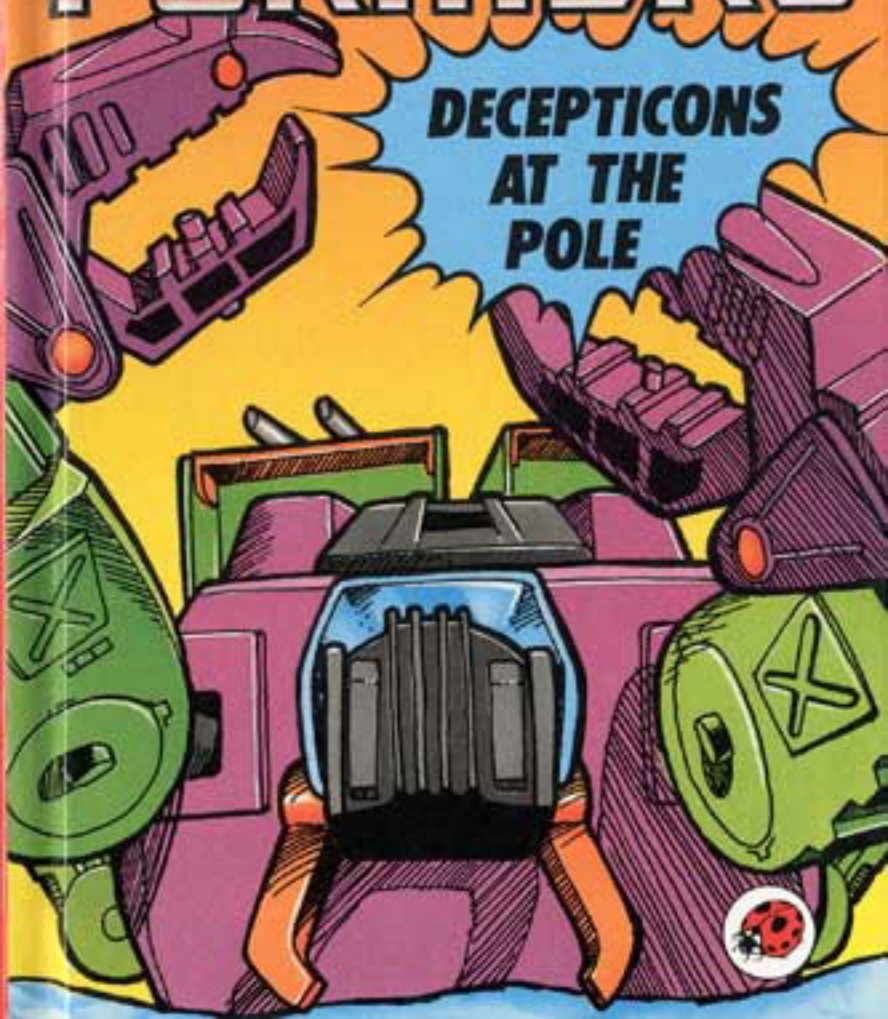


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THE TRANS FORMERS

**DECEPTICONS
AT THE
POLE**



Once, long ago, a race of robot beings called Autobots were forced to wage war against their evil counterparts, the Decepticons, to bring peace back to their home planet Cybertron. When chance brought both sides to Earth, the war went on.

Over many centuries leaders have come and gone. Now the fight continues in a far flung corner of the galaxy, on the planet Nebulos. Both Autobots and Decepticons have formed new alliances, each with a rival group of native Nebulans.

The Decepticons are determined to destroy the Autobots and reign supreme. Will they succeed?

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THE TRANSFORMERS™ FORMERS



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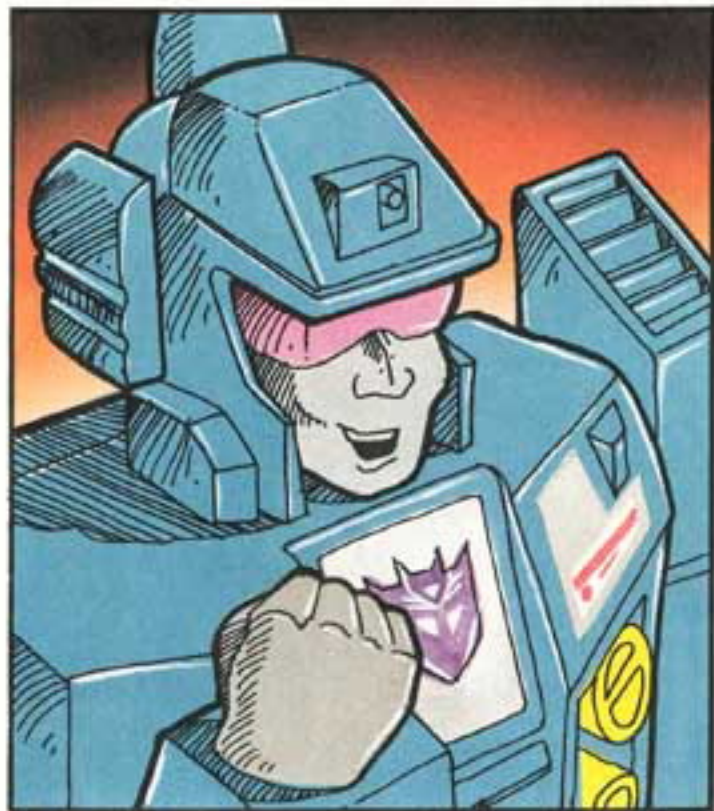
by JOHN GRANT

illustrated by BARRY ROWELL of LEOGRAPHICS

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In their base on Nebulos, the Decepticons were planning the next move in their unending war with the Autobots.

