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INVADING CLANS™

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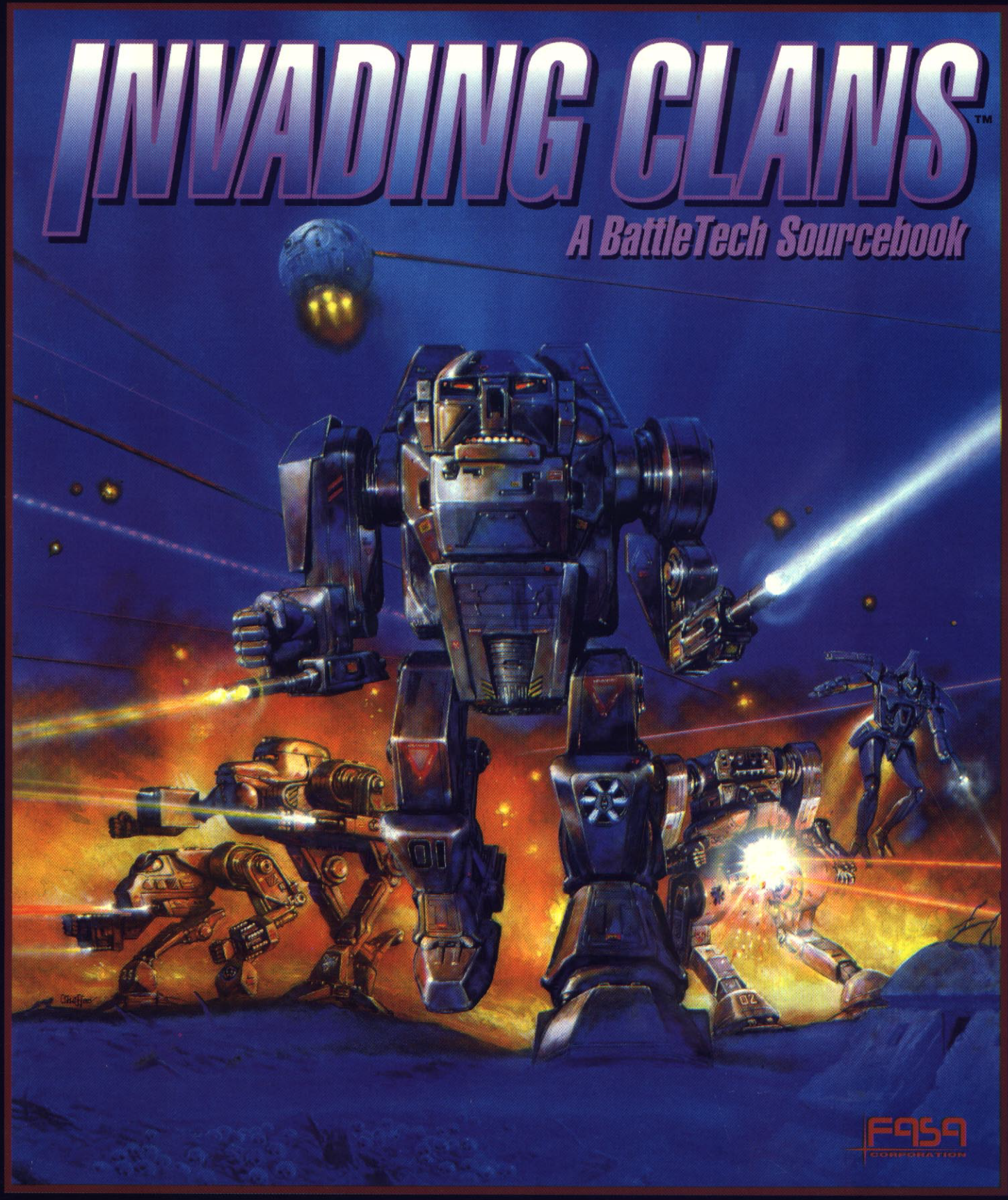

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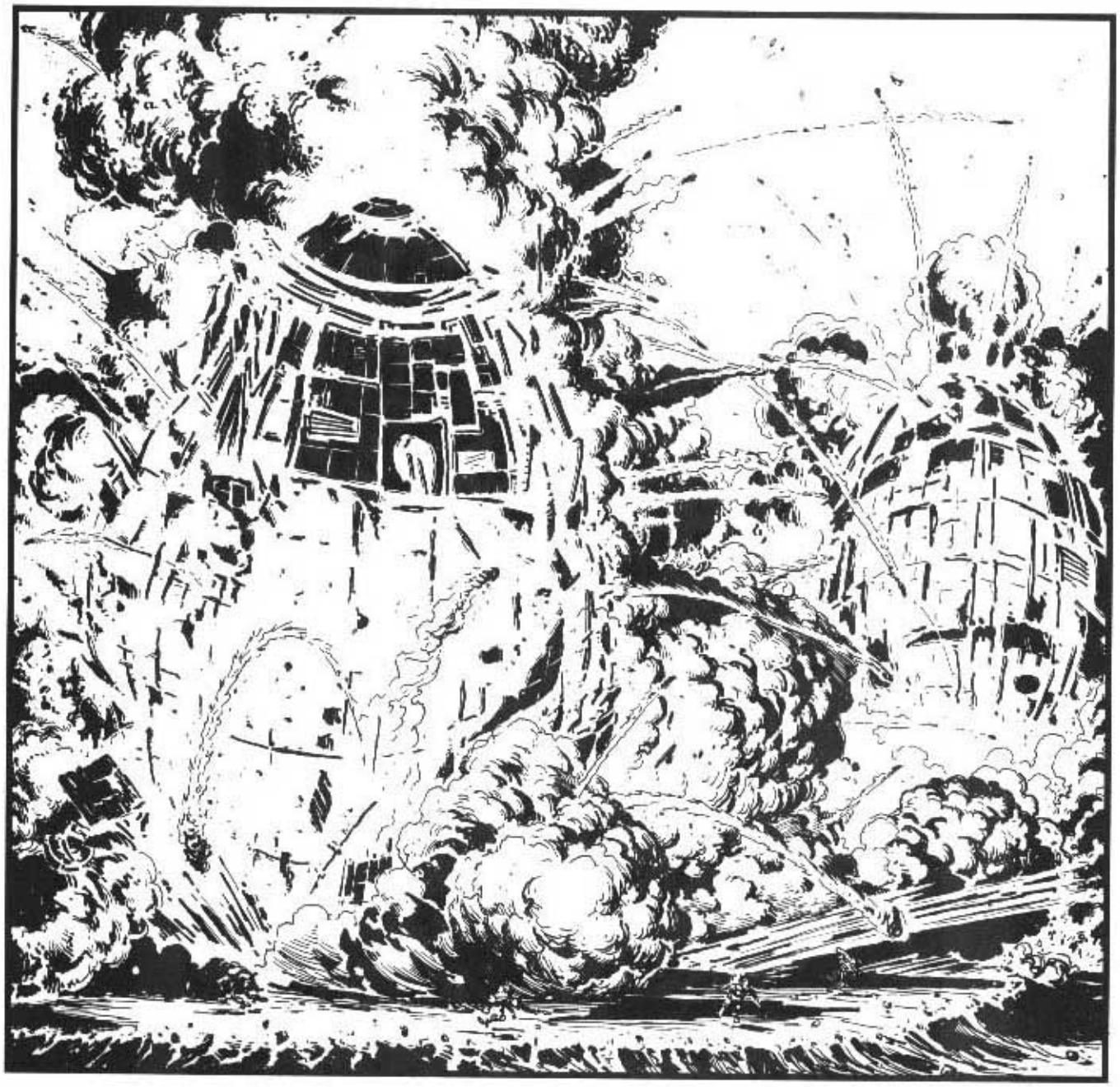

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Special thanks: To Mike Nystul, for giving some crazy tourist types a chance. Here's hoping that Pariah kicks butt and takes names in the process.
And to my parents: Thanks for putting up with the Late Night Antics.

WOLFNET CLASSIFIED REPORT: ALPHA LEVEL CLEARANCE

FROM: Commander Jaime Wolf
TO: Prince Victor Steiner-Davion, Federated Commonwealth
Archon Katrina Steiner, Lyran Alliance
Coordinator Theodore Kurita, Draconis Combine
Captain-General Thomas Marik, Free Worlds League
Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao, Capellan Confederation
Elected Prince-in-Exile Haakon Magnusson, Free Rasalhague Republic
Duchess Candace Liao, St. Ives Compact
Primus Sharilar Mori, ComStar
DATE: 18 January 3058

It has been seven years since the Com Guards defeated the invading Clans on Tukayyid and forced them to accept the terms of the agreement fashioned by then-ilKhan Ulric Kerensky and Precentor Martial Anastasius Focht. The Clan–Inner Sphere conflict did not end on that bloody field, however, for the Truce of Tukayyid did not preclude the Clans from attacking Inner Sphere-held planets "above" the line marked by that battered world. The forced cooperation between the invading Clans also dissolved on Tukayyid, leading to the near-total destruction of Clan Wolf's presence in the Inner Sphere and the death of ilKhan Kerensky, the strongest representative of the Clans' Warden ideal. These events alone should serve as a warning to you, the leaders of the Inner Sphere, that the Clans never find satisfaction in the status quo. Though all my allegiance lies with my adopted home, I am Clan enough to know that this enemy of the Inner Sphere will again roll toward Terra before the truce's remaining ten years pass.

During the Year of Peace, I preached cooperation between the Houses as the only hope of repulsing this threat to the Inner Sphere way of life. Some of you refused to listen, and some have forgotten the point of the lesson. If you say that the Inner Sphere way of life is war and that the coming of the Clans simply turned your efforts to a new enemy, then you do not truly understand life under Clan rule. In fact, careful examination of events prior to the invasion shows that the people of the Inner Sphere long ago tired of war and its effect on their lives. The turmoil in the Chaos March shows how far those people will go to avoid the arbitrary disruptions to health and happiness that always follow in the wake of decisions made by rulers who sit safely light-years away. The time has come to unite, not under the banner of a new Star League, but against an enemy waiting to destroy the people whose interests you claim to carry in your hearts.

This letter and the attached files provide an overview of the history and current military and political activities of Clans Ghost Bear, Smoke Jaguar, Nova Cat, Steel Viper and Diamond Shark. Each Clan's history includes the story of the Clan's founding or describes the forces that most influenced the development of the Clan into its present form, the innovations or failures of the Golden Century of the Clans, and the Clan's actions and motivations during the invasion of the Inner Sphere. Each Clan's file also includes brief notes on the planets in its occupation zone, a summary of its current front-line forces and two 'Mechs unique to that Clan. While ComStar has made a valiant effort to compile similar information for its own archives, the current disruption in its ranks makes those reports woefully inadequate and dangerously inaccurate. Please believe that in the event of discrepancies between the ComStar and Wolfnet versions of these summaries, the Wolfnet version offers the truer story. I urge each of you to study this report and use the information it offers to protect your subjects. Find a way to exploit the strengths and weaknesses of each Clan to your own advantage and unite your efforts to repulse the invaders before they again move against you.

CURRENT SITUATION

Though the Clans maintained the appearance of internal harmony for several years after their defeat on Tukayyid, by 3055 two incidents proved that peace to be a sham. In a minor but telling event, an officer of Clan Jade Falcon apparently negotiated temporary safe passage through Clan Smoke Jaguar space in order to accomplish two goals: to foment further unrest among the occupying Clans and to harass Clan Nova Cat. A small Jade Falcon unit raided a Nova Cat-held world to destroy a water-processing plant. Though Clan Nova Cat barely felt the loss, they notified the Grand Council that Clan Jade Falcon had failed to follow the Clan protocol of declaring a *batchall* for its attack. IlKhan Kerensky censured Clan Jade Falcon for ignoring Nicholas Kerensky's teachings, but also declared that new situations called for new rules. That statement would soon return to haunt him.

In the second clear sign of disunity, the Inner Sphere received a sharp reminder of just how lethal Clan action could be against the Successor States. A supposed Periphery pirate named Red Corsair began raiding planets in the Lyran half of the Federated Commonwealth using Clan equipment. Clan Wolf and the Federated Commonwealth cooperated to destroy the Red Corsair. In the process, Khan Phelan Ward of Clan Wolf discovered that one of his own officers had outfitted and trained the Corsair, and was using her in an attempt to break the Truce of Tukayyid and change the balance of power among the invading Clans.

These incidents represented the widest cracks in the Clans' seemingly united front. In the years following the truce, factions within the ranks three times called for a vote on whether to honor the Truce of Tukayyid. Twice the Crusaders proved unwilling to directly challenge the ilKhan, and the vote failed. The third vote set into motion a true catastrophe. In the months following the second vote, the Loremaster of Clan Wolf prepared and presented to ilKhan Kerensky an indictment based on research conducted by a Crusader member of Clan Wolf. IlKhan Ulric Kerensky stood accused of treason "on the scale of that committed by the Usurper Stefan Amaris" for conspiring with ComStar to arrange the Clans' defeat on Tukayyid and for elevating Phelan Ward, a "known Inner Sphere agent," to Khan of Clan Wolf. When Kerensky repudiated the charges in a Clan Council, his accusers brought a third charge against him: conspiring to destroy Clan Wolf's genetic heritage. The Crusaders claimed that by agreeing to the truce, the ilKhan effectively denied Clan Wolf's warriors the

opportunity to be tested and gain experience in war and therefore doomed them to failure and death on the battlefield. Ulric demanded that the evidence for this third charge be heard by the Grand Council of the Clans, and on 8 August 3057, that body met on the planet Tamar to hear evidence against its ilKhan.

Well aware that any effort he made to defend himself would fail, ilKhan Kerensky left his defense to Khan Phelan Ward and began planning to stymie the Crusaders' ploy to break the truce and resume the invasion. When the Grand Council declared Ulric guilty of treason and stripped him of his position, Ulric demanded a Trial of Refusal. Clan Jade Falcon won the right to defend the Grand Council's decision, and Khan Elias Crichell learned too late the full extent of Ulric's clever scheme. The former ilKhan intended to prevent the Crusaders from continuing toward Terra by one of two means. He intended first to decimate Clan Jade Falcon in this Trial of Refusal by fighting the defenders on several occupied worlds rather than in a single battle. Combat losses would weaken the strongest Crusader Clan beyond its ability to recover and continue the invasion, and so split the Crusader vote for breaking the truce. If Ulric lost this Trial of Refusal, he would continue to demand additional trials each time the Crusaders, most likely led by a Jade Falcon ilKhan, voted to resume the battle with the Inner Sphere. In effect, he promised Khan Crichell an endless war with Clan Wolf.

Forced to accept Ulric's willingness to destroy two Clans to protect the Inner Sphere from the further ravages of a renewed thrust toward Terra, Khan Crichell prepared to defend his occupied territory. Meanwhile, Ulric divided his entire occupying force into three groups. All Wolves with Crusader sentiments he gathered under his own leadership and pitted against the strongest of the Jade Falcon defenses. He gave the greenest troops to Khan Natasha Kerensky and sent them in a second corridor of attack against Falcon-held worlds. The brightest and best of his Clan warriors who embraced the Warden philosophy he assigned to Khan Phelan Ward, along with all Wolf support personnel who held Warden sentiments. Khan Ward drove through Jade Falcon territory on a path for Morges, a world protected by his Inner Sphere family's unit, the Kell Hounds. Knowing that he himself might not survive the trial, Ulric Kerensky charged Phelan with preserving the way of Clan Wolf and continuing Warden efforts to protect the Inner Sphere from the Crusaders.

The remaining two groups of Wolves threw themselves at Clan Jade Falcon until their diminished numbers made it impossible to continue. Both Natasha and Ulric Kerensky died in this failed Trial of Refusal. SaKhan Chistu of Clan Jade Falcon took advantage of their deaths and the absence of other Wolf leaders to declare that the trial had actually been a Trial of Absorption, and that all personnel and property of Clan Wolf now belonged to Clan Jade Falcon. He also declared a Trial of Abjuration that struck from the Clan rolls the Bloodnames of all those who followed Khan Phelan Ward into the Inner Sphere, both before and after the decisive battle on Wotan, and so stripped Phelan of his Bloodname and rank. Star Captain Vlad of Clan Wolf, left for dead on Wotan, challenged Khan Chistu to a Trial of Refusal to repudiate the claim of absorption and won, in turn re-establishing the remaining Wolf warriors as a separate entity known as Clan Jade Wolf. Clan Jade Wolf immediately laid claim to Clan Wolf's Bloodnames.

Phelan Kell remains Khan of Clan Wolf, confirmed in his rank and given a new Bloodname by Ulric Kerensky. Khan Kell believes that Khan Elias Crichell will rise to ilKhan, and that Vlad Ward will become the first Khan of Clan Jade Wolf. Though he did not live to see it, Ulric Kerensky succeeded in his attempt to stall the Crusader initiative by decimating Clan Jade Falcon. His sacrifice leaves the remnant of Clan Wolf free to preserve the best of Clan culture and ways and to absorb the traditions and philosophies of the Inner Sphere that will strengthen them. He has also bought them vital time to prepare a defense against the inevitable resumption of hostilities between the Clans and the Houses of the Inner Sphere.

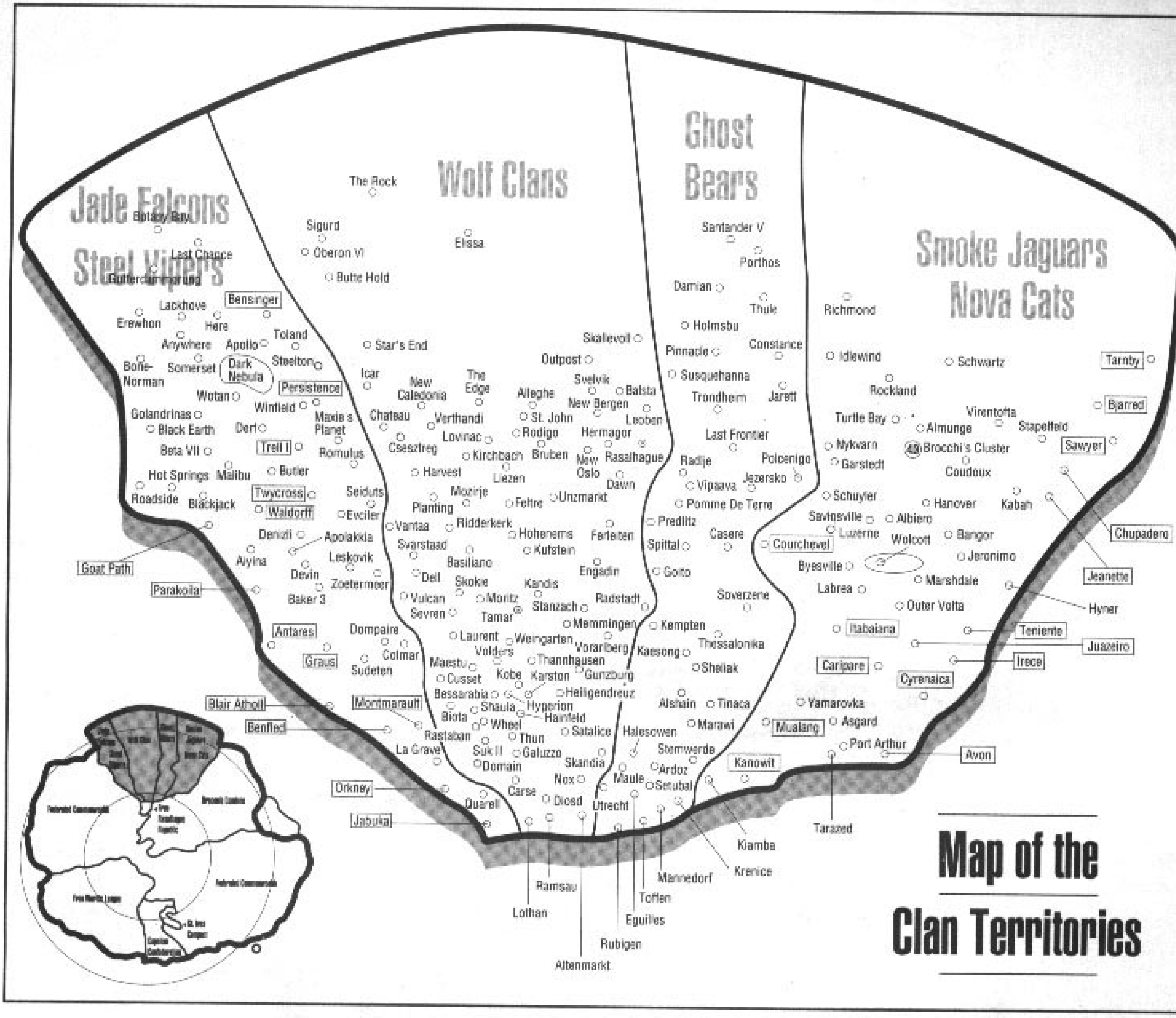
THE REMAINING CLANS

With the two most prominent of the seven invading Clans thrown into disarray, many of the remaining five are poised to play a stronger role when the invasion of the Inner Sphere resumes. In the years since signing the Truce of Tukayyid, the invading Clans have turned all their energies toward rebuilding their respective war machines in preparation for renewed fighting. Military and civilian leaders alike are well advised to watch their Clan borders carefully. The following paragraphs summarize the current situation within each Clan.

The crippling losses in personnel, equipment and leadership that Clans Wolf and Jade Falcon suffered during their recent trials have placed Clan Ghost Bear at the top of the heap among the invaders. Since Tukayyid, it has brought massive reinforcements forward from the homeworlds, including the entire Rho Galaxy. These fresh troops, easily able to learn from Tukayyid's survivors the hard lessons driven home on that planet, will pose an enormous threat even to the elite Combine regiments currently stationed on the Draconis–Ghost Bear border. In fact, the Ghost Bears are the Clan most likely to reach Terra first when the invasion of the Inner Sphere inevitably resumes. DCMS troops on the worlds Kiesen, Meilen, Odabasi and Dumaring face a more immediate danger; the worlds they defend are above the truce line and within a single jump of Ghost Bear forces.

Though all casualty reports and other reliable sources claimed that Clan Smoke Jaguar Khan Lincoln Osis died in the fighting on Tukayyid, the senior Smoke Jaguar Khan has since returned to active duty as the leader of his Clan. Soon after the truce, the warriors of Clan Smoke Jaguar elected Star Colonel Brandon Howell, one of the few heroes of the debacle on Tukayyid, as the Clan's Khan, but Howell graciously accepted the position of saKhan instead when Osis reappeared. Both Khans are concentrating on bringing the Clan back up to its formidable fighting strength, but have met with little success. Constant raiding by yakuza and other rebels has left the Jaguars with only eight front-line Clusters in their invasion force, fewer than any other Clan save for the decimated ranks of Clans Jade Falcon and Wolf. The Draconis presence on Wolcott is a constant thorn in the Jaguars' side, but shortages of troops and materiel along with periodic Nova Cat raids on nearby worlds have so far prevented the Jaguars from attempting to take the planet. If the Coordinator of the Combine intends to capitalize on this situation, however, he is advised to take action soon. With frustration and tension running high among Jaguar warriors, this bloodthirsty Clan is the most likely to break the truce first and push toward Terra. If they can solve their supply and troop problems, they will become a truly lethal enemy.

After Clan Steel Viper's humiliating defeat on Tukayyid, Khan Natalie Breen resigned her position, clearing the way for saKhan Perigard Zalman to lead the Steel Vipers. The Vipers have never had a surplus of front-line warriors, and the fighting on Tukayyid depleted their ranks to the point where they relied on PGCs to defend most of their holdings. After pulling more troops from the homeworlds, Khan Zalman began the slow process of beefing up his forces. During the recent hostilities between Clans Wolf and Jade Falcon, more than a few Viper warriors called for Trials of Possession against lightly defended Falcon worlds. Knowing he could not afford to lose troops in such trials, Khan Zalman refused to make the challenges his forces demanded, using the Clan's



Map of the Clan Territories

history to support his contention that rapid expansion is not the Viper way. In the end, cooler heads prevailed, and the Vipers have only engaged in minor raids to capture necessary resources and supplies. By ignoring the short-term advantage of taking planets from Clan Jade Falcon in favor of bolstering his Clan's long-term prospects in a renewed invasion, Khan Zalman has shown himself to be a canny and dangerous opponent.

After suffering crushing defeats on Luthien and Tukayyid, Clan Nova Cat is still licking its wounds. Fortunately for the Nova Cats, Clan Smoke Jaguar is in almost equally bad shape, so neither Clan stands to lose ground in Trials of Possession any time soon. Unfortunately for the Inner Sphere, the lack of such trials means that the Nova Cats have few outlets for combat save raids on worlds unprotected by the truce. Interestingly, though the Draconis Combine is concentrating its border activity on Smoke Jaguar targets, Wolfnet has detected periodic coded transmissions traveling between Nova Cat and Kurita worlds. As these transmissions have yet to be decoded, their purpose remains unclear. Rumors abound that Khan Severen Leroux has been declared dezgra in the wake of the Nova Cats' defeat on Tukayyid and will shortly be deposed. If this should happen, Oathmaster Biccon Winters will most likely ascend to the Khanship. Unfortunately, Winters's military aptitude represents an unknown quantity.

Contrary to ComStar reports, Clan Diamond Shark's forces were not completely destroyed on Tukayyid. The Sharks' Omega Galaxy, composed entirely of freebirth warriors, sacrificed itself to the Com Guards and bought both Diamond Shark Khans time to escape the slaughter along with a small detachment of 'Mechs from the remnants of their respective Galaxies. Our sources lost track of the fleeing Sharks after they left the Tukayyid system, and their current whereabouts are unknown. Though Diamond Shark merchant activity continues at a vigorous pace, no military units have been spotted in the Inner Sphere since the signing of the truce.

CLAN GHOST BEAR

CLAN GHOST BEAR

The white seems to stretch away forever. Only the distant mountains rising majestically into the blue skies interrupt the scenery. Though they seem close enough to reach in the journey of an hour or two, one could trek for many days without reaching their mist-shrouded foothills.

These plains and mountains give a home to our namesake. The mighty ghost bear presides over Strana Mechty's southernmost continent. To even catch a glimpse of the bear, you must travel the open expanse of snow for many days, always moving toward the mountains. It is when you feel ready to turn back to the comfort of your base camp, exhausted and defeated, that you will realize that you are not alone. A palpable presence makes the bile rise in your throat, so thick you nearly choke on it. Yet your eyes, your window to the real world, see nothing.

Suddenly, you focus on movement: a white-cloaked lynx bounds across the tundra, its paws digging gaping wounds in the snow as it accelerates. As the cat passes through your field of vision, the ground directly in front of you erupts in a living cloud of snow that leaps after the running lynx. You stare, and you realize that the cloud of snow swirls around your namesake, the legendary ghost bear. Though you do not understand how this huge beast remained invisible, you cannot deny that only moments ago you saw no living thing. As the bear gives chase, snow sloughs off its back, revealing massively muscled flanks covered in pure white fur. The hapless lynx turns and twists in a vain attempt to throw its pursuer off the chase, but the hunter will not be denied. You stare, transfixed by the spectacle. The bear lunges through the heavy layers of snow as easily as a fish swimming through water. Its howl assaults your ears, terrifying and hauntingly sweet all at once. The bear's deadly claws glint in the morning light as its paw, large as your head, smashes into the frantic cat at blinding speed. Crimson stains the pristine white carpet, and the lynx goes down surrounded by a cloud of steam. The giant beast moves in for the feast, and still you stand and stare. The ghost bear remains unaware of your presence, and you watch it gulp down huge mouthfuls of raw meat.

The battle took only a few, scant seconds, yet every detail burns with a distinct light in your mind. You pray that you are as efficient when it falls to you to be the hunter ...

—From the ritual words spoken by the Clan Ghost Bear Loremaster on the eve of the Clawing ritual

Children of the Bear, hearken to my words:
Be always vigilant.
Learn for yourselves that which your forebears imparted
So easily and freely;
Demand of yourselves
The foresight of Jorgensson
And the courage of Tseng;
Through them, we are strong.
To them a debt is owed,
Repaid through loyalty undying and Character unflinching.

—From the *Oath of Acceptance*, Clan Ghost Bear

The ghost bear of Strana Mechty is a truly awesome beast. Though similar in appearance to the polar bear of Terra's arctic region, the ghost bear is larger and stronger, some specimens having been recorded as standing more than five meters tall when reared up on their hind legs. Unlike the polar bear's fur, which shows a yellowish cast, the ghost bear's coat is pure white. Even the ghost bear's eyes and nose are a pale gray that appears nearly white, and its coloration makes the bear practically invisible against snow, even when running at full speed. Its size limits the ghost bear's ability to pursue its prey for any length of time, and so rather than running down its quarry, the bear lies in wait on the fringes of its prey's territory, using its keen sense of smell to locate likely hunting spots. The ghost bear then buries itself in the snow to enhance its camouflage, remaining completely motionless, often for days at a time. The bear apparently enters a state of semihibernation while awaiting a potential meal, conserving energy but remaining acutely aware of its surroundings all the while. The ghost bear takes its name from both its coloration and from its apparent ability to materialize from nothing.

Nicholas Kerensky chose this seemingly brutish animal as the namesake for one of his Clans for more than its physical prowess. He also admired the loyalty it showed to its family; ghost bears mate for life and maintain a tenuous connection to their offspring, a trait almost unknown in the animal kingdom. Nicholas also believed that the ghost bear represented a strong respect for tradition. He characterized ghost bears as clinging stubbornly to their instincts, only reluctantly changing their habits and behaviors to adapt to environmental and situational changes. The ghost bear survives its apparent lack of adaptability with an extremely hardy constitution and high birth rate.

CLAN GHOST BEAR

Like its namesake, Clan Ghost Bear has also survived, often in spite of itself, by virtue of its methodical persistence and the success of the Clan breeding program. The traditions of strength and stability on which Clan Ghost Bear prides itself can be traced back to its founders, the only married couple to help establish a Clan. The founders of Clan Ghost Bear receive equal reverence from its warriors, so much so that most believe that neither Sandra Tseng or Hans Jorgensson could have forged the Clan alone.

TIME OF DECISION

The General's intent was clearly stated,
To depart and never return.
He forced none but swayed many;
This compassionate, brilliant man
Had led thousands to victory,
And he would again lead the long march.

—*The Remembrance* (Clan Ghost Bear), Passage 8, Verse 6, Lines 12–17

General Aleksandr Kerensky defeated Stefan Amaris's troops on Terra in 2779, thereby ending nearly a decade of tyranny by the Usurper of the Star League. Another four years passed before he finally accepted the ideological death of the Star League in the Inner Sphere and decided to do something about it. No longer willing to live in a "civilization that spurns the ideals it once professed to hold so dear," General Kerensky proposed to the loyal soldiers of the Star League Defense Force that the only way to preserve the Star League and honor those who had died in its service was for the people in whose hearts and souls the spirit of that noble body resided to leave the Inner Sphere and reject the cruel age upon which it seemed intent to embark.

The general's "orders" for Operation Exodus stated that any who wished to join this brave venture would be accepted at any time until 5 November 2784, one day prior to the scheduled jump. Under any other circumstances, the architects of Clan Ghost Bear would have remained on New Samarkand and died as loyal citizens of the Inner Sphere.

Sandra Tseng and Hans Ole Jorgensson were kindred spirits united by circumstance. Born in the year that Richard Cameron came of age and took the reins of the Star League from his regent, General Aleksandr Kerensky, both grew up dreaming of becoming warriors in the SLDF. They trained hard to complete their MechWarrior training, she in Liao space and he in Kurita. Newly graduated and untried in combat, Tseng and Jorgensson joined the steady trickle of troops who, against the orders of their governments, continued to travel to General Kerensky's current theater of operations. They were blooded in the battle to retake Terra, Jorgensson in Europe and Tseng in North America, and met at a celebration held to honor the dead and welcome the liberators. They fell madly in love.

EXCLUSIVE BLOODNAMES

General Bloodnames
Gurdel
Snuka

MechWarriors
Jorgensson
Tseng
Bekker
Hall

Elementals
Kabrinski
DelVillar
Vong

Aerospace Pilots
Bourjon
Gilmour
Devon

Married a short time later, Tseng and Jorgensson continued to serve in the SLDF, but were forced to question the strength of their loyalty to their leader when Kerensky announced the Exodus to his troops. Though the couple agreed that the deteriorating situation in the Inner Sphere appeared unlikely to improve and that the only sure way to preserve the Star League was to remove its heart and transplant it to an uncorrupted realm, they doubted Kerensky's ability to oversee a peaceful effort such as the Exodus. In addition, both had families in the Inner Sphere that they felt reluctant to leave behind, no matter how noble the cause. They decided to stay behind and defend whatever remained of the League.

Stationed on New Samarkand at the time of the Exodus, Sandra and Hans did their part in preparations for the departure. As the ships hung at the jump points waiting for the go order, a steady stream of SLDF soldiers visited the planet on their final shore leave, and many single and married soldiers tried to convince the couple to join the Exodus. Though these conversations must have eroded their confidence in their decision to stay, neither would admit to having second thoughts.

On the day before the fleet made its historic jump, General Kerensky spoke to his assembled forces, both the soldiers on the ground and in space, those joining the Exodus and those remaining behind. Hans and Sandra listened to the general's impassioned words with rapt attention. Though the words were familiar, only when they came directly from the general's mouth did they convey the hopes and dreams of a true visionary. Ghost Bear legend claims that the moment the general finished his speech, the couple looked into each other's eyes and each saw the

CLAN GHOST BEAR

other's desire to join the Exodus. They never said the words but immediately made arrangements to join the great adventure, boarding the WarShip *Prinz Eugen* that same evening. Loremasters from other Clans who wish to cast aspersions on the couple will claim that the couple initially declined to join the Exodus simply to avoid making a difficult decision. Ghost Bear Loremasters willingly accept that theory, but say that it simply proves that their Clan's founders understood the true gravity of the commitment General Kerensky was asking them to make.

EXODUS UNREST

The uncertainty and inconvenience of the months-long journey coreward eventually became too much for some people to bear. Few ships in the Exodus fleet were designed to carry passengers, and most were overcrowded. The *Prinz Eugen* crammed hundreds of people into makeshift barracks in the vessel's cavernous cargo holds, and the freedom for which so many lives had been sacrificed seemed a pipe dream on the WarShip's crowded decks. Though the decision to return to the Inner Sphere and make the best of that bad situation arose from more than a desperate desire for privacy, that alone might have been reason enough.

While it was the ship's officers who led the rebellion, they had the silent support of a majority of their passengers. These people willingly abandoned the familiar for the promised land only to find themselves trapped in space and denied the right to change their minds. General Kerensky's unwavering refusal to respond to numerous petitions asking him to reconsider his scheme, and his inability or unwillingness to even hint at a destination or even a timetable seemed to leave the travelers on the *Eugen* little choice.

The passengers aboard the *Eugen* who argued against the mutiny, Tseng and Jorgensson among them, represented a vocal minority. Their pleas for the mutineers to trust Kerensky long enough for the general to answer their demands fell on deaf ears, and the general was forced to take swift action in order to save his dream. The general's decision to purge the officers of the *Eugen* shocked the entire fleet, and though General Order 137 laid to rest some of the resentment that began to build as a result of Kerensky's brutal actions, it seems clear that the *Eugen* incident represented the beginning of the end for unity among the Exodus fleet.

SECOND EXODUS

Tseng and Jorgensson settled on Babylon when the Exodus fleet arrived at the Pentagon worlds. By the time General Kerensky implemented his plan to decommission 75 percent of the military, Sandra was three months' pregnant. Blessed with quick intelligence, broad-based aptitudes and an eagerness to help wherever they were needed, Sandra and Hans adapted easily to life in the private sector when they tested out of the SLDF ranks. Both soldiers accepted Kerensky's plan as a solid first step on the road to lasting peace.

Though still only cautiously optimistic about their brilliant military leader's ultimate plan for maintaining a productive and tranquil society, the couple worked hard and managed to live in contentment for more than ten years, as they raised their son and contributed their skills to various industries on Babylon. Records also show that both former soldiers trained regularly in simulators to maintain their fighting skills.

Soon after dissatisfied ex-soldiers on Eden began violently agitating for a return to military service, Kerensky's society also began to show cracks along cultural lines. People of similar backgrounds had settled near each other, and the old political divisions offered a convenient way to decide between friend and enemy. Few people believed that the violence would spread to the remaining Pentagon worlds. Like many others, Tseng and Jorgensson went about their daily routines, trusting the general to lead them through this new test. Their confidence in Kerensky's peacetime leadership abilities was utterly destroyed when their son was killed by a stray bullet during a Lyran–Combine riot in a Babylon marketplace. With the meaning savagely torn from their lives, Tseng and Jorgensson fell with grief. Grief inevitably gave way to anger, and sooner than expected the pair petitioned Nicholas Kerensky to return to active service in his 146th Royal BattleMech Division. A cursory review of their records and a demonstration of their current level of skill on the 'Mech simulators were all Nicholas needed to draft them as MechWarriors.

When General Kerensky died while preparing a campaign plan to reunite the factions on Eden, the general populace responded by intensifying the violence, and the now-leaderless military fell into complete disarray. With strong support in the fledgling colonies of the Cluster, but none in the cities of the Pentagon worlds, Nicholas accepted the challenge of finding a way to preserve his father's dream and began to formulate his plan for a second Exodus. He enlisted the services of Tseng and Jorgensson, whom he considered reassuringly level-headed, to help him reach those who might join him in this second attempt to preserve some vestige of the Star League. For six months the couple traveled the Pentagon worlds in an effort to find followers to support their new leader. They soon discovered that the local military leaders enjoyed much stronger support than Nicholas, who was regarded as a poor successor to his poorly regarded father. (Though both Aleksandr and Nicholas Kerensky eventually gained nearly godlike status among the Clans, his disillusioned followers rejected Aleksandr in the years following his death for his failure to deliver his people to the promised land.) Despite this widespread lack of interest in Nicholas's plan, Tseng and Jorgensson found a majority of the Pentagon worlds' scientists and laborers eager to accompany Nicholas into the scarcely populated Kerensky Cluster.

A NEW BEGINNING

In order to conceive the plan of designing a completely new society, Nicholas must have recognized his father's mistake of failing to offer his followers a focus for their lives. Those who

joined him in the second Exodus understood that from the moment they stepped foot on Strana Mechty as a people apart from the original Exodus fleet, their lives would be completely different. Nicholas intended to change everything about social relationships that caused division and chaos, and he needed the wholehearted support of every man, woman and child. Sandra Tseng and Hans Jorgensson were two of his most ardent advocates, turning their persuasive skills and practical arguments to convincing people of the wisdom of Nicholas's way. His trusted and valuable aides therefore took it particularly hard when they learned their assigned roles in their leader's new society: they were to help shape two different Clans. Nicholas soundly reasoned that it was better to evenly distribute one's prime assets in order to gain maximum benefit, and though Nicholas did not overestimate the couple's devotion to the Clans, he seriously underestimated their devotion to one another. Long before he chose to formally declare mating nothing more than a means to achieve a more perfect society, Nicholas asked Tseng and Jorgensson to abandon the ideal of marriage for love and subsume it to the greater good of the future.

In an eerie parallel to their deliberations concerning the original Exodus, Tseng and Jorgensson carefully weighed the circumstances, costs and consequences, and regretfully chose to reject the new life they so fervently believed in in order to remain together. Their decision made, the couple quietly packed survival kits and disappeared into Strana Mechty's southernmost continent. Though none would have questioned Nicholas's decision to wash his hands of the pair and abandon them to their fate, apparently Nicholas's wife Jennifer Winson rightly pointed out that, regardless of the circumstances, Nicholas would have never considered separating himself from his own wife. Wisely agreeing with his wife's logic, Nicholas quickly agreed to reassign the couple to the same Clan—as soon as he could find them.

Sandra Tseng and Hans Jorgensson fared badly against the brutal elements of the planet's antarctic circle. Their survival kits proved inadequate for long-term operations in the bitter weather, and mishaps claimed their remaining supplies before three weeks had passed. Frostbitten and afraid, the couple crawled into a cave along the slopes of the forbidding Minsk range and comforted each other with the fact that, as they had wanted, they would die together.

What happened next more properly belongs to legend than history. According to the couple's story, the cave they chose also served as shelter for a ghost bear. When that intimidating creature returned to its den and saw the intruders, it rose to its full height, gave a heart-stopping roar, then sat on its haunches and stared at Sandra Tseng and Hans Jorgensson as if waiting for a reply. Without hesitation, they struggled to their feet and together let out a bloodcurdling war cry. As they clung to each other for support, the bear padded toward them on all fours, snuffling the air as he circled the humans. Overcome by fear and exhaustion, Tseng and Jorgensson collapsed, unconscious. When they next awoke, the first thought that struck them was that they felt warm for the first time since leaving the Clan settlement. The bear was sleeping curled around its human guests.

As soon as the couple stirred, the bear woke up, stretched and left the cave, returning moments later carrying a rabbit in its mouth. The huge beast laid the freshly killed rabbit on the floor of the cave, placed one immense paw on its prey's head, and bit its meal neatly in half. The bear gulped down the rabbit's hindquarters, then moved back to the mouth of the cave, sat on its haunches and stared at the humans. Sandra and Hans shared that meal and the next three the bear provided, slowly regaining their strength. Though they believed at first that they were hallucinating, it seemed that whenever they stumbled from the cave to drink or eliminate they saw their bear, each time a different size and marked differently by scars and other marks. On the third morning with the bear, the animal sat at the mouth of the cave staring out. When Tseng and Jorgensson looked to see what was holding its interest, they found five ghost bears of varying ages and sizes—some were wrestling, some were standing nose to nose and one was just arriving carrying a steaming rabbit in its mouth, which it laid at the mouth of the cave.

With this incident, Tseng and Jorgensson became the first witnesses to the ghost bear's lifelong attachment to its mate and offspring. Though others had made detailed accounts of the bear's hunting style and other habits, no one had discovered this unusual trait. Just as inspiration had struck the pair when they listened to General Kerensky's message for the Exodus, they now felt inspired to return to Nicholas with this remarkable evidence of the importance of family and to fight for the right to serve the Clans as a team.

On their long trek back to civilization, Tseng and Jorgensson encountered another facet of ghost bear behavior that they later incorporated into their Clan's rituals. Their journey took them across the border between two ghost bears' territories, and as they watched an adolescent bear move across the landscape one afternoon, a second bear of similar age rose up from where it was hidden in the snow and attacked the first. The couple found the brutal beauty of this deadly territorial dispute fascinating, and they shared a vow to honor the ghost bear by testing themselves against one as soon as they recovered from their ordeal. They met the search party Nicholas had sent out when they were nearly halfway home, and the renegade couple immediately announced their intention to return and challenge Nicholas's decision. When the leader of the search party replied with Nicholas's apology and an invitation to return and help him avoid similar mistakes in the future, the couple collapsed again, this time from joy and relief.

INCEPTION OF THE BEAR

The kinship of spirits is vital;
Without this connection there
Can be no true understanding.

—From the *Oath of Acceptance*, Clan Ghost Bear

WOLFNET ARCHIVE FILE: 44463-CR7-02/14/03

From the first Ghost Bear Loremaster's notes concerning the Clawing ritual

Few Clan rituals are as bloody or as dangerous as the Ghost Bear Clawing. The Clawing represents a rite of passage into the upper echelons of the Ghost Bear command structure, and so every Ghost Bear Khan and most Galaxy Commanders have performed the Clawing. Ghost Bear warriors traditionally spend a month (the length of Tseng and Jorgensson's exile from the Clans) performing a complex series of focusing rituals and training exercises before attempting the Clawing. Only the highest-ranking "un-Clawed" warrior of each Cluster is offered the chance to participate in this yearly ritual.

On Strana Mechty's winter solstice, the ritual party lands its vessel in the planet's antarctic circle. The Loremaster of the Clan assigns the candidates of each Galaxy to hunting parties. Each hunter is equipped with an ornately decorated spear, a primitive but efficient cold weather outfit that resembles the traditional dress of the Inuit of Terra, and a survival kit equivalent to those carried by Tseng and Jorgensson on their flight. Each party is also assigned a pair of specially trained dogs. The Loremaster of the Clan begins the ritual by charging each hunting party with its task: to kill a ghost bear and return to the base camp with its carcass as proof. The ritual party remains at the base camp for one month, then abandons for dead any warriors who have not returned. While outsiders may interpret this as a contradiction of the Bears' principle of brotherly love, we consider it a testament to our respect for tradition and the high demands we make of our leaders.

Many warriors die in their attempt to complete the Clawing. Some die from exposure or starvation, but most die at the claws of their honored prey. The average survival rate is less than 40 percent, and most survivors return empty-handed. Surviving the ritual but failing to complete it brings only disappointment, not dishonor, because most unsuccessful hunting parties simply failed to find a ghost bear.

The role of this ritual in selecting the Ghost Bear high command places an unusually high number of Elementals within the ranks of our Khans, Galaxy Commanders and Star Colonels. Aerospace pilots, though well respected in Clan Ghost Bear, rarely achieve a higher rank than Star Captain.

Nicholas visited Tseng and Jorgensson as soon as doctors declared the pair fit to resume their normal activities. The story of how they survived their exile had spread quickly upon their return, and Nicholas solemnly announced that he intended to assign Tseng and Jorgensson to Clan Ghost Bear. He went on to suggest that they consider working toward a leadership position that he intended to create for each Clan. First, though, they needed to test for a position in the Clan's newly reorganized military. In one of the briefest, most one-sided combat trials on record, Hans and Sandra laid waste to their opponents in an amazing display of teamwork and skill. In a matter of minutes, all six opposing 'Mechs were destroyed or disabled. When the smoke cleared, Tseng and Jorgensson were well on their way to becoming the leaders of Clan Ghost Bear.

Their adventure with the ghost bears gave the couple a certain cache among the other warriors of their Clan, who looked to them for guidance on how best to exemplify the finest traits of the Clan's namesake. With Nicholas's permission to mold the Clan in any way they saw fit as long as they honored the Clan way, Tseng and Jorgensson began by forging strong bonds of friendship and loyalty between the Ghost Bear warriors. Those early years also laid the groundwork for many of the Clan's unique practices and rituals. In an effort to make every warrior equally strong and effective in order to create an efficient, deadly fighting force, Tseng and Jorgensson encouraged the Ghost Bear warriors to practice individual and group confidence-building exercises that they developed from SLDF training exercises. In order to foster a strong sense of belonging, and with it, unparalleled loyalty, Clan Ghost Bear allowed every warrior, Bloodnamed or not, to vote on any issue that concerned the Clan as a whole. While Clan Diamond Shark also practiced an expanded voting policy, Ghost Bear warriors retained the right to vote for their lower castes. On the first anniversary of their initial encounter with the ghost bear, Tseng and Jorgensson led a hunting party into Strana Mechty's antarctic wilderness in the earliest version of what would become the Clawing Ritual.

By the time Nicholas Kerensky declared himself ilKhan and established two Khans as the leaders of each Clan, the Ghost Bear warriors were so accustomed to following Sandra Tseng's and Hans Jorgensson's lead that they unanimously elected the pair as their Khans. The Clan had smoothly incorporated its unique style into Nicholas's tenets for his society, and the forty-plus Ghost Bear warriors enjoyed a closer relationship than any other Clan could comprehend. Rumors that every member of the Clan enjoyed intimate relations with every other became rampant. When ilKhan Kerensky traveled to the Ghost Bear enclave to confront the Khans with these tales, he discovered a Clan wholly at one with itself. He found a situation reminiscent of the closely knit extended families common in preindustrial societies, and every member of the Clan offered Nicholas the respect due the patriarch of such a family. Khan Jorgensson explained to Nicholas his theory that mutual respect produced superior loyalty, and the ilKhan accepted it as obviously valid.

RETURN TO THE PENTAGON

The Ghost Bears shared the task of retaking the Pentagon world Arcadia with Clans Blood Spirit, Star Adder and Steel

Viper. When it took the Bears a week longer than any other Clan to capture their objectives, the other Khans publicly doubted the Clan's methods and philosophy. Nicholas dismissed these concerns by pointing out that the Ghost Bear Khans themselves were well known for solving problems by making a thorough and considered examination of every situation. To their credit, they achieved the lowest fatality rate of the Clans who attacked Arcadia and swelled their ranks with bondsmen.

During the fighting on Arcadia, the Bear Khans proved their personal valor and loyalty to their warriors. Khan Tseng made a heroic effort to command her troops from the front lines of the battle, often placing her 'Mech in the way of shots meant for her soldiers. Both skill and luck protected her from serious or permanent damage in these selfless acts of bravery, and Ghost Bear Loremasters continue to recount her actions as the ideal toward which all Clan warriors and Khans should aspire. Khan Jorgensson's greatest contribution to the Ghost Bear fighting forces was his creation of a completely open command structure that offered each warrior almost complete autonomy. In any other military unit such a tactic would lead to disaster, but the Ghost Bear warriors were so intimately familiar with one another as soldiers and as friends that this structure encouraged them to reach unexpected heights of brilliance.

When the campaign to subdue the Pentagon worlds ended, Nicholas put the finishing touches on Clan society. He also announced that the five Pentagon worlds were to be divided into Clan-ruled spheres of control, known as enclaves. The Bears redeveloped large parts of Arcadia as their enclave, setting the captured population to work rebuilding Arcadia's once-glittering cities.

GOLDEN CENTURY

Khan Sandra Tseng died in 2848 defending her genetic legacy against Khan Franklin Osis of Clan Smoke Jaguar. Though the Bears carried the day, they all felt the loss of their beloved Khan as a serious blow, particularly Hans Jorgensson. Toramano Tseng assumed the Khanship in Sandra's place, and Khan Hans Jorgensson retired from his position soon after. Jorgensson died peacefully in his sleep some ten years later.

Beginning long before Sandra Tseng's death, the warriors of Clan Ghost Bear developed a unique ceremony to honor their dead. The original forty warriors combined elements of all their religions into a short ritual that satisfied each member's needs for honoring those who passed on before them. Over the years, the "funeral" ceremony transformed to accommodate changes in Clan ways and society, but the simple service held to honor Sandra Tseng became Clan Ghost Bear's standard ritual to mark the passing of a Khan. The Clan also allowed the funeral of multiple warriors killed in action to evolve into something slightly more elaborate and always longer than the service held to mark a single warrior's death, because such a ritual must comfort a larger number of mourners.

WOLFNET ARCHIVE FILE: 76765-LG9-10/27/23

It is a sad fact of life that over the years, many Clans have found real or imagined reasons to hate one another. This account is paraphrased from the Clan Ghost Bear version of *The Remembrance*.

The origins of the long-standing feud between Clans Ghost Bear and Wolf lie within a matter that, on the surface, did not even concern Clan Ghost Bear: the annihilation of Clan Wolverine.

Immediately following the Council's unanimous vote to destroy Clan Wolverine in a Trial of Annihilation, the renegade Clan divided into several independent units, each attempting to simultaneously stock up on supplies and avoid pursuers. Most of these units saw escape to the Inner Sphere as their only chance for survival. Though Khan Tseng bid well and cleverly for the right to destroy Clan Wolverine, that honor went to Clans Wolf and Widowmaker.

One of the small Clan Wolverine units fled to a moon in the Arcadia system, where a Ghost Bear patrol watched the renegades liberate some supplies from a hidden stockpile and leave the planet. The Ghost Bear failure to raise the alarm became public knowledge through the deathbed statement of Star Captain Amon, who commanded the Bear patrol. Even years after the fact, Amon spoke of the incident in a tone of deep indignation when he stated that "hunting the Not-Named Clan was an honor denied us. Had the Wolves been truly determined to stop them, they would have. That they failed in their task was not of concern to me or my men."

Enraged by the Ghost Bear warrior's righteous attitude and shamed by even this questionable evidence that they failed to complete such an important task, Clan Wolf immediately launched a series of punitive raids against Ghost Bear worlds. Bear and Wolf units grappled for several days with no clear winner until Khan Sandra Tseng cleverly defused the situation by pointing to the Not-Named Clan as the Wolves' true enemy. Rather than venting their anger against a perceived slight, Khan Tseng asked the Grand Council, should not Clan Wolf concentrate on finishing the job by hunting down the renegades? The matter was put to a vote and defeated by a narrow margin when cooler heads pointed out the difficulty of tracking the renegades through so many years of space travel.

Both the events of the Trial of Annihilation and the long-delayed revelation that the effort failed left a bitter taste in the mouths of Wolf and Ghost Bear warriors. Those Ghost Bears inclined to hold grudges viewed Wolves as haughty, unreliable, and unforgiving. Many Wolf warriors considered the Ghost Bears to be un-Clanlike slackers with little regard for honor or authority. Though these specific characterizations faded with time, both Clans find new slights often enough to feed the simmering hatred between them.

WOLFNET ARCHIVE FILE: 93215-TJ3-12/8/60

From the notes for the book *Becoming a Khan: The Legend Factor*, censured by the Grand Council as frivolous and lacking respect for Nicholas Kerensky

The original Khans of Clan Ghost Bear were remarkable for more than their status as the only married couple to found a Clan. The bonds of love and loyalty they forged between all members of their Clan surpassed ordinary camaraderie and made them, in every important way, a real family.

Sandra Tseng and Hans Jorgensson were the parents of that family. They taught cooperation and communication by both deeds and words, and those words and actions earned them the status of legendary heroes. Clan Ghost Bear pays its founders such deep respect that by unspoken consent, its Clan Council always fills an open Khanship by electing the most eligible Tseng or Jorgensson. Only rarely has the Clan been forced to elect a leader from another genetic legacy, and then only recently. The Clan seems always to prosper under Tseng/Jorgensson guidance, and this nearly faultless record lends further credence to the founders' mystique.

Nadia Winson, one of those "other" Khans, was captured as a bondsman from Clan Wolf mere days after she earned her Bloodname. Winson, a cagey warrior and staunch Crusader, quickly regained her warrior status and rose through the ranks, eventually assuming leadership of Clan Ghost Bear during one of those rare periods when no candidates named Tseng or Jorgensson were eligible. Ironically, it was Winson, not a namesake of the founders, who attempted to force the issue of invasion in the Grand Council in 3000. When both Ghost Bear Khans died during the Clan Wolf's Trial of Refusal protesting the 3048 vote to invade the Inner Sphere, the Ghost Bear Clan Council made an uncharacteristically impulsive vote for change. They elected as their new Khans Karl Bourjon and Theresa DelVillar.

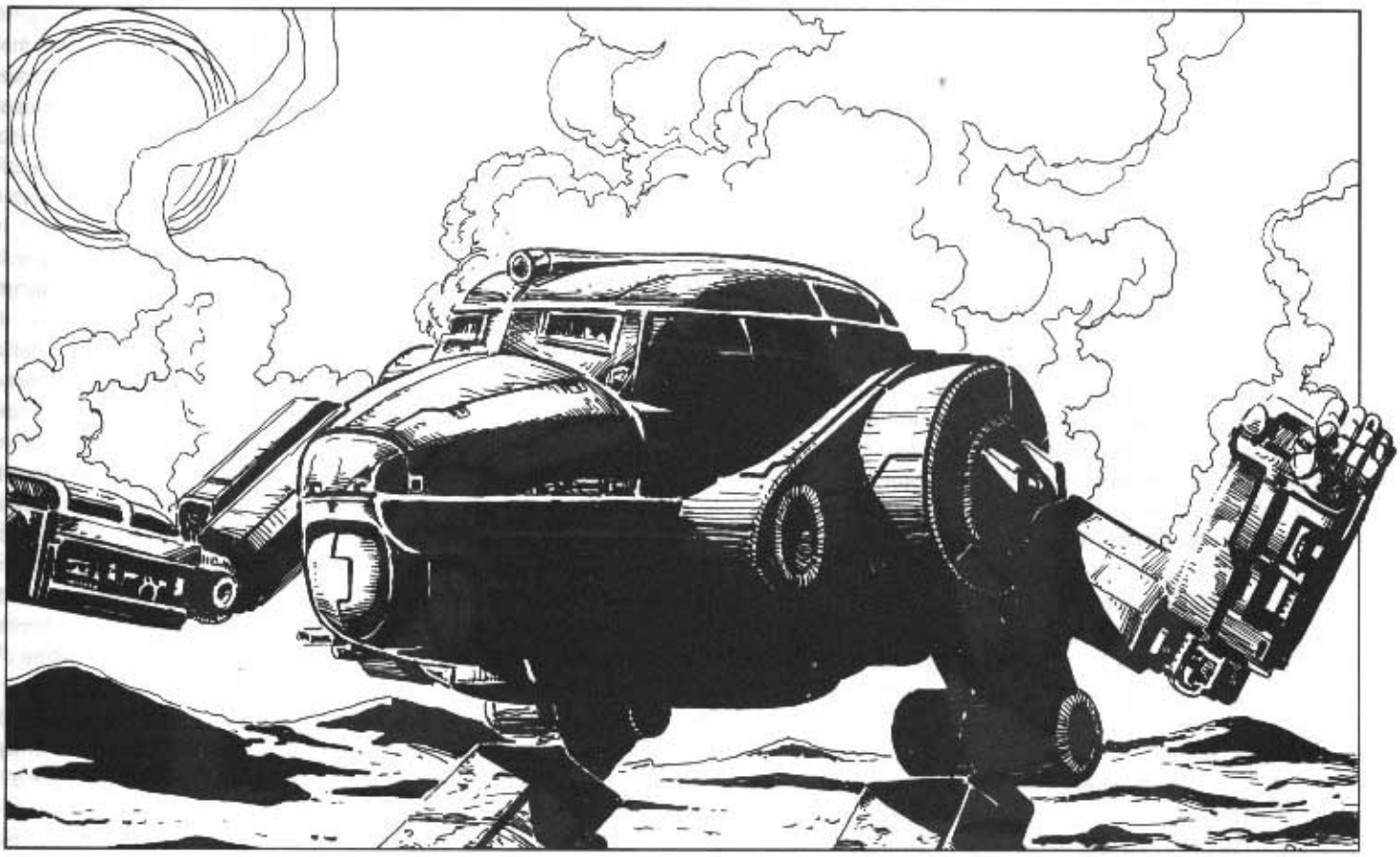
Corina Tseng filled Khan Jorgensson's position, and Frederick Jorgensson assumed the position of Loremaster, thus insuring the continued prominence of the Tseng and Jorgensson bloodlines.

Contrary to expectations, the death of Nicholas Kerensky during the 2834 Trial of Absorption won by Clan Wolf against Widowmaker did not destroy Kerensky's new society. [EDITOR'S NOTE: ComStar document number BLP-612-DTC incorrectly identified this date as 2825.] In fact, his death prompted a century of unparalleled technological and economic growth. Clan Ghost Bear entered the Golden Century with its usual deliberate stride, devoting substantial attention and energy to furthering its traditions and maintaining a true sense of family. So successful were they at achieving these goals that members of the Clan eventually became uncomfortable dealing with people outside the "family." Their inability to trust others' instincts and advice made them slow to accept ideas and technology developed outside their Clan, but the Ghost Bears' solidarity allowed them to strengthen their political position and create new ways and new technology on their own. The liberal voting policy instituted by Hans Jorgensson also allowed Ghost Bear leaders to take a wait-and-see position on political and military issues. Though the Clan's detractors label this habit as a reluctance to try anything new, those more familiar with the inner workings of the Clan understand that the Ghost Bear way lies on the path of intellectual deliberation and prudent action. While this attitude sometimes holds the Clan back when compared to other Clans, few other Clans match Ghost Bear's thoroughness in exploring the implications and repercussions of all their endeavors.

Clan Ghost Bear's approach to accepting innovation had both a negative and positive economic impact. When Clan Coyote introduced the OmniMech in 2854, the Ghost Bear leadership proved reluctant to simply adopt this major new piece of hardware without thoroughly analyzing its performance and its potential impact on established military doctrine. Many technicians who examined the OmniMech design applauded its basic concept but pointed out several minor design flaws such as poor cockpit design, serious stresses placed on certain myomer bundles, and weak connections in the ammunition-feed link between the modular pods. The Ghost Bear technicians suspected that these problems might indicate larger faults in the prototypes that could prove dangerous. While Clan Ghost Bear debated the merits and flaws of the OmniMech, other Clans chose to bring them into active duty. The Bears would be the last Clan to adopt the OmniMech, and that delay cost them several key cities and legacies, lost to OmniMech-equipped Clans.

