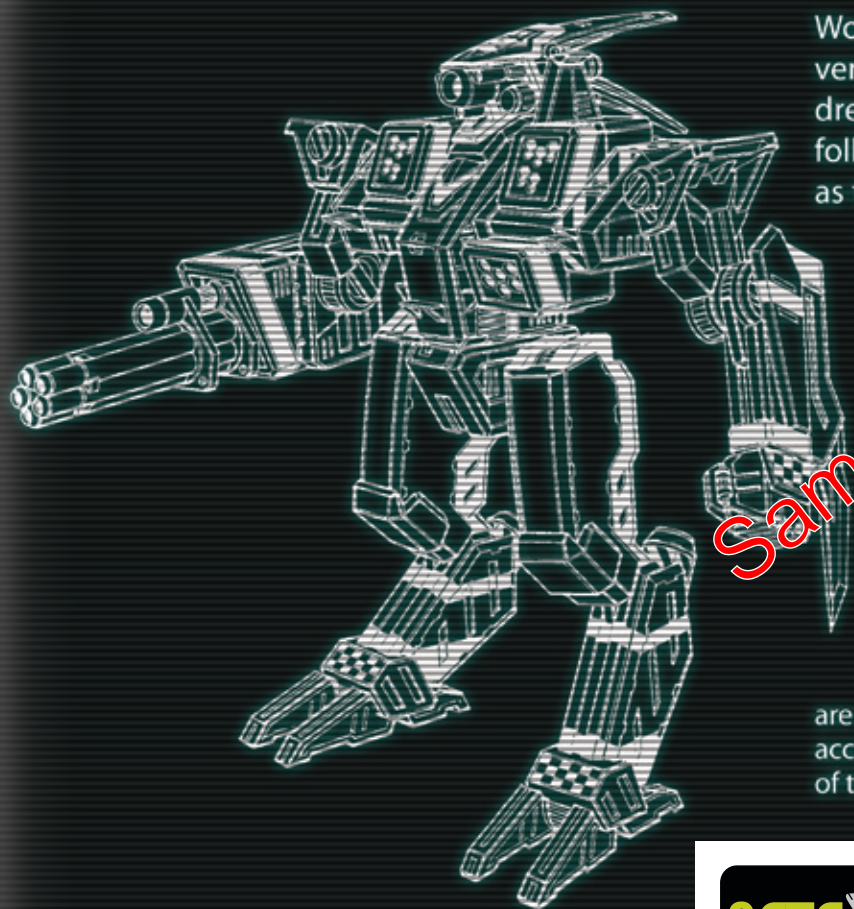


# THE JIHAD



In November 3067 the Second Star League disbanded. The Word of Blake—a splinter group of ComStar—had been on the verge of joining in fulfillment of ancient prophecies. Denied their dream, the Blakists sought to preserve the Star League against the follies of the Houses, but its fanaticism manifested this noble goal as the Jihad: a horrific war that has pitted every faction against each other and even themselves. Against such an anvil, new cutting edge machines of war are marched into the fire. The discovery of an ancient Hegemony Memory Core graphically showcases the definition of the conflict, as primitive 'Mechs not seen on a battlefield since the dawn of 'Mech production over a half millennia ago once again appear.

*BattleTech Technical Readout: 3075* provides a comprehensive look at the latest machines of war debuting during the Jihad: from 'Mechs to battle armor, Support Vehicles to DropShips and more. In addition, a complete "Age of War" section covers the Terran Hegemony and each of the five Great Houses during the Age of War, including the very first BattleMechs produced by each faction and how such machines are starting to appear once more. Each military vehicle is illustrated in detail, accompanied by a description of its history, capabilities, game stats, and some of the unit's most famous pilots.

