

THE COMMAND POST



Issue # 200

June 2004

ISSUE 200 INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Issue #200 of the Command Post! Who would have thought when the game was released in 1987 that it would still be going strong seventeen years later?

We have many goals and objectives when we create a new game and one of the goals for CTF was that it be something we could take to conventions for demonstration purposes. Back in "the day" we would drag around the only portable computer available to us, a Kaypro luggable with an 8088 processor, two 360k floppy drives (no hard drive), as well as an Epson dot matrix printer. Each turn would take about two hours (mostly for print time) so a short game would take all day. It was lots of fun but rather than being a great way of introducing newbies to PBM most games were fought between existing players who enjoyed the face-to-face interaction of plotting, planning, gloating and moaning.

Of course CTF has grown and evolved steadily over the years, mostly in response to player feedback and suggestions. The original release was basically 2-D (level 3 terrain blocked all shots even when standing on opposite ends of a ridge — doh!) and the ratings system strongly favored heavy Bots. Quickly we went 3-D, added formal teams, Bot design rules, many new Bots, new weapons, internal systems, new move orders, more detailed reports, new game options and many revisions to the turn results. Not to mention tweaking the program code to generate more interesting and realistic results. Part of the longevity of CTF must be attributed to a solid basic design as well as a steady stream of enhancements and improvements.

None of this would mean much without the players who bring the game to life. What started out as a dry, head-to-head battle game became much, much more as players took their Pilots seriously and extensively role-played their characters' interactions through Player Notices and Diplomatic Messages. Places like "Mother's" became fictional hangouts for post-game shop talk. Indeed two of our best writers have graciously blessed this issue with some of their finest work. A real treat for GMs and players alike. Not to mention player drawn artwork that has graced these pages over the years.

So enjoy Issue #200, one of the largest in years. And we all look forward to bigger and better things in the years to come as CTF2187 continues to evolve and improve. And thanks to all of you, the players for making CTF what it is today and will become in the future!

GAME NEWS

Arena #382 [Fast 4-Sided]: Turn #4 saw all four teams scoring well. Side #3 did the best which allowed them to close the ratings gap with the scoring leader, Side #1. Side #2 had, by far, their best turn to date and now have some hope of being serious competitors. This turn saw all four Command Posts taking fire and next turn will likely see the game's first CP Kill.

Turn #5 saw Side #1 expanding their lead as most teams go after the "easy" points for Command Post hits. One Command Post went down this turn and at least one more is likely to fall next turn. This turn's CP Kill was awarded to Lieutenant Buckwheat of the INTIMIDATORS who destroyed Command Post #1 with a Mini Missile attack from his Gunfighter. The Best Bot Victory Rating is 2.83.

T#3: S#1: 0.85 S#2: 0.15 S#3: 0.67 S#4: 0.53
T#4: S#1: 1.39 S#2: 0.46 S#3: 1.34 S#4: 0.96
T#5: S#1: 2.19 S#2: 0.85 S#3: 1.99 S#4: 1.23

Arena #383 [Fast 4x4]: Turn #4 saw Side #4's lead slipping a bit as all four of the opposing teams outscored them. Much of this turn's high scoring was the result of determined attacks on all four of the Command Posts resulting in the destruction of Command Post #3 after it was served a final Heavy Machine Cannon burst from Lieutenant Woad The Witless's Ranger. Next turn could see two additional CP Kills and the game's first Bot casualties.

Turn #5 saw Side #4 expanding their lead as the casualty count continues to rise. This turn saw General Slime Sledge Hammer destroying Command Post #2 with Mega Missile fire from his

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Raptor and Major Zhitnik Zezel ejecting from his battered Ranger (VR=0.96, DR=2.91). Next turn could bring another CP Kill and two new Bot casualties. The Best Bot Victory Rating is 5.55!

