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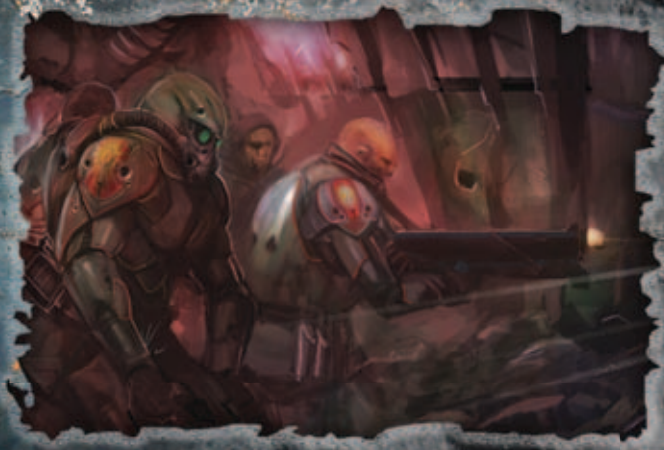

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BATTLETECH™

A TIME OF WAR

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The following people have been involved in the creation and development of BattleTech rules, either by writing material that was assimilated into the main body of the rules, serving as the BattleTech line developer in the past, or otherwise contributing to the game in a major way.

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THE FIRES OF HELL

GATHERING PLAYERS

Ben Rome

FORT DEFIANCE
MARIA'S ELEGY
HESPERUS II, LYRAN ALLIANCE
5 JUNE 3076

"Watch out!" came the cry from across the bay.

Lunging forward, Sergeant Busby "Buzzy" Matvey caught the teetering metal case just before it plunged down to the mid-sized hangar's ferrocrete floor. With a grunt, he shoved the olive-drab canister back onto the top of its stack while the forklift backed away.

But not fast enough.

Buzzy smiled as Lieutenant Luella Hildebrand boiled up to the side of the lift like a miniature tornado. He shook his head as he returned to his work transferring the supply crates into the tight cargo bay of the Mark IV Landing Craft. Already, Luella's dressing-down of the poor lift driver was reaching a staccato pace that even a Mydron Minigun couldn't match.

"Hot one, her, yes?" asked Buzzy's lanky partner.

"*Da*," he replied, handing over another narrow crate marked, "CAUTION: FLAMMABLE".

"You know I wasn't talkin' about her looks, now."

Buzzy sighed. "*Da*," he responded again, this time looking his companion full in the face. A grizzled soldier, Ethan Naoko had once more neglected to shave the stubble from his pointed chin. "You know, if the Captain sees that scruff, he'll have words again."

The older man shrugged. "So what? Not like we're on a mission. Unless you've heard something I've not?"

"Nope," Buzzy replied. "I just know as much as you."

Pivoting, he grabbed another case from the stack. Luella's rapid-fire delivery finally ceased in the background and he noted the lift's whine as it backed away, almost as though the machine itself were sulking.

He heard Ethan's low whistle behind him. "Still, y'know, she's pretty hot…"

Buzzy sighed again and smiled. He turned and thrust the case at Naoko, cracking a smile.

"*Da*."

▲▼▲

Lieutenant Luella Hildebrand stalked away from the retreating lifter, the confrontation filed away and forgotten. There was still too much to do and clearly not enough time. *Detonators*, she thought. *Did we pack enough*?

She consulted the datapad clutched in her left hand and scrolled down the list, her determined stride missing not a hitch as she stalked down the corridor toward the Captain's office. Without looking up, she deftly avoided collisions with her fellow officers, finally stopping in front of a nondescript gray-green door. Knocking once, she didn't wait for an acknowledgement and stormed in.

"Problem, Luella?" asked the man seated in front of her, his night-black face cast strangely aglow by the monitor he was staring into.

The Lieutenant snapped to attention and saluted. "Captain Travis," she barked. "No, sir. Just a lift driver who isn't aware of the regs regarding volatile and explosive cargo."

Captain Jared Travis leaned back, looking over at his exec. His white teeth practically lit up his face. "I assume you re-educated him?"

Luella relaxed slightly. "Yes, Captain. I'll report him later."

Jared waved it off.

"No need," he said. "We've got more important things at the moment." He stood and turned, searching the cluttered shelves behind him. "Has Corporal Logan reported in yet?"

"Not yet, sir."

"Very well. He should soon, I would expect. The shuttle from the *Duquesne* was probably delayed. Ah-ha!" The captain snagged a small book from the shelf and turned back to Luella.

"Have the team report to the hangar at twenty-hundred hours,"

he said as he opened the leather-bound book to a ribbon-marked page.

"Very good, sir." Luella turned to go, already churning through the supply list in her head.

"Oh, and Luella?" Jared called.

She stopped and turned to look back at him. "Sir?"

"Take a few minutes to relax. Don't know when we'll get the chance again."

▲▼▲

Captain Jared Travis closed the small Bible in his hand and leaned back in his office chair, unable to concentrate enough to quiet his own self. The butterflies he felt in his stomach weren't from the orders sitting on his monitor, or their promise of action.

No, he thought, *it's because* she's *coming*.

Jared took a deep breath and released it slowly. The last time he and Belle Lee had crossed paths—two years ago—it had been a torrential downpour of violence, emotion, stress and fatigue.

And it all ended with a failed marriage proposal.

Ancient history, Travis! he chided himself. *Get a grip!*

He had no idea why his mind was dragging it all back up again. Yes, the fighting on Kittery was horrific; their escape from that Blakist hellhole a nightmare ordeal that still kept him awake sometimes.

But it was all in the past.

Travis snapped himself out of his reverie. The General was coming to brief them on a mission, not to re-ignite some short-lived, war-fueled relationship. Jared refocused on the monitor in front of him.

The orders were simple enough on the surface, but that wasn't saying much; a reconnaissance mission to an as-yet-undetermined planet, part of a larger operation currently being assembled. Travis knew without a doubt that the target world was already determined, but that operational security demanded such information be withheld until all the players were in place and ready to strike.

That was simply how these things went down.

The rest of the orders contained little else in the way of useful information beyond the standard bureaucratic rhetoric. Indeed, the only part that had Jared's insides doing somersaults was the last line: "General Belle Lee will present your operational orders in person."

Shaking off the malaise, he refocused again on the screen, bringing up the profiles of his two new team members. He tapped past Luella's dossier; she'd already been here a week and he felt he had her pegged.

That brought him to the "newbie": Franz Logan.

Jared's mouth turned down as he scanned Logan's short record. Recent academy grad from Skye, failed the MechWarrior MOS twice, two reprimands from his drill sergeant for daydreaming on watch. Excellent weapons skills, passable first aid, and licensed to operate standard WorkMechs.

"So basically, we've got ourselves a wannabe 'Mech jock who knows which end of the rifle goes where and is most likely to succeed as a battlefield casualty when the crap hits the fan," he said to the empty office.

"Wonderful."

▲▼▲

Corporal Franz Logan pressed his face against the unyielding surface of the observation deck's massive, armored window, looking

down on the planet below. One hand pressed against the glass above his head, the other clutched a nearly full bulb of raspberry juice.

He still couldn't believe he was finally seeing this place in the flesh: *Hesperus II*.

Home to one of the largest BattleMech manufacturing centers in the Lyran Alliance, if not the entire Inner Sphere!

Franz drank in the planet's details as his DropShip drew ever closer. Once upon a time, he'd memorized every detail about this place; to him, it was the seat of the gods of war. He smiled as the DropShip turned slightly, bringing the gigantic Myoo Mountains into view. The massive mountain chain was easily visible even from high orbit.

It was like visiting Mecca. *More like, 'Mecha'*, he thought to himself. He snorted loudly at the joke in his head.

"Find something amusing?" came a voice next to him.

Startled from his planetary worship, Franz gave a small cry and involuntarily squeezed his hands.

Including the juice bulb in his right.

Horrified, he turned quickly. "Watch out—"

Too late! The stream of juice shot forth from the bulb's opening and struck the voice's owner dead-on, slashing a red stain across her otherwise pristine and nondescript gray jumpsuit.

Franz felt the blood drain from his face. He stared, slack-jawed, through the haze of remaining raspberry droplets as the red-haired woman looked down at her jumpsuit in bemused shock.

"I'm…" he stammered. "Oh, my God…I'm so…"

The woman chuckled softly. "Quite all right, Corporal," she said. With a light touch off the window, she drifted away from the remaining juice mist. "I should know better than to disturb someone intent on merging with an observation window."

Franz noticed how the woman's blue eyes sparkled as she spoke. He felt his face go from cold to hot as he blushed. He broke eye contact and looked around the deck.

"Ma'am," he croaked. *It figured*, he thought. *The first beautiful woman I've seen since that miserable night with Jenny right before boot camp, and I say hello by squirting her with* raspberry juice.

The woman smiled again, obviously amused by his awkwardness. "We'll be on final approach in fifteen minutes," she said. "You may want to clean up that mess before we get gravity back. I don't think the purser would appreciate stains on his carpet."

"N-n-no, I don't think he would," he mumbled. He glanced down at his feet, noting with horror that the toes of his regulation boots were scuffed. *Again*.

Steeling his spine, he looked up and blurted out, "Would you like to watch the landing with…" It took a moment for Franz to realize the room was empty.

"…me?"

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"Cigarette?" Ethan Naoko asked absently, shrugging the pack from his pocket and gesturing to Buzzy.

The larger man shook his head. "Nah. Trying to quit."

Ethan shrugged. "Suit yourself." He fished one out and stuck the pale yellow stick in his mouth. He gazed up into the Hesperan sky.

Buzzy caught the older man's gaze and looked up himself. "Getting busy up there again." His eyes tracked the multiple lights crossing the sky. Most were headed toward the nearby temporary town outside Maria's Elegy.

"Yeah. Good to see, I think. Means the reconstruction's going forward again."

Buzzy nodded. He looked over at Naoko. "Did you ever think you'd be involved in combat again? I mean, getting pulled back into the fray from a desk job…"

"And three months from retirement," Ethan finished for him. He looked down, chewing thoughtfully on the unlit cigarette. "Tell the truth, no," he said quietly.

A Warrior VTOL screamed across the sky, running low to the ground. Its passage kicked up dust and grit, but added a sudden welcome breeze to an otherwise dry afternoon in Hesperus' so-called "temperate zone". The thumping rhythm of the craft's rotors echoed long after it disappeared.

"Thirty-plus years I've put in, Buzzy," Ethan said, shoving his hands into his pockets and walking slowly toward the barracks entrance a short distance away. "I've run the gamut of war, I think. 'Mech jock, infantryman, prisoner of war, desk jockey. Even ended up going from one army to another, thanks to the vagaries of what flag's flying when."

"Wait, what? I never knew that!"

Ethan looked over at the bigger man. "Yep. Did my time in the DCMS and was a civvie when the Feddies showed up on Breed back in '63. Conscripted a bunch of us for grunt work. Somehow, we got loaded up and shipped off with the rest of the Feddie army back to Robinson as fresh AFFS recruits." He spat out the mangled cigarette.

"You're so full of shit."

The older man stopped and looked at Buzzy for a moment, then laughed. Wiping his eyes, he slapped Buzzy on the shoulder, releasing another small cloud of Hesperan dust. "Had you going for moment, though," he rasped.

Buzzy shook his head, then looked up. "Sell it to the greenie, Ethan." The distant rumble of a DropShip's fusion engines were audible. Both men turned toward the makeshift drop pad to the east, where the ovoid craft now settled on a descending column of fire.

"New shipment's arrived," Buzzy said.

Naoko nodded. "Maybe this one's got our orders."

"That'd be nice. Bein' a glorified cargo grunt isn't my idea of fun."

"This is the army, Buzzy. What the hell did you expect?"

"Fame, fortune, women?" Buzzy suggested with a smirk. "And guns, of course. Always the guns."

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Luella adjusted her headphones to no avail; the heavy thrum from the massive GM 520-OR drive train permeated everything around her. If she concentrated long enough, she was sure she could feel her bones vibrate from the Defiance E-class ground tug's inexorable crawl towards the *Duquesne*.

Despite the noise, it was the first few moments of rest she'd had all week.

She'd been assigned to Recon Squad Four, part of the "Stone's Lament" regiment, after the horrendous losses to her squad on Coventry. Her reassignment came as part of some agreement the Alliance had with Devlin Stone. She didn't understand it, but didn't have to; her superiors ordered her, and here she was.

Along with her came new operational orders; the unit was being resupplied and prepared for action somewhere along the Blake Protectorate border. Where that would be, she surmised, would come soon enough—the briefing officer, along with additional supplies for the squad and the squad's final member, were all on the DropShip now looming over the makeshift drop pad.

Not all of the *Duquesne*'s cargo was for the squad. Far from it. The massive *Excalibur*-class carried an enormous amount of cargo, if not BattleMechs. This one, according to the data file currently showing on Luella's small screen, was full mostly of construction supplies and material for the rebuilding project going on in Maria's Elegy. The city had been virtually razed in the brutal

fighting against the dug-in Blakist occupiers, and every week brought new shipments of construction supplies from the Lyran Alliance and beyond.

Luella looked again at the *Duquesne*, its massive egg shape still growing in the tug's windscreen. Hopefully, she mused, she would be able to collect Logan and the rest of the squad's equipment quickly amid all that other material. There was still much to do, and very little time left.

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Franz decided to disembark from the *Duquesne* through one of the large 'Mech bays. He'd discovered the lance of BattleMechs being transported by the DropShip early in the voyage from the star's nadir point and made it a point to visit them every single day. He actually spent a lot of the trip just sitting in the bay, admiring the gigantic war machines and drinking in their details. He knew them all by heart; leaving through the bay was more to a chance to say goodbye to his silent companions than anything else.

As the 'Mech bay doors ground open and the harsh light from the Hesperan sun exploded into the bay, Franz noticed a small group of men and women clustered near one of the larger 'Mechs, a *Victor*. He did a quick double take when he spotted a shock of red hair; it was the woman from earlier that morning, the one he'd sprayed with raspberry juice.

He felt himself blush again.

He dared not approach them, as they seemed deep in conversation. All of them were dressed in familiar garb: t-shirts, cooling vests, shorts and heavy combat boots. One even wore a Trinity-style cowboy hat, though he also carried a bulky helmet under his arm. All bore a manner of unmistakable confidence. Franz knew the attire and the attitude well—and what they represented.

To many, MechWarriors were the "gods" of war, the specialized elite who commanded mighty BattleMechs—titanic knights in shining armor.

It was a group that Franz didn't belong to, and could never belong to. Horrible scores and failure to pass the tests back on Skye saw to that. He stood off at a distance, in the shadows of a cargo pallet, unwilling to approach.

Ashamed.

Yet unable to tear his eyes away from those who lived his shattered dreams.

After a few minutes, the four warriors broke up. Each went toward a different 'Mech. Franz thought the woman would move toward the smaller *Phoenix Hawk*, but was surprised when she turned and scrambled up the side of the *Victor*, the heaviest 'Mech in the bay.

His watch beeped, a subtle reminder of his looming appointment with his new superiors, but Franz didn't hear it. Instead he continued to stare as each 'Mech thundered out of its gantry and trooped down the DropShip's ramp to the ferrocrete pad below.

From the top of the ramp, Franz watched the lance form up and move off, tromping their way across the tarmac—deftly avoiding an approaching ground tug as they went. The retreating metal titans headed off toward the nearest Defiance complex entrance, rumbling the earth with every footstep.

An eternity later, Franz became aware of someone shouting at him. She was a short, lithe woman in a standard, olive drab jumpsuit. She wore an expectant look as she stalked up the ramp.

Franz immediately noticed the dual arrows sewn into her fatigue collar—the insignia of a Lyran "leutnant"—and the nametag "Hildebrand" stitched over her left breast. Dropping his duffle, he snapped to attention and saluted.

Hildebrand stopped, looked at the datapad in her hand, and—with obvious annoyance—asked, "Corporal Franz Logan?"

"Sir, yes sir!"

Hildebrand returned his salute and barked, "At ease, soldier. I am Lieutenant Luella Hildebrand. You can quit land-gazing, grab your gear, and help me load up that half-track behind you. Then, *maybe*, I'll forget your inattentiveness."

Logan relaxed a bit and snatched up his dropped bag as the Leutnant—no, "Lieutenant"—stepped past him. He noticed the half-track strapped on the pallet as the cargo bay laborers began unstrapping it from the floor mounts. "This one, ma'am?"

Hildebrand half-turned and nodded. "That's correct, Corporal. All those crates on the next pallet over need to be loaded into the squad bay in the rear. Once you're done, we'll travel back to barracks and get things started. We're behind schedule."

"Yes ma'am. The *Duquesne* had some plant issues halfway through our travel from the nadir. Or so the Captain said." Logan tossed his duffle into the small space behind the driver's seat and flipped the switch to drop the rear ramp.

"Regardless, step it up. We don't have all day. Be done when I get back," she snapped and moved farther into the bay, heading toward the interior lift.

Logan didn't bother to reply. He rolled up his sleeves and started grabbing crates.

▲▼▲

Ethan dropped heavily into the chair opposite Buzzy, his tray clattering onto the table and sloshing the gray paste that passed for soup around its shallow brim. Flecks of soup splashed onto the lacquered surface in front of Buzzy.

"Hey man, trying to be neat here!"

"Sorry," Ethan replied. He grabbed a biscuit and dug into the vast array of food arranged on his tray.

The two ate in companionable silence, despite the normal mess hall noise. As they were finishing up, a woman in tan fatigues with a stethoscope dangling around her neck pulled out a chair beside them and sat down with a cup of coffee. Doctor Grace Luther wrapped her hands around the mug as if to warm herself and sighed.

"What's up, doc?" Ethan piped up, chuckling.

Grace moaned. "Doesn't that ever get old with you?"

"Naoko defines old, Doc," Buzzy smiled. "You know that."

"I suppose so. And don't call me 'Doc,' Busby. It's Grace."

"Sorry."

Ethan stuffed the last of his shortbread into his mouth and mumbled.

"Man, talking with your mouth full is no way to talk to the lady," Buzzy said, kicking his friend under the table.

The older man swallowed hard and wiped his mouth on his sleeve. "Sorry, Doc—I mean, Grace."

"It's okay, Ethan. I'm too tired to really care about you two and your pathetic attempts to date me." She ran her fingers through her dirty blonde hair, tucking the stray strands back over her ear.

Buzzy laughed. "Not me, Grace. You know I have a girl back home." He pushed his tray away from him. "It's ol' Ethan here you've got to watch out for. Sly as a fox, that one."

Ethan colored slightly and mumbled under his breath.

"What, no answer?" Grace smiled. "You're losing your wit, old man."

The three of them laughed lightly, breaking the building tension. Grace took a long sip of her coffee, then looked at her two companions. "They're pushing harder to finish the preps," she said. "Any idea what this mission's all about?"

The two men glanced at each other, then at the doctor. "No clue," Ethan admitted. "Just that the ElTee's been like a wolverine getting

all our supplies together. Scuttlebutt says some big honcho came down on the latest supply dropper; most likely we'll know at the meeting in a couple of hours."

"That's what I've heard, too," Grace sighed. "Can't say I'm terribly happy about it."

Buzzy lightly punched the woman on the shoulder. "What, anxious to leave our good company so soon?" He noticed her face darkened and the corners of her mouth turned down. "Oh, wait—your request for transfer failed?"

She nodded. "Captain denied it."

Ethan leaned forward, sympathetic. "Sorry to hear it, Grace. I know it's been tough since the Elegy."

Grace nodded once. Staring at the table, she clutched her mug as if it were a lifeline. "I still have nightmares about that night. I really don't think I'm an asset to the team—you guys need someone who can operate under pressure, not some 'fraidy cat pacifist' like me."

"Nonsense!" Buzzy retorted. "What happened to Jamison wasn't your fault! It was those damned Blakists and you know it. *They* did that to him; you did everything you could to save him."

"It just wasn't enough…"

"Bullshit," Ethan chimed in. "Look, Gracie, you're a damned fine field doctor. You have your principles to adhere to—we all do. That's what separates us from those demon-spawned Wordies. The fact that you feel like this proves it."

"He's right," Buzzy said. "I mean, it doesn't happen a lot, but in this, he's dead-on."

Grace smiled at the jibe, but it was a weak smile. "Maybe…"

Ethan leaned back. "No 'maybe' about it! Just let us shoot 'em, Doc, and be there to patch us up when we take the bullets."

Grace's winced and her eyes narrowed suddenly. She set her cup down, hard enough to make Buzzy blink.

"I've got work to do," she said, coldly. "I'll see you guys at the briefing."

She stood up quickly and hurried away.

Buzzy kicked Ethan again under the table. "*Durak*!"

"What?" cried the older man.

"Sometimes—no, most times? You say the stupidest shit."

▲▼▲

Jared looked up from the podium as the door opened. With a quick salute, Luella stepped into the room and threaded her way through the short row of chairs to where the Captain stood.

"I take it we have no problems?"

"None, sir." She handed over a small stack of flimsies. "The half-track is in decent condition, though it's the Taurian model. So we've got less armor than a Lyran design."

Jared nodded. "Not surprised. I'd heard rumors these were heavy on the merc market; looks like Alliance suppliers grabbed a stack."

"Likely the case. Anyway, we've got full ammo loads, a new portable comms package, and additional spare parts. And Corporal Logan has arrived as well."

"Impressions?"

"He was too busy ogling the lance of 'Mechs that disembarked from the *Duquesne*—he almost missed my arrival."

The captain grunted softly, flipping through the stack of flimsies.

"Good worker, otherwise. Had the half-track loaded after I signed off with the cargo master." She paused, glancing around the tiny briefing room.

Jared looked up from his reading. "Obviously you have something to say, Lieutenant, so out with it."

"Permission to speak freely?"

The captain sighed. "Look, Luella, I know you're a stickler for rules and regs. But believe me, you'll be on my good side if you toned down the rigidity with me when we're in private."

Luella appeared to contemplate this for a moment, then nodded. "Sir, there is something on my mind."

"So I can tell." He set the stack down and looked her in the eyes. "Speak."

"Sir, I know…I mean, I've heard that Lieutenant Jamison was close to you…"

Jared nodded. "We served together nearly ten years. He was my XO for six and was there with me on Kittery."

She looked around, casting for the words. "I'm...I'm really sorry about what happened to him. And I'm not sure I can live up to his reputation around here."

The captain looked at his new executive officer thoughtfully, pursing his lips. "Is that what's been bugging you, Lieutenant?"

"Yes, sir. I feel as if you don't trust me to do my job," she said, her eyes locking back on his. "Sir."

Jared smiled slightly. "You're right," he replied, noting the small shock in her eyes at his response. "But it's not because of you, nor is it because of Lieutenant Jamison's death.

"It's simply because until we fight as a unit and I see what you're capable of under the stress of combat, I can't trust you."

Luella opened her mouth to reply but Jared cut her off.

"That's not to say I don't think you'll do a great job. But in all honesty, what concerns me is your record."

"Sir?"

Jared fixed her with a hard stare. "You're noble-born, Luella," he said. "You got your position through your family's name, not by your merits."

Luella's eyes widened, and her mouth hung open. Her fists clenched and she looked ready to leap at her commanding officer. "How—*how dare you?*" she seethed.

"*Attention*!" Jared snapped.

Luella froze and assumed a rigid stance, her face flushed and mouth stretched into a thin frown.

"Now," Jared continued. "This is my personal impulse and direct opinion. It is also your chance to prove me wrong.

"You want to know what killed Richie and Donald? Oh, it was the Blakists—they pulled the triggers, after all. But if it wasn't for some blue-blooded half-wit minor noble from some back-assed Lyran planet, they wouldn't have been in that position to start with.

"See, this half-wit's family had some type of 'summer home' here on Hesperus. When we arrived with Stone, it was still standing and miraculously untouched. So our General Hogarth—the aforementioned half-wit—orders us to hold our position and guard the house. Not because of some strategic value, but because it held some worthless art that his family didn't want to see destroyed."

Luella's jaw relaxed and understanding began to dawn in her eyes.

"So we got caught by a Blakist battle armor advance, with poor cover. All of that house's precious art couldn't stop the laser beams and machine gun rounds that ended up taking Richie and Don's lives. Hogarth ends up with a medal and commendation; we end up with two friends needlessly dead and not even an apology.

"So pardon me if I seem a bit leery of you for now, Lieutenant. Your family name isn't unknown to me and I'm fairly sure you got transferred over to this unit because up until last week, we were

assigned as a garrison force. So, yes, you're going to have to *prove* yourself to me; yelling isn't going to make things any easier."

Luella nodded curtly. Her eyes fixed on the tri-vid projection screen behind Jared and she coldly intoned, "Is that all, sir?"

Captain Travis sighed deeply. "Yes, Lieutenant. Carry on."

The executive officer snapped a rigid salute and with parade-ground precision, wheeled about and exited the room.

Jared watched her go and sank into one of the briefing chairs. His eyes clouded as he bowed his head and wept quietly.

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Corporal Franz Logan stepped into the briefing room at 1950, ten minutes early. Three other people were already present: Doctor Grace Luther, who'd given him a quick exam and declared him fit for duty, and two other men—one large enough to be an Elemental, and another, smaller and older man. Judging by their fatigues, he guessed them to be other members of his new unit, but neither the good-looking exec nor the Captain was present.

Franz approached the larger of the two men and stuck out his hand. "Corporal Franz Logan, LAAF."

The larger man looked at the proffered hand and then at Franz's face with an unreadable expression. "Problem with your arm, son?" he asked, his Russian accent heavy.

Reddening, Logan snapped a quick salute just as the smaller, older man burst out laughing. "Geez, Buzzy, give the kid a break, will you?"

The older man turned to Franz and stuck out his own hand. "Sergeant Ethan Naoko," he said. "This here's Corporal Busby Matvey, but we all call him 'Buzzy.'"

Franz breathed a sigh of relief and seized Ethan's hand, pumping it vigorously. "Pleased to meet you both. Um…are these new recon squads all this casual?"

Buzzy laughed. "Heck no, just us. But from the looks of it, don't try to get casual with the El-Tee. She's more liable to rip your spine out and replace it with the nearest rifle barrel."

"Yeah, I got that impression when I met her earlier today on the flight line."

Ethan chuckled. "So, Franz. You came in on the *Duquesne*?"

"Yeah."

Buzzy slipped into a chair and stretched. "Did you meet the General?"

Both men took chairs on either side of the larger man.

"General? I…I don't think so. Didn't really see anyone of note, except…" Franz's voice trailed off.

"Except who?" prodded Ethan.

"Yeah, who?" echoed Buzzy.

"Well, there was this hot fox that I ran into on the way down. Red hair, blue eyes, body that'd probably wrap you up in a pretzel and you'd enjoy the experience—"

A heavy sigh came from the far corner of the room, suddenly reminding Franz of the doctor's presence. Grace hadn't said a word since he entered, and remained otherwise silent in her chair, studying a datapad.

"She was one of the MechWarriors that arrived," he finished, his voice lowered.

"*Nice*!" Ethan whistled. "What's she pilot?"

"*Victor*."

"Assault-class jock? And to die for? Damn, what I'd give to be back in the cockpit again."

Franz looked at Ethan as the door behind them opened. "You were a MechWarrior?"

A deep voice rumbled behind them all. "He was, a long time ago. Don't let him fool you, though—he drove a *Stinger*."

Ethan and Buzzy jumped to immediate attention upon hearing Captain Travis' voice; Franz instinctively followed his new teammates' lead. Trailing in the big, dark-skinned man's wake was the petite Lieutenant Luella Hildebrand.

"At ease," the Captain said, nodding to Luella who stepped over to the tri-vid system. The doctor slid into the seat beside Ethan as the team got comfortable.

"Glad to see you're all here. I assume we've all made our introductions?" Jared looked at Franz, who nodded affirmatively. "Good. So you all know we've been assigned to an upcoming operation; until today, we didn't know what that exactly entailed." Jared looked at the four of them, then at Luella.

"Now we do." He tapped a command on the podium. The lights dimmed and the tri-vid lit up with a slowly revolving planetary image. "This is the primary planet in the Rochelle system. I've already downloaded the planetary informational file into your personal datapads; it's been appended with information we've received from Alys Rousset-Marik's resistance group." The rotating image flashed in spots, with small data windows opening up.

The four seated team members shifted in their seats and Buzzy raised his hand.

"Yes, Corporal?"

"Is this a large-scale op or are we going point for a small force?"

Captain Travis tapped his podium again and the tri-vid image shifted to a system view. "I'll let the commander of that operation answer it for you. Atten-*shun*!"

The room immediately snapped to attention as the door admitted a striking, red-haired woman with flashing blue eyes and wearing the standard green jumpsuit with a general's diamond cluster on each collar.

Franz's heart froze and ice shot through his veins. *The woman from the observation deck! The MechWarrior who drove the* Victor*!*

He'd sprayed a general with common fruit juice!

It was all he could do to remain standing.

Buzzy glanced at the now-green corporal standing next to him and then at the general. He elbowed Ethan, who stole a look and shook his head with a grin.

"At ease," she commanded. The room relaxed and they all settled back into the room's rigid chairs.

Captain Travis's stomach squirmed slightly at the sight of the General, but kept his face passive. *She definitely commands a room*, he thought. "General Belle Lee, commander of Stone's Lament. General, this is Recon Squad Four, at your service."

Belle returned Jared's salute and turned to face the team. "Good evening, everyone. We'll put aside pleasantries for now," she began, then looked at Franz directly. "We've got a mission to attend to; there will be time for drinks later."

At that, Corporal Franz Logan fell out of his chair.

As the room devolved into controlled pandemonium, Ethan looked at Buzzy and winked. "At least the kid has good taste."

Inner Sphere: General term used to describe a region of space roughly one thousand light-years across, composed of more than two thousand populated planets, with Terra (Earth) at the center. This area is further divided into geopolitical regions, where one power or another holds sway. For most of the centuries since humankind took to the stars, the vast majority of these worlds have belonged to one of the five Great Houses. Smaller powers have come and gone over this same time period. Any world or geopolitical power outside the Inner Sphere is said to lie in the Periphery, considered the frontier of the known universe.

— Encyclopedia Galactica

CLAN JADE FALCON OCCUPATION ZONE

RULER	Khan Marthe Pryde
GOVERNMENT	Clan (Caste-driven, Warrior-dominant hierarchy)
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Hammarr, Sudeten
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S)	English (official)
DOMINANT RELIGION(S)	None
INHABITED WORLDS: 52	FOUNDING YEAR: 3050
	CURRENCY: Kerensky

CLAN

HOUSE STEINER (LYRAN ALLIANCE)

RULER	Archon Adam Steiner
GOVERNMENT	Constitutional Monarchy (with German feudal stylings)
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Tharkad City, Tharkad
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S)	English And German (official), Scottish Gaelic, Italian, French
DOMINANT RELIGION(S)	Christianity (Protestant), Judaism, Islam
INHABITED WORLDS: 330	FOUNDING YEAR: 2341
	CURRENCY: Kroner

GREAT HOUSE

CLAN WOLF (IN-EXILE)

RULER	Khan Phelan Kell
GOVERNMENT	Clan (Caste-driven, Warrior-dominant hierarchy)
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Wolf City, Arc-Royal
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S)	English (official)
DOMINANT RELIGION(S)	None
INHABITED WORLDS: N/A	FOUNDING YEAR: 3057
	CURRENCY: Kerensky

CLAN

HOUSE MARIK (FREE WORLDS LEAGUE)

RULER	Captain-General Corinne Marik (contested)
GOVERNMENT	Parliamentary Confederacy (operating under military rule)
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Atreus City, Atreus
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S)	English (official), Spanish, Greek, Romanian, Urdu
DOMINANT RELIGION(S)	Christianity (Catholic), Judaism, Islam
INHABITED WORLDS: 308	FOUNDING YEAR: 2271
	CURRENCY: Eagle

GREAT HOUSE

CLAN DIAMOND SHARK

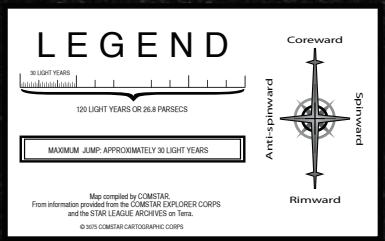
RULER	Khan Barbara Sennet
GOVERNMENT	Clan (Caste-driven, Warrior-dominant hierarchy with mercantile stylings)
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Brasilia, Itabaiana
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S)	English (official)
DOMINANT RELIGION(S)	None
INHABITED WORLDS: 3	FOUNDING YEAR: 3067
	CURRENCY: Kerensky

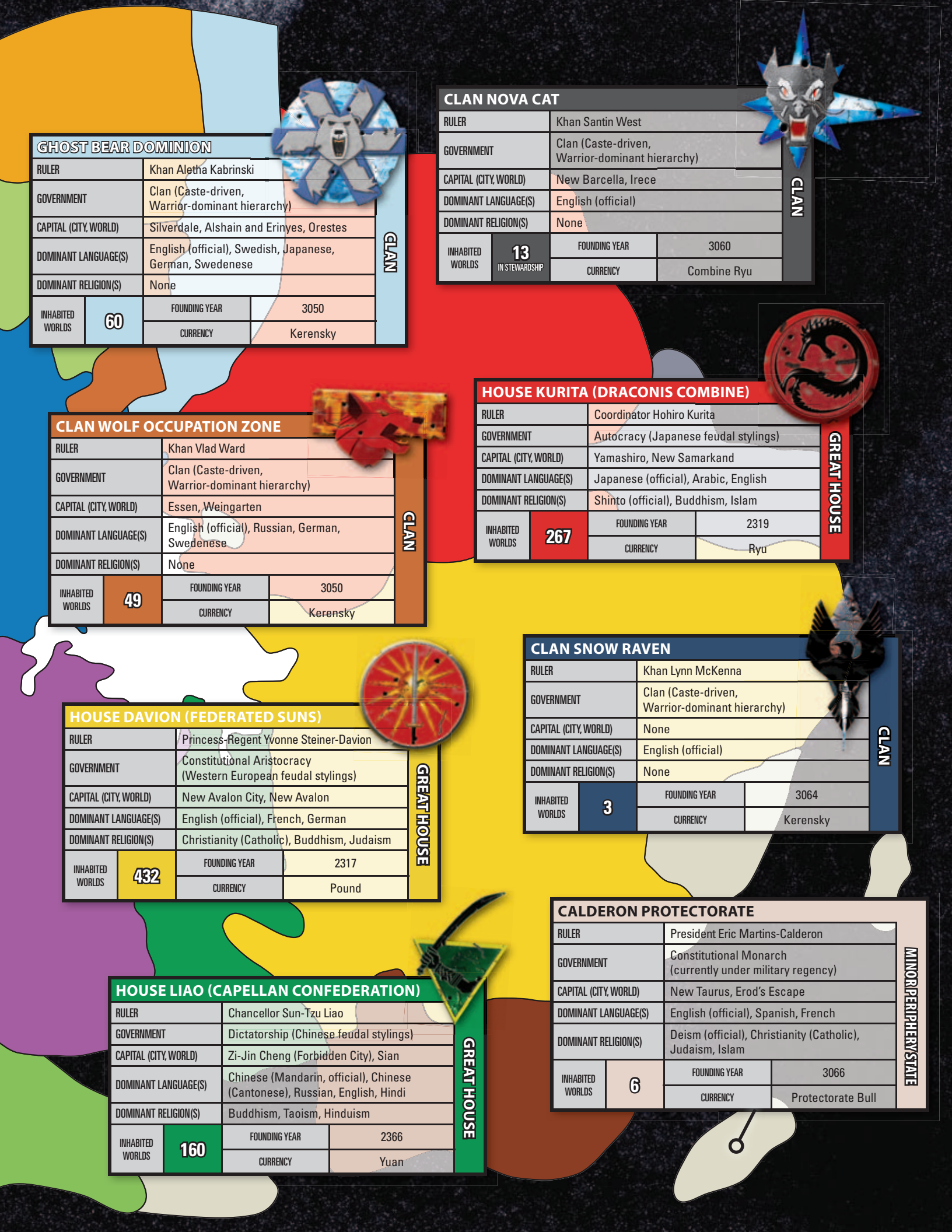
CLAN

MAGISTRACY OF CANOPUS

RULER	Magestrix Naomi Centrella-Liao
GOVERNMENT	Monarchy (Matriarchal)
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Crimson, Canopus IV
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S)	English (official), Spanish, Greek, Romanian, Chinese (Mandarin)
DOMINANT RELIGION(S)	Buddhism, Christianity, Wicca, Judaism
INHABITED WORLDS: 44	FOUNDING YEAR: 2530
	CURRENCY: Dollar

PERIPHERY STATE





GHOST BEAR DOMINION

CLAN

RULER	Khan Aletha Kabrinski
GOVERNMENT	Clan (Caste-driven, Warrior-dominant hierarchy)
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Silverdale, Alshain and Erinyes, Orestes
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S)	English (official), Swedish, Japanese, German, Swedenese
DOMINANT RELIGION(S)	None
INHABITED WORLDS: 60	FOUNDING YEAR: 3050
	CURRENCY: Kerensky

CLAN NOVA CAT

CLAN

RULER	Khan Santin West
GOVERNMENT	Clan (Caste-driven, Warrior-dominant hierarchy)
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	New Barcella, Irece
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S)	English (official)
DOMINANT RELIGION(S)	None
INHABITED WORLDS: 13 IN STEWARDSHIP	FOUNDING YEAR: 3060
	CURRENCY: Combine Ryu

CLAN WOLF OCCUPATION ZONE

CLAN

RULER	Khan Vlad Ward
GOVERNMENT	Clan (Caste-driven, Warrior-dominant hierarchy)
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Essen, Weingarten
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S)	English (official), Russian, German, Swedenese
DOMINANT RELIGION(S)	None
INHABITED WORLDS: 49	FOUNDING YEAR: 3050
	CURRENCY: Kerensky

HOUSE KURITA (DRACONIS COMBINE)

GREAT HOUSE

RULER	Coordinator Hohiro Kurita
GOVERNMENT	Autocracy (Japanese feudal stylings)
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Yamashiro, New Samarkand
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S)	Japanese (official), Arabic, English
DOMINANT RELIGION(S)	Shinto (official), Buddhism, Islam
INHABITED WORLDS: 267	FOUNDING YEAR: 2319
	CURRENCY: Ryu

HOUSE DAVION (FEDERATED SUNS)

GREAT HOUSE

RULER	Princess-Regent Yvonne Steiner-Davion
GOVERNMENT	Constitutional Aristocracy (Western European feudal stylings)
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	New Avalon City, New Avalon
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S)	English (official), French, German
DOMINANT RELIGION(S)	Christianity (Catholic), Buddhism, Judaism
INHABITED WORLDS: 432	FOUNDING YEAR: 2317
	CURRENCY: Pound

CLAN SNOW RAVEN

CLAN

RULER	Khan Lynn McKenna
GOVERNMENT	Clan (Caste-driven, Warrior-dominant hierarchy)
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	None
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S)	English (official)
DOMINANT RELIGION(S)	None
INHABITED WORLDS: 3	FOUNDING YEAR: 3064
	CURRENCY: Kerensky

HOUSE LIAO (CAPELLAN CONFEDERATION)

GREAT HOUSE

RULER	Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao
GOVERNMENT	Dictatorship (Chinese feudal stylings)
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Zi-Jin Cheng (Forbidden City), Sian
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S)	Chinese (Mandarin, official), Chinese (Cantonese), Russian, English, Hindi
DOMINANT RELIGION(S)	Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism
INHABITED WORLDS: 160	FOUNDING YEAR: 2366
	CURRENCY: Yuan

CALDERON PROTECTORATE

MINOR PERIPHERY STATE

RULER	President Eric Martins-Calderon
GOVERNMENT	Constitutional Monarch (currently under military regency)
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	New Taurus, Erod's Escape
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S)	English (official), Spanish, French
DOMINANT RELIGION(S)	Deism (official), Christianity (Catholic), Judaism, Islam
INHABITED WORLDS: 6	FOUNDING YEAR: 3066
	CURRENCY: Protectorate Bull

THE HANSEATIC LEAGUE

DEEP PERIPHERY STATE

RULER	The Council of Merchants		
GOVERNMENT	Mercantile Alliance (with German feudal stylings)		
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Commerce, Bremen		
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S)	German (official), English, Spanish		
DOMINANT RELIGION(S)	Christianity (Protestant), Judaism		
INHABITED WORLDS	24 (EST)	FOUNDING YEAR	2891
		CURRENCY	None (Barter)

NUEVA CASTILE

UMMAYAD CALIPHATE (C) & CASTILIAN PRINCIPALITIES (P)

DEEP PERIPHERY STATE

RULER	Caliph Lise Burrill (C) King Joseph Noye (P)		
GOVERNMENT	Feudal Monarchy (C) Monarchy (with Spanish stylings, P)		
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Granada (C) Asturias (P)		
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S)	Arabic, English, Russian (C) Spanish, German (P)		
DOMINANT RELIGION(S)	Islam (C), Christianity (P)		
INHABITED WORLDS	2 (C) 7 (P)	FOUNDING YEAR	2830 (C) 2392 (P)
		CURRENCY	None (Barter)

RIM COLLECTION

MINOR PERIPHERY STATE

RULER	President Elian Whitney		
GOVERNMENT	Democracy		
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	New Promise, Gillfillan's Gold		
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S)	English, German, Scottish Gaelic, Italian, Greek		
DOMINANT RELIGION(S)	Christianity (Protestant), Judaism, Islam		
INHABITED WORLDS	6	FOUNDING YEAR	3048
		CURRENCY	Lyran Kroner

CIRCINUS FEDERATION

MINOR PERIPHERY STATE

RULER	President Calvin McIntyre		
GOVERNMENT	Military Dictatorship		
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Clayborne Remembered, Circinus		
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S)	English, German, Spanish, Greek		
DOMINANT RELIGION(S)	Christianity, Judaism, Islam		
INHABITED WORLDS	8	FOUNDING YEAR	c. 2775
		CURRENCY	Skull

MARIAN HEGEMONY

PERIPHERY STATE

RULER	Caesar Cassius O'Reilly		
GOVERNMENT	Dictatorship (with Romanesque republican stylings)		
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Nova Roma, Alphard		
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S)	English and Latin (official) German, Spanish, Greek		
DOMINANT RELIGION(S)	Christianity (Lutheran), Judaism, Islam		
INHABITED WORLDS	26	FOUNDING YEAR	2920
		CURRENCY	Talent

RIM COMMONALITY

MINOR

RULER	Chairman Ardal Thomasson		
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Zletovo, Lesnovo		
INHABITED WORLDS	5	FOUNDING YEAR	3075

LEGEND

30 LIGHT YEARS

120 LIGHT YEARS OR 26.8 PARSECS

MAXIMUM JUMP: APPROXIMATELY 30 LIGHT YEARS

Coreward

Anti-spinward

Spinward

Rimward

Map compiled by COMSTAR.
From information provided from the COMSTAR EXPLORER CORPS and the STAR LEAGUE ARCHIVES on Terra.

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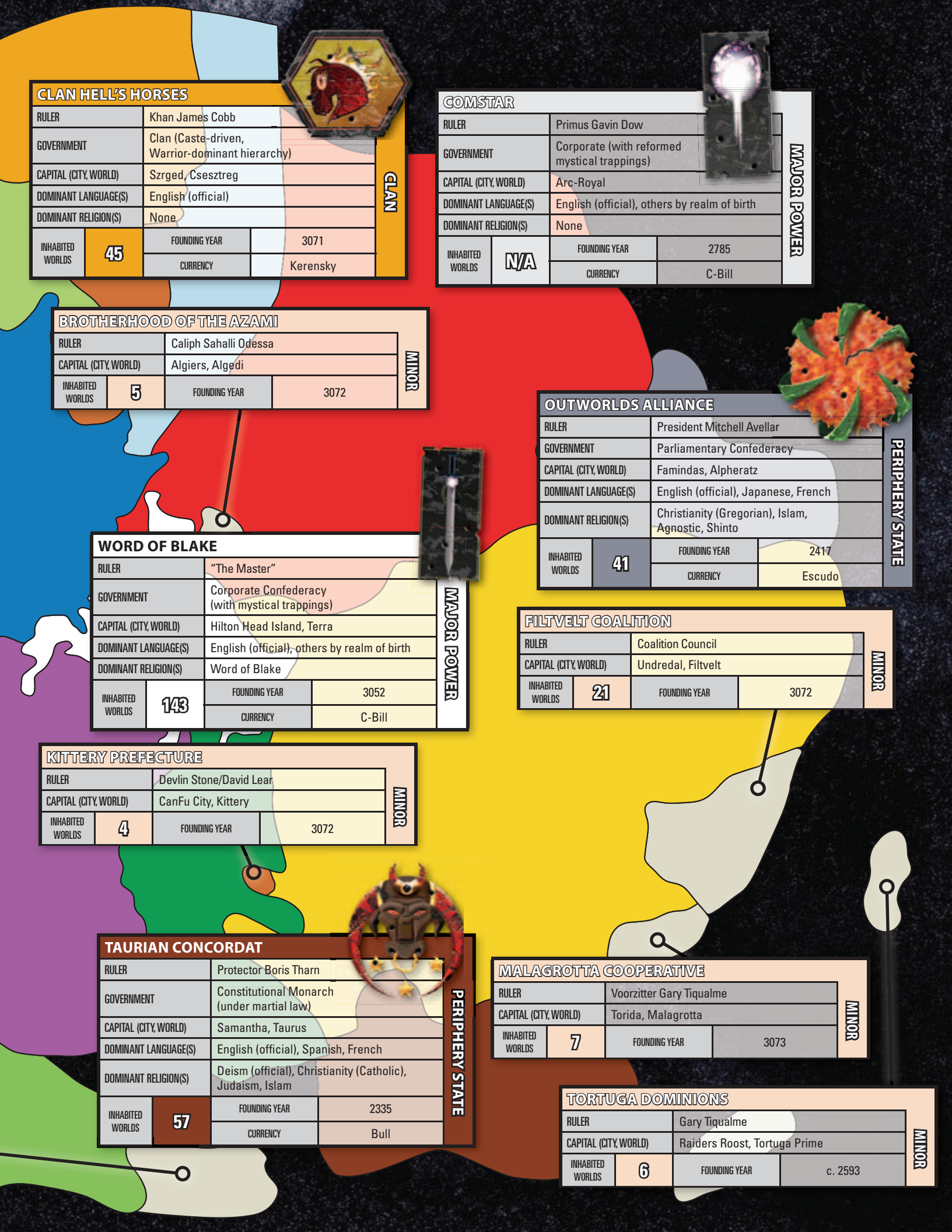
FRONC REACHES

MINOR

RULER	President Carver Trondel		
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Freedom's Ring, Fronc		
INHABITED WORLDS	8	FOUNDING YEAR	3066



CLAN HELL'S HORSES

RULER	Khan James Cobb
GOVERNMENT	Clan (Caste-driven, Warrior-dominant hierarchy)
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Szrged, Csesztreg
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S)	English (official)
DOMINANT RELIGION(S)	None
INHABITED WORLDS	45
FOUNDING YEAR	3071
CURRENCY	Kerensky

CLAN

COMSTAR

RULER	Primus Gavin Dow
GOVERNMENT	Corporate (with reformed mystical trappings)
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Arc-Royal
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S)	English (official), others by realm of birth
DOMINANT RELIGION(S)	None
INHABITED WORLDS	N/A
FOUNDING YEAR	2785
CURRENCY	C-Bill

MAJOR POWER

BROTHERHOOD OF THE AZAMI

RULER	Caliph Sahalli Odessa
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Algiers, Algedi
INHABITED WORLDS	5
FOUNDING YEAR	3072

MINOR

OUTWORLDS ALLIANCE

RULER	President Mitchell Avellar
GOVERNMENT	Parliamentary Confederacy
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Famindas, Alpheratz
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S)	English (official), Japanese, French
DOMINANT RELIGION(S)	Christianity (Gregorian), Islam, Agnostic, Shinto
INHABITED WORLDS	41
FOUNDING YEAR	2417
CURRENCY	Escudo

PERIPHERY STATE

WORD OF BLAKE

RULER	"The Master"
GOVERNMENT	Corporate Confederacy (with mystical trappings)
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Hilton Head Island, Terra
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S)	English (official), others by realm of birth
DOMINANT RELIGION(S)	Word of Blake
INHABITED WORLDS	143
FOUNDING YEAR	3052
CURRENCY	C-Bill

MAJOR POWER

FILTVELT COALITION

RULER	Coalition Council
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Undredal, Filtvelt
INHABITED WORLDS	21
FOUNDING YEAR	3072

MINOR

KITTERY PREFECTURE

RULER	Devlin Stone/David Lear
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	CanFu City, Kittery
INHABITED WORLDS	4
FOUNDING YEAR	3072

MINOR

TAURIAN CONCORDAT

RULER	Protector Boris Tharn
GOVERNMENT	Constitutional Monarch (under martial law)
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Samantha, Taurus
DOMINANT LANGUAGE(S)	English (official), Spanish, French
DOMINANT RELIGION(S)	Deism (official), Christianity (Catholic), Judaism, Islam
INHABITED WORLDS	57
FOUNDING YEAR	2335
CURRENCY	Bull

PERIPHERY STATE

MALAGROTTA COOPERATIVE

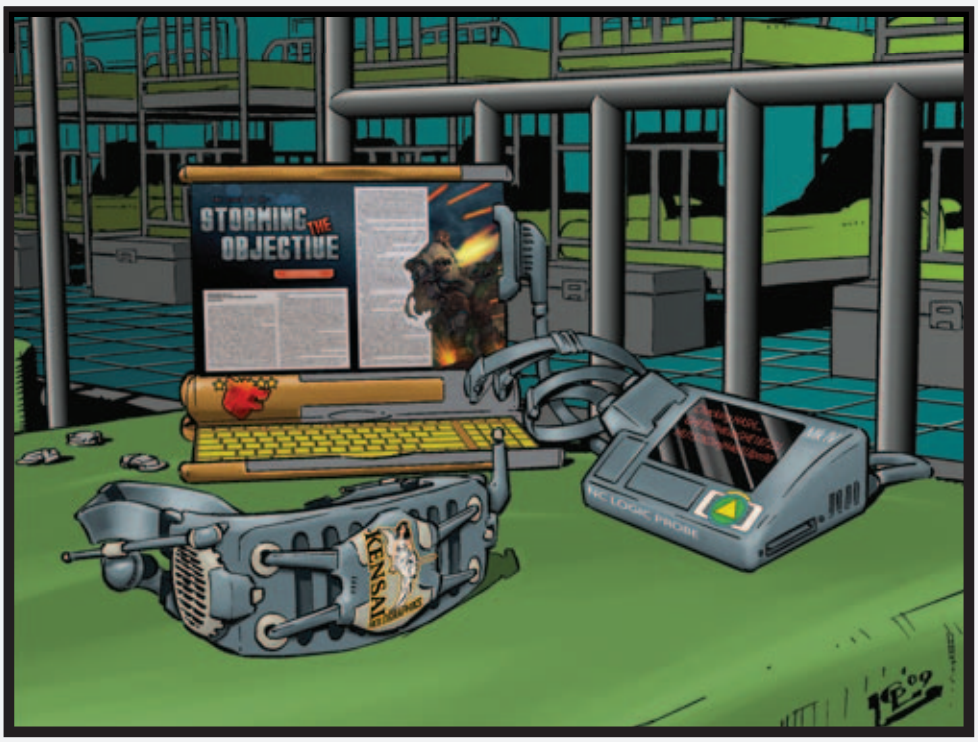
RULER	Voorzitter Gary Tiqualme
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Torida, Malagrotta
INHABITED WORLDS	7
FOUNDING YEAR	3073

MINOR

TORTUGA DOMINIONS

RULER	Gary Tiqualme
CAPITAL (CITY, WORLD)	Raiders Roost, Tortuga Prime
INHABITED WORLDS	6
FOUNDING YEAR	c. 2593

MINOR



"This is the Inner Sphere, thousands of planets colonized by humankind. Once, it was united under the Star League, but for the last three hundred years, it has been consumed by savage wars…."

WELCOME TO THE BATTLETECH UNIVERSE!

It is a universe at war. Even as humankind reached out to command the stars, the human lust for conflict and conquest could not be overcome as easily as the distances of light years. Driven by the dream of one day ruling all of humanity, mighty empires formed, fell, and rose again. From the chaos of war arose the Star League, the pinnacle of human civilization, a Golden Age where a lasting peace and time of prosperity seemed possible at last. But greed, ambition, and treachery combined to tear it all down once more, plunging all the worlds humans called home into centuries of simmering conflict.

Power over billions now rests in the hands of those who can claim noble blood, or the heritage of elite warriors. Generations of soldiers have done battle across countless worlds, fighting for a dream long dead, perpetuating the cycle until few could imagine any other way. The most elite among these men and women—like modern-day knights in the neo-feudal realms that now hold sway—are the MechWarriors, those who command the mightiest war machines of the thirty-first century: BattleMechs.

The *BattleTech* universe is a realm of perpetual war between interstellar dynasties and feuding Clans. It is a realm where humankind's greatest enemy is itself, rather than alien invaders. It is a universe where flags and governments change with regularity on the border worlds, and high-minded ideals like "honor", "glory", and "freedom" are the catchphrases of warlords.

It is a universe where life is cheap, but BattleMechs are not.

STARTING OUT

A Time of War: The BattleTech RPG (BTRPG) is a role-playing game set in a distant future where ongoing warfare and neo-feudalism are the norm. Humanity has settled thousands of worlds and forged mighty empires, but remains bitterly divided. Warring factions struggle endlessly for dominance, each devoted to their own vision of restoring a long-lost Golden Age. Fighting for these massive empires, interstellar conglomerates, and feuding noble families are warriors, mercenaries, pirates and spies.

WHAT IS A ROLEPLAYING GAME?

If you have ever read a book, seen a movie, or watched a television show where, upon finding a character saying or doing something really dangerous or foolish, you thought, "I wouldn't have said/done *that*!" then you have a good idea of what makes up the core premise of a role-playing game. While the actions of a character in a book, movie, or television program may be beyond your control, in a role-playing game, *you* control the actions of your character, effectively determining the character's fate through decisions and actions whose outcomes can range from spectacular success to tragic failure.

A role-playing game (RPG, for short) is essentially an improvisational theater: part storytelling, and part game. A single player (called the gamemaster, or GM) directs the game for a group of players that assume the roles of characters in a fictitious setting. This setting could be a mystery adventure set

In this war-torn universe, one moment of inattention can prove lethal.

in the 1930s where the characters travel the globe in search of treasure and intrigue, or a fantasy realm inhabited by dragons, trolls and sword-wielding barbarians, or even a science fiction setting complete with aliens, spaceships and world-crushing weaponry. The players pick a setting that they find cool and want to play in. The players then craft their own characters, providing a detailed history and personality to bring each to life. These characters have a set of statistics—typically numerical values that represent skills, attributes, and other abilities. The gamemaster then explains the situation in which the characters find themselves. The players, through their characters, interact with the storyline and each other's characters, acting out the plot. As the players role-play through some scenarios, the gamemaster will likely ask a given player to roll dice, and determine the success or failure of a character's attempted action based on the roll's result, using the rules of the game as a guide.

Together, the players control the storyline (the adventures), which evolves much like any movie or book, but within the flexible plot directed by the gamemaster. This gamemaster's plot provides a framework and ideas for potential courses of action and outcomes, but is simply an outline of what might happen; nothing is concrete until the players become involved. If you don't want your character to walk down those darkened stairs, your character doesn't. If you think you can talk yourself out of a situation in place of pulling a gun, then try to make it happen. Only the story into which the players are immersed is scripted; their reactions to it are not. And so the story can be changed based on the characters' actions and their responses to the events of the story, creating a constantly evolving adventure.

The best part is that there is no "right" or "wrong" way to play an RPG. Some games may involve more combat and dice rolling-related situations, where other games may involve more storytelling and improvised dialogue to resolve a situation. Each group of players decides for themselves the type and style of game they enjoy playing!

WHAT'S NEEDED TO PLAY

To play a game of *A Time of War*, you need the following.

- A group of players and a place to meet (in "real life" or online)
- One player to act as the gamemaster
- The contents of this book
- Something for everyone to take notes with
- Three 6-sided dice per player (or a digital equivalent)
- Imagination

A Group of Players and a Place to Meet

While role-playing games are flexible enough to allow any number of people, most gaming groups number around four to eight players. This number of people brings a good mix of personalities to the table and ensures great cooperative play without getting too chaotic or too focused on just one or two characters.

Once a group of players have determined to play *A Time of War,* they'll need to designate someone as the gamemaster (see below), and work out a time and place to meet.

While most role-playing groups meet locally and regularly, each group is different and should determine where, when, and how often they'll play. One group may decide they can only get together once a week, at a friend's house, library, or college common room for four-hour sessions, while another group might have to meet "virtually" via internet chat rooms, synching up their schedules for a once-a-month six-hour gaming marathon.

As long as the player group can meet with regularity, and includes a gamemaster and at least one or two character-controlling players, all the makings of a good role-playing game campaign are present.

Starting Players: When playing groups meet for the first time, the players should use this first session to generate their characters (as opposed to generating them outside of the group). This will make it far easier for the gamemaster to coordinate the party's creation and tailor it to the needs of the planned campaign, while avoiding any possible clashes that can result from players accidentally making characters that are too different—or, worse, too *similar*—to each other. It also allows the more experienced role-players in the group a chance to help out those who may be newer to role-playing.

One Player to Act as the Gamemaster

Once a group has been determined, one player in a role-playing game must step up and take the reins of the

Startled by an unsuspecting crewman, Mayamba—a veteran JumpShip pirate—lets his gun do all the talking.

gamemaster. Many role-playing groups maintain a single gamemaster who runs all of their gaming sessions month after month. Other groups may rotate the player who acts as gamemaster, with each gamemaster controlling a given portion of the unfolding story for several sessions before handing off control to another player. Once again, the approach taken to selecting a gamemaster is ultimately up to the player group's style. Some groups may have the perfect person who loves the work involved and is more than willing to run session after session, while other groups may decide that they all want to take turns as the gamemaster and as players.

The gamemaster controls the story. This player keeps track of what is supposed to happen and when, describes events as they occur so that the players (as characters) can react to them, and keeps track of other characters in the game (referred to as non-player characters, or NPCs). The gamemaster is also the official judge of the rules for the campaign, and helps the players resolve their characters' actions based on the situation and the suggested rules that may cover them.

The gamemaster describes the world as the characters see it, functioning as their eyes, ears, and other senses. Gamemastering may not be easy, but the thrill of creating an adventure that engages the other players' imaginations, testing their gaming skills and their characters' abilities in the game world, can make the entire experience worthwhile. While supplements and sourcebooks produced by Catalyst Game Labs will follow to support *A Time of War* with a wealth of gamemaster and player support, gamemasters can always adapt the game universe to suit their own styles.

The Contents of This Book

Whether you have purchased the print or electronic version, this book is specifically organized to present the information needed to start your own adventures in the universe of *BattleTech*. Below you'll find a summation of each chapter of this rulebook.

The Universe Before You: An introduction to gaming and a short review of the *BattleTech* setting described and covered by *A Time of War*.

Basic Game Play: The core rules and game mechanics are covered in this section, describing the general rules governing the characters' use of skills, attributes, and traits.

Character Creation: This chapter covers the character design process, enabling players to create a unique persona to face the challenges in *A Time of War*.

Traits: Traits are special capabilities a character may have that go beyond training and attributes. The rules for these special capabilities are found in this chapter.

Skills: The character's skills represent trained abilities that are often at the core of virtually everything the character does in the course of his or her adventures. Skills determine what the character knows how to do (and how well the character can do it).

Combat: The heart of any role-playing game set in a universe of war, the *Combat* chapter provides rules for handling game play when negotiations break down and the only solution left is violence.

Tactical Combat Addendum: Set in a universe where combat is often resolved using armored battlefield units, this chapter provides rules specifically designed to mesh the role-playing experience with the tabletop wargame described in *Total Warfare*, *Tactical Operations*, and *Strategic Operations* (see *The BattleTech Universe*, p. 31, for more information).

Special Case Rules: Whether it be the alien environs of a thousand distant worlds, or the perilous flora and fauna that often come with them, this chapter covers the special cases dealing with game play events beyond the normal interactions between human beings and their weapons of war.

Equipment: Also known as the player-character's toy box, this chapter covers a wide range of personal gear a character might want (or need), ranging from mundane gadgets like personal computers and communicators, to powerful support weapons, explosives, and even cybernetic implants.

Character Advancement: The evolution of a character from game session to game session can come in many forms, be it improved skills and attributes based on experience, or improved wealth and power from a rise in rank or title. This chapter covers those elements of the game.

The GM's Toolkit: This chapter is a veritable how-to manual for gamemasters, providing a guide for when and how to use

GAME TERMS

The following terms are commonly used when playing games set in the *BattleTech* universe:

Action Check ..... Any time a character must complete an action whose outcome is in doubt (such as the use of a Skill or the test of an Attribute), it requires a dice roll. This roll is referred to as the Action Check.

Attribute ..... A feature that measures raw physical or mental capabilities.

Attribute Check ..... Any Action Check that tests a character's Attribute is referred to as the Attribute Check.

Burning Edge ..... The act of using a character's Edge Attribute to change an Action Check outcome or otherwise "cheat fate" is referred to as "burning Edge".

Dice/Die (D6) ..... Dice are used to resolve Action Checks. A Time of War uses six-sided dice (often abbreviated as D6).

Experience (XP) ..... The measure of a character's advancement is accomplished by the accumulation and distribution of Experience (XP) points.

Gamemaster (GM) ..... In a role-playing game, the gamemaster (GM for short) is the one who controls all the non-player characters, tells the story, and sets up challenges for the player characters.

Margin of Failure (MoF) ..... The difference between a target number and a modified roll result that falls below that number is referred to as the roll's Margin of Failure (or MoF, for short).

Margin of Success (MoS) ..... The difference between a target number and a modified roll result that equals or exceeds that number is referred to as the roll's Margin of Success (or MoS, for short).

Modified Roll ..... The result of a dice roll after all modifiers are applied is referred to as a Modified Roll.

Modifiers ..... Any number that is added to (or subtracted from) a dice roll, a target number, or a damage value is referred to as a modifier. Modifiers that apply to a target number are called TN modifiers. Modifiers that apply to the dice roll result are referred to as roll modifiers. Modifiers that apply to a damage result are referred to as damage modifiers. Modifiers may be added or subtracted as appropriate (positive modifiers are added; negative modifiers are subtracted)

Multipliers ..... Multipliers are special modifiers that require the player to *multiply* a roll result, target number, or damage value instead of adding or subtracting.

Net Margin of Success (Net MoS) ..... In any Opposed Action Check, the Net Margin of Success (Net MoS) is defined as the sum of the winning character's MoS plus the losing character's MoF. If neither character failed in the roll, the character with the higher MoS wins, and subtracts the opposing character's MoS to find the Net MoS. If neither character made a successful roll, there is no Net MoS.

Non-Player Character (NPC) ..... Any characters not controlled by the players in a role-playing game are referred to as non-player characters (NPCs for short).

Opposed Action Check ..... A special Action Check that pits one character's roll against another's is referred to as an Opposed Action Check.

Party ..... A common term for a group of player characters.

Player Character (PC) ..... Any player-controlled characters in a role-playing game are referred to as player characters (PCs for short).

Skill ..... Any trained ability a character possesses is referred to as a Skill. Skills vary in complexity, and the character's proficiency in them is identified by a Skill Level. A character that does not possess a given Skill is said to be Untrained in that skill.

Skill Check ..... Any Action Check that tests a character's Skill is referred to as a Skill Check.

Target Number (TN) ..... The base number that a dice roll must equal or exceed to achieve a successful result. A target number may also occasionally referred to as a to-hit roll.

Trait ..... Additional features a character may possess that are not quantified by Attributes and Skills are referred to as Traits, and may be positive or negative.

When a mission goes awry, apologies are not enough for some liege lords.

the rules, and a wealth of easy-to-use resources for generating unexpected campaign events and encounters to keep a player group guessing.

Something for Everyone to Take Notes With

Role-playing can get pretty in-depth over time. Each character the players and gamemaster control has a number of statistics and other resources that must be tracked over time to maintain continuity in the game. For this reason, character record sheets are provided at the back of this book, and may be photocopied as needed to facilitate easy record keeping for characters. In addition, notepads (or word processing programs) may be used to record any other information the players or gamemaster deem important throughout the course of a session.

Additionally, some groups enjoy a synopsis of each session that can be compiled and read at a later time in order to enjoy and share their exploits. This can be particularly useful if a player is unable to attend a given session, providing a quick re-cap that can be quickly read before the next gaming session begins and avoiding any bog-down that could occur as the player tries to catch up on current events. The session scribe can be a shared responsibility or assigned, all based on what a given playing group finds works best for them.

Three Six-Sided Dice Per Player (or a Digital Equivalent)

As will be described in the *Basic Game Play* section (p. 34), three six-sided dice (3D6) are required to play *A Time of War*. Dice are used to help resolve actions the characters may perform where the possibility of success or failure exists. For players gaming through an on-line medium, such as chatrooms, dice-rolling programs (often referred to as "dicebots") are a common and easily accessible equivalent, providing similar randomized results to the clattering of physical dice across a gaming table.

Imagination

Last, but by no means least, a role-playing game requires imagination. All too often, it's easy for someone looking at a pencil-and-paper based RPG to be intimidated by the rulebooks and the numbers. But at the core, the focus is to have fun, to delve into a fictional reality where control over the characters' actions—the characters' fates—lies in the hands of the players controlling them. The imagination—more than the game rules—is what truly brings the player into the game; without it, a role-playing game would merely be an exercise in mindless dice-rolling.

The need for imagination goes for the gamemaster, too. A large part of the gamemaster's job is to tell a good story, a story the players can dive into. Inspiration can be drawn for this effort from film, television, or even a good book. Pay attention to how the story is put together, how the characters are built, and how the plot unfolds, and find ways to use these ideas in your own game, adding plots and subplots that perhaps you didn't notice were there before. The players, too, can aid in constructing this story, both by their own reactions to the events the gamemaster constructs, and by telling a part of the story themselves as they execute their actions.

For further inspiration, players and gamemasters can even explore the wealth of sourcebooks, rulebooks, and stories written for the *BattleTech* universe, many of which are described later in *The BattleTech Universe* (see p. 31). Finally, a wealth of resources exists online for any player interested in the *BattleTech* universe, from the forums and official product information provided by classicbattletech.com, to the quality fiction provided by battlecorps.com.

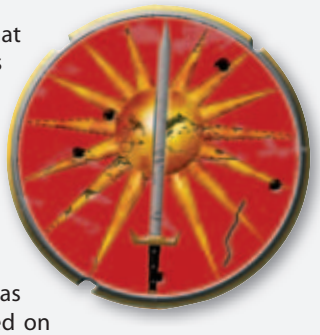
A UNIVERSE AT WAR

The *BattleTech* universe is a universe caught in the throes of eternal war. Though there have been periods of peace, the sheer number of worlds and the ambitions of their far-flung leaders have all but ensured that somewhere, somehow, armies have fought and bled for someone's cause. Even during the golden days of the first Star League, conflict has raged, pitting man against man in an ongoing struggle for supremacy.

At the heart of these conflicts were the Great Houses and realms described below (additional faction-specific information—such as dominant languages and religions, government, and more—may be found on pp. 12-15).

HOUSE DAVION (FEDERATED SUNS)

Founded: 2317



Seen by many as a realm that glorifies warfare, House Davion's Federated Suns has one of the Inner Sphere's most capable military forces, and their First Prince is seen as one of the mightiest rulers in the Sphere. Primarily settled and ruled by descendants of Terra's Western Europe, the Federated Suns has adopted a nobility system based on feudal England and France, and professes the ideals of personal freedom and rule of law above all else.

House Davion's archenemies are its neighbors, House Liao's Capellan Confederation and House Kurita's Draconis Combine. During the Fourth Succession War, the Federated Suns united with House Steiner's Lyran Commonwealth to create the Federated Commonwealth. Under this union, Houses Davion and Steiner conquered half the Confederation, and went on to challenge the might of House Kurita in the War of 3039. But this alliance eventually sundered during the FedCom Civil War in the 3060s. Now threatened by the Word of Blake and their Jihad, the Federated Suns once more stands beside its old enemies, united against a common threat.

The Federated Suns is very liberal when it comes to personal freedom and trade, with a free market economy that allows its citizens to pursue personal profit. Militarily, they prefer combined-arms warfare and strategic initiative, valuing the virtues of logistics and maneuvering over brute force and savagery.

HOUSE KURITA (DRACONIS COMBINE)

Founded: 2319

Patterned on the culture of feudal Japan, and ruled by a hierarchy of warlords loyal to the shogunate ideals of the ruling House Kurita, the Draconis Combine is a realm whose warriors and citizenry embrace the tenets of *bushido*—the ancient Japanese Way of the Warrior. To the people of the Combine, honor and duty are the very cornerstones of society, without which there can be nothing. While these social mores have made the Combine's military one of the most fearsome and fanatical on the battlefield, it was the modernist reforms of Coordinator Theodore Kurita that transformed the DCMS into an even more deadly force.

Hard pressed during the Clan invasion—to the point where their own capital of Luthien teetered on the brink of a Clan occupation—the "Dragon" repaid its would-be conquerors by leading the charge to Annihilate Clan Smoke Jaguar. Today the Combine is riddled with internal enemies in the form of the subversive Black Dragon Society, while fighting a war of attrition against the Word of Blake. Thus, Coordinator Hohiro Kurita and his supreme warlord, *Kanrei* Kiyomori Minamoto, now struggle to achieve the twin goals of unifying their realm while turning back the deadly Word of Blake offensive.

A particularly harsh and xenophobic society, the Draconis Combine maintains a socialist market economy and a rigid leadership divided into social castes. Militarily, the Draconis Combine Mustered Soldiery continues to struggle with the competing ideals of personal honor and glory, and the need to function as a unit against a determined enemy. Thus, in battle it is as common to see a lone Combine warrior challenge a superior force as it is to see entire formations combine their might to bring down an enemy.

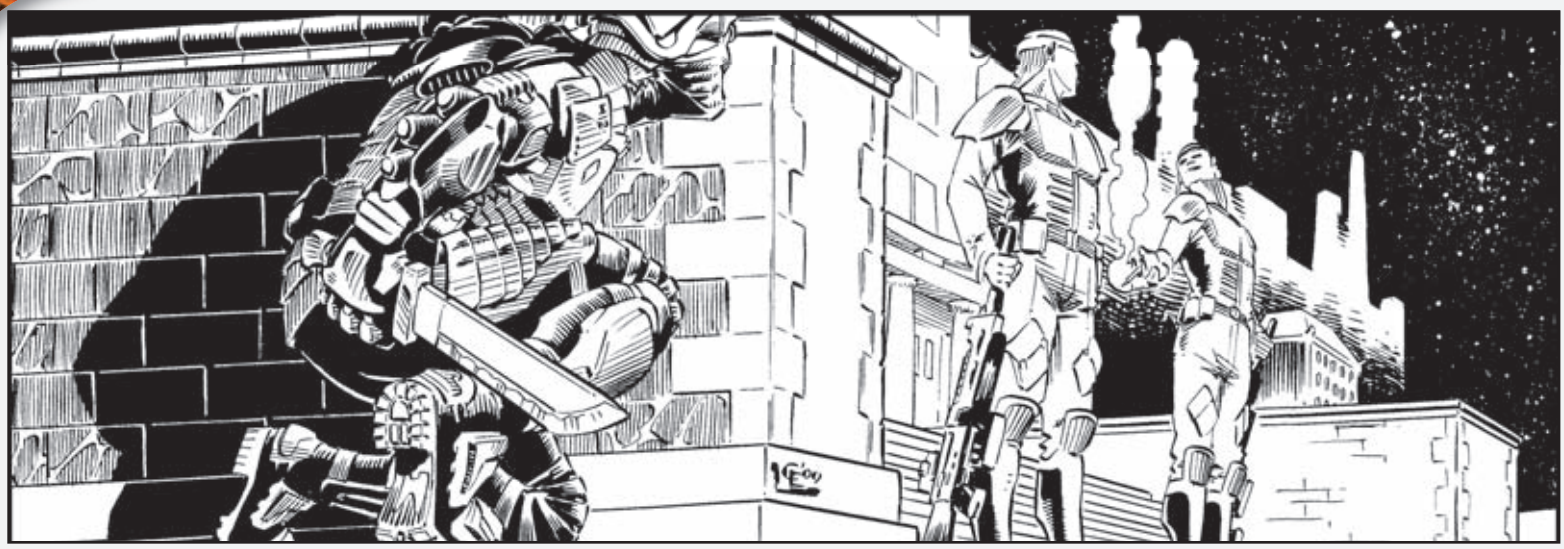
HOUSE LIAO (CAPELLAN CONFEDERATION)

Founded: 2366

Originally settled by people from Terra's Asian nations, one can see the roots of Chinese and Russian culture in people of House Liao's Capellan Confederation. The smallest of the five Great Houses after centuries of unrelenting warfare, House Liao has come to embrace the harsh reality of police state politics and ruthless control to ensure their nation's survival against its enemies. The Maskirovka, the Capellan secret police, keeps a cold and calculating eye on the Confederation's people, who must earn their rights to be citizens, rather than expect such privileges from birth.

Nearly shattered by House Davion in the Fourth Succession War, the Confederation teetered on the edge of extinction until its latest Chancellor, Sun-Tzu Liao, rose to form the Trinity Alliance with the Magistracy of Canopus and the Taurian Concordat and reclaim much of what his realm lost in the Fourth Succession War. After bringing the renegade St. Ives Compact back into the fold during his wildly successful Xin Sheng political movement, Sun-Tzu's reign promised the Confederation a return to its former glory—until the Word of Blake Jihad erupted and soon engulfed his state in a new Sphere-spanning war.

Although the Confederation effectively stands alone against the Blakist menace, with only its allies in the Magistracy of Canopus for support, House Liao has maintained its determination to survive the worst that war can throw at it.



A master of covert ops, Dirk Jacobs prepares his vibroblade just in case these House Marik sentries aren't as bored as they seem.

For the people of this realm, the needs of the state will always take precedence over those of its individuals. This fact is as evident in the seemingly fanatical nature of the Capellan soldiery as it is in the open market communism that dominates the nation's economy.

HOUSE MARIK (FREE WORLDS LEAGUE)

Founded: 2271

Unlike the other feudal realms of the Inner Sphere, the Free Worlds League is—at least on paper—a democracy. Although largely run by the Marik family for centuries (due to various circumstances and the provisions of an "emergency resolution" passed in the late 2700s), the League is actually a conglomerate of many smaller states and planets that allied long ago, and stands today as the oldest of the Successor States.

Though internally divisive by nature and riddled with bureaucracy, the League has existed in relative peace for many years, and even escaped the worst of the Fourth Succession War. A civil war nearly sundered the realm in the 3030s, but the League recovered and gradually rose in stature over the decades since, fighting only a small and very effective war in 3057 while harboring the breakaway Word of Blake after that group's formation. Becoming the arms dealer for the Inner Sphere after the Clans' arrival, the Free Worlds' industry and economy boomed, but with the start of the Jihad, even the people of the League were not immune. Shocked to learn that their Captain-General, Thomas Marik, was actually an impostor set on the throne by ComStar many decades ago, the League has begun to unravel at its seams. Today, at least three leaders have risen with a claim to the title of Captain-General, putting the entire realm on the verge of collapse.

Defining itself as a nation of tolerance and open-mindedness, it comes as little surprise that the Free Worlds League also maintains an open market capitalist economy, which has helped to make it one of the most economically and socially progressive powers in the Inner Sphere. However, with a military made up of regional forces, the performance of its troops can vary with the political situation at home.

HOUSE STEINER (LYRAN ALLIANCE)

Founded: 2341

Originally known as the Lyran Commonwealth, House Steiner's Lyran Alliance is widely recognized as a nation of merchants and industrialists first, and warriors a distant second. Settled and dominated by predominantly Germanic and Scottish cultures, and ruled by the Steiner family through a combination of political intrigue and brute economic force, the Lyran state is united in the pursuit of status and wealth.

Often on the defensive in the Succession Wars, House Steiner's peace initiatives sparked the creation of the Federated Commonwealth, but when the Clans invaded, the Lyran half of that alliance suffered the bulk of their assault. The strain of this event and others led to the sundering of the Federated Commonwealth, the birth of the Lyran Alliance, and the eruption of the FedCom Civil War. In the wake of that conflict, the battered Alliance hopedt to reclaim its lost glories under a new Archon, only to see the start of the Word of Blake Jihad firsthand with a surprise assault on their own capital world of Tharkad.

Like the Federated Suns, the Lyran state enjoys an open market economy that boasts centuries of stability and success, boosted by the presence of some of the Inner Sphere's most industrialized worlds. Although the reforms of the Federated Commonwealth era improved Lyran martial prowess, the influence of the so-called "social generals" and widespread confidence in "bigger equals better" firepower has returned House Steiner's realm to a time when it was widely seen as militarily inept. Indeed, the Lyran solution to most problems is typically negotiation, barter, or

covert action—but with their resources and wealth, the armies of House Steiner can often field heavier and more numerous forces than their enemies, producing a virtual wall of steel against an enemy advance.

COMSTAR

Founded: 2785

Jerome Blake, the last administrator of the original Star League's communications network, founded ComStar in the wake of the Star League's final collapse. As an independent and ostensibly neutral international organization, ComStar's role was to rebuild and administer the hyperpulse generator network that made interstellar communications possible across the Inner Sphere. To secure ComStar's neutrality, Blake and mercenary forces in his employ seized Terra to spare it the turmoil of the Succession Wars, establishing the central hub of ComStar's power.

After Blake's death, his followers—considering him a visionary and a saint—gradually transformed ComStar into a quasi-religious order, a veritable church, devoted to "the word of Blake" with a mandate to preserve the secrets of the lost Star League from the Inner Sphere's ultimate collapse. In the centuries that followed, ComStar provoked or played an influential role in the raging Succession Wars, operating entirely from the shadows while maintaining their neutrality to all powers. But when the Clan Invasion revealed a greater threat that would require Inner Sphere unity to defeat, ComStar's order fractured as divisions emerged between the devout followers of Blake's word who believed it was ComStar's time to rise and rule all, and those who believed ComStar should secularize and share its power with the Inner Sphere nations. The Schism, as it came to be known, set the stage for a broiling war between the so-called "reformist" ComStar and the reactionary Word of Blake, which would culminate in the Jihad.

Not a realm in their own right, ComStar claims among its membership people from all corners of the Inner Sphere. As a result, ComStar has none of the cultural identity the Great Houses may claim, nor does it boast the industrial capacity of hundreds of worlds. Nevertheless, the reformed Order still stands as a curious combination of interstellar relief organization and communication company to its allied realms, with economic and political power far exceeding its size. The Com Guards—ComStar's military arm—represents one of the most sophisticated and well-trained armies in the Inner Sphere, preferring truly combined-arms tactics and elaborate command and control networks, though many of its warriors suffer from an identity crisis prompted by the Schism and the upheavals since.

WORD OF BLAKE

Founded: 3052

A reactionary breakaway faction of ComStar, the Word of Blake represents the original quasi-mystical version of Jerome Blake's interstellar communications legacy, which formed after ComStar defeated the Clans in the Battle of Tukayyid. Committed to the presumed prophecies of Jerome Blake, which claimed that the Inner Sphere was destined to collapse and that ComStar would rise up to reunite humanity under its banner, the "Blakists" could not reconcile their faith with the reformist mission launched by ComStar's new leaders.

Under the leadership of Demona Aziz, former Precentor of Atreus, the Word of Blake found a safe haven on Gibson in the Free Worlds League, where they rebuilt, reorganized, and eventually grew strong enough to take Terra from their "heretic" brethren in 3058. Aggressive and determined to ensure the success of Blake's vision, the Word gradually expanded its influence and international standing throughout the lawless worlds of the nearby Chaos March, claiming more territory than ComStar had ever claimed in its entire history. Though internally divided among several sects, the Word of Blake nevertheless managed to maintain its focus and unity until the final meeting of the new Star League council in 3067, when—according to Blakist prophecies—they believed they would be recognized by the other realms as a legitimate power with a leading stake in Inner Sphere politics. When the Star League instead disbanded, many in the Word of Blake took this as the ultimate betrayal of Blake's vision, and lashed out. The result was the Jihad—a virtual holy war between the Word of Blake and its allies and the rest of the Inner Sphere.

Like ComStar, the Word of Blake's military emphasizes teamwork and combined arms, and benefits from a technology base that dates back to the original Star League. Their quasi-religious fervor, however, has made the followers of "Blake's true vision" far more deadly and determined in combat, especially now that they feel the entire universe has turned against them.

THE CLANS

Founded: 2822

After the collapse of the original Star League, General Aleksandr Kerensky—leader of the Star League Defense Force—led roughly eighty percent of the SLDF on an Exodus from the Inner Sphere, rather than witness the coming wars as the Great Houses turned inexorably against one another. After wandering the interstellar void for over a year, these survivors of the Star League settled the distant worlds of the Pentagon and Kerensky Clusters. Under the leadership of Aleksandr's son Nicholas, these exiles formed a new society that would one day return to the Inner Sphere as the Clans.

Determined to harness the violence inherent in humankind—which he felt could not be contained or eradicated—and to ensure the survival of colonies by filling every necessary niche his new society would need, Nicholas instituted a caste-based system where everyone had a role, and the warrior was considered the pinnacle. Led by an original 800 loyal officers, whose bloodlines would continue in a eugenics program determined to produce the perfect warriors, the Clans became a society where might makes right, be it in politics or on the battlefield—but where rampant bloodshed could at least be contained to those trained for battle. During the so-called "Golden Century" after their formation, the Clans made immense technological and genetic breakthroughs, including the development of OmniMechs, battle armor, and the powerful Elemental phenotype.

Convinced over the centuries that they were the saviors of the Inner Sphere their forebears had left behind, the Clans returned to the Inner Sphere in 3048 on a mission of conquest. With the ultimate goal of seizing Terra and re-forming the Star League in their image, the Clans tore through nearly a quarter of the Inner Sphere in less than two years' time, endangering the survival of both the Lyran half of the Federated Commonwealth and the Draconis Combine, while nearly destroying the entire Free Rasalhague Republic. At the Battle of Tukayyid, however, ComStar won a fifteen-year truce with the Clans, giving the Inner Sphere desperately needed breathing room to rebuild and upgrade their armies. This truce would eventually give the Inner Sphere nations enough time to re-form the Star League themselves and destroy one of the invading Clans, effectively winning a lasting end to the Clan Invasion, but not before several invading Clans had established a home on Inner Sphere worlds.

Of the original twenty Clans created by Nicholas Kerensky, only fourteen remained in 3060. Though each has developed a unique identity over the centuries, most today are loosely aligned along Crusader or Warden political lines (favoring the Inner Sphere's conquest or protection, respectively). As of 3075, seven Clans—the Diamond Sharks, Ghost Bears, Hell's Horses, Jade Falcons, Nova Cats, Snow Ravens, and Wolves—have secured territories in the Inner Sphere. Reliant on socialized economies and the brutal discipline of the warrior caste, these Clans now struggle to hold onto their hard-won territories with honor as the Word of Blake Jihad swirls around them.

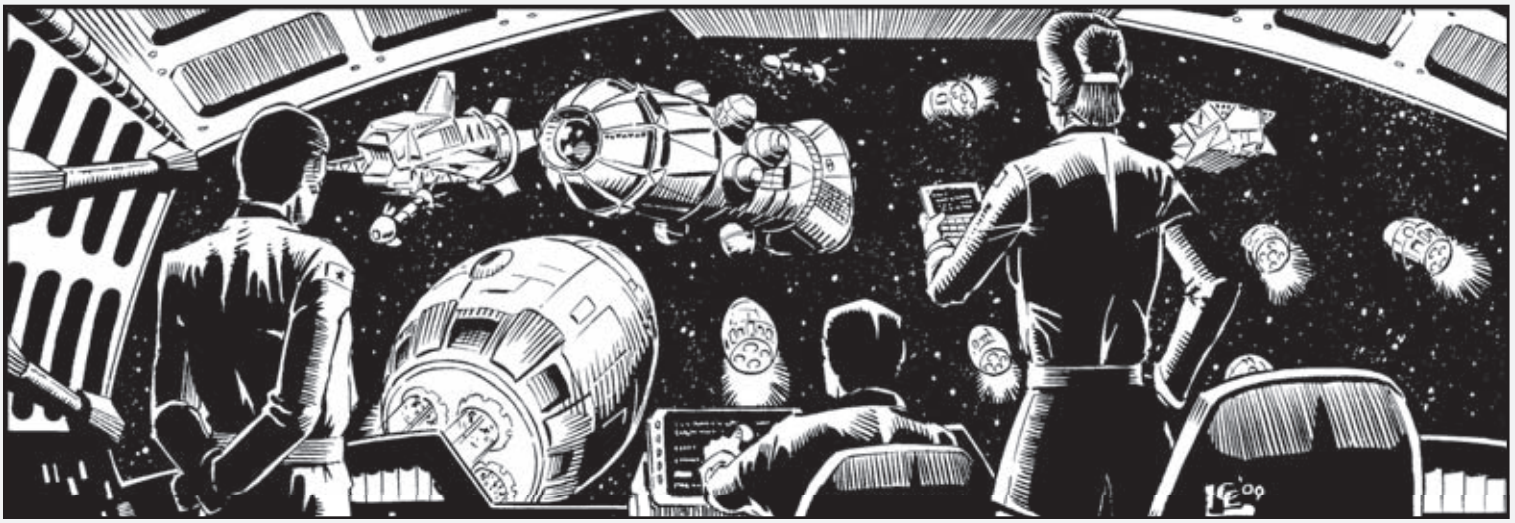
In battle and elsewhere the Clans have developed a sense of personal honor that includes formal contests ("Trials") to resolve conflicts at any level and ensure that their warriors remain strong and ready for battle. Their custom of bidding forces before battle helps to reduce waste in combat by minimizing the Clan's risk in each conflict. However, as many Clans realized that their Inner Sphere opponents would not adhere to the same level of honor, their tactics and technologies have begun to adapt, making the Clans more ruthless and deadly than ever.

THE PERIPHERY

The Periphery is the collective term used to describe the many realms and independent worlds that exist beyond the borders of the Great House states. Many include the refugees of the Succession Wars, while others are minor powers in their own right. Pirates and privateers stalk the space lanes of these far-flung territories, often crossing paths with other wanderers and merchants from the Inner Sphere.

Lacking the resources and support of the larger interstellar realms closer to Terra, the Periphery worlds are generally poorer, less industrialized, less populous, and more untamed than the rest of the Inner Sphere. These factors combine with the fiercely independent nature of most Periphery peoples and the all-pervasive threat of piracy to give these fringe realms a "frontier" feel. Many of the Inner Sphere realms thus tend to view the worlds and people of the Periphery as technologically and culturally backward—and this underestimation has bred more than its fair share of conflict.

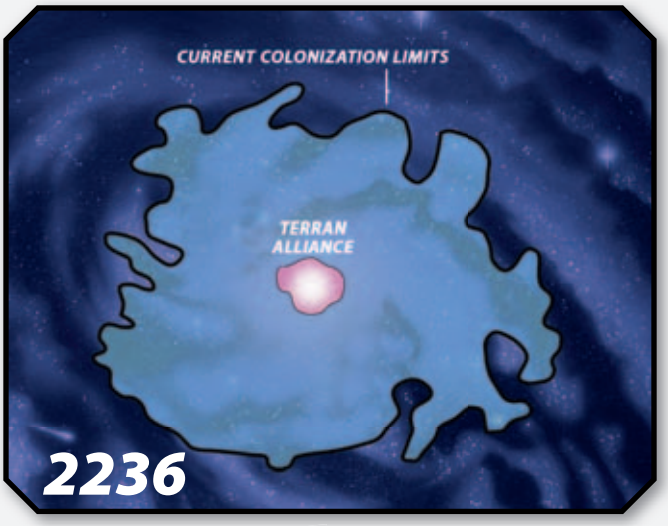
Though once on par with the Inner Sphere (after their subjugation to the Star League), the cultures, economies, and technological sophistication of the Periphery worlds now vary greatly from realm to realm and even world to world. In the last few decades, however, several of the Periphery's larger realms have shown remarkable growth that has even made the mighty Successor States take notice.



Within weeks of the "go" vote, Wolf Clan forces gather in space for the start of Operation Revival.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BATTLETECH

The history of the *BattleTech* universe spans over a thousand years and covers the rise, fall, and rebirth of many empires, heroes, and villains. The following overview represents a highly simplified version of this deep history.



COLONIZING THE STARS

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, two men—Thomas Kearny and Takayoshi Fuchida—discovered the principles behind faster-than-light travel. Although no one believed them at first, less than a century later, the Kearny-Fuchida drive finally helped humankind take its place among the distant stars with the first extra-solar colony established on the world of New Earth in 2116. Within another one hundred years, the human sphere of influence included six hundred extra-solar colonies, all founded within 120 light-years of Terra.

In 2236, several colony worlds—chafing under an increasingly restrictive Terran Alliance—launched a rebellion against their homeworld government. In response to this so-called Outer Reaches Rebellion, the Terran Alliance government suddenly severed all ties to its colonies beyond a thirty light-year radius, whether such worlds wanted independence or not. As "Mother Terra" drew inward, new alliances formed among the distant colonies, desperate to survive in a universe void of Terran trade and Terran security. These alliances eventually formed the five states of the Inner Sphere: the Capellan Confederation, the Draconis Combine, the Federated Suns, the Free Worlds League, and the Lyran Commonwealth.

AGE OF WAR

In the year 2398, the Capellan Confederation declared war against the Free Worlds League over the world of Andurien and its neighboring systems. Soon afterward, conflict spread out across human-occupied space as the other interstellar alliances and empires fell upon one another in a savage series of wars. This period of constant fighting—spanning nearly two centuries and hundreds of worlds—saw the creation of the first BattleMechs and the birth of the Ares Conventions.

The BattleMech, invented by the Terran Hegemony in 2439, would soon become the ultimate weapon in conventional ground warfare, blending superior mobility, resilience, adaptability, and firepower in a single package piloted by an individual warrior. After its proven trial by fire in 2443, the technology quickly spread to the other realms of the Inner Sphere, revolutionizing the face of modern warfare.

Equally significant were the Ares Conventions. First proposed by Capellan Chancellor Aleisha Liao, the Conventions were an interstellar agreement to limit warfare and avoid the horrors of mutually assured destruction across entire worlds. Unfortunately, while their spirit would survive even into the thirty-first century, the Ares Conventions also legitimized the concept of resolving political and economic disputes through war by establishing rules for "limited warfare".

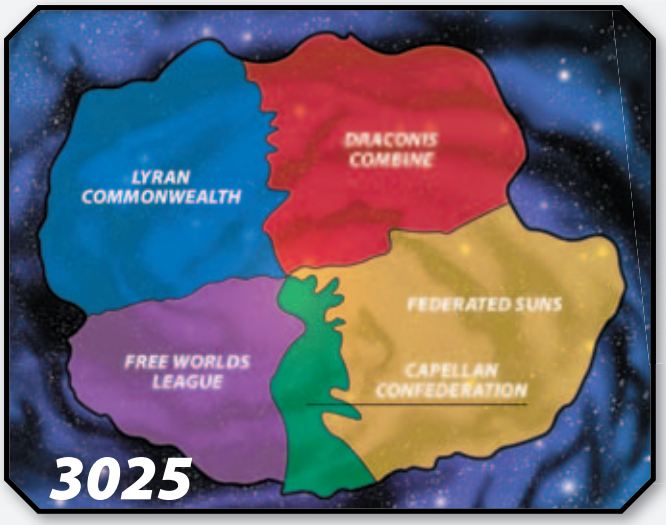
By the time the Age of War ended in 2571, warfare had been so revolutionized by the BattleMech and the Ares Conventions that conflicts now resembled personal duels or chess matches more than full-on bloodshed.

STAR LEAGUE

Also referred to as the Golden Age of Humankind, the Star League era began when the five Great Houses of the Inner Sphere joined with House Cameron—lords of the Terran Hegemony—to create the Star League in 2571. The result of brilliant diplomacy and military cunning, the Star League unified the six largest states of the Inner Sphere in a single confederacy of nations. But while the Star League ended war between the Great Houses, its first order of business upon its formation was to declare war on the Periphery realms that held out against the alliance.

Driven by the ideal of bringing all of humanity under one rule, the Star League launched the Reunification War against the Periphery realms. Ultimately victorious, the Star League reigned over all worlds without contest for over two hundred years. Under the leadership of the Cameron family, and the ever-watchful protection of the Star League Defense Force, the Star League ushered in a time of relative peace and prosperity—a pinnacle of human civilization.

But like all great empires, the Star League was destined to fall…



THE SUCCESSION WARS

In 2766, Stefan Amaris, lord of the Rim Worlds Republic—then largest of all the Periphery states—killed the young First Lord Richard Cameron and his family in a bloody coup years in the making. Having lured the trusting SLDF away from Terra to quell a sudden Periphery-wide revolt, the Rim Worlds troops swiftly seized and shattered the Terran Hegemony, ultimately forcing the Star League's commanding general, Aleksandr Kerensky, to fight a long and bloody war of liberation. Though ultimately victorious some seven years later, Kerensky saw the League he fought for torn asunder by the surviving House Lords—each of whom claimed the right to take the throne left vacant by the lost Cameron family.

Desperate to avoid the coming conflicts, Kerensky led the bulk of the Star League Defense Force to parts unknown—and, in so doing, left the Inner Sphere to almost three hundred years of constant warfare.

The Succession Wars, as they came to be known, effectively threw the Ares Conventions into the fire as the Houses tore into each other with every weapon in their arsenal. Whole worlds were wiped out by chemical, nuclear, and biological weapons, while JumpShips and factories of every kind were targeted in a bid to destroy the enemy's infrastructure. Technology vital for the survival of interstellar empires became nearly irreplaceable as the specialized factories and parts were quickly lost, forcing a return to the kind of low-intensity warfare espoused by the nearly forgotten Ares Conventions.

This change left the Inner Sphere in a virtual stalemate until Houses Steiner and Davion allied in 3028 and launched the devastating Fourth Succession War that nearly ripped the Capellan Confederation in two. By 3030, a single mighty empire—led by the marriage of Steiner and Davion rulers—united almost half of the Inner Sphere under its banner, and though they met defeat when trying to conquer the Draconis Combine in 3039, an eventual Steiner-Davion conquest of the entire Inner Sphere seemed all but assured.

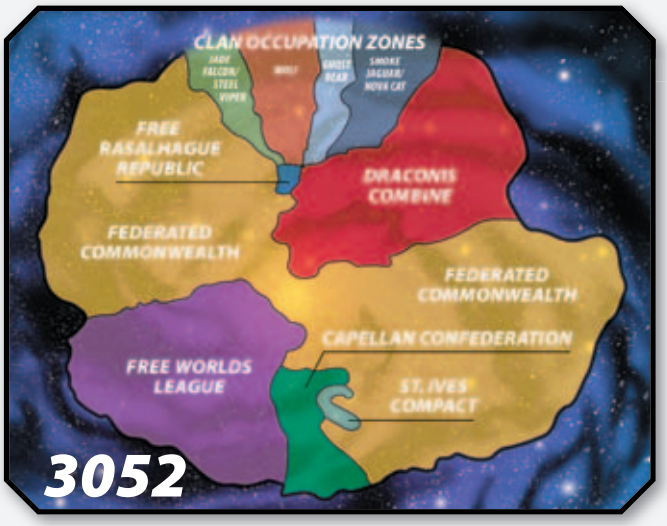
Until, in the waning days of the 3040s, a new enemy appeared…

CLAN INVASION

After centuries in exile, the descendants of Aleksandr Kerensky's long-departed SLDF forces returned to the Inner Sphere with a vengeance. Tearing their way through the Periphery in 3048, the warriors of the Clans—with their strange customs, advanced BattleMechs, and battle-armored infantry—were at first seen by the people of the Inner Sphere as alien invaders. Their attacking forces smashed through the front-line troops of the Federated Commonwealth and the Draconis Combine alike, and nearly destroyed the newborn Free Rasalhague Republic that lay between them. It took unprecedented cooperation between the Great Houses and the might of ComStar's army to halt the invasion in 3052, but at a terrible price.

The Clan Invasion sparked a surge in the technological renaissance that had only just begun in the Inner Sphere. Within a few years, the threatened nations of the Inner Sphere had pushed military production and sophistication to near-Star League levels, and even mighty WarShips—lost since the early years of the Succession Wars—once more flew under the banners of the Great Houses.

Unfortunately, ComStar's victory against the Clans at Tukayyid had only bought a fifteen-year truce, and in the effective absence



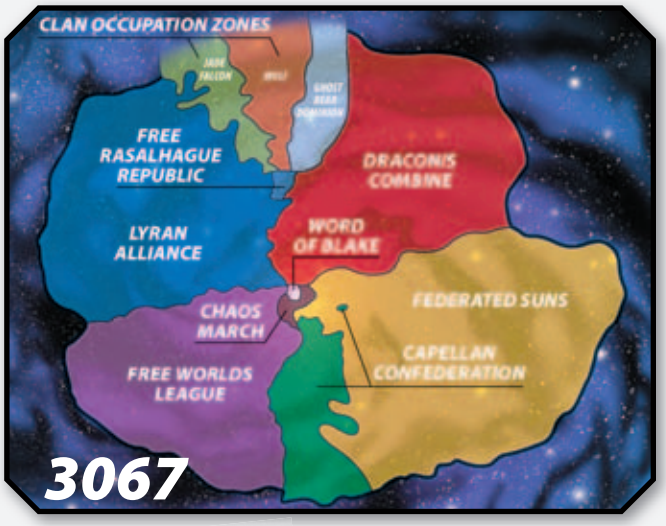
of a mutual threat, the realms of the Inner Sphere once more turned envious eyes upon each other. Even as some leaders worked tirelessly toward a more lasting end to the Clan threat, the machinations of others divided the Federated Commonwealth in two and ignited the worlds around Terra in war.

CIVIL WAR

In 3060, the Successor States and ComStar re-formed the Star League in an effort to destroy the Clan threat once and for all. The allied forces, united under a new Star League Defense Force, combined to destroy the Smoke Jaguar Clan, effectively shattering the head of the Clans' militant Crusader faction. But as the allies won a formal end to the Clan invasion, tensions mounted at home between the sundered Federated Commonwealth states, while a resurgent Capellan Confederation launched its own campaign to reclaim many of its long lost territories.

The FedCom Civil War finally erupted in 3062 and raged until early 3067, savaging two founding members of the reborn Star League—the Federated Suns and the Lyran Alliance—while igniting several other conflicts in their bordering nations as well. In the aftermath of the conflict, Houses Davion and Steiner stood once more apart, their realms battered. Although some dared look to a bright future in the hopes that the new Star League would finally contain war throughout the Inner Sphere, others saw a reborn League that had stood idly by as its member states nearly destroyed one another.

On the eve of the Star League conference in November of 3067, the future of the Inner Sphere hung in the balance.



JIHAD

At the Star League conference in 3067, the leaders of the Capellan Confederation, Federated Suns, and Lyran Alliance shocked their fellow House Lords by declaring the new Star League a failure and pulling out of the alliance. The Star League's supporters reacted with universal dismay, but one—the Word of Blake—took this event hardest of all.

Formed in 3052, after the Clans' defeat at Tukayyid, the Word of Blake represented the fanatical, quasi-religious factions that left ComStar when its new leadership moved for a more secular and open relationship with the Inner Sphere. Though seen as radicals and often derided by their former ComStar brethren, the Word of Blake built its strength quickly, seizing Terra from ComStar in 3058 and gradually expanding its influence throughout the Periphery, Free Worlds League, and the abandoned worlds near Terra. By 3064, the Word had won probationary membership in the new Star League, and anticipated their full membership in 3067 as the realization of a great prophecy.

When instead the Star League disbanded, the most radical elements in the Word of Blake launched a string of attacks that inadvertently ignited a war across the entire Inner Sphere—a holy war of immense proportions. In just a few short months, the Word's disastrous efforts to force the Star League to re-form at gunpoint unleashed a conflict that pitted the entire Inner Sphere against them and saw the use of terrible weapons not seen since the Third Succession War.

The year is 3076, and the Jihad still rages. The fires of war continue to sweep across the Inner Sphere, Periphery, and even the Clan homeworlds, once more pitting humankind against itself in a war for power, freedom, and—above all else—survival.

A Time of War: The BattleTech RPG (BTRPG) uses a host of terms to convey the numerous concepts covered in the universe and in game play. While not all-inclusive, this list of terms will allow new players to quickly acclimate themselves to the universe of *BattleTech*.

Several terms in this glossary are standard scientific terms, often used in the real world. As the universe of *BattleTech* attempts to remain as close to "reality" as possible—while allowing players to interact with the great stories waiting to unfold—such terms are used liberally.

UNIVERSE TERMS

The following terms are commonly used by people living in the *BattleTech* universe:

Abtakha — A term used by the Clans to refer to a warrior adopted by the Clan after first being captured.

Aerospace Fighter — Any combat-capable aircraft that can operate equally well in space and in atmosphere.

Age of War — The period of history before the founding of the first Star League, during which time many of the Great Houses formed and the BattleMech was created. The Age of War was characterized by the widespread use of unlimited warfare, until the various states signed the Ares Conventions.

AgroMech — An IndustrialMech designed for use in agricultural settings.

Ares Conventions — The archaic rules of warfare that first codified (and accidentally legitimized) the use of limited warfare in settling disputes between the realms of the Inner Sphere. While no longer technically in effect, the Ares Conventions are often cited and held as the ideal for limited warfare.

Autocannon — A common, fully automatic ballistic weapon, using in personal and tactical combat alike. Autocannons use conventional chemical or explosive reactions to deliver slug munitions to a target in rapid fire bursts.

Battle Armor — A suit of powered personal armor, weighing up to two tons. Also referred to as battlesuits, battle armor can withstand damage from some of the heaviest battlefield weapons.

BattleMechs — The pinnacle of military technology, BattleMechs are armed and armored bipedal or quadrupedal war machines that stand anywhere from eight to twelve meters in height and are piloted by MechWarriors.

Bloodhouse — The trueborn genetic successors of the Clans' founding warriors are grouped into Bloodhouses, each of which bears the name and the genetic legacies of a founding warrior.

Bloodname — The ultimate achievement of a trueborn Clan warrior, the winning of a Bloodname—which identifies the warrior's genetic link to one of the Clans' original founders—enables the warrior to pass his genes along to the next generation through the Clan eugenics program.

Bloodright — A trueborn Clan warrior's genetic link to a Clan founder is referred to as the warrior's Bloodright. If the warrior is proven worthy enough, he may receive an opportunity to win a Bloodname in a Trial of Bloodright, thereby ensuring the passing of his own genetic legacy to the next generation of warriors.

Brotherhoods — Cabals of MechWarriors who aid (and sometimes hinder) the rulers of the Great Houses.

Clans — The descendants of the original Star League Defense Force, forged into a new society that uses ritualized warfare and a code of honor in combat, and which maintains order using a strict caste system that segregates warriors, laborers, scientists, and technicians.

Combat Vehicles — Any ground vehicle (including tracked, wheeled, hovercraft, or Wing-in-Ground Effect vehicles) or VTOL designed expressly for battlefield use, but not including BattleMechs, ProtoMechs, fighters, or battle armor.

Combined-Arms Combat — The integrated deployment of various types of military assets (such as infantry, 'Mechs, and combat vehicles) as a single force.

ComStar — The organization that took over interstellar communications (and Terra) shortly after the fall of the original Star League.

ConstructionMech — An IndustrialMech designed to aid in building construction.

Conventional Fighter — Any combat-capable aircraft (except for VTOL vehicles) that can only operate in atmosphere.

Cybernetics — Any technology implanted in the human body or grafted to the human nervous system, to replace or repair a damaged body part, or to physically enhance the user.

DropShips — Large space vessels used to ferry supplies, personnel, and equipment from JumpShips or WarShips to other vessels or to and from a planet's surface.

Elemental — Term used to describe the genetically bred battle armor warriors used by the Clans, as well as their "standard" battle armor design.

Enhanced-Imaging Implant — A neural cybernetic implant developed by the Clans for a direct connection between a MechWarrior, fighter pilot, battlesuit trooper, or ProtoMech Warrior to control their machines in battle without a neurohelmet. The technology is considered dangerous, as it eventually induces madness in the user.

Eugenics Program — The Clan system of producing increasingly superior warrior generations by selective pairing of genetic material int artificial wombs.

Families — Influential people who can trace their lineage back centuries and whose power and influence can rival that of a landed noble. Titles and BattleMechs within these families are often passed down from generation to generation.

ForestryMech — An IndustrialMech designed for use in logging forests.

Freeborn — Any member of Clan society produced by the natural mating of parents, rather than by the carefully selected artificial means used in the eugenics program.

Gauss Weaponry — Any ballistic weapon described as a Gauss weapon delivers its rounds using magnetic propulsion, rather than a chemical or explosive reaction. Gauss weapons are typically more powerful than conventional ballistics, but expensive and more energy-intensive.

Great Houses — The five most powerful families of the Inner Sphere, and the star empires they rule: House Davion (Federated Suns), House Kurita (Draconis Combine), House Liao (Capellan Confederation), House Marik (Free Worlds League), and House Steiner (Lyran Alliance/Commonwealth). The ruler of a Great House is called a House Lord.

House Lord — The ruling member of one of the Great Houses.

House Cameron — The extinct Great House that ruled the Terran Hegemony and the first Star League.

House Davion — The Great House that rules the Federated Suns.

House Kurita — The Great House that rules the Draconis Combine.

House Liao — The Great House that rules the Capellan Confederation.

House Marik — The Great House that rules the Free Worlds League.

House Steiner — The Great House that rules the Lyran Alliance.

Holovid — Also known as "tri-vid", a common video medium in the *BattleTech* universe that projects three-dimensional images using lasers.

Hyperpulse Generator (HPG) — The most common form of interstellar communication, based on the hyperspace principles developed by Thomas Kearny and Takayoshi Fuchida (see *Kearny-Fuchida Drive*, below).

IndustrialMechs — Also referred to as WorkMechs, IndustrialMechs are bipedal or quadrupedal machines similar to BattleMechs in design, but which are usually unarmed and built for civilian use.

Inner Sphere — A region of space surrounding Terra and extending roughly 600 light-years outward, and largely dominated by the five Great House empires. In general terminology, the Inner Sphere can also refer to all realms, peoples, and technologies not of the Clans.

Jihad — Term applied to the war launched when the second Star League disbanded and the Word of Blake struck out against all Inner Sphere realms.

Jump Points — Any point in a star system where gravitational forces are low enough to permit the proper formation of the K-F jump field is referred to as a jump point. Normal space traffic enters and departs from the zenith and nadir jump points of a system (located due "north" and "south" of the system's star, respectively), but non-standard (or "pirate") points may also be located based on the interaction of planets, moons, and other bodies within the system.

JumpShips — Spacecraft that can "jump" through hyperspace, instantaneously transporting themselves and their crews to other star systems up to 30 light-years away.

Kearny-Fuchida (K-F) Drive — The technology at the core of a JumpShip (or WarShip) that transports such vessels through hyperspace is referred to as the Kearny-Fuchida (or K-F) drive, after the scientists who first developed hyperspace theory, Thomas Kearny and Takayoshi Fuchida.

Laser — The most common form of energy weapon in the *BattleTech* universe, short for Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation.

Light-Year — A unit of distance based on the distance traveled by light in a vacuum over the course of 1 Terran year. A light-year is approximately 9.46 trillion kilometers in distance.

Limited Warfare — The (generally) accepted practice of withholding nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons as an aid in conquering planets; winning battles through use of 'Mechs, tanks, and infantry with minimal civilian casualties. Those Houses, Clans, and groups that follow the Ares Conventions practice the concept of limited warfare.

Lostech — General term used during the Succession Wars to describe lost technology from the first Star League.

'Mech — An abbreviation of BattleMech (also used for IndustrialMechs, but not for ProtoMechs).

MechWarrior — The pilot of a BattleMech.

Metric System — The denizens of the *BattleTech* universe all use the metric system in everyday life. Land distances are always given in meters and kilometers; temperature is always given in Celsius; weight is described in grams, kilograms and metric tons, and so forth.

MiningMech — An IndustrialMech designed for mining and excavation.

Minor Houses — Any powerful family that rules a smaller interstellar realm, Periphery state, or territory within a Great House empire.

Myomer — Bundles of polyacetylene fibers that simulate the work of human muscles when exposed to electrical current. Small-scale myomers are used mainly in medicine to replace damaged human tissue, while larger myomers are primarily used to control the limbs and main weapons of 'Mechs, ProtoMechs, and battle armor.

Neural Impulse Helmet (Neurohelmet) — The device that allows a BattleMech pilot to "drive" a 'Mech, allowing the giant machine to walk upright and balance its own weight.

OmniFighter — An aerospace fighter built for rapid reconfiguration between missions.

OmniMech — A 'Mech built for rapid reconfiguration between missions.

OmniVehicle — A Combat or Support Vehicle built for rapid reconfiguration between missions.

GLOSSARY

Particle Projector Cannons (PPCs) — A high-powered energy weapon that uses magnetic accelerators to fire high-energy proton or ion bolts that cause damage through both impact and high temperature.

Periphery — The smaller, less powerful realms that lie along the fringes of the Inner Sphere are collectively known as the Periphery. Although often overlooked by the Great Houses, several Periphery states have grown in stature to become true powers in their own right, such as the Magistracy of Canopus, Taurian Concordat, and the Outworlds Alliance. Beyond these realms, in the less-explored reaches of space, lies the Deep Periphery, which includes many states only recently discovered by the denizens of the Inner Sphere.

Power Armor — See *Battle Armor*.

Phenotype — A genetically bred human form developed by the Clan eugenics system to perfect their warrior caste in specialized roles. Clan phenotypes include Elementals (bred for battle armor warfare), fighter pilots (bred for aerospace combat), and MechWarriors (bred for BattleMech combat).

ProtoMech — A Clan-designed unit similar in many ways to a BattleMech, but much smaller and controlled by ProtoMech Warriors, who make use of enhanced-imaging neural implants to directly interface with their machines.

Scorched-Earth — A military tactic or strategy that consists of devastating or destroying all land, buildings, and resources while advancing (or retreating) so as to leave nothing salvageable to the enemy.

Sibko — A Clan term, derived from "sibling companies", that describes a group of trueborn warriors from a single genetic pairing.

Slug Thrower — A generic term applied mostly to small arms that fire ballistic rounds, rather than laser bolts, particle beams, or otherwise project energy damage.

Small Craft — Any aerospace craft between an aerospace fighter and a DropShip in weight and size is described as a Small Craft. This includes many surface-to-orbit shuttles.

Star League — The original alliance of the Great Houses of Cameron, Davion, Kurita, Liao, Marik, and Steiner, as well as the Periphery realms, effectively uniting all of humanity from 2570 through 2781. In 3060, the name was used again to declare the Inner Sphere's alliance against the Clans; this "Second Star League" only lasted from 3060 to 3067.

Successor States — The realms ruled by the Great Houses of Davion, Kurita, Liao, Marik, and Steiner, who were once united under the Star League.

Succession Wars — The period from the fall of the first Star League to the Clan Invasion in 3048 where each Great House waged war against the others to recreate the Star League.

Support Vehicle — Any ground vehicle (including tracked, wheeled, hovercraft, or Wing-in-Ground Effect vehicles), VTOL, airship, fixed-wing aircraft, train, or satellite designed for civilian, industrial, or other non-battlefield use.

Terra — The name for Earth in the *BattleTech* universe. Humanity's homeworld.

Terran Hegemony — The destroyed realm that once included Terra and formed the central power of the original Star League under the rule of House Cameron.

Trueborn — A member of the Clans produced using the Clan eugenics system, rather than by natural methods.

Unlimited Warfare — The concept of using total war to overpower an enemy, including the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) to quickly destroy as many of the enemy as possible, in complete defiance of the spirit of the Ares Conventions.

WarShip — A combat-capable JumpShip, capable of in-system travel like a DropShip, is referred to as a WarShip.

Wing-in-Ground Effect (WiGE) Vehicle — An uncommon Combat or Support Vehicle type, WiGE vehicles are a hybrid of hovercraft and true aircraft that can achieve great speeds.

Word of Blake — The fundamentalist breakaway faction of ComStar that formed after the Battle of Tukayyid.

VTOL Vehicle — A VTOL vehicle is any non-fixed wing aircraft that travels by using rotors or ducted fans for lift.

In the shadow of a BattleMech melee, Private Daniel Auger heroically dispatches an enemy spotter in a deadly knife fight.

THE BATTLETECH UNIVERSE

A Time of War is set in the universe of *BattleTech*, a futuristic setting of armored combat that is much more than a mere board game. The *BattleTech Introductory Box Set* offers players an excellent starting point to learn about this war game and its universe, which is vibrant, strong and still growing after twenty-five years in print. The fictional universe—and the valiant struggles of its dynamic, human characters—has been enjoyed by millions of fans around the world.

To convey the universe to the *BattleTech* community (as well as to demonstrate how players can take that universe and integrate it into the game system), Catalyst Game Labs publishes several different lines of rulebooks, sourcebooks, and campaign packs to support campaigns of every style and scale. While not an all-inclusive list, the following provides an overview of the primary series of products published by Catalyst Game Labs (or FanPro LLC/FASA) for use with *BattleTech*.

CORE RULEBOOKS

Following the introduction to the game through the *BattleTech Introductory Box Set*, the core rulebooks lay the foundation of game play (and the universe) for the various aspects of *BattleTech*. *Total Warfare*, the first in this series of core rulebooks, delivered the basic rules of armored combat in the thirty-first century, the rules for fighting with BattleMechs, ProtoMechs, aerospace fighters, infantry, and more. Covered with a breadth and a visual presentation never before achieved, *Total Warfare* launched a series that will act as the bedrock for any type of game the players may wish to undertake (including the role-playing aspect covered in this volume, *A Time of War*).

TECHNICAL READOUTS AND RECORD SHEETS

With so much of the *BattleTech* universe focused on war, the vehicles, BattleMechs, and other tools of modern tactical warfare often play a significant role in a character's identity. The *Technical Readouts* are the ultimate guidebooks to the weaponry and war machines of the thirty-first century. With fully illustrated entries and statistics, these reference books also provide insight into the design philosophies and battlefield preferences of the various factions that vie for power across the Inner Sphere and beyond.

Pre-filled record sheets to track the status and capabilities of the various units found in the *Technical Readout* books are published separately in the *Record Sheets* series.

THE JIHAD

BattleTech has always been a dynamic universe with progressing story lines that shake things up, uniting and shattering factions, developing characters into beloved (or despised) icons of this war-torn universe. Such events breathe life not only into the fiction players read, but into the games they play.

The current universe-shaking story line is the Word of Blake's Jihad, a Sphere-spanning war begun in 2005 with the publication of *Dawn of the Jihad* and *Jihad Hot Spots: 3070*. Look for future Jihad books that will continue to shock, amaze and entertain for years to come.

HANDBOOKS

The *BattleTech Universe* book in the *BattleTech Introductory Box Set* provides a taste of the Great Houses of the Inner Sphere, delving into the history of the universe and the Houses that jointly make up the Inner Sphere. The *Handbooks* series describes in further detail the culture, history, and political makeup of each of the Inner Sphere's major powers, providing a wealth of information and game material ideally suited for role-playing campaigns.

HISTORICALS

The *Historicals* series delves into the pivotal wars of the Inner Sphere's thousand-year history, with important personalities, maps of individual attack waves and regiment listings, along with a campaign framework that allows players to enact every aspect of each of these important conflicts.

War of 3039 and *Brush Wars* are currently available in print, while the new *Turning Points* series offers a look at pivotal battles of the Jihad in an electronic book format available through battlecorps.com. More such sourcebooks and e-books will appear in the future, allowing players to explore the stunning events of the current Jihad and the historical wars that have shaped every faction to date.

MAPS, TERRAIN AND MINIATURES

In the tabletop wargame of *BattleTech*, pre-printed hexagonal map sheets and terrain are used to regulate movement and combat in game play, providing a solid visual reference to ranges, lines of sight, and terrain that can affect a battle. Miniatures or counters are used on these maps to represent the units involved in a firefight, so that players can determine their units' facings and positions with ease.

Although the role-playing setting offers players far more game play options than tactical combat and thus does not require miniatures or maps, such tools are highly recommended if and when the player characters find themselves in combat. The maps provided in the *BattleTech Introductory Box Set* can be easily adapted from the tactical scale of the war game to the personal scale of this role-playing system, while counters or miniatures from a variety of systems (including, of course, the miniatures used to represent units in *Total Warfare*) may be used to represent characters and creatures in personal combat.

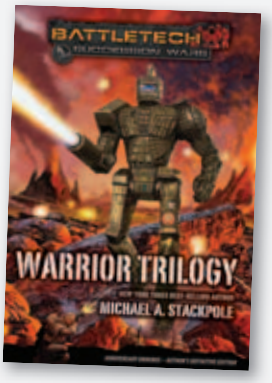
FICTION

As described in our other core rulebooks, fiction plays a pivotal role in bringing the *BattleTech* universe to life. Whether "story fiction" that places readers inside the heads of the characters in that universe, or "sourcebook fiction" that places the reader in the universe as though living among those characters, both work hand-in-hand to immerse players in this vibrant milieu.

Total Warfare concentrated on story fiction, while *TechManual* concentrated on sourcebook fiction. *Tactical Operations* covers something of a middle ground, with various story and sourcebook fiction sections found throughout the book. In *A Time of War*, the fiction presented reflects the story of a single, diverse group of characters not unlike a typical party of player characters, and is intended to entertain and provide inspiration for new players adventuring in the *BattleTech* universe.

Novels

From the moment *Decision at Thunder Rift* published in 1986, novels have consistently proven the best way to convey the fantastic stories that have kept fans coming back to this universe for 25 years. What's more, a host of players across the years have found the joy that comes from reading a gripping story they can then attempt to re-create on their own gaming table. The re-launching of the *BattleTech* novel line follows that grand tradition of epic story telling. A host of amazing authors will bring their talents to immerse players into the universe through all new fiction, including New York Times' Bestselling author, Michael A. Stackpole. Additionally, perennial novel series such as the *Warrior Trilogy* and *Blood of Kerensky Trilogy* will be re-released in definitive author omnibus editions.



While the re-launching of *BattleTech* novels will place them on store shelves once more, nearly 100 full-length novels have been published for the *BattleTech* (*MechWarrior*) universe across more than 20 years. With unit sales in the tens of millions, the novels have been translated into more than fifteen languages world-wide, making it one of the biggest science fiction novel lines in history. However, much of that rich novel history has been out-of-print for long years. BattleCorps.com is changing that. Starting in early 2009, BattleCorps.com is publishing one of these out-of-print novels each month in Electronic Advanced Reader Copy format (a PDF-style document). While these EARC publications can be purchased through the BattleShop by anyone, they're free to BattleCorps.com members.

BATTLECORPS

In addition to the novels, even more fiction and supporting material (including adventures and scenarios) may be found on BattleCorps.com. BattleCorps.com is the premiere online fiction source for BattleTech, providing stories to subscribers

by a stable of authors that includes national best sellers as well as upcoming new talent. In addition, the BattleShop at BattleCorps.com offers players the ability to order everything from poster maps, to PDF sourcebooks to miniatures for a complete gaming experience.

CHOOSE YOUR RULES

Intended to cover a broad range of possibilities for role-playing, *A Time of War* covers an equally broad range of rules, with varying degrees of complexity. Though designed for compatibility with the tactical game system in *Total Warfare*, the emphasis on the character's personal scale means that these rules would be considered "advanced" or optional in a tactical game campaign.

Players and gamemasters in a role-playing setting should consider these rules a guideline to performing and resolving actions at the personal scale—but never as a straitjacket to entertaining game play. As long as the players and gamemaster are having fun, they can use as many of these rules (or as few of them) as desired. In this way, a playing group's role-playing experience in the *BattleTech* universe can be tailored to the personal tastes of its members by including only those rules that make the game more interesting or fun.

GAMEMASTER ADJUDICATION

Because the actions and events possible in a role-playing game are driven more by the players' imaginations, it is possible to encounter many rules within this book that do not account for every possibility or circumstance. Although the developers and writers have gone to great effort to make these rules as comprehensive as possible, no set of rules can cover every option that may cross a creative player's mind.

When confronted by such unexpected circumstances, it falls to the gamemaster—with all due respect to the players, of course—to resolve the situation appropriately using any means desired. If, in the process of this gamemaster adjudication, a playing group runs into an argument, feel free to let a die roll resolve any disputes so you can return to playing the game and having fun. Net-savvy players may even take advantage of the discussion forums at www.classicbattletech.com for ideas on how other player groups may have tackled a similar "gray area".

FICTION VS. RULES

It is important to remember that regardless of the critical role fiction plays in immersing players in the *BattleTech* universe, the events and actions depicted in *BattleTech* fiction should never be construed as rules. As with *Total Warfare* and *TechManual*, the sections of this book devoted to fiction are given a unique look and style that sets them apart, compared to the uniform presentation of the various rules sections, and all fiction chapters are italicized in this book's table of contents. The only significant exception to this is the sourcebook material that will appear in the *Equipment* section, and the "in-universe" quotes and anecdotes scattered throughout the *Traits* and *Skills* sections, as well as other chapters. These little bits of "fluff" are intended to emphasize the nature of the items and game play features they precede, and are almost universally identified by their italicized font style and quotation marks.

Called away from a formal affair, Kell Hounds Lieutenant Colonel Scott Bradley receives an urgent strategic update from his troops in the field.

Despite the devastating power of the Blakist invaders and their "Demon" battlesuits, Canopian special forces refuse to stand down.

"While Ethan is lying unconscious on the briefing room floor, does anyone have anything they'd like to say…?"

OVERVIEW

As with most role-playing games, *A Time of War: The BattleTech RPG* (*BTRPG*) relies primarily on the interaction between the gamemaster and the players to resolve actions and events within the game's imaginary setting. Indeed, whenever an outcome is not in doubt, or when the current focus is on dialogue or descriptions, game play may be resolved through informal discussion between players and gamemaster.

Dice come into play whenever a character attempts to perform an action that could reasonably fail, or that could be opposed by another character: for example, using one of the character's Skills, or attempting a difficult or strenuous feat. Any actions or situations that require a dice roll—typically using two six-sided dice (2D6)—are referred to as Checks in *A Time of War*.

Ultimately, the gamemaster determines when a situation requires a Check, but in general—unless the in-game situation involves combat, potential for injury, or simply a long and complex task—it is best to resolve game play through role-playing (rather than "roll-playing"). A player who spends more time crunching numbers and tossing dice than getting into character and thinking through a problem is likely to have a less rewarding an experience than one who gets into character and tries to live the adventure.

When dice are used to resolve an action (an Action Check), the player rolls against an appropriate target number (TN) based on the Skill, Attribute or Trait being used. Modifiers, based on the complexity of the action and the circumstances surrounding it, are applied to the roll result (the outcome shown on the dice). If the roll for the Action Check—after adding in all modifiers—equals or exceeds the acting character's target number, the action is considered a success. If the roll falls below the target number, the action is considered a failure.

CHARACTERS

A character in *A Time of War* is much like a character in a novel or film, except that the player (or the gamemaster, for non-player characters), rather than a pre-set script, controls the character's actions. Composed of a collection of Attributes, Traits and Skills, all characters in *A Time of War* define their game play abilities through these values, but it is the player who provides the personality behind the statistics.

CHARACTER RECORD SHEET

The Character Record Sheet notes the game statistics that allow a character to interact within the game's framework. In conjunction with these core rules, the character sheet provides all the information the player needs to resolve actions, track damage, determine movement, or identify resources the character has at his disposal.

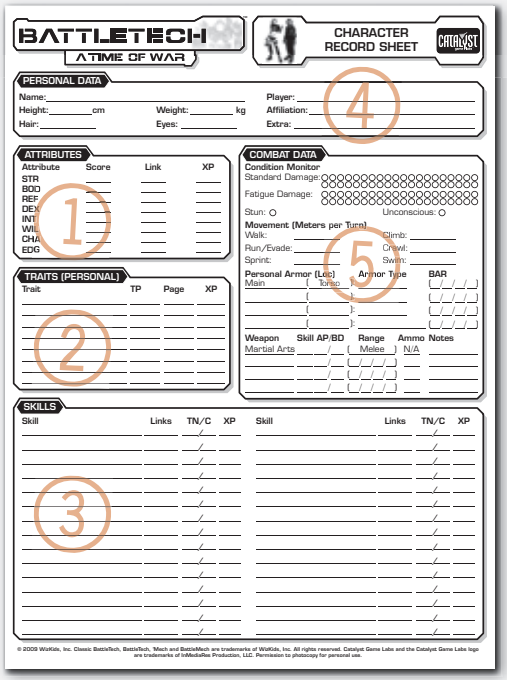
In addition to the character's three primary categories of statistics—Attributes, Traits, and Skills—the Character Record Sheet also features areas to track the character's personal data, combat data, inventory, biography, and any key vehicle data.

ATTRIBUTES

Characters in *A Time of War* are described using three broad categories of statistics. The first of these—Attributes—describes the character's raw physical and mental capabilities. Each character possesses eight Attribute values (also called "Attribute scores") that are described below.

STR (Strength): As its name implies, the STR (Strength) Attribute measures a character's raw muscle power, affecting the amount of weight he can lift and carry, and how much damage he can deliver in melee combat. Higher STR scores define physically stronger characters.

BOD (Body): A character's BOD (Body) Attribute indicates how sturdy and "in shape" he is, measuring raw endurance as well as how


BATTLETECH
A TIME OF WAR
CHARACTER RECORD SHEET
CATALYST GAME LABS
PERSONAL DATA
Name:
Player:
Height:_____cm
Weight:_____kg
Affiliation:
Hair:
Eyes:
Extra:
4
ATTRIBUTES
Attribute Score Link XP
STR
BOD
REF
DEX
INT
WIL
CHA
EDG
1
COMBAT DATA
Condition Monitor
Standard Damage:
Fatigue Damage:
Stun: ○ Unconscious: ○
Movement (Meters per Turn)
Walk:
Run/Evade:
Sprint:
Climb:
Crawl:
Swim:
5
Personal Armor (Loc) Armor Type BAR
Main Torso
TRAITS (PERSONAL)
Trait TP Page XP
2
Weapon Skill AP/BD Range Ammo Notes
Martial Arts / Melee N/A
SKILLS
Skill Links TN/C XP Skill Links TN/C XP
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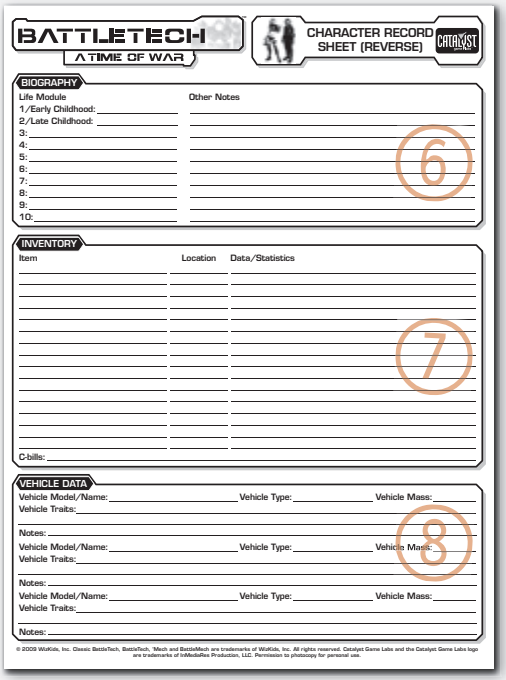
BATTLETECH
A TIME OF WAR
CHARACTER RECORD SHEET (REVERSE)
CATALYST GAME LABS
BIOGRAPHY
Life Module Other Notes
1/Early Childhood:
2/Late Childhood:
3:
4:
5:
6:
7:
8:
9:
10:
6
INVENTORY
Item Location Data/Statistics
7
C-bills:
VEHICLE DATA
Vehicle Model/Name: Vehicle Type: Vehicle Mass:
Vehicle Traits:
Notes:
Vehicle Model/Name: Vehicle Type: Vehicle Mass:
Vehicle Traits:
Notes:
Vehicle Model/Name: Vehicle Type: Vehicle Mass:
Vehicle Traits:
Notes:
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much damage the character can withstand in combat. Higher BOD scores reflect greater durability and the ability to perform strenuous tasks for longer durations.

RFL (Reflexes): The RFL (Reflexes) Attribute measures a character's swiftness and reaction time, affecting how fast he can react to threats or cover ground. Higher RFL scores reflect less hesitation, better response times and quicker overall movement.

DEX (Dexterity): The DEX (Dexterity) Attribute defines a character's fine motor control and physical acuity, a vital quality for everything from operating a computer to firing a handgun. Higher DEX scores reflect a steadier hand and superior hand-eye coordination.

INT (Intelligence): As can be surmised, the INT (Intelligence) Attribute measures a character's brainpower, particularly his memory, higher reasoning and deductive powers. Higher INT scores reflect keener minds.

WIL (Willpower): The WIL (Willpower) Attribute measures a character's bravery and his capacity to "think for himself", as well as his ability to steel his nerves and rally his body against fear and physical exhaustion, and to take charge of a situation. Higher WIL scores describe bolder and more decisive characters.

CHA (Charisma): The CHA (Charisma) Attribute measures a character's personal appeal, affecting how those around him react to his general appearance, mannerisms and speech. While not an indicator of physical beauty per se, higher CHA scores describe characters who are more appealing and inspiring to others.

EDG (Edge): The EDG (Edge) Attribute is easily one of the most powerful Attributes a player character (or critical NPC) possesses. Representing raw luck, a character's EDG points can be "burned" in game play to affect Action Checks, altering their outcomes slightly or even forcing a "do over" that can snatch a victory out of certain defeat. Characters with a higher EDG have more luck on their side.

Attribute Statistics

On the character sheet, each Attribute receives the following identifying information: Attribute Score (Score), Link Modifier (Link), and Experience (XP). These statistics are further defined below.

Attribute Scores

In game play, Attribute scores are most commonly applied directly as modifiers to Attribute Checks—dice rolls used to determine the character's success in actions where the character is either unskilled or where no Skill actually applies. Since all Action Checks (including Attribute Checks) apply modifiers to the roll, and the goal of any Action Check is to equal or exceed its target number, higher Attribute scores improve the character's chances of success.

For human characters, Attribute scores tend to fall in a range from 1 (feeble) to 8 (excellent), although truly exceptional specimens may possess Attributes as high as 10. An Attribute score of 4 defines the level an "average" person may expect.

Link Modifiers

When a character possesses a Skill, his TN for that Skill is much lower than it would be for attempting to use the Skill untrained, with raw Attributes alone. Though training in a Skill usually makes the difference, particularly high or low Attributes can also affect the outcome of a Skill Check. This Attribute effect on a trained Skill is identified by its Link Modifier, which is applied as a roll modifier to trained Skills only.

Experience

The Experience (XP) column of an Attribute is used to track the level of development the Attribute has received. An Attribute will possess the highest score that its XPs completely cover, but excess XPs may be stored and accumulated as the character advances in game play.

Attribute Increase and Decrease

Over time, a character's Attributes may increase or decrease as a result of game play, experience and age. Increases, which typically occur through spending

ZERO ATTRIBUTE EFFECTS TABLE

Attribute	Suggested Effect
STR	Critically enfeebled (Requires full mobility and life support)
BOD	Character killed
DEX	Extensive nerve damage (No actions involving hands)
RFL	Paralyzed from the neck down (Requires mobility and life support)
INT	Major brain damage (All Skills reduced to Untrained)
WIL	Psychosis (Character receives random Compulsion Trait at maximum value)
CHA	Crippling depression (Character receives Combat Paralysis Trait; reduced all CHA-based Skills to Untrained)
EDG	Out of luck (Must buy back 1 point with Experience before EDG can restore normally)

XPs on such upgrades (see *Character Advancement*, p. 330), can bring an Attribute as high as the maximum value allowed for the character's phenotype type. Decreases—which more commonly occur through game play events, injuries and advanced age—can reduce Attributes to critical levels.

Attributes reduced below a value of 1 will have grave consequences based on the Attribute so reduced, either killing or permanently crippling the character in some way. The nature of such damage is ultimately up to the gamemaster, but suggested possibilities appear in the Zero Attribute Effects Table below. In addition, all character actions attempted using Attributes reduced to a value of 0 automatically fail (treat as a natural roll of 3).

TRAITS

A character's Traits define special-purpose characteristics and abilities beyond the more quantifiable Attributes and Skills. Traits can affect game play in a variety of ways, from a special rule applicable to limited circumstances to a personal detail significant enough for its own plot hook.

Some Traits provide modifiers to certain Action Checks the character may perform, while others use even more specialized rules. Thus, there is no hard-and-fast approach to using Traits beyond the rules for the Trait itself (see *Traits*, beginning on p. 106).

When in doubt, a player may declare that he or she wishes to make use of a Trait at any point in game play. Ultimately, however, it is up to the gamemaster to determine whether or not the Trait and its effects apply to the situation at hand (or, if necessary, whether another Trait or Skill might apply instead).

Leutnant Luella Hildebrand is finding it hard to get some badly needed supplies for her team's upcoming mission, and has managed to narrow down the source of their difficulties to a tight-fisted officer at the nearby Quartermaster Office. Taking the savvy Ethan Naoko along for the ride, she opts to confront the LAAF officer, an apparently no-nonsense woman who remains adamant that the supplies she has requested are earmarked for troops "higher on the realm's priority list right now."

Ethan's character has the Gregarious Trait, which the player suggests using to "sweet talk" the young lady. But Luella's character has the Connections Trait at level 3, which her controlling player suggests could be used to "call in favors" and deal with the situation by bringing pressure on the officer instead.

The GM, considering the fact that Luella and Ethan are already face-to-face with the officer, decides that use of Luella's Connections would take too long as she hunts for contacts to bring into this dispute. Thus, he deems Ethan's Gregarious Trait more useful to the current situation, and allows the use of that Trait to provide a bonus to his Acting Skill Check, which he uses in a somewhat desperate appeal to the officer's better nature.

SKILLS

A character's Skills list represents abilities he has been trained to use effectively. In a typical *A Time of War* role-playing session, characters generally use Skill Action Checks to resolve actions far more often than they use Attributes or Traits.

A complete list of Skills may be found in the Skill List Table (p. 142). The descriptions for each Skill appear in the section following that table.

Skill Statistics

On the character sheet, each Skill receives the following identifying information: Skill Level (Level), Linked Attributes (Links), Target Number / Complexity Ratings (TN / C), and Experience (XP). In addition to these statistics, the name of the Skill can provide additional information, such as the presence of any subskills or specialties associated with their use.

Subskills and Specialties

Subskills and specialties are variations on standard Skills that further refine the area of expertise and professional training the Skill in question requires. Subskills are mandatory areas of focus for otherwise-related Skills, and are identified by following the root Skill's name with a slash and the appropriate Subskill's name (for example, "Language/French" or "Technician/Electronics"). Specialties, on the other hand, are optional, and are identified by following the root Skill's name with the appropriate specialty's name in parentheses (for instance, "Small Arms (Submachine Guns)" or "Technician/Mechanical (Fuel Cell Engines)".

The differences between subskills and specialties are further defined below.

Subskills: Subskills must be identified with their root Skills at purchase, and are used to specifically identify the nature of a Skill that can have vastly different areas of expertise. The Skills chapter (beginning on p. 140) describes all the Skills used in *A Time of War*, listing their applicable subskills within each description. Characters may possess multiples of the same root Skill, but each must have a different Subskill assigned to it.

Characters trained in one or some of the subskills under a single root Skill can only resolve the trained subskills normally. If attempting to use another Subskill they do not possess, the action is treated as an untrained Skill Check.

Specialties: Specialties are usually not mandatory for a given Skill, but instead reflect a personal favoritism in a character's Skill training. Because they represent a degree of personalization, specialties are not described in the Skills chapter, nor do they need to be identified during character creation as they can develop later

in the character's career. A character may only possess one specialty per Skill (or Subskill).

Characters who possess a specialty in a given Skill receive a bonus modifier to performing that Skill when the particular area of specialization applies. The downside of this bonus is that a penalty will apply whenever the same Skill is used in a situation where the specialty does *not* apply. For example, a character that has the "Small Arms (Shotguns)" Skill would receive the specialty bonus when using a shotgun-style weapon in personal combat, but would suffer a penalty when using a laser pistol instead.

Skill Levels

A Skill's level quantifies the amount of training the character has received in the Skill. Character Skills may receive a level of 0 through 10. As with Attribute scores, higher values reflect a greater chance of success, as the Skill's level is added to the roll result as a bonus. A Skill Level of 0 thus represents a rudimentary understanding of the Skill, while a Level of 10 represents the pinnacle of human expertise.

Characters are said to be untrained in any Skill that is not listed on the character sheet, or in which they have yet to achieve even a Level of 0 through the expenditure of XPs. As noted under *Attributes* (see p. 35), untrained Skills are resolved as special Attribute Checks.

Linked Attributes

Particularly high or low Attributes can affect the character's success in using the Skills to which they are related (or "linked"). Linked Attributes can provide modifiers to any Skill Checks to which they are linked, or may be used to identify which Attributes are called upon when attempting a given Skill untrained.

Basic Skills (as defined under *Skill TN and Complexity*, below) are linked to only one Attribute, while Advanced Skills (which require more institutionalized learning or specialized instruction) are linked to two Attributes.

The Attributes listed under a Skill's "Links" column are the Attributes that will provide any applicable link modifiers (found under the Links column for the relevant Attributes) to the Action Check roll.

Skill TN and Complexity

The target number and Complexity of a Skill defines the base value that must be rolled in order to succeed in using the Skill, as well as how complex the Skill is to use and to learn. The TN for a Skill is a simple numeric value that appears to the left of the slash under the Skill's "TN / C" column, while the Skill's Complexity is given as a two-letter code on the right of the slash.

In game play, the Complexity code for a Skill defines its sophistication in terms of action first (S for Simple or C for Complex) and its difficulty to learn second (B for Basic or A for Advanced). A Skill described as simple can be accomplished relatively quickly—almost reflexively—while Complex Skills take longer and require greater concentration on the character's part. Meanwhile, Skills described as basic are fairly easy to learn—even without intensive training and discipline—while Advanced Skills require a greater investment in time and study to hone.

Tiered Skills: In rare instances (most notably Martial Arts and Melee Weapons), a Skill may be usable for a time in a cruder form, but the character may be unable to progress beyond a certain level of effectiveness without more specialized training. These so-called "tiered" Skills begin as basic in their training complexity, but become advanced before they can progress beyond a certain point. Basic tiered Skills have a maximum Level of 3, while Advanced tiered Skills have a minimum Level of 4.

Tiered Skills are technically the same Skill on the character sheet, but must be clearly identified by their TN / C values (and Linked Attributes) when they transition from basic to advanced. For example, Martial Arts—a Tiered Skill—has a TN/C of 6/SB at Skill levels of 0 through 3, but a TN/C of 7/SA at Skill levels of 4 and up.

Experience

The Experience (XP) column for a Skill is used to track the level of development the Skill has received. A Skill has the highest level that its XPs completely cover, but excess XPs may be stored and accumulated as the character advances in game play.

4 PERSONAL DATA

At the top of the Character Record Sheet, the Personal Data field provides a place to note the character's name, controlling player, basic physical descriptors (such as height, weight, hair and eye color).

5 COMBAT DATA

To the right of the Attributes and Traits fields, the character's Combat Data block is used to track the character's damage and fatigue levels, stun and consciousness status, movement rates, and primary personal armor and weapon stats.

6 BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

The uppermost block on the back of the Character Record Sheet, this block is used to record the character's background and/or previous stages in life (as devised using the Life Module character creation rules).

7 INVENTORY

The central—and largest—block on the back of the character sheet is where players can record their personal equipment, including everything from additional small arms weaponry to lightweight, civilian-grade vehicles, identifying not only their vital gameplay stats, but also where the character keeps them.

8 VEHICLE DATA

For characters who have one (or more) Vehicle Traits—reflecting ownership of a heavy piece of military or heavy industrial hardware (such as a 'Mech)—the last data block on the back of the Character Record Sheet provides the player with space to identify the vehicle's name and model, its type (such as combat vehicles, ProtoMechs, battle armor, BattleMechs), its mass (in tonnage), any special Traits that affect the vehicle, and final notes that can indicate extra features like the vehicle's colors, details, nicknames, and the like.

Even as her "employer" laughs with his guest unawares, Loki Agent Meridian administers the toxin that will slay one more traitor to the realm.

ACTIONS

In a typical role-playing game session, dice are not required to resolve mundane actions or dialogue. Indeed, a good role-playing session can be accomplished with nary a die roll made, through nothing more elaborate than interactive storytelling between the gamemaster and the players. Still, in many situations throughout an adventure, the outcome of a character's choices may rely on actions that can fail. At times like these, the gamemaster will request an Action Check , a (typically) 2D6 dice roll used to determine the character's chances and level of success.

Action Checks in *A Time of War* come in two main forms: Attribute Checks and Skill Checks. Attribute Checks are used to resolve situations where none of the character's Skills apply (or where he simply lacks the required Skill), and thus must attempt to resolve the outcome by raw Attributes alone. Skill Checks are used to resolve any action where one of the character's trained Skills applies.

ATTRIBUTE CHECKS

Attribute Checks are used whenever the character's Attributes are being directly tested and no Skill applies to the situation, or when the character simply lacks the proper training in the Skill he is being asked to perform.

Based on the action in question, an Attribute Action Check may call upon one or two Attributes—known as Single Attribute and Double Attribute Checks, respectively. Unless the action in question is an untrained Skill (which has defined Linked Attributes to work from), the Attribute or Attributes required for an Attribute Check are determined at the gamemaster's discretion.

Regardless of the Attributes called upon for an Attribute Check, the target numbers are fixed at 14 for a Single Attribute Check and 21 for a Double Attribute Check. Including those made for untrained Skill use, Attribute Checks do not receive link modifiers, but instead add the relevant Attribute score (or scores) directly to the dice roll result.

Single Attribute Checks: Examples of Single Attribute Action Checks include a STR Attribute Check to determine if the character can lift or move a heavy object away from a blocked door, an INT Attribute Check to recall an important detail at a high-pressure moment, or using CHA to handle an untrained Negotiation Skill Check.

Double-Attribute Checks: Examples of more involved Double Attribute Checks include a BOD+RFL Attribute Check to determine the character's performance in a sporting event, a RFL+INT Attribute Check to determine how well the character performs in a video game, or using INT and DEX to perform an action using an untrained Technician Skill.

> *Busby "Buzzy" Matvey has a STR Attribute score of 8 and a RFL Attribute score of 6. He is attempting to haul a crate of ordnance off the bed of a transport when, without warning, the vehicle—erroneously left in neutral, rather than park—suddenly lurches beneath him. Though the crate's weight is not overly encumbering to him, it is massive enough that the sudden shift in his balance threatens to topple both Busby and the explosives onto the tarmac below—with potentially lethal results!*
>
> *The GM decides that Busby needs a successful STR+RFL Double Attribute Check to avoid falling and dropping the crate. This means that Busby's controlling player will be rolling 2D6 against a target number of 21, but gets to add +14 to the dice roll (STR 8 + RFL 6 = 14). Busby will thus be hoping for a dice roll of 7 or more to avoid the fall (7 + 14 = 21), unless the GM applies other modifiers to the result to reflect other conditions.*

Newly arrived at the LAAF field base on Hesperus II, Franz Logan is passing by the base recreation center when he is blindsided by an errant soccer ball. Annoyed, Franz allows his temper to get the best of him, and decides to hurl the offending object at the nearest off-duty soldier he deems partially responsible for this "attack".

The GM decides this is essentially a Thrown Weapons Skill Action, but Franz lacks that Skill. As Thrown Weapons has only one Linked Attribute—DEX—the action must be resolved as a Single Attribute Check against Franz's DEX score (which happens to be 6). This means that Franz's controlling player will be rolling against a TN of 14, but with an automatic +6 applied to the dice roll due to Franz's DEX score. It will therefore take a 2D6 roll result of 8 for Franz to bean his target—give or take any other modifiers the GM may assign for conditions like range and movement.

SKILL CHECKS

Skill Checks are used in place of Attribute Checks whenever the character is attempting to perform an action for which he has received proper training or instruction. Skill Checks are resolved in the same fashion as Attribute Checks, but receive much lower target numbers as trained Skills—although the complexity of a Skill will affect its TN somewhat. Linked Attribute and specialty modifiers also apply to this type of action Check, reflecting the impact of exceptionally good or poor Attributes on the character's success.

Skills are specifically focused, and so are used in more defined situations than Attributes. For example, a character in a gunfight would rely on her Small Arms Skill to make ranged weapon attacks using her pistol, rifle or submachine gun, but against an enemy who gets in too close, she would need her Martial Arts Skill to battle the enemy hand-to-hand, or her Melee Weapons Skill to use close-quarters weapons like knives, swords and staves.

Untrained Skill Checks: A character lacking a Skill appropriate to a situation (even at Level 0) may still attempt to resolve an action using that Skill—but must do so as an Attribute Check instead. In such a case, the Attributes being tested are the ones described as the Skill's Linked Attributes. Target numbers for an untrained Skill Check are the same as those for an appropriate Attribute Check.

Doctor Grace Luther, a combat medic, also doubles as the communications ("commo") tech for Recon Team Four. Her character has the Communications/Conventional Skill, which uses INT as a Linked Attribute, has a TN of 6, and a Complexity of "SB" ("Simple-Basic"). In an effort to secure reconnaissance data on a target area in the field, she attempts to patch into a neutral weather satellite. The GM decides to allow this as an aspect of her Communications skill, but only so far as establishing a link to the target sat.

Grace will be attempting to establish her satellite link using her Communication/Conventional Skill, against a TN of 6. The modifiers that will apply to this roll will be Grace's Skill level in Communication/Conventional, as well as any applicable Linked Attribute modifiers for her INT score, and any difficulty modifiers the GM sees fit to assign the effort. If the roll is successful, Grace will have established a link to the satellite, but may require additional Skill Checks to hack into its software for any desired images and data.

Sergeant Ethan Naoko has been asked to help the technicians bring a damaged BattleMech into a repair bay. It's been a while since he's commanded a 'Mech, but he does have a level of 4 in Piloting/'Mech (Light). The Skill's Linked Attributes are RFL and DEX, and its TN / C Rating is "7 / SA", indicating a "Simple-Advanced" Skill with a TN of 7. In addition, as the Skill fully describes itself as "Piloting/'Mech (Light)", a specialty bonus will apply to any Piloting Skill rolls if the 'Mech is in the "light" weight class (or a penalty, if the design is not in the "light" weight class), in addition to the modifiers for Ethan's Skill level, the linked Attributes, and any conditions the GM sees fit to include.

OPPOSED ACTIONS

In some cases, a character's Action Check may be directly opposed by the actions of another character. Examples of such cases—called Opposed Actions—include abstracting a negotiation or resolving the outcome of a simple arm-wrestling contest between two characters. Opposed Actions may be made between identical Skills and Attributes, or they may occur between different Skills and Attributes that might reasonably oppose each other (such as using Stealth to oppose Perception when attempting to slip by a sentry, or WIL versus CHA when attempting to resist being terrified by an attacking creature).

The TNs and modifiers applied to an Opposed Action Check are the same as those used in standard Action Checks. However, unlike a standard Action Check, the winner of an Opposed Action Check is the character that succeeds with the highest Margin of Success (MoS) against the action's TN. If the MoS between both characters is a tie, the characters expend the time and energy on the action, but achieve no resolution.

If the opposing characters both fail their Opposed Action Checks, the characters expend time and energy on their actions, but the outcome—depending on the severity of the failed rolls and any relevant circumstances—may result in anything from a clumsy and confused "disconnect" between the characters, to self-inflicted injuries from an epic failure.

Mere days before another dangerous mission into enemy territory, Busby Matvey and Ethan Naoko take some much-needed R&R time and journey to an off-base tavern. After a few drinks, and a few stories of missions past, Ethan feels a bit daring and challenges Busby to an arm-wrestling match to determine who buys the next round. The GM decides that this will be a straight Opposed Attribute Check against the characters' STR Attribute scores. Given his STR Attribute score of 8, versus Ethan's STR of 6, Busby—though somewhat inebriated—takes that bet.

As an Opposed Single Attribute Check, the players controlling Busby and Ethan will both be rolling against a TN of 14. Busby's roll will receive an added +8 to reflect his strength (STR 8), while Ethan's roll will receive a +6 roll modifier. Unless other modifiers are applied, this means Busby will succeed on a roll of 6 or higher, while Ethan will need an 8 or higher to succeed. Victory in the arm-wrestle, of course, goes to the character whose roll succeeds by the most points.

BASIC ACTION RESOLUTION

Regardless of its nature, the Action Check is a simple matter of rolling dice (typically 2 six-sided dice, or 2D6), applying any prescribed modifiers to the roll result, and comparing that result to the target number. Success in an Action Check occurs when the final modified roll result equals or exceeds the action's TN.

Exceptions: Special Traits or conditions (such as the Natural Aptitude Trait) may vary the basic action resolution system somewhat, but the heart of every Action Check is always based on a 2D6 roll result.

BASIC ACTION CHECK TABLE

Action Check	Target Number
Skill Check (Simple-Basic Skill)	6
Skill Check (Simple-Advanced Skill)	7
Skill Check (Complex-Basic Skill)	8
Skill Check (Complex-Advanced Skill)	9
Attribute Check/Untrained Skill Check (Single-Attribute)	14
Attribute Check/Untrained Skill Check (Double Attribute)	21

Determine Target Number

The target number that applies to each roll in basic game play is given in the Basic Action Check Table. Attribute Checks receive a different TN based on whether they employ one or two Attributes, while Skills list their TNs and Complexity ratings on the character sheet.

(All of the TNs used in standard game play are listed on the Basic Action Check Table for clarity.)

Making the Roll

Once a TN is identified, the character's controlling player rolls 2D6 (unless a special Trait or condition applies, such as Natural Aptitude). If the action is being opposed by another character (see *Opposed Actions*, p. 39), the acting character and his opponent must each make an appropriate roll to resolve the action.

Apply Modifiers

Once the roll is made, modifiers are then added to produce a final roll result to compare with the TN. Based on the nature of the roll, these modifiers will reflect the character's Attributes, Skill Level, and any other general conditions that might affect the action's outcome.

Because the goal of all Action Checks is to meet or exceed the TN, negative roll modifiers are considered penalties and positive roll modifiers are considered bonuses. All appropriate modifiers—as determined by the gamemaster—must be applied to the roll result after the Action Check is made. The Basic Action Check Table shows the modifiers that may apply to any non-combat Action Check based on the action type and the character's situation.

Attribute Checks and Untrained Skills: As described earlier, Attribute Checks (including those made for untrained Skill use) automatically apply the relevant Attribute scores to the roll result, as well as any applicable conditional modifiers the gamemaster deems fit.

Skill Checks: Trained Skill Checks automatically apply the Skill Level, any relevant Linked Attribute modifiers, and any conditional modifiers the gamemaster sees fit.

> *Franz Logan, the newest member of Recon Team Four, is trying to sneak up on Ethan Naoko during a training exercise. Under normal conditions, this would be a simple Opposed Skill Action Check pitting Franz's Stealth Skill against Ethan's Perception Skill—but Franz actually lacks the Stealth Skill! As a result, the GM determines, Franz must attempt his Stealth check as an untrained Skill.*
>
> *The Stealth Skill uses two Linked Attributes (RFL + INT), and has a TN / C Rating of 7 / SA, indicating a target number of 7 and a Complexity Rating of SA ("Simple-Advanced"). Because Franz is untrained, however, he will have to resolve this action as a Double Attribute Check against the Skill's Linked Attributes. Franz has a RFL Attribute score of 7, and an INT score of 5, and thus faces a TN of 21 with a roll modifier of +12 for his Attributes. It is dusk, and there is some cover, so the*

A TIME OF WAR VS. TOTAL WARFARE

A Time of War, the *BattleTech* role-playing game, is designed to mesh as completely as possible with the core rules for the *BattleTech* war game as described in *Total Warfare* and the rest of this core game series (including *TechManual*, *Tactical Operations*, *Strategic Operations* and *Interstellar Operations*). The rules in *A Time of War* may thus be applied to the *Total Warfare* tabletop game with minimal disruption to the game play experience of either system.

However, for the sake of clarity, some terms and rule descriptions used in this book may seem at odds with the core rules in *Total Warfare*, particularly the differences between how actions are resolved in the RPG and how they are handled in tabletop play.

The chief difference between the *Total Warfare* approach and that used in *A Time of War* is this: In *Total Warfare*, the term "Skills" refers to the target number (TN) to use the Skill under optimal conditions. For example, a MechWarrior with a Gunnery Skill of 3 needs to roll a 3 or better in order to score a hit, if no other modifiers apply. Lower Skill numbers are therefore better, and modifiers apply to the TN instead of to the roll result (unless stated otherwise). In *A Time of War*, a character's Skill Level is a value added to the roll result, *not* to the TN; therefore, a higher Skill number is better, as it increases the roll result.

In essence, the outcome is the same, regardless of the game system used (though the RPG setting allows for a wider range of possibilities for particularly resourceful players and experienced characters). To convert a character's relevant Gunnery or Piloting Skill in *A Time of War* over to *Total Warfare*, simply subtract the character's Skill Level from the Skill's Base Target Number as listed on the Basic Action Check Table in this book (for example, a character with a Gunnery/'Mech Skill Level of 4 in *A Time of War* would have a *Total Warfare* Gunnery Skill of 3; Base TN 7 – 4 = 3).

"**Superhuman" Skills:** Because *Total Warfare* does not recognize Skills with a TN of less than 0, any Skills converted from *A Time of War* that fall below a TN of 0 must be treated as 0 in *Total Warfare* game play (unless all players agree to allow such "superhuman" abilities in the game).

Specialties: At the gamemaster's discretion, specialty modifiers may also be applied to the character's applicable rolls in *Total Warfare*. For clarity's sake, these modifiers must apply to the roll in the same manner as they are applied in the RPG setting.

ACTION CHECK MODIFIERS

Attribute Check Modifiers *(Attributes and Untrained Skills)*	Roll Modifier
Single Attribute	+ Attribute Score
Dual Attribute	+ Sum of Attribute Score

Skill Check Modifiers *(Trained Skills Only)*	Roll Modifier
All Skill Checks	+ Skill Level
Skill Specialization	
Skill is not specialized	+0
Skill is specialized (Specialty applies)	+1
Skill is specialized (Specialty does *not* apply)	–1
Linked Attribute Value	
0	–4
1	–2
2–3	–1
4–6	+0
7–9	+1
10	+2
11+	+ (Attribute ÷ 3)*

Action Difficulty and Special Conditions	Roll Modifier
General Action Difficulty (All Checks)	
Very Easy	+3
Easy	+1
Average	+0
Difficult	–1
Very Difficult	–3
Extremely Difficult	–5
*Vision-based Action Checks (Perception Skill)***	
Target at Point-Blank Range (less than 1 meter)	+1
Target at Short Range (1 to 300 meters)	+0
Target at Medium Range (301 to 600 meters)	–2
Target at Long Range (601 to 900 meters)	–4
Target at Extreme Range (over 900 meters)	–6
Miscellaneous Conditions (All Checks)	
Character is Injured	– (Injury Modifier; see p. 182)
Character is Fatigued	– (Fatigue Points – WIL, minimum 0)
Environmental Conditions	See p. 230
Good Conditions (unencumbered, no hazards)	+1
Poor Conditions (encumbered, minor hazards)	–1
Bad Conditions (very encumbered, serious hazards)	–2

*Round down, to a maximum of +5

**Applies primarily to Perception Skill Checks (other affected actions are at the gamemaster's discretion). General Action Difficulty and Miscellaneous Conditions modifiers (for darkness, concealment and so forth) may also apply.

GM decides this makes the attempt somewhat easier, and so an added roll modifier of +1 is applied. Franz is also wearing camouflage clothing appropriate for the environment, adding another +1 to the roll.

Franz's controlling player thus will receive a total roll modifier of +14. He rolls 2D6 and sees a 5 and a 4—for a roll total of 9. Adding the +14, the player finds the final result is 23. This means Franz succeeded in his untrained Stealth efforts by 2 points.

Ethan's Perception Skill, meanwhile, is at level 4. It uses INT as its only Linked Attribute, and has a TN / C Rating of 6 / SB. Ethan's INT score is 7, and the dusk-time lighting and light cover is making it hard for him to see everything at once. He's using no visual aids like thermographic sensors. Ethan's roll modifiers are thus: +4 for his Skill level, +1 for a Linked Attribute score of 7, and a –1 modifier for the dusk-time lighting and cover (GM-assigned modifier—parallel to the one given to Franz for his action check)—for a total roll modifier of +4.

Ethan's controlling player rolls 2D6 and sees a 4 and a 2—for a total roll result of 6. Adding in the +4 roll modifier, for a final result of 10, he finds that Ethan has succeeded with his Perception Skill Check by 4 points (Roll of 10 – TN of 6 = 4).

Because Ethan's Margin of Success (MoS) is higher than Franz's, Ethan spots Franz's approach.

Fumbles

In any Action Check, a natural, unmodified dice roll of 2 represents an automatic failure, even if the modified roll result is higher than the action's TN (or lower than 2). This reflects a fumble, where—for whatever reason—Murphy's Law conspires to thwart the player's action, usually with disastrous (or at least highly embarrassing) results.

A fumble could indicate a weapon jamming at the wrong moment, a sudden blowout sending a speeding ground car out of control, or an unintended insult delivered at the most delicate stage of a negotiation. Unless a specific rule or circumstance indicates otherwise, the actual cause of the fumble can be described at the gamemaster's option (though gamemasters should take care not to penalize a player too much; the roll, after all, has already failed).

Stunning Successes and Miraculous Feats

The flipside of a fumble (but by no means a guarantee of success if the action is particularly difficult), the "stunning success" may occur if the player's 2D6 Action Check roll yields an unmodified 12. In this case, the player may roll

MARGIN OF SUCCESS/FAILURE TABLE

Margin	Result	Example
+7 or more	Spectacular	(Perception) Spotted a housefly at 100 meters
+5 to +6	Extraordinary	(Acrobatics) Double-flip while diving into a pool six stories below
+3 to +4	Good	(Computers) Hacked the local interweb game server
+1 to +2	It'll do…	(Surgery) "Well, there will be some scarring…"
0	Barely made it!	(Acting) Two out of three critics found your performance "forgettable."
–1 to –2	Almost…	(Driving) Stopped two meters into the intersection at the red light
–3 to –4	Bad	(Cryptography) One in every three words *might* make sense…
–5 to –6	Terrible	(Stealth) *Snap!* You found the loudest, driest twig in the sandbox!
–7 or worse	Disastrous	(Security Systems) "Warning! Intruder alert! Release the gas!"

1D6 again and add that die roll result to the previous one. If this extra die roll yields a 6, the player may roll the die again, and add that result to the total, continuing in this fashion until the die finally rolls less than a 6, or until a maximum total unmodified roll result of 30 occurs (5 dice coming up 6s in succession). This roll, plus any modifiers, is the Action Check's final result, and is resolved against the action's TN as normal.

Miraculous Feat: If the maximum stunning success total of 30 is achieved, the character has accomplished a miraculous feat, and automatically succeeds at any attempted action (so long as it is at least physically possible).

Quality of Success (or Failure)

In many cases, the quality of a character's success (or failure) during an Action Check may be almost as important as whether the character succeeded or failed at all. The quality of a character's success refers to the margin by which the character succeeded (or failed) at his Action Check. This outcome is referred to as the character's Margin of Success (MoS) or Margin of Failure (MoF).

When quality of success is important, higher MoS results for an Action Check indicate better results, such as more information from an interrogation, more concessions from a tough negotiator, or a few extra kilometers per hour from a vehicle during a high-speed chase. Conversely, higher MoF results in an Action Check will prove more costly than a simple failure; the interrogation subject can turn to stone or even lapse into a catatonic state, the tough negotiator can stubbornly refuse to haggle or call off the deal entirely, or the speeding car can go into a sudden, uncontrolled spin at the wrong moment.

In game play, a character's Margin of Success (MoS) is recorded as how many points by which his or her Action Check roll succeeded, while the Margin of Failure (MoF) is defined as the number of points by which the roll failed. If a modified roll of 5 is made on an Action Check with a TN of 7, the roll's MoF is 2 (7 – 5 = 2); if the roll result were 9 instead, the MoS would be 2 (9 – 7 = 2).

The Margin of Success/Failure Table provides a rough description of the level of success or failure the character has achieved, based on the number of points by which the roll result succeeded (expressed as positive numbers above the TN) or failed (expressed as negative numbers below the TN).

Net Margin of Success

When determining the quality of success for an Opposed Action, the character that won the exchange must identify the Net Margin of Success, based on the combination of his own result and the opponent's outcome. If the opposing character also had an MoS, the opponent's MoS is subtracted from the winning character's MoS to find the winning character's Net MoS. If the opposing character's roll failed, the character's MoF is added (as a positive number) to the winning character's MoS.

> *During their arm-wrestling match in the bar (an Opposed STR Attribute Check), Busby (with his STR score of 8) and Ethan (STR of 6), each have a TN of 14 to make in order to succeed. The GM has assigned no additional modifiers, so only their respective STR scores may be added to the dice rolls to determine success.*
>
> *Ethan rolls 2D6 and finds his result is 9. Adding +6 for his STR, he attains a final modified roll result of 15. This is 1 point above his TN, so Ethan has succeeded, with a Margin of Success (MoS) of 1. Busby, meanwhile, rolls a 5, adding +8 to the result for his STR for a final result of 13. This means that Busby has actually failed to make his TN, with a Margin of Failure (MoF) of 1 point.*
>
> *Amazingly, Ethan has won his arm-wrestle with Busby, but to find out by how much, Ethan's controlling player adds his MoS of 1 to Busby's MoF of 1. This yields a Net MoS of 2 for Ethan. It's a minor victory, all things considered, but had the Net MoS been greater—say, 5 to 6 points or more—the gamemaster could have decided that the victory as so great it left a very stunned STR 6 character with nasty bruises, a sprained wrist, or even a broken arm!*

EDGE

The Edge (EDG) Attribute represents one of the most powerful tools at a character's disposal, but also one of the most precarious. Unlike other Attributes, EDG is not linked to any Skill, nor is it generally used as an Attribute Check (though the gamemaster may use it to determine the outcome of a game of chance in which the character might take part). Instead, characters may "burn" EDG in game play to affect the outcome of an Action Check, either modifying the roll result by a number of points or forcing the Check to be rerolled.

The maximum number of EDG points a character can burn is equal to the character's EDG score, after which the character's EDG is effectively reduced by the number of points burned. EDG can only be regenerated at the gamemaster's discretion (usually in return for accomplishing good deeds or other such altruism, or simply after an extended period of time). Thus, players should use this special Attribute with caution.

EDG may only be burned to affect an Attribute or Skill Check, and may be burned only once per roll. The roll being modified (or redone) by the burning of EDG points must affect the character burning EDG directly (such as when attempting to change the outcome of one of the character's own Action Checks, or in the case of an attack made against the character). EDG cannot be burned on behalf of another character, or burned repeatedly to force multiple rerolls on the same Action Check.

Burning Edge

EDG points can be burned on a roll immediately before it is made or immediately afterward. Depending on when the EDG points are burned, their effect on the roll can vary significantly.

Before the Roll: Burning EDG points before a roll is a particular gamble (because there is no guarantee that the Check will succeed or fail without it). Doing so, however, can dramatically increase a character's chance of success (or his enemy's chance of failure) by applying a modifier to the roll equal to twice the number of points of EDG spent. These points may be applied as a positive or negative modifier at the EDG-burning player's discretion, and so can be used as a positive modifier to increase a roll result, or as a negative modifier to decrease it. For instance, a technician character can burn 2 points of EDG before making a Technician Skill roll on a repair job—applying a +4 modifier to his roll—or, when threatened by an enemy commando with a gun, can burn 2 EDG points to apply a –4 modifier to the enemy's Small Arms Skill Check roll.

After the Roll: EDG points burned *after* a roll can be spent in two ways. The first modifies the outcome of an Action Check in the same manner as EDG burned before the roll, but at a rate of only 1 point per point of EDG burned (so 2 points of EDG burned after the roll can change the Action Check roll result by 2 points, as desired).

The second method is to force a reroll, discarding the roll result in favor of a new one. This method costs only 1 EDG point, but may make it possible for an even "better" result to occur than could be possible by adding or subtracting EDG points from the roll itself. EDG-forced rerolls do not apply any EDG modifiers that may have previously been placed on them (such as when using EDG to force an opponent to reroll an Action he already modified with with own EDG).

Recovering Edge

The loss of EDG points affects the character as any other Attribute reduction might, particularly in those rare instances where EDG-based Attribute Checks are required, or where the character's life hangs in the balance and EDG is painfully low. Fortunately, however, the loss of Edge through pushing one's luck is rarely permanent. Over time, Edge may be recovered.

The exact methods for a character's recovery of EDG points can vary with the gamemaster's discretion. However, as luck in this case might represent a character's karma, its recovery may be rewarded if the character performs any significant good deeds (the Golden Rule), or suffers a particularly horrible mishap (karmic backlash).

Alternatively, characters unwilling to wait that long (or work that hard) may expend Experience Points (XPs) on Edge recovery, effectively "buying back" the expended Edge points (representing a certain degree of "live and learn"). Characters using the "live and learn" approach must spend 20 XPs to recover each burned Edge point.

Regardless of the method chosen, the maximum number of EDG points a character may recover is equal to the character's original EDG Attribute score prior to spending any EDG points. This means a character starting with an EDG score of 5 cannot recover 6 or more EDG points by natural recovery alone.

Recovering from Zero EDG: The "live and learn" method for recovering EDG is *mandatory* if the character is reduced to an EDG score of 0 in game play. Purchasing additional Edge points beyond the character's starting EDG Attribute score (and up to the character's racial maximum—see *Attribute Maximums*, p. 122) qualifies as improving an Attribute, however, and is covered under *Experience Points* (see p. 333).

Luella Hildebrand, at the controls of a Karnov UR Transport, has found her VTOL caught up in a heavy windstorm just as she was on final approach to a remote supply base airfield. Her Piloting/VTOL Skill has a Skill level of 4, the Linked Attributes of RFL and DEX, and a TN / C Rating of 7 / SA. The GM identifies the heavy windstorm as a –3 roll penalty, while Luella's RFL of 7 and DEX of 6 provide a +1 Linked Attributes modifier. This yields a total roll modifier of +2 (+4 for Skill Level, –3 for windstorm, and +1 for Luella's RFL of 7), meaning that Luella's controlling player will need to make a roll of 5 or higher to succeed.

Confident of success, the player rolls 2D6 and gets a roll result of 3. Combined with the +2 modifier, the final modified result of 5 will mean that Luella crashed the Karnov on the tarmac.

To avert this disaster, Luella's player announces that she will burn 2 points of her EDG Attribute to ensure the Karnov's safe landing. This point is added directly to the modified roll result, bringing it up to a 7—the minimum result Luella needed to land safely.

Jared Travis (DEX 6, INT 8) is attempting to disarm an explosive device using his Demolitions Skill. His Skill level is 3, and the Linked Attributes are DEX and INT. The TN / C for Demolitions is 9 / CA. The device is crude in design, as if hastily thrown together by someone with only a passing understanding of explosives, so the GM declares there will be a +1 roll modifier applied. In addition to the +3 Jared receives for his Skill level, and another +1 for his high INT score, this means Jared's roll will receive a total modifier of +5.

With a TN of 9 to disable the explosives, the player controlling Jared decides to burn 1 point of Edge ahead of the roll. Because he burns the Edge before making the roll, the points burned on the roll are doubled, adding +2 to the roll result modifiers in this case. With a final roll modifier of +7, this means that unless Jared rolls a 2—a natural fumble—his bomb-defusing action will certainly succeed.

Edge and NPCs

In most cases, regular non-player characters (NPCs) will not burn EDG points before or after an Action Check (to avoid bogging down game play). However, gamemasters are encouraged to allow particularly important NPCs (whether friendly or hostile to the player characters) to exercise their own EDG as necessary.

THE FIRES OF HELL

THE CALM BEFORE

KEVIN KILLIANY

DROPSHIP DAVID
OUTBOUND TO PIRATE JUMP POINT
HESPERUS II SYSTEM, LYRAN ALLIANCE
12 JUNE 3076

Franz ignored the bangs and bustle of the launch bay, studying the flat display of his noteputer intently. The DropShip was decelerating toward the jump point and inertia provided what felt like one-third standard gravity—enough to let him lean against the bulkhead instead of clinging to it. In a few hours, the DropShip would be secured to its JumpShip. And after a long, sickening leap through some sort of non-space that Franz still didn't understand, they would be deep within the Rochelle system.

He was a long way from Mississauga.

The planet on the screen was a computer-generated image, toned and shaded to look like a photograph. The not-quite-natural colors indicated surface features, easy to read if you knew the color code. Betting the expanse of blue-gray represented water, Franz guessed the world was mostly ocean. What land there was looked like…well, that depended on whether yellow meant mountains, forest or desert. The top of the sphere, angled toward the virtual camera, was a uniform grey-white. Unless the planet was experiencing an ice age, it was winter in the northern hemisphere.

The data box above the image told him there were three moons and a ring of frozen dust orbiting the planet, but they were not displayed. Unessential to the mission, he guessed.

The gravity was light; for all its ores and rare earths, Rochelle was not a dense world. Its atmosphere was oxygen-rich, but tainted by a few centuries' worth of industrial pollutants. Eye irritants, skin irritants, local plants inedible to off-worlders—the cautions scrolled across the bottom of the screen.

Franz tapped the animation key. An amber line appeared, descending toward the north pole from the edge of the screen. The image of the planet expanded, the scale changing as the line curved, following the world's rotation. The line ended on a narrow sliver of tundra separating a range of jagged mountains from an icy bay. Franz looked up from his noteputer to take in the sleek lines of the Mark VII Landing Craft.

It looked sturdy enough: capable, even while secured to its gimbaled launch cradle. But once clear of the DropShip, it would be facing a hostile world alone. With him riding helplessly inside. What he hated about flying was having his life depend on someone else's skill.

Or luck.

"Right *there* is where it goes wrong."

Franz jumped.

Ethan Naoko was standing there, his arms crossed, practically at Franz's elbow. He hadn't heard the man approach. No surprise there. The Combine ex-pat had been fighting in one military or another longer than Franz had been breathing.

"Where?" Franz asked, hoping Ethan had missed his start of surprise.

"There." The older man leaned down to tap the edge of the noteputer screen where the amber line entered the frame. "As soon as we're committed. That's when everything will go *au diable*."

"No plan survives contact with the enemy." Franz tried to sound worldly.

"No plan survives contact with *reality*," Ethan corrected. "There's no such thing as being ready for everything."

Franz looked back at the noteputer screen. As nearly as he could tell, the scrolling list of biohazards still hadn't looped.

"So, what do you do?"

"Did you know this ship is painted black?"

"What?"

"The *Leopard CV* around us." Ethan's sketchy gesture indicated the launch bay. "DropShips navigate by sensors, passive and aggressive, pinging each other at thousands of kilometers, trading shots at ranges that make no sense at all. They never get close enough to see each other."

"I know that," Franz bristled. "I graduated—"

"Top of your class from the finest military academy in the Inner Sphere, whichever one you think that is." Ethan dismissed his protest. "So why is our DropShip painted black?"

"Huh?"

"Purple, pink, green, paisley, or polka dot; what difference does the *color* of a DropShip make at some ungodly range?" Ethan didn't wait for an answer. "It makes no difference at all. There is no practical reason for a DropShip to be black, no realistic situation where that would be an advantage. But they painted every centimeter of this bird dead flat black *just in case*.

"What do you do? You do everything you can to be ready for whatever's going to happen. And you never, ever, let yourself get comfortable thinking you're ready."

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"Ready, Doc?"

"Grace," Grace corrected. "And as ready as I'm likely to get, Lieutenant Hildebrand. Rochelle presents a pretty potent mix of pollutants and biotoxins, but I think these prophylactics should carry us through."

"Excuse me?"

Grace held up two syringes and a plastic pack of assorted pills.

"Broad spectrum antibiotics, mega-doses of vitamins and metabolic enhancers, fast-acting general antiviral vaccines," she said. "Pretty much the standard mix for a hostile bio-environment, with a couple of tweaks to meet Rochelle-specific hazards."

"It's a wonder the world is inhabited."

"It was a verdant world when humans arrived." Grace shrugged as she turned back to arranging the medical supplies. "We spent the last few centuries trying to kill the planet; we shouldn't be surprised it's fighting back."

Luella opened her mouth, then paused. The medic's voice was packed with a lot more tension than the conversation justified.

"Grace…" She waited until the taller woman was looking at her. "Do you have a concern about this mission?"

"Only an idiot wouldn't have concerns going into combat."

"If things go right, this will not be a battle," Luella countered. "It's a recon run."

"We are rendezvousing with elements of the local resistance who will lead us to some sort of never-before-seen Blakist complex that we are supposed to assess and sabotage—destroy if possible," Grace answered. "To imply this 'recon run' will not

involve at least one firefight is disingenuous at best. Lieutenant."

"I meant," Luella tried again, "the mission parameters are such that we will actively avoid combat whenever possible. We're gathering data to apprise the fleet of conditions on the ground. Sabotage is secondary to espionage.

"And even then, our target is the installation's hard assets, not its personnel. More a demolition job than a battle."

Grace resumed arranging the medical supplies.

Luella noted no two packs of pills were exactly alike. Grace said she had tweaked the doses to meet Rochelle's needs, but she suspected the medic had tailored each preventative treatment—*prophylactic*, to use the doctor's term—to meet the specific medical requirements of each team member.

"You're very good at this."

Grace looked at her sharply, then evidently decided Luella had been sincere. "I take my job seriously."

Luella couldn't think how to continue that conversational vein and abandoned it for the direct approach. "Doctor, is there something I've done to upset or offend?"

The medic blinked, then twisted her mouth in a rueful smile. "Sorry, lieutenant—"

"Luella."

"Sorry, Luella. It's what you do and what I do," she said. "You're here to kill and I'm here to make sure no one dies."

"I am not a killer." Luella felt the blood rising to her face, but kept the tension from her voice. "I fight to save people; to set them free."

"That came out wrong," Grace said. "We're both here for the same reason, to break the Blakists' stranglehold on humanity. The difference is, I will not kill. I've never even fired a weapon."

Luella opened her mouth, then realized she could think of nothing to say. Hoping she didn't look too much like a fish, she closed her mouth.

"No matter how wrong, how evil I believe a person to be, I can not take their life." Grace answered the question Luella had not asked. "I do not have that right."

"Then—"

Luella paused to gather her thoughts. She had seen Grace Luther's record. A native of—Callison? Or was it Kalidasa?—the woman had come to Devlin Stone's service by way of Alys Rousset-Marik's resistance fighters. She had served as medic or comm tech on a half dozen of Rousset-Marik's most daring raids against Blakist strongholds. There was no reconciling a record like that with the doctor's declaration of pacifism.

"That's a little difficult to understand," she said at last.

"Try living it," Grace answered.

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Travis rubbed the inside of his elbow as he entered the hold of the Mark VII. There wasn't any real pain, but knowing not one but *two* needles had punctured his flesh, pumping what had felt like a half liter of fluid into his veins, was enough to trigger the absent rubbing. His body reassuring itself that it was still intact.

Busby was working, back to the door, evidently arranging items in one of the exterior bins on the team's ATV.

"Hildebrand is our vehicle expert," Travis said by way of greeting. "You're the pilot."

Busby grunted. "I am also the heavy weapons expert and I will check what I need to check." The half-grin twisting one side of his mouth took the edge off his words. "That, and I worry I forgot something. Easier to inventory small items while we still have gravity."

"Well, hate to interrupt, but you need to see Doc for your pills and shots. They need time to kick in before we get there."

"I was thinking I'd just take my chances with the Rochelle bugs."

"Bad idea. The way I hear it, once you've had a year or two to adapt, you're just hung over. Until then, you're sick as a dog."

"Lovely."

"I never figured you to be afraid of shots."

"Shots, no. But pills…" The big man shuddered. "My stomach can't take them in gross lots."

"Doc probably has a pill for that."

Busby grunted again.

"Feel this," he said, lifting a backpack from the rack and handing it to Travis.

Travis understood what he was checking before he took the pack. The ripstop fabric was stretched taut and every cinch strap let out to its last hole. It was hard to gauge weight in the one-third gravity of deceleration, but he was willing to bet it pushed the maximum listed capacity.

"Hefty," he commented.

"The kid came in a few minutes ago and added about six kilos of stuff," Busby said. "I was thinking he maybe had some sort of personal special purpose kit he wanted to take along, but he was just stuffing odds and ends. Made no sense."

"Must be counting on Rochelle's three-quarter gee," Travis said, re-racking the pack.

"Someone should maybe explain inertia."

"Doc's got pills for muscle aches." Travis jerked his thumb toward the hatch. "And you need to go get your half-kilo of meds. Now. I don't want you too sick to fight when we're on the surface."

Grinning at the departing Tikonov's colorful complaints, Travis inspected the rest of the team's backpacks.

For all his disparaging the weight of the kid's pack, Busby's massed as much as any other two combined. A hard-shell harness for carrying a squad's worth of heavy weapons, Travis doubted he could lift it in Terran-standard gravity, much less fight with it strapped to his back.

Ethan's ancient pack, on the other hand, was pure Combine, right down to Japanese characters the old fighter insisted were a ward against incoming artillery. He had added the several external pouches—for items found "foraging"—on his own.

Luella's pack was straight regulation, of course, with an additional bandolier of power packs to feed her blazer. Theoretically, the double-barreled laser could take down anything they were likely to come against, but if things got hot and heavy the beast would eat energy packs like popcorn.

Doc's… Well, between the radio and the med kit, her rig had precious little room for anything else. He wasn't surprised to discover the external bayonet sheath was packed with fiberglass splints.

Travis stood for a moment, his hand resting on his own racked

pack, and looked around the landing craft's crowded hold. Individuals. Competent individuals, but individuals.

Not a team.

Even the four who *had* been a team—or part of the team when Recon 4 included Richie and Don—were individuals again. He'd seen it before. When a small unit took losses, it stopped being a unit. Or stopped being the same unit. Even without new blood entering the fold, the survivors had to relearn their reflexes, rethinking what and who they could count on.

Which was why you always brought in new blood as soon as practical. You wanted all the pieces in place before the unit reformed its heart.

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DROPSHIP DAVID
PIRATE JUMP POINT
HESPERUS II SYSTEM, LYRAN ALLIANCE
13 JUNE 3076

"Sir."

Travis looked up from his 'puter to find Luella hovering in front of the podium. At first blush, the idea of using a podium for lectures in zero-gee made little sense. But then again, assuming it was bolted securely to the deck, a podium provided a secure anchor to keep the speaker from drifting away in the middle of a salient point. Not to mention giving the audience an unmistakable visual cue as to which way they should be oriented.

Luella was oriented correctly, without a single unsecured hair to indicate the lack of gravity. Since she was neither obviously clinging to anything nor drifting away, Travis surmised she had one boot snug in a foot-loop as she held the no-gee equivalent of attention. He wondered what, if anything, she had retained of his admonition that she tone down the spit-and-polish in private.

Then he noted the others entering the long cabin behind her and toned down his own attitude. She was following protocol, maintaining order and decorum in front of their command. He might think she was a bit too rigid about the regs, but he could hardly justify being pissed at her for following them.

"Lieutenant?" he asked mildly.

"I had a conversation with Grace Luther." Luella's voice was pitched for his ears alone. "And I couldn't help but have some concerns."

"Because she's a pacifist?"

"You knew?"

"I've been lying about her martial arts scores to keep her certified as Recon 4's medic and comm tech for over a year now." Travis shook his head. "She's the best argument for conscription I've ever seen."

"Conscription?"

"At gun point, the way I got the story," Travis said. "Seems Alys needed a doctor fast and raided a Universalist medical mission."

"How did she become medic in a Stone's Lament recon unit?"

"Same way the rest of us did. Orders." Travis raised his hand just enough to stop Luella's next words. "She's good at her job and she does it when all hell's breaking lose. I suggest you table any concerns you might have about Doc."

"Yes, sir."

"Was that all?"

Luella visibly considered before shaking her head. Travis was willing to bet someone else had raised a red flag in her by-the-book mind and was glad to see she was learning.

The rest of Recon 4 was loosely organized around the cabin with only the new kid looking anywhere near as regulation as his XO. Had he let them go too far? Let them get too informal, too irregular? Perhaps. But just as strict protocols and procedures engendered effective performance under fire, the improvisation that could save a mission—and lives—sprang from knowing what your companions were capable of.

It was a thin line.

"Everybody reviewed the mission specs?" Travis asked.

"Yes, sir." Franz snapped out a parade ground answer.

Luella nodded, Ethan looked comically blank, and neither Busby nor Grace acknowledged the rhetorical question.

"What are we after, Naoko?"

"Not a clue, sir," Ethan answered. "That's why we're after it. The Robes are dug in on Rochelle for no apparent reason and the local good guys got word out there's some sort of installation on the north continent. Not big, but probably important."

Franz had his hand up, like he was in grade school. Travis suppressed a smile as he nodded for the boy to speak.

"We land just below the arctic circle and link with elements of the Rochelle resistance. We then travel south by ATV, following the Elbe River, before cutting west to the suspected location of the installation. We observe, but do not engage, any Blakist forces en route. If we determine the installation represents a viable threat to the liberation fleet, we neutralize it. Ten days after insertion, we break radio silence and relay all data to the liberation fleet for go/no-go decision." The kid took a breath. "Sir."

"Essentially correct," Travis acknowledged.

For the next twenty minutes he reviewed the mission, confirming that everyone was familiar with the backup contingencies, alternate routes, secondary and tertiary objectives. His people had done their homework. Questions were sensible and on-target and—no surprise—Ethan and Busby had thought up a couple of new angles.

"People," he said when it was clear all the points had been covered, "we're going into harm's way for a real reason this time. There's a Blakist base that needs destroying. There's a planet full of people who need setting free. We are the eyes and ears of Stone's Lament. Just us; no other teams going in. If Rochelle is going to be liberated, it's up to us to pave the way.

"We—all of us—have never gone into fire as a team before. It's going to be hot; we're going to get burned. But if we keep our wits, do our jobs, and work as a team, the parts that get burned away will be the ones we don't need. It'll hurt, but we'll come out the other side tempered—sharper, harder and tougher.

"We've got just under an hour before we jump," he concluded. "Use that time to do whatever you have to do to get yourself ready. Then be ready. We're going to hand the Robes their heads and live to tell the tale."

"There is a hero in each of us. Join the fight against oppression! Contact your local recruiter today!"

OVERVIEW

The *BattleTech* universe is a rich tapestry of factions and cultures embroiled in a state of continuous conflict. For new players and old, the scope can be a little overwhelming at first, but the "organic" process of character creation is designed to remedy this by enabling players to build their characters using blocks of points and statistics called Life Modules. When completed, these modules yield a character whose origins and backstory fit within the fabric of the *BattleTech* universe while meshing with the player's unique character concept.

This chapter covers the process of creating player characters and unique NPCs for use in *A Time of War* role-playing campaigns. Additional rules provided at the end of this chapter offer a streamlined, points-only system that can be used to generate minor NPCs, as well as rules for enhancing characters in later game play using Experience Points (XP).

CHOOSING THE CHARACTER CONCEPT

A vital first step to character design is for the player to choose a character concept. This concept can be as basic as "a MechWarrior" or as complex as "a noble scion, expelled from the family when she refused to marry against her will, turned mercenary tanker and privateer." The more details the player can come up with for his character, the more smoothly things will go during the character generation process. Keep in mind that character design is best accomplished by first conferring with the gamemaster, to ensure the best fit for the final character with the other player characters and the game campaign to come.

Working With the Gamemaster

When working a new player character into a campaign, the player should learn a number of key details from the gamemaster before proceeding. Among the most important are the type of campaign the gamemaster intends to run, its era, and—for the player character party—any affiliation and character type limits. The gamemaster should have worked out all of these factors before character creation, paving the way for the players to create a clear and coherent party.

Campaign Type: In this context, a role-playing game's campaign type reflects the gamemaster's general plan for the players' exploits. Is it a short adventure scenario, set to begin and end in just a few sessions when a specific mission goal is met, or is it an open-ended series of adventures with no real pre-defined end? Is it military-themed? Corporate? Police? Mercenary? Clan? Solaris? Is combat expected to be routine or infrequent? Answering these questions can easily fill in the blanks and provide a guide for the player to build at least a basic concept with.

Campaign Era: Another major issue for character creation, the era in which the campaign is set establishes a number of limits, which can include affiliations, vehicle and equipment assignments, and Life Path Modules. Will the adventure be set in the Golden Age of the first Star League, or the darkness of the Age of War that preceded it? Or will it be during the late Succession Wars, when a technological renaissance gradually reintroduced the war-weary Successor States to the wonders of lostech and the birth of

Though trained for combat and armed for the field, Doctor Maria Staten has sworn an oath to do no harm.

the Steiner-Davion legacy? Or perhaps the Clan Invasion era, with its devastating culture clash, or the Word of Blake Jihad with its rampant chaos and the horrors of total war?

Affiliation Limits: For whatever reason—whether as a key component of the campaign type or a pretext for a subplot—the gamemaster may set affiliation limits on character creation, locking the players into a preset number of originating factions.

Character Type Limits: As much of the action in the *BattleTech* universe happens on the battlefield, most role-playing campaigns in this setting will likely be military. Based on the gamemaster's plans for the adventure, however, certain fields of expertise may not fit with the rest of the party. For instance, a campaign centered on an all-BattleMech command may find little use for a character who can only pilot a VTOL.

CHARACTER CREATION BASICS

Once a player has determined his character concept (with any necessary aid from the gamemaster), he can build his character. Players can accomplish this in one of two methods outlined below, based on the players' preferences and the nature of the character being created. Both of these methods are driven by the use of Experience Points (XP) to buy the character's Attributes, Traits and Skills.

The first of these, the Life Modules approach, allows the player to build his character organically by selecting batches of XPs tailored to specific phases of a character's life experiences. The more Life Modules taken, the older and more experienced the character becomes. The Life Modules method also produces a basic character background, broadly defining his life from birth to the start of his playing adventures. Was he raised on a farm and joined the service to see the universe and protect his home realm from its enemies? Or was he a scion of nobility, sent off to the best preparatory schools and academies to uphold the family's honor as a MechWarrior? Or was he a drifter, a war orphan who came of age on the streets, and now wanders the Inner Sphere to avoid authorities and somehow find a better life?

The points-only approach bypasses Life Modules in favor of a more free-form method where the character's XP Pool is directly spent on the desired Attributes, Traits and Skills. This approach leaves the definition of the character's background completely up to the players, and minimizes any quirks that can arise from the use of Life Modules. This approach is best used when time for character design is limited, when the character in question is an NPC, or when the provided Life Modules do not fit the adventure at hand.

Once all Attributes, Traits and Skills are set by either method, the player can then spend any currency the character has on starting equipment, while also filling in any additional personal information required (such as physical descriptions, names and other biographical data).

The XP Pool

All characters in *A Time of War* are built using XPs, either applied directly to the character's Attributes, Traits and Skills or spent on Life Modules. The Experience Points made available to the character at the start of character creation constitute the character's XP Pool. As Life Modules are purchased, their XP costs must be subtracted from the XP Pool and the XPs they award must be distributed among the character statistics indicated by the module's data.

A character may not spend more XPs than he receives for his starting allotment (see below) on Life Modules or individual statistics. However, at the end of the character creation stage—and before the character can enter game play—the controlling player should not have any XPs left over.

Starting Allotments

All starting characters in *A Time of War* receive an initial allotment of 4,500 XPs—a value that represents the baseline experience of a normal human character 21 years of age at the start of game play. At the gamemaster's discretion, however, this amount can be increased by 100 XPs for every year of age over 21 (or reduced by 100 XPs for every year of age below 21). Remember that these ages are only approximations; if the character is built using the Life Modules system, his final age—determined by the player's choice in Life Modules—may vary.

Clan Warriors: To reflect their harsher upbringing and intensive training regimen, Clan characters from the warrior caste begin the creation process with a starting allotment of 5,000 XPs, and receive an additional 150 XPs per year of age over 18 (or 150 XPs less for each year of age below 18).

Life Modules

Life Modules are the building blocks of organic character design in *A Time of War*. Each Life Module is identified by a stage number (0 through 4) that reflects its place in the character's overall development, along with the module's name and its cost (in XPs). The module's name roughly defines its general nature at that point in the character's life (for example, the High School module reflects the period when the character attended a traditional high school). The cost defines how many XPs are spent from the character's XP Pool when the module is selected.

Though the XP Pool defines the character's hard limit in terms of purchasing Life Modules, most starting characters are ready for play after choosing five Life Modules in total. However, if the gamemaster (and the character's XP Pool) permits, characters can be created using as many as ten Life Modules or as few as one. In more extreme instances of this, the starting XP Pool may need to be adapted to suit.

Following the module's name and XP cost is a brief description of what the module represents, followed by the bulk of its game data. Prerequisites—which identify any character requirements necessary to take the module—are listed immediately after the description. A listing of fixed XP values then follows, where the module pre-assigns experience to the character's Attributes, Skills and Traits. Flexible XPs, if listed, may also appear after these pre-assigned XPs, indicating additional points the player can spend as he sees fit. All XPs assigned in a Life Module—including flexible XPs—*must* be assigned before the character can advance to the next module. Additional notes (if any) may appear after this data, to describe any special requirements or features the module may have.

During character design, the player must allocate all of the module's listed XPs to the character's sheet, keeping track of the total XPs assigned to each Attribute, Trait and Skill, and applying any flexible XPs either to these Attributes, Traits and

TYPICAL CAMPAIGN BASICS FOR A TIME OF WAR

Given the size and scope of the *BattleTech* universe, it's easy to be overwhelmed by the options available for a potential role-playing campaign. The following are just some of the choices, provided for quick ideas that can be developed for a full campaign or a one-shot pick-up adventure.

Popular Campaign Types

The campaign type should be pretty clear from the word "go"—a one-sentence description of the adventure's focus, be it the exploits of a mercenary force (by far one of the most popular campaign types in *BattleTech*, because it allows player characters to hail from almost any affiliation), the struggles of an upstart MechWarriors' stable on Solaris VII (emphasizing the intrigue of competing factions, corporations and criminal organizations on the infamous Game World) or the hard-fought campaign of a House military force facing its trial by fire in a new war. Other effective campaign types may focus on the adventures of a corporate security force, police actions on some backwater world, or even a space exploration campaign backed by the likes of ComStar's Explorer Corps or the Interstellar Expeditions group.

The type of campaign can help determine the range of characters that will best fit the party. More military-style groups will likely focus a lot of game time on the soldiers and other combatants, while corporate security and police campaigns will see more interaction with the civil sector (and generally a lot less heavy weaponry). Exploration missions can feature a hodgepodge of character types, with greater emphasis on those with a scientific or diplomatic bent, backed up by some more combat-oriented characters "just in case."

Popular Campaign Eras

The *BattleTech* universe spans a future timeline more than a thousand years from that of present-day Earth. While technically all of that time is playable, the most popular eras are the Age of War and Star League period (collectively called the Star League Era), the Succession Wars and aftermath period (Succession Wars Era), the Clan Invasion period (Clan Invasion Era), the period surrounding the FedCom Civil War (Civil War Era), the Word of Blake Jihad (Jihad Era), and the period after the Jihad through to the 3140s (Dark Age Era).

These eras of play each reflect different times where specific technologies and character types may or may not exist (depending on the region of space in which the gamemaster chooses to set the adventure). For example, Clan characters and equipment cannot be used in Inner Sphere or Periphery-based campaigns set in the Succession Wars or Star League eras. Likewise, characters hailing from the Free Rasalhague Republic may not exist in a campaign set during the Star League period (unless the game is specifically set in the time before the original Rasalhague state was conquered by the Draconis Combine). ComStar, Clan and Word of Blake characters and equipment cannot be used in the Star League era anywhere, though ComStar may appear in the Succession Wars (as can the Clans, so long as the adventure is set in the Clan homeworlds and the phenotypes are carefully monitored by the gamemaster).

Affiliations

Unless the player group in question is irregular in nature (typically mercenary or pirate), there will likely be restrictions on the affiliations that players can choose. A party of House Kurita regulars, for example, would not welcome a character of non-Combine origins, especially those from Houses Steiner or Davion, with whom they warred most often throughout the history of their realm.

More multi-national parties, such as mercenaries, pirates, Solaris stables or parties from a large interstellar organization (including mega-corporations like StarCorps, international alliances like Interstellar Expeditions or major international factions like ComStar and Word of Blake), may permit player characters from any background, but gamemasters should be prepared to temper the characters' allegiances so they can function as a team. Self-avowed Davion supremacists in a party dominated by Capellan-born characters, for example, would cause havoc for an ongoing adventure.

Character Types

As a war game universe largely centered on giant, walking BattleMechs, it comes as no small surprise that the MechWarrior is a dominant character type for most adventures. However, with so many avenues for adventure, *A Time of War* supports the full spectrum of character types, from the humblest civilian wage slave to the mightiest MechWarrior champions of Solaris VII. Still, care should be taken in selecting the characters best suited for an adventure.

Many characters can be defined by a single class, based on what they do (though *A Time of War* does not strictly stratify them as such). Warrior characters can range from infantry to vehicle crews to MechWarriors and fighter pilots. Technician types can range from mechanics and computer techs to BattleMech technicians and aerospace engineers. Scouts can range from special infantrymen, fast vehicle drivers and undercover police to more sophisticated international "man of mystery" spies and surveillance experts. If a game is expected to see a lot of combat, warrior types and scouts might be preferred over technicians. Campaigns based on political or corporate intrigue, meanwhile, may emphasize characters with more social and mental skills, like technicians, scientists and diplomats.

A good player character mix should be able to partake in most of the adventure's action at any given time. Too wild a mix, and the campaign can easily exclude one portion of the party while the rest get all the limelight.

Skills, or to any others they decide to add along the way. Once all modules are completed and any additional XPs are applied in the final stage of character design, the total XPs allotted to each Attribute, Trait and Skill will define their final values (if any) at the start of game play.

Just as importantly, the modules selected will also provide a short description of the character's origins and background. This gives the character a firm grounding in the *BattleTech* universe and potential hooks the gamemaster and player can use for later adventures.

POINTS-ONLY CHARACTER CREATION (OPTIONAL)

An alternative to the Life Modules system, recommended mainly for creating NPCs in a hurry, the points-only method allows players to spend XPs directly on the desired Attributes, Traits and Skills. Players using the points-only approach need only determine the character's starting XP allotment and spend these points as indicated under the standard rules for purchasing Attributes, Traits and Skills (after the Life Modules).

Players using the points-only method may proceed directly to *Purchasing Attributes, Traits and Skills* (p. 85). However, even when using a points-only approach, it is highly recommended that players seeking a more authentic feel for their characters review any Life Modules that could mesh with the chosen character design for ideas on appropriate character features. For example, a points-only character with a Federated Suns background could benefit from purchasing the same Attributes, Traits and Skills found in the FedSuns Stage 0 Life Module.

> *Jeff decides to create a character in Leon's campaign, which is already in progress. He knows the campaign will include a combined-arms unit of 'Mechs and tanks. Since most other players plan on playing MechWarriors, Jeff decides to play a tanker to be different. Because Leon's campaign has already started, Jeff decides to use the points-only method of character generation, so he can get his character up and running a bit faster. Leon grants him 5,000 XPs to start with, which Jeff will use to purchase Attributes, Traits and Skills a la carte.*
>
> *Roy, another player in Leon's campaign, opted to create his character—a MechWarrior—using the Life Modules system. He too received 5,000 XPs from Leon to start with, and will use them to develop his character by purchasing Life Modules.*

PREREQUISITES AND ACCUMULATING EXPERIENCE

During character creation—regardless of the method chosen—players must be mindful of the prerequisites and Experience Points their characters will accumulate. Prerequisites identify any restrictions or requirements the final character design must meet in order to use a particular Life Module, Skill Field or other feature. Accumulating XPs, meanwhile, identifies how developed the character's Attributes, Traits and Skills will be throughout the character's progression.

Handling Prerequisites

Prerequisites need not be met before a player takes a desired Life Path or Skill Field, but they must be met at the end of the character's design. For example, a character who enters Intelligence/Covert Operations Training will find that its prerequisites include a minimum INT score of 4, a minimum WIL score of 5 and a minimum of +2 Trait Points (TP) in the Connections Trait. Odds are, these prerequisites will not be met by the time the character reaches this stage, but these minimum requirements must be tracked and fulfilled during the final stages of character design in order to ensure that the character is legal for play.

Modified Prerequisites: When using the Life Modules system, or when selecting successive Skill Fields, players may occasionally find that some prerequisites may change for the same Attribute, Trait or Skill. For example, military Basic Training requires a Rank Trait and minimum INT and WIL Attribute scores of 3, while Anti-'Mech Infantry special training requires the Infantry Field and a minimum WIL of 5. Whenever a character encounters a situation like this, the more restrictive prerequisites apply. In the case of Attributes, Skills or positive-TP Trait prerequisites, the higher minimum (or lower maximum) of any such statistics will supersede the lower minimum (or higher maximum) prerequisites. For negative-TP Traits, the higher TP minimum (and the lower TP maximum) applies instead (so a maximum –3 TP Trait would supersede a –2 TP Trait maximum).

Conflicting Prerequisites: In some cases, a character may attempt to choose a module or Skill Field that has conflicting prerequisites with another module or Skill Field (such as selecting a module for a different affiliation than the one with which the character was created). In the event of such a conflict, the player cannot take the most recently selected module that conflicts with the older, established one.

Gamemaster Arbitration: In the event that the above rules do not mesh with a player's desired character development, the gamemaster may override the prerequisites for the player's benefit.

Accumulating Experience

When selecting Life Modules, XPs are largely assigned to specific Attributes, Traits and Skills. These XPs may be positive (preceded by a plus sign) or negative (preceded by a minus sign), regardless of whether the Attribute, Trait or Skill in question is positive or negative. Players must keep track of these XPs, adding together all the values accumulated from each module for each character statistic (adding a negative value is the same as subtracting a positive number).

Flexible XPs: Most modules also allocate XPs to the character as Flexible XP, or allow the player to choose where the Experience Points go from a range of possible Attributes, Traits or Skills. If no specific instructions accompany an allotment of XPs, the player may apply these flexible XP as a lump sum to any desired Attribute, Trait or Skill his character already possesses, add them to a new Trait or Skill, or break up the XP allotment and disperse the points as desired to a selection of both.

Subskills: Some XPs are allocated to Skills with largely undefined subskills (ending in "/Any," "/Affiliation," or similar terms). If the Subskill is identified as Affiliation, the character must allocate XPs to the Subskill based on his own affiliation. If the Subskill is less well defined (subskills listed as Any), the player may choose the specific Subskill for the character's Skill and allocate the XPs to that. If the character already possesses the chosen Subskill, the XPs accumulate as normal.

CHOOSING LIFE MODULES

Once a player has a character concept in mind, the next step is to choose the character's Life Modules. As noted above, Life Modules are identified by stages, which define their placement in a character's development.

Each Life Module comes with an XP cost, which is subtracted from the character's starting XP Pool during the creation process. A character cannot purchase more Life Modules than his starting XP Pool can afford.

STAGE 0: AFFILIATION

Stage 0 reflects the character's origins, essentially defining his cultural heritage. Establishing the character's affiliation provides the character with bonuses and features based on this factor, and may also set limits on which Life Modules may or may not be selected for this character later.

All characters must select a Stage 0 Life Module.

Sub-Affiliation (Optional)

In most cases, the various affiliations available to players represent vast stellar empires, which are further divided into regional sub-affiliations. Players interested in greater depth may add a desired sub-affiliation to the main affiliation when completing this stage.

Universal Fixed Experience Points

Regardless of their original affiliation, all characters in *A Time of War* must purchase a mandatory universal allotment of fixed XPs in Stage 0 that establishes a minimum level of Attributes, as well as the character's general awareness of his surroundings and his ability to understand at least one of his home realm's main languages. Also provided are XPs toward the common tongue of English (which is spoken in all corners of human-occupied space). Thus, in addition to all XPs awarded from the character's starting affiliation, all characters using Life Modules must purchase the following (at a cost of 850 XPs): +100 XP to each Attribute, Language/Affiliation Primary or Secondary Language Skill (+20 XP), Language/English Skill (+20 XP) and Perception Skill (+10 XP).

STAGE 1: EARLY CHILDHOOD

All characters using Life Modules must choose one—and only one—Stage 1 Life Module, reflecting their early childhood development. Early Childhood is roughly defined as the character's life from birth through ten years of age.

STAGE 2: LATE CHILDHOOD

All characters using Life Modules may choose one—and only one—Stage 2 Life Module, reflecting their critical teenage years and—in most societies—their coming of age. Late Childhood is roughly defined as the character's life from age 11 through 18 years of age. A Stage 2 module is required if the character will continue his development into stages 3 or 4.

STAGE 3: HIGHER EDUCATION (OPTIONAL)

Stage 3 reflects an optional phase in a character's life: Higher Education. This period covers any enlistment or academy training the character may undertake after achieving maturity, which may include military or police training for a state or local government, civilian colleges and universities, technical or vocational schooling.

Stage 3 is a wholly elective part of character development, but required for any character expected to serve in a government or corporate-sponsored military, paramilitary or police field. Also, characters who aim for careers in education, engineering, law, medicine, science or similar "high-level" fields of expertise must possess the proper schooling to back it up.

A character may select more than one Stage 3 Life Module, but can never repeat the *same* Stage 3 Life Module. Stage 3 modules differ from other stages in that they primarily award Skills in batches called Fields, which represent standardized forms of training. A single Stage 3 Life Module may award from 1 to 3 Fields at a time, but as more Fields generally also mean more time spent in this stage, this can produce characters of more advanced age before they enter "real life." For this reason, gamemasters are encouraged to limit starting characters to no more than two Stage 3 Life Modules during the creation process.

Scholastic Options

Based on the character's affiliation (and possibly other factors, such as Childhood Stage choices), a range of options may exist for the controlling player to choose from when selecting a Higher Education Stage Module. These scholastic options represent the different colleges and universities the character may attend, each of which may provide different curricula based on their focus and resources.

Fields

All Higher Education modules provide Skills to the character in batches called Fields, but based on the nature of the institution, a character may be provided with as few as one Field, and as many as three per module. These Fields are generally described as Basic Training, Advanced Training and Special Training. (A special fourth Field may be offered, called Officer Training, but this is actually treated as a repetition of the Higher Education module even though it takes place concurrently with another associated Stage 3 module.)

A minimum of one Field—Basic Training—must be chosen when the character enrolls in one of the schools represented in the Stage 3 modules. At the player's choice (or as a result of the module's requirements), this may be followed immediately by an appropriate Advanced Training Field. Only a character who has received both Basic Training and an appropriate Advanced Training Field may select a Special Training Field (if any are offered). Taking a Special Training Field, however, adds to the Stage 3 time requirement and costs additional XPs.

STAGE 4: REAL LIFE (OPTIONAL)

The final stage of character development before game play begins is called Real Life because it reflects the period of the character's life after all schooling is done and he proceeds into the "real world"—entering the workforce, striking out in search of adventure or serving his state in a tour of duty. Like Stage 3, Stage 4 Life Modules are optional.

Stage 4 may even be repeated as desired. However, if a character repeats the same module, he only adds the Skill XPs awarded it; Attribute and Trait XPs are not applied beyond the first time (even though the module's cost remains the same).

Roy conducts a casual preview of the Life Modules before diving into his character creation process, even though he has a solid idea of his character's background and general makeup. He decides that his MechWarrior's development will be fairly typical, tracing the life of a child of common origin (but with a strong military tradition that drives him to serve as a MechWarrior), who comes of age in military school and then ventures off to a MechWarrior academy. Before game play begins, Roy will also take steps to ensure that his warrior gets seasoned with at least one tour of combat duty in service to his state. Because Roy is a fan of House Davion, he opts to make his character a citizen of the Federated Suns.

With this general plan in mind, Roy chooses Federated Suns for Stage 0, Blue Collar for Stage 1, Military School for Stage 2, Military Academy for Stage 3 and at least one Tour of Duty module for Stage 4. These choices made, Roy launches into the modules to see how each one will shape his character.

STAGE 0 MODULES: AFFILIATIONS

"Hey, where did you say you were from again?"

A character's affiliation identifies his or her realm of birth, and is not so much a stage of life as a factor that helps define the character's ethnic and cultural background. Thus, choosing an affiliation is referred to as Stage 0, and costs a relatively minimal amount of starting XP. The affiliations presented here reflect the major realms, minor states, Clan and independent factions that exist in the *BattleTech* universe as of the mid-3070s.

Sub-Affiliations: Each of the major affiliations presented here includes sub-affiliations, regional or cultural sub-sects of the main affiliation, which reflect a more specific heritage and political inclination. Sub-affiliation XPs are awarded in addition to those associated with the main affiliation and are accounted for in the module's total cost, so it is most efficient for a character to choose both a primary affiliation and a sub-affiliation for their Stage 1 module.

