarrior packaging and in the *Technology of Destruction* book, now available at Amazon (www.amazon.com). Normally the LightWave 'Mechs are created by an artist with reference photographs of the sculpt, such as the Timber Wolf, and built from scratch. But Rhino can export geometry that can be cleaned up in LightWave saving quite a bit of work and it is fully accurate to the miniature.

The LightWave Shrike will be textured and used for packaging, ads, other printed materials, and animated if needed. LightWave is divided into two applications: the Modeler for creating models and the Layout for creating scenes. Textures can be applied in both.

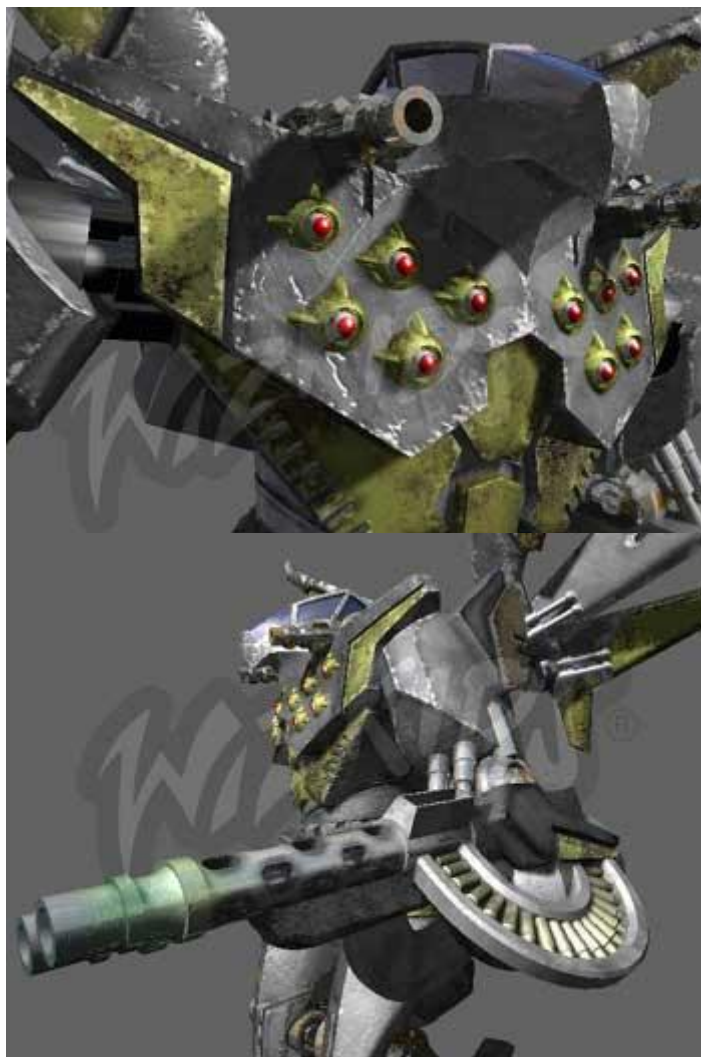
We have a large library containing hundreds of textures to choose from depending on the 'Mech and its environment. Everything from a rusty dumpster to an old cookie sheet. Depending on how the final model will be seen will dictate the amount of texturing needed. If the model is seen on a small box or for a short amount of animation there is no need for detailed texturing. Below is the Shrike in the Modeler application with textures being applied:



The Shrike model is then placed in the Layout application for lighting and final rendering:



With the Shrike translated I was able to add details that were not visible in the Rhino sculpt. For instance each wing now has a series of articulation points with hydraulic arms which will eventually be animated to show how the wings fold down over the jump pack when they are not dissipating heat or stabilizing the 'Mech. Or I can create particle effects to show the heat dispersion (think infrared or night vision). There are many possibilities.



**Final words:**

So now you have seen a glimpse of the process from concept to production for the Shrike. This experiment was highly successful and we learned a ton about what works and what doesn't. This process will be used in future expansion and work along side traditional sculpting. The computer is after all just a tool, it can not and will not create art on its own. I hope you have enjoyed this series of articles and I look forward to writing future articles. Enjoy *Falcon's Prey* and see you on the flip side! BTW, can you find the second 'Mech that created in Rhino that will appear in Falcon's Prey? Good luck!

Next week, check back for the final article in this series where MechWarrior Lead Developer Kelly Bonilla details the process of creating stats for a 95-ton 'Mech.

Griffin

Unit Name: Griffin

Unit Num: 109 **Faction:** Stormhammers **Point Cost:** 160

Unit Num: 110 **Faction:** Jade Falcon **Point Cost:** 164

Unit Num: 111 **Faction:** Highlanders **Point Cost:** 165

Unit Num: 112 **Faction:** Republic of the Sphere **Point Cost:** 165

Tactics and Secrets

Every *Griffin* is a Jump Jet-equipped ranged beast, but the Green Stormhammers version is even more so. A ballistic range of 14, two targets, Armor Piercing, and a starting damage of 6 will see to it that this monster is put to good use. Chargemonkey enthusiasts should note that its beautifully high damage value is on the secondary weapon system, and that holds true for all the *Griffin* variants. The Stormhammers variant kicks off the point values at 160.

The Veteran Jade Falcon version doesn't bring a lot of special equipment to the battlefield for 164 points, but it is well equipped to capitalize on the Merciless faction ability should you choose the ever-risky death from above attack. This will let you roll a six-sided die to add to your attack value, lessening the pain to 1 damage for an unsuccessful death from above attack.

For only 1 point more, you can invest in the Highlanders Elite *Griffin*. As with other Highlander units, the defense is strong (20 to start) and the unit layers a couple of clicks of Heavy Armor before engaging Decoy. This one will serve you best at a distance, though the defense should have you covered when that isn't possible.

The Republic of the Sphere variant opts to pay for Decoy primarily for its 165 points and holds Jump Jets for just a tad longer. Those are really the only bells and whistles to be found on this variant, except for some late Camouflage and Streak Missiles.

Design Notes

Merciless is likely raising eyebrows at this moment. The Jade Falcon stepping into the Inner Sphere to test The Republic's mettle is wiser and more compromising to the tactics employed by their enemies, even if they don't embrace them wholeheartedly yet. They're aggressive, heat-efficient, and highly focused, though they don't quite buy into a "by any means necessary" mentality. Overall, players who have been waiting for the Falcons to arrive will need to adapt a "strike first, strike hard" style of play.

Monic Deleportas

Unit Name: Monic Deleportas - *Warhammer IIC*

Unit Num: 121 **Faction:** Spirit Cats **Point Cost:** 246

Tactics and Secrets

The *Warhammer IIC* is the 'Mech for the player who doesn't require a lot of bells and whistles. In Spirit Cats style, this 'Mech starts with 4 energy damage and Pulse, with a range of 12 for some fairly long-distance combat. If you're looking to split up your destruction, forgo using Pulse and choose two targets instead. Except for Pulse on the initial three clicks, the only other color you'll see on this dial is grey for Heavy Armor, which extends throughout the length of the dial until the 'Mech hits Salvage. Be forewarned that this *Warhammer's* weaponry and armor severely cut down its speed, which begins at a mere 6 and progresses to 4. They also don't do much for its heat – even for a Spirit Cat unit, the heat effects start on click three and don't let up. Even with these drawbacks, this 246-point gorilla may very well become a cornerstone for any respectable Spirit Cats player's battleforce.

Design Notes

Spirit Cat units in general evoke a simpler way to play, as their flat dial profiles tend to make them much more reliant on their basic stats than on any special equipment they may have. The *Falcon's Prey Warhammer IIC* is no exception, relying on a steady 9 attack for the better part of five clicks. The only complaint some Spirit Cat players may have is the 'Mech's somewhat out-of-place heat dial, but the weapon load out on this bad boy is just too much for even a poor Spirit Cat to bear.

Najeh Hammond

Unit Name: Najeh Hammond – *Tiburon*

Unit Num: 117 **Faction:** Sea Fox **Point Cost:** 137

Tactics and Secrets

Most players will probably be tempted to avoid the 137-point *Tiburon*, especially when they see its starting defense of 16. But Evade, a speed of 10, and a secondary range of 10 will help it stay reasonably far from the battle to start, which is where you'll want it. But don't be too concerned about getting the paint scratched, because once the gloves come off and the lasers come out, this 'Mech starts dealing 4 damage, or 8 if you use Pulse. With an attack of 10 progressing to 9 and a forgiving heat dial, there's hardly any reason to not to use it. At the end of its dial when Decoy and Improved Targeting kick in, you'll want to pull back again to let them do their job, which is to keep the 'Mech around to make use of the Scavenger faction ability. This allows the unit to gain 2 clicks of repair when it eliminates a unit of the same speed type as itself.

Design Notes

Traditionally, many players dislike "berserker" dials, often complaining that the unit generally takes damage that bypasses most – if not all – of the "good" clicks. We tried to keep that mind during the design of this unit, putting its "best" click at the third position, but continuing the "sweet" clicks through click 7. Also, the lack of repair markers on Sea Fox units (similar to Bannson's Raiders) combined with the Scavenger and Predator abilities will help to keep this unit useful. As a Clan, Sea Fox is still primarily interested in trade, and as such their units appear mostly harmless from a distance; they prefer to keep the bulk of their armaments concealed until deals go awry or more persuasive tactics become necessary.

SalvageMech MOD

Unit Name: SalvageMech Mod

Unit Num: 081 **Faction:** Highlanders **Point Cost:** 95

Unit Num: 082 **Faction:** Jade Falcon **Point Cost:** 97

Unit Num: 083 **Faction:** Republic of the Sphere **Point Cost:** 99

Unit Num: 084 **Faction:** Stormhammers **Point Cost:** 99

Tactics and Secrets

The last of the IndustrialMechs goes out with a bang. Looking for some big repair power? Look no further than the SalvageMech MOD. Each rank of this clawed monster starts with an attack of 10 and has a forgiving heat dial, so it'll work for all your pushing repair needs. The Green Highlanders unit layers some Heavy Armor on a 20 starting defense and offers Rapid Strike to cover any poor repair rolls. 95 points is a small price to pay for some help around the battlefield.

The Jade Falcon Veteran unit keeps its attack of 10 for the first three clicks and makes use of Evade to help it get where it needs to go. With a defense of 17, however, be prepared to yo-yo it in and out. A vent 3 should help players justify the 97 points this variant costs.

The Elite Republic of the Sphere unit brings back Rapid Strike with a coating of Reflective Armor to help guard against any unwanted heat from outside energy weapons for 99 points.

The Elite Stormhammers unit fills a sort of Spirit Cats role, simply providing Repair special equipment with a layer of Heavy Armor for longevity. The 270-degree front arc that all SalvageMech MODs have will increase this unit's usefulness if you have several units in need of a little repair.

Design Notes

Players rejoice: The last I.C.E. 'Mech approaches. Admittedly, the burning hatred professed by many players for the humble I.C.E. can make anyone leery about having to design one, but this fine line of 'Mechs has served well until the appropriate factories could retool and is therefore worthy of an appropriate sendoff. As such, we felt it appropriate to design a 'Mech that was capable of repairing not only its brethren, but also those new-fangled fusion machines as well. It might be the last of its kind, but it's certainly useful – on purpose, no less!

Skadi Swift Attack VTOL

Unit Name: Skadi Swift Attack VTOL

Unit Num: 033 **Faction:** Jade Falcon **Point Cost:** 42

Unit Num: 034 **Faction:** Dragon's Fury **Point Cost:** 45

Unit Num: 035 **Faction:** Jade Falcon **Point Cost:** 48

Unit Num: 036 **Faction:** Spirit Cats **Point Cost:** 48

Tactics and Secrets

The Green Jade Falcon Skadi can fill one of two positions in your battleforce: an active attacker with a speed of 16 and a range of 10 for 2 damage or an effective "tagger" with its Homing Beacon special equipment to help any friendly ballistic damage units get a clear shot on a target. For 42 points, it's a worthwhile investment.

The Veteran Dragon's Fury is built more as an anti-personnel monster. It keeps the range of 10 while increasing its speed to 18 and starting damage to 3. Reactive Armor will help keep it safe from ballistic attacks while it clears out any protective infantry screens foolish enough to not break ranks when they see it on the battlefield. A single target for those attacks keeps this unit reasonably priced at 45.

The Elite Jade Falcon unit offers up a speed of 18, starting defense of 17, and T-SEMP special equipment with a 2 damage value. You might consider using this model to knock out opposing 'Mechs as well as artillery units. Even after T-SEMP is gone, Evade and an attack of 8 will keep the Skadi useful as a diversion for 48 points.

The Elite Spirit Cats Skadi surrenders special equipment for a wee bit more armor, damage, and range, making it a good, old-fashioned attack VTOL, just as its namesake suggests. A starting defense of 18, speed 18, and range 12 make this unit an effective 48-point attacker.

Design Notes

The Skadi is a strict Jade Falcon design in terms of pure aesthetics, evidenced primarily by the swooping wing and tail design and the "tattooing" on the sides, which is reminiscent of the dermal tattoos sported by many Clan members to achieve enhanced imaging. The introduction of "new" technology into the **MechWarrior** universe may coincide with the return of the Jade Falcons, but the Jade Falcons are not the sole reason behind its introduction. There are several types of equipment and ammo in the **MechWarrior** universe that aren't well reflected in game terms at the moment. Exploring these as the game line progresses is definitely desirable.

Skanda Light Tank

Unit Name: Skanda Light Tank

Unit Num: 053 **Faction:** Spirit Cats **Point Cost:** 46

Unit Num: 054 **Faction:** Mercenary **Point Cost:** 48

Unit Num: 055 **Faction:** Jade Falcon **Point Cost:** 50

Unit Num: 056 **Faction:** Republic of the Sphere **Point Cost:** 50

Tactics and Secrets

The Green Skanda Light Tank is for Spirit Cat players looking to help their enemies slow down and smell the roses. A range of 12 and T-SEMP will help keep enemy targets in place for friendly units at a cost of 46 points. Make good use of its range, as its limited arc (135 degrees) could be problematic if any opposing units should sneak up on it.

The Veteran mercenary Skanda is best used in a sniper capacity; infiltrate it to capitalize on its 16 range and two targets. The damage may seem low at 2, but Armor Piercing and an attack of 9 help ensure that every shot counts. An infiltrating sniper of this caliber is a steal at 48 points.

The Elite Jade Falcon drops the ballistic range to 14 and a single target but starts out with a damage of 3. A defense of 18 and Evade also makes this unit a candidate for sniping rather than up-close-and-personal combat. It's an investment at 50 points, but it should be worth it for the range player.

The Elite Republic of the Sphere unit fares better in a close-up environment, with its Decoy and starting defense of 19, though also consider moving it into hindering terrain to make use of Camouflage and to help protect it because of its 135-degree front arc. Its tracked speed type and speed 10 allows this unit to get to safety relatively quickly for 50 points.

Design Notes

The Skanda is also a Jade Falcon design, as players are probably prone to noticing by now. These "signature styles" are shared among vehicle and infantry units, but not 'Mechs, which are exclusive. That isn't to say players won't see some 'Mech styles shared across factions, but specific 'Mechs will most likely appear only with specific factions. We're definitely looking forward to developing signature styles for future and existing factions, and we already have some great things in the works.

Stinger

Unit Name: Stinger

Unit Num: 093 **Faction:** Jade Falcon **Point Cost:** 100

Unit Num: 094 **Faction:** Highlanders **Point Cost:** 104

Unit Num: 095 **Faction:** Stormhammers **Point Cost:** 106

Unit Num: 096 **Faction:** Swordsworn **Point Cost:** 106

Tactics and Secrets

The Green Jade Falcon *Stinger* is, as are most *Stingers*, plagued by its short range (the highest is 6). Its characteristically high attack value (for Jade Falcon), however, helps to make up for it in this 100-point variant. Your best bet with this *Stinger* is to run it into position, fire, and run it back out. Evade will help keep the heat down, and you won't encounter any bad effects until the third click of heat anyway. Use it early and often.

The Veteran Highlanders unit fares much better in the defense department, though its speed suffers for it. A starting defense of 19 with Heavy Armor will make you feel better about getting it into position to do some Armor Piercing and Pulse damage, and for 104 points you'll probably be fairly willing to give it a spin. This is another unit you'll want in the fray right away.

The Elite Stormhammers *Stinger* forgoes some defense for more and longer-lasting damage and a higher attack value. Armor Piercing and Pulse comes with this 106-point version, which has a starting attack value of 10. As with the others, get it in early and use it often. The heat dial won't mind one bit.

The 106-point Elite Swordsworn version also opts for higher damage, although it brings Evade to help make up for the small defense loss. Some heat will be a good thing, as the triple-strength myomer on each *Stinger* will kick in to speed a bit. If you need it, Pulse also helps make this version a useful hit-and-run piece.

Design Notes

Quite a few 'Mechs in this set were loaded out with short-range weapons, which are not particularly easy to design. Fortunately, these light 'Mechs came out rather nicely costed for those short ranges, and they should find at least a passing spot in some brave battleforces. Aesthetically, the *Stinger* is a favorite among the design team, as it illustrates how a light 'Mech should be proportioned. Going forward as we rein in sizes and scale, players should see this petite silhouette more and more.

Sylph Battle Armor

Unit Name: Sylph Battle Armor

Unit Num: 017 **Faction:** Spirit Cats **Point Cost:** 26

Unit Num: 018 **Faction:** Stormhammers **Point Cost:** 28

Unit Num: 019 **Faction:** Dragon's Fury **Point Cost:** 30

Unit Num: 020 **Faction:** Jade Falcon **Point Cost:** 30

Tactics and Secrets

A speed of 20, energy range of 8, and single-use Evade makes the Green Spirit Cats Sylph an even more effective harassing unit than a good ATV Squad. The ability to stay at cruising level is a big plus in helping it get where it needs to be in order to be effective, though at first you may have a hard time justifying spending 26 points on an infantry unit.

The Veteran Stormhammers unit's speed drops to 18 and comes with Bypass. It's an effective ready-to-go driver for any wayward units you might capture on the battlefield, and it has the added benefit of most likely getting there in two or fewer turns. 28 points is the cost of glory for this variant.

The Elite Dragon's Fury Sylph may seem pricey at 30 points, but that price tag also gets you six clicks of Evade and a starting speed of 22, making this unit the fastest infantry available. If you're willing to spend the points, this is the harasser extraordinaire.

The second Elite version belongs to Jade Falcon, and while its speed is a modest 20, it brings an attack of 8 and Pulse to an army that may need an eye in the sky to soften up weaker targets. Or hold it back to perform clean-up work for 30 points.

Design Notes

Designing the Sylph Battle Armor was almost agonizing. During the design process, they were coming out to be pretty pricey, almost as much as a VTOL. So why would a player take an infantry piece when they could field a fine VTOL instead? After some rethinking and the incorporation of Salvage, things began to look a little better. Players should find the free-spin capabilities of these mini-VTOLs useful, as well as the standard energy damage reduction for infantry units and the faster-than-most-VTOLs speed.

Big Bertha

Unit Num	Rank	Faction	Point Cost
118	Unique	Gunslinger	179

Tactics and Secrets

"She's a touchy gal, but you just have to know how to keep her distracted."

– Adam Stark, gunslinger and pilot of "Big Bertha"

Another favorite, the *Rifleman* returns as "Big Bertha" – and at a marked discount when compared to its previous incarnations.

Big Bertha offers a slightly higher speed (8) than previous versions do, though its weapon selection remains mostly the same, with both the ballistic range type (maximum range 12) and the energy range type (maximum range 8). An assault order will effectively give Big Bertha a range of 16, and with Streak Missiles she doesn't need to see what she's shooting at. Even if she doesn't play hard to get, Hardened Armor and a defense of 20 will keep the riff-raff off her back for her first three clicks.

This all sounds fairly good for 179 points, so where's the downfall? Big Bertha has a hot temper, with heat effects starting on her second click and not letting up for the remainder of her dial. Enter Big Bertha's preferred handler, gunslinger Adam Stark.

Adam Stark handles Big Bertha like a dream, managing to drag +2 from her speed value, improving her attack by +2, and bringing +1 to her defense. In addition, Adam knows how to keep Big Bertha "Cool Under Pressure" as he ignores any speed heat effects that require a die roll (when not shutdown) – all for the low price of 230 points. To help preserve Big Bertha as she says on the move, also consider adding Decoy for 38 points. 268 total points for a 'Mech that's tough to shut down may be a small price to pay.

Design Notes

Big Bertha is a personal favorite if for no other reason than someone who paints his or her ride fire engine red must have some sort of attitude. When developing the gunslingers and their 'Mechs, we tried to make them very different in appearance so that they would stand out in a battleforce. When developing some of the pilot skills and abilities, we often look to items in the game that players don't like so much as they learn to live with, such as heat effects. Enter Adam Stark.

Elements of Style: Clan Nova Cat

The Ins and Outs of the Inner Sphere Visionaries

With Clan Nova Cat taking its place beside House Kurita in *Annihilation*, it was time to develop a signature look for them, as we'd done for factions in previous sets. The first faction to get this signature treatment was Clan Jade Falcon in *Falcon's Prey*, followed by House Kurita in *Firepower*. We weren't as concerned with developing a signature play "feel" for Clan Nova Cat, because we intended for them to mirror their splinter faction, the Spirit Cats: an affinity for (though not a reliance on) energy weapons, slightly increased longevity, and a reliance more on sheer combat values rather than on special equipment.

For the benefit of the uninitiated, here is a brief historical rundown on Clan Nova Cat. This Clan is one of many Clans that began riding roughshod through the Inner Sphere in 3050. Like other Clansmen, they are genetically bred warriors selected for their abilities in combat, and they live in a society where the warrior caste is king. Unlike most other Clans, however, they have developed a close bond with one of the Inner Sphere Houses: House Kurita. The only other Clan to even consider doing such a thing was Clan Ghost Bear, which moved into the Inner Sphere and became the Ghost Bear Dominion, eventually integrating entirely with an Inner Sphere faction known as the Free Rasalhague Republic to form the Rasalhague Dominion. Clan Nova Cat's close ties with House Kurita began in 3062 (the current MechWarrior year is 3135), when Minoru Kurita, the son of Coordinator Theodore Kurita of House Kurita, was sent to Clan Nova Cat to enlist their assistance in overcoming another Clan threatening their House: Clan Smoke Jaguar. Because of Minoru's own mystical bent (due to his extensive study of the more esoteric martial arts), he was welcomed into the Clan, which offered its help. After the threat was dealt with, Minoru was taken as a bondsman to then-khan (leader) of Clan Nova Cat, Khan Santin West. A bondsman is a prisoner held in indentured servitude until he or she is either released or accepted into the Clan. In Minoru's case, he was accepted, cementing the bond between House Kurita and the Nova Cats.

Relying more on visions and rituals than on hard information and Trials, Clan Nova Cat better resembles American Indian and Aztec tribes than a traditional Clan. As such, when the sculpting team began to think about concepts, they turned to those influences.

Before concepting and sculpting a new faction, an internal style guide is first generated. **MechWarrior** Digital Studio Manager Vic Bonilla reviews source materials here in the office and then generates a style guide based in part on those findings as well as input from the game designer and other sculptors. From the style guide comes what are referred to as the key elements of a faction. The key elements of Clan Nova Cat are:

Mystical elements. For example, cockpits that suggest an animal-like shape without overtly resembling one, or overall vehicle profiles that might suggest an animal-like shape. This also includes paint schemes that resemble "war paint."

OmniMech technology. In part because of their affinity for OmniMechs (BattleMechs with interchangeable parts), Nova Cat units have an overall look and feel to them.

Neo-Gothic Elements. Believe it or not! To reflect their developed architecture, Clan Nova Cat units have clean vertical lines and small amounts of clustered details for emphasis. To also harken back to cathedral-like structures, weapons are usually mounted a little higher up, and cockpits moved a little farther down.

An additional element that was entertained was the placement of "feathers" for rank on Nova Cat units. An example of this can be seen in the *Jaguar* Quad 'Mech in *Firepower*. Look at the rear leg of this unit; the series of three "feathers" you see are a test. These weren't adopted into the final design partly due to sculpting and breakage concerns. We wanted them to be exclusive to true Nova Cat units, but the removal and replacement of these feathers (to accommodate a case in which the unit was "acquired" by a different faction) proved to be too costly.

