

MECHANICS 16

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SPECIAL FEATURE:

MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM

ZEON'S AWESOME WAR MACHINES

Covers a range of military mechs from the Principality of Zeon, including everything from mobile tanks to battleships and attack carriers, complemented by detailed model kit examples!

004 SPECIAL FEATURE: ZEON'S AWESOME WAR MACHINES


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* All prices listed include tax.
* All prices are current as of June 2023.



It is the year 0079 of the Universal Century. The cluster of colonies furthest from the Earth, called Side 3, proclaimed itself the Principality of Zeon and launched a war of independence against the Earth Federation. Initial fighting lasted over one month and saw both sides lose half their respective populations. People were horrified by the indescribable atrocities that had been committed in the name of independence.

Eight months had passed since the rebellion began. They were at a stalemate.

Special Feature
Mobile Suit Gundam

ZEON'S AWESOME WAR MACHINES

The mecha of the Zeon military continue to captivate veteran Gundam fans. Zeon introduced the groundbreaking humanoid mobile suit, the Zaku, and boldly went to war against the Earth Federation for independence despite their numerical disadvantage. The effectiveness of their weapons systems truly exemplified the power of Zeon technology. In this issue, we begin an in-depth exploration of the military mechs that Zeon introduced in the original Gundam series. We take a close look at kits of the iconic Zaku, Dom, and Gouf, as well as massive mobile armors like the Bigro and Braw Bro. We also highlight other mobile weapons like the Wappa and Sealanth. Not to be overlooked, their battleships, including the Musai, also receive detailed attention. Are you ready for this deep dive?

PRINCIPALITY OF ZEON

THE BIRTH AND EVOLUTION OF ZEON'S MOBILE WEAPONS

The Zeon military revolutionized warfare with their creation of colossal humanoid weapons known as Mobile Suits. In an era dominated by battles influenced by Minovsky particles, these Mobile Suits clashed in titanic melee skirmishes, evoking images of ancient giants in combat. As we revisit the One Year War, we'll delve into the creation and evolution of these game-changing weapons that have indelibly marked the history of the Universal Century

Text and commentary by Hiroyuki Kawai

MOBILE SUIT REVOLUTIONIZING WARFARE WITH MOBILE SUITS

In U.C. 0079, Side 3, the colony farthest from Earth, proclaimed itself the Principality of Zeon and launched an attack on the Earth Federation. The advent of the mobile suit, a revolutionary new weapon, emboldened the resource-limited Principality of Zeon to confront the mighty Earth Federation.

No discussion of the Mobile Suit can be complete without mentioning the groundbreaking discovery of "Minovsky Particles" by Dr. Trenov Y. Minovsky. Dr. Minovsky not only unveiled the Minovsky-Ionesco type thermonuclear reactor, a compact fusion device, but also discovered that densely dispersed Minovsky Particles could disrupt radio waves and electronic devices. This combination of compact reactors and radio jamming capabilities enabled the Principality of Zeon to challenge the military might of the Earth Federation, ushering in a new era of combat dominated by humanoid weaponry and direct, line-of-sight confrontation.

However, the road to this new kind of weaponry was complicated. In U.C. 0071, Zeon sponsored a weapons development competition involving three key players: Zeonic, MIP, and Zimmad. MIP presented the MIP-X1, essentially an enhanced space capsule, while Zeonic unveiled the ZI-XA3, a towering humanoid weapon. The ZI-XA3, a result of Zeonic's S.U.I.T. project, laid the groundwork for later mobile suits, most notably the MS-01.

Initially, many, including Gihren Zabi, favored the MIP-X1 and viewed the ZI-XA3 with skepticism.

However, the ZI-XA3's superior humanoid design, unmatched versatility, innovative attitude control through AMBAC, and overall enhanced performance shifted perceptions. It represented not just an extension of traditional weaponry, but the dawn of a transformative era in warfare.

After refining the small fusion reactor and fluid pulse system, Zeonic proceeded with the MS-03 and MS-04 trials. U.C. 0074 witnessed the birth of the MS-05 Zaku I, the first operational mobile suit. Over the subsequent five years, Zeon formulated a military strategy centered around mobile suits. During this period, the Zaku evolved into the MS-06 Zaku II. As U.C. 0079 dawned, Zeon plunged into war with palpable anticipation. Key victories, including the capture of Granada and the triumph at the Battle of Loum, were undeniably fueled by the strategic use of the mobile suit.

