

Solaris Sentinel

June 2001

Edition IX

Howdy! Welcome to another edition of the Solaris Sentinel. This month's edition packs quiet a bang as I have an interview with Loren Coleman, editorial, new Strategic Session, terrain article, spoof on simplified rules, and a few ads and loose ends. So far, the direction of the game of BattleTech is uncertain, but we can rest assured that the universe is far from dying. So, check out Mr. Coleman's interview for the lowdown and then browse through the rest of the edition; should have a lot to offer! Enjoy!

Ross Koga
Editor and Publisher

Patriots and Tyrants: Interview with Loren Coleman

Here is the "coveted" Loren Coleman interview that I did in two parts. First session was on IRC in a live format while the second was via e-mail. I have combined the two and tried to clean up the text so that it doesn't look TOO bad on Word. Loren goes by the nick rumor on IRC, so I left it that way! Enjoy!

SS- I'll start off with some of the smaller questions...

<Rumor> and I'll try to be as forthcoming as I can be. Sometimes, I will be necessarily vague, or invoke privilege.

SS- Okay, what novel was the most fun for you to write?? And why?

<Rumor> it's a tie, I think. Double-Blind cause it was my first, and FASA let me play with Sun-Tzu who was fascinating. Patriots and Tyrants because it was almost like writing my first novel again, only this time being able to use ALL the political characters.

SS- Opens up a good question I got a few days ago: Which was more interesting to work with: Victor Davion or Sun-Tzu Liao?

<Rumor> Sun-Tzu liao.

<Rumor> No question there. Victor is a great tragic hero. But he's mainly above-board and open. Sun-Tzu is much more complex, and you really can do about anything with him.

SS- Okay... another question on Sun-Tzu: in the Capallen Solution, is Sun-Tzu's mother's specter a literary devise or should we worry for his health? =)

<Rumor> Both.

<Rumor> If you don't worry about the health of a Liao, you're jsut asking for me to make it happen. Still, the 'voices' are not necessarily a pointer than Sun-Tzu is cracking. Not yet anyway.

SS- Okay, do you identify with any of the characters from your novels?

<Rumor> any and all of them. If you can't identify with them, even a man as condemnable as the assassin, how can you write them?

<Rumor> Still, I think I know what you are really asking. Are any of them me in disguise?

SS- I guess so =)

SS- Blaine compared Loren Jaffray and Bekker to attributes he has... =)

<Rumor> There's a part of me in Aris Sung most definitely. And Marcus GioAvanti of course. Though not necessarily the same part. I infused Tancred Sandoval with some of my own experiences as well.

SS- Yeah, I figured Aris and Marcus... they are strong characters... ones I like well.

<Rumor> there are others. There was more of my personality in the professional troublemaker on Solaris VII, more than in the main character in that book. It varies.

SS- What faction (that you have written about) is your most favorite?

<Rumor> For the Inner Sphere, it would be the Capellan Confederation, mostly because I was allowed to reinvent them. And it was so rich with hidden detail.

<Rumor> For the Clans...

<Rumor> It would be Clan Diamond Shark. Not your typical Clan. I like it when I can make things different.

SS- yes, the Diamond Sharks offer a lot of different story lines... you wrote the intro to Mechwarrior's Guide to the Clans? Going from memory here

<Rumor> Yep.

<Rumor> The Diamond Shark story about commerce and battle.

SS- Okay, what's your favorite 'Mech?

<Rumor> Depends on the situation... but I guess if i had to pin myself down, it's the *Emperor*.

SS- Any chance of seeing the Templar in action anytime soon??

<Rumor> Hrm.. Is that Word of Blake?



House Hiritsu mini by Sal Crump

SS- No, Davion... 85 tons, omni... FM: FedSuns

SS- I guess that would be a no.

<Rumor> Ah, one of THOSE. Well, given that the books I'm writing now are mostly Fed Sun and Lyran Alliance, the answer is 'probably.'

SS- Now, looking at the upcoming novels, we are ending the FedCom Civil war in three (?) books? Patriots and Tyrants, Blaine's Call of Duty and the finale book for that series and Brian's (forgot the name)... Are there going to be any books concerning the Home Clans in the near future?

SS- Make that 4 books

<Rumor> There are more.

SS- More?

<Rumor> Blaine is writing a BT book set during the civil war. Randall Bills and Thom Gressman are writing MW books that focus on two very important worlds. And I'm writing three political novels that track Victor and Katherine and their assorted friends.

SS- I heard something somewhere about a Blood Spirit novel in November... might have been a 'Mechwarrior novel. I think Randall told me about that one

<Rumor> yeah, there was one. but that one got canned due to the need to do more book son the war.

<Rumor> Randall shifted to an inner sphere story instead.

SS- Okay, I see. So the Clans are basically left behind (for now), besides Brian's book on the Ghost Bear invasion.