Overall, you can see that the unifying theme for the Nova Cat units is centered in the cockpit—clean lines that harken back to some American Indian wolf and animal masks. You can see this cockpit design in the Cizin vehicle and *Shadow Cat* and *Wendigo* 'Mechs. Additional shared elements include hexagonal-shaped weapon barrels and greater detail on the weapons than what you might ordinarily see (a Neo-Gothic element). To top it all off, the Nova Cats share a unifying paint scheme in which the main color (white) is accented by stripes of red, black, and bronze/gold "war paint," depending on rank. To incorporate OmniMech elements, we actually physically engineered the weapons of the *Shadow Cat* and the *Wendigo* to be interchangeable; that is, the weapons of one can be removed and placed on the other. We met with only minimal success, however, in the actual implementation. So, although it can be done, we don't necessarily advise doing it because of potential breakage and loose joints that might develop over time. If a game play element can be attached to this mechanic, we may resurrect it in the future.

The regiments of Clan Nova Cat (from Green to Elite) are Xi Provisional Galaxy, Tau Galaxy, and Alpha Galaxy. Fans familiar with the Xi Provisional Galaxy regiment may be disappointed to see that we didn't keep their neon paint and glyph scheme, but we found it difficult to maintain and couldn't really get used to seeing a lot of units like that on the battlefield, especially with all the gunslingers running amok. Vic Bonilla also couldn't quite get used to having a war machine painted in bright neon colors, and as the one who primarily helps maintain the look and feel of **Age of Destruction**, the neon didn't see the light of day.

After all the work, we ended up with Clan Nova Cat, ready and willing to aid House Kurita (the Draconis Combine) in its bid to reclaim worlds once yielded to The Republic of the Sphere. Together they have created one of the largest power blocs yet seen in the **Age of Destruction**, and the rest of the Inner Sphere have their work cut out for them if they want to keep them at bay. We hope players and collectors alike will enjoy the Nova Cats with the same relish we experienced in developing them for the Age of Destruction.

If you'd like to read more fiction about Clan Nova Cat, we recommend the **MechWarrior** novel *Heretic's Faith*, now available at book stores.

Hadur Fast Support Vehicle

Unit Name: Hadur Fast Support Vehicle

Unit Num: 041 **Faction:** Swordsworn **Point Cost:** 46

Unit Num: 042 **Faction:** Highlanders **Point Cost:** 48

Unit Num: 043 **Faction:** Dragon's Fury **Point Cost:** 48

Unit Num: 044 **Faction:** Clan Jade Falcon **Point Cost:** 50

Tactics and Secrets

"Lemme get this straight . . . it's a hover vehicle, with an Arrow IV on top of it? Only some crazed Clan could come up with something like that.

- Armormaster Brian Moriarty

The Hadur Fast Support Vehicle combines two never-before-joined aspects: an artillery range and the hover speed mode. The result is a highly mobile artillery unit that may not spend all of its time in the deployment zone. Each variation offers five to six viable clicks of life with admirable defenses. Without a clear line of fire, each Hadur needs a 13 or 14 to hit its artillery target, and each can roll as low as an 11 or 12 and still hit its target, provided the center dot was directly on target. Because of the delicate combination, each Hadur has only one target available to it, but each has Improved Targeting at some point to help make that one shot count.

Swordsworn, Green Unit

The 46-point Swordsworn Hadur is the most conservative of the group, best left at distance to allow Evade and a 17 defense to keep it safe. With a blast radius of 3" and a steady damage value of 2, that may not be such a bad idea. The maximum range of this Hadur is 10 with an artillery range of 30, so keeping it away from your opponent may be the best thing.

Highlanders, Veteran Unit

The Highlanders unit has better survivability, whether far away or up close, for 48 points. A defense value of 19 is augmented by single-use Evade if necessary, and the whole package comes with Armor Piercing over the entire dial. Though the blast radius is only 2", Armor Piercing alone will probably make this the most popular Hadur on the tournament scene, artillery range of 30 notwithstanding.

Dragon's Fury, Veteran Unit

This 48-point unit is also best kept at a distance with a defense of 18 and Decoy. A blast radius of 3" will help make up for the lack of damage special equipment. A speed value of 10 will help keep this Hadur out of enemy ranges, but an artillery range of 28 will still help ensure that targets are in its range.

Jade Falcon, Elite Unit

The Jade Falcon Hadur features a little of everything from the previous versions for 50 points, including single-use Evade for the first two clicks and Armor Piercing for the next three. With a less-than-average minimum/maximum range of 2/8, this version will best serve as an artillery piece.

Design Notes

A combination hover/artillery unit is a cool thought, and the sculpt for this piece came out beautifully. Many players don't abide by units that try to fill more than one role in a battleforce, so players will probably use the Hadur in one role or another, but not both. The speedier Hadurs will probably see some play as hover vehicles and harassers (although expensive as such), while the ones with average speed will live their lives on the battlefield as artillery pieces.

Hanse MBT

Unit Num	Rank	Faction	Point Cost
073	Green	Clan Jade Falcon	86
074	Veteran	Stormhammers	90
075	Veteran	Steel Wolves	90
076	Elite	House Davion	93

Tactics and Secrets

"The Hanse? Yeah, I've seen them on the battlefield. Thankfully, so did our Rifleman pilot."

– Colonel Sendoa Caruthers

A moderate assault-level tank, the Hanse MBT's greatest weaknesses are a minimum range of 2 to 4 (depending on the faction) and a front arc of 180 degrees. With a maximum range of 14 on most versions and the ability to possibly fire even if based by opposing units, however, the Hanse may still be worth the investment. Remember that whichever version of the Hanse you choose, chances are good it's going to be slow as dirt.

Jade Falcon, Green Unit

This unit could very well have a shot at being the most-used version, with the energy range type, attack 10, damage 3, and Pulse. The defense is decent at 21 with Reactive Armor, and Improved Targeting farther down on the dial will keep this unit useful until the end. Don't be afraid to drive this unit in; even if it gets based by an opposing unit, it may still have a chance to be effective.

Stormhammers, Veteran Unit

This unit will serve the player who doesn't need a lot of bells and whistles. A simple ballistic range type with two targets and armor piercing damage for 5, this unit will cause the opponent to duck whenever it gets close. At 90 points, this unit will probably benefit from a transport.

Steel Wolves, Veteran Unit

Surrendering Armor Piercing for Streak Missiles, this 90-point version doesn't necessarily need to see what it wants to fire at, which is probably best for it. You can push this monster into an attack of 10 and a defense of 22, but be cautious that a 'Mech doesn't come along and knock it out of its sweet spot.

House Davion, Elite Unit

House Davion adds an additional target to its Hanse (for a total of 3), with Armor Piercing through the first five clicks of the dial. Its 93 points also get you a 21 defense and an attack of 9. So even if this version might not hit those higher-profile targets, chances are it'll be able to stick around long enough to get in a few good shots.

Design Notes

The strong lines and big-gun aspect of the Hanse are reflective of the House Davion design style. As time goes by, we'll further develop the look and feel of this House, along with Steiner. Though the Hanse has some shortcomings, a faction pride or situational alliance will provide some assistance, as players turn to CECs to lend more support to their vehicles and infantry.

MHI Hawk Moth Gunship

Unit Name: MHI Hawk Moth Gunship

Unit Num: 045 **Faction:** Highlanders **Point Cost:** 45

Unit Num: 046 **Faction:** Steel Wolves **Point Cost:** 48

Unit Num: 047 **Faction:** Stormhammers **Point Cost:** 48

Unit Num: 048 **Faction:** Bannson's Raiders **Point Cost:** 51

Tactics and Secrets

"For the combined-arms race, Victory Conditions Industries now offers the latest in aerial support and firepower. It is with great pleasure that we introduce the latest, brightest flame found in today's skies: the MHI Hawk Moth Gunship."

All MHI Hawk Moth incarnations sport a defense of at least 19 when you factor in the height advantage modifier and special equipment. Each version comes with Armor Piercing or Pulse, allowing it to deal a decent amount of damage, even though each has only four viable clicks available to it.

Highlanders, Green Unit

This sturdy, 45-point VTOL can handle some of your tougher customers, whether in the thick of combat or on the fringes. With an attack value of 9 and Armor Piercing, this unit will likely deliver its 3 damage to whatever it attacks. Though it is one of the slower Hawk Moths with a speed value of 16, you can still get a good 14 inches of range from a move order that also incorporates a ranged combat attack. After taking 2 damage, this unit picks up Evade and Anti-Personnel to turn to deal with infantry. If a 9 attack isn't quite enough for you, consider a situational alliance with the Steel Wolves, which makes a +1 to its attack value available. This unit starts out with a no-frills 19 defense at NOE.

Steel Wolves, Veteran Unit

A longer maximum range of 12 and Armor Piercing for the duration of its dial make this 48-point version useful, but not necessarily as efficient as other Hawk Moth variations. Reaching a maximum speed of 18, this version is best kept on the edge of combat so as not to gamble with its 17 defense (20 with single-use Evade at cruising level) too much. Reactive Armor will help keep anti-aircraft fire at bay, but one good hit with a PPC will probably burn this Hawk Moth's wings.

Stormhammers, Veteran Unit

Although slow like the Highlanders version (with a speed value of 16), steady Armor Piercing through four clicks and a defense of 18 (19 at cruising level) still give this Hawk Moth a purpose in a battleforce. Though not easy to pull off, you'll want this one to hit and run with its 10-inch maximum range, two targets, and 3 damage. There isn't much else to speak of with this version, but if you have a Stormhammers force and 48 points to burn on a VTOL, consider this unit.

Bannson's Raiders, Elite Unit

Bannson's Raiders trade the ballistic range type for energy and exchange Armor Piercing for Pulse on their 51-point Hawk Moth. A defense of 18 (19 at cruising level) is augmented by Decoy and a zippy speed of 20. If you try it and like it, consider using some good ol' Bannson's Raiders pride to have 1 repair available during your command stage to keep it aloft.

Design Notes

The Hawk Moth originally started its life as a much larger piece. Too large, in fact, for what it was initially intended to be. Because the Hawk Moth was a 3-D piece built on the computer, the sculpting team was able to reduce it in size and print it out again at its current size. With the retirement of the *Death from Above* expansion from the tournament scene, it's safe to assume that more VTOLs will be included in future sets to try to keep the tournament playing scene level between factions.

PHK-2C5-A 'Hellfire' Phoenix Hawk IIC

Unit: PHK-2C5-A "Hellfire" *Phoenix Hawk IIC* #121

Pilot: Trebor Ydek

Point Cost: 208

Faction: Gunslinger

Tactics and Secrets

"It looked like a Phoenix Hawk . . . but it wasn't any Phoenix Hawk that I'd ever seen before . . ."

---Armormaster Jack Russell Beckett

"Hellfire" is an assault that can serve either the melee or ranged combat position in your battleforce, and, at 208 points, it's a good thing it can multi-task.

For the ranged combat portion of your battle, Hellfire offers a 10 inch maximum range, 4 targets (no waiting), and a starting damage of 6. With a speed of 8 and Jump Jets, the effective range with this bad boy and an assault order becomes 14 inches. Combined with a 270 degree front arc and a starting attack of 10, Hellfire is made to bring long-distance ballistic goodness to the enemy's infantry and vehicle units.

Should you find yourself thwarted in your attempts to rain ballistic death, Hellfire is also well-equipped to go toe to toe with any foes with a melee range type on its primary damage slot for 3 and Rapid Strike for 3 more if you might be so inclined. A defense of 21 will also help make sure that once it gets in another unit's way it stays there for a while.

Hellfire has a decent heat dial for those 208 points, with no heat effects showing up until click three when you'll need to concern yourself with a minor shutdown and minor ammo explosion roll. From there Hellfire proceeds to another minor shutdown roll and a major ammo explosion.

Adding Trebor Ydek to Hellfire will net you +2 to its speed value, and a +1 to both attack and defense. Trebor also brings the "Fire from the Sky" ability, allowing him to double the range at a -2 penalty for an attack. Pushing Hellfire to such limits however is not without a cost. In this case, the cost is 1 pushing damage, so use it sparingly. Placing Trebor in Hellfire will cost you 260 points. For an additional 38 points, you can also give Streak Missiles to Hellfire, creating your own 298 pound gorilla.

Design Notes

Players will probably notice some subtle Jade Falcon elements on the *Phoenix Hawk IIC*, which were deliberate even though they may remain a mystery for a while. A preponderance of ATMs made this 'Mech a little difficult to stat out, since redundant weapon systems aren't particularly useful unless you rely on the special equipment assigned to them. With the ability for players to assign their own special equipment, redundant weapon systems take a further kick in the teeth. One of the better solutions is to supply a melee attack where possible, which certainly was possible with the *Phoenix Hawk IIC*.

SH-V-H "Yami" "[Darkness]" *Shiro* #084

Pilot: Kenshin Tadashi

Tactics and Secrets

"It is with great pride that we present what will prove to be a 'Mech that will honor not only the future of the Draconis Combine, but also its glorious past. Ladies and gentleman, behold . . . the **Shiro**."

– Chu-Sa Isamu Takei, at the official military presentation of the **Shiro**

"Yami" will likely be most players' first experience with House Kurita. At 232 points, Yami is a heavy 'Mech in the Kurita style, complete with both ranged and melee weapons.

Yami features a ballistic ranged weapon in its secondary spot, with three targets and a maximum range of 18 inches. The downside? The minimum range on this weapon is 4 inches, which leaves a small "dead zone" you'll need to watch out for. Still, Yami's speed of 8 allows for a ranged combat assault of 22 inches, which can cover any units that decide to try to hide in plain sight.

Your best bet is to keep Yami back and use its range to soften up targets and provide cover for other units. With a defense of 21 and Hardened Armor, Yami can hold its own for a little while. After taking some damage, Yami eventually will run out of ammo and begin to fill its next role: getting up close and personal. Yami's speed will be down by that point, but so is its damage, so don't be afraid to charge in order to close the distance quickly; Yami will only be dealt 1 damage for it. If charging isn't your thing, make sure Yami is in a good position before the ammo runs dry. As with all Kurita units, as Yami declines, its attack value goes up. A starting attack of 9 eventually rises to 12 – with no Salvage in sight.

Yami's heat dial is incredibly lenient, with only three heat effect rolls (all minor) required over its dial. Two appear on click three and one appears on click four, though the last is accompanied by Ammunition Jam.

Adding Kenshin Tadashi to Yami will give it +2 to both its speed and attack values. Kenshin also contributes his Nowhere to Hide ability, which allows him to make indirect-fire ranged combat attacks that ignore the +3 a target would normally receive to its defense. Kenshin can also do a maximum of 3 damage on an indirect-fire ranged attack instead of 2. In Yami's cockpit, Kenshin is well worth his 34 points.

Design Notes The *Shiro* is named for Shiro Kurita, the founder of the Draconis Combine, or House Kurita, and it was chosen by the sculptor. When designing the Kurita 'Mechs, we decided to make them more effective when used with other units. The *Shiro*'s task is to watch over and lay down cover fire for other friendly units on the battlefield; we also hoped to evoke the sense of Shiro Kurita watching over his empire. In addition, in order to convey the never-say-die attitude of the "Pillar of Steel" (House Kurita's military branch), we made the defense and offense of Kurita units inversely proportional; that is, as a Kurita's defense value decreases, its attack value increases. This sometimes posed a challenge in design, but the trade off is that their damage also decreases.

Towed Gauss Rifle

Unit Num	Rank	Faction	Point Cost
009	Green	Stormhammers	18
010	Veteran	Highlanders	19
011	Veteran	Bannson's Raiders	19
012	Elite	Swordsworn	20

Tactics and Secrets

"As a gunner operating Towed Gauss Rifle, you will probably feel primarily like one thing: a target. I'm here to make sure you are a target that bites back."

– Master Sergeant Diego "Skiff" Connors

Another infantry unit with a speed value of 0, this little powerhouse will likely leave tournament players scrambling for transports, at least until the next expansion. With each one capable of delivering 3 damage with a single shot, and almost each one bearing some Improved Targeting, the temptation to take them will likely prove too great to pass by, especially with point value investments ranging only from 18 to 20.

Stormhammers, Green Unit

This unit brings Reactive Armor in hopes of prolonging its lifespan outside of a transport. With an attack of 7, and the only version without Improved Targeting, you may want to invest in at least two in order to provide much needed ranged combat formation support, or use it primarily against weaker infantry. Or invest in Stormhammers pride and keep a reroll up your sleeve.

Highlanders, Veteran Unit

One click of Heavy Armor and two clicks of Improved Targeting come with this version, but with a defense value of 17 it may not survive long outside the confines of a cushy transport. Be sure to use it early and often to get your point value's worth.

Bannson's Raiders, Veteran Unit

This Towed Gauss comes with some Reactive Armor, much like the Stormhammers version does, but it also adds two clicks of Improved Targeting. Chances are good that this Towed Gauss will see the most play of all the versions.

Swordsworn, Elite Unit

One click of Improved Targeting and two clicks of Heavy Armor adorn this 20-point version. Again, keep it safe in a transport and support it with some friends. If one click of Improved Targeting isn't enough, consider a situational alliance with the Stormhammers to allow for one attack reroll during your order stage.

Design Notes

Creating units that are low in cost but that pack a punch is risky business, and players have to decide if they are worth it – especially if such a unit has a speed of 0. Even with set retirement, there are a good number of transports available to take care of this cargo in the Restricted tournament environment, and as time passes we'll continue to keep the transport numbers up unless changes are in order. Any transport porting such high damage potential will likely become a lightning rod on the battlefield.

Valiant

Unit Num	Rank	Faction	Point Cost
085	Green	Swordsworn	116
086	Veteran	Steel Wolves	119
087	Veteran	Highlanders	119
088	Veteran	Bannson's Raiders	122

Tactics and Secrets

"Formerly serving a primary function as a melee 'Mech, the Valiant has been modified with an array of ranged weapons that should make it the premier ranged striker. I will now demonstrate how to keep it at that pinnacle when under fire."

– MechWarrior Cassius Soltan

A light but well-armored 'Mech, the *Valiant* has been modified from a melee machine to a ranged combat expert. All versions offer a lenient heat dial and an attack of 9, making them good assault order machines against lesser targets. Each *Valiant* comes equipped with both the ballistic and energy range types, making them ideal for handling many different unit types.

Swordsworn, Green Unit

At 116 points, this *Valiant* probably has the "worst" heat dial, with two heat effects showing up on click three and continuing into click four. Its speed 8 will give it an effective range of 12 when combined with an assault order. A starting attack of 9 that fades into Improved Targeting will keep this version useful in softening up targets, while a defense of 19 preserves its hide. For an additional 33 points, equip Evade to help prolong its life.

Steel Wolves, Veteran Unit

This 119-point *Valiant* will serve well either in or out of combat, but you'll make the best use of it by keeping it out. With Evade and a defense that gets to be 20, assaulting with this version is the best use for it. With Armor Piercing and a maximum range of 10 (14 with an assault order), this unit will likely be able to soften up any target on the field. To help it reach that sweet spot a little faster, invest in some Steel Wolves pride, which allows you to deal 1 pushing damage to a Steel Wolves unit friendly to you at the beginning of your command stage.

Highlanders, Veteran Unit

This *Valiant* can certainly be used with assault orders, but because of its lower speed value your better bet may be to simply toss it into the fray and keep it from getting tied down by other units. With a starting defense of 20 and Evade, this unit should last long enough to deal out some Armor Piercing punishment.

Bannson's Raiders, Elite Unit

This version is probably the weakest. With only respectable damage and defense values, its only outstanding feature is a speed of 10. Good for assaulting, perhaps, creating a range of 15 if you choose to use it, but probably better suited to staying on the sidelines. Or if you really need it, consider using this version's Alpha Strike to score a quick 8 damage against an unsuspecting target. This *Valiant* won't be long for this world after such an act of defiance, but hopefully you made that 122 points worth it.

Design Notes

The *Valiant* served well in a melee capacity, and we wanted to make a version that would also do it justice at range. Because the sculpt is an older one, it isn't exactly in scale with what a light 'Mech should look like (an understatement), but we went with the letter of the law, if not the spirit. As newer sculpts are created and older ones are phased out, players will see a uniformity in scale on the battlefield as time goes on, which will greatly please the Sculpting department (an understatement).

XNS-01-A "Chikako" Xanthos

Unit: XNS-01-A "Chikako" Xanthos #123

Pilot: Dean Sohnle

Point Cost: 211

Faction: Gunslinger

Tactics and Secrets

"Now, in the Age of Destruction, Victory Conditions Industries ('No battle is won without Victory Conditions.') is pleased to unveil their latest revolution in the world of assault 'Mechs . . . the Xanthos."

Parking this mobile gun platform in hindering terrain certainly isn't the worst thing you could do, as its 21 defense rises to 23 against ranged combat attacks. Once there, you needn't be too concerned about whether or not anything will still be in range, with a maximum range of 14 on the ballistic range type, Streak Missiles, a starting damage of 5, and a 180-degree arc. An energy range type with a maximum range of 8 and damage of 3 will help take care of any 'Mechs that might decide to threaten its position.

As a Quad 'Mech, "Chikako's" initial speed of 8 drops to 7 only after it takes 9 damage! Similarly, its attack also decreases slowly, dropping from 10 to 9 to 8 over the course of 13 clicks. Like most Quad 'Mechs, however, once this Xanthos reaches the end of its lifespan, it degrades quickly, eventually reaching 0 speed and attack on its last click.

Adding Dean Sohnle to Chikako (his preferred 'Mech) only makes things better: The 'Mech's speed, damage, and attack value each increase by 1. He also brings the Outmaneuver special ability, meaning that not much will keep this 'Mech pinned down unless it wants to be.

Chikako's point value is a modest 211. Combined with Dean Sohnle, the point investment rises to 267. If you're looking to enhance Chikako's energy weapon, consider also adding single-use Pulse for an additional 26 points (293 total).

Outside of Chikako (meaning "son of wisdom"), Dean Sohnle will bring his +1 modifiers to the speed, attack, and defense values of any assault 'Mech for 28 points. Unlike most other Quad 'Mech pilots, Sohnle's speed modifier applies to both Quad 'Mechs and their bipedal 'Mech counterparts.

Design Notes

The Xanthos tested the limits of the Quad 'Mech base for us, as the Sculpting department knew it would. Creative positioning and posing eventually got it to the point where we wanted and needed it to be. I can't say that we'll see any other assault-class Quad 'Mechs anytime soon, but now we know – and knowing is half the battle. Quad 'Mech development in general was no easy task; it took several iterations before the final incarnation became clear. (At one point, we had even removed their rear arcs to try to compensate for their perceived weakness of no free spins!) Eventually everything came together, and the Quad 'Mechs are finally striding out onto the battlefield. How long before a classic design makes an appearance? Maybe sooner than you think....

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=39400s

Boris Vassilev

Unit Name:	MAL-XP-A "Blackout" <i>Malice</i>
Pilot:	Boris Vassilev
Faction:	Gunslinger
Unit Number:	076
Point Value:	239

Tactics and Secrets

"mal•ice (noun): A desire to harm others or to see others suffer; extreme ill will or spite."

"*The Terran Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, 12th Edition*"

A new entry into the **MechWarrior** universe, the *Malice* brings long-distance pain to the battlefield, this one for 239 points.

"Blackout" is slow as dirt, with a starting speed value of 6, but with the ballistic range type on both damage values and ranges of 0/12 and 3/14 on its primary and secondary damage values, respectively, you probably won't need to move this bad boy around very much. In addition, both damage values allow you to target two opposing units. Blackout's punch resides in its primary damage value (6), which has Armor Piercing. If you find you need to call on the secondary damage value for its extra 2 inches, you'll have to make do with 3 damage. The only other special equipment you'll encounter comes in on clicks six through nine, where Improved Targeting is available. But beware the heat dial: on click four you'll have an Avoid Shutdown roll and an Avoid Ammunition Explosion roll to deal with. If you don't heed the warnings there, click five presents Ammunition Jam, another Avoid Ammunition Explosion, and Avoid Shutdown: Critical worries. The Blackout's starting attack and defense values come in at 10 and 22, respectively, making it a potential threat even without a pilot. You could give Blackout's defense a boost with Camouflage gear (G-043). The good news is that it costs only 3 points. The bad news is that Blackout will be dealt 1 damage each time it uses it.

If you do decide that a pilot is necessary, slip Boris Vassilev in for a mere 54 points. He'll up Blackout's attack value to 12 and bring its defense up to a more respectable 23. As an added bonus, if you're a lucky roller, you'll make use of Vassilev's "Good Night, Irene" maneuver: If you target a single unit and roll a critical hit, the target is eliminated instead of damaged. For a total of 293 points, this combination creates a decent (if pricey) assault 'Mech.

