

By Kevin Siembieda

As you know, we have been wanting and needing to post this massive Update for weeks. I realized it was something that needed to be done back in April. But as always, there is so much to do all the time.

Attending **AdeptiCon**, hosting a **Robotech® RPG Tactics™** tournament at the Palladium Open House and talking with more and more of our Kickstarter backers, and wargamers in general, especially over the last 6-8 months, has helped to crystallize a number of plans we've been kicking around for awhile.

One is to *restart the conversation* about **Robotech® RPG Tactics™** with our *Kickstarter backers*. And that's exactly what this post is all about. I apologize for the length of this Update, but there is a lot to talk about, both past and present. And I hope I answered many of the questions that have been circulating for a while.

It is rare that I ever wish I could hit a *reset button* and do something all over again. Differently. Better. The **Robotech® RPG Tactics™** and the related RRT **Kickstarter** launch is one such time I wish we could get a *do-over*.

There is no "reset button" or "do-over" that can undo everything and let us start again, back to 2013, with the knowledge we have today. But we can start again, with you, if you'll let us.

I'll go into the specifics of the news and developments with **Robotech® RPG Tactics™**, upcoming products, and the future for this game line in a moment, but the **bottom line is:**

We simply were not prepared for the full scope and magnitude of such a large and successful Kickstarter, nor manufacturing in China. The learning curve has been considerable and has contributed to some of the delays, while other delays have been to do the game right. Palladium is getting up to speed and, of course, intends to fulfill this Kickstarter, as well as do so much more.

We were lost the woods for a while when we started this venture. We were full of ideas and good intentions, but with scarcely a clue about the magnitude of the undertaking awaiting us. We were smart enough from the beginning to know that we'd need some expert help. Someone with experience with Kickstarters, sculpting, and making this type of game, which is why we joined forces with **Ninja Division** (the creative people behind *Soda Pop Miniatures* and *Cipher Studios*).

Who is Palladium Books®?

We've only recently come to realize that many of you from the wargaming community don't really know much, if anything, about **Palladium Books**

. That became evident with some of the wild speculation about us and the future of the RRT product line. Again, this is something we probably should have realized, but we did not.

Palladium Books has been a force in the role-playing market for more than three decades, but we didn't think about the fact that many of our Kickstarter backers may never have heard of us. After all, the role-playing game and tabletop wargame game markets do not have a lot of crossover. That has changed and continues to change in recent years, but the fact is, for many of you, Palladium Books is a blank slate. An unknown quantity.

Please allow me introduce ourselves. Palladium Books is an established company. Not some fly-by-night startup. We have been

creating and publishing role-playing games since 1981. That's 34 years, folks, and we have no intention of going away.

Our two biggest licensed RPGs have been **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles** and **Robotech®**.

Our biggest and best selling RPG is

Rifts

®, and it has even been optioned for development into a live action motion picture. We don't know if that will ever happen as the IP has been sitting in development hell for 13 years, but we remain hopeful.

I'm going to focus on Palladium's history with **Robotech®** because that's what's important to most of you. Palladium released

The Robotech® RPG

waaaay back in 1986. We worked to get this license because we were ALL big fans of the

Robotech

® animated TV series. The guys writing the novels used our books for reference. Many of us at Palladium collected the Bandai toys and model kits, Robotech® books and, well . . . everything we could find for

Robotech

®. We acquired the license because we *loved the property*

.

The Robotech® RPG (1986) was an instant smash hit. Sourcebooks followed. We'd also release

Robotech® II: The Sentinels® RPG

(1987) and the

Macross® II RPG

(1992). In 1989, I knew fans wanted

Robotech

® on VHS videocassettes. When

LIVE Entertainment

dropped the ball by editing the episodes of Macross they had released, and earned the ire of fans everywhere, they contacted

Palladium Books

and generously offered us the rights to release

Robotech

® on VHS tapes, uncut. I jumped at the opportunity even though nobody else saw the market potential. As a dyed-in-the-wool

Robotech

® fan, I knew other fans were dying for

Robotech

® to be done right on VHS. My distributors and advisers were not so sure. This was back in the day when “Japanimation” was a new concept and anime in the English language was a rare thing. I took the plunge anyway. Of our 72 distributors back in the day, only ONE placed an order. And it was for something like 26 copies. Things looked bleak.

I came up with a new strategy and went to a direct mail campaign with ads in **Dragon Magazine** and other print mediums. (The Internet was just in its infancy in 1989.) The demand was immediate and tremendous. Within 6 weeks, Palladium had distributors begging for

Robotech

® on VHS videocassettes. The release of the beloved

Robotech® animated series

on VHS was a huge success for Palladium.

Palladium Books® was the first company to offer the entire **Robotech®** series

on videotape in North America, including the three episodes of

Robotech® II: The Sentinels

®. We topped the “anime” best seller charts with every release. At one point we had eight of the top 10 slots. Back then, people considered us a pioneer in bringing “anime” to North America. For a very short while, I guess we were pivotal to those early days. The thing is, we did it

because we loved the

Robotech® TV show

and knew our fellow fans wanted it.

We would have continued to sell the tapes except that the mastermind behind **Robotech®**, *Carl Macek* and his company, *Streamline*

Entertainment

outbid us. Carl also had plans to get

Robotech

® back into television syndication which trumped anything Palladium could offer. Sadly, his attempts to re-syndicate the show were very limited and short-lived.

For many years, Palladium Books was at the forefront of helping to keep **Robotech®** available to fans. We let the **Robotech®** license go after 15 years (2001), because we felt we had done what we could with it, at the time, and because we could not support the plans to abandon the original **R**

obotech

® anime in favor of exclusively focusing on the ill-fated

Robotech® 3000

, which was the intention of the powers that be at Harmony Gold at that

time.

Robotech® 3000

was supposed to be a new

Robotech

® animated series, but it never happened. Some years later we found ourselves missing

Robotech

®. When the opportunity arose for us to reacquire the

Robotech® license

(2007) under a new regime at Harmony Gold USA, Inc. – guys who were fans themselves and who loved the entire series – we again jumped at the chance.