<Rumor> yeah, that's the last one

<Rumor> If anyone got the short end with FASA closing its doors, its the Clans. We had some stories planned, including one set completely in the Clan home worlds, but they've been sidelined so that we can finish telling the civil war. Not that they don't get some time on the stage, they do. Just not as much as we had wanted. What's in store for them? Well, given that their entire reason for being around got taken away from them in the Grand Refusal, I'd say they are fresh out of wars to fight. Unless we make some more. As I like to say, they're percolating. When they're done, you'll know it.

SS- Okay, the last few books were under the FASA time line, so what will this mean for WizKids?



GioAvanti Caesar, mini by Ron Smith

<Rumor> it means that they get the civil war all tied up in a neat little package. And from there, they can go any number of directions.

SS- Right, most rumors have centered on advancing the time line, like back in the early '90's, with the intro for the Clans...

<Rumor> The last books will be at GenCon 2002. It would take WK at least that long to ramp up a new line, so at best one starts up as the other closes.

<Rumor> I've heard those rumors.

<Rumor> <innocent smile>

SS- Probably can't comment on that one

<Rumor> depends on the question. Let me say that I can make a case that we have no jump, a 20-year jump, and over a hundred years. Give me 15 minutes; I'll create a scenario that demands a 1000-year jump.

SS- True, so the future is wide open...

<Rumor> the beauty of this is, we can do whatever we want and/or whatever we think the game universe needs

SS- How many books are slated to cover the FedCom civil war and will WizKids have any say in that area of BattleTech?

<Rumor> There are about 6 left, including the three I am writing to follow the higher level politics and such things as the Star League conferences and the conflict between Omi and the Assassin. And no, I don't think WK will have a lot to say at this point. These last novels were really with FASA, and the story was roughly planned a year ago so why mess with them now?

SS- what about these rumors of Michael Stackpole coming back?

<Rumor> the future is always wide open. You'd be surprised how often we've changed major events at the last minute, just because it was too obvious or to better set up another event in the future.



Mini by T-bolt Men Shen Omni,
Harloc Raiders

SS- the inner workings of the time line...

<Rumor> Mike is almost certainly going to be involved in any re-launch of BattleTech. He knows the characters, and he knows how to tell a damn good story. And he's a friend of Jordan's.

<Rumor> how he will be involved is unknown. but we can all hope to see stories by Mike again.

SS- I agree, but I figure you will be in the forefront as well, correct?

<Rumor> Well.... only one can lead. But if it's not me, Mike better not slow down to much or I'll leave footprints up his backside. <G>

<Rumor> Mike and I get along great, fortunately. And we like working together. I like it when he pushes me to excel, and I hope I do the same to him.

SS- Alright. But I'm sure you're writing will be just as important and I know just about everyone enjoys your writing right along with Mike's.

SS- In your writing, what do you feel is the most important to describe to the reader and why?

<Rumor> Characters.

<Rumor> if the characters aren't there, if they aren't working for the reader, then the rest doesn't mean anything. It's the character that grounds you in the setting, that makes the details real, that makes the jokes funny. Without characters, all you have is a sourcebook.

SS- When you envision/create your characters to write about, do you use MW3rd, MW2nd, or do you use your imagination.

<Rumor> I try to portray characters as people first, and stats a far second. The RPGs are terrific when you need dice, but when I'm trying to make people believe in a character, they get in the way. Life rarely fits along a bell curve.

SS- what's to become of the Free Worlds League? Are there going to be any stories in the near future about them?

<Rumor> Actually, we've been dropping some hints for years. As to what will happen, and when it will happen, that of course has to remain a secret. May you live in interesting times.

SS- Do you play out your battle scenes via BattleTech, or are they written more for story pleasure than the random luck that can occur in the game?

<Rumor> I sometimes use a map sheet and Mechs to keep it all straight in my head, but I rarely roll it out. In the short amount of space I have, there are things I need to accomplish and the faster I get to them usually the better. I try not to do anything that isn't at least possible in the board game, or at least theoretically sound. But if it's a choice between (what I hope is) engaging fiction and following the rules, the rules lose every time.

SS- what do you think of the WizKids buy-out?

<Rumor> I've made my feelings fairly clear on this, so I don't mind repeating them. First of all, it's not really a buy out. FASA was dying. It was a matter of struggling along and hoping for a miracle drug, or pulling the plug and letting go with -some- dignity. That WizKids was in the position to purchase the properties I think is a great thing overall. Jordan Weisman created BattleTech, and that he has his hands back in the universe cannot be a bad thing. WizKids is also well funded. That means a much better chance at long-term stability.

SS- If BattleTech should switch to the "click-tech", would you still support the game?

<Rumor> Of course. BattleTech was never about the game system to me. It was a rich universe full of battle and politics and great characters. That's what brought me in and kept me coming back. So long as we are keeping that (and why wouldn't we) I'm here. Also, I like the click-tech system as seen in Mage Knight, but again that's beside the point. If the mechanics were pared down to a coin-toss, I'd stay and write fiction so long as people were reading it. It's all about the 'story.'

SS- What do you think about the 'Mechs from MW4/MW2?

