

Running Chaos Campaign Using MekHQ

Written for MHQ v0.48/0.49.6

Guide by Ulysses Sockdrawer



Introduction & Thanks

I've written this guide as follow-on to my guide to using MekHQ to run ATB or StratCon as a multiplayer GM tool.

For a long time, I found the Chaos Campaign ruleset confusing and hard to follow, particularly when trying to compare its terminology to that used by MekHQ and the Campaign Operations sourcebook.

This guide draws on my experience running Chaos Campaign using the Battle of Tukayyid source book. The main focus will be on converting some of Chaos Campaign's terminology into that used in MekHQ, as well as how MekHQ can be used as an effective GM tool for the system's simplified accounting and repair processes.

I would like to extend my thanks to the following people/groups:

- Hammer, for encouraging me to write this guide.
- Corporal Kevek for an excellent series of Tukayyid games using the Chaos Campaign system.
- The entire MegaMek dev team for making fantastic software
- CGL, FASA, and anybody and everybody who has ever been involved in making Battletech the awesome franchise it is today.

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What do I need to know before I run Chaos Campaign in MekHQ?

First things first, at the very least you'll want a copy of the Chaos Campaign rules. These are free (thanks CGL!) and can be found on their website as a PDF here:

<https://store.catalystgamelabs.com/products/battletech-chaos-campaign-succession-wars>

Next, this guide assumes you're comfortable with MekHQ as a piece of software, particularly in some of the features offered by the GM mode. If you're unsure, ask in the Discord (feel free to @ me) and somebody will be happy to help.

You may also want any number of other source books or supplementals to drive your campaign. CGL have published a large number of these for most eras of Battletech so you shouldn't be short of ideas with such a rich universe to play with.

Glossary of Terms

Chaos Campaign (CC) uses its own lexicon which is very different to that used by MekHQ (MHQ). For the avoidance of doubt, I've broken down the most common/confusing CC terms with their MHQ parallels:

| Chaos Campaign | MekHQ |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Campaign | Mission |
| Track | Scenario |
| Battlefield Support Point (BSP) | N/A – not present in Total Warfare/MegaMek. |
| Warchest Points (WP) | C-bills are the closest equivalent in MHQ |
| Support Point (SP) | Not trackable in MHQ |

Who needs a MekHQ file if we're playing Chaos Campaign?

Each force in your campaign (either multiplayer, or single player against the bot) will need its own MekHQ save file. This becomes important when it comes to accounting, and handling salvage, losses, and personnel.

For a guide on how to use MekHQ in this way, please see my original campaign guide for ATB/StratCon, as a lot of the same principles apply.

Setting Up Your MekHQ File

Before you begin playing, you'll need to set up your MekHQ file, particularly your campaign options. Make sure the majority of these are to your liking before you begin playing.

Make sure you have GM mode enabled at all times when working in MekHQ for this campaign. All players will need to enable this to ensure they can manipulate the suite in the ways needed to support Chaos Campaign.

You will want to disable options relating to the following:

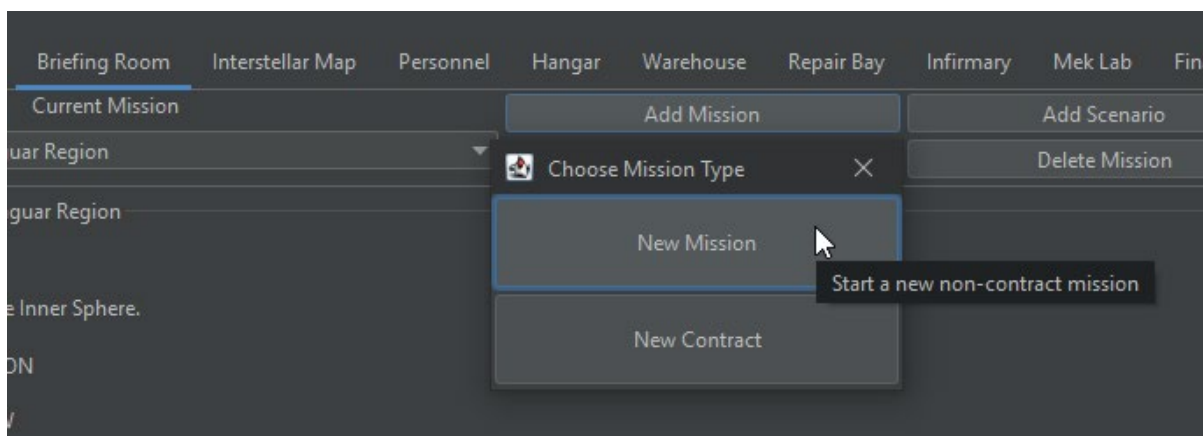
- C-bill costs for purchasing units or parts in the Finances tab.
- Skill Randomisation for newly acquired personnel, to prevent them acquiring SPAs or secondary skills on joining.
- XP gain should be disabled in the Experience tab as Chaos Campaign uses Warchest/Support points to purchase pilot skill upgrades.
- Repair and maintenance checks (except for the 'Use Quirk' option if desired).
- Against the Bot/StratCon.
- Any delay to delivery time and acquisition rolls to acquire equipment in the Supplies and Acquisition tab. Planetary Acquisition should also be disabled.

