



**BATTLETECH**<sup>TM</sup>

**ALPHA STRIKE**<sup>TM</sup>

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INTRODUCTION

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ALPHA STRIKE

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ALPHA STRIKE

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# INTRODUCTION



*Izanagi Warriors are joined in battle by a Second Sword of Light Gunslinger.*

It is a universe at war. Even as humankind reached out to command the stars, the human lust for conflict and conquest could not be overcome as easily as the distances of light years. Driven by the dream of one day ruling all of humanity, mighty empires formed, fell, and rose again. From the chaos of war arose the Star League, the pinnacle of human civilization, a Golden Age where a lasting peace and time of prosperity seemed possible at last. But greed, ambition, and treachery combined to tear it all down once more, plunging all the worlds humans called home into centuries of simmering conflict.

Power over billions now rests in the hands of those who can claim noble blood, or the heritage of elite warriors. Generations of warriors have done battle across countless worlds, fighting for a dream long dead, perpetuating the cycle until few could imagine any other way. The most elite among these warriors—like modern-day knights in the neo-feudal realms that now hold sway—are the MechWarriors, those who command the mightiest war machines of the thirty-first century: BattleMechs.

The *BattleTech* universe is a realm of perpetual war between interstellar dynasties and feuding Clans. It is a realm where humankind's greatest enemy is itself, rather than alien invaders. It is a universe where flags and governments change with regularity on the border worlds, and high-minded ideals like "honor," "glory," and "freedom" are the catchphrases of warlords.

It is a universe where life is cheap, but BattleMechs are not.

## ALPHA STRIKE BASICS

*Alpha Strike* is a fast-playing game of armored combat set in the *BattleTech* universe, where ongoing warfare and neo-feudalism are the norm. In this future, the pinnacle of human technology is the BattleMech, a hulking, robotic war machine weighing up to 100 metric tons, and bristling with weapons and armor. Piloting these BattleMechs are MechWarriors, the elite warriors of the Great House and Clan armies alike. While the battlefield is also home to the vast gamut of infantry, combat vehicles, aerospace fighters, the BattleMech reigns supreme.

With the *Alpha Strike* rules, players simulate battles between armies with miniatures representing the various battlefield units, and model terrain representing the battlefield itself. Statistical data for each battlefield element is tracked using unit cards, measuring the element's mobility, armor, firepower, and special abilities. Dice are used to resolve attacks between elements, with successful attacks delivering damage that degrades each unit's performance.

The winner of an *Alpha Strike* scenario is often the player whose army is the last one standing, but—as in real life—tactics and mission objectives can evolve beyond even that simple definition of success.



## ALPHA STRIKE VS. TOTAL WARFARE

Players familiar with the *BattleTech* universe through *Total Warfare* will notice some immediate differences between those game rules and the ones found in *Alpha Strike*. For example, where *Total Warfare* relies on the players using map sheets marked with a hexagonal grid to track movement and range, *Alpha Strike* is primarily a terrain-driven game.

In place of hexes, the ideal way to play *Alpha Strike* is to employ three-dimensional terrain. This can range from professional-quality, painted and flocked foam and scale model buildings—all materials one might find in any hobby store that caters to model railroad hobbyists and war gamers—or the most basic improvised approximations, such as various books for hills, and paper stand-ups for trees. Overall, the primary goal of any terrain used for *Alpha Strike* is to achieve a reasonable sense of scale with the miniatures the players are using to represent their forces.

(For players who prefer using hex maps in place of three-dimensional terrain, rules for converting *Alpha Strike* to hex map play are provided later in this book.)

The rules in *Alpha Strike* also reduce the detail level found in the *Total Warfare* style of play, abstracting away the various nuances of each unit's weapons, armor, and structural designs in favor of a faster-playing system. These rules are actually an adaptation of those presented most recently in our *Strategic Operations* advanced core rulebook (known there as Quick-Strike). As a result, they remain fundamentally compatible with the classic *BattleTech* game rules.

## WHAT'S NEEDED TO PLAY ALPHA STRIKE

To play *Alpha Strike*, you'll need the following:

### Players

*Alpha Strike* is ideally a "player versus player" wargame (though *Alpha Strike* campaigns can certainly be run with one player acting as a "gamemaster" who merely runs the forces that oppose the players). As a result, it is kind of hard to have a good game of *Alpha Strike* with less than two players, so you'll want to invite your friends in. (It's downright impossible without any players at all.)

### Rules

This book contains all the core rules needed to play *Alpha Strike* games ranging in complexity from the basic introductory level through the advanced-level rules suitable for strategic campaigns. Sample company-sized army lists or the Clan Invasion era of play are even provided for players interested in quickly jumping straight into gameplay.

**Supplemental Rules:** To maintain the focus on the basics, this rulebook does leave out some details, most notably unit conversion from standard, *Total Warfare*-style *BattleTech*, and a more in-depth look at the alternative eras and faction-driven tactics and technologies. For the conversion rules, players will find the rules in *Strategic Operations* (see pp. 355-381, SO). Future supplemental books—both in printed and in downloadable formats—will be provided in the future, offering larger army lists, support for alternate eras of play, and even introducing special rules to simulate factional flavor, tactics, and technologies.

### Dice

The primary action resolution system in this game involves rolling dice. Like the other rule sets in the *BattleTech* game line, *Alpha Strike* uses six-sided dice (D6s), with most players requiring at least two "six-siders" (2D6) to resolve most actions. Extra dice can be helpful, but are not required.

### Miniatures

*Alpha Strike* uses standard *BattleTech* miniatures to represent units. The *BattleTech Introductory Box Set* comes with a set of plastic miniatures and Iron Wind Metals sells *BattleTech* metal miniatures in both sets and individual packs. Each unit employed in an *Alpha Strike* army is represented by its own miniature.

**Miniature Scale:** The miniatures described above are roughly sized to the 1:285 scale. For those familiar with railroading modeling and the like, this makes *BattleTech's* preferred miniatures generally compatible with Z-scale models and terrain. (Although Z-scale is technically 1:220, *BattleTech* miniatures do tend to fluctuate slightly in scale, largely for quality and detail purposes. Because of this, *BattleTech* miniatures can be viewed more as icons that represent specific units, than a truly accurate to-scale representation of a battlefield unit.)

**Proxy Miniatures:** While having the exact miniature matching the make and model of the players' units is ideal, it may not always be a practical option for those whose resources are limited. Players should therefore feel free to use substitute miniatures to represent their units as "proxies" for any missing units—so long as the substitute miniatures are at least of a size and general shape that appropriately reflects the unit in question. Because likeness can be a subjective thing, however, using proxy figures should only be employed if all other players agree.

### Unit Cards

*Alpha Strike* cards are available for download from Catalyst Game Labs. Cards for all the Introductory Box Set units are available for free download from the [bg.battletech.com](http://bg.battletech.com) website, and sets of cards for other units are available for purchase. Players armed with the unit's *Alpha Strike* stats may also fill in blank cards for themselves. The data recorded on an *Alpha Strike* unit card is described in the Introductory Alpha Strike rules (see pp. 10-21).