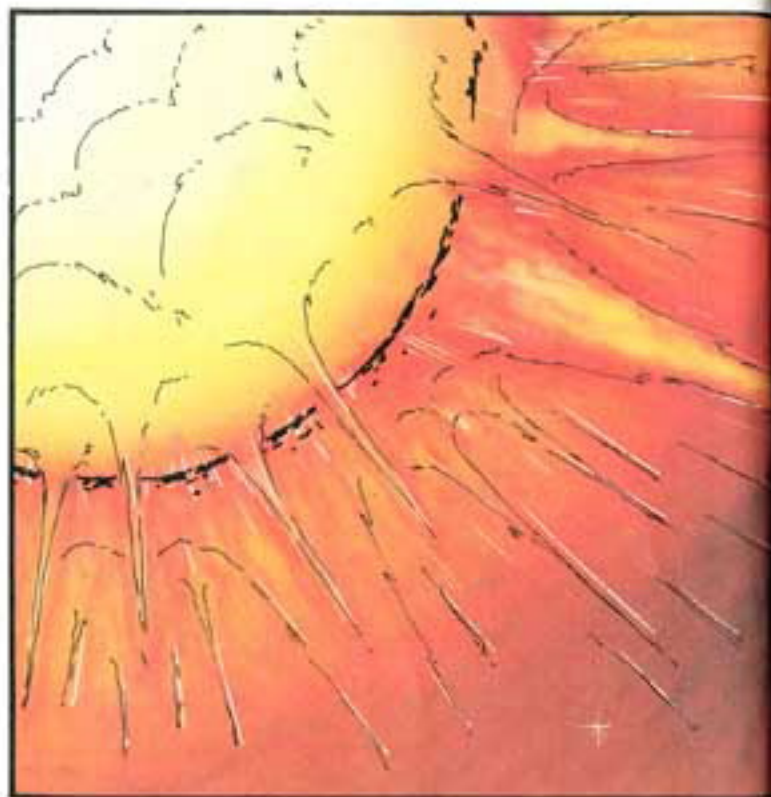
Slugslinger spoke up. "I don't know why we don't just ride all over them in one go," he said. "We spend most of our time running round in circles taking potshots. A major battle plan is what we need!"



"A major battle plan is what we cannot have," snapped Cyclonus. "Since coming to Nebulos we have been short of energy. We can maintain normal functioning and some military activity. We do not have the resources for anything greater."

"The Nebulans managed before we came," put in Scourge.

"The Nebulans are small, with small energy requirements," said Cyclonus. "But it might be worth asking them. They may know more about energy on this planet than they have told us so far."



Cyclonus consulted the Nebulan scientist, Vorath.

"Unlike other planets," explained Vorath, "Nebulos does not rely on solar energy. Suns rise and set. Suns can be screened by clouds. Their energy is unreliable. Nebulos's main energy source is far off on the very edge of our galaxy. It is a star... a pulsar, which sends out a steady stream of cosmic radiation. By a fluke of



intergalactic gravitation, most of this radiation is intercepted by Nebulos. Its greatest concentration is in our north polar region."

"What happens then?" asked Cyclonus.

"Nebulos's magnetic field forms a network of force lines. The cosmic energy is guided by these to every part of the planet."

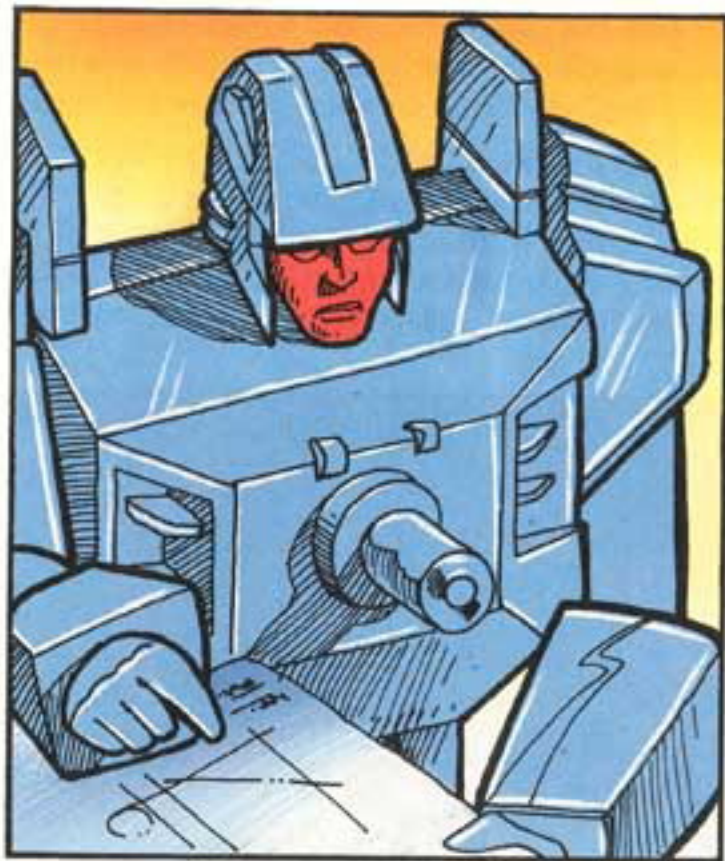
Cyclonus reported what he had learned to the rest of the Decepticons. "If we can tap the planet's energy at the pole, we should have more than enough for our needs. Then we can deal with the Autobots once and for all."

"Why should we only take enough for our needs?" cried Slugslinger. "Let's take it ALL! That would really deal with the Autobots once and for all!"

"Tut, Tut, Slugslinger!" said Triggerhappy, wagging a finger. "Let's not be greedy. Besides, we need the Autobots... for target practice!"