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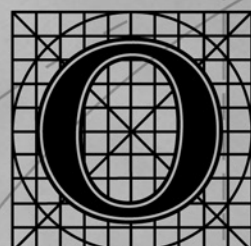
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# TECHNICAL READOUT:™





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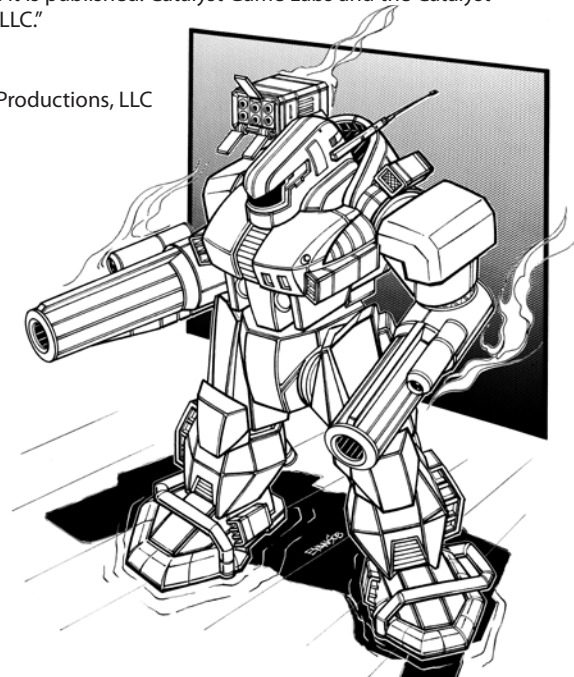
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# INTRODUCTION

INCOMING  
MESSAGE

SEND

SAVE

CANCEL

DELETE

Indolent. Decadent. Corpulent. Gluttonous. Ignominious.

These are but a few of the descriptions splashed with disdain upon my name. That the blood of the Dragon flows in my veins—while my person seems so stained—has shamed many for long, long years. Yet there is irony, *so ka*. Irony in the very fabric of my existence.

Wheels within wheels within wheels. A perfect, never-ending symmetry of lines, circles, and whorls undulating across the Inner Sphere in a skein few see and fewer comprehend. Not even the legendary *cha-no-yu* (and the perfection of that ceremony's garden) performed by the greatest tea master of the last century—Jiro Ishiyama—on Echo V might compare. Like the lost treasure of Jiro and his craft, I have spent a lifetime honing my skills. Dissembling. Obfuscating. Falsifying. Most assume the media or my enemies branded me "Uncle Chandy," yet the decades-old moniker comes from my own hand. After all, one can never suspect the Smiling Buddha.

There are legion that practice this same craft, from astute businessman to the blackest SpecOps teams of the Houses' intelligence agencies. Yet mine is a craft not of my own hand, but an apparatus gifted to me as a matriarchal legacy of blood across generations. Backed by unlimited funds and beholden to no one but my own Honor to the Dragon, I am ensconced in a rather unique position.

Yet, even now, long committed to this course of action, revealing my hand is anathema. Painful. What should have taken mere moments has consumed days as I struggle to overcome my obsession with standing in the shadows and emerge to the light.

But now it begins.

For long years I have hunted secrets in the dark. I have derived much enjoyment from puzzling over ancient mysteries and discovering vanished tomes and treasures. Yet I have always striven to protect the Dragon. Even as the Federated Commonwealth was riven with civil war, I doubted the authenticity of the Word of Blake. I saw how they practiced my own precious art of subterfuge, and I re-allocated vast resources to discovering their Truths. As the Word had begun to unfold, I was forced to stand idle, my knowledge unused. Knowing that any stolen details I provided, even to the Dragon, would expose inroads made against the Blakists. Infiltrations would be found and exterminated, a decade's work lost. Even with the crown of the Combine embattled and falling, my hands were tied. Many will decry my actions, branding me a traitor worse than any usurping Von Rohrs. Yet I stayed the course, delving ever deeper to discover the secrets behind the Word of Blake.

I have discovered and verified those secrets. The location of one of their Hidden Worlds. And more. Much more.

With such power in hand it is time to step forward. Time to entrust the power of those secrets to those who will use them with brutal efficacy, while I continue my own clandestine campaign. To accompany those Blake Documents, I am providing a comprehensive document in the traditional Wolfnet (and ComStar before them) technical specification readout format. The *Cutting Edge* section documents the latest machines of war marching off Inner Sphere and Clan assembly lines, while the *Age of War* section details information discovered within the Hegemony Memory Core and the current rise of those designs following its comprehensive and rapid dissemination in the early years of the Jihad.