### Tape Measure

You will need at least one measuring device, usually a tape measure. A measuring stick marked with 6", 24" and 42" marks can be useful for determining range, or a laser sight that measures range. A flexible tape measure can be useful for determining movement around obstructions. Players are free to measure at any time.

**Measurements:** For the purposes of this rulebook, the "Imperial" measuring standard (inches and feet) is used, rather than the metric system. For those comfortable with metric standards wishing to make the conversion, 1 inch (1") is equal to 2.54 centimeters. Because this can lead to some odd fractional centimeter values, however, we would recommend converting from inches to centimeters using a simpler 2.5 multiplier (thus, marking one's metric-only tape measure at the 15cm, 60cm, and 105cm lengths).



## Tabletop and Terrain

A tabletop is the bare minimum, typically 6' x 4' or larger. Miniature trees, buildings, hills and other terrain are then added to produce a simulated battlefield. The rough "real world" scale for this battlefield is approximately 7.5 meters per inch, making the recommended table sizes generally equivalent to a battlefield size 360 to 540 meters across.

**Measurements:** Once more, for players who prefer the metric system, 1 inch equals 2.54 centimeters, and 1 foot (1') equals 30.48cm. The recommended table size mentioned above thus works out to about 183cm x 121cm.

# ALPHA STRIKE AT A GLANCE

The core rules for *Alpha Strike* are divided into four broad sections in this book, as follows:

**Introductory Alpha Strike:** Following this chapter, the Introductory Rules cover the basics of ground-warfare gameplay, and are best recommended for new players. To keep things simple, the Introductory Rules presume that the players' forces are entirely composed of BattleMechs, the dominant war machine of the *BattleTech* setting.

**Standard Alpha Strike:** The standard rules are ideal for players who are comfortable and proficient with the introductory-level game. Standard *Alpha Strike* covers the broader range of *BattleTech* ground warfare, introducing infantry, ProtoMechs, combat vehicles, and other ground combat elements into the general experience.

**Abstract Aerospace System:** This chapter covers the use of aerospace assets that operate above the standard-level *Alpha Strike* (and occasionally interact with it). This system allows players to resolve movement and combat for aerospace and conventional fighters, small craft, and DropShips.

**Advanced Alpha Strike Options:** The rules in this chapter present more advanced-level options for games played using the standard *Alpha Strike* rules, including advanced terrain types, artillery weapon rules, buildings, exotic environmental conditions, fire and smoke, and even conversion rules from terrain-based play to hex-grids.

**Campaign Play:** The last of the core rules sections presented in this book presents a rough structure for resolving a campaign using *Alpha Strike* rules. This system employs a series of mission tracks designed to simulate a textbook planetary invasion between neighboring factions, beginning with the landing process and continuing to the ultimate conclusion of either glorious conquest or heroic defense.

## ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

After the core rules chapters, *Alpha Strike* features two additional chapters:

**Campaign Setting: Clan Invasion:** This chapter is short review of one of the most formative eras in *BattleTech* history: the Clan Invasion period, from 3050 to 3062. This chapter quickly summarizes the events and major powers involved in the Clan Invasion, while also providing full, playable stats for sample forces from that era. Players can use these armies, together with the core rules in this book, to play out campaigns set in this historical period.

**The BattleTech Universe:** This final chapter in this book presents a short sourcebook on the overall *BattleTech* setting, describing the history, major factions, and terminology of *BattleTech* in broad strokes.

**Alpha Strike Supplementals:** Beyond this book, and over the coming months, players will find downloadable content tailored for use with *Alpha Strike* via the [bg.battletech.com](http://bg.battletech.com) website. This not only includes the *Quick-Strike Cards* that translate classic *BattleTech* units into *Alpha Strike*-playable units, but also includes *Alpha Strike Eras*—full-size documents that detail the major periods of warfare in the *BattleTech* universe, complete with larger-size, ready-to-play army lists, and special rules additions to add more flavor and depth to your *Alpha Strike* games.

## COMMON GAME TERMS

The following terms are commonly used when playing *Alpha Strike*, and most will appear repeatedly throughout this book:

**Area of Effect (AoE)** – An area of effect refers to a circle around a center point that may be affected by certain weapons or items. Examples of AoE items include electronic countermeasures (ECM) suites, and attacks from artillery weapons.

**Armor and Structure (A and S)** – On an *Alpha Strike* unit's card, bubbles are used to indicate the how many points of external (Armor) and internal (Structure) damage the unit can sustain before being destroyed. Damage that strikes Structure bubbles dramatically increases the chances of the unit suffering critical damage.

**Base-to-Base Contact** – When two miniatures are physically touching each other on the table, they are said to be in base-to-base contact.

**Critical Hit (Critical)** – In *Alpha Strike*, a critical hit refers to a special form of internal damage that impairs a unit's functions

without necessarily destroying it. Critical hits tend to occur as a result of damage to a unit's Structure, and can affect mobility, firepower, and effectiveness in a variety of ways.

**D6** – *Alpha Strike* uses six-sided dice for game play, using D6 as shorthand for each die a player needs to roll to resolve attacks and so forth. A number preceding D6 refers to how many dice are required for a given action (usually 2D6), with the outcome of the roll determined by adding the dice together. Thus, when a player rolls 2D6 and gets a 3 result on one die, and a 4 on the other, the roll result is added up to 7 (3 + 4 = 7).

**Damage Value (Damage)** – A unit's Damage Value defines the number of points of Armor and/or Structure damage it can inflict against a target with a successful attack at each range bracket.

**Heat Scale** – Some units—notably 'Mechs and aerospace fighters—can potentially overheat as a consequence of combat actions and conditions. The Heat Scale is the part of the unit's card used to keep track of the unit's present heat levels in the event it



## COMMON GAME TERMS (CONTINUED)

does overheat. (See Overheat Value, below; if a unit's heat scale reaches, or exceeds, "S", the unit is shutdown.)

**Inch** – The distance measurement used most commonly to define range and height in *Alpha Strike* is the imperial inch, which uses a double quotation for shorthand (1 inch = 1"). For players converting to metric, 1 inch is equal to 2.54 centimeters, but a more easily recommended conversion of 2.5 cm to the inch is recommended for ease of play.

**Initiative** – In *Alpha Strike*, Initiative is the gameplay mechanism used to determine movement and combat resolution order.

**Line of Sight (LOS)** – The direct line between two units is referred to as the unit's Line of Sight. This will be the straightest, shortest distance between the units. A "clear LOS" refers to a line of sight that is not blocked by intervening obstructions. An "obstructed LOS" may have one or more objects between the two units. When two units cannot see each other at all through the objects and terrain between them via this straightest distance, LOS is may be considered blocked entirely.