Their traditions did not prevent Clan Ghost Bear from achieving several important discoveries. Ghost Bear was the first Clan to profit by mining rare raw materials from the asteroid belts common to many Kerensky Cluster systems. While other Clans worked for their profits by mining on the planets proper, Clan Ghost Bear developed unmatched techniques to efficiently strip-mine asteroids. They also devoted their scientific capabilities to new methods of purifying water, and are credited with producing the first strain of Shipeley wheat, a strain so resistant and hardy that it can grow in any soil and climate, including the mineral-poor ground of Strana Mechty's icy southern continent.

Kilbourne Jorgensson rose to the position of Khan during the Golden Century, an event remarkable only because Kilbourne was one of the first Elementals chosen for the post. A man of remarkable grace and tender sensibilities, he improved the general perception of Elementals, who until that time were considered by many to be second-rate compared to MechWarriors. Warriors of all Clans speak of Kilbourne with great respect to this day.



OPERATION REVIVAL

Now is the time
To prove
What we know to be true:
That we shall conquer all.

—*The Remembrance* (Clan Ghost Bear), Passage 155, Verse 2, Lines 45–48

When Clan Smoke Jaguar captured the ComStar Explorer Corps ship *Outbound Light*, Khan Leo Showers used the information gained by interrogating the ship's crew to create a stir in the Grand Council and manipulate the gathered Khans to vote for the invasion of the Inner Sphere. Only Clan Wolf voted against an immediate return, and Khan Ulric Kerensky called for a Trial of Refusal when the vote went against him. Though bidding lowered the odds against Clan Wolf to four to one, they knew they faced a losing battle, especially because both Ghost Bear Khans led their elite force in the trial.

In a series of brilliant hit-and-run engagements, Khan Ulric Kerensky managed to kill both the Ghost Bear Khans, taking Nornian Tseng and Ursula Jorgensson away from their Clan. Later, in a speech to the Grand Council, Khan Kerensky commented that new situations require new thinking. Though it seems unlikely that he was addressing his remarks specifically to Clan Ghost Bear, those warriors understood a veiled message in his words and responded. When they met to elect new Khans, the Bear Clan Council voted unanimously to try a change. They acknowledged the valuable leadership provided by the Jorgenssons and Tsengs over the years, but they felt the need to try someone new. With that historic decision, Clan Ghost Bear chose to elect Khans of Bloodnames other than those of its founders, even though several Jorgenssons were eligible. Karl Bourjon, undisputedly the finest warrior in the Clan, and Theresa DelVillar, an Elemental, became the Ghost Bear Khan and saKhan, respectively. Though unaware of his part in Clan Ghost Bear's choices, Clan Wolf Khan Ulric Kerensky was pleased by the Bears' new leadership, as both new Khans held far more moderate views than their predecessors. In fact, saKhan DelVillar was widely labeled as a moderate Warden.

As soon as the Clan forces defending the Grand Council's decision against Clan Wolf defeated Ulric Kerensky's troops, the Grand Council determined that four Clans represented a sufficient invasion force. A vote gave Clan Wolf one slot in the invading force by virtue of its position as descendants of Kerensky. The bidding for the right to serve as one of the three remaining invading Clans began in late

3048. The bidding process lasted for two full days and was conducted in three rounds. Those Clans who remained in the final round would participate in combat trials that would determine the final three invading Clans. Each Clan made a preliminary bid, then retired to study the other Clans' opening bids. On the second day, the Clans launched into a fierce bidding war, with each Clan mercilessly cutting away their excess troops in order to move on to the final round. Clan Ghost Bear made an initial bid of twelve full OmniMech Galaxies with appropriate Elemental and aerospace support.

Clan Smoke Jaguar emerged first from the bidding process by slashing their initial eleven-Galaxy bid to three. The Ghost Bears followed suit and exited the bidding with three mixed Galaxies. The six Clans that made it to the final round, Clans Smoke Jaguar, Jade Falcon, Ghost Bear, Nova Cat, Steel Viper and Diamond Shark met in combat to determine who would invade as the primary force and who would serve as the reserve. The Third Bear Guards earned their Clan the Draconis Combine–Free Rasalhague Republic corridor. Clans Jade Falcon and Smoke Jaguar also won positions as primary invaders, and Clan Steel Viper emerged as the reserve Clan that the Wardens insisted be included in the invasion force. Clans Nova Cat and Diamond Shark called for and won Trials of Refusal that placed them next in line to join the invasion.

Though the invading Clans crafted the basic attack plan in a Grand Kurultai, assigning each primary Clan to an invasion corridor, each Clan designed the specifics of its own invasion strategy. The Ghost Bear Khans disagreed about how best to prepare for the enemy. Khan Bourjon felt that their forces would meet minimal opposition and argued that excessive supplies would simply weigh down the fleet and place a needless burden on the Clan members remaining on the home worlds. While she agreed that the Bears would surely beat all comers, saKhan DelVillar harbored reservations about the low amount of supplies that Khan Bourjon proposed as adequate. Her counterproposals fell on deaf ears. Clan Ghost Bear took the fewest supplies and materiel of any Clan, and this lack would cost them dearly later on.

While the Khans debated strategy with their Star Colonels, the three invading Bear Galaxies gathered on Strana Mechty to spend two nights feasting and hunting and fostering general camaraderie through organized games. As firm believers in the usefulness of organized play to develop teamwork and provide a healthy form of relaxation, Sandra Tseng and Hans Jorgensson had created a decathlon-style event that they organized once a year, though they encouraged the Ghost Bear warriors to use the games as exercise and celebration any time. Subsequent Khans supported these games, and they eventually became a Ghost Bear tradition. The Clan also sent out six Clawing parties that each pledged to return within a week. Four parties returned alive, and two of those found and killed ghost bears. Many Bear warriors interpreted this unprecedented rate of success as a sign of assured victory in the coming invasion.

THE INVASION BEGINS

At the request of the other Khans, the ilKhan declared the Periphery open territory. While this afforded the Ghost Bears the opportunity to bid for the Elysian Fields, though those planets technically lay in the Wolf corridor, the open-space policy also allowed Clan Smoke Jaguar to attack Helmar Valasek and his pirates on Santander's World, which lay within the Ghost Bear corridor.

The Elysian Fields, a protectorate of the Oberon Confederation, had historically been home to a community of pacifistic agriculturists. Interested primarily in the challenge of military conquest and technological gains, the Clan initially decided to pass by the Elysian Fields. Clan Ghost Bear only became interested in the cluster of planets when Star Commander Swahla discovered an old piece of lore in Star League records. Swahla found a veiled reference to Project Achilles, a top-secret research facility said to be located somewhere within the Elysian Fields. During the height of the League's scientific innovation, First Lord Nicholas Cameron developed a number of research facilities that he left scattered throughout human space. The diverse placement of these facilities allowed the Star League to tap the brightest minds of the time without forcing them to relocate to the Terran Hegemony. Because many of those bright minds joined General Kerensky's Exodus, they sealed their bases away from the prying eyes of the Inner Sphere, often leaving generous amounts of equipment in storage. General Kerensky justified preserving rather than destroying this technology by claiming that these hidden caches would benefit the Star League Defense Force when it returned to the Inner Sphere. Wolf's Dragoons and Snord's Irregulars spent many years reclaiming these facilities within the Inner Sphere, but neither group had searched the Periphery.

Star Commander Swahla immediately informed his superiors of his find, and Star Captain Edwin Gilmour bid unopposed for the right to take the Elysian Fields. Because other commanders dismissed his bid as a spurious attempt to gain glory by defeating a world unlikely to resist invasion, Gilmour was able to attack with his initial bid of the Silver Kodiaks Trinary. As expected, the Kodiaks met no resistance. The worlds Mangringaine and Nyserta offered no standing defense of any sort, and the local populace fell into an immediate state of panic at the sight of BattleMechs. On both worlds, the governments surrendered long before the Kodiaks even approached the capital cities.

The lush tropical world of Elissa, on which the Bears expected to find the old laboratory, enchanted the Ghost Bear warriors who landed there. One commented that if such beauty could be found in a fringe world, then imagine the paradise Terra must offer. The Silver Kodiaks dispersed immediately upon landing and proceeded toward the capital city. They expected much the same response as they had received on Mangringaine and Nyserta, and so felt a shock when their

JumpShip commander informed them that a hyperpulse signal was being transmitted from the planet's surface. Though they moved immediately to locate the source, a Class B hyperpulse facility, a ComStar official managed to send a brief distress message before the Kodiaks disabled the transmission dish. The message to ComStar indicated that the attacking 'Mechs bore a wolf's head insignia, an understandable mistake in view of the Silver Kodiaks' symbol of a bear's head in profile. When ComStar learned more about the invading Clans, they assumed that Elissa fell to Clan Wolf.

The Silver Kodiaks spent nearly a week searching the planet and finally discovered an extensive series of tunnels that extended deep inside a mountain range. Star Captain Gilmour personally led the expedition to investigate the tunnels and caverns which ultimately uncovered nothing but a series of abandoned mines. Enraged by having wasted so much time on a false lead, Gilmour immediately challenged Star Commander Swahla to a Trial of Grievance. Only Gilmour left the Circle of Equals alive. The Bears promptly evacuated the Elysian Fields, refusing to garrison a planet that only served as a source of shame for the entire Clan. After Tukayyid, Galaxy Commander Conal Ward of Clan Wolf won Elissa in a Trial of Possession.

The Ghost Bears swept their remaining Periphery targets with little effort. The primitive settlements on the three other worlds they took laid no claims to belonging to a larger empire and offered minimal opposition. Khan DelVillar began to believe that even Khan Bourjon overestimated the needed amount of supplies and materiel. In the Grand Kurultai held to review the initial invasion effort, the Ghost Bear Khans reported on overwhelming lack of worthy opposition. By the time they returned to their Clan to prepare for the first wave, Khans DelVillar and Bourjon had already wiped Khan Kerensky's words of warning from their minds. They accepted the Periphery level of technology and training at face value and expected no better effort from the remainder of the Inner Sphere.

WAVE ONE: LOOKING FOR A FIGHT

In accordance with their traditions, the Ghost Bear warriors voted at the start of the first wave to determine who would have the privilege of conquering the first world. This became a lengthy process that slowed the Bears' scheduled timetable considerably. Each warrior wanted the honor of conquering the first planet for his own command and none were willing to step aside. After a week of indecisive votes, Khan DelVillar declared that all three Galaxies would participate in the invasion, each assigned a continent of the planet Thule in the Free Rasalhague Republic.

The First Husars of the Rasalhague KungsArmé stood ready to defend their world against the Clan. They refused to respond when the Bears announced their presence with a *batchall*. Though she had no idea what a Galaxy represented, Överste Joannie Swigard massed her troops in the Fresdon desert, a treacherous terrain for which her troops had been selectively trained, and prepared to do battle. As the Ghost Bear ships dropped to the planet, Khan Bourjon announced that the attacking force would consist of a combined force made up of representatives of each Galaxy. The commanding officers of each Galaxy bid fiercely for the right to join the combined troops.

A force of three Trinaries, one of them a Supernova, dropped onto the desert plain anticipating a swift victory, but the Clan force failed to account for the incredible heat of Thule's noonday sun. The battle commenced as the Clan warriors fired the first salvo with their vast array of weaponry. They discovered, to their dismay, that the heat overload caused by this environment negated the advantage of their superior technology. Many Clan 'Mechs shut down from excess heat after their first volley, leaving those 'Mechs vulnerable to the Husars' second greatest asset, their artillery. Shells rained down on the mostly immobile Clan forces, and before they managed to restart their machines, the Bears lost a Trinary of equipment. The First Husars began a running battle, using their light 'Mechs to draw the Ghost Bear fire, move out of harm's way, then return to attack their overheated opponents.

Star Colonel François Cote broke his bid first, ordering the remainder of his Cluster to approach the Husars from the east. The Husars had anticipated this strategy, and sent aerospace fighters to strafe the Third Bear Striker Cluster on its approach. In response, Star Colonel Stephan Huntsig broke his bid and called in his aerospace elements. As the fighters danced overhead, the Fiftieth Striker Cluster (the Black Bears) advanced. The two Clan forces surrounded the First Husars but did not engage the enemy. Suspicious of the sudden calm, the Husars sent out recon units to determine the reason for the lull. When these units failed to return, the Överste realized that the Bears had not given up, they were waiting for nightfall. Rather than waiting for the Clans to gain the advantage, Överste Swigard decided to push at the Ghost Bear lines while the sun was still high in the sky.

Using a barrage of artillery to cover its movement, the First struck at the north flank of the Clan lines. When the Bears attempted to stem the tide by setting their lighter elements against the Husars, Överste Swigard simply maneuvered her troops away from the heavier Ghost Bear elements providing backup and completed the breakout in short order. The Bears followed. Though the Ghost Bear pilots had by this time achieved air superiority and provided cover for the swifter Bear 'Mechs to overtake the Husars, the continuing artillery barrage punched huge holes in the Ghost Bears' rear lines. Star Colonel Paul Vishio broke his bid next by calling in aerospace forces to silence the Husar's long-range guns.

Deprived of their artillery, the Husars could do little but run. They made for the large river that bisected the Fresdon plain to meet their naval assets. An entire company sacrificed itself in

the final push that allowed the Husars to board the massive cargo ships and head upriver. The ships soon carried the Husars out of range of the Clan Ghost Bear's 'Mechs, forcing the invading commanders to solve a dilemma. Should they wipe out the opposing force by using their aerospace assets to sink the ships, or use their air assets to track the Husars and resume the battle when the ships landed? A vote among the warriors present concluded that sinking the ships went against Clan honor, and units were dispatched to follow the ships until they landed.

With the majority of the Husars out of the picture, the planet seemed to accept Ghost Bear rule. The Ghost Bear Khans declared the world conquered and set their sights on the next target world, leaving the 312th Assault Trinary behind to garrison Thule and destroy the First Husars when they chose to land.

The Ghost Bears would leave similarly light and ultimately insufficient garrisons on every world they conquered. The few warriors who pointed out the discrepancy between the sizes of the Bear and Wolf garrisons were accused of placing too much stock in Khan Kerensky's advice. Most warriors agreed with their Khans, who still considered the pathetic resistance offered in the initial stages of the invasion the greatest challenge the Ghost Bear warriors should expect to face.

The Ghost Bears finished the first wave smoothly and ahead of schedule. Though some Bear Crusaders agitated for additional combat assignments, their Khans reminded these ambitious warriors that the plan of attack had been carefully planned and agreed to by vote, and so it would be followed to the letter. To celebrate the successful completion of the first wave, the Khans declared that the warriors would join in a round of games, and that these games would be held at the end of every wave, with the winner receiving his choice of assignments in the next wave.

WAVE TWO: DISASTER STRIKES

In May of 3050, Clan Ghost Bear suffered its greatest hardships of the invasion, ironically from nature rather than man. The principal target in the second wave was the world of Jarett, where Clan Ghost Bear would face its first Draconis Combine troops. Smoke Jaguar reports described Combine military tactics as a curious mixture of honor and brutality, but whatever the truth, the Bears felt certain that these troops would offer a better fight than the Rasalhagians and Periphery scum they had fought so far. Khan Theresa DelVillar won the honor of subduing Jarett, and she led elements of Alpha Galaxy (the Golden Bears) against the Ninth Alshain Regulars.

The Combine force's commander, *Tai-sa* Sonia Zev, did not understand what response the Ghost Bear Khan expected to receive for her *batchall*. She did know that she had an inexperienced unit under her command, and she had no intention of revealing her troops' lack of combat testing to the Clan. Unfortunately for Zev, Khan DelVillar had already learned from ComStar officials that the green Ninth regiment was spread out in three battalions over the northern part of the planet. Khan DelVillar dropped her units in a standard combat formation and immediately faced the determined warriors of the Ninth. The battle began with Khan DelVillar challenging a *Commando*. The Khan's Elemental Point quickly shredded the *Commando*, but the 'Mech's pilot refused to give up, continuing to fight even against the Clan's massive battle-armored troopers. The Khan captured this feisty young warrior and made him her bondsman, and in a neat parallel to their actions long ago on Arcadia, the Ghost Bear warriors followed her lead by attempting to capture their opponents rather than kill them. This made the survival rate of the Ninth impressively high.

The Clans and the Draconis Combine fought the major battle for Jarett in the lush foliage of the Solun Jungle. The Ninth's lead battalion made excellent use of the cover afforded by the trees, a lesson that Kanrei Kurita would borrow for himself later in the invasion. For nearly a week the Ninth survived by fighting on the run, but the Ghost Bears followed this fox hunt to its inevitable conclusion, learning a great deal about Inner Sphere guerrilla tactics along the way. The Ninth eventually succumbed to Clan Ghost Bear nearly ten days after the Golden Bears landed.

The conquest of the second wave was proceeding as planned when Khan Bourjon received the startling news that Rasalhague once again controlled Thule. The First Husars had finally reappeared and destroyed the Ghost Bear garrison unit. In fact, the Khans discovered that similar uprisings were occurring on many Bear-controlled worlds. Though ComStar officials seemed to be doing their best to pacify the public, it was becoming apparent that the Bears would have to take some kind of action. Again leaving only token garrisons on their newly acquired worlds, the Ghost Bears returned to reassert their authority on worlds seething with revolt.

The Golden Bears returned to Thule and caught the remainder of the First Husars in the planet's frigid south lands. The Bears easily swept through the Husars' prepared positions, the Elementals taking control of the narrow trenches that the First had intended to use as fortifications. Khan DelVillar supposedly said, "How polite of you to spare us the effort of digging your graves." The battle ended almost before it began, and certain proof indicates that Joannie Swigard has already risen to warrior status from bondsman.

Khan Bourjon and the Blitzkrieg faced full-scale operations on every world he was assigned to pacify. Often, after disposing of the Clan garrison, the citizenry sowed vibrabombs all around the major cities and filled the alleyways with armed defenders determined to die rather than surrender. A week of constant fighting prompted Delta Galaxy Commander Roberto Snuka to threaten to level every city in order to achieve his vic-

tory. Fortunately for the populace, the much-loved planetary ComStar Demi-Precentor stepped in and broadcast a plea for peace via the local multimedia, promising that the Clan's administration of the planet would function as a beneficial cooperative with ComStar. The announcement ended most of the violence, and Clan control was restored, with the help of a hefty garrison force.

The Bears' Beta Galaxy was sent to repacify Damien, home of the Black Omen mercenary company. The Omen hid from the invaders when the Ghost Bears initially attacked the world, biding their time in order to strike at the garrison as soon as the bulk of the enemy lifted offplanet. This dishonorable action certainly contributed to Clan Ghost Bear's fierce dislike of mercenaries. The Khans scheduled Beta's jump for Damien on 17 May, and the Galaxy Commander was to send a message via HPG to notify his commanders as soon as his force arrived insystem at Damien. The message never came. Though HPG breakdowns were rare, all Clans accepted the fact of their existence. While it was unusual for the HPG to fail to transmit, the Khans were busy elsewhere and so waited a week to focus their attention on the missing Galaxy.

When the Black Bears deployed to track down the missing Galaxy, they arrived at Damien and learned that Beta Galaxy's WarShip had collided with a small asteroid upon entering the system. The angle of impact had limited most of the damage to a single DropShip, but this minimal damage came at the price of the death of an entire Cluster. The WarShip itself was also damaged in such a way that it could not be repaired without Clan facilities, and so Beta abandoned the ship and headed for the planet's surface. Because Damien lacks a ComStar facility, Beta Galaxy had no means of communication. By the time the Black Bears arrived, Beta Galaxy had destroyed the Black Omen and held firm control of the planet.

The loss of an entire elite Cluster of MechWarriors deeply saddened the Ghost Bears, and the Khans agreed to honor the Ghost Bear dead by taking time out of the push for Terra to hold their traditional ceremony. While the other Clans began to strike in the third wave of the invasion, all Bear warriors not assigned to essential garrisons rendezvoused on Damien. The ceremony to commemorate the dead lasted for two full days.

The Ghost Bears mustered from Damien to launch their third wave, but in the process realized they needed to deal with an unexpected problem. The number of garrison units required combined with the loss of an entire Cluster left Clan Ghost Bear critically short of combat forces. A close vote in early June resulted in the warriors agreeing to continue forward despite this apparent crisis, and the Khans planned to counter the potential shortage by holding fewer troops in reserve.

WAVE THREE: WINDS OF CHANGE

IlKhan Showers contacted Khan DelVillar in late May to suggest that Clan Ghost Bear might wish to bid for the honor of conquering the world of Rasalhague. He pointed out that because the planet lay close to the border of their corridor of invasion, the Ghost Bears could legitimately slow the Wolf juggernaut by forcing Clan Wolf to bid to take that world. Khan DelVillar, well aware that her Clan was performing far below expectations, agreed that conquering Rasalhague might improve the Clan's fortune and would certainly boost morale. She and Khan Bourjon put together a plan of attack and then informed Khan Ulric Kerensky that Clan Ghost Bear wished to bid for the right to take the capital world of the Free Rasalhague Republic. When Khan Kerensky attempted to lodge a protest with the ilKhan, Showers quickly replied that any Clan could bid for any world, per Clan tradition. Khan Ulric responded by declaring that he would meet the Ghost Bear Khans on 27 June for the bidding. While, at the time, the Khans' choice to both participate in the attack on Last Frontier as the opening shot of the third wave seemed inexplicable, it quickly became clear that they were simply positioning themselves for the attack on Rasalhague.

On 23 June Clan Ghost Bear descended to face off against the First Freemen, the defenders of Last Frontier. The outcome of the short, brutal fight seemed a foregone conclusion. The green Rasalhague regiment fought bravely but offered no real

opposition to the elite Clan force, though they did manage to land one serious blow to the Clan. When the Ourse Keshik, led by Khan DelVillar, raided a Freemen ammunition dump on 24 June, Överste Knute Kurita's defending company opened fire on the charging Clan 'Mechs and, surely by chance rather than design, scored a direct missile hit on Khan DelVillar. Her Point scrambled to remove her from the battlefield, but the damage was done. Khan DelVillar slipped into a coma from which she would never emerge.

Khan Bourjon secured Last Frontier, then immediately convened a meeting of all available Bloodnamed warriors to vote for a new Khan. MechWarrior Aletha Kabrinski, the Clan's current Oathmaster, earned the title of Khan by defeating stiff competition. Her first official statement as saKhan was to suggest to the assembled warriors that Khan Bourjon, while a competent warrior, was not leadership material. Her statement echoed the sentiments of many Bear warriors, who felt that the Clan's poor performance to date could accurately be blamed on the Khan's lack of competence. She called for one of the warriors present to challenge Khan Bourjon for his position, and nominated Star Colonel Bjorn Jorgensson for the honor.

Caught completely off guard by this show of no confidence, Khan Bourjon called for a vote to determine the extent of his warriors' discontent. The warriors voted unanimously to choose a new Khan, then voted to elect Star Colonel Bjorn Jorgensson, an aerospace pilot of great martial and tactical skill, as Clan Ghost Bear's new Khan. When Khan Bourjon called for a Trial of Refusal, Khan Jorgensson, well liked by his command and having served with distinction in the invasion, chose to accept the challenge personally. Because he was a poor hand-to-hand fighter, Khan Bourjon chose to fight augmented, even though to do so gave Khan Jorgensson the advantage of his aerospace fighter. Khan Jorgensson chose to fight in the tropical jungles of Last Frontier's equator, an unusual choice that nonetheless served him well in the end.

A gentle rain began to fall as the combatants mounted up and started their machines. Khan Bourjon held the upper hand in the initial stages of the duel, skillfully using the jungle to take cover from Jorgensson's strafing runs, then emerging to fire at the retreating fighter before it could turn and make its next pass. While the observers wondered why Jorgensson failed to attack more aggressively, the fighter pilot continued to bide his time, waiting for his opponent to churn up the ground into a slippery, muddy soup. Bourjon's 'Mech slowed to a crawl and showed up brilliantly on Jorgensson's infrared scanners. When he considered Bourjon sufficiently mired, Jorgensson began his assault in earnest. Bourjon proved unable to defend himself against the repeated, merciless attacks from his opponent, and accepted Jorgensson's offer of hegira in the end.

A Jorgensson once again held the Khanship, and his first few days in office would prove him to be a capable and decisive leader. As his first priority, Khan Jorgensson contacted ilKhan Leo Showers to inform him of the events that had transpired and to assure him that taking Rasalhague remained a top concern for Clan Ghost Bear. He then contacted Khan Ulric Kerensky and informed the Wolf Khan that the change in leadership would force Clan Ghost Bear to delay the bidding for Rasalhague. Khan Jorgensson simply accepted Clan Wolf's veiled accusation of deliberately delaying the meeting and decided to find a way to use the perceived advantage if he could.

As his third official act, Khan Jorgensson reluctantly contracted with Clan Steel Viper to garrison the Ghost Bear-occupied worlds. Though he realized that he must have as many warriors available as possible to support a successful bid for Rasalhague, asking for help from a Clan the Ghost Bears despised was a bitter pill to swallow. (Unlike the enmity between many Clans, the long-standing discord between Clans Ghost Bear and Steel Viper was based, not in a single event or series of insults, but in a deep and irreconcilable difference in the philosophies of the Clans' founders.)

The bid for Rasalhague took place aboard the *Dire Wolf* on 4 July 3050 in a grueling 90-minute test of nerves, regarded by many as a textbook example of Clan bidding. Even after Khan Jorgensson realized that he would lose the bid, he continued the contest in order to push the Wolf bid as low as possible. Though disappointed by losing the chance to take Rasalhague, Khan Jorgensson walked away from the bidding confident that Clan Wolf could not take the world without breaking its bid. He returned to his warriors, who were anxiously awaiting orders to attack the Republic's capital world, and sent them instead toward the remaining targets of the third wave.

That the Steel Viper forces were garrisoning those worlds already under Ghost Bear control freed the entire Ghost Bear invasion force to focus on the task of securing all the remaining worlds in their invasion corridor. The new Khans consistently led its troops to quick, efficient victories, though on many worlds the fighting caused a great deal of collateral damage. Rather than confining the populace to prison camps, the Clan put them to work rebuilding their cities and towns, reminiscent of its policy toward the population on the reclaimed Pentagon worlds. This apparent effort to acknowledge the value of their conquered foes' way of life radically changed the Inner Sphere people's view of the invaders, at least on Ghost Bear-occupied planets. The number of uprisings dropped from a constant state of rebellion to an occasional isolated revolt.

The time lost in changing their Khans and arranging the bidding for Rasalhague allowed the Ghost Bears only enough time to conquer two additional planets in the third wave, Radije and Policenigo. On Policenigo, the victorious 304th Assault Cluster (the Howling Bears) actually freed the population from the grip of a tyrannical government. The ComStar briefing on the planet's defenses also mentioned, almost as an afterthought, that the planet's governor had long been engaged in the illegal spice trade and had avoided the watchful eye of the ISF only by ruthlessly controlling every aspect of its citizens'

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From the unpublished war journal written by Commander Jaime Wolf during the Clan invasion

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Judging by the date of the first entry, Commander Wolf began this journal when he decided to actively aid the Inner Sphere against the Clans and invited the rulers of each realm to Outreach for training.]

Of all the events of the Clan invasion, the one that prompted the least comment was Clan Ghost Bear's decision to replace one of its Khans in the middle of this major military operation. It seemed to be an impulsive choice for a Clan so dedicated to the principles of loyalty and tradition, but further analysis proves that they remained true to their founders' ideals.

The easiest explanation for their action also makes the most sense. Quite simply, the Ghost Bear's track record indicated that the Clan should have been more successful during the invasion than they had been so far. In the first two waves, Clan Ghost Bear conquered only eight worlds, half as many as Clan Wolf subdued in the same amount of time. It could be argued that Clan Wolf owed its success to the fact that it entered the Inner Sphere one Galaxy stronger than any other Clan, but Clan Smoke Jaguar took fifteen worlds in the first two waves with the same number of warriors as Clan Ghost Bear. Clan Ghost Bear simply failed to operate as efficiently as those other Clans.

The primary cause of Khan Karl Bourjon's failure laid in his gross underestimate of the scope of the operation. The Bear warriors consumed most of their available supplies during the first wave against token resistance. Had Khan Bourjon admitted his mistake at that point and brought forward additional supplies, I believe he would still be Khan. Khan Bourjon also failed, along with most of his Clan, to accurately judge the will of the people to resist. While all the Clans suffered from this failing to some degree, only the Ghost Bears and Smoke Jaguars mishandled the situation so dramatically. When combined with the Bears' initial reluctance to trust the administration of supposedly conquered worlds to either ComStar or the existing government, the garrisons left on these planets proved woefully inadequate. It should have required little guesswork to realize that the citizenry would rebel, and the Bears' reaction to these obviously unexpected uprisings also seemed uncharacteristic. Whole Galaxies returned to pacify what amounted to civilians with a grudge.

The loss of troops suffered in the Beta Galaxy collision with the asteroid did not improve the Khan's situation. Though he was not blamed for the tragedy, Khan Bourjon must certainly be held responsible for failing immediately to focus his warriors' anger at losing their brothers and sisters into meaningful gains on the fields of battle. Instead, he agreed to honor the dead in the traditional solemn ceremony.

With popular opinion already beginning to solidify against him, Khan Bourjon repeated an earlier mistake by again leaving inadequate garrisons on those worlds his Clan was forced to retake. He compounded this mistake by failing to react to Clan Wolf's accelerated attack schedule, leaving his warriors clamoring for their Khans to call forward provisional garrison clusters to free up the invading warriors to assault more worlds. Khan Bourjon continued to reject this step even when his saKhan encouraged him to add these special-purpose troops to his forces.

The growing dissatisfaction reached a flash point when the Bear warriors learned that Khan Bourjon originally intended to reject ilKhan Showers's scheme to seriously delay or stop Clan Wolf's advance. While Karl Bourjon had as much disdain for the Wolves as any of his warriors, he somehow failed to see the advantage to falling in with the ilKhan's plan. Only the Bears' tradition of obedience to the ilKhan prompted Bourjon to acquiesce. The Ghost Bear warriors were furious when they learned that their Khan had even considered passing up the opportunity to conquer a capital world. At that moment, the invading Ghost Bears decided to replace Khan Bourjon at the earliest opportunity. It seems reasonable to assume that Aletha Kabrinski, the Clan's Oathmaster and a staunch Crusader, stood at the head of this movement. The loss of Khan DelVillar in the invasion of Last Frontier gave the Bear warriors the chance they needed to shake up the status quo and replace Khan Bourjon. Kabrinski's nomination of Bjorn Jorgensson answered the belief of most warriors that only by electing a Tseng or Jorgensson as Khan would their fortunes change.

This incident illustrated many things about Clan Ghost Bear: its political awareness, a degree of superstition and the power of those who lead when supported by the confidence of their followers. It also showed, though no one recognized the warning signs, that Clan Ghost Bear's family ties were no longer so strong.

lives. The Howling Bears received no response to their *batchall*, and landed on the planet smack in the middle of a popular uprising. The government's battalion of new 'Mechs and a full regiment of augmented infantry found themselves under attack from two sides; the locals gained enough courage from the appearance of the Ghost Bears to launch guerrilla actions against their government's troops and supply caches, and the Ghost Bears quickly sized up the situation and concentrated their assault directly on the battalion. The defending troops soon retreated to a specially dug network of tunnels that extended into the mountains, and though the grateful populace made valiant efforts to aid the 304th in rooting them out, the Clan failed to account for nearly 30 percent of the renegade troops. The citizens gladly accepted the Clan way and the Ghost Bears' administration, and the Bears in turn protected their new caste members by posting a substantial garrison of front-line troops to Policenigo.

WAVE FOUR: RENEWAL

Khan Jorgensson was determined that his troops would be well supplied before continuing on with the fourth wave, even though this required a delay of almost three weeks. He also followed the lead of the other Clans and called up provisional garrison clusters (PGCs) to replace front-line garrison forces. He further replaced Beta Galaxy's destroyed Cluster with an undamaged one brought forward from the home worlds, thus returning the Clan to the strength of its original invasion bid. He and saKhan Kabrinski worked closely together to ensure that the fourth wave would bring nothing but success. They knew that their warriors were anxious to race with Clan Wolf. They also believed that the Inner Sphere would offer far stiffer opposition in this wave than ever before, especially when they learned through ComStar that House Kurita intended to defend its worlds with battle-hardened front-line troops. While the Bear warriors welcomed the challenge, they knew that the days of easily won worlds had ended.

Their month-long delay to refit and resupply cost the Ghost Bears prestige in the eyes of the other Clans, who considered the two months remaining to be an inadequate amount of time to properly invade the eight worlds the Bears planned to take. Khan Kabrinski answered this challenge by firmly reminding her Galaxy Commanders and Star Colonels that they would lose far less honor by breaking their bids and winning than by being beaten. She also informed them that most Inner Sphere commanders at least knew of Clan bidding practices and would use that knowledge to their advantage as often as the Clans allowed.

The Bears met less resistance than expected in the beginning of the fourth wave, taking five worlds in a month and a few days. They began to think they had overestimated the Inner Sphere's ability to respond to their threat, and the Khans began to hope that they could accelerate their pace and meet their timetable.

The Third Bear Guards (the ilKhan's Shield) fell into heavy fighting on the sixth world on their schedule, the Rasalhague world of Casere. The fanatical Second Husars used their light elements to harass the Cluster and draw the Bears into an old industrial sector where the Husars' heavy elements lashed out from reinforced positions. The close-quarters fighting neutralized the Third's advantage in weapons range, but their firepower compensated for that loss. Despite their habit of taking as many bondsmen as possible from their enemies' ranks, the fierce fighting forced the Ghost Bear Cluster to destroy the Husars to a man.

The world of Soverzene, taken near the end of the fourth wave, demonstrated to Clan Ghost Bear what Inner Sphere forces could do when truly motivated. The Second Alshain Regulars, the planet's usual defending force, received reinforcement from the Twenty-seventh Dieron Regulars. The commanders of both units were determined to make the Clans pay dearly for this world, which supplied many of the district's raw materials. *Tai-sa* Jasick Yoshiro and *Tai-so* Ano Tars planned a mobile defense in order to take advantage of the supplies they had stashed in various caches on the world's main continent. When the Bears arrived insystem and discovered that they faced two full regiments, Khan Jorgensson skipped the bidding process and committed the whole of Beta Galaxy to taking the world. Galaxy Commander Laurie Tseng received approval for her plan to take a conservative approach in the invasion, landing her forces in two locations and sending each to take one of the two principal cities on the world.

The Dieron Regulars were assigned to protect Averti and so moved to head off the Twelfth Bear Chevaliers and the Fourteenth Battle Cluster, as the Clan forces lunged toward their objectives. Using air strikes, the Twenty-seventh herded the two Clusters toward the Killimangero fjords near Averti. Aware that they were being manipulated, the Bears approached the natural formations cautiously and found the Twenty-seventh waiting on the edge of the narrow waterways. The Twelfth sent a Trinary forward to engage the two companies of Combine 'Mechs, but as the Bears approached, the Twenty-seventh began to retreat directly over the side of the cliffs. The Trinary charged forward and looked down to see the jump-capable Twenty-seventh 'Mechs already making their way up the opposite cliff face. Moments later, a powerful explosion rocked the area, sending most of the Trinary tumbling down into the fjord on a rock slide. Unfortunately for the Twenty-seventh, few Omnis were actually destroyed by the trap. To make matters worse for the Regulars, the Fourteenth Battle Cluster flanked them to the east and caught the two now-undermanned companies as they reached the top of the opposing cliff. The Bears' attack sent most of the Inner Sphere machines tumbling back down into the water, but the remainder of the Twenty-seventh attacked at that point, emerging from the cover of the trees within the crescent-shaped fjord. The Twelfth and Fourteenth immediately descended into the waterway and pursued the Twenty-seventh through rough-hewn escape tunnels. When the Twenty-seventh emerged from the tunnels on the far side of the fjord, it immediately detonated the explosives planted earlier. They returned to Averti believing themselves victorious, only to lose the city to the Bears later that night in a nearly bloodless surprise attack. The Ghost Bear commanders had sent Elementals into the tunnels during the fighting in the fjord, and those troopers had disarmed the majority of the Combine's planted explosives.

The Second Alshain Regulars fared even worse against the 304th and 332nd Assault Clusters. The Bears hounded the mobile Second and forced them to retreat to their ammunition supply base, by so doing allowing the Bears to get a fix on the base's location and destroy it with aerospace assets. Now running out of ammo, the Second retreated north with the 304th in hot pursuit. Clan aerospace elements forced the Second into a forest where the 332nd awaited their opponents' arrival. Trapped between two full-strength Assault Clusters, the Second Alshain Regulars took heavy losses. Those soldiers who managed to

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From the unpublished war journal written by Commander Jaime Wolf during the Clan invasion

The news of ilKhan Leo Showers's death affected Clan Ghost Bear in a strange and profound way. All normal activities ground to a halt as Ghost Bear warriors said a silent prayer for the soul of Leo Showers. His loss forced many of them to realize that they had lost something far more fundamental than battles in the first months of the invasion. They had lost touch with each other.

Among the Clans, only Clan Ghost Bear looks upon its founders as parents of a great family. When the Clans expanded following their successful campaign to retake the Pentagon worlds, and again when Nicholas Kerensky instituted his ambitious program to genetically engineer warriors, Clan Ghost Bear lost a certain degree of closeness simply because of its size. Before the invasion started, however, Bear warriors managed to maintain close personal ties to their trothkin long after leaving the sibko. Also because the Ghost Bear warrior caste structure is less military and more fraternal than most Inner Sphere units condone, the Ghost Bear units developed fierce loyalty and shared close bonds of friendship and trust with one another. This intimacy also fostered a more informal command structure than that of other Clans, which is exactly what founder Hans Jorgensson intended.

Even before the invasion began, time and circumstance conspired to erode the Clan Ghost Bear warriors' unique relationship. When they launched the invasion, the nature of the military operation forced Clan warriors into a regimented schedule unlike any since the retaking of the Pentagon worlds. Trothkin lost touch with one another and communication broke down as the warriors concentrated all their energy on the immediate matter at hand.

The ilKhan's death apparently served as a kind of emotional wake-up call for the Ghost Bear warriors. Whenever possible, they began shuttling between worlds renewing friendships and re-establishing the lines of communication. Their shared loss seemed to bind them even closer together.

Other Khans speculate that this renewed sense of unity was what galvanized the Clan in its battles against the Inner Sphere from that point on. The Ghost Bears had strayed from the path, and it took a shocking event like the death of their leader to bring them together again. In fact, the Ghost Bears' success on Tukayyid can be attributed, at least in part, to their strong esprit de corps.

escape destruction staged a rescue mission at Averti, freeing the Combine's captured soldiers and equipment from the Twenty-seventh. The Bears spent nearly two weeks hunting down the renegades, but gave up the search when their Bloodnamed warriors were recalled to Strana Mechty to elect a new ilKhan. Elements of the Twenty-seventh and Second managed to escape the planet, but both had suffered devastating losses.

Clan Ghost Bear considered the fourth wave a qualified success. Under the leadership of the new Khans, the Clan took eight worlds and garrisoned them with only minor resistance. When Khans Kabrinski and Jorgensson answered their ilKhan's call to travel to Radstadt for a Grand Kurultai, they waited to leave until they felt sure that everything was under control. Delayed by their duties, they were the last to learn the shocking news that ilKhan Leo Showers was dead.

Proud upholders of Great Kerensky's words, heed me, for I must relate a tragedy. Our leader is dead. Leo Showers, Khan of Khans, leader of Clan Smoke Jaguar, commander of those who would raise the Star League up from the ashes, no longer graces this world. Yet mourn not the loss of his physical presence, for his blood legacy will course through the veins of countless fierce warriors of future generations, all who will await the command to avenge his untimely death.

—From the recall order issued by Khan Bjorn Jorgensson, Clan Ghost Bear

Though ilKhan Showers lost his chance to somehow wrest the impetus of the invasion from Clan Wolf in the Grand Kurultai, that gathering still offered ample opportunity for dissension among the Khans. Most Khans declared their intentions of immediately bringing additional forces forward to punish the Inner Sphere for the death of their ilKhan. Others pointed out the futility of abandoning the carefully laid invasion plans to retaliate for a quirk of fate. Khan Perigard Zalman of Clan Steel Viper allowed cooler heads to prevail by using the Khans' discord in an argument for returning to Strana Mechty and electing a new ilKhan. Though this sparked an even more heated debate about the wisdom of leaving their hard-won gains behind, and though Khan Jorgensson felt inclined to disagree with anything Zalman said, the Khans eventually agreed that electing a new ilKhan was the only way to keep the invasion force cooperating.

During the journey back to Strana Mechty, Khans Jorgensson and Kabrinski conspired with the Khans of Clans Jade Falcon and Smoke Jaguar to formulate a plan that would place the blame for ilKhan Leo Showers's death squarely on the shoulders of Khan Ulric Kerensky. Though they had no hard evidence to prove the truth of their accusations, they doubted Ulric's ability to disprove their claim. The Ghost Bear Khans, always ready to strike at Clan Wolf in even the most minor ways, also suggested a back-up plan. If Khan Ulric managed to prove his innocence of the charges laid against him, they would ham-

string him by electing Kerensky as ilKhan, effectively binding him to the will of the Grand Council, whose agenda was now firmly controlled by the Crusaders. They also expected Clan Wolf Loremaster Conal Ward to assume his Clan's Khanship and felt that Ward would make an excellent addition to their cause.

When the Grand Council gathered to elect a new Khan, its first order of business was to hear testimony to support the Crusaders' accusations against Ulric Kerensky. Based mostly on the arguments offered by an outraged Phelan Wolf, Ulric was cleared of all responsibility in ilKhan Showers's death. The vote to install Ulric as ilKhan went smoothly, but no one predicted ilKhan Kerensky's next move. That he named Natasha Kerensky to replace him as Wolf Clan Khan surprised all the assembled Khans and the Black Widow herself. Handed a Pyrrhic victory, the Crusader Khans could only hope that Natasha would fail her Trial of Position and so become ineligible to be Khan. As history shows, her explosive performance in that trial left the Khans dumbfounded. Only Ulric's decision not to pair the Ghost Bears with another Clan for the next wave of the invasion tempered the animosity most Bear warriors felt toward Kerensky as their leader.

The months-long journey back to the Inner Sphere allowed ample time for the Khans of the seven invading Clans to draft and redraft their attack and defense plans. Determined to avoid the mistakes of their predecessors, the Khans of Clan Ghost Bear brought a quantity of supplies with them from the home worlds rivaled only by that carried by Clan Wolf, and they established unbroken supply lines by pressing the merchant caste into service. This move guaranteed Clan Ghost Bear a slow but steady stream of supplies flowing from Clan space to the occupation zone. Khans Kabrinski and Jorgensson modeled their strategy for the fifth wave on the Clan Smoke Jaguar battle plan, assigning each Galaxy a sweep pattern. The first Galaxy to conquer all the planets in its minizone received the honor of taking the final world in the wave. In view of Inner Sphere duplicity in response to most *batchalls*, the Khans also recommended that their Galaxy commanders prohibit bidding, but most took a wait-and-see position on that suggestion.

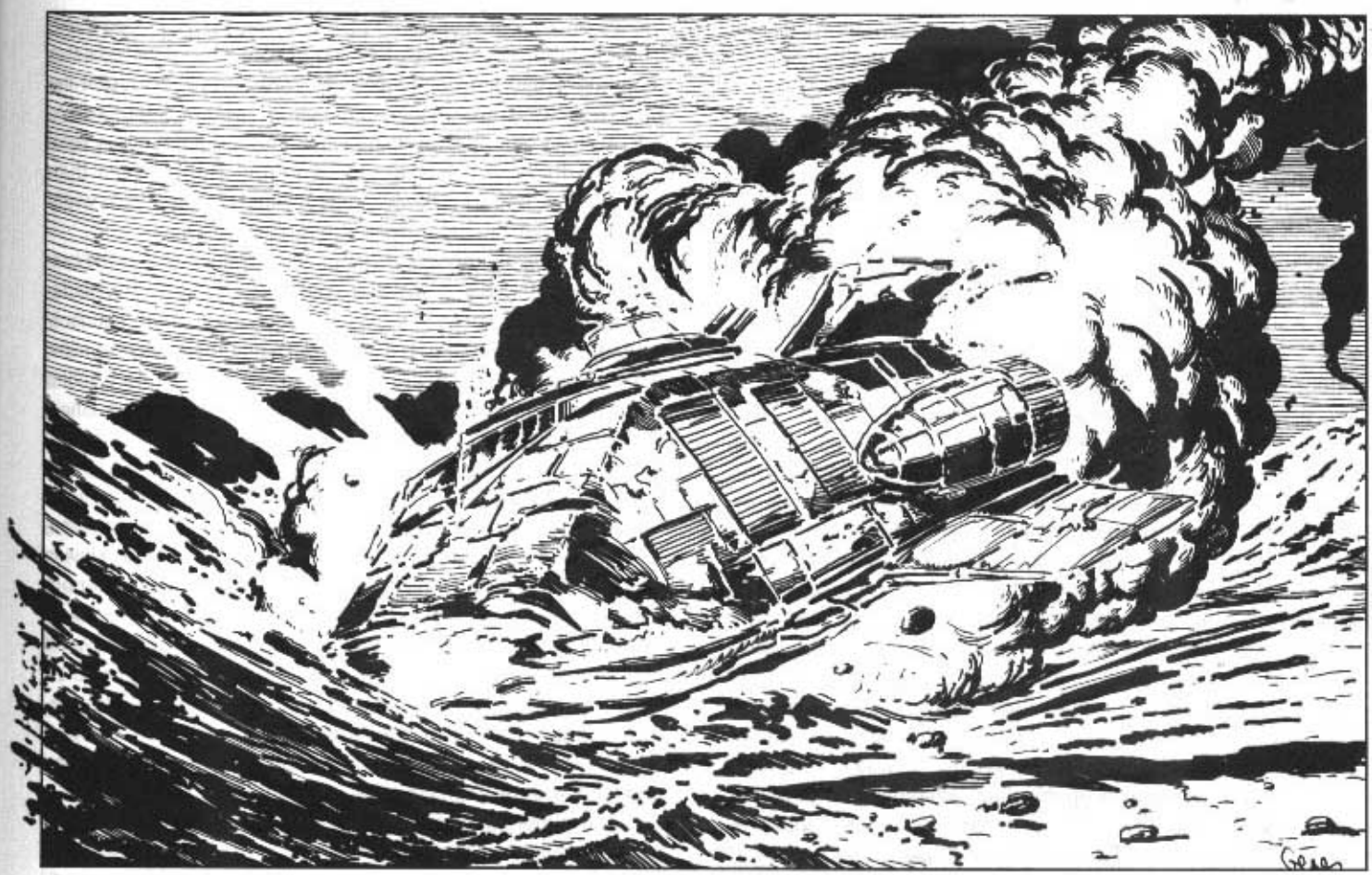
WAVE FIVE: THE ROARING BEAR

Assigned to Thessalonika as part of a training exercise, the Twelfth Sun Zhang Academy Cadre (Humility) found itself trapped on that planet by the sudden reappearance of the Clans. Unable to send the unblooded troops offplanet, *Tai-sa* Tasha Greer of the Eighth Alshain Regulars ordered the Twelfth to withdraw far enough to move out of harm's way as soon as Delta Galaxy appeared insystem. *Tai-sa* Anthony Fanhorn politely but firmly refused Greer's order. His cadets would remain at their posts and perform their duties in the tradition of the Dragon. Because the Twelfth refused to pull out, *Tai-sa* Greer decided to work the unit into her battle plan.

Khan Jorgensson personally led Delta Galaxy in the attack that signaled the Bears' return to the Inner Sphere. Though the planet Kempten lay closest to the Bears' point of re-entry, the Ghost Bear Khans chose to prove themselves against Thessalonika's defenders, the Eighth Alshain Regulars. Khan Jorgensson issued a standard *batchall* but received no answer to his challenge. Using information provided by ComStar, the Khan unleashed the Sixty-eighth Striker Cluster to deal with the Eighth and assumed that the force sent to meet him represented the bulk of his battle-hardened opponents. Though Khan Jorgensson expected the Inner Sphere troops to cower in the forests and fire from cover, he was pleasantly surprised to find the enemy standing to face them in something resembling Clan fashion. The Sixty-eighth eagerly pressed the attack and swiftly closed the gap between themselves and their foes while the Kuritas stood their ground. As soon as the Clan warriors began firing their longest-range weapons, the Kurita force began to gradually pull back as they returned fire. The battle was progressing unexpectedly well for the Sixty-eighth. The Kurita troops had failed to fight as well as expected, and they were giving ground almost too readily. Just as the Clan leaders alerted their units to expect a trap, Star Colonel Chou Vong detected more Kurita units approaching from the rear. Greer had positioned part of her unit on the Sixty-eighth's flank, and finally sent them into the fray.

The Bears immediately noticed a difference between the two forces. These new troops were shooting better and reacting faster to pressure. Star Colonel Vong informed her superiors that she now faced two different units, and Khan Jorgensson responded by unleashing the Seventy-Third Battle Cluster. When the warriors of the Sixty-eighth protested against another unit sharing its glory, the Eighth took advantage of the distraction and delivered a crippling blow. Their scouting elements had located the Sixty-eighth's DropShips. While the First Battalion pinned down the Cluster, the rest of the regiment traveled to the Bears' landing zone and launched an all-out attack that crippled the Bears' transports. The one DropShip that managed to lift off was so heavily damaged that it crashed before it could reach the Sixty-eighth.

The Seventy-third, led by Khan Jorgensson, crushed the Twelfth, leaving only the Eighth as an effective fighting force. The remaining Kurita troops joined armor and infantry units supplied by the planet's militia to harass the Clan units in a continuous delaying action. Khan Jorgensson suspected this change in tactics meant that the defending troops had somehow called for reinforcements and feared that if the Bears failed to secure the planet immediately, the battle for this one planet would prevent the Galaxy from pushing ahead with its assigned sweep. In the face of this threat, he called down the rest of Delta Galaxy. Combined, the five Clusters easily overwhelmed the conventional regiments set against them, but the Eighth remained elusive, raiding in force when the Bears least expected it and consistently hitting the Clan's weakest flank. Despite Khan Jorgensson's best personal efforts, the Combine aero-



space fighters denied Delta Galaxy air superiority. A week of frustration passed before the Bears discovered how the defenders had been managing to balk them at every turn.

Almost by chance, one of Delta Galaxy's WarShips picked up a message originating on a small moon orbiting Thessalonika. When he learned that the message accurately described his troop positions, Khan Jorgensson dispatched a DropShip of Elementals to investigate the source of the signal. A quick scan of the moon revealed the presence of a small research station whose staff was using powerful telescopes to watch the planet, then transmitting the Clan movements to the Combine commanders. The Elementals seized the station and deactivated its transmitters. Deprived of its spies, the Eighth quickly fell to Delta Galaxy.

The other planets taken in the initial thrust of the fifth wave were Kempten, Kaesong and Sheliak. All three worlds offered minimal resistance, and the Golden Bears won the right to take the sweep's final objective, the Combine district capital of Alshain.

ALSHAIN

While the fifth-wave sweep went smoothly for Alpha Galaxy under the command of Khan Kabrinski, neither she nor her warriors expected well-defended Alshain to fall easily. Kabrinski declared that the whole of Alpha Galaxy would attack this world.

Theodore Kurita assigned the elite Second Sword of Light to help the Sixth Alshain Regulars defend their home world. *Tai-sa* Kelly Dok To answered Khan Kabrinski's challenge directly, truthfully stating who defended the world, but she refused to commit to a single battlefield. Khan Kabrinski decided to split the Golden Bears and try to pin down as many Kurita troops as quickly as possible. The First Bear Guards tackled the Sixth Alshain, while the Third Bear Guards and the Fiftieth Striker Cluster went to deal with the Second Sword of Light.

The First Bear Guards (the Rage) found the Sixth Alshain Regulars in the Polotmy Mountains. The Regulars used the majestic peaks to their best defensive advantage and created dug-in positions. Several strafing passes by the First's aerospace elements failed to even faze the Sixth, and the Bear 'Mechs faced fire from all directions. The Alshain Regulars took advantage of the mountains' natural sniper cover to prevent the Rage from gaining any ground in a long day of fighting. Khan Kabrinski finally ordered the Black Bears to abandon their battle with the Second Sword of Light and assist the First Bear Guards in routing the Regulars.

The Bears reluctantly quit their inconclusive struggle with the Second Sword of Light. By following the strategy developed by Kanrei Kurita—keep mobile, duck and hide when confronted, and combine fire—the elite Kurita force inflicted massive damage on its opponents. Though individual Combine warriors sometimes answered the Bears' challenges to single combat, *Tai-sa* Dok To forbade this practice when it became clear that the Clan warriors always won. The Second steadily lost ground, but they were relinquishing it rather than being forced back. The broken canyons in which they fought, filled with rocky ground and natural crevices, provided ideal cover, and the hotly contested air war prevented either side from calling for aerospace support.

The Kuritans had initially lured the Bears to the floor of the canyon by baiting the trap with light jump-capable units. When the Bears reacted as *Tai-sa* Dok To had hoped, pouncing on the light 'Mechs and watching in surprise as the Kurita units sailed over the canyon walls, she unleashed her battalions to rain down fire onto the Bear forces. The Kurita advantage was short-lived, as most of the Black Bears' 'Mechs were also jump-capable. The battle became a shooting match until the Third Bear Guards discovered a steep path carved into the rock leading out of the canyon. Having learned from experience, Star Colonel Hunter Tseng ordered his Elementals to sweep the path. The tons of explosives they found would have obliterated the Guards. As quickly as the Elementals defused the bombs, the ilKhan's Shield moved up the path, attempting to flank the Second. When they reached the top they discovered that the Black Bears were working with the same plan. The two Bear units fired on each other for several confused seconds before they realized that the Second had escaped.

The Kurita forces chose that moment to launch a devastating counterattack. An entire heavy battalion charged the Bears' weak left flank during the confusion, focusing their attack on an isolated Trinary and crushing the unit. By the time the remaining Bear units turned their firepower against the Second, the Sword of Light had begun a full retreat to the city of Silverdale. Convinced that the tide of battle had turned, the Khan ordered the Black Bears to Polotmy to assist the Rage. The ilKhan's Shield continued to pursue the Second and ran straight into a trap. The Second brought all four battalions to bear at once against the Third Bear Guards, forcing the now-desperate Star Colonel Tseng to order his Cluster to punch through the Second's lines at any cost. Only by taking heavy losses and expending an enormous amount of ammunition did the Third free itself and organize a retreat. The Second did not pursue its advantage, instead continuing on to Silverdale and boarding their DropShips.

As instructed, the Black Bears dropped behind the Sixth's solid defenses, in a matter of hours sweeping the Combine unit into the waiting guns of the Rage. When the Sixth charged forward in a desperate attempt to escape, punching a hole clear through the Rage lines, the Bears immediately closed the gap behind them, but this apparent advantage quickly dissolved. The MechWarriors of the Second Sword of Light chose this moment to make a daring combat drop directly on top of the First Bear Guards. The ensuing chaos allowed the Sixth to retreat to its nearby DropShips while the Second made a fighting withdrawal. The assembled Ghost Bear forces then attacked en masse, throwing units at the Kuritans from every side, but nothing broke the defenders' lines.

What remained of the ilKhan's Shield dropped into the battle site an hour after the Second, but it was too late. The planetary militia, held in reserve since the fighting started, suddenly lashed out at the Bears, providing sufficient distraction to allow the remnants of the Sixth Alshain Regulars and the Second Sword of Light to evacuate Alshain and leave it to the Ghost Bears.

NEW RULES

The loss of Alshain struck a stunning blow at the Combine, the first of many to be delivered by Clan Ghost Bear. Having completed their first sweep on schedule, the Bear warriors voted to skip the usual rest and refit period and immediately launch the next sweep, but the Ghost Bears quickly discovered that their extraordinarily long supply lines were too slow to be effective. Though they completed the sweep with little trouble, they consumed most of their ammunition stores to take five worlds. The Clan waited nearly a month between the second and third sweeps to let logistics catch up with their front lines.

The supply crunch and the Inner Sphere's ever-changing tactics prompted Khan Jorgensson to issue several sweeping general orders in early January 3052. He ordered the immediate reconfiguration of hundreds of OmniMechs to replace most missile and autocannon systems with lasers and PPCs. The Khan also placed a temporary moratorium on the traditional rules of Clan engagement. The Inner Sphere had repeatedly demonstrated its lack of honor and therefore lost the right to be treated honorably. Jorgensson forbade the use of *batchall* and zellbrigen for the remainder of the invasion.

He further ordered the merchant caste members manning the supply lines to find adequate supplies for the warriors, no matter what the cost. The merchants answered this challenge by trading in exotic items found on captured worlds. The scheme provided an unexpected side effect—it offered the merchants the chance to see the Inner Sphere at the same time as they gathered supplies, which in turn showed the citizens of occupied worlds a different side of the Clan. Khan Kabrinski hoped that contact with nonwarrior Clan members might reduce the incidence of rebellion on PGC-controlled worlds, and her contribution to Khan Jorgensson's plan succeeded.

During the fifth wave, the Ghost Bears outperformed every Clan but Clan Wolf. They took eighteen worlds in all, and the proud Ghost Bear warriors felt that they were finally receiving their due. The Ghost Bear Khans reacted very differently to the news that ilKhan Kerensky had agreed to fight ComStar in a

proxy battle for Terra on the planet Tukayyid. Khan Jorgensson objected to the whole idea because the bargain included the fifteen-year truce. SaKhan Kabrinski enthusiastically embraced the ilKhan's deal with complete confidence that the Clans would emerge victorious.

TUKAYYID: WORLD OF FATE

Khan Jorgensson made the official bid of three Galaxies for the Ghost Bears' right to invade Tukayyid, and won the right to descend in the fifth hour of combat. The Ghost Bear targets would be the twin cities of Spanac and Luk. Khans Jorgensson and Kabrinski laid out a simple and direct battle plan designed to crush the Com Guards quickly, confident that the strength of their forces would carry them to victory.

The Ghost Bears drove straight for their target cities, opposed by the Com Guards' First Army and the reserve Fourth Army. As the senior commander, Precentor Katherine Luarca deployed her First Army to engage the Bears upon their landing, leaving only her veteran 103rd Division (Truth in Communication) to defend Spanac. Fearing that the green troops of the Fourth Army would break facing Clan OmniMechs in the field, she assigned the Fourth to garrison Luk.

The Ghost Bears split their forces, landing Alpha Galaxy in the hills above Spanac and Beta and Delta near Luk. Both forces landed unopposed, but suffered hit-and-run attacks as they advanced. The First Army's 308th Division (Clarity of Thought) did little to slow the veteran forces of Alpha Galaxy, and Beta Galaxy decimated the 121st Division (Gray Backs). The Ninety-First and Twelfth Divisions of the First Army fared better, trapping Delta Galaxy's Twentieth Polar Bear Attack Cluster in the outskirts of the Holth forest and inflicting heavy losses on the Clan troops. This skirmish turned the tide in the Bears' push for Luk and forced Beta and Delta Galaxies to withdraw. The Ninety-First Division then fell back to assist in the defense of Spanac, but just managed to enter the city before Alpha Galaxy took up positions in the suburbs. The Bears settled in to hold Spanac under siege until reinforcements from the failed attack at Luk arrived. Unfortunately for the Clans, the Com Guards' Twelfth waylaid those reinforcements in a brilliant ambush, setting fire to the Holth forest and attacking Beta Galaxy's Seventh Bear Guards as they fled from the burning woods. When the exhausted Seventh finally broke free of the inferno, they ran down wide paths cut through the woods to the hills beyond. By entering these corridors, the Bears fell to devastating short-range fire from the dug-in forces of the Twelfth. To a man, the overheated Ghost Bear 'Mechs died in the forest.

Meanwhile, the Com Guards had trouble on other fronts. The troops of the Ninety-First Division failed to achieve a proper defensive position in Spanac, and the arrival of Beta and Delta Galaxy troops at the siege enabled the Ghost Bears to overrun the Ninety-First and capture most of its supply caches intact. Predicting the imminent fall of the city, the Precentor Martial ordered Precentor Luarca to pull her 103rd Division out of Spanac.