For us, **Robotech® RPG Tactics™** isn't just about the potential money we might make, this is a *dream job*.

It's the culmination of everything we could ever want.

This is a passion

. We want this game to be freakin' awesome. We want to wow and woo you. We want

Robotech® RPG Tactics

™ to be a great experience.

We are the very same guys who did the **Robotech® role-playing games** and brought you the **R**

obotech® series on VHS videocassettes

when no one else even realized there was a market for such products.

We love

Robotech

®. We want to make great

Robotech

® products to share with all our fellow Robotech® fanatics around the world! The Macross Saga portion of

Robotech® RPG Tactics

™

(RRT)

is just the beginning. Just as we did with the original games and videotapes, we intend to bring you every aspect and era of

Robotech

® for the

RRT

game line! If you saw it in the TV show, we want to provide it as a game piece for

Robotech® RPG Tactics

™. After all, every new mecha, vehicle and combat unit adds to your gaming experience and broadens the scope of combat!

And we are just getting started.

We haven't talked about our passion or plans for the future, because we haven't even satisfied our current commitments with **RRT Wave 2**, though we are getting there.

We didn't share with you who Palladium is or our history with **Robotech** ®, because it just didn't dawn on us to do so. We just sorta figured everyone knew who we were. I know, stupid, but we didn't think of it.

And once the

Kickstarter

had ended with such a resounding success, we found ourselves on a

runaway train and hanging on for dear life. And not just on a train ride. Think of the old Westerns or that moment in Indiana Jones where he's fighting on that speeding truck and trying not to fall to his doom. That was us and RRT after the Kickstarter. Read on for the gory details.

The Advent of Robotech® RPG Tactics™

It is our love of **Robotech®** and the desire to bring it to fans in new and exciting ways that prompted us to create **Robotech® RPG Tactics™**.

The ideas started to percolate in the beginning of 2012, after I found out Harmony Gold was open to letting Palladium do game pieces for our existing RPG game license.

In 2012, my original plan was to only make game pieces to sell as an add-on to the existing role-playing game market. Research is 90% of everything in

business, so we started to quietly talk with fans to find out whether they had any interest in Robotech® game pieces. They did. That led us to recognize the growing excitement for tabletop games and wargames, and we started to consider releasing the game pieces as part of a bigger, **new Robotech® game**

. I also had

Thomas Roache, Carmen Bellaire

and others pitching us on the idea of creating an entirely new game that placed an emphasis on the use of the game pieces as well as offering them to the existing RPG player base and collectors. The more I researched and talked with fans, distributors and industry people, the more excited I became about all of it.

I felt we needed to keep the game pieces simple and easy to put together. No more than 8-10 parts, especially if we were to make the new **Robotech®** game and pieces appealing to a wide audience. I even rejected one potential partner, early on, because he insisted that to make the mecha highly detailed – the way fans insisted they wanted – the pieces would have to have 16-20 parts. That to me was not acceptable. Turns out he was right, especially via the manufacturing method we ended up using. I wish I had stuck to my guns on that small

piece count and simplicity, but I'm getting ahead of myself.

First, I want to thank *Thomas Roache* for his persistence and passion that opened my eyes to the possibilities.

Honestly, I don't know if

Robotech® RPG Tactics

™ would exist if it were not for Tom and his efforts to rally an online movement for Palladium to even consider something like this. It was also Tom who first suggested Palladium talk to

Soda Pop Miniatures/Ninja Division

about working with us to make the game pieces and it was

Ninja Division, Tom

and

Carmen Bellaire

who helped convince us that doing a new game would be the way to go with this project. Tom's insights and suggestions continue to this very day. Since then we've added other fan consultants, guys like

Bad_Syntax,

Mike Arnold, David Chase Murphy

, and many, many others who have offered constructive suggestions and help. That number would grow to

immense proportions after the Kickstarter as we would have an army of fans to bounce ideas off on and get suggestions from. I always make a point to speak with dozens of backers and fans at every convention. Everyone we have spoken with has been a huge help. And that dialogue will continue, hopefully on an even larger scale as we move forward to expand the Robotech® universe.

We thought we had all our bases covered. And we did. But only to a point. The thing is, when you are new to something – something massive – and go into it blind, you don't even necessarily know the right questions to ask or what you should be doing. You have just leaped off the proverbial cliff and have no idea how far the drop is or what you are going to land in. We thought we did. But we didn't.

What we all knew for sure is that we had a lot to familiarize ourselves with and master, but we had no idea how huge of an amount that was, nor the vast scope of related things we'd also need to learn. It was immense and overwhelming at times. **Ninja Division** was there to

help and we could NOT have done this without them. But they had their own projects to launch and manage, and other commitments to deal with. We understand that, but it meant there were times where we could have used more input. Other times we were scrambling to take care of whatever the new challenges were, and sometimes while learning exactly how do that.

As it turned out, none of us at **Palladium Books** nor **Ninja Division** were truly prepared for EVERYTHING to come.

Here's just one simple example. The first container of RRT games is about to ship from China in July of 2014. As in, it will be ready to ship in 10 days. We are happy as can be. We assumed

Ninja Division

would handle the importing as Palladium has NO experience in this whatsoever and had informed them of this. Or if not

ND

, the Manufacturing Broker that

Ninja Division

brought in on this project. So we were left dazed and scrambling, again, when the Ninjas told us, “Sorry, you need to deal with this directly and on your own. We can’t help you, because we don’t know this stuff either and you need to take care of all the paperwork, we can’t do it for you.” They couldn’t recommend a broker, either; presumably because this end of the business was new to them too. When we asked ND if the Manufacturing Broker could handle it for us, they said, no. We later learned that the company could have done it, but apparently ND didn’t know that at the time.

