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THE ANIME & MANGA MAGAZINE

# PROTOCOL CULTURE ADDICTS

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by Martin Ouellette

## SPOTLIGHT: HEAVY GEAR 15

## HEAVY GEAR (TV SERIES): OVERVIEW

In the last twenty years, it has been the dream of many North American entertainment companies to duplicate the often enormous success Japanese "Giant Robot" animations have had on the Occidental market. Shows like *Goldorak* (the French version of Go Nagai's *UFO Robot Grendizer*), *Robotech*, *Transformers* and more recently, *Mobile Suit Gundam Wing* and *The Big-O*, have helped shape what could be considered today a rather lucrative market based on "Giant Robots" shows. One of the companies that have succeeded in producing their own brand of anime-like material for the Occidental market is Dream Pod 9, a Canadian gaming company whose members have been influenced by the Japanese way of doing things (some of these people participated in the now deceased *Mecha Press*, the very first Japanese mecha-oriented magazine in the Occidental market) as far as designs and stories are concerned. Of their two most successful titles, the gritty *Heavy Gear* (the other being the more *Mobile Suit Gundam*-like *Jovian Chronicles*) has been noticed enough to become an animated TV series, produced by Sony Pictures Entertainment (*Roughnecks: Starship Troopers Chronicles*, *Max Steel*) and Mainframe Entertainment (who worked on *ReBoot*, *Transformers: Beast Wars*, *Shadow Raiders*, *Action Man*).

The *Heavy Gear* Role-Playing game and Video games, as well as the animated TV series (even if the world of the TV series is not as well developed and gritty as the games'), take place in the sixth Millennium, on Terra Nova, a planet settled, then abandoned, by the Earth thousands of years earlier. Now the population of Terra Nova is thriving, even after the Interpolar War (the planet is separated into three well separated zones: North, South and the Equatorial band, known as the Badlands) and an attempt by the Earth government to reconquer the planet. Of course, such a population has to be entertained and one of the games most popular on Terra Nova at this moment is the Heavy Gear Championship Tournament, an event similar to our WWF™ wrestling, but with giant humanoid machines known as Heavy Gears (or HG or, more simply, Gears).

The story of the *Heavy Gear* animated TV series revolves around the rivalry between young Marcus Steven Rover of the Southern Shadow Dragons and Major Drake Alexander Wallis III, leader of the Northern Vanguard Of Justice and 9 times Heavy Gear Champion. The Dragons and the Vanguard being the best Heavy Gear Championship teams of the their respective hemispheres. While the South's Shadow Dragons are the good guys and are pretty much playing by the rules, the North's Vanguard Of Justice is seemingly composed of seedy characters, quick to use their dirtiest tricks to win (which is somewhat strange, since many of the Role-Playing Games' players prefer the North). When Wallis loses his title to newcomer Marcus, the Vanguard are even more prone to try to fudge the dice...

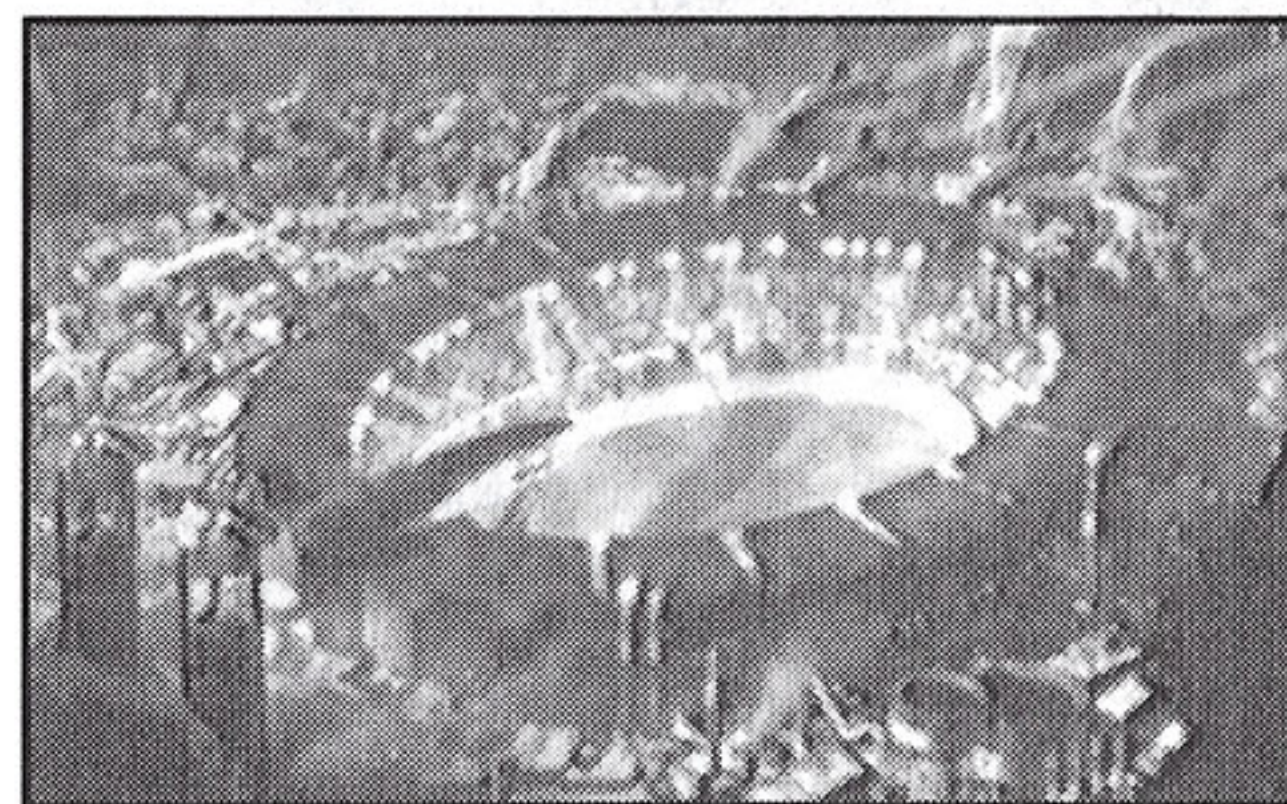
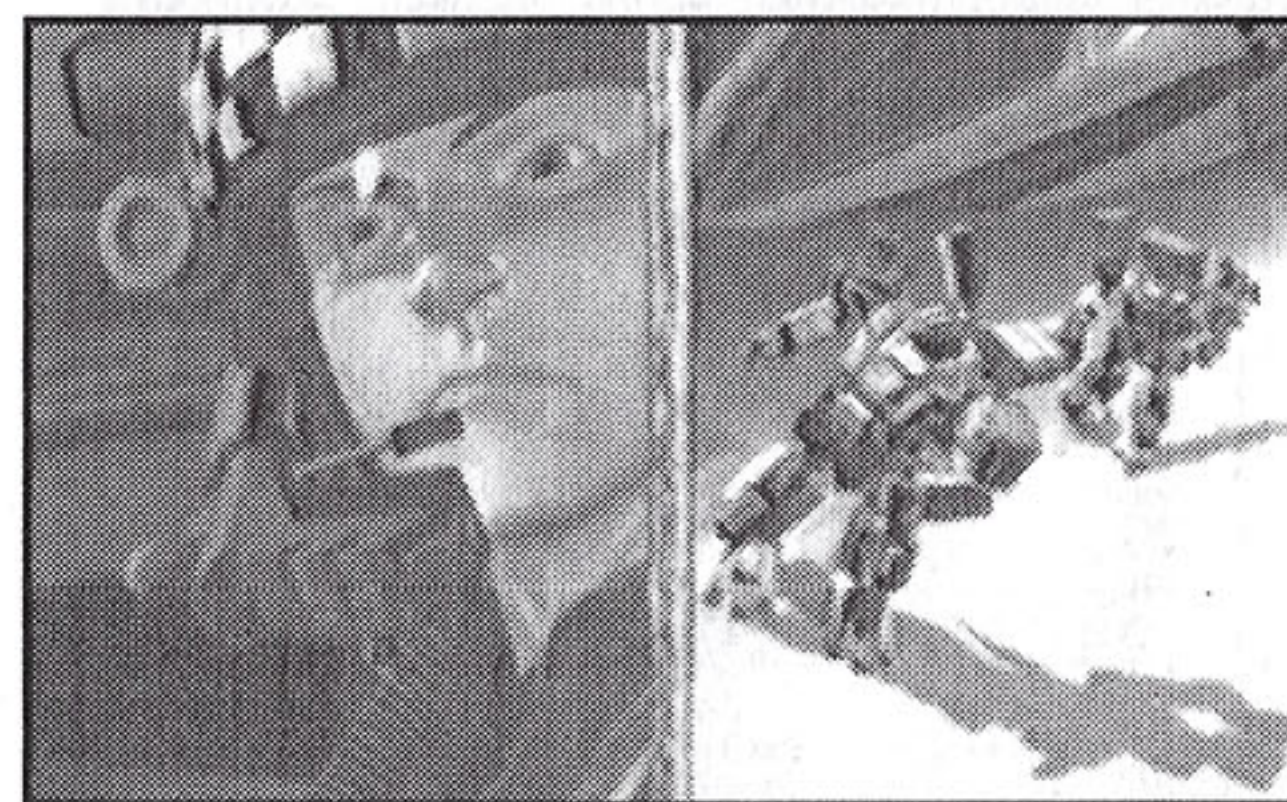
Of course, since *Heavy Gear* was created by a Canadian company AND was, in good part, inspired by Japanese animation, we were anxious to see it for ourselves. We must say that the results are somewhat mixed. Let us explain why. First, the 3D computer animation, done by Mainframe Entertainment, is not bad at all. The textures are nicely done and the Gears' movements are really impressive. However, the characters are still so-so, but we believe this is more the result of lack of time and budget per episode than anything else (when given enough time and budget, you get results like *Final Fantasy* ...), something even standard animation has trouble dealing with. Moreover, in this show, the Gears are more important than the characters, so...

However, the real problem with the series is the somewhat repetitive and childish plot. While the world described in the games is a very rich and well developed universe (the *Heavy Gear* Role-Playing Game has over 50 books published so far) whose maturity has attracted many players, the TV series seems to have been designed to cater to a much younger, less sophisticated audience. Even then, this does not excuse the weaknesses of the repetitive scenarios, especially given the wealth of information that was available to the writers (and the example of the Japanese shows they had certainly seen on American TV). The series also lacks a conductive element, something that will make the audience want to see the next episode. A "shtick", as some would say. A good example of what we are talking about is episode #25 "The Zero Racer". It would have been really cool to have this mecha and its mysterious pilot as recurring characters, especially if the pilot would have been somewhat involved with Marcus in some way (his father or a young female pilot, etc.). That would have given the episodes a conductive link that is pretty much missing here... But there is also a positive side to the show's simplicity: it is easily accessible and its similarity to WWF™ wrestling, one of the most popular entertainment ever devised by man, gives the show a greater visibility and the chance to reach a larger audience.

