MICHAEL T. DESING'S

ARMY ANTS: TWILIGHT

Contents

ABOUT

Michael T. Desing's Army Ants: Twilight is two things: first, it's an ongoing narrative about a group of ants at the end of the Ant/Wasp War, © Michael T. Desing. It is also a roleplaying game for two or more players, released under the Open Game License (page 24).

As a **reader**, you will hopefully decide to follow the exploits of a team of army ants on their greatest, and possibly final, adventure.

As a **player**, you will take on the role of an army ant or an allied bug, traversing the wilds. You will join with a team of other bugs to overcome the challenges that the referee places before you. You will use these rules, an assortment of dice, and your imagination to craft a shared tale of your adventures.

CHAPTER ONE: ONCE MORE UNTO THE BREACH

I have a story to tell you. The story started 25 years ago, with a mini-comic and a group of ants. I've already told the first part of it through graphic novels, webcomics, and other games. It's a story about the ants: their war with the wasp empire; the tournament; honor and prophecy. Now, it's time for me to tell the rest of it. It's time to finish the story.

We crossed the Red Meridian at 0400 Hours. The dark was oppressive. We couldn't see it, but we could all feel it.

Phil, our team's communications operative, sighed, "First time in the backyard in six days. Feels like a lot longer."

I nodded. Gunner, our heavy weapons specialist and squad leader, called down, "Guys. Keep your mandibles up. We can't know what to expect." He set into the upper lookout position, easing back into the harness and letting his ankle brush the side of my right antenna.

It was tight inside the Mud Rover. That was what we'd named her. She was a standard-issue ATP-77 Frogger 6-wheel amphibious reconnaissance vehicle. AM-17L quad-series engine. 310 snail power. Six-speed elevated torque transmission system. Maximum payload 4000 mg. Top speed 10 meters per minute land, 5 meters per minute amphibious. Custom-mounted AM-3 heavy machine gun with triple-capacity belt feeder. Most importantly: full environmental seclusion for up to 48 hours. Standard crew of 2, with maximum deployment of 12. But it felt tight even with just the three of us.

Gunner's foot brushed against my head again. I let go of the wheel with my right hand and guided his foot into the stirrup. "Feel that?" He called down, "left side is a little gimpy. I'm thinking that middle tire is leaking again. Let's be sure to check that in Crossroads. How long 'til arrival?"

Phil, sitting to my right, checked one of the many screens he monitored. "Three clicks. So at this speed about 2 minutes."

A beat. "Hmf. Let's hear the recording again, make sure we're not missing anything. Don't want us rolling into a trap."

He didn't need to hear the recording again. But I guess maybe he did. Phil cued it up. Play. The familiar hiss. Three bursts of static, and then her voice.

"This is Honeydew, Senior Agent of the Ladybugs, and acting director of Central Intel. This is a call to all remaining forces to come home. There aren't many of us left, but we need to organize. This will be the only open communication. If you know where, then you know. If you don't… well, may the Queen guide your path." Click.

Phil shut it down, "Fourteen seconds. Best hacking would need at least fifteen of open line, so it shouldn't be compromised. Nothing in the transmission to give away location. I doubt it's a trap."

We'd all changed over the last while, but Phil's transformation was the most stark. He wasn't a bumbling idiot anymore. He'd lost his clumsy, oh shucks demeanor. And his sense of humor. And his ADHD. He was now the consummate communications operative.

I missed my old friend.

I guided the Mud Rover from the thick grass, turning left onto a narrow, broken road. I saw lights ahead. Gunner's foot flexed, and I heard the safety switch off. "Locked and loaded."

"Let's assume the best," I said despite present circumstances, straining to see what the light revealed. It silhouetted two bugs who carried red flares. I was trying to make out the non-verbal signal they were making.

Phil was ahead of me, "universal allied welcome signal. If it's a trap, they've gone to a lot of work to make it look like the real deal."

Gunner left the safety off.

I pulled the Mud Rover to just shy of 3 centimeters away. One of the flare-carriers produced a wand with a dish at the end and approached. He was a cricket. He moved up the passenger side and started sweeping the dish up and down across the side of the Mud Rover, looking for spore contamination I assumed. The other bug, also a cricket, approached my side. He shifted the flare to his off hand and pulled a clipboard from under his right arm. "Welcome to Crossroads. What's your service number?"

"DTM-0407," I said by rote.

He checked the clipboard, "Hmf. Last Shadow Hill manifest had this as crew of five. Sergeant Gunner, Warrant Officer Zak, Corporals Vince and Phil, Private First Class Slab."

"We're three now." I kept my eyes forward.

"Sorry to hear." He glanced to the back of the Mud Rover. In the rearview mirror, I could see his partner give a thumbs up. He was back to business, "You can follow this road half a meter. Pull into the large warehouse on the right." I nodded and shifted into gear, and the Mud Rover lurched forward. She was tired, too.

The warehouse was a rickety old thing in a town full of rickety old things. Its best features were the sagging train depot, the thin row houses, and the watering hole called the Ladybug's Picnic. It looked like the kind of place gnats would be ashamed to call home.

Of course, it was all a front. Underneath was the most intricate intelligence hub in Seven Fields.

Or at least, it used to be.

As we rolled onto the platform in the middle of the warehouse and started to descend via the hydraulic elevator, the change was obvious. Several halls off the main artery sat entirely dark. Passages were sealed off. Silence had replaced the familiar buzz of activity.

We came to a rest a half meter below in the motor pool. Somewhere, water dripped against metal. A staleness pervaded the air. Five vehicles sat here. I saw a few jeeps and motorcycles, and a helicopter that was either being taken apart or being put back together. It was impossible to tell.

A single ladybug met us. She was unfamiliar. Young. Reminded me of Honeydew when we first met her. Seemed professional. She didn't say her name. Probably a good idea. Last thing anybody needed was to get personal. Not now. "The commander was pleased to hear of your arrival. She's waiting for you."

She led away briskly. We tried to stretch, having been crunched in our seats for the last two hours, but she didn't wait. We hustled after her. Gunner was lagging noticeably. I couldn't blame him.

We entered the command center. The last time we were here, it was a hub of activity. Then, two dozen high-level ladybug operatives monitored a dozen screens, processing activity from across Seven Fields. Now, there were three ladybugs, and only two screens were active. The whole room shared a dull blue glow.

"Sorry for the mood killer," Honeydew said from the middle of the room, standing with her back to us, not looking up from her podium. She was fighting to stand tall, despite the exhaustion that threatened to overwhelm her, "energy conservation is a high priority. We're down to two days of power."

The old Phil would have stammered. This Phil walked up to her and gave her a strong hug. She was surprised, but then returned it. "Hey, Phil."

I was next, and she squeezed a "Hey, Honeydew." out of me. She whispered, "Vince, I'm so sorry."

I choked, "Me too." She held the hug for an extra second. I noticed the ant colonel's insignia on her shoulder. It looked… heavy.

"Hey, Dew." Gunner hadn't crossed the chamber.

"Gunner. Good to see you." She wasn't looking at him. She turned back to her podium.

She activated a key on the console. A few graphics popped on a screen, replacing the map with red dots that had been there, "you guys make seven teams that have reported in. That makes 29 army ants.

29. A regiment of 750 army ants had been stationed at Haven Hill not even two weeks ago. It was too big to think about. "I've already dispatched the other six teams. I had given up hope of any others…" she was on the verge of something, but she pulled herself back, "we've activated the Twilight Protocol."

Gunner finished her thought, "If our Hills should fall, the Twilight Protocol is as follows: forage to live, fight to survive, and find a new queen."

She nodded, "and I'm trying to keep us organized. Doing my best. Following up leads. Trying to recover as many resources as we can. Salvaging old depots for ammunition and supplies." She sighed, "we're spread pretty thin."

"What's the civilian status?" I asked. I already knew the answer, but I had to hear it.

"Bad," she admitted, "after we took out Valhalla Complex, the Wasp Empire activated the Doomsday Directive. We estimate that the spores wiped out all five ant hills and their queens, 80% of insect life in the backyard, and we think upwards of 50% across all of Seven Fields. The lack of rain for two weeks was a killer. Literally."

"Our science division is in shambles, but they've been able to glean this much - the carrier is a microscopic parasite. Attacks the mind in ways we are still trying to understand. Produces spores, infects insects, makes them savage, infects others, kills in days - more spores, more contamination. Round and round. Affects most insect species – has hit ants the hardest, but many others are decimated, too."

"Can it be stopped?"

"Negative. It may be running its course, but we cannot be sure. Quarantines seem to have helped. But there are pockets where we know there's still a lot of contamination. Unfortunately, one of our high-priority targets is also heavily contaminated."

The weight of the silence pressed against us. Honeydew broke it, "So, you guys come by to shoot the snot, or you ready to get back to work?"