"Then it's agreed," said Cyclonus. "We will establish an energy interception station at the pole. Aimless will be in charge of design and construction. Misfire, as Aimless's partner, you will make sure that he makes no mistakes."

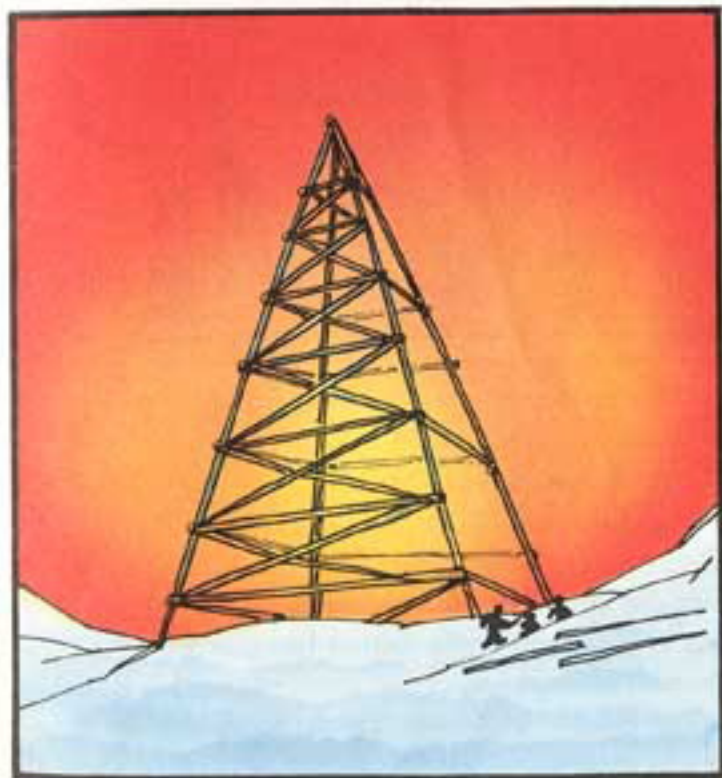




Aimless prepared his design for the energy interceptor. It would be a giant tetrahedron rising a hundred metres above the surface of the planet. There was no need of foundations, he explained. The ground at the pole was frozen to a great depth as solid as the hardest rock. Permafrost, he called it.

The tetrahedron was put together in sections, and each section carried to the pole for assembly. The Decepticons found it hard work. Everything became coated with ice and frost. Some of them suffered from frozen mechanisms. Special rations of anti-freeze had to be issued.

But despite the difficulties, the work went rapidly ahead. Piece by piece the tetrahedron began to rise above the desolate polar lands.



Among the Autobots it was Highbrow who first suspected that the Decepticons were up to something. "Do you realise," he said to Hot Rod, "that it's been several weeks since the Decepticons gave us any trouble?"

"True!" said Hot Rod.



"Not only true," replied Highbrow, "but very unusual." He mentioned it to several others, and the Autobots agreed that they must investigate.

It did not take long to find out what the Decepticons were doing. Brainstorm flew a high altitude spy mission, sending back video images of the Decepticon construction force at work. The tetrahedron was close to completion. Hot Rod asked his Nebulan companion, Sparks, what it might mean.



"I guess that it is a piece of pyramid energy technology. From its location I would say that the Decepticons plan to intercept the energy flow from space."

"But that would be disaster for the Autobots!" cried Hot Rod.

"Not only for the Autobots," said Sparks, "but also for Nebulos. Without a steady flow of cosmic energy, the planet will die!"

Hot Rod contacted the Decepticon base by radio. He spoke to Cyclonus.

"You must stop your work at the pole, Cyclonus, before it is too late," he said. "You do not know what you are doing. You will bring destruction down upon us all!"

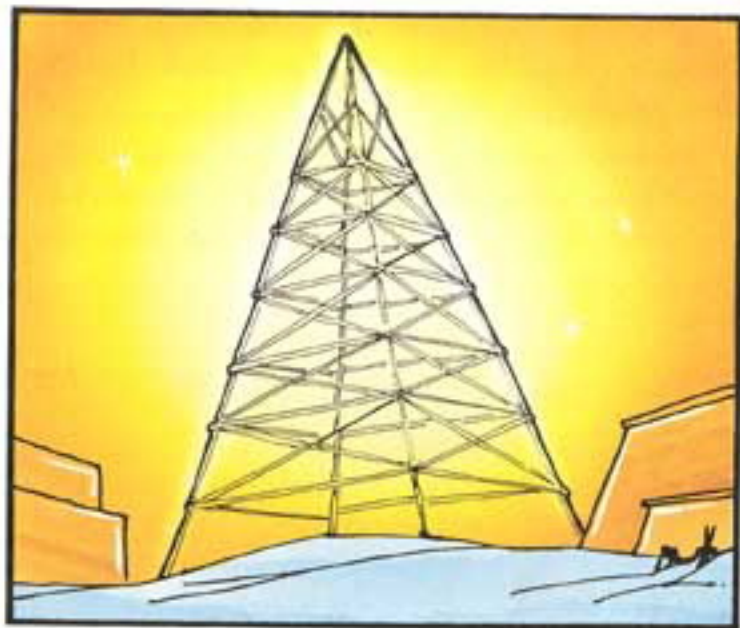


"Exactly!" cried Cyclonus. "Every one of you miserable Autobots will regret that you ever set foot on Nebulos! Without energy you will be helpless! But do not worry. We Decepticons are not completely heartless. We will spare you enough energy to keep you functioning... just! You have a use as slaves... or spare parts!"

"You don't understand," cried Hot Rod. "It is the planet itself you are about to destroy, and the Decepticons with it."