Sub-affiliations are ultimately optional, however. If desired, the gamemaster may permit characters to take a more "vanilla" approach and ignore the sub-affiliation XPs—but as this option does not affect the module's XP cost, it effectively wastes potential character experience.

UNIVERSAL EXPERIENCE POINTS

Remember that, in addition to those provided by affiliation and chosen module, the universal fixed Experience Points mentioned earlier in this chapter must be applied to the character as well at this stage (see p. 52). As noted, these universal XPs automatically subtract 850 XPs from the character's starting XP Pool.

CHANGING AFFILIATIONS

Most of these affiliations are presented with the presumption that the character will retain his or her ethnic allegiance into adulthood, but circumstances such as capture by a rival Clan or defection to another state can prompt a change in the character's final allegiance.

Players wishing to incorporate such changes into their backstory can do so by selecting two affiliations rather than one. The first affiliation must be the one the character was born into, and the second must be the affiliation with which the character ends the creation process. The controlling player must then divide all XP values (including the purchase XP costs) for both affiliations by 2, rounding any half points down, and apply the XPs for both to all relevant Attributes, Traits and Skills. If either affiliation has restrictions noted, only those of the final affiliation apply.

Knighted by none other than the Captain-General himself, a new applicant proudly joins the ranks of the Knights of the Inner Sphere.

CAPELLAN CONFEDERATION (HOUSE LIAO)

MODULE COST	150 XP

Having suffered badly at the hands of its neighbors for centuries, the Capellan Confederation has become a virtual police state, its people wary of enemies within and without and devoted to survival at any cost. Nearly destroyed by the Steiner-Davion offensive in the Fourth Succession War, the determined Capellan people rallied with fanatical zeal that reached its apex with the ascent of Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao, whose *Xin Sheng* (Rebirth) movement revitalized the nation and marked a resurgence of the ancient Chinese culture that now dominates the realm.

Primary Language	Mandarin Chinese
Secondary Language	Russian, Cantonese, Vietnamese, English
Fixed XPs	[Attributes] WIL (+50 XP); [Traits] Exceptional Attribute/EDG (+100 XP), Compulsion/Paranoia (–100 XP); [Skills] Language/Any Capellan Secondary (+10 XP), Protocol/Capellan (+10 XP), Martial Arts (+5 XP)

Sub-Affiliations

Capellan Commonality	[Attributes] EDG (+50 XP); [Traits] Wealth (+15 XP); [Skills] Language/Any FedSuns (+5 XP), Protocol/FedSuns (+5 XP)
Liao Commonality	[Attributes] INT (+50 XP); [Traits] Reputation (–25 XP); [Skills] Language/Choose Any FedSuns or Lyran (+15 XP), Protocol/Choose either FedSuns or Lyran (+10 XP), Arts/Any (+10 XP), Martial Arts (+15 XP)
Sian Commonality	[Attributes] WIL (+75 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Hatred of Federated Suns (–135 XP), Citizenship (+50 XP), Connections (+50 XP); [Skills] Interest/Capellan History (+10 XP), Protocol/Capellan (+15 XP), Language/Any Capellan Secondary (+10 XP)
St. Ives Commonality	[Attributes] WIL (+50 XP), EDG (+50 XP); [Traits] Reputation (–100 XP), Wealth (+50 XP); [Skills] Language/Any FedSuns (+15 XP), Protocol/Capellan (–15 XP), Protocol/FedSuns (+10 XP), Arts/Any (+5 XP), Martial Arts (+10 XP)
Victoria Commonality	[Attributes] WIL (+35 XP); [Traits] Connections (+50 XP), Wealth (–50 XP); [Skills] Language/Any (+15 XP), Negotiation (+10 XP), Martial Arts (+15 XP)
Flexible XPs	None

Notes: Child labor is legal in the Confederation, so Capellan characters may take the Civilian Job Stage 4 module in place of a Stage 2 module (advancing immediately to age 18 in the process).

Capellan characters may not take the Military School Stage 2 module or *any* Stage 3 module unless they also purchase the Citizenship Trait.

AFFILIATION

DRACONIS COMBINE (HOUSE KURITA)

MODULE COST	150 XP

House Kurita's rigid society is patterned strongly on the ideals of feudal Japan and allows for very few exceptions. An overriding belief in the superiority of Combine honor and the destiny of Kurita dominion over all has produced a society that is harsh and distrustful of all gaijin (outsiders), while idolizing principles of decorum and personal honor.

Primary Language	Japanese
Secondary Language	Arabic, English, Swedenese
Fixed XPs	[Attributes] WIL (+50 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Xenophobia (–100 XP), Wealth (–50 XP), choose one: Pain Resistance or Combat Sense (+100 XP); [Skills] Arts/Oral Tradition (+15 XP), Martial Arts (+10 XP), Protocol/Combine (+15 XP)

Sub-Affiliations

Azami	[Attributes] WIL (+90 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Xenophobia (–50 XP), Equipped (–50 XP), Thick-Skinned (+100 XP), Wealth (–25 XP); [Skills] Language/Arabic (+10 XP), Language/Japanese (–10 XP), Martial Arts (+10 XP), Melee Weapons (+10 XP), Riding (+5 XP), Survival (+10 XP)
Benjamin District	[Traits] Compulsion/Paranoid of Combine Government (–50 XP), Connections (+50 XP), Patient (+25 XP), Wealth (+35 XP); [Skills] Art/Oral Tradition (+5 XP), Martial Arts (+10 XP), Protocol/Combine (+15 XP), Streetwise/Combine (+10 XP)
Dieron District	[Attributes] INT (+5 XP), WIL (–5 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Xenophobia (+10 XP), Connections (+10 XP), Enemy (–10 XP), Wealth (+10 XP); [Skills] Interest/Star League History (+5 XP), Language/Any (+5 XP), Negotiation (+5 XP), Arts/Any (+5 XP)
New Samarkand (Galedon) District	[Attributes] WIL (+100 XP), CHA (–50 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Hatred of Federated Suns (–50 XP), Connections (+50 XP); [Skills] Interest/Combine History (+10 XP), Melee Weapons (+15 XP), Negotiation (+5 XP), Protocol/Combine (+10 XP), Streetwise/Combine (+10 XP)
Pesht District	[Attributes] WIL (+100 XP), EDG (–25 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Hatred of Clans (–100 XP), Connections (+20 XP), Wealth (+50 XP); [Skills] Martial Arts (+10 XP), Melee Weapons (+15 XP), Protocol/Combine (+20 XP), Streetwise/Combine (+10 XP)
Flexible XPs	[Skills] +10 XP to any one of the following Skills: Archery, Melee Weapons or Thrown Weapons

Notes: Child labor is legal in the Draconis Combine, so Combine characters may take the Civilian Job Stage 4 module in place of a Stage 2 module (advancing immediately to age 18 in the process).

AFFILIATION

FEDERATED SUNS (HOUSE DAVION)

AFFILIATION

MODULE COST	150 XP

The social and cultural structure of the Federated Suns hails mostly from feudal England, with additional influences from France and other Western European societies. Ever mindful of its political and military situation, the Suns is divided into military sub-states called Marches, where the threat of invasion from nearby realms colors everyday life. This "border culture" is in stark contrast to the realm's more sophisticated and affluent inner worlds, or the oft-neglected worlds of the Periphery Outback.

Primary Language	English
Secondary Language	French, German, Hindi, Russian
Fixed XPs	[Traits] Choose Natural Aptitude/Protocol or Natural Aptitude/Strategy (+100 XP; see *Notes* below); [Skills] Protocol/FedSuns (+10 XP)
Sub-Affiliations	
Capellan March	[Attributes] WIL (+40 XP); [Traits] Connections (+25 XP), Compulsion/Hatred of Capellan Confederation (–50 XP); [Skills] Protocol/FedSuns (+10 XP), Interest/FedSuns History (+10 XP), Language/Choose one from Cantonese, German, Mandarin, Spanish or Russian (+5 XP)
Crucis March	[Attributes] WIL (+50 XP), EDG (–50 XP); [Skills] Arts/Any (+10 XP), Interest/FedSuns History (+15 XP), Protocol/FedSuns (+15 XP)
Draconis March	[Attributes] EDG (+25 XP); [Traits] Connections (+20 XP), Compulsion/Hatred of Draconis Combine (–30 XP); [Skills] Arts/Any (+10 XP), Interest/FedSuns History (+10 XP), Protocol/FedSuns (+5 XP)
Outback	[Attributes] STR (+50 XP), BOD (+150 XP), WIL (+100 XP), INT (–100 XP); [Traits] Illiterate (–50 XP), Reputation (–50 XP), Wealth (–100 XP); [Skills] Arts/Any or Interest/Any (+10 XP), Streetwise/FedSuns (+10 XP), Survival (+20 XP)
Flexible XPs	None

Notes: A minimum INT score of 4 is required for any FedSuns characters that select Natural Aptitude/Protocol or Natural Aptitude/Strategy in Stage 0.

For his character's Stage 0, Roy has chosen the Federated Suns as his affiliation, with the Crucis March as a sub-affiliation. This module costs 150 points from the character's XP Pool, in addition to the 850 XPs spent on the character's universal Experience Points. After deducting the total of 1,000 points from his character's XP Pool, Roy begins to add up the XPs awarded by the module as follows.

Roy places 100 XPs in each of his character's Attributes from the universal XP allotment. His affiliation does not modify any Attributes, but the Crucis March sub-affiliation adds 50 XPs to the character's WIL and subtracts 50 XPs from the character's EDG.

No Traits are awarded by the universal XPs, but the Federated Suns module offers 100 XPs to either the Natural Aptitude/Protocol or Natural Aptitude/Strategy Trait so long as the character has a minimum INT score of 4 at the end of the creation process. Roy places 100 XPs in Natural Aptitude/Strategy, and notes that his character's INT has a minimum score requirement of 4 for later. He is not sure his character will need Natural Aptitude/Strategy at this point, but it seems most appropriate for a character he plans to make into a career MechWarrior.

For Skills, Roy decides to deal with the universal XPs first, and so allocates the required 20 XPs in Language/English and 10 XPs in Perception. Another 20 XPs are slated for one of his affiliation's primary or secondary Language Skills, which Roy puts into French (after seeing that language listed as one of the FedSuns' secondary tongues).

The choice of a Federated Suns affiliation places 10 XPs in the Protocol/FedSuns Skill, while the Crucis March sub-affiliation applies 10 XPs toward an Arts Skill of Roy's choosing, 15 XPs in Interest/FedSuns History and another 15 XPs toward the Protocol/FedSuns Skill he already has (giving that Skill a total of 25 XPs by the end of Stage 0).

The points assigned, Roy moves on to Stage 1.

FREE WORLDS LEAGUE (HOUSE MARIK)

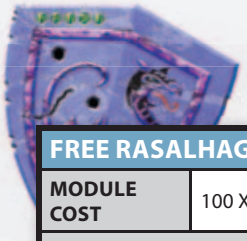
MODULE COST	150 XP
A nominal confederation of smaller states long ruled by a single family, the Free Worlds League is riven with deep divisions and a nightmare bureaucracy only recently brought into a semblance of unity centered on the capital world of Atreus. Despite numerous internal conflicts, however, the League is known for its open-mindedness and technological savvy, as well as its curiously contradictory distrust of cybernetic enhancements.	
Primary Language	English
Secondary Language	Greek, Hindi, Italian, Mandarin, Mongolian, Romanian, Slovak, Spanish, Urdu
Fixed XPs	[Skills] Language/Any Secondary (+15 XP), Arts/Any (+10 XP)
Sub-Affiliations	
Marik Commonwealth	[Traits] Wealth (+100 XP), Equipped (+100 XP), Reputation (–100 XP); [Skills] Appraisal (+5 XP), Negotiation (+10 XP), Protocol/Free Worlds (+10 XP)
Principality of Regulus	[Attributes] WIL (+75 XP); [Traits] Gregarious (+75 XP), Compulsion/Atrean Opponent (–50 XP), Reputation (–50 XP); [Skills] Interest/Regulan History (+20 XP), Negotiation (+25 XP), Perception (+15 XP), Protocol/Free Worlds (+15 XP)
Duchy of Oriente	[Traits] Reputation (+100 XP); [Skills] Appraisal (+5 XP), Negotiation (+15 XP), Technician/Any (+5 XP)
Duchy of Andurien	[Attributes] WIL (+50 XP); [Traits] Combat Sense (+225 XP), Compulsion/Hatred of House Liao (–100 XP), Compulsion/Atrean Opponent (–50 XP), Reputation (–30 XP); [Skills] Negotiation (+15 XP), Perception (+10 XP), Protocol/Free Worlds (+15 XP)
Other FWL Worlds	[Traits] Any one (+35 XP); [Skills] Appraisal (+15 XP), Protocol/Free Worlds (+10 XP), Any one (+15 XP)
Flexible XPs	None
Notes: Free Worlds characters that receive an Implant/Prosthetics Trait automatically receive –100 XPs in the Reputation Trait as well.	

AFFILIATION

LYRAN ALLIANCE (HOUSE STEINER)

MODULE COST	150 XP
Loosely patterned on feudal Germany, with other Western European influences apparent (most notably Swiss and Scottish), the Lyran Alliance—originally known as the Lyran Commonwealth—is a heavily industrialized and mercantile realm. Many Lyrans see warfare as a dirty business and simply aspire to great wealth or high social standing. As a result, the Lyran military frequently comes off as lackluster, while Lyran merchants and political leaders seem ruthlessly sharp.	
Primary Language	German
Secondary Language	English, Italian, Scots Gaelic, Swedish
Fixed XPs	[Attributes] WIL (–50 XP), EDG (–50 XP); [Traits] Equipped (+100 XP), Extra Income (+50 XP), Wealth (+100 XP), Choose either Combat Paralysis or Glass Jaw (–100 XP); [Skills] Negotiation (+15 XP), Appraisal (+10 XP), Protocol/Lyran (+15 XP)
Sub-Affiliations	
Alarion Province	[Attributes] CHA (–50 XP); [Traits] Wealth (+70 XP); [Skills] Administration (+10 XP), Interest/Any (+10 XP), Language/Any (+10 XP), Negotiation (+10 XP)
Bolan Province	[Traits] Compulsion/Hatred of House Marik (–50 XP), Connections (+50 XP), Wealth (+25 XP); [Skills] Administration (+5 XP), Negotiation (+15 XP), Protocol/Lyran (+10 XP), Streetwise/Lyran (+5 XP)
Coventry Province	[Attributes] WIL (+100 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Hatred of Clans (–95 XP), Wealth (+25 XP); [Skills] Administration (+10 XP), Negotiation (+10 XP), Protocol/Lyran (+10 XP)
Donegal Province	[Attributes] WIL (+50 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Greedy (–75 XP), Connections (+50 XP), Reputation (–50 XP), Wealth (+50 XP); [Skills] Appraisal (+10 XP), Negotiation (+10 XP), Protocol/Lyran (+15 XP)
Skye Province	[Attributes] WIL (+100 XP); [Traits] Connections (+85 XP), Reputation (–150 XP); [Skills] Language/Scots Gaelic (+10 XP), Negotiation (+15 XP), Protocol/Lyran (–15 XP), Streetwise/Lyran (+15 XP)
Flexible XPs	None

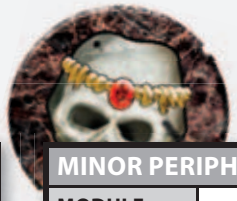
AFFILIATION



FREE RASALHAGUE REPUBLIC

AFFILIATION

MODULE COST	100 XP
Long ago, the predominantly Scandinavian Rasalhague Republic was invaded and conquered by the Draconis Combine. Though they eventually won their freedom after centuries of occupation, their Free Rasalhague Republic was swiftly crushed mere decades later by the invading Clans. Despite being down, the quasi-democratic Republic is far from out, and even as foreign flags fly over their native worlds, Rasalhagians still cling to their culture and identity.	
Primary Language	Swedish
Secondary Language	English, Japanese, Swedenese, German
Fixed XPs	[Attributes] WIL (+25 XP), EDG (–25 XP); [Skills] Negotiation (+15 XP), Interest/Any (+10 XP)
Sub-Affiliations	
Clan War Expatriate	[Attributes] WIL (+125 XP), EDG (+100 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Hatred of Clans (–150 XP), Wealth (–50 XP); [Skills] Language/Choose Any Lyran or Draconis (+15 XP), Martial Arts (+10 XP), Protocol/Choose either Lyran or Draconis (+10 XP), Small Arms (+15 XP)
Ghost Bear Dominion	[Traits] Equipped (+50 XP), Introvert (–25 XP), Reputation (–25 XP); [Skills] Protocol/Clan (Ghost Bear) (+20 XP), Interest/Any (+10 XP), Interest/Remembrance (+10 XP), Negotiation (+10 XP), Martial Arts (+15 XP), Melee Weapons (+10 XP)
Flexible XPs	None
Notes: Rasalhague-born characters that join a mercenary command automatically receive –100 XP in the Reputation Trait. Rasalhague characters with the Ghost Bear sub-affiliation reflect native (non-Clan) Rasalhagians within the Ghost Bear Dominion and must take only those Stage 1 and 2 modules permitted to Clan freeborns.	



MINOR PERIPHERY

AFFILIATION

MODULE COST	75 XP
In addition to the larger realms, the Periphery includes an assortment of minor powers. Banded together for mutual protection and trade, some of these realms—like the Fiefdom of Randis and the Franklin Fiefs—are as tiny as a single (but well-armed) world, while others—like the icy mining colonies of the Mica Majority and the democratic realms of the Niops Association and Rim Collection—encompass a handful of worlds.	
Primary Language	English
Secondary Language	Any
Fixed XPs	[Traits] Equipped (–150 XP); [Skills] Perception (+15 XP), Survival (+20 XP)
Sub-Affiliations	
Fiefdom of Randis	[Attributes] BOD (+125 XP), EDG (+50 XP); [Traits] Illiterate (–75 XP), Wealth (–50 XP); [Skills] Martial Arts (+10 XP), Melee Weapons (+10 XP), Negotiation (+10 XP), Streetwise/Periphery (+15 XP), Survival (+20 XP)
Franklin Fiefs	[Attributes] BOD (+150 XP), INT (–100 XP), WIL (+50 XP); [Traits] Equipped (–60 XP), Illiterate (–90 XP), Toughness (+100 XP); [Skills] Martial Arts (+15 XP), Medtech (+10 XP); Protocol/Novo Franklin (+10 XP), Streetwise/Periphery (+10 XP), Survival (+10 XP), (+10 XP to any one of the following: Archery, Melee Weapons or Negotiation)
Mica Majority	[Attributes] BOD (+100 XP), RFL (+100 XP), EDG (–100 XP); [Traits] Equipped (–25 XP), Toughness (+100 XP), Wealth (–100 XP); [Skills] Career/Mining (+10 XP), Language/Japanese (+10 XP), Negotiation (+10 XP), Survival/Arctic (+10 XP)
Niops Association	[Attributes] INT (+125 XP), WIL (–110 XP); [Traits] Equipped (+200 XP), Introvert (–125 XP); [Skills] Interest/Any (+10 XP), Technician/Any (+15 XP)
Rim Collection	[Attributes] CHA (–50 XP), EDG (+100 XP); [Traits] Fit (+75 XP), Wealth (–50 XP); [Skills] Negotiation (+15 XP), Small Arms (+5 XP), Choose two: Animal Handling, Archery, Martial Arts, Melee Weapons, Streetwise/Rim Collection or Survival (+10 XP)
Flexible XPs	+25 XP each to any three Attributes or Traits, or combination thereof.
Notes: Unless otherwise specified, characters from any of the listed Minor Periphery realms may not take the following Life Modules: Preparatory School or Military School (Stage 2); University or Military Academy (Stage 3); Postgraduate Study (Stage 4). Characters with the Franklin Fiefs sub-affiliation that do not purchase the Citizen Trait (reflecting membership in the gentry) may not receive the Title or Property Trait, and may not undergo any military training other than Basic Training, Infantry or Cavalry. Characters from the Mica Majority and Rim Collection sub-affiliations may not take the Nobility Life Modules in Stage 1 or 2, nor may they hold titles within their respective realms.	

MAJOR PERIPHERY STATE

MODULE COST	100 XP

Often overlooked and underestimated by their more powerful neighbors in the Inner Sphere, the major nations of the Periphery—particularly the Magistracy of Canopus, the Marian Hegemony, the Outworlds Alliance and the Taurian Concordat—have become miniature Successor States with thriving cultures, governments and economies. Though their technology and military strength may not be enough to stand up to even the smallest Great House in a straight fight, the fiercely independent Periphery States nevertheless reign supreme in their own arena, and collectively stand strong enough that they can no longer be simply ignored.

Primary Language	English
Secondary Language	See sub-affiliation
Fixed XPs	Equipped (–50 XP)
Sub-Affiliations	
Circinus Federation	[Secondary Languages] German, Spanish; [Attributes] STR (+100 XP), BOD (+75 XP), INT (–100 XP), WIL (+70 XP); [Traits] Illiterate (–75 XP), Reputation (–200 XP), Toughness (+300 XP), Wealth (–125 XP); [Skills] Choose three: Animal Handling, Martial Arts, MedTech, Small Arms, Streetwise, Survival or Tracking (+20 XP each)
Magistracy of Canopus	[Secondary Languages] Greek, Romanian, Spanish, Urdu; [Attributes] CHA (+100 XP), EDG (+50 XP); [Traits] Gregarious (+50 XP), Illiterate (–25 XP), Reputation (–125 XP), Wealth (+25 XP); [Skills] Streetwise/ Magistracy (+15 XP), (+15 XP to either one of the following: Acting or MedTech)
Marian Hegemony	[Primary Language] Latin; [Secondary Languages] French, German, Greek, Spanish, Swedish; [Attributes] WIL (+100 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Paranoid (–50 XP), Connections (+25 XP), Reputation (–150 XP), Toughness (+125 XP); [Skills] Interest/Marian History (+15 XP), Interest/Roman History (+10 XP), Language/Latin (+15 XP), Protocol/Marian (+10 XP), Strategy (+5 XP)
Outworlds Alliance	[Secondary Languages] French, Japanese; [Attributes] EDG (+75 XP); [Traits] Equipped (–55 XP), G-Tolerance (+125 XP), Wealth (–75 XP); [Skills] Streetwise/ Outworlds (+10 XP), Survival (+10 XP), Choose one: Martial Arts, MedTech or Small Arms (+15 XP)
Taurian Concordat	[Secondary Languages] French, Spanish; [Attributes]: WIL (+150 XP), EDG (+50 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/ Distrust FedSuns (–75 XP), Compulsion/Stubborn (–75 XP); [Skills] Martial Arts (+10 XP), Negotiation (+10 XP), Small Arms (+15 XP), Streetwise (+15 XP), Survival (+5 XP)
Flexible XPs	+15 XP each to any three Attributes, Traits, Skills or combination thereof.

Notes: The Magistracy of Canopus sub-affiliation includes the Fronc Reaches; the Taurian Concordat sub-affiliation includes the Calderon Protectorate.

Characters with a Marian Hegemony sub-affiliation must purchase the Citizen Trait (reflecting plebeian or better social standing) or must take the Slave Life Module for Stage 1. Marian characters without the Citizen Trait may not select Military School or Preparatory School in Stage 2, nor may they take any Stage 3 modules.

AFFILIATION

DEEP PERIPHERY

MODULE COST	50 XP

Far beyond the borders of the Inner Sphere and its neighboring Periphery realms lies the aptly named Deep Periphery. While many human-inhabited worlds in this expanse are little more than forgotten castaways, at least four significant realms have risen in this void: the mercantile Hanseatic League, the Iberian-influenced Castilian Principalities, the enigmatic Umayyad Caliphate and the merchant families of the JàrnFòlk.

Primary Language	See sub-affiliation
Secondary Language	See sub-affiliation
Fixed XPs	Equipped (–20 XP)
Sub-Affiliations	
Hanseatic League	[Primary Language] German; [Secondary Languages] English; [Traits] Citizenship (+30 XP), Compulsion/ Distrust Lyrans (–20 XP); [Skills] Appraisal (+10 XP), Negotiation (+20 XP), Protocol/Hanseatic (+10 XP)
Castilian Principalities	[Primary Language] Spanish; [Secondary Languages] German; [Attributes] DEX (+25 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/ Castilian Honor Code (–20 XP), Compulsion/Hatred of Umayyads (–20 XP); [Skills] Martial Arts/Basic (+15 XP), Melee Weapons (+15 XP), Negotiation (+10 XP), Protocol/Castilian (+25 XP)
Umayyad Caliphate	[Primary Language] Arabic; [Secondary Languages] English; [Attributes] DEX (+20 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/ Xenophobic (–10 XP); [Skills] Art/Any (+10 XP), Interest/ Any (+10 XP), Protocol/Umayyad (+20 XP)
JàrnFòlk	[Primary Language] JàrnFòlk Norse; [Secondary Languages] Danish, English, German, Swedish; [Attributes] RFL (+20 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/ Xenophobic (–10 XP), Natural Aptitude/Martial Arts (+10 XP), Wealth (–10 XP); [Skills] Negotiation (+15 XP), Protocol/JàrnFòlk Families (+15 XP), Choose one: Arts/ Any, Interest/Any or Technician/Any (+10 XP)
Flexible XPs	+10 XP each to any two Attributes, Traits, Skills or combination thereof

Notes: Characters with a Hanseatic League sub-affiliation whose Wealth Trait is reduced to 0 or less lose the Citizenship Trait and become serfs, receiving the following Traits as a result: Reputation (–20 XP) and In For Life (–40 XP).

Characters with a Castilian Principalities sub-affiliation may not receive a Rank Trait level higher than their Title Trait level, nor may they take any University Life Modules.

Characters with an Umayyad Caliphate sub-affiliation who choose to be warriors of any kind must take the Nobility Stage 1 Life Module, and may not take Officer or MechWarrior Skill Fields without purchasing at least one level of Title Trait. Any Umayyad character that receives the Combat Paralysis Trait also receives Reputation (–10 XP).

Characters with a JàrnFòlk sub-affiliation may not select the White Collar, Preparatory School, Military School or Undergraduate Studies modules, nor may they select any Stage 3 module except for Family Training. JàrnFòlk characters may not become MechWarriors or use battle armor unless they first leave the JàrnFòlk.

AFFILIATION

INVADING CLAN

MODULE COST	75 XP
The warrior societies founded by Nicholas Kerensky believe in the ultimate form of "might makes right." Having ritualized warfare to minimize its devastating impact on their resource-starved societies, the Clans grew more sophisticated and lethal during their centuries in exile until, in 3048, they launched an invasion of the Inner Sphere aimed straight toward Terra. By the mid-3070s, seven of the original twenty warrior Clans laid claim to Inner Sphere worlds, competing against each other for dominance, yet united by a common culture and the dream of one day restoring the Star League in their own image.	
Primary Language	English
Secondary Language	None
Fixed XPs	[Traits] Compulsion/Arrogance (–50 XP), Compulsion/Distrust of Inner Sphere (–100 XP); [Skills] Interest/Clan Remembrance (+25 XP), Protocol/Clan (+25 XP) Clan characters that fall into the castes (or sub-castes) described on p. 61 receive the following fixed XP. A Clan-born character that does not fit in any of these listed castes is considered Dark Caste and must choose the Pirate sub-affiliation under *Affiliation: Independent* (see p. 63) as if using the Changing Affiliations rule (see p. 53).
Sub-Affiliations	
Diamond Shark	[Attributes] STR (–50 XP), INT (+25 XP), EDG (–50 XP); [Traits] Connections (+25 XP), Equipped (+25 XP), Wealth (+30 XP); [Skills] Negotiation (+20 XP), Perception (+10 XP), Protocol/Diamond Shark (+10 XP)
Ghost Bear	[Attributes] STR (+25 XP), BOD (+25 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Hate Hell's Horses (–25 XP), Exceptional Attribute/Strength (+50 XP), Slow Learner (–50 XP); [Skills] Art/Any (+10 XP), Protocol/Ghost Bear (+10 XP), Streetwise/Rasalhague (+5 XP)
Hell's Horses	[Attributes] STR (+25 XP), BOD (+25 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Hate Ghost Bears (–25 XP), Introvert (–30 XP); [Skills] Melee Weapons (+10 XP), Navigation/Ground (+15 XP), Protocol/Hell's Horses (+15 XP), Survival/Desert (+15 XP)
Jade Falcon	[Attributes] WIL (+25 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Falcon Pride (–75 XP), Compulsion/Hate Steel Vipers (–50 XP), Reputation (+100 XP); [Skills] Acting/Intimidation (+10 XP), Martial Arts (+15 XP), Protocol/Jade Falcon (+15 XP), Survival/Forests (+10 XP)
Nova Cat	[Attributes] EDG (+120 XP); [Traits] Enemy/The Clans (–100 XP), Enemy/Draconis Combine (–50 XP), Equipped (+50 XP), Reputation (–100 XP), Sixth Sense (+100 XP); [Skills] Interest/Nova Cat Vision Quest (+10 XP), Language/Japanese (+5 XP), Protocol/Draconis Combine (+5 XP), Protocol/Nova Cat (+10 XP)
Snow Raven	[Attributes] INT (+20 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Raven Pride (–50 XP), Connections (+50 XP); [Skills] Negotiation (+10 XP), Protocol/Snow Raven (+10 XP), Zero-G Operations (+10 XP)
Wolf	[Attributes] INT (+25 XP), WIL (+25 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Wolf Pride (–50 XP), Equipped (+50 XP), Enemy (–100 XP), Reputation (+50 XP); [Skills] Protocol/Wolf (+10 XP), Choose two: Interest/Any, Leadership, Negotiation, Perception or Strategy (+10 XP)
Flexible XPs	None

Notes: Clan characters may not take the Property or Extra Income Traits; the Title Trait (which reflects a Bloodname in Clan society) is unavailable to any Clan character that does not also take the Trueborn Trait.

The Clan Wolf sub-affiliation includes Clan Wolf (in-Exile).

Characters with the Ghost Bear sub-affiliation cannot choose the Aerospace Phenotype and must select the MechWarrior Phenotype instead, substituting the MechWarrior Field Aptitude with a Field Aptitude in any one Fighter Pilot Field Skill.

Only characters from the Ghost Bear and Hell's Horses sub-affiliations have access to the Elemental-Advanced sub-caste. Only characters from the Snow Raven Clan have access to the Aerospace-Naval sub-caste.

The ProtoMech Warrior sub-caste is not available to any Clan character entering game play prior to 3062, or to any Invading Clan characters entering service after 3075. Characters from Clans Diamond Shark, Ghost Bear, Steel Viper and Wolf—not including Wolf (in-Exile)—may not choose the ProtoMech Warrior sub-caste even if entering service between 3062 and 3075. Jade Falcon characters may only choose the ProtoMech Warrior sub-caste for characters entering service from 3062 to 3068.

None of the Warrior sub-castes are available to Steel Viper characters that do not take the Trueborn Trait.

Freeborn Clan characters do not require a Phenotype Trait (and use the Normal Human Phenotype if none is selected).

HOMEWORLD CLAN

MODULE COST	50 XP
With their defeat at Tukayyid in 3052 and the Great Refusal in 3060, the Clan invasion faltered and collapsed, ending—at least for now—the threat of a mass Clan migration into the Inner Sphere. The invasion, however, widened the rifts between those Clans who claimed "Spheroid" worlds and those who remained on the resource-poor planets Kerensky's descendants first called home. Forced to watch as their rival Clans grew ever stronger, the so-called Homeworld Clans console themselves with the knowledge that Inner Sphere contact will only further corrupt their Invading brethren, while they remain free of "barbarian" pollution.	
Primary Language	English
Secondary Language	None
Fixed XPs	[Traits] Compulsion/Distrust of Inner Sphere (–200 XP), Compulsion/Hate Invading Clans (–100 XP); [Skills] Interest/Clan Remembrance (+25 XP), Protocol/Clan (+25 XP) Clan characters that fall into the castes (or sub-castes) described on p. 61 receive the same Fixed XP identified there. Any Clan-born character that does not fit in any of those listed castes is considered Dark Caste and must choose the Pirate sub-affiliation under *Affiliation: Independent* (see p. 63) as if using the Changing Affiliations rule (see p. 53).
Sub-Affiliations	
Blood Spirit	[Attributes] BOD (+25 XP), WIL (+200 XP), CHA (–50 XP); [Attributes] Combat Sense (+100 XP), Compulsion/Blood Spirit Fanaticism (–100 XP), Compulsion/Hate Star Adder (–100 XP), Equipped (–65 XP), Exceptional Attribute/WIL (+200 XP), Introvert (–50 XP), Reputation (–50 XP); [Skills] Interest/Clan History (+25 XP), Martial Arts (+15 XP), Small Arms (+15 XP), Protocol/Blood Spirit (+10 XP)
Cloud Cobra	[Attributes] INT (+50 XP), WIL (+50 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Religious Faith (–25 XP), Equipped (–25 XP), Patient (+100 XP), Reputation (–25 XP); [Skills] Interest/Theology/Any (+20 XP), Protocol/Cloud Cobra (+20 XP), +10 XP to any one other Skill
Coyote	[Attributes] INT (+100 XP), EDG (+25 XP); [Traits] Equipped (+25 XP), Reputation (–25 XP), Choose one: Custom Vehicle, Natural Aptitude/Computers, Natural Aptitude/Technician/Any or Vehicle Level (+10 XP); [Skills] Interest/Coyote Rituals (+15 XP), Protocol/Coyote (+10 XP), Survival/Any (+10 XP)
Fire Mandrill	[Secondary Languages] Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Russian, Spanish; [Attributes] WIL (+125 XP), +75 XP to any one other Attribute, –20 XP to any one other Attribute; [Traits] Compulsion/Fire Mandrill Fanaticism (–100 XP), Compulsion/Kindraa Fanaticism (–100 XP), Enemy/Rival Kindraa (–25 XP), Reputation (–25 XP), Choose one: Combat Sense, Exceptional Attribute/Any, Fast Learner, Natural Aptitude/Any or Sixth Sense (+150 XP); [Skills] Language/Secondary (+20 XP), Martial Arts (+15 XP), Protocol/Fire Mandrill (+15 XP), Protocol/Kindraa (+25 XP), Choose two: Leadership, Melee Weapons, Negotiation, Perception or Tactics/Any (+10 XP)
Goliath Scorpion	[Secondary Languages] Goliath Scorpion Battle Language (warrior caste only), Russian; [Attributes] DEX (+50 XP), INT (+50 XP), EDG (–50 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Necrosia Addiction (–50 XP), Fit (+55 XP), Reputation (–25 XP), Choose one: Exceptional Attribute/INT, Natural Aptitude/Gunnery/Any, Natural Aptitude/Melee Weapons or Natural Aptitude/Interest/Any (+100 XP); [Skills] Interest/Star League History (+20 XP), Melee Weapons (+15 XP), Protocol/Goliath Scorpion (+10 CP)
Ice Hellion	[Attributes] DEX (+75 XP), RFL (+125 XP), WIL (+50 XP), CHA (–75 XP); [Traits] Combat Sense (+100 XP), Impatient (–100 XP), Reputation (–70 XP); [Skills] Interest/Clan Remembrance (+15 XP), Martial Arts (+10 XP), Negotiation (+15 XP), Protocol/Ice Hellion (+10 XP), Swimming (+10 XP), Survival/Arctic (+10 XP)
Star Adder	[Attributes] INT (+100 XP), WIL (+75 XP), CHA (–70 XP); [Traits] Combat Sense (+100 XP), Compulsion/Clan Honor (–50 XP), Equipped (+25 XP), Reputation (+25 XP), Choose one: Compulsion/Adder Arrogance or Compulsion/Burrock Forever! (–60 XP); [Skills] Leadership (+10 XP), Perception (+10 XP), Protocol/Star Adder (+10 XP)
Steel Viper	[Attributes] INT (+75 XP), WIL (+100 XP), CHA (–50 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Clan Honor (–100 XP), Compulsion/Hate Jade Falcons (–100 XP), Compulsion/Hate Snow Ravens (–50 XP), Connections (+100 XP), Equipped (+100 XP), Reputation (+50 XP); [Skills] Negotiation (+15 XP), Protocol/Steel Viper (+15 XP), Survival/Any (+20 XP)
Flexible XPs	None
Notes: See notes for the Invading Clan affiliation.	

AFFILIATION

CLAN CASTES

Clan Castes	
MechWarrior	[Attributes] DEX (+75 XP), RFL (+75 XL), WIL (+75 XP), CHA (–25 XP), EDG (–50 XP); [Traits] Fit (+25 XP), Impatient (–50 XP)
Elemental	[Attributes] BOD (+125 XP), STR (+125 XP), DEX (–75 XP), CHA (–75 XP); [Skills] Martial Arts (+25 XP)
Elemental-Advanced	[Attributes] BOD (+200 XP), STR (+175 XP), DEX (–100 XP), RFL (–75 XP), CHA (–100 XP), EDG (–100 XP); [Traits] Patient (+25 XP), Reputation (+100 XP)
Aerospace or ProtoMech	[Attributes] BOD (–50 XP), STR (–50 XP), DEX (+150 XP), RFL (+150 XP), CHA (–25 XP), EDG (–25 XP); [Traits] Fit (+25 XP), Impatient (–50 XP)
Aerospace-Naval	[Attributes] BOD (–50 XP), STR (–50 XP), DEX (+125 XP), RFL (+125 XP), INT (+50 XP), CHA (–25 XP), EDG (–100 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Arrogance (–100 XP), Patient (+75 XP), Reputation (+75 XP)
Warrior Caste (Other)	[Attributes] BOD (+75 XP), STR (+50 XP), DEX (+50 XP), RFL (+50 XP), CHA (–25 XP); [Traits] Reputation (–75 XP)
Scientist Caste	[Attributes] STR (–50 XP), INT (+100 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Arrogance (–25 XP), Patient (+100 XP), Reputation (–25 XP); [Skills] Interest/Any (+10 XP), Science/Any (+15 XP)
Technician Caste	[Attributes] DEX (+100 XP), INT (+20 XP), CHA (–50 XP); [Traits] Patient (+100 XP), Reputation (–75 XP); [Skills] Interest/Any (+15 XP), Technician/Any (+15 XP)
Merchant Caste	[Attributes] BOD (–50 XP), INT (+25 XP), CHA (+75 XP); [Traits] Gregarious (+100 XP), Reputation (–75 XP); [Skills] Appraisal (+10 XP), Negotiation (+15 XP), Protocol/Any (+10 XP), Streetwise/Clan (+15 XP)
Laborer Caste	[Attributes] BOD (+100 XP), STR (+125 XP), DEX (+50 XP), RFL (+50 XP), INT (–50 XP), CHA (–50 XP); [Traits] Reputation (–125 XP); [Skills] Career/Any (+15 XP), Interest/Any (+10 XP)

AFFILIATION

During the decline of the Succession Wars, even children learned to become scavengers on the ravaged worlds of the Inner Sphere.

TERRAN

MODULE COST	225 XP		

In the centuries since humankind took to the stars, Terra has been seen as both benevolent mother and cruel oppressor of the hundreds of worlds humanity now calls home. Yet whatever their histories, every culture in human-settled space can trace its origins to Terra. Though isolated for hundreds of years under the authority of ComStar, Terra—the center of the Inner Sphere, the crown jewel of the Star League, and the most coveted world in all of known space to the Clans—has thrived as an island of high culture and technology.

The people of Terra (and their solar system neighbors on Luna, Mars, Venus, Titan and elsewhere) owe their allegiance to no Great House or Clan, and were spared the horrors of the Succession Wars by the grace of their ComStar benefactors. This fact, coupled with Terra's place as humankind's ancient home, has engendered a sense of superiority over the "colonials" beyond Terran space. This arrogance and aloofness—born of prosperity, self-perceived enlightenment and a history no other world can possibly match—verges on xenophobia. To the people of the Terran system, the universe has revolved and always will revolve around them.

Primary Language	Any	**Secondary Language**	Any
Fixed XPs	[Attributes] INT (+100 XP), EDG (–150 XP), +50 XP each to any two other Attributes; [Traits] Compulsion/Distrust of Non-Terrans (–75 XP), Reputation (+100 XP); [Skills] Language/English (+25 XP), +15 XP to any two other Language Skills		

Sub-Affiliations

Belter	[Attributes] STR (–25 XP), BOD (–25 XP), +100 XP to any one Attribute except for CHA and EDG; [Traits] Compulsion/Xenophobia (–100 XP), Reputation (–50 XP), Wealth (+50 XP), Choose two: Ambidextrous, Attractive, Exception Attribute/Any, Fast Learner, G-Tolerance, Good Hearing, Good Vision, Implant/Prosthetics, Pain Resistance or Toughness (+50 XP); [Skills] Navigation/Space (+15 XP), Survival (+10 XP), Zero-G Operations (+15 XP), Choose two: Driving, Interest/Any, Language/Any, Medtech, Piloting/Any, Sensor Operations or Technician/Any (+10 XP)
Lunar Citizen	[Attributes] STR (–20 XP), BOD (–25 XP), INT (+50 XP), WIL (+40 XP), EDG (–25 XP); [Traits] Equipped (+25 XP), Poor Vision (–25 XP), Thick-Skinned (+25 XP), Wealth (+50 XP); [Skills] Technician/Any (+5 XP), Choose one: Arts/Any, Computers, Interest/Any, Survival/Any or Zero-G Operations (+10 XP)
Martian Citizen	[Attributes] STR (–15 XP), WIL (+50 XP); [Traits] Equipped (+65 XP), Introvert (–25 XP), Poor Vision (–25 XP), Reputation (–25 XP), Thick-Skinned (+25 XP), Wealth (+35 XP); [Skills] Language/Any previously chosen secondary Language Skills (–10 XP), Negotiation (+10 XP), Survival/Martian Desert (+10 XP), Choose one: Arts/Any, Computers, Interest/Any, Martial Arts, Medtech, Melee Weapons or Small Arms (+15 XP)
Outer System Citizen	[Attributes] STR (–15 XP), BOD (–15 XP), RFL (+20 XP); [Traits] Equipped (+75 XP), Reputation (–20 XP), Wealth (+25 XP); [Skills] Negotiation (+10 XP), Technician/Any (+10 XP), Choose two: Arts/Any, Computers, Driving, Interest/Any, Martial Arts, Survival/Any or Zero-G Operations (+10 XP)
Terran Citizen	[Attributes] EDG (–100 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Distrust of Non-Terrans (–75 XP), Connections (+100 XP), Equipped (+100 XP), Impatient (–50 XP), Wealth (+110 XP); [Skills] Interest/Terran History (+10 XP), Perception (–5 XP); +5 XP to any four other Skills
Venusian Citizen	[Attributes] BOD (+35 XP), INT (–25 XP), WIL (+35 XP), [Traits] Equipped (+25 XP), Introvert (–50 XP), Reputation (–25 XP), Thick-Skinned (+75 XP), Wealth (+15 XP); [Skills] Language/Any previously chosen secondary Language Skills (–10 XP), Survival/Any (+20 XP), Choose one: Arts/Any, Computers, Interest/Any, Martial Arts, MedTech, Melee Weapons or Technician/Any (+15 XP)
Flexible XPs	None

Notes: After 3059, when Venus' last cities effectively closed (or collapsed), Venusian characters are considered expatriates; no Terran characters born after 3059 may choose a Venusian sub-affiliation.

INDEPENDENT

MODULE COST	50 XP
The so-called "independents" are those individuals and worlds that lie scattered throughout human-occupied space, but whose allegiance lies outside the major and minor states of the Inner Sphere, Periphery and Clan dominions. A few noteworthy independents include the lawless worlds and pirate havens of Antallos and Tortuga, as well as the fractured quasi-Arabian caliphates of Astrokaszy. But even mercenaries, pirates and "spacers"—none of whom could ever call a single world "home"—fall into the category of independents. These rogue affiliations attract some of humanity's most adventurous souls, who may find themselves plying the space lanes for trade or doing battle for causes more personal than any empire's banner.	
Primary Language	See sub-affiliation
Secondary Language	See sub-affiliation
Fixed XPs	[Attributes] WIL (+20 XP), EDG (+20 XP); [Traits] Equipped (–20 XP), Reputation (–10 XP), Wealth (–10 XP)
Sub-Affiliations	
Antallos	[Primary Language] English; [Secondary Languages] Any; [Attributes] BOD (+20 XP), WIL (+10), CHA (–10 XP); [Traits] Illiterate (–20 XP), Pain Resistance (+10 XP), Reputation (–20 XP), Toughness (+10 XP); [Skills] Language/Japanese (+10 XP), Perception (+10 XP), Streetwise/Periphery (+10 XP), Choose two: Acting, Escape Artist, Martial Arts, Melee Weapons, Small Arms or Survival/Desert (+10 XP)
Astrokaszy	[Primary Language] Arabic; [Secondary Languages] English, German, Greek; [Attributes] BOD (+15 XP), WIL (+10 XP), CHA (–10 XP), EDG (–10 XP); [Traits] Fit (+20 XP), Compulsion/Xenophobic (–20 XP), Illiterate (–20 XP), Reputation (–10 XP), Thick-Skinned (+15 XP); [Skills] Perception (+10 XP), Protocol/Astrokaszy (+10 XP), Streetwise/Periphery (+10 CP), Choose two: Acting, Martial Arts, Melee Weapons, Small Arms, Survival/Desert or Thrown Weapons (+15 XP)
Generic	[Primary Language] Any; [Secondary Languages] Any from nearest state; [Traits] Introvert (–10 XP); [Skills] Interest/Any (+10 XP), Negotiation (+10 XP), +10 XP to any four other Skills
Mercenary	[Primary Language] English; [Secondary Languages] Any; [Attributes] CHA (–20 XP); [Traits] Equipped (+20 XP), Rank (+20 XP); [Skills] Negotiation (+10 XP), Protocol/Mercenary (+10 XP), +10 XP to any one other Skill
Pirate	[Primary Language] Any; [Secondary Languages] Any from nearest state; [Attributes] BOD (+20 XP), WIL (+10 XP), CHA (–30 XP); [Traits] Pain Resistance (+10 XP), Reputation (–30 XP), Toughness (+10 XP); [Skills] Language/Any (+10 XP), Negotiation (+5 XP), Perception (+15 XP), Choose three: Acting, Escape Artist, Martial Arts, Melee Weapons, Small Arms or Survival/Any (+10 XP)
Spacer	[Primary Language] English; [Secondary Language] Any from nearest state; [Attributes] BOD (–20 XP), STR (–10 XP), DEX (+10 XP), RFL (+10 XP); [Traits] Equipped (+10 XP), G-Tolerance (+20 XP), Introvert (–20 XP), Natural Aptitude/Zero-G Operations (+20 XP); [Skills] Career/Ship's Crew (+10 XP), Zero-G Operations (+10 XP), Choose one: Appraisal, Interest/Any, Navigation/Space, Negotiation or Sensor Operations (+10 XP)
Tortuga	[Primary Language] English; [Secondary Languages] Any Taurian or FedSuns Primary or Secondary Language; [Attributes] BOD (+10 XP), STR (+10 XP), WIL (+20 XP), CHA (–40 XP); [Traits] Pain Resistance (+10 XP), Reputation (–50 XP), Toughness (+10 XP); [Skills] Language/Any (+10 XP), Martial Arts (+10 XP), Negotiation (+10 XP), Perception (+10 XP), Streetwise/Periphery (+10 XP), Choose three: Acting, Escape Artist, Melee Weapons, Small Arms or Survival (+10 XP)
Flexible XPs	None

Notes: Characters with an Antallos, Mercenary, Pirate, Spacer or Tortuga sub-affiliation may not take Title Traits. Characters with an Antallos, Pirate or Tortuga sub-affiliation may not take the Nobility, Preparatory School or Military School modules.

Characters that take a Mercenary sub-affiliation for Stage 0 are born into the mercenary life. Characters that are not born to the mercenary life but turn mercenary later must choose another affiliation.

Characters that take a Spacer sub-affiliation cannot take the TDS (Transit Disorientation Syndrome) Trait.

AFFILIATION

COMSTAR/WORD OF BLAKE

MODULE COST	50 XP
Originally a neutral, interstellar pseudo-corporation that rose from the ashes of the first Star League, ComStar established an unassailable empire based on its complete control of the interstellar HPG communications network. Transforming itself into a quasi-religious order, ComStar monitored and subtly manipulated events across the Inner Sphere while cloaking itself in mystery. Fragmented in the wake of the initial Clan Invasion, however, a reformed ComStar moved to share many of its advantages with the Inner Sphere in defense against the Clans—while the fanatical Word of Blake amassed the terrible forces unleashed in their recent Jihad against all of humankind.	
Primary Language	English
Secondary Language	Any from nearest state
Fixed XPs	[Traits] Enemy (–100 XP), Equipped (+100 XP), Rank (+50 XP), Reputation (–50 XP); [Skills] Communications (Conventional) (+10 XP), Interest/Writings of Jerome Blake (+10 XP), Negotiation (+10 XP)
Sub-Affiliations	
ComStar	[Attributes] INT (+25 XP), WIL (–15 XP); [Traits] Connections (+50 XP), Enemy/Word of Blake (–100 XP), Reputation (+20 XP); [Skills] Protocol/Nearest state (+15 XP), Protocol/ComStar (+15 XP), Technician/Any (+10 XP)
Word of Blake	[Attributes] WIL (+50 XP), CHA (–50 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Paranoid (–50 XP), Connections (+75 XP), Enemy/ComStar (–100 XP), Equipped (+30 XP); [Skills] Interest/Writings of Jerome Blake (+15 XP), Interest/Writings of the Master (+15 XP), Negotiation (+10 XP), Protocol/Nearest state (+5 XP), Protocol/Word of Blake (+10 XP), Technician/Any (+10 XP)
Flexible XPs	None
Notes: Characters with a ComStar/Word of Blake affiliation may not posses the Extra Income or Property Traits. When choosing this affiliation, the character must also select a second "birth" affiliation (few people are born to either order).	

AFFILIATION

Irritated was another round of inspections, Leutnant Hans von Beckh pauses for a stretch—at least as much as his Steiner dress blues will allow.

STAGE 1 MODULES: EARLY CHILDHOOD

"God, I miss those days! All loaded up with optimism and hope… Not a care in the world… At least until dad took that job on Gibson…"

In character creation, Stage 1 modules reflect the character's early childhood, from birth to age 10. Though these modules are cheapest in terms of XP, they represent possibly the most formative stage of character development, as the circumstances and events in a character's early childhood can strongly influence his options later in life.

Age: At the end of Stage 1, all characters are considered to be 10 years old.

BACK WOODS

Module Cost: 290 XP

Raised in the country (or in other remote parts of human space where amenities are few and far between), the back woods life leaves one hardy, but unrefined and uneducated.

Prerequisites: Any affiliation; STR 4+, BOD 5+

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] STR (+100 XP), BOD (+100 XP), RFL (+75 XP), INT (–25 XP), CHA (–50 XP); [Traits] Equipped (–50 XP), Fit (+100 XP), Illiterate (–75 XP), Toughness (+75 XP), Wealth (–75 XP); [Skills] Language/Affiliation (–5 XP), Martial Arts (+10 XP), Melee Weapons (+10 XP), Navigation/Ground (+10 XP), Perception (+5 XP), Running (+10 XP), Survival/Forest (+15 XP), Tracking (+10 XP)

Flexible XPs: +25 XP each to any two Attributes or Traits

BLUE COLLAR

Module Cost: 200 XP

The common folk of most thriving commercial or industrialized worlds, characters from blue collar families have humble beginnings, but usually receive a solid education and even some vocational insights.

Prerequisites: Any affiliation

Fixed XPs: [Attributes]: STR (+45 XP), BOD (+50 XP), DEX (+50 XP), INT (+25 XP), WIL (–10 XP), CHA (–10 XP); [Skills] Career/Any (+10 XP), Interest/Any two (+5 XP each)

Flexible XPs: +10 XP each to any four Attributes, Traits or Skills

For his character's Stage 1 module, Roy has settled on Blue Collar, because he envisions his character as "common born" with "humble, yet respectable" beginnings. To the gamemaster, Roy justifies this as the life of an "army brat" to help set up his later module choices.

The Blue Collar module costs 200 points from the character's XP Pool, and has no prerequisites Roy needs to worry about. It awards 45 XPs to the character's STR Attribute, 50 XPs to BOD, 50 XPs to DEX and 25 XPs to INT, but it reduces the character's WIL and CHA XPs each by 10 points. The character's Attribute XPs currently are: STR = 145, BOD = 150, RFL = 100, DEX = 150, INT = 125, WIL = 140, CHA = 90, WIL = 50.

For Traits, the Blue Collar module does not award any XP to Roy's character.

For Skills, Roy finds that his character receives 10 XPs to any Career Skill (he selects Soldier, to reinforce the "army brat" background), and +5 to any two Interest Skills. Roy chooses FedSuns History—a Skill he already has—for one of those Interests, and BattleMechs for the other (as a child, he explains, the character was fascinated by BattleMechs and had a collection of several 'Mech figurines he played with all the time).

In addition to these, the Blue Collar module also provides four 10-XP batches as flexible XPs, indicating they may be applied to any four Attributes, Traits or Skills. Roy puts 10 XPs into his character's Perception Skill (raising it to 20 XPs), and 10 XPs each into his RFL, INT and EDG Attributes (raising them to 110, 135, and 60 XPs, respectively).

The point allocations complete, Roy moves on to Stage 2. His character is currently 10 years old.

BORN MERCENARY BRAT

Module Cost: 300 XP

The child born to mercenary parents (or adopted by a passing mercenary command early in life) is an army brat of the most transient nature, whose family travels to distant and foreign realms with regularity, and who knows no true nationality or culture beyond the confines of military DropShips and field bases.

Prerequisites: Independent/Mercenary affiliation; STR 4+, BOD 4+, WIL 4+

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] STR (+75 XP), BOD (+50 XP), RFL (+100 XP), WIL (+25 XP), CHA (–25 XP), EDG (+25 XP); [Traits] Equipped (+50 XP), Illiterate (–50 XP), Reputation (–50 XP); [Skills] Career/Soldier (+10 XP), Interest/Military History (+5 XP), Language/Any (+10 XP), Martial Arts (+15 XP), Melee Weapons (+10 XP), Negotiation (+5 XP), Perception (+5 XP), Streetwise/Any (+10 XP)

FARM

Module Cost: 275 XP

The character raised on a farm faces a childhood of seemingly endless chores in a modest lifestyle. The work is hard, but ultimately rewarding. As not every world in the Inner Sphere can grow its own food, farming families are often highly respected.

Prerequisites: Any affiliation

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] STR (+100 XP), BOD (+100 XP), DEX (+25 XP), CHA (–50 XP); [Traits] Animal Empathy (+25 XP), Illiterate (–25 XP), Toughness (+50 XP), Wealth (–25 XP); [Skills] Career/Agriculture (+10 XP), Animal Handling (+15 XP), Interest/Any two (+5 XP each)

Flexible XPs: +10 XP each, to any four Attributes, Traits or Skills

FUGITIVES

Module Cost: 225 XP

Characters born to a fugitive lifestyle face transient childhoods, constantly on the move as their parents or guardians—wanted for crimes against the state or hunted by

criminal overlords—whisk them from one world to another in a desperate effort to elude capture.

Prerequisites: Any affiliation

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] STR (+25 XP), RFL (+100 XP), WIL (+100 XP), EDG (+100 XP); [Traits] Connections (+75 XP), Dark Secret (–100 XP), Illiterate (–25 XP), Introvert (–100 XP), Wealth (–100 XP), Choose one: Combat Sense, Fit, Good Hearing, Good Vision, Patient, Thick-Skinned or Toughness (+100 XP); [Skills] Acting (+5 XP), Language/Any (+5 XP), Perception (+10 XP), Running (+10 XP), Stealth (+10 XP), Streetwise/Any (+10 XP), Zero-G Operations (+5 XP)

Flexible XPs: +5 XP each to any four Attributes, Traits or Skills

NOBILITY

Module Cost: 215 XP

The noble-born character is blessed with the most privileged of upbringings, receiving upper class status, top-rate education and a luxurious lifestyle where every need and many desires are automatically met. As a result, "bluebloods" often seem cultured, but suffer from the indulgences of their soft lives.

Prerequisites: Any affiliation; 5+ TP (total) in Title, Wealth or Property Traits

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] STR (–75 XP), BOD (–75 XP), RFL (–50 XP), INT (+100 XP), CHA (+100 XP); [Traits] Equipped (+125 XP), Enemy (–200 XP), Glass Jaw (–100 XP), Reputation (+175 XP), Wealth (+150 XP); [Skills] Appraisal (+5 XP), Art/Any (+10 XP), Interest/Any (+10 XP), Language/Affiliation (+10 XP), Protocol/Affiliation (+10 XP)

Flexible XPs: +5 XP each to any four Attributes, Traits or Skills

SLAVE

Module Cost: 45 XP

Characters born to slavery are typically the children of slaves still working off a debt to their masters, or were themselves captured and sold into slavery at a very young age (typically by pirates and such). The young slave's life can be a harsh one, with few rewards.

Prerequisites: Any affiliation; STR 4+, BOD 4+

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] STR (+100 XP), BOD (+75 XP), DEX (+100 XP), INT (–50 XP), WIL (–50); [Traits] Equipped (–100 XP), Illiterate (–90 XP), Patient (+100 XP), Reputation (–100 XP), Wealth (–200 XP), (+90 XP to either of the following Traits: Exceptional Attribute/Any or Natural Aptitude/Any); [Skills] Language/Affiliation (–5 XP), Career/Any (+15 XP), Interest/Any (+10 XP), Protocol/Affiliation (+15 XP), Stealth (+15 XP), Streetwise/Affiliation (+15 XP), Technician/Any (+5 XP)

Flexible XPs: +25 XP each to any four Attributes or Traits

STREET

Module Cost: 250 XP

The character raised on the streets lives in a dangerous world of lawlessness in the midst of civilization. Lacking the prosperity of the upper classes, such children learn quickly to rely more on cunning and luck than on the kindness of strangers.

Prerequisites: Any affiliation

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] STR (+25 XP), BOD (–20 XP), RFL (+100 XP), WIL (+100 XP), CHA (–25 XP), EDG (+100 XP); [Traits] Connections (+75 XP), Compulsion/Paranoid (–50 XP), Enemy (–100 XP), Illiterate (–75 XP), Reputation (–100 XP), Toughness (+200 XP), Wealth (–75 XP); [Skills] Language/Affiliation (–5 XP), Martial Arts (+15 XP), Melee Weapons (+5 XP), Perception (+10 XP), Running (+10 XP), Stealth (+10 XP), Streetwise/Affiliation (+10 XP)

Flexible XPs: +10 XP each to any four Attributes, Traits or Skills

TRUEBORN CRÈCHE

Module Cost: 300 XP

The trueborn Clansman begins life in the constant company of his fellow genetic siblings—sibkin—while simultaneously learning the arts of combat as soon as it is possible to walk. Bred ultimately to rule their Clan as members of its warrior caste, trueborns in the crèche believe in the Clans' highest law: might makes right.

Prerequisites: Clan affiliation; Phenotype and Trueborn Traits required

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] STR (+100 XP), BOD (+125 XP), RFL (+125 XP), WIL (+100 XP), CHA (–75 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Clan Honor (–100 XP), Phenotype (+0 XP; see *Notes*, below), Slow Learner (–300 XP), Trueborn (+200 XP); [Skills] Interest/Clan Remembrance (+10 XP), Martial Arts (+10 XP), Melee Weapons (+5 XP), Protocol/Clan (+10 XP), Small Arms (+5 XP), Swimming (+10 XP)

Flexible XPs: +15 XP each to any five Attributes, Traits or Skills

Notes: Character must choose Aerospace, Elemental or MechWarrior Phenotype.

WAR ORPHAN

Module Cost: 170 XP

With parents killed by foreign invaders (or friendly fire), the war orphan begins life at a crossroads. War orphan characters often endure a mixture of scorn and pity in their societies, but usually grow stronger and more self-reliant for it.

Prerequisites: Any affiliation

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] INT (+50 XP), WIL (+100 XP), EDG (+100 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Traumatic Memories (–100 XP), Illiterate (–25 XP), Introvert (–50 XP), Reputation (–50 XP), Sixth Sense (+150 XP), Wealth (–100 XP); [Skills] Language/Affiliation (–5 XP), Perception (+10 XP), Stealth (+5 XP), Streetwise/Affiliation (+10 XP)

Flexible XPs: +25 XP each to any three Attributes or Traits

WHITE COLLAR

Module Cost: 170 XP

Above the middle class, but still a far cry from nobility, characters hailing from white collar families enjoy a relatively pampered lifestyle and sheltered existence, but hopefully realize this means society will expect more from them in return.

Prerequisites: Any affiliation; 3+ TP (total) in Wealth or Property Traits

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] STR (–50 XP), BOD (–50 XP), INT (+75 XP), WIL (–50 XP), CHA (+75 XP); [Traits] Equipped (+75 XP), Enemy (–100 XP), Extra Income (+50 XP), Glass Jaw (–50 XP), Reputation (+50 XP), Wealth (+100 XP); [Skills] Art/Any (+10 XP), Interest/Any (+10 XP), Language/Affiliation (+5 XP), Protocol/Affiliation (+5 XP)

Flexible XPs: +5 XP each to any three Attributes, Traits or Skills

STAGE 2 MODULES: LATE CHILDHOOD

"I don't know. Those last four years were just a blur, and if it weren't for Jenny in Stellar Geography, I probably wouldn't have gotten that scholarship to Chekswa. Thank God for unanswered prayers, huh?"

In character creation, Stage 2 modules reflect most of the character's teenage years, from age 11 through age 16. A key time for most characters, this stage offers more XPs as the characters grow and develop. This is especially true of Clan characters, whose society forces them through more intensive training protocols, accepting only the best and discarding the rest.

Flexible XPs: During Stage 2, a character may spend no more than 35 flexible XPs on a single Skill, and no more than 200 flexible XPs on any one Attribute or Trait.

Age: At the end of Stage 2, all characters are considered to be 16 years old.

ADOLESCENT WARFARE

Module Cost: 500 XP

Whether on the mean streets of a gang-ruled town or a war-ravaged world on some Great House's front line, a character who spends more teenage years carrying a gun or a knife than school books lives the life of an adolescent warrior.

Prerequisites: Any Stage 1 module except Nobility and Trueborn Crèche

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] BOD (+40 XP), RFL (+40 XP), WIL (+50 XP), INT (–30 XP); [Traits] Combat Sense (+80 XP), Connections (+30 XP), Compulsion/Paranoid (–20 XP), Enemy (–40 XP), Wealth (–20 XP); [Skills] Language/Affiliation (–25 XP), Leadership (+25 XP), Medtech (+25 XP), Melee Weapons (+25 XP), Negotiation (+15 XP), Perception (+25 XP), Protocol/Affiliation (–10 XP), Running (+40 XP), Small Arms (+20 XP), Stealth (+30 XP), Streetwise/Affiliation (+45 XP), Survival (+25 XP)

Flexible XPs: +130 XP

BACK WOODS

Module Cost: 500 XP

Isolated from the conveniences of modern society, a back woods teenager lives a survivalist's life, but tends to find interacting with so-called normal society a far greater challenge than any danger on the fringes of human space.

Prerequisites: None

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] BOD (+60 XP), WIL (+70 XP), INT (–20 XP); [Traits] Animal Empathy (+50 XP), Good Hearing (+40 XP), Introvert (–20 XP), Wealth (–20 XP); [Skills] Climbing (+30 XP), Medtech (+20 XP), Melee Weapons (+20 XP), Perception (+45 XP), Protocol/Affiliation (–15 XP), Small Arms (+20 XP), Stealth (+40 XP), Survival/Forest (+25 XP), Tracking (+30 XP)

Flexible XPs: +125 XP

CLAN APPRENTICESHIP

Module Cost: 500 XP

While warriors in Clan society endure a fierce training protocol almost from birth, those relegated to the lower castes spend their teenage years apprenticed to masters of their designated trades.

Characters taking this module must identify their caste in formal Clan society before moving forward, and must adhere to the prerequisites and XP allotments for that caste (for Dark Caste, take the Back Woods or Street modules instead). Experience Points not assigned to any caste are also available to all the apprenticed castes described here.

Prerequisites: Clan affiliation, BOD 4+ (Laborer Caste), CHA 4+ (Merchant Caste), INT 4+ (Scientist Caste), DEX 4+ (Technician Caste)

Fixed XPs: [Skills] Administration (+35 XP), Computers/Any (+50 XP), Interest/Any (+30 XP), Interest/Clan History (+80 XP).

Laborer Caste Only: [Attributes] BOD (+30 XP); [Skills] Career/Any (+50 XP), Computers/Any (+40 XP), Driving/Ground Vehicle (+20 XP)

Merchant Caste Only: [Attributes] CHA (+30 XP); [Skills] Administration (+50 XP), Appraisal (+40 XP), Negotiation (+20 XP)

Scientist Caste Only: [Attributes] INT (+30 XP); [Skills] Computers/Any (+30 XP), Interest/Any (+10 XP), MedTech (+20 XP), Science/Any (+50 XP)

Technician Caste Only: [Attributes] DEX (+30 XP); [Skills] Computers/Any (+30 XP), Perception (+20 XP), Technician/Any (+30 XP), Technician/Any (+15 XP), Technician/Any (+15 XP)

Flexible XPs: +165 XP

FARM

Module Cost: 400 XP

The character that spends his teenage years on a farm learns a host of skills invaluable to one of the Inner Sphere's most vaunted civilian professions.

Prerequisites: None

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] BOD (+40 XP), CHA (–20 XP); [Traits] Animal Empathy (+30 XP); [Skills] Administration (+35 XP), Animal Handling (+30 XP), Career/Agriculture (+50 XP), Driving/Ground Vehicle (+30 XP), Interest/Any (+40 XP), Interest/Any (+20 XP), Small Arms (+30 XP)

Flexible XPs: +115 XP

FREEBORN SIBKO

Module Cost: 950 XP

Though lacking the sophistication and intensity of the trueborn military regimen, the training cycle for aspiring Clan warriors born outside the iron wombs can be just as brutal in many ways.

Characters taking this module must identify their branch of service (aerospace, cavalry, Elemental, infantry or MechWarrior) in the Clan military before moving forward, and must adhere to any prerequisites and XP allotments for that caste. Experience Points not assigned to any branch are also available to all the freeborn branches described here.

Prerequisites: Clan affiliation; BOD 3+, DEX 4+, RFL 3+, WIL 4+; must select a Clan-affiliated Stage 4 module next.

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] BOD (+50 XP), WIL (+50 XP), CHA (–30 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Clan Honor (–30 XP), Rank (+100 XP),

Reputation (–40 XP); [Skills] Career/Soldier (+50 XP), Interest/Clan Remembrance (+20 XP), Negotiation (+50 XP), Clan Basic Training Field* (+180 Total XP, +30 XP per Skill; Rebate: 6 XP per Skill)

Aerospace Only: [Traits] Vehicle (+100 XP); [Skills] Clan Aerospace Warrior Field* (+250 Total XP, +50 XP per Skill; Rebate: 10 XP per Skill)

Cavalry Only: [Traits] Vehicle (+100 XP); [Skills] Clan Cavalry Field* (+250 Total XP, +50 XP per Skill; Rebate: 10 XP per Skill)

Elemental Only: [Traits] Vehicle (+100 XP); [Skills] Clan Elemental Field* (+350 Total XP, +50 XP per Skill; Rebate: 10 XP per Skill)

Infantry (non-Elemental) Only: [Traits] Equipped (+40 XP); [Skills] Infantry Field (+300 Total XP: +50 XP per Skill; Rebate: 10 XP per Skill)

MechWarrior Only: [Traits] Vehicle (+40 XP); [Skills] Clan MechWarrior Field* (+300 Total XP, +50 XP per Skill; Rebate: 10 XP per Skill)

Flexible XP: +200 XP (aerospace and cavalry only), +100 XP (Elemental only), +150 XP (infantry and MechWarrior only)

Notes: *See the Clan Military Skill Fields in the Master Fields List (p. 85) for prerequisites. Freeborn Clan warriors may ignore Phenotype prerequisites. As described in Stage 3, XP costs for Fields come with a "rebate" that puts XPs back into the character's XP Pool after Skills have been purchased.

Upon completion of this Stage, all Clan warriors must proceed to Stage 4: Real Life.

HIGH SCHOOL

Module Cost: 400 XP

Common across the Inner Sphere and Periphery—though hardly universal, as different worlds and social classes face different needs—the academic life is typical for most teenagers, preparing them for future careers in the modern work force, military service or perhaps some form of higher education.

Prerequisites: Any non-Clan affiliation; may not have Illiterate Trait

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] CHA (+25 XP), INT (+25 XP); [Traits] Connections (+20 XP); [Skills] Computers (+20 XP), Interest/Any (+40 XP), Interest/Any (+35 XP), Language/Affiliation (+10 XP), Streetwise/Affiliation (+20 XP), Swimming (+20)

Flexible XPs: +185 XP

MERCENARY BRAT

Module Cost: 600 XP

While most normal kids are in high school, the teenage mercenary brat is seeing more of the universe and picking up the skills of his family's trade along the way as an able body between missions.

Prerequisites: None

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] WIL (+35 XP), EDG (+50 XP), INT (–20 XP), CHA (–20 XP); [Traits] Connections (+40 XP); Tech Empathy (+20 XP); [Skills] Career/Soldier (+50 XP), Driving/Ground Vehicle (+15 XP), Interest/Any (+30 XP), Interest/Any (+20 XP), Language/Any (+30 XP), Language/Any (+20 XP), Martial Arts (+30 XP), Medtech (+10 XP), Negotiation (+50 XP), Perception (+30 XP), Streetwise/Any (+20 XP), Tactics/Any (+10 XP), Technician/Any (+30 XP)

Flexible XPs: +150 XP

MILITARY SCHOOL

Module Cost: 500 XP

Whether by punishment or as a matter of familial pride, the character that spends his late childhood in military school comes away from the experience with a host of skills and a sense of discipline that can boost any eventual military or political career.

Prerequisites: WIL 3+

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] CHA (+50 XP); [Traits] Connections (+15 XP), Fit (+15 XP), Rank (+20 XP); [Skills] Career/Soldier (+25 XP), Computers (+35 XP), Interest/Any (+30 XP), Interest/Military History (+40 XP), Leadership (+20 XP), Martial Arts (+30 XP), Medtech (+10 XP), Melee Weapons (+20 XP), Protocol/Affiliation (+30 XP), Running (+30 XP), Small Arms (+50 XP), Strategy (+10 XP), Swimming (+30 XP)

Flexible XPs: +40 XP (may only be applied to Skills)

For Stage 2 of his character's design, Roy decides on the Military School module. Though not a common path for a kid raised in the middle class, Roy has established that his character is an army brat, and further adds that his family has maintained a tradition of service for generations, thus making it a matter of familial pride (and possibly discipline) to send their children off to military school.

The Military School module costs 500 points from the character's XP Pool (which by now is down to 3,300). Its only prerequisite is a WIL score of 3 or higher, so Roy notes that his character will need a minimum WIL of 3 at the end of character creation.

For Attributes, the module awards 50 XPs to the character's CHA score (raising its XPs to 140).

For Traits, the module awards 15 XPs to Connections, 15 to Fit and 20 to Rank.

For Skills, the module awards 25 XPs to Career/Soldier (raising that Skill's XP to 35), 35 XPs to Computers, 30 XPs to any Interest (which Roy decides to add to the BattleMechs Interest Skill he picked up last stage), 40 XPs to Interest/Military History, 20 XPs in Leadership, 30 XPs in Martial Arts, 10 XPs in Medtech, 20 XPs in Melee Weapons, another 30 XPs in the Protocol Skill of his Affiliation (the FedSuns, of course, now up to 55 XPs), 30 XPs in Running, 50 in Small Arms, 10 in Strategy and 30 in Swimming.

In addition, Roy finds that his character receives 40 flexible XP, which can be allocated only to Skills. He decides to add 5 more XPs each to his two Language Skills (bringing both up to 25 XPs), 10 more to Perception (for a total of 30 XPs), 10 more to Arts/Painting (for a running total of 20 XPs) and 10 more to Interest/FedSuns History (bringing it to 30 XPs).

This stage complete, Roy moves on to Stage 3. His character is now 16 years old.

PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Module Cost: 500 XP

A common alternative to high school for the children of wealthy parents, preparatory ("prep") school paves a character's way to many of the Inner Sphere's most prestigious colleges and universities with an eye toward eventual influential careers in politics, law, medicine and corporate management.

Prerequisites: May not have used Back Woods or Fugitive Stage 1 modules. May not possess the Illiterate Trait.

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] CHA (+60 XP); [Traits] Connections (+40 XP), Extra Income (+20 XP), Gregarious (+20 XP); [Skills] Archery (+20 XP), Computers (+25 XP), Interest/Any (+30 XP), Interest/Any (+20), Interest/Any (+20 XP), Language/Any (+20 XP), MedTech (+10 XP), Melee Weapons (+15 XP), Protocol/Affiliation (+40 XP)

Flexible XPs: +160 XP (up to 80 XP may be applied to Traits)

SPACER FAMILY

Module Cost: 500 XP

The child of a spacer family is raised in the low-gravity and sterilized-atmosphere world of DropShips and JumpShips, rarely setting foot on planets long enough to take root. Characters from this background tend to be a little more insular toward outsiders, but are in their element when out in the "black sea."

Prerequisites: Cannot have the TDS Trait; RFL 4+, DEX 4+, INT 4+; Minimum Zero-G Operations Skill +2

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] RFL (+40 XP), DEX (+30 XP), BOD (–20 XP), STR (–20 XP); [Traits] Equipped (+20 XP), G-Tolerance (+40 XP), Natural Aptitude/Zero-G Operations (+20 XP), Introvert (–25 XP); [Skills] Career/Ship's Crew (+30 XP), Communications (+20 XP), Computers (+20 XP), Gunnery/Spacecraft (+10 XP), Interest/Any (+15 XP), Language/Any (+15 XP), Navigation/Space (+20 XP), Perception (+15 XP), Piloting/Spacecraft (+15 XP), Sensor Operations (+15 XP), Technician/Aeronautics (+20 XP), Technician/Electronic (+20 XP), Zero-G Operations (+15 XP)

Flexible XPs: +175 XP (at least 100 XP must be applied to Skills)

STREET

Module Cost: 400 XP

Life on the streets can get downright dangerous, particularly for kids in their teens. Characters coming from this background have learned to survive by identifying the gangs, evading the authorities and defending themselves (or just running away) when cornered.

Prerequisites: None

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] BOD (+20 XP), EDG (+40 XP), CHA (–20 XP); [Traits] Brave (+15 XP), Connections (+20 XP), Enemy (–20 XP), Illiterate (–20 XP); Reputation (–20 XP); [Skills] Acting (+20 XP), Climbing (+15 XP), Disguise (+20 XP), Escape Artist (+20 XP), Interest/Any (+20 XP), Interrogation (+20 XP), Martial Arts (+20 XP), Medtech (+10 XP), Melee Weapons (+25 XP), Negotiation (+20 XP), Perception (+25 XP), Running (+25 XP), Scrounge (+10 XP), Small Arms (+20 XP), Stealth (+15 XP), Streetwise/Affiliation (+40 XP)

Flexible XPs: +60 XP

TRUEBORN SIBKO

Module Cost: 1,600 XP (all non-ProtoMech Warriors); 1,500 (ProtoMech and Advanced ProtoMech Warriors)

The intense training regimen of the trueborn Clan warrior has already begun by the time the time he leaves the crèche. Bred for combat and indoctrinated into the ways of the Clans, young trueborns undergo training at this stage that can literally hone them into warriors or kill them in the process.

Characters taking this module must identify their branch of service (aerospace, Elemental, ProtoMech or MechWarrior) in the Clan military before moving forward, and must adhere to any prerequisites and XP allotments for that caste. Experience Points not assigned to any branch are also available to all the trueborn branches described here.

Prerequisites: Clan affiliation; Aerospace, Elemental or MechWarrior Phenotype; BOD 3+, DEX 4+, RFL 3+, WIL 3+; ProtoMech warriors may not have Combat Paralysis, Glass Jaw, Lost Limb, Poor Hearing, Poor Vision or Slow Learner Traits.

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] BOD (+40 XP), DEX (+60 XP), CHA (–30 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Clan Honor (–50 XP), Rank (+200 XP); [Skills] Career/Soldier (+80 XP), Interest/Clan Remembrance (+50 XP), Negotiation (+80 XP), Clan Basic Training Field (+300 Total XP, +50 XP per Skill; Rebate: 10 XP per Skill)

Aerospace Only: [Traits] Vehicle (+200 XP); [Skills] Gunnery/Spacecraft (+40 XP), Piloting/Spacecraft (+40 XP), Navigation/Air (+40 XP), Clan Aerospace Warrior Field* (+400 Total XP, +80 XP per Skill; Rebate: 16 XP per Skill)

Elemental Only: [Traits] Vehicle (+160 XP); [Skills] Clan Elemental Field* (+560 Total XP, +80 XP per Skill; Rebate: 16 XP per Skill)

Elemental (Advanced) Only:** [Attributes] CHA (–30 XP), EDG (–30 XP); [Traits] Equipped (+50 XP), Vehicle (+200 XP); [Skills] Gunnery/Battlesuit (+25 XP), Piloting/Battlesuit (+25 XP), Swimming (+10 XP), Tactics/Infantry (+10 XP), Clan Elemental Field* (+560 Total XP, +80 XP per Skill; Rebate: 16 XP per Skill)

ProtoMech Only: [Traits] Compulsion/Chemical Addiction (–100 XP), Implant/EI Neural Implant (+200 XP), Reputation (–100 XP), Toughness (+100 XP), Vehicle (+100 XP); [Skills] Navigation/Ground (+30 XP), Tactics/Infantry (+50 XP), Tactics/Land (+50 XP), Clan ProtoMech Warrior Field* (+250 Total XP, +50 XP per Skill; Rebate: 10 XP per Skill)

ProtoMech (Advanced) Only:** [Traits] Compulsion/Chemical Addiction (–100 XP), Implant/EI Neural Implant (+200 XP), Reputation (–100 XP), Toughness (+125 XP), Vehicle (+125 XP); [Skills] Navigation/Ground (+30 XP), Tactics/Infantry (+50 XP), Tactics/Land (+50 XP), Clan ProtoMech Warrior Field* (+400 Total XP, +80 XP per Skill; Rebate: 16 XP per Skill)

MechWarrior Only: [Traits] Vehicle (+200 XP); [Skills] Gunnery/BattleMech (+80 XP), Piloting/BattleMech (+60 XP), Clan MechWarrior Field* (+480 Total XP, +80 XP per Skill; Rebate: 16 XP per Skill)

Flexible XPs: +150 XP (aerospace and Elemental only), +50 XP (advanced Elemental and MechWarrior only), +190 XP (ProtoMech only), +15 XP (advanced ProtoMech only)

Notes: *See the Clan Military Skill Fields in the Master Fields List (p. 85) for prerequisites. As described in Stage 3, XP costs for Fields add a "rebate" that puts XPs back into the character's XP Pool after the Field Skills have been purchased.

**Advanced Elemental training (in place of standard Elemental training) is available only to Ghost Bear and Hell's Horses Elemental trueborns, with the following minimums: BOD 6+, DEX 4+, RFL 4+, WIL 4+; advanced ProtoMech training is available only to members of Clan Blood Spirit.

Clan Steel Viper characters reduce age at the end of this process by 1 year.

Upon completion of this Stage, all Clan warriors must proceed to Stage 4: Real Life.

STAGE 3 MODULES: HIGHER EDUCATION

"All right, you pukes, listen up! Welcome to the Filtvelt Military Academy! I am Sergeant-Major Kevin von Holt, your senior drill instructor, and I will be your patron saint of pain for the duration of your stay in my compound! But you 'Mech lice will address me only as 'Sergeant-Major'! Do you understand!?"

In character creation, Stage 3 modules reflect an optional period in the character's life focused purely on training or academic advancement, often between late childhood and official entry into the "real world" of adulthood. Based on the character's starting affiliation, a vast array of schools and training facilities are available, each of which offers its own unique blend of Skills, Fields and other advantages to character design. As a result, this stage in character development follows a slightly different format from the others.

OVERVIEW

Higher education offers characters a wealth of improvement in terms of Attributes, Traits and Skills that cannot be matched in any other stage of development. Though there exists a bewildering array of educational options and institutions available to characters, for the purposes of character creation all of them can be narrowed down to a basic set of "master" schools that cover their primary educational functions, and then modified by specifics based on the character's criteria.

Four levels of training are possible for a character in this stage of development: Basic Training, Advanced Training, Special Training and Officer Training. The exact nature of these levels varies from school to school, but each offers a mix of Attribute, Trait and Skill XPs in the same fashion as other paths, as well as special Fields—batches of Skills that are granted to the character, but also incorporate a special XP rebate once taken.

By selecting and purchasing a master school and a specific school, characters will complete their higher education requirements and be ready for Stage 4 (Real Life).

CHOOSE YOUR SCHOOLING

Each institution of higher education represented here offers a host of programs for its students. Prerequisites in each school, however, control who has access to what educational options, based on their Attributes, Traits, previous modules and perhaps even their career or faction of choice. A character that wishes to attend a certain school must make sure he meets all requirements listed for that school. (These prerequisites are maintained to the end of character generation unless another module increases them.)

Master Schools List

As the primary function of all schools in this stage is to award Skill Fields to the character, schools are listed on the Master Schooling List by the Fields that they offer. When the player selects a specific master school, the character automatically purchases all of the Attribute, Trait and Skill XPs awarded as automatic by the school, and then must select two to three of the Fields offered by that master school, with the following restrictions on such selections:

- The player must choose one—and only one—Field from the Basic Fields list.
- The player must choose at least one Field from the Advanced Fields list.
- The player may not choose more than three Fields in total for a school. (Choosing a second Advanced Field is a viable option for a third Field, as is selecting a Special Training Field.)
- Finally, for all the Fields chosen, the character must meet the prerequisites as shown on the Master Fields Table (see pp. 82-85) unless the chosen school's rules indicate otherwise (such as the Solaris Internship's waiver of Basic Training for MechWarriors). See *Fields*, below, for rules on how many XPs are received and rebated by selecting a Field.

Players and gamemasters should be aware that the Master Schools List defines the educational options available to characters in only the most fundamental ways. Dozens of major military academies exist across the Inner Sphere and Periphery, and thousands of trade schools, technical schools and universities are available to characters from almost any populated world. Specific schools—ranging from prestigious institutions of higher learning like the Lyran Alliance's University of Tharkad, or the FedSuns' New Avalon Institute of Science, to major military academies like the Draconis Combine's Sun Zhang MechWarrior Academy or the Capellans' Liao Conservatory of Martial Arts—can offer subtle variations whose full rules are beyond the scope of this book. Gamemasters and players seeking to add flavor to their player characters to reflect such institutions may consult the faction's relevant Handbooks for ideas on how to incorporate additional details into the character's schooling experience.

Officer Training: Officer training is considered a special addition to the standard Stage 3 cycle, and can only be taken by characters who have already taken an Intelligence, Police or Military Master School type. Unlike the other types of training, officer training only provides the Officer Skill Field and access to officer ranks (O1, O2 and so forth) in the character's Rank Trait. Officer training thus does not have Basic, Advanced or Special Fields.

Fields

Each school assigns XPs in conventional Attribute/Trait/Skill format and in the form of Skill Fields. Skill Fields are special "package deals" of Skills that cover an entire occupational role (such as MechWarrior, Cavalry, Scientist and so forth). Characters who purchase such Fields must pay a total of +30 XPs for each Skill in the Field (in addition to the Module's XP Cost). For this, they receive +30 XPs in each of the Field's Skills, as well as 6 XPs per Field Skill awarded to their XP Pool as a special "rebate". This rebate reflects the benefits of the professional training received in the Higher Education Stage.

Like schools themselves, Fields have prerequisites. These requirements are listed with the Field's entry in the Master Fields Table (see p. 82-85).

Field Costs: As stated above, the cost for an individual Field is equal to 30 XPs times the number of Skills the Field provides. Thus, when a school listing gives its cost in XPs as (XPs + Field Costs), the player must sum up the XP costs for all Fields chosen under that school and add that value to the school's bse XP cost.

AGE

In Stage 3, aging is no longer a set factor, but an accumulation of years based mainly on the number of Fields chosen. Thus, a character that completes this stage will not have a set age upon graduation. Though specific schools may vary quite a bit on how long it takes to graduate, these rules generalize the time this stage takes for simplicity's sake.

The amount of time needed to complete a school's programs is listed in the statistics for its Fields on the Master Schools List, in parentheses with the Field type. This value applies regardless of the specific Field chosen in that school. For example, an entry of "Basic (+1 year):" indicates that the school's Basic Field training program runs only 1 year, while an entry of "Advanced (+2 years):" indicates that the school takes two years of the character's life to train him in an Advanced Field.

To find a character's age at the end of Stage 3, simply add up the years each Field takes and add that sum to the character's current age.

REPEATING STAGE 3

The Higher Education Stage reflects the totality of the character's optional "extra learning" in life, and can reflect either conventional pass-through schooling all at once or the culmination of several non-contiguous years spent toward self-improvement. For this reason, a character may not repeat any Stage 3 schooling of the same type during character creation. Characters may, however, opt to repeat this stage if they choose a completely different type of schooling on the Master Schools List.

For purposes of these rules, a schooling type is completely different if it does not fall under the same general type of school (Civilian, Intelligence/Police or Military) as the prior school. As shown on the Master Schools List, Civilian type schools include Technical College, Trade School, University and Solaris Internship; the Intelligence/Police type of school includes Police Academy and Intelligence Operative Training; and Military schools include Military Academy, Military Enlistment and Family Training. Officer Training, which is a secondary school type associated with Intelligence/Police and Military school, is not counted against this rule.

To ensure that his character becomes a MechWarrior, Roy must take him through Stage 3 for training. He has already prepared his character for this with the background of an army brat that attended military school. To take it all the way, Roy selects the Military Academy school option, as it offers the best education in MechWarrior Training a character can receive. Roy's character easily meets the prerequisites for prep or military school (thus avoiding the additional Trait and Attribute XPs listed, which mainly reflect someone pulling strings to get him accepted).

The academy will cost Roy at least 830 points from his XP Pool, but the final total depends on how many Fields he opts to take. Per the Stage 3 rules, he must take at least one Field from the school's Basic Fields list and one from the Advanced Fields list. Roy decides to assess the cost of these Fields later, after applying the other XPs the module offers.

For Attributes, the basic Military Academy awards 50 XPs to STR, 100 to BOD, 125 to RFL and 100 to WIL (raising these Attributes to 195, 250, 235 and 240 XPs, respectively). For Traits, Roy's character receives 100 XPs in the Equipped Trait and 200 XPs in Rank (raising that Trait to 220 XPs). For Skills, he receives 15 more XPs toward Interest/Military History (raising it to 55 XPs), 10 more XPs in Leadership (raising it to 30), 15 more XPs in Protocol/FedSuns (for a running total of 70) and 15 more XPs in Swimming (raising it to 45 XPs). A final 100 flexible XPs are then awarded, which Roy immediately assigns to a Vehicle Trait, reasoning that his MechWarrior character will need to start earning his ride as soon as possible.

Proceeding to his Basic Skill Field at the academy, Roy looks up Basic Training on the Master Fields List and finds it under Military Skill Fields. There he notices that Basic Training offers five Skills in all, with the prerequisites of a Rank Trait, an INT score of 3 and a WIL score of 3. Roy notes that he must end character creation with a minimum WIL of 3 (the minimum of 4 for INT that he has had since Stage 0 remains unchanged, since it's higher than Basic Training's requirement of 3), as well as at least 1 Trait Point (TP) in Rank.

Basic Training has 5 Skills in all—Career/Soldier, Martial Arts, Medtech, Navigation/Ground and Small Arms—and 30 XPs each are awarded to these, costing a total of 150 additional XPs from Roy's XP Pool. However, Roy also receives 6 XPs per Skill in a special rebate, returning 30 XPs to his XP Pool. Once more, Roy notes this for later accounting. Roy also notes that Basic Training has added 1 year to his character's age, bringing him to 17 (though his academy years are not over yet).

Proceeding to Advanced Training, Roy finds himself ready for MechWarrior Training and looks up the MechWarrior Field on the Master Fields List. This time, the requisites are the Basic Training Field (already accomplished), as well as DEX and RFL minimums of 4. Roy notes that his character must have at least a 4 in both his RFL and DEX scores, and proceeds to apply 30 XPs to each of his MechWarrior Field Skills: Gunnery/'Mech, Piloting/'Mech, Sensor Operations, Tactics/Land and Technician/Any (Roy opts for Technician/Weapons). As with Basic Training, this adds 150 XPs to the module's cost and returns 30 XPs to the character's XP Pool in rebate points. This advanced training adds another year to the character's life as well, for a final age of 18.

After some consideration, Roy decides not to pick up Special Training—the optional third level of courses offered by the Military Academy—nor will he take Officer Training at this point, because he wants a humble and simple MechWarrior for now. He thus adds up the final costs for Stage 3: 830 XPs for the Academy itself + 150 for Basic Training + 150 more for MechWarrior training, for a total module cost of 1,130 XPs. This reduces the character's XP Pool to 2,170, though he receives back a total of 60 XPs in rebates. Roy ends Stage 3 with a final tally of 2,230 XPs left in his character's XP Pool, while his character is 18 years old and ready to serve on the front lines.

With his character fresh from a House Davion military academy, Roy now proceeds to Stage 4.

CIVILIAN SCHOOLS

The following represents schools that focus on non-military endeavors.

Technical College (600 XP + Field Costs)

The common technical college (any reasonably populated and industrialized world has dozens of these) is a place where students acquire the skills to operate and maintain the infrastructure, be it by mastering communications or learning to operate or maintain the heavy machinery that makes modern life possible. Technical colleges are open to students from virtually any social strata.

Prerequisites: None

Automatic: [Attributes] DEX (+100 XP), INT (+100 XP); [Traits] Equipped (+150 XP); [Skills] Computers (+20 XP), Interest/Any (+30 XP); [Flexible XP] (+200 XP)

Fields:

Basic (+1 year): Communications, Pilot/Aerospace (Civilian), Pilot/Aircraft (Civilian), Pilot/DropShip (Civilian), Pilot/Exoskeleton, Technician/Civilian

Advanced (+2 years): Cartographer, Engineer, Merchant Marine, Pilot/IndustrialMech, Pilot/JumpShip, Technician/Aerospace, Technician/'Mech, Technician/Vehicle

Trade School (560 XP + Field Costs)

Trade schools are more generalized equivalents to technical colleges (and just as common on any developed world, especially as they represent anything from a local community college to a correspondence school attended via interweb). In a trade school, students can acquire skills vital to a range of non-technical careers, ranging from life sciences and commerce to journalism and management. Like technical colleges, trade schools are open to students from virtually any social strata.

Prerequisites: None

Automatic: [Attributes] INT (+50 XP), Any one other (+100 XP); [Traits] Connections (+50 XP), Equipped (+100 XP); [Skills] Any three Skills (+20 XP each); [Flexible XP] (+200 XP)

Fields:

Basic (+1 year): General Studies, Merchant

Advanced (+2 years): Analysis, Anthropologist, Archaeologist, Cartographer, Communications, HPG Technician*, Journalist, Manager, Medical Assistant, Merchant Marine

University (710 XP + Field Costs)

Universities represent the upper crust of higher education among civilians. Many developed worlds have their own universities, but the cream of the crop are those that draw on students from across their native realms, such as House Davion's prestigious New Avalon Institute of Science or the Lyrans' University of Tharkad. Universities are expensive, and most have strict entry requirements, but offer students access to the skills for lucrative careers in science, medicine, law and technology.

Prerequisites: Minimum INT 4+. Also, if character did not take Preparatory School as a Stage 2 module (or Nobility or White Collar as a Stage 1 module), apply the following: [Attributes] WIL (+100 XP), EDG (–100 XP); [Traits] Connection (+200 XP), Reputation (–100 XP), Wealth (–100 XP)

Automatic: [Attributes] INT (+150 XP), WIL (+75 XP), CHA (+25 XP), EDG (+25 XP); [Traits] Connections (+200 XP), Equipped (+50 XP), Reputation (+75 XP), Wealth (–200 XP); [Skills] Computers (+25 XP), Interest/Any (+20 XP), Perception (+25 XP), Protocol/Affiliation (+20 XP); [Flexible XP] (+220 XP)

Fields:

Basic (+1 year): Cartographer, Communications, General Studies, Manager, Scientist, Technician/Civilian

Advanced (+2 years): Analysis, Anthropologist, Archaeologist, Detective, Engineer, HPG Technician*, Planetary Surveyor, Medical Assistant, Politician, Technician/Aerospace, Technician/Vehicle

Special (+2 years): Doctor, Lawyer, Military Scientist, Technician/'Mech, Technician/Military

Solaris Internship (700 XP + Field Costs)**

The Game World of Solaris practically breaks all the rules when it comes to higher education. Here, anyone able to seize an opportunity—or with the right connections—can find an alternative to conventional schooling by getting in on the "ground floor" with an internship. Internships are informal, and most focus on the games in some aspect, whether learning the ins and outs of stable management, the skills of a BattleMech gladiator (without all that pesky martial discipline), or even the cutthroat world of modern journalism. Of course, the fact that these options only exist on a world rife with crime, treachery and violence has kept far more from exploiting such "opportunities" as have pursued them.

Prerequisites: Character must be a resident of Solaris VII and have at least +2 TP or more in the Connections Trait.

Automatic: [Attributes] CHA (+150 XP), EDG (+50 XP), Any one other (+50 XP); [Traits] Connections (+100 XP), Enemy (–50 XP), Reputation (+100 XP), Choose: Equipped (+100 XP) or Vehicle (+100 XP); [Skills] Acting (+25 XP), Interest/Solaris Games (+30 XP), Perception (+20 XP), Streetwise/Any (+25 XP); [Flexible XP] (+100 XP)

Fields:

Basic (+2 years): Communications, Manager, Technician/Military

Advanced (+2 years): Cavalry, Journalist, MechWarrior, Pilot/Battle Armor, Politician, Technician/'Mech

INTELLIGENCE/POLICE SCHOOLS

The following master schools cover the law enforcement and intelligence communities. These schools are paramilitary in nature, but only some stress combat proficiencies.

Police Academy (680 XP + Field Costs)

Virtually every inhabited world has a standing police or peacekeeping force dedicated to maintaining order and catching criminals. The standard police academy requires very little of potential law enforcers, but offers the benefits of a career that ideally fosters community stability and respect. Police academies are open to students from virtually any social strata.

Prerequisites: None

Automatic: [Attributes] RFL (+100 XP), WIL (+100 XP); [Traits] Connections (+50 XP), Rank (+100 XP), Reputation (+100 XP); [Skills] Computers (+15 XP), Driving (+20 XP), Protocol/Affiliation (+25 XP), Streetwise/Affiliation (+30 XP); [Flexible XP] (+140 XP)

Fields:

Basic (+0.5 years): Police Officer

Advanced (+1 year): Analysis, Communications, Detective, Intelligence, Technician/Military

Special (+2 years): Covert Operations, Police Tactical Officer, Special Forces, Technician/Aerospace, Technician/Vehicle

Intelligence Operative Training (760 XP + Field Costs)

Intelligence agencies—whether working for a civilian government or attached to a military force—are by nature secretive and sophisticated institutions. Dedicated to protecting their home realms against threats where police are insufficient but a military response is too overpowering, intelligence groups tend to eschew public training campuses and focus

*This Field Available only to characters affiliated with ComStar, Word of Blake, or the Clans.

**Solaris MechWarrior Fields do not require Basic Training.

their training programs where prying eyes cannot see. Intelligence agencies are thus very selective about who they recruit and why.

Prerequisites: Minimum INT 4+ and WIL 5+, plus +2 TP or more in the Connections Trait.

Automatic: [Attributes] INT (+100 XP), WIL (+150 XP), Any one other (+50 XP); [Traits] Alternate ID (+50 XP), Connections (+200 XP), In For Life (–300 XP), Rank (+250 XP), Wealth (+50 XP); [Skills] Acting (+20 XP), Computers (+20 XP), Protocol/Affiliation (+25 XP); [Flexible XP] (+150 XP)

Fields:

Basic (+1 year): Basic Training

Advanced (+1 year): Analysis, Covert Operations, Detective, Intelligence, Police Officer, Scout

Special (+2 years): Police Tactical Officer, Special Forces

MILITARY SCHOOLS

The following master schools cover military training options available to most factions in *A Time of War*.

Military Academy (830 XP + Field Costs)

Military academies represent the finest in training for career-minded characters in the military. Every major realm boasts at least one interstellar-grade military academy like House Steiner's Nagelring on Tharkad, or the Draconis Combine's Sun Zhang MechWarrior Academy. As the place where MechWarriors learn their craft and all recruits are viewed as potential officer candidates, military academies have stricter entry requirements than simple enlistment.

Prerequisite: If character did not take Prep School or Military School as a Stage 2 module, apply the following: [Attributes] WIL (+100 XP), EDG (–100 XP); [Traits] Connection (+200 XP), Reputation (–100 XP), Wealth (–100 XP)

Automatic: [Attributes] STR (+50 XP), BOD (+100 XP), RFL (+125 XP), WIL (+100 XP); [Traits] Equipped (+100 XP), Rank (+200 XP); [Skills] Interest/Military History (+15 XP), Leadership (+10 XP), Protocol/Affiliation (+15 XP), Swimming (+15 XP); [Flexible XP] (+100 XP)

Fields:

Basic (+1 year): Basic Training, Basic Training (Naval)

Advanced (+1 year): Analysis, Cavalry, Infantry, Marine, MechWarrior, Pilot/Aerospace (Combat), Pilot/Aircraft (Combat), Pilot/DropShip, Scientist, Scout, Ship's Crew

Special (+2 years): Doctor, Infantry/Anti-'Mech, Military Scientist, Pilot/Battle Armor, Pilot/JumpShip, Special Forces

Military Enlistment (720 XP + Field Costs)

Where military academies represent the upper crust of military training, military enlistment represents the much more common standard, employed by interstellar realms and individual worlds alike to train the majority of their ground troops. Focused on conventional forces, such as infantry and cavalry, these training centers—found on any world or in any realm that maintains a standing defense force—lack the sophisticated training programs that turn out MechWarriors and aerospace fighter pilots, but still produce quality support troops for any army.

Prerequisites: None

Automatic: [Attributes] STR (+125 XP), BOD (+125 XP), RFL (+100 XP), WIL (+100 XP), CHA (–100); [Traits] Equipped (+50 XP), Rank (+100 XP); [Skills] Swimming (+20 XP); [Flexible XP] (+200 XP)

Fields:

Basic (+0.5 years): Basic Training, Basic Training (Naval)

Advanced (+1.5 years): Cavalry, Infantry, Marine, Medical Assistant, Police Officer, Scout, Ship's Crew, Technician/Military

Special (+1 years): Police Tactical Officer, Infantry/Anti-'Mech, Special Forces, Technician/Aerospace, Technician/'Mech, Technician/Vehicle

Family Training (570 XP + Field Costs)

Sufficiently powerful noble houses and affluent citizens can often circumvent the requirements of academies and service to the state by instead performing their military training "in-house". This so-called "family training" is particularly common among the minor noble houses of far-flung worlds where the military forces of their nominal rulers are few and far between, leaving such worlds without defense. Given the expense, many noble houses or wealthy families who pursue this effort often present what amounts to a watered-down academy experience due to a lack of regular, qualified instructors or state of the art equipment, yet many nevertheless have turned out warriors competent enough to serve in their homeworlds' defense.

Prerequisite: Character must have taken Preparatory School or Military School as a Stage 2 module, or received a Connections Trait of +1 TP or higher.

Automatic: [Attributes] STR (+75 XP), BOD (+75 XP), RFL (+50 XP), WIL (+50 XP); [Traits] Equipped (+50 XP), Rank (+100 XP); [Skills] Driving (+15 XP), Interest/Homeworld History (+20 XP), Protocol/Affiliation (+15 XP), Survival (+20 XP); [Flexible XP] (+100 XP)

Fields:

Basic (+0.5 years): Basic Training, Basic Training (Naval)

Advanced (+1.5 years): Cavalry, Infantry, Marine, MechWarrior, Pilot/Aerospace (Combat), Pilot/Aircraft (Combat), Pilot/DropShip, Scout, Ship's Crew

Special (+2 years): Infantry/Anti-'Mech, Pilot/Battle Armor, Pilot/JumpShip

OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL

Any military, paramilitary or police force operates under a strict chain of command, but only the most qualified can be officers. Officer Candidate School (OCS) is technically a branch of whatever academy or other institution the character is attending, but is paid for as an option after choosing all other Fields, with the following rules:

Officer Candidate School (550 XP + Field Costs)

Prerequisite: Character must have used the Intelligence, Police or Military Schools only, and possess at least one Basic and one Advanced Field. Characters require this training to access the officer ranks in the Rank Trait.

Automatic: [Attributes] CHA (+100 XP), EDG (–200 XP); [Traits] Connections (+50 XP), Equipped (+50 XP), Rank (+250 XP), Reputation (+50 XP), Wealth (+100 XP); [Skills] Leadership (+10 XP), Protocol/Affiliation (+25 XP); [Flexible XP] (+115 XP)

Fields:

Basic (+1 year): Officer Training

Note: Upon completion, character may select the "O" grades on the Rank Trait Table (see p. 124)

STAGE 4 MODULES: REAL LIFE

"They sure didn't teach us anything about this *back at the Nagelring!"*

In character creation, Stage 4 modules reflect the period in the character's life focused on adulthood after any extra training and academic advancement. In this stage, growth comes from harsh life experiences, whether in the workplace, the mean streets, the unforgiving wilderness or the battlefield.

AGE

As with Stage 3, aging is no longer a set factor in Stage 4, but an accumulation of years based on the nature of the Life Module chosen. A character will not have a set age upon completion of a Stage 4 module.

The amount of time a Stage 3 Module takes is listed in its Time statistic. To determine a final age at the end of Stage 4, simply add all Stage 3 and Stage 4 time spent to the number 16 (the character's Stage 2 ending age).

REPEATING STAGE 4

The Real Life stage reflects the character's experiences after he has achieved adulthood and completed any additional schooling. Because this covers a broad range of possibilities of any length—from short, two-year to combat tours to a virtual lifetime at a humble civilian job—characters may repeat Stage 4 modules of any type, including the module most recently completed.

Stage 4 can be repeated either by taking the same module again—if permitted by its rules—or by taking a different Stage 4 module. With the gamemaster's consent, any number of Stage 4 modules can be repeated in this fashion, subject to the following rules:

- If repeating the same module more than once (such as the Tour of Duty module), the character will receive only the Skill and Flexible XP awards for the repeated module. Attribute and Trait XPs are awarded only once per module. (The module's XP cost remains unchanged.)
- All prerequisites for the chosen module must be met by the character's design. If any prerequisites conflict (such as affiliation prerequisites), the most recently selected conflicting module cannot be taken. Modules with no prerequisites are not considered conflicting.
- If any variable-level minimum prerequisites apply that are of a different level than a similar prerequisite the character already has (such as minimum Attribute requirements), the more extreme positive or negative prerequisite applies—for example, the higher of two Attribute minimums or the lower of two otherwise identical negative-TP Traits.
- If any variable-level *maximum* prerequisites apply that are of a different level than a similar prerequisite the character already has (such as maximum Trait requirements), the *less* extreme positive or negative prerequisite applies—for example, the lower of two Attribute maximums or the higher of two otherwise identical negative-TP Traits.
- Time also accumulates with each repeated module, and so aging rules (see p. 330) apply to the character based on the total time spent in Stage 4.

AGITATOR

Dedicated to challenging authority by any means necessary, agitators seek to gather disciples and move them against their governments and leaders—whether for a noble cause or personal gain. Unsurprisingly, the agitator's lifestyle puts him in constant peril. After all, the last thing the monarchies and military juntas of the Inner Sphere and the Clans need is someone who makes waves.

Module Cost: 900 XP

Prerequisites: None

Time: +4 years

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] WIL (+75 XP); [Traits] Bloodmark (–50 XP), Gregarious (+80 XP), Toughness (+80 XP), Reputation (–150 XP); [Skills] Acting (+50 XP), Disguise (+75 XP), Driving/Any (+65 XP), Leadership (+60 XP), Negotiation (+80 XP), Perception (+70 XP), Prestidigitation (+100 XP), Small Arms (+75 XP), Streetwise/Affiliation (+75 XP), Tactics/Infantry (+40 XP), Training (+50 XP)

Flexible XPs: +125 XP (maximum of +50 to any Attribute)

CIVILIAN JOB

You may not carry a weapon, or hold the fate of worlds in your hand, but you earn a living, and it's honest work to boot. Whether you're a career bureaucrat, a cubicle rat, a humble store clerk or a freight loader at the local spaceport, you are part of the vast infrastructure that keeps your town and your society running—even if you occasionally daydream about something more…

Module Cost: 600 XP

Prerequisites: None. Clan characters from any non-warrior caste except Scientist and Dark Caste use this module.

Time: +6 years

Fixed XPs: [Skills] Administration (+75 XP), Career/Any Non-Military (+40 XP), Computers (+40 XP), Driving/Any (+60 XP), Interest/Any (+50 XP), Interest/Any (+50 XP), Leadership (+40 XP), Negotiation (+30 XP), Protocol/Affiliation (+50 XP), +80 total additional XP (+20 XP to any four Skills in the character's chosen career Field—if character has no Field, treat as additional flexible XP)

Flexible XPs: +85 XP

CLAN WATCH OPERATIVE

Among the Clans, the "honorless" business of spycraft and espionage is considered anathema, but even the most hidebound of Kerensky's descendants know better than to completely ignore the advantages of intelligence operations. Though considered ignoble and often assigned to operatives who failed the Clans in some way within their chosen profession, the operatives of the Clan Watch nevertheless strive to catch up to their Spheroid counterparts in the arena of covert ops.

Module Cost: 1,200 XP

Prerequisites: Any Clan affiliation. Must be a member of the Warrior, Scientist or Technician sub-castes.

Time: +3 years

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] INT (+70 XP), RFL (+50 XP), CHA (–75 XP); [Traits] Connections (+100 XP), Dark Secret (–50 XP); In For Life (–100 XP), Reputation (–50 XP); [Skills] Acting (+30 XP), Computers (+75 XP), Cryptography (+50 XP), Demolitions (+40 XP), Martial

Arts (+75 XP), Perception (+75 XP), Protocol/Affiliation (+50 XP), Small Arms (+80 XP), Stealth (+50 XP), Streetwise/Affiliation (+50 XP), Tracking (+80 XP)

Homeworld Clan Only: [Skills] Career/Soldier (+60 XP), Interrogation (+50 XP), Investigation (+50 XP), Melee Weapons (+40 XP), Protocol/Any Clan (+75 XP), Security Systems (+35 XP), Streetwise/Any Homeworld Clan (+50 XP), Survival (+25 XP), Technician/Any (+40 XP)

Invader Clan Only: [Traits] Equipped (+50 XP), Dark Secret (–50 XP); [Skills] Computers/Any (+50 XP), Disguise (+35 XP), Interrogation (+75 XP), Investigation (+75 XP), Negotiation (+40 XP), Perception (+50 XP), Streetwise/Any Invader Clan or Inner Sphere (+50 XP), Survival (+50 XP)

Flexible XPs: +175 XP

CLAN WARRIOR WASHOUT

Yours was a life filled with promise and glory for the Clan—until something went wrong. Though you survived the failure that led to your dismissal from the warrior training programs, you have been consigned to a lesser caste and must now learn to accept your role in supporting the warrior brethren you might otherwise have joined in battle.

Module Cost: 400 XP

Prerequisites: Clan affiliation; prior module must be Freeborn Sibko or Trueborn Sibko. Player must choose which caste the washed-out warrior has joined. Do not choose this module if "washing out" to ProtoMech training (see *Notes* below).

Time: +2 years

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] CHA (–25 XP), WIL (–50 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Any (–25 XP), Reputation (–75 XP); [Skills] Career/Soldier (–30 XP), Computers (+25 XP), Protocol/Affiliation (+80 XP), Survival (+75 XP), –60 total additional XP (–30 XP each to two of the character's Clan Warrior Field Skills)

Scientist Caste Only: [Attributes] INT (+50 XP), RFL (+25 XP); [Traits] Dark Secret (–50 XP); [Skills] Administration (+75 XP), Interest/Any (+50 XP), Investigation (+75 XP), Medtech (+50 XP), Science/Any (+75 XP), Surgery (+25 XP)

Technician Caste Only: [Attributes] RFL (+25 XP), STR (+50 XP); [Traits] Impatient (–50 XP); [Skills] Communications/Any (+75 XP), Interest/Any (+50 XP), Perception (+75 XP), Technician/Any (+75 XP), Technician/Any (+50 XP), Technician/Any (+25 XP)

Merchant Caste Only: [Attributes] WIL (+75 XP); [Traits] Thin-Skinned (–50 XP); [Skills] Acting (+45 XP), Administration (+40 XP), Appraisal (+75 XP), Interest/Any (+40 XP), Interest/Any (+35 XP), Leadership (+40 XP), Negotiation (+50 XP), Streetwise/Affiliation (+25 XP)

Laborer Caste Only: [Attributes] BOD (+75 XP); [Traits] Dependent (–50 XP); [Skills] Career/Any appropriate (+75 XP), Computers (+50 XP), Driving/Any (+75 XP), Interest/Any (+75 XP), Interest/Any (+50 XP), Streetwise/Affiliation (+25 XP)

Flexible XPs: +185 XP

Notes: This module cannot be repeated.

Clan Hell's Horses washouts may instead opt to take Stage 2: Freeborn Sibko (Cavalry or non-Elemental Infantry sub-modules only) in place of this module, but must pay the cost for that module instead of this one and treat it as +3 years time.

Clan Steel Viper washouts may opt to take Stage 2: Freeborn Sibko (non-Elemental Infantry sub-module only) in place of this module, but must pay the cost for that module instead of this one and treat it as +2 years time.

Any Clan washouts slated for ProtoMech training may use the Stage 4: ProtoMech Training module presented on p. 79 in place of this module, but must pay the cost for that module instead.

CLOISTER TRAINING

The religious Cloisters fostered by Clan Cloud Cobra—a legacy of the Clan's founding by a former SLDF chaplain—offer a curious mixture of spiritual and martial pursuits. Though stronger in the Homeworlds, the Cloisters include members from virtually every Clan, so even a warrior in the Inner Sphere may explore his faith while simultaneously demonstrating his fierce devotion to the Way of the Clans.

Module Cost: 700 XP

Prerequisites: Clan (warrior caste) only, WIL 5+; eligible characters outside of Clan Cloud Cobra must also have a minimum +2 TP in the Connections Trait.

Time: +3 years

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] WIL (+75 XP); [Traits] Connections (+50 XP), In For Life (–75 XP); [Skills] Interest/Clan Remembrance (+80 XP), Interest/Theology (+100 XP), Interest/Any (+75 XP), Melee Weapons (+50 XP), Perception (+35 XP), Training (+85 XP), +75 total additional XP (+25 XP each to any three of the character's Clan Warrior Fields)

Flexible XPs: +150 XP

Notes: This module cannot be repeated.

COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

The spirit of front-line journalism remains alive and well even on the 'Mech-heavy battlefields of the thirty-first century. Only there can the combat correspondent—part soldier, part journalist—truly shine. Battlefield journalism isn't for the faint of heart, but it's a lot more respectable than being a paparazzi.

Module Cost: 700 XP

Prerequisites: Any non-Clan affiliation. Must have Journalist Field. Must not have Combat Paralysis Trait.

Time: +4 years

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] WIL (+50 XP), CHA (+75 XP); [Traits] Extra Income (+40 XP), Reputation (+30 XP); [Skills] Art/Writing (+35 XP), Career/Journalist (+50 XP), Communications/Conventional (+30 XP), Computers (+20 XP), Investigation (+35 XP), Language/Affiliation (+50 XP), Language/Any (+30 XP), Navigation/Any (+25 XP), Negotiation (+40 XP), Perception (+30 XP), Survival (+35 XP), Technician/Electrical (+35 XP)

Flexible XPs: +90 XP

COMSTAR/WORD OF BLAKE SERVICE

Though technically more of an international conglomerate than a sacred order, the centuries-old devotion to maintaining the neutrality of Terra and the interstellar communications network of hyperpulse generators spawned a quasi-religious fervor that gave rise to the modern ComStar. Post-3052 ComStar shed much of this mysticism in favor of playing a protector role for the Inner Sphere against the Clan threat, but the schism that resulted when the more fanatical members left created the dangerous and unpredictable Word of Blake. Both organizations, however, retained much of the training

and services that made them important to the realms of the Inner Sphere throughout the Succession Wars.

Based on their training and background, members of either order can be tasked with anything from technical service on the HPGs, to local telecommunications and mail service, to planetary security and police investigations.

Module Cost: 900 XP

Prerequisites: ComStar or Word of Blake affiliations only. Cannot have any of the following Traits above the lowest possible level: Lost Limb, Poor Hearing, Poor Vision, TDS.

Time: +5 years

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] DEX (+50 XP), INT (+50 XP); [Traits] Combat Sense (+75 XP), In For Life (–100 XP), Tech Empathy (+35 XP), Choose one: Equipped, Vehicle or Wealth (+100 XP); [Skills] Administration (+40 XP), Communications/HPG (+75 XP), Communications/Any (+35 XP), Computers (+35 XP), Language/Any (+25 XP), Martial Arts (+45 XP), Protocol/Affiliation (+35 XP), Protocol/Any (+20 XP)

ComStar Only: [Attributes] WIL (+25 XP), EDG (–25 XP); [Traits] Equipped (+80 XP), Rank (+80 XP), Compulsion/Hatred of Word of Blake (–50 XP); [Skills] Communications/HPG (+15 XP), Leadership (+20 XP), Negotiation (+15 XP), Technician/Any (+15 XP), Training (+15 XP), +160 total additional XP (+40 XP each to any four Skills in any Skill Fields the character possesses; if none, raise any four Skills by +40 XP)

Word of Blake Only: [Attributes] INT (+25 XP), CHA (–25 XP); [Traits] Equipped (+70 XP), Rank (+70 XP), Compulsion/Hatred of ComStar (–75 XP), Compulsion/Hatred of Clans (–100 XP); [Skills] Communications/Any (+50 XP), Computers (+35 XP), Cryptography (+25 XP), Interest/Writings of Jerome Blake (+50 XP), Interrogation (+40 XP), Perception (+25 XP), +160 total additional XP (+40 XP each to any four Skills in any Skill Fields the character possesses; if none, raise any four Skills by +40 XP)

Flexible XPs: +50 XP

Note: This module can be used by all branches of service in the ComStar or Word of Blake affiliations. However, ComStar or Word of Blake members trained in intelligence, police or military Skill Fields can choose Covert Operations, To Serve and Protect, and Tour of Duty modules (respectively) instead.

COVERT OPERATIONS

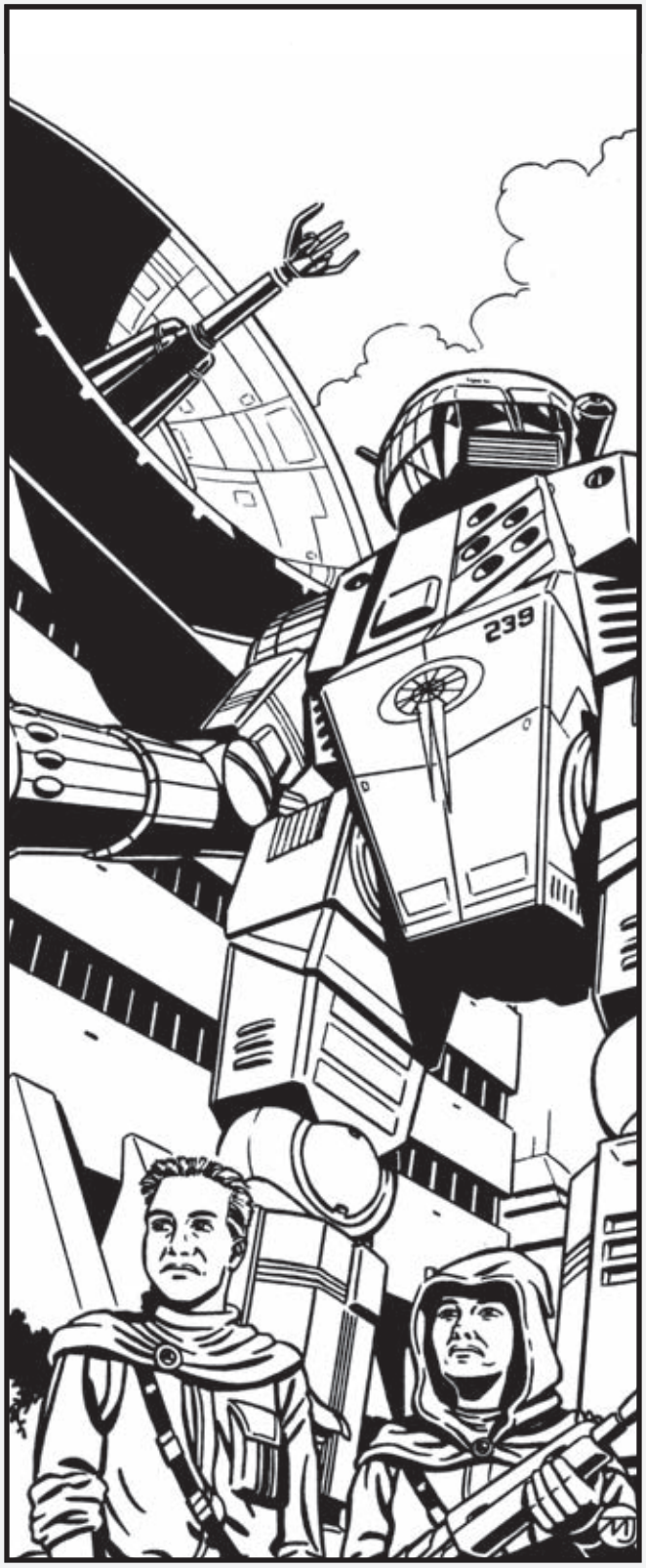
Spies, espionage agents, scouts, insurgents or even undercover officers—all are specialists in the shadowy deeds collectively known as covert operations. These operatives are most successful when their deeds are unknown, and many take to the field secure only in the knowledge that—should they fail—their governments will disavow all knowledge of their existence.

Module Cost: 1,000 XP

Prerequisites: Inner Sphere or Periphery affiliation only. Must have prior military or intelligence training in a Stage 3 module *or* at least one Tour of Duty module with a minimum +150 XPs in either the Connections Trait or the Leadership Skill. Character also must not have the Combat Paralysis Trait.

Time: +6 years

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] Choose two: BOD (+50 XP), RFL (+50 XP), WIL (+50 XP), EDG (+50 XP); [Traits] Alternate ID (+85 XP), Enemy (–25 XP), In For Life (–110 XP), Sixth Sense (+50 XP); [Skills] Acting (+25 XP), Perception (+50 XP), Survival (+75 XP), +150 total additional XP (+25 XP assigned to a maximum of six Skills in the character's Military or Intelligence/Police Skill Fields)



Wary of another attack by fanatical Blakist operatives, Com Guard Adepts Lawson and Kanusa guard the HPG on Arc-Royal with BattleMech support.

Capellan Confederation Only: [Attributes] DEX (+25 XP); [Traits] Citizenship (+75 XP), Dark Secret (–50 XP), Fit (+25 XP), Reputation (–50 XP); [Skills] Climbing (+50 XP), Demolitions (+60 XP), Escape Artist (+35 XP), Interrogation (+50 XP), Investigation (+15 XP), Martial Arts (+75 XP), Perception (+25 XP), Science/Chemistry (+40 XP), Stealth (+50 XP), Tactics/Any (+30 XP), Thrown Weapons (+45 XP)

ComStar/Word of Blake/Terran Only: [Attributes] INT (+25 XP); [Traits] Combat Sense (+50 XP), Fast Learner (+50 XP), Impatient (–50 XP), Reputation (–50 XP) [Skills] Administration (+50 XP), Communications/Any (+50 XP), Computers (+50 XP), Cryptography (+60 XP), Interrogation (+75 XP), Small Arms (+50 XP), Strategy (+50 XP), Tactics/Any (+40 XP), Technician/Any (+50 XP)

Draconis Combine Only: [Attributes] INT (+50 XP), WIL (+50 XP), CHA (–50 XP), EDG (–50 XP); [Traits] Connections (+75 XP), Enemy (–25 XP), Equipped (+50 XP), Reputation (–75 XP), Choose one: Compulsion/Loyalty to House Kurita or Compulsion/Loyalty to Draconis Combine (–50 XP); [Skills] Acrobatics/Gymnastics (+35 XP), Climbing (+50 XP), Computers (+25 XP), Cryptography (+40 XP), Interrogation (+60 XP), Investigation (+25 XP), Leadership (+40 XP), Martial Arts (+55 XP), Melee Weapons (+30 XP), Protocol/Affiliation (+40 XP), Stealth (+30 XP), Streetwise/Affiliation (+35 XP), Tactics/Any (+35 XP), Training (+25 XP)

Federated Suns Only: [Traits] Combat Sense (+50 XP), Compulsion/Any Addiction (–25 XP), Connections (+40 XP), Enemy (–75 XP), Rank (+50 XP); [Skills] Acrobatics/Free-Fall (+20 XP), Climbing (+35 XP), Computers (+45 XP), Cryptography (+30 XP), Driving/Any (+25 XP), Interrogation (+25 XP), Investigation (+65 XP), Leadership (+20 XP), Navigation/Any (+35 XP), Security Systems (+50 XP), Streetwise/Affiliation (+50 XP), Support Weapons (+30 XP), Tactics/Any (+30 XP)

Free Worlds League Only: [Traits] Slow Learner (–50 XP), Tech Empathy (+50 XP), Choose one of the following two pairs of Traits: Implant/Prosthetic (+50 XP) and Lost Limb (–50 XP) *or* Attractive (+50 XP) and Dark Secret (–50 XP); [Skills] Administration (+45 XP), Computers (+30 XP), Disguise (+35 XP), Driving/Any (+35 XP), Forgery (+45 XP), Interrogation (+35 XP), Investigation (+40 XP), Martial Arts (+25 XP), MedTech (+35 XP), Protocol/Affiliation (+60 XP), Swimming (+50 XP), Tracking (+65 XP)

Free Rasalhague Only: [Attributes] WIL (+50 XP); [Traits] Alternate ID (+35 XP), Compulsion/Rasalhague Pride (–75 XP), Equipped (+35 XP), Impatient (–25 XP); [Skills] Cryptography (+35 XP), Demolitions (+50 XP), Disguise (+35 XP), Interrogation (+25 XP), Medtech (+50 XP), Melee Weapons (+35 XP), Perception (+25 XP), Security Systems (+40 XP), Small Arms (+50 XP), Stealth (+50 XP), Tactics/Infantry (+35 XP), Technician/Any (+25 XP), Tracking (+25 XP)

Lyran Alliance Only: [Attributes] WIL (+30 XP); [Traits] Connections (+85 XP), Enemy (–45 XP), Introvert (–85 XP), Property (+25 XP), Rank (+85 XP), Reputation (–20 XP); [Skills] Acting (+30 XP), Computers (+50 XP), Cryptography (+35 XP), Driving (+35 XP), Forgery (+20 XP), Investigation (+50 XP), Martial Arts (+40 XP), Negotiation (+50 XP), Strategy (+25 XP), Support Weapons (+25 XP), Tactics/Any (+25 XP), Training (+40 XP)

Periphery (Any) Only: [Attributes] BOD (+25 XP), WIL (+50 XP); [Traits] Alternate ID (+50 XP), Compulsion/Gambling (–35 XP), Connections (+25 XP), Introvert (–35 XP); [Skills] Administration (+50 XP), Driving/Any (+50 XP), Disguise (+35 XP), Interrogation (+65 XP), Melee Weapons (+25 XP), Negotiation (+25 XP), Security Systems (+25 XP), Small Arms (+60 XP), Survival (+50 XP), Throwing Weapons (+35 XP)

Independent Affiliations Only: [Attributes] RFL (+75 XP), CHA (–50 XP); [Traits] Bloodmark (–50 XP), Connections (+75 XP), Extra Income (+25 XP), Reputation (–75 XP), Wealth (–50 XP); [Skills] Acting (+50 XP), Climbing (+35 XP), Cryptography (+40 XP), Escape Artist (+75 XP), Interest/Any (+50 XP), Language/Any (+75 XP), Martial Arts (+35 XP), Navigation/Any (+25 XP), Protocol/Any (+45 XP), Science/Chemistry (+25 XP), Small Arms (+25 XP), Streetwise/Any (+35 XP), Tactics/Any (+35 XP)

Flexible XPs: None

Notes: For Clan covert operations, see Stage 4: Clan Watch Operative (p. 74).

The Independent Affiliations sub-module can be taken by any Inner Sphere or Periphery affiliation in lieu of the sub-module for the character's primary affiliation, but that sub-module may not be repeated.

DARK CASTE

Though often referred to as the Bandit Caste as well, the Dark Caste is more an outcast fragment of Clan society than a pirate collective. Whether born to it or kicked out of the Clans for some indiscretion, the life of the Dark Caste is that of a drifter or fugitive, driven to the shadows of Clan civilization and often lucky to find any form of passage offworld for a safer haven. Resourceful Dark Casters often form the core of the underworld in Clan society, a rough analog to the organized crime syndicates that plague the realms of the Inner Sphere.

Module Cost: 700 XP

Prerequisites: Any Clan affiliation, but only after leaving the Clans or washing out of training.

Time: +4 years

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] BOD (+25 XP), DEX (+25 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Distrust of Inner Sphere (+75 XP), Reputation (–100 XP), Wealth (–25 XP); [Skills] Acting (+30 XP), Disguise (+50 XP), Escape Artist (+50 XP), Gunnery/Any (+75 XP), Martial Arts (+60 XP), Navigation/Any (+50 XP), Negotiation (+25 XP), Perception (+40 XP), Piloting/Any (+20 XP), Prestidigitation (+25 XP), Protocol/Clan (–25 XP), Running (+30 XP), Stealth (+40 XP), Survival (+45 XP), Technician/Any (+45 XP), Technician/Any (+25 XP)

Flexible XPs: +115 XP

EXPLORER

For all the thousands of worlds inhabited by humankind in the Inner Sphere and Clan space, there are thousands more waiting to be discovered—or *re*discovered, as the case may be. Organizations great and small (and even well-off, thrill-seeking individuals and lostech prospectors) have dedicated themselves to exploring these lost or untapped worlds, seeking everything from relics and ruins of the fallen Star League to potential new resources waiting for a colony to exploit them.

Module Cost: 900 XP

Prerequisites: Inner Sphere affiliations must have at least 150 XP in Connections before finalizing character. Periphery

affiliations have no Connections restriction. Clan affiliations must be of the scientist caste only. May not have TDS Trait.

Time: +6 years

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] BOD (+20 XP), RFL (+30 XP), INT (+30 XP), WIL (+30 XP); [Traits] G-Tolerance (+50 XP), Good Hearing (+35 XP), Vehicle (+35 XP), Introvert (–40 XP), Wealth (–50 XP); [Skills] Appraisal (+35 XP), Climbing (+25 XP), Communications/Any (+35 XP), Computers (+20 XP), Investigation (+35 XP), Language/Affiliation (+25 XP), Language/Any (+40 XP), Martial Arts (+25 XP), Melee Weapons (+30 XP), Medtech (+15 XP), Navigation/Any (+50 XP), Piloting/Any (+50 XP), Sensor Operations (+55 XP), Survival/Any (+75 XP), Streetwise/Any (+35 XP), Tracking (+25 XP), Zero-G Training (+15 XP)

Flexible XPs: +170 XP

GOLIATH SCORPION SEEKER

As a general rule, Clan warriors do not practice the indulgence of exploration for its own sake, preferring to leave that "menial" task to the Scientist caste. Long fascinated by their Star League roots, many warriors of Clan Goliath Scorpion have become the exception that proves the rule. Devoted to finding relics of the fallen Star League wherever they may be, these solitary Seekers pursue private quests (with their Clan's blessing) as far from the Homeworlds as the Inner Sphere itself.

Module Cost: 700 XP

Prerequisites: Clan Goliath Scorpion affiliation; warrior caste only

Time: +4 years

Fixed XPs: [Traits] Connections (+75 XP), In For Life (–25 XP); [Skills] Appraisal (+50 XP), Computers (+65 XP), Interest/Archaeology (+55 XP), Interest/Star League History (+60 XP), Interest/Pre-Star League History (+35 XP), Language/Any (+35 XP), Medtech (+40 XP), Navigation/Space (+35 XP), Perception (+50 XP), Survival/Any (+40 XP), Zero-G Operations (+25 XP)

Flexible XPs: +160 XP; at least 100 XP must be applied to Attributes or Traits

GUERILLA INSURGENT

Fighting for a cause, whether freedom from tyranny or to drive foreign invaders from the homeland, the guerilla insurgent is an outlaw many condemn as a terrorist and many others hail as a patriot. Armed and dangerous—and possibly backed by a foreign government—guerillas are seen as enemy combatants by those they face, even though many of these warriors may be little more than otherwise law-abiding citizens with little formal training.

Module Cost: 900 XP

Prerequisites: Cannot have a Clan affiliation.

Time: +6 years

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] STR (+100 XP), WIL (+100 XP); [Traits] Bloodmark (–50 XP), Combat Sense (+30 XP), Connections (+50 XP), Equipped (+30 XP), Compulsion/Hatred for Authority (–100 XP), Dependent (–25 XP), Unlucky (–35 XP); [Skills] Computer (+45 XP), Demolitions (+65 XP), Disguise (+40 XP), Escape Artist (+25 XP), Melee Weapons (+20 XP), Perception (+25 XP), Prestidigitation (+50 XP), Security Systems (+25 XP), Small Arms (+35 XP), Support Weapons (+35 XP), Survival/Any (+35 XP)

Free Rasalhague Insurgent Only: [Traits] Bloodmark (–35 XP), Combat Sense (+40 XP), Lost Limb (–50 XP), Prosthetic (+50 XP); [Skills] Demolitions (+40 XP), Forgery (+40 XP), Leadership (+35 XP), Protocol/Rasalhague (+35 XP), Streetwise/Rasalhague (+40 XP), Tactics/Any (+25 XP)

Guerilla Insurgent (General) Only: [Attributes] EDG (–25 XP); [Traits] Dark Secret (–50 XP), Enemy (–50 XP), Reputation (+25 XP), Toughness (+25 XP); [Skills] Climbing (+40 XP), Driving/Any (+50 XP), Interrogation (+50 XP), Language/Affiliation (+35 XP), Small Arms (+25 XP), Swimming (+45 XP), Tactics/Infantry (+50 XP)

Flexible XPs: +180 XP

MERCHANT

While most inhabited worlds in the thirty-first century are reasonably self-sufficient, there does exist a need (or merely a fervent desire) for raw materials, manufactured goods and luxuries that can only be found elsewhere. Responding to this need are merchants. The trader's life involves almost constant JumpShip travel, and includes free traders (independent operators), merchant masters (accomplished traders who often have a corporate backing), Deep Periphery traders (those who travel well beyond the relatively safer borders of the Inner Sphere) and Diamond Shark warrior-merchants (inactive warriors from the Diamond Shark Clan who now seek to further their Clan's profits and resources through less brutal means). Some merchants maintain a regular route, while others more daring have been known to seek their fortunes on any world their vessels can reach.

Module Cost: 900 XP

Prerequisites: Merchant Field, or a minimum of +50 XPs each in Negotiation and Administration; Diamond-Shark warrior-merchants must have Clan/Diamond Shark affiliation, be of either the warrior or merchant caste, *and* must not have the TDS Trait.

Time: +4 years

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] CHA (+50 XP); [Traits] Enemy (–75 XP), Reputation (+50 XP), Wealth (+50 XP); [Skills] Acting (+20 XP), Appraisal (+20 XP), Computers (+15 XP), Interest/Any (+35 XP), Language/Affiliation (+20 XP), Language/Any (+25 XP), Negotiation (+20 XP), Perception (+30 XP), Protocol/Any (+35 XP), Protocol/Any (+15 XP), Zero-G Operations (+10 XP)

Free Trader Only: [Attributes] WIL (+50 XP); [Traits] Connections (+50 XP), Extra Income (+50 XP), Gregarious (+25 XP); [Skills] Administration (+25 XP), Appraisal (+15 XP), Leadership (+15 XP), Martial Arts (+15 XP), Melee Weapons (+15 XP), Small Arms (+10 XP), +150 total additional XP (+30 XP each to any five Skills in the Merchant or Merchant Marine Skill Fields, even if the character does not already possess them)

Merchant Master Only: [Traits] Connections (+50 XP), Enemy (–25 XP), Extra Income (+25 XP), Reputation (+25 XP); [Skills] Administration (+15 XP), Career/Merchant (+20 XP), Communications/Conventional (+10 XP), Interest/Antiques (+10 XP), Interest/Any (+25 XP), Language/Any (+25 XP), Negotiation (+15 XP), +210 total additional XP (+35 XP each to any six Skills in the Manager, Merchant or Merchant Marine Skill Fields, even if the character does not already possess them)

Deep Periphery Trader Only: [Attributes] BOD (–50 XP), WIL (+75 XP); [Traits] Connections (+20 XP), Enemy (–100 XP), Exceptional Attribute/EDG (+75 XP), G-Tolerance (+75 XP); [Skills] Administration (+20 XP), Language/Any (+25 XP), Leadership (+20 XP), Martial Arts (+25 XP), Melee Weapons (+30 XP), Small Arms (+25 XP), Zero-G Operations (+15 XP), +125 total additional XP (+25 XP each to any five Skills in the Merchant or Merchant Marine Skill Fields even if the character does not already possess them)

Diamond Shark Warrior-Merchant Only: [Attributes] WIL (+75 XP), CHA (+25 XP); [Traits] Enemy (–150 XP), G-Tolerance (+50 XP), Reputation (–25 XP), Wealth (+25 XP); [Skills] Administration (+25 XP), Career/Merchant (+20 XP), Communications/Conventional (+25 XP), Computers (+25 XP), Interest/Any (+25 XP), Language/Any (+25 XP), Navigation/Any (+15 XP), Negotiation (+20 XP), +210 total additional XP (+35 XP each to any six Skills in the Manager, Merchant or Merchant Marine Skill Fields even if the character does not already possess them, or—if the character has any Warrior Skill Fields—to any six Skills in those Fields instead)

Flexible XPs: +200 XP

NE'ER-DO-WELL

"Aimless" is one way to define the lifestyle of the ne'er-do-well. Committed to no one job or place for very long, this individual is something of a free spirit, either still looking for his place in the world or simply determined to see all there is to see before he settles down on any one course. The Ne'er-Do-Well module is a catch-all category that can be applied to any character who does not fit the other modules.

Module Cost: 700 XP

Prerequisites: Not available to Clan characters unless they leave the Clans and travel to the Inner Sphere

Time: +4 years

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] EDG (+75 XP), (+75 to any one other Attribute); [Traits] Extra Income (+75 XP), Reputation (–25 XP), Wealth (–50 XP); [Skills] Acting (+25 XP), Appraisal (+25 XP), Art/Cooking (+35 XP), Disguise (+15 XP), Escape Artist (+35 XP), Interest/Any (+40 XP), Interest/Any (+20 XP), Language/Any (+25 XP), Martial Arts (+20 XP), Negotiation (+35 XP), Prestidigitation (+25 XP), Running (+35 XP), Streetwise/Affiliation (+25 XP), Survival/Any (+35 XP), Swimming (+10 XP)

Flexible XPs: +145 XP; may not be used on any Traits.

Notes: Flexible XP are not awarded during repeats of this module, though the module's XP cost remains unchanged.

ORGANIZED CRIME

In most worlds of the Inner Sphere, they're known as the mafia, the mob, or (more ominously) the syndicate. In the Draconis Combine, they are typically known as yakuza, and on worlds in and around the Capellan Confederation they are the tongs or the triads. Whatever the name, their goals are the same: to amass wealth and power through any means necessary, legal or otherwise (mostly otherwise). Most organized crime syndicates rule their unofficial territories through a combination of brute force and terror, though many know how to present a benevolent façade when situations demand it. When their territories are threatened by rival organizations and police, however, the soldiers of organized crime can be as lethal on the street as a MechWarrior on the battlefield.

Module Cost: 1,000 XP

Prerequisites: Clan-affiliated characters must take at least one Dark Caste module before entering organized crime. When taking the Organized Crime module as a Clan character, do not award the module's Attribute or Trait XP to the character (though its cost remains unchanged).

Time: +5 years

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] EDG (+85 XP); [Traits] Alternate ID (+100 XP), In For Life (–150 XP), Cthoose one: Dark Secret (–85 XP) or Compulsion/Loyalty to Crime Boss (–85 XP; see *Notes* below); [Skills] Acting (+60 XP), Career/Syndicate* (+100 XP), Computers (+15 XP), Demolitions (+50 XP), Driving/Any (+30 XP), Escape Artist (+35 XP), Forgery (+35 XP), Interest/Any Sport (+55 XP), Interrogation (+85 XP), Language/Syndicate* (+50 XP), Leadership (+25 XP), Martial Arts (+30 XP), Melee Weapons (+45 XP), Negotiation (+35 XP), Perception (+35 XP), Prestidigitation (+35 XP), Protocol/Affiliation (+25 XP), Security Systems (+45 XP), Small Arms (+75 XP), Stealth (+35 XP), Streetwise/Affiliation (+50 XP)

Flexible XPs: +100 XP

Notes: *The gamemaster may select an affiliation-specific organized crime syndicate, such as the mob, yakuza, tong, Dark Caste and so on. The character may be loyal to the organization in general (higher negative-TP rating) or to the local syndicate head (lower negative-TP rating).

POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

For some academics, the scholastic experience does not end when the degree is handed out. Through postgraduate studies, the character takes his recently hard-earned knowledge into the field, rounding out his expensive education with some hands-on experience before entering the workforce proper.

Module Cost: 700 XP

Prerequisites: University module required.

Time: +4 years

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] INT (+100 XP), WIL (–50 XP); [Traits] Connections (+75 XP), Extra Income (+25 XP), Wealth (–100 XP); [Skills] Appraisal (+50 XP), Interest/Any Academic (+120 XP), Interest/Any (+85 XP), Language/Affiliation (+85 XP), Language/Any (+50 XP), Survival (+35 XP), Training (+75 XP), Zero-G Operations (+25 XP)

Flexible XPs: +175 XP (apply at least 100 XP to a maximum of four Skills in the Skill Fields the character picked up during Stage 3 University)

Notes: This module may not be repeated.

PROTOMECH PILOT TRAINING

In some Clans, aerospace warriors who wash out of conventional warrior training may get a new lease on life by opting for retraining as a ProtoMech warrior. Though some of these Clans also have conventional ProtoMech training now, the relatively new ProtoMech concept and the race to fill their ranks has prompted many Clans to maintain this "washout backup" program, even though other Clans disdain it.

Module Cost: 600 XP

Prerequisites: Clan Blood Spirit, Fire Mandrill, Goliath Scorpion, Hell's Horses and Snow Raven Affiliations only. Warrior caste only. Must have Aerospace Phenotype and Implant/EI Neural Implant Traits. May not have Combat Paralysis, Glass Jaw, Lost Limb, Poor Hearing, Poor Vision or Slow Learner Traits.

Time: +2 years

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] RFL (+50 XP); [Traits] Fast Learner (+50 XP), Toughness (+80 XP), Vehicle (+75 XP), Compulsion/Chemical Addiction (–80 XP), Implant/EI Neural Implant (+150 XP), Reputation (–75 XP); [Skills] Career/Soldier (+15 XP), Escape Artist (+20 XP), Interest/Neural Implants (+15 XP), Martial Arts (+30 XP), Melee Weapons (+15 XP), Tactics/

Infantry (+50 XP), Tactics/Land (+50 XP), +125 total additional XP (+25 XP each to all Skills in the Clan ProtoMech Skill Field)

Flexible XPs: +30 XP

Note: This module cannot be repeated.

SCIENTIST CASTE SERVICE

Second only to the warrior caste in power and prestige, the Clan scientist caste has earned its due after centuries of dedicated work on perfecting the warriors' eugenics program and developing newer and more efficient weaponry to go with them. Despite this, many in the other castes keep a wary eye on the scientists, quietly suspecting that this highly intelligent and resourceful segment of Clan society hides its own ultimate agenda.

Module Cost: 1,200 XP

Prerequisites: Clan affiliation, scientist caste only

Time: +4 years

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] INT (+75 XP), WIL (+50 XP), BOD (–75 XP); [Traits] Choose one of the following Trait pairs: Fast Learner (+75 XP) and Combat Paralysis (–75 XP) or Natural Aptitude/Any Interest or Science Skill (+75 XP) and Dark Secret (–75 XP); [Skills] Acting (+50 XP), Administration (+75 XP), Career/Scientist (+100 XP), Computers (+70 XP), Cryptography (+50 XP), Interest/Clan Genetics (+85 XP), Interest/Any (+75 XP), Investigation (+95 XP), Language/Any (+45 XP), Leadership (+35 XP), Medtech (+65 XP), Perception (+85 XP), Protocol/Affiliation (+65 XP), Protocol/Any Clan (+35 XP), Science/Any (+85 XP), Training (+85 XP)

Flexible XPs: +50 XP

SOLARIS INSIDER

Solaris VII may not be the only world where 'Mech-scale tournaments are held, but the famed Game World in the Lyran Alliance is unique in the Inner Sphere for inviting warriors from all over human-occupied space to do battle in the arenas. Whether for fortune, glory or revenge, gladiators clash almost daily in their simulated battlefields, while warrior stables compete for top slots in the Grand Tournament.

Solaris insiders can make or break the deals that give hopeful champions a shot at the coveted Top Twenty, conducting a thriving business on a world where the streets overflow with crime, danger, intrigue and treachery.

Module Cost: 825 XP

Prerequisites: Solaris Stable Internship module required or a minimum of 200 XP in the Connections Trait to taking this module.

Time: +4 years

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] WIL (+50 XP), CHA (+45 XP), EDG (+50 XP); [Traits] Compulsion/Gambling (–75 XP), Connections (+150 XP), Enemy (–200 XP), Fit (+50 XP), Property (+75 XP), Reputation (+100 XP), Wealth (+100 XP); [Skills] Administration (+30 XP), Computers/Any (+25 XP), Escape Artist (+15 XP), Forgery (+15 XP), Interest/Solaris Games (+20 XP), Interest/Solaris Night Life (+25 XP), Interest/Any (+15 XP), Prestidigitation (+15 XP), Security Systems/Any (+25 XP), Stealth (+20 XP), Streetwise/Solaris VII (+25 XP), +150 total additional XP (+25 XP each to five Skills from the character's Solaris Stable Internship Skill Fields; if character does not have any such Fields, choose Skills from the Communications, Manager or Politician Fields only)

Flexible XPs: +100 XP

Notes: If this module is repeated, the character must also apply –100 XP to the In For Life Trait (reflecting increasing influence by a criminal or intelligence organization). The module's cost will not change.

SOLARIS VII GAMES

Though many "game worlds" exist in the Inner Sphere, Solaris VII is by far and away the best known. Gladiators from all walks of life come to this world to do battle in its arenas for wealth and glory—but few survive Solaris VII's seamier side, with its intrigues, betrayals and Machiavellian undercurrents. Only the best can be champions; the rest wallow in the mediocrity of their fake battles and shallow followings.

Module Cost: 900 XP

Prerequisites: Must have taken Solaris Stable Internship, Tour of Duty or any module that incorporates MechWarrior, Cavalry or Battle Armor training.

Time: +4 years

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] EDG (+100 XP), +100 XP to any other Attribute; [Traits] Bloodmark (–25 XP), Compulsion/Gambling or any other Addiction (–50 XP), Enemy (–250 XP), Reputation (+150 XP), +300 total additional XP (+100 XP each to any three of the following Traits: Custom Vehicle, Design Quirk, Equipped, Extra Income, Property, Tech Empathy or Vehicle); [Skills] Acting (+25 XP), Administration (+10 XP), Computers (+10 XP), Escape Artist (+15 XP), Interest/Solaris Games (+30 XP), Interest/Solaris Night Life (+35 XP), Interest/Any (+10 XP), Martial Arts/Any (+20 XP), Streetwise/Solaris (+25 XP), +270 total additional XP (+45 XP each to any six Skills from any Tech or Military Skill Fields the character possesses, except Officer Training)

Flexible XPs: +125 XP

Notes: If this module is repeated, the character must also apply –150 XPs to the In For Life Trait (reflecting increasing influence by a criminal or intelligence organization). The module's cost will not change.

THINK TANK

Many government, corporate and military organizations commonly employ a handpicked assortment of geniuses whose singular task is to identify problems, propose solutions and project the strategies their employers will need to succeed. Think tanks may not be the most exciting or glamorous places to work, but they are rewarding in many other ways.

Module Cost: 900 XP

Prerequisites: INT 7+; At least +3 TP in Connections Trait; Character must have one or more of the following Skill Fields: Analysis, Doctor, Engineer or Military Scientist

Time: +4 years

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] STR (–75 XP), BOD (–75 XP), INT (+90 XP), WIL (+75 XP); [Traits] Connections (+100 XP), Exceptional Attribute/INT (+75 XP), Rank (+75 XP), Wealth (+100 XP), In For Life (–100 XP); [Skills] Administration (+50 XP), Computers (+50 XP), Interest/Any Academic (+120 XP), Interest/Any (+85 XP), Protocol/Affiliation (+30 XP), Science/Any (+30 XP), Technician/Any (+30 XP), Training (+50 XP)

Flexible XPs: +190 XP (may be spent only on non-military, non-combat Traits and/or Skills)

TOUR OF DUTY

In the war-torn *BattleTech* universe, soldiers and warriors risk their lives every day on the battlefield. Whether they do so for lord or Clan, for country or money, their lives are often spent in long,

dull stretches on guard—punctuated by the relentless panic that only incoming fire can bring.

Module Cost: 700 XP (Periphery affiliations); 800 XP (Inner Sphere affiliations); 1,000 XP (Clan affiliations)

Prerequisites: Must have at least one Military Skill Field.

Time: +3 years

Fixed XPs: [Traits] Connections (+25 XP), Choose Equipped or Vehicle (+100 XP); [Skills] Career/Soldier (+50 XP), Martial Arts (+40 XP), Navigation/Any (+40 XP), Protocol/Affiliation (+40 XP)

Periphery Only: [Attributes] +50 XP to any one Attribute; [Traits] Enemy (–50 XP), Toughness (+50 XP); [Skills] Interest/Any (+25 XP), Leadership (+15 XP), Medtech (+30 XP), Negotiation (+25 XP), Perception (+15 XP), +150 total additional XP (+25 XP each assigned to a maximum of six Skills the character possesses from his Military Fields)

Inner Sphere Only: [Attributes] +50 XP each to any two Attributes; [Traits] Rank (+50 XP), Choose Equipped or Vehicle (+50 XP), Choose Compulsion/Any Addiction or Unlucky (–50 XP); [Skills] Language/Affiliation (+15 XP), Leadership (+15 XP), Martial Arts (+10 XP), Medtech (+20 XP) Perception (+20 XP), +175 total additional XP (+25 XP each assigned to a maximum of seven Skills the character possesses from his Military Fields)

Clan Only: [Attributes] +75 XP each to any two Attributes; [Traits] Bloodname (+50 XP), Combat Sense (+75 XP), Enemy (–75 XP), Choose Equipped or Vehicle (+75 XP); [Skills] Communications/Any (+15 XP), Computers (+15 XP), Interest/Any (+20 XP), Perception (+20 XP), Technician/Any (+10 XP), +250 total additional XP (+25 XP each assigned to a maximum of ten Skills the character possesses from his Military Fields)

Flexible XPs: +100 XP

Notes: Inner Sphere affiliations include all Great Houses, Rasalhague, ComStar/Word of Blake and Terran affiliations; Periphery affiliations include all Periphery realms and Independents; Clan affiliations include Homeworld and Invading Clans.

Taking his MechWarrior character to the logical conclusion of his training, Roy chooses a Tour of Duty module for his first foray into Stage 4. Because his character hails from House Davion's Federated Suns—an Inner Sphere affiliation—this module will cost 800 of the 2,230 points remaining in the character's XP Pool.

The prerequisites for this module require the character to have at least one Military Skill Field. Since Roy picked up the Basic Training and MechWarrior Fields in Stage 3, his character qualifies. Because this module covers three different sub-types of Tours of Duty, Roy must bear in mind that the fixed XPs awarded by the module are further enhanced by those of its sub-modules (in this case, the one noted as "Inner Sphere Only").

For Attributes, the Inner Sphere Tour of Duty awards Roy's character 50 XPs each to any two Attributes of Roy's choosing. He elects to put these into DEX and EDG, raising the former to a total of 200 XPs and the latter to a total of 110.

For Traits, the Inner Sphere Tour of Duty awards 25 XPs to Connections (which raises Roy's character's Connections Trait to 40 XPs in total), as well as 100 XPs to either the Equipped or Vehicle Traits. Because he wants to secure a fairly decent BattleMech for his character's use, Roy puts the 100 XPs into his Vehicle Trait (bringing it to 200 XPs). The character also receives an additional 50 XPs in Rank (for a running total of 270), another 50 XPs to either Equipped or Vehicle (Roy again picks Vehicle, raising that Trait to 250) and –50 XPs toward his choice of a Compulsion Trait reflecting an addiction, or the Unlucky Trait. Roy picks the Compulsion Trait, figuring that the stress of military service may have driven his character to smoke or drink a bit more heavily than is healthy.

For Skills, Roy's character receives 50 XPs in Career/Soldier (bringing his total to 115), 40 + 10 XPs in Martial Arts (raising it to 110), 40 XPs in any Navigation Skill (Roy picks the Navigation/Ground Skill he already has, bringing that to 70 XPs) and 40 XPs in Protocol/FedSuns (climbing to 110 total XPs). In addition, Roy finds another 15 XPs are awarded to one of his affiliation's Language Skills; he picks English, raising it to a total of 40. He gets another 15 XP in Leadership (for a total of 45), 20 more in Medtech (now up to 60 XPs) and 20 more in Perception (for a running total of 50 XPs). Finally, Roy is awarded 175 more XPs specifically slated for up to seven of his character's Military Field Skills in 25-XP groupings. After some thought, Roy puts two groupings each—for a total of 50 XPs per Skill—into his character's Piloting and Gunnery Skills (bringing both to 80 XP). He then assigns the remaining three groups of 25 XPs each to his character's Sensor Operations, Tactics/Land and Technician/Weapons Skills, raising each of them to 55 XPs.

Finally, Roy finds that he has 100 flexible XPs remaining to dole out. Once again, he puts these points into his Vehicle Trait, raising it to a current XP value of 350.

Looking over his current scores, Roy contemplates another pass through Tour of Duty, but decides it may not be worth it since the Attribute and Trait XPs will not repeat. With 1,430 remaining in his XP Pool, Roy opts to finalize his character's stats.

The Tour of Duty module takes up 3 years of the character's life, advancing his age to 21 at the end of the character creation process.

TO SERVE AND PROTECT

Police or security officers are a common sight on any civilized world. Even when given uncommon titles—such as the "Strategic Locals" of the Lyran Alliance's federal police, or their "Friendly Persuader" counterparts in the Draconis Combine—those who wear the policeman's badge command the respect of the civilian population they are sworn to serve and protect.

Module Cost: 900 XP

Prerequisites: Police, Police Tactical or Detective Field required

Time: +4 years

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] BOD (+100 XP), RFL (+100 XP), WIL (+100 XP); [Traits] Connections (+50 XP), Enemy (–75 XP), Choose one of the following Trait pairs: Attractive (+50 XP) and Handicap (–50 XP) or Fit (+50 XP) and Dependent (–50 XP); [Skills] Administration (+25 XP), Computers (+35 XP), Cryptography (+15 XP), Interrogation (+25 XP), Investigation (+25 XP), Leadership (+25 XP), Medtech (+30 XP), Melee

Weapons (+45 XP), Navigation/Any (+35 XP), Perception (+45 XP), Protocol/Affiliation (+25 XP), Small Arms (+50 XP), Streetwise/Affiliation (+45 XP), Support Weapons (+15 XP), Tactics/Infantry (+25 XP), Training (+10 XP); +100 total additional XP (+25 each in four of the character's relevant Police Officer, Police Tactical Officer or Detective Fields)

Flexible XPs: +50 XP

TRAVEL

Sometimes, a person just needs to get away from it all. While not generally an option for most denizens of the Inner Sphere, many intrepid souls nevertheless manage to leave their homeworlds behind and venture among the stars for little more reason than to soothe their own wanderlust. Though it can take years and hoards of cash, interstellar travel can be its own adventure.

Module Cost: 700 XP

Prerequisites: Cannot have TDS Trait; must have at least +2 TP or more in the Extra Income or Wealth Traits

Time: +6 years

Fixed XPs: [Attributes] INT (+45 XP), EDG (+45 XP); [Skills] Art/Any (+35 XP), Art/Cooking (+30 XP), Climbing (+35 XP), Driving/Any (+50 XP), Interest/Any (+75 XP), Interest/Any (+45 XP), Interest/Any (+20 XP), Language/Affiliation (+50 XP), Language/Any (+35 XP), Survival/Any (+25 XP), Swimming (+50 XP), Zero-G Operations (+50 XP)

Flexible XPs: +110 XP

MASTER FIELDS LIST

CIVILIAN SKILL FIELDS

Anthropologist
Requires: General Studies Field, INT 4
- Career/Anthropologist
- Interest/History (Any one culture)
- Investigation
- Language/Any
- Language/Any
- Protocol/Any

Archaeologist
Requires: General Studies Field, INT 4
Career/Archaeologist
- Appraisal
- Interest/Geology
- Interest/History (any)
- Navigation/Ground
- Perception

Cartographer
Requires: INT 4
Career/Cartographer
- Computers
- Navigation/Air
- Navigation/Ground
- Perception
- Sensor Operations

Communications
Requires: INT 4
- Acting
- Career/Communications
- Comms/Conventional
- Computers
- Protocol/Any
- Sensor Operations

Doctor
Requires: Medical Assistant or Scientist Field, DEX 4, INT 5, WIL 3
- Administration
- Career/Doctor
- MedTech
- Protocol/Affiliation
- Surgery/Any

Engineer
Requires: Technician/Civilian or Military Fields, INT 4
- Appraisal
- Career/Engineer
- Perception
- Technician/Nuclear
- Technician/Any

General Studies
Requires: INT 3, at least one other Skill related to those shown below
- Career/Any
- Computers
- Interest/Any
- Perception
- Protocol/Affiliation

HPG Technician
Requires: ComStar, Word of Blake or Clan Affil., Communications Field
- Administration
- Comms/Conventional
- Comms/HPG
- Computers
- Cryptography

Journalist
Requires: INT 3, CHA 4, WIL 4
- Acting
- Art/Writing
- Career/Journalist
- Computers
- Investigation
- Perception

Lawyer
Requires: General Studies Field, INT 4,CHA 4, WIL 5
- Acting
- Administration
- Career/Lawyer
- Interest/Law
- Negotiation
- Protocol/Any

Manager
Requires: INT 5, CHA 5
- Administration
- Career/Management
- Leadership
- Negotiation
- Protocol/Affiliation
- Training

Medical Assistant
Requires: DEX 3, INT 4
- Career/Medtech
- Computers
- Interest/Pharmacology
- MedTech
- Perception

Merchant
Requires: CHA 3, WIL 3
- Administration
- Appraisal
- Career/Merchant
- Negotiation
- Protocol/Any
- Streetwise/Any

Merchant Marine
Requires: RFL 3; cannot have TDS Trait
- Career/Merchant Marine
- Protocol/Any
- Technician/Aeronautics
- Technician/Any
- Zero-G Operations

Pilot – Aerospace (Civilian)
Requires: DEX 3, RFL 4, INT 3
- Career/Aerospace Pilot
- Comms/Conventional
- Navigation/Air
- Navigation/Space
- Piloting/Aerospace
- Sensor Operations

CIVILIAN SKILL FIELDS

Pilot – Aircraft (Civilian)
Requires: DEX 3, RFL 3
Career/Aircraft Pilot
Comms/Conventional
Navigation/Air
Piloting/Aircraft or VTOL
Sensor Operations

Pilot – DropShip
Requires: DEX 4, INT 3, WIL 3; cannot have TDS Trait
Career/DropShip Pilot
Comms/Conventional
Navigation/Space
Piloting/Spacecraft
Sensor Operations
Zero-G Operations

Pilot – Exoskeleton
Requires: STR 5, BOD 5
Piloting/Battlesuit
Sensor Operations
Technician/Electric
Technician/Mechanical
Technician/Myomer

Pilot – IndustrialMech
Requires: DEX 3, RFL 3
Piloting/'Mech
Sensor Operations
Technician/Electronic
Technician/Mechanical
Technician/Myomer

Pilot – JumpShip
Requires: DropShip Pilot Field, INT 5; cannot have TDS Trait
Administration
Computers
Navigation/K-F Jump
Navigation/Space

Planetary Surveyor
Requires: Scientist Field, INT 6
Appraisal
Driving/Any
Navigation/Ground
Survival/Any
Tracking/Wilds

Politician
Requires: Manager Field, CHA 4
Acting
Career/Politician
Leadership
Negotiation
Protocol/Affiliation

Scientist
Requires: INT 4
Career/Scientist
Computers
Interest/Any
Investigation
Perception
Science/Any
Training

Technician – Aerospace
Requires: Technician – Civilian or Military Fields, INT 4
Computers
Technician/Aeronautics
Technician/Fusion
Technician/Jets
Zero-G Operations

Technician – Civilian
Requires: INT 3, DEX 3
Appraisal
Career/Technician
Technician/Electronic
Technician/Mechanical
Technician/Nuclear

Technician – 'Mech
Requires: Tech – Civilian or Military, INT 4
Technician/Electronic
Technician/Jet
Technician/Mechanical
Technician/Myomer
Technician/Nuclear

Technician – Vehicle
Requires: Tech – Civilian or Military, INT 4
Computers
Technician/Electronic
Technician/Mechanical
Technician/Nuclear

INTELLIGENCE/POLICE FIELDS

Analysis
Requires: INT 4, WIL 4 (or INT 3, WIL 4 with Police Officer Field)
Computers
Investigation
Language/Any one
Language/Any one
Sensor Operations
Strategy
Tactics/Any

Covert Operations
Requires: INT 4, WIL 4 (or INT 3, WIL 4 with Police Officer Field)
Acting
Escape Artist
Language/Any one
Perception
Protocol/Any
Streetwise/Any
Tracking/Any

Detective
Requires: INT 4, WIL 4 (or INT 3, WIL 4 with Police Officer Field)
Career/Detective
Computers
Interrogation
Investigation
Perception
Security Systems
Streetwise/Affiliation

Intelligence
Requires: INT 4, WIL 4 (or INT 3, WIL 4 with Police Officer Field)
Comms/Conventional
Computers
Cryptography
Language/Any
Sensor Operations

Police Officer
Requires: WIL 3
Acting
Career/Police
Driving/Any
Martial Arts
MedTech
Small Arms
Streetwise/Affiliation

Police Tactical Officer
Requires: Police Officer Field, RFL 4
Climbing
Demolitions
Running
Support Weapons
Tactics/Infantry
Thrown Weapons
Tracking/Urban

MILITARY SKILL FIELDS

Basic Training
Requires: Rank Trait, INT 3, WIL 3
- Career/Soldier
- Martial Arts
- MedTech
- Navigation/Ground
- Small Arms

Basic Training (Naval)
Requires: Rank Trait, INT 4, RFL 3; cannot have TDS Trait
- Career/Pilot or Ship's Crew
- Martial Arts
- MedTech
- Navigation/Space
- Small Arms
- Zero-G Operations

Cavalry
Requires: Basic Training Field, DEX 3
- Artillery
- Driving/Any
- Gunnery/Any Vehicle
- Sensor Operations
- Tactics/Land or Sea
- Technician/Mechanical

Infantry
Requires: Basic Training Field
- Acrobatics/Free-Fall
- Artillery
- Climbing
- Comms/Conventional
- Support Weapons
- Tactics/Infantry

Infantry – Anti-'Mech
Requires: Infantry Field, WIL 5
- Acrobatics/Gymnastics
- Demolitions
- Perception
- Security Systems/Electronic
- Technician/Mechanical
- Technician/Myomer

Marine
Requires: Basic Training (Naval) Field; cannot have TDS Trait
- Acrobatics/Free-Fall
- Demolitions
- Gunnery/Spacecraft
- Security Systems/Any
- Zero-G Operations

MechWarrior
Requires: Basic Training Field, DEX 4, RFL 4
- Gunnery/'Mech
- Piloting/'Mech
- Sensor Operations
- Tactics/Land
- Technician/Any

Military Scientist
Requires: Analysis Field, INT 5
- Career/Military Scientist
- Computers
- Cryptography
- Interest/Military History
- Strategy
- Tactics/Any

Officer
Requires: Basic Training Field, Rank Trait of O1 or higher
- Administration
- Leadership
- Melee Weapons
- Protocol/Affiliation
- Training

Pilot – Aerospace (Combat)
Requires: Basic Training or Basic Training (Naval), DEX 4, RFL 4
- Gunnery/Aerospace
- Navigation/Air
- Navigation/Space
- Piloting/Aerospace
- Sensor Operations
- Tactics/Space
- Zero-G Operations

Pilot – Aircraft (Combat)
Requires: Basic Training or Basic Training (Naval), DEX 4, RFL 3
- Gunnery/Air Vehicle
- Navigation/Air
- Piloting/Air Vehicle
- Sensor Operations
- Tactics/Air

Pilot – Battle Armor
Requires: Infantry Field, STR 6, BOD 5
- Climbing
- Gunnery/Battlesuit
- Martial Arts
- Piloting/Battlesuit
- Sensor Operations
- Tactics/Land

Pilot – WarShip
Requires: Pilot – DropShip Field, DEX 4, INT 6, cannot have TDS Trait
- Computers
- Leadership
- Navigation/K-F Jump
- Navigation/Space
- Protocol/Affiliation
- Strategy
- Tactics/Space

Scout
Requires: Basic Training, INT 4, WIL 3, cannot have Illiterate Trait
- Comms/Conventional
- Disguise
- Language/Any
- Disguise
- Stealth
- Streetwise/Any
- Tracking/Any

Ship's Crew
Requires: Basic Training (Naval), RFL 3, cannot have TDS Trait
- Career/Ship's Crew
- Computers
- Gunnery/Spacecraft
- Technician/Any
- Zero-G Operations

Special Forces
Requires: Infantry, MechWarrior or Scout Fields, BOD 4, RFL 4, WIL 5
- Acrobatics/Free-Fall
- Demolitions
- Small Arms
- Stealth
- Survival/Any
- Tracking/Any

Technician – Military
Requires: INT 3, DEX 3
- Appraisal
- Career/Technician
- Technician/Electronics
- Technician/Mechanical
- Technician/Nuclear
- Technician/Weapons

MASTER FIELDS LIST

CLAN MILITARY SKILL FIELDS

Clan Aerospace Warrior
Requires: Clan Affiliation, Aerospace Phenotype, DEX 5, RFL 5, WIL 4
- Gunnery/Aerospace
- Navigation/Space
- Piloting/Aerospace
- Sensor Operations
- Tactics/Space

Clan Basic Training
Requires: Clan Affiliation
- Martial Arts
- MedTech
- Melee Weapons
- Navigation/Ground
- Protocol/Affiliation
- Small Arms

Clan Cavalry
Requires: Clan Affiliation, Basic Training Field
- Artillery
- Driving/Any (or Pilot/Air Vehicle)
- Gunnery/Land, Sea, or Air Vehicle
- Sensor Operations
- Tactics/Land (or Air)

Clan Elemental
Requires: Clan Affiliation, Elemental Phenotype, BOD 5, DEX 3, RFL 3, WIL 4
- Climbing
- Gunnery/Battlesuit
- Melee Weapons
- Piloting/Battlesuit
- Sensor Operations
- Small Arms
- Tactics/Infantry

Clan MechWarrior
Requires: Clan Affiliation, Mech-Warrior Phenotype, BOD 4, DEX 3, RFL 4, WIL 5
- Gunnery/'Mech
- Leadership
- Navigation/Ground
- Piloting/'Mech
- Sensor Operations
- Tactics/Land

Clan ProtoMech Warrior
Requires: Clan Affiliation, Aerospace Phenotype, Implant/EI Neural Implant, DEX 3, RFL 4, WIL 4
- Gunnery/ProtoMech
- Navigation/Ground
- Piloting/ProtoMech
- Sensor Operations
- Tactics/Land

PURCHASING ATTRIBUTES, TRAITS AND SKILLS

Characters in *A Time of War* develop their capabilities over time, as a result of life experiences. These are reflected by Experience Points (XPs), which are used to purchase (and, in game play, further develop) the character's Attributes, Traits and Skills.

The Experience Point (XP) Costs Table below provides the XPs required to purchase an Attribute, Trait or Skill at any desired level. During character creation and game play, the total amount of XPs applied to each of the character's Attributes and Skills must be maintained in order to identify the character's development. Any XPs left over from character creation (typically the result of using the Life Modules system, or once game play has started and experience begins to accumulate) must be applied to an appropriate Attribute, Skill or Trait. The player need not spend these points in any particular fashion, but all accumulated XP must be applied somewhere.

DETERMINING FINAL LEVELS

Attributes, Traits and Skills are always considered to have the levels that have been fully purchased, so a character with 525 XPs assigned to his STR Attribute is considered to have a STR score of 5 in game play, with 25 XPs left over (or stored toward later advancement to STR 6). Likewise, a character with 232 XPs in the Small Arms Skill—and who does not possess either the Fast Learner or Slow Learner Traits—is said to have a Skill Level of 6 in Small Arms.

Extraneous points can be left as-is or optimized for more efficient character design (see *Optimizing Leftover Points*, p. 87).

Attribute, Trait and Skill Listings

As indicated on p. 34 of *Basic Game Play*, all characters receive the following eight Attributes: STR (Strength), BOD (Body), RFL (Reflexes), DEX (Dexterity), INT (Intelligence), WIL (Willpower), CHA (Charisma) and EDG (Edge).

Descriptions of all Traits available in *A Time of War*—including their Trait Point (TP) values—may be found in the *Traits* chapter (see pp. 106-135). Likewise, descriptions of all Skills available in *A Time of War*—including a complete listing and descriptions of possible subskills—appears in the *Skills* chapter (see pp. 140-159).

Character Minimums

Players must always keep in mind that no character may possess Attribute scores at 0 or lower, nor may they possess Skill levels below 0. Because the choices a player makes when using the Life Modules system may cause the character to inadvertently violate this rule, the following applies in the event a character falls below any required minimums.

Attributes: If one or more of a character's Attributes has fallen to 0 or less at the end of character creation, the Attribute automatically receives a score of 1. This "minimum score reset" must be paid for using XPs. If none are available in the character's XP Pool, the player must subtract enough XPs from any number of his character's Skills, positive Traits or Attributes to offset the cost.

Skills: Skills reduced below a level of 0 during character creation are lost, and any excess "negative XPs" must be recovered if the player is using the *Optimizing Leftover Points* rule (see p. 87).

Traits: Traits, which may be positive or negative, vary their minimums and maximums case by case. If a Trait has fewer XPs (or, more accurately, more negative XPs) than its minimum Trait Point limit provides, the excess must be recovered if the player is using the *Optimizing Leftover Points* rule.

Character Maximums

Attributes, Traits and Skills all have a maximum limit under these rules, though these maximums can vary with the character's Phenotype and Trait choices. (Skill levels in *A Time of War* may never exceed 10.) If a character receives more XPs in any Attribute, Trait or Skill than that Attribute, Trait or Skill can support at its maximum level, the excess XPs may be recovered for use elsewhere if the player uses the *Optimizing Leftover Points* rule (see p. 87).

Skill Specialties

Characters may add specialties to their Skills at any time by spending 100 XPs on the Skill in question and obtaining the gamemaster's approval (to ensure that the specialty fits the Skill and does not represent another existing Skill or Subskill). Skills that have been specialized must have their specialty listed in parentheses beside the Skill in question. No Skill can have more than one specialty.

Removing Specialties: If a player wishes to remove a Skill specialty later on, he must spend another 100 XPs to "un-specialize". An un-specialized Skill should be noted on the character sheet with an asterisk or other easily recognized symbol, so that the player can identify the Skill's variation in XP costs. Once a Skill specialty is removed, the player may "re-specialize" in a new area, using the same rules for purchasing the specialty to start with.

EXPERIENCE POINT (XP) COSTS TABLE

	Attribute/	Skill Levels		
Level/Score	Trait Level*	Standard	Fast Learner	Slow Learner
0	N/A	20	18	22
1	100	30	27	33
2	200	50	45	55
3	300	80	72	88
4	400	120	108	132
5	500	170	153	187
6	600	230	207	253
7	700	300	270	330
8	800	380	342	418
9	900	470	423	517
10	1,000	570	513	627
11+	(Level x 100)	N/A	N/A	N/A

*Negative-value Traits provide an equal number of XPs to an equivalent positive-value Trait's cost. No character Attribute may be 0 or less.

Roy's MechWarrior, fresh from the Life Modules, has the following XPs allotted to his character sheet:

Attributes

STR: 195, BOD: 250, RFL: 235, DEX: 200, INT: 135, WIL: 240, CHA: 140, EDG: 110

Traits

Compulsion/Addict: –50, Connections: 40, Equipped: 100, Fit: 15, Rank: 270, Vehicle: 350

Skills

Art/Painting: 20, Career/Soldier: 115, Computer: 35, Gunnery/'Mech: 80, Interest/BattleMechs: 35, Interest/FedSuns History: 30, Interest/Military History: 55, Language/English: 40, Language/French: 25, Leadership: 45, Martial Arts: 110, Medtech: 60, Melee Weapons: 20, Navigation/Ground: 70, Perception: 50, Pilot/'Mech: 80, Protocol/FedSuns: 110, Running: 30, Sensor Operations: 55, Small Arms: 80, Strategy: 10, Swimming: 45, Tactics/Land: 55, Technician/Weapons: 55

Roy also notes that he has a minimum requirement of 4 for his character's RFL, DEX and INT scores, as well as a minimum of 3 for WIL. His character must have the Rank Trait as well.

Consulting the Experience Point (XP) Costs Table, he cross-references the current XPs in each Attribute, Trait and Skill, and determines the following Attribute scores, Trait Points and Skill levels so far. Because his character has neither the Fast Learner nor Slow Learner Traits, Roy uses the Standard column when figuring out his Skill levels:

Attributes

STR: 1, BOD: 2, RFL: 2, DEX: 2, INT: 1, WIL: 2, CHA: 1, EDG: 1

Traits

Compulsion/Addict: –0, Connections: 0, Equipped: 1, Fit: 0, Rank: 2, Vehicle: 3

Skills

Art/Painting: 0, Career/Soldier: 3, Computer: 1, Gunnery/'Mech: 3, Interest/BattleMechs: 1, Interest/FedSuns History: 1, Interest/Military History: 2, Language/English: 1, Language/French: 0, Leadership: 1, Martial Arts: 3, Medtech: 2, Melee Weapons: 0, Navigation/Ground: 2, Perception: 2, Pilot/'Mech: 3, Protocol/FedSuns: 3, Running: 1, Sensor Operations: 2, Small Arms: 3, Strategy: NA, Swimming: 1, Tactics/Land: 2, Technician/Weapons: 2

Needless to say, Roy plans to put his leftover XPs to good use upgrading his character's Attributes before game play begins, as they do not even reach the minimums mandated by his Life Modules. He would also like to upgrade his Rank and Vehicle Traits a bit more (in reviewing the Rank Trait, he realized that a Rank of 2 is still too low for a bona fide MechWarrior to have, especially a non-officer). His Skills, however, he decides are fine, especially for a starting character, so he will likely leave them alone.

To make the most of his remaining XPs, Roy decides to optimize his character's points.

OPPOSED TRAITS AND CANCELING EXPERIENCE

At the end of character creation, the character may possess Traits that are opposed under standard rules (such as Glass Jaw and Toughness). A character who has two opposing Traits must cancel the experience between the two Traits, to identify which remains with the character and which does not. This is done by adding the XPs between the two Traits together. If the result is positive, the negative Trait is canceled out (erased from the character) and the positive one receives the remaining XPs. If the result is negative, the positive Trait is cancelled, and the remaining XPs are assigned to the negative Trait. If the result is zero, both Traits cancel out.

Opposed Traits must be resolved in this fashion before the Optimization phase. Consult the Opposed Traits Table to identify which Traits the character may have that are in opposition.

Exception (Illiterate Trait): The only exception to the above rules occurs in the case of the Illiterate Trait. Because Illiterate is opposed by Skill Levels and not another Trait, canceling does not occur. Instead, XPs in the Illiterate Trait remain present only as long as the character possesses no Language Skills with a level of 4 or higher. If the character possesses even a single Language Skill with a Skill level of 4+, the Illiterate Trait is erased, but without a corresponding reduction in the character's Language Skills.

Negative Traits with Positive XPs: In rare instances, a normally negative Trait may wind up with a positive number of XPs through Life Modules. If such Traits are found prior to the Optimization phase, the negative Trait is stricken from the character's record sheet and any positive XPs that remain must be added to the character's current XP Pool.

OPPOSED TRAITS TABLE

Positive Trait (TP)	Negative Trait (TP)
Animal Empathy (+1)	Animal Antipathy (–1)
Attractive (+2)	Unattractive (–1)
Combat Sense (+4)	Combat Paralysis (–4)
Fast Learner (+3)	Slow Learner (–3)
Fit (+2)	Handicap (–[1 to 5])
Good Hearing (+1)	Poor Hearing (–[1 to 5])
Good Vision (+1)	Poor Vision (–[1 to 9])
Gregarious (+1)	Introvert (–1)
4+ Levels in a Language Skill	Illiterate (–1)
Patient (+1)	Impatient (–1)
Tech Empathy (+3)	Gremlins (–3)
Thick-Skinned (+1)	Thin-Skinned (–1)

OPTIMIZING LEFTOVER POINTS

In many cases, a player may find that the XPs assigned to the various Attributes, Traits and Skills put his character either between levels or beyond any maximum or minimum levels for those statistics at the end of the character creation process. Ordinarily, this simply reflects the fact that a character represents a living human being, who is always in a state of development and growth. However, if the players desire, these "extraneous XPs" may be pooled and reassigned to the various statistics for maximum efficiency. This is referred to as "optimization".

The optimization process must come before attempting to use negative Traits to gain XP under the *Buying Additional Experience Points* rule (see p. 89). Additional negative Traits may not be purchased to offset the costs of any character improvements before the player begins the optimization phase.

Optimization is a points-organizing technique that players may use on a character's Skills, Traits and Attributes—either all at once or separately, so long as the same category is fully covered. For example, a player may decide to optimize his character's Traits and Skills only, leaving the Attributes as they are because he plans to merely add the XPs back into that category of statistics. Or the player may decide to simply optimize his character's Skills alone and use those XPs for both Attributes and Traits.

The Optimization Process

The optimization process may only be performed in character creation, and primarily focuses on the Life Modules system (as the Points-Only system tends to "self-optimize"). This process simply "shaves off" the excess XPs a character has attained through Life Modules and reassigns them back to the character's XP Pool.

Points can be shaved from any category of character stats: Attributes, Traits, or Skills, but regardless of the category, the process is always one of subtracting from the category, and addition to the XP Pool. The amount of points that are subtracted are based on the points in excess of the Attribute, Trait, or Skill's lowest fully-attained level (or score) and its current point value (or, in the case of negative Traits, the negative points needed to attain the next lowest fully-attained "negative level"). A positive Attribute, Trait, or Skill cannot be optimized below its highest fully-attained level or score, while negative Traits must be lowered to their next fully-attained "negative level". (XPs beyond the highest possible level for an Attribute, positive Trait, or Skill, or below the lowest possible negative Trait level automatically optimize into the character's XP Pool.) For example, a Skill that has attained a Level of 2 with XPs leftover cannot be optimized to Level 1 to gain extra points.

For example, a character with 325 XPs in an Attribute has fully attained a score of 3 in that Attribute, with 25 points extra. When optimized, the Attribute subtracts 25 XP (coming down to 300 XP), and adds 25 XP to the character's XP Pool. If a character has –125 points in Compulsion—a variable-level negative Trait which is effective at every negative Trait point from –1 to –5—the character must subtract 75 XPs from the Trait (reducing it to –200 XP and thus "activating" the Trait at the –2 TP level), while adding 75 XP to his Pool.. If a character has 200 XPs in Patient—a Trait worth only 1 Trait Point (100 XPs)—the character subtracts 100 XPs from Patient and applies that to his XP Pool.

The Optimization process cannot reduce any Attribute, Trait, or Skill to a level of 0 unless said Attribute, Trait, or Skill is a positive-value stat with insufficient XPs to reach its lowest level. At the end of optimization, all affected Attributes, Traits, or Skills must be at a fully-attained level.

Negative Traits and Optimization

When a character has a "partial" negative Trait at the time he decides to optimize the character, the optimization process adds XPs to the character's XP Pool by adding negative XPs to the Trait (as opposed to spending positive XP the character may not have to "buy off" a partial negative Trait). However, this form of optimization is limited to attaining only the nearest "activated" level of the Trait (the point where its negative XPs round off the Trait to its next lowest level of game play effect). For example, if the character has received –125 XP in Glass Jaw—a 3 TP Trait that costs –300 XPs to activate—then it will take an additional –175 points to optimize the Trait, adding 175 XPs to the character's XP Pool in the process. In the case of a variable-level negative Trait like negative Reputation, however, if such a Trait has a value of –75 XPs, it will optimize to –100 XPs (where it has –1 TP value and game play effects). It will not optimize lower than that (to –200 XPs, for example), as doing so would constitute voluntarily buying added XPs (see *Buying Additional Experience Points*, below).

In preparation for finalizing his character's statistics, Roy decides to optimize his XPs. Starting with Skills, he totals up each Skill's excess XP—the points that went above one level, but failed to reach the next. For example, his Career/Soldier Skill, at 115 XPs, easily reaches Level 3 (which costs 80 XPs), but falls 5 XPs shy of Level 4. Rather than spend XPs to bring it up, Roy instead shaves away the extraneous 35 XPs over 80 and adds them back to his character's XP Pool. In the case of the Strategy Skill—so low it failed to even reach 0—the Skill drops off the character sheet, becoming one of the character's untrained Skills.

After running the numbers, Roy finds that he has shaved 210 extra XPs in Skills, which he redistributes to his XP Pool.

Turning his attention to Traits next, Roy notes that the 100 XPs in Natural Aptitude/Strategy are effectively useless to him now, as he no longer has the Strategy Skill and 100 XPs are not enough to activate the Trait. The same can be said of his 40 XPs in Connections and 15 in Fit. He shaves away those XPs, adding another 155 to his XP Pool. He also notices that his character's –50 XP Compulsion Trait is too high to activate. Wiping it out, however, would cost 50 XPs, so he instead decides to subtract another 50 from it, activating the Compulsion at –1 TP. He calls this a nicotine/smoking addiction—ultimately minor, but definitely performance-affecting if he goes into withdrawal. It also essentially adds 50 more XPs to the XP Pool.

Having added the extra XPs from Skills and Traits to his XP Pool, he finds that he has 1,845 XPs left. He wishes to reinvest some of these in his Rank and Vehicle Traits, adding 30 to Rank (for a total of 300 XPs, giving him a 3 TP Rank Trait) and 50 to Vehicle (for a total of 400 XPs, resulting in a 4 TP Vehicle Trait). This leaves him 1,765 XPs to upgrade Attributes, which he decides not to optimize at this time.

To upgrade his character's RFL (at 235 XPs), DEX (at 200 XPs), INT (at 135 XPs) and WIL (at 240 XPs) to their minimum required levels (400, 400, 400 and 300 XP, respectively), Roy would need 690 XPs, which would leave him with 1,075 XPs remaining. But Roy wants to do more than just reach the character's

Pjotr smiled as it became clear he was the only one to bring a knife to the fistfight.

minimum requirements. He hopes to have a character with STR 4, BOD 6, RFL 5, DEX 6, INT 4, WIL 4, CHA 4 and EDG 3. Accomplishing that, however, would cost a total of 2,095 XPs based on the current XPs assigned to each Attribute. Unwilling to compromise so close to his goals, Roy decides to look for a way to increase his XP Pool further.

BUYING ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE POINTS (OPTIONAL)

During this final phase in character creation (or when using the alternative points-only creation method described on p. 51), a player can opt to increase his character's XPs by adding (or enhancing) negative Traits to the character's design. Gamemasters are strongly advised to work closely with players who exercise this option, to ensure that the negative Traits chosen fit the character's design.

The maximum number of XPs that can be gained using this method is equal to 10 percent of the XPs originally allotted to the character's design, regardless of whether the player is using the points-only or Life Modules method. The affected negative Trait must be purchased at (or enhanced to) a fully-attained level in XPs; a character cannot, for example, pour –299 XPs into the Glass Jaw Trait, and then use the XPs purchased this way to buy Toughness.

Additional XPs can only be bought by taking negative Traits. Attributes and Skills cannot be reduced below the levels established after optimization when creating a character using the Life Modules system.

With 1,765 XPs left to spend on upgrading his Attributes, Roy finds that he needs at least 2,095 to get his Attributes where he'd like them to be. This means he needs to come up with 330 XPs somewhere. Since he has already optimized his character, and the gamemaster has insisted that he work within the original 5,000 XP Pool he was given, his only real option now is to buy additional XPs through adding negative Traits.

With a 5,000-XP starting pool, Roy knows he can only pick up a total of 500 XPs through negative Traits in this manner (10 percent of 5,000 = 500). Rather than cripple himself with a high-powered negative Trait like Slow Learner (which would give him 400 XPs as a –4 TP Trait), he decides to build some of his background into the Traits he picks. He chooses to take two negative Traits: In For Life (a –3 TP Trait) and a –1 TP Dark Secret Trait. With –4 TP between them, these Traits are worth –400 XPs, which are added to the XP Pool. This allows Roy to purchase the desired Attributes, with 70 XPs left over. Roy explains these Traits to the gamemaster as a potential plot hook in the character's past: At some point during his tour of duty, the character committed a crime that a superior officer, high-placed official or local crime boss managed to keep hidden (Dark Secret). The character now owes this individual or organization his services, to be called upon at some undefined later date.

With the extra 400 XPs in hand, Roy now has 2,165 XPs to spend. He adds 205 to the 195 in STR, giving his character 400 XPs in STR for a final STR score of 4. He then adds 350 XPs to the 250 in BOD to get 600 XPs in that Attribute for a score of 6. Continuing in this fashion, Roy ends up spending 2,095 XPs to obtain his desired statistics of STR: 4, BOD: 6, RFL: 5, DEX: 6, INT: 4, WIL: 4, CHA: 4 and EDG: 3. He then applies the 70 leftover XPs toward one new Skill: Streetwise/FedSuns, which Roy explains to the gamemaster as an adaptation to the needs of maintaining his secret and dealing with the people to whom he owes his career. The 70 XPs are sufficient to buy the Skill at Level 2, with 20 XPs left over. Roy adds these to his Running Skill, bringing its total XPs up to 50, which is enough to upgrade it to a Level 2 Skill.

At this point, Roy's character is complete and mostly ready to play. To round out the process, he will add finishing touches (like a general description and a name), and purchase equipment the character will need in his future duties.

OPTIONAL POINTS-ONLY DESIGN SYSTEM

The above rules apply equally to characters designed using Life Modules or the points-only method. In the latter case, however, points are not accumulated through the addition of Life Modules, but bought straight up. As a result, it becomes easy to overlook the minimum or maximum levels a given Attribute, Trait or Skill may require in order for the character to receive and use it. Players using the points-only design approach should ensure the following when completing their character designs.

Attributes

The minimum value of any Attribute is 1, unless the character's affiliation or relevant training require a higher value. Be sure to check out the character's desired Skill Fields and affiliation prerequisites when assigning the Attribute values for a character developed using the points-only approach.

The maximum values for a character's Attributes are primarily defined by his phenotype (see the Phenotype Trait description, p. 121), unless the character also picks up the Exceptional Attribute Trait to increase a maximum by 1 point.

Jeff begins by assigning points to his character's Attributes. He settles on assigning 5 for STR and 6 for BOD. He wants his character to be strong and tough. He also wants him to be strong-willed, and assigns another 6 to WIL. Finally, he wants him to be lucky, and so assigns 5 to EDG. His lesser Attributes will include RFL 2 and DEX 3. This will make him less effective using his vehicle's direct-fire weapons, but since Jeff intends this character to be an artillery specialist, he is all right with those handicaps. He makes sure to give his character INT 4 to prevent a penalty for the Artillery Skill, and puts only 3 in CHA, as he wants his tanker to be gruff and unpleasant. This will make commanding other players or NPCs in case of a promotion more challenging, but Jeff considers it a good roleplaying opportunity.

At 100 XPs per point for each Attribute, Jeff has used 3,400 XPs to assign Attributes (STR 5 + BOD 6 + RFL 2 + DEX 3 + INT 4 + WIL 6 + CHA 3 + EDG 5 = 34 x 100 = 3,400 XP). He has 1,600 XPs left to spend.

Traits

Under the points-only system, the only Traits absolutely required are the prerequisites for a character's desired Skill Fields. Additional Traits (positive or negative) can be purchased

using XPs as normal. Purchasing negative Traits to add XPs to the character's XP Pool is permitted under this system (see *Buying Additional Experience Points*, above). The same 10 percent of the character's starting XP Pool applies to gaining XPs in this fashion.

Next, Jeff assigns Traits. He wants his character to have a slight head start in climbing the career ladder, and so gives him 2 Trait Points (TP) in Rank. Jeff has also consulted with the gamemaster about his vehicle, and the gamemaster has agreed to Jeff's request of getting the unit's Marksman tank. He will need a 6 TP Vehicle Trait for that.

At 100 XPs per Trait Point, Jeff spends a total of 800 XPs on Traits (Rank 2 TP + Vehicle 6 TP = 8 TP x 100 = 800). Though it is tempting to pick up a negative Trait to recover some spent XPs and maybe upgrade his Traits or his weaker Attributes, Jeff decides to avoid any kind of handicaps at this stage.

Of the 1,600 XPs he had after purchasing Attributes, Jeff now has only 800 XPs left for Skills.

Skills

Under the points-only system, the character can cherry-pick the Skills best suited to his role, purchasing them for the cost listed in the Experience Point Cost Table. (If purchasing at the Fast Learner or Slow Learner rates, the character must pay for the relevant Trait in order to do so.)

Skill Fields: Skill Fields may be purchased under the points-only system as well, but a character using this method is limited to no more than three Skill Fields, plus the optional Officer Training Field. All Fields remain subject to their listed prerequisites.

When purchasing a Skill Field using the points-only method, all Skills in the Field must be purchased at once. The level each Skill receives is up to the player, but the final XP cost for the Field is that of the entire Field's component Skills combined. Once this cost is known, however, the character will receive a 20 percent "rebate" in XPs (rounded up) to his XP Pool, which may be used to purchase additional Attributes, Traits and Skills.

Required Skills: Regardless of the Skills and Fields chosen, all characters must spend at least 20 XPs on a Language Skill for their chosen affiliation's primary or secondary tongues (see the modules in *Stage 0: Affiliations* for this information). An additional 20 XPs must be spent on the Language/English Skill, and an additional 10 XPs must be spent on Perception. These mandatory purchases cost 50 XPs altogether, though improvement of any of these Skills can increase this amount.

Jeff quickly realizes that his tanker character would best be served by taking the Cavalry Skill Field, which provides all the Skills necessary to operate a combat vehicle and a 20 percent rebate in XPs to boot. Looking at the Cavalry Skill Field on the Master Fields List, Jeff notes that his character needs a minimum DEX score of 3 and the Basic Training Field in order to take the Cavalry Field. Though the gamemaster could waive this requirement, he does not, and so Jeff must also purchase the Basic Training Skill Field, which includes the following prerequisites: an INT score of 3, a WIL score of 3 and a minimum of 1 Trait Point in Rank. Reviewing his Attribute and Trait choices, Jeff finds that his character already meets the minimum requirements for both Fields.

For his basic training, Jeff decides to apply a +3 Skill level to Career/Soldier and Navigation/Ground, deciding that his tanker will be well established in his profession, with a good feel for direction (as he plans this tanker to be something of an artillery specialist). For the Martial Arts and Small Arms Skills, Jeff assigns a +1 Skill level, and for Medtech—a Skill Jeff does not see his character needing with trained medics likely around—he assigns a Skill level of +0. In all, these basic training Skills will cost Jeff's character 240 XPs (80 XPs x 2 for the +3 Skills, 30 XPs x 2 for the +1 Skills, 20 XPs for the +0 Skill = 240 total XPs). Normally this would reduce his XP Pool to 560 points, but the fact that he took the Skills as part of the Cavalry Field means that Jeff's character recovers 48 XPs from his Field rebate (20 percent of 240 XP = 48 XP). Jeff thus has 608 XPs left to spend on his character (560 + 48 = 608).

For his Cavalry Field, Jeff decides on a +4 Skill level for Artillery (costing 120 XPs), +3 to Driving/Ground Vehicle and Gunnery/Ground Vehicle (80 XPs each; Jeff opts for the Ground Vehicle Subskill to match the Marksman tank his gamemaster generously promised to assign him). The remaining three Cavalry Field Skills—Sensor Operations, Tactics/Land and Technician/Mechanical—receive a +1 Skill level (at 30 XPs each). The final cost for the Cavalry Field will be 370 XPs, reducing Jeff's XP Pool to 238, before the 20 percent rebate adds 74 XPs back (20 percent of 370 = 74). Jeff's character now has 312 XPs left to spend.

Jeff notes that he also needs to place 20 XPs in one of his affiliation's primary or secondary Language Skills, 20 XPs in Language/English and 10 XPs in Perception. As Jeff plans to make his tanker a Free Worlds League character, he decides to consult the Stage 0 module for that affiliation. Looking over the League's primary and secondary languages, Romanian catches his eye, and so he elects to take a +3 Skill level in Romanian—adding 60 XPs to the 20 XPs already spent toward its cost. For English, he assigns an additional 30 XPs, to bring it up to the 50 XPs needed for a +2 Skill level. (Given these Skills, Jeff notes that his character speaks English well enough to be understood, but likely has a heavy Romanian accent.) He also adds another 20 XPs to Perception, bringing that Skill up to a +1 level.

Rather than copy all of the Free Worlds League Skills from Stage 0, Jeff simply adds Protocol/Free Worlds League and Interest/Marik Commonwealth at a +1 Skill level, for 30 XPs each, to cover his nation of origin. Jeff also adds Communications/Conventional at +1 (for 30 more XPs), the Appraisal Skill at +1 (for 30 XPs; Jeff suggests that his character was the son of a forger and learned how to spot a forgery in his youth), and Melee Weapons at +0 (at a cost of 20 XPs, granting him the ability to use a sword, which he claims he also learned from his father).

These additional Skills cost a total of 300 XPs (80 [Language/Romanian] + 50 [Language/English] + 30 [Perception] + 30 [Protocol/Free Worlds] + 30 [Interest/Marik Commonwealth] + 30 [Communications/Conventional] + 30 [Appraisal] + 20 [Melee Weapons] = 300), which leaves Jeff with only 12 XPs left over at this point. Jeff decides to apply these to his character's Artillery Skill. Though clearly not enough to reach the next level, later XPs earned in game play can be added to these leftovers to help the character advance.

Unused Points

Any XPs not used at the end of the points-only rules system must be added as desired to the character's existing Attributes,

THE METRIC SYSTEM

The *BattleTech* universe uses the metric system exclusively, measuring distances in meters or kilometers, weights (or mass) in kilograms and metric tons, volume in liters and kiloliters, and temperatures in Celsius (or Kelvin). Players used to the Imperial System (which uses feet and miles for distance, pounds for weight, gallons for volume and temperatures in Fahrenheit) may wish to convert such measurements to metric, particularly when determining character data such as height and weight.

For your convenience, the following conversion formulae are provided:

Distance
1 inch (1") = 2.54 centimeters (cm)
1 foot (1') = 30.48 centimeters (cm)
1 yard (1 yd.) = 0.914 meters (m)
1 mile (1 mi.) = 1.609 kilometers (km)

Weight
1 ounce (1 oz.) = 28.35 grams (g)
1 pound (1 lb.) = 453.59 grams (g)
1 pound (1 lb.) = 0.454 kilograms (kg)

Volume
1 pint (1 pt.) = 0.473 liters (0.473 l)
1 quart (1 qt.) = 0.946 liters (0.946 l)
1 gallon (1 gal.) = 3.785 liters (3.785 l)

Temperature
Fahrenheit (°F) to Celsius (°C): (°F – 32) x (5/9) = °C

Common BattleTech Measures
1 meter (m) = 100 centimeters (cm)
1 kilometer (km) = 1,000 meters (m)
1 gram (g) = 1,000 milligrams (mg)
1 kilogram (kg) = 1,000 grams (g)
1 metric ton (t) = 1,000 kilograms (kg)
1 liter (l) = 1,000 milliliters (ml)
1 kiloliter (kl) = 1,000 liters (l)
Celsius (°C) to Kelvin (°K): (°C – 273) = °K*

*Kelvin temperatures are mainly used whenever temperatures are derived relative to Absolute Zero (0 °K or –273 °C)

Traits and Skills. These leftover points can then later be used in game play to improve those Attributes, Traits and Skills as normal.

FINAL TOUCHES

Once all Attribute, Trait and Skill XPs have been allocated and levels for all statistics tallied, the player may then add finishing touches to the character. This includes defining the character's appearance and background, and purchasing any equipment the character may own prior to game play.

DEFINING FEATURES

Using the lines at the top of the character sheet, the player can provide details of the character's basic description, including hair color, eye color, height and weight, as well as other personal info such as homeworld and affiliation. The controlling player decides how this information is recorded, but should provide enough details to allow the gamemaster or other players to quickly recognize the character in game play.

It is customary to describe character weight in kilograms and character height in centimeters.

CHARACTER BACKGROUND

If the player used the Life Modules system, he will have a ready-made biography prepared for the character that roughly defines birth status, childhood, educational and career background (if any) prior to the start of game play. Fine details can then be added to enhance the character's depth, using any unique Traits and Skills purchased along the way as a reference. Many of these details will likely have been decided when the player first worked out the character's concept at the start of the creation process, and require little more than imagination (and perhaps a little creative input from the gamemaster and other players).

Characters created using the points-only method are more open to interpretation, but before game play begins, players controlling such characters are strongly encouraged to create a suitable background that explains where the character came from and how he got where he is now. Though the Life Modules need not be used to define such characters' backgrounds, players may consult the module descriptions for inspiration (perhaps by asking the simple question, "Which modules would have fit my character best as he grew up?").

Above all, the character's background should provide a clue as to why the character is where he is now, with the group he is with, and what his motivations may be in future adventures. People don't usually pop into existence out of thin air, after all, or take on adventures that can risk life and limb "just because."

PURCHASING EQUIPMENT

A last "final touch" the player will need to complete before game play can properly begin is the purchasing of any personal equipment, including weapons, armor, clothing, electronics and even lodging (if necessary). Equipment, in this case, does not refer to combat or heavy industrial vehicles (including 'Mechs, battle armor, fighters and so forth) that are covered by the character's Vehicle Traits (if any), but it may include smaller Support Vehicles such as personal cars and similar transports.

To determine how much and what type of equipment a character can purchase, consult the character's Equipped and Wealth Trait TP values. (If the character does not possess one or both of these Traits, presume a Trait TP of 0.)

Wealth: The number of C-bills awarded by the character's Wealth Trait (see Wealth in the *Traits* chapter, p. 128) identifies the maximum total value of any equipment the character can purchase at character creation. For example, a character with a Wealth Trait TP of +3 can afford to purchase up to 10,000 C-bills' worth of personal equipment. Any C-bills left unspent after the purchase of equipment are saved and may be used after game play begins.

Equipped: The three-letter codes provided by the Equipped Trait (such as D/B/B for a 0-level Equipped Trait) indicate the maximum Tech/Availability/Legality ratings the character's equipment may possess (see *Equipment*, starting on p. 254) during the time period in which the character is playing. A starting character may purchase any equipment within his means so long as its letter codes are equal to or lower than those given for his level of the Equipped Trait; higher letters denote items that are harder to come by.

However, this applies only if the item is manufactured by the character's native affiliation (meaning the item has the character's affiliation code listed in its statistics) or is generic enough for general purchase (indicated by no affiliation code given for the item). If a desired item has an affiliation code outside of the character's native affiliation, treat the item's effective Availability and Legality ratings as if they are each 1 level higher than the norm. For example, a Lyran character with a Level 3 Equipped Trait can purchase items with a rating of E/C/D (or lower in each letter category) as long as they have an affiliation code of "LA" or "–", but must treat items with other affiliation codes as though they are rated at E/D/E.

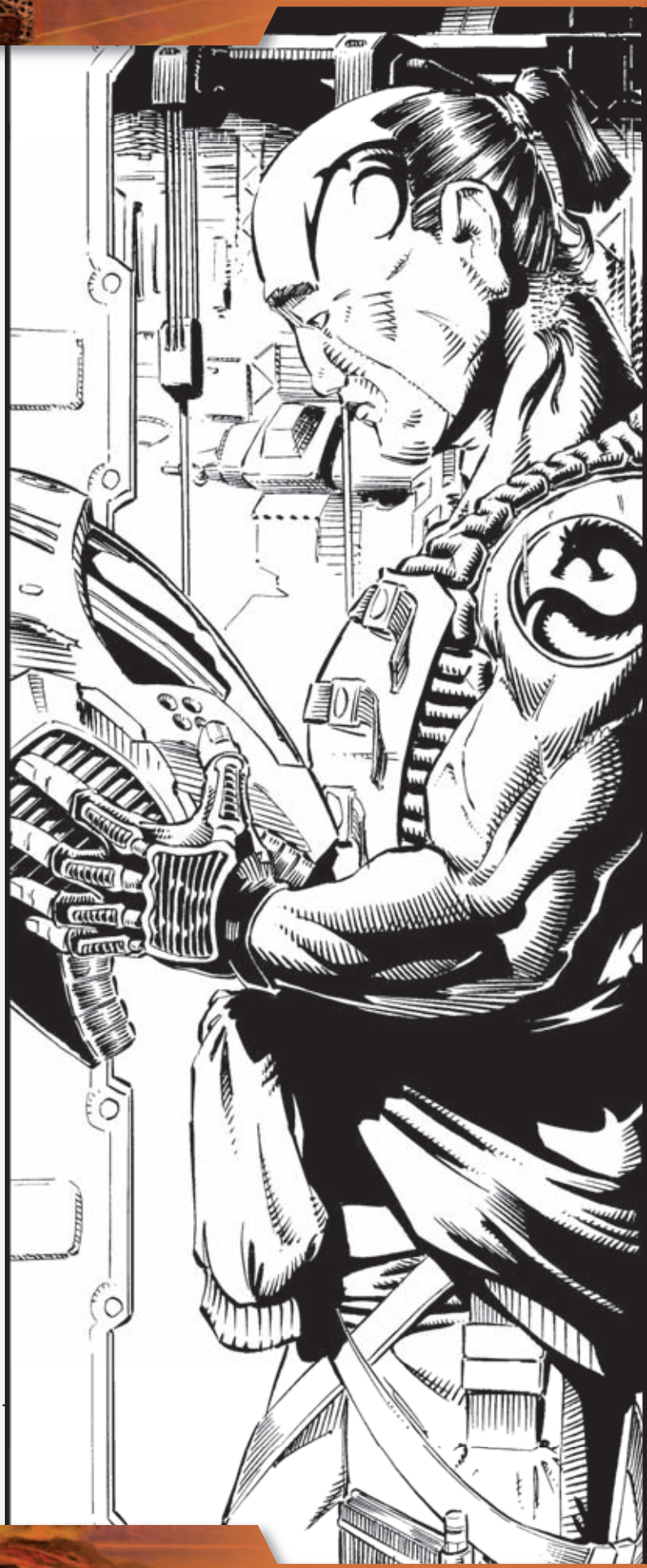
Issued Gear (Optional Rule)

Privately, most characters may find that the legality of an item vital to their occupation will put it beyond their reach when purchasing equipment at the start of game play. Examples of this include neurohelmets and cooling vests, which can possess Legality Ratings beyond the normal equipment levels a starting character might have.

However, different standards often apply when the character is actively serving with a mercenary, military or state-sponsored organization, essentially making some items available to which the character ordinarily would not have access. This "issued gear" belongs not to the character, but to his employer.

Gamemasters wishing to take advantage of this optional rule may allow the character to choose up to two items of equipment, up to a rating of E/D/D for the Inner Sphere or F/D/D for the Clans, so long as they are directly related to the character's occupation. These items should be the cheapest of the available selection, however, reflecting the fact that most organizations tend to equip their personnel with items purchased from the lowest bidder.

The final act in character creation is purchasing equipment. Jeff decides to buy a standard SMG, as he feels it's a good all-round weapon for a tanker to have, plus it's small enough to fit inside the tank without causing problems. He also gets a flak vest and a pair of leather combat boots to go with his general-issue fatigues, and hopefully keep him a little bit safer



MechWarrior Tetsuo Olafson of the Ninth Ghost Regiment takes a moment to reflect on the gravity of his duties to his Coordinator and his oyabun.

in combat. Having a basic field kit makes good common sense to Jeff, as does having a military communicator.

The total cost falls well within the 1,000 C-bill allotment he receives as a character with no TP in Wealth, but Jeff doesn't see anything else he wants his tanker to have that doesn't require higher levels of Wealth and Equipped. Satisfied, he submits the result to the gamemaster for approval.

After working out physical descriptions and a name, Roy decides to finish his character off by purchasing his personal equipment. The character has 0 points in the Wealth Trait and 1 TP in Equipped, which allows him up to 1,000 C-bills worth of equipment rated D/B/C (or lower in one or more categories).

Roy decides first on a sidearm to carry inside the 'Mech cockpit, so his warrior can defend himself should he be forced to eject in hostile territory. He selects a powerful and reliable Magnum auto pistol (with two magazines for now). A cooling vest, shirt and shorts make up the MechWarrior's battle attire, so Roy purchases those, as well as leather boots. Of all of these items, the Magnum (with its C/B/D Equipment rating) and the cooling vest (rated D/C/B) are beyond the legal range Roy's character may possess, with the Magnum out of range by 1 point in Legality and the cooling vest out of range by 1 point in Availability. To circumvent these limits, Roy gets permission from the gamemaster to invoke the Issued Gear optional rule, which he uses to obtain the desired items. The gamemaster approves this use of the rule.

Keeping the rest of his items utilitarian, Roy adds a military communicator, a basic field kit, a medical kit, two medipatches and eight stimpatches to round out the MechWarrior's survival gear. The total cost is 394 C-bills, allowing the MechWarrior character to bank the rest for now.

SAMPLE CHARACTERS

"Everyone is a little unique. But the completely unique are rare."

OVERVIEW

The sample characters shown in the next few pages reflect examples of the kind of character a player can create using the character creation rules presented here. Most have been created using the points-only rules, though the MechWarrior was made using the Life Modules system.

These sample characters were created not only as demonstrations, but also to cover a wide spectrum of specialties and backgrounds, should the players or gamemaster opt to use them to jump-start a campaign. They can be used as-is, either as player characters or as special NPCs. (Regular NPCs can be made using the *NPC Templates* rules on p. 336.)

Adapting Sample Characters for Game Play

Each of these sample characters includes a short description based on the character's design. However, as with their statistics, their descriptions are merely examples. Each is designed to serve as a lead-in for a player to sign on with almost any venture. Gamemasters can use these templates just as they are, or alter the relevant statistics by swapping a desired Skill or Trait for another of equal value, or by adjusting Attribute, Trait or Skill levels (so long as each increased statistic is matched by another statistic's decrease of equal XP value).

For example, the FedSuns MechWarrior can be adjusted to a Lyran character's liking by trading in all affiliation-specific Skills linked to the FedSuns for identical Skills linked to the Lyran Alliance instead, and perhaps trading the In For Life Trait for an Extra Income Trait of identical TP value (reflecting a monetary debt in place of a life debt). Additionally, a sample character's Attributes can swap points to suit a player's desires, such as raising a particularly low RFL score at the expense of an inexplicably high CHA.

MECHWARRIOR

You are one of an elite branch of the military, respected and revered. MechWarriors are feared by their enemies and are the favored protectors of their realms. So you believed as a child, but like so many stories told to the young, these were only half-truths. Because you came from humble beginnings, you find yourself increasingly ostracized by the 'Mech-owning nobles, who consider you and those of similar background a threat to their power and wealth. Intrigue is common, and only those skilled in protocol, business or both can get ahead—unless you are exceptionally gifted, or lucky. You have yet to be given the chance to demonstrate either, as military service so far has included more boredom than action. A three-month campaign hunting pirates barely qualified as a proper diversion, and their eventual demise was little more than an execution. You yearn deeply for proper action, that you might shed the yoke of politics and focus on what you truly love in life: to pilot a BattleMech and destroy your enemies.

