# Mad Al's Homemade Tank Guide

This 'book' actually consists of a three-ring binder with about four hundred pages of fairly compact type and severely plain illustrations, separated (via colored cardstock pages) into ten chapters. There is no publishers' information; and the contact information on the last page gives a PO Box located somewhere in "the Michigan Freedom Zone," plus a set of CB and shortwave radio frequencies. Mad Al's Guide gives off that unmistakable aura of being something from the 1980s, based on everything from the font, to the tone, and to the oddly surreal stock illustrations.

A look at the chapter heads should prove instructive:

1. Why We Fight
2. Know the Enemy: The Centauran Menace
3. Which Vehicle is Best For You?
4. Basic Armoring Techniques
5. Your First Vehicular Weapons
6. Converting to Ethanol: How and When
7. The Ten Commandments of Offensive Driving
8. Advanced Armoring Techniques
9. Adapting Alien Tech: Dos and Don'ts

## 10.  Maintaining the Perfect Combat Garage

There's also a recurring sidebar throughout the Guid that heavily uses the theme "The Three Rs: Resist, Repurpose, Recycle."

The general language of the Guide is **extremely** patriotic and aggressive in tone.  Based on context from the text, the Guide was written in the aftermath of an alien invasion in 1981. The aliens (Centaurans) are not all-conquering, but large portions of the United States (and, in fact, the rest of the world) are either under Centauran control, or are effectively lawless. The capital of the USA is Cincinnati, the British Empire (not Commonwealth) is being run from Australia, and large sections of the "Three Rs" sidebars seem to be translated from Russian resistance *samzidat* circulated by the *Avtodual'nyye rytsari Svyatoy Materi Rossii*.

On the other hand: yeah, it's a fairly good basic primer on how to turn a mid-sized sedan into an armored and armed combat vehicle. It assumes a heck of a lot of high-tech materials, which is problematical for people lacking crashed Centauri combat shuttles to loot.  But there's about five pages' worth of casual schematics of reverse engineered lasers and the exact molecular makeup of

titanium-weave kinetic absorbers that have made about half a dozen defense contractors swallow their collective gum.  They have, in fact, started a consortium to properly exploit this information -- and they would very much like to know more.  They will pay **extremely well** to know more, in fact. In whatever denomination the people providing them that information might prefer.

(Don't know how to score this one; it's obviously based on Steve Jackson Games' *Car Wars* -- with a hint of Niven/Pournelle's *Footfall*, and possibly a touch of *The Day After Ragnarok* -- but there's nothing in here that's trademarked, or subject to copyright.)

- Moe Lane
- http://www.moelane.com