

30 YEARS OF GAMING

Initially published over thirty years ago as a tabletop board game, *BattleTech* has gone on to become one of the gaming industry's most important and longest-lasting science-fiction universes. In this pamphlet we will explore a little of the property's history of products and skim the surface of *BattleTech's* incredibly rich fictional setting.

The art in this Primer covers thirty years of action-packed BattleTech excitement. From the very first books published in 1985 to illustrations this year from both the tabletop game as well as concept sketches from Harebrained Schemes' coming BATTLETECH: enjoy the visual history of this stunning setting.





TABLETOP GAMES

Starting as a single boxed game which included two plastic model kits and paper counters, *BattleTech* quickly grew to become a major innovator of tabletop games, blurring the lines between competitive strategy games and fictionally intensive role-playing games. Over the last thirty years there have been over 250 tabletop game products with total sales of millions of units. The production quality of these products pushed the industry forward with the amount of full-color art, plastic components, and innovative synchronized integration between all aspects of the *BattleTech* universe: tabletop games, novels, video games, miniatures, and even toys and television shows.

MINIATURES

Within the year of its first publication, metal miniatures for use with *BattleTech* began releasing and would go on to garner dozens of awards. New miniatures for *BattleTech* have been produced each year for over three decades, making it one of the longest run of miniatures in gaming history, with well over a thousand unique miniatures released to date. *Iron Wind Metals* is the current producer of *BattleTech* miniatures, while www.camospecs.com includes thousands of photos of high-detailed, painted miniatures to peruse, while *Fighting Pirannha Graphics* produces the high-quality waterslide decals seen on many of those miniatures.

30 YEARS OF GAMING



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COMPUTER GAMING

Few properties lend themselves better to electronic entertainment than the concept of piloting a giant walking 'Mech in combat. Since 1988, the *BattleTech* license has had a grand tradition in electronic gaming history. Worked on by hundreds of talented designers, programmers and artists, and enjoyed by millions of gamers, *BattleTech* has pushed the boundaries of computer and video games from 1988 up until the present. Of particular note are both the *BattleTech Centers*, which appeared in 1990—the first multiplayer, networked immersive world available to the public—and *MechWarrior 2*, published in 1995, which remains one of Activision's all-time highest unit sellers.

30 YEARS OF GAMING



NOVELS

From the moment *Decision at Thunder Rift* published in 1986, novels became an integral part of the universe. Unfolding a living arrow of time where the universe changed and progressed, while also presenting different sides of each story, with battles and perceptions often varying from empire to empire and novel to novel: all the shades of grey. A "trenches to the throne room" style of storytelling, which conveyed the epic nature of the universe against the heroics and villainy of individuals.

Over ninety published novels across two decades, with well over two million copies of *BattleTech* novels having been sold worldwide in over ten different languages: *BattleTech* is one of the largest, longestrunning science fiction universes. In some countries, they have outsold prominent licensed literary properties such as *Star Trek* and *Star Wars*. Continuing that rich legacy, the fiction-subscription website **BattleCorps**. **com** has published over two million words of short stories and novellas over the last decade.

CARTOON SERIES

The *BattleTech* animated series aired in 1994, produced by Saban Entertainment. It ran for thirteen episodes and was noteworthy as the first weekly show to feature computer-generated animation: it blended traditional animation techniques with CGI (for the battle scenes).

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TOYS

In 1994, Tyco Toys released a toy series based on the *BattleTech* cartoon. In the early 2000s both K'nex and Joyride released a series of successful "MechWarrior"-branded toys. Joyride's toys were the most successful they'd ever released.



thousand light years and beyond.