Optional rules to enable:

- Quirks (Repair and Maintenance tab)
- Special Pilot Abilities and Edge (Personnel tab)
- MekHQ's medical system (Medical tab), although this is not recommended with Chaos Campaign due to the complexity and its time based system.
- Tech limits, as desired for your era.

Setting Up the Campaign

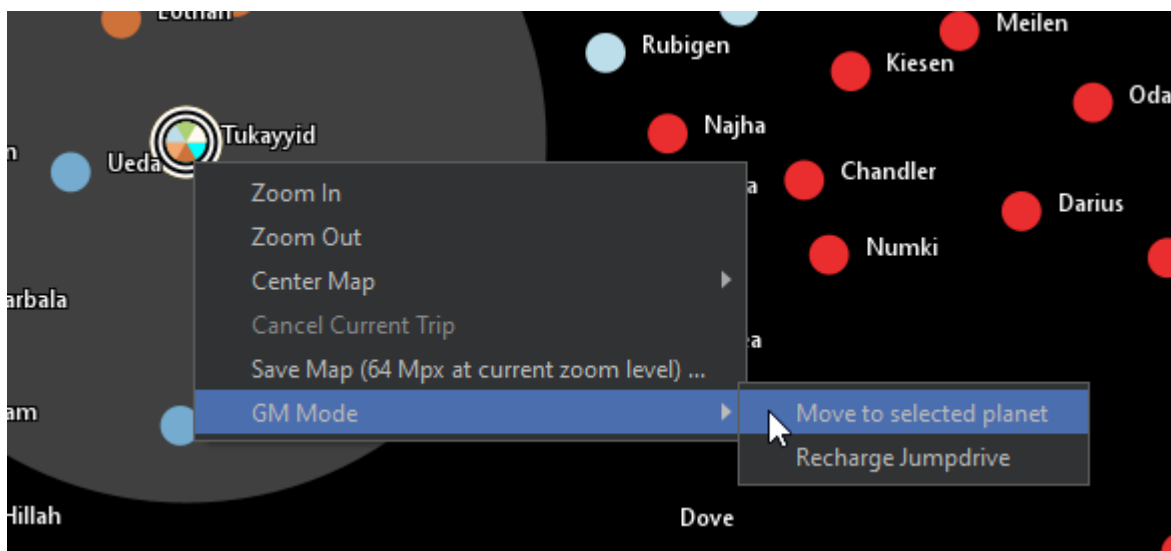
When you set up the campaign for the first time in each MekHQ save file, you will want to make sure you create a 'Mission' and not a 'Contract' in the briefing room.



The 'Mission' setup in MekHQ is simple and does not try to make an automated C-Bill payment to the force every month.

Each MHQ file will need a 'Mission' created – I would recommend using the name of the campaign (e.g. 'Battle of Tukayyid – Smoke Jaguar Zone' or 'Battle for New Avalon, 3067'), as well as having the planet set.

Using the Interstellar Map tab, find the star system chosen for your campaign, right click on the start system, and use the GM dialogue to 'Move to selected planet'. This will place the MHQ campaign on that planet. This is more of a fluff detail, but one that is nice to have.



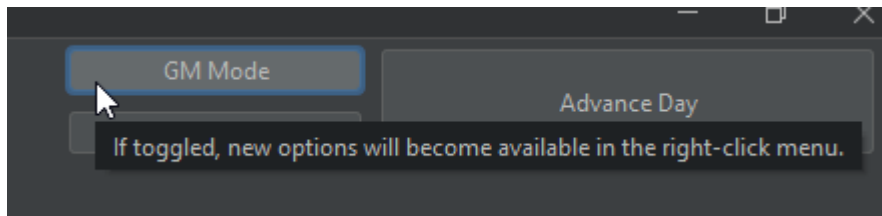
The next thing to do will be to set up your force's budget for the campaign. We will do this in the Finances tab in MekHQ.

