

VFH-10AR “Shellback”

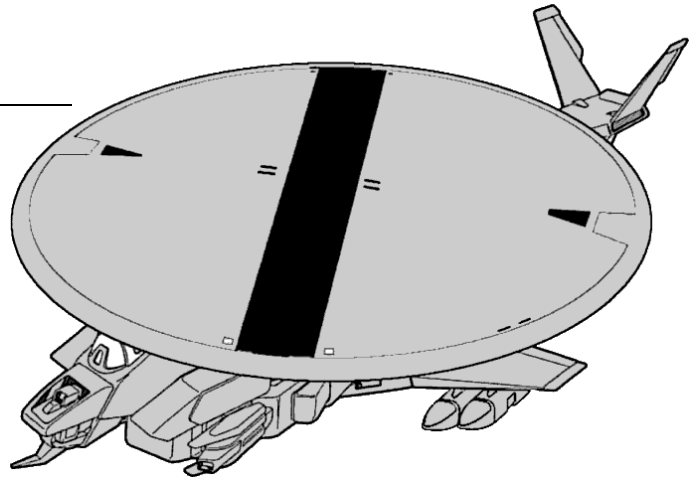
By Jason Lang

OVERVIEW:

The Armies of the Southern Cross suffered from a certain amount of lack of foresight. Brought in to suppress insurrectionists and Zentraedi malcontents, they kept with tactics and equipment that worked well against those situations, but didn't seem to understand that there would be other enemies to adapt to.

Early space battles against the Masters forces quickly revealed the lack of theater support for both command and deployed forces. A quick retrofit of the Roc shuttle was a slapdash fix, but the ASC needed a dedicated theater support.

The AJACs copters were coming online, and in early engagements, proved to be a solid platform against Masters forces. However, it was already packed with electronics, leaving engineers little room to add additional. By removing the blade structure and drive, this opened up a suitable amount of space to work with. Instead of the classic rotor blades, a large radome was placed above the mech. As it had a comparable diameter to the rotors of the old system, no modifications to the transformation system had to be made. Upgraded communications systems allowed the pilot to network with a division, sharing communications and sensory data for dozens of fighters or command ships for further boosting. The distinctive appearance of the mech, especially in Battleloid mode, led many pilots and ground crews to give it the nickname of “shellback”.



Further modifications gave the Shellback powerful electronics warfare abilities, able to jam enemy radar and communications. Feedback from TASC scouts led engineers to add abilities to the electronics package, making it a powerful scout vehicle. It is thought that it was for this purpose that the stealth coating was added to the vehicle.

Ultimately, only a few dozen of this variant was made before the end of the war. None are known to have survived the Invid Invasion.

VEHICLE TYPE

Armored Reconnaissance and Scout Veritech

CREW

Two. One pilot, one electronics officer.

ARMOR

MDC by location:

Arms (2)	100 each
Arm Mounted Pulse Laser (2)	50 each
Hands (2)	35 each
Arm Thrusters (2)	55 each
Legs (2)	125 each
**Tail Section	150
**Tail Fins (3)	45 each
**NOTAR Thrusters (3)	55 each
***Wings (2)	125 each
Main Engines (2)	140 each
Reinforced Pilot's Compartment	150
****Main Body	400

** Destroying the tail section, the NOTAR thrusters, or two or more tail fins sends the mecha out of control and unable to fly in fighter or helicopter mode. Small target, requires the attacker to make a “Called Shot” with a -2 to strike.

*** Destroying one wing reduces all bonuses and speed by half in helicopter mode. Destroying both stabilizers sends the mecha out of control. Small target, requires the attacker to make a "Called Shot" with a -2 to strike.

**** Destroying the main body destroys the mecha.

SPEED

Helicopter mode:

625 mph at sea level

Mach 3.1 in space.

Battleoid Mode:

Running: 35 mph

Flying: 188 mph

STATISTICAL DATA

Helicopter Mode:

Height: 10.5 feet

Length: 29.5 feet

Wingspan: 22.6 feet.

Radome span: 23 feet.

Battleoid Mode:

Height: 29.2 feet

Length: 8.2 feet

Width: 9.2 feet

Radome span: 23 feet.

Weight: 17.0 tons.

Physical Strength: Robotic P.S. of 40.

