

# THE EVOLUTION OF THE VARIABLE FIGHTER

—by Benjamin L. Wright (with thanks to Koji Goto)

## What is a Variable Fighter?

*Macross*' revolutionary Variable Fighter (or VF) is a multi-purpose combat vehicle with superior maneuverability, the ability to operate on ground, in the air, or in space and has three distinct modes of operation: Fighter (a conventional jet plane), Battroid (humanoid) and Gerwalk (a hybrid form which combines the maneuverability of a Battroid with the speed of a Fighter—it stands for Ground Effective Reinforcement of Winged Armament with Locomotive Knee-joint).

*Macross*' VFs have always been topical. *Macross*' VF-1 Valkyrie was based on the most advanced fighter of the time (1982), the F-14 Tomcat. The VF-17 of *Macross 7* resembles the F-117 stealth fighter of Desert Storm fame, and the YF-21 and YF-19 of *Macross Plus*' Supernova Project echo the YF-23 and YF-22 which competed in USAF's Advanced Tactical Fighter trials a couple of years ago.

## Parallel Evolution:

### Takachihoff vs Shinsei

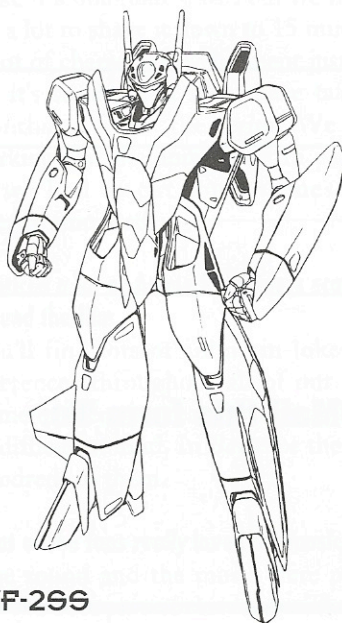
*Macross* has two timelines: the older *Macross II* timeline starts with the AD2009 story shared by the TV series and movie (*Do You Remember Love?*), followed by the *Macross Flashback 2012* OVA (AD 2012), the *Macross 2036* video game (AD2036) and the *Macross II* OVA series (AD2092). The more recent timeline also includes the shared TV and movie story and *Flashback 2012*, but then proceeds with *Macross Plus* (AD2040) and *Macross 7* (AD2045). The two timelines are mutually exclusive (refer to the *Macross Timeline* article which appeared last issue). The split occurs at the development of the VF-4, the VF-1's successor.

January, 2009: all Valkyries had been assigned to the SDF-1 to undergo further tests, when the appearance of Breetai's fleet brought about an impromptu combat test. A great deal of combat data on the Valkyrie's was collected and processed by the Stonewell and Belcom corporations, and applied to their successor to the VF-1. In May, 2009 they began work on Project VF-4, which called for a non-transformable fighter based on the VF-1 but optimized for space combat. (The war seemed entirely space-based; ground-capable anti-Zentraedi vehicles appeared unnecessary.) However, the VF-4 team were killed (and almost all data lost) when the Zentraedi bombarded the Earth's surface.

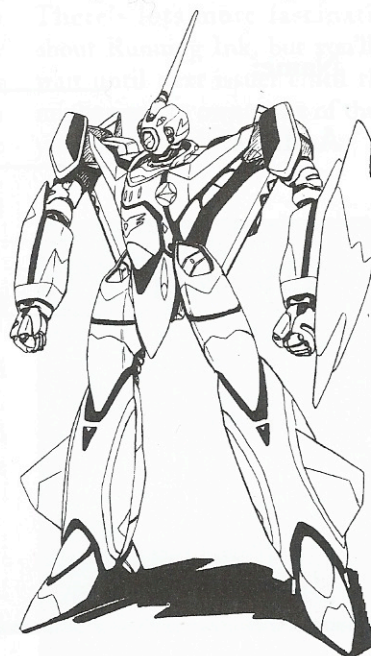
The surviving engineers were aboard *Macross*, and they had only fragmentary data on the VF-4 project. Here occurs the *M II-M 7* continuity split; according to *Macross II*, these engineers had been work-

ing under Doctor H. Takachihoff to design the VE-1 Elintseeker. After the war, they formed the Takachihoff Company and revived the still-incomplete VF-4 project. Dr. Takachihoff dies in 2030, but his company becomes the new "first name" in VF design.

In *Macross 7*, the same engineers went to work in 2011 on the VF-5000 project, an effort to create a high-speed interceptor based on the VF-1's original blueprints and newfound Zentraedi technology. The direct result of this project was the merger of Shinnakasu and Stonewell-Belcom into Shinsei Industries. Shinsei's VF-5000 was the first non-transformable VF, (why it was designated "VF" at all remains a mystery) and though fully spaceworthy, its duty was atmospheric. Development of the VF-5000 was postponed by the already-approved VF-4 project.



VF-25S



VF-11B

NOTE: All VFs from the *Macross II* timeline are marked with an asterisk (\*).