ATTRIBUTES

	Score	Link
STR	4	+0
BOD	6	+0
RFL	5	+0
DEX	6	+0
INT	4	+0
WIL	4	+0
CHA	4	+0
EDG	3	–1

Movement (Meters per Turn)

Walk:	9
Run:	21
Sprint:	42

Traits	Rules
Dark Secret (–1)	See p. 112
Equipped (1)	See p. 116
In for Life (–3)	See p. 120
Rank (3)	See p. 123
Vehicle (4)	See p. 128

RELEVANT SKILLS

Skill	Links	TN / C	Level
Art/Painting	DEX	8 / CB	+0
Career/Soldier	INT	6 / SB	+3
Computers	INT	8 / CB	+1
Gunnery/'Mech	DEX + RFL	7 / SA	+3
Interest/BattleMechs	INT	8 / CB	+1
Interest/FedSuns History	INT	8 / CB	+1
Interest/Military History	INT	8 / CB	+2
Language/English	INT + CHA	7 / SA	+1
Language/French	INT + CHA	7 / SA	+0
Leadership	WIL + CHA	7 / SA	+1
Martial Arts	RFL	6 / SB	+3
MedTech	INT	6 / SB	+2
Melee Weapons	DEX	6 / SB	+0
Navigation/Ground	INT	6 / SB	+2
Perception	INT	6 / SB	+2
Piloting/'Mech	RFL + DEX	7 / SA	+3
Protocol/FedSuns	CHA + WIL	9 / CA	+3
Running	RFL	6 / SB	+2
Sensor Operations	INT + WIL	7 / SA	+2
Small Arms	DEX	6 / SB	+3
Streetwise/FedSuns	CHA	8 / CB	+2
Swimming	STR	6 / SB	+1
Tactics/Land	INT + WIL	9 / CA	+2
Technician/Weapons	INT + DEX	9 / CA	+2

Equipment	Cost	Weight	Stats
Magnum Auto Pistol (2 clips)	50 (+4)	0.5 kg	see p. 265
Cooling Vest	200	4 kg	see p. 294
Shirt and Shorts	9	—	see p. 299
Leather Boots	25	0.8 kg	see p. 299
Military Communicator	50	0.1 kg	see p. 301
Basic Field Kit	10	5 kg	see p. 312
Medical Kit	10	0.25 kg	see p. 313
Medipatch (x2)	20	0 kg	see p. 313
Stimpatch (x8)	16	0.1 kg	see p. 313

TANKER

The generous might call you strong-willed. You've always had your own way of getting things done, and cared little what others might have to say about it. This hasn't earned you many friends, but not many enemies either. Few dispute your capabilities, though you often say it's better to be lucky than good. The artillery branch is often overlooked and underappreciated, but a skilled commander can use it to turn the tide of battle or cover a retreat, changing it from a rout to a fighting withdrawal.

You reside in a realm full of strife and discord where neighbors fight neighbors. It is clear that the realities of the past will not survive into the future. The likelihood of having to fight and kill your fellow countrymen keeps growing. Your skills will be in high demand, but maybe it's better to seek your fortune elsewhere. You have always made your own way.

ATTRIBUTES

	Score	Link
STR	5	+0
BOD	6	+0
RFL	2	–1
DEX	3	–1
INT	4	+0
WIL	6	+0
CHA	3	–1
EDG	5	+0

Movement (Meters per Turn)

Walk:	7
Run:	17
Sprint:	34

Traits	Rules
Rank (3)	See p. 123
Vehicle (5)	See p. 128

RELEVANT SKILLS

Skill	Links	TN / C	Level
Appraisal	INT + WIL	7 / SA	+3
Artillery	INT	6 / SB	+4
Career/Soldier	INT	6 / SB	+3
Comms/Conventional	INT	8 / CB	+1
Driving/Ground	DEX + RFL	7 / SA	+3
Gunnery/Ground	DEX + RFL	7 / SA	+3
Interest/Marik Commonwealth	INT	8 / CB	+1
Language/English	INT + CHA	7 / SA	+2
Language/Romanian	INT + CHA	7 / SA	+3
Martial Arts	RFL	6 / SB	+1
MedTech	INT	6 / SB	+0
Melee Weapons	DEX	6 / SB	+1
Navigation/Ground	INT	6 / SB	+3
Perception	INT	6 / SB	+1
Protocol/Free Worlds League	CHA+WIL	9 / CA	+1
Sensor Operations	INT + WIL	7 / SA	+1
Small Arms	DEX	6 / SB	+1
Tactics/Land	INT + WIL	9 / CA	+2
Technician/Mechanical	INT + DEX	9 / CA	+1

Equipment	Cost	Weight	Stats
Submachine Gun (5 clips)	80 (+25)	0.5 kg	see p. 265
Flak Vest	50	2.8 kg	see p. 288
Fatigues	30	0.5 kg	see p. 299
Leather Boots	25	0.8 kg	see p. 299
Military Communicator	50	0.1 kg	see p. 301
Basic Field Kit	10	5.0 kg	see p. 312

AEROSPACE PILOT

Born in a realm that celebrates the aerospace arm of its military, you have always wanted to reach that pinnacle. Competent, quick to follow orders and experienced, you are an asset to any formation. Your birth nation is in upheaval, undergoing many changes as war washes over it. The nation that emerges on the other end will not be like the one in which you were born. Will you stay to see these changes through as best you can, or is this the moment to seek your fortunes elsewhere?

ATTRIBUTES

	Score	Link
STR	2	–1
BOD	5	+0
RFL	5	+0
DEX	6	+0
INT	4	+0
WIL	2	–1
CHA	5	+0
EDG	4	+0

Movement (Meters per Turn)

Walk:	7
Run:	17
Sprint:	34

Traits	Rules
Rank (3)	See p. 123
Vehicle (8)	See p. 128

RELEVANT SKILLS

Skill	Links	TN / C	Level
Career/Soldier	INT	6 / SB	+2
Gunnery/Aerospace	DEX + RFL	7 / SA	+3
Language/English	INT + CHA	7 / SA	+3
Language/French	INT + CHA	7 / SA	+2
Martial Arts	RFL	6 / SB	+1
MedTech	INT	6 / SB	+1
Navigation/Air	INT	6 / SB	+2
Navigation/Ground	INT	6 / SB	+0
Navigation/Space	INT	6 / SB	+2
Perception	INT	6 / SB	+2
Piloting/Aerospace	RFL + DEX	7 / SA	+3
Sensor Operations	INT + WIL	7 / SA	+3
Small Arms	DEX	6 / SB	+1
Tactics/Space	INT + WIL	9 / CA	+2
Zero-G Operations	RFL	6 / SB	+2

Equipment	Cost	Weight	Stats
Needler Pistol (2 clips)	50 (+4)	0.5 kg	see p. 268
Flak Vest	50	2.8 kg	see p. 288
Jump Suit	24	0.3 kg	see p. 299
Light Environmental Suit	200	5.0 kg	see p. 296
Leather Boots	25	0.8 kg	see p. 299
Respirator	50	2.5 kg	see p. 296
Military Communicator	50	0.1 kg	see p. 301
Basic Field Kit	10	5.0 kg	see p. 312
Medical Kit	10	0.25 kg	see p. 313
Medipatch x 2	20	0 kg	see p. 313
Stimpatch x 10	20	0.1 kg	see p. 313

ELEMENTAL

Born and bred for combat in excess of any other human, as a Clan Elemental you are expected to die for the betterment of your Clan from your first moment of existence. Your Clan faces its worst enemy yet, both new and ancient; you live in a time when unusual demands may be placed upon you. Are you a part of the front-line force driving at the heart of the Word of Blake, or have you been relegated to the rear guard? Perhaps your Khan will send you on "special" assignment with your new allies. Whatever the task may be, you know you have been built to excel and succeed.

ATTRIBUTES

	Score	Link
STR	9	+1
BOD	7	+1
RFL	5	+0
DEX	5	+0
INT	4	+0
WIL	4	–1
CHA	2	–1
EDG	4	+0

Movement (Meters per Turn)	
Walk:	14
Run:	24
Sprint:	48

Traits	Rules
Phenotype/Elemental (1)	See p. 121
Rank (3)	See p. 123
Toughness (3)	See p. 127
Trueborn (2)	See p. 109
Vehicle (5)	See p. 128

RELEVANT SKILLS

Skill	Links	TN / C	Level
Art/Sculpting	DEX	8 / CB	+1
Climbing	DEX	6 / SB	+2
Demolitions	DEX + INT	9 / CA	+3
Gunnery/Battlesuit	DEX + RFL	7 / SA	+3
Language/English	INT + CHA	7 / SA	+3
Martial Arts	DEX + RFL	7 / SA	+4
Melee Weapons	DEX	6 / SB	+2
Navigation/Ground	INT	6 / SB	+2
Perception	INT	6 / SB	+2
Piloting/Battlesuit	RFL + DEX	7 / SA	+3
Protocol/Clan Ghost Bear	CHA+WIL	9 / CA	+2
Sensor Operations	INT + WIL	7 / SA	+2
Small Arms	DEX	6 / SB	+3
Tactics/Infantry	INT + WIL	9 / CA	+3

Equipment	Cost	Weight	Stats
Combat Shotgun (5 clips)	175 (+10)	4.5 kg	see p. 268
Fatigues	30	0.5 kg	see p. 299
Military Communicator	50	0.1 kg	see p. 301

SCOUT

While most military units rely on a variety of machines to augment their reconnaissance efforts, ranging from vehicles to BattleMechs to orbiting DropShips, the role of the dismounted scout not disappeared, merely changed. You are expected to map out hostile formations and their supply lines, and just as often you are tasked with infiltrating installations, bases and cities on hostile worlds to get pertinent information—a task no 'Mech can perform. You do this for the future of humankind, to help shape events that true progress may come, and the Word has ensured you are well equipped for your task. Who knows where and to whom your mission will take you? Have the recent events of this so-called Jihad caused a change of heart, or merely strengthened your resolve to have Blake's Will be done?

ATTRIBUTES

	Score	Link
STR	3	–1
BOD	4	+0
RFL	4	+0
DEX	3	–1
INT	5	+0
WIL	5	+0
CHA	6	+0
EDG	3	–1

Movement (Meters per Turn)

Walk:	7
Run:	17
Sprint:	34

Traits	Rules
Alternate ID (2)	See p. 108
Equipped (2)	See p. 116
In For Life (–3)	See p. 120
Rank (4)	See p. 123
Wealth (3)	See p. 128

RELEVANT SKILLS

Skill	Links	TN / C	Level
Acting	CHA	8 / CB	+3
Career/Scout	INT	6 / SB	+3
Comms/Conventional	INT	6 / SB	+3
Disguise	CHA	6 / SB	+2
Interest/Word of Blake	INT	8 / CB	+2
Language/English	INT + CHA	7 / SA	+3
Navigation/Ground	INT	6 / SB	+2
Negotiation	CHA	8 / CB	+3
Perception	INT	6 / SB	+3
Protocol/Word of Blake	CHA + WIL	9 / CA	+2
Security Systems/Electronic	INT + DEX	9 / CA	+3
Small Arms	DEX	6 / SB	+0
Stealth	RFL + INT	7 / SA	+3
Streetwise/Lyran Alliance	CHA	8 / CB	+3
Tracking	INT + WIL	7 / SA	+3

Equipment	Cost	Weight	Stats
Pulse Laser Pistol	1000	1.0 kg	see p. 267
Power Pack (HC)	15	0.3 kg	see p. 306
Sneaksuit Camo	7000	4.0 kg	see p. 297
Fatigues	30	0.5 kg	see p. 299
Leather Boots	25	0.8 kg	see p. 299
Load Bearing Vest	20	0.4 kg	see p. 290
Filter Mask	5	0.4 kg	see p. 296
Military Microcommunicator	200	0 kg	see p. 301
Micro-recorder	100	0.2 kg	see p. 302
Noteputer	200	0.5 kg	see p. 303
Rangefinder Binoculars	200	0.5 kg	see p. 304
Advanced Field Kit	100	15.0 kg	see p. 312
Electronic Compass	30	0.1 kg	see p. 312
Emergency Rations x 20	40	20.0 kg	see p. 312
Bubble Tent	200	3.0 kg	see p. 312
Medical Kit	10	0.25 kg	see p. 313
Medipatch x 2	20	0 kg	see p. 313
Stimpatch x 10	20	0.1 kg	see p. 313

FACEMAN

No one will ever rely on you on the battlefield, but new mercenary commands that beat the odds by reaching their first anniversary have learned that not every battle is fought with weapons. You are the face of the company, not just toward the public, but also to your clients and enemies, especially the kind that attempt to use the law to fight their battles. Whether during a press conference, contract negotiations or in the courtroom, you have made a name for yourself as an experienced and competent representative of your employer. Will you continue to grow with them, or is the grass greener elsewhere?

ATTRIBUTES

	Score	Link
STR	2	–1
BOD	3	–1
RFL	3	–1
DEX	2	–1
INT	6	+0
WIL	5	+0
CHA	6	+0
EDG	3	–1

Movement (Meters per Turn)

Walk:	5
Run:	15
Sprint:	30

Traits	Rules
Connections (5)	See p. 111
Gregarious (1)	See p. 118
Reputation (1)	See p. 124

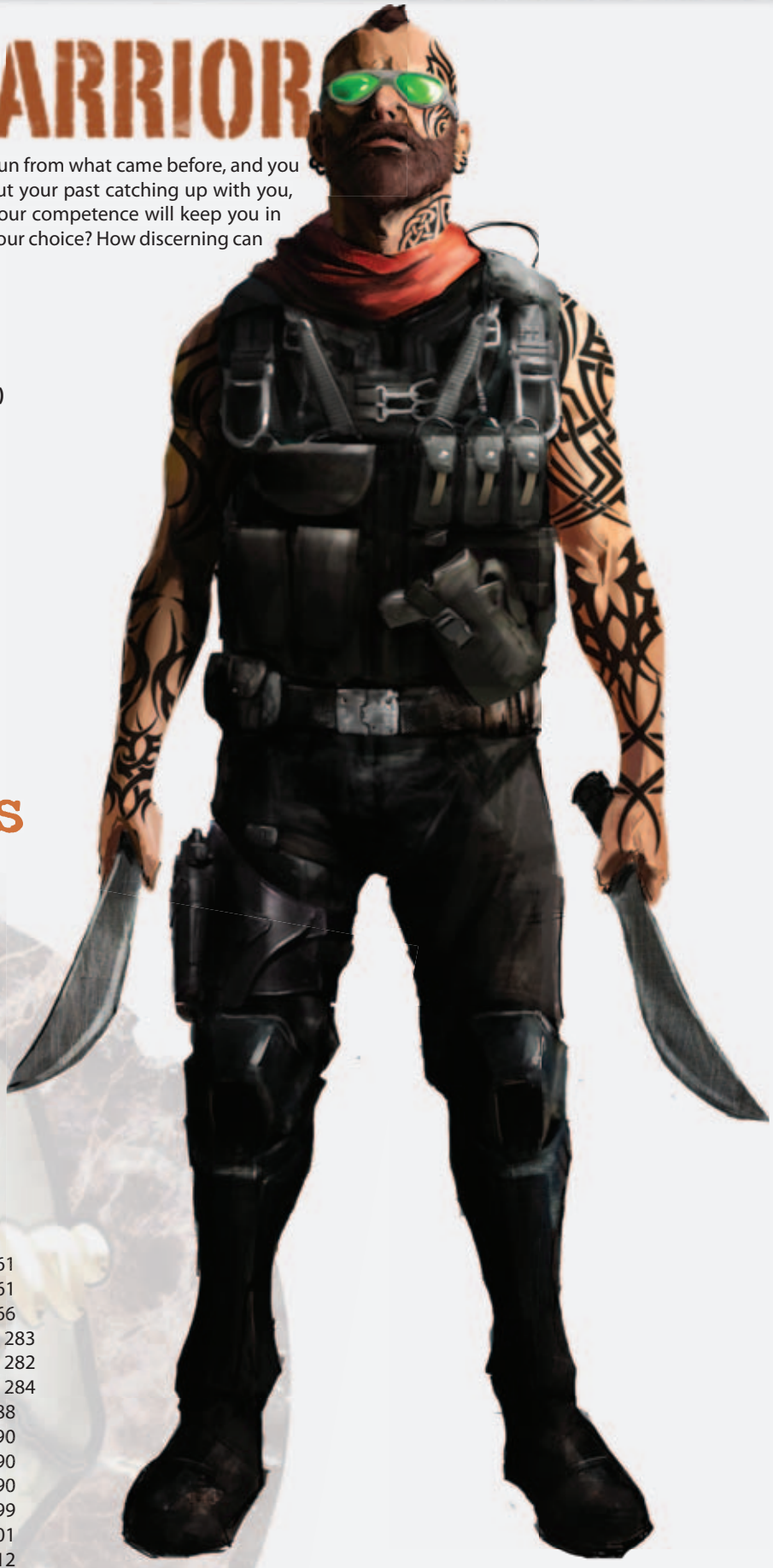
RELEVANT SKILLS

Skill	Links	TN / C	Level
Acting (Deception)	CHA	8 / CB	+6 (+1)
Art/Writing	DEX	8 / CB	+3
Career/Journalist	INT	6 / SB	+2
Career/Lawyer	INT	6 / SB	+4
Computers	INT + DEX	9 / CA	+3
Disguise	CHA	6 / SB	+2
Interest/Law	INT	8 / CB	+5
Investigation	INT + WIL	9 / CA	+4
Language/English	INT + CHA	7 / SA	+5
Negotiation	CHA	8 / CB	+5
Perception	INT	6 / SB	+4
Protocol/Free Worlds League	CHA + WIL	9 / CA	+3
Protocol/Mercenary	CHA + WIL	9 / CA	+4

Equipment	Cost	Weight	Stats
Coat	55	—	see p. 299
Jacket	36	—	see p. 299
Shirt	15	—	see p. 299
Pants	23	—	see p. 299
Footwear	50	0.8 kg	see p. 299
Noteputer	200	0.5 kg	see p. 303
Micro-recorder	100	0.2 kg	see p. 302
Civilian Communicator	45	0.1 kg	see p. 301

RENEGADE WARRIOR

You have no past you wish to share with anyone. You're on the run from what came before, and you have no desire to turn back. Even if you don't have to worry about your past catching up with you, your focus is on the future. You are skilled at what you do, and your competence will keep you in demand with potential employers. How discerning will you be in your choice? How discerning can you afford to be?



ATTRIBUTES

	Score	Link
STR	6	+0
BOD	6	+0
RFL	4	+0
DEX	5	+0
INT	4	+0
WIL	6	+0
CHA	4	+0
EDG	4	+0

Movement (Meters per Turn)

Walk:	10
Run:	20
Sprint:	40

Traits	Rules
Alternate ID (2)	See p. 108
Bloodmark (–2)	See p. 109
Enemy (–2)	See p. 113
Equipped (1)	See p. 116

RELEVANT SKILLS

Skill	Links	TN / C	Level
Acrobatics/Freefall	RFL	6 / SB	+4
Artillery	INT + WIL	7 / SA	+2
Career/Soldier	INT	6 / SB	+4
Climbing	DEX	6 / SB	+3
Comms/Conventional	INT	6 / SB	+2
Language/English	INT + CHA	7 / SA	+3
Medtech	INT	6 / SB	+3
Navigation/Ground	INT	6 / SB	+3
Perception	INT	6 / SB	+2
Small Arms (Rifles)	DEX	6 / SB	+4 (+1)
Support Weapons	DEX	6 / SB	+2
Tactics/Infantry	INT + WIL	9 / CA	+2
Throw Weapons	DEX	6 / SB	+1

Equipment	Cost	Weight	Stats
Bayonet	8	0.3 kg	see p. 261
Sword	30	3.0 kg	see p. 261
Assault Rifle (4 clips)	200 (+12)	3.5 kg	see p. 266
Grenade, HE x 2	40	1.2 kg	see p. 278, 283
Grenade, AP x 2	32	1.2 kg	see p. 278, 282
Grenade, Smoke x 2	8	1.2 kg	see p. 278, 284
Ab/Flak vest	300	3.2 kg	see p. 288
Load Bearing Vest	20	0.4 kg	see p. 290
Combat Helmet	200	2.0 kg	see p. 290
Combat Boots	48	2.0 kg	see p. 290
Fatigues	30	0.5 kg	see p. 299
Military Communicator	50	0.1 kg	see p. 301
Basic Field Kit	10	5.0 kg	see p. 312
Medical Kit	10	0.25 kg	see p. 313

BATTLEFIELD TECH

As you're not an expert in a particular field, you tend to describe yourself as "versatile." You can fill in for a wide range of functions, freeing up the specialists to do what they do best. Your broad knowledge makes you a favorite for off-world missions, where an incomplete palette of specialists may leave gaps in expertise that can prove inconvenient when the experts are light-years away. You are not completely defenseless against threats, though not many can afford to squander a competent technician carelessly. With your range of skills and experience, finding employment will not be difficult.

ATTRIBUTES

	Score	Link
STR	4	+0
BOD	4	+0
RFL	3	+0
DEX	6	+0
INT	5	+0
WIL	4	+0
CHA	3	+0
EDG	5	+0

Movement (Meters per Turn)

Walk:	8
Run:	18
Sprint:	36

Traits	Rules
Equipped (1)	See p. 116
Rank (3)	See p. 123
Tech Empathy (3)	See p. 125
Wealth (2)	See p. 128

RELEVANT SKILLS

Skill	Links	TN / C	Level
Administration	INT + WIL	7 / SA	+2
Appraisal	INT	8 / SB	+1
Career/Soldier	INT	6 / SB	+1
Career/Technician	INT	6 / SB	+2
Language/English	INT + CHA	7 / SA	+3
Martial Arts	RFL	6 / SB	+1
Medtech	INT	6 / SB	+0
Navigation/Ground	INT	6 / SB	+0
Perception	INT	6 / SB	+1
Small Arms	DEX	6 / SB	+1
Technician/Electronics	INT + DEX	9 / SA	+4
Technician/Mechanics	INT + DEX	9 / SA	+4
Technician/Nuclear	INT + DEX	9 / SA	+4
Technician/Weapons	INT + DEX	9 / SA	+4

Equipment	Cost	Weight	Stats
Revolver (2 reloads)	40 (+2)	0.5 kg	see p. 265
Flak Jacket	75	3.2 kg	see p. 288
Fatigues	30	0.5 kg	see p. 299
Filter Mask	5	0.4 kg	see p. 296
Satchel Battery	20	2.0 kg	see p. 306
Descartes Mk. XXI	1000	7.0 kg	see p. 303
Deluxe Tool Kit	750	50.0 kg	see p. 310
Handheld Laser Torch	40	1.0 kg	see p. 310
Military Communicator	50	0.1 kg	see p. 301
Basic Field Kit	10	5.0 kg	see p. 312

THE FIRES OF HELL

THE MISSION BEGINS

STEVEN MOHAN, JR.

PIRATE POINT
ROCHELLE, WORD OF BLAKE PROTECTORATE
3 JULY 3076

Somewhere in a hidden corner of the Rochelle system, space was empty.

Then it wasn't.

A *Scout*-class JumpShip floated silently through the pirate point. Even before the *Scout* confirmed its location, an ebony *Leopard CV* detached from the JumpShip, angled up, and hit her engines in a short, violent burn, shooting above the ecliptic and launching her in a course that would end in a parabolic arc to intersect the system's only inhabited planet.

▲▼▲

The collision alarm sounded and the modified Mark VII Landing Craft slipped out of the *Leopard*'s flight deck. Sergeant Busby "Buzzy" Matvey started to sweat; the shuttle's control stick felt slick beneath his palm.

The mission was now literally in his hands. The team behind him was quiet—for once. They seemed to realize the gravity of the moment.

And gravity was exactly the right word. He goosed his engines just a touch to give him some downward velocity and then he let the planet's gravity do the rest. He wouldn't cut the engines in again until they hit atmosphere.

No sense making the job any easier for the Robes.

Like a lance falling from the sky, the Mark VII fell toward the silent world.

▲▼▲

Buzzy looked out into the unbroken darkness as he fought the shuttle's controls. The Mark VII bucked and rolled and jumped and shimmied as he slalomed back and forth, keeping his craft in a shallow dive to cut speed as much as possible, lowering the craft's heat signature as it fought atmospheric drag. Snow spattered the canopy as he dipped into a high storm, but was OK. Nothing to see, anyway.

"*Hey!*" said Ethan Naoko, stuttering with the craft's vibration, "This is t-too e-e-easy. Can you sh-shake things up?"

"It wasn't me who chose polar insertion," Buzzy barked.

The night side polar route had been selected to cover the Mark VII's insertion. Rochelle's north pole was lightly populated. Even better, charged particles spiraled down along the magnetic lines of force that gathered together at the poles, making radar detection difficult and comms worse. Harder for the Robes to see and report.

But it also meant the landing craft had caught a fierce arctic storm coming down. So no one was going to see their descent—even if the shuttle ended up as a string of debris strewn across a hundred kilometers of pristine, blue-white ice.

That was called a basic Spec Ops trade-off.

"Can you angle us out of the storm?" Captain Travis asked.

Buzzy set his jaw. The bulkhead that normally separated pilot from passengers had been removed, which meant he got to hear everyone's bitching. "Would you like a drink, too?" he asked. "Beverage service will begin in a moment."

"Sergeant," Luella Hildebrand snapped. The XO was strictly by the book. Didn't help that she was sitting right next to him in the co-pilot's chair.

"Complaints are a distraction," Buzzy said, trying to hold his voice level. "If you want down in one piece, please let me fly."

A jagged shard of lightning slashed past the cockpit, strobing cold actinic light through the shuttle's canopy, followed by a massive peal of thunder that shook the craft.

"Th-thanks," Ethan said. "That's m-m-much b-better."

Buzzy swore colorfully in Russian as he wrestled with the Mark VII's controls. He had half a mind to crash on purpose.

Just to shut Ethan up.

"You know, Buzzy," Grace Luther said, "if you shake me apart on the descent, I won't be able to patch you back up when you get shot."

He muttered something dark and guttural under his breath as he banked, turning the LC on its right side, hurtling past a swirling snowscape until he found the natural trench heading southward. Diving low, ignoring the protests of the others, Buzzy drove the shuttle to within only a few dozen meters of the ground and kept it there as the lands below gradually gave way to open water, grasslands, and finally forested lands after an hour of steady flight. The doctor must've seen something, because Buzzy heard her gasp—and then she shouted: "*Bogie*! Up high, right side."

"*Bogie*?" Travis snapped. "That can't be right. How—"

Sudden gee forces choked off his words as Buzzy jerked the stick over and put the shuttle into a steep vertical climb. He stepped on the gas.

"What're you doing?" Travis shouted, his words slurring against the massive acceleration.

"Our orders are not to be seen," Buzzy said through clenched teeth.

"It's not a bogie," Travis snapped. "Can't be. Polar approach should've covered insertion and we've been below radar ever since. Probably civilian. Don't go back. *Don't go back*!"

But Buzzy wasn't listening. He snapped the shuttle over in a barrel roll and came out of it inverted. He didn't bother to right the craft before screaming heavenward; he felt blood rush from his head as suddenly they were pushing high gees. He was looking out of the cockpit through ever-darkening vision.

"*Busby*!" Travis roared.

The pilot leaned over his panel and stabbed a button. An image popped up on the viewscreen that flanked the ferroglass canopy. It showed a sleek aerospace fighter painted ghost-white, streaking over the thick mass of coniferous woodlands. The narrow fuselage flared into swept-back wings, which merged gracefully with rounded horizontal stabilizers. The fighter had no vertical stabilizer. An autocannon was nestled on the fighter's left side just behind the cockpit, and nasty-looking weapon pods hung off its wings.

"*Shiva*," Travis said.

"*Nyet*," Buzzy sneered. "I think it's an airliner. Or maybe a hot air balloon. Or perhaps a crop duster."

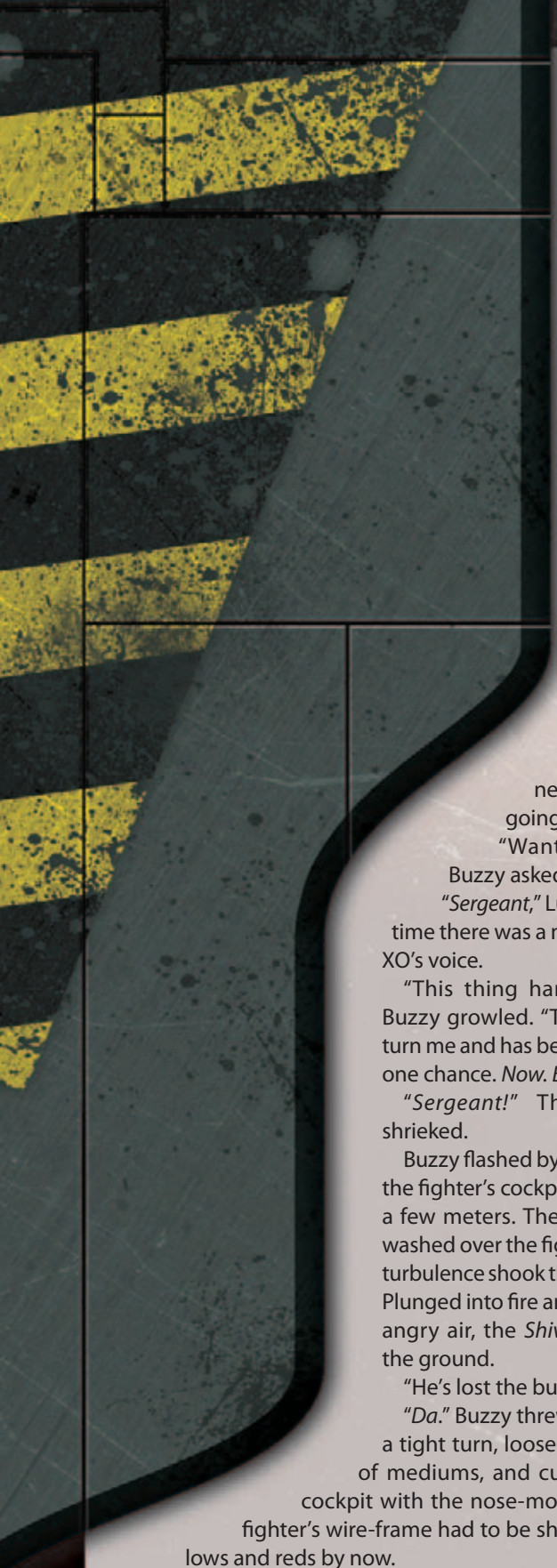
Travis bit the words out. "Don't miss!"

On the screen, Buzzy dropped his targeting reticle over the *Shiva*'s canopy. The dot in the center glowed a fierce gold. He thumbed the trigger, and the shuttle's cockpit flashed white as a pair of medium lasers stabbed forward.

The *Shiva* juked left, its pilot no doubt hearing the jump tone that warned of enemy targeting radar, but it wasn't fast enough to avoid the instantaneous blasts of scarlet energy that lashed across the fighter's canopy, scouring away armor and ferroglass.

Two heartbeats later, Buzzy loosed another twin-laser salute.

"*Heat*," Travis called out.



"*Arctic*," Buzzy called back, ignoring the secondary monitor that would call him a liar.

The *Shiva* pilot stood his craft on its tail, trying to climb to safety. This time, Buzzy tore into the Blakist's damaged cockpit with all four of his Kajuka lasers. Ruby light sparked off the fighter's canopy.

"Um," said Franz Logan, the new kid. "Aren't you going to pull up?"

"Want to fly, meat?" Buzzy asked.

"*Sergeant*," Luella snapped. This time there was a note of panic in the XO's voice.

"This thing handles like a pig," Buzzy growled. "The *Shiva* can outturn me and has better guns. We have one chance. *Now. Be. Quiet*."

"*Sergeant!*" This time, Luella shrieked.

Buzzy flashed by the *Shiva*, clearing the fighter's cockpit by no more than a few meters. The shuttle's exhaust washed over the fighter's canopy and turbulence shook the Blakist machine. Plunged into fire and manhandled by angry air, the *Shiva* dipped toward the ground.

"He's lost the bubble," Travis said.

"*Da*." Buzzy threw the Mark VII into a tight turn, loosed yet another pair of mediums, and cut into the *Shiva*'s cockpit with the nose-mounted smalls. The fighter's wire-frame had to be showing a lot of yellows and reds by now.

The *Shiva*, trapped in an inverted spin, spiraled downward. Its LB-20X cut through the sky, but missed the shuttle wide. The Blakist pilot still didn't know where he was, a point that was poignantly demonstrated when Buzzy hit him again and the Robe ejected.

Upside down.

The pyrotechnics in the *Shiva*'s cockpit blew the canopy and threw his chair free of his aircraft as safety protocols demanded. Unfortunately, they also smashed the pilot straight into the deck.

The pilot's death was followed seconds later by that of his *Shiva*. The fighter plowed into the forest with a horrific concussion, throwing a dark plume of steam and debris into the air.

Buzzy jerked his head down in a quick, decisive nod as he threw the shuttle back into level flight. "*Now*," he said, "we begin beverage service."

Luella Hildebrand leaned forward and pulled up the mission profile, grimaced. "Your flying is *ausgezeichnet*, Sergeant Matvey," she said, staring coldly at him. "But your strategic judgment? *Unter aller Sau!*"

"What are you trying to say, Luella?" Travis asked.

"Do you really think the pilot didn't get a message off?" she demanded. "Or that no one saw or *heard* that?"

"Intel doesn't have any bases out here," Ethan said hopefully. "And no one lives out here."

"So why was the *Shiva* here?" Luella countered.

"Routine patrol?" Corporal Logan said. "Maybe a training exercise?"

"By itself?" Travis asked. "No; XO's right."

"So either our *Shiva* has a friend out there, or—" Luella began.

"–Or intel's wrong and there's a base somewhere," Buzzy finished.

"Which we'll have to make a wide detour to avoid," Travis concluded.

"This encounter shatters our timeline," Luella said. "We won't reach the equatorial base on time. And by the time we get there, they'll be waiting for us. Which means no recon for the main invasion force."

She turned on Buzzy. "How many people will lose their lives to pay for your little stunt back there?"

Buzzy swallowed and said nothing, feeling his face burn.

"Unless—" Travis said.

The XO slowly nodded. "Unless we can find the other base."

▲▼▲

Buzzy gripped the stick and clenched his jaws as he skimmed the nape of the earth. In flight school this was called "ground hugging" by some. "Stupid" by others.

He was hurtling over a forest canopy, flying low to avoid detection. He wiped sweat from his forehead with the back of his arm. If he flew any lower, he'd make a sudden and brief career change from pilot to tree surgeon.

They had vectored to a boreal forest farther south of the polar caps, but there was something unsettling about the trees, something *different*. Since they were going to be down in those trees very soon, it was not quite an academic concern. Rochelle was a poisoned world—there was no telling what might be down there.

Buzzy glanced up—and saw something moving high across the horizon.

"*Bogie*," he snapped.

"*Don't shoot it down*," Travis and Luella shouted at the same time.

Buzzy growled, but said nothing.

"Zero Eight Four," Travis said. "Maybe, what, twenty thousand meters?"

"Twenty-three," said Buzzy, who had a more practiced eye.

"XO, concentrate your search there," Travis ordered.

"Looks like a VTOL," Buzzy said. "Maybe a Warrior."

"So factor in range."

Luella kept silent for several long moments. (*Thank you, God*, Buzzy thought.)

"It's right here," she finally said. Buzzy watched the XO lean forward and tap her screen. He saw a narrow strip of red among cooler blues and greens. "There's a heat island effect in the jungle."

"What does that prove?" Grace asked. "Could be hot springs or volcanism or—"

"The *Leopard* took some images on the run-in and downloaded them to us before we launched. I superimposed a recon photo over the thermal map. There's a cut in the forest right near the thermal bloom. When the DropShip's Intel officer looked at it, he thought it was a logging road, but now—"

"Airstrip," Buzzy said.

Luella nodded. "*Ja*."

"All right," Travis said, "I'm about ready to end the aerial portion of the tour now."

"*Yes*," said everyone in the shuttle at the same time.

Buzzy scowled.

"XO, can you give me a distance to target?"

Luella nodded curtly. "Yes, Captain. Call it 33, 34 klicks."

Travis nodded, weighing choices. Buzzy knew exactly what he was thinking. Drop in close and there was a good chance they'd be detected. Drop too far, and there was a good chance they'd be picked up by a Blakist patrol.

After all, someone was going to notice the missing *Shiva* sooner or later.

"Twenty-five thousand meters," Travis said finally. "And Buzzy, just this once—"

Buzzy glanced back at him. "Yes, Captain?"

"Fly quiet."

▲▼▲

Buzzy scanned the forest canopy for an opening. He could flip the Seven up on its tail and take it down vertical, but he needed a little flat land and that was tough to see through the trees.

"Need to make a call," Travis said, his voice tight.

"I know that," Buzzy snapped, "but the planned LZ was hardpan in the shadow of mountains." He pounded the flight console with a fist. "This is nothing but *trees and trees and trees*."

"It's a broken play," Travis admitted, "but we still have to—"

A shrill jump tone cut him off.

Buzzy jerked his stick hard right and back, putting the shuttle in a rising starboard turn. He didn't know where the missiles were, but he *did* know where they were going and that it was best not to be there as fast as possible.

"*Nine o'clock*," Ethan shouted, saying something useful for the first time during the entire flight.

Buzzy swung right, settling on a reciprocal course and pushing the Mark VII for all it was worth. Juking right and down, up and left, he tried every trick he knew to break the missiles' lock.

The shrill jump tone sounded again, shattering his concentration. This time he saw them—dead ahead, white contrails rising from the jungle and bending over, while flight after flight of SRMs shot straight toward them along slanted angles.

"They were herding us," Luella hissed.

Buzzy jerked back on the stick, throwing the shuttle into a steep climb, hoping the missiles behind them and the missiles ahead would target each other. Two or three explosions dotted the tree canopy below them with orange fire.

Too few to make a difference.

Most of the missiles followed them up. And the batteries below were firing still more.

Warheads rippled across the landing craft's belly, exploding with a terrible bass roar that set Buzzy's ears ringing. The shuttle shook like a toy, and the hits went on and on. It felt like an earthquake.

This time, no one made jokes.

Buzzy glanced down at his wire-frame schematic. A red-and-black checkerboard marked his lower fuselage. Shattered armor—and worse. Weapons systems damaged. Hydraulic lines cut. Back-up systems vaporized. He'd lost most of his starboard control surfaces and the port wing was a broken stub.

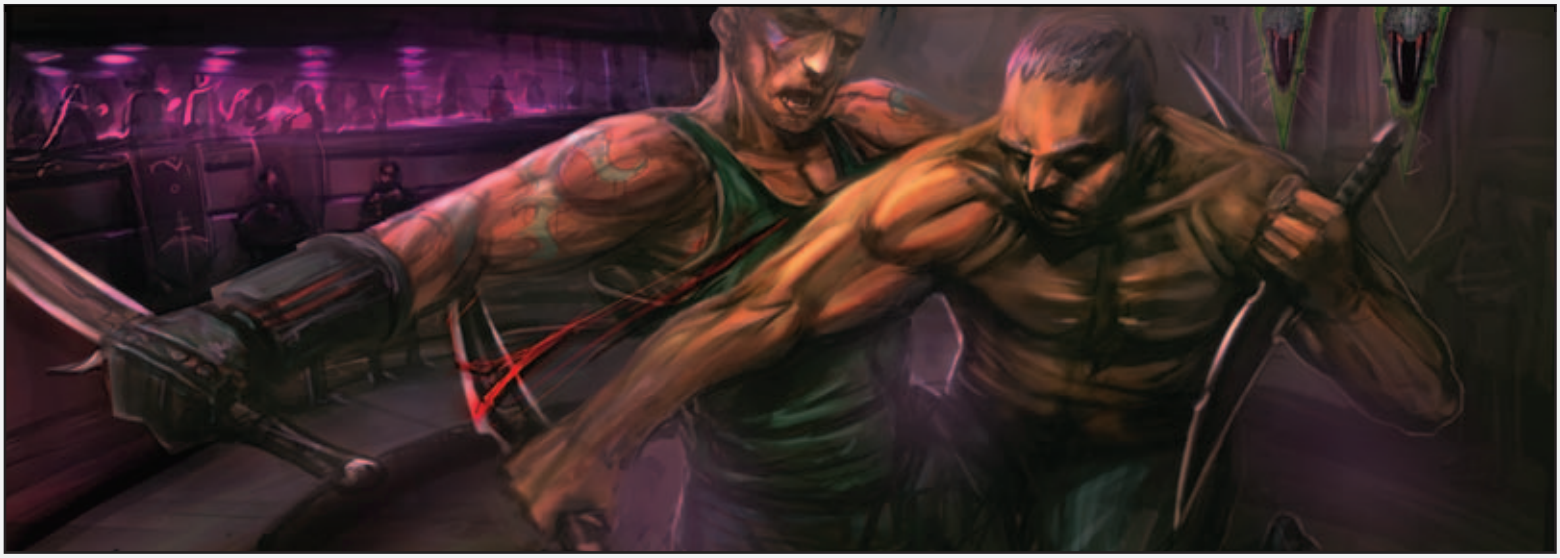
The shuttle cart-wheeled down, caught in a flat spin that Buzzy could not stop.

He pulled back on his stick, trying to force the craft up—or at least slow its fall. He jerked the stick over, trying to get the starboard wing to bite into the air, trying to get just a little lift. Sweat sheened his forehead. He ground his molars painfully together. The muscles on his arm stood out like steel cables.

He fought the dead stick with every trick he knew, every last newton of strength. He used all his skill to try to save his bird. Save his *team*.

But he could not defeat gravity's determination to finally end the journey it had set them on all those thousands of kilometers above the planet's north pole.

In the infinite black of empty space…



With the eyes of their fellow Clansmen upon them, two Steel Viper MechWarriors battle for personal honor in a Circle of Equals.

"Great Gaffa's Ghost! How the hell does someone even begin to learn a stunt like that?"

"Kid, you don't learn anything like that. Some things, you're just born with!"

As described in the rules for character creation (see pp. 48-93), Traits reflect special abilities that characters may possess beyond the standard Attributes they are born with or Skills they have been trained in. These Traits range from innate abilities like ambidexterity or pain resistance to disabilities like allergies or missing limbs, and may also include more tangible or social characteristics like reputation, wealth or enemies.

The following section describes the nature and game play effects of Traits supported by *A Time of War*.

OVERVIEW

Each Trait listed in this chapter comes with a name, its Trait Point (TP) score and a few sentences that roughly identify it, as well as a complete description and game rules. Each listing states whether the Trait is a Character or Vehicle Trait (and whether it is based on a character's identity, where applicable), as well as the Trait's type (positive, negative or flexible); whether it can be taken multiple times by the same character or vehicle; and whether it has an opposing Trait or character feature.

TRAIT POINTS

Just as Attributes have scores, Traits have point scores that define their level of impact on character design. This information is measured by the Trait Point (TP) score, which appears in brackets in the Trait's "type" line. Like Attributes, most Trait Point scores can be modified over time by spending XPs (unless the Trait's rules state otherwise), or they may be modified more directly during game play. The effects of a given Trait (or a given level of a multi-level Trait) do not apply unless the full XP cost (or value) for that Trait has been reached.

For example, a player may decide to invest his character's XPs in developing the Toughness Trait, which costs 300 XPs as a 3 TP Trait. If the character has only managed to put 250 XPs into Toughness, he may not draw upon the Trait, but must wait until he has spent the remaining 50 XPs to activate it.

CHARACTER AND VEHICLE TRAITS

All of the Traits presented here belong to either a character or a vehicle the character possesses.

Character Traits define extra features that apply to the character himself, and may be further defined as identity-based (if the character has multiple aliases). Character Traits cannot be assigned to a character's vehicle.

Vehicle Traits apply only to a character's vehicle (if any), and may not be taken if the character has no vehicle (small civilian vehicles, which may be purchased as equipment, are not counted as worthy of Vehicle Traits). A given Vehicle Trait may apply to only one vehicle in the character's possession, but a character with multiple vehicles may possess multiples of this Trait to give more than one of his applicable vehicles the same feature.

POSITIVE, NEGATIVE AND FLEXIBLE TRAITS

The Trait's TP score reflects its general level of effect on the character (or one the character's vehicles, as appropriate). When a Trait is identified as positive, negative or flexible, it refers to the Trait's TP score. Virtually all Traits fall into one of these categories; Positive Traits benefit the character (or vehicle) in some way, while Negative Traits hinder the character. Flexible Traits are variable-TP Traits that can have either positive or negative TP scores.

During character generation, Traits may be awarded as part of a Life Module, or may be purchased using an appropriate amount of experience. Some may even change during game play from the

expenditure of XPs, though the rules may vary with the nature of the Trait in question and the gamemaster's approval.

Negative Traits and Character Creation: As noted in character creation, a player may elect to take negative Traits for his character as a means of recouping XPs, but may not generate more than 10 percent of his starting XP allotment when doing so.

MULTIPLE TRAITS

Multiple Traits can be taken more than once per character, with each being treated as a separate Trait. Examples include Compulsions, Connections, Enemies, Handicaps and Implants. Though many Multiple Traits have opposing-value Traits, such opposed Traits do not cancel each other out under the *Opposing Traits* rule (below) unless the gamemaster specifically allows it.

When determining the nature of each Multiple Trait, it is important to identify them with additional descriptions that further define them. In the case of Identity-based Multiple Traits (for characters with Alternate IDs), the Trait's name (and TP score, if appropriate) should include which alias the Trait belongs to. Non-identity-based Traits must likewise be described, but players and gamemasters may simply use a descriptive word or two about them in place of an identity name.

For example, a character with the Alternate ID of John Smith—an alias with a price on his head in the form of a –2 TP Bloodmark Trait—would list the Bloodmark Trait as "Bloodmark (–2)/John Smith". A character with a severe video game addiction would list it as "Compulsion (–2)/Vid Games", while another with multiple dependents might have "Dependent (–1)/Wife (Barbara)", "Dependent (–2)/Son (John Jr.)", and "Dependent (–2)/Daughter (Ayami)".

Identity-Based Traits

In *any* case where a Trait is listed as identity-based, that Trait is also considered a Multiple Trait for that character, and must be assigned to specific character aliases as appropriate. If the character has no Alternate IDs, the Trait can only be applied to a single identity, and thus may be treated as a Multiple Trait only if its rules allow it.

OPPOSING TRAITS

Traits described as opposed have either another Trait or another character feature (such as a Skill) that cancels or reduces their effectiveness when assigned to the same character. The Trait rules description identifies such Traits and describes what will occur if a character receives (or purchases) opposing Traits.

VARIABLE-LEVEL TRAITS

Variable-level Traits come in a range of TP scores that reflect a greater or lesser impact, based on the Trait's final TP score. Most such Traits include a reference table to further define the full extent of their impact at each TP level. Variable-level Traits are easily identified in their descriptions; their TP scores appear as a range rather than a single number.

Multiple Traits

Variable-level Traits that are also noted as Multiple Traits are unique in that a character may receive multiple Traits of the same type, but different levels. For simplicity, characters may combine Variable-level Multiple Traits (such as consolidating three –1 TP Bloodmarks into one –3 TP Bloodmark), or disperse them among multiple alternative identities (if they have the Alternative Identity Trait, such as assigning one –1 TP Bloodmark to the main identity and a –2 TP Bloodmark to another). However, as long as the Traits are clearly distinguishable (such as a –1 TP Compulsion/Addition to Smoking and a –3 TP Compulsion/Attention Deficit), a character may assign more than one Variable-level Multiple Trait to the same character.

MASTER TRAITS LIST

Positive Character Traits		Negative Character Traits	
Alternate ID	2 TP	Animal Antipathy	–1 TP
Ambidextrous	2 TP	Bloodmark	–5 to –1 TP
Animal Empathy	1 TP	Combat Paralysis	–4 TP
Attractive	2 TP	Compulsion	–5 to –1 TP
Citizenship/Trueborn	2 TP	Dark Secret	–5 to –1 TP
Combat Sense	4 TP	Dependent	–2 to –1 TP
Connections	1 to 10 TP	Enemy	–1 to –10 TP
Exceptional Attribute	2 TP	Glass Jaw	–3 TP
Fast Learner	3 TP	Gremlins	–3 TP
Fit	2 TP	Handicap	–5 to –1 TP
G-Tolerance	1 TP	Illiterate	– 1 TP
Good Hearing	1 TP	Impatient	–1 TP
Good Vision	1 TP	In For Life	–3 TP
Gregarious	1 TP	Introvert	–1 TP
Implant/Prosthetic	1 to 6 TP	Lost Limb	–5 to –1 TP
Natural Aptitude	3 or 5 TP	Poor Hearing	–5 to –1 TP
Pain Resistance	3 TP	Poor Vision	–9 to –2 TP
Patient	1 TP	Slow Learner	–3 TP
Phenotype	0 TP	Thin-Skinned	–1 TP
Poison Resistance	2 TP	TDS	–1 TP
Property	1 to 10 TP	Unattractive	–1 TP
Rank	1 to 15 TP	Unlucky	–10 to –2 TP
Sixth Sense	4 TP		
Tech Empathy	3 TP		
Thick-Skinned	1 TP		
Title/Bloodname	3 to 10 TP		
Toughness	3 TP		

Flexible Character Traits		Vehicle Traits	
Equipped	–1 to 8 TP	Custom Vehicle	1 to 6 TP
Extra Income	–10 to 10 TP	Design Quirk	–5 to 5 TP
Reputation	–5 to 5 TP	Vehicle Level	1 to 12 TP
Wealth	–1 to 10 TP		

TRAIT DESCRIPTIONS

The following descriptions reflect Traits available to characters in *A Time of War*, provided in alphabetical order for ease of reference.

ALTERNATE ID [CHARACTER (IDENTITY)]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive, Multiple [+2 TP]

"I'm afraid you have me confused for someone else…"

A character with the Alternate ID Trait has a well-established alias that he or she can call upon in dire circumstances (such as having a price on one's head from Tharkad to Solaris). More than a mere name, this alias comes with credentials, resources and even an alternate appearance. A character may possess more than one Alternate ID, with each reflecting a different persona, but if the character has any Identity-dependent Traits, those Traits must be assigned to one of the character's identities. Identity-dependent Traits are: Alternate ID, Attractive, Bloodmark, Connections, Dark Secret, Dependents, Equipped, Glory, Heritage, In For Life, Influence, Property, Rank, Reputation, Vehicle and Wealth. Multiple or Flexible-value Traits may be broken up among the character's various Identities, but the player should take care to track which identity has which Traits, as tapping the resources of one alias while under another can expose the character to anyone who might dig too deeply into his past.

To assume an alternate identity in game play (after one is established, either through lengthy role-playing or through character creation), the character need only spend a day "getting into character" by making the appropriate Acting and Disguise Skill Checks. If the identity is already well established (as determined by the gamemaster), this effort may be accomplished with no dice rolling required—or with a substantial bonus—unless the character is pressed for time or resources.

Characters attempting to penetrate an Alternate ID may do so after spending a significant period of time (weeks or even months) researching the character's background. At the end of this period, the investigator must make an appropriate Skill Check to penetrate the suspect identity, with modifiers assessed based on how much time he spent, how thoroughly he did his research, and whether or not the suspect character said or did anything that could expose the alias (all determined by the gamemaster). This roll is made as an Opposed Double Attribute Check against the subject's INT and WIL Attributes. If the investigating character's Net Margin of Success (the sum of the investigator's MoS minus the subject's MoS) is 3 or more, the false identity is exposed. If the investigator fails by a margin of 3 or more, not only has he failed to expose an alias, but his activities will tip off the subject to the effort. Any other result means the investigator has failed to expose the alias without tipping off the subject (though if he achieved an MoS of 0 to 2, he has learned enough to merit further research).

AMBIDEXTROUS [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive [+2 TP]

"I have some bad news for you, my friend: I'm not left-*handed either."*

A character with the Ambidextrous Trait can use both hands equally well (a character without this Trait must select a primary and an "off" hand during character generation). Ambidextrous characters ignore the off-hand modifier in game play and in combat. Though this Trait allows the character to carry and use a weapon equally well with either hand in combat, it does not confer the ability to exceed the normal number of actions allowed in a combat turn.

ANIMAL ANTIPATHY [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Negative, Opposed [–1 TP]

"Blake's Blood, Roger! Did you lose a fight with your girlfriend's kitten again*?"*

A character with the Animal Antipathy Trait manages to bring out the worst in all creatures, great and small. Whether or not the character feels the same way, something about the character makes animals react far more negatively to his presence than they would otherwise. In game play, Animal Antipathy imposes a –2 modifier to all Skill Checks involving animals, such as Animal Handling, Riding and so forth. This effect also doubles the modifiers for a creature's Shy or Aggressive Traits whenever said creature must make a Fight or Flight Check in the character's presence (see *Creatures*, p. 238). Any creature with the Aggressive Trait will also behave as if it has the Blood Rage Trait while in the character's presence. If combat ensues, a creature so enraged will attack the nearest character with this Trait first.

The Animal Empathy Trait opposes the Animal Antipathy Trait. If a character with Animal Antipathy receives or purchases Animal Empathy (or vice versa), the Traits cancel each other out.

ANIMAL EMPATHY [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive, Opposed [+1 TP]

"Oh, yeah, I know the Kountze arctic terror looks *pretty frightening, but if you know your way around them, they're really not that hard to handle."*

A character with the Animal Empathy Trait has a natural gift with creatures, even those he may ordinarily despise. In game play, Animal Empathy imposes a +2 modifier to all Skill Checks involving animals, such as Animal Handling, Riding and so forth. This effect also halves the modifiers (rounding down) for a creature's Shy or Aggressive Traits whenever said creature must make a Fight or Flight Check in the character's presence (see *Creatures*, p. 238). Creatures without the Aggressive Trait behave as if they have the Shy Trait while in the character's presence, while creatures with the Shy Trait behave as if Tamed instead. If combat ensues, creatures will attack characters with this Trait last—unless the animal empathic character directly attacks the creature first.

The Animal Antipathy Trait opposes the Animal Empathy Trait. If a character with Animal Empathy receives or purchases Animal Antipathy (or vice versa), the Traits cancel each other out.

ATTRACTIVE [CHARACTER (IDENTITY)]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive, Opposed [+2 TP]

"Whoa!"

A character with the Attractive Trait has a natural beauty that makes the character more appealing to those attracted to the character's gender. Characters with this Trait receive a +2 modifier to Skill and Attribute Checks where the character's CHA Attribute is a factor, if the subject of the roll is attracted to the character's gender. If the subject is not normally attracted to the character's gender, a +1 modifier applies, to reflect the disarming charm produced by the character's comeliness.

The Unattractive Trait opposes the Attractive Trait. If a character with Attractive receives or purchases Unattractive (or vice versa), the Traits cancel each other out unless the Attractive Trait is specifically assigned to one of the character's aliases (in which case, Attractive is treated as an identity-dependent Trait; see *Alternate ID*, p. 108).

BLOODMARK [CHARACTER (IDENTITY)]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Negative, Multiple [–5 to –1 TP]

"At this time, the Word of Blake is offering a twenty-million C-bill reward to the individual or unit who brings in the fugitive Devlin Stone—alive and reasonably unharmed. Stone and his followers are wanted for numerous acts of terror and piracy against the Protectorate and should be considered armed and extremely dangerous."

A character with the Bloodmark Trait has a price on his head and is being actively hunted by bounty hunters looking to collect. The reason for this bounty may stem from a real transgression on the character's part, a complete fabrication by an enemy with resources and a grudge, or a case of mistaken identity. Bloodmarks are typically tied to one (or more) of the character's Enemies (see the *Enemies* Trait, p. 113), but a character who has this Trait in the absence of an Enemy may simply be unaware of who has targeted them in such a fashion.

The Bloodmark Table presents a rough guide to the size of the bounty placed on the character's head, as well as to the Enemy Level of the bounty hunters who will come looking for the character, and the frequency of possible encounters with bounty hunters that may come with this Trait. Gamemasters should feel free to create NPCs to represent these hunters, based on their experience and influence relative to the Bloodmarked character. The hunters, however, are not truly enemies of the character; they are simply operatives working to bag the character for whoever posted the bounty. In the end, defeating the hunters will not save the character from his Bloodmark Trait. In game play, the only way a character can remove a Bloodmark Trait is to somehow deal with the individual or group that posted the bounty to begin with.

Gamemasters should note that the encounter frequencies given on the Bloodmark Trait Table are merely suggestions, and reflect only a rough average number of bounty hunter encounters a character may face during a given period of gameplay time (not counting any long periods spent "of the grid", such as while in transit). This frequency may increase if the character is particularly prominent or easy to track (such as characters with Dependents, Titles or Reputations). Encounters may include more than one bounty hunter as well, particularly as higher bounties render a character's capture increasingly lucrative to a broad range of collectors.

Bloodmark Traits are identity-based, and so must be assigned to one of the character's aliases if the character has an Alternate ID (see *Alternate ID*, p. 108). A character that has multiple Bloodmark Traits must distribute them among all aliases as appropriate. A single identity may have only one Bloodmark Trait at a time. Even if the bounty is being placed by multiple sources, the addition of others adds more bounty hunters to the pursuit and effectively raises the Trait's overall level.

BLOODMARK TRAIT TABLE

Trait TP	Bounty (in C-bills)	Bounty Hunter's Enemy Level	Suggested Encounter Frequency
–1	19,999 or less	1	(1D6 ÷ 3) per 6 months*
–2	20,000 to 74,999	1	(1D6 ÷ 2) per 3 months*
–3	75,000 to 249,999	2	(1D6 ÷ 3) per month*
–4	250,000 to 999,999	2	(1D6 ÷ 2) per month*
–5	1,000,000 and up	3	(1D6) per month

*Round down

CITIZENSHIP/TRUEBORN [CHARACTER (IDENTITY)]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive [+2 TP]

In some Inner Sphere states (and among all the Clans), individual rights and privileges are more severely restricted than they are in most other societies. In the Inner Sphere, citizenship is the term most often used to identify those members of society permitted to own land, vote, gain access to higher education, or even follow certain careers. Among the Clans, this stratification is apparent in the divide between those born of the iron wombs—so-called trueborns—and those born through more conventional methods ("freeborns").

Inner Sphere (Citizenship)

"Your papers seem to be in order. So, how long will you be staying here on Sian, Citizen Pheng?"

An Inner Sphere character that possesses the Citizenship Trait has won the right to be called a citizen in one of the more restrictive realms. Not all realms require this Trait; those Affiliations that have restrictive citizenship requirements are identified in the character creation chapter (see pp. 48-93).

Citizenship Traits are identity-based, and so must be assigned to one of the character's aliases if the character has an Alternate ID (see *Alternate ID*, p. 108). A character that has multiple Citizenship Traits must distribute them among all aliases as appropriate, with a maximum of one Citizenship Trait per alias.

Clan Characters (Trueborn)

"Out of my way, freebirth!"

Among the Clans, only those individuals spawned in the iron wombs can claim to be known as trueborns. Only a trueborn Clan character is eligible to receive a Bloodname Trait (the Clan equivalent of Title; see p. 126), and with it, a voice in Clan politics. Trueborn Clansmen must select a Phenotype Trait as well (see p. 121), and begin life as part of the Warrior Caste (though trueborns can still wash out of training or leave the Warrior Caste through other means).

The Trueborn Trait reflects a birth status in the Clans. It cannot be faked, but it can be concealed to some extent if the character takes on any alternate identities. A Clan character with a Trueborn Trait and one or more Alternate ID Traits can assign the Trueborn Trait to only one of these identities, but that identity must be the character's primary identity (the one he or she was actually born to). Bloodnames do not transfer between aliases.

COMBAT PARALYSIS [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Negative, Opposed [–4 TP]

"Please, God! Please, God! I don't wanna die! I don't wanna die!"

A character with Combat Paralysis tends to freeze up in stressful situations, especially combat. In game play, characters with this Trait roll Initiative using the worst two dice of 3D6. Furthermore, a character afflicted with Combat Paralysis may not seize the initiative, and must therefore act only during his own Action Phase. In Tactical Combat, this Trait has no effect unless the character is in command of a force, or is separated from his force commander under the optional Out-of-Contact rule (see p. 204).

In stressful situations outside of combat where quick reactions are vital, the gamemaster may require a character with Combat Paralysis to make a successful WIL Attribute Check to act in a timely manner. Failure on this roll means the character delays for one turn (5 seconds) before acting.

The Combat Sense Trait opposes the Combat Paralysis Trait. If a character with Combat Paralysis receives or purchases Combat Sense (or vice versa), the Traits cancel each other out.

COMBAT SENSE [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive, Opposed [+4 TP]

"Be advised that your target is highly dangerous. Last night, four of Solaris City's finest tried to apprehend him. In the ensuing melee—which was said to last less than fifteen seconds—the suspect managed to kill three men. Doctors say the fourth will be lucky if he ever walks again…"

A character with Combat Sense is in his element during stressful situations, especially combat. In game play, characters with this Trait roll Initiative using the best two dice of 3D6 (as if Initiative itself were a Natural Aptitude), and reduce the combat modifier for Stun or Surprise to +1 (from +2). In Tactical Combat, this Trait has no effect unless the character is in command of a force, or is separated from his force commander under the optional Out-of-Contact rule (see p. 204).

In stressful situations outside of combat where quick reactions are vital, the gamemaster may also apply a +1 roll modifier to any Action Check the character performs where stress or fear are a factor (such as resisting the intimidation effects of a creature's Terror Trait, or disarming a bomb as its timer races through its last 15 seconds).

The Combat Paralysis Trait opposes the Combat Sense Trait. If a character with Combat Sense receives or purchases Combat Paralysis (or vice versa), the Traits cancel each other out.

COMPULSION [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Negative, Multiple [–5 to –1 TP]

"What do you want to hear, man? I told you, I can't help myself! It's a sickness!"

A character with a Compulsion Trait has an irrational tendency toward some kind of negative behavior, ranging from a minor quirk like fear of heights or a superstition, to a more serious addiction to drugs or alcohol. In more extreme cases, a compulsion can take the form of madness, where stress can trigger a dramatic and emotional episode.

The level of a Compulsion Trait determines how severely detrimental it is to the character's behavior in game play, but player and gamemaster should thoroughly discuss the cause and nature of each compulsion beforehand to get a feel for what may or may not set it off. The Compulsion Trait Table below provides basic rules and examples of how severely this Trait will affect a character.

A character's compulsion is always considered active, but not necessarily "triggered". As long as a compulsion is not triggered, the character functions normally, but things that trigger the Compulsion Trait vary with its description. Addiction-type compulsions (such as alcoholism) reflect Compulsions Traits triggered if the character cannot get access to the focus of his addiction for more than 24 hours. Hatred- or fear-based compulsions (such as racism or phobias) are triggered if the focus of the Compulsion Trait is present (and the character knows this). More serious psychoses (such

COMPULSION TRAIT TABLE

Trait TP	Compulsion Severity (Example)	WIL Attribute Roll Modifier*	Effects
–1	Trivial (Personal quirk)	+0	Character suffers –1 modifier to all rolls
–2	Significant (serious addiction)	–2	Character suffers –3 modifier to all rolls
–3	Major (minor psychosis)	–4	See Madness Table
–4	Severe (major psychosis)	–7	See Madness Table
–5	Extreme (clinical insanity)	–10	See Madness Table

*Round down

MADNESS TABLE

Type	Effects
Berserker	Character flies into a rage and attacks nearest person (friend or foe). [Gain Toughness and Pain Resistance Trait effects; gain +1 Initiative roll modifier, +1 Melee Skill Check modifier; suffer –1 modifier to all other rolls.]
Catatonia	Character's mind shuts down, unable to process anything. [May not act. Character is treated as an immobile target.]
Confusion	Character becomes severely disoriented and lost. [Suffer –2 modifier to all rolls.]
Flashbacks	Character becomes lost in a past event similar to the current situation. [Suffer –2 modifier if attempting to act on anything that does not mesh with flashback events.]
Hysteria	Character loses emotional coherence. [Roll 1D6 every 2 turns (10 seconds): On 1-2, see Berserker; on 3-4, see Confusion; on 5-6, see Paranoia.]
Paranoia	Character suddenly distrusts everyone and everything. [Suffer Combat Paralysis Trait effects. Character identifies everyone as hostile.]
Regression	Character's personality shifts to a much younger self. [Apply TP score to all Skill and Attribute rolls.]
Split Personality	Character's personality changes to that of another persona. [Gamemaster should produce an "NPC character" with identical Attributes, but with a different background, Skills and non-Identity Traits for the afflicted character to play.]

as berserker rages, full-blown paranoid delusions and multiple-personality disorders) are triggered under any circumstance the gamemaster deems stressful enough. Triggered compulsions provide game play effects as listed on the Compulsion Trait Table, though the gamemaster may apply additional effects based on the nature of the compulsion (such as doubled roll modifiers over extended periods, or modifiers that apply to a particular Skill).

Characters can fight to maintain control in the face of a Compulsion Trait's effect, but to do so they must make a successful WIL Attribute Check (applying the roll modifier shown on the Compulsion Trait Table). Success allows the character to "hold out" for a number of 5-second turns equal to the roll's MoS. Failure means the compulsion is triggered as normal. Addiction-based compulsions return to their dormant state once the character gets his "fix," while hate- or fear-based compulsions subside when the object of their focus is destroyed or no longer present. Madness-type compulsions subside if the character is rendered unconscious, or after a period of minutes equal to twice the Trait's negative TP score (for example, a –3 TP madness-type Compulsion Trait lasts for 6 minutes), or after the character is successfully "talked down" by a friendly character (which forces another WIL Attribute Check by the character with the compulsion).

Characters may have any number of Compulsion Traits, so long as none directly oppose each other (such as an irrational fear of heights and an irrational love of plunging out of perfectly good aircraft).

CONNECTIONS [CHARACTER (IDENTITY)]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive, Multiple [+1 to +10 TP]

"Don't worry; I know some people on Galatea. If anyone can help us, they can!"

A character with the Connections Trait can potentially call upon the aid of contacts and resources, given enough time and a credible means to do so. This Trait's TP score provides a guide for how powerful such connections are, and how easy it is for a character who has them to find contacts at any given time—as well as how often a character may be able to tap his connections.

The Connections Trait can be a powerful tool in the hands of a crafty player character, so gamemasters must balance the character's process for finding and using this Trait against the character's situation and demands. For example, a character stationed on a depopulated outpost in the Periphery, without benefit of a working HPG, will be unable to call on his connections to deliver him fine caviar from Tharkad before it spoils. The gamemaster should also determine whether local connections might ask for something in exchange for their services (and what that might be).

Connection Traits are regional- and identity-based, and so must be assigned to one of the character's aliases if the character has an Alternate ID (see *Alternate ID*, p. 108). The region the Connections cover must also be identified, and can be as small as a single city (for Trait TPs of 3 or less), a world (Trait TPs of 5 or less), a realm (Trait TPs of 8 or less), or the entire Inner Sphere (Trait TPs of 9 or 10). A character that has multiple Connection Traits must distribute them among all aliases as appropriate.

Tapping Connections

In order to tap a connection, the character must spend 2D6 hours actively searching for a local contact, and may not do so more frequently than indicated by the Check Frequency for the Connection Trait's TP score. The character must then make an appropriate Skill Check, applying the appropriate Connection Roll modifier to the result, as well as any other modifiers the gamemaster deems appropriate.

The Skill used for these checks should vary with the nature of the connection. For underworld connections, the character should use Streetwise; for political, military, or police connections, the recommended Skill is Protocol; for corporate or commercial connections, Negotiation is best.

Success on the appropriate Skill Check means the character manages to establish contact with the connection for one or more favors, as determined by the gamemaster (though most connections can provide no more than a few favors at a time). Failure means that the character is unable to establish contact. If the MoF is 3 points or more, he may have even alerted an enemy to the attempt.

Connection Resources

Depending on the Connection Trait's TP score, the extent of the resources available to the character will vary. Loosely identified on the Connections Trait Table under "Typical Aid," these resources may consist of information, money, equipment and manpower—identified on the table as Info, Wealth, Equip and People, respectively. For ease of reference, the level of these resources is also given, with a number range from 1 to 10, in order of their value. Level 1 reflects easy-to-receive information, a small stipend of funds, access to common equipment, or a minor aide; Level 7 reflects substantially more restricted information, greater funds, harder-to-find items, and a squad of well-trained personnel; and so on. Ultimately, the exact value and nature of the resources provided is up to the gamemaster, based on the situation. However, suggested resources in a pinch may include the following:

Info: This resource reveals information equal to an appropriate Computers, Interest, Interrogation or Investigation Skill Check with an automatic MoS equal to the Info level.

Wealth: The character can access funds up to a Wealth Trait of equal positive TP score to the Wealth level listed (see *Wealth*, p. 128). These funds, however, typically must be paid back; if he reneges, the character may receive a negative Extra Income Trait (see p. 116) or even a Bloodmark (see p. 109).

Equip: The character can access personal gear up to an Equipped Trait of equal positive TP score to the Equip level listed (see *Equipped*, p. 116). This equipment, however, typically must be returned in working order; the character may receive a negative Extra Income Trait (see p. 116) to pay off any damaged or lost goods, or may even receive a Bloodmark (see p. 109).

At the gamemaster's discretion, the character tapping the connection for equipment may also need to make a Negotiation Check to actually receive a desired item. The Connection Roll modifier applies to this check as well, reflecting the connection's willingness to hand over the goods.

People: The character receives aid from a connection's representative (perhaps even the local contact himself) in the form of an NPC with 20 percent more total XP than the

character's current level for every level of People (for example, a listing of "People 5" indicates that the NPC has 100 percent of the character's XP). Alternatively, this resource may translate to multiple NPCs of lesser XP, if the gamemaster prefers. After rendering their aid, these NPCs (presuming they survive) return to wherever they came from.

Gamemasters should remember that any NPC aid obtained through a Connection Trait should possess Skills and abilities relevant to the character's needs (even if the character doesn't realize what they will be just yet). These Skills and abilities need not be the NPC's best assets, however. For example, a character who is simply tapping his connection for a chauffer may get a young lad fresh out of driving school who can barely parallel park or handle a high-speed chase, but who turns out to be a wizard with electronics when the player character realizes he left his passcard key at home.

CONNECTIONS TRAIT TABLE

Trait TP	Check Frequency	Connection Roll Modifier	Typical Aid
+1	1 per 14 days	–2	Info 1
+2	1 per 14 days	–1	Info 2, Wealth 1
+3	1 per 10 days	+0	Info 3, Wealth 2, Equip 1
+4	1 per 7 days	+1	Info 4, Wealth 3, Equip 2, People 1
+5	1 per 4 days	+2	Info 5, Wealth 4, Equip 3, People 2
+6	1 per 7 days	+1	Info 6, Wealth 5, Equip 4, People 3
+7	1 per 10 days	+0	info 7, Wealth 6, Equip 5, People 4
+8	1 per 14 days	–2	Info 8, Wealth 7, Equip 6, People 6
+9	1 per 30 days	–3	Info 9, Wealth 8, Equip 7, People 8
+10	1 per 60 days	–5	Info 10, Wealth 9, Equip 8, People 10

*Round down

CUSTOM VEHICLE [VEHICLE]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive, Multiple [+1 to +6 TP]

"Since when can a Commando *jump three hundred meters!?"*

A Custom Vehicle Trait applies to only one of the character's vehicles (if any), and varies with the vehicle's technological sophistication and design uniqueness. The Custom Vehicle Trait applies solely to battle armor, ProtoMechs, BattleMechs, IndustrialMechs, Combat Vehicles, Conventional Fighters and Aerospace Fighters. Without a Custom Vehicle Trait, the character's starting vehicle (if any) is determined randomly using the appropriate Affiliation column and the Random Assignment Tables (see *Vehicle Level*, p. 128).

The Custom Vehicle Trait Table identifies how the TP score of this Trait affects the character's available selections from the appropriate vehicle type. The Random Assignment Tables referenced here are located on pp. 130-135 and reflect a sampling of "stock" units in the present 3075 era by general Affiliations. Gamemasters interested in reflecting greater depth in their games may wish to research other vehicle designs featured in the various Technical Readouts and assign vehicles by the alternate non-table method noted in the Custom Vehicle Trait Table. A Clan player with no Custom Vehicle Trait will receive a Random Front-Line unit assignment if trueborn, or Second-Line if freeborn.

CUSTOM VEHICLE TRAIT TABLE

Trait TP	Inner Sphere Vehicle Selection	Clan Vehicle Selection
0	Random Stock (own I.S. Affiliation)	N/A
+1	Random Stock (any I.S. Affiliation)	N/A
+2	Choice of Stock (own I.S. Affiliation)	N/A
+3	Choice of Stock (any I.S. Affiliation)	Random Second-Line Stock
+4	Design own Vehicle (I.S. Technology)	Random Front-Line Stock
+5	N/A	Choice of Stock (any Clan)
+6	N/A	Design own Vehicle (Clan Technology)

Non-Table Method: Random Stock = Gamemaster's choice from appropriate affiliations

DARK SECRET [CHARACTER (IDENTITY)]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Negative, Multiple [–1 to –5 TP]

"I said I don't *want to talk about it!"*

A character with the Dark Secret Trait has a major skeleton in his closet—a past deed, relationship or personal truth he'd rather not see brought to light. The TP score for this Trait indicates just how major this secret is, with a –1 TP score reflecting a fairly minor (but still character-damaging) secret like lying about one's political views or academic credentials on an application, while a –5 TP secret reflects a major act of treachery or a morally reprehensible crime. If the secret is ever revealed, the Dark Secret Trait will become a Reputation Trait of equivalent TP score for the character, and will also reduce any Connections the character has by half the Trait's negative TP score (round up). For example, a –3 TP Dark Secret, once revealed, reduces the character's Reputation by 3 TP and his Connections by 2 TP (3 ÷ 2 = 1.5, rounded up to 2). At the gamemaster's discretion, a particularly devastating Dark Secret can even lead to additional effects, such as imprisonment, persecution and Bloodmark Traits. A character with a Dark Secret is likely to do anything in his power to ensure that the secret remains hidden forever.

Any time a character with a Dark Secret faces scrutiny, there is a chance the secret will be revealed. In such a case, use the rules for revealing an Alternate ID to see if the secret is exposed, with a +3 modifier applied to the investigating party's roll if the investigator is not specifically looking for anything incriminating (such as a fan researching the life and times of a public hero for his interweb site).

Dark Secret Traits are identity-based and must be assigned to one of the character's aliases if the character has an Alternate ID (see *Alternate ID*, p. 108). A character with multiple Dark Secret Traits must distribute them among all aliases as appropriate. The Dark Secret cannot be the character's alternate identity itself, as the rules for that Trait already cover the dangers of exposure. Likewise, the secret cannot be tied to a negative Reputation Trait the character already has, or to a Bloodmark Trait already on the character's head, as both such Traits reflect character flaws that are already exposed.

A revealed Dark Secret damages the Reputation and Connections of the affected identity only if the alias is also revealed later (in which case, all known connected identities share the same level of effect). Once the Dark Secret is revealed and its effects are resolved, the Dark Secret Trait is removed from the character's record sheet.

DEPENDENTS [CHARACTER (IDENTITY)]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Negative, Multiple [–1 to –2 TP]

"We have to go back! My kids are on that ship!"

A character with a Dependent Trait has a loved one or family member (usually a spouse or children) who is very important or close to the character—and who cannot defend against being taken captive or threatened by potential enemies. The level of this Trait reflects the dependent's vulnerability; a –1 TP Dependent might be an adult who is mildly disabled or lacks self-defense Skills, while a –2 TP Dependent reflects a juvenile or severely handicapped individual.

A character whose dependent is threatened (and who knows of the threat) cannot function normally until that dependent is out of harm's way. To reflect this in game play, treat the effects of a threatened dependent as equivalent to a triggered Compulsion Trait of equal TP score (see *Compulsion*, p. 110). If multiple dependents are threatened, stack any roll modifiers applied to a maximum of –3.

Dependent Traits are identity-based and must be assigned to one of the character's aliases if the character has an Alternate ID (see *Alternate ID*, p. 108). However, unlike other identity-dependent character Traits, the Trait effects noted above can apply to a character regardless of his alias (though an additional +1 roll modifier applies if the threatened dependents are not associated with the character's currently active alias, reflecting the distance the character feels from his dependents when using his alternate persona).

DESIGN QUIRK [VEHICLE]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Flexible, Multiple [–5 to +5 TP]

"Oh, yeah, I should've warned you about that. For some reason, the HUD flickers out for a few seconds every time you fire the PPCs, and the Warbook software won't update past the 3025 database, so it keeps identifying everything you see as a Marauder *or a* Warhammer*, but other than that, she runs like a beaut!"*

The Design Quirk Trait applies to a specific vehicle the character owns, or is assigned to, rather than to the character. This Trait describes extra features or flaws that a vehicle has beyond its combat statistics. These design quirks, listed in the Design Quirks Trait Table (pp. 114-115), refer primarily to those described on pp. 195-199 of *Strategic Operations*. Gamemasters without access to that rulebook who wish to use this Trait, or who wish to apply similar quirks to unlisted units such as ProtoMechs, may instead devise an appropriate feature or flaw in the character's vehicle based on the TP score for this Trait. Positive or negative TPs of 1 or 2 reflect fairly minor or limited-effect quirks such as sporadic sensor glitches (negative TP) or small piloting bonuses that apply only in certain conditions (positive TP), and so forth. TPs in the 3 to 5 range reflect increasingly significant quirks like faulty power systems (negative) and enhanced targeting (positive).

Any applicable vehicle (BattleMechs, IndustrialMechs, Combat and Support Vehicles, fighters or battle armor) may receive multiple quirks, each with a range of TP scores, but may only possess one quirk of a given type at a time (for example, a vehicle may not receive the Combat Computer Quirk twice). Gamemasters are also well advised to temper such features within reason.

A vehicle should receive no more than 5 positive and 5 negative Design Quirks, and must not have more than 5 TP worth of Design Quirks after adding together the TP scores for all quirks assigned.

Design Quirks are assigned only to the vehicle in question and do not transfer if the vehicle is destroyed.

Design Quirk/Rumble Seat

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive [+0 TP]

Though 'Mechs, vehicles, and aerospace craft only require seating for their operators alone, some may contain a spare seat in their control areas in which a passenger (or observer/instructor) may ride. This design quirk—not featured in *Strategic Operations*—may not be taken by any unit that employs a Small Cockpit or Torso Cockpit, has a Cramped Cockpit Design Quirk, or is classified in the Light or Ultra-Light weight class.

In game play, a rumble seat allows the unit to take one passenger in its control section in relative comfort. This passenger may observe the unit's sensors and (if desired) may even possess a special override switch that can lock down the controls in an emergency (a feature common for instructors on training 'Mechs). Units without a rumble seat may not take passengers unless the unit is designed with weight set aside for sufficient cargo, seating or quarters.

ENEMY [CHARACTER (IDENTITY)]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Negative, Multiple [–1 to –10 TP]

"Holy crudstunk! Did they send an entire division here just to get you*? Whose daughter did you defile?"*

A character with an Enemy Trait has somehow attracted the ire of a person or organization that has the influence and the will to make the character's life a living hell. Enemies of this type are far more powerful than a mere childhood or academic rival, though they may start out as such. To be worthy of the Enemy Trait, an enemy must have a level of influence similar to a character's connections, but working against the character rather than for him. The Trait's TP score indicates the level of the enemy's power and influence.

Gamemasters should work with the characters in creating the identity and motivations of any enemies, using the Enemy Trait Table as a rough guide. For creating enemies, the table provides the enemy's relative experience compared to the character (expressed as the enemy's XP, used when building the enemy as an NPC). For example, a –6 TP Enemy receives 2.4 times the character's XP when created as an NPC. The table also provides examples of typical enemies at that level of TP, though any such enemies should be tailored to the character (a character who is a major in a merc unit, for example, would not likely see a –2 TP Enemy as a lesser-ranked captain).

In game play, enemies may interfere with the character through any means open to them, ranging from bureaucratic disruptions and misplaced supplies to arranging for the character's transfer or demotion at an inconvenient time,

DESIGN QUIRKS TRAIT TABLE

Design Quirk	Trait TP	BattleMech/ IndustrialMech*	Vehicle†	Battle Armor	Fighter/Small Craft††
Positive Quirks					
Accurate Weapon	+Var	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Anti-Air Targeting	+Var	Yes	Yes	No	No
Atmospheric Flyer	+3	No	No	No	Yes
Battle Computer	+5	Yes	Yes	No	No
Combat Computer	+3	Yes	No	No	Yes
Command BattleMech	+2	Yes	No	No	No
Cowl	+4	Yes	No	No	No
Easy Maintenance	+1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Easy to Pilot	+2	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Extended Torso Twist	+3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fast Reloader	+1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hyper-Extending Actuators	+1	Yes	No	No	No
Improved Cooling Jacket	+1	Yes	No	No	Yes
Improved Communications	+2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Improved Life Support	+1	Yes	No	Yes	No
Improved Sensors	+3	Yes	Yes	No	No
Improved Targeting, Short	+3	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Improved Targeting, Medium	+4	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Improved Targeting, Long	+5	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Internal Bomb Bay	+2	No	No	No	Yes
Modular Weapons	+1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Multi-Trac Targeting	+2	Yes	No	No	No
Narrow/Low Profile	+3	Yes	Yes	No	No
Protected Actuators	+1	Yes	No	No	No
Reinforced Legs	+1	Yes	No	No	No
Rumble Seat‡	+0	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Searchlight	+1	Yes	Yes	No	No
Stable	+2	Yes	No	No	No
Variable-Range Targeting	+Var	Yes	No	No	No
Negative Quirks					
Ammo Feed Problem	–1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Atmospheric Flight Instability	–2	No	No	No	Yes
Bad Reputation	–1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cooling System Flaw	–3	Yes	No	No	No
Cramped Cockpit	–2	Yes	No	No	Yes
Difficult Ejection	–1	Yes	No	No	Yes
Difficult Maintenance	–1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
EM Interference	–1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Exposed Actuators	–1	Yes	No	No	No
Exposed Weapon Linkage	–2	Yes	Yes	No	No

*Includes OmniMechs
**Applies only to ICE-powered units in this category
†Includes Combat Vehicle, Support Vehicle
††Includes Fixed-Wing Support Vehicle
‡Not listed in *Strategic Operations* (see description)

DESIGN QUIRKS TRAIT TABLE, CONT.

Design Quirk	Trait TP	BattleMech/ IndustrialMech*	Vehicle†	Battle Armor	Fighter/Small Craft††
Negative Quirks, continued					
Fragile Fuel Tank	–2	No	Yes**	No	Yes
Gas Hog	–2	Yes**	Yes**	No	Yes
Hard to Pilot	–2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Inaccurate Weapon	–Var	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
No/Minimal Arms	–3	Yes	No	No	No
No Cooling Jacket	–2	Yes	No	No	Yes
No Ejection System	–2	Yes	No	No	Yes
No Torso Twist	–2	Yes	No	No	No
Non-Standard Parts	–1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Poor Cooling Jacket	–6	Yes	No	No	Yes
Poor Performance	–3	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Poor Targeting, Short	–2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Poor Targeting, Medium	–3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Poor Targeting, Long	–4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Poor Workmanship	–1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prototype	–2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sensor Ghosts	–2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Unbalanced	–1	Yes	No	No	No
Un-streamlined	–2	No	No	No	Yes
Weak Head Armor	–Var	Yes	No	No	No
Weak Legs	–1	Yes	No	No	No
Weak Undercarriage	–1	No	No	No	Yes

*Includes OmniMechs
**Applies only to ICE-powered units in this category
†Includes Combat Vehicle, Support Vehicle
††Includes Fixed-Wing Support Vehicle
‡Not listed in *Strategic Operations* (see description)

ENEMY TRAITS TABLE

Trait TP	Check Frequency	Enemy's XP	Typical Enemies (Underworld, Political, Military)
–1	1 per 90 days	x1.2	Bounty Hunter, Local Police Chief, Mercenary Captain
–2	1 per 60 days	x1.4	Minor Underworld Lt., Planetary Bureaucrat, Military Captain
–3	1 per 30 days	x1.6	Minor Underworld Boss, Planetary Governor, Mercenary Major
–4	1 per 14 days	x1.8	Minor Terrorist Group, Planetary Corporation, Military Major
–5	1 per 14 days	x2.0	Major Underworld Lt., Minor Noble (Baron), Mercenary Colonel
–6	1 per 7 days	x2.4	Major Underworld Boss, Regional Administrator, Military Colonel
–7	1 per 7 days	x2.8	Interstellar Syndicate, Noble (Count), Mercenary General
–8	1 per 4 days	x3.5	Secret Military Cabal, Interstellar Corporation, Military General
–9	1 per 4 days	x4.0	Major Terrorist Group, March Lord, Military District Marshal
–10	1 per 2 days	x5.0	Government Conspiracy, House Lord, General of the Armies

or even sending hired thugs to attack the character when his guard is down. The frequency of these encounters is up to the gamemaster, but a general guide appears in the Enemy Trait Table as well. Gamemasters may also roll 2D6 periodically to see if a random encounter or event involving an enemy occurs, adding the character's Reputation Trait score (if any) and the Enemy Trait's TP score to the result. If the result is 7 or higher, the enemy creates no hassles for the character this time, but may be watching him.

Gamemasters should take care not to abuse the Enemy Trait. While enemies can provide a useful hook for adventures, they should not dominate the overall plot line if only one of the players' characters has aroused such a nemesis.

Enemy Traits are identity-based and must be assigned to one of the character's aliases if the character has an Alternate ID (see *Alternate ID*, p. 108). A character with multiple Enemy Traits must distribute them among all aliases as appropriate. Characters (and their aliases) may have any number of Enemy Traits.

Geoff's character, Richard Kawolski, has a –4 TP Enemy and a +3 Reputation Trait. According to the Enemy Trait Table, Richard's enemy has 1.8 times his character's XP (a number revised as often as Richard himself receives XP), and so Richard may encounter interference from this enemy once every two weeks. With the game currently between major events, the gamemaster decides to check for an encounter with this enemy.

The 2D6 roll result is 8 + 3 (for Richard's Reputation) – 4 (Richard's Enemy's TP) = 7. Richard is lucky; the gamemaster determines that the enemy takes no overt action against him at this time.

EQUIPPED [CHARACTER (IDENTITY)]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Flexible, Multiple [–1 to +8 TP]

"Yes, this is a Mauser 1200 Light Support System with an NVR-50 telescope and IR laser sighting. And no, you can't *touch it!"*

A character with the Equipped Trait has less (or more) restricted access to certain equipment during character creation. Though this Trait is primarily used during character creation, the gamemaster may use this level of equipment access throughout game play as long as the character also has a Connections Trait of equal score. This option allows the character to access the level of gear represented by this Trait in game play, by identifying the related connections as the character's access to an exclusive supplier.

The Equipped Table outlines the character's level of equipment access based on the Trait's TP score, reflecting the maximum equipment ratings to which a character may have access when purchasing equipment in terms of Tech Level, Availability and Legality (see *Equipment*, starting on p. 254, for more information on these codes).

The Equipped Trait cannot be used to obtain items covered by the Vehicle Trait (see p. 128). However, personal vehicles and support vehicles may be obtained through this Trait.

Equipped Traits are identity-based and must be assigned to one of the character's aliases if the character has an Alternate ID (see *Alternate ID*, p. 108). A character with multiple Equipped Traits must distribute them among all aliases as appropriate, with no more than one Equipped Trait per alias.

EQUIPPED TRAIT TABLE

	Maximum Equipment Ratings		
Trait TP	Tech Level*	Availability**	Legality**
–1	C	A	B
0	D	B	B
+1	D	B	C
+2	D	C	C
+3	E	C	D
+4	E	D	D
+5	E	D	E
+6	E	E	E
+7	E	E	F
+8	F	F	F

*For Periphery-affiliated characters, reduce the Tech Level Rating by 1 (to a minimum of B); Clan-affiliated characters increase Tech Level ratings by 1 (to a maximum of F).

**If purchasing items that have an Affiliation code outside of the character's native Affiliation (or which are not "neutral"), increase the item's Availability and Legality ratings by 1 each.

EXCEPTIONAL ATTRIBUTE [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive, Multiple [+2 TP]

"I never met anybody that could hit that hard, and I've fought Elementals on the streets of Harlech!"

A character with the Exceptional Attribute Trait may have an Attribute value that is 1 point above the normal maximum for that phenotype (see *Assigning Attributes* in the character creation rules, p. 85). This Trait, however, does not actually raise the selected Attribute itself or provide the Attribute at its new maximum value; experience points must still be spent to accomplish that (during character creation or game play).

Though Exceptional Attribute may be purchased multiple times, only one Exceptional Attribute Trait may be applied per Attribute.

EXTRA INCOME [CHARACTER (IDENTITY)]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Flexible, Multiple [–10 to +10 TP]

"Easy enough for you to say when you have cash coming in from your 'extra-curricular ventures' every month. Me, I'm in so much debt I had to get a second mortgage on my immortal soul just to make my hovercar payments."

EXTRA INCOME TRAIT TABLE

Trait TP	Monthly Cash (in C-bills)	Trait TP	Monthly Cash (in C-bills)
–10	–5,000	+1	250
–9	–4,000	+2	500
–8	–3,000	+3	750
–7	–2,250	+4	1,000
–6	–1,750	+5	1,500
–5	–1,500	+6	1,750
–4	–1,000	+7	2,250
–3	–750	+8	3,000
–2	–500	+9	4,000
–1	–250	+10	5,000
+0	0		

PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIES

War College of Goshen

Canopian Institute of War

Orloff Military Academy

New Avalon Institute of Science

A character with the Extra Income Trait receives (or pays out) money on a monthly basis due to a stipend, low-risk investment or personal debt beyond his current employment. How much money comes in (or goes out) on a monthly basis (always assessed at the start of the month) depends on this Trait's TP score as defined in the Extra Income Trait Table below. Positive-TP Extra Income Traits reflect a regular income, while negative-TP Extra Income Traits reflect an ongoing debt.

The funds are covered electronically, drawing off the character's savings regardless of his physical location. However, before game play begins, the gamemaster and the player of a character with Extra Income must define all of the character's Extra Income Traits, to determine what cause and conditions maintain this flow of money. If the Extra Income is a stipend, such funds may come with conditions the character must uphold to continue receiving them. In the case of a debt, a certain total balance may remain outstanding (for which the debt may only be covering the interest).

Extra Income Traits are identity-based and must be assigned to one of the character's aliases if the character has an Alternate ID (see *Alternate ID*, p. 108), to a maximum of one Extra Income Trait per identity. A character with multiple Extra Income Traits must distribute them among all aliases as appropriate.

Some other Traits—specifically, Property and Rank—represent other avenues of regular income the character may receive. Because these Traits incorporate some form of payments already, the Extra Income Trait cannot represent additional income from such Traits. Any funds the character receives for his in-game employment (such as characters serving with a mercenary command, active military service or corporate entity) are likewise not covered by the Extra Income Trait.

FAST LEARNER [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive, Opposed [+3 TP]

"Training manual? I don't need no malfing training manual!"

A character with the Fast Learner Trait can pick up and improve Skills faster than many other characters of equal intelligence. Fast Learner reduces the experience cost for Skills by 10 percent, both during character generation (see p. 86) and Skill advancement (see p. 333).

The Slow Learner Trait opposes the Fast Learner Trait. If a character with Fast Learner receives or purchases Slow Learner (or vice versa), the Traits cancel each other out.

FIT [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive, Opposed [+2 TP]

"Rise and shine, flabby! We got us ten kilometers to run before breakfast, and that hill ain't gonna climb itself!"

A character with the Fit Trait—from either a blessed metabolism or a healthy lifestyle of proper diet and exercise—has excellent endurance and physical prowess beyond the norm for a typical character with equivalent Attributes. This Trait confers a +1 roll modifier to any Attribute Check against the character's BOD or STR scores (but not to Skill Checks involving those as Linked Attributes). The Fit Trait also halves the character's Fatigue (rounding down) from strenuous activity such as running, sprinting or lifting heavy objects (see *Fatigue*, p. 189). Finally, characters with this Trait recover an additional 2 points of Fatigue per turn.

The Handicap Trait (at any level) opposes the Fit Trait, but unlike most Traits, Fit and Handicap do not cancel each other out in their entirety. Instead, the character must offset any Handicaps by purchasing enough "additional" Fit Traits to balance the negative TP score of *all* Handicaps (in essence using Fit's positive TPs to cancel out the negative TPs of Handicap). Only after all such Handicaps are "bought off" in this fashion can the character receive a Fit Trait (so long as the Fit Trait attains its full TP score of +2). If any of the character's Handicaps are described as genetic, however, no amount of Fit Trait points will cancel out the disorder, and the character can never receive the Fit Trait.

G-TOLERANCE [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive [+1 TP]

"You think that's bad, ground-pounder? Wait till we hit open space and the captain really *opens up the throttle!"*

A character with the G-Tolerance Trait is less affected by the stresses of variable gravity conditions, including zero-gravity operations and high-gravity maneuvers. Characters with this Trait suffer half the roll modifiers applied from non-standard gravity conditions and acceleration (see *Planetary Conditions* under *Special Case Rules*, p. 230), as well as half the Fatigue from such conditions (see *Fatigue* under *Personal Combat*, p. 189).

G-Tolerant aerospace pilots also apply a +1 modifier to Piloting Skill Rolls when executing high-G maneuvers (such as those described on p. 78 of *Total Warfare*), and receive a +1 roll modifier to any RFL Attribute Checks made to resist the effects of sudden inertia (such as while onboard a DropShip attempting a sudden maneuver or acceleration).

GLASS JAW [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Negative, Opposed [–3 TP]

"…But…I barely even touched *him!"*

A character with the Glass Jaw Trait is far more susceptible to injury than his BOD Attribute may indicate. When sustaining injury of any kind, a character with Glass Jaw multiplies any personal damage sustained by 1.5 (rounding up), and multiplies any Fatigue suffered from combat by 2.

The Toughness Trait opposes the Glass Jaw Trait. If a character with Glass Jaw receives or purchases Toughness (or vice versa), the Traits cancel each other out.

GOOD HEARING [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive [+1 TP]

"What do you mean, 'Didn't I hear that?'? Dogs *couldn't even have heard that!"*

A character with the Good Hearing Trait has better-than-average hearing. This Trait applies a +1 roll modifier to any Perception Skill Checks where hearing is a factor, but has no impact on combat action rolls.

The Poor Hearing Trait (at any level) opposes the Good Hearing Trait. If a character with Good Hearing receives or purchases Poor Hearing (or vice versa), the Traits cancel each other out.

GOOD VISION [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Flexible, Opposed [+1 TP]

"It was dark, he was pretty far away, and things happened pretty quickly, but I'm positive *the shooter was wearing a Third Division unit insignia."*

A character with the Good Vision Trait has better-than-average visual acuity. This Trait applies a +1 roll modifier to any Perception Skill Checks where vision is a factor, but has no impact on combat action rolls.

The Poor Vision Trait (at any level) opposes the Good Vision Trait. If a character with Good Vision receives or purchases Poor Vision (or vice versa), the Traits cancel each other out.

GREGARIOUS [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive, Opposed [+1 TP]

"Janos, you sly dog! Come over here! I want you to meet my new friends! We're going to start a mercenary company together, and I think you'd be perfect for the command lance!"

A character with the Gregarious Trait has a knack for dealing with people beyond what his normal CHA Attribute might indicate. This Trait applies a +1 roll modifier to any Skill Checks where social interaction is a factor (at the gamemaster's discretion).

The Introvert Trait opposes the Gregarious Trait. If a character with Gregarious receives or purchases Introvert (or vice versa), the Traits cancel each other out.

GREMLINS [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Negative, Opposed [–3 TP]

"What the—? 'Load Ammo Error?' What does that even mean*? This is a* Wolfhound*!"*

A character with the Gremlins Trait seems to be incredibly bad with machines, often to the point where anything more sophisticated than a pencil may inexplicably break down or fail on them at a crucial moment.

A character with this Trait is so bad with machines that even his attempts to understand technological systems seem to bog down on the intellectual level, resulting in a 10 percent increase to the XP costs for raising or purchasing any Technician Skill. In addition, characters with this Trait receive a –1 roll modifier for using any equipment with a Tech Rating of B or higher, and suffer a fumble result when using any such equipment on a natural roll of 2 or 3. On a natural roll of 2, in fact, the equipment undergoes a breakdown (determined by the gamemaster); weapons that normally fail on such rolls get jammed or fused, requiring repairs before they may be used again.

The Tech Empathy Trait opposes the Gremlins Trait. If a character with Gremlins receives or purchases Tech Empathy (or vice versa), the Traits cancel each other out.

HANDICAP [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Negative, Multiple, Opposed [–5 to –1 TP]

"Look at this file! Says here he's an asthmatic; he's allergic to synthleather; his speech is slurred thanks to a stroke he had at age twelve; and he can't run half a kilometer without stopping for breath every hundred meters or so. And still *they put this guy on the front lines?"*

HANDICAP TRAIT TABLE

Trait TP	Sample Handicap	Sample Handicap Effects
–1	Serious Allergy	–1 to all rolls when Handicap is triggered
–2	Crippling Allergy	–3 to all rolls when Handicap is triggered or +1 Fatigue for strenuous activity (see *Fatigue*, p. 189)
–3	Minor Disability	No functionality in a small area such as a hand or foot, or +2 Fatigue for strenuous activity (see *Fatigue*, p. 189)
–4	Major Disability	No functionality in a larger area or system, such as an arm or a lung, or double Fatigue for strenuous activity (see *Fatigue*, p. 189)
–5	Crippling Disability	Poor functionality throughout the body, such as paralysis or emphysema

A character with the Handicap Trait has some kind of physical or mental impairment that isn't covered by other Traits (specifically, Traits such as Compulsion, Glass Jaw, Lost Limb, Poor Vision, Poor Hearing, Slow Learner, Thin Skinned or Transit Disorientation Syndrome). The TP score for a Handicap determines how detrimental it is to the character's behavior and capabilities in game play, but the cause and nature of each Handicap should be thoroughly discussed between player and gamemaster beforehand to get a feel for how extensive and limiting it is.

Handicaps with a –1 or –2 TP score, for example, reflect minor afflictions such as allergies or a reduced endurance for strenuous activity, while Handicaps with a –4 or –5 TP score may reflect far more extensive disabilities, like a chronic and mobility-robbing disorder that requires constant medical care to keep in check. The Handicap Trait Table below provides basic rules and examples of how severely this Trait may affect a character, but gamemasters and players should agree to the overall effects before play begins, and may add more specific limitations as well.

The Fit Trait opposes all Handicap Traits a character may possess, but unlike most Traits, Fit does not cancel Handicap out in its entirety. Instead, a character with Handicap may not cancel out these negative Traits until he has received an equal or greater number of Trait points from the Fit Trait. If, however, any of the character's handicaps are described as genetic, no amount of Fit Trait points will cancel out the disorder, and the character can never receive the Fit Trait.

Handicap Traits may not be "doubled up" with other physical deficiencies the character suffers from. If a limb or other body function already suffers from the effects of another negative Trait—such as Lost Limb, Glass Jaw or Poor Vision—a Handicap Trait that effectively describes the same malady cannot be applied.

ILLITERATE [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Negative, Opposed [–1 TP]

"Right! Hit the button marked 'Core Dump'! Right!…What does that one look like?"

A character with the Illiterate Trait cannot read, despite his level of Language Skills. This may stem from a lack of proper schooling or a mild mental handicap that impairs his ability to easily comprehend the written word. Characters with this Trait treat all Skills where INT is a Linked Attribute as an untrained Skill in game play, but only if some form of reading is required to complete the action (at the gamemaster's discretion). Illiterate characters who also lack the Skill in question still determine the action's TN as normal, but can only resolve it by rolling 3D6 and using the lowest two dice results to complete the action. Furthermore, when purchasing or improving Skills that rely on INT as a Linked Attribute, or which have an Advanced training requirement (CA or SA Skills), the Illiterate Trait adds 10 percent to the Skill's XP cost (round up).

The Illiterate Trait is not opposed by another Trait, but instead is opposed by any Language Skill with a level of 4 or better. If a character with Illiterate receives or improves a Language Skill to level 4 or more, the Illiterate Trait is cancelled out.

IMPATIENT [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Negative, Opposed [–1 TP]

"Okay, people. Like in the drills. On my mark, we—Goddammit, Leon, no! Hold your fire! Hold your fire!*"*

A character with the Impatient Trait suffers from a compulsive inability to wait, even when it might be in the character's best interests. In game play, characters with this Trait apply a –1 modifier to all rolls for Skill and Attribute Checks that require a significant amount of time and focus (such as any Skill or action classified as Complex). In addition, the character may only accumulate a maximum +2 roll modifier for Extra Time or Careful Aim, reflecting that even when the character does invest precious time in an action, he simply cannot do so as well as others.

The Patient Trait opposes the Impatient Trait. If a character with Impatient receives or purchases Patient (or vice versa), the Traits cancel each other out.

IMPLANT/PROSTHETIC [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive, Multiple [+1 to +6 TP]

"Oh, yeah. Lost the arm in '63, doing some of the Prince's dirty work. They fixed me up real well, though; can't hardly tell it's a fake, can you?"

A character with the Implant/Prosthetic Trait has lost a limb or organ, but has managed to secure a replacement before the start of game play. This Trait allows the character to reduce the debilitating effects of a Lost Limb, Poor Hearing, or Poor Vision Trait, but only as well as the Implant/Prosthetic allows (as indicated in the Implant/Prosthetic Trait Table). Furthermore,

IMPLANT/PROSTHETIC TRAIT TABLE

Trait TP	Available Implant/Prosthetic
+1	Type 1 Prosthetic (Finger/Hand/Foot/Leg); Hearing Aid (Ear); Corrective Lens Implant (Eye); Cosmetic Surgery (Full Body)*
+2	Type 2 Prosthetic (Finger/Hand/Foot/Leg); Hearing Aid (Ear); Corrective Lens Implant (Eye)**
+3	Type 3 Prosthetic (Finger/Hand/Foot/Leg); Bionic Replacement (Ear); Corrective Lens Implant (Eye)
+4	Type 4 Prosthetic (Finger/Hand/Foot/Leg); Bionic Replacement (Ear); Bionic Replacement (Eye)
+5	Type 5 Prosthetic (Finger/Hand/Foot/Leg); Bionic Replacement (Ear); Bionic Replacement (Eye)
+6	Type 6 Cloned Replacement (Finger/Hand/Foot/Leg)†; Elective Myomer Replacement (Hand/Foot/Arm/Leg)
+7	Type 6 Cloned Replacement (Finger/Hand/Foot/Leg/Ear/Eye)†; Elective Myomer Replacement (Full Body)

*Treat Cosmetic Surgery as an Attractive Trait (see *Attractive Trait*, p. 108).

**Clan characters may also purchase an EI Neural Implant (see p. 317) at this Trait level as long as they remain with the Clans.

†Clan characters may purchase these Implant/Prosthetics at 1 TP less as long as they remain with the Clans.

A Clan War veteran, Captain Pascalin solemnly toasts the comrades he lost on far away Huntress with a sympathetic bartender.

because most prosthetics are mere replacements for the real thing, and may be unplugged or damaged, should any damage befall the character and affect these replacements, the character's healing process will require both medical and technical aid.

For a full explanation of how implants and prosthetics work in game play, consult the rules for such equipment on pp. 314-316 of the *Equipment* section. This Trait reflects only prosthetics and implants a character may receive as replacements for damaged body parts before the start of game play, not "enhanced" prosthetics with extra features, or prosthetics and implants that may be installed at a later date. Characters may not acquire implants or prosthetics through XP alone.

A character may receive multiple Implant/Prosthetic Traits, but only to a maximum of one per limb, plus one for each ear and eye replaced. Any implant described as "full body" applies to all limbs, but not the eyes and ears.

IN FOR LIFE [CHARACTER (IDENTITY)]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Negative, Multiple [–3 TP]

*"Michael-*san*, the* oyabun *would like a word with you…"*

A character with the In For Life Trait is (or was) a member of a large and secretive organization, or is bound by oath, personal honor or some other intangible means to the will of another individual or group. This obligation may stem from any number of sources, so it is important for the player and the gamemaster to coordinate on the Trait's origins and nature, as they may warrant the creation of suitable non-player characters to whom the character is beholden. Personal life debts may be tied to one (or more) of the character's connections (see the Connections Trait, p. 111), for example, while an organization the character feels compelled to obey might actually be represented by an enemy persona (see the Enemy Trait, p. 113).

In game play, an organization or individual for whom the character is In For Life may call upon the character for favors, full-blown missions or even a final resolution of his life debt at any time—even one detrimental to the character. The character must obey these missives for as long as the "master" organization or individual considers him so beholden, but unlike a connection, such "masters" may offer the character little in return and may even be unlikely to offer aid or resources for such missions. Nevertheless,

LOST LIMB TRAIT TABLE

Trait TP	Missing Limb	Missing Limb Effects
–1	1-2 Fingers (same hand)	–1 to all DEX-related rolls using affected hand
–1	1-3 Toes (total)	–1 to all RFL-related rolls related to balance
–2	3-4 Fingers (same hand)	–2 to all DEX-related rolls using affected hand
–2	4+ Toes (total)	–2 to all RFL-related rolls related to balance; –1 from all movement rates
–3	Hand or Foot	–3 to all DEX-related rolls (Hand)*; –1 RFL and half movement** (Foot)
–4	Hand or Foot	–3 to all DEX-related rolls (Hand)*; –1 RFL and half movement** (Foot)
–5	Arm or Leg	–4 to all DEX-related rolls (Arm)*; half RFL**, quarter walking movement**, and may not run, sprint, evade or jump (Leg)

*Applies to any Complex Actions; any action that requires two hands becomes impossible. **Round down

Note: A character that suffers the loss of both arms cannot perform any DEX-related actions without prosthetic replacements; a character that suffers the loss of both legs cannot move without some form of assistance.

a character's failure to uphold such an obligation could transform the "master" into an enemy, and could even result in a Bloodmark (see *Bloodmark* Trait, p. 109) against the character if the "master" has the resources and inclination to do so.

In For Life Traits are identity-based and must be assigned to one of the character's aliases if the character has an Alternate ID (see *Alternate ID*, p. 108). A character with multiple In For Life Traits must distribute them among all aliases as appropriate.

INTROVERT [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Negative, Opposed [–1 TP]

"Well, uh, I was wondering. That is, ah, if you're not busy or anything. Erm, maybe, would, um. Gosh, this is hard. I guess, um, what I'm trying to say is, well, ah…"

A character with the Introvert Trait has difficulties dealing with people beyond what his normal CHA Attribute might indicate, because of innate shyness or some other social ineptitude. This Trait applies a –1 roll modifier to any Skill Checks where social interaction is a factor (at the gamemaster's discretion).

The Gregarious Trait opposes the Introvert Trait. If a character with Introvert receives or purchases Gregarious (or vice versa), the Traits cancel each other out.

LOST LIMB [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Negative, Multiple [–5 to –1 TP]

"My legs! My legs! Dear God, what happened to my legs!?"

A character with a Lost Limb Trait has lost all of—or a significant portion of—one of his limbs through a birth defect or an injury. The TP value of this Trait varies with the extent of the damage, with a –1 or –2 TP Lost Limb reflecting missing fingers or toes, while a –3 to –4 Lost Limb reflects a missing foot or hand, and a –5 TP Lost Limb reflects a missing leg or arm. The Lost Limb Table outlines the game play effects of these missing limbs.

A character may possess multiple Lost Limbs. However, any hand that suffers the loss of five fingers should be treated as a missing hand.

The Implants/Prosthetics Trait technically opposes the Lost Limb Trait. However, as most prosthetics are easily removable at any time, a Lost Limb Trait is not truly cancelled out by a Prosthetic Trait of equivalent type, unless the prosthetic is classified as a Type 6 (Cloned Replacement Limb) or is otherwise permanent (such as a myomer implant).

NATURAL APTITUDE [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive, Multiple [+3 or +5 TP]

"Let me give it a try. I have a knack for this kind of thing…"

A character with the Natural Aptitude Trait has an affinity for a particular Skill that goes beyond mere training. Though a character may possess multiple Natural Aptitude Traits, the number of these may not exceed the character's INT Attribute. The TP score for this Attribute is based on the Skill's complexity rating, with a +3 TP Natural Aptitude applying to Basic Skills (CB or SB) and +5 TP Natural Aptitude applying to Advanced Skills (CA or SA).

In game play, the Skill Check for any Natural Aptitude Skill in which the character has any levels (including Level 0) are rolled using the best two dice of 3D6, rather than a normal 2D6. This same best-of-three rule applies to untrained Skill Checks as well.

PAIN RESISTANCE [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive [+3 TP]

"Is that *all you got!? My* mother *hits harder than that!"*

A character with the Pain Resistance Trait has an exceptional ability to ignore more pain than others. While this Trait does not reduce the damage inflicted against the character, it does reduce all Injury modifiers (to Action Checks and movement effects) by 1 point (to a minimum of 0), and allows characters to ignore the Stun effect for any injuries sustained as long as the character has sustained less than his BOD score in standard damage, including those from Fatigue damage points.

PATIENT [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive, Opposed [+1 TP]

"Hold your hell's horses, laddie! Do you want it done now, or do you need it done right*?"*

A character with the Patient Trait has better focus and self-control, even in high-pressure situations that might force others to haste. In game play, characters with this Trait apply a +1 modifier to all rolls for Skill and Attribute Checks that require a significant amount of time and focus (such as any Skill or action classified as Complex). In addition, the character may accumulate a maximum +4 roll modifier for Extra Time or Careful Aim, reflecting the character's heightened focus and perseverance.

The Impatient Trait opposes the Patient Trait. If a character with Patient receives or purchases Impatient (or vice versa), the Traits cancel each other out.

PHENOTYPE [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Neutral, Restricted [0 TP]

"I don't care what the biologists say. If you've ever seen one of those vat-born freaks, you'd know *they aren't human anymore!"*

Technically, all characters receive a phenotype upon creation, but unless the character in question is a Clan trueborn, the only option available in *A Time of War* is defined simply as "normal human". Trueborn Clansmen, however, have been eugenically bred toward other phenotypes as well, and must select the Aerospace, Elemental or MechWarrior phenotypes for their characters. This Phenotype Trait has no TP score, but all characters must possess one and only one phenotype. If a character has no Phenotype Trait assigned, he or she is presumed to be a normal human.

The Phenotype Trait Table identifies the properties of each phenotype. Each phenotype provides free modifiers to the character's base Attributes, which are applied after the character has spent XP on these Attributes, but which may not exceed the listed Attribute maximums (shown in parentheses) for that phenotype. For example, a trueborn Elemental receives an additional +2 Attribute points in Strength, but cannot exceed STR 9 (10 with an Exceptional Attribute), even with these bonus points. Additional Bonus Traits are provided as well (if any), which cost the character no XPs when taken with the phenotype.

Attributes modified by the Phenotype Trait should note their modifiers separately on the Attribute score, to minimize confusion regarding the XP-to-score ratio. For instance, a Clan Elemental's STR with 600 XPs in the Attribute would list its score as "6 + 2", and would make rolls as if the Attribute had

PHENOTYPE TRAIT TABLE

Phenotype	Attribute Modifiers (Maximum)* STR	BOD	DEX	RFL	INT	WIL	CHA	EDG	Bonus Traits
Normal Human	+0 (8)	+0 (8)	+0 (8)	+0 (8)	+0 (8)	+0 (8)	+0 (9)	+0 (9)	None
Aerospace	–1 (7)	–1 (7)	+2 (9)	+2 (9)	+0 (9)	+0 (8)	+0 (8)	+0 (8)	G-Tolerance, Glass Jaw, Field Aptitude: Clan Fighter Pilot
Elemental	+2 (9)	+1 (9)	–1 (7)	+0 (8)	+0 (8)	+0 (9)	+0 (8)	+0 (8)	Toughness, Field Aptitude: Elemental
MechWarrior	+0 (8)	+0 (8)	+1 (9)	+1 (9)	+0 (8)	+0 (8)	+0 (9)	+0 (8)	Field Aptitude: Clan MechWarrior

*Increase Maximum Attribute value by +1 if the Attribute is modified by the Exceptional Attribute Trait (see p. 116).

a score of 8. Attribute maximums still apply to the sum of the Attribute and its Phenotype Trait modifier.

Field Aptitude

To reflect their intense breeding, upbringing and training, Clan trueborns receive a special "sub-Trait" along with their phenotypes called a Field Aptitude. The Field Aptitude applies to all Skills within the trueborn's appropriate Training Field (Clan Fighter Pilot, Elemental or MechWarrior), and applies a permanent –1 TN modifier to those Skills. Simple-Basic Skills receive a TN of 5, Simple-Advanced Skills get a TN of 6, Complex-Basic Skills have a TN of 7 and Complex-Advanced have TN 8.

POISON RESISTANCE [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive [+2 TP]

"I drank what*!?"*

A character with the Poison Resistance Trait is blessed with a metabolism that is particularly resistant to poisons and toxins, including alcohol, narcotics and other chemicals. This Trait applies a +2 modifier to all Attribute Checks made to resist the effects of poisons, drugs and alcohol.

POOR HEARING [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Negative, Opposed [–5 to –1 TP]

"What!?"

A character with the Poor Hearing Trait suffers from hearing loss due to a birth defect or later injury. The severity of this condition varies with the Trait's TP score; a –1 TP Poor Hearing Trait represents minor hearing loss, while a –5 TP Poor Hearing translates to complete deafness (in both ears). In game terms, the TP score for this Trait is applied as a roll modifier to any hearing-based Action Checks. The character also suffers a personal combat Initiative roll modifier equal to half the Trait's score (rounding down), reflecting his difficulty in picking up vital cues in the midst of personal combat. For example, a character afflicted with a –3 TP Poor Hearing Trait suffers a –3 roll modifier when attempting to hear sounds using his Perception Skill, as well as a –2 modifier to his Initiative roll (–3 ÷ 2 = –1.5, rounded down to –2).

At –5 TP, hearing anything becomes impossible. Hearing-based Action Checks automatically fail, and a –3 modifier applies to all Initiative rolls in personal combat.

The Good Hearing Trait opposes the Poor Hearing Trait. However, as Poor Hearing can vary in score, reflecting a broad range of hearing disability, Poor Hearing is not cancelled out by a single instance of Good Hearing; instead, it merely loses 1 negative TP. The Poor Hearing Trait is not cancelled out entirely unless a character receives (or purchases) enough points in Good Hearing to negate it.

POOR VISION [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Negative, Opposed [–9 to –2 TP]

"Son of a branth! That DropShip wasn't there a moment ago!"

A character with the Poor Vision Trait has bad eyesight due to a birth defect or later injury. The severity of this condition varies with the Trait's TP score; a –2 TP Poor Vision Trait represents minor loss of visual acuity (including night blindness or color blindness), while a –9 TP Poor Vision translates to total blindness (in both eyes). The character with this Trait suffers half its TP

PROPERTY TRAIT TABLE

Trait TP	Average Land Area	Average Annual Personal Income	Example Landhold
+1	2 sq. km	20,000 C-bills	Small farm or shop
+2	4 sq. km	40,000 C-bills	Medium-sized farm or office complex
+3	6 sq. km	60,000 C-bills	Large agriplex or small factory
+4	8 sq. km	80,000 C-bills	Major commercial center or small spaceport
+5	10 sq. km	100,000 C-bills	Major industriplex, town-sized factory, castle or fort
+6	600 sq. km	200,000 C-bills	Small town or village
+7	1,200 sq. km	400,000 C-bills	Large town or city
+8	6,000 sq. km	800,000 C-bills	Small continent or large islands
+9	20,000 sq. km	1,600,000 C-bills	Continental land mass
+10	120,000 sq. km	15,000,000 C-bills	Small moon or multiple continents
+11*	600,000 sq. km	125,000,000 C-bills	Planet

score (rounded down) as a modifier to any vision-based Action Checks or personal combat Initiative rolls. For example, a character with a –3 TP Poor Vision Trait suffers a –2 roll modifier (–3 ÷ 2 = –1.5, rounded down to –2) when attempting to make out a target or object details, or roll Initiative in personal combat.

At –9 TP, seeing anything becomes impossible. Vision-based Action Checks automatically fail, and a –5 modifier applies to all Initiative rolls in personal combat. Operating any kind of vehicle (including 'Mechs) becomes impossible as well.

The Good Vision Trait opposes the Poor Vision Trait. However, as Poor Vision can vary in score, reflecting a broad range of visual disability, the Trait is not cancelled by a single instance of Good Vision. Instead, it merely loses 1 negative TP. The Poor Vision Trait is not cancelled out entirely unless a character receives (or purchases) enough points in Good Vision to negate it.

PROPERTY [CHARACTER (IDENTITY)]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive, Multiple [+1 to +10 TP]

"Be it ever so humble, there's no place like my winter castle on Tatyana…"

PROPERTY ADMINISTRATION MODIFIERS TABLE

Condition	Modifier
Property Status	
Property near a Clan border	–2
Property near Periphery	–1
Property near other border	–1
Property is water-poor	–1
Property is water-rich	+1
Property is agricultural	+1
Property is lightly industrialized	+1
Property is heavily industrialized	+2
Property-Holder Status	
Character has no Title Trait	–3
Character has Title Trait	+(Title TP ÷ 3)*
Character has Reputation	+(Reputation TP)
Non-Military Events	
Natural Disaster (Minor)	–2
Natural Disaster (Major)	–4
Political Scandal (Minor)	–1**
Political Scandal (Major)	–2**
Military Events	
Property Raided (Lightly)	–2
Property Raided (Heavily)	–3
Property Invaded (and Defended)	–4**
Property Invaded (and Conquered)	–2**

*Round down

**An additional –2 applies to the scandals if the property-holder is part of the scandal; an additional +3 applies if the property-holder took an active role in the defense.

A character with the Property Trait holds land (or other real estate) that provides a steady source of income. The amount of land owned by the character depends on the Trait's TP score as indicated in the Property Trait Table below, which also shows the annual income the property may generate for the character (determined at the end of the year). Note that these are averages only, and can vary wildly from faction to faction and world to world. Any character with at least one level of Wealth may possess a Property Trait up to a score of +5 TP. Above that point, characters may only possess Property Traits with a TP score equal to (or less than) their current Title Trait level (if any).

Characters who belong to the Clans—whether trueborn, freeborn or captured from the Inner Sphere—may not possess Property Traits, though Clan characters who leave (or are removed from) the Clans may acquire property later on.

In game play, a character's property is his personal kingdom; while there, the character is effectively in command of the personnel and physical resources present, and may draw upon them as he sees fit. However, various local conditions can affect the income and support the property generates—including the property's proximity to a hostile border, Clan-held territories, or the Periphery; its level of heavy industry and water resources; the character's titular status (or lack thereof); and any military, political or social scandals or disasters that befall the landhold (including natural disasters like earthquakes and floods, as well as military actions, like raids and enemy occupation).

To determine how much these factors affect the character's income from his property, the character must make an annual Administration Skill Check, applying the appropriate modifiers to the roll as indicated in the Property Administration Modifiers Table. If this Action Check succeeds, the property generates 5 percent more revenue than its annual average for every 2 points of MoS (rounding down). If the check fails, the property produces 5 percent less revenue than its annual average per point of MoF. If the check is a fumble, the character's mismanagement is so severe that the gamemaster may assign additional effects, up to and including the character's liege invoking an entailment clause, which effectively strips the landhold away from the character (non-titled characters experience this as a hostile takeover from a rival corporation or as expulsion from a company's board of directors). For more complete rules on administrating a landhold, see *Political and Military Power*, p. 349-359.

Property Traits are identity-based and must be assigned to one of the character's aliases if the character has an Alternate ID (see *Alternate ID*, p. 108). A character with multiple Property Traits must distribute them among all aliases as appropriate, with a maximum of one Property Trait (of any value) per identity.

RANK [CHARACTER (IDENTITY)]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive, Multiple [+1 to +15 TP]

"Don't you 'sir' me, soldier! I'm a sergeant! I work *for a living!"*

A character with the Rank Trait holds an official position in a military, paramilitary, police or intelligence organization. The TP score for this Trait indicates the level of authority the rank carries, with ranks identified by the letter "E" reflecting enlisted ranks (E1, E2, E3 and so forth), and those noted by the

GENERAL RANK TABLE

Trait TP	Rank	Command Level: Enlisted (Non-Clan)	Command Level: Officer (Non-Clan)	Command Level: Clan
+1	E1	Trainee	Cadet	None
+2	E2	Senior Trainee	Cadet	Point Second
+3	E3	Trooper	MechWarrior/Pilot	Point Cmdr/MechWarrior/ Pilot
+4	E4/O1	Squad Second	Lance Leader	Aerospace/Vehicle Point Cmdr
+5	E5/O2	Squad Second	Company Second	Star Commander
+6	E6/O3	Squad Leader	Company Commander	Star Commander
+7	E7/O4	Platoon Second	Battalion Commander	Nova Commander
+8	E8/O5	Platoon Leader	Regimental Second	Nova Commander
+9	E9/O6	Lance Second	Regimental Commander	Trinary Commander
+10	E10/O7	Battalion NCO	Brigade Commander	Supernova Commander
+11	E11/O8	Regiment NCO	'Mech Brigade Cmdr	Cluster Commander
+12	E12/O9	NCO of the Army*	Division Commander	Galaxy Commander
+13	O10	N/A	Corps Commander	saKhan*
+14	O11	N/A	Army Commander	Khan*
+15	O12	N/A	House Lord*	ilKhan*

*These ranks are not attainable during character generation, but may be attained through advanced game play, if the gamemaster allows it.

letter "O" reflecting officer ranks (O1, O2, O3 and so forth). Officer ranks may not be selected by characters that have not also taken the Officer Skill Field.

Characters who are not part of a military, paramilitary, police or intelligence group do not ordinarily require a Rank Trait, though at the gamemaster's option, a Rank Trait may be used to denote the character's position in another workplace or political setting.

A description of the common military ranks used by most of the factions in the BattleTech universe begins on p. 356, but for purposes of determining a ranked character's level of overall authority, consult the General Rank Table.

Players whose characters hold rank through a Rank Trait may be technically in charge in the chain of command, but for the best role-playing experience, gamemasters should temper the authority of the Rank Trait with appropriate responsibilities. For example, a ranked character may have a superior officer of his own, who constantly checks his work in the name of discipline and fairness; or perhaps the rank carries with it a ubiquitous paperwork requirement that keeps the ranked character chained to his desk for more hours in a day than he'd prefer. (Additional suggestions appear under *Political and Military Power*, p. 349).

A player may not increase his character's Rank Trait by spending XP once game play has started. Instead, whether the character retains his rank, advances or suffers demotion is entirely up to the character's determination and the situations presented to him by the gamemaster. A character who is constantly successful in his career may advance quickly, while a character who loses battles or lacks discipline may get demoted. (Clan characters must requalify every year with a Trial of Position, proving the right to retain their rank through ritual combat.)

As with Wealth and Equipped, the Rank Trait reflects the character's present active-duty rank. If the character leaves the organization in which he holds the rank, the Rank Trait is instantly reduced to 0 TP—and the position (along with any authority, payments and privileges it affords)—is forfeit within that organization.

Rank Traits are identity-based and must be assigned to one of the character's aliases if the character has an Alternate ID (see *Alternate ID*, p. 108). A character with multiple Rank Traits must distribute them among all aliases as appropriate.

REPUTATION [CHARACTER (IDENTITY)]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Flexible, Multiple [–5 to +5 TP]

"Well, bless my soul! It's Evelyn Czerny, as I live and breathe! I hope you don't find it presumptuous, but can I shake your hand? You've been a hero of mine since your fight in the Factory back in '62…I don't normally do this, but…can I have your autograph?"

A character with a Reputation Trait is famous (or infamous) for some reason or other, and may be easily recognized far and wide by admirers and enemies alike. The Reputation Trait Table loosely defines the extent of a character's Reputation, based on the Trait's TP score. Positive-TP Reputations reflect fame and (generally) admiration, while negative-TP Reputations reflect stigmas, infamy and outright hatred.

This kind of fame or infamy can affect the character's dealings with others in any realms or regions where the Reputation Trait applies. The character receives a +1 roll modifier to all Negotiation,

REPUTATION TRAIT TABLE

Trait TP	Reputation (Region)
+0	Effectively unknown (scarcely recognized beyond co-workers, family and friends)
+1 or –1	Known (usually recognized on a single world or within a minor power)
+2 or –2	Well known (recognized in entire Great House region, minor Inner Sphere powers, or in a single Clan or Periphery state)
+3 or –3	Very well known (known across an entire Successor State or across at least two Clan or Periphery states)
+4 or –4	Extremely well known (recognized in at least two Successor States, or across all Clan or Periphery states)
+5 or –5	Universally known (recognized across the entire Inner Sphere, Periphery and Clan space)

Protocol, Seduction and Streetwise Action Checks if the TP score for this Trait is positive, or a –1 roll modifier to the same Action Checks if the TP score is negative. Reputation scores above or below 0 also impose a –2 roll modifier to Disguise Action Checks—regardless of whether the Trait's TP score is positive or negative—as the character's face is well known in the region where his Reputation applies. A +2 modifier also applies to any rolls made by characters investigating or researching the famous or infamous character's background for Dark Secrets or Alternate IDs (see *Alternate ID*, p. 108 and *Dark Secret*, p. 112, respectively).

Reputation Traits are region- and identity-based and must be assigned to one of the character's aliases if the character has an Alternate ID (see *Alternate ID*, p. 108). A character with multiple Reputation Traits must distribute them among all aliases as appropriate, to a maximum of one Reputation Trait per identity. In the case of characters with multiple identities, if a connection is exposed between multiple aliases that have Reputation Traits, the exposed aliases receive the lowest-TP Reputation between them. If multiple connected aliases are exposed at once—each with a different level of Reputation—the lowest of all the exposed aliases will apply to the character.

> *Ben Tsukade is an ISF double agent, currently masquerading as a Lyran shipping magnate named Bjorn MacDuff on Solaris VII. He also has a second Alternate ID: Eric Misato, a FedSuns mercenary liaison from Robinson, allegedly taking a much-needed vacation in the Lyran Alliance. As himself, Ben has a +3 TP Reputation in the Draconis Combine, but his Bjorn MacDuff character—known for crude behavior and a knack for crushing smaller businessmen in search of the almighty kroner—has amassed a –2 TP Reputation (and likely an enemy or two). Eric, in the meantime, has no Reputation to speak of.*
>
> *An enemy of Bjorn, intent on exposing any dirty laundry he can find, gets more than he bargained for when he exposes Ben's alternate Eric persona while digging through Bjorn's financial records. Determined to bring Bjorn down, this enemy tips off the Lyran Intelligence Corps, who quickly confirm the connection between Bjorn and Eric. Eric thus suddenly receives Bjorn's –2 TP Reputation, as the lowest Reputation score of the two exposed aliases, while the LIC issues a warrant for both aliases' arrest.*
>
> *Though Ben's ISF persona has not yet been exposed, his dramatic escape from LIC agents at the Solaris Spaceport soon leads the Lyrans to investigate his background further, eventually exposing the link between all three identities. Thoroughly exposed when the Lyrans spam every newsnet in the region with images of all three aliases, all three identities suddenly receive the –2 TP Reputation Trait as known aliases of a Combine spy.*

SIXTH SENSE [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive [+4 TP]

"There's something in the air tonight; I can feel it! Better tell the squad to lock and load. I think the Robes are making their push tonight!"

A character with the Sixth Sense Trait has a special intuition that tends to offer inexplicable insight into unusual or dangerous situations—a gut instinct that goes beyond reason. Such characters receive a +3 roll modifier to Perception Skill Checks made to determine whether they are surprised, and may also receive further "feelings" of imminent danger at the gamemaster's discretion.

A Sixth Sense feeling isn't as accurate or well honed as a radar blip, but is instead more of a general sense that something is amiss. If a particularly deadly peril is looming, the gamemaster may allow a character with Sixth Sense to make a Perception Check, with a roll modifier applied based on the relative distance (in time or space) of the approaching danger. A successful roll gives the Sixth Sense character a feeling that "something's not right," while a roll with a significant MoS may impress the character with a more accurate sense that the enemy will attack soon (but with no solid idea of how many or from where the assault might come).

SLOW LEARNER [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Negative, Opposed [–3 TP]

"Can you go over that whole procedure one more time? I almost have it now…"

A character with the Slow Learner Trait has difficulty picking up and improving Skills compared to other characters of equal intelligence. Slow Learner increases the experience cost for Skills by 10 percent during character generation (see p. 86) and Skill advancement (see p. 333).

The Fast Learner Trait opposes the Slow Learner Trait. If a character with Slow Learner receives or purchases Fast Learner (or vice versa), the Traits cancel each other out.

TECH EMPATHY [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive, Opposed [+3 TP]

"Let's take a look…Well, this actuator seems nice and tight, but it looks like you have a loose myomer bundle here…Ah, there it goes! Nothing to it!"

A character with the Tech Empathy Trait has an intuitive knack for gadgetry that goes beyond mere training. A character with this Trait can grasp the concept of operating technological systems faster than others, resulting in a 10 percent decrease to the XP costs for raising or purchasing any Technician Skill. In addition, characters with this Trait receive a +1 roll modifier for using any equipment with a Tech Rating of B or higher in non-combat situations (such as using the Computers Skill or any Technician Skill when not in the midst of raging crossfire).

The Gremlins Trait opposes the Tech Empathy Trait. If a character with Tech Empathy receives or purchases Gremlins (or vice versa), the Traits cancel each other out.

THICK-SKINNED [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive, Opposed [+1 TP]

"What's the matter? Too cold for you? And you call yourself a Lyran…"

A character with the Thick-Skinned Trait is especially resistant to the effects of extreme temperatures. A character with this Trait who is exposed to extreme temperatures (see *Weather Conditions*, p. 236) receives an additional 10 degrees of tolerance to extreme temperatures over that of a normal person (and an additional 5 degrees to the extremes of the "comfort zone"). In addition, any modifiers for extreme temperatures that apply are divided by 2 (rounding down).

Breaking the monotony of extended field maneuvers, Sao-wei Philip Nguyen and his squad enjoy a meal of rice, rations—and a little of Si-ben-bing Stefanio's "liberated" plum wine.

If a BOD Attribute Check to resist extreme temperature fails, the character suffers damage equal to 1 point of Fatigue times half the roll's MoF (rounded up). If the character falls unconscious, he suffers 1 point of BOD Attribute reduction for every additional 20 minutes of exposure (rather than 10).

The Thin-Skinned Trait opposes the Thick-Skinned Trait. If a character with Thick-Skinned receives or purchases Thin-Skinned (or vice versa), the Traits cancel each other out.

THIN-SKINNED [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Negative, Opposed [–1 TP]

"Is it just me, or is it freezing *on this DropShip?"*

A character with the Thin-Skinned Trait is especially susceptible to the effects of extreme temperatures. A character with this Trait who is exposed to extreme temperatures (see *Weather Conditions*, p. 236) loses 10 degrees of tolerance to extreme temperatures compared to that of a normal person (and also loses 5 degrees from the extremes of the "comfort zone"). In addition, any modifiers for extreme temperatures that apply are multiplied by 2. If a BOD Attribute Check to resist extreme temperature fails, the character suffers damage equal to 2 points of Fatigue times the roll's MoF (rounded up). If the character falls unconscious, he suffers 1 point of BOD Attribute reduction for every additional 5 minutes of exposure (rather than 10).

The Thick-Skinned Trait opposes the Thin-Skinned Trait. If a character with Thin-Skinned receives or purchases Thick-Skinned (or vice versa), the Traits cancel each other out.

TITLE/BLOODNAME [CHARACTER (IDENTITY)]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive, Multiple [+3 to +10 TP]

Most Inner Sphere states acknowledge hereditary peerage that places individuals in the ruling class by accident of birth and breeding rather than merit. While openly disparaging this "nobility," the Clans also place great stock in the bloodlines of their warrior caste, essentially establishing their own form of familial politics based on ancestry traceable to the Clan founders. For the Inner Sphere and Clans alike, these titles—or Bloodnames—form the basis of power and influence that have dominated the Inner Sphere and Clan homeworlds alike since time immemorial.

Both the Title and Bloodname Traits are identity-based and must be assigned to one of the character's aliases if the character has an Alternate ID (see *Alternate ID*, p. 108). Inner Sphere characters may take multiple Title Traits, dispersing them among the character's aliases as desired. Clan characters, however, may possess only one Bloodname, even if the character has somehow gained additional aliases.

As not all Titles (or Bloodnames) are considered equal, each one's value and power is linked to the Trait's TP score as outlined in the table below. While functionally similar, Titles and Bloodnames have significant differences that are described in detail in the following paragraphs.

Inner Sphere (Title)

"Welcome aboard, your Highness! My crew and I stand ready to assist you, whatever your needs!"

Players whose characters have noble status in the Inner Sphere through a Title Trait may technically hold political power, but for the best role-playing experience, gamemasters should temper this authority with appropriate responsibilities. While titles can be bestowed, many are inherited from generations past, forged in an agreement between the character's family and their liege lords. A character with a Title Trait will likely have a liege lord to answer to, who constantly checks on the titled character's activities in the name of familial honor and political control. Conversely, as titles may be revoked for particularly bad performance or treasonous activities, a non-Clan character with a title may face challenges from lesser nobility who covet the character's status.

Titles do not always confer power in the Inner Sphere; many, in fact, may be honorary, with no land grants attached. However, the Title Trait is used to establish the limit of how much land the character might rule over, as described under the rules for the Property Trait (see p. 123). In addition, players may choose a slightly cheaper form of a desired title by choosing to be an heir for that Title Trait instead. This places the character in line for the title without providing the authority or the full honors that come with it…yet.

As with the Rank Trait, a player may not increase his character's Title or Bloodname by spending XP once game play has started.

GENERAL TITLE TABLE

Trait TP	Title (Inner Sphere)	Bloodname (Clan)*
+3	Knight Bachelor*	Lesser Non-Exclusive Reaved Bloodname
+4	Knight Banneret*	Lesser Non-Exclusive Reaved Bloodname
+5	Baronet	Lesser Non-Exclusive General Bloodname
+6	Baron	Lesser Non-Exclusive Phenotype Bloodname
+7	Viscount	Greater Non-Exclusive General Bloodname
+8	Count/Earl	Greater Non-Exclusvie Phenotype Bloodname
+9	Marquis	Lesser Exclusive General Bloodname
+10	Duke	Lesser Exclusive Phenotype Bloodname
+11**	Grand Duke**	Greater Exclusive General Bloodname
+12**	Prime Minister**	Greater Exclusive Phenotype Bloodname
+13**	Sovereign**	Kerensky's Legacy

*This Title Trait (and all Bloodnames) cannot be taken as an Heir.

**These titles are not attainable during character generation, but may be attained through advanced game play, if the gamemaster allows it.

Note: Bloodnames identified as phenotypes refer to specific lines tied to MechWarrior, Aerospace and Elemental phenotypes.

Instead, whether the character retains his title, advances or has his title reduced by an angry liege is entirely up to the character's determination and the situations presented to him by the gamemaster. A character who demonstrates constant loyalty and competence may improve his titled stature over time, while a character who abuses his vassals or fails to show the proper respect for his liege may suffer penalties up to a loss of his birthright. Titled characters who also have landholds (see the Property Trait, p. 123) also face the additional responsibility of their own holdings, which must be maintained, nurtured and protected, lest a rival or liege find them unworthy and strip away such assets.

Clan (Bloodname)

"Freeborn filth! How dare *you show such disrespect? I am Eulice Winson of Clan Wolf! The honor of the founders flows through my veins! Who are you to oppose the legacy of Kerensky and the founders of our Clan?"*

Only a Clan trueborn can possess the Bloodname Trait, which grants the character the use of a last name belonging to one of the original founders of the Clans. To earn it, the character is presumed to have fought his way through the Trials of Bloodright, likely defeating several fellow Clansmen in his quest for the right to pass his genetics to future generations.

Even though Bloodnames are technically inherited, this Trait cannot be taken as an Heir, nor can Clansmen who attain this Trait benefit from its level in determining whether or not the character may possess property, as Clan characters are forbidden to own property beyond what they have personally conquered.

Unlike a title, a Clan trueborn's Bloodname is permanent, irrevocable, and limited to a maximum of one per Clan character.. The Bloodname's TP score also cannot be raised or lowered once the character receives it, as its status in Clan society is rigid and unyielding.

TOUGHNESS [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive, Opposed [+3 TP]

"Come to me, little Spheroid! Hit me with your best shot!"

A character with the Toughness Trait is even less susceptible to injury than his BOD Attribute may indicate. When sustaining injury of any kind, a character with Toughness multiplies any personal damage sustained by 0.75 (rounding up), and multiplies any Fatigue suffered from combat by 0.5 (rounding normally, .5 rounds up).

The Glass Jaw Trait opposes the Toughness Trait. If a character with Toughness receives or purchases Glass Jaw (or vice versa), the Traits cancel each other out.

TDS — TRANSIT DISORIENTATION SYNDROME [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Negative [–1 TP]

"Ugh! I think I left my stomach in the last star system…"

A character with Transit Disorientation Syndrome (TDS) becomes violently ill after experiencing hyperspace jumps—far more than is normal for most space-faring people in the *BattleTech* universe. In game terms, the character is treated as Stunned (see *Personal Combat*, p. 184) for a duration of 20 minutes after the jump (minus the character's BOD Attribute), and cannot "shake off" these stun effects until that much time has passed. For an additional 3D6 hours afterward, the character is nauseated, irritable and disoriented, and suffers a –1 roll modifier to all Action Checks performed in this period.

If a character with TDS must endure a second hyperspace jump while recovering from the first, the character is knocked out by the second jump for a period equal to the normal stun duration (20 – BOD minutes), followed by another 24 + 4D6 hours of lingering nausea and disorientation that apply a –2 roll modifier to all Action Checks performed by the afflicted character within that period.

UNATTRACTIVE [CHARACTER (IDENTITY)]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Negative, Opposed [–1 TP]

"No, no! I wouldn't call her ugly, but she did have the kind of face only a trachazoi could love…"

A character with the Unattractive Trait is physically repulsive in some way, be it from a deformity, scarring, an obnoxious voice, or even terrible fashion sense. This ugliness makes the character hard for others to stomach. Characters with this Trait receive a –2 modifier to Skill and Attribute rolls where the character's CHA Attribute is a factor. Unlike Attractiveness, this modifier applies regardless of gender.

The Attractive Trait opposes the Unattractive Trait. If a character with Unattractive receives or purchases Attractive (or vice versa), the Traits cancel each other out unless the Unattractive Trait is specifically assigned to one of the character's aliases (in which case, Unattractive is treated as an identity-dependent Trait; see *Alternate ID*, p. 108).

UNLUCKY [CHARACTER]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Negative [–10 to –2 TP]

"Why does this always *happen to me?"*

A character with the Unlucky Trait seems to have the universe itself as an enemy, cursed with such bad karma that even the most mundane tasks might go horribly awry without warning. In game play, the gamemaster uses the character's Unlucky Trait as an EDG Trait *against* the unlucky character, either by forcing the character to reroll an Action Check or modifying the result of an Action Check roll by burning the character's Unlucky Trait "points" in the same way EDG points are burned (see *Edge* in *Basic Game Play*, p. 42). The number of these "anti-EDG" points a character has depends on the Trait's TP score as shown in the Unlucky Trait Table. These points regenerate every game session, unlike the character's own EDG, which may take longer to rebuild after use.

Gamemasters should be careful not to abuse this Trait, especially when the outcome of a roll could mean the difference between life and death for the character. Use of this Trait must also be restricted to any rolls that affect the unlucky character directly, rather than the fates of his teammates. Finally, if the unlucky character has burned any of his own EDG at the same time the gamemaster uses the Unlucky Trait against him, the unlucky character can make a special Single Attribute Check against his EDG score. If successful, the character instantly regenerates 1 point of EDG as karma attempts to balance itself out.

UNLUCKY TRAIT TABLE

Trait TP	Unlucky Points
–2	1
–3 to –4	2
–5 to –6	3
–7 to –8	4
–9 to –10	5

VEHICLE LEVEL [VEHICLE]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Positive, Multiple [+1 to +12 TP]

"It may not look like much now, but that Clint *has been in my family since the days of the Camerons, and I'd still take it over anything else you'd assign me to…sir."*

A character with the Vehicle Trait begins play with an assigned vehicle—a BattleMech, IndustrialMech, Combat Vehicle, Conventional Fighter, Aerospace Fighter, Battlesuit or ProtoMech. (Other vehicles, such as Support Vehicles, may be purchased as equipment at the end of character creation; see *Purchasing Equipment*, p. 91.) This Trait's TP score indicates the weight class of vehicle a character receives, as shown in the General Vehicle Trait Table; with an increase of 2 TP, the character can also elect to own the desired vehicle, to reflect a machine he previously purchased outright (before spending C-bills in character creation) or received as an heirloom. The vehicle ownership option is not available to Clan characters who remain in the Clans, as all vehicles belong to the character's Clan and so can be assigned as the Clan sees fit.

The Vehicle Trait does not define the exact model of a character's vehicle. For that, see the *Custom Vehicle Trait* (p. 112), or determine the model by using the Random Unit Assignment Table (on pp. 130-135).

Vehicle Traits are identity-based and must be assigned to one of the character's aliases if the character has an Alternate ID (see *Alternate ID*, p. 108). A character with multiple Vehicle Traits must distribute them among all aliases as appropriate, but a given identity can have any number of Vehicle Traits (of any value).

WEALTH [CHARACTER (IDENTITY)]

Trait Type [TP Score]: Flexible, Multiple [–1 to +10 TP]

"How much did you want for that Avanti Starfire? Really? Well then, sold! And I just happen to have the cash right here…"

A character with the Wealth Trait begins play with more—or, in some unfortunate cases, far less—than the 1,000 C-bills of starting cash most characters receive to purchase personal equipment and such at the end of character creation (see *Purchasing Equipment*, p. 91). The Wealth Trait Table indicates how much starting cash the character receives based on the TP score of this Trait, but does not establish the equipment ratings the character may access, nor does it establish any pay rates or extra income a character may receive during game play. Any unspent money may be carried over into general game play for later use.

Wealth Traits are identity-based and must be assigned to one of the character's aliases if the character has an Alternate ID (see *Alternate ID*, p. 108). A character with multiple Wealth Traits must distribute them among all aliases as appropriate, with a maximum of one Wealth Trait (of any value) per identity.

GENERAL VEHICLE TRAIT TABLE

Trait TP	BattleMech/ IndustrialMech	Battle Armor	Combat Vehicle	Aerospace Fighter	Conventional Fighter	ProtoMech
+1	None	PA(L)	Light	None	Light	None
+2	Ultra-Light*	Light	Light	Light	Light	None
+3	Light	Medium	Medium	Light	Medium	Light
+4	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Light
+5	Medium	Heavy	Heavy	Medium	Medium	Medium
+6	Heavy	Heavy	Heavy	Heavy	Heavy	Medium
+7	Heavy	Assault	Assault	Heavy	Heavy	Medium
+8	Assault	Assault	Assault	Heavy	Heavy	Heavy
+9	Assault	Assault	Assault	Assault	Heavy	Heavy
+10**	Assault	Assault	Assault	Assault	Heavy	Heavy

*For BattleMechs, treat "Ultra-Light" as "Light."
**TP values above +10 are possible, if applying the +2 TP to own said vehicle.

WEIGHT CLASS KEY

Weight Class	BattleMech/ IndustrialMech	Battle Armor	Combat Vehicle	Aerospace Fighter	Conventional Fighter	ProtoMech
Ultra-Light	10-15 tons	0-400 kg	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Light	20-35 tons	401-750 kg	0-39 tons	5-45 tons	5-20 tons	2-4 tons
Medium	40-55 tons	751-1,000 kg	40-59 tons	50-70 tons	25-35 tons	5-7 tons
Heavy	60-75 tons	1,001-1,500 kg	60-79 tons	75-100 tons	40-50 tons	8-9 tons
Assault	80-100 tons	1,501-2,000 kg	80+ tons	100-200 tons*	N/A	N/A

*Assault-class Aerospace Fighters actually represent the entire Small Craft Aerospace unit class.

WEALTH TRAIT TABLE

Trait TP	Starting Cash (C-bills)
–1	100
+0	1,000
+1	2,500
+2	5,000
+3	10,000
+4	25,000
+5	50,000
+6	100,000
+7	250,000
+8	500,000
+9	1,000,000
+10	2,000,000

RANDOM UNIT ASSIGNMENT TABLE (CIRCA 3075)

LIGHT BATTLEMECHS

2D6	Capellan Confederation	Draconis Combine	Federated Suns	Free Rasalhague Republic	Free Worlds League	Lyran Alliance	ComStar
2	JA-KL-1532 Jackal [30]	HM-1 Hitman [30]	RTX1-O Raptor [25]*	NTK-2Q Nighthawk [35]	EGL-2M Eagle [25]	OSR-3D Osiris [30]	SPR-5F Spector [35]
3	JR7-D Jenner [35]	JR7-D Jenner [35]	HNT-171 Hornet [20]	WSP-3S Wasp [20]	ZPH-1A Tarantula [25]	COM-7S Commando [25]	HSR-200-D Hussar [30]
4	RVN-3L Raven [35]	OW-1 Owens [35]*	ALM-7D Fireball [20]	JA-KL-1532 Jackal [30]	JA-KL-1532 Jackal [30]	BZK-F3 Hollander [35]	THE-N Thorn [35]
5	UM-R63 UrbanMech [30]	PNT-10K Panther [35]	JVN-10P Javelin [30]	JR7-K Jenner [35]	HER-3S Hermes [30]	SPR-ST Spector [35]	MCY-99 Mercury [20]
6	FS9-S Firestarter [35]	RTX1-O Raptor [25]*	WLF-2 Wolfhound [35]	LCT-3S Locust [20]	SDR-7M Spider [30]	WLF-2 Wolfhound [35]	HER-1S Hermes [30]
7	RVN-3L Raven [35]	RTX1-O Raptor [25]*	JVN-10P Javelin [30]	COM-5S Commando [25]	HMR-3M Hammer [30]	COM-5S Commando [25]	RTX-O Raptor [25]*
8	SDR-5V Spider [30]	SDR-9K Venom [35]	COM-5S Commando [25]	OW-1 Owens [35]	HMR-3M Hammer [30]	FS9-S Firestarter [35]	OW-1 Owens [35]*
9	C-SK1 Cossack [20]	JR7-K Jenner [35]	VLK-QD1 Valkyrie [30]	RTX1-O Raptor [25]*	JR7-D Jenner [35]	NTK-2Q Nighthawk [35]	HM-1 Hitman [30]
10	ZPH-1A Tarantula [25]	SDR-7M Spider [30]	DRT-3S Dart [25]	SDR-7M Spider [30]	HER-3S Hermes [30]	DRT-3S Dart [25]	MON-66 Mongoose [25]
11	JVN-10N Javelin [30]	KBO-7A Kabuto [20]	BH-30S Battle Hawk [35]	PNT-9R Panther [35]	FNHK-9K1B Falcon Hawk [25]	RZK-9S Razorback [30]	C-SK1 Cossack [20]
12	UM-R60 UrbanMech [30]	PNT-9R Panther [35]	SPR-5F Spector [35]	DRT-3S Dart [25]	ZPH-1A Tarantula [25]	TLN-5W Talon [35]	OTT-9CS Ostscout [35]

MEDIUM BATTLEMECHS

2D6	Capellan Confederation	Draconis Combine	Federated Suns	Free Rasalhague Republic	Free Worlds League	Lyran Alliance	ComStar
2	BJ2-O Blackjack [50]	KTO-20 Kintaro [55]	ENF-6M Enforcer III [50]	DMO-1K Daimyo [40]	FS9-O Firestarter [45]*	MON-267 Mongoose II [40]	LNX-9Q Lynx [55]]
3	SYU-2B Sha Yu [40]	BSN-3K Bishamon [45]	FS9-O Firestarter [45]*	SCP-1N Scorpion [55]	APL-1M Apollo [55]	BTZ-3F Blitzkrieg [50]	BJ2-O Blackjack [50]*
4	HUR-WO-R4L Huron Warrior [50]	WFT-1 Wolf Trap [45]	STH-1D Stealth [45]	RJN-101-C Raijin [50]	CDM-3M Cicada [40]	HCT-5S Hatchetman [45]	END-6Q Enfield [50]
5	VND-3L Vindicator [45]	DMO-1K Daimyo [40]	BJ-2 Blackjack [45]	GRF-3M Griffin [55]	HER-2S Hermes II [40]	STH-1D Stealth[45]	MON-266 Mongoose II [40]
6	DV-7D Dervish [55]	BJ2-O Blackjack [50]	WTH-2 Whitworth [40]	CRB-27 Crab [50]	TBT-7M Trebuchet [50]	NGS-4S Nightsky [50]	BEO-12 Beowulf [45]
7	VND-3L Vindicator [45]	FS9-O Firestarter [45]	ENF-5D Enforcer [40]	BEO-12 Beowulf [45]	HER-5S Hermes II [40]	GRF-6S Griffin [55]	BJ-2 Blackjack [45]
8	BJ-2 Blackjack [45]	SR1-O Strider [40]	CRB-30 Crab [50]	KW2-LHW Lineholder [55]	HBK-5M Hunchback [50]	HBK-4G Hunchback [50]	HBK-4G Hunchback [50]
9	CLNT-3U Clint [40]	KIM-2 Komodo [45]	DV-8D Dervish [55]	SHD-7CS Shadow Hawk [55]	B1-HND Bloodhound [45]	UZL-3S Uziel [50]	FS9-O Firestarter [45]*
10	SNK-1V Snake [45]	WFT-1 Wolf Trap [45]	NGS-4S Nightsky [50]	WVR-8K Wolverine [55]	TBT-7M Trebuchet [50]	STY-3C Starslayer [50]	TSN-1C Tessen [50]
11	HUR-WO-R4L Huron Warrior [50]	WVR-8K Wolverine [55]	SNT-04 Sentry [40]	WVE-9N Wyvern [45]	TR-1 Wraith [55]	CN9-D Centurion [50]	GRM-R-PR29 Grim Reaper [55]
12	MS1-O Men Shen [55]*	LNX-9C Lynx [55]	SR1-O Strider [40]*	VT-5M Vulcan [40]	BJ2-O Blackjack [50]*	SCP-12S Scorpion [55]	DV-6M Dervish [55]

HEAVY BATTLEMECHS

2D6	Capellan Confederation	Draconis Combine	Federated Suns	Free Rasalhague Republic	Free Worlds League	Lyran Alliance	ComStar
2	THR-1L Thunder [70]	NJT-2 Ninja-To [65]	TNS-4S Thanatos [75]	DRG-3F Dragon Fire [75]	TDR-9M Thunderbolt [65]	CTS-6Y Cestus [65]	BMB-12D Bombardier [65]
3	ON1-K Orion [75]	DRG-3F Dragon Fire [75]	OTL-6D Ostol [60]	RFL-7M Rifleman [60]	ANV-3M Anvil [60]	AXM-1N Axman [65]	CHP-3N Champion [60]
4	LHU-2B Lao Hu [75]	AV1-O Avatar [70]*	AXM-1N Axman [65]	BMB-12D Bombardier [65]	GLT-5M Guillotine [70]	CES-3S Caesar [70]	GLT-3N Guillotine [70]
5	TSG-9H Ti Ts'ang [60]	BHKU-O Black Hawk-KU [60]*	CES-4R Caesar [70]	WR-DG-02FC War Dog [75]	TMP-3M Tempest [65]	GAL-1GLS Gallowglas [70]	FLC-8R Falconer [75]
6	JN-G8A Jinggau [65]	DAI-01 Daikyu [75]	PTR-4D Penetrator [75]	CHP-3N Champion [60]	ON1-M Orion [75]	PTR-4D Penetrator [75]	BL-6-KNT Black Knight [75
7	MAD-5L Marauder [75]	DRG-5K Grand Dragon [60]	JM6-DD JagerMech [65]	ARC-3M Archer [70]	ON1-M Orion [75]	FLC-8R Falconer [75]	FLS-8K Flashman [75]
8	GHR-5H Grasshopper [70]	DRG-7K Grand Dragon [60]	FLC-8R Falconer [75]	GHR-5H Grasshopper [70]	CPLT-C1 Catapult [65]	DRG-3F Dragon Fire [75]	AV1-O Avatar [70]*
9	CPLT-C1 Catapult [65]	MTR-5K Maelstrom [75]	JM6-D3 JagerMech III [65]	AV1-O Avatar [70]*	ARC-8M Archer [70]	MTR-5K Maelstrom [75]	HEL-3D Helios [60]
10	ANV-3M Anvil [60]	SJA-7D Shugenja [75]	WHM-8D Warhammer [70]	BHKU-O Black Hawk-KU [60]	YMN-6Y Yeoman [65]	BGS-1T Barghest [70]	ST-8A Shootist [70]
11	OSR-4L Ostroc [60]	CRD-5K Crusader [65]	CTF-3D Cataphract [70]	GLT-3N Guillotine [70]	HRC-LS-9000 Hercules [70]	VR5-R Verfolger [65]	EXT-4D Exterminator [65]
12	HEL-3D Helios [60]	NDA-2K No Dachi [70]	RFL-8D Rifleman [60]	DRG-5K Grand Dragon [60]	P1 Perseus [75]*	TNS-4S Thanatos [75]	EXC-B2 Excalibur [70]

*This is an OmniMech.

RANDOM UNIT ASSIGNMENT TABLE (CIRCA 3075)

ASSAULT BATTLEMECHS

2D6	Capellan Confederation	Draconis Combine	Federated Suns	Free Rasalhague Republic	Free Worlds League	Lyran Alliance	ComStar
2	SRC-3C Sirocco [95]*	TSH-7S Tai-sho [85]	DVS-02 Devastator [100]	THG-11E Thug [80]	ALB-3U Albatross [95]	BLR-4S BattleMaster [85]	KGC-000 King Crab [100]
3	AWS-9M Awesome [80]	NG-C3A Naginata [95]	TLR1-O Templar [85]*	CP-11-A Cyclops [90]	CGR-1A1 Charger [80]	BRZ-A3 Berzerker [100]	TIT-N10M Grd. Titan [100]
4	MR-V2 Cerberus [95]	HTM-28T Hatamoto-Chi [80]	AWS-8Q Awesome [80]	CGR-3K Charger [80]	TIT-N10M Grd. Titan [100]	PPR-5S Salamander [80]	AWS-8Q Awesome [80]
5	AS7-K Atlas [100]	SD1-O Sunder [90]*	GUN-1ERD Gunslinger [85]	MAL-1R Mauler [90]	STK-5M Stalker [85]	HA1-O Hauptmann [95]*	THG-11E Thug [80]
6	EMP-6A Emperor [90]	AS7-K Atlas [100]	VTR-9K Victor [80]	KGC-001 King Crab [100]	AS7-D Atlas [100]	AS7-S2 Atlas [100]	HGN-732 Highlander [90]
7	AWS-8Q Awesome [80]	HTM-27T Hatamoto-Chi [80]	VTR-9K Victor [80]	CRK-5003-1 Crockett [85]	AWS-10KM Awesome [80]	ZEU-9S Zeus [80]	AS7-K Atlas [100]
8	STK-5M Stalker [85]	MAL-1R Mauler [90]	AS7-K Atlas [100]	AS7-K Atlas [100]	AWS-9M Awesome [80]	BNC-5S Banshee [95]	MR-V2 Cerberus [95]
9	PLG-3Z Pillager [100]	CRK-5003-2 Katana [80]	VTR-11D Victor [80]	MR-5M Cerberus [95]	AS7-K Atlas [100]	TDK-7X Thunder Hawk [100]	VKG-2F Viking [85]
10	TIT-N10M Grd. Titan [100]	CGR-3K Charger [80]	LGB-12C Longbow [85]	BNC-3S Banshee [95]	MR-V2 Cerberus [95]	GUN-1ERD Gunslinger [85]	PPR-5S Salamander [80]
11	CP-11-A Cyclops [90]	SD1-O Sunder [90]*	BNC-5S Banshee [95]	VKG-2F Viking [85]	LGB-7Q Longbow [85]	FNR-5 Fafnir [100]	STK-5M Stalker [85]
12	Y-H9G Yu Huang [90]	AKU-1X Akuma [90]	SGT-8R Sagittaire [95]	AWS-8Q Awesome [80]	GRN-D04 Grd. Crusader II [80]	BNC-8S Banshee [95]	TDK-7X Thunder Hawk [100]

RANDOM UNIT ASSIGNMENT TABLE (CIRCA 3075)

LIGHT BATTLEMECHS

2D6	Word of Blake	Mercenary	Major Periphery	Minor Periphery	Deep Periphery/ Pirate	Clan (Front-Line)	Clan (Second-Line)
2	RDS-2A Red Shift [20]	AF1 Artic Fox [30]	STG-5T Stinger [20]	NTK-2Q Night Hawk [35]	SDR-5V Spider [30]	Uller [30]*	Crimson Hawk [25]
3	HSR-200-D Hussar [30]	EGL-2M Eagle [25]	WSP-7MAF Wasp [20]	THE-S Thorn [20]	PNT-9R Panther [35]	Puma [35]*	Baboon 2 [20]
4	MON-66 Mongoose [25]	LCT-5M Locust [20]	JVN-10P Javalin [30]	ABS-3L Anubis [30]	JR7-D Jenner [35]	Hankyu [30]*	Piranha [20]
5	MCY-99 Mercury [20]	DRT-4S Dart [25]	ABS-3L Anubis [30]	PNT-9R Panther [35]	JVN-10F Javelin [30]	Koshi [25]*	Icestorm [25]
6	SDR-7M Spider [30]	ZPH-1A Tarantula [25]	UM-R63 UrbanMech [30]	JR7-D Jenner [35]	COM-2D Commando [25]	Dasher [20]*	Pack Hunter [30]
7	NXS2-A Nexus II [25]	BH-K305 Battle Hawk [30]	COM-2D Commando [25]	MON-67 Mongoose [25]	LCT-1V Locust [20]	Puma [35]*	Solitaire [25]
8	HMR-3M Hammer[30]	JA-KL-1532 Jackal [30]	SDR-7M Spider [30]	FS9-H Firestarter [35]	FS9-H Firestarter [30]	Fire Falcon [25]*	Locust IIC 4 [20]
9	EGL-2M Eagle [25]	HMR-3M Hammer[30]	RVN-3L Raven [35]	JVN-10N Javelin [30]	LDT-1 Brigand [25]	Uller [30]*	Peregrine 4 [20]
10	GUR-2G Gurkha [35]	WLF-2 Wolfhound [35]	ZPH-1A Tarantula [25]	STG-5R Stinger [20]	STG-1R Stinger [20]	Hellion [30]*	Ocelot [35]
11	LCT-5M Locust [20]	TLN-5W Talon [35]	ABS-3R Anubis [30]	HMR-3M Hammer [30]	WSP-1A Wasp [20]	Cougar [35]*	Bear Cub [25]
12	C-MK-O Malak [30]	SPR-5F Spector [35]	RTX-1-O Raptor [25]	LDT-1 Brigand [25]	STG-5R Stinger [20]	Dasher [20]*	Koshi [25]*

MEDIUM BATTLEMECHS

2D6	Word of Blake	Mercenary	Major Periphery	Minor Periphery	Deep Periphery/ Pirate	Clan (Front-Line)	Clan (Second-Line)
2	BJ2-O Blackjack [50]*	FS9-O Firestarter [45]*	MS1-O Men Shen [55]*	HCT-3F Hatchetman [45]	ASN-23 Assassin [50]	Stooping Hawk [55]*	Fenris [45]*
3	APL-1M Apollo [55]	VND-5L Vindicator [45]	BJ-3 Blackjack [45]	HBK-4G Hunchback [50]	VL-5S Vulcan [40]	Nabori-Nin [50]*	Hellhound 2 [50]
4	GRMR-PR31 Grim Reaper [55]	CNS-5M Cronus [55]	TBT-5N Trebuchet [50]	DV-6M Dervish [55]	TBT-5S Trebuchet [50]	Grendel [45]*	Clint IIC [40]
5	LGH-4W Lightray [55]	CBR-02 Cobra [45]	VND-3L Vindicator [45]	TBT-5N Trebuchet [50]	CLN-7V Chameleon[50]	Black Lanner [50]*	Shadow Hawk IIC 4 [45]
6	INI-02 Initiate [40]	HBK-5S Hunchback [50]	SHD-2H Shadow Hawk [55]	VT-2T Vulcan [40]	HBK-4G Hunchback[50]	Dragonfly [40]*	Pinion [45]
7	FS9-O Firestarter [45]*	WVR-8K Wolverine [55]	MHL-2L Marshal [55]	WTH-1 Whitworth [40]	CN9-D Centurion [50]	Fenris [45]*	Hunchback IIC [50]
8	HBK-4G Hunchback [50]	SNT-O4 Sentry [40]	ENF-4R Enforcer [50]	HBK-4G Hunchback [50]	VND-1R Vindicator [45]	Black Hawk [50]*	Ursus [50]
9	BNC-5W Buccaneer [55]	LNX-9Q Lynx [55]	MHL-X1 Marshal [55]	ASN-21 Assassin [40]	CLNT-2-3T Clint [40]	Ryoken [55]*	Griffin IIC 4 [40]
10	RJN-200-A Raijin II [50]	STY-3D Starslayer [50]	KW1-LH2 Lineholder [55]	BJ-1 Blackjack [45]	HCT-3F Hatchetman [45]	Shadow Cat [45]*	Arctic Wolf [40]
11	BLF-21 Blue Flame [45]	CDA-3F Cicada [40]	CN9-D Centurion [50]	BJ-1 Blackjack [45]	BJ-1 Blackjack [45]	Pouncer [40]*	Lobo [40]
12	C-PRT-O Preta [45]*	BJ2-O Blackjack [50]*	HUR-R4L Huron Warrior [50]	MHL-X1 Marshal [55]	WFT-1 Wolftrap [45]	Phantom [40]*	Phantom [40]*

*This is an OmniMech.

RANDOM UNIT ASSIGNMENT TABLE (CIRCA 3075)

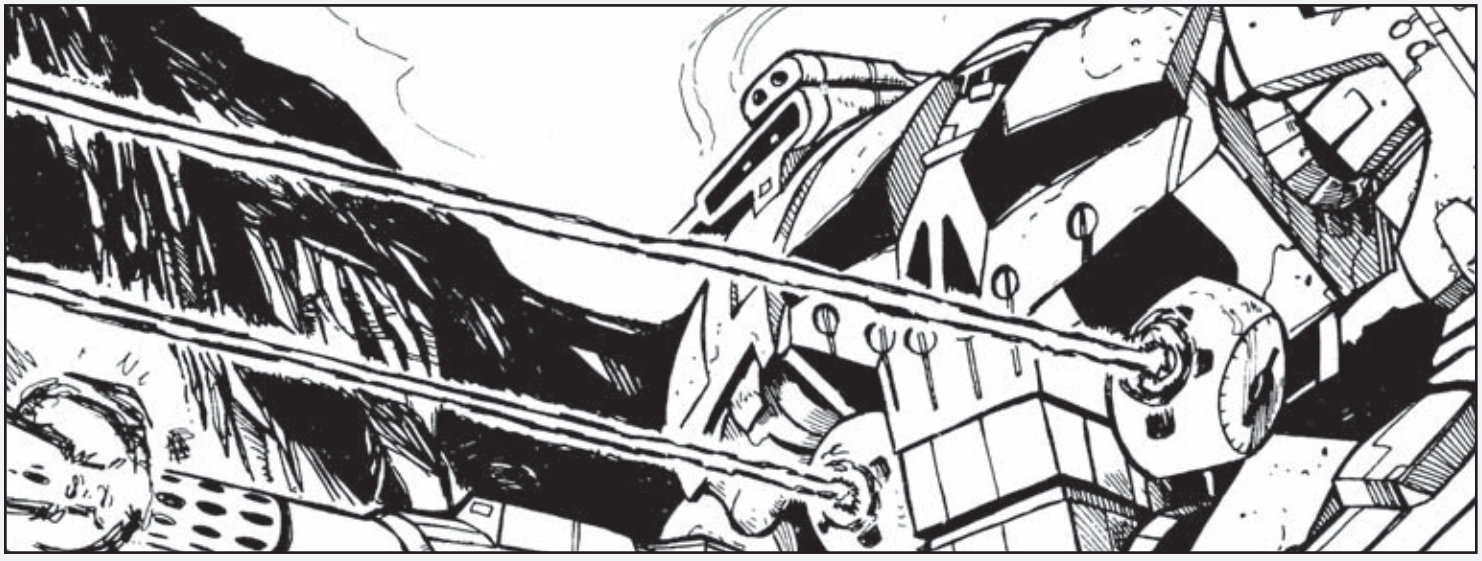
HEAVY BATTLEMECHS

2D6	Word of Blake	Mercenary	Major Periphery	Minor Periphery	Deep Periphery/ Pirate	Clan (Front-Line)	Clan (Second-Line)
2	C-DVA-O Deva [70]*	KSC-5I Koschei [65]	HEL-3D Helios [60]	JM6-S JagerMech [65]	ARC-2R Archer [70]	Linebacker [65]*	Thor [70]*
3	YMN-6Y Yeoman [60]	YMN-6Y Yeoman [60]	GHR-5J Grasshopper [70]	QKD-4G Quickdraw [60]	ON1-K Orion [75]	Nova Cat [85]*	Ha Otoko [60]
4	ANV-3M Anvil [60]	HEL-3D Helios [60]	CPLT-C4 Catapult [65]	DRG-1N Dragon [60]	MLN-1B Merlin [60]	Thor [70]*	Ryoken II [75]
5	TMP-3M Tempest [65]	RFL-6X Rifleman [60]	ON2-M Orion [75]	BL-7-KNT Black Knight [75]	QKD-4G Quickdraw [60]	Loki [65]*	Arcas [65]
6	FLS-8K Flashman [75]	WHM-8D Warhammer [70]	THR-1L Thunder [70]	MLN-1A Merlin [60]	JM6-S JagerMech [65]	Vulture [60]*	Orion IIC [75]
7	BL-6-KNT Black Knight [75]	ARC-8M Archer [70]	CTF-3L Cataphract [70]	GHR-5H Grasshopper [70]	GHR-5H Grasshopper [70]	Mad Cat [75]*	Rifleman IIC 3 [65]
8	TYM-1A Toyama [75]	TDR-7SE Thunderbolt [65]	RFL-7M Rifleman [60]	GLT-4L Guillotine [70]	GLT-5M Guillotine [70]	Thor [70]*	Grizzly [70]
9	WHF-3B White Flame [75]	MTR-5K Maelstrom [75]	TDR-5S Thunderbolt [65]	ON1-K Orion [75]	QKD-4G Quickdraw [60]	Cauldron-Born [65]*	Thresher [60]
10	AV1-O Avatar [70]*	CTS-8Y Cestus [65]	WR-DG-02-FC War Dog [75]	CPLT-C1 Catapult [65]	CTF-3D Cataphract [70]	Night Gyr [75]*	Ha Otoko [60]
11	ARC-8M Archer [70]	BHKU-O Blackhawk [60]*	CTF-4L Cataphract [70]	JM6-S JagerMech [65]	CPLT-K2 Catapult [65]	Mad Cat [75]*	Predator [60]
12	C-GRG-O Grigori [60]*	AV1-O Avatar [70]*	KSC-5MC Koschei [65]	QKD-4G Quickdraw [60]	WHM-6R Warhammer [70]	Vulture [60]*	Mad Cat [75]*

ASSAULT BATTLEMECHS

2D6	Word of Blake	Mercenary	Major Periphery	Minor Periphery	Deep Periphery/ Pirate	Clan (Front-Line)	Clan (Second-Line)
2	C-ANG-O Archangel [100]*	SD1-O Sunder [90]	PLG-3Z Pillager [100]	CGR-1A1 Charger [80]	EMP-6A Emperor [90]	Man O'War [80]*	BLR-3S BattleMaster [85]
3	KGC-000 King Crab [100]	SRC-3C Sirocco [95]	BNC-3S Banshee [95]	KGC-0000 King Crab [100]	CP-11-H Cyclops [90]	Daishi [100]*	Man O'War [80]*
4	MR-V2 Cerberus [95]	HGN-732 Highlander [90]	EMP-6A Emperor [90]	HGN-733 Highlander [90]	STC-2C Striker [80]	Gladiator [95]*	Jupiter [100]
5	GRN-D-04 Grd. Crusader II [80]	CP-12-K Cyclops [90]	ZEU-9S Zeus [80]	BNC-3E Banshee [95]	CGR-1A1 Charger [80]	Turkina [95]*	Phoenix Hawk IIC 4 [80]
6	AWS-9M Awesome [80]	VTR-10D Victor [80]	STK-5M Stalker [85]	KGC-001 King Crab [100]	BNC-3E Banshee [95]	Man O'War [80]*	Warhammer IIC 4 [80]
7	THG-11E Thug [80]	MR-V2 Cerberus [95]	AWS-9Q Awesome [80]	AWS-8Q Awesome [80]	STK-3F Stalker [85]	Masakari [85]*	Kodiak [100]
8	VNQ-2A Vanquisher [100]	GUN-1ERD Gunslinger [85]	VTR-9K Victor [80]	CRK-5005-1 Crockett [85]	VTR-9B Victor [80	Daishi [100]*	Supernova [90]
9	LGC-01 Legacy [80]	LGB-12C Longbow [85]	BNC-3MC Banshee [95]	VTR-9B Victor [80]	GOL-1H Goliath [80]	Kingfisher [90]*	Mad Cat Mk. II [90]
10	TIT-N10M Grd. Titan [100]	BKW-7R Black Watch [85]	CGR-1A5 Charger [80]	CP-11-H Cyclops [90]	CGR-1L Charger [80]	Masakari [85]*	Phoenix Hawk IIC [80]
11	ALB-3U Albatross [95]	TIT-N11M Grd. Titan [100]	AS7-D Atlas [100]	GOL-1H Goliath [80]	LGB-7Q Longbow [85]	Gladiator [95]*	Kingfisher [90]*
12	C-SRP-O Seraph [85]*	MAD-4S Marauder II [100]	Y-H9G Yu Huang [90]	AS7-D Atlas [100]	BNC-5S Banshee [95]	Mad Cat Mk. II [90]	Gladiator [95]*

*This is an OmniMech.



A middleweight brawler, the Arcas *is one of the first Clan 'Mechs to be built exclusively by the Ghost Bear Dominion.*

RANDOM UNIT ASSIGNMENT TABLE (CIRCA 3075)

LIGHT UNITS

2D6	Battle Armor (IS)	Battle Armor (Clan)	Vehicle (IS)	Vehicle (Clan)	Aerospace Fighters (Inner Sphere)	Aerospace Fighters (Clan Front-Line)	Aerospace Fighters (Clan Second-Line)
2	Smoothdavid II	Aerie	Striker Light Tank [35] W	Beagle [15] H	SL-22 Shologar [25]	S-HA-O Shade [35]	ZRO-115 Zero [35]
3	Tornado	Sylph	J. Edgar Light Hover Tank [25] H	Hephastus [30] H	SPR-7D Sparrowhawk[30]	S-HA-O Shade [35]	THK-63 Tomahawk [45]
4	Gray Death Scout	Aerie	Scorpion Light Tank [25] T	Odin [20] W	F-11 Cheetah [25]	ZRO-115 Zero [35]	Issus 2 [40]
5	Achileus	Aerie	Savannah Master [5] H	Zorya [35] T	F-10 Cheetah [25]	RGU-113LP Rogue[40]	Chaeronea 3 [25]
6	Kage	Sylph	Skulker Wheeled Scout [20] W	Mithras [25] T	SPR-H5 Sparrowhawk[30]	SPD-504 Spad [30]	Issus [40]
7	Gray Death Scout	Sylph	Pegasus Scout Tank [35] H	Indra [35] W	SL-21 Shologar [25]	Vandal [30]	Chaeronea [25]
8	Achileus	Sylph	Hunter Light Support Tank [35] T	Svantovit [35] H	TR-7 Thrush [25]	Avar [25]	Issus [40]
9	Kage	Aerie	Saracen Medium Tank [35] H	Asshur Spotter[20] H	SYD-21 Seydlitz [20]	RGU-133E Rogue [40]	Chaeronea 2 [25]
10	Nighthawk	Aerie	Scimitar Medium Tank [35] H	Shamash [11] H	SYD-Z4 Seydlitz [20]	THK-63CS Tomahawk [45]	Issus 3[40]
11	Kobald	Sylph	Saladin Assault Tank [35] H	Hephastus [30] H	TR-8 Thrush [25]	THK-63CS Tomahawk [45]	SPD-504 Spad [30]
12	Smoothgoliath II	Aerie	Mobile HQ [25] W	Gabriel [5] H	Corax [30]	S-HA-O Shade[35]	RGU-133E Rogue [40]

MEDIUM UNITS

2D6	Battle Armor (IS)	Battle Armor (Clan)	Vehicle (IS)	Vehicle (Clan)	Aerospace Fighters (Inner Sphere)	Aerospace Fighters (Clan Front-Line)	Aerospace Fighters (Clan Second-Line)
2	Purifier	Clan Medium	JES I Tactical Missile Carrier [45] H	Epona [50] H	DARO-1 Dagger[45]	S-RSL-O Rusalka [65]	GTHA-500 Gotha [60]
3	Trinity-Ying Long	Afreet	Blizzard [25] H	Hachiman [50] T	CMT-3T Trioka [65]	S-RSL-O Rusalka [65]	HCT-213B Hellcat II [50]
4	Fa Shih	Salamander	Hetzer Wheeled Assault Gun [40] W	Ku [50] W	DFC-O Defiance [55]	IRN-SD3 Ironsides [65]	Ammon [65]
5	Cavalier	Elemental	Drillson Heavy Hover Tank [50] H	Ares [40] T	LCF-R15 Lucifer [65]	DFC-O Defiance [55]	Tyre [55]
6	Infiltrator II-Puma	Afreet	Myrmidon [40] T	Enyo [55] T	CSR-V12 Corair [50]	HCT-215 Hellcat II [50]	Ammon [65]
7	Inner Sphere Standard	Elemental	Vedette Medium Tank [50] T	Epona [50] H	TR-10 Transit [50]	HCT-215 Hellcat II [50]	Tyre [55]
8	Gray Death Standard	Salamander	Maxim Heavy Hover Transport [50] H	Tyr [45] H	SL-17 Shilone [55]	GTHA-600 Gotha [60]	Ammon [65]
9	Longinus	Elemental	Condor Heavy Hover Tank [50] H	Epona [50] H	F-90 Stingray [60]	LTN-G15 Lightning [50]	Tyre 2 [55]
10	Rottweiler*	Undine	Vedette Medium Tank [50] T	Hachiman [50] T	LX-2 Lancer [55]	F-94 Stingray [50]	Ammon [65]
11	Raiden	Clan Medium	Goblin Infantry Tank [45] T	SM-1 Tank Destroyer [50] H	ON-1 Oni [55]	S-RSL-O Rusalka [65]	HCT-214 Hellcat II [50]
12	Void	Undine	Regulator Hovertank [45] H	Zephyr [40] H	MK-O Tatsu [70]	S-RSL-O Rusalka [65]	IRN-SD1 Ironsides [65]

*This is a four-legged (quad) BattleArmor.

RANDOM UNIT ASSIGNMENT TABLE (CIRCA 3075)

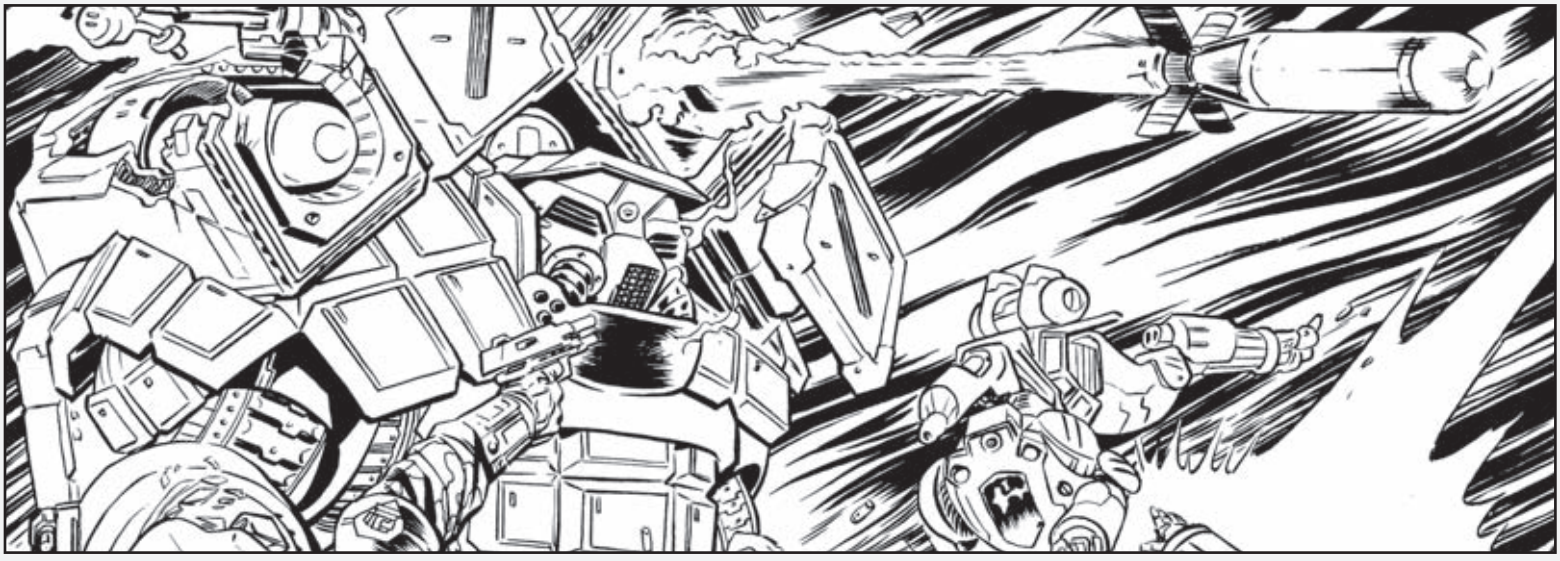
HEAVY UNITS

2D6	Battle Armor (IS)	Battle Armor (Clan)	Vehicle (IS)	Vehicle (Clan)	Aerospace Fighters (Inner Sphere)	Aerospace Fighters (Clan Front-Line)	Aerospace Fighters (Clan Second-Line)
2	Sloth*	Rogue Bear	Padilla Heavy Artillery Tank [75]T	Demon [60]W	SL-15K Slayer [80]	S-STR-O Striga [85]	AHB-643 Ahab [90]
3	Sloth*	Corona	SRM Carrier [60]T	Burke [75]T	SHV-O Shiva [85]	SHV-O Shiva [85]	HMR-HD Hammerhead [75]
4	Phalanx	Gnome	Po Heavy Tank [60]T	Shoden [70]W	F-700 Riever [100]	SHV-O Shiva [85]	Hydaspes 2 [95]
5	Sloth*	Rogue Bear	Patton Tank [65]T	Ishtar [65]W	F-100 Riever [100]	F-700 Riever [100]	Xerxes [85]
6	Phalanx	Corona	Manticore Heavy Tank [60]T	Athena [75]T	TR-13 Transgressor [75]	F-700 Riever [100]	Hydaspes [95]
7	Sloth*	Gnome	Von Luckner Heavy Tank [75]T	Oro [60]T	SL-15 Slayer [80]	HMR-HG Hammerhead [75]	Xerxes [85]
8	Phalanx	Corona	Bulldog Medium Tank [60]T	Ishtar [65]W	CHP-W5 Chippewa [90]	AHB-643 Ahab [90]	Hydaspes [95]
9	Phalanx	Rogue Bear	Rommel Tank [65]T	Athena [75]T	STU-K5 Stuka [100]	AHB-MD Ahab [90]	Xerxes [85]
10	Sloth*	Gnome	Brutus Assault Tank [75]T	Shoden [70]W	HSCL-1-O Huscarl [75]	RPR-200 Rapier[85]	Hydaspes 2 [95]
11	Sloth*	Corona	LRM Carrier [60]T	Oro [60]T	EST-O Eisensturm [95]	SHV-O Shiva [85]	RPR-100 Rapier [85]
12	Phalanx	Rogue Bear	Pike Support Vehicle [60]T	Magi [70]T	CHP-W8 Chippewa [90]	S-STR-O Striga [85]	AHB-443 Ahab [90]

ASSAULT UNITS

2D6	Battle Armor (IS)	Battle Armor (Clan)	Vehicle (IS)	Vehicle (Clan)	Dropships (Inner Sphere)	Dropships (Clan Front-Line)
2	Grenadier	Golem	Demolisher II Heavy Tank[80]T	Heimdall [95]T	Nekohono'o[S]	Noruff[A]
3	Fenrir*	Golem	Behemoth Heavy Tank [100]T	Fury [80]T	Fortress[S]	Outpost[S]
4	Hauberk	Golem	Sturmfeur [85]T	Rhino [80]T	Excalibur[S]	Confederate[S]
5	Grenadier	Golem	Ontos Heavy Tank [95]T	Mars [100]T	Union-X[S]	Carrier[A]
6	Kanazuchi	Golem	Schrek PPC Carrier [80]T	Morrigu [80]T	Leopard[A]	Union-C[S]
7	Grenadier	Golem	Demolisher Heavy Tank[80]T	Mars [100]T	Union[S]	Overlord-C[S]
8	Hauberk	Golem	Partisan Air Defense Tank [80]T	Morrigu [80]T	Overlord[S]	Broadsword[A]
9	Fenrir*	Golem	DI Morgan [100]T	Alacorn Mk VI Heavy Tank [95]T	Triumph[A]	Mercer[S]
10	Kanazuchi	Golem	Heavy LRM Carrier [80]T	Morrigu [80]T	Seeker[S]	Arcadia[A]
11	Hauberk	Golem	Challenger X MBT [90]T	Heimdall [95]T	Overlord A3[S]	Sassanid[S]
12	Fenrir*	Golem	Alacorn Mk VI Heavy Tank [95]T	Puma [95]T	Conquistador[A]	Miraborg[S]

*This is a four-legged (quad) BattleArmor.



Even as a Lyran Fenrir battlesuit rushes his position, Leftenant Labourier unleashes another volley from his Grenadier's damaged missile rack.

RANDOM UNIT ASSIGNMENT TABLE (CIRCA 3075)

LIGHT UNITS

2D6	ProtoMechs	IndustrialMechs	Conventional Fighters
2	Harpy [2]	Patron LoaderMech [15]	Boeing Jump Bomber [20]
3	Harpy 2 [2]	CPK-6 "Copper" SecurityMech [25]	Angel Light Strike Fighter [10]
4	Siren [3]	ED-X4 Crosscut LoggerMech [35]	Boomerang Spotter Plane [5]
5	Orc [4]	WI-DM DemolitonMech [35]	Boeing Jump Bomber [20]
6	Cecerops [3]	SC Powerman LoarderMech [35]	Angel Light Strike Fighter [10]
7	Satyr [4]	CON-7 "Carbine" ConstructionMech [30]	Angel Light Strike Fighter [10]
8	Satyr 2 [4]	RA-4 CattleMaster Herder [25]	Angel Light Strike Fighter [10]
9	Siren 2 [3]	KIC-3 Harvester Ant [20]	Boeing Jump Bomber [20]
10	Orc 2 [4]	HVR-99 Harvester [30]	Boomerang Spotter Plane [5]
11	Erinyes 2 [2]	GM-3A "Pompei" FireMech [15]	Angel Light Strike Fighter [10]
12	Erinyes [2]	MR-8C Marco [30]	Boomerang Spotter Plane [5]

MEDIUM UNITS

2D6	ProtoMechs	IndustrialMechs	Conventional Fighters
2	Centaur 2 [5]	QUA-51T Quasit MilitiaMech [45]	Defender Medium Strike Fighter [25]
3	Procyon 2 [5]	BC-Buster HaulerMech [50]	Guardian Fighter [20]
4	Procyon [5]	BC-Buster HaulerMech [50]	Guardian Fighter [20]
5	Chrysaor [6]	Jabberwocky EngineerMech [50]	Defender Medium Strike Fighter [25]
6	Centaur [5]	QUA-51T Quasit MilitiaMech [45]	Guardian Fighter [20]
7	Roc [7]	BC-Buster HaulerMech [50]	Defender Medium Strike Fighter [25]
8	Hydra [6]	Hyena SalvageMech [55]	Guardian Fighter [20]
9	Roc 2 [7]	QUA-51T Quasit MilitiaMech [45]	Defender Medium Strike Fighter [25]
10	Chrysaor 2 [6]	Hyena SalvageMech [55]	Guardian Fighter [20]
11	Basilisk [7]	Jabberwocky EngineerMech [50]	Guardian Fighter [20]
12	Basilisk 2 [7]	Hyena SalvageMech [55]	Defender Medium Strike Fighter [25]

HEAVY/ASSAULT UNITS

2D6	ProtoMechs	IndustrialMechs	Conventional Fighters
2	Triton 2 [8]	Kiso [100]	Planetlifter Air Transport [50]
3	Gorgon 2 [8]	SC-V-1 "Vampyr" ScavengerMech [80]	Meteor Heavy Strike FIghter [45]
4	Triton [8]	LM-4/C Lumberjack [70]	'Mechbuster [50]
5	Delphyne [9]	GUR-2G Gurkha [35]	'Mechbuster [50]
6	Minotaur 2 [9]	RCL-4 Dig Lord [65]	Planetlifter Air Transport [50]
7	Minotaur [9]	LM-4/C Lumberjack [70]	Meteor Heavy Strike FIghter [45]
8	Gorgon [8]	ATAE-70 "Uni" CargoMech [70]	'Mechbuster [50]
9	Gorgon 2 [8]	ATAE-70 "Uni" CargoMech [70]	Meteor Heavy Strike FIghter [45]
10	Minotaur 2 [9]	RCL-4 Dig Lord [65]	Planetlifter Air Transport [50]
11	Minotaur 2 [9]	Kiso [100]	'Mechbuster [50]
12	Delphyne 2 [9]	SC-V-1 "Vampyr" ScavengerMech [80]	Meteor Heavy Strike FIghter [45]

*This is a four-legged (quad) 'Mech. [A]Aerodyne [H]Hover [S]Spheroid [T]Tracked [V]VTOL [W]Wheeled
†If an illegal result occurs (rolling an assault-class weight for a heavy-class Trait, reroll).

THE FIRES OF HELL

SECURING THE LZ

PAUL SJARDIJN

CRASH SITE
CAREDONIAN WIND FOREST, ROCHELLE
3 JULY 3076

Breathing the thick, hot air was a chore that sapped the body, encouraging the humans exposed to its dense blanket to do as little as possible. The experience was made worse by the heavy stench of the fires around the crash site and the chemical smells emitted by the battered Landing Craft. Grace was reasonably sure the forest they'd plowed into had a stink all its own, hinting at what was to come.

The crash had been the most unpleasant experience in her life. She'd never been so completely convinced that she was going to die. Until that moment, she had been secure in her apathy toward death. Her intellect allowed her to stay emotionally detached from death's inevitability. How foolish to worry about something that couldn't be prevented. She realized now that her detachment lasted as long as death was decades away from her, but when it approached at near-terminal velocity, it became an entirely different *being*. It was a creature, an animal of sorts, striking at her, desiring to take something away from her that she held dear. It was tangible. It was *real*.

Travis had organized his ambulatory personnel and focused on extracting those who were unconscious so Grace could begin work on them. When they'd withdrawn a safe distance from the shuttle and Busby's bleeding had been stabilized, Travis said, "All right. They know where we are, and they'll move to finish the job. We'll need to set up an ambush site. Ethan, you and I need to buy Grace some time to deal with Busby, Luella and Logan."

"Commander," Buzzy said. "I can ambush! All better now, see?" Wielding a hand cannon he'd recovered somehow, he blew a hole in an innocent tree.

"You don't move until Grace clears you, or I'll shoot you in the head," Travis told him. "Got it?"

Busby appeared reluctant, but said, "Yes, sir."

After Travis and Ethan left to take up position, Grace focused on Busby. He was champing at the bit. "Please hurry, Doc. More killing to be done today, and I need to be doing it!"

"You are far too eager to end life, Buzzy." She looked at his face while she tested his joints, and spotted a slight twitch when she bent his left hand back.

"Too eager? Perhaps." He seemed to contemplate her words. "But I would rather kill two today so that four others may survive tomorrow! Hah!" He chuckled at his own joke while Grace scowled at him.

"All right, Buzzy. Apart from that perforation in your upper left arm, you have a small break in your left wrist. Could be a hairline fracture, could be more severe."

"I feel fine!"

"Riiight." Her voice left little doubt that she didn't believe him. "But you get to look forward to the moment when your adrenaline runs out. Meanwhile, the plastiflesh bandage should buy us some time on the wound. Have fun at your ambush."

"Yes, ma'am!" Busby said cheerfully. He collected several weapons from their supplies that lay strewn about, then headed after Travis and Ethan.

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Grace turned to her other charges. She felt own adrenaline draining. Her hands shook a little, and her muscles ached. She felt tired and heavy, and wondered if she was going into shock.

"Ignorance can be bliss," she thought, not for the first time. Her broad knowledge of everything that could go wrong with a human body had turned her into a bit of a hypochondriac, and she was quick to presume the worst when she detected symptoms. She cursed the lack of proper diagnostic equipment and flipped a mental coin as to which of her patients required more immediate attention.

Luella was bleeding from numerous cuts and would have several impressive bruises before long, but so was the rest of the team. More worrying was her rapid breathing and nosebleed, which could indicate anything from broken cartilage to brain damage.

Franz Logan had similar surface wounds, but he was snoring—which could indicate a cold, enlarged adenoids, nasal polyps or an obstruction in his airway. Or maybe he just snored. "Well, at least it isn't Pickwickian syndrome…" she muttered as she turned toward her potential brain damage victim.

Bitterly, she realized there was little she could do. She checked pupil responses—normal—and then settled in to wait. Wait for the bleeding to stop. Wait for the patient to

regain consciousness. Wait for an MRI to combat-drop on the crash site. Wait for the patient to complete her permanent transformation from human being to vegetable.

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She heard gunfire and several explosions, and felt her whole body tighten up. Travis' voice crackled over her headset. "Grace. We've engaged some hostiles, two squads of Robes. Four down, they're taking cover. Get Luella and Logan on their feet *now*. We need to leave!"

"Yes, sir!" she barked back, sounding more nervous than she felt. "Acknowledged," she added, with more control. *Doing the impossible, immediately, sir!*

She searched a first-aid kit for smelling salts, ammonia, anything that might snap them out of it. Some slapping might be necessary, she realized, when she came up short. The rookie first, she decided. She was a little afraid of Luella. Or rather, intimidated. That sounded less weak,

The first slap was feeble and produced no response. She put more into the second, and Logan stopped snoring. "Ah! Rosy! Not so hard…" he mumbled. Despite the situation, Grace blushed. This was getting ridiculous.

She slapped him again, harder, and yelled "Wake up, Logan! *Now*!"

"Whazzat?" Logan shot up and looked at Grace for a split second before fainting.

"Damn it!" *Probably a concussion*, Grace thought. *Absolutely* lovely. She'd do him a favor by letting him sleep it off as much as possible, but only if it kept him out of a Blakist prison bed.

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She was about to inflict Plan B on Logan when she heard an unfamiliar voice close behind her.

"Hands up! *Right* now!"

She yelped in surprise.

"I mean it! Hands up, or I put a bunch of holes in you!"

Grace put her hands up immediately. Her heart was pounding. She was dreadfully close to panic, she realized. *You* need *to maintain control, Grace!*

This was all wrong. It wasn't supposed to be like this. This was going to be another Hesperus. She was supposed to do comm work. *They* were supposed to do the fighting and the dying. She was supposed to patch them back up! She didn't think of herself as a coward, but things had gotten all buggered up since that fighter had tried to intercept them.

She suddenly realized that the distant shooting had stopped. A feeling of doom deepened her fear. Had her teammates been captured? Or killed?

"Good. Now stand up, reeeeal slow. I don't want to shoot you, but I'm not taking any chances neither, got it?"

Grace nodded. He sounded young.

"Good! See? We'll get along just great. OK, on your feet. Real slow." He sounded like he was calming down a bit. Grace couldn't say the same. Her heart was racing and her mind churned, trying to come up with a solution. Her eyes darted around, seeking some kind of answer nearby.

She spotted Logan's sidearm.

"I ain't got all day, lady. On. Your. *Feet*."

This isn't going to work, she thought. *Don't even try it...*

From her kneeling position next to Logan, she leaned forward and then stretched out her right leg sideways. Getting up with her hands above her head wasn't easy. She wobbled back and forth, slightly at first and then severely, before falling forward on top of Logan. She yelled, "Don't shoot me! Don't shoot! I fell! Don't shoot me!" The genuine panic in her voice made her feel small.

"It's OK! Relax, just get your hands back up and we're good." There was more compassion in his voice than indifference this time. Or so

Grace hoped. She pushed herself up off of Travis, one hand on his sidearm, and sat back. Before raising her hands, she opened her belt pouch and dropped the gun in. Her heart raced. *Did he notice?*

"There you go. OK, now try again, nice and slow, and keep your hands where I can see them." Grace got to her feet without incident. "Doing good, little lady. All right, time to turn around. Easy does it. There we go."

He wasn't as close behind her as she had thought, but the trooper was as young as she'd suspected. He wore the uniform of a Word of Blake Protectorate Militia infantryman. He was handsome, and looked about a decade younger than herself, which would make him in his early twenties.

"My name's Yuri, and you're my prisoner." He was trying to sound sure of himself, but his voice and eyes betrayed him. He sounded nervous, and his eyes were darting left and right.

"I'm Grace. So, now what happens?" She tried to sound confident herself, but far more fear was audible than she liked. Her voice quivered, for Pete's sake! What kind of elite commando was she?

One who hasn't killed a single human yet.

"Now? When the boys get here, we head back to the firebase and get you guys properly processed. You know, the usual." He shrugged, and his rifle moved with him.

Grace nodded.

"Ah? Familiar with 'the usual'? Not even going to try to tell me how this is all some big mistake, how you're innocent merchants who panicked when they got attacked by those two big mean fighters?" He laughed. Grace agreed that it would be more than a little ridiculous to feign innocence. *Not going to try that.* She swallowed, the motion painful to her dry throat.

"No sense in lying," she said. "But this may be a great opportunity for you."

Yuri raised an eyebrow, apparently intrigued. This bolstered her confidence, and she proceeded.

"Your buddies will be here soon. Then everything we've got here will get divided up, and no doubt the bosses will make sure *they* get their fair share. Am I right?"

Yuri shrugged. "Death and taxes, lady. So?"

"So, what if I told you we've got a big stash of cash in our ship. All untraceable. We were supposed to use it while on-planet. I could show you where it is, and all you'd have to do is let me go." There—that sounded entirely reasonable, didn't it?

Yuri considered it briefly. He shifted his weight and shrugged his shoulders again, rolling them, perhaps to loosen the muscles.

That gun must be getting heavy...

"Yeah, I don't think so. Thanks for the offer, but odds are I'll get a pretty decent bonus out of this. Meanwhile, I can guarantee that the spooks'll be all over this one. The LT might not know about the cash-stash neither, but you just don't mess around with ROM. They're like friggin' mind readers. And they're not even the worst of the bunch." He cringed slightly, as if remembering some unspeakable event. "No thanks, not rolling the dice on that one."

Grace's heart sank. She'd actually started to hope she could pull it off. Now she had nothing to bargain with.

Damn it! Why couldn't it be a stupid trooper?

The Guardsman rolled his shoulders again. Then his left hand went to his holstered sidearm. He pulled it free and pointed it at Grace. All the while, the barrel of his rifle barely moved. Once he had his revolver pointing at her, he lowered his rifle and slung it onto his back. Then he swapped hands on his revolver and smiled. "That's better."

Grace opened her mouth to say something just as Logan announced his improved state of awareness with a curse. "Ah! *Scheisse*! My head!"

Grace couldn't see Logan behind her, but heard him stir.

Yuri's attention refocused and sharpened. "Okay, lady. Move three steps to the right, and keep those hands up!"

Grace did as she was told, while Yuri walked closer and used both hands to keep his gun aimed. Logan looked tired and in pain, but was trying to sit up. He noticed the guardsman, and his face showed frustration and anger. "Awww, motherfu—" His curse trailed off as he fainted again.

Yuri barked a laugh. "That's one heck of a concussion! He's going to regret surviving the crash when he wakes up for real!" He seemed amused, but also concerned, the way men reacted when they saw another man get kicked in the groin.

Grace grasped at straws. "Do you have some medical background?"

"Nah, just had a concussion once myself. Sucks!"

So much for trying to connect on a professional basis.

Desperate situations called for desperate thinking. She closed her eyes and came to a decision. She had to do it. It was necessary.

"You know—they don't know where you are yet. They don't know who you've found. For all they know, it's just these two." She paused, swallowed, pushing herself along as she motioned to the two unconscious soldiers. "You… could just let me go. I could… really make it worth your while, if you know what I mean." She tried to smile seductively, but knew she looked desperate. Damn *you, Grace. Damn you.*

Yuri blinked, then smiled. "Gee, I really appreciate the offer. No, seriously. I guess that means you didn't think we'd rape you—"

Grace's mouth opened in shock.

"Which we wouldn't!" Yuri hurriedly continued. "Sorry. We're not in to that stuff. Anyway, I couldn't take you up on the offer. The LT'd cut my balls off one by one with a pair of pliers if I did. Which'd really piss off my girl, I tell you! She'd want to do the de-balling with a bottle-opener for that. I wouldn't want to deprive her of the opportunity. She might get mean." He chuckled.

"At any rate, you'd probably just stab me in the eye, or break my spine with your legs or something while I was thinking with the little head. So, er, don't take it personally, OK? You're not bad-looking. Just not my type."

She'd never felt more rejected—or despairing—in her life. She wanted to cry.

He suddenly seemed to remember something. "Oh! Almost forgot!" He pressed and held a button on the side of his helmet. It clicked with the sound of a cracking knuckle. Yuri talked more sternly than he had a second ago. "Seven-Three, this is Seven-Seven. Got three prisoners at crash site, two KO. Please advise." He paused briefly, while Grace took a moment to consider yet another one of her mistakes.

"Roger, Seven-Three, will hold position. Out." When he let go of the button, he smiled at her. "Thanks for reminding me. That could've been bad."

May you die of colon cancer, asshole.

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Grace was losing patience. She ground her teeth as she mulled over insults that would adequately convey her state of mind. Just as she lined up the best she had, she saw something fly at Yuri from behind and to the left of her. It struck him in the shoulder. It looked and sounded heavy, and he cursed.

"Son of a—" Revolver in both his hands again, he aimed toward the source of the projectile.

"Grace—*now*!" Luella yelled.

Grace paused for what seemed like an eternity as she tried to figure out what she had to do *now*. Then she realized, and felt like a tremendous idiot for not understanding it sooner. She reached into her front belt pouch and withdrew the automatic pistol she'd removed from Logan when she "fell" on top of him. She pointed it at Yuri just as he fired his gun. The sound was incredibly loud, and made Grace jump. Behind her, Luella coughed. Grace snapped off the safety and aimed as Yuri began to swing his weapon back toward her.

She had never fired a gun before.

But what stopped her from shooting was a promise. A promise only to heal, never to harm. Only to save, never to kill. A promise as dear to her as the person she'd made it to.

The bullet entered her body above the left clavicle bone, perforated her trapezius muscle, and left her, all in less than twenty milliseconds. It didn't knock her back like it would in *Immortal Warrior*. It didn't hurt that much, either. It did make her fire her own gun. The bullet struck Yuri in the leg. He screamed and fell to his knees, then toppled. He tried to stop his fall with his hands and fired again. The bullet dug into the dirt.

He shot *me*, she thought, and she fired again. She missed, twice. He struggled back to one knee and tried to aim, and promptly got shot in the arm by someone else. Grace hoped it was Luella. He dropped his gun. Grace's fourth bullet hit him in the gut, and he crumpled forward. Her fifth bullet missed, and she became aware of two people yelling at her to stop. One was ordering her, the other was begging her. She stopped.

Only then did she realize she'd broken her very important promise.

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She ran over to Yuri and got there just before Luella caught up and kicked away the revolver. Grace babbled apologies as she rolled the trooper over. Her shoulder definitely hurt now.

"Grace! Leave him. We have *got* to leave *now*!"

"No! No! I shot him! I can't leave him like this!"

Yuri groaned and looked at her, fear plain in his face. "Oh, shit! Am I going to die?"

She took several deep breaths, fighting her body's reaction to her own injury. "No, you're not going to die. You'll be OK. I'm a doctor, I know what to do!"

Yuri seemed confused. "A doctor?"

"Grace! *Leave*! *Now*!" She'd never heard Luella that mad before. Something inside her casually knocked aside what little rationality remained, allowing the full river of anger and fear to flow unimpeded by common sense. She bounced to her feet and got in Luella's face.

"NO! I SHOT HIM! HE IS NOT GOING TO DIE!! YOU HEAR ME?!" Never mind that the woman outranked her, and could easily and severely kick her ass. She regretted that her scream came out more like a panicked screech, but she regretted yelling at Luella even more. She was about to apologize when Luella's glare evaporated. She nodded once and said, "Fine. Hurry."

Grace nodded back and hobbled toward the nearest medkit. Her shoulder hurt worse and worse, and she barely dared move or use her left arm, but she had other priorities. She returned to her charge and put pressure bandages on Yuri's leg and arm wounds before examining the hole that would likely kill him. She removed the too-thin body armor that had done him no good, then opened his shirt near his stomach. The hole pulsed dark red blood, almost black. She groaned in regret and frustration as she applied another pressure bandage and added a pain-killer patch. She *couldn't* fix this. Not with what she had on hand.

Yuri looked up at her. She tried to think of some euphemisms to put him at ease. But she realized he understood.

"That's it, huh? I'm gonna die?"

She wanted to say no. "Yes. I can't… It's…"

He interrupted her. "It's okay. No, really, it is. I don't want you… It's not your fault. You did what you had to, you know? So did I. I'm sorry I shot you, lady."

Part of her felt grateful, most of her did not. She had never hated herself more. What a waste! Why couldn't he be stupid, or crazy, or evil, and deserve this somehow?

"Hey. Look. The others? They'll be here soon." He reached feebly for his helmet and tapped the communications switch.

Luella spoke up before Grace could say anything. "Then we've run out of time. Grace, tend to Logan and head north. I'm right behind you."

Grace felt defeated. She *was* defeated. There was nothing left to do here. She got to her feet, then stopped.

"Hey. If they get here soon, you'll be all right. Tell them you have severe internal damage to your abdomen, and need to be sent to a hospital immediately." She wanted to be more specific, but didn't know how much medical knowledge Yuri's unit had.

"Thanks," He seemed relieved for a moment. Then his expression sobered. "How much time do I have?"

"Not enough to waste it. I can't tell without better equipment." *But I can tell it won't be enough.* She didn't want it to be true. The nearest population center wasn't even remotely close enough. Yuri's only hope was his firebase.

"Grace." Luella sounded far more urgent this time. "That's it. We go *now*. Get Franz."

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It was all too *much*. She walked to Logan, half-blinded by tears, and began to drag him to his feet. Harsh pain made her regret it, and she finally took care of her own wound. She hadn't realized she'd bled that much, and suddenly realized that her faint feeling had a biological reason beyond emotion. Luella took care of Logan herself, dragging a case in her other hand. Grace's only cargo was the few medkits she'd found. As they staggered north, she knew she was leaving behind a lot more than her blood.

She looked at Luella, in need of sympathy. "I'm really sorry I killed him." It sounded so pathetic and hopeless, but this time she didn't care.

Luella seemed to think for a moment. "No, Grace. *We* killed him."

Grace didn't understand why, but it helped a little.

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Some time later, a VTOL flew overhead, heading roughly northwest in a straight line that resembled nothing like a search pattern.

Thanks, Grace, Luella thought as she watched the craft take the dead Guardsman away.

The old man seemed like such an easy mark to Nisu—until he dispatched Rohan without even breaking a sweat.

"Four years of academy training, three more of special forces training, and four consecutive tours on the Clan front… You've seen the scores from the simulators, and the personnel dossier says the rest. You want someone who knows 'Mech combat, top to bottom, you can pick up any old Solaris jock. You want someone who knows how to fight a war, come see me."

SKILLS OVERVIEW

Skills reflect learned abilities available to all characters in the *BattleTech* universe. Depending on the level of complexity—both in action and in training—a given Skill may be more difficult to pull off in a given situation. The Skills a character may possess are listed in the Master Skills List Table. This list also includes the Linked Attributes assigned to each Skill, as well as the Skill's TN and Complexity (TN / C) values, which are vital to determining how players may use the Skill in game play.

USING SKILLS

The basics of how to resolve Skill Checks have already been covered in *Basic Game Play* (p. 39); the following section expands on the fifty-three major Skills covered in *A Time of War*. In a typical game session, characters will frequently be called upon to use their Skills, though it may not always be clear which Skills they should use and when.