Design Notes After so many good and bad reads on various **Age of Destruction** forums, some days the bad reads just stick in your mind. It's times like these that you wish you could give those forum-goers a piece of your mind. Fortunately, as a designer, I can't really do that. So instead I have to give something else. So, I decided to give my *Malice*. The *Malice* design was a little shaky in the concept stage, but after deliberations with the artist, Ethan Pasternack (a **BattleTech** fan, like many of us), we got the loadout you see here. Overall, we think this unit turned out beautifully; it offers a new design while holding to the "classic 'Mech" look.

Hellion

Unit Name: HELLION			
Faction:	Rank:	Unit Number:	Point Value:
House Steiner	Green	053	112
House Kurita	Veteran	054	113
House Davion	Veteran	055	113
Republic of the Sphere	Elite	056	114

Tactics and Secrets

"It's been firing on me for the last 20 minutes! It's gotta shut down sometime!"

—Armormaster Jack Russell Beckett

The *Hellion* offers the ballistic range type (2/12 or 4/14, depending on faction) on its primary damage value and the energy range type (0/8 or 0/10, depending on faction) on its secondary damage value—with starting damage values of 2 and 3, respectively. A 180-degree front arc on all its versions makes this light 'Mech handy as a front-line unit, though a starting defense of 19 makes it fairly vulnerable. The *Hellion's* starting speed runs between 8 and 10, and all versions have forgiving heat dials that call for only minor checks.

House Steiner, Green Unit (112 pts.)

The 112-point Steiner *Hellion* has a modest starting speed of 8 coupled with Evade to aid its defense of 18. With ranges of 4/14 and 0/10, however, chances are good this unit won't be near anything that can do it serious harm anyway. To help it fulfill a sniper role, consider adding Armor Piercing (gear G-036) for an additional 23 points. This version has no die-roll heat effects until the final click (unusual for a Steiner/Stormhammers unit . . . maybe they finally found their extra heat sinks!), when Avoid Shutdown and Avoid Heat Sink Overload rolls appear. If you somehow manage to shutdown this little guy, don't vent it; instead, let it lose heat naturally so that you can make your restart roll.

House Kurita, Veteran Unit (113 pts.)

Though the Kurita unit has slightly shorter ranges, with a starting speed of 10 you probably won't miss the extra 2 inches very much. This version offers a starting defense of 19 with Reflective Armor for 113 points, and it doesn't suffer from heat effect rolls until the final click. There, you'll have to deal with an Avoid Shutdown roll and an Avoid Ammunition Explosion roll, which may or may not affect this unit depending on how much damage it's taken. In Kurita style, this unit has a starting attack of 9 that climbs to 10 by the time it's through.

House Davion, Veteran Unit (113 pts.)

For the same 113 points, you might also consider the Davion version, which gives you Armor Piercing and single-use Evade, should it get in a tight spot. This little monster's attack starts at 10, even though it's only for one click. If that isn't enough for you, consider adding the An Ting University graduate pilot (P-015) for a +2 attack. Unfortunately, Davion is still sorting out its heat sink situation, so you'll encounter heat effects on clicks 4 and 5. The good news is that they're minor, and you can vent from shutdown and still encounter a restart roll.

Republic of the Sphere, Elite Unit (114 pts.)

The Republic of the Sphere unit costs only 1 point more than the Veteran versions, features longer ranges, and brings you full-time Evade for five clicks from the very start of the dial. This unit also gives you a starting click with a 10 attack to make the most of its lifespan. You'll encounter an Avoid Shutdown roll on clicks 4 and 5 of this unit's heat dial and an Avoid Heat Sink Overload roll on click 5.

Design Notes

For those familiar with Classic **BattleTech**, this particular *Hellion* is the primary weapons configuration, even though you can't tell by looking at the arms. In sculpting it is sometimes necessary to "mirror" an arm to save time and cost, and this is true whether the piece is done by hand or via computer. One design change the artist made was to move the cockpit from the head to the torso, because it seemed to make more sense to give the pilot enough room to actually sit in the 'Mech. This unit is a computer-generated sculpt done by Vic Bonilla. The pose for this unit turned out well, mostly because it's a light 'Mech and offers more options than heavier 'Mechs.

Jaguar

Unit Name:Jaguar		
Rank:	Unit Number:	Point Value:
Green	049	96
Veteran	050	98
Veteran	051	98
Elite	052	100

Tactics and Secrets

Mass: 35 tons

Chassis: Fortune VII Endo Steel (Quad)

Power Plant: 315 GM XL

Cruising Speed: 76 kph

Maximum Speed: 119 kph

Jump Jets: None

Armor: Compound RSH5 Ferro-Fibrous

Standard Weapons and Ammo: 1 Extended-Range ATM6
1 Medium Laser

– From *Assault Tech Industries’ brochure on their newest design, the Jaguar*

Each version of the *Jaguar* sports the energy range type (0/6) in its primary damage slot and the ballistic range type (4/10, 2/8, or 2/10, depending on the faction) in its secondary damage slot, accompanied by a 270-degree front arc. Starting attack values run from 9 to 10, and starting defenses are modest – 18 or 19 – depending on the version. The bulk of the equipment on the *Jaguar* is in its engine, giving it a starting speed value between 8 and 11.

House Davion, Green Unit

This 96-point Quad ‘Mech offers the lower defense of 18, but it brings Streak Missiles, Pulse, and a reasonably forgiving heat dial until click four, when three minor heat effects appear. To ratchet up the power level, consider adding the Albion Military Academy Graduate pilot from **Age of Destruction** (P-002) for 9 points in order to boost attack and defense by 1 each, and maybe also include the Decoy gear (G-004) for 21 points.

Jade Falcon, Veteran Unit

A lower maximum ballistic range relegates this *Jaguar* as the second ‘Mech in a two ‘Mech battle force. Though it does come with TSEMP on its primary damage value, a maximum range of 6 hurts. Use this ‘Mech to give opposing units (primarily vehicles) order tokens as your primary ‘Mech deals the damage. If you want it for that role, consider adding the Firepower Jade Falcon Star Commander pilot (P-017) for 19 points to get a total speed value of 11, an attack of 12, and a defense of 20.

Dragon’s Fury, Veteran Unit

Sharing the same low range values as the Jade Falcon version, this 98-point unit adds some Evade and Pulse to make up for it. Its starting defense of 18 may make this unit a challenge to keep it around, but it’s 11 speed and forgiving heat dial allows for some rapid strike assault orders.

House Steiner, Elite Unit The slowest *Jaguar*, with a starting speed value of 8, this House Steiner version provides steady Armor Piercing on its secondary damage value for its 100 points. The best course of action will be to augment the starting defense of 19 with a pilot or add some Pulse gear (G-001) from **Age of Destruction** to get in some good shots.

Design Notes

The defense values on the *Jaguar* series of ‘Mechs will probably seem a bit low, but that’s because when designing Quad ‘Mech units it’s important to factor in the hull-down modifier, even though it won’t apply all the time. The sculpting team was very pleased with the scale at which the *Jaguar* came was produced; when compared to the *Thunder Fox*, *Prowler*, and *Xanthos*, the *Jaguar* is quite obviously a light Quad ‘Mech in terms of tonnage.

Morningstar HQ

Unit Name:Moringstar HQ		
Faction:	Unit Number:	Point Value:
House Kurita	037	48
House Steiner	038	49
Bannson's Raiders	039	49
House Davion	040	50

Tactics and Secrets

"We are here to provide direction and support to our forces. The Morningstar is here to keep us safe while we do it."
 – Leutnant-General Colin Turner

The Morningstar HQ is fairly pricey for what it does, which is to give Command to your battleforce. Because the versions are costed between 48 and 50 points, many players will probably pause and wonder if three clicks of Command are worth the price of admission. With defense values that all start at 20 and that have some sort of armor contribution, however, these command vehicles will likely be around for quite some time.

House Kurita, Green Unit

With a steadily rising attack value for 48 points, this version is likely the most versatile of the Morningstar units, and House Kurita players will likely gladly add it to their armories. This unit has Reactive Armor for the same three clicks as its Command and the ballistic range type with a 0/8 range. A steady 2 damage throughout its somewhat short dial gives its 270-degree front arc a purpose even after Command is gone.

House Steiner, Veteran Unit

This 49-point Morningstar has a ballistic range of 0/10, giving it some utility if you decide to keep it in your deployment zone while using its Command and one click of Heavy Armor. Its 180-degree front arc is somewhat limited, but with a speed value of 6 you probably won't want to stray this unit far from your deployment zone anyway. With a starting damage value of 3, Steiner players will probably use this unit to take potshots at incoming units, even with its meager starting attack value of 8.

Bannson's Raiders, Veteran Unit

The Bannson's Raiders Morningstar shares the Command and Heavy Armor of the Steiner version, but it offers a slightly higher speed value of 8 and no repair markers – giving Bannson's Raiders the possibility for some long-lasting Command with the right repair vehicle.

House Davion, Elite Unit

At 50 points, this is the priciest Morningstar out there. In this case, those points are paying for a 0/10 ballistic range weapon, a 270-degree front arc, and Reflective Armor. The speed value is low at 6, so if you plan to move this unit, take some Battle Armor to cover its rear. Because it has an average attack of 8, Davion players may want to consider using their faction pride card (F-012) to reroll a die from an attack roll. Doing so could make this Elite Morningstar as versatile as the Green version.

Design Notes

Considering set retirement and the introduction of the Houses into Age of Destruction, we had planned to introduce a new Command unit with this expansion. While definitely costlier than the previous Mobile HQ units from Dark Age (about twice as much), these do sport better survivability, which we hope will make people seriously consider investing in them. Choosing the Morningstar was really a no-brainer; the look and feel of the unit fits well in the Age of Destruction, even if it may not see much play except in games with larger build totals.

Oni Battle Armor

Unit Name:Oni Battle Armor		
Rank:	Unit Number:	Point Value:
Green	013	18
Veteran	014	20
Veteran	015	20
Elite	016	22

Tactics and Secrets

"They say 'oni' means 'demon.' I don't know if they were demons, but we sure had a devil of a time routing them."

—Colonel Sendoa Caruthers

Decent, if pricey, battle armor, the Oni might still find a place in quite a few battleforces, even with their limited ballistic ranges. If nothing else, they'll certainly find a place in the battleforces of those who prefer the comfort of Improved Targeting: Each variation of the Oni Battle Armor features it, plus a starting defense of 17 and some form of armor special equipment that supplies immunity to energy damage.

Dragon's Fury, Green Unit (18 pts.)

This version sports the bare essentials of Oni Battle Armor: Heavy Armor and Improved Targeting. A front arc of 135 degrees and a ballistic range of 0/6 may limit this unit, but Improved Targeting runs the length of the dial and helps deliver this unit's 2 damage. A speed of 8 makes this unit fairly mobile, so you might consider using it to threaten opposing units.

House Kurita, Veteran Unit (20 pts.)

For the player looking for a little unit with some bite, this might be it. Improved Targeting and Heavy Armor last for only the first two clicks, but this version adds Armor Piercing and a starting damage of 2. If you're feeling lucky, use the two targets to spread the damage around until the damage value drops to 1 on click three. As with other Kurita units, this one will end its life with a high attack (9) and low damage (1).

Bannson's Raiders, Veteran Unit (20 pts.)

The busiest of the Oni Battle Armor units by far, this variation trades Heavy Armor for Reflective Armor and Armor Piercing for Homing Beacon. It might seem like an odd combination, especially with a range of 0/8, but four clicks of Evade should help keep this unit in play until you can put it to use.

House Kurita, Elite Unit (22 pts.)

Not much different from the veteran Kurita unit, this unit merely extends Heavy Armor, Armor Piercing, Improved Targeting, and 2 damage for three clicks. A 180-degree arc helps take advantage of two targets to make the most of your Armor Piercing, and a decent speed (8) will help keep this unit mobile.

Design Notes

For those players who may not yet be aware, when we come out with a "signature" piece for a faction, the faction that "created" it generally gets the lion's share of them. In this case, as a House Kurita signature design, most versions are given to Kurita and their "child" faction, the Dragon's Fury. Eventually, other factions will get versions, but it'll take a little time. Originally, this Battle Armor had Hardened Armor on the Kurita versions to reflect their usual unit design. However, playtesters came back with rightful cries of "are you nuts?" so the Hardened was changed to Heavy. Evident in the Oni Battle Armor is the pervasive samurai design of House Kurita.

Tokugawa Heavy Tank

Unit Name: TOKUGAWA HEAVY TANK			
Faction:	Rank:	Unit Number:	Point Value:
House Davion	Green	033	52
House Kurita	Veteran	034	56
Republic of the Sphere	Veteran	035	56
Dragon's Fury	Elite	036	60

Tactics and Secrets

"This is the Tokugawa Heavy Tank. Once upon a time, this unit was exclusive to our beloved 'friends' in the Draconis Combine. Now, thanks to the wonders of salvage and free enterprise, it's now available to all of us."

—Master Sergeant Diego "Skiff" Connors

The Tokugawa offers moderate damage and fairly solid defense for between 52 and 60 points. Each offers ballistic damage at a maximum range of 10 or 12, a front arc of 360-degrees, and a minimum range of 0, making it one of the least-vulnerable vehicles on the battlefield. The starting defense on each Tokugawa is a decent 20, most likely making it a 'Mech target in combat. Special equipment differs with each faction, but with four versions to choose from, it should be fairly easy for a player to find a good fit for his or her battleforce.

House Davion, Green Unit (52 pts.)

This unit offers up the little-seen Point Defense equipment for the first three clicks, making it a potential candidate to escort your Battle Armor into position before laying some waste. Taking that infantry along with you will also help improve its 8 starting attack. Don't worry about other units keeping up with this Tokugawa, as its starting speed is only 6. This Tokugawa also couples Evade with its Point Defense. Finally, a steady damage of 3 all the way down this unit's 7-click dial should make you consider investing in faction pride card F-012, which lets you reroll a die on an attack roll.

House Kurita, Veteran Unit (56 pts.)

The Kurita version also offers a 7-click dial and Evade for the first two clicks. In addition, it gets complementary Heavy Armor for those clicks. This unit can be sent in without an escort, and a starting speed of 8 will get it into a useful position fairly quickly. After two clicks, this Tokugawa's damage will drop from 3 to 2, where it will remain for the rest of the dial. As with all Kurita units, the attack will rise as defense falls, eventually ending up at a 12 if you manage to find its very last click before destruction.

Republic of the Sphere, Veteran Unit (56 pts.)

The most defensive of the Tokugawas, this Veteran unit doesn't see an increase of its 20 defense, but it does bring Decoy to the table for six clicks. Offensively, it contributes a starting 3 damage with two single-use Armor Piercings. With a speed of 6, you may consider using a transport to get this unit into position a little more quickly, especially if you don't entirely trust that Decoy will keep this unit around until it gets there. A starting attack of 8 may inspire a player of The Republic to invest in faction pride card F-011, which will up a unit's attack value by 1.

Dragon's Fury, Elite Unit (60 pts.)

The Dragon's Fury unit is a unique design in terms of what Tokugawas are capable of. Though it offers the shortest maximum range at 10, it also offers the highest starting damage value at 4 and single-use Homing Beacon all the way down its dial. With damage that decreases to 3, and eventually to 2 on its last non-Salvage click, you may elect not to use it at all. If you do put it to work, however, Improved Targeting all the way down the dial and a starting attack of 9 will pretty much guarantee a hit.

Design Notes

The Tokugawa Heavy Tank is a classic design that's held up well over time, and can be found in TRO 3058 on page 58 for those who may own it. As a designer, I enjoy it because of its dual weapon system: two medium pulse lasers backed up by an LB 10-X autocannon and SRM6 (short-range missile) rack. With two weapons systems (energy and ballistic), if this piece should happen to be drafted by an energy-weapon-heavy faction, the pulse lasers can be reflected on the dial instead of the autocannon. This particular unit was sculpted by one of our sculptors who works by hand, Jeff Wilhelm, who also did last week's *Malice*.

Wahab Fusilli

Unit Name:	"Ôkami" ("Wolf") <i>Rokurokubi</i>
Pilot:	Wahab Fusilli
Faction:	House Kurita
Unit Number:	070
Point Value:	127

Tactics and Secrets

"Ôkami is indeed formidable on the battlefield and a credit to the DCMS. I, however, often wonder which is more the wolf: the 'Mech itself or the pilot."

– Overheard comment

The *Rokurokubi* is the second signature House Kurita 'Mech in *Firepower*, and it continues the Kurita style. "Ôkami" offers a ballistic range type weapon at a range of 3/14, and a melee range type weapon with a 270-degree front arc. Unlike most Kurita units, Ôkami sports Reactive Armor (instead of Hardened Armor) on its starting defense value of 18, which lasts for three clicks as this unit takes potshots at the enemy. With only three heat effects requiring die rolls, and all of them minor, don't be afraid to give Ôkami assault orders. An initial speed value of 10 gives this *Rokurokubi* an effective range of 19 when assaulting. Once Reactive Armor is gone, Armor Piercing appears along with an attack value of 10. When the ammo runs out, this *Rokurokubi* picks up Rapid Strike and an attack value of 11. With a steady 2 damage for both damage values and no Salvage in sight, this 127-point light 'Mech is a nice addition to a Kurita battleforce.

To make a nice addition better, consider adding Wahab Fusilli to Ôkami for an additional 22 points. Formerly a VTOL pilot, Fusilli adds +2 to the speed and defense values of, and +1 to the attack value of, his very own 'Mech. For a total of 149 points, however, tournament players may find his Noble Sacrifice ability lacking: If a friendly 'Mech is declared the target of a ranged combat attack, if Fusilli's 'Mech can be the target instead, it is. Fusilli and Ôkami will probably more readily find their places in games with larger build totals, or in friendly games.

Design Notes

I couldn't believe Wahab Fusilli's name is misspelled on his pilot card (Fusilli should have two "l"s, not one). If I ever forgive myself for that, I'm sure I'll remember how much I enjoy the *Rokurokubi*. Like the *Shiro*, the *Rokurokubi* was named by the sculptor, Vic Bonilla. Whereas the *Shiro*'s job in a battleforce is to lay down cover fire for other units, the *Rokurokubi*'s job is to snipe away at opposing units to soften them up for killing blows from other units. So that's one 'Mech for suppressing the enemy and one 'Mech for sniping at the enemy. Almost sounds like there should be one more, huh?

Bishop Transport VTOL

UNIT: BISHOP TRANSPORT VTOL #029–#032

Tactics and Secrets

"When it absolutely, positively has to be there. Maybe even in one piece."

—Bishop Transport Pilot Stanley Kowalski

With the imminent retirement of the Garrot Super-Heavy Transport from tournament play, some players have speculated whether anything would be available to take its place. The answer is the Bishop Transport VTOL. Although the speed of the Bishop is comparable (all versions weigh in with a starting speed value of 12), the additional points you'll need to spend for a Bishop have all gone to the starting defense value of 18 on each. You'll also have a token ballistic weapon with a range of 0/6 that could come in handy if you're in a tight spot. With starting attack values of 8, this VTOL might even hit something! The biggest differences between the four versions of this unit are in the defense special equipment that come with them. Whichever one you choose, your best bet is to use them for transport only, because you'll get no "shoot and scoot" from them.

House Davion, Green Unit (37 pts.)

The Davion Bishop brings a starting damage value of 2 if you find you need it, and its 18 starting defense value is augmented by two clicks of Heavy Armor. So with a 19 defense at cruising level, this transport is sturdy enough to get just about anything from point A to point B.

Republic of the Sphere, Veteran Unit (39 pts.)

The starting damage value of 2 trails off to 1 after two clicks, but as previously pointed out, this unit should not be a main source of assault power. The Republic Bishop is well girded against anti-aircraft attacks with its four clicks of Reactive Armor and starting 18 defense value. This unit is perfect for lugging around your Republic or Highlander Kelswa Assault Tank (figures #077 and #079 from Falcon's Prey) until you find just the right spot for it on the battlefield.

Clan Nova Cat, Veteran Unit (39 pts.)

Though forced to deal with a ballistic weapon, the Nova Cat Bishop still maintains the 0/6 ballistic range—though the starting damage value is only 1. Still, that seems to have freed up points to put in four clicks of Decoy on this ponderous feline. Be wary, though: The last click is single-use, so try not to let it get that far. This could be a fine casing for a formation of Thunderbird Battle Armor with Pulse.

House Steiner, Elite Unit (41 pts.)

A near copy of the Republic version, the Steiner Bishop also sports Reactive Armor, though for five clicks instead of four. The defense value on the Steiner version also goes downhill faster than the Republic version, so you'll need that extra click of armor. Keep it away from any energy-equipped units, and this transport should serve your battleforce well.

Design Notes

The Bishop Transport VTOL is one of the favorite toys here in the office mostly because of the incredible amount of articulation that we managed to squeeze onto it. All four engines are articulated, as are all four "claws" holding in the payload. You can actually remove the container or leave it on for aesthetic purposes, or maybe even make up your own scenarios with it. We were very impressed with what the factory was able to do with this piece. The Bishop Transport VTOL was conceptualized by Ethan Pasternack and sculpted digitally by David Choi and Robert Kyde.

Julie Kolchak

UNIT: NSR-K1-M "JACK" NIGHT STALKER #071

PILOT: JULIE "JULZ" KOLCHAK GS-023

Tactics and Secrets

"Ask her out? You ask her out. I'd rather not risk getting a very large blade through my head."

—Overheard comment

Fitting this *Night Stalker*, which is intended to be the quintessential urban-combat machine, into your battleforce might seem like a challenge, but it's one that this unit rises to admirably.

"Jack" comes with starting damage values of 3 in both its primary and secondary slots. With a melee attack for its primary damage and an energy attack at 0/10 for its secondary damage, it may seem like Jack will need protecting before it gets in range of opposing units, and looking at its first click might further that notion: It starts with a speed of 10, an attack of 9, and a defense of 20. Be sure to make use of the Infiltrate on its first click. It'll take 1 damage for it, but then Jack clicks right into some Agility, Evade, and Heavy Armor, with consistent stats from the first click. This special equipment trails off at the same time, but not before Jack picks up Hand-to-Hand with a damage value of 0. Transition Jack from a distance sniper to a melee attacker and you should get your 149 points' worth out of it.

On the heat dial front, Jack has only minor heat effects starting on click 4 (counting the starting click as 1). However, once Jack starts running hot, its positive speed heat effects kick in, increasing Jack's assault ranged combat attack. A vent rating of 3 helps encourage Jack to run hot.

Plug in GS-023, Julie "Julz" Kolchak, and speed, attack, and defense will each increase by a modest 1. For her 27 points, Julz also brings "Marked for Death" to your battleforce. This ability decreases the defense values of any opposing 'Mechs within 6 inches of Jack by 1. If you need more, assign Jack some Beagle Active Probe gear for 35 points to give friendly units +1 to their attack values when they target opposing figures within 6 inches of Jack. In total, an effective +2 attack to both Jack and your friendly figures for 211 points. You might consider loading up on cheaper units to accompany Jack, or just one heavy hitter to wreak havoc when Jack hits the enemy front line.

Design Notes

The *Night Stalker* is intended to be more of an urban-combat machine—not something that ports over well into **Age of Destruction**—but the gist of it is there. Interesting articulation points on this piece include the two shoulder-mounted "boxes." These flip down flat and back up. Originally, the Heavy Armor on this unit was Hardened Armor, but testing brought back comments such as, "You make this, you'll have the random population screaming 'Arnis with hardened armor! Oh my god! How could they make this unit!' That said, it does seem perhaps a little too strong." So I traded Hardened for Heavy. Julz and her pilot art are based on our testing coordinator, Julie Haehn, who works so hard to make all our games great. The "Kolchak" part of her name, as well as the 'Mech's name (*Night Stalker*), are nods to *Kolchak the Night Stalker*, a show from the early '70s that my mom enjoyed. This one's for you, Mom! The *Night Stalker* was conceived by Vic Bonilla and hand-sculpted Jeff Wilhelm.

Katana Tormark

UNIT: HK-P-M "KURO HA" ("BLACK BLADE") *HITOTSUNE KOZO* #072

PILOT: TAI-SHU KATANA TORMARK

Tactics and Secrets

"... But I'm on my course now, claiming worlds for the Dragon. People might think I'm nuts, tempting a power as awesome as the coordinator's. And if Vincent Kurita demands my death? I'd do it. Gladly. Because then, finally, I'd belong. I'd be someone's daughter, not a ghost's or a memory's, but a real, flesh-and-blood daughter: a Daughter of the Dragon."

