

ARGENT FIRE

THE PREMIERE BATTLETECH COMMUNITY E-ZINE

THIS MONTH:

Interview with the Father of BattleTech -

JORDAN WEISMAN

Inner Sphere 3025 Wants YOU!

BattleCorps.com Ready to Go live!

Interview with DarkspARCs, the Music Man

Sci-Fi City Rumble

"The Standoff" - by Liam

"Dragon vs. PPC", Part 2

...And Much MORE!!!

VOLUME 1 / ISSUE 4 / APRIL 2004

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Pg 15-16, Marauder and WarHammer

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Pg 18, "WarHammer" Various on-line and unknown sources (please see disclaimers in the submissions section if there is a problem)

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OPENING VOLLEY

Welcome to the latest installment of Argent Fire, the free E-Zine of the BattleTech Community. Yes, we are here for the entire BattleTech Community, to include the CBT board game, MechWarrior and MechCommander series of games and, especially, the mods for the game. Recently I got to find out from Mr. Weisman himself (one of the Father's of BattleTech, aaaaaahhhhuuuuuuummmmm, hehe), that the community at large is very special to him and he is working very hard to ensure we have a good product in BattleTech for several years to come. In fact, in this issue I have an interview with the man himself.

I need to address something with the community right now, though. I have gone to several pro-BattleTech sites which seem to be nothing less than extraordinarily hostile to Mr. Weisman, the now defunct FASA Corporation, WizKids and FanPro. Indeed, I was working on the input from several dozen people on these various forums concerning their feelings towards Mr. Weisman, in particular, and I began to succumb to the hostility myself. I am here to apologize to the BattleTech Community first, then the Mr. Weisman, because I was wrong in my thinking, and so are you. Jordan Weisman has been doing everything he can to continue to put out a better product for the community as a whole as it relates to BattleTech, as well as putting out a product which will bring in new people, new business as it were, for WizKids, so they can CONTINUE production of the game series in all of CBT, MW: DA, and on-line games for the PC and X-Box. To finish I will tell those who grumble against the established market, displacing their anger at Jordan Weisman instead, to cut it out, shut up and continue to play the game. It's not fair for you, or me for that matter, to go poke sharp sticks in the eye of the developers of the game if, indeed, we don't know all of the circumstances.

Well, that's my rant for now. Now onto the construction of these E-Zine.

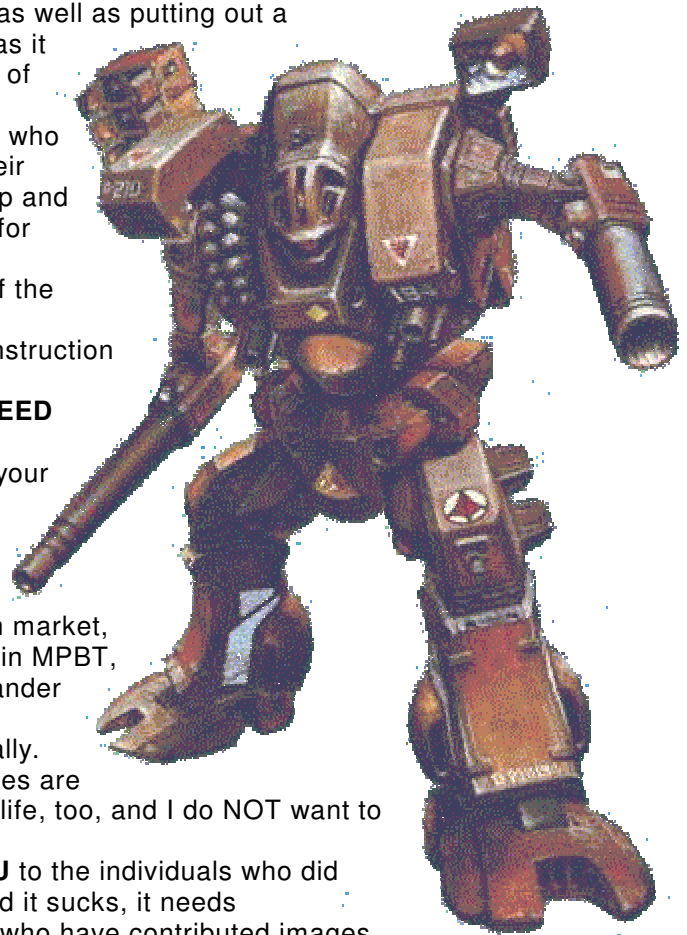
I know I sound like a broken record, but **WE NEED HELP! COME ON IN!**

Look, folks, we need your stories, your ideas, your emails and posts about your feelings towards Argent Fire, and we want your articles about your favorite BattleTech games and mods, your favorite league(s), battle(s) you've played in, and your artwork. Finally, in this 20th year since BattleTech's release to the open market, we want your stories, battles, and whatnot you've had in MPBT, Solaris, and any of the MechWarrior and MechCommander series games. Those of you who have table-top experiences to write about, please send those especially. Photo's are not a bad idea. Please, folks, these E-Zines are getting to be fewer and far-between because I have a life, too, and I do NOT want to stop this awesome endeavor.

That being said, this is a massive **THANK YOU** to the individuals who did comment on the E-Zine, wrote emails (whether you said it sucks, it needs improvement, or you loved it) and posts, and to those who have contributed images, stories and interviews to make this issue really sing. Especially in my mind are DarkspARCS, Maddog 3060, maxoconnor, Liam and, especially, Mr. Jordan Weisman, who has taken time out of an extraordinarily busy schedule to do this interview for you, the community, and for me as well.

Finally, Argent Fire now as a mirror site at <http://www.battletechmodproductions.com/afire.shtml>, and I would just be tickled if you would pay a visit to BattleTech Mod Productions itself and say "Hi!" to MaSaKaRi and the gang. MaSaKaRi made this mirror site possible, even designed the front page for it himself. I must say I'm jealous because it looks better than mine, hehe, but I am very grateful to have the help from BMP, especially since Argent Fire ran me out of bandwidth last month.

Oh, that's another thing. I owe Authentic Web Hosting (<http://www.computertronics.com>) a HUGE thank you for providing one extra gig of bandwidth last month free of charge. They already provide three gigs of bandwidth each month, for a super low price per month (no extended contracts) and their service has been excellent thus far. Thanks, folks, you're the best.



Finally – I know, you're saying "Didn't he say finally two paragraphs ago?" hehe. Can't help it, I have news. Alright, three new sections are going to start being added to Argent Fire in the next issue. The first one is the '**Mech Hangar**', where we'll take between 3 and 5 new 'mech designs (CBT style 'mechs only, please?), with their images, and display them for all to see. Next is '**Up and Comin'**' which is designed to be an announcement section for products related to CBT and MW: DA for the coming months. For those of you actually in WizKids and FanPro, this is free advertisement, guys, but you're going to have to figure out how to keep this down to one to five pages, alright? Finally, we'll be adding a mods update section known as '**Pet Projects**'. For those of you who prefer to only have the digest version of what's happening in the BattleTech Community, meaning you only read Argent Fire instead of visiting all the various forums and the myriad of BattleTech-related sites out there to keep up, you can get that version of upcoming projects here.

Alright, I guess that's enough drivel for the time being. Take a look at the rest of the E-Zine and keep those emails and posts rolling in.

~The Wolf

THE GRAPEVINE

Armageddon Unlimited Standing Down For Now!

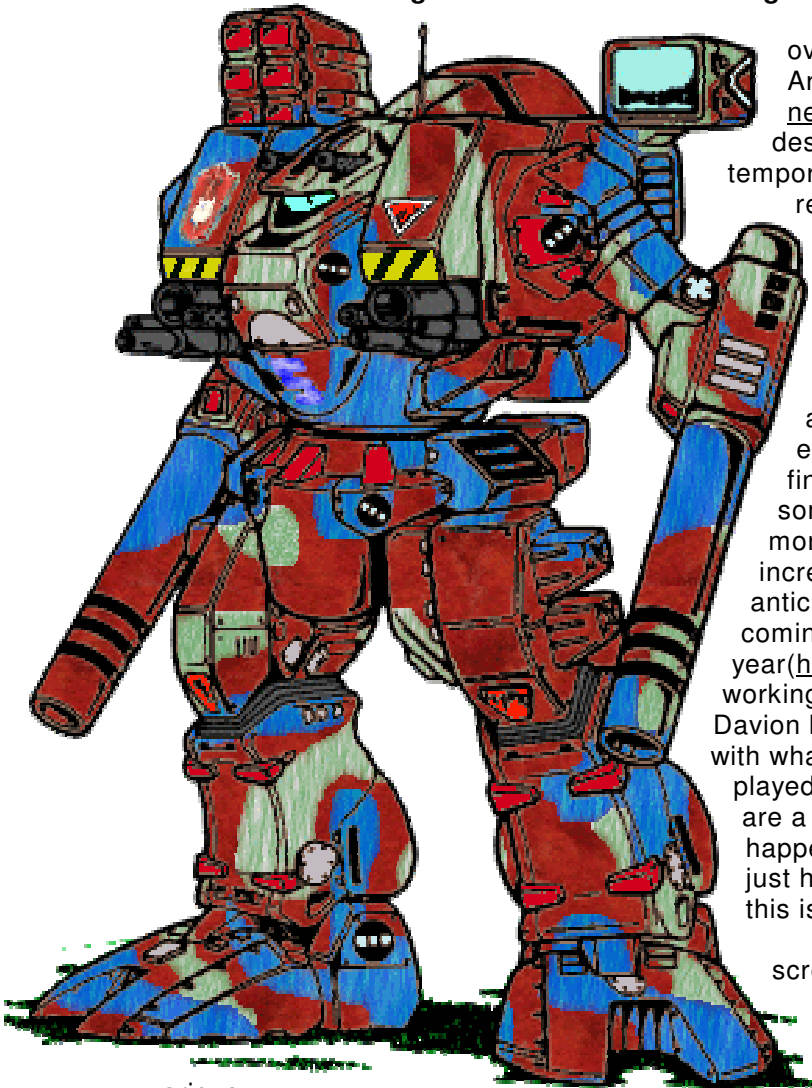
For those of you who have been looking over the articles and the web site for Armageddon Unlimited (<http://www.wolvesau.net/AU.htm>), my personal Merc unit, with designs of joining, please understand that I am, temporarily, shutting it down. The web site will remain up, and I will continue preparations for when the unit is supposed to re-start, but it may be some time before it actually does. I am sorry for the inconvenience, folks, but I have too much going on in my life right now.

First, I am still trying to get my first novel sold, and I have a second one I'm already writing, though I'm having to fight for every last paragraph. Next, I am still trying to find a job which will allow me to be able to have some kind of a life and still pay some decent money. Next, I am working on improving and increasing my Aliens fan-site/PbEM-site in anticipation of the Aliens vs. Predator movie coming out in August this year (<http://www.wolvesau.net/Aliens>). Finally, I am working to help get and keep Bmster2Cs House Davion based 1st Capellan Dragoons off the ground, with whatever resources I feel I'm able to offer, to be played in IS3025 (<http://www.is3025.com>). There are a number of other, more personal, things happening, but I won't outline those for you. I'm just happy I am forcing myself to take time to write this issue.

I DO have a self-designed theme and screen saver I am designing for AU, but it may be some time before I can get that done as it's my first time doing this. As well, I will continue to convert and write portions of the Operations Manuals which will go into AUs

various promotion and activity process for a later time. Finally, I do INTEND to finish Empire..., the story I started in HowlNet(AUs forums) concerning the fall and rise of General Kay Wolf, which will be included in an anthology somewhere down the line.

(NOTE: For those interested few, the paint scheme on this WarHammer is AUs official scheme.)





IS3025 Needs an Animator!!!

Punk, the Project Coordinator for IS3025, has asked me to put out a call for an animator to help work with IS3025s Torque Engine to get the animations done for Alpha Testing, so the project can continue to move forward.

The requirements are as follows:

>>> Must have experience animating characters, must be able to do cycles, like walking/running. Must use Bones or Biped for these animations.

And the Developers would like it if:

>>> ...they had some EXP w/ the Torque Engine, would like it if they have done animation for Machines/Mecha before.

Basically they will be creating a set of animation, which most of the Mechs will use. Will have to do at least three different Walk/Run Cycles. Standard 2 leg, Chicken walkers, and then 4 legged Mechs. Most of the animation is not hard, it's the walking/running that will be the biggest challenge.

If you need to contact Punk to ask more questions about requirements, or to give him your 'resume', so to speak, concerning your animating experience and skills, please visit <http://www.is3025.com/contacts.php>? I'm sure Punk will be happy to answer any further questions you may have.

A new post just showed up as well, explaining how the IS3025 team could also use more **Coders** and **2D Artists**. Again, contact Punk with your resume's and get ready to join one of the best mod teams in existence.



BattleCorps.com is Almost Ready to Go!

I have been to the BattleCorps.com web site and, I am here to tell you, they're getting very close to launch time. Below are the submission guidelines for writers. If you haven't already begun to do so, get your typin' fingers out and let fly with a good story. However, a small warning: if you have a cherished mercenary unit, character, or BattleMech, DO NOT include them in any of your stories. They will become the direct property of the BattleTech machine (this is the only thing I disagree with) to help them make money off your intellectual property. You might get paid for it, but it won't be a whole lot. Anyway, without further adieu, I give you the BattleCorps.com submission guidelines...

MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Story Content

BATTLECORPS is an emerging market for official (canon) fiction set in the *Classic BattleTech* universe. We are primarily looking for "character oriented" stories, where the characters, rather than the technology, provide the main focus. We expect to see a good number of manuscripts where BattleMechs play a large role, but this is in no way a mandatory element.