When to Use a Skill

As a general rule, a character may need to use a Skill to accomplish any task for which he has received the proper training and experience. It is generally the gamemaster's job to identify if a Skill Check is required for a given situation, based on the nature of the action being performed. In many cases, an action may be so mundane or basic to a character that no Skill is required (such as opening an unlocked door, or flipping on a light switch), or mere knowledge of the Skill is enough to get by with (such as speaking one's native tongue or operating a computer without attempting to hack it).

Skill Checks, in fact, should only be made when there is a significant (and possibly dangerous) chance that the character performing the action might fail. Piloting Skill Checks, for example, are not required to simply march a BattleMech from one end of an empty tarmac to another. But if the pilot instead attempts to race his machine across the pavement while simultaneously turning to evade enemy fire, he would need to make a Piloting Skill Check to keep the 'Mech from skidding or falling.

Choosing the Right Skill

The Skills described in this chapter are clearly named and broadly defined to be used in a variety of in-game circumstances, and so selecting the right Skill for the job is typically simple for the gamemaster to accomplish. If the character is confronted by a ticking time bomb, for example, Demolitions is obviously the best Skill for that job.

In some cases, however—either because the character lacks that specific Skill or because his controlling player is particularly creative—it may be possible to resolve the action using Skills other than those the gamemaster offers. Once the gamemaster has determined that a Skill Check roll is needed, it is up to him and the player to identify in a timely fashion the Skill that fits the action best.

LINKED ATTRIBUTES

All Skills rely on one or more of a character's Attributes, which reflect physical, mental or social properties that make a character more or less inclined toward certain Skills. These Attributes (called Linked Attributes) are listed for each Skill. Skills with an Advanced

Complexity rating (SA or CA) rely on two Attributes, while Basic Skills (SB or CB) rely on one.

Linked Attributes may provide additional roll modifiers toward the use of a Skill if the Attributes in question are particularly good (or bad).

TARGET NUMBERS

The first half of a Skill's TN / C Rating, the target number (TN) applies to any effort by the character to use the Skill (so long as the character possesses it to begin with). This TN reflects the use of the Skill at its most elemental level, with no modifiers applied for Skill Level, Linked Attributes or conditions.

COMPLEXITY RATING

The second half of the TN / C Rating, a Skill's Complexity Rating is a two-letter code that reflects how involved the Skill is in terms of physical action or concentration and training. A Skill's action rating can be Simple (S) or Complex (C), while its training rating can be Basic (B) or Advanced (A). For example, a Skill with a "CB" Complexity Rating is "Complex-Basic".

Action Rating: Skills with a Simple action rating (SB or SA) may be executed quickly and with little conscious thought. Complex Skills (CB or CA) are more involved and take more time and concentration to perform.

Training Rating: Basic Skills (SB or CB) reflect Skills that require little formal training and come to most characters quickly. Advanced Skills (SA or CA) involve more in-depth instruction and study, often requiring months—or even years—to truly master.

SUBSKILLS

Characters who possess a Skill that has subskills must determine which subskill applies to them at the time they pick up the Skill. Subskills indicate Skills that are related to the chosen Skill, but are still different enough from one another that they effectively represent separate disciplines. A character may possess multiple subskills of a given Skill, but each receives its own entry and TN on the character's Record Sheet.

The subskills available to each Skill are generally pre-defined in the rules and listed with the Skill's description. Examples of subskills include the Aerospace, Battlesuit and 'Mech subskills available for Gunnery and Piloting Skills.

When listing a Skill with a subskill, the subskill follows its "parent" Skill after a slash. For example, "Gunnery/'Mech" represents the 'Mech-based subskill of the Gunnery Skill.

SPECIALTIES

Characters may opt to further personalize their Skills by choosing a specialty to focus on. Unlike subskills, specialties are not pre-defined in the Skill's rules, but are left up to the player's imagination (and the gamemaster's permission). Characters attempting to use a Skill within their area of specialty receive a bonus roll modifier to the attempt, while attempts to use the same Skill outside the area of specialty suffer a penalty. Sample specialties include "Lasers" for any Gunnery subskill, or "Human Resources" for Administration.

When listing a Skill with a specialty, the specialty follows the name of the Skill (and any subskills) in parentheses. For example, a Skill called "Acting (Seduction)" reflects that the character with the Actinv Skill specializes in the art of seduction, while a Skill listed as "Gunnery/'Mech (Laser)" indicates that the character's 'Mech-based Gunnery Skill specializes in laser weaponry, rather than ballistic or missile weapons.

TIERED SKILLS

Tiered Skills are special type of Skill, which vary in their Linked Attributes and TN / C Ratings once the character passes a certain threshold in Skill proficiency. At or below a Skill Level of 3, these Skills are considered basic, and therefore more accessible to characters without formal training. Once the tiered Skill progresses to Level 4 or higher, it becomes advanced, as the character must now enhance the elementary Skill with more sophisticated training and techniques to improve its effectiveness.

Under these rules, Art, Martial Arts and Melee Weapons are all considered tiered Skills. Below Level 4, each Skill reflects rudimentary knowledge ("freestyle" art, street fighting, or the unrefined use of basic, improvised or crude melee weapons). Above Level 3, the character begins to add more effective techniques through improved training, such as learning the complexities of color and composition in Art, integrating martial arts styles such as karate or tae kwon do for Martial Arts, or developing fencing techniques for Melee Weapons.

To identify their Linked Attributes and TN / C Ratings, tiered Skills receive two listings on the Master Skills List, but because they are still the same Skill, they receive only one description.

AVAILABLE SKILLS

The following Skills reflect those available to characters in *A Time of War*, provided in alphabetical order for ease of reference. In many cases, suggested modifiers (in addition to those described in *Basic Game Play*) and examples for where the Skill will apply best are provided. However, these modifiers and examples should not be considered exhaustive. As all situations are different, it is ultimately up to the gamemaster (with support from the players) to determine the most effective use of a given Skill, and the most applicable modifiers to it.

ACROBATICS

"Look, it's real simple. All you have to do is leap off the bridge and onto that moving monorail. After that, you roll, grab the edge, and flip yourself inside the side windows, and nobody will even see you coming. Piece of cake, right?"

Subskills: Free-Fall, Gymnastics

The Acrobatics Skill covers the character's grace, balance and training to handle complex—and generally dangerous—physical movement. Modifiers to typical Acrobatics Skill Checks should include weather and gravity conditions, character encumbrance, terrain difficulty and the distance the character is moving. Acrobatics comes with two main subskills: Free-Fall and Gymnastics.

MASTER SKILLS LIST

Skill Name	Links	TN/C	Skill Name	Links	TN/C
Acrobatics	RFL	6 / SB	MedTech	INT	6 / SB
Acting	CHA	8 / SB	Melee Weapons [Basic Tier]	DEX	6 / SB*
Administration	INT + WIL	7 / SA	Melee Weapons [Advanced Tier]	RFL + DEX	7 / SA*
Animal Handling	WIL	6 / SB	Navigation	INT	6 / SB
Appraisal	INT	8 / CB	Negotiation	CHA	8 / CB
Archery	DEX	6 / SB	Perception	INT	6 / SB
Art [Basic Tier]	DEX	8 / CB*	Piloting	RFL + DEX	7 / SA
Art [Advanced Tier]	DEX + INT	9 / CA*	Prestidigitation [Basic Tier]	DEX	6 / SB
Artillery	INT + WIL	7 / SA	Prestidigitation [Advanced Tier]	RFL + DEX	7 / SA*T
Career	INT	6 / SB	Protocol	WIL + CHA	9 / CA
Climbing	DEX	6 / SB	Running	RFL	6 / SB
Communications	INT	6 / SB	Science	INT + WIL	9 / CA
Computers [Basic Tier]	INT	8 / CB	Security Systems	DEX + INT	9 / CA
Computers [Advanced Tier]	DEX + INT	9 / CA	Sensor Operations	INT + WIL	7 / SA
Cryptography	INT + WIL	9 / CA	Small Arms	DEX	6 / SB
Demolitions	DEX + INT	9 / CA	Stealth	RFL + INT	7 / SA
Disguise	CHA	6 / SB	Strategy	INT + WIL	9 / CA
Driving	RFL + DEX	7 / SA	Streetwise	CHA	8 / CB
Escape Artist	STR + DEX	9 / CA	Support Weapons	DEX	6 / SB
Forgery	DEX + INT	7 / SA	Surgery	DEX + INT	9 / CA
Gunnery	RFL + DEX	7 / SA	Survival	BOD + INT	9 / CA
Interest [Basic Tier]	INT + WIL	9 / CA	Swimming	STR	6 / SB
Interest [Advanced Tier]	INT + WIL	9 / CA*	Tactics	INT + WIL	9 / CA
Interrogation	WIL + CHA	9 / CA	Technician	DEX + INT	9 / CA
investigation	INT + WIL	9 / CA	Thrown Weapons	DEX	6 / SB
Language	INT + CHA	7 / SA	Tracking	INT + WIL	7 / SA
Leadership	WIL + CHA	7 / SA	Training	INT + CHA	9 / CA
Martial Arts [Basic Tier]	RFL	6 / SB*	Zero-G Operations	RFL	6 / SB
Martial Arts [Advanced Tier]	RFL	6 / SB*			

Complexity Codes: CA = Complex-Advanced, CB = Complex-Basic; SA = Simple-Advanced; SB = Simple-Basic
*Tiered Skill: Basic Tier has a Skill Level maximum of 3; Advanced Tier has a Skill Level minimum of 4.

Free-Fall: Covers all manner of jumping, gliding, unpowered flight and the use of personal jump packs. A successful Acrobatics/Free-Fall Check represents a safe landing. A failed check represents a crash, with the severity of any damage based on the roll's Margin of Failure.

Gymnastics: Covers general feats of agility, balance and grace. Though commonly used for show, Gymnastics also covers a multitude of situations where the character may be trying to move around complex obstacles, negotiate exceedingly difficult terrain, avoid falls due to poor and unstable footing, or execute short jumps. A successful Acrobatics/Gymnastics Check can help the character pass through difficult terrain better than others (in personal combat, this can effectively reduce the character's normal movement costs per turn by 1 MP per point of MoS, to a minimum of 1 MP per meter moved), or avoid damage from falls as high as the Skill's current level (in meters). A failed Acrobatics/Gymnastics Check can range from a stumble that slows the character down, to a potentially bone-breaking fall.

ACTING

"Look, I don't care what your orders say! All I know is I have a shipment of Marly-750 main drive components signed for by Precentor Csencsics himself! Don't ask me why, but if you're really going to hassle me here, maybe you should get your bosses on the horn and tell them why their DropShips won't be lifting troops off this rock any time soon!"

Subskills: None

The Acting Skill covers the character's ability to use language, projection and personality to entertain, misdirect or just plain charm the socks off someone. Typical Acting Skill Checks should take into account conditions that could harm or help the character's performance (such as whether he lacks the proper attire or props to present a convincing appearance). However, if the subject is particularly skeptical or wary of the acting character, an Opposed Action Check may be in order to properly resolve the use of this Skill.

Acting has no subskills, though it can cover a range of specialties covering deception (the art of lying), fast-talk (bombarding a subject with enough superfluous information to overwhelm him), intimidation (using body language and strength of will to cow a subject with implied threats and bluffs), performance (general entertainment acting, including impersonations) and seduction (the art of charming a subject). Characters seeking to emphasize one of these aspects over another are advised to select one of those Acting styles as a specialty.

The success (or failure) of an Acting Check determines whether or not the Acting character delivered a credible performance.

ADMINISTRATION

"Why, no! I have no idea how hard it is to fight a war! My job is to simply make sure all the troops are fed, billeted, clothed, equipped and deployed to the proper drop zones in time for your carefully-laid strategic assault, while also making sure we have enough parts, munitions and medical support available for when you realize just how little forethought you put into the entire operation!"

Subskills: None

The Administration Skill covers the character's ability to organize, allocate and track resources for a project—preferably while keeping the entire operation on time and under budget. As this Skill reflects an abstract and generally universal concept, applicable in business, industrial or military logistics, it has no major subskills, but players may consider an area of specialty to reflect a project type or work sector that is more familiar to them (such as military logistics, business administration, human resources, land management and so forth).

Characters with Administration and who maintain a landhold or a business interest, or are actively working in the support chain of a military command, may use this Skill in game play once a month, with the gamemaster assigning modifiers to the standard Skill Check based on any applicable conditions (such as time, budgetary or manpower limits, and demands on the character). Characters with landholds or business interests may use Administration to determine their profit margins on a monthly basis (with a general increase of 5 percent per 2 points of MoS, or a loss of 5 percent per MoF point). In all other fields, successful Administration Checks may influence whether or not critical supplies, manpower or salaries are received on time.

ANIMAL HANDLING

"Now, what we have here is a rare carcharodontosaurus camlannensis*—better known in the League as the Mordred Lizard. This one's just a baby, but ain't she a beauty? As terrifying as she looks, this species really isn't any more dangerous in the wild than a Calloway wildebeest, but that hasn't stopped hunters from—son of a branth! She bit me!"*

Subskills: Herding, Riding, Training

The ability to control or influence animals, or to interpret their behavior, is governed by the Animal Handling Skill. Modifiers to typical Animal Handling Skill Checks should include the physical and emotional state of the creature being handled, the demeanor of the handler, and any distracting circumstances such as loud noises or other physical stimulus. Animal Handling comes with three main subskills: Herding, Riding and Training. In addition, characters can have specialties focused on a specific creature or class of creatures.

Herding: The Herding subskill is used by breeders and ranchers across known space, and includes knowledge of animal diets, life cycles, habitat, behavior and overall animal husbandry. It includes a rudimentary understanding of the animal's health and its diseases (though it is still no substitute for a veterinarian), but Skill Checks are typically required simply to ensure that a population of animals under the handler's control is healthy, stable and otherwise well behaved.

Riding: The Riding subskill is used when mounting tamed animals, and includes the ability to interpret the animal's behavior as well as the knowledge necessary to properly ride the mount. Similar to Piloting or Driving, Animal Handling/Riding mainly requires Skill Checks when attempting to perform special tasks while mounted, such as avoiding a spill when turning at full speed.

Training: The Training subskill is used to tame and train an animal for use as a mount. Checks for this Skill are typically made at the end of a training session with the creature, with success indicating that the animal has learned something and failure indicating that the lessons didn't stick.

APPRAISAL

"The filigree is exquisite, and the gold inlays within the seams of the Cameron Star clearly suggest it's from the Modern Chivalrist Period during the reign of Simon Cameron…but I regret to inform you that it's still a fake."

Subskills: None

Appraisal is used to determine the relative value or authenticity of an object, and includes sufficient knowledge of the appropriate market to derive or deduce its monetary value. Appraisal is typically combined with a more academic Interest Skill (see p. 147) and often cannot be obtained without formal education or apprenticeship. Appraisal should be used for objects that have a certain degree of subjective value attached, such as art or historical artifacts, as the value of such objects can be amplified or depressed in a manner separate from normal supply and demand mechanics. For more practical objects—such as electronics, tools and other mechanical or high-tech items—the appropriate Technician Skill is a better choice for identifying value (see p. 157).

ARCHERY

"Electronic decoys, automatic rifles, portable radar sensors—you call yourself a hunter? Give me carbon composite and a little sharpened steel, and point me toward the nearest New Kyotan hunter's ground. By nightfall, we'll be eating roast ki-rian without the powder burns!"

Subskills: None

The Archery Skill covers the use of bows and arrows, archaic ranged weapons that discharge a projectile using mechanical force from a drawn bow and string. When wielding bows or crossbows in personal combat, the Archery Skill is used to make the attack.

Though the Archery Skill has no subskills, the differences between hand-drawn bows and crossbows are significant enough to merit specialization, if the player so desires.

ART

"I'll grant you, Corporal, that every great artist has to express what he feels deep inside, but I'm also pretty sure that painting the Colonel's likeness—dressed in nothing more than twelve-centimeter stilettos and black garters—as 'nose art' on Captain Baker's Stalker *pretty much earned you those four weeks in the stockade."*

Subskills: Various media (Dance, Drawing, Music, Painting, Poetry, Sculpture, Songwriting, Writing and so on)

The Art Skill reflects an aesthetic talent the character has cultivated purely as a means of creative expression. Born more of creativity and handiwork than mere study and research, the Art Skill reflects a range of potential subskills from dancing and music to painting and sculpture. Art Skill Checks are made at the end of the character's efforts to create (or perform) a work of art, a process that can take hours, days or even years. Roll modifiers should account for the complexity of the work being attempted, the medium and supplies, and whether or not the artist rushed the job. Success means the character executed the work well, while failure indicates a work that, once completed, may not have been worth the hype.

Tiered Skill: To reflect the difference between a casual "hobby" artist and a dedicated professional, Art is represented in *A Time of War* as a Tiered Skill, progressing from simple training at the lowest four levels (0 through 3) to a more advanced and focused form from which true masterpieces can emerge.

ARTILLERY

"Alpha Bravo Two-One-Eight! Check your fire! Check your fire! I need wide area suppression nine-one meters due south of my position! We have non-coms in the area! For the love of Allah, don't miss!"

Subskills: None

The Artillery Skill is used to fire and spot for all kinds of artillery-type weapons, from the single-impulse chemical-propelled projectiles of "tube artillery" to self-propelled artillery missiles like the Arrow IV system. Though used primarily on 'Mechs and vehicles, artillery weapons can also be towed into battle by infantry formations, and so are not considered a simple offshoot of the Gunnery Skill. Indeed, certain infantry-carried Support Weapons (such as mortars) also make use of this Skill.

Full rules on the use of artillery in tactical combat are found in *Tactical Operations*, but additional rules applicable to *A Time of War* are outlined in the combat chapters of this book.

CAREER

"What exactly is it that you do here?"

Subskills: Various occupations (Examples: Accountant, Cook, Doctor, Soldier and so on)

In order to be successful in a given profession, a wide range of skills and knowledge is necessary. The Career Skill is a catch-all that covers the jargon and procedures a character needs to perform the general day-to-day duties of his job such as paperwork, reports to supervisors and the like.

Career Skill Checks are used only to resolve tasks that fall within the character's chosen profession, but that are not adequately represented by the other Skills in this chapter. If the character possesses another Skill that better fits a part of his profession, use that Skill instead (even if it is of a lower level). For example, a MechWarrior with the Career/Soldier Skill at Level 3 cannot use it in place of his Level 2 Gunnery/'Mech Skill.

The gamemaster must ultimately decide if a particular task in the character's job can be resolved using the Career Skill, or must be resolved with another Skill or Attribute Check.

CLIMBING

"Why did I look down…?"

Subskills: None

The Climbing Skill is necessary when attempting to scale up or down any heights without the benefit of stairs, ladders or elevators. Though formal training isn't required to climb relatively simple objects like trees and rocks with a decent slope to them, negotiating the steep rock face of a mountain, clambering up the side of a building or swarming a moving BattleMech requires more than a little practice.

Possession of the Climbing Skill allows the character to use Climbing movement in personal combat as a Simple Action (without it, Climbing is not only an untrained Skill, but a Complex Action as well). In addition, this Skill covers knowledge of climbing and rappelling gear.

Climbing Skill Checks (when required) may be modified based on how treacherous or difficult to climb a surface is, how much weight the character is carrying, and whether or not the character is using any kind of climbing gear suitable for the job. On a successful Climbing Check, a character scales the surface he is climbing; on a failure, he falls. (Merciful gamemasters should consider allowing a failed Climbing Check with a low MoF to represent a momentary slip, on which the character merely loses some distance.)

COMMUNICATIONS

"Welcome to the branch of the military where we don't *express ourselves through the use of kinetic weaponry."*

Subskills: Black Box, Conventional (EM), Hyperpulse Generator

The Communications Skill is used for all methods of organized communication. This Skill gives the character an understanding of how to use local communications networks commonly found on any inhabited world, as well as how to transmit and receive data and messages over such networks. Action Checks for this Skill are used most often to establish or tap into a communications network, detect and receive incoming signals, triangulate the source of an unidentified comm signal, or even attempt to jam enemy communications. Other actions related to communications—such as translating coded messages, hacking into automated systems or repairing damaged comm equipment—all require other Skills (Cryptography, Computers and Technician/Electronics, respectively).

Skill modifiers for Communications can include bonuses for the proper equipment (a character cannot use this Skill without some form of communications equipment), and penalties for hostile (or neutral) interference. In some cases, Opposed Communications Checks may even be necessary to resolve an effort to overcome an active enemy jamming effort.

Communications comes with three main subskills, each reflecting a different method of communication used in the thirty-first century: Black Box, Conventional EM and Hyperpulse Generator.

Black Box: A top-secret interstellar communications device (often also called a fax because it sends and receives messages as simple text-on-paper), the so-called black box represents a peculiar Star League-era experimental technology based

on older pre-HPG communications tech. Its transmissions are faster than light, but slower and more restrictive than hyperpulse technology. Because it remains classified among the few major powers that have samples of this device, formal training in Communications/Black Box is non-existent.

Conventional (EM): Conventional electromagnetic communications—often referred to by the archaic term "radio"—represents the most basic and accessible form of communications. This subskill covers the use of wired and wireless communications devices, from personal communicators and radios to satellite relay systems and C^3 networks, including LOS laser and microwave communicators.

Hyperpulse Generator: Ever since the heyday of the Star League, virtually all interstellar communications have been handled by the vast network of hyperpulse generators that link nearly every inhabited world together. Essentially a massive energy cannon, designed to "shoot" ultra-compressed signal batches through hyperspace, the hyperpulse generator (HPG) is the most efficient and secure form of interstellar communications known to thirty-first century humankind, even as the stewards of its technological secrets—ComStar and the Word of Blake—wage war against one another. Only ComStar, Word of Blake and the Clans train people in HPG communications, making this Skill only somewhat easier to come by than Communications/Black Box.

COMPUTERS

"Hold on. This file is much too small. They'll notice it's fake. Give me a bit to include some useless code."

Subskills: None

The Computers Skill covers the operation or creation of software using computers in the *BattleTech* universe. While the user interface of most devices is sufficiently simple to operate that it takes no training or Skill to accomplish rudimentary tasks, taking full advantage of a computer's capabilities to access data, conduct in-depth research or hack into sensitive networks requires some form of the Computers Skill. Action Checks for this Skill apply any time the character attempts to do more than browse the system or use ready-made applications (such as word processors, electronic readers or accessing local GPS and interweb networks). Modifiers may apply if the software is outdated, corrupted or just plain incompatible with the system being used, or if the system has been locked against potential hackers.

The Computers Skill has no subskills, but the tiered nature of this Skill helps mark the difference between computer operations and computer programming. Skilled computer operators can take full advantage of the computer's capabilities, including the ability to quickly navigate the memory and storage devices attached to the computer to find hidden data, hard-to-reach network sites, and even diagnose software and hardware problems. Programmers, meanwhile, can create, alter and manipulate software, or even hack through software security and firewalls to dig up ultra-sensitive data.

Tiered Skill: To reflect the difference between casual computer operations and more sophisticated programming and hacking, the Computers Skill is represented in *A Time of War* as a Tiered Skill, progressing from simple computer operations at the Basic four levels (0 through 3) to more advanced programming levels where the user can create and manipulate programs rather than simply running them, and bypass virtual security.

CRYPTOGRAPHY

"I tend to make my ciphers something improbable, like the name of some mundane farm animal in Swahili. There just aren't many planets where they speak that, and so far my trusty yet ancient dictionary hasn't let me down."

Subskills: None

The techniques and process of coding and decoding data is known as cryptography. The Cryptography Skill enables a character to attempt to create and decode communications and data alike. When using this Skill to encode data, the character's Margin of Success becomes the modifier used by anyone attempting to decode the message without a cipher. (If the check fails, the transmission or data is not properly encoded, and will be automatically translated by anyone who receives the information.)

Attempting to decode a message or data with the proper cipher does not require a Cryptography Skill Check as long as the decoding character also has the Cryptography

Skill. (If the decoder lacks the Skill, an untrained Skill Check is needed instead.)

Encoding or decoding transmissions or data electronically is accomplished within seconds or minutes, depending on the amount of data to be decoded. Encoding or decoding transmissions and data manually can be extremely time-consuming, requiring numerous man-hours.

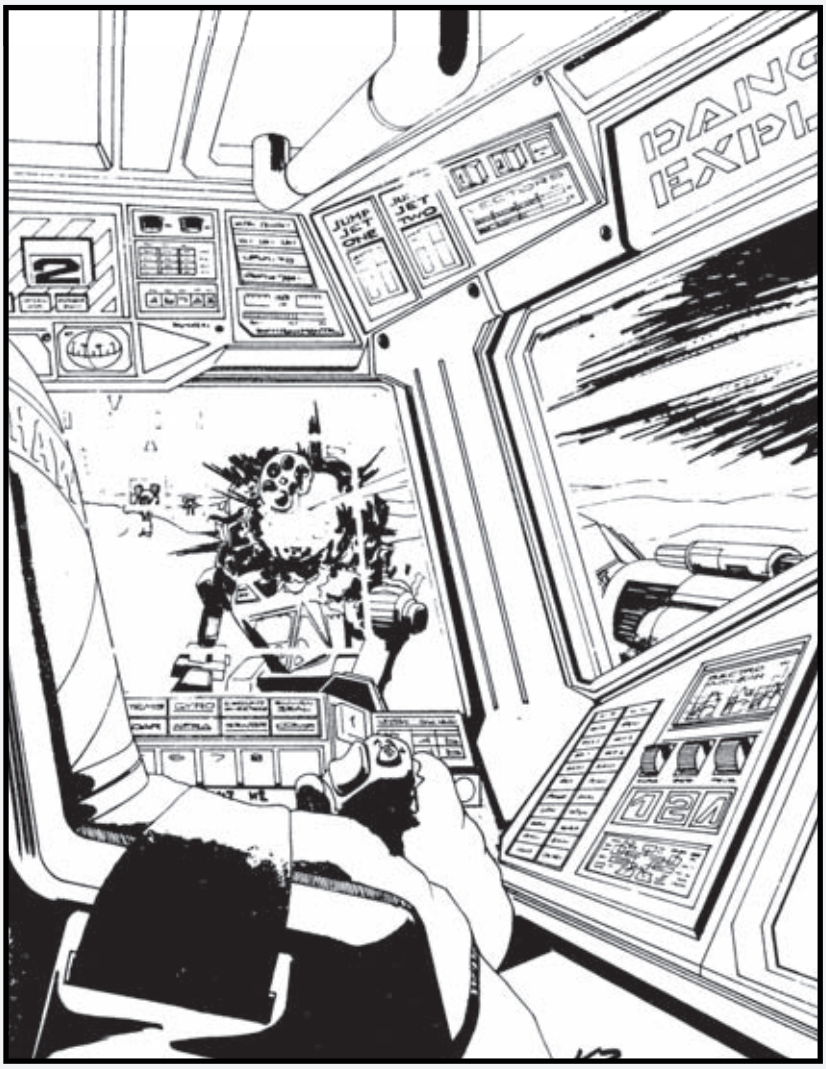
DEMOLITIONS

"But they're all *red!"*

Subskills: None

The ability to rig, use, arm and disarm explosives, as well as determining the best quantity, power and placement of explosive charges, is covered by the Demolitions Skill. While most explosives follow the brute force rule (if it's not working, you're not using enough), the safe use of explosives—and, more importantly, the ability to disable them without detonation—requires training. Demolitions Skill Checks are needed any time a character attempts to set up or disable an explosive device. Modifiers for setting up explosives include difficulty modifiers for less than ideal placement or insufficient explosive materials, or for working with particularly crude or unstable components. The Margin of Success on a successful explosives set-up check will translate into the penalty modifier for anyone attempting to disable the device.

There is little margin for error when handling or disarming explosives, which should be reflected by the dire consequences of a failed Demolitions Skill Check. If the character fails to set up an explosive by a MoF of 5 or more, the explosives prematurely detonate, immediately doing their maximum damage to the character. The same result occurs if a character fails a disarming Demolitions Skill Check with any MoF of 3 or more. Any other failed result simply means that the device fails to arm or disarm, respectively.



Although the Thor *possesses superior technology, even its Clan-made armor is no match for Hauptmann David Hawthorne's ace gunnery skills and his 'Mechs' hulking autocannon.*

DISGUISE

"Good lord. I'm never dressing up like a woman again."

Subskills: None

The Disguise Skill is used to adjust one's own appearance to avoid recognition (or to be taken for someone else). Modifiers apply to Action Checks for this Skill based on the equipment (or lack thereof) that the disguising character has on hand to make the change, as well as on what features and changes the character is attempting to accomplish and how. The gamemaster should define the possible modifiers for such an Action Check up front, based on how radically the character is making his change.

If successful, the disguising character's MoS applies as a penalty against any Perception Skill Checks to see through the ruse. (If the perceiving character also has Disguise, however, his own Disguise Skill level can be applied as a bonus to the Perception Check, since he will more likely recognize the tricks of the trade.) A failed Disguise Check means the altered look is simply too obvious to work with.

A successful Acting Skill Check can further enhance the effectiveness of a good disguise. If a character successfully makes both a Disguise and an Acting Skill Check, the MoS for both Skills will apply to the perceiving character's Perception Check to penetrate the disguise.

DRIVING

"I remember saying that as long as it has wheels, I'd drive it, but it's clear now I need to amend that statement by also insisting on propulsion and a steering wheel. I apologize for not being more specific."

Subskills: Ground Vehicles, Rail Vehicles, Sea Vehicles

The ability to operate and drive surface-based vehicles and vessels is determined by the Driving Skill. In general, Driving focuses on vehicles designed to be piloted by a single driver, but larger units that require multiple pilots still rely on a single navigator/master driver who directs the unit's overall motion. Because all vehicles tend to vary, gamemasters may apply penalties to Driving Skill Checks if the character finds himself operating a vehicle or vessel that he is not accustomed to,

especially if the vehicle has radically different performance specs from his regular ride (such as attempting to drive an ultra-swift, ultra-light Savannah Master hovercraft after long years behind the wheel of a large and lumbering Demolisher assault tank). Because vehicles can be regarded as tactical units, more detailed rules for their operation may be found under the relevant movement rules chapters in *Total Warfare*, *Tactical Operations* and *Strategic Operations*.

The Driving Skill broadly covers two main classes of vehicles in *A Time of War* with the following two subskills: Ground Vehicles and Sea Vehicles.

Ground Vehicles: Ground Vehicles include any vehicle designed to operate primarily on land (or just above it), and includes Combat and Support Vehicles with wheeled, tracked or hover-based motive systems.

Rail Vehicles: This specialized subskill covers all rail vehicles, including conventional trains and magnetic levitation (maglev) vehicles.

Sea Vehicles: Sea Vehicles includes displacement hull, hydrofoil and submersible vessels designed for operation on (or under) water, and therefore covers all Combat and Support Vehicles with such motive systems.

ESCAPE ARTIST

"You left her in here with only handcuffs and a straightjacket on? I left specific instructions to encase her in ferrocrete the moment she was captured!"

Subskills: None

The Escape Artist Skill is used to defeat restraints placed on the character's person. (Locks and other devices established to trap a character in—or keep the character out of—a room are defeated using the Security Systems Skill.) Gamemasters may modify any Escape Artist roll based on the sophistication of the restraints that bind the character, as well as any tools or other aids the character may be resourceful enough to obtain.

FORGERY

"I'm good, but I'm going to need a little more than this notepad to get you in to that HPG compound. Here's my list."

Subskills: None

Most modern official documents contain a number of devices intended to prevent them being copied without being identifiable as a copy or new product (the most effective being the DNA-triggered verigraph, which is often used to validate ComStar documents). Yet despite these efforts, the methods and means to falsify such documents have also evolved, and their use is covered under the Forgery Skill.

When attempting to create a copy of official documents, a character uses Forgery Skill, with a difficulty modifier based on the sophistication of the document's verification devices and the tools at the character's disposal. For example, simple handwritten signatures—fairly easy to reproduce—apply a minimal modifier of +0 to +1 to reproduce by hand (an electronic replication may even give the character a bonus), while efforts to reproduce a verigraph may apply a more extreme +4 to +6 penalty to pull off, even with sophisticated electronic equipment at the forger's disposal.

When attempting to determine whether a document has been forged, the MoS of the forger is used as a penalty against the opposing character's Perception or Investigation Skill Checks. If the perceiving character has the Forgery Skill himself, that Skill's modifier may be applied to the effort to detect the fraud. Without the Skill, however, or any other tools to penetrate the ruse, additional penalties may apply to the Perception or Investigation Check.

GUNNERY

"And I wasn't even aiming for the head…"

Subskills: Aerospace, Air Vehicle, Battlesuit, Ground Vehicle, 'Mech, ProtoMech, Sea Vehicle, Spacecraft, Turret

The Gunnery Skill is used by operators of most Combat Vehicles, 'Mechs, battlesuits, and aerospace units to aim and fire the unit's onboard weaponry in combat. The modifiers that apply to these Skills are described in the relevant combat chapters for *Total Warfare*, *Tactical Operations* and *Strategic Operations* (though it is important to remember that such modifiers are applied to the roll TNs in those rulebooks, while *A Time of War* inverts the same modifiers and applies them to the Skill Check for the same outcomes). The Gunnery Skill reflects the use of weapons mounted directly on a broad range of units, many of which have very different functional interfaces. As a result, Gunnery has a number of subskills, which must be specified at character creation.

Aerospace: Gunnery/Aerospace covers the use of all weapons mounted on small aerospace units, including aerospace fighters, Small Craft and Satellite Support Vehicles.

Air Vehicle: Gunnery/Air Vehicle covers the use of all weapons mounted on atmospheric-only units, including Airship Support Vehicles, conventional fighters, VTOLs and WiGE vehicles.

Battlesuit: Gunnery/Battlesuit covers the use of weapons mounted on battle armor, power armor (light), and exoskeletons. (For smaller weapons carried by the suit's manipulators or armored gloves, the appropriate Small Arms or Support Weapons Skill applies instead.)

Ground Vehicle: Gunnery/Ground Vehicle applies to the use of all weapons mounted on Combat and Support Vehicles with a wheeled, tracked or hover motive system.

'Mech: Gunnery/'Mech covers the use of all weapons mounted on BattleMechs and IndustrialMechs.

ProtoMech: Gunnery/ProtoMech applies to the use of all weapons mounted on ProtoMech units.

Sea Vehicle: Gunnery/Sea Vehicle applies to the use of all weapons mounted on Combat and Support Vehicles with a displacement hull, hydrofoil or submersible naval vessel motive system.

Spacecraft: Gunnery/Spacecraft applies to the use of all weapons mounted on large spacecraft, including DropShips, JumpShips, WarShips and Space Stations.

Turret: Gunnery/Turret applies to the use of all weapons mounted directly on fixed defense turrets and structures (including Mobile Structures), as well as weapons mounted on fixed-movement units (Rail Vehicles).

INTEREST

"It would truly make me happy if we could divert ourselves from all the gore and bloodshed for a moment in order to complete this football pool. How about it, men?"

Subskills: Any academic or cultural pursuit or hobby (History, Literature, Holo-Games, Sports Statistics and so on).

The Interest Skill is another great catchall Skill that includes any specific area of study or specialized knowledge a character possesses that is not covered by any other Skill on the character's record sheet.

Interest Skill Checks are used only to resolve tasks that fall within the character's area of interest, but are not adequately represented by other Skills within this chapter. If the character possesses another Skill that better fits a given situation, use that Skill instead (even if it is at a lower level). For example, a technician with the Interest/BattleMechs Skill at Level 4 cannot use it in place of his Level 2 Technician/Nuclear Skill.

The gamemaster ultimately decides if a particular task in the character's job can be resolved using the Interest Skill, or must be resolved with another Skill or Attribute Check.

Tiered Skill: To reflect the difference between casual "hobby-level" interests and a dedicated expert in a subject, Interest is represented in A Time of War as a Tiered Skill, progressing from simple training at the lowest four levels (0 through 3) to a more advanced and focused form common among specialists and consultants.

INTERROGATION

"I wanted you to realize that, after tonight, your life will be forever changed. Toward that end, I cut off your hand. How much further change you undergo depends entirely on your degree of cooperation. I will now ask the first question."

Subskills: None

The Interrogation Skill covers the ability to extract information from an individual who is unwilling to yield any. Beyond simple torture, intimidation and persuasiveness, this Skill includes the ability to determine (within reason) whether a subject is telling the truth or lying. (Whether the subject is correct or not is a different matter entirely.)

Modifiers to an Interrogation Skill Check must include the subject's WIL (subtracted from the roll, as a penalty), and may account for additional effects, such as the subject's health (injured or fatigued subjects are easier to break), the interrogator's methods (chemicals, force or the old "good interrogator/bad interrogator" routine may provide varying effects) and the amount of time taken (longer periods can wear a subject down as the prospect of escape or rescue wanes, producing a bonus). A successful Interrogation Check can reveal as much as one critical or useful piece of information per point of MoS; a failed check can translate to learning nothing, or—if violence or torture is involved—the subject's injury or death at the interrogator's hand.

INVESTIGATION

"All right, let's get one of those fingers to the lab for analysis."

Subskills: None

The Investigation Skill is used to gather evidence toward the solution of a particular mystery, and is a favored Skill among police detectives, private security and intelligence operatives. Using a structured approach toward information gathering, characters skilled in Investigation can identify what avenues and sequences of research will most likely produce results, and can tap a broad range of sources for information and evidence pertaining to a particular crime or other past action.

Investigation Skill Checks focus on hard evidence and research (gathering evidence from witnesses falls under the Interrogation Skill), and should apply modifiers based on the amount of evidence gathered so far, balanced against the actual suspect's efforts to cover his tracks (if any). The process can take hours or days depending on the investigator's meticulousness, the suspect's caution, and pure dumb luck, with every successful roll made after that period either eliminating one or more suspects or adding one or more bits of significant evidence—after which, the process begins again. Failed Investigation Checks turn out to be dead ends or false leads, wasting valuable resources and time the investigator simply may not have.

The Investigation Skill has no subskills, but characters may specialize in forensics (the analysis of physical evidence) or research (the analysis of records and media) as a focus for their evidence gathering.

Gamemasters should take great care, however; it can be all too tempting for a player to roll his character's way to the conclusion of an investigation using this Skill.

LANGUAGE

"Bless him. Speaks four dead languages, and two words of English. 'Beer' and 'bread'. Quite the mess when the poor lad needed to use the facilities."

Subskills: Any specific language

A wide variety of languages exists within the *BattleTech* universe. While standard English is spoken on almost every inhabited world, most realms—and their member worlds—have also developed layers of their own languages, dialects and terminology (some dating back to pre-Exodus Terra) that combine to make interstellar travel an enlightening experience in cultural diversity.

A character's Language Skill identifies the languages he can speak, understand and (usually) read, with each Language subskill identifying one language in the character's repertoire. Language Skill Checks are almost never necessary in game play; the character is generally considered to be automatically successful at understanding any language for which he has a Skill Level of 0 (though he will speak it with a pronounced local accent), and with basic reading comprehension possible at Level 1 (unless the character has the Illiterate Trait; see p. 119). At Level 2, the character attains enough ability in the language that he can be understood by another character who has only recently learned the words himself (effectively eradicating the worst of his accent), while a character at Level 3 is considered fluent. At a Skill Level of 4 or higher, the character's command of the language is considered excellent, with an expanded vocabulary and clear enough enunciation to be easily understood anywhere the language is spoken.

LEADERSHIP

"If one more person quotes Machiavelli, Sun-Tzu or Jerome Blake to me, so help me, I'm going to show him what a leader worthy of the name Davion *can do!"*

Subskills: None

The Leadership Skill is used to inspire and motivate subordinates to follow the character's commands, and is a common Skill among military and political leaders (for obvious reasons). A Leadership Skill Check is typically not required in normal game play, but may be called for when attempting to exhort NPCs to do something questionable or potentially suicidal (in which case, a penalty modifier should be applied that reflects the relative danger presented by following the command).

Whether Clan or Spheroid, few men can hope to exceed the legacy of Wolf's Dragoons' Jamie Wolf.

The Leadership Skill can also provide an Initiative bonus to a team of characters during personal combat (see p. 166) as long as the character using the Skill is, in fact, in command of the team and able to communicate with them during the battle. Leadership can also provide an Initiative bonus in tactical combat (see p. 204) at the gamemaster's discretion (as it means the enemy's Leadership Skill should also be applied).

MARTIAL ARTS

"The ultimate goal is to win without fighting. But I can settle for you kids being undefeated and surrounded by a pile of broken bodies."

Subskills: Any Martial Arts style

At its most basic levels, the Martial Arts Skill represents the character's prowess in unarmed (or virtually unarmed) melee combat. With this Skill, the character's fists and feet are weapons, though not until he achieves higher levels of expertise can the character exchange brute force, adrenaline and fury with the skilled focus of a true fighter.

The rules for using the Martial Arts Skill in personal combat appear on pp. 175-177. Subskills exist that encompass the various styles of martial arts available (such as boxing, gung fu, karate and the like), but in *A Time of War*, these subskills merely reflect the potential attained in advanced Martial Arts Skill levels. Though each style has its strengths and weaknesses, the basic rules remain the same in standard game play.

Tiered Skill: To reflect the difference between crude street fighting and the skills of a honed hand-to-hand killer, Martial Arts is represented in *A Time of War* as a Tiered Skill, progressing from simple training at the lowest four levels (0 through 3) to a more advanced and sophisticated style available only through dedicated training and experience. Even though a character may spend all of his martial arts training career learning judo, karate and other specialized fighting forms, it is only after reaching advanced levels (4 and up) that these styles truly take hold and enable the character to deliver stronger and more precise blows in combat.

MEDTECH

"Stop fussing and just bite down on that rag! You don't have to be conscious for me to suture these wounds!"

Subskills: General, Veterinary

The MedTech Skill represents basic medical training, including everything from first aid (Skill Level 0) to basic pharmacology and other "field medicine." A skilled MedTech can stabilize wounded characters in combat, treat characters who have undergone surgery and who are in recovery, and perform all duties and procedures that might be asked of a nurse or a clinical doctor, but falls just shy of being able to perform major surgery. Additional rules covering the use of MedTech Skills in game play are described under *Healing and Recovery* in the Personal Combat chapter (see pp. 192-195).

MedTech has two main subskills: General and Veterinary.

General: MedTech/General is the subskill used to treat human patients in *A Time of War*.

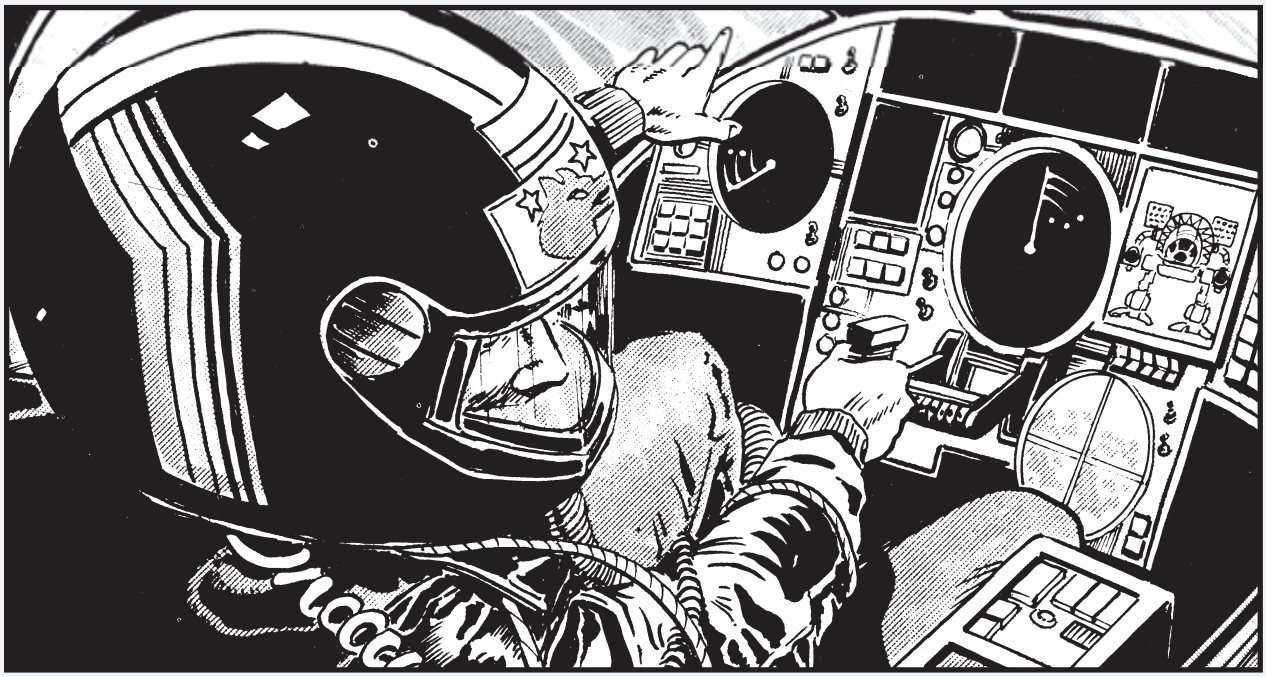
Veterinary: The MedTech/Veterinary subskill is used in the treatment of animals. However, given the sheer diversity of life in the *BattleTech* universe, veterinary MedTechs should further define their area of expertise with a specialty species or class of species (examples might include Avians, Terrestrial Mammals or Trachzoi).

MELEE WEAPONS

"And that's when I hit him in the naughty bits with my warhammer, your honor."

Subskills: None

Similar to Martial Arts, the Melee Weapons Skill has two effective levels of sophistication. At its most basic, the Melee Weapons Skill represents the character's ability to use a variety of close-quarters weapons, from knives and clubs to whips and staves. Using this Skill grants the character some effectiveness with such basic weaponry, but only at higher levels of expertise does the character abandon the wild swings and over-powered lunges of basic knife-fighting in favor of the finesse of swordfighting.



Point Commander Anton gestures to a close-flying wingman as he readies his attack run against a Jade Falcon 'Mech column.

The rules for using the Melee Weapons Skill in personal combat appear on pp. 175-177. Though melee weapons vary greatly, specialties—rather than subskills—are recommended to emphasize the character's greater expertise with any one class of melee weapon. Recommended specialties include Blades (covering weapons like daggers, shivs, swords and most vibro-weapons), Blunt Weapons (covering clubs, maces and staves) and Whips (covering non-rigid melee weapons such as chains, flails, nunchaku and lashes).

Tiered Skill: To reflect the difference between rudimentary knife-fighting and the skills of a close-in weapons master, Melee Weapons is represented in *A Time of War* as a Tiered Skill, progressing from simple training at the lowest four levels (0 through 3), to more advanced and sophisticated techniques available only through dedicated training and experience.

NAVIGATION

"No, I'm not *lost, and I will* not *ask for directions."*

Subskills: Ground, Air, Sea, Space, K-F Jump

Travelling to a specific destination is impossible without luck, signs or the Navigation Skill. A character with this Skill can use various tools, such as maps, compasses, electronic navigational instruments and so on to determine his location, and how to get wherever he wants to go. A Navigation Skill Check isn't necessary every time a character tries to go somewhere, especially if he is already familiar with traveling to and from the location in question, but it may be used periodically in unfamiliar territories, or when lost behind enemy lines.

Navigation has five main subskills, each based on a different traveling medium: Air, Ground, K-F Jump, Sea and Space.

Air: Navigation/Air is the Skill used to plot an aircraft through a planetary atmosphere, identifying the safest and most efficient routes around weather phenomena, locating emergency landing sites in the event of danger, and finding one's way with the aid of anything from local starlight and compass readings to state-of-the-art sensors and air-traffic control input.

Ground: The Navigation/Ground Skill covers finding one's way on highways and byways, as well as in the deep wilderness on foot.

K-F Jump: The Navigation/K-F Jump Skill is used to plot safe jump points and identify the most efficient interstellar routes for JumpShips and WarShips traveling between worlds. Use of this Skill relies heavily on the vessel's computers and a wealth of astronomical data, enabling the navigator to plot courses using either the conventional "safe" destinations of solar zenith and nadir jump points, or the far more unpredictable and risky pirate points that dot every planetary system.

Sea: The Navigation/Sea Skill is used to guide water-based vessels at (and under) sea, using any aids available from the placement of stars in the night sky and simple compasses to the latest in GPS technology.

Space: The Navigation/Space Skill is used to pilot spacecraft in deep space, using magnetic cues, electronic signs and the like to guide a spacecraft safely between distant points (such as from a star system's zenith recharge station to its primary planet).

NEGOTIATION

"Let's talk."

Subskills: None

At its simplest, the Negotiation Skill is used to reach a compromise between two or more parties, be it for political, commercial or legal reasons. As a Skill, Negotiation requires no roll if the haggling characters are all player characters; it should be simple enough for two players to role-play their way through a discussion among themselves rather than let the dice decide for them.

To resolve a negotiation with an NPC, however, this Skill becomes almost paramount, as the negotiating player character must now pit his Negotiation Skill (if any) against that of the subject

in a straight Opposed Action Check. At the gamemaster's discretion, additional modifiers may be applied to the player character's roll, to reflect stubbornness or reluctance on the opposing NPC's part.

A successful negotiation on the player character's part will earn him some concessions from the NPC. If the negotiation is about money or other quantifiable resources, it can reduce an asking price by up to 5 percent per point of net MoS (or force the NPC to accept a price up to 5 percent higher than he wished for, per net MoS point). If the discussion is about politics, the NPC may concede a key point or promise some degree of political support. If legal, the NPC will plea bargain more in the player character's favor. A failed negotiation means the NPC does not budge; if the roll is bad enough, it can even represent a walk-out in the midst of the negotiations as the NPC decides to break off talks.

The Negotiation Skill has no subskills, but characters may specialize in commercial, legal or political negotiations if they are in a profession that could benefit from such specialization. Commercial Negotiation Skills cover the terms and conditions surrounding the procurement and pricing of goods and services; legal Negotiation Skills focus on litigation and determining guilt or innocence in accordance with local laws. Finally, political Negotiation Skills cover public debates, policy discussions, the winning over of allies and/or the placating of enemies.

PERCEPTION

"So. When did you become aware that your date was, in fact, no longer alive?"

Subskills: None

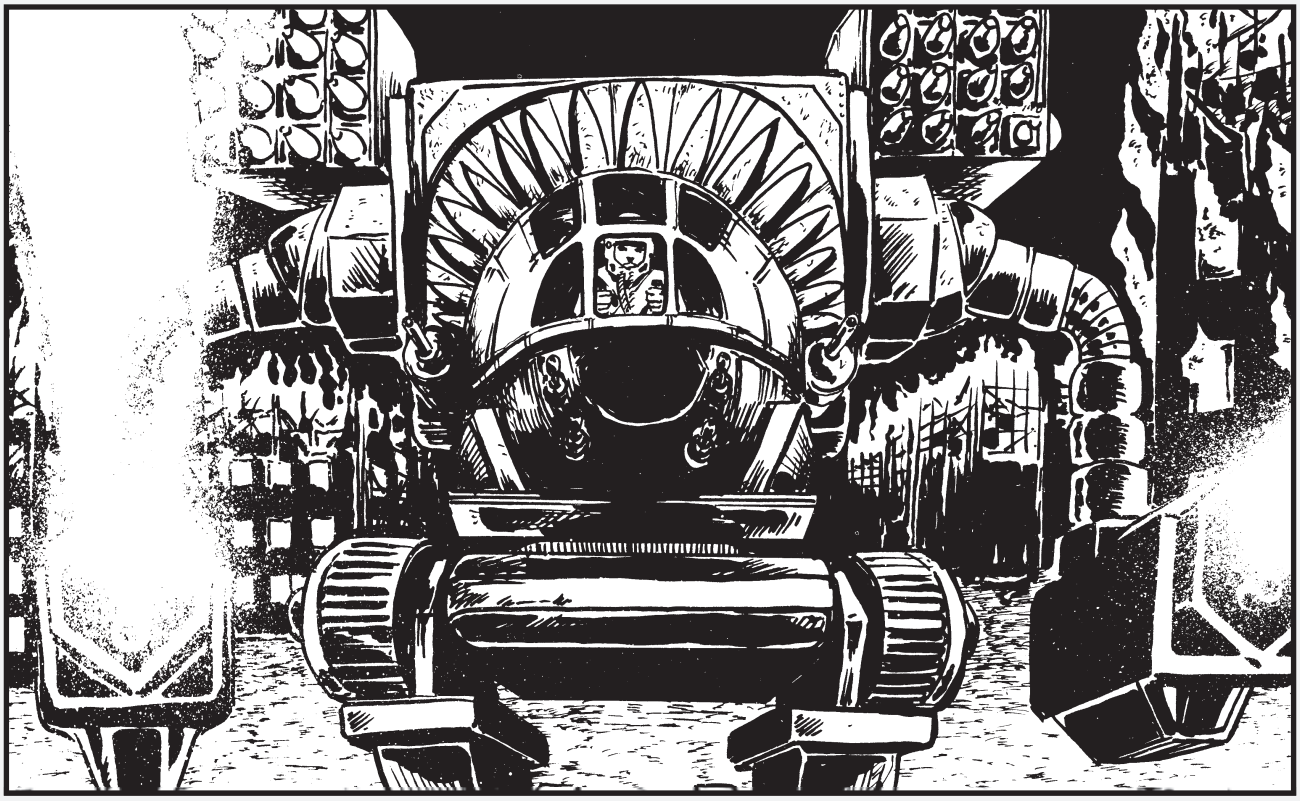
Perception determines a character's awareness of his surroundings, and is one of the most commonly used Skills in *A Time of War*. With this Skill, the character uses all his senses (not just his eyes and ears) to spot signs of danger or clues to a puzzle in his immediate environment, though modifiers may apply based on darkness, weather conditions, atmospheric taints and other sensory-affecting conditions. Whether attempting to spot an unusual shadow or movement that could be a hidden sniper, or picking up on the non-verbal signals given off by other people trying to convey a message, Perception Skill Checks can be made any time the character decides to scrutinize his environment and other individuals around him. Searching a location requires a Perception Check, as does conducting surveillance or eavesdropping on a conversation. Yet for all its applications, gamemasters and players should be careful not to overuse the Perception Skill, as constant dice rolling to sniff out signs and clues can leave the character totally unprepared to deal with the dangers he's overlooked.

PILOTING

"We will begin this course with some examples of deconstructive lithobraking. This 30-minute holofilm is titled 'When the Ground Isn't Your Friend.'"

Subskills: Aerospace, Air Vehicle, Battlesuit, 'Mech, Spacecraft

The Piloting Skill is used by operators of most Combat and Support Vehicles, 'Mechs, battlesuits and aerospace units to control and maneuver their vehicles in and out of combat. The modifiers that apply to these Skills are described in the



Clan training regimens are notoriously brutal, but effective. As a result, Clan MechWarriors are infamous for their superior combat skills.

Newly arrived in the Draconis Combine, Vernon Frederick, an emissary of the Free Worlds League, hopes to convey respect with an awkward bow.

relevant combat chapters for *Total Warfare*, *Tactical Operations* and *Strategic Operations* (though it is important to remember that such modifiers are applied to the roll TNs in those rulebooks, while *A Time of War* inverts the modifiers and applies them to the Skill Check for the same outcomes). Given the wide range of vehicles and other units available in the thirty-first century universe, a correspondingly wide range of subskills exists for Piloting, which must be specified at character creation.

Aerospace: Piloting/Aerospace covers control and flight systems used by small aerospace units, including aerospace fighters, Small Craft and Satellite Support Vehicles.

Air Vehicle: Piloting/Air Vehicle covers control and flight systems used by atmospheric-only units, including Airship Support Vehicles, conventional fighters, VTOLs and WiGE vehicles.

Battlesuit: Piloting/Battlesuit covers control and operation of battle armor, power armor (light) and exoskeletons. Though such suits are more worn than "driven" by their operators, this Skill covers their operation, whether designed with humanoid chassis or as quadrupeds.

Ground Vehicle: This subskill is covered under the Driving Skill.

'Mech: Piloting/'Mech covers control and operation of BattleMechs and IndustrialMechs, including biped and quadruped chassis and the use of any non-ranged industrial equipment and melee combat weapons if necessary.

ProtoMech: Piloting/ProtoMech applies to control and operation of ProtoMechs.

Rail Vehicle: This subskill is covered under the Driving Skill.

Sea Vehicle: This subskill is covered under the Driving Skill.

Spacecraft: Piloting/Spacecraft applies to control and flight systems used by larger aerospace units, including DropShips, JumpShips, WarShips and Space Stations.

PRESTIDIGITATION

"So, where did *you pull that pistol from, exactly?"*

Subskills: Pick Pocket, Quickdraw, Sleight of Hand

Characters skilled in Prestidigitation have trained their manual dexterity to an exceptional degree. They are capable of manual feats in excess of the average person, even those who are naturally very dexterous.

This Skill can be used in a variety of ways, each identified as a subskill below.

Pick Pocket: Prestidigitation/Pick Pocket is used to surreptitiously remove items from a person. To determine if the victim remains unaware of the event, the pick-pocketing character and his victim should roll an Opposed Action Check, pitting the pickpocket's Prestidigitation against the victim's Perception. If the pickpocket fails, he's caught red-handed. If not, he can slide back into the shadows undetected (and likely somewhat richer for the effort.)

Quickdraw: This subskill is used to quickly prepare a small weapon for use, hopefully before the character's would-be opponent can react. A successful Prestidigitation/Quickdraw Check gives the player character a free action to prepare his weapons before others can act. Failure means the character's move is so clumsy and awkward that he loses the element of surprise, or he fumbles and drops the weapon.

Sleight of Hand: Prestidigitation/Sleight of Hand reflects the ability to produce (or make disappear) small objects with a dexterous flair. Characters can use this Skill to pilfer objects kept in plain sight, or to entertain others with feats of wonder.

Tiered Skill: To reflect the difference between casual "hobby-level" prestidigitation and the skills of a dedicated professional, Prestidigitation is represented in A Time of War as a Tiered Skill, progressing from simple training at the lowest four levels (0 through 3) to a more advanced and focused form that separates the magicians from the simple tricksters.

PROTOCOL

"If I file the paperwork for a safety inspection of his Lordship's crate of Timbiqui Dark, to be executed by your person, I'd stand to expect a fifty percent cut of any 'failed specimens', right?"

Subskills: By Affiliation

A Character skilled in Protocol is aware of the formalities, bylaws, quirks and red tape associated with a particular faction's political rulers and high society. A successful roll using this Skill can help the character navigate the bureaucracy and get things done through the proper channels. Career officers and businessmen are often strong in Protocol, and in some nations it affects promotion to a greater degree than competence.

A typical Protocol Skill Check is used whenever the character seeks to cash in a favor or hook up with a contact in the local government or military apparatus. The difficulty of this effort depends on the character's relative importance, how busy his local connections may be, and what resources he's willing to trade to gain an audience. A successful Protocol Check can also help the character avoid embarrassing slips by identifying the important people at a local political or social event, and recognize any quirks in local customs necessary to win respect and minimize offense.

Subskills: As social, legal and bureaucratic customs vary greatly between realms and Clans, the Protocol Skill employs the Affiliation of its use as a subskill. A character with the Protocol/Lyran Alliance Skill, for example, would be completely out of his element in the Draconis Combine (though he could later pick up Protocol/Draconis Combine to circumvent that).

RUNNING

"A hundred meter dash in 30 seconds with full kit? Oh, yeah! With an Atlas *charging after me, I'd do it in 10!"*

Subskills: None

Except for the handicapped, virtually all characters in *A Time of War* can run, but characters with the Running Skill have trained themselves to run farther, faster and longer than the average Joe. A Running Skill Check in game play is virtually unheard of, but characters with this Skill can add its level to their Running MP in personal combat (see *Movement*, p. 167), thereby gaining a real advantage.

SCIENCE

"…and finally, I believe my work on an exothermic blistering agent for my previous employer makes me ideally suited for this position."

Subskills: Any major scientific field (examples: Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics and so on)

In the warlike future of the thirty-first century, scientific advancement may have slowed to a crawl, but humankind's understanding of the sciences was never truly lost. The Science Skill reflects extensive academic and hands-on knowledge of a particular field of major science such as Biology, Chemistry, Metallurgy and so on, that is not covered by an existing Technician Skill.

Science Skill Checks are used only to resolve tasks that fall within the character's field of scientific study, but that are not adequately represented by the other Skills in this chapter. As with Career and Interest Skills, if the character possesses another Skill that better fits a given situation, use that Skill instead (even if it is of a lower level). For example, a doctor confronted with a badly injured patient cannot use his Level 3 Science/Biology Skill in place of his Level 1 Surgery Skill. On the other hand, a doctor may use Science/Chemistry to identify the nature of a toxin found in his patient's bloodstream during a routine exam.

The gamemaster ultimately decides if a particular task can be resolved using the Science Skill, or must be resolved with another Skill or Attribute Check.

SECURITY SYSTEMS

"Well, the big obvious wall-mounted camera is to keep people from noticing the one that looks like the doorbell. It actually does work, and yes, so does the doorbell."

Subskills: Electronic, Mechanical

The Security Systems Skill is used to analyze and—if necessary—defeat locks, locking mechanisms, sensors and other instruments designed to protect a facility against intrusion, or to keep prisoners trapped inside. (This Skill is not used to install such systems; installation is covered by the appropriate Technician Skill instead.) Modifiers to a Security Systems Check apply based on the complexity of the locking mechanisms and any tools the character has on hand to defeat them. A successful roll will disable or destroy an offending lock mechanism, sensor or similar security system, while failed rolls either leave them intact and active or trigger an alarm that can summon hostile guards in moments.

The Security Systems Skill has two main subskills: Electronic and Mechanical.

Electronic: The Security Systems/Electronic Skill is used primarily to defeat electronic locking mechanisms such as code-key accessed devices and electro-magnetic safety locks. It can also be used to interrupt, disable or scramble sensor feeds, though such efforts may set off alarms if the local guards are alert enough.

Mechanical: Mechanical security systems generally use simple manual controls and other low-tech means that cannot be hacked or otherwise compromised electronically. In general, a combination of brute force and finesse can overcome most mechanical locks and primitive mechanical sensors (such as tripwires and other crude booby traps), though the skilled Security Systems master often carries personal lock-picking equipment for just such an emergency.

SENSOR OPERATIONS

"So, when the yellow blip goes 'boop', is that a good thing? Yes? No? Gonna throw me a bone?"

Subskills: None

The operation of sensor suites (as found in most Combat Vehicles and all spacecraft) requires the use of the Sensor Operations skill. When piloting a vehicle in combat, this Skill generally acts as a second Perception Skill (see p. 151), but covers targets that can be detected by artificial sensors rather than by visual sighting alone. When attempting to spot a target using motion detectors or radar, seismic, magnetic or infrared sensors and their like, use the Sensor Operations Skill.

In tactical game play, Skill Checks are not generally required for using sensors, but gamemasters can add flavor by allowing characters to make sensor sweeps for specific searches or when attempting to uncover booby traps and ambushes, assigning modifiers based on the potential targets and the character's familiarity with the sensor suite. The use of any specialty or advanced sensor equipment can further enhance the character's effectiveness, translating to bonus modifiers on the Sensor Operations Skill Check.

SMALL ARMS

"Honestly, do you need a gun from every single world we visit? Your collection already outweighs a Wasp*!"*

Subskills: None

This skill covers handheld weapons of various types, and is used to execute any ranged weapon attack delivered by a firearm or energy weapon not covered by the Archery, Support Weapons or Thrown Weapons Skills. The Small Arms Skill does

not use subskills as such, but the sheer variety of such weapons can encourage player characters to specialize. Recommended specializations include slug-throwers (ballistic weaponry), lasers (energy-based handheld weapons), burst weapons (including submachine guns and pulse lasers), shotguns (a category that also covers flechette weapons like needlers), Gauss weapons (magnetic-projectile weapons), rifles (long-barreled firearms designed for greater range) and gyrojets (self-propelled mini-rocket weapons).

Full rules for the use of small arms in personal combat may be found under *Ranged Combat Resolution* (see pp. 171-175) in the *Personal Combat* chapter.

STEALTH

"Did that box move?"

Subskills: None

The Stealth Skill governs the character's ability to sneak past people and to camouflage other objects or persons against detection. Modifiers to a Stealth Check may be applied based on the stealth equipment available to the character, local conditions that affect visibility and sensors, and whatever possible means observers might be using to detect intruders. How much or how fast the stealthy character moves can also affect the Stealth Check.

With these modifiers combined, the character's Stealth Check may be pitted in an Opposed Action Check against the opponent's Perception or Sensor Operations Check (as appropriate). If more successful than the observer, the stealthy character remains undetected. Failure may mean anything from the character's stealth arousing suspicion to his being completely revealed.

STRATEGY

"Make no mistake here, Captain. Those facilities on Rochelle are crucial to the enemy's war effort. If you don't neutralize your target there within 48 hours of landfall, every soldier on the line from Phecda to Stewart will be at risk."

Subskills: None

Where the Tactics Skill (p. 156) deals with the execution and direction of combat actions in the immediate area, the Strategy Skill tracks the grander scale of planetary and interstellar warfare. Concerned with the movement and direction of large forces, the neutralization or capture of major objectives, and the maintenance of supply chains, strategic planning aims to win wars, where tactical planning focuses on the battles that make them up.

The strategic masters of the Federated Suns leave little to chance when planning any offensive.

Characters may make Strategy Skill Checks to help identify the overall goals for a major campaign, and to perceive clues about any flaws in an enemy's campaign strategy. Modifiers may apply based on a lack of reliable intelligence or communications, leading to flawed analyses (and correspondingly bad planning). A successful roll can enable a character to know where a critical flaw exists in a current campaign plan, or even sniff out whether and where an enemy army might be planning its next major offensive. But while superior strategy can win wars, gamemasters should never allow a simple roll using this Skill to provide all the answers for a campaign planner.

The Strategy Skill has no subskills per se, but characters may specialize as desired at the planetary or interstellar levels to focus their strategic acumen on winning worlds individually, or managing the space lanes and brigades of troops in multi-world warfare.

STREETWISE

"What do you mean, how did I know about this place? Forget about it! There's one on every planet!"

Subskills: By Affiliation

The Streetwise Skill represents the seamy underside of the Protocol Skill in *A Time of War*. Where Protocol reflects the customs and formalities of law-abiding society (see p. 152), Streetwise covers life outside the boundaries of governmental or noble control. Streetwise characters use this Skill to find opportunities, gain contacts with persons of interest in less legitimate (or merely less reputable) areas of human endeavor, or simply to circumvent "the system" to obtain information, help or items that would normally be unavailable.

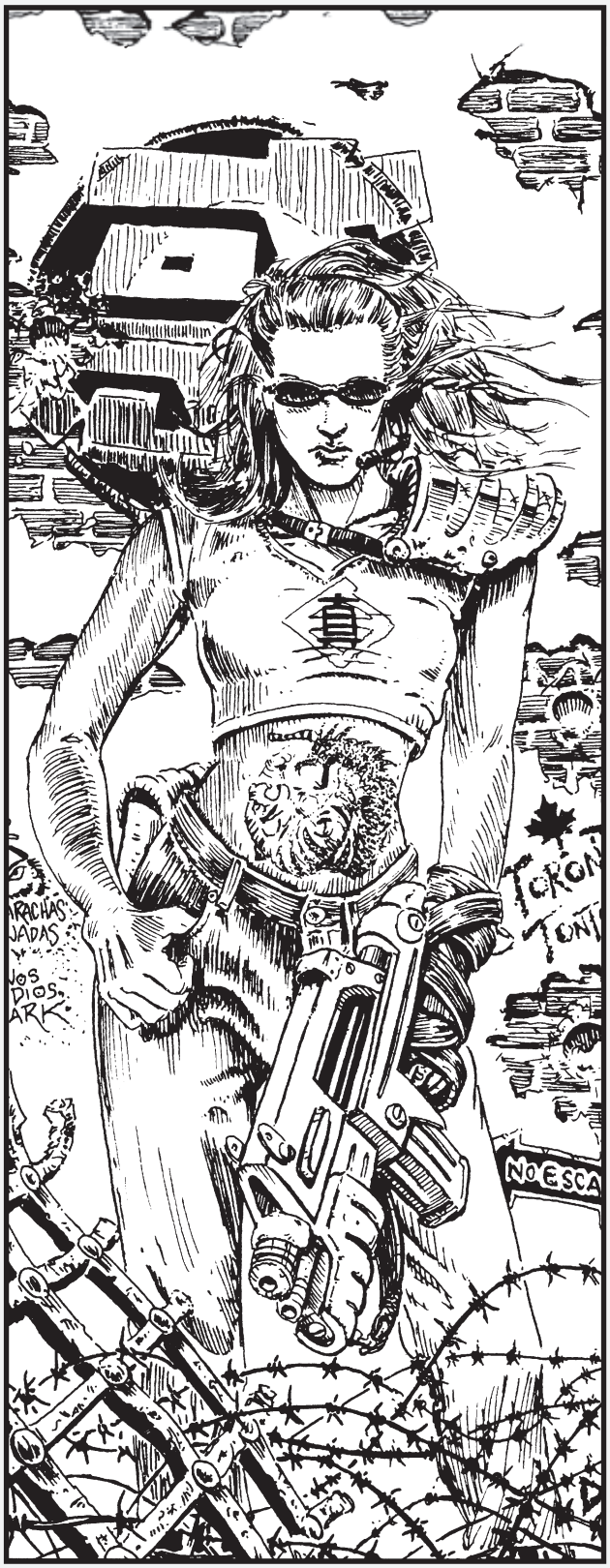
A typical Streetwise Skill Check is used whenever the character seeks to tap into the local underground scene or hook up with a contact amid the local crime syndicates or counterculture. The difficulty of this effort depends on the character's familiarity with the local scene, how cautious his contacts may be, and what resources he's willing to trade to gain an audience. A successful Streetwise Check can also help the character avoid dangerous missteps by identifying the important people among the criminal element and which of them might be an undercover law enforcement agent (or worse).

Subskills: As a mirror of the society they feed off of, the customs and practices of the underground tend to fall into similar themes throughout major realms and Clans, and so the Streetwise Skill employs the Affiliation of its use as its subskill. A character with the Streetwise/Federated Suns Skill would be fairly good at navigating the underbelly of a city on a Davion world, but virtually useless in the back alleys of the Outworlds Alliance (unless he also picked up the Streetwise/Outworlds Alliance Skill).

SUPPORT WEAPONS

"This weapon is designed to defeat 'Mech-grade armor. However, when used in an anti-personnel capacity, it will not disappoint… unless you dislike overpenetration. If so, this weapon will bring you much grief."

Subskills: None



So, you think the battlefield is dangerous? Try Port Krin on a Saturday night!

The Support Weapons Skill covers the use of heavy personal combat weapons of various types (typically referred to as medium weapons in vehicle design, or support weapons among infantry). Characters use the Support Weapons Skill to execute any ranged weapon attack delivered by such weapons not already covered by the Archery, Small Arms or Thrown Weapons Skills.

The Support Weapons Skill does not use subskills as such, but the sheer variety of such weapons can encourage player characters to specialize. Recommended specializations include missiles (including LRMs, SRMs, and rockets), lasers (energy-based support weapons, including particle cannons), burst weapons (including machine guns and personal autocannons), flamers (incendiary weapons), Gauss weapons (magnetic-projectile weapons) and recoilless weapons (long-barreled, direct-fire rockets and gyrojet weapons).

Full rules for the use of Support Weapons in personal combat may be found under *Ranged Combat Resolution* (see pp. 171-175) in the *Personal Combat* chapter.

SURGERY

"All right, let's get this spleen yanked out, and then I'll get started on your gunshot wounds! We could probably dispense with anesthetics, but you seem to have a negative personality; let's give you some so you can't bring me down."

Subskills: General, Veterinary

The Surgery Skill follows roughly the same rules as the MedTech Skill, but pertains more to cutting open a patient and dealing with serious problems like vital organ damage, cancers and physical reconstruction. A character with the Surgery Skill but no MedTech Skill can perform all of the actions appropriate to MedTech without having to make an untrained Skill Check. However, such efforts suffer a –2 roll modifier to reflect the surgeon's reduced experience with such run-of-the-mill medical tasks.

For more on how to perform surgery in game play, consult the Healing and Recovery rules in the *Basic Combat* chapter (pp. 192-195). As a general rule of thumb, the Surgery Skill should not be used on characters who have suffered less than half of their total number of hit points in damage, or who have sustained any single injury greater than half the character's BOD score (rounded down, if individual injuries are being tracked).

Surgery often takes hours to resolve, and patient recovery can take weeks due to the invasiveness of most surgical procedures. Surgery can also be extremely risky for the patient; any failed Surgery Skill Check can cause greater damage to the character, extending his convalescence or even killing him.

Subskills and Specialties: Surgery Skill modifiers can be based on the equipment and facilities at the surgeon's disposal, the extent of any injuries, and the surgeon's familiarity with the specific procedure. As with MedTech, Surgery also breaks down into two subskills—General for human patients and Veterinary for animal patients. Players should consider additional specialties for fields of surgical expertise, such as Cardiopulmonary (pertaining to the heart and lungs), Cosmetic (plastic surgery and reconstruction), Gastroenterologic (pertaining to digestive systems), Neurological (pertaining to the brain and nervous systems), Oncological (pertaining to cancer treatment) and Transplants (pertaining to organ replacement and cybernetic implantations). These specialties apply to both subskills.

SURVIVAL

"Well. You either just ate one of the most poisonous plants on this sub-continent, or a fairly harmless one known for promoting flatulence. Guess we'll find out, won't we?"

Subskills: By Environment (arctic, desert, forest, ocean, mountain, jungle and so on)

The Survival Skill is used to help the character endure the challenges and dangers of a particular natural environment. Though this Skill includes basic knowledge of flora and fauna, and the means to identify what can and cannot be eaten, the extreme diversity found on the hundreds of inhabited planets usually prevents someone from being an expert in a particular environment on more than one world. (To reflect this, a character should tie his Survival Skill to a specific planet.)

A character may need to make a Survival Skill Check once per day while in the wild for extended periods. If successful, the character remains healthy and establishes or maintains a food supply. If not, the character may suffer damage from those elements that can inflict physical harm, or from lingering Fatigue, or even have his Attributes reduced over time. (The gamemaster should determine the specifics of such deterioration based on present conditions, taking into account issues such as hunger, food poisoning, illness and the like; for random animal attacks, the character must rely on other Skills to cope).

Subskills: Even if the character does not specialize his Survival Skill to a given world, Survival subskills are restricted to general environment types. Examples include arctic, jungle, tundra and mountain environments, though gamemasters and players may be able to describe other locales worthy of this Skill.

SWIMMING

"Off you go, lads. And never you mind that the water looks brown. I'm confident there's not a sewer pipe, regardless of the suspicious odor."

Subskills: None

The Swimming Skill enables the character to swim, tread water and essentially deal with all-liquid terrain. A character with Swimming Skill generally must make no Skill Checks if he is treading water (swimming in place) or simply moving from one point to another on the surface. Deep dives and maneuvering through tight underwater confines may require a Skill Check to resolve. Possession of the Swimming Skill allows the character to use Swimming movement in personal combat as a Simple Action (without it, Swimming is not only an untrained Skill, but a Complex Action as well). In addition, this Skill covers knowledge of diving and SCUBA gear.

Swimming Skill Checks (when required) may be modified based on the nature of the liquid in which the character is swimming, how much weight the character is carrying, what weather and current conditions exist, and whether or not the character is using any kind of swimming gear suitable for the job. A successful Swimming Skill Check to enter the water, for example, means that a character successfully slides in and executes a deep dive without wasting breath and motion. Swimming underwater without gear also requires Skill Checks to determine when a character may need to surface. Failure means the character either needs to try again or may begin to drown while still too deep to break the surface. (Drowning is often reflected by delivering continuous Fatigue damage points to the character's combat monitor.)

TACTICS

"Flank them? In my Atlas*? That'll take all day!"*

Subskills: Infantry, Land, Sea, Air, Space

The Tactics Skill focuses on the execution and direction of battles in an immediate combat area, typically one with which the tactical officer is directly involved—be it from the cockpit of his own BattleMech, as commander of an infantry squad, or from a nearby HQ vehicle. Concerned with victory conditions and the state of the troops involved in the action, the Tactics Skill aims at winning the current battle more than the campaign of which it may be only a small part.

Characters may make Tactics Skill Checks to help identify the overall goals for a current or upcoming battle, and to perceive clues about any potential flaws in the enemy's combat tactics. Modifiers may apply based on a lack of local intelligence or communications, leading to flawed analyses (and correspondingly bad planning). A successful roll can enable a character to know where a critical flaw exists in an enemy's defenses or attack plans, or even sniff out whether an enemy ambush or flanking force might be lying in wait. But while superior Tactics can win wars, gamemasters should never allow a simple roll using this Skill to provide all the answers a field commander may want.

As an added benefit, a character's Tactics Skill may beef up his Initiative in personal or tactical combat if the following conditions are met: a) the character is the team's commander or tactical officer; b) the team has reliable and uninterrupted communications during the turn; and c) the players agree to using Team Initiative rather than individual Initiative. For every turn where all of these conditions apply and the Tactics Skill user can communicate with his team, the level of this Skill may be applied to the team's Initiative roll as a bonus.

The Tactics Skill has four primary subskills, each focused on a distinct class of modern combat: Infantry, Land, Sea and Air.

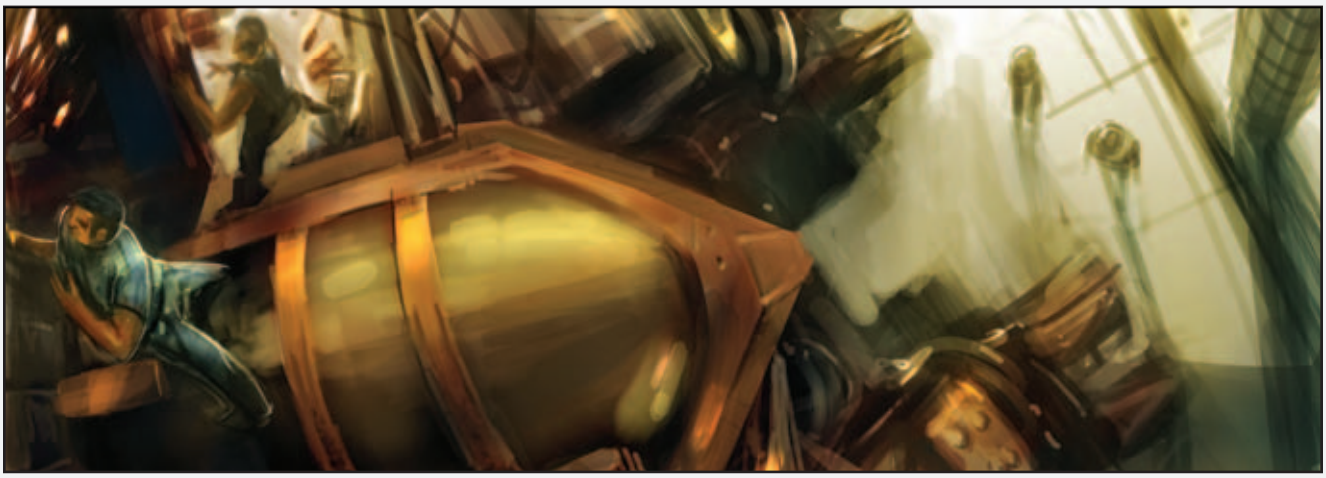
Infantry: This subskill covers tactics where the primary forces are non-vehicular ground units such as infantry, mounted infantry and battle armor.

Land: This subskill covers tactics where the primary forces are vehicular (though non-vehicle forces may be a component of the battle). It specifically covers battles where vehicles and 'Mechs are the dominant factor.

Sea: This subskill covers tactics where the primary forces are water-based vehicles (though amphibious units, such as SCUBA infantry, may be a component). It especially focuses on surface and submersible naval vessels.

Air: This subskill covers tactics where the dominant factor is air power, including VTOLs, airships and fighters in atmospheric combat, but where a minimum of other forces appear. (For air-support missions, the relevant ground-based or space-based tactics are more appropriate, as air power is relegated to supporting roles in such instances.)

Space: This subskill covers tactics in the dark vacuum of space that involve aerospace fighters, Small Craft, DropShips and other large spacecraft, though Marine boarding actions may be a vital component of such combat.



With mere hours to go before enemy DropShips arrive, technicians scramble to make every possible machine ready for battle.

TECHNICIAN

"There's your problem."

Subskills: Aeronautics, Cybernetics, Electronic, Jets, Mechanical, Myomer, Nuclear, Weapons

The Technician Skill covers the ability and knowledge to repair and maintain equipment. As these Skills are most commonly used in *BattleTech* to repair damaged vehicles and BattleMechs, their use is fully detailed in the Maintenance, Repair and Salvage rules starting on p. 166 of *Strategic Operations*.

Note: For gamemasters and players adapting these rules, remember that *Strategic Operations*—like *Total Warfare*—uses modifiers that apply to target numbers rather than Action Checks. Therefore, any prescribed modifiers mentioned for Technician Skill use should be *subtracted* from the dice roll made when using *A Time of War* rules, rather than added. Remember also to employ the most applicable Technician subskills for each roll. Prescribed repair times remain the same.

The Technician Skill has four primary subskills, each focused on a distinct class of modern technology. Gamemasters and players should be aware that while a fair degree of overlap can exist between the subskills, the most appropriate one should always be used to make an Action Check, even if the character has a lower level in it.

Aeronautics: This subskill covers components and mechanisms specifically designed for aircraft and aerospace designs, and is used when servicing basic aeronautical control and support systems.

Cybernetics: The Cybernetics subskill covers technologies designed to mimic or replace functions of the human body, including prosthetic limbs, bionic implants and artificial organs. The Technician/Cybernetics Skill cannot be used to implant such equipment; that is the job of a character with a proper Surgery Skill.

Electronic: This subskill covers the repair and design of electronic components, ranging from simple wiring and power management systems to computer hardware and robotic control systems.

Jets: This subskill covers the design and repair of thrust-based propulsion systems, and includes everything from 'Mech-based jump jets to maneuvering and drive thrusters on fighters, DropShips and WarShips.

Mechanics: A general-purpose Technician subskill, Technician/Mechanics covers the basics of vehicular and structural design and basic mechanical systems. Conventional internal-combustion and other non-nuclear engines also fall under this category.

Myomer: This subskill covers technologies based on myomer pseudo-muscle, including small-scale medical myomer technologies (such as

Major Kevin Balkend didn't consider a training session complete until his students are begging for mercy.

those used in elective myomer implants or artificial limb design) and large-scale BattleMech musculature and actuator systems.

Nuclear: This subskill covers the technologies of nuclear and atomic power systems and engines, including military, industrial and commercial fission and fusion engines, as well as their cooling systems. (Heat sinks, however, fall under the category of the Mechanics subskill.)

Weapons: This Technician subskill covers the broad array of ranged combat weapons used by modern militaries, including lasers, particle cannons, ballistic weapons (conventional of magnetic-propelled) and missile technologies. Given this range, it is not uncommon for this subskill to be further specialized, including small arms and heavy weapons within a given category. Melee weapon types are better served by the Mechanics subskill.

THROWN WEAPONS

"McPherson. Stop striking the enemy in the groin with your grenades. It's uncivilized."

Subskills: Blades, Blunt Weapons

This skill covers the use of handheld weapons weighted and balanced for throwing—a ranged and often indirect attack in personal combat that includes bladed weapons such as shuriken and darts, blunt objects like rocks, and explosives like grenades and bomb satchels. The Thrown Weapons Skill uses the following subskills in game play:

Blades: This subskill covers the use of sharp thrown objects, such as shuriken, throwing daggers and darts. Such weapons are generally balanced for throwing and accurate placement.

Blunt Weapons: This subskill covers everything from improvised weapons like rocks and debris to balls and even grenades.

TRACKING

"OK. The good news is, we're gaining on him. But so are the wolves."

Subskills: Urban, Wilds

The Tracking Skill enables a character to follow a person or animal based on the scant signs and evidence they leave behind. This Skill is commonly used by scout troops patrolling built-up areas for intruders, or by game hunters tracking wild game for

food or sport, but it can also be used to foil hostile trackers by covering one's traces.

A successful Tracking roll can yield clues to where the tracker's quarry may have gone and how long ago it passed through an area where the tracker is searching—and, if close enough by, can even identify the quarry's most likely location. Modifiers to a Tracking roll depend on the subject's size and intelligence, the preponderance of clues it may leave in its wake, and environmental factors. (Tracking humans across a broken tundra with minimal weather is likely to be extremely difficult, while following a wild elephant through a muddy jungle may be quite a bit easier.)

If a character uses his Tracking Skill to thwart enemy trackers, it counts as a Complex Action and reduces the character to one-third of his usual movement rates. On the plus side, it also applies half the character's Tracking Skill level (rounded up) as a penalty modifier to the opposing tracker's Tracking Skill.

Tracking has two primary subskills: Urban and Wilds.

Urban: This subskill covers pursuing a target through "civilized" areas, and includes the ability to spot physical signs of a target's passing. Such evidence may be anything from disturbed debris and telltale property damage to quick queries among the locals as to whether they've seen anything matching the quarry's description. In an urban setting, humans are often the game.

Wilds: A more common venue for tracking, the Wilds subskill covers any environment beyond the urban (or suburban) sprawl, from desert sands and frozen tundras to temperate forests and tropical jungles. In the wilds, the most common game is non-human.

TRAINING

"It is my job to teach you mudheads enough to extend the amount of time you survive on the battlefield. Make no mistake, you pathetic rejects, you will all still die, but—by Blake—the skills you learn in my camp will enable you to take plenty of the enemy with you by the time that glorious day comes!"

Subskills: None

The Training Skill enables a character to share his expertise with other characters. This Skill is particularly valuable, as the further development of any Advanced Skill (SA or CA) requires a trainer. A successful Training Check can impart to the lucky recipients bonus XP toward the addition and improvement of any Skill the trainer has and wishes to pass on.

To train another character in a Skill, the trainer must possess a Training Skill level equal to or higher than the Skill he is teaching. That Skill must also be in the trainer's own repertoire, and its recipient must be at least one level below the trainer in expertise to benefit from the trainer's instruction. If all of these criteria are met, the training character can make a Training Skill Check at the end of a week's instruction time, applying the trainee's INT Linked Attribute modifier to the roll result in addition to all other normal Skill modifiers.

If the Training Check is successful, the trainer bestows his INT score in XP upon the trainee character, plus the Training Skill Check's Margin of Success. These XP are awarded directly to the Skill the trainer is teaching the trainee, and may be combined with XP the trainee has already received to advance the Skill to its next level. If the roll fails, the trainer must repeat the week's instruction and try again. Only if the

Training Skill Check succeeds can a trainee character raise the level of an Advanced Skill (even if he has the XP to advance otherwise). Skills listed as Basic (SB or CB) can be improved in the same way, but receive double the XP allotment due to their greater simplicity.

Because the Training Skill requires a 1-level difference between trainer and trainee, the maximum possible Skill level a trainer can reach with the Training Skill is 9. Once a Skill is advanced to Level 9—regardless of its complexity—a character can only advance by XP.

ZERO-G OPERATIONS

"Damn you, Leon! I told you once, I told you a hundred times: Gauss rifles do *have a recoil!"*

Subskills: None

The ability to function effectively in micro-gravity is the primary purpose for the Zero-G Operations Skill. Skill Checks are not generally required for Zero-G Operations, but each level of this Skill the character possesses will reduce the penalties a character may suffer for operating in low or zero gravity (gravity ratings under 1.0 G; see *High/Low Gravity* under *Special Conditions*, p. 237) by 1 point (to a minimum modifier of 0). This penalty reduction does not apply to inertia-based modifiers, as they are affected by the G-Tolerance Trait (see p. 118).

A character may make a Zero-G Operations Skill Check to resist additional side effects from micro-gravity at the gamemaster's discretion, such as knockdown effects from recoil when using kinetic weapons in zero gravity. In such cases, a successful Zero-G Operations Skill Check allows the character to ignore those effects. The Zero-G Operations Skill may also be used in place of Acrobatics/Free-Fall, but only as long as the character is operating in micro-gravity or zero gravity.

THE FIRES OF HELL

RECON

KEVIN KILLIANY

CAREDONIAN WIND FOREST
ROCHELLE
5 JULY 3076

Luella tried to ignore the scaly scrape of her collar against the flaky rash that was spreading across her throat. And maybe down her chest and back as well. Not that she was going to open her suit to check. With airborne pollutants peeling away her epithelials, keeping skin exposure to a minimum was a priority.

At least she hoped it was pollution. The possibility of some mutated fungus or microbe getting past the mega doses of meds and vitamins Doc Luther had given them—of something feeding on her skin—was more than she wanted to consider.

With an effort, Luella ignored what she hoped was the imaginary sensation of flakes of her skin sloughing off, and focused on her infrared goggles. No heat signatures.

She would have felt better about that if she didn't know her own jumpsuit blocked eighty percent of her body heat.

Luella turned her head slowly, carefully quartering her assigned arc.

According to their topo maps, a dismal swamp lay between them and their objective, but for now the unit was in a forest of sorts. The fluted boles of yorkwoods—giant trees some fifteen meters across at the base—rose like celestial columns to disappear into the mists above their heads.

Enough sunlight forced its way through whatever canopy the giants formed to support trees of more familiar scale. The underbrush was composed mostly of fronded plants—spiked half-circles of brittle green or sickly yellow that bobbed and rattled in the faint breeze—with islands of more conventional bushes. The good news was that the waving fronds obscured their movements while the rustling rattle covered any sound they might make. The bad news: the waving fronds also obscured the movements of any Blakists, and the rattling rustle covered any sound *they* might make.

"Got something."

Luella slowly turned her head in the direction Ethan was facing. Nothing. Then fronds moving against the wind. Bringing her hand to the edge of her goggles, she clicked to visible light. Something was definitely moving through the underbrush. Two somethings, human-sized.

Luella clicked her throat mic twice. An answering click assured her Travis and the others had taken cover.

The Blakist patrol was moving across their intended path. Unless the Robes changed course, they would pass at about thirty meters.

If the patrol saw them. . . .

Luella stepped up the goggles' magnification and turned her head slowly, sweeping back along the approaching patrol's backtrail. It took her twenty seconds to decide the patrol had no backup.

That we can see, she amended. *Even if they don't get off a message when the shooting starts, the shooting will bring in all the fire support they need.*

"Here."

Luella turned toward the sound of Ethan's voice.

Ethan's hand was extended, a civilian-grade slug gun across his palm. It was flat and black and angular, but its clean lines were

ruined by the sausage of a suppressor—maybe twenty centimeters long and five thick—screwed to the muzzle.

"Where the hell did you get that?"

"It was a wedding gift from my mother," Ethan deadpanned. "Twelve mil, subsonic."

"Against body armor?" Luella didn't reach for the gun. "You need high velocity and narrow cross section. A seven, maybe a nine."

"Fast bullets make sonic booms; no way to silence a gun like that," Ethan said. "And you saw those jokers at the LZ—these Robes let the accounting department pick their armor."

"So why are you handing it to me?"

"You're a better shot."

Luella shook her head. "We don't know if these two are part of the net trying to catch us or if they're guarding something they want us to keep away from," she said. "Either way, they're on a search pattern because their brass doesn't know where we are. If they don't show up where they're supposed to, that's going to change—and not in a good way."

Ethan shrugged, conceding the point, and closed his hand around the gun. But he didn't put it away.

"They didn't walk all the way out here," Ethan murmured when the patrol had passed them.

"Agreed," Luella said. "But they have been this way before. They moved like men following a set path, not scouts picking their way."

"Defensive patrol, then." Ethan raised his head slightly, tapping his goggle's zoom toggle as he looked back along the Blakists' path. "What do you suppose they're guarding?"

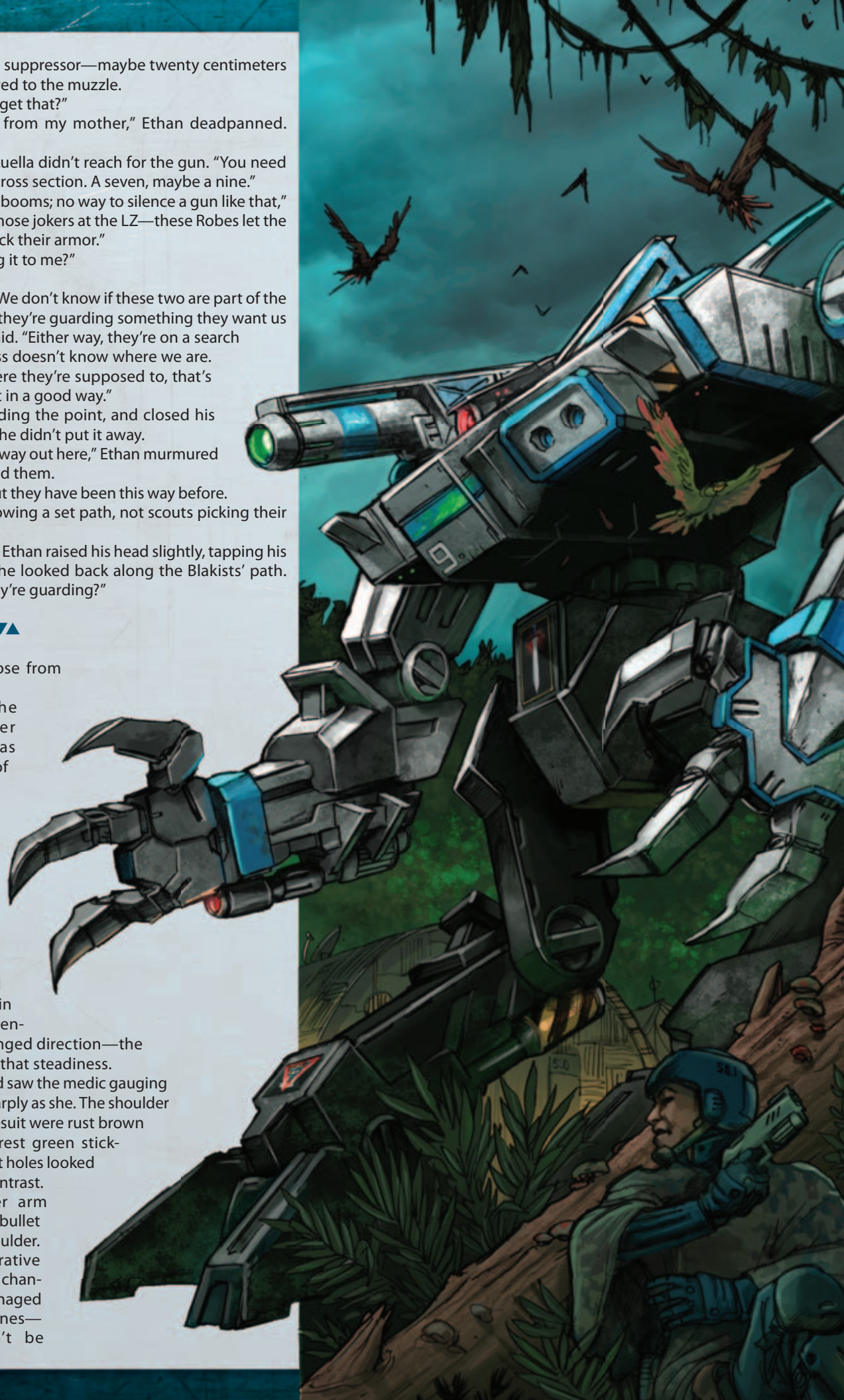
▲▼▲

Travis nodded as he rose from cover.

Luella returned the acknowledgment, her eyes on Franz Logan as the youngest member of the team picked his way through the fronds toward their position. He moved steadily, with no sign of the weaving he'd been doing the first day after the crash. Whatever Grace had doped him with was working. But Luella could see the extra care he took in placing his feet, the momentary hesitations as he changed direction—the kid was having to work at that steadiness.

She glanced at Grace and saw the medic gauging her erstwhile patient as sharply as she. The shoulder and sleeve of Grace's jumpsuit were rust brown with dried blood; the forest green stick-patches covering the bullet holes looked incongruously bright in contrast.

Grace moved like her arm hurt—no surprise there, a bullet had gone through her shoulder. *Through* being the operative word. The wound, a clean channel front to back, had managed to miss all joints and bones—though Luella wouldn't be



surprised if after-action X-rays found the medico's scapula had been nicked.

Grace had kept the arm moving as they marched, rotating it to keep the muscles from freezing up. That had cost them a couple of pauses to replace slipped and saturated pressure bandages, but it ensured she could still use her arm.

Her eyes met Luella's, then slid away. The more serious wound was on the inside.

Busby brought up the rear. The big man looked like a tank, particularly with his broad pack stuffed with every weapon he could carry, but he managed to move silently between the rattling vanes of the frond plants.

Making noise wasn't the only danger the plants offered. The dry fronds were brittle, and a trail of broken ones would tell the Blakists where they'd been.

"We need a vehicle," Busby said, his voice pitched low to stay within the group.

"I'll call ahead for a rental," Travis said. "Something fast enough to outrun the Robes, you think? Or something with enough punch to fight them off?"

"I've been following those guys." He indicated Grace and Logan with a nod. "They need to be riding, not walking. Hoof it much farther, they'll be no good when we get there."

Logan dismissed the assessment with a curse and Grace stood a little taller when Travis looked her way. Nonetheless, Luella had to concede Busby's point. They were not in top shape.

She was a little surprised when Travis turned his calculating gaze her way. It took her a moment to remember she'd been knocked unconscious in the crash. She was as much walking wounded as Logan and Grace.

Luella raised her chin slightly. *Nothing wrong with me but a little diaper rash on tadalafil*, she thought toward her captain

"A VTOL would be good." Busby's Tikonov accent rhymed the acronym with *beetle*. "But anything is better than nothing."

Travis shook his head. "Making a side trip to steal a vehicle from the Robes—assuming we could find one and snatch it—is out of the question. We're too far behind schedule to waste the time."

"What if they parked one right in our line of march?" Luella asked.

"Meaning?"

"What I came back to report," Luella said. "Ethan and I came across a patrol. Not a search party, defensive perimeter."

"Guards? What would they be guarding in the middle of nowhere?"

"The thing about the middle of nowhere is that it's usually halfway between somewheres."

"You found a resupply depot?"

"Maybe no more than a convenient cache." Luella shrugged. "We didn't get close enough to find out. Left Ethan watching the watchers, timing their rounds just in case, and came back here to report. My first thought was to map the extent of their patrols and take us around, but if we're looking for a ride, there's bound to be vehicles there."

Travis nodded.

"We'll move up to the patrol perimeter. You and Ethan go in. We'll see what we got, then see what we do."

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"We've got a compound," Luella murmured, knowing the laser comm in her helmet carried her voice clearly to Travis.

Or it should, if she'd lined the narrow beam up right. Travis couldn't answer, of course. Even with narrow beam, his signal would have washed past her and into the Blakists' broad-spectrum scanners. She doubted the Robes could break their encryption protocols, but the enemy didn't need to know what they were saying, just where they were saying it.

"Looks like a light-weight fire base." She rose slightly from her crouch, counting on the waving fronds to cover her movement as she continued her report. "Cleared area for VTOL; comm hut; big spread of canvas, could be a vehicle tent, but I can't see inside from this angle; double row of definitely barracks tents for maybe forty troops—"

Ethan's warning hand on her shoulder stopped her mid-word. She let his firm pressure bring her back to her low crouch.

Luella didn't have to ask what had alerted him—the rhythmic impact vibrations rising through her boots told her a BattleMech was stalking their way. She tried to determine its vector from the seismic thumps. Impossible, but just as impossible not to try.

She hoped it hadn't been in line of sight to Travis while she was broadcasting.

Counting on Ethan to follow, she crept backwards, angling toward a spreading oak tree. At least it looked like a spreading oak tree, even if the scale of the cloud-scraping yorkwoods reduced it to underbrush. The fronds protecting them from troops on the ground would be no obstacle to a 'Mech jockey atop a ten-meter-tall weapons platform.

Another tree, maybe two hundred meters to their left, shuddered and bent. Giving up on reaching their tree, Luella threw herself flat among the roots of the frond bushes.

"*Merde*," Ethan muttered. "Damned buttons keep me too far off the ground."

Luella wondered if that tired bit of trench humor had ever been funny.

The vibrations continued—seven, ten, twelve—without getting more intense. The 'Mech was not coming their way. Luella chanced a slow push-up. Nothing—the sickly yellow fans were too tall. She drew her knees up under her and rose into a low crouch.

Not ten meters high; more like eight.

The BattleMech was a *Malak*—a thirty-ton Omni with a low center of gravity and broad shoulders. She'd never seen one in the flesh and didn't know enough to recognize this configuration, beyond what looked like a jagged machete retracted along its left forearm.

As she watched, the machine stopped just short of the earthworks surrounding the small firebase and reversed itself, turning in place until its back was to the compound. Luella expected it to head out on a new vector, but it simply stood, as though on sentry duty. From this new perspective she could make out the double snout of a twin-barreled missile launcher protruding like a name badge from its left chest.

"Okay, that's wrong," Ethan said.

Luella wasn't surprised to see the older man crouching beside her.

"What?"

"*Malak*." He indicated the stationary machine with a nod. "Super high-tech scout 'Mech used only by the Blakist elite. Domini or whatever."

"So?"

"So have you noticed anything elite about the jokers we've been fighting? A 'Mech like that with these boys makes no sense at all."

"A lot about this setup makes no sense," Luella agreed. "We don't have all the pieces."

"So let's get more pieces."

Creeping where they dared, belly-crawling where they had to, the pair spiraled in toward the compound, getting as much of the curved earthworks between themselves and the 'Mech standing sentry as they could.

"Sloppy."

Luella nodded her agreement.

There should have been a clear fire field around the camp's fence—bare earth stretching out at least a hundred meters. Instead there was a band of stunted frond plants and bushes less than fifty meters wide. As though the garrison had made a minimal attempt, then left the cleared area to overgrow. The uneven growths were nearly a meter tall. She didn't know how quickly the local plants grew, but it had to have been weeks since the fire field was last cleared.

Brittle rattle behind her.

Luella rolled right, fronds clattering beneath her, as she swung her laser around and down. Barrel between her knees, she lined up—

Her finger froze on the trigger as Travis' face registered.

"That was supposed to be a subtle warning I was approaching," the captain said.

"Effective." Luella was surprised at how matter-of-fact her voice sounded.

"Next time, you might try a bit less subtle," Ethan suggested as he lowered his carbine.

"Noted." Travis belly crawled to join them at the edge of the clear fire field. "What have we got?"

"Definitely vehicles under the canvas; I make it two tanks." Luella pointed to the two sets of treads visible beneath the edge of the fabric. "It's framed high, so I'm betting it keeps the rain off BattleMechs as well."

"That might be 'Mech feet." Ethan pointed.

Luella thought the block of shadow looked more like stacked crates, but didn't offer an opinion. They'd know soon enough.

"Something doesn't look right," she said instead. "This whole setup is unbalanced."

"Not enough people," Travis agreed.

"And not the right people. Ethan said it before; we've got a Domini OmniMech working with infantry from a second-string planetary militia. Any other time, the Domini wouldn't acknowledge these guys exist."

Travis grunted, acknowledging the point.

For a long moment the three scanned the all but deserted compound, each searching for the key that would unlock the puzzle.

A man in a tanker's field rig ducked under the edge of the canvas shielding the vehicles and strode toward what appeared to be the comm hut, focused more on the noteputer in his hand than where he was going. Luella followed him with her eyes. Definitely planetary militia, though she didn't recognize the color combination. Rochelle or brought in from off-world?

Ground shock. Another. The *Malak*, out of sight on the other side of the camp, was moving. The third impact felt slightly fainter than the first. By the sixth step, the three soldiers relaxed. The machine was moving away.

"I got it," Ethan announced.

"Got what?"

"What we're looking at." The grizzled sergeant pointed. "Skeleton crew, third string militia, guarding what? A secondary or tertiary supply dump. The Domini would never guard a place like this, but the first string militia would."

"You're not making sense," Travis said a beat before Luella.

"Sure I am," Ethan countered. "The Domini know we're on planet. But they don't know exactly who we are, how many we are or where we are, right?"

He paused, looking back and forth between the two officers with an expectant expression. Luella realized he wasn't going to continue unless they indicated they were following his argument.

"Right."

"So the Domini are looking for us," Ethan said. "But maybe there's not enough of them to throw out a tight enough net. So they draft the best of the locals, the elite of the planetary militia, to fill in the gaps—maybe beat the bushes to drive us toward the Domini guns."

"Leaving the third string to guard caches like this one," Travis finished.

"Right. These are the traffic cops and truant officers and weekend warriors," Ethan said. "The Domini just send an Omni by every so often to make sure they haven't fallen asleep or accidently shot themselves in the ass."

"Makes sense."

Luella nodded reluctantly. It did make sense. But that didn't mean it was the right answer.

"I'm making no movement by the tank tent," Travis said. "You think you could hotwire one of those rides, Lieutenant?"

"In my sleep."

"Naoko, you cover. I'm heading back to round up the troops." He looked back at Luella. "When you make the tank, give a double click on your mic. Then wait five minutes to make your break. Bear east-southeast, we'll circle to meet you."

"Don't slow down for me," Ethan added. "I'll hop on when you run me over."

▲▼▲

Luella placed her hand carefully. Pressing the dry frond into the soft soil, she muffled its dry crunch with her palm. The ground beneath the stunted frond plants and bushes of the not-so-clear fire band was covered with dry fronds and withered branches. Even using all her stealth to bring her knee forward, the crackle of desiccated detritus sounded like a barrage of small-arms fire to her ears.

She moved on her stomach, always aware of the blazer strapped across her back and the fact that her cover was barely a meter high.

She gripped Ethan's silenced gun, using the butt and heel of her shooting hand to support her weight as she pulled herself forward. She still was not convinced of the slug thrower's effectiveness, but it was better than nothing—and less likely to be noticed than her double-barreled laser. As long as she didn't run into anyone wearing real body armor, it should be fine.

Her other hand came down in tar.

Surprised, she pulled her hand back. It was coated in a viscous amber liquid; caked in dirt and crumbled frond fragments.

Sap?

A terrible suspicion formed in the pit of her stomach.

Slowly, making no sudden, eye-catching movements, Luella raised herself up until she could see the top of the frond plant in front of her. The spiny trunk ended in a ragged gash that oozed a thick flow of sap. Turning her head slightly, she saw the next plant had also been hacked.

The plants in the clear fire field hadn't grown up to a meter high. They'd been cut down to a meter.

Luella keyed her throat mic.

"Ambush!" she broadcast with as much force as she could without shouting. "Trap! Bug out!"

From somewhere behind her came the staccato rattle of Ethan's carbine. A rage of heavier weapons answered.

Too late.

Dropping the useless pistol, Luella struggled to unlimber her blazer.

The ground before her exploded.

Neither Keiko Marita nor her team of commandos are interested in negotiating when lives on the line.

"Six of you against two of us, huh? This is so unfair… You guys are going to need more people…"

OVERVIEW

In *A Time of War*, combat is practically a part of daily life, especially for those who make it their business. Personal combat in this setting is a special extension of the basic game play system, but is far more structured, with all actions resolved in brief, five-second intervals called *turns*. This turn-based system is designed to reflect the time-intensive nature of the situation.

The following personal combat rules expand on those featured in *Basic Game Play* (see pp. 34-43). All characters or creatures involved in combat under these rules are referred to as characters.

THE COMBAT TURN

Each turn in personal combat reflects a five-second period of time that follows a set sequence of three *phases*, beginning with the Initiative Phase (where turn order is determined), continuing through the Action Phase (where characters move and carry out actions) and ending with the appropriately named End Phase (where the outcome of many actions is resolved). Until combat is resolved, the End Phase of each turn is followed immediately by the Initiative Phase of the next.

INITIATIVE PHASE

The Initiative Phase always begins the personal combat turn. In this phase, the players and gamemaster roll to determine the order in which the characters act. Initiative may be performed individually (where each character has its own initiative) or at the team level (where an entire side is combined into a single unit that acts as one—ideal for faster play in larger battles).

ACTION PHASE

In the Action Phase, the characters can navigate and interact with the battlefield as desired (in accordance with their Initiative order). The number of actions that a character may perform is limited by the relative complexity of the actions being chosen.

END PHASE

In the End Phase of the personal combat turn, any unresolved events completed in the turn are resolved, including any continuous damage, ongoing operations, environmental effects or other factors that can have an impact on the characters' fatigue or consciousness. As its name implies, the End Phase always indicates the end of a combat turn.

INITIATIVE PHASE

During the Initiative Phase, each player rolls 2D6 to determine the order in which the characters will act. The character who had the highest Initiative roll result acts first, followed by the character with the next-highest result, and so on until the character with the lowest roll result acts last. Unlike tactical combat (or personal combat using the *Tactical Combat Addendum* rules beginning on p. 200), personal combat actions are resolved immediately, rather than simultaneously, so a character who wins the Initiative roll can execute and resolve an attack before his opponent has acted.

In the event of a tie, the tied character with the highest RFL Attribute score (or the highest WIL score, plus Leadership level, if

COMBAT SCALE

The *BattleTech* universe offers a broad range of scales at which combat can be resolved. The rules covered in this chapter focus on personal combat, the smallest of these scales, but have been designed with respect for the scale of combat described in *Total Warfare* (which is referred to in this book as *tactical combat*; see pp. 200-225). Players familiar with tactical combat will doubtless notice some differences, because the greater emphasis on personal combat and role-playing take precedence here over the more abstracted effects of larger-scale game play.

MAPS AND MINIATURES VS. FREEFORM PLAY

For effective game play, these combat rules rely heavily on knowing the environment, terrain and distances between characters. For best results, it is therefore recommended that maps, counters and/or miniatures be used to track the characters' whereabouts. The players need to set a fixed scale to determine the distances involved, and the characters' markers should indicate which direction they are facing at any given time. Hex maps—similar to those used in *Total Warfare*, for example—may be used with a game scale of 1 hex per 5 meters, while a gridless map or miniature terrain could establish a game scale of 1 inch per meter of distance.

If personal combat involves a small number of characters (generally ten or less), it may be resolved more abstractly, so long as the gamemaster and players are meticulous about tracking the characters' movement, local terrain and other factors that can influence combat resolution. Resolving combat using such freeform play requires no maps, counters or miniatures, but otherwise uses the rules given in this chapter.

CHARACTER SHEET COMBAT DATA

For speed of play, all the information pertinent to a character in combat is consolidated in a single block on the Character Record Sheet called the Combat Data block. Located on the right-hand side of the first page on the character sheet, this area is used to record the following vital statistics.

Condition Monitor: A series of bubbles is used to track the Standard Damage and Fatigue Damage that a character may sustain in combat, as well as whether or not the character is rendered Stunned or Unconscious. A completely undamaged character should show twice his BOD in open Standard Damage bubbles (with all extra damage bubbles blacked out), twice his WIL in open Fatigue Damage bubbles (again, with all extra Fatigue bubbles blacked out), and an open Stunned and Unconscious bubble.

Movement: This area tracks the number of meters per turn the character can move in combat, covering basic movement rates (Walk, Run, Sprint) as well as special movement rates (Climb, Crawl, Evade and Swim). See *Movement Actions*, p. 167, for information on finding these values.

Personal Armor: This area tracks the types of armor the character is wearing, including its body location, type and BAR values across the four Standard damage types (Melee/Ballistic/Energy/Explosive). If advanced Hit Location rules are not in play, only the armor worn on the character's torso applies to resolving damage, and so the first line of this area already identifies "Torso" as the location. See *Personal Equipment*, starting on p. 254, for information on the character's personal armor.

Weapons: This area lists up to three weapons the character may possess in combat, in addition to his Martial Arts Skill. Because all characters are presumed to have rudimentary hand-to-hand fighting ability, Martial Arts is listed first. If the character is Untrained, the letters "UT" should replace the Skill's level. See *Personal Equipment*, starting on p. 254, for statistics on the various weapons; for unarmed combat and additional melee weapon damage effects, see *Melee Combat Resolution*, p. 175.

squad or team Initiative are used) acts first. If these scores are also identical, make a second roll to resolve Initiative between the tied characters.

INDIVIDUAL VS. SQUAD AND TEAM INITIATIVE

Depending on the number of characters involved, the players and gamemaster may decide to use Individual Initiative, Squad Initiative or Team Initiative.

Individual Initiative: Under Individual Initiative, each character rolls separately for Initiative order, with RFL used as the tie-breaking Attribute score. This method works best for small-scale fights with no more than ten total characters in play.

Squad Initiative: Under Squad Initiative, characters are grouped into squads of four or more characters apiece, with one member of each squad designated the squad's leader. The leader then rolls for his squad's place in the Initiative order, when the entire squad will resolve its actions at once. The sum of each squad leader's WIL Attribute score and Leadership Skill levels is used as the tie-breaker in Team Initiative. This method works best for fights involving more than ten characters, or when vehicles are in play.

Team Initiative: Under Team Initiative, a designated leader on each side makes an Initiative roll for the entire side in a fight. As with Squad Initiative, the sum of each leader's WIL Attribute score and Leadership Skill levels is used as the tie-breaker. At this level of play, however, the winning team must alternate the actions of its various sub-units against those of the other teams in play, with each side moving parts of their total force as proportionately as possible. (For example, a team that outnumbers its enemy 3-to-1 and wins Initiative would have three squad-sized units move and act before the opposing team may even move one.) This method works best for large combat sequences involving fifty or more characters and vehicles.

INITIATIVE MODIFIERS

The Initiative roll is not an Action Check per se, and so is not typically rolled against a character's Skills or Attributes directly, as it reflects an overall combination of awareness, timing, reflexes and pure luck. Injuries and fatigue do not affect an Initiative roll, but other conditions may, such as certain character Traits (Combat Paralysis and Combat Sense) or special Skills (Tactics and Leadership). These effects are described in the Initiative Table.

HOLDING ACTION

In rare instances, a character with a higher Initiative may not wish to act at his point in the Initiative order, because he is waiting for another character to make a move first. In such an event, the character may declare—on his normal Initiative—that he is "holding action." The character who holds his action is then treated as if he rolled a lower Initiative for purposes of game play, but with the choice to act at any point from the moment he "held action" until the end of the turn.

When a character holding an action finally does act, he must do so before or after another character (not during another character's action). Afterward, the rest of the turn sequence resumes normally.

Held actions do not carry over to the next turn. If a character holding his action does nothing by the end of the turn, he has effectively taken no action for that turn (and is considered to have stood still).

Josef and Robert are two player characters, each with a RFL score of 6 (though Robert also has the Combat Paralysis Trait). While slumming in the streets of Solaris VII, the two are menaced by a trio of knife-wielding thugs (all of whom have a RFL score of 5, with their leader also sporting a Leadership Skill level of 2). Announcing the start of personal combat, the gamemaster calls for an Initiative roll, and rolls for his three thugs while Josef's and Robert's controlling players make their own rolls.

Josef's player rolls 2D6 and gets a result of 5. Robert, thanks to his Combat Paralysis, must roll 3D6 and take the worst two dice, but lucks out with a final result of 8 in spite of this handicap. For the thugs, the GM rolls a 7 for the leader, a 4 for Thug #2 and a 6 for Thug #3. Adding in the thug leader's ability to command his people—there's nothing at present to stop him from barking orders—raises the thugs' Initiatives to 9, 6 and 8, respectively.

The Initiative sequence is thus the Thug Leader at 9, Robert and Thug #3 at 8, Thug #2 at 6 and Josef on 5. Because they have tied, the gamemaster compares Robert's RFL score with that of Thug #3. Finding Robert's RFL of 6 higher than Thug #2's RFL of 5, the gamemaster determines that Robert can act right after the thug leader, followed by Thug #3.

INITIATIVE TABLE

Base Initiative Roll	Individual
Basic Initiative	Base: 2D6
Combat Paralysis	Base: 3D6 (worst 2D6)
Combat Sense	Base: 3D6 (best 2D6)

Additional Conditions*	Individual
Tactics Skill	+Skill level
Leadership Skill (Squad Leaders only)	+Skill level

*To use Skill modifiers, Squad or Team Initiative rules must be in play. For Tactics, the appropriate Subskill is required; For both, the squad leader must be present, active and able to communicate with his troops to apply the modifier.

ACTION PHASE

In the Action Phase, characters can navigate and interact with the battlefield as desired (in accordance with their Initiative order). The number of actions a character may perform is limited, however, based on the actions' general complexity and the physical or mental concentration required. The personal combat system presented here recognizes four main types of actions: Incidental Actions, Simple Actions, Complex Actions and Movement Actions. All four are described more fully below and shown in the Action Complexity Table.

Incidental Actions

Incidental Actions require little to no physical movement or concentration, and can be resolved within a second's time or less. Examples of this include yelling out a single-word warning, defending against a melee attack or dropping to the ground.

A character may perform up to five Incidental Actions per turn, regardless of any other actions being performed.

Simple Actions

Simple Actions require some concentration and effort, but can be resolved quickly, such as firing a weapon, delivering a melee attack, operating a vehicle or using a Simple Skill that the character possesses.

A character may perform up to two Simple Actions per turn, but may not combine them with Complex Actions in the same turn. All rolls required to perform a Simple Action must be resolved immediately.

Complex Actions

Complex Actions require full concentration and serious effort on the character's part, and may take one or more full turns to resolve. Examples include using a Complex Skill the character possesses, attempting any Skill in which the character lacks training or using a complex device.

A character may perform only 1 Complex Action per turn, and may not perform a Complex Action in conjunction with any other action type (except Incidental Actions).

Movement Actions

As the name suggests, Movement Actions describe the character's movement during a combat turn, and can range from standing still or walking to running, sprinting or executing special movements like crawling, climbing and swimming. Any character not unconscious (or otherwise rendered completely immobile) *must* declare what movement type he is using every turn. If none is specified, the character is treated as stationary and may not willingly move during the combat turn.

ACTION COMPLEXITY TABLE

Incidental Actions	
Non-Movement	
Crouch	Drop Object
Drop Prone	Gesture
Leaping (Downward)	Melee Defense (except Break Grapple)
Observe Quickly (No Perception Skill)	Sit Down
Speak (Single Word)	Stand Up
Movement	
No Movement	Walking

Simple Actions	
Non-Movement	
Lead Team	Leaping (Upward or Horizontaly)
Load Weapon	Melee Attack
Melee Defense (Break Grapple)	Observe in Detail (Perception Skill)
Pick Up/Put Down Object	Ranged Attack (other than Suppression Fire)
Ready/Draw Non-Crewed Weapon/Small Equipment	Recover From Stun
Speak (Brief Phrase)	Stow (Sheath Equipment)
Use Simple Object	Use Simple Skill (Trained)
Movement	
Climbing (with Climbing Skill)	Crawling
Running	Swimming (with Swimming Skill)

Complex Actions	
Non-Movement	
Careful Aim	Extinguish Fire
Ranged Attack (Suppression Fire)	Ready Large Equipment/ Crewed Weapon
Recover Fatigue	Speak (Conversation)
Spot for Indirect Fire	Use Complex Object
Use Complex Skill	Use Untrained Skill
Movement	
Climbing (without Climbing Skill)	Evading
Sprinting	Swimming (without Swimming Skill)

How far a character can move in combat (measured in meters) is based primarily on the character's STR and RFL Attribute scores, as well as any Skills the character has relevant to the movement being performed. Terrain and other obstacles can reduce these movement rates, reflecting the added time spent getting around (or plowing through) such obstructions.

Movement Actions also count as Incidental, Simple or Complex Actions, depending on the type of movement desired. Regardless of their complexity, a character must use one—and only one—movement type per turn, and so players must balance their characters' Movement Actions accordingly. For example, a character that uses Running Movement (a Simple Action) may execute a single additional Simple Action in the Action Phase, rather than two Simple Actions, because the Movement Action used up one of the character's Simple Actions for the turn.

MOVEMENT ACTIONS

In terms of meters moved per turn, the Movement Rates and Costs Table shows the base movement rates that each character receives under these rules. The movement rates are further described below, including their impact on the character's Action Phase.

Maps and Miniatures: When using maps and/or miniatures to track and resolve movement, it is important to remember the agreed-upon map scale and convert the characters' MPs accordingly. For example, if playing on a hex map that uses a 5-meters-per-hex scale, characters must divide their number of MPs by 5, rounding up, to determine their movement rates in hexes.

Battle Armor and Vehicular Units: If battle armor and/or vehicular units (including 'Mechs) are present in the combat scenario, their normal movement rates must be converted to the same game scale as the characters before play begins. On the tactical scale used in *Total Warfare*, each MP a battle armor or vehicular unit possesses translates to a speed of 10.8 kilometers per hour (or 15 meters per 5-second combat turn).

MOVEMENT MODES AND MANEUVERS

In personal combat, there are three primary and four special movement modes a character may use, each with a distinct movement rate. There is also an assortment of maneuvers that can be executed as part of a character's movement.

Walking

The most conventional movement mode, walking uses little energy or concentration, and is considered an Incidental Action. Walking is the only movement mode a character may perform in reverse.

Running

In combat, running tends to be the more common movement mode. It takes more concentration and exertion than walking, and is considered a Simple Action. Though it technically requires no Skill to run, characters with the

MOVEMENT RATES AND COSTS TABLE

MOVEMENT RATES

Movement Mode	Base MPs (Meters per Turn)
Walk	(STR + RFL)
Run	10 + (STR + RFL) + (Running Skill Level)
Sprint	(Running Level) x 2*
Special Movement Modes	
Climb	[(Walking MP) ÷ 2]** + (Climbing Skill Level)†
Crawl	[(Walking MP) ÷ 4]**
Evade	Running MP
Swim	(Walking MP) + (Swimming Skill Level)†
Turn in Place	0††

*Sprinting creates fatigue each turn (see Fatigue, p. 189)
**Round up
†Half movement (rounding down), if the character lacks the indicated Skill
††Turning in place is a movement rate in which the character moves a negligible distance and thus spends no MPs.

MOVEMENT COSTS

Terrain/Situation	MP Cost (per meter)
Clear Terrain	1
Rough Terrain	+1
Difficult Terrain	+3
Blocking Terrain	Impassable
Change Elevations	+1 per meter of elevation
Maneuvers	
Crouching/Sitting	+1
Dropping Prone	+0
Turning (0-120 degrees)	+0
Turning (each 60 degrees over 120)*	+1
Leaping Up/Horizontal	+2
Leaping Down	+1
Standing Up	+2
Encumbrance	
Encumbered	x2
Very Encumbered	x3
Overloaded	1 MP Maximum

*Or fraction thereof

Running Skill have improved their natural running rate through significant training, and can therefore move somewhat faster or longer than those without the Skill.

Sprinting

Sprinting reflects a flat-out, nothing-else-matters movement mode that counts as a Complex Action and therefore cannot be combined with any other action types. Speed is paramount here, making this movement mode barely more effective against enemy attacks than running—but when a character needs to escape or reach a friend in a hurry, sprinting may be the only option. Because a sprinting character is pouring full effort into the action, every turn of sprinting movement increases the character's Fatigue by 1 point.

Special Movement Modes

In addition to walking, running and sprinting, characters may need to carry out alternative movement actions, such as jumping, crawling or climbing. These special movement modes are described below.

Climbing: Climbing movement refers to the rate and proficiency with which the character can climb vertical objects, such as ladders, trees, cliffs and buildings. (When climbing stairs, slopes or over objects under a meter in height, normal walking, running and sprinting modes apply, but at a reduced rate to represent the extra effort of getting up or over something.) Climbing is considered a Simple Action if the character is scaling a ladder or has the Climbing Skill, but a Complex Action if the character is climbing a non-ladder surface without Climbing Skill.

If climbing a surface specifically made for that activity—such as a ladder—a successful Climbing Skill Check is not required. If the surface is not made for climbing—such as a rock wall, cliff face or the side of a building—the action requires a successful Climbing Skill roll, even if the character must attempt the climb untrained. Failure results in a fall from the height the character was at when he began his climbing movement for the turn (see *Falling Damage* under *Damage Resolution*, pp. 181-182.)

Crawling: Crawling, the slowest and typically stealthiest movement mode, consists of essentially moving while prone. Crawling movement is counted as a Simple Action in the Action Phase, and makes the character harder to attack at range.

Evading: Evasive movement represents a modified run in which the character adds dodging and weaving maneuvers in an effort to present a more difficult target. Evading is treated as a Complex Action for Action Phase purposes, but does not automatically fatigue the character.

Swimming: Swimming movement refers to the rate and proficiency with which the character can move through water and water-like liquids deeper than waist level. Swimming is considered a Simple Action if the character has the Swimming Skill, but a Complex Action if the character lacks the Swimming Skill.

A character with the Swimming Skill does not need to make a Swimming Skill Check when swimming on the surface or treading water, but may require one when diving without equipment to determine how far he can move before having to come up for air (the gamemaster must assign an increasing modifier of –2 to the roll for every turn spent submerged without a breathing apparatus). If a character lacks the Swimming Skill, he can only tread water, moving at half the speed of a character with

Swimming Skill, and must make a roll every time his head goes below water. Failure on this untrained Swimming Check results in drowning damage if the character lacks breathing apparatus (see *Continuous Damage*, p. 180), which continues until the character makes a successful Swimming Skill Check in a subsequent turn and returns to the water's surface.

Turning in Place: A character performing no other movement except to turn in place may do so as an Incidental Action that expends 0 MPs and is counted as negligible movement for attacker and target movement modifiers.

Maneuvers

Maneuvers are actions that—while technically movements—are treated in game play as either part of a character's movement or a special-case alternative. The most common maneuvers are as follows:

Crouching, Going Prone, Sitting or Standing Up: Dropping prone, crouching, sitting or standing up are all considered maneuvers. Each may be performed as part of an appropriate movement action (determined at the gamemaster's discretion, when in doubt) at a nominal cost in MPs. Dropping prone costs 0 MPs, while crouching or sitting costs 1 MP and standing up costs 2 MPs. All of these maneuvers are treated as Incidental Actions.

Flying, Gliding or Jumping (Assisted): Though normally the purview of avian creatures, characters with appropriate equipment (such as jump packs, parachutes or a hang-glider) can use a special flying movement mode in specific circumstances. Unlike other maneuvers, the assisted jump, glide or flight cannot be combined with another movement mode, but instead replaces the normal walk, run and sprint options from take-off to landing. The movement rates for flying, gliding or assisted jumping equipment may be found in the rules for the necessary equipment, and so are not listed in the Movement Rates Table. Unless the rules for the appropriate equipment specify otherwise, operating flying, gliding or assisted jumping devices counts as a Simple Movement Action.

Leaping: Similar to crouching, dropping prone, sitting and standing up, leaping maneuvers (not to be confused with jumping via jump packs and the like) is considered a part of a Movement Action, rather than a separate movement mode. A character can make an unassisted leap vertically or horizontally across a distance of 1 meter (plus an extra 0.1 meters per level of Acrobatics Skill) at any point during his Movement Action, or downward (without injury) a distance of 2 meters (plus 1 meter per extra level of Acrobatics Skill). It costs 2 MPs to make an upward or horizontal leap, regardless of the distance covered, but only 1 MP to leap downward. (A character who attempts to leap downward without MPs, or attempts to leap down a greater distance than he safely can, must make a successful Acrobatics Skill Check to avoid damage from the fall; see *Falling Damage*, pp. 181-182.)

Turning: Changing direction or facing while in motion is a maneuver that is considered part of the character's movement, and not a separate action. To reflect the character's momentum, turning costs a certain number of MPs based on how sharply the character makes his turn within the span of a meter's movement. The first 120 degrees of turning (enough to change up to two hexsides' worth of facing on a hex-gridded map) is considered free for MP purposes, but each additional 60 degrees (or fraction thereof) costs 1 extra MP. For example, making an about-face (a 180-degree turn) within a meter's worth of movement would cost the character +1 MP (0 for the first 120 degrees turned, +1 for the additional 60 degrees turned).

TERRAIN AND ENCUMBRANCE

Terrain and encumbrance can affect how well a character handles himself in combat. Because the specifics can vary greatly, the rules below simplify the nature of any terrain for speed of play. If special circumstances warrant, gamemasters may impose additional effects based on local conditions such as weather, atmosphere and unusual terrain features (see the *Special Case Rules* chapter, beginning on p. 230, for examples). In general, however, terrain effects for characters in combat work as described below and as shown on the Movement Rates and Costs Table.

Clear Terrain

Clear terrain includes pavement, open flooring, packed snow or soil, and other generally dry, firm and flat open areas. Clear terrain has no negative effect on a character's movement.

Rough Terrain

Rough terrain covers high grass, occasional rocks, gravel, scattered rubble or furniture, and other terrain types that would otherwise be clear. Each meter of rough terrain costs 1 more MP to pass through than a meter of clear terrain.

Difficult Terrain

Difficult terrain reflects thick foliage, large concentrations of rubble, furniture and other natural or man-made obstructions, as well as any particularly soft, wet or boggy surfaces. Each meter of difficult terrain costs 3 more MPs to pass through than a meter of clear terrain.

Blocking Terrain

Blocking terrain is any large walls, sheer cliffs or obstructions that a character cannot easily surmount without special Skills or equipment. Blocking terrain can also include large bodies of water, walls of flame or other hazards a character simply cannot cross. Characters may pass through some types of blocking terrain if they possess the proper Skills and/or gear to do so, but will suffer a drastic reduction in MPs when attempting such movement, leaving them unable to perform other actions or avoid attacks in the process.

Changing Elevations

In personal combat at the scale handled by these rules, a level of height equates to a meter's worth of raised or lowered surface, which may be accessed by steps or slopes—as opposed to more gradual shifts in the ground that can be treated as rough terrain. Climbing up or down a level change of more than 1 meter per meter of forward movement—without using the Climbing Skill or appropriate climbing gear (including ladders or climbing/rappelling equipment)—costs additional MPs.

Maximum Slope: For game play purposes, sharp elevation changes—such as cliffs or walls—must be treated as blocking

terrain, rather than elevation changes. If the angle of a slope changes its height by more than five meters upward or downward within five meters of forward movement, the slope is too steep and Climbing Skills may be required.

Encumbrance

Characters equipped with heavy armor and/or weapons, or otherwise laden with excessive weight, are said to be encumbered, as are any characters carrying equipment specifically noted as having encumbering effects. Unless such characters are piloting battle armor or vehicles, or are equipped with some kind of harness or load-bearing equipment that mitigates these effects, they suffer movement penalties as a result.

The Encumbrance Table defines what weight limits cause encumbrance, based on the character's STR score. A character is considered encumbered if he carries as much or more weight than is listed under the Encumbered column on the table; he is considered very encumbered if he carries as much or more weight than is listed under the Very Encumbered column. A character is considered overloaded if he attempts to carry as much or more weight than the value listed in the Overloaded column.

Characters defined as encumbered double their MP costs for every turn they remain encumbered and suffer 1 additional point of fatigue at the end of any turn in which they use sprinting movement or engage in melee combat while encumbered. Characters identified as very encumbered triple their MP costs every turn they remain very encumbered and suffer 1 point of fatigue at the end of any turn in which they use any movement mode other than walking or crawling, or are engaged in melee combat.

Characters defined as overloaded may be unable to move at all. If the gamemaster permits, such characters may be able to drag themselves and their excessive cargo around at a rate of 1 MP per turn, treating this movement as a crawl.

Encumbering Items: A character already encumbered by weight limit issues who in turn carries encumbering equipment raises his encumbrance factor by one level. For example, if a character with a STR of 5 is carrying more than 30 kg of gear, he is considered encumbered; if he also is wearing a suit of ballistic plate armor (noted as an encumbering item in its statistics), the character is treated as if very encumbered.

His squad gunned down by an unseen sniper while out in the wilderness, Kevin—a FedSuns trooper—wants to get behind a large boulder he's spotted for some cover. Though he cannot see his attacker, he knows the direction from which the weapons fire is coming, and plots his route to the boulder, which is 11 meters away.

The 11-meter distance means Kevin will spend a base 11 MPs getting to it. On the map the gamemaster has made of the area, Kevin sees that 2 of the 11 meters are light gravel, rough terrain that adds 1 MP per meter to move through. Another meter of the terrain ahead is a thick clump of low brush and the remains of a tree, which the gamemaster has identified as difficult terrain; moving through that meter will cost an extra 3 MPs. Kevin also sees that the boulder is on a hillock that rises up 1 meter (+1 MP), and though he does not need to turn by more than 120 degrees at any point while rushing to the boulder, he does plan to turn around once he gets behind it, adding +1 MP for the turning maneuver. Kevin therefore needs a total of 18 MPs to traverse the 11 meters to his destination, get behind his boulder and turn around (11 base MP +2 [2 meters of rough terrain] +3 [1 meter of difficult terrain] +1 [increasing elevation] +1 [turning 180 degrees]). Kevin is also Encumbered, doubling this total MP cost to 36.

Kevin has a RFL score of 6, a STR score of 4 and a Running Skill level of 3. This means that at a run, he has 10 + (6 + 4) + 3 = 23 MP, well short of the 36 MP needed. Kevin doesn't like any of the spots he could get to this turn, as none will provide him with cover. He decides to drop his backpack, a Simple Action that reduces the total weight of his inventory below 20 kg and relieves him of the Encumbered effects. This gives him the mobility to easily cover the required distance.

ENCUMBRANCE TABLE

STR	Encumbered	Very Encumbered	Overloaded
0	0.1 kg	0.5 kg	1 kg
1	5 kg	10 kg	15 kg
2	10 kg	20 kg	25 kg
3	15 kg	30 kg	50 kg
4	20 kg	40 kg	75 kg
5	30 kg	60 kg	100 kg
6	40 kg	80 kg	125 kg
7	55 kg	110 kg	150 kg
8	70 kg	140 kg	200 kg
9	85 kg	170 kg	250 kg
10	100 kg	200 kg	300 kg
11+	(STR x 15) kg	(STR x 30) kg	(STR x 45 kg)

Note: When computing the weight a character is carrying, round up to the nearest kg for STR of 1+.

MOVEMENT FROM PREVIOUS TURN

For purposes of determining modifiers against moving targets, any character that has not yet acted in the current turn should be considered still moving at the same movement rate used in the previous turn. If, however, the character has become encumbered, been wounded, is grappled or otherwise unable to use the previous movement rate due to other actions, the gamemaster may declare that the target is using its next-fastest possible movement rate.

If combat begins without defining the prior movement rates of any characters, presume that all potential targets begin combat as stationary targets.

COMMAND COHESION

When employing Squad or Team Initiative, squads of characters must move as a single unit. To further reflect their unity, squad mates must not move to a position more than 10 meters away from their nearest squad mate. If—through attrition or other circumstances—any squad members become separated from the nearest squad mate by more than 10 meters, the breakaway portion of the squad must function as a separate unit for Initiative and action purposes, or rejoin its squad to restore command cohesion.

RESOLVING ACTIONS IN PERSONAL COMBAT

In personal combat, resolving most actions works just as it does in standard game play. For most actions—particularly Incidental Actions, movement and speech—no rolling is generally required. Skill use and Attribute Checks may still occur as needed, especially if the character is attempting an attack or attempting to defend against a melee attack.

If a Skill or Attribute Check is required for non-combat actions (such as the use of a non-combat Skill like Computers), the Action Check roll works just as it does under standard game play rules, though it may take more than one combat turn to resolve whatever the character is attempting to do. The gamemaster may also assign additional difficulty modifiers to the roll, to reflect the added chaos and stress of trying to perform while under fire.

Combat-specific actions—such as ranged weapon and melee attacks—receive a more structured set of modifiers and rules, described below. As with non-combat game play, attempts to use a Skill the character does not possess must be treated as an appropriate Attribute Check instead.

RANGED COMBAT RESOLUTION

Any attack made against a target a meter or more away from the attacking character is referred to as a ranged attack. Ranged attacks are typically made using ranged combat weapons such as bows, firearms and support weapons, but thrown weapons such as shuriken and grenades also fall into this category.

Ranged attacks are resolved by the attacking character as a Skill-based Action Check appropriate to the weapon being used. For example, a character attempting to shoot an opponent using a pistol would use his Small Arms Skill, while a character attempting to hit his target with a throwing knife would use the Thrown Weapons Skill.

RANGED ATTACK ROLL

The ranged attack roll uses the same target numbers as appropriate for the Skill, and applies the same relevant modifiers for Linked Attributes and Skill levels as a standard Skill Check. The roll must also include modifiers for range, target and attacker movement, and any appropriate terrain and environmental conditions. These modifiers are identified in the Combat Modifiers Table (see p. 178), and explained in more detail below. As with all Skill Checks, if the modified roll meets or exceeds its TN, the attack succeeds and the target suffers damage. Otherwise, the shot misses.

Whether or not the attack succeeds, executing a ranged attack will expend ammunition or energy, which should be tracked at all times.

RANGE AND LINE OF SIGHT (LOS)

For most ranged attacks, the attacker must be able to see the target (Blind Fire and Indirect Fire are notable exceptions; see *Special Weapon Effects*, p. 172), and the target must be within range of the weapon used. Various factors—terrain and other obstructions—can greatly affect a character's line of sight (LoS), while weapon ranges vary with their design.

The effects of range and terrain are described below. Because situations can vary greatly, these rules simplify range and terrain effects for speed of game play. If special circumstances warrant, gamemasters may impose additional modifiers and game effects based on local conditions such as weather, atmosphere and unusual terrain features (for examples, see the *Special Case Rules* chapter, beginning on p. 230).

Range Modifiers

Each ranged combat weapon receives values that represent its range (in meters) across four broad classes: Short, Medium, Long and Extreme. These range classes reflect the weapon's relative ability to hit and inflict damage against targets over distance. For most weapons, range modifiers increase over farther distances (though some weapons may replace these modifiers based on quirks of their manufacture).

Out of Range: Attacks may not be initiated against targets that lie beyond a weapon's listed Extreme range.

Point-Blank Range: Any target that lies within 1 meter of an attacker is considered to be at Point-Blank range for a ranged weapon attack. If the attacker and the target are engaged in melee combat, however, Melee Combat rules apply instead (see *Melee Combat Resolution*, p. 175).

Cover Modifiers

Terrain that affects a character's line of sight can include anything large enough to conceal or partially conceal an attacker's view of his target. Whether the cover is trees and shrubs, curtains, rocks, hills, furniture or anything else that the target is not wearing or carrying (such as armor or shields), the overall effect on line of sight is the same.

In abstract game play (without maps or miniatures) the degree of cover a target receives must consider all obstructions between the attacker and the target, and choose a final modifier based on those obstructions. If map sheets and/or miniatures are used, determining what level of cover applies will be a simple matter of identifying the modifier for each obstruction or cluster of obstructions along the way, and summing up the total. In such a case, however, obstructions should be averaged across 30-meter spans (the equivalent of a single hex in *Total Warfare*-scale play).

For example, if a target is standing behind an overturned table, two chairs and a tattered curtain blowing, the gamemaster may determine that the target is receiving moderate cover from all these obstructions combined, as half his body remains visible through all of them. The same effect can be achieved on a map simply by considering all of the obstructions across 30 meters of terrain as moderate cover.

The following paragraphs define the basic levels of cover that may affect an attack roll in abstracted personal combat. For map-based combat, these modifiers may be applied to 30-meter expanses as indicated above and under the terrain rules in *Special Case Rules* (see pp. 230-238):

- **Light Cover:** Light cover conceals up to a quarter of the target's mass. Examples of this kind of cover may include a narrow doorway, light foliage, bare trees, wrought-iron bars and sheer curtains (where the target's silhouette is clearly visible).
- **Medium Cover:** Medium cover conceals up to half the target's mass. Examples include a window opening in a wall, desks, podiums, counters and thick leaves or bushes.
- **Heavy Cover:** Heavy cover conceals up to three-quarters of the target's mass. Examples include hills, walls, large rocks and dense jungle foliage.
- **Full Cover:** Full cover conceals up to 100 percent of the target's body mass. Examples include wide tree trunks, walls, large boulders and so forth. Targets under full cover that leave nothing exposed to the attacker may still be attacked using the Blind Fire or Indirect Fire rules, while targets that leave as little as 5 percent of their body mass (such as a single hand) exposed may be attacked with a significant modifier.
- **Other Characters:** While not cover in and of themselves (because they are presumed to be in motion as well), the presence of other characters between an attacker and target will affect LoS enough to present an additional attack modifier. This modifier applies only once, in addition to any modifiers from cover, regardless of how many characters lie between the attacker and the target.

OTHER COMBAT MODIFIERS

Additional combat modifiers that can affect the accuracy of a character's ranged attacks are also shown in the Combat Modifiers Table on p. 178. These include modifiers for movement, target size, attacker actions and conditions, miscellaneous conditions, aimed shots and other special ranged attack modifiers.

Movement Modifiers: Movement modifiers apply to the roll based on the attacker's movement mode and a combination of the target's movement distance and movement mode.

Target Size Modifiers: Unique to dismounted characters in personal or tactical combat, target size attack roll modifiers reflect the target's physical size.

Attacker Actions and Conditions: These roll modifiers reflect special attacker-based conditions such as the attacker's level of encumbrance, whether the attacker is striking at a secondary target in the same turn as the primary target, using an off-hand to deliver the attack, or suffering from Fatigue or Injury effects (see *Damage Effects*, pp. 182-184).

Miscellaneous Condition Modifiers: These roll modifiers apply for any special environmental conditions (see *Special Case Rules*, starting on p. 230), if the target is stunned or surprised, if the attack is coming from behind or if the attacker is using his off-hand.

Aimed Shot Modifiers: These roll modifiers apply when the attacker aims at specific hit locations on the target, and thus may only be used with Hit Locations rules (see p. 190).

Additional Ranged Attack Modifiers: These roll modifiers describe additional situations that only apply to ranged attacks, and include special weapon effects such as taking careful aim, firing on a target with a friendly character engaging that target in melee, burst-fire and splash attacks, indirect fire and blind shooting.

Portia is a Word of Blake soldier providing overwatch with her sniper rifle. Having already taken down five members of a FedSuns infantry squad crossing through the wilderness, she is left with one target who just darted behind the excellent cover of a large boulder.

The base target number (TN) for Portia's Small Arms (Rifles) Skill is 6. Her Skill level is 5, which adds a +1 modifier to the roll (plus, she has the Rifles specialization, which adds an additional +1). Her DEX is 7, which provides a Link Attribute modifier of +1. Between her Skill, specialization and Attributes, Portia's attack roll modifier is already +7 (+5 for Skill level +1 for Rifles specialization +1 for the DEX Link modifier = +7).

Portia's target is at Medium range, which adds a –2 attack roll modifier. The gamemaster has indicated that the target's position behind a large boulder provides heavy cover from Portia's angle, imposing an additional –3 modifier. The target character is a normal, medium-sized human (+0). Portia has not moved, but her target has just scrambled 11 meters to get behind his rock, adding a –1 target-movement modifier. Portia dropped her equipment next to her before she began to snipe, and thus is unencumbered. Though she is fatigued from previous fighting, her 2 current Fatigue points are well below her WIL of 4, and so no fatigue modifier applies, but she was injured by one of the soldiers she gunned down—enough for an additional –1 Injury roll modifier. This means Portia's attack receives a –7 modifier, negating the +7 for her Skill, specialization and DEX modifiers (+7 – 7 = 0). Portia would need a roll result of 6 to make the shot (TN of 6 + 0 = 6).

To increase her chances, Portia decides to spend her turn taking Careful Aim, applying a +1 modifier. In the next turn, rather than step into the open, her target remains stationary, eliminating the target movement modifier—but then drops to the ground, applying a –1 modifier to Portia's attack. This combination of actions ultimately adds a net +1 to Portia's roll, so she would only need a result of 5 to hit her target (5 + 1 = 6).

Rather than take the chance of her target bolting in the next turn, Portia rolls her attack and gets a 5—just enough to strike her target!

SPECIAL RANGED ATTACK EFFECTS

Many of the attacks possible in ranged combat include special options based on the weapons fired or other battle conditions. The rules for these more common special effects are described below.

Area-Effect (Blast) Weapons

Area-effect weapons (also known as blast weapons) are a special class of weapon that includes rocket launchers, grenades and mortars. These weapons—identified by an "A" in their Base Damage (BD) codes—deliver their damage by spreading it out over a wider area than standard ranged weaponry. The attack roll for these weapons reflects where the center of the blast will occur, and may be directed against a character or a target area (the latter is considered an immobile target, with no size modifier). Because of the area-effect weapon's wider "footprint," it receives a +2 attack roll modifier when resolving fire.

Damage to a target from area-effect or blast weapons is based on the target's proximity to the impact point (see *Area-Effect Damage*, p. 179). All targets within the blast area of an area-effect weapon are considered hit by the attack unless they are protected

With the spotting assistance of a mercenary infantry unit, friendly artillery quickly destroys a Blakist fortification on Rochelle.

by an obstruction that offers full cover and can hold up under the damage. (For example, a low wall between a character and the center of a grenade explosion may protect the character from the blast if the character is crouched behind the wall and the wall's AP and damage capacity are enough to withstand the grenade's damage.) If in doubt, the gamemaster may determine whether any such cover exists.

Blind Fire

Blind fire refers to any ranged direct-fire attack where the attacker has no direct line of sight to the target but can potentially attack anyway. This can include firing at a target through a door, or in complete darkness, or while blindfolded.

Blind fire imposes the standard attack modifiers for full target cover, in addition to all standard modifiers for movement and range. However, Blind Fire attacks may not be used to deliver an Aimed Shot, nor can they take advantage of Careful Aim modifiers, as the attacking character cannot physically see his target.

Firing through Barriers: If a Blind Fire attack is made against a target through a barrier, damage for any successful attacks must be resolved using the rules described under *Armor and Barrier Effects* (see pp. 185-189).

Burst Fire

Weapons with burst-fire capability (such as machine guns, submachine guns and pulse lasers, or any weapon identified by a "B" in its Base Damage codes) can fire more than one shot per attack. This allows them to increase their damage potential, but at a significant risk of jamming, misfiring or overheating—an event that normally happens only on a Fumble. The Burst Fire attack is optional for most burst-capable weapons (though some such weapons may *only* fire in bursts).

Burst-capable weapons receive two key statistics standard ranged weapons do not: a Recoil modifier, and a Burst Fire rating (which is made up of two numbers separated by a slash). The Recoil modifier is applied directly to the attack roll for any Burst Fire attack made by the weapon. The Burst Fire rating indicates the maximum number of shots the weapon can fire in a single attack (left of the slash) and the number of shots (or fraction thereof) it can fire in burst mode before increasing its chance of a misfire by 1.

A burst-fire weapon that misfires will suffer the effects after it hits its target, and so will still hit if the attack roll result exceeds the TN. A successful Skill Check appropriate to the weapon must be made, however, before it can be used again. Clearing a weapon's misfire counts as a Simple Action.

> *The notes for a Gunther MP-20 submachine gun indicate that it has a Recoil modifier of –1 and a Burst Fire rating of 10/4. The Recoil modifier means that firing the MP-20 in burst mode applies an additional –1 roll modifier to the weapon's attack. Meanwhile, the Burst Fire rating indicates that the weapon can fire up to 10 shots at a single target per attack, but every 4 shots fired (or fraction thereof) increase its likelihood of a misfire by 1. For example, when firing 2-4 shots in a burst, the MP-20 will misfire on an unmodified roll of 3 or less (natural Fumble on 2 + 1), while a full 10-shot burst increases the misfire chance by 3 (10 ÷ 4 = 2.5, round up to 3), creating misfire effects on any unmodified roll result of 5 or less (Fumble on 2 + 3).*

Crewed Weapons

Some weapons—typically heavy support weapons—require a crew in order to operate effectively in combat (even though the main components for such weapons are generally carried by one member of a combat squad). Crewed weapons are identified by a special note in the weapon's statistics that also indicates the number of crewmen required, such as Crew: 3.

In combat, crewed weapons cannot be used to deliver an attack unless the required number of crew (identified in the weapon's notes) are located within 1 meter of the weapon and the weapon has been properly set up to fire. Likewise, a crewed support weapon cannot be moved unless it has been torn down. Setting up (or tearing down) a crewed weapon requires no roll, but counts as a Complex Action undertaken by all members of the weapon's crew.

Regardless of the crew size, only a single weapon operator makes the attack roll.

A member of the fearsome Draconis Elite Strike Teams patrols the wilderness of a far-flung planet.

Indirect Fire

Indirect fire is similar in many ways to blind fire, except that weapons with Indirect Fire capabilities—identified by a note of "Indirect" in the weapon's statistics—can only attack targets that are not somehow shielded by terrain or structures from *above* (such as roofs and the like). Indirect Fire attacks do not require a line of sight, but may be made against a target the attacker can see, one within line of sight of a friendly spotting character (who can communicate with the attacker) or against an entirely unseen target.

An Indirect Fire attack applies all the same modifiers as a Blind Fire attack, but receives an additional +2 roll modifier if the attacker—or a friendly character spotting for the attacker—has line of sight to the target. Unlike a Blind Fire attack, missed shots scatter away from the intended target by a number of meters equal to the attack's MoF. The direction of this scatter is randomly determined. A recommended method is to use 1D6 to determine the direction, with a 1 indicating scatter directly away from the attacker, and each subsequent number representing a direction 60 degrees further clockwise from that angle.

Most Indirect Fire attacks use area-effect (blast) weaponry. The attack modifiers and damage effects of such weaponry will apply to the Indirect Fire attack.

Spotting for Indirect Fire: Spotting for an Indirect Fire attack is a Complex Action that uses the Artillery Skill, but does not require an Action Check as long as the spotting character has a valid line of sight to the target area and unobstructed communications with the firing unit. If either of these conditions is in doubt due to terrain or interference, Perception and Communications Checks may be needed as appropriate. A successful spotting action allows the attacker to receive the +2 roll modifier mentioned above, but must be accomplished in the same turn the attack is made.

Suppression Fire

Also known as "walking fire" or "sweeping fire," suppression fire is a special attack that can only be performed by weapons capable of burst fire (identified by a "B" in their Base Damage codes). In a Suppression Fire attack, a line of shots is directed across an area without actually aiming at a specific target. To execute a Suppression Fire attack, the attacker must trace a line of adjacent 1-meter hexes (or spaces 1 meter in diameter), while firing at least one shot (and up to 5) into each one. Each space must receive the same number of shots.

The attack roll for suppression fire is made for each target within the affected spaces, but each roll receives a modifier equal to –6 plus the number of shots fired per meter. Thus, a suppression-fire spread that places 1 shot per meter suffers a –5 modifier on each attack roll (–6 + 1 = –5), while a spread that pumps the maximum of 5 shots per meter suffers an attack roll modifier of only –1 (–6 + 5 = –1). Other modifiers for recoil, range, terrain, movement and so forth apply as well.

A Suppression Fire attack is considered a Complex Action that uses twice the maximum number of shots a weapon can fire per Burst Fire attack (in effect representing two full bursts fired in rapid succession). If the weapon does not have the energy or ammunition to execute a full attack, the suppression fire line will continue as planned until the weapon is exhausted. However, the chance of misfire for the entire spread is equal to that of only one complete burst. For example, an Imperator AX-22 assault rifle (Burst Fire rating of 15/3) will fire 30 shots in a full suppression fire

attack (or as much of that as its magazine permits), but will only misfire after making an attack with a natural roll result of 7 or less (15 ÷ 3 = 5; Fumble 2 + 5 = 7).

Because the Suppression Fire attack reflects a single, long pull of the trigger, only the first attack roll made in the line of fire may misfire (even on an unmodified roll result of 2). Though the damage from a successful Suppression Fire attack is delivered using a weapon's Burst Fire capabilities, any target hit by a successful attack roll suffers damage as if struck by a standard non-burst weapon attack, for purposes of determining additional MoS damage (see *Damage Resolution*, pp. 177-182).

Splash Weapons

Weapons with a Splash attack—identified by an "S" in their Base Damage (BD) codes—deliver damage by spraying their target with a cloud of flechettes, shrapnel, flaming or caustic liquids, and so forth. This effect provides such weapons with a +2 attack roll modifier, while also enabling them to seek weak points in the target's armor (for more details, see *Damage Resolution*, pp. 177-182).

Subduing Attack

Some ranged weapons—identified by a "D" in their Base Damage (BD) codes—are designed to stun or subdue a target rather than to inflict harm. Subduing attacks delivered by ranged weapons are resolved in the same fashion as a standard ranged attacks of the same type, and receive no special modifiers, but their damage is resolved as Fatigue rather than Standard damage points (see *Damage Resolution*, pp. 177-182).

MELEE COMBAT RESOLUTION

Melee combat refers to combat at very close quarters—the point where swords, fists and feet tend to come into play. Like ranged combat, melee combat is resolved using Skill-based Action Checks, but such actions are always made as Opposed Checks between the attacking character and his target (the defender). As with ranged combat, melee combat uses a more structured resolution than standard Skill use.

MELEE COMBAT ROLLS

Every melee combat attack requires two Skill rolls: one from the attacking character (called the melee attack roll), and one from the defender (called the melee defense roll). The Skills used for both must be appropriate to the action, but need not be the same Skill. For example, an attacker using a sword against his unarmed opponent would attack using his Melee Weapons Skill, while his opponent would defend with Martial Arts Skill.

Because melee combat is an Opposed Skill Check, the Margin of Success between the opposing combatants is much more important to the result than in ranged combat. If the target of a melee attack is an inanimate object or otherwise incapable of making a melee defense roll, the target is automatically considered to have failed its roll by a margin of 3.

To determine the success of a melee attack, compare the results of the attacker's and defender's rolls. Damage inflicted depends on the following outcomes:

- If the attacker's roll succeeds *and* the attacker's MoS is equal to or greater than the defender's, the attacker successfully delivers melee damage to his opponent.
- If the attacker's roll succeeds, but his MoS does *not* exceed the defender's MoS, both attacker and defender suffer damage.
- If the attacker's roll fails and the defender's succeeds, the attacker suffers damage from the defender's counterstrike.
- If the attacker's and defender's rolls fail, neither combatant's assault connects, and neither suffers damage.

MELEE COMBAT LIMITS

No more than four attackers can make a melee attack against the same target in a single turn. Also, because each melee attack forces the target to make a corresponding melee defense roll, these defense rolls (except rolls to break a grapple) are considered Incidental Actions during the Action Phase, and do not impede the defender's ability to attempt a melee attack during his own Initiative.

RANGE AND LINE OF SIGHT

Melee combat reflects fighting at point-blank range, and so range and line of sight have minimal impact on resolving these actions. (Blind fighting, a rare exception, is described below.) Therefore, when resolving melee combat rolls, the Range and Cover modifiers shown on the Combat Modifiers Table do not apply.

OTHER COMBAT MODIFIERS

The Combat Modifiers Table also shows additional combat modifiers that can affect a character's melee performance. As with ranged combat, these include modifiers for movement, target size, attacker actions and conditions, miscellaneous conditions, Aimed Shots and other special melee combat modifiers. In melee combat, however, both the attacker and the defender must apply modifiers to their rolls, with each treating himself as the "attacker" and his opponent as the "defender" regardless of who initiates the attack and who is on its receiving end.

Movement Modifiers: Movement modifiers apply to both melee rolls based on both combatants' Movement Actions. These modifiers are applied to the attacker's roll normally (with the attacker's movement modifier and the defender's target movement modifier applied to the attacker's roll).

Target Size Modifiers: As with ranged combat, size modifiers are unique to dismounted characters in personal or tactical combat.

Attacker Actions and Conditions: These roll modifiers reflect special attacker-based conditions such as level of encumbrance, whether the attacker is striking at a secondary target in the same turn as his primary target, using an off-hand to deliver the attack or suffering from Fatigue or Injury effects (see *Damage Effects*, pp. 182-184).

The defender in a melee applies the attacker-based modifiers to his own roll and treats his opponent as the "defender," but if

the defending character did not initiate the attack, the secondary target modifier applies to this roll.

Miscellaneous Condition Modifiers: These roll modifiers apply for any special environmental conditions (see *Special Case Rules*, starting on p. 230), if the target is stunned or surprised, if the attack is coming from behind or if the attacker is using his off-hand.

Aimed Shot Modifiers: These modifiers apply when the attacker aims at specific hit locations on the target, and thus may only be used with Hit Locations rules (see p. 190). Aimed Shot modifiers typically apply to melee attack rolls only; the defending character in such cases need not worry about Aimed Shot effects unless he is trying to direct any potential damage caused by his defense to a particular part of the attacking character's body.

Additional Melee Attack Modifiers: These modifiers describe additional situations that only apply to melee actions, and include special melee attacks such as making and maintaining grapples, attempting a melee action while stunned or surprised (typically when defending against an attack), and attempting to attack a target with a friendly character already engaging him in melee combat.

SPECIAL MELEE EFFECTS

Many melee combat attacks include special options based on the nature of the attack or other battle conditions. The rules for these special effects are described below.

Blind Fighting

Blind fighting is the melee analog to blind firing in ranged combat. Blind fighting refers to any melee attack where the attacker has no direct line of sight to his target but can attack anyway. Examples include jabbing a sword at a target through a heavy curtain or a thin door, or in complete darkness, or while blindfolded.

Like blind firing, blind fighting imposes the standard attack modifiers for full target cover, in addition to all standard modifiers for movement and range. Blind-fighting attacks may not be used to deliver an Aimed Shot, as the attacking character cannot see his target; however, if the defender can see the attacker, his defensive roll may be executed as normal.

Striking Through Barriers: If a Blind Fighting attack is made against a target through a barrier, damage for any success must be resolved using the rules given under *Armor and Barrier Effects* (see pp. 185-189). Melee attacks with an AP of 0 may not be executed through any barrier with a BAR of 1 or higher.

Grapple

A grapple is a special melee attack that reflects an attempt by an attacker to restrain the defender, rather than to inflict damage. Grapple attacks are slightly more difficult to execute than standard melee attacks (receiving a –1 roll modifier), but are otherwise resolved in the same manner as standard melee combat. A grapple must be declared before any melee rolls are made. If the attacker attempting a grapple succeeds in his attack roll *and* the defender's roll fails, the attacker inflicts no damage to the defender, but does restrain him. If the attacker's roll fails *and* the defender's roll succeeds, the defender reverses the grapple, effectively restraining the attacker instead. On any other result, the combatants are engaged in melee, but neither one is damaged or grappled.

Once a grapple attack succeeds (or is successfully reversed), the character who restrains his opponent becomes the grappler, while his opponent is referred to as the grappled. The grappled character is restrained, but receives no damage unless another attacker—or the grappling character—opts to deliver another melee attack in subsequent actions.

While grappling, the two characters are considered to occupy the same space.

Melee Combat While Grappling: While grappling, it is easier for the two combatants to strike one another. To reflect this, all melee actions by the grappled character against his grappler receive a +1 roll modifier, while all melee actions by the grappler against the grappled character receive a +2 roll modifier. This covers all melee actions between the grappling characters, including attempts to break the grapple (see below). Characters friendly to the grappler also receive a +2 roll modifier to melee attacks against a grappled target (but the grappled character receives no such advantage in defense, unless these characters are also grappling the grappled character).

Ranged Attacks Against Grappling Characters: Because the grappling characters occupy the same space, any ranged attacks against a character involved in a grapple may randomly strike either the grappler or the grappling character.

Maintaining or Breaking a Grapple: Maintaining a grapple is an action that must be repeated every turn the grappler wishes to maintain his restraint of the grappled character. This is a Simple Action—delivered in place of a normal melee attack—that requires the grappler to succeed in an Opposed STR Attribute Check against the grappled character. This check is modified by the characters' respective Martial Arts Skill levels, Injury modifiers and any other appropriate modifiers for grappling characters versus grappled characters (or vice versa).

If the grappler rolls a failure, or the grappled character receives a higher MoS than the grappler, the grapple is broken, and the grappled character is free to escape using his Walking movement rate. Otherwise, the grapple is maintained.

Unlike other defensive melee combat rolls, the effort to break from a grapple is considered a Simple Action on the grappled character's part. If more than one grappler is holding the grappled character, the effort to break from the grapple requires rolls against all grapplers, but the entire action is still considered a single Simple Action.

Moving While Grappling: If both characters are on their feet and one possesses a higher STR score than the other, the character with the higher STR can attempt to move, but effectively drags the other character along for the ride. This movement—treated as a walk—has a rate equal to the stronger character's STR + RFL scores, minus the weaker character's BOD score. If neither character is on his feet, or their STR scores are identical, neither character may move while grappling.

Ranged Weapons in Melee Combat

If a character in melee combat attempts to use a ranged weapon—such as firing a pistol while wrestling an opponent—the action is treated in the same fashion as a normal melee combat Opposed Action Check, except that it pits the appropriate weapon Skill for the attacker's ranged weapon against the defender's melee combat Skill. The weapon's attack roll receives the Point-Blank range modifier for a ranged weapon, but does not suffer modifiers for cover.

Subduing Attack

As with similar ranged weapons, melee weapons identified with a "D" in their Base Damage codes (as well as all unarmed and unaugmented hand-to-hand attacks) are specifically designed to subdue a target rather than to inflict lasting harm. Such subduing attacks are delivered using the same rules as an appropriate standard melee attack, but inflict Fatigue points in place of Standard damage.

Characters using melee weapons that do not ordinarily inflict Subduing damage (such as swords and knives) can still execute subduing attacks with such weapons if they possess a Melee Weapons Skill level of 2 or more. This reflects striking the target with the handle of the weapon, or the flat of its blade, rather than with the parts intended to break skin or shatter bone.

Having stumbled upon Ivan, a turncoat among his team, in the midst of sabotaging a 'Mech, Satosh attempts to flee to alert his comrades. Determined to keep Satosh quiet, Ivan draws a combat knife and charges after him, initiating melee combat. Ivan has a Melee Weapons Skill of +3, while Satosh is an accomplished hand-to-hand fighter with a Martial Arts Skill of +6. As an advanced-level Skill, the TN for Satosh's Martial Arts is 7, while Ivan's basic-level Melee Weapons Skill has a TN of 6. For this first round of combat, Ivan wins Initiative, acting first.

Even though Satosh attempted to run from Ivan, his fully loaded backpack has weighed him down. Ivan still needs to run to intercept Satosh (a Simple Action that imposes a –2 modifier to his melee attack), and will hit him from behind (for an added +1 modifier). No other modifiers affect the attack (Satosh is a normal human-sized target and not under any form of cover; his mere 7 meters of movement produced no target movement modifier; visibility and weather are fine; Ivan is not attempting any special attacks, and his average Attributes are not producing any Link modifiers). Combined with his Skill modifier, Ivan receives a final roll modifier of +2 (+3 for Skill level – 2 for attacker running + 1 for his attack from behind). He rolls a 10, achieving a MoS of 6 (10 + 2 = 12; 12 – TN of 6 = MoS of 6).

Because this is a melee attack, Satosh gets a defense roll. He finds he is encumbered (–1), he has run (–2), his Attribute provides no Link modifiers, and Ivan's movement—at 9 meters, tops—is not enough for a target movement modifier. Combined with his Skill of +6, Satosh receives a +3 roll modifier (+6 for Skill level –1 for Encumbered – 2 for attacker running). Satosh rolls a 9, achieving a MoS of 5 (9 + 3 = 12; 12 – TN of 7 = MoS of 5). Because his MoS was greater than Satosh's, Ivan successfully delivers damage in this melee.

In the next turn, Satosh wins Initiative and gets to act first. Ivan's blade inflicted 3 points of Standard damage and left Satosh stunned. Because of this, he is no longer considered to be running, and he has received a –1 Injury modifier. Satosh spends a Simple Action to shake off the stun and an Incidental Action to turn in place (to face Ivan). His second Simple Action is to attack before Ivan strikes again.

BASIC COMBAT TARGET NUMBERS

Combat Action Check	Target Number (TN)
Ranged Attack	Appropriate Ranged Weapon Attack Skill TN
Melee Weapons Attack (and Defense)	Appropriate Melee Weapon Attack Skill TN
Martial Arts Attack (and Defense)	Appropriate Martial Arts Skill TN
Maintain / Disengage from Grapple	Appropriate Martial Arts Skill TNs*

*Opposed Action Check. Only made after successful melee grapple.

Satosh is still encumbered, but his movement is negligible, and he has sustained an injury that imposes a modifier of –2 to his actions. Ivan, meanwhile, has also stopped moving, and has created no other modifiers. Combined with his Skill level of 6, this gives Satosh a Martial Arts attack roll modifier of +3 (6 Skill level – 1 for Encumbered – 2 for Injury = 3). Ivan, meanwhile, receives a modifier of +3 to his Melee Weapons defense roll (+3 for his Skill + no other applicable modifiers).

Satosh's attack roll is 8, yielding a final result of 11 for a MoS of 4 (8 + 3 = 11; 11 – TN of 7 = 4). Ivan rolls a 6, claiming a MoS of 3 (6 + 3 = 9; 9 – TN of 6 = 3). Ivan loses this melee action and takes damage. If Satosh is lucky resolving this damage, Ivan may be stunned, forcing him to spend an action shaking off his stun before he can attack again.

DAMAGE RESOLUTION

Once an attack is successfully delivered, damage is applied to the target, the nature and extent of which varies with the weapon and the level of the attack's success. These rules presume that the character suffers damage as a result of combat, but characters in non-combat situations are just as susceptible to damage from other sources (such as falling), and so these rules also apply to non-combat situations as appropriate.

DAMAGE NOTATION

All damage a character may sustain is described with two values, separated by a slash, which consist of a combination of numbers and letter codes. The first value—the Armor Penetration (AP) factor—appears to the left of the slash and reflects the damage's armor-defeating capability as well as its basic damage type (in a single letter code). The second value—the Base Damage (BD) factor—is shown to the right of the slash, and indicates the base number of damage points the weapon delivers on a successful attack, as well as any special weapon effects (in one or more letter codes).

All weapons receive these basic values in their statistics (see *Personal Equipment*, starting on p. 254), while other damage sources (such as unarmed melee combat and falling damage)

BASIC COMBAT MODIFIERS

Conditional Modifiers	Roll Modifier
Range (Ranged Combat Only)	
Point-Blank Range	+1
Short Range	+0
Medium Range	–2
Long Range	–4
Extreme Range	–6
Target's Cover (Ranged Combat Only)	
Light Cover (Target 5-25% concealed)	–1
Moderate Cover (Target 26-50% concealed)	–2
Heavy Cover (Target 51-75% concealed)	–3
Full Cover (Target 76-100% concealed)	–4
Other Characters in Line of Fire	–1
Movement (Ranged and Melee Combat)	
Attacker Walking/Treading Water	–1
Attacker Running/Crawling/ Swimming	–2
Attacker Jumping/Gliding/Flying	–3
Target Moved 10-45 meters	–1
Target Moved 46-75 meters	–2
Target Moved 76-105 meters	–3
Target Moved 106-150 meters	–4
Target Moved 151+ meters	–5
Target Evading	–(Target's Acrobatics Skill, Max –4)
Target Jumping/Gliding/Flying	–2
Target Crawling/Prone	–1
Target Immobile	+4
Target Size (Ranged and Melee Combat)	
Monstrous (Ex: Whale, DropShip)	+5
Very Large (Ex: Elephant, BattleMech)	+3
Large (Ex: Horse, battle armor, ground car)	+1
Medium (Ex: Adult human, refrigerator)	+0
Small (Ex: Young child, coffee table)	–1
Very Small (Ex: Dog, desktop computer)	–2
Extremely Small (Ex: Cat, book)	–3
Tiny (Ex: Mouse, micro-communicator)	–4

Conditional Modifiers	Roll Modifier
Attacker Actions/Conditions (Ranged and Melee Combat)	
Attacker Encumbered	–1
Attacker Very Encumbered	–2
Attacker Overloaded	–3
Attacking Secondary Target/ Defending vs. Melee	–1
Attacking with Off-hand	–1
Attacker is Fatigued (see Damage Effects)	–(Fatigue points – WIL)
Attacker is Injured (see Damage Effects)	–(Injury Modifier, see p. 182)*
Miscellaneous Conditions (Ranged and Melee Combat)	
Environmental Conditions	See pp. 230-238
Target Stunned/Surprised	+2
Attacking from Behind	+1
Using Off-Hand	–1
Aimed Shot** (Ranged and Melee Combat)	
Chest	–2
Arm, Leg, Abdomen (Wing/Fin)	–3
Head, Hand, Foot (Tail)	–5
Additional Ranged Attack Modifiers (Ranged Combat Only)	
Attacker Taking Careful Aim	+(1 per Careful Aim Action, max +3)
Friendly Character in Melee with Target	–2
Burst-Fire Attack	–Recoil Modifier
Splash or Area-Effect (Blast) Attack	+2
Suppression Fire Attack	–1
Indirect Attack (with Spotter)	–2
Blind Fire/Indirect Attack (without Spotter)	–4†
Additional Melee Combat Modifiers (Melee Combat Only)	
Attacker Stunned/Surprised	–6
Friendly Character in Melee with Target	+2
Crawling/Prone Target in Melee Range	+2
Using Ranged Weapon in Melee Combat	–2
Attempting Grapple (Attacker Only)	–1
Grappling Attacker vs. Grappled Target	+2
Grappled Target vs. Grappling Attacker	+1

*If Hit Location rules are in use, do not apply general Injury modifiers to actions. **Only if Hit Location rules are in use.

†Do not apply Full Cover modifier when using Blind Fire or Indirect Fire (without spotter)

receive their own damage notation based on the situation. The Damage Notation Table defines the various damage codes that may appear in the AP and BD factors for various weapons and other damage-causing sources.

The damage from a Gunther MP-20 Submachine Gun is listed as 4B/3B. The AP factor—4B—identifies the MP-20 as having an Armor Penetration rating of 4 as a ballistic weapon (B). The BD factor—3B—indicates that the weapon delivers 3 points of base damage, but is also capable of burst fire (B) attacks.

The Automatic Shotgun, meanwhile, has an AP/BD listing of 1B/5BS, which describes an AP 1, ballistic (B) weapon that delivers a base damage of 5 points, with burst-fire and splash damage (BS) effects.

The Man-Portable Plasma Rifle, listed as 5E/10CS, is an AP 5 energy-damage (E) weapon that can deliver base damage of 10 points with continuous and splash damage effects (CS).

DAMAGE NOTATION TABLE

Armor Penetration Factor		Base Damage Factor	
Code	Effect	Code	Effect
B	Ballistic	A	Area-Effect
E	Energy	B	Burst-Fire
M	Melee	C	Continuous Damage
S	Special	D	Subduing/Disabling Damage
X	Explosive	S	Splash Damage

STANDARD DAMAGE VS. FATIGUE

In personal combat, damage comes in two primary forms: Standard damage and Fatigue. Standard damage reflects actual physical—and potentially lethal—injuries. Fatigue represents exhaustion, exertion, minor bruising and other non-lethal injuries (including Subduing damage). Unless an attack or weapon specifies otherwise, all damage sustained in personal combat is presumed to be Standard damage.

Recording Damage

Standard and Fatigue damage are both found in the Condition Monitor on the right-hand side of the Character Record Sheet, with both values represented by open bubbles that the player crosses out (in pencil) as his character suffers damage. An uninjured character with no Fatigue should have a number of open Standard damage bubbles equal to twice his BOD score, and a number of open Fatigue damage bubbles equal to twice his WIL score.

As a character suffers Standard damage, the player must mark off the same number of bubbles from the character's Standard damage lines. As the character suffers Fatigue damage, the player must mark off the same number of bubbles from the Fatigue damage lines.

If a character suffers more Standard damage than he has damage bubbles to record it, the character dies. If a character suffers more Fatigue damage than he has Fatigue bubbles to record it, the character automatically falls unconscious and any excess Fatigue points transfer to Standard damage.

Stun and Unconscious: If a character is stunned or unconscious, the player must mark the appropriate bubbles. These marks are erased once the character shakes off the stun or wakes up (as appropriate).

STANDARD RANGED ATTACK DAMAGE

The damage delivered by a successful ranged weapon attack is based on the weapon's BD factor. This damage may be increased by a Margin of Success (MoS) factor based on the weapon type used, or decreased by armor values above the weapon's listed AP factor.

Standard Damage: Unless the weapon has the Burst-Fire code in its BD factor (and is fired in burst-fire mode), it increases its damage by 0.25 points per point of MoS (with any final fractions rounded *down* to the nearest whole point). Burst-fire weapons fired in Suppression Fire mode deliver damage in accordance with these rules as well.

Area-Effect (Blast) Damage: Regardless of the attack roll result, the MoS for all attacks delivered by an area-effect (blast) weapon is considered 0 when assessing damage. This is because the damage automatically affects all targets within that radius unless an obstruction strong enough to absorb the damage is present between the point of impact and the target. As the damage radiates outward from an area-effect weapon's point of impact—unless the weapon's rules state otherwise—the attack's AP and BD factors decrease by 1 for each meter of distance (to a minimum of 0).

Burst-Fire Damage: Burst-fire weapons fired in Burst-Fire mode inflict 1 point of additional damage for every point of MoS on a successful attack, up to the maximum number of shots fired in the attack. The maximum number of shots a burst-fire weapon can fire is found in the weapon's Burst rating (in the notes, to the left of the slash).

Continuous Damage: Unless otherwise specified by the rules for the weapon or situation, damage from any weapon with the Continuous Damage feature occurs over and over during the End Phase after the weapon first hits its target. The initial damage at the time of the first successful attack is resolved per a Standard damage attack (unless other features, such as Splash damage, indicate otherwise), but in the next End Phase after that (and in subsequent End Phases, as long as the Continuous Damage effects linger), the character suffers additional damage points that receive no added MoS effects. For more information, see *Continuous Damage* (p. 180).

Subduing Damage: Subduing damage inflicted by a ranged weapon follows the same rules as standard ranged attack damage, but all damage points are assigned as Fatigue rather than Standard damage.

Splash Damage: If the optional Hit Locations rules are not in effect, weapons with Splash damage increase their AP ratings by 1 point (to a maximum of 10) against other characters. Aside from any other damage features (such as Continuous damage effects), Splash damage is resolved as a normal attack.

Ranged Damage and Fatigue

Any time a character sustains Standard damage from an attack, he also suffers 1 point of Fatigue. Attacks that already deliver Fatigue points (such as Subduing damage) do not add this Fatigue point.

Ranged Attacks and Armor

Unless otherwise noted, damage from a ranged attack is affected by any armor the target is wearing (see *Armor Effects*, pp. 185-189).

Ranged Attacks and Stun

Any time a character suffers damage from a ranged attack, he also suffers Stun effects (see *Stun*, p. 184).

The Gunther MP-20 has a damage notation of 4B/3B and its notes show a Burst rating of 10/4. This means it can fire up to 10 shots in a full burst (increasing its chance to misfire by 1 point for every 4 shots or fraction thereof fired in the burst). If a soldier using an MP-20 in Burst-Fire mode fires a 3-shot burst at a target and scores a hit with a 4-point Margin of Success, the attack delivers 3 damage points to the target, plus an extra 3 damage points for the attack's MoS (to the maximum number of shots fired in the burst). If the shooter had instead tried to fire an 8-shot burst, but achieved a MoS of only 5, the damage inflicted would be 3 points plus 5 extra points for the MoS.

If a character armed with a Magna Laser Rifle (Damage 3E/5, no burst-fire capability) hits his target with a MoS of 5, the attack delivers 5 damage points from the weapon, plus 1 point from the attack's MoS (MoS 5 x 0.25 = 1.25, round down to 1).

STANDARD MELEE ATTACK DAMAGE

The damage delivered by a successful melee attack (including damage from melee weapons, unless the weapon's data states otherwise) is equal to 1 point for every 4 points of the attacking character's STR score (rounded up), plus the damage value of any melee weapons used in the attack. As with ranged attack damage, this damage may be increased by a Margin of Success (MoS) factor or decreased by armor values above the attack's AP factor.

Because melee attacks are Opposed Action Checks, the MoS of a successful melee attack is affected by the MoS (or MoF) of the defender's melee defense roll. If the defender's roll succeeds (but is not high enough to defeat the attack), the defender's MoS is subtracted from the attacker's MoS; if the defender's roll fails, the defender's Margin of *Failure* (MoF) is added to the attacker's MoS.

The amount of additional damage delivered by a melee attack's MoS is equal to 0.25 damage points per point of MoS (with any final fractions rounded *up* to the nearest whole point).

Unarmed Melee Damage: Unless otherwise specified (such as when the attacker is wearing special gloves), the AP factor for any unarmed melee attack is presumed to be 0M. All damage inflicted in unarmed melee combat is treated as Subduing damage (see below).

Armed Melee Damage: If a melee weapon or special gloves/manipulators are used, apply the AP factor for the melee weapon as appropriate, in addition to the MoS effects described above. Also, unless the melee weapon specifies otherwise, the character's STR also factors into the attack's damage as described above.

Grapple Damage: Under these rules, a successful grapple attack inflicts no damage to either character.

Subduing Damage: Subduing damage inflicted by a melee attack follows the same rules as standard melee attack damage, but all damage points are assigned as Fatigue rather than as Standard damage.

Knockdown: As an optional rule, a successful non-grappling melee attack with a MoS of 3+ may also knock the opponent to the ground. (For more information, see Knockdown under *Optional Rules*, p. 192.)

Melee Damage and Fatigue

Any time a character sustains Standard damage from an attack, he also suffers 1 point of Fatigue. Attacks that already deliver Fatigue (such as Subduing damage) do not add 1 more Fatigue point.

Melee Attacks and Armor

Unless otherwise noted, the damage from a melee attack is affected by any armor the target is wearing (see *Armor Effects*, pp. 185-189).

Melee Attacks and Stun

Any time a character suffers damage from a melee attack, he also suffers Stun effects (see *Stun*, p. 184). Because a grapple attack delivers no damage, a character is not stunned by a grapple.

Connor, an unarmed soldier with STR 6, successfully strikes his opponent with a Martial Arts Skill MoS of 4, while his opponent rolls a MoS of 1. This means Connor will deliver 2 points of damage from his STR (STR 6 ÷ 4 = 1.5, round up to 2) plus 1 additional point for his MoS (attacker's MoS of 4 – defender's MoS of 1 = 3; 3 x 0.25 = 0.75, rounded up to 1).

Because this is an unarmed attack, this damage receives an AP factor of 0M and is treated as Subduing damage, inflicting its 3 damage points as Fatigue rather than Standard damage.

Rayne, a katana-wielding DEST trooper, brings his weapon to bear in a fight with a Black Dragon insurgent. His katana's weapon damage is 1M/2, and Rayne himself has a STR score of 5. His Melee Weapons Skill roll succeeds with a 4-point MoS, while the insurgent's defense roll fails by 2. This means the katana delivers 2 damage points (from the sword's BD), plus 2 points for Rayne's STR (5 ÷ 4 = 1.25, rounded up to 2), plus 2 additional points for the sum of Rayne's MoS and his opponent's MoF (attacker's MoS of 4 + defender's MoF of 2 = 6; 6 x 0.25 = 1.5, rounded up to 2), or 6 points total.

As this is an armed melee attack, using a weapon not specified as Subduing, and as Rayne's controlling player has not specified his intention to deliver this attack as a Subduing strike (DEST rarely takes prisoners), this damage receives an AP factor of 1M (from the katana's statistics) and is applied as Standard damage rather than as Fatigue.

CONTINUOUS DAMAGE

In some cases, a character may receive lingering damage that simulates bleeding, fire, acid or toxins. Except in the case of a weapon attack, Continuous damage is not resolved in the same Action Phase as the attack that delivers it, but in the End Phase of each turn that follows the initial attack (or exposure).

Characters may attempt to stop Continuous damage during their Action Phase, though the means will vary with the damage type. For example, Continuous damage from bleeding may only be stopped by successful use of a MedTech Skill (with modifiers based on the extent and nature of the injury, as described under *Damage Effects*, pp. 182-184), while attempts to extinguish a fire would require appropriate actions such as dousing the victim in water or sand, or otherwise attempting to smother the flames.

If a character suffers damage that results in Continuous damage effects, the effect is treated as a successful attack with a MoS of 0. The amount of Continuous damage and the effects of any armor will vary according to the type of attack. Unless otherwise stated, the following rules define Continuous damage effects, based on the situation.

Bleeding: A bleeding character (see *Bleeding Effect*, p. 184) suffers 1 point of Standard damage per turn. This effect can only be halted by a successful MedTech Skill roll for the bleeding location, modified as normal for the character's injuries.

Drowning/Suffocation: A drowning or suffocating character sustains 2 points of Fatigue damage per turn, unless he can reach a breathable air supply.

Atmospheric Toxins: Atmospheric taints or toxins inflict Continuous damage on any character exposed to them. Unlike bleeding and drowning, inhaled toxins and poisons possess an AP and a BD value, just like a weapon attack. (The AP receives a Special [S] code.) Special filters and other life support gear provide a BAR against inhaled toxins and poisons. If the BAR of a functioning filter or piece of life support equipment used by the character is higher than the AP for the airborne toxin or poison, the character is unaffected. Otherwise, the character suffers Continuous damage based on the strength and toxicity of the airborne agents. These can range from a simple irritant with an AP/BD of 1S/1CD (AP 1, Special; BD 1 Continuous, Subduing), to an extremely caustic chemical reaction with an AP/BD of 9S/8C. Conventional armor that does not provide breathing assistance has no effect on Continuous damage from atmospheric toxins.

Poisons: Regardless of the vector chosen, the Continuous damage effects of poisonous agents (unlike environmental toxins) have a finite lifespan. Though they, too, receive special AP and BD values, any poison with Continuous damage effects also has a Duration value. Characters exposed to a poison (inhaled, ingested, injected or contact), suffer Continuous damage equal to half the poison's Strength value for a number of turns equal to the poison's Duration value. (See *Drugs and Poisons* in the *Personal Equipment* chapter, pp. 317-321, for more information.) Unless special rules indicate otherwise, armor does not protect against the Continuous damage inflicted by a successful poison attack.

Vacuum: A character exposed to vacuum without benefit of an undamaged spacesuit, aerospace flight suit or similar pressurized full-coverage suit sustains 5 points of Standard damage per turn. Suffocation effects may also apply if the character lacks a breathable air supply. Only a pressurized suit that has not been compromised (has no BAR values reduced to 0) can avert this damage.

Continuous Inferno Weapon Damage: A character struck by a weapon that inflicts Continuous damage using incendiary gel (such as infernos) suffers the weapon's full damage effects when initially struck in combat. Starting in the following End Phase, the character suffers half the weapon's rated BD (but at the same AP factor) to a minimum AP/BD of 5E/4C. This damage continues every turn until the fire is extinguished, and affects any armor the character is wearing as well.

Continuous Non-Inferno Weapon Damage: A character struck by a weapon that inflicts Continuous damage *not* derived from inferno munitions (or similar incendiary gels) suffers the weapon's full damage effects when initially struck in combat. Starting in the following End Phase, the character suffers half the weapon's rated BD (but at the same AP factor). In each subsequent End Phase, this Continuous damage BD halves again (rounding up) while retaining the same AP factor, until it is reduced to a BD of 1 point (inflicted as the last turn of the weapon's Continuous damage). Unless this damage is delivered by a toxin or poison (see above), it also affects any armor the character is wearing.

Normal Fire: A character set ablaze by means other than incendiary gels or an incendiary weapon attack suffers 3E/2C Continuous damage in the End Phase of every turn until the fire is extinguished. Fire damage also affects any armor the character is wearing.

Continuous Damage and Fatigue

Each turn a character sustains Standard damage from Continuous damage effects, he also suffers 1 point of Fatigue. Continuous damage that already delivers Fatigue does not add 1 more Fatigue point.

Continuous Damage and Armor

As noted above, armor has no effect on Continuous damage that results from bleeding, drowning, suffocation or successful poison attacks. (For a poison attack to be successful, it must somehow enter the character's system via its chosen vector; inhaled poisons must be inhaled, injected poisons must inflict damage to reflect that they have pierced skin, contact poisons must touch skin and ingested poisons must be consumed). Armor does affect Continuous damage that results from weapon damage or normal fire.

Against atmospheric toxins and inhaled poisons, "armor" means the BAR of any breathing filters and equipment. Such equipment is fully effective if the filter's BAR exceeds that of the toxin, negating the Continuous damage; otherwise, the damage affects the character.

Against vacuum, only a pressurized suit that has not been compromised will protect against Continuous damage effects. If the suit is compromised, or the character is not wearing a properly sealed and pressurized suit, the Continuous damage occurs as normal.

Continuous Damage and Stun

Characters do not suffer Stun effects from Continuous damage (see *Stun*, p. 184).

FALLING DAMAGE

Falling represents a special kind of attack against the character that can occur in a multitude of circumstances, from a failed Climbing or Acrobatics Skill Check to being thrown off a building. Falling damage has the following rules:

- A character that falls 5 meters or less will suffer no significant damage, but if the fall resulted from a Failed Action Check or was otherwise outside the falling character's control (such as being thrown), the character suffers Stun effects (see below).
- Falling damage is resolved as a successful attack against the character with an effective MoS of 0.
- The AP factor for a fall of more than 5 meters equals 0.1 times the number of meters fallen (rounded normally, with .5 rounding up), and is always treated as Melee (M) damage. The maximum AP factor for a fall is 10M.
- The BD factor for a fall of more than 5 meters equals 0.2 times the number of meters fallen (rounded up). This is treated as Standard damage, with no special effects. There is no maximum BD for a fall.
- If the character falls into or onto something particularly soft (such as an air mattress or water), divide the AP and BD factors for the fall by 2 (rounding up).
- If the optional Hit Locations rules are being used (see *Hit Locations*, pp. 190-191), roll one hit location for every 5 points of damage sustained and apply that damage to the rolled location, modifying the damage as appropriate for the location of the hit and any armor present.

Falling Damage and Fatigue

Each turn a character sustains Standard damage from a fall, he also suffers 1 point of Fatigue.

Falling Damage and Armor

Unless otherwise noted, the damage from a fall is affected by any armor the target is wearing (see *Armor Effects*, pp. 185-189).

Falling Damage and Stun

Any time a character suffers an unintentional fall, he also suffers Stun effects (see *Stun*, p. 184).

STANDARD DAMAGE TABLE

Attack Type	Standard Damage Value
Ranged (Standard)*	Weapon Damage + (Attacker's MoS x 0.25)**
Ranged (Burst-Fire)	Weapon Damage + (Attacker's MoS)
Melee (Unarmed)	(Winner's STR ÷ 4)† + (Winner's MoS x 0.25)†
Melee (Armed)	(Weapon Damage) + (Winner's STR ÷ 4)† + (Winner's MoS x 0.25)†
Falling (Hard Surface)	0.2 x (Falling Distance in meters)††
Falling (Soft Surface)	0.1 x (Falling Distance in meters)††
Area-Effect	Weapon Damage – (Distance from Impact in meters)**

*Also for burst-fire weapon used as suppression fire

**Round down; area-effect damage AP is reduced by 1 per meter of distance, also rounded down.

†Round up; For net MoS, subtract loser's MoS from winner's if both succeeded (or add loser's MoF to winner's MoS)

††Round up; Damage AP = (0.1 x falling distance, rounded normally; 0.5 rounds up)

FATIGUE

Fatigue damage represents minor wounds, exhaustion and other factors that—while far from lethal—can potentially take a character out of action. As it represents a host of possible conditions, Fatigue damage may be recorded as the result of an attack, or at the End Phase of a turn as a result of exhaustion.

Fatigue from Standard Damage and Falls: A character suffers 1 point of Fatigue damage any time he takes Standard damage from an attack or a fall.

Fatigue from Subduing Attacks: If the character is hit by a Subduing attack, all damage sustained will be Fatigue points from the attack itself.

Fatigue from Exertion and Continuous Damage: Additional Fatigue effects from Continuous damage, physical exhaustion and the like are applied and resolved in the End Phase of each combat turn (see *End Phase*, p. 189).

Fatigue Damage and Armor

If delivered by an attack (rather than the result of exertion or encumbrance), Fatigue damage is affected by any armor the target is wearing as for a normal attack (see *Armor Effects*, p. 185). Fatigue from exhaustion or exertion is not affected by armor.

Fatigue Damage and Stun

A character only suffers Stun effects from Fatigue points delivered by an attack (see *Stun*, p. 184).

Recovering Fatigue

Characters may recover Fatigue points as a special action in combat. See the Fatigue rules in the *End Phase* section (p. 189).

DAMAGE EFFECTS

As characters suffer damage, their injuries reduce their effectiveness in battle and increase their chances of falling unconscious or dying. The following rules govern these effects as they occur in combat.

INJURY MODIFIERS

The general decline in effectiveness caused by damage is referred to as a character's Injury modifier, and is based primarily on the amount of Standard damage he has sustained, relative to his total damage capacity.

Base Injury Modifiers: The base Injury modifier for a character equals –1 for every 25 percent (or fraction thereof) of the character's total Standard damage capacity that has been used up.

Injury Modifiers and Actions: The base Injury modifier is applied to all rolls affected by the character's injuries, including physical Action Checks, Consciousness and Knockdown checks. (If there is some question as to whether a character's injury may affect an action, the gamemaster may decide the outcome based on the specific circumstances.) In addition, a character's Injury modifier is applied to any MedTech and Surgery Action Checks performed on the character.

Injury Modifiers and Movement: In addition to acting as a roll modifier, Injury modifiers affect all of the character's movement rates. To determine this effect, treat the character's Injury modifier

Cornered and outnumbered by enemy troops, Leutnant Lawrence Thomas and his squad grimly face down the charging hordes with a barrage of laser rifle fire.

as a modifier to his Walking and Running MP rates, and recalculate all other rates as indicated in the Movement Rates and Costs Table (see p. 168).

If Injury modifiers reduce a character to 0 Walking MPs or less, the character cannot move (except to turn in place), but is not considered immobile unless he is also rendered unconscious or killed.

Hit Location Effects: If using the optional Hit Location rules, do not apply Injury modifiers to actions and movement effects. Instead, use the Specific Wound Effects rules described under *Hit Locations* (p. 190). Injury modifiers still apply, however, to any Consciousness, Knockdown and healing checks.)

Oscar—a character with a BOD of 6 (and thus a Damage Capacity of 12), a Walking rate of 11 meters and a Running rate of 21 meters—would suffer a –1 Base Injury Modifier for every 3 points of total Standard damage sustained (12 x 0.25 = 3).

After sustaining 5 total damage points (for a –2 Injury Modifier), Oscar finds he has been reduced to Walking and Running rates of 9 and 19 meters, respectively (11 Walking – 2 Injury Modifier = 9 Walking; 21 Running – 2 Injury Modifier = 19 Running). This means his Sprinting rate—equal to twice his Running rate—will be 38 meters, while his Crawling rate will be 3 (Walking rate of 9 ÷ 4 = 2.25, rounded up to 3).

Jaylen, a character with a BOD of 3 (Damage Capacity 6), a Walking rate of 8 meters and a Running rate of 18 meters, would suffer a –1 Base Injury Modifier if he sustained 1 point of damage, because 1 point is less than 25 percent of his total capacity (6 x 0.25 = 1.5). However, at 2 and 3 points, Jaylen's Base Injury Modifier would be –2, because the damage at 2 and 3 points exceeds 25 percent and is less than or equal to 50 percent.

At 1 point, Jaylen's Walking and Running rates would fall to 7 and 17 meters, respectively; at 3 points, he must contend with –3 MPs, for rates of 5 and 15 meters, respectively.

FATIGUE MODIFIERS

In addition to modifiers from physical damage, the character's level of fatigue applies its own kind of Injury modifier known as a Fatigue modifier. A character's Fatigue modifier is equal to –1 times the number of Fatigue points the character has accumulated beyond his WIL score. Thus, a character with a WIL of 4 suffers no Fatigue modifiers until he accumulates 5 Fatigue points or more.

Fatigue modifiers are applied to all Action Checks the character may attempt, but they do not affect any MedTech Checks made by attending medics and such, nor do they affect the character's movement rates as standard Injury modifiers do. Finally, Fatigue modifiers are not doubled when making Consciousness Checks.

Hit Location Effects: Regardless of whether the Hit Locations rules are in effect, Fatigue damage modifiers apply as indicated above.

Teddy—a combat correspondent with a WIL of 4—spent the last turn running through a battle-ravaged city with an encumbering load strapped to his back and has sustained a single point of Fatigue. Because this 1 point is well below his WIL score, no Fatigue effects apply to any of his Action Checks (yet).

Suddenly, Teddy is hit by a blast from an enemy soldier wielding a Ceres Arms Crowdbuster (AP/BD: 0S/5D). Because he lacks even basic protection against this weapon, Teddy feels its full effect and suffers 5 points of Fatigue damage, increasing his Fatigue to 6. This puts Teddy's Fatigue 2 points past his WIL score, and he therefore suffers a Fatigue Modifier of –2 to all actions, including Consciousness Checks. His movement rates are unaffected.

CONSCIOUSNESS CHECK

A Consciousness Check is required any time a character suffers Standard damage or is struck by a successful Subduing damage attack. This roll is made as a standard WIL Single Attribute Check, but adds the character's BOD score to the roll result, as well as the character's Injury and Fatigue modifiers. If successful, the character remains conscious.

Gavin, a corporate security guard with a BOD of 5 and a WIL of 4, has found himself in the midst of a mercenary attack on his outpost. At one point in the firefight, he gets shot by an enemy pistol and takes 3 Standard damage points, and must now make a Consciousness roll.

As a Single Attribute Check, the roll has a TN of 14, but Gavin applies a +5 to the roll for his BOD in addition to the +4 from his WIL score. The 3 points of Standard damage from the pistol is over Gavin's 25 percent Damage Capacity threshold, but less than 50 percent, so a Base Injury Modifier of –2 applies. The single point of Fatigue Gavin sustained does not affect his Injury modifier, because the 1 point is well below his WIL of 4. This leaves a final roll modifier of +7 (+5 [BOD] +4 [WIL] –2 [Injury Modifer at 50 percent] = +7). To stay conscious, Gavin needs to roll a 7 or better.

BLEEDING EFFECT

Under some circumstances, a character may be injured severely enough to suffer major bleeding (which may be external, like a sliced artery, or internal). Bleeding is a special form of Continuous damage that can occur any time a character suffers Standard damage (but not Fatigue damage).

To determine if a character is bleeding after an attack, every time he suffers Standard damage in excess of half his BOD score (rounded up), the character must make an unmodified BOD Attribute Check. If successful, the character does not bleed. Otherwise, the character is bleeding.

Though it is realistically possible to bleed from multiple injuries, for the sake of simplicity, a character may only be bleeding or not bleeding under these rules (as with Stun effects). Once a character fails a Bleeding Check, no further checks are necessary unless the character receives medical aid to stop the bleeding.

Once a character begins to bleed, he sustains Bleeding damage as a Continuous damage effect during every End Phase after the bleeding injury occurred, until the blood flow is stopped.

Stopping Bleeding

To successfully stop a character's blood loss, a friendly character—or the wounded character himself, if able—must spend an entire turn tending to the wound without movement, and execute a successful MedTech Skill Check during the Action Phase. The wounded character's base Injury modifier is applied to this roll result, along with any other modifiers appropriate to the circumstances.

If a MedTech Skill Check fails to stop the bleeding in the current turn, the bleeding continues in the corresponding End Phase as normal.

DEATH

Any character that suffers more than 2 times his BOD score in Standard damage points (not Fatigue points) is killed.

TACTICAL KILL

If, during particularly large combat scenarios, a character is rendered unconscious from damage, Fatigue, or both, the character may be considered a "tactical kill" and removed from play. If the character was simply rendered unconscious and suffered no bleeding, he may be revived after the battle. Otherwise, the character must make a successful BOD Single Attribute Check roll—using his last known Injury modifier—to survive.

STUN

Any time a character suffers Standard damage—or Fatigue damage delivered by an attack—the character is stunned. A stunned character may take no actions until he shakes off the Stun effect, which requires a Simple Action (but no Action Check).

Characters may only be stunned or not stunned. Additional attacks delivered to a stunned character produce no further Stun effects.

TRAITS AND DAMAGE EFFECTS

Some Traits a character may possess—particularly Glass Jaw and Toughness—can affect how the character sustains damage. Though these are discussed in full in the *Traits* section (starting on p. 106), their most direct impact in damage resolution is described below.

Fit: Multiply all Fatigue points sustained from exertion and Continuous damage (but not from Standard damage or Subduing attacks) by 0.5 and round down.

Glass Jaw: Multiply all physical damage points sustained by 1.5 and round up. Multiply all Fatigue points by 2.

Handicap: Multiply all Fatigue points sustained from exertion and Continuous damage (but not from Standard damage or Subduing attacks) by 2.

Toughness: Multiply all physical damage sustained by 0.75 and round up. Multiply all Fatigue points by 0.5 and round up.

Pain Resistance: The Pain Resistant Trait does not modify damage, but it does apply a +1 modifier to any of the character's rolls or actions (including movement) that are affected by Injury modifiers (see *Injury Modifiers*, p. 182), and allows the character to ignore all Stun effects as long as the amount of damage sustained—Standard or Fatigue—is less than the character's BOD score.

ARMOR AND BARRIER EFFECTS

Armor and other barriers may block an attack or impede damage a character would otherwise sustain. Once a character suffers damage, any armor or barriers that the attack must pass through may reduce that damage based on the armor ratings of such obstructions.

ARMOR AND BARRIER TYPES

Three main types of armor or barriers apply in combat: personal armor, tactical armor and barrier armor.

Personal Armor

Personal armor refers to any armor worn by the character as clothing, except for armor that uses Tactical Armor points (such as vehicles and battle armor). This armor is considered part of the character and is essentially targeted with him. Creatures with a Natural Armor value treat this natural armor as personal armor. Personal armor is tracked by BAR values alone, with four values under standard play.

Tactical Armor

Tactical armor refers to the armor (or structure) of vehicles and other battlefield or support units that track damage in points (including battle armor, even though battlesuit armor is more of a middle ground between personal armor and vehicle-grade protection). Tactical armor receives a BAR value and a number of points that reflects the armor's resilience and overall thickness. As tactical armor reflects vehicular-grade protection, characters are generally not considered to be wearing tactical armor as much as operating a unit protected by such armor from the inside. This means that characters protected by tactical armor may not be targeted directly unless some part of their body is visible to outside characters (such as through an open and clear window or port in a typical civilian ground car). Characters so protected remain immune to armor-defeating damage, as such damage applies to the tactical armor instead.

Battle Armor: Battle armor—including exoskeletons and PA(L) suits—is considered a hybrid of vehicle-grade combat armor and personal armor. Unlike a vehicle, a battlesuit's operator wears the suit close to his body, and is thus vulnerable to more incidental damage than a vehicle driver or MechWarrior. Against vehicular-scale weapons, with their wider impact, battle armor tends to suffer tactical armor damage only, but against enemy infantry, BAR values help to account for the suit's greater weaknesses at joints that are far more vulnerable to smaller weapons and a steady aim.

Barrier Armor

Barrier armor is a catchall term that covers the protection a character may receive from obstacles in the line of fire and the general resilience of other objects that can themselves be targets of an attack. Like tactical armor, barrier armor is rated in BAR and armor points, but the armor points a barrier receives reflect its general size and integrity as an impediment to damage, rather than its ability to take damage on a targeted character's behalf. Consequently, characters may be attacked through such barriers, with both the barrier and the target character taking any damage that penetrates.

AP VS. BAR

The damage a character receives is only reduced by armor that is superior to the Armor Penetration (AP) rating of the damage inflicted. For all armor and barriers, this is indicated by a Barrier Armor Rating (BAR) that can range from 0 to 10.

Personal armor (as opposed to tactical armor), receives four BAR values separated by slashes. These four values indicate the armor's effectiveness against Melee, Ballistic, Energy and Explosive damage types (respectively), which may be degraded as damage occurs. Tactical armor and barriers generally receive only one BAR value, which remains equally effective against all damage types as long as the armor has tactical armor points. If a given armor or barrier type only has a single BAR number, presume that it falls into the tactical armor category. Battle armor—a notable exception—occupies a special hybrid category where the armor tracks its damage in tactical armor points, but also receives a four-value BAR to reflect its effectiveness against various personal combat weapons.

If a character suffers damage that has an AP equal to or greater than the BAR value of any personal armor or barriers (other than tactical armor) between the damage source and the character, the armor or barrier will not affect the damage result. For example, if a weapon with an AP/BD of 4M/3 hits armor with a BAR of 2 versus Melee damage (the first value in a four-value BAR notation), the weapon's damage of 3 will not be reduced by the inferior armor.

If a character suffers damage that has an AP *below* the applicable BAR of the armor or barrier (other than tactical armor) between the damage source and the character, the armor reduces the final AP and BD of the attack (including all modifiers for MoS and STR, as applicable) by the difference between the armor's BAR and the attack's AP. For example, if a weapon with an AP/BD of 5B/6 hits armor with a BAR of 6 against Ballistic damage (the second value in the four-value BAR notation), the superior armor reduces the weapon's AP/BD from 5B/6 to 4B/5 (AP 5 – BAR 6 = –1 to AP and BD).

Regardless of the attack's nature or the armor's strength, an attack's AP and BD may not be reduced below 0.

Personal Armor and Barriers: Any remaining damage that passes through personal armor or barriers (other than tactical armor) is applied as damage to the targeted character.

Tactical Armor: If an attack must pass through tactical armor, its damage is reduced as described above for AP values below the armor's BAR. Any damage inflicted beyond the armor's damage-reducing effect will apply only to the armor and structure points of the tactical armor itself, rather than to any characters within. See *Tactical Armor Degradation*, below.

> *If a Gunther MP-20 (AP 4B) scores a hit against a target wearing personal armor that has a Ballistic BAR of 6, and the resulting damage is 6 points (thanks to a solid hit while using burst-fire mode), the 2-point superiority of the target's BAR reduces the damage to 4 points (6 – 2 = 4).*

Alternatively, if an attacker with a STR score of 6 uses a sword (AP/BD: 1M/2) to strike a target through a barrier with a BAR of 3, and the attack receives a MoS of 5, the normal damage—6 points (2 for the weapon, 2 for STR and 2 for the MoS)—would be reduced to 4 points by the barrier (6 points damage – 2 points of difference between AP 1 and the barrier's BAR of 3).

Finally, if an attacker with a Heavy Support Laser (7E/12) successfully hits a vehicular target with a BAR of 8 and 4 tactical armor points on the location struck, the weapon's BD of 12 would be reduced to 11 by the target's superior armor by (AP 7 – BAR 8 = –1; BD 12 – 1 = 11). This modified BD value will likely inflict a loss in armor points to the unit, as described under tactical armor degradation.

ARMOR DEGRADATION

As armor sustains damage, it generally loses effectiveness over time. For personal armor, this effect is recorded as an overall loss in BAR values. Barriers and tactical armor (such as that found on vehicles, battle armor and 'Mechs) record this effect as a loss of tactical armor points protecting the hit location.

Personal Armor Degradation

Personal armor may degrade every time the armor is struck, but fails to absorb or deflect all of the incoming damage. If an attack that delivers standard damage (not Fatigue-only damage) penetrates armor to deliver 5 or more points of damage, personal armor will degrade. When this occurs—regardless of the type of attack (be it a melee weapon, a ballistic, energy beam, or explosive)—all four of the armor's BAR values are reduced by 1 point, to a minimum of 0. Personal armor reduced in this fashion remains repairable (but increasingly ineffective) until all four BAR values fall to 0, at which point the armor is effectively destroyed and offers no protection whatsoever.

Tactical Armor (and Structure) Degradation

Vehicles, battle armor and similar tactical units use armor points rather than a reducible BAR value to track their overall effectiveness. Thus, tactical armor (and internal structure) retains its full BAR until every point is destroyed in the location hit, even if this BAR fails to reduce the damage from an attack to 0. Indeed, any attack that delivers damage after accounting for the tactical armor's BAR will reduce the location's Tactical Armor value by an amount equal to the number of Standard damage points the weapon inflicts, divided by the armor's BAR (rounding normally). Attacks that deliver Subduing damage or that otherwise deliver only Fatigue damage do no harm to tactical armor.

Hit Locations: Even though hit location rules are considered optional when attacking creatures and other characters, attacks against any tactical unit (including vehicles, ProtoMechs, BattleMechs and so on) require a hit location roll per such units' standard rules. Full coverage of these units and their hit location tables (depending on type) appear in *Total Warfare*, *Tactical Operations* and *Strategic Operations*.

Tactical Armor vs. Internal Structure: These rules also consider a tactical unit's internal structure identical to tactical armor. Unless the unit is a battle armor suit (see below) or its design notes state otherwise, the BAR value for any tactical unit's internal structure is presumed to be identical to that of its exterior armor.

Battle Armor and Exoskeletons: The tactical armor used on battle armor and exoskeletons reflects a middle ground between full-scale vehicle armor and personal armor. This armor has special effects in standard play, including multiple BAR values (as defined in the Battle Armor BAR Table), based on the armor's starting number of tactical armor points. If the target of an attack is a character wearing battle armor, a Power Armor (Light) suit or an exoskeleton, any damage that reduces the suit's tactical armor points will also affect the character within. If, after accounting for BAR effects, a battlesuit or exoskeleton suffers more than 1 point of damage to its tactical armor, each additional point of tactical armor damage also delivers 1 Standard damage point to the character within. Triple this penetrating damage (to 3 points of Standard damage per point of tactical damage) if the suit is an exoskeleton.

Star Captain Vaness Carns, a Wolf Clan Elemental, unleashes the hellish firepower of her "Toad" battlesuit during the fighting on Radstadt.

Even if using the optional hit location rules, weapons that inflict splash damage effects do not receive the +1 AP effect of such weapons if the target is wearing battle armort.