Palladium had absolutely no knowledge about overseas shipping, export or import. Nothing about the paperwork. Nothing about the cost. Nothing about . . . well, any aspect of overseas shipping. (The Ninjas had given us an estimated cost for shipping, but the real costs would be more than double that estimate.) Suddenly, we have 10 days to find a shipping broker and figure all of this out. The first few days go toward reaching out to people we know and seeing if they could refer an import broker. We pick the one that appears on the list of two companies we know and trust, and give them a call. They turn out to be quite understanding, patient and helpful. They explain the process, help us figure out the “codes” and

“classifications” of the “goods” being imported, help us fill out the paperwork, and the whole nine yards.

Of course, nothing is easy. Here are the highlights of things we learned about shipping when we had to deal with the importing of RRT: Palletize the shipment at the factory in China or in the States? Become aware that only certain types of pallets can be used and they need a certificate showing they have been treated against various types of insects to pass US Customs. Having that document is a must. Being lost in the woods, we don't realize that the shipment must be made ready on a particular day, and that the factory or our broker must arrange for the shipment to be *trucked* from the factory to the docks (an additional cost), and do so by a certain time on that *partic*

ular day

so it can be loaded onto the

scheduled ship

. And that shipment must be scheduled for that specific vessel 2-3 weeks in advance. If there is a delay at the factory and you miss the scheduled ship, add a week or two (sometimes longer) till the next container ship is available. And then there may be port charges for cargo that sits at port for more than a few days. Assuming your

shipment gets to the port on time, you are okay, except the vessel may be behind schedule one to several days, or is delayed at port after being loaded for one to several days. Once out to sea, it's 3-4 weeks before it arrives.

When the ship arrives at a US port it does NOT automatically pull up to a dock and start to unload. It has to wait for a dock to open up and get clearance to proceed to dock. That's normally 1-3 days. Then you have to wait a few days for it to clear US Customs without being tagged for inspection. Our first shipment got tagged, which is why we could not start shipping to backers as early as we had planned, nor have any product at the 2014 Gen Con Indy. If tagged for Customs inspection – which being a first time importer from China, we were – you are looking at another “5-7 business days” before it is cleared. (Our container was cleared, no problems, after six or seven days, plus the weekend when it just sat.) After passing US Customs, the shipment waits another few days before it can be picked up by truck and delivered to Palladium in Westland, Michigan. Or a few days to deliver it by truck to the train depot for delivery by train to the *Detroit terminal*, and then picked up by a truck and delivered to the

Palladium warehouse. Delivery by train is a couple thousand dollars less expensive (multiply that by 10 containers and it's a considerable savings), but it adds an extra 4-6 days vs truck. In an effort to expedite shipping to our Kickstarter backers, we had the first few shipments trucked to us. Once a truck is scheduled, you are stuck with it, even if there are delays at port. And, btw, you might be charged for cargo sitting in port even if the delay is not your fault. The "work slowdown" and subsequent strike at ports across the USA would make matters even more complicated, causing horrendous delays throughout the shipping of

Robotech® RPG Tactics

™. It was a nightmare, and from what we heard, we missed the worst delays that came later. Wow. And then one container got put on the train, made it to Detroit, and then got put back on the train and sent all over the place, starting with Chicago and ending up in Mexico – yes, Mexico – before it finally arrived at Palladium! Wild and completely out of our control.

Out of the blue, we had to become fluent with all of this, and more, the hard way. And that's just to *receive the product* from China. Shipping from the Palladium warehouse across

North America and around the world was a whole other animal. And a whole other batch of things to put into place, master and manage. At this point, Wayne and Julius know a lot more about logistics and shipping than they ever imagined. But again, I digress.

And that's on top of all the things we had to handle with regard to the actual RRT game design, writing, packaging, 3D sculpting, mold making, engineering, manufacturing, advertising and managing the Kickstarter. Whew. Ninja Division was there to show us the ropes and handle the key components, but there were mountains of material for Palladium to review, corrections and changes to be made, things to catch and other work to be done before final approvals. That's why I used importing of goods as an example, above, because it sounds simple, and compared to some of the other demands and challenges, it was.

The birth of Robotech® RPG Tactics™

When we embarked on this journey (early 2012 and long before we announced any plans), we knew we wanted to take **Robotech®** in a dynamic, new direction with game pieces for role-players, wargamers and collectors alike. The more we discussed the possibilities with Palladium game designer *Carmen Bellaire*, *Thomas Roache* and others, the more we gravitated toward doing a completely new, kick-ass game. Something epic in scope that included beautifully detailed game pieces that would delight Robotech® fans. We quietly began researching and exploring all possibilities. We listened to fans and began conceptualizing what needed to be done.

As **Robotech®** fans ourselves, and after several months of research, we had a very good idea of what fans wanted and what we

wanted to do. Of course, we listened to the fans. They wanted 1/285 scale, highly detailed game pieces. Sounded good to us. Harmony Gold concurred. The trick was the actual execution.

That's where **Ninja Division** came in. We spoke with a number of people as we moved forward to make Robotech® game pieces, but after speaking with

John Cadice

of

Soda Pop Miniatures

(and soon after,

Kai, David

and other members of the team that would become Ninja Division), we felt we had found the right group of people to make this game happen. They were supremely confident, smart, and self-professed

Robotech

® fans eager to embrace a project like this. The quality of the products they had produced themselves and in concert with other game publishers was excellent.

Super Dungeon Explore

was a hot new release at the time,

Hellorado

was another, and

Relic Knights

was being developed and looked fabulous. Both Carmen Bellaire and Tom Roache were ecstatic over the choice to work with these guys to make

Robotech® RPG Tactics

™. Everyone we spoke to, including distributors and industry people, agreed that

Soda Pop Miniatures

and

Cipher Studios

were the right choice to team up with. These guys certainly had the anime style down.

Everyone seemed to have positive feedback about these “impressive new guys.” We liked

them and liked what they had to say. They explained they had the knowledge, the experience and were ready to start work immediately. We just had to trust them. We did, so we took the plunge.