The entire timeline is open for exploration, but newer writers are encouraged to stay on the sidelines of larger events (such as Kerensky's assault on Terra or the wedding of Hanse and Melissa) to prevent submission conflicts with the core *Classic BattleTech* authors. It is unlikely that we will purchase vanity stories about personal units with author-as-character. Neither are we interested in gratuitous sex or "gross-out" violence. The best advice is to find an unexplored area or idea, tell a really good story, and be professional.

Manuscript Format

Submitted manuscripts must be double-spaced and printed or typed on one side of the page only. No hand-written submissions. Make sure your ink is fresh (not faded) and that you do not use erasable paper. When using a word processor, choose a font/type that is easy to read such as Times 13 point and please do not justify the right-hand margin. The first manuscript page should include the title, your name and address, and the number of words in your story. Enclose a brief cover letter with that same information. For more detailed information about manuscript formatting, refer to our published **Style Guide**.

Please do **NOT** send us electronic submissions attached to e-mail or on disk. We will ask for electronic copy only when purchasing a story. The staff will not reply to such submissions, and cannot guarantee the safety or return of disks.

Payment & Rights By submitting to **BATTLECORPS**, you acknowledge that your work is set in an owned universe and that you retain no rights to any of the characters, settings, or "ideas" detailed in your story. Only the way in which you express your story is protected by international copyright law. We purchase **all rights** to every published story. Those rights are automatically transferred to WizKids, LLC.
We pay only after publication. Beginning writers generally receive four cents (\$.04) per word. Established writers can expect more. We seldom buy stories longer than 5,000 words from a new writer, and chapter serials are even tougher. Non-traditional formats such as poetry or Flash HTML will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Submission All submissions should be accompanied by a self-addressed manila envelope carrying enough postage to return the manuscript. If you choose to attach only a standard (#10) envelope, also self-addressed and stamped, we will consider the manuscript disposable and will return only our reply. If you live overseas or in Canada, use International Reply Coupons for postage with the self-addressed envelope.
The **BATTLECORPS** staff will do its best to answer all mail in a timely manner. We regret that we do not, at this time, have the resources to make detailed critiques for every submission. Form letters will be used in most cases. If you have not heard from us within three months, assume your manuscript was lost in the mail and feel free to resubmit.

Unless otherwise directed, all submissions must be made via the postal service to the address noted here:

BattleCorps Submissions
PMB 202
303 91st Ave NE, G-701
Everett, WA 98025

If any of you are interested in reading their Style Guide and their Art Submission Guidelines, please let me know, or simply pay a visit to <http://www.battlecorps.com> for yourself.
~The Wolf

BATTLEROMs

Howdy. In this issue of BattleROMs we actually have a couple of reports for you from fans of this E-Zine. If these folks can do it, you can too, so bring it on.



Orlando Sci-Fi City Rumble

By Maddog 3060

Hello, and welcome to what I hope is a series of reports on Battletech Games fought in, of, by, and around the Sci-Fi City Classic Battletech Club of Orlando, Florida. In this, and other possible reports in this series, I hope to provide interesting stories, tactics, and commentary on Battletech, the game and its players.

To begin, let me lay some background. The area of Orlando is, unbeknownst to many tourists, a hotspot of gamers. D&D, other RPGs, card games of all colors, and wargames of every stripe are popular amongst the folk 'round here. Battletech is, of course, also included in this tally. The problem that many gamers face is one of locating like-minded individuals with similar taste in games. Sci-Fi City, our local gaming store (formerly known as Enterprise 1701) has stepped in to help out gamers, providing a bulletin board for advertisements where one can seek other gamers, as well as organizing various tournaments and meetings for the more popular games.

Thus it came to pass that the Classic Battletech Club was created. Its purpose was to set a date every

month where Battletech players could come to the store and KNOW that there would be a game to play against others.

February 7th was such a pre-arranged meeting. Initially deemed to be a 'Tournament' type event, where prizes would be handed out to those who performed well in the double-elimination type play, but circumstances (a broken computer delayed John M. Hurtt, the event co-ordinator, from finishing his work) prevented this. However, the show must go on, and so a 'regular' meeting took place, by which I mean a series of shorts games were held to kick rear and take names.

I arrived late, and so missed out on an hour or so of the meeting, though I got there just in time to join in the last game; a 4-on-4 free-for-all to be played with miniatures on one of the well-crafted fields that Sci-Fi City (hereafter referred to as SFC) provides for miniature game players that request a table ahead of time.

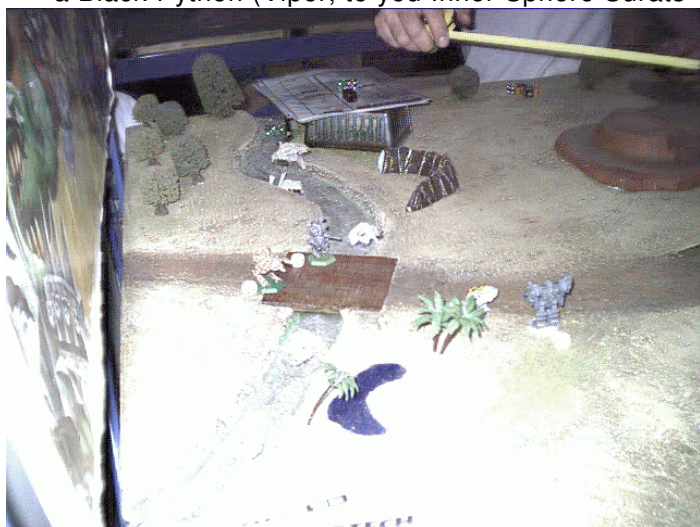
The setup was geared towards heavy fighting, with each player controlling only two mechs each, one Clan Tech, and the other IS Tech, both at Level 2, and a total tonnage limit of 150 tons was enforced for each player. Each player would also start out in a corner of the table, and the rules were to set 1 inch = 1 hex.

I would like to divide the game into turns, but I'm afraid that I didn't take notes, and so I can only give you a general telling, instead of a detailed analysis. The first turn is rather easy to describe, however, given as it was short due to the fact that everyone was out of range with their weapons. Nevertheless, the spirit of the fight was on, as each force raced inward towards the central hill that dominated the map. Heavy woods guarded my right while a small river controlled access to my left flank.

The next turn, I initially turned to the right, seeking to gain position and fire on the mechs in that direction. However, the mechs to my forward area made a beeline for me, and my turn had caused the other player I was initially going to attack to turn in towards me. It appeared that my battlefield life was going to be short indeed.

However, the fourth player had his own ideas, and soon my right flank, still protected by heavy woods, was secure as the mechs to my right engaged in a furious battle. This would only be a prelude to my own fight with the two mechs approaching from the fore and left.

My forces topped the weight limit, with a Linebacker H and a Templar Prime forming a powerful, if short-ranged force. My now-chief opponent had a custom version of a Warhammer and a Black Python (Viper, to you Inner Sphere Surats =P), each sporting targeting computers.



By the third turn, we were close enough for decent weapons fire. I had also made a bad, newbie-mistake: I rushed a Clan mech carrying pulse lasers and a TC. Never, EVER, do such a thing. My poor Linebacker, I had rushed him to go toe-to-toe with the Black Python-mod, hoping as I was that the twin Heavy Large Lasers could carry the day along with the other weapons on my 65-ton mech.

I then learned another lesson; when using Heavy Lasers, either make sure they're tied into a Targeting Computer, or don't run up to a mech that just jumped. (D' oh!) I think I only scored a hit with one ER Medium Laser from that exchange, with my Clanner mech receiving a beating from his mechs. My

Templar just didn't have the speed to close, and his shot with the Gauss Rifle went wide.

It was then that things did not look well, with one mech cut off, BADLY overheating from a large-scale weapons attack (two H-L Lasers' ll do that) and the other not fast enough to make it close in time to help. Fortunately, I won initiative and had the ability to react to my opponent's moves. Though the heat had slowed my Linebacker down greatly, his Jump Jets allowed me to move him into the stream that formed part of the landscape, giving him partial cover while he cooled down. Meanwhile, my Templar closed in to get to where the Large Pulse Laser and the Gauss Rifle started to become truly effective. However, my primary target, the Black Python/Viper, proved hard to hit, and my dice seemed to be cursed so that I wouldn't hit a thing even if the modifiers were relatively decent.

Still, luck was with me, as my guys proved hard to hit, and what did hit me tended to be spread around on various locations, preventing critical hits. Another won initiative allowed me to have my 65-tonner to jump (his JJs are in the torso, and therefore are usable in depth 1 water) clear of the stream and re-join the fight, while my Templar closed in for additional punishment.

His Black Python/Viper was proving difficult to hit again, and so I switched targets to his modded Warhammer. In a series of heavy blows, I managed to deal great damage to his 70-ton mech and knock him down in the process, though my Linebacker also fell to the combined weapons effects from both of his mechs.

At this point, I should apologize for not covering the other, semi-related battle to my right. To tell the truth, by this time both sets of combatants had such fierce battles going, that we couldn't spare any attention to what the others were doing. Still, the occasional look to the other players' record sheets showed that they were in a battle of heavy hits and little maneuver, while my battle seemed to be the opposite.

Now, as of this time, my own fight was going into a brutal segment. My Linebacker and his Warhammer had managed to both get up without trouble, and now a second round of heavy damage was going to be done. Having lost Initiative, I had to bare it as he maneuvered his annoying Black Python/Viper into the rear of my Linebacker, though it wasn't too bad; the rear was the only place that had any pristine armor left. I again concentrated on his most exposed mech, the Warhammer. With great satisfaction I dropped him again and even managed to blast off the right arm to that mech. Though that Warhammer mod had the PPCs in the torsos, it made it easier to ignore as I concentrated on his annoying Black Python/Viper, which continued to gain position with his initiative. A Gryo hit to my Linebacker was followed with its eventual destruction, though I soon gained a pound of flesh by hurting his Warhammer more with Alpha-strikes from my close-in Templar.



His jumping Black Python/Viper, however, kept gaining position, and with him in my rear and no one else to cover my Templar, it was a matter of time until I lost him. Nevertheless, I had managed to draw out the fight another two turns by efficient maneuvering, using light forests for cover and allowing the excellent accuracy of my TC to make up for the enemy's jumps.

Critical damage doomed my last mech as much as anything, though the continued losing of initiative really didn't help. Still, I managed to leave his Warhammer a wreck and his mexican jumping bean of a mech, the Black Python, lost its arm and some lasers, as well as having paper-thin armor.

After finishing me off, my opponent took what was left of his force (very little, I'm proud to say) and tried to close in with the victor of the other mini-battle, which I gathered had been as furious as anything that had happened in the fight I was in.

Conclusions & Impressions:

- 1. Whenever possible, use Targeting Computers with Clan Heavy Lasers.

2. Maneuvering is always effective, except when it' s not; if you can' t get a decent movement modifier to your enemy' s tohit roll, don' t bother to do much.
3. The Templar is a solid mech. Use it if you need an Inner Sphere assault mech.

And lastly, I should mention something important: The fellow players of Battletech here are some of the nicest, most generous people I' ve met. I had come without miniatures, thinking that it would be a hex-map battle. Although I came with none, they easily lent me a pair of mechs to use to represent my forces. Furthermore, they were more than willing to give me a few seconds to catch up with their mental calculations, since I don' t (yet) have all the tables memorized. ;)

I would mention their names... Except I have the worst memory when it comes to names. Still, I will endeavor to learn them so that I may lend a name to the spirit of generosity and of good sportsmanship in general.

And that is it, for now. I hope I wasn' t too boring, and perhaps maybe I was even entertaining. Until next time, I remain Maddog3060, slayer of Jade Falcons and the enemy of all tyrants.

Personally, I am looking forward to hearing more of Maddog3060s fights and the camaraderie that has developed in that group. As well, I would like to hear more of the communities war stories. That's mostly what this E-Zine is designed for is for your stories, and the friendships that develop within the community. Thank you, Maddog3060, for your article, your time, and your friendship.

~The Wolf

BIO-FEEDBACK

Alright, we're finally getting some decent feedback on the E-Zine. Actually, I undertook a pretty large advertising campaign within the community and, although I'm still reeling from some of the feedback on that, I believe the mission was accomplished. After all, I was run completely out of bandwidth(I'm not proud of this or anything, can you tell? hehe) as people throughout the community found this to be good enough for them to download and, at the very least, peruse. I send a hearty thank you out to the ENTIRE community. Well, here's what you said to me, good, bad, and ugly...

From Fossi on the BMP Forum, 02.06.04:

nice magazine.

i was mostly interested in the interview with RAM, but i had a look at the rest of your mag though. constructive (i hope) criticism:

- layout is ok, but still (i don' t know what you changed) needs a more professional touch. look at good real-life magazines for examples of how to do it. borders, a smaller fontsize and ' blocksatz' (well, thats what its called in german... all lines start and end at one line, with spaces between the words) would help. also check your ' whitespace' , it too big now i guess, at least my printer can use more of the page...