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

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

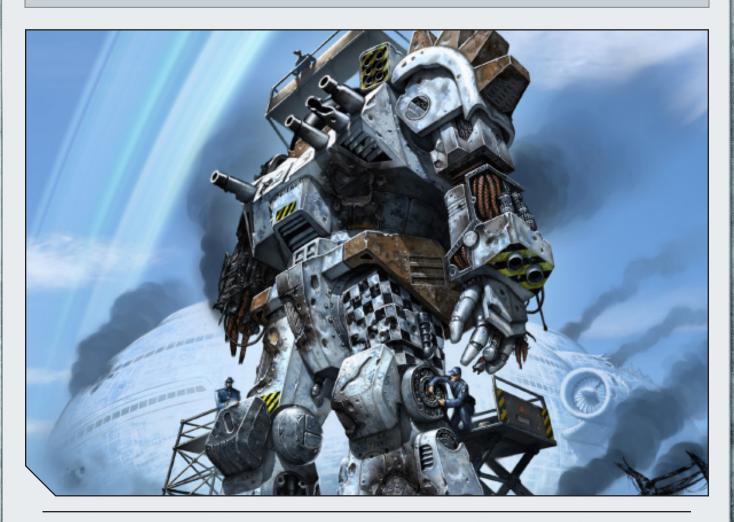
For twelve generations, armies of BattleMechs have clashed across more than two thousand colonized planets of the Inner Sphere, visiting such destruction on humanity's technological capabilities that old, scavenged 'Mechs outperform newly built models.

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

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

THIS is BattleTech.

BATTLEMECHS.....



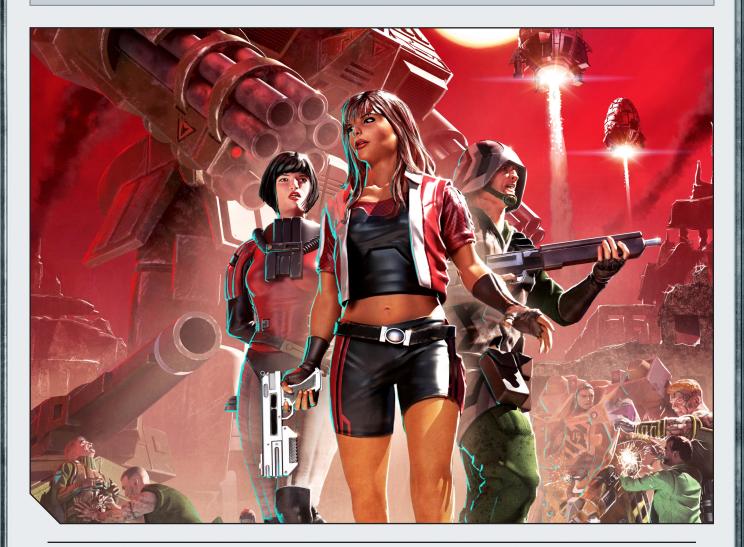
BATTLEMECHS

—Excerpts from a promotional pamphlet originally distributed by Defiance Industries of Hesperus, Lyran Commonwealth, 2997

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

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

MECHWARRIORS



MECHWARRIORS

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

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

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

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

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BATTLETECH ERAS

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

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

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



STAR LEAGUE (2005-2780)

lan Cameron, ruler of the Terran Hegemony, concludes decades of tireless effort with the creation of the

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



SUCCESSION WARS (2781-3049)

Every last member of First Lord Richard Cameron's family is killed during a coup launched by Stefan Amaris. Following the

thirteen-year war to unseat him, the rulers of each of the five Great Houses disband the Star League. General Aleksandr Kerensky departs with eighty percent of the Star League Defense Force beyond known space and the Inner Sphere collapses into centuries of warfare known as the Succession Wars that will eventually result in a massive loss of technology across most worlds.

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



CLAN INVASION (3050-3061)

A mysterious invading force strikes the coreward region of the Inner Sphere. The invaders, called the Clans, are descendants

of Kerensky's SLDF troops, forged into a society dedicated to becoming the greatest fighting force in history. With vastly superior technology and warriors, the Clans conquer world after world. Eventually this outside threat will forge a new Star League, something hundreds of years of warfare failed to accomplish. In addition, the Clans will act as a catalyst for a technological renaissance.