—from Katana Tormark's personal diary

This 156-point *Hitotsune Kozo* is the third signature 'Mech for House Kurita, filling the gap between the long-range *Shiro* and the shorter-range *Rokurokubi*. Featuring the ever-present melee range type in the primary location, for its secondary weapon the *Kozo* brings a 2/10 range with a single ballistic target. A starting damage of 2 on the melee attack holds steady throughout the dial until click 8, where Hand-to-Hand kicks in for the remainder of the dial with an accompanying damage value of 0, making it worthwhile. Having the Hand-to-Hand will come in "handy," seeing as how your ammo will run out at the same time, making it your primary source of damage. Before it leaves, though, your secondary damage will start out at 5 before fading to 3 and then 0. With no special equipment to speak of there, you'll probably want to consider some gear for it. With a 180-degree front arc and the minimum range of 2, infantry will be the big threat for this unit, so you'll do well to avoid any pesky battle armors that might be in the area.

For other stats, the speed value of this *Kozo*, "Kuro Ha," starts at 8 before ending at 6 on click 11, and it includes four clicks of Jump Jets. That'll give you a close combat assault range of 8 inches and a ranged combat assault range of 14, which isn't too shabby for a support 'Mech. The starting attack value is decent as well, starting at 9 before ending with a single click of 12. Kuro Ha definitely is meant to be a close-combat unit at the end of its life. Unfortunately, its defense value around that time makes this a bit difficult. The defense starts out fine at 21 with Hardened Armor for two clicks. After that, it's downhill, but reasonably gradual. By the time you hit your Hand-to-Hand clicks, you'll be down to 18. You might consider equipping this unit with Heavy Armor (G-065) for 35 points.

If you really want the most from Kuro Ha, though, consider putting in Tai-Shu Katana Tormark (L-018) for 37 points. She'll bring +2, +2, and +1 to speed, attack, and defense, respectively, and she'll also install "Unto the Breach," which allows her to add 1 to her damage on a close combat attack and gives her use of the run option when using an assault order to make a close combat attack. Even better, she won't gain 1 heat for using the run option in this way. If 37 points is too steep, but you still like those bonuses, Tormark will fit nicely into any House Kurita or Dragon's Fury medium class 'Mech for 27 points. But really, Kuro Ha is where she wants to be, and for a total of 193 points (156 + 37), she'll make a solid finishing unit for a battleforce.

Design Notes

As noted, this is the third signature 'Mech for House Kurita and most likely the last one to be seen for a while. We've been trying to get out three signature 'Mechs for new and incoming factions, but with smaller sets it sometimes gets difficult, so it may not happen every time. Because we've been doing our best to create relationships between the fiction and the sets when possible, it seemed only fitting that Katana Tormark return in *Annihilation* in her new capacity as a tai-shu of the Draconis Combine. If other recognizable pilots undergo similar changes, we'll do our best to show those as well.

Kisho Nova Cat

UNIT: WNO-VP-M "NEBULA" *WENDIGO* #074

PILOT: KISHO NOVA CAT

Tactics and Secrets

"And now we Nova Cats live on our reservations in the Draconis Combine, beholden to oaths of fealty sworn to House Kurita, having defected from the Clans once we saw the writing on the wall. Having followed the visions that caused our brother Clans to fall on us and kill us by the millions."

—Kisho Nova Cat

A signature piece for Clan Nova Cat, the *Wendigo* is another medium-class design with a surprisingly good range for a faction most known for its lack of good ballistic weaponry. This *Wendigo*, "Nebula," offers a primary ballistic weapon with a range of 4/14 and a secondary energy weapon with a range of 0/12. Both weapons offer two targets, and even though this 'Mech has a fair ballistic range, you'll probably rely more on the energy weapon with a starting damage of 4 than you will on the ballistic weapon with a damage of 3, which drops to 2 fairly rapidly. The starting speed value is fair at 8, and the starting attack is also decent, at 10. The defense values are appropriately Nova Cat-like, starting at 20 and holding until click five, when it drops to 19. The only color you'll find on this dial is Reflective Armor, present on clicks one through four, with the fourth being single-use.

The heat dial, too, seems appropriate; it remains clean until the third click, where a -1 and an Avoid Shutdown roll appear in the speed position. Push this 'Mech once more and you'll encounter -1 modifiers all the way down, accompanied by yellow heat effect checks. If you're far enough down in the dial (click four), the Avoid Ammunition Explosion won't affect you at all. You'll need to worry about only Avoid Heat Sink Overload and Avoid Shutdown.

Overall, you may want to keep Nebula out of the middle of combat and let it take potshots when it can. Consider adding some single-use Evade (G-066) for 22 points. And while we're adding CECs, you should also consider adding Kisho Nova Cat to Nebula, raising its speed, attack, and defense values by +2, +1, and +1, respectively. Kisho will also be able to use Trained Eye, which gives him a two-out-of-three chance to ignore Decoy and defense special equipment with "armor" in the name for the duration of a ranged combat or assault order. This is regardless of whether he's using Nebula's primary or secondary weapon. Kisho will cost you 27 points in Nebula (or 16 points in any other medium Nova Cats or Spirit Cats 'Mech), bringing its point value total to 209 (160+22+27).

Design Notes

The *Wendigo* is another Nova Cat design that the electronic game player may liken to the *Wendigo* mentioned in **MechAssault 2**, if I recall correctly. This particular one is not that one. In the Age of Destruction, Clan Nova Cat has turned the design into a completely new OmniMech, rather than a modification of an existing one. All the signature Nova Cat figures are sculpted so that aesthetically, their weapon arms are interchangeable with each other to help support the OmniMech concept. Originally we requested that the arms of both the *Wendigo* and *Shadow Cat* actually be physically removable and modular, and we met with minimal success. Although it can be done, I don't necessarily advise doing it because of potential breakage and loose joints that might develop over time. Kisho's curious pilot ability stems in part from his mystic background, which is explored a bit more in the novel *Heretic's Faith*. The *Wendigo* was conceived and designed by Vic Bonilla.

Morrigan

UNIT: MORRIGAN #053–#056

Tactics and Secrets

"In mythology, the Morrigan chooses which warriors will die. As a pilot of the TSEMP-equipped Morrigan, you will do the same."
—Shujin Thomas Kurai

Running the gamut in price from 94 to 116 points, the *Morrigan* has the potential to be a mini-monster on the battlefield. Each incarnation is Jump Jet- and TSEMP- equipped, sports a starting defense of 20 or 21, and is speedy enough to run rings around the opposition. For many it makes a nice supporting piece; a few may try to build a battleforce around it. The *Morrigan* offers the energy range type on its primary weapon and the ballistic range type on its secondary weapon, each with a single target (except for the Dragon's Fury version). Starting attacks range from 8 to 10, and each sports a very lenient heat dial with no heat effects appearing until click four (with the starting click as click one). In addition to that, each has only yellow heat effect checks to contend with, so the high rolling player should have no problem with any of these units.

Sea Fox, Green Unit (94 pts.)

The Sea Fox unit follows previous Sea Fox designs, remaining defensive until click three, when attack and damage really kick in. This trait makes it one of the more difficult units to use. Primary and secondary ranges check in at 0/10 and 4/12, respectively, with starting damages of 1 and 2. To help you hurry this unit along to click three are two instances of single-use TSEMP. You'll lose your defense of 20 and attack of 8, but gain a primary damage value of 3 and an attack of 10. With no repair markers, you still may find this unit appealing; if it's too tricky for your style, consider one of the other versions instead.

Clan Nova Cat, Veteran Unit (108 pts.)

The Nova Cat variant brings primary and secondary ranges of 0/12 and 0/10, complemented by a starting attack of 9 and starting defense of 21. With a speed of 10 (giving this unit an assault range of 17), there's no reason not to use it for assaulting. Adding a Clan Nova Cat Star Commander (P-025) for 10 more points gives you +1 to speed, attack, and defense.

Dragon's Fury, Veteran Unit (108 pts.)

With a definite detriment in range (0/8 and 0/12 with two ballistic targets), the Dragon's Fury unit tries to compensate with a speed value of 12 and two clicks of Improved Targeting later on the dial. With a starting attack of 10 and defense of 20, you might consider assigning Duchess Katana Tormark (L-001, **Age of Destruction**) to it for 21 more points and final starting values of 14 speed, 12 attack, and 21 defense.

Spirit Cats, Elite Unit (116 pts.)

With the same ranges as its Nova Cat predecessor, the Spirit Cats version offers a steady primary damage value of 2 all the way down its dial, a single starting click of Decoy on its 21 defense, and only two yellow Heat Sink Overload heat effects to check for. For an additional 9 points, think about adding the Frihet Training Facility Graduate (P-027) for an additional +1 to attack and defense.

Design Notes When looking for a faction to showcase the TSEMP technology (first introduced in *Falcon's Prey*), the Spirit Cats/Clan Nova Cat immediately came to mind. The Morrigan wound up being more of a collaborative effort between House Kurita and Clan Nova Cat, as evidenced by the lack of distinctive Nova Cat design elements. Though it turned out a bit lighter in weight than we intended, we were all pleased with the design of the TSEMP weapon. The *Morrigan* was conceived by Todd Lubsen and sculpted in 3-D by David Choi.

Ravager Battle Armor

UNIT: RAVAGER BATTLE ARMOR #017–#020

Tactics and Secrets

"Personally, I just like the name. Imagine a military force closing in with Ravagers and Violators. I know that I would be pretty concerned if I were on the receiving end of that."

—Shia-ben-bing Glenn Stillson

Ravager Battle Armor is a bit more survivable than most infantry despite a relatively short dial, between 5 or 6 clicks. Each version offers a starting defense of 19 and starting damage of 2—and with a short range of 0/8, you'll need that added defense. They all sport armor of some sort, which will help keep them around for a bit.

Bannson's Raiders, Green Unit (19 pts.)

Bannson's adds Reactive Armor and Point Defense to their version. Though the dial is short at 5 clicks, the damage value of 2 is steady. With an attack value of 7, you'll definitely want more than one, and while you're at it you might also slip in a unit with Repair.

House Kurita, Veteran Unit (20 pts.)

Almost a duplicate of the Bannson's Raiders version, House Kurita slips in 3 clicks of Heavy Armor on their unit, making the ballistic range type one of the few things that's going to stop them. Their attack value starts at 7, eventually topping out at 10, though it's accompanied by a declining damage value.

House Steiner, Veteran Unit (21 pts.)

The slowest of the Ravagers (its speed value is 6, compared to most others at 7 or 8), this Steiner version opts for Reflective Armor to ward off the energy range type. They also come with a starting attack of 8, better than the previous two. You'll probably still want a formation of them so that you can capitalize on their two clicks of Armor Piercing.

House Davion, Elite Unit (22 pts.)

In the middle of speed values with a 7, the House Davion version comes with Reactive Armor, along with a single click of Armor Piercing. With the same longevity as House Steiner (six clicks) and the same starting attack values, you might consider taking this version instead for its protection against the ballistic range type. Be wary, though, as this version's attack value drops faster than the Steiner version's and might leave you in the lurch if you aren't careful.

Design Notes

Ravager Battle Armor was intended to be assault-class battle armor, but it didn't quite turn out that way in the dial design. Because the desire was to keep point values relatively low in order to help this set be more supportive, this unit didn't quite get all the clicks that it perhaps should have. Chances are good, however, that this shortcoming will be remedied in a future set, should we use this sculpt again. The Ravager Battle Armor was conceptualized by Ethan Pasternack and sculpted by hand by Ben Saunders.

Scott Graves

UNIT: HL-SS-L "QUANTUM" HELLION #069

PILOT: SCOTT GRAVES GS-021

Tactics and Secrets

"Vassilev?! If I ever work with that maniac again it'll be too soon."

—Scott Graves

It's another light 'Mech, but don't dismiss this *Hellion* too quickly. "Quantum" actually has a few things going for it. The ranges are similar to those found in the *Firepower* set: a 4/12 ballistic range type on primary damage with a starting value of 2, and a 0/10 energy range type (two targets) on secondary damage with a starting value of 3. So what makes Quantum more expensive than your average *Hellion*? A 270-degree front arc for starters, along with higher defense and speed values topped off by positive speed heat effects.

Quantum offers up starting values of 12, 9, and 20 for speed, attack, and defense, respectively, giving Quantum an effective 18-inch assault distance in ranged combat. As far as special equipment goes, the only thing you'll find on this 119-point *Hellion* is Reactive Armor for four clicks. On the heat dial, you'll encounter one minor heat effect check on the fourth click. The real trouble comes on click five, where three minor heat effect checks rear their ugly heads. Still, if you're a lucky roller you might run Quantum that hot in order to get an additional +2 to its speed.

To increase Quantum's utility even more, assign GS-021, Scott Graves, to it and watch its attack and defense both jump by +2. Yes, that's right: the first recruitable 'Mech pilot who adds +2 to defense. Graves will also impart his "If at First" ability, which allows him to reroll any number of dice from his attack roll. At 32 points, he's a sniper to die for. Add Evade gear (G-002, **Age of Destruction**) for 33 points, and the only thing Quantum may need to watch out for are units charging out of desperation. Overall it's a pricey combination at 175 points, but one worth considering.

Design Notes

Making unique versions of formerly common units can be challenging, because the temptation is always to try to make them better than their common counterparts—but not too much so. Overall, Quantum turned out well. The real chance being taken is its pilot, Scott Graves. A +2 to defense on a light 'Mech was heretofore unheard of, but more than a few players wanted to see light 'Mechs speedier and harder to hit. Some have suggested that we start designing speedier light 'Mechs with higher defenses and slower but easier-to-hit heavier 'Mechs, but if such a thing were to be wholly implemented, it likely wouldn't be until the next new base set. The *Hellion* is an existing design in Classic BattleTech (see Technical Readout: 3067), this one sculpted digitally by Vic Bonilla.

Solitaire

UNIT: SOLITAIRE #049–#052

Tactics and Secrets

“Old stock?” Hardly. That’s a ‘proven classic.’”

—Overheard comment from Clan Sea Fox

The *Solitaire* is definitely one of the cheapest light ‘Mechs available, ranging in cost from 98 to 102 points. Each version offers a high speed value, starting at 12 or 14. With a maximum range generally topping out at 10, this unit has a decent assault distance of 16 for ranged combat. The damage values are fairly high as well for a light ‘Mech, generally starting at 3 or 4. The biggest challenge of using the *Solitaire* is watching its painful heat dial and keeping it away from opposing units. Though it has a slightly better starting defense value than most light ‘Mechs do, a 20 will still only let it go so far. Be sure to put in a pilot with at least +1 to defense. Each *Solitaire* has the energy range type on both primary and secondary damage, with a 0/6 and 0/10 range, respectively.

Clan Sea Fox, Green Unit (98 pts.)

Tricky Clan Sea Fox adds this unit to their ranks, which brings a lower damage value of 2 for both primary and secondary—until it gets riled. The starting speed value of 12 is enhanced by Evade for two clicks, allowing you to zip it around your opponent and take pot shots with the starting attack value of 8 (again, make sure to add a pilot). Once it gets angry, the damage values will move up to 3 and 4, with the primary damage value of 3 also having Pulse. The attack shoots up as well, at 10 for clicks three and four. The heat dial for this unit is fairly lenient considering the other variants; you’ll have minor heat effect checks on clicks three and four, only hitting major checks on click five. This unit isn’t easy to use, but you can beef it up with gear and a pilot to be pretty annoying until you get damaged enough to hit a “sweet” click and tear into an opposing unit.

Republic of the Sphere, Veteran Unit (100 pts.)

This unit starts out fairly survivable. The 20 starting defense value includes three clicks of Decoy. Starting damage values are 3 and 4, respectively, for primary and secondary, and a decent starting attack of 9 (for three clicks!) helps this unit to be a good long-distance harasser. If you can stand it, put in the Master Sergeant pilot (P-026) for 16 points to get +2 to attack. Even though this pilot doesn’t provide any defense modifier, an attack of 11 will be nothing to sneeze at, and you can always add on some Evade gear (G-002, Age of Destruction) for 33 points to protect it at range. For a total of 149 points, this *Solitaire* makes for a decent support unit.

Bannson’s Raiders, Veteran Unit (100 pts.)

Speedier than the previous two units, with a starting speed value of 14, the Bannson’s Raiders *Solitaire* effectively gets a ranged combat assault range of 17 inches with the secondary damage value. With one click of Evade, this unit can easily become a bit of a sniper for your battleforce. If you decide to try to beef it up to help withstand some punishment, you could possibly make good use of its three clicks of Pulse on its primary damage value. As far as its heat goes, this is the best *Solitaire* of the bunch, with Avoid Heat Sink Overload and Avoid Shutdown heat effects on clicks four and five of the dial, accompanied by –1 modifiers.

House Kurita, Elite Unit (102 pts.)

A starting speed value of 14 makes this *Solitaire* a possible sniping candidate as well, although the starting damage values of 3 may put you off. Before you dismiss this one, though, bear in mind that the 20 defense value is accompanied by two clicks of Kurita’s ever-present Hardened Armor. If anything, this is your candidate for some Evade gear and a pilot. The starting attack value is even decent at 9. The only dangerous part here is a nasty heat dial with a minor heat check on click three, two minor checks on click four, and then a minor, major, and an engine shutdown on click five. If you’re confident of your heat management abilities, Wahab Fusilli (L-008, Firepower) for 15 more points will get you +2, +1, and +2 to your speed, attack, and defense, respectively. That’s a starting defense of 22 with Hardened Armor. Add on Evade (G-002, Age of Destruction) for 33 more points, and you’re at 24 defense at range for 150 points. Not bad for a start to a battleforce.

Design Notes

The *Solitaire* is a “classic” design from the pages of BattleTech Technical Readout 3067, one of our favorite Technical Readouts here in the office. Originally created by Clan Sea Fox (then Clan Diamond Shark), we thought it was only fair that they should get a *Solitaire* despite their nomadic existence. We had been hoping to make this sculpt “moddable” in regards to the large laser, but because it’s so carefully integrated into the torso, it proved to be too difficult. Still, we were very pleased with the scale and overall design of this figure. The *Solitaire* was hand-sculpted by Jeff Wilhelm.

Thunderbird Battle Armor

UNIT: THUNDERBIRD BATTLE ARMOR #021–#024

Tactics and Secrets

"Here's a little guy with a big gun. Please post any comments."

—Comment from sculptor Ben Saunders

Just as expensive as Ravager Battle Armor, Thunderbird Battle Armor offers two main differences: Jump Jets and a lower defense value. So for the same points you get a slightly more mobile but fragile unit that has the potential to heat up opposing 'Mechs if it deals damage. The Thunderbird Battle Armor also starts with 2 damage, though it declines more rapidly than the Ravager's.

Spirit Cats, Green Unit (19 pts.)

The Spirit Cats bring Pulse and Reflective Armor to their Thunderbird Battle Armor in their bid for survivability. A starting attack of 7 for their 0/8 energy range type means they need support; otherwise, you're going to have a relatively pricey piece of technology running amok to pin things down or add the called-shot modifier.

Clan Nova Cat, Veteran Unit (21 pts.)

The Nova Cat variant adds nothing to its Jump Jets, but it brings a 0/10 energy attack and a 180-degree arc. Unfortunately, there isn't much else here except for a more gradual decline. Though it may slip in an attack before its unfortunate end, it may end up in base contact with other units more often than not.

Bannson's Raiders, Veteran Unit (21 pts.)

With a starting speed value of 9, this is the fastest Thunderbird Battle Armor. You might find this piece a bit more usable, as it has Decoy for the length of its dial and Improved Targeting for the last five clicks. Unfortunately, a 0/6 range on its energy range type means that it probably won't be around for long, regardless of Decoy. Consider augmenting this unit with a situational alliance or faction pride card.

Clan Nova Cat, Elite Unit (23 pts.)

Back to a 0/10 energy range type, this one also gets three clicks of Pulse, a starting attack of 8, and a starting defense of 18. That still doesn't make it the most survivable battle armor out there, but it makes it one that packs more of a punch than some.

Design Notes

I know what you may be thinking: Cats get three versions of this? Players who have been around for a few sets will take this seeming oddity for what it usually means. This is a signature piece for Clan Nova Cat, giving them several versions in its first appearance before other factions start getting their hands on them. Initially, the Thunderbird was going to be a VTOL design, but the Bishop VTOL was already in progress. The Thunderbird Battle Armor was conceived by Ethan Pasternack and sculpted by hand by the ever-talented Ben Saunders.

Fortune & Glory

Tactics and Secrets

"Pfft. My friend, most people get killed chasing after Fortune and Glory."

—Overheard comment

"Fortune" and "Glory" feature identical stats, befitting their twin status, so the only decision you really need to make is whether its ballistic or energy might you're after. Each Nyx has a primary energy range type with 0/10 range and a secondary ballistic range type with 4/10 range. 270-degree arcs makes them difficult to sneak up on, and a respectable starting speed of 10 and attack of 9 are good starts for support 'Mechs. The only problem some players might have is the starting defense of 19.

Both units cost a modest 112 points and bring two clicks of Evade to the field. Fortune (unit #114) includes three clicks of Armor Piercing, and Glory (unit #115) includes three clicks of Pulse, both coming with a starting damage value of 2. Each one's remaining starting damage value begins at 3. Combined with forgiving heat dials that include no heat effects until their fifth clicks, these units have interesting potential.

Combine these units with their respective pilots, Fortuna Pannichello (GS-032) and Gloria Pannichello (GS-033), and you'll raise the point values of these units to 140 each, while getting +2, +2, and +1 to speed, attack, and defense, respectively, in return. You'll also get their Double Team ability, which gives them an additional +1 to their attack values against 'Mechs and, when used in the same battleforce, gives one an order (not from your order total) whenever the other one receives an order. With a combined point value of 280, Fortune and Glory will most likely appear in more casual games, but an aspiring few may decide to put the twins into a 450-point game.

Design Notes

Fortune and Glory are an experiment to see if there's a place for sympathetic gunslinger abilities. Even though those units won't see much tournament play, we like to make sure we don't forget about the casual MechWarrior player. We always wanted to do some sort of "twin" gunslingers in the game, and the idea of Fortuna and Glory was actually put forth by 3-D sculptor Vic Bonilla. The Nyx was designed by John Bear Ross and sculpted in 3-D by Vic Bonilla. This modified form was conceived and sculpted by Vic Bonilla.

Julian Davion

Tactics and Secrets

"If you can't shoot 'em, smash 'em."

—Overheard comment

A medium 'Mech for House Davion, this *Enforcer III* has a decent range of 0/12 for both its primary energy range (with two targets) and its secondary ballistic range (also with two targets). A 180-degree front arc makes those two weapons fairly versatile, along with starting damages of 3 for each. Starting speed, attack, and defense values of 8, 9, and 20, respectively, are ripe for modifiers from a good pilot.

"Damocles" comes with Anti-Personnel on its ballistic range as well as Jump Jets on its speed value for four clicks. It also offers up two clicks of Command for its 157 points. House Davion also found some heat sinks for this particular incarnation of the *Enforcer III*, meaning no heat effects until click four. Even then, clicks four and five of the heat dial offer only minor heat effects, avoided on rolls of 3–6. Though this is an expensive medium 'Mech, a Davion player will probably still find a place for it in a battleforce.

If you're willing to spend another 36 points, consider pilot Julian Davion (L-030) to gain +1, +2, and +1 to speed, attack, and defense. You'll also get his ability to move up to his unit's speed value and make a close combat attack against a target after resolving a ranged combat attack (not necessarily a successful one) against that target. Overall, you'll get a 'Mech better suited to taking out support rather than taking on the big guys.

Design Notes

The *Enforcer III* features some of the elements of style being adopted for House Davion, also known as the Federated Commonwealth: clean, straight lines sometimes augmented with large plates—a more classic look than most factions have. Although the Davions are better known for their firepower than their heat management, this *Enforcer III* gives a better-than-Davion performance. It also features an arm intended to pivot to offer either a melee attack or an energy one. This versatility in Davion 'Mech design may become a staple. The *Enforcer III* was conceptualized by Vic Bonilla and sculpted by hand by Jeff Wilhelm.

Lars Magnusson

"The Ursus isn't for everyone. When you first start piloting it, it can be a real bear of a 'Mech."

—Lars Magnusson

A 157-point medium 'Mech, the Rasalhague Dominion's *Ursus*, "Ull," may even find its way into some other battleforces for the stats it has. Though extremely light on special equipment, this unit's combat values go a long way in carrying it. The only color you'll find on this dial is five clicks of Pulse at the very end, so depending on your use of Ull, you'll probably want to assign some gear to it.