"Do not try to frighten us off with your wild tales, Autobot," cried Cyclonus. "In a few days the tetrahedron will be complete. Then you will come begging for energy. You will be at the mercy of the Decepticons."





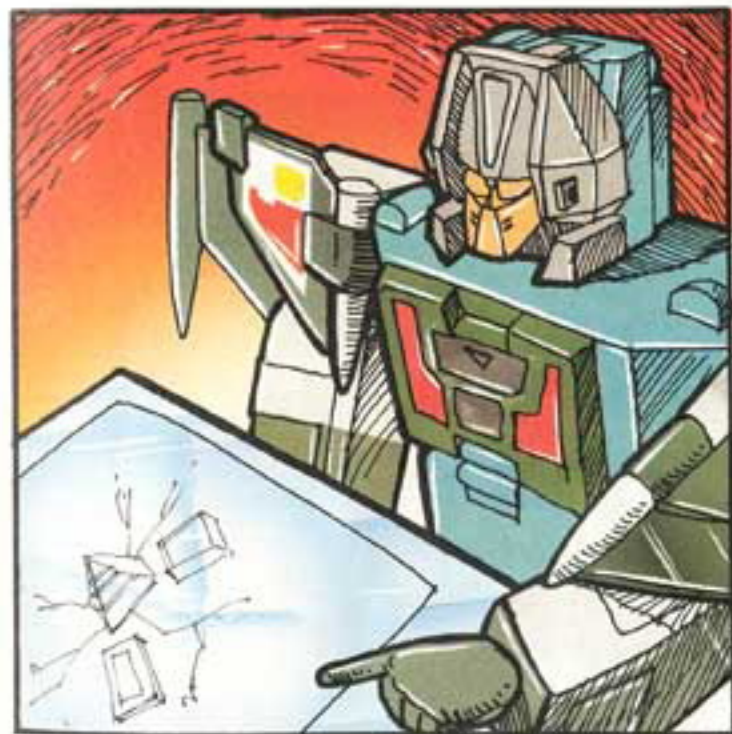
Three days later, the Decepticon tetrahedron was complete. It rose against the polar sky like a strange mountain. The gleaming network of metal rods which formed the tetrahedron sparkled in the sharp, frosty light. Cyclonus and the Decepticons looked up at it with pride. Aimless was more than proud. He was astonished that something of his had been completed without mistakes... and showed no sign of falling down.

When an Autobot reconnaissance patrol reported back that the Decepticon energy interceptor was completed, Hot Rod called the Autobots together.

"We have no other choice," he said. "The tetrahedron must be destroyed."

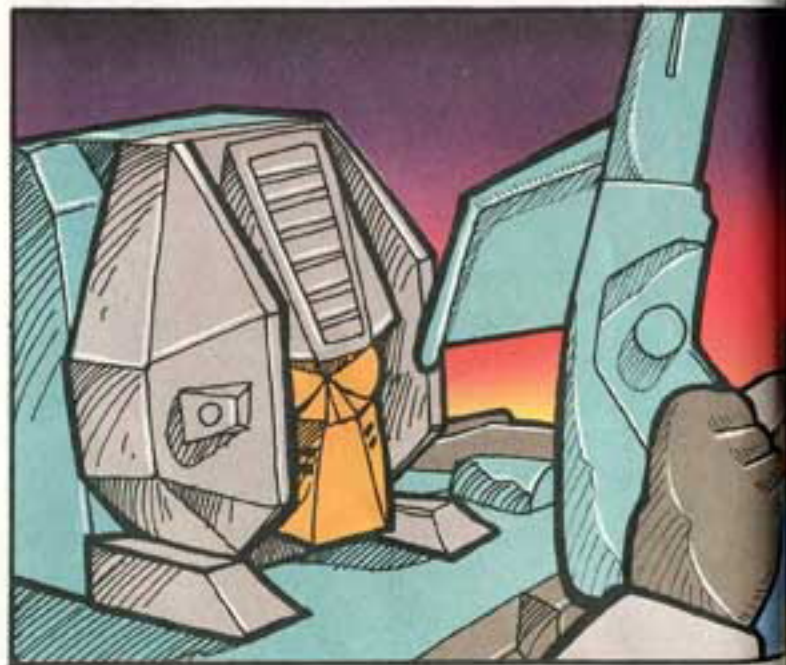
Plans were made, and a sabotage task force led by Brainstorm stood in wait. When the right moment came, they would attack and destroy the Decepticon installation before they themselves and the planet Nebulos were destroyed.

Then, word came from the Autobot scouts. The Decepticons had returned to their base, leaving only a small force to guard the tetrahedron.



Under cover of darkness, Brainstorm led his task force on their mission to destroy the Decepticon tetrahedron. It came in view in the starlight long before they reached it. "It's enormous!" said Crosshairs. "Are we expected to destroy *that*?"

The Nebulan, Sparks, spoke up. "Every structure has a weak point. Destroy that and you destroy everything. If you Autobots can keep the Decepticon guard occupied, we guarantee to turn that thing into a heap of scrap." Then he signalled to the other Nebulans who made up the demolition party, and crept into the darkness towards the tetrahedron.



Brainstorm waited several minutes, then he gave the order:

"AUTOBOTS... COMMENCE FIRING!"

A storm of laser fire swept over the Decepticon position from the Autobots' weapons. The Decepticons returned the fire, and next moment a fierce battle was raging.

Unseen by the Decepticons, the small Nebulans clambered swiftly among the struts and ties of the tetrahedron, attaching demolition charges.