The Ghost Bears took the city, but soon faced a counterattack from two divisions of the Fourth Army. Garrisoned at Luk, the Fourth Army divisions had seen little combat in the battle on Tukayyid and so arrived at Spanac fresh and ready for action. With the Fourth Army raining artillery fire on the city and the remnants of the Ninety-First and Twelfth Divisions raiding in the suburbs, the Bear Khans chose to leave Beta and Delta Galaxies to hold Spanac while Alpha Galaxy mustered for an assault on Luk.

At Luk, Alpha Galaxy tore into the remaining divisions of the Fourth Army with all the ferocity of Clan Ghost Bear's namesake. Despite the Com Guards' superior numbers, the Fourth came close to breaking until Precentor Luarca redeemed herself by leading her 103rd Division and the remaining elements of the 308th in an attack against Alpha Galaxy's main supply depot. The assault forced the Bears to pull back to defend their supplies; though the Fiftieth Striker Cluster managed to enter Luk's suburbs, the Clan troops lacked the force needed to take the city. Alpha Galaxy fought off a raid by reinforcements from the First Com Guard Army, but they suffered such high losses in doing so that the Bear Khans reluctantly ordered a withdrawal back to Spanac.

At this point, the ilKhan declared an end to the Ghost Bear campaign. Knowing that they lacked the strength to take Luk from the fresh Com Guards troops stationed there, the Bear Khans raised no objection. The battle of Tukayyid had already ended in defeat for several of the other Clans, and so if the Bears continued to fight, the Com Guards could easily shift enough forces from other combat theaters to drive the Clan from Spanac. Rather than lose all that they had gained, the Ghost Bears withdrew while they could still claim victory.

The Precentor Martial also welcomed the end of the Bear campaign. Though the Com Guards had lost to these particular Clan opponents, their forces' departure from Tukayyid left the First and Fourth armies free to turn against the hard-fighting Jade Falcons. Because the Ghost Bears captured Spanac, breached defenses at Luk, and inflicted somewhat greater losses than they sustained, ilKhan Kerensky and Precentor Martial Focht agreed that the Ghost Bears had won a marginal victory over the Com Guards.

Aftermath

Clan Ghost Bear wasted no time in recriminations for being forced to accept the Truce of Tukayyid by other Clans' failures to achieve their objectives on that planet. The Khans immediately began rotating their battered troops back to the Clan home worlds and bringing fresh warriors forward to the occupation zone. Clan Ghost Bear has quietly and efficiently rebuilt its occupying forces into the strongest Clan contingent in the Inner Sphere, and stands well-placed to leap out in front of a renewed Clan offensive.

OCCUPATION ZONE (AS OF JULY 3052)

THE PERIPHERY

PORTHOS

September 3049
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: Star Captain Ian DelVillar (Alpha OmniMech Star, the Ourse Keshik)
Defending Forces: MechWarrior Uchi Tikidomo (former DCMS officer)
Major Battle Site: Deson Ranch
Outcome: After serving with distinction in the War of 3039, Uchi Tikimodo retired to Porthos, where he lived peacefully until the Clans came. Porthos had no defenses, and Clan Ghost Bear expected no resistance. Much to their surprise, they were met upon landing by Tikimodo in his *Archer*. He offered the Bears the chance to fight for possession of the world and the Ghost Bears immediately accepted his challenge. Star Captain DelVillar won the right to fight the DCMS MechWarrior, squaring off his *Blackhawk* against the *Archer*. The fight was a mismatch, but Tikimodo's tenacity in the face of impossible odds so impressed Star Captain DelVillar that he agreed to employ Tikimodo as a liaison between the planetary government and Porthos's new Clan rulers.

SANTANDER'S WORLD

July 3052
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: 310th Assault Trinary, 117th Battle Trinary, Supernova Command (First Bear Guards, Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Seventh Provisional Garrison Cluster (Clan Smoke Jaguar)
Major Battle Site: Santander's Jewel
Outcome: Clan Ghost Bear took Santander's World from Clan Smoke Jaguar in a Trial of Possession, as a test of their rebuilt fighting strength and as payback for having so narrowly lost the bidding war for the world during the conquest of the Periphery. Newly re-formed after the Battle of Tukayyid, the First Bear Guards hammered the Smoke Jaguar forces in a fiercely fought Trial of Possession. The Ghost Bears used what they considered flexible tactics to win; Clan Smoke Jaguar called the Bears' strategy "contemptible Inner Sphere skullduggery," and Khan Brandon Howell demanded that the ilKhan rebuke the Bears for un-Clanlike behavior. IlKhan Kerensky ruled that the Bears, like all Clans, had the right to engage in battles as they saw fit. If the Smoke Jaguars had a problem with the way the Bears chose to conduct themselves, they had the right to call for the appropriate trials. This response temporarily cowed Khan Howell, but border disputes continue to flare between the two Clans.

FIRST WAVE

(March–April 3050)

THULE (FRR)

March 3050
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: 139th Striker Cluster (Alpha Galaxy), 304th Assault Cluster (Beta Galaxy), 73rd Battle Cluster (Delta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: First Husars
Major Battle Site: Fresdon Desert
Outcome: See text.

DAMIEN (FRR)

March 3050
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: 34th Striker Trinary (Eighth Bear Cuirassiers, Delta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: The Black Omen (a mercenary company)
Major Battle Site: None
Outcome: The 34th landed with high hopes of finishing off the defenders in short order, but after six days of fruitless searching decided that the Black Omen must have left Damien before the Bears arrived. The Ghost Bears left a small garrison on the planet and moved on. Two months later, the Black Omen mercenary company came out of hiding and overran the garrison, forcing the Bears to retake the planet during the second wave of the invasion. The Black Omen's "treachery," as the Ghost Bears see it, accounts for much of that Clan's well-known hatred of mercenaries.

HOLMSBU (FRR)

March 3050
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: 43rd Elemental Support Trinary (12th Bear Chevaliers, Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Seventh and Eighth Corrugated Lancers (2 armored regiments supported by infantry)
Major Battle Sites: Redwood, Linden's Bluff
Outcome: The Lancers were ill-prepared for a fight with battle-armored Elementals and fell quickly to the Clan troops' superior weapons and training. The Ghost Bears readily accepted the Lancers' surrender.

PINNACLE (FRR)

March 3050
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: Alpha and Bravo Assault Stars (71st Assault Trinary, 140th Striker Cluster, Delta Galaxy)

Defending Forces: The Pinnacle Guardsmen (1 regiment of mechanized infantry)
Major Battle Site: Lodan Factory
Outcome: The Ghost Bear OmniMechs overran the infantry regiment, booting it out of its hardened positions within hours of landing.

CONSTANCE (DC)

April 3050
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: 68th Striker Cluster (Delta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: The Honor Guard (5 companies of 'Mechs, 2 armor regiments)
Major Battle Sites: Cedar Groves, Hartmond Hills
Outcome: In this savage battle, both sides resorted to ambushes and other devious tactics. The Honor Guard went so far as to poison the general water supply, wrongly assuming that the Bears did not have their own reserves. The Ghost Bears labelled the Honor Guard dezgra after this incident; Star Colonel Chou Vong used it as an excuse to call down his entire Cluster and finish the battle quickly. The Honor Guard, however, used hit-and-run guerrilla attacks to deny the Bears a swift victory. The 68th chased the Honor Guard's elite armor regiments for five days, whittling down the Inner Sphere forces through attrition.

SECOND WAVE

(May 3050)

SUSQUEHANNA (FRR)

May 3050
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: 96th Battle Trinary (14th Battle Cluster, Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Regal Death (a mercenary company supported by 2 battalions of heavy armor)
Major Battle Sites: Silver Lake, Vernaw Woods
Outcome: The 96th landed at the location agreed to in the *batchall*, but landed to discover their opponents had failed to show. Remembering the vanished Black Omen mercenary company on Damien, the 96th went hunting but expected to find no opposition. Bravo Battle Star walked straight into a Regal Death ambush in the Vernaw Woods, where the mercs had retreated to prepared positions upon detecting the Bears' arrival insystem. Pit traps and minefields destroyed three of Bravo's OmniMechs; concentrated weapons fire took down a fourth and seriously damaged the fifth. Fortunately for the lone Ghost Bear survivor, the other two stars of the battle Trinary arrived in time to make short work of the mercenaries. The

Bears fought with such a ferocity that not a single Regal Death soldier survived the assault. After this engagement, many Ghost Bear commanders declared all mercenary units dezgra, unworthy of honorable treatment and fit only for immediate destruction. Upon encountering mercenaries after the battle for Susquehanna, Ghost Bear leaders rarely bothered issuing a *batchall* and almost never claimed bondsmen from mercenary ranks.

JARETT (DC)

May 3050
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: Trinary Galaxy Command, 310th Assault Trinary, 17th Battle Trinary (First Bear Guards, Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Ninth Alshain Regulars
Major Battle Site: Sulen Jungles
Outcome: See text.

TRONDHEIM (FRR)

May 3050
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: Trinary Command, Twelfth Battle Trinary, 34th Fighter Binary (Third Bear Guards, Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Trondheim Freedom Defenders (2 mechanized infantry regiments, 1 aerospace wing, 2 battalions of heavy armor, 1 'Mech company)
Major Battle Sites: Misby Flats, Lava Web, Millargro
Outcome: The Defenders fought a versatile mobile campaign across most of the world's largest continents. Early in the battle, the Defenders led a Star of Ghost Bear 'Mechs onto the Lava Web, a flat plain of lava whose top crust is alternately thin and thick enough to support the weight of light 'Mechs or armor. The heavy Bear OmniMechs broke through the crust and sank into the molten stone beneath. Eager to avenge their fallen comrades, the rest of the Bear forces hunted down the Defenders from the open fields of Millargro to the crowded streets of Misby Flats, where they finally pinned the Defenders down and obliterated them.

THIRD WAVE

(June–July 3050)

LAST FRONTIER (FRR)

June 3050
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: The Silverroot Keshik, the Ourse Keshik, 310th Assault Trinary (First Bear Guards, Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: First Freemen
Major Battle Sites: Brighton Rock, Ascension
Outcome: See text.

RADIJE (FRR)

July 3050
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: Alpha Nova Star (Supernova Echo, 115th Striker Cluster, Delta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Twelfth Rasalhagian Dragoons Free Company (4 'Mech lances supported by an infantry battalion)
Major Battle Site: Lochsdown
Outcome: The Twelfth Dragoons refused to respond to the Bears' *batchall,* and the insulted Bears hunted them for three full days. Tired of the chase, the Bears showed the planet's defenders little mercy when they finally caught up with them. The Clan units saturated the field with weapons fire and refused all offers of surrender until they had destroyed every last Rasalhagian 'Mech. Only then did the Bears accept the surrender of the rest of the Free Company. For this undisciplined action, Star Captain Marialle Hawkins received an official reprimand and served two months on garrison duty getting to know the people she had conquered.

POLICENIGO (DC)

July 3050
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: 321st Assault Trinary (304th Assault Cluster, Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Policenigo Guard (1 infantry regiment, 1 'Mech battalion)
Major Battle Sites: 43rd Regional Correctional Facility, Park Mountains
Outcome: See text.

FOURTH WAVE

(August–October 3050)

VIPAAVA (FRR)

August 3050
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: Alpha Battle Star (23rd Battle Trinary), Alpha Nova Star (76th Supernova) (14th Battle Cluster, Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: 22nd Rasalhagian Free Company (1 'Mech company, 2 regiments of infantry)
Major Battle Site: Lion's Den
Outcome: The 22nd Free Company attempted to fight with honor, challenging the Bears to a stand-up fight at the Lion's Den, a massive rock outcropping far from Vipaava's cities and towns. The Bears, suspecting a trap, approached the site cautiously. To their surprise, they found the Free Company arranged as promised in the *batchall.* Alpha Nova Star of Beta Galaxy's 76th Supernova engaged the defenders first, decimating the unit and forcing the Rasalhagians to surrender. This engagement helped convince Rasalhagian commanders that they could not win a straight fight against Clan forces and would have to develop new tactics.

JEZERSKO (FRR)

September 3050
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: 310th Assault Trinary, Alpha Fighter Star (16th Fighter Binary, First Bear Guards, Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: First and Second Jezersko Brigade (2 regiments of armor)
Major Battle Sites: Hell's Ridge, Pleasure Grotto
Outcome: The 310th stormed the Jezersko Brigades as soon as they spotted the defenders' tanks. Using their weight to their advantage, the Bears picked their opponents apart. The Brigades attempted to outmaneuver the Bears, but the Clan forces moved too swiftly for them. The Brigades scrambled to the Pleasure Grotto, where they had set up remote-firing weapons and vibrabombs. The pursuing Bears easily sidestepped most of these, but found it more difficult than they expected to rout out the defenders. They finally resorted to aerial bombardment, forcing both defending units into the open where the Ghost Bear 'Mechs dispatched them.

POMME DE TERRE (FRR)

September 3050
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: Alpha Command Star (Trinary Command, 139th Striker Cluster, Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: None
Major Battle Site: None
Outcome: Several of the planet's prominent politicians had heard reports of high civilian casualties during battles against the seemingly unstoppable Clans. Because only a small planetary militia defended their planet, the politicians appealed to the ruling council of Pomme de Terre to surrender without a fight, reminding those who wavered of Clan Ghost Bear's equitable treatment of occupied populations. After days of debate, mere minutes before Star Colonel Stephan Huntsig issued his *batchall,* the Council made its decision. Pomme de Terre surrendered unconditionally to Clan Ghost Bear, and the Clan left only a small garrison on the world.

PREDLITZ (FRR)

September 3050
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: 2133rd Striker Trinary, 469th Assault Trinary (332nd Assault Cluster, Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: 17th, 20th, and 31st Rasalhagian Free Divisions (1 'Mech battalion, 2 regiments of armor)
Major Battle Sites: Warm Line, Durengo, Billy's Tears
Outcome: In the face of overwhelming opposition, the Rasalhagians fought a mobile defense, dashing from supply cache to supply cache with the Bears in hot pursuit. Each Free Division made a separate stand, and the Clan forces overran the defenders each time. Near the craggy cliffs known as Billy's Tears, the Bears discovered a supply cache that no Free Division had yet reached. Rather than take it, the 2133rd hid in the crags and waited for the Free Divisions to come and get their supplies. When the Rasalhagians appeared, the 2133rd pounced and wiped them out.

SPITTAL (FRR)

September 3050
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: Alpha Striker Star (141st Striker Trinary), Trinary Command (140th Striker Cluster, Delta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Third and Fourth Spittal Knights (2 'Mech companies, 1 battalion of infantry)
Major Battle Sites: Rutger's Pass, Swerve Pass
Outcome: The Bear forces chased the Knights' 'Mechs into Rutger's Pass, where the Rasalhagians had set up a vibrabomb field. When the vibrabombs failed to explode, the Knights were forced to retreat to their fallback position in Swerve Pass. The Bears followed them straight into the firing line of the Knights' infantry battalion. The Bears used their jump jets for the first time, rising out of the pass onto the ledges from which the infantry troops were firing at them. With the infantry's defeat, the remaining 'Mech forces fell quickly.

CASERE (FRR)

September 3050
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: Third Bear Guards (Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Second Husars
Major Battle Site: Hemmond Industries sector
Outcome: See text.

GOITO (FRR)

October 3050
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: Supernova Command (First Bear Guards, Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: The Hunting Revelers (2 armor battalions)
Major Battle Site: Apache Canyon
Outcome: The relentless advance of the Clan troops broke the morale of the green Revelers, whose clumsy retreat into Apache Canyon sealed their fate.

SOVERZENE (DC)

October 3050
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: Beta Galaxy
Defending Forces: Second Alshain Regulars, 27th Dieron Regulars
Major Battle Sites: Averti, Killimangero Fjords
Outcome: See text.

FIFTH WAVE

(November 3051–April 3052)

THESSALONIKA (DC)

November 3051
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: Delta Galaxy
Defending Forces: Eighth Alshain Regulars, Twelfth Sun Zhang Academy Cadre
Major Battle Sites: Dorian Cove, Guerdel practice fields, Verdandra, Holy Marsh
Outcome: See text.

KEMPTEN (FRR)

December 3051
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: 712th Assault Trinary (Twelfth Bear Chevaliers, Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Kempten Border Legion
Major Battle Sites: Precious Plight, Sacrifice Mound
Outcome: The Border Legion, a collection of aging warriors in ancient 'Mechs and armored vehicles, faced the Clan invasion with the bleak knowledge that the Rasalhagian government could spare no troops to aid them. The warriors of the Twelfth Bear Chevaliers, having heard of the Smoke Jaguars' defeat on Wolcott, were apprehensive when the Legion engaged them in *batchall,* but nonetheless agreed to a stand-up fight in Precious Plight, an amusement park. The Bears landed in the middle of a disorienting carnival of light and sound. Legionnaires had hung mirrors at all angles to confuse the Clan 'Mechs' scanners, and the Twelfth initially had difficulty spotting the enemy forces. Firing from cover, the Legion's *Devastator* battalion inflicted considerable damage on the stunned Bears in its opening volley. Recovering quickly, the 712th fanned out and destroyed the Legion's less-mobile tanks, then pursued the remainder of the Legion to Sacrifice Mound and destroyed them.

KAESONG (DC)

December 3051
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: Trinary Command (14th Battle Cluster, Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Blue Lightning (a mercenary company)
Major Battle Site: Vedsan City
Outcome: JumpShip trouble stranded the Blue Lightning on Kaesong just before the Ghost Bears' invasion of the planet. When the Bears arrived insystem, the Kaesong government pleaded with the mercenaries to defend their planet, but the mercenaries' agreement did more harm than good. Knowing that his troops would face dezgra mercenaries, Star Colonel Dane Jorgensson skipped the bidding process and simply sent in the elite Trinary Command to deal with the Lightning. Outgunned and outnumbered, the mercenaries retreated to the streets of Vedsan, where the Ghost Bears rooted them out and destroyed them.

SHELIAK (DC)

December 3051
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: 78th Elemental Support Binary (68th Striker Cluster, Delta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Sheliak Professional Football League
Major Battle Site: Kurita Stadium
Outcome: Hearing of Clan Ghost Bear's imminent arrival over Sheliak, the planetary government panicked. As a minor planet with few resources and little strategic value to the Draconis Combine, they had no military to defend them. In an all-night session with the terrified governors, football commissioner Jimmy "Straight Jim" Lorne proposed a bold plan. Confident that the Clans knew nothing of the game of football, he suggested that the Sheliak Professional Football League challenge the invaders to a game. If the Clans won, they could claim the planet; if they lost, Sheliak would remain free of Clan occupation. Because it was the only chance they had, the governors agreed to Straight Jim's plan. To their surprise, the Clans agreed to play. Straight Jim, however, had not counted on facing a team of eight-foot-tall Elementals, nor had he expected the Clans to know the rules of the game. (Few Inner Sphere citizens even suspected that the Clans would continue to play the sports common to 20th century Terra.) The dismayed leaders and people of Sheliak could only watch as the Ghost Bear team devastated the Sheliak All-Star team, 84 to 3. The planetary government handed Sheliak over to the Ghost Bears during the postgame show.

ALSHAIN (DC)

December 3051
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: Alpha Galaxy
Defending Forces: Sixth Alshain Regulars, Second Sword of Light
Major Battle Site: Polotmy Mountains, Fareer Canyons
Outcome: See text.

TINACA (DC)

January 3052
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: Bravo Supernova (115th Striker Cluster, Delta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: First Sun Zhang Academy Cadre
Major Battle Site: Nearmiss
Outcome: Knowing that the warriors of Bravo Supernova faced mere cadets, the commander of the 115th Striker Cluster ordered them to capture as many opponents alive as possible and make them bondsmen. The cadets, however, disregarded their own orders to surrender and threw themselves at the Bear 'Mechs as soon as the Clan force landed, engaging in death

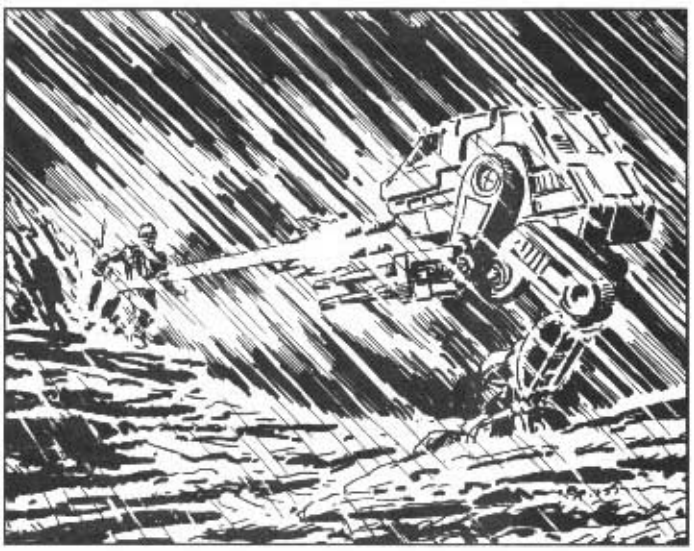
from above attacks and other desperate tactics in an all-out assault. The Bear warriors had no choice but to respond in kind, quickly turning the battle into a bloodbath. The Supernova's commander, Star Captain Edore DelVillar, ordered her Elementals to enter the fray and pry the cadets from their 'Mech cockpits, and ordered her MechWarriors to aim at the legs of the enemy 'Mechs. Using these tactics, the 115th captured a full battalion of cadets.

MARAWI (DC)

January 3052
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: 332nd Assault Cluster (Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: 41st Dieron Regulars
Major Battle Sites: Brossard Woods, Deep Cove, Hull
Outcome: Expecting little serious opposition from the green 41st Dieron Regulars, Star Colonel Seija Harlow prepared for a short campaign. The Bears dropped east of the 41st, straight into a barrage of artillery. As the Bear 'Mechs sought cover, Star Colonel Harlow unleashed her fighters to find the guns. A wing of old-style fighter planes intercepted the Clan aerospace units, but the Bears blew the defenders out of the sky within 20 minutes. They then sought out the gun emplacements and razed them to the ground. No longer trapped by artillery fire, the 332nd slammed into the 41st from the left flank, rolling up the green unit as it went. The Bears made short work of the 41st, pursuing the retreating unit to the town of Hull along the roads leading to it from Brossard Woods. The Bear aerospace fighters caught the defenders just shy of the city and crushed them.

HALESOWEN (DC)

January 3052
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: Alpha, Tango Stars (Trinary Command, 140th Striker Cluster, Delta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: The Halesowen Protectors (1 'Mech company, 1 regiment of infantry)
Major Battle Site: Corlene Steppes
Outcome: Striking at high noon, the Bears swept over the entrenched infantry and headed straight for the 'Mechs. The retreating Protectors turned the tables briefly by luring both Clan Stars into a well set-up ambush. The defenders' infantry regiment attacked from both sides of the Clan force, downing seven OmniMechs before the Bears extricated themselves from the trap. At their commanding officer's order, the rest of Trinary Command dropped onto the planet and encircled the ambush site. The Protectors, trapped in turn, called in an artillery strike which distracted the Bears long enough for the 'Mechs and infantry to slip past the Clan blockade. Determined not to lose, Star Colonel Jorgensson broke his bid and called down his own air units. The Bear fighters strafed the Protectors and forced them to retreat into the wide-open Corlene Steppes, where the Bear 'Mechs easily defeated them.



STERNWERDE (DC)

January 3052
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: First Bear Guards (Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Seventh Alshain Regulars
Major Battle Sites: Lone Hill, Marlet, Dearborne Lake, Hideaway
Outcome: The First Bear Guards dropped from heavy cloud cover and engaged the Seventh Alshain in a running fight, surging along the Seventh's first line of defense. Upon reaching the center of the line, the Bears punched through it and spread out to take down as many opponents from behind as they could. *Tai-sa* Gerber Shazil, however, foiled this tactic by swiftly ordering his troops to turn and charge through the Bear lines. The Regulars smashed through the Bears and marched into the waters of Dearborne Lake. The First Bear Guards followed and chased the Regulars out of the water, but briefly lost the fleeing Inner Sphere unit in a blinding rainstorm. In the final showdown near the Regulars' DropShips at dawn the next day, elements of the Seventh sacrificed themselves to ensure the escape of the bulk of the unit.

MAULE (DC)

February 3052
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: 433rd Supernova Trinary (73rd Battle Cluster, Delta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: The Sixth and 43rd Maule Armored Brigades
Major Battle Site: Billowing Leaf
Outcome: Though the Ghost Bears easily wiped out the planet's defenders outside the town of Billowing Leaf, the people of Maule initially made life miserable for the occupying Clan forces. As soon as the 433rd departed, leaving behind a Provisional Garrison Cluster, local people began staging round-the-clock

protests at the Clan administrator's headquarters. Realizing that they could not imprison everyone on Maule for "treasonous activities," the Ghost Bear authorities heeded the people's grievances and agreed to give the citizens a limited degree of freedom, even allowing them to travel under Clan supervision.

Because Maule is currently one of the few planets in Clan-held space that regularly trades with the Inner Sphere, the 304th Assault Cluster defends the world from the possibility of attack by Inner Sphere forces.

ARDOZ (DC)

February 3052
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: Trinary Command (Third Bear Guards, Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Unknown
Major Battle Sites: Unknown
Outcome: No information concerning events on Ardoz has been available since the Ghost Bears captured the world. Rumors abound that the Bears discovered a Star League base on the planet, but these rumors cannot be confirmed. The destruction of Ardoz's HPG facility in the initial attack has resulted in a total information blackout from the planet; the Ghost Bears are refusing to let any ComStar representatives rebuild, and they have said nothing about the situation on the world.

SETUBAL (DC)

February 3052
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: 50th Striker Cluster (Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: 21st Benjamin Regulars
Major Battle Sites: Marcil's Noose, Creation Fields
Outcome: The 21st Regulars split their forces and deployed the two halves about two kilometers apart, hoping the Bears would do likewise. Against a divided Clan force, the Regulars could slowly close the gap between their two halves and destroy the Bears with their combined strength. Star Colonel Stephan Huntsig, however, massed his entire unit against half of the defenders. As he had hoped, the green warriors cracked and charged toward the other half of their unit for help with the Bears in hot pursuit. The other half of the 21st, not knowing who was charging over the hill toward them, began firing into the pack, hitting as many friendlies as enemies. The 50th Striker Cluster hit the rest of the 21st at full steam and plowed straight through them. Soon thereafter, the green 21st surrendered.

UTRECHT (FRR)

March 3052
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: The Ourse Keshik
Defending Forces: None
Major Battle Site: None
Outcome: Utrecht surrendered to the Ghost Bears without a fight, and Khan Jorgensson personally signed the treaty of occupation. Among the planet's resources is a large supply of natural alloys that the Clans find particularly useful in manufacturing ferro-fibrous armor, and so the Bears have set up a large-scale mining operation to extract the ore.

EGUILLES (DC)

March 3052
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: 115th Striker Cluster (Delta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Fourth Arkab Legion
Major Battle Sites: Rockcliff, Carstairs Plains, Island Tropics
Outcome: The 115th landed just north of the Fourth Arkab's main encampment and immediately launched a series of stinging raids. Using the flexibility of the OmniMech to its fullest potential, they thwarted all enemy attempts to determine the number and composition of the Clan forces. Because the Fourth had not responded to the *batchall*, its warriors could could only assume that they were vastly outnumbered. *Tai-sa* Sajulam Kosiridam and his officers opted for a suicide charge into the center of the enemy lines; much to their surprise, the 115th broke and retreated under the weight of the assault. The Ghost Bears turned and made a stand on Carstairs Plains, where Star Colonel Romano Tseng engaged in one-on-one combat against two members of the Fourth while her Cluster kept the rest of the defending unit busy. In the second one-on-one battle, the Fourth's commander destroyed Tseng's 'Mech. The death of their Star Colonel demoralized the embattled 115th Strikers; leaderless and perilously low on ammunition, they ran before the Fourth's furious assault all the way back to their DropShips at Rockcliff. There, they reconfigured their 'Mechs for laser weapons and awaited their pursuers. The Fourth caught up with the 115th and surrounded them, expecting victory, but the Legion's second battalion collapsed under a heavy Bear counterattack. Choosing to live and fight another day, the Fourth ran for their DropShips and lifted off, their retreat largely unchallenged by the exhausted Ghost Bear force.

KRENICE (DC)

March 3052
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: Twelfth Bear Chevaliers (Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Fifth Amphigean Light Assault Group
Major Battle Sites: Bellow Canyon, LightDraught Woods, Hasnorvan
Outcome: From concealed positions amid the natural crags in Bellow Canyon, the Fifth Amphigean unleashed a rain of devastating fire on the Ghost Bear 'Mechs as soon as the Clan forces landed. They then scattered throughout the rock formations and raided the Clan's supply lines, disrupted communications, and even launched an occasional assault. The Twelfth's heavy 'Mechs spent most of their time chasing the

lighter, swifter machines of the Fifth, and eventually flushed them from hiding using air assets. The Bear 'Mechs herded the Fifth toward the city of Hasnorvan, in the opposite direction from the Fifth's DropShips. Making the best of a bad situation, *Tai-sa* Helen Cassidy ordered small numbers of troops to detach from the Fifth's main body and engage in hit-and-run assaults against the pursuing Bears. In one evening raid, a company of the Fifth led the Twelfth on a merry chase through LightDraught Woods for two hours, until the Bear warriors got lost and called on aerospace observers to guide them out of the trackless forest.

Just outside Hasnorvan, the Twelfth took the Fifth by surprise. Star Colonel Douglas Silva had ordered the 63rd Assault Trinary to march toward the city ahead of the Ghost Bears' main body and dig in, and so the 63rd was waiting as the Fifth approached the city's outskirts. As soon as the Fifth came within firing range of the dug-in Clan 'Mechs, all the Clan forces opened up on the defenders. The web of interlocking fire decimated the Fifth within hours.

MANNEDORF (DC)

March 3052
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: 72nd Assault Trinary, First Elemental Support Binary (304th Assault Cluster, Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: The GoldMiners ('Mech company)
Major Battle Site: Silvermain Mines
Outcome: The Bears bid fiercely for the right to destroy the mercenaries, who made their stand in the Silvermain Mines. The Miners packed explosives into every nook and cranny they could find, intending to bury the 72nd under a ton of rubble. When the Ghost Bears entered the mine, the mercenaries triggered the explosives, and rejoiced in their apparent victory—prematurely. Unknown to the GoldMiners, a Star League base had been built beneath and behind the mine shafts; the 72nd, overhearing the mercenaries' plan via an intercepted transmission, had sent Elementals ahead of the 'Mechs to open the doors to the base's tunnel network. Just before the explosives went off, the 72nd slipped to safety through the hidden entrances to the Star League base. The GoldMiners emerged from the rear exit of the mine to find the 72nd waiting for them.

TOFFEN (DC)

March 3052
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: 469th Assault Trinary (332nd Assault Cluster, Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Third and Eighth Toffen Guards (2 'Mech companies, 1 regiment of infantry)
Major Battle Sites: Dell Reservoir, Longueil Power Plant
Outcome: The major metropolitan centers of Toffen lay beneath Dell Reservoir. Gambling that the Ghost Bears would not use their aerospace strength in order to avoid damaging the cities they had come to conquer, the Third and Eighth made their initial stand at Dell. Faced with only a single Trinary, the defenders moved forward, confident of victory against a mere fifteen 'Mechs. The Bears, however, had other ideas. They easily routed the green defenders and followed the retreating units to the abandoned Longueil power plant, three kilometers away. There, the Guards' infantry elements used the abundant large metal cylinders as excellent cover while they sowed the plant with explosives. While the frustrated Ghost Bears opened every old generator and looked inside for the enemy, the troopers of the Third and Eighth slipped a few at a time out of the building. Scenting an Inner Sphere trap, Star Captain Pinter Hall led the 469th out of the plant just before it detonated. The angry Ghost Bears hunted down the remainder of the defenders, but many of the Guards escaped and went to ground. The planetary garrison is still dealing with occasional flare-ups of violence from surviving Toffen Guards.

RUBIGEN (DC)

April 3052
Clan Ghost Bear Forces: First Bear Guards (Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Fourth Alshain Regulars
Major Battle Sites: Gibbon's Reality Park, SouthBell, Granite Bluffs, Lodo Spaceport
Outcome: The Fourth sent its aerowing to attack the Ghost Bear DropShips, but the Ghost Bear vessels downed most of the aerospace fighters. The Bears landed safely inside Gibbon's Reality Park, a giant virtual-reality center with high-quality holographic projecting. Finding themselves unexpectedly surrounded by three regiments, the Bear guards began firing, only to discover that several of their opponents were holographic projections. The Fourth, hidden amid the illusions, used the Bears' confusion to swarm the Clan unit. Star Colonel Whover ordered his 'Mechs to fire at anything that gave off a signal and shed heat, meanwhile directing his Elementals to find and shut down the holographs' power source. The Elementals succeeded in their task, only to find that the 'Mechs of the Fourth had vanished. The Star Colonel sent a headhunter squad to hunt down the Fourth's leader, *Tai-sa* Boris Timsjek, but the Elementals failed to find him. The Bear Guards pursued the elusive Fourth for the better part of a month, with little success; every time the Guards thought they had the Kurita soldiers pinned down, the Fourth vanished from beneath their gunsights. After three solid weeks of fighting, *Tai-sa* Timsjek realized that his unit could only delay the Clan's takeover of Rubigen, and that retreat was a wiser course than fighting until the last man was destroyed. The remainder of the Fourth boarded the unit's DropShips and lifted off under heavy fire from the First Bear Guards. Less than a battalion of the Fourth Alshain Regulars made it offworld.

FRONT-LINE UNIT SUMMARY

COMMAND SUPERNOVA (THE OURSE KESHIK)

Khan: Bjorn Jorgensson
Aide de Camp: Star Colonel Michael Hawkins
Alpha and Bravo Command Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Alpha Fighter Star (10 Fighters)
Alpha Battle Nova (5 OmniMechs, 5 Elemental Points, 5 artillery pieces)

CLAN NAVAL RESERVE

Star Commodore Elissa Snuka
WarShip Group: *Bears' Den (Black Lion), Dieron's Run (Cameron Class)*
Support Vessels: 6 Clan Monoliths, 8 Clan Merchants, 7 Clan Scouts, 6 Clan Invaders

ALPHA GALAXY (THE GOLDEN BEARS)

3 Clusters
CO: Galaxy Commander saKhan Aletha Kabrinski

TRINARY GALAXY COMMAND (THE SILVEROOT KESHIK)

Alpha and Bravo Nova Command Stars (5 OmniMechs, 5 Elemental Points each)
Charlie Command Star (10 Fighters)
Tango Artillery Command Star (5 OmniMechs)

1ST BEAR GUARDS (THE RAGE)

Star Colonel Justin Gurdel
Supernova Command (Star Captain Joanna Forrester)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Command Novas (5 OmniMechs, 5 Elemental Points each)
310th Assault Trinary (Star Captain Carl Hambash)
Alpha and Bravo Assault Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Charlie Elemental Star (5 Elemental Points)
312th Assault Trinary (Star Captain Edwin Gilmour)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Assault Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
23rd Elemental Support Binary (Star Captain Sarah Kabrinski)
Alpha and Bravo Elemental Stars (5 Elemental Points each)
16th Fighter Binary (Star Captain Magara Gilmour)
Alpha and Bravo Fighters Stars (10 Fighters each)

3RD BEAR GUARDS (THE ILKHAN'S SHIELD)

Star Colonel Hunter Tseng
Trinary Command (Star Captain Helen Jorgensson)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Command Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
219th Assault Trinary (Star Captain Andre Hannifan)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Assault Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Tango Support Star (25 Elementals)
12th Battle Trinary (Star Captain Paul Homaovi)
Alpha and Bravo Striker Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Charlie Nova (5 OmniMechs, 5 Elemental Points)
45th Elemental Support Binary (Star Captain Sarah DelVillar)
Alpha and Bravo Elemental Stars (5 Elemental Points each)
34th Fighter Binary (Star Captain Dale Kabrinski)
Alpha and Bravo Fighter Stars (10 Fighters each)

50TH STRIKER CLUSTER (THE BLACK BEARS)

Star Colonel Stephan Huntsig
Trinary Command (Star Captain Derek Jorgensson)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Command Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

43rd Striker Trinary (Star Captain Milton Snuka)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Striker Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
212th Striker Trinary (Star Captain Lents Tseng)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Striker Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
32nd Supernova Striker Trinary (Star Captain Donel Carrera)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Striker Novas (5 OmniMechs, 5 Elemental Points each)
Alpha Fighter Trinary (Star Captain Victoria Bourjon)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Fighter Stars (10 Fighters each)

BETA GALAXY (NIGHT HOWLERS)

4 Clusters
CO: Galaxy Commander Loremaster Laurie Tseng

GALAXY COMMAND TRINARY (THE SHRILL KESHIK)

Star Captain Bernice Bekker
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Command Novas (5 OmniMechs, 5 Elemental Points each)
Tango Fighter Star (10 Fighters)

12TH BEAR CHEVALIERS (THE WENDIGOS)

Star Colonel Douglas Silva
Trinary Command (Star Captain Massir Omid)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Command Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
712th Assault Trinary (Star Captain Dorell Mitshan)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Assault Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
63rd Assault Trinary (Star Captain Layne Vong)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Assault Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
43rd Elemental Support Trinary (Star Captain Jocelyn Kabrinski)
Alpha and Bravo Elemental Stars (5 Elemental Points each)
12th Fighter Binary (Star Captain Levand Jorgensson)
Alpha and Bravo Fighter Stars (10 Fighters each)

304TH ASSAULT CLUSTER (THE HOWLING BEARS)

Star Colonel Paul Vishio
Supernova Trinary Command (Star Captain Dillan Vong)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Command Stars (5 OmniMechs, 5 Elemental Points each)
321st Assault Trinary (Star Captain Vegara Ortiz)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Assault Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
14th Assault Supernova (Star Captain Bernard Bazso)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Assault Stars (5 OmniMechs, 5 Elemental Points each)
72nd Assault Trinary (Star Captain Edwin Bekker)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Assault Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
1st Elemental Support Binary (Star Captain Ossin Vong)
Alpha and Bravo Elemental Stars (5 Elemental Points each)

332ND ASSAULT CLUSTER (THE IOWA BLACKLANCERS)

Star Colonel Seija Harlow
Trinary Command (Star Captain Gosvoda Nuyriev)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Command Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Tango Fighter Support Star (10 Fighters)
469th Assault Trinary (Star Captain Pinter Hall)
Alpha and Bravo Assault Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Charlie Elemental Star (5 Elemental Points)
2133rd Striker Trinary (Star Captain Jillian Snuka)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Striker Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
23rd Elemental Support Binary (Star Captain Alan Kabrinski)
Alpha and Bravo Elemental Stars (5 Elemental Points each)
Delta Fighter Trinary (Star Captain Lucien Bourjon)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Fighter Stars (10 Fighters each)

14TH BATTLE CLUSTER (THE MAULERS)

Star Colonel Dane Jorgensson
Trinary Command (Star Captain Kristie Tseng)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Command Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
96th Battle Trinary (Star Captain Welland Bazso)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Battle Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Tango Fighter Star (10 Fighters)
23rd Battle Trinary (Star Captain Liam Snuka)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Battle Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
76th Supernova (Star Captain Kenbarg DelVillar)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Novas (5 OmniMechs, 5 Elemental Points each)
Delta Fighter Trinary (Star Captain Sheryl Bourjon)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Fighter Stars (10 Fighters each)

DELTA GALAXY (THE BLITZKRIEG)

5 Clusters
CO: Galaxy Commander Roberto Snuka

TRINARY GALAXY COMMAND (JORGENSSON'S KESHIK)

Star Captain Trung Vong
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Command Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Tango Support Star (5 OmniMechs)
Tango Fighter Star (10 Fighters)

8TH BEAR CUIRASSIERS (THE BLINDING DRIVE)

Star Colonel Dana Vishio

Trinary Command (Star Captain Trudy Devon)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Command Stars (10 Fighters each)

286th Assault Trinary (Star Captain Dimon Bekker)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Assault Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

90th Striker Trinary (Star Captain Della Ortiz)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Striker Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

56th Elemental Support Trinary (Star Captain Tamm Hakimi)
Alpha, Bravo Charlie Elemental Stars (5 Elemental Points each)

47th Fighter Binary (Star Captain Endo Kabrinski)
Alpha and Bravo Fighter Stars (10 Fighters each)

73RD BATTLE CLUSTER (THE LASH)

Star Colonel François Cote

Trinary Command (Star Captain Hoston Bekker)
Alpha and Bravo Command Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Charlie Command Star (10 Fighters)

314th Battle Trinary (Star Captain Hee Silva)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Battle Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

433rd Supernova Trinary (Star Captain Majorie DelVillar)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Novas (5 OmniMechs, 5 Elemental Points each)
Tango Fighter Star (10 Fighters)

72nd Striker Trinary (Star Captain John Bekker)
Alpha and Bravo Charlie Striker Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

Echo Fighter Trinary (Star Captain Felicia Jorgensson)
Alpha and Bravo Fighter Stars (10 Fighters each)

68TH STRIKER CLUSTER (THE WALKING PANZERS)

Star Colonel Chou Vong

Trinary Command (Star Captain Jill Hawkins)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Command Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

413th Striker Trinary (Star Captain Stunner Tseng)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Striker Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

88th Striker Trinary (Star Captain Monique Memba)
Alpha, Bravo Charlie Striker Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

78th Elemental Support Binary (Star Captain Jocelyn)
Alpha and Bravo Elemental Stars (5 Elemental Points each)

Delta Fighter Binary (Star Captain Farn Jorgensson)
Alpha and Bravo Fighter Stars (10 Fighters each)

115TH STRIKER CLUSTER (THE ROLLING WAVE)

Star Colonel Romano Tseng

Trinary Command (Star Captain Douglas Silva)
Alpha and Bravo Command Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Charlie Command Nova (10 Fighters, 5 Elemental Points)

Supernova Echo (Star Captain Marialle Hawkins)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Novas (5 OmniMechs, 5 Elemental Points each)

465th Striker Trinary (Star Captain Dancry DelVillar)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Striker Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

Bravo Supernova (Star Captain Edora DelVillar)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Striker Stars (5 OmniMechs, 5 Elemental Points each)

67th Fighter Trinary (Star Captain Harrel Jorgensson)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Fighter Stars (10 Fighters each)

140TH STRIKER CLUSTER

Star Colonel Boris Jorgensson

Trinary Command (Star Captain Brigit Kabrinski)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Command Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Tango Fighter Star (10 Fighters)

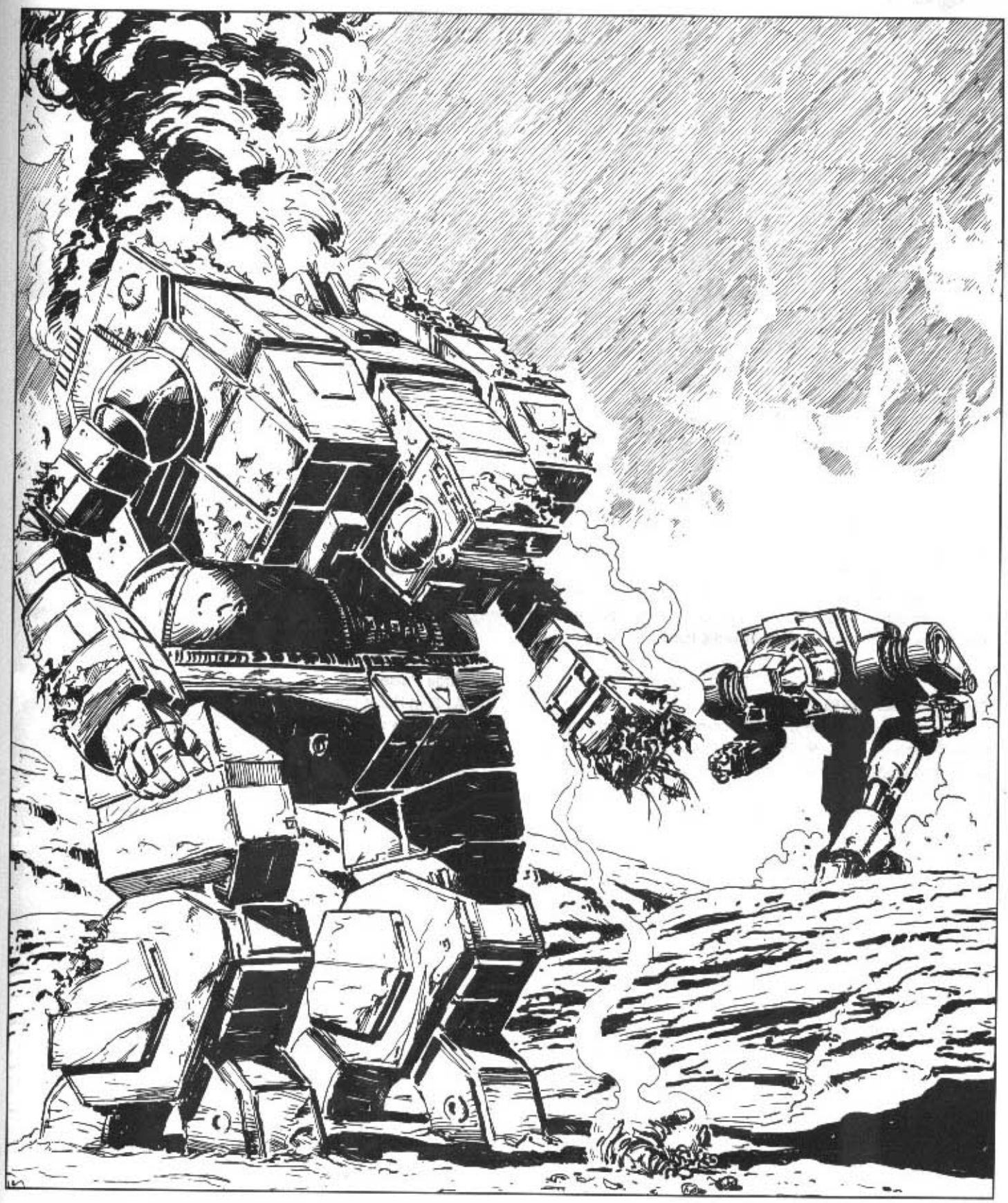
141st Striker Trinary (Star Captain Grendel Kabrinski)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Striker Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Tango Fighter Star (10 Fighters)

82nd Striker Nova Binary (Star Captain Lefar Bekker)
Alpha and Bravo Striker Novas (5 OmniMechs, 5 Elemental Points each)

12th Striker Nova Binary (Star Captain Killian Silva)
Alpha and Bravo Striker Novas (5 OmniMechs, 5 Elemental Points each)

73rd Elemental Support Trinary (Star Captain Norman DelVillar)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Elemental Stars (5 Elemental Points each)

Forgen Fighter Trinary (Star Captain Gordon Showers)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Fighter Stars (10 Fighters each)



GRIZZLY

Mass: 70 tons
Chassis: Endo Steel
Power Plant: 280 Standard
Cruising Speed: 43.2 kph
Maximum Speed: 64.8 kph
Jump Jets: 4
Jump Capacity: 120 meters
Armor: Standard
Armament:
1 Gauss Rifle
1 LRM-10 Launcher
1 Large Pulse Laser
1 Medium Pulse Laser
1 Small Pulse Laser
Manufacturer: Unknown
Communications Systems: Unknown
Targeting and Tracking System: Unknown

OVERVIEW

Seen only in Ghost Bear garrison Clusters, the *Grizzly* is a multirole heavy 'Mech that shares design concepts with the Clan's two favorite Omnis, the *Vulture* and *Gladiator*. While slower than other 'Mechs in its class, the *Grizzly* makes up for lack of speed with jump jets and long-range weaponry. Though the *Grizzly* represents a decent all-around unit, it has failed to make a niche for itself because it lacks the focus of its "parent" designs.

CAPABILITIES

The *Grizzly* is used by PGC commanders for roles that other Clans would fill with *Thors* and *Lokis*. The 'Mech's heavier armor and standard engine give it a much higher survival rate, which is fortunate because it is difficult to repair. The *Grizzly* has layers of sloped armor that tend to lodge in place when damaged, and its bulky leg actuators are apparently unique and hard to obtain.

The *Grizzly* mounts a deadly array of weapons, featuring a massive Gauss rifle in the right arm. The 'Mech's left arm sports a trio of pulse lasers similar to but smaller than the array featured in Configuration D of the *Gladiator*. The 'Mech's long-range firepower is supplemented by a ten-pack of long-range missiles in the right torso.

DEPLOYMENT

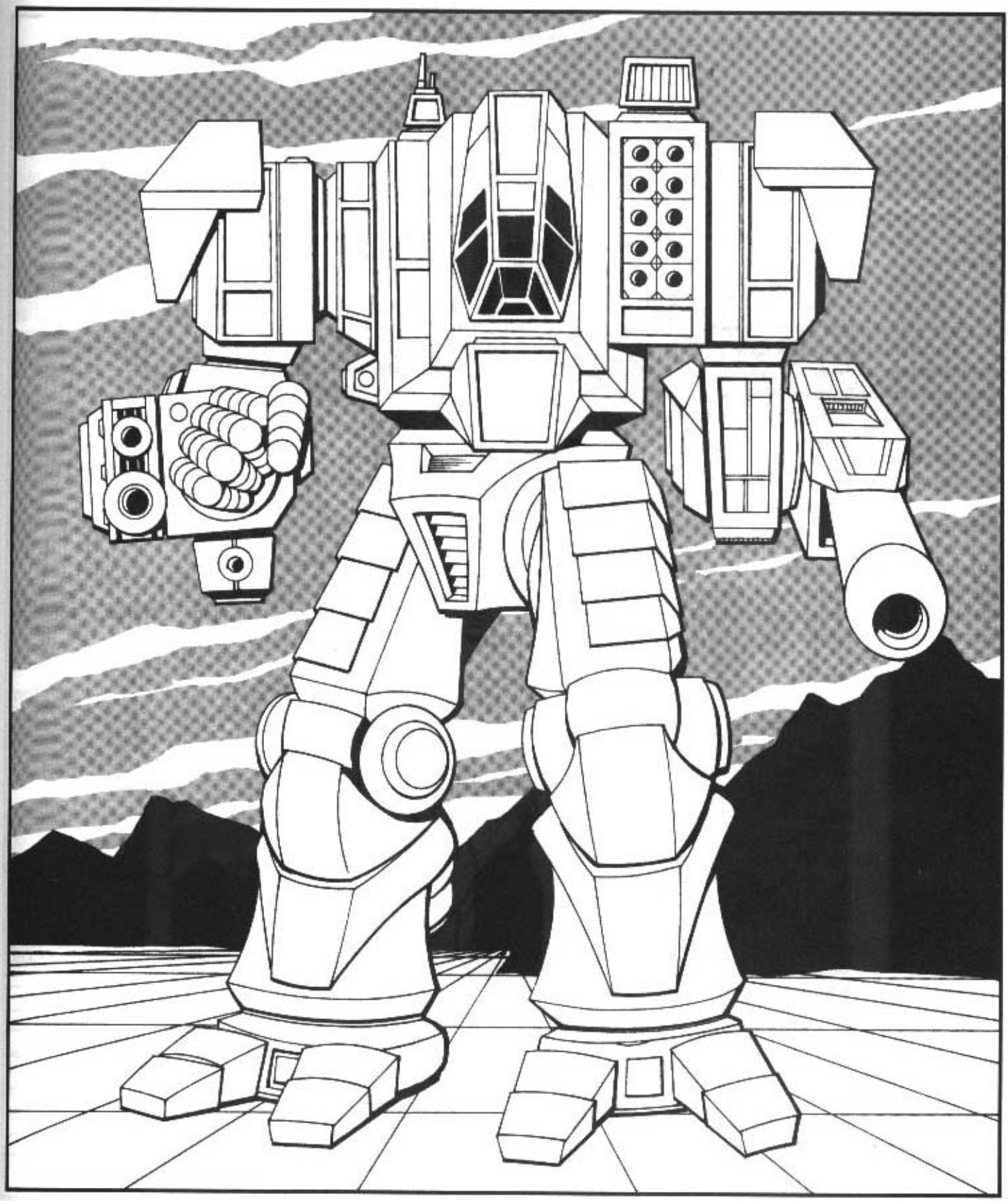
Though the *Grizzly* has been in service for more than 100 years, it has never been a popular design. Hundreds of them are still on active duty in Bear PGCs, even though the design has not been manufactured since 3013. This is a strong testament to the *Grizzly*'s excellent survivability in combat. Current intelligence shows these 'Mechs scattered throughout the Ghost Bear occupation zone.

Type: **Grizzly**
Technology Base: Clan
Tonnage: 70

Equipment		**Mass**
Internal Structure:	Endo Steel	3.5
Engine:	280	16
Walking MP:	4	
Running MP:	6	
Jumping MP:	4	
Heat Sinks:	11 [22]	1
Gyro:		3
Cockpit:		3
Armor Factor:	208	13
	Internal Structure	*Armor Value*
Head	3	9
Center Torso	22	31
Center Torso (rear)		10
R/L Torso	15	23
R/L Torso (rear)		7
R/L Arm	11	22
R/L Leg	15	27

Weapons and Ammo	**Location**	**Critical**	**Tonnage**
Gauss Rifle	RA	6	12
Ammo (Gauss) 16	RA	2	2
Large Pulse Laser	LA	2	6
Medium Pulse Laser	LA	1	2
Small Pulse Laser	LA	1	1
LRM 10	RT	1	2.5
Ammo (LRM) 12	RT	1	1
Jump Jets	RL	2	2
Jump Jets	LL	2	2

CLAN GHOST BEAR



KODIAK

Mass: 100 tons
Chassis: Endo Steel
Power Plant: 400 XL
Cruising Speed: 43.2 kph
Maximum Speed: 64.8 kph
Jump Jets: None
Jump Capacity: None
Armor: Standard
Armament:
1 Ultra-20 Autocannon
2 Streak SRM-6 Launchers
8 Extended-Range Medium Lasers
1 Extended-Range Large Laser
Manufacturer: Unknown
Communications Systems: Unknown
Targeting and Tracking System: Unknown

OVERVIEW

The *Kodiak* is a large, fast-moving assault 'Mech that carries impressive medium-range firepower. Ghost Bear technicians probably designed it as the second-line equivalent to the popular *Gladiator* OmniMech, once again demonstrating the Ghost Bear Clan's tendency to stick with the familiar. Trading the MASC and jump jets of the *Gladiator* for more armor and weaponry, the *Kodiak* has gained quite a reputation in the short time it has been in service.

CAPABILITIES

Though never observed in action, certain assumptions about the *Kodiak*'s performance can be made based solely on its weapon load. A devastating Ultra-20 autocannon occupies the entire right side of its torso. Opposite the autocannon is a pair of Streak SRM-6 launchers. Combined, these weapons provide ample close-in firepower but lack the ammunition to fight an extended battle. Designers probably disregarded this factor since the 'Mech is intended for garrison use close to supply lines. Above each hand is a clawlike array of four extended-range medium lasers, giving the *Kodiak* impressive hitting power even if it runs completely out of ammunition. Supplementing these weapons is a single ER large laser mounted in the torso directly beneath the engine. Likely added as an afterthought, this weapon gives the 'Mech a single shot at long range, but generates too much heat to be used once the enemy closes.

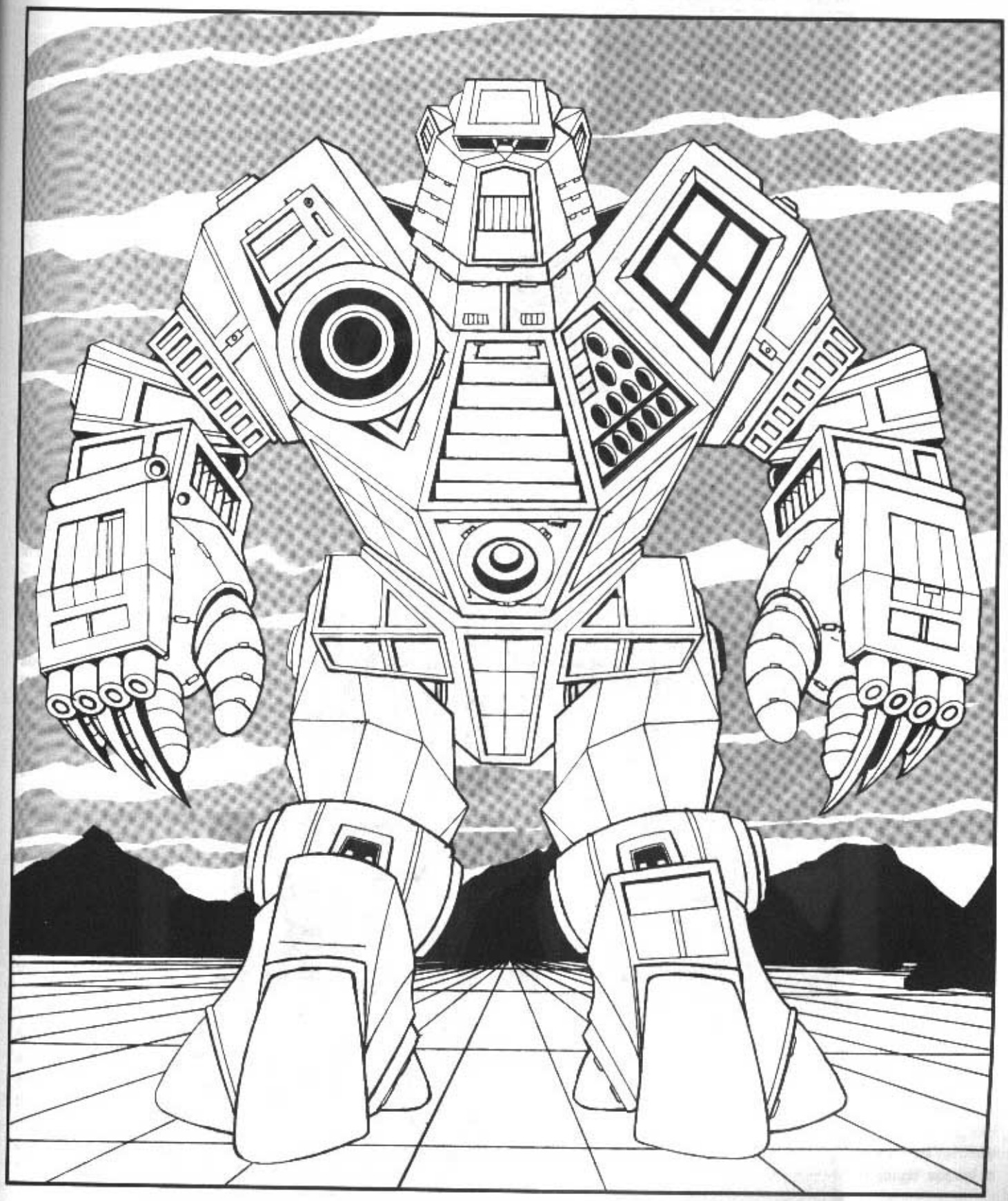
DEPLOYMENT

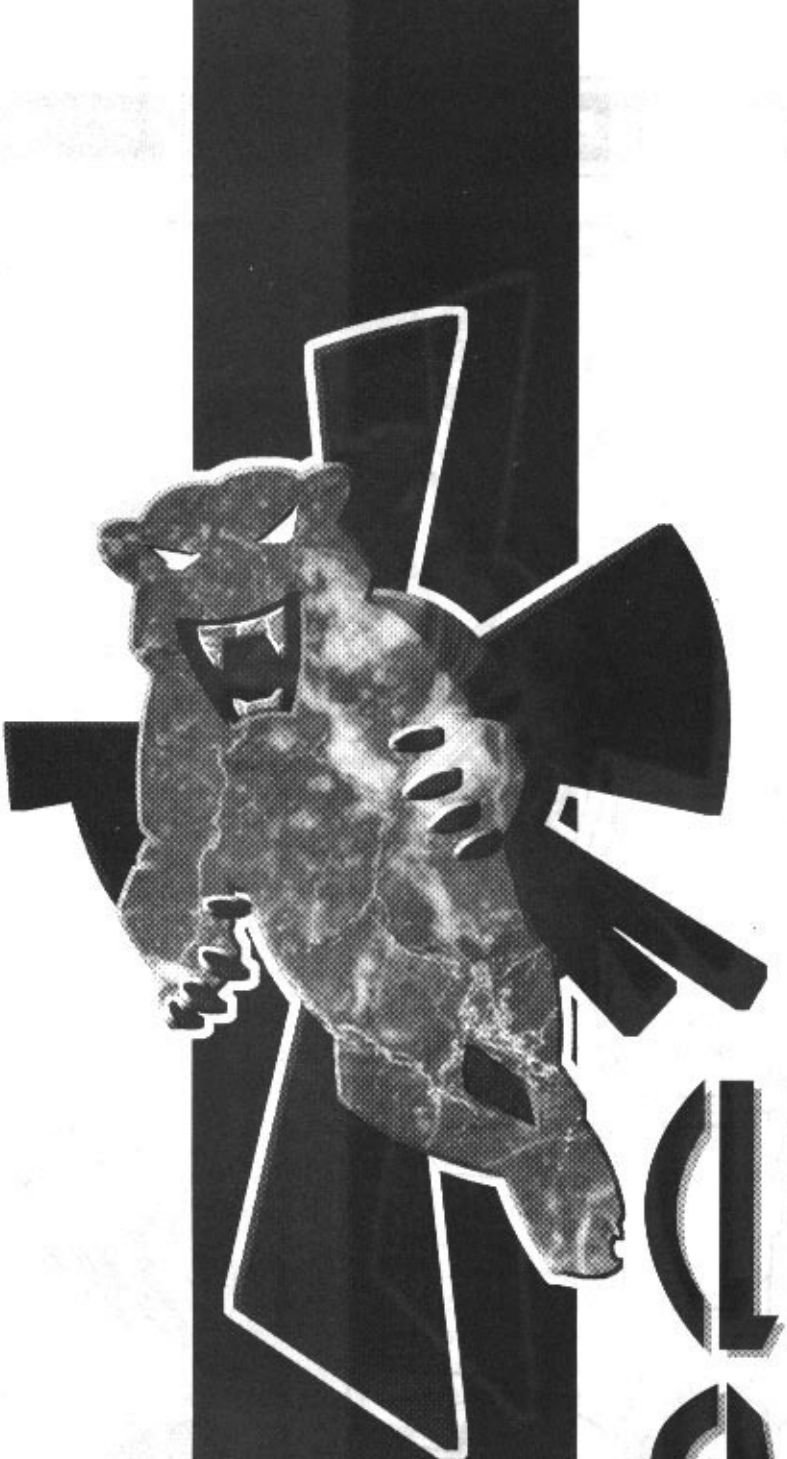
The *Kodiak* is a 'Mech unique to Clan Ghost Bear. A relatively new design, few have been seen and Inner Sphere troops have yet to face one in battle. *Kodiak*s spotted among PGCs are always found as the command vehicle of assault Trinaries and Clusters.