**Margin of Failure (MoF)** – The difference between a target number and a modified roll result that falls below that number is referred to as the roll's Margin of Failure (or MoF, for short).

**Margin of Success (MoS)** – The difference between a target number and a modified roll result that equals or exceeds that number is referred to as the roll's Margin of Success (or MoS, for short).

**Modified Roll** – The result of a dice roll after all modifiers are applied is referred to as a Modified Roll.

**Modifiers** – Any number that is added to (or subtracted from) a dice roll, a target number, damage value, or heat value, is referred to as a modifier. Modifiers that apply to a target number are called TN modifiers or to-hit modifiers. Modifiers that apply to the dice roll result are referred to as roll modifiers. Modifiers that apply to a damage result are referred to as damage modifiers. Modifiers may be added or subtracted as appropriate (positive modifiers are added; negative modifiers are subtracted).

**Movement (Move)** – *Alpha Strike* units measure the distance they can move in each turn of play in inches. When a letter appears after the number of inches an *Alpha Strike* unit possesses, it indicates the mode of movement the unit employs, which can active special rules and options such as the ability to jump over interceding terrain or use hovercraft movement to cross water features, and so forth.

**Multipliers** – Multipliers are special modifiers that require the player to *multiply* a roll result, target number, damage value, and so forth, instead of adding or subtracting.

**Overheat Value (OV)** – A unit's overheat value indicates the number of additional damage points it can deliver in exchange for suffering overheat effects.

**Point Value (PV)** – A unit's Point Value measures its approximate battlefield strength, based on a combination of its mobility, armor, structure, weaponry, special abilities, and even its pilot or crew's skill.

**Point of Impact (POI)** – A point of impact is the targeted center of an area-effect attack.

**Range** – The distance between two units is often referred to as the range between them. Weapons and certain other items tend to have range values, often described as Short, Medium, Long, Extreme and so forth. These "range brackets" are often used to describe a unit's overall ability to deliver damage to a target, with shorter-ranged attacks typically more devastating and easier to deliver.

**Round Up** – Recurring rules (often involving multipliers) may request that a player "round up," "round down" or "round normally," depending upon the situation. Rounding up means to increase a value to the nearest desired number (usually the nearest whole number), regardless of how small the fraction may be. For example, if a value of 3.1 is achieved and a player is asked to "round up to the nearest whole number," that 3.1 becomes a 4.

**Round Down** – Rounding down means to decrease the value to the nearest desired number—once again, regardless of the decimal. For example, a value of 3.6 that the player must "round down to the nearest whole number" becomes a 3.

**Round Normally** – Rounding normally means that when the value to be rounded falls closer to a lower target number than a higher one, the player must round down. Conversely, values from the midpoint between two possible target numbers and up to the higher number must be rounded up. For example, a value of 3.4 that the player must "round normally" becomes 3, but a value of 3.5 or more (the midpoint between 3 and 4) would be rounded up to 4.

**Skill Rating (Skill)** – In *Alpha Strike*, a unit's Skill Rating refers to the unit's ability to deliver effective attacks and perform certain actions. Better Skill Ratings are generally coupled with lower base target numbers. For this reason, a unit's Skill may even be referred to by a number, which describes the unit's target number to execute attacks before applying any modifiers.

**Special Ability (Special)** – Many units in *Alpha Strike* feature special abilities. Specials are noted on the unit's data card using simple abbreviations. Each Special represents a unit bonus capability the unit might be able to use in combat.

**Target Number (TN)** – The number that a dice roll must equal or exceed to achieve a successful result. When referring to attack actions specifically, a target number may also be referred to as a to-hit number.

**Unit** – In these rules, the term "unit" refers to any single unit or group that can be fielded in a *BattleTech* game and moves and attacks as one. When a group is referred to as a "unit" individual group members may be referred to as "Elements".

**Unit Size (Size)** – In *Alpha Strike* play, a unit's size refers to its weight class. This is generally given in a numerical format, with 1 indicating a Light unit, 2 indicating a Medium unit, and so forth.

**Unit Type (Type)** – A unit's type is its broad classification, which helps identify basic rules for how it moves and acts in gameplay. In the introductory-level rules, only BattleMech unit types are used. Other types include combat vehicles, infantry, aerospace, and so forth.

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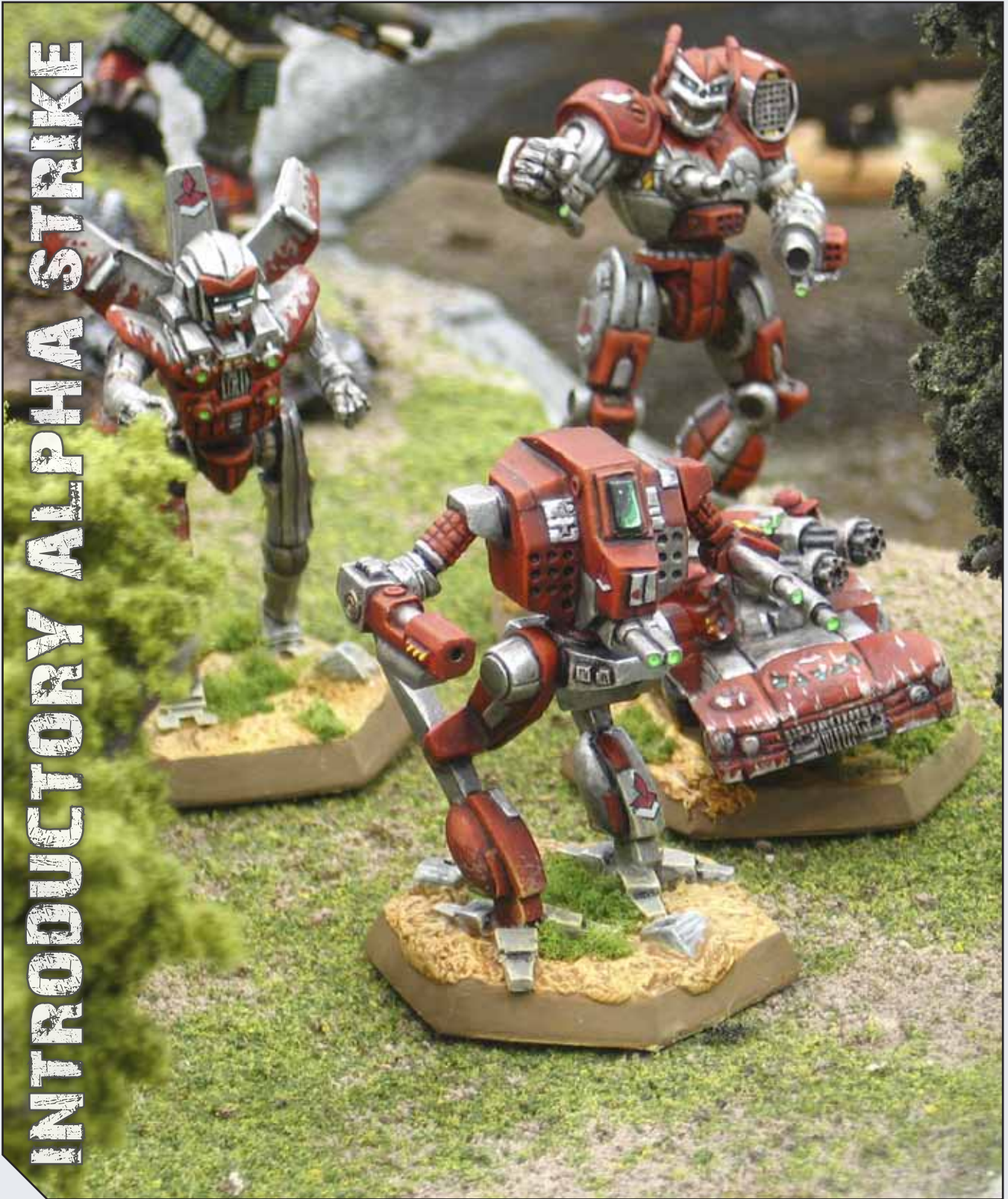
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# INTRODUCTORY ALPHA STRIKE



