

20 Years of BattleTech

by Randall N. Bills

- An estimated twenty-five million people have played a BattleTech or MechWarrior game or read a BattleTech or MechWarrior novel since the property's inception in 1984.
- More than eleven million copies of MechWarrior PC games have been sold to date.
- The BattleTech/MechWarrior story line is one of the most successful science fiction lines ever created. More than seventy full-length BattleTech or MechWarrior novels have been published by Penguin Books and translated into more than fifteen languages.
- Over three hundred and fifty different BattleTech/MechWarrior game and toy products have been produced to date; several products, such as the Technical Readout series, the core rulebook and base box set, have been in continuous print (in on form or another) since publication.
- Ten million people have played the BattleTech/ MechWarrior virtual reality game.
- More than eleven million MechWarrior: Dark Age Collectable Miniatures Game figures are currently in play on tabletops all over the world.
- More than five thousand World Wide web pages have been created to date by the exceptionally loyal, vocal and well-connected BattleTech/MechWarrior community.

Magnificent!

In December 1986, after a month of trying to convince myself to spend the twenty dollars on the 2nd Edition box set (after all, when you're fifteen, that's a decent amount of money...at least it was for me), I finally caved in. At the time there were exactly ten products out and one novel with the BattleTech name on it (took me until 1992 to secure a copy of BattleDroids).

I've always had a great imagination. However, as Chad, Tony and I sat around that first day—Chad's *Warhammer* and my *BattleMaster* stood a few hexes away from each other blazing away, while Tony's *Marauder* took the opportunity to hit either one of us; we even did the heat wrong, applying all heat effects first and *then* subtracting heat sinks, until a much later conversation with Scott—I never could've imagined that list above. Or the fact that here I am, twenty years after the game first published and eighteen years after I first stripped off the shrink wrap, still enjoying watching where BattleTech/MechWarrior will go next; still enjoying playing; still enjoying reading the storylines in a universe that seems to have endless depths.

Of course I know I'm not alone; a single person can't keep a universe alive like this, after all. Instead, it is the community of BattleTech/MechWarrior which has kept it alive and growing for so long.

During 2004—the 20 Year Anniversary—I think it's great to look back across the distances we have come and realize that through thick and thin, BattleTech/MechWarrior has lived on. I look into the future and I see no reason why we cannot celebrate again in a decade's time. We have some wonderful products coming this year—not to mention 05 and beyond—and I could think of no more appropriate year for the launch of BattleCorps (the subscription-based, official source for Classic BattleTech fiction), then now; about time we get Classic BattleTech fiction rolling again!

Regardless of whether you picked up BattleDroids that first year, or are just now finding out what BattleTech/MechWarrior is all about. I welcome you to look back over the wonderful canvas created through thousands of illustrations and millions of words (not to mention toys, computer games and so on) and to look forward to more exciting products, captivating characters and fantastic adventures to come.

Seize the day!

(On this same page you'll notice several different versions of the 20 Year Anniversary logo. If you have a website, feel free to grab the logo which will fit your site and slap it on your main page. The more logos out there, the more people will be aware and the more excitement and interest we can generate across the board. With all your help, we can make this an unforgettable year for BattleTech/MechWarrior.)