Range: 24 standard canisters of protoculture, giving approximately 370 hours of operation. Heavy use can reduce that dramatically.

WEAPON SYSTEMS

1. **LWS-40 Laser (1)** – AJACs designers went with an integrated gun pod, fixed to the forearm. To meet a variety of needs, they ended up going with two different pods to give the pilot a variety of options to use.

The LWS-40 is a durable weapon designed for good range and accuracy.

Primary Purpose: Assault

Range: 4000'

Damage: 1d4x10 MD per pulse

Rate of Fire: Each pulse counts as one of the pilot's melee attacks.

Payload: Effectively Unlimited

Modes: Heli (Fixed forward), Battleoid (Left arm)

Notes: +1 to strike.

2. **LLW-20 Pulse Laser** – While the LWS-40 is a long-range "sniper" weapon, the LLW-20 is a close-in dogfighting weapon.

Primary Purpose: Air-to-Air/Assault

Range: 2000'

Damage: 2d4 MD for a single blast, 4d4 MD for a burst.

Rate of Fire: Each blast uses one of the pilot's melee attacks.

Payload: Effectively Unlimited

Modes: Heli (Fixed forward), Battleoid (Right arm)

3. **Hand to Hand Combat:** As standard for AJACs when the Mecha Elite Combat Training skill is taken, plus the following additional bonuses:
- +1 to initiative
 - +2 to strike
 - +1 to parry
- Restrained Punch/Forearm: 1d4 MD
 - Full Strength Punch: 2d6 MD
 - Power Punch: 4d6 MD; counts as two attacks.
 - Kick: 3d8 MD
 - Leap Kick: 5d8 MD; counts as two attacks.
 - Stomp: 2d4 MD; targets only 11 feet or smaller.
 - Body block/Ram: 1d8 MD per 20 mph of speed. Counts as two attacks, and has a 60% chance of knockdown.

SENSORS AND EQUIPMENT OF NOTE

1. The VFH-10AR has all the standard sensors of a AJACs TC version.
2. Active Electronically Scanned Array radar: Radar includes a 500 mile range (400 km), and can identify and track up to 500 targets. This powerful system provides a +15% to Sensory Equipment skill rolls to detect and identify objects with it.
3. Advanced Communications Array: This system can “hook in” up to 6 squadrons of fighters and up to 10 vessels at up to 500 miles. This network can share radar data and relay communications to any target hooked into the system. All members in the network gain +2 to initiative, +1 on Perception rolls, +1 to strike and +3 to parry and dodge.
4. Radar and Communications Jammer: The Shellback has equipment that can scramble enemy radar units and radio communications to all units within 10 miles (16 km) of it. Victims must roll on the Radio: Countermeasures and Sensory Equipment skills with a -40% penalty. Both skills must be a success or their systems remains knocked out. Victims roll once every 10 minutes. A success on both skills restores their systems. Note: To keep jamming the enemy's systems the Shellback must fly in a tight circle and remain within 10 miles (16 km) of the enemy it is scrambling. If it flies outside this range, the enemy's systems automatically return to normal. In order to jam incoming missiles, the pilot must roll under his electronic countermeasures skill. A successful roll means the targeting system (and/or radio control signals and scanners) of all missiles directed at him, or in his path, are scrambled, causing the missiles to veer off target; effectively -7 to strike. Roll for each missile in the volley. In the alternative, the pilot can send a direct, laser signal to one or two missiles within a 2000 foot (610 m) range, whether directed at him or another target entirely, and scramble their targeting to make them veer off target: -9 to hit their intended target. Note that this jamming ability applies to "smart bombs" as well as mini-missiles and other types of guided missiles. The jamming defense disables the missile's tracking, guidance and motor systems, it does not enable the pilot to seize control and direct the missiles to a new or different target.
5. Sensor Spoofers: These integrated spoofers and heat shields, along with the radar absorbing coating on the Shellback, make this mecha extremely hard to find with instruments. Anyone trying to find one by radar or enhanced optics is -25% on their Sensory Equipment skill rolls, and reduces the range that they can detect it by half.

Author's notes:

Actually made rules for the thing I've made a picture of long ago. Thanks to Yui Yuasa for inspiring me to finally get my ideas down.