*The mercenary unit Ronim was formed from the Draconis Combine Tenth Ghost Regiment, after refusing orders they deemed a "suicide mission."*

The following introductory-level rules are designed to familiarize new players with the basics of the *Alpha Strike* game system. As such, they focus entirely on ground warfare between BattleMechs ('Mechs), as they are the primary (and most flexible) of BattleTech's combat units.

## COMPONENTS

Introductory *Alpha Strike* uses miniatures, six-sided dice (D6s), tape measures and tabletop terrain. These items were described in brief in the previous chapter (see pp. 6-9). Unit cards, which track the vital statistics and conditions of each unit in play, are also required. The data they present is described below.

### THE UNIT CARD

The following items appear on the Unit Card for BattleMech units:

**Unit:** In *Alpha Strike*, the term “unit” refers to any single element or group of elements that can be fielded in a *BattleTech* game. Even when a unit represents multiple elements, the unit moves, attacks, and tracks damage as one.

**Type (TP):** The Type field on a unit card indicates the general classification of a unit in two-letter codes. The BattleMech (BM) is the only unit type covered in Introductory *Alpha Strike*.

**Point Value (PV):** A unit's Point Value measures its approximate battlefield strength, based on its combat capabilities.

**Size (SZ):** On the unit card, the unit's size is a numerical value indicating its weight class. BattleMechs tend to come in four sizes, in increasing weight: 1 (Light), 2 (Medium), 3 (Heavy), and 4 (Assault).

**Movement (Move):** On the unit card, the Move field indicates the number of inches the unit may move during a turn of gameplay. When a letter appears after this number of inches, it indicates a special mode of movement the unit might possess, such as the ability to jump (see Jumping, p. 15).

**Skill:** This blank area on the unit card is where the player can indicate the base to-hit number for the unit's attacks. (A regular-rated MechWarrior commonly has a value of 4, while a value of 1—or even 0—indicates an elite-rated MechWarrior.)

**Damage Value:** The numbers shown in this part of the unit card indicates the amount of damage points the unit can deliver at each range bracket—S (+0), M (+2), and L (+4). These range brackets, respectively, are Short, Medium, and Long. If a unit cannot deliver damage at a range bracket, it may have either a 0 in that bracket, or a dash (“—”).

**Overheat Value (OV) and Heat Scale:** For BattleMech units, the Overheat Value indicates the number of damage points the unit can add to its attack, in exchange for suffering an equal amount of heat. Overheating is tracked in the four boxes under the heat scale, with each point of overheat given its own box. If the unit suffers 4 or more points of overheating, it will shutdown (indicated by the “S” in the fourth box of the Heat Scale).

**Armor and Structure (A/S):** The white bubbles in this part of the unit card indicate how many points of external armor the unit possesses, while the gray-shaded bubbles track how many points of internal structure it possesses. When a unit is damaged, these bubbles are crossed off. A unit that has had all of its structure bubbles marked off is considered to be destroyed.

**Special Abilities:** In *Alpha Strike*, units that possess special battlefield abilities beyond movement, damage, armor, and structure, will note these abilities as Special Abilities. These features are described on the unit card using abbreviations, and are further described later in this book.

**ID:** In the event that multiple units of the same design are used in a given *Alpha Strike* scenario, players may differentiate these units with some form of handy identifying information, recorded on the reverse side of the unit card.

## SETUP

To begin setup, the controlling player for each side rolls 2D6. The player with the highest dice result is the initiative winner, and thus may choose his desired army list first (see *Clan Invasion Army Lists*, pp. 135-141). The player with the lowest initiative roll selects his army list last (see p. 115).

### CHOOSING ARMY LISTS

This rulebook includes a list of forces appropriate to the various major factions of the Clan Invasion era. For the purposes of these rules, these forces are called army lists. Before starting play, each player should choose one of these army lists to serve as his force. (For quicker games, players may choose to play with a portion of their chosen armies.)

As long the number of units—and the total Point Values of these units—are equal for all players' armies, the battle will be even.

### Unit Type Restrictions

For the purposes of Introductory *Alpha Strike*, players must restrict all unit selections to BattleMech-type units only (BM). For your convenience, the sample army lists provided in this book are all of the BattleMech unit type, but on-line supplements and resources will offer a greater range of unit types more suitable for the standard *Alpha Strike* rules.

## Preparing Unit Cards

The data presented in each army list provides the full *Alpha Strike* stats for the units in that army list. These statistics must be faithfully copied into the appropriate fields on the players' unit cards.

When translating a unit's Arm/Str values to a unit card, extra armor and structure bubbles (respectively) beyond those of the unit's stats must be blacked out prior to play, leaving the remaining bubbles untouched. (For example, the Arm/Str values for the AWS-9M *Awesome* are given in the Capellan Confederation Army List as 8/4. This means that, when translating the *Awesome*'s stats to a unit card, all but 8 of the Armor bubbles must be blocked out, while all but 4 of its Structure bubbles must be blocked out.)

## Alternative Army Lists

Beyond the lists presented in this book, players may purchase downloadable supplements on-line that present larger and more varied army lists appropriate to any desired era of *BattleTech* gameplay. Players comfortable with the rules may even create their own custom army lists by either converting standard *BattleTech* units to *Alpha Strike* play (using the rules found in our *Strategic Operations* advanced rulebook), or by translating the unit's "Quick-Strike" stats as found on the *BattleTech* Master Unit List ([www.masterunitlist.info](http://www.masterunitlist.info)).

## PLACING TERRAIN

In *Alpha Strike* play, any available terrain is usually selected by the agreement of both players. If the terrain features are modular, the players can even alternate turns adding elements to the terrain table, setting up any hills, water features, woods, and so forth suitable for play.