<Rumor> Ermmm.... I think that the cheap availability of Clan-level technology has always bothered me, but other than that, they look fairly cool. Fortunately I'm only a semi-purist. I know what -I- like, but I can also roll with what I'm given.

SS- What do you think about the PC game, Mechwarrior 4?

<Rumor> I think it's an incredible engine with an engaging story wrapped around it. Truly, the authors should be given some kind of award. Especially the guy who wrote all that great dialogue and scripted most of the movie scenes. Art. Pure art.

I think it was a lot of fun to work on it, and I hope to actually play it some time.

SS- How do you go about assigning names to characters? I know several people who would jump at the chance to be a character in a novel! (Heck, I had a guy ask if authors would auction off chances to have their name included in a book)

Actually, I have run some character auctions for charity in the past, taking up the idea that Mike had started. But other than those few, I create names in many ways. Pull them from the phone book or the backend of movie credits. Out of thin air. Or I look up words that describe the idea of the character and translate them into another language.

Marcus GioAvanti was named after a football player and a brand of small refrigerator. I liked the sound of the name Aris Sung got his first name from the House Liao book, and his last because it sounded properly Capellan. Michael Searcy is my nephew. Ty Wu Non is a play on words. But still sounded Capellan. Just to name a couple.

SS- If you could write with another BattleTech author, who would it be and why?

<Rumor> Other than Mike Stackpole? Ah, I won't count him since I kind of have written with Mike in the past. We coordinated a great deal of material between Prince of Havoc and the Capellan Solution, and with Mike's wonderful input I had a blast with Patriots and Tyrants.

So I guess that would be Randall Bills. Randall and I work well together. We approach stories in much the same way. I think we'd make a good team. The only problem is if we could stop talking long enough to write a chapter.

SS- Have a little open-ended section were basically you can say anything you want.

<Rumor> Well, I know I've made some people a touch angry lately because I have (rather vocally) supported WizKids as they take over BattleTech. To the point that I've suggested they simply stop the complaining because a) it's not doing any good, and b) it's not their property to make such decisions or threats. And it's not mine. We're all guests in the BattleTech universe. I've had a good stay. I hope to continue on in whatever form the universe takes. If others have too, that's great. So let's trust the owners/developers/writers to keep doing the best job they can and see where it goes. If you need the door, it's there. And it will let you back in anytime you want to come back.

More Notes on Terrain-making

I'm not going to attempt to re-write Maciej Marciniak's excellent article on terrain making (available on The Dropship's site), as he's covered the main points very well. All I intend to do here is toss a couple more ideas into the ring, as well as add my own points for making other stuff to go on that terrain.

First item to cover is how to make hills. There are two methods, topographical or natural: topographical means that hills are a stepped-affair, with each elevation stage being a distinct step up from the lower. This makes questions about partial-cover, blind spots, and aim easy to figure out, but doesn't look lifelike at all. Also in the plus-category, hills can be constructed separate from the main-part of the board and placed wherever you choose.

Natural hills look right, as they go in a gradual slope to the crest of a hill, or sharply in the case of a drop-off. This type of terrain keeps questions about slope, and whether a vehicle could cover the climb, pretty easy to figure out. Line-of-sight questions are handled by using a long ruler, to see just how much of a target 'Mech or vehicle can be seen. Plus, little features like folds, arroyo's (deep, dry washes), gullies and such, are easily added. Hills of the natural type can also be separate from the base, but those you run a bit more risk of denting or damaging the hills.

Whichever you go with, remember that shaping the material is going to be somewhat messy. A hot-wire knife is the best tool to use for shaping foam, but they can be a touch expensive, so the alternate is to use a craft-knife (like X-Acto) blade that's as sharp as possible. For escarpments, cliffs, and sharp drop-offs, you can use a solvent to shape the foam (liquid glues like Tenax or Testors are best, although if carefully used pure acetone will really melt the foam). Alternately, you can mark a line on the foam with a pencil,

place the foam over the edge of a table at that line, and simply break it off. That uses the normal cells of the foam to achieve a natural-looking surface on an established line.

Small features can be created from leftover scraps of foam, shaped to the size you want, then sealed using dry-wall putty. This seals the foam well, keeps it from being damaged, and takes paint lots better than the bare foam does. One item that far too many games don't make available, although the rules do cover them, are prepared fighting positions. What these amount to, are a deep slot dug into the ground for a vehicle to park into. The dirt is piled onto the front and sides of the position for a protective berm, leaving just the vehicle's turret visible for firing while protecting the rest. This can be shaped from foam, sealed and painted like fresh dirt, then set aside to be added if your game allows you time to dig a fighting position. Shape that like a squared-off "U", keep 'dirt' piled on the three sides of the "U", and this can be placed on the board where you desire. One trick is to shape the foam piece, then glue it onto a piece of very thin plastic sheet, to help keep it's shape. Only thing to remember here is that CA (cyano-acrylate or super-glue) melts foam like crazy, so keep its use limited as possible.