- i think the style could be more ' official' from times to times, you do a mag, don' t ' beg' us to read it, but let us beg to be able to read it

- i feel you talk about AU a lot

- maybe having a link list in an ' offline' magazine isnt that ideal. i suggest you either do it on your homepage or leave that to the linklist there already are

Thank you, Fossi. It is, indeed, constructive criticism and I greatly appreciate it. I'll address your concerns one by one:

- I've looked at other real-life magazines, per your request, and all of them use columns and extreme spacing, full justification on their columns, and more professional type-print. I don't own any software, or know this software well enough, yet, to be able to produce anything that professional looking. This is an amateur affair, unfortunately, and I'm doing what I can with what I have. I do promise, as soon as I have some better software, to do what I can. I do, however, need to address columns. I started this E-Zine with columns and worked well within those, and they were fully justified columns, as well. However, it is unrealistic to expect a reader to move their mouse to the bottom of a page to read, then back to the top, so I opted for an easier to use for me, and easier to read for you, single column document format. I know it can be distracting, but it saves on page space as well. For the whitespace, I am going to widen the used paper by a quarter inch on the inside. Please, everyone reading this, tell me what you think? Is it more viable than what I had in Issue 3? If it is, I'll use it. However, my concern is that these paragraphs are already too wide to hold anyone's interest for long, and it makes it hard to read.
- As for getting anyone to beg me to read my E-Zine, that's never likely to happen, hehe. However, when you're first getting started in an endeavor like this –which, I've actually been doing this for a year or so now, I think- you need to find creative ways to get people to read your E-Zine.
- I do talk a LOT about AU. That's my baby, my pride and joy and, originally, this E-Zine was designed to be internal to Armageddon Unlimited, period, not for the whole community. However, I broke that with the downfall of my command staff and the realized proliferation of the community as a whole. With the 20-year anniversary of BattleTech, I thought it might be nice to do this for the entire community instead. Now, for all those of you who are actually reading this, I will continue to print material concerning AU unless I have other things to print. *hint hint*
- I have the link list in there for folks who don't go to the various web sites very often, but may show an interest in a single specific site, or may want to be able to print an off-line list, from this E-Zine, for themselves. However, the idea of doing links on the Argent Fire web site is an interesting idea, and one I will take under advisement.

Thank you, again, for your kind words and constructive criticism, Fossi, it is well received. I'm not sure if I'm making enough layout changes, but I hope the whitespace has, at least become less a hindrance for you.

From Acidspike on the IS3025 Forum, 02.06.04:

Red, Nice magazine.

Listen if you need any help with the PDFs, I own the full version of Acrobat 6. (I make PDFs for my clients all the time) I would be more than happy to run your files through it to clean it up. Let me know.

Anyways, keep up the good work!

Acidspike

Thanks, AcidSpike, I greatly appreciate your efforts at trying to get these worked into cleaner files, but I guess Acrobat just isn't the thing to do it. Honestly, I would love to have cleaner files and, if PDF995 EVER releases a version which fixes these problems, I may purchase that version. Until then, thank you again.

From Riffled on the IS3025 Forum, 02.06.04:

Sorry to tell ya but mechcommander is nearly dead , mc gold followed by mc2 saw to that. The last of the sl hardcore fans are proly found on gamespy still playing mechcommander , if ya lucky ya might get between 20 and 40 guys playing .

It was a great game and had a great following with a strong community , but sadly now its just a shaddow of its former self.

Has anyone taken a look at the Mech.US site, yet, to try and take interest in that community of gamers? It's a site that deals, mainly, with MC2, but it needs some life put into it.

From AndrewOsis on the IS3025 Forum, 02.09.04:

good job red,I like the mag,nice interview ram 😊

From War Angel on the BTU.org Forum, 02.09.04:

Yeah, I gotta say that' s some great work! A BTfanzine is needed right now with CBT back on the rise.

Have you posted this on the Classic BattleTech forums yet?

Yep, and the community there, initially, told me all but where I could stick Argent Fire. Now, Paul and the CBT team have been great to work with, and have helped me to get my ad for Argent Fire back on track. If any of you, as subscribers or casual readers, decide to tell your friends or BT sites you visit about Argent Fire E-Zine, please make sure to tell them it is for the ENTIRE community, and it is FREE? Thank you.

From £Yñ× 2öö3 on the BMP Forum, 02.11.04:

Your E-Zine rox.

From Atlas3060 on the CBT Forum, 02.14.04:

nice,
some interesting items for reading. this is what makes the gaming community fun.
Keep up the work.

From Clan Smoke Jaguar Khan on the Bad Karma Forum, 02.14.04:

isnt this advertising?



Yes, Clan Smoke Jaguar Khan, it is. However, since the E-Zine is free and is intended for the ENTIRE BattleTech Community, it should cause any harm. CSJK, I invite you and any of your brethren within CSJ or within the Bad Karma Community to go ahead and write articles and submit pictures as many people have done for this E-Zine Issue already. Thank you for your conscientious observation.

From Mecharoo Mk. 3 on the Lords of the Battlefield Forum, 02.15.04:

Holy Hamsters!

I didn' t even know the existance about this fanzine. Thanks for bringing it to my attention. Rather cool.

From wmarples on the Lords of the Battlefield Forum, 02.15.04:

Very cool. I also did not know of the existence of this publication.

Alright, folks, that's it for this issue's Bio-Feedback. I want to send a hearty thank you, again, to everyone who commented and everyone who has enjoyed this E-Zine. I hope we can continue the positive influx of articles, emails, and healthy posts that are displayed here. Simply send your comments, compliments, or disturbances with this E-Zine to argentfire@wolvesau.net.

~The Wolf

INTEL.

JORDAN WEISMAN

Our first interview for this month is a very special interview, with one of the father's of BattleTech himself, Mr. Jordan Weisman. Jordan Weisman, L. Ross Babcock, III and a small staff of individuals first designed, developed, and produced the predecessor to BattleTech, known as BattleDroids, in the early '80s, and the game has been rolling since late 1984 with what we all know and love as BattleTech today. FASA Corporation, the company founded to help continue



production of BattleTech products, along with the various entities, sub-contractors, and licensees of the BattleTech line, have always had their problems in the past, including ungrateful fans, although typically from third party sources such as Harmony Gold, who illegally sued FASA Corporation for using their art and images to represent the early BattleMechs for this game. However, there have also been good times, and millions of fans and fanatics around the world play this game in several different languages and with styles they have made all their own.

I suppose I should just get to the interview and, hopefully, this will change the minds of the critics. So, without further adieu, I give you Mr. Jordan Weisman...

AF) Mr. Weisman, BattleTech has been a labor of love since 1982 with the publishing of Battle Droids and 1984 with the release of the first BattleTech box set. Twenty years is a very long time, and you have a community of avid readers and gamers who have stuck by you all that time. Is there anything special you would like to say, do, or create for your loyal fans?

JW) I continue to be amazed that after twenty years we are all still passionately involved in the universe of BattleTech. When I first conceived of it and then, as it was developed by Ross, I, Mike, and several others, we could not have envisioned that twenty years later people would still care about what we were writing. The fact that there is still such a large and devoted audience is a compliment not only to us that started the ball rolling, but to the community itself which took what we created and totally made it their own. The universe's vitality is a reflection of the emotional and creative investment of its fans, as they keep it constantly entertaining for each other and for us.

The last part of your question is an interesting one, "...is there anything special you would like to create for your loyal fans?" The answer on one level is easy; 'yes'. But that does not really do the question justice. After all these years I still don't think that we have created the ultimate BattleTech experience either on the tabletop or on the TV/Computer screen, and I still really want to do that. I look at some of the advances in Mech Assault 2 and see that we are really making large strides towards that ultimate vision, and it is really exciting. So yes, I and the teams that create both the tabletop and the computer/video games are still on a crusade.

AF) How much longer do you believe BattleTech will live on? What about MechWarrior: Dark Age?

JW) Wow, if you had asked me that question 20 years ago, I would have never guessed 20 years, so I don't think I am qualified to guess at this point. I do know that the universe will last longer than any embodiment of it. The BattleTech universe has been presented in dozens of forms, including many different tabletop versions, computer versions, video games, novels, comics, TV shows, toys, card games, etc. Each embodiment may have its own life span, but the BattleTech universe seems to always continue onward.

AF) During that time, is there anything specific we, as players and fans, should be able to look for? Do you have the BattleTech/Dark Age time-line already planned out, or are you making it up as you go along?

JW) I would be willing to try and convince you that I planned out a detailed 20 year story arc before we started, but you're all too smart to fall for that one. No we are definitely making things up as we go along, but within a framework of a broad fictional arc that was established at the beginning of the property. Every year we gather together all the major authors and licensees for a several day story conference where we plot out in detail the next three years of the story so

that we can make sure that the novels, the tabletop games, and the software are all connected thematically when they all appear. In these conferences we also establish what decision points in the plot lines will be up to the players and what mechanisms the players will have for affecting the story.

AF) What changes would you make in the game were you to re-release it?

JW) There is not anything that I have created, or lead the creation of, that I don't wish that I could just go back in time and make this tweak or that. I think that this is totally part of the creative process, if you ever made something that you truly thought was perfect, why would you ever risk trying making anything again as you would almost surely not live up to your previously perfect performance. All you can hope for is that you did more right then wrong and that people enjoy what you create.

AF) Are there any plans to make a new on-line client/server game which will emulate the BattleTech universe on a running time-scale? For that matter, are there any plans for a new game, period?

JW) There are several computer/video games in the works, but the only one I am at liberty to talk about is the upcoming Xbox title Mech Assault 2 which is looking totally cool.

AF) Have you any news concerning the BattleTech movie Electric Entertainment is said to be working on, such as a release date and any further information than what is presently available on the net?

JW) No new news at the moment. I think the only thing that moves slower than Hollywood is waiting for your tax refund. Dean Devlin remains passionate about the project and is keeping it moving forward.

AF) Do you, periodically, take a look around the internet at the various BattleTech and MechWarrior web sites which exist in the fan base for BattleTech? If so, have you ever considered using any custom units in an official capacity for BattleTech? If not, what would be the criteria necessary to satisfy in order to become an official BattleTech unit?

JW) We do scan the sites on a regular basis and are constantly amazed and impressed with the creativity and passion of the fans. In the past we have included some fan created units and it is something that we should do more often, but one of the challenges is that since we cannot clearly include them all, do we piss off more people because theirs was not selected? Your question has given me a thought that I will follow up with the team on how to possibly handle this.

AF) What do you think of the various leagues, games, and MODs being produced by the community? Do you have a favorite among those?

JW) As I said above the creativity and dedication of the fans in creating and moderating these games is truly inspiring. But like with my three boys, I can't pick any favorites.

AF) Is there going to be another MechWarrior Role-Playing Game produced for the RPG community? If so, what might we expect to see from that game and do you have a tentative release date?

JW) The RPG rights are with FanPro at the moment and I don't know when they plan on releasing a new version of it.



AF) *Is there anything which may be done by your fans, more than what's being done now, to help keep BattleTech moving?*

JW) Well I know that it sounds crass, but the best way to keep the product coming out is to keep buying it. Support FanPro by buying their current product and at the same time tell them what you would like to see next so that they can produce it. Same goes for WizKids and Microsoft; each of these are businesses that have to make decisions based upon revenue, so support the product and there will be more of it.

AF) *I understand there was supposed to be a MechWarrior television series, but aside the few pictures I've seen representing 'mechs there, I've heard nothing more. Do you have any news about that endeavor?*

JW) There was a live action television [series] in development several years ago, but the networks balked at the per-episode production cost and it never got picked up.

AF) *During this twenty years of BattleTech, what has your primary motivation been to continue the game, and why?*

JW) I started with a love for the imagery and then built a world to support and enhance that imagery. Over time the world and its vibrant characters became as much a motivating force as the imagery itself.

AF) *What is the real reason FASA Corporation closed its doors, and will you, any of the old FASA staff, FASA Interactive, or anyone related to the BattleTech franchise, ever be released from the Harmony Gold debacle? Your fans have often wondered what truly happened in those proceedings, and we would ask you to clarify what happened now? In addition, there have been a lot of issues concerning the "unseen" and "reseen" ' mechs and, quite frankly, we want the old ones back; do you think we' ll ever see them again?*

JW) The real reason that FASA closed its doors is that it had been losing over a million a year for several years and we could not afford to continue it any longer. We kept hoping that there was a turn around coming, but in truth was that we were not selling enough of the product to keep the company afloat. It's sad, but simple.



AF) *Do you believe the zeal for BattleTech, particularly by certain old timers, is misplaced or over-zealous? What advice would you give your fans to help temper that zeal?*

JW) When we are emotionally passionate about something we all lose perspective sometimes and this happens in things that we really care about. So even if I think a fan or group of fans is being "over-zealous" I know that it is the result of how much they care, so that even though they may be calling all sorts of terrible names, that they ultimately are paying me a compliment because they care that much about something that I helped create. I do wish that they could express those "compliments" in a

more constructive manner sometimes. But the truth is that the vast majority of fans are very supportive, and even when they are disappointed about a direction or decision that we have made they are constructive in how they express those feelings, and I and the team really appreciate that. In terms of advice I guess I would just ask for fans to take a moment to reflect for a little while and think about [things] from our perspective before demanding change.

AF) *I understand, from working around in the community that, although you have made decent money from your products for BattleTech, it hasn't been as much as, perhaps, a product of this caliber should earn. Has it been worth it, anyway?*

JW) BattleTech has been rewarding in every way possible; emotionally, creatively, and financially. Like anything that has lasted this long, it has had years that it paid the rent, and years that we had to invest in it to keep it going, but the roller coaster ride has been a great one that I would not trade for anything.

AF) *Is there anything I have not addressed in this short interview which you would like to say to your loyal fans and to new fans around the world? Anything I have not covered that you would like to explain about?*

JW) Nope. I think you hit all the high spots. Thanks for taking the time and caring so much about the BattleTech universe. I look forward to talking again at the 30th anniversary, if not sooner!