#### VF-1 "Valkyrie"

Manufactured by Stonewell-Belcom (with assistance by Centinental and Shinnakasu). Rolled out in 2008, weighing 18.5 tons, with 23 tons of engine power. Variable-geometry fighter with Battroid, Gerwalk and Fighter configurations. Armed with GU-11 Gunpod and multiple ROV-20 head lasers. Variants include the standard VF-1A, the two-seat VF-1D, the junior officer's VF-1J, the flight leader's VF-1S, the training VT-1 Ostrich and the reconnaissance VE-1 Elintseeker. Additional equipment includes FAST Packs (Super Valkyrie) or Grenade Box Protectors (Armored Valkyrie).

#### VF-4 "Lightning III"

This non-variable fighter replaced the VF-1 for space combat in 2012. It weighed 13.95 tons, with 28 tons of engine power. Armed with dual beam guns and 12 air-to-air missiles. No variants except for the early VF-X-4, which had 35% parts commonality with VF-1. A variable-geometry version of the VF-4 Lightning III, the VF-14, was captured by the Varauta in *Macross 7*. The FZ-109A and FZ-109F "Elgerzorene" are "alienized" VF-14 versions, converted much like their micronized Zentraedi pilots.

#### VF-5000 (and VF-5)

Designed by Shinsei Industries in 2009 as a non-transformable, anti-Bodolza atmospheric fighter. Equipped with on-board radar-suppression system and advanced avionics, a space-combat variant (the VF-5) partially replaced the VF-4 in 2020.

#### VF-1R "Refined Valkyrie"\*

In 2036, the Zentraedi Neld fleet attacked Earth. Their weapons and vehicles were sufficiently different from those used by the Breetai, Laplamiz and Bodolza fleets to warrant improved VFs. Takachihoff upgraded the VF-1 and developed a new FASTPack (the SPII) for these Refined Valkyries (a Refined Super Valkyrie integrates added propellant, verniers, booster

engines and beam cannon into two backpacks). Variants include the standard VF-1AR, the junior officer's VF-1JR and the flight leader's VF-1SR.

#### VF-XX Zentraedian Valkyrie\*

Manufactured by Takachihoff in 2054 as a technology demonstrator for the new technologies gleaned from a captured Zentraedi factory, very few Zentraedian Valkyries were produced and even fewer saw combat. The VF-XX had no Gerwalk mode.

#### VF-2SS Valkyrie II\*

Manufactured by Takachihoff in 2072, the VF-2SS Valkyrie II was designed for improved hand-to-hand combat capability against the Zentraedi, and was thus larger than the VF-1 (14m tall). The Valkyrie II was purpose-built as a space-combat fighter, but the Minmay Attack was so effective, it was relegated to anti-ship duty. Once retrofitted, a Super-Armed Valkyrie combined the firepower of a Super Valkyrie and an Armored Valkyrie and mounted a large anti-ship railcannon.

#### VF-2JA Icarus\*

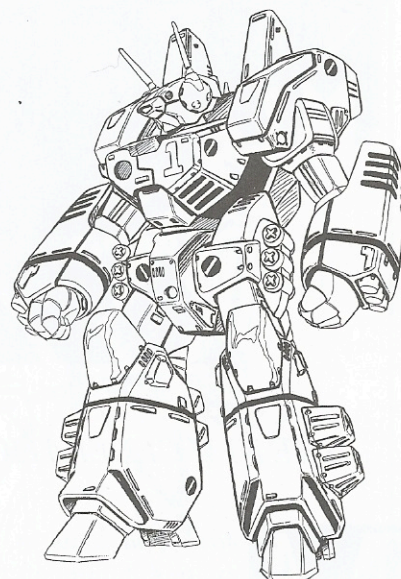
Manufactured by Takachihoff in 2086, the VF-2JA Icarus was designed as a CCV (Control-Configured Vehicle) for atmospheric combat and could reach speeds of mach 5.5. It was even larger than the Valkyrie II (15.9m tall), and its Gerwalk configuration used a forward-swept wing design for increased maneuverability.

#### Metal Siren\*

Rolled out by Takachihoff in 2092, this prototype variable fighter had four modes: Fighter, Gerwalk, Battroid and Gunroid. Armed with dozens of micro-missiles like an Armored Valkyrie or Super-Armed Valkyrie II, as well as dual gunpods, beam cannons and an experimental "Plasma Spear," only one functional Metal Siren saw combat in *Macross II*.