It was on!

Ninja Division got to work. Palladium Books ponied up \$40,000 to get the ball rolling. It was a risk, because if the Kickstarter flopped, we'd be screwed. ND got the 3D sculptors sculpting, the game design and writing into development, key art and packaging into production, and other pre-production elements rockin' and rollin'. Lacking experience with 3D sculpting and manufacturing in China, Palladium felt it wise to leave most of the technical decisions up to **Ninja Division**, with

Palladium approving sculpts, artwork, packaging, etc., before it would be sent to *Harmony Gold* for final approval. The game rules we developed together, as we had very strong ideas about what the game needed to be, and what Robotech® fans wanted.

The Kickstarter

The guys at **Ninja Division** had the technical knowhow, the connections and the people to help Palladium make this product, now all we needed was the money to do it. And that was a problem.

When we started to get serious about **Robotech
h® RPG Tactics**

™, talks naturally segued into how do we afford all this?

Ninja Division

estimated the cost to be between \$550,000 and \$900,000 to make the game and expansion packs we all wanted to see made. And not just enough to provide to the Kickstarter backers, but enough to get the game into the retail market. That was an impossible amount of money for Palladium. “Not if you launch it via Kickstarter.” That was what everybody was telling us, the Ninjas included. All of them were right.

It was my friend *Jolly Blackburn*, creator of **Knights of the Dinner Table**

, who first told me about *Kickstarter*

and that I should look into it. A couple weeks

later, out of the blue,

Carmen Bellaire

began ranting about the value of Kickstarter and that it was something Palladium needed to look into. This was before

Robotech® RPG Tactics

™ was even an idea.

Carmen was the first to restart the Kickstarter conversation, saying we should fund the **Robot ech® RPG Tactics**

™ project via Kickstarter. That it would be easy. Tom Roache concurred. We were hesitant. It sounded great, but we knew it had to be a lot more demanding and difficult than it sounded. And it had to be done right to be successful.

Doing a Kickstarter and needing that amount of money was scary. Exciting, but

scary. And Palladium had NO experience in doing one or knowing how to handle it.

Enter Ninja Division. At the time, *Soda Pop Miniatures*

and

Cipher Studios

had done something like eight Kickstarters between them, and had the experience we lacked in all areas. The Ninjas said they could handle the Kickstarter 100%, from start to finish. From the graphics, writing and the video presentation, to the stretch goals and Q&A. This was a huge relief, as we knew nothing about doing a Kickstarter. We let the Ninjas run with it, sat back and watched in awe. Of course, we made some suggestions and did some editing, but this was

Ninja Division's

show. We trusted their expertise and what needed to be done. And look as the result,

wow. The Kickstarter was a tremendous success and there was much rejoicing.

But nothing is easy. I had big concerns about costs all around. I badly wanted to include additional shipping fees in the Kickstarter. Something that almost everyone does today, but back then, we were strongly advised not to. We were told that nobody (back then) charged shipping and that if we charged a shipping fee in addition to the backer pledge levels, it would severely reduce the chances of a successful Kickstarter. This was the subject of many discussions. I finally acquiesced, but it would be something that would haunt us later, as shipping worldwide would be in the neighborhood of \$150,000 all by itself. Just for Wave One! Yeah, shipping is brutal, especially with the advent of “dimensional weight” – the larger the package, regardless of weight, the more it costs. The Ninjas said they factored

shipping into the pledge levels, but final costs would be greater than their estimates across the board.

Remember that runaway train I spoke of early? When the Kickstarter ended, that train took off with us on it, and it immediately started to rocket out of control.

First, not knowing anything about Kickstarters, we did not realize the real job of managing a Kickstarter begins **AFTER** the Kickstarter is funded. We thought that when **Ninja Division** said it would handle the Kickstarter from start to finish, that they would be handling everything. Again, we didn't know what "everything" entailed.

As it turned out, they meant “finish” as a successful funding. Again, not knowing exactly what’s involved and with miscommunication by both parties, Palladium did not realize it would be our responsibility to handle the thousands of emails and questions that would follow the successful funding of the Kickstarter.

Remember, we were still figuring out and learning everything about Kickstarters, including establishing the BackerKit storefront to manage the pledges of our 5,000+ backers, among many other things. Consequently, something like six weeks went by without Palladium answering a single question or email on the Kickstarter page. It was only when one of the Ninjas reached out to Palladium, asking why were we ignoring the backers on the Kickstarter page, and the discussion that followed, that we at Palladium realized it was our job to manage the page. We jumped right on it, but by then, backers were frustrated and we had a thousand

plus emails to answer, plus regular posts and updates to make. Like I said, it was crazy as that express train was rocketing down the tracks with more unexpected challenges and surprises to come.

Second, we discovered we were not “98% done” and ready for manufacturing. This was a huge surprise, the details and depths of which we did not come to fully understand till some months after we had missed our 2013 Fall Release. I’ve caught a lot of flack for saying we were 98% done, but that’s what we thought. All of us.

Our past experience was the old school method of making game pieces in which once you have your sculpts – in this case, the 3D renders – you make your mold and you start spitting out

and packaging pieces. 98% of the 3D sculpts were done. The rules, done. The artwork, done. Final book layout easy, breezy and something that should be done in a matter of days; a no-brainer. Game card designs, mostly finished. When we launched and finished the Kickstarter, we truly thought we were 98% DONE. Here's something you'll laugh at, when we first estimated a November 2013 release, we actually thought we were being cautious. There was no doubt in our minds at Palladium that **Robotech® RPG Tactics**™ would ship that Fall. December at the latest. We spent money on ads saying as much.

Boy, were we wrong.

It turns out the type of manufacturing we're doing is fairly new to the hobby game industry.