Type: **Kodiak**
Technology Base: Clan
Tonnage: 100

Equipment		**Mass**
Internal Structure:	Endo Steel	5
Engine:	400 XL	26.5
Walking MP:	4	
Running MP:	6	
Jumping MP:	0	
Heat Sinks:	20 [40]	10
Gyro:		4
Cockpit:		3
Armor Factor:	280	17.5
	Internal Structure	*Armor Value*
Head	3	9
Center Torso	31	40
Center Torso (rear)		15
R/L Torso	21	32
R/L Torso (rear)		10
R/L Arm	17	32
R/L Leg	21	34

Weapons and Ammo	**Location**	**Critical**	**Tonnage**
Ultra AC/20	RT	8	12
Ammo (Ultra AC/20) 10	RT	2	2
ER Large Laser	CT	1	4
2 Streak SRM-6s	LT	3	6
Ammo (Streak SRM-6) 30	LT	2	2
4 ER Medium Lasers	RA	4	4
4 ER Medium Lasers	LA	4	4





CLAN SMOKE JAGUAR

CLAN SMOKE JAGUAR

... A magnificent beast, the smoke jaguar. It is ferocity unbound, tenacity without limit. Once it locks its powerful jaws around the throat of its prey, it never lets go. The greatest of warriors might be shamed by comparing himself to such fierce courage ...

My Clans might learn much from this beast. Like us, it came from Nature, but has been improved by human hands. And now the great cat born on Terra thrives on a world so many light-years away from the planet of its birth that the human mind shudders to contemplate it ... as we must. As we will ...

The smoke jaguar fights like a true warrior. No deceit, no subterfuge—a single, brutal assault, both open and deadly. A powerful spring from above, a slash of its huge claws across its victim's throat, and its prey lies dead before it. So should all of us fight our enemies—openly, but with overwhelming force. Thus we may win true glory, by defeating the foe in honorable combat. Truly, this great cat is a finer warrior than any human being I have ever seen on the field of battle ... !

—*From* Birth of a New Society: The Collected Writings of Nicholas Kerensky, *Strana Mechty Press, 3025*

Like many of the Clan warriors it represents, the predator for whom Clan Smoke Jaguar is named owes its existence to science tampering with nature. Its genes are those of the Terran jaguar, altered in the laboratory to enable it to survive in a harsher environment. Imported by Aleksandr Kerensky's followers to the world of Strana Mechty, the smoke jaguar throve in the fertile jungles that teemed with suitable prey.

Members of Clan Smoke Jaguar take fierce pride in their namesake, which the Clans' revered founder, Nicholas Kerensky, chose for them. They believe that Nicholas modeled all of Clan society on the smoke jaguar, and point proudly to the above entry from one of his many journals in which he extols the beast's virtues. Modern-day Smoke Jaguars often quote from this journal entry, which they revere above all other literature save for the Clans' epic poem, *The Remembrance*.

FIRES OF WAR

Remember Franklin Osis,
Father of his Clan.
Three strengths he gave us:
The jaguar's spring that brings the enemy down,
The jaguar's claws that rend the enemy's heart,
The jaguar's taste for the enemy's hot blood.

—*The Remembrance* (Clan Smoke Jaguar), Passage 104, Verse 18, Lines 5–10

Clan Smoke Jaguar worships its namesake with fanatical fervor, so much so that its members have faithfully modeled every aspect of their society on the animal's behavior. The Smoke Jaguars claimed the dubious distinction as the most bloodthirsty of the Clans with the wanton destruction of the city of Edo on the world of Turtle Bay. More than to the beast, however, the Clan owes its bloodthirstiness to its first Khan, Franklin Osis.

Born in the Federated Suns to parents who served as tank commanders in the Star League Defense Forces' 238th armored division, Osis was two years old when the Star League crumbled to nothing. His parents, Lena and Simas Osis, were among the first to join General Aleksandr Kerensky's Exodus from the Inner Sphere. Kerensky could do no wrong in their eyes, and they taught their young son to regard the general with the same blind trust.

Franklin spent a peaceful childhood on the planet Eden, where the Osis family settled when the Star League Army's armada made planetfall in the cluster they called the Pentagon worlds. Lena and Simas Osis both tested out of General Kerensky's newly competitive military, but gladly took the opportunity to serve their beloved leader as farmers rather than warriors. Though they found the earliest years of their new life hard, by the time young Franklin began formal schooling the first generation of Eden's colonists had transformed the once marginally habitable planet into a world of thriving settlements, with highly advanced light industry and the beginnings of several cities. All was not as tranquil as it seemed, however. The demobilization of so much of the SLDF left the Pentagon worlds with large numbers of newly minted civilians unable to cope with the realities of life outside the military; these dissatisfied people turned all too easily to old grievances and ethnic animosities, fracturing the unity of the Star League's exiles.

Franklin Osis's homeworld had been settled by former citizens of the Federated Suns and the Capellan Confederation, two realms with a long history of enmity between them. Tensions on Eden gradually rose between these two groups from offhand grumbling to suspicion, and finally to outright hatred. Gangs of young toughs formed on both sides and sought violent confrontations with their counterparts. Franklin's younger brother, Simon, joined a Federated Suns gang, but Franklin held back. The loyalty to General Kerensky so carefully instilled in him by his parents superseded the gangs' appeal to

EXCLUSIVE BLOODNAMES

General Bloodnames
Furey
Kotare

Mechwarriors
Osis
Showers
Wirth
Wimmer

Elementals
Perez
Moon
Nevversan

Aerospace Pilots
Stiles
Chrisholm

national pride, and the sheer pointlessness of the violence repelled him. Only when he became the victim of constant harrassment from both Capellan and Federated Suns sympathizers did Franklin heed his brother's urgings and join a gang for his own protection.

Franklin ran with his gang for close to a year, hanging back from fights as much as he dared and trying, though without success, to turn his fellow gang members' aggression to some constructive purpose. His uneasy accommodation with gang life came to an abrupt and shocking end on a hot summer night in 2800, when he joined some of his fellow gang members in setting fire to a Capellan-run factory. The act of arson went off as planned, but a passer by spotted the gang members just as they were leaving the factory grounds. The gang ran after their unlucky observer, and when they saw that he was a Capellan boy wearing a rival gang's colors, they beat him to death and left him lying in a gutter. A horrified Franklin refused to join in the beating; instead, he pleaded with his comrades to stop. When they paid no attention, he turned to threats, growing more and more agitated as his fellow gang members continued to ignore him. When the gang's Capellan victim began spitting blood from a punctured lung, Franklin struck out wildly at every gang member within reach. Local law enforcement arrived on the scene to find Franklin taking a battering from three gang members; two others lay unconscious on the pavement near him. When the arsonists, Franklin among them, were convicted of setting the fire and sentenced to a year's hard labor, Franklin almost welcomed the trip to the labor camp in an inhospitable region of Circe.

Circe, however, proved anything but a haven from the violence on Eden. Franklin found the forced labor backbreaking, but the bleak surroundings and the casual brutality of labor-camp life took a far greater toll on him. He returned to Eden all but broken in spirit, only to find himself and his family caught up in the first full-scale rebellion of what would later come to be called the Exodus Civil War.

General Kerensky's response to the rebellion of Eden's Capellan settlements tore the last shreds of hope for peace from Franklin Osis's soul. Enraged that the rebels had taken the life of his close friend, General DeChevilier, Kerensky ordered every last rebel soldier rounded up and killed without regard to legal concerns. The settlements from which they had come were razed and their remaining populations dispersed in what came to be known as the DeChevilier massacre. Far from cowing Eden's people, the massacre only spurred them to greater violence against their once-beloved leader and his standing army. Franklin, seeing the man he had revered as a guardian of peace turn to violence as easily as anyone else, became convinced that humanity could never escape the taint of war and killing unless human beings created a wholly new society, one uncontaminated by age-old patterns of behavior. When Aleksandr Kerensky's son, Nicholas, called for a second Exodus in order to build just such a society, Franklin leaped at the faint hope he offered. He, his brother and their parents traveled with Nicholas to the world of Strana Mechty, deep in the Kerensky Cluster.

MAKING OF A KHAN

On Strana Mechty, Franklin Osis found some measure of the peace he so desperately sought. He came to love the lush jungles, home to all manner of wildlife, whose behavior he spent long hours studying in an attempt to deal with his disturbing memories of war-torn Eden. He was particularly fascinated by the behavior of the smoke jaguar; the huge cat's predatory nature both repelled and fascinated him, and in studying it he sought to understand the place of bloodshed in the natural order of things. Franklin had scarcely begun to recover from the trauma of the riots and the prison camp, however, when a tragedy occurred that changed him forever from a seeker of peace to a devotee of war.

In the spring of 2809, Franklin and Simon Osis set out for a nearby patch of jungle to observe a pride of smoke jaguars. As they neared a clearing, a huge smoke jaguar leaped on Simon Osis from the high branches of a tree, knocking him to the ground and savaging him before he could draw a weapon to defend himself. Frozen with fear and shock at the suddenness of the attack, Franklin was unable to draw any of his own weapons in his brother's defense. Only when Simon's frantic screams choked off as the beast tore out his throat did Franklin finally find the will to move. Seized by a berserker's rage, he drew the first weapon to hand—a small hunting knife—and leaped on the jaguar. After a brief, fierce struggle, the predator lay dead at his feet. For the first time in his life, Franklin Osis

took pleasure in violence; his frenzied butchery of the beast that had slain his brother seemed to him to wipe out the stain of his own initial cowardice.

From then on, Franklin Osis gloried in every opportunity to face danger and conquer it through combat. At the urging of Nicholas Kerensky, Franklin began training as a MechWarrior, and he soon outstripped his instructors in the ferocity and tenaciousness of his attacks. His fierceness both impressed and worried Nicholas, who feared that Osis might become nothing more than a killing machine unless he learned to control the rage that fueled his every battle. To that end, Nicholas singled him out for officers' training. Franklin learned quickly and within two years had risen to command a Trinary in the newly forming Clan Smoke Jaguar. Not long afterward, Franklin's superior fighting skill and utter ruthlessness won him the position of Khan within his Clan.

During the Clans' campaign to retake the Pentagon worlds, Khan Franklin Osis played a leading role in the reconquest of Eden. He and his fellow Smoke Jaguars were among the most brutal of the conquering forces, razing villages and cities wholesale in their attempts to eliminate the soldiers who faced them in antiquated BattleMechs.

Khan Franklin Osis led Clan Smoke Jaguar for 30 years, during which he consolidated the power of the warrior caste and fortified the Smoke Jaguars' position relative to the other Clans. Shortly after the end of the Pentagon campaign, Khan Osis and his best warriors competed in Trials of Possession for almost every Brian Cache remaining on Eden, and won more than half of them. When Nicholas Kerensky instituted the eugenics program throughout the warrior castes of all the Clans, Khan Osis devised a stricter training system than any other Clan save Steel Viper for Clan Smoke Jaguar sibkos—with deadlier results for those who failed. More than any other Clan, more even than ilKhan Kerensky, Franklin Osis glorified the art of war and those who practiced it, and shaped his Clansmen accordingly.

Despite his warlike bent, however, Osis acknowledged the usefulness of other endeavors. Though he valued the scientist, merchant, technician and laborer castes less than the warrior caste, he did value them insofar as their areas of expertise could advance warfare or aid those who waged it. The scientist might discover ways to make weapons more efficient or powerful; the technician could repair and improve upon the machines of war; the merchant provided the funds for scientific research and for buying materiel; and the laborer grew the food the warriors ate and manufactured the supplies they needed. All somehow served the warrior caste and deserved a certain share of honor for doing so. Toward the end of his life, Osis also began to see the need for at least a little peace, if only to give the warrior a breathing space between battles. To this day, Smoke Jaguar warriors often quote a saying attributed to their first Khan: "Like a favorite dish, war loses its flavor when tasted too often."

GOLDEN CENTURY

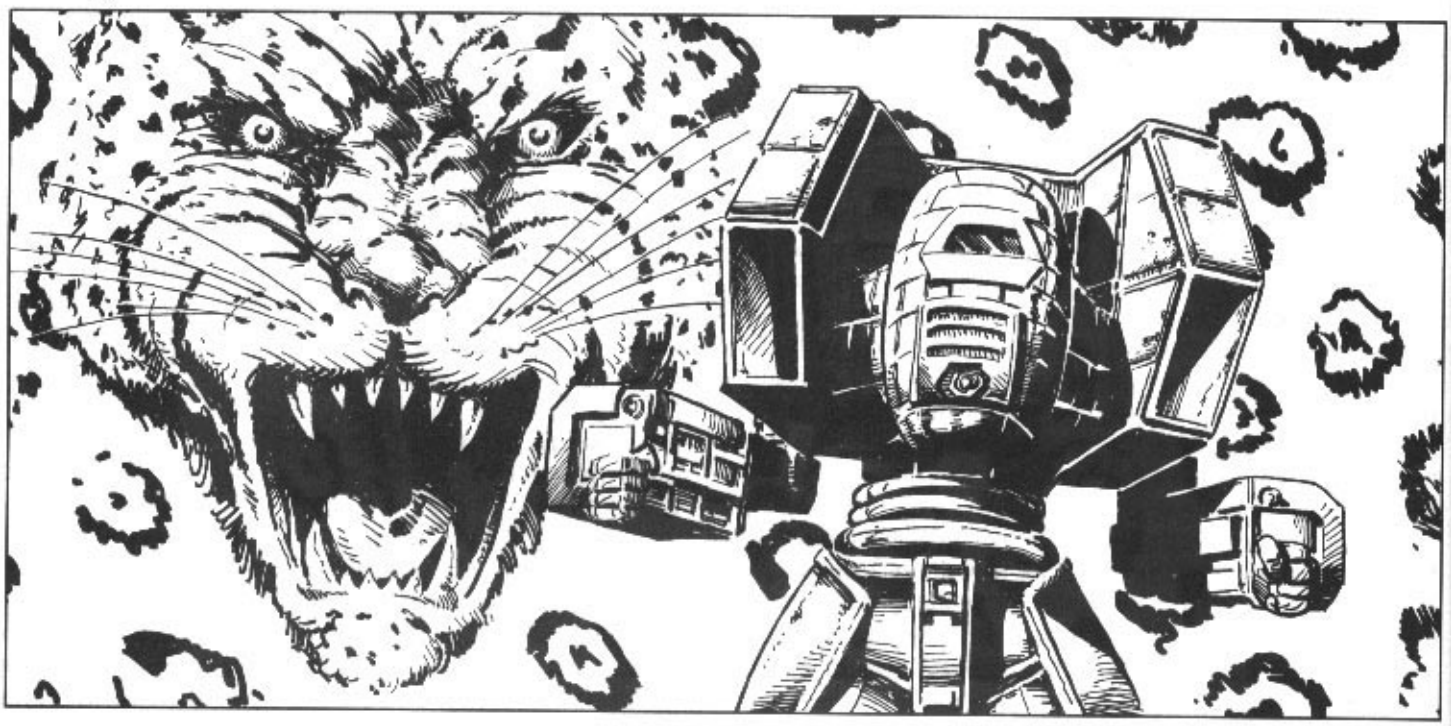
Five are our foundation;
One above the rest.
Four are the steppingstones,
The fifth the pinnacle.
The laborer, the technician, the scientist, the merchant,
These are the steppingstones
To the warriors' place.
As the insect feeds the bird,
As the bird feeds the wolf,
As the wolf feeds the smoke jaguar,
So all give life to the warrior
Who sheds his blood for their glory.

—*The Remembrance* (Clan Smoke Jaguar), Passage 121, Verse 43, Lines 12–24

Unfortunately, Franklin Osis's successors continued to glorify the Clan's warriors at the expense of the other castes. During the decades of prosperity later known as the Golden Century, other Clans grew wealthy while Clan Smoke Jaguar lagged behind. Though all the Clans regarded the warrior caste as superior, most acknowledged the debt that warriors and the Clans as a whole owed to the merchants, laborers, scientists and technicians who kept the rest of Clan society functioning. The Smoke Jaguar warriors learned from a succession of shortsighted Khans to value the "lower" castes less and less, and finally to scorn their very existence. Clan Smoke Jaguar valued only war in an era of relative peace, and so relegated itself to the economic sidelines.

Unlike other Clans, Clan Smoke Jaguar failed to take advantage of the potential wealth available through colonization and trade. They colonized far fewer worlds than Clan Wolf, for example, and confined themselves to building military bases on the worlds they did possess. Fewer colony worlds meant access to fewer natural resources, depriving them not only of wealth but also of military advantages they might have gained by the use of those resources. Rather than developing their own sources of wealth, Clan Smoke Jaguar warriors took what they could from others.

Throughout most of the Golden Century, the Clan fought countless Trials of Possession over everything from Brian Caches to prosperous colonies to genetic legacies, and won enough of these trials to support themselves. In one of the most militarily significant of these trials, Clan Smoke Jaguar warriors won possession of several OmniMechs from Clan Coyote long before many of the other Clans had access to the more powerful machines. This technological edge helped keep the Smoke Jaguars a prominent Clan despite their relative lack of material wealth. The Jaguars' absorption of Clan Mongoose also significantly increased the Clan's assets. Mongoose earned the disdain of other Clans by consistently relying on political maneuvering to accomplish its ends, even attempting to sidestep a



Grand Council ruling by citing the writings of Kerensky. The Jaguars won the Absorption Right and claimed all of Mongoose's planets and material, but never used any of the absorbed Clan's genetic legacies, allowing Mongoose to fade into obscurity. This incident reinforced the view that Clan Smoke Jaguar's power rested on military prowess alone and deepened the warrior caste's disdain for merchants and the "lesser" castes whose members spent no time on the battlefield.

This increasing scorn of the lower castes eventually led to widespread discrimination against the so-called freebirths in every walk of Clan life, including the warrior caste. Most of the Clans believed that "trueborn," or genetically engineered, warriors made superior fighters, and gave them highly preferential treatment. Clan Smoke Jaguar took this preference a step further, severely curtailing the number of freebirths allowed to serve as warriors. Within a century of Khan Osis's death, Clan Smoke Jaguar had almost no freebirth warriors in its ranks. To compensate for the consequent decline in manpower, the Smoke Jaguar Khans took the controversial step of allowing their trueborn warriors two Trials of Position in which to prove their fitness for combat.

Though all the lower castes resented the warriors' treatment of them, the merchant caste found it particularly galling. As they saw it, the persistent refusal of the Smoke Jaguar warriors to acknowledge the value of economic activity kept them from countless opportunities for profit that the merchants of many other Clans enjoyed. They had few outlets for their grievances; though the merchant caste had the legal right to bring its concerns before the Clan Council for redress, the warriors' control of that governing body meant that the merchants had little chance for a fair hearing. Denied other outlets for their anger toward the warriors, many members of the merchant caste began secretly skimming profits from the ventures they were allowed to pursue.

THE LONDERHOLM REVOLT

The merchants' activities came to light in 2912 on the planet Londerholm, which Clan Smoke Jaguar had colonized 18 years earlier. By 2905, Londerholm had become Clan Smoke Jaguar's breadbasket, with virtually all of its abundant grain and livestock exported for sale to other Smoke Jaguar planets under the aegis of the Clan Council. Predictably, the Clan Council saw to it that most of Londerholm's produce went to feed the Clan's warriors. However, the merchants in charge of shipping were able to purloin a certain amount of the foodstuffs for the use of the other castes.

Despite the export of most of the food they grew, Londerholm's farmers kept themselves and their families fed on the single, abundant crop remaining to them: the cholach, a hearty and nutritious root vegetable that grew reasonably well even in poor soil. Mere weeks before the cholach harvest in the autumn of 2912, a mysterious blight struck virtually the entire crop, turning the farmers' staple food into a rotting, inedible mass. To stave off starvation, representatives of the laborer caste on Londerholm petitioned the Clan Council to allow them to keep back a third of the foodstuffs slated for export—the minimum they considered necessary to feed the local population at a subsistence level until the following year's harvest.

The Clan Council refused, and chided the laborers for presuming to suggest that the Clan's noble warriors give up any part of their caste's rights for the convenience of mere laborers.

Several days later, a band of desperate locals prevented a shipload of grain from leaving the port city of Vostok with its precious cargo. A furious Khan Ian Moon ordered the 181st Battle Cluster to take control of every port on Londerholm and guard all food shipments until the cargo ships left the planet. When the last food shipment departed, the 181st razed Vostok to the ground.

Khan Moon's brutality shocked the laborer caste into immobility, but worse was to come for Clan Smoke Jaguar's merchant caste. The cargo manifests of the ships from Vostok, which the warriors controlled, showed that the merchants had been skimming large portions of previous shipments. Faced with this treachery, Khan Moon and the Clan Council declared that Londerholm's merchants should receive no profits from the harvest transported in their ships. In addition, the merchant caste as a whole was ordered to pay an indemnity to the Clan Council equal to half the caste's total wealth, as determined by chosen members of the warrior caste.

Even by the most conservative estimate, the indemnity would force nearly two-thirds of the Clan's merchants into bankruptcy. When merchant caste representatives demanded an explanation for this harsh punishment, the Council coldly replied that the merchants were guilty of stealing and of inciting the laborers of Londerholm to revolt.

Already seething at the warriors' restriction of business opportunities, the merchant caste erupted in open rebellion. On the colony world of Atreus, gemstone merchants in the capital city refused a DropShip carrying two Trinaries of the First Jaguar Cavaliers permission to land. The Cavaliers landed anyway and rampaged through the capital, destroying every building and mowing down every civilian in their path. The terrified survivors appealed to the Clan Council, claiming the Right of Forgiveness and citing Nicholas Kerensky's writings about the warrior's duty to uphold justice.

Rather than shame his warriors by disciplining them for attacking Atreus's capital without orders, Khan Ian Moon publicly commended their actions and ordered the rebellious merchants punished for daring to lift a hand against MechWarriors. On the Khan's orders, the Cavaliers executed the city's merchants and their families, then razed every building in the city save for the spaceport. To prevent any recurrence of such "unnatural" rebellions against authority, Khan Moon formally stripped the Clan's lower castes of their limited right to self-governance and gave all political power into the hands of the warrior caste. When a few of his fellow Khans challenged his actions in the Grand Council, Khan Moon successfully argued that each Clan must settle its own affairs without outside interference. If the other Clans intervened in a purely internal dispute between two Clan Smoke Jaguar castes, then any Clan might interfere in another Clan's business for any reason. Impressed by the veiled threat behind this logic, the other Clans quietly ceased their protests.

RISE OF THE CRUSADERS

In our dark days of wandering,
He gave us Hidden Hope;
Our sacred duty calls us to return.
As our Father told us,
And his father before him,
Ours is the redemption of the Universe;
Ours is the paradise of Terra;
Ours is the war of liberation.

—*The Remembrance* (Clan Smoke Jaguar), Passage 204, Verse 6, Lines 2–9

Throughout the 29th and 30th centuries, Clan Smoke Jaguar fell behind its fellow Clans both politically and economically. Even their vaunted military strength began to ebb as other Clans outstripped them in far-reaching technological research. The only consistent success to which Clan Smoke Jaguar could point was an ongoing turnout of highly skilled, lethal warriors—and even this success soon threatened to become a liability. The combat trial system and other ironclad conventions of inter-Clan warfare, designed to limit the destructiveness of combat to acceptable levels, worked all too well in Clan Smoke Jaguar's case. Deprived of sufficient opportunity to gain glory in combat against their fellow Clans, the Smoke Jaguars looked toward the only remaining target that could possibly give them a challenge—the Inner Sphere.

Though the Kerenskys' Hidden Hope doctrine had always provided the Clans with the rationale for returning to the region their ancestors had left, Clan Smoke Jaguar warriors were the first to shape that doctrine into a specific, immediate call to arms. During the early decades of the 30th century, the Clans gradually came to see the long-lost worlds of the Inner Sphere as virtual paradises in comparison to the Clan worlds, and the people on them as barbarians unworthy to live on such idyllic planets. Capitalizing on this widespread discontent, members of Clan Smoke Jaguar claimed publicly that the return to the Inner Sphere of which Aleksandr and Nicholas Kerensky had spoken was at hand. The Clans, they said, had purged themselves of the Inner Sphere's taint, and must claim their sacred right to conquer every world inhabited by the evil descendants of the five Great Houses so that true humanity—represented by the Clans—might live on the worlds they alone deserved. The Clans must launch a righteous war against the Inner Sphere—not in several generations' time, not "someday," but immediately.

The Smoke Jaguars' call for invasion split the Clans politically into two factions. Clan Smoke Jaguar and its supporters began calling themselves "Crusaders," while those who opposed immediate invasion called themselves "Wardens." The fact that Clan Wolf was the most prominent Warden Clan helped the Smoke Jaguars gain the enthusiastic support of Clan Jade Falcon, whose members shared with Clan Smoke Jaguar a long-held resentment of Clan Wolf's wealth, prestige

WOLFNET ARCHIVE FILE: 07765-ER3-21/31/7

Transcript of a statement made by Ulric Kerensky to Anastasius Focht

I first encountered Leo Showers in a battle between my own heavy Trinary and his assault Trinary on the planet Tranquil. I no longer remember precisely why we fought, but the reason does not matter nearly so much as the outcome. I emerged the victor that day, but at the cost of losing almost every OmniMech in my command. Star Captain Leo of Clan Smoke Jaguar fought with a tenacity I had never before seen in a warrior so young.

We next met some years later at a tournament on Strana Mechty. The young Star Captain had since earned his Bloodname and risen to the rank of Galaxy Commander, and confided to me his plan to become Khan of his Clan. In exchange for my agreement to attack the Jaguar world of Kirin, defended by his closest rival for the Khanship, he offered to use his influence among my own Clan's Crusader faction to promote me to Galaxy command. Not caring overmuch even then for Crusader politics, I turned down his offer but wished him every success. He did not seem offended by my response at the time, but in light of subsequent events I have begun to wonder.

Leo Showers became Khan soon afterward, and he and I carried on a battle of wills in the Grand Council for the next 20 years. He had become an even more ardent Crusader, while I had turned toward the Warden point of view. The Wardens successfully staved off the proposed invasion of the Inner Sphere time and time again, but the Crusaders nipped at our strength like a pack of hounds at the flanks of a tiring deer. At the head of the pack was Khan Leo Showers. He had a remarkable gift for oratory; he could sway a crowd with the slightest trick of voice or gesture, and though his arguments often lacked logic, more and more of our fellow Khans were swayed by them.

The appearance of the *Outbound Light* finally won the battle for him. Presented with what Khan Showers called evidence of the Inner Sphere's intent to invade our region of space, many wavering Khans came down solidly on the Crusaders' side. Ever alert to the possibilities of the moment, Showers convinced the Council to appoint him ilKhan, supreme leader of all the Clans. Hearing him speak that day, seeing the look in his eyes, I realized for the first time just how ruthless and tenacious he was. IlKhan Showers desperately wanted to invade the Inner Sphere, not to bring the freedom of Clan ways to its benighted citizens, but so that he could set foot on our sacred homeworld of Terra and know himself its overlord. This overwhelming desire to rule no matter what the cost shaped our every battle, from the first Periphery engagement to the assault over Rasalhague that cost ilKhan Showers his life.

I remained one of the few to protest the invasion vote. I doubted Khan Showers's claim that the Inner Sphere meant to invade our worlds—and even if they had, what had Clan warriors to fear from those we had so long ago left behind? Did Khan Showers secretly believe the Clans so weak that we could not repel any invading force from the hopelessly corrupt descendants of the Inner Sphere barbarians?

I do not believe Khan Showers ever forgave me for asking him that question.

and comparatively freewheeling ways. During the final three decades of the 30th century, Smoke Jaguar and Jade Falcon agitators took their pro-invasion propaganda to the streets on every Clan world, gaining converts everywhere they went. By the year 3000, not even Clan Wolf's considerable clout could prevent the question of invasion from being addressed in the Grand Council.

When Khan Kerlin Ward of Clan Wolf stole the Crusaders' thunder by proposing the famous compromise that sent Wolf's Dragoons to the Inner Sphere, the Khans of Clan Smoke Jaguar objected vociferously. The fact that Clan Wolf had proposed the idea was sufficient reason to reject it in the minds of many Smoke Jaguar warriors; still worse was the very suggestion of sending "dirty freebirth" warriors to spy out the Inner Sphere's military readiness. To the Smoke Jaguars' way of thinking, a mission of such importance should have been entrusted to trueborn warriors, who could be trusted not to turn traitor. The Grand Council voted to send Wolf's Dragoons' over Clan Smoke Jaguar's vehement protests. The Jaguars' loss to the "spineless" Wolf Clan hardened their dislike of Clan Wolf into open hatred.

ILKHAN LEO SHOWERS

Remember Leo Showers,
Great Khan of Khans.
He showed us the way to destiny,
And gave his life to achieve it.

—*The Remembrance* (Clan Smoke Jaguar), Passage 215, Verse 31, Lines 22–25

In 3004, the year Wolf's Dragoons left Clan space, the man that the Inner Sphere would come to know as ilKhan Leo Showers was born in a sibko on the Smoke Jaguar world of Huntress. Leo Showers passed through every phase of his training with flying colors and distinguished himself as a MechWarrior from an early age. Hungry for power and eager for conquest, he ardently supported the call for invasion. As he achieved higher and higher military rank and won his Bloodname, he also rose to political prominence on the Crusaders' bandwagon. By far the most eloquent promoter of the Crusader ideal, Leo Showers used a dazzling combination of fighting ability and political skill to become Khan of Clan

Smoke Jaguar at the age of 25. For almost the next two decades, he used every resource at his disposal to tip the balance in the Grand Council toward the invasion of the Inner Sphere.

To his intense frustration, Leo Showers saw every proposal for a vote on the invasion stymied by Khan Ulric Kerensky of Clan Wolf. With every setback he redoubled his efforts, becoming obsessed with gaining his objective and humiliating his rival Khan in the process. The arrival of the ComStar Explorer Corps vessel *Outbound Light* at a jump point near his homeworld of Huntress in 3048 provided the answer to Showers's prayers. Ever since the apparent defection of Wolf's Dragoons to the Inner Sphere sometime during the 3020s, the Clans had lacked reliable data about affairs in the Successor States. With the *Outbound Light* and her crew in his possession, Khan Showers controlled the Clans' only source of up-to-date information.

Like the astute politician he was, Showers manipulated everything he learned from the crew of the *Outbound Light* to best suit his own purposes. In particular, he pointed to the union between the Federated Suns and the Lyran Commonwealth as proof positive that the Inner Sphere, far from being on the verge of collapse, had actually begun to create a new Star League without the Clans' intervention. He also implied that the very existence of the *Outbound Light* proved that the Inner Sphere intended to invade the Clan homeworlds and had the resources to mount a successful campaign. As Showers had hoped, his carefully doctored arguments led the Grand Council to vote in favor of invading the Inner Sphere. Jubilant Clan Smoke Jaguar warriors celebrated their victory with parades and feasting. When Leo Showers became ilKhan and the leader of the entire invasion force, the Smoke Jaguars believed they had at last achieved their rightful glory.

OPERATION REVIVAL

The Grand Council backed Showers's proposal to invade the Inner Sphere with the stipulation that Clan Wolf be one of the four primary invading Clans. The Wardens persuaded the rest of the Council to add a fifth Clan, to be held in reserve in the unlikely event that any of the invasion forces should need back-up troops. Seventeen Clans engaged in a series of combat trials to determine which Clans would invade; to the delight of Clan Smoke Jaguar's warriors, their Clan performed well enough to end up as one of the invading Clans. Having chosen the fighting force, the Council turned its attention to forming a specific plan for the invasion.

Together with Khan Elias Crichell of Clan Jade Falcon, ilKhan Showers devised the plan that the Grand Council ultimately chose, known as Operation Revival. The four primary invading Clans engaged in bidding for one of four "invasion corridors" stretching from the outermost reaches of the Periphery all the way to Terra. Citing an obscure passage from one of Nicholas Kerensky's diaries, Crichell and Showers proposed that whichever Clan captured Terra would become the ilClan, the supreme Clan among Clans.

Khan Lincoln Osis's bold bid of three Galaxies won for Clan Smoke Jaguar the corridor that led through the Draconis Combine. The Smoke Jaguars were ecstatic at their victory; they believed that House Kurita of the Combine had aided the hated Stefan Amaris in his conquest of the Star League, and welcomed the chance to strike against such a foe. Their preparations complete, the invading Clans—Smoke Jaguar, Ghost Bear, Jade Falcon, Wolf, and Steel Viper in reserve—gathered their forces over Strana Mechty. In his final speech to the Clans' vast army, ilKhan Leo Showers promised them swift victories, and confidently predicted that Clan Smoke Jaguar would stand on the soil of Terra within the year.

INTO THE VOID

Clan Smoke Jaguar first met the Inner Sphere enemy on Santander's World, home to the infamous Periphery pirates known as Santander's Killers. The Killers' leader, Helmar Valasek, had a reputation for cruelty and cunning, and saKhan Sarah Weaver was determined that Clan Smoke Jaguar would claim the honor of killing the pirate king. Weaver personally led the fiercely competitive bidding for Santander's World against Star Colonel Kellin MacKenzie of Clan Ghost Bear. Both warriors bid down to a Trinary apiece, but Khan Weaver finally won the bidding by removing her own 'Mech from the contest. MacKenzie refused to reciprocate, and so Khan Weaver won the right to take the planet with nine 'Mechs and a Star of Elementals. Though the sacrifice of her 'Mech meant that saKhan Weaver could not fight on the surface along with her troops, she insisted on coordinating the battle from her command DropShip.

SaKhan Weaver made her initial *batchall* as a matter of form, not expecting the pirates to respond. To the saKhan's surprise, Helmar Valasek answered the ritual challenge, telling Weaver that a battalion of Santander's Killers would meet the Smoke Jaguar forces on the Gillard Plains roughly 10 kilometers from the pirates' main base. Impressed by this unexpected display of courage by the "Inner Sphere barbarians," saKhan Weaver provided the obligatory listing of her invasion force, then ordered the nine 'Mechs of the Shroud Keshik to drop onto the designated battlefield.

The Shroud Keshik landed on the Gillard Plains to find three DropShips awaiting them instead of the 'Mechs they expected. The grounded DropShips were well shielded, impervious to the OmniMechs' scanners. SaKhan Weaver ordered the Elementals forward to scan the surrounding area and investigate the ships. The Elementals approached the triangle of DropShips without incident and boarded the nearest one, only to find it empty. The vessel had been stripped down to bare hull. Determined to find the enemy they had come to fight, the infuriated MechWarriors of the Keshik began marching their

OmniMechs toward the Killers' base. As they passed close to the DropShips, Santander's Killers detonated the explosives with which they had lined the ships' hulls, vaporizing the vessels and destroying more than half the 'Mechs in a cloud of deadly shrapnel.

When the smoke cleared, the surviving members of the Keshik faced a company of BattleMechs. From the lead 'Mech, Helmar Valasek apologized for the lateness of his arrival, claiming that he had been eating dinner when the Clan forces landed. In a short but spirited battle, the Killers destroyed the few remaining OmniMechs, losing four of their own in the process.

Incensed by this humiliating loss to "Inner Sphere freebirth scum," saKhan Weaver accused Valasek of treachery. Claiming the right to break her original bid, Weaver deployed the 362nd Jaguar Assault Cluster to crush Santander's Killers. This time, saKhan Weaver personally led the attack.

The fighting lasted for nearly a week, with Valasek and his pirates often giving as good as they got. Their superior knowledge of the terrain, plus a few well-laid traps, allowed them to cripple an entire Trinary of Smoke Jaguar 'Mechs. In the end, however, the Smoke Jaguars' superior weapons and sheer frenzy carried the day. During the pirates' last stand, Valasek squared off his own *BattleMaster* against Khan Weaver's *Timber Wolf*. SaKhan Weaver and the Smoke Jaguars made short work of the pirates' machines, only to find that Valasek had not actually piloted the *BattleMaster*. Despite their best efforts, the Smoke Jaguars have not yet managed to locate the pirate king who gave them the slip.

Though the Jaguars fought many more battles in the Periphery, none were as hard-fought or as costly as the engagement on Santander's World. The Smoke Jaguars finished their Periphery sweep right on schedule, in January of 3050. They had captured every world they targeted and lost very few of their 'Mechs in the process. Only one minor annoyance marred the Clan's satisfaction—they had so far been unable to match the speed of the hated Clan Wolf.

FIRST WAVE: THE JAGUAR POUNCES

Their ambition whetted by their successes in the Periphery, the Smoke Jaguars targeted ten Combine worlds in their first assault. They planned to conquer these worlds within two short months, to prove that they could surpass the speed of Clan Wolf's invasion forces. Khan Lincoln Osis split the Smoke Jaguars' three Galaxies, making each Galaxy Commander responsible for taking three worlds. The honor of taking the remaining world would fall to the Galaxy that captured its worlds first.

The Smoke Jaguar forces eagerly anticipated their first brush with the elite DCMS forces, considering them worthier opponents than the Periphery's defenders. To their intense disappointment, most of the "valiant" warriors of House Kurita broke and ran under the fury of the Clan assault. The Smoke Jaguars felt strangely cheated by their opponents' behavior; they had expected easy victory, but had also hoped for a certain level of resistance so that the victory would taste all the sweeter. The only significant opposition the Jaguars faced during the first wave of invasion came from the First Alshain Regulars stationed on the planet Richmond.

Tai-sa Donald Ashira, commander of the Regulars, responded with what the Clans considered honor to Khan Osis's *batchall*. To oppose the Regulars, Khan Osis deployed two Trinaries; Ashira chose the rocky ground of the Crag Gorge as the battlefield. The Kurita troops fought hard, but the Smoke Jaguar forces used their superior weapons and 'Mechs to whittle down the Regulars' greater numbers over the course of four days. Knowing they faced desperate odds, the Kurita troops swore an oath not to surrender, then made their last stand in Olderson Pass in the north wall of the gorge. The Smoke Jaguars, using the frontal assault tactics for which they later became infamous, smashed through Richmond's defenders and obliterated the Regulars. Fewer than 5 percent of the DCMS troops survived to become bondsmen of Clan Smoke Jaguar.

IDLEWIND

The survivors of the First Alshain Regulars were among the lucky few who opposed the Smoke Jaguars and lived to tell the tale. The defenders of the world of Idlewind met a far grimmer fate. The Third Jaguar Cavaliers' Assault Trinary, commanded by Star Colonel Paul Moon, dropped onto that lightly defended Combine world in early 3050. Upon realizing that a single armored battalion of the local militia stood ready to repel the invaders, Moon declared that the forces within his Assault Trinary would bid for the right to lead the rest in taking the world. The honor fell to two Points of Elementals, led by Star Commander Joal. The Star Commander issued a *batchall* to the defending militia, who agreed to meet the Elementals in a wooded area approximately two kilometers from Idlewind's capital city. The Elementals dropped from their troop carrier into the woods; seconds later, dozens of napalm bombs planted by the militia exploded, setting off a raging inferno around them.

Unfortunately for the militia, the napalm tactic only enraged the Elementals. Their armored suits were impervious to fire, and the two Points emerged from the deathtrap unscathed. Star Commander Joal and his troops led the Third Cavaliers' Assault Trinary in search of the enemy. Reasoning that the militia had probably gone to ground in the nearby capital, the Star Commander declared it a no-holds-barred target. Any enemy dishonorable enough to set a trap for its foe deserved no mercy. The Trinary's 'Mechs and Elementals swept through the city in a street-by-street search, destroying buildings and even tearing up pavements in search of the "cowardly" militia who refused to stand and fight.

The city's inhabitants responded with defiance, taking up

every weapon they could find to battle the invaders. Unfortunately for the people of Idlewind, shotguns and rifles and ancient troop carriers were no match for a Trinary of angry Clan Smoke Jaguar warriors. The Jaguars hunted down every defender they saw; within three hours, they had slaughtered half the capital's inhabitants and reduced its buildings to rubble. Forced to defend the actions of his troops before the Grand Council, Khan Lincoln Osis pointed out that the incident on Idlewind was the second time that Smoke Jaguar forces had been dishonorably deceived by Inner Sphere soldiers, and that the people of the Inner Sphere clearly needed to be taught a lesson. The Jaguars would soon deliver a more graphic version of that lesson on yet another world.

TURTLE BAY

Turtle Bay lay in the invasion path chosen by the Mistweavers Galaxy, commanded by Galaxy Commander Cordera Perez. Defending the world was the Fourteenth Legion of Vega; among the Legion's members was Prince Hohiro Kurita, son of the heir to the Combine's throne. The Smoke Jaguars entered the Turtle Bay system via pirate jump points and issued their standard *batchall,* to which the Legion's commander responded by declaring that he would face the Clans with every 'Mech under his command save for Prince Hohiro's battalion. Over the prince's furious objections, *Tai-sa* Tarukito Niiro ordered Hohiro's unit into defensive positions within the city of Edo.

The Fourteenth Legion of Vega faced two Supernova Trinaries and an aerofighter Trinary in the rolling meadows just north of Edo. *Tai-sa* Niiro dispersed his troops in a wide arc around the battlefield facing the center of the broad expanse. As he had hoped, the Clan forces landed in the dead center of the battleground. *Tai-sa* Niiro had hoped to open massed fire on the Clan units the minute they came within range, but the OmniMechs used their longer ranges to begin firing first. Meanwhile, Smoke Jaguar aerofighters strafed a column of DCMS heavy tanks, destroying most of the armor in a single sweep. Niiro ordered his own aerospace elements into the fray, but the Kurita fighters were no match for the Clans. As a last, desperate gambit, Niiro deployed his infantry forces. Hidden in deep trenches, the infantry boiled up out of the earth and assaulted the OmniMechs from the rear as they passed, but had time to do only a little damage before the Clan Elementals set upon them.

The Legion held its own for several hours, but then its lines wavered and broke. The DCMS troops retreated toward Edo, where Hohiro's regiment transmitted radio messages directing them to the Legion's DropShips. As soon as Hohiro realized that the Legion could not hold against the Clans, he commandeered the spaceport's facilities and attempted to uplink with the satellites orbiting the planet, sending word of the dire situation on Turtle Bay to the DCMS high command. Hohiro then laid as many traps as he could for the advancing Clans in Edo's narrow streets. As the Jaguars pursued the scattered Fourteenth into the city, Hohiro's battalion sniped at the Clan 'Mechs from their hidden positions. The Kurita prince had expected the Jaguars to retreat and regroup; instead, they rampaged through the city, destroying buildings and killing countless civilians in their savage hunt for the DCMS forces. At length, the battered Fourteenth Legion surrendered; the survivors, Hohiro Kurita among them, were taken to Edo's formidable Kurushiiyama prison.

WOLFNET ARCHIVE FILE: 33251-FT4-11/12/7

Transcript of a statement by Tomiko Kagi, survivor of the Turtle Bay massacre

During my days in hiding after our defeat on Turtle Bay, I often walked the streets of Edo at night, desperate for some kind of activity to keep me from despair. On one of those nights, I saw a band of Elementals out on a hunt for resisters. They moved along a narrow side street, their silver-painted suits of armor making them look like giant extraterrestrial beetles. From their suits' external speakers, they broadcast a repeating message in a grating metallic voice. Someone had bombed a Smoke Jaguar bunker earlier that day, and the Elementals demanded that person's surrender. Once the culprit had turned himself in, the Elementals would leave the neighborhood in peace. As they walked along, they fired at random toward little knots of the curious who foolishly crowded into doorways and windows to see them. When the onlookers hid after the first few shots, the Elementals simply upped their weapons' destructive power and fired on the dilapidated shacks that passed for houses in that part of town.

I had not dared carry my sidearm with me, for fear I might have been spotted with it on my ramble. Without a gun, I would attract little attention; with one, I would most likely have been killed without warning. I could do nothing to stop this almost casual carnage; I could only watch from the shadowed corner of a courtyard and try not to scream with rage.

After 20 minutes or so, an old man hobbled into the street from a house next to one of the burning shacks. He told them that he was the guilty party they sought, and pleaded with them to put out the fires they had started before the entire neighborhood went up like so much rice paper. The lead Elemental's shot took the top of the old man's head off. Then the murderer said, "That you would stoop to plead for your miserable lives shows your weakness. Clan Smoke Jaguar declares you unfit to live." When their leader had finished speaking, the entire group of armored demons unleashed a barrage of laser fire, not stopping until every shack was in flames.

That was my first lesson in Clan honor.

WOLFNET ARCHIVE FILE: 43357-FD5-24/31/7

From *Aiding the Enemy: Nykvarm Under Occupation*, by Acolyte Nadia Morgan, ComStar Press, 3055

Even with ComStar taking the role of administrator, the Smoke Jaguars insisted on installing their own governors on every captured planet. Every decision about any aspect of life on the planet is under the governor's control, but unfortunately many of the warriors assigned to this task know nothing about the society over which they have been given absolute power. In one instance, on the planet Nykvarm, this ignorance had tragic consequences.

Over ComStar's objections, the planetary governor shut down a large farm on the world's northern continent and transferred its workers to a munitions plant. Unfortunately, the farm was the sole production site for a type of grain that was the only cure for a deadly viral plague. This plague broke out annually on the northern continent, and the people had always harvested the grain and baked it into loaves of bread that local folk ate when the first plague symptoms appeared. The Smoke Jaguar governor knew nothing of the plague, and suspected some kind of "Inner Sphere trickery" from those who tried to tell him how necessary the grain was to the people's survival.

When the plague broke out that year, the governor was appalled to realize that many of his own warriors as well as a quarter of the local population were dying of the illness. The governor himself died three weeks into the epidemic, mere days before Smoke Jaguar scientists developed a usable vaccine.

To the victorious Smoke Jaguars' intense embarrassment, the local yakuza in the city of Edo broke into Kurushiiyama prison and set Hohiro Kurita and the remaining Legionnaires free. Until the jailbreak, the Smoke Jaguars had not known that the Combine's crown prince was among their captives. As soon as they discovered what a prize they had lost, the Smoke Jaguars ordered an intensive search for the escapees. Edo's yakuza cells took every opportunity to harrass the Smoke Jaguars, setting bombs and killing Clan warriors whenever they could. When Galaxy Commander Cordera Perez ordered his troops' withdrawal from Edo, the yakuza and Edo's citizens believed they had won a great victory. They could not have been more wrong.

Perez ordered his Galaxy's WarShip, the *Sabre Cat*, into low orbit around Turtle Bay. When it hung over the city of Edo, Perez fired the huge vessel's laser and autocannon batteries again and again until nothing remained of the once-proud city save piles of smoking debris. The sheer barbarity of destruction on this scale horrified the other Clans, sparking a backlash against Commander Perez and the others responsible from several fronts. Warden sympathizers found the wholesale destruction of "our backward Inner Sphere cousins" criminally irresponsible, and even the hardest of the hard-line Crusaders despised the act as a sign of cowardice. Star Colonel Dietr Osis successfully challenged Galaxy Commander Cordera Perez for command of the Mistweavers, and Clan Wolf announced its intention to bid away all naval assets in every battle henceforth. In order to keep their own honor intact, the other Clans had no choice but to follow suit.

SECOND WAVE: SILENT FURY

Forced to use more troops than anticipated to quell rebellions on their captured planets, the Smoke Jaguars conquered far fewer worlds in their second wave. After the debacle on Turtle Bay, the Smoke Jaguars did not dare obliterate the rebels from orbit. Instead, they relied on a combination of ComStar administration and brutal penalties for even the smallest offense. Despite the Jaguars' iron grip, dissent continued to flare as the formerly free people of the Inner Sphere expressed their loathing of the Jaguars' authoritarian regime.

Not surprisingly, the Smoke Jaguar garrisons left behind on the conquered worlds attempted to govern them as they did their own colony worlds in Clan space. All people in occupations deemed nonessential by Clan standards were pressed into making munitions to replenish the Jaguars' diminishing supplies. True to their own Clan tradition, the Smoke Jaguar authorities offered their captive laborers no recompense; they regarded the honor of serving the warrior caste as payment enough. Increasingly poor, hungry and left without alternatives, more than a few citizens revolted against their new rulers, and not even ComStar's diplomatic intervention could quell the rebellions completely.

Adding fuel to the fire, Clan Smoke Jaguar's pace had once again fallen behind Clan Wolf's. Angry that "spineless" Wardens were making better progress than they were, many Smoke Jaguar warriors turned practice bouts into deadly contests, blaming each other for the failure of the Clan to gain its rightful share of glory. When Khan Edmund Hoyt ordered an end to the practice bouts in order to conserve his warriors for real battle, frustrated Clan fighters took out their anger on the populations of captured worlds. Attacks on innocent civilians fanned the flames of rebellion, and the Clan had unusual difficulty flushing the rebels out of hiding. Though they did not know it at the time, Warlord Theodore Kurita of the Draconis Combine was secretly smuggling weapons to rebel factions on every planet he could reach, mainly through networks set up by the yakuza.

To combat local resistance movements, Khan Weaver received permission from ilKhan Showers to bring forward Provisional Garrison Clusters from Clan space to hold the captured worlds. With the garrisons in place, the Smoke Jaguars could deploy their Galaxies for the next wave of conquest.

THIRD WAVE: CHASING THE WOLF

When Clan Wolf's Khans announced their intention to accelerate their pace, Clan Smoke Jaguar reacted with outrage. Determined to catch up to their hated rival, Weaver and Osis plotted out an expanded invasion timetable. Relying on the PGCs to keep the peace, the Jaguar Khans drew up plans to attack the next three worlds en masse. They captured the planets easily, but discovered that their larger troop numbers had bought them another problem: the so-called Paradise syndrome.

For the first time, many Smoke Jaguar warriors had a long enough rest from fighting to fall in love with the beauties of the worlds they had taken. As a result, more than a few of the Clan warriors started bidding among themselves for various plots of land they coveted. The number of Trials of Possession rose dramatically, distracting many warriors and costing others their lives. Local citizens on the occupied worlds took full advantage of the Jaguars' lapse of attention, engaging in acts of sabotage against the Clan's supply stockpiles.

The Garrison Clusters, composed of second-line warriors with inferior equipment, were intially unprepared for the onslaught of rebel activity. On the planet Tarnby, the remnants of the Fourth Pesht Regulars managed to capture the spaceport and board their DropShips, forcing the garrison commander to call in air elements to destroy the ships before they could leave the planet. As the Smoke Jaguar governing authorities lost control on world after world, ilKhan Leo Showers was forced to deal with the problem personally. The ilKhan invalidated the results of all Trials of Possession made for plots of land, then ordered the merchant caste to come up with a way to calm the unrest among the local laboring populations. The merchants made the local people bondsmen to their own caste, paying them for their work as long as they behaved well. They also housed the bondsmen near where the supplies were stored, reasoning correctly that guerrilla elements would be reluctant to kill large numbers of their own people with each act of sabotage.

Having quieted the waves of rebellion, the ilKhan personally led the Smoke Jaguars' Delta Galaxy into combat to capture the next four worlds on the Clan's agenda. The planets fell swiftly to the ilKhan's aggressive tactics and the overwhelming numbers of heavy and assault OmniMechs. Despite a bad beginning, Clan Smoke Jaguar finished its third wave ahead of Clan Ghost Bear and Clan Jade Falcon. They had even finished their campaigns before Clan Wolf, but the Wolves had conquered more worlds, including the Free Rasalhague Republic's capital world. Not to be outdone, Khan Osis decided that Clan Smoke Jaguar would also capture a capital world.

FOURTH WAVE: THE JAGUAR STUMBLES

During the fourth wave, the Smoke Jaguars faced the heaviest opposition from the soldiers of the DCMS. Banking on Hanse Davion's promise that the Federated Commonwealth would not invade Combine territory while the Clans were menacing both realms, Theodore Kurita had stripped the Commonwealth borders of troops and thrown the extra units into the fight against the Smoke Jaguars. On every world, the Jaguars found a well-equipped and determined foe who fought for every centimeter of ground. DCMS forces refused to engage in single combat; instead, they poured massed fire on the enemy and engaged in shadowy hit-and-run raids. More than once, Clan leaders were forced to pull back because they had vastly underbid the strength needed to take a world. The fourth wave brought Clan Smoke Jaguar its first true disaster of the invasion, on the Combine world of Wolcott.

WOLCOTT

Knowing that he desperately needed a victory over the Clans, if only to prove to his people that the Clans were human, Theodore Kurita carefully planned the battle for Wolcott. The world was ideal in many ways; the hot marshes covering most of the eastern continent threw off a thick fog, and the many trees in the area provided excellent cover. To further blunt the Clans' technical edge, Theodore ordered large strips of reflective metal hung from the trees. Between the marsh gasses, dense trees and reflective metal, the OmniMechs' scanners would be rendered virtually useless. The tightly packed tree trunks and branches would also force the Clans to fight up close, negating the range advantage of their weapons.

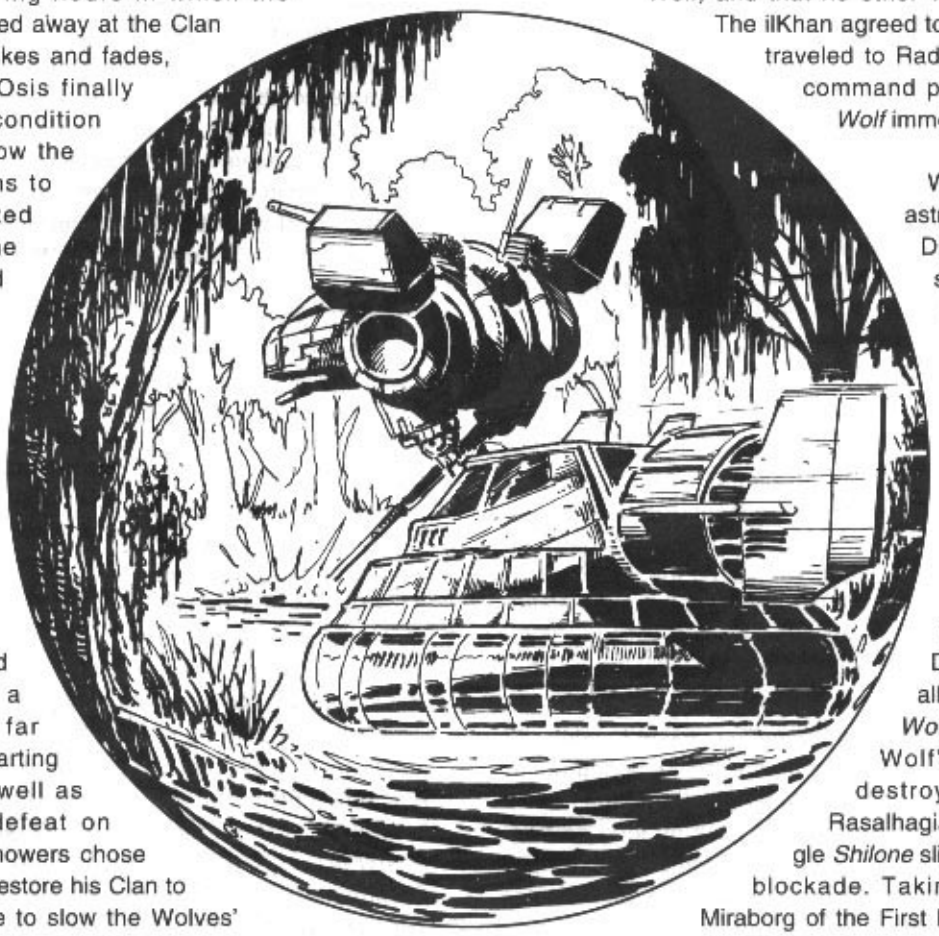
Theodore then transferred both of his elite Genyosha regiments to Wolcott under the assumed name of "Yuutsu," and had new unit records made that identified the Genyosha MechWarriors as green troops. When the Smoke Jaguars' Mistweavers Galaxy arrived over Wolcott and Galaxy Commander Dietr Osis issued the *batchall* for the planet, Theodore's son Hohiro answered the challenge and informed the Smoke Jaguars' commander of the terms of the battle. If the Jaguars won, Wolcott would be theirs; if the Yuutsu won, the Jaguars must give them four OmniMechs and two dozen suits of Elemental armor in addition to their word never to attack Wolcott again.

As expected, Osis initially balked at this offer. Hohiro then pointed out that, as he had only green troops with which to defend the planet, the odds of winning strongly favored the Smoke Jaguars. Stung by Hohiro's subtle implication that the Smoke Jaguar commander feared to fight, Osis agreed to the terms and personally led his invasion force down to the planet.

The Jaguar 'Mechs landed in their enemy's chosen battlefield, the fetid and fog-ridden swamps. Unable to use their sophisticated scanning equipment, the Clan forces failed to

spot the Savannah Master hovercrafts hidden in the thick underbrush. The hovercraft attack took the Clan OmniMechs completely by surprise, striking their flanks and forcing them into close formation. Before the tightly packed Clan 'Mechs could advance, the Genyosha's battalion of heavy 'Mechs poured down long-range missile fire on the Clan machines. The lethal shower pinned the Jaguar forces down in the swamp, leaving them vulnerable to hit-and-run attacks by the more maneuverable light 'Mechs of the Inner Sphere units. After several harrowing hours in which the Genyosha troops whittled away at the Clan command with fast strikes and fades, Galaxy Commander Osis finally surrendered on the condition that Hohiro Kurita allow the surviving Clan 'Mechs to leave. Hohiro accepted the surrender, and the Genyosha supervised the departure of the Clan DropShips. The Galaxy Commander, however, did not go with his troops. Instead, one of his own Clansmen executed him on the battlefield for his failure.

The fourth wave ended with the Smoke Jaguars having captured a paltry four worlds, a total that put them far behind Clan Wolf. Smarting from that shame as well as from the shocking defeat on Wolcott, ilKhan Leo Showers chose to use his influence to restore his Clan to prominence. Desperate to slow the Wolves' advance, the ilKhan called for the Grand Kurultai that would cost him his life.