All in all, here are our prognostics. On the positive side, the 3D animation is nicely done, the mechanical designs are really cool and the story is simple, to the point and easily accessible to all ages (but it's mostly aimed at kids). On the negative side, the character designs are so-so and nearly all the things that made *Heavy Gear* such a great role-playing game are gone. In short, if you are looking to be entertained, this is a good show for you, but if you are looking for something deep and meaningful, well...

**News Flash!** The first DVDs of the series are on the way. The first one should be released in the summer of 2002. Also, if you like highly detailed metal miniatures, the *Heavy Gear* miniature series has more than 58 figures in its lineup, ranging from Gears to Tanks, Striders and infantry. Have fun!

## ⚠ SPOILER AHEAD ⚠



Designs: 3.5 Animation: 4 Soundtrack: 2.5 Story: 2.5 Translation: — Average: 3





## HEAVY GEAR (TV SERIES): CHARACTER PROFILES

### The "Good Guys"

#### Marcus Steven Rover

Marcus is the latest addition to the Shadow Dragons, the South's best HG dueling team. However, as young as he is (20 Cycles, about 15 years-old), his seat-of-the-pants Gear pilot abilities are such that he has quickly earned his comrades' respect. A fast learner with lightning quick reflexes and a master of unconventional HG combat tactics, Marcus also has some quirks: overconfidence and a total disrespect for discipline, two things that sometimes put him in rather dangerous situations. Having replaced Lt. Jan Augusta, his childhood hero, in the Shadow Dragons, Marcus has inherited two things from the retired ace Duelist: his Command Jäger (renamed "Red Rover") and the enmity of Major Drake Alexander Wallis III, the fearsome leader of the North's Vanguard Of Justice HG Dueling team, the ultimate masters of dirty tricks in the HG circuit. Marcus better watch his back...

#### Sebastian

Sebastian is a GREL (Genetically Recombined Experimental Legionnaire), a Supersoldier created by the Earth Forces for the war against Terra Nova and abandoned by them when they lost the war. A huge man with fantastic strength, reflexes and stamina, Sebastian is, thanks to his Jan-class genes (officers), much more independent and capable of interaction with other people than your usual, run-of-the-mill GREL. However, he still finds it difficult to "hang loose" and some of his attempts make him comical. Of all the Shadow Dragons, Sebastian seems to be the closest to Marcus. He pilots a King Cobra HG, named "Warhawk".

#### Dirx

If you want to be told the truth with no cute pink bows on it, Dirx is your man. Loud, brash and totally lacking in social graces, this is the guy your mother did not want you hanging around with. However, Dirx has great perks for a HG Duelist: fiercely loyal to his comrades, fast on the trigger and an imaginative, relentless adversary. The word "retreat" is NOT in this man's vocabulary. Although Zerve's good friend, Dirx does not share his "positive waves" perspective on life and makes it quite clear. His negative attitude is sometimes bothering to the others, but they do rely on him. He pilots an Armored Jäger, named "Buzzwomp".

#### Zerve

How this New Age Guru type found his way into the Shadow Dragons is beyond us (and probably beyond them as well!). This guy is Dirx's antithesis: all calm, charming and flowwwiing with positive waves. However, do not be fooled by his laid back attitude; Zerve CAN take on the most fearsome adversary and make them run for cover. Like Marcus, he has more than a certain liking for offbeat tactics and will use them to his full advantage. The Vanguard's dirty tricks seem to amuse him (dispersing those negative waves is so fun!). Zerve pilots a Desert Jäger, named "Crush Bucket".

#### Sonja Briggs

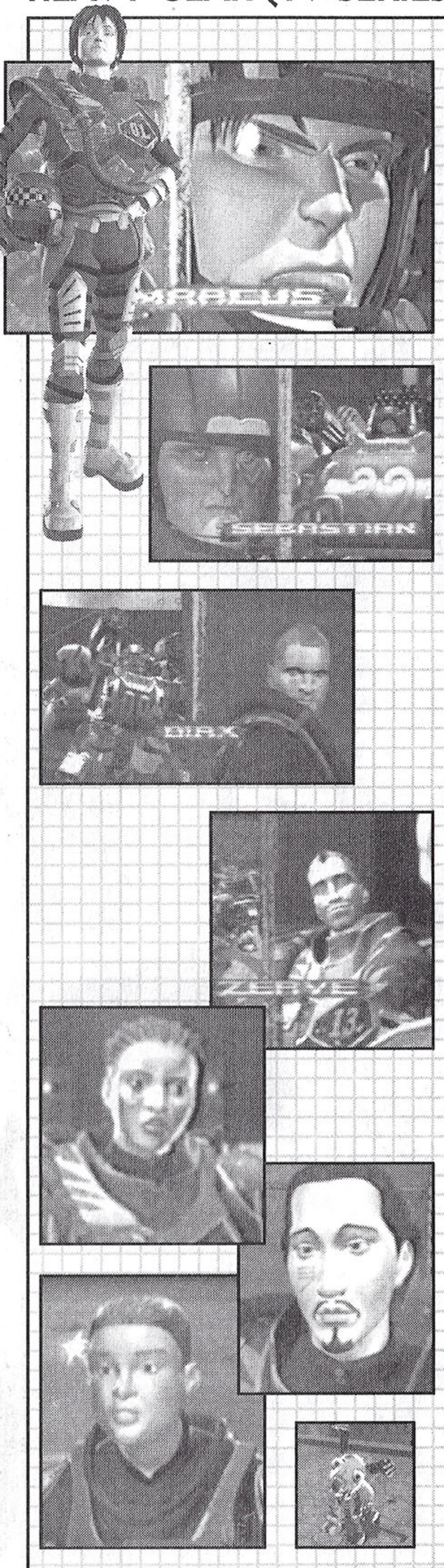
Continuing the Shadow Dragons' tradition of offbeat characters, Sonja was a Gear Racer before entering the world of HG Dueling. Graced with great patience and incredible reflexes sharpened by years of racing at breakneck speeds, she is one of the most dangerous pilots around, often popping up in front of her adversary to fire a devastating shot, then fading like a ghost. Sonja pilots "Sweet Venom", a Long Bow Blitz Jäger.

#### Kusunoki Tachi

Tachi is the Shadow Dragons' hand-to-hand HG combat expert. While excellent in standard HG combat, he is at his best when wielding the huge Vibro-Katana that has been passed on for generations in his family. While seemingly calm and reserved, he is a fierce and relentless adversary and can pull off maneuvers only a chosen few can even dream of ever being able to achieve. Serge Garpenlov of the Vanguard will certainly remember the cost of stealing Tachi's beloved Vibro-Katana... Tachi's machine is a Rattlesnake HG, named "Bonzai Basher".

#### Budd Squires

Although not a Duelist, Budd, as their mechanic and parts supplier, is an important part of the Shadow Dragons. Marcus may be very good at tinkering around the Gears, but Budd is a genius at it and often comes up with jury-rigged repairs that save the Dragons' butt. Between matches, Budd pilots the clown Gear named "Rex Aplenty" and entertains the audience. Budd has a robotic dog called Buttons...







by Martin Ouellette

## HEAVY GEAR (TV SERIES): CHARACTER PROFILES (Continued)

### *The "Bad Guys"*

#### **Drake Alexander Wallis III**

Wallis is the leader of the Vanguard Of Justice (what a tacky name!) and once was the Heavy Gear Champion. We say "once was" because Marcus has taken that title from him and this is not something Wallis will easily forget nor forgive. Born to a wealthy Northern family with a long tradition of military service, Major Wallis had a distinguished career in the Northern military, whose code of honour and discipline he cherished and had made his own. However, Marcus taking his hard won title from him has made Wallis forget (nearly) everything about these things he so believed in. Pushed by Magnilda Rika, the Vanguard's true Commander, Wallis is now driven by his need to regain his title at any cost, even if it means resorting to dirty tricks to do so. Wallis Gear is a modified Grizzly, named "King Of Sting".

#### **Rank**

The character everybody loves to hate! A consummate bully with a VERY short fuse, Rank loves nothing more than pound his adversary into scrap metal and then laugh at them. However (and this is a big "however"), as good as he is, Rank often forgets that he is playing with a team and his antics will, more than once, lead to their defeat. Rank hates the Shadow Dragons (or "the snakes" as he calls them) so much that he is ready to do anything to get rid of them, even if it means resorting to backstabbing or any other dirty tricks he can think of. The machine Rank pilots is a Mad Dog HG, named "Droolin' Duelin' Mad Dog", a name that could fit its pilot just as well...

#### **Yoji Kirakowa**

The Vanguard's expert in "dirty Tricks" (sabotage, electronic warfare, boobytrapping, etc.), Yoji is, beside Wallis, the most important member of the team. Mean and quite aggressive, she always seems ready to explode. An orphan from "Trash City", Yoji has kept much of her street gang edge, something that makes her quite dangerous. A specialist in scouting, Yoji is often sent ahead to snoop around the Shadow Dragons and bring back some info that could be used against them. Yoji's gear is a Cheetah, named "Punk-Fu" (she likes to call her adversaries "Punks!!").

#### **Serge Garpenlov**

If Rank is the show-off part of the Vanguard, then Serge is their most discrete part. The oldest of all the Vanguard pilots, Serge is a veteran who has seen many battles and has learned about the benefit of keeping your cool under fire. A deadly marksman, he is also a pro at ambushes and, in that regard, works quite well with Yoji. His motto seems to be "Keep your cool, do your job and come back to fight another day". Serge's Gear is a Jaguar, named "Hammer".

#### **Von "Boom Boom" Maddox**

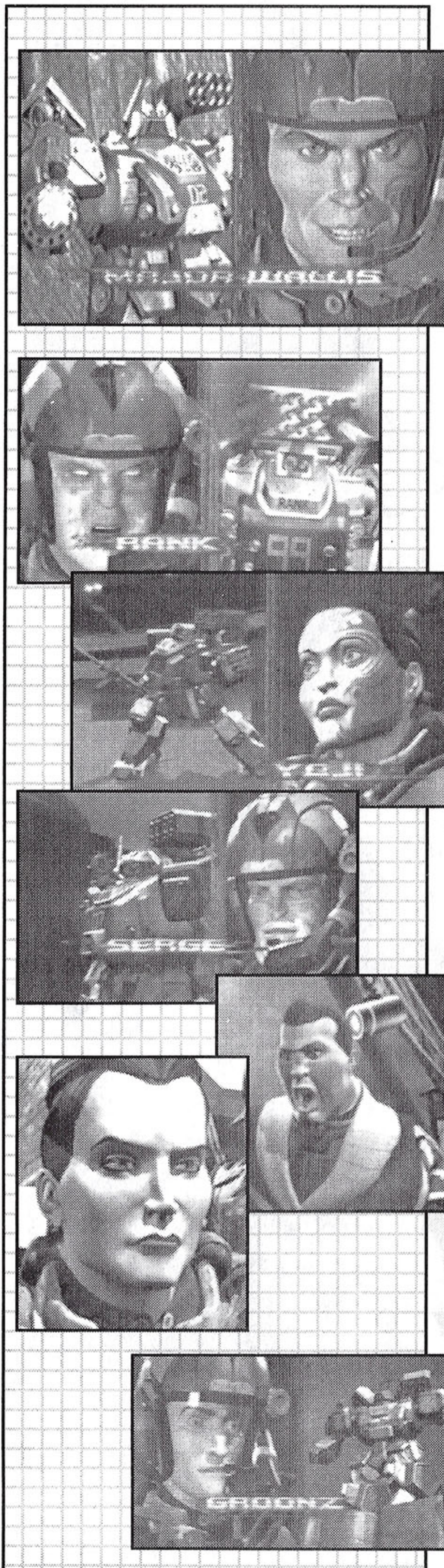
As both the main announcer and organizer, Maddox is one of the most popular sports figures on Terra Nova. However, what a lot of people do not know is that he is willing to do just about anything to turn a profit, including helping the Vanguard so that the show stays interesting. The Interpolar War had nearly bankrupted Maddox, but he has made a come back with the Heavy Gear Championship Tournament and he has no intention of letting something as lame as honour or loyalty get in his way...