Swamps and small pools (tanks, here out West) can be done in two ways: made onto a plastic piece, or worked into the surface of your ground-board. Having them into the surface looks best, but that means that it's a fixed item, you can't move it other than to move the entire hex-piece of that base-board. Making it onto a piece of plastic doesn't look as realistic, but that does keep it very flexible for placement.

The same thing applies to rough areas, or rubble, those can be worked into the surface or kept on plastic bases. Rough areas can be made by taking a scrap of foam and tearing one surface away, leaving it very rough in appearance. Paint it in various stone colors, and there's an area that's going to give vehicles and non jump-capable 'Mechs fits. Alternately, get varying grades of talus (rock debris) used in model railroading, and glue that to the plastic or your ground. It comes already done in natural colors, so choose accordingly.

Rivers almost need to be worked into the surface of your main ground board, as most are lower than the surrounding ground level. You can simulate a river using blue paper or plastic, but that looks goofy and can be blown out of position by a simple sneeze; better to have hexes with a river worked into it. That way an escarpment for faster-running rivers can be added, in keeping with how the water will wear away the banks.

Trees make for an opportunity to really stretch your ability. You can buy pre-made trees for railroading stuff, but those give you limited choices and can be rather expensive. If you're going that route, stick to "HO" or "Z" gauge materials. If you want to make your own, that simply takes a little preparation, and you can pound out a fair number in a short time.

Take a wooden toothpick (round ones are best), snap it in half, then coat the pointed end for a quarter-inch with CA, then stick small pieces of 'ground-loam' to the glue. 'Ground-loam' is basically small pieces of green sponge-foam that has been ground into even smaller pieces; this can be used for small bushes by itself, or stuck to something for larger plants. The one problem with making trees this way is that CA will partially dissolve the stuff, making for a sticky green mess.... Don't get it onto your fingers, or you'll look like you have moss growing on your skin....

After you have several pieces stuck to the toothpick, set the tree aside until the CA sets (10-15 minutes). Make several dozen at once, so you have a fair supply for various features. Take a small cup and mix white glue (Elmer's) and water, about 50-50, and then use an old brush to saturate the foam bits stuck to the toothpick. Once the foam is totally saturated, set that tree aside in a stand for overnight, so that the glue can dry. A piece of cardboard with small holes poked into it makes a perfect drying stand.

Once the glue has dried completely, you'll have a nice, random-looking bunch of green on the end of the toothpick. The glue will dry quite hard, so handling the tree won't really be a problem. Simply touch up the exposed wood areas to resemble a tree more, and green for the foliage, then seal with Dull-cote. Smaller sized trees can also be used on a miniature's base for appearance stuff, as well as smaller pieces of your talus for boulders.

For placing the trees, there are two approaches to this as well. The first and simplest is to poke small holes into your ground-pieces, set the tree into the hole for sizing, then use CA to set the tree into the ground. This looks best, but you have to protect the trees while the piece is in storage. Plus, for gaming purposes, those trees are a permanent part of your board, you can't conduct clearing fire to remove a forest area. To handle that, mount the trees onto pieces of plastic for bases, so that they can be stored separately, or removed if the game-play calls for that. I prefer the latter method, using plastic bases about the same size as the mini-bases, so that they can be shaped as desired.

Grass is easily handled, by spreading your glue/water mix onto the ground piece and then sprinkling with 'grass' used in railroading. Once that dries, touch up any exposed foam areas with paint, seal the whole thing with Dull-cote, and you're all done.

Buildings, bridges, and other manmade details are best made separate from the ground. 1), they allow a more flexible approach to setting-up the game area, so that you can recreate a given city/town, or a design your own, and 2), they can be replaced if weapons-fire destroys the given item. This is especially important for bridges, as they create a bit of a tactical bottleneck for non jump-capable units, forcing them to use that bridge for crossing gullies and rivers. Thus, if you wish to destroy that bridge, once the artillery fire has done so, replace it with a model of a destroyed bridge, and keep playing.

You can make your own buildings and bridges, which is my preference, or you can buy pre-made items for model railroading. Once again you'll need to use HO or Z-gauge pieces, as those are the right scale for use with Battletech miniatures. For appearances sake, I make two versions of the same building, one normal, and the other bombed-out.

Simply paint each appropriately for the situation, and away you go.

Roads are another item that can either be painted directly onto the ground surface, or done on plastic sections. Again I prefer the latter, allowing a much more flexible approach to my table layout, plus if I wish to destroy a stretch of road I can do so, replacing those road sections with appropriately painted craters and rubble.

How much time and money you spend on all of this is totally in your control. Buying a lot of pre-made stuff used in model railroading will save you a lot of time and effort, but that tends to add-up in cost real fast. On the other hand, making stuff yourself takes longer and makes you use your imagination and problem-solving skills, but costs much less. Needless to say, that latter method is what I find the most enjoyable, as that's part of the whole fun of this hobby in the first place.