CATASTROPHE STRIKES

Mourn for our ilKhan, o warriors!
Cry curses to the heavens!
They have silenced the voice of the Crusaders;
Let them be ash beneath our feet.
Make your hearts as proud as his,
Make your blood as fierce,
Make your blows as deadly to our enemies.

—*The Remembrance* (Clan Smoke Jaguar), Passage 215, Verse 31, Lines 26–32

To justify the extraordinary step of calling for a Grand Kurultai, ilKhan Showers claimed that the speed of Clan Wolf's advance was endangering the entire invasion effort. Twice before, Khan Ulric Kerensky had quashed the ilKhan's attempts to slow the Wolves, but Clan Wolf's success eventually provoked enough resentment from all the other invading Clans to give the ilKhan the backing he needed. Khan Ulric requested that the Grand Kurultai take place in the Radstadt system near the Wolves' front line aboard the flagship *Dire Wolf*, and that no other WarShips be present. The ilKhan agreed to these conditions and traveled to Radstadt, transferring his command personnel to the *Dire Wolf* immediately on arrival.

Within a few hours, catastrophe struck. The First Drakøns, an elite aerospace unit of the Free Rasalhague Republic, appeared insystem, acting as escort to the Rasalhagian Prince Haakon Magnusson. Fearing that the Clan WarShip over Radstadt would attack them and capture the prince, the Drakøns launched an all-out attack on the *Dire Wolf*. The pilots of Clan Wolf's Golden Keshik destroyed most of the Rasalhagian fighters, but a single *Shilone* slipped through the Clan blockade. Taking deadly aim, Tyra Miraborg of the First Drakøns flew her crippled ship straight at the bridge of the *Dire Wolf*. The impact and resulting explosive decompression claimed the life of ilKhan Leo Showers, and would have killed Khan Ulric had not his bondsman, Phelan Kell, dragged him to safety.

The ilKhan's death stunned the Clans, especially Clan Smoke Jaguar. While debate raged among the rest of the invaders about whether or not to crush the Inner Sphere immediately for killing the ilKhan, the Smoke Jaguar Khans remained oddly silent. When the Grand Kurultai eventually voted to return to Clan space and elect a new ilKhan before resuming the invasion, Khans Osis and Weaver abstained. The Clan and its leaders only began to emerge from the shock and grief of their loss when Khan Chistu of the Jade Falcons offered them a target for their unfocused rage: Clan Wolf.

During the long months of the voyage back to the Clan worlds, Khan Chistu of Clan Jade Falcon proposed to the Smoke Jaguars and the rest of his fellow Crusader Khans a plan to lay the blame for ilKhan Showers's death at the feet of Ulric Kerensky. If they succeeded, the Grand Council would give them permission to execute Kerensky on the battlefield for his crime; if they failed, they would destroy him more subtly by electing him ilKhan and forcing him to lead the very invasion against which he had passionately fought.

During the Grand Council on Strana Mechty, the Smoke Jaguar Khans attempted to pin blood-guilt on Kerensky by calling on warriors who had been present on the *Dire Wolf*'s bridge to testify. Believing that Phelan Kell, Ulric's "Inner Sphere freebirth lackey," would be the most likely to betray his master, Khan Lincoln Osis allowed Kell to speak. Too late, he realized his error; far from betraying Ulric, Phelan Kell's lucid account of events destroyed the Jaguars' case against him. Khan Osis then exacted the second part of the Crusaders' revenge by nominating Ulric as ilKhan. The motion passed and the Smoke Jaguars rejoiced, but not for long.

Ulric's first act as ilKhan was to appoint Natasha Kerensky, the only one of the "traitorous" Wolf's Dragoons to return to Clan space, as Khan of Clan Wolf. He then announced that Leo Showers had been right in his contention that the Clans must keep pace with each other; however, he saw no reason to slow down the Wolves in order to achieve this objective. Instead, he proposed speeding up the other Clans' timetables by adding Clans Nova Cat and Diamond Shark to the invasion force, and moving Clan Steel Viper from reserve status to full partnership in the invasion. Commenting that the faltering pace of Clans Smoke Jaguar and Jade Falcon proved their need for additional forces, Ulric assigned Clan Nova Cat to support the Smoke Jaguars and Clan Steel Viper to support the Jade Falcons. Diamond Shark replaced the Steel Vipers as the Clans' active reserves.

The Smoke Jaguar Khans fought the measure furiously, but they and the Jade Falcons could not stand against the combined votes of Clans Diamond Shark, Steel Viper, Nova Cat and Wolf. Even the Ghost Bears supported the new ilKhan's decision; they had not been saddled with a partner they did not want, and saw no reason to oppose Ulric's motion. Having gained his objective, Ulric gave the knife one final twist. He declared that the new invaders had the right to establish their own supply lines into the Inner Sphere, which meant that Clans Nova Cat and Steel Viper needed to control at least some of the worlds already captured by their "partner" Clans. The ilKhan decreed that the new invading Clans must bid for the worlds they wished to take. The "junior partners" chose the least well-defended worlds, many of them on the front lines as well as some closer to Clan space.

Kerensky's political maneuvering was only partially successful. Clans Steel Viper and Jade Falcon spent much of the next invasion wave at each other's throats, but the Smoke Jaguar Khans reached an early accommodation with their Nova Cat counterparts. Though insulted by the implication that they needed help and by the prospect of getting that help from the hated Nova Cats, the Smoke Jaguar Khans realized that their only recourse lay in a Trial of Refusal. Such a trial would cost them valuable warriors on the eve of resuming the invasion. Unwilling to pay that price, Khans Osis and Weaver settled for a more subtle revenge; they handed over six worlds to the Nova Cats, all of which just happened to be hotbeds of resistance. The troops no longer needed to pacify those worlds joined the Jaguars' main invasion force, which began to prepare for an assault on the Combine capital world of Luthien.

FIFTH WAVE: ALL-OUT WAR

In early November of 3051, Clan Smoke Jaguar forces assaulted four Combine planets simultaneously. Expecting swift victories, they were dismayed to discover that the Combine had fortified many of its border worlds during the Clans' absence. On three of the four planets, Smoke Jaguar forces bogged down in hard-fought battles against determined defenders; only the world of Labrea fell within the week originally planned for the conquest. On the planet Hyner, the Smoke Jaguars met a level of resistance they found particularly disturbing; an entire battalion of the Second Arkab Legionnaires fought fiercely in Star League-era BattleMechs that the Clans had never before seen in the hands of Inner Sphere troops. The Smoke Jaguars eventually took the planet, but their Arkab foes pulled off a brilliant midnight escape.

Having conquered all four worlds in their initial sweep, the Smoke Jaguars chose the planet Avon as their next target. Clan Nova Cat had also laid claim to this world, but the Smoke Jaguar Khans wanted to avoid wasting resources on inter-Clan battles. They proposed that the two Clans work together to take Avon and divide control of the world between them. Khan Lucian Carns of Clan Nova Cat intended to refuse, but bowed to ilKhan Kerensky's backing of the Smoke Jaguar proposal. The ilKhan had obtained information on Luthien's formidable defenses at the Smoke Jaguars' request, and deemed it a target of such importance that it must be taken at all costs. By sharing the world of Avon, Clans Smoke Jaguar and Nova Cat would not only avoid squandering valuable materiel in a Trial of Possession, but would also have a base from which each of them could launch an effective strike on the Combine capital.

One Smoke Jaguar and one Nova Cat Cluster landed on Avon to face the Second Amphigean Light Assault Group. Knowing that they could not win a stand-up fight against the Clan forces' superior machines, the Second Amphigean opted for a short, fierce guerrilla campaign aimed at destroying as many Clan supplies as possible. Full companies of Kurita 'Mechs attacked supply depots under cover of darkness, diverting the Clans' attention from the silent commandos who planted explosives amid crates full of equipment. Citing the "perfidious"

nighttime raids as an excuse, the Smoke Jaguar commander sent out a "headhunter" Star to overrun the Second's command post. Only after the headhunters killed all the Second Amphigean's top brass in a single ruthless strike did the Inner Sphere force falter. The Second Amphigean perished mere days after the deaths of its commanders, fighting to the last breath against the Cluster from the Mistweavers Galaxy.

During the month of December, Clan Smoke Jaguar launched no further attacks. Instead, they prepared for the mighty assault on Luthien. Near the end of November, Theodore Kurita learned of the pending attack on his capital by the combined forces of Clan Smoke Jaguar and Clan Nova Cat; though the source of his information has never been identified, plausible rumors suggest that the Smoke Jaguar Khans publicized their invasion plans through a carefully orchestrated series of leaks. If true, these rumors show that Clan Smoke Jaguar learned at least one lesson from the Inner Sphere: the usefulness of psychological warfare. By advertising their intent to strike at the very heart of the Combine, Clan Smoke Jaguar meant to demoralize their opponents, and may even have hoped to attract more troops so as to give themselves a greater challenge.

With preparations for the Luthien campaign almost completed, ilKhan Kerensky gave the honor of overall command to Khan Osis of Clan Smoke Jaguar. Osis was overjoyed. Not only would his warriors finally get the true test of their mettle that they deserved, but the success of the campaign would give him the political and military clout to challenge Kerensky for the position of ilKhan.

LUTHIEN

As the storm gathers
Some run from the clouds in fear
Some prepare for rain.

—Haiku by Shin Yodama, written just prior to the battle for Luthien

The battle for Luthien was one of the largest engagements fought in the Clan invasion, second only to the battle for Tukayyid. Against three Smoke Jaguar and two Nova Cat Galaxies, the Combine threw five of its best regiments and three militia regiments, as well as a reserve unit made up of the Coordinator's bodyguards and other veteran MechWarriors. Coordinator Takashi Kurita led this unit, dubbed the Dragon's Claws. In addition, two regiments of the Kell Hounds and five regiments of Wolf's Dragoons landed on Luthien to support the DCMS at the request of Prince Hanse Davion of the Federated Commonwealth. Neither of the attacking Clans had anticipated fighting the famous mercenary units, and mistakenly believed that victory lay within easy reach.

According to Clan custom, the Smoke Jaguars allowed their opponents the choice of battlefield during the *batchall*. Theodore Kurita selected the Tairakana Plains and the surrounding hills, 50 kilometers from the Imperial City. Clan aerospace fighters opened the battle, arrowing through the upper levels of Luthien's atmosphere and providing lethal cover for the DropShips full of OmniMechs. Though Wolf's Dragoons' and the Kell Hounds' aerospace assets ultimately tore air superiority from the Clans' grasp, both the Smoke Jaguars and Nova Cats managed to land the bulk of their forces on the wide-open plains.

Within minutes after landing, the Clan 'Mechs were strafed by the First Sword of Light's aerospace wings. Though unable to halt the slowly advancing Clan troops, the Kurita fighters did considerable damage. More importantly, they drove the Clan columns toward the shores of Basin Lake, where the First Sword of Light's ground forces awaited them along with the Genyosha and a regiment of elite Otomo 'Mechs. Contrary to their usual tactics, the Smoke Jaguar 'Mechs poured massed long-range fire on the waiting Kurita units instead of engaging them in one-on-one contests. Despite the heavy damage the Clans were inflicting on them, the DCMS units did not break formation as soon as the Clans had expected.

The Otomo regiment was the first to waver. They had held the middle of the Kurita formation, and so had taken the brunt of the Smoke Jaguar assault. The Otomo MechWarriors fought back far less well than the Jaguars had expected of an elite unit, and when the unit finally collapsed, the Clan 'Mechs poured eagerly through the gap in the Kurita line. Too late, the Smoke Jaguar commanders realized that they had fallen into a trap. As the lead Smoke Jaguar 'Mech reached the third and final line of Otomo 'Mechs, the Clan machine hit a vibrabomb and went down in a flash of fire. The collapsing 'Mech knocked over a Kurita *Archer*, which exploded as soon as it hit the ground. Like a string of firecrackers, the remaining Otomo 'Mechs exploded as well, covering the Jaguar 'Mechs in a lethal rain of shrapnel.

With the Clan forces in chaos, the real Otomo and the Second Legion of Vega charged straight into their ranks. The Jaguars fell back, then regrouped and began to slash through the First Sword of Light that was hammering at their flank. The First Sword fell back in turn, but then halted and began to inch back over the ground they had lost. Only the timely arrival of a phalanx of Nova Cat 'Mechs and aerospace fighters allowed the Smoke Jaguars to break through the Kurita lines and head toward the hills that concealed the Imperial City.

The third battalion of the Kell Hounds' second regiment caught up with the 336th Jaguar Combat Cluster on the far shore of Basin Lake and launched an all-out assault, determined to prevent the Clans from reaching Luthien's capital. Despite the mercenary unit's tactical brilliance, most of its 'Mechs succumbed to the Clans' greater numbers. The arrival of the First Sword of Light saved the Kell Hounds battalion from destruction, but the heavy casualties already taken meant that the unit was effectively out of the fight. Khan Osis took consid-

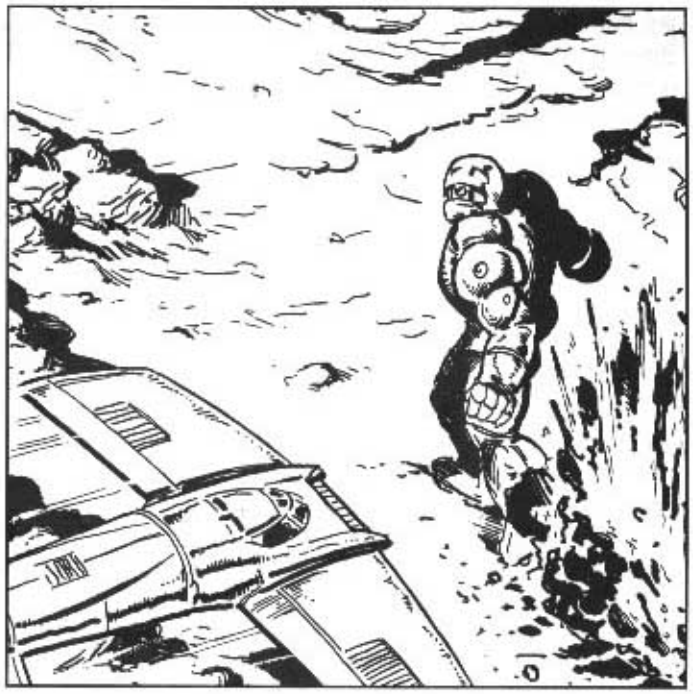
erable satisfaction in the routing of the mercenary battalion; virtually everywhere else on the field, the Smoke Jaguars had gotten bogged down in a brutal slugging match instead of swiftly crushing all opposition.

By the second day of the campaign, most of the remaining Smoke Jaguar forces had reached the Kado-guchi Valley. On the valley's far side, through the only easily accessible gap in the hills, lay the Imperial City. Khan Osis, growing impatient for the victory he still felt confident of winning, ordered the Clan forces to launch a single large-scale assault that would crush the remaining Inner Sphere troops. The two long lines of MechWarriors met in a titanic clash, but the Clan forces failed to overwhelm Luthien's dogged defenders. Some of the Clan troops suffered terrible defeats; the 145th Jaguar Regulars fell prey to Wolf's Dragoons' Delta Regiment, which cut the 145th from the main body of the Jaguar forces and slaughtered them down to the last man.

The Clan line finally broke when the Smoke Jaguars' 315th Battle Cluster crumbled under the determined assault of the First Genyosha and the Kell Hounds' First Battalion. The Inner Sphere forces pounded the Clans unmercifully, inflicting so much damage that Khan Osis briefly considered retreat. Before he could give the order, however, the Twenty-second Jaguar Regulars broke through a weak link in the chain of defending troops. The Twenty-second surged through the gap, only to find themselves caught in deadly crossfire between the remnants of the Otomo and the Second Legion of Vega. The Clans charged the Otomo 'Mechs, hoping to win by dint of superior numbers. Instead of standing and fighting, the Otomo 'Mechs gave way and allowed the Twenty-second Regulars to run straight into the arms of the Alpha Regiment of Wolf's Dragoons. The few survivors of the Twenty-second were later rounded up and clapped into prison in the Imperial City.

The two-day battle for Luthien was a bitter and total defeat for Clan Smoke Jaguar. Of the three Galaxies they had committed, less than half boarded the Clan DropShips and lifted off the planet. The Smoke Jaguars took more than a month to recover from their losses and their intense humiliation, deriving only slight satisfaction from exercising increasingly repressive measures against rebellious occupied worlds. Certain Smoke Jaguar commanders also began quarreling with their counterparts in Clan Nova Cat, accusing them of allowing Nova Cat merchants to smuggle weapons to rebels on Smoke Jaguar-held worlds. Rumors of such activity flew fast and thick, not only among the Clan garrisons, but also among several resistance groups. However, given Clan Smoke Jaguar's tendency to pick fights as compensation for battlefield defeats, the accusations may simply have served as a pretext for a Trial of Grievance. Whatever the case, no trial was fought; ilKhan Kerensky wished to preserve his Clans' fighting strength and refused to countenance wasting it for a cause that might not even have existed.

Not long after the Combine's resounding victory on Luthien, the DCMS high command issued orders to its Ryuken



regiments on Wolcott to stage lightning raids on nearby Clan-held worlds, both to destroy Smoke Jaguar supply caches and to arm the local population. The Smoke Jaguar authorities responded by ordering indefinite prison terms for anyone suspected of subversive activities, as well as of anyone even remotely connected to the suspect individuals. They also issued a blanket ban on fraternization between Jaguar personnel and local citizens, punishable by immediate demotion in rank.

Almost two months after the Luthien debacle, the Smoke Jaguars resumed their fifth invasion wave, capturing five additional worlds. Though ultimately successful, the conquest of those worlds took a far heavier toll than expected on the Smoke Jaguar forces, and took them so long to accomplish that the Clan lost all hope of ever catching up to Clan Wolf. Demoralized by two crushing defeats, the Smoke Jaguars welcomed the ilKhan's announcement of the proxy battle for Terra that was to take place on the backwater planet of Tukayyid in the rump of the Free Rasalhague Republic. Though the Jaguar Khans automatically distrusted any arrangement made by Ulric Kerensky, and positively loathed the prospect of a 15-year peace treaty if they lost, they nevertheless craved a chance to redeem their failures in the eyes of their fellow Clansmen.

TUKAYYID: THE CRUCIBLE

The bidding for the Battle of Tukayyid began on the 18th of April, with all the invading Clans vying for the landing order and target cities they considered would win them the greatest glory. Led by Clan Smoke Jaguar, the Khans of the other invading Clans concentrated on preventing Clan Wolf from winning favorable battle conditions. The conspiracy apparently succeed-

ed; Clan Wolf ended up landing five full days after the other Clans, and won the right to attack the smallest and least well-defended cities of Brzo and Skupo.

Khan Osis of Clan Smoke Jaguar rejoiced in having beaten the Wolves, and also in having won the honor to be the first to set foot on Tukayyid. He believed that ComStar's Com Guards would be easy pickings because ComStar had only shown the Clans its pacifist side. The Jaguars' target cities also promised the Clan great glory in the winning of them, as both lay in terrain heavily favoring the defender; Dinju Heights nestled in the Dinju Mountains, and Port Racice lay near the treacherous ground of the Racice River Delta. Refusing to listen to the ilKhan's warnings about the dangers of scarce supplies, the Jaguar Khans landed woefully unprepared for the battlefield siege they were soon to face. Instead, the Jaguar Khans placed their faith in the ability of their Galaxies to overwhelm all opposition with two swift, brutal strikes.

Khan Osis led Alpha Galaxy, including the elite 6th Jaguar Dragoons and the Jaguar Grenadiers, into the Dinju Mountains. Meanwhile, saKhan Weaver and the Mistweavers Galaxy landed in the marshes of the Racice River Delta. Both Khans expected easy victory; neither was to have it.

The Dinju campaign began well for the Clan; the Sixth Jaguar Dragoons cut through the Com Guards' green 50th Division and easily secured Alpha Galaxy's drop site. When the Dragoons and the Jaguar Grenadiers began their march on Dinju Heights, they encountered only modest resistance from remnants of the 50th, whose light raids did little damage. The Clan warriors advanced toward the seemingly undefended Dinju Pass, confident of swiftly capturing the city that lay beyond. Unknown to the Jaguars, they were marching straight toward the heavier elements of the Com Guards' 299th Division, hidden in the pass.

Only the un-Clanlike caution of Star Colonel Brandon Howell saved the Jaguar Grenadiers from annihilation. Believing the undefended pass too good to be true, Howell sent two Stars of the Grenadiers forward in a ploy to force any hidden Com Guards out into the open. He then ordered the rest of his OmniMechs to hug the walls of the pass while moving forward at flank speed. Though the Grenadiers took heavy losses when the 299th sprung their trap, elements of the unit broke through Com Guard forces to confront the 323rd Division on the doorstep of Dinju Heights.

Not to be outdone by one of his own Star Colonels, Khan Osis attempted to lead his Sixth Jaguar Dragoons on a similar charge through the pass. Unfortunately for the Dragoons, the remaining 'Mechs of the 299th and 323rd Divisions were swarming all over the floor and the far end of the pass. The Dragoons took heavy casualties, and a Com Guard MechWarrior picked off Khan Osis with a well-placed laser shot against Osis' battle armor.

In the meantime, saKhan Weaver and the Mistweavers' OmniMechs had bogged down close to their landing zone. The initial drop went well; the pools and marshes of the Racice Delta gave the Smoke Jaguar 'Mechs and Elementals a soft landing, inflicting fewer casualties than usual for such a maneuver. The Jaguars discovered, however, that wading through the swamps forced them to move at a painfully slow pace. Com Guard 'Mechs concealed in the delta's deep pools and sluggish river channels repeatedly ambushed the Jaguars, negating both the Clans' weapon-range advantage and their 'Mechs' superior heat-sink technology. Ongoing artillery barrages herded the Clan 'Mechs ever deeper into the delta, where still more Com Guard 'Mechs waited in ambush. Near the end of the third day's march toward Port Racice, the 'Mechs of the Com Guards' 207th Division surrounded the Galaxy's Command Star and launched a coordinated attack against its units. Khan Sarah Weaver died in the fighting when her *Warhawk*'s fusion engine went critical.

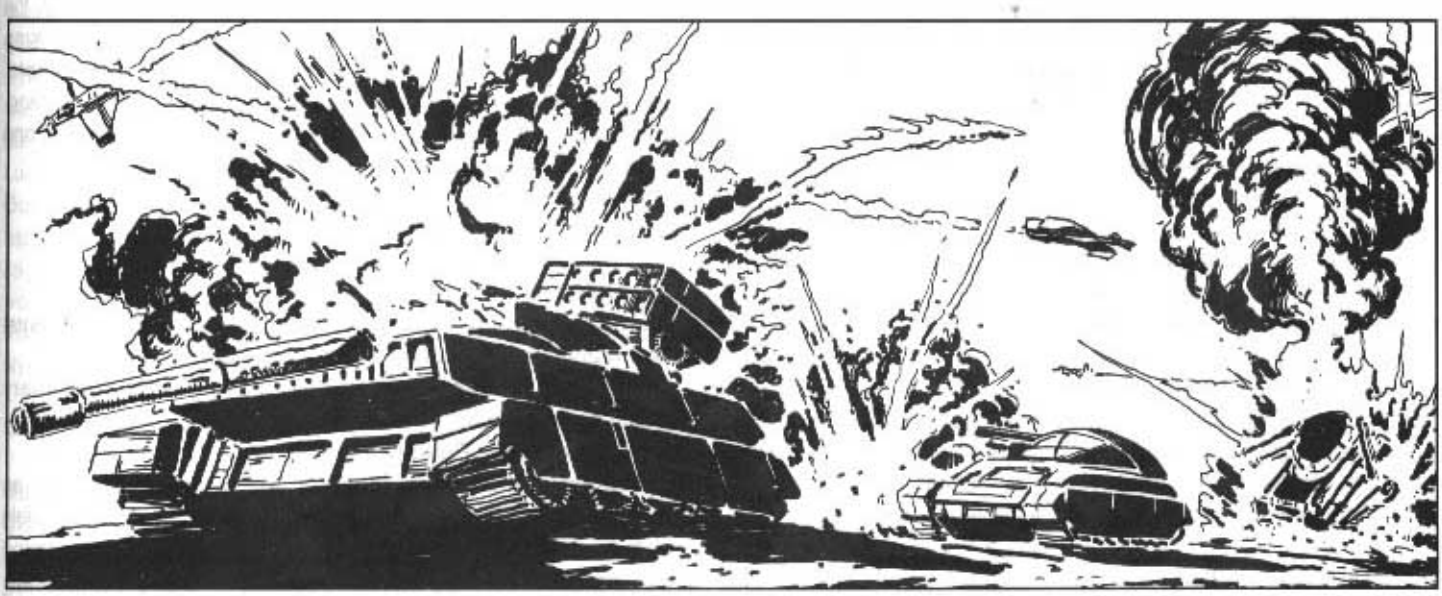
With the leaderless Clan Smoke Jaguars facing the fresh troops of the Com Guards' Second Army, ilKhan Ulric Kerensky ordered the Jaguars to retreat from Tukayyid. The dispirited warriors of the Mistweavers Galaxy obediently retreated toward their drop zone, but several of Alpha Galaxy's units refused. The Sixth Jaguar Dragoons viewed ilKhan Kerensky's orders as a Wolf Clan snub intended to erase the honor they had gained through the sacrifice of the Jaguar Grenadiers and the loss of Khan Osis. Proud and defiant, they continued their advance down the Dinju Pass, accompanied by several warriors from Alpha Galaxy's surviving Clusters. The sheer numerical superiority of the Com Guards' forces in the pass, however, eventually overwhelmed them.

Unable to fight their way back through the pass to aid their floundering companions, the few remaining warriors of the Jaguar Grenadiers launched a death-or-glory attack on Dinju Heights. The assault had no chance of succeeding, but forced the Com Guards' 82nd and 322nd Divisions to pull back into the city. With the Com Guards' retreat, a few of the Grenadiers managed to escape back to their drop zone.

AFTERMATH

Clan Smoke Jaguar elected Star Colonel Brandon Howell as its Khan shortly after the Clans' defeat on Tukayyid. Khan Howell had just begun the long, uphill struggle to rebuild the fighting strength for which his Clan was known when Khan Lincoln Osis returned, apparently rescued during salvage operations on Tukayyid. Khan Howell accepted his leader's return with good grace and took up the position of saKhan instead. Constant rebellion on Smoke Jaguar-occupied worlds and apparently random raids by other Clans and the Draconis Combine keep the Smoke Jaguar forces too busy for the Khans to effectively reforge them into an unbeatable force. Its fierce desire to subjugate the people of the Inner Sphere and force them to accept Clan leadership under the flag of the recreated Star League makes it likely that Clan Smoke Jaguar will break the Truce of Tukayyid.

OCCUPATION ZONE (AS OF JUNE 3052)



THE PERIPHERY

(August–September 3049)

SANTANDER'S WORLD

August 3049
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Elements of the Shroud Keshik (Alpha Galaxy), 362nd Assault Cluster (Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Santander's Killers
Major Battle Site: Gillard Plains
Outcome: See text.

FIRST WAVE

(March–April 3050)

RICHMOND (DC)

March 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Trinaries Assault and Second Battle (Fifth Jaguar Regulars, Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: First Alshain Regulars
Major Battle Sites: Crag Gorge, Olderson Pass
Outcome: See text.

TARNBY (DC)

March 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Trinaries Battle and Assault (Sixth Jaguar Dragoons, Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Fourth Pesht Regulars
Major Battle Site: Divers Grotto
Outcome: Trinary Assault's heavy and assault OmniMechs launched a furious predawn raid against the inexperienced Fourth Regulars, whose attempts to match the Clan 'Mechs' firepower in one-on-one combat failed miserably. The Elementals of Trinary Battle caused some Pesht Regulars to panic—they had never seen Elemental battle armor before, and the seemingly unkillable enemy prompted more than a few terrified Kurita soldiers to break and run. The defenders' eastern flank swiftly collapsed, and Star Captain Bowen of Trinary Battle exploited this weakness to the utmost in the Jaguars' stunning victory.

IDLEWIND (DC)

March 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Trinary Assault (Third Jaguar Cavaliers, Delta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Idlewind Stormtroopers (a heavy tank battalion supported by a regiment of mechanized infantry)
Major Battle Site: Breezemont
Outcome: See text.

SCHWARTZ (DC)

March 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Trinaries Command and Second Battle, Supernova Striker (19th Striker Cluster, Delta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Ninth Pesht Regulars
Major Battle Site: Komache Fields

Outcome: Star Colonel Thilla Showers led her troops in a daring planetfall virtually on top of the Ninth. The brutal fight ended when Star Colonel Showers defeated *Tai-sa* Mark Graham, the Ninth's commander, in single combat. Insufficient aerospace cover on the part of the Smoke Jaguars, however, allowed the bulk of the Ninth's survivors to escape.

ROCKLAND (DC)

March 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Alpha and Bravo Stars (Galaxy Trinary Command, Delta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Rockland People's Army (1 mechanized infantry regiment)
Major Battle Site: Liberty Park
Outcome: The People's Army made a valiant stand in the park, determined to die on the patch of land that served as their memorial to freedom. The Jaguar OmniMechs destroyed the poorly equipped infantry within minutes of landing.

BJARRED (DC)

March 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: First Trinary Battle, Trinary Striker, Binary Elemental (Jaguar Grenadiers, Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: First and Second Bjarred Armored Regiments (heavy armor supported by infantry)
Major Battle Sites: Donrad Hill, Bird's Roost
Outcome: The Bjarred Armored Regiments set up an elaborate ambush for the Clans on Donrad Hill, sowing the entire surrounding area with vibrabombs. A Point of Elementals discovered the booby trap when the Point leader triggered a bomb, and the rest of Binary Elemental disarmed the explosive devices. In the meantime, Bjarred's defenders had retreated to the Bird's Roost, a crumbling Brian Castle. The Jaguars hunted their prey through the castle's maze of tunnels, and although Trinary Striker suffered severe casualties when part of the castle wall collapsed on top of it, the Jaguars eventually flushed out the defenders and destroyed them.

TURTLE BAY (DC)

March 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: 362nd Assault Cluster (Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: 14th Legion of Vega
Major Battle Site: See text.
Outcome: See text.

ALMUNGE (DC)

April 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Alpha Battle Star (Trinary Battle, First Jaguar Guards, Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Almunge Cadet Infantry Battalion
Major Battle Site: Sculyan Hills
Outcome: The cadets chose to defend their homeworld in the gently rolling Sculyan Hills. Though hopelessly outmatched, the cadet battalion fought hard for every inch of ground, taking heavy casualties. Grudgingly impressed with the cadets' courage in facing so formidable an opponent without flinching, Star Captain Chrisholm accepted the survivors' surrender and made them bondsmen.

VIRENLOFTA (DC)

April 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Trinary Assault, Alpha Elemental Star (225th Jaguar Battle Cluster, Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Seventh Hell's Brigade (2 mercenary 'Mech companies and 1 infantry battalion)
Major Battle Site: Port Shianty
Outcome: The Jaguars landed on top of the mercenaries as they attempted to lift offplanet, forcing them into a desperately uneven fight. The battle raged across the open fields around the spaceport for several hours, until two Points of Elementals finally managed to seize the Brigade's DropShips. Most of the unit died in an ill-fated attempt to recapture them.

STAPELFELD (DC)

April 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Alpha Command Star (Trinary Galaxy Command, Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: None
Major Battle Site: None
Outcome: The thinly populated world of Stapelfeld had no defenders, and so the local government surrendered to Galaxy Commander Frederick Wimmer as soon as the Clan forces landed. Much to their chagrin, the Jaguars quickly discovered that Staplefield had little of value to offer them.

SECOND WAVE

(May 3050)

SAWYER (DC)

May 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Supernova Battle (225th Jaguar Battle Cluster, Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: The Dark Horns mercenary company
Major Battle Site: Posit Woods
Outcome: The Dark Horns made their stand in a lightly wooded area east of the capital city. The Elementals of the Alpha Nova Battle Star spent the first day on Sawyer hunting down the dug-in mercenary unit. The Elementals met the Dark Horns early on the second day and flushed them straight into the arms of the Supernova's waiting OmniMechs.

NYKVARM (DC)

May 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Supernova Assault (Nineteenth Striker Cluster, Delta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Nykvarm Armored Battalion
Major Battle Sites: Nykvarm (capital city), Bollins Marsh, Lucerna Plains
Outcome: Nykvarm's defenders fought a mobile campaign, using their fast hovercraft to outdistance the slower-moving Jaguar assault 'Mechs. Despite a few initial victories, the world's defenders swiftly fell to Star Captain Castris and the troops of Supernova Assault. All but a few members of the Nykvarm Armored Battalion survived the fighting.

COUDOUX (DC)

May 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Alpha Battle Star (First Trinary Battle, Jaguar Grenadiers, Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Colette's Crusaders 'Mech Company
Major Battle Site: Lodio Spaceport
Outcome: The Jaguars overran their objectives and took the Crusaders' DropShip as spoils of war.

CHUPADERO (DC)

May 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: First Trinary Assault, Aerospace Trinary (214th Jaguar Dragoons, Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: First Chupadero Armored Legion (1 regiment of armor, 2 mobile infantry regiments, 1 aerospace wing)
Major Battle Sites: Dale Valley, Billoc Tunnels
Outcome: The Aerospace Trinary decimated the antiquated fighters sent against them, quickly winning air superiority and buying the Assault Trinary time to hunt down the rest of the planet's defenders at its leisure. The First Chupadero Armored Legion set 'Mech traps all over the floor of Dale Valley, but the Jaguar 'Mechs stepped over most of them and broke the tank regiment's ranks even as it retreated. The battered remnant of the defenders entered the nearby Billoc Tunnels, through which they intended to return to the capital city of Fredsin and make a last-ditch stand. Rather than wait for the Legion to come out of hiding, Star Captain Wesley Moon took his unit into the tunnels and destroyed all of the First Legion's remaining vehicles.

GARSTEDT (DC)

May 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Trinary Assault, Trinary Command, Binary Elemental (Seventh Jaguar Dragoons, Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Third Alshain Regulars
Major Battle Sites: Cordivas Grotto, Filmore Steppes
Outcome: *Tai-sa* Albert Brookhaven and his troops holed up in the Grotto, knowing that the Clan forces would have to pay a high cost to dislodge them. Rather than attacking the Third as Brookhaven had hoped, however, the Smoke Jaguar commander chose to wait out the Third Alshain Regulars. Realizing that he faced a choice between fighting or remaining trapped indefinitely by Clan Smoke Jaguar troops, *Tai-sa* Brookhaven scouted out the best possible avenue for retreat to the Third's DropShips and then led his forces out of the Grotto. During the running battle from the Grotto to the south end of the Filmore Steppes, where the Third's DropShips waited, a Star of OmniMechs chewed up Brookhaven's command company. Lighter elements of Trinary Command kept the rest of the Third busy until Trinary Assault arrived. The Smoke Jaguar forces destroyed an entire battalion of the Third Alshain Regulars; most of the remaining two battalions managed to retreat off-planet.

THIRD WAVE

(June–July 3050)

KABAH (DC)

June 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Alpha and Bravo Stars (Second Trinary Assault, 214th Jaguar Dragoons, Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: The Kabah Guards (2 'Mech companies)
Major Battle Site: The Kabah Palace
Outcome: The Jaguar OmniMechs defeated the Kabah Guards in a single hour-long battle on the jousting fields of the Kabah Palace. Only three of the Kabah Guards survived to become bondsmen.

JEANETTE (DC)

June 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Alpha and Bravo Battle Stars (First Trinary Battle, Fourth Jaguar Dragoons, Delta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Divine Light (2 Level II Com Guards units)
Major Battle Site: Jeanette HPG Station
Outcome: According to what the Smoke Jaguars had been able to learn, the world of Jeanette was undefended. They did not expect the battle they got from the Com Guards' unit Divine Light. The Light's commander, Precentor Kevin James, deplored ComStar's collusion with the Clans and chose to attack the Smoke Jaguars. The Jaguars, incensed at the assault by forces they had assumed were their allies, destroyed the unit. This incident temporarily strained relations between ComStar and the Clans until Precentor Martial Focht offered the Smoke Jaguar Khans a personal apology and agreed to pay restitution for the damage done to their 'Mechs.

SCHULYER (DC)

June 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Trinary Assault, Trinary Command, Binary Elemental (Seventh Jaguar Dragoons, Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Third Alshain Regulars (survivors from Garstedt)
Major Battle Sites: Olasin Fjord, Mitsuhama Ridge
Outcome: The Jaguars intended to finish off the battalions of the Third that had escaped them on Garstedt, but the resupplied Regulars proved harder to defeat than the Jaguars expected. In a series of staged battles that lasted almost a week, the Third moved from spot to spot on the planet, forcing the Jaguars to expend energy and ammunition following and attacking them. The Regulars managed to inflict so much damage on the Seventh Dragoons' Assault Trinary that Star Colonel Nevversan broke his bid and called in an extra Trinary. Before the reinforcements caught up with the Third, the Inner Sphere unit had lifted offworld, once again disappearing beyond the reach of the Jaguars.

HANOVER (DC)

July 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Third Battle Supernova (Fifth Jaguar Regulars, Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Hanover Militia (2 'Mech battalions)
Major Battle Site: Foothills of the Worldspine Mountains
Outcome: At first the battle went well for the militia; using supply caches hidden in the Worldspine Mountains, it was able to beat the undersupplied Jaguar forces to a standstill. After nearly nine days of stalemate, the Smoke Jaguar commander called down reinforcements and sent them to flank the Combine units. The final battle took place in a blizzard and inflicted heavy casualties on both sides. After extracting a promise from the Smoke Jaguar commander to treat the militia fighters honorably, the Hanover Militia's commander surrendered.

SAVINSVILLE (DC)

July 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: The Shroud Keshik
Defending Forces: Rolling Thunder (1 'Mech lance, 2 infantry companies)
Major Battle Site: Blue Ridge Valley
Outcome: SaKhan Sarah Weaver won the right to take Savinsville with the Shroud Keshik, but was disappointed to find her troops facing a two-bit mercenary unit using the same name as the more famous mercenary company of whom Wolf's Dragoons' reports had spoken. The saKhan and the Shroud Keshik made short work of the mercenaries, who broke and ran within minutes of the Clan landing.

ALBIERO (DC)

July 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Trinary Command, Trinary Striker, Alpha Elemental Star (First Jaguar Guards, Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Eighth Albiero Militia
Major Battle Sites: Dartson Ridge, the Little Hills
Outcome: The Eighth attacked the Jaguar forces immediately after the Jaguars landed and pushed them back to Dartson Ridge. At the ridge line, the Eighth's armored battalion launched a deadly rain of artillery, trapping the Jaguars until Trinary Striker broke out in a fierce assault and charged toward the artillery. While the Striker Trinary demolished the artillery units, Trinary Command and the Elemental Star located the defenders' supply caches. A successful ambush at the principal supply cache destroyed the militia regiment's command company; shortly afterward, all resistance collapsed save for a few companies that escaped into the hills. The escapees continue to harass the Smoke Jaguar occupying forces with hit-and-run guerrilla raids.

FOURTH WAVE

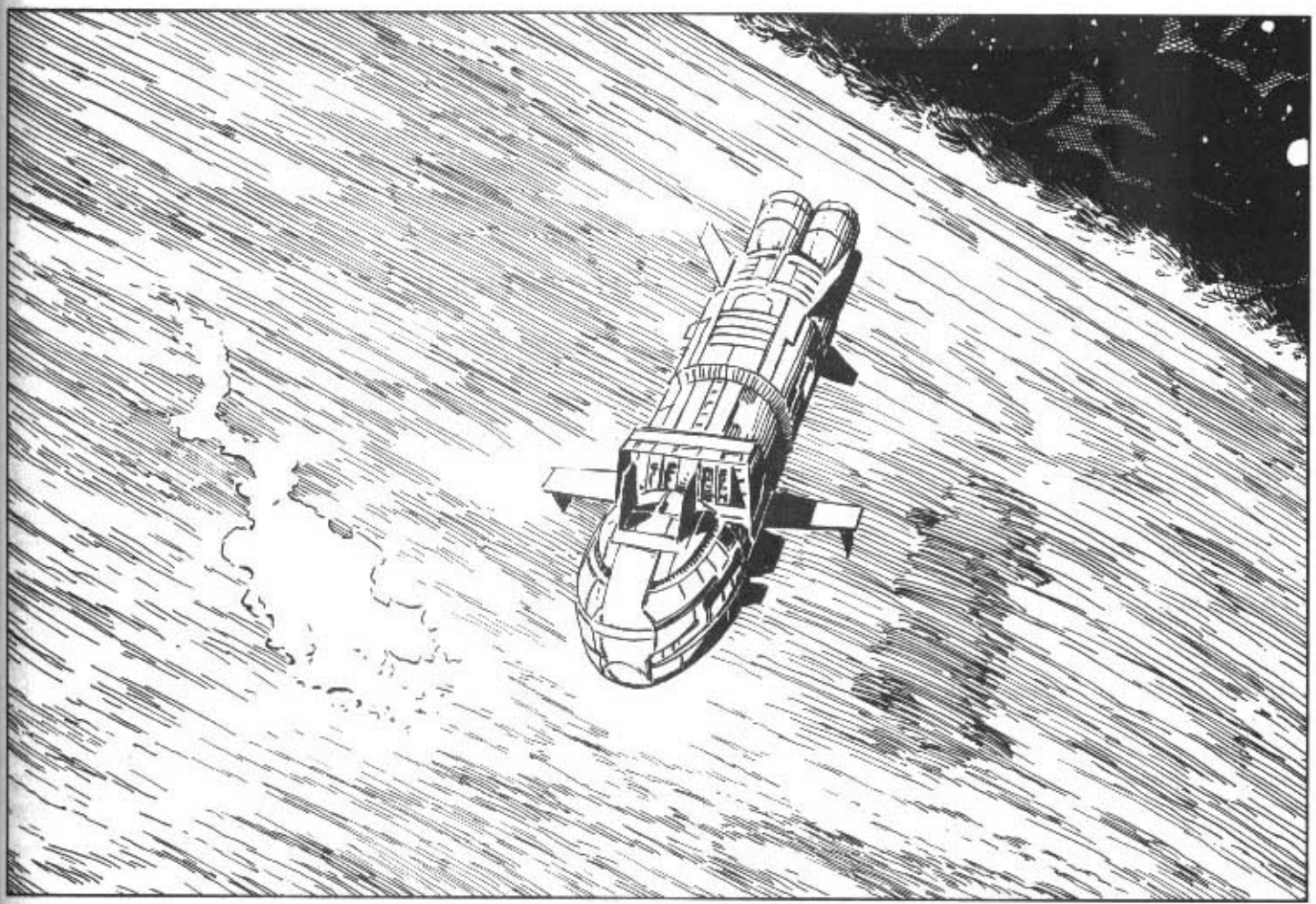
(August–October 3050)

LUZERNE (DC)

August 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: First and Second Trinary Battle (Fourth Jaguar Dragoons, Delta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Ninth Alshain Regulars (survivors from Jarett)
Major Battle Sites: Topeka Bay, Lawrence Pass
Outcome: Badly pounded by the Ghost Bears, the Ninth had learned Clan tactics the hard way. Both Jaguar Trinaries walked into well-orchestrated crossfire in Topeka Bay. Unfortunately for the Ninth, the Clan forces managed to force their way out of the firing zone and circle behind the Ninth. The Ninth fled north, taking heavy casualties. When they arrived at Lawrence Pass, the route through the last mountain range that separated them from Luzerne's capital city and spaceport, the Smoke Jaguars fired down on the Ninth from the walls of the pass and virtually destroyed the unit.

BANGOR (DC)

September 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Trinary Command, Trinary Assault, Second Trinary Battle (Jaguar Grenadiers, Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Second Benjamin Regulars
Major Battle Sites: Bangor Market, Division Shield



Outcome: The Jaguar forces attacked the Second Regulars from long range, then sent their heavy units crashing through the Regulars' lines. The Benjamin Regulars made a surprisingly orderly retreat but could not survive the Jaguars' unending onslaught. The Regulars finally fell to the Jaguars on Division Shield, a high plateau overlooking the capital city.

COURCHEVEL (DC)

September 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: First and Second Assault Supernovas, Trinary Command (362nd Assault Cluster, Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Tenth Alshain Regulars
Major Battle Sites: Dragon's Rift, Harcourt Plains
Outcome: The swift 'Mechs of the Supernovas overran the Tenth's hardened positions a full hour before the Regulars expected them to arrive. The Jaguars caught the Tenth in the open, and the battle quickly turned into a bloodbath. In a series of hard-fought battles, the Tenth retreated from the exposed Harcourt Plains into the rocky cover of the Dragon's Rift. Unfortunately for the Tenth, Star Colonel Emilie Wimmer had anticipated this move and sent her Command Trinary into the Rift to await the Regulars. Shortly after dawn on the second day of fighting, the battered Tenth surrendered.

JERONIMO (DC)

September 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Trinary Assault, Second Trinary Battle, Binary Elemental (Third Jaguar Cavaliers, Delta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Fifth Galedon Regulars
Major Battle Site: Topside Woods
Outcome: After several hours of fighting against the Fifth Regulars in hardened positions, Star Colonel Paul Moon was forced to break his bid and call down the Second Battle Trinary. With the addition of these forces, the Jaguars triumphed over the Fifth. Only a battalion and a half escaped the planet.

BYESVILLE (DC)

October 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Binary Elemental (Sixth Jaguar Dragoons, Alpha Galaxy)

Defending Forces: The Byesville Militia (1 armored battalion, 2 infantry battalions)
Major Battle Sites: Rydersin, Killogny, Peel
Outcome: In a single night, the Elementals found and took control of the militia's headquarters. The next morning, the militia surrendered.

WOLCOTT (DC)

October 3050
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: 225th Jaguar Battle Cluster, Galaxy Command Trinary (Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: First and Second Genyosha
Major Battle Site: Swamp Valley
Outcome: See text.

FIFTH WAVE

(November 3051–April 3052)

MARSHDALE (DC)

November 3051
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Third Jaguar Cavaliers (Delta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Sixth Ghost Regiment
Major Battle Sites: Drenden, Asquare Field, Thoughnet
Outcome: Reassigned to Marshdale during the year-long lull in the Clan invasion, the Sixth Ghost Regiment had set up a complicated series of defenses across Marshdale's smallest continent. The Sixth Ghost led the Third Cavaliers on a wild chase up and down the continent, snaring more than a few of the Clan 'Mechs in the more ingenious defenses and traps. Tiring of the game, the Third's commander sent his heavy elements into the city of Drenden and ordered them to tear it up as a means of drawing the Sixth Ghost Regiment into open battle. The Sixth complied, meeting the Jaguars in Asquare Field where the Combine troops had sown bombs and traps. Remembering their earlier experience, the Jaguars prudently sent members of the technician caste ahead of the Clan 'Mechs to trip the bombs in advance. The Cavaliers then cut a swath through the Sixth Ghost. The Sixth made an orderly retreat to the city of Thoughnet, where the Cavaliers overtook and defeated them.

LABREA (DC)

November 3051
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Trinary Assault (Fifth Jaguar Regulars, Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Third Royal Labrean Defense Regiment (2 armored battalions, aerospace support)
Major Battle Site: Colodney
Outcome: The Labrean defenders' aerospace fighters initially pinned down the Jaguars, who had not expected to face air elements because the Third Royal's commander had failed to mention the aerospace wing in his answer to the *batchall*. The Jaguar forces retaliated for what they considered the Labreans' falsehood by destroying the grounded air units in a nighttime raid, and then hunted down the armored battalions within a week.

HYNER (DC)

November 3051
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: First Striker Cluster (Delta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Second Arkab Legion
Major Battle Sites: Trent's Glen, Wessen, Binar Heights
Outcome: Khan Hoyt personally commanded the forces invading this world, dropping under heavy cloud cover to immediately engage the Second Arkab Legion. The planet's defenders, fighting in Star League-era BattleMechs whose presence startled the Clans, gave the Smoke Jaguar forces a tough fight. As the Clans slogged through Trent's Glen, the Legionnaires whittled them down using hit-and-run tactics. As the Clans cleared the glen, they turned and attacked the Second en masse. The Legion lines held initially, then buckled under the unrelenting fury of the Clan assault. More than half of the Legionnaires fled into the wooded glen in which they had recently fought, giving their Clan pursuers the slip and ultimately escaping the planet under cover of darkness.

OUTER VOLTA (DC)

November 3051
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Alpha Star (the Shroud Keshik)
Defending Forces: None
Major Battle Sites: None
Outcome: The planetary council surrendered to the Smoke Jaguars before the Clan forces landed.

AVON (DC)

November 3051
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Fifth Jaguar Regulars (Alpha Galaxy), Fourth Jaguar Dragoons (Delta Galaxy), 214th Jaguar Dragoons (Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Second Amphigean Light Assault Group
Major Battle Sites: Devon Highlands, Fresno, Beachweld
Outcome: See text.

LUTHIEN (DC)

January 3052
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Alpha, Beta and Delta Galaxies

Defending Forces: First Sword of Light, Second Legion of Vega, First and Second Genyosha, Otomo ('Mech regiment), Dragon's Claws, Wolf's Dragoons (5 regiments), Kell Hounds (2 regiments)
Major Battle Sites: See text.
Outcome: See text.

YAMAROVKA (DC)

February 3052
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Trinary Striker, Binary Elemental (Sixth Jaguar Dragoons, Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Legion of Yamarovka (2 'Mech companies)
Major Battle Site: Lasden Bluffs
Outcome: The Sixth Dragoons' OmniMechs tore through the defending 'Mech companies, destroying them before the Elementals arrived on the planet.

ASGARD (DC)

February 3052
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Nineteenth Striker Cluster, Fourth Jaguar Dragoons (Delta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Third Benjamin Regulars
Major Battle Sites: Vernan, Odin's Retreat, Ragnarok Plains
Outcome: As soon as the Jaguar units landed, the Third Regulars began a round-the-clock artillery bombardment. To escape the Third's guns, the Jaguars pushed forward in a night march and arrived at the city of Vernan a whole day before the Regulars had expected them. In a fierce battle, the Third unleashed its heavy and assault 'Mechs to tie up the attackers while the rest of its forces retreated to a secondary line near the rock formations known as Odin's Retreat. The veteran unit dug in and held the line for almost a month in the face of a nonstop Jaguar assault. Eventually, the assault elements of the Fourth Jaguar Dragoons broke through the Third's defenses and rolled up the defending unit's western flank. The Third pulled back across the Ragnarok Plains, fighting a running battle all the way to their DropShips. A little more than a battalion escaped Asgard intact.

PORT ARTHUR (DC)

March 3052
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: The Shroud Keshik, Seventh Jaguar Dragoons (Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: First Proserpina Hussars
Major Battle Sites: Zuave Vale, Disher, Point aux Trembles
Outcome: SaKhan Weaver directed the battle for this resource-rich world. The Jaguars immediately engaged the First Hussars, forcing the veteran unit to retreat to a second line of defense. The pursuing Jaguars bogged down at the secondary line, failing to dislodge the dug-in defenders. SaKhan Weaver ordered a headhunter Star to attack the Hussars' command company; the headhunters destroyed half the Hussars' command units, but *Tai-sa* Jeong Moon Lee narrowly escaped. The Hussars retreated again, drawing the Smoke Jaguars after them until the Clan units came within firing range of several concealed remote-firing weapons in hardened positions. The Jaguars spent almost a week hunting for and dismantling the hidden heavy weapons while the First launched sporadic raids on the Jaguars' supply depots. Angered at the "dishonorable" automated attacks, the Seventh Dragoons mercilessly hounded the Hussars, eventually forcing the battered unit to abandon the world.

TARAZED (DC)

April 3052
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Trinary Assault, Trinary Battle (First Jaguar Guards, Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Seventh and Thirteenth Tarazed Armored Regiments
Major Battle Site: Lucerne
Outcome: The Jaguars landed and immediately launched a ferocious attack, their assault OmniMechs making short work of both defending regiments.

KIAMBA (DC)

March 3052
Clan Smoke Jaguar Forces: Galaxy Command Trinary, Alpha Galaxy
Defending Forces: Third Proserpina Hussars
Major Battle Sites: Collins Ridge, Hecate's Swamp
Outcome: Knowing that the Third Proserpina Hussars were combat veterans, Khan Hoyt personally led the assault against them. Immediately on landing, the Jaguars found themselves battling armor elements attached to the Third. As the OmniMechs fought off their attackers, the Third's aerospace fighters launched a strafing attack on the Jaguar DropShips and severely damaged one of them before the Jaguars forced the fighters from the sky. The Jaguars then pursued the retreating armored battalion into Hecate's Swamp, where the Third sprung its deathtrap. The armored battalion's personnel mixed kerosene with the murky swamp water and set it alight, engulfing two Clan Trinaries in flames.

Infuriated by this underhanded tactic, Khan Hoyt unleashed a headhunter squad to decapitate the Third. *Tai-sa* Weston, commanding officer of the Third Hussars, died in the attack along with most of his command company. The Jaguars then forced the demoralized Third back to Collins Ridge, where the embattled Hussars made a brave but futile last stand.