Gunner perked up for the first time in days. A mission. This would give us something. Purpose. Better than driving around the western wilds for a week like we had been, just trying to stay alive, brooding in our hopelessness, "what do you have for us? I know that there's an old radio station seven clicks from here…"

"Already have a team on that. They set out a few hours ago. No. I've been holding on to a mission that's… delicate."

Phil, surprisingly, was the first to speak, "we've got it. What's the target?"

Honeydew picked up a folder and flipped through it. She offered it forward. I took it.

"I need you to go back to Shadow Hill."

The World of the Ants

The ants and their ilk live in an area called Seven Fields. Seven Fields has seen constant upheaval over the last several years, as various species ebb and flow in power; each winter brings a cease to activity, and each spring brings shifts to the power dynamics at play as some species come to prominence as others fade.

Recent History

♦ **Two Years Ago.** Ants from Haven Hill spread out across Seven Fields, establishing four other military posts. They faced direct challenge by the Fly Confederacy, the reigning power of Seven Fields. The two sides engaged in a series of skirmishes that were characterized by guerilla warfare. At first snowfall, the two sides declared peace, as the flies agreed to allow the ants to establish a series of hills, while the flies could maintain their network of affiliated city states and fortresses without challenge.

♦ **One Year Ago.** A new Wasp Empress established a hive in the backyard, unifying a dozen different wasp and beehives under a single banner. This combined force imposed tyrannical law, directly confronting the fledgling Ant Republic, and diminishing the power of the Fly Confederacy, which saw a sudden and steep decline, as its confederacy of nation states fell into internal conflict. The spring saw a massive Fly Civil War, while the latter part of the summer and early autumn saw the Wasp Empire pick apart fly infrastructure, fracturing the once mighty nation. The ants rose to challenge them, establishing a series of strongholds as winter approached.

♦ **This Spring.** The Ant/Wasp War renewed with the arrival of spring. Both forces emerged from winter engaged in a protracted and bloody conflict that drew the entirety of Seven Fields into war.

♦ **This Summer.** The war reached its peak, as the wasps launched a series of direct attacks against ant hills, using advanced weapons systems to level several ant fortifications. The ants retaliated with a series of clandestine operations. One of these led to the death of the Wasp Empress, and the fall of the mighty Valhalla Complex. With the death of the Empress, her final order was triggered: The Doomsday Directive. Dozens of wasp agents spread a biological agent that ravaged insect life across Seven Fields, starting a time called the Calamity. The flies responded by setting off "dirty bombs" that poisoned food sources and spread low-level radiation in many places.

♦ **Now.** It is autumn. The ants and their allies who remain endeavor to pick up the pieces. Winter looms. Hope is fading. Desperately, teams traverse Seven Fields striving to follow the last order of the High Queen, the Twilight Protocol: *Forage to Live; Fight to Survive; Find a New Queen.*

Ant Scale

The perspective of ants and their allies differs greatly from our own. To immerse yourself in the game, it will be helpful to consider ant scale. Everything is smaller. To an ant, a millimeter is a foot. Six meters is a mile. Time is also compressed. Since an army ant lives only three years, an hour is like a day, a day is like a month, and a month is two years.
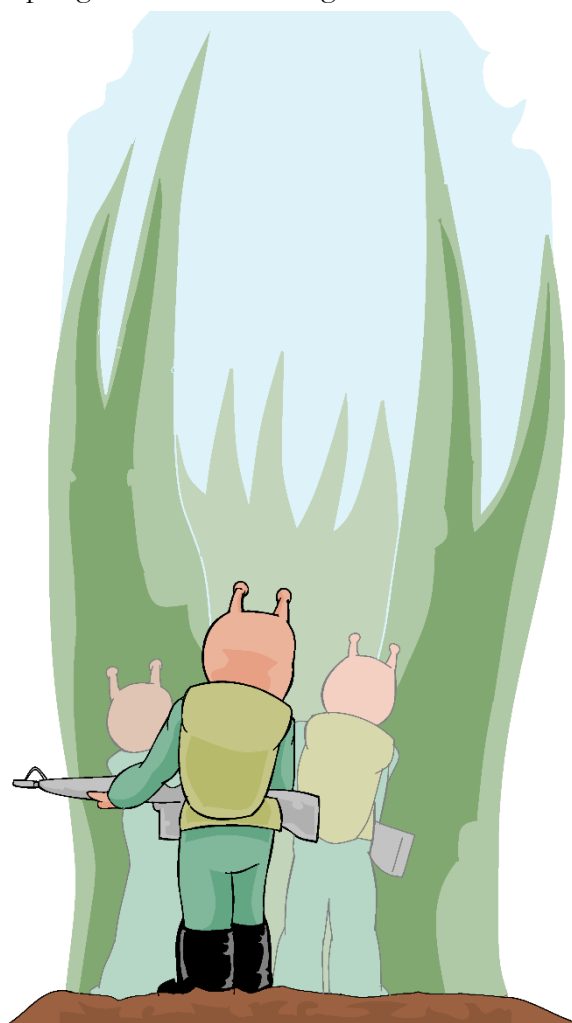
Core Rules: Characters

Specialties represent a combination of the species and vocation of an insect. **Attributes** are the six primary physical and mental traits that define your bug. These are rated from 1 to 18. Each rating has a companion **modifier** that is used instead of the attribute rating in some situations. While you add STR 13 to **checks** to lift a stone, add your +3 modifier to attack and damage rolls in melee, and to attack rolls with heavy weapons. Attempt checks against a default **difficulty target (DT)** of 20. An **active check** (i.e. to kick a door open) takes one **action**, but a **resistant check** (i.e. to hold breath) does not.

The Attributes

Attribute	Rating added to checks to	Modifier added to
Strength (STR)	Apply physical strength	Melee attack/damage rolls; heavy weapons attack rolls
Intelligence (INT)	Apply knowledge and learning	Skills involving tech; known languages
Wisdom (WIS)	Apply insight and understanding	Any roll to heal.
Dexterity (DEX)	Apply quickness and accuracy	Armor Class; most ranged attack rolls
Constitution (CON)	Apply physical endurance	Hit Points rolled every level
Charisma (CHA)	Apply personality and charm	Followers' morale; access to psionics

Attribute Ratings

Rating	Descriptor	Modifier
0-1	Impaired	-3
2-3	Poor	-2
4-5	Below Average	-1
6-7	Average	+0
8-9	Good	+1
10-11	Excellent	+2
12-13	Remarkable	+3
14-15	Incredible	+4
16-17	Amazing	+5
18-19	Insect Peak	+6
20-21	Predator	+7
22-23	Large Predator	+8
24-25	Huge Predator	+9
26	Alpha Predator	+10

Levels rate relative power. A level 1 bug is inexperienced, while a level 6 bug is exceptionally experienced, skilled, and powerful. You improve in level by earning **Experience Points** (XP). With each level, you amass more **Hit Points** (hp), which measure how much damage you can sustain. Keep track of your current hp. Your level is your base attack modifier. You have a total number of general **Talents** equal to your level. You act a number of times each round equal to your level. Add your level to your armor class.

Levels

Level	XP Required	Hit Dice	FEAT
1	0	2d6	+7
2	100	4d6	+8
3	300	6d6	+9
4	1,000	8d6	+10
5	3,000	10d6	+11
6	10,000	12d6	+12

FEATs reflect a general measure of your overall skill. Your FEAT modifier is a base of +6 +level. Attempt a FEAT in a wide range of situations; you may be asked to attempt a FEAT to test one of your talents (talent FEAT), to resist an enemy's ability (resist FEAT), or to notice something unusual (sense FEAT).

When you attempt a FEAT, roll 1d20 +your FEAT modifier against the default **difficulty target (DT) 20**. When someone rolls a FEAT to resist an ability you use, the foe rolls 1d20 +FEAT, with a DT of 20.

Some creatures have abilities that impose a penalty or bonus to your FEAT attempt. A creature with sense +2 causes you to take -2 to your FEAT attempt when using sneak against that foe, also taking +2 to its own sense FEATs.

GAMEPLAY BASICS

Dice. Resolve situations by rolling dice, which range from four-sided (d4) to twenty-sided (d20). For a percentage (d100), roll 2d10; count the first result in the 10s column, the second in the 1s column; 00=100.

Action Rolls. You attempt an action by rolling 1d20 + modifiers. For attacks, the DT is the foe's AC.

- When attempting a **melee** or **heavy weapons attack**, add your level, STR modifier, and any special modifiers.
- When attempting a **thrown weapon attack**, add your level, STR modifier, and any special modifiers.
- When attempting a **ranged weapon attack**, add your level, DEX modifier, and any special modifiers.
- When attempting an action to **check** one of your six attributes, roll 1d20 +your attribute rating. For example, you roll 1d20 +STR to lift a blocked trap door, or 1d20 +CHA to deceive an enemy.
- An attack roll of a natural 20 is a **critical hit**; deal +1d6 damage. An attack roll of 1 is an automatic miss; attempt a FEAT or lose your remaining actions for the rest of the round. For actions, FEATs and checks: 20 always succeeds; 1 always fails.
- Note: You attempt a total number of actions each round equal to your level; as an ant 4, you act 4x per round.