Warchest Points & the Finances Tab

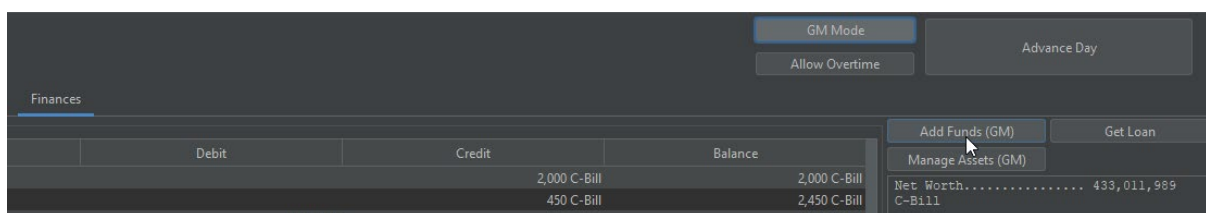
MekHQ is set up to run mercenary campaigns using c-bills, but with a little creativity, the Finances tab can be made to track Warchest Points effectively.

The way to do this will likely appear a little counter-intuitive at first, but with a little practice should become familiar.

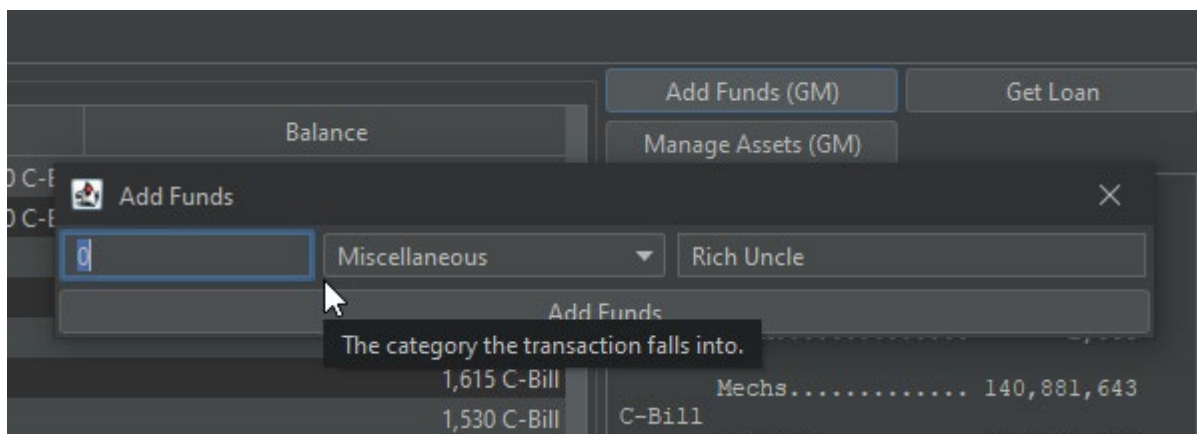
This is the tab where GM mode is most important. Without it, you will not be able to adjust the finances in the way needed to run Chaos Campaign.



The button you will use most often when running Chaos Campaign is the slightly misleading 'Add Funds (GM)'.

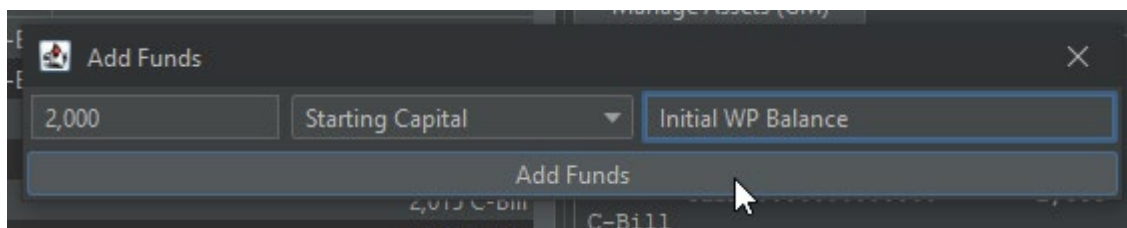


When clicked, this will open a dialogue:



We will use MHQ's accounting system for c-bills to represent Warchest Points. Typically a Chaos Campaign force will start with either 1,000 or 2,000 WPs.

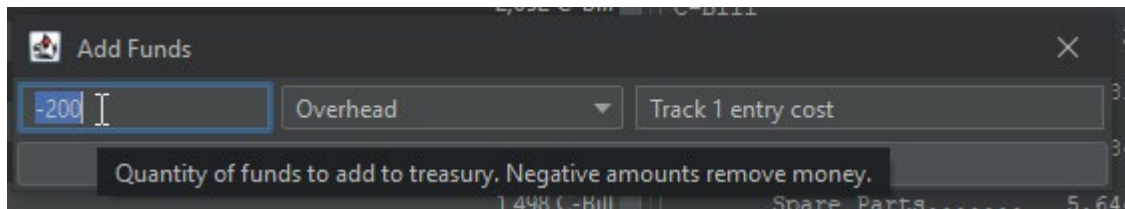
You will add these by entering '2000' in the left most box of the open dialogue, setting the middle dropdown to 'Starting Capital', and the right-hand box to something like 'Initial WP Balance' (or whatever wording works for you).