#### VF-11 "Thunderbolt"

Manufactured by Shinsei Heavy Industry in 2040 to replace the VF-5. Weight is 9 tons, with two-d vectored thrust boasting



VF-1J with GBP-1S

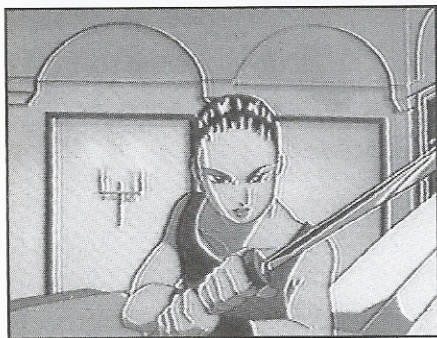
240% the engine power of the original VF-1s. (Mach 8 at 30,000 feet!) Armed with a reloadable gunpod, single head laser and antiballistic shield. Variants include the preproduction VF-11A, the standard VF-11B of *Macross Plus*, the improved VF-11C of *Macross 7*, the two-seat VF-11D trainer, the Jamming Birds' custom VF-11D (with Sound Booster) and Sound Force's VF-11MAXL (with Sound Booster, piloted by Mylene Genius); the VF-11 MAXL's engines are replaced by those of a VF-16, but no information is available on the VF-16. Additional Thunderbolt equipment includes FAST Packs (Super Thunderbolt) or offensive armor (Full-Armored Thunderbolt).

#### VF-19 Family

Manufactured by Shinsei Heavy Industry in 2040. Initial prototype for Project Supernova (YF-19 "Alpha-One") weighed 8.75 tons, with 113 tons of engine power. As per Supernova requirements, can achieve Earth orbit, is equipped with Pinpoint Barrier System, and accepts a Fold Booster. Features a 360° virtual cockpit display, active aerodynamic control (forward-swept wing), two-d thrust vectoring and anti-laser coating. Armament includes a head laser, missile hardpoints and a gatling gunpod. Variants appeared —to be continued on page 48

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Hiro's name.) Quatre confirms that there are 47 ICBMs at Edwards, with a detonation radius of 300 km. Sally begs Hiro to stop the countdown. After crawling through air vents to the control room, he pulls the emergency shut-off switch, stopping the countdown with one minute, 45 seconds remaining.



Neun, sitting outside Luxembourg, comments on what a stubborn man General Nagel is. Luxembourg has virtually been leveled, and he refuses to surrender. Soon after, Sechs confronts Nagel in his study. Nagel recognizes Sechs, and begs for mercy. Nagel pleads that the destruction of the Cinq Kingdom was not his fault, rather, he was only following the Alliance's orders. He goes for his gun. Sechs shoots him, proclaiming, "Rest in peace, Miliardo Peacecraft."

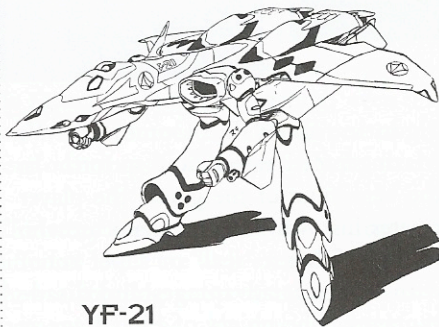
Wu Fei and Trois locate Treize's fleet in the Bering Sea. Lady Un's Leo catches the Shen Long off-guard. "No one can stop me!" cries Wu Fei, but he finds he has his hands full with her. When Treize's ship sails by, Lady Un warns him away. Wu Fei, however, has other ideas. He flies over, where Treize awaits him with saber drawn. Wu Fei leaps to the challenge, and soon finds himself outclassed. Treize soon has his saber at Wu Fei's throat. "I win," says Treize. "Kill me," says Wu Fei. "It was a good fight," Treize replies. Wu Fei counters, "If you don't kill me now, I'll come after you again." Unfazed, Treize dryly promises "I will enjoy fighting you later." Wu Fei retreats in disgrace. 完

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in 2045: Sound Force's VF-19-Kai "Fire Valkyrie" (with Sound Booster) and the Emeraldforce-issue VF-19F and VF-19S (flight leader's version) "Excaliber," also known as a "Blazer Valkyrie."

#### **VF-21 Family**

Manufactured by General Galaxy in 2040. Initial prototype for Project Supernova (YF-21 "Omega-One") weighed 9.55 tons, with 130.4 tons of engine power. As per Supernova requirements, can achieve Earth orbit, is equipped with Pinpoint Barrier System, and accepts a Fold Booster. Features 3-d thrust vectoring, morphable control surfaces and BDS (Brain Direct System; fly-by-brainwave). Based on the Meltran "Quadlun-Rau" powered armor, it is heavily armed, with two forearm beam cannon, a laser gun, four micro-missile launchers and a caseless gatling gunpod. The only variant is the VF-22S, piloted by Maximillian Genius in 2045.



**YF-21**

#### **VF-17 "Nightmare"**

Manufactured by a combined effort of Shinsei Heavy Industry, General Galaxy and the Macross 7 Special Technologies Group. Rolled out in 2045, weighing 11.85 tons, with 110 tons of engine power. Armed with a collapsible stealth gunpod, chest and forearm beam cannons, four micromissile launchers and multiple head lasers. Variants include the standard VF-17D, the two-seat VF-17T trainer (also used by Sound Force) and the flight leader's VF-17S. Additional equipment includes a Radome or a Space Fold Booster. 完

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