Mr. Weisman, I hope so as well. I look forward to actually being able to meet you sometime in the near future as well. To the rest of the BattleTech Community, I would implore you to support the products being put out for BattleTech as well. We have an awesome, huge, community, and I feel that, as long as we can keep things rolling together, we can really make some good things happen to keep BattleTech rolling.

In my first issue of Argent Fire I was pretty harsh on the BattleTech Community because I have been, like so many others, looking at the bad apples at the bottom of the barrel rather than the good guys sitting on top. People such as the Devs and Admins of BattleTech Mod Productions, IS3025, BattleTech Universe.org, Inner Sphere Wars, Mech.us, the Mech Warfare League, and individuals such as maxoconnor, Maddog3060, MaSaKaRi, Julian, Raz, and a whole host of other people I don't have enough lines to mention. Each person has their attitudes, their feelings, their beliefs, and their knowledge of the BattleTech universe and how the real world works, and each person deserves the right to their dignity and their voice. However, I still say muzzle it if all you can do is criticize negatively, hehe. Just my personal opinion.

~The Wolf

DarkspARCS, the Music Man

Hey, if you're a game producer, pay special attention to this one...

DarkspARCS is a personal friend of mine, and he's recently begun working on music for the BattleTech genre of games, particularly as a sound editor for several mods. He did the theme for my own Armageddon Unlimited, which can be heard if you go to <http://www.wolvesau.net/AU.htm> and he's done many other themes which hold the same or better quality as many of the MechWarrior 4: Mercenaries soundtracks as well as many of the themes which go into today's leading computer games. That's my introduction to my friend, and now you'll learn the rest about the man which can be told through a short interview...

AF) *What brought your attention to BattleTech Mod Productions to use as the center for your musical works?*

DS) About 6 months ago, our development team over at MercStorm (now MechStorm.net) became affiliated with a small group of BattleTech-based game and game engine mod developers in the interest of creating a private community of conglomerated developers that could lend assistance and support to it's affiliated members projects in the form of scripting, textures, modeling and Gfx - Sfx development. This effort was a direct response to what we had logically concluded as a complete departure of the CBT based PC game genre known as MechWarrior by Microsoft to force that long-standing game universe's devoted participants to switch over to their Xbox platform in order to continue to enjoy that game in the form of Mech Assault... an "Exclusively for Xbox" game development.

BattleTech Mod Productions (BMP) was a major contributing affiliate of that [community] development Co-Op that began forming, in that MaSaKaRi hosts several, very dynamic Mods currently under development that are all based on the BattleTech game genre and will span across 5 different game engines, thus spreading the good cheer of the CBT universe to other gaming communities not familiar with BattleTech. When I joined the BMP administrative team to help MasaKaRi organize this Co-Op initiative and help get the content database started, It became very easy for me to help those mods with their Sfx and soundtrack requests... of which I currently am



still involved in doing. The need for sounds for these games was so great that I took a step back and looked around the Mecha community as a whole and discovered that soundtrack development was indeed a need that hadn't been addressed appropriately as of yet, and thus the BattleTech SoundTracks Project was born.



AF) What, in your history with BattleTech, is so rich that it would cause you to want to develop soundtracks for the genre and for the mods currently in production?

DS) I'm going on my 9th year of exclusive involvement with this game universe. While I admit that I've never played the actual BattleTech board Game, I pursued my gaming career starting out with Mechnet / MercNet and MechWarrior 2 and followed through with this game to it's current PC compatible version, MechWarrior 4: Mercenaries. It was this game that got the ball rolling for me to desire to learn how to develop applications for the game, to do something for it that would allow me to leave my mark within it's creative process.

Starting my League journey, I became a mercenary under the command of the Aces High Armored Cavalry within the Planetary Assault League in the BattleTech Universe, and served garrison duty directly for ComStar, of whom the Primus there at that time was an individual known by many as Chris "IcedT" Trimmer. Impressed with my performance, The Precentor Martial was authorized to offer me a position within ComStar's Militia, which I gracefully accepted. Having successfully become a member of ComStar way back then (back then, to become a member of ComStar was not only viewed as an honor but also as an exciting thing to represent the mightiest BattleTech entity to not only exist but also to represent the only faction to keep its promises to protect and to serve for over 300 years in the game's timeline... impressive, in my opinion!), I joined another ComStar unit within a Solaris based league which was known as the "Gladiator School" of gaming leagues, the original Star Lance League that Micah Douglass created. I served under the ROM and ExCor factions, divisions of ComStar, and fought my way up through the ranks to acquire the Command Position within ComStar's primary faction... which by the time we took on the ComStar uniform (a.k.a. Com_ and then later CStar_) We had organized into one of the original online gaming units that played across 4 leagues and boasted an active member roster of over 320 pilots. Our battles were fought upon the MSN Zone, and were so big we would literally fill the Events Room to capacity for an entire day in pitched battles against the Kell Hounds and Clan Smoke Jaguar. Oh how I remember the days lol...

And that's how ComStarUnited was born...

I wanted to create a ComStar unit back then that ultimately would become recognized officially by Wizkids as representing the ComStar within their universe that had at it's peek the control of the entire Inner Sphere, and was the reigning victor against the Clans on Tukayyid (Much like the way the 331st Royal Battlemech Division of the Minnesota Tribe is... <http://www.minnesotatribe.com/>) Interestingly, an internal conflict occurred, and those that I had to forcefully remove from the unit went on to create their own unit (<http://www.feartheword.com>) AKA the Word of Blake (WofB), and oh how you should have seen the forum HPG uplinks and all the garbage we exchanged against each other on them .. so you see, this ComStar unit actually lived BattleTech specific events on a RL level.

With that history, coupled with my unrelenting drive to accomplish something for this game, I discovered an avenue to both make a difference community-wide with my Sound Engineering but also in that which I am developing for it

AF) What are the mission objectives of yourself and your design team? What do you hope to accomplish by producing this music?

DS) lol, that depends on which dev team you're asking about. I currently am involved at the development level with several CBT-Based mods and game ventures...

As a collective whole however, all of us in all of these projects ultimately want to make our work shine amongst the masses as well as gain the approval of the copyright owners with such. That goal was achieved by myself personally with the BattleTech SoundTracks project when Jason "DeathShadow" Knight of the Official Classic BattleTech website development team showcased my project in their launch of the "From the Front Lines" section on their front page. Thanks again Jason for all your hard work... I hope that folks all around the Mecha Community take advantage of the soundtracks made available for their enjoyment, and from what I've read in the emails sent to me by folks thanking me and in the forums around the community where I've advertised the project, it appears that I succeeded in giving them something to be proud of. Ultimately, I'd like to see my work included into Franchise licensed versions of the games I'm currently helping to create... they're in my opinion that good!

Take IS: 3025 for example. That Massively MultiPlayer Online Game is in many ways already better than the original that its concept was derived from, MBT3025, a franchise licensed to EA Games which closed its doors soon after they opened. Well those that loved the game in its short time refused to let it die, so Project Jenner was born. Today, Project Jenner has revised itself into Inner Sphere: 3025, and what's even more impressive is that the original person who started that venture never gave up and he now is realizing his work's merit with a proposed Beta release target of this fall. To me, Russ Wall's determination is just amazing, and to be a part of his team is indeed very exciting. I was recently brought onboard over there as their Lead Sound Engineer and a Site Admin, along with another veteran programmer to supplement the already existing team, which from what I've observed so far, the entire team and their abilities there are just awesome!

AF) Which mods, leagues and games are, at present, involved with your BattleTech Soundtracks? Who are you producing soundtracks for?

DS) My work is a progressive one, and the projects that I mention here all have worked with me or will be requiring my work for soundtrack acquisitions for their projects:

- BattleTech Space Wars
- BattleField 2750
- The Capellan Solution
- MechStorm's Project Nemesis
- Inner Sphere: 3025

There also have been requests from established as well as up and coming Mecha Gamers leagues, one in particular, the Mech War Fare League being developed by FreakBoy, has begun using the soundtracks to stream for their faction homepages. I'm proud of the music I produce, and when folks let me know that it's good enough to have them use it within their projects, there comes with it a sense of satisfaction at knowing that they're proud of my work too. Lol... I have even been told by some folks that they take out the music from the MW4 games they play and just stream my soundtracks in their place... I tell ya, the initiative MechWarriors possess is indeed a dynamic one! Thanks to all the folks that have emailed me and posted forum comments praising my work, it's much appreciated!



AF) We've discussed your mission objectives, what you would like to see done with your soundtracks. However, what is your overall goal with producing this music? Are you trying to get anyone's attention?

DS) *looks around*.. *evil grin* .. My overall goal is to eventually contribute to a licensed franchise that will produce a quality BattleTech experience in a professional manner. I've been trying to get Mr. Weisman's attention for quite a few years with my various projects ranging from a novel series I wanted to produce relating to a revival of the ComStar Explorer Corps to a bid to create a fully featured Classic BattleTech movie that I had already negotiated contractual privileges with LucasFilms LTD. for the use of its ILM and Skywalker Sound Studios for; however those projects never got past the licensing stage from Wizkids for some reason so they died where they stood. I don't think that Mr. Weisman has been given the full benefit of being able to review my work due to it being handled by his people at the legal management level that had specific

requirements for mandating their licensing agendas. I can understand that they have a business to run and they only desire to have the best representation made available to them for things that they will endorse. My not having "professional credentials" or "legal representation" has always been the factor that has prevented me from moving forward with my projects, which In My Honest Opinion is understandable from a business point of view but also a frustrating one because I don't feel that those factors are as important as producing a quality work are.

Another entity I've worked with in my game productions and continue to try to get the attention of is Fasa Studios. We over at MechStorm desired to acquire licensing and were in the process of signing the Non-Disclosure Agreement with Fasa Studios to take delivery of the MW4 SDK and Toolkit to continue production of the MechWarrior 4 game series FOR PC when suddenly it was announced to us that that provision was no longer available from Microsoft. As you can guess, we were very disappointed. While they have apparently abandoned the PC gaming platform for that genre in favor for their Xbox initiative, a move that has greatly disappointed literally MILLIONS of MechWarrior players around the world, it also appears to the observant beholder that MS did all of this to force product sales for their Xbox. We're hoping that Fasa Studios will make the right choice and provide for the PC gamer another quality MechWarrior game, whether in the form of MechWarrior 5 or even Mech Assault. Their announcement of Mech Assault 2 was missing the "Exclusively for Xbox" term that Mech Assault 1 originally possessed, so there are many of us that are keeping our fingers crossed, hoping that that will mean Fasa Studios will also produce a PC version for Mech Assault 2.

All I can add at this point is if Microsoft doesn't relinquish this trend soon, another development entity is going to take this open market by the reigns and serve the MechWarrior Community with what it wants. *cough*

AF) Do you have any feelings about the direction the BattleTech universe is taking lately? What would you say needs to be done to remedy anything which might be wrong at present?

DS) When Wizkids started producing MWDA material on their fledgling website back around 2 years ago, the content I reviewed quite honestly made my stomach turn. I mean, anyone who read the ORIGINAL version that was posted pertaining to the new BattleTech timeline was saying "what is this, pre-school 101? Barney does Vegas?"... how could one man amongst trillions within a 500 light year wide universe dominate all of the factions within it (that for a thousand years couldn't even destroy each other effectively I might add lol...) and bring about peace? I watched many who had religiously been dedicated to the preservation of the CBT universe throw down their books and leave because of that. At the same time, I experienced a severe amount of factional ignorance within the MechWarrior games I play. Doesn't anyone who is part of a CLAN remember the Clan Rules of Engagement A.K.A. Zellbrigen?

"According to the way of the Clans, only the trueborn are superior and pure. They, by birth right, are with honor, and righteous. Among the elaborate and mysterious ways of the Trueborn Warrior is the Rules of Engagement." ... The HoloTank

However, as time progressed and those of us that remained loyal to the CBT genre watched WizKids pull a rabbit out of their hat and to this day continue to find satisfied joy with regards their universe alternative that they are creating known as MechWarrior: Dark Age. Their revised timeline now makes a lot of sense... After all, the Word of Blake was a very well trained part of ComStar, and I can't disclose how well "trained" the ROM faction that accompanied WOB was. All I will disclose is that most of the unknown "elite" ROM agents were detained in undisclosed maximum-security facilities for mankind's protection when not out in the field... heh. I however would like to see the ORIGINAL CBT Universe continue to be developed for and it's alternatives endorsed. DeathShadow of CBT has an initiative currently running known as the BattleTech Invaders that looks hopeful, as well as even you over there at Argent Fire are seeking to create alternatives within the CBT Universe. I wish you both a wealth of luck in that venture.

The only other complaint that I would like to re-emphasize is for Fasa Studios to start supporting PC based MechWarrior games once again...

AF) What is your idea of the perfect BattleTech mod?

DS) lol... Oh boy, that's a tough one *not!* ... Inner Sphere: 3025 promises to actually become what I envision as the perfect BattleTech game... a massively multiplayer application that ultimately will allow hundreds of individual players to participate in online warfare while piloting their favorite BattleTech - Correct BattleMech. And not just 20 or 30 mechs, but the whole factionally - correct package of mechs. At the same time, the role-playing aspect of the game will make it feel like you're actually that character that you play in the game. Networking issues during game play will pretty much become a rarity due to the fact that you won't have to have a CD in the tray, spyware eating your bandwidth while you're trying to play because we have no reason not to

trust you, nor will have to connect to several different server applications to actually be able to play. The only other server you would have to log onto would be the in-house Teamspeak 2 communications server for battle comms... that is until we discover a way to incorporate the comms into the actual application itself - like MS Gamevoice has accomplished with Xbox live (MS... lol, can you send me an Xbox XDK for Christmas s and write it off next year?...). I' d really like to see WizKids allow Russ to acquire a franchise license for IS: 3025, he' s put out a lot and received nothing so far to not be granted that at least.