#### **Colonel Magnilda Rika**

The true Commander of the Vanguard Of Justice and one of the two reasons why Major Wallis has stooped so low in his attempts to regain his lost title of Heavy Gear Champion. She is quite displeased by the poor performance of the Vanguard in reclaiming the title and has, more than once, used underhanded tactics that puts them at risk just so that she can get rid of the Dragons. Not a very nice person...

#### **Gunther Groonz**

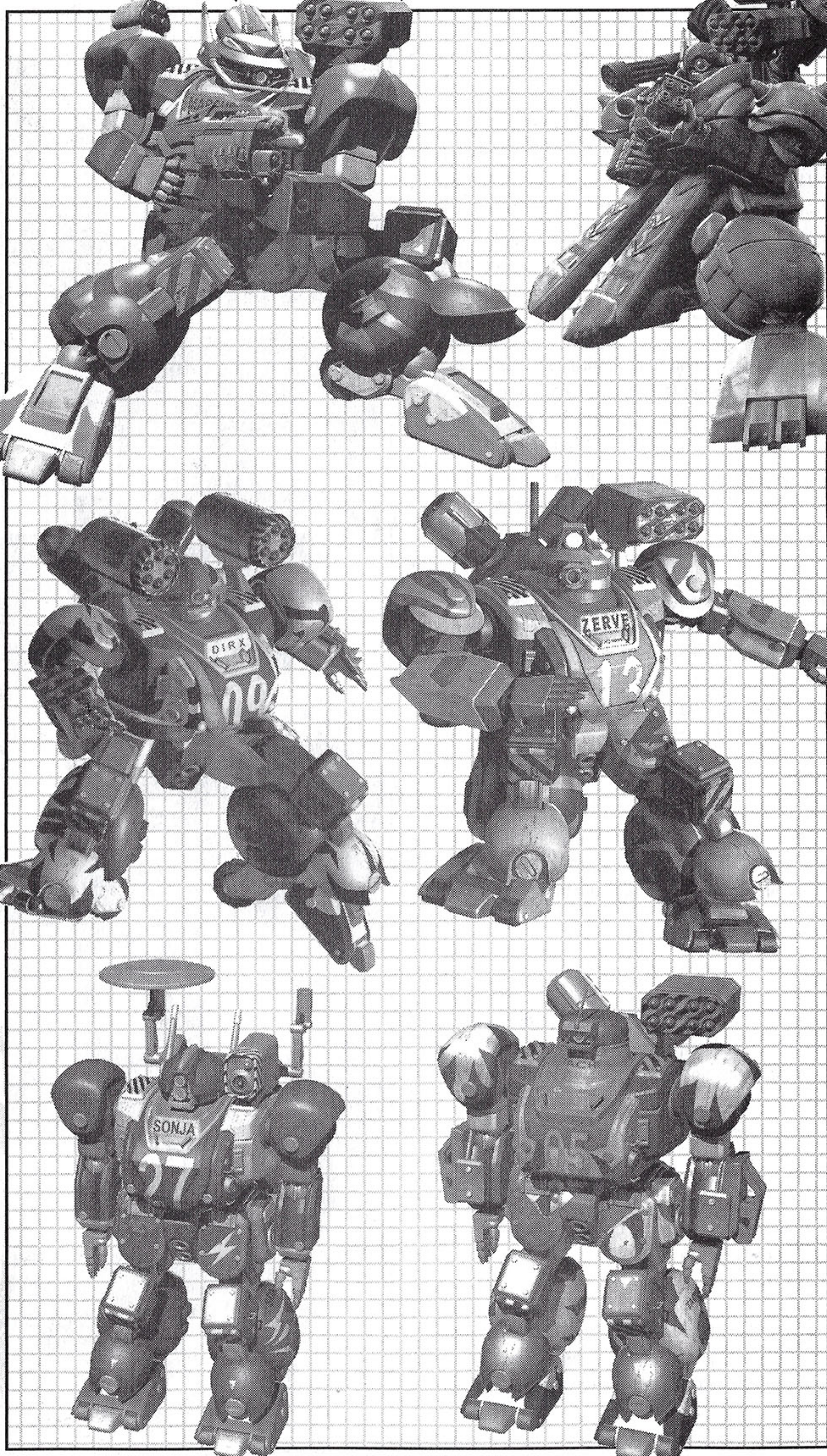
The fifth member of the Vanguard team, Groonz is their heavy weaponry specialist. An explosives freak, he enjoys inventing new ways to blow up his adversaries and even gives names to the bombs he makes! Since he is the Vanguard's fire support specialist, it is only normal that Groonz has the biggest, most heavily armed HG available in the North: a Kodiak, which Groonz named "Crunch Muncher".







## HEAVY GEAR (TV SERIES): MECHA FILES

**"The Good Guys"****"Red Rover" — Command Hero Jäger**

"Red Rover" is the HG Marcus inherited from his childhood hero, Lt. Jan Augusta. Along with augmented performance from the standard Jäger, "Red Rover" is also armed with an experimental rapid-fire "pulse-shock" rifle, a modified Autocannon which fires powerful energy rounds. After episode #15, "Red Rover" is modified with a new technology which increases its speed and mobility.

**"Warhawk" — King Cobra**

Not surprisingly, Sebastian pilots a King Cobra, one of the most powerful HGs ever produced. Designed to punch through enemy lines, the King Cobra is a perfect Gear for Sebastian, who can use all of its monstrous potential as an assault machine. Even if "Warhawk" is a little slow compared to the other machines, it more than makes up for it in armor and firepower.

**"Buzz Womp" — Armored Jäger**

The perfect choice for Dirk, who thinks that beating the dust off your opponent should be a "hands on" experience. With "Buzz Womp's" heavy armor, he can soak up a lot of punishment and still end up the winner. And if he cannot get as close to the enemy as he wants, he can still use the Heavy Automatic Grenade Launcher!

**"Crush Bucket" — Desert Jäger**

Zerve's "Crush Bucket's" most remarkable pieces of equipment are its "Laserflame" Cannon (a new kind of flamethrower that uses a High Intensity Laser) and a huge claw built on its left forearm. The armament is completed by an Anti-Gear Missile Launcher (8 missiles) and a Grenade Launcher.

**"Sweet Venom" — Long Bow Blitz Jäger**

The ultimate HG for the Badlands, the "Sweet Venom's" agility gives it the possibility of tackling just about any terrain. It could be considered a kind of "Mountain Bike HG" for extreme Gear pilots! The main weapons of "Sweet Venom" are a Heavy Autocannon and a Rotating Anti-Gear Missile Pack.

**"Bonzai Basher" — Rattlesnake**

Of all the Southern Gears, the "Bonzai Basher" is the only one to wield a Gear-size Vibro-Katana sword. This is one of Tachi's most cherished possessions, as it was inherited from his grandfather. Along with the Gear's special Stealth coating, the Vibro-Katana is what makes "Bonzai Basher" so efficient in close combat.





by Marin Ouellette

## HEAVY GEAR (TV SERIES): MECHA FILES (Continued)

### "The Bad Guys"

#### "King Of Sting" — Grizzly

Along with boosted performance and armor, Wallis' Grizzly HG's most remarkable modification is its head unit, taken from a Headhunter HG. This gives the "King Of Sting" superior communications abilities, something useful for a leader's machine. After episode #14, "King Of Sting" is modified with new technology which will force Marcus to do the same with his "Red Rover".

#### "Droolin' Duelin' Mad Dog" — Mad Dog

Although not considered very efficient by military standards, the huge Mad Dog HG has one thing Rank wanted more than anything else: lots of missiles to fire! Supplemented by a 40mm Autocannon, machineguns and Grenade Launchers; "Droolin' Duelin' Mad Dog's" armament is more than enough to make up for Rank's inherent lack of brains...