Damage Rolls. After a successful attack, determine damage by rolling the appropriate die +any modifiers.

- When resolving **melee weapon damage**, roll the weapon's die type +your STR modifier.
- When resolving any **thrown or ranged weapon damage**, roll the weapon's die type +any modifiers.

LEVEL UP!

When you earn the XP total required for the next level, you **level up**. Increase your FEAT modifier +1, add +2d6 +CON modifier to your total hit points, add +1 to AC, act 1 more time each round, learn 1 general talent, and earn the abilities of the next level for your specialty.

SUFFERING DAMAGE

At 0 hp, you are **stunned** (unable to act); at a negative value of hp equal to your CON rating, your bug dies. You recover hp with aid kits, through mysticism, or through rest. Every turn of rest restores 1d4 +CON modifier hp. You can never recover to more than your starting hp, but your hp increase every level.

BUILDING A CHARACTER

1. Roll 2d6 six times, rerolling 1s, for the starting ratings of your six attributes.
2. Select a **specialty** (see page 9) and assign attribute scores as appropriate to that specialty.
3. Roll your **hit points**. Roll 2d6 +your CON modifier. Re-roll 1s.
4. Select one general **talent** (see page 10), a focused area of expertise or training.
5. Roll for starting **gear**, as indicated by your specialty. See page 12.
6. Determine your **armor class (AC).** Your AC is a base of 10 +your level +your armor's modifier +your DEX modifier (possibly limited by the type of armor you wear). Your AC is the DT for a foe to strike you with a direct physical attack. With AC 17, a total attack result of 17+ hits you.
7. Determine your **attack and damage ratings** for your various attacks, based on your attributes. At level 1 with DEX 10 (+2) and an AM-16 (1d8), your ratings with that weapon are +3/1d8. You roll 1d20+3 to hit, and you roll 1d8 for total damage on a successful hit.
8. Record your FEAT modifier (+7 at level 1, possibly modified by your specialty or talents).
9. Pick a **demeanor**. Your demeanor is one word that exemplifies your personality. It could be a word such as *brave, clever, diligent, helpful, kind, thrifty, tough*, or *vengeful*. This should guide roleplaying.
10. Develop a **quote**. Your quote is your catch phrase, philosophy, or famous last words.
11. Give your character a name and a serial number. Ant serial numbers are ##-##### format.

Name _____   Specialty _____

Rank _____   Serial Number _____   Level _____

Armor Class	Hit Points	FEAT Modifier	Move	Experience

Rating		Modifier
	STR	
	INT	
	WIS	
	DEX	
	CON	
	CHA	

Gear

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Range

Talents

Recent Photo
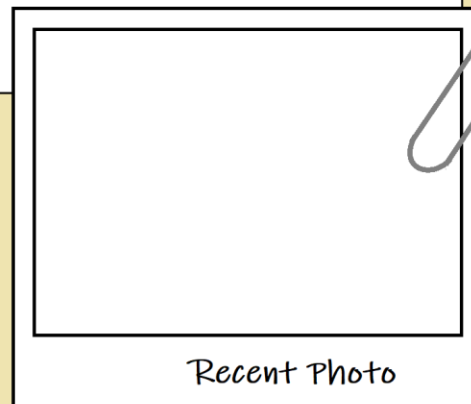
Quote:

SPECIALTY

A specialty is a unique combination of a species (red ant, ladybug, etc.) and field of training (commando, ranger, etc.). Each specialty provides an assortment of abilities that sets it apart from all others.

Each level, members of that specialty receive additional abilities. The listed bonuses are cumulative; at level 3, Vince (red ant infantry) elects to add an additional +1 to DEX, beyond the +1 he took at level 1 (for a total cumulative bonus of +2, taking his starting DEX score of 8 to 10). He also gets to select two more talents (1 for increasing in level, +1 bonus because of his specialty).

ABOUT MYSTICAL TALENTS

The mystical talents of **wilding** and **psionics** are unlocked when bugs attain ratings of 14 or better in WIS or CHA, respectively. At these ratings, a bug transcends normal insects, elevating perception into the supernatural world. This means that some red ant rangers will learn wilding relatively early in their careers, while some may never unlock this ability at all.

RED ANT COMMANDO

Start With	Security; Small Arms; Sneak; Garrote; Tinkering; Move 4
Progression	DEX +1 (levels 1, 2, 3, 5); CON +1 (levels 3, 6); +1d4 sneak attack damage (levels 1, 3, 5); sense +1 (levels 2, 4, 6)
Gear	Pistol; Starter Gear; Garrote

As a red ant commando, you are among a rare breed. You want the dangerous missions. While you are not the most formidable in a straight-up fight, your ability to strike quickly and silently is without parallel. You cannot wear better than light field armor. Sneak attack damage is cumulative; at level 5, you deal +3d4 sneak attack damage.

RED ANT HEAVY WEAPONS

Start With	Small Arms; Heavy Weapons; Tinkering; Move 4
Progression	STR +1 (levels 1, 2, 4, 5); CON +1 (levels 3, 6); +1 to all damage rolls (levels 1, 3, 5); AC +1 (levels 2, 4, 6)
Gear	Machine Gun; Starter Gear

As a red ant heavy weapons specialist, you carry machine guns into combat, dealing unparalleled damage.

RED ANT INFANTRY

Start With	Small Arms; Tinkering; Move 4
Progression	+1 to one attribute as desired (see below); +1 bonus talent each level
Gear	Rifle; Starter Gear

As a member of the red ant infantry, you are the most adaptable member of the military. You may allocate your +1 attribute point as desired each level, but you may not increase any attribute to a rating of better than 13. You learn two talents each level, instead of the standard 1.

RED ANT RANGER

Start With	Small Arms; Sneak; Recon; Tinkering; Move 4
Progression	WIS +1 (levels 1, 2, 4, 5); CON +1 (levels 3, 6); sense +1 (levels 1, 3, 5); move +1 (levels 2, 4, 6); unlock wilding at WIS 14+ (see page 10).
Gear	Rifle; Starter Gear

As a red ant ranger, you become one with the wild, able to use nature as an ally. If you attain WIS 14+, your natural connection extends to include the supernatural talent of wilding.

LADYBUG INFILTRATOR

Start With	Security; Small Arms; Garrote, Covert Ops; Sneak; Tinkering; Move 4
Progression	DEX +1 (levels 3, 6); CHA +1 (levels 1, 2, 4, 5); sense +1 (levels 1, 3, 5); bonus talent (levels 2, 4, 6); unlock psionics at CHA 14+ (see page 10).
Gear	Pistol; Starter Gear; Garrote

As a ladybug infiltrator, you are a master of secrecy and manipulation. You cannot wear better than light field armor. If you attain CHA 14+, your mental affinity extends to include the supernatural talent of psionics.

TALENTS

Talents include the skills, abilities, and supernatural powers your bug possesses. **Specialty talents** are only available to certain specialties that get them; **general talents** may be purchased as you advance in level.

SPECIALTY TALENTS

♦ **Covert Ops** allows you to attempt a FEAT to take a variety of actions, such as swipe objects without being seen, forge documents, and assume fake identities. A foe's sense may modify the DT of covert ops attempts. While sneak is used in combat situations, covert ops is used in non-combat situations.

♦ **Heavy Weapons** allows you to carry machine guns into combat. You use STR instead of DEX for attack rolls with machine guns.

♦ **Recon** allows you to attempt a WIS check to track a creature, identify an unknown plant or animal, or intuit direction in the wild.

♦ **Security** allows you to attempt a FEAT to pick a lock, disarm a trap, or foil a security device.

♦ **Sneak** allows you to attempt a FEAT to sneak past or upon a foe. If successful, you gain surprise (see page 16). A foe's sense may modify the DT of sneak attempts. While sneak is used in combat situations, covert ops is used in non-combat situations.

♦ **Tinkering** allows you to maintain, repair, modify, and upgrade your primary weapon. You have a total number of bonus points to allocate to your weapon equal to your level. You may modify the accuracy (granting bonuses to hit), damage (granting bonuses to damage rolls) and/or range (granting bonuses to range increment), up to a maximum of +3 each. As a bug 4, you have 4 points to allocate. You could increase your weapon's accuracy +3 and damage +1, or you might give +2 to damage and range.

♦ **Two Weapons** you wield two weapons (pistols or melee weapons). Take one bonus attack each round. Both weapons must be one-handed (pistols or melee weapons). You cannot tinker your second weapon.

MYSTICAL TALENTS

Mystical talents are unlocked when a bug reaches CHA 14 (psionics) or WIS 14 (wilding). Foes of higher level than you are allowed a FEAT to resist your mystical talent attempts, as applicable. Range is usually 3.