I'll be adding to this article in the future, plus possibly making it a regular feature on my site, so if you have suggestions of your own that you find work well for you, be sure to e-mail those to me and I'll add 'em in.

Have Fun!!

The Ogre

Strategy Session: The Art of Retreat

By Ross Koga

There comes a time in one's life when one is forced to take leave of the battlefield due to his inferior forces or the enemies sheer luck. One must not look at this as a bonafide butt whipping, but a tactical maneuver to save face and machines. There is only so much an outnumbered and out gunned force can do in the face of superior numbers and superior firepower. When one find's him self in such a situation, there are at least three courses of action that can be taken:

- Hopeless Battle
- Panicked Flight
- Orderly Withdraw

The "hopeless battle," or the suicide drive, is a maneuver employed when pilots realize that they are cut off from their main forces, buying time for allies in retreat, or fearful for their life AFTER the engagement. These three motives can, in effect, propel the 'Mechwarrior to feats of uncommon valor and heroism. The other day in a game I had with girlfriend, I found my forces on the bad end of a deal due to her sheer luck (head shot to my *Dire Wolf* from her *Warhawk*) I decided that the *Warhawk* had to die for it's arrogance and broke the Clan honor rules for a killing shot. Two of her Omni's at the back of my *Nova Cat* opened up, doing massive damage. It was at this time that I decided to retreat. The problem was my two lighter machines (*Vapor Eagle/Goshawk* and *Incubus/Vixen*) were a lot faster than the *Nova Cat*. Her *Mad Cat* and *Puma* were substantially faster than the *Nova Cat* as well, and quickly ate up the distance. Here is where I decided to hold up their advance with the *Nova Cat*. He had no chance of

escaping and as such, decided to sell him self out. The *Mad Cat* moved first, so I charged it. The *Nova Cat* managed to run into the *Mad Cat*, but in the event, the *Nova Cat* fell down, while the *Mad Cat* remained up. Her *Stooping Hawk* let loose with everything, savaging the *Nova Cat* and destroying it. This final act of defiance bought time to let the lighter machines escape. The *Nova Cat* had no chance of escaping the faster machines. The only problem with this “maneuver” is the fact that you WILL die. No questions asked, unless you manage to hit three ‘Mechs in the head. Your opponent will remember you faintly as a “heroic, but stupid” warrior and leave it at that. Now, here’s the next form of fleeing.

The Panicked Flight retreat mode is one that is in use though-out the Inner Sphere and on Tukiyyid by the Clans. In this form of retreat, your warriors do an about face and move at the fastest possible speed towards the rear. Main problem here is if a superior foe keeps his wits about him and picks you off from behind or even advances and takes ground. If you are in a campaign and keeping ground is vital, you are effectively screwed. I do not recommend this mode of flight, as there is too much chaos and getting over run is a real possibility.

The finale mode is the most desirable, the Orderly Retreat. I had this one set up in my game with my girlfriend: the *Vixen* and *Goshawk* had stopped and were providing cover fire for the retreating *Nova Cat*. In the Orderly Withdraw, you tend to leap-frog your command so to provide more damage to the enemy and deter him from following you. The art here is to try and not get over run. If you are over run while attempting an Orderly Withdraw, it will quickly turn into a combination of the first two retreating tactics. You must blunt your enemy with accurate weapons fire, something that can be iffy at best in BattleTech. To end my battle story, my girlfriend’s *Stooping Hawk* Prime got a headshot with a critical roll to my *Vixen*. She took out my sensors and life-support system, of course. After the second brush with death, I decided it was time to bug out, Orderly Withdraw non-withstanding. I did an about face with the *Vixen* and *Goshawk* and charged the *Nova Cat*. Such are the ways of battle.

Wes’ Take on Future BattleTech

(Please note humor!)

(This is NOT what is going to happen; take this with a grain of salt, even a whole salt lick if you will! Just take it for the joke it is!! ☺)

Thank you for purchasing BattleTech Super-Duper Rules. Please read book cover to cover before starting game. You already started, didn’t you? Well fine then.

To begin play, setup pieces on ply-fiberboard constructed of 71/100-inch ply-fiberboard. If ply-fiberboard is not available, then please just stop reading now, as you are wasting your time. Place pieces on board one either side of playing area.

The term initiative is no longer used. To determine who-goes-first-ness, roll seven five and a half sided dice. Dived that sum by the weight class of your Mech, multiply by number of Mechs on each side, and subtract, oh, lets say six from the total. The highest number goes first, unless it is a leap year, in which case the highest number goes last, unless it is a Friday, in which case the person with the ugliest haircut goes last.

Movement is determined by the following easy equation:

(Movement points) * (Final initiative <see above>)/(The current time/ The number of letters in the person with the ugliest haircut's name)

Once moved, the players then determine damage. To figure whether a weapons hit or not, both opponents use rock paper scissors to determine who roles first. The winner roles 8D73 and subtracts movement <see above>. If number exceeds the number of times some has commented on the person with the worst hair in reference to their mother and a bag of potato chips, then the weapon hits, unless on odd number dates, in which case both players hop on one foot and yell," I SEE PARIS, I SEE FRANCE, I SEE (insert opponents name) UNDERPANTS!" in their worst French accent. Last person standing wins decision.