Once the terrain is placed, the initiative winner gets the first pick in declaring an edge of the table area to serve as his army's "home edge"—the side of the battlefield where his units will enter. The opposite edge then becomes the home edge for the player with the lowest initiative roll.

In most scenario types, a player's units may only exit the map safely through that player's home edge, but some scenarios may allow (or even require) a player's units to escape the map via other map edges—perhaps even the home edge of the opposing force.

## Starting Positions

Generally, units begin play off the board, and enter the battlefield area only during the first turn. At the players' option, units may instead begin play already placed on the board within their deployment zones (defined as the whole map area within 10 inches of the units' home edge).

In this latter case, the player who made the higher Initiative roll during set-up may choose whether to begin setting up his units first or second. Once this is decided, each player takes turn placing one of his units on the map within his army's deployment zone until all units have been placed. Units may be placed with any facing direction desired.

If the opposing armies have an unequal number of units, refer to the *Unequal Number of Units* rule (see p. 27), to determine how many units must be placed by each player in turn.

# PLAYING THE GAME

This section provides an overview of the *Alpha Strike* gameplay sequence. For simplicity, these rules presume that each game is made up of two sides, controlled either by two players or by two teams of players. Whenever the rules refer to a player, that term can mean a team of players as well as an individual.

## SEQUENCE OF PLAY

An *Alpha Strike* game consists of a series of turns. During each turn, all units on the table will have an opportunity to move and fire their weapons or make physical attacks. Each turn consists of several smaller turn segments, called phases. During each phase, players may take one type of action, such as movement or combat. The players execute the phases in a given order. Specific actions, movement, effects of damage and so on are fully explained in separate sections later in these rules.

Each turn includes the following phases, performed in the following order:

### Step 1: Initiative Phase

Each player rolls 2D6 and adds the results together to determine Initiative; re-roll ties. The player with the higher result wins the Initiative for that turn.

Because movement and combat are considered to occur simultaneously in the course of an *Alpha Strike* game turn, the Initiative winner actually executes unit movement and combat actions *after* the player(s) with the lower Initiative roll. This simulates a greater awareness of the tactical situation.

### Step 2: Movement Phase

The player with the lowest Initiative roll moves one of his units first. Presuming an equal number of units on the two sides, the Initiative winner then moves one of his units, and the players continue alternating their unit movements until all units have been moved.

If the number of units per side is unequal, the player with the higher number of units must move more units in proportion to that of his opponent. See the *Unequal Number of Units* rule (see p. 27) for a helpful guide to handling unequal force numbers.

### Step 3: Combat Phase

As with the movement phase, the player with the lowest Initiative roll acts first in the Combat Phase, but—rather than alternating actions—this player declares and resolves *all* of his units' combat actions at this time, followed by the Initiative winner.

In the Combat Phase, each unit may execute one attack. Damage from these attacks is resolved immediately, but the effects do not take place until the turn's End Phase. This means that a destroyed unit will normally have a chance to return fire.

#### Step 4: End Phase

Both players may complete the End Phase simultaneously. In this phase, each player executes any miscellaneous actions remaining for the turn, such as removing destroyed units, or restarting units that shut down from overheating in a previous turn. The specific rules for such actions state whether or not they take place during the End Phase.

After resolving all End Phase actions, the turn ends and the players return to Step 1, repeat all these steps until one side meets its victory conditions for the scenario.

#### VICTORY CONDITIONS

In Introductory *Alpha Strike*, victory is most commonly achieved when one player's army destroys all of the opposing players' units.

#### Alternative Victory Conditions

Players interested in more variety may assign alternate victory conditions for their *Alpha Strike* games as they wish. Examples of this include "breakthrough" scenarios, where one side's goal is to move a certain number of its units across the map and off the opposing edge with minimal casualties, or a "capture the flag" type of scenario, where a player's force might claim victory by moving its units to a pre-designated point and surviving in that position for a certain number of turns.



## MOVEMENT PHASE

Every unit has a base Move listed on its unit card. This value is the maximum number of inches the unit may move during its turn. A unit may move in any direction and—at the end of its movement—may face in any direction. Units need not move their full amount; in place of moving, a unit may simply stand still. A unit may make multiple turns, during the course of its movement, to maneuver around obstacles, so long as the inches traveled are within its maximum Move rating. (Using a flexible tape measure, to correctly measure this indirect distance, is highly recommended.)

Terrain may prohibit or impede a unit's movement, as shown on the Movement Cost Table.

#### Minimum Movement

As long as a unit is mobile (meaning that its Move has not been reduced to zero through damage or heat effects), it can always move 2 inches in any direction, regardless of the terrain's movement costs (unless the terrain in question is prohibited).

#### Facing

'Mech units are considered to be facing the same way as the feet of the miniature representing the unit.

A unit's facing affects combat resolution (see *Combat Phase*, below), and can only be voluntarily changed during the Movement Phase.

#### Stacking

During the Movement Phase, a unit may move through a space occupied by other friendly units, but may not move through unfriendly units at the same elevation. If the units occupy different elevations during a unit's movement (such as when a 'Mech unit with jumping capability uses it to move), the units are considered to be at different elevations and may pass through the same space.

Regardless of how they arrive at their destination, units in *Alpha Strike* may not occupy the same space on the game table, regardless of any differences in elevation.

#### TERRAIN

Terrain may impede movement, costing an extra number of inches to enter or pass through. These extra costs are shown on the Movement Cost Table. Note that multiple terrain conditions may combine for higher movement costs (such as when changing elevations while moving through water).

**Water:** 'Mech units entering water must pay the combined cost of the movement, plus the extra movement costs for water terrain and any level change costs.

**Level Change:** 'Mechs may climb onto and over terrain as steep as 2 inches high (per inch of horizontal travel). Doing so costs 1 extra inch of movement per inch of elevation changed. (For an exception, see *Jumping*, p. 14). Level changes greater than these are considered prohibited terrain in *Alpha Strike*, too sheer for the 'Mech to traverse. If the unit does not have enough Move allowance remaining to climb to the desired level of terrain, it must remain at the previous level, and cannot move any further.



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## MOVEMENT COST TABLE

Terrain Type	Movement Cost
Clear	1"
Rough/Rubble	+1"
Woods	+1"
Water	+1"
Level Changes (up or down) Per 1" elevation	+1" (max 2" per 1" travelled)

In the Movement Basics Diagram at right, the Vulture has 10 inches of Movement. To move to Point A, it spends 6 inches of its available Move to get to the hill, 2 inches to move up the hill, and then 2 more inches to move across the hill. As it has run out of Move, the Vulture stops there, and its controlling player can choose any facing for it to end with.

The Vulture cannot move straight to Point B. The 4" elevation change is more than the 2" allowed for elevation changes per 1" travelled.

If the player wishes instead to avoid ending up on top of the hill, the Mech can move around the hill to reach Point C. In this case, it spends 6 inches to move below the hill, and its remaining 4 inches are spent moving up the gap between the hill and the woods.