T#3: S#1: 1.25 S#2: 1.08 S#3: 0.68 S#4: 1.42
 T#4: S#1: 1.68 S#2: 1.49 S#3: 1.15 S#4: 1.77
 T#5: S#1: 1.84 S#2: 1.81 S#3: 1.41 S#4: 2.28

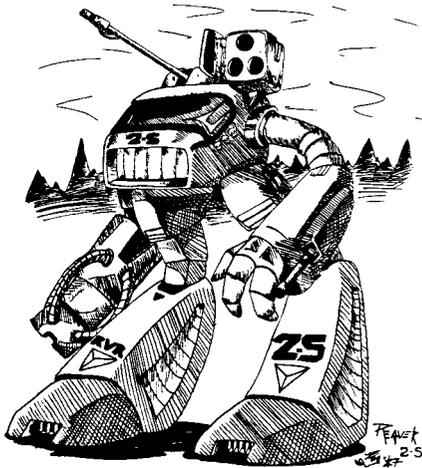
Arena #384 [DYNACHROME BRIGADE vs. FRAG' DEN HENKER]: Turn #2 saw Side #1 expanding their lead as combat intensifies. Most of the movement is currently on the flanks. On the left, a general melee has broken out. On the right, Side #2 is making excellent use of terrain to turn the enemy battle line. This looks to be an exciting battle!

Turn #3 saw little change in the comparative ratings as Side #1 retains a solid hold on the lead. The fiercest fighting continues to be along the flanks where the outcome of this battle may be decided. Side #2 could pull into the lead next turn as a breakaway Bot may be contemplating a CP run. The Best Bot Victory Rating was 1.05.

Turn # 1: Side # 1: 0.08 Side # 2: 0.06
 Turn # 2: Side # 1: 0.39 Side # 2: 0.27
 Turn # 3: Side # 1: 0.54 Side # 2: 0.43

Arena #385 [SISTERS OF SILICON vs. LEGION OF WAR]: Turn #2 saw Side #2 surging into the lead as they scored more than twice the number of points of their opponents. These Victory Points come from the all important Bot hits rather than the easy CP attacks and the ensuing bonus points. This means that not only did Side #1 drop into second place but they took quite a pounding as well! While Side #1 is deployed in the classic linear formation, Side #2 appears to be massing in the center for a concentrated attack — a bold strategy but one with some serious risks!

Turn #3 saw Side #1 scoring poorly allowing their opponents to expand their lead. Such a large lead so early in the game could make Side #2 unstoppable! This turn saw Side #2 making a preliminary attack on the enemy Command Post as they push through the center of the enemy line. Combat seems to be devolving into a general melee but the team that maintains some sense of order



and control will have a substantial advantage over the coming turns. Indeed, Side #1 has a chance for some heavy duty payback if they can use the current deployments to their advantage. The Best Bot Victory Rating was 1.20.

Turn # 1: Side # 1: 0.08 Side # 2: 0.09
 Turn # 2: Side # 1: 0.24 Side # 2: 0.47
 Turn # 3: Side # 1: 0.37 Side # 2: 0.71

HALL OF FAME

Ratings are only for those Pilots who have completed games and do not include games in progress. Kills, however, do include games in progress.

Senior Ranking Pilots

General Dutchman
 General Madmartigan
 General Anthony Stark
 General Cutthroat Collins
 General Bolo
 * General Mad Dog
 General Bastlor Grumock
 General Riva Irongrip
 General Mordius
 General Lunatik
 General Helen Narena
 General Slime Sledge Hammer
 General Rugal Ratslayer
 General Solo McIntres
 General Whispering Death
 General Blood Shredder
 General H.A.L. Mayne
 General I.B. Tryon
 General Angus McNarley
 General Frontal Robotomy
 General Richard Shadowhand
 General Kael

Top Light Bot Ratings

Lt. Colonel Wan Tyn Sol Jr. — 8.30!
 Major General Slanter Jax — 7.92
 General Madmartigan — 7.82
 Captain Condor — 7.65
 Colonel Otto Von Braun — 7.52
 Major Odysseus — 7.45
 General I.B. Tryon — 7.40
 Major Eric Sunsword — 7.30
 Colonel Artemis — 7.18
 Colonel Phantom Shadow — 7.15

Top Medium Bot Ratings

Lieutenant Findem And Fryem — 6.99
 Lieutenant Bili the Axe — 6.89
 General Slime Sledge Hammer — 6.37
 Major Roger Dawkins — 6.20
 Lt. Colonel Hammerhead — 6.14
 Lt. Colonel Chico Delgado — 5.87
 Lt. General Jerek Loren — 5.78
 Lt. Colonel Egoan Mor — 5.51
 Colonel Draka Deathdealer — 5.39
 Lieutenant Brian Boru — 5.30