Another perfect BattleTech game I see making a splash is MaSaKaRi' s BattleTech Space Wars. That aerospace based game will pit players against each other within the reaches of outer space in the warships and fighters specific to the CBT Universe. BattleTech Mod Productions is a proud sponsor of several BattleTech specific Games and Mods that span across a plethora of different game engines such as Command and Conquer, Battlefield 1942, HalfLife 1 and 2, HomeWorld 1 and 2, and Unreal Tournament. Current Hosted Mods are MW3D, BTSW, The Capellan Solution, Exodus, and a Portuguese version of the BattleTech Board Game online. MaSaKaRi has done a lot for the community in that regard, [which] is why I joined him in administering the BMP website due to its massive workload



AF) What would you recommend for people who would like to get into a similar business to yours, such as producing soundtracks?

DS) Get a life....

LMAO !

No, but seriously, I would recommend right off the bat to make sure mentally that this is what you want to do. That is the whole key to succeeding at anything you wish to accomplish. The determination, the effort, the accomplishments and the success you will achieve with that by itself is imperative to your tasks at hand. Then from there, devise a plan of systematic attack pertaining to

what it is you want to do and then finally...

DO IT !

AF) What are the means you have to produce your soundtracks? How do you determine what the best sounds will be for a particular unit, house or section of the BattleTech universe?

DS) I will be frank pertaining to the soundtracks I have produced for the BattleTech SoundTracks project to date... they are a conglomerated mix of various soundtracks from many different artists from around the world along with riffs I myself have created on my system. I employ the use of a Creative SoundBlaster Live soundcard which uses Creative' s EAX sound dynamics and Dolby' s 5.1 surround sound and incorporates it into the codecs used to create my Sfx. The technology also employs the use of the SoundFont 2 specification. The software that came with my soundcard also installs Creative' s suite of virtual orchestration instruments and sound editing applications known as AudioHQ and Rythmania, which allows you to use soundfonts to create solo tracks that later can be incorporated into a multi-track application such as SoundForge, Micromedia Flash or Vegas (all of which I use in my productions). I employ the use of Vienna SF Studio to convert audio clips into soundfonts. I also use applications such as SFPack and SfArk to compress my soundfonts into archives.

The means by which I go about determining a specific track for a specific CBT entity or event is after I create the track I listen to it and while doing so review a list of pending soundtracks containing the titles I have pre-authored for my desired project objectives. That list BTW contains over 111 titles to be fulfilled. What that means is that in the end, the BattleTech SoundTracks project will contain one hundred eleven (111) soundtracks! All of them representing BattleTech at its finest !

AF) *Do you have anything else you would like to see addressed placed in this interview?*

DS) What I would like to do at this time is something not many folks do that, however, I would like to do for the sake of the CBT community. These aren't necessarily my views or opinions, but they are instead things that I see from people within the community that obviously is a concern for them. I have also experienced these things first-hand, which allowed me to relate to these people's concerns... so I will use this opportunity to try to vocalize their concerns with this section... and thanks for the opportunity to do this !

It seems that my "bible thumping" over at MechStorm pertaining to us going into Xbox Development and the future of MechWarrior went long unheeded, and my perceptions that have been based upon both my research upon the MS corporate backwebs have proven themselves accurate indeed.

As Fasa Studios declares their 2nd Mech Assault release, MS Game studios has decided to basically hijack the CBT MechWarrior genre from off of the PC platform to force religiously dedicated folks to the game to purchase an Xbox to continue their enjoyment of it. True to form, MechWarrior 5 is being developed under the Mech Assault game genre, which is based exclusively upon the Xbox platform. Folks may have little choice for continued MechWarrior action unless somehow a PC ready version is published for Mech Assault, or the continued trend for alternative Game Engine Modding completes a course that can satisfy the most detail oriented ones amongst us pertaining to the game... and we all know there are plenty of us like that to go around with this particular universe lol...

One item I did however notice missing from Fasa's announcement of the MA2 development was the EXCLUSIVELY for Xbox part. That made me send an email to Fasa Studios a month ago requesting information on a possibility that Mech Assault 2 will also have a PC version release as well. I'm sure it will be ignored as it has been a month already without a reply, so we may just have to wait and see. Past emails I had sent to FS and Day1 Studios have been unanswered pertaining to Xbox development even, which that, coupled with the YEARS of fighting I've had to endure with WizKid's legal department over endorsements and Licensing for projects I've undertaken in the past (Including a bid for Movie Licensing for the actual BT movie, which was awarded to Dean Devlin a year after WizKid's refusal to license my already backed proposal for such from Lucasfilms LTD. Oh well...)

Going ahead with Mods based on MechWarrior and/or CBT using other Game engines such as Command and Conquer, Tribes, Unreal Tournament, Battlefield 1942, HalfLife / HL2, and HomeWorld / HW2 (to name a few that are currently being used for BT related modding) seemed the only avenue to pursue. Being that I've been involved in the CBT Universe for close to 9 years now, both as a participant within it and it's various Leagues, as well as one that has enjoyed correspondence with some of it's more notable representatives over the years (I.E.: Blaine Pardoe, Peter "Von" Mayberry, Jay over at CyberLore, Jana SilverStien..) as well as it's notable supporters (Brian Hammock, Giskard, Masakari, Micah Douglas, Richard Littles, Chris Trimmer, Adrian Wright, Miami, VMaxx, Dark Knight, Wolverine... God !!... and many, many others) I figured it has become a duty of mine as such to take up the call to support the initiative.

Believe me, I have seen so much dedicated talent give up on CBT development over the years due to the very reasons The Development is facing today, a lack of ownership support of its community initiatives. Heck, Patrick, a.k.a. MechTech, of the MekTek Community recently signed off even, so CBT's community warriors are still dropping like flies over these issues.

Not spARCy, heh... not yet.

With all that I've endeavored and achieved (and have failed to accomplish as well)with this Game, I took a step back and analyzed the various community projects under development and said ok... what's NOT being done that you can contribute your energies towards?

Cinematic and Game-Development Quality Musical Orchestrations that represent CBT entities BY DIRECT DESIGNATION !

heh...BINGO !

I couldn't get my book deal for the revival of the ComStar Explorer Corps (congratulations by the way go out to Mr. Blaine Pardoe with his recent contractual award for yet again another novel... this time for MW: DA. I hope your litigation pertaining to your 9 completed and ready-for-print CBT novels left over from your FASA Corp. days can succeed as well so that those novels can also find their way onto bookshelves for us to enjoy someday).

I couldn't get my movie deal (Hey Dean... lol, What's the word man?...).

I couldn't get either the MW4 SDK nor any support or info for such for Xbox development (thanks anyway Von, Hope all is well with you bro...).

So I'll make SoundTracks ... heh.

And with those soundtracks, use the same initiative to support Mods wishing to use them within their CBT-related developments, of which there currently are 5 that are obtaining my services for such... MechStorm has announced our under development HalfLife 2 mod' s entitlement, Nemesis, which I will also be supporting massively. We intend on incorporating some unique CBT attributes within that Game Engine to not only spread the word about BattleTech to other communities within the online gaming world, but to yet again make available a MechWarrior / CBT Based Game adventure for PC Gamers...

Microsoft, if you read this, please mandate your support for us within the PC Gaming community. Make MechAssault 2 available for PC... is that too much to ask for?

For those folks out there that discover this article, here' s a Salute to you all that I have known for so long. Keep up the faith, we' ll manage to get this thing working again one day lol... Even if it' s in another format, such as Inner Sphere: 3025, MaxGaming Technologies' Dark Horizons (heh.. mum' s the word there) or my soon to be accomplished endeavor known as AruraSeed, another Mecha-Based Universe coming to a PC in your home hopefully sooner than later heh... =)

Yes, I am still the Primus of ComStar... Eat your heart out you silly wobbies =) (Images of Elmer Fudd seem imminent lol)

Anyway Paul, it has been a privilege talking with you, and thank you again for your community support when and where it' s needed.



I have to agree with spARCS on a LOT of points he put out, although I'll reiterate it is my personal opinion, and not that of the crew which may, one day, be writing in this E-Zine. My primary concern at this point, however, is the movie. Don't do it in MechWarrior: Dark Age, please? You will waste your time and your money. If it's not done in Classic BattleTech you are likely to lose more than you'll make on the movie, and it'll go to video before your backers try to string you up for producing a flop. Classic is the ONLY way to go because over 2/3rds of the multi-million fan community is still based on Classic BattleTech. Dark Age is too new an enterprise, and you will lose with it. In all honesty I don't believe I'm the only one with that opinion. I would dare you to contact me, Mr. Devlin, at argentfire@wolvesau.net and obtain a listing of the sites and forums I have found to visit which, I believe, is all of them, and then you search for BattleTech Movie on any of those sites, and you will find, I believe, more detractors than supporters. Just my two cents.

~The Wolf

BMP
BATTLETECH MOD PRODUCTIONS

BATTLECORPS.COM

I know many of you may already have received emails to this effect, but I felt it was also noteworthy here. Get into this, folks, you might just enjoy it.

~The Wolf

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BATTLECORPS AND IRON WIND METALS ANNOUNCE NEW PROGRAM

3/11/04

With the imminent launch of BattleCorps.com-the best new source for Classic BattleTech® fiction-InMediaRes Productions, LLC unveils plans to offer new miniatures and BattleTech paraphernalia in conjunction with Iron Wind Metals.

The program will launch with a 70mm x 100mm, 2.5 oz metal laser etching of the 20 Year Anniversary Classic BattleTech logo. This will be available for purchase only to BattleCorps subscribers, produced and shipped by Iron Wind Metals. Limited numbers of the logo etching will be awarded throughout 2004 as promotions and prizes at various BattleTech events. An etching of the BattleCorps logo will also be offered only through BattleCorps.com.

New, unique ' Mech variants from IWM, such as the Mad Cat Pryde, Daishi Prometheus, Yen-Lo-Wang and more, will again be available first (and possibly exclusively) through BattleCorps.com! Additionally, players will be able to round out their BattleTech action with the 28mm pilot miniatures packaged with these variants. Each is appropriate to the ' Mech, including Aidan Pryde, Victor Steiner-Davion, Kai Allard-Liao and others!

"I think this is incredible," said Loren Coleman, a founder of InMediaRes Productions. "Both BattleCorps and Iron Wind Metals are utterly devoted to strengthening the community, and what better way to do that than to combine efforts."

In addition, BattleCorps and Iron Wind Metals are sponsoring a truly fantastic BattleTech contest! Once a year, a lucky BattleCorps member will be chosen to be immortalized in metal: IWM will commission a sculpt of his or her favorite ' Mech variant, along with a pilot bearing his or her (or his or her character' s) likeness. This phenomenal contest will be open only to subscribers who have earned high community status prior to the start date of the contest! Watch the BattleCorps.com site for more details.

"Everything that BattleCorps and Iron Wind Metals jointly can do to promote the game and universe helps us all," said Mike Noe, President of Iron Wind Metals.

Both companies are exploring additional ways to work together in the future.

InMediaRes Productions, LLC is an electronic publishing company specializing in media tie-in fiction and the strong support of web-based communities. Its first foray is www.battlecorps.com, a Classic BattleTech fiction-based subscription website.

Iron Wind Metals LLC-and its progenitor Ral Partha-have been producing science fiction and fantasy miniatures for over twenty years. They hold, together with Ral Partha Europe, the exclusive rights to their award-winning line of BattleTech miniatures.

As long as I, and any staff which comes on-board in the future, are able to continue production of this E-Zine, I intend to support BattleCorps.com, WizKids, LLC(their MechWarrior: Dark Age Line), and Fantasy Productions(CBT). I believe the BattleTech Community(which includes the CCG, MechWarrior, MechCommander, and Mech Assault sub-communities) is the most viable community of people in the world, all over the world, and I'm proud to be a part of it. I am not getting any profits from this endeavor and I do it on my own time, which is my contribution to this wonderful community. That being said, go sign up to BattleCorps.com if you haven't already, and let's see what kind of support we can give to these good people. Thank you.

~The Wolf

BATTLETALES

RAM021 is a personal friend of mine, not too personal, but personal enough, from the IS3025 board. Well, when he was still playing in MPBT there was a time when the following interesting battle came up. Please copy and paste the link into your browser and enjoy the story. It's not very long, but it's pretty good.

RAM021's Battle Report(Kestrel):

<http://www.is3025.com/phpBB2/viewtopic.php?t=612>

"The Standoff"

By Liam

Based on an actual drop in EA:3025.

It was one of those backwater hell-holes of a planet. The temperature plummeted to 45 Celsius in the shade, at midnight. It was a desert ball, too close by far to its sun, but just far enough for human habitation, if you used air conditioning and plenty of sunblock. There were canyons on this planet that rivaled those on Terra itself, for size that is. I saw holos of the canyon they called the "Grand" on the North American continent. It was beautifully colored. This planet just had sheer wall of dun brown, set against a duller backdrop. Yeah they were huge, but boring. It had ravines, mesas, all that same shade of brown, and all HOT.