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| <p>Zeonic</p> <p>As the government-sponsored corporation of the Principality of Zeon, Zeonic was the driving force behind the MS-01, effectively marking the genesis of the MS. They led the development of prominent MS, concentrating on models such as the Zaku I, Zaku II, Gouf, and Gelgoog.</p> | <p>Zimmad</p> <p>Despite being a major corporation in Zeon alongside Zeonic, Zimmad trailed behind in the field of MS innovation. They gained recognition for producing specialized mobile suits, most notably the Dom, Rick Dom, and Gogg.</p> | <p>Zeonic's Mobile Suit Development Units and Hubs</p> |
| <p>MIP</p> <p>Although MIP's proposal was not chosen as the next-gen primary weapon, their proficiency in developing beam weapons and mobile armor gained prominence. Responsible for creations like the Z'Gok, Grublo, and Bigro, they played a pivotal role in development of Gelgoog's beam weapons.</p> | <p>Granada</p> <p>Following the onset of the One Year War, Granada, under Zeon's control, evolved into a significant base for raids and mobile operations. Beyond its military applications, it also emerged as a hub for weapons development.</p> | <p>California Base</p> <p>Initially an Earth Federation stronghold, the California Base, once seized by Zeon, offered a critical strategic advantage on Earth. This base pioneered localized mobile suit development and facilitated the creation of submarines such as the Yukon.</p> |



MS-05B Zaku I (Old Zaku)

The Zeonic Corporation's first operational mobile suit, the Zaku I, carved its niche in support roles, especially in logistics, following the debut of the Zaku II.

MS-06 Zaku II

The Zaku II swiftly emerged as Zeon's flagship mobile suit at the onset of the One Year War. Innovations such as external coolant pipes and enhanced cooling systems significantly boosted its performance. It underwent several iterations, beginning with the mass-produced Type A, progressing to the nuclear-capable Type C, and culminating in the refined Type F. After the descent to Earth, many Type Fs were converted into the ground-optimized Type J configuration.

MOBILE SUIT UTILIZATION OF GROUND COMBAT MOBILE SUITS FOLLOWING THE EARTH DESCENT OPERATION

The Principality of Zeon achieved victory during the Loum Campaign, decimating 80% of the Earth Federation's main fleet and capturing General Revil. Two months later, they initiated Operation Earth Descent, indicating that plans for an Earth invasion had been in motion even before official hostilities commenced. It was a logical progression to enhance Mobile Suits with ground combat capabilities.

Modifying space-oriented Mobile Suits for operations in gravity presented numerous challenges, ranging from adapting to environmental conditions to optimizing mobility. Taking the Zaku II as a case study, these issues were tackled by discarding space combat equipment, resolving the cooling challenges posed by the thermonuclear reactor, and integrating features such as

dust-proofing to accommodate terrestrial combat environments. While the terrestrial adaptation of the Zaku II served as a provisional solution upon its deployment on Earth, it swiftly made way for mobile suits explicitly designed for ground warfare: the MS-07 Gouf and the MS-09 Dom. Intriguingly, these two suits adopted divergent strategies to confront the fundamental challenge of range. The Gouf capitalized on synergies with the Dodai YS aircraft, whereas the Dom leveraged its thermonuclear jet engine to facilitate rapid hovering. Both adaptations were markedly successful.

Amphibious mobile suits were deployed to Earth's vast oceans, encompassing 70% of the planet's surface. These units undertook missions such as disrupting maritime commerce and severing sea

lanes, thereby augmenting Zeon's terrestrial supremacy. Zeon's advancement post-descent was significantly expedited by the prompt introduction of these environment-specific mobile suits. The capture of pivotal development hubs like the California Base early in the One Year War was instrumental. The capacity to replicate Earth's diverse habitats, such as deserts and oceans, within space colonies is inherently restricted. Thus, the opportunity to refine these suits in genuine environments profoundly impacted their efficacy.

However, by November U.C. 0079, the momentum appeared to be shifting. The Earth Federation was preparing for a counteroffensive, driven by their overwhelming numerical advantage.