Top Heavy Bot Ratings

Captain Mack Ross — 5.60
Captain Achilles — 5.21
Major Embo Slamboa — 5.01
Captain Hagen — 4.99
Captain Krunch — 4.86
Brigadier General Botman — 4.80
Brigadier General Oliver Stone — 4.75
Lt. Colonel Storm Chanter II — 4.60
Major Cannon Fodder — 4.52
Colonel Dana Malh — 4.48

Top Light Bot Pilots (3+ Game Average)

Major Odysseus — 6.07
Lieutenant Bad Karma — 5.67
Colonel Larry Underwood — 5.40
General Kael — 5.32
Captain Condor — 5.17
Major U.B.1 Snotlicker — 4.77
Lt. Colonel Ian McTaggart — 4.73
Brigadier General Botman — 4.66
General Madmartigan — 4.62
Major General Arlos Terminator — 4.62

Top Medium Bot Pilots (3+ Game Average)

Lieutenant Bili the Axe — 4.74
Major General Hawkeye — 4.34
General I.B. Tryon — 3.64
Colonel Draka Deathdealer — 3.63
Brigadier General Tlepolemus — 3.59
Major General Merlin D'Arcy — 3.57
Lt. Colonel Hammerhead — 3.41
Major General Elric Deathsong — 3.38
Captain Stephen Maturin — 3.37
Lt. General Jerek Loren — 3.36
Caotain Thor — 3.36

Top Heavy Bot Pilots (3+ Game Average)

Captain Hagen — 3.65
Lt. Colonel Augustus — 3.57
General Blood Shredder — 3.43
Major Cannon Fodder — 3.41
Brigadier General Botman — 3.30
Captain Antannyn Rykk — 3.27
Captain Vercingtorx — 3.25
Captain Krunch — 3.24
Lieutenant Marc Aragon — 3.16
General Kael — 3.06

Pilots With The Most Individual Victories

General Solo McIntres — 7

Pilots With The Most Team Victories

General Anthony Stark — 16

Pilots With The Most Bot Kills

Captain Grim Reaper — 7

Pilot With The Most CP Kills

General Blood Shredder — 10

Top 2-Sided Team Ratings

A#363 Side #2 (un-named) — 3.22!
A#378 Side #2 (Dynachrome Brigade) — 3.02
A#326 Side #2 (un-named) — 2.89
A#186 Side #2 (Centurions) — 2.87
* A#379 Side #2 (Legion Of War) — 2.85
A#327 Side #1 (Kzinti Fithp) — 2.83
A#294 Side #2 (4th Praetorian Guard) — 2.83
A#209 Side #2 (Black Company) — 2.83
A#346 Side #2 (Frag' Den Henker) — 2.82
A#114 Side #2 (Mechastorm) — 2.82
A#348 Side #1 (Lensmen) — 2.77
A#355 Side #1 (Frag' Den Henker) — 2.76
A#351 Side #2 (Kzinti Fithp) — 2.74
A#329 Side #1 (un-named) — 2.72

Top 4-Sided Team Ratings

A#359 Side #3 (Bot Busters) — 5.11
A#377 Side #4 (un-named) — 5.10
A#302 Side #2 (B'Hood of Thunder) — 5.07
A#339 Side #3 (Intrepid Enterprises) — 4.48
A#366 Side #3 (Bot Busters) — 4.38
A#249 Side #4 (Intrepid Enterprises) — 4.40
A#263 Side #2 (Intrepid Enterprises) — 4.34
A#317 Side #3 (B'Hood of Thunder) — 4.28
A#319 Side #3 (Legion of War) — 4.22
A#161 Side #4 (un-named) — 4.21
A#375 Side #4 (Legion Of War) — 4.16
A#310 Side #2 (Assass./Intrepid Ent) — 4.12

Top 2x4 Team Ratings

A#376 Side #2 (Kzinti Fithp/The Line) — 3.31
A#368 Side #1 (Legion of War) — 3.01
A#333 Side #1 (Berserkers) — 2.96

SPECIAL PLAYER NOTICE

CTF2187:HERO'SWALK
by Shannon Muir

With thanks to the players and their Pilots,
Whose actions provided 200 issues of Command
Post history...

"Welcome to the Arena Historical Museum," a young woman in uniform addressed Iona and her school tour group. "Though other teams, such as the Sisters of Silicon, have founded their own specialized museums and memorials, this remains the official museum and Hall of Records as designated by the High Council of the Arenas. I'm Kristi, your tour guide for today."