#### "Punk-Fu" — Cheetah

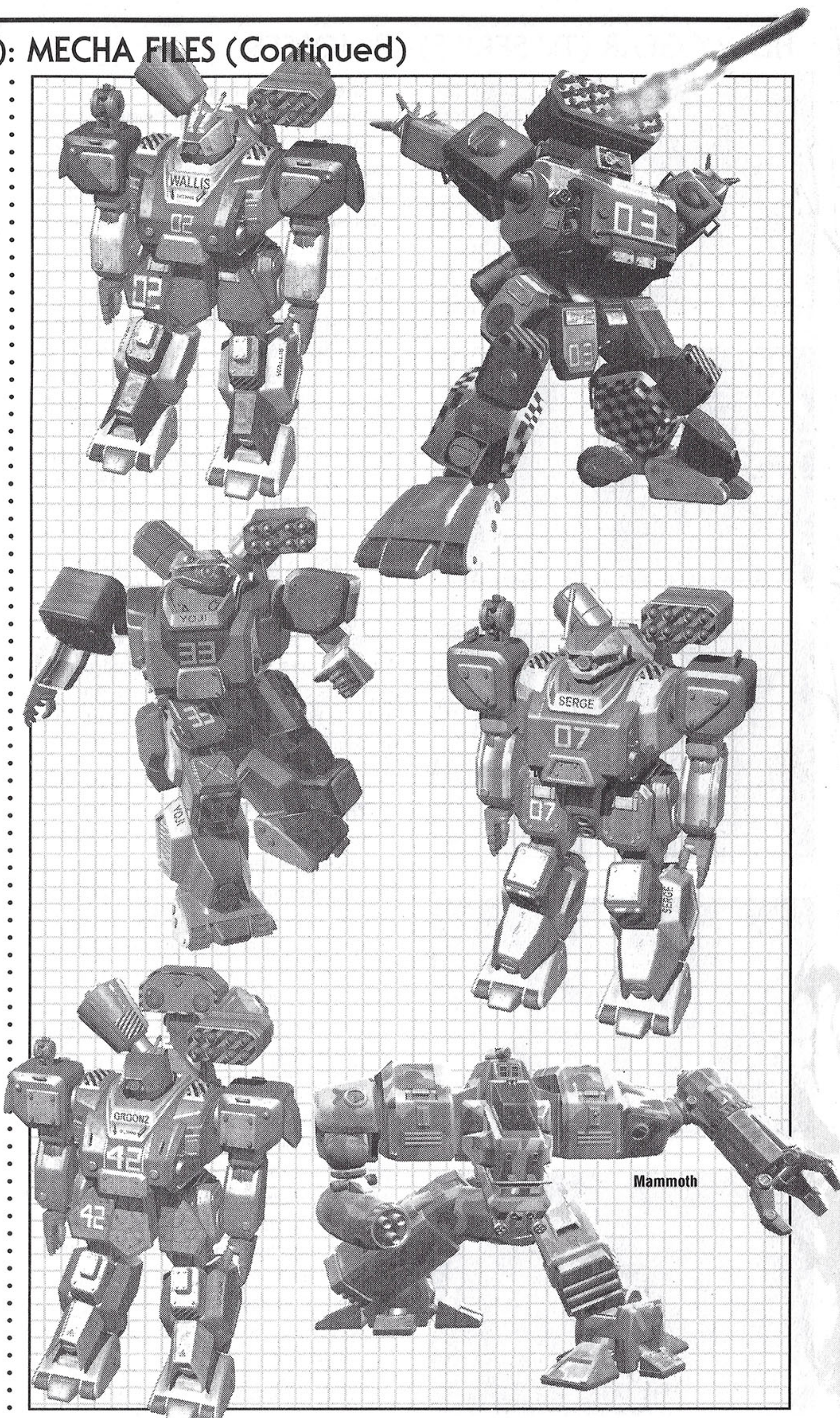
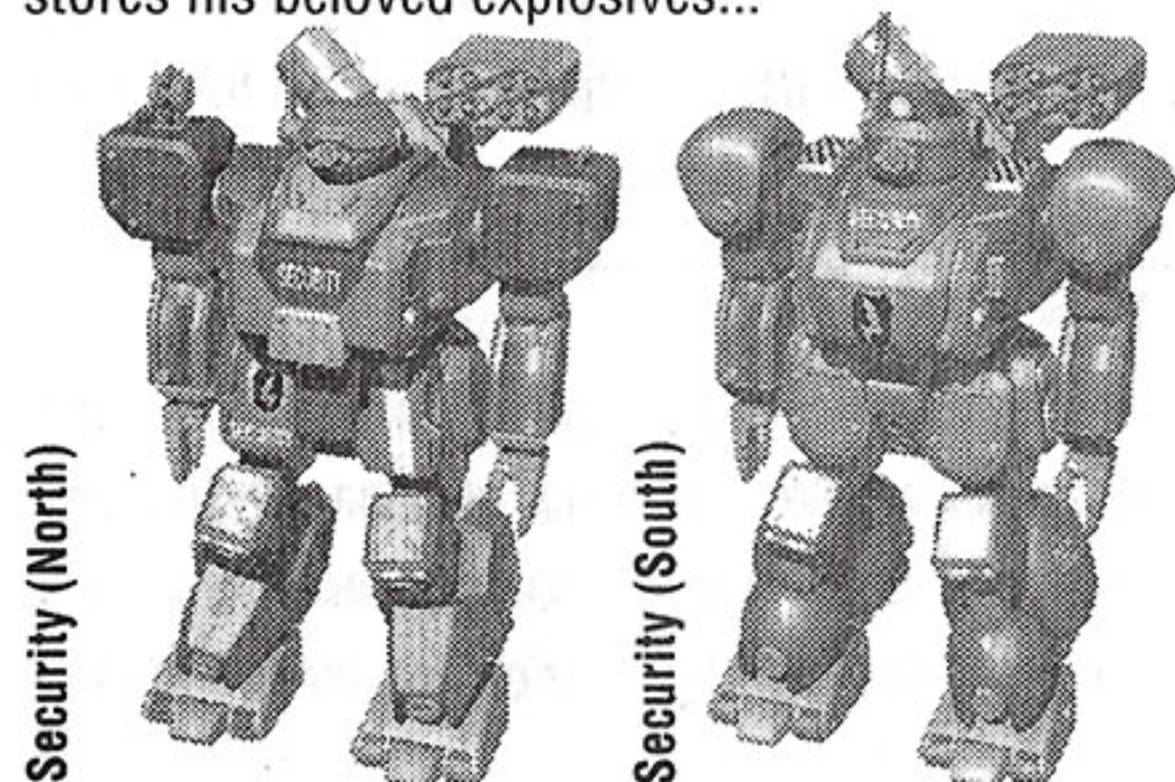
Along with Sonja's "Sweet Venom", Yoji's "Punk-Fu" can be considered one of the fastest HG on the Heavy Gear Tournament circuit. With the help of "Punk-fu's" complete Electronic Warfare Suite, Yoji can enjoy one of her favorite sports: hack enemy Gears' systems while battling them!

#### "Hammer" — Jaguar

Serge's "Hammer" is the Vanguard's sniper HG. Equipped with an Arrowlight Laser Rifle, an exceptional target acquisition system and a very well trained Neural Net, "Hammer" rarely misses its target. However, when it does, it can engage its enemy the way Serge likes it: fast and hard!

#### "Crunch Muncher" — Kodiak

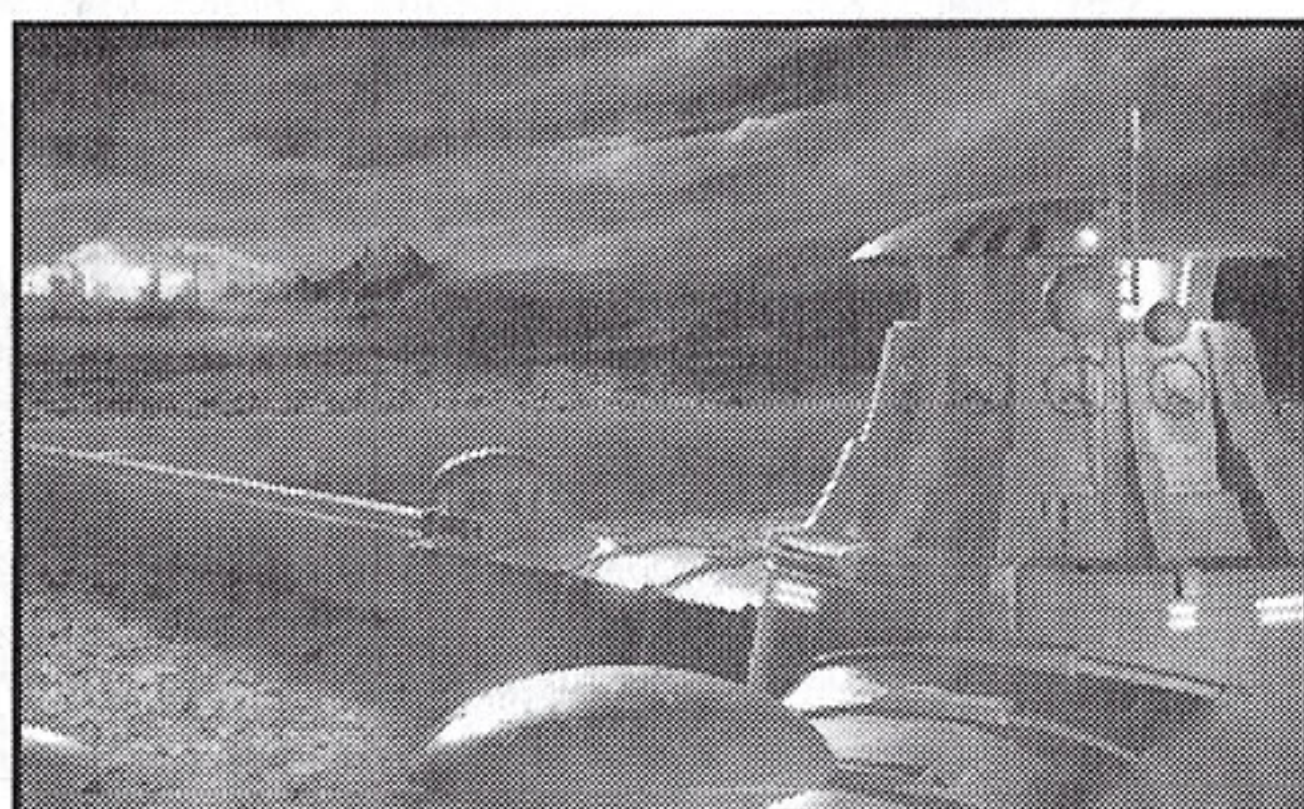
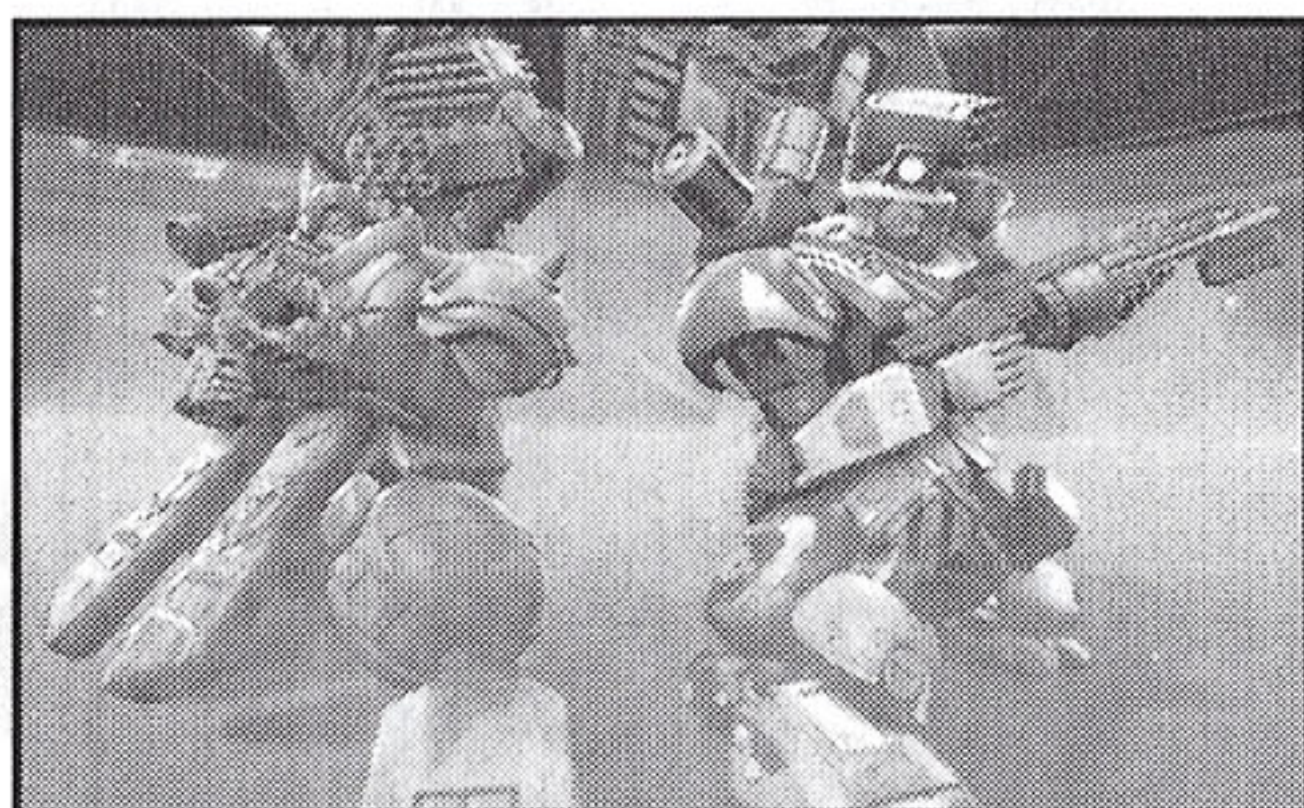
The Vanguard's counterpart of Sebastian's "Warhawk" King Cobra HG, Groonz's Kodiak is one of the most powerful HG on the planet. Super heavy armor, along with its powerful Particle Accelerator makes "Crunch Muncher" a scary adversary indeed. It has a set of compartments into which Groonz stores his beloved explosives...