In a textbook case of road rage, Casey opens fire on a civilian ground car with a BAR of 4 using her Magnum revolver (an AP/BD 4B/5 weapon). Because her weapon's AP is equal to or greater than the BAR of the attacked vehicle, the damage is unmodified, so 5 points of personal armor damage are inflicted on the vehicle. When converted to tactical armor damage, the attack reduces the ground car's armor in the location struck by 1 point [5 BD ÷ (4 BAR) = 1.25, rounded down to 1].

Facing down a Word of Blake Phalax battlesuit with an Energy BAR of 6, Peter's team opens up with a blast from their support particle cannon (AP/BD: 5E/14S), and manages a modest MoS of +2. Against the suit's tactical armor, the

damage of 14S (with no additional damage, due to the fairly low MoS) is divided to by the suit's BAR of 6. this produces a result of 2.333 points, which rounds up to 3.

As the suit sustains this damage, its wearer is also hit by 2 points of damage from the attack (3 points of tactical damage – 1 = 2)..

BATTLE ARMOR BAR TABLE

Tactical Armor	BAR (Clan)	BAR (Inner Sphere)
1	4/4/5/4	4/4/5/4
2	5/5/6/5	4/5/6/5
3	6/5/6/5	5/5/6/5
4	7/6/6/6	6/6/6/5
5	7/7/6/6	7/7/6/6
6	8/7/6/6	8/7/6/6
7	8/7/7/7	8/7/6/6
8	9/7/7/7	9/7/7/7
9	9/8/7/7	9/8/7/7
10	9/8/8/8	9/8/8/7
11	9/9/8/8	9/8/8/8
12	10/9/8/8	9/9/8/8
13	10/9/9/8	10/9/8/8
14	10/9/9/8	10/9/9/8
15	10/9/9/9	10/9/9/9
16	10/10/9/9	10/10/9/9
17	10/10/9/9	10/10/9/9
18	10/10/9/9	10/10/9/9

Fire-Resistant Armor: Fire-resistant armor provides a BAR of 10 vs. any Incendiary damage.

Exoskeletons: Unless the extended life support system is installed, lower all BAR values for exoskeletons by 2 (to a minimum of 0) to reflect their open construction.

Barrier Armor Degradation

As with tactical armor, barriers other than personal armor also do not suffer BAR reduction when taking damage. However, such barriers can represent a broad range of potential obstacles, and so they react to damage effects in varying ways as well.

When attempting to determine the effects of an attack against (or through) a barrier, the rules for tactical armor degradation apply. The barrier receives a special "barrier integrity" value that reflects how easily it may be shattered (or destroyed for cover and barrier purposes) by the resulting damage. This value—determined by the gamemaster based on the nature of the barrier—does not necessarily translate to the same resilience as the kind of armor carried by battlefield vehicles. Instead, this value reflects the barrier's overall ability to maintain enough structural integrity to present an obstacle.

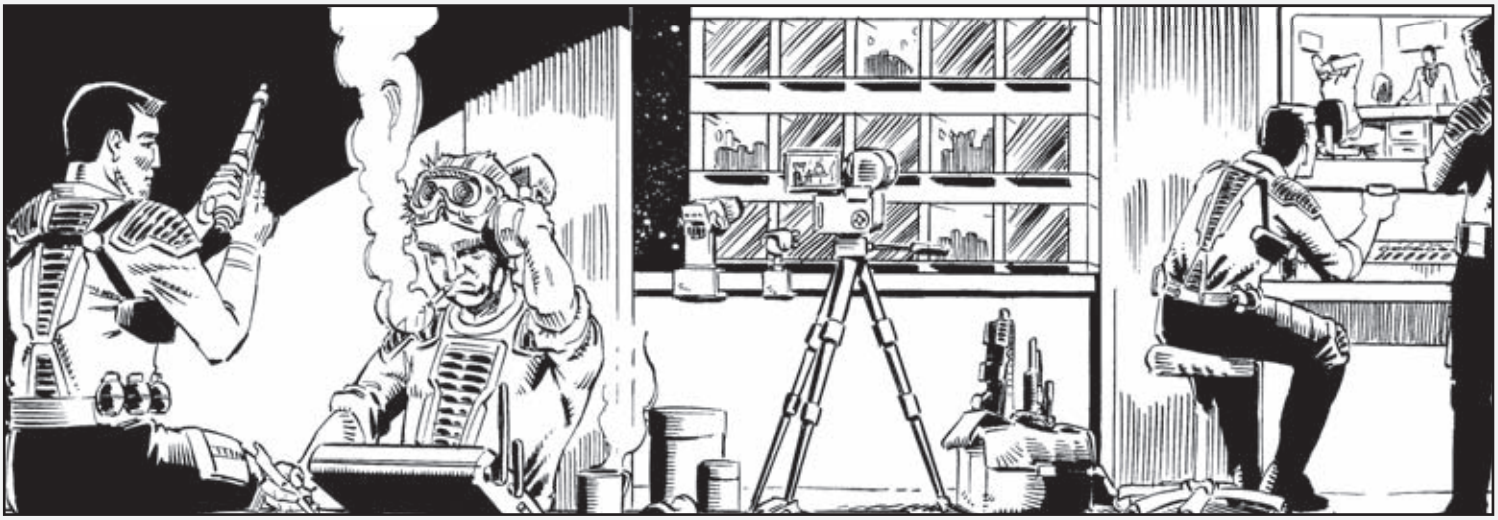
The Barrier Armor Table below offers a guide to the nature of a potential barrier or object under this rule, including the suggested BAR and integrity points for a range of possible obstructions. For example, an easily shattered barrier (like a glass window) would have only 0 or 1 points of barrier integrity before shattering, with a BAR of 0 or 1 that virtually ensures its near-effortless destruction. By contrast, a section of residential wall may receive a BAR of 2, but can sustain 4 to 5 points of BAR-defeating damage before losing its effectiveness as potential cover.

BARRIER ARMOR TABLE

BAR	Sample Barrier/Object
0	Paper/Cloth Banner; Paperback Book; Keycard
1	Window, Standard Glass; Hardcover Book; Compad
2	Window, Safety Glass; Interior Wall/Door, Residential/Commercial; Personal Computer
3	Interior Wall/Door, Industrial/Military/ Shipboard; Particleboard Table/Desk
4	Exterior Wall/Door, Wood/Sheet Metal; Solid Wood Table/Desk
5	Window, Ship's Viewport; Cement Patio Furniture
6	Armored Window, Industrial/Military; Commercial Power Generators
7	Exterior Wall, Industrial/Military; Industrial Power Generators
8	Reinforced Exterior Wall, Industrial/Military; Military Power Generators
9	Armored Wall; Vault Door/Wall; BattleMech Canopy Armor
10	Ship's External Bulkhead; BattleMech Armor; Solid Rock

BARRIER INTEGRITY TABLE

Points	Example
0-1	Easily shattered (crystal, glass or paper construction)
2-3	Flimsy (interior doors, light furniture, tree branch/sapling)
4-5	Modest (interior walls, exterior doors, heavy furniture, tree trunk)
6-10	Tough (exterior walls, industrial equipment)
11-20	Ironclad (reinforced walls, airlock hatches, military equipment)
21-50+	Impregnable (armored walls, solid rock)



While his Ebon Magistrate team stakes out the office of a possible subversive, Darrin Collins listens intently for the signal to attack.

BAR Zero Barriers: Any object or barrier with a BAR of 0 is considered instantly destroyed on any attack made against it that inflicts damage.

Nick bravely decides to use his vibroaxe to chop down a cherry tree. The vibroaxe has an AP/BD of 6M/4. The gamemaster determines that the cherry tree is a BAR 4 object with 5 points of barrier integrity. Nick's melee "attack" on the cherry tree receives a net MoS of 8 (because of the tree's immobility and lack of self-defense), and his STR is 5. This yields a Damage Value of 8 [4 + (8 MoS x 0.25 = 2) + (5 STR ÷ 4 = 1.25, rounded up to 2) = 8]. The tree's AP of 4 translates this to 2 points of integrity damage (8 ÷ 4 = 2). Given the tree's 5 integrity points, Nick will likely make short work of it really soon…

STACKED ARMOR

Whenever an attack must pass through more than one armor type (such as when firing through a barrier to hit an armored target, or through multiple layers of personal armor), resolve the damage to the first barrier (or layer of armor) struck and then to each additional barrier or layer of armor inward toward the intended target.

If any of the various barriers or armor layers possess BAR values higher than that of the original attack's AP, the armor reduces the remaining damage accordingly, and reduces the attack's AP by an amount equal to the difference between the armor or barrier's BAR and the attack's AP.

If the damage absorbed by the various barriers and/or armor layers between the attacker and his target reduces the weapon's BD to 0, the attack is negated before it can reach its target. Resolve armor degradation and damage as normal for any layers that are penetrated by the attack.

Stacking Personal Armor

Under these rules, if a character decides to "stack" armor on himself (by wearing one layer of personal armor over another), each layer added increases his Encumbrance factor by one level, rendering an unencumbered character Encumbered, an Encumbered character Very Encumbered, and a Very Encumbered character Overloaded. A character may not wear more than three layers of personal armor.

Shannon is wearing two layers of personal body armor on her torso—a flak armor vest over a neo-chain jacket—and standing behind a large pane of glass when she is hit by a round from an enemy gunman's Sternsnacht Claymore, with a MoS of 4 on the attack roll. The Claymore has an AP/BD of 3B/6; the window is standard glass, with a BAR of 1 and a barrier integrity of 2 points; the flak vest has a BAR of 1/5/1/3; and the neo-chain jacket has a BAR of 3/3/2/2. As the attack roll has a MoS of 4, the Sternsnacht's normal BD of 6 is raised to 7.

The first obstacle the shot hits is the window, and so damage effects are resolved against the window first. At a BAR of 1, however, the window cannot hope to slow or impede the shot's AP 3B effects. The window suffers the full 7 points of damage to its BAR (7 BD ÷ 1 BAR = 7). As this is well above the window's 2-point barrier integrity, the window shatters, and the damage continues unimpeded.

The next obstacle is Shannon's flak vest. Against the AP 3B Zeus shot, her 1/5/1/3 armor actually has 2 BAR points more than the shot's AP in ballistic damage (5 BAR – 3B AP = 2). This reduces the AP and BD of the attack by 2 points each, so it drops from an AP/BD of 3B/7 to 1B/5 (3B – 2 = 1B; 7 – 2 = 5). Because the damage penetrating the flak vest is 5 or more standard damage points, that layer of armor degrades by 1 point across all BARs, to 0/4/0/2.

This leaves 1B/5 damage to hit the neo-chain beneath, which has a BAR of 3/3/2/2. The neo-chain's BAR 3 against ballistics is now 2 points above the 1B AP factor the Claymore round has left, reducing its AP/BD values again by 2 points each (3 BAR – 1B AP = 2). This reduces the AP/BD of the shot to 0B/3 (1B – 2 = –1B, minimum of 0B; 5 – 2 = 3). Though the damage still passes through the armor, the neo-chain's BAR values are not

reduced, because only 3 points of standard damage has passed through.

With no more barriers to travel through, the remaining damage—AP/BD of 0B/3—hits Shannon.

END PHASE

In the End Phase of a combat turn, any continuous actions, Continuous damage, fatigue and morale effects are resolved.

BLEEDING AND CONTINUOUS DAMAGE

During the End Phase, any Continuous damage from bleeding, poisons, fire or incendiary/caustic chemical weapons takes effect. The damage points inflicted per turn by these various Continuous damage sources are described under the Continuous damage rules in *Damage Resolution* (see p. 180).

Any Consciousness Checks required must be made after all applicable Continuous damage effects are resolved.

FATIGUE

As noted under *Damage Resolution*, Fatigue represents a character's level of physical exhaustion as well as damage sustained in combat. In addition to sustaining Fatigue damage from Subduing attacks, or as a side effect of Standard damage, additional fatigue may apply from general exertion and other activities that cannot be resolved during the Action Phase.

The Fatigue Accumulation Table sums up the conditions under which a character will develop and accumulate Fatigue points. Damage-based fatigue, as noted under *Damage Resolution* (see p. 182), accumulates whenever the damage occurs (typically during the Action Phase), and is modified as indicated by the Fatigue effect multipliers. All other applicable Fatigue effects must be accounted for during the End Phase, to determine the character's final condition at the end of the turn.

Recovering Fatigue

Fatigue remains with a character until the character can rest and recuperate, or recover with the aid of special equipment such as stimpatches (see p. 313). In combat, however, a character can also reduce his total fatigue by a number of points equal to his BOD by spending a full turn doing so. Fatigue recovery in combat is considered a Complex Action, so the character recovering fatigue in this manner may make no further actions, including any movement other than walking.

An unconscious character will also recover his BOD score in Fatigue points during the End Phase of each turn he remains unconscious.

RESOLVING EXTENDED ACTIONS AND AUTOMATIC EVENTS

Many particularly complicated actions—such as performing battlefield repairs or hacking into a computer system—may take far longer to complete than a single five-second turn allows. During the End Phase, the gamemaster may determine whether or not such extended actions require a Skill Check roll or other action to complete (or merely to offset possible interruption from combat). If rolls are required, they must be made as normal during the character's next Action Phase.

Also in this part of the combat turn, the gamemaster can resolve or describe any neutral or automatic events that occur by the end of the turn, upon which the character's actions may not have had any immediate effect. Examples include the ticking down of a bomb's timer, or the movement of an elevator another level or two toward its destination.

FATIGUE ACCUMULATION TABLE

Situation	Fatigue Accumulation
Damage-Based Fatigue	
Non-Subduing Damage	+1 per Hit
Subduing Weapon Damage	+(Weapon Damage) per Hit
Subduing Melee Damage	+(Melee Attack Damage) per Hit
Continuous Movement Fatigue*	
Walking	+1 per BOD Minutes
Running/Crawling	+3 per BOD Minutes
Swimming/Climbing	+1 per BOD Turns
Sprinting/Jumping	+1 per Turn
Encumbered Movement	+1 per BOD Minutes
Exertion	
Character Requires STR Attribute Check	+1 per Turn
Fatigue Effect Multipliers	
High/Low Gravity**	x Gravity (G) Rating†
Glass Jaw/Handicap Trait	x 2†
Toughness/Fit Trait	x 0.5†

*Applies only if character spends full time period using the listed movement rate (or a faster one) without rest.

**Applies only to Continuous movement, Sprinting/Jumping movement and Exertion Fatigue; halve this modifier (rounding normally) if character has the G-Tolerance Trait

OPTIONAL PERSONAL COMBAT RULES

The following additional rules present options for enhancing the depth and detail of personal combat in game play.

MORALE CHECKS

When this optional rule is in effect, the gamemaster may demand a special Morale Check from one, some or all of the characters in response to certain events. Because their

nature can vary, Morale Checks may occur once or many times during a session—or not at all. Examples of events that may require a Morale Check include the sudden arrival of enemy reinforcements, the death or incapacitation of one or more friendly characters in combat, or anything else that might shock or dismay the characters on an emotional rather than physical level.

A Morale Check is made as a WIL Single Attribute Check. If Squad or Team Initiative rules are in play, the Leadership Skill of the character's commander can be added to this roll, along with any other modifiers the gamemaster might find applicable (such as negative modifiers for particularly frightening or demoralizing events, like the loss of a friend, the sudden roar of a particularly terrifying creature, or the flash and thunder of an autocannon burst that missed the character by less than half a meter—or positive modifiers for a rousing pre-battle speech, the arrival of friendly reinforcements, or the fall of the enemy commander).

If the Morale Check fails, the character becomes demoralized. While demoralized, the character suffers all the effects of the Combat Paralysis Trait (see p. 110). If the character has Combat Sense, this effect negates that positive Trait instead; but if the character *already* has Combat Paralysis, his condition worsens and he automatically fails any situation that requires a WIL Attribute Check for as long as he is demoralized. Multiple Morale Check failures are cumulative to this maximum negative effect; if a character with Combat Sense fails his Morale Check three times in a row, he loses his Combat Sense abilities and becomes so demoralized that every WIL Check automatically fails until the demoralization effect wears off.

Recovering Morale

Once a Morale Check has failed, a successful Leadership Skill Check is required in a subsequent Action Phase to undo the effect. This is a Simple Action that requires a commander who is not demoralized to be able to communicate with the demoralized character and convince him to rally. (If desired, the commander may make this a Complex Action and apply an additional +2 modifier to the Action Check roll.)

If no such commander or means of communications exists, the demoralized character will remain so until the end of the combat event, or until something occurs that could snap him out of it (as determined by the gamemaster). Such events may include anything that would provide a major positive modifier to a Morale Check, or perhaps even a sudden rage-inducing effect akin to a berserker moment.

HIT LOCATIONS

Basic personal combat rules presume that all characters aim their attacks at the target's center of mass, and so any damage done is generalized. If the players and gamemaster agree, however, the characters may instead opt to determine the actual hit locations for every successful attack. This option provides for more detailed and realistic combat results, but can also slow down game play somewhat and make personal combat more deadly.

When a target is struck by an attack using this rule, the attacker must roll 2D6 to determine the body location struck using the Hit Locations Table below. This location roll may be modified (or rolled again for further clarity) based on the direction of the attack, as indicated by the Angle of Attack modifiers. The hit location then determines how to modify the damage and what specific wound effects may occur.

HIT LOCATIONS TABLE

ANGLE OF ATTACK MODIFIERS

Attack Direction	Modifer
From Left Side	–1
From Right Side	+1
From Front or Back	+0
From Above	Reroll Leg Results*
From Below	Reroll Head Results*

*Second location result stands, even if it is identical

HIT LOCATION ROLL

Roll (2D6)	Location
2 or less	Head
3	Left Foot
4	Left Hand
5	Left Arm
6	Torso*
7	Legs**
8	Torso*
9	Right Arm
10	Right Hand
11	Right Foot
12 or more	Head

*Roll 1D6: 1-4 = Chest; 5-6 = Abdomen
**Roll 1D6 and add Attack Direction modifier: 3 or less = Left Leg; 4 or more = Right Leg

Damage Multipliers: When using hit locations, characters continue to track their total level of damage using the Damage Tracker as normal. However, the amount of damage sustained from a successful attack must first be modified based on the location struck. The Location Effects Table provides this modification as a damage multiplier. Whenever a character suffers damage using the Hit Locations rule, multiply the damage sustained—*after* applying all armor effects—by the damage multiplier appropriate to the location struck (rounding all damage values up).

Armor Effects: When using hit locations, the BAR of any personal armor must be that of the armor in the specific body location struck, rather than the character's overall BAR. A character wearing no armor beyond a flak vest, for example, would receive none of the vest's BAR benefits if he is shot in the arm.

Melee and Splash Weapons: To reflect their need for a more direct hit, reduce the AP values for all melee weapons and weapons with splash effects (including incendiary and blast weapons) by 1 when using Hit Location rules (to a minimum AP of 0).

Because splash weapons apply their damage over a larger area of the body, they use the lowest BAR value of all body locations adjacent to the location struck when determining their armor effects and such.

Specific Wound Effects: When using Hit Location rules, the normal Injury modifiers (but not Fatigue modifiers) described under standard rules apply only for Consciousness, Knockdown and healing checks, but not for general Action Checks or movement effects. In those cases, normal Injury modifiers are replaced by the specific effects of the wounded location, as indicated on the Location Effects Table. Any rolls required to determine these wound effects must be made by the attacking character.

Healing and Recovery: If Hit Location rules are used, the players must also use the Surgery rules under *Healing and Recovery* (see p. 193-195).

In the thick of a raid on a Jade Falcon base, Logan—a Lyran commando with a BOD and WIL of 7, a RFL of 8, a Walking rate of 14 and a Running rate of 24—takes fire from a dismounted Jade Falcon MechWarrior. The Falcon MechWarrior is using a Clan ER Laser Pistol (AP/BD: 4E/3), and scores a hit with a MoS of 5, for a BD of 4 (3 + 1 [MoS of 5 x 0.25 = 1.25, rounded down to 1] = 4). Logan is wearing a standard LAAF infantry armor kit.

After determining that his shot has hit, the Falcon's player rolls for location, applying a –1 roll modifier because he is attacking Logan from the left side. The roll result is 8, which is modified to 7, indicating a leg hit. The attacker rolls 1D6 again to determine which leg, applying a –1 modifier for attack direction. The result is a 2, meaning Logan is struck in the left leg. As LAAF infantry attire has no armor there, the damage is not modified for armor.

According to the Location Effects Table, the 5-point hit from the Falcon's weapon is reduced to 4 points against Logan's leg (5 BD x 0.75 Leg hit multiplier = 3.75, rounded up to 4). Marking these damage points on his Condition Monitor, Logan finds he has suffered damage equal to more than 25 percent of his total damage capacity, but less than 50 percent, giving him an Injury Modifier of –2. Because the players are using Hit Location rules, this modifier only affects Logan's Consciousness Checks and any healing checks such as MedTech and Surgery. Because the hit delivered Standard damage, Logan also receives 1 Fatigue point, and he is Stunned.

Because he took the hit to his leg, Logan also faces a Knockdown Check and a loss of 2 meters of movement per turn. This reduces his Walking rate to 12 and his Running rate to 22.

For his Knockdown Check, Logan must make a RFL Single Attribute Check with the –2 Injury Modifier applied. Against the TN of 14, he rolls a 6 and adds his RFL of 8 plus the Injury modifier, for a final result of 12. This means Logan is knocked down by the hit.

Logan must also make a Consciousness Check, because he took Standard damage (not Fatigue). This roll—a WIL Single Attribute Check that adds his BOD score and the Injury modifier—also has a TN of 14. Logan rolls a 5 and adds his WIL of 7, his BOD of 7 and his Injury Modifier of –2, for a final roll result of 17. As this equals or exceeds the TN of 14, Logan remains conscious. He can shake off the Stun effect in his next action before getting up and moving (albeit at a reduced rate) to continue the fight.

LOCATION EFFECTS TABLE

Location	Damage Multiplier	Combat Effects
Head	x2	Roll 1D6: 1-4 = Dazed; 5 = Deafened; 6 = Blinded
Chest	x1	Roll 1D6: 1-3 = No added effect; 4 = Dazed; 5 = Knockdown; 6 = Internal Damage
Abdomen	x1	Roll 1D6: 1-2 = No added effect; 3-4 = Dazed; 5 = Knockdown; 6 = Internal Damage
Arm	x0.5	All actions using affected arm suffer –1 roll modifier (max –2)†
Leg	x0.75	Knockdown; reduce all movement by 2 meters/turn (to a min. of 0 meters/turn)†
Hand*	x0.25	All actions using affected hand suffer –2 roll modifier (max –4)†
Foot	x0.25	Knockdown; reduce all movement by 1 meter/turn (to a min. of 0 meters/turn)†

*If the affected hand is holding an object or grappling, the wounded character must make an immediate DEX Attribute Check (applying all Injury and Wound Effect modifiers) to avoid releasing the held object.

†Any hits to a limb that would otherwise exceed the maximum listed effects (such as an arm-based roll modifier of –3 or a reduction of the character's Walking MP to less than 0) render the limb Shattered (see below).

SPECIFIC WOUND EFFECTS TABLE

Effect	Description
Dazed	Character suffers 1D6 additional Fatigue damage points
Deafened	Character suffers critical damage to ear equal to Level 3 Poor Hearing (see p. 122)*
Blinded	Character suffers critical damage to eye equal to Level 3 Poor Vision (see p. 122)*
Internal Damage	Character suffers 1D6 additional Standard damage points (check for bleeding)*
Knockdown	Character must make a RFL Attribute Check to avoid falling, applying Injury modifiers
Shattered Limb	Character cannot use the affected limb (check for bleeding)*

*Surgery Skill required to stabilize/repair this wound type; apply a –2 modifier to all Surgery Checks

KNOCKDOWN CHECKS

Most commonly due to wounding, but also a potential outcome from a successful melee attack, Knockdown Checks are made to determine whether or not an attack has knocked the character down. Knockdown Checks are most often made whenever the character suffers a Knockdown effect using the Hit Location rules (see p. 190), or when an opposing character delivers a successful non-grappling attack with a MoS of 3 or better using Martial Arts or Melee Weapon skills. Characters may not deliberately topple themselves (such an action is treated as going prone), nor does an already prone character need to make a Knockdown Check.

Gamemasters may determine other instances where a character may require a Knockdown Check (such as environmental hazards, like ice), as well as any additional modifiers that may apply to such checks (such as the Disability or Lost Limb traits).

A character's Knockdown Check is a simple RFL Single Attribute Check, applying the character's current Injury and Fatigue modifiers to the roll result. If successful, the character does not fall. If unsuccessful, the character has fallen and immediately suffers Stun, but takes no further damage (unless the character is on perilous footing, where a fall can have more dire consequences).

LETHALITY REDUCTION

As presented, these personal combat rules can rack up casualties quickly, or render player characters unable to take part in a fast-paced adventure thanks to extensive injuries. To mitigate this, gamemasters can opt to reduce the deadliness of personal combat by using one or both of the methods described below. If applied, however, the rule must be applied to all characters in the game, including friendly and hostile NPCs, as well as any creatures the characters may encounter.

Increased Damage Capacity

Under standard rules, a character receives a number of standard damage capacity points equal to 2 times his BOD score, and a number of Fatigue points equal to 2 times his WIL score. With the Increased Damage Capacity rule, the GM may use a multiplier of 3 or 4 for both damage capacities instead, essentially boosting both damage capacity values by 50% and 100% respectively.

As this is intended to boost character survivability, any damage the characters sustain in gameplay will not be affected or modified in any way, and Injury and Fatigue Modifiers will remain based on their existing rules.

Increased Armor Effectiveness

A more indirect method of handling lethality is to address the issue of personal armor. Under standard gameplay, any standard damage that the character receives after armor reduction (presuming the armor has sufficient BAR to do so) is applied as normal standard damage. To boost armor effectiveness, gamemasters opting for this lethality-reducing rule would translate any standard damage that penetrates personal armor into Fatigue damage instead. (Fatigue-inducing attacks remain unchanged.) Remember, however, that this effect only occurs when an attack is made that penetrates the character's personal armor. If the AP of the attack is equal to or greater than the armor's BAR, it penetrates without effect and remains lethal.

HEALING AND RECOVERY

Wars may never end, but battles always do. After the shooting stops and one side stands victorious, fresh wounds and major trauma may leave many survivors in desperate need of medical attention. The following rules govern healing and recovery from combat injuries and the like, but can also be applied to damage sustained from other sources such as foreign toxins, accidents and illness.

GENERAL HEALING RULES

Healing from injuries in *A Time of War* takes one of two forms: normal (unassisted) healing and assisted healing.

Normal healing requires little more than rest in a clean, safe area, with bland food and plenty of fluids. Given time, normal healing can contain blood loss, fight infections and allow characters to recover from most non-specific injuries. This type of healing is gradual, however, and cannot repair more extensive injuries such as major organ damage, shattered bones, severed limbs and the like. In essence, if major surgery would be required, or if the character's Standard damage exceeds 75 percent of his normal Damage Capacity, the character cannot use normal healing. When in doubt, the gamemaster decides whether normal healing can be used.

Assisted healing requires adequate medical facilities, access to modern medicines, and perhaps even surgical technology and techniques, but also represents a faster healing rate thanks to the continuous care the character receives. Assisted healing is needed when the damage includes lost limbs, organ damage, major bleeding, poisons or any other injury that requires surgical procedures to repair.

As a character heals, any marked-off Standard and Fatigue damage bubbles will be cleared at the prescribed rate by the end of the healing cycle. Specific injuries that require surgery may also be removed or modified based on the outcome of the Surgery Check made against them, but the full effects of any surgical healing will not apply until the character has recovered all of his damage points. (See *Surgery*, below, for more information.)

Regardless of the healing method used, a character may not recover more damage or Fatigue points than his maximum capacities prior to sustaining any injuries or fatigue.

Stabilizing a Character

These rules presume that a character undergoing a healing process has been stabilized prior to any necessary procedures. Stabilizing a character includes stopping blood loss, splinting damaged limbs and otherwise making it possible to safely move the wounded character to medical facilities. This process uses the same rules as stopping blood loss (see *Bleeding Effect*, p. 184), but applies an additional +2 to the MedTech Skill roll if the character performing the roll is not in combat.

Once a character is properly stabilized, he may undergo the healing processes outlined below.

Specific Wound Effects: If the character has suffered specific wounds under the Hit Location rules, the presence of these wounds adds a –2 modifier to the MedTech Skill Check to stabilize the character.

NORMAL (UNASSISTED) HEALING

When unassisted healing is used, an injured character recovers 1 Standard damage point for every week spent resting. Double this healing time if the conditions of the character's convalescence are unhealthy (lacking in clean water, shelter, nutrition and proper sanitary facilities).

If the injured character possesses the Fit or Toughness traits, the base healing cycle of 7 days will be reduced by 1 day (per Trait). If the injured character possesses the Handicap Trait, that Trait adds 1 day per –1 TP value to the character's healing cycle.

An injured character who performs any actions more strenuous than walking short distances, reading or using a computer while undergoing normal healing also adds a day to each weeklong healing cycle before recovering any damage.

Unassisted Fatigue Recovery

A character who is active (but not overly exerting himself) recovers Fatigue damage at a rate equal to his BOD score per minute. If resting to recover Fatigue, the character reclaims Fatigue points at a rate equal to his BOD score per 5-second turn.

ASSISTED HEALING

Assisted healing uses the same basic rules as normal healing, but requires access to proper medical facilities and the ministrations of an attending physician who sees to the character's medical needs at least twice a day. A character who follows these instructions—including performing no actions more strenuous than short walks, reading or computer use—recovers damage equal to half his BOD score (rounded up) per week of convalescence.

If for any reason the character loses access to medical support while undergoing assisted healing, or attempts to perform strenuous actions of any kind, the character is subject to normal healing rules.

SURGERY

When specific wound effects marked as requiring surgery to stabilize or repair occur in personal combat, a successful Surgery Skill Check is required to repair (or contain) the damage before healing can begin. Only a single Surgery Check may be performed per day on an injured character, and only a single specific injury may be tended to. Remember that performing surgery on a major specific wound adds an additional –2 modifier to the MedTech Skill Check, due to the extreme damage.

The surgical process requires a number of hours equal to 12 minus the surgeon's Surgery Skill level, the wounded character's Injury modifier and any specific wound effect modifiers (to a minimum of 2 hours). Double this time if the surgery must be performed at any facilities short of a fully stocked hospital. (Surgery may not be performed at all if the surgeon has only a medkit or less to work with.)

To determine the level of success in repairing the damage from a specific wound, the character performing the surgery must make his Surgery Skill roll and consult the Surgery Success/Failure Table. Even a failed Surgery Skill Check—so long as it fails by less than 6 points—will stabilize a specific wound location and allow for normal healing, even though the character may suffer lasting effects.

Regardless of the success level of the surgery performed, a character will not return to his former level of functionality until he has recovered all of his marked-off damage points. Until that time, all of the character's specific wounds are presumed to be at the levels that existed before surgery.

Surgery Success Levels

The following rules define the outcomes listed on the Surgery Success/Failure Table. If a Surgery Check results in a Fumble, assume it achieved a MoF of 6. These rules suggest what can result at various grades of surgical success (or failure) on a major specific injury. At the gamemaster's discretion, any negative permanent effect may be swapped for one of equal value (for example, a –1 TP Handicap can be swapped for a level of the Unattractive Trait, reflecting extensive scarring).

Any lingering damage effects from less-than-full recovery will become permanent once the character finishes healing up all damage bubbles.

Full Recovery: On full recovery, the effect of the critical damage most recently sustained will be erased as soon as the character regains his total damage points.

Partial Recovery: Once the character restores all damage bubbles, the specific injury that achieves partial recovery will return to functionality with minor lasting effects. Injuries that inflict deafness or blindness result in a permanent –1 TP Poor Hearing or Poor Vision Trait (as appropriate), while an internal injury imposes a lasting –1 TP Handicap Trait appropriate to the injury sustained (diminished lung capacity, restricted diet, chronic pain and so forth). For shattered limbs, partial recovery translates to a permanent –1 Attribute modifier to DEX (for hand/arm injuries) or RFL (leg/foot injuries).

Limited Functionality: Once the character restores all damage bubbles, a surgical result that yields limited functionality leaves lasting and significant effects in the affected area. For deafness or blindness, the character receives a permanent –2 TP Poor Hearing or Poor Vision Trait (as appropriate), while an internal injury imposes a lasting –2 TP Handicap Trait appropriate to the injury sustained. For shattered limbs, limited functionality translates into a permanent –2 Attribute modifier to DEX (hand/arm injuries) or RFL (leg/foot injuries).

SURGERY SUCCESS/FAILURE TABLE

Surgery MoS	Injury Recovery Level
+3 or better	Full Recovery
+0 to +2	Partial Recovery
–1 to –2	Limited Functionality
–3 to –5	Permanent Effect
–6 or lower	Patient suffers additional 1D6 damage from bleeding*

*Surgery Check must be repeated immediately

Despite the tight confines, Lydia manages to duck under a would-be pirate's shot to deliver a deadly strike with her bone-slicing vibrosword.

Permanent Effect: Once the character recovers all damage bubbles, a surgical result that yields a permanent effect fails to restore any of the damage to the affected area. For Deafness or Blindness, the character receives a permanent –3 TP Poor Hearing or Poor Vision Trait (as appropriate). Internal injuries with permanent effects impose a lasting –3 TP Handicap Trait appropriate to the injury sustained, as well as a permanent –2 TP Compulsion/Medical Addiction that reflects the character's lifelong need for medicines to stave off the pain or other ill effects his internal injuries left him with. For shattered limbs, the outcome is an appropriate Lost Limb Trait, as the surgeon finds he has no choice but to amputate.

Corrective Surgery

If the result of surgery is less than optimal, the surgeon may make one attempt to "correct" the previous procedure by putting the patient under the knife again (unless EDG is used to re-roll). This second surgery applies all the modifiers and time requirements of the first, but uses the patient's Injury modifier at the time the second surgery takes place (which need not be immediate). This second result stands, even if it is worse than the first (unless the result is a MoS of 6+, which requires an immediate repeat roll to stabilize the character all over again).

For surgery required by a MoS of 6+, corrective surgical procedures *must* be performed immediately, as this represents a dire situation on the operating table.

Arthur, a FedSuns tanker lucky to have survived the last battle, has a BOD of 5, the Toughness Trait, and suffered 7 points of Standard damage under the general damage rules. As a 7 translates to more than 50 percent (and less than 75 percent) of his full Damage Capacity, he has an Injury Modifier of –3, which is applied to the roll for a field medic's MedTech Check when stabilizing him. Thankfully, the battle is over, and the MedTech Check receives a +2 modifier in addition to the medic's Skill and equipment. Arthur is successfully stabilized.

Lacking specific wound effects, the gamemaster determines that surgery is not required. Arthur may immediately begin to recover damage points through normal or assisted healing.

Using the normal healing process, Arthur would need 42 days of strict bed rest to fully recover from his injuries, healing 1 point of damage every 6 days (7 days base healing rate – 1 day for Toughness = 6 days; 6 days x 7 points = 42 days).

Alternatively, Arthur could receive assisted healing, and stay holed up in a hospital bed while a doctor tends to his injuries at least twice a day. In that case—so long as he behaves—Arthur will recover 3 points of damage every two weeks (14 days), and will thus restore 6 of the 7 damage points he took in just 28 days. At that point, the gamemaster may allow him to switch to normal healing (outpatient care), so that he can complete his healing in one more week—a week faster than the normal healing process.

In a game that used the Hit Location rules, Charles is a mercenary scout who ran afoul of Capellan soldiers. He has a BOD of 6, a WIL of 5 and several injuries—the worst of which was internal damage from a shot in the abdomen, and a blast to his arm that shattered it. He has suffered a grand total of 10 damage points out of his Damage Capacity of 12—some of that from bleeding effects. He also has suffered 7 points of Fatigue damage. Miraculously, he is conscious.

At 10 points of damage, Charles is over 75 percent of his damage capacity. He must apply a –4 Injury modifier to any medical rolls, as well as another –2 for the presence of specific wound effects. His Fatigue modifier, which does not affect the MedTech Skill roll, will clear out within a couple turns, as he had opted to sit and recover Fatigue while waiting for the medic once the fight was over. The battlefield medic, with excellent MedTech Skill and equipment, manages to stabilize Charles enough fort transport, and he is whisked to a field hospital.

There, the attending surgeon decides that the gut shot—complete with internal organ damage—is the priority for

the first day of surgery. The surgeon has a Skill level of 6. Combined with Charles' –4 Injury Modifier, and the –2 modifier for the specific wound effect, this gives a total modifier of 0. Given the fact that they are not in a fully stocked hospital, this value determines that it will take 24 hours to properly treat Charles' internal injuries from the abdominal hit (12 base + 0 for Injury Modifier, specific wound and Skill modifiers = 12 x 2 for less-than-fully-stocked hospital = 24).

The Surgery Check for the gut shot has a TN of 9 and the following modifiers: +6 (surgeon's Skill), –4 (Charles' Injury modifier), –2 (specific wound effect), –2 (gamemaster-supplied modifier for the inadequately stocked field hospital) and +1 (the surgeon has a Field Surgery Kit)—for a total roll modifier of –1. Rolling a 10 and applying this modifier, the surgeon achieves a MoS of 0 (10 – 1 = 9; 9 – TN of 9 = 0). This is sufficient for partial recovery, which the gamemaster translates into a –1 TP Handicap, reflecting chronic pain from the war wound.

Because Charles suffers from another surgery-dependent injury, he still cannot heal after this first round of surgery. Instead, the surgeon must return later to work on his shattered arm. Because Charles is stable, his damage points do not change and so his Injury modifiers remain as they are. The surgeon—a dedicated fellow—returns the next day to start work on the arm. Because all modifiers are the same, this means Charles will spend another 24 hours under the knife.

The modifiers are the same, the TN is 9 and the roll modifier is –1. This time, however, the surgeon rolls a 4, which is modified to 3—a MoF of 6. According to the Surgery Success/Failure Table, this means that Charles' arm is shattered badly enough to make amputation likely, and he also will suffer an additional 1D6 damage—in fact, he could very likely die on the operating table! Deciding this is unacceptable, the surgeon burns his EDG on a re-roll, but this time the roll is 6, which modifies to 5. This MoF of 4 still leaves the arm permanently useless, but at least Charles hasn't died in the bargain.

Knowing he can attempt corrective surgery once more before Charles heals completely, the doctor opts not to amputate; instead, he simply closes Charles up. Because this is considered a completed surgery, it allows Charles to start healing normally. Given the extent of his injuries, the doctor orders a hospital stay, meaning that Charles will benefit from assisted care. At a BOD of 6, he will recover 3 damage points every 2 weeks. The doctor sets surgery up for six weeks from now, to maximize the chances of fixing Charles' arm before he is fully recovered.

Six weeks later, Charles has recovered 9 of his 10 damage points, reducing his Injury modifier to a mere –1. In that time, the surgeon has also managed to get Charles moved to a proper hospital and restocked his Field Surgery Kit. Given these changes, the modifiers to work on his shattered arm are now +4 (+6 for surgeon's Skill, –1 for Charles' Injury Modifier, –2 for the specific wound effect, +0 for well-stocked hospital and +1 for the Field Surgical Kit = 4). Moreover, the surgery time required will be only 9 hours (12 –[6 for surgeon's Skill –1 for Charles' Injury modifier –2 for the specific wound effect] = 9 x 1 [adequate hospital facilities] = 9).

This time, the surgeon rolls a 9, and applies the +4 modifier for a final result of 13—a MoS of +4. Charles' arm will make a full recovery. The surgeon briefly considers attempting corrective surgery on Charles' abdominal wound as well, now that the odds are better, but after hearing the prognosis (that the surgeon would need at least an 8 to accomplish such a feat), Charles waives further surgery.

With the last of his injuries' tended to, Charles can heal at a normal rate, recovering his last damage point over the course of the next week in bed rest alone. Good thing, too, because the Colonel has another mission for him…

THE FIRES OF HELL

HEAVY ARTILLERY

JASON HARDY

CAREDONIAN WIND FOREST
ROCHELLE
5 JULY 3076

Some of the trees stretched upward forever. Tall and straight, not a single branch or leaf interrupted their grooved brown surface as they rose twenty meters, thirty meters, more, piercing the jungle canopy and finding the sun. Much of the jungle below them was new, but the trees seemed as if they had grown here forever and would continue to rise for decades or even centuries.

Except for the ones that were getting blown up.

"What the hell was that?" Franz Logan screamed. Buzzy ran ahead of him and didn't turn around. Franz watched the fire burn a giant yorkwood tree, carving a black archway in the mammoth trunk. Then there was another explosion behind Franz, another wave of heat.

There were no straight lines in the jungle. Buzzy went left around a smaller tree, then right past a thick collection of underbrush, then dove to his left for no apparent reason.

Half a second later, Franz did the same. A rocket streaked by and slammed into a yorkwood tree, spreading more smoke.

Buzzy was on his feet already. His mouth was moving, but Franz couldn't hear any words. He heard the crackle of fire, the clatter of bullets, and the constant brush-brush of Wobbies moving through the jungle to find him, but he didn't hear anything Buzzy said. He hoped it wasn't important.

More noise, more explosions, came from farther away. Part of Franz wanted to turn toward the sounds, face his pursuers and take them down. Sure, they outnumbered him, but wasn't that how every good war story started? *I was outnumbered, four to one, maybe five to one, but that didn't scare me…*

But Buzzy didn't seem ready to stand and fight, and Franz thought it would be best to stick with the only member of his unit that was anywhere nearby.

Gunfire clattered, like marbles falling on linoleum, only louder, and leaves and flowers fell apart. A yellow petal drifted in front of Franz and grazed his cheek. Their aim was getting better.

Then he heard a siren. An echoing wail, rising and falling everywhere. He could feel the sides of his face vibrating with its highest note.

Buzzy turned and looked at Franz. His face was red, his mouth wide, and he was yelling something. The words were lost in the siren's sound, but Franz didn't need to hear them to know that Buzzy was yelling, "*MOVE*!"

Franz moved. They ran to the right until they passed a yorkwood tree. Then Buzzy took them back left and ran straight, using the tree to block the Wobbies' view of them. If the Wobbies were still watching.

They ran for a long time, pulling through thick-tendriled plants that snagged their ankles, nearly tripping a dozen times, until Franz abruptly realized that he could hear his own footsteps. Dead leaves under the ground cover rustled and crackled. The calls of a few birds sheltered high in the canopy echoed. And he

could hear them. There wasn't any gunfire, explosions, or shouting. The wail was gone, too.

"Hot damn," Franz said, and a wide smile crossed his face.

"Keep moving, rookie," Buzzy said without turning around. "Good to get some space 'tween them and us while we got a chance."

"Okay," Franz said, though part of him thought that if the Blakists had turned away from them, it was a good opportunity to go from pursued to pursuer. But maybe Buzzy needed a rest first.

Then he noticed the spatters of red on the plants in front of him. And that Buzzy kept his right arm clenched to his side and was leaning forward as he walked.

"Buzzy?"

"Just keep walking,'" Buzzy said. "Find someplace dry and dark."

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Some of the yorkwood tree hollows were bigger than a lot of military dorms. It didn't take long to get Buzzy sheltered and out of sight inside one of the trees.

A Blakist armor-piercing round had hit his side, ripping his vest and taking a chunk of him with it. Franz couldn't decide if Buzzy was lucky he'd only been hit in the side or unlucky that an armor-piercing round had found him. He helped Buzzy put a medipatch on the wound and made sure the big man was comfortable, then he left. He'd made a persuasive case about the need for recon and trying to find the others, but the truth was, he couldn't just sit in the middle of rotting wood while there was fighting to be done.

So now he was sneaking through the jungle on his own, avoiding Blakists, and it was awesome. He held his auto-pistol near his cheek and peered around trees. When the coast was clear, he'd run forward until he found shelter again. Once or twice he went into a rolling dive before he reached cover, just because he could.

For a while he didn't see anyone else, and he started to wonder if he was traveling in the right direction. He didn't hear much, either, other than birdcalls.

Then he saw movement. With the poor visibility in the jungle, he didn't spot the Blakists until he was almost on top of them. Something was monopolizing their attention, though, so they didn't notice his approach.

He stayed low, peering over the gnarled, spiny ground cover, watching the Blakists. He saw three of them off the bat, then two more. They all had rifles, held ready.

Then he saw more movement—a two-legged vehicle, walking toward him. His heart raced, his hands dug into the ground, but he didn't run. It was small, it had to be, or he would've seen it sooner. Probably just some ForestryMech or something, not a military one.

The 'Mech had stopped. It stood quietly as the Blakists moved toward it. Franz took a deep breath and crept forward.

His progress was slow, his hands covered with dirt and insect bites, but he remained undetected. The 'Mech ahead of him loomed larger, and the Blakists kept going toward it.

There were more Blakists out there, walking toward the 'Mech from the other side, which meant they were looking in Franz's direction. He dropped to his belly. Now he couldn't see anything but purplish, thorny plants. He took a few breaths, then slowly raised his head.

He didn't have a clear enough view to count all of them, but there had to be at least a dozen Blakists. They formed a loose circle near the feet of the 'Mech, and something was in the middle of them. Franz squinted, then remembered he had binoculars in his helmet. He lowered the lenses over his eyes and looked again.

The "something" in the midst of the Blakists was actually three somethings. The light in the jungle and the binoculars let Franz see them clearly. Travis, Hildebrand, and Naoko, on their knees, their hands on the backs of their heads.

Strangely enough, the sight of their faces calmed Franz down. *Every great war story starts with the hero outnumbered,* he thought, *and his friends in trouble.*

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"I don't know how much help I'll be," Buzzy said. "I won't be too fast, but I can provide cover fire and move around at my own pace."

Franz nodded. He'd stayed with the Blakists long enough to see where they were taking the others, then he'd returned to the tree.

"So how do I get the others?" he asked.

"You *don't*," Buzzy said. "You're not gonna just waltz into a Blakist camp and steal away some prisoners. You find a way to divert the Wobbies, and I'll find the others."

"But you just said you'll be slow! You'll take forever to find them and get them out!"

"Then your distraction better be *pretty damn good*," Buzzy said.

Franz nodded. Tough mission, long odds—perfect.

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The one thing Franz had figured out by the time he got to the Blakist camp was that he needed a ride. He had a pistol and, if he borrowed one from Buzzy, a rifle. That wouldn't be enough to give Buzzy even half a minute to find the others. But if he had armor around him and wheels—or legs—beneath him, it would be a different story. He could cause a royal fuss then.

So as he circled the camp, goggles down, infrared sensors on, he wasn't looking for Travis and the others. He was looking for a garage.

It wasn't hard to find, even though it wasn't a full structure. The Blakists had put up a canvas roof to keep rain off, but that was it. Two vehicles were parked next to each other—one was a tank, big and heavy, with a revolving turret bristling with laser barrels. An Ontos. A handful of lasers, a good collection of missiles—plenty of ways to cause a distraction.

But next to it—once Franz saw what was next to it, the Ontos might as well not have existed. This was no ForestryMech, no industrial pretender to God of War status. This was an honest-to-god BattleMech, the real deal. It stood tall, with a large barrel on its right arm and a missile launcher on its shoulder. It was a *Griffin*, and Franz could have recited its specs off the top of his head. It was a balanced machine, medium weight, good speed, armor and weapons that could pack a punch at range. It was beautiful.

Franz looked at the two vehicles and knew which one he should take. The Ontos was a good forty tons heavier than the *Griffin* and had more weapons and armor. It was considerably slower, true, but Franz didn't need a vehicle to help him run away—the Blakists would have an easier time chasing the Ontos, which would make it better for a diversion. Plus, 'Mechs were always better secured than tanks, meaning the Ontos would probably be easier to steal.

But the *Griffin* was a 'Mech—how could he not take it?

Not that it would be easy. People didn't just leave 'Mechs sitting around with the engine running, waiting for anyone who felt like it to jump in the cockpit. But being part of a covert ops unit had its privileges. If Franz could keep out of sight as he approached the 'Mech, he'd find out if the forged codes on the chip in his pocket were worth anything.

He spoke quietly into his comm. "Buzzy, are you in position?"

"'Course," Buzzy said.

"Okay, I need you to move about a hundred meters east. Then spray some fire into the camp and move your ass."

"Okay. Anywhere in particular you think my ass should end up?"

"Anywhere but their cages."

"Roger that. Hope what you got in mind works."

"Me too," Franz said, but not into the comm.

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Against human feet, the twisted greenery on the ground seemed thick, but with feet that were part of a fifty-five ton metal machine, the plants were not a factor. Franz might as well have been marching on ferrocrete.

The view from the *Griffin*'s cockpit was intoxicating. While he was still nowhere near the top of the yorkwood trees, he stood taller than almost everything else around, including the ForestryMech that remained motionless in the middle of the Blakist camp. The *Griffin* was responsive to every move he made—a slight twitch on the joystick and an arm swung out, a light nudge on the throttle put it into a smooth walk. And if he stomped on the pedals, jump jets would shoot him into the air, maybe into the canopy above.

He still couldn't believe it had worked—his slow approach through the noxious plants, the sudden movement following Buzzy's barrage, the dash to the *Griffin*, and the success of his fake codes. He had done it—he was riding a 'Mech into battle, and everything was perfect.

Once the *Griffin* was moving, Franz laid down some weapons fire. He swung the right arm back and forth, squeezing out PPC fire, watching blue energy race away from him. He would have loved to level the camp, to smother it with missiles and PPC fire until there was nothing left but a charred black circle in the jungle. The others were still in there, though. He had to be a little cautious.

He'd taken out the Ontos when he stole the *Griffin*; no point to leaving it there, ready to give chase. He had left it with smoke rising from its twisted, melted turret.

He hadn't been able to put the *Griffin* into a run yet in the thick jungle, but its long-legged trot was quite satisfying. He moved back and forth along the north end of the Blakist camp, pacing like a wolf or a tiger or whatever predators lived in this freakish forest. The Blakists were pretty good at finding cover, but whenever he caught sight of them, they were running, and he liked the way that looked.

"Buzzy, how are you doing?" he said over their squad's comm channel.

"Be better if you keep those PPCs a little farther from me," Buzzy said. "Makin' progress. Prison's dead center, so keep your fire on the edges."

"Roger," Franz said, then swung the arm and sent a few blasts toward the spot where he'd last seen some Blakists. He loved the way the PPCs left a trail of burnt, smoldering leaves.

Then lights started flashing, alarms sounded and alerts went off all around. Franz didn't know what they were telling him. He froze. He knew he should look at every alert, learn everything that was going on with his machine, but he couldn't. He wasn't moving. He was in someone's sights and not moving. And he was taking fire. That was bad.

He kicked the 'Mech into motion and turned it right, running near the camp. More alarms went off. He'd been hit again. The armor on his back was vanishing.

He cursed. He'd been fighting like an infantryman, looking with his own eyes, not letting the 'Mech's sensors work for him. Now that he looked at the sensors, he could clearly see something coming from behind him. He should have seen it sooner. Damn Blakist must have been laughing at him, wondering why he didn't move as the Blakist closed on his six. But he saw the enemy now, and he'd show him what he could do.

He got his arm around first, firing a bolt toward his pursuer to slow it down, then turning the rest of his body so he could fire a few missile rounds.

He recognized the enemy 'Mech as soon as it came into view—it was the same damn *Malak* that had annoyed them before. This time, though, Franz had what he needed to take it down.

He had to think quickly. The *Malak* was smaller than him. Strategies and tactics ran through his mind, and he knew he must have heard what a heavier 'Mech should do against a smaller one, but he couldn't think, it was like all those other times, all those other tests, when his mind had gone blank and he'd fallen back on instincts that, sadly, turned out to be wrong.

But instinct was the only thing he had right now, so he followed it. He charged, weapons firing. Most of the shots went wild, hitting yorkwood trees. The *Malak* responded in kind, and more trees caught fire. A few missiles hit Franz, but the armor on the *Griffin*'s front was thicker than on the back. He could absorb some blows.

"Logan, Logan, I've got 'em!" Buzzy said over the comm. "We're moving out and—holy *hell*, Logan, what are you doing?"

"Don't worry about me!" Franz said. "Just get them out of here!"

"Logan, don't charge that thing! For God's sake, don't charge!"

Buzzy sounded exactly like Franz's old instructors, which was not helpful. "Shut up! Get out of here!" He turned the comm off so he could focus on the *Malak*. It stood right in front of him, flames shooting out of its right arm, the large blade on its left slashing x's in the air. Franz wasn't worried, though. He had a fifteen, maybe twenty-ton weight advantage on the Blakist 'Mech. It couldn't out-brawl him. He pulled the left joystick out so he'd be ready to sweep in with a crushing blow and beat the crap out of the spindly 'Mech.

But the *Malak* was dancing, moving to the side, leading with the blade on its left arm. The blade scored the *Griffin*'s chest, and even more sensors went off. Franz brought his arm around to deliver a smack, but he was too slow and only managed a glancing blow. The *Malak*'s flamer, meanwhile, burned the *Griffin*'s front.

Sweat poured down Franz's forehead, and his hands shook on the joystick. His feet twitched, almost stomping the pedals and sending himself into the air, until he remembered that he'd be totally vulnerable while he flew up. He tried to move to the side instead, tracking the *Malak*, but he was too slow. He couldn't get a clean shot off, and the *Malak* kept roasting him with its flamers.

He'd made a mistake. He'd gotten into his first real 'Mech battle, and he was getting creamed. He was too close to a faster 'Mech, and he couldn't get away.

His LRMs weren't very effective at this close range, so Franz flailed away with his arms. He kept his feet moving, hoping the *Malak* would stumble or fall back or do something that would let him put some space between it and him.

Smoke thickened as trees and plants and Franz's *Griffin* burned. The *Malak*'s lasers shone through the smoke, finding Franz's 'Mech way too often. He hadn't watched his alarms much throughout the fight, and now he couldn't even if he wanted to because there were too many of them. His weight advantage over the *Malak* had been completely negated. The *Griffin* was dying.

A noise came from outside. Franz didn't know if he had his external mic on, or if it was still functional, but he heard a continuous crash, like the charge of an elephant. He checked his scanners to see if anything was approaching, but nothing registered. They must be broken, because something was out there, and it was coming fast.

He couldn't locate the noise, didn't know where it was, didn't know how to avoid it. The *Malak* didn't care; it was still pressing Franz, so all he could do was move backward and hope the source of the noise wasn't behind him.

The noise grew louder, a shuddering rustle. Then came a brief moment of silence, followed by the loudest crash of all as metal screamed. Then there was a heavy *thunk*.

Franz retreated for a full ten seconds before he realized he wasn't being pursued any more. There were no more lasers. Smoke swirled in front of him, and the *Malak* wasn't there. He checked his scanner—no sign of the Blakist 'Mech. He stood still, not trusting this development, waiting for the *Malak* to emerge. But it didn't.

He stepped cautiously through the smoldering jungle, scanning back and forth, looking for something that would tell him what happened.

And then he saw it.

It was a yorkwood tree, about seven meters thick. It had fallen, and now its huge trunk blocked his way. But he could see over it, to where most of the *Malak* lay motionless against another tree. Its lights were off and its right leg had been ripped away.

The Blakist MechWarrior hadn't known where the noise was coming from either, or how to avoid it. He'd tried to dodge the falling giant and came up short.

Franz knew he couldn't stay here long, but he took a moment to preserve the mental image of the fallen *Malak*. His first kill as a MechWarrior. Some might quibble and insist that the tree actually delivered the killing blow—but it was Franz's fight, and he was the one left standing at the end of it. That's how his story would go.

A win, after all, is a win.

Storming an underground base, Corporal Jean-Rene Le Bris and his squad blunder into close-quarters combat with a platoon of Blake Protectorate troops.

"Kings of the battlefield? They're just big targets to me …"

OVERVIEW

In a universe of endless warfare like *BattleTech*, combat is often a part of daily life, especially for those who make it their business. In most cases, battles may be resolved using either the personal combat rules found in this book, or—at larger scales—by the use of other core rulebooks, such as *Total Warfare*, *Tactical Operations* and so forth.

Closest to the personal combat scale presented in this rulebook is vehicle-scale combat. This scale of combat is primarily represented by the core rules in *Total Warfare*, the first of this rulebook series, and the basis of most warfare in the thirty-first century. Where personal combat is generally used for battles on the small infantry scale—generally involving up to ten characters per side with no vehicular presence—*Total Warfare* rules are used to resolve battles where vehicles, BattleMechs and similar armored units come into play (but they may be used to resolve large-scale infantry battles as well). If, through the course of an adventure, characters find themselves in a battle where personal combat becomes cumbersome and *Total Warfare* offers a more streamlined solution, the players can either convert their characters directly over to *Total Warfare* statistics and play using that rulebook, or use the hybrid rules presented here, which are referred to as tactical combat.

The tactical combat rules offer additional options that can enhance game play on the vehicular battle scale for a campaign primarily centered on role-playing. For players familiar with *Total Warfare* and *Tactical Operations*, these rules are considered advanced. They are tailored more for *A Time of War* than for *Total Warfare*, but borrow heavily from both systems.

Conflicts Between *Total Warfare* and Tactical Combat

The tactical combat system borrows heavily from and adds to *Total Warfare*'s game play rules, with which *A Time of War* strives to maintain compatibility. Despite this, some rules may clash between the two game systems as a result of the shifting scales of play. The gamemaster and players should agree which rules will take precedence at such moments in the manner that best fosters speedy game play. Remember that the object of any game is to have fun, first and foremost.

Tactical Scale

While standard *Total Warfare* rules can cover engagements of any size, from a one-on-one duel between units to a regimental-scale engagement, the tactical combat rules addendum presented here provides far more detailed engagements that can bog down play. These rules are therefore best recommended when the tactical battle includes no more than 1 lance of vehicles or 'Mechs per side, and the players want to add another layer of play to regular *Total Warfare* games using *A Time of War* characters.

Players should realize that it is extremely difficult for a small infantry formation or other group of "dismounted" characters to survive an encounter with a vehicle or 'Mech. Indeed, at the basic level of game play involving infantry-level characters—the rules from *Total Warfare*—infantry may be readily eliminated with just a few attacks from a heavy anti-infantry weapon system.

Maps and Terrain

Where in personal combat, players may be able to abstractly track the positions and facings of the various characters involved in a fight without maps or other visual aids, the tactical combat

system can quickly outpace the players' ability to resolve things abstractly. It is strongly recommended that players use maps or terrain to track the whereabouts and facings of all combatants. This can be accomplished by using standard mapsheets, miniature terrain or something else like a hand-drawn map, with miniatures, counters, or even coins and bottle caps used to represent units and characters.

Whatever the method, bear in mind that any map or terrain system representing the battle area must use a consistent scale. Recommended scales include 5 meters per 1 hex (or square), or 1 meter per inch (on terrain).

Personal Hit Locations

In the interests of speeding up game play, use of optional personal combat hit locations for characters is discouraged at the tactical combat scale. Unless a situation specifically calls for a character to know the exact location of his injuries, any personal damage a player character or important NPC received may be randomly distributed after the combat scenario ends.

VEHICULAR VS. INFANTRY UNITS

Under the tactical combat rules, references will frequently be made to vehicular or infantry units. For the purposes of these rules, the term "vehicular units" refers to all Combat and Support Vehicles (regardless of motive type), fighters (including conventional and aerospace), 'Mechs, ProtoMechs, Small Craft, space vessels of every type and Mobile Structures. The term infantry, meanwhile, refers to characters, conventional infantry troopers (whether operating individually or organized into squads or platoons), creatures and characters mounted on creatures.

In general, vehicular units that engage other vehicular units use the standard game rules prescribed by *Total Warfare* and *Tactical Operations*, with all relevant changes made to accommodate tactical combat rules (including adjustment to the 5-second turn scale and the conversion of skills and modifiers). Meanwhile, infantry units that engage other infantry units may use the personal combat rules, or take the more abstract approach of *Total Warfare* and *Tactical Operations*.

Battle Armor: Under these rules, battle armor—including PA(L) suits and exoskeletons—occupies a middle ground in the vehicular versus infantry divide. Battle armor uses vehicular rules when attacking or being attacked by another vehicular unit (including opposing battle armor). When attacking or being attacked by infantry units, however, personal combat rules are recommended instead.

Warriors

Tactical combat uses the same Skill Action Checks to resolve attacks, based on the Skills and Attributes most appropriate to the unit in question. These Skills—Gunnery, Piloting and Driving—are directly analogous to the Skills presented in *Total Warfare*. However, on the level of vehicles and infantry squads—which can have multiple crew or troopers—the rules in *Total Warfare* present more of a unit-wide average of Skills and an abstraction of their functions.

To identify the appropriate Skill conversion (and, where applicable, Skill user) for a tactical combat unit, consult the Skill Class Conversions sub-table in the Tactical Skills Table below. To determine which warrior in a unit comprised of multiple warriors (including vehicle crews) is responsible for that unit's various actions in game play, refer to the Tactical Skill Users sub-table. In tactical combat, the warrior who performs a given action is the one indicated by the Tactical Skill Users sub-table, using the appropriate character Skill that matches the unit's Piloting and Gunnery Skills in the Skill Class Conversions sub-table.

Infantry Cohesion (including Battle Armor): The tactical combat rules assume that infantry units may operate as individual troopers in game play, but as a means of simplifying their actions, the players may instead agree to maintain squad or platoon cohesion in tactical combat. Under infantry cohesion rules, the members of the infantry squad or platoon may spread out no farther apart than an area 30 meters across. If infantry cohesion rules are maintained, the leader of the squad or platoon resolves the unit's Actions, with all Gunnery and Anti-'Mech Skills derived from the average levels of all squad/platoon members (rounded normally, with .5 rounding up), and delivered in a single attack (per averaged Skill) against a target.

If the players choose not to use infantry cohesion rules, the individual troopers may move farther apart and deliver attacks against multiple targets, but they still must resolve all of their actions at the same time during a turn, as their squad/platoon is still counted as a single "unit" in the turn order. If required to roll for initiative in tactical combat, only the infantry unit's designated squad or platoon leader may make the roll.

Converting Skills

As noted in the sidebar *A Time of War vs. Total Warfare* (see p. 40), character Skills in *A Time of War* convert easily and directly into *Total Warfare* Skill ratings by simply subtracting the character's relevant *A Time of War* Skill level from the Skill's TN. For example, an Inner Sphere MechWarrior character with a Gunnery/'Mech Skill level of +4 would subtract that number from the Skill's TN of 7 to receive a *Total Warfare* Gunnery Skill of 3 (7 – 4 = 3).

These tactical combat rules, however, presume the players will instead continue to resolve actions using the rules presented in this book. Thus, instead of converting Skills from *A Time of War* to *Total Warfare*, the players should instead convert from *Total Warfare* to *A Time of War*. They may do so simply by subtracting the relevant *Total Warfare* Skill from the TN of its appropriate *A Time of War* Skill equivalent. For example, in the case of the Inner Sphere MechWarrior referenced above, the player would convert the MechWarrior's *Total Warfare* Gunnery Skill of 3 to a Gunnery/'Mech Skill level of +4 in *A Time of War* (7 [Gunnery/'Mech's *A Time of War* TN] – 3 [*TW* Skill] = 4).

Attributes and Traits: If for any reason a unit's *Total Warfare* Skill is known but the Attributes or Traits of its pilot(s) are not, presume the unit's pilot(s) to have a score of 6 in any relevant Attribute and presume said pilot(s) to have no Traits that affect the unit's combat Skills.

Converting Skill Modifiers

As with Skills themselves, the modifiers that apply in *Total Warfare* are also reversed in *A Time of War*. This distinction is important because the modifiers in *A Time of War* (and those

presented here for tactical combat) are applied to the Action Check's roll, rather than to the target number for the action.

To adapt any relevant Action modifiers from *Total Warfare* to *A Time of War*, simply subtract the *Total Warfare* modifier from the Action Check roll, rather than adding it to the target number. For example, the *Total Warfare* modifier for weapon attacks that pass through 30 meters of Light Woods is +1, so that modifier is subtracted from its equivalent *A Time of War* Action Check. Meanwhile, the *Total Warfare* modifier for attacking an immobile target is –4; thus, the equivalent *A Time of War* modifier adds +4 to the roll result, because the subtraction of a negative value is equal to the adding of a positive number of equal value.

During an A Time of War *adventure, a party of player characters from Kevin's gaming group is assigned as the crew of a Danai Support Vehicle, a 45-ton wheeled vehicle armed with two ER medium lasers and a Thumper artillery piece. The vehicle has a crew of 3—one commander, one driver and one gunner. The gunner is Matt, who has a Gunnery/Ground Vehicle Skill of +4; the commander (Josh) has the Artillery Skill at +2; and the driver (Kate) has a +3 in Driving/Ground Vehicle. Thus, in tactical combat, Josh rolls initiative and makes any attacks that involve the vehicle's Thumper, Kate moves the vehicle and makes all Driving Skill Checks, and Matt uses the vehicle's lasers.*

During another adventure, Jacob's squad of battle armored infantry finds itself facing an enemy in a modified LM4/C Lumberjack IndustrialMech. His squad consists of himself (Gunnery/Battlesuit Level +4, Pilot/Battlesuit Level +3), Ricky (Gunnery/Battlesuit +5, Piloting/Battlesuit +4), Jen (Gunnery/Battlesuit +4, Piloting/Battlesuit +2) and Pat (Gunnery/Battlesuit +3, Piloting/Battlesuit +4).

After the squad's players agree to use infantry cohesion rules, Jacob—as the squad leader—is identified as the one who will roll initiative as necessary, move the squad and direct their fire throughout the fight. However, the Gunnery and Anti-'Mech Skills for his squad will be the average of its component members, and thus will have Skill modifiers of +4 and +3, respectively ([4 + 5 + 4 + 3] = 16 ÷ 4 = 4 for Gunnery; [3 + 4 + 2 + 4] = 13 ÷ 4 = 3.25, round down to 3 for Piloting/Anti-'Mech).

THE COMBAT TURN

Under these tactical combat rules, each turn represents a 5-second time-span (so as to maintain compatibility with the personal combat scale) and uses the same basic action sequence presented in personal combat: Initiative, Action and End Phase. However, tactical combat under the *Total Warfare* rules system uses 10-second turn lengths, so two combat turns under these rules will technically occur in a turn played under strict *Total Warfare* rules.

Furthermore, because movement in *A Time of War* is tracked in meters rather than hexes, the movement points (MPs) used by any battle armor or vehicular unit in *Total Warfare* play must be multiplied by 15 to find the number of meters per turn they may

CHOOSE YOUR COMPLEXITY

For conventional infantry and characters not surrounded by tactical armor (including battle armor and vehicles), the scale of game play chosen to resolve combat can have dramatic consequences. This often stems from the playability factors involved at each scale, which each set of rules is intended to optimize. At the personal combat scale of *A Time of War*, for example, a character's BOD and WIL scores help to determine how much damage he can sustain in battle, which is excellent when dealing with damage done by the most common dangers, such as small arms and hand-to-hand combat. But at the *Total Warfare* scale of game play—where damage is delivered by multi-ton weaponry designed to shatter tactical armor—each trooper in an infantry formation is represented by a single point of tactical-scale damage, which is considered enough to render the trooper a "tactical kill".

In tactical combat, these two systems collide, throwing characters and infantry on the field with their *A Time of War* attributes and abilities, while the heavy weaponry common to *Total Warfare* units makes its presence known. The tactical combat rules serve to mesh combat in *Total Warfare* and *A Time of War*. Yet even with rules aimed at simplifying massed infantry units (such as the infantry cohesion rule), tactical combat can suffer from a level of complexity that makes resolving even a fairly simple battle a long and difficult process.

Players may therefore consider using straight *Total Warfare* rules in cases where the battle seems too big or complex to resolve otherwise. Doing so requires a simple Skill conversion for vehicular pilots and crews (as noted under the *Converting Skills* rules; see p. 201), while battle armor squads containing player characters or key NPCs simply need to designate which battlesuits in the squad are operated by which characters.

For conventional infantry units that contain player characters or key NPCs, every active character in the platoon must make an EDG Attribute Check every time the platoon takes *Total Warfare*-scale damage, subtracting 1 from the result for every 10 percent of casualties the platoon has taken (rounded up, meaning a typical 28-man platoon would apply a –1 roll modifier for every 3 troopers hit; 28 x .10 = 2.8, rounded up to 3). If the roll fails, the character is among those hit in the attack. If more characters are struck than the platoon has actually suffered in *Total Warfare* damage points, each character hit must roll 2D6 and apply no modifiers to the result. The number of lowest-rolling characters up to the unit's amount of *Total Warfare* damage points is hit by the attack. For example, if a platoon with six characters takes 3 points of *Total Warfare* damage, and four of the six characters fail their EDG Attribute Check, those four each roll 2D6; the characters who make the lowest three rolls are struck by the damage).

Remember, however, that this damage represents a "tactical kill" that may not necessarily kill the character. To determine the character's actual condition after the attack, convert the damage as described in the Weapon Damage Conversion rules (see p. 211).

TACTICAL SKILLS TABLE

Action	Single Warrior	Multiple Warriors
Non-Infantry Units		
Initiative	Driver/Pilot	Commander
Movement	Driver/Pilot	Driver/Pilot
Ranged Combat Action	Driver/Pilot	Gunner*
Artillery Fire	Driver/Pilot	Gunner or Commander
Melee Combat Action	Driver/Pilot	Driver
Infantry Units		
All Actions	N/A	Squad/Platoon Leader**

*If the unit has multiple weapons, it may have one gunner for each.

**Applies if using infantry cohesion rules only. Though the squad/platoon leader makes all rolls, the Skill ratings for the unit must be the average (rounded normally, with .5 rounded up) of all troopers in the squad/platoon.

SKILL CLASS CONVERSIONS

Unit Type	Gunnery Skill	Piloting Skill*
Aerospace Fighter, Small Craft, Satellite	Gunnery/Aerospace	Piloting/Aerospace
Aircraft, Airship, Conventional Fighter	Gunnery/Air Vehicle	Piloting/Air Vehicle
Artillery Weapon	Artillery**	As Unit Type
Battle Armor, Power Armor, Exoskeleton	Gunnery/Battlesuit†	Piloting/Battlesuit†
BattleMech, IndustrialMech	Gunnery/'Mech	Piloting/'Mech
Ground Vehicle (Wheeled, Tracked, Hover)	Gunnery/Ground Vehicle	Driving/Ground Vehicle
Infantry	Small Arms†	Climbing†
Naval Vehicle (Surface, Hydrofoil, Submarine)	Gunnery/Sea Vehicle	Driving/Sea Vehicle
ProtoMech	Gunnery/ProtoMech	Piloting/ProtoMech
Rail Vehicle	Gunnery/Turret	Driving/Rail Vehicle
Spacecraft (DropShip, JumpShip, WarShip)	Gunnery/Space	Piloting/Spacecraft
Space Station	Gunnery/Space	Piloting/Spacecraft
Turret (Fixed)	Gunnery/Turret	None (Not Applicable)
VTOL or WiGE Vehicle	Gunnery/Air Vehicle	Driving/Air Vehicle

*In Total Warfare play, all Combat and Support Vehicles refer to their Piloting Skill as Driving. Infantry (including conventional and battle armor) also do not use a Piloting Skill, but possess a rough equivalent called Anti-'Mech Skill, which covers their ability to scale an active unit to plant charges and execute attacks. For battle armor, this is the Pilot/Battlesuit Skill; for conventional infantry, this is reflected by the Climbing Skill.

**Artillery weapons may be employed by virtually any unit type, but differ significantly from other weapon types. When using any artillery weapon, the Artillery Skill replaces the unit's normal Gunnery Skill. The appropriate Piloting Skill for an artillery-equipped unit is therefore whatever is appropriate for the unit that carries the artillery weapon.

†When acting as a squad or platoon under one commander, the Skill level used for an infantry unit must be the average score (rounded normally, .5 rounds up) of all combined troopers in the squad or platoon. Also, battle armor units using non-mounted infantry weapons (such as a rifle held in armored gloves) must use the relevant Small Arms or Support Weapons Skill instead of Gunnery.

Lyran infantrymen patrol the perimeter of a classified installation.

move (determined from the center of the unit's "footprint"; see *Stacking and Size*, below).

Finally, while combat resolutions will differ little from the rules presented in *A Time of War* for personal combat, the actual outcome of all actions in a tactical combat turn are resolved simultaneously. This means a unit that is destroyed in a tactical combat turn can deliver damage to its opponent, even if the unit would ordinarily act later in the turn.

INITIATIVE PHASE

Initiative in tactical combat is resolved differently from personal combat, and is designed to take into account the momentum of heavy war machines or large groups of combatants in action, while still providing reasonably swift game play.

ROLLING TACTICAL INITIATIVE

Tactical combat Initiative differs from the approach used in personal combat by resolving instead as it does in *Total Warfare*, with a single commander per side rolling for the Initiative order of his entire force. These Initiative rolls may be modified by the commander's Tactics and Leadership Skills in the same fashion as is done under personal combat; apply the standard effects of the Combat Sense or Combat Paralysis Traits, if needed.

If the modified Initiative results are equal, both sides re-roll.

Out of Contact (Optional Rule)

If for any reason (unfriendly ECM, lack of communications ability and so forth) members of a force are cut off from their commander's leadership, the following out-of-contact rule may be applied to reflect the chaos that can result as force cohesion breaks down. Unless stated otherwise, these rules apply only to the members of the force who are out of contact.

First, if out-of-contact rules are in use, all Initiative rolls made by a commander whose force includes characters with Combat Paralysis and/or Combat Sense Traits must include a 3D6, with one of the three dice separated from the others (even if the commander himself lacks either Trait).

Second, all members of the force who are cut off from the commander will use the commander's base 2D6 dice roll (not counting the separated third die), but must apply a –4 modifier to the result.

Third, any out-of-contact force members who possess the Combat Sense Trait will take the best two dice of all three the commander rolled for their Initiative, while any out-of-contact characters with Combat Paralysis take the worst two of the same 3D6.

Finally, if any part of an out-of-contact force ties its final Initiative result with that of another force not out-of-contact, the out-of-contact unit(s) automatically lose the tie.

> *Jacob commands a force that includes 10 units in all (4 BattleMechs, 2 vehicles and 4 infantry squads). Jacob has Combat Sense, a Leadership Skill of +3 and a Tactics/Land Skill of +4. This allows him to roll 3D6 for Tactical Initiative, and apply a +7 to the roll result (+3 for Leadership +4 for Tactics = +7). He rolls a 5 and a 1 for his first 2D6, and a 4 on the third die. His Combat Sense Trait means he applies the +7 modifier to the best two dice results (the 5 and 4) for a final Initiative roll result of 16. His opponent's modified Initiative result is 12, and so Jacob's force wins the Initiative roll under the standard tactical Initiative rules.*

VEHICULAR ACTION COMPLEXITY TABLE

Incidental Actions	Simple Actions	Complex Action
Non-Movement	*Non-Movement*	*Non-Movement*
Activate/Deactivate AMS	Bracing (see p. 84, *TO*)	Dodge**
Activate/Deactivate Electronics	Careful Aim	Physical Defense/Shielding
Activate/Deactivate Heat Sink(s)	Ejection (Manual)	Restart Shutdown Vehicle
Activate/Deactivate MASC	Execute a Physical Attack (Excluding Charge, Ram and Death from Above)†	Speak (Conversation)
Avoid Shutdown	Execute Ranged Attack (using one or more weapons)	Spot for Indirect Fire
Drop Prone	Hull Down (Quad 'Mechs and vehicles only; see p. 21, *TO*)	Use Complex Skill
Dump Ammunition	Observe in Detail (Perception Skill)	*Movement**
Eject (Automatic)	Sensor Lock	Charge/Ram/Death From Above
Observe (Quickly)	Speak (Long Sentence)	Climb (see p. 22, *TO*)
Pick Up/Put Down Object	Use Simple Skill	Evade (see p. 18, *TO*)
Select Ammunition Type	*Movement**	Sprint (see p. 18, *TO*)
Select Fire Mode	Crawl (see p. 20, *TO*)	
Sensor Sweep	Jump Movement	
Speak (Brief Phrase)	Leap (see p. 22, *TO*)	
Standing Up from Prone	Run/Flank/Max Thrust	
Torso Twist/Rotate Twist		
*Movement**		
No Movement		
Walk/Cruise/Safe Thrust		

Note: This table reflects actions performed while operating battle armor or vehicular units in tactical combat. For dismounted characters or conventional infantry, consult the Action Complexity Table in *Personal Combat* (p. 167). References to *TO* indicate rules found in the *Tactical Operations* rulebook.

*Vehicles may use only one Movement Type per tactical combat turn.

**Only possible if the character has the Dodge Maneuver Advanced Pilot Ability.

†Certain special attacks may be classified as Complex Actions.

Jacob's gamemaster, however, is opting to use the out-of-contact optional rule for this engagement, and has noted that half of Jacob's force—1 BattleMech, both vehicles and 2 infantry squads—are inside the bubble of a hostile and active ECM. Unfortunately for Jacob, the MechWarrior cut off from his command is Michael, who suffers from Combat Paralysis.

Given Jacob's Initiative roll as described above, this means all five of the units cut off from Jacob's command will suffer a –4 roll result modifier, making their Initiative result a 12. (As this ties with the opposing force's roll, and the opposing force is not suffering from out-of-contact effects, the opposing force effectively wins Initiative over the out-of-contact units.)

Moreover, MechWarrior Michael must determine his Initiative by taking Jacob's worst two dice to find his Initiative result, and still applies the –4 modifier to the result for being out of contact. Jacob's worst two dice were a 4 and a 1, for a total result of 5, plus Jacob's Skill modifiers of +7. After applying the out-of-contact modifier of –4, Michael's final Initiative result is a mere 8 (5 for the roll result, +7 for Jacob's Skills, –4 for being out-of-contact = 8).

TACTICAL ACTION SEQUENCE

Once Initiative is determined, the lowest Initiative roller moves a portion of his side's units first, followed by the next lowest Initiative roller, and so on until the last units moved are those of the highest Initiative roller. (Under these rules, each vehicle, fighter, 'Mech or infantry squad is treated as a single unit.) As prescribed in *Total Warfare*, the number of units moved by each side should be proportionate to the number of units each side has in the battle, with each side moving their units in portions until all teams have moved.

For example, if a team consisting of a BattleMech and two battle armor squads rolls Initiative against another team with three vehicles and three infantry squads, the vehicle-and-infantry team—which enjoys a 2-to-1 advantage in numbers over the BattleMech-and-battlesuit team—would have to move two units before the opposing force moved one.

TACTICAL ACTION RESOLUTION

As in *Total Warfare*, all weapons fire and physical attacks are resolved simultaneously in tactical combat (with weapon attacks factored before physical combat actions; this means a unit destroyed or crippled before it can attack in the current turn may still act before the turn's end).

ACTION PHASE

In tactical combat, infantry may continue to move and act as they would normally under personal combat rules or—if using the infantry cohesion rules—move as a close-knit unit for maximum integrity. The presence of vehicular units (including battle armor, ProtoMechs, Combat Vehicles and 'Mechs) adds further complexities that are addressed here.

ACTION SEQUENCE

As with personal combat, tactical combat resolves movement and combat in a single Action Phase (as opposed to *Total Warfare*'s breakdown of Movement, Combat and Physical Attack phases). This allows players familiar with the personal combat rules in *A Time of War* to more easily transition to the larger scale of vehicular combat and resolve actions immediately, though the simultaneous-effects aspect of tactical combat maintains integrity with *Total Warfare* game play.

Infantry units continue to follow the standard rules limiting the number of Incidental, Simple and Complex actions they may perform in a given tactical combat turn (though such units operating under infantry cohesion rules do so as a unit). Vehicular units, however, present a more expanded list of action complexities, detailed in the Vehicular Action Complexity Table.

Combat Paralysis and Actions

If any unit in tactical combat (other than the force's Initiative-rolling commander) is controlled by a character with the Combat Paralysis Trait, the character must make a WIL Attribute Check every turn before taking any actions. If this check fails, the character suffers a –2 roll modifier to all Action Checks performed during that turn. If the character with this Trait is not in command of the unit—such as when serving as the non-ranking trooper in an infantry squad, or as the non-commander member of a combat vehicle crew—his Combat Paralysis has no effect on the unit.

MOVEMENT ACTIONS

To convert the movement rate of a battlesuit, 'Mech or other vehicle from *Total Warfare* MPs to *A Time of War* movement rates, simply multiply all of the unit's listed MPs by 15. This yields the number of meters per turn such units can move. For example, a BattleMech with Walking MP 4, Running MP 6 and Jumping MP 3 could walk 60 meters, run 90 meters and jump 45 meters per turn in *A Time of War* using tactical combat rules.

Velocity and Thrust Points: For aerospace units such as conventional and aerospace fighters, Small Craft, DropShips and other units that use Thrust Points (which do not measure speed, but acceleration and deceleration), movement in tactical combat is typically a moot point; such units can overfly a ground combat area in less than 5 seconds. For reference, however, a point of velocity at low altitude (18,000 meters or less) is roughly equal to 250 meters per 5-second turn, with all aircraft restricted to a maximum speed of 500 meters per 5-second turn. In space, where atmospheric drag is no longer a factor, 1 Velocity Point is equal to 1,500 meters per 5-second turn, and aerospace units can effectively accumulate velocity by applying constant thrust.

Infantry Movement: Infantry units observing the infantry cohesion rules may only move as fast as their slowest member, as the entire unit must remain in the 30-meter diameter area. If not using the infantry cohesion rules, the infantry unit's members still move at the same time, but each member can move at his own rate.

Unit Movement Sequence

Though they may technically move at the same point in a turn, given the size, flexibility and momentum of the various unit types that can appear in tactical combat, the actual movement sequence of units with the same Initiative will vary. This can be especially important for determining unit placement after movement.

The standard unit movement sequence in tactical combat—from the first unit moved at a given point in Initiative to the last—is as follows:

- All rail vehicles in motion
- All airborne DropShips and Large spacecraft
- All airborne aerospace fighters, conventional fighters, Fixed-Wing Support Vehicles and Small Craft
- All airborne VTOLs
- All airborne Airships
- All non-human creatures
- All battle armored infantry
- All conventional infantry (and dismounted characters)
- All ProtoMechs and ground or naval Combat and Support Vehicles under 5 tons
- All BattleMechs
- All IndustrialMechs and Medium-sized ground or naval Combat and Support Vehicles
- All Large-sized ground or naval Combat and Support Vehicles
- All Mobile Structures
- Any remaining mobile units

Movement Costs

The movement costs described in personal combat (p. 168) still apply to infantry units and battle armor in tactical combat, but for other vehicular units, specific terrain restrictions and movement effects apply instead as shown in the Vehicular Movement Costs Table. (This table is a modified form of the standard Ground Movement Tables shown in *Total Warfare*, but adds some details to account for the meters-based movement scale of tactical combat. More detailed and advanced rules that cover vehicular and aerospace movement can be found in *Total Warfare* and *Tactical Operations*.)

Aerospace Movement Costs: For players interested in faster play regarding units that maneuver using Thrust Points, such units can be handled much more abstractly in tactical combat. In the lower atmosphere, all aircraft capable of expending at least 2 Thrust Points may do so to perform one of the following maneuvers per 5-second combat turn: take off, land, hover in place (if VTOL-capable), fly up to 500 meters in one direction, climb 250 meters while flying forward 250 meters, dive 500 meters while flying forward 250 meters, or fly 250 meters while turning up to 90 degrees left or right. VTOL-capable aircraft can also hover in place for one turn by spending 2 Thrust Points per turn. Of these movements, only takeoff and landing are classified as Complex Actions, allowing all armed aircraft to deliver an attack in the same turn as they execute such maneuvers.

VEHICULAR MOVEMENT COSTS TABLE

Movement Action or Underlying Terrain	Cost per Meter Moved (meters spent)	Prohibited Units
Standard Movement Cost	1	—
Clear, Paved, Bridge, Road	+0	Naval*
Rough	+1	Wheeled, Naval
Woods		
Light	+1	Wheeled, Hover, VTOL, WiGE, Naval**
Heavy	+2	Ground Vehicles, Naval**
Water		
(up to 2 meters deep)	+0	Naval*
(2 to 6 meters deep)	+1	Ground Vehicles†
(7+ meters deep)	+2	Ground Vehicles†
Building		
Light Construction (CF 0–15)	+1	VTOL, WiGE, Naval††
Medium Construction (CF 16–40)	+2	VTOL, WiGE, Naval††
Heavy Construction (CF 41–90)	+3	VTOL, WiGE, Naval††
Hardened Construction (CF 91–150)	+4	VTOL, WiGE, Naval††
Rubble	+1	Wheeled, Naval‡
Elevation Change (+/– 6 meters over 30 meters)	+15	Surface Naval§
Elevation Change (+/– 12 meters over 30 meters)	+30	Ground Vehicles, Surface Naval§§
Elevation Change (+/–18 meters over 30 meters)	-2.5 per meter	All except VTOLs and Subs

Additional Movement Actions	Movement Cost Per Action	Prohibited Units
Facing Change (per 4 degrees)	1	—
Facing Change (per 60 degrees)	15	—
Drop Prone ('Mech only)	15	‡‡
Drop Prone (ProtoMech or Battle Armor only)	5	‡‡
Hull Down (Quad 'Mechs and vehicles only)	30	‡‡
Stand/Rise (from Prone/Hull Down)	30	‡‡

*Wheeled vehicles gain an extra 15 meters per turn on Paved/Bridge/Road terrain; Wheeled Support Vehicles without the Off-Road Chassis modification pay 2 meters per meter of movement on Clear or Shallow Water terrain; shallow-draft boats, like life rafts and kayaks, may enter Shallow Water terrain.

**Wheeled units with Monocycle or Bicycle chassis modifications may enter Light Woods normally, but not Heavy Woods; VTOL and WiGE units must fly over such terrain.

†Ground vehicles with Amphibious Chassis modifications may enter as if a surface naval vessel; Hovercraft and WiGEs may fly over this terrain as if Clear; IndustrialMechs must be equipped with environmental sealing and a fuel cell, fission or fusion engine.

††Non-infantry units must make a Piloting/Driving Skill Check when entering this terrain below roof level and through anything but an opening large enough to accommodate the unit. Apply a –1 roll modifier for Medium Construction, –2 for Heavy and –5 for Hardened. A failure means the unit takes damage equal to 10 percent of its tonnage (round up, in vehicular armor points). Meanwhile, the building takes an equal amount of damage to its CF.

‡'Mech units must make a Piloting Skill Check once per 30 meters of terrain traversed (or fraction thereof), falling on a failure.

§Applies to all ground units attempting to ascend/descend an incline, VTOLs changing altitude and submarines changing water depth, but not to units falling, crashing or sinking.

§§Applies to 'Mechs attempting to ascend/descend an incline, VTOLs changing altitude and submarines changing water depth, but not to units falling, crashing or sinking.

‡‡Dropping Prone, going Hull-Down and Standing/Rising Up are not technically counted as movement actions in tactical combat. Use of Prone and Hull Down maneuvers reduce the unit by one size class when targeted by infantry units (see Stacking and Size, p. 209).

As with other vehicular movement rules, aerospace movement is more thoroughly explained in both *Total Warfare* and *Tactical Handbook*.

Vehicle Turn Modes (Optional Rule)

To better reflect vehicular movement in action, the advanced rules for turn modes outlined on p. 25 of *Tactical Operations* are highly recommended for tactical combat.

Jumping

Jumping movement in tactical combat is a special mode available primarily to units equipped with jump jets or jump packs, such as 'Mechs, ProtoMechs and battle armor. Infantry units can use this mode of transit as well, if equipped with personal jump packs and the Acrobatics/Free-Fall Skill.

The maximum distance a unit can jump in tactical combat is equal to 30 meters times the unit's Jumping MP. However, in a single 5-second turn, a unit may only leap up to half of its jump distance. For infantry jump packs, see the equipment notes.

Jumping is counted as a Simple Action. While jumping, the unit may be targeted or make attacks with normal jumping modifiers.

Non-Infantry Units: For non-infantry units, jumping requires two 5-second turns to complete (though the movement still counts as a Simple Action in each turn). The 'Mech or vehicle travels in a straight line between its starting point and its destination, and is presumed to reach the apex of its jump by the end of its movement in the first turn. This apex can be as high as 6 meters times the unit's current Jumping MP, and as low as 6 meters above the underlying terrain. If any objects or terrain lie within the path of the jump that are taller than the unit's apex, the unit must choose a different path.

In the second turn of the jump, the unit completes the jump using the same rules for the first turn's flight until the unit lands in its destination (with its chosen facing). Any Piloting Skill Checks required by the underlying terrain must be made upon landing.

UNIT SIZE AND VOLUME TABLE

Unit Type	Size Class	Length x Width x Height (in meters)
*Creatures**		
Tiny (Mouse)	Tiny	0.01 x 0.01 x 0.01
Extremely Small (Cat)	Extremely Small	0.2 x 0.1 x 0.1
Very Small (Dog)	Very Small	0.3 x 0.2 x 0.3
Small (Wolf)	Small	0.6 x 0.4 x 0.5
Medium (Leopard)	Medium	2 x 1 x 0.8
Large (Horse)	Large	4 x 2 x 2
Very Large (Elephant)	Very Large	10 x 6 x 4
Monstrous (Whale)	Monstrous	30 x 15 x 10
Human		
Infant/Toddler	Very Small	0.2 x 0.2 x 0.3
Child (age 3-12)	Small	0.5 x 0.5 x 1.2
Teenager/Adult	Medium	1 x 1 x 2
Elemental (unarmored)	Large	1.5 x 1.5 x 2.3
*Vehicular Units***		
Battle Armor/Exoskeleton	Large	2 x 2 x 3
ProtoMech	Very Large	4 x 4 x 6
Small Vehicle (<0.5 tons)	Large	5 x 4 x 2
Medium-Heavy Vehicle (0.5-100 tons)	Very Large	9 x 3 x 3
Super-Heavy Vehicle (>100 tons)	Very Large	12 x 6 x 5
'Mech (Biped)	Very Large	2 x 4 x 12
'Mech (Quadruped)	Very Large	6 x 5 x 9
'Mech (Biped, Prone)	Large	12 x 6 x 2
'Mech (Quad, Hull Down)	Large	6 x 5 x 4
Fighter/Aircraft	Very Large	18 x 14 x 5
Small Craft/Small Airship	Monstrous	60 x 25 x 18†
Medium-Heavy Airship	Monstrous	150 x 50 x 25†
Large Naval Vessel (>500 tons)	Monstrous	120 x 30 x 30†
DropShip (Spheroid)	Monstrous	85 x 85 x 80†
DropShip (Aerodyne)	Monstrous	140 x 130 x 30†

*For reference purposes only (presumes shape of a typical Terran quadruped mammal, not including tail).

**Vehicular unit "footprints" (length and width) are those of the hull/feet area, and do not include additional length for weapon muzzles, hoists and the like.

†For reference only; AirShips, Large Naval Vessels and DropShips can vary greatly in actual size, though all are classified as Monstrous units.

Infantry Units: Unlike non-infantry units, infantry equipped with jump packs and jets (including battle armor) may jump and land in the same 5-second turn. For non-battlesuit jump equipment, the distance that may be jumped in one turn is listed in the equipment's statistics (see *Personal Equipment*, p. 312). For battle armor, the maximum jump distance that may be covered is equal to the battle armor's Jumping MP x 15 meters. The maximum height of an infantry unit's jump is equal to half its maximum jump distance.

Units in the Landing Area: If units occupy a jump's designated landing area, the jumping unit may attempt to

execute a Death From Above attack against such units. For jumping vehicular units, this action precludes any weapon attacks in the same turn and is resolved per the rules on pp. 149-150 in *Total Warfare*.

If the attacking unit itself is jumping infantry and its target is a vehicular unit (other than battle armor), resolve the success of this attack by making an Opposed Skill Check using the jumping unit's Acrobatics/Free-Fall Skill and the target unit's Piloting Skill. If the vehicular unit loses the check, it has been swarmed by the attacking infantry. Otherwise, the infantry fails to fully land on the target, but instead lands around it.

If the target is infantry or battle armor, it cannot be struck by a Death From Above attack, as the jumping unit is too easy for the grounded infantry to avoid.

> *Mark wants to jump his* Phoenix Hawk *next to a hostile infantry squad. His target location is exactly 100 meters from where he started. He can easily make this leap with his 'Mech's jump range of 180 meters (6 Jumping MP x 30 meters = 180). However, his maximum possible altitude is 36 meters (6 Jumping MP x 6 meters = 36). Even though he starts his move on top of a 5-meter tall building, there is a 50-meter tall spire along his straight-line path that intersects his footprint (see below). He has to re-adjust his destination so that he bypasses the tall spire. He finds that this course change increases his travel distance to 110 meters, and passes over a 14-meter tall building. He begins the jump as a part of his first Simple Action for that turn, and chooses to travel 55 of the maximum 90 meters he could perform this turn (180 meters ÷ 2 = 90 meters), while maintaining a jump altitude of 15 meters to clear the intervening building.*
>
> *For his next Simple Action, Mark decides to open fire with his large laser on an Achileus battle armor unit below. He did not have line of sight to the battlesuit from his previous location, but as he is now airborne and closer, he has a clear shot and is even in short range for his BattleMech's large laser. Using his other Simple Action this turn, Mark fires on the battlesuit, taking the modifiers to the roll on his Gunnery Skill Check for his jump, the suit's movement, and any terrain. Unfortunately, Mark rolls poorly and his laser misses the target.*
>
> *During the next turn, Mark considers using his first Simple Action to fire additional weapons at the offending suit, but as he is really after another infantry formation closer to his destination, he decides to complete the jump move first. Landing safely (the terrain was clear and requires no Piloting Skill roll), Mark opens up on the enemy infantry nearby with both of his machine guns for his remaining Simple Action.*

Stacking and Size

All objects—including infantry units—take up space, which cannot be shared with other units except in specific circumstances (such as grappling or swarming). Though the abstraction of the combat turn means that small enough objects can pass through each other—such as individual infantry troopers and dismounted characters—anything larger than a human being generally presents an impassable barrier.

In tactical combat, all units—including infantry—have a size and "footprint" that reflects the unit's physical position in the battle area. In the course of a tactical combat scenario, no two units of Medium size or greater can occupy the same space as another unless one of the following applies:

- One of the two units in question is destroyed, knocked out or killed
- The two units are characters or creatures engaged in a grapple
- One of the units is riding within or atop the other, larger unit
- The unit is a vehicle being attacked by anti-'Mech infantry (swarming or leg attacks)
- The units are friendly and at least one is Medium size or smaller.

The larger unit is a standing 'Mech or grounded DropShip with engines off, and the smaller unit is Large size or smaller.

How much space a given unit occupies is directly related to its physical size. While this is often represented by a simple size class in personal combat (Small, Medium, Large and so forth), many units have a distinctive volume as well, which indicates the ground area where no other unit can be present. The Unit Size and Volume Table provides a basic guide for unit sizes and their physical volume on the terrain. For stacking purposes, a unit's "footprint" on the ground is identified as its length and width. Height is included for additional reference and line of sight purposes.

Size and Combat Modifiers: A unit's size also affects how easily it may be hit in combat by conventional infantry and dismounted characters. See *Weapon Attack Modifiers*, p. 210, for more information.

VEHICULAR COMBAT

All weapon and physical attacks carried out by vehicular units—including the weapons mounted on battle armor—are typically resolved using *Total Warfare* rules when the subject of the attack is another vehicle or battle armor unit. However, in tactical combat, ranges are expressed in meters, and the 5-second turn length imposes limits on how quickly such weapons may be used. In addition, the interface between vehicular-scale damage and characters means that additional details are required to mesh these units with the game play in *A Time of War*.

Unless otherwise noted, a vehicular unit may fire one, some or all of its weapons as a single Simple Action in a single tactical combat turn.

Rate of Fire

In most cases, vehicular weapons (including those mounted on battle armor) may fire only one shot or burst per 10-second span (the length of a standard *Total Warfare* combat turn), and spend the rest of that period cycling ammo or charging up for another shot. To reflect this in tactical combat, unless a vehicular weapon is specifically noted as having the Rapid Fire or Anti-Infantry Traits, it cannot fire more than once over two 5-second turns.

This rule also holds true for physical attacks by any vehicular units other than battle armor (which, like infantry and

dismounted characters, may initiate melee combat per the personal combat rules).

If many vehicular units are in play, it may be helpful to track which units have fired which weapons by placing counters or light tick marks in pencil on the unit's record sheet, beside the listing for the weapons that are fired. This mark or counter is removed in the End Phase of the following turn to show that the unit may use the indicated weapon again.

Weapon Range Conversion

To determine the effective Short, Medium and Long range values for all vehicular weapons (including those mounted on battle armor), multiply each weapon's range in *Total Warfare* hexes by 30. This is its range (in meters) for tactical combat purposes.

Extreme Range: The Extreme Range value for vehicular weapons is equal to twice its Medium Range value, meaning the effective Extreme Range of a vehicular weapon (in meters) equals 60 times the weapon's Medium Range in *Total Warfare* hexes.

Infantry Cohesion: If using the infantry cohesion rules, the effective attack range for a squad or platoon is abstracted to reflect the unit's ability to focus its fire on a single target. In this case, the unit must find the average Short Range value (rounded to the nearest whole meter) for all of its ranged weapons, and use that as the entire unit's Short Range distance. The Medium, Long, and Extreme range distances for these weapons are then computed at double, triple and quadruple the Short Range value, respectively. For example, a squad of 5 troopers equipped with three Federated Long Rifles (35-meter Short Range), a TK Assault Rifle (25-meter Short Range) and a Hellbore Assault Laser (60-meter Short Range), would find its average Short Range to be 38 meters (35 + 35 + 35 + 25 + 60 = 190 ÷ 5 = 38), and so would consider Medium, Long and Extreme Range attacks to be made at 76, 114 and 152 meters, respectively (38 x 2 = 78; 38 x 3 = 114; 38 x 4 = 152).

Weapon Attack Modifiers

For vehicular units (including infantry operating in squads or platoons), the roll modifiers for all actions must be those prescribed in the appropriate vehicle combat rules (such as *Total Warfare* and *Tactical Operations*). As noted above, these modifiers must be *subtracted* from the roll, rather than added to the target number, to remain compliant with the basic tactical combat rules in this book.

For dismounted characters and infantry units operating as individual troopers, use the roll modifiers described in personal combat (see p. 178).

Size Modifiers: Remember that in addition to all other modifiers, infantry (including battle armor) and characters attacking vehicular units (also including battle armor) will benefit from such units' size modifiers. Vehicular units larger than a battlesuit (including ProtoMechs), however, use a broader array of sensor equipment and so do not use size modifiers.

Vehicular Units Targeting Infantry

At tactical-scale combat, vehicular units generally will not target individual infantry troopers, but instead direct their fire toward the center of the infantry formation, allowing the size and sheer brute force of their heavy weapons to compensate for their lack of precision. To reflect this, unless the rules for the weapon specifically state otherwise, every attack against an infantry formation (platoon or squad) by a vehicular weapon must apply a –1 roll modifier (plus all other relevant modifiers for movement, terrain and so forth). The focus of this attack must be the trooper, character or creature closest to the center of the targeted squad or platoon.

Hauptmann Clarence Dekker and his wingmate soar across the battlefield to intercept an incoming enemy DropShip.

If successful, the targeted trooper will be the center of the weapon's "strike zone"—a small area of effect that represents the weapon's destructive "footprint". Unless otherwise noted by the weapon's Traits, the radius of a vehicular weapon's strike zone is equal to its *Total Warfare* damage value, divided by 10 (in meters, rounded up to the nearest tenth of a meter). Any characters, creatures or conventional infantry within this zone suffer damage from the strike.

If the weapon attack misses, the shot does not simply disappear, but instead "scatters" in a random direction a distance of 1 meter for every point of MoF.

Intentionally Targeting Individuals: If a vehicular gunner insists on targeting an individual character or infantry trooper (including one from a battle armor squad), that attack may be carried out as above, but suffers a –4 roll modifier, rather than –1 (in addition to all other modifiers for movement, terrain and such).

Battle Armor Units: While battle armor-mounted weapons are technically vehicular, battle armor troops do not use these rules when attacking infantry or characters. Instead, battlesuits use standard personal combat rules to resolve their attacks and must select specific targets, with all of their weapons' damage converted as appropriate from their *Total Warfare* damage values.

WEAPON DAMAGE CONVERSION

In tactical combat, the presence of vehicular units poses an added challenge to dismounted characters and conventional infantry. Virtually all vehicular units track damage using armor points and a single BAR that, unlike personal armor, does not degrade through damage. The following rules describe how damage from personal combat weapons converts to vehicular-scale damage (and vice versa).

Personal Combat Weapons vs. Vehicles (Standard): After any successful attack against a vehicular unit (not counting battle armor), the attacker must roll for hit location per the vehicle's normal *Total Warfare* rules. To determine the effect of such weapons against vehicular armor, use the Armor and Barrier Effects rules found in *Personal Combat* on pp. 185-189. Apply any points of vehicular-scale armor that the attack inflicts to the hit location as normal, and check for critical hits in accordance with normal *Total Warfare* rules.

Personal Combat Weapons vs. Vehicles (Squad Cohesion): If the players are using infantry cohesion rules, their attacks become more abstracted and simplified in game play, with each weapon receiving a set damage value in *Total Warfare* points—a decimal value that can be found on pp. 349-352 of our second core rulebook, *TechManual*.

These simplified damage values account for armor penetration and the general effectiveness of the unit's firing as a squad/platoon, so the normal Armor and Barrier Effects rules do not apply. Instead, the sum of all weapon damage values that the squad/platoon's personal combat weapons can deliver defines the squad/platoon's maximum damage potential with such weapons, and that total damage—divided by the number of infantry in the squad/platoon—identifies the amount of *Total Warfare* points an individual member of the squad/platoon will deliver.

Upon a successful attack, the squad/platoon's controlling player rolls on the Cluster Hits Table appropriate to the number of active squad/platoon members remaining (see p. 116, *Total Warfare*). Multiply the resulting number of hits by the damage per trooper, and round normally (.5 rounds up) to find how many damage points the squad/platoon's attack delivers. As with standard infantry-based Cluster attacks in *Total Warfare*, this damage is distributed against the target in 2-point clusters.

Vehicular Weapons vs. Non-Battle Armor Infantry: Unless otherwise stated (see *Vehicular Weapon Traits*, pp. 212-214), any attack by vehicular weapons that directly hits a character will inflict damage with an AP of 10 and a BD equal to 6 times the weapon's *Total Warfare* damage value. For example, the Inner Sphere medium laser—with its *Total Warfare* damage value of 5—would inflict damage with the following AP/BD ratings in *A Time of War*: 10E/30.

Unless otherwise noted, if a character is within a vehicular weapon's "strike zone" (see *Vehicular Weapons Targeting Infantry*, above), but is not directly hit by the weapon, the character suffers half the weapon's AP and BD in damage. Thus, a character standing just under half a meter away from the impact of a medium laser (and thus still within the laser's "strike zone") will suffer 5E/15 damage, rather than 10E/30.

Vehicular Weapons vs. Battle Armor Infantry: If a battle armor unit is hit by another vehicular unit (including other battle armor units), the damage must be resolved using standard *Total Warfare* rules and tactical armor damage. Any damage that exceeds a battlesuit's Tactical Armor Value (and thus strikes the trooper inside) may be converted as indicated above for non-battle armor Infantry.

Non-Heavy Weapons: Non-heavy weapons in tactical combat include the various personal combat weapons, from melee weapons to small arms and support weapons. These weapons already have their damage values stated for personal combat and tactical combat play, and so do not require conversion.

Ed is firing his Enforcer*'s AC/10 and large laser at an infantry squad. He is 97 meters away from his target, well within the short range for both weapons, which equals 5* TW *hexes x 30 meters = 150 meters. The damage for the AC/10 converts to a 10B/60 attack (10* TW *points x 6 = 60), while his large laser converts to a 10E/48 attack (8* TW *points x 6 = 48). The footprint for the AC/10 attack is 10* TW *points ÷ 10 = 1.0 meters, while the footprint for the large laser attack is 8* TW *÷ 10 = 0.8 meters.*

Ed rolls his attack, factoring all normal to-hit modifiers, and including a –1 roll modifier for firing on an infantry formation. His AC/10 hits. The center trooper in the infantry squad, a player character named Hanlan, is immediately subjected to the 10B/60 attack. Needless to say, with a BOD of 5 and protected by a simple flak vest (which has a far lower BAR than 10 against ballistic weapons), Hanlan does not survive the experience and is immediately killed. Hanlan's buddy, Frankel, is within 1 meter of Hanlan, and is subjected to half damage from the AC/10's attack (5B/30). Despite this reduction in damage, however, Frankel's BOD 4 and flak armor can hardly hope to survive the strike any better than Hanlan.

Meanwhile, Ed's large laser attack misses its target with a MoF of 3. This means the laser's impact point scatters 3 meters in a random direction. The gamemaster determines that the impact point doesn't contain anyone, and that no one is within the laser's 0.8-meter diameter "strike zone".

A four-man infantry squad made up of player characters needs to deal with a CellCo Ranger that is using its turret-mounted machine gun to place suppressive fire on an allied infantry group, which is pinned down. The players have flanked wide, and are about to attack the vehicle on its left side. Three of them have automatic rifles, while one has a semi-portable MG. The automatic rifles inflict 4B/4B damage with a Burst Rating of 15/3. The semi-portable machine gun can deliver 5B/4B damage with a Burst Rating of 20/3. The squad is not using the infantry cohesion rule.

The riflemen in the party all have a Small Arms (Rifles) Skill level of 4, granting them a +5 modifier for attacks using rifles (+4 for level, +1 for Rifles specialty). The Ranger, at 62 meters away, falls into the Medium Range band for these weapons, imposing a –2 roll modifier, but the vehicle also has no cover (and thus no modifier against the attack roll), and counts as a Very Large target (for a +2 modifier). The Ranger hasn't moved, and neither have the player characters, who have all taken a stationary position behind their cover before firing. Thus, their basic attack will require a roll result of 1 or better (–2 for medium range, +2 for vehicle's size, +5 for Skill

and specialty = +5 to the roll; to reach a 6 or better, a roll of 1 is needed, which is easy enough on 2D6). All three riflemen decide to fire 9-shot bursts, which adds a –1 recoil modifier to the roll result, but also adds the potential to jam each rifle on an attack roll result of 5 or less (9 shots, with a Burst Fire rating of 15/3 = +1 misfire chance per 3 shots fired, +3 to jam; 2 + 3 = 5). With this modifier, the shots are still guaranteed to hit, but will misfire on an attack roll result of 5 or less (and thus the weapon would need to be cleared before shooting again).

The riflemen roll and get a 4, 10 and 6. One rifle jams, while the other two hit the APC. Because these are burst-fired weapons, the MoS for each modifies their BD values, for final damage results of 4B/12 and 4B/7. The CellCo Ranger's armor has a BAR value of 8.

Using the Armor and Barrier Effects rules, the riflemen inflict only 1 point of damage on the Ranger between them. The 4B/12 attack delivers 8 BD after accounting for the difference in its AP versus the Ranger's BAR (AP 4 – BAR 8 = –4 to BD), which is in turn divided by the vehicle's BAR for a final value of 1 (8 BD ÷ 8 BAR = 1). The much weaker 4B/7 attack was reduced to a mere 0.375 damage and rounded to 0. The CellCo Ranger loses 1 armor point.

The player firing the semi-portable machine gun has a Support Weapons (Machine Guns) skill of +5. He is also burst-firing, meaning he has a net +4 modifier to his roll after factoring the weapon's recoil (–2 for range, +2 for vehicle size, +5 for Skill +1 for specialty –2 for the semi-portable MG's recoil = +4). He elects to fire a 15-round burst (raising the chance to jam by +5) and makes an attack roll of 10. The attack has scored a MoS of 8, meaning he will inflict 5B/12 damage in this attack. After factoring the effects of the tactical armor, this means the semi-portable MG will hit with 1.125 damage, rounded down to 1 point. The CellCo Ranger's BAR 8 armor suffers another 1 point of damage.

Had the players instead opted to use the infantry cohesion rule, their attack and damage calculations would have been abstracted, with only one character making the attack roll based on the average of their Skills as a generic 4-man infantry attack against a vehicle. In such a case, the damage conversion rules would have given the entire squad a maximum damage rating of 2.31 (ultimately rounded down to 2) on a successful hit (with an average of 0.58 points per trooper).

MARGIN OF SUCCESS/FAILURE IN TACTICAL COMBAT

Unless otherwise noted, the standard Margin of Success (or Failure) effects of any attack that inflicts personal combat damage still apply in tactical combat. Thus, a character who is struck by burst weapon fire will still sustain 1 additional point of BD for every point of the attack's MoS, while a character struck by standard weapon fire will sustain 1 additional point of BD for every 4 points of the attack's MoS.

VEHICULAR WEAPON TRAITS

All vehicular weapons—also called heavy weapons in *Total Warfare*—are classified by various codes that indicate their unique traits in combat. These weapons perform per their normal *Total Warfare*-style rules when fired at opposing vehicular units, but against infantry units in tactical combat, these weapon traits (described on p. 113 in *Total Warfare* and shown in the equipment tables on pp. 303-305 of that book) yield alternative features that replace the normal anti-infantry effects in *Total Warfare*.

These added effects are outlined below. Where multiple weapon traits apply, use the one with highest AP value and combine all other effects.

ANTI-INFANTRY WEAPONS TABLE

Vehicular AI Weapon	AP/BD	Max Hexes
AP Gauss Rifle	8B/6BS	24
Light Machine Gun	7B/5B	12
Machine Gun	8B/6B	24
Heavy Machine Gun	8B/6B	36
Micro Pulse Laser	6E/6B	24
Small Pulse Laser	7E/6B	24
Flamer	6E/6CS	48

AI (Anti-Infantry)

Weapons classified as anti-infantry (see p. 213,*Total Warfare*) are designed to sweep a much larger area than most direct-fired weapons, in the hopes of catching as many bodies as possible. To reflect this, AI weapons mounted on all vehicular units (except for battle armor) follow the special rules given below when attacking any infantry unit in tactical combat (also except for battle armor). For battle armor-mounted AI weapons, see *Battle Armor Weapons* (p. 214):

- Anti-Infantry weapons are lighter than most heavy vehicular weapons, and so they have different AP and BD values than larger vehicular weapons. To reflect this, the most common AI weapons and their corresponding AP values are listed in the Anti-Infantry Weapons Table below, along with their converted BD values.
- Unlike other vehicular weapons, AI weapons may be fired once for every 5-second tactical combat turn (rather that once per 2 turns). Each firing consumes one-half of one round of ammo for that weapon (if applicable).
- Each AI weapon attack covers a number of adjacent 1-meter spaces (or hexes) equal to twice the maximum dice roll possible for the weapon's prescribed anti-infantry "burst fire" damage in *Total Warfare* (see pp. 215-217, *TW*). For the sake of simplicity, these values are also presented under the Max Hexes column in the Anti-Infantry Weapons Table. This attack can be laid out in any pattern the attacker desires, so long as all of the 1-meter spaces chosen form a continuous line of fire—even a non-straight one—within the attacker's appropriate firing arc.
- If no map is used, simply roll the weapon's *Total Warfare* damage dice as normal and randomly determine which members of the targeted infantry formation are struck by weapons fire. To determine if any player characters or key NPCs are struck, each such character must roll 1D6 while the attacker also rolls 1D6 for each of them. If the attacker's roll matches the roll made by a corresponding PC or key NPC, that character is struck.
- Resolve an AI attack against every conventional infantryman, character or creature within the targeted 1-meter hexes (friendly or hostile) as if the characters were the target of a

VEHICULAR MISSILES TABLE

Number of Missiles per Volley				
1-point Missile*	2-point Missile*	3-point Missile*	BD	Strike Zone Radius
1 to 5 missiles	1 to 3 missiles	1 to 2 missiles	6A	5 meters
6 to 10 missiles	4 to 5 missiles	3 to 4 missiles	6A	7 meters
11 to 15 missiles	6 to 8 missiles	5 to 6 missiles	7A	10 meters
16 to 25 missiles	9 to 12 missiles	7 to 8 missiles	8A	12 meters
26 to 35 missiles	13 to 18 missiles	9 to 11 missiles	9A	14 meters
36 to 40 missiles	19 to 20 missiles	12 to 14 missiles	10A	15 meters
41+ missiles	21+ missiles	15+ missiles	12A	20 meters

**Total Warfare* damage points

Suppression Fire attack in personal combat (see pp. 174-175). However, in the case of heavy weapons (and their battlesuit-mounted equivalents), ignore the normal attack roll modifier for suppression fire, and the chance for a misfire. On a successful hit, each target struck sustains the damage indicated above, with 1 additional damage point inflicted for every 4 full points of the attack's MoS.

RAPID-FIRE WEAPON TABLE

Weapon Type	Maximum Shots per Turn
Ultra Autocannon	1
Rotary Autocannon	3

AE (Area Effect)

Area-effect weapons (including bombs and artillery weapons) attack a much larger area than standard heavy weapons, explosively shattering anything within 45 meters (or more) of the attack's impact point. In addition to their damage to vehicular targets (including battle armor) in standard *Total Warfare* (see p. 113, *TW*) and *Tactical Operations*' Artillery rules (see pp. 179-186, *TO*), AE weapons in tactical combat affect conventional infantry, characters and creatures using the following rules:

- As with area-effect weapons in personal combat, vehicular AE weapons in tactical combat automatically "hit" every character, creature or conventional infantryman within the radius of effect (friendly as well as hostile) with an effective MoS of 0, unless such targets are encased in a vehicle or structure that can sustain the damage for them.
- For all conventional infantry, characters and creatures within 15 meters of a vehicular AE weapon's impact point, the attack has an AP of 10X and a BD consistent with the full value of the weapon's damage, converted as appropriate. (This BD, after conversion, is always considered area-effect—code "A" for damage notation purposes.) For example, a high-explosive bomb dropped by a passing fighter (which inflicts 10 points of damage in *Total Warfare*) would have an AP/BD Rating of 10X/60A against any hapless characters standing within 15 meters of the bomb's impact.
- Beyond 15 meters from the impact point, area-effect damage drops off at a rate of 4 BD points per meter of distance (to a minimum of 0), while the damage's AP degrades at 1 point for every 10 full meters of distance (also to a minimum of 0). For example, a Long Tom Artillery weapon with high-explosive ammo would deliver 25 *Total Warfare* damage points to its impact site (which converts to AP/BD: 10X/150A); after inflicting that horrendous devastation to everything within 15 meters, the damage degrades as it radiates outward. At 35 meters from the impact—20 meters after the first 15—the AP/BD values would be 8X/70A (20 meters after the first 15 reduces the AP by [20 ÷ 10 = 2] and the BD by 80 [20 x 4 = 80]; AP 10 – 2 = AP 8; BD 150 – 80 =70). Damage continues to radiate and dissipate in this way until both AP and BD fall to a value of 0 or less.
- If any type of terrain cover is present around the infantry, character or creature in question—such as hills, trees, walls, large rocks and so on—the target may make a RFL Attribute Check to "dive for cover" (forfeiting any remaining actions for the turn), and thus reduce the damage by an amount equal to 10 percent for every point of MoS. If this roll fails or if there is no suitable cover (such as in open or paved terrain), the AE damage is not reduced.

C (Cluster)

Cluster weapons affect a wider area than their standard counterparts. The "strike zone" radius for a Cluster weapon is double that of its standard equivalent (or the weapon's *Total Warfare* damage value, divided by 5 and rounded up to the nearest tenth of a meter).

DB/DE (Direct Fire Ballistic/Direct Fire Energy)

Direct-fire ballistic or energy weapons represent the standard weapon class, and so have no additional effects.

H (Heat-Causing Weapon)

In addition to their standard rules against vehicular units (as indicated on p. 113, *Total Warfare*), each point of *Total Warfare*

damage from these incendiary weapons translates to a BD of 6CS. Even against battle armor, these weapons can be dangerous, and increase their AP value to 10E unless the battlesuit is equipped with fire-resistant armor.

M (Missile Weapon)

Though missiles are nominally area-effect weapons, their close-formation flights (intended to hammer other vehicular units) are less effective against infantry than artillery weapons. Thus, missile weapons used against infantry units in tactical combat resolve fire against infantry units per the normal rules for targeting infantry (see *Vehicular Units Targeting Infantry,* p. 210), with the following exceptions:

- The AP value for all vehicular missiles is 10X.
- The BD value and strike zone size for a missile attack varies with the *Total Warfare* damage value of the individual missiles fired, and the number of missiles fired in the volley. The Vehicular Missiles Table identifies both of these factors.
- In addition to the normal scatter effect, a missed missile weapon attack also halves its BD values (but retains its AP of 10X), reflecting an additional loss of cohesion in the missile flight.

P (Pulse Weapons)

In addition to providing a +2 Gunnery Skill roll modifier when fired, pulse weapons have a "strike zone" four times the size of a standard anti-infantry attack (or the weapon's *Total Warfare* damage value, divided by 2.5 and rounded up to the nearest tenth of a meter).

R (Rapid-Fire Weapons)

Unlike standard weapons (and similar to AI weapons), rapid-fire weapons may fire one or more shots in a 5-second turn. The exact number of shots fired depends on the weapon, but each delivers its attack separately, with its own attack roll and relevant modifiers, plus an additional –1 roll modifier for every consecutive shot fired. (This modifier is negated entirely if the weapon spends at least one full 5-second turn holding fire.)

The drawback of this high rate of fire, however, is the higher chance of a misfire. To reflect this, on any unmodified to-hit roll with a result lower than the number of consecutive shots the weapon has fired in rapid-fire mode, the shot automatically misses and the weapon seizes up. For example, an Ultra-Autocannon firing two shots in rapid-fire mode would misfire on a roll of 2 during the second consecutive shot fired. To determine the maximum number of shots a rapid-fire weapon can fire in a given 5-second turn, consult the Rapid-Fire Weapon Table. Each shot fired consumes one shot of ammunition and generates the full heat (as applicable) for the weapon's type.

Unless otherwise noted, a misfired weapon can be cleared using a Simple Action.

BATTLE ARMOR WEAPONS

As noted under *Vehicular vs. Infantry Units* (see p. 201), personal combat rules should be used when battle armor units attack (or are attacked by) non-battle armor infantry units in tactical combat. However, most weapons built for battle armor use occupy a middle ground between conventional infantry support weapons and the heavy weapons carried on combat vehicles and BattleMechs. These weapons, primarily intended for anti-vehicle work, are more powerful than their conventional counterparts of the same name, but somewhat less powerful than their vehicular equivalents when fired on infantry.

Trooper Julius Smith noticed that their door-to-door searches went smoother now that his squad had BattleMech support.

Statistics for using battle armor weapons against characters under *A Time of War* rules are shown in the Battle Armor Weapons Table. This table includes the battle armor weapon's common name, its AP/BD against characters, and special notes that include the following:

- The weapon's number of bursts or shots (per magazine)
- The weapon's Burst modifier (if any). Note that burst-capable battle armor weapons *always* fire in bursts, as they are designed to deliver maximum potential damage. Thus, the Burst modifier applies directly to the likelihood of a misfire and not the attack roll. (For example, a battlesuit Heavy Machine Gun has a Burst modifier of +2; this means it will misfire if its unmodified attack roll result is 4 or less [2 + 2 = 4].)
- The weapon's Recoil modifier (if any)
- If the weapon uses ordnance, the type is listed. (The AP/BD values given for the weapon presuppose that the unit is armed with standard high-explosive rounds).

Burst-capable battle armor weapons may deliver burst-fire attacks or suppression-fire attacks. The number of 1-meter areas to which a battle armor weapon can deliver a suppression-fire attack is equal to 6 times the weapon's Burst modifier; for determining additional MoS damage, the number of shots in a burst is 30.

Against battle armor and vehicular units, battle armor weapons retain their normal *Total Warfare* range and damage values. Against non-battle armor infantry units, battle armor weapons attack using the standard rules for personal combat, but use the Gunnery/Battlesuit Skill to resolve such attacks.

As with vehicular units, battle armor may fire one, some or all of their weapons as a single Simple Action. However, ranged battle armor weapon attacks and battle armor melee attacks are considered two separate Simple Actions in a tactical combat turn.

Conventional Infantry Weapons on Battle Armor

Some battle armor may also carry much lighter conventional infantry weapons, such as small arms (pistols, rifles, shotguns and submachine guns) or support weapons (support machine

BATTLE ARMOR WEAPONS TABLE

Weapon (Battle Armor Version)	AP/BD	Notes
Gauss Weapons		
David Light Gauss Rifle	6B / 5	Shots: 15
King David Light Gauss Rifle	8B / 7	Shots: 15
MagShot Gauss Rifle	6B / 7	Shots: 10
Grand Mauler/Tsunami Gauss Rifle	6B / 6	Shots: 5
Anti-Personnel (AP) Gauss Rifle	7B / 6BS	Bursts: 50; Burst Mod: +2; Recoil: 0
Grenade Launchers		
Micro Grenade Launcher	5X / 8S	Shots: 20; Ordnance Type: B
Grenade/Heavy Grenade Launcher	6X / 10S	Shots: 20; Ordnance Type: C
Machine Guns		
Light Machine Gun	6B / 5B	Bursts: 50; Burst Mod: +1; Recoil: 0
Machine Gun	7B / 6B	Bursts: 50; Burst Mod: +1; Recoil: 0
Heavy Machine Gun	8B / 6B	Bursts: 50; Burst Mod: +2; Recoil: 0
"Bearhunter" Autocannon	9B / 8B	Bursts: 20; Burst Mod: +3; Recoil: –1
Mortars		
Light Mortar	6X / 11AS	Shots: 20; Ordnance Type: D
Heavy Mortar	6X / 12AS	Shots: 40; Ordnance Type: E
Recoilless Rifles		
Light Recoilless Rifle	6X / 10S	Shots: 20; Ordnance Type: C
Medium Recoilless Rifle	6X / 11S	Shots: 20; Ordnance Type: D
Heavy Recoilless Rifle	6X / 12S	Shots: 20; Ordnance Type: E
Flamers		
Flamer	3E / 7BCS	Bursts: 10; Burst Mod: +3; Recoil: 0
PPCs		
Support PPC	6E / 14S	Shots: 15
Plasma Weapons		
Plasma Rifle	5E / 10CS	Shots: 20
Needlers		
"Firedrake" Support Needler	3B / 6BCS	Bursts: 30; Burst Mod: +2; Recoil: 0
Lasers		
Small Laser	7E / 12	Shots: 30
Medium Laser	6E / 8	Shots: 30
ER Micro Laser	5E / 8	Shots: 30
ER Small Laser	6E / 8	Shots: 20; Clan version: BD +2
ER Medium Laser	6E / 10	Shots: 20; Clan version: BD +2
Micro Pulse Laser	5E / 4B	Bursts: 17; Burst Mod: +1; Recoil: 0
Small Pulse Laser	5E / 5B	Bursts: 14; Burst Mod: +2; Recoil: 0
Medium Pulse Laser	6E / 7B	Bursts: 12; Burst Mod: +1; Recoil: 0; Clan: BD +2
Heavy Small Laser	6E / 10	Shots: 20; –1 to attack roll
Heavy Medium Laser	7E / 14	Shots: 20; –1 to attack roll

BATTLE ARMOR WEAPONS TABLE, CONT.

Weapon (Battle Armor Version)	AP/BD	Notes
*Missiles (per Launcher Tube)**		
SRM/Advanced SRM/Streak SRM	6X / 12S	Shots: 1 per Tube; Ordnance Type: E
MRM	6X / 11S	Shots: 1 per Tube; Ordnance Type: D
LRM	6X / 10S	Shots: 1 per Tube; Ordnance Type: D
Rocket Launcher	5X / 8S	Shots: 1 per Tube; Ordnance Type: C

NOTE: These weapons are "heavy" versions of personal combat weapons mounted on battle armor only. As noted under *Vehicular Units Targeting Infantry* (p. 210), all battle armor attacks against conventional infantry, characters and creatures are resolved using personal combat rules. To find the effective range for these weapons, consult their Total Warfare range values and convert to meters by multiplying their hex ranges by 30.

*Missile launchers may target as many adjacent 1-meter areas as there are tubes in the launcher's rack, or they may be fired on the same individual target.

BATTLE ARMOR MELEE MODIFIERS TABLE

Battle Armor Feature	AP/BD Modifier	Martial Arts	Melee Weapons
Chassis Type			
Quadruped	+2M / +2	+2*	N/A
Biped/Humanoid	+1M / +1	+1	+1
Chassis Weight			
PA(L)/Exoskeleton (0-400 kg)	+0M / +0	+0	+1
Light (401-750 kg)	+1M / +1	+1	+1
Medium (751-1,000 kg)	+2M / +2	+2	+1
Heavy (1,001-1,500 kg)	+2M / +3	+2	+0
Assault (1,501-2,000 kg)	+3M / +3	+2	–1
Manipulators			
Armored Glove	+0M / +0	+0	+0
Basic Manipulator	+1M / +0	–1	+0**
Battle Claw	+2M / +1	–2	+0**
Heavy Battle Claw	+2M / +2	–3	–1**
Salvage Arm	+0M / +0	–3	–3**
Industrial Drill	+2M / +1	–3	–3**
Cargo Lifter	+0M / +4	–4	–4**
Manipulators with Magnets	+0M / +0	+0	–1
Manipulators with Vibroclaws/Vibroblades	+4M / +5	+1	+3
No Manipulators	–1M / –1	–2	–3**
Other Features			
Has VTOL or UMU System†	+0M / +0	–1	–1
Has Mine or Sensor Dispenser System†	+0M / +0	–1	–1
Detachable Missile Pack (Jettisoned)	+0M / +0	+0	+0
Detachable Missile Pack (Attached)	+0M / +0	–1	+0
Mimetic Armor	+0M / +0	+1	+1

*Quadrupeds may only attempt charging melee attacks.

**Melee weapons cannot be held in these manipulators; this modifier therefore applies to any melee weapons mounted in the corresponding arm.

†Non-cumulative; modifier applies if the battlesuit carries either or both of these systems.

MECHWARRIOR/PILOT/CREW DAMAGE TABLE

Event	Damage (AP/BD)
MechWarrior	
Cockpit Location hit by Weapon or Physical Attack	1B/3
Damage from Falling	1M/3
Internal Ammunition Explosion	0E/4D*
Center Torso Destroyed by Artillery	10X/20
MechWarriors and Fighter Pilots	
Unit Overheats by 15+ points (w/Life Support Damage)	0E/2
Unit Overheats by 25+ points (w/Life Support Damage)	0E/4
Conventional Vehicle Crew	
Critical Hit: Commander/Driver Hit	5B/4 (to Commander/Driver)
Critical Hit: Crew Stunned†	0M/5D* (to all Crew)
Crew Killed†	5B/10 (to all Crew)

*Damage unaffected by armor.

†In the case of multi-hex vehicles (such as trains and Very Large Naval Vessels), only the crew in the segment (hex) of the vehicle struck suffers this effect.

guns, support flamers and the man-portable versions of many battle armor weapons). The use of these weapons in combat requires the appropriate Small Arms or Support Weapons Skills if carried in the battlesuit's hands, or the Gunnery/Battlesuit Skill if they are directly mounted of the armor (such as when using a battle armor anti-personnel weapon mount).

In either case, their modifiers, range and damage rules remain identical to those of the conventional infantry weapons listed in the *Personal Equipment* chapter of this book, and adhere to the same personal combat rules (or the infantry cohesion rules, if those are in play).

Battle Armor Melee Attacks

Battle armor units may also engage conventional infantry in melee combat, using any mounted or carried melee weapons with the same rules as for personal combat. Melee attacks with battle armor use the same Skills as appropriate for the melee attack being attempted (Melee Weapons for blades, staves and such; Martial Arts for punches, kicks, grapples and the like). Additional modifiers apply to these attacks due to the battlesuit's construction, including increased AP and BD values for melee attacks, as well as Skill modifiers that define the suit's effects on the character's melee prowess. These modifiers are indicated in the Battle Armor Melee Modifiers Table.

A suit's modified melee AP can never rise above 10, and may never be reduced below 0.

Lieutenant Kanto has jumped his salvaged Elemental battle armor next to a hostile infantry squad. He had won Initiative, but held his action until after this squad had moved. They are in close formation, so Kanto decides to use his arm-mounted machine gun in suppression-fire mode, rather than bursting at a single hostile. He places a 6-meter line, and can hit five individuals. The TN for this Gunnery/Battlesuit Skill attack is 7. Two of the five individuals are at point-blank range, and so receive a +1 to-hit modifier, while the other three are in Short Range (+0). The squad does not have any cover from the Elemental suit, and are of normal human size (+0 for both). Kanto jumped (for a –3 modifier) while the infantry has walked a distance between 10 and 45 meters (–1 modifier). Kanto's base Suppression Fire modifier of –6 is reduced to –1 since he is firing 30 rounds into a 6-meter area (5 shots per meter x +1 per shot per meter = +5; –6 +5 = –1, the minimum penalty for a suppression-fire attack). This creates a total Conditional modifier of –5 (or –4 for the two troopers in point-blank range). Kanto has a +4 Gunnery Skill, so the net modifier to the roll is –1 and 0. Against a TN of 7, this means Kanto needs a 7 to hit the closest two troopers, and 8 to hit the more distant ones.

Kanto rolls 5 times in the order of his line, starting with the trooper closest to him. He gets a 7, 11, 8, 3 and 6. Even though a 3 result would jam his weapon, that was not the first shot in the suppression-fire attack and thus the weapon can ignore misfire effects. Either way, however, Kanto missed the last two troopers in his line of attack.

Each hit Kanto made delivers 7B/6 damage, plus 1 BD for every 4 points of MoS. The first trooper—struck by a MoS of 1—thus receives 6 BD that easily penetrates his personal armor; the second trooper—struck with a MoS of 4—suffers 7 BD; the third trooper—hit with a MoS of 0—takes 6 BD.

Kanto also has an anti-personnel weapon on his Elemental suit: a heavy gyrojet gun. He fires that at the trooper furthest away from him (a distance of only 6 meters, well within the weapon's Short Range). With a base TN of 7 (as this weapon is mounted on his suit rather than carried in its hands), the modifiers Kanto finds are Short Range (+0), no cover (+0), his jump (–3) and the trooper's walk (–1). Because this is not Kanto's primary attack, the Secondary Target modifier applies (–1) for a total Conditional modifier of –5. Kanto's Gunnery/Battlesuit Skill is +4, so his total modifier is –1.

He rolls a 7, scoring a MoS of 4, which adds 1 point of damage to his gun's 4B/6 rating. His target's Ablative/Flak armor once more fails to absorb any of the BD, and so the trooper suffers 7 points of damage.

As each of the troopers has a BOD of 5, these attacks severely wound them.

During a subsequent turn, Kanto decides to engage in melee combat against the enemy infantry, using his suit's battle claw. The TN for his Martial Arts Skill (which is advanced-level) is 7, and Kanto does not have to move as he is already within point-blank range with his intended target. No other modifiers apply, so Kanto has a total Conditional modifier of 0. His Martial Arts Skill is +5, but his suit (humanoid, Medium weight, with battle claw) applies a total +1 modifier, for a final Martial Arts Skill modifier of +6. (Meanwhile, his opponent only has Martial Arts +2, and has to contend with modifiers for Kanto's large size in armor.)

Kanto rolls an 8, applying +6 for a result of 14 (a MoS of 7 for his advanced-level Martial Arts Skill). His opponent rolls a MoS of 4 on his Martial Arts Skill, which reduces Kanto's net MoS to 3 (Kanto's MoS of 7 – his opponent's MoS of 4 = 3).

Kanto's STR score is 7, which produces a BD of 2 (7 ÷ 4 = 1.75, rounded up to 2). His MoS of 3 adds another point of damage (once more rounding up). His Elemental battle armor is humanoid, Medium weight, and uses a battle claw, which adds +5M/+4, for a final damage of 5M/7. The target's Ablative/Flak suit cannot absorb this attack, so he suffers 7 BD.

DAMAGE TO VEHICLE PILOTS/MECHWARRIORS

In some cases, such as extreme overheating, falling or certain critical hits, the pilot or crew of a vehicular unit (other than battle armor) may suffer personal damage. The MechWarrior/Pilot/Crew Damage Table translates the normal *Total Warfare* effects on any non-battle armor vehicular unit's crew or pilots into *A Time of War* AP/BD damage values. Because they affect characters strapped into a vehicular unit, the damage is effectively controlled, and the effects are not directly applied by an attack (but rather are merely a secondary result), this damage is not modified for MoS/MoF effects under normal combat rules.

Though risky, Chu-i Michael Midoriyama elects to conserve his DEST infiltration suit's power by disengaging its electronic camouflage in safe territory.

PHYSICAL ATTACKS

In order for any unit to execute a physical attack, it must be within 5 meters of the intended target at the end of its movement. Death From Above and Charge/Ram attacks are a special exception; for those, the 'Mech or vehicle must be directly adjacent to the target.

If the target is infantry, apply the normal modifiers for targeting an individual (as a physical attack can only be made against individual infantry troopers). A successful physical attack will deliver ballistic-type damage with an AP equal to the attacking unit's BAR (so a BattleMech or Combat Vehicle's physical attack AP will be 10B, while a civilian Support Vehicle with a BAR of 6 will inflict physical attack damage with an AP of 6B). The damage inflicted will convert from the unit's normal *Total Warfare* damage points as usual, with each *Total Warfare* point translating to 6 points of BD inflicted on an *A Time of War* character.

Charge/Ram Attack Damage

Remember that the calculation of a Charge Attack's damage is based on the speed of the vehicle or 'Mech over the course of 10 seconds, and therefore must cover the distance traveled in the previous 2 tactical combat turns. The Charge Attack does not have to be declared until the turn in which it would strike, but can only occur if the attacker wins the Initiative in the turn in which the attack strikes.

END PHASE

As with personal combat, any continuous damage effects (including bleeding and incendiary effects), fatigue and the resolution of any continuous actions occur in the End Phase. For characters, these rules are already covered under *Personal Combat* (see p. 189) and remain essentially unchanged. This phase is also where any Consciousness checks may be made for characters knocked out in a previous turn.

The addition of vehicular units does not significantly alter the resolution of End Phase activities, but such units merit certain special rules that apply in tactical combat.

HEAT ('MECHS AND FIGHTERS)

In *Total Warfare*, the End Phase is point where 'Mechs and aerospace fighters must determine their heat levels after executing movement and weapons fire. Building up this heat works just as it does normally (the number of points the unit builds up is equal to the sum of the heat values for all weapons and movement actions the unit performed in the current turn, plus any leftover heat from a previous turn, and any additional heat from external sources like fire and inferno munitions).

However, because of the 5-second turn length in tactical combat, the amount of heat dissipated by the unit's heat sinks is halved (without rounding). All other heat rules, including heat-induced modifiers to movement and weapon attacks, remain unchanged by this effect. For instance, a BattleMech with 10 double heat sinks that has overheated by 15 points in one turn can only dissipate 10 points of heat in that turn, and begins the next 5-second turn at 5 points overheated—hot enough to lose 1 MP (15 meters of movement in tactical combat) during its movement action.

The Bounty Hunter closes in on an unsuspecting target.

SPECIAL PILOT ABILITIES

"That guy's got moves in his machine you just won't find on any aptitude tests…"

Some combat vehicle pilots can demonstrate mastery over their machines that goes way beyond their Skills and aptitudes, special talents that seem uncanny when compared to more conventional operators. Similar in many ways to character Traits, these Special Pilot Abilities reflect a combination of talent, experience and intimate familiarity between vehicles and their pilots, the kind of thing that simply cannot be taught in exercises.

The following Special Pilot Abilities (SPAs) function almost identically to Traits (see *Traits*, pp. 106-135). Unlike Traits, Special Pilot Abilities are generally unavailable to player characters during character creation, but are instead earned through in-game experience and development. (A gamemaster may opt to make an exception for rare cases, such as characters starting at Veteran or Elite level XPs—or, more commonly, for key NPCs.)

Acquiring Special Piloting Abilities

To acquire a Special Pilot Ability, the character must not only spend a requisite number of XPs, but must also meet any other special prerequisites the SPA calls for. The gamemaster must also approve the ability, based on how it meshes with the character's demonstrated combat and piloting style, as well as the character's training. For example, a character who historically prefers to pilot low-heat BattleMech designs and almost never pushes his machine past 5 points of overheating in combat simply does not fit with the "Hot Dog" SPA, even if he meets all of the ability's prerequisites and has the XPs to buy it. By the same token, a character who has not been trained as a MechWarrior or ProtoMech pilot cannot make use of the Melee Specialist SPA, because that ability applies only to 'Mech and ProtoMech units.

Using Special Pilot Abilities is generally as easy for the character as using his own trained Skills, and so most of the abilities listed below have no additional impact on the complexity of the Skills they derive from or modify. Exceptions to this are noted in the ability's specific rules.

Ability Classes and Maximums: Special Pilot Abilities are grouped into two broadly defined classes: Gunnery Abilities and Piloting Abilities. A character may possess up to three SPAs in each class, each of which must be linked to one of the character's chosen fields. Even if a character has multiple areas of vehicular expertise (such as MechWarrior and fighter pilot Skills), he may possess only three Gunnery SPAs and three Piloting SPAs at the most, for a total of six SPAs in all. Miscellaneous SPAs can be applied to either the character's Gunnery or Piloting APA slots.

Additional Ability Restrictions: In addition to the prerequisites and the ability class limits noted above, a character must have a minimum Skill level of 5 before he can purchase his first Advanced Piloting Ability (so a character with a Skill level of 4 in Piloting and a 5 in Gunnery may pick up his first Gunnery-class Ability, while a character with a Skill level of 5 or higher in both Piloting and Gunnery may pick up an appropriate SPA for each one).

For a character to obtain the second SPA for a Skill class, he must reach a level of 7 in addition to meeting all other requirements. A level of 10 in a Skill is required before a character can pick up a third SPA for that Skill's class.

Multiple Abilities: Unless otherwise noted in the ability's rules (such as the Weapon Specialist SPA), each Special Pilot Ability may only be taken once per character.

GUNNERY ABILITIES

The following Special Pilot Abilities are related to the character's Gunnery Skill. When selecting Special Pilot Abilities, these SPAs may only apply to the Gunnery class.

Blood Stalker

"Oh, no! Oh, no*! You are* not *getting away from me, you son of a branth!"*

Prerequisites: [Attributes] WIL 6+; [Traits] Compulsion/Any; [Skills] Gunnery/Any 5+

XP Cost: 120 (100 for Clan MechWarriors)

A questionable, but strangely effective ability in many combat situations (especially among the duel-minded Clans), the Blood Stalker SPA reflects a character's ability to single-

Despite calling Arc-Royal his home for years, Galvan Ward's Enhanced Imaging "tattoos"—a hallmark of the Crusader Clans—make it impossible to avoid trouble with the locals.

mindedly focus on one—and only one—enemy target, whether for reasons of personal honor, rage or simply an intense focus on a single tactical objective. This ability need not be tapped in every scenario in which the character takes part, but if used, it can only be focused on one enemy unit per combat scenario.

When used, the Blood Stalker Ability applies a +1 roll modifier for all ranged attacks made by the warrior against his designated target. In exchange, however, any attacks directed against targets other than the one the Blood Stalker has designated suffer a –2 roll modifier. These modifiers last until the End Phase of the first turn after the designated target retreats, or is otherwise defeated or destroyed. Afterwards, the ability deactivates and the Blood Stalker modifiers no longer apply.

Fist Fire

"Take that! And that*!"*

Prerequisites: [Skills] Gunnery/'Mech 5+; [Abilities] Melee Specialist SPA

XP Cost: 150

Though the Fist Fire Special Pilot Ability—available only to MechWarriors—is used in physical combat, and therefore relies on Piloting, its use of ranged weapons to augment the damage from a physical strike places it in the Gunnery class. To use this ability, the 'Mech must have an arm that contains full actuation (a functional shoulder, upper arm, lower arm and hand), as well as at least one direct-fire energy or ballistic weapon. (Physical attack weapons may be present as well, but are not required.) A Fist Fire attack may be delivered against any non-infantry unit.

To execute the Fist Fire attack, the aforementioned arm must be used to deliver a punch or physical weapon attack, per standard physical combat rules. If this attack is successful and inflicts damage to the target, the Fist Fire warrior then fires one (and only one) of the arm-mounted weapons, resolving the attack per the normal rules for the weapon, but with an added +1 attack roll modifier because the attack is at point-blank range. If the weapon attack succeeds, the target sustains the weapon's damage to the same location as the physical attack.

For example, if an HCT-5S *Hatchetman* delivers a successful hatchet attack using its right arm—where it also mounts a medium pulse laser—to a target 'Mech's left torso, it would deliver 9 points of damage from the hatchet, plus an additional 6 points of damage to the same area if its medium pulse laser also hits during a Fist Fire attack.

Marksman

"Bam! Bullseye!"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] DEX 5+; [Traits] Good Vision; [Skills] Gunnery/Any 5+

XP Cost: 200

The Marksman Ability enables a MechWarrior, ProtoMech pilot, fighter pilot or vehicular crew gunner to potentially hit any desired location on a target. A pilot or gunner with the Marksman SPA can make a special Aimed Shot attack as if using a targeting computer (see p. 143, *TW*). The pilot's unit must remain stationary and make no physical attacks during the round in which he uses this ability. In addition, only one of the unit's weapons may be used; no other weapon may be fired in the same turn. Use of the Marksman Ability is considered a Complex Action.

The Marksman Ability may be combined with a targeting computer or enhanced-imaging technology; if the warrior's unit is equipped with such items and they are active when this ability is used, the Aimed Shot attack receives a +2 roll modifier.

Multi-Tasker

"Everyone deserves some love."

Prerequisites: [Attributes] WIL 6+; [Skills] Gunnery/Any crewed unit 5+

XP Cost: 50

While well-trained pilots and crews can perform multiple tasks simultaneously, accurately targeting multiple foes isn't something many gunners can do with ease, resulting in a modifier that applies for any secondary targets within the unit's firing arcs. The Multi-Tasker Ability reduces the penalty modifiers for attacks against multiple targets (see pp. 109-110, *TW*) by 1 point. Attacks against secondary targets in the unit's forward arc receive a +0 roll modifier, while attacks against secondary targets in the unit's rear and side arcs receive a –1 roll modifier.

In addition, crewed vehicles with multiple weapons can reduce their recommended number of gunners by 1 for every 2 levels (or fraction thereof) that the Multi-Tasker gunner has in his Gunnery Skill. A vehicle cannot be reduced to less than 1 gunner in this fashion, however.

Oblique Attacker

"I don't have to see 'em to hurt 'em!"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] INT 5+; [Skills] Gunnery/Any 5+, Sensor Operations 5+

XP Cost: 50

A MechWarrior or gunner with the Oblique Attacker Ability is well versed at executing indirect-fire attacks using LRMs and artillery (see p. 111, *TW*, and pp. 179-186, *TO*). In addition to receiving a +1 roll modifier to his attack when firing indirectly, this warrior can identify the target's location without the benefit of a spotter. This latter "indirect spotting" capability requires only a successful Sensor Operations Check during the End Phase of a 5-second tactical combat turn, with a –1 roll modifier applied for every half kilometer of distance between the oblique attacker and the target.

Range Master

"Too close… Too far… Ah! Just right! Eat nickel, Clanner!"

Prerequisites: [Abilities] Sniper SPA

XP Cost: 100

The Range Master Ability grants the warrior mastery over any range band except Short (Minimum, Medium, Long and so forth). Any weapon attacks made in the selected range band may swap range modifiers with the Short range band (if the range band selected is Minimum, the Short Range modifier becomes –4 instead).

For example, a Range Master may select the Long range band as his area of mastery (a –3 roll modifier, thanks to the Sniper SPA), and would receive a +0 modifier at that range, but at the cost of a –3 modifier for attack rolls made at Short Range.

Sharpshooter

"See? That armor plate isn't 110mm proof anymore!"

Prerequisites: [Abilities] Marksman SPA

XP Cost: 100

The sharpshooter is a master marksman who can strike the weakest spot on a 'Mech or vehicle by aiming for known weak points or exploiting pre-existing damage. A pilot or gunner with the Sharpshooter Special Ability is granted an additional chance for a critical hit on any successful Aimed Shot attack performed while using the Marksman APA (see *Marksman*, p. 220), even if the targeted unit still has armor in the struck area.

The legendary Bounty Hunter rarely camouflages his infamous trademark armor.

This additional Critical Hit Check is made using the standard rules for determining critical hits (see pp. 123-124, *TW*), and occurs in addition to any other Critical Hit Checks the target unit would normally suffer from armor loss, hit location or the penetrating critical hit rule (see p. 206, *TW*). For example, if a marksman's Aimed Shot attack was delivered by a BattleMech's PPC against a Support Vehicle with a BAR of 7, and the attack destroyed the last of that armor to hit the internal structure below, the attacker would make three rolls on the target's Determining Critical Hits Table (once for the penetrating critical attack damage that exceeds the Support Vehicle's BAR, a second roll for the damage that breached the armor to hit the internal structure, and the third for the Sharpshooter SPA).

As with the Marksman Special Ability, the Sharpshooter Special Ability is treated as a Complex Action.

Sniper

"I can ruin a trachzoi's sex life at a quarter-klick."

Prerequisites: [Attributes] DEX 5+; [Traits] Good Vision; [Skills] Gunnery/Any 5+

XP Cost: 150

The Sniper Special Pilot Ability reduces all range attack modifiers by half, so an attack delivered at Medium, Long and Extreme ranges applies a –1 roll modifier at Medium Range (rather than –2), a –2 modifier at Long Range (rather than –4) and a –3 modifier at Extreme Range (instead of the usual –6).

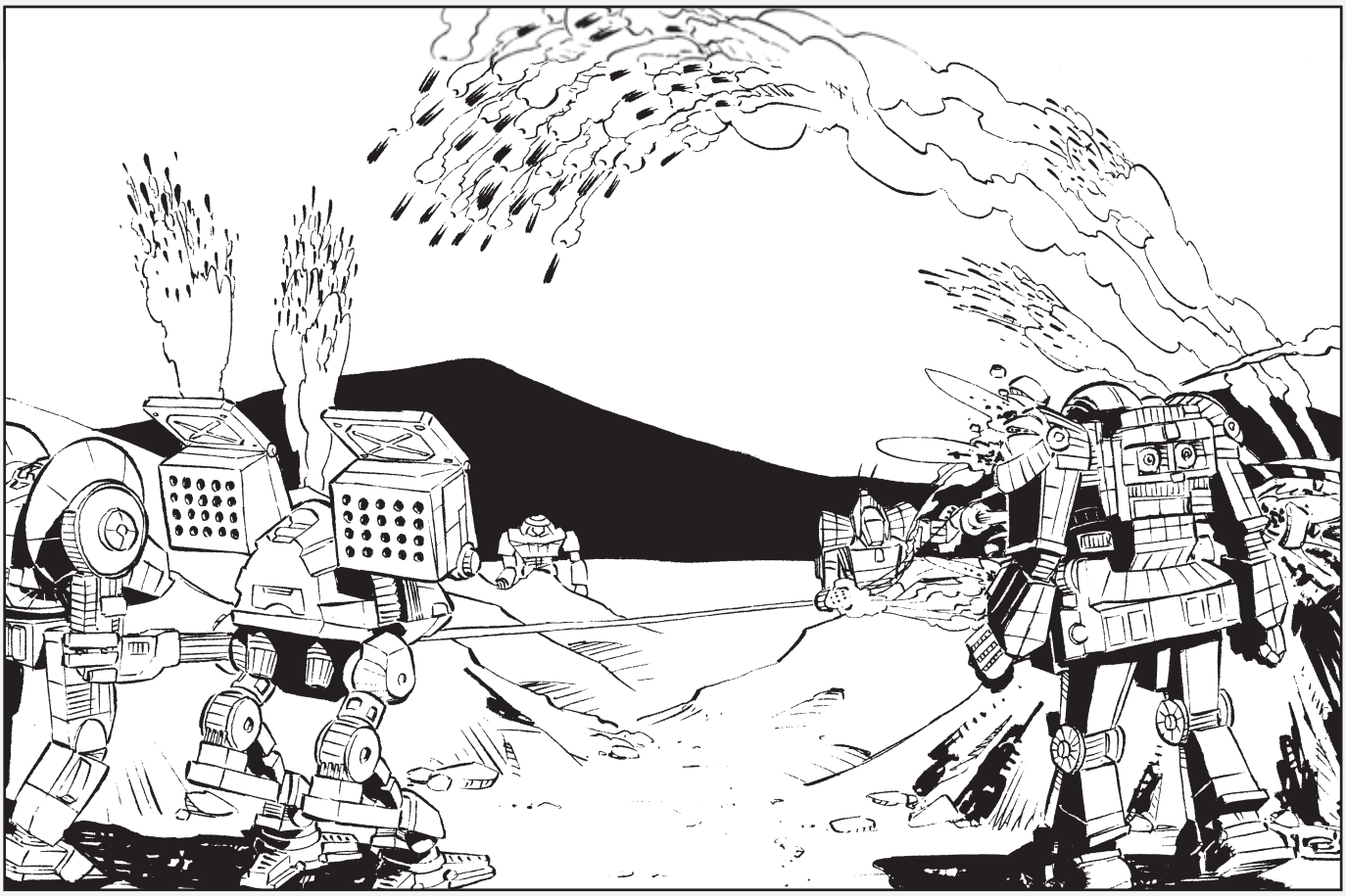
Weapon Specialist

"Yeah, I see him. So how many particles do you want me to stitch across him from my PPC?"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] DEX 5+; [Skills] Gunnery/any appropriate (with appropriate specialization) 5+

XP Cost: 150

A MechWarrior, ProtoMech pilot, fighter pilot or gunner with the Weapon Specialist Ability is exceptionally proficient with a single type of weapon system. When acquiring this ability, the warrior must identify a specific weapon (based on his current Gunnery Skill specialization)



Missiles fly at almost point-blank range when a Lyran assault lance stumbles into a Combine ambush.

as his ultimate "weapon of choice" in battle. For example, a MechWarrior with Gunnery/'Mech (Lasers) can choose the medium laser, while a vehicle gunner with Gunnery/Ground Vehicle (Missiles) might choose the LRM-10. The warrior must also have substantial prior experience with the weapon system in question. (The gamemaster must decide what is considered "substantial" in order to be eligible; if a character has been piloting a *Wolfhound* his entire career, for example, he cannot gain the Weapon Specialist Ability for a Gauss rifle the first time he climbs into a *Hollander*.)

When making attacks using his chosen weapon, the weapon specialist applies a +2 attack roll modifier (instead of the usual +1 for Skill specialization). Unlike a typical Skill specialization, the Weapon Specialist Ability does not produce a corresponding penalty for the use of non-specialized weapons.

Unlike most other SPAs, a character may possess multiple Weapon Specialist Abilities, though each still counts toward the maximum of three Gunnery-class abilities.

PILOTING ABILITIES

The following Special Pilot Abilities are related to the character's Piloting Skill. When selecting Special Pilot Abilities, these SPAs count toward the Piloting class.

Dodge

"Missed me again, you idiot!"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] RFL 5+; [Skills] Piloting/ProtoMech or Piloting/'Mech 5+

XP Cost: 100

The Dodge SPA allows a pilot to execute a special evasive maneuver when engaged in physical combat. This dodge—effective against physical attacks only—requires the dodging warrior to make a special Piloting Skill Check when his opponent makes his physical attack roll (the Dodge roll applies all of the usual Piloting modifiers relevant to the unit's condition). If the dodging unit's MoS is higher than that of the attacking unit, the physical attack misses.

A Dodge maneuver is considered a Simple Action, but applies to all physical attacks made against the dodging unit in that turn. The dodging unit does not require additional rolls for additional physical attacks in the same turn. Instead, the Dodge roll MoS for the first attack is compared to the MoS of all physical attacks made against the dodging unit to determine their individual successes.

Hot Dog

"If you can't stand the heat, get out of the BattleMech!"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] BOD 5+; [Traits] Thick-Skinned; [Skills] Piloting/Aerospace or Piloting/'Mech 5+

Members of the dreaded Shadow Divisions thrive on the terror their uniforms inspire.

XP Cost: 50

Heat, a unique danger to 'Mechs and aerospace fighters, has long been a personal bane to the pilots of such units. Some pilots, however, have developed a knack for riding their machines' unique "heat envelopes," pushing their fighters and 'Mechs to the limits of shutdown and even explosion just to squeeze out every last gram of performance. A character with the Hot Dog SPA is one such individual, and can apply a +1 modifier to any roll made to avoid overheating effects (including Shutdown and Ammo Explosion checks, as well as Pilot Damage and Random Movements checks from overheating).

Heavy Lifter

"Why, lookie here! I done caught me a Locust*! Hey, Marcus! Go long!"*

Prerequisites: [Attributes] DEX 5+; [Traits] Natural Aptitude/Piloting/'Mech; [Skills] Piloting/'Mech 5+

XP Cost: 50

The Heavy Lifter SPA reflects a mastery of fine balance unique among MechWarriors of any stripe. Where the lifting capabilities of most BattleMechs and IndustrialMechs are derived from a combination of the machine's own mass and special equipment, the heavy lifter has learned how to enhance these "rated maximums" through creative balancing techniques and sheer determination.

The Heavy Lifter SPA allows a 'Mech pilot to lift, carry, drag and even throw objects (including basic cargo and even hostile units) weighing up to 50 percent more than the machine's normal limit. This affects not only a 'Mech's maximum lifting weights defined by the 'Mech Lifting Capacity rules (p. 261, *Total Warfare*), but also the maximum weight allowance and throwing distances referenced in the Picking Up and Throwing Objects rules (see pp.92-99, *Tactical Operations*).

Jumping Jack

"These legs exist purely as a suspension system…"'

Prerequisites: [Attributes] RFL 5+; Piloting/'Mech or Piloting/ProtoMech 5+

XP Cost: 150

Jump jet-equipped 'Mechs and ProtoMechs are among the most agile battlefield combatants, but to call them graceful is an utter fabrication. However, while most 'Mech jumps demonstrate the brute-force-over-physics approach with every earth-shuddering leap, some pilots have become astonishingly adept at such maneuvers. The Jumping Jack SPA replaces the normal –3 attacker movement modifier for using Jumping movement with a –1 modifier.

Maneuvering Ace

"My call sign isn't Drifter because I wander from place to place…"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] DEX 5+; [Skills] Piloting/any vehicular 5+

XP Cost: 100

MechWarriors and crews with the Maneuvering Ace Ability are especially good at executing quick turns and maneuvering in tight confines. Bipedal 'Mech units and VTOL units at Cruising speed whose pilots possess this ability can perform the lateral shift maneuver normally available only to quad 'Mechs (see p. 50, *TW*), while quadruped 'Mechs can perform the same action for 1 less MP than usual. Vehicles crews receive a +1 roll modifier on any Piloting Checks required if the vehicle fails to fulfill the requirements for a turn mode (see p. 25, *TO*), while aerospace units reduce the Thrust Point costs for any special maneuvers by 1.

In addition to the above, all units piloted by a maneuvering ace receive a +1 roll modifier for any Piloting Skill Checks needed to avoid skidding, sideslipping or (in the case of aerospace units) random movements.

Melee Master

"I'll bet you didn't see that one coming, did ya?"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] RFL 6+; [Traits] Ambidextrous; [Skills] Piloting/'Mech or Piloting/ProtoMech 6+; [Abilities] Melee Specialist SPA

XP Cost: 150 (180 for Clan MechWarriors)

A MechWarrior with the Melee Master Ability has brought physical combat to blinding new levels, achieving physical combat speeds other warriors can only dream of. As with the Melee Specialist Ability, this ability is less common among Clan MechWarriors than among their Spheroid counterparts, but ProtoMech warriors feel no such restriction.

When executing a physical attack, a MechWarrior with this ability can deliver one extra punch, kick, club, or hatchet attack

during a physical attack phase (so long as all other restrictions are met, such as not firing weapons in the attacking limb). This attack may even be combined with a Charge or Death from Above attack. For ProtoMechs, use of this Ability doubles the ProtoMech's total damage in a Frenzy attack.

Melee Specialist

"Awww, did you catch my fist with your face?"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] RFL 5+; [Skills] Piloting/'Mech or Piloting/ProtoMech 5+

XP Cost: 100 (120 for Clan MechWarriors)

A MechWarrior with the Melee Specialist Ability has perfected the difficult art of melee combat using the arms, legs, fists and feet of his BattleMech or ProtoMech, and is a master of physical attacks of all kinds. Given the Clans' preferred fighting style, this ability is less common among Clan MechWarriors than among their Inner Sphere counterparts, but some ProtoMech warriors—who are trained to make the most of their machines' smaller stature—have been known to embrace these "barbarian tactics."

When executing a physical attack, the warrior with this ability receives a +1 modifier to the attack roll, and increases by 1 point any damage dealt by a successful physical attack.

Natural Grace

"Cut that out, Derek! This is a battle arena, not a disco!"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] RFL 5+, DEX 6+; [Traits] Natural Aptitude/Piloting/'Mech or Piloting/ProtoMech; [Skills] Computers 4+; [Abilities] Any one of the following PSAs: Dodge, Maneuvering Ace, Melee Specialist or Speed Demon

XP Cost: 150

A MechWarrior or ProtoMech pilot with natural grace has combined hundreds (if not thousands) of man-hours of programming with his own knack for piloting his machine. As a result, he has developed and perfected dozens of special maneuvers and combinations that give an incredibly lifelike quality to the way his BattleMech/ProtoMech moves, but that have questionable value in battle.

The special maneuvers a warrior with the Natural Grace Ability can perform are limited primarily by the player's imagination and the gamemaster's agreement, but may include the ability to execute complex gestures, handle delicate objects, perform a dance maneuver or execute an unusual acrobatic maneuver. While these maneuvers have no game play effect—beyond amusing or annoying one's fellow players—the talent and grace do grant the following bonus capabilities:

- An additional +1 roll modifier to any check that involves avoiding falls, damage from moving through buildings, pilot damage from falls or setting off minefields.
- An additional hexside of torso twisting range beyond the 'Mech's current abilities (regardless of chassis configuration). This will allow most bipedal/humanoid 'Mechs to rotate their torsos through 300 degrees (covering all facings except directly to the rear), while quads can "twist" to the left or right like humanoids.
- The ability to perform an "arm flip" with only one arm, or with an arm that also has lower arm and/or hand actuators.
- Reduce the movement cost to pass through ultra-heavy woods, ultra-heavy jungle, and buildings by 1 meter per meter of distance moved (–1 MP).

Aleksandr Kerensky: Legendary Protector of the original Star League, and Father of the Clans.

- 1-point reduction of the damage inflicted by a hostile physical attack (but only if the character also possesses the Dodge or Melee Specialist SPAs).
- The ability to use Running MP in reverse (but only if the character has the Maneuvering Ace or Speed Demon SPAs).

Speed Demon

"Speed is life… and fun!"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] RFL 5+; [Skills] Piloting/Any vehicular 5+

XP Cost: 100

A pilot with the Speed Demon SPA can really pour it on! As long as his unit makes no weapon or physical attacks during a turn, a vehicle piloted/driven by a character with the Speed Demon Ability adds 1 MP (15 meters per turn) to the unit's Running/Flanking movement and 2 MPs (30 meters per turn) to its Sprinting movement rate.

MISCELLANEOUS ABILITIES

The following Special Pilot Abilities are not technically related to the character's Piloting or Gunnery Skills, but they represent additional Special Pilot Abilities that such pilots can develop nevertheless. When selecting Special Pilot Abilities, these SPAs may count toward either the character's Piloting or Gunnery class.

Combat Intuition

"I hate it when I'm right..."

Prerequisites: [Attributes] INT 4+; [Traits] Sixth Sense Trait; [Skills] Tactics/Any appropriate 5+

XP Cost: 200

A MechWarrior, pilot, or vehicle crew commander with the Combat Intuition SPA can accurately predict an opponent's actions by focusing intently on them. To use this special ability, the character must spend a Simple Action focusing on his environment during a tactical combat turn's End Phase. This action is extremely taxing, and inflicts 1 point of Fatigue damage to the combat-intuitive character. Though Combat Intuition may be used as often as every turn, this Fatigue effect can pose a danger to the warrior if the ability is overused.

In the following turn, the unit whose pilot has Combat Intuition may take all of its actions after all other units have acted (as if the unit with Combat Intuition won Initiative over all other units in the field). Alternatively, the combat-intuitive unit may "pre-empt" the actions of any other single unit in the turn, and perform all of its movement and combat actions before its chosen target can do so.

Free World League security forces are frequently engaged in population control.

Demoralizer

"Come and face me, little Spheroid—if you dare!"

Prerequisites: [Attributes] WIL 6+, CHA 4+; [Skills] Acting 4+, Leadership 5+, Piloting/Any appropriate 4+

XP Cost: 150

A MechWarrior, pilot or vehicle crew commander with the Demoralizer Ability can make his unit a holy terror on the battlefield, projecting an intimidating presence that seems to manifest in the way he operates his machine and taunts his enemy (with or without the use of communications equipment).

The Demoralizer Ability can be used on any single opposing battlefield unit, but requires the demoralizer's unit to have a clear line of sight to its target at a distance no greater than 300 meters. The demoralizer must then make a special "psychological" attack on the target in place of a normal weapon attack. An Opposed WIL Attribute Check between the two units' pilots or commanders represents this attack, with the demoralizer applying his CHA score to his roll's result. The opposing unit does not apply his own CHA score to his check, but is presumed to have a WIL score of 6 if his WIL is unknown at the time of the demoralizer's attack.

If the demoralizer-controlled unit wins the opposed check, the target unit becomes demoralized. During the following turn, the demoralized unit cannot use any movement rate faster than Walking/Cruising/Safe Thrust, and cannot deliberately move closer to the demoralizer unit (though factors like momentum or the demoralizer's own movement may still narrow the gap between the two units). In addition, the demoralized unit suffers a –1 modifier to all attack rolls made against the demoralizer's unit, reflecting the fear the demoralizer has managed to instill in his opponent. These effects last for only one turn, during which time the demoralizer may maneuver and execute attacks of his own as normal.

If the demoralizer's psychological attack fails, both units perform normally in the following turn, though the demoralizer may attempt to use his ability again in the following turn.

Tactical Genius

"Trust me! It'll work! They're not going to see this one coming."

Prerequisites: [Attributes] INT 6+; [Traits] Combat Sense; [Skills] Leadership 5+, Tactics 5+

XP Cost: 150

A force commander with the Tactical Genius SPA has a superior grasp of the battlefield situation over and above the abilities of his own innate combat sense, and can tap into this ability to maintain control in even the most chaotic firefights. This ability has no effect, however, if the character is not the field commander for his force.

With the Tactical Genius Ability, the commander may re-roll his force's Initiative without burning any EDG points. However, this second roll does not benefit from the character's Combat Sense Trait, and stands as rolled—even if the second result is worse than the first. Edge also cannot be used on this second Initiative roll.

In addition to the above, the character's excellent grasp of tactics and leadership make his force immune to the out-of-contact optional rule effects. This reflects the commander's ability to prepare his troops for unpredictable situations even when communications are compromised.

THE FIRES OF HELL

JOURNEY

KEN' HORNER

AWALLA FENS
ROCHELLE
8 JULY 3076

"It smells like the backside of a TasOx here," Logan complained, using his free hand to pull a box of mints out of his coat pocket. He cracked the box and sniffed before closing it again and returning it to where it had come from.

"You know…" Ethan started to reply, then paused for effect. "…The human nose is an amazing organ. If you'd just let it adjust to the surroundings, you'd stop noticing the odor. Instead, you keep overriding the aroma of the sulphur compounds and your nose keeps smelling them."

Franz scowled and turned to look at Ethan, but the large body of Busby was imposed between them as they carried their injured teammate.

"Is that true, Doc?" Luella asked, a bit out of breath from pulling her relatively short legs out of the muck that constituted the ground.

"Don't ever speak to me again," came the ice-cold response. For a moment, the sounds of the swamp returned as an eerie silence overtook the group. A few birds chirped and an Awalla lizard made a throaty call.

"Sorry. Is it true, Grace?" Luella said as she shook her head.

"How the hell should I know?" Grace answered. "I'm a medic, not an ear, nose and throat specialist. You don't see me asking you what the caliber on a Von Luckner is."

Luella stopped and spun around to face the taller woman. "This is the army, not some liberal arts outing. Show a little respect to your superior officer."

"Superior?" Franz chimed in. "If you're so superior, why did I have to save all your asses with my 'Mech moves?"

"Your 'Mech moves? More like beginner's luck and the Robes not thinking anyone would be so stupid as to do half the things you did. Why—"

Travis waded back toward the stopped party from his position on point. "Knock it off, all of you! You whiny brats are bellyaching more than the most injured soldier here."

A groan from the semi-conscious Busby drove home the Captain's point.

"Sir?" Ethan said. "Maybe a break is in order? There's a few downed logs over there, they should be dry enough to sit on for a bit."

Travis wiped his brow and then put his hands on his hips, scanning the party as he thought. "Good idea. Let's take fifteen, people." Though tension remained, the group moved quickly over to the cluster of logs. Ethan and Logan helped Busby lie down on one of the larger logs while Grace came over to check on him. As she looked at the wound in his side without removing the bandages, the rest of the team managed to space themselves out as far as they could in the clearing.

Ethan took the opportunity to survey his surroundings. He could see yumba trees as far as the mists would let him, their gnarly roots spreading far out to claim as much water as they could. Smaller plants sprouted in random spots, usually the deeper sections where the waters would likely be waist deep. Occasionally the group had spied mud clustered around the base of a yumba, but he couldn't see any now.

As if the muck beneath the water and the ever-present roots didn't make their travels treacherous enough, dead groves killed by random toxic clouds—contamination from weapons and industrial spills in Rochelle's past—were strewn about, often forcing them to go around the fallen debris for half a kilometer or more. Smaller patches, like the one they sat in, weren't as frequent. Three days they'd been stuck in this place, running

out of supplies, staying soaked and sticky and making lousy time in getting to their final destination. He sighed as he lay back and tried to remember when he had last been dry. Maybe the Robes would have been better than the swamp.

Ethan watched as Logan tipped back this canteen, the last few drops falling into the young man's parched mouth. He left the canteen inverted and looked inside, as if he expected to find some magical spigot that he'd forgotten. Dejected, he lowered it and bent over to immerse it in the ankle-deep water at his feet.

"Stop!" Ethan shouted. Everyone froze, then turned to look at him. He glared at Logan. "Don't you dare fill up with swamp water."

Logan looked down at his canteen, then up at the team members he could see. Sheepishly, he asked, "Why not?"

Ethan groaned. "Kid, don't they teach you anything? Even Terra's swamp water is full of salt, bacteria and plant life. Here on Rochelle, who knows what kind of toxins you're getting? Men go crazy in swamps drinking the water."

Logan looked like he might cry. Ethan took a deep breath, got up and sloshed over to him. He felt torn. The guy was trying his best, but sometimes he was just too eager, and it annoyed Ethan.

"Look at this yumba stalk." Logan's eyes followed where he gestured. Ethan pulled out a pocketknife and took Logan's canteen. Holding it below the juncture of the green stalk and the branch it protruded from, he slowly slid his knife into the stalk's soft tissue. "Nature is rarely the most absolute of providers," he said as a clear liquid dripped out of the cut. The flow increased as he made the hole bigger by wiggling the knife back and forth. "But roots do a pretty good job of filtering the water they send to the rest of the plant. I wouldn't live off this forever, but it should get you through the end of the week."

"Man, trees keep saving me on this planet," Logan said.

Ethan looked askance at him. "Huh?"

"Never mind."

Logan stared in awe as the clear liquid flowed out of the yumba, filling his canteen. After a few minutes, the rate of flow slowed until it finally stopped. Logan hefted the canteen as Ethan handed it back to him, noting that it was half full. He smiled and took a swig…then immediately spat it out, all over Ethan.

"It's sour!"

"No shit!" Ethan wiped the aspirated yumba juice off his face. "I told you it'd be potable, not Luthien Ale." He walked away to see how Busby was doing.

Logan drank more of the sour liquid with a disgusted look on his face. "It tastes like horse—"

"Can it, corporal," Travis said.

▲▼▲

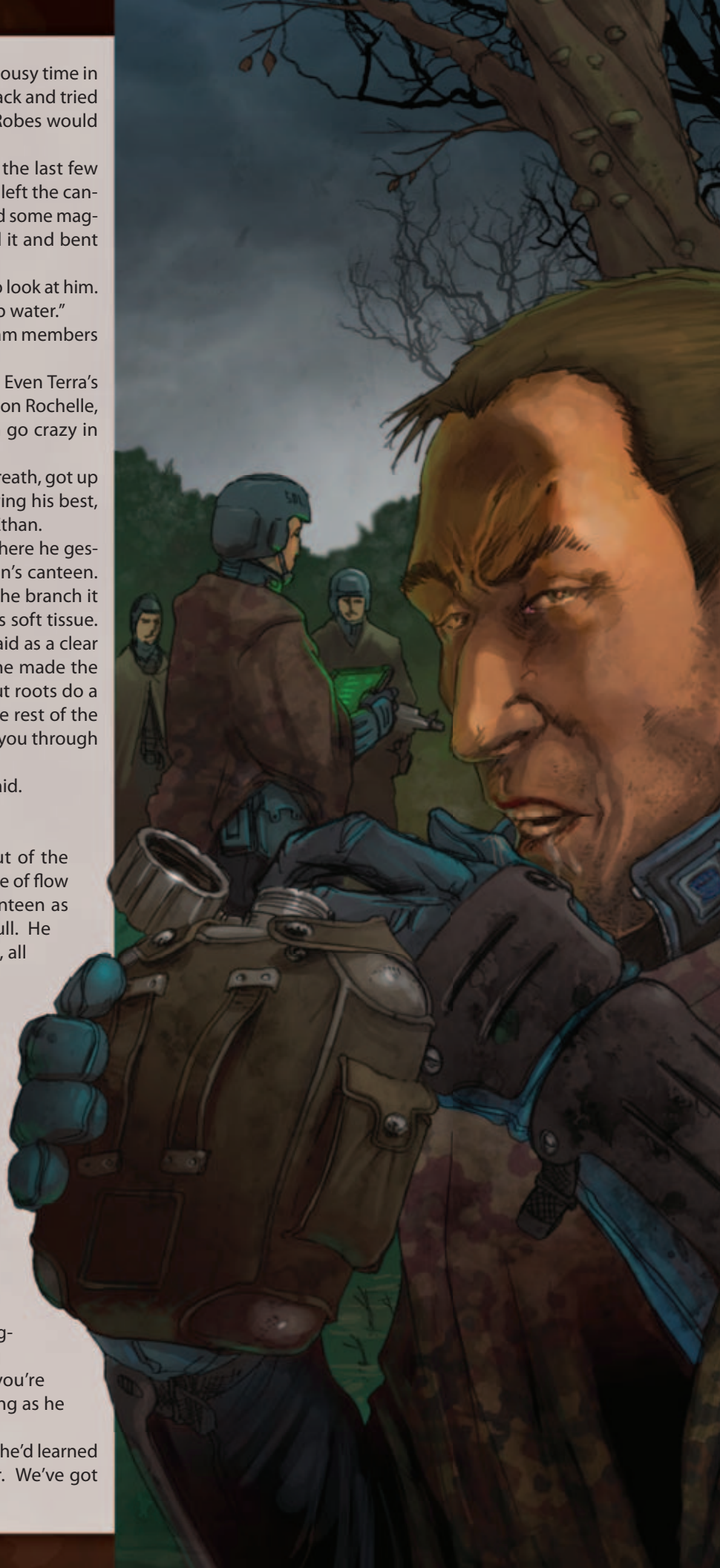
"Which way?" Travis asked Ethan.

Ethan looked at the map, the captain's noteputer and the swamp around them. He tapped the 'puter's blank screen and then scratched his head.

"Whatcha doing, guys?" Logan asked, apparently invigorated after their fifteen-minute rest.

"What's the second most important need when you're trapped in the wilderness, rookie?" Travis asked, smiling as he glanced at Ethan.

The younger man thought hard, trying to recall what he'd learned as a Steiner Scout. "We need water, food and shelter. We've got water, so next would be food."



Ethan rolled his eyes at Travis.

"Now, now, Mr. Naoko, he has a point. For establishing a permanent residence, food is probably next up. However, we're trying to get back to civilization, so the next requirement is navigation." He turned and saw that the doctor was done tending to Busby. "Grace!"

"Yes, sir," she replied, wearily making her way over to them. Twenty meters was more like forty in the endless muck and water.

"We're not getting a reading on this thing and we've got no landmarks to go by."

"Are we still getting a signal?" she asked, taking the noteputer away from him. "No. The Robes changed the codes." Her brow furrowed in concentration as she pushed keys. Travis and Ethan watched intently as she tried to break the encryption.

"How hard can it be to find a sat connection?" Luella said.

"This isn't the wilds of Tharkad," Grace replied. "They don't have triple redundant positioning systems, just the barely functional ring around this crappy planet."

"This is nothing compared to the deserts of Vega," Busby chimed in as he leveraged himself into a sitting position.

Grace turned to look at him, "Buzzy, keep quiet and lie back down."

Ethan shook his head, "No, he's right. Some of us have been in crazy spots and survived. Heck, people negotiated terrain before the advent of satellites. I was on Amerigo on Proserpina for four days, stuck in an envirosuit after my *Panther* got shot out from under me."

Sighing, Grace turned to Ethan with her hands on her hips, "That's great, old man, but I meant Buzzy needs to keep quiet and lie down so his infection won't take him out completely."

"Oh."

Travis cleared his throat. "Look, many of us have been in strange places and crappy situations. Let's put our heads together and figure out how get out of this swamp and on to the target. When Stone gets here, we can get Buzzy some better attention and all of us a dry place to rest."

"How about that way?" Logan asked, striding through the muck like a peacock out to impress a mate. No one had noticed his absence in the earlier discussion.

Ethan turned in the direction Logan was pointing. "And that would lead us to…?"

"The complex."

"And how do you know that, greenie?"

Logan put his hands together and performed a mocking bow. "Ancient Lyran secrets."

"Cut the crap, corporal!" Travis ordered.

Logan rolled his eyes and threw back his arms. "I climbed a tree and spotted a tower in that direction. What would you do without me? Saving your butts yet again. I haven't even gotten a thank you for taking out the *Malak*."

It was Luella's turn to roll her eyes. "Thanks? I thanked the yorkwood tree that saved us *and* you."

Logan looked down at the muck and kicked at something in the water. "Well, yeah…"

"All right, people," Travis said. "Let's pack up and move out."

Ethan walked over to Busby, but the large man managed to get up without his assistance, instead using a broken branch from a yumba tree. Ethan supported his injured side as the group moved forward. Every half hour, Logan climbed a tree and got their bearings. After his third trip down, Travis broke the weary silence.

"I think I can top your Proserpina tale, Ethan."

"Do tell, sir," Ethan replied through his teeth as he supported Busby.

"We were supposed to catch a transport on Caph between a couple of islands. Well, this transport had seen some action. We did some patchwork to fix it up, but halfway between, we got caught in a terrible storm. The patches didn't hold up to the beating of the waves, so we had to abandon ship. I was in the boat with the ship's captain."

"Ahab, sir?" Luella asked.

Ethan smirked and shot back, "No, I'm sure it was Bligh."

Travis shook his head, "Nope, Kirk."

"Suuuuure, sir," Grace replied.

Travis held up his hand as if pledging something, "Honest. Kirk McCall."

The group groaned in near-unison.

"Anyway, when the storm breaks, we're out in the middle of nowhere…"

▲▼▲

As Rochelle's day ended and its moons rose, Travis called the group's travel to a halt in the diminishing light. Ethan wasn't sure how far they'd come; it felt like forty kilometers, but he knew it was less. The soft ground, Busby and the lack of a good route had slowed them down considerably. He was just glad they hadn't needed to backtrack around tangled underbrush, something he'd done more than once in his life. Off in the distance, he spotted something he hadn't seen in more than a day—land.

"Sir, up ahead." He pointed at the island in the swamp.

Travis's eyes strained to see it. "What?"

"The island."

"What about it?"

"Wouldn't you like to rest on dry ground instead of on a fallen tree trunk?"

Travis actually smiled. "I hadn't even thought about that. Yeah, that sounds good." The team spent another ten minutes wading over to the patch of damp earth. While hardly dry by most standards, compared to the muddy morass beneath their feet the moist earth felt like bedrock. Only a few meters in diameter, the roughly circular island had barely enough room for everyone.

"What if this was the back of a sea serpent?" Logan asked, his imagination working overtime.

"You want to see a sea serpent?" Grace asked him.

"Yeah!"

"Go to Thraxa one day, ask to see a devourer."

"A devourer?" Logan gulped, his eyes almost as big as saucer plates. Then he laughed. "You're pulling my leg."

Ethan shook his head. When this mission was over, he wanted to invite Corporal Logan to join their weekly poker game; he'd probably get half the kid's money. "Nope, devourers are real. They mostly leave beach-goers alone. Mostly."

Logan shuddered and pulled off his boots, then poured out the water that had accumulated in them.

Ethan followed his lead and turned to the captain, who was helping Grace check Busby once again. "Should we set a watch, sir?"

"C'mon," Luella groaned. "Do you really think the Robes followed us all the way out here? We can't even find us, how are they going to find us?" She lay back and put her arm over her eyes.

"Toasters aren't the only thing to worry about out here," Grace replied. "Besides, with their active probes, the Robes might just stumble across us."

Wearily, Travis looked at the team. "Naoko, Logan, Hildebrand and me. We'll each take two hours."

Ethan knew Rochelle's night only lasted six hours, but an extra hour on each end would give them time to rest up and let the planet rotate into its star's light.

Luella raised her arm and turned to glare at Ethan. "*Arsch*!" she hissed, then rolled over in search of sleep.

Ethan pulled out a ration bar and noshed on it. "This trip is getting funner by the minute," he muttered under his breath. He wondered if 'funner' was a real word as the rest of his companions fell into exhausted slumber.

▲▼▲

Ethan looked at his watch and noted it was two and a half hours since he'd started his shift. In the pitch black, he was lucky to see a few feet beyond the island. Using Captain Travis's low-light goggles, he scanned the perimeter, looking for anything moving or out of the ordinary. Still quiet other than a few lizards crawling through the tree branches. Twenty years ago, he'd have been asleep by now, but in his advancing age he found himself needing sleep less. He reached out and shook Logan gently.

"Wha—!" he started to say, but Ethan put a hand over his mouth.

"Shh. It's your turn to watch." He pulled his hand back.

Logan rubbed the sleep out of his eyes, and some mud in. He looked at his hands in disgust. "M'kay."

Ethan handed him the goggles. Logan took them and scanned the swamp. Ethan was about to go to sleep when he saw Logan pull a small object out of his pocket.

"What'cha got there?" he asked.

Logan looked at him, then at his hand, as if being awoken so suddenly made his mind work more slowly. "Oh, this. It's the BattleRom from the *Griffin*. When we ditched it just inside the swamp, I wanted a souvenir, so I took this."

Ethan smiled, glad that at least someone was getting enjoyment out of this fubar mission. "Lucky you did. It probably wouldn't have survived that grenade I tossed in there. I wish I'd saved the Rom from my first 'Mech fight."

Logan sighed. "At least you probably did well."

"You saved our asses back there."

"Yeah, but Luella keeps reminding me that I got lucky, with the tree and all."

Ethan shrugged. "So what. I nearly capped my CO with a PPC. As long as you learn from and survive your mistakes, that's what counts."

Suddenly, Logan glanced up and froze. "What's *that*?" he hissed.

"Where?"

Logan pointed, looking through the goggles. "It's like one of those circus cats."

"Tamada!" Ethan cried. He jumped up and shook Travis and Luella awake. "Swamp tiger!"

A roar followed as the large, glittering, cat-like beast leaped from the tree ten meters away and landed in the middle of the small island. It latched onto Busby and started to drag him away. Busby woke up screaming. Logan kicked the tiger, but it barely acknowledged him as its thick hide, full of heavy metals, absorbed the blow. Travis rolled over and drew his pistol, but Busby's flailing body blocked a clean shot.

Luella darted around the big cat's side, but the tiger lashed out with a hind leg and knocked her into the water. Her gun landed with a splash a meter from her outstretched hand. The beast dragged Busby into the water, away from the group.

Electricity crackled suddenly. The tiger yelped and growled, incidentally dropping Busby like a rag doll. Ethan cracked the whip again, smacking the tiger. A spark flashed in the night as the whip struck its target. Unwilling to face more danger for its suddenly-hard-to-get meal, the cat bounded off.

"Shoot it! We could eat it," Logan said.

"Nah," Travis replied. "They can survive ingesting toxic metals, but we can't."

Luella and Ethan pulled Busby back up to the island, where Grace took out more bandages.

"That," Ethan said to Luella, "is why we set a watch." If it hadn't been so dark, he'd have sworn he saw a tear in her eye.

Even though he could hear the enemy squad closing in behind them, Sergeant Gerald Smith and his spotter, Jeoren, refused to abandon their mark.

"How did we get into this mess?"

"Oh, come on! This is nothing! What about that time on Devil's Rock?"

"Or Solaris VII?"

"Two words: Port Krin."

Much of what happens in *A Time of War* can be adjudicated using the standard rules presented in this book. But what about those extra things *not* covered by the standard rules? The little twists thrown in by the environment, or the players, or just some random quirk of fate?

In many cases, the gamemaster may just need to wing it—after all, one of the key features of a role-playing environment is the potential for virtually anything to happen, and no rule set can hope to handle "virtually anything." Thus, whenever a gray area presents itself, the gamemaster is free to use his best judgment to decide how unexpected events and items fit into the game rules and affect the environment and characters around them.

Still, a number of "special case" rules appear in this chapter to aid gamemasters and players in some of the more common (yet still unusual) situations an adventure may lead to. These rules cover a variety of situations, from alternative planetary environments and conditions to basic creatures rules, to diseases and illnesses.

PLANETARY CONDITIONS

"It's raining! It's pouring! This planet is so boring!"

The Inner Sphere (and Clan space) contains a massively diverse range of worlds. No two are alike, and even on a single world the environment can vary wildly. Terrain and weather are the principal factors here: the ground underfoot (both as a general terrain type and regarding more specific conditions), and the atmosphere around the characters (or the lack thereof). Unless otherwise specified, assume these rules apply to characters and battle armor as well as BattleMechs, ProtoMechs and vehicles.

Note: The rules on planetary conditions presented here are actually expansions of rules outlined in *Total Warfare* and expanded on in *Tactical Operations* and *Strategic Operations*. These rules therefore refer heavily to those other core rulebooks with regard to their impact on tactical game play (especially vehicles and 'Mechs), while also describing any relevant effects that characters in an *A Time of War* campaign will experience. Gamemasters interested in bringing these planetary conditions into play would be well advised to consult the referenced rulebooks when possible, to understand the full impact of exotic terrains and weather conditions.

MOVEMENT MODIFIERS

In clear, easy terrain it requires 1 meter-worth of a character's or vehicle's movement allowance to travel one meter. In other terrain types, the amount of movement allowed varies. The cost to move forward a meter is (1 + terrain MP Modifier) meters of movement.

> *John is in light woods and wants to move forward 5 meters. The movement modifier for light woods is +1 MP, so each meter of movement uses up 2 meters of his movement allowance. This means his 5-meter move requires him to expend 10 meters' worth of movement.*

TERRAIN TYPES

Action in the *BattleTech* universe takes place in a wide variety of terrain. This terrain is often quite rugged and wild because modern militaries seek (with poor success) to do battle away from civilization. Hard lessons have created various codes of military conduct, such as the defunct Ares Conventions of the long-gone

Age of War, the unwritten rules of Inner Sphere combat in the late Succession Wars, and Clan rules of engagement that encourage battle away from civilians. With opponents rarely evenly matched, terrain becomes a tool of the warriors, helping their efforts (or hindering those of their enemies).

The following paragraphs describe a mix of common and uncommon terrain types (not *every* terrain type that exists, but a wide selection of them), detailing their effects on combat and other actions. (Movement costs of terrain in tactical combat are discussed in depth on p. 52 of *Total Warfare* and p. 32 of *Tactical Operations*.)

Note: In keeping with the mechanics of the role-playing system presented in this book, any action modifiers noted in the following rules reflect their impact on dice rolls made using *A Time of War* rules, and are applied to the roll itself. In *Total Warfare* play, these modifiers are reversed (positive modifiers become negative and vice versa) and applied to the to-hit number instead. Players should realize that the results are fundamentally identical across both systems.

Furthermore, when the rules below discuss "characters" or "RFL-related Action Checks," this refers to anyone (player character or NPC) who is dismounted/not operating a vehicle in such terrain and conditions. These same effects also apply to any creatures or beast mounts a character may encounter in these situations.

CLEAR

Whether the plains of Terra's Midwestern North America or the veldt of New Syrtis, Clear terrain is exactly that: terrain with few, if any, obstacles or contours to hinder movement—or to provide cover from the elements (or hostile fire).

Clear terrain applies no modifiers to movement or combat and is the default terrain if no other is indicated.

Examples: Fields, meadows, prairies

VEGETATION

Many planets have a covering of vegetation, ranging from light scrub, grasses and moss to massive megaflora like California redwoods and Ironhold pine. In tactical combat, there are two broad classifications for vegetation: light woods and heavy woods. For *A Time of War*, a finer gradation is appropriate, as described below.

Scrub

Scrub terrain comprises scattered bushes that hamper infantry movement and provide soft cover, but pose no obstacles whatsoever to vehicles and vehicle-mounted weapons (which treat it as Clear terrain). Characters and infantry units must spend 2 meters of their movement allowance to move through 1 meter of Scrub terrain.

Ranged attacks in personal combat suffer a –1 roll modifier for every 30 meters of scrub, or fraction thereof.

Examples: Moorland, hedgerows

Light Woods

Light woods are areas of scattered woodland (often about 12 meters in height) that hamper vehicular movement and combat. Tracked vehicles and 'Mechs may still move through light woodland with care, and while weapon fire is hampered (with each 30-meter span applying a –1 roll modifier for every 30 meters of light woods, or fraction thereof), it is not obscured completely.

Characters in Light Woods terrain suffer no movement effects (the trees are spaced widely enough apart for dismounted characters to navigate with ease), but any creatures of Very Large size or larger will suffer movement effects as a vehicle.

Examples: Orchards, taiga

Heavy Woods

Heavy woods are more densely packed areas of vegetation, rarely much taller than light woods but posing a more significant obstacle to vehicular movement and combat. Only the most heavily armored units can move through heavy woods easily, and line of sight is quickly blocked.

Ranged attacks in personal combat suffer a –2 roll modifier for every 30 meters of heavy woods, or fraction thereof. Characters in Heavy Woods terrain suffer no movement effects (the trees are spaced widely enough apart for dismounted characters to navigate with ease), but any creatures of Large size or larger will suffer movement effects as a vehicle.

Examples: Wild forests, plantations

Ultra-Heavy Woods

Rarely seen on heavily populated worlds, ultra-heavy woods are primeval forests that frequently dwarf their more managed equivalents. Reaching heights of about 18 meters, and often closely packed, ultra-heavy woods are impenetrable to vehicles (only infantry can pass through) and provide an almost impenetrable obstacle to heavy weapons fire.

Characters in personal combat may execute ranged attacks through ultra-heavy woods with a –3 roll modifier per 30 meters of such terrain, or fraction thereof. Characters and creatures of Medium to Large size in Ultra-Heavy Woods terrain must spend 2 meters of their movement allowance for every meter of Ultra-Heavy Woods terrain they traverse. Creatures smaller than Medium size suffer no movement effects from ultra-heavy woods, while creatures of Very Large size or greater cannot enter such terrain.

Examples: Redwood forests (Terra)

Jungle

Unlike temperate woodlands, which often have little or no undergrowth, the jungle environments found in areas of high humidity and temperature combine dense undergrowth and trees. In tactical combat, jungles function like woods (and may be light, heavy or ultra-heavy) with the same movement/combat penalties. However, infantry and characters must pay for 1 additional meter of movement allowance per meter of normal movement for woods of corresponding density due to the difficulty traversing the undergrowth common to jungles (for example, a character in ultra-heavy jungle must pay 3 meters of movement allowance per meter of jungle terrain traversed).

Examples: Amazonia (Terra), Mesozonia (Shasta)

ROUGH

Rough terrain encompasses a wide variety of irregular terrains, ranging from broken and rocky ground to tussocks of peat and the stumps of trees. It poses a navigation challenge to many vehicles but does little to impede vehicular line of sight. Attacks against a character in Rough terrain suffer a –2 roll modifier to reflect additional cover, but attacks though Rough terrain or against larger vehicles in Rough terrain suffer no penalties.

Characters in Rough terrain must add 1 additional meter of their movement allowance for every meter of the terrain they traverse.

ICE

The standard rules for Ice appear on p. 50, *Tactical Operations*. For characters in *A Time of War*, ice imposes a –3 roll modifier to any RFL-based Action Checks made on it, unless the characters spend 1 extra meter of movement allowance per meter to move carefully. A failed RFL-based Action Check results in a fall on Ice terrain.

Ice may also be considered Fragile terrain. See the rules for *Fragile Terrain*, p. 234, for more information.

WATER

Water terrain encompasses a wide variety of conditions, ranging from still ponds to raging torrents, from mountain streams to oceans. At its most fundamental, it is graded by depth. Features such as waves and running water are discussed in *Terrain Conditions* (pp. 233-236).

A character partially submerged in water is said to have a degree of partial cover corresponding to the amount of his body "concealed" beneath the waterline.

Note: It is generally presumed that Water terrain is, in fact, water. In some more exotic locales, however, it may be a different liquid medium. If exploring such alternative liquids, the gamemaster may augment the water-related rules with secondary effects. For example, a "lake" of liquid petroleum would function similarly to water for movement purposes, but would have additional effects such as a high susceptibility to being set ablaze.

Very Shallow Water

Very shallow water is up to half a meter deep and poses little obstacle to 'Mechs and vehicles, but does hamper infantry movement. To move 1 meter in very shallow water, characters must spend 1 additional meter of movement allowance.

Shallow Water

Between one-half and 2 meters deep, shallow water poses little obstacle to 'Mechs and amphibious vehicles, but poses difficulty for non-amphibious vehicles. In tactical combat, this terrain is identified as Depth 0 water.

Characters and infantry in shallow water are swimming and must move at their listed Swimming rate. Checks for any actions other than swimming also suffer a –2 roll modifier while the character remains in the water.

Deep Water

Water deeper than 2 meters is usually broken into 6-meter bands for tactical combat purposes (so water 6 meters deep is Depth 1 water in tactical combat) and is only passable by 'Mechs (which will likely be partially or wholly submerged) and amphibious or naval units. Submersible vehicles and SCUBA infantry fall into the category of naval units for these purposes, as some of the few units that can actually operate in (and under) deep water.

Characters may use the Swimming Skill to operate on (or near) the surface of deep water as if in shallow water, but attempting to operate at depths greater than three times the character's BOD score (in meters) requires not only the Swimming Skill but SCUBA gear or some other appropriate pressurized diving apparatus.

Extreme Depths: Page 42 of *Tactical Operations* offers additional rules for extreme depths (over 90 meters), where few units generally operate.

PAVED

Unlike Clear terrain that is usually undulating and (relatively) soft underfoot, paved landscape comprises areas of very hard, very flat terrain. Most often associated with man-made landscapes such as roads, landing pads and interior floors, it also includes natural terrain such as limestone sheets. With few obstacles, units may move and fight at high speed on such terrain (ground vehicles even receive an extra 1 MP per turn while moving on pavement). However, the corollary of a relatively smooth surface is a lack of traction; as a result, 'Mechs and ground vehicles moving at running speeds face the significant risk of skidding when they change direction (see p. 61, *Total Warfare*).

Characters on Paved terrain experience a similar danger of slipping only when attempting to change directions while using Sprinting movement. A successful RFL Attribute Check—with a –2 roll modifier applied for the use of Sprinting movement—is required to avoid a slip and fall. In addition, damage to characters from falls on (or collisions with) Paved terrain is increased by +1 AP and +1 BD.

URBAN

As the name suggests, urban terrain comprises any landscape dominated by buildings. Because Urban terrain is difficult for vehicles and 'Mechs to maneuver and fight in—not to mention the fact that doing so constitutes a violation of most civilized rules of war—such units rarely do battle there, often leaving the business of combat in urban environs to infantry.

Urban environments are typically a mixture of Paved and Clear terrain (representing roads and yards), light woods (often used to represent parks), a limited amount of open water (covering park lakes, pools and fountains) and an abundance of structures. Vehicles and 'Mechs operating in an urban setting must use the standard tactical rules for movement and combat described in *Total Warfare* (or add the advanced building rules featured in *Tactical Operations* for even greater detail).

For characters, most urban combat will involve navigating the terrain, entering and exiting buildings, and using structures and other natural terrain for cover. The standard personal combat rules for barriers apply when attacking most terrain features in an urban environment (from walls and windows to furniture). In addition, structures themselves can suffer damage as if they are vehicles (most buildings and the like fall into the Very Large to Monstrous size categories and are treated as immobile targets for purposes of attack modifiers). In such a case, the Construction factor (CF) of a building is equal to its tactical armor value as a "vehicular" unit. The BAR of such structures, however, varies with the construction materials used (see *Armor and Barrier Effects*, pp. 184-189, for more rules).

Building Collapses

Characters inside a building that is destroyed or collapsed (usually as a result of combat) suffer damage with an AP equal to the structure's BAR (classified as Ballistic Type damage) and a BD equal to 2 times the building's total height (in stories, counting any basement levels), reflecting a combination of falling damage and debris from the structure.

The final BD value inflicted by a collapsing building may be reduced, however, by a factor of 10 percent for every point of MoS the character makes on a successful RFL Attribute Check (reflecting the character's scramble for suitable cover as the building crashes down around him), to a maximum 100 percent reduction in damage (reflecting a miraculous escape). If successful by a MoS of 4 or better, the character is also not trapped in the rubble, and can escape the ruins in the following turn (if otherwise physically able to do so). This damage is rounded down. A MoS of less than 4 means the character is trapped and must dig his way out or wait for rescue.

> *An AFFS soldier with a RFL score of 7 is in a 5-story building with a BAR of 6 when it is collapsed by enemy fire. He thus may suffer damage with an AP/BD rating of 6B/10 (2 x 5 stories = 10). Scrambling for cover, he rolls a RFL Attribute Check against a TN of 14, adding 7 to the result for his RFL score. Rolling a 9, he has made his TN by 2, and thus reduces the damage he faces by 20 percent, or 2 points. As the soldier's personal armor has only a BAR of 4 against ballistics, he's going to feel every one of those 8 points of damage, and because his MoS was not 4 or higher, he will be trapped in the rubble.*

MAGMA

In areas of high volcanic activity, lava flows may pose a major obstacle. Units that do not touch the ground (including VTOLs, hovercraft, WiGE units and infantry using aerial movement) may cross magma fields safely. 'Mechs may also cross this terrain, but face considerable heat and damage (see pp. 36-38 of *Tactical Operations* for details). Ground vehicles and other units that enter liquid magma suffer immediate motive failure upon entry and are considered destroyed, though characters in such vehicles may attempt to escape or eject, if possible. Encrusted magma is a Fragile terrain (see *Fragile Terrain*, p. 234) and may be traversed by ground units and infantry at some risk.

Characters in a magma environment are susceptible to damage if they come into contact with liquid magma or lava. This damage has an AP/BD Rating of 8E/5C. Continuous damage from liquid magma represents incendiary damage. Even crossing encrusted magma or standing within 5 meters of such terrain exposes the character to the effects of extreme heat (see *Weather Conditions*, pp. 236-237).

TERRAIN CONDITIONS

Whereas terrain types govern the general attributes of the landscape, terrain conditions reflect specific, often localized, effects over and beyond the nature of the terrain itself. For example, woods offer one set of tactical difficulties. Woods where the terrain is also muddy are a whole new proposition. Any modifiers and unit prohibitions imposed by terrain conditions are added to modifiers and unit prohibitions imposed by the underlying terrain. There are three main classes of terrain conditions: Soft terrain, Fragile terrain and Dynamic terrain.

If no underlying terrain is specified for a particular area, assume the underlying terrain is clear. (Road/Bridge, Rubble and Swamp represent specific terrain types.)

> *A heavy woods area that is also muddy slows a character down by a factor of 4 (3 for Heavy Woods and +1 for Mud). Shots directed into or through such an area apply a roll modifier of –2 (the standard modifier for Heavy Woods terrain), and any Piloting Skill Rolls or RFL-based Action Checks made in the area suffer a –1 roll modifier (the standard modifier for Mud conditions). In addition, ground and naval units cannot enter the terrain.*

SOFT TERRAIN

Soft terrain encompasses a broad range of conditions that generally slow travel and may impose Piloting Skill modifiers, as they cause difficulties in operating equipment. Vehicles designed to operate in such conditions (such as snowmobiles) or that use a hovering or gliding propulsion system may ignore these penalties unless otherwise noted. Soft terrain does not impose to-hit penalties on weapon attacks.

Hovercraft, VTOLs and WiGE vehicles in flight, as well as all other airborne units like infantry using jump packs, are unaffected by Soft terrain conditions.

Damage to characters from falls on (or collisions with) Soft terrain is halved (in both AP and BD factors).

Deep Snow

Deep Snow rules apply to areas covered with loose snow that is more than a meter deep (lesser accumulations of snow have no measurable effect on tactical units). Movement in deep snow costs characters and infantry an additional 2 meters of movement allowance per meter moved. A –1 roll modifier also applies to all RFL-based Action Checks by characters in deep snow, as well as to ranged attacks against characters in deep snow (to account for their partial—but completely penetrable—cover).

Unless it is specified in the scenario rules, the gamemaster may treat the underlying terrain as hard-packed snow, which can be reflected as either Ice or Clear terrain. Characters in deep snow may also suffer extreme-cold temperature effects if not suited for such terrain.

Semi-Deep Snow: In the event characters find themselves in snow more than 30 centimeters (about 1 foot) but less than 1 meter deep, the same general rules apply, but movement modifiers are reduced by half (to an additional 1 meter of movement allowance per meter of movement).

Mud

Slick, sticky mud can make any terrain dangerous. The optional Mud rules in this section apply only to mud less than a meter deep; for deeper mud, use the rules for Swamp terrain instead.

Any character moving into or through Mud terrain must spend an additional meter of movement allowance for every meter moved, and suffers a –1 roll modifier to any RFL-based

xxx Sergeant Oscar Dubey was impressed; the Blakist enemy was actually using the magma flows as a moat around their hidden installation.

Action Checks in such terrain. Characters in mud also may not use Sprinting movement rates and must make a RFL Attribute Check to avoid slipping and falling any time they attempt to run.

Sand

Sandy terrain represents the shifting sands of deserts and beaches across known space. Maintaining steady footing on dry, loose sand is difficult, so any RFL-based Attribute Checks made in such terrain receive a –1 roll modifier. For all infantry and characters on foot, movement on sand costs 1 extra meter of movement allowance for every 2 meters moved (or fraction thereof).

Swamp/Bog/Quicksand

Swamp terrain mixes water and land with seeming abandon and is extremely treacherous, impeding movement. Swamp terrain costs 1 extra meter of movement allowance per meter moved for all characters and infantry. Additionally, at the start of every turn in which a character is in swampy terrain, he must make a RFL Attribute Check before moving, applying a –1 modifier to the roll. If this roll fails, the character has bogged down in the terrain, and becomes effectively stationary (though not immobile). Jumping into swampy terrain (or landing from any form of airborne movement) automatically renders the character bogged down at the start of his next turn (though he may attempt to move in subsequent turns).

Characters in Swamp terrain also cannot use Sprinting movement, and may slip and fall on a failed RFL Action Check if they attempt to use running movement (a –1 roll modifier applies to this Action Check as well).

Tundra

Tundra consists of a layer of dark, mucky snow over permafrost and is generally common in cold climates that also receive sufficient sunlight for vegetation. The hardy grasses and lichens that grow profusely on tundra give it the appearance of a grassy glade, but this actually tends to make the terrain slippery and treacherous (translating to a –1 roll modifier to all RFL-related Action Checks by characters operating on such terrain).

Because tundra exists in cold climates, extreme cold temperatures may also apply to characters operating in such environments.

FRAGILE TERRAIN

Fragile terrain is landscape that initially appears in one state, but has the potential to change to another state (usually as a result of damage), placing anyone operating on such surfaces in jeopardy. Players should note that in some cases a fine line exists between Fragile terrain, which has the *potential* to change, and Dynamic terrain, which actually changes. Unstable slopes, for example, are classified as Fragile terrain because they do not automatically change state; once a change is triggered, they become Dynamic terrain (an avalanche or a mudslide).

Where the rules presented here call for an EDG Attribute Check, if the affected unit or character has no identified EDG score, presume an EDG of 6.

Magma Crusts

Though it appears solid, the ground around an active volcano is not always strong enough or cool enough to work (and fight) on. In some instances, liquid rock, or magma, can be flowing centimeters beneath the surface. Whenever any unit (except flying or gliding units like hovercraft and VTOLs) enters a section of magma crust, the controlling character must make an EDG Attribute Check with a +6 roll modifier (though the gamemaster may change this modifier to reflect the crust's thickness and the effects of any weight pressing down on it). If this check fails, the crust breaks and the character falls through into liquid magma.

Characters in a vehicle or other unit that sinks into liquid magma in this fashion can make a RFL Action Check to see if they can escape the sinking unit. Otherwise, they too will suffer the effects of the liquid magma.

Magma crusts may also be broken by heavy weapons fire and generally do so after suffering 30+ tactical damage points per 30-meter area.

Until a magma crust breaks, the terrain is treated as normal, though characters working on magma may be susceptible to extreme heat if the magma flow is close beneath the surface (or if active magma flows exist elsewhere nearby).

Ice Sheets

Standard rules for ice appear on p. 232 but those rules only deal with the effects of moving (and skidding) on ice. For solid ice—such as a glacier or a polar ice cap, where the underlying terrain is ground and not liquid or even gas—those rules are usually sufficient (barring the odd crevasse).

Where the terrain is less solid—such as on a frozen lake, for example—units and characters run the risk of breaking through the ice and falling into the water below. For game play purposes, these are known as ice sheets.

Ice sheets actually fall into three broad categories: thick, thin and very thin. Normal (solid) ice rules apply to all of these types, but each category of ice sheets carries its own chance of breaking through the surface as follows:

- **Thick Ice:** Thick ice may support all land units, but has weak points where heavier units—though not infantry or characters, even in battle armor or riding mounts—may fall through. When entering a section of thick ice, the mounted or armored character should make an EDG Attribute Check, adding +6 to the result and subtracting one-tenth of their armor or mount's tonnage (rounded up) from the roll. If this check fails, the ice shatters and the armored or mounted character falls through, suffering all the effects of a fall into whatever lies below.
- **Thin Ice:** Thin ice may support all land units, but even unarmored and dismounted characters may fall through any weak points they encounter. In this case, the player adds +4 to the EDG Attribute Check described above for thick ice and subtracts one-fifth of the tonnage of their armor or mount's weight (rounded up). Failure means the ice breaks and the character falls into whatever lies below.
- **Very Thin Ice:** Very thin ice can only support dismounted infantry and characters, and automatically shatters beneath any units weighing half a ton or more. Even a passing hovercraft will shatter very thin ice as it passes over, and will fall through unless liquid water or some other surface is directly below. Characters on very thin ice fall through on a failed EDG Attribute Check with a +1 modifier.

Unstable Slopes

Unstable slopes are those that—generally due to a combination of their angle and the presence of a loose or fragile terrain feature—can potentially shift dramatically when disturbed. Unstable slopes of snow and ice, for example, can potentially trigger an avalanche, while an unstable slope of mud and muck can be a recipe for mudslides. Even the side of a steep sand dune can be classified as an unstable slope, just waiting to spell disaster for the unwary.

An unstable slope may be "triggered" by movement through the terrain. As a character passes through such terrain, he must make a successful EDG Attribute Check with a roll modifier ranging from +3 to –3 (at the gamemaster's discretion, to reflect the terrain's instability). Add another +2 to this roll result if the character is walking or crawling along the unstable surface, and –4 if the character is running or sprinting, or climbing the slope itself. If the roll succeeds, the character safely completes his current movement without triggering an event (but must repeat the action in the next turn, if still on the unstable surface). If the check fails, the unstable terrain is triggered.

When triggered, the unstable terrain immediately displaces the character 1D6 x 30 meters down the slope, inflicting double the normal falling damage a character would otherwise sustain from that distance (see *Falling Damage*, pp. 181-182). If the character's new location is also unstable terrain, a second EDG Attribute Check is required, with the same modifiers as before, plus an additional –2 modifier to reflect the disturbance already caused. Events continue in this fashion until the character succeeds in an EDG Check or the character has fallen to a flat, stable surface.

When an event is triggered in this fashion, its effects include anyone within 30 meters of the character's position. For the sake of simplicity, however, only the character that triggered the event may make the EDG Attribute Checks to determine whether or not the event continues.

DYNAMIC TERRAIN

Unlike Fragile terrain—which *might* change status—Dynamic terrain is in constant flux. In some regards, this makes it easier to deal with, as its effects can be predicted or accounted for. On the other hand, this also means a character cannot avoid the effects of Dynamic terrain.

Rapids and Waves

Swiftly moving currents and waves make traversing water even more difficult and dangerous than usual. To reflect this, rapids and waves cost 1 additional meter of movement allowance per meter moved when swimming through such waters. In addition, a character caught in rapids or waves must make a successful Swimming Skill Check every turn that he remains subjected to such currents. On a failure, the character will be forced 1 meter in the direction of the current for every point of MoF.