After determining hits, resolve damage as such:

Apply

Yell," Take that, you ugly, dirt-for-brains heathen!"

Rinse

Repeat

Please by more of our fine products-
(AerocCrap 4 2/3 and CitySpit)

Wes "William Avon" Williams

'Mech of the Month

Here's a custom I cooked up last year. I had Ogre do up a custom mini as well. Enjoy!

Type/Model:	Dire Wolf (Daishi) X
Tech:	Clan / 3050
Config:	Biped OmniMech
Rules:	Level 2, Standard design
Mass:	100 tons
Chassis:	Standard
Power Plant:	300 XL Fusion
Walking Speed:	32.4 km/h
Maximum Speed:	54.0 km/h
Jump Jets:	None
Jump Capacity:	0 meters
Armor Type:	Standard

Armament:

- 2 Gauss Rifles
- 2 ER PPCs
- 3 Medium Pulse Lasers

1 ER Small Laser
Manufacturer: (Unknown)
Location: (Unknown)
Communications System: (Unknown)
Targeting & Tracking System: (Unknown)

Variants:

A new Clan Coyote variant, the Dire Wolf X models a prototype Devestator that was unearthed in a Brian Cache. The weapons configuration



has been updated with Clan-Tech, allowing for medium pulse lasers and more heat sinks to be added. The design is capable of laying down a barrage of fire that can dismantle the toughest of opponents. Coyote techs are working on another variant that mounts a TC, but it is unclear when that will be finished.

Mini painted and decaled by Ross Koga;
 modifications by Tim "The Ogre" Watson

Type/Model:		Dire Wolf (Daishi) X	
Mass:	100 tons		
Equipment:		Crits	Mass
Internal Structure:	152 pts Standard	0	10.00
Engine:	300 XL	10	9.50
Walking MP:	3		
Running MP:	5		
Jumping MP:	0		
Heat Sinks:	19 Double [38] (Heat Sink Loc: 3 LT, 3 RT, 1 LL)	14	9.00
Gyro:		4	3.00
Cockpit, Life Support, Sensors:		5	3.00
Actuators:	L: Sh+UA, R: Sh+UA	12	.00
Armor Factor:	304 pts Standard	0	19.00

	Internal Structure	Armor Value
Head:	3	9
Center Torso:	31	47
Center Torso (Rear):		14
L/R Side Torso:	21	32/32
L/R Side Torso (Rear):		10/10
L/R Arm:	17	34/34
L/R Leg:	21	41/41

Weapons & Equipment:	Loc	Heat	Ammo	Crits	Mass
1 Gauss Rifle (Ammo Loc: 2 LA, 2 RA)	RA	1	32	10	16.00
1 Gauss Rifle	LA	1		6	12.00
1 ER PPC	RT	15		2	6.00
1 Medium Pulse Laser	RT	4		1	2.00
1 ER PPC	LT	15		2	6.00
1 Medium Pulse Laser	LT	4		1	2.00
1 Medium Pulse Laser	CT	4		1	2.00
1 ER Small Laser	HD(R)	2		1	.50
TOTALS:		46		69	100.00
Crits & Tons Left:				9	.00

Calculated Factors:

Total Cost:	28,888,124 C-Bills
Battle Value:	2,784
Cost per BV:	10,376.48
Weapon Value:	6,161 / 6,161 (Ratio = 2.21 / 2.21)
Damage Factors:	SRDmg = 65; MRDmg = 49; LRDmg = 26
BattleForce2:	MP: 3, Armor/Structure: 8/6
	Damage PB/M/L: 9/8/5, Overheat: 1
	Class: MA, Point Value: 28
	Specials: omni

Created with HeavyMetal Pro

Urban Wrecker

By Ross Koga

Mechwarrior John glanced at his counter located inside the nerohelmet for the 4th time in five minutes. The clock slowly counted down to the beginning of the trial. A trial which he had no part in creating but had been submitted to end. The timer reached it's final destination of 00:00:00 and John immediately powered up his *UrbanMech* IIC. He started his 'Mech down the street he had been facing, moving at the brisk pace of 54

kph, the *UrbanMech*'s top speed. The little 'Mech was an oddity amongst light 'Mechs: its top speed was the same as most assault class designs yet it only weighed in at 30 tons. The design was actually an improvement over the older *UrbanMech* that had accompanied the great Kerensky on the Exodus.