MechWarrior Online: Piranha Games' MechWarrior Online is set in this era.



CIVIL WAR (3062-3067)

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



JIHAD (3068-3080)

Davion collapses into five long years of bitter civil war.

Following the Federated Commonwealth Civil War, the leaders of the Great Houses meet and disband the new Star League, de-

claring it a sham. The pseudo-religious Word of Blake a splinter group of ComStar, the protectors and controllers of interstellar communication—launch the Jihad: an interstellar war that will ultimately pit every faction against each other and even against themselves, as weapons of mass destruction are used for the first time in centuries while new and frightening technologies are likewise unleashed.



DARK AGE (3081+)

Under the guidance of Devlin Stone, the Republic of the Sphere is born at the heart of the Inner Sphere following the Jihad.

One of the more extensive periods of peace begins to break out as the 32nd century dawns. The factions, to one degree or another, embrace disarmament and the massive armies of the Succession Wars begin to fade. However, in 3132 eighty percent of interstellar communications collapses, throwing the universe into chaos. Wars almost immediately erupt and the factions begin rebuilding their armies.

THE STAR LEAGUE

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

STAR LEAGUE

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

House Cameron

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

TERRAN HEGEMONY

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

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

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

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

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

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

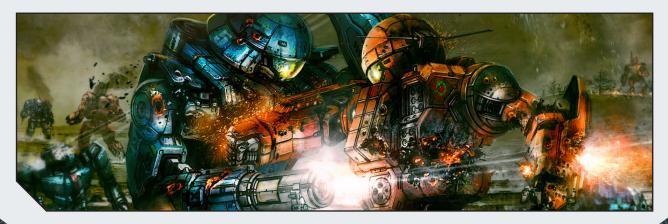
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THE GREAT HOUSES.....

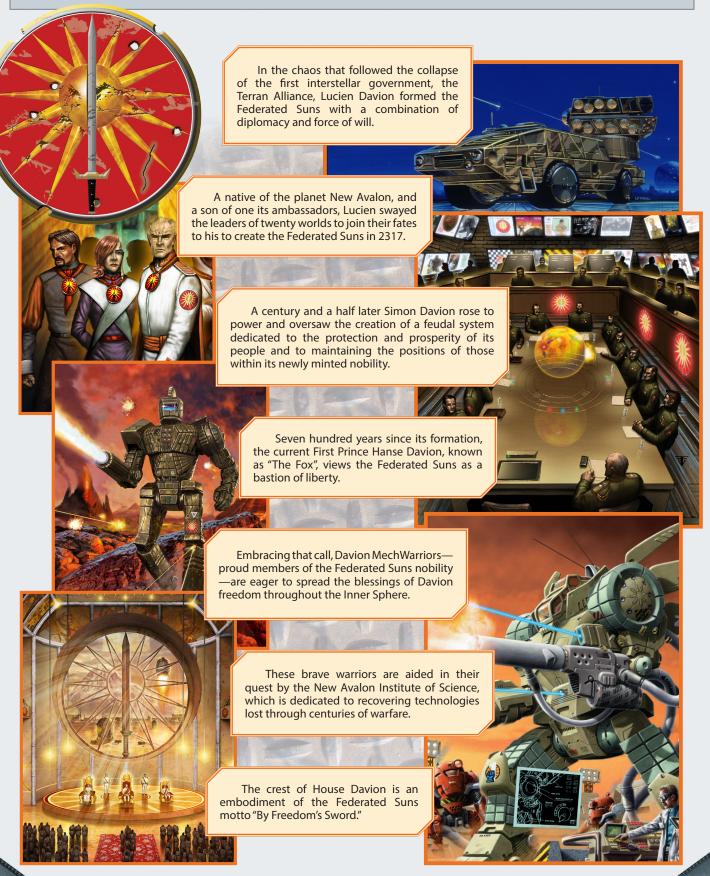


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In keeping with their feudal origins, every empire in the Inner Sphere includes some type of noble class. Nobility in the thirty-first century is largely hereditary, with the designated heirs of nobles inheriting their noble parents' rights, states, and responsibilities. Though most sovereigns can grant titles to their subjects, this practice is relatively rare—even for MechWarriors, the modern equivalent of knights.