Ull comes with a two-target energy primary range value of 0/10 and a two-target ballistic secondary range value of 2/12. The starting damage on each is a 2, gradually progressing to 4 and 3, respectively. Your starting speed, attack, and defense values are 8, 9, and 21, but the best thing is the staying power of two of those values. The attack value remains at 9 for eight clicks before hitting 10 for the last two able clicks of the dial, and the defense value remains at 21 through click five before beginning a downward turn.

The downside to Ull isn't quite the heat dial, because you'll encounter only minor heat effects there, starting on click four. The challenge is primarily in its speed, which drops to 6 when the damage values start getting high. With a short assault range, you may want to do whatever you can to increase this 'Mech's speed.

That remedy could be as simple as adding pilot Lars Magnusson for 32 points. Though he won't add to your defense, he'll give a +2 to both speed and attack, improving the assault distance and giving a solid 11 attack through most of the dial. Magnusson also "improves" Ull's damage value by virtue of his Inhuman Speed special ability: When Ull targets multiple figures with a ranged combat attack and succeeds against more than one, it scores its damage value against each unit successfully hit instead of dividing it between them. A hefty 189-point investment, but well worth it for those who like a little stability in their battleforces.

Design Notes

The *Ursus* is an existing BattleTech design, slightly updated and altered for the Rasalhague Dominion. Since Clan Ghost Bear assumed the military aspect of the Rasalhague Dominion, we felt it was important that their units reflect Clan Ghost Bear rather than the Rasalhague Republic. As a Clan Ghost Bear design, the *Ursus* already bore quite a few of the desired features of the Rasalhague Dominion: an imposing size, heavy-looking armor, and skull accents. Because of those features, we made a few alterations to this final version of the *Ursus*, and you'll also find such features in the other Rasalhague Dominion 'Mech, the *Karhu*. The *Ursus* was conceptualized and digitally sculpted by David Choi.

Phoenix Hawk

Tactics and Secrets “Wait . . . Phoenix Hawk . . . one? They won’t be satisfied ‘till there’s one in every class, will they?”
—Sergeant Ty Stiller

This modified *Phoenix Hawk* (now the *Phoenix Hawk I*) sports good ranges, good attacks and even better speed, but the not-exactly-stellar defense still remains. Even so, with starting speed values of 10 or 12, a secondary ballistic range type of 0/12 to 0/16 and Jump Jets, you might find yourself willing to pay the higher price of these light ‘Mechs.

Clan Nova Cat, Green Unit (114 pts.)

Continuing the tradition of exceedingly nice energy weapons, Clan Nova Cat has their version sporting a secondary energy range type of 0/16, with two clicks of TSEMP as well. As expected, the primary ballistic range value is wanting at 0/8, but comes in handy against any infantry on the field. Their starting damage values of 2 and 3 for primary and secondary are quite decent, as is the starting speed value of 10 with four clicks of Jump Jets and the defense value of 19. Consider adding the Star Commander pilot (P-025, MW: Annihilation) for 10 points for a +1 to speed, attack and defense.

Republic of the Sphere, Veteran Unit (117 pts.)

Another of the preponderance of ‘Mechs The Republic receives in Domination, most notable is the amount of color you’ll find on this unit’s dial. The primary and secondary ranges weight in at 0/10 and 0/14, respectively, with damage values of 2 and 3. The ballistic weapon benefits from four clicks of Artemis V Fire-Control System while the starting defense of 20 gets a single click of Reflective Armor to aid it. The Republic lacks a well-rounded light ‘Mech class pilot, but if you only care about the successful shot try adding the Master Sergeant pilot (P-026, MW: Annihilation) for 16 points to get a mighty +2 to your attack.

Clan Jade Falcon, Veteran Unit (117 pts.)

Sacrificing defense and range for speed and attack? Invest in a Clan Jade Falcon variant. Your ranges will change to 0/8 and 0/12, but you’ll gain a starting speed value of 12 with five clicks of Jump Jets and a starting attack value of 10 with two clicks of Improved Targeting at the end of the dial if you need them. Curiously, you’ll also find two clicks of PPC Capacitor on the secondary damage value. With a vent of 3, you may want to make use of it. For even more pain, add the Star Commander (P-017, MW: Firepower) for 19 points and get +2 to attack and +1 to add to the starting defense of 19.

House Kurita, Elite Unit (120 pts.)

With similar ranges to the Jade Falcon unit (0/8 and 0/12), this version will let you keep the starting speed value of 12 and toss in a starting defense value of 20 with one click of Hardened Armor. Not bad if you want a unit to get (hopefully) at least one shot off before taking the big hit. If you don’t have pilot Wahab Fusili to put in (L-008, MW: Firepower), look out for the Kashira, P-036 in this set to get a +2 to attack and a +1 to defense for 19 points.

Design Notes

This particular sculpt is an example of one of the sculpts we inherited with a scale problem. As we’re wont to do when a sculpt has an existing form and seems exceptionally out of line with it, this *Phoenix Hawk* has become a *Phoenix Hawk I*. The original *Phoenix Hawk* can be found in the BattleTech universe and exists as a ‘Mech of medium tonnage (between 40 and 55 tons). While we liked the sculpt for this one, it’s far too small to be qualified as a medium, so the designation was changed to “light.” We know some players take issue sometimes with our idea of “exceptionally out of line,” but we try to make the best decisions we can. The modification for this figure (the newly added missile rack) was sculpted by hand by Jeff Wilhelm.

Scourge

Tactics and Secrets "I find that the name of the Scourge certainly fits its spirit."

—Tai-shu Eric DuVall

A new heavy class 'Mech design, the *Scourge* offers heavy firepower at a very decent speed. Each *Scourge* comes with a starting defense of 21 and an attack value of 9. Depending on which *Scourge* you take you'll get a starting speed of 8 or 9 with Jump Jets, though each *Scourge* will bring you a ballistic range type for its primary damage value and an energy range type for its secondary range type. Combined with a lenient heat dial, the *Scourge* may be the new heavy on the block.

House Kurita, Green Unit (190 pts.)

The House Kurita unit primary and secondary ranges check in at 0/10 and 0/8, respectively, with starting damages of 4 on both. You also get two targets for your secondary damage value, five clicks of Jump Jets with your starting speed of 10 and two clicks of Hardened Armor. With no heat checks until click four and a final attack value of 12 at the end of it's dial (for four clicks), Kurita players will probably be happy to add this bit of firepower to their front lines.

Republic of the Sphere, Veteran Unit (194 pts.)

Part of their bonanza of 'Mech units, The Republic will be glad to check in this version with two targets for both primary and secondary ranges, which are at 0/14 and 0/10. The Republic also gets starting damage values of 4 for each weapon, though it brings six clicks of Jump Jets and Heavy Armor, giving it a little more survivability. It also carries a 270-degree front arc to capitalize on those two targets it can choose, and features only minor heat effects on clicks four and five of the heat dial. This is another good heavy to send out first into the thick of things.

Clan Nova Cat, Veteran Unit (194 pts.)

Though the ballistic range suffers a bit on this version at 0/10, the energy range with two targets is decent at 0/12. The Pulse for five clicks at a damage value of 4 is the real selling point for this unit, despite the speed value of 8. Like the Republic version, the Clan Nova Cat *Scourge* has six clicks of Jump Jets. Unlike the Republic version, this unit gets one minor heat effect check on click four, and one minor and one major heat effect check on click five. Still a decent unit to send in to get the job done, though you'll want to add a pilot or some armor to this one.

Rasalhague Dominion, Elite Unit (196 pts.)

Rasalhague players get a heavy 'Mech to test their mettle with, as they begin wrestling with their dial design. This version has a single ballistic target at 0/14 and two energy targets at 0/10. The damage value of 0 on the primary damage value is no mistake; this bear doesn't start getting angry until click 4, where a damage value of 3 appears, hitting 4 at the end of its dial. The secondary damage value of 3 also ends at 4 at the end of it's life, picking up Pulse for the last five able clicks. A starting attack value of 9 stays steady through click 7 before increasing to 10 for clicks eight through twelve, and the speed value of 8 offers Jump Jets for the first seven clicks. While other units get weaker, this one gets stronger, eventually ending up with a nasty punch that has the potential to finish off other 'Mechs at the end of their lifespan.

Design Notes

The *Scourge* is a new design, intended to bring a punch to the battlefield courtesy of a Gauss Rifle, combined with a decent heat dial. In some cases when we start considering new 'Mech designs, we start with a name which helps to drive the design along. The team contributes to a list of both 'Mech names and nicknames, which was consulted in this case, and now the reasonably quick and hard-hitting unit appears here. The *Scourge* was conceived and sculpted by hand by the ever-talented Jeff Wilhelm.

Simian Battle Armor

Tactics and Secrets "Great. That's all this battle needs; flying monkeys."

—Captain Sally Dubois

Battle armor for some of the speed-deprived, at least three of the four factions that receive them will probably be happy to see these despite the lower defense values. Each Simian Battle Armor has a maximum defense value of 17 and an attack value of 7. Speed values range from 8 to 10 depending on the faction.

House Steiner, Green Unit (16 pts.)

House Steiner continues to show a deficit in the horsepower area, as their Simian Battle Armor keeps a starting speed value of 8. A starting damage value of 2 with Flamers helps this unit a little bit, though the attack value of 7 almost guarantees you'll never see it alone. Three clicks of Jump Jets make it a little more mobile.

Wolf Hunters, Veteran Unit (18 pts.)

Even though it needs a click of damage before hitting it's stride, this version is probably the most useful one. The Wolf Hunters come away with what eventually becomes a speed 10 unit with Jump Jets for the length of it's five-click dial. Added to that are three clicks of Flamers on the front end of this dial. Both Flamers and Jump Jets on click one will incur damage if you use them, making it fairly simple to hit that speed value of 10 on click two. Otherwise, the Wolf Hunters continue to suffer from the same energy weapon detriment that the Steel Wolves have. This unit comes away with a 270-degree front arc and an energy range type of 0/6.

House Liao, Veteran Unit (18 pts.)

If you're not happy with the range of the Wolf Hunters version, consider this one instead. House Liao starts out with that speed value of 10 and also throws in a starting defense value of 18. An energy range type of 0/8 and 180-degree arc rounds out this infantry unit. Though this unit is augmented by only four clicks of Jump Jets, Liao players will probably still find a place for its six-click dial in their battleforce.

House Davion, Elite Unit (20 pts.)

House Davion gets another energy-damage immune unit with their version of the Simian. An energy range type of 0/8 with a 270-degree arc, this one compliments four clicks of Jump Jets with four clicks of Reflective Armor. This one continues the parade of speed value 10 units, and should make for a good option for the Davion player looking for a decent harasser without necessarily having a lot of bite.

Design Notes

If there ever happens to be any "down time" between MechWarrior sculpting frenzies and no other lines need any assistance, sculptors will often pursue creating additional designs, both for their own satisfaction and for possible inclusion in a future set. The Simian Battle Armor is a product of this exercise. Created before being given a name or stats to work with, the sculptor merely wanted to see about creating some new and interesting battle armor. With some minor modifications, this piece was included in Domination. The Simian Battle Armor was conceived and hand-sculpted by Ben Saunders.

SLR-AV-L "Diamond Jack" Solitaire

Tactics and Secrets "I would rather be a lucky MechWarrior than a skilled MechWarrior."

-Wiley Rollins

Diamond Jack is a straight-forward 'Mech: it's fast, its damage is steady, and with a good pilot, it can hit quite well. Adding Wiley Rollins to his standard ride will make the Solitaire even more likely to hit. Although Diamond Jack's 10-inch maximum range is a bit low, its 12-inch starting Speed, combined with Wiley's +1 Speed modifiers and his ability to turn 3s into 6s makes for a nasty 17-inch striking range on an assault order, with an average attack result of 21 **after** the assault modifier. Jack's Heat Dial is a little dangerous, including three separate chances to shut down (one through cascade), and one Weapons Offline result, but an above-average vent rating makes it much easier to recover from running hot. Although Rollins will have to drive Diamond Jack up close and personal to deal damage to the enemy, he isn't entirely unprotected from return fire, boasting three starting clicks of Reflective Armor. After losing its armor, Wiley kicks in the targeting computer, gaining five full clicks of Improved Targeting before finally drifting off into Salvage.

Troubled by Situational Alliances? Want a chance to do away with them each turn, while still keeping a useful 'Mech in your battleforce and not breaking the bank? The alternate version of Wiley Rollins in Diamond Jack is just the way to do it. With a 1-in-3 chance to counter a Situational Alliance each turn, Wiley will be sure to frustrate your opponent.

Design Notes

Diamond Jack is an archetypical Mohammad Ali 'Mech: it has the speed to float around the battlefield like a butterfly, and the punch to sting like a bee. It won't be toppling Assault 'Mechs by itself any time soon, but it can put a serious crimp on any Light or Medium 'Mechs your opponent chooses to field, or blast most vehicles past the point of usefulness. Wiley is the perfect complement in that he nudges each of Jack's abilities up just a little, and lets you ensure that your shots find their mark (and make it harder for your opponent to hit him).

Yulri Wolf

Tactics and Secrets “No it is not pretty, but neither is what it does to the other guy.”

-Yulri Wolf, in reference to “Fang”

Yulri Wolf embodies the adaptability and flexibility that Anastasia Kerensky has instilled in her Wolf Hunters. He can pilot any ‘Mech, no matter the weight class, including both Quads and standard bipedal ‘Mechs. As with all Wolf Hunters, Yulri’s ‘Mech’s first click isn’t anything to brag about, but Fang has plenty of single-use special equipment to get it off that first click and into its best clicks, ranging from Evade, Improved Targeting, and Hardened Armor. On its second click, “Fang” boasts Armor Piercing with two targets and 5 damage. The downside is that it only has a 10 range, but with a 10 speed (+2 more from Yulri) and Melee damage in its primary slot, getting close to the enemy isn’t a bad thing. Fang’s heat dial is forgiving too, boasting only three spots of color on its entire length, and only four modifiers. Once Fang takes a bit more damage and finally loses Armor Piercing (5 clicks in), it drops its melee damage and picks up Hand-to-Hand weapon, giving it the opportunity to deal out some serious damage even late in the dial.

Yulri’s bonuses (+2 to Speed, and +1 each to Attack and Defense) are nice, but what is really frightening is his ability to wreak havoc when he’s piloting Fang. Smack an enemy ‘Mech for 5 (Armor Piercing) damage, and then you can give a friendly vehicle a ranged combat order against the same target—without costing you an order! When Yulri is Leading the Charge, enemies had better look out.

Design Notes Yulri and Fang embody the combined arms approach of the Wolf Hunters: not only do they hunt in packs, but they pack a nasty punch a click or two into the dial, and they’re willing to use anything in order to gain victory. The Mongrel was designed by David Choi.

Anubis #049-052

Tactics and Secrets

"The Anubis was designed by Gittleman and Abzug, two engineers within the Fredonian Industrial Technologies design consortium. It was supposed to complement the Osiris, another 'Mech they had designed that Federated Suns' Achenar BattleMechs was already building."

—Anubis Technical Overview, Technical Readouts: 3067

Clan Nova Cat, Green (106 pts.)

The Clan Nova Cat *Anubis* is a well-rounded unit, carrying a 0/12 energy range type primary weapon and a 4/10 ballistic secondary weapon. Equipped with Evade for nearly half its dial, it'll be able to do some quick run-arounds for sneak attacks with its 3 primary damage. After taking heavy damage, the unit gains Electronic Camouflage, giving it a chance to retreat. The defense is a respectable 20, Evade makes an even more respectable 22. A pilot bonus will push it even higher, which isn't too shabby for a light unit. The heat dial is clear until the third click, where a minor speed heat effect appears. On the fourth click, there's a possibility of minor heat, and an Ammunition Explosion.

Wolf Hunters, Veteran, (108 pts.)

The Wolf Hunters unit has a short 0/8 energy primary weapon, but this is compensated by a 2/14 ballistic secondary weapon. As with other Wolf Hunters, 1 damage is needed to get the unit into its sweet spot. This is easily achieved by a single-use Improved Targeting or Infiltrate, which will push the *Anubis* to a spot where it'll shine with Armor Piercing for 3 damage, and Reactive Armor at 19 defense (which Evade pushes to 21). This unit also has positive heat effects on its dial, giving it a bonus to speed starting on the second click and continuing until shutdown. There is a minor heat effect on click three and three minors on click four.

Rasalhague Dominion, Veteran (108 pts.)

This *Anubis* variation will be one of the more difficult Rasalhague Dominion units to play in the beginning, but once it starts to take damage, it gets vicious. Its 0/10 energy primary weapon is joined by a 4/12 ballistic secondary weapon, though 2 damage is required to really get it going. Both damage values start out at 2 and end at 3 before Salvage. A mixture of Improved Targeting and Heavy Armor for the first two clicks will help the unit survive until it slips into Evade and its 9 and 10 attack values.

House Liao, Elite (110 pts.)

The House Liao unit is similar to the Clan Nova Cat unit, with a slight difference in the gear loadout and weapon ranges. No Salvage and fairly consistent damage throughout the dial distinguish it. The short ranges on both weapons, 0/8 primary energy and 2/10 secondary ballistic, means this unit will be a support unit for a bigger 'Mech in most battleforces. Like all other *Anubis* units, this one has Evade, which will help its 20 starting defense. The heat dial has no heat effects until a minor heat effect on click three, and a minor and major effect on click four. This unit will greatly benefit from a pilot and a gear CEC.

Design Notes

Stealth Armor is an existing armor type in the BattleTech universe that still isn't reflected well in the Age of Destruction game, something that may be remedied in the next base set. As such, the *Anubis* relies primarily on Evade and ranged combat to stay safe. The *Anubis* is a classic design that was updated only modestly before getting to the sculpting process, which brought out the Egyptian features of the design. The *Anubis* was adjusted in concept by Ben Saunders and sculpted digitally by David Choi.

Avalanche

Tactics and Secrets "We believe that Clan Nova Cat has chosen the name *Avalanche* due to the erupting smoke trails from the torso mounted LRM 10s. Like the snowy cloud raised by the avalanche of nature, this is usually the last thing you'll ever see if you're not careful."

—Hauptmann Philip Strom, during de-briefing

House Liao, Green Unit (150 pts.)

The House Liao unit couples Homing Beacon with a ballistic range of 2/14, and with a damage of 3 and starting attack of 9 opposing figures should be scurrying for cover. The energy damage is decent at a 4, though with a range of 0/10 you might not be using it too often. A starting defense of 21 might still change your mind, especially if boosted with a defense-loving pilot. Heat doesn't become much of a problem for this unit until click four, where two minor heat effect rolls will come up. Push into click five and two minors will be joined by a major.

Clan Nova Cat, Veteran Unit (153 pts.)

Holding true to their energy roots, the Clan Nova Cat version sports a 0/12 range for its primary energy weapon, while its ballistic range checks in at 4/12. This version does offer Pulse along with that energy range, but with a 270-degree front arc you might actually choose to make use of the two targets this unit offers. Heat is even more forgiving on this unit, with one minor heat effect on click four, though you'll have to deal with three on click number five. A starting defense value of 20 will need some support before being used.

House Kurita, Veteran Unit (153 pts.)

The Kurita variant of the *Avalanche* doesn't add much beyond Jump Jets. But it does bring along two clicks of Hardened Armor for a little help on defense. Their heat dial is a bit better than the Clan Nova Cat version, sporting an overall four minor heat effects along with one engine overheat heat effect. An attack value of 8 eventually climbs up to an 11 by dial's end, so consider adding additional gear to this one for a more useful piece.

Clan Nova Cat, Elite Unit (156 pts.)

With ranges and a front arc matching it's veteran counterpart, the ranges also remain the same. The major differences between the two include three targets on its primary energy weapon, and the addition of Reflective Armor to go with its Jump Jets. You won't find any Pulse here, though adding on the Pulse gear CEC for 37 points (MW: Firepower G-038) is always an option. Definitely use this one if you're sure you need those three targets. Otherwise, you'll probably want to stick with the veteran version for a few points less and built-in Pulse.

Design Notes

The *Avalanche* is a new design and the third medium class Clan Nova Cat OmniMech. Intended to help bolster their less-than-stellar ballistics capabilities, the *Avalanche* joins the *Wendigo* in this regard, though as a common 'Mech the *Avalanche* can be used more heavily in Clan Nova Cat armies. If you look you'll notice the *Avalanche* legs are almost the exact same as the *Wendigo*'s, though the ports in the upper thighs were altered a bit for the *Avalanche* design. The ER medium lasers for the arms are more obvious in their origins, in this case the *Shadow Cat*. The *Avalanche* was conceptualized and sculpted in 3-D by the accomplished David Choi. And it isn't painted in all gray and red.

GBT-GL-L 'Arachne' Gambit #069

Tactics and Secrets: “The Gambit, eh? What do you think the chances are of the Highlanders getting a couple?”

“Oh, I think you’ll see at least one Highlander Gambit.”
—Overheard conversation

A new light ‘Mech, the *Gambit* has a lot going for it, though speed seems to be its primary asset. “Arachne” comes with a starting speed value of 12 that can increase to 14 via some positive heat effects. Any complaints will probably be directed at Arachne’s ranges. Both weigh in at 0/10: the primary range for two targets and energy damage of 3, and the secondary range for a single target and ballistic damage of 2. Still, assault orders will give Arachne a range of 16, which isn’t bad. The attack value starts at 9, which is average for a light ‘Mech. For a better chance to hit, consider using this unit’s Homing Beacon for a +2 to attack. Arachne’s defense is decent at a starting value of 20, and would certainly benefit from the addition of some Evade gear.

If you’re wondering about playing the heat dial for that +2 to the speed value, fear not. The highly efficient Arachne has only two heat effects on its heat dial—two Avoid Shutdown heat effects on clicks four and five. With such minimal risk, be sure to use Arachne’s Homing Beacon as much as possible.

And speaking of Homing Beacon, to get even more mileage out of it, add pilot Mila Mazur (GS-050) for 21 points. She’ll not only increase your speed, attack, and defense by 1, 1, and 2 respectively, but she’ll also bring her “On the Fly” ability, allowing her to use Homing Beacon on an assault order as well as a ranged combat order. When added on to Arachne’s point value of 110, that’s 131 points for a unit that has a good chance of hitting a variety of figures on the battlefield—and making it easier for your other figures to hit them as well.

Design Notes

The *Gambit* is an example of a unit that had a name but no preconceived notion of what it should look like, unlike the *Night Stalker*, which started with a design concept and gained a name later. We did try to make the *Gambit* a bit more specialized than other ‘Mechs, designing it for a definite purpose rather than merely to fill a more general need in a battleforce. The *Gambit* was conceived by David Choi and sculpted by hand by Ben Saunders.

Huitzilopochtli Assault Tank #045-048

Tactics and Secrets

"The new assault tank? I can't pronounce it. Let's call it the 'Who's Your Daddy' tank and be done with it."
—Overheard conversation

The Huitzilopochtli Assault Tank is the latest in a long line of assault tanks, and, as such, may or may not find its way into battleforces. There's variation in these tanks, including range type (energy or ballistic), maximum range (12 to 14), and maximum damage (4 or 5). The only common features include a maximum of two targets and slow-as-dirt speed values starting at 6.

House Liao, Green (95 pts.)

The House Liao unit takes the ballistic range type with a range of 0/14 and a starting damage value of 5. Added to that are Streak Missiles for its first three clicks, though the first use will deal 1 damage to it. The rest of the dial rests squarely in the numbers themselves, as opposed to any proliferation of special equipment. A starting attack value of 10 and a defense value of 22 make this unit attractive, though you might be wary of its 270-degree arc.

House Kurita, Veteran (96 pts.)

House Kurita adopts the energy range type for its two targets, along with a 0/12 range and damage value of 4. The starting attack value of 7 is pitifully low for an assault tank, but this version gets Improved Targeting for its first three clicks until it reaches an attack value of 9. Hardened Armor augments a defense value of 21 or 20 before it runs out. Though its range is short in comparison to its brethren, its 360-degree front arc should come in handy.

Rasalhague Dominion, Veteran (96 pts.)

The Dominion's range goes back to 0/14 with the ballistic range type, and easily has one of the more colorful Huitzilopochtli dials, though all the colors are squares—no circles to help this tank take damage. You'll have to push it or get in the line of fire to do that. The starting attack value of 7 is augmented by Improved Targeting for two clicks, and the starting defense value of 20 (steady for six clicks) has Heavy Armor for three clicks before being knocked into Reactive Armor on click four. The starting damage value of 2 eventually climbs to 5 at the end of the dial, sprinkled with Artemis V Fire-Control and intermittent Armor Piercing. This unit is challenging to play, but hitting Armor Piercing at the end of the dial with the attack value at 10 is pretty sweet.