♦ **Psionics** allow you to attempt a CHA check once per turn to perform a supernatural action related to mentalism. You can **charm** a neutral or enemy bug for 1 turn (forcing the bug to attempt a FEAT or view you as an ally for 1 turn; no CHA check required), **telekinetically move** an object with your mind (using CHA as STR for 1 turn, affecting objects up to range 3), or **read an object** you touch, discerning 1 useful fact about it.

♦ **Wilding** allows you to attempt a WIS check once per turn to perform a supernatural action related to nature. You can **heal** with your touch (restoring 1d6 +level +WIS modifier damage), **charm** a natural predator (forcing the creature to attempt a FEAT or view you as a friend for 1 turn; no WIS check required) or **commune** with nature (asking one question of the natural world that may receive a cryptic reply).

General Talents

These talents are available for purchase as you advance in level; receive 1 general talent each level. You may not take any general talent more than once.

- **Aim.** Add +1 to ranged weapon attack rolls.
- **Expert.** Add +2 to attempts with one of your other talents that requires a FEAT or attribute check, or in an area that does not have a unique talent (for example: driver, digger, swimmer, climber…)
- **Artillery.** You have training in field artillery such as grenade launchers, bazookas, and mortars. Those without this training use such weapons at -4.
- **Fortitude.** Add +5 to hit points.
- **Hurler.** Add both +DEX and +STR bonuses to thrown weapon attack rolls. Add you STR modifier to thrown weapon range.
- **Leadership.** You have a pool of points equal to your CHA modifier every round. You may add these to actions, attacks, and FEATS attempted by allies that you can communicate with. You may allocate points after dice are rolled. You receive no bonuses.
- **Martial Arts.** Add +2 to melee attack rolls and deal 1d4 base unarmed damage.
- **Mechanic**. You can add your level to one aspect of your team's vehicle, increasing its Armor Class, its hit points, decreasing its control DTs, or improving its weapon system as with tinkering. For instance, as an ant 4, you could increase the Frogger's AC by maintaining a custom-made set of armor plating. You can synergize with other ants, working together to increase several parts of your vehicle. Any maximum modifier is +4.
- **Medic.** While all ants have basic training in first aid, able to use aid kits to restore damage to themselves or allies, you are a cut above. When you use an aid kit, add +2 to the hits you restore.
- **Moxy.** You may reroll any one action, resist, result, or FEAT roll you make each turn.

- **Parry.** Add +1 to AC for each melee weapon you wield.
- **Precision.** Add +1 to all weapon damage rolls.
- **Resilience.** Ignore the first damage you suffer from every attack that hits you equal to your CON modifier.
- **Saboteur.** You understand explosives, engineering, and mechanics, able to sabotage vehicles or set/disarm explosives. Attempt an INT check to sabotage. You can also set improvised devices with tripwires and grenades. See the example on page 23.
- **Savagery.** You may enter a primal rage, taking a bonus to all attacks equal to your level. This lasts for 1 turn. You may do this one time each day for free, but each additional attempt requires a successful FEAT. Once you activate savagery, you cannot leave battle unless you are stunned, or all enemies fall.
- **Sharpshooter.** Shift all ranged weapon damage up one die (ex: 1d6 becomes 1d8).
- **Sniper.** Once per turn, you may make one attack against a foe that has not seen you, using a ranged weapon. If you hit with the attack, attempt a FEAT. If successful, you automatically kill that target. Targets must be equal or below your level. You cannot use sniper against foes of higher level.
- **Technology.** You may use, modify, and operate technology. See technology sidebar.
- **Toughness.** Add +1 to your AC.
- **Unscathed.** Once per turn, use a free action to attempt a FEAT. If successful, you completely ignore damage from one attack or event.

Sidebar: Technology

Technology is a flexible talent with many potential applications. Any time you use your technology talent, attempt an INT check. The referee sets the DT based on the difficulty of what you attempt. You could attempt to send a communication, decode or block communications, scour a computer for encrypted files, jam radar systems, or manipulate power systems such as generators, electric grids, and batteries. Technology relies on the player to think creatively about how this talent may apply in a circumstance. The overall technology level of the game evokes the early 1980s.

Gear

Gear includes a wide range of useful items. In the past, ants were able to requisition whatever they might need from the quartermaster. Now, even relatively common gear is hard to come by. Your specialty indicates what primary weapon you begin with. You also have **starter gear** (see below). Any additional gear must be found on your missions.

Weapons, Military

You start with one weapon, based on your specialty. You empty a clip or finish a belt on your first attack roll of 1 each turn. Keep track of clips, because you cannot use your weapon when you run out of ammo.

Pistols (roll 1d6)

♦ **(1-4) AM-45 Pistol** (1d6/range 3). The standard-bearer of sidearms, the AM-45 is a dependable, efficient weapon. Users receive +1 tinkering point to place as desired.

♦ **(5-6) AM-UZ Auto Pistol** (+1/1d6+1/range 3). This automatic pistol deals significant damage.

Rifles (roll 1d6)

♦ **(1-4) AM-16 Assault Rifle** (1d8/range 5). The weapon at the heart of the ant military. This is the most versatile weapon Ant Munitions ever crafted. Users receive +1 tinkering point to place as desired.

♦ **(5-6) AM-G3 Assault Rifle** (+1/1d8+1/range 4). A newer weapon being deployed for the short-range fighting that was becoming prevalent, the AM-G3 has more power and accuracy than the AM-16.

Machine Guns (Roll 1d6)

♦ **(1-4) AM-60 Machine Gun** (1d10/range 6). This is the workhorse of heavy weapons for the ant military. Users receive +1 tinkering point to be placed where desired.

♦ **(5-6) AM-G1 Machine Gun** (1d10+2/range 6). This beast requires STR 10+ to carry into combat. It was originally meant for vehicles, but quickly became popular among the heavy weapons corps.

Artillery (Roll 1d6)

♦ **(1-4) Grenade Launcher.** Fires a specially-designed grenade (comes with 2d4 grenades; roll 1d4 for explosive types, page 13), range 6.

♦ **(5-6) Mortar.** Fires a specially-designed grenade (comes with 2d4 grenades; roll 1d4 for explosive types, page 13), range 10.

Starter Gear

Your starter gear is a random assortment of loot that you were able to scrap together. In addition to your weapon, you have 1 suit of combat fatigues; 1 survival knife (deals 1d6 melee damage), a backpack, and the following:

1d4+4 clips or belts of ammunition for your primary weapon.
1d4 explosives (roll for each on the table on page 13).
1d4 pieces of general gear (roll for each on the list on page 13).

Armor, Explosives, and Weapons

Roll	Armor	Explosives	Weapon
1	Helmet (+1 AC) Any may wear.	Fragmentation Grenade. Deals 2d6 damage to all in a 4 cm square; targets may attempt a FEAT for half damage.	Simple Melee Weapon (axe, sword, spear) 1d6 damage
2	Light Tactical Suit (+1 AC) (a)	High Explosive Grenade. Deals 3d6 damage to all in a 1 cm square; targets may attempt a FEAT for half damage.	Simple Ranged Weapon (bow, sling); 1d6 damage; range 3
3	Light Tactical Suit (+1 AC)	Concussive Grenade. Forces all creatures in a 4 cm square to attempt a FEAT or be stunned 1d6 rounds.	Pistol (includes 1d4 clips)
4	Flak Jacket (+2 AC) (b)	Incendiary Grenade. Deals 2d6 damage to all in a 1 cm square; targets may attempt a FEAT for half damage. Flammables will start on fire.	Rifle (includes 1d4 clips)
5	Flak Jacket (+2 AC)	Dynamite (1d6 sticks and 1d4 timed detonators). Each stick deals 1d10 damage to all in a 4 cm square; targets may attempt a FEAT for half damage.	Machine Gun (includes 1d4 belts)
6	Heavy Tactical Armor (+3 AC) (c)	Plastic Explosive (1d6 lumps and 1d4 remote detonators). Each lump deals 1d12 damage to all in a 4 cm square; targets may attempt a FEAT for half damage.	Artillery (includes 1d4 pieces of ammunition)

(a) With a **light tactical** suit, add +1 to armor class. You have no limit to your DEX bonus to AC.
(b) With a **flak** jacket, add +2 to armor class. Your maximum DEX bonus to AC is +2.
(c) With **heavy tactical armor**, add +3 to armor class. Your maximum DEX bonus to AC is +1.

General Gear

General gear includes a wide range of useful items. Roll 1d20.

1. **Ait Kit, Standard.** Use 1 full round to restore 1d4 + WIS modifier hp to yourself or an ally nearby. Each aid kit can only be used once.

2. **Aid Kit, Advanced.** Use 1 full round to restore 2d4 + WIS modifier hp to yourself or an ally nearby. Each aid kit can only be used once.

3. **Armor.** Roll on table above.

