d20 mecha

GIANT TRANSFORMING ROBOTS

and a million other designs....



d20 Mecha **provides a detailed d20 System point-based creation toolkit for all things mecha:**

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- **giant transforming robots**
- **military assault vehicles**
- **impenetrable fortresses**
- **mechanical monsters**
- **sleek power armour**
- **galaxy space cruisers**
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- **pirate sailing ships**
- **combat jet fighters**
- **speedy hot rods**
- **and much more....**

An essential companion for any d20 System game

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GUARDIANS OF ORDER, INC

秩序護衛

For use with all

d20 system

Games

besm d20

d20 System game material requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons®, Third Edition Core Books, published by Wizards of the Coast®

d20 mecha

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d20 Mecha is designed to add flexible, multi-genre mecha design and combat rules to the d20 System. With these rules in hand, you have a unified set of mechanics to use in games featuring any kind of robot or vehicle-operating character. You can create giant robots, starships, tanks, jet fighters, helicopters, pirate galleons, cars, cycles, submarines, powered armour — even weird inventions like burrowing moles, ether flyers, or mechanical dragons!

We have designed *d20 Mecha* to be fast and flexible. The vehicle creation system was inspired by the original *Big Robots, Cool Starships* supplement for the anime game *Big Eyes, Small Mouth*, but these rules have been rebuilt from the ground up to integrate seamlessly with the d20 System. In the process they've become less abstract, gaining an additional level of precision. This means that otherwise similar types of vehicles, such as two sports cars, can now "feel" quite different.

Another objective of our design was to ensure mecha created by this system could be compatible with vehicle statistics in other popular d20 System games, whether in the heroic fantasy, modern day, or science fiction genres. Different d20 System games often handle characteristics like vehicle manoeuvrability, damage, armour protection, or cost in quite distinct ways, so we've included suggestions for customising such statistics, with a range of choices rather than dogmatic values. *d20 Mecha* is an excellent addition to our *BESM d20 RPG*, but is compatible with any d20 System game.

d20 Mecha also includes a set of mecha-related character classes, Feats, and a complete vehicular combat system, but these are just options as well. We expect many GMs will already have a favourite set of rules that covers vehicular chases or vehicle-using character classes ... but we also hope the core of this supplement — the design system — will prove useful as a powerful tool for creating balanced robots, suits, and vehicles for nearly any setting.

Ultimately, the purpose of *d20 Mecha* is to help players and GMs take their game in new directions by providing a wide array of play-balanced options for using mecha of all sorts. After all, no matter how awe-inspiring the machine, it really has just one purpose: to carry the characters into adventure, and make that action as dramatic as possible!

David Pulver
July 2003

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d20 mecha — For Free!

d20 Mecha is part of an unstoppable force known as Open Source Gaming, which generates a plethora of d20 System game rules and text that can be distributed freely with very few restrictions. Guardians Of Order supports this movement and has made a System Reference Document (SRD) containing all Open Game Content from *d20 Mecha* available on our website to everyone — free of charge!

Download the *d20 Mecha SRD* at:
http://www.guardiansorder.com/d20

We also make it easy for companies to publish and market products compatible with *d20 Mecha* through a low-cost trademark license. You can even have Guardians Of Order distribute and sell your *d20 Mecha* product for you through our creator-owned publishing imprint, Magnum Opus — and you keep most of the profits!

Learn about publishing your own *d20 Mecha* book at:
http://www.guardiansorder.com/magnumopus



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INTRODUCTION



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Mecha Introduction

"Mecha" is the term used by Japanese animators and fans to refer to the mechanical designs that appear in Japanese animation, or anime. A mecha can be a giant robot, a suit of powered armour, or a vehicle of some other sort, such as a spaceship, tank, submarine, or motorcycle.

d20 Mecha provides a means of describing all manner of mecha in game terms, and offers simple, playable systems for using them in adventures. Although its primary focus is on anime-style giant robots and powered armour, *d20 Mecha* can be used to create everything from sports cars to sky galleons.

Powered Suits and Giant Robots

The concept of a suit of powered armour was first given form in Robert Heinlein's 1959 novel *Starship Troopers*, which featured "mobile infantry" wearing power-assisted space suits equipped with jet packs and heavy weapons. During the 1960s, the US military began experimenting with a real-life version, the man-amplifying exoskeleton, and while they proved too hard to control for the technology of the day, they helped inspire a host of comic book characters such as Marvel's Iron Man.