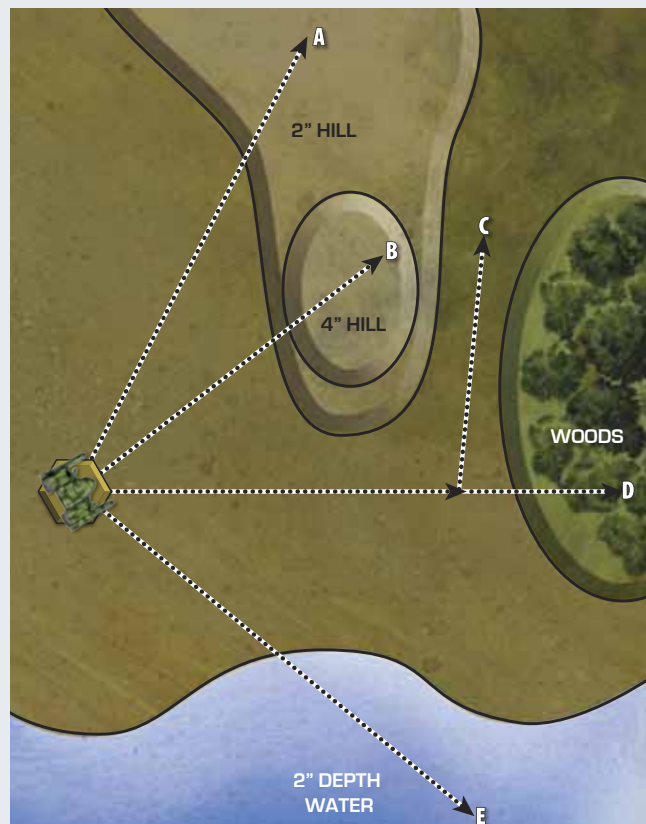
The Vulture can also move to Point D and end its movement in the Woods. For that, it spends 7 inches of Move to get to the edge of the Woods. Because Woods cost an extra 1 inch per inch traveled through such terrain, the Vulture can only move 1.5 inches into the Woods before running out of Move.

If the player would rather place his Vulture in the water, he can move the Mech 4 inches to the water's edge, spend 2 inches of Move for the elevation change into the water, and then 4 more inches of Move to push through 2 inches of water terrain.

## JUMPING

Any unit with a "j" listed in its Move statistic is a unit that possesses the ability to jump over intervening obstructions. The distance such units can jump is given as the Move value beside the "j". Jumping is an alternative movement type that cannot be combined with normal ground movement by the same unit in the same Movement Phase. Units with jumping ability do not always have to jump, and some may even have a shorter Move while jumping than the same unit can move on land. (For example, the JR7-K Jenner, with its Move of 14"/6"j, can use 14 inches of Move on the ground, or jump for 6 inches.)

A jumping unit ignores terrain costs for the purposes of movement, and may jump in any direction, regardless of its original facing. Jumping movement always follows the shortest path possible; the player simply chooses an end point (up to the unit's jumping Move allowance), and the unit lands at that location, with any desired facing direction.



• MOVEMENT BASICS DIAGRAM •

**Maximum Jump Height:** For a jump to be legal, the jumping unit must also be able to clear any terrain it is attempting to pass over. A jumping unit can jump over any terrain that is lower in height than its jump Move rating, so a unit with 6 inches of jumping Move may jump over any obstructions less than 6 inches tall.

**Downward Jumping:** When jumping downward (such as off a cliff or building), a jumping unit may safely jump down from any height.

**Water:** Units with jumping capability may jump into water terrain, but not out of it.

## COMBAT PHASE

In the Combat Phase, each unit may deliver one attack against another unit, be it a physical attack or a weapon attack. If a unit is unable or unwilling to make an attack in the current turn, it may be skipped for that turn.

To make an attack, the controlling player declares which unit is attacking, what unit it is attacking, the nature of the attack (weapon or physical), and—if applicable—how much of his unit's Overheat Value the attack will use (see *Overheating*, p. 20). The player then resolves combat for that unit, applies any damage to the target, and then moves on to another available unit to repeat the process until all of his units have made their attacks. If the player wishes a unit not to make an attack, or if a unit is unable to make an attack for any reason, the player may pass for that turn.

Once a player has resolved (or skipped) combat actions for all of his units, the opposing player may then do so for all of his units.

In Introductory *Alpha Strike*, the only valid targets for an attack are other units.

## RESOLVING WEAPON ATTACKS

The sequence for resolving weapon attacks is as follows:

- Step 1: Verify line of sight (LOS)
- Step 2: Verify firing arc
- Step 3: Determine range
- Step 4: Determine to-hit number
- Step 5: Roll to hit
- Step 6: Determine and apply damage
- Step 7: Roll for critical hits (if applicable)

### Step 1: Verify Line of Sight

Line of sight (LOS) in *Alpha Strike* is determined by what a unit can “see” from its vantage point on the table. Units can usually be sighted by simply going to the eye level of the attacking unit and looking at the target miniature. If the target miniature can be seen, then the units have LOS to one another. When this is not possible, players may determine line of sight by running a straight measuring tape or a taut string from miniature to miniature, or perhaps even by using a laser pointer.

If less than one-third of a miniature is visible behind solid terrain (such as hills or buildings), then the line of sight is considered to be blocked.

Non-solid terrain—such as woods—does not automatically block LOS in the same fashion. In the case of such terrain, line of sight is only considered to be blocked when it passes through 6 inches or more of such intervening non-solid obstructions. Woods that intervene, but do not block, LOS will impose a modifier to the attack’s to-hit numbers (see the *To-Hit Modifiers Table*, p. 16).

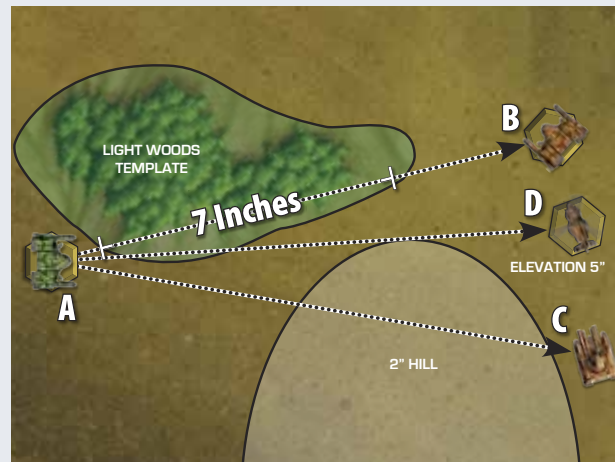
**Adjacent Ground Units:** Units in base-to-base contact always have line of sight to each other.

**Intervening Units:** Intervening units are not treated as terrain, and thus have no effect on LOS or attacks.

**Partial Cover:** If more than one-third (but less than two-thirds) of a target is hidden behind blocking terrain, LOS is not considered blocked. Instead, the target is said to possess partial cover, and the attacker will apply a modifier to his attack to-hit number as a result (see the *To-Hit Modifiers Table*, p. 16).