Iona couldn't shake the feeling she recognized the tall young woman with the ebony hair and lightly tanned skin, but the name didn't ring a bell. Neither did the lightweight cane the woman used as she slowly led them down the hall.

"Various holopictures capture some of the most historic events of the Arenas," Kristi said, pointing to illustrations on both sides of the corridor. "Over here, a holophoto of the first Arena's Individual Victor, a mysterious woman known only through history as 'The Ace,' one of the rare female pilots of her time. Next to that, a holo-recreation of the fatal shot to the Left Rear Torso of Max Elbowroom's Ravager by Ibee A. Targitt, which led to the first recorded Pilot Death in Arena Number Five."

Iona shuddered at the re-creation. Death didn't seem it should be celebrated.

"In that same Arena, Ibee A. Targitt received the first Command Post Kill. Next, in Arena Number Six, Movin' Van Norton became the first pilot to get a Rating over 5.0. Arena Seven brought the first recorded Ejection of Gabriel Kalevala from his Reaver."

Iona yawned at Kristi's dry delivery. She sure wasn't a natural at this, and Iona wondered what this young girl was doing talking about ancient history anyway.

"Arena Nine showed the first introduction of an unregistered but named team, the still famous Dynachrome Brigade. In Arena Twelve, we find the first known second generation combatant with the appearance of Max Elbowroom, Jr."

Iona perked up at this. Children following parents into the service seemed more common in her generation, but it was interesting to know that it happened even back then.

"Arena Thirteen, considered many to be unlucky, because it is the first 'official' Bot Arena."

"Why's that?" asked one of the other students on the tour.

"Good question. There were still tank battles running simultaneously, but they were slowly getting phased out. By the time Arena Thirteen happened, tank battles were no more."

The tour group turned a corner.

"Around the time of Arena Sixteen came the debut of the Cutter, Mauler, and Cyclops," Kristi said, indicating the holoimages of the Bot types in a display. "The first four-sided game was Arena Eighteen, and in Arena Twenty-Eight Frank N. Styn becomes the first documented Pilot to be done in by a Command Post."

Iona winced at yet another death mention.

"Justin Case became the first person ever to get five Team Victories in Arena Seventy-Six, and the Arenas see their first General with the promotion of Lunatik after Arena One Hundred and Four."

Kristi stopped to rest in front of a holo-portrait featuring Femme Fatale.

"Arena One Hundred and Thirty makes a lasting impact on the Arenas with the recorded appearance of the first all-female team in Arena history, the Sisters of Silicon, led by Femme Fatale."

"What's the big deal?" some guy in the tour group piped up. "Gals can do as good as the guys."

"Ah, but for a long time after the big wars someone decided it was a big deal. Though the original need for the Sisters is gone, they now look to be one of the most elite teams around."

Kristi continued to walk down the hallway, Iona following.

"Five CP kills are earned by Cannon Fodder in Arena One Sixty Six, and the aptly-named Grim Reaper becomes the first Pilot to get five Bot Kills in Arena Two Oh Three. Anthony Stark, Riva Irongrip, Mordius, and Ulysses Patton all get ten Team Victories around Arena Two Fifty Three. It wouldn't be until Arena Two Fifty Nine that Solo McIntres nabs five Individual Victories, and Anthony Stark becomes the fifth full Arena General in Arena Two Sixty Eight."

Iona began to tense.

"Our tenth Championship Tourney was Arena 349, and after Arena 366 H.A.L. Maybe became the first Female General of the modern Arenas."

Iona stood in stunned shock. She'd expected some mention here, somewhere.

Kristi stopped in front of large, solid steel doors. They did not open on approach, nor did Kristi seem to be heading toward the door.

"What's that room?" Iona asked.

"The Chamber of Fallen Heroes," Kristi said with a heavy sound to her voice. "Whether a Pilot dies from an enemy Bot, a CP, or Self-Destruct, they're all listed there."

"Can we go in?" begged one student. "I want to see the body count."

"Yeah, that'd be cool," chimed in another.

"People dying is not cool," Iona heard Kristi hiss through clenched teeth. Then, loudly, "There's no need to go in there. It's just a long list of names, you probably don't know any of them."

