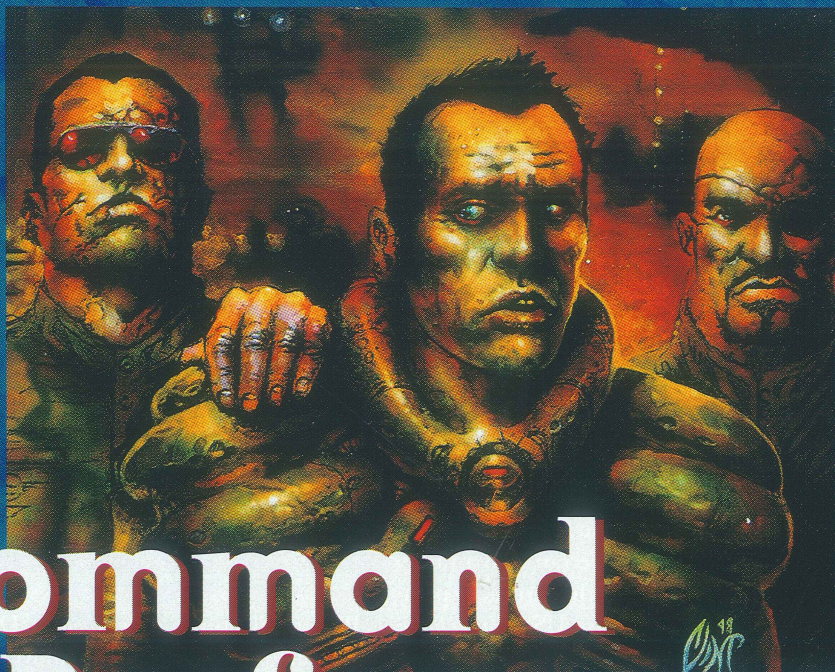


by Shawn F. Carnes



CLINT LANGLEY

Command Performance

BattleTech Gets a 'Mech-over in the Commander's Edition

Power up those nuke reactors, kids, because the *BattleTech: Commander's Edition* (BT:CE) set is headed your way. The hard-working folks at Wizards have put in some serious overtime to guarantee that this third edition of the basic set will knock your chrome-plated socks off. No consideration has been spared to revitalize the play value of one of the best trading card games around. Let's take an in-depth look at some of the amazing changes that await you in *Commander's Edition*.

One of the first things you'll notice about BT:CE once you open a deck (other than the cool new packaging) is that the layout of the cards has changed. Never fear—this change is a good thing. The look of the cards is much more streamlined, with all the game data found on the left edge of the card. In addition, each card type bears a new background, such as rusted metal for 'Mechs. The new layout allows commanders to quickly find the activation cost, house or clan affiliation, attack, armor, structure, and speed (if the card is a 'Mech or Vehicle). Also, several cards have new flavor text from some of the finest writers this side of the Periphery.

So what cards are included in *Commander's Edition*? For one thing, search all you want, but you'll find no

Effective Groundwork. What you will find, however, are cards selected from *Counterstrike*, *Mercenaries*, and *MechWarrior* that reflect the BattleTech universe up to the year 3058. Personalities who have, for lack of a better term, *died* are now gone. Other personalities have changed in subtle and not-so-subtle ways. The 'Mechs themselves have been updated, reflecting the influx of new technology into the Inner Sphere, as well as new developments within the Clans. Check out the new Imp, for example. The Big Man has now gotten even bigger.

As for tournament play, you can include the new 'Mechs along with the older versions. Remember that the new 'Mechs do not replace the older ones entirely, but rather should be considered updated versions that incorporate the newest technology the Clans and the Inner Sphere have to offer.

The action gets off to a rolling start with preconstructed starter decks that feature a number of fixed cards that enable new players to jump into the BattleTech universe feet first. There are eight factions to choose from: ComStar, Davion, Kurita, and Steiner for the Inner Sphere; and Smoke Jaguar, Jade Falcon, Ghost Bear, and Wolf for the Clans. Each deck has a theme specifically designed to maximize play potential for the deck, while not spilling all the secrets of