There are serious conversion and incompatibility issues in converting the 3D models done by the sculptors to what needs to be done in China to make the molds and go into manufacturing. This is not just something Palladium and Ninja Division ran into, it's true for EVERYONE using this type of manufacturing process. Only we didn't know that at the time. Neither did Ninja Division, who were only starting to get the picture after the Kickstarter ended and they sent the first digital files over. (Or if they did, they didn't realize the conversion process would be as arduous.) It would take Palladium months to grasp exactly what the situation was. Mainly because at that time, we weren't directly involved in the conversations with the factory and the Manufacturing Broker. As the seemingly inexplicable delays went on, it seemed insane to us. How could someone not have made a conversion program for these incompatible files (3D sculpts versus what the manufacturer/factory needs)? However, we

have since had this confirmed by the folks at Dust and several other game companies that this is, indeed, the case, and there is no way around it at the present time. Crazy, right?

As I understand it, the engineers in China have to completely rebuild, and recreate EACH 3D file, using the 3D sculpts as *a base*

from which to start, and even that is mainly just reference for the pose. They have to, in effect, completely redesign a completely new digital model to manufacturing specifications. To complicate matters further, the engineers in China have to adjust the 3D sculpts further to take into consideration the manufacturing process and the types of metal molds that are required. That makes certain undercuts and details impossible, and requires different approaches and more numerous pieces to make the detailed game pieces all of us

Robotech® fans wanted.

This created a tremendous amount of additional work and delays complicated by the language barrier and the way things are done in China. The increase in the number of pieces, and more tiny parts than any of us expected, has become something of an issue as well. Making some mecha more of a pain in the neck to build than others. That said, the mecha in **Robotech®**
RPG Tactics TM

look gorgeous when built and even more gorgeous when beautifully painted. We have seen hundreds of amazing finished pieces. And even the perceived level of difficulty and time to build them are a matter of debate depending on the level of experience and temperament of the model builder/gamer. A lot of people seem to think the Destroids are a bitch. Then I talk to someone with an army of painted Veritechs and Destroids who tell me it wasn't that bad. Such is

the nature of this hobby. I know a couple of people, for example, who could cobble Destroids together in 20-30 minutes and they look great. But both of the guys that I personally know, are either experienced model builders or experienced wargamers.

I'm personally disappointed by the large number of parts, because it makes the point of entry difficult for gamers new to this hobby. It's even worse for collectors who just want a cool mecha to slap together in five minutes and put on their shelf. I understand that, because I'm one of those guys. Though I'm an artist, I'm not great at building or painting what amounts to tiny model kits. I'm that collector or gamer who is disappointed by the complexity and work required to build these pieces. I would need someone to build (and paint) them for me and that becomes expensive very quickly. Though, man, do they look great painted. Palladium and

Ninja Division went this route because we were trying to please you and provide you with the product we thought you wanted.

To make a long story short, we thought we were on top of things. We thought

Robotech® RPG Tactics

™ would be ready to ship by the Fall of 2013, only six months after the Kickstarter. The problem was, we didn't know as much as we thought. And that included

Ninja Division

when it came to all the ins-and-outs of manufacturing in China, 3D file conversions and the amount of time required for all of it. The commitments to the

Robotech® RPG Tactics

™

Kickstarter

are truly massive, with a tremendous number of moving parts, as Ninja Division puts it, and it all

takes time to coordinate to make it right. We hate that it is all taking so long, but we have never stopped working on trying to make **Robotech® RPG Tactics**™ something great.

There are many other things I could discuss, but they would take up another 20 pages and are all water under the bridge. We're all about *moving forward*, unleashing **RRT Wave Two** and doing much more with **Robotech® RPG Tactics**™ to broaden the scope of the game and options for fun.

Palladium Books is committed to the **Robotech® RPG Tactics**

TM

game line

, not just as a Kickstarter project, but as a long term, continuing game line that will become epic as we proceed. The massive undertaking and our lack of experience have delayed some parts of our planned releases, but Palladium remains committed to this great property and the RRT game line. It's just going to take longer to fully launch. We'll need your support and time to nurture and grow it. Once

Wave Two

is released, we can continue to expand the Macross setting as well as doing the other

Robotech

® generations of settings and factions, and we believe the momentum will surge and we should be able to keep building upon all aspects of the game. A great game.

Doing Robotech® RPG Tactics™ right

From the very beginning we have tried to do **Robotech®** right and make **Robotech® RPG Tactics**

™ great. Remember, we are those same fan boys who have been publishing **Robotech**

® products for decades. We have had industry experts like **Ninja Division**

onboard from the start, and we've listened to **Robotech**

® fans and our Kickstarter backers while working hard to make everyone happy. We've come to understand more about you and what you need and want for this

product. We continue to listen to you and we are making the changes and moving forward in the manner we think you will want to see.

You can't make everyone happy.

Everyone has an opinion, and opinions vary. Sometimes a lot.

Which voices and opinions do you listen to?

Who do you let make the final judgement on decisions? Everyone can't be right when there are several differing points of view.

Don't worry, we're on that too. We've learned valuable lessons from the past and we continue to learn about this game market and the specific wants of our backers and gamers. *Carmen Bellaire* and I will be taking a much more direct hand in future products. We have also developed a network of industry people and *trusted fan advisors* from our Kickstarter backers.

Let's face it, we all got what (we thought) we wanted: "highly detailed, 1/285th scale (6mm) game pieces." That's what everyone wanted and was shouting from the rafters. Us included!

Well, that's what we have, and it is not exactly what we all wanted, after all.

What none of us realized is that to preserve all that detail and possibility there would be a lot of parts and pieces to put together. Ninja Division felt that would be okay. Honestly, I'm not sure what the alternative would be, but we are looking into them for ALL FUTURE game pieces and expansion packs after

RRT Wave Two

. Heck, we've been looking at ways to try to reduce the number of pieces in

RRT Wave Two

, but that's taking much longer than we hoped and is yielding minimal results.

We are working on it. The smaller size of future mecha in the later eras of **Robotech**® will have some impact on that issue. Plus, we now realize – as do many of you – that sacrificing some detail to have fewer pieces and easy ways to build the mecha is the way to go in the future.