4. **Binoculars.** See clearly to 10 meters.

5. **Climbing Spikes.** Add +4 to climbing checks.

6. **Communications Kit.** Allows communication up to 25 meters; allows technology checks to jam or intercept (see sidebar on page 11).

7. **Entrenching Tool.** Shovel/spade.

8. **Flares.** Illuminates a 4 cm square.

9. **Flare Pistol.** Fires a flare (as above) up to 1 meter. Comes with 2d4 flares.

10. **Grapple.** Attempt a thrown weapon attack vs. AC 10 to hook this to a fixed point. Includes 5 cm of rope.

11. **Gas mask.** The wearer is immune to gas attacks but takes -1 to all actions.

12. **Flashlight.** Casts light to 5 cm.

13. **Parachute.** Keeps you from taking falling damage from heights better than 1 meter.

14. **Rope.** 3d6 cm of rope.

15. **Scope.** Attach to a weapon to increase its range increment by +4. (1 in 4 also has night vision).

16. **SCUBA gear.** Breathe underwater for 4 hours.

17. **Tent.** For 2d4 insects.

18. **Utility Knife.** Contains many simple tools.

19. **Walkie Talkie.** Allows communication to 10 meters.

20. **Wet Suit.** Swim at your full normal move.

RANK AND PROMOTION

Honeydew, the acting head of Central Command, was granted the rank of Colonel of the Ant Army just before the Calamity. In this role, she has authority to grant rank and to promote insects within the Ant Army. She understands the importance of rank in maintaining the morale of troops; they need to believe that things can get better, and that the army can return. She takes this responsibility seriously.

STARTING RANK

During character creation, roll a CHA check to see where your bug starts. If the check result is 19 or lower, your bug is an enlisted soldier; at 20-23, your bug is a warrant officer; at 24+, your bug is an officer.

EARNING A PROMOTION

A bug is considered for promotion every 100 XP. At this time, his or her record is evaluated, and the bug attempts a CHA check. The bug receives a bonus or penalty of up to +4/-4 to the check, depending on behavior during the time since the last review (as determined by the referee). For example, if the bug ignored an order and was reckless during one mission, he might suffer a -2 penalty to the check; if he was an exemplary soldier and made sacrifices for his team, he might add +4 to the check. Note: The CHA bonus listed is for interactions with allies, not for future rank promotion rolls; this CHA bonus applies to interactions with allies and to morale checks of those under your command.

ENLISTED SOLDIERS

Rank	DT	Notes
A-1 Private	N/A	You are a grunt. Take nothing and be grateful.
A-2 Private First Class	21	Add +1 to applicable CHA checks.
A-3 Lance Corporal	22	Add +2 to applicable CHA checks.
A-4 Corporal	23	Add +2 to applicable CHA checks.
A-5 Sergeant	24	Add +3 to applicable CHA checks.
A-6 Staff Sergeant	25	Add +4 to applicable CHA checks.
A-7 Master Sergeant	26	Add +4 to applicable CHA checks.
A-8 Sergeant Major	27	Add +5 to applicable CHA checks.
A-9 Command Sgt. Major	28	Add +6 to applicable CHA checks.

WARRANT OFFICERS

Rank	DT	Notes
W-C Cadet	N/A	Add +1 to applicable CHA checks.
W-1 Petty Warrant Officer	21	Add +2 to applicable CHA checks.
W-2 Deputy Warrant Officer	24	Add +4 to applicable CHA checks.
W-3 Warrant Officer	27	Add +6 to applicable CHA checks.
W-4 Chief Warrant Officer	30	Add +8 to applicable CHA checks.

OFFICERS

Rank	DT	Notes
O-1 2nd Lieutenant	N/A	Add +2 to applicable CHA checks.
O-2 1st Lieutenant	22	Add +4 to applicable CHA checks.
O-3 Captain	25	Add +6 to applicable CHA checks.
O-4 Major	28	Add +8 to applicable CHA checks.
O-5 Lt. Colonel	32	Add +10 to applicable CHA checks.

ARMY ANT RANK INSIGNIA
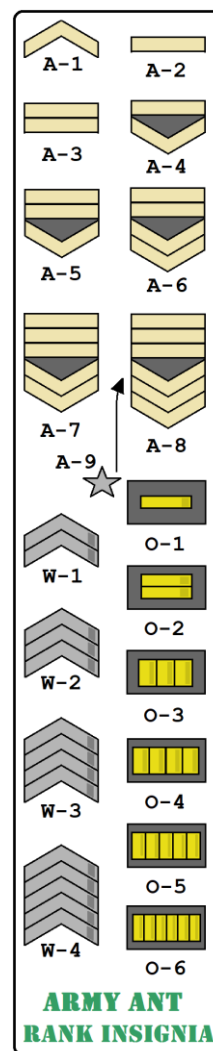
Vehicles

At one time, a strong corps of vehicles was at the heart of the ant war effort. Those days are gone. Now, a small number of vehicles remains in service, and the availability of fuel to power those vehicles, much less personnel to maintain them, is at a premium. Out of this, smaller, more easy-to-maintain vehicles have come to the fore. Primary among these is the ATP-77 Frogger 6-wheel amphibious reconnaissance vehicle. The default assumption of the game is that the team of bugs has one of these as their mobile base of operations. All vehicles have a basic walkie-talkie hookup with a range of 25 meters and a basic set of tools.

Vehicle Statistics

- **Armor Class** sets the CR for foes to attack the vehicle.
- Roll **Hit Dice** to find how much damage (hit points) the vehicle can sustain. If you use a vehicle to ram another object or creature, roll Hit Dice for damage dealt to both the vehicle and target (with maximum damage equal to move). All vehicles also have **resilience,** ignoring the first points of damage suffered.
- **Move (MV)** is the maximum travel rate of the vehicle. Typical cruising speed is Move -2.
- **Control** sets the CR for checks to operate the vehicle through difficult circumstances or maneuvers. Attempt a control check to maneuver the vehicle at full speed in any adverse conditions.
- **Weapons** may grant a bonus to hit (via targeting). Operators attempt ranged attacks using DEX.
- **Crew** lists the number of operators and passengers, and/or amount of cargo (Driver + Crew).
- **Fuel Consumption** gives the number of meters the vehicle can travel per ml of fuel.
- **Capacity** gives the total capacity of the fuel tank, in ml (**range** is calculated as capacity x consumption).

Sweet Ride!

Your team starts the game with an **ATP-77 Frogger.** Roll for its starting armor class (1d4+15), hit points (2d10) and control (1d4+20). It begins with 1d6+4 ml of fuel, and 2d4 belts of ammo for the machine gun. The fuel cans are empty. It is yours to upgrade (through vehicle tinkering) and maintain. If your vehicle is damaged, you must spend 1 turn fixing it, per hp recovered.

ATV
AC 15; HD 2d6 (Res 1); MV 10; Control 18;
Driver +1; Fuel: 25 m/ml; 4 ml (100m range)

Combat Jeep
AC 16; HD 2d8 (Res 2); MV 12; Control 20;
Driver +3; Fuel: 20 m/ml; 8 ml (160m range)

Light Scout Car
AC 17; HD 2d8 (Res 3); MV 12; Control 22;
Cannon (1d10/range 8); Driver +2
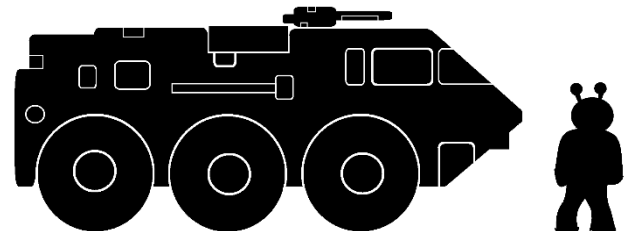Fuel Consumption 20 m/ml; 10 ml (200m range)

Heavy Scout Car
AC 18; HD 2d10 (Res 4); MV 12; Control 24;
Cannon (2d6/range 10); Driver +3
Fuel Consumption 15 m/ml; 10 ml (150m range)

Medium Tank
AC 20; HD 4d10 (Res 5); MV 10; Control 30;
Cannon (3d10/1 meter); Driver +3
Fuel Consumption 5 m/ml; 15 ml (75m range)

AMPHIBIOUS PERSONNEL CARRIER

ATP-77 Frogger
AC 16-20; HD 2d10 (Res 3); MV 10 (5 water);
Control 21-24; Top-Mounted Heavy Machine Gun (+1/2d6/5)
Driver +1; up to 10 passengers/comparable cargo
Fuel: 10 m/ml; 10 ml (100m range)
2 fuel cans (3 ml each).

ENCOUNTERS

Encounters include any interaction with a creature, an obstacle, or a situation. This section provides an overview of the rules governing encounters.