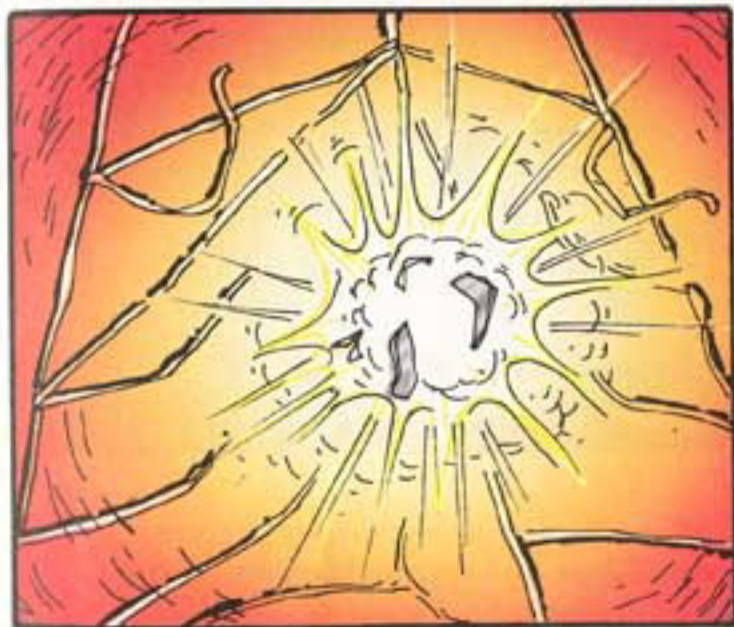
It was not long before the Nebulans had completed their work and rejoined the Autobots. "Time to get out of here," said Sparks.

The Autobots fired one final blast, then withdrew quickly into the dark.



The Decepticons also stopped firing. The danger was past, they thought. The Autobots had failed. The tetrahedron was safe.

Suddenly, from above their heads, there came the sharp crack of an explosion. Then another. And another. Bright flashes flickered among the rods at one corner of the giant structure as the Nebulans' charges detonated. Nothing more happened for several seconds. Then one of the Decepticons cried, "LOOK OUT! It's falling!"



The explosions had destroyed one of the corner bases. Against the stars the tetrahedron was leaning over, moving faster every second.

With a crash and screech of rending metal, the Decepticon energy interceptor crumpled to the ground.



When the Decepticons at the pole reported back to base that the tetrahedron had been destroyed by the Autobots, Cyclonus cried furiously, "The fools! They fell for one of the oldest tricks in the book!"

"If I had been in charge," said Scourge, "not an Autobot would have survived, and there would not be a scratch on the energy interceptor."

"We will start again," said Cyclonus. "You,



Aimless, will come up with a design that is not so easily destroyed. Scourge, you will be responsible for its protection."

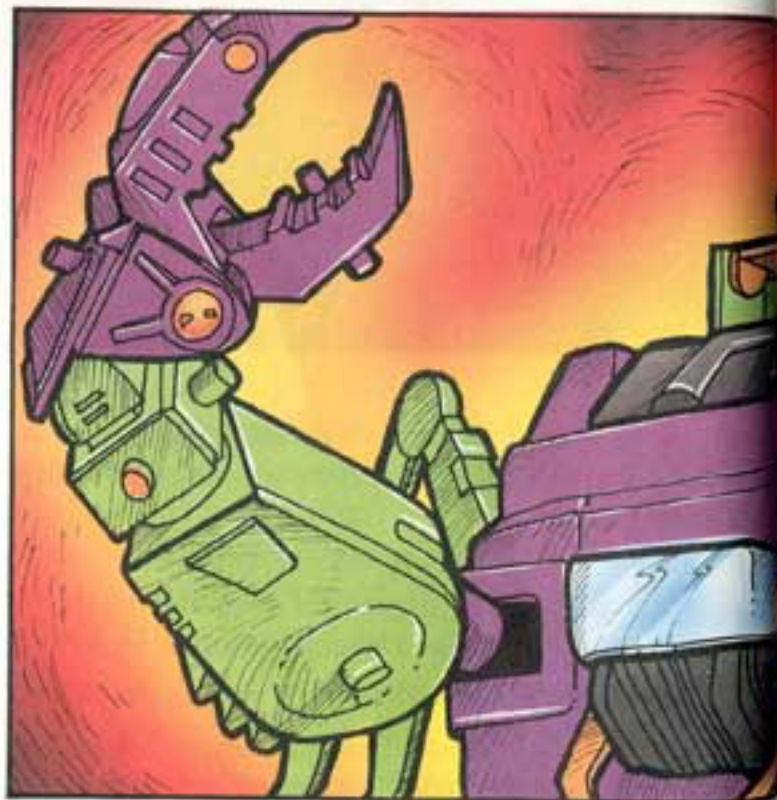
"I have an idea which will guarantee that," said Scourge. "Instead of a guard of miserable idiots, I suggest that the entire Decepticon force be used."

"Move everyone to the pole?" said Cyclonus.

"Activate Scorponok!" said Scourge. "Move the whole base to the pole!"