Our greatest asset is you, we know that

In the end, you, our Kickstarter backers and Robotech® fans, have been our greatest resource and biggest help in figuring all this out. You, more than anyone, have helped guide us through the last two years. You've helped us come to a clearer understanding of what you need and want. Some of you even came to the Palladium warehouse to help us pack and ship to other backers. And boy, do we appreciate everything. It has been you who have helped point us in different directions, shared your knowledge and experiences, suggested painters and manufacturers, and offered up many excellent ideas and suggestions, many of which we intend to run with. We are constantly amazed at your willingness to

share your thoughts and help. We have met hundreds of you at conventions, events, and at our office. Many others, even some close and frequent contacts, are faceless voices from the Internet, but just as important as anyone we have met in person. All of you guys have been awesome. Please, keep the suggestions coming! We want your input as we complete

RRT Wave Two

and move on to other eras and settings for

Robotech

®. We are listening, we always have. We just have not always been in a position to move as quickly as any of us would like.

We have learned a hell of a lot these past two years, and you have been a big part of that. We continue to fine-tune our knowledge and plans for RRT Wave Two and the **Robotech®** generations yet to come. We welcome the constructive input and want you to point out things that you think we should consider.

The Future of Robotech® RPG Tactics

TM

We plan to do it all. Every mecha, combat vehicle, alien, battle setting and avenue of adventure in the **Robotech**

® universe. And that's from every era:

The Macross Saga, The Masters Saga, New Generation, Shadow Chronicles

and MORE such as the *Malcontent Uprisings, the Unification War*

, and the

Zentraedi vs the Regent's Invid hordes and the Inorganics

. If you saw it in the anime, we want to eventually include it in the

expanding universe of
Robotech® RPG Tactics
TM .

**And we want your
involvement every step of the
way!**

Size matters. For example, the
size of the mecha in other eras of
Robotech®. Do we keep the 6mm

scale as we original planned and talked about in the Kickstarter and early postings, or do we scale them up a bit, say from 6mm to *15mm*?

The knee-jerk reaction from me and the Palladium crew, as well as those of you we have heard from, is to keep the game pieces at the 6mm scale! But is it really a good idea? I want everyone to take a moment and really think about this. Remember, we all thought we

wanted lots of details on the game pieces and look at what we have, mecha with a lot of small pieces to build. Some people are not very happy with that. I think *we are all* figuring things out as we go along, and we need a conversation about whether we really should maintain the 6mm scale for future, smaller mecha and vehicles.

When any of us imagine everything to scale in our heads, it all looks marvelous. But when you see these game pieces in real life, at real

6mm scale – the size difference is shocking and disappointing. The 6mm pieces are tiny and unimpressive. Unless you hold them up close, you can't make out any details. They might as well be ants glued to a base. You could glue the rump of an ant to a base and you could not tell the difference between it and the actual piece sitting on the table unless you looked really close. I'm completely serious. You could glue little bits of plastic or metal shavings to a base and at the 6mm scale, a Cyclone doesn't look much different. Even the Invid, when in scale with

Macross, are tiny, like the head of an eraser on a pencil.

Consider this: When we recollect **Robotech**

® images, it is always by the era/Robotech War. In the anime and in comic books, all the figures from

that era

are in scale with each other. And they work fine that way when contained to just the Macross Saga or just New Generation. But when you combine ALL ERAs at the

same scale, and put them together,

**Southern Cross/Masters Saga,
New Generation,**

and

Shadow Chronicles

, the mecha are just plain tiny at 6 mm.

Stand them next to the Macross mecha, and the later generations of tiny mecha *suck* from a *purely visual perspective*

.

We've had some ambitious **Robotech® RPG Tactics**

™ fans make, at their own expense, a Logan, Hover Tank, Bioroids, Cyclones and Invid via 3D printing, so we've seen them, and they are tiny, especially the mecha from the later Robotech® generations.

More important, I have seen *RRT gamers* who were absolutely insistent upon

keeping the 6mm scale and ready to fight you over it — UNTIL they see the actual figures, in scale, together. Almost immediately and without fail, they suddenly have a change of heart and say, “I don’t know, maybe you should scale them up to 15mm.”

The Palladium crew and I are starting to think the same thing, that to have visually effective game pieces (and pieces that are fun to paint), they need to be 15mm. Here is why:

You need to ask yourself, what is it *you want* from these future game pieces?

- Are you looking for something fun to paint and pose? If so, you don't want 6mm figures. There is little to paint and nothing to pose.

- Are you looking for something that looks cool on the

battlefield? If so, you don't want 6mm figures. They are just colored specs on a base.

- Are you looking for something that looks cool to put on your shelf? If so, 6mm figures are most definitely not it. They are just colored specs on a base.

Half the fun is painting these bad boys, and you've got virtually nothing or little to paint on many of

these 6mm scale figures. This has been driven home to me by several professional and amateur painters who have come up to me and Wayne with increasing frequency to point out that there is nothing to paint on a 6mm figure. Some have even shown us examples.

FYI: At 15mm, the later era **Robotech**® mecha and vehicles like Cyclones still look proportionately and appropriately small, but offer enough size to have good detail, be

fun to paint and look great on terrain or your shelf. Again, a few fans and a couple of our painters have actually gone to the trouble to make and show us how this looks in scale.

So again, I **NEED** you guys to really think about what you want from these next generations of **Robotech**
h ®

pieces. If you want something fun to paint and have recognizable detail, I think 15mm is the way to go. **PLEASE** let us know what you

think. Ultimately, we will try to provide what the majority (if not all) of you want.

Note: To me, the ideal solution is to offer both scales in each expansion pack or blister pack; a tiny 6mm and a 15mm mecha. **HOWEVER,** I do NOT know if that would be cost effective or practical depending on the method of manufacturing we use make them. I mean, why provide figures the buyer may not want and may never use, especially

if it increases the cost of the pack. So please do NOT decide that is the solution. It's one possibility Palladium will investigate.