## HEAVY GEAR (TV SERIES): SYNOPSES



### 1. The Tournament

The dream of Marcus Rover, a boy from the Badlands of Terra Nova, is to, one day, become Heavy Gear Champion in the now famous Heavy Gear Championship Tournament. However, Marcus' uncle, Greco, is not really charmed by the prospect, Marcus' dad having been killed in a Gear duel. The only real contact Marcus has with HGs is that he is a mechanic for the South's famous Shadow Dragons dueling HG team. The team trusts Marcus implicitly and Marcus tries to live up to their expectations by finding for them a rare piece of hardware. But Von "Boom Boom" Maddox has other plans and stops Marcus from delivering the part. Meanwhile, the Shadow Dragons have entered the arena and are facing their Northern counterparts, the Vanguard Of Justice, led by the current Heavy Gear Champion, Major Drake Alexander Wallis III. Lt. Jan Augusta, leader of the Shadow Dragons starts his duel with the Vanguard's Rank and gets a good beating. Soon the duel becomes a free for all and Marcus, horrified, watches on as his heroes and friends have their butts kicked. Furious, Marcus escapes, steals a clown HG (used for entertaining the crowd between duels) and jumps into battle. To Wallis' horror, Marcus, using tactics that are definitely NOT in the rule book, manages to help the Dragons win this engagement...

### 2. The Face-Off

Marcus has repaired Lt. Augusta's HG and has gone out for a test run. What Marcus does not know is that the Vanguard's true Commander, Colonel Magnilda Rika, has ordered Wallis and his team to hunt him down and get rid of him. While in the desert, Marcus is attacked by the Vanguard, who think he is Augusta. Now Marcus has to fight a running battle, a battle that will most certainly end with Wallis' victory if Marcus does not get help soon...

### 3. Training A Dragon

Thanks to the retirement of Lt. Augusta and the courage and skills he has shown so far in battle, Marcus gets the chance of a lifetime: gain a place as one of the Shadow Dragons. However, Lt. Creet, who is there to evaluate Marcus, does not give the kid an inch of slack and keeps trying to flush him. Marcus MUST reach 75 points in evaluation and the Lieutenant seems adamant that he does not reach the magic score. Moreover, Marcus has Serge and Yoji of the Vanguard trying to sabotage his every efforts...

## ⚠ SPOILER AHEAD ⚠

### 4. Grudge Match

Marcus being such a good pilot at such a young age is an admirable feat, but it has provoked some resentment in the Shadow Dragons. Dirx is somewhat upset at the kid upstaging him and heads out to blow off some steam. However, he is so enthralled in his anger that his meeting with the Vanguard ends up in him challenging them for a duel. This is a chance the Vanguard will not pass up and they charge. The rest of the Dragons are not exactly pleased by Dirx taking chances like that, but, since he insists that he can lead them to victory if they listen to him, they decide to follow his lead... Right into the Vanguard's trap and the only one who can get them out of there is Marcus...

### 5. The Desert Duel

While in the desert transporting Gear parts for the Dragons, Budd Squire, their head mechanic and parts supplier (as well as the pilot of the clown Gear seen in the first episode), is attacked by the Vanguard, who steal his truck. However, Dirx does not believe Budd's story and accuses him of having sold the parts to someone else. Now the Dragons have to find their parts or they will not be able to participate in the 24 hour Baja race, an extremely tough event they have never lost before. The Dragons begin the race at a disadvantage and it will take all of Marcus' cunning to dig them out of the hole they are currently in...

### 6. Gear Wars

Budd Squires has built himself a funny little piece of hardware: a remote which can take control of any HGs Neural Net (the machines' main computer). This worries Marcus a bit and he decides to play around with "Red Rover's" Neural Net so that it becomes impervious to Budd's remote. However, in doing so, he has activated the NN's Voice Enhancer and the machine is now talking to him, saying things Marcus does not necessarily want to hear. Of course, the Vanguard have heard about Budd's little invention and Yoji has stolen it. Just imagine what happens when she takes control of Sebastian's "Warhawk" and turns it against the Dragons... Usually, Marcus can help, but "Red Rover's" reconfigured NN has other ideas about the whole situation...

### 7. The Train

Marcus has dramatically upstaged Yoji in an event and the Vanguard's little lady is not very happy about it. However, she gets a chance to get even when Rank reveals another of his hare brained plans: unhooking





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## HEAVY GEAR (TV SERIES): SYNOPSES (Continued)

the Dragon's car from the Maglev train taking them to the tournament's next event. As the Vanguard nearly flawlessly executes their plan, Yoji goes after Marcus, only to be saved by him when her Gear loses its footing and nearly plunges to oblivion. Right on the spot, Maddox decides that this could be an interesting challenge: the team getting to the next event first will win extra points. The Vanguard run away with the repaired train, but, thanks to a neat gadget, Marcus has a good idea on how to win this new race...

### 8. Sacrifice

Wallis and the Vanguard have not been performing up to Colonel Rika's expectations and she is getting rather tired of them always being beaten by the Shadow Dragons. She is about to look for another way of getting rid of them when Wallis asks (OK, begs...) for another chance to regain her trust. Rika accepts to give him one more chance, but at one condition: his team will be joined by a GREL soldier named Vigon. In the Dragons' team, Zerve suggests to Sebastian to try to "hang loose", something the big GREL has some problems with (not that he does not try!). Later, the Vanguard, despite Vigon's help against Sebastian, are defeated by the Dragons in the first rounds of the Orem tournament and Colonel Rika decides to use her own charming way to get rid of the Dragons: an Anti-Matter bomb that will wipe them out. The negative point to all this is that the Vanguard and the entire city will suffer the same fate! Luckily for them all, Wallis finds out about the bomb...

### 9. The Tunnels

The entire Terra Nova underground is a vast maze of tunnels, known as the McAllen tunnels. The stretch from the Waterloo Arena to the New Baja Arena is where one of the most dangerous races of the HG Championship takes place. Tachi Kusunoki, having been there before, is made leader of the Dragons for this race. However, the Vanguard have other plans. Equipped with a stealth Gear (read "invisible" Gear...) Serge Garpenlov has been given the mission of disrupting the Dragons' race and his first mission is to get rid of Tachi. Serge does so and even steals Tachi's Vibro-Katana, something he will woefully regret later...

### 10. Mega Duel

The Dragons and the Vanguard face each other in the last event of the HG Championship, which will give the winning team the last 500 points. The first round consists in a "Last Gear Standing" duel, with only the last standing Gear of each team being able to go on to

the grand finale, a fight against the huge "Mega Gear". Of course, Colonel Rika and Maddox would be pleased if Marcus got whacked and Wallis won the title. But Marcus has no intention of getting himself put on the deceased list and he beats Wallis (not by much, though...), becoming the new Heavy Gear Champion...

### 11. Disqualified

Marcus' new title of Heavy Gear Champion is taken away from him, as security camera images show him rigging the pop-up walls of the Trash City arena with explosives. Of course, Marcus protests, but the rules are clear: the Dragons will have to fight the Vanguard in a three round revenge match, but without Marcus' help. Marcus' uncle Greco heads off to try to clear his nephew's name while the Dragons try to survive their fight against the Vanguard and their new team mate, Draven...