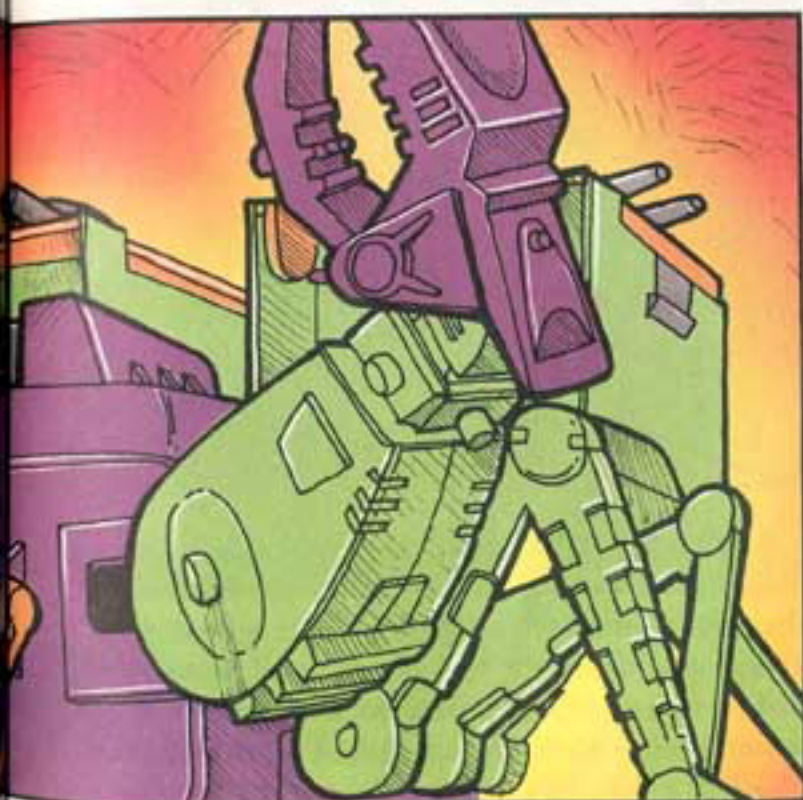
The Decepticon base on Nebulos was a mighty fortress. It bristled with weapons, and was believed to be impregnable. It was also mobile. Transformed to an evil scorpion-like monster called Scorponok, it could move itself to wherever the Decepticons wished.

Aimless soon produced a new plan for an energy interceptor. He claimed that it was an improvement on the tetrahedron.



All preparations were made. Cyclonus gave the orders, and Scorponok's transforming mechanism was activated. Towers, ramps and launch pads retracted. Hydraulic claws and hydraulic legs unfolded.

The Nebulan pilot took his place, and on Cyclonus' signal the great machine started on its way across the surface of the planet towards the pole.





The Decepticons wasted no time in clearing the wreckage of the tetrahedron. They salvaged what they could, then set to work to build a new energy interceptor. It took the form of three low domes set in a triangle. The domes were connected by armoured conduit. The conduit led to a battery of high pressure energy reservoirs.

Close to the reservoirs, Scorponok came to rest. The huge legs and claws retracted as it settled on the permafrost. The towers and ramps slid into position. And laser cannon stood ready to cover all the approaches to the installation.

Scourge carried out an inspection. "Let them try again, if they dare. We are more than ready for them," he said.



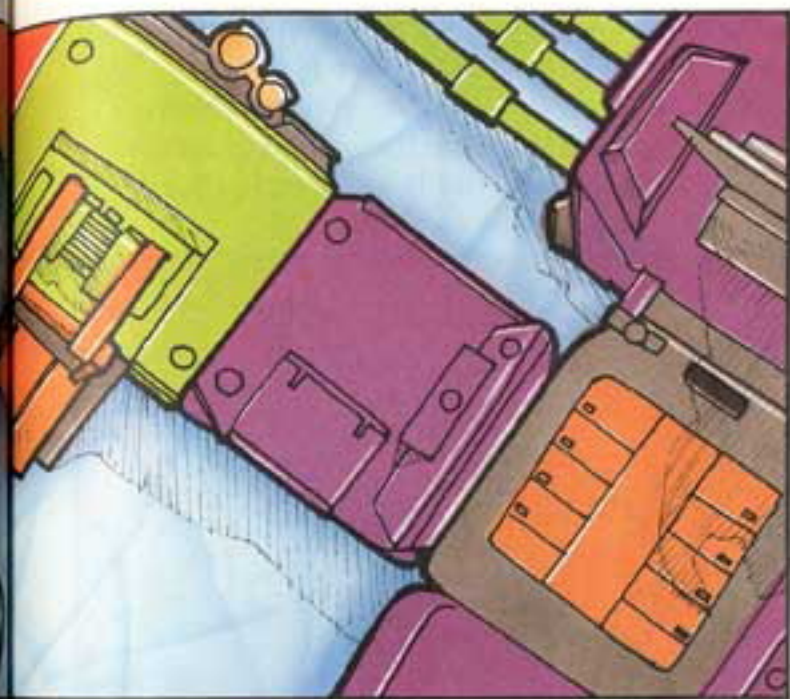
The energy interceptor began operating. The reservoirs became charged. It was working just as Aimless had planned. Very soon no energy at all would reach the rest of the planet. Disaster was close for all its inhabitants.



All the Decepticons' activity at the pole was known to the Autobots. High altitude spy flights by Brainstorm had revealed that the new energy interceptor was completed. They also showed Scorponok in position to defend the installation.

Kup said, "We have no choice. The only way to destroy that thing is with a frontal attack."

"Even if every Autobot took part," said Hot Rod, "we'd be completely outgunned. We wouldn't even get within sight of the target. Perhaps we could create some sort of diversion. If we could