Assuming we cannot offer both sizes in the same package at a reasonable price,
which ONE size would you most prefer?

Wave Two – by the end of 2015?

We want Wave Two out yesterday. Or even better, last year. That can't happen. We are shooting for the end of 2015 and will do **EVERYTHING** we can to make that a reality. But as I hope you are beginning to understand, things are not always under our absolute control.

To be honest, we have been so savaged for the many delays and changing release dates in the past, that we are afraid to offer release dates or certain details until we are

sure of them. That has resulted in fewer updates over the past few months. In fact, I have had several advisors tell me not to even say that we are trying hard for an end of 2015 release for Wave Two. But we really are. That's what I want more than anything. If we can make it happen, we will. Again, going into all the reasons for the delays or why we might not be able to make a release date is excruciating and we are not going to put ourselves or you through that pain. We just aren't. We will, of course, release what we consider to be reasonable information and data as we get it.

And we'll try to do so more often. PLEASE remember this is all a work in progress. Things change.

We hope that you realize **Wave Two** and all future releases mean money for Palladium and its partners, as well as a vibrant future for the game line, so if we can get product out faster we most certainly will! End of year is the plan. If we can do it sooner, even better! But no promises. And might it be later? Maybe. We don't know yet. When

we have a much clearer idea for a release date we will post it!

Until then, we have some cool stuff coming your way

We more than anyone know how murderous that wait for **RRT Wave Two** is for everyone. Well, we hope to soften the wait and keep you energized by doing a number of things that we

hope will make it a little less painful and demonstrate Palladium's commitment to

Robotech® RPG Tactics

TM. In fact, we are dedicating a huge part of our time and focus over the next several months to getting

RRT WAVE TWO

finished by the end of the year (no promises) as well as the many things we're listing below!

More online support with a basic set of the rules available in the PDF

format – we just want to make some clarifications to the rules first. This should include paper miniatures to use to try the game out.

Additional factions and mecha cards, Force Cards, charts and other good stuff will be made available for free online in the weeks ahead. Carmen and others have been working on this material for awhile now. Unfortunately, we are all juggling other commitments, but we hope to devote much more

time to making them available in the next couple of months.

Three new Convention Exclusives – Debut at Gen Con Indy, 2015 – and available to our Kickstarter backers online

See, we learn from you. We are releasing three new Convention Exclusives at **Gen Con Indy**, but are also taking measures to make sure YOU, our Kickstarter backers, can also get them without having to go to that particular convention or anywhere. Just a few clicks on the

computer will enable you to order these and many other items to expand your RRT gaming experience.

Wayne has spent the last week working out the best way of making the **3 new convention exclusives (and other good stuff) available to our Kickstarter backers ONLINE.** That means you do NOT have to make it to **Gen Con Indy** or *whatever other conventions*

these items may be made available. And Palladium does not do many conventions.

These exclusives will ONLY BE OFFERED at conventions AND TO OUR KICKSTARTER BACKERS.

They are not being made available to retail stores. So you may want to talk to your friends who aren't part of the Kickstarter and order some for them if they want any.

For ordering instructions, [click here](#)

.

You will have to pay for shipping. That's not much in the USA, probably around \$6-12 per group of three (varies with geographic location). Our online shipping calculator will inform you of the cost, but it does start to get a bit pricey to ship to Canada and overseas, and purchasers outside the USA are responsible for any applicable Customs fees, taxes,

broker fees and duty.

**The manufacturer working with
Palladium on these is legendary
*GHQ***

,
right here in the USA. We've been
talking with

GHQ

since March and they have agreed
to manufacture our exclusives and
help us offer a number of other

Robotech® RPG Tactics

™ items to our backers long before
they are made available to retail

outlets. All are cast in
100% Britannia pewter
and will have the
GHQ
stamp of quality.

NEW Convention Exclusives
– Must place your order by
July 15, 2015

1. Miriya's Super Valkyrie in

Guardian Mode. We thought this was the perfect companion to Miriya in her Female Power Armor offered in 2013. A sleek, dynamic item. \$22 plus shipping.

2. Breetai ready for combat. This is Commander Breetai in a suit of Zentraedi Heavy Body Armor. His right hand opened enough to place a weapon, Micronian or the severed head of a Valkyrie or other bit of wreckage. \$22 plus shipping.

3. Grell's Male Power Armor.

Includes a Grell character card for use as a Malcontent. \$22 plus shipping.

□ ALL 3 RRT Convention Exclusives are being manufactured by GHQ in the USA. Most of you should be well acquainted with the quality of GHQ's Micro Armour and attention to detail.

□ **All are cast in 100% Britannia Pewter by GHQ** and each comes packaged on a Robotech® blister card.

□ **All 3 will be made to order based on what our Kickstarter backers want, plus 1,500-2,000 more for Palladium's use as "convention exclusives."** The first convention where they will be offered is the **2015 Gen Con Indy**. They may also be available at a couple of trade shows and the

2016 AdeptiCon

.

□ **All pre-orders must be placed by July 15, 2015** . Once we have numbers, **GHQ** will manufacture them and we will ship them as soon as they arrive at the Palladium warehouse, guaranteed. Since **GHQ** is the manufacturer here in the USA, turnaround should be quick, probably shipping at the end of August.

GHQ

cannot provide us with an exact date until they know how many they'll need to make, so please get those orders in soon. These three new Convention Exclusives will be first made available at Gen Con Indy, while supplies last. As a backer, however, you can [order them from the comfort of your home](#)

▪

And because you didn't get the chance before due to Palladium's own lack of understanding, and the fact that we continually get requests from our Kickstarter backers for them, we will also be taking orders at the same time for the 2013

Max

and

Miriya Convention Exclusives

. Available only to RRT Kickstarter backers and at select conventions.

Orders must be placed by

July 15, 2015

. Both are 100% pewter.