FRONT-LINE UNIT SUMMARY

CLAN SMOKE JAGUAR (HQ)

Khan Lincoln Osis
Aide de Camp: Star Colonel Devon Osis

COMMAND TRINARY (THE JAGUARS' DEN)

Star Captain Hillary Bowen
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Command Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Delta and Echo Command Stars (5 Elemental Points each)
Gamma and Omega Command Stars (10 fighters each)
Naval Complement
WarShips: *Streaking Mist (Black Lion), FireCrest (Congress), The Iowa, Sabre Cat (Essex)*

CLAN SMOKE JAGUAR SECONDARY COMMAND

CO: saKhan Brandon Howell

COMMAND TRINARY (THE SHROUD KESHIK)

Star Captain Caslon Stiles
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Command Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Delta Command Star (5 Elemental Points)
Echo Command Star (10 fighters)

SMOKE JAGUAR NAVAL RESERVE

(The Jaguar's Stride)
Star Commodore Paulina Perez
Reserve arm (3 Clan Monoliths, 7 Clan Invaders, 12 Clan Merchants, 9 Clan Star Lords, 7 Clan Scouts)

BETA GALAXY (THE MISTWEAVERS)

4 Clusters
CO: Galaxy Commander Mikhail Ward

GALAXY COMMAND TRINARY (THE SWATH KESHIK)

Star Colonel Jack Bowen
Alpha Command Star (5 OmniMechs)
Bravo and Charlie Command Stars (5 OmniMechs each, 2 Fighters each)

1ST JAGUAR GUARDS (THE WHITEWATCH)

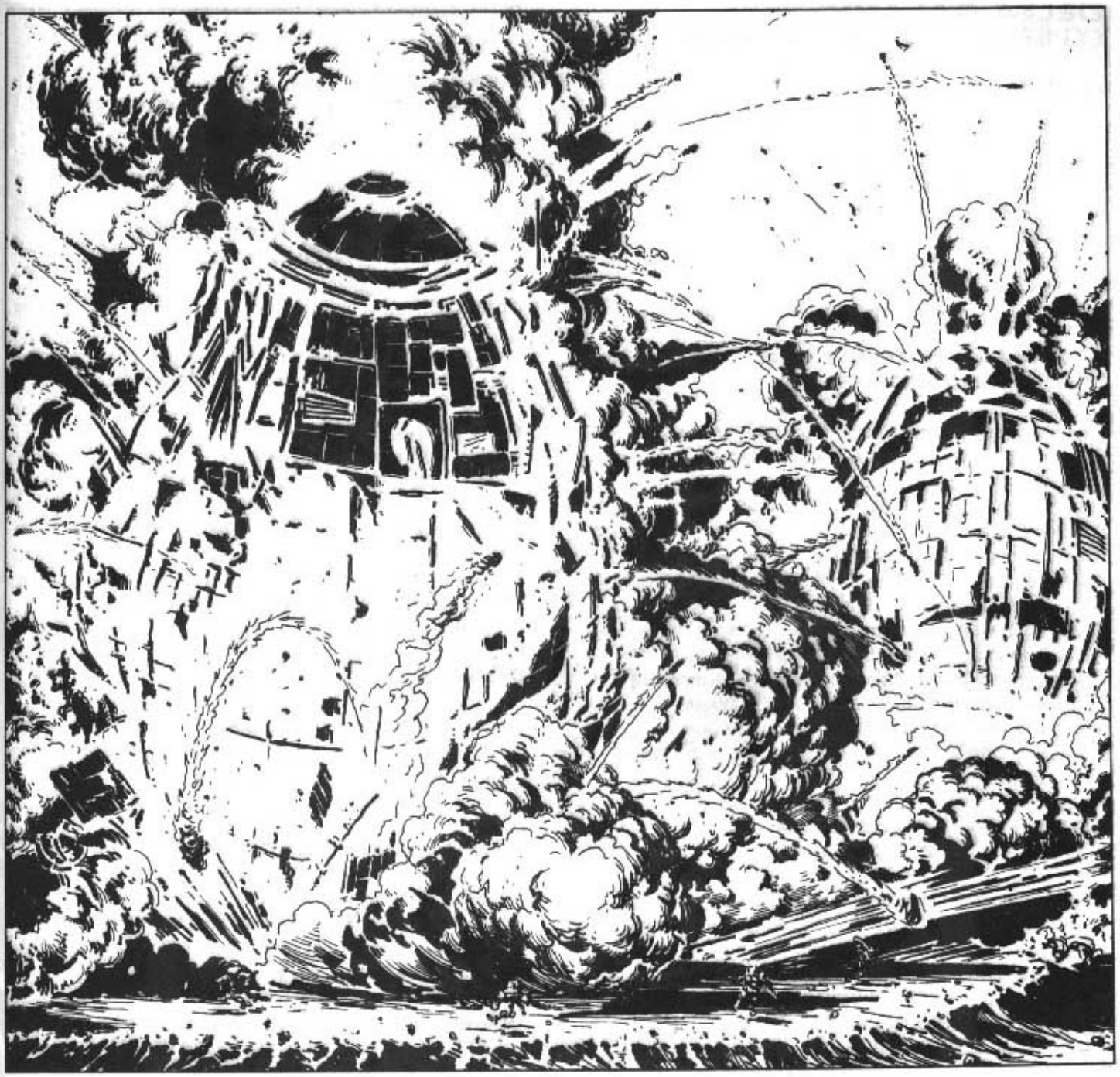
Star Colonel Terrance Stiles
Trinary Command (Star Captain Glen Osis)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Command Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Trinary Battle (Star Captain Anthony Chrisholm)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Battle Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Trinary Striker (Star Captain Del Bowen)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Striker Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Binary Elemental (Star Captain Dewen Showers)
Alpha and Bravo Stars (5 Elemental Points each)
Trinary Assault (Star Captain Monasa Chrisholm)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Assault Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Delta Fighter Star (10 Fighters support)

362ND ASSAULT CLUSTER (THE SILVER JAGUARS)

Star Colonel Emilie Wimmer
Trinary Command (Star Captain Silva DesCastris)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Command Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Trinary Battle (Star Captain Dwayne Myers)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Battle Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
First Trinary Assault (Star Captain Lois Furey)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Assault Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Second Trinary Assault (Star Captain Stephan Osis)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Assault Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Binary Elemental (Star Captain Gran Osis)
Alpha and Bravo Stars (5 Elemental Points each)
Fighter Star (Star Captain Carlo)
10 Fighters

267TH BATTLE CLUSTER (THE DEVIL'S MIST)

Star Colonel Diane Perez
Trinary Command (Star Captain Robert Kotare)
Alpha and Bravo Command Nova (4 OmniMechs, 4 Elemental Points each)
Charlie Command Star (5 Elemental Points)
Trinary Assault (Star Captain Carol Montizima)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Assault Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
First Trinary Battle (Star Captain Marian Showers)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Battle Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Binary Elemental (Star Captain Samuel Levi)
Alpha and Bravo Stars (5 Elemental Points each)
Second Trinary Battle (Star Captain James Hildenrath)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Battle Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Supernova Battle (Star Captain Stephan Bowen)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Nova Stars (5 OmniMechs, 5 Elemental Points each)



2ND JAGUAR GUARDS (THE STRIKING CATS)

Star Colonel Jefferson DesCastris

Trinary Command (Star Captain Michael Myers)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Command Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

First Trinary Assault (Star Captain Wayne Komolosi)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Assault Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

Aerospace Trinary (Star Captain Leslie Kotare)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Fighter stars (10 Fighters each)

Binary Elemental (Star Captain Nicholas Furey)
Alpha and Bravo Stars (5 Elemental Points each)

Second Trinary Assault (Star Captain Ellen Stiles)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Assault Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

Trinary Striker (Star Captain Roman Perez)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Striker Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

DELTA GALAXY (THE CLOUD RANGERS)

2 Clusters
CO: Galaxy Commander Hang Mehta

GALAXY COMMAND TRINARY (THE SKYRIDERS KESHIK)

Star Captain Sumner Osis
Alpha and Bravo Command Nova (5 OmniMechs, 4 Elemental Points each)
Charlie Command Fighters Star (10 Fighters)
Delta Command Artillery Support Star (5 OmniMechs)

3RD JAGUAR CAVALIERS (THE STORMRIDERS)

Star Colonel Paul Moon
Trinary Command (Star Captain Edwina Showers)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Command Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
First Trinary Battle (Star Captain Tamera Osis)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Battle Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Trinary Assault (Star Captain Oleg Nevversan)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Assault Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Binary Elemental (Star Captain Nanci)
Alpha and Bravo Stars (5 Elemental Points each)
Second Trinary Battle (Star Captain Hashka Komolosi)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Battle Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Supernova Striker (Star Captain Ramon Showers)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Nova Stars (5 OmniMechs, 5 Fighters Points each)

19TH STRIKER CLUSTER (THE RAZOR'S EDGE)

Star Colonel Thilla Showers
Trinary Command (Star Captain Logan Moon)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Command Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Trinary Battle (Star Captain Bryston Nevversan)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Battle Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Binary Elemental (Star Captain Kevin Furey)
Alpha and Bravo Stars (5 Elemental Points each)
Supernova Assault (Star Captain Reshondra DesCastris)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Nova Stars (5 OmniMechs each, 5 Elemental Points each)
Supernova Battle (Star Captain Erik Osis)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Nova Stars (5 OmniMechs each, 5 Elemental Points each)
Supernova Striker (Star Captain Rhonda Stiles)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Nova Stars (5 OmniMechs each, 5 Elemental Points each)
Binary Air (Star Captain Gera Perez)
Alpha and Bravo Fighters Stars (10 Fighters each)

EPSILON GALAXY (THE TEETH OF JUSTICE)

2 Clusters
CO: Galaxy Commander Jin Mehta

GALAXY COMMAND TRINARY (THE DARK PROWLERS)

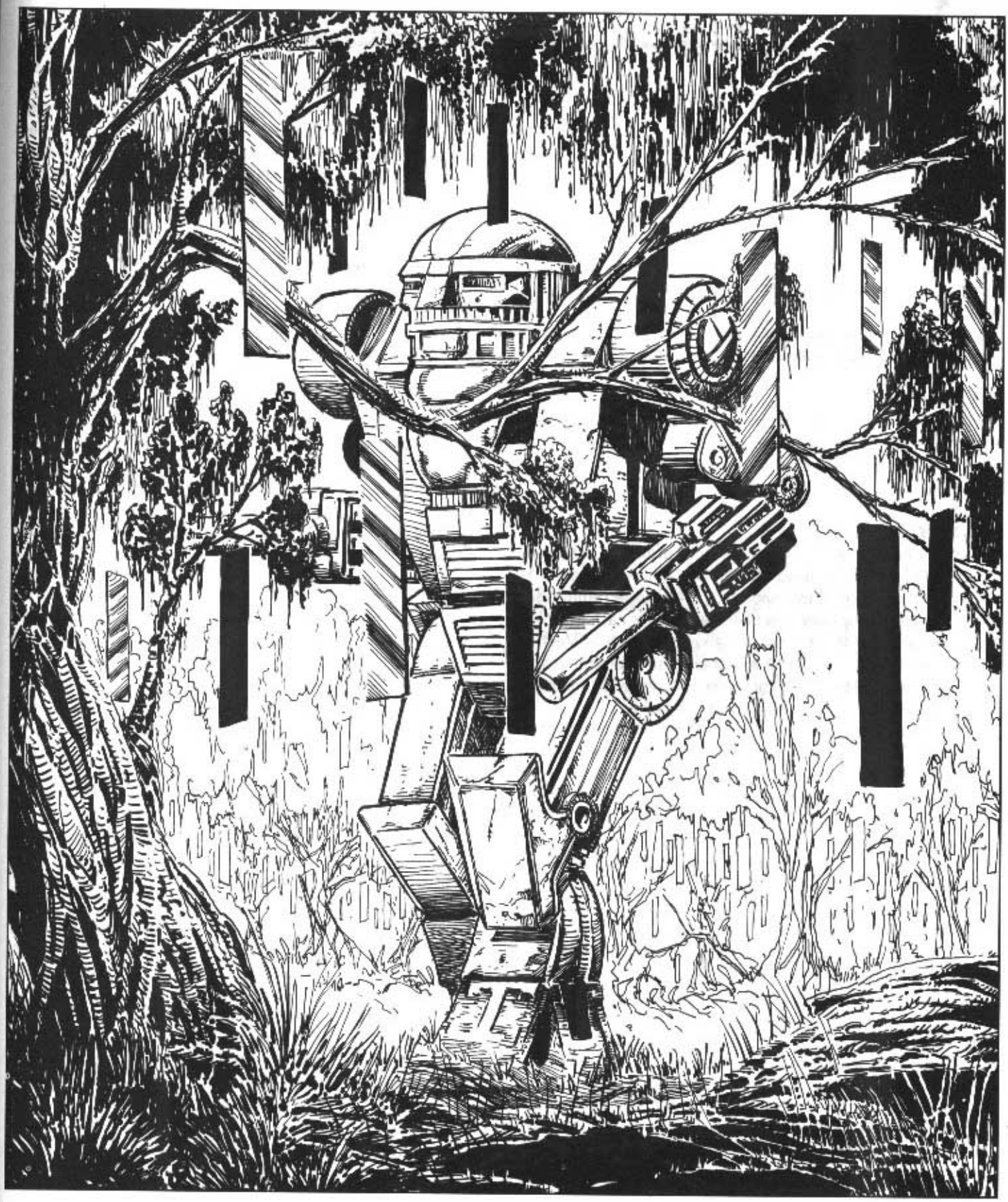
Star Captain Hilliard Levi
Alpha and Bravo Command Nova (5 OmniMechs, 4 Elemental Points each)
Charlie Command Fighters Star (10 Fighters)
Delta Command Artillery Support Star (5 OmniMechs)

4TH JAGUAR DRAGOONS

Star Colonel Aaron Showers
Trinary Command (Star Captain Lavina Showers)
Alpha and Bravo Command Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Charlie Command Star (5 Elemental Points)
First Trinary Battle (Star Captain Jillian Osis)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Battle Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Trinary Assault (Star Captain Ranna Bowen)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Assault Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Binary Elemental (Star Captain Sersa)
Alpha and Bravo Stars (5 Elemental Points each)
Second Trinary Battle (Star Captain Mambrams Nevversan)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Battle Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Support Star (Star Commander David Pryde)
Alpha Artillery Support Star (5 OmniMechs)

7TH JAGUAR DRAGOONS (THE LEAPING JAGUAR)

Star Colonel Sidney Nevversan
Trinary Command (Star Captain Erlish Wirth)
Alpha and Bravo Command Novas (4 OmniMechs, 4 Elemental Points each)
Charlie Fighter Star (10 Elemental Points)
Trinary Assault (Star Captain Delia Nevversan)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Assault Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Trinary Battle (Star Captain Jose Osis)
Alpha, Bravo and Battle Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Charlie Elemental Star (25 Elemental Points)
Binary Elemental (Star Captain Alfa Bowen)
Alpha and Bravo Stars (5 Elemental Points each)
Trinary Striker (Star Captain Peter)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Striker Stars (5 OmniMechs each)



CAULDRON-BORN

Mass: 65 tons
Chassis: Endo Steel
Power Plant: 325 XL
Cruising Speed: 54.4 kph
Maximum Speed: 80.1 kph
Jump Jets: None
Jump Capacity: None
Armor: Ferro-Fibrous
Armament:
30 tons of pod space
Manufacturer: Unknown
Communications System: Unknown
Targeting and Tracking System: Unknown

OVERVIEW

First seen during the battle of Luthien, the ability of this OmniMech to take damage and remain operational earned it the name *Cauldron-Born*, after the unstoppable zombies of Irish myth.

CAPABILITIES

The *Cauldron-Born* arsenal is built around a massive Gauss rifle, which occupies the 'Mech's entire right arm. A 75mm dual-purpose autocannon occupies the left arm. The *Cauldron-Born* carries two tons of ammunition for each of these weapons. An LRM-10 launcher juts above the birdlike 'Mech's left shoulder, while an SRM-2 launcher in an over-and-under mount graces the machine's right breast. A single ER medium laser is the *Cauldron-Born*'s only energy weapon.

Alternate Configuration A carries a mammoth 203mm autocannon in its right torso. Three tons of ammunition ensures the pilot will not run out of close-range firepower too early in the fight. ER large lasers and heavy machine guns are mounted in each arm. The right arm also supports a medium pulse laser, while the left carries an anti-infantry flamer. A trio of ER medium lasers sprout from the machine's left torso. Two of these weapons fire into the 'Mech's rear arc.

The *Cauldron-Born-B* carries an arsenal of energy weapons. Each arm carries an ER PPC and a large pulse laser in side-by-side mounts. The machine's torso mounts a pair of medium pulse lasers, and an active probe and target acquisition gear allow the pilot to detect hidden enemy units. One Kurita warrior called the *Cauldron-Born-B* the best-armed forward observer ever built.

Alternate Configuration C boasts a pair of LRM-15 launchers and a pair of SRM-6 launchers, with two tons of ammo provided for each. A pair of 25mm high-speed chain guns allows the *Cauldron-Born-C* to place more accurate, if less effective, fire on an enemy's position.

DEPLOYMENT

So far, only the First Jaguar Guard Cluster appears to use the *Cauldron-Born*. Because only three machines have been engaged by Inner Sphere warriors, most believe the design is so new that the other Clans have not yet deployed them. Clan warriors taken prisoner in the Kado-guchi Valley provided the information on the B and C variants.

Type: **Cauldron-Born**
Technology Base: Clan OmniMech
Tonnage: 65

Equipment		**Mass**
Internal Structure:	Endo Steel	3.5
Engine:	325 XL	12
Walking MP:	5	
Running MP:	8	
Jumping MP:	0	
Heat Sinks:	13 [26]	3
Gyro:		4
Cockpit:		3
Armor Factor:	182	9.5

	Internal Structure	*Armor Value*
Head	3	9
Center Torso	21	32
Center Torso (rear)		9
R/L Torso	15	22
R/L Torso (rear)		8
R/L Arm	10	17
R/L Leg	15	19

Weight and Space Allocation

Location	*Fixed*	*Spaces Remaining*
Head	1 Ferro-Fibrous	0
Center Torso	1 Endo Steel	0
	1 Ferro-Fibrous	
Right Torso	2 Engine	9
	1 Endo Steel	
Left Torso	2 Engine	7
	1 Endo Steel	
	1 Ferro-Fibrous	
Right Arm	2 Ferro-Fibrous	6
Left Arm	2 Ferro-Fibrous	6
Right Leg	2 Endo Steel	0
Left Leg	2 Endo Steel	0

CLAN SMOKE JAGUAR

Primary Weapons Configuration

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
Gauss Rifle	RA	6	12
Ammo (Gauss) 16	RT	2	2
LB 5-X AC	LA	4	7
Ammo (AC) 40	LA	2	2
LRM-10	LT	1	2.5
Ammo (LRM) 24	LT	2	2
ER Medium Laser	LT	1	1
SRM-2	RT	1	.5
Ammo (SRM) 50	RT	1	1

Alternate Configuration A

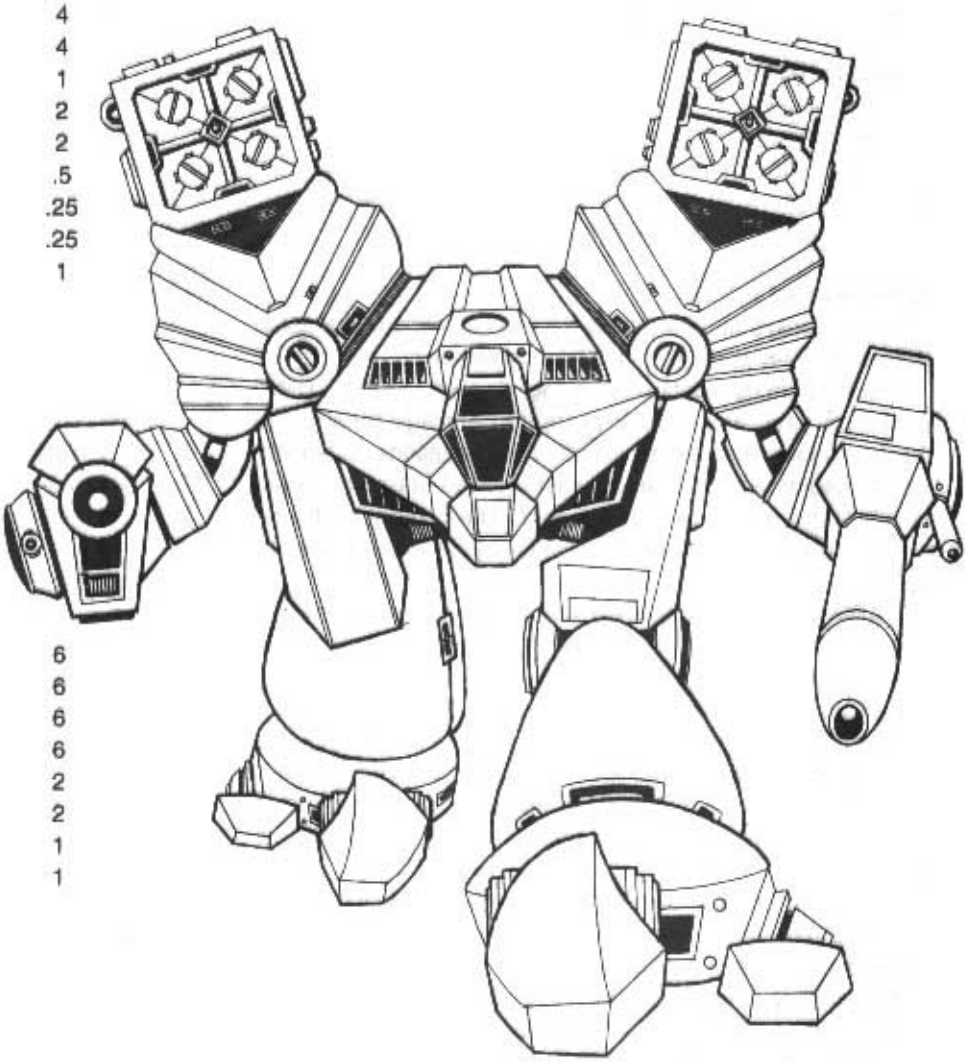
Ultra AC/20	RT	8	12
Ammo (AC) 15	LT	3	3
ER Large Laser	RA	1	4
ER Large Laser	LA	1	4
ER Medium Laser	LT	1	1
2 ER Medium Lasers	LT (R)	2	2
Medium Pulse Laser	RA	1	2
Flamer	LA	1	.5
Machine Gun	RA	1	.25
Machine Gun	LA	1	.25
Ammo (MG) 200	LT	1	1

Alternate Configuration B

ER PPC	RA	2	6
ER PPC	LA	2	6
Large Pulse Laser	RA	2	6
Large Pulse Laser	LA	2	6
Medium Pulse Laser	RT	1	2
Medium Pulse Laser	LT	1	2
Active Probe	RT	1	1
TAG	LT	1	1

Alternate Configuration C

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
SRM-6	RA	1	1.5
Ammo (SRM) 30	RT	2	2
SRM-6	LA	1	1.5
Ammo (SRM) 30	LT	2	2
LRM-15	RT	2	3.5
Ammo (LRM) 16	RT	2	2
LRM-15	LT	2	3.5
Ammo (LRM) 16	LT	2	2
Ultra AC/2	RA	2	5
Ammo (AC) 45	RA	1	1
Ultra AC/2	LA	2	5
Ammo (AC) 45	LA	1	1



HANKYU

Mass: 30 tons
Chassis: Endo Steel
Power Plant: 240 XL
Cruising Speed: 83.4 kph
Maximum Speed: 128.6 kph
Jump Jets: 6
Jump Capacity: 180 meters
Armor: Ferro-Fibrous
Armament:
9.5 tons of pod space available
Manufacturer: Unknown
Communications System: Unknown
Targeting and Tracking System: Unknown

OVERVIEW

The *Hankyu*, or "Short Bow," first appeared in the Inner Sphere during the Battle of Luthien. Apparently the Smoke Jaguars' attempt to create a fast scout 'Mech, the *Hankyu*'s armor is somewhat lighter than that of comparable Inner Sphere designs, but its speed makes it a difficult target.

CAPABILITIES

The *Hankyu* carries a wide variety of weapons and electronics. All variants carry an anti-infantry flamer.

In its primary configuration the *Hankyu* mounts LRM-5 packs on each arm. CASE-protected storage bins in the machine's torso hold ammunition for these weapons. Extended-range medium lasers in each wrist and the standard flamer complete the complement of weapons. The primary configuration also boasts an active probe system, target-acquisition gear, and a full ECM suite.

Alternate Configuration A replaces the long-range missile systems with Streak SRM-6 packs. A single, small pulse laser provides precision fire, and the flamer completes the weapon load in this close-combat version.

Alternate Configuration B boasts a diverse mix of long- and short-range weapons. A multibarrel LB 2-X autocannon sprouts from the machine's right hand, backed up by the flared muzzle of the standard flamer. A pair of medium lasers hang below the left wrist.

Alternate Configuration C modifies the *Hankyu* for extended scouting missions. This configuration features two extended-range medium lasers in each wrist, and a medium pulse laser in both the right and left torso. The left torso also houses the standard flamer. An active probe allows the pilot to spot hidden or shut-down 'Mechs at a safe distance.

DEPLOYMENT

Clan Smoke Jaguar is the primary user of the *Hankyu*, though the Nova Cats and Steel Vipers are also rumored to employ the design.

Type: **Hankyu**
Technology Base: Clan OmniMech
Tonnage: 30

Equipment		**Mass**
Internal Structure:	Endo Steel	1.5
Engine:	240XL	6
Walking MP:	8	
Running MP:	12	
Jumping MP:	6	
Heat Sinks:	10 [20]	
Gyro:		3
Cockpit:		3
Armor Factor:	77	4

	Internal Structure	*Armor Value*
Head	3	9
Center Torso	10	9
Center Torso (rear)		5
R/L Torso	7	8
R/L Torso (rear)		4
R/L Arm	5	7
R/L Leg	7	8

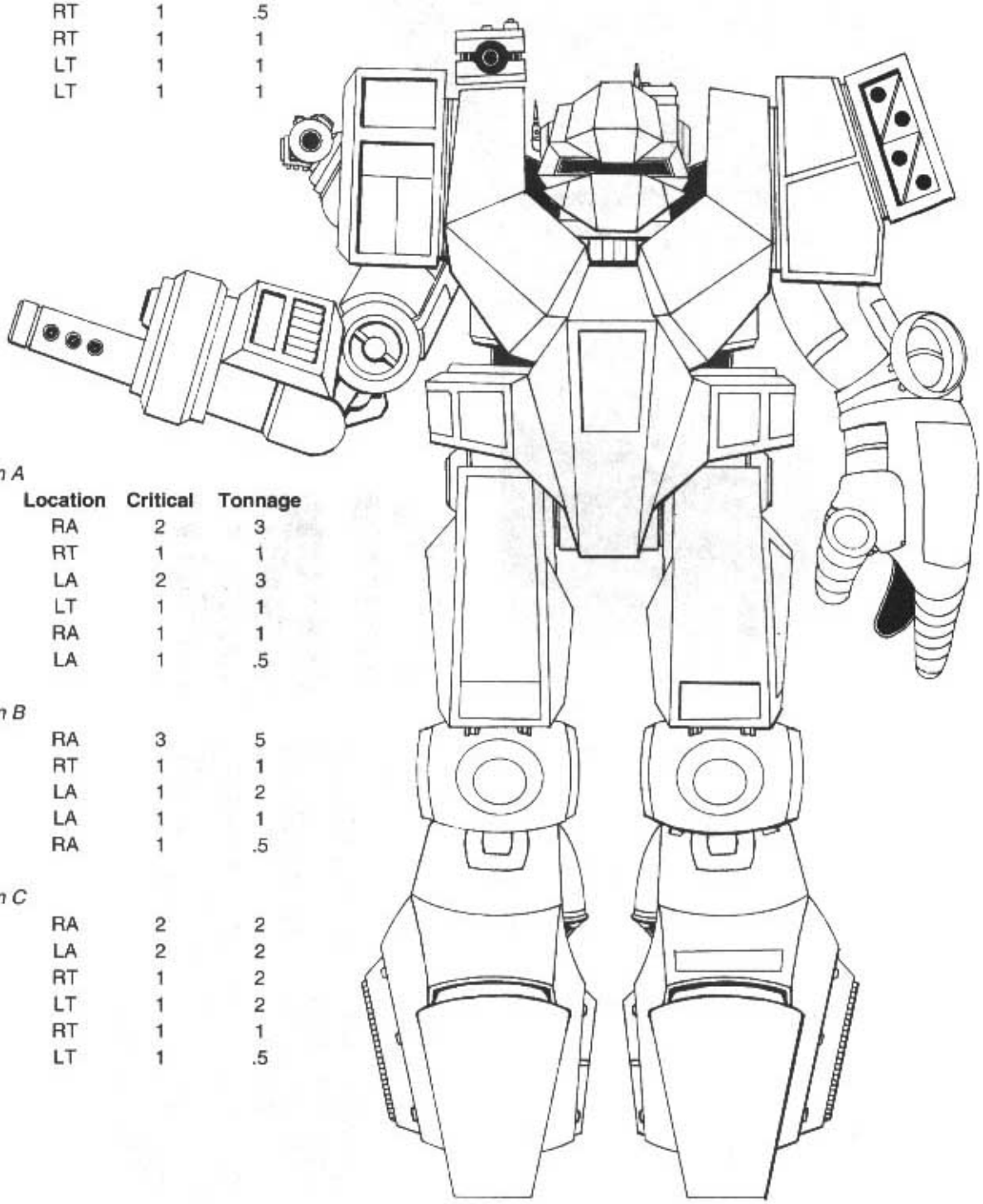
Weight and Space Allocation

Location	*Fixed*	*Spaces Remaining*
Head	1 Ferro-Fibrous	0
Center Torso	2 Jump Jets	0
Right Torso	2 Ferro-Fibrous	4
	2 Endo Steel	
	2 Engine	
	2 Double Heat Sink	
Left Torso	2 Ferro-Fibrous	5
	3 Endo Steel	
	2 Engine	
Right Arm	1 Ferro-Fibrous	6
	1 Endo Steel	
Left Arm	1 Ferro-Fibrous	6
	1 Endo Steel	
Right Leg	2 Jump Jet	0
Left Leg	2 Jump Jet	0

CLAN SMOKE JAGUAR

Primary Weapons Configuration

Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
LRM 5	RA	1	1
Ammo (LRM) 24	RT	1	1
LRM 5	LA	1	1
Ammo (LRM) 24	LT	1	1
ER Medium Laser	RA	1	1
ER Medium Laser	LA	1	1
Flamer	RT	1	.5
Active Probe	RT	1	1
TAG	LT	1	1
ECM Suite	LT	1	1



Alternate Configuration A

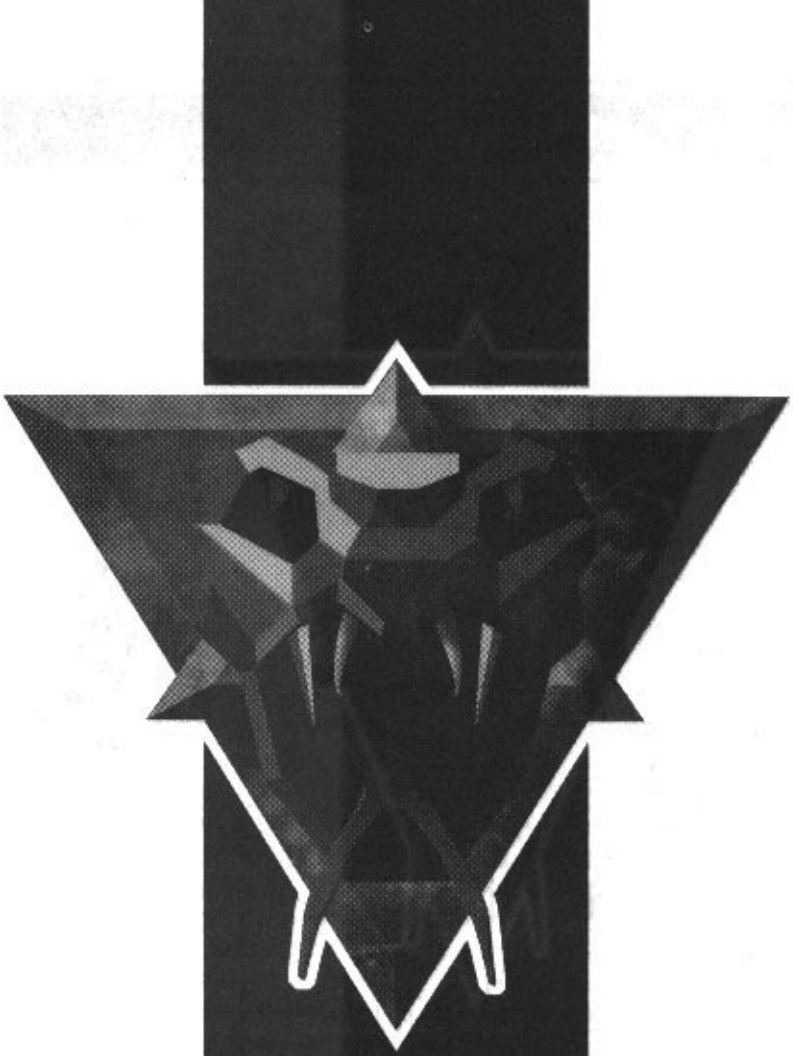
Weapons and Ammo	Location	Critical	Tonnage
Streak SRM 6	RA	2	3
Ammo (SRM) 15	RT	1	1
Streak SRM 6	LA	2	3
Ammo (SRM) 15	LT	1	1
Small Pulse Laser	RA	1	1
Flamer	LA	1	.5

Alternate Configuration B

LB 2-X AC	RA	3	5
Ammo (AC) 45	RT	1	1
Medium Pulse Laser	LA	1	2
ER Medium Laser	LA	1	1
Flamer	RA	1	.5

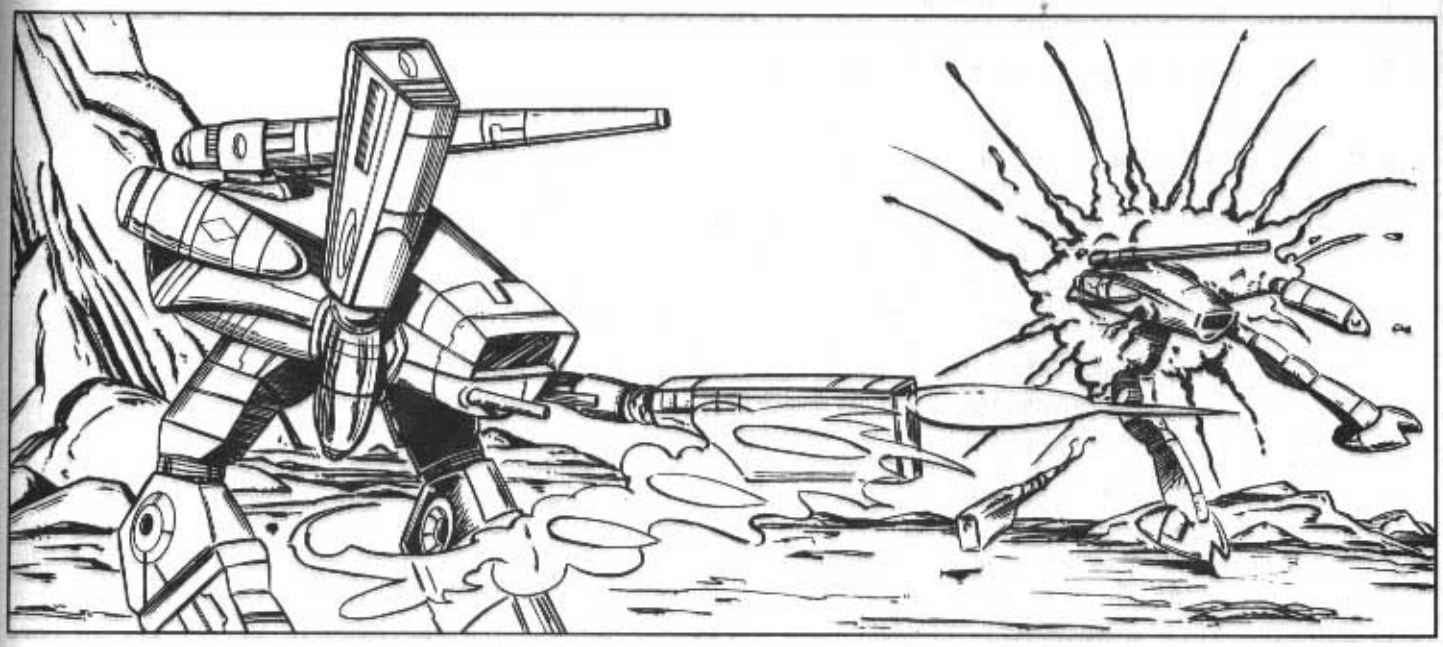
Alternate Configuration C

2 ER Medium Lasers	RA	2	2
2 ER Medium Lasers	LA	2	2
Medium Pulse Laser	RT	1	2
Medium Pulse Laser	LT	1	2
Active Probe	RT	1	1
Flamer	LT	1	.5



CLAN STEEL VIPER

CLAN STEEL VIPER



A truly fearsome beast, the great viper of Arcadia possesses strength and tenacity unmatched by any other predator on that world. It coils around its prey in a crushing embrace, then finishes its kill with a deadly poison. The warriors of the Clan I name Steel Viper show remarkable tenacity in battle and in their service to our great mission. May they continue to serve with unshakable faith, and may their opponents learn to fear the fangs of the Steel Vipers.

—*From* Birth of a New Society: The Collected Writings of Nicholas Kerensky, *Strana Mechty Press, 3025*

Clan Steel Viper presents something of a paradox. They follow more fiercely the Clan way and the code of the warrior than any other Clan, and at the same time believe in a unique vision that may ultimately temper the aggression of the Clans. This seeming paradox rises from the Vipers' deeply held conviction that they alone understand that Nicholas Kerensky's true vision called for the Clans to conquer the former worlds of the Terran Hegemony and then to restore the Star League, not by coercing the people of the Inner Sphere to accept Clan leadership, but by cooperating with the existing Great Houses to re-establish one proper government. Because they alone understand this vision, the Vipers also believe that their destiny is to lead the restoration of the Star League as ilClan.

Though the results of the trials on Strana Mechty to determine the invading Clans restricted Clan Steel Viper to reserve status during the initial stages of the Inner Sphere campaign, the Vipers went on to achieve notable successes in the fifth wave and even after the Battle of Tukayyid. They took a number of worlds from Clan Jade Falcon, whose invasion corridor they share, and now stand as the Clan closest to Terra. The Clan's leaders have displayed remarkable aplomb in negotiating the recent political and military storms swirling around them, and many observers expect Clan Steel Viper to emerge as a dominant force when the Clans next move against the Inner Sphere.

BIRTH OF THE VIPER

Nicholas Kerensky chose to name one of his 20 Clans for the Arcadian viper, a creature of great strength that always finished its foes by administering a lethal dose of poison, which Nicholas often referred to as the coup de grâce. Clan Steel Viper's first saKhan inspired his fellow warriors by example to imitate their namesake's most admirable qualities.

Contrary to the common progression of events, Clan Steel Viper's most influential founder did not serve as its first Khan but as its first saKhan. Though Antonius Zalman served under General Aleksandr Kerensky during the war following the Amaris coup (first by working against Amaris's efforts to take and hold Terra, then under General Kerensky's direct command) and though he showed unshakable loyalty to both Aleksandr and Nicholas during the subsequent two Exoduses, when a wish to acknowledge Zalman's contributions prompted

WOLFNET ARCHIVE FILE: 34892-SV4-09/08/58

The dramatic (and probably legendary) story of the Zalman blood legacy as frequently told by Clan Steel Viper Loremasters

The Zalman Bloodname derives from Antonius Zalman, a reserve member of a small militia unit serving on Terra during the time of Stefan Amaris's coup. Zalman and two others from his unit managed to escape the slaughter of Amaris's initial strike and fled deep into the jungles of South America to lead a small band of resistance fighters. Supplies were hard to come by, and Zalman and his followers had to make daring and costly raids to obtain the barest of essentials. Undeterred by the obstacles facing them, Zalman's group fought on.

By 2773, Zalman was forced to admit that his group was fighting a losing battle. He found it nearly impossible to recruit new soldiers, and his sources of supplies dried up as the Usurper's troops caught on to Zalman's tactics and methods. Zalman recognized that his efforts on Terra had become futile and that his unit might not survive the wait for General Kerensky to arrive and decided to change his tactics. When he heard of Amaris's nefarious plan to ship hundreds of hostages to a Hegemony world under siege and use them to shield his troops against the expected assault by the Star League Defense Forces, he knew this was his chance to fight the Usurper on a new front. Disbanding his resistance cell and sending all but three of his most skilled soldiers underground to await rescue, Zalman and his tiny unit traveled to Mexico City, integrated themselves with the hostages and boarded the ship bound for the planet York.

Immediately upon their arrival on the surface of York, the defending commander placed Zalman and the other civilians into position to await the imminent arrival of SLDF troops. Zalman positioned his cadre as far to the rear of the civilian line as possible, and under cover of darkness abandoned his assigned position and returned to the underdefended command post, killing everyone present. Breaking the command codes with a device he acquired on Terra before leaving that planet and refined on the journey to York, Zalman and his soldiers mounted the command 'Mechs stationed at the post and accessed the main computer, then proceeded to use the information they discovered to locate and destroy several Republican Guard supply depots, all the while dodging the pursuing Amaris troops. By drawing the guards' fire and taking a few judicious laser shots, Zalman's team also freed many political prisoners. Zalman's extensive experience with the rebel action on Terra made it easy for him and his team to conduct a damaging hit-and-run campaign while staying just out of reach of the Republican punitive forces.

Within two days of Zalman's bold escape, the SLDF arrived insystem and burned toward the planet. Its losses left the Republican Guards stationed on York too short of supplies and materiel to fight the extended battle that Kerensky's troops seemed intent on pursuing. Within a week, the Amaris forces surrendered, and General Kerensky personally decorated Zalman for outstanding service to the Star League.

The Zalman name has become synonymous with determination in the face of superior foes and ingenuity in the face of hopelessness. We honor the Zalman Bloodname above all others.

to endorse Zalman as the Khan of Clan Steel Viper, Zalman refused the honor. By that time 80 years old and in failing health, Antonius Zalman declined Nicholas's offered support and asked his beloved leader to instead influence the Clan vote in favor of Zalman's protégé, Lieutenant Ellie Kinnison.

At Zalman's urging, Lieutenant Kinnison, a former commander with the 131st Royal BattleMech Division, accepted this grave responsibility, but only on the condition that Zalman accept the post of saKhan and continue to serve as her mentor. With her saKhan's guidance, Kinnison proved to be an able leader and one of the most outspoken advocates for Nicholas's new order. Within months, Kinnison whipped her troops into shape, quickly adapting Clan Steel Viper's warrior caste to the new rank and organization systems devised by Nicholas. She also fostered in her Clan a deep appreciation for and understanding of the qualities of flexibility, independence and adaptability. Those very qualities kept Antonius Zalman alive and made him a valuable soldier in the forces resisting Stefan Amaris's overthrow of the Star League, and later in General Kerensky's SLDF. Antonius Zalman died in a training accident after serving only two years as Kinnison's advisor and aide, and the Clan voted to replace him with Star Colonel Steven Breen.

When Nicholas led his forces back to the Pentagon worlds, Kinnison and her Vipers fought valiantly on Arcadia, winning the field time and again by virtue of Khan Kinnison's courage and tactical skill. At every opportunity, Kinnison preached the essential rightness of Nicholas Kerensky's vision and encouraged all those she defeated and those whom she rescued to accept the Clan way of life. She sang Nicholas's praises so often and so fervently that many who heard her suspected that Khan Kinnison and the ilKhan were romantically involved. Though later events would prove that Khan Kinnison felt an obsessive love for Nicholas Kerensky, no evidence exists to suggest that the ilKhan returned her feelings. He remained firmly and loyally devoted to his wife, Jennifer Winson, throughout his life.

As soon as the Clans ended the strife on the Pentagon worlds, Nicholas assigned several Clans to each world, placing Clan Steel Viper on Arcadia. Each Clan was charged with garrisoning the captured systems and reorganizing the members of the population according to Clan ways. Under Kinnison's leadership, the Steel Vipers restored order to the war-torn planet and assimilated their assigned percentage of the population with admirable efficiency, which Nicholas duly noted when he toured the captured worlds several months later. During his visit

EXCLUSIVE BLOODNAMES

General Bloodnames
Breen
Zalman

MechWarriors
Ahmed
Andrews
Mercer
Moffat

Elementals
Chapman
Grimani
Roland

Aerospace Pilots
Cochraine
Masters
Tamm

to Arcadia, Kinnison presented the ilKhan with a huge viper captured in Arcadia's jungles, probably hoping to win Nicholas's affections with the gift of Clan Steel Viper's namesake.

From the ranks of the many she rose,
Pre-eminent among all others.
Foe after foe fell before the young warrior
For destiny guided her sword.
When our Leader called, she rose
And became the head of the mighty Serpent.
She guided the Viper alongside the Wolf,
Along the path of the True Vision.
Let us forever honor the First Khan, who showed the way.
Let us remain faithful to the True Path she marked for the Viper.

—From *The Remembrance* (Clan Steel Viper), Passage 3, Verse 5, Lines 6–15

VIPER TREACHERY

With the Pentagon worlds conquered and order restored, the Clans began to settle into their new order and environment and to expand their numbers, both by natural reproduction and the genetic-breeding programs designed to produce a steady supply of superior Clan warriors. However, while most of the Clans were graduating four or five warriors from each sibko (the warrior caste's vehicle for testing the prowess of its young), the Vipers were producing only one or two. Concerned that one of his Clans might fall behind the others unnecessarily, Nicholas sent a team from Clan Sea Fox's scientist caste to examine the Viper methods.

Khan Kinnison offered the scientists her Clan's full cooperation, giving the team free and complete access to all aspects of the breeding operation. The team found no problems with the equipment or methods used by Viper scientists and concluded that Clan Steel Viper simply followed a more demanding training regimen than the other Clans, thereby accepting few very elite new warriors into that caste's ranks. The inspection team returned to the ilKhan with a satisfactory report and an invitation from Khan Kinnison for Nicholas and his wife to take a short vacation and inspect the facilities themselves. Kerensky accepted Kinnison's invitation. Records show that during that period, Nicholas found the demands of his administration to be a heavy burden. He apparently hoped that a brief stay near the dramatic volcanoes on Arcadia's southern islands would provide a needed respite.

Determined to avoid all potentially embarrassing or damaging incidents that might be perpetrated against the ilKhan by the unusual but inevitable rebel activity plaguing Clan Steel Viper territory on Arcadia, Khan Kinnison made thorough preparations for her leader's visit. She placed saKhan Breen in charge of security and double-checked every decision he made by reviewing all security plans on a daily basis. In the final twelve hours before ilKhan Kerensky was due to arrive, Khan Kinnison checked in with saKhan Breen hourly to ensure that she remained completely up-to-date with the final preparations.

With all measures in place and Nicholas's DropShip only an hour away, Breen took a final tour of the area surrounding Kerensky's drop site to confirm that every step of his security measures was in place.

As Breen stepped inside a storage warehouse near the drop site, three masked warriors ambushed the Star Colonel. In a vicious but silent melee, Breen subdued all three attackers but suffered a broken arm. Calling for backup and broadcasting a security alert, Breen raced through the rest of the building, suspecting that additional attackers might lie in wait. The Star Colonel surprised two more warriors adjusting the sights of a high-powered sniper rifle and dispatched both men with two quick blasts from his laser pistol. A cursory examination of the warriors and the rifle failed to reveal any details of the apparent conspiracy, but an incoming call on the assassin's two-way communicator gave Breen the information he needed. Grabbing a loaded sidearm from one of the fallen assasins, saKhan Breen raced for the ilKhan's DropShip, arriving at the end of the ramp just as it completed unfolding. As Nicholas and Jennifer descended the ramp and Khan Kinnison walked forward to greet the couple, Star Colonel Breen fired the renegade guard's pistol.

The shot caught Khan Kinnison in the shoulder and dropped her to her knees. At the sound of the shot, the ilKhan's bodyguards immediately surrounded Nicholas and Jennifer and hustled them back toward the protection of the ship, and three Steel Viper warriors attempted to subdue Breen. In the confusion, only Breen and Jennifer Winson saw Khan Kinnison draw

her own pistol and aim it directly at the ilKhan's wife. Breen, having taken out two of his assailants with vicious kicks, threw the third off balance long enough to draw his laser pistol and take another shot at his Khan. This time his aim was true—the laser punched through Kinnison's skull and the Steel Viper Khan dropped dead.

Star Colonel Breen immediately surrendered to a joint force of Clans Wolf and Steel Viper warriors and spent nearly 20 hours in custody while the ilKhan and his advisors investigated the circumstances of the attempted assassination. Almost exactly 24 hours after arriving on Arcadia, Kerensky appeared with Breen before the Bloodnamed of Clan Steel Viper. A thorough investigation of saKhan Breen's actions and Khan Kinnison's personal effects, plus intense questioning of the traitors Breen subdued in the warehouse, proved Breen's innocence and portrayed Kinnison as a deeply troubled woman obsessed with the idea of forcing Nicholas Kerensky to return her intense love. Her personal journal revealed Kinnison's pathetic plot to kill Jennifer Winson in a wildly improbable attempt to make Nicholas turn to his greatest admirer, Khan Ellie Kinnison, for comfort. In an impassioned address, Nicholas condemned Ellie Kinnison to obscurity and repeated his greatest hopes for the future:

> *It seems inconceivable that everything we have accomplished can be threatened by the actions of individuals within our highest ranks. Khan Kinnison acted against everything the Clans represent and all we strive to achieve. ... It is just such aberrations that Clan society will prevent and control. Fortunately, the Steel Viper ranks also produced an individual capable of seeing and believing in the evil harbored in another's heart, and who acted selflessly to dispense proper justice to such a traitor. Count yourselves fortunate, Steel Vipers, that your Clan survives by virtue of a pure majority. ... I nominate Star Colonel Breen as Khan of Clan Steel Viper. ... As your ilKhan, I claim the right to strike the name Kinnison forever from all records past and present. The tainted genes of that accursed line shall be cast out and destroyed as well.*

The Steel Vipers quickly elected Star Colonel Steven Breen as their new Khan and tapped Star Colonel Shandra Zalman for saKhan. Relieved that Nicholas had declined to punish their Clan for the actions of its mad Khan, members of all castes nonetheless speculated on the reasoning behind Nicholas's decision. Many had feared that Nicholas would use the attempted assassination as an excuse to annihilate or absorb the Vipers. These paranoid individuals guessed that they were given a second chance because Nicholas considered his Clans' unity too fragile in the wake of the Exodus Civil War to risk igniting inter-Clan warfare by conducting such a purge. More cynical observers decided that Nicholas's seemingly magnanimous display was a shrewdly calculated move to win over any mutinous elements remaining within Clan Steel Viper or a prudent response to the fact that the ilKhan and his Wolf honor guard were surrounded by potentially hostile Viper forces.

Perhaps the most plausible explanation is that Nicholas refused to condemn the Clan to death because he realized that Kinnison's plot did not grow out of a desire for power. Kinnison's apparent obsession for Nicholas pushed her over the edge of sanity, clouding her judgment and eventually consuming her reason. Nicholas Kerensky created the Clans to confine the worst impulses of humankind in rigidly structured channels, thereby allowing all individuals to direct their own destiny to a certain degree. Khan Kinnison was assigned responsibility for her actions in the same way that each sibko warrior accepts his or her failure or success as a direct reflection of his or her abilities.

IlKhan Kerensky's decision to strike Ellie Kinnison's name from Clan records and to destroy her genetic material set a precedent that other ilKhans and Khans used infrequently but effectively in the following centuries. This ritual eventually took shape as the Trial of Abjuration and gained equal status with the six original Clan trials.

NECESSARY CHANGE

Because Ellie Kinnison proved to be unfit for command, other Clans mistakenly assumed that the Steel Vipers themselves were incapable of protecting what was theirs. Khan Steven Breen led Clan Steel Viper to victory in several hard-fought Trials of Possession in the months following the assassination attempt. Clan Steel Viper quickly proved Nicholas's judgment to be correct: Khan Kinnison's failure was hers alone, and her well-trained warriors still possessed the deadly strength of the Clan's namesake. Many years passed and many Khans led the Vipers before the remaining Clans accepted that Clan Steel Viper stood as strongly devoted to Nicholas's vision as any other Clan.

From its inception, Clan Steel Viper focused its efforts mainly on developing unbeatable military prowess. Circumstances following Khan Kinnison's descent into madness forced the Clan to further hone its fighting skill, and this constant emphasis on creating a Clan of ultimate warriors caused Clan Steel Viper to neglect its people's need for a deeper purpose in life. The warrior caste eventually noticed a spiritual and ideological void by comparison with Clan Wolf, which seemed to direct its warriors' lives by encouraging them in every way to live up to the legendary Kerenskys, and Clan Ghost Bear, which fostered a remarkably close, almost familial relationship between its warriors. The Clan's lack of direction also caused constant low-level unrest among the lower castes—scientists could not focus their research effectively, merchants could not establish stable partnerships or trade routes, and technicians never knew what materiel or technology they might be asked to use or do without.

of his freedom. Hohiro Kurita was trapped behind enemy lines and, painful as the decision must have been for his father, the Draconis Combine simply could not risk sending a force to extract him and his troops and so leave some other target underdefended.

The Nova Cats swept the remainder of their objectives for the fifth wave on schedule, meeting serious opposition only on Kanowit, their final target. Aware that his troops would face the green Eleventh Alshain Regulars and the more experienced Thirty-fourth Galedon Regulars, saKhan Carns chose to split his invading force and attack the defending units simultaneously. The Eleventh had taken a position on a high bluff that fell steeply away to a grassy plain, planning to take full advantage of this natural fortification's steep rise and crumbling limestone cliff face. Unable to determine precisely why the planet's defenders made this choice but confident that their superior weaponry and armor would carry the day, saKhan Carns landed the First Nova Cat Guards on the plains below the Eleventh's position. While this decision did not prove particularly damaging, saKhan Carns found his unit's inability to reach the Kurita troops from below, even by using the unique skills of Elementals, extremely frustrating. Adding to his frustration, it quickly became apparent that the Eleventh's main goal was simply to occupy the invaders until the Thirty-fourth arrived to reinforce them.

The second Clan force, made up of the 449th and 489th Assault Clusters, attacked the Thirty-fourth in the interlocking tunnels and caverns of a natural formation known as Theodore's Retreat. Using well-placed traps and plenty of ammunition, *Tai-sa* Venn Oblak and his troops managed to seriously damage the attackers. Star Colonel Evelyn Morris eventually ordered a fighting retreat from what appeared to be a death trap, her troops seeding the tunnels and caverns with explosives as they withdrew. Less than half of the Thirty-fourth walked away from the collapsed landmark. Upon discovering that the 449th had accomplished its goal, saKhan Carns ordered the unit to board its DropShips and land behind the Eleventh's lines. Unable to hold its position in the face of this new enemy force, the green Eleventh broke and ran, somehow managing to escape the planet with a substantial number of its members intact. Though the Nova Cats now controlled Kanowit, saKhan Carns found his troops' performance on the planet more embarrassing than efficient. This performance became insignificant when, in mid-April, ilKhan Ulric Kerensky called a kurultai for the seven invading Clans to bid for the final planet in the current phase of the invasion: the world known as Tukayyid.

BATTLE OF TUKAYYID

When ilKhan Kerensky met with the Khans of the other invading Clans to discuss the plan that would come to be known as the Truce of Tukayyid, he found it a hard sell. The Jade Falcon and Ghost Bear Khans opposed this premature conclusion to the invasion, though they certainly recognized the advantage of battling for Terra on a proxy planet to avoid unnecessary collateral damage. Khans Osis and Weaver of Clan Smoke Jaguar bitterly resented the implication that the Clans could not complete the job they had begun and took offense at the mere idea of striking a bargain with an enemy

proven dishonorable and contemptible. The Nova Cat Khans, always conscious of the price that any battle demanded in the coin of warriors and materiel, carefully considered the idea of the truce and accepted its value. When they asked Oathmaster Winters to seek confirmation of their decision in a vision, she could only describe again the tragic scene of the white mist enveloping all the Clans, claiming that that had been her recurring vision in answer to every question asked during the past year. The Khans impatiently dismissed her refusal to accept ilKhan Showers's death as the fulfillment of that prophecy and voted yes for Tukayyid.

While Khan Leroux spoke out against the subtle plan fostered by Clans Jade Falcon and Smoke Jaguar to use the bidding process to manuever Clan Wolf into landing last on Tukayyid, in the end Clan Nova Cat played along—after all, the price of victory was continued glory and a renewed opportunity to win the position of ilClan for itself. Confident of success against the mostly green Com Guard forces, the Khans bid elements of their two remaining functional Galaxies to take their objectives, as well as bringing forward the fresh troops of Gamma Galaxy. Their bid won them the right to land third on Tukayyid.

In the Nova Cats' attempts to take the cities of Joje and Tost, they faced the veteran Com Guard Seventh Army, as well as divisions of the Twelfth Army stationed as reserves in the two cities. With Precentor Koselka's elite 278th Division detached from the Twelfth Army to battle Clan Wolf and the White Lions of the 394th Division facing Clan Jade Falcon, the remaining Twelfth Army units lacked any significant combat experience.

Khan Leroux chose to launch the campaign with the Clans' efficient and effective hover-drop maneuver, placing the combat DropShips in the lower atmosphere to allow OmniMechs and Elementals to make a short drop without the confining, heat-dissipating pods used for higher-atmosphere drops. Unfortunately for the Nova Cats, the aerospace fighters of the Com Guards' 417th Division had gained air superiority over the Clan drop zone. The 417th's strafing and bombing runs wrought havoc on Alpha Galaxy. In the most damaging attack, a kamikaze run by a Com Guard *Hammerhead* fighter destroyed the Galaxy Command DropShip, along with the 30 OmniMechs and six Stars of Elementals of the Fourth Nova Cat Lancers' Bravo and Delta Supernova Trinaries. SaKhan Lucian Carns immediately questioned Alpha Galaxy's ability to take Tost after sustaining such devastating losses, but Khan Leroux led his troops against the city as planned.

Gamma Galaxy and the remaining elements of Alpha Galaxy pushed past the 244th Division and rushed toward Joje, only to be stopped by the 417th and Ninth Divisions at the edge of the city's northernmost suburbs. The Ninth and 417th had, in fact, lured the Cats toward Joje, stalling the Clan offensive with a combination of vibrabomb fields, aerospace fighters and armor elements. The Nova Cats attempted to relieve the pressure by sending Beta Galaxy's 44th Nova Cat Cavaliers toward Tost, but reserve units from the Thirteenth and 431st Divisions crushed the Cavaliers along the road.

By the third day of the fighting, Clan Nova Cat found itself perilously low on ammunition, but their fierce attacks had weakened Joje's defenders and forced the Ninth and 417th Divisions to retreat in order to regroup. Harassed by the Com Guard 467th Division's attempts to cut the Clan force off from its landing zone, saKhan Carns ordered Gamma Galaxy to withdraw toward the drop zone accompanied by a handful of damaged OmniMechs from Beta Galaxy and asked the units to advertise their presence. Meanwhile, the rest of Beta Galaxy's 'Mechs hid themselves under the surface of Lake Losiije, the only easily recognizable landmark in the area.

As Carns had hoped, the unsuspecting 244th and 467th Divisions met at the lake in order to combine their weakened units and pursue the fleeing Clan force. As Precentors Slagle and Shykes tried to organize their troops on the shore, Beta Galaxy emerged from the water's depths and attacked. The Nova Cats shattered both divisions and captured several ComStar supply depots.

Fresh from a successful rout of the Nova Cats' Alpha Galaxy, Precentors Colombini and Landaker of the Ninth and 417th ordered an all-out attack against the Clan forces now controlling the Losiije Lake District. Before Beta and Gamma Galaxy could make use of their captured supplies, the Ninth, 417th and 116th Divisions threw themselves against the Clan forces in a fierce counterattack, successfully recapturing the supply depots. Faced with this setback, Khan Leroux ordered his battered MechWarriors to withdraw to their DropShips. The Com Guards harassed the Nova Cats all the way back to their drop zone, whittling the Clan force down to a single Trinary of surviving OmniMechs from Beta Galaxy.

Having failed to capture either of their target cities, the Nova Cats were judged to have lost to the Com Guards despite the fact that they inflicted the most severe losses on their opponents of any other battle on Tukayyid. Oathmaster Biccon Winters had been right to interpret her vision literally. The white mist trailing behind each Clan was the ComStar liaisons assigned to each occupation zone, and it was the army of white 'Mechs belonging to the Com Guard that handed Clan Nova Cat its final defeat.

Aftermath

Its invasion force nearly destroyed by the action on Tukayyid, Clan Nova Cat has confined its activities to rebuilding its presence in the Inner Sphere. Apparently uninterested in or unable to muster the strength to challenge other Clans or Houses for possession of planets above the truce line, Nova Cat keeps to itself, though rumors indicate a growing mutual admiration between Clan Nova Cat and House Kurita. Given the similar qualities of the spiritual attitudes of these two groups, some sort of collaboration between them seems a reasonable development.

OCCUPATION ZONE (AS OF JUNE 3052)

WORLDS CEDED TO CLAN NOVA CAT BY CLAN SMOKE JAGUAR

(November–December 3051)

TARNBY (DC)

November 3051
Clan Nova Cat Forces: Galaxy Command Supernova (the Vision Keshik, Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Remnants of the Fourth Pesht Regulars
Major Battle Site: Bullinda
Outcome: Because the Fourth Pesht Regulars responded honorably to the Vision Keshik's *batchall* for taking their world, the Nova Cat warriors honored their opponents with a quick defeat. One hour into the battle, the ragtag band of defenders surrendered their remaining forces.

BJARRED (DC)

November 3051
Clan Nova Cat Forces: Alpha Command Star, Alpha Command Trinary (the Nova Cat Keshik)
Defending Forces: The "Free Bjarred League"
Major Battle Site: Deony Plains
Outcome: The initial aerospace sweep over the planet revealed no rebel activity, and so Khan Leroux led the Nova Cat Keshik on to its next target. The Provisional Garrison Cluster assigned to Bjarred, however, discovered a well-established resistance movement hidden in a network of underground caverns known as the Deony tunnels. Following their Khans' wishes, the PGC negotiated with the rebels rather than wiping them out.

SAWYER (DC)

November 3051
Clan Nova Cat Forces: Alpha Command Star (the Lachesis Keshik, Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: None
Major Battle Site: None
Outcome: Khans Leroux and Carns landed on Sawyer for the sole purpose of formally accepting the local population's surrender to Nova Cat rule. Clan Smoke Jaguar had brutally wiped out all sources of resistance during its occupation, and the planet's leaders were relieved to swear obedience to a more reasonable dictatorship.

CHUPADERO (DC)

November 3051
Clan Nova Cat Forces: The Shiva Keshik (Delta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Surviving elements of the First Chupadero Armored Legion (1 infantry battalion, 2 armor battalions)
Major Battle Sites: Cornerstone, Hill Valley
Outcome: Though Clan Smoke Jaguar claimed to have destroyed the Chupadero Legion during its occupation of Chupadero, this fierce fighting force had simply gone to ground and rebuilt using the local population and every vehicle of any description available on the planet. The Nova Cat Khans repeatedly reminded the Shiva Keshik to tread as lightly as possible in taking the planet in order to create favorable conditions for the garrison forces to do their job with a minimum of fuss. Unfortunately, the defenders refused to see things in that particular light. The heavy damage inflicted by both sides provoked Clan Nova Cat to submit a formal complaint with the ilKhan against the Smoke Jaguar occupation tactics.

JEANETTE (DC)

December 3051
Clan Nova Cat Forces: Alpha Assault Star (First Assault Trinary, First Nova Cat Guards, Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: None
Major Battle Site: None
Outcome: The Nova Cat Guards made a perfunctory sweep of the world and declared it free of rebel factions. The planet remains peaceful to this day; its many small islands lie too far apart to make any type of coordinated resistance effort possible, and the Nova Cat PGC finds its surroundings too idyllic to consider marring the perfection with battles.

COURCHEVEL (DC)

December 3051
Clan Nova Cat Forces: Command Trinary (Fourth Nova Cat Guards, Delta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Seventh Battle Trinary (Second Jaguar Regulars, Zeta Galaxy, Clan Smoke Jaguar)
Major Battle Site: Dragon's Rift
Outcome: The two Clans met in a standard Trial of Possession on the world of Courchevel. The Smoke Jaguars attacked the Nova Cats in a relentless frontal assault, and the Cats attempted to flank and outmaneuver the heavier Jaguar machines. Though the Jaguars eventually made a concentrated push and broke through the Nova Cat line, one frustrated Jaguar warrior foolishly fired on two opponents at once. The Nova Cats quickly

ended the ensuing general melee and took the world with a single remaining functional OmniMech.

FIFTH WAVE

(December 3051–March 3052)

IRECE (DC)

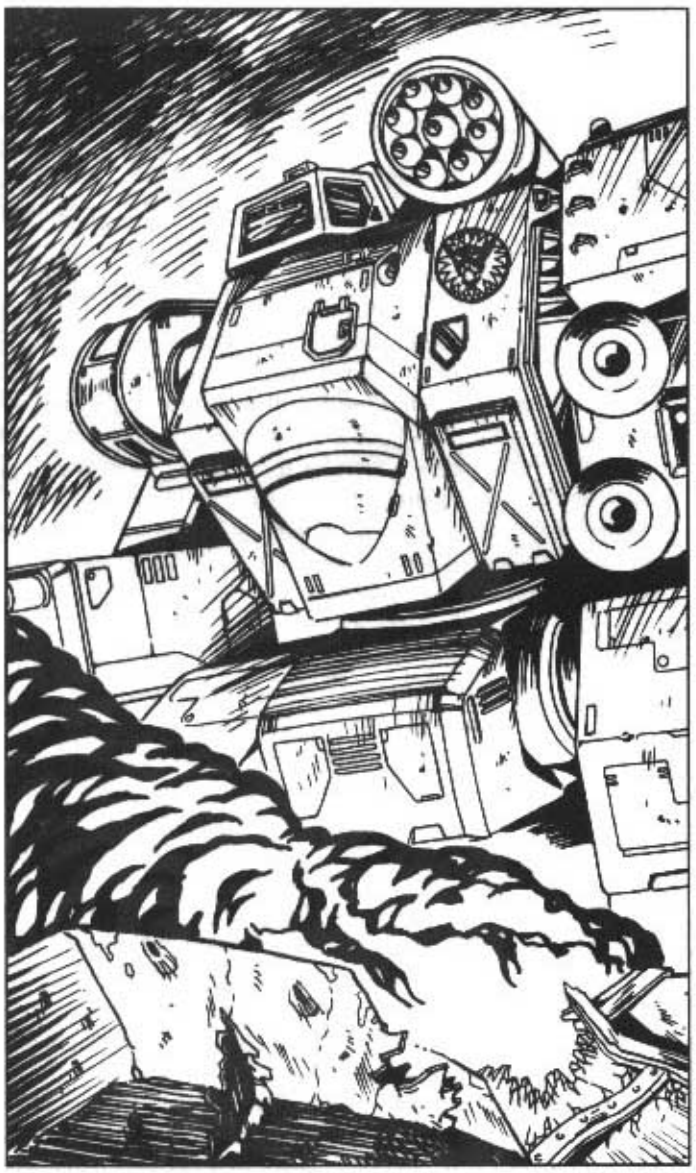
December 3051
Clan Nova Cat Forces: Beta Galaxy
Defending Forces: Eighteenth Dieron Regulars
Major Battle Site: LexaTech Industries, Land-Air 'Mech Factory
Outcome: See text.