Clan Jade Falcon, Elite (97 pts.)

Clan Jade Falcon gets the most predictable and reliable tank of the bunch, a 0/12 energy range type beast with a starting damage of 4 and Pulse. The starting defense value here is 21 with four clicks of Decoy, and the starting attack is 11. Improved Targeting also helps the attack value when it drops later to 8. All this is topped off with a 360-degree front arc, making this a reasonably powerful support piece.

Design Notes

The Huitzilopochtli Assault Tank is a classic design named after the Aztec god of war and the sun, who was sometimes depicted as a hummingbird. Just how a hummingbird is related to an assault tank, we'll never know. This design was slightly altered from previous versions, most notably in the relocation of the Arrow IV systems to the center of the vehicle, and the driver's cockpit to the front. The treads were also split in this design, primarily for aesthetic reasons. The Huitzilopochtli Assault Tank was conceived and hand sculpted by Jeff Wilhelm.

JLP-KO-L "Sparky" Jackalope #070

Tactics and Secrets

"Those 'Lopes are hitting the battlefields as often as bunnies..."
 --overheard conversation

The *Jackalope* is a light 'Mech with a lot of versatility that provides good protection and the ability to get in and out of battle quickly. "Sparky," with a starting speed value of 12 and Jump Jets, doesn't have very many places it can't go. One thing players will notice about this 'Mech is that it boasts an assault order range of 22 inches even before the pilot is added. That's right ladies and gentlemen; Sparky boasts a 16 inch maximum range value on its ballistic secondary weapon with one target and a starting damage value of 2. Its energy primary weapon sports a maximum range of 10 with two targets and a matching damage value of 2. The attack value starts at an average 9, but you'll be sniping away at targets from far away, and, of course, can always benefit from light 'Mech gear. The standard Advanced Anti-Missile System is present on Sparky for the first three clicks, and it starts with a 20 defense.

Sparky's heat dial is decent, with no effects until click four where you'll have to deal with one minor heat effect. On click five you'll have to deal with two minor heat effects, but with a vent rating of 2, this 'Mech can stand up to the heat.

Robert "Skippy" Wilson (GS-051) adds even more versatility to his *Jackalope* with his Escort pilot ability. When this unit is given a move order, it does not use an order from your order pool. In addition, his ability also allows Sparky to be part of movement formations. However, he cannot run when using his pilot ability. Wilson won't work for Clan Nova Cat, but he'll work for anyone else if the price is right so Nova Cat players have the House Kurita work-around. He brings average pilot bonuses with him to attack and defense values at a +1 to each, but his +2 to his speed value allows Sparky to move at 14 from the start of the dial. Wilson is 11 points by himself or 35 in Sparky, bringing the total point value of this 'Mech/pilot combo to 150 points. That's a bargain for this useful piece in your battleforce!

Design Notes

This will most likely be the last *Jackalope* players will be seeing for a while, so we tried to make it a reasonably worthwhile one. Players will notice that this *Jackalope* is a bit more expensive than previous ones, while not sporting the same amount of special equipment that those previous ones do. Sparky's cost is tied up primarily in the extended range and wider front arc, which will hopefully make this an attractive piece for players. With luck, Robert Wilson's pilot ability won't hurt any either. The *Jackalope* was conceived and digitally built by Vic Bonilla.

SCG-WF4-H "Preacher" *SCOURGE* #074

Unlike previous *Scourges*, "Preacher" features a secondary ballistic range value of 2/14 that's coupled with a damage value of 4 throughout the dial. Even though it has only a single target, that's a lot of firepower to keep on hand for the duration of its life. Added to that is a primary energy range value of 0/10 with three targets, though the primary damage value isn't as forgiving; it starts at 4, gradually decreasing to 2. Preacher doesn't feature much beyond that for its 187 points, though it does have six clicks of Jump Jets and two of Heavy Armor in the beginning.

Preacher's heat dial is on par with other *Scourge* 'Mechs; no heat effects until click four, (a minor ammunition explosion heat effect). Press on to click five and you'll encounter two minor heat effects and one major one. The good news is that an increased vent value of 3 might encourage you to play it a little more aggressively than you might other *Scourges*.

For more aggression, consider adding Cesar "Deacon" Cornelius (GS-052) to Preacher for an additional 48 points. Attack and defense values will increase by 2 and 1, respectively, and he'll provide his "Deliverance" ability, which allows for a doubling of an unmodified damage value on a roll of 6 on a six-sided die. With a consistent 4 damage on its ballistic weapon, there are plenty of chances for a potential 8 or more damage against a single target for the patient player. A total of 235 points for this combination may be too pricey for some players, but Preacher and Deacon may still find their way into a battleforce or two.

Design Notes

Cesar "Deacon" Cornelius is an odd pilot in that he has a strange modifier to speed. Cornelius gives -2 to a Quad 'Mech's speed value, though he does nothing to a 'Mech's speed value. We thought it would add a little flavor to the pilot without doing anything earth-shattering, though it'll probably confuse a few players when it first comes out. We were very excited about Preacher's paint scheme; the design of the 'Mech really lent itself well to the paints that were chosen. The *Scourge* was conceived and hand sculpted by Jeff Wilhelm.

TR-VR-H Thor #065-068

Tactics and Secrets

"Thor, Loki, Summoner, Hellbringer . . . it all says the same thing: trouble."

---Captain Lucas Spalding

In the MechWarrior universe, the *Thor* is a tried-and-true design originally introduced and used primarily by the Clans. Since then other factions have discovered its utility and put it to widespread use. The *Thor* falls under the category of Omni 'Mech, which gives it the ability to change weapon loadouts quickly on the field of battle. And Age of Destruction *Thors* have some of the best loadouts to date.

Clan Nova Cat, Green (201 pts.)

We start with the green-ranked *Thor*, which Clan Nova Cat gets for 201 points. A starting speed value of 8 and Jump Jets for the first five clicks keeps this heavy 'Mech going where it needs to go. A starting defense value of 21 with Reflective Armor keeps this unit somewhat safe from many of the energy weapons out there, but its maximum primary range value (16) is what will keep it safest. At 4, its damage value might seem low for a Clan Nova Cat energy weapon, but it keeps that value for four clicks before dropping to 3 for another six clicks. Consistent energy damage is the order of the day with this *Thor*. Backing up the energy weapon is a 4/12 ballistic range type secondary damage value of 3. Maneuvering with that kind of range should be a snap for most players. Its heat dial is fairly forgiving, with a vent rating of 3 and a minor Heat Sink Overload and minor Ammo Explosion on click 4 and again on click 5, which also includes a minor Avoid Shutdown.

Rasalhague Dominion, Veteran (204 pts.)

At 204 points, the Rasalhague Dominion *Thor* starts with a 21 defense that lasts for seven clicks. Improved Targeting for the first three clicks with a starting attack value of 8—that reaches 11 before going to Salvage—will help keep this 'Mech on target. Rasalhague players get a challenge in this *Thor*, as it gains Jump Jets after taking 5 damage, and must take at least 3 damage before its 0/12 secondary ballistic range type weapon gets a damage value of 3. Once this bear wakes up, though, your opponent will be on the receiving end of 4 Armor Piercing damage from its primary 2/14 ballistic range type weapon. On this *Thor's* heat dial, you'll be hoping to avoid a minor Ammo Explosion and minor Avoid Shutdown on click four. Click five is a bit more harrowing, with a major Ammo Explosion, minor Ammo Explosion, and minor Avoid Shutdown. You can vent this 'Mech for 2.

Wolf Hunters, Veteran (204 pts.)

Not to be denied, the Wolf Hunters gain another powerhouse in the second veteran *Thor* at 204 points. This unit's first click shows a defense value of 19, attack value of 8, and speed value of 6, accompanied by single-use Hardened Armor, Improved Targeting, and Jump Jets, respectively. On its second click, this unit truly shines. A defense value of 21 appears with Hardened Armor, a 9 attack value, and an 8 speed value with Jump Jets make this unit a solid investment. A 2/16 primary ballistic range type with 5 Armor Piercing damage will make sure your opponents try to stay away. A 0/12 secondary ballistic range type weapon with 4 damage and two targets doesn't hurt for backup, either. With no colored heat effects until click four, you'll be able to push this unit fairly regularly. A minor Ammo Explosion and minor Avoid Shutdown on click four, and a major Ammo explosion, minor Ammo Explosion, and minor Avoid Shutdown on click five are dangers to watch for.

Clan Jade Falcon, Elite (207 pts.)

Clan Jade Falcon gets the fastest of these *Thors* for 207 points. With a starting speed value of 10 with Jump Jets, this 'Mech will get where you need it to go quickly. A 0/12 primary energy range type weapon with one target and 3 Pulse damage will worry your opponents. If you need some more range, the 2/14 secondary ballistic range type weapon with two targets and 4 damage should serve nicely. An attack value of 10 can probably benefit from a respectable pilot, and a base defense of 21 will help keeps this 'Mech safe. The heat dial, although shorter than standard, is fairly resilient, with only a minor Avoid Heat Sink Overload on click three and a minor Avoid Heat Sink Overload, minor Ammo Explosion, and minor Avoid Shutdown on click four before the 'Mech shuts down. Be wary, though; if you shut down, venting won't help you restart, so be prepared to sit for a while—or avoid shutdown altogether.

Design Notes

The *Thor* (also called a *Summoner* by the Clans) has worked its way up the ranks to become a classic design. Evident in the sculpt are Loki (or Hellbringer) legs and arms. This was done deliberately to reflect the Omni 'Mech technology of the **MechWarrior** universe. When assigning the *Thor* to factions, we went for Clan or Clan-descended factions appropriate for this 'Mech. In addition, Clan Jade Falcon needed one, because they originally produce the *Thor* in fiction. This *Thor* was originally sculpted by Jeff Wilhelm, with modified arms sculpted digitally by Vic Bonilla.

CTR-DC-M “Yen-Lo-Wang” Centurion #072

Tactics and Secrets

“Many variations of this versatile, all-aspect ‘Mech exist today, but few have gained the notoriety of the one Danai Liao-Centrella first piloted on Solaris. That is because this very machine bears the serial number FS1010-031X, marking it as the one and only ‘Yen-lo-wang’ once piloted by Danai’s famous cousin, Kai Allard-Liao.”

—*Excerpt, O5P classified documents*

It probably hasn’t been long-awaited, but now we have the return of “Yen-lo-wang.” And now, in its **Age of Destruction** incarnation, it can be assigned gear!

As far as ‘Mech stats go, this Yen-lo-wang isn’t very different from the *Counterassault* one. It still offers the melee range type on its primary damage value and the energy range type on its secondary damage value, with a range of 0/14. Both damage values start out at 3, with the primary damage eventually reducing to a steady 2 for the remainder of its life. The biggest difference is that this version gets Full Strike after its Agility, and the Jump Jet-equipped speed value is slower. Also, its defense has gone up by 1 on its first click to a 21 to help it be the close combat monster it wants to be.

Dark Age (DA) players will remember the heat dial. Yen-lo-wang is easy to run hot, with only three minor heat effects on its entire dial. Positive speed modifiers start kicking in on click three of the heat dial, and positive damage modifiers start on click four.

DA players will also note a drop in points; the previous Yen-lo-wang with Danai Liao-Centrella was 185 points. This version weighs in at a relatively light 158. When equipped with Danai Liao-Centrella herself, however, the point value goes up to 204. For that price, Yen-lo-wang’s speed rises to its previous state with Liao-Centrella’s +2; its attack gets better than before with a +2; and its defense also inches up at +1. Liao-Centrella also brings the “Slam” ability to Yen-lo-wang, allowing it to ignore the assault modifier when making a close combat attack with given an assault order. It also allows for a second close combat attack against the target, with a – 1 to the target’s defense value for that attack. Not a bad revisiting of one of our favorite **MechWarrior** ladies.

Design Notes

I hope that the return of Yen-lo-wang and Danai Liao-Centrella will be well received by House Liao players, if no one else. The challenge with the piece was to keep Yen-lo-wang similar to how it first appeared, just with pilot Danai Liao-Centrella extracted. We also, however, wanted to keep the piece competitive and show improvements that Liao-Centrella might have made since her first appearance. Overall, we’re pleased with the piece, and will most likely bring back some other well-known pilots as well. The shield-bearing *Centurion* was sculpted by Jeff Wilhelm.

BLR-4S-A "Stormwind" Battlemaster

Tactics and Secrets

"Come on... stop trying to hit me and HIT me!"

- Morpheus, "The Matrix"

There's no doubt that the Rasalhague Dominion is a unique faction on the battlefield. You need a different set of tactics, both offensively and defensively, to effectively use their inverted attack/damage values. Combine this dial paradigm with an assault 'Mech and you have quite a firecracker on your hands. Meet "Stormwind," a *Battlemaster* from the Dominions' arsenal.

Like many Rasalhague machines, this unit starts out modestly, with 3 damage on its' primary energy weapons (0/10 range with 3 targets), 6 movement, 8 attack with Improved Targeting, and 21 defense. Three identical clicks at the top of the dial make this bear slow to anger. However, that's equal to the damage output of a lot of light and medium 'Mechs, and Stormwind hasn't even gotten rolling yet. Once you hit the fourth click, the secondary ballistic weapons come online (2/14 range, one target) with 3 damage, slowly rising to 5 toward the end of the dial. Likewise, your energy weapons gain the Pulse ability mid-dial before settling in at 4 damage (without Pulse) towards the end. You'll enjoy a stable movement rating through Salvage, and your attack will top out at a fearsome 11! And with sixteen total clicks of life, this 'Mech is in the battle for the long-term.

What about your heat dial? A vent of 2 gives average heat dispersion. However, you won't be making any rolls until your fourth heat click, where your energy and ballistic weapons show yellow. The fifth click is an ugly mess of black, red, and yellow (fortunately, no ammo explosions), so you'll want to avoid this if you can.

Out of curiosity, I decided to see how this *Battlemaster* compared to others in the game. After all, at 248 points, Stormwind is a fairly significant investment. So, I dug out "Caber" (#122, Age of Destruction, 224 points) and "E.O.D." (#135, Age of Destruction, 200 points). Their respective sweet spots are kind of hard to compare, given the different design paradigms, but suffice to say that Stormwind is on par with these two other assault 'Mechs in terms of combat values. So I tried a different test: starting from the first click, I gave each unit 11 points of damage. Hey, it's not unrealistic to assume that could happen in one turn. At this point, both "Caber" and "E.O.D." were down to 2 damage on their secondary weapons, 6 attack, 18 defense, and 4 movement. You're pretty much heading for the dropzone at that point. Stormwind, however, boasted 4 damage on the energy weapons, 5 on the ballistics, 6 movement, 19 defense, and an 11 attack. Yikes! Inverted dial archetype or not, you don't want to be on the business end of that.

For an additional 35 points, you can add preferred pilot Vanessa Gurdel. She'll give Stormwind +2 on movement and +1 on both attack and defense. Best of all, her special ability gives her +1 on her close combat attack value for every unit basing her. She'll only cost you 28 points in another assault 'Mech, which isn't a bad price at all!

Stormwind and Vanessa Gurdel will be available as limited edition prizes at WizKids Mechwarrior events in your area. Enjoy!

Design Notes "Stormwind" joins the ranks of unique *Battlemasters*, and takes its place beside the ultra-rare *Kodiak* as an assault 'Mech for the Dominion. Only one of the three assault 'Mechs that the Dominion will receive in Wolf Strike, it's a fearsome beast and might make players think twice about not attacking the units of a Dominion player, seeing as how 200+ points are a lot to leave on the battlefield for victory condition number 2. The *Battlemaster* was conceived and sculpted in 3D by Vic Bonilla.

Carnivore Assault Tank

Tactics and Secrets

"Gentlemen, recon says we're facing a mixed arms company with at least a lance of Carnivore tanks. They're aptly named. So listen up, otherwise you're gonna find out what it's like to be wearing sirloin underwear in a dog-eat-dog world ..."

- Captain Tanya Carnahan, Rock Brigade Mercenary Battalion, classified location along the border of Fortress Republic

Heavy tanks have long occupied a curious niche in the Mechwarrior universe. Expensive, but with the limitations of vehicles, they are often relegated to tank drop or supporting roles. However, the Carnivore Assault Tank may challenge that notion. With ten clicks of life, tracked speed mode, notable range (including no minimum), robust defensive values, few repair markers, specialized armor, 360-degree arcs, and ballistic Armor Piercing standard on all models, only a foolish commander would ignore their presence on the battlefield!

Clan Jade Falcon, Green (76 pts.)

The Clan Jade Falcon unit, as one might expect, has slightly lower range than its' brethren (0/12). However, it also begins with an attack of 10 and a speed of 7, and it delivers 4 Armor Piercing damage to its' single target. A starting defense of 20, paired with five clicks of Reactive Armor, make it all but impervious to many infantry. Its' damage values drop off a little quicker than other Carnivores, yet the traditional mid/late dial Improved Targeting keeps it in the fight well down the dial.

House Steiner, Veteran (83 pts.)

The Lyran Carnivore shares some similarities to the Jade Falcon version, with a starting damage value of 4, Reactive Armor, and a single target. However, this unit enjoys greater range (0/14) and a starting 9 attack with Improved Targeting for four clicks. It's a little slower with a speed of 5, but the greater range and starting defense value of 21 make this a hard nut to crack. Got a pesky high defense 'Mech running around? This tank is the right tool for the job. Be careful of pushing, though; the Steiner version has Armor Piercing for only the first three clicks. Use it wisely!

Wolf Hunters, Veteran (83 pts.)

Anastasia's crew enters the fray with the usual low starting stats: 8 attack, 19 defense, 3 Armor Piercing damage, and 5 speed. However, the Armor Piercing is single use, as is one click of Infiltrate on the movement. It's an easy jump to the sweet spot, where you'll find 4 damage, 10 attack, 20 defense, and a slightly better movement with the added bonus of Camouflage for four clicks. Two targets and a maximum range of 14 make this a ranged combat beast, and four clicks of Heavy Armor will let you slough off infantry basers with ease. Park yourself in some trees and blast away.

Clan Wolf, Elite (90 pts.)

The Clan Wolf Carnivore begins the battle with almost identical starting values as the Wolf Hunter version. After all, they are cut from similar cloth! However, with this version, you have the choice of single use Armor Piercing or ballistic armor to get you to the sweet spot. And sweet it is – 10 attack, 5 damage, 21 defense. Mid-dial, you'll swap Armor Piercing for Anti-Personnel, a nasty surprise for the unwary! It holds a speed of 6 almost all the way down the dial. Best of all, the Clan Wolf version has a range of 16 and 2 targets. Make no mistake, this is the hunter/killer of the four.

Design Notes

In keeping with the Clan Wolf design style, the Carnivore tank sports a prowling wolf motif, most noticed in the cockpit design. Additionally, the headlights to either side of the cockpit serve as a platform for the yellow "wolf eyes." Not as clear on the cockpit are rows of "teeth" to either side. As far as armament, the Carnivore is intended to be an 80-ton tank, equipped with Gauss Rifle and machine guns for repelling pesky infantry. The Carnivore was conceived by Vic Bonilla and sculpted in 3-D by John Bear Ross.

Horrible Day

*"Not even winning the battle would make this day any better."
—Lieutenant Kenny Hung, on planet Chichibu*

KGC-20-A "Gibraltar" King Crab

Tactics and Secrets

"I hear that the Johns woman has "I am become Kali, Destroyer of Worlds" written all over the inside of her cockpit. That's drama, if you ask me! Nothing but bluster and the stuff holovids are made of. What's up with that, Sergeant?"

"...well, 'tain't braggin' if it's true, now, is it, Corporal?"

---Exchange overheard on Imbros III before the formation of Fortress Republica

Assault-class 'Mechs are all about one thing: sheer firepower. Classic Battletech players will remember Zeta Battalion; the military unit within Wolf's Dragoons that was comprised almost entirely of 80-100 ton monstrosities. Alyssa Johns and her King Crab, "Gibraltar," would not have been out of place with the Zetas. Indeed, this unit typifies everything you'd come to expect from this weight class. It's nothing fancy, but unless you feel like you need something more than a solid, no-nonsense 'Mech with high defense and a weapons loadout that's deadly at any range, Gibraltar will fit the bill.

The first feature you'll notice is the excellent ranged combat stats. You have energy weapons on your primaries with a single target, 0/12 range, and 4 starting damage. Ballistic weapons occupy the secondary slot, with two targets, 4/14 range, and 6 damage. This combination gives you plenty of options at all distances! A move of 6 is pretty typical for a 'Mech of this size, and an attack of 10 will give your opponent something to think about. With a name like Gibraltar, you'd expect good protection, and you'll get it with a starting defense of 22 with Hardened Armor. You only get the Hardened Armor for one click, but you have seven slots of Heavy Armor right after it. As a final subtle touch, there's only one repair marker, and it's on the 11th click (out of 16) on the dial.

That's all the color you'll see on this combat dial. The heat dial is a little more shaded, but not as much as you might think for this much damage potential. Your first three clicks are free of dice rolling (but you will lose a little movement on the third click). The fourth click hazards a heat sink overload and a shutdown. The fifth click should be avoided if possible, with critical heat sink overloads, ammo jams, and shutdown potential.

Gibraltar is uncomplicated and clean, and for 267 points, you can use this King Crab as the centerpiece of an army with plenty left over for support. Pilot Alyssa Johns (Wolf Strike, GS-065) will cost you 28 points, and will add one to attack, defense, and movement. Pair her with Gibraltar, though, and her Like A Rock ability will let your Hardened and Heavy Armor reduce impact and special attack damage for an additional 4 points. It's not a showy ability, to be sure. But like her ride, Alyssa Johns is all about simple, effective utility.

Gibraltar and Alyssa Johns will be available as limited edition prizes at WizKids Mechwarrior events in your area. Dum vivimus, vivamus! ...and not ONE 'rock and roll' pun. How about that?

Design Notes

The *King Crab* is a classic design that's experienced some change for the Age of Destruction, most noticeably in the leg area. The legs of this BattleMech have been redesigned for what's hoped to be a more believable walk cycle. The spaces left at the rear of this figure would allow for the legs to raise and lower for ease of movement, though they would also make a tempting target for firepower. The *King Crab* was conceived by Vic Bonilla and hand sculpted by Ben Saunders.

Mad Cat MK IV

Tactics and Secrets

"That Anastasia Kerensky . . . she's always been a bit of a trendsetter. Just like her dear old mom."
—Unknown

House Kurita, Green (230 pts.)

This long-awaited 'Mech adds a nice heavy punch to the Dragon's arsenal for 230 points. It sports a primary energy range of 0 to 14 inches and a damage value of 5 supplemented by a single click of PPC Capacitor to crack some eggs! Its secondary ballistic weapon will help to sweep away infantry, with two targets and a range of 0 to 8 inches and a damage value of 3. The heat dial is fairly forgiving, with a vent rating of 2 and no effects until click three and no rolls to make until click four, where Avoid Heat Sink Overload and Avoid Shutdown appear. On the fifth click of the heat dial, you'll find an Avoid Ammunition Explosion roll, and Weapons Offline and Engine Overheat. A starting speed of 8, an attack of 9, and a defense of 20 with Hardened Armor make this a good starting heavy 'Mech for the Kuritan army.

House Davion, Green (230 pts.)

House Davion gets a starting attack of 9, speed of 7, and defense of 21, pretty much in line with what you'd expect from a green heavy 'Mech. Heavy Armor helps to protect this machine from damage. Two targets at 0 to 14 inches on its primary energy weapon help to spread its 4 damage around, or choose a single target and put Pulse to work on those peskier opponents. Three targets at 0 to 8 inches with 4 damage on its secondary ballistic weapon will help with those targets resistant to energy-based weapons. The heat dial shows no effects or rolls until the fourth click, where you'll find Avoid Heat Sink Overload and Avoid Ammunition Explosion. On the fifth click are Avoid Heat Sink Overload: Critical, Weapons Offline (secondary), and Avoid Shutdown. This unit has a vent rating of 2.

Clan Jade Falcon, Veteran (233 pts.)