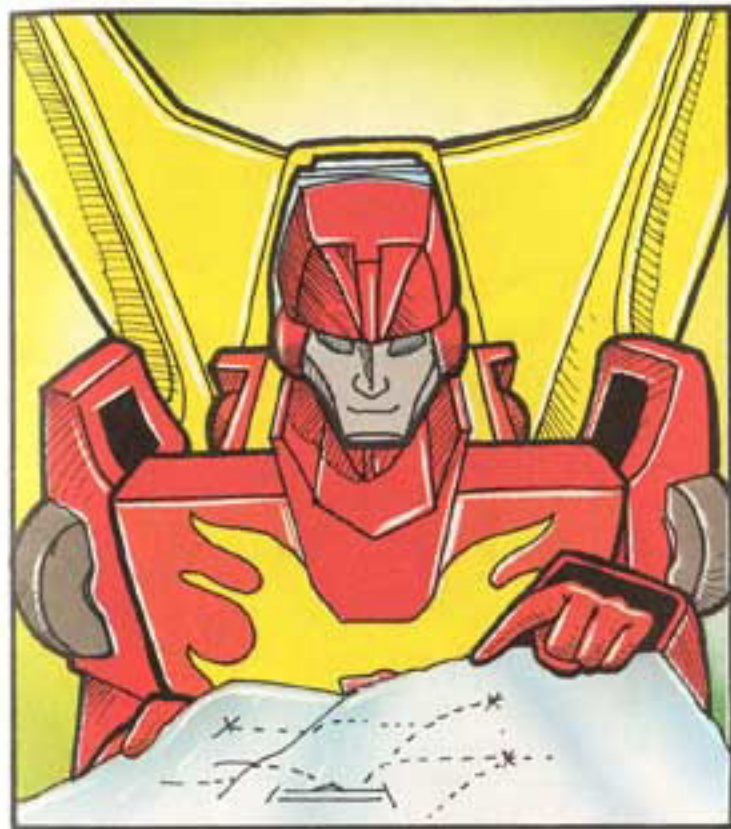
lure some of the Decepticons away, we might just have a chance of reaching the complex."

Brainstorm had listened quietly. Now, he spoke. "I have studied the reports of the Decepticon complex. With the help of my Nebulan partner, Arcana, I have learned much about the north pole of planet Nebulos, and I can work out a plan that cannot fail. Kup and Hot Rod may mount their armed attack, but the planet itself can play the main part in destroying the Decepticon energy interceptor."

Brainstorm was very mysterious about his plan. He and Arcana spent much time making complicated calculations. The other Autobots heard occasional words as they worked: specific heat capacity... water table... cohesive sheer strength... and much more.



Next, Brainstorm asked Sureshot, Blurr and Kup to attend a special briefing. They came from the briefing grinning broadly. Now they understood what Brainstorm and Arcana were up to.



Brainstorm next took Hot Rod aside. After that Hot Rod began to draw up his battle plan.

Word had passed among the Autobots of Brainstorm's plan for wrecking the Decepticon complex. They were eager to put it into action... except, perhaps, Hardhead. He would prefer to charge in, guns blazing. He had no time for all this clever stuff.



Now the Autobots were ready. They left their base in small parties and each party made its way separately to the pole. Under cover of darkness, they assembled to receive final orders.

Then, keeping under cover, they took up positions with a clear view of Scorponok.

Following Brainstorm's instructions, Sureshot, Blurr and Kup moved to positions overlooking the domes. Each was armed with his thermal laser weapon.



All was ready.

As day broke over the frozen polar waste, Hot Rod sent a radio message to the Decepticons.

"The entire Decepticon force is in great danger," he said. "You have made a trap for yourselves. Pull out now while there is still time."



At his command post inside Scorponok, Cyclonus heard Hot Rod's message.

"The poor fools!" he cried. "Who do they think they are threatening? Trap, indeed! Let them do their worst! We are ready for them!"

Outside, among the frost-covered rocks and



gullies, the Autobots waited for a reply to Hot Rod's message.

None came.

Hot Rod turned and raised his arm.

"Autobots! Commence firing!" he ordered.

As the Autobots opened fire, Scorponok's defences swung into action. Cannon and missile projectors poured a steady barrage towards the Autobots.

But Hot Rod had chosen their positions with care. The Decepticon shots either fell short or passed harmlessly overhead.

Scourge directed operations in Scorponok. "Destroy them!" he shouted. "Once and for all rid Nebulos of all Autobots!"

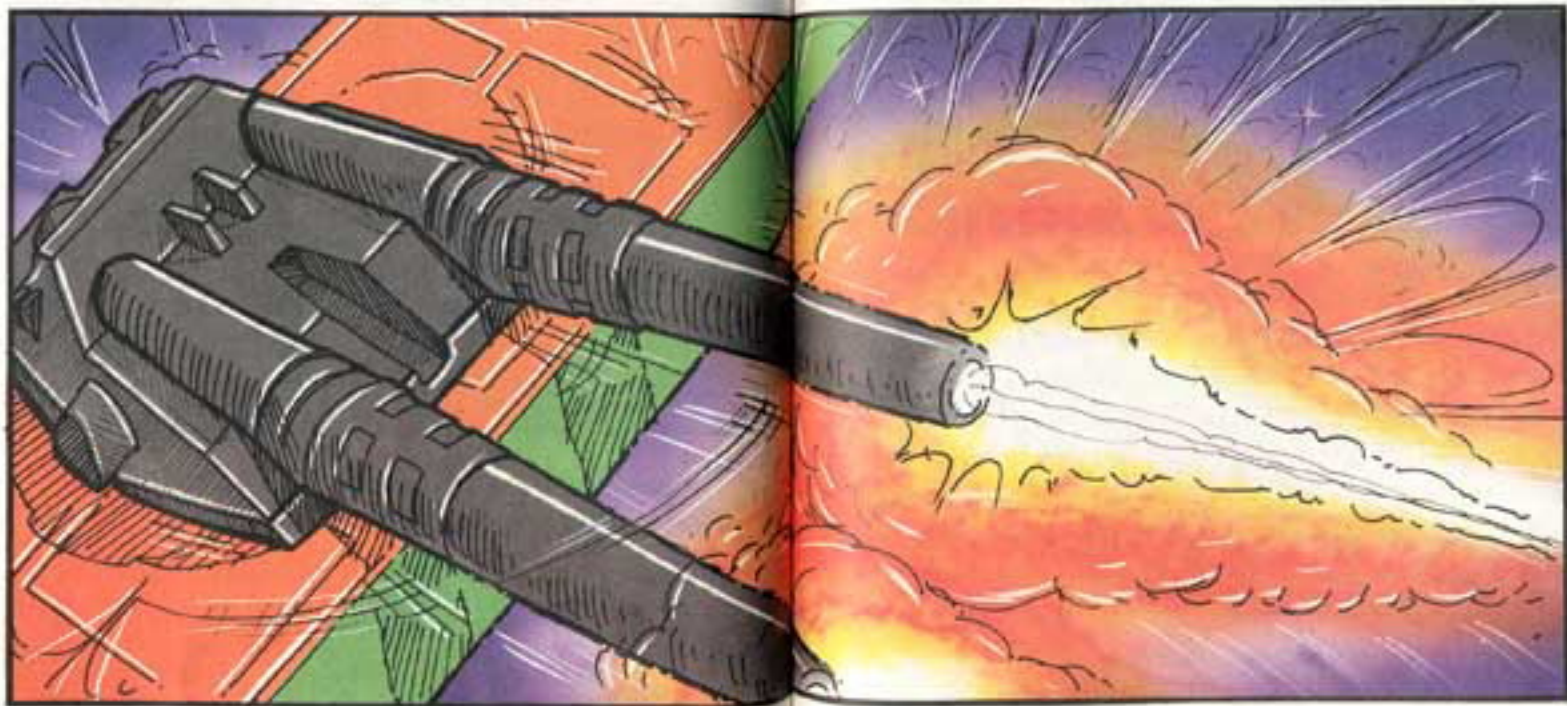
And, while Scourge and the Decepticons had