AVON (DC)

December 3051
Clan Nova Cat Forces: 274th Battle Cluster (Delta Galaxy), 449th Assault Cluster (Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Second Amphigean Light Assault Group
Major Battle Sites: Fresno, Pollit Plains, Tenderlands
Outcome: The Second Amphigean Light Assault group had been split into task forces to deal with the Clan invaders, but the Second knew they had only a slim chance of surviving against an entire Cluster of Clan 'Mechs. The Nova Cats' initial assault immediately routed the Second from its positions. The Clan's heavy elements pursued the defending forces while the light elements outflanked them. After hard fighting, the Second broke through a weak spot in the Nova Cat lines and headed east toward a supply cache, but arrived to find Clan Elementals guarding the much-needed materiel. The Cats again forced the Second to move east, which allowed the defending troops to rejoin the rest of their regiment. The battle lasted less than a day because the Cat forces never allowed the Second a chance to dig in. The Second made its final stand at Fresno, where the massed firepower of the Jaguars and the Cats decimated the Second's meager remaining troops.

LUTHIEN (DC)

January 3052
Clan Nova Cat Forces: Alpha Galaxy, Delta Galaxy
Defending Forces: First Sword of Light, Second Legion of Vega, First and Second Genyosha, Otomo ('Mech regiment), Dragon's Claws, Wolf's Dragoons (5 regiments), Kell Hounds (2 regiments)
Major Battle Sites: Tairakana Plains, Kado-guchi Plains, Kado-guchi Valley
Outcome: See text.



ITABAIANA (DC)

January 3052
Clan Nova Cat Forces: Alpha Striker Star (Third Striker Trinary, 179th Striker Cluster, Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: None
Major Battle Site: None
Outcome: The government of Itabaiana had no forces to defend its planet, and so Clan Nova Cat took this world without a fight. The brief ceremony held to transfer the reins of government to the Nova Cats gave the Clan unrestricted access to a resource-rich world that continues to produce a quantity of iron ore far greater than any similar world in Clan space. The 44th Nova Cat Cavaliers garrison this world to protect the Clan's new-found resources against any other Clan intent on grabbing this rich deposit of iron for itself.

JUAZEIRO (DC)

January 3052
Clan Nova Cat Forces: Forty-fourth Nova Cat Cavaliers (Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Twenty-first Galedon Regulars
Major Battle Sites: Vernando Crevice, Jimsing Fields, Corky's Noose
Outcome: Star Colonel Istal Devalis won honor for her assault on Juazeiro by fighting a tight, intelligent campaign that allowed her forces to take the world with minimal losses. Her first move was to send a headhunter Star to compromise the defenders' command position. Concerned with accurately placing his troops in hidden positions, *Tai-sa* Adam Sawyer was taken completely by surprise when the Elementals destroyed his headquarters. Adam's brother Lee assumed command of the regiment upon the commander's death, and attempted to fight from the positions established in the original battle plan. The Twenty-first only realized the Nova Cats' frontal assault was a feint when the Cavaliers attacked from the rear. Sawyer quickly broke his troops into lances and initiated a campaign of hit-and-run skirmishes that he hoped would allow the Twenty-first's surviving elements to reach its landing zone and leave the planet. Less than a battalion of the Twenty-first escaped offworld, and Devalis's insignificant losses gave her a victory. Hindsight showed that, had Star Colonel Devalis included aerospace assets in her bid to take the planet, she would have destroyed the entire Regulars force.

MUALANG (DC)

January 3052
Clan Nova Cat Forces: The Nova Cat Lancers (Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Ninth Dieron Regulars
Major Battle Sites: Longstein, Mualang City, Drop Port
Outcome: When the Nova Cat Lancers issued their *batchall* to *Tai-sa* Mao Sheng-jo of the Ninth Dieron Regulars, the defending commander greeted the Nova Cats and cheerfully bid them luck as they dropped to the planet's surface. In an ill-planned attempt to beat the Clan forces at their own game, Sheng-jo issued a badly worded challenge to the Clan commander and got exactly what he asked for. The Lancers' battle Trinaries immediately engaged the bulk of the Ninth while the Elementals and striker Trinary flanked the defenders. Caught in a pincer, the Ninth bolted and the Cats pursued. Hoping to slow the Clan onslaught by forcing them to fight in the streets of Mualang City, Sheng-jo again proved his imperfect knowledge of the Clan way of thinking by assuming that their philosophy of minimizing collateral damage would prevent them from wreaking havoc in a populated area. The Lancers charged straight through the city in pursuit of the Ninth's assault elements, forcing the Regulars into a full retreat toward their DropShips. Unfortunately for the Ninth, the Clans had already captured their only means of escape off Mualang.

TENIENTE (DC)

January 3052
Nova Cat Forces: 449th Assault Cluster, 489th Assault Cluster (Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Third and Eleventh Pesht Regulars
Major Battle Site: Brodice Plain
Outcome: The attacking Nova Cat forces were pleasantly surprised when Teniente's defenders responded correctly to their *batchall* and declared their intention of fighting according Clan tradition. The Third and Eleventh Pesht Regulars awaited them on the Brodice Plain, a large, flat grassy stretch of land offering precious few places to conceal traps. The 449th and 489th engaged their targets immediately upon landing and quickly proved that the Pesht Regulars had sacrificed all advantages of their previous combat experience by trying to match the Clan fighting style. The Nova Cats were systematically wiping out the Third and Eleventh 'Mech by 'Mech until Hohiro Kurita, heir to the Combine throne, assumed command of the combined regiments.

Hohiro ordered the Regulars to break away from the battle, and he coordinated a guerrilla campaign instead, eventually sending the remaining troops to ground. The Nova Cats' enemy vanished before their eyes, and they suddenly found themselves bogged down in an apparently fruitless effort to find the Kuritans. The Third and Eleventh helped organize a resistance movement on Teniente and then supported its efforts for several long months. At the request of Hohiro's sister Omi, the Revenants, a Federated Commonwealth unit commanded by Prince Victor Steiner-Davion, eventually executed a daring raid against the Nova Cat-controlled planet and spirited Hohiro Kurita and what remained of the Third and Eleventh off Teniente.

CARIPARE (DC)

February 3052
Nova Cat Forces: First Nova Cat Guards (Alpha Galaxy)
Defending Forces: Second Ghost Regiment
Major Battle Sites: Johnson Lake, Trevorton Forest, Lissan Fields
Outcome: Clan Nova Cat issued a *batchall* for this world and was told that the defending forces consisted of one green regiment. Caripare's position in the Smoke Jaguar–Nova Cat corridor, near the front lines but far enough away to eliminate it as an easy target for raiders, made Clan Nova Cat eager to conquer this productive agricultural world with as little damage as possible. Hoping for an easy victory against an inexperienced unit but well aware that the Combine commander might have lied about his troop strength or configuration, Star Colonel Gritas bid to take the planet with two Trinaries. The Clan forces landed near Johnson Lake and immediately came under attack by elements of the elite Second Ghost Regiment hidden in the

water's depths. This deception set the tone for the hard-fought battle that followed. Star Colonel Gritas eventually called down another Trinary, justifying the fact that she broke her bid by pointing to the Kurita commander's misinformation and reiterating the Khans' desire to use the planet for supply purposes. The additional troops allowed her to take the world, but could not help her avoid a fierce running battle that destroyed the centuries-old Trevorton Forest.

Recognizing Caripare's strategic importance, Clan Smoke Jaguar immediately challenged Clan Nova Cat to a Trial of Possession for the planet. Unwilling to destroy any more of Caripare's resources, the Khans of both Clans agreed, after a long and acrimonious debate, to share the conquest of the world and administer it jointly.

CYRENAICA (DC)

February 3052
Nova Cat Forces: 179th Striker Cluster (Beta Galaxy)
Defending Forces: First Shin Legion
Major Battle Sites: Delios Point, Numia Valley, Lasner
Outcome: When Warlord Theodore Kurita allocated some of the Star League weapons given by ComStar to the Combine to the First Shin Legion, *Tai-sa* Chou Yanyouan knew his unit would face the Clans. Yanyouan felt confident in his knowledge of Clan equipment and tactics and so expected to give the Nova Cats a run for their money. When the Clan attacked without announcing their forces through the *batchall* and then used the recently developed Smoke Jaguar tactic of sending the Clan's heaviest 'Mechs to tear up and down the defenders' lines, probing the farthest-flung elements with striker Trinaries, and strafing the Legion's rear with aerospace assets, the terrified and confused *Tai-sa* ordered a fighting retreat. The Legion pulled back to the coastal city of Lasner and settled in for a siege. The Nova Cats immediately sent their aerospace assets to take out the Legion's long-range artillery, then drove their 'Mechs straight through the defenders and into the heart of the city. Here, the Legion infantry finally held the tactical advantage long enough to destroy almost a Trinary's worth of the 179th's OmniMechs. The First Shin Legion limped offworld as soon as two regiments of heavy armor arrived to reinforce the Combine defense. Their first taste of the Clans had been enough.

KANOWIT (DC)

March 3052
Nova Cat Forces: Elements of Alpha Galaxy
Defending Forces: Eleventh Alshain Regulars, Thirty-fourth Galedon Regulars
Major Battle Sites: Richard's Point, Kooldaje, Theodore's Retreat
Outcome: See text.

FRONT-LINE UNIT SUMMARY

CLAN COMBINED COMMAND

CO: Khan Severen Leroux
Aide: Star Colonel Sheila Rosse

CLAN COMMAND (THE NOVA CAT KESHIK)

Star Colonel Lois Drummond

Alpha Command Trinary (Star Captain Simon Morris)
Alpha Command Star (10 Fighters)
Bravo and Charlie Command Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

Beta Command Trinary (Star Captain Hela Drummond)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Elemental Stars (5 Elemental Points each)

Delta Command Trinary (Star Captain Tiber Leroux)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Assault Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

Echo Command Binary (Star Captain Teague Hardo)
Alpha and Charlie Artillery Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

CLAN NOVA CAT NAVAL RESERVE

Star Commodore Jan Jorgensson
Alpha Naval Reserve (8 Clan Invaders, 6 Clan Monoliths, 5 Clan Scouts, 4 Clan Star Lords)
WarShip Command
1 *Congress* Class WarShip: *True Vision*
1 *Black Lion* Class WarShip: *Thunderbolt*
9 *Aegis* Class WarShips, 3 *Vincent* Class WarShips

ALPHA GALAXY (VICTORY OVER DELUSION)

3 Clusters
CO: Galaxy Commander saKhan Lucian Carns
Aide: Oathmaster Biccon Winters

GALAXY COMMAND SUPERNOVA (THE VISION KESHIK)

Star Captain Swanye Devalis
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Nova Command Stars (5 OmniMechs, 5 Elemental Points each)
Echo Command Star (10 Fighters)

FOURTH NOVA CAT GUARDS (HAND OF FATE)

Star Colonel Kothinur Gritas

Cluster Command Trinary (Star Captain Jackim West)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Fighter Stars (10 Fighters each)

First Assault Trinary (Star Captain Casdon Nostra)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Assault Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

Second Battle Trinary (Star Captain Lucinda Kostas)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Battle Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

Third Battle Trinary (Star Captain Mark Drummond)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Battle Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

Fourth Elemental Trinary (Star Captain Ladon Poiltas)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Battle Stars (5 Elemental Points each)

Fifth Striker Binary (Star Captain Croesus Lenardon)
Alpha and Bravo Striker Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

449TH ASSAULT CLUSTER (JOYS AND SORROWS)

Star Colonel Thadeus Nostra

Command SuperNova (Star Captain Leon Rosse)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Nova Stars (5 OmniMechs, 5 Elemental Points each)

First Assault Trinary (Star Captain Oasic Carns)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Assault Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

Second Assault Trinary (Star Captain Hendrick West)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Assault Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

Third Assault Trinary (Star Captain Sazur Bullin)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Assault Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

Fourth Fighter Binary (Star Captain Kraig Leroux)
Alpha and Bravo Fighter Stars (10 Fighters each)

489TH ASSAULT CLUSTER (THE THIRD EYE)

Star Colonel Evelyn Morris

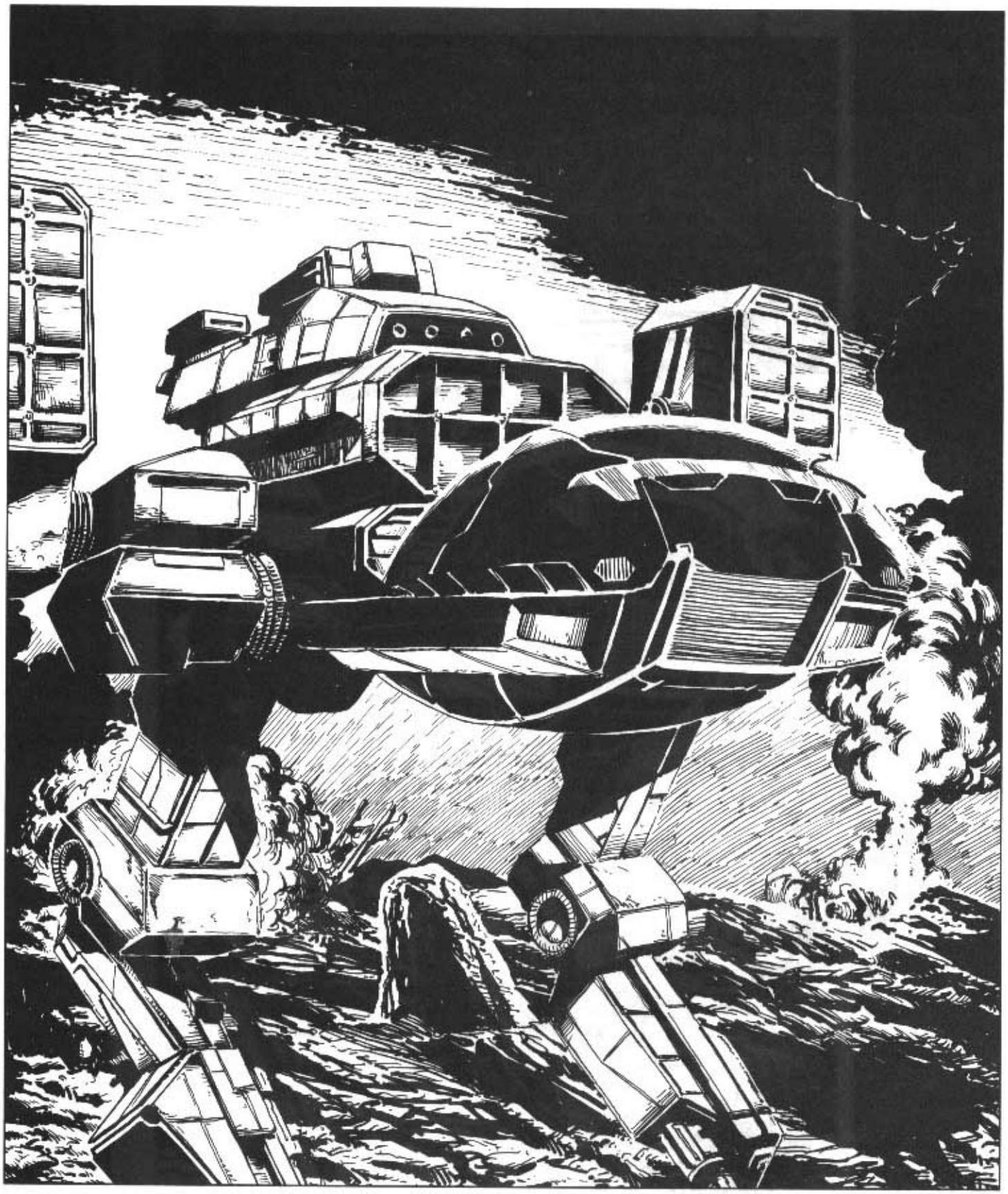
Command Trinary (Star Captain Wevva Lenardon)
Alpha and Bravo Command Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Charlie Command Star (5 Elemental Points)
Echo Command Star (10 Fighters)

Battle Trinary (Star Captain Hyo Lossey)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Battle Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

Striker Trinary (Star Captain Tina Deleportas)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Striker Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

Elemental Binary (Star Captain Khine Bavros)
Alpha and Bravo Elemental Stars (5 Elemental Points each)

Elemental Binary (Star Captain Nerum Winters)
Alpha and Bravo Elemental Stars (5 Elemental Points each)



Artillery Binary (Star Captain Pewell Carns)
Alpha and Bravo Artillery Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

SIGMA GALAXY (SPIRITUAL VISION)

3 Clusters
CO: Galaxy Commander Brian Lossey

Galaxy Trinary Command (The Lachesis Keshik)
Star Captain Tirant Higall
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Command Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

179TH STRIKER CLUSTER (CIRCLE OF POWER)

Star Colonel Santin West

Command Supernova (Star Captain Jill Lenardon)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Nova Stars (5 OmniMechs, 5 Elemental Points each)

Battle Binary (Star Captain Ithon Delaportas)
Alpha and Bravo Battle Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

Striker Trinary (Star Captain Marol Winters)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Striker Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

Striker Trinary (Star Captain Degrave Nostra)
Alpha and Bravo Striker Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

Fighter Binary (Star Captain Wethbin Rosse)
Alpha and Bravo Fighter Stars (10 Fighters each)

44TH NOVA CAT CAVALIERS (THE FIVE ACTIONS)

Star Colonel Istal Devalis

Command Trinary (Star Captain Bevin Hardo)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Command Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

Assault Trinary (Star Captain Cassin Drummond)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Assault Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

Striker Trinary (Star Captain Pithum Kostas)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Striker Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

Elemental Binary (Star Captain Greta Winters)
Alpha and Bravo Elemental Stars (5 Elemental Points each)

Fighter Binary (Star Captain Vedec Bavros)
Alpha and Bravo Fighter Stars (10 Fighters each)

THE NOVA CAT LANCERS (THE PATH OF RIGHT)

Star Colonel Gregor Rosse

Command Trinary (Star Captain Saddiv Morris)
Alpha and Bravo Command Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Charlie Command Star (10 Fighters)

Battle Trinary (Star Captain Jokew Devalis)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Battle Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

Battle Trinary (Star Captain Kithyo Delaportas)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Battle Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

2nd Striker Binary (Star Captain Vera Lossey)
Alpha and Bravo Striker Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

Elemental Trinary (Star Captain Ota Bullin)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Elemental Stars (5 Elemental Points each)

DELTA GALAXY (WAYS OF SEEING)

3 Clusters
CO: Galaxy Commander Karl Devalis

GALAXY COMMAND (THE SHIVA KESHIK)

Star Captain Trent Leroux
Alpha Command Star (10 Fighters)
Bravo and Charlie Command Novas (5 OmniMechs, 5 Elemental Points each)

4TH NOVA CAT GUARDS (THE ORACLES)

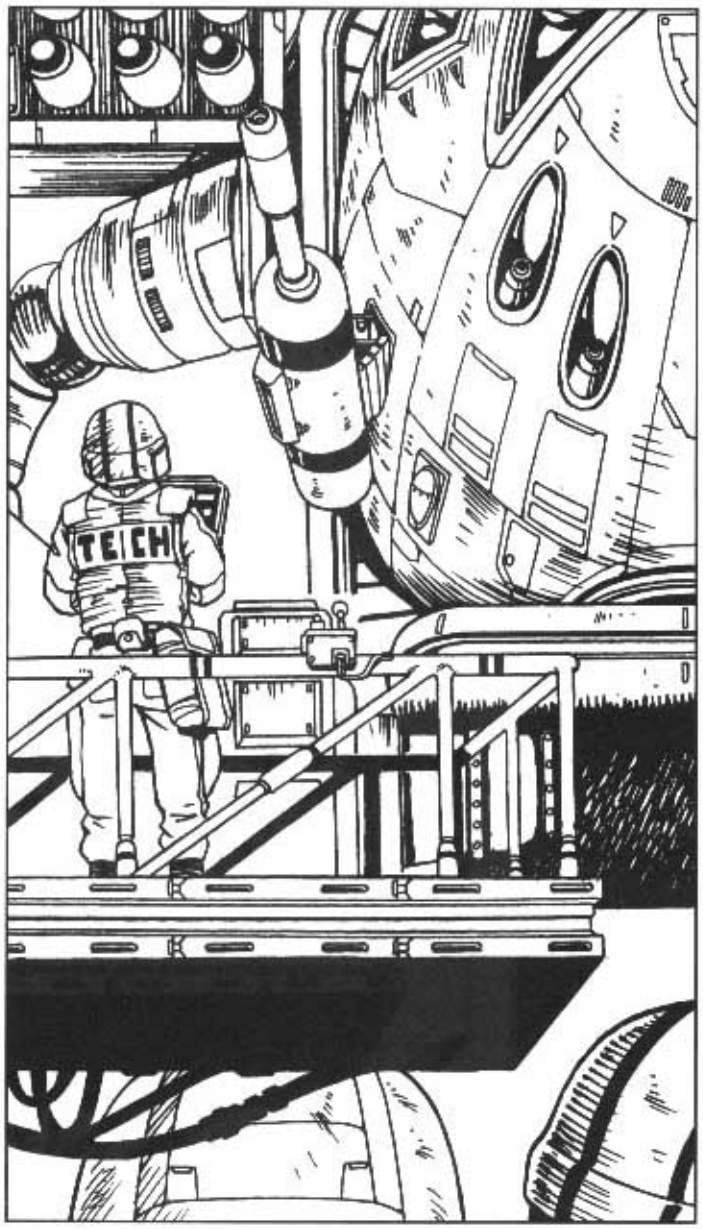
Star Colonel Kelly Hardo
Command Trinary (Star Captain Lytton Winters)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Command Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Battle Trinary (Star Captain Wecken Rosse)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Battle Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
43rd Striker Trinary (Star Captain Padrick Drummond)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Striker Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Fighter Binary (Star Captain Marthe Leroux)
Alpha and Bravo Fighter Stars (5 Fighters each)
Assault SuperNova (Star Captain Toddu Devalis)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Nova Stars (5 OmniMechs, 5 Elemental Points each)

274TH BATTLE CLUSTER (VIGILANCE OF THE CAT)

Star Colonel Jullamon Lossey
Command Trinary (Star Captain Price Hardo)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Command Stars (5 Elemental Points each)
First Battle Trinary (Star Captain Ester Gritas)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Battle Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
Second Battle Trinary (Star Captain Payne Lenardon)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Battle Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
43rd Battle Binary (Star Captain Hanna Carns)
Alpha and Bravo Battle Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
48th SuperNova Battle (Star Captain Lavern West)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Battle Novas (5 OmniMechs, 5 Elemental Points each)
Fighter Trinary (Star Captain Maureen Leroux)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Fighter Stars (10 Fighters each)

119TH STRIKER CLUSTER (SELF HARMONY)

Star Colonel Thara Lossey
Command Trinary (Star Captain Linda Leroux)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Fighter Stars (10 Fighters each)



Striker Star Trinary (Star Captain Gwenneth Carns)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Striker Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
First Striker Trinary (Star Captain Janet Drummond)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Striker Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
88th Striker Trinary (Star Captain Wendy Devalis)
Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Striker Stars (5 OmniMechs each)
First Elemental Binary (Star Captain Hajni Rosse)
Alpha and Bravo Elemental Stars (5 Elemental Points each)
17th Striker Binary (Star Captain Julie Winters)
Alpha and Bravo Striker Stars (5 OmniMechs each)

NOBORI-NIN

Mass: 50 tons
Chassis: Endo Steel
Power Plant: 250 XL
Cruising Speed: 57.4 kph
Maximum Speed: 86.3 kph
Jump Jets: 5
Jump Capacity: 150 meters
Armor: Ferro-Fibrous
Armament:
23.5 tons of pod space
Manufacturer: Unknown
Communications System: Unknown
Targeting and Tracking System: Unknown

OVERVIEW

The first *Nobori-nin*, or "Banner-bearer," appeared during the Battle of Luthien in the colors of the 119th Nova Cat Striker Cluster. The single finlike projection sprouting from its back gave this humanoid 'Mech its name. Apparently it reminded a DCMS intelligence officer of the banner samurai sometimes wore on their backs in feudal Japan. This design is known as the *Huntsman* among the Clans. It exemplifies the OmniMech concept, as it fills a variety of roles depending on its pod configuration.

CAPABILITIES

In its primary configuration, the *Nobori-nin* makes a superb prolonged-combat 'Mech. The right arm mounts an AC-2 Ultra autocannon and the left mounts a Streak SRM-6. Each arm also holds a pair of medium lasers. An LRM-10 slaved to an Artemis IV fire-control system provides the *Nobori-nin* with extremely accurate long-range fire capability. An antimissile system and A-pods provide close defense, and an active probe/TAG combination provides the pilot with his electronic eyes.

Alternate Configuration A mounts a large pulse laser in each arm. The right arm also supports an LB 2-X autocannon, and the left mounts an LRM-10 system. Apparently, the *Nobori-nin-A*'s LRM launcher uses the same technology as the LRM-20 found on the *Atlas*. A rapidly cycling ammo feed allows the weapon to fire five missiles through each tube in the same amount of time normal missile launchers require to cycle once. Two additional double heat sinks help dissipate the great heat generated by these weapons.

The *Nobori-nin-B* was designed for sudden raids and rapid strike operations. It mounts an extended-range particle cannon in its right arm, backed up by a pair of medium pulse lasers. The left arm supports an LB 10-X autocannon. Two tons of ammunition stored in the left torso pod provide enough ammunition for a fast strike. The B variant's anti-infantry weapons include an 11mm rotary machine gun and a flamer.

The C variant seems to have been intended for long-range fire support. It mounts an LRM-20 in its right torso and an LRM-15 in the left. One ER medium laser, an ER small laser, and an AC-5 Ultra provide more accurate fire. A Streak SRM-6 provides more heavy striking power, while a flamer handles close-in defense.

DEPLOYMENT

Since the Battle of Luthien, the *Nobori-nin* has been spotted in striker Clusters all along the Draconis Combine border. It is seen more often among Nova Cat units than any other, but is uncommon even among their forces. This indicates that the design is either new or carries some sort of inherent dishonor.

Type: **Nobori-nin**
Technology Base: Clan OmniMech
Tonnage: 50

Equipment		**Mass**
Internal Structure:	Endo Steel	2.5
Engine:	250 XL	6.5
Walking MP:	5	
Running MP:	8	
Jumping MP:	5	
Heat Sinks:	10 [20]	
Gyro:		3
Cockpit:		3
Armor Factor:	169	9
Internal Structure	*Armor Value*	
Head	3	9
Center Torso	16	25
Center Torso (rear)		7
R/L Torso	12	18
R/L Torso (rear)		6
R/L Arm	8	16
R/L Leg	12	24

CLAN NOVA CAT

Weight and Space Allocation

Location	*Fixed*	*Spaces Remaining*
Head	1 Ferro-Fibrous	0
Center Torso	1 Jump Jet	0
	1 Endo Steel	
Right Torso	2 Engine	6
	1 Endo Steel	
	2 Ferro-Fibrous	
	1 Jump Jet	
Left Torso	2 Engine	5
	1 Endo Steel	
	3 Ferro-Fibrous	
	1 Jump Jet	
Right Arm	2 Endo Steel	6
Left Arm	1 Ferro-Fibrous	5
	2 Endo Steel	
Right Leg	1 Jump Jet	1
Left Leg	1 Jump Jet	1

Primary Weapons Configuration

Weapons and Ammo	**Location**	**Critical**	**Tonnage**
2 ER Medium Lasers	RA	2	2
2 ER Medium Lasers	LA	2	2
Ultra AC/2	RA	2	5
Ammo (AC) 45	RA	1	1
Streak SRM 6	LA	2	3
Ammo (SRM) 15	LA	1	1
LRM 10	RT	1	2.5
Ammo (LRM) 12	RT	1	1
Artemis IV FCS	RT	1	1
Antimissile System	LT	1	.5
Ammo (AMS) 24	LT	1	1
Active Probe	RT	1	1
TAG	LT	1	1
A-Pod	RL	1	.5
A-Pod	LL	1	.5
Flamer	LT	1	.5

Alternate Configuration A

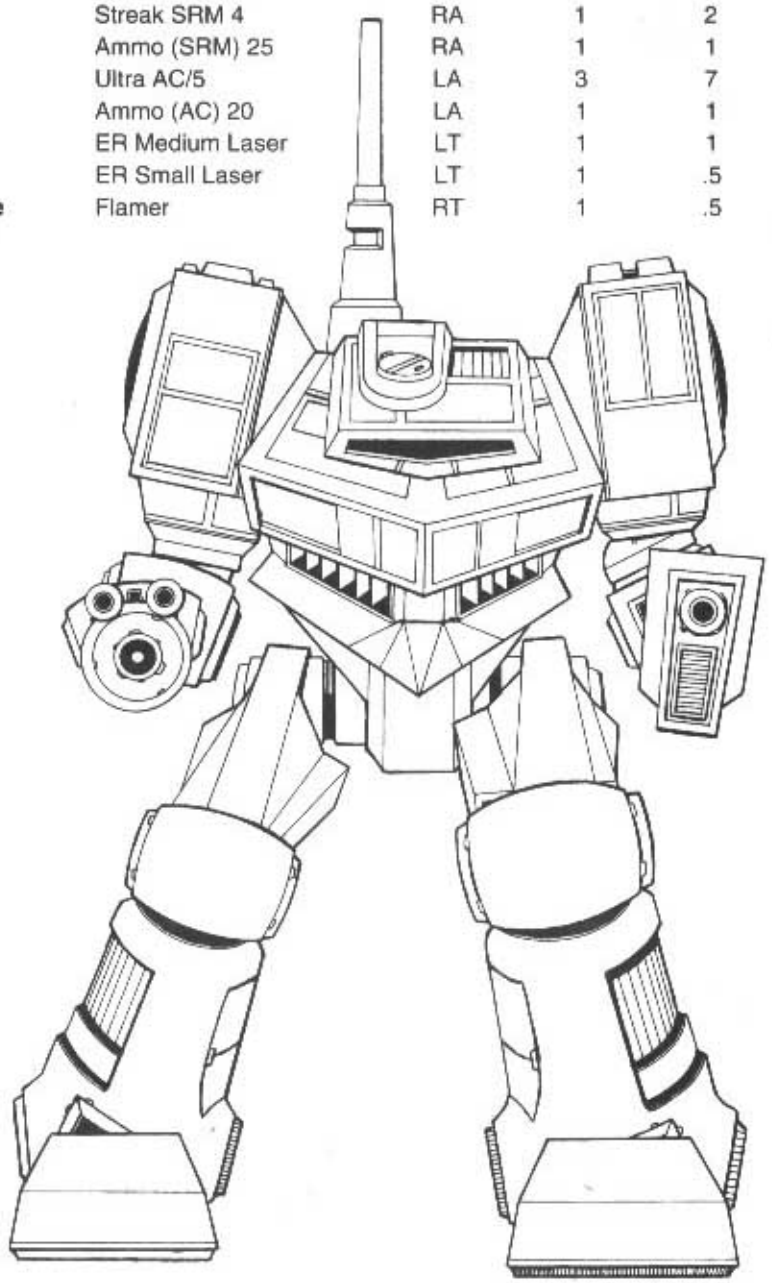
Large Pulse Laser	RA	2	6
Large Pulse Laser	LA	2	6
LB 2-X AC	RA	3	5
Ammo (AC) 45	RT	1	1
LRM 10	LA	1	2.5
Ammo (LRM) 12	LT	1	1
Double Heat Sink	RT	2	1
Double Heat Sink	LT	2	1

Alternate Configuration B

Weapons and Ammo	**Location**	**Critical**	**Tonnage**
ER PPC	RA	2	6
LB 10-X AC	LA	5	10
Ammo (AC) 20	LT	2	2
2 Medium Pulse Lasers	RA	2	4
2 Machine Guns	RT	2	0.5
Ammo (MG) 200	RT	1	1

Alternate Configuration C

LRM 15	LT	2	3.5
Ammo (LRM) 8	LT	1	1
LRM 20	RT	4	5
Ammo (LRM) 6	RT	1	1
Streak SRM 4	RA	1	2
Ammo (SRM) 25	RA	1	1
Ultra AC/5	LA	3	7
Ammo (AC) 20	LA	1	1
ER Medium Laser	LT	1	1
ER Small Laser	LT	1	.5
Flamer	RT	1	.5



SUPERNOVA

Mass: 90 tons
Chassis: Standard
Power Plant: 270 Standard
Cruising Speed: 32.4 kph
Maximum Speed: 54 kph
Jump Jets: 3
Jump Capacity: 90 meters
Armor: Standard
Armament:
6 Extended-Range Large Lasers
Manufacturer: Unknown
Communications Systems: Unknown
Targeting and Tracking System: Unknown

OVERVIEW

Mounting a menacing array of lasers, the *Supernova* is every bit the big brother of the *Black Hawk*, which is known as the *Nova* among the Clans. Though most designers would assume that the *Supernova* was developed in the mold of its smaller brother, evidence suggests that its design actually predated the *Black Hawk*. Plans to replace the autocannon of the *King Crab* with clusters of large lasers grew from a shortage of ammunition, and though these designs met with little success due to the *Crab*'s integral ferro-fibrous armor, they gave rise to a lighter and leaner design functioning on a similar principal. It is unknown if the *Supernova* was actually produced at this time or if it was shelved in favor of the *Black Hawk* OmniMech.

CAPABILITIES

Slow-moving but surprisingly agile, the *Supernova* nonetheless counts on destroying its enemies before they get close enough for mobility to be a factor. It accomplishes this with frightening regularity using its array of six extended-range large lasers, mounted three in each arm. Provided there is a clear line of sight to the enemy, a single *Supernova* can often eliminate an entire Star of approaching heavy 'Mechs before they get a shot off in return. Like the *Black Hawk*, the *Supernova* suffers from severe overheating if all its lasers are fired repeatedly. Even the 26 double-strength freezers mounted in the 'Mech's roomy chassis can only dissipate 75 percent of the heat generated by its weapons.

DEPLOYMENT

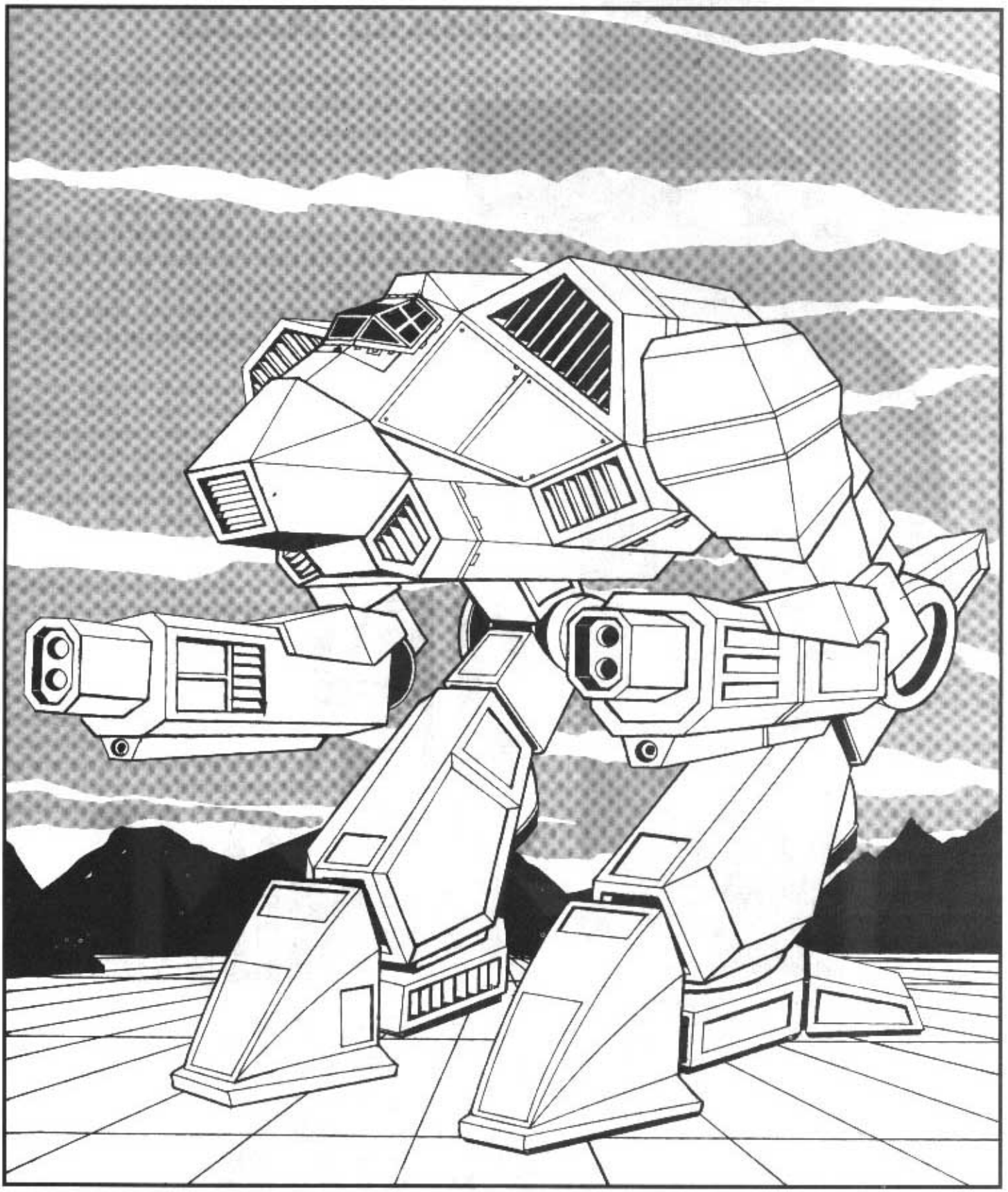
Despite problems with overheating, the *Supernova* has become a mainstay of Nova Cat garrison forces. The *Supernova* is rarely seen outside of Clan Nova Cat, and is always used in a defensive role. Garrisons throughout the Nova Cat zone have one or two of these 'Mechs stationed at most major bases, factories and cities. Reports also place a few *Supernova*s in the PGCs of Clans Wolf and Ghost Bear.

Type: **Supernova**
Technology Base: Clan
Tonnage: 90

Equipment		**Mass**
Internal Structure:		9
Engine:	270	14.5
Walking MP:	3	
Running MP:	5	
Jumping MP:	3	
Heat Sinks:	26 (52)	16
Gyro:		3
Cockpit:		3
Armor Factor:	232	14.5
	Internal Structure	*Armor Value*
Head	3	9
Center Torso	29	33
Center Torso (rear)		10
R/L Torso	19	26
R/L Torso (rear)		8
R/L Arm	15	26
R/L Leg	19	30

Weapons and Ammo	**Location**	**Critical**	**Tonnage**
3 ER Large Lasers	RA	3	12
3 ER Large Lasers	LA	3	12
Jump Jet	CT	1	2
Jump Jet	RT	1	2
Jump Jet	LT	1	2

CLAN NOVA CAT



CLAN DIAMOND SHARK

CLAN DIAMOND SHARK

The noble sea fox once belonged to us, but it has proven weaker than we. We have survived where it has not, by becoming one with the predator that killed it.

The diamond shark prowls through the ocean in search of prey, scorning the smaller creatures of the sea in favor of more powerful opponents. It sees the sea fox, graceful and lethal, but knows itself more lethal still. Here is a foe worth fighting ... here is an enemy against which the diamond shark may test its mettle!

The gray shape glides through the water, every inch of it a weapon so silent that its victim cannot hear it coming. It bides its time, watching and waiting, plotting the best moment to strike. As the sea fox rises from the water, the diamond shark leaps out of the waves behind it and arrows down in a deadly arc. It plunges back into the surf a hair's breadth from the sea fox, so close that the diamond-hard ridges on its side draw the doomed fox's blood. Too fast for the fox to react to the danger it only now sees, the shark leaps again, this time catching its prey in its powerful jaws and snapping its neck with the slightest downward pressure ...

Clan Diamond Shark occupies a unique position among the Clans. Within a rigidly hierarchical blueprint for society, they have come closest to democracy; among people convinced that military strength depends on tight controls and reverence for the chain of command, the Diamond Sharks have achieved remarkable battlefield prowess through the kind of flexibility other Clans disdain. Clan Diamond Shark is also the only Clan ever to have changed its name, a startling shift for a society that values order and stability above virtually all things. In changing its name, Clan Diamond Shark adapted to a unique set of circumstances. Its ability to do so most clearly demonstrates this Clan's unorthodox nature.

Clan Diamond Shark began its existence as Clan Sea Fox, named by Nicholas Kerensky for a seallike reptilian predator found in Strana Mechty's freshwater oceans. Nicholas admired this animal for the honor it apparently paid to its prey, seeming to bow to its opponent before attacking. Nicholas saw the ability to honor one's enemy as one of the essential traits that set the true warrior apart from the barbarian killing machine. Clan Sea Fox remained admirably faithful to that trait, as well as to the idealism and adaptability bequeathed to it by its two most influential Khans. Though born more than a century apart, Khan Karen Nagasawa and Khan Damon Clarke did more to shape Clan Sea Fox than any other leaders in this Clan's history.

FROM PEACEMAKER TO WARRIOR

Then Karen Nagasawa said,
"The past holds wise men as well as fools;
Why, then, do we listen only to the foolish
When we have another choice?"

—*The Remembrance* (Clan Diamond Shark), Passage 12, Verse 14, Lines 4–7

Karen Nagasawa, Clan Sea Fox's most influential Khan, was born on the world of Dieron during the third year of Stefan Amaris's reign of terror over the Terran Hegemony. Her parents belonged to the SLDF's 2145th Dragoons, and had fled to one of Dieron's Castle Brians to escape the 422nd Amaris Cavaliers ten months before Karen's birth. Karen spent the first six years of her life in the Castle Brian, until General Kerensky freed the Hegemony from the Usurper's cruel grip. Kerensky assigned the 2145th to the Periphery March, but before long he and everyone else in the SLDF recognized that the Star League could not survive much longer. Tensions escalated on the Periphery worlds, often flaring into open violence against the SLDF. Karen's father, Hiroji Nagasawa, barely escaped with his life from a street riot, and Karen's mother kept the little girl housebound for fear of the violence outside. When General Kerensky issued his famous call for Exodus, the Nagasawa family gladly followed him into the unknown reaches of space.

When the SLDF finally made planetfall on the worlds they christened the Pentagon Cluster, the Nagasawas settled on the planet Arcadia along with several other people from the Terran Hegemony. Able to socialize with people her own age for the first time, Karen enjoyed her newfound friends but preferred the silent company of books that had enriched an otherwise lonely childhood. Her natural tendency to keep to herself increased during Arcadia's long slow slide into anarchy. Throughout Karen's adolescence, the discontented among Arcadia's population revived old grudges and ancient national animosities; when her friends began to choose sides in the atmosphere of rising hostility, Karen turned to solitude and study as a shield from a world she could no longer understand.

After completing her formal schooling at the age of 22, Karen Nagasawa began a career as a journalist. Well-educated, perceptive and with a flair for the written word, Karen used her writing skills as a well-honed weapon against the rising tide of war. From her parents she had learned to treasure the ideals of peace and unity; the ever more likely possibility of civil war on the Pentagon worlds appalled her. Her thoughtful, reasoned

EXCLUSIVE BLOODNAMES

General Bloodnames
Clarke
Kalasa

MechWarriors
Hammond
Sennet
Hawker
Rodriguez

Elementals
Vewas
Maine
Oshika
Coston
Horn

Aerospace Pilots
Fowler
Nagasawa
Faulk

appeals for peace won her critical acclaim, but the vast majority of ordinary citizens were too caught up in the madness of the moment to pay Karen or others like her any heed.

As the unrest grew, Karen became even more determined to force people to recognize the true horrors of war. In a fine display of courage to which Clan Diamond Shark warriors still point with pride, Karen traveled to the most dangerous city on the world of Eden, the focal point of the turmoil. She spent several months on Eden, writing passionate stories on the ordinary folk whose lives had been shattered by riots and street violence. When all-out civil war erupted between Eden's Davion and Liao citizens, Karen Nagasawa was forcibly escorted by the senior editor of her newspaper's local branch onto the last DropShip to lift offplanet. He had no intention of losing one of his best writers to what he termed "foolish pseudo-heroics" and packed Karen back to Arcadia, where he assumed she would be safe.

Karen returned to Arcadia to find her homeworld at the boiling point. Not content to sit back and report on the looming disaster as it happened, Karen searched frantically for some concrete action she could take to halt the march toward war. Hearing Nicholas Kerensky's appeals for peace on the Pentagon worlds, Karen offered him her services to more widely publicize his message. As weeks and then months passed with no change for the better, Karen came to share Nicholas Kerensky's increasing conviction that no one wanted to hear a call for peace because human beings naturally preferred war. She came to believe, as he did, that the only way to spare humankind the ravages of constant strife was to create a wholly new society in which aggression is channeled into tightly controlled directions. When Nicholas decided to create just such a society, Karen Nagasawa helped him write the speeches proposing the second Exodus. To this day, members of Clan Diamond Shark credit their first Khan with having persuaded many of the members of the original Clans to follow their beloved founder on the journey to Strana Mechty.

On Strana Mechty, Karen spent considerable time with Nicholas and his wife, Jennifer Winson, listening and commenting as they discussed the shape of the new society they intended to build. She put their grand ideas into simple yet eloquent words that inspired all of Nicholas's followers to join in his great endeavor. Like all those who followed Nicholas and those who were born during the 20 year exile on Strana Mechty, Karen Nagasawa submitted to intensive testing in order to find her place in Kerensky's new society. Feeling the need to take a greater role in the formation of the Clans, Karen Nagasawa entered combat training, where she showed amazing natural skill as an aerofighter pilot.

THE PENTAGON CAMPAIGN

By the time Nicholas and his Clans were ready to retake the war-torn Pentagon worlds, Karen had risen to the rank of Star Colonel in the newly formed Clan Sea Fox, surpassing quite a few veterans of the SLDF. Her rank entitled her to a leadership position in the invasion force, and Nicholas assigned her Clan to retake the world of Babylon along with forces from Clans Ice Hellion, Coyote, and Cloud Cobra. The Khans of those Clans, however, resented Star Colonel Nagasawa's meteoric rise and belittled her objections to their invasion strategy as "the foolish prattle of a scribbler." They discovered the hard way that Nagasawa's instinct for strategy more than matched her piloting ability.

The other Khans leading the Babylon campaign had drastically underestimated the colonists' ability to react to the Clan invasion, and so mistakenly believed that a single, all-out assault on an important enemy position would win them the entire planet. Holding to the letter of Nicholas Kerensky's exhortations about fighting honorable battles, the Khans also opted for a frontal 'Mech assault rather than using any tactics they considered "deceptive" or "unfair." They got a much tougher stand-up fight than they had bargained for; the enemy's forces were far stronger than they had believed, and the "killing blow" they had so fondly believed in ended up costing them almost half their machines. Star Colonel Nagasawa, displaying a pragmatic streak that frequently surfaces among Diamond Shark warriors to this day, led her fighter Star on a high pass over the rebel stronghold and bombed it, then ordered the remaining Ice Hellion, Coyote and Cobra 'Mechs to secure what was left of the installation.

Refusing to take orders from someone they still considered an amateur soldier, the leaders of the other Clans' forces countermanded Nagasawa's instructions and instead ordered their troops to march toward a nearby city they had identified as a secondary objective. Their departure allowed Babylon's rebellious citizens to regain control over their damaged stronghold, until a 'Mech contingent from Clan Sea Fox retook it from the rebel forces. This battle cost the life of Clan Sea Fox's senior Khan.

KHAN NAGASAWA

Impressed by Star Colonel Nagasawa's strategic acumen and confident of her skills as a leader, Nicholas suggested that she try for the Khanship of Clan Sea Fox. Once elected Khan, Nagasawa immediately took steps to ensure her Clan's long-term survival. An avid student of history and something of an idealist when it came to politics, Nagasawa saw the source of the Star League's strength as a combination of its material prosperity and the value it placed on the lives of its individual citizens. Nagasawa supported the Clans' caste system as an extension of valuing the individual citizen, because it gave everyone a clearly defined place in society and allowed each citizen to make a contribution to it. Unlike many other Khans, however, Khan Nagasawa did not see the other castes as existing merely to serve the warrior caste. She believed that true strength depended on bonds of trust between all five castes, and so promoted unprecedented freedom of information and association throughout the Clan.

Khan Nagasawa's unorthodox ideas soon paid off. Clan Sea Fox scientists and merchants, granted free rein to use their talents as they saw fit for the Clan's benefit, soon put their Clan in the forefront of scientific and economic achievement. Clan Sea Fox scientists perfected the artificial womb technology and genetic engineering techniques that gave rise to the sibko system, and Sea Fox merchants soon became the dominant traders in the universally valuable commodity of information. The merchants created the so-called Chatterweb, a vast information-exchange network whose reach extended throughout the Clans and that eventually became one of Clan Sea Fox's most important military as well as economic assets.

Khan Nagasawa also instituted the ritual of paying homage to the Clan's namesake animal, a practice that continued for almost two centuries until the Khanship of Damon Clarke. Roughly a decade after becoming Khan, Nagasawa learned that the dumping of pollutants into freshwater rivers and lakes on Strana Mechty was slowly destroying the sea fox's habitat. Dusting off her journalistic skills, Nagasawa used the Chatterweb to publicize the sea fox's plight, and even traveled to Strana Mechty to film a documentary report on the sea fox's precarious survival. Her public awareness campaign saved the sea fox; to ensure that subsequent generations would continue to safeguard the Clan namesake, Nagasawa decreed that every Khan of Clan Sea Fox would present the beast with a gift of fish at the beginning of his or her term of leadership.

Clan Sea Fox also prospered militarily during Khan Nagasawa's stewardship. Their resounding defeat of Clan Coyote in a Trial of Possession for the colony world of Delios established their reputation as tricky warriors; by dint of clever bidding, Clan Sea Fox's Galaxy Commanders forced Clan Coyote to commit far fewer resources to the battle than the Coyote commanders had intended. The Sea Fox's sharp bidding tactics eventually made them the focus of a Trial of Grievance declared by Khan Jerome Winson of Clan Wolf. Clan Sea Fox fought the Wolf forces to a draw in a short but spirited engagement, forcefully establishing their right to bid as they saw fit.

PEACE AND PROSPERITY

As each warrior plays his role in battle,
So each caste plays its role for the Clan.
Growers of food and makers of 'Mechs,
Those who discover and those who enrich,
All look for justice to the warrior who governs.

—*The Remembrance* (Clan Diamond Shark), Passage 96, Verse 12, Lines 1–5

Clan Sea Fox's relatively egalitarian treatment of its "lower" castes enabled it to profit hugely throughout the Golden Century. The Sea Fox merchant caste made several important contributions, taking greater initiative than any other Clan in the exploration and development of trade routes and colony worlds. Eagerly joining Clan Nova Cat in the business of futures speculations, Sea Fox merchants explored deeper into the so-called Kerensky Cluster than any other Clan in search of valuable resources to trade. Among the most profitable finds was the discovery of a jellylike liquid on the world of Strata Domingo, which upon contact with a simple starch hardened into a tough protective coating that could withstand the stress of a vacuum. Used to repair heavy machinery and reinforce both Elemental armor and ships' hulls, the substance called HarJel brought wealth to many a Sea Fox merchant as well as conferring military advantages on the Clan. Since Strata Domingo's discovery, other Clans have tried to take the world and its valuable product from Clan Sea Fox, but all attempts so far have failed.

The technician and scientist castes gave Clan Sea Fox its most important military edge, the OmniMech. Via the Chatterweb, Clan Sea Fox techs and scientists learned of Clan Coyote's researches into early OmniMech technology. Quick to see its potential, members of Clan Sea Fox offered their own considerable scientific and technical expertise on the Coyote project. Scientists and technicians from both Clans worked together on the development of the OmniMech.

and so Clan Sea Fox was among the first Clans to field the powerful new machines.

A test-run battle on the world of Tathis proved the OmniMech's military value. The Sea Fox Khan, Kevin Arbott, chose to attack the Clan Mongoose colony planet in order to secure its bountiful corn harvest after poor packaging in transport had ruined the bulk of the Sea Foxes' crop. Khan Arbott led a Trinary of OmniMechs in an assault on Clan Mongoose forces, then retreated to the DropShips after several hours of inconclusive fighting. Aboard the DropShips, the Sea Fox OmniMechs changed their weapon configurations, then dropped to the planet and renewed their attack. The reconfigured 'Mechs took the defenders completely by surprise, enabling Clan Sea Fox to win its objective.

THE GREAT CHANGE

Bid the Sea Fox farewell;
Noble he was, but not strong enough.
The diamond shark has devoured him;
The shark is the greater warrior.

—*The Remembrance* (Clan Diamond Shark), Passage 127, Verse 35, Lines 6–9

In 2984, Damon Clarke became Khan of Clan Sea Fox. Unusual for such a relatively liberal Clan, Khan Clarke was a conservative who strongly favored the Crusader political movement. Modern-day Diamond Shark Loremasters say of Khan Clarke that he began life as a Jade Falcon but was mistakenly dropped into a Sea Fox nest. The "Jade Falcon" label refers not to his parentage, but to an arrogant attitude toward nonwarriors more characteristic of the rabidly conservative Falcons than of a typical Sea Fox. His brilliant battle record and stunning skill in a 'Mech won him the Khanship over several rivals, and the Clan's lower castes feared that Clarke would try to remake Clan Sea Fox in the Jade Falcons' or Smoke Jaguars' image. Ironically, the Khan who prized stability and order in all things would preside over the single most drastic change ever experienced by any of the Clans.

The seeds of the change had been sown some months before Clarke became Khan, when Clan Snow Raven declared a Trial of Possession for valuable oil fields on the Sea Fox world of Priori. Priori's defenders had discovered the Snow Raven attack strategy via the Chatterweb, and were well-prepared to meet the enemy. The Sea Foxes easily defeated Clan Snow Raven's forces, then followed up the battlefield humiliation by filling the Chatterweb with unflattering jibes about the fighting abilities of the Snow Raven senior Khan. Khan Howell of Clan Snow Raven, an arrogant man secretly insecure about his combat skills, felt personally disgraced by Clan Sea Fox. Though his saKhan and the rest of his Clan accepted their loss, Howell privately vowed revenge.

A group of Clan Snow Raven scientists on Strana Mechty had recently completed an ambitious attempt to genetically engineer the ultimate predator: a breed of shark so deadly that no other marine creature could stand against it. Khan Howell, visiting Strana Mechty for a Clan Council, stole one of these sharks from the scientists' labs and took it by VTOL to the largest freshwater ocean on Strana Mechty. There, he dropped his deadly cargo into the water and waited for the shark to find the largest source of fresh meat: the sea fox.

Mere weeks later, Damon Clarke was installed as senior Khan. As his office required, he made the journey to Strana Mechty to bring the gift of fish to the sea fox. Clarke and his party took a small boat out to the center of the freshwater ocean and waited for a sea fox to appear. Five hours later, an unusual wait for the namesake's appearance, one of Clarke's entourage finally spotted a sea fox. Clarke flung the fish to it, but as the sea fox leaped up and bowed to its prey, a huge, silvery shape reared out of the water and took the fox's neck in its jaws. After a brief but fierce struggle, the sea fox's attacker snapped its neck and then disappeared beneath the waves with the corpse.

A horrified Khan Clarke called a meeting of Clan Sea Fox's Bloodnamed warriors and related the catastrophe. None of them could fathom where the mysterious predator had come from; as far as they knew, the sea fox had no natural enemies.

After several hours of intense discussion, the warriors decided to capture one of the terrible sea-beasts and study it. Two full Points of Elementals were barely sufficient to bring the shark down without killing it, and the beast killed one of its assailants before succumbing. After a close look at the thing, Clan Sea Fox scientists dubbed it the diamond shark because of its color and the ridges of diamond-hard spines on its sides. They discovered that within the few brief months of its arrival on Strana Mechty, the shark had decimated three of the four colonies of sea foxes in the ocean. Based on the sheer speed of the fox's destruction, Clan scientists predicted that the sea fox again would be an endangered species before the end of the year.

To Khan Clarke's mind, the diamond shark's swift victory over the sea fox in the battle for supremacy proved the shark's fitness as a namesake. Clarke drafted a proposal to change Clan Sea Fox's name to Clan Diamond Shark, then called a Grand Council in order to secure his fellow Khans' approval before suggesting such a momentous change to his Clan's Bloodnamed warriors.

POLITICAL HARDBALL

Khan Clarke's startling petition provoked a mixed bag of strong reactions in the Grand Council. Many Khans sympathized with Clarke's desire to take the name of the predator that had proved itself stronger; others refused to tolerate what they saw as the rejection of the name that Nicholas Kerensky himself had chosen. Khan Howell of Clan Snow Raven led the opposition to Clarke's plan, beside himself with rage at the thought of his revenge going awry. He inadvertently revealed his own hand in the sea fox's destruction, however, and his horrified warriors immediately disavowed Khan Howell's barbaric act. In the final tally, eight Clans voted in Clarke's favor and nine voted against him. Fully prepared for such an outcome, Clarke immediately called for a Trial of Refusal.

Bidding for the trial put Clarke's forces at a single Cluster, facing a Cluster plus a Star of Clan Snow Raven 'Mechs. From the first seconds of the 45 minute battle, Clarke and his forces dominated the field, inflicting three times as many casualties as they suffered. Having won the right to change his Clan's name, Khan Clarke went into seclusion for 48 hours to debate the question of who should be allowed a say in this momentous decision. His own conservative instincts prompted him to reserve voting rights on the issue to the warrior caste, but he knew that denying the lower castes the chance to choose their namesake might well provoke massive unrest. On the other hand, allowing the entire Clan to vote could set a potentially dangerous precedent by overtly placing the lower castes on the same level as the warrior caste. Clarke had been chipping away at this egalitarianism ever since gaining significant military rank, and he disliked the idea of giving in to it.

During his two days of isolation, Khan Clarke read every one of Khan Nagasawa's writings he could find in an attempt

WOLFNET ARCHIVE FILE: 21998-DF4-23/45/4

Transcript of debate on Grand Council floor following Khan Clarke's announcement of Clan Sea Fox's intention to change its name to Clan Diamond Shark

Snow Raven Khan: I cannot believe what I am hearing! This freebirth scheme to sidestep their Clan's dishonor makes me sick! Never since the shame of the Not-Named Clan has Kerensky's vision been so twisted by the deeds of his own people.

Sea Fox Khan: We merely wish to acknowledge the—

SR Khan: Spare me your mercantile prattle! A true warrior would admit his dishonor and beg the council's mercy. You seek to turn this disgrace into a victory!

SF Khan: I am sure an appropriate trial would—

SR Khan: To declare a Trial of Refusal is to admit that a valid case is before this council. And I would not give you the satisfaction of a Trial of Grievance! The loss of your namesake to a greater predator is merely an ironic testimony to the pathetic state of your Clan's warriors. Khan Clarke, have you been purchased by your own merchant caste?

Snow Raven saKhan: The loss of their namesake? Has the Sea Fox actually become extinct?

SF Khan: Yes, it is true. The sudden appearance of a great new predator, the so-called diamond shark, in the sea foxes' waters has driven the species so near to extinction that it will surely be gone before the end of the year. [Addressing Snow Raven Khan.] But how did you know about that? We have not yet announced the facts of our case to the council.

SR Khan: More trickery! The facts are there for all to see in your own contemptible Chatterweb! Fellow Khans, see for yourselves—

SR saKhan: I have not heard any such information on the Chatterweb! [Addressing Snow Raven Khan.] You knew of this treachery all along, didn't you? Didn't you?

SR Khan [nervous pause]: Yes ... yes! I know all about it because I did it! My scientists created the glorious diamond shark! I myself deposited the sharks in the waters of Strana Mechty! Yes, my fellow Khans, I killed the sea fox! Was it any less then they deserved? They have dishonored us all with their shameless profiteering and complete disregard for the ways of Kerensky! I call for a Trial of Annihilation against Clan Sea Fox! Let them be destroyed as their namesake was, by my hand!