General Alexander Kerensky took the bulk of the old Star League Defense Force with him on a massive Exodus after defeating Aramis in the bloody control for the Star League. Fearful of power-hungry Council Lords and stripped of his power as defender of the Inner Sphere, Kerensky called all of his forces together to try and escape the bloody fighting that loomed on the horizon between the feuding House Lords. Over 60% of the SLDF left with Kerensky, traveling into unknown space. After settling in the Pentagon cluster, civil war broke out. Alexander Kerensky died and his son, Nicholas, called for a second Exodus. It was in this exodus that the Clans were born. A total society based on warfare, the Clans flourished for 200 years. Their genetically engineered warriors dominated the battlefield and their superior technology dominated known space. John's Clan, Clan Coyote, was once on the forefront of Clan politics, space, and military. Years of being worn down by Crusader factions had left the Clan in shambles and only Khan Sullivan Koga's reforms had helped stem the tide of battle.

The Crusaders, the label for the political faction that believed that the Clans should return to the Inner Sphere, were generally fanatical in their beliefs and had taken their frustrations out on the Coyotes before the Invasion. The Coyotes and Clan Wolf had managed to block several votes to invade and the Coyotes bore the brunt of frustration. The Coyotes, one of the premiere Warden Clans, believed that the Clans should protect the Inner Sphere from outside influences. This was the base of their friction with a good number of the other Clans. Even today's trial stemmed from the Crusader/Warden conflict.

John's Star Commander, Rick, had challenged the Star Colonel Dakari Topol, of all people, to a Trial of Grievance over some of the unit postings that he had been trying to enforce on certain warriors in his command that expressed Warden views. That was why they were here today, as Point Commander Rick's bid had been himself in his 30 ton *Incubus*, the two *Ares Medium Tanks* of Howler point, and John in his *UrbanMech* IIC. The Star Colonel had chosen his *Canis* and a Star Commander from Charlie Trinary in his *Locust* IIC. The forces seemed fairly even, although the Star Colonel's *Canis* could rip his "walking trash-can" to pieces. Even Rick's *Incubus* couldn't withstand a prolonged encounter with the 80-ton monster. The tanks might be able to hold a spot for a few seconds against the *Canis*, but they too would succumb to its massive firepower. Rick selected this city area because he had trained the entire star in urban combat, but Rick had not bid Michael or Mark into the Trial, leaving their *UrbanMech* IIC's out of the contest. *He might have cut it too close this time*, John thought as Tanker Roberts in Howler 2 yelled into the COM System.

"Star Colonel's buddy just came down the street towards me, engaging," Roberts shouted into the system, as the sound of long-range missiles igniting blared out anything else he might have said.

"Freebirth," Rick mumbled into the radio. "John, keep moving down 8th Street. I think I caught a glimpse of the *Canis* on MAG scan. If I did, he will be turning the corner in a couple of seconds. Rick out."

“Aff,” was John’s simple reply. He guided the *UrbanMech* IIC along with Howler 1, Tanker Bobby’s *Ares* Medium Tank. John glanced down 8th street, the street he was traveling down. He switched to Magnetic Anomaly Detector mode, switching his view screen to pick up large masses of metal and walking nuclear reactors. The metal in the buildings didn’t help, but through a corner store about 360 meters away, John caught movement and his sensors screamed out at him. He angled the *UrbanMech* IIC behind a building, removing the line of sight to the massive *Canis*. Howler 1, though stood it’s ground.

“Fire for effect!” Tanker Bobby roared into the communications network. The turret mounted large laser sent a blast of coherent light towards the big ‘Mech, but it missed by only a few meters, melting ferro-crete. The forty ton tank’s missile bays irrupted in flames as twenty-five warheads darted up the street. Both launchers connected with the assault ‘Mech, destroying armor all over it. The ‘Mechs response was to raise it’s right arm and fire back at the tank with the two extended range large lasers housed there. The hellish energy splashed across the front of the tank while some splashed the street. The tanks armor held.

“Umm... Moon Chaser, this is Howler 2, over,” Tanker Roberts said calmly into the COM system.

“Yes, Moon Chaser here, over,” Rick said from the cockpit of his *Incubus*.

“We’ve got a problem here. Main turret is jammed to hell. Melted armor ran over the mechanisms and froze it up, over,” Roberts said in a level voice.

If Rick had been offended by the contractions, he didn’t show it. The line was dead for a second, and then his voice came over in a commanding tone, “Alright. Proceed with the plan then.”

“The Plan”, John thought, almost laughing out loud. The plan was to try and box in the Star Colonel and deal with the little *Locust* IIC later. Yet even now, the Star Colonel had backed his *Canis* up from the corner after taking armor damage from Howler 1. The tank kept moving down the street, waiting for the assault ‘Mech to reveal itself. The Star Colonel wasn’t about to give the tank its wish, even though the *Canis* could probably take out the small tank in the next engagement.

“Heads up!” yelled Bobby from Howler 1, “The Locust just crossed me up at the intersection. Robert, take a shot!”

“Hold on, trying to get into position,” Richard mumbled more to himself than to anyone listening.