**Woods:** Units do not receive partial cover from woods terrain.

**Water:** ‘Mech units that are standing in Water terrain at a depth (negative elevation) level of 1 inch will receive partial cover benefits from the water. Because the water surrounds the ‘Mech, this partial cover applies even if the attacker is standing at a higher level than the target and would ordinarily be able to see the target’s legs. If a unit is completely submerged within water (such as a ‘Mech unit standing in water features 2 or more inches deep), LOS to (and from) the submerged unit is considered to be blocked.



• LINE OF SIGHT DIAGRAMS •

In the Line of Sight diagram, BattleMech A wants to target BattleMech B. From the perspective of BattleMech A, the only thing the controlling player sees between the two units is a woods template. Using a measuring tape drawn between the two units to find how many inches of Woods terrain intervene, the player finds that he is trying to target a unit through 7 inches of light woods intervene. Because this is more than 6 inches, LOS between the two BattleMechs is actually blocked; BattleMech A therefore cannot attack BattleMech B.

The controlling player decides instead to target Ground Vehicle C. Unfortunately, when he leans down to the mini’s level to check LOS, he finds that Vehicle C is actually hidden by the low ridge between them. This leaves only Vehicle D, a VTOL currently flying at an elevation level of 5 inches above the table, as the only target that BattleMech A can see from its vantage point. BattleMech A’s player notes that even this LOS passes over the woods terrain between them, and verifies with a straight-edge that the attack will pass through some wooded terrain.



### Step 2: Verify Firing Arc

Every unit in *Alpha Strike* has a particular field of fire into which the unit may make attacks. These fields of fire, based on the unit's type and its facing, are known as firing arcs. A Mech unit's firing arcs extend to the edge of the battlefield in the directions indicated by the diagram.

If more than half of the target unit's base lies outside the attacker's firing arc, then the attack cannot be made.

### Step 3: Determine Range

*Alpha Strike* uses fixed range brackets for all weapon types. To determine a unit's range, measure the distance from the edge of the attacker's base to the edge of the target's base, and compare this number to the Alpha Strike Range Table, to determine what range bracket the target lies in.

A unit's successful attack will deliver a certain amount of damage to the target at each of the indicated ranges, but not all units can deliver damage at every range bracket. If a unit's damage value in a given range bracket is given as a 0 or a dash ("—") on its unit card, the unit cannot make a weapon attack at that range.

**Base-to-Base Contact:** Units may not make weapon attacks against targets with which they are in base-to-base contact. Against such units, the attacker may only deliver a physical attack (see *Resolving Physical Attacks*, p. 19).

## ALPHA STRIKE RANGE TABLE

Distance	Range
Up to 6"	Short
Over 6" and up to 24"	Medium
Over 24" and up to 42"	Long

### Step 4: Determine To-Hit Number

Once a player has determined that he has LOS to his target, that the target is within the attacking unit's firing arc, and within a range bracket it can deliver damage to, he must determine the to-hit number. The player's dice roll must equal or exceed this to-hit number in order to score a successful attack against his target.

The base to-hit number for all attacks is the unit's Skill Rating. This number is then modified based on the attack's range bracket, the target's movement capability, terrain features, and other miscellaneous situations. The modifiers applicable to Introductory *Alpha Strike* are shown on the To-Hit Modifiers Table. Unless otherwise stated, all modifiers are cumulative, which means they are added to the unit's base to-hit number to find the final to-hit number.

## TO-HIT MODIFIERS TABLE

RANGE MODIFIERS		
Range	Distance	Modifier
Short	Up to 6"	+0
Medium	>6" to 24"	+2
Long	>24" to 42"	+4

TARGET MOVEMENT MODIFIERS <sup>1</sup>	
Target's Available MP	Modifier
0-4"	+0
5"-8"	+1
9"-12"	+2
13"-18"	+3
19"-34"	+4
35"+	+5
Jump Capable	+1

TERRAIN MODIFIERS	
Terrain	Modifier
Woods	+2 <sup>2</sup>
Partial Cover	+2

PHYSICAL ATTACKS MODIFIERS	
Physical Attack Type	Modifier
Charge	+2
Death From Above	+3
Melee	+1
Standard	+0

TARGET MODIFIERS	
Target	Modifier
Is Shutdown/Immobile	-4

MISCELLANEOUS MODIFIERS	
Attacker	Modifier
Fire Control Hit	+2 <sup>3</sup>
Overheated	+ Heat Level [1-3] <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Modifier Modifier is based on the unit's available movement, modified by heat levels and critical hits (if applicable). For units with multiple movement modes, apply the modifier from the mode that has the highest modifier. Inches actually moved by the unit are irrelevant.

<sup>2</sup>Modifier applies if terrain is intervening or occupied by target.

<sup>3</sup>This modifier may apply multiple times, but does not apply to physical attacks.

<sup>4</sup>Heat modifiers do not apply to physical attacks.



**Shutdown Units:** Shutdown units do not receive a movement modifier for target's available movement.

**Occupying and Intervening Terrain:** Terrain is occupied if any part of the unit's base is in contact with the terrain. Terrain is intervening if the Line of Sight passes through it before reaching the target (see *Verify Line of Sight*, p. 15).

*In the To-Hit Roll diagram, Alice's CTF-3L Cataphract stands at Point A and is attacking an ANV-3M Anvil at Point B. Alice's Mech has a Skill rating of 3, establishing her base to-hit at 3. She then applies the following modifiers:*

*The Anvil is 2 inches away, and thus at short range (no modifier).*

*The Anvil's available Move is 10"/4". The 10" ground movement provides a target movement modifier of +2, while the 4"j provides only +1 (+0 for the 4" movement, +1 for jump capability = +1 total). As the ground movement modifier is higher, +2, is used.*

*Next, Alice adds 2 because the Anvil is in water that provides partial cover.*

*This makes the final, modified to-hit number 7 (3 [Skill Rating] + 0 [short range] + 2 [target movement] + 2 [partial cover] = 7). Alice will need to roll 7 or higher on 2D6 to successfully hit her target.*

### Step 5: Roll to Hit

To execute an attack, the controlling player rolls 2D6 for each unit and compares the total to the modified to-hit number identified in the previous step. If the dice roll equals or exceeds the modified to-hit number, the attack succeeds. Otherwise, the attack fails.

### Step 6: Determine and Apply Damage

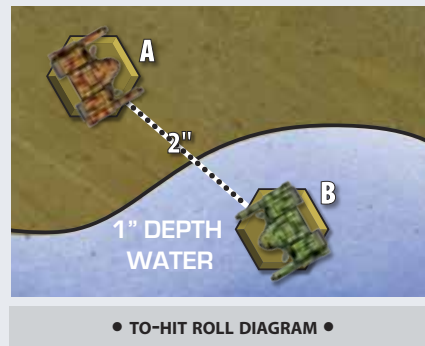
When an attack is successful, its damage is applied immediately, but damage effect will not take place until the End Phase. Before damage can be applied, the attack direction and amount of damage must be determined.