You will see this number reflected in the ledger taking up most of the Finances window as 2000 c-bills.

During your campaign, you will use the same Add Funds button and dialogue, entering either positive or negative numbers to add or subtract Warchest Points as needed.

By entering a negative number in the left-most box, MekHQ will subtract the number entered from the total:



As you play through your campaign and add or remove funds, you will end up with a detailed ledger which tells the story of your progress:

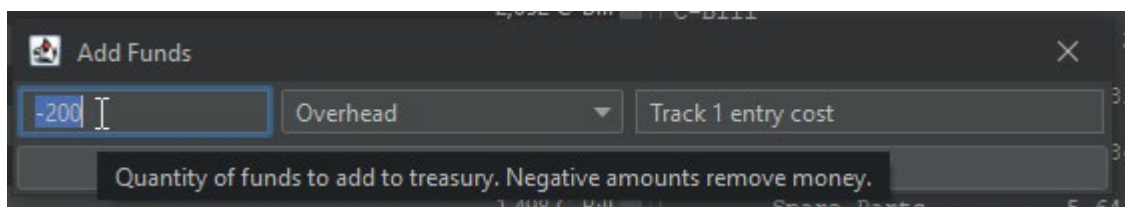
| Date | Category | Notes | Debit | Credit | Balance |
|------------|-------------------|---|------------|--------------|--------------|
| 3052-01-01 | Starting Capital | Starting WP | | 2,000 C-Bill | 2,000 C-Bill |
| 3052-01-01 | Contract Payments | Achieved 3 x Objectives - Soft Landing | | 450 C-Bill | 2,450 C-Bill |
| 3052-01-01 | Overhead | Soft Landing Track Cost | 300 C-Bill | | 2,150 C-Bill |
| 3052-01-01 | Repairs | Repair and Rearm Scenario 1 Mechs | 98 C-Bill | | 2,052 C-Bill |
| 3052-01-01 | Repairs | Aerospace Repairs | 37 C-Bill | | 2,015 C-Bill |
| 3052-01-01 | Overhead | Pushback - Racine Delta Track 2 Entry | 400 C-Bill | | 1,615 C-Bill |
| 3052-01-01 | Repairs | Track 2 Repairs and Ammunition | 85 C-Bill | | 1,530 C-Bill |
| 3052-01-01 | Repairs | Aerospace repairs | 23 C-Bill | | 1,507 C-Bill |
| 3052-01-01 | Overhead | Healing injured mechwarrors | 9 C-Bill | | 1,498 C-Bill |
| 3052-01-01 | Salaries | 2 x pilot training | 40 C-Bill | | 1,458 C-Bill |
| 3052-01-01 | Overhead | Racine Delta - Track 3 - Recon | 200 C-Bill | | 1,258 C-Bill |
| 3052-01-01 | Contract Payments | 2 x Objectives - Racine Track 3 | | 200 C-Bill | 1,458 C-Bill |
| 3052-01-01 | Repairs | Track 3 Repair & Rearm | 64 C-Bill | | 1,394 C-Bill |
| 3052-01-01 | Overhead | Mechwarrior healing | 3 C-Bill | | 1,391 C-Bill |
| 3052-01-01 | Overhead | 3 x Pilot Improvement | 80 C-Bill | | 1,311 C-Bill |
| 3052-05-02 | Overhead | Dinju Mountains - Track 1 - End Run | 300 C-Bill | | 1,031 C-Bill |
| 3052-05-02 | Repairs | Omnis mech configuration | 4 C-Bill | | 1,027 C-Bill |
| 3052-05-02 | Equipment Sale(s) | Dinju Track 1 - Draw | | 150 C-Bill | 1,177 C-Bill |
| 3052-05-02 | Repairs | Repairs | 120 C-Bill | | 1,057 C-Bill |
| 3052-05-02 | Overhead | Dinju Mountains - Track 2 Entry Cost | 300 C-Bill | | 757 C-Bill |
| 3052-05-02 | Contract Payments | Dinju Mountains - Track 2 - 1 x Objective | | 200 C-Bill | 957 C-Bill |
| 3052-05-02 | Repairs | Dinju Mountains - Track 2 Repairs | 60 C-Bill | | 897 C-Bill |
| 3052-05-02 | Contract Payments | Dinju Mountains - Track 3 (Strike) Entry | 200 C-Bill | | 697 C-Bill |
| 3052-05-02 | Overhead | Pilot Healing | 9 C-Bill | | 688 C-Bill |
| 3052-05-02 | Overhead | 2 x SPAs | 60 C-Bill | | 628 C-Bill |
| 3052-05-02 | Miscellaneous | Campaign Reset | 628 C-Bill | | 0 C-Bill |

When converting WPs to Support Points, you will need to keep track of these separately. As Support Points are not a permanent resource, and are instead spent as soon as they are acquired (at least in my experience of Chaos Campaign) this should not be a blocker.