their eyes on the Autobot main force, Sureshot, Blurr and Kup spread out within sight of their special targets and waited for the signal from Brainstorm.

There was a crackle in their radiophones, and they heard Brainstorm's voice:

"Operation Heatwave... commence!"

Sighting their weapons, the three Autobots poured a stream of high temperature laser power onto the frozen ground that supported the domes.



The glare of the lasers caught the attention of one of the Decepticons. He shouted to Scourge. Scourge took one look. "The fools!" he cried. "There are only a few of them over there. Apeface! Skullcruncher! Deal with them!"



The two Decepticons charged out of a port in the armoured side of Scorponok. The laser flashes were clear, beyond the domes. "This way," roared Apeface, beating his chest-plate. "Let's chop 'em up small! Grind 'em to filings..." He stopped. Something was wrong! The rock-hard ground was soft and slippery! He lost his footing and sprawled in a squelchy mess of mud! Skullcruncher transformed to alligator mode, but the ground was becoming too sticky even for him. They struggled back to where the ground was still hard.

As the Autobot laser fire heated and melted the permafrost, the energy interceptor complex began to settle in the slime. One dome was tilting sharply. Suddenly, with a crash, it collapsed. The other two quickly followed.



Kup signalled to Brainstorm,

"Operation Heatwave... phase one complete!"

Back signalled Brainstorm,

"Commence phase two!"

The three Autobots turned their lasers on the frozen ground beneath the energy reservoirs. As the permafrost collapsed under them, they split apart, and the energy escaped in a dazzling flash.



Inside Scorponok, no one knew what was happening. Orders were shouted, but all was confusion.



Hot Rod and the Autobots had stopped firing. They watched in astonishment as the escaped energy melted the ground on which Scorponok rested. The Decepticon base was sinking fast into the ooze.

"Transform to scorpion mode!" shouted Cyclonus.

The Autobots watched as the giant, insect-like machine struggled with its mechanical legs to pull itself clear of the mire. The Decepticons had no thoughts for the Autobots as they pushed and heaved, trying to help the scorpion base to free itself.

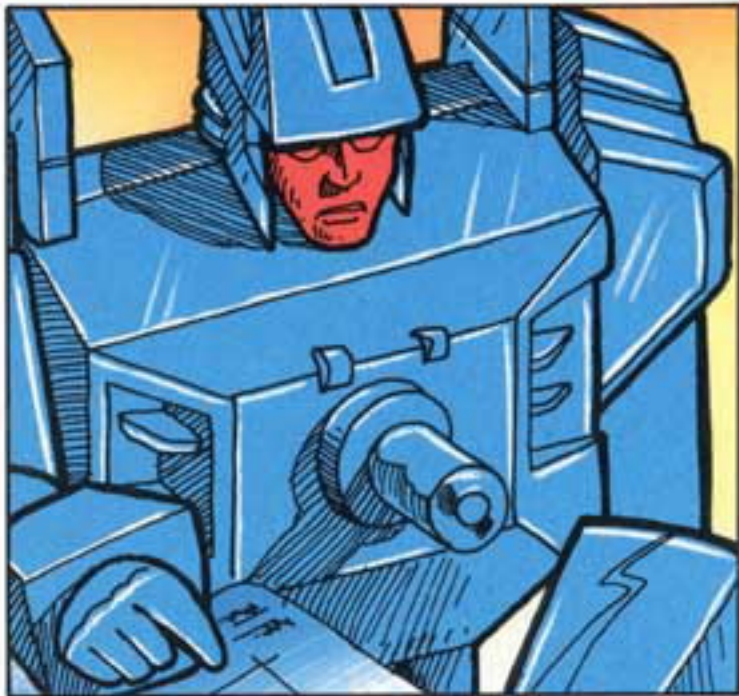
"I feel that we really ought to offer our help," said Hot Rod. "On the other hand, I think that this could keep the Decepticons usefully occupied

for some time."

"I think you are probably right," said Kup. "We would probably only get in the way. I suggest we go home. It's been a busy day."

And turning their backs on the wreckage of the Decepticon energy interceptor and the bogged-down Scorponok, the Autobots transformed and set off on the long haul back to base.





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