John noticed the icon for the Locust dart behind two buildings and then started heading down side street. *I think I can make that*, John thought as he did some quick mental calculations in his head and then mashed down to the two foot peddles, sending super-heated plasma through special exhaust ports on the rear of his ‘Mech, known as jump jets. The little *UrbanMech* IIC lifted off the ground and cleared the first building, coming down in an alley section. The *Locust* IIC drifted right before his crosshairs, turning to meet an unseen enemy from where he had come. John triggered his Ultra autocannon, spitting shells in the direction of the smaller ‘Mech. Only one burst of the deadly, armor piercing shells connected with the *Locust* IIC, blasting one hundred percent of the armor of the right leg. John cursed the jump, which had helped him miss the shot. He expected the ‘Mech to turn on him, but it fired at it’s unseen antagonist, it’s extended large laser lancing out. This was followed by a tremendous explosion that broke the glass

windows of the department store John's 'Mech was standing next to. The glass fell to the ferro-crete below, shattering into even smaller pieces and showering the startled on lookers who had been standing outside when John jumped in.

Just as the laser finished destroying its target, a wave of missiles and laser fire caught the little 'Mech in the torso. The anti-armor warheads dug into the armor, blasting it off while the laser beam boiled armor off the right side of the 'Mech. To add to this, three laser beams raced into the rear of the 'Mech. One of the hellish beams of energy missed, striking the side of the nearest building, a large industry center. That section burned, throwing smoke into the already dark air. The other beam hit the rear torso of the Locust, followed by micro pulses of a larger weapon. That weapon cored through the torso, destroying internal structure and equipment. The *Locust* shuddered, falling to the ground in heap of high technology rubble.

John hesitated for a second; trying to figure out where the laser beams to the rear of the stricken Locust IIc had come from. Glancing at his HUD, he noticed the icon for Star Commander Rick's *Incubus* loitering down the street from the burned out carcass of destroyed battle equipment. The *Incubus* only paused for a second longer and turned back up the street from which it had come, accelerating rapidly to its amazing sprinting speed of 145 kph. John shook his head; *I wish I could get one of those speed demons.* The *UrbanMech* IIc and *Incubus* were the same tonnage, but the difference in engines gave the *Incubus* an incredible top speed, one of the fastest known to 'Mechs. John was shocked out of his daydream by Rick's steely voice as it filtered though the channel.

"John, I need you to jump over here to the downtown section. Keep to the roofs. I have a fix on the Star Colonel and Howler is trying to box him in. Just head north and try to get on these skyscrapers. Howler 2's fuel tank ruptured and the crew was killed. We need to back that *Canis* up somewhere so we can pummel it. Move out!"

John looked across the street at the taller building. Easy, he reassured him self. No thought was given to the crew of Howler two as he again stomped down on the foot pedals, igniting his jump jets and sending him up into the sky.

Editorial of the Month: News from around the Net

I decided to run a small editorial to get a few things noticed. There were two things that stuck out during the month of May to me besides graduation from High School. One started in IRC and the other was a long string of messages posted on Patrick's BattleTech



Archive that got me thinking about painting in general. I'll start with the IRC topic first.

A couple of weeks ago, a man hailing from Germany came into the channel with a brainstorm, not just a small spring shower, but a gigantic, Oklahoma-sized thunderstorm. Living in Germany, he had been witness to the starvation of at least 4500 kids in Berlin; most going on 4-5 meals a week, with one being warm.

A local pastor has set up a program to provide food to them, but 4-5 meals a week is the best he can do. My friend's idea was this: take at least thirty old miniatures (Unseen and BattleRoids), have painters on #painters_guild (irc.jurai.org [6667]) paint them up nice, and sell them on e-bay. All proceeds would go to the church in Germany to help feed some of the children there. The rarity of the miniatures alone would fetch twenty-five to thirty-five US dollars. Of course some, like ones painted by Sal Crump, would probably go for forty or fifty; that's just an added bonus! This is all for a good cause, and when the auctions go up, I'll be sure to inform everyone so you'll have a chance to look at, and hopefully, bid on them! These should all be quality paint jobs and quality works of art. As I once heard, it will help give gamers a better reputation, even if to a small group of people.

The other topic of interest was the large discussion over master painters that occurred mid-May on Patrick's BattleTech Archive Forums. Half Stack visited the 'Mechyard, home of Jeannette's 'Mechyards and Joe Frazier's painting shop. The whole situation was blown out of hand through various posts to point of a flame war over who was better: Joe or Ron Smith of Archer's Miniatures. Even in the heat of flames, each participant made clinical analysis for and against both painters, and even Sal Crump and Piggy were brought into the fray. And what's the point to all of this? Besides the fact that we established that everyone in the discussion couldn't hope to paint as well as the people we were mentioning, it was nice to hear some good discussion on miniature painting. Sometimes it seems that there is no discussion on miniatures and although this one was rather heated, people were able to see the quality and craftsmanship of miniature painters being examined and debated. I would love to see more debate on miniatures, casting, painting, and so on, but with these uncertain times, I'm not sure what will happen. Let's hope for the best and brace for the worst. Have a great summer as well!

Ross Koga
Solaris
Sentinel
Editor and
Publisher