Iona swallowed hard and nervously approached Kristi.

"Please, I would like to go inside," she blurted out. Kristi stared harshly at her, but Iona's mouth just kept rambling. "I mean, how will we learn to appreciate those who take the risk and give their lives? Seeing all those names might make a difference."

Kristi's face softened.

"Most people just find that room too depressing, so I don't bother. But if you really feel it would make a difference..."

With that, Kristi moved over to the steel doors and punched in a code. They slid open, revealing walls of names. Iona walked in quickly, far in front of the rest of her disinterested group, and scanned the walls. She walked around until she found herself standing near the listing of deceased Pilots for Arenas250-300.

Arena #283 — Roarshock Test.

Iona heard a sigh, and looked up to see Kristi staring at the wall.

"Oh man, that was a horrible game. The Sisters and WASP totally got run over. I'm so glad my Mom made it out when she did."

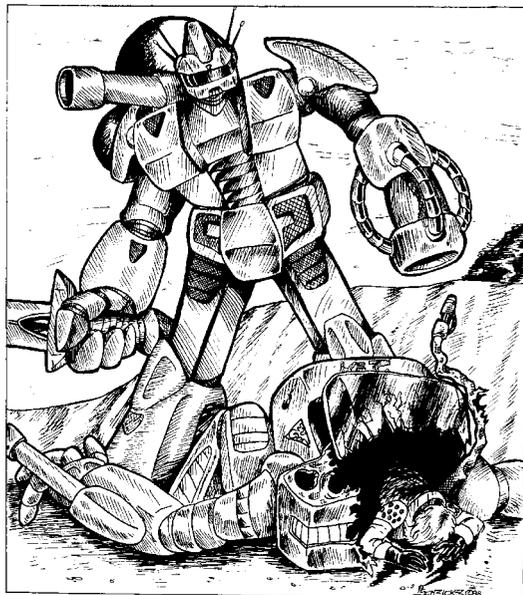
Now Iona stared Kristi down with a frosty gaze.

"You act like it's a crime wanting one's parents to be safe."

"I knew I recognized you. You're K.S. 'Speedy' Wright."

"Yeah, I.M. Shirley Wright's daughter, but what does that have to do with anything?"

"I'm Iona Questa Testa. My father Was Roarshock Test."



Iona watched Kristi cover her mouth quickly to hide her shock. "I'm sorry," came the muffled apology.

"Wish I could believe that anyone in your family cared. Where was your Mom for my Dad?"

"She did as good as she could do."

"Not good enough!"

With that, Iona spun around and marched out of the museum, fighting back the tears, but at long last taking the first steps at letting go.

SPECIAL PLAYER NOTICE

Wan downed what remained of his beer. He leaned back from the bar. The dark ambiance of the pub suited him somehow. Dark, brooding, hopeless. Empty.

"Go ahead and hate your neighbor,..." the stage act sang. A hopeless shell of a wannabe has-been. Wan let his eyes play over her body. Not more than nineteen. And already washed up. Still, the hair was right. And the eyes. Those eyes.

She looked like Annie Jean.

Or, at least like what AJ would have looked like if... Wan waved toward the waitress, who nodded. That was why he kept coming back here. They said the heart went on. But she'd died, and they'd lied.

Her medical bills had forced him into the arena. At first he'd seen her everywhere. In the voice of a child on the street, in the spunk of the urchins that crawled about the refuse of society. That was at first. Now,... The heat of battle was the only place he could feel her. The only place where her voice whispered its kisses across his dead soul. Let him know he loved her. He didn't fight for glory. He didn't fight for justice. He didn't even fight for money. He fought for her. To feel her.

If only she hadn't died while he was in his first arena. But she had. All alone in a heartless hospital. Struggling to live while her machines were turned off one by one. Calling for him.

And he'd killed her.

Pilots never knew the causes they fought for, but enough money and political clout would get you anything. They'd had a rider on his play. His skill had given them the legal judgment to unplug her. He'd murdered his own daughter. He'd murdered himself.

He was a tin soldier. An empty shell made in the image of war.

The waitress clumped another beer in front of him. Wan frowned at its stale aroma. He was scheduled for combat in two hours. But he needed to see her, and they only served paying customers. he looked back at the singer sashaying on the stage. She wrapped her fingers around the mic stand. Wan could feel AJ's frail cold fingers wrap around his own. Paying customers. Freaks! They'd let her die because some rich kid needed the equipment. They'd bet on Wan, because they knew he was desperate. Wan pushed himself away from the bar.