Geyser

On some planets, geologic activity creates geysers and mud spouts that can erupt without warning. Often, the only clues to a geyser's presence are small holes or cracks in the ground, easily overlooked by troops in combat. When a geyser erupts, it spews steam and water into the air, obscuring line of sight and making movement through the terrain more difficult.

Before the characters enter terrain where geysers are present, the gamemaster must secretly determine where any geyser vents might be and conceal their locations from the players (or, to make things sporting, allow them a Perception Skill Check with a –2 roll modifier to spot any nearby vents).

Geysers have no effect on the underlying terrain until they erupt, which the gamemaster can determine by random rolls for each vent in the field. An erupting geyser is treated as heavy woods for the purpose of determining line of sight

into or through such terrain, and inflicts 3E/4S damage through steam and scalding hot water to any characters within 5 meters of the vent. If a character is within range of an erupting geyser, he may attempt to dodge this burst by making a successful RFL Attribute Check, but this forces the character to make an immediate running movement.

Geyser rules can also be used to simulate the effects of small magma/supercooled liquid eruptions on volcanic planets. In such cases, any unit that enters or stands in a hex where an eruption occurs suffers the same effects as if it had fallen into liquid magma (see *Magma*, p. 233). Under such conditions, treat the terrain where the eruption occurred as liquid magma for the next 1D6 hours.

Earthquakes

Some planets in the *BattleTech* universe suffer frequent tectonic activity that can hinder the mobility of characters and cause targeting difficulties for everybody, along with damage to structures.

When an earthquake strikes, the gamemaster must assign a strength value to the tremors, ranging from +1 (mild) to +5 (severe). This value is then subtracted from the rolls made for any Action Check by any characters in the following turn. In addition, each character standing within the affected area must make a successful RFL Attribute Check before taking any movement actions in a turn that a tremor is underway, with the tremor's strength subtracted from the roll result. If the roll fails, the character falls down and must get up.

Additionally, the gamemaster must roll 1D6 for each building on the map. If the result is equal to or less than the strength value of the tremor, that building suffers 2D6 tactical damage points multiplied by the earthquake's strength value. If the building is reduced to a CF of 0, it collapses. (See *Building Collapse* under Urban terrain rules, p. 232).

WEATHER CONDITIONS

Weather conditions are a much more transient game play effect that can vary even during a short encounter or battle. The rules below encompass a broad range of conditions, both natural (precipitation, wind, sunlight) and man-made (smoke, fire), which may affect all of an area where the characters are acting or only a small, localized part of it.

Hybrid Weather: Many weather conditions may occur simultaneously in a given situation, such as high winds and rain, or snow and extreme cold. In such situations, all modifiers for the various active weather conditions will stack. For example, a desert sandstorm may include extremely high temperatures, high wind, and blowing sand, while a blizzard would incorporate extremely cold temperatures, blowing wind, and heavy snow.

Precipitation and Particles

Rainfall, snow, blown sand and other objects in the air are a common weather phenomenon that can influence weapons targeting and lines of sight. For characters, precipitation (rain and snow) is a particular hindrance to visibility and can affect all weapons fire, whereas particulate matter (blown sand and sleet, for example) is a greater hindrance to energy weapons than to ballistics and missiles. Regardless of the nature of such interference, their effects are broadly classified here and can be categorized as light or heavy.

With rain or snow-type precipitation, a –1 roll modifier per 30 meters applies to all ranged attacks made by characters from within the weather effect, regardless of the intensity of the rain or snowfall. (Wind becomes a likely factor in heavier rain or snowstorms.)

For more particulate conditions, the same –1 roll modifier applies to all ranged attacks when the intensity of the weather is light, but increases to –2 when heavy. An additional –1 roll modifier applies when using an energy weapon to deliver the attack. Particulate conditions can include wind, especially when the weather is heavy.

Prolonged precipitation can also affect the underlying terrain. Light rain may be only an inconvenience, but heavy rain can turn underlying Clear terrain into mud. Similarly, a heavy snowfall may transform Clear terrain into deep snow after prolonged periods, and particulate matter may likewise build up to create sandy terrain.

Wind

Windy conditions reduce the effectiveness of all ranged attacks using ballistic and missile weapons (including unpowered weapons, such as bows and thrown blades). Moderate winds impose a –1 roll modifier on all ranged non-energy weapons fire, while high winds impose a –2 roll modifier, as well as a –1 roll modifier to all RFL-based Action Checks. Characters operating hovercraft, gliding vehicles, jump packs and other aircraft in high winds must make an appropriate Acrobatics or Piloting Skill Check every turn they remain above the ground, to avoid being blown along the direction of the prevailing winds for a number of meters equal to the roll's MoF.

Visibility

While standard rules presume that most action takes place in good visibility conditions (full lighting or daylight, with no fog or smoke), many situations may arise where the characters must deal with poor visibility.

Darkness: When dealing with darkness, the degree affects the modifiers applied to all actions taken where visibility is a factor (including Perception Skill Checks and combat). For the sake of simplicity, light-based visibility may be broken down into four main categories: Dim (such as at dusk/dawn, or under weak lighting), Dark (night-time light, but with some illumination sources like a moon, stars and distant street lamps), Very Dark (moonless night, interior darkness with no or minimal guide lights) or Pitch Black (zero or near-zero lighting). For characters and infantry, each grade of lighting applies an additional –1 modifier to any Action Checks where visibility is a factor; Dim lighting confers a roll modifier of –1, Dark applies –2, Very Dark –3 and Pitch Black –4.

If the action in question is being directed against something (or someone) within reach of the acting character, a +2 modifier applies as well to all lighting situations except Dim. This reflects the slight offset to the inhibiting effects of darkness once the character can reach out and touch his target. Likewise, searchlights negate all darkness modifiers within the light's area of effect (typically an arc, though some light sources may be more diffuse, such as a campfire, or the door in a darkened room being opened to reveal a well-lit hallway beyond), with the exception of Dim lighting.

Fog: Fog may arise in many atmospheres of standard pressure or greater (as opposed to thin or trace atmospheres and vacuum), and adds a visibility modifier to all actions in the same fashion

as darkness: a –1 roll modifier for vision-dependent actions taken in light fog, –2 for all vision-dependent actions taken in heavy fog and –3 if the fog is so thick as to be nearly "pea soup." A +1 modifier applies for any actions taken against or with objects the character can reach, however (such as melee combat or operating a computer).

Smoke: Typically the result of fires, smoke is far more localized, denser and more fluid than fog or darkness, and is treated more as "mobile terrain" than as a simple visibility factor, as smoke spreads and twists its way across an area. Characters attempting to see or deliver a ranged attack against a target through smoke must apply a –1 roll modifier for every 30 meters (or fraction thereof) that their line of sight passes through light smoke. For heavy smoke, double this modifier.

Extreme Temperatures

By and large, the range of human tolerance to temperatures falls between –30 and 50 degrees Celsius (–22 and 122 Fahrenheit). For most characters, comfortable temperatures fall within 10 to 30 degrees Celsius (50 to 86 Fahrenheit), with the lower and higher ends of human tolerance made possible only through specialized attire (including everything from insulated snowsuits to swimming trunks and cooling vests). If operating outside these "comfort levels" (beyond 10 to 30 degrees Celsius), characters suffer a –1 modifier to all Action Checks for every full hour they are exposed to such temperatures.

If operating outside the range of human tolerances (beyond –30 to 50 Celsius) without the benefit of a fully enclosed and insulated suit (including battle armor or space suits), characters must make a BOD Attribute Check for every full minute of exposure. A –1 modifier applies to this roll result for every 2 degrees the temperature is above 50 or below –30. If the check is successful, the character remains unharmed (but is extremely uncomfortable, and suffers a –2 roll modifier to all Action Checks for every full hour of exposure). Otherwise, the character suffers 1 point of Fatigue, multiplied by the roll's Margin of Failure. If the character takes enough damage to render him unconscious, each additional 10 minutes of exposure reduces the character's BOD Attribute by 1. When his BOD reaches zero, the character dies.

Thick-Skinned/Thin-Skinned Traits: Characters with the Thick-Skinned or Thin-Skinned Traits are less or more susceptible to extreme temperature ranges, respectively. Consult the rules for these Traits on pp. 125-126.

EXOTIC CONDITIONS

Not all environmental conditions fall into neat categories of terrain and weather. Some, such as high and low gravity, atmospheric taints and the like, must be handled on a case-by case basis.

HIGH/LOW GRAVITY

Many human-inhabited worlds have gravities similar to Terran standard (1G). Operating effectively in different conditions is largely a matter of familiarity; most inhabited worlds in the Inner Sphere boast gravities ranging from 0.7 to 1.3 times that of Terra (0.7 to 1.3 G), though some colonies exist outside this range.

In any gravity to which a unit or character is acclimated, such units and characters suffer no roll modifiers. In unfamiliar conditions, a –2 roll modifier applies to all RFL-based Action Checks. Gamemasters interested in adding more depth to this effect may choose to start at a –3 roll modifier and apply +1 against this penalty for every week the character spends in that environment until the gravity modifier is gone. This change reflects the character's gradual acclimatization to the new gravity.

An environment's G-rating also identifies the number of meters' worth of movement allowance the character uses to move an actual meter, and serves as a multiplier for the effective weight of any items the character might carry and his Fatigue from exertions such as movement.

> *On a .75-G planet, a character spends only 0.75 meters' worth of his movement allowance to traverse 1 meter of open terrain, and multiplies the weight of any of his personal gear by 0.75 when determining his carrying capacity or encumbrance. Meanwhile, another character on a 1.25-G world requires 1.25 meters' worth of movement allowance to cover the same distance, and multiplies the weight of any items he attempts to lift and carry in such environments by 1.25 when determining his encumbrance.*

Extreme Gravity (Under 0.2 G/Over 2.0 G)

If the gravity in question is extremely low (below 0.2 G) or extremely high (over 2.0 G), characters suffer more debilitating effects in addition to those prescribed for the high/low gravity rules above.

For extremely low gravity, only characters who have the Zero-G Operations Skill or who have fully acclimated to the low gravity over a period of a month can function normally. Otherwise, such characters must make a RFL Attribute Check every time they use any movement type other than walking or crawling, or when performing any action involving the STR Attribute. Upon failure, the character "stumbles" and suffers damage consistent with a 1-meter fall (see *Falling Damage*, pp. 181-182). Any other falling damage sustained in an extremely low-gravity environment multiplies its Base Damage value (but not the AP) by the environment's G rating, rounding down.

For extremely high gravity, characters who have not fully acclimated over a full month or more must make a RFL Attribute Check every time they use a movement type other than walking or crawling, or when performing any action involving the STR Attribute (such as lifting items). Upon failure, the character "stumbles" and suffers damage consistent with a 4-meter fall (see *Falling Damage*, p. 181-182). Any other falling damage sustained in an extremely high-gravity environment multiplies its Base Damage value (but not the AP) by the environment's G rating, rounding up.

Living in Extreme Gravity: Characters who live in extreme-gravity environments for extended periods tend to accrue additional effects as time goes on. To reflect this, the gamemaster may apply the following optional rules to characters who choose to inhabit extreme-gravity areas for durations longer than 3 months.

- **Extremely Low Gravity:** People who live in extremely low-gravity environments tend to be physically lighter and weaker than average people, but more nimble. Characters born and raised in such conditions should reduce their STR and BOD Attribute maximums by 1, while increasing their RFL Attribute maximums by 1. Also, characters living in such environments must spend 2 XPs for every 1 XP applied to their STR or BOD Attributes, reflecting the extreme difficulties in building muscle mass in very low gravity. Characters in such environments who were not born to them must also take a Handicap Trait with a minimum value of –1 TP, to reflect the medical needs associated with a chronic loss of calcium and muscle matter that must be offset by regular exercise and special supplements.
- **Extremely High Gravity:** People who live in extremely high-gravity environments tend to be physically larger and stronger than average people, but slower overall. Characters born and raised in such conditions increase their STR and BOD Attribute maximums by 1, while reducing their RFL maximum by 1. Also, characters living in such environments must spend 2 XPs for every 1 XP applied to their RFL Attribute, reflecting the extreme difficulties in developing fast responses in very high gravity. Characters living in such environments but not born to them must also take a Handicap Trait with a minimum value of –1 TP, to reflect the medical needs associated with chronic heart and blood pressure issues that must be offset by regular exercise and special supplements.

Shifting Gravity (Acceleration)

Page 35 of *Strategic Operations* addresses the risks of very high, sustained accelerations, but does not address the common tactic of spacecraft crew to rapidly maneuver when boarded, throwing unprepared occupants around with unanticipated G-forces.

When such maneuvers are used (or simply occur), characters inside a spacecraft are effectively caught in earthquake conditions (see p. 236). Resolve any sudden accelerations as for an earthquake with a strength equal to the Safe Thrust of the maneuvering vessel. Halve this "strength factor" (rounding up) if the characters are prepared for such maneuvers (such as the crew of a ship being attacked by a boarding party).

Atmospheric Taints

Standard rules assume actions are taking place on worlds with an atmosphere akin to, if not exactly the same as, Terra's. Many worlds, however, do not conform to this standard; their atmosphere is tainted to some degree or another. It may have a high CO_2 level or a low oxygen partial-pressure, or a biological taint or chemical elements inimical to terrestrial life. The degree of taint varies and can be broken into four categories: Trace, Mild, Severe and Deadly.

Roll modifiers imposed for working in tainted atmospheres apply only to operators of conventional vehicles, infantry and battle-armored troops. Sealed 'Mechs—including BattleMechs and IndustrialMechs with the environmental sealing feature—as well as ProtoMechs, fighters and spacecraft are unaffected by atmospheric taints until they suffer an armor breach in a location containing crew or pilots.

Trace Taints: Trace-level atmospheric taints apply a –1 roll modifier to all Action Checks performed by characters or infantry exposed to such environments without proper equipment such as respirators and the like. In general, a Trace-level taint causes the character no permanent harm. Characters inside battle armor or in sealed vehicles are unaffected by Trace taints.

Mild Taints: Mild taints also have no impact on characters inside battle armor or in sealed vehicles, but other characters and infantry suffer a –1 roll modifier to all Action Checks while wearing protective gear (which may include items ranging from simple respirators and filter masks to combat enviro-suits) and a –2 roll modifier if not. In addition, a particularly damaging Mild taint may cause continuous damage to a character at the gamemaster's discretion, with damage ratings ranging from 1S/1C to 2S/2C.

Severe Taints: Severe taints require full environmental suits and impose a –2 roll modifier to all infantry and characters. If forced to operate in Severe taint without adequate protection, a character suffers a –4 roll modifier and continuous damage ranging from 2S/3C to 3S/4C. Internal combustion-powered vehicles—even sealed ones—in such environments also feel the effects of a Severe taint in the air, imposing a general –1 roll modifier to all Driving or Piloting Skill Checks the driver must make while operating them.

Deadly Taints: Deadly taints (or Toxic Atmospheres on p. 56, *Tactical Operations*) are, as their name suggests, all but fatal to unprotected infantry and characters (with a recommended continuous damage rating of 4S/5C). Infantry or characters with adequate protection suffer a –2 roll modifier.

Only full environmental suits, enclosed battle armor and sealed vehicles count as protection for characters against a Deadly taint. Of these, environmental suits pose the greatest risk, as they may be breached if reduced to a BAR of 0, or if any non-subduing weapons fire or bladed weapons successfully strike the character and the character fails an EDG Attribute Check with a +6 modifier.

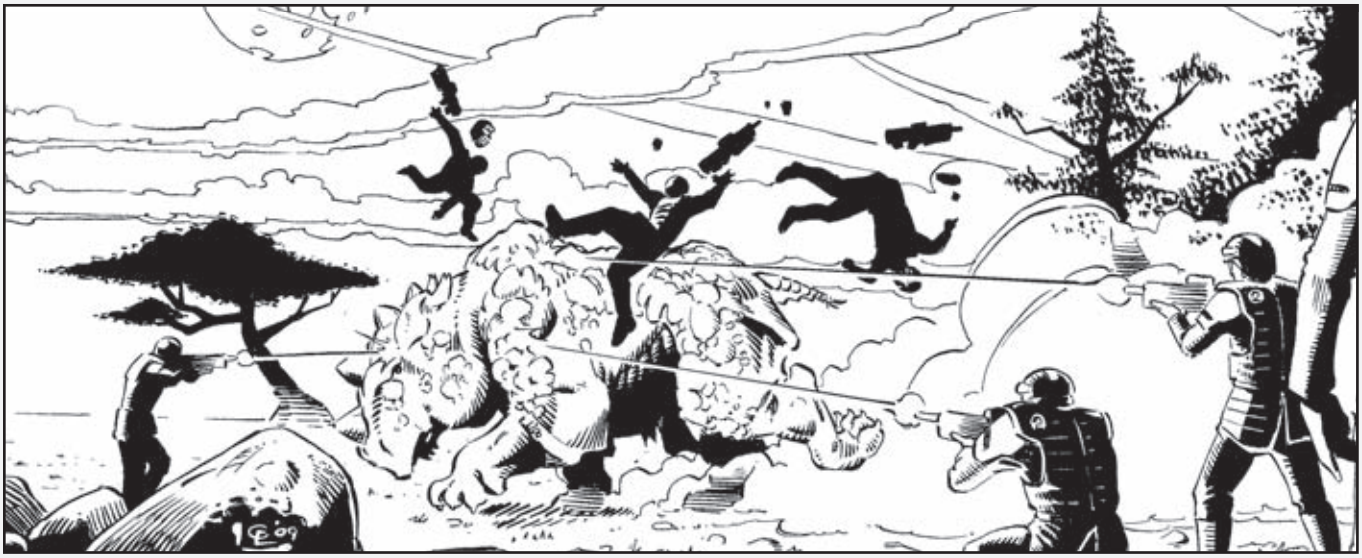
Vacuum

Vacuum is inimical to human life, and so any characters or infantry operating in it must be fully suited. They also suffer a –2 roll modifier to all Action Checks due to decreased visibility and dexterity. To reflect the fragility of such protective gear, any character attacked while wearing a space suit or other vacuum-environment gear other than battle armor must make a successful EDG Attribute Check with a +6 modifier every time the suit is struck by non-subduing weapons fire or bladed weapons. If this check fails, or if the suit's BAR is reduced to 0, the suit suffers a breach, and the character takes 5 points of continuous damage per turn from a lack of air (unless he can secure a separate, functioning breathing apparatus and oxygen supply).

CREATURES

"Sweet Mother of Kerensky, what is that thing!?"
"Lunch!"

Though sentient alien species have yet to appear on all of the worlds humankind has occupied in *A Time of War*, the *BattleTech* universe is replete with alien flora and fauna whose presence has proved both boon and bane to human existence across the stars. The rules presented here offer a simplified means of incorporating this broad and exotic aspect of the universe into a role-playing campaign, complete with a sampling of several



The last thing Gunsho *Givens expected as he led his squad through the badlands of Athenry was an attack by a charging stone rhino.*

common and uncommon creatures Gamemasters and players can use these creatures as is or treat them as templates for similar encounters with other fauna, tweaking their values as needed for more variety.

ENCOUNTERS

Characters will most commonly encounter domesticated creatures around human settlements. Such an encounter is unlikely to be violent unless the characters provoke the creature, or the creature is trained as a guard animal and the characters are trespassing.

Encounters in the wild are less predictable. Unless the creature is a predator, hungry and significantly larger than the players, it usually will not attack unless provoked. Even then, creatures are unlikely to attack unless they outnumber the player characters or feel threatened. Exceptions can include player characters trespassing on the creature's perceived territory, or if they approach the creature's young (knowingly or otherwise). Most animals are not suicidal, and normally avoid confrontation unless the situation appears to be in their favor.

CREATURE ATTRIBUTES

Creatures in *A Time of War* receive only seven of the eight Attributes human characters do: STR, BOD, DEX, RFL, INT, WIL and EDG. In most cases, these Attributes function as they do for human characters, but with a few minor differences. For one, the sheer variety of creatures possible in *A Time of War* means that virtually none of these Attributes has an upper limit (though the sample creatures provided reflect the average statistics for a specimen in each featured species). For another, a creature's BOD score is more directly linked to size and weight than to overall physical fitness. Finally, a creature may have Attributes as low as 0 and remain active in game play, even if the Attribute is BOD; this only means that such creatures will die if they suffer any damage affecting that Attribute.

To save on space, creature Attributes are summarized as seven numbers, separated by slashes, under the column header "S/B/D/R/I/W/E".

CREATURE SKILLS

All animals typically have three primary Skills for the purposes of most scenarios: AniMelee, Perception and Tracking. Unlike humans, creatures do not resolve untrained Skills as Attribute Checks, but instead treat any Skill they lack as a –2 Skill. As with human Skills, creatures may apply Linked Attribute modifiers to their rolls as well.

The Skills below list their TNs and Linked Attributes, followed by their descriptions and any relevant special rules. As with Attributes, creature Skills are summarized in the Sample Creatures Table under the header "A/P/T", identifying the creature's AniMelee, Perception and Tracking Skills, respectively.

Training Creatures: Tamed or domesticated creatures can be trained in the same manner as a human character (see the Training rules, p. 334 of the *Gamemaster's Section*). However, the training process takes a full month and the training character must use his Animal Handling Skill in place of the Training Skill. Subtract the creature's WIL Attribute modifier (not the creature's actual WIL score) from the result of this roll and—if successful—award the creature its INT score in XPs, multiplied by the training roll's MoS. If the creature receives enough XPs in this fashion, it may upgrade the Skill for which it was being trained to the next level.

AniMelee (A)
TN: 5, Links: STR + RFL

AniMelee is the creature Skill used to resolve all attacks made by animals. In game play, this Skill works exactly like Martial Arts does for humans, but has a base TN of 5 and uses the creature's STR and DEX as its Linked Attributes. In the case of a successful attack, use the damage listed under Attack in the Creatures Table below as the damage value inflicted.

Ram Attack: A special attack used by only a handful of creatures, the ram attack works like a regular charge attack with regard to its TN, but can be executed within 1 turn. Use the Creature's normal AP for the charge attack. Add the creature's STR and BOD together, and multiply this number by the number of meters the creature covered that turn prior to impact. Divide this result by 750 and round normally. For example, the hipposaur does 236 + 305 = 541 x 35 = 18,935 / 750 = 25.2 = 25 points of damage at 3M AP during a normal charge attack.

Perception (P)
TN: 5, Links: INT

This skill is used to determine whether a creature is aware of any nearby player characters or NPCs. This creature Skill works exactly as the Perception Skill does for humans.

Tracking (T)
TN: 5, Links: INT+WIL

Usually, only predators have this Skill, which works the same as Tracking/Wilds does for humans. Most creatures with this Skill use it to find prey outside their line of sight (but that they may hear or smell). Such prey may include other creatures or even the player characters.

CREATURE COMBAT

Combat using creatures can be resolved as if the creatures were regular humans, though some creatures may possess additional natural defenses such as natural armor (which works just like personal armor a character might wear). As with humans, creatures can withstand twice their BOD Attribute score in standard damage points, and twice their WIL in subduing (Fatigue) damage.

When a creature executes a successful AniMelee attack, use the damage listed in the Creatures Table, and modify as normal for the creature's MoS, but not its STR. If a creature's description mentions poison, refer to the Drug and Poison rules in the *Equipment* chapter (pp. 314-321) for more information.

Derrick's character, Marcus, is attempting to hunt down a nolan someone brought to his planet to cause trouble. He knows the creature is smart and dangerous, but believes he can deal with it given the firepower advantage provided by his Imperator AX-22 assault rifle.

Unfortunately for Marcus, the nolan is lying in ambush. Derrick fails Marcus' Perception check and so the character walks right up to the nolan, unawares. The creature attacks without giving Marcus an opportunity to react, instantly winning the first round of initiative and gaining a modifier for surprise.

Steve, the gamemaster, rolls for the nolan's attack. The creature's TN is 5, and it has an AniMelee Skill of 4 (+4). The range is point-blank (+1), and the nolan is running at its target (–2). Marcus was walking slowly, but covered about 12 meters (enough for a –1 modifier), and is also surprised (+2). The total roll modifier is therefore +4 (+4 +1 –2 –1 +2 = +4). Steve rolls an 8 for the nolan, for a total result of 12 (8 + 4 = 12), and thus has scored a MoS of 7 (12 – 5 = 7).

Though he is surprised, Marcus is in melee, and so gets a chance to defend himself. Marcus' Martial Arts Skill is +3 with a TN of 6. His target is at point-blank range (+1), and though the Large-sized (+1) nolan ran, its movement—a mere 2 meters—was not enough for a modifier (+0). Marcus was walking (–1), and is surprised (–6). Derrick rolls an 8 for Marcus, and applies a –2 modifier to the result (+3 for skill, +1 for point-blank, +1 for size, +0 for target movement, –1 for Derrick's movement, and –6 for Derrick's surprise). This gives him a final result of 6, yielding a MoS of 0.

With its MoS of 7 overpowering Marcus' MoS of 0, the nolan wins the melee. Seven points, divided by 4, results in 2 additional damage points (7 ÷ 4 = 1.75, rounded up to 2). While the nolan's STR of 11 would normally provide an additional 3 damage-point bonus for a human, the nolan is a creature, and this effect has already been factored into its 2M/4 damage potential. The Nolan therefore inflicts a total of 4 + 2 = 6 damage points on Marcus.

Derrick and Steve are using hit location rules, so Steve rolls for a hit location and gets a 5. The nolan has caught Marcus on the left arm, which multiplies the damage effects by 0.5, reducing the 6-point hit to 3. Marcus' ablative/flak armor fails to reduce the damage further (its BAR of 2 versus melee damage is ineffective against the nolan's 2M AP value). Marcus' BOD is 6, and this is his first injury, which equates to 25 percent of his total damage capacity of 12 (3 ÷ 12 = 0.25). That's enough for a –1 injury modifier. Because he has sustained standard damage, Derrick must now make a WIL Attribute Check to see if Marcus remains conscious. He rolls a 10, adding +6 for his WIL score, +6 for his BOD score, and –2 (double his injury modifier). The final result of 22 easily exceeds the TN of 14 he needed to stay conscious, though the fact that Marcus took damage means he is stunned and also suffers 1 point of Fatigue damage.

Unfortunately for Marcus, the nolan's bite also means that the creature injected him with its venom. The poison is lethal and continuous, meaning Marcus will take additional damage over time until the venom is used up, Marcus dies or until he is treated with an antidote. The nolan's poison has a Damage Value of 3 (AP/BD: 0S/3C), with a Duration of 60 minutes, and an Expiration Value of 5, meaning the venom will inflict 3 points of standard damage once every 60 minutes up to 5 times, unless Derrick can get treatment in that time span.

As the venom inflicts continuous damage, the first 3 damage points take effect during the End Phase of the turn. This raises Marcus' damage to 6 points total, or 50 percent of his overall capacity, and decreases his injury modifier to –2. (It also adds another Fatigue damage point to his condition monitor, but this has no immediate effect, as his Fatigue level remains below his WIL.) Because the venom damage is standard, Derrick must now roll for consciousness again. This time, he rolls a 9. After applying +6 for Marcus' WIL, +6 for his BOD and –4 (double his injury modifier), he gets a final result of 17—still above the TN of 14 needed to stay on his feet. Marcus remains alive and conscious, but is badly hurt by the nolan's bite and venom.

Steve now has Derrick and the nolan roll for initiative. Derrick gets a 5, but the nolan rolls 4, so Marcus acts first. He uses his first Simple Action to shake off his Stun damage and his second Simple Action to open fire with a 6-round burst at the nolan.

The range is still point-blank (+1) and the nolan is a Large creature (+1). Marcus has a BOD of 6, meaning that his 6 points of damage give him a –2 injury modifier. In Burst mode, his Imperator generates a –1 Recoil modifier (but a +2 chance to misfire at 6 shots fired; 6 ÷ 3 = 2), while his Small Arms Skill is +4 for a final Skill modifier of +3. His base TN is 6. He rolls and gets a 10, modified by +3 to a result of 13. As his MoS exceeds the number of shots fired in his burst, this means Derrick can add 6 points to the weapon's standard damage of 4, delivering a grand total of 10 damage points to the nolan. The Imperator's AP of 4B easily defeats the nolan's BAR of 2B, bringing the nolan down 10 points from its total damage capacity of 18. Having taken more than 50 percent of its maximum damage capacity, the nolan is badly wounded but not dead, with an injury modifier of –3.

Steve checks the nolan's consciousness next. Like a human, the nolan must make a WIL Attribute Check against TN 14, applying its WIL Attribute (+7), its BOD (+9) and double its injury modifier (–6), for a final modifier of +10. Steve rolls a 4, meaning the powerful creature is barely able to shrug off an amount of damage that would have easily dropped most humans.

The nolan doesn't stick around, however. Badly injured and lacking the pack that normally makes its species so brave against prey, the nolan bolts off, breaking line of sight.

Marcus is left alone, injured and possibly dying despite his excellent armor, and unable to defeat the demonic-looking creature despite his weapon's firepower.

CREATURE COMPENDIUM: TERRESTRIALS

The following sample creatures represent fauna typical of many worlds throughout the Inner Sphere and Clan space. Starting with terrestrial species to provide a solid point of comparison, this compendium also includes more exotic creatures found on other worlds humankind has settled.

Camel

Particularly common on worlds and climates with limited access to water, camels have proven a common export from Terra. Though ideal for dry worlds, camels can also be found on "wet" worlds where potable water is rare or somehow difficult to harvest. Only the camel's stubborn and relatively surly demeanor has prevented this beast from gaining more widespread acceptance in environments that don't call for its unique adaptations.

Cat

A small scavenger species, known for its disarming appearance and air of dignity (or, some say, arrogance), the cat is a popular domestic pet also valued for its ability to hunt and kill household pests such as local rodents. Terrestrial cats have adapted well to most of the environments where humankind thrives, including space stations and JumpShips, and many worlds have a native analog to the cat.

Dog

Another popular domestic pet since humanity's early days, favored for their loyalty and adaptability, dogs have been bred for a range of functions from humble companions and light pack animals to household guards and guides for the disabled. Like cats, dogs have adapted well to the hundreds of worlds man now calls home, and many worlds have a native equivalent to these noble creatures.

Donkey

Prized for its resilience, the donkey has become common among the stars, accompanying humankind to worlds or environments where other pack animals falter, but where the fairly compact donkey can thrive. It is also popular as a lower-cost alternative to more capable beasts of burden.

Elephant

The largest terrestrial land animal still in existence, the elephant has been frequently exported to other worlds. Humankind has used the highly intelligent elephant as a mount and beast of burden for centuries. Valued for those capabilities, the elephant has proven extremely successful on many other planets, thriving in the wild on worlds that do not contain predators capable of threatening it. The elephant population is estimated in the low billions across the Inner Sphere; on some worlds, wild elephants have even become a local hazard, leading to a resurgence of the infamous ivory trade that nearly exterminated the species a millennium ago. Modern-day elephant poachers have taken to tranquilizing the animals and removing their tusks more humanely before selling the beast to local "ivory farmers" for additional profit.

Golden Eagle

The golden eagle is one of the few terrestrial species to remain confined to Terra since humankind expanded into space. A large and powerful bird of prey, difficulties in training the beast rendered it unpopular for offworld export. Today, the golden eagle remains common in Terran skies, and is often measured against the many exotic avian species on other worlds that humanity has since encountered.

Grizzly Bear

The grizzly bear has not been an endangered species since the late twenty-first century, but it continues to be fairly rare. With little demand for such solitary predators offworld, this animal has rarely been seen beyond Terra, but numerous alien analogs exist among those planets with well-developed ecosystems. Among the most famous examples is the Kyotan armor-bear, a creature uncannily similar to the terrestrial grizzly, but that grows a thick, armored hide to protect against fellow predators.

Horse

Terrestrial equines have served humanity as prized mounts since prehistoric times. Large, strong and swift, horses can carry a rider or two—plus cargo—over almost any terrain, even the exotic ones found on distant worlds. Though a

plethora of exotic pack animals have been found among the stars since humanity became interstellar (such as the large feline tabirath, the six-legged lizard-like Odessan raxx and the genetically modified Coventry kangaroo), the terrestrial horse maintains its historical niche as a favored mount, pack animal and work beast on many worlds.

Leopard

Adaptive and quick, the leopard (one of Terra's few remaining "great cat" species) is a relatively successful—and rather opportunistic—predator. Approaching extinction at the dawn of the interstellar age, its striking fur gave this species an ironic new lease on life when an eccentric billionaire named Eliot Haldar exported a breeding colony's worth of the creatures to Sadachbia to create a continent-sized "fur farm." While it took several decades to raise enough leopards for industrial purposes, the animal's population on Sadachbia was so successful that the species was re-introduced on Terra a few years after Haldar's death.

Predators similar to the leopard are common among worlds that have developed ecosystems, with examples like the ki-rian of New Kyoto or the nova cat in Clan space.

Lion

One of Terra's quintessential "apex predators," lions—another terrestrial "great cat"—are known for their social behaviors as well as their hunting prowess. On the verge of extinction since the twentieth century, the lion continues to be a rare sight in the wild, despite numerous attempts at introducing it in compatible extraterrestrial habitats. Prior to the Jihad, House Liao had begun a reinvigoration project on Sian as a component of its *Xin Sheng* efforts (the lion has great symbolic value to the Chinese culture *Xin Sheng* enforces), but insufficient time has elapsed to judge its success or failure.

Orca

Also known as the killer whale, the highly intelligent orca is a skilled marine predator that is also highly social. Orcas have been exported a few times beyond Terra, but with mixed success. Trained orcas have even been used as a mount for special SCUBA infantry on a few worlds over the centuries, though the more common combination of orcas and SCUBA troops has been as an infiltration team, slipping into hostile territories undetected even when sonar nets are present.

Peregrine Falcon

Small but extremely swift, the peregrine falcon is known as the fastest terrestrial animal. Intelligent and trainable, this creature has been a favored export as a "keystone predator" targeting flying pests, particularly around airports, spaceports and even a few royal palaces. The art of taming and training falcons is still widely practiced, with Duchess Therese Marik of Tamarind among its most famous practitioners.

Rat

One of the animals that has followed humankind despite their best efforts to prevent it, the rat has established its presence on many human-inhabited worlds and spaceborne habitats. Most commonly seen as a pest and disease vector, the rat is sometimes also a pet—prized by some for the very same qualities that make it such an efficient pest—or the focus of laboratory experiments. Surprisingly, pet rats are often very personable and loyal, bonding well with their owners.

Rattlesnake

A pit viper common on the American continents, the rattlesnake is one of the best-known snake species on Terra, easily identifiable by the special scales at the tip of its tail, which function as a rattle to warn off intruders. Their potent venom makes them particularly dangerous to larger animals, including humans.

Rattlesnake Venom: The rattlesnake's venom has an Injected vector and the following damage statistics: AP/BD: 0S/1C; Duration: 30 minutes; Expiration: 6.

Rhinoceros

On Terra, the rhinoceros—a native of the African continent—was a large, thick-skinned herbivorous mammal with no natural predators, save humans. Hunted to near extinction—primarily for his signature horn—the rhino has not been widely re-introduced elsewhere in the Inner Sphere, but survives to this day only through human conservation efforts. Still, numerous worlds have large land animals that share the rhinoceros' characteristics, with perhaps the most extreme example being the supermassive hipposaurs on the Canopian world of Vixen.

Wolf

Highly intelligent pack predators, wolves often become the apex predator of their preferred environments. The wild cousins of modern domestic dogs, wolves have been introduced to many worlds throughout the Inner Sphere and even Clan space, often to help control native species. Though generally successful, this practice has also recreated the ancient conflict between man and wolf over local livestock populations.

White Shark

Highly perceptive, white sharks are among the largest and most lethal of all known sea predators on Terra. Though some deep marine species are larger (such as the black megalodon and ravine squid), the "great white" is best known as the apex predator of the upper ocean depths, where even humans are prey.

CREATURE COMPENDIUM: EXTRATERRESTRIALS

The following are just a few examples of the extraterrestrial species in the *BattleTech* universe.

Alcor Bush Ape

Common in the equatorial jungles of Galvinia, Alcor's primary continent, the Alcor bush ape is known for its intelligence. Large and capable of tool use (but not tool crafting), these alien primates are seen as tremendous and generally dangerous pests and troublemakers by locals. Many of these creatures seem to enjoy causing mischief, vandalizing nearby settlements without a clear imperative to extract food or defend territory during such bouts. Confrontations with bush apes can be violent—sometimes even deadly—especially when encroaching on their territory. Alcorans have not yet found an adequate means of deterring or controlling bush ape populations short of killing them en masse, and migrating colonies inhabiting the planet's northern plains and rainforests have put almost the entire human population of Alcor within reach of these destructive quasi-simians.

Branth

Resembling the mythical flying dragon of human lore, the branth has appealed to the imagination since its discovery on the Marik world of Lopez. While they spit a venomous acid instead of fire, the branth is a highly dangerous predator. Intelligent and trainable, branths have been used as mounts on Lopez, but efforts to export the species have met with limited success due to the creature's remarkably weak immune system, which struggles against any foreign infection or parasite. Scientists continue to research the selective properties of the branth's immune system, in the hopes of one day introducing the species to more worlds.

Poison Spray: The branth can deliver a special ranged attack using its AniMelee Skill with a range of 5/8/10/12 (in meters); this poisoned spray has a Contact vector and the following damage stats: AP/BD: 2B/2CS; Duration: 5 seconds; Expiration: 2.

Coventry Kangaroo

Originally bred as a pack animal, the Coventry 'roo (often nicknamed "boomer" as a reference to the Australian term for male kangaroos) resembles a normal Terran red kangaroo, and is technically not an extraterrestrial species, but more of a genetically modified variation on Terran stock. While it proved itself unsuitable as a cargo animal, the Coventry kangaroo later turned out to be a capable mount, especially favored in Coventry's sparsely populated agricultural regions. To enhance their utility as a war-mount for local mounted infantry, several sub-breeds of this creature have been artificially deafened, so they do not startle as easily. Domestic boomers, wild packs and husbanded packs, however, usually have normal hearing.

Godan

A vicious, dog-sized, lizard-like pack predator native to the Davion world of Kittery, the jungle-dwelling godan is one of the more aggressive extraterrestrial species humanity has encountered. Strictly diurnal, and unafraid to attack even larger animals and humans, the godan is the reason travel through the Kittery jungles is strictly prohibited during daylight. Godans are matriarchal and tend to use ambush tactics and packs of up to twenty creatures to take down larger prey, but they are also known for tearing apart male pack-mates when hungry or wounded.

Hipposaur

The size of the extinct Terran apatosaur, the six-legged hipposaur lives off algae and vegetation from the Daana River on the Periphery world of Vixen. It is relatively docile and easy to domesticate, resulting in its use as a mount and pack animal. Though raids on Vixen have been quite rare, trained hipposaurs have been used as war animals, with each one large enough to carry squads of armed troops, armor and even support-grade weapon mounts on its massive back. So massive that they can even sustain damage from most vehicle-grade weapons, one favored tactic of "hipposaur infantry" is to ram heavy targets such as vehicles and 'Mechs with enough force to shatter armor plate or even cause the unit to topple.

Nolan

A highly intelligent and deadly pack predator, the nolan has proven itself a significant threat to colonists on the Steiner world of Engadine—so much so that the world hosts a massive, annual hunting expedition called the Rooting to keep the species in check. There are increasing concerns that this practice may lead to the

hipposaur

nolan's extinction—but given the creature's massive demon-like physique, the sheer number of human casualties it has caused and its fast reproductive rate, the Rooting is not likely to end any time soon.

Nolan Venom: A successful bite attack by a nolan that causes damage can inject the target with the nolan's deadly venom. This venom has an Injected vector and the following damage statistics: AP/BD: 0S/3C; Duration: 60 minutes; Expiration: 5.

Odessan Raxx

A massive six-legged, lizard-like beast of burden, the Odessan raxx is favored in hot, dry environments, and has been a popular export from the Steiner world of Odessa for centuries. It competes with the camel, with some favoring the raxx for its submissive and less surly demeanor. Raxx are also used in a military capacity, where their horns and thick hide compliment their impressive size. Domestic raxx have their horns removed on most worlds (reducing the AP of their attacks by 1).

Ovan Slyack

The massive slyack—native to the Capellan world of Ovan—reminds many of an oversized frog. It is a predator, but can go several months without hunting courtesy of its back skin, which functions as a habitat for the chlorophylic bacteria symbiotically linked with it. Slyack normally seem dormant during the day, when they spend most of their time soaking in the meager rays of Ovan's dim red dwarf sun, but become much more active after sunset. Though not technically nocturnal (as the species can put one half of its brain to "sleep" at any given time), the slyack is extremely territorial, and many humans have been caught unaware by a sudden attack from an apparently sleeping slyack. Slyack inflict damage by jumping on top of their intended target and impaling it with their long and extremely hard nose-horn.

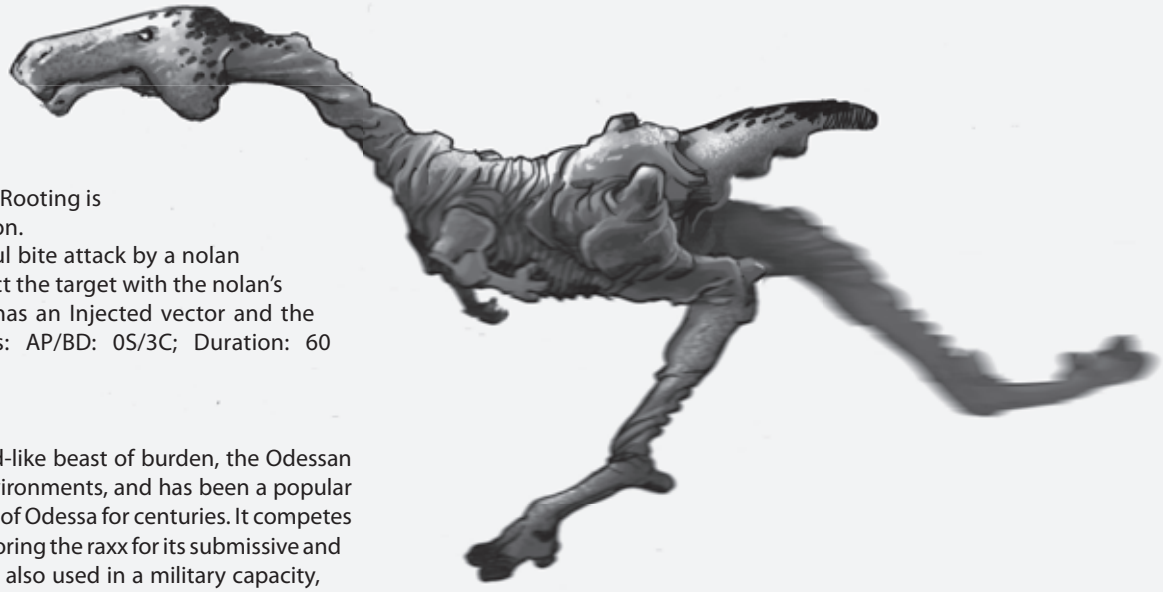
Steel Viper

One of the most dangerous creatures in Clan space, the Arcadian steel viper is a large and powerful snake-like creature capable of constricting as well as poisoning its prey. It can move as swiftly in the water as it can on land.

Steel Viper Venom: The steel viper prefers to wrap itself around its prey before delivering a bite with its paralytic venom. If a steel viper successfully makes a grappling attack in one turn, in its subsequent turn, on its next successful AniMelee attack, it will bite the character for normal damage. Steel viper venom has an Injected vector and the following damage statistics: AP/BD: 0S/5DC; Duration: 1 minute; Expiration: 7.

Syramon Thunderbird

Named after its discoverer, the Syramon thunderbird is an extremely deadly flightless avian native to the Marik world of Oriente. Particularly dangerous in packs, it became a popular guard-animal after the discovery that it could be tamed, and it has been exported a few times by security firms intent on providing "exotic" threats that most criminals and opponents would not have previously encountered.



tariq

Tabiranth

From the lost world of Jardine (in Marik space), the tabiranth is a large, fairly docile felinoid creature favored among wealthy elites and early interstellar nobility as a riding and hunting mount. With cat-like agility and grace, equivalent speed and superior senses, the tabiranth gave traditional equines a run for their money, while its adaptability and large birth litters made it possible for several worlds beyond Jardine to stock an abundance of these animals for export. This has since proven fortuitous, as recent rumors indicate the tabiranth's homeworld was exterminated by unknown forces early in the Jihad.

Tariq

Extremely swift and durable, the bipedal, lizard-like tariq became famed for its regular use as a riding and battle mount by the planetary militia on Brasha, in the Outworlds Alliance. Well adapted to desert climates, this tamable predator has emerged as a potential competitor for the terrestrial camel, as Clan Snow Raven's merchant caste is examining the economic feasibility of exporting the animal for sale across the Inner Sphere.

"T-Rex II" (Megalosaurus Tyrranus)

Neither the largest nor the most dangerous predator on its homeworld, the megalosaurus tyrannus rex paradiseus is a native of Hunter's Paradise, a Periphery settlement abandoned by the Star league centuries ago. The so-called "T-Rex II" takes its name from its striking resemblance to the terrestrial tyrannosaurus rex, which went extinct 65 million years ago. Today, this alien analog that favors the light woods and sub-tropics of Hunter's Paradise is seen as a trophy animal by the affluent would-be hunters that still visit the world—even though the predatory lizard has killed almost as many humans as have lived to claim such a prize.

Simmons's excellent reflexes and weapon skill are just a hair too slow to prevent this black reaper from landing a mortal wound in the jungles of Yance I.

CREATURES TABLE

The Creatures Table offers a sampling of common and exotic fauna described above. Remember that these animals reflect only a small number of creatures one might encounter in the *BattleTech* universe during an adventure in *A Time of War*. If desired, the gamemaster may modify any of these creature statistics to create a unique species with which to challenge the players.

These simplified statistics include the creature's common name, its average weight (in kilograms), its base attributes (STR/BOD/DEX/RFL/INT/WIL/EDG), its Size Modifier (as used in combat; see the Combat Modifiers Table on p. 178), its BAR (rated as personal armor: Melee/Ballistic/Energy/Explosive) and the AP/BD values of the creature's standard attack. Also listed are the creature's movement rates, which appear as Walk/Run/Sprint rates for ground-based animals unless otherwise noted. Finally, the last column of this table provides the average Skill level each creature possesses when performing AniMelee (A), Perception (P) or Tracking (T) Skill Checks, respectively.

DISEASES

"That's a rather nasty rash you've got there…"

Mandatory genetic vaccines given to the earliest extra-solar colonists in the twenty-first and twenty-second centuries rendered humanity considerably more resistant to disease by the thirty-first century. Armed with a boosted natural immune system, the humans who settled far-flung worlds were less susceptible to disease, prepared by a massive program fueled by paranoid fears of alien "superbugs." Despite these efforts, however, people *do* still get sick.

In minor cases (which happen most of the time), infections and illnesses are often treated and resolved before their symptoms become significant. Where a flu or cold may have resulted in a person taking a few days off to recover in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, by the thirty-first, most flu bugs pass with little or no notice beyond a day of low energy. When more serious symptoms *do* emerge, the most likely culprit is exposure to some alien disease that has adapted to humankind's stronger, better immunities—a virus, bacteria or parasite that likely would have killed thousands a millennium ago.

Most role-playing campaigns in *A Time of War* can function perfectly well without factoring in a random encounter with diseases. The rules presented here offer interested players and gamemasters a chance to explore this unconventional aspect of game play that can serve as everything from a plot hook or player-character inconvenience to a major dilemma the characters must overcome (or at least survive).

MEDICAL MAINTENANCE

For those who travel, it is standard operating procedure to be inoculated against a world's specific diseases—to the extent that they've been identified—to prevent nasty reactions (such as death). For this reason, military commands, space merchants, interstellar cruise lines and spaceports maintain a standing medical staff whose sole function is to provide the necessary inoculants for the traveler's expected destination. People who do not travel often accomplish the same with semi-annual doctor's visits, which help keep them healthy in the face of local infections and ailments.

Preventative Inoculations

Preventative inoculations for travelers can be costly; unless his military command, government agency or corporate perks are meeting the character's medical needs, he can expect to pay roughly 50 C-bills per battery of inoculants (though actual costs can vary wildly). A full inoculation session can take up

CREATURES TABLE

	Mass (kg)	Attributes (S/B/D/R/I/W/E)	Size (Mod)	BAR (M/B/E/X)	Damage (AP/BD)	Move (W/R/S)	Skills (A/P/T)	Notes
Terrestrials								
Camel	650	25 / 23 / 1 / 4 / 4 / 5 / 2	+1	0 / 0 / 0 / 0	1M / 1	8 / 20 / 40	–1 / +5 / –1	B
Cat	9	2 / 2 / 2 / 8 / 6 / 4 / 7	–3	1 / 0 / 0 / 0	1M / 1	4 / 9 / 30	+4 / +5 / +1	A
Dog	25	3 / 43 / 2 / 6 / 5 / 3 / 3	–1	1 / 0 / 0 / 0	1M / 1	8 / 20 / 70	+4 / +5 / +5	C
Donkey	250	14 / 13 / 1 / 4 / 4 / 4 / 2	+1	1 / 0 / 0 / 0	1M / 1	8 / 20 / 40	–1 / +4 / –1	B
Elephant	6,000	104 / 110 / 3 / 5 / 7 / 4 / 4	+1	0 / 0 / 0 / 0	1M / 4	6 / 25 / 55	–1 / +5 / –1	B, D
Golden Eagle	4.5	3 / 1 / 2 / 5 / 2 / 7 / 3	–2	0 / 0 / 0 / 0	1M / 1	0.5 / – / 280	+3 / +6 / +3	E
Grizzly Bear	325	18 / 20 / 3 / 5 / 6 / 7 / 2	+1	1 / 0 / 0 / 0	1M / 5	4 / 12 / 35	+3 / +3 / +2	
Horse	500	21 / 20 / 1 / 4 / 4 / 3 / 2	+1	1 / 0 / 0 / 0	1M / 1	20 / 40 / 85	–1 / +4 / –1	B
Leopard	60	6 / 5 / 2 / 7 / 5 / 5 / 2	0	1 / 0 / 0 / 0	1M / 3	8 / 20 / 80	+5 / +5 / +2	
Lion	200	12 / 12 / 2 / 5 / 5 / 5 / 2	+1	1 / 0 / 0 / 0	1M / 4	8 / 20 / 80	+6 / +5 / +3	
Orca	7,200	116 / 85 / 2 / 5 / 6 / 5 / 2	+2	1 / 0 / 0 / 0	1M / 3	40 / 90	+2 / +9 / +0	B, F
Peregrine	0.9	1 / 1 / 1 / 3 / 2 / 5 / 3	–2	0 / 0 / 0 / 0	1M / 1	0.5 / – / 445	+3 / +6 / +2	E
Rat	0.4	1 / 1 / 3 / 7 / 5 / 4 / 2	–4	0 / 0 / 0 / 0	1M / 0	4 / 9 / 18	+1 / +4 / +0	
Rattlesnake	8	2 / 2 / 1 / 6 / 3 / 5 / 1	–2	0 / 0 / 0 / 0	1M / 1	4 / 7 / –	+4 / +4 / +1	G
Rhino	2,000	52 / 50 / 1 / 3 / 4 / 7 / 2	+1	2 / 0 / 0 / 1	1M / 5	6 / 25 / 62	+3 / +1 / –1	B
Wolf	60	4 / 5 / 2 / 6 / 6 / 5 / 2	–1	1 / 0 / 0 / 0	1M / 2	8 / 18 / 62	+5 / +5 / +5	
White Shark	2,000	74 / 60 / 1 / 6 / 3 / 6 / 1	+2	1 / 0 / 0 / 0	2M / 8	50 / 105	+3 / +8 / +4	F
Extraterrestrials								
Alcor Bush Ape	220	13 / 12 / 7 / 6 / 6 / 3 / 3	+1	2 / 0 / 0 / 0	1M / 3	12 / 24 / 35	+5 / +2 / +1	
Branth	720	27 / 18 / 2 / 7 / 6 / 2 / 4	+1	3 / 2 / 1 / 2	1M / 7	5 / 15 / 120	+2 / +5 / –1	B, E, G
Coventry Kangaroo	110	9 / 16 / 3 / 7 / 4 / 3 / 2	+1	1 / 0 / 0 / 0	1M / 2	15 / 30 / 60	+1 / +4 / +1	B
Godan	35	4 / 4 / 2 / 5 / 3 / 6 / 1	–1	0 / 0 / 0 / 0	2M / 1	6 / 15 / 45	+3 / +4 / +1	
Hipposaur	35,500	236 / 305 / 4 / 6 / 5 / 3 / 2	+4	2 / 2 / 1 / 1	3M / 10	15 / 35	+3 / +3 / –1	B, F, D
Nolan	185	11 / 9 / 3 / 7 / 7 / 7 / 1	+1	3 / 2 / 0 / 2	2M / 4	10 / 18 / 52	+4 / +2 / +5	
Odessan Raxx	2,400	58 / 60 / 1 / 3 / 5 / 3 / 2	+1	2 / 1 / 0 / 1	1M / 5	6 / 18 / 48	–1 / +3 / –1	B, D
Ovan Slyack	480	16 / 18 / 2 / 4 / 3 / 2 / 2	+1	3 / 1 / 1 / 2	2M / 6	6 / 12 / 80	+2 / +5 / +2	
Steel Viper	200	12 / 10 / 1 / 7 / 3 / 6 / 2	+1	1 / 0 / 0 / 1	1M / 1	4 / 7 / –	+5 / +2 / +2	G
Syramon Thunderbird	180	23 / 15 / 2 / 4 / 3 / 6 / 3	+1	0 / 1 / 0 / 0	1M / 3	10 / 20 / 75	+6 / +3 / +3	C
Tabarinth	250	14 / 13 / 2 / 5 / 5 / 3 / 2	+1	1 / 0 / 0 / 0	1M / 4	20 / 40 / 85	+4 / +6 / –1	B
Tariq	510	15 / 15 / 3 / 6 / 4 / 3 / 3	+1	1 / 1 / 0 / 1	1M / 2	35 / 70 / 100	+3 / +3 / +1	B
"T-Rex II"	7,000	115 / 110 / 1 / 4 / 3 / 5 / 1	+2	1 / 0 / 0 / 0	3M / 10	3 / 13 / 25	+2 / +6 / +2	D

Notes

A – These creatures can be domesticated as pets.
B – These creatures can be domesticated and trained as pack animals or mounts.
C – These creatures can be domesticated and trained as guard animals.
D – This creature can ram; multiply AP by 2, and add 1 to BD for every 5 meters moved.
E – The Sprint Rating represents the creature's maximum Movement Rating in the air
F – The Movement Ratings for this creature indicate its Cruising and Flanking swimming rates.
G – This creature has a special venom or poison attack (see creature description).

RANDOM DISEASE TABLE

RANDOM SYMPTOMS

2D6	Effect
2	Mysterious growth. A large mass begins to grow at a random location (consider using the Hit Location Table on p. 190). This mass increases rapidly in weight (over the course of days) and saps endurance from the victim, affecting his BOD. If located on the limbs, the mass inhibits the victim's motion, affecting DEX. The mass may be filled with infected tissue, cancerous tissue or parasites.
3	Necrosis. Tissue begins dying off at a random location (consider using the Hit Location Table on p. 190). This saps endurance from the victim, affecting his BOD. If growing in an exposed area, it also affects his CHA.
4	Loss of hearing. The victim's hearing deteriorates, possibly to the point of deafness. This affects the victim's RFL and translates into a Poor Hearing Trait.
5	Body weight change. The victim suffers a significant shift in body mass, either suddenly gaining or losing weight. This affects the person's BOD and STR.
6	Hair condition. The victim's hair is dramatically affected, either by causing total baldness or promoting extreme and unusual hair growth. This affects the person's CHA.
7	Flu-like symptoms. The character suffers headache, nausea, fever and general weakness. This affects BOD and STR.
8	Skin condition. The victim's skin takes on a prominent or blotchy shade such as noticeable pallor or literal whiteness, bright red, or more unusual colors such as orange, purple and so on. This affects the person's CHA.
9	Loss of eyesight. The victim's eyesight deteriorates, possibly to the point of blindness. This affects RFL and translates into a Poor Vision Trait.
10	Paralysis or spasms. These may strike a body part or the victim's whole body. This affects the person's DEX and RFL.
11	Heart condition. Something alters the function of the heart, affecting the person's BOD and STR.
12	Asymptomatic. A condition exists, but without any symptoms easily observable to the victim. Some asymptomatic conditions may cause the victim to deteriorate without notice, allowing minor problems to inflict a heavy toll. Asymptomatic conditions often display symptoms eventually. For game purposes, they can be assigned retroactively, so that the underlying condition may have been contracted months or even years previously, and is about to display symptoms.

RANDOM FREQUENCY

1D6	Effect
1	15 days
2	12 days
3	9 days
4	6 days
5	3 days
6	1 day

RANDOM SEVERITY

1D6	Effect
1	Positive Effect. Somehow, the disease affects the person in a way that does them good. The character's affected Attribute improves by 1 (negative Trait effects become the positive opposing Trait, if applicable). At subsequent Frequency intervals, decrease the affected Attributes/Traits by 2 points.
2	Neutral Effect. The symptoms occur, but not to a degree that affects the person's Attribute.
3	Slight Effect. The symptoms decrease the affected Attributes/Traits by 1 point.
4	Moderate Effect. The symptoms decrease the affected Attributes/Traits by 2 points.
5	Severe Effect. The symptoms decrease the affected Attributes/Traits by 3 points.
6	Variable Severity Effect. Roll 1D6 again and apply the result. Re-roll on this table once per Frequency interval (re-rolling any result of 1 or 6) and apply the new Severity effects, rather than applying the same Severity result each Frequency interval.

to 24 hours to prepare, administer and complete, as it usually requires supplies that include a "seed organism" or prepared samples of the destination's major viral and bacterial threats—understandably handled with the greatest of care and kept fresh for processing to make anti-virals and such. Most of these are available through the medical trades, even across hostile borders, as many governments maintain a healthy fear of interplanetary pandemics.

Administering a battery of inoculants simply requires an Advanced Medical Kit and a successful MedTech Skill Check by an attending physician. A failed Skill Check primarily means the inoculants did not take hold and must be repeated, but a fumble can mean the subject suffered an extreme allergic reaction to the pharmaceutical cocktail and cannot be re-treated without waiting a month to "flush" his system. (If a second fumble occurs while trying to inoculate a character for the same target world, the subject character gains a –1 TP Handicap Trait that applies to that world only—allowing any Fit Traits to remain in effect except on that world. This reflects a particular allergic sensitivity to the ecosphere of that planet, and immunity to its inoculants.)

Practical Limits

Even a successful inoculation battery is never foolproof. Some diseases, after all, defy inoculation or have yet to receive a proper vaccine for the particular strains. Even a properly vaccinated subject can contract a disease his inoculants should have prepared him for—or something entirely new could get through the best of his preventative care. The human immune system may be stronger than ever, but the universe has trillions of ways to counter it.

RANDOM DISEASE EFFECTS

A character may contract a disease because inoculation failed, because he wasn't inoculated before, because inoculation is impossible, because the decease has never been encountered until now, or simply because the gamemaster feels like adding a new hitch to the campaign. In such an event, the gamemaster is free to inflict any number of symptoms he deems appropriate, for as long as desired, and with potentially fatal consequences if necessary. However, it is generally bad form to inflict a deadly threat on a player character that the players can do nothing about, so some thought is required before inflicting a fatal disease.

Random Disease Tables

The Random Disease Tables presented here are intended as a source of inspiration for gamemasters who decide to make disease a part of their adventures. Though presented as random tables, symptoms and ailments may be chosen instead if the gamemaster wants a particular and predictable effect.

The Random Disease Tables are used to quickly identify the nature, effect rate and severity of any strange illnesses that might befall the character. To use them, the gamemaster first rolls 2D6 on the Random Symptoms Table, then rolls 1D6 on the Frequency Table to determine how often the symptoms will affect the victim's Attributes (or Traits, where applicable). Finally, a 1D6 roll on the Severity Table reveals how badly the Attributes or Traits are affected at the end of each prescribed Frequency interval. Any attendant statistics—such as Link Attribute modifiers, movement and damage capacities—must be modified in accordance with the character's modified Attribute scores or Traits.

Even the bed restraints can barely contain Doctor Luc Rouquette's patient's mad thrashing in the throes of a fever-induced delirium.

While under the influence of an illness, the character may be treated or even cured using the Illness Recovery rules below. If a Character's Attribute score drops to or below 0, consult the Zero Attributes Effect Table (p. 36). Presuming the character is still alive, the disease may still be stopped using the Illness Recovery rules, but the appropriate Zero Attribute Effect cannot be reversed without intense therapy or treatment (requiring the purchase of Attributes using XPs).

> *Fred is gamemastering a campaign and wants to inflict a disease on one of his players, thereby starting a "race for the cure" plot line. He decides the disease has two symptoms, and so rolls 2D6 twice on the Random Symptoms Table. He gets an 8 and a 2. He decides that the character, Carla, will develop a green hue to her skin as well as a mysterious growth on her right arm.*
>
> *Next, he rolls 1D6 on the Frequency Table and gets a 4, meaning that Carla's BOD, DEX and CHA will be affected every 6 days. He then rolls 1D6 on the Severity Table and gets a 5, meaning those Attributes will decrease by 3 points every 6 days.*
>
> *Fred likes the 6-day frequency, but doesn't like how far the Attributes will drop, so he exercises the gamemaster's prerogative and decides to let them drop at a rate of 2 points every 6 days instead.*

Illness Recovery

A person's immune system will frequently fight off an alien disease before it can kill him, but there are no guarantees. To determine whether he has successfully fought off the disease, the afflicted character must make a BOD Attribute Check once per day, starting with the first day that symptoms manifest. This roll

is modified by –4 times the disease's latest Severity roll, but receives an additional +1 every day thereafter. For example, a character who contracts a disease with a Severity roll of 3 would experience a –12 modifier the first day the illness is symptomatic (–4 x Severity roll of 3 = –12), but on the following day, his roll would have a –11 illness modifier, eventually falling to +0 at 12 days after the initial illness presented itself.

To help the immune system fight back, immunity-boosting medicine, antibiotics and (where possible) established cures can halt a disease in its tracks. Immunity boosters are found in any Advanced Med Kit and provide a +2 modifier to the BOD Attribute Check. Antibiotics, available in Field Surgery Kits, provide a +4 bonus. Full cures (if they exist) are most often found in hospitals or well-stocked M.A.S.H. (Mobile Army Surgical Hospital) units, where they provide a +8 modifier.

Properly administering a medication requires a successful Medtech Skill Check, with a failed check reflecting an under-dose or overdose of the treatment that adds the Medtech roll's MoF to the next BOD Attribute Check.

Characters with any Clan Trueborn Phenotype have superior immune systems to normal humans, and thus receive a further +2 bonus when making illness recovery BOD Checks.

Once the recovery BOD Attribute Check is successful, the victim begins healing at the same rate as the Frequency and Severity of the disease. For example, if the disease reduced an affected Attribute by 2 every 9 days, the victim recovers that afflicted Attribute by 2 points every 9 days (or, for a more progressive rate, 1 point every 4.5 days). This recovery rate does not apply if the affected Attribute is reduced to or below 0 (see above).

Use with Caution

Once again, it is generally not fun to have a character die from a random disease, so gamemasters should use these rules sparingly—and even then, it's best to ensure that a cure exists for the malady in question (even if it is not immediately apparent to the player characters). Still, the race to find a cure may be a worthwhile adventure.

> *Carla tries to recover from her disease. Her BOD was 5, but her mysterious growth has dropped that to 3. On the first day, she needs to roll against a TN of 14 with a +3 modifier for her BOD and a –16 modifier for the disease's Severity roll (–4 x 4 = –16). As it is the start of her recovery, her controlling player realizes that she cannot hit the TN with anything short of a Stunning Success, as the highest modified result she can get at this point is –1 (roll result of 12 + 3 – 16 = –1). At this rate, it will be 15 days before she might fight off the infection on a 2D6 roll of 12—if it weren't for the fact that her BOD is dropping by 2 points every 6 days and will therefore kill her by day 12…*
>
> *Fortunately for Carla, immune system boosters and antibiotics are made available, affording her a total +6 modifier. It is still impossible to recover on Day 1, so Carla (and her doctors) must wait for a more ideal time to try to cure her. On Day 2, the disease applies a –15 modifier against her BOD of +3—still not enough to try. By Day 6, when the infection will rob Carla of another 2 points of BOD, the Severity modifier has been reduced to –6. Combined with Carla's BOD of 1 by this time, she still faces impossible odds (a roll of 12 + 1 – 6 + 6 for treatments = 13, versus a TN of 14).*
>
> *By Day 10, the Severity modifier has fallen to –2, while Carla's BOD remains 1 and the treatments still provide a +6 cumulative modifier. Taken together, Carla's player finds that a roll of 9 or higher will now allow her to fight her infection (roll result of 9 – 2 + 1 + 6 = 14). The odds are lower than she'd like, but given that she will suffer another 2 points of BOD loss and die in a mere two days, she's getting desperate. Carla's player decides to cash in all of her character's 3 EDG points before the roll to nudge the odds up. This EDG burn adds another +6 to the roll, turning the needed 9 into a 3 minimum to fight off her infection. Even though it will reduce Carla's EDG to 0, she goes for it, rolling a 6.*
>
> *While she would have been better off with a cure available, Carla makes her recovery roll on Day 10, and her body fights off the illness. At this point, however, she has lost 4 BOD, 4 DEX and 4 CHA points. It will take 12 days for those points to recover (at 2 points per Attribute).*
>
> *Then Carla's player realizes she has a bigger problem. Unfortunately, Carla's original CHA score was 4, meaning she suffered the Zero Attribute Effect for CHA on Day 6 (in addition to the Zero Attribute Effect she earned burning all her EDG to break the illness). She now has crippling depression and is totally out of luck. Her CHA and her EDG Attributes will not recover naturally, but must be bought back using XPs (though her EDG will resume normal recovery rates after its first point is purchased, per the normal EDG rules shown on pp. 42-43). In the meantime, all of Carla's CHA-based Skills function as if untrained, and she suffers from Combat Paralysis.*

THE FIRES OF HELL

STORMING THE OBJECTIVE

JIM RAPKINS

UNKNOWN FACILITY
OUTSKIRTS OF AUSTRALIND, ROCHELLE
11 JULY 3076

Travis winced in annoyance as a bead of sweat rolled down his grime-covered face and pooled near his eye. Blinking it away didn't work, but as irritating as it was, he wasn't about to take his eye off the prize. The rifle scope's display danced as he slowly tracked across the seemingly open ground that his team was about to cross. They were using light amps on their scopes, but the first trickle of light had appeared on the horizon. If they didn't move soon, they'd lose the cover of darkness. *There…*

Travis reached and tapped Busby on the shoulder, not taking his eye from the sight. The bigger man hissed and flinched, but quickly recovered, orientating his big Zeus longarm on the target Travis had just pointed out. Nothing special, two rent-a-cops patrolling the perimeter of what looked like a derelict facility. They were there less to protect against theft than to prevent local kids from trashing the place. Both wore the heavy jerkins the locals were fond of, the high collars stuffed with a chem-sealed hood should they get caught in the open when it started raining. A far cry from the combat ponchos his team wore over their sneaksuits. The jerkins actually kept the moisture out. The sodden patch on his stomach from lying in the greasy mud gave the lie to the manufacturer's claims of "environmental protection". Doc…Grace…had said the meds they'd taken before arrival should protect them from exposure to tainted soil and ground, but being this close to it…and *breathing* it in? No, the sooner they were on their feet and moving, the better.

The two guards reached their destination and wheeled unhurriedly on one foot to go back the way they'd come. Travis contemplated abandoning the mission. Dawn was coming quickly, and he wasn't sure this was the place. Hildebrand had been adamant. It looked like just another abandoned warehouse in a sea of them. They were on the outskirts of the MediQuick Corporation's former headquarters, and when that company had abandoned Rochelle, they'd done an unimpressive job of cleaning up after themselves. Hildebrand and her team were in the vast yards that, in this area at least, contained a myriad of hazmat gear left behind by MediQuick when it scarpered. Hazmat tents—some erected, others not—filled the area, making it seem less like a logistics yard and more like some ghostly gypsy camp. *And yet…*

Something wasn't right about the place. It had been hard to pin down at first, but the signs were there. The scraggly grass strong enough to survive the rains was too green, the gap between the yard and the chain-link fence surrounding the warehouse too uniform. Windows were unbroken, and the guards only patrolled the vicinity around the one building. It wasn't any one thing, but add them all together and something was up.

A short burst of static in his ear heralded Luella's voice. "Captain, do you see them?"

Travis nodded, then remembered she wasn't there with him. He keyed the sub-vox mike strapped to his throat. "Yeah. Wait for them to head back around the corner, and then make your move."

A double burst of static was the only reply. Travis continued tracking the guards as they meandered back along the same route they'd come. The second they rounded the corner of the dilapidated building, Travis heard Hildebrand and her team break cover, crouching lower as they left the safety of the tent farm to cover the open ground before the fence. Ethan and Logan moved quickly, their ponchos discarded, their sneaksuits festooned with webbing and tools. Hildebrand cautiously came up the rear, her blazer rifle pointed in the direction the guards had traveled. Ethan removed his wirecutters from his belt and went to work on the flimsy fence. Travis waited for him to snip a hole big enough for everyone to pass through. And waited…

"Hildebrand, what's the problem?" Travis wasn't sure if the hiss that came back was random static, or his XO biting off what she really wanted to say.

"This isn't a chain-link fence sir." Travis was glad she couldn't see him arch an eyebrow. *Sure looks like a chain-link fence…* "At least, I mean, it's not some corroded pile of wire. The rust is fake. Looks like someone painted it on, even applied a different texture." Travis whistled quietly. Someone was trying really hard to make this look like something it obviously wasn't.

"Can you get through?" Travis got his answer when Hildebrand keyed her external mike, and Ethan's hushed swearing became audible.

"Naoko says no."

Travis grinned in spite of himself. "Okay, double back, we'll find another way in." Trusting Busby to keep an eye out for the absent guards, Travis raised himself from his supine position, back cracking as he crouched half-upright. This was getting interesting. Word of Blake didn't do subtle. On Dieron, they might not have made huge inroads, but you knew where they were. Facilities blazoned with the broadsword normally had quite a few metal guardians stomping around. Appliqué corrosion was not their style. So…whose style was it?

"Crap!"

Travis wheeled around sharply at the sound. "What is it?" he whispered, not bothering to key the throat mike.

"Tripped over." *Logan*. The sudden yelp that came next took them all by surprise.

"Ex! No!"

The warning came too late. A series of dull thuds erupted as the concealed contact plate Hildebrand was standing on came down on a pressure switch. Almost unseen, projectiles sprang from buried launchers, exploding in a cascade of incandescent light, the overpressure knocking out hearing while the light from the projectiles pulsed with ever-increasing brightness. The detached part of Travis' mind immediately said, "flashbangs," but it was the roar of pain from Buzzy that confirmed it.

"*Bliad*!" The big man threw down his rifle, his optic nerve almost overloaded after viewing the spectacle through the light amplifier. Busby was blinking rapidly, trying to clear the afterimage and the liquid welling up in his eye. Travis grabbed his own rifle and examined his team through the scope. Ethan and Logan were both on the ground holding their hands to their ears, and Hildebrand was vomiting on hands and knees as the nausea caused by the light show overtook her.

"Boss!" Busby's shout snapped Travis back to their situation. Alerted by the noise, the two security guards came running around

the corner, weapons drawn and leveled. Both guards carried submachine guns in looped slings, moving in a way that was much too professional as they ate up the distance between themselves and Hildebrand's team.

"Buzz—take 'em down! Now!" Travis didn't wait for a response, slewing his Zeus on target and breathing out as he caressed the trigger. He felt, rather than heard, the ear-shattering blast as the big rifle recoiled against the compensator, the huge bullet ripping through the still morning air to slam into the ten ring of the first guard. The erstwhile enemy collapsed. Before he could line up on the next guard, Travis felt a wave of overpressure as a deafening roar announced Busby's own contribution to the fight. The other target was down, too. Not much survived a hit from the big rifle. Travis tapped Busby on the shoulder and gestured toward the prostrate forms of the entry team.

"Come on!" Travis keyed his mike as he left the dubious safety of his cover, and moved to assist his downed team. "Grace! Get up here! We need you!" He didn't wait for the doctor to respond. Busby had shouldered his big rifle, and had his Intek out and tracking. The low-pitched whine as the weapon charged ended abruptly as a barely audible beep announced it was ready. Leaving Busby to provide security, Travis knelt down and grabbed a handful of sneaksuit, dragging a still-gagging Hildebrand to the fence. Without checking on her, he returned to do the same to Logan as a groggy Ethan dropped the unmoving form of the younger soldier at his feet.

"He'll be okay…just NFDs…no gas." Travis nodded. NFDs—Noise Flash Devices—were a less-than-lethal incapacitation grenade. They really would have been screwed had the projectiles contained immobilizing gas. A small trickle of blood rolled down the side of Ethan's face.

"What about you?"

Ethan surprised him by smiling wryly. "I'll be okay, Cap. Just the ears. Check on the X." As if on cue, Hildebrand moaned, then spat out the remaining bile in her mouth.

"Ugh…I hate those things." She looked pale, but aside from that, unharmed. Satisfied that his team was up and mobile, Travis examined the problem at hand.

"Buzz—any contacts?" Whoever hadn't heard the NFDs would have been deaf not to hear the supersonic crack of the Zeuses going off. Travis was concerned the guards had friends. In the two days they'd observed the facility, they hadn't seen anyone except for the guards, but whatever this place was, that didn't mean that there weren't other folks stalking about.

"Negative, Cap. But we might like to find some proper cover. We're a bit exposed at the moment."

Travis nodded. They needed to get out of the open. And the only cover, without going back to where they'd just come from was the warehouse itself. He grabbed Hildebrand's blazer, ignoring her protestations. Aiming at the not-so flimsy fence, he squeezed the trigger over and over. The disguised ferroweave core wavered, and for a second, Travis though it was going to hold. Finally, the chain links glowed hot and snapped apart, one by one, the laser slicing through the strands of wire. With a smile and a flourish, he handed the weapon back to a contrite Hildebrand, before gesturing to the still-smoldering entrance he'd just created.

"Shall we, folks?"

▲▼▲

It was taking too long. He and Hildebrand had been at this for a while, and even the ComStar-provided override tool they'd been given was struggling. The doorway to the warehouse/facility was set up as a nice defensive location, but Travis had had Busby and Logan set up a makeshift barrier around the corner, simply to give them some warning should things kick off again. Grace had gone over everyone to make sure they were suffering no effects from the flashbangs. A stim shot and some painkillers had Ethan operating at near full capacity, and they didn't have the manpower to sideline him. But Travis wasn't taking any chances, so Ethan and Grace sat and watched as he and Hildebrand failed again to open the door.

"CONTACT!"

Busby's shout was punctuated with the keening wail of the Intek firing, the echo drowned out by the harsh bark of automatic weapons. Travis dropped the code-breaker and grabbed his AX-22 from where it was propped against the wall. Hildebrand did the same with her blazer. Without saying anything, both sprinted around the corner to support Busby and Logan. Travis felt shards pepper his face as stray rounds ate into the warehouse's concrete façade, each strike launching gray dust into the air. The dust obscured his vision, so when it abruptly cleared, he wasn't ready for the sight that greeted him.

Standing upright with braced legs was one of the guards they taken out before. Only he wasn't firing the weapons…he *was* the weapons. Travis stared, fascinated. The man's forearms had split, with two barrels appearing on each appendage. *Domini*. A bloody smear marred the…*thing's*…jerkin, evidence of the bullet it had taken earlier. The air filled with dust as the Domini turned his weapons toward the newcomers. The staccato bursts kept everyone's head down as the cyborg walked the stream of tracers away from the barrier that Busby and Logan were cowering behind, and toward the corner occupied by Hildebrand and Travis.

Travis snapped off a burst from his rifle, catching the Domini with two rounds in the chest. The Word of Blake minion ignored the hit, turning his full attention toward Travis as he moved back behind cover. Taking advantage of the distraction, Busby stood upright and slashed a line across the Domini's left arm. Roaring inhumanly, the cyborg twisted one arm toward Busby. A stream of tracers ate into the heavy wooden pallets that made up the barrier. Logan's shot went wide as he used the commotion to scramble across the alleyway to another position.

From where they crouched, Hildebrand and Travis could see Logan, but could only hear Busby. Every attempt they made to move from cover was met with a wall of fire. The hammering sounds of multiple bullets tearing through the wooden barrier halted for a second as Logan opened up with a long burst, empty shells cascading down like brass rain as the younger man fought to keep the barrel from rising and on target. Whether or not he hit anything was irrelevant; the sudden break in suppressing fire allowed Travis and Hildebrand to make their own shots against the target before ducking back behind the corner. Travis saw Logan duck as the stream of tracers turned his way. But Logan was in a good position. *We can do this…* It would be a hard fight, but they were four on one, and no matter how tough the one, numbers would win out in the end. Travis turned his attention back to Busby, listening for the Intek's keen that would mark the next round of firing. He keyed his mike.

"Buzz, Logan. Buzzy, you shoot, we shoot, Logan shoots. Got it, guys?"

A couple of terse "Roger"s signaled that the other men understood what was going on. The Intek fired, followed almost instantly by the hammering of bullets on wood. Hildebrand and Travis leaned around the corner and fired a quick burst. Blood geysered on the Domini's leg as the heavy AX-22 rounds punched though the flesh there. Travis pulled back around and waited for the sharp bark of Logan's Federated rifle on full auto.

When Logan's broken body slammed into the wall next to

him, Travis wasn't ready. Gasping for air as bloody froth escaped his mouth, Logan tried to point back where he'd been as Travis grabbed him by the leg and pulled him behind the corner, out of the line of fire. Satisfied that Hildebrand had him, Travis lined up where Logan had been. A form came slowly into focus through the biting dust in the alley. The other guard. He was as big as a bear and carried no weapons. A red glow emanated from behind his eyes, just as Travis fired a long burst. *Take this, you bastard!*

But the Domini had already moved, leaping through the air. Travis kept firing as he tracked the target, ignoring the danger of exposing himself as he tried in vain to tag the monster that had hurt Logan. The cyborg landed next to Busby, knocking away the heavy pallets with a swing of its left arm. The shattered wood clattered to the feet of the other Domini, who had stopped firing as his comrade entered his sight line. The big monster's right arm batted away the Intek as Busby tried to use the rifle butt to hit the new threat. Travis could only watch in increasing horror as the Domini grasped both of Busby's biceps. Pinned, Busby did what came naturally: he head-butted the cyborg. Crimson spouted forth as Busby's forehead smashed into the bridge of the monster's nose.

The Domini's blood streaked lips split in a feral grin.

And then it pulled.

"Noooooooooo!!!!" Travis screamed as the Domini was bathed in Busby's blood, the crack of bones snapping punctuated by the dull tearing sound of flesh being ripped from them. Travis held down the trigger, round after round slamming into the rifle's chamber. But too soon he heard the empty sound of a breach locking open as the magazine ran dry. Tears streaming down his face, Travis said a quick prayer for Busby's soul. He pulled back behind the corner before the Domini could target him.

Tears welled in Hildebrand's eyes, but she said nothing. Travis quickly looked at Logan, still coughing pink froth. Travis stooped down to grab him and move him to safety before the Blakist cyborgs could round the corner. Hildebrand's warning almost came too late.

"Travis! Watch out!"

He felt the rush of superheated air pass his ear as the twin beams of Hildebrand's blazer sliced above him. He collapsed on Logan's prostrate form, trying to protect the younger man from what was coming. When nothing happened, he turned to look. There, lying on the ground with the top half of its head missing, was the big Domini. The shot from the blazer had carved through the soft bone Busby had shattered, the brilliant light cauterizing the wound so that only the cyborg's grayish brain was visible. The glow behind the eyes was gone.

Travis stood quickly. "Quick, before his mate comes to."

Luella nodded, then looked up sharply. "Captain! These are Domini, which means—"

Travis blanched. "Suicide charges!"

The body of the dead Domini lifted slightly, and Travis' world exploded. The last thing he saw was the other Domini stalking around the corner, arms raised…

▲▼▲

"Way to go, Doc."

"I said to call me Grace."

"Shhh, you two, he's coming around."

Jared Travis sat up with a splitting headache. *Thank you, Lord, for that.* He looked around at the assembled faces smiling at him. Foremost was Grace, with maternal concern on her face.

"How are you feeling?"

Travis shook his head. "Like I should be dead." He looked at his team…what was left of it. "Why aren't I?"

Ethan stepped forward, ears still bandaged. "It was Doc. She saved you."

Travis nodded. "I get that—but how come that…*thing*…didn't kill us all?"

Ethan shook his head and smiled. "No, you don't understand. It was Doc; she stopped it. Then saved you and the X. Even the kid's gonna make it." When Travis looked askance at him, Ethan explained. "AT rocket. Those Domini may be tough, but they aren't *that* tough."

Travis looked at Grace in wonder. "I didn't know you knew how to use those."

Grace shrugged. "What's to know? It says 'Point toward enemy' on the side, so I did." She shuddered, then regained control of herself. "Someone had to do something."

Ethan sat next to her and put his arm around her. She looked up at Travis with swollen eyes. "I…I…I couldn't do anything for poor Busby."

"We're in." True to form, Hildebrand had continued the mission, working the door while the injured team members recovered. As he slowly got to his feet, Travis saw a camouflage poncho draped over an unmoving form. *Fare thee well, my friend.* Breathing out deeply, he composed himself. They still had a mission at hand. He moved up to Hildebrand, who had cracked the door code and was currently using a fiber-optic camera to check for telltale signs of traps or countermeasures.

"We know what's in there?" He gestured at the camera's small display.

Hildebrand shook her head. "Not sure, just looks like a big room filed with computers."

Travis nodded. "Well, we better find out."

Hildebrand gestured for Ethan to move up and provide cover, and then turned to Travis and counted off with her fingers. He was still dizzy, but capable of this task. The two of them quickly stepped over the threshold, drawing sidearms, scanning for threats. Electrical leads snaked through the building, which seemed to be one cavernous room, the walls filled with computer equipment of various sorts. A soft hum permeated the space, the environmental controls keeping the temperamental equipment cool. Hildebrand moved over to the far wall and examined some of the monitors. Travis looked at those closest to him, but he couldn't work it out. "Any idea what it is?"

Engrossed in her study, Hildebrand didn't respond. Travis waved for Ethan to join them, hoping another brain might be able to work out what the hell this place was. He missed Hildebrand's first whisper. "What?"

"I said, I think it's tracking equipment." She was still facing the computers, scrolling through the information on the screen.

"Tracking equipment for what?"

Again no response. At first. Then: "It's tracking the fleet!"

Travis started. "Fleet? What fleet? Not the invasion fleet *that's supposed to be waiting for our go-ahead!"*

Whatever reply Hildebrand meant to give, Ethan's question eclipsed it. "'Charging?' What the hell does 'Charging' mean? What's charging?"

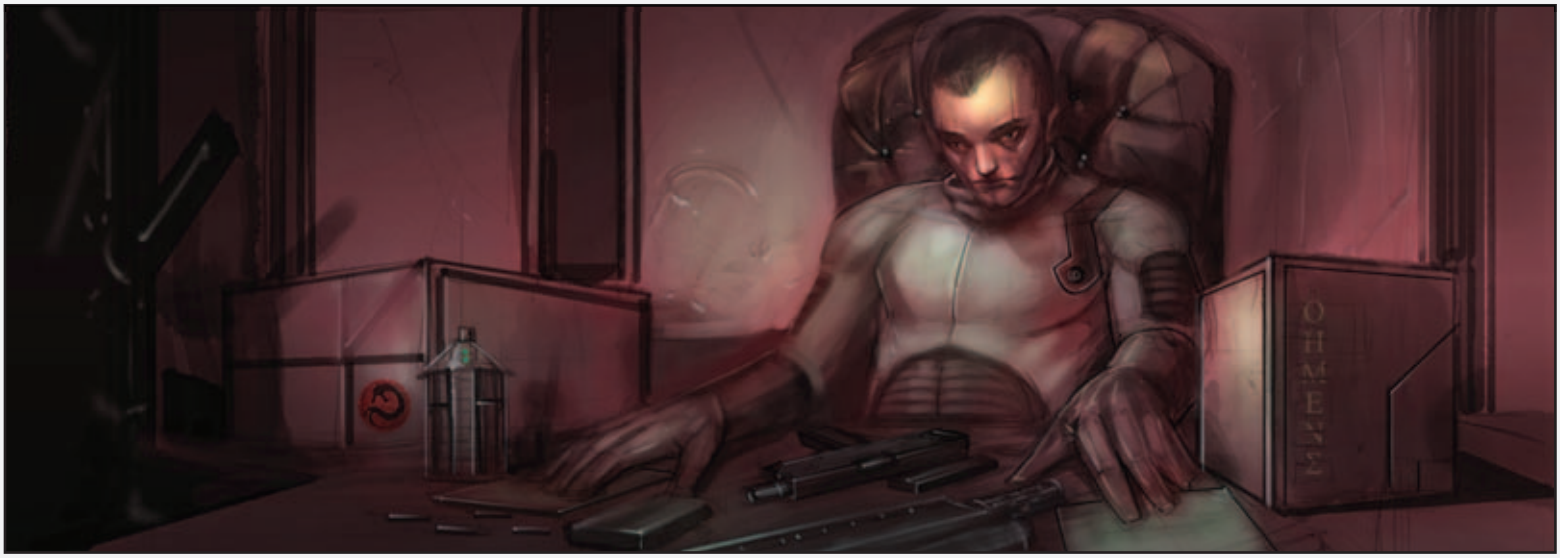
Hildebrand raced across the room to Ethan's terminal. Her fingers flew across the keyboard. "*Scheisse*…!"

"What?!" Travis snapped.

She looked up, her face white. "This is an SDS tracking center. It's currently tracking the fleet. *Our* fleet." She ignored Ethan's muttered question about what an SDS was. "If I'm right, it's getting ready to fire."

"What?! Turn it off!"

"I don't know how!"



"Name your needs, and I'll name my price. No questions asked."

"Welcome to Randal's! Protect yourself right! If we don't have what you need, it doesn't exist in the Inner Sphere!"

OVERVIEW

Humans are tool-using creatures, and to accomplish the tasks they undertake, they need equipment. In the thirty-first century, the range of available equipment is staggering: a special tool exists for almost every job and a weapon for every target. The challenge is finding a good source for equipment. Some gear is rare or illegal; some is only available on a specific planet or in certain Successor States. In *A Time of War*, tracking down important equipment can even be an adventure on its own!

This section covers general rules regarding personal equipment used in the *BattleTech* universe, including rules for encumbrance and acquiring gear. The balance is devoted to descriptions of equipment commonly found in *BattleTech*. The items are broken down into categories and subcategories, including a cross section of the most common and important items found throughout known space.

This list is not meant to be all-inclusive, however. Additional items will appear in future *BattleTech* products, and gamemasters are encouraged to design and introduce items unique to their campaigns. To do so, use the statistics given below as guidelines.

Following the equipment descriptions is a series of charts that provide the information necessary to use equipment in game play, including cost, weight, combat statistics (where applicable) and any other important details.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Every character in *A Time of War* should purchase some basic equipment before beginning the game—be it a noteputer, a hovercar or a rifle. Each player has a finite amount of "cash" with which to buy gear based on his character's Wealth Trait (see p. 128), while his Equipped Trait (see p. 116) helps identify the range of gear to which he has access.

Purchases will likely not end there, as the player will naturally want to buy newer and better equipment throughout the course of his character's life. This section presents ideas on where to spend a character's hard-earned money during game play and what limitations to apply.

EQUIPMENT RATINGS

All personal equipment available for purchase in *A Time of War* includes among its statistics a series of letter codes called equipment ratings, which determine how easy it is for characters to acquire various items. These ratings—expressed in 5-letter groups—represent each item's technology level, availability (across three major eras of play) and legality. The letter codes range from A (the easiest to acquire) to F (the most difficult).

Tech Level

All equipment requires a certain level of technology and industry to produce. Some items, such as knives and clubs, require very little technological sophistication, while others are based on research completed only in the past few years. Gamemasters should carefully monitor the tech level of equipment they allow into their campaigns, as many worlds will not be able to produce the newest and best goods.

Likewise, gamemasters need to make sure the equipment they make available to the characters fits the time period of their campaigns. This is especially true when playing in other major eras,

such as the time of the first Star League or the Succession Wars that followed its collapse.

Equipment Technology Ratings from A to F are described in the following table.

Availability

Supply does not always equal demand. Just because a piece of equipment can be produced doesn't mean it is available in sufficient quantities to supply everyone who wants it. Likewise, just because an item is uncommon now, it need not always have been so (or, conversely, an item available in abundance now need not always have been this common).

The Availability Rating for an item describes how difficult a particular piece of equipment is to find on average throughout known space, particularly within three broad eras of play: the Age of War/Early Star League (up to about the year 2800), the Succession Wars (from 2800 through 3050), and the Clan Invasion period (from 3051 onward).

Legality

While some pieces of equipment can be easily found, their acquisition or use might be illegal. For example, many weapons, including lasers, are regulated on all but the most frontier-like worlds. Likewise, operators of vehicles such as hovercars and aircraft must be licensed, or else they face stiff fines if caught.

Tools of the Trade (Optional Rule): As an optional rule, a player character or important NPC can start play with a particular piece of equipment he has acquired while in the employ of a government or military organization. To reflect this past ownership, the character may possess one item up to 2 levels higher in its Legality Rating than his Equipped Trait normally covers. Remember, however, that this piece of equipment technically still belongs to the organization from which the character received it, and not to the character himself (though it may have been given to the character as a reward). The acquired item may even be stolen goods, or a trophy of past accomplishments. The gamemaster must decide which situation applies.

LEGALITY RATINGS

Rating	Legality
A	**Unrestricted**. Legal for anyone to purchase and use.
B	**Monitored**. Some legal requirements must be met for purchase or use.
C	**Licensed**. Legal purchase and use require a government license, which is usually easy to acquire.
D	**Controlled**. Illegal on many "civilized" worlds, except to authorized individuals in the government, police or military.
E	**Restricted**. Highly illegal. Private citizens found with this equipment will be imprisoned. Only government and military personnel have legal access to this equipment, and only under certain conditions.
F	**Highly Restricted**. Contains top-secret technology or materials. Available only to military or government agents with proper credentials and clearance.

TECHNOLOGY RATINGS

Rating	Technology Level
A	**Primitive technology**. Requires no industrialization, only hard labor and skill to produce.
B	**Low technology**. Requires basic industrialization, such as that available after Terra's Industrial Revolution.
C	**Medium technology**. Requires advanced industrialization and electronics technology, first available in the twentieth through twenty-second centuries.
D	**High technology**. Requires heavy automated industry, commonly available in all Successor and most Periphery States today.
E	**Advanced technology**. Requires the scientific advances found only during Star League times. All Clans have access to this level of technology, as do the major worlds of the Successor States after approximately 3055.
F	**Hyper-advanced technology**. This level was still theoretical during the first Star League era, but has now been achieved by the Clans. Even the most advanced Successor State cannot yet build equipment of this level.

AVAILABILITY RATINGS

Rating	Availability
A	**Very common**. Available throughout inhabited space in huge quantities.
B	**Common**. These items are widely available, but due to materials or cost they are not always manufactured in sufficient quantity to meet demand.
C	**Uncommon**. Such items are sometimes troublesome to find, since they require rare materials or specific skilled labor or technology to produce. Uncommon items might be unavailable on many planets, yet common on the worlds where they are manufactured.
D	**Rare**. These are specialty items produced under contract or for a limited market. Few businesses sell such items; generally, characters must locate a supplier in order to buy rare items.
E	**Very rare**. These items are either no longer manufactured or only manufactured on a few worlds. They are exceedingly difficult to find and often carry a price tag well in excess of the "list" price, as they might only be found on the black market or in a personal collection.
F	**Unique**. One of a kind or close to it. Only a few were ever made or are known to have survived. Advanced prototypes as well as rare antiques and small-run limited-edition items fall under this category.
X	**Non-Existent.** The item in question does not exist in this particular time period.

ACQUIRING GEAR

A character's initial creation includes the basic rules for purchasing personal equipment, using a starting allotment of money (in C-bills) and Equipped Trait points provided for pre-campaign preparations. When it's time to spend some of a character's hard-earned C-bills in game play, however, the gamemaster will need to supply places to shop. Depending on the campaign, the players and gamemaster may also need to use currency exchange rates.

Exchange Rates

During character creation, characters receive money in the form of C-bills, a universal currency in the *BattleTech* universe. Most employers, however, prefer to do business in the standard scrip of their home realms, whether Lyran kroner, FedSuns pounds, Taurian bulls or even Clan Kerenskys. If the characters travel, they will need to exchange whatever currency they have on hand into local currency before they can purchase anything.

The Exchange Rates Table gives approximate Inner Sphere transfer rates against the C-bill as of the start of 3076, showing how much of each realm's currency it takes to equal 1 C-bill. To convert C-bills into a specific realm's currency on this list, divide the number 1 by the appropriate value listed in the C-bill column, rounding up or down to the nearest .01. For example, when determining how many Lyran kroner a character may receive from 28 C-bills, the player should multiply 28 x 1.18 (the S-bill to C-bill exchange rate). The result of 33.04 is the number of kroner the character would receive to equal 28 C-bills.

If converting between realm currencies, take the starting realm currency and convert it to C-bills by first dividing the originating realm's currency by its exchange rate to the C-bill, and then multiplying that result by the new realm's exchange rate (and rounding the final result up to the nearest .01). For example, a character starting with 33.04 kroner, who wants to exchange it for Combine ryu, would divide 33.04 by 1.18 (the S-bill to C-bill rate), and then multiply the result by 1.32 (the K-bills to C-bill rate). This would yield 36.96 ryu (33.04 ÷ 1.18 x 1.32 = 36.96).

INNER SPHERE EXCHANGE RATES

Realm Currency	Realm	C-bill
C-bill	All	—
L-bill (yuan)	Capellan Confederation	2.00
S-bill (kroner)	Lyran Alliance	1.18
D-bill (pound)	Federated Suns	1.20
K-bill (ryu)	Draconis Combine	1.32
M-bill (eagle)	Free Worlds League	1.12
R-bill (krona)	Free Rasalhague Republic	1.67
Kerensky (Clans)	(Any)	0.25
Taurian Bull	Taurian Concordat	4.00
Calderon Bull	Calderon Protectorate	5.00
Canopian Dollar	Magistracy of Canopus	4.00
Fronc Dollar	Fronc Reaches	10.00
Escudo	Outworlds Alliance	6.67
Talent	Marian Hegemony	7.69
Skull	Circinus Federation	20.00

Legal Means

Most of the time, a character will make purchases legitimately, just as in real life. General clothing and personal goods can be found at department stores or small shops, vehicles will be on display at huge indoor or outdoor dealers and so on.

Large planets (and cities) have many types of retailers. Small settlements and backwater worlds, however, might only have a single general store that can order many specialized items (with a long waiting period) but that only stocks a small assortment of the basic necessities.

In some cases, characters should not be able to simply walk into a store and buy anything they want. The very nature of some sought-after items demands that they be handled differently. For example, most military hardware—weapons, ammunition, armor and vehicles—is only sold in bulk directly from the manufacturer or a field salesperson, and then only if the buyer has the proper credentials from a legitimate military organization or government. Trade shows, where hundreds of manufacturers of similar types of equipment (be it military hardware, electronics or sporting goods) gather to show their wares, are a good place to make contacts and arrange for large purchases.

Characters can also arrange to purchase things from private citizens—bulletin boards and classified ads still exist in the thirty-first century, and can be used to track down potential deals off the beaten path.

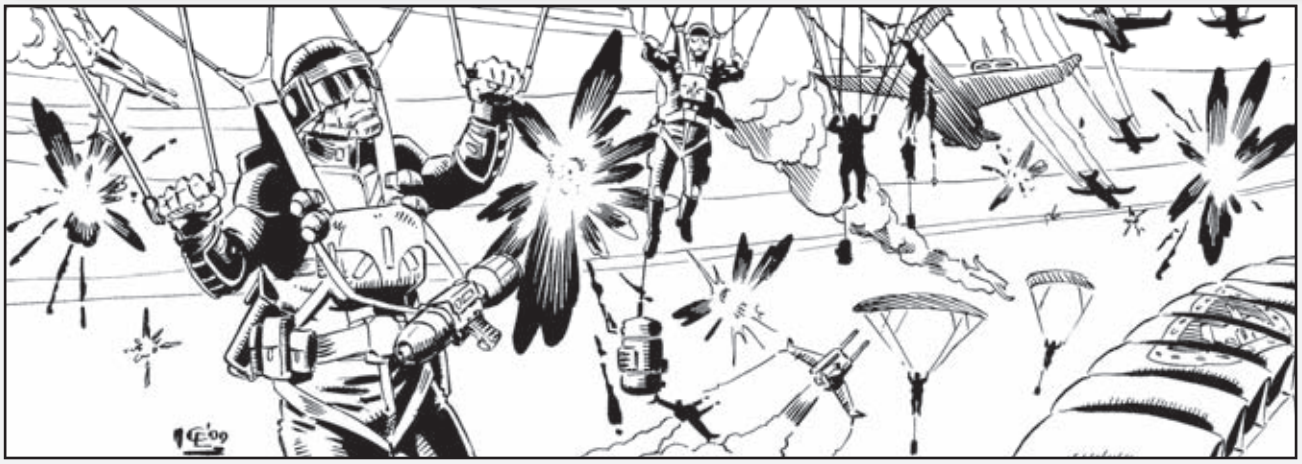
Gamemasters can consult the equipment ratings when taking characters on their "shopping sprees." Common items may be temporarily out of stock or on back order. Some things might need to be special-ordered if they are uncommon. Characters looking for rare items may have to invest considerable effort (and money) in tracking them down. The gamemaster determines just how hard a particular piece of equipment is to locate.

The Black Market

On occasion (particularly for characters who make a living in any line of work that involves combat), a character might want to purchase gear that is illegal without the proper credentials. Indeed, even with the right licenses, this equipment could prove impossible to legally obtain in the character's current locale; or perhaps the character doesn't want to jump through all the hoops needed to get the right credentials, fearing the ramifications of a paper trail. Alternatively, the character might want to quietly "offload" some of his own equipment, avoiding the "proper" channels in favor of a little discretion. Characters in these situations often turn to the black market.

Finding the local black market can turn into an adventure on its own. By their very nature, seedy sellers are not supposed to be easily found. Therefore, characters looking for a black market must use Streetwise Skill to find the person who can get them in touch with the right people—often with the aid of an appropriate bribe or threat. Shady Connections are also very useful for locating black-market outlets.

Whether the equipment in question is even available is up to the gamemaster. If it is, then the gamemaster should establish a cost based on its equipment ratings, or use the Black Market Base Costs Table provided here to find the appropriate multipliers for an item's normal cost, based on its Availability and Legality



Stalwart Support, one of the Inner Sphere's most professional all-infantry merc units, drops into a hot battlezone with heavy air support.

ratings, as well as the location where the deals are taking place. In general, commonly available items can be had for far less than retail price ("that drum of lubricant just *fell* out of the DropShip"), while rare and highly restricted items can command up to twenty or thirty times the normal going rate. Of course, good use of the Negotiation Skill can help to bring down the price.

Even after the purchase is made, characters who do business on the black market may want to exercise some discretion with their new toys. Most law enforcement officials do not treat black-market dealings lightly, and keep a wary eye out for the contraband such markets are known to sell. If characters are caught with such illegal items, they may be slapped with stiff fines or even prison time, depending on the gear they are apprehended with. Black marketeers prefer to maintain a low profile, so if the characters draw attention to themselves and to where they may have gotten their illegal goods, the people they dealt with may decide to pay them a less-than-cordial visit. For the unwary, dealings with the black market can have dire consequences down the road.

BLACK MARKET BASE COST TABLE (GENERIC)

BASE COST MULTIPLIERS

	Availability					
Legality	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**
A	0.5	1	1.25	1.5	2	4
B	1	2	2.5	2	3	6
C	2	3	4	3	4	9
D	3	4	5	6	8	14
E	5	6	7	10	15	21
F	7	9	11	13	20	30
Additional Standard Multipliers						
Clan Border	x1.10					
House Border	x0.97					
Periphery Border	x1.05					
Major World	x0.98					
Shattered/No Government	x2					

Gray Areas

Other avenues exist for acquiring equipment, many of dubious legality. For example, characters may salvage equipment from a battlefield; some military types have even been known to break down entire vehicles and ship them home piece by piece. While most militaries have strict regulations as to what their people can keep, these rules are commonly overlooked—especially by officers who come home with their own trophies. Likewise, police and customs agents might confiscate things that turn up on searches, keeping choice pieces for their own collections.

Perhaps the most common way of circumventing local laws is to travel someplace where the item in question is not restricted and is easily purchased. For example, the Periphery is well known for its lax regulations on everything from weapons to narcotics. Characters can then simply return home with their new toy—assuming they can make it through customs, as this constitutes smuggling. So long as they can justify having the items in some way ("Oh, I picked that up while I was fighting the Jade Falcons on Wolcott"), and they are discreet enough, odds are slim that a character with contraband items will be hassled on sight.

New vs. Used

Not everything a character picks up in the course of a campaign will be hot off the assembly line. Goods bought from private citizens and objects confiscated or scavenged from the battlefield will undoubtedly show signs of previous use. As even used equipment can fetch a price, thriving markets in "pre-owned" items from collectibles to firearms to vehicles may be found almost anywhere, providing characters with a way to obtain equipment otherwise beyond their means.

The gamemaster should apply game play modifiers to used equipment in particularly poor condition, to reflect the wear and tear inflicted on such items by previous owners. After all, the old axiom, "Buyer beware: a deal that's too good to be true probably is," is still relevant in the thirty-first century. These modifiers can range from a simple (and permanent) –1 to –3 roll modifier on Action Checks to use them, to an increased likelihood of catastrophic failure (treating a roll of 3 or 4 as a Fumble).

Basic or Luxury Model

The equipment listed in this section is representative of countless similar products found throughout known space. Some are among the most basic items. However, artisans and machinists have surely made some of these mundane pieces into beautiful and elegant objects worthy of being presented as gifts of honor or passed down from one generation to the next. An ordinary combat knife that costs eight C-bills and is considered common, for example, is very different from the heirloom-quality kris exquisitely handmade by a master bladesmith, using rare alloys and including finely etched details in its verde-ivory hilt.

Other luxury items can vary wildly across the spectrum of the *BattleTech* universe. For example, while everyday *BattleTech* life is almost paper-free, books remain a status symbol for many family libraries, and many important documents are replicated in hardcopy "for posterity." Small, controlled batches of wines and liqueurs have a far better taste and aroma than mass-produced varieties. Vintage vehicles, decades or even centuries out of production, or customized with bodies and frames "sculpted" to the tastes of their owners, attract wealthy aficionados and enthusiasts. Even an item that is otherwise ordinary can be classed as a luxury if it holds great historical value, such as the gem-encrusted laser pistol used by Stefan Amaris to kill Richard Cameron, or a plate from the wedding reception of Hanse Davion and Melissa Steiner.

When differentiating the standard-model item from its luxury equivalent, the gamemaster may set almost any price desired. It would not be uncommon, in fact, for some items to achieve monetary value magnitudes beyond their ordinary equivalents, if they are rare enough, exquisite enough or hold sufficient historical value. In addition, the Availability Rating for such an item should always be one or two levels higher than the standard for its type.

EQUIPMENT TERMS

The following are the most common terms used to define the vital game play statistics of the equipment featured in *A Time of War*.

Affiliation (Aff): An item's base affiliation (if other than general). This two-letter code indicates the primary realm of manufacture. If attempting to purchase the item outside of its realm, the item's Availability and Legality ratings increase by 1.

Armor Penetration (AP): A weapon's potential to pierce armor. For personal combat weapons, this value also includes a letter code identifying the weapon's type (M for Melee, B for Ballistic, E for Energy and X for Explosive).

Barrier Armor Rating (BAR): The relative defensive value of armor against damage. Personal armor receives four values, based on the four main types of damage (Melee, Ballistic, Energy and Explosive), while vehicles and other objects receive a single BAR that applies to all damage types.

Cost: The cost of the item (in C-bills).

Crew: The number of trained personnel needed to operate the equipment. If more than one person is required, the equipment is not truly portable and should be fixed to a static mount or vehicle.

Base Damage (BD): The basic damage inflicted by a weapon against characters in *A Time of War*. Letter codes also indicate special damage effects such as burst-fire, continuous damage and so on (these codes are fully explained in *Personal Combat*, p. 177)

Patch: The cost (in C-bills) for material to repair a point of armor value (see *Armor Repairs*, p. 259). This does not include the cost of labor.

Power Usage (P-Use): The number of standard power points an item consumes. This can be in points per use (PPU), points per minute (PPM), points per hour (PPH) or—for power-using weapons—points per shot (PPS). (Power-using weapons list their PPS in the Shots column on the Weapon Table, p. 264.)

Power Capacity (P-Cap): The maximum number of power points a power pack, battery or similar device can hold at a full charge. As items use up power points, this number will decrease until the device is recharged or the current charge reaches zero and the item ceases to function.

Range: Range has dual meaning in these listings. For weapons, this statistic indicates the short, medium, long and extreme ranges of a weapon (if only one value is given, that is the maximum range the item can reach). For vehicle entries, this term refers instead to the distance a vehicle can travel before it needs refueling.

Recharge Rate: The standard number of power points a recharger can produce each hour.

Refueling Cost: The C-bill cost to refuel a vehicle or item.

Reload: The C-bill cost for a full magazine of ammunition to reload the weapon. If required, the cost of an individual round can be found by dividing the Reload cost value by the weapon's Shots.

Shots: The number of rounds a weapon's standard magazine holds (and, by extension, the number of standard shots a character can make before needing to reload).

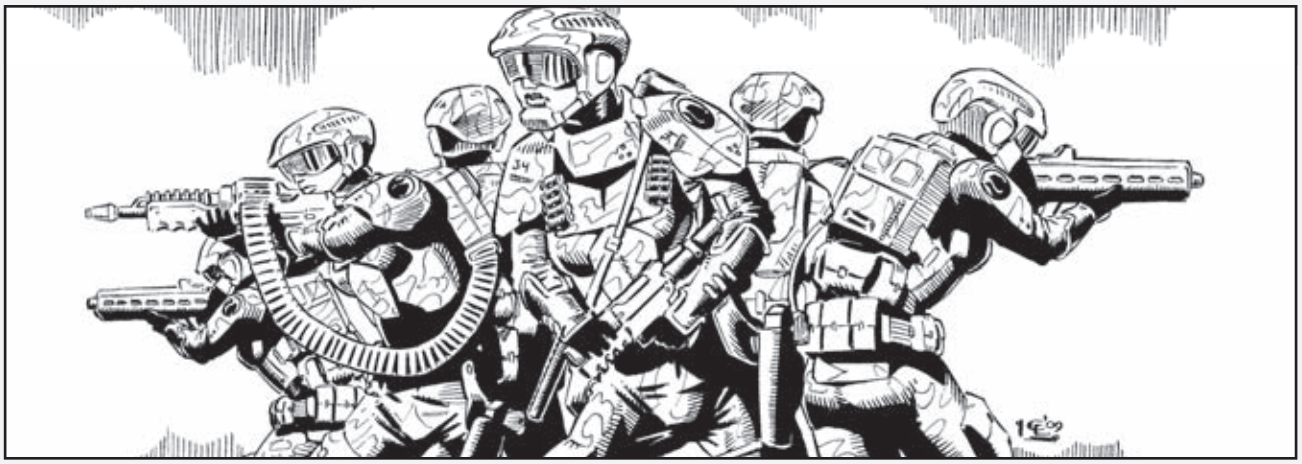
Skill: The Skill required to use the item in any Action Checks.

Speed: A vehicle's maximum speed in kilometers per hour (kph). This is given in Cruise and Flank values, separated by a slash.

Mass: The mass of an item, or its weight under standard Terran gravity (1.0 G). This is given in grams (g), kilograms (kg) or metric tons.

Affiliation Codes:

CC	Capellan Confederation (House Liao)	**CF**	Circinus Federation (Major Periphery)
CS	ComStar/Word of Blake	**MC**	Magistracy of Canopus (Major Periphery)
DC	Draconis Combine (House Kurita)	**MH**	Marian Hegemony (Major Periphery)
FS	Federated Suns (House Davion)	**OA**	Outworlds Alliance (Major Periphery)
FW	Free Worlds League (House Marik)	**TC**	Taurian Concordat/Calderon Protectorate
LA	Lyran Alliance (House Steiner)	**MP**	Minor Periphery State
FR	Free Rasalhague Republic	**DP**	Deep Periphery State
IC	Invading Clan (Any)	**IN**	Independent World
HC	Homeworld Clan	**TR**	Terran
Clan	All Clans	**Per**	Periphery (General)



Although the Olsen's Rangers are now wanted fugitives, Captain Shioban Morris of Olsen's Archers is still known as one of the Inner Sphere's most capable mercenary infantry commanders.

USING EQUIPMENT

The following sections explain terms that define equipment and the effects of encumbrance. Guidelines for repairing equipment are also provided.

EQUIPMENT DATA

Weapons and other equipment have various ratings and game mechanics for reference in game play. These statistics can be found in the equipment tables, beginning on p. 261. Rules regarding the general use of weapons and armor in combat appear in *Personal Combat* (pp. 164-195), and special game rules may appear after some entries in this section to further elaborate on particular items. A basic overview of the statistics presented here is given in *Equipment Terms*, below.

REPAIRS

When a piece of equipment breaks—through misuse, overuse, accidents or damage in combat—it must be repaired before it can be used again. A broken item requires an appropriate Technician Skill Check to repair. If an appropriate kit is not available (see *Repair/Salvage Gear,* p. 309), the repair attempt must be made with an increased difficulty penalty for the lack of proper equipment, unless the gamemaster rules that the lack of tools will make repairs impossible.

The time a repair takes for a personal item is up to the gamemaster. As a guide, personal weapons, simple electronics and basic mechanical devices take 1D6 hours to repair, while a more complicated device takes 2D6 hours to repair. Anything the gamemaster considers to be very large and complicated can take 3D6 hours or more.

For repairs to BattleMechs and other vehicles, more detailed rules appear under *Maintenance, Salvage, Repair and Customization* in *Strategic Operations* (pp. 166-199).

Personal Armor Repairs

As discussed in the personal combat rules, personal armor can be routinely damaged in combat and therefore frequently needs repair (see *Armor Degradation*, p. 186). Even though each weapon strike causes only one type of damage at a time, when using the four-number BAR values, armor degradation affects all of the armor's BAR values simultaneously. For example, ablative armor (BAR 3/1/6/1) becomes 2/0/5/0 after its first degradation, and 1/0/4/0 after two degradations. As long as the armor is not destroyed (which occurs when reduced to a BAR of 0/0/0/0), each point of degradation repaired by the successful use of an armor patch reverses one level of armor degradation (but does not add any BAR values beyond the armor's original design). Thus, armor reduced by two levels of degradation from 3/1/6/1 to 1/0/4/0 will recover one level with a single patch to a final BAR of 2/0/5/0. A second patch would be needed to restore it to its full effectiveness.

Repairing a level of personal armor degradation requires a patch of the appropriate type and a successful Technician/Mechanical Skill Check with a penalty modifier equal to the total number of degradation levels the armor has sustained. A failed Action Check wastes the patch, but the repair can be attempted again. A fumbled Action Check permanently damages the armor, wasting the patch and permanently reducing the armor's BAR values by 1.

Personal armor repair—whether successful or not—takes 5 minutes' time, multiplied by the total of all BAR values the armor would have when fully repaired, and again by the number of patches used. For example, ablative/flak armor has original BAR values of 2/4/5/2, for a total BAR of 13. Each level of BAR degradation repair attempted thus takes 65 minutes (13 x 5 = 65).

THE WARRIOR'S CATALOG

In the endless search for ways to separate people from their money, one of the best is offering them something useful. Today's world offers more equipment, services and gadgets than any time since the fall of the Star League. The following is an excerpt from The Sharper Warrior's *fall catalog, including comments by famed mercenaries Major Kenneth Petruzzelli and Captain Jason Henne. Prices may vary depending on location and purchasing agreement with* The Sharper Warrior.

—The Modern Mercenary (Quarterly)

MELEE AND ARCHAIC WEAPONS

In the thirty-first century, lasers have been around for hundreds of years, nuclear warheads for over a millennium, and WarShips can destroy cities from orbit. Despite this, humankind still makes use of almost every weapon ever devised, sometimes going all the way back to rocks and sticks. Necessity, personal preference and practicality all have helped drive the use of melee and archaic weapons throughout human space.

ARCHAIC MELEE WEAPONS

"A good knife is not only a weapon but a useful tool. I always carry one strapped to my boot, even in the cockpit." —KP

"Katanas and wakizashis can be the deadliest blades around, but only if you get quality swords. The cheap knock-offs are only as good as other common blades—at best." —JH

Be they bladed or blunt, archaic melee weapons are low maintenance and reliable, often requiring little more than routine sharpening. Today's manufacturing techniques and materials make these weapons far more resilient and durable than their crude ancestors from millennia ago.

Axes and swords of various designs, from various cultures, are all equally effective at slicing through the flesh of an opponent. They are also often part of formal military attire. In modern times, the available types and styles of these weapons tend to vary by the cultural influences of the biggest and most powerful local realm. For example, the Chinese dao is popular in the Confederation, while the katana, wakizashi and no-dachi can be found almost everywhere in the Combine. In the more European-styled realms of the Federated Suns, sabers are a popular officer's ornamentation, while the scimitar is fashionable on worlds where Arab influences dominate. Even the prominence of Nordic and German cultures has kept massive war axes and broadswords in circulation, while policing agencies and other "non-lethal" security forces make use of clubs and batons.

ARCHAIC RANGED WEAPONS

"If you can't afford a laser pistol, and are afraid of your slug thrower's ammo degrading from heat exposure, a crossbow may be for you." —KP

"Knowing how to shoot a bow can be as useful as knowing how to play golf in the Combine." —JH

Man-powered ranged weapons are diminishing on the field of battle, but hobbyists and specialized uses have kept them from vanishing altogether. Guerrilla fighters appreciate the portability and reusability of throwing weapons, and many scouts and commandos find archaic ranged weapons are quieter than modern weapons. They also don't require regular upkeep and repair, like silencers and flash suppressors do.

Even as it falls into a niche on the battlefield, archery remains popular across the Inner Sphere in many walks of life. Modern compound and recurve bows are popular with hunters and sportsmen, while traditionalists practice with long bows and hankyus. Even the technique of using a daikyu from horseback is still practiced among the ruling elite of the Draconis Combine. For those seeking a technological advantage, crossbows add penetrating power to the allure of bowmanship with the ease of use of a firearm.

MODERN MELEE WEAPONS

"Don't carry a neural whip in Lyran, FedSuns or Capellan space; they're still illegal there. Well, unless you're working for one of those 'black ops' units." —KP

"Vibroweapons can be effective even against battle armor." —JH

While archaic melee weapons blend practicality and style, modern melee weapons focus on power and effectiveness. Powered melee weapons have two main varieties: vibro weapons and contact energy weapons. Vibro weapons rely on high-frequency vibrations to produce a blade with a superior cutting edge. The energy requirements of these weapons, however, are enormous; most vibro weapons can last only a few minutes under constant power. They are also harder to conceal than their archaic counterparts, because their mechanisms are bulky and produce an audible (and intimidating) hum when in operation. The monowire, which brings vibro technology to a garrote, has recently been miniaturized enough to leave the slaughterhouses and enter the hands of the assassin.

Contact energy weapons, as the name implies, injure or stun an opponent by delivering a jolt of energy on contact. The most common are the stunsticks used by police and security forces on any reasonably developed world. Most of these are not designed for lethal force, but there are instances of them killing the victim. Some stun weapons or contact energy weapons have been modified to deliver more than a simple "shock to the system." These specialty weapons might be found in crowd control forces as well as a torturer's chamber.

THE SHARPER WARRIOR
MAKING ELITISTS SINCE 3041

ARCHAIC MELEE WEAPONS

SKILL: MELEE WEAPONS

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	AP/BD	RANGE	SHOTS	COST/RELOAD	AFF	MASS	NOTES
AXE	A/A-A-A/A	3M/2	1M	—	25	—	4 KG	−2 TO-HIT
BLACKJACK/SAP	A/A-A-A/A	0M/3D	1M	—	5	—	200 G	−2 TO-HIT
BOKKEN	A/B-B-B/A	0M/2	1M	—	15	DC	2 KG	+1 TO-HIT
CLUB OR IMPROVISED	A/A-A-A/A	1M/1	1M	—	—	—	2 KG	—
DAO	A/C-C-C/B	1M/2	1M	—	200	CC	3 KG	+1 TO-HIT
FINGERNAILS,CARBON-FIBER REINFORCED	D/X-D-D/C	1M/1	1M	—	1000	CC	—	NO EFFECT VS. BAR 3+
HATCHET/TOMAHAWK	A/A-A-A/A	2M/1	1M	—	10	—	1 KG	−2 TO-HIT
KATANA	A/C-C-D/B	2M/2	1M	—	250	—	2.5 KG	+1 TO-HIT
KNIFE/DAGGER/BAYONET	A/A-A-A/A	1M/1	1M	—	8	—	250 G	—
NO-DACHI	A/C-C-C/B	1M/3	1M	—	300	DC	4.5 KG	—
NUNCHAKU	A/B-B-B/A	1M/1	1M	—	10	DC	1.5 KG	OPPONENT −2 TO DEFEND
POLE ARM	A/B-B-B/B	1M/2	2M	—	50	—	6 KG	—
SCIMITAR	A/C-C-C/B	2M/2	1M	—	250	—	2.5 KG	—
STAFF	A/A-A-A/A	0M/2	1M	—	5	—	2.5 KG	—
SWORD	A/A-A-A/B	2M/2	1M	—	30	—	3 KG	—
WAKIZASHI	A/C-C-C/B	1M/1	1M	—	150	DC	1 KG	+1 TO-HIT

THE SHARPER WARRIOR
CLICK HERE TO FIND NEAREST AGENT

ARCHAIC RANGED WEAPONS

SKILL: ARCHERY

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	AP/BD	RANGE	SHOTS	COST/ RELOAD	AFF	MASS	NOTES
SHORT BOW	A/A-A-A/A	2B/1	8/20/50/100	1	10/1	—	800 G	SIMPLE ACTION TO RELOAD
LONGBOW	A/B-B-B/A	2B/2	10/30/80/175	1	20/2	—	1.5 KG	SIMPLE ACTION TO RELOAD
COMPOUND BOW	C/B-A-A/A	2B/2	10/25/70/160	1	15/2	—	1 KG	SIMPLE ACTION TO RELOAD; +1 TO ATTACK
HANKYU	A/C-C-C/A	2B/1	8/20/55/110	1	15/1	DC	800 G	SIMPLE ACTION TO RELOAD
DAIKYU	A/C-D-D/A	2B/2	10/25/60/125	1	30/2	DC	1 KG	SIMPLE ACTION TO RELOAD
CROSSBOW, BASIC	A/A-A-A/A	3B/2	5/16/30/70	1	10/1	—	2 KG	SIMPLE ACTION TO RELOAD
CROSSBOW, HEAVY	A/A-A-A/A	3B/3	5/20/40/100	1	10/1	—	4 KG	SIMPLE ACTION TO RELOAD

SKILL: THROWN WEAPONS

DART	A/A-A-A/A	1M/1	*	—	3	—	10 G	+1 TO-HIT; HALF THROWN WEAPON RANGE (ROUND DOWN)
SHURIKEN	A/B-B-B/A	2M/1	*	—	5	DC	100 G	EXTREME RANGE = 6X SHORT
KNIFE, THROWING	A/C-C-C/B	2M/1	*	—	8	—	250 G	—
HATCHET/TOMAHAWK	A/A-A-A/A	3M/1	*	—	10	—	1 KG	—
SPEAR	A/B-B-B/B	2M/2	*	—	15	—	5 KG	DOUBLE THROWN WEAPON RANGE

*The effective range for these thrown weapons is equal to the character's STR + DEX scores, x1 for Short Range, x2 for Medium Range, x3 for Long Range and x4 for Extreme Range.

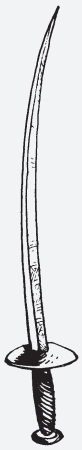
ARCHAIC WEAPONS

• BLACKJACK •

STATS • P. 261

• NUNCHAKU •

STATS • P. 261



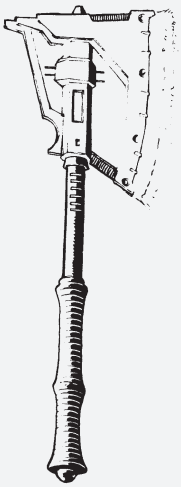
• DAO SWORD •

STATS • P. 261

• HATCHET •

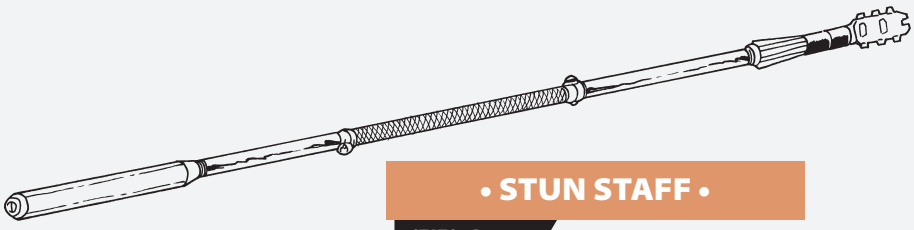
STATS • P. 261

MODERN MELEE WEAPONS



• VIBROAXE •

STATS • P. 264

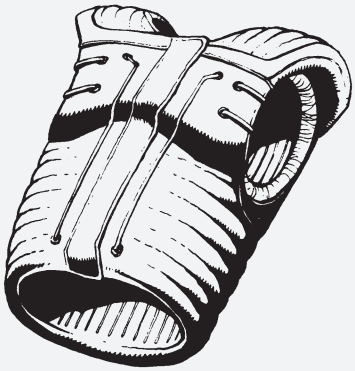


• STUN STAFF •

STATS • P. 264

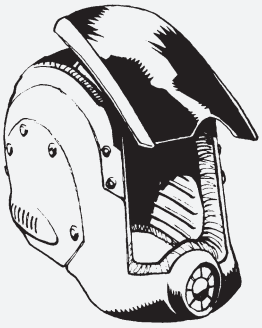
• MEDUSA NEURAL WHIP •

STATS • P. 264



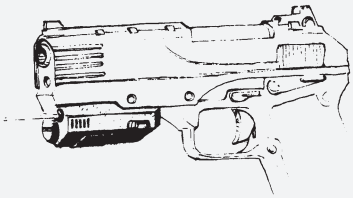
• COOLING VEST •

STATS • P. 294



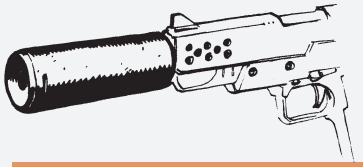
• NEURO HELMET •

STATS • P. 294



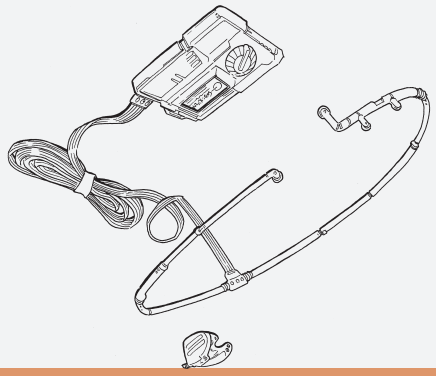
• LASER SIGHT •

STATS • P. 286



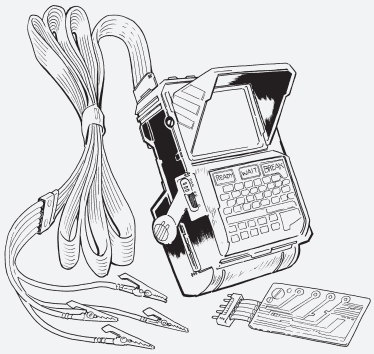
• SILENCER •

STATS • P. 286



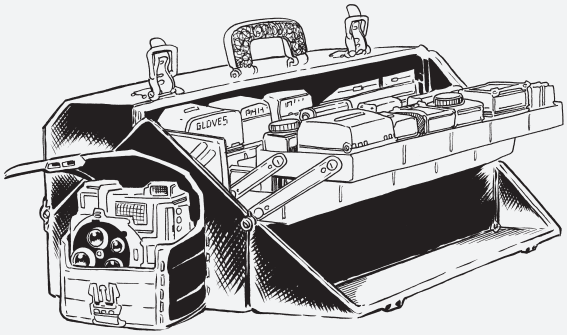
• SUBVOCAL COMMUNICATOR •

STATS • P. 301



• ELECTRONIC CODEBREAKER •

STATS • P. 308



• FORENSIC ANALYSIS KIT •

STATS • P. 308

THE SHARPER WARRIOR
THE BEST GEAR AT THE BEST PRICES

MODERN MELEE WEAPONS

SKILL: MELEE WEAPONS

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	AP/BD	RANGE	SHOTS	COST/ RELOAD	AFF	MASS	NOTES
MEDUSA WHIP	E/X-F-E/E	0E/1D	3M	1 PPS	2,200/*	CLAN	450 G	+1 TO-HIT; MAY ADD +1D BD PER +0.25 PPS, TO MAX OF 9D AT 3PPS
MINI STUNSTICK	C/B-A-A/B	0E/3D	1M	1 PPS	50/*	—	150 G	DO NOT ADD STR DAMAGE
NEURAL LASH	D/E-E-D/C	0E/5D	1M	1 PPS	750/*	DC	100 G	DO NOT ADD STR DAMAGE
NEURAL WHIP	D/F-F-E/E	0E/5D	1M	2 PPS	500/*	DC	300 G	DO NOT ADD STR DAMAGE
STUNSTICK	C/A-A-A/B	0E/4D	1M	1 PPS	200/*	—	200 G	DO NOT ADD STR DAMAGE
STUN-STAFF, SINGLE-END	C/A-C-A/B	0E/4D	2M	1 PPS	300/*	—	3 KG	—
STUN-STAFF, DOUBLE-END	C/A-C-A/B	0E/4D	2M	2 PPS	500/*	—	3 KG	—
MONOWIRE	E/E-F-E/E	4M/5	0M	1 PPS	200/*	—	250 G	−2 TO-HIT; REQUIRES AIMED SHOT HIT
VIBROAXE	E/C-D-D/C	6M/4	1M	2 PPS	150/*	CC	5 KG	−1 TO-HIT
VIBROBLADE/VIBRODAGGER	D/B-C-B/C	6M/2	1M	1 PPS	100/*	CC	—	—
VIBROKATANA	E/E-E-D/D	6M/3	1M	2 PPS	350/*	DC	1 KG	+1 TO-HIT
VIBROMACE	D/X-F-E/E	3M/5	1M	3 PPS	540/*	CF	6 KG	−2 TO-HIT
VIBROSWORD	E/D-D-C/D	6M/3	1M	1 PPS	300/*	—	2.5 KG	—
VIBROSWORD, CLAN	F/X-F-E/D	7M/3	1M	2 PPS	500/*	CLAN	250 G	—

Note: PPS = Power Points per Shot (1 turn = 1 shot). *Per power pack; see p. 306

SMALL ARMS

The term "firearm" once encompassed the full array of personal ranged weapons available to humankind, but by the time of the Star League, lasers and particle weapons had carved their own niche in a field once dedicated to the slug throwers of centuries past. Today's small arms offer a dizzying set of options for the modern warrior, from the chemically induced impact of ballistic projectiles and the focused energy of laser weapons, to the charged streams of particle weapons, magnetic acceleration of Gauss weapon technology, and even miniature self-propelled rockets in modern gyrojet guns. With weapon styles covering the gamut from small, concealable pistols and rapid-cycling submachine guns to larger rifles and the close-quarters "splash" of shotguns, the variety of ways one person can kill or maim another at a distance is only matched by the number of manufacturers in the Inner Sphere.

BALLISTIC WEAPONS

"Unless you like being at the mercy of everyone else on the battlefield once you leave the cockpit, you'd best drop a few notes on a decent sidearm." —KP

"Cheap, easy to maintain, and still effective after centuries of history, automatic rifles are the standard of conventional infantry. If it works, don't fix it." —JH

Ballistic weapons are the oldest type of firearm. Using chemical reactions to create a quick, explosive gaseous expansion, these weapons propel small projectiles toward the target with lethal force. The chemicals used in their firing chambers have changed remarkably over the last millennium, but their legacy of simplicity and reliability has kept ballistic weapons alive in modern times. Cheap and easy to produce even on most low-tech worlds, conventional ballistic weapons remain popular across the Inner Sphere, Periphery and even in Clan space.

Pistols typically feature large-caliber but short, small rounds fired through a short barrel. Most pistols attempt to find a compromise between compact portability and firepower, with modern weapons generally leaning toward firepower.

Submachine guns, or SMGs, fire rounds equivalent or identical to pistol rounds, often through barrels significantly longer than pistols. This provides greater accuracy over longer range while introducing burst and full-auto fire. Still relatively compact, they are a popular choice for those who want the firepower of an automatic rifle, but can't afford the bulk or expense, and are willing to compensate with volume of fire.

While nearly all ballistic weapons have rifled barrels, the Rifles category refers to weapons that fire powerful small-caliber bullets through a long barrel. Rifles almost always have significantly more propellant for their bullets, and successfully wed accuracy and firepower. While most modern armor can resist pistols and individual SMG rounds, it takes high-quality armor to defeat rifles.

BALLISTIC WEAPONS

SKILL: SMALL ARMS (PISTOLS)

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	AP/BD	RANGE	SHOTS	COST/ RELOAD	AFF	MASS	NOTES
AUTO-PISTOL	C/A-A-A/C	3B/4	5/20/45/105	10	50/2	—	500 G	*
AUTO-PISTOL (HAWK EAGLE)	C/X-F-C/C	4B/3B	5/20/50/100	15	100/10	FW	500 G	BURST: 3/2; RECOIL: −1
AUTO-PISTOL (MAGNUM)	C/A-A-B/D	3B/5	5/20/50/120	8	75/4	—	500 G	−1 TO-HIT*
AUTO-PISTOL (M&G SERVICE)	C/C-B-C/C	3B/4	5/20/40/85	8	60/3	LA	650 G	—
AUTO-PISTOL (NAMBU)	C/B-C-C/C	3B/4	5/25/50/110	12	75/2	DC	450 G	*
AUTO-PISTOL (SERREK 7875D)	C/X-C-B/C	3B/3	5/25/50/120	16	185/3	FS	400 G	+1 TO-HIT AND SERVICE
AUTO-PISTOL (STERNS. PYTHON)	C/X-X-C/D	4B/4	5/15/40/80	12	125/4	—	750 G	*
SEMI-AUTO (TK ENFORCER)	C/X-X-B/C	3B/3B	7/25/55/140	20	110/3	LA	1.6 KG	BURST: 4/1; RECOIL: −1
PISTOL (HOLD-OUT)	B/A-A-B/E	3B/3	2/5/8/20	2	20/1	—	200 G	—
PISTOL (STERNS. CLAYMORE)	C/X-E-D/D	3B/6	5/15/38/70	3	200/1	—	2.5 KG	RANGE MODIFIERS: +0/+3/+6/+11
PISTOL (MAKESHIFT)	B/A-A-A/C	3B/4	5/15/30/65	1	15/1	PER	1 KG	−1 TO-HIT**
REVOLVER	C/A-A-A/C	4B/4	8/18/40/90	6	40/1	—	500 G	—
REVOLVER (MAGNUM)	C/B-B-B/D	4B/5	8/18/45/100	5	60/3	—	500 G	−1 TO-HIT
HARPOON GUN (PEQUOD, MK. 1)	B/D-C-B/C	3B/3	8/12/25/30	1	350/2	TC	2.3 KG	FIRES GRAPPLING CABLE; +4 TO CLIMBING SKILL W/ CABLE ENGAGED; SIMPLE ACTION TO DISENGAGE CABLE; NO MODIFIER TO USE UNDERWATER

SKILL: SMALL ARMS (SMGs)

AUTO-PISTOL (MYDRON)	C/C-B-B/E	3B/2B	6/22/40/90	20	100/4	—	1.5 KG	BURST: 6/3; RECOIL: −1
AUTO-PISTOL (STETTA)	D/X-F-C/E	3B/2B	3/10/20/50	100	150/10	—	2 KG	BURST: 10/2; RECOIL: −1
MACHINE PISTOL (MARTIAL EAGLE)	D/X-F-D/E	3B/3B	5/20/50/100	30	180/20	FW	1.8 KG	BURST: 10/5; RECOIL: −1
SUBMACHINE GUN	C/A-A-A/D	3B/3B	5/16/35/80	50	80/5	—	3 KG	BURST: 10/2; RECOIL: −1
SMG (GUNTHER MP-20)	C/X-E-C/D	4B/3B	4/12/30/50	30	125/5	LA	2.5 KG	BURST: 10/4; RECOIL: −1
SMG (IMPERATOR 2894A1)	C/X-C-B/D	4B/2B	5/18/40/85	50	100/5	—	4 KG	BURST: 10/2; RECOIL: −1
SMG (KA-23 SUBGUN)	D/X-C-D/E	4B/2B	6/20/45/100	40	250/6	DC	2.5 KG	BURST: 10/3; RECOIL: −1
SMG (RORYNEX RM-3/ XXI)	D/C-B-C/E	3B/2B	3/12/28/60	100	80/10	—	3 KG	BURST: 15/2; RECOIL: −1
SMG (RUGAN)	C/D-B-C/E	3B/2B	4/15/30/70	80	100/8	—	3.5 KG	BURST: 15/2; RECOIL: −1

*Jam on Fumble **Misfire on Fumble (delivers 1X/1S damage to user) †See Weapon Accessories †† See Grenade Launchers

ENERGY WEAPONS

"I carry a laser pistol in the cockpit; its light weight doesn't make me second-guess having it." —KP

"It's really hard to find a better hand-held deal than an energy weapon. Almost anything a good slug-thrower can do, an energy weapon does better." —JH

Advanced energy weapons are often thought superior to ballistic weapons, though personal preference may have something to do with this perception. Lighter than ballistics, and typically boasting more power and longer range, lasers are almost a no-brainer choice in packing a sidearm. While the lack of moving parts makes them more durable in many cases, they are more expensive and require more advanced equipment to repair. Lasers also have significant power requirements, swiftly draining standard energy packs.

Variations of the standard laser exist. Just like BattleMechs, personal lasers can be built to fire in single, strong bursts, or

BALLISTIC WEAPONS, CONT.

SKILL: SMALL ARMS (RIFLES)

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	AP/BD	RANGE	SHOTS	COST/ RELOAD	AFF	MASS	NOTES
RIFLE (AUTOMATIC)	C/A-A-A/D	4B/4B	30/75/170/415	30	80/2	—	4 KG	BURST: 15/3; RECOIL: –1
RIFLE (BOLT-ACTION)	B/A-A-A/B	4B/4	40/115/225/500	5	60/1	—	3 KG	SIMPLE ACTION TO CHAMBER NEXT ROUND
RIFLE (FEDERATED LONG)	C/X-C-A/D	4B/5	35/85/205/450	10	120/3	—	5 KG	—
RIFLE (IMPERATOR AX-22 ASSAULT)	C/X-X-B/D	4B/4B	30/80/185/435	15	200/3	—	3.5 KG	BURST: 15/5; RECOIL: –1
RIFLE (M&G G-150)	C/X-X-C/D	4B/4B	45/95/215/460	9	270/5	LA	3.5 KG	BURST: 3/1; DETACHABLE TELESCOPE†
RIFLE (MAKESHIFT)	B/A-A-A/B	4B/4	20/65/140/300	1	20/1	PER	6 KG	–1 TO-HIT**
RIFLE (TK ASSAULT)	C/X-C-A/D	4B/4B	25/70/160/410	20	150/3	LA	5.5 KG	BURST 10/5; RECOIL: –1
RIFLE (ZEUS HEAVY)	C/C-B-B/D	5B/5	35/80/190/420	5	200/3	LA	8 KG	—
ELEPHANT GUN	B/B-C-C/C	5B/6	20/60/160/400	2	100/2	PER	5 KG	–2 TO-HIT
FEDERATED-BARRETT M42B	C/X-X-D/E	—	—	—	1,385/—	FS	—	2 COMPLEX ACTIONS AND SKILL CHECK TO RECONFIGURE
(STANDARD MODE)	—	4B/5B	30/75/180/430	50	—/12	FS	6 KG	BURST: 10/3; RECOIL –1; LASER SIGHT† AND GRENADE LAUNCHER††
(CLOSE-IN MODE)	—	3B/4B	20/50/120/280	50	—/12	—	5 KG	BURST: 5/2; RECOIL –1; LASER SIGHT, SOUND/FLASH SUPPRESSOR† AND GRENADE LAUNCHER††
(LT. MACHINE GUN MODE)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	SEE SUPPORT WEAPONS
SNIPER RIFLE	B/C-C-C/D	5B/4	45/150/340/700	5	350/4	—	10 KG	SIMPLE ACTION TO CHAMBER NEXT ROUND
SNIPER RIFLE (MINOLTA 9000)	D/X-X-E/F	5B/4	50/160/360/730	10	1,000/5	CC	6 KG	—
HARPOON GUN (PEQUOD, MK. 2)	C/F-D-B/D	4B/4	18/35/65/90	2	700/5	TC	4.1 KG	WIRELESS; NO MODIFIER TO USE UNDERWATER

*Jam on Fumble **Misfire on Fumble (delivers 1X/1S damage to user) †See Weapon Accessories †† See Grenade Launchers

in rapid-cycling pulses that mimic a kind of "energy SMG" (but without recoil). Less disciplined users shooting at the highest rate of fire will burn through a standard power pack in seconds. Another energy hog, the Blazer, is to the laser what the double-barreled shotgun is to a regular shotgun. Using two focusing tubes, dual beams can be fired, giving the Blazer a bit of additional range and punch.

The Ebony assault rifle is an attempt to provide increased power efficiency by allowing the user to drastically alter the characteristic of the beam, and the associated power use. The Mauser system represents an attempt to standardize infantry weapons during the Star League that has continued under Word of Blake and the Clans, albeit in two different directions. Containing everything a soldier might need in a single package, the Mauser is also an extremely capable pulse laser rifle.

FLECHETTE WEAPONS

"A cooling vest may be almost as good as a flak vest, but they only cover your torso. Fool around with someone wielding a needler and expect to suffer for it." —KP

"I ignore flechette weapons in my battle armor, but against civilians they're almost a WMD". —JH

Flechette weapons rely on many fast, small projectiles to cause damage over a large area. Dating back to the blunderbuss, for many years the shotgun was the mainstay of flechette-type weapons. In the past millennium, it has been joined by needlers and some specialized ammunition for other weapons. Flechette weapons are best used against unarmored or lightly armored opponents, as the individual projectiles cannot penetrate heavier armored targets. Similarly, these weapons are rarely effective against solid barriers.

Shotguns are similar to rifles, but with smooth barrels usually lacking the rifling. While this decreases their effective range, it allows them to fire cartridges filled with small projectiles, typically metallic balls. These spread over an area, making the shotgun a good choice against targets without full body protection. Shotguns can also fire solid slugs, making them similar to regular a ballistic weapon, though the lack of rifling reduces effective range.

While a needler may produce a similar result, these weapons operate differently from shotguns. Rather than shooting a burst of projectiles at once, a needler shreds a block of polymer into a stream of small, needle-like plastic shards. Propelled by compressed gas, these light rounds have hardly any recoil. Even less penetrating than ball bearings, the shards are devastating against flesh, causing needler weapons to be outlawed in some

ENERGY WEAPONS

SKILL: SMALL ARMS (PISTOLS)

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	AP/BD	RANGE	SHOTS	COST/ RELOAD	AFF	MASS	NOTES
LASER PISTOL	D/B-A-A/D	4E/3	15/35/80/225	2 PPS	750/†	—	1 KG	—
BLAZER PISTOL	D/C-C-D/E	5E/3	15/40/90/240	8 PPS	3,000/†	FW	2 KG	—
ER LASER PISTOL	F/X-D-C/D	4E/3	20/50/125/300	3 PPS	1,000/†	CLAN	1 KG	—
HOLDOUT LASER PISTOL	D/B-B-B/D	4E/2	10/22/50/120	3 PPS	100/†	FW	50 G	—
LASER PISTOL (WHITE DWARF)	D/X-X-C/E	4E/3	10/25/60/150	1	250	FW	250 G	ONE SHOT, -3 TO PERCEPTION CHECK TO NOTICE BEAM
NAKJIMA HAND LASER	D/X-D-C/D	5E/2	20/40/100/250	1 PPS	750/†	DC	1 KG	—
NOVA LASER PISTOL	E/X-X-D/E	3E/5	8/20/40/100	10 PPS	1,250/†	FW	1.5 KG	—
SUNBEAM LASER PISTOL	D/X-F-D/E	4E/4	15/30/65/200	4 PPS	750/†	FW	1 KG	—
PULSE LASER PISTOL	D/B-F-C/D	3E/2B	12/30/70/195	2 PPS	1,000/†	—	1 KG	BURST 5/2; RECOIL 0
PULSE LASER PISTOL, CLAN	F/X-C-C/D	3E/3B	15/35/80/200	3 PPS	1,500/†	CLAN	1 KG	BURST 5/2; RECOIL 0

SKILL: SMALL ARMS (RIFLES)

LASER RIFLE	D/C-B-B/D	4E/4	60/205/465/1100	5 PPS	1250/†	—	5 KG	—
LASER RIFLE (MAXELL PL-10)	D/X-X-C/D	5E/3	55/200/460/1050	9 PPS	2,000/†	LA	6.5 KG	—
BLAZER RIFLE	D/C-C-D/E	5E/4	65/220/485/1180	10 PPS	2190/†	—	7 KG	—
MARX XX LASER RIFLE	D/D-E-D/D	5E/3	75/250/500/1150	6 PPS	1750/†	—	6 KG	—
EBONY ASSAULT RIFLE	F/X-X-E/F	—	—	—	8,500/†	MC	10 KG	SIMPLE ACTION TO CHANGE SETTING
(STANDARD MODE)	—	4E/3	65/200/475/1,000	8 PPS	—	—	—	—
(HIGH-POWER MODE)	—	5E/4	50/160/350/700	12 PPS	—	—	—	—
(EXTENDED-RANGE MODE)	—	3E/2	80/260/610/1,200	4 PPS	—	—	—	—
INTEK LASER RIFLE	D/X-D-D/D	4E/3	80/275/550/1200	2 PPS	1,250/†	FW	5 KG	—
MAGNA LASER RIFLE	D/C-C-D/D	3E/5	50/190/440/1000	5 PPS	1,500/†	DC	6 KG	—
M61A COMBAT SYSTEM	D/X-X-D/E	4E/4	70/225/480/1,100	5 PPS	2,150/—	FS	6 KG	INCLUDES LASER SIGHT AND GRENADE LAUNCHER
MAUSER 980 ASSAULT SYSTEM	E/C-F-D/D	3E/3B	55/170/365/740	2 PPS	8,000/†	CS	10.5 KG	BURST 10/4; RECOIL 0, INCLUDES A DETACHABLE VIBROBLADE†† AND A COMPACT GRENADE LAUNCHER‡
MAUSER 1200 LSS	E/X-X-E/E	4E/4D	55/170/365/740	5 PPS	10,000/†	CS	11 KG	BURST 5/2; RECOIL 0, INCLUDES A DETACHABLE VIBROBLADE†† AND A COMPACT GRENADE LAUNCHER‡
MAUSER IIC IAS	F/X-F-E/F	4E/5	90/300/700/1,400	5 PPS	18,000/†	CLAN	12 KG	ENCUMBERING; INCLUDES DETACHABLE VIBROBLADE†† AND A GRENADE LAUNCHER‡
ER LASER RIFLE	F/X-D-D/D	4B/4	90/300/700/1400	5 PPS	2,000/†	CLAN	5 KG	—
PULSE LASER RIFLE, CLAN	F/X-E-D/D	3E/4B	60/180/400/800	5 PPS	2,000/†	CLAN	6 KG	BURST 10/4; RECOIL 0
PULSE LASER RIFLE	D/D-E-C/D	3E/3B	40/130/275/595	4 PPS	2,000/†	—	5 KG	BURST 10/4; RECOIL 0
STARFIRE ER LASER RIFLE	E/X-X-E/E	4E/4	85/285/625/1300	6 PPS	2,500/†	FW	5 KG	RECHARGE: 1; −3 TO PERCEPTION CHECK TO NOTICE BEAM

Note: PPS = Power Points per Shot. †Per power pack (see Power Packs, p. 306) ††See Modern Melee Weapons (p. 264) ‡See Grenade Launchers (p. 273)

FLECHETTE WEAPONS

SKILL: SMALL ARMS (PISTOLS)

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	AP/BD	RANGE	SHOTS	COST/ RELOAD	AFF	MASS	NOTES
NEEDLER PISTOL	D/A-A-A/D	2B/5BS	2/6/12/20	10	50/1	—	300 G	BURST 5/2; RECOIL –1; NEEDLER
NEEDLER PISTOL (HOLD-OUT)	D/C-B-B/E	2B/5S	2/4/6/12	5	20/—	—	50 G	NEEDLER; CANNOT BE RELOADED
NEEDLER PISTOL (SEA EAGLE)	D/X-F-D/D	1B/4BS	2/5/10/20	10	110/5	FW	350 G	BURST 5/3; RECOIL –1; NEEDLER
M&G FLECHETTE PISTOL	D/B-B-C/E	1B/4BS	2/5/10/20	15	100/4	LA	500 G	BURST 5/2; RECOIL –1; NEEDLER

SKILL: SMALL ARMS (RIFLES)

AUTOMATIC SHOTGUN	C/B-B-C/D	2B/5BS	4/10/20/45	12	200/2	—	5 KG	BURST 5/1; RECOIL –1
COMBAT SHOTGUN	C/B-B-B/D	3B/5S	5/12/24/50	8	175/2	—	4.5 KG	—
DOUBLE-BARRELED SHOTGUN	B/A-A-A/B	1B/6BS	3/8/16/45	2	30/1	—	4 KG	BURST 2/1; RECOIL –1*
DOUBLE-BARRELED SHOTGUN (SAWED OFF)	B/A-A-A/B	1B/6BS	1/4/8/22	2	30/1	—	3 KG	BURST 2/1; RECOIL –1; –1 TO ATTACK ROLL*
AVENGER CCW	C/X-E-C/D	2B/6BS	7/18/28/62	15	345/4	CLAN	5.5KG	BURST 3/1; RECOIL –1
WITH SOLID AMMO	C/X-E-C/D	5B/6B	7/18/28/62	15	345/16	CLAN	5.5KG	BURST 3/1; RECOIL –1
NEEDLER RIFLE	D/B-B-B/D	2B/5S	5/14/30/40	20	75/2	—	1 KG	NEEDLER
SHREDDER HEAVY NEEDLER RIFLE	D/X-X-C/D	3B/5S	3/8/15/30	10	150/3	LA	1 KG	NEEDLER

Note: Weapons identified as Needler suffer a –2 AP modifier against barriers and tactical armor. *Complex Action to Reload.

GAUSS WEAPONS

SKILL: SMALL ARMS (PISTOLS)

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	AP/BD	RANGE	SHOTS	COST/ RELOAD	AFF	MASS	NOTES
GAUSS PISTOL	F/X-D-D/D	4B/5	5/20/60/150	4, 1PPS	1,500/1	CLAN	1 KG	—
GAUSS PISTOL (MANDRAKE)	E/X-X-E/E	3B/4	3/10/35/80	1	750	CC	0.1 KG	—

SKILL: SMALL ARMS (RIFLES)

GAUSS RIFLE (THUNDERSTROKE)	E/X-X-E/E	5B/6	30/80/250/700	5, 2PPS	2,500/3	FS	7 KG	ENCUMBERING
GAUSS RIFLE (THUNDERSTROKE II)	E/X-X-D/E	5B/6	45/100/300/850	20, 1PPS	3,500/10	FS	6.5 KG	—

SKILL: SMALL ARMS (SMGs)

GAUSS SUBMACHINE GUN	E/X-X-D/F	5B/4B	30/80/250/700	30, 1PPS	2,000/10	CLAN	4.5 KG	BURST: 3/1; RECOIL –1

Note: Gauss weapons also require power packs (see Power Packs, p. 306).

GYROJET WEAPONS

SKILL: SMALL ARMS (PISTOLS)

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	AP/BD	RANGE	SHOTS	COST/ RELOAD	AFF	MASS	NOTES
COVENTRY HANDROCKET	D/X-X-D/E	4B/4	15/30/75/180	5	250/5		3.1 KG	GYROJET
GYROJET PISTOL	D/D-D-C/E	3B/4	8/25/70/165	2	450/1	—	2.5 KG	GYROJET
GYROJET PISTOL, HOLDOUT	D/D-D-C/E	3B/4	3/7/12/25	2	30/1	—	50 G	GYROJET

SKILL: SMALL ARMS (RIFLES)

GYROJET RIFLE	D/C-C-B/D	4B/5	35/90/275/500	10	1,250/100	—	7 KG	GYROJET
GYROJET GUN, HEAVY	D/C-D-C/E	4B/6	45/120/300/625	5	2,500/250	—	10 KG	GYROJET; ENCUMBERING
GYROSLUG CARBINE	D/C-D-C/D	4B/4	20/50/120/260	20	800/5	—	4 KG	GYROJET
GYROSLUG CARBINE (STAR KING)	D/X-C-D/D	4B/5	23/65/130/285	20	950/15	LA	5.2 KG	GYROJET
GYROSLUG RIFLE	D/B-C-C/D	4B/5	25/60/150/315	50	1,000/20	—	8 KG	GYROJET

MISCELLANEOUS RANGED WEAPONS

SKILL: SMALL ARMS (PISTOLS)

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	AP/BD	RANGE	SHOTS	COST/ RELOAD	AFF	MASS	NOTES
DART GUN	C/A-A-A/C	1B/3D	1/4/6/10	1	40/1	—	650 G	—
GAS CAPSULE PISTOL ("SPITBALL")	C/E-D-C/B	0B/*	4/11/19/27	25	6/2	—	1 KG	−1 TO ATTACK ROLL; GAS CARTRIDGES MUST BE REPLACED AFTER 200 SHOTS (1 C-BILL PER GAS CARTRIDGE)
LGB-46R "PAINT" GUN	C/A-A-B/B	0B/0	1/2/3/4	15	50/10	—	1.8 KG	FIRES LIQUID PAYLOAD (TYPICALLY PAINT OR WATER)
SONIC STUNNER	D/B-C-B/B	0S/4D	2/5/7/10	1PPS	100/†	—	600 G	**
TRANQ GUN	C/A-A-A/C	2B/4D	3/10/18/25	10	30/1	—	1.5 KG	ONLY DELIVERS ITS BD IF THE WEAPON'S AP (PLUS THE ATTACK'S MOS ÷ 4, ROUND DOWN) EXCEEDS THE TARGET'S BAR. OTHERWISE, NO BD IS APPLIED.

SKILL: SMALL ARMS (RIFLES)

BUCCANEER GEL GUN	C/X-X-D/C	2B/4D	3/10/18/25	5	200/20	FW	2.5 KG	AP 0 VS. BARRIERS/TACTICAL ARMOR; NO RECOIL IN ZERO-G; ON HIT, −2 TO KNOCKDOWN CHECK
CERES ARMS CROWDBUSTER	D/X-F-D/C	0S/5D	2/6/10/15	2PPS	150/†	CC	1 KG	**
RADIUM SNIPER RIFLE	E/F-X-F/F	4S/5C	95/350/750/1500	5, 10PPS	9,500/650	TC	12 KG	ON SUCCESSFUL HIT THAT PENETRATES ARMOR, INJECTS TARGET WITH 1 DOSE OF RADIUM POISON (SEE DRUGS AND POISONS, P. 317)

*The BD for this weapon depends on its payload; gas capsules may contain contact/inhalation poisons up to 3 BD in damage (see Drugs and Poisons, p. 317).

**Sonic-based stun weapons are only effective at Atmospheric pressures of Thin or higher; Helmets provide BAR 1 protection vs sonic weapons; Fully-enclosed armor (such as battlesuits and enviro-suits) and earplugs provide BAR 5; Vehicle armor (and full deafness) provide BAR 10 vs sonic weapons

†Per power pack (see Power Packs, p. 306)

MODERN WEAPONS

• MARTIAL EAGLE •

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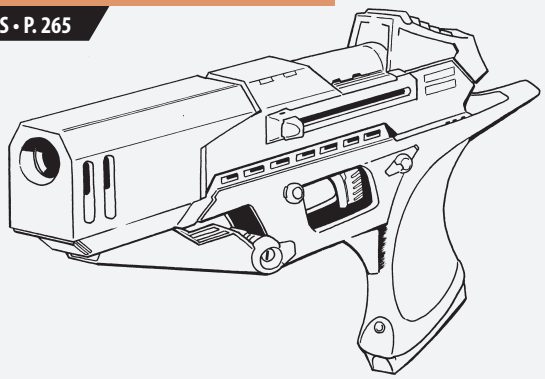
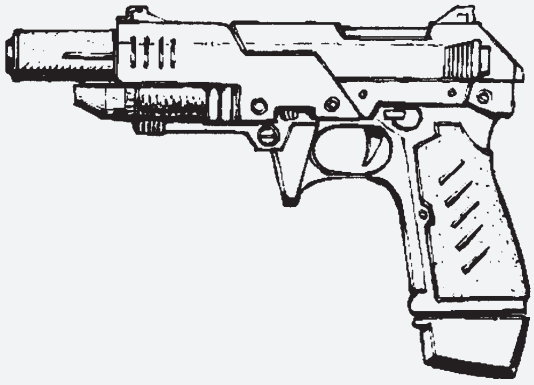


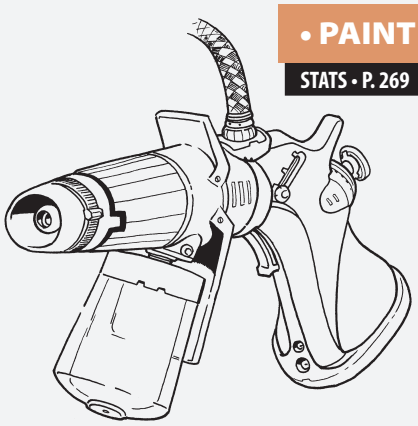
• NAMBU PISTOL •

STATS • P. 265



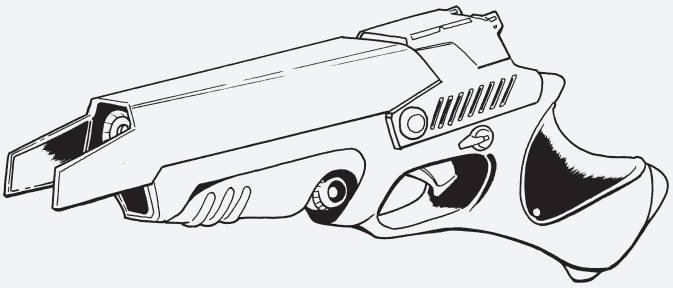
• PAINT GUN •

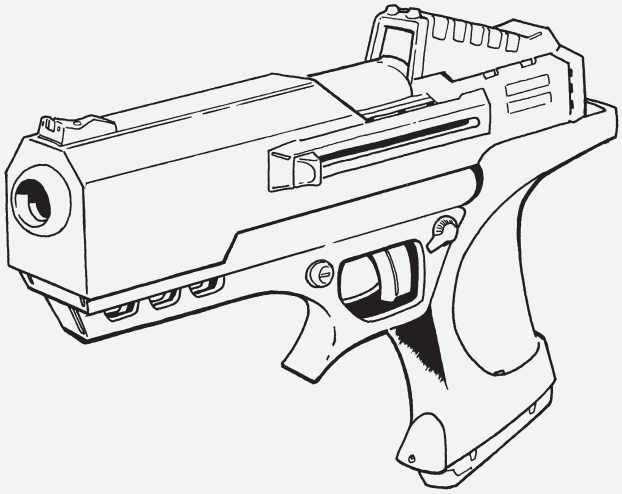
STATS • P. 269



• SEA EAGLE NEEDLER •

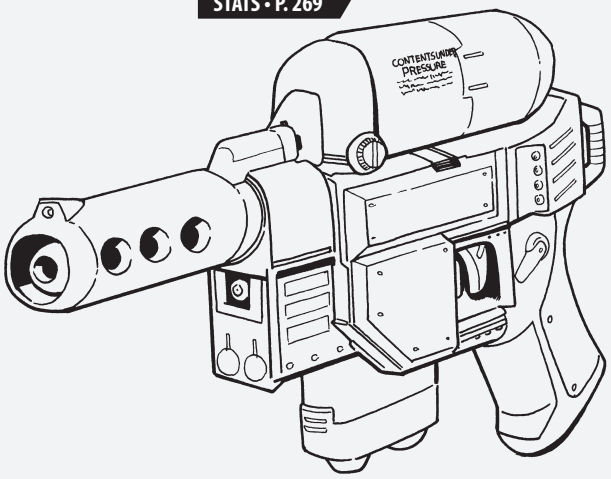
STATS • P. 268





• SPITBALL GAS PISTOL •

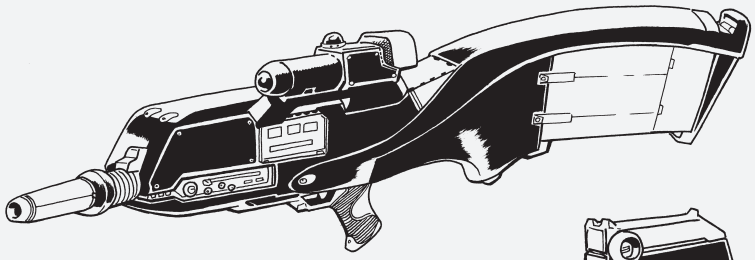
STATS • P. 269



• HAWK EAGLE •

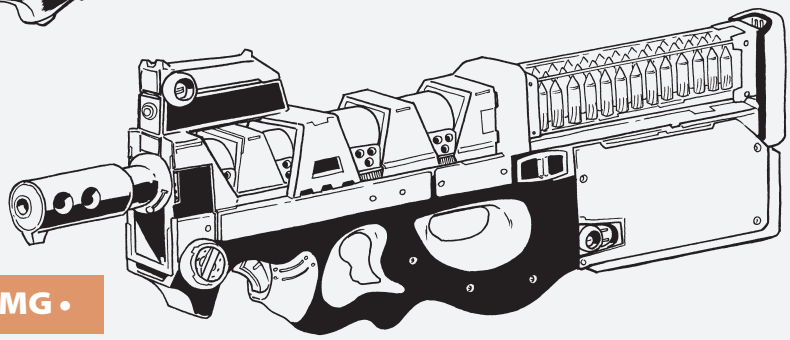
STATS • P. 265

MODERN WEAPONS



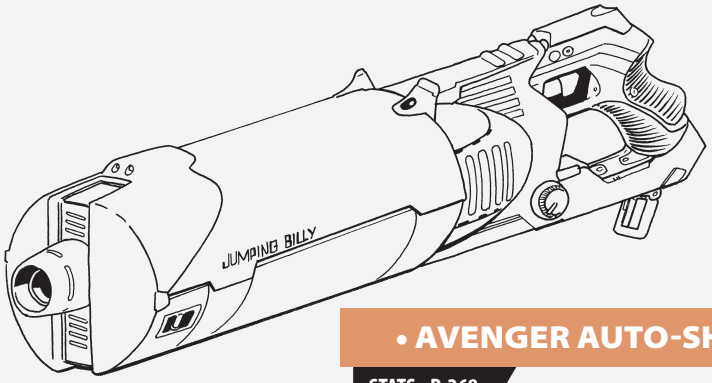
• EBONY ASSAULT RIFLE •

STATS • P. 267



• GAUSS SMG •

STATS • P. 268



• BUCCANEER GEL GUN •

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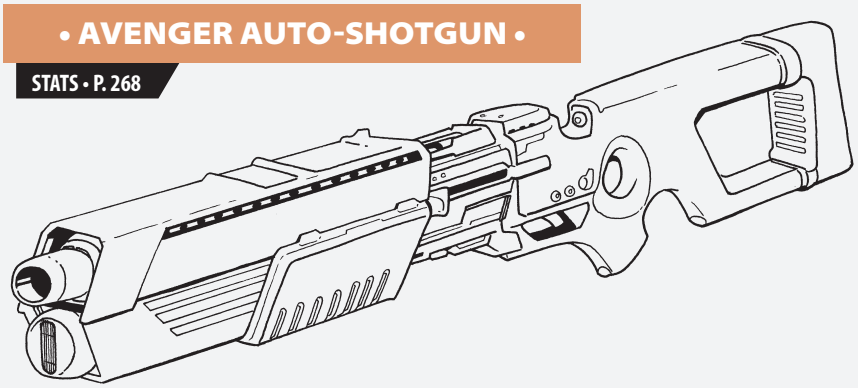
• AVENGER AUTO-SHOTGUN •

STATS • P. 268



• SNIPER RIFLE •

STATS • P. 266

jurisdictions. Their short range and inability to penetrate hard targets is often a drawback that limits them to close-quarters self-defense, but needler weapons are ideal for spaceship combat, where armor isn't as frequent and the user doesn't want to worry about hull breaches. For ease of use, needler cartridges contain a gas cylinder with enough gas to fire the enclosed polymer block.

GAUSS WEAPONS

"I've seen some Capellan hotshots plug these as the next standard MechWarrior sidearm, but I don't see it. It needs a power pack and *ammo? Sounds like too much to lug around." —KP*

"With the integral batteries on battle armor, Gauss weapons are a decent anti-personnel mount." —JH

Like ballistic weapons, Gauss weapons propel a solid slug down a barrel to the target. Instead of a chemical reaction, Gauss weapons use magnetic fields to propel a metallic slug. More reliable than a standard slug-thrower, these weapons are also more complicated and expensive. They are popular with those who have had a chance to use them, but require projectile ammunition as well as power packs to provide enough energy to operate the electromagnets. Because of their complexity, personal Gauss weapons are rare, only slightly more common among the Clans.

GYROJET WEAPONS

"In the cockpit, I can shrug off most small weapons fire, but gyrojets to the canopy make me nervous." —KP

"These are becoming more common and they're growing on me." —JH

More like miniature rocket launchers than guns, gyrojets fire an explosive-tipped, self-propelled projectile at extremely high speed. The initial hiss of the projectile is quieter than typical gunfire, but the noise of the sonic boom begins only slightly ahead of the muzzle. The rocket nozzles that propel the projectile inflict an extremely high-velocity spin, which gives it a long effective range. This makes these weapons a great choice for those who can afford the costly price tag and upkeep. The exhaust trail from the round can be traced back to the shooter under the right conditions, however.

Gyrojet weapons are heavier and bulkier than their ballistic counterparts. Gyroslugs are a version of a gyrojet with smaller amounts of propellant, allowing more ammunition but shorter range.

Special Game Rules

Gyrojet-type weapons (as indicated in the weapon's notes) suffer no AP reduction at Extreme Range. In addition, under most atmospheric conditions, a Perception Check to track the source of a gyrojet weapon's fire receives an additional +2 roll modifier.

MISCELLANEOUS SMALL ARMS

"*Even with double-strength heat sinks, you're better off without active flamethrowers nearby." —KP*

While most personal weapons can be easily grouped, some fall outside the usual categories. Most of these are a variety of non-lethal weapons, though "less-lethal" is often a more appropriate label; for just as humans have managed to survive almost every nasty weapon we've dreamt up, someone always seems to find a way to die from the most innocuous ones as well.

Law enforcement personnel use dart weapons that dispense an electrical shock via a thin cable with a maximum length of 10 meters. The user must reload this dart after every discharge. Similar in intent to the dart weapon, the tranq gun delivers a payload of an injectable chemical to the target, if it can penetrate any armor the target is wearing. Typically using an incapacitating agent, these weapons are used by security forces and kidnappers, of the criminal and intelligence-service varieties.

Some weapons listed here, such as the sonic stunner and Ceres Crowdbuster, use sound waves to disrupt the intended target. Outside the frequency range audible to humans, the weapons may appear quiet, but can easily be "heard" through electronic means.

SUPPORT WEAPONS

Support weapons—also referred to as medium weapons—are meant to provide a powerful destructive force for a group of soldiers. Their weight, size and ammunition (or power) consumption make them poor choices as standard weapons, but coordinated with an organized unit these weapons can serve as an effective force multiplier. While the media is fond of having heroic characters use these large and unwieldy weapons like SMGs, the instances where this happens in real life are few and far between. Individuals most often use support weapons on battle armor, which enables one augmented soldier to carry lasers, machine guns and heavy rockets that normally require a crew.

Without battle armor, moving these types of weapons generally involves a crew whose job is to assemble and disassemble the mount, or the weapon itself.

Game Rules for Support Weapon Crews

In game play, a support weapon with a crew requirement needs its entire crew to spend a full Complex Action assembling or dismantling the weapon before it can be moved. If the weapon is undermanned, increase this assembly or breakdown time by 1 turn for every missing crewman. For example, a weapon with a crew requirement of 3, but whose crew consists only of the operator, will take 3 turns to assemble before firing. Additional crew cannot speed up this process.

MACHINE GUNS

"One machine gun isn't terribly scary; but four firing from cover should give even a 'Mech pause." —KP

"Keep your machine gun crews lavishly equipped with ammo. You never want them to get gun-shy about suppression fire." —JH

The oldest support weapon type, the machine gun is still the most popular. These weapons generally have a larger caliber and rate of fire than the assault rifles a typical soldier carries, though machine guns are heavier, more expensive and can burn through ammunition at a much higher rate. Compared to other support weapons, these weapons are simple and inexpensive, and some versions are light enough for a single soldier to carry and use.

MACHINE GUN SUPPORT WEAPONS

SKILL: SUPPORT WEAPONS

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	AP/BD	RANGE	SHOTS	COST/ RELOAD	AFF	MASS	NOTES
AUTOCANNON, BEARHUNTER	D/X-X-D/F	7B/7B	14/60/120/200	180	3,000/200	CLAN	40 KG	BURST 30/5; RECOIL –3; CREW: 2
AUTOCANNON, SEMI-PORTABLE	C/C-D-D/E	6B/3B	25/75/200/550	200	2,000/150	—	25 KG	BURST 25/7; RECOIL –2; CREW: 2
FEDERATED-BARRETT M42B	C/X-X-D/E	—	—	—	1,385/—	FS	—	COMPLEX ACTION TO RECONFIGURE
(LT. MACHINE GUN MODE)	—	4B/5B	40/90/200/475	300	—/60	—	7 KG	BURST 15/3; RECOIL –2; SEE BALLISTIC WEAPONS (P. 266) FOR STANDARD AND CLOSE-IN CONFIGURATIONS
MACHINE GUN, LIGHT	C/B-B-B/D	5B/3B	30/80/190/450	45	400/6	—	7 KG	BURST 15/5; RECOIL –2; CREW: 2
MACHINE GUN, PORTABLE	C/B-B-B/D	5B/4B	30/85/200/460	75	1,000/10	—	11.5 KG	BURST 15/5; RECOIL –2; ENCUMBERING
MACHINE GUN, SEMI-PORTABLE	C/B-B-B/E	5B/4B	40/95/225/500	80	1,100/10	—	20 KG	BURST 20/5; RECOIL –2; CREW: 2
MACHINE GUN, SUPPORT	C/C-C-C/E	5B/5B	45/100/250/625	100	1,750/50	—	44 KG	BURST 20/6; RECOIL –2; CREW: 2
SUPPORT NEEDLER, FIREDRAKE	D/X-X-C/F	3B/7BCS	16/35/55/80	30	500/10	LA	25 KG	BURST 10/2; RECOIL –2; CREW: 2; NEEDLER*

*Though technically not a machine gun, the Firedrake Incendiary Support Needler follows the same essential rules for machine guns, while adding needler effects (including suffering a –2 AP modifier against barriers and tactical armor).

GRENADE LAUNCHERS AND MORTARS

SKILL: SUPPORT WEAPONS

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	AP/BD	RANGE	SHOTS	COST/ RELOAD	AFF	MASS	NOTES
GRENADE LAUNCHER	C/A-B-B/D	(B)	20/55/130/200	20	465/*	—	5 KG	—
GRENADE LAUNCHER, COMPACT	C/B-C-B/E	(A)	15/40/90/150	1	290/*	—	3 KG	SIMPLE ACTION TO RELOAD
GRENADE LAUNCHER, AUTOMATIC	C/B-B-B/E	(B)	20/45/110/180	10	975/*	—	12 KG	BURST 5/1; RECOIL –2
GRENADE LAUNCHER, HEAVY	C/X-X-D/E	(C)	20/60/150/250	20	1,500/*	—	15 KG	BURST 5/2; RECOIL –2; ENCUMBERING
GRENADE LAUNCHER, HVY. AUTO	D/X-X-D/E	(D)	25/65/150/240	20	4,500/*	CLAN	20 KG	BURST 5/2; RECOIL –2; ENCUMBERING
SKILL: ARTILLERY								
MORTAR, LIGHT	B/A-A-A/D	(D)	40/100/250/565	1	1,400/*	—	50 KG	CREW; 2; INDIRECT; MINIMUM RANGE: 40**
MORTAR, HEAVY	B/A-A-A/D	(E)	100/180/400/900	1	5,000/*	—	220 KG	CREW; 3; INDIRECT; MINIMUM RANGE:100**

*Per ordnance type (see Ordnance, p. 282-284) **Due to their arcing fire, mortars cannot effectively target any unit or area within their minimum range.

MISSILE LAUNCHERS

SKILL: SUPPORT WEAPONS

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	AP/BD	RANGE	SHOTS	COST/ RELOAD	AFF	MASS	NOTES
VLAW	C/A-B-B/E	(B)	35/150/295/450	1	75	—	2.2 KG	CANNOT BE RELOADED
LAW	C/A-B-B/E	(C)	55/200/335/560	1	350	—	4 KG	CANNOT BE RELOADED
LRM LAUNCHER	D/X-X-D/E	(C)	75/400/1000/2100	1	2,000/*	—	30 KG	ENCUMBERING
MRM LAUNCHER	D/X-X-E/E	(D)	65/300/1100/1500	1	2,500/*	—	30 KG	ENCUMBERING
SRM LAUNCHER (STANDARD)	C/B-D-D/E	(E)	60/225/425/740	2	1,500/*	—	30 KG	ENCUMBERING
SRM LAUNCHER (LIGHT)	C/C-C-C/E	(D)	55/180/270/475	2	1,500/*	—	10 KG	—
SRM LAUNCHER (HEAVY)	C/C-D-D/E	(F)	74/235/353/530	1	3,000/*	—	20 KG	ENCUMBERING
MK 1 LIGHT AA WEAPON	D/E-F-D/E	5B/6S	40/160/320/650	1	1,000	—	5 KG	CANNOT BE RELOADED; +2 TO ATTACK VS. AIRBORNE TARGETS; −5 VS. ALL OTHERS
MK 2 MAN-PORTABLE AA WEAPON	D/F-X-D/E	6B/8S	60/360/900/1800	4	3,500/1,000	—	35 KG	ENCUMBERING; CREW: 2; +2 TO ATTACK VS. AIRBORNE TARGETS; −5 VS. ALL OTHERS

*Per ordnance type (see Ordnance, pp. 282-284), but increase cost by 10 percent for SRM or MRM munitions, and by 15 percent for LRM munitions.

RECOILLESS RIFLES

SKILL: SUPPORT WEAPONS

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	AP/BD	RANGE	SHOTS	COST/ RELOAD	AFF	MASS	NOTES
RECOILLESS RIFLE, LIGHT	C/B-B-A/E	(C)	50/180/375/600	1	300/*	—	8 KG	ENCUMBERING; BACK-BLAST 2M
RECOILLESS RIFLE, MEDIUM	C/B-B-A/E	(D)	60/200/390/640	1	2,000/*	—	32 KG	CREW: 2; BACK-BLAST 5M
RECOILLESS RIFLE, HEAVY	C/B-B-A/E	(E)	70/225/450/700	1	4,000/*	—	60 KG	CREW: 3; BACK-BLAST 10M

*Per ordnance type (see *Ordnance*, pp. 282-284)

At the highest end of the machine gun scale are personal autocannons. These semi-portable weapons provide a massive rate of fire, but their multiple-barrel design—coupled with their extreme size and power—preclude typical recoil compensation modifications, causing many to mount them on gyroscopic harnesses or on tripods. Their weight and size make them a rare choice for mobile support.

GRENADE LAUNCHERS AND MORTARS

"MechWarriors don't have to worry much about grenades, but in the heat of the moment, you can't tell an LRM impact from a grenade explosion." —KP

"The great thing about indirect weapons is that I can kill the enemy without ever being seen." —JH

Another staple of warfare, grenade launchers are the simplest support weapons, made to fire grenades at ranges beyond regular throwing distance. Some of these are one-shot weapons, requiring loading after each use, while others carry smaller grenades in clips or magazines that are capable of automatic fire—albeit at a somewhat greater expense.

Grenade launchers typically use self-propellant grenades, and so cannot launch regular hand grenades. The typical standard grenade launcher or compact grenade launcher is small and light enough to be mounted underneath the muzzle of a rifle or submachine gun. The larger automatic and heavy grenade launchers are more popular as light support weapons.

Mortars are smooth-bore, indirect-fire weapons prized for their simplicity and ease of use. They have longer ranges than grenade launchers and fire heavier munitions, but usually require a crew, where most grenade launchers require only a single operator. Still, mortars remain popular as a cheap alternative (or supplement) to artillery.

Special Game Rules

Grenade launchers are capable of direct or indirect fire, and may use the Indirect Fire rules described on p. 174. Mortar weapons may only fire indirectly, and thus must use the Indirect Fire rules. Both of these weapon classes determine their AP/BD values based on the type and size of ordnance they use (see *Ordnance*, p. 279). The letter shown in their AP/BD column thus indicates the appropriate ordnance size.

SUPPORT ENERGY WEAPONS

SKILL: SUPPORT WEAPONS

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	AP/BD	RANGE	SHOTS	COST/ RELOAD	AFF	MASS	NOTES
DRAGONSBANE PULSE LASER	E/X-X-D/E	5E/3B	60/230/500/1250	15	5,000	DC	7 KG	BURST 15/5; RECOIL 0; MUST FIRE FULL BURST AND CANNOT BE RECHARGED
HELLBORE ASSAULT LASER	E/X-X-E/E	6E/6	60/205/465/1100	10PPS	2,500/†	CS	10 KG	ENCUMBERING
SUPPORT LASER	D/C-D-D/E	6E/8	100/325/760/1500	10PPS	10,000/†	—	72 KG	CREW: 2
SUPPORT LASER, SEMI-PORTABLE	D/C-D-C/E	5E/7	80/300/700/1450	7PPS	5,000/†	—	40 KG	CREW: 2
SUPPORT LASER, ER (NON-CLAN)	E/X-X-E/E	6E/8	110/400/800/1650	15PPS	11,250/†	FW	110 KG	CREW: 2
SUPPORT LASER, ER (CLAN)	F/X-X-D/E	6E/10	125/450/900/1700	15PPS	11,250/†	CLAN	100 KG	CREW: 2
SUPPORT LASER, ER (CLAN, SEMI-PORTABLE)	F/X-X-C/E	5E/8	100/350/775/1575	10PPS	10,000/†	CLAN	25 KG	CREW: 2
SUPPORT LASER, HEAVY	D/D-F-D/E	7E/12	150/500/900/1900	20PPS	40,000/†	—	140 KG	CREW: 3, RECHARGE: 1 TURN
SUPPORT PULSE LASER	E/D-F-D/E	5E/5B	85/310/725/1500	7PPS	16,000/†	—	150 KG	BURST 15/4; RECOIL: 0; CREW: 2
SUPPORT PULSE LASER, HEAVY	E/D-F-E/E	6E/5B	120/425/850/1750	8PPS	60,000/†	—	300 KG	BURST 15/5; RECOIL: 0; CREW: 4
SUPPORT PULSE LASER, SEMI-PORTABLE	F/X-X-D/E	5E/4B	70/250/600/1300	6PPS	12,500/†	CLAN	40 KG	BURST 10/4; CREW: 2
FLAMER, MAN-PACK	C/A-A-A/E	3E/5CS	8/20/35/70	12	100/2	—	15 KG	ENCUMBERING; INCENDIARY
FLAMER, HEAVY	C/A-B-B/E	3E /7CS	8/20/35/70	3	200/200	—	25 KG	INCENDIARY; CREW: 2
PARTICLE CANNON, SEMI-PORTABLE	D/C-F-D/E	4E/8S	60/225/475/1200	6PPS	7,000/†	—	40 KG	CREW: 2; RECHARGE: 1 TURN
PARTICLE CANNON, SUPPORT	D/C-F-C/E	5E/14S	75/275/650/1400	10PPS	45,000/†	—	1,800 KG	CREW: 5; RECHARGE: 2 TURNS
PLASMA RIFLE, MAN-PORTABLE	E/X-X-D/F	5E/10CS	60/250/500/1000	10, 5PPS	7,500/10‡	—	30 KG	ENCUMBERING, INCENDIARY
TAG, LIGHT (MAN-PORTABLE)	E/F-X-E/D	0E/0	150/500/950/1900	5PPS	40,000/†	—	20 KG	ENCUMBERING

†Per power pack (see Power Packs, p. 306) ‡Plasma rifles also require power packs (see Power Packs, p. 306)

SUPPORT GAUSS WEAPONS

SKILL: SUPPORT WEAPONS

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	AP/BD	RANGE	SHOTS	COST/ RELOAD	AFF	MASS	NOTES
DAVID LIGHT GAUSS RIFLE	E/X-X-E/E	5B/5	90/330/745/1535	8, 8 PPS	6,000/20††	FW	18 KG	ENCUMBERING; BURST 4/1; RECOIL −1
GRAND MAULER GAUSS CANNON	E/X-X-D/E	6B/6	45/120/375/1000	5/6†	5,000/5††	FS	14 KG	ENCUMBERING
KING DAVID LIGHT GAUSS RIFLE	E/X-X-E/E	6B/5	100/350/775/1575	80, 8 PPS	8,000/200††	TW	30 KG	CREW: 2; BURST 5/2; RECOIL −1
MAGSHOT GAUSS RIFLE	E/X-X-E/F	6B/7	70/280/600/1250	20/3†	8,500/10††	FS	45 KG	CREW: 2
TSUNAMI HEAVY GAUSS RIFLE	E/X-X-D/E	6B/6	45/135/400/1070	5/8†	5,500/5††	DC	12.5 KG	ENCUMBERING

††Gauss weapons also require power packs (see Power Packs, p. 306).

MISSILE LAUNCHERS

"Normally you can plink at infantry from beyond the range where they have a chance of hurting you. Infantry equipped with missiles don't afford us that luxury." —KP

"New battle armor pilots sometimes assume that just because an infantry squad's bullets are bouncing off their armor, they can ignore them. But when one of those guys pulls out a LAW, it's one heck of a wake-up call." —JH

Support missile weapons are the most common method of providing an infantry unit with a potent anti-vehicular punch. Relatively lightweight, cheap and with excellent range and firepower, few weapon systems beat this combination. The most common missile launcher on the market today is the disposable Very-Light Anti-armor Warhead launcher, known to most folks simply as the V-LAW. The ubiquitous SRM launcher is another faithful standby, and commonly comes in a variety of sizes and styles that usually fire one or two missiles before needing a reload. Corean Farshot's man-portable LRM launcher has added greater range to the infantryman's missile capabilities that other manufacturers have begun to duplicate across the Inner Sphere.

Also covered in this category are the long-overlooked Anti-Aircraft (AA) weapons that have only recently started to make a comeback on the modern battlefield, like Armstrong Industries' Mk. 1 Disposable Light AA Weapon and their 4-shot Mk. 2 design.

Special Game Rules

Of the missile launchers presented here, only LRMs are capable of indirect fire, and may use the Indirect Fire rules on p. 174. All of these weapon classes determine their AP/BD values based on the type and size of ordnance they use (see *Ordnance*, p. 279). The letter indicated in their AP/BD column thus indicates the appropriate ordnance size.

RECOILLESS RIFLES

"I really hate seeing these things on battle armor." —KP

"When using them in the confines of a structure, always make sure there's enough room for the back-blast to vent without hurting you. Knock down a wall if you've got to." —JH

Similar to gyrojet weapons, recoilless rifles fire spin-stabilized rockets. The launch system they use, however, vents most of its exhaust through the back of the weapon, to reduce recoil to negligible levels, making these weapons viable in microgravity environments. While they still inflict some recoil on the launcher, the effect is minimal compared to regular rifles and missile launchers, which ultimately vent through the muzzle. While this allows for much greater thrust potential, it also creates a hazard behind the weapon for any unlucky or foolish enough to stand there. Recoilless rifles are gaining in popularity with the increased proliferation of anti-missile weaponry on the modern battlefield. Traveling at much higher speeds than normal missiles, recoilless rifle rockets are effectively immune to AMS.

Special Game Rules

When fired, recoilless rifles produce a back-blast that fans out in a 120-degree arc behind the weapon's direction of fire, for a distance as indicated in the weapon's notes. All targets and objects in this area are affected as if struck by a weapon with an AP/BD rating of 2E/6S.

Recoilless rifles use ordnance munitions just like grenade, mortar and missile launchers do (see *Ordnance*, p. 279), but cannot use FASCAM or flare ordnance.

SUPPORT ENERGY WEAPONS

"The last couple of decades have seen some pretty dangerous energy weapons becoming available to infantry. It's getting harder to ignore them." —KP

"Even with the power reserves a battlesuit carries, energy weapons need their own power clips. These things may not use ammo as such, but you still have to nurse your shots." —JH

Heavier than machine guns, support lasers provide a bigger punch but consume power packs at an incredible rate. This typically restricts them to an anti-vehicular role, and support energy weapons are often hooked up to a vehicle or building's power supply to add to their longevity for that reason. Support pulse lasers can provide rates of fire similar to or greater than that of a support machine gun, and are often used to provide suppression fire.

Flamers, by comparison, are sheer terror weapons, aimed at clearing rooms, bunkers and jungles by "flushing" the area with fire. Plasma weapons accomplish much the same effect with a more sophisticated process where foam-core ammo is lased and shot like a white-hot soft projectile at a target. Though both of these may be called ballistic weapons, based on the technicality that each uses more substantial ammo beyond battery power, their primarily incendiary effects earn them the energy weapon classification in most cases.

Support particle cannons—another favorite of anti-vehicle troops—operate similar to vehicular PPCs, but their longer recharge time between shots tends to make most troops prefer lasers and other support weapons.

Finally, there's the man-portable TAG, which is less a weapon and more a targeting aid for incoming semi-guided missiles and artillery fire. In this respect, it makes the common infantryman more of a threat because he can call in fire support that may inflict far more damage than any other weapon in the ground-pounder's arsenal.

SUPPORT GAUSS WEAPONS

"Gauss weaponry is much more expensive and power-thirsty than conventional ballistic, making it a rare sight in large infantry formations—but still, this technology has revolutionized the ballistic potential a ground-pounder can deliver." —KP

"Some swear by them, but I'm avoiding guns that require ammo and *draw off my power supply as much as Gauss guns do." —JH*

Heavy and expensive, support-grade Gauss weapons offer a powerful punch at excellent range. Like personal Gauss weapons, support versions require specialized ammunition *and* power packs. Intended primarily for anti-vehicular roles, the expense and logistical requirements of these weapons have slowed the rate at which they are deployed, but elite and well-supported troops may easily field Gauss rifle squads or even platoons.

EXPLOSIVES

Explosives are a mainstay of the battlefield, but their expense and range of effect make them situational. A large variety of explosives is available, some designed for the least skilled individuals, others that require expertise to utilize effectively. Some types are part of delivery systems for use with other weapons, such as mortars or recoilless rifles.

STANDARD EXPLOSIVES

"Losing a leg in the middle of a minefield is possibly the most humiliating way to hand your 'Mech to the enemy." —KP

"Mines are a great force multiplier, but they're no replacement for soldiers. A mine can't tell your foot from that of your enemy." —JH

Grenades are one of the most ubiquitous weapons on the modern battlefield. Though they require little skill to use effectively ("almost" can be just as good as a direct hit when it comes to these weapons, after all), a truly skilled user can toss one of these just where he wants it—and where it will most damage the enemy. Grenades come in a range of sizes and types, from a standard battlefield "pineapple" to the small-but-deadly micro-grenades favored in special operations. A more recent introduction—the rocket-assisted grenade—has also made its dubious debut lately, combining a short-range thruster and fold-out stabilizer fins with the basic form and function of the battlefield standard.

Mines—another commonplace battlefield explosive—are about as ancient a concept as hand grenades (if not more so). In essence an explosive booby trap, mines today come in a wide variety of types and functions, ranging from anti-vehicular versions that a person could jump on all day and not set off, to the motion-sensitive active mines used to butcher jump infantry by the platoon. Standard mines may be set for a variety of triggers, but typical anti-personnel versions usually detonate only when anything heavier than a small child hits their detonator, while anti-vehicular mines (conventional and mass-sensitive vibrabomb varieties) hold off until they sense a target within range of their tolerances. Active mines—a particularly nasty variation of standard mines—use sensors to detect a target in the air immediately above them, and throw up a cloud of shrapnel to take it down. Command-detonated mines are the most destructive of all, activated by the remote control of a friendly unit and thereby allowing for superior target selection.

Grenade Special Game Rules

Tossing grenades is considered an Indirect Fire attack and uses all the applicable rules given in *Personal Combat*, including scatter effects on a missed attack. The range a grenade can be thrown is based on the character's STR score, as shown in the Standard Explosives Table, with Short Range equal to the character's STR, Medium equal to the character's STR x 2, Long Range equal to the character's STR x 3, and so forth (with all ranges in meters). All of the basic grenade types (except rocket-assisted grenades) use the same ordnance munitions seen with mortars, missiles and grenade launchers.

Mine Special Game Rules

Mines are typically planted as traps for unwary enemies and intruders. Setting and arming a mine requires no Action Check, but counts as a Complex Action. Creating true minefields requires multiple mines, spread out over a target area. FASCAM munitions can deliver such minefields with a simple weapon attack on the target area, but hand-laid minefields can take significantly longer.

Minefields receive a density rating when deployed, which corresponds to how many mines are placed in the same amount of area. Each "point" of minefield density equates to one mine for every area 5 meters in diameter (or roughly 37 mines within an area 30 meters across). FASCAM-deployed minefields (also known as Thunder missiles) have a density equal to 2 points for every 5 points of *Total Warfare* damage the launcher would normally inflict, and spread across an area 30 meters in diameter (so an LRM-20 FASCAM round delivers a minefield with a density of 8 on a successful attack). When a minefield's density is not specified, it is presumed to be 4 (3 for command-detonated mines). The maximum density rating for a minefield is 11.

When a unit crosses through an area mined with standard or active minefields, its controlling player must make a special Detonation Check. This is an EDG Attribute Check, subtracting the minefield density from the result, adding –2 if the character is running or sprinting through the field, and adding –4 if the unit is a vehicle. (Each trooper in an infantry unit may make this roll separately, or—if infantry cohesion rules are used—the squad commander may make the roll on the unit's behalf, based on the average EDG score for the squad's members; crewed vehicles use the Driver's EDG score.) If this result is successful, no mines are detonated and the unit continues normally. Otherwise, a mine has detonated and must apply its damage to the unit. Once a mine detonates, the density of the minefield is reduced by 1 point and the unit that set off the device suffers damage as appropriate.

For infantry units, the damage inflicted by a mine, resolved in tactical combat, equals that of the listed ordnance type. For vehicular units, the damage inflicted by a minefield is equal to the minefield's density rating times 2.5 (round down), and reduces the minefield's density by 2 points.

A minefield reduced to a density of 0 is effectively neutralized, though a few stray explosives may remain. Characters trained as minesweepers must spend 2 consecutive Complex Actions disarming a single mine, using the Demolitions Skill. This roll is not modified by the field's density, but if the minefield was somehow concealed beforehand, an appropriate Perception Check may be required to locate the mines first.

Mines are treated as objects with a BAR of 2. Any mine that suffers damage (typically by being shot at or being within the blast zone of another exploding mine) detonates on a 2D6 roll of 9 or greater.

Additional rules for the use of minefields may be found in the mines' listings and notes in the Standard Explosives Table.

STANDARD EXPLOSIVES

SKILL: THROWN WEAPONS

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	AP/BD	RANGE	SHOTS	COST/ RELOAD	AFF	MASS	NOTES
GRENADE, MICRO	C/B-C-C/E	(A)	STR X 1/2/3/4	1	2	—	200 G	INDIRECT
GRENADE, MINI	C/B-B-B/E	(B)	STR X 1/2/3/4	1	10	—	450 G	INDIRECT
GRENADE	C/A-A-A/E	(C)	STR X 1/2/3/4	1	20	—	600 G	INDIRECT
GRENADE, ROCKET-ASSISTED	C/X-X-D/E	5X/10A	STR X 1/2/3/4	1	50	—	600 G	INDIRECT; −2 TO ATTACK; RANGE X5 AND BD −2 IN ROCKET-ASSISTED MODE

SKILL: DEMOLITIONS

MINE, ACTIVE	E/X-X-D/E	(D)	—	—	1,000	CC	5 KG	−4 TO DETONATION CHECK VS. JUMPING UNITS OR HOVERCRAFT IMMEDIATELY OVERHEAD
MINE, COMMAND-DETONATED	C/B-B-B/E	(E)	—	—	75	—	600 G	WILL NOT DETONATE UNLESS TRIGGERED BY FRIENDLY UNIT WITH WORKING COMMS.
MINE, STANDARD	B/A-A-A/E	(E)	—	—	50	—	500 G	+4 TO DETONATION CHECK VS. HOVERCRAFT; MAY NOT ATTACK JUMPING UNITS OVERHEAD
MINE, VIBRABOMB	D/B-D-C/E	(E)	—	—	500	—	1 KG	TRIGGERED BY TONNAGE SETTING (SEE P. 209, TACTICAL OPERATIONS)
SEA MINES	*	*	—	—	X2	—	X1	CAN BE DEPLOYED IN WATER UP TO 72 METERS DEEP.
LAND MINES	*	*	—	—	X1	—	X1	CAN BE DEPLOYED ON LAND OR UNDERWATER (ON THE FLOOR OF THE WATER FEATURE) TO A MAX DEPTH OF 15 METERS

*Land mines and sea mines reflect common minefield deployment options. If none are specified, a minefield is presumed to be land mines. If no type is then specified (Active, Command-Detonated, Standard or Vibrabomb), the minefield is presumed to be a Standard type.

DEMOLITIONS

SKILL: DEMOLITIONS

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	AP/BD	RANGE	SHOTS	COST/ RELOAD	AFF	MASS	NOTES
C8, BLASTING BLOCK	D/B-B-B/D	7X/10A	—	1	50	—	1 KG	−4AP/−4BD PER METER
C8, SATCHEL CHARGE	D/B-D-C/E	8X/12A	STR X 0.5/1/1.5/2	1	210	—	4.5 KG	−2AP/−2BD PER METER; RANGE APPLIES WHEN THROWN AS A GRENADE
DEMOLITION KIT	C/A-C-B/D	—	—	12	200	—	2 KG	USED TO RIG UP TO 12 EXPLOSIVES FOR REMOTE OR TIMED EXPLOSIVES; +1 TO DEMOLITIONS ROLL TO RIG EXPLOSIVES
PENTAGLYCERINE	D/C-E-D/D	7X/10A	—	1	150	—	200 G	−2AP/−2BD PER METER

DEMOLITIONS

"If you have the time, it pays to have engineers check a bridge before you cross it. I once had a bridge explode on me, while the river bed was riddled with mines." —KP

"Sometimes a kilo of C8 can change the direction of a battle more than an Atlas*." —JH*

Demolitions are explosives tasked with doing more complex jobs than just exploding. Demolition experts can engineer their charges to cause specific effects, either maximizing their destructive potential or focusing the impact on nearby structures. Knowing how much or how little to use can mean the difference between opening a door and collapsing a building. While Alfred Nobel's dynamite is rarely found in the thirty-first century, Compound-8 (C8) and pentaglycerine have filled the void much more effectively as the modern explosives of choice. Anti-'Mech infantry often have satchels filled with C8 for crippling vehicles and BattleMechs, though other creative uses have manifested over the years.

Special Game Rules

Planting and disarming demolition charges requires the Demolitions Skill (triggering also uses the Skill, but generally should not require a Skill Check unless the gamemaster rules that the trigger mechanism is suitably complex). Rigging up demolition charges (other than satchel charges, which act as "pre-rigged" explosives) is a Complex Action, but if successful, the MoS for the rigging roll is doubled and subtracted from any roll to disarm the explosives. (This penalty does not apply to the individual who rigged the explosives originally.) Failure to rig an explosive may cause it to fail or reduce its damage effects when detonated. Failure to disarm an explosive forces the disarming character to make an EDG Attribute Check, the MoS of which is the number of turns the character has before the bomb goes off.

A Fumble in any of the above cases will cause the demolitions charge to explode immediately.

When detonated, most demolitions charges are designed to contain their area of effect by "shaping" their blast force. As a result, even though they are area-effect weapons, the amount of damage they inflict reduces faster as it radiates from the central point. This new damage reduction rate—identified in the item's notes—replaces the customary –1 AP/–1 BD per meter that most other explosives produce. For example, the hyper-focused C8 Blasting Block (which lists –4AP/–4BD per meter in its notes) inflicts 7X/10A at the center of the blast, but only 3X/6A at a 1-meter distance and 0X/2A at 2 meters.

ORDNANCE

"Most of these are available to vehicle-scale LRMs and SRMs, but we still lack some capabilities. Fortunately, most have to do with hostile infantry anyway." —KP

"You pretty much have to resign yourself to a handful of ammunition types unless you have one of those PA(L) designs that work as a mule. You'll just about always want to have some smoke grenades on you, though." —JH

Many of today's man-portable explosive launchers and mine weapons share similar payloads that differ only in delivery methods. A "Universal Ordnance Rating Standard" achieved universal recognition in the days before the first Star League, and rates all such military conventional explosives with a single letter code that represents the ordnance's general munitions size. At the lower end—A and B ordnances—are minor explosives, such as micro-grenades and light flares. The largest mortar shells and man-portable missiles may be found at the upper ratings, D and E. Larger rounds exist, but these reflect vehicular-scale weapons, heavy artillery and air-dropped bombs.

The Universal Ordnance Rating Standard includes variations on standard explosives, covering such diverse alternative payloads as shrapnel-heavy anti-personnel explosives, anti-vehicle penetrator shells, incendiary "inferno" ordnance, modern FASCAM rounds and even non-lethal ordnance such as flares, flash, smoke charges and Narc homing missiles.

Special Game Rules

Weapons that use ordnance munitions are noted with a letter (in parentheses) in place of the normal AP/BD values. Such weapons may use only ordnance of that same rating class (a letter value from A through E), but may use alternative ordnance types such as Anti-Personnel, Flare, Inferno and so forth, as long as the ordnance exists in that class.

The damage value for each ordnance type and class available in *A Time of War* is defined in the Ordnance Table, along with any additional cost and special notes. As all ordnance derives its range and ammunition count per magazine from the weapon using it, the Ordnance Table does not feature a Range or Shots column for this weapon type.

SPECIALTY AMMUNITION

"With what little we wear in the cockpit, infantry with flechette ammo is an excellent reason to stay inside." —KP

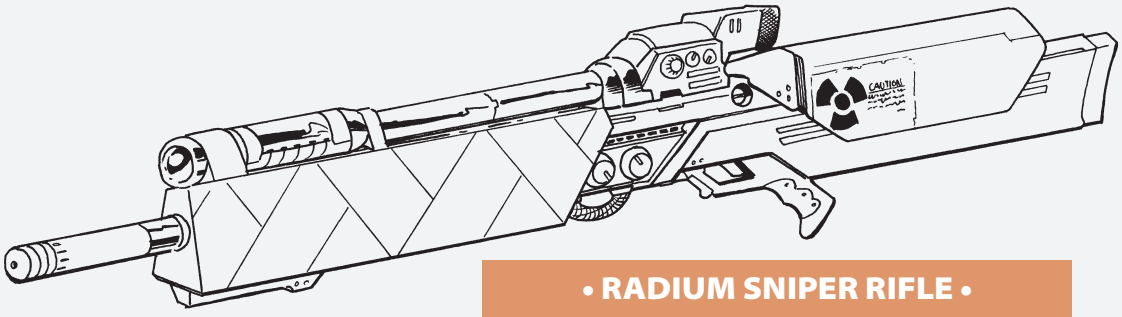
"You pretty much have to know what you're dealing with before you start taking on the mass of specialized ammo." —JH

While lead slugs are good enough for most foot soldiers across the Inner Sphere, circumstances may demand a slightly modified approach to resolving a problem. This is where the added flexibility of specialty ammunition comes into play.

Outside of explosive ordnance, slug-throwers enjoy the widest variety of alternative ammo options. AET (Accelerated Energy Transfer) and frangible rounds, for example, reduce penetration to avoid the dangers of using high-powered handguns in a boarding action. At the opposite end of the spectrum is armor-piercing ammo, which may cause less physical damage to a target, but can at least defeat the armor around it. Explosive ammunition—very effective, if expensive—can be used with bows and crossbows, as well as slug-throwers. Flechette ammo enables slug-throwers to match the "splash" effects of a needler. And while some firearms have rounds that travel slower than the speed of sound to avoid the sonic boom that makes them so loud, for those that do not, there are specialty sub-sonic rounds that produce the same effect. There are even incendiary rounds available, which can be used to ignite a target. Like explosive rounds, these have a bow-and-arrow equivalent for the true hunter.

Less common additions to the ballistics market have thrown radioactive trackers into the mix, as well as air-bursting

MODERN WEAPONS



• RADIUM SNIPER RIFLE •

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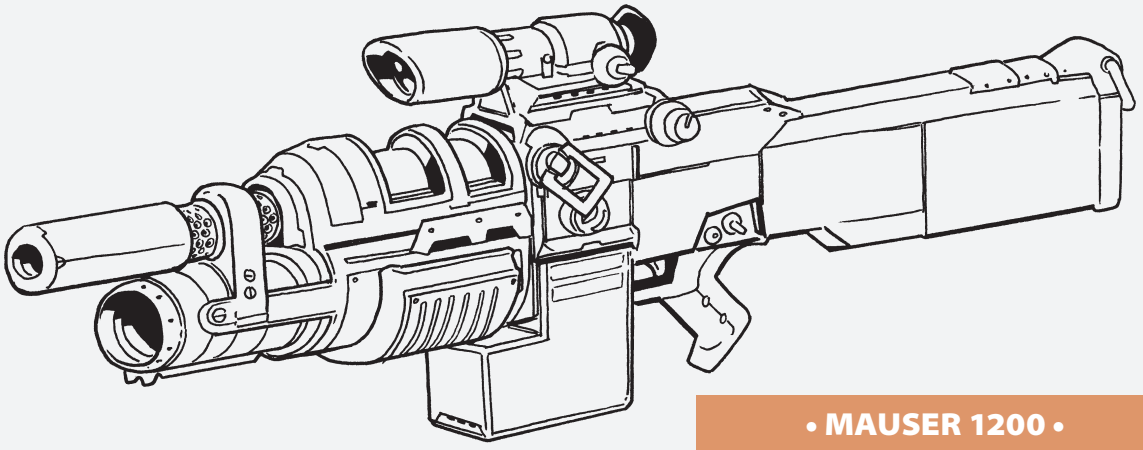

• MAUSER 1200 •

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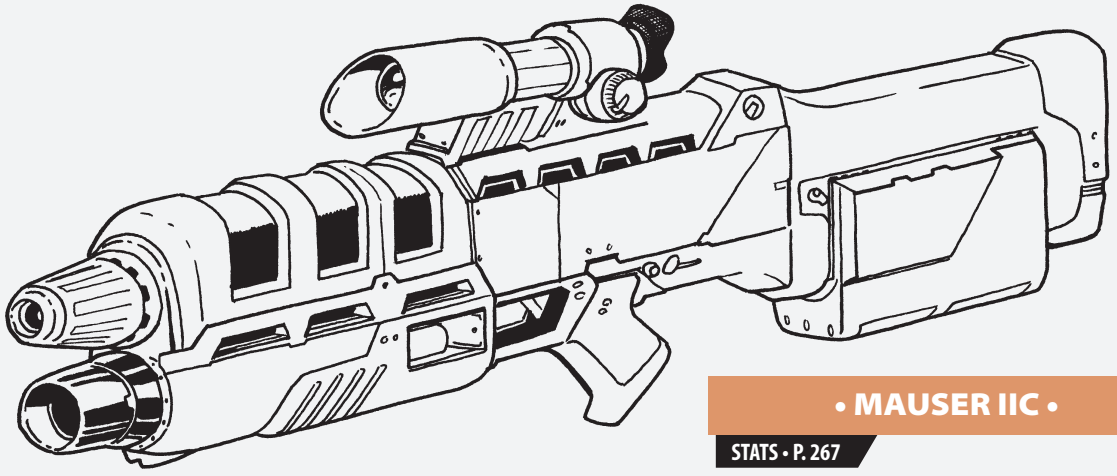

• MAUSER IIC •

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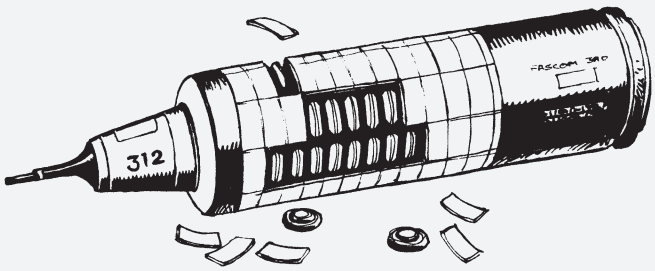
MODERN WEAPONS



• FASCAM ORDNANCE •

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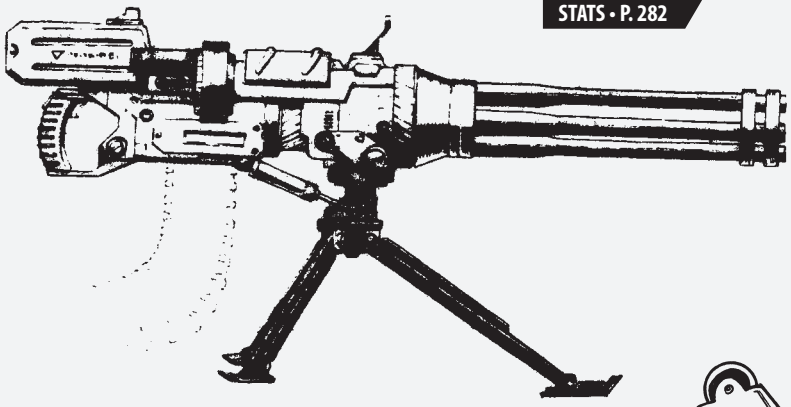

• SEMI-PORTABLE AUTOCANNON •

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• ROCKET ASSIST GRENADES •

STATS • P. 278

ORDNANCE						
ITEM	**EQUIPMENT RATINGS**	**AP/BD**	**COST/ RELOAD**	**AFF**	**MASS**	**NOTES**
ORDNANCE, ANTI-PERSONNEL						
CLASS A	C/B-C-C/E	2X/8A	2	—	200 G	—
CLASS B	C/A-B-B/E	3X/10A	8	—	450 G	—
CLASS C	C/A-B-A/E	4X/12A	16	—	600 G	—
CLASS D	C/A-B-B/E	4X/13A	24	—	2 KG	—
CLASS E	C/A-B-B/E	4X/14A	32	—	4 KG	—
ORDNANCE, AIR-BURST						ALL AIR-BURST ORDNANCE: AVAILABLE TO MORTARS ONLY; ATTACK IGNORES ANY GROUND-LEVEL COVER.
CLASS D	D/X-X-C/F	5X/10A	60	FW	2 KG	—
CLASS E	D/X-X-C/F	5X/11A	80	FW	4 KG	—
ORDNANCE, ANTI-VEHICLE						ALL ANTI-VEHICLES: MAXIMUM 1-METER BLAST AREA*
CLASS C	C/B-C-C/E	8X/10A	100	—	1 KG	—
CLASS D	C/B-C-C/E	8X/11A	250	—	3 KG	—
CLASS E	C/B-C-C/E	8X/12A	400	—	5 KG	—
ORDNANCE, FASCAM						ALL FASCAMS: INCREASE MINEFIELD DENSITY BY 2
CLASS D	D/X-X-B/E	**	50	CC	3 KG	AFFECTS 3M RADIUS
CLASS E	D/X-X-B/E	**	100	CC	5 KG	AFFECTS 5M RADIUS
ORDNANCE, FLARE						ALL FLARES: NEGATES DARKNESS MODS FOR 25 SECONDS
CLASS A	C/A-B-B/B	—	1	—	200 G	ILLUMINATES 50M RADIUS
CLASS B	C/A-B-B/B	—	2	—	450 G	ILLUMINATES 75M RADIUS
CLASS C	C/A-B-A/C	—	4	—	600 G	ILLUMINATES 100M RADIUS
CLASS D	C/A-B-B/C	—	10	—	2 KG	ILLUMINATES 200M RADIUS
CLASS E	C/A-B-B/C	—	20	—	4 KG	ILLUMINATES 300M RADIUS
ORDNANCE, FLASH						ALL FLASH ORDNANCE: NO EFFECT VS. ANTI-FLASH BAR HIGHER THAN ORDNANCE AP†
CLASS A	C/B-C-C/D	2S/2AD	2	—	200 G	—
CLASS B	C/A-B-B/C	3S/3AD	8	—	450 G	—
CLASS C	C/A-B-A/C	4S/4AD	16	—	600 G	—
CLASS D	C/A-B-B/C	5S/5AD	24	—	2 KG	—
CLASS E	C/A-B-B/C	7S/6AD	32	—	4 KG	—

*Halve AP/BD value for all targets in that area not directly hit by this ordnance.