HOUSE DAVION (FEDERATED SUNS)......



HOUSE KURITA (DRACONIS COMBINE) ...



HOUSE LIAO (CAPELLAN CONFEDERATION)

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

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

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

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

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

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

The defiant *dao* sword of the Liao crest represents the Capellan Confederation motto "One Vision."

HOUSE MARIK (FREE WORLDS LEAGUE)..



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

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

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

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

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

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

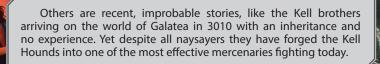
In the Lyran throne room, two BattleMechs flank the Archon throne and the emblem of House Steiner, exemplifying their motto "Indomitable Will."

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

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

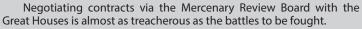


Some mercenaries have histories dating back centuries, none longer than the Northwind Highlanders, the current incarnation of the Scottish regiments of ancient Terra.



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

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



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

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

CHOOSE YOUR EXPERIENCE



CHOOSE YOUR EXPERIENCE

There are five ways in which people enjoy the *BattleTech* universe.

- As a tabletop miniatures game
- As a tabletop board game
- As a tabletop roleplaying game
- As a reader of fiction
- As a computer game

It's important to note that what makes *BattleTech* so enjoyable is there is no "right way" to experience it. While the avenues above are the primary ones, most players mix and match all aspects. With board gamers reading all the fiction, or roleplayers rotating to the board game or tabletop during 'Mech vs. 'Mech combat; the fiction and board game/tabletop players being as much a fan of the computer games as any electronic-only gamer; and so on.

The following pages provide a quick rundown of these five ways to enjoy the universe and point you where you can leap to explore more!

CHOOSE YOUR EXPERIENCE

AS A TABLETOP MINIATURES GAME

Alpha Strike is the new, streamlined and fast-playing rules for BattleTech. Developed for the modern tabletop miniatures wargamer, these rules take an entire evening of board-game BattleTech and condense it down to an hour, while retaining all the great flavor of giant BattleMechs clashing across alien worlds. There's even a free, online database—the Master Unit List—where you can build forces and print out Unit Cards that go well beyond the available Alpha Strike Lance Packs! You can also use any of your miniatures—whether Ral Partha, Iron Wind Metals or MechWarrior: Dark Age—to leap right into the action!

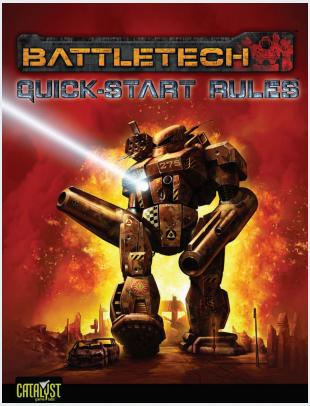


Check out the free Alpha Strike Quick-Start Rules.





CHOOSE YOUR EXPERIENCE



AS A TABLETOP BOARD GAME

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The *BattleTech* boardgame is where it all began over thirty years ago. These Quick-Start Rules include everything you need to play (you just bring the dice and excitement), including a map and cut-out counters. Whether you're brand new to trying the game, or coming back after years of hiatus, dive into the experience that started it all!



Check out the free BattleTech Quick-Start Rules.