"... The bloody morning after... er... er..." Her voice followed him out the door.

Wan Tyn Sol Jr. strode toward the arena.

BOT EVALUATION

PATRIOTII

of trials: 3

Weather: All Moderate/Dry

Of the Patriot IIs tested: two survived their arena, and one was self destroyed by an ejecting Pilot. Of the two survivors, one was piloted by a Cadet, the other by a Lieutenant. The ejecting Pilots was also a Lieutenant.

The consensus of the test pilots is that the new weapons arrangement in the Patriot II goes a long way to improve the flexibility in target selection while stationary. It is the belief of all test pilots that the forte of this Bot is firing KD from a Heavy Building, making the most of the combination of Shield Generators, ECM Pods, and eight tons of armor. In such a role, and with only a single Cooling Unit, unnecessary movement should be avoided to reduce heat build-up. The combat experience of the Pilots confirmed the importance of flexibility in targetting, therefore it is recommended that the placement of the Mini-L to the Left Arm should be maintained.

The Rail Gun proved to be a worthwhile weapon in the tests of the Patriot II, resulting in about one third of all Victory Points scored by the three Pilots. It should be noted however, that the Rail Gun was used in preference to the Medium Laser whenever possible to get the greatest number of shots possible for developing hits/shot ratio for the new weapon. All Pilots commented favorably on the range of the compact three ton weapon, and less favorably on the heat gained from firing the weapon so often. This was especially true when at Optimum Range, which for the Rail Gun is identical to that of the Medium Laser. Because of the additional Heat, all Pilots stated that the ML would have been used in preference to the Rail Gun had not the test imposed the previously mentioned bias. Not only that, but at least one test Pilot questioned whether a damaged Rail Gun should ever be fired, except as a

last resort! Their consensus is that the Committee should continue research into the Rail Gun to the end of stretching the Optimum Range to three to better distinguish it from other weapons in its class, and to better justify the extra heat of firing. Undoubtedly this new weapon has unrealized potential in future Light Bot designs, but is probably of limited utility in a Heat sensitive design such as the Patriot II.

The value of the Shield Generator is still very hard to determine. Based on the experience of twenty-eight turns in arena conditions, the Shield Generators reduced incoming damage on one hit in five. It is also impossible to state how much damage was actually absorbed, since this would require knowing the damage that would have been generated without the Shield Generator's intervention. Most often the damage recorded after the Shield successfully intervened was exactly what an average expected hit from the firing weapon would have produced. In only two out of thirteen recorded cases did the Shield Generator result in a hit being reduced below the expected average. Further, at no time did the Shield Generator absorb damage more than once during a turn, and never on two successive turns.

[Ed: Each Shield Generator has an 18% chance of absorbing one point of damage per hit. The Patriot has two giving it a 36% chance of absorbing one point of damage per hit.]

This performance seems to be disappointing, and it is also not clear that the presence of two Shield Generators added any more protection than a single Generator would have done. At three tones each, the Shield Generator is the largest non-weapon component that a designer can install. When one considers that the Patriot II could have carried three more Cooling Units, devices of known and proven value in place of the redundant Shield Generator, the test Pilots have to wonder if the device has much of a future as it is configured. The only conclusion that can be reached pertaining to the Shield Generator is that the Committee should continue to work on it's development, trying to either enhance its performance or reduce the weight to no more than two tons with performance remaining as it is.

Aside from these comments, the test Pilots were enthusiastic about the Patriot II's performance in all types of encounters. The Bot stood up well to close combat, and was, as noted, particularly valuable in the area of supplying supporting fire from a concealed position, sniper fashion. The unanimous vote of the test Pilots was to adopt the Patriot II in its current configuration, in the hope that continued development of the Rail Gun and Shield Generator will only improve a more than adequate design.

Russ Vie Brooks
TM72 Frag den Henker

AGE ON-LINE

Our presence on the Internet is growing rapidly with a number of resources currently available.