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| <p>MS-07 Gouf</p> <p>The Gouf, the Zeon military's first dedicated land combat unit, is equipped with a heat rod and a 5-barrel 75 mm machine gun. It excels in close combat against other MS.</p> | <p>MS-09 Dom</p> <p>The Dom, Zimmad's first mass-produced mobile suit, was designed for enhanced mobility through high-speed hovering. It is heavily armored and wields the formidable Giant Bazooka, delivering tremendous firepower.</p> | <p>MSM-03 Gogg</p> <p>The Gogg, produced by Zimmad, is an amphibious MS and the first from Zeon to be equipped with beam weapons. This advancement was made possible by a water-cooled thermal management system for its thermonuclear reactor.</p> | <p>MSM-04 Acguy</p> <p>The Acguy, an amphibious model from the Zeon Company, benefited from the reuse of Zaku parts, which shortened its development time. Its stealth capabilities made it ideal for reconnaissance and covert missions.</p> | <p>MSM-07 Z'Gok</p> <p>The Z'Gok, an advanced amphibious model from MIP Company, comes equipped with Mega Particle Cannons on both arms. It excels underwater and outperforms the GM in ground combat.</p> | <p>MSM-10 Zock</p> <p>Developed at the California Base, the Zock is an amphibious mobile suit serving as a mobile artillery platform. Equipped with a powerful generator, it boasts nine high-energy beam cannons.</p> |
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MOBILE SUIT URGENT DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEXT-GENERATION MAIN MOBILE SUIT

Following their setback in Operation Odessa, Zeon urgently required a new primary mobile suit for space combat, particularly as the Earth Federation had already deployed their GM units. The necessity to incorporate beam weapons into the new design led to developmental delays. In the interim, the Rick Dom, celebrated for its efficient production, underwent modifications for space adaptability.

This urgency set the stage for a showdown between the MS-14 Gelgoog and the MS-15 Gyan, contenders for the next-generation primary mobile suit. The Gelgoog, technically superior even to the Earth Federation's Gundam, was anticipated to be a game-changer. However, its late entry onto the battlefield, combined with a scarcity of skilled pilots, limited its impact. An earlier initiation of mass production might have altered the One Year War's outcome.

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| <p>MS-09R Rick Dom</p> <p>The Rick Dom, a space-adapted variant of the efficient Dom design, substitutes the original terrestrial thermonuclear jet engine with a space-compatible thermonuclear rocket engine.</p> | <p>The Gelgoog stands as Zeon's ultimate primary mobile suit, birthed from a collaborative endeavor spearheaded by Zeonic, with MIP and Zimmad providing essential components. Its prowess was deemed superior even to that of the Earth Federation's Gundam.</p> | <p>Crafted by the Zimmad Company, the Gyan boasted agility but fell short in versatility. Although it didn't claim victory in the next-gen MS competition, under M'Quve's stewardship, it presented a formidable challenge to the Gundam at the Texas Colony base.</p> |
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MOBILE ARMOR UNLOCKING TRUE POTENTIAL WITH MOBILE SUIT SUPPORT

While mobile suits were central to Zeon's military strategy, certain scenarios demanded specialized firepower. This need led to the development of mobile armors, which, unlike mobile suits, prioritized offensive capabilities. Evolving from the MIP-X1 concept, these units delivered unparalleled firepower, particularly when deployed alongside mobile suits.

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| <p>MAX-03 Adzam</p> <p>Originating from the lunar-centric Luna Tank design, the Adzam ensnares mobile suits with a cable and annihilates them using heat generated by electromagnetic waves.</p> | <p>MIP's Zakrello, a prototype mobile armor, was designed for deconstruction. However, in defiance of orders, Dimitri commandeered it into battle.</p> | <p>A direct descendant of the MIP-X1, the Bigro excels in hit-and-run tactics, leveraging its thermonuclear rocket engine and Mega Particle Cannon.</p> | <p>As the behemoth of the mobile armor class, the Big Zam brandishes up to 28 Mega Particle Cannons, a colossal variant, and an I-Field generator. It wreaked havoc on the Tianem fleet in the Battle of Solomon.</p> |
| <p>MSN-02 Zeong</p> <p>Custom-built for Newtype pilots, the Zeong features detachable wired mega particle cannons for multifaceted assaults. After losing his Gelgoog, Char commandeered the Zeong in his climactic duel against Amuro's Gundam.</p> | <p>Crafted for Newtype pilots with insights from the Flanagan Institute, the Braw Bro is uniquely designed to disassemble into five components. It employs wired Mega Particle Cannons for long-range confrontations.</p> | <p>Specifically designed for Newtypes, the Elmeth utilizes psychic communication to remotely orchestrate over ten wireless bits. Lalah showcased the formidable prowess of its Psycommu-based armaments.</p> | <p>The Grublo, an aquatic variant of the Bigro, is propelled by a thermonuclear water jet engine. It boasts an arsenal that includes torpedoes, anti-aircraft missiles, and massive claw arms.</p> |