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AS A TABLETOP ROLEPLAYING GAME

Titanic BattleMechs clashing across alien worlds against a backdrop of Machiavellian politics and knives in the dark. The in-depth, epic universe of *BattleTech* lent itself immediately to tabletop roleplaying. Whether you're exclusively roleplaying, or creating a hybrid of the tabletop/board game and roleplaying, getting out of the BattleMech can be just as much fun as being in it!



Check out the free A Time of War Quick-Start Rules.



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CHOOSE YOUR EXPERIENCE



AS A READER OF FICTION

The *BattleTech Universe Guide* is a great way to further jump into the fictional universe. It includes a great short story, then provides an in-depth history of the universe (fleshing out the details provided in this PDF), a rundown of the main factions and why a MechWarrior fights for a given empire, and finally a short Technical Readout showcasing some of the core BattleMechs available in the 3025 Succession Wars Era.

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Check out the free BattleTech Universe Guide.

Beyond this, a series of anthologies of *BattleTech* short fiction are available as ebooks and in print; compilations of the best of each year of **BattleCorps. com**, the fiction subscription website, and a perfect way to further dive into the story fiction of *BattleTech*.





CHOOSE YOUR EXPERIENCE

MECHWARICR



MechWarrior Online is a free-to-play tactical BattleTech combat simulator that provides players with the opportunity to pilot over fifty distinct Inner Sphere and Clan BattleMechs across a range of diverse maps. Set during the era of the Clan Invasion, players can choose to fight against other players of similar skill levels in standard Assault, Skirmish, and Conquest game modes, or under the banner of a Great House or Clan to vie for territory across a dynamic map of the Inner Sphere in the highly-competitive Community Warfare game mode.

As each team is comprised of twelve players, communication and effective team-work are essential. MechWarriors must hone and utilize their own skill and the unique capabilities of their chosen BattleMechs in order to achieve victory.





CHOOSE YOUR EXPERIENCE





BATTLETECH is a turn-based, tactical 'Mech combat game for PC (and Mac and Linux) featuring a full length single-player story campaign set in the deadly 3025 Succession Wars Era of *BattleTech*. Command your own mercenary outfit while finding yourself inexorably drawn into a bloody dynastic conflict set in the Periphery of the Inner Sphere. On the battlefield, you'll command a lance of devastating BattleMechs. Off the battlefield, you'll manage the finances and logistics of your mercenary outfit—from the salvage taken from the battlefield, to the modifications and loadout of your 'Mechs, to the salaries and skill growth of your MechWarriors.

At the time of this writing, **BATTLETECH** is already a runaway success on **Kickstarter** thanks to strong support from the Global BattleTech Community. The game is due for release in the first half of 2017 and is being developed by Harebrained Schemes, the studio behind several other critically-acclaimed Kickstarter-funded projects including *Shadowrun Returns*, *Shadowrun: Dragonfall, Shadowrun: Hong Kong*, and *Golem Arcana*.

CREDITS

Original BattleTech Universe Creation

Jordan K. Weisman

Writing

Randall N. Bills

Development

Randall N. Bills

Ray Arrastia

David Kerber

Jordan K. Weisman

Editing

Philip Lee

Graphic Design & Layout

Ray Arrastia

David Kerber

Evolved Faction Logos Design

Jason Vargas Ray Arrastia

Matt Heerdt

Illustrations

www.ironwindmetals.com

Doug Andersen, Gregory Bridges, Doug Chaffee, Ed Cox, Les Dorsheid, David English, Jonathan Gonzalez, Hanzo, James Hauser, Jim Holloway, Alex Iglesias, Mike Jackson, Jason Juta, Dana Knutson, Michael Komarck, Chris Lewis, Duane Loose, Randall Mackey, Kevin McCann, Mike McCain, Aaron Miller, Chris Moeller, Mark Molnar, Victor Moreno, Matt Plog, Neil Roberts, Peter Scanlon, Anthony Scroggins, Klaus Scherwinski, Steve Venters, Franz Vohwinkel, Eric Williams, Mark Winters, Mark Zug OB NOT

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