TALES OF CTF2187: A great site containing the best of Shannon Muir's game related fiction and more! Check it out at:

<http://members.aol.com/shannonelisemuir/>

ORBO's CTF2187 HOME PAGE: Want to check out a great archive of old CTF newsletters? How about player bios, many with color photos? All that plus lots of other useful information is available at the CTF website. Special thanks to Orbo (Rob Fackler) for his efforts in setting and maintaining this cool site: Check it out at:

<http://userweb.suscom.net/~orbomaxx/ctfhome2.htm>

Brigadier General Them Bones [PN323] of the Berserkers [TM5] has set up a Chat Room at:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ctf2187>

Brigadier Them Bones [PN323] of the Berserkers [TM5] has also started an email discussion list to keep everyone up to date on game happenings and other topics of interest such as Pilots, Teams, Strategy, Bot Designs, etc. The mailing list is FREE.

For those of you unfamiliar with a mailing list, here is how it works. Folks interested in a common topic must JOIN (aka SUBSCRIBE TO) the list. All of these "members" will then receive all postings to this list and can also respond and/or post their own messages. All sorts of folks can have all sorts of topics going at the same time — so long as it is strictly CTF related.

To join, send a blank email to: CTF2187-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

If you prefer to get all of the postings in one "batch" mailing a day (rather than each one sent to you individually) then immediately send a SECOND email to: CTF2187-digest@yahoogroups.com

If you want to learn about the happenings in the CRACK OF DOOM (I and II) check out the following message boards:

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/conclave_gathering/
<http://www.neosoft.com/~lanza/ICONdiscuss1.html>

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Coming in July, our FOURTEENTH annual Championship Tournament! Sign up now! The first four signups get the coveted "pole" positions (ie. are set up in the corners of the Arena near the poles that hold the shields that protect the audiences from harm. Being in the corner, your flanks and rear are better protected during the opening salvos!).

Note: Currently seven of the maximum of twelve positions have been filled. We need at least one more setup before the game can begin and so will extend the signup deadline by a few more weeks.

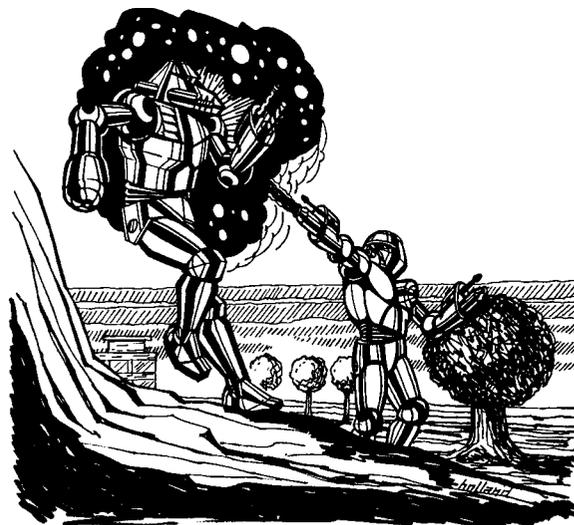
RULE CHANGES

Beginning July 1st, 2004 the following changes are in effect:

1) Pilot stats can now be raised above 20 (the previous max), but it won't be easy. Raising your stats up to 20 follows the old rules, that is, each increase costs 50 Experience Points. Raises ABOVE 20 cost the new level times 5. In other words raising your Agility from 19 to 20 costs 50 EP (old rules), raising it from 20 to 21 costs 105 ($21 * 5 = 105$) Experience Points. Likewise raising in from 39 to 40 would cost 200 EPs ($40 * 5 = 200$). Remember you can only raise your stat to the next level and each increase above 20 will cost progressively more.

2) New Weapon: HELLFIRE MISSILE. The Hellfire Missile is a new concept for in-missile technology — a weapon designed to inflict moderate damage and intense Heat. For a missile it has short range and only moderate accuracy but it packs a solid punch and can really give your opponents the hot foot.

Hellfire Missile: Weight=3 tons, Heat to fire=5, Optimum Range=5, Maximum Range=8, Accuracy=Low, Damage=4, Heat Factor=3.



SPREAD THE WORD

Do you know someone who might be interested in Play-By-Mail? Better yet, how about someone who might be interested in playing one of the games run by AGE (CTF, COD I, COD II)? If so, send us their name and address and we will send them our massive information package along with a special free gift. It's a great way to recruit a friend into the hobby.