TIME

Measure combat time in **rounds of 3 seconds** and **turns of 1 minute**. Each round is broken into **phases**; a phase includes all activity by one participant in the combat round. On your phase, attempt a number of actions equal to your level. *Grenades always go off at the end of your phase, regardless of when they were activated.*

MOVEMENT

You may travel up to your **move** rate (in cm) in one action. Travel up to your move in meters per turn over good roads. Travel your move in cm per turn while exploring and mapping a new environment.

SEQUENCE OF COMBAT

1. Determine if either side is **surprised**. If one side clearly catches the other unawares, grant surprise. Surprise wins initiative, with +2 to attack rolls made in the first round.
2. Roll **initiative** if there is no surprise. All participants attempt a FEAT, acting in order from highest to lowest. Continue this rotation throughout combat. On your phase, you attempt a number of actions equal to your level. With one action, you can travel your move in cm, fire a weapon, attack with a knife, throw a grenade, or attempt a check/FEAT.
3. Combat continues until one side is defeated or fails morale and flees.

RANGE & DISTANCE

♦ Melee weapons require you to be within 1 cm of the foe to attack.

♦ Ranged weapons have a range increment measured in cm. Each increment imposes -2 to the attack. A weapon with range 3 attacks at -2 from 4-6 cm, at -4 from 7-9 cm, etc.

♦ All thrown weapons (including grenades) have a range increment of 1 +STR modifier. A grenade that 'misses' lands or bounces into an adjacent 1-cm square. Roll 1d8 and count clockwise from the opposite square from the target. If that ends in a wall or other barrier, it bounces back into the target square, and doesn't really miss!

MORALE

Creatures who suffer a significant loss (the loss of their leader, the defeat of half of their forces, an important symbolic loss) may be required to attempt a **morale FEAT**. If the creatures fail, they turn and flee. Creatures who flee grant full XP as if they were slain. The player bugs never roll morale, although their referee-controlled allies may. Creatures add the CHA modifier of their leader to this check.

EPIC CHECKS

Some things you may try to do are so incredible that they defy reason. With an attribute rated at 14 or better, you may attempt an **epic check**. Epic checks have a DT of 30. An epic check might allow you to rip a dandelion from its roots (STR), run across a thread (DEX), or compel an entire army with your voice (CHA).

AMMUNITION

Remember that you must keep track of ammunition. If your weapon uses ammunition, you empty a clip on your first natural 1 each turn. Keep track of when you empty a clip or finish a belt of ammo and subtract that from your available ammo. There are two universal sizes for ammunition – small arms ammo (in clips) and machine gun ammo (in belts). Because ammo is so hard to find, most enemies only carry a few extra rounds, and rarely carry multiple clips.

REACTIONS

A creature that is not inherently aggressive may react positively. The bug interacting attempts a CHA check, DT 20. Success suggests the target views the bug favorably; failure suggests conflict.

STRUCTURAL DAMAGE AND AOE

Many weapons and explosives deal AOE (area of effect) damage. In general, consider the following when determining the effect of such damage on an environment. Damage below the listed amount is generally ignored; either you blast through the stone wall or you knock a few chunks from it.

- Breakables (glass, normal windows) are destroyed at 1+ damage.
- Soft targets (most furniture, weeds, grass) are destroyed at 5+ damage.
- Medium targets (heavy windows, doors) are destroyed at 10+ damage.
- Heavy targets such as walls are breached, floors cave in, and ceilings collapse at 15+ damage.
- Reinforced barriers, stone, and brick are compromised at 20+ damage.

OTHER SITUATIONS

- **Blindness** (including from darkness) imposes -4 to attacks and checks requiring sight.
- **Climbing** requires a STR or DEX check every 3 cm (use the better attribute).
- **Cover** grants +2 AC (minor cover) or +4 AC (full cover) when a bug can find it.
- **Crawling** imposes -2 to move (min. 1).
- **Falling** deals 1d6 damage per 3 cm fallen (maximum 3d6 for bugs). Bugs may attempt a FEAT for half damage.
- **Food.** All bugs are natural foragers, and it is assumed they eat once per hour. Bugs can find food pretty much anywhere. In extremely hostile environments, bugs may have to attempt a FEAT to forage enough food for the hour. Each hour that goes by without eating imposes a cumulative -1 to CON. A bug dies at CON 0.
- **Languages.** Each species has its own unique language, but all bugs also speak **concord**, a common trade language. A bug knows concord, his/her native language, and a total number of additional languages equal to his/her INT modifier.
- **Stunned** creatures are unable to act and have an effective armor class of 10 while stunned.
- **Swimming** imposes -2 to move (min. 1).
- **Unarmed** bugs deal 1 point of damage, + modifiers (STR applies; min. 1 point).
- **Vision.** Bugs cannot see past 1 meter.

THE CONTAGION

The Contagion is a dangerous mystical plague released by the wasps as part of the Doomsday Directive. A bug exposed to the Contagion must attempt a CON check or contract it, becoming a mindless cannibal that eats its own kind. The Contagion sets in 1d6 hours after exposure. The victim gets +1 STR and CON every day, but suffers -1 WIS, INT, and CHA. When any of those reaches zero, the bug dies.

The Referee

As the referee, you have an important role. You keep track of the action, play all NPBs (non-player bugs), and direct the team through its missions. The players bring their bugs to life; you animate everything else!

Interpreting Dice

The dice help to tell the story; seek to interpret dice in ways that keep the story moving forward in a fun way.

Challenges

You will place a variety of challenges before the bugs. These challenges include physical barriers to overcome as well as foes or predators to be defeated. Sample creatures appear starting on page 20. Challenges may include:

♦ **Doors** can be locked or barred, requiring a security FEAT to bypass or a STR check to force open.
♦ **Barriers** can include barbed wire (dealing 1d4 damage per round of contact), gates, pits, and a variety of security systems, both mundane and technological.
♦ **Puzzles** require luck, skill, or both.
♦ **Traps** can be hidden anywhere – floors, ceilings, doors, and stairs, or along paths and foliage. Traps are found with a successful sense FEAT, requiring a security FEAT to disarm.

Common Traps (Roll 1d4)

Roll	Trap
1	**Explosive** traps deal 1d8 damage per level of the trap in a 1 cm radius. All targets may attempt a FEAT for half damage.
2	**Pits** deal falling damage (page 17). Pits may have spikes at the bottom, dealing +1d6 damage.
3	**Poison Gas** traps force all creatures in a 1 cm radius to attempt a FEAT or suffer 1d6 damage per level of the trap.
4	**Spring Weapons** require a FEAT to evade, dealing 1d6 damage per level of the trap to one target.

Setting DTs

You may be required to set DTs for unexpected situations. Most of the time, the DT is 20. For simple tasks, set the DT at 16. For an especially rigorous challenge, set the DT at 24.

The Environment

This is an unpredictable, ever-changing place. A sudden rainstorm can transform a field into a massive sea; strong winds can ravage a field of dandelions.

♦ **The Wilds** encompass the vast regions of Seven Fields and beyond. There are wide swaths of grassland (with blades of grass that tower over the ants), dense jungle-like gardens, patches of clover, muddy ravines, and puddles that can be a meter across.
♦ **Roads** are plentiful, as land-traveling bugs traverse common trails, and many rough dirt roads crisscross in all directions. Few finished, paved roads exist.
♦ **Ruins** are scattered about, the remains of communities and fortresses that have been wiped out through warfare or disease. Many of these are ripe for exploration, still holding the resources that their former inhabitants may have left behind.
♦ **Settlements** include civilian towns and villages, rural communities, minor strongholds, or massive fortresses.

Economics

At various times, currencies circulated by flies, wasps, and ants have provided economic stability for Seven Fields. Those times have passed. While some places still accept any (or all) of these currencies, most bugs have reverted to a barter economy in the last several weeks, trading goods and services for comparable items. At this point, it is more valuable to be paid in fuel or gear than in fly rubles.

Factions

With the breakdown of the military super-powers, several factions have arisen to fill the void. These include cults that worship powerful predators, clans of mutant bugs that patrol the wilds, conspiracy-driven wanderers who follow the ramblings of strange prophets, or cabals of warlord zealots who leverage the chaos for their own benefit. Some even believe that spirits of dead insects now roam the wilds.

ADJUDICATING MYSTICISM

Mysticism should be mysterious and unpredictable. When a bug attempts to use either wilding or psionics, you should be flexible in your interpretations of rules. Let the players try! In general, mysticism effects last no longer than 1 turn, and any effort to use mysticism against a more powerful foe (one of higher level) should at a minimum permit a FEAT to resist.

MUTATIONS

A series of natural and supernatural events have led to a generation of bugs (and some predators) being born with strange mutations. It appears as many as 1 in 4 bugs have such mutations. Some common mutations are listed below.