### 12. Marcus Rover, Northern Ace

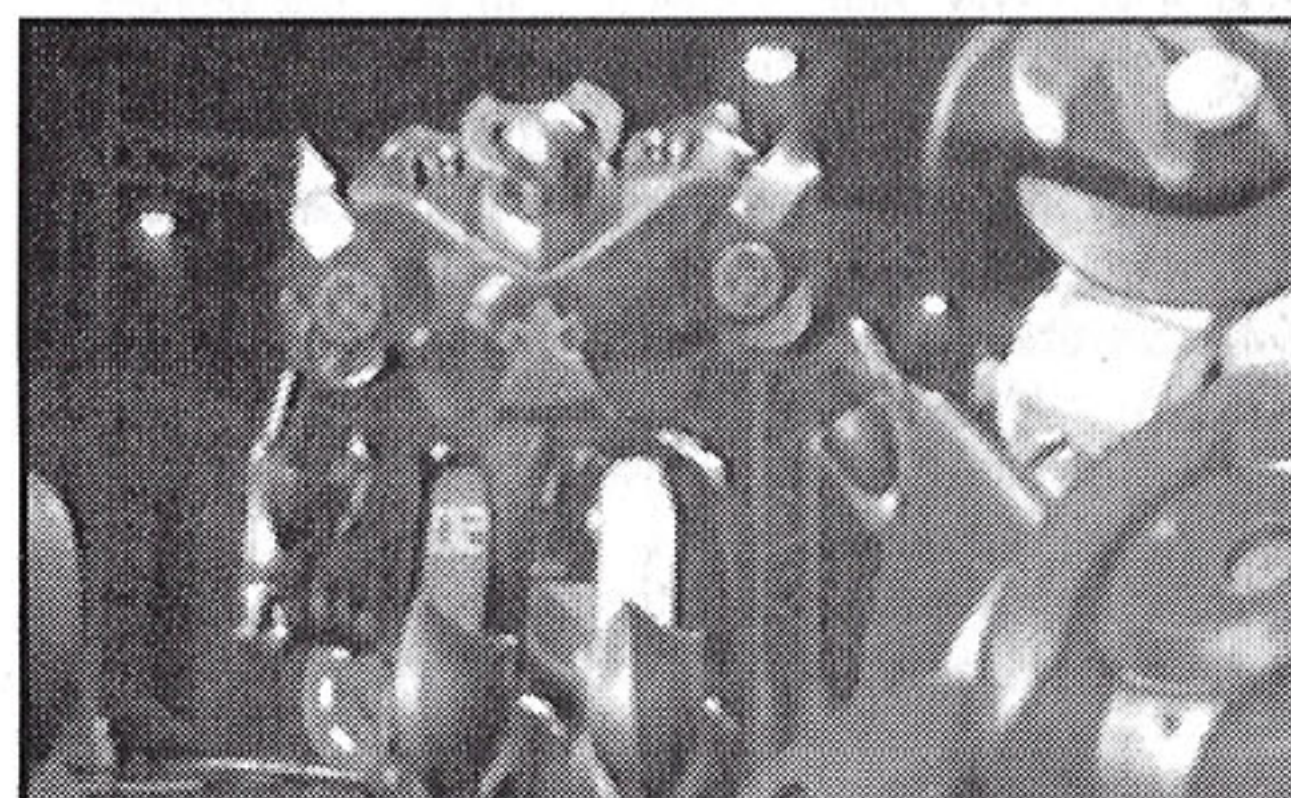
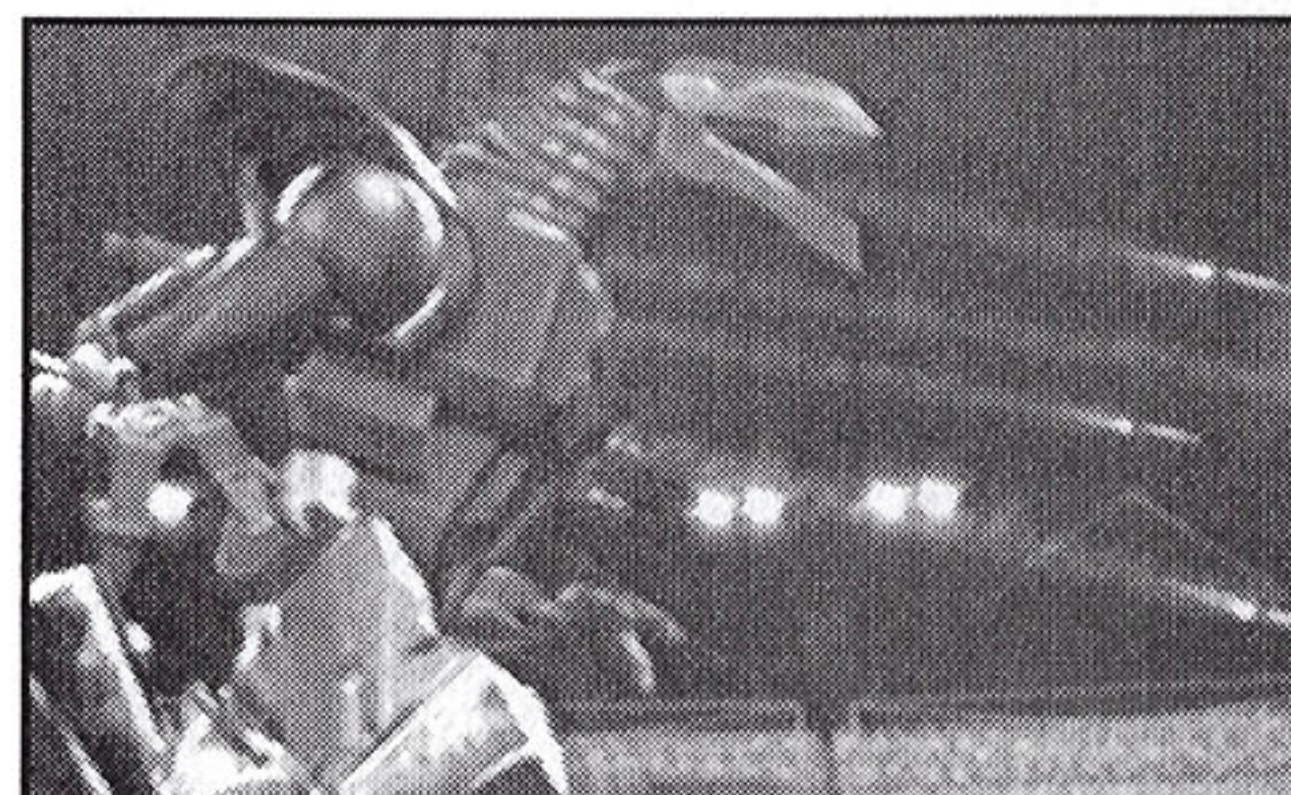
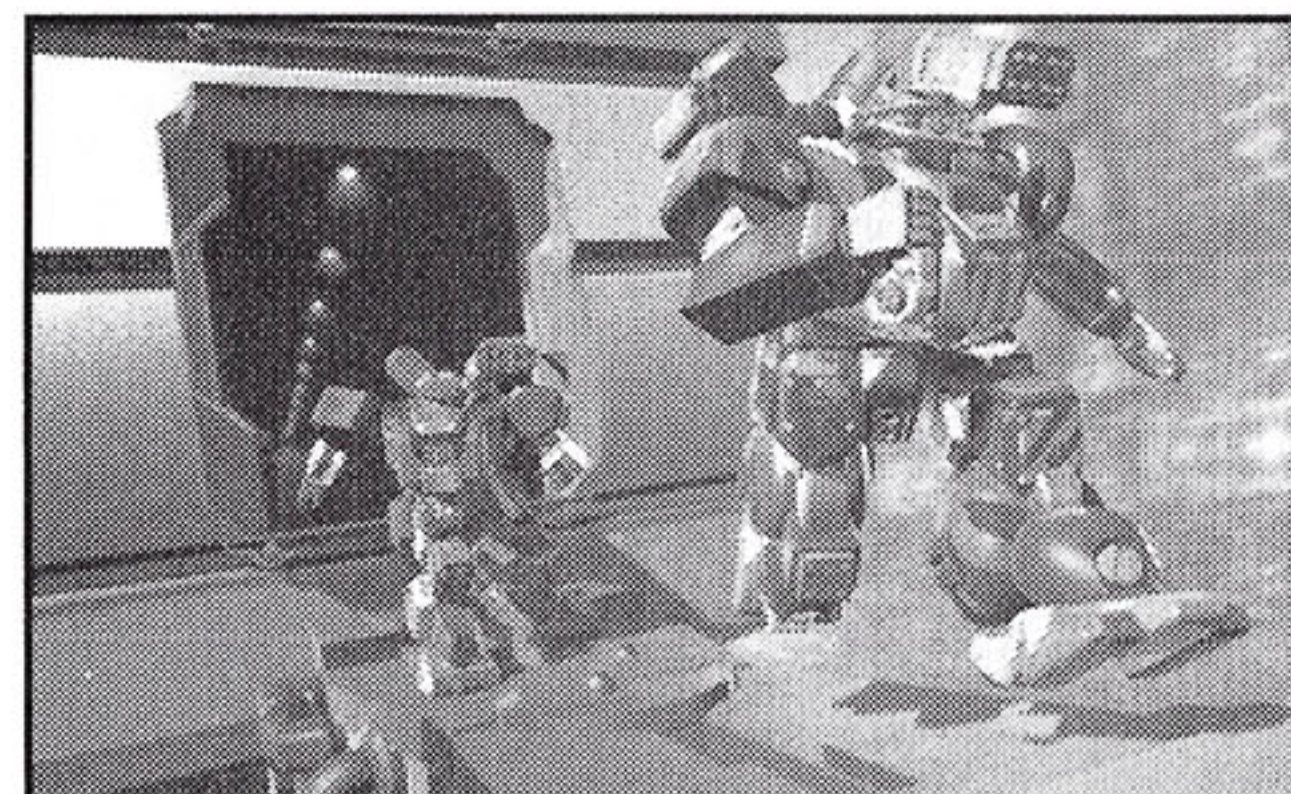
Marcus has a nasty surprise when Colonel Rika has his uncle Greco kidnapped as a bargaining chip for a rather uncool deal: If Marcus does not become a member of the Vanguard, she will do something bad to Greco. Marcus, trapped, accepts, but Sebastian is the only Dragon to know what happened. Of course, Dirx is furious and decides to annihilate the "traitor". When Marcus starts to show some signs of trying to go back on the deal, Rika ups the ante and sends the Northern military into Orem, Marcus' hometown...

### 13. Mercenary Gambit

While traveling to Dirx's hometown of Dunnigan for a HG demonstration, the Dragons are intercepted by desert raiders known as the Sand Stalkers. Commanded by a harridan with the charming name of "Crusher" Von Krieg, the raiders have taken hold of Dunnigan and just won't let go. To make things worse, the village's mayor is none other than Dirx's smart aleck dad Anatole and Lt. Creet (Lt. "Creep" for Marcus...) has made an interesting offer to Von Krieg: a two round slugfest between the Dragons and the raiders, with the village as prize! At first, the Dragons don't have too many problems, but Von Krieg has a surprise in store for them: a giant Hovortank with LOTS of cannons and armor...