Continuing on, Clan Jade Falcon gets its shot at a *Mad Cat Mk IV* with the first veteran version. For 233 points, this 'Mech has a primary energy weapon with two targets, a range of 0 to 12 inches, and a damage value of 6. A secondary ballistic weapon follows with a range of 0 to 8, three targets, and a damage value of 3. A starting speed of 8 with Evade will help protect this unit and add to its defense of 19 and Decoy. A starting attack value of 10 will encourage players to be aggressive. This unit's heat dial will help keep it in battle for a decent amount of time, even with a vent rating of 2. The first effects appear on click four, with Heat Sink Overload. On click five we get Weapons Offline, Avoid Ammunition Explosion, and Avoid Shutdown.

House Steiner, Veteran (233 pts.)

House Steiner gets the second veteran *Mad Cat Mk IV* of this set. Also for 233 points, this 'Mech has starting attack, speed, and defense values of 10, 7 (with Electronic Camouflage), and 21 (with Heavy Armor), respectively. It features a primary energy weapon at 0 to 14 inches, two targets, and 6 damage, which drops steadily until Salvage. Its secondary ballistic weapon has a 0 to 10 range, two targets, and 4 damage with Streak Missiles. A vent rating of 2 supports the heat dial. The first heat effect appears on click three, and click four brings you Weapons Offline and Avoid Shutdown. The fifth click brings three rolls: Avoid Heat Sink Overload, Avoid Ammunition Explosion, and Avoid Shutdown: Critical.

Clan Wolf, Elite (236 pts.)

Clan Wolf steps in for the first elite *Mad Cat Mk IV* of the set for 236 points. It's at its peak on click two, with attack, speed, and defense values of 10, 7 (with Electronic Camouflage), and 21 (with Heavy Armor), respectively. Worry some enemy vehicles and 'Mechs with a primary energy weapon with a 0 to 14 range, 5 damage, and PPC Capacitor to add insult to injury. The secondary ballistic system has a 2 to 10 range with three targets, 3 damage, and Homing Beacon. Its vent rating follows suit at 2. The first effects and rolls appear on click four, with Avoid Heat Sink Overload and Avoid Ammunition Explosion. On click five you'll see Weapons Offline and two rolls for Avoid Ammunition Explosion and Avoid Shutdown.

Rasalhague Dominion, Elite (236 pts.)

The second elite and last *Mad Cat Mk IV* of *Wolf Strike* belongs to the Rasalhague Dominion for 236 points. Starting values for attack, speed, and defense are 8, 7, and 21 (with Heavy Armor), respectively. The attack ends at 10 before Salvage. The primary energy weapon starts at 3 damage and works up to 6 with PPC Capacitor at 0 to 14 inches and two targets. The secondary weapon has a 0 to 8 range, three targets, and goes from 3 to 4 damage. Another vent rating of 2 sees effects starting on click four (Avoid Ammunition Explosion). On click five you'll be rolling for Avoid Heat Sink Overload and Avoid Shutdown, and your secondary weapon will be offline.

Design Notes

The *Mad Cat Mk IV* design comes from Clan Sea Fox, still looking to make a profit even in the year 3136. The fact that they first sold to the Wolf Hunters may hint at their loyalties . . . or not. Most noticeable on this *Mad Cat* are the forward- and rear-facing missile racks, giving this unit a 360-degree front arc. Also noteworthy is the angled torso/hip connection, which serves to protect this fragile and important piece of the 'Mech. The *Mad Cat Mk IV* was conceived and built in 3-D by Vic Bonilla.

Manteuffel Attack Tank

Tactics and Secrets

"Lethal Tank. Funny Name."

- Marketing slogan, Kentish and Company Military Public Relations

You might be getting the impression that the Wolf Strike set has more than a little heavy firepower in it. If you are one of these, this weeks' Sneak Peek won't disappoint! It's time to get familiar with the Mantueffel Attack Tank, the counterpart to the Carnivore introduced a few weeks ago. All versions of this monster give you tracked speed mode, a 0/10 range with 2 ballistic targets, high defensive values, few repair markers, 360-degree arcs, speed values of at least 8, and starting damage values of five. Yes, you heard that right. Five. If the Carnivore is the hammer, the Mantueffel is the anvil.

Republic of the Sphere, Green (93 pts.)

This unit might have the label 'green', but it's anything but. Indeed, this version probably has the most staying power of any of the Mantueffels, with a starting defense of 22, Heavy Armor for half the dial, and ten clicks of life. An initial speed value of 8 gets it where you need it to go, and a beginning attack value of 9 with some Improved Targeting means it's also accurate. You don't have any special abilities on your damage value, but with attack and defense values like this, you won't miss them.

Clan Jade Falcon, Veteran (96 pts.)

No reduced range here – it's 10 like all the other Mantueffels! Like most of its' Clan brethren, this tank is all about delivering pain. Five points of Armor-Piercing pain that is, and an attack value of 10 pretty much means it's going to happen. A starting defense value of 21 and several clicks of Decoy make this tank a vexing target to hit. And, of course, it has mid-late dial Improved Targeting, making this tank a useful piece even after it's taken some punishment.

Bannsons' Raiders, Veteran (96 pts.)

Jacob always gets the best toys money can buy. What does 96 points get you? Five Anti Personnel damage, an attack value of 9, a beginning defense value of 21 with Heavy Armor, and 8 movement with a click of Infiltrate to start it where you want it! You'll keep your attack and defense special equipment for half the dial... but remember, your dial is a little shorter than other Mantueffels. Did we mention that there's no repair markers? A little planning and you should be able to keep this vehicle in tip-top shape for the entire battle!

House Davion, Elite (99 pts.)

Victor would be proud; this unit is all about options. Your starting stats are most impressive, with a 10 attack, 5 damage (with Armor Piercing for a goodly part of the dial), and defense of 21 with Hardened Armor. Pretty spiffy! However, you may want to push it one click. If you do, your attack will drop a bit and you'll lose your Hardened Armor, but you'll gain Evade for four clicks and pick up Heavy Armor instead. There's only one repair marker here, and it's toward the end of the dial. How tough is this tank? Even after taking four damage, it's still got 4 Armor Piercing damage, a move of 7 with Evade, and an attack of 8.

Design Notes

The Mantueffel Attack Tank is an existing design from the BattleTech universe, and the familiar eye will notice the biggest change is the location of the medium lasers that this unit carries. Relocated from the turret, they can now be found on the main body of the tank. Other than that, the addition of some nice lines are the only changes that were made to this already fine unit. The Mantueffel Attack Tank was built in 3-D by David Choi.

Neanderthal "Thug"

Tactics and Secrets

"I'm a pretty straightforward kinda guy. You got something to say? Have enough guts to get in my face and say it. Because you better believe I'll do the same. And yes, I fight the same way."

- Rodrigo Vazquez

"Hit them before they hit you." It's a pretty simple, yet effective strategy. Many players make armies based around this notion, with 8-10" range on infantry, at least 12" on vehicles, and if that 'Mech doesn't at least have an 18" assault range, it's staying in the box. These are also the sorts of players that smile whenever the word "Shiro" is uttered.

However, some pieces are designed for getting in close and personal. "Thug" is one such machine, and Rodrigo Vazquez is one such pilot. How so, you might ask? Let's put it this way; this Neanderthal heavy class 'Mech has 14 clicks of life total, and Brawling for ten of those clicks.

That's right. Brawling for over 70% of the dial.

Of course, if you want to use that ability, you'll need to close the distance quickly and even survive some hits along the way. No need to worry, as Thug will get you there in style. With a starting attack of 10, native defense of 21 (with several clicks of heavy armor to boot), and a speed of 9, maneuvering Thug into position is a little easier, even if you take some lumps along the way. Of course, you have a primary energy weapon with two targets, 0-12 range, a starting damage of 4, and three clicks of PPC Capacitor just for an added surprise! Melee is your secondary weapon, where Brawling lies... but it has a damage value of 0 all the way down the dial, so keep an eye on your primary damage. Other than that, it's a pretty typical Bannsons' machine, with slowly degrading stats, a shorter than average dial, and best of all, no repair markers.

Your heat dial is pretty standard fare, maybe even a little more on the agreeable side for a heavy 'Mech. A vent of 2 gives average heat dispersion. Your first three clicks are free of pain. By the fourth one, you're rolling for heat sink overload on your primaries. Your fifth click? Welcome to Shutdown City, population you, with a critical heat sink overload and a shutdown roll.

However, to REALLY use Thug at its' full potential, you'll want to invest in Rodrigo Vazquez. His 33 points buys you a pilot with +2 on both attack and defense. Yes, Rodrigo is a very useable pilot! Put him in his Neanderthal for 48 points and his Down and Dirty ability kicks in, which allows him to ignore opposing pilot modifiers when making close combat attacks. Down and dirty indeed! So for 246 points, you'll get a 'Mech with an attack of 12, defense of 23 with Heavy Armor, a move of 9, and increasingly dangerous the closer it gets.

Yep, that'll do.

Thug and Rodrigo Vazquez will be available as limited edition prizes at WizKids Mechwarrior events in your area. Prost!

Design History

The Neanderthal continues to endure the test of time, making another appearance since its' introduction in the Annihilation expansion. As before, this 'Mech sports a swappable hand, one of the more successful tooling experiments we've attempted with the MechWarrior line. Will we add gameplay value to this ability sometime? It's certainly possible. We try not to rule anything out as we've been on our quest for the best representation of OmniMechs and alternate loadouts for these bad boys. The *Neanderthal* was conceived by Todd Lubsen and hand sculpted by Jeff Wilhelm.

RVN-4N-L "Magister" Raven

Nice Try

At the beginning of your command stage, choose a single opposing target 'Mech that this unit can draw a clear line of fire to; ignore this unit's maximum range value. Cancel the ability of any pilot assigned to the target until the beginning of your next command stage.

JS: Tired of facing off against players who bring pilots that can reach out and pound your 'Mech into slag with multiple hits? Or kill off your pilots with a lucky shot? Now you can negate their special ability. This makes the 30 points required to put him in his 'Mech all worth it. His +2 to speed and +2 to attack doesn't hurt any either. His recruitment costs are 0 for House Liao, 5 for House Kurita, and 10 for all other factions. However...

TR: (Uh oh....)

JS: Who has heard of a 'Mech pilot who wears glasses? Honestly! Just kidding folks, Carrott wears 'em and he's a cool guy. Four-eyed geek, but, cool guy.

TR:!!!

JS: Now for the 'Mech!

TR: Hey, wait a minute... some other of us wear spectacles too! ...geek? GEEK???? *fume*

JS: For 143 points, you start out with a 3 damage, 0/10 range, energy weapon. You also get a 2 damage, 2/14, range ballistic weapon. As for the rest of the 'Mech, you have a 9 speed with Evade, 9 attack with Improved Targeting, 20 defense with Decoy, vent of two and with a 180-degree front arc. With James Carrott pilot in this 'Mech, you end up with an 11 speed, 11 attack, 22 defense light class 'Mech. That's pretty good for a total of 173 points as a 'Merc or a House Liao Gunslinger.

TR: That tears it! But what to do? Hm...Jonas isn't aware of the orbital mind control satellites that Approved Play put into place during the Mage Knight heyday... nor is he aware that they're still active and only a few of us have the codes...

JS: The stats remain the same until the third click when the Improved Targeting goes away and the 'Mech gains Homing Beacon. On subsequent clicks, the stats start to decrease and special equipment will go away on every click until it's salvaged on the tenth click and destroyed on the eleventh click.

TR: ...I wonder if that console downstairs still works...

JS: I foresee a lot of fun armies in my future with this pilot & 'Mech combination as the centerpiece to frustrate my opponents! Perhaps a nasty Dragon's Fury - Spirit Cat situational advantage theme army... *cackles madly*

TR: Uh... Hey, Jonas? I'll be right back...

JS: ...Tony? Anyhow. The Officer's Club Kit also comes with designer notes, a spiffy Wolf Strike Pin, a Player ID Card with defense/attack modifier list on back, and 4 Scenario Cards #009-012. The Scenario Cards are pretty fun but won't be previewed here so they will be a surprise for folks who get them. :)

Design Notes:

The *Raven* is another classic design, often referred to as the pinnacle of light class scout 'Mech designs. Though it's difficult to convey in the game on the 'Mech themselves, lately it's been done through "Probe" gear. Only slight updates were made to the already excellent design of this 'Mech, primarily seen in the cockpit windows and somewhat in the weapons. This *Raven* was conceptualized by David Wahlstrom and built digitally in 3-D by David Choi.

Wraith Battle Armor

"I guess those Dominion techs learned a bit of history when they designed that Wraith battle armor, you know the old Terran saying, 'The only good defense is a good offense.'" --- overheard conversation during a Republic briefing

Republic of the Sphere, Green (23 pts.)

The Republic of the Sphere gets the first chance to try out the new Wraith battle armor with the green version. For 23 points you get a package well worth offending the enemy with. Its' starting stats of 2 damage, 0/8 range energy, attack of 8, speed of 7, and defense of 17 help with that endeavor! A mostly blue dial also helps with two clicks of Grapple, two clicks of Jump Jets, and Reactive Armor on the first click. This unit has the smallest of the front arcs checking in with 135-degree front arc. Pretty snazzy for an infantry that lives for 6 clicks.

Wolf Hunters, Veteran (24 pts.)

The Wolf Hunters get the first veteran version of this new battle armor and it does not disappoint! For 24 points you'll find this battle armor very versatile. Following the Wolf Hunter paradigm, the first click has slightly lower stats that rise on the second click. Starting off with single use Flamers for 1 damage, a 6 speed, a 7 attack, and 16 defense values, they all rise by 1 for the second click. The second click sees the battle armor switch out Flamers for Grapple for 3 clicks, and then back to Flamers for the last three clicks of its dial. Four clicks of Jump Jets from the start, and Reactive Armor for two clicks from the start make sure this infantry get to where it needs to be and stay alive for a while. Also this unit boasts a 0/8 inch energy range but has a 180-degree front arc.

Rasalhague Dominion, Veteran (24 pts.)

The Rasalhague Dominion claims the next veteran Wraith for 24 points as well. The waking bear will make sure you notice this infantry. Starting stats include a 1 damage 0/8 inch energy weapon, 8 speed, 6 attack, and a 17 defense value. This unit has Jump Jets for four clicks, and Reactive Armor for three clicks. Grapple shows up for the last three clicks of this battle armor's dial, with damage and attack values of 2 and 8, respectively. This unit also has a 180-degree front arc.

Rasalhague Dominion, Elite (25 pts.)

The Rasalhague Dominion also claims the elite version for 25 points; after all, they created it. This unit starts out with Grapple, Jump Jets, and Heavy Armor, and starting attack, speed, damage, and defense values of 6, 7, 1, and 17 respectively. The surprise for your opponent will be on the end dial when this unit has threatening values of 3 for damage and 9 for attack. Be on the look out for this monster infantry!

Design Notes

The Wraith battle armor is a signature piece for the Rasalhague Dominion, which is why they have two versions of it in the set. The Wraith battle armor actually bears a lot of similarities (as far as design aesthetics go) to the Rasalhague BattleMechs, but due to the sculpt size a lot of this detail gets lost. Check out this concept art for the Wraith battle armor. The most predominant theme within the Rasalhague Dominion pieces is the subtle (and not-so-subtle) skull motifs, present here on the shoulder pads and chest armor. The Wraith Battle Armor was conceptualized by Brent Evans and hand-sculpted at the WizKids Studio.

CPLT-D1-H "Cynosure" Catapult and Jonas Saunders

Tactics and Secrets

"Are you out of your mind? High-Octane Construction Orange paint job on a 'Mech?"

"With Wolf Hunters Metallic Red highlights, if you please."

"Flamin' 'Mech will be visible from a mile off . . ."

"That's the point. Look up Cynosure in a dictionary sometime."

—Exchange between MechWarrior Jonas Saunders and his Solaris tech.

What can we expect from a 'Mech and pilot inspired by our resident "Loony with a Vision?"
Read on and find out.

Unit Notes

"Cynosure" is a 215-point 'Mech that's built around a classic *Catapult* loadout: long-range missiles, Jump Jets, and short-range energy support. Its primary slot sports a 0-10, two-target energy weapon that deals 4 damage to start and slowly degrades to 2 damage before Salvage. TSEMP appears on the first three clicks. The secondary weapon is a 4-16, three-target ballistic weapon that deals 5 damage but degrades quickly, eventually disappearing at click eight.

Starting attack and defense are 10 and 22, respectively, which are above average for a heavy 'Mech, and degrade gradually. A starting speed is 6 is augmented by Jump Jets for the first five clicks, making this unit effective on Solaris, where maneuvering around obstacles is just as important as making your attack rolls.

The heat dial is a bit touchy, with a Minor Heat Sink Overload and Shutdown roll on the third click and Critical Heat Sink and Minor Shutdown roll on the fourth click. The ballistic weapon is also offline on that click.

For 40 points in his 'Mech, Jonas Saunders provides +1 speed, +2 attack, and +1 defense. His ability fits a fire-support role very well:

TARGET ACQUIRED (optional) This unit ignores the indirect-fire modifier when making an indirect-fire ranged combat attack. If this unit's indirect-fire ranged combat attack succeeds, it scores damage to the target equal to its damage value, maximum 3 damage, instead of 2 damage.

Given long range, pilot ability, and accuracy, Cynosure's controller will be able to wear down opposing 'Mechs as they close in, using Jump Jets to choose the prime location to fire. Given an above-average defense, it will also have the staying power needed to wear down the opponent. Cynosure will definitely see a lot of action in **Solaris VII**.

Design Notes

by Kelly Bonilla

Cynosure sacrifices some in the way of special equipment in favor of raw stats, as evidenced by the front-loaded special equipment on the dial. In an effort to overcome its slower speed, Cynosure packs a TSEMP punch to slow down the opposition long enough to bring its 16-range long-range missiles to bear. Toward the end, Cynosure tries not to become a victim of its own tactics, by adding a couple clicks of Electronic Camouflage, encouraging its opponents to come at it head on—which, in the end, is probably for the best: Not many units can pull off a screaming don't-hit-me-orange without blinding some poor pilot in the process.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=41518



VXN-7B-L "Valentine" Vixen and Kerensa Mayborne

Tactics and Secrets

"Now taking to the arena floor is the lovely and talented Kerensa Mayborne, with her Vixen, 'Valentine.'"

"And you can bet she's not going to accept candy and flowers to back down from this fight, Sam."

"You said it, Max. And yet, Hell hath no fury..."

—Sam Gagnon and Max Hase, arena announcers, Solaris VII event

Solaris VII gives us a game in which 'Mechs rule the battlefield—or, in this case, an arena. This map-based game lends itself to a different type of strategy and tactics. Kerensa's beauty coupled with her light *Vixen* 'Mech, "Valentine," is a deadly combo.

Unit Notes

This unit (#006) packs a solid punch. Its speed of 12 comes with Evade for two clicks. A respectable 12 primary energy range (that's an 18 assault range) allows you to stand and fight or get in that first shot. Pulse for five clicks provides enough damage to be nasty in a Solaris VII arena and packs enough punch on the battlefield to make this 'Mech effective support. Another nice "Valentine's Day" gift is Anti-Personnel on your ballistic secondary weapon.

Like all light 'Mechs, Valentine has a fairly short dial at only nine clicks. Its stats, however, stay relatively stable for the first half of the dial, and its heat dial is reasonably friendly, with no negative modifiers or shutdown rolls until the fourth click.

Kerensa's special ability, "Never Turn Your Back," is sneaky, giving an extra +1 for rear-arc shooting. That's handy to have when you're competing on Solaris. She also gives +2 speed, +1 attack, and +1 defense, making her a good pilot for other light 'Mechs (and her recruit cost of only 5 for any faction is quite inexpensive). Additionally, her flavor text gives you enough of her personality to buy into her character as a pilot and game piece.

So, what do you get for the cost? Valentine will run you 119 points; Kerensa Mayborne (GS-006) is an additional 20 on top of that (or 11 in another 'Mech that's not her preferred ride). So for fewer than 140 points, you get a contender with a starting speed of 14 with Evade, 11 attack, and 23 defense against ranged combat attacks. That's an economic package that is sure to give your opponents reason to pause.

Plus . . . she's "the most beautiful MechWarrior around." Excepting Kelly, of course.

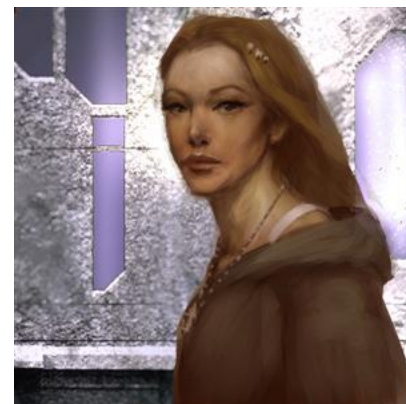
Design Notes

by Kelly Bonilla

Valentine is a straightforward girl who likes her Pulse and Evade. The 'Mech was designed as a little bit of a dancer, but she also knows how to dish it out with Artemis IV Fire Control. Many of the **Solaris VII** 'Mech designs harken back to pre-**Age of Destruction** releases, where pilot abilities were incorporated into 'Mech designs. With the unique way in which **Solaris VII** plays, a 'Mech with abilities available for most of its dial is practically a must, so we endeavored to make each 'Mech "useful" throughout a match. As an aside, players might find Pulse a little diminished in the **Solaris VII** game: The second attack will still face the same defense value because damage is not applied to the target until the end of the round.

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=41482



RFL-5M-H “Crucible” Rifleman and Marcello Donnici

Tactics and Secrets

“I thought that last shot took out his Gauss rifles!”

“Apparently, so did his opponent.”

—Sam Gagnon and Max Hase, arena announcers, Solaris VII event

At first glance, “Crucible” looks like a modest ‘Mech with moderate damage and slow speed. An overconfident opponent, however, is in for a surprise further down its dial.

Notes

For 215 points, Crucible starts with a 6 speed and 20 defense. Although this is low for a heavy ‘Mech, it’s more than made up for by a 10 attack with Improved Targeting. Things get even better on its fifth click, when its speed improves to 8 and it gains Evade, with its attack and defense falling by only 1. Assign pilot Marcello Donnici to this ‘Mech and it gets +3 speed, +1 attack, and +1 defense for 35 points.

Crucible’s primary ballistic weapon has two targets, a maximum range of 14, and a minimum range of 3. Damage output is modest starting at 4 with Armor Piercing for the first five clicks, disappearing for the next five, and then reappearing at 3 Armor Piercing damage for three clicks before disappearing again through Salvage. Its secondary weapon is a two-target energy weapon with a 0–6 range. Damage starts at 0 before jumping to 4 on click five, eventually trailing down to 2 before Salvage.

Crucible’s heat dial is very manageable, with a minor heat sink and shutdown roll on the third click, and only a minor heat sink roll on the fourth. The primary weapon is offline and the engine overheated on the same click, so make sure to vent to that restart roll if you’ve shut down all the way.

You might wonder why Crucible’s damage values are so erratic for both weapons, disappearing at times. Then answer lies in Crucible’s pilot’s ability:

NOT OUT YET If this unit makes a ranged combat attack using a damage value of 0, roll a d6 and subtract 1 from the result. The result replaces this unit’s damage value for the attack.

What does this mean in the **Solaris VII** arenas? For a total of 246 points, you get an accurate ‘Mech/pilot combo, which gets more mobile in the mid-game, and has the potential to dish out a large amount of damage on every click of its life.

Design Notes

by Kelly Bonilla

I’m very fond of the way the paint scheme emerged for this ‘Mech, which is a testament to giving our painter, Chris Hart, a set of colors and wishing him luck. Crucible is another dial designed by **MechWarrior** second, Ethan Pasternack. Here’s what he had to say about it:

“Lightly armored but surprisingly quick, Crucible was loaded out to deal an initial barrage of death from afar, and then duck and weave its way into close range, where its small but plentiful lasers can do some real damage. Crucible’s pilot always covers his bases, though; he saves a few Gauss rifle rounds just in case he needs to back off again, and he packs countermeasures to make sure he gets the chance.”

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=41506



DWF-VP-A “Widowmaker” Daishi and Natasha Kerensky

Tactics and Secrets

“Great Kerensky’s ghost! The black Daishi has a red hourglass? I guess it’s in the fan now!”

—Unknown lance commander, Isle of Skye

Unit Notes

The sight of the ‘Mech was enough to cause ripples of fear to pass through the enemy ranks, and these stats show why. True to the Clan Wolf paradigm, “Widowmaker” begins with 4 primary energy damage at 14”, climbing to 6 damage for clicks two and three. Dropping to 4 damage, it gains Pulse, before falling to 3 damage for clicks seven and eight. Losing Pulse at click nine, damage drops to 2 on click 12; it remains there until the ‘Mech gains Salvage at click 15. Ballistic Armor Piercing damage begins at 3 at 8”, jumping to 6 damage on click two and then down to 5 on the third click. Three clicks of 4 damage, followed by another three clicks of 3 damage—when the ballistic cassettes run out of ammo. The 270 degree firing arc means that no one sneaks up on the “Dire Wolf.”