SAMPLE MUTATIONS (ROLL 1D8)

Roll	Mutation
1	Regenerate 1 hit point per round.
2	Amphibious, with gills and scaly shells.
3	Radiated. Force all within 3 cm to attempt a FEAT or suffer -1 CON for 1d4 hours.
4	You randomly change color every 1d4 turns to match nearby objects.
5	Poison touch. Touch deals 1 point of poison damage, no resist allowed.
6	Darkvision, but light sensitive (suffer -1 to actions in full daylight).
7	Every 1d6 hours, one attribute randomly increases or decreases 1d4 points.
8	You die at -1 hp, spontaneously combust, and deal 2d6 damage in a 1 cm radius.

MISSIONS

Missions are self-directed or come from Central Command. Missions fall into three types:

- ♦ **Seek/Recover.** The team is sent to find something. They may have to simply prove it exists ("establish contact with the lightning bugs"), restore it ("get the pipeline repaired") or bring it back ("we need that egg!").
- ♦ **Destroy.** The team is sent to get rid of something. This could be a hard target ("take out the bridge") a creature ("that frog has to be eliminated") or even data ("destroy all the files on the hard drive").
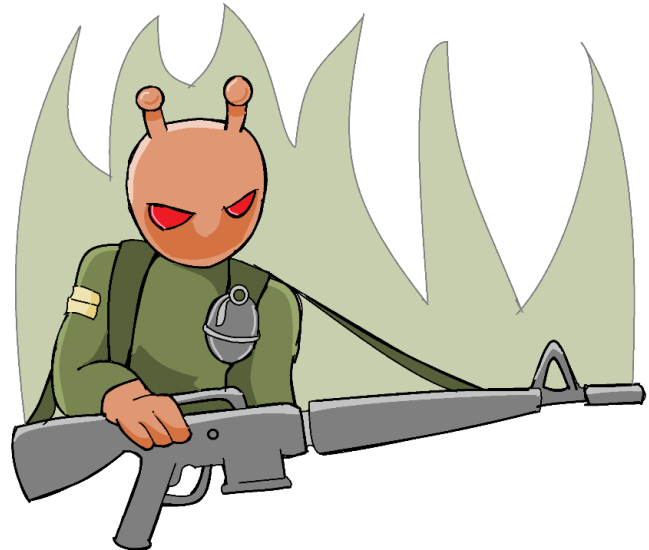
- ♦ **Defend.** The team is sent to protect something. This could be a creature ("prevent an assassination attempt against the cricket ambassador"), a location ("those mosquitoes must not cross the pavement line") or a vehicle ("don't let those gnats hijack the train").

AWARDING XP

XP is earned based on the foes defeated and missions accomplished. Each creature listing gives an XP value, which is divided among all the bugs who participated in the battle with that creature. Each mission objective gives XP awards, divided in the same way. The bugs may complete all, some, or none of the mission objectives.

RECOVERING LOOT

Bugs may find a variety of loot on their missions. Roll 1d8 each time loot is recovered.

LOOT RECOVERED (ROLL 1D8)

Roll	Loot Recovered
1	Armor (1 suit, roll on page 13)
2	Explosives (1, roll on page 13)
3	Weapon (1, roll on page 13)
4-5	General Gear (1 piece, roll on page 13)
6	Fuel (2d4 ml)
7	Ammunition, Small Arms (1d4 clips)
8	Ammunition, Machine Gun (1d4 belts)

CREATURES

Creatures are the predators, foes, and potential allies that the bugs encounter. A creature's entry includes:

♦ Its perspective, size, and level. For bugs, their **lifespan** is given in parenthesis.

♦ **Perspective** indicates whether the creature is an ally, neutral, an adversary, or a predator. Allies are naturally inclined to help and support the ants; any CHA check when interacting with an ally is made with the rank bonus. Neutrals are neither inclined towards or against the ants. Adversaries are antagonistic towards ants, and often attack without provocation. Any CHA check when interacting with an adversary is made at -4. Predators hunt ants for food, and generally cannot be reasoned with.

♦ **Minions** are level 0 creatures with 1 hit die; they act once per round. **Sizes** include small (under 3mm tall; HD d4), Medium (4-9 mm tall; HD d6), Large (1-3 cm tall/long; HD d8), Huge (4-10 cm tall/long; HD d10), Massive (11-25 cm tall/long; HD d12), and Colossal (26+ cm tall/long; HD d20). Creatures are rated with stars indicating relative power: (*) = exceptional; (**) = superior; (***) = legendary

♦ Armor Class rating; Hit Dice (roll hit points for each creature individually): FEAT modifier; Movement rates (MV), and XP value (awarded for defeating this creature). **Flight, burrowing,** and **swimming** give their independent movement rates.

♦ A short description of the creature's habits and abilities. All predators have **darkvision**.

♦ About creature weapons and gear: Each militaristic bug has a level in 10 chance of carrying an extra clip of ammo, and a level in 10 chance of having one piece of miscellaneous gear.

CREATURE ABILITIES

♦ **Acid Spit** provide a pool of dice available to the creature each turn. This pool is the same as the creature's Hit Dice. Up to half of total dice may be used in any one spit action. All targets within the area of effect will be hit; those affected may attempt a FEAT for half damage.

♦ **Amphibious** creatures can breathe underwater and are equally at home in or out of water.

♦ **Poison** forces the prey suffering damage from the applicable attack to attempt a FEAT or suffer damage as indicated, typically 1d4 hp per level of the creature.

♦ **Tongue strike** is a melee attack against a target at range. A successful tongue strike deals the listed damage and pulls the target in for an immediate bite attempt at +2. Once a creature has been captured via tongue strike, the target suffers automatic bite damage once per round, every round, until one of the creatures dies. Tongue strikes are only usable against targets smaller than the creature using it.

♦ **Wall Crawling** allows the creature to move along walls and ceilings at its full movement.

BUGS

Bugs are the other intelligent, organized, and often militaristic insect species that interact with the ants. 1 in 4 bugs has also been affected by a **mutation** (see page 19).

AMBUSH BUG

Adversary Medium Insect 2 (30 weeks)
AC 12; HD 4d6; FEAT +8; MV 4; XP 10
Light rifle (+4/1d6+1/4); Recon; Sneak

These excellent trackers are routinely employed as hitmen and bounty hunters. They are social, often working in teams of 2d6 bugs.

ANT LION

Adversary Large Insect 2 (4 weeks)
AC 13; HD 4d8; FEAT +8; MV 5; XP 10
Spear (+4/1d8+1) + Bite (+4/1d6)

These savage, primitive bugs hunt ants and their ilk. They bite and carry spears into combat. An ant lion carries 1d4 spears and will keep one on hand for melee combat. It bites and spears each round, attacking once with each attack.

APHID

Neutral Medium Insect Minion (4 weeks)
AC 10; HD 1d6; FEAT +4; MV 2; XP 1
Simple tools (+1/1d4)

These simple, peaceful bugs are plentiful, living as farmers and common traders. They often rely on ants for protection.

ASSASSIN BUG

Adversary Medium Insect 4* (50 weeks)
AC 17; HD 9d6; FEAT +8; MV 5; XP 90
Rifle (+9/1d10+2/6); Knife (+9/1d6+1/poison)
Covert Ops; Poison; Recon; Sneak; Sneak Attack

These rare, elite bugs undertake the most challenging operations, commanding top dollar. Their sneak attack deals +2d4 damage. Their venom is poisonous, and though they can bite (+9/1 dmg/poison), they are more likely to poison their knives. Targets must attempt a FEAT or suffer 4d6 additional poison damage.

COCKROACH

Adversary Large Insect 3** (50 weeks)
AC 18; HD 7d8; FEAT +15; MV 6; XP 70
Machine Gun (+7/1d12/5); wall crawling

These thick-shelled bugs often serve as mercenaries. Some fancy themselves would-be overlords, trafficking in illegal goods. Their hard shells provide resilience 2. They are incredibly hardy, hence their high FEAT rating.

CRICKET MILITANT

Ally Medium Insect 1 (10 weeks)
AC 13; HD 2d6; FEAT +7; MV 4 (leap 10); XP 3
Light rifle (+2/1d6/4)

These allied insects form loose-knit communities. They have a military, but it is poorly organized, consisting of bands of companies that operate essentially independently. Due to short lifespans, they tend to be foolhardy and immature.

DOODLEBUG

Adversary Medium Insect Minion (1 day as larva)
AC 10; HD 1d6; FEAT +4; MV 1; XP 1
Bite (+1/1d4)

This larval form of ant lion nests in shallow, loose dirt or sand. The doodlebug emits a hum that forces any other bug to attempt a FEAT (DT 20) or be drawn towards the sound. A bug moving within 1 cm of a doodlebug nest must attempt a DEX check (DT 20) or slide into the lair of the doodlebug. There, the target takes -4 to attacks until the doodle is dead. The doodle attacks with a bite.

GNAT MERCENARY

Adversary Medium Insect Minion (1 week)
AC 12; HD 1d6; FEAT +5; MV 3 (fly 6); XP 1
Light rifle (+1/1d6/3)

These minor bugs are common in mercenary forces as foot soldiers and basic militia.