MS-06S ZAKU II

SPECIFICATION MS-06S Zaku II

Height: 17.5 m
Weight: 56.2 t
Known Pilots: Various

The Zaku II S-Type was engineered as a comprehensive upgrade over the Zaku II F-Type, achieving enhanced performance across multiple functions. This model showcases advancements in areas such as communication systems, sensory equipment, and acceleration due to the refinement of various components. Predominantly assigned to frontline commanders and elite squads, the S-Type is especially notable for being the exclusive mobile suit of Char Aznable.

Transforming the S-Type into a robust form inspired by MSV designs

It's only appropriate that we start with a Zaku, the first humanoid mobile weapon in mankind's history, renowned for revolutionizing warfare tactics in the Universal Century. It initially overwhelmed Earth Federation forces at the onset of the One Year War. Specifically, the MS-06F Zaku II, introduced in December UC 0078, set the stage for subsequent variants, including the ground-oriented J-Type within the MS-06 series. In this feature, we spotlight the S-Type, an advanced version of the F-Type designed for commanders. This project is based on the MG Char's Custom Zaku Ver. 2.0, with the objective to enhance its silhouette, drawing inspiration from MSV designs. Moving away from Char's Custom's signature pink, we opted for a classic green to capture the quintessential Zaku aesthetic, envisaging an unnamed commander in control.

BANDAI SPIRITS 1/100 scale plastic kit
MS-06S Zaku Ver. 2.0
(Char's Custom) modified

MS-06S Zaku II
Composition and text by Yu FUWA

SAMPLE



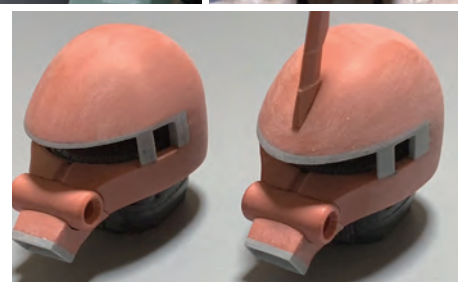
▼ Certain units boast upgraded backpacks and leg panels, enhanced with additional verniers. The showcased model takes inspiration from Char's Custom unit, melding elements of the F-Type, including vents and thrusters, into its revamped, sturdier design.



▲▶ The S-Type is a variant engineered for enhanced acceleration and maneuverability, building on the foundations of the F-Type. In this custom kit, the design ambitiously evolves to embody a bulkier Zaku, drawing inspiration from MSV designs like the 06R by augmenting the dimensions of various parts and components.



◀ I narrowed the mono-eye slit by adding a 1 mm plastic sheet to the top, for a more penetrating gaze. The columns on both sides were made using 0.3 mm plastic sheets, and the duct tips extended with a 0.3 mm layer. I crafted two interchangeable heads: one with a blade antenna, and one without.



◀ I added plastic sheets to the chest's sides, folded at an angle at the bottom to increase volume. The hip block was expanded using a 1 mm plastic sheet, and a 1 mm space was added between the hip armor and the thighs to accommodate their enlargement.



▲ Photos during production. Modification points are clearly visible since these were taken before primer was applied.



▲ The base for the spiked armor on the left shoulder was sourced from the MG Gouf Ver. 2.0, with spikes from the Zaku Ver. 2.0 attached on top.



▶ The volume of the thighs was bulked up with epoxy putty. The seam, including molded details on the shins' reverse, was carefully smoothed out. The soles were encased in a plastic sheet to increase volume, as was the armor on the top of the foot.



◀ The kit's included weapons were painted with precision. For the Heat Hawk Axe, I crafted an auxiliary blade designed to simulate a luminous effect.



◀ I widened the shield by 8 mm by adding plastic plates to the sides, making it look more robust and powerful.