The planet was part of a system along the Marik-Steiner border. OK, maybe it was a bit inside the Steiner border; alright, way inside. In any event, a company of ours was detached to this ball of boiling dust to hold it for at least a month until a more permanent defense base could be set up. You see, this planetary system somehow sat really close to an important jump point, and if we could route supplies through this system, it would greatly help the war effort. Or so the scuttlebutt was in the operations unit. All I know is that it was hot; hotter than a Sergeant Major's temper.

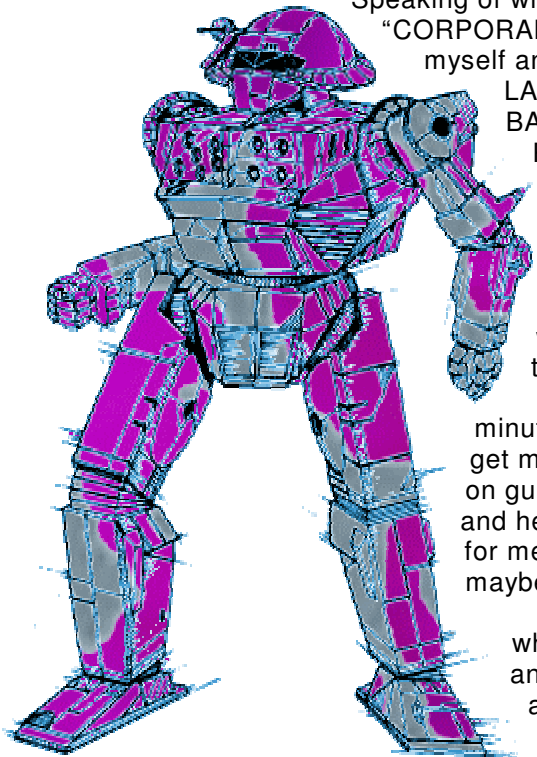
Speaking of which, I heard a shout from the front of the barracks.

"CORPORAL LIAM, GET YOURSELF OVER HERE NOW!!" I sighed to myself and rolled off my bunk. "Coming Sarge," I replied. "YOU LAZY, GOOD FOR NOTHING EXCUSE FOR A BACKWOODS TRACTOR DRIVER. MY GRANDMOTHER PILOTS A BETTER MECH THAN YOU—AND SHE'S DEAD! IF I EVER..." Sarge droned on and on with a few choice epithets regarding my lineage, parentage, offspring, bodily functions, and all those other terms of endearment he usually used in a good mood. It's amazing. Good sergeants seem to be able to dispense with the need to breathe for nearly 15 minutes at a time if they get into a groove.

When Sarge finally broke for air, at what seemed 20 minutes into his harangue, but was more likely 5, he told me to get myself over to the mechbay and work on my mech, as I'd be on guard patrol for the next 5 days straight. I feigned remorse and headed out. Little did he know that I so loved piloting, that for me 5 days of straight patrol, even in this heat, was a joy. Or maybe he DID know. Sarge was like that.

As I slowly meandered to the mechbay, I thought of what got me here in the first place. We are a military family, and our family's roots in the Defenders of Andurien go back a number of generations. My dad was an aerospace pilot, my uncle in the armor corps. I had three first cousins who were in mechanical engineering, and a host of distant cousins in various branches of the service. However, I was the first Battlemech pilot in our family for over 80 years. Most of my relatives were too smart to strap themselves into these front line behemoths. Others didn't have what Recruiters called the "aptitude." Either way, I wouldn't be in any other part of the service. There is nothing quite like strapping yourself in to 20 or 30 tons of death enfleshed as steel, knowing that you could wipe out a reinforced infantry company without breaking a sweat. Unless you were on this hellhole of a planet.

I entered the mech bay and looked up at my beauty. They had issued us Javelin' s this time; the JVN-10F to be precise. And they were sweet. Used to Spiders and Commandos, this mech was wicked. Four medium lasers, jump jets, more armor than the silver foil on the Commando, and a decent top speed to boot. Some more experienced pilots swore by JVN's, and I could see why.



Although I was waiting for the opportunity to use one of those sniping Panther' s I had heard so much about.

I always oversaw my mech's prep. I trusted our techs; they were the best in the business. But there is nothing quite like doing it yourself. I checked coolant levels, plasma bottle integrity, actuator functions, no need to check ammo loads on this puppy though. One thing I always had a hang-up for was exact lens positioning on the lasers. Before that, they had to be carefully cleaned and polished. With all the dust on this planet, a film of grit inevitably covered the focusing lasers. Also the constant pounding would throw the mirrors and lenses off by a hair—and over a few hundred meters that would add up. I would always be kidded, "What are you so fanatical about that for? Learn to hit a mech 20 meters away first," and other such encouraging comments would flow my way. But I was still relatively naïve back then.

Done prepping, I headed back to the mess to pick up a snack or two for the patrol. After all, we were here for 3 weeks already, and all we saw were own shadows—and hot dust. It was the soldier's best friend, boredom. At that moment, what we least expected, happened.

Klaxons starting roaring and lights flashing. I ran back to my mech and got hooked up faster than I had ever done so before. Crackling over the headset came the frightening news. A Steiner Dropship had been picked up just at the edge of detection. We didn' t have clear intel, our Raven was being repaired. All we knew was a lance of Steiners had hit the planet surface, and we had to prevent them from destroying our base.

As I could have guessed, Sarge was powered up in his JVN already. That man had the most uncanny knack for being in the right place at the right time, and doing the right thing to boot. I envied and respected that man. Our lance was filled by two other Corporals, relatively new to the company. "Great", I thought to myself, "we haven't even had a chance to train together, and now we're going in hot." Then again, this is what I lived for.

120 tons of metal and fluid rumbled out of the mechbay, as soon as we cleared the base, Sarge told us to floor it. Command and Control gave us the last known bearing of the Steiner lance and we headed in that direction, all detectors at highest settings.

Then we got the good news. The Steiner lance was a light lance. All Javelins, just like ours. At least we weren' t on a fool's mission.

Then we got the bad news. They had landed on the highest plateau for about 400 clicks. And we were approaching the cliff. I hit the JJ's and yelped a warning to Sarge. I could see their dust. Sarge told us to move slightly out of range, about 280 meters or so line of sight from the cliff's edge, and wait.

Those few minutes seemed to take hours. Sweat pouring off my forehead, and down my face, I risked a brief moment and used a rag to clear my vision. Did I mention the planet was hot?

Then, we saw them.

The helmets of their JVN's crested the cliff, and we had ourselves a standoff. It would be as suicidal for us to try and climb the cliff, as it would be for them to try and descend it.

A flash lit the air, and a beam of light shot out from the torso of one of the Steiner JVN's. "Idiot," Sarge muttered under his breath, "any fool could see we're out of range." I guess he felt he was leading a pack of fools as well, for I heard his voice in my helmet on the lance com channel saying "hold your fire, you girls, they're out of range."

The Steiners slowly backed out of range. One of them, most probably their leader walked his mech forward and hailed us in strongly accented Galactic Standard English. "Greetings you sons and daughters of pigs. Have you made your wills yet? We will kill you, rape your wives and sisters, and dance on your graves." He went on for a few more minutes. A master of prose he was not, but he kept it up. "You chicken-hearted flowerpots,"—I think he mistranslated something there—"come and get us. We are waiting for you!" With that he withdrew beyond the lip of the cliff, out of sight.

Sarge immediately cut in to the channel. "Anyone who makes even ONE step, I swear I will shoot you down right here, right now!" I think he meant for us to wait it out.

After approximately two minutes, the Steiner commander walked his mech up again, and repeated his taunts. Once again he withdrew out of sight.

This went on for a while, back and forth, and our team exhibiting a control I felt remarkable. The Steiner commander would approach, taunt, and retreat. Approach, taunt, and retreat. I was starting to notice a pattern. No, not that he was trying to get us to charge, I'm not that stupid. The pattern was in his approach. Confident in his superior position, having the high ground, it seemed to me that the commander got careless. He would walk his mech in a straight line, forward and backward, without any lateral variance.

I tested this hypothesis on his next two forays. I set my laser's sight for maximum, and centered it on the Steiner cockpit as he continued mangling the English language. Ignoring something about our mother's being hamsters and our father's smelling of elderberries, I set virtual

reference markers, and waited for him to withdraw. “What are you doing,” broke into my concentration. Sarge had noticed the twisting and shifting of my mech’s torso. “Trying something Sarge,” I replied, “now let me concentrate.”

When the blowhard returned, I chuckled. It was as I thought. He hadn’t varied more than six inches laterally. I quickly tried to remember all that trigonometry from piloting school. Sines and Cosines and all that such. Sparing you all the details, I worked out that if I would move my mech forward 15 meters, and tilted the torso back as far as the JVN could, the Steiner cockpit would be barely in range over the cliff edge as he walked forward to greet us.

As the Steiner withdrew, I started shunting power to the mech. “WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING CORPORAL!” came the loving reply in my ear over the encrypted channel. “I SWEAR TO GOD I’LL KILL YOU MYSELF! GET BACK!” I responded quickly, “trust me Sarge, I don’t have enough time to explain, but if I mess up, I’ll present myself to you personally to shoot, now shut up and let me be!” Maybe it was my offer, maybe it was my forwardness, but the Sarge shut up.

I quickly moved my mech in position, tilted it back as far as it would go, and zoomed in on where I was betting the Hauptman would reappear. I disconnected the safety interlocks, and keyed all four lasers to fire simultaneously. It would have to be an alpha strike; I wouldn’t get a second chance. “All that polishing and prep better have been worth it,” I muttered under my breath as the lasers charged.

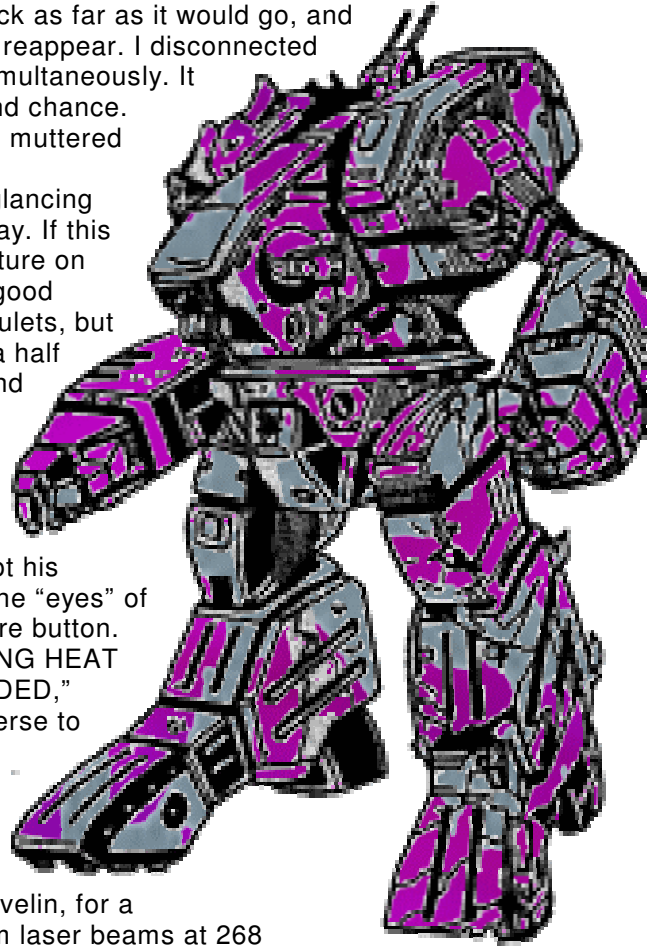
Time seemed to stand still as I nervously kept glancing between the heat indicator and the laser charging display. If this didn’t work, I’d was as good as dead. With the temperature on this planet, the heat from an alpha strike would take a good fifteen seconds to dissipate. Sweat poured off me in rivulets, but I could not spare the concentration to wipe it off. Even a half second delay would most probably be the end of me, and not from Sarge, either. I waited for the Steiner to reappear.

And he did. He had started talking even before he got in range. “Marik pig-dogs,” he said. I held my breath as his mech’s helmet crested the cliff, and some small part of my brain wondered where he got his material from. I hoped I’d never find out. The moment the “eyes” of his JVN hit my aiming reticule, I mashed down on the fire button. Alarms and heat indicators started going wild. “WARNING HEAT LIMITS EXCEEDED, WARNING HEAT LIMITS EXCEEDED,” kept ringing in my helmet as I channeled full power reverse to the Jump Jets in a desperate attempt to get out of range. When I recovered from the jolt, I finally got to see why there was stunned silence on the open channel. At the edge of the cliff teetered an upright Javelin, sans head. All those hours of painstaking care had paid off in one fateful moment. The head of that Javelin, for a brief instant in time, had been the nexus of four medium laser beams at 268 meters. It simply vaporized. Without the computers stabilizing the gyros, the mech overbalanced and almost gracefully plunged head over heels off of the cliff. It reminded me of that crazy sport at home called “bungee jumping,” except this time it was 30 tons of metal plunging down a cliff and no safety rope.

“By all that is Holy,” came Sarge’s whisper over the lance com channel. Then the mop up began. The Steiners were so completely demoralized after seeing their leader so ignominiously disposed of, that the through all tactics out the window, and charged down the cliff, screaming epithets in a polyglot of German and English. It was like nuking spardvisjh in your bathtub, as we used to say back home. It took about 8 minutes to dispose of the other three JVN’s, and all we suffered was some scorched paint and maybe one busted laser between us all.

After the fray, Sarge walked his JVN up next to mine, and contacted me on the personal tightbeam channel. I think it was the only time that he spoke to me in a voice lower than that of a jackhammer. “Liam, by all rights I should bust you back to buck private and write in your file that you should never get within 500 meters of another mech in your life. Dammit, do you know what would have happened if you missed?!?!”