LIGHTNING BUG

Neutral Medium Insect 2 (50 weeks)
AC 14; HD 4d6; FEAT +8; MV 4 (fly 12); XP 10
Light rifle (+4/1d6+2/4)

These military bugs are fiercely independent, and often serve as mercenaries. They emit light in darkness (without intending to) making it impossible for them to sneak. Once per turn, they may **flash** as a free action, forcing all creatures within 3 cm to attempt a FEAT or be blinded for 1d4 rounds, taking -4 to all actions. Lighting bugs are immune to flash effects.

MOSQUITO

Adversary Large Insect 2* (6 weeks)
AC 13; HD 4d8; FEAT +8; MV 3 (fly 10); XP 15
Assault rifle (+4/1d8+1/5); wall crawling

These tall, gangly insects tend to be antisocial. Drinking blood will do that. Mosquitoes tend to carry disease; coming into close contact with a mosquito forces any non-mosquito bug to attempt a FEAT. Failure means that the bug gets sick for 1d4 days, suffering -2 to CON during that time.

Predators

Predators are the big, instinct-driven beasts that hunt ants and other insects. Unless otherwise noted, predators only take one action per round. 1 in 10 predators are **awakened**, gaining insect-level intellect and the ability to speak, sometimes lording over bugs; 1 in 6 have been affected by a **mutation** (see page 19).

Chickadee

Huge Predator Bird 4
AC 16; HD 9d10; Feat +10; MV fly 40; XP 60
Bite (+9/4d8); Fly
These yellow birds feast on insects.

Chameleon, Pygmy

Huge Predator Reptile 3**
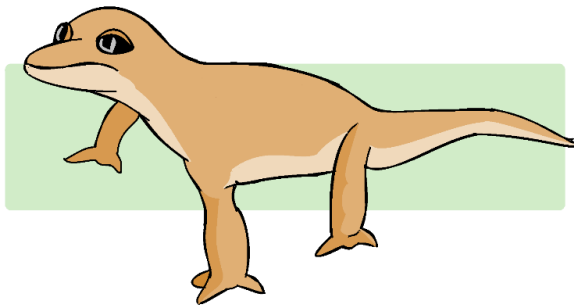AC 17; HD 7d10; Feat +8; MV 10; XP 70
Bite (+7/3d8); Recon; Sneak; Acid Spit
These clever reptiles are excellent hunters; their acid spit is a stream 6 cm long.

Field Mole

Huge Predator Mammal 3
AC 15; HD 7d10; Feat +9; MV 20 (burrow 10);
XP 1; Bite (+7/3d8); Burrowing
These large garden pests have been known to wipe out entire insect communities.

Gecko

Large Predator Lizard 2
AC 13; HD 4d8; Feat +8; MV 8; XP 10
Bite (+4/2d6)
These lizards are somewhat docile and have been trained as steeds. In the wild, they will attack bugs but are not particularly aggressive.

Minnow

Massive Predator Fish 4*
AC 15; HD 9d12; Feat +10; MV Swim 25; XP 90
Bite (+9/4d10); Water Breathing
These aggressive fish patrol shallow waters for insects. They swallow whole on a critical hit.

Shrew

Huge Predator Mammal 2
AC 14; HD 4d10; Feat +8; MV 20 (burrow 10);
XP 10; Bite (+4/2d8); Burrowing
These common garden pests feed on insects.

Sparrow

Massive Predator Bird 5
AC 18; HD 10d12; Feat +11; MV fly 50;
XP 100; Bite (+10/5d10); fly
These huge birds evoke fear and wonder in bugs.

Strangle Weed

Colossal Predator Carnivorous Plant 4**
AC 16; HD 8d20; Feat +10; MV 0; XP 120
Tendrils (+8/1d12 per round automatic)
A patch of strangle weed can spread out over dozens of centimeters, attacking a number of bugs at one time equal to its HD. It attacks by squeezing targets, dealing 1d12 damage each round automatically once it binds a foe. It constricts until destroyed. Constricted foes take -2 to actions. Fire deals double damage to strangle weed.

Tree Frog

Huge Predator Amphibian 4
AC 17; HD 9d10; Feat +10; MV 4 (leap 25);
XP 60; Bite (+9/4d8); Tongue Strike (+9/1d8)
Amphibious; Leap; Sneak
These amphibians subsist on a regular diet of insects.

Venus Fly Trap

Massive Predator Carnivorous Plant 3*
AC 15; HD 6d12; Feat +9; MV 0; XP 50
Bite (+4/2d8); Acid; Sneak
These legendary plants disguise themselves, snapping shut with a powerful bite, dealing 1d6 acid damage per round automatically until either the fly trap or target is dead.

RELAY STATION BRAVO

This is an introductory adventure for a team of 3-5 level 1 bugs.

> **Mission Brief:** Relay Station Bravo went offline two weeks ago. Your team has the following mission objectives: 1) secure the station, neutralizing any hostiles; 2) recover any generators and batteries that remain at the station; and 3) re-activate the relay tower, if possible.

The Approach. The rise leading up to the relay station is relatively steep, requiring a vehicle control check at -2 to ascend. If failed, the vehicle gets stuck in the mud just west of A, and the shrew attacks. It will take 2d6 turns to dig the frogger out, and another check is required every 3 cm going up the road. The frogger is likely to get stuck driving up – several times.

A. The Shrew. A young **shrew** (hp 10 – wounded from a battle with crickets) nests at the bottom of the rise. It has been digging up and eating doodlebugs and also had a big snack of crickets (see B) but it is taking a rest before finishing its meal. It is easy to surprise if the bugs are on foot (+4 to surprise attempts), but it will hear a vehicle coming within 20 cm and will investigate. It has a few things that were on the crickets – two fragmentation grenades and a med kit – in its shallow cave.

B. Doodlebug Field. The Ant Lion (Area C) nested here. There were 20 larva this morning, but only **6 doodlebugs** (hp 2 each) remain. Each bug crossing has a 5 in 6 chance of coming within range of a doodlebug's singing. One of the doodles is currently fighting with a **cricket** (hp 9) named Gustav, and he is yelling for help. Gustav was part of a team of crickets that had tracked the two ambush bugs (area C) here. His fellow crickets are dead, eaten by the shrew. The doodles have nothing of value.

C. Relay station. This building is currently commandeered by two ambush bugs who were chased here by a team of crickets. They have set up a defensible position, and plan to go down fighting.

C1. Entry. The ambush bugs hastily hewed a hole in the floor and nailed down a carpet in the middle of the room. A sense FEAT (DT 20) is required to notice the trap. The first bug stepping on it will rip through it and fall into the basement, suffering 1d6 damage. The stairs are also trapped, with a tripwire and fragmentation grenade. Finding the tripwire requires a sense FEAT (DT 20). If failed, the grenade explodes, with damage centered on the third stair.

C2. Basement. This was used for storage by the relay team. An **ant lion** (hp 19) is hiding here; she created nests outside and was hiding here, waiting for them to hatch, when they ambush bugs arrived and she ducked for cover. They do not know she is here. She will attack any creature falling through the hole in C1 or coming down the stairs. There is one generator here. It will be damaged beyond repair if it suffers 5+ damage.

C3. Tower. The stairs ascend 5 cm. The **2 ambush bugs** (hp 15, 19) are hiding here. Each has rudimentary cover (granting +2 to AC). They will fire upon anyone coming up through the trap door (staying partway in the trap door grants +2 to AC). Any bug thinking of just fragging this whole room is allowed an INT check (DT 20) to realize this would also make it impossible to fix the station; if the room takes 5+ points of area of effect damage, the relay station console is completely destroyed. Another generator is stored here as well. Restoring the console requires technology and a successful INT check (DT 20) to get the station up and running. In addition to all enemies, each generator recovered is worth +3 XP, clearing the station is worth +10 XP to the team, and restoring the relay station to power is worth an additional +15 XP to the team.
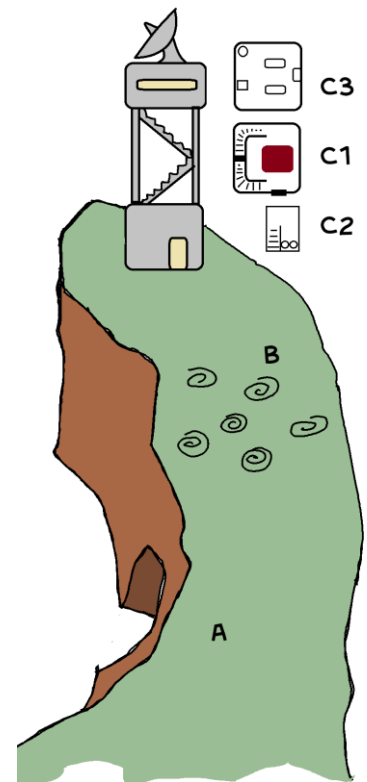
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