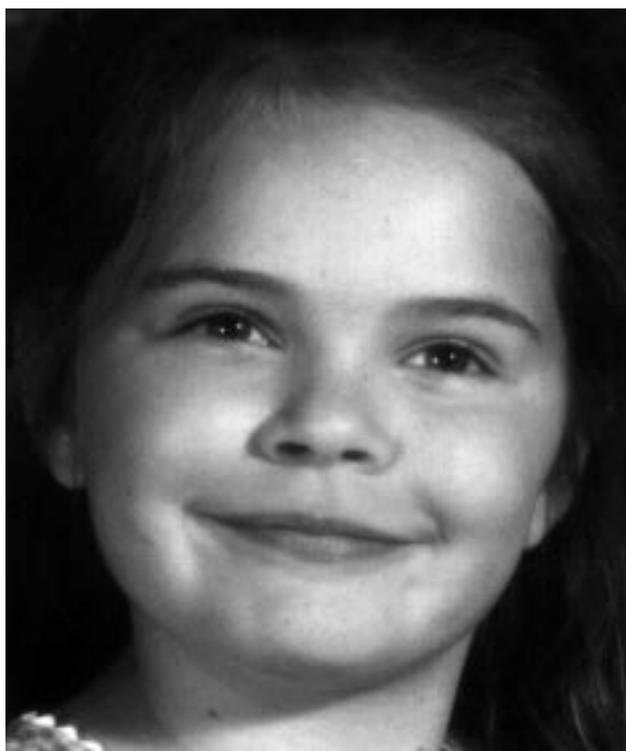
SAMMI REPORT

It's been quite a while since the last Sammi Report and we have been getting quite a few requests for an update so here it is....

Sammi is now eight and half and about to finish off the third grade. She made the Honor Roll (mostly A's) the first trimester and Principal's List (all A's) the second trimester.

This year she qualified for the "GATE" program (Gifted And Talented Education) which is unusual for a third grader, kids can't normally qualify before the fourth grade. Previously GATE was a fabulous program but was pared down this year due to budget cuts and will likely face further cuts for next year. However, whatever the program status now, being in GATE means she qualifies for advanced programs when she gets to high school which is an important step towards college.

The highlight for this year's GATE program was the Destination Imagination competition. Sammi's team went to the regional competition in Modesto



and took second place in their primary challenge and first place a challenge sponsored by the Milk Advisory board. Duane, of course, was there to film the whole thing and turned the footage into a DVD to share with family and friends.

Sammi is active in Girl Scouts. This year, among other things, her troop had the opportunity to build a float and march in the local Christmas parade. She just "bridged" over from a Brownie to a Junior and is looking forward to collecting a whole new set of badges.

Last year she signed up for Soccer with her friend Taryn. This was quite a surprise as she had previously shown little interest in organized sports. Duane signed up to help out and got stuck being the coach (despite no experience in either coaching or soccer!). Sammi's league (National Youth Sports) is co-ed and year round with very short seasons. Thus despite playing for little more than a year she is now on her seventh season. She's a rock solid defender but really prefers to think of herself as a goalie. Her current team (the "Dominators") looks like the best ever but this season they merged her age group (8-9) with the one above it (10-12) and thus she will be hard-pressed going up against kids so much older than she is.

This last year she finally got the puppy she always wanted. We went to the pound and picked up Charlie, who is a Dachshund-Jack Russel Terrier mix. Note to the wise: BAD combination — very hard to potty train and a high energy beast. We wanted a playful lap dog not an annoying yap dog! He's getting better with age though....

Otherwise Sammi is a normal, happy kid. She loves to play the Sims and Petz on the computer, plays with girls and talks about boys, LOVES Lilo and Stitch and looks forward to spending a lot of time at the pool this summer!

SPECIAL OFFER

July 1st is a special date for us here at Advanced Gaming Enterprises as it marks the EIGHTEEN year anniversary of our first processing turns for the original Crack of Doom Playtest (the company itself was actually formed several months earlier). In celebration and to show our gratitude for your dedicated and enthusiastic support we have the following special offer: Send in a single check for \$50.00 or more for your CoD or CTF account during the month of JUNE and we will deposit that money PLUS an additional \$4.00 into your account. That's right, an additional four extra dollars game credit, FREE! It's just our way of saying Thank You! [Note: This is a 'CASH ONLY' offer that includes checks and Money Orders but NOT payments made by Credit or Debit Card.]

Debbie & Duane