**Attack Direction:** When an attack hits a unit, it must be determined whether or not it strikes the target's front or rear. To determine this, lay a straightedge from the center of the attacker's base to the center of the target's base. If the attack enters through the rear hex side of the target's base, the attack direction is to the target's rear. Otherwise, the damage applies to the front of the target. If the straightedge crosses at the intersection of two hex sides, the target chooses which side is hit by the attack.

**Amount of Damage:** The base amount of damage delivered by a successful weapon attack is equal to the attacking unit's damage value at the appropriate range bracket. If the target is at short range, the base damage is that listed in the attacking unit's S value. For a target at medium range, the M value is used. For a target at long range, the L damage value applies.

Add 1 point of damage to any successful attack that strikes its target in the rear.

Units that track heat may inflict additional damage on their targets at the expense of overheating. The decision to overheat for additional damage potential must be made when the attack is declared, but before it is resolved (see *Overheating*, p. 20).



**Heat Special Ability:** Some units have a preponderance of heat-generating weapons. Units with this feature will reflect this in the unit's stats via the Heat special ability (HT#). The Heat special ability will also include a numeric rating (for example, HT1), which will indicate the number of additional heat points that will be applied to the target in the End Phase of the turn when the attack hits. (This heat applies in addition to the indicated amount of the unit's normal weapon attack damage, so a unit that can deliver 3 points of damage and has the HT1 special will deliver 3 points of damage plus 1 point of heat.) A unit may be struck by multiple attacks that deliver heat, but no unit may gain more than 2 points of heat per turn in this fashion.

### Applying Damage

The following question-and-answer process covers the recording of damage from a successful attack.

**Question 1:** Does the target unit have armor (Arm) bubbles remaining on its unit card?

**Yes:** Check off one armor bubble for every point of damage delivered against the unit, until all damage is applied or all armor is destroyed. Then proceed to Question 2.

**No:** Proceed to Question 3.

**Question 2:** Is there attack damage remaining?  
**Yes:** Proceed to Question 3 to allocate remaining damage.

**No:** The attack is finished.

**Question 3:** Does the target unit have structure (Str) bubbles remaining?

**Yes:** Check off one structure bubble for every point of damage delivered, until all damage is applied or all structure is destroyed. Then proceed to Question 4.

**No:** Proceed to Question 4.

**Question 4:** Is there damage remaining?

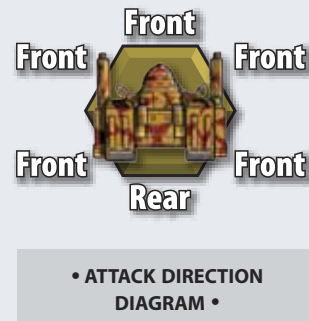
**Yes:** The target unit is destroyed.

**No:** Go to Question 5.

**Question 5:** Does the target unit have structure bubbles remaining?

**Yes:** Roll once on the Determining Critical Hits Table (see *Step 7: Roll for Critical Hits*, p. 18). The attack is finished.

**No:** The target unit is destroyed.



Kevin's RFL-3N Rifleman begins the turn undamaged, and so it has 4 points of armor and 5 points of structure. This Combat Phase, the 'Mech is hit by weapon attacks from a STK-5S Stalker and a BSW-X1 Bushwacker. After checking the attack directions, Kevin's opponents find all shots will strike his Rifleman on the front. The Stalker is attacking from medium range and will thus deliver 3 points of damage. Kevin marks off 3 armor bubbles, leaving 1 armor and 5 structure circles for his Rifleman. Because the damage has not marked off any structure bubbles, there is no Critical Hits roll.

The Bushwacker, also attacking from medium range, also delivers 3 points of damage. Kevin marks off the last bubble of armor on his Rifleman and 2 points of structure, leaving it with no armor bubbles, and 3 bubbles of structure.

Kevin informs his opponent that the attack has hit his structure. This means there is a chance for a Critical Hit. His opponent rolls 2D6, getting a 10 result, and consults the Determining Critical Hit Table. This means the Rifleman has taken a Fire Control Hit. In future turns, the Rifleman will suffer an additional +2 to-hit modifier to its weapon attacks.

### Step 7: Roll for Critical Hits

Any time a hit damages structure, critical damage may occur that further weakens or impairs the target unit. To determine whether a unit suffers a critical hit—and the nature of such damage—the attacker rolls 2D6 and consults the Determining Critical Hits Table. Critical Hits must be clearly marked on the unit's card. The effects of all critical hits are permanent.

If the given critical hit effect does not apply to the unit in question (for example, a weapon hit on a unit that has already had all of its damage values reduced to zero), apply 1 additional point of damage to the unit instead, but do not roll for additional critical hits as a result of this extra damage.

### Critical Hit Effects

The following describes the effects of each critical hit type described in the Determining Critical Hits Table.

## DETERMINING CRITICAL HITS TABLE

2d6 Roll	Effect
2	Ammo Hit
3	Engine Hit
4	Fire Control Hit
5	No Critical Hit
6	Weapon Hit
7	MP Hit
8	Weapon Hit
9	No Critical Hit
10	Fire Control Hit
11	Engine Hit
12	Unit Destroyed



*This Sunder has clearly taken a Weapon Hit, and likely an MP Hit.*

**Ammo Hit:** Unless the unit has the CASE, CASEII, or ENE special abilities, the unit is destroyed. If the unit has CASE, it suffers 1 additional point of damage (roll again on the Determining Critical Hits Table if this damages structure). If the unit has the CASEII or ENE special abilities, apply no additional damage and treat the result as No Critical Hit.

**Engine Hit:** The unit's power system has been damaged. The engine hit will cause the unit to generate 1 heat point any time it fires its weapons without delivering any extra damage from overheating. (The unit may still use overheating to add damage to its attacks, but this heat will add to the 1 point generated by the engine hit.) A second Engine Hit critical will destroy the unit.

**Fire Control Hit:** Some mechanism for controlling the unit's weapons has been damaged. This could represent anything from arm actuator damage to sensor hits. Each Fire Control Hit adds a cumulative to-hit modifier of +2 for all subsequent weapon attacks by the damaged unit. (This modifier will not apply to physical attacks.)

**MP Hit:** Something related to the unit's ability to move has been damaged. The affected unit loses half of its current Move, rounding normally (to a minimum Move loss of 2 inches). If a unit is reduced to a Move of 0 inches (or less) in this fashion, the unit may no longer move.

**No Critical Hit:** The hit causes not critical effect.

**Unit Destroyed:** The unit has suffered fatal damage and is eliminated from the game.

**Weapon Hit:** This hit represents the destruction of a number of weapons on the affected unit. All damage values are reduced by 1 (to a minimum of 0). Weapon Hits do not affect a unit's physical attack values.