### 14. Happy New Gear

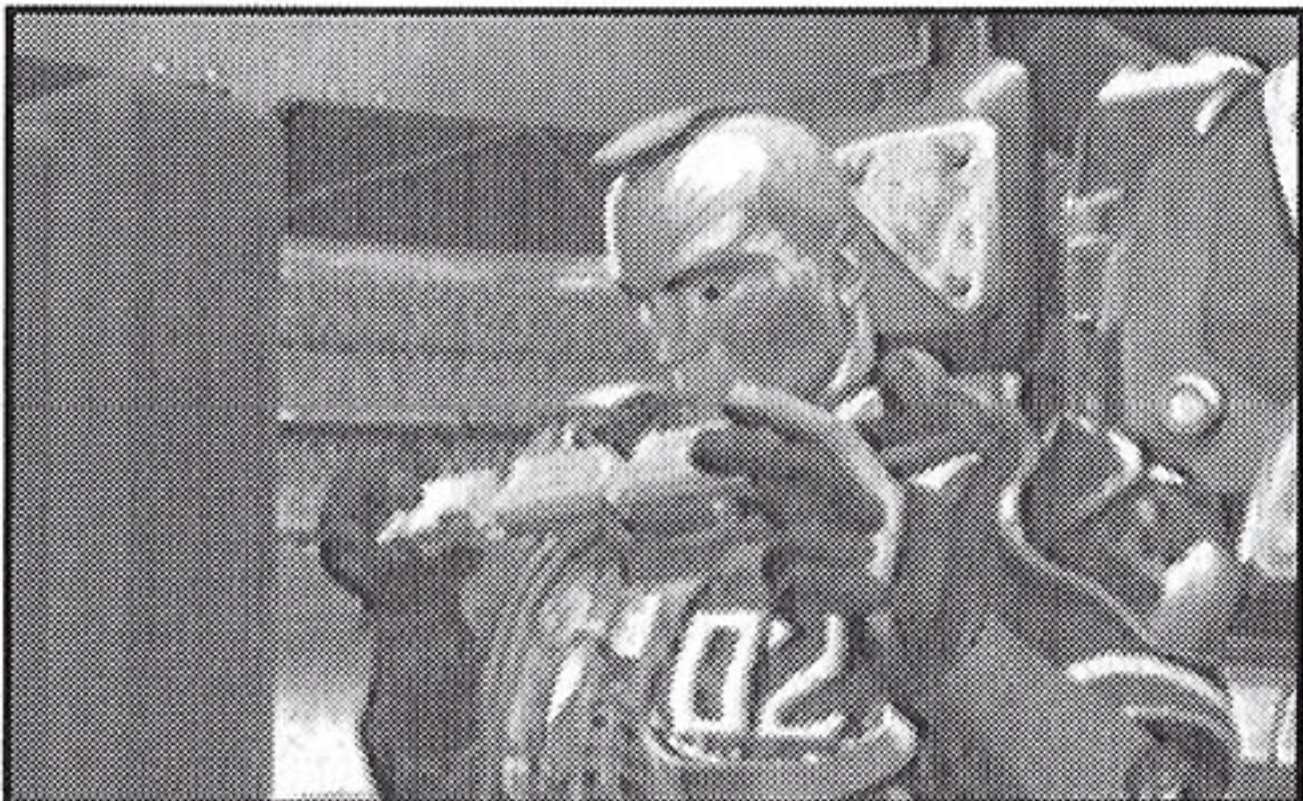
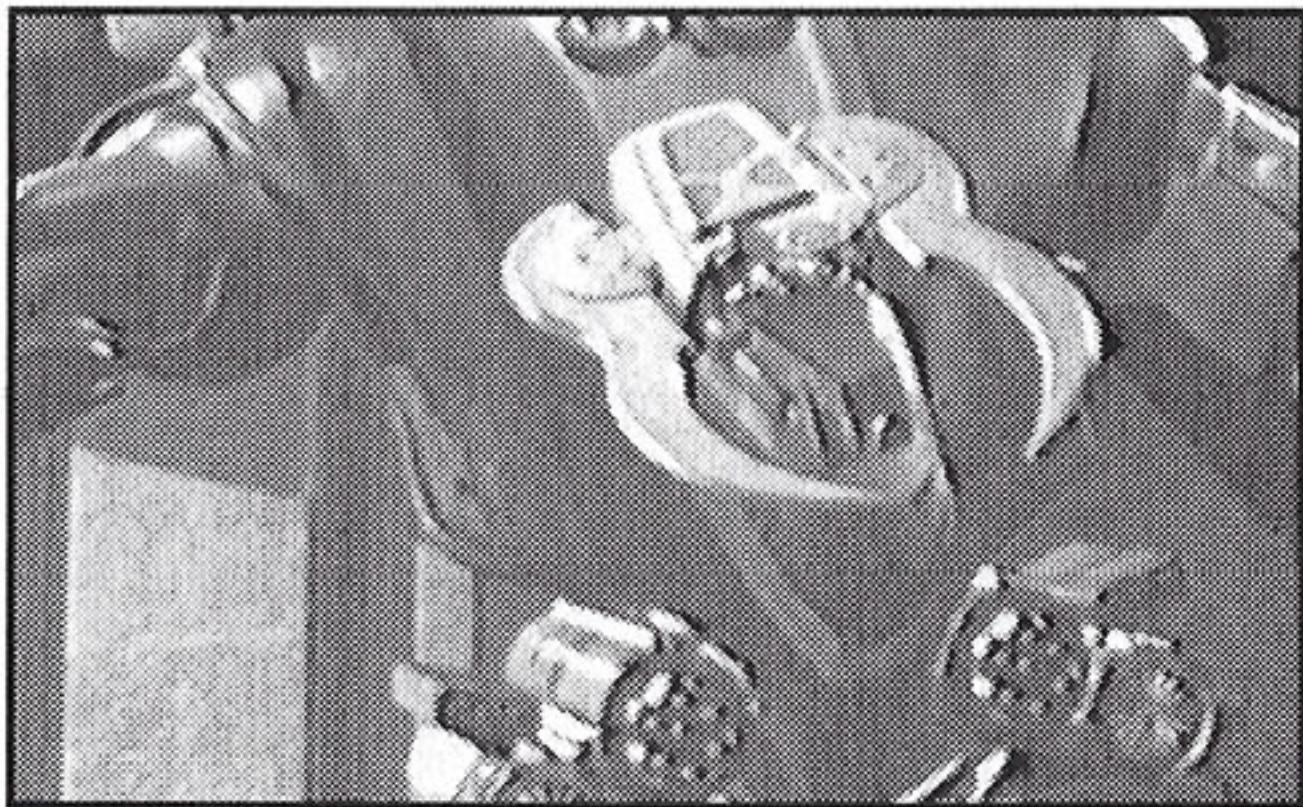
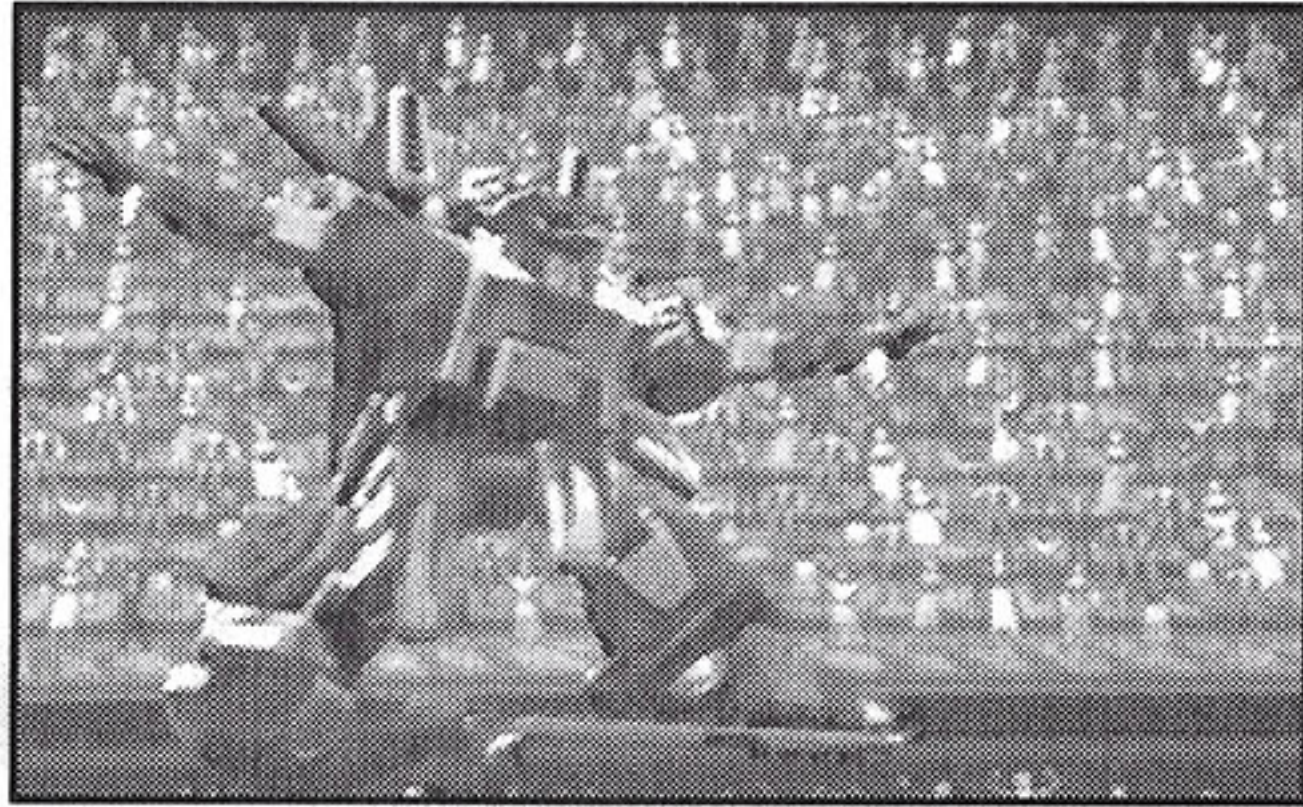
While snooping around an old Terra Novan temple to see if he could scrounge up a juicy piece of hardware or two, Budd Squires finds a secret underground laboratory containing some incredible HG technology.







## HEAVY GEAR (TV SERIES): SYNOPSES (Continued)



### PRODUCTION INFORMATION

**Heavy Gear**, Animated TV series, Season 2001-02: 40 x 30 min., first 26 episodes aired in syndication on 171 stations from 09-22-01 to 03-02-02, rated 7+. Dir.: Johnny Darrell, Tim Eldred, Sean Frewer, William Lau, Sean Osborne; Char. Des.: Fil Barlow; Developer & Story Ed.: Mark Hoffmeier, Richard Raynis, Mark Seidenberg; Techn. Dir.: Jason Osipa; Ass. Dir.: Elizabeth Rufenacht; Orig. Music: Wayne Boon, Jim Iatham; Spec. Effects: SFX Mainframe; Producers: Adelaide Productions, Mainframe Entertainment; Cast: Charles Shaughnessy (Wallis), Lukas Haas (Marcus), Greg Ellis (Rank, Bob Stonefire); Clancy Brown (Zerve, Vigon, Draven), Michael Chiklis (Augusta), David DeLuise (Dirx), Sarah Douglas (Ryka), Nicholas Guest (Groonz), Ed Hopkins (Sebastian), Tom Kane (Greco), Clyde Kusatsu (Tachi), Karen Maruyama (Yoji), Keith Szarabajka (Serge), Vanessa Williams (Sonja), Jim Wise (Maddox), Dom DeLuise (Mayor Conn), Michael Harrington (Lt. Creet), Dublin James (Budd Squires), Joan Van Ark (Von Krieg). Nominated for the '02 Golden Reel Award for its sound editing. Based on *Heavy Gear* by Pierre Ouellette and Dream Pod 9. Licensed by Paradox Entertainment.

However, while rummaging around, Budd awakens a couple of aggressive dinosaur-like robots (named Guardian Gears) who follow him back to Orem. The Dragons manage to defeat the Guardian Gears and soon go back to the subterranean lab. Unfortunately, the Vanguard have already been there and Wallis has upgraded his "King Of Sting" HG to a whole new level of Gear crunching technology!...

### 15. Transformation

While the population of Orem are throwing a big party for the Dragons, the Vanguard suddenly attacks, then retreats, causing the Dragons to go after them in hot pursuit. Unfortunately for Marcus and the Dragons, Wallis is waiting for them in his newly upgraded "King Of Sting" and makes them regret their somewhat Gung-Ho decision. Marcus realizes that the only way they will keep the Vanguard off their case is to upgrade their own machines and the Dragons go back to his shop, only to find out that the Vanguard trashed the place, leaving just enough stuff to upgrade one Gear. After some discussion and a vote, the Dragons decide to upgrade Marcus' "Red Rover", finishing the job with only minutes left to show up for the next tournament. But "Red Rover" has some surprises of its own...

### 16. The Monster Of The Maze

This time, the tournament consists in entering a maze of tunnels, where a Gear-eating monster is believed to be wandering, ever hungry. Wallis goes in first and becomes appetizer for the monster... Or so everybody is led to believe. Marcus then enters the maze, only to be followed by his team mates, who do not want him to end up like Wallis. The Dragons carefully explore the maze, but fall into a trap, where a huge bio-mechanical creature (an experiment by the Northern military), known as the Minotaur, jumps them. At first, Zerve's groovy positive waves seem to have an effect, but then Dirx fires and all hell breaks loose. The Dragons escape the maze, but are followed by the Minotaur. It is at this point that Wallis shows up again (much to Rank's joy...) and the two teams join their forces to get rid of the giant creature...