**FASCAM rounds may deploy anti-personnel, high-explosive or inferno mines. These are considered standard mines, but with an Ordnance Type of B, that raise the minefield density rating over the described area. See additional mine rules under Standard Explosives (p. 277).

†Sunglasses provide a BAR of 1 vs. flash ordnance; combat helmet visors and tinted vehicular windows provide BAR 3; advanced combat helmet visors provide BAR 7; battle armor, BattleMech, ProtoMech, Combat Vehicle and all aerospace craft windows provide a 10 BAR vs. flash.

††Damage shown is for standard tear gas; other inhalation-vector poisons of equal BD may be used instead (see Drugs and Poisons, pp. 317-321); Damage may be negated or reduced by appropriate hostile environment gear (see p. 296).

‡Only anti-vehicle and high-explosive ordnance may be enhanced for compatibility with Narc missiles. Doing so reduces the missile's BD by 1 and adds 50 percent to the munitions' cost.

ORDNANCE, CONT.						
ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	AP/BD	COST/ RELOAD	AFF	MASS	NOTES
ORDNANCE, GAS						ALL GAS: NO EFFECT IN THIN ATMOSPHERES/VACUUM; LASTS FOR 4D6 TURNS (2D6 IN STRONG WINDS); EFFECTS REMAIN CONTINUOUS WHILE CHARACTERS ARE IN GASSED AREA.
CLASS A	C/B-D-D/E	1S/5ACD††	2	—	200 G	AFFECTS 3M RADIUS
CLASS B	C/B-C-C/E	1S/5ACD††	10	—	450 G	AFFECTS 6M RADIUS
CLASS C	C/B-C-B/E	1S/5ACD††	20	—	600 G	AFFECTS 9M RADIUS
CLASS D	C/B-C-B/E	1S/5ACD††	30	—	2 KG	AFFECTS 12M RADIUS
CLASS E	C/B-C-C/E	1S/5ACD††	40	—	4 KG	AFFECTS 15M RADIUS
ORDNANCE, GUIDED						ALL GUIDED ORDNANCE: AVAILABLE TO MORTARS ONLY; ATTACK RECEIVES A +2 ATTACK ROLL MODIFIER AGAINST ANY TARGET SUCCESSFULLY DESIGNATED BY FRIENDLY TAG.
CLASS D	D/X-X-C/F	5X/10A	120	FW	2 KG	—
CLASS E	D/X-X-C/F	5X/11A	160	FW	4 KG	—
ORDNANCE, HIGH-EXPLOSIVE						
CLASS A	C/B-D-C/E	4X/6A	2	—	200 G	—
CLASS B	C/B-C-B/E	5X/8A	10	—	450 G	—
CLASS C	C/A-A-A/E	6X/10A	20	—	600 G	—
CLASS D	C/A-B-B/E	6X/11A	30	—	2 KG	—
CLASS E	C/A-B-B/E	6X/12A	40	—	4 KG	—
ORDNANCE, INFERNO						ALL INFERNOS: NO EFFECT IN THIN ATMOSPHERES/VACUUM; IGNITES ALL AFFECTED TERRAIN AND LASTS FOR 4D6 MINUTES (2D6 IN RAINY/SNOWY WEATHER)
CLASS B	C/B-D-C/E	3E/3ACS	8	—	450 G	—
CLASS C	C/B-C-B/E	3E/5ACS	16	—	600 G	—
CLASS D	C/B-C-B/E	3E/7ACS	24	—	2 KG	—
CLASS E	C/B-C-B/E	3E/9ACS	32	—	4 KG	—
ORDNANCE, NARC						ALL NARCS: ATTACK ROLL MODIFIER APPLIES TO FRIENDLY INFANTRY-LAUNCHED NARC-COMPATIBLE MISSILES; FOR VEHICULAR UNITS, SEE PP. 138-139, TW‡
CLASS C	E/E-X-E/C	—	600	CS	1 KG	+1 TO INFANTRY-PORTABLE NARC-COMPATIBLE MISSILES
CLASS D	E/D-X-D/C	—	800	CS	3 KG	+2 TO INFANTRY-PORTABLE NARC-COMPATIBLE MISSILES
CLASS E	E/D-X-D/C	—	1000	CS	5 KG	+3 TO INFANTRY-PORTABLE NARC-COMPATIBLE MISSILES

*Halve AP/BD value for all targets in that area not directly hit by this ordnance.

**FASCAM rounds may deploy anti-personnel, high-explosive or inferno mines. These are considered standard mines, but with an Ordnance Type of B, that raise the minefield density rating over the described area. See additional mine rules under Standard Explosives (p. 277).

†Sunglasses provide a BAR of 1 vs. flash ordnance; combat helmet visors and tinted vehicular windows provide BAR 3; advanced combat helmet visors provide BAR 7; battle armor, BattleMech, ProtoMech, Combat Vehicle and all aerospace craft windows provide a 10 BAR vs. flash.

††Damage shown is for standard tear gas; other inhalation-vector poisons of equal BD may be used instead (see Drugs and Poisons, pp. 317-321); Damage may be negated or reduced by appropriate hostile environment gear (see p. 296).

‡Only anti-vehicle and high-explosive ordnance may be enhanced for compatibility with Narc missiles. Doing so reduces the missile's BD by 1 and adds 50 percent to the munitions' cost.

ORDNANCE, CONT.						
ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	AP/BD	COST/ RELOAD	AFF	MASS	NOTES
ORDNANCE, SMOKE						ALL SMOKE: NO EFFECT IN THIN ATMOSPHERES/VACUUM; LASTS FOR 4D6 TURNS (2D6 IN STRONG WINDS). SEE WEATHER CONDITIONS, P. 237, FOR RULES ON SMOKE.
CLASS A	C/A-B-B/C	—	1	—	200 G	AFFECTS 3M RADIUS
CLASS B	C/A-A-A/C	—	2	—	450 G	AFFECTS 6M RADIUS
CLASS C	B/A-A-A/C	—	4	—	600 G	AFFECTS 9M RADIUS
CLASS D	B/A-A-A/C	—	10	—	2 KG	AFFECTS 12M RADIUS
CLASS E	B/A-A-B/C	—	20	—	4 KG	AFFECTS 15M RADIUS
ORDNANCE, STUN						
CLASS B	D/A-B-B/C	1S/8AD	10	—	450 G	—
CLASS C	C/A-B-A/C	1S/10AD	20	—	600 G	—
CLASS D	C/A-A-A/D	1S/12AD	30	—	2 KG	—
CLASS E	C/A-B-B/D	1S/14AD	40	—	4 KG	—

*Halve AP/BD value for all targets in that area not directly hit by this ordnance.

**FASCAM rounds may deploy anti-personnel, high-explosive or inferno mines. These are considered standard mines, but with an Ordnance Type of B, that raise the minefield density rating over the described area. See additional mine rules under Standard Explosives (p. 277).

†Sunglasses provide a BAR of 1 vs. flash ordnance; combat helmet visors and tinted vehicular windows provide BAR 3; advanced combat helmet visors provide BAR 7; battle armor, BattleMech, ProtoMech, Combat Vehicle and all aerospace craft windows provide a 10 BAR vs. flash.

††Damage shown is for standard tear gas; other inhalation-vector poisons of equal BD may be used instead (see Drugs and Poisons, pp. 317-321); Damage may be negated or reduced by appropriate hostile environment gear (see p. 296).

‡Only anti-vehicle and high-explosive ordnance may be enhanced for compatibility with Narc missiles. Doing so reduces the missile's BD by 1 and adds 50 percent to the munitions' cost.

explosive ammo. Some arms manufacturers have recently introduced specialty payload canisters for Gauss-based ballistics, as well as a special form of guided gyrojet munitions.

Special Game Rules

The specialty ammunition listed here modifies the standard ammunition used by various weapons as indicated. Any exceptions to such munitions being available to the entire class are noted where they occur. Bow and arrow specialty ammo, for example, is compatible with all bow and arrow weapons, including crossbows. Most slug-thrower specialty ammo may be used with all pistols, rifles, submachine guns, shotguns and machine guns that fire bullets (slugs) using chemical or powder propellant, except for frangible rounds (unavailable to shotguns) and air-burst ammo (unavailable to all weapons other than rifles).

The damage value, range and cost modifiers for each specialty ammo type available in *A Time of War* are defined in the Specialty Ammunition Table, along with any special notes on their use. As all specialty ammo derives its weight and shot count per magazine from the weapon using it, the Specialty Ammunition Table does not feature columns for this data.

Some specialty ammunition types can actually change the weapon's special characteristics (such as AP codes for ballistics versus explosive, or BD codes for standard damage becoming splash damage). When encountering different code letters from the weapon's standard while using specialty ammunition, the AP and BD codes for the specialty ammo always replace those for the weapon's default ammunition. If no codes are given with the new ammunition, the original codes remain in effect. The numerical values for AP and BD are always modified as indicated (to a minimum value of 0, but with no maximum). As the sole exception, any weapon with a burst-fire code in its BD retains burst-fire capability even when using alternative munitions.

For example, a standard automatic rifle with its default clip inflicts 4B/4B damage per shot; but with flechette ammo, the same rifle delivers 2B/5BS damage (AP 4B – 2B = 2B; BD 4B + 1S = 4BS). If the weapon were armed with AET rounds instead (which lists as +0/+0), the weapon would remain 4B/4B, until it struck a barrier (where it would become 2B/4B because the weapon reduces its AP by 50 percent against barriers).

SPECIALTY AMMUNITION						
ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	AP/BD	RANGE	COST/ RELOAD	AFF	NOTES
BOW AND ARROW SPECIALTY AMMO						
EXPLOSIVE	C/C-E-D/D	−1X/+1S	—	X3	—	*
INCENDIARY	C/B-C-C/C	−1B/−1CS	—	X1.5	—	CHANGES BD TO CONTINUOUS/SPLASH
SLUG-THROWER SPECIALTY AMMO						
AET	D/D-X-D/C	+0/+0	—	X2	CS	AP 50% (ROUND DOWN) VS. BARRIERS
AIR-BURST	D/X-X-D/E	−1X/−1S	—	X8	FS	AVAILABLE TO RIFLES ONLY; REQUIRES GUIDED RIFLE MODULE; COMPLEX ACTION TO ATTACK *
ARMOR-PIERCING	C/C-E-D/D	+1B/−1	—	X3	—	—
EXPLOSIVE	C/C-E-D/D	−1X/+1S	—	X3	—	*
FLECHETTE	D/B-C-B/B	−2B/+1S	—	X1	—	UNAVAILABLE TO SHOTGUNS
FRANGIBLE	C/D-X-D/B	−1B/+0	—	X2	CS	0 AP VS. BARRIERS
INCENDIARY	C/B-C-C/C	−1B/−1CS	—	X1.5	—	ADDS CONTINUOUS/SPLASH TO BD
RADIOACTIVE TRACKER	C/E-F-E/E	+0B/+0	—	X3.5	—	TARGET "TAGGED" ON A SUCCESSFUL HIT (EVEN IF UNDAMAGED); SIGNATURE LASTS 1 MONTH; REQUIRES TRACKER SCANNER TO SPOT.
SUBSONIC	C/B-C-C/D	−2X/−2	HALF RANGE	X1	—	JAM ON FUMBLE
TRACER	C/B-B-B/B	—	—	X1.5	—	+1 ATTACK ROLL MODIFIER FOR SUPPRESSION FIRE OR IN DARKNESS; +2 PERCEPTION TO SPOT ATTACKER USING TRACER AMMO
GAUSS SPECIALTY AMMO						
GDPC ROUNDS	D/X-X-F/E	**	—	X2	FW	FOR SUPPORT GAUSS WEAPONS ONLY
GYROJET SPECIALTY AMMO						
GUIDED GYROJET ROUNDS	E/X-X-E/E	−1B/−1	—	X8	—	REQUIRES GUIDED RIFLE MODULE; COMPLEX ACTION TO ATTACK; +2 TO ATTACK

*On a Fumble, weapon explosively misfires and delivers half AP/BD damage to attacker. (The weapon is also destroyed.)
**Gauss-delivered Payload Canisters replaces normal weapon damage with Class D Gas Ordnance effects (see Ordnance, p. 279).
Note: Guided Rifle Modules and the Radioactive Tracker Scanner may be found under Weapon Accessories (see p. 286).

WEAPON ACCESSORIES

"If you're a MechWarrior, and you see some of this gear up close, odds are you're about to get assassinated." —KP

"In the right hands accessories can make a weapon even deadlier. In incompetent hands all they do is make it more expensive." —JH

Most personal weapons are ready to use right off the shelf, but some people need more than the standard version offered. Weapon accessories tend toward three major functions: making the gun harder to notice, making it more accurate or handling the recoil better. Silencers and flash suppressors dominate the first function, making the weapon harder to see or hear as it is used, a big plus for the stealth warrior; they combine nicely with specialty munitions meant to aid in such efforts. For accuracy, laser and telescopic sights, barrel-mounted flashlights and even corner-shot accessories make it possible for the shooter to hit his targets better. Recoil compensation—particularly favored among support weapons—counters the effects of heavy burst firing, while making it possible for a single gunner to operate lighter support weapons.

These accessories and more have evolved over the years to enhance the capabilities of today's infantry arms.

Special Game Rules

Specific game rules for each of the following accessories may be found in the Notes column of the Weapon Accessories Table. Because these items do not have specific damage, ranges or ammo counts, the table does not feature columns for this data.

THE SHARPER WARRIOR
THE BASIC MODEL IS TOO ... BASIC

WEAPON ACCESSORIES					
ITEM	**EQUIPMENT RATINGS**	**COST/ RELOAD**	**AFF**	**MASS**	**NOTES**
SIGHTS AND SCOPES					
BARREL-MOUNTED FLASHLIGHT	B/A-A-A/A	10	—	250 G	NEGATES DARKNESS MODS UP TO 15M*
LASER SIGHT	C/A-A-A/A	25	—	100 G	+1 ATTACK ROLL MODIFIER*
NIGHT VISION SCOPE	D/A-B-B/A	125	—	450 G	+2 ATTACK ROLL MODIFIER AT M/L/E RANGES; NEGATES DARKNESS MODS UP TO 1,000M*
TELESCOPIC SCOPE	C/A-A-A/A	30	—	200 G	+2 ATTACK ROLL MODIFIER AT M/L/E RANGES
CORNERSHOTS					
ISR-71G "TRIPWIRE"	C/D-E-D/D	560	—	3.7 KG	USEABLE BY PISTOLS ONLY; MAY SHOOT AROUND AN ADJACENT CORNER WITH FULL COVER; REQUIRES POWER PACK FOR CAMERA (0.3 POINTS PER MINUTE)
ISR-93TX "ROUNDHOUSE"	D/D-F-D/D	2,400	—	6.2 KG	USEABLE BY RIFLES, SMGS AND PISTOLS ONLY; MAY SHOOT AROUND AN ADJACENT CORNER WITH FULL COVER; REQUIRES POWER PACK FOR CAMERA (0.5 POINTS PER MINUTE); RECOIL +1**
STABILIZERS AND HARNESSES					
GYROSCOPIC HARNESS	D/D/D	1,000	—	6 KG	RECOIL +1**
RECOIL COMPENSATION	C/B/D	X1.1	—	X1.1	RECOIL +1; ENCUMBERING**
"MAKO" GYROSTABILIZER	D/E/D	8,400	—	3.7 KG	RANGE MODS: −2/−1/+1/+2 WHEN ACTIVE; REQUIRES POWER PACK AND USES 1 POWER POINT PER MINUTE
SILENCERS AND SUPPRESSORS					
AMR-20 RIFLE/PISTOL SILENCER	E/D/D	500	CS	50 G	−4 TO PERCEPTION CHECK ROLL (TO HEAR)†
SOUND SUPPRESSOR	C/B/D	50	—	250 G	−2 TO PERCEPTION CHECK ROLL (TO HEAR)†
SILENCER	C/B/D	25	—	100 G	−4 TO SOUND PERCEPTION CHECK ROLL; BREAKS ON ATTACK FUMBLE†
SOUND AND FLASH SUPPRESSOR	C/C/D	200	—	300 G	−2 TO PERCEPTION CHECK (VISION AND SOUND)†
FLASH SUPPRESSOR	C/B/D	100	—	250 G	−2 TO PERCEPTION CHECK (TO SEE)†
FLASH SUPPRESSOR, JAF-05	E/D/D	1,000	CS	675 G	−4 TO PERCEPTION CHECK (VISION AND SOUND)†
GENERAL ACCESSORIES					
BOW ACCESSORY MOUNT	B/B/A	15	—	200 G	ALLOWS FOR MOUNTING 1 SCOPE, SIGHT, OR FLASHLIGHT ON A BOW WEAPON
HOLSTER	B/A/A	20	—	150 G	AVAILABLE FOR PISTOLS AND RIFLES ONLY
SPECIALIZED ACCESSORIES					
GUIDED RIFLE MODULES	E/X-X-D/F	2,000	FW/FS	250 G	ATTACH TO WEAPON USING GUIDED GYROJET OR AIR-BURST RIFLE AMMO TO USE GUIDANCE/SPECIAL FEATURES (SEE SPECIALTY MUNITIONS, P. 285); REQUIRES POWER PACK (1 POINT PER HOUR)
M-11J "CLOAKING DEVICE"	F/F-X/F/F	4,350,000	CS	4.5 KG	WORN AS A SUIT (COVERS ARMS, LEGS AND TORSO; NO BAR); CONCEALS WEAPONS AND NON-ENCUMBERING EQUIPMENT FROM SENSORS (−8 TO PERCEPTION AND SENSOR OPERATIONS CHECK ROLLS TO SPOT HIDDEN WEAPON); REQUIRES POWER PACK (0.5 POINTS PER MINUTE)
RADIOACTIVE TRACKER SCANNER	C/E-F-E/E	2250	—	100 G	DETECTS TARGETS "PAINTED" BY RADIOACTIVE TRACKER ROUNDS (SEE SPECIALTY AMMUNITION, P. 285); MAX RANGE 35M (+1 TO SENSOR OPERATIONS CHECK ROLL PER 5 METERS CLOSER); REQUIRES POWER PACK (0.5 POINTS PER HOUR)

*Requires Micro-Power Pack to function; uses 0.1 point points per hour of continuous use.

**Recoil modifiers cannot rise above 0; Recoil Compensation is a specific weapon modification, not a detachable accessory.

†These accessories will not work with Gauss, gyrojet, or plasma weapons; of these, only the JAF-05 may be used with energy weapons of any kind.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

The rivalry between better armor and better weaponry is as old as warfare itself. While technology and techniques have changed, this competition rages on. Today, just as there is a multitude of ways to harm someone, there is a multitude of ways to avoid, absorb or deflect harm.

When looking into personal armor, the discriminating buyer should take his locale into account. While a full suit of riot gear is a good way to avoid injury in most cases, wearing it in the Triad on Tharkad is sure to get one arrested. Even a flak jacket may garner unwanted attention on many "civilized" worlds—even though it's as natural as breathing on outlaw worlds like Antallos.

In addition to combat armor, there is a wealth of other protective gear, including everything from armor accessories and concealed armor—suitable for the urban battlefield—to hostile environment and stealth gear. Available in a variety of types and styles, the array of personal protective gear is almost as broad as conventional clothing.

FLAK ARMOR

"If I'm in a hot zone, I'll usually toss on a flak jacket when I'm out of the cockpit." —KP

"As if laser guns don't have enough in their favor already, you can really ruin someone's day if the poor bugger's only got flak on him. That alone is worth the laser's expense in my book." —JH

An accountant's dream but a soldier's nightmare, flak armor is cheap and widely available, but is mainly effective against low-power small arms fire, shrapnel and concussive force. Soldiers issued flak armor may want an upgrade, but it has been shown to reduce injuries and fatalities. While it does not provide much protection against modern high-powered or energy weapons, its low cost and fairly solid protection against ballistics has made flak armor the most common type.

Flak armor can be found in all the common styles: helmets, jackets, vests, pants and even full suits. The most unusual form of flak armor out there has got to be the armored kilt, which offers ballistic protection "where it counts" but does nothing to spare you below the knee.

ABLATIVE ARMOR

"Ablative armor is a bad idea in the cockpit. Those plates just suck up all the ambient heat in there and make life even less pleasant." —KP

"The most likely place to run across ablative armor is in a space boarding operation. Marines love this stuff." —JH

Designed to protect wearers from laser and particle weapons, the composite ceramic plates that make up ablative armor are lighter than flak and absorb heat energy well, but they are pretty fragile against ballistics. While still fairly effective against blunt or edged weapons, ablative armor is almost useless against slugs. Though almost as easy to come by as flak, the price and specialized nature of ablative armor make it more common among naval and aerospace forces than it is on the ground.

ABLATIVE/FLAK (AB/FLAK) ARMOR

"Ab/flak is a great last resort, but no substitute for staying behind cover." —KP

"Outfits that truly value their infantry generally find the C-bills to pay for this armor." —JH

Ab/flak armor is the natural hybrid of flak and ablative armor. Though heavier and more expensive than flak armor, its slightly reduced effectiveness against ballistics is compensated for by much-improved resistance to energy and melee weapons. Though not quite as effective against energy weapons as true ablative armor, ablative/flak armor is a good balance of the two.

BALLISTIC PLATE ARMOR

"Forget about your usual anti-infantry guns when shooting someone in ballistic plate. Just hose them with the big guns." —KP

"Short of a suit of powered armor, ballistic plate is the toughest stuff out there." —JH

Consisting of dense fibrous-polymer plates, ballistic plate is modern plate mail. While offering superior protection compared to lighter armors, it is also extremely heavy, making it unsuitable for typical infantry. Commonly found in urban assault forces, bomb disposal units and police tactical squads, ballistic plate allows its wearers to withstand tremendous punishment.

NEO-CHAINMAIL ARMOR

"At first it may look archaic, and you may feel silly wearing it, but for the protection and flexibility it offers, neo-chain isn't half bad." —KP

"I don't know about this stuff; sure, it may be good against combat knives and flechettes, but it's been quite a few millennia since a soldier could feel protected by something so flimsy…" —JH

Fairly new, having been introduced only a couple years before the Jihad, neo-chainmail uses a modern mix of ceramic-metal composites in a classic style of interlocking links to produce armor that is lightweight, completely flexible and quite effective against most melee and light ballistic weapons. Designed to be concealable as well as curiously stylish, neo-chain may be an armor style waiting to come into its own or simply a short-lived fad.

MYOMER ARMOR

"I haven't really tried myomer armor, but leave it to the Lyrans to create a literal 'power suit' for their CEOs." —KP

"As a concept it's interesting, but I think it's the ballistic weave, rather than the idea of an armor that constricts around your body, that really makes this gimmick work." —JH

PERSONAL ARMOR

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	BAR (M/B/E/X)	COST/PATCH	AFF	MASS	COVERAGE	NOTES
FLAK ARMOR	**C/A-A-A/B**	**1/5/1/3**	—/—	—	—	—	—
JACKET	—	—	100/10	—	3.5 KG	TORSO, ARMS	—
PANTS	—	—	75/10	—	5.5 KG	LEGS	—
SHORTS/SKIRT/KILT	—	—	100/10	—	3.5 KG	LEGS	+1 TO ATTACK'S AP
SUIT	—	—	150/10	—	8.6 KG	TORSO, ARMS, LEGS	—
VEST	—	—	50/10	—	2.8 KG	TORSO	—
ABLATIVE ARMOR	**D/A-B-A/C**	**3/1/6/1**	—/—	—	—	—	—
JACKET	—	—	750/10	—	2.6 KG	TORSO, ARMS	—
PANTS	—	—	500/10	—	4 KG	LEGS	—
SHORTS/SKIRT/KILT	—	—	750/20	—	2.5 KG	LEGS	+1 TO ATTACK'S AP
SUIT	—	—	1,000/20	—	6.3 KG	TORSO, ARMS, LEGS	—
VEST	—	—	400/20	—	2.1 KG	TORSO	—
ABLATIVE/FLAK ARMOR	**D/B-C-B/C**	**2/4/5/2**	—/—	—	—	—	—
JACKET	—	—	600/15	—	4.1 KG	TORSO, ARMS	—
PANTS	—	—	400/15	—	6.3 KG	LEGS	—
SHORTS/SKIRT/KILT	—	—	750/20	—	4.2 KG	LEGS	+1 TO ATTACK'S AP
SUIT	—	—	800/15	—	9.8 KG	TORSO, ARMS, LEGS	—
VEST	—	—	300/15	—	3.2 KG	TORSO	—
BALLISTIC PLATE ARMOR	**D/C-C-C/D**	**4/6/5/4**	—/—	—	—	—	**CANNOT BE PATCHED IF ANY BAR IS REDUCED BELOW HALF**
SUIT	—	—	1,600/50	—	22 KG	TORSO, ARMS, LEGS	ENCUMBERING
VEST	—	—	600/50	—	8.8 KG	TORSO	—
NEO-CHAIN ARMOR	**D/X-X-C/D**	**3/3/2/2**	—/—	—	—	—	**CONCEALABLE**
JACKET (UNHOODED)	—	—	700/17	—	1.9 KG	TORSO, ARMS	—
JACKET (HOODED)	—	—	830/17	—	2.1 KG	TORSO, ARMS, HEAD	—
PANTS	—	—	450/17	—	2.8 KG	LEGS	—
SHORTS/SKIRT/KILT	—	—	375/17	—	1.8 KG	LEGS	+1 TO ATTACK'S AP
SUIT	—	—	920/17	—	4.7 KG	TORSO, ARMS, LEGS	—
VEST	—	—	375/17	—	1.7 KG	TORSO	—

PERSONAL ARMOR, CONT.

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	BAR (M/B/E/X)	COST/PATCH	AFF	MASS	COVERAGE	NOTES
MYOMER ARMOR	**E/X-X-E/E**	**3/5/4/5**	**—/—**	**LA**	**—**	**—**	**CONCEALABLE; REQUIRES HC MICRO-POWER PACK (0.5 POINTS PER MINUTE WHEN ACTIVE); HALF BAR WHEN INACTIVE(ROUND DOWN)**
SUIT	—	—	5,800/150	—	18 KG	TORSO, ARMS, LEGS	ENCUMBERING
VEST	—	—	1,800/150	—	7.5 KG	TORSO	—
CONCEALED ARMOR	**—**	**—**	**—/—**	**NO CLAN**	**—**	**—**	**CONCEALABLE; –4 TO PERCEPTION, –2 TO SENSOR OPERATIONS CHECK ROLLS TO SPOT WHEN WORN UNDER CLOTHING.**
CONCEALED FLAK	D/D-C-B/C	1/4/1/2	X1.5	—	X0.75	—	VEST, JACKET, PANTS OR SUIT
CONCEALED ABLATIVE	E/E-D-B/D	2/1/4/1	X1.5	—	X0.75	—	VEST, JACKET, PANTS OR SUIT
CONCEALED AB/FLAK	E/F-D-C/D	2/3/3/2	X1.75	—	X0.80	—	VEST, JACKET, PANTS OR SUIT
CONCEALED BALLISTIC PLATE	E/X-F-D/D	3/4/4/3	X1.8	—	X0.75	—	VEST, JACKET OR SUIT; +1 TO DETECTION ROLLS

Another concealable armor type, marketed to high society folk in the Lyran Alliance who crave more personal protection, myomer armor combines a modified form of myomer bundles with a thin ballistic fabric to produce a low-power armor capable of a decent level of protection for a dubiously high price. The technology was recently introduced by House Steiner's Kyoto College, but some have observed a certain similarity between how this armor functions and how the dermal armor implants work that are purportedly used by some special-operations types.

CONCEALED ARMOR

"Making battlefield armor thinner and more discreet just because you want to wear it out on the town may not sound wise, but on the streets of some worlds, it can make the difference between life and death." —KP

"Style should never be taken over substance! Strip off enough layers to wear armor under street clothes and it may be your street clothes that do more of the damage absorption." —JH

Concealed forms of flak, ablative, ab/flak and even ballistic plate armor have existed for as long as the original versions. Aimed at offering light protection to civilian, corporate, government or police forces while not drawing attention, these armor forms are available in many of the same styles as their standard counterparts, but are slim and flexible enough to be worn under normal outerwear.

Special Game Rules for Personal Armor

The personal armor types presented here reflect standard "mix-and-match" armor types that can be acquired by most individuals in the *BattleTech* universe (as opposed to the full armor kits issued by major state governments to their troops—see *Standard Armor Kits*, p. 291). All the armor types described above are listed on the Personal Armor, Combat Armor Accessories and Armor Kit tables in their most commonly available forms, with Equipment Ratings, BAR (in Melee/Ballistic/Energy/Explosive format), the cost for the item plus a single 1-point patch, the producing affiliation and the armor's mass. In addition, the Coverage column defines the body locations protected by each armor item, which applies when using the optional Hit Location rules in personal combat. (If said optional rules are not in force, only the character's torso armor can be counted in personal combat.) Finally, the Notes column indicates any special features or limits of the armor's capabilities.

COMBAT ARMOR ACCESSORIES

"A good soldier's got a good helmet and a good set of boots on him." —JH

"Gripper gear isn't a joke. Makes anti-'Mech infantry even harder to deal with." —KP

While a suit of ballistic plate may shrug off pistol fire, it still won't protect the areas of the body a soldier uses most: head, hands and feet. Combat helmets, a necessity in infantry warfare, can not only protect a skull from deadly impacts and lead poisoning, but can even provide the eyes with some protection against smoke, dust and glare. Combat boots, made of ablative and anti-ballistic materials, provide protection superior to plain leather boots, while plasteel boots—favored by MechWarriors for their ability to protect against heat—are even tougher and heavier (and more expensive). Heavy combat gloves combine advanced materials and design to provide excellent hand protection at some expense of dexterity.

For even greater protection, modern riot shields are made from the latest in resilient, anti-ballistic polymers, and are common among police forces on most worlds. Many police tactical units deploy heavy bullet shields intended to protect advance units against pistol fire, or even heavier shields

COMBAT ARMOR ACCESSORIES

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	BAR (M/B/E/X)	COST/PATCH	AFF	MASS	COVERAGE	NOTES
HELMETS							
FLAK HELMET	C/A-A-A/B	1/5/1/3	25/10	—	1 KG	HEAD	+0 TO PERCEPTION; BAR 2 VS. FLASH
ABLATIVE HELMET	D/A-B-A/C	3/1/6/1	200/20	—	800 G	HEAD	+0 TO PERCEPTION; BAR 3 VS. FLASH
ABLATIVE/FLAK HELMET	D/B-C-B/C	2/4/5/2	150/15	—	800 G	HEAD	+0 TO PERCEPTION; BAR 3 VS. FLASH
STANDARD COMBAT HELMET	C/A-A-A/B	3/4/3/1	100/15	—	3 KG	HEAD	−2 TO PERCEPTION; BAR 3 VS. FLASH
ADVANCED COMBAT HELMET	D/D-C-B/C	5/6/5/2	200/25	—	2 KG	HEAD	−1 TO PERCEPTION; BAR 7 VS. FLASH; INCLUDES MILITARY COMM.
GLOVES							
HEAVY COMBAT GLOVES	E/D-F-E/C	3/4/4/3	125/15	—	1 KG	HANDS	−1 TO DEX-RELATED ROLLS
BOOTS							
COMBAT BOOTS	B/A-A-A/A	2/3/3/1	48/10	—	2 KG	FEET	—
PLASTEEL BOOTS	D/D-F-C/A	4/6/4/4	175/50	—	3 KG	FEET	—
SHIELDS*							
RIOT SHIELD	C/B-B-B/B	2/2/2/2	100	—	2 KG	—	PROVIDES FULL COVER WHEN CROUCHED; BARRIER INTEGRITY: 5
BULLET SHIELD	D/B-B-B/B	4/4/4/4	300	—	4 KG	—	PROVIDES FULL COVER WHEN CROUCHED; BARRIER INTEGRITY: 8
HEAVY SHIELD	D/C-C-C/C	6/6/6/6	500	—	6 KG	—	PROVIDES FULL COVER WHEN CROUCHED; ENCUMBERING; BARRIER INTEGRITY: 12
LOAD-BEARING EQUIPMENT**							
VEST	B/A-A-A/A	1/3/1/1	20	—	400 G	TORSO	+1 STR (CARRY/ENCUMBRANCE ONLY)
PACK	B/A-A-A/A	—	10	—	100 G	—	+1 STR (CARRY/ENCUMBRANCE ONLY); SIMPLE ACTION TO DETACH; COMPLEX ACTION TO ATTACH
PACKFRAME	C/A-A-A/A	—	45	—	1 KG	—	+2 STR (CARRY/ENCUMBRANCE ONLY); COMPLEX ACTION TO ATTACH/DETACH
GRIPPER GEAR							
GRIPPER BOOTS	E/E-E-E/B	2/2/1/2	600	LA	5 KG	FEET	+2 TO CLIMBING (+4 WITH GRIPPER GLOVES); REQUIRES STANDARD POWER PACK (1 PPM)†
GRIPPER GLOVES	E/E-E-E/C	2/2/1/2	1,000	LA	1 KG	HANDS	+3 TO CLIMBING (+4 WITH GRIPPER BOOTS); −2 TO ALL OTHER DEX-RELATED ROLLS; +3 TO STR ROLLS WHERE GRIP IS A FACTOR ONLY; REQUIRES STANDARD POWER PACK (1 PPM)†
MICROHOOK BOOTS	D/D-F-D/B	—	90	—	2 KG	FEET	+1 TO CLIMBING (+3 WITH MICROHOOK GLOVES); INEFFECTIVE ON SMOOTH SURFACES
MICROHOOK GLOVES	D/D-F-C/B	—	100	—	400 G	HANDS	+2 TO CLIMBING (+3 WITH MICROHOOK GLOVES); INEFFECTIVE ON SMOOTH SURFACES
GRAPPLE ROD	D/C-D-A/B	—	500	—	3 KG	—	MAX RANGE: 20M; FIRE AS SUPPORT WEAPON (NO RANGE MODIFIER WHEN IN RANGE); ON SUCCESS, USER GAINS +3 CLIMBING ROLL TO ASCEND 20M IN ONE TURN; ONE-SHOT ONLY (50 C-BILLS TO RESET)

*Shields are not personal armor per se, but are treated like objects that use the Barrier Armor rules (see pp. 185-189)

**STR mods for Load-Bearing Equipment apply to carrying capacity and Encumbrance rules only, not movement rates or melee combat actions.

†PPM = Power Point per Minute

intended primarily for building-breaching combat where high-powered weapons are expected.

Load-bearing equipment is another common feature of soldiers' gear. Providing pockets and pouches and clips for additional harnesses, a good set of load-bearing gear can help a trooper store far more cargo than he otherwise could (provided it can fit). Military load-bearing vests incorporate integral holsters for pistols, loops or pouches to contain rifles, and pockets to accommodate cargo of various sizes. Packs and packframes offer even more carrying options, and usually include specific attachment points or pouches for battery packs, field and medical kits, and water receptacles.

Last but not least comes gripper gear. First developed in the Age of War and Star League era to assist anti-'Mech infantry with scaling BattleMechs, gripper gloves and boots are rare powered climbing aids. Microhook gloves and shoes offer a similar ability without myomer-enhanced grips and servos, and have thus become more popular in the civilian and covert operations sectors. Still, these formidable accessories remain challenged by the tried-and-true grapple rod. Though the rod is not worn by its operator, but carried into battle as a weapon, this device remains a standard against which all other climbing gear is measured.

STANDARD ARMOR KITS

"Mix and match armor may be fine for the civilian sector and mercs, but any state worth its salt generally offers its troops a standardized kit, to streamline logistics." —KP

"You can tell a lot about a realm's priorities by the way they supply their troops." —JH

Beyond over-the-counter armor options found across the Inner Sphere today, the various major and minor powers have tapped their own armor suppliers for exclusive armor kits their troops use in battle. These kits offer troops a "House standard" that strengthens their sense of national unity while streamlining logistics. Though slight deviations from the standards are possible at regional and local levels (or even among individual troops), most professional soldiers sport some form of official kit when fighting in the field.

EXOTIC ARMOR

"A MechWarrior combat suit may be better than a cooling vest, but don't expect it to stop a laser pistol." —KP

"Had to deal with a modern set of medieval plate mail once. Treat 'em like ab/flak equipped targets, and exploit their poor peripheral vision. Or just bypass them altogether." —JH

In the modern age, it's unlikely a warrior will encounter Bogu (kendo armor) or the ceremonial Oyoroi armor in battle, but they make fine collector's pieces—and, surprisingly enough, they offer a measure of protection even against today's small arms.

Kendo practitioners might find their Bogu useful in a pinch outside the dojo, while traditional samurai Oyoroi (and the medieval plate that served their European equivalents in ancient Terran history) can be found in some ceremonial guards. Ancient suits are rare and treasured, but modern replicas made with more advanced materials are almost up to the level of ballistic plate. Such ceremonial armored suits are still used in numerous cultures proud of their centuries-old heritage, and typically have performance and cost equivalents to the modern Oyoroi listed here. Usually, ancient and modern versions of such suits of armor exist as well.

HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT GEAR

"As scary as combat on a lifeless rock is, don't try to pilot a 'Mech in an envirosuit." —KP

"Even the most paranoid shipboard personnel don't commonly walk around in space suits—like marines, they don the vacuum gear only when a known danger looms." —JH

Even on the most habitable worlds, areas exist where humans cannot survive without assistance—even if the inhospitable place is a BattleMech salvage yard.

Whether in an effort to avoid dust, smoke or other irritants, filter masks and protective goggles represent the lightest of today's "hostile environment" gear, protecting the mouth, nose and eyes from foreign contaminants. Understandably, these items are most popular in smoke-filled environments such as factories, mills and mines. Respirator units—often rebreathers that recycle carbon dioxide and derive fresh oxygen from a solid chemical supply—more fully enclose the face and are meant for even more toxic environs, from a world with a native taint to a battlefield thick with unknown chemical agents.

For more extreme hostile environments, only full-body gear will do—from an engineering suit for the rigorous repair work on board spacecraft, to a heavy enviro-suit for exploration in toxic atmospheres, to space suits for facing the harsh vacuum and cosmic rays of the void.

In between lies harsh weather gear: heat suits (to stay cool and hydrated in hyper-arid climates), parkas and snowsuits for arctic environs and wetsuits that are a must for deep divers. Hostile environment gear can be as varied as the dangers a person might expect to face on any of the thousands of worlds humankind now calls home, but the savvy traveler can make do with a few of these key items and visit almost anywhere.

Special Game Rules

The various items described in the Hostile Environment Gear Table are mission-specific. When used correctly, they provide all the benefits described in their statistics and notes. When used incorrectly (at the gamemaster's discretion), their functionality may be compromised, affecting their capabilities either in a statistical sense, or by rendering some special features moot. For example, a character cannot expect to survive in space wearing only a respirator; he might not suffocate, but the vacuum and the cold will quickly destroy him.

All full-body suits provide protection only so long as they are not torn open. A full-body hostile environment suit is considered compromised if the suit sustains any non-Fatigue damage that reduces any one of its BAR values to 0. (If the suit starts with a 0 value, the suit is compromised by any non-Fatigue damage that penetrates the suit and affects the character within.) If the suit is Encumbering, it remains Encumbering even when destroyed unless the character sheds the suit.

STANDARD ARMOR KITS (BY FACTION)

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	BAR (M/B/E/X)	COST/PATCH	AFF	MASS	COVERAGE	NOTES
CAPELLAN CONFEDERATION							
HELMET	C/B-B-B/D	3/4/5/3	200	CC	2 KG	HEAD	INCLUDES MILITARY COMM.; −1 TO PERCEPTION CHECK ROLLS; AV 7 VS. FLASH
SUIT	B/B-B-B/C	3/4/3/2	200/10	CC	4.5 KG	TORSO, ARMS, LEGS	2/2/3/2 BAR FOR ARMS AND LEGS
BOOTS	B/A-A-A/A	2/3/3/1	48/10	—	2 KG	FEET	—
CLANS (GENERIC)							
HELMET	E/E-E-E/F	5/6/5/3	1,400	CLAN	1 KG	HEAD	INCLUDES MILITARY COMM., IR SCANNER, NIGHT VISION AND RANGEFINDER; REQUIRES HC MICRO-POWER PACK (3 PPH); +1 TO PERCEPTION ROLLS; AV 8 VS. FLASH
SUIT	E/E-E-E/F	3/6/5/3	4,000/150	CLAN	6 KG	TORSO, ARMS, LEGS	—
BOOTS	C/E-E-E/F	3/5/5/3	100/20	CLAN	2 KG	FEET	—
GLOVES	C/E-E-E/F	1/1/3/2	60	CLAN	0.5 KG	HANDS	—
COMSTAR/WORD OF BLAKE							
HELMET	F/D-D-D/F	4/5/5/3	1,200	CS	2 KG	HEAD	INCLUDES MILITARY COMM., IR SCANNER, NIGHT VISION, RANGEFINDER, AND ULTRASONIC DETECTOR (5M RANGE); REQUIRES HC MICRO POWER PACK (3 PPH); +1 TO PERCEPTION ROLLS; AV 8 VS. FLASH
SUIT	D/E-E-E/E	4/6/5/4	3,000/120	CS	8 KG	TORSO, ARMS, LEGS	—
BOOTS	B/A-A-A/A	2/3/3/1	48/10	—	2 KG	FEET	—
GLOVES	B/A-A-A/A	1/1/1/1	30	—	0.5 KG	HANDS	—
DRACONIS COMBINE / FREE RASALHAGUE REPUBLIC							
HELMET	C/B-B-B/D	3/4/4/2	200	DC/FR	1 KG	HEAD	INCLUDES MILITARY COMM.; AV 7 VS. FLASH
SUIT	B/B-B-B/C	2/2/3/1	100/8	DC/FR	5 KG	TORSO, ARMS, LEGS	—
BOOTS	B/A-A-A/A	2/3/3/1	48/10	—	2 KG	FEET	—
GLOVES	B/A-A-A/A	1/1/1/1	30	—	0.5 KG	HANDS	—
FEDERATED SUNS							
HELMET	C/B-B-B/D	4/5/5/4	500	FS	1.5 KG	HEAD	INCLUDES MILITARY COMM., IR SCANNER AND RANGEFINDER; REQUIRES HC MICRO POWER PACK (2 PPH); −1 TO PERCEPTION ROLLS; AV 7 VS. FLASH
JACKET	B/B-B-B/C	3/5/4/3	450/10	FS	5 KG	TORSO, ARMS	1/2/2/1 FOR ARMS
BOOTS	B/A-A-A/A	2/3/3/1	48/10	—	2 KG	FEET	—
GLOVES	A/B-B-B/B	2/2/2/2	40	FS	1 KG	HANDS	—

Notes: PPH = Power Points per Hour

STANDARD ARMOR KITS (BY FACTION), CONT.

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	BAR (M/B/E/X)	COST/PATCH	AFF	MASS	COVERAGE	NOTES
FEDERATED SUNS (PAB-27 ELITE KIT)							
HELMET	D/X-X-C/D	4/6/5/4	800	FS	2 KG	HEAD	INCLUDES MILITARY COMM., IR SCANNER, NIGHT VISION, AND RANGEFINDER; REQUIRES HC MICRO POWER PACK (2 PPH); –1 TO PERCEPTION ROLLS; AV 7 VS. FLASH
VEST	D/X-X-C/D	4/6/5/4	650/50	FS	7.5 KG	TORSO	—
ARM GUARDS	C/X-X-C/C	2/4/3/3	100	FS	2 KG	ARMS	—
LEG GUARDS	C/X-X-C/C	2/4/4/3	200	FS	3.5 KG	LEGS	—
BOOTS	C/X-X-D/C	2/4/4/3	250	FS	2.5 KG	FEET	—
GLOVES	C/X-X-D/C	2/2/3/3	80	FS	0.5 KG	HANDS	DEX –1
FREE WORLDS LEAGUE							
HELMET	C/B-B-B/D	4/4/4/3	250	FW	1 KG	HEAD	INCLUDES MILITARY COMM., IR SCANNER; REQUIRES HC MICRO POWER PACK (1 PPH); –1 TO PERCEPTION CHECKS; AV 7 VS. FLASH
SUIT	B/B-B-B/D	5/6/4/3	1,500/30	FW	15 KG	TORSO, ARMS, LEGS	ENCUMBERING; 3/4/2/1 FOR ARMS AND LEGS
BOOTS	B/A-A-A/A	2/3/3/1	48/10	—	3 KG	FEET	—
GLOVES	B/A-A-A/A	1/1/1/1	30	—	0.5 KG	HANDS	—
LYRAN ALLIANCE							
HELMET	C/B-B-B/D	4/6/6/4	300	LA	1.2 KG	HEAD	INCLUDES MILITARY COMM., IR SCANNER AND NIGHT VISION; REQUIRES HC MICRO POWER PACK (1 PPH); –1 TO PERCEPTION ROLLS
JACKET	B/B-B-B/D	3/5/4/3	350/10	LA	3.5 KG	TORSO, ARMS	2/4/3/2 FOR ARMS; AV 7 VS. FLASH
BOOTS	B/A-A-A/A	2/3/3/1	48/10	—	2 KG	FEET	—
GLOVES	B/A-A-A/A	1/1/1/1	30	—	0.5 KG	HANDS	—
MAGISTRACY OF CANOPUS							
HELMET	C/B-B-B/D	5/6/5/2	250	MC	1 KG	HEAD	INCLUDES MILITARY COMM. AND RANGEFINDER; REQUIRES HC MICRO POWER PACK (1 PPH); –2 TO PERCEPTION ROLLS; AV 7 VS. FLASH
VEST	C/A-A-A/B	1/5/2/3	75/10	MC	3 KG	TORSO	—
BOOTS	B/A-A-A/A	2/3/3/1	48/10	—	2 KG	FEET	—
GLOVES	B/A-A-A/A	1/1/1/1	30	—	0.5 KG	HANDS	—

Notes: PPH = Power Points per Hour

STANDARD ARMOR KITS (BY FACTION), CONT.

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	BAR (M/B/E/X)	COST/PATCH	AFF	MASS	COVERAGE	NOTES
MARIAN HEGEMONY							
HELMET	C/B-B-B/D	5/6/5/2	300	MH	1 KG	HEAD	INCLUDES MILITARY COMM., NIGHT VISION AND RANGEFINDERS; REQUIRES HC MICRO POWER PACK (1 PPH); –1 TO PERCEPTION ROLLS; AV 6 VS. FLASH
JACKET	B/B-B-B/D	3/6/4/3	1,200/25	MH	10 KG	TORSO, ARMS	—
BOOTS	B/A-A-A/A	2/3/3/1	48/10	—	2 KG	FEET	—
GLOVES	B/A-A-A/A	1/1/1/1	30	—	0.5 KG	HANDS	—
TAURIAN CONCORDAT/CALDERON PROTECTORATE							
HELMET	C/B-B-B/D	3/5/5/3	210	TC	1 KG	HEAD	–1 TO PERCEPTION ROLLS; AV 7 VS. FLASH
JACKET	B/B-B-B/D	2/3/3/2	50/5	TC	3 KG	TORSO, ARMS	—
BOOTS	B/A-A-A/A	2/3/3/1	48/10	—	1.2 KG	FEET	—
GLOVES	B/B-B-B/B	2/2/2/2	60	TC	0.5 KG	HANDS	INCLUDES MILITARY COMM.
PERIPHERY/GENERIC							
HELMET	B/A-A-A/B	4/5/4/2	180	—	1.8 KG	HEAD	–1 TO PERCEPTION ROLLS; AV 5 VS. FLASH
JACKET	C/A-A-A/B	1/5/1/3	100/10	—	3.5 KG	TORSO, ARMS	—
BOOTS	B/A-A-A/A	2/3/3/1	48/10	—	2 KG	FEET	—

MECHWARRIOR KITS

MECHWARRIOR KIT (INNER SPHERE – REGULAR)							
COOLING VEST	D/B-C-B/B	1/2/0/1	200	—	4 KG	TORSO	*
NEUROHELMET, STANDARD	D/B-C-B/B	4/4/3/2	900	—	6 KG	HEAD	–2 TO PERCEPTION; ENCUMBERING**
SHORTS	A/A-A-A/A	—	6	—	—	LEGS	—
PLASTEEL BOOTS	D/C-D-C/A	4/6/4/4	175/50	—	3 KG	FEET	—
MECHWARRIOR KIT (INNER SPHERE – ELITE OR COMSTAR/WORD OF BLAKE)							
MECHWARRIOR COMBAT SUIT	E/B-F-C/D	2/5/1/3	20,000/50	—	10 KG	TORSO, ARMS, LEGS	1/4/0/2 BAR FOR ARMS, LEGS*
NEUROHELMET, COMBAT	E/B-D-B/B	2/3/2/1	1400	—	5 KG	HEAD	–1 TO PERCEPTION; ENCUMBERING; MAY BE SEALED IN HOSTILE ENVIRONMENTS (1-HOUR AIR SUPPLY)**
PLASTEEL BOOTS	D/C-D-C/A	4/6/4/4	175/50	—	3 KG	FEET	—
MECHWARRIOR KIT (CLAN)							
COOLING SUIT	E/X-E-D/B	2/2/1/1	5,000/500	CLAN	2 KG	TORSO, ARMS, LEGS	1/1/1/1 BAR FOR ARMS, LEGS*
NEUROHELMET, CLAN	F/X-E-B/B	2/3/2/1	5000	CLAN	3 KG	HEAD	–1 TO PERCEPTION**
BOOTS	C/E-E-E/F	3/5/5/3	100/20	CLAN	2 KG	FEET	—

*If a Cooling Vest/Suit or Flight Suit is reduced to a BAR of 0 in any category, it loses its functionality; treat the unit as if it has suffered a Life Support critical hit in game play.

**Neurohelmets are required to safely operate BattleMechs and IndustrialMechs. Without a neurohelmet, pilot suffers a –6 Piloting Skill roll modifier, and must make Piloting Skill rolls even when turning at walk.

Notes: PPH = Power Points per Hour

STANDARD ARMOR KITS (BY FACTION), CONT.							
ITEM	**EQUIPMENT RATINGS**	**BAR (M/B/E/X)**	**COST/PATCH**	**AFF**	**MASS**	**COVERAGE**	**NOTES**
SPECIAL COMBAT KITS							
AEROSPACE FIGHTER PILOT KIT							
COMBAT FLIGHT SUIT	C/B-C-B/B	2/3/2/2	3,000/300	—	7 KG	TORSO, ARMS, LEGS	MAY BE SEALED IN HOSTILE ENVIRONMENTS (WITH GLOVES, BOOTS AND PILOT'S HELMET; PROVIDES 48-HOUR LIFE SUPPORT)*
PILOT'S NEUROHELMET	C/B-C-B/B	2/3/2/2	1,200	—	5 KG	HEAD	MAY BE SEALED (WITH COMBAT FLIGHT SUIT); AV 10 VS. FLASH**
FLIGHT GLOVES	A/A-A-A/A	—	20	—	—	HANDS	REQUIRED TO SEAL COMBAT FLIGHT SUIT
BOOTS	B/A-A-A/A	2/3/3/1	55/15	—	3 KG	FEET	REQUIRED TO SEAL COMBAT FLIGHT SUIT
OTHER SPECIAL COMBAT KITS							
COMBAT SPACE SUIT	D/E-E-E/E	1/5/1/3	7,000/15	—	14 KG	FULL	ENCUMBERING; MAY BE SEALED IN HOSTILE ENVIRONMENTS (PROVIDES 48-HOUR LIFE SUPPORT); AV 8 VS. FLASH
MARINE COMBAT SUIT	D/D-D-D/D	4/5/5/2	15,000/100	—	20 KG	FULL	+2 TO ZERO-G OPERATIONS; MAY BE SEALED IN HOSTILE ENVIRONMENTS (PROVIDES 18-HOUR LIFE SUPPORT); AV 10 VS. FLASH
TANKER'S SMOCK	C/B-C-B/C	3/5/5/3	275/30	—	7.5 KG	TORSO	REPLACES TORSO ARMOR IN STANDARD INFANTRY ATTIRE ; INCORPORATES COOLING SYSTEMS*

*If a Cooling Vest/Suit, Flight Suit or Tanker's smock is reduced to a BAR of 0 in any category, it loses its cooling functionality; treat the unit as if it has suffered a Life Support critical hit in game play. For vehicle crewmen, character suffers the effects of Thin Skinned Trait, see p. 126, while inside a combat vehicle.)

**Neurohelmets are required to safely operate BattleMechs, IndustrialMechs and aerospace fighters. Without a neurohelmet, pilot suffers a –6 Piloting Skill roll modifier, and must make Piloting Skill rolls even when turning at walk/Safe Thrust.

Notes: PPH = Power Points per Hour

EXOTIC ARMOR							
ITEM	**EQUIPMENT RATINGS**	**BAR (M/B/E/X)**	**COST/PATCH**	**AFF**	**MASS**	**COVERAGE**	**NOTES**
BOGU (KENDO PRACTICE ARMOR)	B/C-C-C/A	2/1/0/1	75/5	DC	7 KG	FULL	–1 TO PERCEPTION CHECK ROLLS
OYOROI (ANCIENT)	A/F-F-F/A	3/1/1/2	50,000/100	DC	20 KG	FULL	–2 TO PERCEPTION; ENCUMBERING
OYOROI (MODERN)	D/E-E-E/B	4/5/4/4	2,000/50	DC	23 KG	FULL	–2 TO PERCEPTION; ENCUMBERING
KNIGHT'S PLATE (ANCIENT)	A/F-F-F/A	3/1/1/2	49,000/100	—	19.5 KG	FULL	–2 TO PERCEPTION; ENCUMBERING
KNIGHT'S PLATE (MODERN)	C/E-F-E/B	4/5/3/3	2,400/55	—	22 KG	FULL	–2 TO PERCEPTION; ENCUMBERING

THE SHARPER WARRIOR
DON'T GET LEFT OUT IN THE COLD

HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT GEAR

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	BAR (M/B/E/X)	COST/PATCH	AFF	MASS	COVERAGE	NOTES
MASKS AND RESPIRATORS							
FILTER MASK	C/A-A-A/A	—	5	—	420 G	—	RELOAD COST: 2 PER 5 FILTERS (MUST BE CHANGED EVERY 72 HOURS); BAR 5 VS. INHALED TOXINS/ POISONS
RESPIRATOR	C/A-A-A/A	—	50	—	2.5 KG	—	PROVIDES 4 HOURS OF BREATHABLE AIR PER TANK (MAX 3 TANKS; TANK COST: 2); BAR 10 VS. INHALED TOXINS/POISONS IF USED AS A FILTER.
HUMIDIFIER MASK	C/A-A-A/A	—	10	—	500 G	—	PROVIDES 8 HOURS OF COMFORTABLE BREATHING IN ARID CLIMATES (EQUIVALENT TO THICK-SKINNED TRAIT IN DESERT ENVIRONMENTS); 10 MINUTES TO REFILL AT WATER SOURCE
HOSTILE WEATHER GEAR							
HEAT SUIT	D/C-C-C/A	0/0/1/0	100	—	3 KG	FULL	DESERT SURVIVAL GEAR; INCLUDES FILTER MASK AND PROTECTIVE GOGGLES; REQUIRES POWER PACK (1 PPD)
PARKA	C/A-A-A/A	1/0/0/0	48	—	2 KG	HEAD, TORSO, ARMS	COLD WEATHER GEAR; ENCUMBERING
SNOW SUIT	C/A-A-A/A	1/0/0/0	72	—	4 KG	FULL	COLD WEATHER GEAR; ENCUMBERING
WETSUIT (SCUBA SUIT)	B/A-A-A/A	1/0/0/0	55	—	5.5 KG	FULL	UNDERWATER GEAR; INCLUDES 4 HOURS OF LIFE SUPPORT (RELOAD COST: 2); IMMUNE VS. INHALED TOXINS; MAX DEPTH 150 METERS; ENCUMBERING ON LAND*
UNDERWATER OPERATIONS GEAR	C/A-B-A/A	1/1/1/1	125	—	30 KG	FULL	UNDERWATER GEAR; INCLUDES 8 HOURS OF LIFE SUPPORT (RELOAD COST: 4); IMMUNE VS. INHALED TOXINS; MAX DEPTH 360 METERS; ENCUMBERING ON LAND*
ENVIRONMENT SUITS							
ENGINEERING SUIT	D/D-E-D/C	1/4/2/3	7,500/10	—	14 KG	FULL	ENCUMBERING; INCLUDES CIVILIAN COMM., INTERCOM LINK, POLARIZED GOGGLES AND 36-HOUR LIFE SUPPORT; −2 TO DEX-RELATED ROLLS
ENVIRONMENT SUIT (HEAVY)	D/C-E-C/B	5/4/3/3	10,000/75	—	18 KG	FULL	ENCUMBERING; BAR 5 VS. FLASH; INCLUDES MILITARY COMM. AND 6-HOUR LIFE SUPPORT
ENVIRONMENT SUIT (LIGHT)	C/B-C-B/B	4/1/3/1	200/35	—	5 KG	FULL	ENCUMBERING; INCLUDES 6-HOUR LIFE SUPPORT
SPACE SUIT	C/B-B-B/B	1/2/1/1	5,000/10	—	12 KG	FULL	ENCUMBERING; INCLUDES MILITARY COMM., THRUSTER PACK, POLARIZED VISOR AND 48-HOUR LIFE SUPPORT
PATCHWORK ENVIRO-SUIT	C/X-X-C/B	3/2/3/2	600/300	MH	20 KG	FULL	ENCUMBERING; SELF-HEALING BIO-POLYMER SUIT CAN RECOVER 1 BAR POINT PER DAMAGE TYPE PER 10 TURNS (TO MAX LISTED BAR RATINGS). 30-YEAR "SHELF-LIFE" BEFORE HEALING SYSTEM FAILS
ACCESSORIES							
GRIP SHOES/SLIPS	C/B-B-B/A	—	30	—	1 KG	FEET	+1 TO ZERO-G OPERATIONS SKILL
ENGINEER'S HELMET	C/X-B-B/A	3/3/0/2	2,000/200	—	1 KG	HEAD	−2 TO PERCEPTION; BAR 5 VS. FLASH; INCLUDES INTERCOM LINK, IR SCANNER, AND RANGEFINDER; REQUIRES HC MICRO POWER PACK (2 PPH)
PROTECTIVE GOGGLES/ VISOR	A/A-A-A/A	—	4	—	—	—	BAR 0 VS. FLASH
POLARIZED GOGGLES/ VISOR	B/A-A-A/A	—	10	—	—	—	BAR 5 VS. FLASH
SUNGLASSES	A/A-A-A/A	—	3	—	—	—	BAR 1 VS. FLASH

*The wetsuit remains functional if breached, but character may not dive more than 75 meters underwater.

STEALTH GEAR

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	BAR (M/B/E/X)	COST/PATCH	AFF	MASS	COVERAGE	NOTES
CAMOUFLAGE CLOTHING	A/A-A-A/A	—	X1.25	—	—	FULL	E/I/C: 0/0/2*
DEST INFILTRATION SUIT	D/F-E-E/E	2/4/5/2	50,000	DC	9 KG	FULL	E/I/C: 0/6/2; REQUIRES HC POWER PACK (1 PT PER 15 MIN WHEN ACTIVE); INCLUDES WRAPAROUND VISOR (BAR 8 VS. FLASH; +1 TO PERCEPTION, CANNOT BE SURPRISED)
GHILLIE SUIT	A/A-B-A/A	—	50	—	6 KG	FULL	E/I/C: 0/0/6*
SNEAK SUIT, CAMO	D/C-D-C/D	0/2/1/2	7,000	—	4 KG	FULL	E/I/C: 0/0/4; REQUIRES HC POWER PACK (1 PT PER 15 MIN WHEN ACTIVE)
SNEAK SUIT, CAMO/ECM	D/C-D-D/D	0/2/1/2	21,000	—	5 KG	FULL	E/I/C: 6/0/4; REQUIRES HC POWER PACK (1 PT PER 10 MIN WHEN ACTIVE)
SNEAK SUIT, CAMO/IR	D/C-E-D/D	0/2/1/2	21,000	—	5 KG	FULL	E/I/C: 0/6/4; REQUIRES HC POWER PACK (1 PT PER 10 MIN WHEN ACTIVE)
SNEAK SUIT, ECM	D/C-D-C/D	0/2/1/2	7,000	—	4 KG	FULL	E/I/C: 6/0/0; REQUIRES HC POWER PACK (1 PT PER 15 MIN WHEN ACTIVE)
SNEAK SUIT, ECM/IR	D/C-E-D/D	0/2/1/2	21,000	—	5 KG	FULL	E/I/C: 6/6/0; REQUIRES HC POWER PACK (1 PT PER 10 MIN WHEN ACTIVE)
SNEAK SUIT, IR	D/C-D-C/D	0/2/1/2	7,000	—	4 KG	FULL	E/I/C: 0/6/0; REQUIRES HC POWER PACK (1 PT PER 15 MIN WHEN ACTIVE)
SNEAK SUIT, IR/ECM/CAMO	D/D-F-E/D	0/2/1/2	28,000	—	6 KG	FULL	E/I/C: 6/6/4; REQUIRES HC POWER PACK (1 PT PER 5 MIN WHEN ACTIVE)
SNEAK SUIT, ECM/IR	D/C-E-D/D	0/2/1/2	21,000	—	5 KG	FULL	E/I/C: 6/6/0; REQUIRES HC POWER PACK (1 PT PER 10 MIN WHEN ACTIVE)

*The Camo modifier for these items only applies if the stealth gear is matched to the environment it is used in (such as woodland camouflage colors in wooded terrain).

A character that uses hostile weather gear in appropriate terrain functions as if he has the Thick-Skinned Trait (see p. 125) while operating in that terrain with that gear. If the character already has Thick-Skinned, double the Trait's effects as long as the character operates in that environment with the appropriate gear.

Statistics for the Combat Space Suit and Marine Combat Suit appear in *Standard Armor Kits* (p. 295).

STEALTH GEAR

"Nothing ticks me off more than taking on some spotter in a gillie suit. Ruins my whole day." —KP

"Sometimes you need to eschew the protection of battle armor for increased stealth. These suits are perfect for such operations, but make sure you know what you need to hide from when you select your suit." —JH

From simple camouflage fatigues to the advanced sensor defeating "ninja suits" of Draconis Elite Strike Teams, stealth gear is a good idea for most ground combat forces (and a downright necessity for black ops types). Various stealth suits are available today that can conceal a wearer from ECM, IR or even visual detectors, including combo suits that allow for greater flexibility.

Special Game Rules

The various stealth suits and concealment devices listed here each receive a special set of statistics in addition to their other rules. These statistics are E/I/C codes, which refer to the stealth equipment's ECM, IR and Camo ratings, respectively. Against portable sensors and personal optics (see *Surveillance Gear*, starting on p. 302), these codes are the modifiers added to the stealth equipment user's Stealth Skill roll when trying to slip by unnoticed. To determine if this stealth action succeeds, the operator of the sensors or optics must make an Opposed Check against the sneaking character's Stealth roll, using the Sensor Operations Skill (if the sensor is remote or automated) or the Perception Skill (if the sensor is directly operated by a character, such as when using binoculars). An operative wearing an IR/Camo Combo Sneak Suit (E/I/C: 0/6/4), would apply a +6 modifier to his Stealth Skill roll when passing a remote IR sensor device, while the sensor's monitoring character would be rolling on his Sensor Operations Skill. If the same operative passed by a guard's line of sight, he would apply a +4 modifier to his Stealth Skill roll in an Opposed Check against the guard's Perception Skill.

Against vehicular sensors—which include multiple layers of sensing equipment—the various E/I/C codes simplify their effects for tactical purposes. These effects are summed up in the stealth gear tactical rules presented here, but only apply to vehicular units attempting to detect or target characters or infantry using stealth gear.

NON-COMBAT ATTIRE

"Most folks find that military field dress can be suitable attire in all kinds of social events." —KP

"Don't assume one set of clothing will do everywhere; there's a time and place." —JH

STEALTH GEAR TACTICAL RULES

The following rules apply when an infantry unit (or character) interacts with vehicle sensors in tactical combat (or Total Warfare game play). All rating values are derived from the E/I/C statistics identified in the Notes for stealth gear.

ECM Stealth Effects in Tactical Combat

The ECM Rating (E) for stealth gear helps identify how well the infantry or character can hide from electromagnetic vehicular sensors (so long as the unit remains stationary and under cover).

ECM Rating	Tactical Rules Effect
Less than 0	Unit cannot hide from enemy EM sensors at all (no Hidden Units rules, pp. 259-260, *TW*)
0 to 5	No tactical effect. Unit may use Hidden Units rules, but can be spotted with Active Probes.
6 to 9	Unit can hide from standard vehicle sensors and Light Active Probes.
10 or more	Unit cannot be spotted by any Active Probes (including the Bloodhound).

IR Stealth Effects in Tactical Combat

The IR Rating (I) for stealth gear helps identify how well the infantry or character can obscure its thermal signature on vehicular sensors, which affects how well it can be targeted over distance.

IR Rating	Tactical Rules Effect (Additional roll modifiers at Short/Med/Long/Extreme Range)
Less than 4	No tactical effect
4 to 5	+0/–1/–2/–3
6 to 7	–1/–1/–2/–3
8 to 9	–1/–2/–3/–5
10 or more	–2/–3/–3/–6

Camo Stealth Effects in Tactical Combat

The Camo Rating (C) for stealth gear helps identify how well the infantry or character can obscure its visible outline on vehicular sensors, which affects how well it can be targeted while in motion.

Camo Rating	Tactical Rules Effect (additional roll modifiers based on target MP spent)*
Less than 4	No tactical effect
2 to 3	–1/–0/–0/–0/–0
4 to 5	–2/–1/–0/–0/–0
6 to 7	–3/–2/–1/–0/–0
8 to 9	–3/–2/–1/–1/–0
10 or more	–3/–3/–2/–1/–1

*A Tactical MP (Total Warfare) is equal to 15 meters per 5-second turn or 30 meters per 10-second turn. IR Rating tactical modifiers are for the targeted infantry unit moving 0 MP/1 MP/2 MP/3 MP/4+ MP (respectively).

Note: All modifiers are cumulative, but only apply to an infantry unit if all the unit's members are using the same stealth gear type. (For example, infantry wearing Combination IR/Camo gear (E/I/C: 0/6/4) gets no benefit for ECM, applies attack roll modifiers of –1/–1/–2/–3 for Short/Medium/Long/Extreme ranges respectively, and additional attack roll modifiers of –2/–1/+0/+0/+0 if the stealthed unit moves 0/1/2/3/4 MP per turn. The unit cannot hide from probes, but a stationary unit wearing such combo stealth gear would apply a –3 attack roll modifier at short range [–1 for Short Range –2 for stationary].)

A wide range of clothing is available, from the highly expensive and beautiful to the cheap and utilitarian. Jumpsuits and fatigues are common dress for many militaries, especially the Clans. Pricing is for standard clothing that the Sharper Warrior provides; a FuRrOr suit will run you close to 10,000 C-bills.

Leather Wear

"A leather jacket may save you from a hold-out pistol, but it's better left to hoverbikers." —KP

"I've got no use for the stuff. In combat." —JH

Thick leather clothing (natural or synthleather) is stylish in many circles and can offer a modicum of protection in combat. Still, while this kind of attire may help you survive a fall off your steel (or live) mount, or even take a few hits in a barroom brawl, one should never rely on mere leather to stop a bullet.

BATTLE ARMOR AND EXOSKELETONS

"You shouldn't ignore battle armor forces, but they're not the Galedon plague, either. Do a proper threat assessment; don't just yield to them because they might need two medium laser shots each to die instead of one." —KP

"Four men in battle armor can rip apart a veteran platoon of 28 men. That's my kind of force multiplier." —JH

While soldiers can be trained or bred to be faster, stronger and tougher than the typical human, battle armor and exoskeletons take this to a whole new level. Exoskeletons provide immense strength and (sometimes) more speed at the cost of grace and manual dexterity. Battle armor expands beyond this, adding

NON-COMBAT ATTIRE

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	BAR (M/B/E/X)	COST/PATCH	AFF	MASS	COVERAGE	NOTES
FORMAL/CASUAL ATTIRE							
DRESS/ROBE	A/A-A-A/A	—	20-44	—	—	TORSO, ARMS, LEGS	ARM COVERAGE OPTIONAL
DRESS SHOES/BOOTS	A/A-A-A/A	—	30-75	—	—	FEET	—
FORMAL GOWN	A/A-A-A/A	—	90-780	—	—	TORSO, ARMS, LEGS	ARM COVERAGE OPTIONAL
FORMAL SUIT	A/A-A-A/A	—	140-575	—	—	TORSO, ARMS, LEGS	—
HAT/CAP/FEDORA	A/A-A-A/A	—	12-15	—	—	HEAD	—
SHOES/SANDALS/ SNEAKERS	A/A-A-A/A	—	17-50	—	—	FEET	—
JACKET/BLAZER	A/A-A-A/A	—	28-36	—	—	TORSO, ARMS	—
OVERCOAT	A/A-A-A/A	—	8-55	—	—	TORSO, ARMS	—
PANTS	A/A-A-A/A	—	8-23	—	—	LEGS	—
PAJAMAS/SLEEPWEAR	A/A-A-A/A	—	15-20	—	—	TORSO, ARMS, LEGS	—
SHIRT/TUNIC	A/A-A-A/A	—	3-15	—	—	TORSO, ARMS	ARM COVERAGE OPTIONAL
SHORTS	A/A-A-A/A	—	6-10	—	—	LEGS	—
SKIRT/KILT	A/A-A-A/A	—	22-25	—	—	LEGS	—
SWEATER/SWEATSHIRT	A/A-A-A/A	—	5-12	—	—	TORSO, ARMS	—
SWEATPANTS	A/A-A-A/A	—	8-15	—	—	LEGS	—
SWIMWEAR (MALE)	A/A-A-A/A	—	7-11	—	—	LEGS	—
SWIMWEAR (FEMALE)	A/A-A-A/A	—	12-19	—	—	TORSO, LEGS	ONE-PIECE OR BIKINI
SOCKS/STOCKINGS	A/A-A-A/A	—	5-8	—	—	FEET	STOCKINGS COVER LEGS TOO
UNDERWEAR (MALE)	A/A-A-A/A	—	3-5	—	—	TORSO OR LEGS	UNDERSHIRT OR BRIEFS/BOXERS
UNDERWEAR (FEMALE)	A/A-A-A/A	—	12-25	—	—	TORSO OR LEGS	ONE-PIECE OR TWO
VEST/APRON	A/A-A-A/A	—	4-9	—	—	TORSO	APRON ONLY COVERS FRONT
MILITARY/WORK ATTIRE							
FATIGUES	B/A-A-A/A	—	30	—	—	TORSO, ARMS, LEGS	—
JUMP SUIT	B/A-A-A/A	—	24	—	—	TORSO, ARMS, LEGS	—
WORK BOOTS	B/A-A-A/A	1/1/0/1	36	—	—	FEET	—
LEATHERWEAR							
JACKET	A/A-A-A/A	1/1/0/1	50	—	2 KG	TORSO, ARMS	—
BOOTS	A/A-A-A/A	1/1/0/1	25	—	0.8 KG	FEET	—
GLOVES	A/A-A-A/A	1/1/0/1	20	—	0.4 KG	HANDS	−1 TO DEX-RELATED ROLLS
PANTS/CHAPS	A/A-A-A/A	1/1/0/1	35	—	3 KG	LEGS	—
SHOES	A/A-A-A/A	1/1/0/1	25	—	0.8 KG	FEET	—
VEST/APRON	A/A-A-A/A	1/1/0/1	25	—	1.2 KG	TORSO	APRON ONLY COVERS FRONT

protection far superior to any other body armor available, along with the strength to tear armor plate off a BattleMech. Expensive and complex, these "ultimate power suits" are not commonly found in the hands of the average individual, but instead are often part of the equipment provided by state armies and major industrial concerns.

SPECIAL GAME RULES

Battle armor and exoskeletons occupy the same basic place in game play, straddling a line between standard combat armor and vehicular units. Full statistics for battle armor and exoskeletons appear in select *Technical Readouts* and other sourcebooks, identifying the weight, movement, armor and armament carried by each suit or exoskeleton. Rules governing these items in tactical (*Total Warfare*-style) game play may be found in *Total Warfare*, *TechManual* and *Tactical Operations*. Their use in personal combat—including conversion of their movement capabilities, conversion of their mounted weapons to personal-scale combat, and the special features of their manipulator equipment—are covered in *Tactical Combat Addendum* (see pp. 200-225). A conversion table to find the BAR values of an exoskeleton or battlesuit appears on p. 187 of *Personal Combat*.

Donning battle armor or exoskeletons is a Complex Action that takes 30 minutes (if unassisted) or 15 minutes (with technical assistance). A successful Piloting/Battlesuit Skill roll can reduce this time by 5 minutes per point of MoS to a minimum of 10 minutes (unassisted) or 5 minutes (assisted). Emergency egress systems allow the operator of a battlesuit or exoskeleton to shed his suit in one 5-second combat turn, as long as the suit is still functioning (defined as having at least 1 Tactical Armor point remaining).

While operating a suit of battle armor—including PA(L) suits and exoskeletons—a character occupies a middle ground in the vehicular-versus-infantry divide, and uses vehicular (tactical) rules when attacking or being attacked by another vehicular unit, including opposing battle armor. When attacking or being attacked by infantry units (including dismounted characters and creatures), personal combat rules are recommended instead.

ELECTRONICS

While one can imagine making do without the latest music system or laser razor, society as a whole in the *BattleTech* universe would likely suffer without its portable communications, computers and the like. In the days of the Star League, advanced electronics made many seemingly impossible tasks routine and even extended the average lifespan far beyond what it would normally be.

The Sharper Warrior offers many electronic tools to improve your lifestyle. Some offer entertainment, others security. Communications are important, both on the battlefield and off it.

COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT

"If you don't pack a personal communicator, you're a fool. Do you really think you can live in that cockpit?" —KP

"Being able to coordinate actions makes a unit much more effective—unless the enemy can hear you." —JH

Despite modern video communications and fiber optics, the radio transmission of audio messages is still the most popular means of long-distance communication throughout inhabited space. For the security conscious, military comm systems have more channels and better encryption, but they tend to use up power faster. Field communicators can transmit complex data such as video and data files. Larger and more powerful versions are available, but their use is often restricted to field communications vehicles.

Of course, the range and reception of all these communications systems often seems short to the average layman, especially with so many micro-communicators limited to line-of-sight (LOS) applications, but most civilized and developed worlds resolve this issue through an extensive network of relay antennas and satellites. With some cities sporting massive communications antennas on their tallest skyscrapers, the only way for a micro-communicator signal to be lost is to effectively work "off the grid" (where most military comm systems do).

Other popular communication devices have more specific roles. The SatNav receiver can pinpoint a user's location to within 5 meters if the world has a working satellite navigation network. Intercoms within buildings and ships offer a "closed" network for a crew to use that's independent of local grids. Headsets offer hands-free portability to extant communicators.

[*Editor's Note: While we at* The Sharper Warrior *would have loved to provide statistical data on the so-called "Black Boxes" rumored to be in the hands of some major government agencies and military powers, we were unable to find any member of the FedSuns, Capellan, Combine, or Lyran governments willing to admit they even have one. Furthermore, it appears the Interstellar Expeditions group also recently "lost" all data regarding these curious interstellar communications devices. Our apologies are offered for this inconvenience.]*

Special Game Rules

To provide any bonus modifiers to an Initiative roll, all members of a party must have functioning two-way (send and receive) communication devices tuned to the same frequency. Communications equipment can even pick up or jam hostile transmissions, if the character has sufficient Communications/Conventional Skill.

Unfriendly ECM, electromagnetic interference and heavy metals can block or disrupt communications, as can the destruction of relays or hubs linked to the same network the communication device is using. For this reason, ranges are listed on the Communications Equipment Table for communication devices that are operating "off network" (unless such operation would be impossible otherwise, as in the case of intercom links). For general reference, virtually all cities on worlds with a sufficient technical base (Tech Base C or higher) have the necessary relays to make communications across a city—or to nearby cities—easy.

AUDIO/VIDEO/TRIDEO EQUIPMENT

"We worked with the Dragoons once and their commander could control his force almost like it was a table top war game. But it didn't make a poor commander a good one." —KP

"Any plan you can scratch in the dirt with a stick is a good one. But it helps when your dirt is holographic." —JH

Audio communication is great when your eyes are busy with something else, but often a picture can be worth a thousand words. Cheap, flat screen displays are widely available, but most advanced displays today use holographic video (holo-vid or tri-

COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	COST	AFF	MASS	RANGE	POWER USE	NOTES
CIVILIAN COMMUNICATIONS							
COMMUNICATIONS HEADSET	D/A-C-C/A	50	—	10 G	100 M	1 PPW	—
COMM. KIT, LONG-RANGE	D/B-D-C/B	400	—	5 KG	50 KM	3 PPH	2,500 KM RANGE TO SATELLITE
CIVILIAN COMMUNICATOR	C/A-A-A/A	45	—	100 G	10 KM (LOS)	0.2 PPH	—
CIVILIAN MICRO-COMMUNICATOR	D/A-B-A/A	175	—	5 G	2 KM (LOS)	0.2 PPH	—
INTERCOM-LINK	D.A-C-B/A	500	—	5 G	10 M	0.2 PPH	USABLE ONLY IN NETWORK; RANGE TO NEAREST NETWORK ONLY; CANNOT BE EXTENDED WITH SATELLITES/RELAYS
SATNAV RECEIVER	C/A-E-C/A	75	—	500 G	—	1 PPH	RECEIVER ONLY; REQUIRES SATNAV NETWORK; +2 TO NAVIGATION SKILL ROLLS WHEN USED
VID-PHONE	D/A-B-A/A	35	—	400 G	—	0.1 PPH	CORDLESS "LAND-LINE" COMMUNICATOR (TIES INTO LOCAL NETWORKS)
MILITARY/INDUSTRIAL COMMUNICATIONS							
FIELD COMM. KIT, ADVANCED	D/B-E-D/B	100,000	CS	100 KG	1000 KM	10 PPH	2,500 KM RANGE TO SATELLITE
FIELD COMMUNICATOR	D/A-A-A/B	200	—	1 KG	25 KM	1 PPH	—
MILITARY COMMUNICATOR	D/A-A-A/B	50	—	100 G	10 KM	1 PPH	—
MILITARY MICRO-COMMUNICATOR	C/A-E-C/A	75	—	500 G	5 KM	1 PPH	—
SUBVOCAL MICROCOMMUNICATOR	D/D-F-C/E	600	—	3.5 G	100 M	1 PPH	USES MICRO POWER PACKS ONLY; REQUIRES COMMUNICATIONS/CONVENTIONAL LEVEL 2+ TO USE; -3 TO PERCEPTION TO EAVESDROP ON USER
RELAYS/HUBS							
CIVILIAN FIELD RELAY, SMALL	C/B-B-B/B	2,500	—	500 KG	2 KM	—	FIXED ANTENNA/RELAY SET-UP
CIVILIAN FIELD RELAY, LARGE	C/D-F-C/B	4,000	—	1,000 KG	10 KM	—	FIXED ANTENNA/RELAY SET-UP
CIVILIAN COMM. HUB	C/C-C-C/C	8,000	—	1,000 KG	5 KM	—	FIXED COMMUNICATIONS HUB; USED TO COORDINATE UP TO 30 RELAYS
MILITARY RELAY ANTENNA	C/C-C-C/C	4,500	—	1,000 KG	5 KM	1 PPD	SEMI-FIXED ANTENNA/RELAY; MAY BE CONNECTED TO LOCAL POWER GRID
MILITARY COMM. HUB	D/C-D-C/D	10,000	—	1,000 KG	25 KM	3 PPD	MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS HUB; EXPANDABLE (SEE P. 121, TECHMANUAL, AND PP. 191-196, TACTICAL OPERATIONS FOR MORE INFO)

NOTE: PPH = Power Points per Hour; PPW = Power Points per Week

vid). Both monitors and projectors are available, but monitors have better quality.

Even more massive, the rare and expensive holotank allows a commander to interact with the holographic projection. By hooking this up to an advanced field communicator, two additional technicians can assist a commander in coordinating data with troops in the field, offering unparalleled command of the battle.

COMPUTERS

"Computers sure make life easier, but they won't do the job for you." —KP

"Humans err. But it takes a computer to really malf things up." —JH

Computers are an indispensable part of daily life, relied on for their ability to input and store data and to perform calculations far faster than any human. Most personal computers are designed for multiple uses, but many have specific functions, such as compads and telescans, which are designed simply for download-and-review functions, versus the ubiquitous

AUDIO/VIDEO/TRIDEO EQUIPMENT						
ITEM	**EQUIPMENT RATINGS**	**COST**	**AFF**	**MASS**	**POWER USE**	**NOTES**
RECORDING DEVICES						
MICRO-RECORDER	C/A-B-B/A	100	—	150 G	0.5 PPH	AUDIO RECORDINGS ONLY; 1 HOUR MAX ON HIGH-QUALITY (10 HOURS AT LOW-QUALITY); SIZE: TINY
MICRO-CAMCORDER	D/B-D-C/A	1,000	—	400 G	1 PPH	AUDIO-VIDEO RECORDINGS; 1 HOUR OF VIDEO (OR 5,000 STILL IMAGES) MAX; SIZE: TINY
VIDEO CAMERA	C/A-B-A/A	250	—	3 KG	0.5 PPH	AUDIO-VIDEO RECORDINGS; 6 HOURS VIDEO (OR 30,000 STILL IMAGES) MAX*
TRI-VID CAMERA	C/A-B-A/A	375	—	4 KG	1 PPH	HOLO RECORDINGS; 2 HOURS OF VIDEO (OR 15,000 STILL IMAGES) MAX*
PROJECTION/PLAYBACK DEVICES						
HOLOMAP	D/A-D-C/A	250	—	2 KG	1 PPH	CAN LINK TO SATNAV RECEIVERS; PROJECTS HOLOGRAPHIC MAPS
HOLOPROJECTOR, PORTABLE	D/A-C-B/A	400	—	4 KG	2 PPH	PROJECTS HOLOVID (TRI-VID) RECORDINGS
HOLOTANK	E/E-X-E/B	500,000	CLAN	2,000 KG	1 PPM	CAN BE HOOKED TO ADVANCED FIELD COMMUNICATIONS TO PRODUCE A +2 ROLL MODIFIER TO A COMMANDER'S STRATEGY, TACTICS AND INITIATIVE
HOLOVISION MONITOR	D/A-B-A/A	300	—	10 KG	2 PPH	PLAYS LIVE AND RECORDED HOLOVID (TRI-VID) MEDIA
PERSONAL MUSIC SET	C/A-B-A/A	20	—	2 KG	1 PPH	PLAYS LIVE AND RECORDED AUDIO-ONLY MEDIA
TRI-VID SET	C/A-B-A/A	220	—	5 KG	2 PPH	PLAYS LIVE AND RECORDED HOLOVID (TRI-VID) MEDIA
VIDEO MONITOR	B/A-B-A/A	160	—	3 KG	1 PPH	PLAYS LIVE AND RECORDED FLAT VIDEO MEDIA
STORAGE MEDIA (BLANK)						
AUDIO/AUDIO-VIDEO CHIP	C/A-B-A/A	1	—	5 G	—	STORAGE MEDIUM FOR DATA, AUDIO AND AUDIO-VIDEO MEDIA
HOLOVID VID-CHIP/ CRYSTAL	D/A-B-A/A	2	—	10 G	—	STORAGE MEDIUM FOR HOLO-VID (TRI-VID) MEDIA
HOLOMAP CHIP	D/A-D-C/A	20	—	10 G	—	STORAGE MEDIUM FOR HOLOMAP/SATNAV RECEIVER

*These recorders are compatible with Infrared, Telescopic and Night Vision scopes
Note: PPH = Power Points per Hour; PPM = Power Points per Minute

noteputers and personal computers nearly everyone over the age of 12 likely owns on any civilized world today.

For diagnostics and maintenance support, the Descartes computer series is still the technician's tool of choice, though nothing beats a good scanalyzer for scientific and forensic work. The engineer's portable console is actually more of a control interface, which uses cartridges to emulate any control system on a large spacecraft—vital for overrides should a bridge system be taken out of action. Another notable control interface (albeit not available for general sale) is the Clans' Enhanced Imaging Display, a modular HUD-style system based on the first Star League's Brain Wire program.

And for the security buff, there is the verigraph scanner/reader. Designed to boost any existing form of encryption for ultimate security, this handy gem embeds the genetic code of a file or message recipient's DNA, to ensure that he—and *only* he—gets the precious data within. As a technique nearly impossible to forge, ComStar has relied on verigraphs for centuries to secure messages for VIPs in just about every walk of life.

SURVEILLANCE GEAR

"I once had a hostile 'Mech company bugged courtesy of some friendly spooks. Probably the most fun I've had in a 'Mech—until a non-bugged company showed up to help 'em." —KP

"Generally speaking, knowing what the target is up to can make all the difference." —JH

The tools available to surveillance operatives (not to be confused with espionage operatives; many in surveillance are actually government and law enforcement, not military) are quite varied, but all share the same basic function: to monitor and track a target's activities. Though much of this can be accomplished from the relative safety of an office with access to planetary networks, field operatives still have to hit the streets and keep an eye on their suspects and targets. For that, they have a host of gear well suited to the job.

Directional microphones (also called shotgun microphones) allow an operative to pick up regular conversation at 100 meters away (and whispers up to 50 meters away). Laser microphones can

COMPUTERS					
ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	COST	AFF	MASS	NOTES
PERSONAL COMPUTING					
COMPAD	D/A-C-B/A	150	—	200 G	PORTABLE; REQUIRES MICRO POWER PACK (0.1 PPH)
NOTEPUTER	C/A-B-A/A	500	—	500 G	PORTABLE; REQUIRES MICRO POWER PACK (0.1 PPH); TEXT READER ONLY
PERSONAL COMPUTER	C/A-B-A/A	250	—	3 KG	DESKTOP; REQUIRES POWER PACK OR PLUG (1 PPH)
POCKET TRANSCRIBER	C/A-B-B/A	200	—	500 G	PORTABLE; REQUIRES MICRO POWER PACK (0.5 PPH); SPEECH-TO-TEXT TRANSCRIPTION AND PLAYBACK ONLY
TELESCAN	C/A-A-A/A	100	—	750 G	PORTABLE; REQUIRES MICRO POWER PACK (0.1 PPH); REQUIRES WORKING SATELLITE NET TO DOWNLOAD AND PLAY LOCAL NEWS AND WEATHER FEEDS.
DIAGNOSTIC EQUIPMENT					
DESCARTES MK XXI	D/C-E-C/B	1,000	—	7 KG	DIAGNOSTIC SCANNER; REQUIRES POWER PACK OR PLUG (2 PPH); +1 TO TECHNICIAN ROLLS (WHEN DIAGNOSING DAMAGE)
DESCARTES MK XXV	E/X-X-D/B	2,500	—	5 KG	DIAGNOSTIC SCANNER; REQUIRES POWER PACK OR PLUG (3 PPH); +2 TO TECHNICIAN ROLLS (WHEN DIAGNOSING DAMAGE)
SCANALYZER	D/B-D-C/B	5,000	—	3 KG	DESKTOP; REQUIRES POWER PACK OR PLUG (0.1 PPT); +2 TO SCIENCE ROLLS (WHEN ANALYZING SAMPLES)
CONTROL INTERFACES					
ENGINEER'S PORTABLE CONSOLE	D/B-E-C/C	5,000	—	4 KG	INTERFACE; REQUIRES POWER PACK OR PLUG (1 PPH); +1 TO SECURITY SYSTEMS/ ELECTRONIC; −1 TO PILOTING/SPACECRAFT
ENHANCED IMAGING DISPLAY	F/X-X-D/F	400,000	CLAN	5 KG	INTERFACE; INTEGRATES WITH COCKPIT SYSTEMS (SEE EI NEURAL IMPLANTS, P. 316); +1 TO SENSOR OPERATIONS WITHOUT EI IMPLANTS
SPECIAL SYSTEMS					
VERIGRAPH SCANNER/ READER	D/A-B-A/A	360	—	1 KG	ENCRYPTS/READS GENETIC CODING OF OPERATOR FOR SECURE MESSAGE TRANSFER; −4 TO FORGERY

Note: PPH = Power Points per Hour; PPT = Power Points per (5-second) Turn

pick up vibrations on thin surfaces such as glass panes, and determine what sounds occur nearby—effectively divining a conversation held inside a building up to a kilometer away (or less, if there's a lot of smog or smoke to cut through).

To frustrate eavesdroppers, voice distorters and white noise generators can be brought to bear. Whether it's a distorter altering a person's voiceprint and washing out background noises to thwart SigInt types, or a white noise generator killing any recorder's ability to sort wheat from chaff when conspirators huddle, victory in the spy war may go to whoever has the wherewithal to use their spyware most effectively.

Adding to this mix are "bugs"—miniature recording or signal devices that can be used to listen in and record conversations remotely or simply to tag an unwitting subject (or, more commonly, said subject's vehicle) to track his movements. To counter (or simply keep an eye on) these bugs are a host of bug scanners and locators—some as small and innocuous as a common wristwatch.

OPTICS

"Just another way to try to see them before they see you." —KP

"Invest in a pair of binoculars for most of your grunts early. It's amazing what the ol' Mark Ones can do for you with a little help." —JH

Humans may have excellent eyesight, but modern technology has made it possible to see farther and better than ever. Whether through a simple pair of binoculars, like the Binox Image Intensifier, or the more advanced Michaeaux, or the enhanced capabilities of the trusty Rangefinder series, which offers night vision as well as impressive magnification, optical technology helps us see what the naked eye cannot. For nighttime action, there are plenty of infrared scanners and night-vision specs on the market, allowing us to see what only a feral tabiranth could before.

For more enhanced optics, one should go no farther than the Draconis Combine or ComStar, producers of such fine examples as the circle-vision visor and the ultrasonic detector. Circle-vision visors are a favorite of the deadly Draconis Elite Strike Teams (DEST), and provide a compressed-360 view most MechWarriors enjoy only inside their cockpits. With circle-vision, the user receives a visual display of everything happening around him, and he therefore can't be surprised even in darkness (circle-vision visors have night vision capabilities).

The ultrasonic detector is even more impressive. Using a sophisticated set of sensors that mimics the echolocation of many avians and marine life, this detector can literally "see" through walls, detecting threats and objects that any other operative will only encounter face-to-face.

SURVEILLANCE GEAR

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	COST	AFF	MASS	DETECTION RANGE	POWER USE	NOTES
AUDIO RECEIVERS AND COUNTERMEASURES							
MICROPHONE, DIRECTIONAL	C/A-A-A/A	60	—	1.5 KG	100 M	0.1 PPH	USED TO HEAR SOUNDS VIA DIRECT AUDIO
MICROPHONE, LASER	C/A-D-C/C	500	—	3 KG	1,000 M	3 PPH	USED TO HEAR SOUNDS BASED ON WALL/WINDOW VIBRATION; REDUCE RANGE TO AS LITTLE AS 100 METERS IN FOG, SMOKE, OR THROUGH OTHER VISUALLY HINDERING TERRAIN.
VOICE DISTORTER	C/D-F-D/C	600	—	500 G	—	0.1 PPH	USED TO OBSCURE USER'S VOICE
WHITE NOISE GENERATOR	C/D-E-D/B	400	—	2 KG	5 M	1 PPM	USED TO THWART AUDIO RECORDINGS WITHIN ITS DETECTION RANGE
BUGS							
MICROPHONE BUG	C/A-B-B/C	40	—	10 G	5 M	—	SOUND-ACTIVATED; RECORDS UP TO 2 HOURS' TOTAL TIME; CAN TRANSMIT RECORDINGS UP TO 100 M FOR 2 DAYS (MAX)
SATNAV BUG	D/B-E-D/C	150	—	50 G	—	—	COMPATIBLE WITH SATNAV RECEIVERS AND SATNAV NETWORKS ONLY; TRANSMITS FOR UP TO 3 DAYS
TRACKING BUG	C/B-D-C/C	30	—	100 G	—	—	TRANSMITS LOCATION FOR UP TO 10 DAYS
TRACKING MICROPHONE BUG	C/B-E-D/C	100	—	150 G	—	—	TRANSMITS AUDIO AND LOCATION FOR UP TO 24 HOURS
BUG SCANNERS/LOCATORS							
BUG SCANNER	C/B-D-C/C	800	—	1 KG	15 M	1 PPH	DETECTS BUGS IN RANGE; SENSOR OPERATIONS SKILL CHECK TO LOCATE EACH BUG
BUG SCANNER WATCH	D/C-E-D/C	1,500	—	100 G	10 M	0.5 PPH	DETECTS BUGS IN RANGE; SENSOR OPERATIONS SKILL CHECK –4 TO LOCATE EACH BUG
TRACKING BUG LOCATOR	C/B-D-C/C	250	—	8 KG	500 M	1 PPH	DETECTS AND RECEIVES AUDIO FROM FRIENDLY TRACKING BUGS
TRACKING BUG LOCATOR, COMPACT	D/C-E-D/C	2,000	—	800 G	200 M	0.5 PPH	DETECTS AND RECEIVES AUDIO FROM FRIENDLY TRACKING BUGS

Note: PPH = Power Points per Hour; PPM = Power Points per Minute

OPTICS

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	COST	AFF	MASS	POWER USE	NOTES
BINOX IMAGE INTENSIFIER	B/A-A-A/A	25	—	250 G	—	20X MAGNIFICATION (+1 TO PERCEPTION ROLLS AT M/L/E)
RANGEFINDER BINOCULARS	D/A-C-B/A	200	—	500 G	0.1 PPH	400X MAGNIFICATION (+4 TO PERCEPTION ROLLS AT M/L/E); ALSO WORKS AS NIGHT VISION GOGGLES
MICHEAUX ELECTRONIC BINOCULARS	C/A-B-B/A	150	LA	750 G	0.1 PPH	400X MAGNIFICATION (+4 TO PERCEPTION ROLLS AT M/L/E)
IR SCANNER	D/A-C-B/A	100	—	400 G	0.1 PPH	DETECTS HEAT SIGNATURES ONLY (NO SURFACE DETAILS) AT 300X MAGNIFICATION (+3 TO PERCEPTION ROLLS AT M/L/E, IGNORING DARKNESS MODIFIERS)
NIGHT VISION GOGGLES	D/A-C-B/A	220	—	600 G	0.1 PPH	NEGATES DARKNESS MODIFIERS, BUT –1 TO PERCEPTION TO SPOT SURFACE DETAILS SUCH AS INSIGNIAS
CIRCLE-VISION VISOR	D/D-F-E/B	5,000	DC	750 G	0.5 PPH	+4 TO PERCEPTION; ALSO WORKS AS RANGEFINDER BINOCULARS; USER CANNOT BE SURPRISED; BAR 10 VS. FLASH
ULTRASONIC DETECTOR	E/D-F-E/B	2,500	CS	3 KG	0.1 PPM	+3 TO PERCEPTION; CAN SPOT TARGETS UP TO 10 METERS AWAY THROUGH BAR 3 BARRIERS; IGNORES DARKNESS; BAR 3 VS. FLASH

Note: PPH = Power Points per Hour; PPM = Power Points per Minute

REMOTE SENSORS							
ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	COST	AFF	MASS	RANGE	POWER USE	NOTES
REMOTE SENSORS							
HEAT SENSOR	D/B-C-B/B	200	—	500 G	1 KM	0.1 PPH	DETECTS VIA HEAT ONLY (AFFECTED BY IR STEALTH GEAR, SEE P. 297)
MOTION SENSOR	C/B-C-B/B	100	—	250 G	10 KM	0.1 PPH	DETECTS VIA MOTION ONLY (AFFECTED BY CAMO STEALTH GEAR, SEE P. 297)
RADAR SENSOR	C/B-C-B/B	2,000	—	5 KG	10 KM	0.5 PPH	DETECTS VIA EM ONLY (AFFECTED BY ECM STEALTH GEAR, SEE P. 297)
SEISMIC SENSOR	D/B-D-C/B	1,000	—	2 KG	5 KM	0.5 PPH	SENSOR OPERATIONS ROLL MODS: +6 FOR BATTLEMECHS, +5 FOR PROTOMECHS, +3 FOR GROUND/NAVAL VEHICLES, +2 FOR BATTLE ARMOR, +1 FOR INFANTRY
TRIP-LINE SENSOR (INFRARED)	D/B-C-B/B	100	—	500 G	10 M	0.1 PPH	–6 TO PERCEPTION TO SPOT; MAX 10M TRIPWIRE
TRIP-LINE SENSOR (LASER)	C/B-C-B/B	50	—	1 KG	10 M	0.1 PPH	–4 TO PERCEPTION TO SPOT; MAX 10M TRIPWIRE
TRIP-LINE SENSOR (PHYSICAL)	A/A-A-A/A	1	—	100 G	10 M	—	–2 TO PERCEPTION TO SPOT; MAX 10M TRIPWIRE
SENSOR MONITORS							
HEAT MONITOR, PORTABLE	D/B-C-B/B	1,000	—	15 KG	15 KM	0.5 PPH	MONITOR UP TO 10 SENSORS
MOTION MONITOR, PORTABLE	C/B-C-B/B	500	—	10 KG	10 KM	0.5 PPH	MONITOR UP TO 10 SENSORS
RADAR MONITOR	C/B-C-B/B	5,000	—	100 KG	50 KM	1 PPH	MONITOR UP TO 10 SENSORS
SEISMIC MONITOR	D/B-D-C/B	5,000	—	100 KG	20 KM	1 PPH	MONITOR UP TO 5 SENSORS
TRIP-LINE MONITOR, PORTABLE	C/A-B-A/B	500	—	10 KG	1 KM	0.5 PPH	MONITOR UP TO 10 SENSORS

Note: PPH = Power Points per Hour

REMOTE SENSORS

"If you're in the field without any support units to set up a picket, remote sensors can go a long way to helping you and your squad sleep." —KP

"A network of these is perhaps the best way to expand your zone of control without needing to send vulnerable and easier-to-detect patrols." —JH

We can't be everywhere at all times, so remote sensors allow monitoring from afar. From a tripwire attached to bells to a modern security camera, sensors can vary greatly in their scope and ability. Sensors can be attached to alarms, recording devices, transmitting devices and even explosives. These sensors have no innate intelligence, so it falls upon the skill of the operator to determine what has triggered the device (if possible).

The most common sensors are trip-lines (literal or laser) and motion sensors. Thermal, seismic and radar are also available. Most are passive detection systems, but radar is active, making it the most effective but also the most obvious to anyone with a radar detector, or the sensor suite aboard any combat vehicle or 'Mech. Seismic sensors have the advantage of being able to work underwater, though trip-lines are also useful in shallow water.

Special Game Rules

A character with the Sensor Operations Skill or an appropriate Security Systems Skill (Mechanical for trip-line sensors, Electronic for others) may set up such sensors without requiring a roll, but it takes a character with Sensor Operations Skill at the monitor to interpret the input from these sensors.

The gamemaster should determine any miscellaneous modifiers to sensor detection, including modifiers for distance, stealth and terrain. Seismic sensors are immune to line of sight restrictions, but they are fairly imprecise, so a flat –2 roll modifier applies to their operation when attempting to pinpoint an intruder.

POWER PACKS AND RECHARGERS

All these wonderful electronics that make our life easier would be next to useless without energy to operate them. Many weapons and other devices that incorporate electronics, such as lasers and Gauss weapons, also require power packs to function. Some devices have built-in batteries, but the rest require some form of energy input, the most popular being power packs.

POWER PACKS

"If you have the contacts, Clan power packs are worth the extra cash when you're in a combat situation." —KP

"When it comes to power packs, quantity is quality. Keep lots of backups in your APCs, or if you happen to have some with a fusion plant, make sure they're set up so you recharge, or even better, power your weapons directly from them." —JH

Going beyond earlier battery technology, power packs hold impressive amounts of energy—enough to fire a laser weapon or run high-tech electronics for hours. While most modern electronics can run off a home outlet or be jacked into a vehicle's fusion plant, power packs offer portability—a definite plus when talking about infantry-toted energy weapons.

Available in various sizes, from ultra-small micro packs to backpack-sized military packs, each offers power consistent with its size and focus. Most conventional power packs offer high-capacity models for extended use, while busy travelers may prefer quick-charge models. For larger jobs, support PPC packs can operate a single support particle cannon or multiple smaller items, while portable power units have remained a favorite for various spacecraft and industrial operations.

THE SHARPER WARRIOR
PORTABLE POWER FOR ALL NEEDS

POWER PACKS

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	COST	AFF	MASS	POWER CAPACITY	NOTES
STANDARD PACKS						
POWER PACK	D/A-B-A/A	5	—	250 G	20 PP	—
MICRO POWER PACK	D/A-B-A/A	10	—	15 G	15 PP	—
MILITARY POWER PACK	D/A-B-A/B	40	—	4 KG	200 PP	—
SATCHEL BATTERY	D/A-B-A/A	20	—	2 KG	100 PP	—
CLAN PACKS						
POWER PACK	F/X-D-B/A	25	CLAN	275 G	30 PP	QUICK-CHARGE
MICRO POWER PACK	F/X-E-C/A	50	CLAN	15 G	20 PP	QUICK-CHARGE
MILITARY POWER PACK	F/X-E-C/B	200	CLAN	5 KG	300 PP	QUICK-CHARGE
SATCHEL BATTERY	F/X-E-C/A	100	CLAN	2.5 KG	150 PP	QUICK-CHARGE
HIGH-CAPACITY (HC)						
POWER PACK	D/A-C-B/A	15	—	300 G	30 PP	—
MICRO POWER PACK	E/B-C-C/A	30	—	20 G	20 PP	—
MILITARY POWER PACK	D/C-C-B/B	120	—	6 KG	300 PP	—
SATCHEL BATTERY	D/B-C-B/A	60	—	3 KG	150 PP	—
QUICK-CHARGE (QC)						
POWER PACK	D/B-C-B/A	10	—	300 G	10 PP	QUICK-CHARGE
MICRO POWER PACK	D/B-C-C/A	20	—	20 G	10 PP	QUICK-CHARGE
MILITARY POWER PACK	D/A-C-B/B	80	—	6 KG	100 PP	QUICK-CHARGE
SATCHEL BATTERY	D/C-C-B/A	40	—	3 KG	50 PP	QUICK-CHARGE
PORTABLE POWER UNIT	C/A-C-B/A	10	—	2 KG	80 PP	SLOW-CHARGE
SUPPORT PPC POWER PACK	D/B-D-C/C	750	—	25 KG	1,500 PP	ENCUMBERING; MAY POWER 1 SUPPORT PPC OR UP TO 6 SMALLER ITEMS VIA DETACHABLE EXTENSION CABLES.

Note: PP = Power Points

RECHARGERS						
ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	COST	AFF	MASS	POWER GENERATION	NOTES
FOSSIL FUEL RECHARGER	C/A-A-A/A	50	—	10 KG	15 PPH	REFUELING COST: 2 C-BILLS PER HOUR OF OPERATION
FUSION RECHARGER	D/D-X-E/B	5,000	CLAN/CS	40 KG	100 PPH	—
HEAVY-DUTY RECHARGER	C/A-A-A/A	50	—	400 G	200 PPH	PLUG-IN; MAY SERVICE UP TO 5 POWER PACKS AT ONCE
KINETIC RECHARGER	C/A-A-A/A	10	—	2 KG	5 PPH	—
SOLAR RECHARGER	D/A-B-B/A	200	—	1.5 KG	45 PPH	—
STANDARD RECHARGER/ LOCAL GRID	C/A-A-A/A	10	—	150 G	50 PPH	PLUG-IN

Note: PPH = Power Points per Hour

Special Game Rules

Unless the item's rules state otherwise, virtually all the power packs listed here technically can be used in any device that spends power points. Still, most devices are designed with a certain size of power pack in mind. As a good rule of thumb, any ranged weapon that requires a power pack may use packs of any desired size (most will use a Military Power Pack); all other powered devices should use a power pack that weighs less than the item, wherever possible.

All power packs featured here are rechargeable using a portable recharger or generator, or by plugging into the local power grid. The rate at which a recharger, generator or local grid recharges a power pack is noted under *Rechargers and Generators* (below). Quick-Charge and Slow-Charge power packs absorb energy at different rates. For Quick-Charge power packs, the recharge rate doubles, with the pack taking on 2 Power Points (PPs) of energy for every 1 point the charger provides; Slow-Charge power packs only absorb 1 PP for every 2 points the charging source provides (rounded down).

A power pack can never be charged beyond its rated Power Capacity; even if left unattended, the pack will shut off its power intake as soon as it has reached its maximum operating capacity.

RECHARGERS

"As long as you have a 'Mech, you have all the power you could ever need. If you lost your 'Mech, you likely have bigger problems." —KP

"I'd rather do KP duty than be the guy stuck cranking the power charger." —JH

Power packs can last awhile, with a virtually unlimited storage time, but they do need to be recharged after they have powered a device. While characters in civilization can accomplish this by just plugging into a power port and drawing from the local energy grid, in the field a portable recharger or generator offers a handy alternative.

Solar rechargers have long been among the most popular because they don't require fuel, but fossil fuel and kinetic versions are available as well. Kinetic rechargers are typically powered by turning a crank, either hand or pedaled, but wind or water sources can be harnessed also, provided they have sufficient speed. The Clans have reintroduced the fusion-powered recharger, a device virtually lost during the Succession Wars.

Special Game Rules

The rechargers listed in the Rechargers Table represent the most common power pack recharger systems used in the *BattleTech* universe. The rate at which they recharge power packs is given under the Power Generation column in Power Points per Hour (PPH). A recharger's PPH is a fixed amount even if it has multiple ports (like the Heavy-Duty Recharger). This means that if a charger with multiple ports must service multiple packs at once, the rate at which it does so must equal the recharger's power generation rate divided by the number of active charging ports in use (rounded down). For example, if the Heavy-Duty Recharger (Power Generation: 200 PPH) services 2 power packs at once, it only puts 100 PP in each pack at the end of an hour of charging (200 PPH ÷ 2 power packs = 100 PPH per pack).

Any charger noted as "Plug-In" must be connected to the local power grid (typically through a standard electrical outlet) to perform its task.

MISCELLANEOUS GEAR

For more nefarious or specialized needs, *The Sharper Warrior* offers some gear that may suit your needs. *The Sharper Warrior* makes no claims about the legality of its products in all venues, so be sure of the laws pertaining to this equipment in your jurisdiction.

ESPIONAGE GEAR AND SECURITY

"While you could forge leave papers, your CO will likely remember not issuing those orders despite what looks like his signature on the bottom." —KP

"I don't mind blowing a door open, or explosively creating a brand new one, but a good lock picker is a prized asset." —JH

While the latest spy trid may have all sorts of miracle electronic gadgets, far more often than not a spy or other black-ops type will make do with something far less flashy.

ESPIONAGEGEAR AND SECURITY SYSTEMS

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	COST	AFF	MASS	POWER USE	NOTES
LOCK-PICKS AND SECURITY BYPASSES						
BASIC LOCK PICK SET	B/A-A-A/C	100	—	365 G	—	+2 TO SECURITY SYSTEMS/MECHANICAL ROLL TO PICK (MECHANICAL LOCKS ONLY)
VIBRO LOCK PICK SET	D/C-E-D/D	2,000	—	520 G	1 PPS	+4 TO SECURITY SYSTEMS/MECHANICAL ROLL TO PICK (MECHANICAL LOCKS ONLY)
ELECTRONIC SECURITY BYPASS KIT	C/C-D-D/E	1,200	—	2 KG	0.1 PPH	+2 TO SECURITY SYSTEMS/ELECTRONIC ROLL TO PICK (ELECTRONIC LOCKS ONLY)
ELECTRONIC CODEBREAKER, ADVANCED	E/E-E-E/F	20,000	—	3 KG	0.2 PPH	+4 TO SECURITY/ELECTRONIC ROLL TO PICK (ELECTRONIC LOCKS ONLY)
NEUROHELMET CODEBREAKER	D/D-F-E/E	100,000	—	4 KG	0.1 PPH	+2 TO SECURITY SYSTEMS/ELECTRONIC ROLL TO HACK ('MECH CONTROL SYSTEMS ONLY)
GENERAL ESPIONAGE GEAR						
DISGUISE/MAKE-UP KIT	C/A-B-B/A	1,000	—	6.5 KG	—	+1 TO DISGUISE SKILL ROLLS; 5 USES
FORGERY KIT	D/B-C-C/E	1,225	—	5 KG	—	+1 TO FORGERY SKILL ROLLS; 5 USES
FORENSICS ANALYSIS KIT, ADVANCED	D/D-C-B/B	4,500	—	8 KG	0.6 PPH	+3 TO INVESTIGATION ROLL; 1D6 MINUTES PER USE; REFILL COST: 100 C-BILLS (REQUIRED AFTER 5 USES)
FORENSICS ANALYSIS KIT, BASIC	C/B-B-A/A	300	—	5 KG	0.2 PPH	+1 TO INVESTIGATION ROLL; 1D6X5 MINUTES PER USE; REFILL COST: 75 C-BILLS (REQUIRED AFTER 3 USES)
COUNTER-FORGERY KIT, BASIC	D/B-C-A/A	700	—	4 KG	0.4 PPH	+2 TO APPRAISAL (OF NON-ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS AND IMAGES ONLY); 2D6 TURNS PER USE
COUNTER-FORGERY KIT, ELECTRONIC	D/C-E-B/A	900	—	4 KG	0.4 PPH	+2 TO APPRAISAL (OF ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS AND IMAGES ONLY); 1D6 TURNS PER USE
FIRE CAPSULE	C/B-C-C/B	50	—	10 G	—	USED TO DESTROY PREPARED DOCUMENTS; −4 TO PERCEPTION TO DETECT EMBEDDED FIRE CAPSULE
LIE DETECTOR/ POLYGRAPH	B/F-F-E/D	380	—	9.5 KG	0.1 PPH	+1 TO INTERROGATION SKILL ROLL (INTERROGATOR ONLY)
NEURAL INTERROGATION COMPUTER	D/X-X-E/F	45,000	CC	200 KG	1 PPM	+2 TO INTERROGATION SKILL ROLL (INTERROGATOR ONLY); SUBJECT MUST MAKE A BOD + WIL ATTRIBUTE CHECK EVERY MINUTE OR SUFFER A −1 TP HANDICAP (−2 TP ON FUMBLE)
GENERAL SECURITY SYSTEMS						
LOCK, MAGNETIC	D/C-C-B/A	100	—	3 KG	0.1 PPD	TYPICALLY USES KEYCARD, PUNCH-CODE, OPTICAL OR VOICEPRINT ACCESS STYLES; SECURITY SYSTEMS/ELECTRONIC SKILL REQUIRED TO INSTALL OR PICK.
LOCK, MECHANICAL	B/A-B-C/A	30	—	1 KG	—	DEADBOLT, CHAIN AND COMBINATION STYLE LOCKS; SECURITY SYSTEMS/MECHANICAL SKILL REQUIRED TO INSTALL OR PICK.
LOCK, ALARMED	B/B-B-B/A	+25	—	+0.5 KG	0.1 PPD	ALARM WILL SOUND OR FLASH (SOMEWHERE) WHEN PICKED UNLESS THE ACTION CHECK TO DO SO SUCCEEDS BY 2 POINTS OR MORE.
LOCK, REINFORCED	C/C-C-C/A	+75	—	+2 KG	—	LOCK FEATURES A REDUNDANT MECHANICAL MECHANISM OR ELECTRONIC FAILSAFE THAT MAKES IT TOUGHER THAN STANDARD MODELS, ADDING A −3 MODIFIER TO THE SECURITY SYSTEMS SKILL ROLL TO PICK (BUT NOT TO INSTALL).
LOCK, BOOBY-TRAPPED	*	*	—	*	—	LOCK FEATURES A BOOBY TRAP SLAVED TO AN ALARM; IF AN EFFORT TO PICK THE LOCK FAILS BY 3+ POINTS, THE BOOBY TRAP WILL GO OFF. EQUIPMENT RATINGS, COST AND ADDED WEIGHT ARE BASED ON THE NATURE OF THE ORDNANCE OR TRAP MECHANISMS USED.
LOCK, NEURAL	D/B-C-B/A	1,000	—	5 KG	0.1 PPD	NEUROHELMET-STYLE ELECTRONIC SECURITY; APPLIES −3 MODIFIER TO SECURITY SYSTEMS SKILL ROLL TO BYPASS WITHOUT A NEUROHELMET CODEBREAKER.*

NOTE: PPS = Power Point per Shot (per use); PPH = Power Point per Hour; PPM = Power Point per Minute; PPD = Power Point per Day

*Neural Locks always have a secondary system (such as the voice key code MechWarriors use in addition to the neurohelmet interface). Both locks must be broken separately to gain access, and both are alarmed. If an alarm fails, the system shuts down and "hard locks," requiring force to override, if possible.

From basic lock picks to advanced disguise kits, the basic tools of the espionage game can help a operative go where others don't want him to. Electronic bypass kits can be used to get around coded locks without raising alarms, while forgery kits can help reproduce falsified IDs and credentials to match a good disguise.

For getting rid of incriminating documents, some operatives embed fire capsules in them. And while the simple polygraph remains a tool of the trade—albeit a rarely used one—its bigger, nastier cousin is the Capellans' neural interrogation computer, which has added a whole new fear tactic to the interrogator's repertoire. [*Editor's Note: Though its data are included here for completeness,* The Sharper Warrior *would like to remind our readers that the Neural Interrogation Computer has been banned in virtually every inhabited system within the Inner Sphere, as its use is deemed a war crime.*]

And MechWarriors, beware! Neurohelmet codebreakers can still be found in today's black markets, meaning that someone crafty enough can steal your precious BattleMech right from the safety of its repair bay.

Special Game Rules

The items featured on the Espionage Gear and Security Systems Table primarily represent the common equipment to which a spy might have access. Gamemasters are encouraged to allow for a wider variance in functions and capabilities, but should avoid awarding modifiers greater than 4 (plus or minus) to any applicable Skill rolls.

As a general guide to the difficulties in breaching security, the Espionage Gear and Security Systems Table provides data on various "typical" security measures an intruder might have to contend with.

REPAIR/SALVAGE GEAR

"If your techs want you to move their stuff, you'd best swallow your pride. They don't even need to sabotage your 'Mech to get back at you. Remember who changes your cockpit air and water filters." —KP

"If you can afford it, the right kit is a necessity. If you can't, find a way before it comes back to bite you." —JH

To repair or maintain any piece of machinery always requires the right tool for the job. Basic tool kits are a necessity, though deluxe versions make most jobs that much easier. Specialized tasks require kits that provide the necessary consumables and specialized tools, such as for 'Mech repair. Laser cutters are a common aid found in the field, thought they are far quicker at cutting than welding.

Beyond the kits, a few other items have proven handy across the Inner Sphere. Null-G packs, for example, make moving more massive objects in micro-gravity easier and can do 60 ton/minutes of work without refueling. Similarly, repair platforms and radiation sheeting make BattleMech repairs easier and safer, even in the field.

Special Game Rules

When a situation calls for repair or salvage gear, the gamemaster should note the complexity of the task ahead. For vehicular units—particularly Combat Vehicles, 'Mechs and the like—detailed rules exist on pp. 166-192 of *Strategic Operations*. (Remember that the same conversion between *Strategic Operations* and *A Time of War* applies as for *Total Warfare* and *A Time of War*; any Skill modifiers indicated in *Strategic Operations* for technicians must be subtracted from the appropriate Technician Skill roll under *A Time of War* rules.)

To perform any repair or salvage work that requires a roll also requires that the character bring at least one basic or deluxe toolkit to the job. If neither of these toolkits is available, the character may use a mobile repair kit, but only if it is appropriate to the specific repair being performed. If none of those three kits are available, the gamemaster may rule that the work suffers a –4 modifier for a lack of tools, or even that the action cannot be completed at all.

For example, to repair a 'Mech's broken shoulder actuator, a technician character must bring a basic toolkit, deluxe toolkit or a myomer/actuator repair kit. Had he instead tried to use the vehicle repair kit, the gamemaster could rule that he lacks the tools to perform this task, and assign a penalty.

Up to two kits can be used per repair or salvage job, and apply all their bonuses as indicated to the job. Additional modifiers may apply based on other conditions, such as the lack of a proper repair bay, poor weather or a lack of sufficient supporting staff.

OTHER MISCELLANEOUS GEAR

"I know a guy who stored a jump pack on his ejection seat to help him get off the battlefield. I think he's an optimist. I sure wouldn't have been able to use one the last time I had to eject." —KP

"Make sure you really know how to use these things before being forced to. Reality's learning curve is mighty steep." —JH

In the field, soldiers and civilians alike may come upon a number of useful items that can aid in everything from deep woods survival to killing a boring afternoon. Below are some of *The Sharper Warrior*'s miscellaneous items, ranging from basic camping and survival gear to climbing gear, jump packs and gliders for the modern extreme sportsman (or specialized combat trooper).

For campers and field troops, nothing helps make a long journey through the wilderness more tolerable than today's field kits. Whether a basic set-up with canteen, utility knife and a bedroll, or the advanced package—with its heating plate, fire starters and enough rations to get by for two weeks—field kits can help keep a squad in fighting trim even during a long march. Further aids for the survivalist are sold separately, including compasses (standard and electronic with GPS capability), emergency flares and extra rations should the local wildlife prove inhospitable to human digestion.

For those expecting even longer stays in the great outdoors, a line of tents and campers—including environmentally sealable bubble tents and personal enviro-bags—make it possible to protect oneself from the elements and local toxins when it's time for a little shut-eye. For the civilian market, the pop-up camper brings the amenities of home to the wilderness by essentially putting a tent and an advanced field kit together and giving them wheels. Though impractical for most military ops, they're great for R&R.

REPAIR/SALVAGE GEAR

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	COST	AFF	MASS	POWER USE	NOTES
TOOLKITS						
BASIC TOOLKIT	C/A-B-A/A	250	—	10 KG	—	ENCUMBERING; REQUIRED TO PERFORM ANY REPAIR THAT REQUIRES A SKILL ROLL
DELUXE TOOLKIT	D/A-B-A/A	750	—	50 KG	—	ENCUMBERING; +1 TO ALL TECHNICIAN SKILL ROLLS
SPECIALIZED REPAIR KITS						
AEROSPACE REPAIR KIT	D/A-C-B/A	2,500	—	310 KG	—	MOBILE; RESTOCKING COST: 500; +1 TO TECHNICIAN/ AERONAUTICS AND TECHNICIAN/JETS ROLLS
BIONIC MAINTENANCE KIT	D/C-E-D/A	5,000	—	45 KG	—	ENCUMBERING; RESTOCKING COST: 1,000; +1 TO TECHNICIAN/ CYBERNETICS AND TECHNICIAN/MYOMER SKILL ROLLS
CUTTING/JOINING KIT	C/A-B-A/A	1,250	—	175 KG	—	MOBILE; RESTOCKING COST: 250; +1 TO TECHNICIAN/ MECHANICS ROLLS
ELECTRONICS REPAIR KIT	D/A-B-A/A	2,000	—	40 KG	—	ENCUMBERING; RESTOCKING COST: 400; +1 TO TECHNICIAN/ ELECTRONICS SKILL ROLLS
FISSION/FUSION REPAIR KIT	C/B-D-C/B	15,000	—	345 KG	—	ENCUMBERING; RESTOCKING COST: 3,000; +1 TO TECHNICIAN/ NUCLEAR AND TECHNICIAN/ELECTRONIC SKILL ROLLS
MYOMER/ACTUATOR REPAIR KIT	D/B-D-B/A	3,000	—	260 KG	—	MOBILE; RESTOCKING COST: 600; +1 TO TECHNICIAN/MYOMER SKILL ROLLS
VEHICLE REPAIR KIT	C/A-B-A/A	1,000	—	225 KG	—	MOBILE; RESTOCKING COST: 200; +1 TO TECHNICIAN/MECHANICS ROLLS
WEAPON REPAIR KIT	D/A-B-A/A	1,500	—	200 KG	—	MOBILE; RESTOCKING COST: 300; +1 TO TECHNICIAN/WEAPONS ROLLS
SMALL ARMS MAINTENANCE KITS						
ENERGY WEAPON KIT	D/A-B-B/A	850	—	2.5 KG	—	ALLOWS MAINTENANCE OF ENERGY-BASED SMALL ARMS AND SUPPORT WEAPONS; RESTOCKING COST: 160; +1 TO TECHNICIAN/ WEAPONS SKILL ROLL (FOR ENERGY-BASED SMALL ARMS AND SUPPORT WEAPONS ONLY)
RELOADING KIT	C/A-B-B/A	250	—	25 KG	—	ENCUMBERING; CAN BE USED TO CAST AMMUNITION FOR BALLISTIC- AND GAUSS-BASED SMALL ARMS AND SUPPORT WEAPONS (SUPPLIES COST AS MUCH AS THE EQUIVALENT AMOUNT OF PRE-MADE AMMUNITION X0.5)
SLUG-THROWER KIT	C/A-A-A/A	100	—	3 KG	—	ALLOWS MAINTENANCE OF BALLISTIC- AND GAUSS-BASED SMALL ARMS AND SUPPORT WEAPONS; RESTOCKING COST: 20; +1 TO TECHNICIAN/WEAPONS SKILL ROLL (FOR BALLISTIC- AND GAUSS-BASED SMALL ARMS AND SUPPORT WEAPONS ONLY)
MISCELLANEOUS TOOLS						
HAND-HELD LASER TORCH	D/A-B-A/A	40	—	950 G	1 PPT	AP/BD: 5E/4 ; CUTS ON CONTACT ONLY
NULL-G PACK	D/B-D-B/A	1,000	—	20 KG	—	FUEL: 60 PTS; REFUELING COST: 10; CONSUMES 1 PT/MIN X TONS OF CARGO MOVED (USABLE IN ZERO-G ONLY)
NULL-G PACK CONTROLLER	D/B-D-B/A	250	—	2 KG	1 PPH	REQUIRED TO OPERATE 2 NULL-G PACKS (WHICH MUST OPERATE AS A SET)
RADIATION SHEETING (PER SQ. M)	C/A-B-A/A	1	—	250 G	—	AVG. 50 SQ. M NEEDED FOR TYPICAL VEHICULAR FUSION ENGINE WORK; REDUCES REPAIR TIME BY 10%
REPAIR PLATFORM	D/B-B-A/A	12,500	—	2,250 KG	2 PPM	MOBILE; REDUCES REPAIR TIME BY 20%

NOTES: PPT = Power Points per (5-second) Turn; PPH = Power Points per Hour; PPM = Power Points per Minute. Items identified as "Mobile" are mounted on wheeled carts that cannot be carried, but can be moved with relative ease. All kits with a Restocking Cost must be restocked after 12 uses to maintain their bonuses.

Finally, for the extreme sportsman (or simply for squads given specialized training), *The Sharper Warrior* offers a line of climbing gear, jump packs, hang gliders and parachutes. Whether you're a mountain trooper, a simple thrill-seeker scaling a cliff-face, a paratrooper who gets a rush from jumping out of a perfectly good aerospace craft, or a jump infantryman bounding across a target-rich battlefield, we have something for you.

Special Game Rules

For most of the equipment listed in the Miscellaneous Gear Table below, the capabilities of each item are well defined in the notes. Additional rules for specific items are as follows.

Field Kits: The knives included with a Field Kit have the same statistics as a standard Knife listed under *Archaic Melee Weapons* (see p. 261). The multi-tool provided with the Advanced Field Kit aids the character in any Technician Action Checks, reducing penalties for lack of equipment at the gamemaster's discretion. The heating plate is used for cooking food and generates enough heat to cause 0E/2C damage if pressed against skin for more than 5 seconds (1 turn). Campfire igniters inflict damage at 1E/3C if a character comes into contact with one as it is lit.

Electronic Compass: An Electronic Compass can tap into any local SatNav networks in the same fashion as a SatNav Receiver, and acts as a global positioning scanner in addition to a normal compass.

Emergency Flares: Emergency Flares can inflict 1E/3C damage if touched while lit and illuminate everything within a 50-meter radius. A successful Perception Check can spot an Emergency Flare with a modifier of +10 at 50 meters distance or less, and –1 for every 100 additional meters of distance beyond that (plus any added modifiers for LOS obstructions and the like).

Emergency Jet Pack/Jump Pack: The Emergency Jet Pack always functions in a flight mode that requires a Simple Action to perform. The Jump Pack, meanwhile, can function in sustained flight mode or execute a single jump. Both require the Acrobatics/Free-Fall Skill to use, but Flight modes require a roll for takeoff and landing, and allow a character in flight to make only one 60-degree (1 hexside) turn for every 5 meters of forward flight. Jump modes require only a single roll on landing, with the jumping character's facing determined at will. Both modes can carry the operator as high as 20 meters above the battlefield for purposes of identifying how high an obstacle they can overcome.

Hang Gliders and Parachutes: Hang Gliders and Parachutes require the Acrobatics/Free-Fall Skill to maneuver while still in the air, or to land on the ground. In order to use any of these, the glider or chute must be deployed well above its target ground level. For gliders, this requires an Acrobatics/Free-Fall Skill to take off, and the forward speed for a glider is listed in the glider's notes. For chutes and gliders alike, an Acrobatics/Free-Fall Skill roll must also be made upon landing, with failure translating to a crash (but with half the damage of a normal fall; see *Falling Damage* in *Personal Combat*, pp. 181-182). As with jump packs in flight mode, gliders can only make one 60-degree (1-hexside) facing change for every 30 meters of distance traversed.

Note that winds and foul weather apply their normal modifiers to all Acrobatics/Free-Fall Skill rolls made by gliders and parachutes, but strong winds will also force a glider or chute to move more radically. For chutes, this movement will be in the direction of the prevailing winds unless the parachutist makes a successful Acrobatics/Free-Fall Skill roll to counter the momentum. For gliders, this will increase the glider's forward movement if the winds come from the tail, decrease forward movement if the winds come from in front, or force the glider pilot to make an Acrobatics/Free-Fall Skill roll to avoid losing control if the glider is hit by strong crosswinds.

HEALTH CARE

"If you find yourself taking a lot of missions behind enemy lines, you'd best brush up on first aid." —KP

"I always try to make sure the medic can get anything I may need from my pack." —JH

War is dangerous and violent, but also complex these days, so it is not only in the dubious moral interests of those running wars to keep as many of their troops as possible alive, but also in their economic interest. It is fascinating to look back over the centuries and see that, while the tools and art of killing and wounding improved, the casualty rate decreased as battlefield medical technology likewise improved by leaps and bounds. *The Sharper Warrior* offers baseline first aid and some of the best medical technology available for the battlefield, a prudent investment in today's uncertain universe.

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

Whether found under the sink in the average household, or on the person of every grunt in the battlefield, the medical kit—a collection of simple bandages and drugs for first aid use—is one of the most common items on the market today. For field medics, an advanced version of this kit exists that adds more effective—but more complicated—equipment and supplies. A field surgery kit is even available for the battlefield surgeon, providing the barest minimum of equipment necessary to handle major injuries and internal damage.

Additional tools of the medical trade—such as a laser scalpel or portable medical monitor—can make any doctor's job easier, but few can compare with the life-saving utility of a life-support unit working in conjunction with the portable medical monitor. Meanwhile medipatches, plastiflesh bandages and persevering sleeves can help staunch blood loss and render an injured soldier safe enough for transport.

Of course, there's also the medical stuff that anyone can apply in the field. Stimpatches, for example, are the modern-day answer to smelling salts, strong enough to rouse an unconscious person or to shake off fatigue with a powerful chemical cocktail. Multiple stimpatches have no cumulative effect, though they could indicate the start of a major addiction. More enhanced versions of the chemical cocktail that gives stimpatches their appeal may be found in the medipacks and LSSUs that make up part of the standard equipment a MechWarrior may have inside the cockpit, though these are further augmented by medications meant to stabilize a wounded pilot.

MISCELLANEOUS GEAR

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	COST	AFF	MASS	POWER USE	NOTES
GENERAL SURVIVAL GEAR						
ADVANCED FIELD KIT	C/A-A-A/A	100	—	15 KG	—	INCLUDES: KNIFE, MULTI-TOOL, INFLATABLE MATTRESS, THERMAL BLANKETS, HEATING PLATE, LANTERN, 2 EMERGENCY FLARES, 5 CAMPFIRE-IGNITERS, CANTEEN, BASIC MEDICAL KIT, 28 EMERGENCY RATIONS; +2 TO SURVIVAL SKILL ROLLS
BASIC FIELD KIT	B/A-A-A/A	10	—	5 KG	1 PPH*	INCLUDES: KNIFE, SLEEPING BAG, LANTERN, 10 EMERGENCY RATIONS, CANTEEN, BASIC MEDICAL KIT; +1 TO SURVIVAL SKILL ROLLS
COMPASS	B/A-A-A/A	10	—	0.1 KG	—	+1 TO NAVIGATION/GROUND SKILL ROLLS
ELECTRONIC COMPASS	C/A-A-A/A	30	—	0.1 KG	0.1 PPH	+2 TO NAVIGATION/GROUND SKILL ROLLS
EMERGENCY FLARES	B/A-A-A/A	10	—	600 G	—	VISIBLE UP TO 5 KM AWAY ON SUCCESSFUL PERCEPTION SKILL (AUTOMATICALLY VISIBLE AT 1 KM OR LESS)
EMERGENCY RATIONS	C/A-A-A/A	2	—	1 KG	—	—
PORTABLE LIFE SUPPORT UNIT	D/B-C-B/A	5,000	—	10 KG	—	PROVIDES 90 TOTAL MAN-HOURS OF BREATHABLE AIR AND HEAT TO PROPERLY SEALED SUITS (INCLUDING SPACE SUITS AND ENVIRO-SUITS) OR SMALL, SEALED ROOMS. RECHARGE COST: 100 C-BILLS
TENTS AND SHELTERS						
BUBBLE TENT	D/A-B-A/A	40**	—	1 KG**	1 PPH	3 PPH IN POSITIVE PRESSURE MODE; AP 8 VS. INHALED TOXINS (AP 10 IN POSITIVE PRESSURE MODE)
TENT	B/A-A-A/A	4**	—	2 KG**	—	—
PERSONAL ENVIRONMENT BAG	D/B-B-A/A	300	—	4 KG	1 PPH	MAX CAPACITY: 1 ADULT OCCUPANT; PATCH COST: 10; AP 8 VS. INHALED TOXINS
POP-UP CAMPER	B/A-A-A/A	550	—	500 KG	2 PPH	MAX CAPACITY: 6 ADULT OCCUPANTS (COST AND MASS +20 FOR EACH ADDITIONAL OCCUPANT TO A MAX OF 10); POWER USE ONLY TO USE INTEGRAL HEATING, REFRIGERATION AND HEATING PLATE; FEATURES ADVANCED FIELD KIT AND 50 EMERGENCY RATIONS.†
GENERAL EQUIPMENT						
CLIMBING/RAPPELLING KIT	C/A-A-A/A	150	—	10.3 KG	—	+1 TO CLIMBING SKILL ROLLS
EMERGENCY JET PACK	D/D-X-E/C	5,000	CS	20 KG	—	1,000 FUEL POINTS; 2 PTS BURNED PER 1 M OF FLIGHT; MAX FLIGHT = 150 M PER TURN; REQUIRES ACROBATICS/FREE-FALL SKILL TO LAUNCH AND LAND
HANG GLIDER, POWERED	C/B-B-B/B	240	—	105 KG	—	ENCUMBERING; ACROBATICS/FREEFALL SKILL REQUIRED TO TAKE OFF, LAND AND MAINTAIN CONTROL IN WEATHER; MAINTAINS ALTITUDE WITH ENGINE RUNNING (ENGINE HAS 1,000 FUEL POINTS; 2 PTS BURN PER 30 M FLOWN; MAX FLIGHT = 60 M PER TURN); WITH ENGINE OFF, OPERATES AS UNPOWERED GLIDER; BAR 2
HANG GLIDER, UNPOWERED	C/B-B-B/B	240	—	84 KG	—	ENCUMBERING; ACROBATICS/FREEFALL SKILL REQUIRED TO TAKE OFF, LAND AND MAINTAIN CONTROL IN WEATHER; LOSES 1 M OF ALTITUDE FOR EVERY (30 + ACROBATICS/FREEFALL SKILL LEVEL) M FLOWN; MAX FLIGHT = 30 M PER TURN; SKILL ROLL REQUIRED TO TAKE OFF, LAND OR EXECUTE TURNS; BAR 2
HULL-BREACHING FRAME	C/X-X-C/D	250	OA	3 KG	—	DEMOLITIONS SKILL TO USE (AP/BD: 10X/10A; −4X/−4A PER METER DISTANCE); ON SUCCESS, BREACHES ARMORED SPACECRAFT HULL ENOUGH TO PERMIT PASSAGE OF ONE LARGE-SIZED CREATURE OR ARMORED TROOPER.
JUMP PACK	D/A-C-A/C	3,100	—	30 KG	—	ENCUMBERING; 1,000 FUEL POINTS; 2 PTS BURNED PER 1 M OF FLIGHT; MAX FLIGHT = 150 M PER TURN; JUMP MODE: 150 M MAX JUMP RANGE PER TURN (5 FUEL BURNED PER JUMP); ACROBATICS/FREE-FALL SKILL TO LAUNCH, LAND AND JUMP
PARACHUTE	C/A-A-A/A	78	—	8 KG	—	ENCUMBERING; +4 TO ACROBATICS/FREE-FALL SKILL (REQUIRED TO LAND, TURN AND MAINTAIN CONTROL IN WEATHER); ONCE A CHUTE IS DEPLOYED, THE CHARACTER WILL FALL AT A RATE OF 20 M PER TURN, AND MAY MOVE LATERALLY IN ANY DIRECTION BY A NUMBER OF METERS EQUAL TO HIS ACROBATICS/FREE-FALL SKILL

*Power used by the heating plate only (which uses micro power packs)

**Cost and weight is per occupant; Bubble Tents have a max capacity of 4 people; Standard Tents have a max capacity of 2 per square meter of ground area, but may be combined with additional tents for larger areas.

†The pop-up camper is a wheeled trailer that can be towed into position by another vehicle and set up. Set-up and collapse of a pop-up camper is a Complex Action that takes 5 minutes per camper occupant.

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	COST	AFF	MASS	POWER USE	NOTES
MEDICAL KITS						
ADVANCED MEDICAL KIT	C/A-C-B/B	250	—	2 KG	—	4 USES; +2 TO MEDTECH SKILL ROLLS; UP TO 4 USES
FIELD SURGICAL KIT	D/A-B-A/B	800	—	11.5 KG	—	2 USES; +1 TO SURGERY SKILL ROLLS; +2 TO MEDTECH SKILL ROLLS;
MEDICAL KIT	C/A-A-A/A	10	—	250 G	—	1 USE: +1 TO MEDTECH SKILL ROLLS
FIRST AID CONSUMABLES						
MEDIPATCH	D/A-B-A/B	10	—	10 G	—	+1 TO MEDTECH SKILL ROLLS (MAX, EVEN IF MULTIPLE MEDIPATCHES ARE USED)
PLASTIFLESH BANDAGE	D/B-D-C/A	5	—	5 G	—	STOPS 1 BLEEDING EFFECT; REDUCES HEALING TIME BY 50% IF APPLIED WITH A SUCCESSFUL MEDTECH SKILL ROLL
PRESERVING SLEEVE	D/A-B-A/B	25	—	500 G	—	+1 TO MEDTECH OR SURGERY SKILL ROLLS ON AFFECTED LIMB; HALTS ANY CONTINUOUS DAMAGE EFFECTS TO AFFECTED LIMB FOR UP TO 36 HOURS
SEDATIVE PATCH	D/A-B-B/B	30	—	12 G	—	INFLICTS 0S/4D "DAMAGE" TO TARGET; NO EFFECT IF NOT PLACED AGAINST SKIN.
STIMPATCH	D/A-B-A/B	2	—	9 G	—	REMOVES 2 FATIGUE (TO MINIMUM OF 0); +1 TO KNOCKOUT ROLLS; ADDICTIVE (DRUG STRENGTH 3)*
STIMPATCH, CLAN	D/X-X-B/B	5	CLAN	10G	—	REMOVES 3 FATIGUE (TO A MINIMUM OF 0) AND STUN; +2 TO KNOCKOUT ROLLS; ADDICTIVE (DRUG STRENGTH 4)*
MEDIPACKS						
CLAN LSSU	F/X-X-D/D	2,200	CLAN	325 G	—	REMOVES 3 FATIGUE AND NEGATE STUN; INJURY MOD +2 (FOR 15 MINUTES AFTER EACH USE); 24 DOSES; RELOAD COST: 100; ADDICTIVE (DRUG STRENGTH 3)*†
MEDIPACK	E/C-E-C/D	400	—	400 G	—	REMOVES 2 FATIGUE AND NEGATE STUN; INJURY MOD +1 (FOR 15 MINUTES AFTER EACH USE); 12 DOSES; RELOAD COST: 75; ADDICTIVE (DRUG STRENGTH 2)*†
MEDICAL TOOLS						
LASER SCALPEL	D/A-B-A/C	50	—	100 G	1 PPT	RANGE: 25 CM; INFLICTS 0E/3 DAMAGE IF USED OFFENSIVELY
LIFE-SUPPORT UNIT	E/B-C-B/B	8,500	CS	22.5 KG	3 PPS	STOPS ALL CONTINUOUS DAMAGE EFFECTS AND ALLOWS CRITICALLY INJURED PATIENTS TO BE MOVED; ALSO REDUCES HEALING TIME BY 20%; +2 TO MEDTECH SKILL ROLLS WHEN USED WITH PORTABLE MEDICAL MONITOR
MYOMER IMPLANTATION DEVICE	E/D-X-F/C	175,000	CS	15 KG	10 PPM	MALFUNCTION ON FUMBLE
PORTABLE MEDICAL MONITOR	E/B-C-B/B	2,200	—	13.3 KG	1 PPM	+1 TO MEDTECH SKILL ROLLS (+2 WHEN USED WITH LIFE-SUPPORT MONITOR)
STASIS TUBE	D/D-F-E/D	500,000	MC	1,200 KG	10 PPD	FREEZE/THAW 1 PERSON IN 24 HOURS; BOD CHECK −2 TO FREEZE/THAW; BOD CHECK −1 PER YEAR (ROUND UP) TO STORE (ON ANY FAILURE, −1 TO BOD OR INT SCORE, DETERMINED RANDOMLY)

*For Clan trueborns, the Drug Strength of stimpatches, medipacks and the Clan LSSU are 2 points lower when determining addiction.
†Injury modifiers not cumulative with multiple doses; injury modifiers cannot be raised above 0.
Notes: PPT = Power Points per (5-second) Turn; PPS = Power Points per Shot (use); PPM = Power Points per Minute ; PPD = Power Points per Day.

PROSTHETICS

"I had to fight some Manei Domini once. Man… Well. Let me just say I think those Leaguers may have a point about their advanced prosthetics bias." —KP

"Folks that chop up their healthy body to 'improve' it invariably die early. No one with EI or full-body myomer replacements has a nice retirement, if they get one at all." —JH

Despite the medical advances of modern society, all too often a patient will survive while a part of his body does not. Fortunately for these people, replacement limbs and organs of various levels of functionality are available, depending on local supplies—and, of course, the size of the patient's bank account. While there are many different styles and manufacturers of prosthetic limbs and such, the medical community long ago established a rating system for prosthetics that defines how well these replacement parts approximate the limb or organ that was lost.

LIMB AND ORGAN REPLACEMENTS

There are five main types for prosthetic limbs. Type 1 prosthetics are the simplest: peg legs or hooks that act as a rudimentary crutch, but are better than nothing (if only barely). Type 2 prosthetics make a leap into simple mechanicals, typically replacing lost hands with a basic claw and lost legs with a jointed, spring-loaded pseudo-leg. At Type 3, the artificial replacements become more complex, and really start to approximate the size, use and shape of the original, though lacking much of a real limb's dexterity and still sporting a distinctly mechanical look.

Type 4 and 5 prosthetics essentially complete the standard medical range for replacement prosthetics (though we'd be remiss if we didn't at least acknowledge the existence of the so-called enhanced prosthetics used by many intelligence operatives—and abused wholesale by the likes of the Word of Blake's Manei Domini. *The Sharper Warrior* does not feature those items, however.) Both types can blend in with real flesh and blood for an extra expense, so they can only be detected on close inspection. Type 4s are still noticeably less flexible and dexterous than the real McCoy, but most users can work around the difference easily enough. In addition to other limbs and organs, sensory organs and kidneys are available at this level. Type 5 prosthetics represent the peak of mechanical replacements, using a complex system of microcomputers, myomers and actuators to be functionally identical to the real thing, and—when properly disguised—all but impossible to detect by anyone who's not a medical professional.

Clan medical science has led to an even more effective form of limb and organ replacement. Colloquially called Type 6, even though they are not technically prosthetics, Clan replacements are cloned copies grown from the recipient's own genetic samples. Ironically, the Clans consider this perfect solution for replacing lost limbs and organs extremely expensive and wasteful, as it requires the subject to spend a lot of downtime waiting for the new limb to mature and acclimate (during which time the original wound cannot fully heal). As a result, most warriors settle for Type 4 or 5 replacements so they can return to battle sooner.

[*Editor's Note: It's worth mentioning that many basic replacement organs, such as artificial hearts, also fall into the types recognized by the medical community. Basic artificial hearts and pacemakers, for example, occupy the Type 3 tier, while replacement eyes, ears and kidneys are seen at Type 4.*]

Special Game Rules

Only characters that have lost a limb, organ, eye or ear can be equipped with a prosthetic, cloned or bionic replacement (and the replacement must be a match for the lost body part it replaces). These lost limbs or organs must be represented on the character's record sheet using the appropriate Trait as well.

For limbs (hands, feet, legs and arms), a replacement prosthetic has a type number that indicates its level of sophistication and approximation of the actual lost limb, with Type 1 representing a simple replacement like a hook hand or a peg leg, and Type 5 being an almost human-like myomer-and-plastic hand or fully actuated leg. This level also indicates how many negative Trait Points of the lost limb's Trait value the prosthetic will offset—to a maximum effective Trait value of 0 (essentially negating the impact of Lost Limb). For example, a character with a –3 TP Lost Limb (assigned to his left foot) could offset 1 point of this with a Type 1 prosthetic foot, reducing it to a –2 TP Lost Limb [–3 TP originally +1 for prosthetic type = –2 TP]. Meanwhile, a Type 4 or 5 prosthetic foot would function just as well as any flesh-and-blood original as far as game play is concerned, so the Lost Limb Trait's value effectively drops to 0.

Unless the replacement is Type 6 (cloned), an implant or prosthetic will not erase the character's Lost Limb Trait, and the implant or prosthetic remains removable. For limbs and other externals (including eyes and ears), the process of removing or attaching a prosthetic is a Complex Action that requires a simple Technician/Mechanical Skill roll. If successful, the prosthetic is attached and activates normally. Any other result indicates the limb must be reset. For internal replacements, any removal process requires surgery (see below).

A Type 6 replacement completely negates a Lost Limb Trait (or Poor Vision/Poor Hearing/Handicap Traits that refer to missing body parts) if it covers the entire limb in question. Should a character with a Lost Limb (or other missing body part) receive a Type 6 cloned replacement, the new limb is grafted to his body, and cannot be removed. The corresponding Lost Limb Trait therefore no longer applies.

A replacement bionic eye or ear offsets the character's Poor Vision or Poor Hearing Traits (as appropriate) to an effective TP of –1, regardless of the Trait's severity before such bionics were installed. Also, as with prosthetics of Type 5 or less, bionic eyes and ears are removable. Only a cloned replacement can completely wipe out the Poor Hearing or Poor Vision Traits.

In addition to the above, additional special rules may apply to any actions involving the affected artificial limb, including a BAR for the replacement should it be struck under the optional hit locations rules (see p. 190-191). If a replacement body part suffers damage that exceeds its BAR (such damage reduces the replacement's BAR under personal armor degradation rules), the character whose limb was damaged must make an EDG Attribute Check, and treat the replacement as disabled if the check fails. A replacement limb reduced to 0 in all four BAR values is considered totally destroyed.

Characters that sustain damage to a replacement limb will not suffer actual damage unless the replacement is a Type 5 or 6 limb. For Type 5, any damage to the limb—in addition to the effects above—also affects the character as if he were struck in a

LIMB AND ORGAN REPLACEMENTS

ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	COST	AFF	NOTES
PROSTHETICS				
TYPE 1: SIMPLE LIMB (ARM/LEG)	A/A-A-A/A	75	—	REMOVABLE; BAR 2/2/1/2; STR –2
TYPE 2: USEFUL LIMB (ARM/HAND)	B/A-B-A/A	750	—	REMOVABLE; BAR 2/3/2/2; STR –1
TYPE 2: USEFUL LIMB (LEG/FOOT)	B/A-B-A/A	250	—	REMOVABLE; BAR 2/3/2/2; STR –1
TYPE 3: STANDARD PROSTHETIC (ARM/HAND)	C/B-C-B/A	7,500	—	REMOVABLE; BAR 3/3/2/3
TYPE 3: STANDARD PROSTHETIC (LEG/FOOT)	C/B-C-B/A	10,000	—	REMOVABLE; BAR 3/3/2/3
TYPE 4: ADVANCED PROSTHETIC (ARM/HAND)	D/C-D-C/A	25,000	—	REMOVABLE; BAR 3/4/3/3; +1 MELEE AP (UNARMED ONLY)
TYPE 4: ADVANCED PROSTHETIC (LEG/FOOT)	D/C-D-C/A	17,500	—	REMOVABLE; BAR 3/4/3/3; +1 MELEE AP (UNARMED ONLY)
TYPE 5: MYOMER REPLACEMENT (ARM)	E/D-F-E/A	200,000	CS	REMOVABLE; BAR 3/4/4/3; STR +1; +1 MELEE AP (UNARMED ONLY)
TYPE 5: MYOMER REPLACEMENT (FOOT)	E/D-F-E/A	50,000	CS	REMOVABLE; BAR 3/4/4/3; STR +1; +1 MELEE AP (UNARMED ONLY)
TYPE 5: MYOMER REPLACEMENT (HAND)	E/D-F-E/A	100,000	CS	REMOVABLE; BAR 3/4/4/3; STR +1; +1 MELEE AP (UNARMED ONLY)
TYPE 5: MYOMER REPLACEMENT (LEG)	E/D-F-E/A	125,000	CS	REMOVABLE; BAR 3/4/4/3; STR +1; +1 MELEE AP (UNARMED ONLY)
CLONED REPLACEMENTS				
TYPE 6: CLONED REPLACEMENT (ARM)	E/X-F-E/A	500,000	CLAN	GRAFTED; NEGATES RELATED LOST LIMB TRAIT
TYPE 6: CLONED REPLACEMENT (FOOT)	E/X-F-E/A	150,000	CLAN	GRAFTED; NEGATES RELATED LOST LIMB TRAIT
TYPE 6: CLONED REPLACEMENT (HAND)	E/X-F-E/A	300,000	CLAN	GRAFTED; NEGATES RELATED LOST LIMB TRAIT
TYPE 6: CLONED REPLACEMENT (LEG)	E/X-F-E/A	350,000	CLAN	GRAFTED; NEGATES RELATED LOST LIMB TRAIT
TYPE 6: CLONED REPLACEMENT (ORGAN)	E/X-F-E/A	200,000	CLAN	GRAFTED; NEGATES RELATED LOST LIMB/HANDICAP/POOR VISION/POOR HEARING TRAIT
BIONIC REPLACEMENTS				
TYPE 5: BIONIC EAR REPLACEMENT	C/A-C-A/A	100,000	—	REMOVABLE; REDUCES EFFECTS OF RELATED POOR HEARING TRAIT TO –1 TP
TYPE 4: BIONIC EYE REPLACEMENT	C/A-C-A/A	220,000	—	REMOVABLE; REDUCES EFFECTS OF RELATED POOR VISION TRAIT TO –1 TP
TYPE 3: BIONIC ORGAN (ARTIFICIAL HEART)	C/B-C-B/A	500,000	—	REMOVABLE WITH SURGERY SKILL; REDUCES HEART-RELATED HANDICAP TRAIT EFFECTS TO –1 TP LEVEL.
TYPE 4: BIONIC ORGAN (ARTIFICIAL LIVER/ KIDNEY)	C/B-C-C/A	750,000	—	REMOVABLE WITH SURGERY SKILL; REDUCES LIVER OR KIDNEY-RELATED HANDICAP TRAIT EFFECTS TO –1 TP LEVEL.
TYPE 4: BIONIC ORGAN (ARTIFICIAL LUNG)	C/C-D-C/A	800,000	—	REMOVABLE WITH SURGERY SKILL; REDUCES LUNG-RELATED HANDICAP TRAIT EFFECTS TO –1 TP LEVEL.
COSMETIC MODIFICATIONS				
TYPE 4 LIMB: COSMETIC TREATMENT	AS ITEM	+1,750	—	–2 TO PERCEPTION ROLLS TO NOTICE THE DIFFERENCE
TYPE 5 LIMB: COSMETIC TREATMENT	AS ITEM	+5,000	—	–4 TO PERCEPTION ROLLS TO NOTICE THE DIFFERENCE
BIONIC EAR COSMETIC TREATMENT	AS ITEM	+1,000	—	–2 TO PERCEPTION ROLLS TO NOTICE THE DIFFERENCE
BIONIC EYE COSMETIC TREATMENT	AS ITEM	+3,000	—	–2 TO PERCEPTION ROLLS TO NOTICE THE DIFFERENCE

real limb, but this damage is applied as Fatigue points only. Type 6 limbs function as the real thing, and so the damage to a Type 6 replacement limb is treated as a normal attack.

Implanting/Installing and Maintaining Limb and Organ Replacements

Any character with a Surgery Skill Level of 2 or higher can install Type 1 and 2 prosthetic limb replacements easily. Apart from having the prosthetic on hand, this Skill roll—treated as a Complex Action—does not require hospital facilities, but may be aided by those or appropriate medkits (the process mainly involves sealing the wounded limb stump and strapping on the replacement; the operator himself can later remove and reattach the replacement limb as noted above). Installing a replacement limb for the first time takes 30 minutes times the limb's type. A failed Surgery Skill roll simply means the attempt must be made again.

More advanced prosthetics (Types 3, 4 and 5, as well as bionic eyes, ears and organs) require a Surgery Skill of 5+ and full hospital facilities to install. The installation process takes 30 minutes times the prosthetic's type, and—as with Type 1 and 2 installations—a failed Surgery roll simply forces the surgeon to repeat the attempt.

A character that receives a Type 6 cloned replacement part must spend anywhere from a week (for small organs like ears and noses) to 12 weeks (for arms and legs) under a doctor's constant medical care, while the replacement part is grown before surgery can even be performed. The surgery to implant the new limb requires Surgery Skill of 5+ and 3 hours to complete. On a Fumble, the recipient's body inexplicably rejects the replacement and no further attempts can be made.

For Type 1 through 5 prosthetic replacements, the recipient must spend 6 weeks in physical therapy acclimating to the replacement body part, during which time said body part may suffer damage as indicated above, but will not offset any penalties assigned by the character's relevant Lost Limb/Poor Vision/Poor Hearing/Handicap Trait. For recipients of Type 6 cloned replacements, this recuperation cycle takes 3 weeks.

Repairing a damaged Type 1 or 2 prosthetic requires a simple Technician/Mechanical Skill roll. Repairing a damaged Type 3, 4 or 5 prosthetic requires the Technician/Cybernetics Skill instead and—in the case of replacement internal organs—a Surgery Skill of 5+. As Type 6 replacements are cloned, their repairs are covered under normal medical care rules (see pp. 192-195). Destroyed replacement limbs cannot be repaired, but may be replaced without undergoing surgery again.

ELECTIVE IMPLANTS

Replacing limbs and organs lost in action or through accident is one thing, but in extreme cases, individuals have chosen to take on body part replacements or implants to enhance their capabilities. Not unheard-of among covert operatives—who have a host of options available, many of which verge on the monstrous and are not covered here—two in particular have become "mainstream" enough to merit a mention: Elective myomer implants and the Clans' Enhanced Imaging (EI) neural implants.

The Sharper Warrior does not offer Enhanced Imaging (EI) or elective myomer implantation, but descriptions and standard costs for these procedures are provided to prevent one of our customers being caught off guard in a time of need. EI, a Clan invention, essentially eliminates the need for a neurohelmet control system in a BattleMech or ProtoMech by linking directly to the subject's brain via a series of tattoo-like contacts. This results in a far greater degree of input and output, and thus makes a warrior's machine even more responsive—but it also makes the warrior susceptible to sensory overload. He literally feels like he *is* his machine, and so feels pain when his machine takes damage. This side effect (which the Clans reportedly can control, but not eliminate, using drugs) seems to harm the nervous system over time, inevitably causing permanent brain damage and even madness among most users if the implants are not removed in time.

Elective myomer implants, an option available in the Inner Sphere (the Clans consider it somewhat repugnant), is another matter. The technique has only recently become *en vogue* after decades of occasional and limited applications, most of it spearheaded by the Capellan Confederation. In this case, myomers are physically grafted to the recipient, replacing or overlaying his normal human muscles to produce a stronger, tougher body.

Special Game Rules for Elective Implants

Elective Myomer Implants: Elective myomer implants create different effects based on the locations that are implanted, as described in the Elective Implants Table. Though individual locations may be implanted, keep in mind that the costs for leg and foot implants are based on having both legs or feet implanted; no modifiers apply if only one leg or foot receives implants and not the other. Additional rules regarding the maintenance of elective myomer implants can be found in the game rules for their implantation and maintenance below.

Enhanced-Imaging Implants: For Enhanced Imaging (EI) neural implants, most effects in game play apply when the character with these implants is operating an appropriate vehicular unit in tactical combat, and said unit is modified with an EI display system (see *Computers*, p. 303). Only battle armor, BattleMechs and ProtoMechs may benefit from the use of EI neural implants. Indeed, ProtoMech warriors *must* have EI neural implants to operate their machines.

In tactical combat (including *Total Warfare* game play), the following rules apply to a unit equipped with Enhanced Imaging technology and piloted by a character with the EI neural implant:

- The unit receives a +1 Piloting Skill roll modifier
- All attacks made that pass through woods, jungle or smoke apply a +1 terrain modifier per 30 meters of terrain effect (1 hex in standard *Total Warfare* game play scale). This modifier may not increase the terrain's normal modifier above –1 per 30-meter hex.
- Darkness modifiers do not apply to attacks made by an EI-equipped unit.
- If the EI-equipped unit is a BattleMech, it may execute an Aimed Shot attack (see p. 110, *TW*) as if equipped with a targeting computer. This Aimed Shot attack receives an additional +1 roll modifier if the unit is also equipped with a functioning targeting computer or the target is Immobile. If the unit does not possess a targeting computer, a –2 roll modifier applies instead.
- If an EI-equipped unit suffers damage to its internal structure (or, in the case of battle armor, any damage that reduces its Tactical Armor value), the EI-implanted character within must make a BOD + WIL Double Attribute Check (if the character's BOD and WIL are unknown, assume their values to be 6 each, thus applying a +12 modifier to a roll against a TN of 21). If

ELECTIVE IMPLANTS				
ITEM	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	COST	AFF	NOTES
ELECTIVE MYOMER IMPLANTS				ALL ELECTIVE IMPLANTS IMPOSE A –2 ROLL MODIFIER TO SURGERY SKILL ROLLS MADE FOR THE AFFECTED BODY PART, IF DAMAGED IN THE FUTURE.
ELECTIVE MYOMER IMPLANT (ARM)	E/X-F-E/A	300000	CC	GRAFTED; STR +1 FOR ALL ACTIONS PERFORMED USING AFFECTED ARM, PLUS BENEFITS FROM ELECTIVE MYOMER IMPLANT (HAND)*
ELECTIVE MYOMER IMPLANT (FEET, BOTH)	E/X-F-E/A	150000	CC	GRAFTED; HALF FATIGUE FOR USING SPRINTING MOVEMENT**
ELECTIVE MYOMER IMPLANT (HAND)	E/X-F-E/A	150000	CC	GRAFTED; +1 TO MARTIAL ARTS AND CLIMBING SKILLS USING AFFECTED HAND*
ELECTIVE MYOMER IMPLANT (LEGS, BOTH)	E/X-F-E/A	375000	CC	GRAFTED; STR +1 AND RFL +1 FOR MOVEMENT PURPOSES**
ELECTIVE MYOMER IMPLANT (FULL BODY)	E/X-F-E/A	975000	CC	GRAFTED; STR +2, RFL +1; CHA –1; CHARACTER GAINS TOUGHNESS TRAIT
ENHANCED IMAGING (EI) NEURAL IMPLANT	F/X-X-D/F	1500000	CLAN	GRAFTED; SEE RULES

*Modifiers not cumulative; if both arms and/or hands are so modified, modifiers apply to both actions equally (character also gains Ambidextrous Trait)
**No effects apply if the implanting is only done on one leg/foot.

this roll fails, the character sustains damage with an AP/BD of 0E/4D (the equivalent of an internal ammunition explosion). Personal armor will not reduce this effect, but if the character has the Aerospace Phenotype, an additional +2 applies to the Attribute Check.

- An EI-implanted character operating any unit type except a ProtoMech may—as a Simple Action—disengage his EI implants. While disengaged, the EI system provides neither its benefits nor its drawbacks in combat (though all other EI neural implant rules apply). Reactivating disabled EI requires another Simple Action.

Implanting/Installing and Maintaining Elective Implants

Any character with a Surgery Skill Level of 5 and hospital facilities can implant (or remove) an elective implant. A myomer implantation device (see *Medical Equipment*, p. 313) is also required if the implant is an elective myomer. A failed Surgery Skill roll simply means the attempt must be made again, unless the result is a Fumble (in which case, the body rejects the implants and another emergency Surgery Skill roll must be made to avoid losing the patient on the table; another attempt cannot be made if one attempt Fumbles).

For elective implants, the recipient must spend 3 months in recovery per implanted limb (EI implants are always considered "full body" and so require 12 months of recovery), during which time the character must remain under constant medical care and functions at one-half his STR and RFL scores (rounded down).

A character with elective implants also receives Compulsion/Medical Addiction (at –2 TP) to account for the painkillers and neuro-inhibitors he must regularly take to stave off the intense headaches and hyper-sensitivity that come with elective myomer implants and EI (respectively). In addition, future MedTech and Surgery Skill rolls to implanted areas receive a –2 roll modifier due to the presence of the implants, and healing/recovery times are doubled as well.

For characters with EI neural implants, each year after implantation can potentially cause further damage to the character's health or mental state. To reflect this, the character receives 1 permanent point of Fatigue damage every full year after his implants are installed. This point cannot be healed away as long as the character remains implanted. In addition, the character must make a BOD + WIL Double Attribute Check immediately upon receiving the permanent Fatigue point, applying all modifiers for Fatigue. If this roll fails, the character suffers –100 XPs to one of the following Traits (determined at random): Combat Paralysis, Compulsion, Handicap, Impatient, Introvert or Slow Learner. Removing EI implants will halt this deterioration, but will not allow the character to recover from the damage done. Once a character has his EI implants removed, he must make one more BOD + WIL Double Attribute Check or immediately receive the Thin-Skinned Trait.

DRUGS AND POISONS

"I had a friend develop a KZ habit. It was terrible, I wouldn't wish it on anyone. Combat drugs are just as bad. Sure, they can boost you for the short run, but they'll make you pay in the end." —KP

"I don't mind combat drugs. All my guys are packing some, but the standing order is that they'd better be about to die before they get to use any. I've got no room for addicts." —JH

The difference between a drug and a poison? A drug usually has beneficial results of some kind. Both are dangerous in sufficient quantities and make the body behave differently. Choosing the right drug or poison for a given situation comes down to identifying the target, choosing yours means of application and balancing the desired end result against any unwanted side effects.

Medications, performance modifiers and narcotics are the common examples of what we call "drugs" in the thirty-first century. For these, each world you visit may have its own definitions of which ones fall on the wrong side of the legal line—heck, according to some rumors, the port authorities on Shiloh will throw you in lockup for carrying a bottle of acetomenaphin! And a lot of legitimate governments are hard on performance enhancers without the proper licenses and medical clearances, so if you're into LD-512, Spazz, Rage or even have a mild "issue" with QwikStim, just remember that some arena venues have a mandatory testing protocol you may want to stay clear of. As to recreationals, anything from alcohol, caffeine and over-the-counter sedatives may be fine for the casual user, but if your habits run more toward K-Z or Clan necrosia, counseling may be in your future sooner rather than later.

Poisons, on the other hand, are pretty much anything toxic—and many narcotics dance on that side of the line as well. Nerve gas, dioxins, VX and the like are on everyone's "no-fly" list, and no port authority anywhere in their right mind would allow someone to just stroll through with any of those in their possession. The Ares Conventions may be dead and gone, but common sense still follows enough of them to identify what a "crime against humanity" is. (Just ask the Blakists!)

If you're looking to incorporate such chemical warfare into your military repertoire, just remember: drugs and toxins are tools. You need to pick the right one for the right job. Injected tranqs are generally useless if your subject ingests them, and poisons intended to kill a victim on contact are a poor choice for liberating the Duke's runaway daughter from pirates. Consult your local jurisdiction regarding the legality of these compounds before ordering.

SPECIAL GAME RULES

When using drugs and poisons in game play, gamemasters should always bear in mind that the sheer variety of medicinal, recreational and performance-enhancing drugs and toxins a character may encounter can produce a dizzying array of effects on a human body. As complete rules for every occasion are nigh impossible, the following is a framework that players and gamemasters can modify as needed in their own games.

Basic Drug Statistics

All drugs, narcotics and performance enhancers share some basic statistics: Primary Vector, Drug Strength, Duration, Base Price and Equipment Ratings. The Primary Vector reflects the method by which a drug can best be absorbed into the body (injection, ingestion or inhalation). Drug Strength provides a numerical value used to identify the drug's ability to affect the body (or form addictions, when applicable), Duration is the drug's base period of effect (in hours). Base Price indicates the drug's cost per dose (in C-bills), and Equipment Ratings indicate the drug's Tech, Availability and Legality ratings. Additional notes are provided if the drug has any specific effects (such as performance enhancers).

Medicinal Drugs: When properly administered, medicinal drugs can offset negative effects from illness and injuries. The proper use of medicinal drugs is covered under the rules for the MedTech Skill (see p. 149). Failed use of MedTech can indicate errors involving medicinal drugs, from overdosing (or under-dosing) a patient, or prescribing the wrong meds for a given situation. In extreme cases (such as a Fumbled MedTech Skill roll), the gamemaster may treat medicines as a poison instead (see below).

Characters prescribed a medication require no MedTech Skill roll to take it; the roll is simply made to determine whether the administering physician prescribes the correct doses and medicines to the subject in a way that avoids harmful drug interactions and allergic side effects.

Performance-Enhancing Drugs: Performance-enhancers are any drug a character may take to improve his physical or mental performance beyond his statistics. Many have side effects that can outweigh their benefits, and most are unreliable over long-term use. Because they are not intended to harm, performance-enhancing drugs may be administered as part of a medical treatment per the rules for medical drugs. Performance enhancer effects last only as long as the drug's listed Duration values. Performance enhancers use their Strength values to determine any addictive effects to the character; while active, they have the full effects listed in their Notes.

Narcotics: Certain drugs have a narcotic effect, influencing the character's emotional or mental state more than his physical capabilities. While these tend to be recreational drugs that are rarely (if ever) prescribed by a physician, many medicines and performance-enhancers also can have narcotic effects. Use of any drug with a narcotic effect carries with it a risk of drug addiction. The likelihood of becoming addicted to a narcotic is based primarily on the character's BOD and WIL scores, and the drug's Strength value (see *General Drug Rules*, below). To find out if a character has become addicted to a drug, consult the Drug Addiction rules below. The Strength value of a narcotic described as a Stimulant, Depressant or Hallucinogenic is used to determine its addictive properties and the extent of any effects. The basic game play effects are listed in the Notes column for the narcotics by class.

Poisons: In game play, poisons are any drug-like chemicals or toxins designed expressly to harm a character, and thus use their Strength value to inflict damage to a character. The type of damage, how long it affects the character, and whether it is continuous or delayed are all defined in the Drug Creation Table below. Characters targeted by a poison attack that succeeds in entering the body through its selected method (such as inhaled toxins being breathed in without a respirator, ingested chemicals taken in with food or injected chemicals delivered by a poisoned dart) must make an immediate BOD Attribute Check with the poison's Drug Strength subtracted from the result as a penalty. If the character has the Poison Resistance Trait, the roll receives an additional +2 modifier. If the Attribute Check is successful, the character resists being poisoned (and may even be unaware of the attempt, unless the gamemaster rewards a particularly close check with the revelation that the character "feels funny"). If the roll fails, the poison takes effect as described.

Note: When determining damage effects from poisons, armor is normally not a factor, and so all poisons have a default AP value of 0S. However, certain protective equipment provides varying degrees of safeguard against toxins. Contact poisons are easily thwarted by full-body clothing and armor, which effectively have a BAR of 10 against toxins. Filter masks and the like also act as BAR 5 armor against airborne (inhaled) poisons. The life support system of Combat Vehicles acts as BAR 8 against airborne poisons. Environmental suits have a BAR of 7 against airborne poisons. Most

SAMPLE DRUGS AND POISONS

SAMPLE DRUG OR POISON	PRIMARY VECTOR	DRUG STRENGTH	POISON AP	DURATION	BASE PRICE	EQUIP. RATINGS	NOTES
DEPRESSANTS (NARCOTIC)*							
ALCOHOL: BEER/WINE	INGESTED	1	—	2 HR	1	A/A-A-A/B	—
ALCOHOL: MIXED DRINK	INGESTED	2	—	3 HR	2	A/A-A-A/B	—
ALCOHOL: HARD LIQUOR	INGESTED	3	—	4 HR	2	A/A-B-B/B	—
ALCOHOL: FUSIONNAIRE	INGESTED	4	—	5 HR	5	A/X-C-B/B	AFF: CLAN
CANNABIS/HASHISH	INGESTED/ INHALED	2	—	3 HR	2	A/B-B-B/C	—
HEROIN	INGESTED/ INHALED	7	—	6 HR	10	A/B-B-B/D	—
CODEINE	INGESTED	5	—	8 HR	6	A/B-B-B/C	MEDICINAL (PAIN REDUCER)
BARBITURATES	INGESTED	6	—	4 HR	7	A/B-B-B/D	—
SEDATEMAXX	INJECTED	4	—	8 HR	10	A/X-C-B/A	MEDICINAL (SEDATIVE)
BATTLESTUN	INJECTED	6	—	2 HR	15	B/X-C-C/A	—
STIMULANTS (NARCOTIC)*							
CAFFEINE	INGESTED	1	—	2 HR	0.5	A/A-A-A/A	—
NICOTINE	INGESTED/ INHALED	2	—	2 HR	1	A/A-A-A/B	—
COCAINE	INHALED/ INJECTED	3	—	4 HR	7	A/C-B-B/D	—
AMPHETAMINES	INGESTED/ INJECTED	4	—	6 HR	6	A/B-B-B/D	—
METHAMPHETAMINES	INGESTED	5	—	6 HR	6	B/B-B-B/D	—
K-Z ("KRAZY")	INGESTED/ INJECTED	6	—	10 HR	10	C/F-D-C/E	—
X-QUICK	INJECTED	3	—	2 HR	2	C/X-F-C/E	—
HALLUCINOGENS (NARCOTIC)*							
PEYOTE/MESCALINE	INGESTED/ INHALED	2	—	8 HR	2	A/A-B-A/C	—
LYSERGIC ACID DIETHYLAMIDE	INGESTED	6	—	8 HR	4	A/B-B-B/C	AKA LSD/ACID
PHENCYCLIDINE	INGESTED	7	—	8 HR	6	A/B-B-B/D	AKA PCP
PSILOCYBIN	INGESTED	3	—	4 HR	3	A/B-A-A/A	AKA "MAGIC" MUSHROOMS
INGROT VENOM	INJECTED	4	—	6 HR	9	A/X-D-C/D	—
NECROSIA	INGESTED	8	—	4 HR	12	C/X-F-D/E	AFF: HC

*These drugs have a narcotic effect and may be addictive. Additional narcotic effects as follows:
For Depressants, character receives –(Drug Strength ÷ 2) to WIL and RFL scores**
For Stimulants, character receives –(Drug Strength ÷ 2) to DEX and +(0.25 x Drug Strength) to RFL**
For Hallucinogens, character receives –(Drug Strength ÷ 2) to WIL score and Perception Skill, and –(0.25 x Drug Strength) to Compulsion/Paranoid Trait**

**Round values down to a minimum of 0. If the drug modifies a Trait the character does not otherwise have, the character receives that Trait while under the drug's influence.

Poison Notes: Lethal poisons inflict their Drug Strength as damage. Delayed poisons hold their effect until the end of the Duration period. Continuous poisons apply half their Drug Strength in damage every Duration until an anti-toxin is applied, or the victim dies.

THE SHARPER WARRIOR
WE CARRY A FULL LINE OF PICK-ME-UPS

SAMPLE DRUGS AND POISONS, CONT.

SAMPLE DRUG OR POISON	PRIMARY VECTOR	DRUG STRENGTH	POISON AP	DURATION	BASE PRICE	EQUIP. RATINGS	NOTES
POISONS							
RATTLESNAKE VENOM	INJECTED	3	0	3 TURNS	5	A/A-B-B/C	LETHAL; CONTINUOUS
AZH VENOM	INJECTED	4	0	1 TURN	5	A/X-C-B/C	LETHAL
GOLIATH SCORPION VENOM*	INJECTED	5	1	1 TURN	10	B/X-D-B/D	AFF: HC; HALLUCINOGENIC; LETHAL
RADIUM	INHALED/ INJECTED	7	3	1 TURN	50	B/C-E-D/D	LETHAL
THALLIUM	INGESTED	3	0	4 TURNS	10	B/A-B-C/D	LETHAL; CONTINUOUS
ARSENIC	INGESTED	4	1	2 TURNS	10	A/A-B-C/C	LETHAL; CONTINUOUS
HEMLOCK	INGESTED	5	0	1 TURN	15	B/B-D-C/D	LETHAL
DIOXINS (INJECTED)	INJECTED	4	0	4 TURNS	20	A/C-D-C/C	LETHAL; CONTINUOUS
DIOXINS (INGESTED)	INGESTED	4	0	8 TURNS	20	A/C-D-C/C	LETHAL; CONTINUOUS
VX GAS (INHALED)	INHALED	30	6	12 TURNS	70	D/C-E-D/E	LETHAL; DELAYED
VX GAS (CONTACT)	CONTACT	30	6	24 TURNS	70	D/C-E-D/E	LETHAL; DELAYED
PERFORMANCE ENHANCERS*							
QWIKSTIM	INGESTED	8	—	1D6X2 HR	8	D/X-F-E/E	AFF: LA; IGNORE FATIGUE; DEX −1
RAGE	INJECTED	9	—	1D6X0.5 HR	10	E/X-E-E/E	AFF: CC; IGNORE INJURY MODIFIERS; STR +3, INT −1, WIL −1
LD-512	INGESTED	6	—	1D6X0.5 HR	12	E/X-X-E/E	AFF: FS; INT +3, WIL +1; −3 TO PERCEPTION
SPAZZ	INGESTED	10	—	1D6 HR	10	D/X-X-E/E	RFL +2, DEX −1; COMPULSION/PARANOIA (−3 TP)

*These drugs have a narcotic effect and may be addictive. Additional narcotic effects as follows:
For Depressants, character receives –(Drug Strength ÷ 2) to WIL and RFL scores**
For Stimulants, character receives –(Drug Strength ÷ 2) to DEX and +(0.25 x Drug Strength) to RFL**
For Hallucinogens, character receives –(Drug Strength ÷ 2) to WIL score and Perception Skill, and –(0.25 x Drug Strength) to Compulsion/Paranoid Trait**
**Round values down to a minimum of 0
Poison Notes: Lethal poisons inflict their Drug Strength as damage. Delayed poisons hold their effect until the end of the Duration period. Continuous poisons apply half their Drug Strength in damage every Duration until an anti-toxin is applied, or the victim dies.

vehicles and environmental suits have an internal air supply, which acts as BAR 10 against airborne poisons. If a poison's AP exceeds the BAR of the protective measures, it bypasses them completely.

Poison Treatment

By far, the most effective solution to a poison is an equal dose of anti-toxin. Characters with MedTech Skill can attempt to treat a poisoned character even in the absence of the specific antidote by using more broad-based ones, though this is generally a stopgap method that can arrest—but not necessarily defeat—an invasive toxin in the victim's bloodstream. To stop the spread of a toxin, the treating character must make a successful MedTech Skill roll, modified by the poison's Drug Strength and the poisoned character's current Injury modifier. If the treating character lacks a suitable medkit, an additional –4 roll modifier is applied as well. If the roll fails, the poison runs its course.

If the roll succeeds by 5 points or less, any damage the poison is causing stops spreading, though the damage already done and its effects remain. The stricken character is merely stabilized until he can get better treatment. Once stabilized, the poisoned character can be treated again once every number of days equal to the poison's Drug Strength. If the character is undergoing treatment in a proper medical facility, his own body can help augment future MedTech Skill rolls by adding his BOD's Linked Attribute modifier to the physician's MedTech roll result. If that roll is successful (or if the initial stabilizing treatment proved successful by a MoS of 6 or more), the poison is defeated and the character recovers 1 point of poison-inflicted damage per day (leaving any other physical damage remaining) until the poison is completely out of his system. If the roll fails, the character does not begin to recover from the poison. A Fumbled MedTech Skill roll may even cause further damage.

Drug Addiction

To determine if a character has become addicted to a drug, the drug-using character must make a BOD + WIL Double Attribute Check when the effects of the latest dose wear off, subtracting the drug's Strength rating from the roll result as a penalty and adding the MedTech Skill level of the using character (or his attending physician, if higher) as a bonus. If the roll is successful, the character resists drug addiction. If the roll fails, the character becomes addicted to the drug's narcotic effects and gains a level of Compulsion Trait (see p. 110) to reflect the addiction (be sure to identify the addictive substance in this case). The maximum level of an addiction Compulsion cannot exceed the drug's Strength value.

Recovering from drug addiction requires an expenditure of XPs equal to the Compulsion Trait's normal XP value at the time the character receives treatment (so recovering from a Level 2 Compulsion would cost 200 XPs), plus at least one month spent in weekly "rehab sessions" with an attending physician.

For added unpredictability, gamemasters need not call for an Attribute Check to check on addictions every time the character uses a narcotic. Since a variety of unknown influences can affect potential addictive developments, the gamemaster may simply call for a check any time the character uses the narcotic, ignoring some instances and checking in others.

Creating Drugs and Poisons

Drugs and poisons may be created and formulated by characters that possess the Science/Chemistry or Science/Biology Skills. How difficult this roll will be varies with the complexity of the drug or toxin being created, and by the amount of support available. These effects are reflected in the Drug Creation Tables below.

When creating a poison or drug, the character must select a base Drug Strength to start with, which will also determine the drug's Equipment Ratings, base cost (in C-bills per dose) and base creation time (in hours). Additional characteristics may then be selected that will modify the drug's Creation Roll Modifier, Creation Time, Equipment Rating and Cost accordingly. Care should be taken with these values, as some add and others multiply. (All values that can be added or subtracted must be added or subtracted *before* any multipliers are applied.) Apply modifiers as needed to reflect additional factors, such as assistants trained in MedTech, Science/Chemistry or Science/Biology, or a lack of proper facilities.

A Skill roll against the creating character's Science/Chemistry Skill is used to determine whether the character has successfully created a poison or drug at the end of the total Creation Time period (based on the Drug Strength and Characteristics chosen). The final, modified Cost reflects the amount of resources spent on the process, and is subtracted before the Skill roll is made. Apply the accumulated creation modifiers to the Science/Chemistry Skill roll and subtract the poison or drug's Drug Strength from the roll result. If the roll meets or exceeds the Skill's TN, the character (and his team, if any) have successfully created at least one dose of the desired compound. If the roll fails, the time and resources are spent, but the drug loses strength equal to the roll's MoF. If the MoF exceeds the compound's desired Drug Strength, the compound is inert and useless.

Performance Enhancers: Performance enhancers can also be created using these rules, though gamemasters should be cautious with them; prolonged, regular use of these drugs can lead to addiction, or—at the gamemaster's discretion—a build-up of tolerance that will either force the user to increase his dosage or eventually render him immune to the drug's effects.

Ted, a chemical weapons expert with a Science/Chemistry Skill of 9, has been tapped to create a potent new poison (with a Base Damage of 5 points). He has a staff of six additional researchers with suitable Skills and a lab. The poison is intended to assassinate a foreign dignitary at a public luncheon, where it should appear accidental, so Ted chooses to create the toxin as an ingested poison, difficult to detect (say, with a –2 MedTech modifier) and given a delayed effect. The base TN for Ted's Science/Chemistry Skill is 9 and the Base Time to create the toxin is 4 hours (based on the desired Drug Strength of 5). The substance is new, will be produced in one dose only, with a rare antidote (all facts that will make it more difficult to trace the poison to anyone). These characteristics combine with the others to produce a final Creation Roll modifier of –3 (+1 [Ingested] –1 [Delayed Effect] –2 [Difficult Detection] –1 [Rare Antidote] –4 [New Drug] +4 [maximum number of assistants aiding research] = –3). The roll therefore receives a total +1 modifier (–5 for the Drug Strength –3 for the Creation Roll Modifiers +9 for Ted's Skill level = +1).

In addition, the process will take 60 hours to complete (Base Time of 12 hours [for Drug Strength 5] –1 [Ingested vector] +0 [for Delayed Effect] +1 [Rare Antidote] +2 [Detection Difficulty +2] –8 [maximum assistance –2 x 4 = –8] = 6 x 10 [for New Drug] = 40 hours) and will cost 10,000 C-bills (100 [for Drug Strength 5] x1 [ingested] x2 [Delayed Effect] x2 [Detection Difficulty +2] x2.5 [Rare Antidote] x10 [New Drug] x1 [per assistant, to a maximum of 4] = 10,000.) Good thing Ted's employers have deep pockets!

PERSONAL VEHICLES

"Most MechWarriors need some transport. While a 'Mech is the most mobile ground vehicle known to man, it won't do when catching a movie, hitting a club or picking up the groceries." —KP

"New merc units often forget the need to get some jeeps and trucks. Even BattleMechs make poor utility vehicles." —JH

Choosing a vehicle is simple for many people, but rarely are their concerns the same. Which matters more, style or durability? Price or utility? Two wheels or six treads? The answer depends on the needs of the buyer. *The Sharper Warrior* offers a wide range of personal vehicles and can get them at rock bottom prices. Similar models from other manufacturers are available for a premium, so contact your local representative or HPG for pricing details.

Standard passenger cars are good for commuting in a secure zone. Wheeled vehicles are cheaper and more reliable, but hovercars are faster. The entry-level model may be fine for

DRUG CREATION TABLES

BASE DRUG STRENGTH	BASE EQUIPMENT RATING	BASE COST (C-BILLS)	BASE CREATION TIME (IN HOURS)
1	A/A-A-A/A	5	1
2	A/A-A-A/A	10	2
3	A/B-B-B/B	25	4
4	A/B-B-B/B	50	8
5	B/C-B-B/C	100	12
6	B/C-C-C/C	200	16
7	B/D-C-C/C	400	21
8	C/E-D-C/D	750	26
9	C/F-E-D/D	1,200	30

DRUG CREATION TABLES

POISON OR DRUG CHARACTERISTIC	CREATION ROLL MOD	CREATION TIME MOD*	EQUIPMENT RATING MOD	COST MOD	NOTES
POISONS					
INGESTED	+1	−1	—/+1/—	X1	ONLY EFFECTIVE WHEN CONSUMED BY MOUTH
INHALED	0	+1	—/+1/+1	X1	ONLY EFFECTIVE WHEN INHALED INTO LUNGS
CONTACT	−2	+1	+1/+1/+1	X2	ONLY EFFECTIVE WHEN ABSORBED THROUGH SKIN
LETHAL	0	0	—/—/—	X1	DAMAGE IN STANDARD DAMAGE POINTS ONLY
INCAPACITATING	+1	0	—/—/−1	X1	DAMAGE IN FATIGUE ONLY (EXCESS FATIGUE WILL NOT TRANSLATE TO STANDARD DAMAGE)
CONTINUOUS	−1	0	—/+1/—	X1.5	APPLY HALF-STRENGTH DAMAGE PER TURN OF DURATION; MUST ADD EXTRA DURATION
DELAYED EFFECT	−1	0	+1/—/—	X2	DAMAGE OCCURS AT END OF DURATION
EXTRA DURATION	−1	+1	−1/+1/+1	X2	ADDS 1D6 TO THE POISON'S DURATION
DIFFICULT DETECTION	−1 TO −3	+1 TO +3	—/—/+1	XTIME MOD	APPLY CREATION ROLL MOD TO ANY MEDTECH SKILL USED TO DIAGNOSE
COMMON ANTIDOTE	+1	−1	—/—/−1	X0.5	APPLY A +1 ROLL MOD TO MEDTECH SKILL ROLLS WHEN TREATING
RARE ANTIDOTE	−1	+1	—/—/+1	X2.5	APPLY A −1 ROLL MOD TO MEDTECH SKILL ROLLS WHEN TREATING
NEW POISON	−4	X10	—/—/—	X10	APPLY A −2 ROLL MOD TO MEDTECH SKILL ROLLS WHEN TREATING
DOUBLE DOSE	+0	+1	—/—/—	X2	—
QUADRUPLE DOSE	−1	+2	—/—/—	X4	—
10X DOSE	−2	+4	—/—/—	X10	—

*In hours, to a minimum of 1 hour

Note: The default Duration for a poison is 1 turn; the default Duration for a performance-enhancing drug is 1D6 hours

DRUG CREATION TABLES, CONT.

POISON OR DRUG CHARACTERISTIC	CREATION ROLL MOD	CREATION TIME MOD*	EQUIPMENT RATING MOD	COST MOD	NOTES
PERFORMANCE ENHANCERS					
SINGLE SKILL BOOSTER	−2	+2	+1/+1/+1	X1.5	APPLY +1 TO ONE SPECIFIED SKILL
ATTRIBUTE-SKILL BOOSTER	−4	+4	+1/+1/+2	X3	APPLY +1 TO ALL SKILLS LINKED TO ONE ATTRIBUTE
ANTI-FATIGUE	−1	+1	—/+1/—	X2	HALVE ALL FATIGUE DAMAGE; APPLY −1 TO ALL DEX-BASED SKILLS
DOUBLE DURATION	+1	+0	—/—/—	X2	ADD 1D6 ÷ 2 HOURS TO DURATION; USER TAKES 1 POINT OF STANDARD DAMAGE
PAIN RESISTANCE	−3	+2	—/—/—	X2.5	HALVE ALL INJURY MODS; USER TAKES HALF DRUG STRENGTH IN STANDARD DAMAGE
STRENGTH BOOST	+1	+0	—/—/—	X2	STR +1, ANY ONE OTHER ATTRIBUTE (EXCEPT EDG) −1
REFLEX BOOST	+1	+0	—/—/—	X3	RFL +1; DEX −1
INTELLIGENCE BOOST	+0	+2	+1/—/—	X3	INT +1; PERCEPTION SKILL −1
CREATION ASSISTANCE					
PER ASSISTANT (MAX 4)	+1	−2	—/—/—	X1	—
POOR/NO FACILITIES	−5	X5	—/—/—	X0.5	—

*In hours, to a minimum of 1 hour
Note: The default Duration for a poison is 1 turn; the default Duration for a performance-enhancing drug is 1D6 hours

employees, but the luxury versions may not be enough for VIP guests who often travel in the top of the line, super-luxurious vehicles. Jeeps, jitneys and aircars can carry larger loads and more passengers and often handle rough terrain better than standard civilian craft. Heavy transports are used for hauling larger amounts of cargo across reliable, paved terrain, while jet sleds are useful for personal transportation over snow-covered ground.

The following are a selection of examples representing their classes; many other manufacturers make similar vehicles with superficial differences.

SPECIAL GAME RULES

The statistics provided here cover a small sampling of the vehicles available to characters in *A Time of War*, and should be suitable for most situations in normal game play. In tactical play, personal vehicles (also known as Support Vehicles in *Total Warfare*) are classified as vehicular units, and should be treated as such.

FUEL

"It might seem degrading, but if you like your support forces around, you may have to hump their fuel along." —KP

"Sometimes it can pay to cart fuel along with you. Sometimes you just waste a whole bunch of time, energy and fuel, while adding a big vulnerability for your enemy to strike at." —JH

It would be nice if every vehicle were fusion powered and only needed refueling once a decade. However, this fairy tale just isn't true (outside of Terra, that is). Not only is there the problem of finding the right fuel from the myriad of different types available, but prices also vary from world to world depending on natural resources. The listing here is typical, but keep an eye on prices for your current location and your destination—on some worlds, in fact, prices can vary even from county to county.

THE SHARPER WARRIOR
NO MONEY DOWN, INCLUDES WARRANTY

PERSONAL VEHICLES

VEHICLE	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	COST*	ARMOR** F/S/R (BAR)	FUEL (KG)/ TYPE***	RANGE†	SPEED (KPH)†	AFF	CREW/PASS	CARGO (KG)
HOVER/WIGE VEHICLES									
ROUTEMASTER HOVERBUS	C/D-B-A/C	15,000	1/1/1 (3)	80/P	495KM	97/151	—	1/13	85
CRIMSON STREAK HOVER RACER	E/X-X-D/D	40,000	3/2/1 (8)	451/H	1,302KM	184/280	—	1/0	8
BAYAMO HOVERBIKE	D/X-X-B/B	3,750	1/1/1 (2)	68/H	509KM	129/194	—	1/1	68
SLIPPER LX HOVERCAR	D/X-X-D/B	11,500	1/1/1 (4)	78/H	605KM	162/248	LA/FS	1/3	9
AIR CAR HOVERCRAFT‡	D/C-E-D/B	15,500	2/2/1 (3)	111/P	802KM	118/183	—	1/11	128
FEICUI AIRCAR HOVERCRAFT‡‡	D/X-E-E/B	140,000	2/2/1 (2)	54/H	302KM	140/216	CC	1/6	215
HURRICANE HOVER CAR‡‡	D/C-E-D/B	10,000	2/1/2 (2)	48/H	393KM	172/259	LA	1/1	36
TURBOFAN CAR‡‡	D/C-E-D/B	10,500	1/1/1 (2)	101/ICE	889KM	140/216	—	1/2	61
COANDA PERSONAL WIGE	D/X-X-C/C	24,000	1/1/1 (6)	475/P	2,412KM	118/183	LA	1/1	19
	NOTE: AMPHIBIOUS								
WHEELED/TRACKED VEHICLES									
SATURNUS V RACER	D/X-X-D/C	42,000	2/1/2 (6)	49/AL	402KM	140/216	—	1/0	59
	NOTE: EJECTION SEAT								
BLUE NOVA SPORTS CAR	B/X-X-D/B	4,250	1/1/1 (2)	29/P	379KM	86/129	—	1/1	198
	NOTE: CONVERTIBLE								
ASTON-MARTIN FIVER ROADSTER	D/X-X-B/B	5,100	0/0/0 (2)	222/B	1,000KM	129/194	FS	1/1	52
	NOTE: CONVERTIBLE								
A-M FIVER TRAVELER MINIVAN	D/X-X-B/B	12,500	2/2/2 (4)	244/B	520KM	118/183	FS	1/7	210
FLASHBANG ZZ10000 MOTORCYCLE	C/X-X-A/B	600	0/0/0 (2)	10/P	1,282KM	108/162	CC	1/0	21
SKODA "GROWLER" UTILITY TRUCK	D/C-E-D/D	15,000	1/1/1 (2)	20/P	1,000KM	64/97	—	1/3	104
	NOTE: AMPHIBIOUS, OFF-ROAD; 20M LADDER, MANIPULATOR ARM								
BULLDOG MEDIUM TRUCK	B/B-B-B/B	6,000	1/1/1 (2)	45/P	1,000KM	43/64	—	1/3	1617
AVANTI LUXURY SEDAN‡‡	C/X-E-D/B	70,000	3/2/2 (3)	22/P	259KM	86/129	—	1/7	292
JEEP‡‡	C/B-C-D/B	6,000	2/2/2 (5)	23/P	509KM	75/118	—	1/3	254
	NOTE: OFF-ROAD								
JITNEY (MINIBUS)‡‡	C/A-A-A/B	62,000	4/3/2 (3)	500/P	588KM	64/97	—	2/24	200
MACADAM GROUND CAR‡‡	C/X-C-C/B	8,000	2/1/1 (2)	83/H	732KM	129/194	—	1/5	97
SPEEDER‡‡	E/C-E-D/B	23,000	3/1/1 (5)	FUSION	UNLIMITED	216/324	—	1/0	15
TRANSPORT, HEAVY‡‡	C/B-B-B/C	90,000	6/5/5 (5)	1,000/P	833KM	64/97	—	1/1	2350
	NOTE: SEE CARGO CARRIERS (*TW*, P. 261)								
TYPHOON GROUND CAR‡‡	C/D-D-D/B	35,000	3/1/1 (2)	10/P	294KM	86/129	FS	1/3	16
JET SLED TRACKED SNOWMOBILE‡‡	C/D-E-D/B	4,000	0/0/0 (2)	14/AL	183KM	86/129	—	1/0	0
	NOTE: SNOWMOBILE								

PERSONAL VEHICLES, CONT.									
VEHICLE	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	COST*	ARMOR** F/S/R (BAR)	FUEL (KG)/ TYPE***	RANGE†	SPEED (KPH)†	AFF	CREW/PASS	CARGO (KG)
FIXED-WING/VTOL VEHICLES									
JETTA CORUNA 4X JET	D/X-X-D/C	330,000	15/9/6 (2)	8,500/H	425PT	4/6	—	2/SPEC.	1,500
	NOTE: 1 LUXURY CABIN, ENVIRO-SEALING								
ZANADU AIR BUS JET	C/X-E-D/C	590,000	13/13/13 (6)	30,000/P	1,200PT	3/5	—	5/100	5,000
	NOTE: FIELD KITCHEN								
SOAR HELICOPTER	C/X-D-C/C	150,000	5/3/2/2 (4)	500/H	952KM	86/129	DC	2/6	0
	NOTE: ENVIRO-SEALING; 4-PATIENT PARAMEDIC EQUIPMENT								
WATER VEHICLES									
WHITESTREAK JETSKI	C/C-D-C/C	280	0/0/0 (2)	1/H	256KM	75/118	—	1/1	9
ATLANTIA LUXURY YACHT	D/X-D-C/C	700,000	25/16/11 (3)	3,000/P	1,153KM	32/54	—	7/7	4,000
	NOTE: 8 LUXURY QUARTERS, 6 CREW QUARTERS, FIELD KITCHEN, 2 LIFEBOATS								

*Costs include a 10-30 percent mark-up addressing taxes, customs, and dealership gouging.
**Armor lists Tactical Armor points as Front/Side/Back (BAR), or Front/Side/Back/Rotor (BAR) for VTOLs.
***AL=Internal Combustion (alcohol), B=Battery, H=Hydrogen (fusion aircraft or fuel cell), P=Internal Combustion (petrochemical or ICE aircraft)
†Range for fixed-wing aircraft is in Thrust Points (tp), not kilometers (km), and Speed is Safe Thrust/Maximum Thrust, not kph.
‡‡These generic vehicles were not detailed in Technical Readout: Vehicle Annex.

VEHICULAR FUELS (TYPICAL)			
FUEL TYPE	EQUIPMENT RATINGS	COST PER KG	NOTES
ALCOHOL	A/A-A-A/B	2	USED BY ICE ENGINE AND STEAM TYPES
COAL	B/A-A-A/A	1	USED BY STEAM ENGINE TYPES
PETROCHEMICAL	A/A-A-A/B	1.5	USED BY ICE ENGINE AND STEAM TYPES
HYDROGEN	C/A-C-C/B	20	USED BY FUEL CELL ENGINE TYPES
NATURAL GAS	B/A-A-A/B	2	USED BY ICE ENGINE AND STEAM TYPES
BATTERIES	A/A-A-A/A	0.25*	USED BY ELECTRIC ENGINE TYPES

*Cost to recharge per kilogram of battery weight
Note: Fission and fusion refueling is part of normal engine maintenance costs and thus not addressed here. For bulk fuel purchasing, refer to p. 179, *Strategic Operations.*

THE FIRES OF HELL

BURNOUT

EPILOGUE

BEN ROME

THARKAD SUMMER, OVERLORD-CLASS DROPSHIP ROCHELLE, WORD OF BLAKE PROTECTORATE
17 JULY 3076

"What the fuck*?!"*

Row upon row of computer monitors, readouts and dangerous-looking wiring. It was like being in a giant bomb just itching to go off. Ethan grabbed a metal girder and gingerly leaned over a bank of small capacitors. There had to be a shut-off switch, a main conduit, SOMETHING!

He didn't know what the hell an SDS was, but from the El-Tee's face, it was something Really Bad.

The air fairly crackled with energy; Ethan felt the hairs on the back of his neck rise up. He leaned farther over the shelf bank, straining to look down at the mass of wires, pipes…and some type of clear tubing with liquid pulsing through it…

Ethan's brain barely registered the click of a weapon safety and the chatter of an auto-rifle when his entire field of view blew up. Something slammed into his head and the world went dark.

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"So how's our baby boy, doc?" Ethan pulled on his fatigues as the ship's doctor tapped on a nearby keyboard. Ethan winced as he felt the cuts on his face separate slightly against the bandages. He reached up and touched the bandage over his eye. *No longer a matched set, apparently…*

Doctor Edwin Garcia glanced at Ethan as he continued his rapid key-tapping. "I told you to move slowly. You tear those stitches one more time and I'm going to use duct tape instead." Satisfied with his entry, he tapped one last button and took up the small datapad next to the wall monitor. "Corporal Logan will be fine, by the way."

Ethan smiled and patted the doctor's arm. "Thanks, Doc."

"Thank your XO. From what I understand, it was her quick thinking that saved his life."

"Actually, Doctor," came a deep voice from the doorway behind them. Ethan snapped to attention and saluted as Captain Jared Travis stepped into the small medbay. "It was Doctor Luther who reacted in time. Without her assistance, we—and you—wouldn't be more than floating atoms at this point."

Garcia snorted. "Yes, well, whomever you wish to thank, do so. Now, if you'll excuse me…" He shouldered his way past the captain and disappeared into the hall.

"Not a big fan of our Gracie, is he?" Ethan thrust his chin at the retreating man. "Seems every doctor in this Krishna-forsaken fleet has a 'tude."

Jared laughed. "The service strips 'em of all pretense of bedside manner when they sign on." He extended a hand and helped the older man down from his perch on the medical bed.

Ethan's smile disappeared. "Hell of a mission, Captain."

Jared nodded silently, glancing at the older man. Then he looked away sharply, wiping his face as he exited the cramped compartment. "More true than you know, Naoko. More than you know."

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"I don't know how!" Luella screamed as she frantically hammered the keyboard with her fingers. Lyran combat doctrine didn't exactly hand out manuals on the proper use of Space Defense Systems, after all.

The monitor chirped at her; one of the status bars lit up green. The other five crept past the halfway point; they'd be ready in less than ninety seconds.

"What the fuck*?!" Ethan roared as he frantically searched along the walls, looking for important cabling.*

Grace hovered mutely over Franz Logan's inert form, stuffing bandages into the young man's shirt. A dark red stain now covered most of his chest.

Captain Travis had located a comms system and was rapidly tapping keys, trying to reach the oncoming fleet. The monitor above his head showed a new series of contacts, labeled with indecipherable codes. Luella knew they were Blakist defenders, arriving to pick off stragglers after the SDS system fired.

The status bars reached 68…74…77 percent now…

Icy calmness enveloped her as adrenaline surged into her system. There was one thing left she could do…

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Luella Hildebrand snapped her eyes open as she suddenly awoke. Disoriented, she shook her head as the automatic fire continued to hammer her ears…

No, wait, she thought, clamping her hands over her ears. Realization dawned just as the noise stopped.

"Sorry, Lieutenant," came a call from above. "We've got to get this sucker repaired before the Chief has our hide."

Luella grimaced and lowered her hands as she looked up. She was still in the main bay of the *Tharkad Summer*. She'd been counting inventory because she had nothing better to do; the mindless accounting kept her from thinking about Franz or Buzzy or the nightmare moments of the last twenty-four hours.

Apparently, she'd sat down and, thoroughly exhausted, fallen asleep near one of the main repair bays.

Glancing back at the Demolisher assault tank that now occupied the berth, she waved noncommittally at the three mechanics. Satisfied with her response, the men turned back to their repair work, the pressurized air hammer resuming its deafening staccato rhythm.

Her commlink chirped in her ear. "Lieutenant, please report to Ready Room Three for debriefing." The Captain's voice sounded flat over the comm channel.

She tapped her ear. "Acknowledged." Pausing briefly, she scooped up the inventory list and exited the bay, walking as a woman to her doom.

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She was panicking. Her hands shook as she ripped open her last medical supply bag, spilling its contents across the bare floor. The young corporal coughed again, his breath ragged. A bloody bubble burst on his lips.

Grace wiped the sweat—or was it tears?—from her eyes. The adrenaline was draining from her bloodstream, she noted clinically. She felt the exhaustion of the last two weeks settle heavily into her legs as she fought to maintain her balance next to the dying corporal.

She grabbed a nearby package of sterilized packing and tore the bag's top with her teeth as her free hand pulled back the boy's fatigue shirt. His armored vest—now discarded outside the warehouse shelter—hadn't stopped the round's penetration, but had at least dispersed enough of its kinetic energy that it didn't blow a giant hole through his chest. The wound was

over his right lung; she could see small air bubbles in the weeping, clotting mess.

Punctured*, a detached part of her brain reported.* Clotting is good, but blood loss will kill him first if not staunched. *She pressed the packing into the hole. Holding it in place with her left hand, she fumbled around with her right for a small black case that had fallen out of the medical bag. She settled to her knees, her calves aching.*

"I don't know how!" Luella shouted from across the room. Grace glanced up. The rest of the team was frantically looking around the cavern they were in. No one was injured, so she returned to the boy in front of her. She popped the case open and grabbed the third syringe without even looking. She knew her tools well. This one would thicken his blood to accelerate clotting while lowering his blood pressure to slow down blood loss.

She'd just emptied the contents of the shot into Logan when fire and noise consumed her senses…

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"Grace? Hey, Doc, wake up." The voice was soft, insistent. A mild poking came soon after.

She grunted. "Don't call me Doc…" she mumbled. Lifting her head, she noticed her arm had fallen asleep. Her hand was where she remembered it from last night, still atop the elbow of the young man now poking her shoulder.

"C'mon, Doc. You fell asleep in your chair. Go get some proper rest or something," Franz Logan pleaded. His arms were still festooned with IV drip tubes and pressure monitors. A clear tube ran into one nostril, giving his voice an odd echo quality. "Don't be lyin' here for my sake."

Realizing how she must look to him, Grace Luther sat up and rubbed her eyes. She attempted to smooth her hair back and knew she needed some serious shower time to wash the last two weeks of grit and grime out of her scalp.

"Right, yes, of course. Corporal." She flexed her back with a satisfying pop. "I recommend you get some more rest yourself. Considering the attitude of our superiors, they'll want to throw you back into the meat grinder soon enough."

Logan lay back against his pillow. "Maybe so, ma'am. But I'm more wanting to get out there and pay those Robes back for… for…" His voice trembled on the verge of breaking.

Busby, Grace thought. She hadn't seen his death, only the aftereffect. The image of the big Tikonov's broken body still haunted her dreams.

She reached out and patted the young man's arm, careful to avoid the IV tube. "You'll be back and going before no time, corporal. Enjoy the rest for the moment; you don't know when you'll get it again."

"Yes, Do—I mean, Grace." Logan closed his eyes, his voice fading as the drugs once more took hold of him. "I never…did… th…thank…y…" He was out like a light.

Grace realized she was still staring at him, her face wet. She hadn't realized the tears were falling.

Busby's broken form swam before her again. The man had died trying to save their lives—even hers. Logan, too, had been in the line of fire, doing what he could to keep the mission going, to give them all a chance.

Even her.

For the first time in her life, Grace was glad she'd finally pulled the trigger.

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Hinky nuevo-disco music played in the background; Franz recognized the song from home. He looked around the room, barely registering the blend of scarlet fabric and white pine furniture. His gaze dropped to a mirror on the wall across from him; there was no trace of bandages or stitches on his bare torso. The purple lounge pants he recognized from his days as a cadet at Sanglamore.

Before he could put much thought into where on the DropShip this room could actually be, she appeared in the doorway. Her red hair contrasted well with the green sequined gown that left little to the imagination. She smiled.

"Corporal, how good to see you up and about," she whispered huskily, moving with purpose across the plush carpet and settling down on the divan next to him.

A glass of red liquid appeared in her hand, he noted with bewildered amusement. She offered it to him.

"Raspberry juice?" Her lips were full, inviting.

"Mmmmhhhuga," he mumbled. What the…?

She apparently didn't notice and placed her hand on his chest, pressing firmly. "I don't know how," she said, her eyes boring into his.

Whoa*, he thought. Her other hand was lightly stroking his arm when one of her nails bit into his shoulder.*

"Ouch!"

She smiled and leaned in to kiss him.

As their lips met, light exploded all around as the room blew up.

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"Whoa," Logan rasped. He blinked, and his vision slowly focused on the overhead deck light. It took him a moment to recognize his surroundings. Not some plush discothèque playroom; a DropShip medical bay.

"You okay there, kiddo?"

Franz recognized Ethan's voice and glanced to his left. The older man was standing there, smiling. Franz blushed, remembering his recurring dream. "Umm, yeah, Ethan. Just a bit…disoriented, is all."

Ethan's right eyebrow rose. "Disoriented, is it? I see." He grinned big.

The man behind the sergeant clapped Ethan's shoulder. "Now, now, Naoko, no need to needle the poor bastard. Been through enough as it is." Captain Travis peered at Franz. "Hmm. You look a bit flushed, Corporal. You sure you're okay?"

"Yes, sir. I think the doctor's going to clear me soon enough." He glanced at the empty chair next to his bed. "Though I don't know about Doc Grace."

Travis nodded thoughtfully. "No worries, son. You just get better. We'll be debriefing in a couple of hours; Doctor Garcia's cleared you for mobility as long as you don't overdo it."

"No problem, sir. Thanks for coming down to see me."

The men nodded and moved to leave. Ethan paused and returned, leaning over to whisper in Franz's ear. "The object of

your dreams is onboard, boyo, so you might want to shave and wash up before we debrief," he said with a chuckle. He turned and followed the captain out before Logan could bean him with a pillow.

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"What the fuck*?!" came Naoko's urgent curse from the corner of the room. Travis frantically tapped out codes on the keyboard, desperately trying to raise the fleet, to no avail. He saw Luella step back and swing her auto-rifle into line, snapping off the safety.*

He hit the floor just as she opened up on the console in front of her and scythed right, then left, hosing most of the controls. Sparks flew and sputtered in mini-explosions across the monitors and readouts.

Suddenly, a sharp explosion erupted from the corner where Naoko was, tossing the man backward over a low-rise console. He grunted as he hit the ground, indicating he was still alive. But his face was a mass of blood and he quickly went limp.

Fire and smoke exploded all around them as a chain reaction of energy jumped from console to console. He could hear an increasing hum of static as the floor vibrated underneath his hands. Luella's rifle had ceased to chatter.

"Lieutenant, report!" His voice was raw and he was choking on fumes. The thick smoke smelled like acid and ozone.

"System…deactivated…" came Luella's voice from the floor nearby. A chain of coughs took the rest of whatever she'd meant to say.

Travis risked a glance up, searching for anything still working. In the corner, illuminating the oily smoke around it, a starred monitor blinked rapidly. He wasn't sure, but he thought he could see the fleet symbols, still on approach to the planet.

The floor bucked and heaved, pitching everything into darkness.