Setting up a Track/Scenario

Once you have set up the Mission, given yourself an initial Warchest Point budget, and moved your forces to the appropriate planet, and created your forces and assigned them to your Table of Organisation & Equipment, you will want to roll for or select the 'track' or first scenario you will play.

Once you have selected the track, make sure you subtract the track entry cost from your warchest using the Add Funds button with a negative number.



There are a number of ways to do this in Chaos Campaign, whether rolling D6s to randomly select, or by playing a series of linked tracks in a carefully planned branching campaign, or simply picking the ones which fit your narrative best.

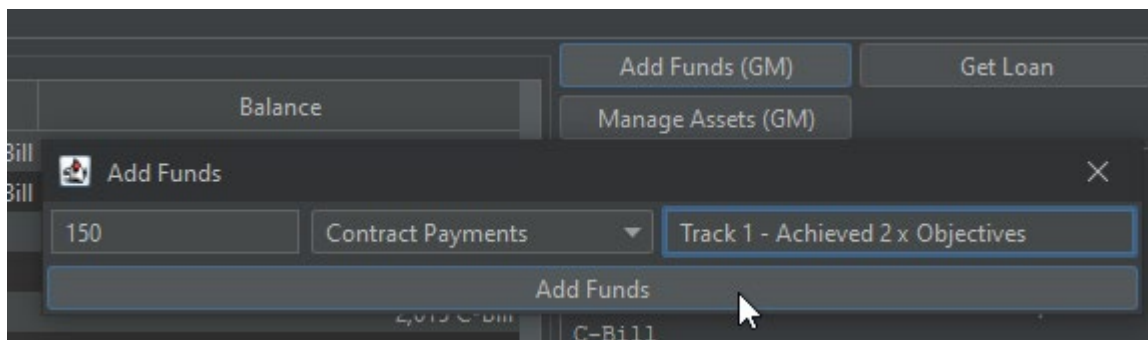
When you're ready to play, set up a scenario, assign units from the TO&E, and extract a .MUL file following the same steps I showed in my previous campaign guide. These aren't replicated here for brevity.

Post-Battle Results – WP earnings and SP conversion

Once you've completed playing your MegaMek game, or perhaps on tabletop if you're using MekHQ as a GM aid, you should either have a .MUL file as the outcome of your battle or printed record sheets with the results.

Use the 'Resolve Manually' button on the scenario in the briefing room (as shown in my previous guide) to assign any damage, injuries, and salvage as appropriate for your scenario.

Now you'll need to tally any earnings. We'll do this on the Finances tab again, using the Add Funds button. During play you've hopefully achieved some objectives. When adding WP earnings, I like to use the 'Contract Payments' selection in the middle dropdown to keep my accounting clear:



Repairing and Rearming your Units

Unless you're a miracle worker, your units will likely have suffered some kind of damage and fired some of their ammunition. At this point you'll need to consult either the campaign book you're using (Tukayyid for example) or the main Chaos Campaign ruleset for the conversion rates for turning WP into Support Points, and how many of these are needed to repair your 'mechs.