SR saKhan: Enough! Your sickening crimes defy belief! I challenge you to meet me in a Circle of Equals! Let us end this quickly, before your shame stains all of Clan Snow Raven!

to understand the true consequences that might result from the decision to throw open the vote. Impressed by the unassailable logic and deep insight of the long-dead Khan's essays on freedom and trust between castes, he began to re-examine his own instinctive judgment of the lower castes. His own efforts to tighten the warriors' control over their fellow Clansmen had met with mixed success, and in reading Khan Nagasawa's writings he began to understand why. Eventually, Clarke concluded that an open vote would best serve the interests of the entire Clan. On the third day since winning the Trial of Refusal, Clarke announced to his fellow Sea Foxes that an open ballot would be held—not only on the issue of the Clan's name change, but on any issue that affected the Clan as a whole.

Not all of the Sea Fox warriors approved of this idea. Galaxy Commander Bret Leroux, one of Clan Sea Fox's finest warriors, challenged his Khan to a Trial of Grievance over the issue. As with the earlier Trial of Refusal, Khan Clarke dominated the battle from the opening minutes and swiftly prevailed. Seven more Bloodnamed warriors, whose names have been lost to history, also challenged him and lost. Each of Clarke's victories brought more and more warriors around to his way of thinking, and the Clan-wide vote eventually took place in September of 2985.

THE VOTE

The people of Clan Sea Fox cast more than 50 million ballots in the referendum. The warriors voted first, followed by the scientists, merchants, technicians and laborers. Powerful computers tallied the results instantly for the viewing crowds. With all votes counted save those of the laborer caste, the close vote stood at 49 percent approving the name change and 51 percent rejecting it. The laborers tipped the scales in favor of the new name, voting 95 percent in favor of the name "Diamond Shark" in a massive show of support for Khan Clarke's new liberalism. On the last day of September 2985, Clan Sea Fox officially became Clan Diamond Shark.

The newly named Clan faced immediate tests of its strength from Clan Smoke Jaguar, whose warriors regarded it as a personal affront that a Clan would allow its lower castes a voice in anything. Clan Smoke Jaguar launched a massive raid against the Diamond Shark world of Priori, going in with as much force as it could honorably get away with. Knowing his warriors faced a tough fight against savage opponents, Khan Clarke used the only advantage he had: flexibility. He had battled the Smoke Jaguars before as a young Star Captain, and knew they rigidly adhered to a prearranged battle plan and the chain of command on the battlefield. He therefore gave his commanders free rein to conduct their battles as befit the situation on the ground, counting on their swift adaptability to throw the Jaguars into chaos.

The Diamond Sharks beat their attackers back on every front, fighting harder and with more unity than the Smoke Jaguar units had expected. This stunning proof of the strength conferred by freedom of action and trust in subordinates convinced Khan Clarke once and for all that Khan Nagasawa had been correct, and inspired him to do away with all of his previous attempts to tighten the warriors' grip on the rest of the Clan.

UNLIKELY CRUSADERS

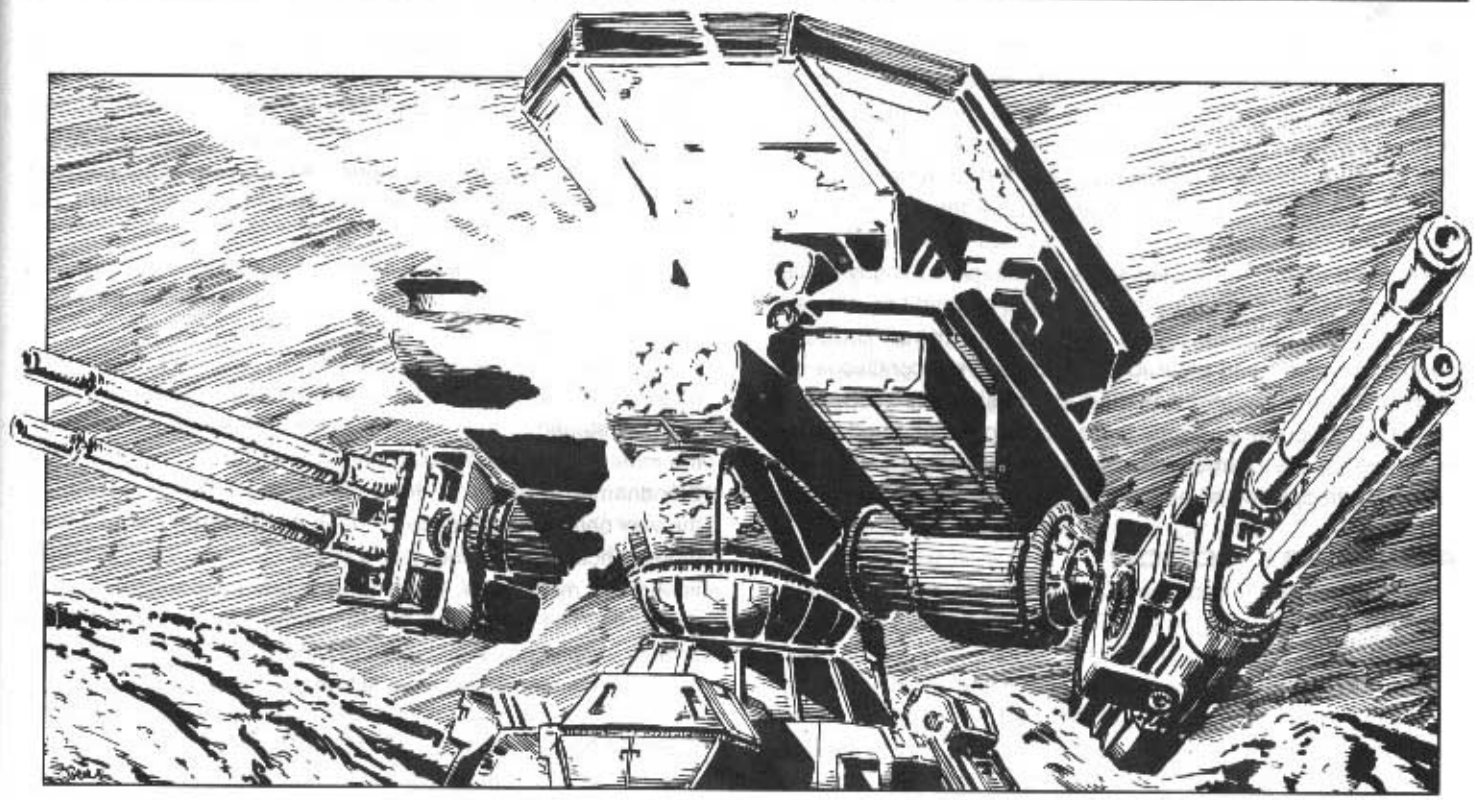
During the early years of the Crusaders' rise to prominence, Clan Diamond Shark attempted to stay out of the debate over whether or not to invade the Inner Sphere. Like most of the other Clans, they believed that they should invade someday—the only question was when and for what purpose. Less contemptuous of the people of the Inner Sphere than such ardent Crusaders as Clans Smoke Jaguar and Jade Falcon, the Diamond Sharks initially leaned toward the Warden view that the Clans existed to protect their backward Inner Sphere cousins from external threats.

As support for the invasion continued to rise, Clan Diamond Shark slowly began to change its collective mind. They strongly disapproved of the Crusaders' attitude, but not their objective. More and more members of Clan Diamond Shark began to feel that they had a duty to join the Crusader movement to save it from the bloodthirsty fanaticism of the Jaguars and the Falcons. Within a few decades, Clan Diamond Shark became almost wholly Crusader, convinced that invasion was inevitable and that only they could turn it from a Falcon- and Jaguar-inspired bloodbath to the true liberation that the Clans' Inner Sphere brethren deserved. They saw their own liberal ways as most closely resembling the Star League, and themselves as the standard-bearers of true freedom to the oppressed people of the Inner Sphere.

When Wolf Khan Kerlin Ward proposed sending Wolf's Dragoons to the Inner Sphere during the Grand Council of 3000, Clan Diamond Shark surprised everyone by enthusiastically supporting the plan. Rather than viewing it as a clever way of sidestepping the invasion, the Diamond Shark Khans found it eminently sensible to gather up-to-date information on the Inner Sphere before attacking it. They also hoped to garner specific information about oppressive regimes with which to convince the few Wardens remaining among them to join the Crusader ranks. The Dragoons' initial reports left the Diamond Sharks well satisfied, particularly their reports on the totalitarian regime of the Capellan Confederation.

Though they felt the time for invasion had come when a Grand Council vote was taken on the issue in 3029, they abstained from the vote rather than support Khan Leo Showers's invasion proposal. Rather than see a Smoke Jaguar lead the invasion of the Inner Sphere, the Diamond Sharks preferred to wait. By the time of the second, ultimately successful vote in 3048, a change of leadership tipped the Diamond Sharks in favor of immediate invasion.

CLAN DIAMOND SHARK



THE CRUSADER KHAN

In 3046, a moderate Crusader by the name of Ian Hawker became Khan of the Diamond Sharks, and he immediately imposed a series of conservative reforms aimed at curtailing the privileges of the lower castes. Among the changes that provoked the loudest outcry were the installation of troops on vessels belonging to the merchant caste, a measure giving the warrior caste veto power over proposed exploratory missions, and an order forbidding freebirth warriors to serve in front-line units. Khan Hawker undercut the protests, however, by citing the overwhelming need for topnotch military preparedness in light of the imminent invasion of the Inner Sphere. When Leo Showers reintroduced the motion to invade during the Grand Council of 3048, Khan Hawker voted to support the measure—with Leo Showers as ilKhan—in order to justify his repressive reform measures.

Reaction throughout the Clan was intense and mostly negative. The question of invasion certainly affected the Clan as a whole, and the lower castes felt they had been cheated of their right to a say in the matter. Clan Diamond Shark's other Bloodnamed warriors, furious that Hawker had not consulted them before voting, made loud noises about challenging his right to the Khanship. They refrained from making any formal challenges, however, after Khan Hawker pointed out that the Clan would need all its warriors in top fighting shape to be sure of winning greater glory during the invasion than any other Clan.

Khan Hawker's troubles, however, had just begun. The forces under his leadership in the bidding for the right to invade did less well than Hawker had hoped; rather than ranking first or second in the combat trials for the four invading Clans and the single reserve Clan, the Diamond Sharks finished sixth out of the 17 Clans who fought. Though such a finish was quite impressive, it left Clan Diamond Shark out of the running for a place in the invasion force. Hawker salvaged Clan Diamond Shark's hopes by joining with Clan Nova Cat in demanding a Trial of Refusal; Clan Diamond Shark won their trial, and with it the status of a reserve Clan.

Despite Hawker's failure to win the Diamond Sharks a place among the primary invading Clans, none of the Bloodnamed challenged him for the Khanship; the Clan's warriors all wanted to keep themselves and their 'Mechs and fighters in perfect condition in case they were called to the front lines. However, behind-the-scenes political maneuvering to oust Hawker intensified. To shore up his faltering political strength, Khan Hawker went looking for allies in the Crusader Clan he considered the most powerful: Clan Jade Falcon. The Falcons' senior Khan, Vandervahn Chistu, was skeptical of Hawker's promise to turn the Diamond Sharks into "true Crusaders" in exchange for political aid, but Hawker found a receptive ear in the wily saKhan Elias Crichell. Eager to build his own power base, Crichell saw the alliance with Hawker as one that he could control and use to his own advantage.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF CONQUEST

Though the performance of Clan Diamond Shark's warriors in the combat trials had cut the Clan out of combat for an indefi-

nite period, the Diamond Shark Khans were determined to profit somehow from the invasion. Allowed to send a single Trinary along with the invasion force to observe the fighting, Clan Diamond Shark chose to send the command Trinary of their elite unit, the Diamond Keshik, commanded by Khan Hawker. Rather than follow the troops of any one of the four invading Clans, the Diamond Shark Khans agreed that their troops would jump from Clan to Clan so as to observe as many battle sites as possible. Khan Hawker hoped that he might be allowed to participate in some of the conquests; saKhan Barbara Sennet, however, had other ideas. By observing conditions on as many Clan-conquered worlds as possible, Khan Sennet hoped to find out what goods the occupying forces needed the most so that the Diamond Shark merchants could sell to the occupying troops and so enrich the Clan.

PERIPHERY ACTION

Khan Hawker's hopes of participating in combat took a quantum leap when ilKhan Leo Showers, a few days out from the edge of the Periphery, declared the Periphery worlds open territory. Khan Hawker immediately submitted a bid to invade the world of Blackstone but was rebuffed by the ilKhan, who brusquely explained that his declaration applied only to the four primary invading Clans. When Showers later extended a patronizing invitation to Khan Hawker to join the Smoke Jaguar forces on his own in one of the raids in the invasion's first wave, Hawker stiffly declined. Offered a similar invitation for the entire Diamond Keshik by Khan Crichell of Clan Jade Falcon, Hawker eagerly accepted. This exchange of insults revived the long-standing mutual loathing between Clans Diamond Shark and Smoke Jaguar, and set the stage for a series of bruising battles between them.

Khan Hawker and the Diamond Keshik joined the Jade Falcons in the conquest of Last Chance, acquitting themselves extremely well. Khan Crichell was delighted with the performance of his political ally, but many other Falcon commanders were not. Galaxy Commander Mar Helmer, in particular, despised Clan Diamond Shark for what he termed their "freebirth ways," and considered their excellent showing on a Jade Falcon battlefield as a personal insult. He began looking for ways to ensure that the Diamond Sharks would be permanently excluded from the invasion force.

FIRST WAVE: MERCHANT MARINES

Having studied the information sent back to the Clan worlds about the situation facing many of the occupying troops on the Periphery worlds, Khan Sennet and leaders of the merchant caste began assembling a merchant fleet. To assure a favorable vote on the proposal to do business in the Periphery and the Inner Sphere, Khan Sennet offered the merchants a lucrative deal: they would be allowed to keep 90 percent of the profits from the venture. The prospect of that much wealth, as well as their own desire to return to the Inner Sphere's "lost paradises," prompted an overwhelmingly positive response. The merchants' scheme, however, infuriated more than a few Diamond Shark warriors, who resented the fact that the traders would set foot on Inner Sphere worlds before they did. A few Bloodnamed warriors challenged Khan Sennet to Trials of Grievance for backing the merchants, but she defeated all of them easily.

Near the end of the first wave of the invasion, Khan Sennet arrived in the Inner Sphere with a fleet of eight merchant JumpShips. Ironically, the Shark merchants first approached Galaxy Commander Mar Helmer of Clan Jade Falcon with their offer to sell his garrison and front-line troops needed supplies. Helmer refused to buy from the Sharks, couching his refusal in the most insulting terms, and began to agitate among his fellow Bloodnamed warriors to drive the "contemptible freebirths" all the way back to Clan space. Though most Falcon warriors were more concerned with the next wave of conquest than with punishing the merchants, more than a few supported Helmer's demands. The furor died out temporarily when the Diamond Sharks simply took their wares to other Clan garrisons, but the lines of a looming political battle had been drawn.

SECOND WAVE: PROFIT AND PERIL

To the Diamond Sharks' initial dismay, none of the front-line units would buy materiel from them. When questioned by Khan Sennet as to their reasons, the other Khans gave her to understand that buying from a Clan that had left its warriors behind while permitting a lower caste to travel to the Inner Sphere would be a breach of Clan honor. Scenting greater potential profit from the occupied worlds, however, the merchants turned to the garrison troops left behind to hold the conquered planets. Many of these, lacking sufficient military supplies to keep a lid on local resistance movements, threw considerations of Clan honor to the winds in favor of practicality. Within weeks, the Diamond Shark merchants had begun to realize a profit on their investment.

Their success, however, soon bought them trouble from Clan Smoke Jaguar. The second wave of the invasion had not gone well for that Clan, and resistance had flared to alarming proportions on all of their conquered worlds. Adding insult to injury, Smoke Jaguar garrison commanders on more than a few occupied planets had bought supplies from the Diamond Sharks out of sheer desperation. IlKhan Leo Showers, distressed over his Clan's lackluster performance and infuriated that the Smoke Jaguars owed something to the Diamond Sharks, argued bitterly with both Diamond Shark Khans about their right to be in the Inner Sphere at all. Khan Sennet scored a hefty political point by pointing out that the results of the bidding for invasion rights forbade only the Diamond Shark warriors to enter the Inner Sphere until called, not the merchant caste. Khan Hawker backed her up by suggesting that the ilKhan was too eager to change the rules he had set as soon as he found them no longer to his liking, and that the position of

ilKhan might be better filled by a less fickle commander. Forced to back down, the ilKhan retaliated by ordering a Jaguar PGC back in Clan space to launch a Trial of Possession for the Diamond Shark world of Delios. The Sharks' Alpha Galaxy made short work of their attackers, then launched their own assault on the Jaguar world of Vinton. They successfully held several key industrial sites on that world, disrupting the flow of the Jaguars' supplies to the Inner Sphere, until they were eventually forced offworld.

THIRD WAVE: BEAR MARKET

As the third wave of the invasion got under way, the Diamond Shark merchants brought six additional fully stocked JumpShips forward from Clan space into the Periphery and Inner Sphere. They expanded their booming business, selling various nonmilitary goods to local merchants who had remained in business as well as hawking military supplies to the PGCs. Unfortunately for the Diamond Shark merchants, their gravy train was soon to reach the end of the line.

In June of 3050, a merchant ship traveling near Brocchi's Cluster to trade with occupied Periphery planets vanished without a trace. Not long afterward, flagging resistance activity on conquered worlds near the Cluster took a sudden, sharp upturn. Galaxy Commander Mar Helmer, ever on the lookout for ways to discredit the Diamond Sharks, made a connection between the two events and publicly accused the Diamond Shark merchant caste of aiding and abetting the resisters. Amid widespread support from other Jade Falcon warriors, Helmer called for a Trial of Annihilation against Clan Diamond Shark for what he termed its merchants' treason and its consistent refusal to conform to Clan tradition.

Unwilling to lose Khan Hawker's political support, saKhan Crichell came up with a crafty compromise to save his ally. Capitalizing on many warriors' uneasiness at taking such a drastic step as a Trial of Annihilation for the offense of a few freebirths, Crichell challenged Mar Helmer and his allies to prove that the Diamond Shark merchants were aiding resistance movements. When Helmer was unable to comply, Crichell invited Clan Diamond Shark to produce documentation of the true extent of its contacts with local merchants. Comprehensive records of business transactions suggested that the Shark merchants had strictly confined their trading to nonmilitary supplies, except when dealing with the Clans' own garrison troops. Having defused much of Mar Helmer's momentum, Crichell then proposed that the Diamond Shark merchants depart the Inner Sphere, not to set foot outside Clan space again until the conquest of the Inner Sphere was complete.

Crichell's proposal won the day by a wide margin. Khans Hawker and Sennet, relieved to have escaped a Trial of Annihilation, accepted the Grand Council's judgment without a murmur. The merchants, however, were less accommodating. Relaying a quick summary of events to their fellow merchants on the Diamond Shark homeworlds, they called for a vote, and the majority voted to stay in the Inner Sphere. Their defiance angered Khan Hawker, who ordered the Diamond Keshik's WarShip to blow up one of the merchant vessels. Seeing how far their senior Khan was prepared to go to enforce the Council's dictates, the cowed merchants headed for home. Khan Crichell took this act of destruction as a sign that Khan Hawker fully intended to teach his Clan the error of their heretofore lax ways, and rewarded Hawker by inviting the Diamond Keshik to participate in the Jade Falcons' fourth wave of conquests.

WOLFNET ARCHIVE FILE: 90112-UR8-23/34/6

Excerpted from a private communiqué between Galaxy Commander Mar Helmer and ilKhan Leo Showers, obtained by ROM agent Victor Newsek shortly before his death

To ilKhan Leo Showers, respectful greetings.

In the service of the Clans, whose best interests we are both sworn to uphold, I claim the right to inform you of a most grievous error that cries out for redress. I refer to the existence of Clan Diamond Shark. The recent defection of a JumpShip full of freebirths from that pathetic excuse for a Clan proves what many among us—yourself included, I have no doubt—have always known: that the so-called Clan Diamond Shark has been from its inception a cancer in the body of the Clans that we must eradicate.

I intend to call for a Trial of Annihilation against them, and I would be honored to have your support in the Grand Council. Perhaps together, you and I may use the recent unfortunate events to accomplish what years of politicking by the Sharks and their dubious allies denied us. The ever-shifting sands of political motivation have for too long protected those who trifle with Clan tradition and then justify their heresy by pointing to battlefield "victories" that resulted from no more than blind luck; I say we can no longer tolerate a Clan that permits its lower castes such unhealthy, un-Clanlike freedom that they defect to the side of the barbarians we now fight. That they would bring mere coin-biting harvesters of material profit into the Inner Sphere before their warriors is bad enough; that their warriors would permit this insult to their honor is conclusive proof that they have none. Not one of the Diamond Sharks, my ilKhan, is fit even to serve as bondsman to a laborer in any other Clan.

As an added inducement for your support in this matter, I can promise you the undying gratitude and loyalty of Clan Jade Falcon's finest Bloodnamed. I am sure that, in the political tests of will yet to come in the course of our historic invasion, you can put such loyalty to good use.

Respectfully, in the shared memory of our Founder,
Mar Helmer

FOURTH WAVE: ADVANCE INTERRUPTED

During the fourth wave, the Diamond Keshik and both Diamond Shark Khans participated in battles for seven worlds. Though the Jade Falcon rank and file still tended to distrust them, their impressive combat skills won the Sharks genuine, if grudging, respect. Soon after the conquest of Leskovik, the Jade Falcon and Diamond Shark Khans received the ilKhan's summons to the fateful Grand Kurultai aboard the *Dire Wolf*. The Khans departed with high expectations, particularly the Falcon Khans; they had long resented Clan Wolf's impressive string of victories in the invasion, and positively slavered at the prospect of forcing them to slow their rapid advance toward Terra.

When the leaders of the two Clans arrived in the Radstadt system, they were shocked at the *Dire Wolf*'s battered appearance. The wreckage of several Rasalhagian fighters told them that a battle had taken place, but not until they saw the *Dire Wolf*'s devastated bridge did they understand the seriousness of what had happened. Upon learning that the ilKhan had died in the Rasalhagian assault, the Diamond Shark Khans voted with the rest to return to Strana Mechty and select a new ilKhan.

CHANGE OF FORTUNE

On Strana Mechty, the Bloodnamed warriors of Clan Diamond Shark voted heavily against the Smoke Jaguars' attempt to blame Ulric Kerensky for the ilKhan's death. They voted equally heavily in favor of Ulric's installation as ilKhan, despite the fact that such a vote meant siding with the Smoke Jaguars. Khan Hawker owed his support to his Jade Falcon allies, who also voted in Ulric's favor; Khan Sennet and the rest of the Bloodnamed simply preferred Ulric to any other candidate, despite his Warden leanings. They believed his benevolent attitude toward the people of the Inner Sphere was more in keeping with the kind of invasion that the blessed Nicholas Kerensky had intended. All of the Diamond Sharks harbored the secret hope that Ulric would reward their backing of him by permitting them an active role in the fighting.

The new ilKhan's declaration that he was adding other Clans to the invasion at first seemed the answer to the Diamond Sharks' prayers. IlKhan Kerensky's decision to place Clan Diamond Shark on reserve status came as a crushing blow, and some Diamond Shark warriors bitterly and publicly lamented their decision to make him ilKhan. Citing the slowness of Clan Ghost Bear's progress, the Diamond Shark Khans petitioned Ulric to allow their Clan to reinforce the Ghost Bear corridor as the Steel Vipers and Nova Cats had reinforced the Jade Falcons and Smoke Jaguars. Ulric refused, but allowed them to engage in a Trial of Possession for one Ghost Bear-controlled world in order to quiet their protests. The Sharks chose to attack the Periphery planet of Nyserta.

THE NYSERTA CAMPAIGN

The Sharks' 369th Striker Cluster, nicknamed the Hammerheads, headed for Nyserta to engage its defenders, the Fifth Phalanx Cluster of Pi Galaxy. Star Colonel Lionel Arlond led the Hammerheads to the designated battlefield on the Luman Plains to find the Ghost Bear forces waiting for them. The combatants exchanged long-range fire for ten minutes, but when the Diamond Sharks began to get the upper hand, the Ghost Bear 'Mechs melted into the woods that fringed the plains' northern edge. Arlond sent his lighter 'Mechs and a Star of Elementals in pursuit, expecting the Bears to swiftly turn and fight. Instead, the Ghost Bear 'Mechs kept running, speeding up their pace and forcing the Sharks to stretch their ranks thin in the attempt to catch them.

After two days of this running retreat, the Bears suddenly turned and smashed through the Sharks' light 'Mechs. Flush with victory at the success of their false-retreat tactic, the bulk of Pi Galaxy advanced at full speed toward the Sharks' heavy and assault 'Mechs, which were closing to catch up with the lighter units. The clash forced the Bear forces back, and so the Bears swung eastward in an attempt to flank the Shark forces. Star Colonel Arlond split a heavy and an assault Star from his main forces and sent them south toward the woods, with orders to keep going at top speed until they had gone far enough to flank the Ghost Bear troops in turn. Meanwhile, the Star Colonel turned his remaining three 'Mech Stars to face the advancing Ghost Bears.

The second head-on clash of 'Mechs was even fiercer than the first, but neither side gave way. Though outnumbered almost three to one, Arlond's troops held the line and waited. The remaining Shark forces charged out of the woods, turned northward, and crashed into the Ghost Bears from behind, accompanied by the surviving light 'Mechs and Elementals of the pursuit force. The rear assault took Pi Galaxy completely by surprise, and enabled the Diamond Sharks to win the field.

Upon hearing the Ghost Bears' formal relinquishing of Nyserta to the victorious Hammerheads, the Diamond Sharks back in Clan space held riotous celebrations in the street. Despite their loss in the bidding rounds, despite the merchants' expulsion from the Inner Sphere, despite every piece of bad luck the universe could throw at them, Clan Diamond Shark had proved its worth by capturing a Periphery world. While the warriors in the combat region plotted the next Trial of Possession, the rest of the castes on the homeworlds stocked up a fleet of JumpShips. Anticipating the lifting of ilKhan Showers's ban on their presence in the Inner Sphere, the merchants intended to waste no time building their Clan's supply lines.

Within weeks of the conquest of Nyserta, Khan Sennet formally petitioned the ilKhan to lift the ban on the Diamond Shark merchants. As she pointedly told Kerensky, allowing the merchant JumpShips to ferry supplies forward was the quickest and easiest way for the Diamond Sharks to build the supply lines that Kerensky himself had said all invading Clans were entitled to; also, imposing any slower alternative would make a mockery of his decree that all the invading forces must keep pace with one another. The ilKhan granted Khan Sennet's petition, to the disgust of certain factions in Clan Jade Falcon, and Khan

Sennet transmitted the order for the loaded merchant vessels to advance. They arrived over Nyserta a scant 30 hours before the ilKhan announced the impending proxy battle for Terra on the world of Tukayyid.

BAPTISM OF FIRE

As with the invasion itself, Khan Ian Hawker failed to earn his Clan a pre-eminent place during the bidding for this historic battle. Overeager to win the right of first landing and overconfident of his warriors' strength, Khan Hawker initially bid a mere six Clusters, and dared not go too far below his opening gambit. The Khans of the other Clans all surpassed Clan Diamond Shark in the number of concessions they could make, and so Clan Diamond Shark ended up landing second to last. Adding insult to injury, Clan Smoke Jaguar won the right to land first.

The Diamond Sharks' target cities, Kozice Prime and Urcunat, lay a mere 20 kilometers from each other on the far side of the Kozice Valley. All five Clusters of the Shark assault force landed in the valley; Alpha Galaxy's Nineteenth Heavy Cluster and Thirty-ninth Striker Cluster headed toward Kozice Prime, while Gamma Galaxy's 222nd Assault Cluster and 369th Striker Cluster headed toward Urcunat.

Alpha Galaxy's Nineteenth Heavy Cluster met the 182nd and Eighty-fifth Divisions of the Third Com Guard Army in the foothills overlooking Kozice Prime, while the elite Thirty-ninth Striker Cluster clashed with a division of the Eighth Army as the Clan 'Mechs entered the narrow end of the Kozice Valley. The Nineteenth Heavy fared well against the Eighty-fifth, but could only make a little headway toward their objective before the 182nd Division outflanked them. The 182nd held Alpha Galaxy's forces down in a brutal slugging match, while the remaining 'Mechs of the Eighty-fifth joined the Thirty-first and Fifty-sixth in an attempt to disrupt the Sharks' supply lines.

Gamma Galaxy's Clusters quickly turned their attention to this new threat, and the 222nd Assault Cluster won the honor of destroying the raiders. The conflict between the 222nd and the Com Guards' Eighty-fifth Division was particularly brutal, with neither side able to gain the upper hand for some time. Finally, Star Colonel Seth Davis grew so frustrated that he called upon the remaining Clusters of Gamma Galaxy for help. The added 'Mechs enabled him to crush the Eighty-fifth, only to lose all but a single MechWarrior to the avenging Thirty-first and Fifty-sixth Divisions.

While Gamma Galaxy battled the doomed Eighty-fifth and the divisions of the Eighth Army, Precentor Burkenbine's Fifth Army executed a combat drop behind the Sharks' front lines, neatly cutting Alpha and Gamma Galaxies off from their landing zone and supplies. Meanwhile, the Com Guards troops already in the valley received reinforcements from the Eighty-second, 301st and 182nd Divisions. The shocked Diamond Shark Khans found their Galaxies completely surrounded and dangerously low on ammunition.

Khan Hawker regrouped the surviving Alpha and Gamma Clusters for an all-out frontal assault in a desperate attempt to break through the deadly ring of Com Guards 'Mechs. Meanwhile, Khan Sennet called upon the reserve 'Mechs of Omega Galaxy to rescue the front-line units from the trap. While Omega fought its way past the 323rd and 299th Divisions of the Fifth Army, the rest of the Com Guards cut down the charging Alpha and Gamma Galaxy OmniMechs like so much wheat. The frontal assault, so prized by Khan Hawker because he considered it more Clanlike than more devious tactics, proved a fatal mistake in the brutal contest with the well-equipped and far trickier Com Guards.

Despite the heavy damage done by ComStar's forces, Omega's reserve 'Mechs finally managed to punch a hole in the Com Guards' iron net. The remnants of Alpha and Gamma Galaxies limped back to the landing zone, the Com Guards harassing their flanks and rear all the way. Just as the Clan drew within sight of its DropShips, the Com Guards massed for a final killing assault. The Diamond Sharks waited for the deadly blow, but it never fell. Instead, the freebirth MechWarriors of Omega Galaxy silently spread out and met the enemy head-on. The Com Guards destroyed Omega Galaxy, but the freebirths' sacrifice cleared the way for the remnants of Alpha and Gamma Galaxies to make good their escape.

In recognition of the incredible bravery shown by a class of warriors he had always devalued, a chastened Khan Hawker formally rescinded his ban on freebirth warriors serving in front-line OmniMechs. Despite the courage of its troops, Clan Diamond Shark lost almost all of the troops it had committed on Tukayyid.

AFTERMATH: THE INVISIBLE CLAN

The near-total destruction of their forces on Tukayyid cost the Diamond Sharks many of their finest officers as well as much of their pride. As if to add insult to injury, within a year of the Tukayyid debacle they lost Nyserta to several Ghost Bear Clusters determined to take their world back. Since the end of 3053, no sources have sighted any Diamond Shark military forces anywhere in the Inner Sphere. Some experts believe that the rest of the invaders forced the Diamond Sharks out of the Inner Sphere as punishment for the magnitude of their defeat; others believe that Tukayyid served as the nail in the coffin of the warriors' political supremacy in that Clan, and that the economically powerful merchant caste has taken over.

Activities observed by several sources within the Clan occupation zones seem to suggest that the merchants are taking a far more prominent place in Diamond Shark society than they did previously, but to infer that the days of the warrior caste's ascendancy are over is a dangerously sweeping assumption. The merchants seem to be making enormous profits from one end of Clan-occupied space to the other, keeping supply lines open to garrison and front-line troops from all the invading Clans.

PIRANHA

Mass: 20 tons
Chassis: Endo Steel
Power Plant: 180 XL
Cruising Speed: 97 KPH
Maximum Speed: 151 KPH
Jump Jets: None
Jump Capacity: None
Armor: Standard
Armament:
12 Machine Guns
2 ER Medium Lasers
1 ER Small Laser
Manufacturer: Unknown
Communications Systems: Unknown
Targeting and Tracking System: Unknown

OVERVIEW

The *Piranha*, like Clan Diamond Shark, is something of an enigma. Though this light 'Mech offers superior speed and maneuverability, the *Piranha* is armed with a weapon load more suited to an attack unit than a recon unit. Also, the 'Mech would seem to operate at peak efficiency when using the "pack" tactics common to the Inner Sphere, as its name implies, but none have been sighted attacking in such a way. These questions may never be resolved, because the last of these 'Mechs disappeared along with the rest of Clan Diamond Shark's military after Tukayyid.

CAPABILITIES

A large XL engine and powerful legs give the *Piranha* an astounding running speed, allowing it to close quickly with the enemy and bring its 12 heavy machine guns to bear. By zipping around behind an enemy 'Mech, a *Piranha* can chew through its opponent's back armor almost instantly. The machine guns are supplemented by three lasers, but the 'Mech lacks the heat sinks to use them effectively. Most pilots use them only if they run out of ammunition—a rare occurrence, because the *Piranha* is always stationed near ample supply depots.

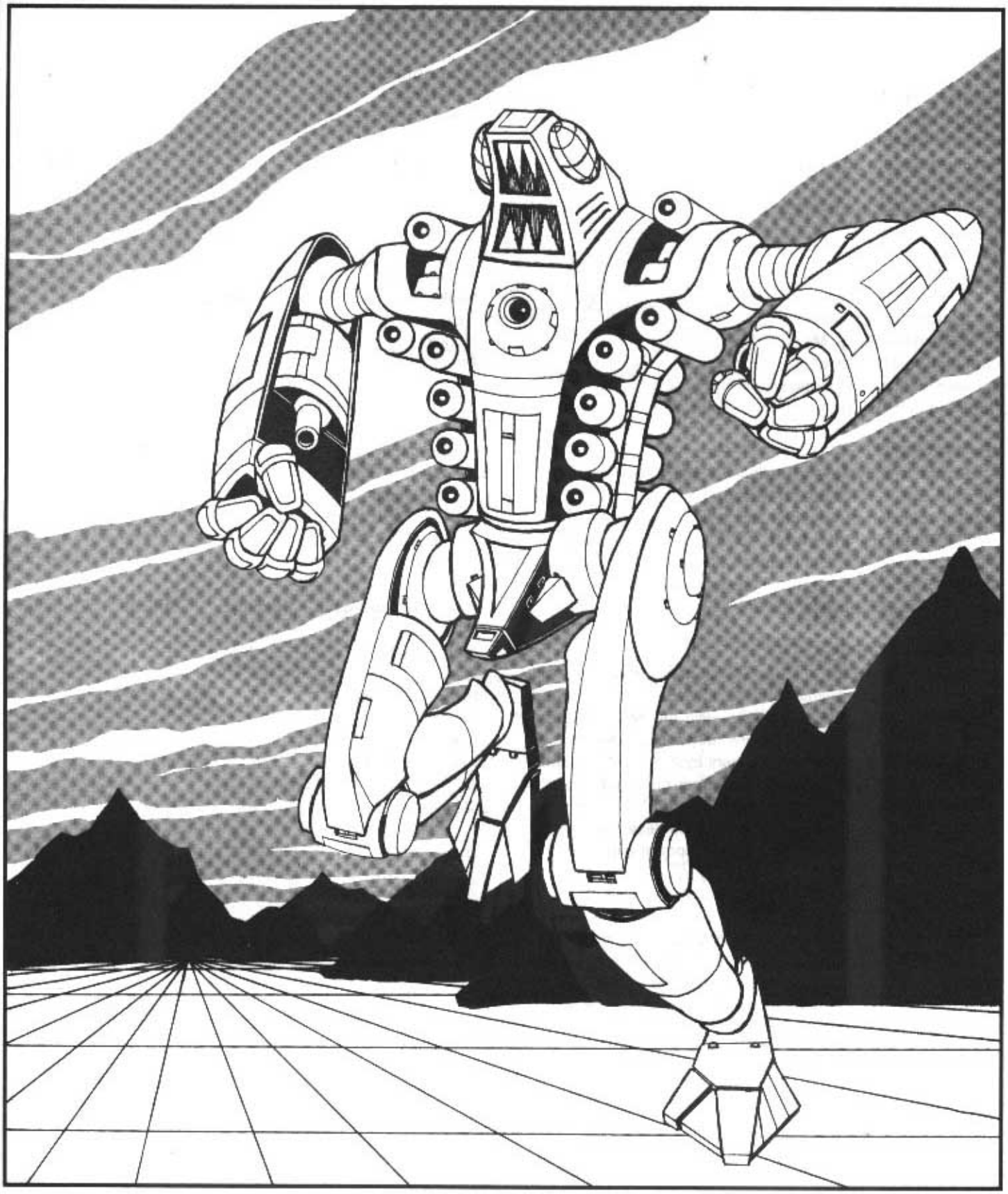
DEPLOYMENT

A few Stars of *Piranhas* saw action in the Tukayyid campaign, acting as combination striker/recon units attached to Omega Galaxy. The *Piranhas* would rush ahead of the main unit, flushing out hidden troops by firing machine guns into the trees and undergrowth, then herding them into the waiting arms of the main attack force. They also proved quite effective as anti-infantry 'Mechs, destroying entire companies of troops in seconds.

Type: **Piranha**
Technology Base: Clan
Tonnage: 20

Equipment		**Mass**
Internal Structure:	Endo Steel	1
Engine:	180 XL	3.5
Walking MP:	9	
Running MP:	14	
Jumping MP:	0	
Heat Sinks:	10	0
Gyro:		2
Cockpit:		3
Armor Factor:	64	4
	Internal Structure	*Armor Value*
Head	3	8
Center Torso	6	9
Center Torso (rear)		3
R/L Torso	5	8
R/L Torso (rear)		2
R/L Arm	3	6
R/L Leg	4	6

Weapons and Ammo	**Location**	**Critical**	**Tonnage**
ER Medium Laser	RA	1	1
ER Medium Laser	LA	1	1
6 Machine Guns	RT	6	1.5
Ammo (MG) 100	RT	1	0.5
6 Machine Guns	LT	6	1.5
Ammo (MG) 100	LT	1	0.5
ER Small Laser	CT	1	0.5



THRESHER

Mass: 60 tons
Chassis: Endo Steel
Power Plant: 300 XL
Cruising Speed: 54 kph
Maximum Speed: 86.4 kph
Jump Jets: 5
Jump Capacity: 150 meters
Armor: Standard
Armament:
1 Ultra-10 Autocannon
2 SRM-6 Launchers
2 Medium Pulse Lasers
1 Extended-Range Medium Laser
Manufacturer: Unknown
Communications Systems: Unknown
Targeting and Tracking System: Unknown

OVERVIEW

Similar in many ways to the heavier *Thor*, the *Thresher* is a Diamond Shark 'Mech ideally suited to garrison duty. With a versatile selection of weapons and excellent maneuverability, the *Thresher* is adaptable to a variety of terrains. Circumstances prevent the Diamond Sharks from fielding a significant garrison force, so the *Thresher* has yet to enter active duty. Little data exists about this unusual design.

CAPABILITIES

Obviously intended to fill a number of different battlefield roles, the *Thresher* seems to excel at none. Jump jets and myomer acceleration signal circuitry give the 'Mech superior speed for its class, but its weapons fail to take advantage of this. An Ultra-10 autocannon in the right torso is a solid weapon at all ranges, but lacks the punch of larger models. Each arm mounts a medium pulse laser and a standard SRM-6 launcher. Along with an ER medium laser in the torso, these weapons do well at short range, but fall short of the firepower expected of a heavy Clan 'Mech.

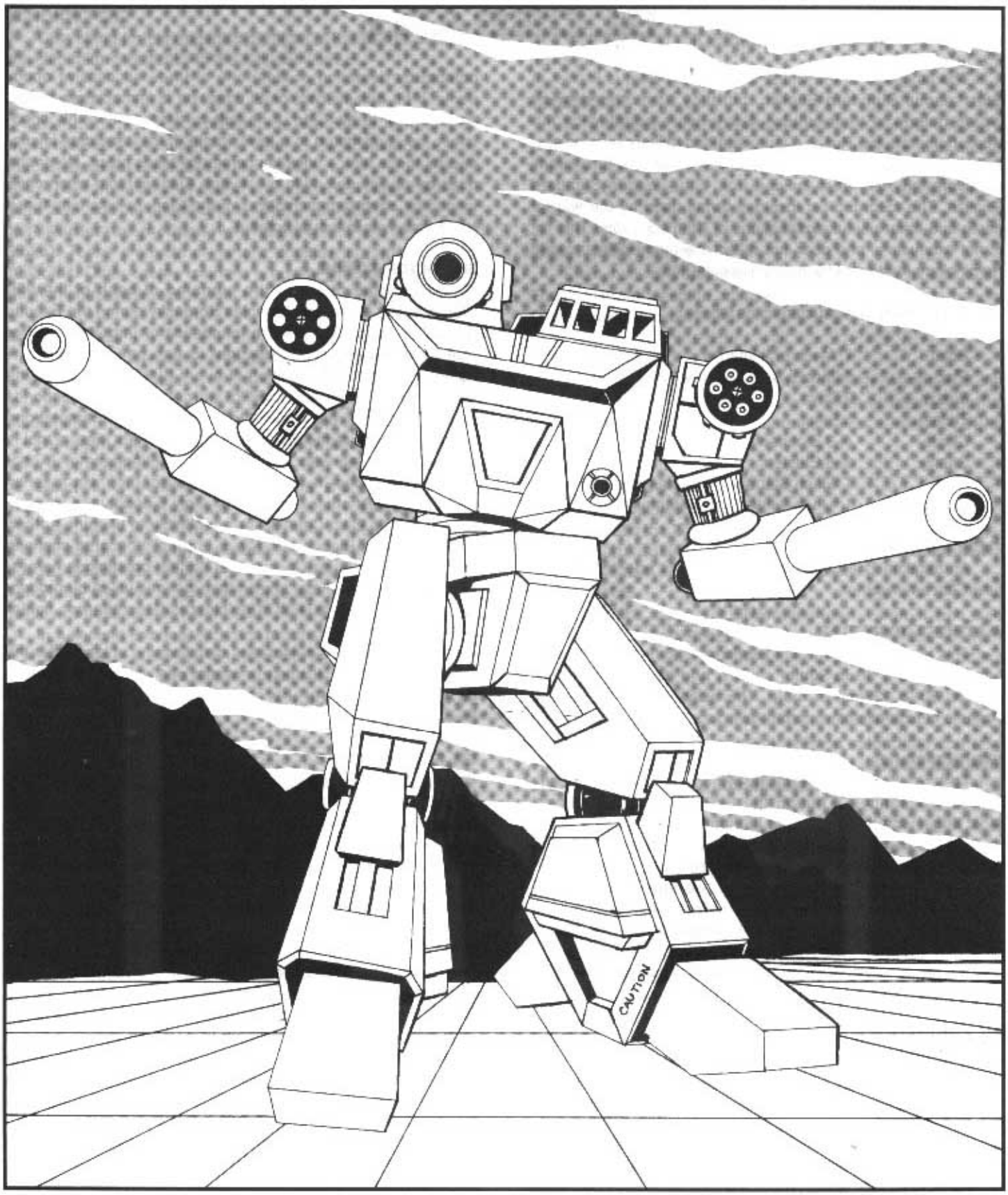
DEPLOYMENT

No *Threshers* have been sighted in battle or in garrison forces. The data provided here comes from an intercepted Diamond Shark transmission. Field agents should anticipate inconsistencies between the information below and the actual 'Mech, if one is ever encountered.

Type: **Thresher**
Technology Base: Clan
Tonnage: 60

Equipment		**Mass**
Internal Structure:	Endo Steel	3
Engine:	300 XL	9.5
Walking MP:	5 (10)	
Running MP:	8 (10)	
Jumping MP:	5	
Heat Sinks:	13 [26]	3
Gyro:		3
Cockpit:		3
Armor Factor:	152	9.5
	Internal Structure	*Armor Value*
Head	3	9
Center Torso	20	22
Center Torso (rear)		7
R/L Torso	14	17
R/L Torso (rear)		5
R/L Arm	10	14
R/L Leg	14	21

Weapons and Ammo	**Location**	**Critical**	**Tonnage**
Ultra AC/10	RT	4	10
Ammo (AC) 20	RT	2	2
MASC	LT	2	2
ER Medium Laser	LT	1	1
SRM 6	RA	1	1.5
Medium Pulse Laser	RA	1	2
Ammo (SRM) 15	RA	1	1
SRM 6	LA	1	1.5
Medium Pulse Laser	LA	1	2
Ammo (SRM) 15	LA	1	1
Jump Jet	CT	1	1
Jump Jets	RL	2	2
Jump Jets	LL	2	2


CAUTION

GLOSSARY

The language of the Clans is based on what is known of Star League Standard English, but they have added many words unique to their culture. Some were adapted by the Kerenskys from the Russian language and military terminology. All these words represent the Kerenskys' efforts to express concepts they felt were lacking from Star League Standard English. The following list includes terms used by the warrior caste and other useful explanations of Clan concepts. This list is not exhaustive, and does not reflect the many differences in terminology existing between the various Clans.

Clan military unit structure is as follows:

Point	1 'Mech or 5 infantry
Star	5 'Mechs or 25 infantry
Binary	2 Stars
Trinary	3 Stars
Cluster	4–5 Binaries/Trinaries
Galaxy	3–5 Clusters
Nova	1 'Mech Star and 1 infantry Star
Supernova	1 'Mech Binary and 2 infantry Stars

ABTAKHA

An abtakha is a captured warrior who is adopted into his new Clan as a warrior.

AUTOCANNON

This is a rapid-firing, auto-loading weapon. Light autocannon range from 30 to 90mm caliber, and heavy autocannon may be 80 to 120mm or more. The weapon fires high-speed streams of high-explosive, armor-piercing shells.

BATCHALL

The batchall is the ritual by which Clan warriors issue combat challenges. Though the type of challenge varies, most begin with the challenger identifying himself, stating the prize of the contest, and requesting that the defender identify the forces at his disposal. The defender also has the right to name the location of the trial. The two sides then bid for what forces will participate in the contest. The subcommander who bids to fight with the least number of forces wins the right and responsibility to make the attack. The defender may increase the stakes by demanding a prize of equal or lesser value if he wins.

BLOODHERITAGE

The history of the Bloodnamed warriors of a particular Bloodright is called the Bloodheritage.

BLOODING

Blooding is another name for the Trial of Position that determines if a warrior cadet will qualify as a Clan warrior. The candidate must first demonstrate physical prowess in personal combat by defeating at least one of three successive opponents. If he defeats two, or all three, he is immediately ranked as an officer in his Clan. If he fails to defeat any of his opponents, he is relegated to a lower caste. If the candidate is successful in the trial, a complex ceremony takes place. He or she must be ritually defended by several Clan warriors when challenged by other representatives of the Clan, or else face those representatives in mortal combat.

BLOODNAME

Bloodname refers to the surname of each of the 800 Warriors who stood with Nicholas Kerensky during the Exodus Civil War. These 800 are the foundation of the Clans' elaborate breeding program. The right to use one of these surnames has been the ambition of every Clan warrior since the system was established. Only 25 warriors, which corresponds to 25 Bloodrights, are allowed to use any one surname at one time. When one of the 25 Bloodnamed warriors dies, a trial is held to determine who will assume that Bloodname. A contender must prove his Bloodname lineage, then win a series of duels against other competitors. Only Bloodnamed warriors may sit on the Clan Councils or are eligible to become a Khan or ilKhan. Most Bloodnames have gradually become confined to one or two warrior classes, but certain prestigious names, such as Kerensky, have shown their genetic value by producing excellent warriors in all three classes (MechWarrior, fighter pilot, and Elemental).

Bloodnames are determined matrilineally, at least after the original generation. Because a warrior can only inherit from his or her female parent, he or she has a claim to only one Bloodname.

BLOODRIGHT

A specific Bloodname lineage is called a Bloodright. Twenty-five Bloodrights are attached to each Bloodname. A Bloodright is not a lineage as we define the term because the warriors who successively hold a Bloodright might be related only through their original ancestor. As with Bloodnames, certain Bloodrights are considered more prestigious than others, depending largely on the Bloodright's history.

BONDSMAN

Clans can keep prisoners taken during combat. These are called bondsmen, and are considered members of the laborer caste unless and until the capturing Clan releases them or promotes them back to warrior status. A bondsman is bound by honor, not by shackles. Custom dictates that even Bloodnamed warriors captured in combat be held for a time as bondsmen. All bondsmen wear a woven bracelet called a bondcord. The base color of the bondcord indicates to which Clan the individual is now bound, and the striping indicates which unit captured him.

GLOSSARY

CANISTER

Clan slang for the eugenics program of the warrior caste. It can also refer specifically to the artificial wombs.

CASTE

Clan society is rigidly divided into five castes: warrior, scientist, merchant, technician, and laborer. Each caste has many subcastes, which are based on specialties within a professional field. The warrior caste is based on a systematic eugenics program that uses the genes of prestigious, successful current and past warriors to produce new members of the caste (see **Sibko**). These products of genetic engineering are known as trueborns. Other castes maintain a quality gene pool by strategic marriages within each caste.

CHALCAS

Anything or anyone who challenges the Clan caste system is considered a chalcas.

CLANS

During the fall of the Star League, General Aleksandr Kerensky, commander of the Regular Star League Army, led his forces out of the Inner Sphere in what is known as the first Exodus. After settling beyond the Periphery, more than 1,300 light years away from Terra, Kerensky and his followers settled in a cluster of marginally habitable star systems near a large globular cluster that hid them from the Inner Sphere. Within fifteen years, civil war erupted among these exiles, threatening to destroy everything they had worked so hard to build.

In a second Exodus, Nicholas Kerensky, son of Aleksandr, led his followers to one of the worlds of the globular cluster to escape the new war. It was there on Strana Mechty that Kerensky first conceived and organized what would one day be known as the Clans.

CODEX

The codex is the each warrior's personal record. It includes the names of the original Bloodnamed warriors from which a warrior is descended. It also records background information such as the warrior's generation number, Blood House, and codex ID, an alphanumeric code noting the unique aspects of that person's DNA. The codex also contains a record of the warrior's military career. See also **Master Codex.**

CONTRACT

A contract is an agreement between the commanders of two units that allows the commander of one to include the units of the other in his bidding for rights to a battle or trial. During the invasion of the Inner Sphere, Cluster commanders within Galaxies frequently made contracts to allow greater, and often more extravagant, bidding, while still maintaining a good mix of BattleMech, Elemental, and fighter combat units.

CUTDOWN

The minimum force necessary to win any trial for which there has been bidding. Bidders who can push their opponent into making a bid below the cutdown are considered clever. Commanders who win with a force smaller than the cutdown are greatly honored.

DEZGRA

A fighting unit that disgraces itself is known as a dezgra unit. The name also refers to the ritual whereby that unit is marked and punished. Any unit that refuses orders, panics in the face of the enemy, or takes dishonorable action is disgraced.

ELEMENTALS

Elementals are the elite, battle-suited infantry of the Clans. These men and women are giants, bred specifically to handle Clan-developed battle armor.

FREEBIRTH

Freebirth is an epithet used by trueborn members of the warrior caste, generally expressing disgust or frustration. If a trueborn warrior refers to another trueborn as a freebirth, it is is a mortal insult.

FREEBORN

An individual conceived and born by natural means is freeborn. Because the Clans value their eugenics program so highly, a freeborn is automatically assumed to have little potential.

GIFTAKE

This is the sample of DNA taken from a warrior who died with great glory in combat. The giftake is considered the warrior's best DNA sample and the one most likely to produce improved warriors.

HEGIRA

Victorious Clan warriors sometimes extend the courtesy of hegira to defeated opponents. Hegira allows the opponent to withdraw honorably from the field without further combat or cost.

ISORLA

The spoils of battle that warriors can claim as their right, including bondsmen, are known as isorla.

KESHIK

The Keshik unit, usually a Cluster in size, provides the senior Khan's honor guard. All warriors consider service in the Keshik to be the highest honor they can render their Clan.

KHAN

Each Clan elects two leaders, or Khans. One serves as the Clan's senior military commander and bureaucratic administrator The second Khan's position is less well-defined. He or she is second-in-command, carrying out duties assigned by the first Khan. In times of great internal or external threat, or when a coordinated effort is required of all Clans, an ilKhan is chosen to serve as the supreme ruler of the Clans.

KURULTAI

A kurultai is a Clan war council. A Grand Kurultai is a war council of all Khans of the Clans. Only the ilKhan can convene a Grand Kurultai at any time or place. A normal Grand Council, on the other hand, may only be convened by petition of three or more Clans, and must be held in the Hall of Khans on Strana Mechty.

LOREMASTER

The Loremaster is the keeper of Clan laws and history. The position is honorable and politically powerful. The Loremaster plays a key role in inquiries and trials, where he is often assigned the role of Advocate or Interrogator.

OATHMASTER

The Oathmaster is the honor guard for any official Clan ceremony. The position is similar to that of an Inner Sphere sergeant-at-arms, but it carries a greater degree of respect. The Oathmaster administers all oaths, and the Loremaster records them. The position of Oathmaster is usually held by the oldest Bloodnamed warrior in a Clan (if he or she desires the honor), and is one of the few positions not decided by combat.

OVKHAN

This is a term of respect reserved for someone of higher rank.

POWLESS

Powless is the vulnerability that a warrior, particularly an Elemental, feels when forced to fight without his accustomed weapons. The word is probably derived from "powerless."

QUIAFF/QUINEG

This Clan expression is placed at the end of rhetorical questions. If an affirmative answer is expected, *quiaff* is used. If the answer is expected to be negative, *quineg* is the proper closure.

RANSOM

Clan custom dictates that a warrior who has been successful at his Trial of Bloodright may be rewarded with a gift by the Clan. Depending upon the warrior's success during the Trial, the ransom might range from the right to choose what type of weapon he will use as a warrior to the right to command a special unit. At the time Khan Natasha Kerensky returned from the Inner Sphere and then underwent her second Trial of Bloodright, ilKhan Ulric Kerensky awarded her a ransom of the right to form the Thirteenth Wolf Guards.

REDE

One of the many forms honor takes in the Clans, a rede is an honor-bound promise. Breaking a rede may be punished by death.

REMEMBRANCE, THE

The Remembrance is an ongoing heroic saga detailing Clan history from the time of the Exodus from the Inner Sphere to the present day. *The Remembrance* is continually expanded to include contemporary events. Each Clan has a slightly different version reflecting their own opinions and experiences. All Clan warriors can quote whole verses of this marvelous epic from memory, and it is common to see passages from the book lovingly painted on the sides of OmniMechs, fighters, and even battle armor.

RISTAR

This term refers to a particularly gifted warrior on his or her way to high position. It is probably derived from the expression "rising star."

SATARRA

A Clan council may cast a veto, or satarra, to settle or postpone disputes between castes within their jurisdiction. Satarra is invoked only when negotiations seem at an impasse and/or threaten to disrupt the work order of the Clan. It seems to be more a ritual than an act of legislation.

SAVASHRI

A Clan epithet.

SEYLA

This word is the ritual response voiced in unison by those witnessing solemn Clan ceremonies, rituals, and other important gatherings. No one is sure of the origin or exact meaning of the word, but it is uttered only with the greatest reverence and awe.

SIBKO

A sibko consists of a group of children produced from the same male and female geneparents in the warrior caste eugenics program. The members of the sibko are raised together, then begin to undergo constant testing. As various members of the sibko fail at each test, they are transferred to the lower castes. A sibko consists of approximately 20 members, but usually only four or five remain at the time of the final test to become warriors, the Trial of Position. These tests and other adversities may bind the surviving "sibkin" together.

SOLAHMA

Solahma is the Clan designation for a unit made up of warriors who have continued to live and fight past what their society considers a warrior's prime. These units seek assignment to suicidal and otherwise doomed missions in order to win the opportunity to die an honorable death in battle. Most of these units, however, draw only garrison assignments.

STRAVAG

A Clan epithet, probably a combination of the Clan words *stran*, meaning independent, and *vagon*, meaning birthing.

SURKAI

The *surkai* is the Right of Forgiveness. The Clans honor uniformity in thought and belief above all else in their society. When warriors disagree, when a Clan disagrees with the Clan Council, or when a member of one caste offends a member of another caste, *surkai* is expected. It is a matter of pride that the offending party freely admit his wrongdoing and request punishment. Those who show great *surkai* are held up as examples to others for their willingness to accept the consequences of their independent thoughts. Those who do not show *surkai* when it is expected of them are viewed with suspicion.

SURKAIREDE

The Rede of Forgiveness, or surkairede, is the honor-bound agreement between the majority and any dissenters. According to the surkairede, once a dissenter accepts punishment for having disagreed with the majority, he should be allowed to resume his role in society without suffering any further disgrace for having spoken out.

TOUMAN

The term given to the fighting arm of a Clan.

TRIAL OF ABJURATION

A Trial of Abjuration is a trial by combat between Clans, in which the losing Clan's Bloodnames are stricken from the rolls as if those Bloodnames had never existed. Clans only engage in this trial when another Clan has committed an error so grievous that the stain on that Clan's honor cannot be wiped clean.

TRIAL OF BLOODRIGHT

A series of one-on-one, single-elimination contests determines who wins the right to use a Bloodname. Each current Bloodnamed warrior in that Bloodname's House nominates one candidate. The head of the House nominates additional candidates to fill thirty-one slots. The thirty-second slot is fought for by those who qualify for the Bloodname but who were not nominated. The nature of the combat is determined by "coining." Each combatant places his personal medallion, a *dogids*, into the "Well of Decision." An Oathmaster or Loremaster releases the coins simultaneously, so that only chance determines which coin falls first to the bottom of the well. The warrior whose coin lands on top chooses the manner of the combat ('Mech versus 'Mech, barehanded, 'Mech versus Elemental, and so forth). The other warrior chooses the venue of the contest. Though these Bloodname duels need not be to the death, the fierce combat and the intensity of the combatants often leave the losing candidate mortally wounded or dead.

TRIAL OF POSITION

The Trial of Position determines whether a candidate will qualify as a warrior in the Clans. To qualify, he must defeat at least one of three successive opponents. If he defeats two, or all three, he is immediately ranked as an officer in his Clan. If he fails to defeat any of his opponents, he is relegated to a lower caste.

TRIAL OF POSSESSION

This trial resolves conflicts in which two or more Clans claim the right to the same thing, be it territory, a warrior's genes, or even supremacy in a difference of opinion. This trial uses the formal challenge of the attacker and the response of defending forces, and favors those commanders from the attacking Clan skillful enough to bid minimal forces.

TRIAL OF REFUSAL

The Clan councils and the Grand Council vote on issues and laws that affect the community. Unlike Inner Sphere legislation, however, any decision can be challenged and reversed by a Trial of Refusal. This trial allows the losing side to demand the issue be settled by combat.

The forces used in the Trial of Refusal are determined on a pro-rated basis. The faction rejecting the decision declares what forces they will use. The side defending the decision (the attacker) can field a force equal to the ratio of winning to losing votes. For example, if the contested vote carried by a three-to-one margin, the attacking forces can field a force three times the size of the force challenging the decision.

TROTHKIN

Used formally, this term refers to members of an extended sibko. Less formally, a warrior will use the term trothkin when referring to someone he considers his peer.

TRUEBORN/TRUEBIRTH

A trueborn or truebirth is a product of the warrior caste's eugenics program.

ZELLBRIGEN

This is the Clan word describing the body of rules used to regulate and ritualize duels. Zellbrigen means that combatants engage in one-on-one duels, even if both sides have many warriors. Those not immediately challenged are honor-bound to stay out of the battle until an opponent is free (meaning he has defeated his enemy). To attack an enemy already engaged with an opponent is a major breach of Clan honor, usually resulting in at least loss of rank.

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