As with all assault ‘Mechs, speed is not this unit’s strong suit, but starting at 6 before ending at 3 at Salvage, this ‘Mech is capable of staying with the fight. Attack value starts at 8 with Improved Targeting and hops to 10 one click in. Both of the starting special equipment are single-use, allowing for a quick priming of this monster. The unit’s defense is healthy, starting out at 23 with Heavy Armor for two clicks, then dropping to 22 on click three. Widowmaker loses its armor and hits its first repair marker at click four, then slowly loses defense until click 10, where it hits 19 and its second and final repair marker. Defense falls to 17 at Salvage, then 16 on the final two clicks before its bullet holes show.

The heat dial shows the Clans’ OmniMech superiority in the form of dual heat sink technology, with a dial more like a heavy ‘Mech than an assault ‘Mech: A Minor Shutdown roll occurs three clicks in, and a pair of minor rolls for energy weapons and shutdown on the fourth click, with a vent rating of 2. This ‘Mech is capable of some serious firepower, and was designed to stay in the fight for quite a while. Minimum ranges are 0, to keep those “fast basers” on their toes. Primary and secondary damage allow for dual targeting.

Whether as a commander in the Wolf’s Dragoons, or as Khan of the Wolf Clan, Natasha shows why the Kerensky Bloodline was such a feared one. She believed that adherence to outdated tactics by force of habit was folly—an “unorthodox” paradigm that led to victory on many battlefields. She doesn’t disappoint us here. Her ability, “Kerensky Blood,” allows her to ignore the called-shot, friendly fire, height-advantage, hindering terrain, and indirect-fire modifiers. No one can deny the Clan Eugenics Program results when a Kerensky is the subject of discussion!

Assigning Natasha to Widowmaker gives the Wolf Clan player a solid assault ‘Mech, which gains +2 speed and attack and +1 defense for 49 points (60 when she pilots her Widowmaker).

Design Notes

by Kelly Bonilla

Designing a “Widowmaker” version of the *Daishi* was reasonably daunting; as a member of one of the most legendary teams in BattleTech history, this ‘Mech has a reputation to live up to. While good on firepower, the main focus of this ‘Mech was the heat dial. To be true to history it needed to run cool, which served to dictate a lot of the design once that part was complete. As for Natasha Kerensky, being the battle-hardened and no-nonsense pilot she was, having her ignore combat modifiers seemed to make the most sense. When determining the paint scheme for Widowmaker, we decided to put it in the imposing colors of the Wolf Spiders, born from Natasha Kerensky’s Black Widow Company. Long live the Black Widow!

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=41524



SLR-PV-L “MetaBlade” Solitaire and Thomas Tabor

Tactics and Secrets

“Thomas Tabor? Well, Max, he’s a good chap, a gentleman through and through. With a little more effort on his part, he might even win more often. If nothing else, though, you have to admit that he’s got style...”

—D. Pinnick, guest announcer, Solaris VII event

When choosing a ‘Mech for a **Solaris VII** competition, it is important to consider carefully the pilot’s ability. Thomas Tabor’s ability (GS-008) to have “eyes in back of his head” lends itself well to the map-based play of **Solaris VII**. His *Solitaire*, “Metablade” (#008), was named by its original owner for the speed with which he used to cut apart his opponents. In that regard, Thomas and Metablade are a perfect match.

Unit Notes

This light unit is well balanced, but its dial will take some getting used to. Its initial speed of 10 comes with Evade for two clicks, compensating for your relatively shorter weapon ranges.

You have a primary energy weapon with 10 range and several clicks of Pulse, and a secondary ballistic weapon with an 8 range. The energy weapon damage drops off by the fourth click, but right around that point, your ballistic damage kicks in with a vengeance. This balance makes it possible to take some hits and still remain potent. In **Solaris VII**, where damage is dealt simultaneously, your opponent will weaken while this unit remains strong. Its attack value, coupled with the pilot’s bonus, gives this unit a monstrous 12 attack with Pulse on the starting click. And just in case you thought Metablade was a pushover, its second-to-last click has quite a surprise for unwary opponents.

Metablade’s dial is pretty typical at nine clicks. Its speed remains relatively stable for the whole dial, while its attack and damage values vary depending on the individual click. After all, Thomas likes to keep people guessing! Its heat dial is its Achilles heel, however; even with a vent rating of 3, you will need to keep an eye on your reactor. Watch your heat and you’ll stay out of trouble. Keep in mind, though, that if you use a vent order when you’ve reached your shutdown markers, you will pass over your start up roll.

Thomas Tabor gives you +1 bonuses across the board to speed, attack, and defense. His pilot ability, “Eyes in the Back of His Head,” gives you a free spin at the end of the movement phase *and* whenever he’s declared the target of an attack. This gives you an edge on movement, because if Metablade becomes the target of an attack you can change its facing. You need not worry about positioning and can instead concentrate on strategy and tactics. Very nice.

Let’s do the math. Metablade will run you 123 points; Thomas Tabor is an additional 22 on top of that (or 10 in another ‘Mech). So for 145 points, you get a contender with a starting speed of 10 with Evade, 12 attack, and 21 defense against ranged combat attacks. This combination is a solid one, and with your help perhaps Thomas can make good in the arena!

Design Notes

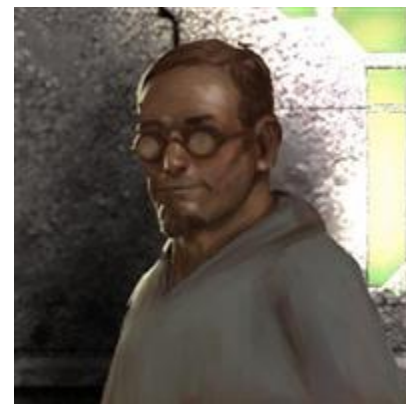
by Kelly Bonilla

Just about all of WizKids’ games actually have two designers; one who works on the game primarily and one who serves as a secondary, who can pick up the game if the primary designer/developer isn’t available or the primary just needs some help. For *MechWarrior*, my second is Ethan Pasternack, an exceptional game designer and concepthor. Ethan assisted in dial creation for the **Solaris VII** release, and had this to say about Metablade:

“This ‘Mech is designed to keep its distance using its speed and maneuverability while pounding on its opponent with Pulse lasers. If anyone manages to get up close and personal, Metablade has a triple serving of machine guns to make them wish they hadn’t. The pilot is known for his comebacks, surging recklessly at the last moment to rally and take his enemy down.”

Source:

http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mechwarrior/mw_article.asp?cid=41497



Goshawk

"The goshawk is a fierce predator, relying on speed and surprise as it hunts its unsuspecting prey."

—Grey's Field Guide to Predatory Birds, New Avalon Press, 3128

The Wolf's Dragoons Gamma Regiment *Goshawk* is the first medium 'Mech and only the fourth since **Age of Destruction** that has a starting attack of 11. Given the plethora of +2 attack medium pilots, the *Goshawk* will not miss many shots. It does steadily degrade through its 11-click dial, ending at an 8 attack before gaining Salvage on click 10.

This 'Mech also starts with a 21 defense, which ranks among the highest for its class. Unlike the attack value, the defense is very stable, only dropping on click three to 20, which it maintains until Salvage. It gains Decoy on the fifth click, making it that much harder to hit.

As with all *Goshawk*, this unit's range and damage output are limited. This variant's primary weapon is a single-target, 3 damage energy weapon with a 0/10 range. It does have Pulse for its first six clicks and maintains its starting damage throughout those clicks. Its secondary weapon is a two-target, 3 damage ballistic weapon with a 0/8 range. Starting damage is 3, which drops to 2 on click five.

It has an average speed value of 8, although it is augmented by Jump Jets for four clicks. If you push this 'Mech, you will need to deal with a tricky heat dial. It has a Minor Heat Sink Overload on the third click as well as a Minor Shutdown roll. On click four, things get worse, with a Minor Heat Sink Overload and Major Shutdown roll. It has a vent rating of only 2, so it will take some time to restart this 'Mech if you fail any shutdown rolls.

The *Goshawk* weighs in at a hefty 169 points, making it one of the most expensive medium 'Mechs in the game.

Tactically, it is ideally suited for urban combat and can spearhead your offensive actions. Because it excels at close-range combat, advance on your opponent quickly. Make sure the support you bring will be able to keep up with it.

Given its high attack and defense, the *Goshawk* will draw the attention normally reserved for heavy or assault 'Mechs. Because of its lower cost, however, the *Goshawk* will have more support to bring to bear once the engagement starts. Make sure to include something in your support that has a high damage profile, because the *Goshawk* has limited damage capability.

In **Solaris VII**, this 'Mech will match up very well with other medium 'Mechs. Use its built-in Jump Jets to close with your opponent as quickly as possible. Remember to issue dodge and defend orders as you approach, especially against opponents that prefer long-range attacks. Once you get into range, your high attack and defense give you a good chance to survive a slugfest.

Legends Reborn: Envisioning Wolf's Dragoons in the Year 3138

by Tony Rivera, a.k.a. "Terrascream"

(Brand managers' note: this article originally appeared on the Belgian site www.mech-warrior.be a few weeks ago. Now, with a few updates, we present this article for everyone on the other side of the pond!)

Hello everyone! My name is Tony Rivera, a member of the **MechWarrior** brand team at WizKids. As many of you know, the newly released **MechWarrior** Action Packs are themed around the Wolf's Dragoons mercenary outfit. I'd like to take a few minutes to let you in on how something like this all comes together. I hope you find this article entertaining, amusing, or informative—or all three! Like all things from WizKids, the process of creating an Action Pack starts with the concept. We started this work in April of this year, knowing that we had several 'Mech-heavy sets already on the calendar and that players would likely want something a little crunchier to round out Constructed play: a combined-arms release. The next question was "Who?" Though we had done faction-themed releases before, we agreed pretty early on that we wanted this one to be playable by all. That meant going with a mercenary affiliation, because they can create formations with any faction.

Once we decided that the theme would be mercenary, the Dragoons were a natural choice. They embody all that is cool about the Inner Sphere. They're expert fighters. Their origins are mysterious. They have worked for every House in the galaxy. They're revealed as a Clan Wolf vanguard. They sided with the Houses against the Clan invasion. They've almost been completely destroyed at least twice, and still they persist. And really, what **MechWarrior** fan *wouldn't* want to field the Dragoons?

So, we had a theme and a direction. That's where the conversations started getting interesting. After all, it's the Dragoons. It's worth doing right by them.

The first in-depth meeting Kelly and I had revealed the interrelated nature of game play, fiction, and production in a pretty big way. Questions came up right away. "Which regiments would still be around? Which 'Mechs would they use? Which vehicles would they have?" And the biggest one of all, "What do we include in the set?" We hadn't gotten more than 10 minutes into the discussion before we beat a hasty retreat into the old FASA Dragoons sourcebook. We ended up trading this book back and forth many times over the course of several months!

We quickly realized that the scope of what we wanted to do was too big for one Action Pack; we'd need to split it out into two: one to focus on combined arms and the other on 'Mechs.

Ironically, choosing the units for the combined-arms Action Pack was easier than choosing the regiment they belonged to! We had several units left over from the unreleased *Outlaws* set that we wanted to get out to the players. Given the Dragoons' historical penchant for contracting their own 'Mech and vehicle designs, it made sense to use this Action Pack to get those units into the arena. We also gave them a wide spread of infantry, a big tank (choosing the Marksman because it hadn't been seen in a while), and two general-purpose 'Mechs. All we had to do then was choose the regiment. Should be easy, right?

That's what I *thought*.

I was all set to go with Alpha Regiment. Makes sense, right? It's the first thing you think of anyway. So I ran this by our friends over at Catalyst Games. (They do **Classic BattleTech**.) Well, it turns out that there's this little incident in Dragoon history called the Jihad. Remember how I mentioned that the Dragoons had almost been destroyed at least twice? The Jihad was one of those times, and Alpha Regiment fared poorly in this conflict. I suppose we could have justified a reconstituted Alpha Regiment; after all, the present **MechWarrior** timeline is in 3138 and the Jihad occurred in 3070. However, we wanted to maintain the continuity of how devastating the Jihad had been to the Dragoons. In fact, the flavor text on the cards in this Action Pack tells some of that back story. So we went with Gamma Regiment instead.

It turns out that was a great choice from an artistic standpoint. Gamma's paint scheme is a midnight blue. On the suggestion of Ethan Pasternack, another member of the Game Design team, painter Chris Hart added touches of "hit me here" orange to nonvital parts on all the units. Though it's not the most intuitive color pairing, from a visual perspective it provides an appealing contrast and adds a certain asymmetry to the units. If anything, it makes the Gammas look even more intimidating! Yes, it's true that we decided not to use the red-white paint scheme that you see on existing **MechWarrior** Wolf's Dragoons game pieces. The Dragoons, like many military units in the Inner Sphere, have a multitude of regimental- and company-based color configurations, and we wanted to reflect that variety.

With the combined-arms Action Pack in the works, we moved on to the 'Mech-based set, where we again ran into more choices. For purely visceral reasons, my first idea was to do the Black Widow command lance. And we could have . . . kinda. By necessity, it would have required a re-imagining of the lance, because the original 'Mech designs now fall under the Unseen/Project Phoenix banner. And without a *Crusader* sculpt, we would also have needed a different 'Mech for Lynn Sheridan. Kelly also pointed out that making legendary pilots wasn't in line with the decision we'd made for Gamma Regiment; that is, to have all the pieces be "generic" and therefore useable in multiples.

The more we talked about it, the more I realized that we wouldn't be able to do the Black Widow command lance proper justice. My next suggestion was Zeta Battalion, thinking that the paint scheme would be easy (all black) and that we could just put the biggest, baddest units we could come up with into the set. Kelly countered with the suggestion of using the Wolf Spiders. She pointed out that this unit was very likely to have survived the Jihad, would be one of the first units rebuilt to full strength, and would also be the unit most likely to have Clan technology. From a design standpoint, this meant we could use Clan OmniMech sculpts and the glossy black-and-red *Widowmaker* paint scheme. After a little more back-and-forth, we agreed that the Wolf Spiders gave us the best of both worlds. On one hand, they are a recognizable unit from Dragoons history; on the other hand, they would give us enough room to try out a few new things.

(I did sort of get my way, though. I think Kelly designed the dials for the Wolf Spiders with a little bit of the Zeta Battalion fighting spirit in mind. More on that in a moment.)

At this point, we knew the unit composition and the regiments; all we needed were combat dials. I didn't give Kelly a specific direction on the design of these dials other than "It's the Dragoons. They are the match of any Inner Sphere great House or Clan. Make 'em good." Kelly decided on a recurring theme that can best be described as "hammer and anvil": combinations of long-range firepower and close-in punch. A perfect theme for a military outfit known for its combined-arms integration and tactical outlay!

Though both Action Packs have this "long range/short range" theme, Gamma Regiment is probably the anvil. It's easy to imagine that Wolf's Dragoons in the year 3138 have learned hard lessons from their past, and that they would conclude that the best way to

control the battlefield is through range and mobility. Half of the infantry units in this Pack have ranges of 10" or greater, and their Marksman tank has an impressive 16" range with two targets. The other two vehicles (the Hephaestus Scout Tank and Anhur Transport) both have transport capacity. And the *Goshawk*? Suffice to say it's a close-in beast!

If Gamma is the anvil, the Wolf Spiders are the hammer. We decided that, like Zeta Battalion, the Wolf Spiders would probably not be afraid to get up-close and personal, and we gave them units that reflected that ethos. The Wolf Spider 'Mechs were based on "real world" **BattleTech** weapon load-outs, which would have excellent stopping power and accuracy: big-bore autocannons, pulse lasers, and the like. If you enjoy playing Liao or the Jade Falcons, you will feel right at home with the Spiders. If you've seen the stats, you know that Wolf Spider 'Mechs don't lose any speed when damaged. Instead, their speed values gradually climb. This was another "Zeta"-like trait Kelly gave them. From the beginning, we knew we wanted to push the envelope a bit with the Wolf Spiders. After all, the Wolf Spiders are a unique fighting force within the Dragoons, who are already unique in their own right! The Wolf Spiders wouldn't fight like their brethren in "regular" Dragoon line regiments, and we wanted to give them a combat dial that would literally play out that distinction. We figured that the Wolf Spiders would be tenacious fighters and stay in the fight until the very end, using their badly damaged 'Mechs as giant projectiles if it would help them carry the battle.

There's a lot to like in these two Packs, no matter your personal playing style. We had a great time creating Wolf's Dragoons for **MechWarrior**, and we hope that you will enjoy them just as much as we do!

Wolf's Dragoons Sneak Peek #1: Gamma Regiment Action Pack

by Calvin Lin, a.k.a. "cjlin576"

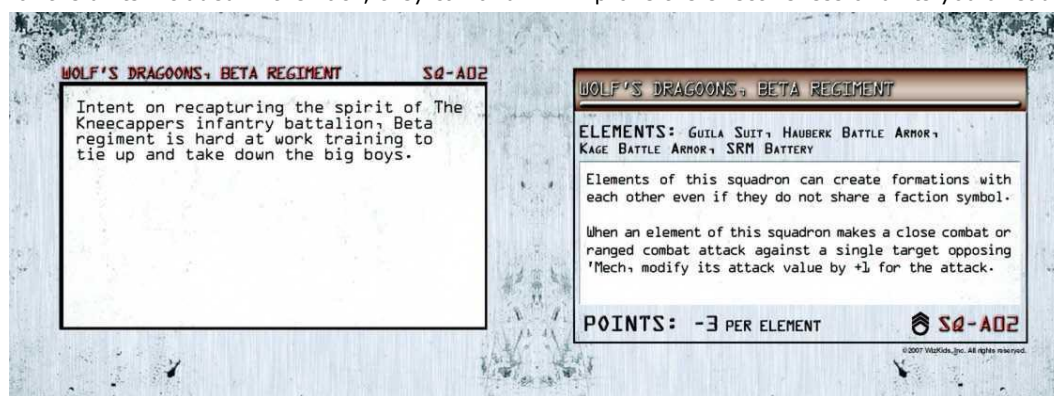
Combined arms returns in force in the Gamma Regiment Action Pack. This is the first **MechWarrior** release since *Wolf Strike* to include vehicles and infantry along with 'Mechs. This Pack also heralds the return of one of the most celebrated mercenary outfits ever to exist in the Inner Sphere: The Wolf's Dragoons. Let's take a look inside.

The first thing you'll notice is the slick paint scheme. Why blue and orange? As explained in the flavor text of one of the pilot cards, "Gamma regiment's blue and orange color scheme serves both to identify them and draw the enemy's eye away from the more critical parts of their units. The orange is applied to non-vital parts of the unit as a distraction, in hopes of taking fire there as opposed to more important parts of the unit, such as the cockpit or hip actuators. Against less-experienced enemies, the tactic holds up fairly well."

With a new set come new units. The Gamma Regiment Action Pack comes with three new designs. There are two new vehicles: the Anhur Transport and Hephaestus Scout Tank. Both are transports with a capacity of 2 and 1, respectively. Both are highly mobile and have Recon on the dial, making them very efficient at transporting the Gamma Regiment infantry anywhere on the battlefield. An M1 Marksman Tank is included to provide heavy fire support for the regiment.

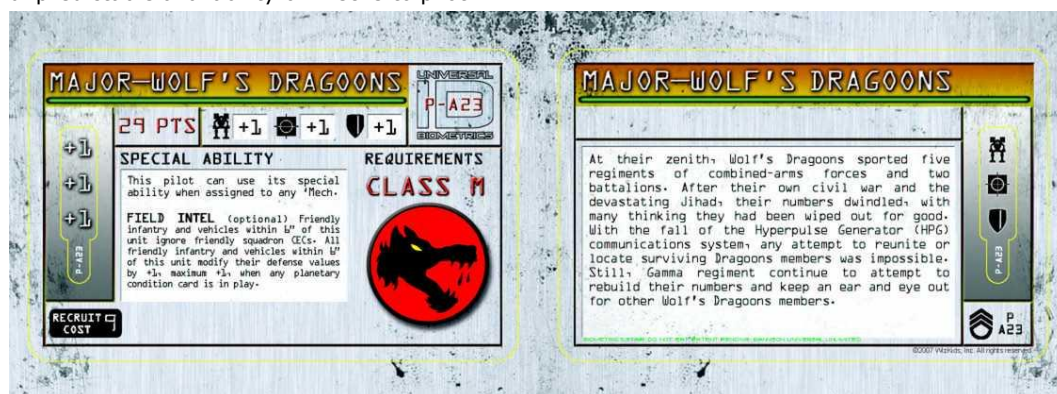
One new infantry unit is introduced: the Black Wolf Battle Armor. The Pack also re-introduces infantry units not seen since *Death from Above*, including the Guila Suit, SRM Battery, Hauberk Battle Armor, and Kage Battle Armor. Rounding out the infantry is a Raiden Battle Armor.

Augmenting the vehicles and infantry in the Pack are four new squadron cards. Although the abilities on these cards seem tailored for the units included in the Pack, they can and will improve the effectiveness of units you already own. Here's a sample:



This is **MechWarrior**, so no Action Pack is complete without 'Mechs. The Gamma Regiment Pack comes with two: a *Goshawk* and a *Scourge*. The Wolf's Dragoons must have outstanding techs, because these variants will stand out among the already existing variants.

Let's not forget that pilots are included in this Pack, and they introduce a new game mechanic: pilot abilities that are usable in any 'Mech. True to their elite mercenary reputation, Wolf's Dragoon pilots adapt well to ever-changing mission specifications and the unpredictable availability of 'Mechs to pilot.



Mercenaries are nothing without their employers, so you'll find a full set of mercenary contract cards for all the current factions in the game. In a universe in which chaos reigns, old prejudices fall to the wayside when survival depends on hiring the best of the best.

As with all other **MechWarrior** Action Packs, you will also find an exclusive 20" x 30" reversible map.

If you haven't noticed, one overriding theme of the Wolf's Dragoons is teamwork. All the pilot abilities, the squadron cards, and the units themselves are geared toward making the regiment one cohesive fighting force. Over the next few weeks, we'll take a look at a few of the units in detail and examine how to use them effectively within your battleforce.

Let's now focus on a few of the infantry and vehicles contained in the Wolf's Dragoons Gamma Regiment Action Pack. Specifically, we'll reveal some statistics for the Black Wolf Battle Armor, Hauberk Battle Armor, and M1 Marksman Tank as well as provide some tactical advice on how to use these units effectively.



The Black Wolf Battle Armor sacrifices speed for heavy weapons and armor. Equipped with a two-target, 2 damage, Armor Piercing weapon with a 0/12 range, this unit is ideally suited to crack open tanks and infantry with armor. Its starting attack is 8, and its defense of 18 is augmented by Reactive Armor. It loses its damage and defense special equipment after 4 damage, and is destroyed after 6.

This Battle Armor is slower than most front-line Battle Armor units. Its starting speed of 7 is augmented by Jump Jets for three clicks. The best way to get this unit into the action is to load it into a transport. It is useful as a tank escort, as its speed matches most heavy tanks.



The Hauberk Battle Armor returns as a more mobile long-range fire support unit. It sports the familiar 4/14 range ballistic weapon for 2 damage. The standard Battle Armor starting attack of 8 and defense of 18 are augmented by Heavy Armor for two clicks. What makes this unit more mobile is Recon for two clicks and a speed value of 8. You won't need to waste an order to get this unit into position.



The 104-point M1 Marksman Tank has been upgraded since **Dark Age**. Its two-target ballistic weapon has a formidable 0/16 range, one of the longest in the game. The 0" minimum will deter infantry from basing it. The weapon starts with 4 damage and picks up Armor Piercing after 2 damage.

The starting attack of 10 is standard for heavy tanks, and its starting 21 defense is augmented with Reactive Armor for the first four clicks and Heavy Armor for two more. An 8 starting speed makes this tank surprisingly fast. This Marksman also has a full dial, so it stands a good chance of surviving any engagement.

Tactically, these units are ideally suited to work together in formation. Use the long range and mobility of these units to deny your opponent the center of the field and threaten light and medium 'Mechs that get too close. If your opponent is unwilling to engage, bait him or her into firing at the Marksman. It can soak up the damage and still be effective, especially since it has Armor Piercing in the middle of its dial. Using the infantry as formation support should more than offset any degradation in the attack value.