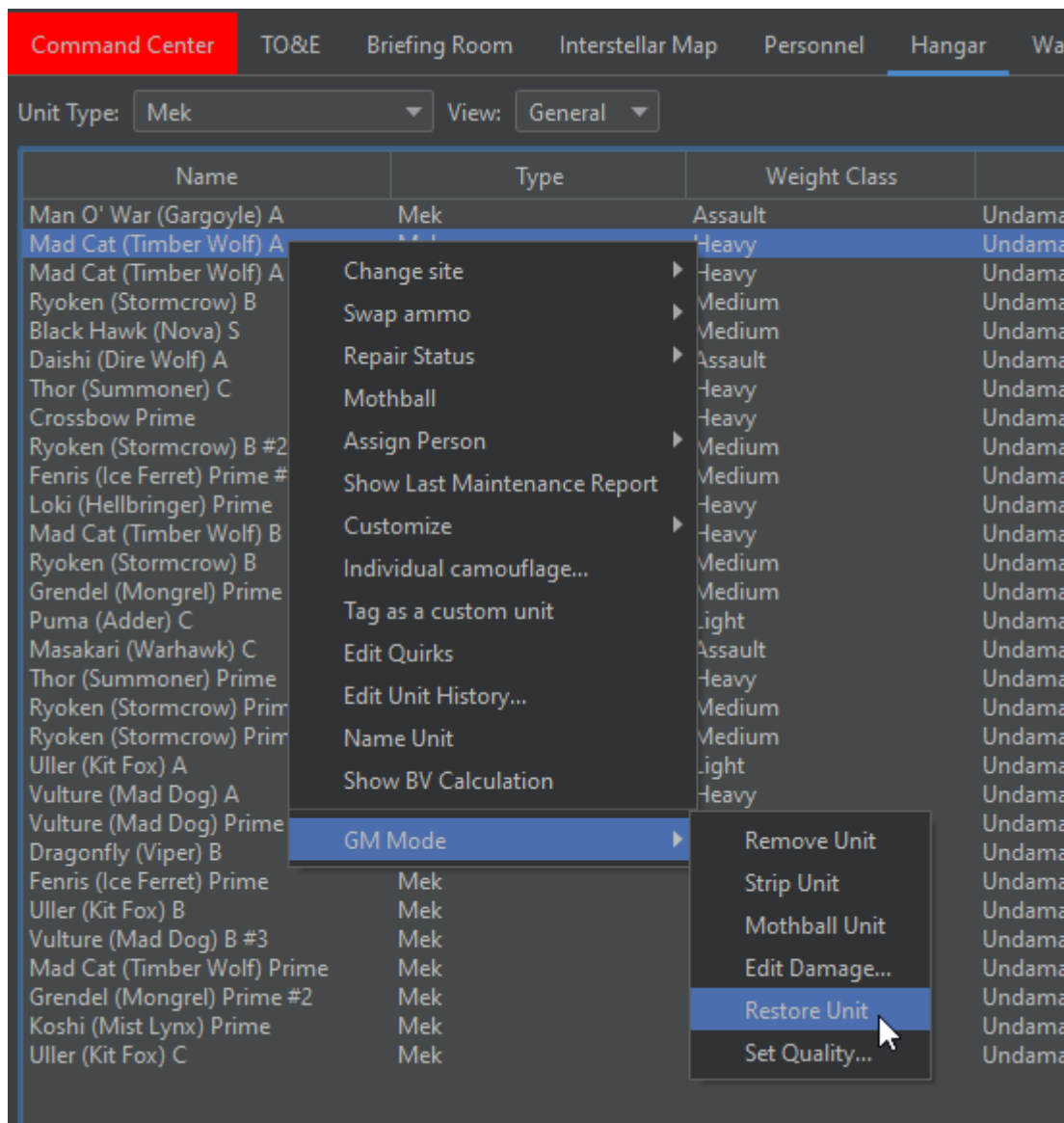
MekHQ doesn't currently have an effective way of tracking Support Points. However, since they are a resource which only lasts between tracks, this shouldn't be an issue. Use a calculator, notepad, or spreadsheet to work out how many SP you need, and then convert your WP by deducting them in your Finances tab again with the Add Funds button and a negative number.

As for repairing and rearming the units, there's a few different ways you might want to do this:

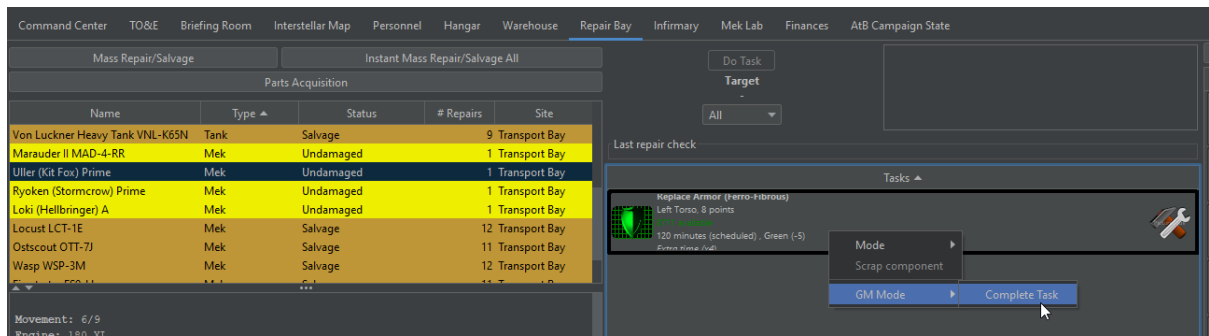
1. Right-clicking on the unit in the hangar and using the GM pop-out menu to 'Restore Unit'. This will remove all damage to the 'mech, replace any lost limbs, and fully replenish any ammunition.
 - a. NB – using this method will make it harder to manage any campaign restrictions on how long repair and rearming takes. Only use this method if you are going for the simplest possible layer of rearming or supply, or it doesn't matter how long repairs take for your use case.

