

Classic BattleTech: A New Dawn

By Randall N. Bills

Twenty years.

Next year marks BattleTech's twentieth anniversary. As I sit contemplating that amazing fact, one question burns in my mind: how?

How could something that was supposed to be a one-off, beer-and-pretzels game possibly have survived so long; and not just survived, but gone on to such amazing heights and breadths? Sure, the game is a blast to play and let's not forget giant robots astride planets, bristling with lasers, autocannons and charged particle cannons tearing apart whole cities. But could it have survived and grown into what it has become with just those elements?

I, for one, don't believe so. From the very beginning BattleTech has had something else that sets it apart from just about every other game like it: fiction. Through sourcebooks and more than sixty novels, BattleTech has created a dynamic, changing universe that has kept players coming back to drink from the well for two decades.

Characters such as Takashi Kurita, Hanse Davion and Anastasius Focht. Perennial warriors like Justin Allard, Natasha and Ulric Kerensky, Phelan Kell and Kai Allard-Liao.

I could easily fill pages with more names. Names of incredible heroes, fantastic villains and always the human element that allows each of us to connect with these men and women—living, breathing characters who struggle in a distant universe to protect their homelands and families from harm. When we can connect so well with the characters we read about, how can we not be ensnared? Like favorite music that always resonates with power no matter if it's the first time or the thousandth time you listen to it, how can anyone not be so passionate about a fictional setting that does the same? More importantly, how can we not clamor for the next glimpse into a universe that at times feels only a paper's thickness away?

In 2001, with the passing of the torch that FASA held for so long to WizKids and the opening of a new chapter with MechWarrior: Dark Age, many believed that the days of fiction in the Classic BattleTech setting were past. Though FanPro LLC has done a fantastic job continuing the legacy of Classic BattleTech sourcebook, it simply is no substitute for the fiction we all thought gone for good.

Well, I'm ecstatic to say otherwise. Thanks to the hard working efforts of those involved in BattleCorps and the extreme willingness of WizKids to see this market filled once more, I'm extremely proud to introduce BattleCorps.com.

BattleCorps.com is a subscription-based website whose goal is to bring high quality fiction to the fans who've supported Classic BattleTech for so long. The stable of authors that BC will bring to the fans includes many of the names, such as Loren Coleman and Michael Stackpole, responsible for some of the most enjoyed and significant novels in the last decade. BattleTech has a heritage and tradition, and BattleCorps intends only to strengthen that fictional lineage.

BattleTech has always been a forward-moving universe, and that will remain true through BattleCorps. However, though this important element will continue to be developed, I'm extremely excited about another massive untapped potential.

BattleTech has one of the longest, most fully developed histories of any science fiction universe, filled with a million untold sagas. The enigmas of the Black Pearl, Snow Fire and Red Corsair. The empire building of Ian Cameron and Stefan Amaris. The tribulations of Aleksandr and Nicholas Kerensky. The horrific tragedy of Jinjiro Kurita and the Kentares IV massacre.

Hundreds of hidden secrets buried in the past. A hundred characters whose deeds have been chronicled, but whose passions, desires and human frailty have not been brought to light. Now is the time for the searing beam of an author's creative touch to reveal the depths of these legendary, almost mythical characters, pulling back the veil of years to reveal secrets left hidden for so long.

If that were not enough, BattleCorps is set to bring you more than just excellent fiction. The community is what has allowed BattleTech to flourish for so many years and BattleCorps is dedicated to strengthening those bonds between people. Private message boards and chat servers will allow fans and players alike to keep in contact and discuss the latest fictional developments. Additional content will include news, previews and interviews, giving readers a behind-the-scenes glimpse at how a fictional setting with the scope and magnitude of BattleTech continues to be developed. Finally, art has always been an essential element of BattleTech, and BattleCorps is committed to maintaining that tradition. Along with new fiction, every month will see new illustrations set in the universe we all love.

A new dawn is upon Classic BattleTech and the future is bright indeed. For those who are just picking up your first boxed set, or those whose shelves groan under the weight of a million words in sourcebooks and novels, I invite you to find your comfy chair, grab your favorite drink and click to enter a site that will bring you the fiction (and all that comes with it) you've been waiting for.

Welcome and enjoy.