### 17. The Scavenger Hunt

Maddox's next challenge is a scavenger hunt, sponsored by everyone's favorite breakfast cereal, Gear Crispy. The two teams race with abandon and give everything they have. However, for once, the Vanguard's dirty tricks pretty much work and the Dragons lose the hunt. A proud Wallis is then awarded the

trophy for his team's magnificent performance: a toy train, a special, numbered edition, just for him! Wallis is, needless to say, not jumping for joy...

### 18. The Ultra Duel

Wallis has a brand new toy, a gift from Colonel Rika: a rifle that fires an unbreakable energy field around your adversary. Marcus having felt the effect of the weapon, he and the Dragons decide that Wallis using this weapon is certainly a rules violation, but since Maddox seems to be rather lax when applying the rules with the Vanguard, they have no choice but to steal it from him to destroy it. For this, they have to go to the North's capital, Valeria, and break into the Vanguard's headquarters. Unfortunately, Sebastian gets a violent anxiety attack (he does not like labs) and the Dragons are captured and thrown in jail... Forever! However, thanks to another of Sebastian's anxiety attacks, they break out of their cells and try to escape. Maddox, hearing about this event, turns it into a tournament (of course...): if the Dragons manage to escape, they are free! But Marcus also thinks about Wallis' new weapon...

### 19. Under Orem

The next tournament is about each of the teams being able to load up as much Tiranium fuel as possible, then return to the arena. The mission given to Groonz by the Major is to make sure that the Dragons do NOT make it out of the underground. Unfortunately, Groonz does his job a little too well, as he and Marcus are trapped in a cave-in... with Groonz's super-powerful bomb, a lovely piece of hardware he named "Clarice" (Groonz IS a freak...)! Now the two of them must work together to get out of there...

### 20. Gear Scout Jamboree

Each of the two teams now take care of "Gear Scouts", a troop of young admirers/ future HG pilots they have taken under their wing. The Dragon Scouts are adamant in joining the Dragons for their next tournament, but Marcus convinces them to stay behind. Or so he thinks. While racing to the top of an icy mountain, Marcus and Sebastian have to take care of two immensely important packages: two little kids who are having way too much fun to see what danger they are really in...

### 21. Rolling Brawl

Marcus and Rank's contracts with Maddox are very clear: he has ALL rights on them and can force them to do pretty much what he wants. And what Maddox wants





by Martin Ouellette

# SPOTLIGHT: HEAVY GEAR 23

## HEAVY GEAR (TV SERIES): SYNOPSES (Continued)

is a kid's TV show. Called "Rover & Ranks", the rather brainless series is a parody of the two's adversity, with Marcus always coming out the winner. With this commitment dropped on them, neither of the two can help their team win the next tournament, something called "Brawl Ball". Rank being the champion of this game (and he IS pretty good at it!), he is a little frustrated not to be able to participate. But when Marcus sees that the Vanguard are applying their dirty tricks tactics against his friends, he breaks his contract and goes out to help them, soon followed by Rank...

### 22. All-Star Gears

Maddox has decided to try something new: create an All-Star Heavy Gear Team. To do so, the two teams will run a race together and at every lap, the last Gear to cross the line will be taken out of the lineup. The final result is this: Marcus and Wallis (of course) will lead Sonja, Dirx, Rank and Yoji into the temple ruins to fight against three specially created bio-mechanical Dino Gears. But Serge and Groonz are not happy about having been left out of the party and they decide to help the Vanguard. Fortunately for the Dragons, Zerve and Tachi are keeping an eye on them. Now the All-Star team's only concern are the Dinos...

### 23. Close Encounters Of The Gear Kind

While on a training run, the Dragons spot an unidentified object, seemingly a ship, hurtling through the atmosphere. Arriving at the crash site, the Dragons encounter the ship's single crew member, a huge metallic creature with a lot of teeth. The Dragons try to become friends with the rather scary creature, when the Vanguard, who had spotted the ship and sneaked in, fire on it, letting it believe that the Dragons fired. The alien starts running after the Dragons, showing its incredible ability to absorb energy. Later, as the two teams begin their next tournament, it soon becomes obvious that the Vanguard has teamed up with the creature. However, no one really knows what the creature is really after and the Vanguard's new ally may not be as good a team player as they first thought...

### 24. Under Water, Under Siege

Zerve and Ranks have made a bet: the first to get a tooth of the legendary Lake Belus monster is THE man! Maddox has made a tournament out of this bet and now the two teams have to go down the lake's murky water and find the hypothetical monster. After fighting squids and some kind of metal-eating fish, the two teams are pretty much ready to give up the search. Until the monster, not so hypothetical after all, attacks

them, that is. Of course, Rank would rather run than face the truly huge creature (who swallows him and his Gear anyway...), but Zerve's positive waves make him stand his ground and get the teeth. All Rank has to show for this rather dangerous little adventure is a Gear covered with slimy stomach fluid. Yuck!...

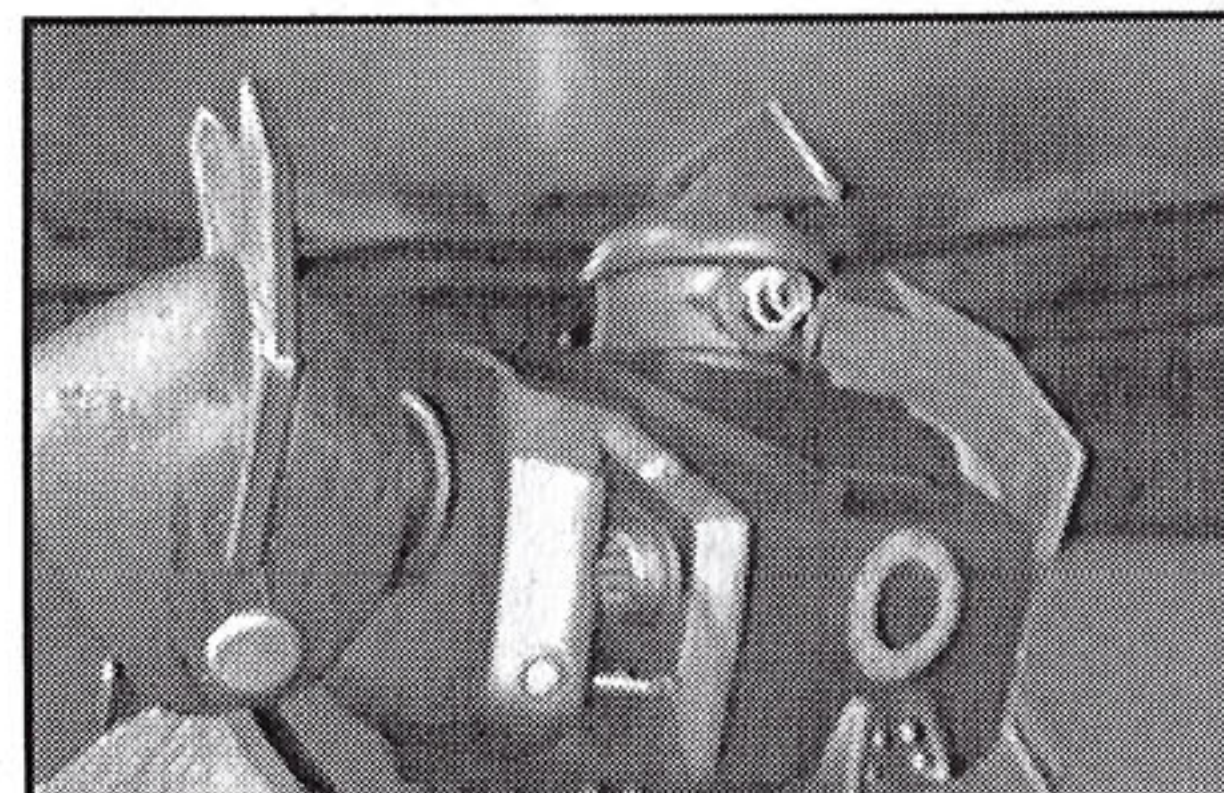
### 25. The Zero Racer

Marcus is the Heavy Gear Champion Of The World. He is Good, he is fast, he is in the zone! Until the "Zero Racer" shows up, that is! The red Gear has shown him up during a demonstration and Marcus is not about to let the red marvel and its mysterious pilot make a fool out of him again. While racing on an out-of-service Maglev train line, the two teams have their hands full with the "Zero Racer", who really seems to be playing for keeps. However, when Groonz blows up the track and forces all the Gears to jump on the functioning Maglev line, the two teams have to find a way to get out and quick, for a train is coming straight for them! If Marcus thinks this is a bad surprise, wait until he discovers who pilots the "Red Racer"!

### 26. The Spider's Web

When Wallis gets stomped by Marcus one time too many, he takes the decision no one ever thought he would take: he retires! Now Yoji is the leader of the Vanguard and she is determined to make the Dragons' life miserable. The next tournament being "The Spider's Web", her job will not be too difficult! Soon, only Marcus and Sonja remain on the Web (which DOES look like a spider's web!) and Sonja goes after them with her Vibro-Whip. Who cares if she does not have the right to use it? However, the two Dragons manage to beat her. This is when a huge Spider Strider makes its entry and goes after them! Guess who is at the controls?...

- 27. The Big Round-Up
- 28. The Rise & Fall Of The Heavy Gear Empire
- 29. The Space Race
- 30. Gearrasic Park
- 31. Heavy Gear Smashdown
- 32. Tournament Xtreme
- 33. The Vanguard Storm
- 34. When Gears Collide
- 35. The Most Dangerous Gear
- 36. Gear-Lympiad
- 37. Marcus Rover Highlights
- 38. Of Monster And Mayhem
- 39. The Third Degree
- 40. Gears Of Fire



## MEDIAGRAPHY

### SCIENCE FICTION ROLEPLAYING & TACTICAL GAME

There are tons of HG books & supplements from Dream Pod 9 ([www.dp9.com](http://www.dp9.com)) — not to mention the old card game, *Heavy Gear Fighter* — but let's start with *Heavy Gear Rulebook 2nd Ed.* (#DP9-101, 1997, SC, 240pg, \$29.95 US, ISBN 1-896776-32-9) and *Heavy Gear Duelist's Handbook 2nd Ed.* (DP9-105, 2000, SC, 128pg, \$20.95 US, ISBN 1-896776-95-7).

### VIDEO GAME

Activision ([www.activision.com](http://www.activision.com)) has licensed and produced two computer video games for PC: *Heavy Gear* and *Heavy Gear II*.

### FIGURES

Fusion Models ([www.dp9.com/fusion](http://www.dp9.com/fusion)) produced a 1/35 Kodiak resin kit (not available anymore) as well as diorama pieces. DP9 ([www.dp9.com](http://www.dp9.com)) also produced over sixty sets or individual *Heavy Gear* miniatures, including the gears from the TV series.

### WEB PAGES

For more information you can check: [www.dp9.com](http://www.dp9.com); [www.mashsomemetal.com](http://www.mashsomemetal.com); [hgconfluence.cjb.net](http://hgconfluence.cjb.net); [epguides.com/HeavyGear/](http://epguides.com/HeavyGear/); [us.imdb.com/Title?0274262](http://us.imdb.com/Title?0274262).