2. Use MekHQ's 'Repair Bay' system, but use GM mode to both acquire the parts needed and to complete any repair jobs. This method will work best where the campaign states that units undergoing certain types of repair are unavailable for a while (perhaps for a track, or until the campaign enters a new phase or region).
 - a. NB – if using this method, you will need to be attentive to MekHQ's Warehouse tab. After each repair/rearm session you will need to clear out the warehouse, particularly of any ammunition. Chaos Campaign assumes that each time you rearm you purchase a full ton of ammunition, no matter how much or little you fired from the 'mech.

Example 1: Restoring units



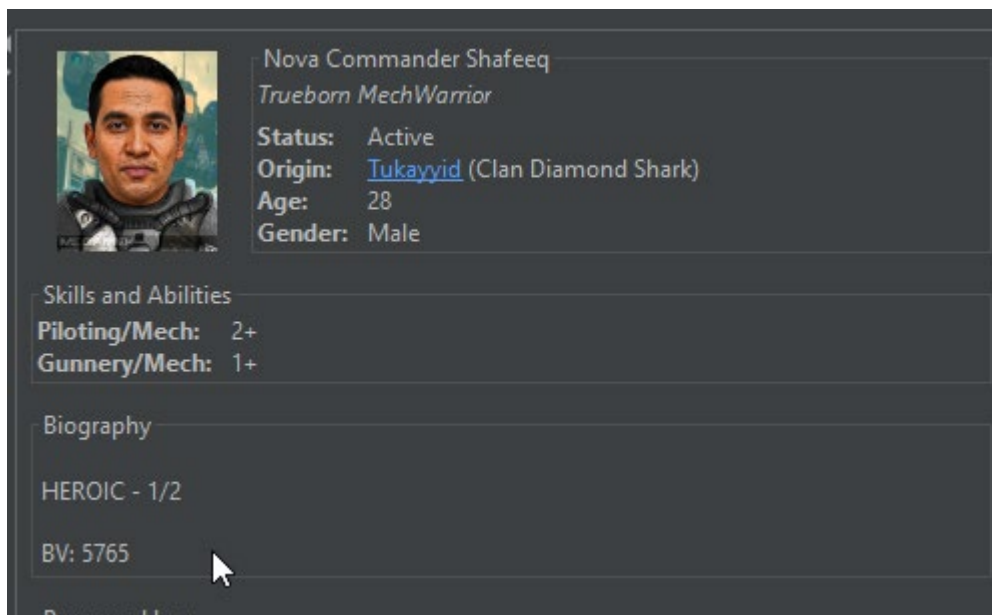
Example 2: Using the Repair Bay



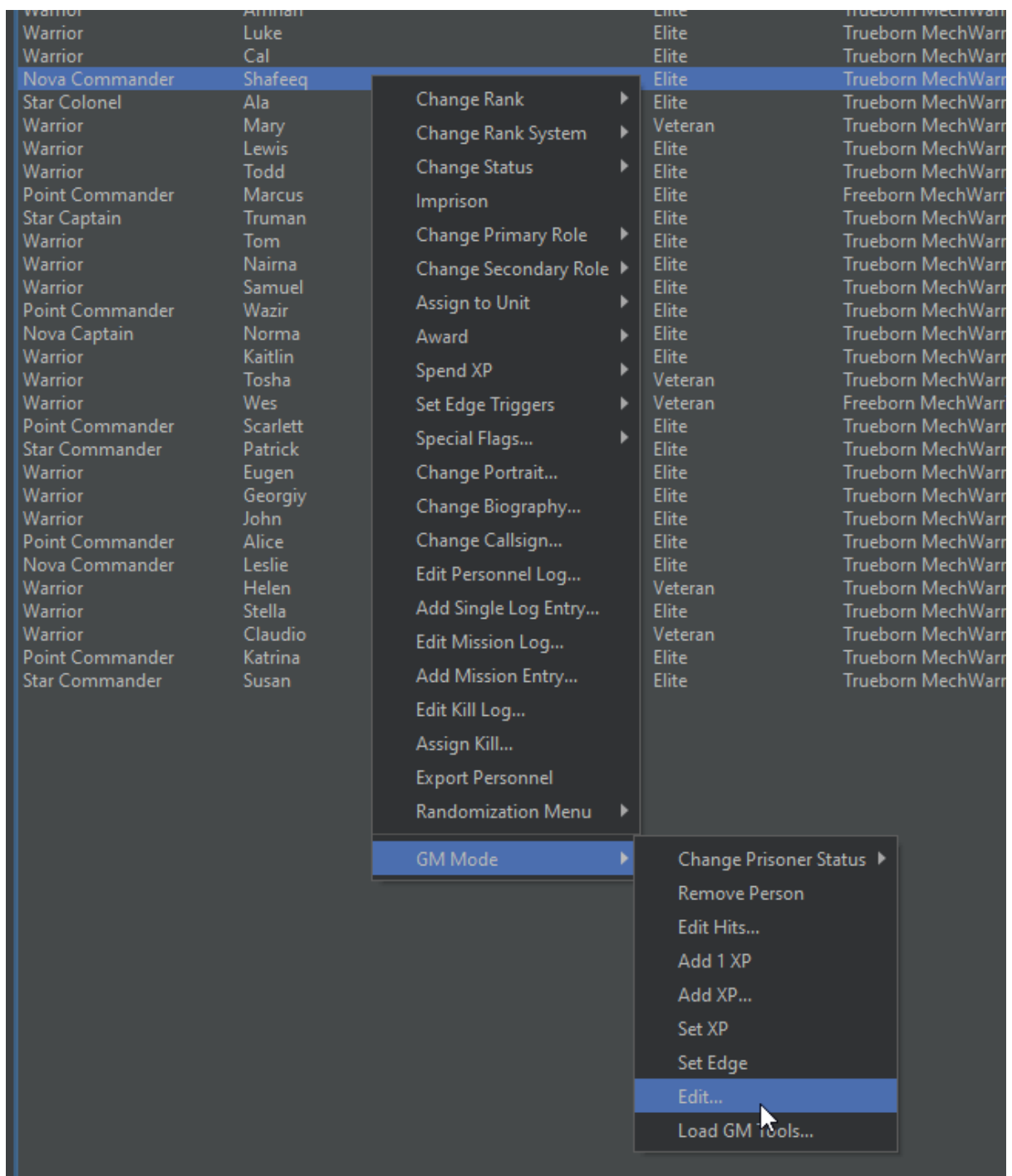
Helpful Tips and Tricks

Chaos Campaign scenarios often call for you to deploy a % of your force, typically 33% or 50%. However, as confirmed on the forums (<https://bg.battletech.com/forums/supplementary-rules/battle-of-tukayyid-force-attrition-and-defender-deployment/>), if you upgrade pilots their % of your force (in either BV or points) does not change.

To help keep track of a unit's original % of your force for deployment purposes, you can capture their original skill level and BV or points cost using the pilot's 'Biography' section in the Personnel tab:



This can be edited through the GM tools:



Customize Personnel

Name:

Bloodname:

Gender:

Origin Faction:

Origin System: ☐ Faction Specific

Origin Planet:

Phenotype: ☒ Clanner

Birthdate: 28 years old

Biography

HEROIC - 1/2

BV: 5765

Skills

| Skill | Level | Bonus |
|---|-------------|----------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Piloting/Mech | 2+ Level: 6 | Bonus: 0 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gunnery/Mech | 1+ Level: 6 | Bonus: 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Piloting/Aerospace | - Level: 0 | Bonus: 