4. Max Sterling's VF-1J Valkyrie in Battloid Mode; a couple different poses are possible. \$22 plus shipping.

5. Miriya's Female Power Armor; a couple different poses are possible. \$22 plus shipping.

MORE! Something NEW – first for you

Our teaming up with GHQ as a manufacturer in the USA makes all sorts of things suddenly possible, with quick turnarounds and release dates we should be able to hit on target – give or take a week or two, not months. And they require minimal time from Palladium, which means we can remain focused on

RRT Wave Two

and the big push to do much more **AFTER** the release of the RRT

Wave Two items.

Earth Defenders Blister Packs

We have been working with **GHQ** and

Carmen Bellaire

with input from

Mike Arnold

and

Thomas Roache

to expand the range of combat on the battlefield. This should help provide more fun and options while we all wait for

RRT Wave Two

. Plus, these Earth Defenders are the type of vehicles and troops that gamers interested in the

Macross Malcontents

can also use to develop and play that faction. We have put together what we all agree are six fun

Earth Defender Blister Packs

.

Note: Like the Convention Exclusives, we are initially only making these items available to our *Kickstarter backers* and

various conventions. Depending on your level of interest and input from our distributors and retailers, we'll make these available to retail (*probably at a bit higher price*) at a later date.

Limited initial availability. We are making numbers to satisfy only what YOU order, plus some small additional percentage as tournament prizes, displays, promotion, some reorders by Kickstarter backers, and similar uses before we decide to also

make them available in retail. That means you have a *limited window of time* to [make your acquisitions](#).

Taking initial orders for Earth Defender Packs *NOW* through July 15, 2015.

1. Apache Combat Helicopter (1)

– Includes flight stand, base and stat card.

Cost:

\$10 per pack plus shipping.

2. A-10 Warthog Jet (1) with big gun for ground attack, plus flight stand, base and stat card.

Cost:

\$10 per pack.

3. T-55MV Tanks (4 per pack), plus 2 stat cards and four bases.

Cost:

\$10.

4. Cougar 6x6 APCs (4 per pack), plus 2 stat cards and four bases.

Cost:

\$10 per pack plus shipping.

5. Convoy Trucks (4 per pack), plus 2 stat cards and four bases.

Cost:

\$10 per pack plus shipping.

6. Infantry Troops (8 troops per base for 24 or 32 total figs; some heavy weapons), 3-4 cards and 3-4

bases.

Cost:

\$10 per pack plus shipping.

Note:

The packs may cost more in retail.

7. GHQ is champing at the bit to make *new Robotech® Macross Saga® vehicles*

(with their stat cards included in each blister pack), such as the

Comanchero Helicopter, Cat's Eye Recon

and others in the months ahead.

GHQ and Palladium can start making these available over the

next few months, provided it is something you would like to see. Please let us know and we'll jump on it.

Cost of the Comanchero (1 fig) to Kickstarter backers:

\$12 plus shipping (1 vehicle per blister pack). Other vehicles yet to be determined.

Note:

The cost of all these packs is likely to be more when we release them in retail stores.

□ **The Invid could be coming**

soon to our RRT Backers. *If you want us to,*
we are also considering releasing **the Invid, Inorganics**
and **Regent,**
later this year (or early next year?),
along with the stats and a scenario
book so that you have the
Regent's Invid
as a new faction to battle the
Zentraedi. This would be separate
from the New Generation/Invid
Invasion story line.

Why the Invid? Because it works with the Zentraedi forces already available with Wave One. The *Robotech® Masters* created *the Zentraedi* specifically to fight the *Invid* and to conquer other alien worlds! You already have the Zentraedi war machine, now you'd have the Regent's Invid forces too as a faction to fight them. And the **Zentraedi/Invid Wars** predate the Macross Saga events of the First Robotech War in the time-line. It feels like a perfect fit!

Like I said, we want to bring
Robotech

® to life and provide EVERYTHING you could want from this expanding game line. By the way, this was the suggestion of a Kickstarter backer at Gen Con last year, and I loved it. Cost yet to be determined at a later date. We need to know if you are even interested in the first place, before we contract with sculptors. If you are, we'd make the Invid faction available at a later date.

□ **You get it all first!** All of these

items are being made available to you, our **Kicks tarter backers**, weeks and in many cases, *months before* any of it is ever made available at retail. It makes sense since you represent our core audience and most dedicated supporters. We hope you like the ideas as much as we do.

□ We thought this would be a GREAT way to keep the excitement for **Robotech® RPG Tactics™**

strong, give you more to play with, and make sure our most stalwart supporters get first crack at some of the new stuff on the drawing boards.

□ The idea to do this is based on conversations with a number of Kickstarter backers at **AdeptiCon** whom we talked with in confidence. (Thank you, fellas for keeping our secret and for your invaluable input.) And the addition of GHQ to Palladium's growing range of resources and expertise.

□ *Best of all, none of this affects or slows down the development or release of **RRT Wave Two** items whatsoever.*

GHQ is doing most of the work, costs are comparatively small because we can manufacture to order, and being made in the USA, we can kick them out fast. There's no waiting months and months for manufacture or shipping. And being made by GHQ, you know the quality will be top-notch.

□ **Harmony Gold USA** has approved all of this. It's just a matter of whether or not

you

want any of these

Robotech® RPG Tactics

™ items. Let us know.

[Order by July 15, 2015](#)

▪

What else can you expect?

A lot. We have a great many plans for the future of **Robotech® RPG Tactics**™. We will reveal them at a later date. Our top priority right now is getting RRT Wave Two into your hands.

Better communication and more support for RRT. We have always listened to you, but I hope we'll be able to maintain better and more frequent contact on the Kickstarter page. I hope this conversation, news and items make you happy. We would have posted sooner, but

we wanted to make sure we could come through with everything we are offering.

We're listening and aiming to please. We hope you hang in there with us, because Palladium is dedicated to **you** and **Robotech®**.

– Kevin Siembieda, Publisher and Game Designer – June 6, 2015