The MG Zaku Ver. 2.0, a 15-year-old release, remains a masterpiece of sculpting, articulation, and build quality, solidifying its status as the definitive 1/100 scale Zaku kit. Although Gundam models have progressed to Ver. 3.0, the Zaku's enduring adherence to the Ver. 2.0 design underscores its timeless quality and significance. This project aimed to alter various elements to echo the bulkier Zaku representations in MSV illustrations.

■ **Head**
The mono-eye slit was refined with a 1 mm plastic sheet, and the eye support columns on either side

were reconstructed with 0.3 mm plastic. The duct edges were meticulously smoothed, and the head's rear was remodeled to reflect MSV-style Zakus. Two head versions were prepared: one echoing the Commander unit's unique design, and a standard version without alterations.

■ **Torso**
Emulating MSV's Zaku aesthetics, plastic sheets were affixed to the sides of the chest, creating a pronounced angled fold. The hip joint block was expanded with a 1 mm plastic sheet, and a 1 mm allowance was created in the waist skirt for the modified, thicker thighs. Aftermarket

thruster verniers replaced the original backpack components.

■ **Arms**
All external armor pieces and embellishments were affixed permanently, honoring the Zaku's monocoque design that minimizes excessive panels and surface intricacies. I used epoxy putty for contour enhancement on the forearms, and the selected fist parts, sourced from another kit, were slightly upscaled. The shield was extended by 8 mm, utilizing a base from the MG Gouf Ver. 2.0 kit and finely sanded spikes from the Zaku set.

■ **Legs**
The thighs were bulked up with epoxy putty. I addressed the prominent seam on the back of the shins by sealing it. The feet were enlarged with two layers of 0.3 mm plastic sheets.

■ **Weapons**
I refined the machine gun and bazooka by eliminating parting lines and detailed the Heat Hawk's latch with a plastic sheet, deliberately keeping additional details sparse.

■ **Painting**
Despite the S-Type designation, the suit features mass-production colors:

Green1 = Gundam Color MS Green + Cool White (1:1 ratio), with a touch of Mr. Color Ironnomoto Cyan
Green2 = Gundam Color Deep Green + Cool White (1:1 ratio)
Backpack = Green2 + Clear Green
Elbow, Knee, Sole = German Gray
Joint Color 1 = Modelkasten Superior Warm Gray
Joint Color 2 = Modelkasten Stormy Sea Gray
Weapons = Graphite Black

Panel lines were accentuated with German Gray enamel paint. Decals from Gundam Decal DX for

Zeon and other sources were applied, followed by a finish with Gaia Color Premium Ex-Flat Clear.

Since no new Ver. 2.0 variations have been released lately, I find myself yearning for models like the Desert Zaku or the Underwater-type Zaku.

Yu FUWA
A modeler devoted to meticulous decal application and pastel-hued painting. In the realm of Gunpla, it seems the Mobile Suits from the Universal Century hold his unwavering admiration.

Recreating the invasion of Central Asia with a diorama

Continuing from the F-type, we present a diorama inspired by the Zaku II Ground Type, set during the Principality of Zeon's First Earth Descent Operation and depicting the seizure of a city within the Central Asia region. This diorama features three MG Zaku Ver.2.0 (J-type) units. The Zaku units form a three-member squad: a young squadron leader, a battle-hardened sergeant, and a rookie in his inaugural combat. They are positioned in close formation, conveying the intensity of the Zaku squad's capture operation. It's important to note that, as this scene occurs before the Earth Federation's counteroffensive, the Zaku units are presumed to possess a substantial firepower advantage. To reflect this, weathering and damage are minimal, giving way to a sleek finish. We invite you to appreciate the diorama, complemented by the realistically detailed buildings constructed from plastic plates and 3D printing.

BANDAI SPIRITS 1/100 scale plastic kit
MS-06S Zaku Ver. 2.0

Zeon's First Earth Descent Operation

Diorama and text by Yoshitaka Chotoku

Principality of Zeon Forces First Earth Drop Operation

The Principality of Zeon's First Earth Descent Operation

On March 1, UC 0079, the military forces of the Principality of Zeon initiated the First Earth Descent Operation. Successfully seizing control of the Earth Federation's Baikonur Space Base in Central Asia, they marked the beginning of their invasion of Earth. In the early stages of the operation, F-types were locally modified for terrestrial combat. However, it wasn't long before units manufactured in Granada and at the California Base were dispatched to the frontlines.