What about the classic mecha, the humanoid robot with a pilot riding inside? This is a more recent invention. Although remote-control robots had long been a part of comics, film and animation, the idea originated in the fertile mind of Japanese manga and anime creator Go Nagai, for the pioneering TV series *Mazinger Z* (1972). With a human in the cockpit, action could now take place on two levels: dramatic mecha battles and soap opera involving their ordinary human pilots. The Mazinger Z robot also had numerous special weapons built into it. Latter series introduced combining and transforming robots that could shift forms or merge together. An entire genre was born — teams of agents using super-powered robots, a craze that soon spread to America with shows like *Voltron* and the (newly reborn) *Transformers*.

Giant robots came of age with *Mobile Suit Gundam* (1979), the first giant robot show to tell a "serious" war story. Instead of its robots being unique inventions run by secret agencies, they were mass-produced combat machines, fighting in battle alongside tanks or airplanes. While retaining the trappings of 20-metre tall robots and dramatic space battles, its core was a hard-edged science fiction story focusing on character development in the crucible of war. Gundam's success created a surge in the popularity of mecha shows, culminating in *Macross* (1982, dubbed as *Robotech*), which heightened the elements of soap opera romance already implicit in the genre and introduced an element of plausibility — with its breathtaking Valkyrie fighters — into the transforming robot. They soon transcended anime to spawn many RPGs, novels, videos, and computer games, such as the long-running *BattleTech* franchise, and, of course, this game.

Today, the Gundam and Macross franchises are still alive and well, with countless sequels and spin offs. Mecha stories are of broader scope than just superhero or war stories, however. Examples include the heroic fantasy of *Vision of Escaflowne*, the apocalyptic psycho-drama of *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, the police saga *Patlabor*, the comedy space opera *Martian Successor Nadesico*,

•• Designer's Note ••

Mecha and d20 System Classes

Barbarian

d20 Mecha *can be used to create Viking longships, chariots, and similar archaic technology as well as advanced machines. Some anime and science fiction novels, however, feature Barbarians who operate higher tech level starships or robots that are magical in origin or the remnants of a lost civilisation.*

Bard

A number of anime feature rock stars or idol singers who double as warriors in powered armour or giant robots, often as guerrillas or vigilantes with a "secret identity." A multi-classed Bard/Mecha Pilot is quite possible.

Druids or Rangers

These classes generally avoid machines and prefer to fight on foot or while riding animals ... but what if a mecha was actually an organic, living machine?

Fighter

The Fighter class is also very appropriate for giant robot pilots who specialise in close combat, such as mecha-gladiators, aristocratic mecha-knights, or power-armoured vigilantes.

Paladins

In a mecha-centred campaign, the GM may allow Paladins to gain a magical mecha instead of a steed, or find one as the culmination of a quest. A Paladin's mecha will often have the Summonable Ability.

Rogues

A mecha is usually too obvious for a Rogue, but even in a medieval setting, a pirate or smuggler may own a small, fast boat with black cloth sails. In more modern day situations, Rogues may want fast cars, speed boats, planes, or starships for smuggling and getaways ... probably stolen, of course.

Clerics, Sorcerers, and Wizards

At high Levels, these classes may use magic to create mecha rather than normal, mundane constructs. Examples can include magical flying ship, mechanical steam-golems, or enchanted suits of armour that magnify their wearer's strength. The creation of such powerful items are usually best left to non-player characters, but their capture or destruction could be the goal of an adventure.

BESM d20 classes

All of the anime-inspired classes detailed in BESM d20 *may be found aboard a large mecha that serves as a base for the characters (like a starship), or be reluctantly drafted into a conflict involving mecha. In particular, Students often end up piloting giant robots, often eventually multi-classing as Mecha Pilots if they survive long enough. Hot Rod characters may design their cars or other vehicles using the* d20 Mecha *system. Adventurers, Gun Bunnies, or Martial Artists in modern day or science fiction settings may eventually acquire a mecha (often a suit of powered armour, helicopter, etc.) for emergencies.*

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