“But I didn’t miss,” I replied softly.



“I know,” said Sarge, “I know,” and with that he wheeled his JVN around, and called for us to enter formation. He contacted the base to inform them of the salvage opportunity, and headed us home.

Sarge never treated me any differently after that, and I didn't expect it. Sarge was his old lovable self, yelling and screaming, and making men out of us. Eventually, attrition caught up with us and both Sarge and I were reassigned to different units. I rarely saw him again. I bumped into him once in a field hospital, where we were both recovering, and once I saw him at a distance at a military starport. I would hear about him a bit more frequently. He had made Sergeant Major; he was brevetted to Captain. Sometime during our last major offensive, he fell in battle; doing what he loved best—dancing the duel of death on Tharkad's soil. I still miss him.

I had some success and more than my fair share of blind luck over time. So it happened that many years and units later, I was able to pull the unit's historical file. When they put the gold braid on your shoulder, it opens some heretofore closed doors. I brought the holocube to a reader, inserted it, and started scanning the data. I looked at my own file, and found it uneventful, as I had remembered it. There was one notation, however, that struck my eye. It was a link to a memorandum to the unit commander, and it went like this (although for security reasons, I'll have to leave out the name).

“Greetings Lieutenant XXXX.

These backwoods, good-for-nothing, farmhands you sent me are slowly becoming more useful. Perhaps another decade would turn them into decent Commando pilots. Next time, send me some recruits with no hands; they'll do less damage with their mech's. Although there's one kid who may have a one out of a thousand chance of turning into something. His name's Liam. Keep your eye on him. Give him the most difficult assignments you can. He'll either turn into a half-decent warrior, or he'll save us another hot-head by getting his rear shot off.

*Sincerely,
Staff Sergeant YYYYYY”*

That was the text of the official memo. But imaged on it was a hand-written scrawl, which read: “Hey Loo, he's a good kid. He reminds me of you when you were a buck private under me; Hell, he reminds me of me.”

I never knew Sarge felt that way, and even now, all these years later, I put my head in my hands and cried. Damn, I still missed him.

*That story rocks, Liam. Got any more like that? Send 'em my way. I'm sure there are a LOT of great writers, just like you, in the community, and I would love to see stuff from all of them. And, if this is the kind of fun you had in MPBT, then I cannot wait for some of these mods(*cough* IS3025 *cough*) to come out. I never really had that much fun in the MechWarrior series.*

~The Wolf

“Dragon vs. PPC”

Part 2

By Paul L. Emerson

aka The Wolf

(**) 1 Cavaliers(Contract History - Contract 3) - Story - Argent Fire - One of the battles for Fallanin II(03 and 04.3011; Fed. Suns contract; Marik and Kurita general combat and defense campaign; Hamal main base with 77th Tactical ' Mech Battalion on both Fallanin II and Hamal; 1 battle campaign with 17 separate engagements on Fallanin II for this story; 3 ' mechs salvage qual. and 2 ' mechs destroyed, one MechWarrior lost, the other dispossessed; plagued with weapon and equipment malfunctions; cut-to awards ceremony of Fallanin II on Jan. 3, 3011). Of 1 huge battle campaign performed on Fallanin II, as well as the defense of Hamal against Marik' s 8th Shootsineers, over the course of this twentyfive month contract, the Cavaliers were actually involved in 17 separate engagements. All of these battles were wins, although at great cost to the Cavaliers and greater cost to the enemy. 9 ' mechs overall were reduced to Salvage quality, and eventually brought back to full strength. 11 ' mechs were lost in the fighting, and the unit was plagued with equipment and weapon malfunctions. The Prince restored 8 ' mechs and released Wolf' s Cavaliers from its' contract. The Cavaliers liberated 180,000 C-Bills worth of special equipment and supplies for itself, with a net gain of somewhere around 125 million C-Bills worth of ' mechs, manpower, techs, and equipment. It' s good to be the king.

General Assembly Area, 77th TMB Fellanin Command

Yamashita World Forest Preserve, Vilnius Mountains, Fellanin II, Draconis Combine

March 07, 3011, Early-Mid Morning

Major Jeremiah Wolf pulled on the leather gloves he'd purchased on Rochester just prior to this mission, and moved his hands around, gripping the controls of his Wolverine, then pulling more tightly on the gloves, then stretching them out the best he could to prepare for a proper, sweat-free, grip on the controls he would need to maintain proper control of the machine. He didn't speak, although he listened to the radio traffic of his unit messing around, typical talk, prior to mission start. The feeling he got from the conversation was one that his people were ready and expecting nothing less than one hell of a fight today. This would be the first face-to-face fight the unit had been in ever, but he knew his people would do well, regardless. Jerry also had the channel to Colonel Steinem, his direct link, wide open and he was listening as her deployment orders went out.

Two minutes ago her entire battalion, Recon Lances first, began their descent down the mountain. Listening to the good Colonel, The Wolf knew that her battalion was in good hands with her at the helm, and they seemed to respond well to her commands. No arguments, no worries, they just did what they were designed to do, no muss, no fuss. Good people she had under her, and it strengthened his confidence to know she was that good.

Senior Lieutenant David Montgomery Wolf went over the pre-start sequence in his head again to ensure that he'd done everything right, in proper sequence, for his BattleMaster. Like his father, he wore gloves, though he didn't



seem to be as worried about their fit as he was about the controls of his 'mech; they had been a bit sluggish lately. The throttle seemed to want to stick at seventy percent, and the pool tech he'd spoken with after the last test drive of the BattleMaster explained that was a normal feature on all BattleMasters. If it gave David too many problems, he would see what he could do to modify it. However, he wouldn't be able to remove it completely; something about interlocks for the reactor coolant system being released and the 'mech going boom.

David found it extremely hard to believe the truth of the matter until he sat down in his stateroom on the Sara J and began accessing the ship's library to find the truth for himself. It wasn't so much the BattleMaster was restricted from going above seventy percent overall speed as much as it was the fact that the switches for the interlocks on the reactor safeties was immediately in front of the throttle assembly path. The designers tried to compensate by putting in a block to warn the pilot to be careful of the interlocks. That had failed because once the block was worn out, a pilot's hand would simply slip right through the seventy-one percent mark and, like being on a patch of ice, slide all the way into the interlock switches, activating them. The technicians tried to compensate in the field by relocating the panel housing the interlock switches, but there was no where else in the 'mech to put them where something more dangerous would not have to be removed. As well, techs had tried to make the block smaller, but the block wore out even faster. Therefore, like shifting an automobile into gear with a manual transmission system, a pilot would have to fight and fidget with the throttle to move it any higher.

It was practical to have the system the way it was, with the adjusted "gear-shift" blocks in the way, although it wasn't practical trying to move above seventy percent on the battlefield because a pilot would spend far too much time in that endeavor and be dead before they arrived at 100% speed.

Despite this issue, David continued to fidget with his controls, trying to ensure they would all work as advertised when the time was right. Simultaneously, he listened to the radio traffic of his own Red Death Squadron and awaited his father's signal to prep for dustoff to invade his assigned area. Pre-battle jitters grabbed at his stomach and he reached for the 'placebo' water, as he liked to call it, to take a few swigs of the semi-warm sugar water.

Seven minutes into the ball-game, Jerry Wolf heard the first shots being fired over comms, the tale-tell static of PPCs passing or hitting friendlies, and the training cadre starting to go down one by one, relatively quickly. Except for the cadre members, Jerry thought, this should be a cakewalk. As he continued to listen he noticed some of the trainees were smart enough to know when

they were outgunned, and seemed to be leaving the compound, headed east in their 'mechs. More mountains lay in that direction, and they would have a ready hiding place. This, however, didn't really seem to concern Colonel Steinem, as she designated only her Alpha Company Recon Lance, the Night Owls, to go after the half-dozen Kuritan trainees.

Unfortunately, sixteen minutes into the combat, just as the Colonel was preparing to call a victory and call Major Wolf's forces to come secure the perimeter, per contract and orders, someone seemed to bring up a question which the Colonel answered impatiently with,

"So? So, what? There was only a single company, so what? We got off easy. The rest are on... What?!... Say again, Night Owl Lead, say again!" Static interrupted the transmission and the flow of adrenaline began in The Wolf's body. He had a horrible feeling something had gone completely wrong, and he wanted to know what it was, immediately. Unfortunately, his orders precluded him from contacting Colonel Steinem, and he had to wait a decent amount of time before he could assume she had gone down in combat, which he began to count off... one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two, and continued to count until he was interrupted at eleven. "Night Owl Lead!! Get back to base camp! All 77th Tango Mike Bravo units, take up defensive perimeter positions, with a quickness people!!! With a quickness!"

Jerry began to breathe very heavily and he waited, beginning his count again, which lasted only three seconds this time, before she tight-beamed a transmission to him, "Major Wolf, you are to remain on station for approximately three mikes longer, roger?"

"Roger"

"Then you are to proceed down the mountain to your pre-designated locations, roger?"

"Ro-ger", Jerry drew it out a little longer this time, knowing the re-designated positions he had already given his people.

"Sit-rep. We are withdrawing our personnel to a tight perimeter east and north within the Kurita training compound. Night Owl One reports seeing large numbers of heat signatures and her lancemates are reporting MagScanner readings off the charts. You received our intelligence about the extra battalion Night Owl spotted last night, roger?"



"Roger"

"It looks like this might be a good day to die."

"Nah, Colonel, never a good day to die, just a good day to whoop some ass, roger!"

"Roger that, Major, roger that!" She seemed to chuckle slightly at this, and continued, "Brief your people," and, just like that, the tight-beam closed and comm. chatter was restored to the rest of The Wolf's two companies. He switched channels to address his Red Death Squadron commander and his Lance Leaders,

"Alright, folks, we have a live situation down there. The good Colonel seems to believe she is preparing to face an unconfirmed battalion of full size Kurita 'mechs and real warriors.

On top of that, we may have more Kurita DropShips burning in-system with reinforcements and/or replacements for that battalion. Seems we may have caught them with their pants down, but we won't have the advantage for long, so we need to act on it as fast as possible and burn out-system quick. Any questions?" Major Wolf waited several seconds to really hear if there were any questions, "Alright, then brief your people, David." He switched frequencies to address his company only, "Alright, Lance Leaders, here are your maps and the key designators for places to land and missions to accomplish. Any questions?" Again, he waited several seconds, "Brief your people on what you want them to do. Out until go."

He switched back to open company frequencies and monitored the Lance Leader briefings, noting the professionalism and pride with which the Lance Leaders addressed their people. No derogatory statements were made. Privates Vargas, Bowser and Long were all told to stick with their wing mates as much as they possibly could so they wouldn't get the crap spanked out of them, but derogatory terms weren't utilized, skills were not questioned, and readiness was assured by the constant drilling the unit did, regardless of contract/no-contract status.

“Ready to roll, sir,” Senior Lieutenant Barrett came over the comms as soon as his briefing was complete.

“El-Tee Drummond reporting ready status, sir,” Charlie called in.

The Wolf switched channels again to talk to David, “Ready, son?” He threw some spring into his voice to help allay any worries David might have. They may have been in several battles together previously, but none this harsh. This was the full meal deal, and he wasn’t sure if David could handle what he was about to see completely.

“Got it, Major,” David replied back, no small amount of annoyance in his voice at being addressed as family instead of by his properly earned rank of Senior Lieutenant. The Wolf didn’t answer, but rather switched channels over to speak with the DropShip Captains for the Sara J and the Srebernica, “Captains Rainwater and Jones, have you been monitoring comms?”

“Ready to rumble now, sir,” Captain Sharika Rainwater pronounced proudly, although Jerry could tell there was a stiffness to her voice, and Captain Caiaphas Jones didn’t answer at all. “I have a feed ready from our camera’s to your number three HDD monitor, sir, whenever you’re ready to see what we do.”

“That would be now, Captain. Thanks. We need to lift and get down there, Captains. Good luck.” No reply would be forthcoming; instead, the comm. link was severed and The Wolf’s number 3 HDD monitor flared to life, adjusting from green to solid-state browns and blacks, then to full color in a matter of seconds as the Major watched the trees begin to sink below the camera’s line-of-sight. As well, the comm. chatter picked up among his two companies as they all felt, as he did, the DropShips rumble mightily as they began to lift their thirty-five-hundred tons as well as the collective tonnage of the varied companies in their ‘mech bays, plus all the many hundreds of tons of supplies, ammunition, foodstuffs, sundries, and personnel required to operate the vessel. However, the engines seemed to be strong enough to handle the loads with some modicum of ease, and the vessels continued to lift over the trees for something like a quarter mile, then came to a hovering, bouncy and unbalanced stop in the air, to shift directional thrusters so the ships would pass over the battlefields where the ‘mechs would all drop off. Then the DropShips would turn back from the field and return to the point they had just left, for the sake of preservation of both fuel and themselves.

Once the ravine, valleys and the massive forest between the training base and Cavaliers position were cleared, The Wolf saw a complete nightmare on the ground ahead and below them.

“Sure you want to do this?” Captain Rainwater flirted over the comms with the Major. He smiled slightly, not really feeling amused at this point so much as scared witless, but he answered with the best response he could afford to give,

“No choice. At this point it’s all about the money.” It had become a Mercenary credo over the last decade or so, and The Wolf never had to use it until this point. Hearing himself say it now seemed so foreign to him, but he knew the wisdom of it. No investment, no return. The Wolf had played the various stock markets of the Inner Sphere all his life, and almost without fail won every time, which was why the Cavaliers had two companies now instead of a single lance of Recon ‘mechs trying to get decent contracts. His personal motto had been “No investment, no return” from the time he began investing in Defiance Hesperus Industries nearly thirty years ago.