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gunnery/Aerospace | - Level: 0 | Bonus: 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Piloting/Ground Vehicle | - Level: 0 | Bonus: 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Piloting/VTOL | - Level: 0 | Bonus: 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Piloting/Naval | - Level: 0 | Bonus: 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gunnery/Vehicle | - Level: 0 | Bonus: 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Piloting/Aircraft | - Level: 0 | Bonus: 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gunnery/Aircraft | - Level: 0 | Bonus: 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Piloting/Spacecraft | - Level: 0 | Bonus: 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gunnery/Spacecraft | - Level: 0 | Bonus: 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Artillery | - Level: 0 | Bonus: 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gunnery/Battlesuit | - Level: 0 | Bonus: 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gunnery/Protomech | - Level: 0 | Bonus: 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small Arms | - Level: 0 | Bonus: 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anti-Mech | - Level: 0 | Bonus: 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tech/Mech | - Level: 0 | Bonus: 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tech/Mechanic | - Level: 0 | Bonus: 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tech/Aero | - Level: 0 | Bonus: 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tech/BA | - Level: 0 | Bonus: 0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tech/Vessel | - Level: 0 | Bonus: 0 |

This is the same dialogue you can also use to upgrade a pilot or crew's skills if you choose to spend Support Points.

Conclusion

I hope this guide was helpful. If you have any more questions or spot the need for a correction feel free to tag me in the MegaMek Discord.

Thanks for reading!