May fate smile upon all of us as we strive against the Word of Blake. As I stand in the light, eyes adjusting to its harshness, I know that I have signed my own death warrant. And yet even one born to shadows knows *giri* and must stand against the darkness at the day of judgment.

Honor to the Dragon.

—Chandrasekhar Kurita  
31 January 3075

# INTRODUCTION

INCOMING  
MESSAGE

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## BATTLEMECHS: THE AESTHETIC EVOLUTION

For reasons only known to my master, Chandrasekhar Kurita has allowed inclusion in this document of a short dissertation concerning the evolution of BattleMech visual aesthetics, which is perhaps quite fitting in a document covering both the latest, cutting-edge BattleMech designs as well as the first, primitive designs from six hundred years ago. I've burned his ears into the early hours many a night with my fascination on the subject. Yet I hope to be brief and avoid passing to you, the reader, the burden that my master so easily bears. Keep in mind I am not referring to the development of technology, which is covered by a legion of experts and historians through endless text books and technical briefs, including this very document. Instead I refer to how the armor is shaped and the weapons placed: the 'Mech's appearance in its final form.

Vehicles most often embody the simplest, most effective way to mount armor upon a chassis. There is a balance at work, where bean counters seek the cheapest form of production while soldiers strive to maintain appropriate combat protection. There are some exotic examples, especially among the Clans, where the dominance of the warrior culture—especially seen in the slavish use of animalistic symbolism—has led to some unique vehicle armor configurations. Despite these exceptions, vehicles tend to fall into a rather straightforward template, which has been copied with only subtle variations across millennia.

BattleMechs, however, are an altogether different category, somewhat akin to those odd Clan vehicles. When the uninitiated refer to BattleMechs as “walking tanks,” they are missing the mark; no one who has stood at the foot of one of these titans ever employs such terminology. The sheer presence of a walking metal titan conjures subconscious, deeply embedded mythological (and cultural) symbols, imbuing the 'Mech with power well beyond its battlefield capabilities. Psychological warfare at its finest. The Inner Sphere's centuries-old culture that embraces the MechWarrior elite—strengthened by the dominance of hereditary nobilities in Sphere government—only enhances these aspects.

When BattleMechs first walked off Terra's Hegemony assembly lines, such thoughts were far from the minds of scientists and engineers. Compared to the latest crop of weapons, the first BattleMech, the *Mackie*, was ungainly, with disproportioned limbs, overly large feet, torso, and head. It also tended toward blocky and rounded lines; an extravagance of engineering for its time, but one that would vanish immediately as it failed to be cost effective. Such ungainliness, along with the almost simplistic armor configuration, completely reflected the concept of a walking tank—simple, direct, and ungainly. Just as the Mark I tank first rolled forth with ugly performance across the battlefield in 1916 on ancient Terra, mounting primitive technologies<sup>1</sup>, the *Mackie* took its first stumbling steps and changed warfare for ever.

As soon as additional prototype BattleMechs appeared, the curves and rounded lines gave way to blocky shapes and hard edges (once again the bean counters flexed their clout, as it proved too expensive to mass-produce rounded armor at the time). However, with the technology still in its infancy, many 'Mechs still sported disproportioned limbs. Though the “primitive stage” of BattleMech development would only last from 2439 to approximately 2520<sup>2</sup>, many “modern stage”<sup>3</sup> BattleMechs designed during this same time period or shortly thereafter sported the same lack of proportion. By 2500, however—whether through aesthetic dictate or maturing of design capabilities—most new designs eliminated that ungainly look. The *Victor* and *Dervish* are excellent examples of these early designs with their blocky, hard edges, yet proportionate limbs.

In the time of the Star League, a new aesthetic emerged. Harkening back to the era of the *Mackie*, the 'Mechs that would become the workhorses of the Star League Defense Force—and would later be sold to the House Lords—sported simplistic armor designs. What's more, advances in technology allowed for the mass production of curved, crystal-aligned steel armor. A few of these designs even embraced the disproportionate look, such as the *Thug* and *Crockett*. Some of the cutting-edge Star League designs, such as the *Night Hawk* and *Lynx*, would take the smooth curves to a new extreme while embracing a stylized armor aesthetic.