The trees seemed to be spawning evil from every pore; ‘mechs moved in full lances from tree-line and clearing to tree-line and clearing and, by the time he finished counting, there were nearly forty-five ‘mechs to be dealt with, plus the rest of the training cadre ‘mechs should they decide to come back and honor Kurita with their spilt blood. After running as they had earlier, they would be better off returning to the fight. From The Wolf’s estimation, that could be another Company of ‘mechs which might show up out of the blue at any time, although most of the ‘mechs displayed at the training grounds had been lights and the smaller mediums, with only the instructors and cadre being allowed to drive the seven heavies. Fortunately, all seven of those heavies were down.

“Alright, Major,” a tight-beam opened from Colonel Steinem, and he acknowledged with two simple clicks on the mic activation button. Then he switched to his officers frequency and explained, “Alright, Colonel Steinem is set up on the opposite side of the training grounds from where the Kurita battalion is intending to hit, and she won’t reach them for another minute. Senior Lieutenant Wolf,” Jerry could picture the smile on his sons face, “you will deploy in that cul-de-sac I told you about, and move out from there. Senior Lieutenant Barrett, I want you to the West and North of their position and give them hell. Take Charlie with you. Take the bad guys down as fast as you can. Remember OUR standing orders concerning how we fight, and use them to your advantage, it’s not hard to do. Roger, hooah!?”

In unison all five of the other officers returned the old battle cry.

“Alright, Sharika, put my lance down here,” The Wolf explained as they crossed the last steep ridge-line leading into the compound. It would take his lance the same amount of time to

reach the forward units of the bad guys as it would for Captain Rainwater to get Barrett's and Drummond's Lances to the other side. In the meantime, Captain Jones DropShip peeled to the left, crossing behind the movement line of Rainwater's ship to hover over the cul-de-sac for several moments while David's people hit the ground and began to move in on the bad guys.

By the time all of the units hit the ground and were ready to meet the enemy, Colonel Steinem's forces would begin clearing the buildings of the Kurita compound, and then all hell would break loose. Major Wolf tried to swallow and found he had no spit, and his stomach told him he was no longer hungry, so he knew he was ready. "Advance, Command Lance. Head 'em up and move 'em out!" Each of his lance's 'mechs, his Wolverine, followed by a Marauder, Dervish and Griffin, began their lumbering march to move within range of the enemy.

~to be concluded

~The Wolf

EVENT CALENDAR

This section of the E-Zine is designed for anyone who would like to post events, whether of their own making or someone else's. Personally, I would appreciate a full months warning for new events which are being scheduled; however, we'll deal with two weeks if necessary. Just be forewarned that with such short notice, even a month worth, since our E-Zine is noted to come out every other month, your event may not be broadcast through us in time to do any good. However, we may gain enough artists and writers in the future to make this E-Zine more popular, therefore it will come out more frequently. Don't count on more than one issue per month, however; I simply do not have that kind of time on my hands.

~The Wolf

March '04

- Argent Fire – Volume 1, Issue 4 – Bio-Feedback, Intel & BattleTales
- Argent Fire – Volume 1, Issue 4 – Event Calendar & Parting Shot, Publish to Web

April '04

- ____AU FM – Wolf's Cavaliers – Contract 10 – 11; could use some help with this!!!
- ____Argent Fire – Volume 1, Issue 5 – Opening Volley, The Grapevine, BattleROMs & Bio-Feedback
- ____AU Web Update

May '04

- ____AU FM – Equal Opportunity Destroyers – Basics & Contract 12, 13
- ____Argent Fire – Volume 1, Issue 5 – Intel, BattleTales, Event Calendar & Parting Shot, Publish to Web

June '04

- ____AU FM – Equal Opportunity Destroyers – Contract 14 and the Waterworld Tragedy
- ____Argent Fire – Volume 1, Issue 6 – Opening Volley, The Grapevine, BattleROMs & Bio-Feedback

July '04

- ____AU FM – Shadow Blade – Basics & Contract 15 – 16
- ____Argent Fire – Volume 1, Issue 6 – Intel, BattleTales, Event Calendar & Parting Shot, Publish to Web

August '04

- ____AU FM – Shadow Blade – Contract 17 – 18
- ____Argent Fire – Volume 1, Issue 7 – Opening Volley, The Grapevine, BattleROMs & Bio-Feedback

September '04

- ____AU FM – Armageddon Unlimited – Basics & Contract 19
- ____Argent Fire – Volume 1, Issue 7 – Intel, BattleTales, Event Calendar & Parting Shot, Publish to Web
- ____Argent Fire Story Anthology #1

October '04

____ AU FM – Armageddon Unlimited – Contract 20 – 21

____ Argent Fire – Volume 1, Issue 8 – Opening Volley, The Grapevine, BattleROMs & Bio-Feedback

November '04

____ AU FM – Armageddon Unlimited – Contract 22 – 23

____ Argent Fire – Volume 1, Issue 8 – Intel, BattleTales, Event Calendar & Parting Shot, Publish to Web

December '04

____ AU FM – Current Events and Introduction to Dark Age unit

____ AU FM Completion of proofing, art insertion(?), making sure ALL AU resources have been tapped for completion of this manual, and selling to WizKids/ FanPro for Classic BattleTech

____ Argent Fire – Volume 1, Issue 9 – Opening Volley, The GrapeVine, BattleROMs & Bio-Feedback

____ Begin Construction of AMG/ MFOL League and Unit Repository

____ MW: DA Web Site Construction(hopefully a kit will be available by now)

____ Brand Spankin' New BattleTech To-Do List including Other Projects..., below

Other Projects on my Mind for BattleTech

MechWarrior: Dark Age RPG (Including: Introduction & Character Generation, Skill Use, Personal & 'Mech Combat Rules and Examples, Gear & Weapons Availability & Acquisition, GameMasters Section & Drama Rules, Eventualities, etc.)

You're all more than welcome to contribute to the above list and AF will endeavor to make sure your information is put out to the rest of the community in a timely manner.

~The Wolf

PARTING SHOT

Alright, folks, until now I haven't really been able to give you any upcoming events. This time is different, and I hope it will remain that way. Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears...

Next month: 1) We're going to do as in-depth an analysis as we can on why Harmony Gold filed and won lawsuits against FASA corporation, and why the recent ruling of a Japanese court COULD be used to over-rule what was done to FASA Corporation. Can anyone say, "Unseen"? I thought you could, hehe.

2) Despite what one of our readers has expressed as being a problem for this E-Zine, I will continue the series on Armageddon Unlimited's History. You want to stop the madness, you need to put in your unit's history and/or activities for us to publish. Official FASA-Canon units or units recognized as legal for WizKids and FanPro to use need NOT submit a history, as we will be working on those throughout Volume 2 of this E-Zine, which is six Issues away, yet.

3) The conclusion of Dragon vs. PPC. You will get to see one of Wolf's Cavaliers worst defeats through this contract, and how the Wolf



and his pilots pulled through it, anyway.

4) We'll be beginning those new sections I told you about in the Opening Volley. Gets your 'mech submissions and images ready for the '**Mech Hangar**. Be warned, however, that not every submission will be placed in this E-Zine. Do NOT send me PDF files outlining your 'mechs, please, just the basic BattleTech statistics and an image if you like. Also, for next issue I'm going to try and put together some general news for **Up and Comin'** projects for CBT and/or Dark Age. Hey, I may not be the biggest fan of DA, but it's part of the BattleTech universe, so I'm going to support it the best I can. Finally, in our **Pet Projects** section I need some of you folks out there to give me an update, written pretty much however you want (please keep it clean?), as to how the mods we both have and have not interviewed for or reviewed about, yet, will have some form of continuing representation in this E-Zine.

5) Alright, last but not least is our Argent Fire Story Anthology #1. That's right, submit your fondest BattleTech stories and tales of derring-do, folks. I would ask you to keep them below 5,000 words, if possible, though I'm not going to penalize you if you go above. Also, if you're going to submit a story, don't let it be less than 1,000 words (okay, close to 1,000 words will do the trick). Finally, if you have art to go with your story, make sure it doesn't belong to someone else and/or that YOU have permission you can forward to me to have that permission available for legal reasons. The last we will be accepting submissions is June 15th, 2004. If you can't write it and get it in by that time, then save it for the next Anthology. This first Anthology will be out in the middle to end of September, folks, so hold your horses and get ready to rumble with the stories.

Until then, keep your powder dry, your weapons well oiled and adjusted, and your uniforms clean.

~The Wolf

ADVERTISEMENTS



Alright, folks, now that I've taken down my big ass ad for Armageddon Unlimited (it will be back, oh yes, it will be back, hehe), I find there is some space that needs to be filled. If you're in a MOD, or in a game, feel free to advertise with us. You saw the Kurita ad I placed here in the last issue, and you see the one above this paragraph. Well, that's just right for size, unless you just absolutely cannot keep your ad that small, then I'll have to make a judgment call. Until next time, take it easy.

~The Wolf

UNIT/RESOURCE LISTINGS

This is the place we list all of the unit web pages in existence. If you have a web page to submit here, please feel free to email them to argentfire@wolvesau.net and we'll get you taken care of by the next issue.

Note that links are listed by category and then alphabetically. If you have a gaming unit, for instance, your unit will be listed in Unit Listings towards the end of these links, and then alphabetically by the name of your unit. No one gets any special privileges for placement, not even the guys who produce these games.

BattleTech Boards/PbEM/MechWarrior

BattleTech Play by E-Mail (in German)

<http://btpbem.kell-hounds.de/>

Dragon's Hobbies - BattleTechnical

<http://www.dragonshobbies.com/battletechnical/>

BattleTech Universe.org

<http://www.battletechuniverse.org/index1.php>

DropShip Command – Maps and Missions, News and Reviews and Forums area

<http://www.dropshipcommand.com/>

Galleries

Dak's BattleTech Miniatures Gallery

<http://www.luckshire.com/flealord/dakgallery/DakGalleryHome.htm>

Mechwerks Production Line – Featuring Art by Max O'Connor

<http://mekwerks.hermes72.net/gallery/albums.php>

Leagues

Inner Sphere Wars – A MechWarrior 4 Mod

<http://www.comstaterminal.com>

Net BattleTech

<http://www.netbattletech.com/>

Mech Commander

Mech Lab – Mech Commander 2

<http://dynamic4.gamespy.com/~mechcommander>**MechWarrior: Dark Age**

MechXF – A wonderful resource for Dark Age

<http://www.mektek.net/~mechxf/>**Maps & Missions**

Alpha Strike – Produce MechWarrior maps and missions

<http://www.alpha-strike.net/>

MercStorm – Community based support for MechWarrior 4: Mercenaries

<http://www.mercstorm.com/>**News & Reviews**

BattleTech HQ

<http://www.angelfire.com/games/battletechHQ/>

BattleTech News & Reviews

<http://btechnewsandreview.tripod.com/>

BattleTech – Until Your Cannon Glows

<http://www.antishaft.com/battletech/>

BattleTech Universe.org

<http://www.battletechuniverse.org>

Lords of the Battlefield

<http://www.lordsofthebattlefield.com/>

The Task Force

<http://www.texmech.net/>**Personal Pages**

Panzerfaust 150's BattleTech Web Home

<http://atlas7d.freesevers.com/>

Froggie's BattleTech Page

<http://www.ajfroggie.com/battletech/>**Producers**

Archer's Miniatures

<http://www.archersminiatures.com/>

BattleCorps – A pay to read fiction site for Classic BattleTech

<http://www.battlecorps.com>

BattleTech Mod Productions – Document various mods which are coming out for Tech

<http://www.battletechmodproductions.com>

Custom Wooden Mechs

<http://spyder297.tripod.com/customwoodenmechs/id17.html>

Fantasy Productions – Producers of Classic BattleTech

<http://www.classicbattletech.com>

Inner Sphere Wars – A MechWarrior 4 Mod

<http://www.comstaterminal.com>

Mecha Entertainment – A Portal site and

BattleTech forums area; producers of BattleTech fun<http://www.mechaentertainment.com/>

MechJock

<http://www.mechjock.com/>

WizKids Games, LLC – Producers of

MechWarrior: Dark Age<http://www.wizkidsgames.com/mwdarkage/>**Tech Readouts & Source Pages**

Chaos March

<http://www.chaosmarch.com/>

BattleNet(in Spanish)

<http://www.solaris7.net/battlenet/>

Marwynn's BattleTech Site

<http://battletech.hopto.org/Marwynn/>

Mordel Blacknight's BattleTech Bay

<http://www.mordel.net>

Wolverine's BattleTech Home Page

<http://www.sanctum.com/surfers/btech/>**Unit Listings: Houses**

Davion Heavy Guards

http://www.geocities.com/davionheavyguards_2000/DHG_Opening.html

Headhunters of Davion

<http://www.hhod.com/main/index.htm>**Unit Listings: Mercenaries**

Armageddon Unlimited Primary Web Site

<http://www.wolvesau.net>

Christian Men Online(CMO) – A Christian Mercenaries group

<http://www.icehouse.net/cmonline>

Death Dealer Mercs

<http://216.202.36.201/>

Skye Rangers Primary Web Site – A

MechWarrior Game Club<http://www.skye-rangers.net>

Strider's Strikers

<http://www.stridersstrikers.com>