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Travis was the last one to enter the larger of the *Summer's* briefing rooms. The debriefing would be cursory and quick; he knew each of his squad members had already been debriefed at length by a member of the General's staff. The idea of this little gathering was more to pull the squad back together, give the obligatory back-slap of a "job well done," and wrap up all the little bits that might have been forgotten.

"Atten-SHUN," snapped Lieutenant Hildebrand as she caught his entrance. She had cleaned herself up, though the bags under her eyes made it obvious she hadn't slept recently.

The room snapped-to immediately, which he waved off just as quickly. "At ease, people."

The mood was gloomy; he felt it without even looking at their faces. Busby's death had hit them all hard. It would take some time for healing—time they didn't have, according to the message he'd recently received.

He still had their attention for the moment. "Look, I know we're going through it right now, so I won't toss out the obligatory platitudes. I just want you all to know that you did a damned fine job out there and I'm happy to serve with you all."

"As am I," came the General's voice behind him. Travis didn't flinch.

He stepped aside to let Belle Lee enter the room and snapped a salute. The rest of the squad did the same. She returned it with crisp decorum and let them at ease. "If you'll take your seats, please, we'll finish this up."

As the squad settled themselves, Travis looked at them all again before taking his own place behind and to the right of the General. They were clearly tired and hurting, but attentive. On a couple of faces, he could see the hunger for revenge.

"A damned fine job, indeed," Belle began. "When we didn't receive your signal, I made the decision based on the intel we had to go forward with the mission. Frankly, if you hadn't taken down that SDS system, this fleet wouldn't be here right now and the Blakists would undoubtedly be burning another world in revenge for our audacity.

"It seems the Blakists were in the process of setting up some sort of planetary defense network. Your actions prompted a catastrophic failure that created a massive energy spike, which surged through the entire system, blowing the power grid in the nearby mountains and taking down the whole network.

"By the time the Blakists had their backup safeties engaged, we were alerted to the situation and managed to sustain only minimal losses before we made planetfall."

She looked at each of them in turn. "Things could have been much worse. I'm happy to say that because of you, many families' sons and daughters will return home at the end of this." She stepped back, snapping to attention. Then, to the squad's astonishment, she saluted.

Travis jumped to attention with the squad and returned the salute, holding it a second longer than the rest of his team. "Thank you, General Lee."

"No, Captain, thank *you*." She turned to the room. "Squad, dis-MISSED."

Travis watched silently as his people filed out, a little spring back in their step. Even Luella seemed to stand a little straighter. It would take time for them to heal completely…but he doubted the Blakists would give it to them.

"Captain, it seems a Blakist-backed corporation in the capital is refusing to disarm. Rather than risk civilian casualties, I need a team of qualified experts to go in and explain the situation to them." She smiled mischievously. "Know anyone?"

Travis's gaze lingered on the door as the last of the team left the room. Slowly, he turned to face his commanding officer, the ghost of a smile playing across his lips. "As a matter of fact, I do…"

During the hellish early days of the Jihad, Blakist forces shelled many second Star League forces into oblivion. Only a handful survived.

Of the many ways that someone can experience *BattleTech*, gamemastering may be one of the most fun. It's also a fair bit of work, but most rewarding things in life have that as a prerequisite.

Even an experienced gamemaster may benefit from examining this section, while a new gamemaster is very likely to find helpful information. One thing to remember: it is critical to develop your own style. What follows is intended to help you, not bind you.

First on the list is character rewards, which help advance their capabilities, financial situations and power. The next topic is NPC use and random encounters, followed by gamemastering tips. Finally, this section covers some specifics of the universe that will help you add flavor to each and every gaming experience.

CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

A person learns from his experiences, as a result of exposure, practice or training. In the game, this reality is expressed by the Experience Points (XP) a character earns during game play.

REWARDS

The overriding objective for a gamemaster when issuing XP to his players is to reward behavior that he approves of and wants to see more of.

Feedback Session

It is important to award XP immediately after the session ends, and also to identify the actions for which a player is getting them. Try to give your players time to respond, and encourage them to identify which activities they are most proud of as you determine how much XP each person has earned. This allows you to cover any gaps in your memory, and ensures that you give credit where it is due. If you are unhappy about someone's performance, it makes sense to mention this, but you should follow up later. Doing this serves two purposes: it takes the discussion away from the rest of the players, making it more private, which gives the affected player less cause to get defensive. Also, as this comes up at a time when everyone is getting ready to head back home, discussion of the issue doesn't drag things out.

This style of direct and immediate feedback works best in the long run, and ensures that everyone knows what their gamemaster expects. It also gives players an opportunity to argue their case if they feel you are underestimating something they did.

A second method to consider is to assign XP in bulk. In such cases, have the feedback session as you would normally. When you have a good picture (and notes) about what each player contributed, you can end the session. Calculate the XP earned normally, but keep that data to yourself. Then, when an opportune moment arrives in the storyline or in real life, let the players know how much they earned for each session, and their total XP earned. The advantage of this approach is that usually, players can immediately do something with their newly gained XP, versus watching their pool incrementally increase while not being able to do much with it.

It is generally good policy to not reveal in great detail the actions for which players are getting XP. If you give them a lump sum per session, they can't determine whether they advanced the campaign or engaged in a personal side-quest in the event you don't want this to be obvious to a player. Just discuss the high and low points verbally to ensure the players do what they're supposed to do.

In most cases, the total XP earned by a player will not be much higher than 10XP for a normal session without exceptional events. During particularly good sessions, it may approach 20XP. Avoid excessive awards. If XP awards are plentiful and even the slightest accomplishment yields a mint, you will quickly trivialize their meaning. If you intend to have a campaign with very powerful characters, have the players create such characters with a larger amount of starting XP instead. Advances should be earned.

Experience awards should be based on two components: group performance and Individual performance. Use the Experience Awards Table on p. 332 as a general guideline for awarding XP.

Group Performance

Group performance awards are a measure of how well the group is resolving your story. XP awards for group performance should be awarded to each member of the group equally. Such an award signifies the cumulative effect of the party's efforts, which means that someone's poor performance may be alleviated by another's stellar accomplishments, and vice versa. Your verbal feedback should cover whether someone failed to pull their weight, and whether someone went above and beyond. Exceptional actions are covered under Individual XP.

Mission

For mission awards, determine whether the challenges within that game session were resolved. Most sessions include one major challenge, some include several. Determine the relative difficulty of the mission(s) compared to what you can expect your players to deal with, and assign XP accordingly.

Campaign

If the session was part of an ongoing campaign, assign a second layer of XP rewards. Did the players actively work toward resolving the challenges of the campaign? Did they go off on a tangent? A group that scored high in a session for completing its mission may not score high for campaign XP if the missions did nothing to bring the group closer to total victory.

Individual Performance

While group XP awards are homogenous by definition, individual awards are used to reward accomplishments specific to each player. Depending on what a given player accomplished, these awards may vary greatly.

Character Development

One of the things that helps make a role-playing game more than just a pick-up game is character development. Beyond the quantitative kind, where Skill, Traits and Attributes improve, players should be encouraged to explore their characters' motivations, and to have them struggle with their past, the situations you throw them into, or both. When they find a new way to fundamentally define who their character is, your campaign gains additional dimension. These kinds of pivotal moments can occur as the result of a dice roll. The key factor is how a player verbalizes the result of that dice roll.

Players should not be discouraged from starting side quests and subplots, especially if they are based on elements of a character's past, as such subplots often provide excellent opportunities for self-discovery and character development. This may cause some distraction from the problems at hand, however, resulting in lower mission and campaign scores if the whole session is devoted to such discovery. If this occurs with the direct involvement of other characters, they can likewise benefit from increased individual XP awards, but it is important to avoid having a single player monopolize everyone's time. This may require resolving the character's efforts outside of a normal session, either electronically or in person. Collaborate with the player on the best course of action.

Role-Playing

The primary objective of a role-playing game is to have fun, usually by playing a role. How well did the player stay in character? Did he play up his Traits and his background? Did he make decisions based on what his character would do, versus what he would do himself? Did he use his character's Traits and Skills appropriately?

If a player behaved in a way very out of character, meaning he did things that don't fit with what his character would have done, it is critical to bring that up during the feedback session. Resolve the consequences at another time, though, because the player's adjustment will likely require a lot of attention. Do not endlessly tolerate disruptive behavior; it won't be fun for you or anyone else.

Please also note that this is a very subjective issue. If you and your players intend to have a very casual session where hilarity is more important than character motivations, you might even consider rewarding the antics. While this RPG is based on a serious setting, if you prefer parody and satire, feel free to adjust your scoring mechanism accordingly. Ultimately, you are the judge of your players' performance.

Achievements

If a single player has just accomplished an absolutely critical feat, it may be worth XP. While this might occur a few times in a session, care must be taken not to reward every high dice roll and every clever idea. The accomplishment should be something that gives pause to your players and you: a real "Wow!" moment. For example, say a dice roll yields a massive Margin of Success and single-handedly snatches victory from the jaws of defeat, or a character does or says something awe-inspiring that catches everyone by surprise. This judgment is highly subjective, but as a rule, the events that actually warrant an XP award should be rare. When they occur, you can consider awarding the point on the spot, but definitely bring it up during the feedback session.

Entertainment

The overriding reason to play any game is to have fun. Fun should be rewarded. This, however, is also a subjective issue. If you're constantly distracted with in-character or out-of-character jokes, and your session's allotted time keeps running out before the mission is done, you might want to caution your players (and any spectators) to filter out the jokes, even if they're excellent. The gamemaster determines the balance that works best, but if anything, jokes that are at least on the topic of your campaign are more helpful than humor that has little to do with it.

Experience Award Table

The three values behind each result on the table below indicate the XP earned for a Trivial, Moderate or Difficult challenge for the players (in the case of group awards). For individual XP awards, the three values represent Minor, Significant and Major achievements. Minor achievements are exactly that: worthy of reward, but not exceptional. If absolutely nothing of note occurred, awarding 0 XP may be

appropriate instead. Significant achievements are impressive feats, or the result of considerable effort on the part of the player. Major achievements should be those that you can bring up again at a later date as a moment you consider an epitome of the character's Skill or other abilities. Usually, individual contributions are at the Minor or Significant level.

All awards can only be earned once per session unless otherwise indicated.

Trivial: Trivial tasks or Minor achievements are those the players should resolve as a matter of course. Actual risk exists and the solution will not be self-evident, but the outcome is nearly guaranteed in the player's favor. Keep in mind that even Trivial challenges may result in serious injury or death to players. *BattleTech* is a deadly universe where there is not a lot of margin for error, or for particularly lucky enemies.

Moderate: Moderate challenges include enemies mostly at the same level as the players and serious problems to resolve. They require the players' best efforts to have a chance at success, and failure is a real possibility. Careless players may take serious casualties when exposed to a Moderate challenge. Players must typically rely on outside assistance to succeed without suffering a Pyrrhic victory.

Difficult: Difficult challenges are those that the players have almost no chance to resolve without considerable outside assistance. Difficult missions should be extremely rare, while campaigns will often be Difficult (or at least Moderate), requiring multiple smaller steps (missions) to succeed. If the players complete Difficult challenges, they have genuinely earned any rewards.

EXPERIENCE AWARD TABLE

Game Outcomes	Awards
Group	
Mission*	
Failure	0/1/5
Success	1/3/7
Outstanding Success	2/5/9
Campaign†	
Players Advanced Campaign	3/5/7
Campaign Completed	5/10/20
Individual	
Character Development	2/4/6
Role-playing	1/2/3
Stayed In-Character (even when it was unwise)	1
Achievements‡	1
Entertainment	1

*A session may include multiple missions, but unless you're wrapping up a Moderate or Difficult mission from a prior session, the scope of multiple missions in one session will usually be Trivial.

†It is possible to have multiple campaigns occurring at the same time. If a session includes progress on multiple campaigns, multiple campaign awards may be warranted.

‡Achievements may occur several times per session, but this should be rare.

Henry gamemasters a campaign with Bryan and Loren. During a particularly grueling mission, the team managed to pull off a win with minimal collateral damage. Henry assigns 3 Group XP. The campaign to free the entire planet has advanced as a result of this success, but Loren regrettably killed an enemy rather than attempt a capture. As the particular enemy could have been an excellent source of information, and had been identified as such, Henry only assigns 3 XP for a total Group XP of 6.

Bryan spent some time having his character come to grips with his addiction (Character Development +2) while also providing some excellent role-play, adding depth to his demolitions expert character by doing research on explosives and using the details when describing his plans and actions (Role-playing +3). His use of the Demolitions Skill proved pivotal, and his explanation of a particularly high Margin of Success on a Skill Check was something Henry can't wait to relate to some of his friends. Additionally, Bryan's plan of attack provided the characters and their NPC support with an excellent advantage, which significantly reduced the casualties they received (Achievements +2). Bryan's always amusing, but didn't have any real whoppers this time (Entertainment +0).

Bryan earned a total of 13 XP this session.

Loren didn't have an opportunity to explore the particulars of his character (Character Development +0). He did play his character very well, (Role-playing +2), and while it was clear that a valuable source of information would be lost, he had his character kill the potential source because of his character's deep hatred of pirates (Stayed In-Character even when it was unwise +1). While he performed well, he did not manage to do anything exceptional. The one high Margin of Success roll he received did not inspire him to a particularly rousing explanation (Achievements +0). Loren is a gifted jokester, and he was on a roll that night, making Henry and Bryan gasp for air in between bursts of laughter (Entertainment +1).

Loren earned 10 XP this session.

CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT OVERVIEW

A person learns from his experiences, as a result of exposure, practice or training. In *A Time of War*, this is expressed by the Experience Points (XP) a character earns during game play, as well as other tangible rewards, such as monetary compensation, rank promotions and the like. As the primary means of developing a character over time are experience and age, the following rules mainly cover the effects of aging and experience on character advancement.

AGING

Time does not stand still while the players' campaign rages on. As a character ages, his Attributes and Traits may change, affecting his overall performance. Every time a character ages a year in the campaign, check his age against the Aging Table below, and immediately apply any XP increases or decreases mandated for that age to the relevant Attributes and Traits once the character reaches that birthday. For example, as soon as a 20-year old character celebrates his 21st birthday, he gains 100 XP each in STR, BOD, RFL, INT, WIL and CHA.

The EDG Attribute is not affected by aging, nor are any Attribute maximums mandated by the character's Phenotype (see *Phenotype Trait*, p. 121). If desired, a character may use XP to offset any negative effects from aging.

AGING TABLE

Age (in years)	Experience Points (XP)							
	STR	BOD	DEX	RFL	INT	WIL	CHA	Traits
21	+100	+100	—	+100	+100	+100	+50	—
31	+100	+100	—	–100	+100	+100	—	Reputation (–150 XP)*
41	—	—	–50	—	—	+50	–25	—
51	—	–100	—	–100	—	—	–50	Reputation (–300 XP)**
61	–100	–100	–100	—	+50	—	–50	Slow Learner (–300 XP)†
71	–100	–125	—	–100	—	–50	–75	Glass Jaw (–300 XP)†
81	–150	–150	–100	–100	–100	–50	–100	—
91	–150	–175	–150	–125	–150	–100	–100	—
101	–200	–200	–200	–150	–200	–100	–150	

*Applies to Clan characters only, reflecting the Clan bias against aging. This Trait's negative effect is cancelled out if the character has earned the Bloodname Trait or holds any rank higher than Star Captain.

**Applies to Clan characters only. Reduce effect to –150 XP if the character has earned the Bloodname Trait or holds any rank higher than Star Colonel.

†These Traits are re-applied during every age bracket following the first time they appear (in case the character has counteracted the negative Trait by purchasing its opposing positive Trait).

ATTRIBUTES

Attributes may be purchased at any time by spending 100 XP per Attribute Point. In order for a character to be eligible for this increase, he must have spent an appropriate amount of time practicing or training (see *Training*, below). The gamemaster must concur that the method of practice, or training, as well as the length of time that the character has practiced or trained, is adequate. It is possible to improve every Attribute a character has, though advancing one Attribute type may be much more time-consuming and difficult than another.

In some rare instances, it may be appropriate to award an Attribute increase to a player. This could occur after a physically taxing amount of time, or after the completion (in spectacular fashion) of a particularly difficult Skill Check. Doing either does not guarantee such increases. Only the gamemaster can determine whether a particular activity or accomplishment warrants an Attribute increase.

Edge

Improving the Edge Attribute also costs 100 XP, and follows all other rules governing Attribute purchasing. Players can use XP to replenish spent Edge (see pp. 42-43). The price per replenished Edge point is 20 XP.

TRAITS

Players can purchase positive Traits to enhance a character, or to counteract existing negative Traits. See p. 87 for a list of opposing Traits. Such a purchase costs 100 XP per TP value of the Trait. For example, purchasing Combat Sense costs 400 XP.

Traits cannot be purchased without proper justification, and require gamemaster approval. A player must be able to explain why or how his character acquired the Trait in question. If the player wishes to represent an accumulation of effort or experience, he should notify the gamemaster of his intent to start earning the Trait, and indicate regularly during feedback sessions whether something occurred that would contribute to his progress.

Some Negative Traits may be inflicted on a character as a result of events during game play (Enemy, Lost Limb and so on). In those cases, no XP is awarded to the player.

Some Traits can only be acquired during character creation. These Traits include: Animal Antipathy, Animal Empathy, Custom Vehicle, Equipped, Exceptional Attribute, Fast Learner, Fit, Good Hearing, Good Vision, Gremlins, G-Tolerance, Illiterate, Natural Aptitude, Phenotype, Sixth Sense, Tech Empathy, Transit Disorientation Syndrome, Unlucky, Vehicle, and Wealth. Characters can lose certain of these positive Traits as a result of injury or other events during game play.

Elected Negative Traits

In some instances, a gamemaster might consider allowing a player to choose to take on new negative Traits, for example, Dependents. The gamemaster may decide that such an elected negative Trait warrants an XP award to the player, but in general gamemasters should only award XP if they intend to make use of this new Trait. In any case, the XP award for elected negative Traits does not have to match the 1 TP = 100 XP formula. The actual award can be higher or lower depending on the generosity of the gamemaster or the degree of trouble the negative Trait will cause (the sooner, the better).

SKILLS

New and existing Advanced Skills can only be learned or improved by expending XP and engaging in training (see below). Basic Skills do not require training; players can simply spend earned XP to learn and/or improve them.

In order to learn or improve a Skill, a character must either engage in training or complete at least one successful Skill Check since the last time the skill improved. When learning completely new Skills, a successful Unskilled Check is required

in lieu of training. If this condition is met, a new Skill can be purchased for 20 XP, or an existing Skill can be improved by spending XP equal to the new skill level's XP cost, minus the XP cost of the existing Skill Level. As always, during such purchases, the appropriate column on the Skill Cost Table must be used depending on whether the Character is a Slow Learner, a Fast Learner, or neither (see Experience Point (XP) Costs Table, p. 86). Skills cannot be improved more than 1 level at a time. Either a new successful Skill Check is required to improve a Basic Skill, or the player must make another Training Skill Check.

TRAINING

Training is necessary to learn new Advanced Skills or to improve existing ones. It can also be used to learn or improve Basic Skills without having to make a successful Skill Check.

A trainer must have at least 1 more level than his student in the Skill he is teaching. Increase the Skill Check result by half the difference between the student's Skill Level (0 if unskilled) and the trainer's Skill Level (round fractions down).

After a successful Training Skill Check, the student may purchase the Skill or the next Skill Level, using the costs in the Experience Point (XP) Costs Table (see p. 86). Each point of MoS of the Training Skill Check reduces the XP cost by 1.

The time necessary to train can vary wildly. As a guideline, each training attempt for a Basic Skill requires a week's worth of full-time commitment by trainer and student. Each training attempt for an Advanced Skill requires a month of full-time commitment by trainer and student. The gamemaster may increase or decrease this as he deems appropriate.

Just like in the real world, other factors can affect training time. Double the time required if the student is a Slow Learner; if the Student is a Fast Learner, cut the time in half. Likewise, double the required time if the trainer and student only have access to inadequate training facilities and tools (such as books, simulators, training courses and so on). Halve the required time if they have access to exceptional training facilities and tools. The gamemaster decides whether inadequate or exceptional training facilities and tools are available.

A Training Skill Check can be made only after the full required period of time has elapsed. It cannot be made if only a portion of the time was spent training—for example, 6 out of 7 days. If a training session is interrupted, the student's progress is not lost, and the session can be resumed later.

DOWNTIME

The most common way characters acquire XP is by completing game sessions. However, large periods of in-universe time may elapse between sessions. Characters can earn XP during such periods of downtime equal to half their INT Attribute per month. Double the XP earned if the character is a Fast Learner, halve it if the character is a Slow Learner. Round down any fractions after applying these two Traits.

Characters can use an appropriate Career Skill during downtime to double the XP earned if a player makes a successful Skill Check. Each 2 points of MoS for the Skill Check adds 1 XP. Gamemasters should apply Difficulty penalties if the circumstances inhibit the execution of the character's particular career. Sometimes, it may not be possible to perform a Career Check. A MechWarrior aboard a DropShip for one month, for example, does not have adequate opportunities for a Career Skill Check. A technician does, provided he has something to fix during that time period.

Characters can only earn such downtime XP by performing a Career Skill Check or making a concerted effort to practice, study or otherwise improve during the downtime. If the character does nothing of consequence, or is focused on recreational activities, divide any XP earned by 4 and round down any fractions.

If a full month of downtime is not available, divide the number of full weeks of downtime by 4, and multiply this fraction by the amount of XP the player would have earned if a full month had been available. For example, Vince would have earned 4 XP if he had a full month of downtime. Only 20 days of downtime were available, however, and so only two full weeks of downtime occurred. 2 divided by 4 is 0.5. Multiplied by the 4 XP Vince would have earned in a full month, that gives Vince 2 XP.

Downtime is not an efficient way to earn XP, even when using the Career Skill. Players should be encouraged to seek out activities and missions that can earn them XP at regular session rates during downtime periods. Downtime may offer an ideal occasion for a player to develop his character, or the character may benefit from attempts at training (see *Training During Downtime*, below).

Training During Downtime

Training during downtime must focus on a particular Skill, and earns the student XP only toward that particular Skill (no other Skill, Trait or Attribute). Use the standard training rules above to perform the Skill Check, and to determine the required amount of time. A successful Skill Check generates a number of XP equal to the student's INT, plus 1 XP per point of MoS for the Skill Check. Players may make Training Skill Checks only after the full required period of time has elapsed. Should this yield enough XP to improve the level of the Skill, a separate Training Skill Check may be required to do so (as described above under *Skills*).

WEALTH AND PROPERTY

One of several ways to motivate a person is to pay them. With few exceptions outside of the Clans, humanity as a whole continues to receive compensation in fungible means, usually C-bills or the local nation's currency.

For centuries, Lyran military might derived from the state's economic might.

BASE SALARY TABLE (C-BILLS)

Position	Monthly	Annually
MechWarrior	1,500	18,000
Aerospace Pilot	1,500	18,000
Vehicle/Artillery Crewman	900	10,800
Aircraft Pilot	900	10,800
Regular Infantry	750	9,000
Specialist/Spec Ops Infantry	960	11,520
Battle Armored Infantry	960	11,520
Scout Infantry	1,050	12,600
DropShip Crewman	1,000	12,000
JumpShip Crewman	750	9,000
WarShip Crewman	1,200	14,400
'Mech/Fighter Technician	800	9,600
Battle Armor Technician	800	9,600
Vehicle Technician	640	7,680
Medic	640	7,680
Doctor	1,500	18,000
Administrator	320	8,320

Quality/Expertise	Field Average	Multiplier
Assistant/Able-Body*	>1	x 0.5
Green	>2	x 0.75
Regular	>3	x 1.0
Veteran	>4	x 1.5
Elite	>5	x 2.0
Infantry: Anti-'Mech Field	N/A	x 1.5

*Assistants/Able-Bodies are short-term hires or astechs who work with the force on an as-needed basis.

†The Infantry: Anti-'Mech Field multiplier is cumulative with the normal Quality/Expertise Rating multiplier, but only to infantry unit types.

Salary

In most conceivable situations, the characters have regular income, either through the Property or Extra Income Traits (see p. 116) or because they are receiving a salary from their employer.

To determine a person's salary in C-bills, first find the Base Salary in the table below. If the person's occupation isn't listed, the gamemaster makes the call, comparing the person's skill-set with those listed.

Next, determine the expertise multiplier by taking the average level of all Skills in the relevant field. The gamemaster may decide that multiple fields apply, in which case take the average of all Skills from all fields. For example, a MechWarrior who is also a commanding officer must use both his MechWarrior and his Officer fields. If this MechWarrior also regularly performs the duties of a foot-soldier, his Basic Training field might also apply. Note that in every standing military, the expertise multiplier is Regular.

Third, determine the rank multiplier. Divide the amount of Rank Trait Points the character has by 6 if he does not have the Officer Field, and by 3 if he does have the Officer Field.

Finally, add both multipliers together and then multiply the Base Salary with this final salary multiplier.

Jorge is a MechWarrior in a House unit. His Base Salary is 1,500 per month. His MechWarrior Field Skills average out to 4.1, and the gamemaster decides that no other fields are relevant for determining Jorge's expertise. His Expertise Multiplier would be 1.5, but since Jorge works for the Federated Suns Armed Forces, his Expertise Multiplier is fixed at Regular, and so is only 1.0. Jorge is an officer and a company commander (Rank 5), so his Rank Multiplier is 5 / 3 = 1.67.

His total salary multiplier is 1.00 + 1.67 = 2.67, and so Jorge earns 4,005 C-bills per month, or 48,060 C-bills per year. If he worked for a mercenary company, his salary multiplier would be 3.17, and he would make 4,755 C-bills per month, or 57,060 C-bills per year.

Bonuses

Some organizations pay bonuses for a job well done. An easy way to handle such performance bonuses is to use the same evaluation as when assigning mission or campaign XP and then apply the bonus value listed in the table below. A bonus is always a percentage of the person's annual salary. Bonuses for individual missions should be rare; employers generally expect their people to do a good job. A bonus for a long engagement (campaign) is more likely.

Other entities pay a noticeably lower salary, sometimes 50 percent less than the norm. They compensate for this by offering performance bonuses far more frequently. This is common in high-risk occupations or units with high turnover, as the dead do not have to be paid. The establishment of such a policy requires someone to have done a morose bit of accounting at some point, and figured out that running things this way provides a net savings to the unit at large. If this policy is in place, double the mission bonus percentage and award it in every instance, but cut the normal salary by 50 percent.

BONUS TABLE

Mission Completion	Trivial	Moderate	Difficult
Failure	0%	0%	0%
Success	1%	3%	5%
Outstanding Success	2%	6%	10%

Campaign Completion	Trivial	Moderate	Difficult
Failure	1%	2%	3%
Success	5%	10%	20%
Outstanding Success	10%	20%	40%

Spending Money

Beyond buying additional equipment using the appropriate rules concerning Tech Level, Availability and Legality (see *Equipment*, pp. 254-325), a person typically has additional monthly expenses such as food, housing, utilities and taxes.

Tax mechanisms vary from nation to nation and from world to world. Presume that whatever actual taxes are in place, an individual pays about 30 percent of his income in taxes, either directly or indirectly on property, purchases and so on. This is a gross simplification for the sake of expediency; gamemasters are encouraged to tailor such details to their own campaigns based on faction, world and so on.

MONTHLY EXPENSES TABLE

Government Expenses	C-bills
Taxes	30%

Housing	C-bills
Base Quarters	240
1 Bedroom Apartment	175
2 Bedroom Apartment	200
3 Bedroom Apartment	225
Duplex House/Condo	300
Small House/Condo	400
Medium House/Condo	500
Large House/Condo	600
Small Mansion	10,000
Medium Mansion	15,000
Large Mansion	20,000

Utilities (% of monthly housing cost)	C-bills
Basic	10%
Expanded Services (including entertainment and network connectivity)	20%

Food (per person)	C-bills
Cheap	120
Quality	240
Luxury	480

RANK AND POWER

Another method of advancing characters is to increase their rank, which brings with it additional income and responsibilities. The latter present opportunities for the gamemaster, as the player is liable for his subordinates' actions to some degree or another. Enemies may use subordinates to strike at the character by indirectly causing a scandal, or the character's rival for his new position might continue to agitate, hoping to build a case that the character was a bad choice (and the rival a better one). Many military units, particularly 'Mech-based ones where attrition is relatively less likely than in other service branches to create openings for promotion, are vulnerable to politics, as some may decide that the only way to advance their own careers is to make their superiors fail. The "Social General" may be a Lyran-specific slur, but the BattleMech branches of almost every military in known space are rife with similar politics. Keep in mind also that no one can be certain of his limits unless he is promoted beyond them. The new challenges facing a recently promoted character may turn out to be too much to handle.

The gamemaster may find all these potential problems appealing, but keep in mind that your players may take such matters very personally; it is critical to first explore the consequences on a personal level before making in-game decisions. In addition, constant promotions will shift the scale of your campaign and move the players gradually away from the action. This may be a desirable outcome, but it should definitely be a deliberate one. If you need an upper limit of how far players can advance to keep your campaign manageable, and to keep the activity at the desired scale, you will need to provide such hard limits, but the players must be made aware of them as early as possible. In-game manifestation of such limits can offer excellent role-playing opportunities, and may be one of the easiest ways to use the Enemy Trait.

NPCS AND RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Some gamemasters will never need this section. Those that do have no reason for hesitation: if you're focusing on the main line of your campaign, you might want to save time on less significant events. Alternatively, sometimes your players take things in a direction you didn't expect, and you need to throw something at them for their trouble without having prepared for it.

The following rules should not be taken as the full extent of what your characters may undergo, but rather as a tool for your benefit. If you find yourself relying on this section exclusively, take some time to come up with problems that don't fit this mold. Also remember that for every rule there is an exception; use this section as a guide, not a rule of law.

NPC TEMPLATES

Non-player characters (NPCs) are numerous in most campaigns. They comprise everyone your player characters meet that is not controlled by another player. In many situations, you won't need statistics for them; either they aren't important enough to warrant such detail, or they operate in a way so different from the player characters that direct interaction using game mechanics never becomes an issue. In those cases, a line or even just a word or two about their personality and what they do may be enough—for example, "Cook; loud, dirty."

Just as often, it may be beneficial to sketch out critical NPCs in detail, even if they will never come into conflict with the player characters. You might want an NPC to perform a Skill Check, or engage in combat with other NPCs, and you don't want to slow the game down by having to figure out that NPC's particular capabilities on the fly.

Despite your best intentions, you may discover a sudden need for a degree of detail that exceeds your preparations. The following paragraphs may help you cover such omissions, either directly or by providing inspiration for your own solutions. Finally, remember that all NPCs can be friendly, hostile or neutral toward the player characters.

NPCs and Dice Use

When using NPCs to help or hinder your players, make a habit of rolling out their actions. Doing this will create more natural results than simply having scripted events occur. Sometimes, plans will succeed far better than you anticipated. If you rolled for it, run with the result. Other times, things won't go as planned, and you should likewise accept this and adapt. While either outcome may derail your planned course of events, preparing for that eventuality (and using the tools in this book) is what makes an RPG more interesting than reciting a story. Sometimes your players will earn their victory, and sometimes your NPCs will squander any claim for a victory over the players. It's better to accept this rather than discourage it.

That said, the gamemaster's overriding priority is not to be bound by the dice, any more than by the rules. If the game session stands to be much more interesting when events occur that contradict the dice rolls, for good or bad, it may be entirely appropriate to overrule the dice and let an NPC win or lose despite them. Gamemasters should feel free to make such calls while keeping them relatively rare.

Just to keep your options open, it is good practice not to roll in front of the players—or, if you have to, don't make it obvious which of the various dice roll results you intend to use. To keep yourself honest, decide which of a series of, say, three dice rolls you might use before you start rolling. Another idea is to roll for certain events ahead of time, if you're convinced they'll occur. However, this can often appear "scripted" to the players, or you might discover that your roll didn't take into account new factors introduced during game play.

NPC Relativity

The power and relevance of NPCs should always be relative to the power and relevance of the player characters. If the NPCs are too weak, they won't pose an adequate challenge or offer adequate support. Likewise, if they are too strong, they will roll over your players, or make your player characters' participation improbable given the capabilities of the rest of their unit. If the player characters are the unit's elite troubleshooters, it is far easier to explain why they get sent on missions.

As a rule of thumb, always identify the player character to whom the NPCs are relative, and use that player character to determine specific NPC Attributes, Traits and Skills.

NPC TYPES

NPCs can be roughly divided in to four groups: Thug, Soldier, Savant and Boss.

Thug

The Thug is significantly less capable than the player characters. Naturally, the more powerful the player characters become, the larger the amount of people covered by this description. The statistics below should be taken as the upper limit of this type of NPC in order to be considered significantly less capable than the player-character archetypes. Gamemasters may well find it appropriate to have an NPC even less capable than the example below.

Usually, Thug NPCs work for or follow more powerful NPCs. Less competent NPCs may still be more influential than player characters. They may be of noble or wealthy birth, they may have been exceptionally lucky, or the powers that be may have failed to notice their incompetence despite their utter lack of fitness for their position. Often, a combination of those factors is in play.

Thug NPCs should comprise the vast bulk of the player characters' support in most situations. Player characters may also have to answer to Thug NPCs that outrank them, or rely on Thug NPCs for critical functions. Such circumstances can become a source of strife between those NPCs and the player characters, if the player characters attempt to replace the incompetent or attempt to shield a sympathetic yet incapable NPC from a career-ending move.

Soldier

Equivalent in power and competence to the player characters, Soldier NPCs should represent the majority of the player characters' opposition when they need a challenging

THUG (NPC STATS)

ATTRIBUTES	10 – 15 Attribute Points less than the comparable player character. Emphasis should be on 1 – 2 Attributes that are linked to that NPC's main profession: for example, INT/DEX for a Surgeon NPC.
TRAITS	2 – 5 less than the comparable player character. Cherry-picking may be beneficial, but for Thug NPCs, Traits should largely be low-level or even non-existent. Powerful or expensive Traits are better used on more competent NPCs. Thugs may have notable Negative Traits.
SKILLS	2 – 6 less than the comparable player character. All Skills should also average to 1 or 2 levels below the average of the comparable player character. Almost no Complex/Advanced Skills. Noteworthy levels should appear at most in only a few Skills: for example, a bodyguard might have decent competence in Small Arms and Martial Arts.

BODYGUARD

Attributes

STR	4	**INT**	3
BOD	5	**WIL**	4
RFL	4	**CHA**	3
DEX	4	**EDG**	2

Traits

Toughness 3

Relevant Skills

Career/Bodyguard	+2	Martial Arts	+4
Climbing	+1	Melee Weapons	+2
Driving/Ground	+2	Perception	+3
Investigation	+1	Running	+2
Language/English	+3	Small Arms	+4

SOLDIER

ATTRIBUTES	Attribute Points equal to that of the comparable player character. Emphasis should be on 2 – 3 Attributes that are linked to that NPC's main profession: for example, RFL/INT for an Infiltrator.
TRAITS	Equal to that of the comparable player character. 1 – 2 more or less is also a good way to help differentiate Soldiers from player characters. Soldiers should generally have a solid mix of Traits that compliment their profession. Some negative Traits may be present, but no more than 1 or 2 low-level ones. A Soldier can have very powerful negative Traits if the intent is to create a semi-functional NPC that operates at Thug levels.
SKILLS	2 – 3 less than the comparable player character. All Skills should average out to match the average of the comparable player character. Some Complex/Advanced Skills are appropriate, but this NPC should have only a few Skills at a noteworthy level—for example, a detective has significant competence in Interrogation and Investigation.

NPC STATS

DETECTIVE

Attributes

STR	4	**INT**	6
BOD	4	**WIL**	6
RFL	4	**CHA**	7
DEX	5	**EDG**	3

Traits

Connections 2
Natural Aptitude/Investigation 5

Relevant Skills

Acting	+3	Language/German	+5
Administration	+2	Language/English	+3
Career/Detective	+4	Navigation/Ground	+1
Cryptography	+1	Negotiation/Legal	+2
Disguise	+1	Perception	+6
Driving/Ground	+4	Security Sys./Mechanical	+1
Forgery	+2	Small Arms	+3
Interrogation	+5	Streetwise/Lyran	+2
Investigation	+6		

SAVANT

ATTRIBUTES	5 – 10 Attribute Points less than that of the comparable player character. Extreme emphasis should be given to 2 – 3 Attributes linked to the NPC's main profession: for example, INT/WIL for a scientist.
TRAITS	Several extremely powerful positive Traits balanced by several extremely powerful negative Traits. The net CP spent on Traits should be about equal to that of the comparable player character. Applying a lot of negative Traits is mandatory.
SKILLS	5 – 15 less than the comparable player character. While a Savant should have very few Skills, those he does possess should all be extremely advanced. A Savant should normally be relegated to Unskilled Checks for anything outside his narrow field.

NPC STATS

CHEMIST

Attributes

STR	2	**INT**	9
BOD	3	**WIL**	7
RFL	3	**CHA**	3
DEX	4	**EDG**	2

Traits

Exceptional Attribute/INT 3
Natural Aptitude/Science 5

Relevant Skills

Chemistry/Biochemistry	+9	Sensor Operations	+1
Computers	+1	Technician/Mechanics	+0
Language/English	+4		

foe. Likewise, Soldiers should serve as the player characters' more competent allies and personnel. Most units and organizations worthy of respect include an ample number of individuals at this level, either making decisions or implementing them. Soldiers might lead larger groups of Thugs, or be led by one in rare cases. When in doubt about the appropriate level of an NPC, friendly or hostile, use a Soldier.

Savant

The Savant should turn up rarely during the campaign. He is the epitome of a specialist, focusing on a single discipline to such an extent that he is inept or non-functional in almost every other area. True Savants cannot function in society without assistance. A Savant can be a brilliant scientist who's just a bit too far on the crazy side of genius, or the killing machine who lacks the mental capacity and upbringing to function outside of combat. There's always something dramatically wrong about a Savant, something that isn't just a hindrance, but utterly crippling. It is almost impossible for a Savant not to be a stereotype or two-dimensional character, and for that reason alone they should be used sparingly.

The player characters' organization may include a Savant, in which case that NPC should serve as a tool the player characters are loath to use given the hassle of dealing with the Savant's flaws. Savants may be used in sparse numbers by the more powerful of the player characters' enemies, generally rather like a piece of equipment considering their overwhelmingly single-minded focus.

When used properly, Savants can add flavor to a campaign; when used too frequently, they reduce its credibility.

Boss

The Boss NPC should be as rare as the Savant, if not more so. He should represent the elite opponents the player characters face. Be it a strike team or a pack of lawyers, the player characters' enemies will presume a victorious outcome once they send their crack minions forth. Bosses can represent pivotal NPCs, both friendly and hostile, and often hold a leadership position. If friendly, a Boss NPC represents the kind of people the player characters aspire to emulate or exceed in competence one day.

Boss NPCs are almost always well-rounded. If a specialist is required, use a Soldier with a much narrower focus on a single field. Boss NPCs are rarely subservient to lesser NPCs for long, either because they surpass them or defeat them in short order.

BOSS

ATTRIBUTES	5 - 10 more Attribute Points than the comparable player character. Emphasis should be on 3 – 5 Attributes linked to that NPC's main profession: for example, INT/WIL/CHA/EDG for a kingpin.
TRAITS	Access to several high-power Traits, plus a handful of negative Traits to add flavor. A Boss is almost always highly functional, with more than his fair share of advantages.
SKILLS	5 – 10 more than the comparable player character. A Boss is versatile by nature, having some competence in a wide range of areas. He is also exceptionally competent in his chosen profession. A Boss should be very hard to beat at his own game, if there's a level playing field.

KINGPIN

Attributes

STR	5	**INT**	8
BOD	6	**WIL**	7
RFL	6	**CHA**	8
DEX	6	**EDG**	6

Traits

Connections	4	Patient	1
Extra Income	5	Property	5
Gregarious	1	Reputation	–2

Relevant Skills

Acting	+5	Investigation	+7
Administration	+5	Language/German	+6
Animal Handling/Riding	+1	Language/English	+4
Appraisal	+3	Leadership	+6
Archery	+1	Martial Arts	+2
Art/Painting	+2	Melee Weapons	+1
Career/Any	+6	Negotiation	+5
Climbing	+0	Perception	+7
Computers	+3	Protocol/Lyran	+4
Cryptography	+2	Science/Any	+1
Demolitions	+3	Small Arms	+2
Disguise	+1	Stealth	+2
Driving/Ground	+3	Strategy	+7
Forgery	+4	Swimming	+1
Interrogation	+6		

NPC STATS

Encountering an NPC at this level should be a significant and unusual event. If you think you need a Boss in order to set up a challenge for your players, create Soldiers that match the level of the player characters instead.

NPC to Player Ratio

When deciding how many NPCs to throw at the players to create a challenging encounter, the question of balance becomes critical. Even Kai Allard-Liao in a 'Mech can be defeated if enough goons come at him. The converse is also true, that a super-powerful NPC may prove a trivial obstacle if thoroughly outnumbered by the player characters.

Tactics and planning hugely affect how successful players are, so gamemasters should consider the following only as a guideline. The dice and the brilliance or stupidity of the players can have a tremendous and unpredictable impact.

NPC Equipment

The equipment available to an NPC need not be in line with the NPC's relative capabilities. Extremely skilled NPCs can have feeble tools and weapons, while almost incompetent NPCs can have top-notch gear. The equipment available to NPCs is case-specific, and often depends on their identity as well as who provided them with the equipment. When in doubt, give the NPCs equipment that is equivalent to whatever the players can lay hands on, and that is suitable to their intended task. If their objective is a quick hit-and-run mission, the NPCs will be well-armed, but are not likely to have survival gear and provisions that could last a few weeks.

Below are some examples to provide additional guidance. Players can also use these, and so their costs and the required rating in the Equipped Trait are listed. Note that the Need: Equipped ratings only consider Technology and Availability, not Legality. Also listed is the minimum STR needed to avoid being encumbered by the equipment package (see *Encumbrance*, p. 170). The *Equipment* chapter (pp. 254-325) provides additional details and specifications.

NPC TO PLAYER RATIO TABLE

NPC	Player:NPC Ratio
Thug	2
Soldier	1
Savant	0.1
Boss	0.5

TROOPER, HIGH BUDGET

Item	Cost	Weight (kg)
Bayonet	8	0.3
Pulse Laser Rifle	2,000	5.0
Military Power Pack	120	4.0
Telescopic Scope	30	0.2
Laser Pistol	750	1.0
Grenade, HE x 2	40	1.2
Grenade, AP x 2	32	1.2
Grenade, Smoke x 2	8	1.2
Ballistic Plate Vest	600	8.8
Load Bearing Vest	20	0.4
Combat Helmet	200	2.0
Night-vision Goggles	220	0.6
Plasteel Boots	175	3.0
Fatigues	30	0.5
Military Communicator	50	0.1
Basic Field Kit	10	5
Medical Kit	10	0.3
Medipatch x 2	20	0.0
Stimpatch x 8	16	0.1
Total	*4,339*	*34.9*
Need: Equipped (3+)	**Need: Wealth (2+)**	**Need: STR 6+**

TROOPER, LOW BUDGET

Item	Cost	Weight (kg)
Knife	8	0.3
Automatic Rifle	80	2.0
Ammo Clip x5	10	—
Flak Vest	50	2.8
Flak Helmet	25	1.0
Fatigues	30	0.5
Leather Boots	25	0.8
Total	*228*	*7.4*
Need: Equipped (1+)	**Need: Wealth (1+)**	**Need: STR 3+**

FIELD MEDIC

Item	Cost	Weight (kg)
Auto Pistol	50	0.5
Ammo x 2	4	—
Grenade, Smoke x 4	16	2.4
Flak Jacket	75	3.5
Load Bearing Vest	20	0.4
Flak Helmet	25	1.3
Leather Boots	25	0.8
Fatigues	30	0.5
Military Communicator	50	0.1
Basic Field Kit	10	5
Advanced Medical Kit	250	2.0
Medipatch x 20	200	0.2
Sedative Patch x 20	30	0.2
Stimpatch x 40	2	0.4
Total	*787*	*17.3*
Need: Equipped (0+)	**Need: Wealth (0+)**	**Need: STR 4+**

MARINE

Item	Cost	Weight (kg)
Dagger	8	0.3
Sword	30	3.0
Laser Rifle	1,250	5.0
Military Power Pack	120	4.0
Ablative Suit	1,000	6.3
Space Suit	5,000	12.0
Grenade, Smoke x 6	12	1.8
Load Bearing Vest	20	0.4
Fatigues	30	0.5
Total	*7,470*	*33.3*
Need: Equipped (3+)	**Need: Wealth (2+)**	**Need: STR 6+**

SPECIAL FORCES OPERATIVE

Item	Cost	Weight (kg)
Auto Pistol	50	0.2
Sound/Flash Suppressor	200	0.3
Mini Stunstick	50	0.2
Vibroblade	300	0.4
Powerpack (HC) x 2	30	0.6
Microgrenade, Smoke x 5	5	1.0
Microgrenade, Flash x 5	10	1.0
Minigrenade, Stun x 5	50	2.3
Sneaksuit IR/Camo/ECM	28,000	6.0
Fatigues	30	0.5
Load Bearing Vest	20	0.4
Jump Pack	3,100	30.0
Micro-recorder	100	0.2
Noteputer	500	0.5
Vibro Lockpick Set	2,000	0.5
Electronic Security Bypass Kit	1,200	0.3
Disguise/Makeup Kit	1,000	6.5
Fire Capsule x 5	250	0.1
Bug Scanner Watch	1,500	0.1
Microphone Bug x 10	400	0.1
Tracking Bug Locator, Compact	2,000	0.8
Tracking Bug x 10	300	0.1
White Noise Generator	400	2.0
Micro-camcorder	1,000	0.4
Rangefinder Binoculars	200	0.5
Electronic Compass	30	0.1
Advanced Field Kit	100	15.0
Emergency Rations x 10	20	10.0
Bubble Tent	200	3.0
Solar Recharger	200	1.5
Medical Kit	10	0.3
Medipatch x 2	20	0.0
Stimpatch x 10	20	0.1
Total	*43,295*	*85*
Need: Equipped (6+)	**Need: Wealth (5+)**	**Need: STR 7+**

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

All of the encounters given on the table below are intended to be relative to the player characters' situation. If a player character is out on his own, a light engagement may be a pair of thugs. If he is in a 'Mech company, a light engagement may be a lance of hostile medium Mechs. In addition, the gamemaster should consider the character's capabilities. A hotshot MechWarrior with little to no Martial Arts or weapon Skills may find a pair of thugs a potentially fatal challenge.

For each random encounter, roll 3D6 to find the result. If you don't like it and gain no inspiration from it, roll again. You may wish to roll twice and think of a way to apply both results simultaneously.

RANDOM ENCOUNTER TABLE

3D6 Result	Effect
3	*"Arrest them!"* Whether through recent actual transgressions or a coup engineered by their Enemies, the player characters are suddenly declared outlaws. The authorities attempt an arrest that stands an excellent chance of succeeding, even if this requires them to move off-world reinforcements into place prior to the arrest. This encounter may affect only part of the player group or unit, and a single session is unlikely to resolve it.
4	*"This may be the worst accident in recent memory."* A massive accident takes place involving the player characters or their unit. Think along the lines of a mis-jump or a DropShip crash. It shouldn't kill the player characters, though they might get hurt. Either way, those around them will suffer significant damage and casualties.
5	*"We've been robbed!"* The player characters or their unit have had something significant stolen from them. This can include a BattleMech, if there is a plausible way to have it taken. Whatever was stolen, the item(s) is of such value (monetary or emotional) that the player characters are intensely motivated to retrieve it.
6	*"It's all their fault!"* The player characters or members of their unit have caused an accident that resulted in considerable material damage, and may have inflicted casualties or fatalities. Someone is out to make an example of them for this.
7	*"That's my baby's daddy!"* A player character's family just expanded unexpectedly, and there are some expectations of personal or financial responsibility. This encounter is usually more entertaining if the player character already has a significant other with a family. Change sexes as required.
8	*"This ain't just the sniffles anymore."* The player characters and most around them are violently ill, but still expected to accomplish their duties somehow.
9	*"Hurry! They're getting away!"* A raid has just occurred, either from pirates, a hostile nation, or local criminal or insurgent elements. The player characters have a chance to intercept.
10	*"I'll owe you one."* A local power has put some pressure on the player characters to assist them with a personal problem. This local group can be organized crime, or a part of the local government/noble house. Refusing has consequences.
11	*"I need your help, and I can pay."* Someone is willing to pay the player characters for their assistance with a personal project. The seeker usually requires a specific talent, such as Animal Handling, Acrobatics or Survival. The demand is for a Skill or a few Skills the player characters do not frequently use. If the player characters have previously accomplished something particularly noteworthy with a Skill, it may be requested specifically. This event is a good one to have occur while there are other pressing demands on the player characters' time.
12	*"I've got a deal so amazing, you can't afford to refuse! Listen…"* Someone has something to sell to you, and they managed to corner you. It's probably just a waste of time…?
13	*"We've got her. You're loaded. Give us the cash or she comes back in small pieces."* Someone the player characters care about is being held for ransom. This can include a significant other or a member of the player characters' unit.
14	*"We're not going to take it anymore!"* A riot just broke out right around the player characters. They might get caught in the middle of it, and the police may not realize who they are. They may be expected to help contain the riot.
15	*"You must help us!"* A disaster, natural or man-made, has laid waste to a local community. The player characters posses the Skills or equipment (or both) to assist. If they do not, the local powers are unlikely to let it slide with a wrist-slap.
16	*"I've got a lead on some top-shelf lostech. Can't get it myself. You can have a cut if you pull your weight."* A prospector needs the player characters to extract some lostech he has found, because he needs their Skills or their equipment to gain access to it, or because it is protected somehow (security measures, other interested parties and so on).
17	*"Didn't see that coming!"* A natural disaster hits the area where the player characters are. It shouldn't kill them, though they might get hurt. Either way, those around them will suffer significant damage and casualties.
18	*"This planet now belongs to us."* Massive planetary invasion by an overwhelming force. A conventional confrontation will not be successful, nor is a single session likely to resolve this problem.

Snipers rarely get a second shot on their target. Good ones—like Devin—never needed them.

GAMEMASTERING TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS

"Did anyone ever get the feeling God's just toying with us? Like this is some kind of game?"

"Don't get so philosophical, Henry. God doesn't roll the dice with the universe!"

The following guidelines may be of value to an experienced gamemaster, or to someone trying his hand at it for the first time.

GENERAL GAMEMASTERING GUIDE

BattleTech is a universe with an extremely elaborate backstory covered in dozens of novels and sourcebooks. This can be intimidating at times. Gamemasters may not know where to start, and may have concerns about failing to account for a specific source.

The goal of any role-playing game is to immerse yourself and your players in a universe that you all find intriguing. It is a vehicle for story-telling, but it also includes the unique device of having main characters who can make up their own minds about the people and situations that they encounter. People invest their time and energy in playing in your campaign because they want to imagine themselves in the *BattleTech* universe, and they want to have fun.

Everything *BattleTech* that exists in print is a potential tool, not a potential obstacle. The gamemaster must decide which elements to use and which to ignore. While a considerable effort is made to ensure that each publication meshes with others, a gamemaster may decide he wants to ignore certain publications and aspects of *BattleTech*. The gamemaster has total freedom in this regard to elect which tools to use, but it is important to discuss such matters with the players, so that they are aware of deliberate omissions. Take care when changing or ignoring elements that may be fundamental to the universe: it is worth the time to evaluate all the implications. It may be cool to come up with entirely new mechanics, such as a new method of faster-than-light travel that is radically different from *BattleTech*'s Kearny-Fuchida system, but such an innovation will have such wide-ranging implications for the *BattleTech* universe at large that you may fail to anticipate every possible permutation this will cause, which can lead to jarring moments down the line when a previously unexplored element proves unrealistic or improbable in light of this change. Likewise, changes to the existing chain of events may have implications and effects years down the line that can cause compatibility issues.

If that seems an acceptable risk, or an acceptable casualty in order for the gamemaster to tell his story, venture on.

Preparation

Regardless of the extent to which canon *BattleTech* is observed, a key element to any successful campaign, both prior to its inception and while it runs, is preparation. Prior to launching the campaign, you should figure out what story you want to tell. Determine the setting, either one that exists in canon or one of your own creation. Determine some of the events you want to see occur. All of these elements can be left relatively vague at this point. Once you've determined them, consult with your players. They may have specific ideas and wishes of their own. If they show no interest in your intended plot or setting, that should lead you to re-evaluate what story you wish to tell. It does you no good to invest the time in setting up a campaign only to discover two game sessions in that your subject matter does not interest some or all of your players. This may be a matter of you adapting to your players' objectives, or finding different players. In most cases, adaptation is preferred even if other potential players abound. Listening to your players may prompt you to come up with new ideas that could be even better. Get the players to talk about what parts of the *BattleTech* universe they wish to explore.

The bulk of the preparation occurs prior to the first session. You should have a pretty good idea about the details of your story: where it occurs and who the main drivers are. Much of the first session is normally used to set the stage, and to make the players acquainted with it. This is difficult to accomplish unless you have taken the time to think your story through, and to create the environs for your players.

Session Preparation

Once the campaign has started, you will need to constantly prepare prior to the session, and you should always give yourself enough time to do a good job. Poorly prepared sessions are frustrating for you and your players, and may lead to campaign consequences you would rather avoid. Key things to consider include the kind of opposition your players will face and the kinds of challenges that may occur. The universe around them isn't static, and the events of the last game session may provoke reactions. Some of those may not be immediately obvious to the players, but you should account for them regardless so you can keep an eye on any implications. It does you no good if you spring a surprise on the players that they might logically have been able to influence previously. They will feel cheated and your campaign will feel like railroading, even if the cause is an oversight on your part.

While you cannot predict everything your players do, you can have some expectations, and you should prepare for all of them as best you can. If there is a chance for 'Mech combat, have record sheets ready to go. If the players are likely to wish to travel, ponder routes and possible events along the way. Have a map available. If there is a chance the player characters may mess with a local power, have some appropriate NPCs ready, especially the more powerful people the player characters may encounter. You may end up not using any of this material, but it is rarely wasted effort. Perhaps that 'Mech battle occurs in the next session, in which case you saved yourself some time.

Be Organized

Take notes during the session. What happened? Who did the players encounter and what did they accomplish? What was said? Sometimes the phrasing of what the players say, or what you have NPCs say, can be important months or even years later. Taking detailed notes is rarely wasted effort. Including the date of the session and any in-game dates will help you organize the notes. Highlight important keywords and phrases to help you look through your notes later. Keep them in a separate folder for easy reference. Try not to make them too detailed: you're running a session, not taking minutes. Recording too much information also makes it difficult to find things later. If you find yourself saying, "Gosh, I wish I had written that down" during a session, don't forget to keep that kind of information moving forward. It may be useful to do some research afterward and see if you can jog your memory or piece together the information you need, just to have it available later.

Be Flexible

While preparation is good, you should never railroad your players into actions they do not wish to take. Nothing makes players lose interest in your story faster than the feeling that they have no control over what happens to their characters. Learn to roll with the punches, and adapt to the players coming up with solutions you did not anticipate. It is good policy to have them explain their plans in detail, as this will give you time to prepare—especially if the planning occurs in one session and the execution of the plan occurs the next.

Still, you have a story to tell. The players don't exist in isolation, and they may not always be able to escape the problems heading their way. You must be flexible in how you push your story along. If the players execute a plan that foils your intent, you may have to roll with it, but you still have some control over the outcome. Make adjustments as necessary, giving the players their victory but providing a new hook or unexpected consequences. Let them liberate the town and defeat the powerful NPC you had hoped to use later on, but exploit a flaw you detected in the players' plan to cause them new hardship, or to inspire a powerful new enemy who either finds fault with the player characters' methods (perhaps they ignored the safety of the town, or of a person dear to this new enemy). Alternatively, this new enemy may be connected in some way to the NPC the player characters just defeated. Almost any outcome presents new opportunities. The key is not to force the players to follow your path, but to look for those new opportunities in their chosen course of action. Rewarding their success does not prevent you from causing additional headaches.

If you decide it is in your best interest to force the players in a certain direction, the best course is to have an NPC criticize their plan of action or offer alternatives. If there is a genuine flaw, they may reconsider. If the NPC identifies a new priority, they may decide to change course or delay their original plan. If you present a specific event to the players and they seem uninterested in pursuing it, add a new incentive to get them to engage in that storyline. Perhaps the spoils for completing the task are richer than initially revealed. Perhaps a third party offers them an additional reward to get involved, or tries to blackmail or force them into committing. It will be useful to determine what kinds of things motivate your players. Perhaps they seek heroic actions or profitable enterprises. Whatever the motivations they react to in-game, those in the universe around them can take note. Their enemies in particular have a vested interest in understanding the player characters and attempting to use that knowledge to manipulate them to their own ends.

Also be flexible with the rules. They can be great tools to help you resolve certain situations, but sometimes it may save time and effort to "abstract" a situation by letting the players describe their actions and responding accordingly. Or you can let a simple die roll determine the outcome. Use your judgment, but also rely on player feedback. They must feel as if they control their own destinies; a single abstract die roll should never result in something truly cataclysmic, or the players will feel cheated.

Be Fair

When you have to make decisions, do so for the sake of the story and the good of the entire campaign. You should never act vengeful toward your players. Your overriding goal is to tell the story, not to punish your players for being a part of it. Use the feedback session to address behavior and activities you

thought were disruptive in an attempt to rectify them. You may learn the players' viewpoint during feedback, and they may not be as wrong as you previously thought.

Also, while it is important to have players suffer the consequences of their actions, don't let them blindly blunder into mistakes their characters would not have made. The players may not have all the knowledge their characters logically would have, especially when it comes to social or protocol-based issues. If a player is about to do something foolish that would not make sense from an in-character perspective, it may be a good idea to have them roll against an appropriate Skill or Attribute. This Skill or Attribute check may be so easy that only a fumble would result in failure. If they succeed, provide insight into the probable consequences of their actions so that they will at least step into the problems knowingly. If the check fails, give them bad guidance or none at all. Whatever happens then, the players will feel as if they had a choice. Just remember that sometimes, something should be so blatantly obvious in-character that no dice roll is needed; in such a case, the player should be told the pertinent perspective prior to executing the action.

Remember never to let a single player monopolize the available time. Give all players a chance to interact, either by having NPCs seek out players who do not seem particularly involved, or by talking to those players in or out of session. It is easy to feel intimidated by players with greater knowledge of the universe, or with more experience at role-playing, or who have greater command responsibilities in-character, and your intervention may be required to ensure that others also play their part. Challenge the in-character leaders to involve such wallflowers in-character, out-of-character or both.

Be Entertaining

A critical skill for a gamemaster is the art of bringing NPCs to life. Even minor and unimportant NPCs are still people. They have motivations and concerns and desires like the players do. Taking the time to really become the NPCs the players speak to adds depth and endless value to your campaign.

You will find it relatively easy to develop personalities and plans for your major villains. After all, being the bad guy is fun. His key henchmen will also be easy to envision. Certainly, developing these key NPCs is an important part of a good campaign. However, it is just as important to develop the allies and friends of your player characters. Their superior officers, both good and bad; their wide-eyed astechs looking to land a permanent job; their bartender friend who lets them put drinks on the tab and keeps an ear out for helpful information; all of the recurring NPCs in your campaign should have distinct personalities that you express when you take on that role.

You don't have to be a professional actor. You just have to give it your best effort, and your players will respond. They will develop lists of people they love and hate. The more you make your NPCs behave like people, the more your players will sink into their own characters. Eventually, even the cab ride from the spaceport to the hotel may be a colorful little episode that elicits a laugh or two. If you invoke a persona for your NPCs, it sets a tone and your players will follow suit.

To accomplish this, it may be helpful to start with a certain stereotype. Most first impressions are based on stereotypes, and for fleeting one-time contact, no more may be required. If regular contact occurs, it will help you to explore the motivations of that NPC and add depth. The gregarious arms dealer may be plotting revenge against a local noble in his spare time. The cantankerous infantry trooper may love animals while having none for humans. Such extra shades may not be apparent without the players looking for them, but it is usually worth the effort to think of something for the players to discover if they try.

Be Detailed

While sometimes a strain to produce, developing the fine details of your world often makes the difference between a mediocre campaign and a great role-playing experience. Your players will take note of the richness of your world when you take the time to provide details. For example, consider the following two descriptions of a local bar:

"There's a bar about two blocks away. When you enter, it looks like a typical dive. There are a few people drinking and a bartender waiting for your order."

Or:

"You step through the heavy doors and into the infamous hangout known as Marauder Bill's. The first thing you notice is smoke. A heavy pall of it hangs so heavily in the air that a blue haze makes it hard to see to the far side of the dimly lit interior. A little dim light is provided by a chaotic barrage of neon signs, all sporting the logo of some brand of beer or other alcohol. The regulars aren't tourists, either. They all have the look of folks who know the wrong side of the street. Some carry themselves with the edge of those who've seen violence up close; others have the lean and sharp manners of a MechWarrior. It's clearly not a place for outsiders. Behind the bar, a heavyset man eyes you warily as he cleans out a beer mug. Above him over the bar is a framed picture of a *Marauder* 'Mech sporting the war paint of the Tendrek Stables on Solaris 7. The young MechWarrior perched on the Mech's left foot is a dead ringer for the bartender if you subtract thirty years and fifty kilos…"

Details, even when they seem excessive, are the tool by which you can deliver your players into the imaginary world

In the battle for Harlech City, the Battle Magic mercenary team was ruthlessly overrun by Wayne Waco's renegade troops.

around them. As long as they provide information or convey a mood, they are not wasted words. Your players will thrive on the details you give them, and it will aid game play as well. More informed players are more confident in their decisions, and more likely to figure out the plot twists you put in their way.

Another advantage of consistent detail is that your clues will stand out less. If you always take a low-detail approach to describing their environs, the one time you decide to specifically mention an object, you might as well have put a spotlight on it.

DEVELOPING STORIES

Nothing seems more daunting to a beginning gamemaster than writing your own adventure. This book contains many tools to help with that effort, and there are different ways to develop your own ideas.

THE PLOT APPROACH

The plot approach focuses on a specific series of events to which you will expose your players that they may influence or be influenced by. This can affect the session or the whole campaign, where a massive series of events is the backdrop.

While any library is filled with thousands of plots, and movies and TV shows can add thousands more, in essence, most of these can be simplified to a few basic concepts from which to build your own plots or encounters. Keep in mind that any plot is about conflict.

Starting with the main plot device will give you an anchor around which to create the rest of your story. What conditions will enhance your plot and provide it a vehicle? If two rival factions exist where your story is set, they must each have the resources to be legitimate rivals. Specific geography may be required to shape events. Specific people may need to be on the scene to facilitate the plot.

A high-ranking officer, bitter that he lacks a noble birthright, decides to create an unstable situation on the world he is charged with protecting. When things get bad enough, martial law will be declared. During the fighting that will be needed to stamp out the anarchy, the local baron will be assassinated. Grief-stricken, the grateful people of the planet will offer the barony to the officer out of gratitude, or so he believes.

At this point, we know we need to develop the officer, likely a general of some kind. We also know that we need to develop two or three henchmen the general trusts to do his covert dirty work. We also need some shady mercenaries or outlaws willing to play the role of anarchists for some serious under-the-table C-bills. We can develop their leader and his top henchmen as well. We will also need to develop the baron and his court. He may be a rich buffoon, but perhaps he is a well-meaning noble who needs help to do the good works he longs to do.

THE GRAND PLOT

While the plot approach is great from a story development perspective, it may feel too large or too restricted for your needs. A modification of this approach is to have a larger underlying plot happening at the same time as the smaller adventures the players resolve. This grand plot usually starts without the players being an integral part of the action, but through their interaction and success or failure, they start to factor in. They may prove themselves increasingly more powerful allies to seek out, or increasingly more deadly enemies to defeat. They might just be a persistent nuisance or obstacle working up to the moment where they are annoying enough to warrant squashing.

Having a grand plot behind the scenes can be highly entertaining, especially if it is not apparent at the start (as it usually will not be to the players). They can look back at past events and suddenly connect the dots, see how their past exploits fit into the bigger picture. However, it also requires a lot of work, since it adds another layer of activity to keep track of. Powerful NPCs must adjust their agendas based on the actions of the player characters, and as the plot progresses, the players' influence on the NPCs' actions and reactions

grows as well. Pulling this off requires excellent organization and careful thought.

It is usually not wise to start a campaign with a grand plot in mind. You can't predict the decisions the players will make. Some decisions may make them ineligible for inclusion in your planned grand plot line. It may be better to let the players struggle through a few conflicts before deciding on the nature of the grand plot, using the player characters' actions as a guideline. Who was affected by what they did? How might someone have been helped or hindered? Using their actions as a guideline and finding the answers to those questions will simplify the creation of a grand plot. The players are already committed to it through their past actions, even if they (and you!) didn't know it at the time. There's no turning back.

THE SANDBOX APPROACH

In this approach, you focus on creating a detailed world. You can elect to use worlds that are well documented in the *BattleTech* canon, or select a world of which little is known. Ultimately, your level of detail should allow the players to immerse themselves in that world. Who are the key local powers? Who is at odds with whom? Who might take notice of the player characters and use them toward their own ends?

When all of that work is done, you turn the players loose in your world and see what happens. Because you know the world so well, you can react swiftly and plausibly to their actions. Over time, you'll add new details to the world—sometimes out of inspiration and other times from necessity. Your players should notice only that you always seem prepared with an answer to their questions, or an adventure to enjoy.

If you select an interesting location, the potential conflict will be readily available as a matter of course. A proper location is one where things are not peaceful or are unlikely to stay peaceful for long: a border world under regular attack, a distant planet favored as a target by pirates, a world on the brink of civil war. A peaceful garden world is a poor setting, beyond being a destination for R-and-R.

Opportunities for action should be numerous, but if the players won't seek out the conflict themselves, you may need to bring it to them.

Among the worlds of the Periphery-based Marian Hegemony is one called Balalaba, which the gamemaster decides to use in an adventure. Current sourcebooks offer little, if any, details on this world, but given its proximity to Astrokaszy—an independent planet dominated by Arabic-styled caliphs—the GM decides to give Ballaliba the same "flavor", suggesting that both worlds may have been settled around the same time by another sect of Muslim immigrants. Only, unlike Astrokaszy, Ballaliba would be absorbed by the Marian Hegemony centuries later. Moving forward, the GM decides that Ballaliba may once have been prosperous, but since the collapse of the Star League, it has been reduced to a world where rival caliphs battle for crumbs of power (while also seeking to curry favor with the Hegemony's caesar). Meanwhile, fortune hunters mount expeditions to this mostly-desert world, looking for rumored caches of Lostech—though most are never heard from again.

That description offers enough to work from, but not so much detail that you'd have to rewrite things. We begin with the idea of a desert world. Perhaps the surface was once covered with water, until various climate conditions caused the waters to recede. Now the world is criss-crossed with rivers that are miles wide and deep. There are no true oceans left, but locals (and your player characters) can use the network of waterways to travel the planet.

The only thing passing for a spaceport is in the largest city, also named Ballaliba. The Caliph there mounts the largest personal army on the planet, including a lance of mercenary BattleMechs. On Ballaliba, there are two true art forms: the art of the deal and the art of the steal. Goods are up for barter constantly, or for sale. If you can't haggle for what you need, you take it by force.

Next, we populate the world with some rival caliphs, each with their own camp and their own little army. We create a few geographical landmarks, such as the Sea of Ash (a vast desert of blackish sands), or the massive Mount Arabathia, where it is rumored the Star League once built pristine BattleMechs. We can draw our inspirations for the world's details from any source. Pictures always help. "A large and rocky mountain" is one thing, but "A giant peak resembling the broken top of Kilimanjaro, where old lava flows and cracked earth replace the snow pack" invokes a vivid image in your players' minds.

The final touches are wild cards: people or places that might prove interesting and add some excitement or opportunity to the mix. Perhaps there is a junkyard, heavily armed and defended, where a man named Saul sells off the husks of vehicles and a few 'Mechs. He only takes cash, and he doesn't care who buys his wares. There may be a Catholic mission and hospital on this largely Muslim world, working to provide medical care and comfort to people caught in the warlords' crossfire. Let your imagination run wild as you consider people who aren't combatants, but who do have a stake in what happens on Ballaliba.

COMBINED APPROACH

An even broader technique is to combine the plot-based approach with the sandbox approach. Drop the players in the middle of the *BattleTech* universe and let them decide where to go next. You can offer them direction by making them aware of particular missions from their patrons, or contracts if they are independent mercenaries. Each of those missions becomes its own plot. Or you could have the player characters travel as they see fit, allowing them to have encounters along the way or become aware of problems as they arrive at a new location. Such an approach asks a lot from the gamemaster, and also requires a degree of flexibility on the players' side, as your ability to adapt to their actions will be taxed from time to time. In such cases, try to segment the campaign by keeping individual encounters and missions separated by the game sessions. If the decision to seek out a new location or adventure is made at the end of a session, the gamemaster has time to prepare.

REMEMBER...

You are playing this game to have fun. If you and your players are having fun, then you're doing things the right way.

The rules are a tool, not a straitjacket.

You can find inspiration anywhere.

Listen to your players. Let them explain their actions so you can plan your reactions. Get their feedback, and provide your own.

Added detail is added value.

The key is practice. Play the game with your players. Learn from your mistakes, and be patient. Take a chance. Roll with your errors. If it all backfires horribly, you might still have an entertaining result, or you might decide to reset and pretend it never happened. Do so only when the players seem to really hate how things are turning out. It's all right if they start to hate their in-character enemies.

Don't be shy: if there are other experienced gamemasters around, ask them for advice. Get their opinion on how you're handling things. If they're part of your player group, consider talking to them outside the session for some feedback.

Get to it. You'll do fine, and you'll have fun doing it.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

The following pages offer some ideas for adventures that gamemasters can run using the rules in *A Time of War*. These ideas are presented here as "seeds": core concepts with minimal details. These basic adventures are merely jumping-off points, designed for expansion as necessary to suit the unique talents of the players' characters. Though each of these adventure seeds includes recommended player group size and general makeup, all of them can be adapted to any scale of play or type of player group desired.

An adventure seed may be used as the core of a single evening's adventure, limited in scope to events in a single city, continent or world—or it can be the basis of an epic-scale adventure that takes the player characters across the Inner Sphere in a campaign that spans light-years.

ADVENTURE SEED: THE CHASE

Recommended Group Size: 4 to 8 player-characters (with optional support)

Recommended Group Type: Military, Mercenary, Police or Special Forces

Recommended Skill Levels: Regular-Veteran (Key Skill levels of 3-5)

"A killer is on the loose!"

The player group must find an assassin who recently killed someone important. Their employer or commander has a connection to the victim that gives him a vested interest in discovering who is ultimately responsible for the hit, and finding the triggerman is the only way to do it.

The players will need to track the assassin, either around the planet or from world to world. As the assassin is a more experienced opponent than any of the player characters individually, tracking and capturing him can prove a dangerous task. As the players hunt their prey, however, they should be able to pick up clues that can lead to the killer or possibly even to his boss.

Complications

The following are just a few of the complications possible in *The Chase*:

- **Keep Them Busy:** The killer, realizing he is being tracked, begins leaving traps or ambushes for the player characters, including hired thugs and other local support. Most of these will be lesser NPCs the player characters should be able to defeat.
- **Favor From the Boss:** The assassin's employer—an elite-level opponent—may indirectly try to obstruct the player characters by sabotaging transports, disrupting their communications, leading local authorities or criminals to attack them, or some such.
- **Turncoat:** One of the NPCs aiding the player characters could be in on the whole thing, and could turn against them at a critical moment.
- **Showdown:** At some point, the assassin—or his employer—get tired of running and decide to face the player characters. This will not be an easy fight, as the opponent will likely only do this from a position of strength.

Tips: Some planning of various destinations and locales will be required to keep this story going, and to give the gamemaster options for reacting to player efforts. Avoid railroading the players with arbitrarily limited options, and avoid the need for improbable events to keep the chase going. If the players genuinely catch their mark early, roll with it; after all, catching the employer will be the next step (and may be easier said than done). If they lose the trail, they may have trouble justifying this to their employer, while the assassin and his boss may remain at large, watching those who dared to pursue them…

ADVENTURE SEED: CIVIL WAR

Recommended Group Size: 6 to 10 player characters (with optional support)

Recommended Group Type: Military or Mercenary

Recommended Skill Levels: Green-Elite (Key Skill levels of 1-8)

"Brother against brother!"

The player group finds itself in a local conflict between factions belonging to the same government or organization. This could be a civil war that is already under way, or one about to reach its flashpoint. The scale of the conflict can encompass factions on a single planet (or even within a single organization, like a minor household or company), or may rage across multiple planets.

The conflict will present military and covert ops objectives similar to any other war, mostly centered on the disruption of enemy communications, the capture of objectives or the denial of resources to the enemy. It will also include opportunities for more irregular missions that the player characters will be given, such as efforts to "win the hearts and minds" of those people most affected by the war, gathering allies who remain on the fence, or even obtaining outside aid.

Complications

The following are just a few of the complications possible in *Civil War*:

- **Betrayal:** With so many competing factors and allegiances going into a civil war, it is possible for friendly forces to switch side at almost any critical moment. These turncoats could attempt to destroy the party outright, or simply thwart their current operation. Or they may simply disappear in the midst of the fight.
- **You Scratch My Back…:** While attempting to win an ally, the players may need to perform a task for an opportunistic potential ally who requires "an act of good faith" first. This task could be fairly honest—like escorting a shipment or envoy to a hostile area, or rescuing hostages taken by the opposing faction—or brutal and unethical, like suppressing local rioters in the potential ally's name or framing another faction for some other heinous act.
- **But That's My Brother!:** One of the key officers or characters in the opposing side could be a relative of a player character—or (for greater conflict and complexity) could even be one of the player characters who has followed his conscience into the enemy's camp. This

individual must be defeated somehow—a difficult task if the characters have any sense of personal loyalties.

- **You Backed the Wrong Horse:** Due to criminal activities, false pretenses or the like, the player characters may find that they are fighting for the "wrong side." This presents a moral dilemma as well as a tactical one: Can they switch sides or get out without getting killed by one or both factions?

Tips: Preparations for a civil war adventure should include determining the influence of outside forces, be they the overlords of the factions that are actually fighting, or neighboring powers that may decide to mingle or stay neutral. Numerous opportunities exist for subterfuge and creative problem-solving in a civil war adventure, and they can all benefit from exploration before the campaign comes to a close. Bear in mind, however, that civil wars are ugly and tend to become even more personal than other armed conflicts. This means it may be harder to end the fighting, even if an opposing leader surrenders or is destroyed.

POLITICAL AND MILITARY POWER

"What do you mean, we've got no place to train? We'll just use my land, I'm not Count Van DeMere for nothing!"

"You've been called before the Crimson Council to account for the deaths of three hundred of your subjects, who reportedly died from starvation after their cropland was destroyed by your mercenary company."

"The price of greatness is responsibility."
Winston Churchill

As with most role-playing games, most of a player character's power comes from the barrel of a gun or point of a sword (in *BattleTech*'s case, sometimes both found on the character's BattleMech). But not all power comes by these martial means, and even that is tempered or expanded by how much power the character wields in the political or military arena.

ROLEPLAYING POWER

Whether during character creation or earned over the course of game play, players may find their characters have amassed considerable influence extending beyond their immediate reach. This power may come from military or civil rank, social titles, land holdings, corporate holdings, connections, even reputation, and in any number of combinations of the above. Such power, in its many forms, can give the player character a vast network of resources as well as a dizzying array of responsibilities.

The specific traits for Rank, Title, Property, Connections and Reputation provide a framework for how they work and what benefits or side effects the character will experience. They do not, however, exist in a vacuum. Instead, they serve as the framework on which the gamemaster builds the structure of his game. Unlike more straightforward Traits, such as Ambidextrous, these Traits can shape and define the entire game, often dramatically. They must be properly balanced, and must also be considered in the very construction of the campaign. If a player is the noble scion of a military industry magnate, with contacts and resources to call on a company of BattleMechs, then the gamemaster probably should scrap his plans for a gritty Dispossessed infantry-type campaign for survival…at least until he manages to separate the scion from his resources, leaving him an empty title that won't buy him a cup of coffee when he's stranded on Port Krin.

Which brings us to our next important point: these Traits define a character and form who he is. If the first thing the gamemaster does is strand the player characters on a desert planet, framed for a crime they didn't commit, then why let a character have those Traits in the first place? If a player chose a path that gave his character a title and a landhold, he probably gave up other opportunities to take other Traits or Skills so he could play that type of character. While often an easy out for dealing with powerful player characters, playing the desert-planet card can quickly turn your players off a campaign.

Coaching is equally important for the gamemaster. If you are there with your player throughout the creation process, you can work with him to develop a character that fits the campaign you envision. If you have a certain idea for a campaign, work with your player and steer him away from choices that will leave him unhappy in the future. Or be flexible and adapt your campaign to the characters created. Work with your players during character creation, explaining the pros and cons, asking them what concept they envision for their character and how these Traits will affect that concept.

For centuries, thousands of worlds bent to the will of ruling nobility.

Use the Traits. They are a defining part of the character and provide a wealth of plot hooks, foils and possibilities. Just as easily, however, they can become a forgotten point sink that the player regrets spending on, or he may quietly revel in how a given Trait allowed him to afford some other important character ability. If a character has a reputation for getting his regiment killed in battle single-handedly, then make sure this colors the reactions of any military types he runs into. If he's the Duke of Greenlaw, he's likely to have no trouble getting reservations to eat at Tharkad's newest Welsh-Indian bistro.

Important Note: Player characters are unique in the universe. They are exceptional, special or otherwise stand out. These rules and guidelines, including the specific benefits of all the related Traits, reflect this, showing the exceptional rather than the usual benefits and side effects of such power. These

rules do not reflect the universe as a whole and how the typical baron, colonel or holovid star is affected by power or position. That information falls more under the scope of *Interstellar Operations* or future general universe-defining sourcebooks.

Benefits of Rank and Title

"Hey, I'm a count now; what does that get me?"

Well, that and 10 C-bills will get him a cup of coffee. What's that? Yes, you can get a triple mocha at the local Jumping Java for 3 C-bills, but he's a count now; counts don't go to the local coffee shop. On its own, a title is very much an intangible asset. The same is true with a former military rank; without connections, property, influence or reputation, these become more base fundamentals than precisely defined character Traits. While Traits like Land, Connections and even Reputation have rules governing how they affect a character, Rank and Title remain extremely vague in exactly what, if anything, they offer.

So why take them? For one, many players revel in being something they are not, in attaining a rank or position they would never dream of having in the real world. Beyond that, though, what these Traits get you is up to the gamemaster. The influence, benefits and even importance of rank and titles are fluid throughout the BattleTech universe. Being the Duke of Donegal does not have nearly the influence it does on Tharkad if the duke suddenly finds himself in the back alleys of Tortuga Prime. Likewise, a retired battalion commander in the Outworlds Alliance will see little benefit on his homeworld, thanks to the general attitude of Outworlds citizens toward their ground-based military. By contrast, a former infantry sergeant in the Federated Suns is likely to see considerable benefits, thanks to the reverence paid to the military in the Davion nation. This is why the Rank and Title traits have so few hard-and-fast rules written into them. Instead, they form a foundation for the gamemaster and player to build on.

> *Paul's character is a tenth-generation baron from the Lyran Periphery. He and his party are currently on a mission in the Chaos March, trying to obtain information that will allow their employer to get a jump on their competitors. The gamemaster decides that Paul's upbringing in a vassal/lord system is able to better influence the town mayor they are currently interviewing. The gamemaster gives Paul a +1 modifier in that effort.*
>
> *Chuck rose to the rank of major in the AFFS before retiring. He's currently on Acamar trying to build a guerilla armor unit for a pro-Davion government. The gamemaster decides that Chuck's experience in the AFFS helps him, as many of the freedom fighters he's working with served in Davion militias or front line units. He gives Chuck a +2 modifier on all his Leadership rolls for the duration of the mission.*

Of course, a player character's rank or title can sometimes go against him, depending on the events in play. An ex-Lyran sergeant major on the Draconis Combine capital of Luthien might find attitudes changing greatly toward him if his past were known, especially in 3032.

In Clan culture, Rank and Title together very much define any Clansman. That said, it is very much a matter of context exactly how Rank and Title benefit a character. Holding a Kerensky Bloodname but the rank of Point Commander in an aerospace Point would draw ridicule rather than pride. Likewise, a Star Colonel with the Bloodname of Malthus right after the Jade Falcon Guard's defeat on Twycross would find it difficult even to maintain his rank, thanks to the recent disgrace associated with his Bloodname. A Clansman outside of Clan culture will find his ranks and titles even more subjectively viewed. A former Wolf Clan Star Captain during Ulric Kerensky's tenure might be treated with considerable respect in many circles in the Inner Sphere, while the Khan of the Smoke Jaguars might well find himself dead in an alley if he ever were to be caught alone.

Ultimately it is up to you, as the gamemaster, to decide the exact benefits of Rank and Title, using your campaign outline and related Traits such as Land, Reputation and Connections. Don't be stingy but you need not give that retired major his own personal BattleMech company, either.

Managing Power

"I don't know how many AgroMechs we have, and what do you mean I need to meet with the governor about labor practices—can't I just go shoot something?"

In practice, a duke or general spends a good majority of his time sitting: in briefings, in conferences, reading reports and filling out paperwork. The sheer volume of work required to maintain a planet, a factory or a regiment can be daunting, and even with the most able staff, a character with this much responsibility has only so much free time. In the real world, a player likewise has to do a lot of record-keeping in order to keep track of his character.

Gamemasters can use the following three tactics to avoid getting bogged down in mundane details and make game play fun and exciting, even as player characters climb the sociopolitical ladder of the *BattleTech* universe.

Cap It: Many times the best solution is to impose artificial caps on advancement, leaving the higher positions of power to NPCs. By default, player characters are barred from only the highest ranks and titles, but nothing prevents the gamemaster from lowering this cap further in the interest of game play. Just as the Jihad Era Manei Domini are recommended for NPC play only, the gamemaster may make these higher ranks and titles NPC-only positions. If a player advances his character into these strata of power, that player character must retire to the NPC ranks. To use this approach, early communication is key. The gamemaster must make sure the players are aware of this "role-play ceiling" and why it exists.

Diversify: When a duke wants a problem taken care of, he rarely does it himself (unless he's a Kell). The same goes for a general; even though he may have been one of the best Special Forces commandos in his youth, he now has greater responsibilities and expectations, and so he can't be running off on special missions all the time. If the enemy invades in force, he'll be in his cockpit holding the line, but otherwise the most powerful weapon wielded by most generals and dukes is their authority. Their orders send a team deep behind enemy lines or into the enemy's research lab to get the job done. In a diversified campaign, the players control both the duke and the mission specialist. While requiring more set-up work and management by the gamemaster, using multiple player characters in this way can help you realistically manage the campaign. Players control two or more characters, representing the "movers and shakers" and the doers. When the player-character general orders an intel mission, the player's other character—the special ops trooper—actually carries out the mission. This campaign style allows the players to explore detailed aspects of political and social intrigue while still having a chance to get visceral and shoot something.

Leverage: *A Time of War* has the advantage of being more than just a role-playing game. As a gamemaster in the *BattleTech* universe, you have a wide selection of resources to draw on. As the player characters move up the chain of influence and power, you can choose to tap into the strategic and interstellar-level rules available in the other *Total Warfare* core rules and supporting *BattleTech* material. *Strategic Operations* introduces campaign rules that allow you to easily push beyond the small unit level. *Interstellar Operations* includes new and comprehensive rules for conducting military and political campaigns, ranging from a handful of worlds to universe-encompassing games. Other products will delve even deeper, letting players interact and control the fates of nation-states and their leaders.

In a leveraged campaign, the details can get pulled up a level, abstracted to allow the players to continue playing "in the trenches" while also controlling entire invasions, R&D and interstellar alliances. *Interstellar Operations* contains a system that allows a game to quickly move between the various *BattleTech* systems, with rules covering such situations as how a one-man intelligence operation can affect the overall intelligence report for a faction, or how lack of supply lines to a planet might affect the morale and health of the player characters' special recon lance.

Ultimately, the gamemaster and players together create the fabric of the game. A cardinal rule of *BattleTech* is, *"If it works for your game, make it whatever you want it to be."*

TITLES AND RANKS EXPLAINED

This section delves into *BattleTech*'s common noble titles, Clan social ranks and military ranks. It describes in detail the overall power of these various ranks, as well as how they may affect a player character who either holds that rank or interacts with someone holding it. This information is meant as a game aid, not an in-universe description of power.

Suggested Traits

Most of the ranks and titles below include a list of suggested Traits that someone of this rank or title might also have. Gamemasters can use this material as a guideline for creating NPCs and designing player characters.

Common Titles

The following paragraphs describe the common titles and ranks of the Inner Sphere. These descriptions are archetypes and represent a broad idea of how these ranks and titles function for player characters who hold them or who interact with such title-holders. For a better understanding of how each one fits into the larger game universe, consult the *Nobility* section of *Interstellar Operations*.

Keep in mind that the exact title can be very fluid and does not necessarily represent the power of the holder. The head of the Regulan state in the Free Worlds League, for example, uses the title of prince but is in fact equal in power to a grand duke. Treat these titles more as guidelines, based on the most common or notable usage associated with a given social/political power; precise names may vary greatly from region to region.

KNIGHT BACHELOR

"A dime a dozen," or so the saying goes. In the *BattleTech* universe, the rank of knight is often seen as admission into the realms of military or political power. The lowest titled rank obtainable, it is often a reward given with military honors or for some other act that greatly benefits the state (being obnoxiously rich and paying taxes apparently qualifies in many nations). The relative abundance of knights bachelor in the Inner Sphere tempers the influence and prestige such a player character can wield, though in many cases the lack of this title is a hindrance. In the Draconis Combine for example, earning the right to wear the paired swords of a samurai is a fundamental pre-requisite to rising in military rank beyond company commander.

The knight bachelor rank defines a player character more than it offers any significant benefits. A character's allegiance, beliefs or achievements can be determined by the circumstances or origin of his knighthood. An important factor in knighthood, which carries on through most of the lower social ranks, is an implied or expected loyalty. The knight owes a certain level of loyalty to whoever knighted him, at least sufficient to keep him from directly opposing his liege. While history shows that treachery is not unheard-of, and in fact can be quite common in some eras, this remains the exception. Players and gamemasters should work closely if treachery to a liege lord is the intent, and not make such radical changes in allegiance "just a part of the game."

The following are potential Traits for NPCs or player characters of this rank serving in active duty: Extra Income (+1), (Rank (O1+).

KNIGHT BANNERET

The most notable difference between a knight bachelor and a knight banneret is the network. A famous author knighted for his contribution to literature is just one knight among many. His knighthood offers him no special ties with anyone save the person or power responsible for it. When a MechWarrior is inducted into the Brotherhood of Randis, by contrast (or into some similar order), he becomes a part of something larger. With this "networking" advantage, of course, come expectations and preconceptions. A Knight of the Order of Davion is expected to be a paragon of Federated Suns military prowess and a matchless defender of the realm; that

FAMOUS KNIGHTLY ORDERS OF THE INNER SPHERE

Realm	Order
Free Worlds League	Knights of the Inner Sphere
Free Worlds League	Order of the Saber
Federated Suns	Order of Davion
Draconis Combine	Order of the Dragon
Lyran Alliance (Commonwealth)	Order of the Tamar Tigers
Capellan Confederation (civilian order)	Order of the Legion of Liao
Independent/Periphery	Brotherhood of Randis
Mercenary, Knights of St. Cameron	Order of St. Cameron

House Davion's sword-and-sunburst standard emphasizes the family's rule through its martial strength.

same knight banneret may find retiring to a Capellan world and setting up a school a bit difficult.

Knightly orders are one way to shape a campaign or provide a never-ending stream of plot hooks. For example, a campaign can be built entirely around the player characters completing a quest to prove themselves worthy of joining the Knights of the Inner Sphere. Or one player might be part of a Lyran knightly order, and his affiliation is discovered while his mercenary unit holds a garrison post in the Free Worlds League.

The following are potential Traits for NPCs or player characters of this rank serving in active duty: Enemy (–2), In for Life, Extra Income (+2), Rank (O2+).

BARONET

This title is most often associated with a knight banneret, turning that single-generation title into a hereditary one. Typically, such titles are bestowed in recognition of important military service and are associated with a nation's highest honors, such as the Federated Suns Medal Excalibur or the Free Worlds Order of the Saber. The original holder of the title is a hero of the realm and accorded considerable respect and honor within it. If inherited, this title carries more expectation than influence or power. The ancestor who first earned the title is most likely a hero of the realm, and the heir will be measured against him.

If a player character is granted the title (as opposed to inheriting it), it should be paired with the Reputation Trait, to reflect the fame of the actions that led to the title award. Similarly, if the gamemaster grants this title as a reward in game play, he should require the player to spend XP on Reputation or grant the Reputation Trait. Obviously, such actions need to be carefully balanced.

The following are potential Traits for NPCs or player characters of this rank serving in active duty: Reputation (1), Enemy (–2), Extra Income (+2), Rank (O2+).

BARON

The lowest common hereditary rank, baronies are also one of the most commonly granted titles for service to the state. Given its relative abundance, the power of a baron usually comes not from the title itself, but from any holdings that come with it, and most often from whatever influence or rank the person has collected on his own. For example, Baron Seth Tobiason, CEO of Dobless Information, gains his power from his control of the media giant; the baronial title was a grant to one of his ancestors for service to the state in running Dobless.

Player characters who start the game with a baronial title have most likely inherited it from a parent. This can provide a foundation for the campaign, with the player character suddenly thrust into a position of responsibility or power. Perhaps he inherited his father's feud along with the title, for example. A grant of a barony in game play should be seen as a major achievement, given only for extremely valuable service to the granting government. Saving the First Prince's niece from pirates will likely earn you a mere knighthood. Engineering an economic boom that pulls three Outback planets out of poverty, or agreeing to station your regiment-sized mercenary force permanently on a border world, are the types of actions that can earn a player a barony. As with knighthood, the title is primarily a status marker or entry card to the political arena. True power still comes from the player character's contacts, influence and personality.

The following are potential Traits for NPCs or player characters of this rank serving in active duty: Gregarious, Property (+4), Enemy (–3), Extra Income (+4), Rank (O2+), Reputation (1).

VISCOUNT

A step up on the social scale, a viscount represents the first of the titles that confer power and influence in and of themselves. Historically just below count/countess, a viscount operates in much the same way, other than a slightly lesser aura of influence and power.

The following are potential Traits for NPCs or player characters of this rank serving in active duty: Gregarious, Property (+5), Dark Secret (–1), Enemy (–4), Extra Income (+5), Reputation (1).

COUNT/COUNTESS

Counts are the second most common of the more influential titles. Often controlling territories ranging from cities to minor worlds or large corporations, counts can hold considerable influence within their nations. Their power is still mainly derived from their political standing, and it is not uncommon for a count's political/business clout to outweigh the power formally associated with the title. Count Johnston, of the Federated Suns' Johnston Industries, is a prime example. A count without property or an equivalent power base may be respected for his title but otherwise has little more power than a baron.

Player characters with this title face certain expectations of how they should behave and what their duties should be. A party-throwing, planet-hopping playboy count will quickly find his reputation and influence eroded, as will one who insists on playing mercenary with his combined-arms battalion. Part of the fabric of Inner Sphere society, counts are the first rank where people see the title first and the holder second. NPC counts typically have the resources and influence to greatly affect a player character's life, whether as a connection, employer or enemy. Fortunately, nobles this powerful are usually so focused on the day-to-day business of running their empires that they tend to forget about the "little people" they could otherwise crush or manipulate. Dealing with a

person at this level of power or greater is usually best done with respect, from the shadows or not at all.

The following are potential Traits for NPCs or player characters of this rank serving in active duty: Gregarious, Property (+7), Dark Secret, Enemy (5), Extra Income (+7), Reputation (2).

MARQUIS/MARQUESSA

This title tends to work two ways: either it is relatively empty, relying on the political and business clout of the holder, or it is second only to a duke in power and influence. Depending on the exact nature of the title, the marquis follows the guidelines for either a count or a duke. The typical reach of a marquis' power ranges from a continent to a border world, or sometimes influence over several border/Periphery worlds.

The following are potential Traits for NPCs or player characters of this rank serving in active duty: Gregarious, Property (+8), Dark Secret (–2), Enemy (–6), Extra Income (+8), Reputation (2)

DUKE/DUCHESS

A duke holds sway over a duchy, an often sizable territory that can range from a single important world to a collection of border worlds. In many nations, dukes are also captains of mega-industry, commanding star-spanning corporations with influence at the highest levels of political and/or economic power, and sometimes in more than one nation. Landed dukes hold near-absolute authority over the territories they command, including lesser nobles, government functions and even local military forces. At this level, a duke's political and titled power become almost indistinguishable. Where a new count may be heir to a relatively empty title and no political position, dukes typically are well established, with a long history in which their title and clout are intertwined.

The highest rank a player character can achieve in normal game play, the title of duke is never just handed out by the ruler of the realm. The player character is most likely an heir, knowing or unknowing, to the duchy and assumes the title on the passing of the previous duke. A player character who has amassed star-spanning power (CEO of a top ten company) may receive a ducal title as thanks for their service to the state, but the title will be mostly window-dressing for the clout the character already possesses. Like counts, but on a much larger scale, NPC dukes can serve as a never-ending source of employment and plots. They can make a player character's life blink out in an instant or raise him from poverty to prosperity in a single act. The famous Red Duke, Hasid Ricol, is an excellent example of a duke's power and influence. Both enemy and ally to the famous Gray Death Legion, Ricol was a mastermind sitting in his web, pulling the strings of his subordinates and enemies.

The following are potential Traits for NPCs or player characters of this rank serving in active duty: Gregarious, Property (+10), Dark Secret (–3), Enemy (–7), Extra Income (+9), Reputation (3).

GRAND DUKE/GRAND DUCHESS

This social rank is peopled by men and women who would be considered heads of state if they oversaw an independent nation. Entrusted with considerable power and (usually) freedom, grand dukes (or warlords, March dukes, archdukes and so on) rule over a large portion of a major Inner Sphere state. They are answerable directly to their nation's sovereign, and often hold more power within their sphere of control than the sovereign does. Such a character's relationship with the head of state forms an integral part of any actions a grand duke may take. Whether as ally or opponent to the head of state, the grand duke's power must always be considered, and is far greater than any player character can obtain.

A grand duke is the highest rank with which most player characters will regularly interact, and even that is likely to occur through many layers of people. At this rank, state intrigues and large-scale military action are the major drivers. Player characters interacting with a grand duke are more likely to be part of some larger action than working directly for him. For example, Grand Duke Morgan Kell may hire them as mercenaries to stage a recon mission on Tharkad. Similarly, on the political stage, player characters might be hired to dig up dirt on Grand Duke Halas of Oriente's chief political rival, the Prince of Regulus. The risks in working for a grand duke are immeasurable, as are the rewards for success.

The following are potential Traits for NPCs or player characters of this rank serving in active duty: Gregarious, Property (+11), Dark Secret (–4), Enemy (–8), Extra Income (+10), Reputation (4).

HEIR/PRIME MINISTER

Holding considerable social and political power, an heir is next in line to be head of state for his nation. Similarly, a prime minister is the head of state's de facto right hand, and in rare instances is the highest-ranking power in a nation (though their power is tempered by some form of democratic body). Pivotal to this rank is the relationship with the head of state. Extremes often are the norm—a prime minister is often the sovereign's most trusted lieutenant, or an heir may lead a loyal (or not so loyal) opposition intent on displacing his parent. While direct power is often more limited than that of many dukes, this rank is punctuated by the influence its holder can wield. This person may not command armies, but his word can affect those that do.

Encounters with prime ministers predominantly mirror those with heads of state, though the potential for intrigue rises in a state with a sovereign and a prime minister. The player characters may find themselves embroiled in plot and counterplot as a nation struggles through civil war. Player characters serve in these games at the level of pawn or rook, with even dukes being used as chess pieces in such maneuvers. Heirs present interesting campaign potential based on the classic incognito plot device. Is Captain Jones really just a kid from Atreus, or is he the Captain-General's son trying to get away from the pressures of royal life by joining a mercenary unit? As with heads of state, encounters with heirs and prime ministers should leave a lasting impression.

The following are potential Traits for NPCs or player characters of this rank serving in active duty: Gregarious, Property (*), Dark Secret (–5), Enemy (–9), Extra Income (+10), Reputation (5).

SOVEREIGN/HEAD OF STATE

Including the Clans, those who wield sufficient power to be considered a head of state have never numbered more than thirty at any one time. Whether Khan, Chancellor or President, heads of state hold the reins of economic and military

power unmatched by any lesser figure. While a March duke of the Federated Suns may command more military strength and money than the Marian Hegemony's Caesar, he must still answer to a higher authority. Though few heads of state wield total power, they nonetheless have influence far beyond the scope of anything the player characters can achieve.

An encounter with a head of state should be a major event in a campaign, easily leading to fundamental changes in the player characters' circumstances. From being knighted by the First Prince to having a Blood Mark from the Coordinator, or even just getting the Archon's autograph as she moves through a crowd to the Triad, encounters with a head of state almost always deeply affect the player characters in one way or another. Even player characters of high social/political rank should find such encounters important. The circle of individuals around a sovereign in the *BattleTech* universe is small and close, keeping even high-ranking player characters at arm's length. Even a duke or general planning a counterattack is still enormously affected by the presence of his head of state.

The following are potential Traits for NPCs or player characters of this rank serving in active duty: Gregarious, Property (*), In For Life, Dark Secret (–5), Enemy (–10), Extra Income (+10), Reputation (5).

Military Ranks

With the militaries of humankind playing such a pivotal role in history's past thousand years, it comes as no surprise that military rank has been equated to social/political titles and woven into the careful social dance of so many cultures. Even for a person with no social or political title, holding military rank grants him a certain measure of respect and recognition in titled circles. A rough guideline of equivalent military rank to title is shown in the Title/Rank Equivalency Table (see p. 355). Keep in mind, however, that different cultures and governments may grant the same rank varying levels of respect.

Note: Equivalency only affects NPC reaction rolls and general role-playing. It does not grant any other abilities or benefits of the Title Trait.

TITLE/RANK EQUIVALENCY TABLE

Generic Title	Generic Military Rank	Clan Ranks
Sovereign*	—	Khan*
Heir/Prime Minister*	—	saKhan*
Grand Duke*	General of the Army	—
Duke/Duchess	General	Galaxy Commander
Marquis/Marquessa	Major/Lt. General	—
Count/Earl/Countess	Brigadier General	Star Colonel
Viscount	Colonel	—
Baron/Baroness	Major	Star Captain
Baronet	Captain	—
Knight Banneret	Lieutenant	Star Commander
Knight Bachelor	Lieutenant	Star Commander

*These ranks can generally not be obtained by Players.

CLAN SOCIAL RANK

Clan social rank is based on blood heritage, ranking a Clansman's potential, Bloodname and the legacy that makes up their bloodlines. These are strictly inter-Clan social rankings, and do not translate to Inner Sphere nobility and political titles. Political power in the Clans is more closely tied to a Clan member's military rank. For a comparison of Inner Sphere titles to Clan military rank, consult the Title/Rank Equivalency Table above.

TRUEBORN

More so than the Inner Sphere title of knight, the trueborn rank is a fundamental requirement for a warrior. Few freeborn warriors ever serve in front-line combat, and those that have achieved the rank of Star Colonel or higher are so rare as to make them stuff of The Remembrance. Being trueborn is essentially the entrance fee to the Clan warrior caste. You don't have to have it, but without it you will always be seen as second best or an anomaly.

TRUEBORN (EXCLUSIVE BLOODNAME)

The fundamental difference between a plain-vanilla trueborn and one from an exclusive legacy is expectation. A trueborn of the Kerensky bloodline is doubly expected to perform well. If a Kerensky fails his Trial of Position, he may open his entire sibko's existence to question. When Star Colonel Malthus allowed the Falcon Guards to be killed by one Inner Sphere barbarian, that debacle shamed the entire Malthus bloodline, which then faced genetic impotence. For the exclusive trueborn who succeeds, the path to Khanship is all the easier, but for the one who fails, the distance to fall is great. There is no worse shame than for a Clan warrior's genes not to be used in breeding the next generation of warriors.

Some famous exclusive Bloodnames are: Kerensky (Wolf), Ward (Wolf), Church (Blood Spirits), Sainze (Fire Mandrill), Cobb (Hell's Horses), Cage (Ice Hellions), Hazen (Jade Falcon), Pryde (Jade Falcon), N'Buta (Star Adder), Steiner (Cloud Cobra), Koga (Coyote), Clarke (Diamond Shark), Jorgensson (Ghost Bear), Kabrinski (Ghost Bear), Kirov (Goliath Scorpion), McKenna (Snow Raven), Mercer (Steel Viper) and Showers (Smoke Jaguar).

BLOODNAMED (LESSER, GENERAL BLOODHOUSE)

Bloodnames are divided into two main categories: general Bloodnames and phenotype Bloodnames. The latter are Bloodnames exclusive to a given class of warrior, whether MechWarrior, Elemental or aerospace pilot. In most cases, it is considered more prestigious to be born to a phenotype Bloodname, representing the greater focus of that Bloodname on a given set of genetics for that warrior type. As always, there are exceptions; the Kerensky and McKenna general bloodlines are prime examples.

Trueborns from a lesser, general bloodline carry a genetic legacy found in many warrior types and across several Clans. As a lesser bloodline, the name has little to make it stand out from the 800 names of the original Clansmen. Perhaps the name has lost status over time, or the line never bred any outstanding warriors. Despite bearing a Bloodname, warriors of these bloodlines must rely almost completely on their own merits and skill to advance in Clan society. Such a character may well be the only Bloodnamed Clees in Clan Wolf, with the remaining 24 Clees warriors spread out among three other Clans. The low expectations of a general Bloodname further limits opportunities for glory and advancement. If the Galaxy Commander must choose between a Clees and a Kerensky to lead a special mission, the Kerensky warrior will most likely be chosen by sheer merit of breeding.

BLOODNAMED (LESSER, PHENOTYPE BLOODHOUSE)

A step above the lesser general Bloodname, warriors with phenotype Bloodnames can hold their heads high, knowing their genetic legacy is true to the warrior breeding they possess. An Elemental of the DeVega Bloodname may share his name with ten other Clans, but can be sure that no aerospace-pilot genetics muddy his pure Elemental bloodline.

The genetic focus of this rank leads to an expectation that the warrior will have mastery of his discipline, often to the exclusion of all else. An Elemental phenotype Bloodnamed warrior would think it beneath him to learn the basics of aerospace piloting, even if he were stationed on a WarShip as a marine. Because these characters lack the expectation of a more prestigious Bloodname, they are not expected to have the diversity of experience a potential Khan would need. Their singular focus can lead to highly skilled warriors in their given class, but also leaves them with blind spots that ensure they cannot rise to high leadership, thus perpetuating the cycle of the lesser Bloodhouses.

BLOODNAMED (GREATER, GENERAL BLOODHOUSE)

Though they share a Bloodname with more than one warrior phenotype and across many Clans, trueborns with

a greater general Bloodname can point to shining stars in their blood heritage. In many ways, warriors with these Bloodnames are the backbone of the Clans. Constantly striving to exceed their blood legacy, they create new ristars who carry on the strength of the Bloodname.

Such warriors have extreme confidence in their own ability and in their potential to achieve more, tempered only by the diversity of the Bloodname among warrior phenotypes. For example, a MechWarrior of the Stanislov Bloodname may draw on the legacy of an Elemental Stanislov who rocketed his Bloodname to prominence three generations back, thereby limiting the prestige the MechWarrior can draw from it.

BLOODNAMED (GREATER, PHENOTYPE BLOODHOUSE)

"We are of the Bloodname Howell; Falcon or Star Adder, we are MechWarriors, pure and true." Such is the attitude of a greater phenotype Bloodname. Though the name is not held by any Clan exclusively, it is likely that the respect and genetics attached to that name resulted in Clans fighting Trials for it to bring their Clans these warriors' abilities. The genetic breeding of a phenotype gives each warrior the focus of it, but the fame of his Bloodname places greater expectations and pressure on him. A Howell sibko, for example, will likely be pushed harder and given greater opportunities to excel at 'Mech combat over a more general Bloodline such as Stanislov.

Leadership is expected of these warriors. While it is still rare for one to become a Khan, the lower ranks of every Clan are filled with warriors from these Bloodnames. Competition is fierce, but the rewards are great, leading to a more engaging and decisive approach to combat (on and off the battlefield).

BLOODNAMED (LESSER, GENERAL EXCLUSIVE BLOODHOUSE)

An exclusive Bloodname confers immense prestige. Knowing that your Clan alone holds the right to the name, that no warrior will bear it who was not born from your Clan's sibko, gives a warrior a vast sense of pride in his heritage. This is what warriors wish for from their genetic legacy. Even among exclusive Bloodnames, however, not all are created equal.

In many ways, warriors with these Bloodnames are social peers to those from a prestigious non-exclusive phenotype Bloodname. MechWarriors of the Howell bloodline are known far and wide, for example, while the Goliath Scorpion-exclusive Bloodname of Talbot is relatively little known. Yet the purity of the Talbot Bloodname, belonging solely to one Clan, gives it a certain prestige that grants the warrior a significant position in the social strata of his Clan. The ability to claim an exclusive Bloodname even as the Clans have battled over the past two centuries earns a warrior considerable respect.

BLOODNAMED (LESSER, EXCLUSIVE PHENOTYPE BLOODHOUSE)

Generally seen as a notch above their exclusive general-Bloodname Clansmen, exclusive phenotype warriors deem themselves the purest bred of all. Their Clan has been powerful enough to maintain good bloodlines without significant external corruption, and their bloodline is made up exclusively of warriors from the same phenotype.

Despite bearing a lesser Bloodname, the purity and focus of the bloodline indicates that these warriors are in the upper strata of Clan society. This status shows in their attitude and confidence. A warrior with this kind of Bloodname knows that his own actions may raise his Bloodname to greatness. One ristar can rocket an exclusive phenotype Bloodname from obscurity to lasting fame.

BLOODNAMED (GREATER, EXCLUSIVE GENERAL BLOODHOUSE)

At this level in Clan society, the differences between ranks become almost indistinct, at least for those just below the pinnacle of Clan society. Warriors with prestigious exclusive Bloodnames only need look to The Remembrance to hear the legends and victories of their geneparents. Warriors of these bloodlines were bred from conception to be leaders, to carry the traditions of the Clan forward and bring their Clan honor and glory.

Note: While technically one step below an exclusive phenotype Bloodname, most Clans hold a handful of exclusive general Bloodnames whose prestige matches that of the greater exclusive phenotype bloodlines. The Hazen Bloodname may be a general Bloodname exclusive to the Jade Falcons, but no one would place it below an exclusive phenotype Bloodname such as Binetti. These Bloodnames are almost always associated with Clan founders or heroes of early Clan history.

BLOODNAMED (GREATER, EXCLUSIVE PHENOTYPE BLOODHOUSE/ KERENSKY'S LEGACY)

These Bloodnames are such stuff as legends are made of. Pryde, Ward, Kabrinski, and Church—these names and others like them have resonated powerfully throughout the Clans and beyond. Bred from the most exclusive and purest genes, each and every warrior who earns one of these Bloodnames is looked to as a potential great leader. Bred for one purpose, given every advantage and pushed harder than anyone else, warriors of a prominent exclusive phenotype bloodline carry the full expectations and weight of their Clans. There is no minor victory or forgotten defeat when a Bloodnamed Kabrinski Elemental fails in battle; his is not a private failure, but one felt by all who hold the name Kabrinski. Included in this prestigious exclusivity is the Kerensky Bloodname; though it is shared among phenotypes, the legacy of the Founder carries prestige that outstrips its multi-phenotype diversity.

For a Bloodnamed warrior of this order, immense pressure to succeed goes hand-in-hand with the potential for equally rich rewards. Any Bloodnamed warrior at this level either aspires to be Khan or is dead.

COMMON MILITARY RANKS

The following military ranks are common across the Inner Sphere, though each faction usually follows its own naming conventions (and may have more or fewer ranks).

Recruit (Spaceman Recruit)

This rank is where the average person begins a military career. Whether volunteer or draftee, the first thing every soldier must go through is basic training. Relatively unchanged in a thousand years, this training serves to indoctrinate the recruit and give him

the basic skills and knowledge to function in the military. Once recruits have completed their training, they enter the military proper at the typical starting rank (usually private or the local equivalent).

Encounters with recruit NPCs are rare unless a player character was part of the same military and involved in training duties. Recruits generally do not have free time to leave base and interact in a non-structured environment. A character that starts play at this rank has failed basic training for medical or disciplinary reasons.

Recommended Traits for a mustered-out, one-tour NPC or player character: Reputation -1, Wealth -4, Combat Paralysis, Dark Secret, Glass Jaw, Lost Limb, Transit Disorientation Syndrome, Unlucky, Extra Income -2.

Potential Traits for NPCs or player characters of this rank serving in active duty: Fit, Compulsion.

Private (Spaceman)

Upon exiting basic training and entering service, an enlisted soldier is assigned the rank of private. He holds this rank during advanced training and the first year of service, barring some exceptional event that garners attention and special promotion.

Privates are still green, learning the ins and out of their service. With little time for anything other than learning and duty, player characters will rarely encounter NPCs of this rank outside of training. As with the recruit rank, a character that starts play as a private mustered out of service early.

Recommended Traits for a mustered-out, one-tour NPC or player character: Wealth -2, Combat Paralysis, Dark Secret, Glass Jaw, Handicap/Lost Limb, Transit Disorientation Syndrome, Unlucky, Extra Income -2.

Potential Traits for NPCs or player characters of this rank serving in active duty: Exceptional Attribute, Fit, Good Hearing or Vision, Compulsion.

Private First Class (Able Spaceman)

Also commonly referred to as lance corporal, this rank is an in-service award generally recognizing one year of active duty. It rarely confers any additional status or responsibility over the rank of private, but does come with a nominal increase in pay. This is the worker bee rank of most militaries, representing soldiers with enough time in service to know the job and enough skills to do it. For the common infantryman, this is the line soldier toting his rifle and following orders all in anticipation of the next paycheck and two-day pass. As the everyman rank, any PFC of note is likely destined for promotion or special training soon.

Characters that start play at this rank most likely only completed one tour of duty. If the character served more than one tour, a negative Trait explaining his rank is appropriate (Dark Secret, busted in rank for black market trafficking, for example.)

The following are potential Traits for NPCs or player characters of this rank serving in active duty: Fit, Good Hearing or Vision, Natural Aptitude, Compulsion, Dark Secret.

Corporal (Petty Officer)

The lowest leadership rank, corporals exist in the area between enlisted and non-commissioned officers (NCOs). This rank is either the first in the NCO leadership chain or awarded as part of a specialty, such as vehicle drivers or gunners. Nearly as common as the ubiquitous PFC, corporals form a core part of any army. As infantry squad leaders, staff clerks, or a general's driver, interaction with corporals can often serve as a key plot point for a player group.

Player characters with this rank are still tightly integrated into their nation's army and only rarely serve as part of a Special Forces unit or other non-standard formation. Corporal is also a common rank among mustered-out soldiers who have served a single tour of duty.

The following are potential Traits for NPCs or player characters of this rank, on active duty or retired: Combat Sense, Exceptional Attribute, Fit, Good Hearing or Vision, Natural Aptitude, Toughness/Thick Skinned, Compulsion, Dark Secret.

Sergeant (Chief Petty Officer)/Staff Sergeant/Sergeant First Class (Senior Chief Petty Officer)

Many would argue that sergeants are the true backbone of any army. All three sergeant ranks fill similar roles and duties, serving as vehicle commanders, platoon leaders, technical crew chiefs and MechWarriors. Sergeants are the first line of leadership, whether they command corporals in an infantry platoon, back up a young lieutenant or pilot a BattleMech.

The most common enlisted ranks for player characters, sergeants can be specialists, MechWarriors, tank commanders or small-unit leaders. Their experience and years of service becomes their currency; the longer in service, the more respect their rank commands. NPC sergeants have proven they can get the job done, or at least convinced their superiors they can.

The following are potential Traits for NPCs or player characters of this rank, on active duty or retired: Combat Sense, Exceptional Attribute, Fit, Natural Aptitude, Tech Empathy, Toughness/Thick Skinned, Compulsion, Dark Secret, Unattractive, Extra Income (+1).

Master/First Sergeant (Master Chief Petty Officer)/Sergeant Major

The term "lifers" best describes the senior ranks of the NCO corps. These sergeants are typically hardened veterans who have made the military their home. Even when they retire, it is often only to change government uniform for mercenary. With age and experience, these soldiers hold considerable influence over the lower ranks. They may not be as fast or as strong as they used to be, but they can easily prove that old age and treachery beat youth and pride any day.

Player characters that have achieved this rank and have no obvious black marks on their history will be a valuable commodity in the civilian or mercenary markets. NPCs of this rank can provide experienced support, expert knowledge and access to other experienced resources. Their long in-service time and understanding of the system can also make them a formidable enemy.

The following are potential Traits for NPCs or player characters of this rank, on active duty or retired: Combat Sense (MSgt), Brave (SM), Connection (2+/4+), Patient, Toughness/Thick Skinned, Compulsion, Enemy (-2), Handicap or Lost Limb (1+), In for Life, Unattractive, Extra Income (+2/+3), Design Quirks (2/3 Positive).

Command/Regimental Sergeant Major

Nothing happens in a regiment that the RSM doesn't know about. The senior enlisted soldier in the unit, his duty is to ultimately ensure the readiness and efficient operation of the entire enlisted corps. In reality his power extends well beyond that, and it is an unwise captain who tries to order an RSM to do anything. RSM NPCs can be valuable contacts, bitter enemies or that ever-watchful father figure a player character must figure out how to get around for that night on the town.

The following are potential Traits for NPCs or player characters of this rank, on active duty or retired: Brave, Connection (6+), Gregarious, Implant/Prosthetic (One level below Lost Limb), Patient, Toughness, Enemy (-3), In for Life, Lost Limb (4+), Poor Hearing or Vision, Extra Income (+4), Reputation (+1).

Sergeant Major of the Army

This singular rank denotes the most senior non-commissioned officer in an entire armed forces. A career veteran, only in the most pacifistic state has this soldier never seen combat. He serves as the senior enlisted advisor to the commander of the military (or branch of military), acting as both the voice of the soldier and the conscience of the commander.

This rank is unattainable for player characters in normal game play, and encounters with such a figure should be as rare as those with the commander of the military. Though Sergeant Major of the Army is a prestigious position, it is far removed from day-to-day operations and active combat. More likely a connection of a well-connected player ("My old sergeant back in '39"), the Sergeant Major of the Army can be a source of valuable information and a way to dig deeper into a military organization.

NPCs of this rank typically have the following potential Traits: Brave, Connection (8+), Gregarious, Implant/Prosthetic (equal to Lost Limb), Patient, Enemy (-5), In for Life, Lost Limb (4+), Poor Hearing or Vision, Extra Income (+7), Reputation (+2).

Second Lieutenant/Lieutenant

Lieutenants range from fresh-faced cadets to experienced cogs in the military machine. As the sergeant is the backbone of the enlisted ranks, the lieutenant is the backbone of the officer corps. The most junior are fresh graduates from the military academy, eager to show everyone they know it all. The most senior are trusted company XOs or department staffers getting the job done and leading men, typically as lance/platoon commanders, aerospace flight leaders or DropShip department heads.

NPC second lieutenants can often be self-important, overly sure of themselves and their recent training. While conversant in the latest tactics, technologies and so on, they frequently make themselves extremely disliked. More senior lieutenants can be valuable information sources, their almost invisible positions in every military bureaucracy giving them insight into all manner of things.

The following are potential Traits for NPCs or player characters of this rank, on active duty or retired: Attractive, Connection (1), Fit, Good Hearing or Vision, Impatient, Design Quirk (1 negative).

Captain (Lieutenant Commander)

Commonly commanding companies, ASF squadrons or small DropShips, captains are much like the sergeant is to the enlisted corps, acting as front-line commanders on the battlefield. Captains shoulder great responsibility, often with few resources and an ever-watchful senior command. As NPCs they are active and hands-on, leading special teams, serving as the main face of military organizations and so on.

The following are potential Traits for NPCs or player characters of this rank, on active duty or retired: Brave, Connection (3), Fit, Gregarious, Sixth Sense, Compulsion, Enemy (1), Extra Income (+2), Design Quirk (1 positive).

Major (Commander)

Commanding battalions in the field, large staff organizations, small independent commands, DropShips or aerospace wings, these officers are the first staff rank, bridging the gap between field and rear-echelon commands. Majors are the last rank commonly at the forefront of a combat operation. NPCs of this rank have amassed experience and influence. They often operate with little supervision from higher command. They can be the field commander to whom the player characters' company reports, or the career logistics man who is worried the player characters might uncover his black-market operation.

The following are potential traits for NPCs or player characters of this rank, on active duty or retired: Connection (4), Patient, Dark Secret, Enemy (2), Extra Income (+4), Design Quirk (2 positive).

Lieutenant Colonel (Captain)/Colonel (Commodore)

Colonels and lieutenant colonels serve as regimental XOs and commanders or brigade XOs, lead major staff organizations or aerospace regiments, or command WarShips and small DropShip/JumpShip flotillas. This is the last rank to regularly see field combat and is also the first purely staff-officer rank. By this point in their career, these characters are either making a career of the military or looking forward to retirement (perhaps into the mercenary market). With upwards of hundreds of men under their command, colonels should be well versed in the mechanics of running an organization and planning major operations.

The following are potential Traits for NPCs or player characters of this rank, on active duty or retired: Connection (5), Patient, Title (2), Dark Secret, Enemy (3), Extra Income (+5), Property (+1), [LTC] Design Quirk (3 positive), Custom Vehicle (4).

Brigadier General (Rear Admiral)/Lieutenant General (Vice Admiral)

Brigadier and lieutenant generals command armor and Infantry brigades or entire planetary militias, hold major province division commands (such as Quartermaster for the Duchy of Andurien), or serve as executive officers for provinces, heads of important schools or institutions, WarShip fleets (BG) and as naval theatre commanders (LG). Career officers, they are as likely to die in uniform as to retire and take a teaching position at some private school or a corner office with a defense contractor. Almost completely removed from the front lines, when these generals get into their 'Mechs, something has gone very wrong. As NPCs, they are high-level contacts, major enemies or the top brass that thought up the hare-brained mission the player characters are on, that made so much sense in the simulators.

The following are potential Traits for NPCs or player characters of this rank, on active duty or retired: Connection (6), Patient, Title (4), In for Life, Enemy (5), Extra Income (+6), Property (+2), Custom Vehicle (4), Design Quirk (1 positive).

Major General

Commanding entire combat brigades or the armed forces of large provinces, or serving in administrative commands (Judge Advocate General, Quartermaster), major generals are in all other respects the same as brigadiers and lieutenant generals.

The following are potential Traits for NPCs or player characters of this rank, on active duty or retired: Connection (7), Patient, Title (5), In for Life, Enemy (6), Extra Income (+7), Property (+3), Custom Vehicle (4), Design Quirk (2 positive).

General (Fleet Admiral)

Commanding entire branches of the armed forces, or responsible for provinces or administrative commands, generals are the highest rank a player character can achieve in normal game play. Forming the highest tiers of command, these officers rarely interact at the field level. Player characters' interaction with generals should be limited mostly to connections or brief encounters when a mission goes amazingly well or horribly wrong.

The following are potential Traits for NPCs or player characters of this rank, on active duty or retired: Connection (7), Patient, Title (6), In for Life, Enemy (7), Extra Income (+8), Property (+4), Custom Vehicle (4), Design Quirk (2 positive).

Commanding General (Commanding Admiral)

The overall commander of a nation's military, answerable directly to the sovereign, the commanding general oversees all training, defense and military readiness for the realm. Commanding generals are equivalent in rank to a duke and have the same guidelines for player character interaction.

The following are potential Traits for NPCs of this rank, on active duty or retired: Connection (9), Patient, Title (8), In for Life, Enemy (8), Extra Income (+10), Property (+6), Custom Vehicle (4), Design Quirk (3 positive).

UNIVERSAL AESTHETICS

A key role for any gamemaster is to set the scene. You are the source of the information the players need, not just to play the game and solve your puzzles, but to experience it and become invested in it. The more detail you provide about the worlds your players visit and the people they encounter, the more they will experience the game as a living, breathing thing that they influence with their actions. A large number of books are available to aid in this effort, but a good gamemaster doesn't recite from a sourcebook; instead, he uses that information to frame the universe for his players.

This process can be divided into four distinct areas: worlds, people, politics and technology.

WORLDS

One of *BattleTech*'s strengths is the vast number of worlds that are inhabited by humans. Numbering more than two thousand, many of these worlds are very Earth-like, either because of comparable evolution (life adapting to a similar environment) or because of Star League-era terraforming efforts. The former makes it plausible to have Earth-like plants and species on an alien world, while the latter can result in species originating from Earth having been exported to alien worlds. Star League-era terraforming included some genetic modification in order to compete with indigenous flora and fauna, or to resist and survive alien diseases, but overall, the scale of genetic engineering was minimal. The scientists of Kerensky's Exodus, and the Clans that evolved from them, were far more invasive and extreme in their experiments. Other nations and entities throughout the centuries of humanity's interstellar travels may likewise have opted for extreme solutions to local problems, allowing the gamemaster to present life forms that appear quite alien or quite familiar to his players.

Many other inhabited worlds are naturally quite different from the "Earth standard," either in how plants and animals appear and survive, or because life on such worlds has manifested in completely divergent ways from the system we know. Some inhabited worlds are hostile to human survival, either because of failed terraforming or because the world was never tamed. Even during the height of the Star League, settling on such harsh worlds was uncommon, but not impossible. Alternatively, some natural disaster may have turned a formerly pleasant world into a hellhole.

Numerous descriptions exist of worlds in the *BattleTech* universe, but the gamemaster is not restricted by these descriptions. If he desires a unique environment, all he has to do is pick a suitable world that lacks a description, and provide his own. Whether the world in question is intended as the player characters' home base, or whether they will only visit it once, ensuring that the players remember that *BattleTech* doesn't contain two thousand carbon copies of Earth is good practice.

Another critical element to consider is that even a small planet is a very large place. On most worlds, humanity only occupies a small portion of the space available, and even if the wildlife is particularly normal near settlements, the potential for something unique or alien in wildlife or geography is always present on almost every world. The use of alien wildlife or geography is a great tool to differentiate one planet from another random, brown, nameless ball of dirt.

PEOPLE

While much has already been established about the large interstellar realms in the *BattleTech* universe, the gamemaster should remember that cultures can diverge significantly if left in isolation. The less important the world, the more likely it is to evolve differently from the rest of the nation. While this dynamic can provide some interesting taboos for the player characters to trip over, it is worth the effort to consider other ways to differentiate a local culture for the players. Specific areas to consider are local spiritual practices, holidays, food and artistic exploits. Similarly, gamemasters should consider encouraging their players to make up a cultural background for their characters that doesn't quite fit the mold of the nation those characters hail from. Diversity isn't just corporate jingo—it can be a vital tool for gamemasters to let players immerse themselves in the story. Diversity puts a face on the nameless horde that inhabits various planets and allows players to add another layer to their own characters.

A role-playing game is more than the sum of all the character sheets. It includes everyone the player characters interact with, especially other player characters.

POLITICS

Some player groups may operate at a level that warrants regular interaction with the leadership of the nation in which the game exists. More typically, the player characters interact on different levels, within the nation's military organization or directly with employers who have less power and influence than the nation's rulers. Regardless of the actual power and influence that applies, a gamemaster should always consider politics—local and interstellar—that may affect the player characters. Even if they are employed directly by a House Lord or reporting to a Clan's Khan, those around them will almost always try to manipulate the player characters toward their own ends. The more powerful or influential the player characters are, the more likely someone else will attempt to use them for other purposes.

Whether a momentary challenge for the players to resolve or a constant nuisance, politics are an excellent way for players to feel as if they are part of a larger whole. Their characters might start out as pawns between two nobles, graduate to bishop status with the help of a third noble who means the first two harm, and ultimately grow powerful enough to destroy all three nobles for their meddling…all without ever firing a shot. And beyond the mechanics of destruction, the reasons that lead to it may be exceptionally dramatic or compelling.

TECHNOLOGY

The *BattleTech* universe encompasses broad contrasts concerning technology. Some worlds are highly advanced, and leading-edge technology is relatively common. Other worlds are underdeveloped, either because they never intended to be anything else or because the devastation of the Succession Wars caused the planetary technology level to decay. Similar contrasts exist among the Clans, as the lower castes lack the same access to advanced technologies as higher castes.

Showing these contrasts can help players immerse themselves in their environment, but *BattleTech* also provides other options. Your player characters may travel to or even live on worlds that have a very low mean technology level, which they must protect (or conquer) using their access to more advanced machines. Frequently, the most advanced pieces of technology on a planet are the player characters' BattleMechs (if they have any).

It is just as plausible to expose your players to extremely well developed worlds where every advancement possible in the 31st century is in evidence and available. *BattleTech* offers a universe of castles and space stations, horseback riding and monorails. Exploring the aspects that you and your players find most attractive will be rewarding, without restricting your games to a blanket universe-wide level of technology.

Another concept to explore is lostech—literally, lost technology. This term refers to items and technologies dating back to the first Star League era, which continues to represent a pinnacle in humanity's technological advancement. While humankind has met and exceeded the weaponry standards of the 28th century, non-military advancements are far less common. Keep in mind that not every piece of lostech is a weapon. Likewise, not every piece of lostech has to be an object or craft of some sort. Immense forgotten structures, machines or facilities may be capable of any number of wonders, from ancient prototypes to technologies once commonplace but now rare. Such objects are almost akin to artifacts, and the acquisition of them can result in conflict when others learn of the player characters' discovery.

In exploring the opportunities presented by the *BattleTech* universe, geography, or wildlife that exists on Earth can serve as inspiration, as can historical events or past and present cultures. Works of science fiction or science fact may similarly be a source of creativity. When using real-life sources, make sure not to copy anything directly. If you know about something, the odds are your players do as well, and such recognition in-game will be jarring rather than enhancing your campaign. Use multiple sources and ideally your own creativity to come up with something truly new, if perhaps more than you might have thought up alone.

Truly gifted gamemasters may be create original material in every aspect, but for the more ordinary of us, there is no shame in being inspired by the wonders that exist today.

MECHWARRIORS AND THEIR 'MECHS

The BattleMech is an outstanding tool of warfare in the 31st century, with few rivals. Heavily armored, environmentally sealed, highly mobile, with a nearly limitless power supply and a broad range of electronics, a 'Mech offers tremendous benefits to a MechWarrior. If it has hand actuators, the tasks a MechWarrior can perform without ever leaving his 'Mech are numerous.

Players therefore find it attractive to determine how to solve problems without their characters needing to leave their 'Mechs. If the gamemaster and players are all happy to resolve situations this way, that's fine. But if you want a few pointers to help coax your MechWarriors out of their machines where they'll get their hands dirty, bloody or both, the following tips may help.

Locale

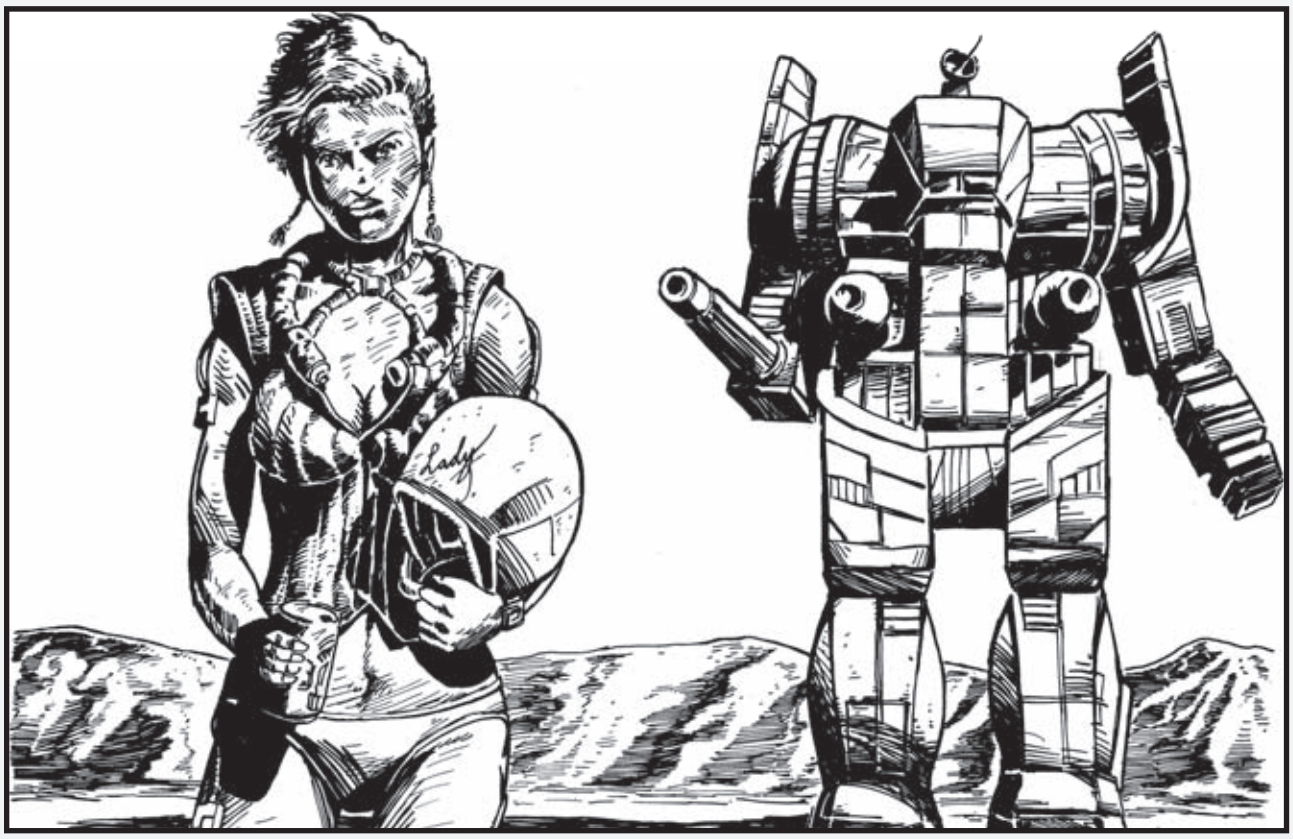
As maneuverable as the BattleMech may be, there are some locations it cannot reach, most because of its size. If the objective is inside a building, a MechWarrior has three options: destroy the building, crash through it, or get out of his 'Mech and walk inside. When the objective does not include "kill everyone inside the building," the first two solutions don't work very well.

Other surroundings may likewise not lend themselves easily to 'Mech travel, such as space stations, DropShips, and so on. And while a 'Mech may be able to withstand certain environments, it may be at such a disadvantage that the MechWarrior has a strong incentive to find other solutions, such as in vacuum, at significant depth under water, or at a cocktail party.

Law

Beyond practical inhibitions, the players may also need to consider legal concerns. For example, they often cannot destroy a building without injuring or killing innocent people. Most regimes frown on this, even if the building and its occupants belong to a hostile nation.

Other restrictions may exist, such as a truce or treaty preventing the use of 'Mechs in certain areas or on certain planets. The employer or planetary ruler may have decreed that the use of 'Mechs is forbidden except when the planet is under attack by a hostile force. Such devices can be formidable obstacles to players whose characters have a vested interest in staying on the good side of the law.



More at home in the cockpit of her prized Awesome, *Lindsay "Lady" Konrad practically resents any pause in the action.*

It may be worth the time to have the players try to come up with ways to circumvent the laws, or obey the letter of them, if not the spirit.

Problem

Apart from physical or legal restrictions, the nature of the problem itself may make a 'Mech unhelpful. A sledgehammer won't help you unscrew a panel (provided you intend that panel and its contents to stay intact).

The best approach here is Skill-based. Determine a Skill (or several) you want to see the player characters use, and then create a problem that can only be resolved thereby. Then try to think of ways in which a 'Mech could be used instead. If you can't determine any, you're in good shape. If you see some, fall back on the prior two methods to exclude use of a 'Mech from the player character's repertoire.

Just remember that your players may be crafty. If they figure out a way to undo that panel with their sledgehammer and not leave a mark, roll with it. Consider rewarding the effort. If anything, you created a situation that forced the players to really think how to use their 'Mechs to resolve the problem, which should usually align with your overall goals as gamemaster.

Ambush

When all else fails, consider the ambush. People cannot live inside a 'Mech forever, and normally they shouldn't want to unless they have some mental affliction (see *Compulsion*, p. 110). They have to leave sooner or later. When they do, the gamemaster can reduce access to their 'Mechs, temporarily or more permanently. Theft, by criminals or through impounding (in other words, theft by local authorities), can be a real hazard, but just being in a different building from their 'Mechs may be adequate.

The ambush itself need not be a violent one. It can be any sudden manifestation of a problem that requires immediate resolution. Even if a 'Mech would be an adequate or superior tool in resolving the situation, if the player characters can't get to them or don't have the time, you have met your objective.

There is nothing wrong with players preferring to use BattleMechs to solve their characters' problems. This universe and this game is about the 'Mech. Don't punish your players for using 'Mechs; challenge them instead. Even the attempt to make it hard to use a 'Mech can be rewarding for players and gamemasters alike.

Also, remember that your efforts to encourage people to leave their 'Mechs may backfire. If they're attacked by a DEST squad every time they stop for a donut, you're creating a strong incentive for the player characters to take up permanent residence in their 'Mechs. Moderation is generally the best policy.

TOURING THE STARS

The following overview describes what player characters can expect to encounter when they visit the various planets of the Inner Sphere and Clan space, from society and culture to economics and industry, along with five sample planets that explore the impact of these varying factors.

SOCIETY AND CULTURE ACROSS HUMAN SPACE

This section summarizes social and cultural aspects common to all planets in the *BattleTech* universe.

Government Types

The 20th-century flowering of democracies and republics on Terra withered in the 21st and 22nd centuries as Terra, and later its colonies, came to be ruled by the de facto autocracy of the Terran Alliance (which was officially a representative democracy). Ironically, the elite and often callous rulers of the Alliance were often selected by nations that were themselves run by representative democracies. (In a government where population and wealth explicitly gave more voting rights, the Alliance remained dominated by the so-called "developed" nations of the West and a few Asian spoilers.) With this sort of autocratic environment, many of Terra's colonists chose small groups or individuals to rule them once they were rid of their Terran Alliance planetary governors. The 24th-century Terran Hegemony revival of noble titles (intended as social rewards rather than marks of actual power) caught the imagination of the many scattered "first families," dictators, and oligarchies that dominated settled space. Imitations soon flowered, resulting in nations dominated (at the top levels) by neo-feudal leadership.

Such formalization of feudal leadership was more than vanity. It was also practical, since the sheer span of interstellar nations took months for communications to cross by courier (until the invention of the HPG in 2630). A neo-feudal government structure offered an effective means of organizing nations made up of mostly autonomous worlds and regions separated by slow transport and communications. This system has remained in place until the current era.

Individual planetary governments, by contrast, take many forms. Just as some of the Great Houses and the Terran Hegemony started as dictatorships, this type of government appears with some frequency at the planetary level. Successful, long-lived dictatorships are considered autocracies (if ruled by one person) or oligarchies (if ruled by a small group). Feudal governments can be considered a subset of oligarchies and are described in more depth in *Political and Military Power*, pp. 349-359. Theocracies are a form of religious autocracy/oligarchy; in addition to the Word of Blake, several planetary theocracies exist like the one on Shiloh in the Free Worlds League.

The Clans present an unusual, example of an oligarchy. The five castes (laborers, technicians, merchants, scientists and warriors) each contribute their top-ranked personnel (each caste has many grades and ranks) to ruling councils. Khans (leaders from the warrior caste) officially rule, but in practice rubber-stamp most non-military decisions and plans drawn up by the civilian councils.

Representative democracies are governments of a small group selected by the electorate. Governments that meet this definition represent a narrow majority of worlds in the Inner Sphere, a somewhat larger fraction of the Periphery, and do not exist in Clan space. Among the Great Houses, the selected leaders of these planetary governments sometimes receive feudal titles for their term of office so they can connect with the feudal interstellar governments, while other worlds have separate noble representatives. The Free Worlds League is a representative democracy on paper, but the ongoing "emergency authority" granted by Resolution 288 gave the Captain-General autocratic powers. A close relative of representative democracy is direct democracy, which is rare above the level of a small town.

Finally, some worlds simply exist in anarchy. This category marks a complete collapse of governmental authority. It last existed beyond the level of individual planets when the Star League Army liberated the Terran Hegemony from the clutches of the Usurper, Stefan Amaris, and promptly banned from government anyone who had served in the Amaris regime. This act gutted the Hegemony's professional civil service and left the state vulnerable to conquest by the Great Houses. In the modern era, anarchy is only seen at the planetary level in the Periphery and some war-torn worlds of the Inner Sphere.

Law and Order

Each major nation maintains its own body of laws. In most cases, some principles are standardized from the influence of the first Star League, but centuries of drift have left laws varying widely across human space. An added layer of complication is the feudal nature of many Successor States: planets and regions are often allowed to run their own legal systems so long as they meet a few requirements set by the national government. This is most obvious in the Free Worlds League, but individual planets tend to have a high degree of autonomy across human space (with the exception of the lightly populated Clan homeworlds). The Federated Suns, for example, has been unable to intervene even in planetary civil wars under certain circumstances.

Responses to crimes vary across human space as well, running the gamut seen on 21st-century Terra and then some. Different local opinions about suitable punishment (or re-education, or corrective socio-psychological adjustment, or whatever euphemism is current) can produce a wide range of penalties. The Capellan Confederation, Draconis Combine and Clans lean toward swift, harsh retribution against criminals, while other nations and planets straddle a middle ground between harshness and leniency.

A common point in the legal systems of major Periphery and Inner Sphere nations is the notion of fairness and impartiality at trial. In theory, the accused has a chance to present his defense (if any) and be heard by an impartial judge (and perhaps a jury). In practice, privileged social classes (nobles) are arrested less often and prosecuted more leniently, and corruption on many worlds allows the wealthy and influential to buy their way out of trouble (unless it is convenient for their enemies to see them prosecuted). A noble may also appeal to senior nobility for a pardon. At the House level, the Capellan Confederation and Draconis Combine are less likely to put much effort into investigating a crime than other Successor States; once they have arrested a suitable candidate, that person (or those people) will be punished. This rule is not ironclad even in those nations; the

SAMPLE CRIMES AND PUNISHMENTS

Crime	Lenient Punishment	Harsh Punishment	Clan Punishment
Slander/Libel	Fines	Indentured Servitude	2-step reduction*
Vandalism	Fines or community service	Work camp	100 hrs community service
Racketeering	Fines or imprisonment	Work camp	2-step reduction* and public flogging
Petty Theft	Imprisonment (6–12 months)	Amputation	2-step reduction*, public flogging and 50 hours community service
Negligence	Fines or imprisonment (1+ years)	Indentured servitude	90 days imprisonment** and public flogging, occasionally Abjuration
Weapon Possession	—	Execution	5-step reduction* and public flogging***
Assault	Imprisonment (1–5 years)	Work camp	30 days imprisonment and public flogging
Manslaughter	Imprisonment (5–10 years)	Execution	Imprisonment or Abjuration**
Grand Theft	Imprisonment (10–25 years)	Amputation, work camp	Varies from 1 year in prison to Abjuration or execution
Kidnapping	Imprisonment (10+ years)	Work camp	Abjuration or execution
Rape	Imprisonment (5+ years)	Execution	2-step reduction, public flogging**
Murder	Imprisonment (10+ years)	Execution	Imprisonment, Abjuration or execution**
Treason/Espionage	—	Execution	Execution

*Reduction in caste rank **Clan warriors rarely experience the full punishment. ***Not applicable to Clan warriors.

system does work sometimes, depending on the local police and courts. Other nations tend to have more professional police and more impartial judicial systems, though this can vary at the planetary level.

Despite all the apparent opportunities for abuse, the Inner Sphere's courts and police are effective enough to maintain civil societies, and often low crime rates. Modern forensics (Tech Sophistication C or better) also aids law enforcement.

The Clans do not use impartial courts (at least in the homeworlds; in the invasion corridor, planetary judicial systems still sometimes function for natives). Civilian offenders are grilled by judge and jury alike, and if the accused is disliked, he is prone to being convicted regardless of guilt. Warriors, on the off chance they are brought before a judge rather than punished by their commander or settling a matter with a combat Trial, are more likely to be acquitted than civilians. If warriors are convicted, a Trial of Refusal (the difficulty of which is suited to the severity of the crime) can allow them to void the ruling. The Clans have little patience with prison; convicted criminals usually end up on harsh work details (which may involve being driven into the laborer caste), lose ranks in their caste, or are executed. The worst Clan criminals are sent to the *Prinz Eugen*, a WarShip involved in an Exodus mutiny and converted to a prison.

Civil law is even more complicated in the Inner Sphere and among the Clans, as these laws are modified by countless local traditions, civil rights and case law. Contracts valid in one nation may not hold in another, though large interstellar corporations have managed to impose enough sanity that common ground can usually be reached.

Police Forces

Law enforcement agencies exist at many different levels in human space: local, regional and national, and there may be other enforcement bodies for specific areas (for example, environmental protection or anti-counterfeiting).

Local forces are generally concerned with maintaining normal law and order. Except for the smallest town with only a sheriff and a trusted deputy, such forces usually show a sophisticated structure of specialists: administrative support, foot and vehicle patrol, investigation, research, tactical units for high-threat situations and so on. National police forces concern themselves with the laws enforced across the nation or crimes that cross jurisdictions. These may blur into internal security and intelligence agencies in some nations. Police are usually trained in armed and unarmed combat to some degree, as well as basic investigative skills.

The Clans are an exception to the well-developed police forces of human space. True policing in the Clan homeworlds is conducted by a small branch of the warrior caste (with supplementary aid from enforcers in each caste). Regarded as the bottom rung of the warrior caste, the Clan police are few and far between, and are rarely happy with their lot in life, which they refer to as being "half civilians." Their preferred means of enforcement is to vent their unhappiness on "examples," presumably scaring the population into good behavior. This is no longer as true as it once was for police in the Invading Clans (Smoke Jaguar excepted), who were revolutionized by contact with professional Inner Sphere police forces. The notion of taking pride in their work was almost as earthshaking for them as the sophisticated methods of their Inner Sphere counterparts.

Language

By the 20th century, English was a lingua franca of Terra, though other contenders existed until 2092. The massive influence of English-speaking nations in the Terran Alliance forced the formal adoption of English as Terra's official

language in that year. Colonists carried this preference to the stars, though the birth of interstellar nations based on small ethnic groups led to the adoption of other official languages. English was re-standardized in the Star League era, and today descendants of Star League Standard English serve as a primary or secondary language for most people in human space. Today, many nations are bi- or trilingual, as discussed under *Affiliations*, (in the *Character Creation* chapter, starting on p. 53).

Education

Owing to the Succession Wars, many human worlds lack a sophisticated education system comparable to what your players have probably experienced. Even worlds with urbanized populations and apparently advanced technology may only have primary schooling, if that, depending on apprenticeships to train workers in their jobs. As a result, competent teachers are difficult to find, perpetually stalling the development of national-scale education systems.

The Federated Suns is a good example. Despite its wealth and martial success, the Suns has rarely managed to put together the money and skilled personnel to create a solid national primary and secondary schooling system. Some worlds (usually but not always the wealthiest) do have exceptional school systems (where equivalents to 21st-century four-year college degrees are the norm), but these are the creations of the planetary government and their successes are not widespread (that job falls to the central government). The much-touted "Vagabond Schools" (schools and teachers ferried by DropShips) have barely touched the hundreds of billions of disadvantaged people in the Federated Suns' Outback, where basic literacy is unusual. In contrast to this are the Federated Suns' universities, which are the best in the Inner Sphere and which offer advanced degrees in the highest sciences that humankind has developed, but are only found on the Suns' wealthiest planets.

The Capellan Confederation has perhaps the most comprehensive basic schooling system in the Inner Sphere, but quantity does not equal quality. Free primary and secondary schooling are available to all citizens, but the curriculum is heavily weighted toward political indoctrination, leaving most Confederation citizens with little better than the equivalent of seven or nine years of basic schooling by 21st-century standards. The Confederation is sorely lacking in advanced schooling (college), reserving it for MechWarriors, the nobility and a handful of exceptionally talented lower-caste individuals. The Draconis Combine is similar, but stops at the most basic schooling (equivalent to four or six years of basic schooling by 21st-century standards; primary courses are reading, writing, arithmetic, political indoctrination and suppression of free thought). Beyond this, the Combine uses aptitude tests to identify talent. The vast majority of Combine citizens go on to apprenticeships or vocational schools. On the other hand, the Combine's upper classes receive one of the best educations in the Inner Sphere, often equivalent to several years of college. The Clans are similar to the Combine, with limited basic schooling followed by vocational training managed by the child's caste.

Unlike the rest of the Inner Sphere, the Free Worlds League and Lyran Alliance have partly solved education (with capitalism). Primary education (ten to twelve years) is available and affordable to most people in those realms, but higher education (any college equivalent) is expensive and out of reach of most of the population. This is doubly true in the Lyran Alliance, where only the well off can afford higher education, and going to university requires true wealth–either personal or a patron's. Knowledge in advanced sciences is thus often lacking in these realms, as is true elsewhere.

While most of the Periphery suffers from poor education, the Taurian Concordat has put together a stellar primary and secondary education system (most citizens receive the equivalent of fifteen years of well-rounded schooling from ages 3 to 18), with two and four years of college or vocational training common. The Federated Suns and individual Inner Sphere worlds often seek to imitate this accomplishment, but generally fall short.

Work

The collapse of the Star League and the Succession Wars' damage to education systems devastated formal education and career advancement over large areas of human space. Neo-feudal influences drive apprenticeship methods of training, and children tend to follow in their parents' footsteps. It is not unusual to see generations of a family following their elders into apprentice-ships at the same machine shop, law firm, computer repair store or hospital. This holds true among the upper classes as well, because few of these children want to abandon their lives of privilege and power.

The Draconis Combine, Clans and Capellan Confederation take this pattern further than other nations. In the Combine, laws and social norms push sons to follow their fathers, while wives and daughters remain at home. It takes exceptional aptitude tests to break that cycle. The Clans are much fairer about the use of aptitude tests, allowing them to place children into castes (except when it comes to the warrior caste; trueborn children have every chance to "test out" to the civilian castes, while naturally born children of civilian castes generally have little chance to become warriors, depending on how conservative the Clan's attitudes are toward so-called freeborns). The Confederation uses a caste system similar to the Clans, but actively encourages citizens to test into better castes because doing so will improve the Confederation as a whole.

The Free Worlds League and Lyran Alliance are more like 21st-century Terra, where schooling and individual work preferences may determine a person's employment. While some—particularly nobles—follow their parents, most people search for work of their own choosing. The Federated Suns varies between the extremes from planet to planet.

Except among the Clans and on the most retrograde worlds, technology is usually such that few people work in agriculture or heavy industry (usually less than 10 percent of a planet's population). Most are in the service industry: restaurants, retail, transportation, entertainment, tourism, government, health care and any other careers that produce intangible goods. Humankind has developed sufficient technological sophistication that manufacturing and extraction (mining, agriculture, fishing and so on) only use small fractions of the labor force unless a nation works hard to assure otherwise.

The Clans, for example, think poorly of most service-sector jobs and force their population into grossly over-staffed industrial and agricultural work (where clothing and housing is guaranteed for work quotas, and the work quotas are small because of overstaffing). The Confederation has attempted to eliminate a number of "parasitic" service-sector jobs (for example, independent lawyers and middle managers), while the Combine's inefficiently

One thousand, two hundred and fifty seven channels and still there's nothing on.

organized and highly regulated manufacturing and extractives businesses always need more personnel. (The Combine would prefer to put a hundred prisoners to work in a mine with hand tools rather than using one earthmover.) Some Federated Suns worlds with exceptionally feudal societies may tie down much of the population into the "pastoral ideal" of subsistence farming despite having the technology to do otherwise.

Entertainment

Entertainment differs only superficially from what your players might be familiar with. Depending on local laws and culture, anything from family-friend beachside resorts to opera to gambling and prostitution may be available. Holovid viewing (at home or in theaters) is an ever-popular pastime, the latter-day successor to movies and television. Sports range from the familiar football (soccer and North American), baseball and hockey, to null-G dance and force cross. Gladiatorial 'Mech combat on Solaris VII enthralls tens of billions of viewers across the Inner Sphere. The ultra-wealthy and powerful typically spend part of the year touring the Riviera-style circuit of 28 leisure worlds. Books—most often electronic—retain a share of the entertainment market, and with thousands of worlds, the range of topics is nearly endless.

Media and Communications

Interstellar communications are slow. Short of extremely expensive "command circuit" HPG transmissions, even transmissions between important worlds generally take days. Transmissions between worlds with Class B HPGs can take weeks or months, depending on the distance. The alternatives—JumpShip couriers—are even slower, to the extent that they probably led to the collapse of the Terran Alliance.

On-planet communications offer a sweeping range of devices more capable and yet less advanced than players will be familiar with, as shown in the descriptions of communications equipment on p. 301 of the *Equipment* section. The collapse of technology, knowledge and education that accompanied the Succession Wars—not to mention ComStar's opposition to the rebuilding of an information-rich society—meant that communications often devolved to relatively simple, purpose-built devices. As a result, most Succession Wars-era noteputers cannot directly connect to communications networks; homes retained separate personal computers, vid-phones, and tri-vids; and even as late as the 3050s, a personal communicator that featured a vid-screen and simple camera was five times as expensive as standard communicators, which in turn had fewer functions than personal communicators of the Terran Alliance.

The stagnation of telecommunications is apparent elsewhere. Storage capacity is typically limited to a few hours of music or video, and the ComStar-standardized chips for those media are not interchangeable. Planetary computer networks are a shadow of their pre-Succession Wars glory, with centuries of users and maintenance personnel suffering from deficient technical educations.

Religion

Religion for most of the Inner Sphere has changed little since the 21st century. The largest religions are still Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Judaism, though all have spawned significant new sects (such as the New Avalon

Catholic Church, an offshoot of Roman Catholicism born in the turbulence of the Amaris Coup). Practice varies; the Free Worlds League, Federated Suns and Lyran Alliance are generally tolerant of all religions (though this varies at the planetary level), while the Combine endorses Zen Buddhism, barely tolerates small Christian gatherings, and has driven Judaism underground.

Ever a spiritual creature, humankind has not ceased exploring matters of the soul since leaving Terra. The Unfinished Book movement appeared in the late 30th century in the Federated Suns and attempts to collect the teachings of all religions into a single volume; it has proven very successful, as it does not replace old faiths so much as supplement them. On the other hand, the One Star Faith was founded in 2801 based on a vision that Kerensky's Exodus Fleet had left to find a paradise. The order suffered the Clans' return badly; many left the faith, some joined the Lyran military to fight the "defilers" of their dream, and others attempted to fit the Clans into their dogma.

The supposed Word of Jerome Blake, which may have been a liberal posthumous rewriting of Blake's diaries by his lieutenant Conrad Toyama, turned ComStar into a cult that saw technology as something to be revered and used mindfully. (The common slur, "toaster worshipper," is inaccurate; a Blakist does not worship or pray to a toaster, but may take a moment to reflect on how a toaster eases the task of preparing breakfast compared to pre-electricity kitchens.) Written amid the fires of the Amaris Coup and the First Succession War, Blake's teachings scorned inappropriate uses of technology, such as the Clans' focus of all their research and industry on warfare. Technology was to be used wisely, which meant controlling its distribution (in this view, the New Avalon Institute of Science and the Helm Memory Core are dangerous because they widely dispersed technology without regard to the risk some recovered technologies posed). Toyama's efforts turned ComStar into a mystery cult. This techno-religion suffered a schism in 3052 after ComStar attempted to destroy both Clan and Inner Sphere society with Operation Scorpion (in hopes of allowing ComStar to step in and "save" humanity). ComStar's new leaders declared false what had long been accepted as Blake's teachings, and ComStar became a secular organization. After a quarter-millennium of belief, many in ComStar could not accept this and splintered to form the Word of Blake, which may be regarded as the truest successor to the old ComStar.

Travel

Modes of travel on a planet have changed little since the early 21st century. Planes, trains, automobiles, ships and airships are still much the same, though there are differences in details. Not all planets caught Terra's 20th-century "car craze," and railways are more common than autos on many worlds. Likewise, airships established themselves on many planets because the colonies did not suffer from Terra's historical bias in favor of fixed-wing aircraft. Aircraft are frequently supersonic. Some passenger trains are maglev designs, but conventional steel rails and wheeled trains are the norm. Even on water-starved worlds or those with poisoned water, large ships are workhorses of freight transport because humanity tends to cluster near whatever water is present on a planet, and it is difficult to find a more efficient form of transport than watercraft.

Space travel, while a common part of *BattleTech* games, is actually a rare experience for most people. People who travel between stars are literally about one in a million in the Inner Sphere due to the shortage of JumpShips and DropShips. DropShips are also little used for everyday transport, even on advanced planets; they are too rare, too expensive and too small to compete with surface ships and trains.

Details about these means of transportation can be found in *Tactical Operations* (*Unsung Technologies*, pp. 227-235) and *Strategic Operations* (*Aerospace Technologies*, pp. 122-141, and *Aerospace Operations*, pp. 244-259).

ECONOMICS AND INDUSTRIES

The following section contains general details on the factors that shape life on worlds in human space, giving players a way to outline the basics of daily life on a planet.

Universal Socio-Industrial Level References

The following descriptions of daily life are benchmarked using the Universal Socio-Industrial Level Reference (USILR) code. The USILR uses an A through F grading system to represent (in order) a settled world's technological sophistication, industrial development, dependence on imported raw materials, industrial output and agricultural dependence (these last two relative to population). The Universal Socio-Industrial Level Reference Table below explains the meaning of each letter in the code.

Technology

This section is meant to give players the basics to imagine life on a *BattleTech* planet. It is far from complete, and it relies on the players' imaginations to fill in the (big) blanks. Using imagination to extrapolate *BattleTech*'s everyday technology may give misleading results, however, since most players will have seen real technology overtake some of that in *BattleTech*. Trying to imagine the evolution of today's technology through to the 23rd or 28th century may prompt players to arrive at technological miracles far beyond what *BattleTech* actually portrays.

BattleTech is the future of the 1980s, and has been kept so deliberately. This universe is about human drama and "giant, stompy robots" (to quote a *Time of War* writer who shall remain nameless). *BattleTech* is not a world of nanotech, AIs, gravity control and genetic engineering; the miracles of the future envisaged in the 1990s and 2000s are generally absent, under-developed or treated as tabloid rumors because they do not fit the setting. *BattleTech* does have some miraculous technologies, like its fusion rockets, Kearny-Fuchida drives, BattleMechs and nigh-magical materials, but these are the (mostly) minimum needed to make stories of latter-day knights in BattleMechs possible without losing the story line in a deluge of teleportation, nanotech cornucopias and virtual realities.

To that end, if players need to determine the capabilities of technology not addressed in the rules (such as the features of personal civilian communicators, what we'd call cell phones), it would be would not be far wrong to stop at the real-world capabilities of technology in the mid-1990s and apply 31st century trimmings like holograms, superficially faster microelectronics and futuristic styling. The mid-1990s is a convenient cut-off date to avoid the high technologies that *BattleTech* has not broadly incorporated into its setting.

Technology through the Ages

The most dramatic innovations in *BattleTech* by and large occurred in the three hundred years between 1800 and 2100 A.D. In or close to this period, humankind liberated itself from muscle

UNIVERSAL SOCIO-INDUSTRIAL LEVEL REFERENCE TABLE

Technological Sophistication	
A	High-tech world. Advanced research centers and universities; best medical care; cutting-edge microelectronics industry.
B	Advanced world. Access to many new technologies; hosts universities; good medical care available (though lacking in most cutting-edge medical tech); basic microelectronics industry.
C	Moderately advanced world. Average local education and medical care; minimal microelectronics industry.
D	Lower-tech world. Poor educational system; medical care equivalent to 21st-22nd century; nonexistent microelectronics industry (except possibly in isolated regions run by private concerns).
F	Primitive world. Inhabitants live without dependence on technology; no advanced education; medical care equivalent to 20th century level (at best).

Industrial Sophistication	
A	Heavily industrialized. Capable of manufacturing any and all complex products.
B	Moderately industrialized. May produce a limited quantity and range of complex products.
C	Basic heavy industry. Equivalent to roughly 22nd century technology; fusion technology possible, but no complex products (including BattleMechs).
D	Low industrialization. Roughly equivalent to mid-20th century level; fusion technology must be imported.
F	No industrialization.

Raw Material Dependence	
A	Fully self-sufficient. System produces all needed raw materials and may export in large quantities.
B	Mostly self-sufficient. System produces all needed raw materials and may export a small surplus.
C	Self-sustaining. System produces some of its needed raw materials and imports the rest.
D	Dependent. System is poor in raw materials and must import most of its material needs.
F	Heavily dependent. System utterly reliant on imported materials to maintain industry and population.

Industrial Output	
A	High output. World has wide industrial and commercial base capable of exporting most of its excess output, if sufficient space transport is available.
B	Good output. World's industrial and commercial base sufficient for modest product export.
C	Limited output. World has a small industrial base which limits exports; imported goods common.
D	Negligible output. World's industrial base insufficient for major exports; reliant on imported goods.
F	No output. World must import most—if not all—of its heavy industrial and high-tech needs.

Agricultural Dependence	
A	Breadbasket. Planetary agro industries meet all local needs and sustain a thriving export trade, as allowed by available space transport.
B	Abundant world. Rich agricultural environment sustains local needs and permits limited exports.
C	Modest agriculture. Most food locally produced, though some agricultural needs rely on imports.
D	Poor agriculture. Minimal agricultural output forces heavy reliance on off-world imports to sustain the local population.
F	Barren world. World's agricultural output cannot sustain the local population without continuous off-world imports.

power with steam, combustion and electricity; enormously increased its standard of living and material wealth with industrialization; harnessed the atom for peace and war; mastered computers and telecommunications; developed space travel and permanently left its homeworld; began shaping other worlds to resemble Terra; and reached the stars, in both slower- and faster-than-light vessels. With few exceptions, subsequent centuries have brought few truly new technologies or sciences, instead mostly refinements. The most notable exception is the BattleMech, a war machine introduced in the 25th century that changed the face of war and has captured human imagination for the six hundred years since its introduction.

This is not to say human innovation stagnated after 2100 A.D. Technology was undeniably refined across the centuries. The building-sized fusion reactors that Kearny and Fuchida helped bring to fruition shrank to fit into battlefield units and private cars in subsequent centuries. JumpShips reached further,

achieving shorter recharge times and greater reliability, than ever before. HPGs blossomed from a forgotten footnote in Kearny and Fuchida's papers to the means of putting all of humankind's worlds within days of each other as far as communications go. In those and many other areas, the Star League reached an undeniable pinnacle of technology. The Clans and their Inner Sphere competitors have only exceeded the Star League in a few, mostly military, areas of technology.

The vast web of the Star League's interstellar economy concentrated key sources of technology in a few regions, quite often the Terran Hegemony. This was partly a practical matter. By the end of the 20th century, technology was no longer something that one city or even one large nation could wholly master. The esoteric industrial facilities needed to build 28th-century computer chips, WarShip fusion engines, K-F drives and other advanced technology took the wealth, knowledge and support of many worlds, and thus were only found on a few. This concentration of critical technologies was also partly a matter of greed and insecurity; those who held the factories held the power. The Star League kept many factories in the Inner Sphere so the Periphery would not think to slip its shackles; the Terran Hegemony kept many factories in its territory so the Inner Sphere would be beholden to it; and Terra kept many military factories on-planet so that it remained master of the Hegemony.

When the Succession Wars started, the House Lords sought to seize the worlds and factories of the Terran Hegemony while knocking their opponents out of the war by destroying their foes' factories. This strategy worked all too well. Any factory or research center that supported the war had been a fair target, and so any facility from ball bearing factories to universities got smashed by BattleMechs, WarShips or orbital bombardment. The more advanced the facility, the more likely it was to become a crater. The outcome of this strategy caused incredible damage.

The Periphery is perhaps the most graphic example of the devastating effects, since it rarely saw a hostile BattleMech until pirates began to proliferate. Owing to the centralization of factories for high-tech products, the major nations of the Periphery nearly lacked the industrial ability or firsthand knowledge to build critical technologies. Planets dependent on off-world food and water died; worlds like apocryphal Comstock, which had become an over-specialized manufacturer of shoes, collapsed into anarchy and poverty; and scores of worlds (often settled by the Terran Hegemony) in the area of the defunct Rim Worlds Republic died because their terraforming failed. Untold millions of deaths occurred without a single hostile BattleMech dropping on Periphery worlds. (Later, raids by pirates for high-tech equipment helped the process along.)

In the Inner Sphere, where war was being fought with nuclear weapons as often as with BattleMechs, the damage was much worse even if fewer worlds outright died. The worlds of the former Hegemony were repeatedly traded between two, three and even four armies, coming out worse for each invasion. Regional capitals and industrial centers of the Great Houses were smashed. It's said that almost no world in the shrinking Capellan Confederation was left un-raided, and the treatment of the Capellans by the Free Worlds and Federated Suns was gentle compared to the brutality along the Free Worlds-Lyran border.

The Third Succession War abandoned the strategy of attempting to destroy the opposition's industrial and technological assets simply because that tactic had worked too well. By 2870, everyone desperately need those assets to "win" the Third Succession War. This reversal almost came too late. The advanced technologies of the Star League were essentially extinct, the skilled labor that had once maintained that scientific knowledge and those factories was dead, and the factories and universities themselves had been bombed out. By the end of the Third Succession War, the most advanced militaries in the Inner Sphere were going to battle in spacecraft they hardly understood, fighting in war machines they could barely build, and defending shells of worlds that had sunk to 22nd or 23rd century levels of technology for lack of critical parts once produced in distant systems. The Inner Sphere's Standard English gained a new word: *lostech*, referring to the lost technological arts of the Star League.

Had the Third Succession War resumed as the Second did, the Inner Sphere might have lost its capacity to travel between the stars (which would have been even more tragic than the face value of the loss, considering the designs that ComStar and the Clans had on the Inner Sphere). Instead, the low tempo of the Third Succession War let the Inner Sphere catch its breath. Visionary leaders began compiling recovered files and books and establishing new centers of learning as the new millennium dawned. By 3025, the Great Houses were making some progress in recovering lost technology. The Helm Memory Core came along at this critical juncture with some of the missing knowledge gathered in one place; it was a seed crystal dropped into a saturated solution. After the Sphere-shaking Fourth Succession War, most of the following two decades were relatively quiet as humankind focused on recovery instead of destruction, and the news offered headline after headline in which lostech became recovered technology.

While the Inner Sphere had been bombing itself into the Stone Age (and dragging the Periphery with it), the Clans had formed a distant pocket of technological stability. After the horrific Exodus Civil War, the emergent Clan culture emphasized strictly controlled dueling over warfare, which preserved civilian populations and industry. The small Clan population (under 100 million for its first century, and only reaching a billion within a decade of the Invasion) was not capable of broad technological innovation (beyond the military), but it was able to maintain Star League industries. In fact, the Clans copied most non-military Star League equipment they found necessary to the extent that Inner Sphere visitors sometimes find the Clan homeworlds like stepping into a Star League-era holodrama.

If the Helm Memory Core kicked off the Inner Sphere's technological recovery, the Clan invasion drove it to a hysterical pace. Attempts to match Clan technological advantages are most obvious on the battlefield, but for every recovered or improved weapon fielded by a House military, a vast pyramid of industries—metallurgy, energy handling, material processing and computers—has been improved and updated. With the military market so small, most of those contractors soon seek civilian markets to generate an honest profit from their expensive new technologies. After four decades, these improvements are beginning to appear in everyday life, though often slowed by the lack of educated customers needed to use the advancements.

Technological Sophistication

If averages could be applied to human space, it would be roughly correct to say the Inner Sphere technological average has climbed to roughly the late Age of War (Technological

Sophistication B, leaning toward C) from its Succession War low (about C). The major Periphery states are still largely at Tech Sophistication C, while the Clan homeworlds are universally Tech Sophistication A.

Unlike the Clan homeworlds, Periphery and Inner Sphere technology varies widely between worlds. Many Inner Sphere worlds exist at Tech Sophistication C and a fair number at D (and a handful at F), but the average is upheld by worlds with better technology. The Periphery is similarly scattered, with sizable numbers of worlds at Tech Sophistication D and F.

Disparities in access to technology can be exacerbated by politics and economics. It is not in the interest of the Capellan Confederation, Draconis Combine, Clans and some individual worlds to allow free communication of ideas, which leads to anarchy (and/or new governments). Populations on these worlds generally get receive-only tri-vids carrying government-approved programming, and existing computer networks (like the Clan Chatterweb) are heavily monitored and filtered. Similarly, it is not profitable for Apple Interstellar to ship new, advanced personal computers to the Federated Suns' impoverished Skid Row worlds.

Even on worlds assigned middle to low Tech Sophistication codes, more advanced technology may exist but it is not locally built (or not widespread), as seen on Annapolis. Many worlds of the Inner Sphere, for example, have some imported technology much more advanced than domestic products, while others, particularly those with military factories, painstakingly build a few advanced items for the military but cannot produce goods of that sophistication for the rest of the world.

Advanced Worlds: On the most advanced worlds like Terra, Tharkad or the Federated Suns' Golden Five (Tech Sophistication A), high technology is almost universally available to the population. The inhabitants are mostly literate and computer-literate (though understanding of underlying software and hardware is still weak in the Inner Sphere and Periphery), and have widespread access to computers and planetary data networks (except where local governments discourage this).

Excellent medical care generally ensures average life spans of 110 to 120 years, nearly the Star League average, with broadened periods of youthful health; it is not unusual for legal retirement ages to be in the 90s and 100s. Such life spans may be limited to the nobility on some worlds, and the Clans are more reticent with medical care for the elderly, seeing it as a waste of material on less productive members of society. This results in an average life span of 60-odd years across all castes in the Clan homeworlds. The Clans do, however, have the best trauma care available (to the warrior caste and to any civilian worth the resources).

While only Terra follows the pre-Succession Wars Terran Hegemony practice of building fusion-powered personal vehicles for common use, transport on other worlds of this technological level typically includes supersonic aircraft, efficient mass transit and cars with autopilots and advanced fuel cell- or battery-powered motors.

Stationary fusion power planets and competent application of renewable energy sources (wind, solar, tidal and so on) generally minimizes pollution from power production, while advanced chemistry and recycling enabled by that same abundant power keeps the environment otherwise clean (unless the government simply does not care, as is the case of the pollution-stained Black Pearl, Luthien).

Communications are usually universal and advanced, offering everyone access to planetary telecommunications networks (local laws permitting).

Middle Technology Worlds: The core worlds of major Periphery states and the majority of the Inner Sphere are Tech Sophistication B and C. These worlds have technology in excess of early 21st-century Terra, potentially granting the same standard of living as on an advanced world. Personal computers and cars and planes are simply bulkier and less capable than those on advanced worlds.

The key term is "potentially granting." When humankind first reached this level of technology (Age of War), specialists and the necessary industries to support these technologies were common. This is not the case during and after the Succession Wars. Technology on these planets is now not only less advanced, but also less *available*. A planet deficient in its ability to build some foundation technology (like Star League-grade computer chips) will have trouble building sufficient quantities of goods based on those technologies. For example, few medical centers will have the most advanced scanners and surgical tools that depend on advanced microelectronics (and any advanced devices will be imports); locally built entertainment systems will be cruder; industrial robots will be less capable; and so on. Another common deficiency is production of vehicle-sized fusion power plants, calling for combustion- or fuel cell-powered vehicles and the economic inconveniences of fuel production (particularly when a world's natural petrochemicals run out).

On many worlds, the deficiency is not so much in the industrial base as in the labor force. In the Federated Suns, Capellan Confederation and Draconis Combine, poor educational systems often leave a planet starved of the trained specialists it needs to staff cutting-edge factories, medical centers and even good schools.

Life is also more expensive on all but garden worlds. With lower technology, the cost of protecting food from polluted environments and obtaining fresh water is higher because the technologies are less capable.

Communications are less sophisticated than on advanced worlds as well. Wireless coverage is usually basic phone service, with computer network access available mostly from fixed locations. Instead of an endless sea of interactive media channels, these worlds offer mere thousands of channels of one-way programming and independent computer networks.

Medical care is good when available. Specialists able to wield the most advanced medical knowledge (let alone actual medicines and medical devices) are distinctly rarer than on high tech worlds. Life spans are usually quite high, in the 90s and 100s, but instead of being entirely a result of local medical care, part of this average results from the centuries when doctors across human space wielded genetic vaccines. Humans are simply healthier now than before James McKenna coined his term, "Homo stellaris."

Low Technology Worlds: Worlds with Tech Sophistication D have generally felt the bite of the Succession Wars more powerfully than most. While these worlds may produce some

technology beyond that of 20th-century Terra—like handfuls of large, crude fusion power plants in fixed installations—many other staples of the *BattleTech* setting are rare or absent. These worlds figured prominently in ComStar's descriptions of the damage done by the Succession Wars, where one might see a farmer riding horseback in handmade clothing struggling to find reception for his advanced personal communicator.

Low-tech worlds suffer more from the same shortcomings as middle-tech worlds. Missing foundation technologies are more prominent; for example, low-tech worlds may completely lack the ability to produce microelectronics, crippling dozens of other domestic industries. They are incapable even of trickle-building advanced components needed by BattleMechs, aerospace fighters or other fruits of 31st-century human technology.

Low-tech worlds have access only to basic medicines, if any, and trained medical personnel are rare. This is one of many signs that education on low-tech worlds is often decidedly deficient. As with middle-tech worlds, general health is often fairly good despite the lack of medical care, owing to the lingering effects of past centuries' medicines; life spans in the 80s are common unless the local environment and health care are truly awful, as on the Clan homeworlds (which are high-tech worlds by any other definition).

Telecommunications are usually quite primitive and hard to access; having one tri-vid and telephone per hamlet is not unusual on these worlds, though basic landline voice communications can be quite common. If computers and other microelectronics are built on the world at all, they are primitive, sluggish, and incompatible with modern software.

Modern transport is also often spotty. Road networks and air travel are limited, with animal-drawn conveyances at least as common as motorized transport.

Most of the technological deprivation found on low-tech worlds occurs not because the technology is so limited, but rather through war damage and/or lack of local knowledge. Twentieth- and 21st-century Terrans made themselves a fine living on this technology, and the Terran Alliance started an interstellar empire with it.

Backward Worlds: At Technological Sophistication F, a world is either settled by techno-phobes or has truly collapsed into a Dark Age. Few such worlds exist in the Inner Sphere. Players may refer to 19th-century Earth for an excellent example of the technology built and/or used on these planets. Most people live on farms, and motorized transport (if any) is limited to regional stations and ports for steam-powered vehicles. Advanced technology (like radios and microwave ovens) is treated with awe, respect, even worship. It is not surprising that pre-Schism ComStar (and now the Word of Blake) found many adherents on these worlds.

The inhabitants of the Inner Sphere tend to write off these "backward" planets as "Stone Age," but those worlds that have literally regressed that far (or even as far as pre-steam) are a rare subset. Most so-called Stone Age planets are quite a bit more capable, particularly when they have sufficient population to sustain all the skills needed to make 19th-century technology viable. Also, though these worlds may be technology-deprived, their people do not necessarily lack basic scientific knowledge. A considerable amount of post-19th century scientific knowledge can survive quite well on these backward worlds and make a real difference. For example, retaining the germ theory of disease and many attendant ideas (personal hygiene, public works like sewers and water treatment, and so on) improves health care by an order of magnitude compared to 19th-century Terra. A few books on latter-day mechanical engineering and human physiology would also give such a world advantages not available to denizens of 19th-century Earth.

The power of Lyran industry is most evident in the sprawling factory complex of Hesperus II's Defiance Industries.

However, that knowledge is usually found on the few planets that are deliberately backward, such as those settled by the Omniss in the Outworlds Alliance. Periphery and Inner Sphere worlds that collapsed because of the Succession Wars tend to lack education systems able to preserve any leftover knowledge that could improve their lot.

Industrial Output and Development

The output of a planet's industry simply indicates how bountiful its factories are: can it give its people vast material wealth, or does it struggle to house and clothe its multitudes? Output alone is not indicative of military production; military production is so small in *BattleTech* that it neither drains nor boosts a planet's general industrial output. Output is also related to the planet's population size; a planet of 5 billion people and Industrial Output Level D produces much more than a planet of 100 million people and Industrial Output A. On the other hand, output is only weakly related to technology; a planet with Technological Sophistication D or C can provide almost as much for its people as a planet with Technological Sophistication A that has the same Industrial Output level. (This is not true at Tech Sophistication F, where the tools of industry are much less productive.)

Industrial development measures breadth of industry rather than capacity. Worlds with higher development levels can produce a broader range of goods and rarely suffer shortages of them. Industrial development tends to be closely related to a planet's technological sophistication, at least in the Inner Sphere and Periphery; the same factors that cause technological collapse have also usually crippled a planet's industry, though there do exist primitive worlds with a broad industrial base (for example, the 20th and 21st centuries on Terra). Industrial development influences a planet's ability to produce military goods; BattleMechs, aerospace fighters and other complicated war machines demand components from many different industries, and so nothing less

than Industrial Development B is sufficient to produce such complex devices.

Industrial Output and Development levels usually go hand in hand in the Inner Sphere and Periphery, where a planet that reaches high industrial output usually does so through its own resources rather than through outside support. (This also means levels of C or better are the norm.) Likewise, a planet that cannot produce much probably has a crippled industrial knowledge base.

Heavily Industrialized Worlds: Players visiting planets with thriving industries can generally find any goods they need (except military goods, which tend to be restricted). Typical examples include the capitals of the Successor States and the core worlds of the Inner Sphere (which, despite vigorous efforts by the Great Houses to flatten them, remain the Inner Sphere's industrial heart).

Restrictions on access to goods usually depend on local politics and economic systems. In realms with relatively capitalist economies (most of the Free Worlds League, the Periphery, the Lyran Alliance and the Federated Suns), heavily industrialized worlds shower their citizens (those who can afford it) with material wealth. On some worlds this may mean plentiful shopping malls, on others convoluted souks, and on yet others an endless army of couriers delivering goods ordered over computer networks.

Other nations tend to be more restrictive. For example, the Combine shackles its businesses with extensive regulations to ensure government control. The Clans refuse to waste energy, resources or labor on more than a bare minimum of necessary industrial products (a penny wise and pound foolish policy that has stifled Clan economic growth and standards of living, but works perfectly well for a society engineered to produce a lean, hungry warrior culture).

High industrial output and development affects more than the variety of goods on shelves. It reaches into transport, housing and many other aspects of daily life. Developed worlds with high industrial output have extensive transportation networks (though ease of access depends on local laws) and the population generally enjoys housing—whether arcologies, apartment blocks or individual homes—that is well built, roomy and comfortable. Industrial muscle can provide the means (and money) to overcome difficulties with agriculture and water filtration on worlds with tainted environments.

Finally, certain myths have grown up around some heavily industrialized worlds. First, such planets are never "covered" in factories. Some metropolitan regions may be testaments to industrial ugliness, but the productivity of any industrial era is sufficient to limit the land consumed by factories to a tiny fraction of a planet's land area even when those factories feed billions of consumers. Second, worlds noted for "extensive" exports actually do not export much in terms of tonnage due to (as always) the limited amount of interstellar transport. Third, heavily industrialized worlds rarely involve much of their population in manufacturing, as discussed under *Work* on p. 364.

Industrialized Worlds: Industrial Output and Development levels B and C are the norm for long-settled worlds. Differences between these and heavily industrialized worlds are few and not always obvious, because these planets can usually meet their populations' basic needs. The differences appear in a reduced ability to make complicated goods that draw on many industries—aerospace vehicles, WorkMechs and so on—and difficulty in launching very large construction projects, such as dams, highway networks, city reconstruction and so forth. Shortcomings in some areas may be compensated for by imports, assuming it is reasonable to import replacements.

A traveler might notice smaller and less robust housing, simpler transportation networks with an emphasis on mass transit over less efficient personal vehicles, higher food and water prices on worlds with tainted environments, and so on.

Underdeveloped Worlds: Worlds with Level D Industrial Output and Development have sharp limitations on their industries. Technology as a whole *may* be advanced, but these worlds are often technologically stunted as well. While some regions or demographics (for example, nobles) may be well off, the population as a whole has scant access to industrial goods—akin to the mid-20th century on Terra, where a small percentage of the population lived far better than the backward majority. This dynamic shapes the whole world. Infrastructure (roads, sewers, utilities and so on) is spotty for lack of local ability to build and maintain it; if the world has regressed to Industrial Output and Development D, then cities and infrastructure may be crumbling (and property crimes are common as people squabble over rare possessions). Most luxury goods are imports and so are quite rare.

Housing may or may not be adequate, depending on population size and how the world got to be Level D. On worlds with unpleasant environments, procuring food and water demands a great deal of effort from the population, all the more because of shortages of basic farming and purification machinery.

Undeveloped Worlds: Once a mark of a new colony, Industrial Output and Development Level F now generally marks worlds that have been bombed into rubble. These worlds must import any item more advanced than those available roughly in Earth's 18th or early 19th centuries. If the population is substantial, this probably means most of the planet's inhabitants have no more knowledge than Technological Sophistication F.

At these industrial levels, the world may not be able to sustain more than several billion people (if it is a garden world) because virtually all labor is manual or animal, making production labor-intensive and inefficient. Worlds with less forgiving environments may have trouble surviving at all.

Resources

Availability and ease of access to resources can have an enormous impact on daily life. When some previously inexpensive, widely used resource begins drying up, every industry and aspect of life that depends on it is affected. Petroleum depletion's effects are probably familiar to players: any goods transported long distances become more expensive, as does production of energy-intensive goods like cement and steel, the heating of homes, and so on.

In *BattleTech*, humankind has not had to struggle with resources since developing the Kearny-Fuchida drive. While planets varied in mineral wealth, the majority had vast reserves compared to depleted Terra. More importantly, those reserves were comparable to Terra's pre-industrial mineral deposits: near the surface and easily extracted. Frankly, humankind got

spoiled by easy resources. While mineral shortages are severe on a planet, most star systems have enormous reserves available in nearby asteroids. Terra's asteroid belt could have fed every material need of every human-settled planet throughout history without noticeable depletion. (The sheer expense of asteroid mining has made it impractical for most common materials, however.)

Ever since the development of the Kearny-Fuchida drive, it has generally remained cheapest to mine habitable planets, and mining techniques are rarely as advanced as those used in the Terran system during the 21st and 22nd Centuries. During the Star League era, the Terran Hegemony even imported resources from the Outworlds Alliance (further tying that Periphery state to the Inner Sphere) rather than resort to expensive local mining techniques. The Succession Wars killed enough JumpShips to make interstellar transport of minerals much more difficult, but few planets have mined themselves out to the extent of 21st-century Terra.

In any case, basic minerals are generally and easily available. Certain elements (iron, aluminum, carbon, oxygen, hydrogen and so on) are so common that if a planet is at Technological Sophistication C, it probably has sufficient mastery of energy (in the form of fusion power) and chemistry to extract and synthesize any common alloy, chemical or fuel it needs. The only questions are how expensive the resulting products are and whether the population has the appropriate technical knowledge. For example, Okefenokee in the Federated Suns can, with minor exaggeration, get oil "by sticking a straw in the ground" and has been experiencing decades of economic growth from industries fueled on cheap oil. Long-settled worlds of the Lyran Alliance, on the other hand, have to mine coal or dredge seafloor sediments for carbon and combine that with water in fusion-heated Fischer-Tropsch reactors, resulting in expensive petrochemicals.

The ability to synthesize materials demanded in large quantities is fortunate because a typical Inner Sphere world can annually consume a billion tons each of iron and oil; delivering such quantities to more than a handful of planets with average or better populations would require all existing JumpShips.

Generally, then, planets whose USILR codes indicate they must import significant amounts of materials (Resource Levels C, D and F) actually are unlikely to import much (by tonnage) except rare materials (tungsten, platinum, indium and such), which are consumed in quantities small enough that they can be delivered by a typical DropShip. Instead, these worlds spend a lot of effort mining and synthesizing their raw materials from non-ideal sources.

Water and Food

When humans reached the stars, they found that one of the most common chemical compounds in the universe—potable water—was rarely available. For the first few decades of colonization, this forced humanity to settle on handfuls of garden worlds and bypass the many other planets that had agreeable atmospheres, gravities and climates, but not clean water. Colonization exploded when Rudolph Ryan introduced the iceship. Soon, it seemed any planet with a whiff of free oxygen and vaguely tolerable temperatures was being colonized. When the Star League introduced cheap high-tech water filtration, hundreds more once-ignored worlds were settled.

During the First and Second Succession Wars, the Great Houses attempted to destroy each other's warmaking capabilities, hitting shipyards, factories, JumpShips, research facilities and other key assets. Unfortunately, these were exactly the assets needed to sustain life on the less hospitable worlds of the Inner Sphere and Periphery. More than two hundred worlds in the Inner Sphere (and hundreds more in the Periphery) died, were abandoned or fell out of contact with the rest of humanity because of the loss of JumpShips and Star League water filtration technology or the failure of terraforming mechanisms.

Today, technological recovery in the Inner Sphere remains insufficient to significantly increase the size of House JumpShip fleets from their nadir in the late Third Succession War, at least compared to the vast fleets that filled jump points before the 29th century. With an average planetary population of about 3 billion people in the Inner Sphere, this means that with few exceptions (literally enough to be counted on one hand), most planets with average or larger populations can feed and provide fresh water for themselves. Those that cannot are dead or else monopolize a noticeable percentage of JumpShips to stay alive.

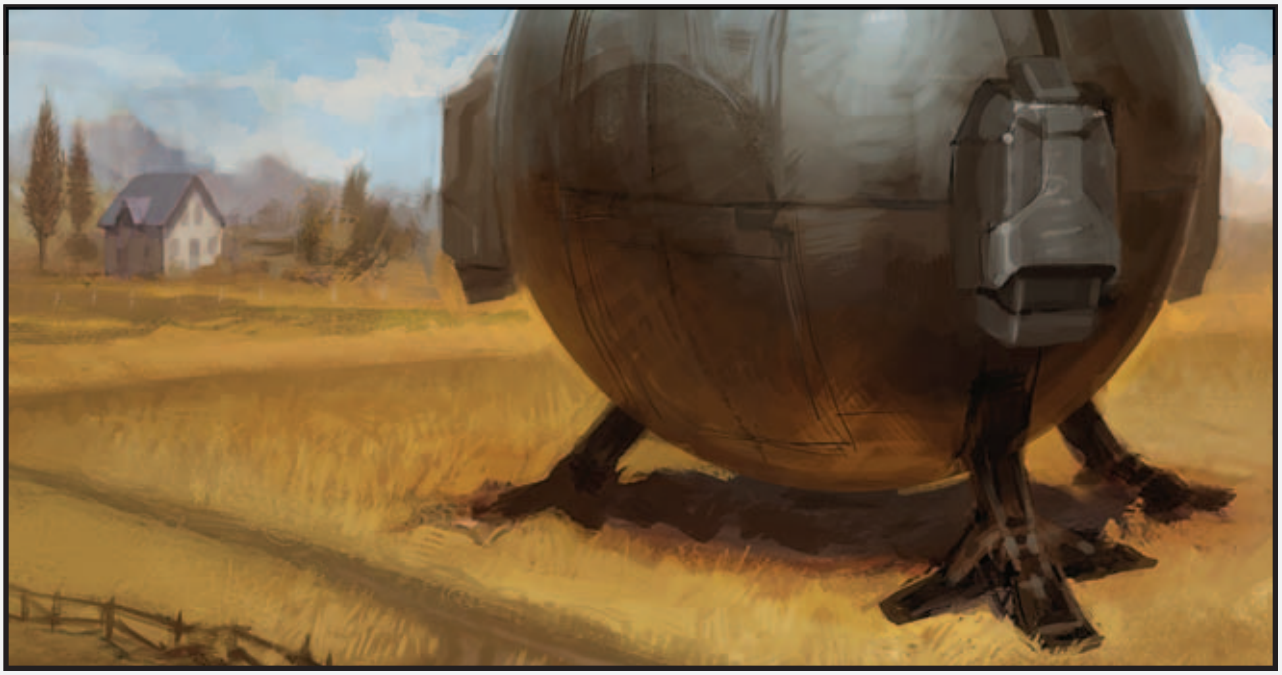
This does not mean that every surviving planet in the Inner Sphere and the Near Periphery is a breadbasket—far from it. Many worlds dedicate sizable portions of their economies to simple survival with primitive, energy-hungry water filters and labor-intensive farming techniques needed for less-than-optimal environments. Some worlds are ruled by dictatorships that carefully control the water supply, while others demand that every able-bodied citizen maintain a home garden to help produce food. Some of the largest economic booms of the 3030s and 3040s came not from new computer chips or revived JumpShip designs, but from innocuous recoveries of chemistry and agronomy that allowed planets to free entire sections of their labor force from the task of bare survival to more profitable activities like building schools and staffing factories.

As with Industrial Output, a planet's Agricultural Dependence Level is related to its population. A planet with a population of 100 million and Agricultural Dependence A produces far less food than a planet with a population of 5 billion and Agricultural Dependence C.

Garden Worlds: On the most pleasant settled planets (Agricultural Dependence A and B), food is grown and water supplied much as it has been on Terra for millennia: in great variety and with little effort.

Local technology determines how much of the population is involved in agriculture. Backward Annapolis, with most of its population at a late pre-steam level of technology, employs more than half of its labor force on farms, where most labor is handled by manual and animal muscle. Ultra-advanced Terra and New Avalon, by contrast, involve less than 0.1 percent of their labor force in heavily automated farms, meatvats, hydroponic facilities and other food-producing operations.

Despite travel brochures to the contrary, even worlds with large populations (like New Avalon's 7 billion) and high food exports (New Avalon feeds millions more in five neighboring systems) are not actually covered in farms. A visitor to such a garden world instead see an endless ocean of exurbs, towering city centers and parkland. Generally, only a small percentage of a world's total land area is covered in permanent croplands, though that might be a sizable fraction of the arable land. For example, less than one-sixth of the land area on the definitive garden world, Terra, is arable; a few percent covers a lot of that.



In the far-flung and nigh-forgotten worlds of the Federated Suns' "skid row" worlds, only the infrequent arrival of free traders reminds the locals that they live in an age of high technology.

Garden worlds are also often marked by bountiful fresh water. A typical inhabitant may hardly glance at public fountains; enjoy regular visits to public or personal swimming pools; have a flush toilet in the home; and bathe with water daily.

Average Worlds: Far more common than garden worlds are the average worlds of the Inner Sphere and the most pleasant Clan homeworlds (Agricultural Dependence C and D). These planets are often marked by contaminated water, unpleasant temperature extremes, tidal locking to red dwarf stars, unusual native biochemistry in the soil or other environmental issues that make producing food a matter of more than sticking seeds in the ground and watching them grow.

These worlds often put a sizable fraction of their labor force or economy (relative to a garden world of the same Tech Sophistication level) into agriculture. Common causes are the need to grow all food in sealed greenhouses isolated from contaminated soil or water, or climatic extremes that force agriculture into small areas of the planet. Expensive alternatives to open-field farming, like "skyscraper farms," may be used, requiring more maintenance, construction expenses and often much more energy for lighting and climate control. Interest in efficiency means these worlds tend to focus on a limited selection of foodstuffs that can be grown most easily, limiting the range of foods available to common citizens. Meat becomes sparser in diets as the agriculture level drops, with free-range grazing animals disappearing first, followed by "factory chickens," farmed fish and even (on advanced worlds) vat meats; commoners generally limit meat to once a week or even holiday meals.

Imports from other star systems may be the only source of luxury foods and, in a few cases, a portion of basic food supplies. At Agricultural Output D, typical menus are limited to things like rice, soya, algae and mycoprotein. In the Inner Sphere and Periphery, worlds with average populations and these Agricultural Dependence ratings do not literally depend on imports for basic food supplies; feeding more than a few planets of average population would quickly monopolize the entire Inner Sphere JumpShip fleet. Instead, the "imports" represent intensive effort being put into food production.

Clean water is typically a limiting factor for agriculture. Water conservation and recycling are paramount, and worlds with lower technology expend vast effort in purifying waste streams from farms and sewers. Fountains are a symbol of wealth, swimming pools may be rare or greatly treasured public assets, knowledge of how to swim is rare, and various dry-bathing methods (or infrequent bathing) are the norm. Some of these aspects of life depend on the contamination of the water—worlds with abundant contaminated water may have lively water sport traditions.

Suboptimal Worlds: Worlds with Agricultural Dependence F (and those at the extreme end of D) are rare in human space, typically outposts on minimally habitable worlds with small populations. Outposts that survived the Succession Wars often have enough hydroponics or similar emergency food production to survive interruption of JumpShip traffic, though some—like Galax and Irian—are critically dependent on food imports. On these worlds, daily life is often similar to living in a spacecraft or on an uninhabitable world. The availability of water depends on local life support systems more than planetary oceans, lakes and rivers.

Irian, one of the most famous food importers in the Inner Sphere, managed to survive the early Succession Wars through the rapid construction of orbital and lunar farms. To this day, more than half the food for Irian's 2 billion inhabitants comes from off-world sources, though very little comes from other star systems.

WHISTLE STOP TOUR

The following descriptions build on the concepts above, covering the gamut of worlds in the Inner Sphere. Gamemasters can use this information to create their own worlds as they visit the hundreds of planets never fleshed out in *BattleTech* sourcebooks, waiting for their imaginations to unfold.

EL DORADO

El Dorado was named for the Terran legend of the "lost city of gold" because the world embodied a myth that a new generation of explorers was searching for: the perfect planet. Emerald and sapphire in color, El Dorado was obviously a water-rich world with an advanced native ecosystem (which proved quite compatible with Terran life). The first survey in 2236 confirmed that the world (15 percent larger than Terra and somewhat denser) had a crust rich in useful minerals. Other than the elevated gravity, which was high enough to drive a lot of settlement to nearby New Avalon, El Dorado fit its name.

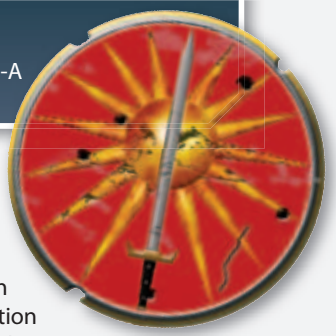
El Dorado has been called "Terra's prettier sister" with good reason. Its six continents (largest to smallest) of San Diego, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Santa Fe, Monterrey and Durango are mostly outside the arctic circles, while ocean currents and inland mountain ranges conspire to prevent large rain shadows on the continents. A string of inland freshwater seas ("The Super Lakes") on San Diego and Los Angeles further this process, leaving El Dorado with the largest amount of naturally arable land on any human-discovered planet and no shortage of pleasant areas to settle. The native plant and animal life is generally attractive (if a bit stocky) and the big moon, Boulder, is a beautiful orb of silver and sapphire (a dense nitrogen-carbon dioxide atmosphere generates picturesque clouds from Boulder's world-ocean).

If El Dorado has a physical drawback other than its gravity, it is volcanic and tectonic activity. Larger and a bit younger than Earth, El Dorado's core is correspondingly hotter, which drives more vigorous tectonic action. This is not particularly obvious in major settled areas, as over the past eight centuries, locals (pushed by insurance rates) have moved away from the worst volcano and quake zones.

Once New Avalon's rival for attention, El Doradans lost interest in taking the limelight during the First Succession War. Aside from a raid by the Draconis Combine that shattered El Dorado's JumpShip yards with nuclear weapons, El Dorado was not directly touched by the Succession Wars. However, the world (and the ruling Sanromea-Davions) suffered badly from the economic warfare of the early Succession Wars, as the planet was tightly integrated with the Inner Sphere's economy. Loss of JumpShips trapped its exports on the ground, while attacks elsewhere cut supplies of vital components. El Dorado overcame those problems by building locally what it could no longer obtain off-world, albeit more crudely. Largely spared direct conflict for centuries, El Dorado became a technological linchpin of the Federated Suns throughout the Third Succession War, supplying key components of 25th-century technology to factories around the realm. (No military factories were founded on the world until the Jihad, however, as an unofficial policy of risk avoidance.) Because of its retention of knowledge, El Dorado also hosts some of the Suns' greatest universities, known locally as the "Gilded Halls."

EL DORADO

(Advanced, Garden, Heavily Industrialized World)
Noble Ruler: Duke Roger Sanromea-Davion
Star Type (Recharge Time): G0V (193 hours)
Position in System: 2
Time to Jump Point: 10.43 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Boulder)
Surface Gravity: 1.25
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 27°C (Mild-Temperate)
Surface Water: 77 percent
Recharging Station: Zenith, Nadir
HPG Class Type: A
Highest Native Life: Mammals
Population: 4,313,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: A-A-A-A-A



Such a perfect colony was naturally settled by heavyweights of the Terran Alliance, especially Mexico and the United States (which shaped El Dorado's naming conventions). In the late Alliance period, colonization was also opened to prosperous Southeast Asian nations, an opportunity primarily exploited by Thailand. Subsequent immigration did not further influence the planet's ethnic mix.

Several cultural features separate El Dorado from the average Federated Suns planet. First is the siesta, an early afternoon nap following lunch, which is often embraced by visitors not yet adapted to the world's 28-hour day. Second is the pride of El Doradan cooking, "Textile" food. The name is a bastardization of "Tex-Thai," but whatever the etymology, its spiciness powers a large domestic antacid market. Third, El Dorado's prevailing attitudes have been called, "white and uptight." Local people are workaholics, sensitive to appearances among neighbors, and prone to elaborate rules of behavior and home decorating set by neighborhood councils (where politics can be vicious and dirty). Off-worlders, especially those who fit the El Doradan stereotype of "scruffy, ill-bred sorts" (meaning they have darker-than-olive skins and/or funny accents) are likely to be treated less politely (though not outright rudely) by natives. Immigration requirements are strict for this reason.

Another aspect of El Dorado's "uptight" ethos is its pervasive, if mainly benign, policing. Despite rather generous civil liberties

in the planetary Constitution, modern El Dorado is a place where police and private security forces use advanced sensors and computer networks to thoroughly monitor public areas. (El Dorado is the source of the most advanced sensor interpretation software in the Inner Sphere.) While leeway does exist to lead a relatively normal life (El Dorado does not share the harsh slander and libel laws of a world like Arcturus, for example, and natives are relatively tolerant of recreational pharmaceuticals and public nudity), visitors who speed in their cars, step on protected grass, carry an unlicensed weapon, jaywalk and so on will find fines instantly levied against their bank accounts and/or security forces approaching within minutes.

Visiting military personnel should be extremely wary of carrying any weapons. AFFS personnel (though not mercs) are allowed to register non-lethal weapons at El Dorado's Customs centers, but anyone else from off-world (barring recognized law enforcement or VIP protection details) cannot carry weapons; even pocket and utility knives are questionable. Natives may acquire non-lethal weapons if they have a clean record, or may acquire small firearms (with RFID tags) if they have a clean record and undergo a lengthy licensing procedure. Police and the militia, of course, use advanced body armor and heavy weapons, and visitors scanned as carrying non-tagged, unregistered weapons make favored targets for mobilization and stunstick combat exercises. (Average response time from a scan in an urban area is 3.2 minutes.)

Law enforcement tends to allow first-time, minor offenses to slide with lenient penalties, but repeat offenders suffer rapidly escalating punishments. El Dorado reacts harshly to several classes of crimes from the start, including violence or crimes committed while under the influence (tolerance for recreational pharmaceuticals is not infinite).

With an appearance-minded culture made worse by civil rights laws that insist on public access to public surveillance equipment, local recreation generally falls between two extremes: quiet relaxation in the home or properly conducted sporting events, at which manic public outbursts are only excusable if alcohol is implicated. El Dorado's "Casino City" metropolis on the continent of Las Vegas is the one spot on the planet that limits public access to surveillance; the giant resorts are considered private land, and they host huge numbers of domestic visitors per year (as well as being home to the planet's debt counseling and gambling addiction businesses). Casino City's more cultured areas are considered part of the Inner Sphere's "Riviera Circuit." On the other hand, even in Casino City, native-run nightclubs are usually disappointing because El Doradans, to quote Victor Steiner-Davion, "think a chaperoned secondary school dance is a wild time."

El Dorado is at the cutting edge of technology (or technological recovery) in the Inner Sphere. It does not have NAIS, but its advanced technology base and a cultural need to "keep up with the Joneses" have made its people some of the widest adopters of recovered technology in the Inner Sphere outside of Terra. Wireless communications are globally available via numerous ground stations (less vulnerable to attack than satellites). Electronics, vehicles and consumer goods are among the most advanced in the Inner Sphere, now broadly matching those of the early Star League and only stymied by the scale of investments needed to set up the infrastructure for further progress. This has not completely stalled El Dorado's technological development, however; local General Motors car factories produce a few ultra-luxury vehicles with dent-fixing body panels of a material suspiciously similar to Clan copper.

Transportation on El Dorado is a typical mix of advanced systems. In the cities, where property laws discourage urban sprawl and result in dense arcologies and condo blocks, light rail and fuel cell buses are predominant. Roads are well maintained but limited in capacity, owing to rail's dominance. Fusion-powered supersonic aircraft are the norm for long-range passenger travel, while orbital flights are available for the wealthy and impatient. Water transport dominates freight shipping, and El Dorado makes use of giant canals and locks (suited for Avalonmax-class freighters) across isthmuses and to link the Super Lakes to the oceans.

Typical of a Golden Five world, El Dorado offers excellent medical care, and the average life span is currently 121 years. El Dorado is particularly noted for nerve repair and cardiovascular care (the latter due to its high gravity). Health care is usually private, though the poor and visitors receive some government benefits, and it is easily affordable; this planet has an abundance of skilled medical personnel and advanced medical technology. VTOL and ground ambulance coverage is outstanding; people have to go deep into the wilderness to be more than an hour from rescue (usually minutes in a city).

As might be expected, El Dorado's education system is also excellent, with no shortage of teachers or knowledge and no pervasive propaganda. Coverage through secondary school is free to citizens (and visiting AFFS personnel) and leaves the population 100 percent literate, generally computer literate as well, and ready for local colleges or even prestigious universities. Despite attempts to export this system throughout the Federated Suns, the expense has kept it from replicating well.

Technically, El Dorado is a representative republic with an elected Governor-Generalcy and bicameral Congress, and a federal division of powers between regional states and the planetary government. In practice, power is concentrated in the hands of the First Families, making the world a successful and low-key oligarchy. These founding colonial families are extremely wealthy clans (typified by the Sanromea-Davions) that own El Dorado's major corporations. The corporations heavily influence elections and government policy via campaign contributions, leaving the public with the illusion it is voting for its choice of candidates while giving the First Families a relatively pliable government without putting themselves in the line of public-opinion fire (which the elected politicians fear more than First Family pressure). The civil service is somewhat corrupt because certain offices are appointed by elected politicians, but stiff testing requirements for any civil service position prevents such cronies from being incompetent.

Many members of the First Families have noble titles, but this simply gives them off-world clout. The only noble title that has constitutional significance on El Dorado is the planetary duke (separate from the Governor-General), who serves as liaison to the Federated Suns government. Because of the national government's minimalist presence, El Doradans

generally spend much more time bemoaning the life-altering shenanigans of Congress and the Governor-General (who serves as commander-in-chief of the powerful and professional planetary militia) than doings in "distant" New Avalon. (The activities of the El Doradan government in turn are often overshadowed by the latest cutthroat politicking of neighborhood councils.)

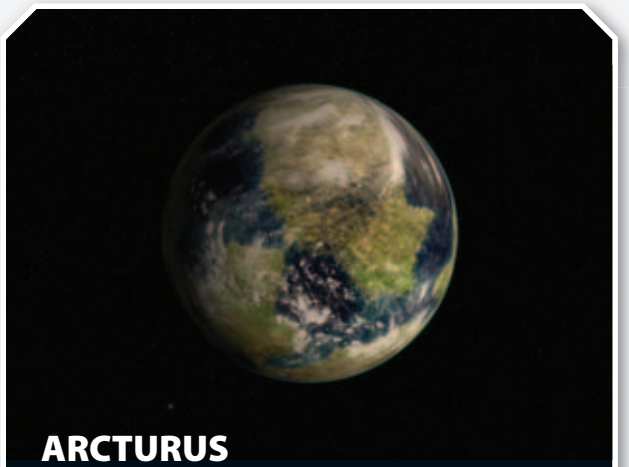
El Dorado has used recycling and advanced technology to preserve its resources despite more than eight centuries of industrial development. Losses in recycling are readily replaced by the abundant mineral reserves. Similarly, fresh water is plentiful and conservation policies keep it that way, while arable land is used efficiently. As a result, El Doradans are wealthy for many reasons: heavy industrialization, low unemployment, high wages and inexpensive essentials. What passes for "dense" urban housing on this planet averages several hundred square meters for the typical middle-class family; holovid players are common in many rooms; it is a coming-of-age rite for "tweens" to get a vidphone in their bedrooms; utilities are not only stable and cheap, but robustly built against quakes and war (for example, EMP), as is the solid (and tasteful) housing. Natives have developed a sense of material moderation; the homes of immigrants are identifiable by their clutter, as all the rare near-lostech they dreamed of is available with a couple of keystrokes and a fraction of their weekly income. Some inhabitants of less pleasant planets are said to burn effigies of El Dorado in public while privately wishing to immigrate there.

ARCTURUS

Arcturus is a typical Inner Sphere planet in many ways. Its technology level is average, it is generally short of potable water (any water, actually) and has trouble producing sufficient food, its mineral resources are depleted, its population is near the Inner Sphere average, and its industry barely meets the needs of its population.

The world has some unique features, however. Arcturus was once the Lyran capital, and unlike most worlds of the Inner Sphere, its population growth has been slightly negative for some time because local cultural issues discourage large families. The population peaked at 3.3 billion during the Golden Years of the Star League (more than two hundred years after the Lyran capital moved to Tharkad). In previous publications, ComStar incorrectly juxtaposed the loss of capital status more than six hundred years ago with the modern population decline and suggested the world was trapped in its glorious past because it preserved its old architecture.

Some Arcturan cities were left to nature because of falling population, but a far larger factor was a Succession War-era trend of abandoning "nuke magnet" cities that developed into a cultural preference for "small-town living." Yet another contribution to the image of a fading world is the existence of only one major industrial city, Malcheema, on the larger northern continent of Attenia. While Malcheema is the only significantly industrialized city on Arcturus—and its capital as well—this reality owes more to overall population size than to planetary ennui. Keeping a mere billion people clothed and housed, and stores stocked, only requires a single city-sized industrial complex—and unlike most other advanced Inner Sphere planets, the Arcturans chose not to widely distribute their industrial centers in hopes of some surviving assaults during the Succession Wars. Visitors are unlikely to recognize Malcheema as an industrial powerhouse, as its factories are hidden in green belts or underground.



ARCTURUS
(Middle Tech, Industrialized, Average World)
Noble Ruler: Duchess Arielle Fyhne
Star Type (Recharge Time): K2III (193 hours)
Position in System: 5
Time to Jump Point: 4.85 days
Number of Satellites: 3 (Donegal, Skye, Tamar)
Surface Gravity: 1.02
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 33° C (Mild-Temperate)
Surface Water: 43 percent
Recharging Station: Zenith, Nadir
HPG Class Type: A
Highest Native Life: Mammals
Population: 1,013,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: B-C-D-C-D

Life on Arcturus is adequate, all told. The trickle of population that leaves to join the Lyran military might be Arcturus' most notable export, but they are not dissatisfied with their homeworld, and certainly not responsible for the population decline.

Typical of a low-water planet, Arcturus' surface is dominated by large continents—northern Attenia, Borreus, Chadrik, Dustina and Penrod—separated by narrow saltwater oceans and straits (which allow inexpensive shipping between Malcheema and the rest of the world). All of the continents lie in Arcturus' temperate zones, giving them generally pleasant Mediterranean-style climates, which was one of the original reasons for selecting Arcturus as the Commonwealth's first capital. Ocean currents bring moderate temperatures and rains to the densely populated regions of Attenia, which holds most of the planet's population. Despite near-terrestrial gravity, Arcturus is a quarter larger in diameter than Terra—a result of a lower density that unfortunately means Arcturus' crust is relatively metal-poor, but also makes real estate inexpensive.

The 2552 planetary charter organizes Arcturus as a constitutional monarchy. The ruling duke or duchess serves as head of state, while the head of government is the Prime Minister. This pattern is repeated at provincial and district scales, where landgraves, grafs and barons serve as heads of state for their landholdings (thus retaining some authority over planetary militia forces), while the

landholds are administered by elected officials (governors, mayors and urban councils). The planetary parliament is a typical bicameral body with roots in the Terran Alliance system. The People's Chamber is fixed at 300 seats, which are reapportioned to the provinces every decade (following a planetary census) according to a complicated formula related to a province's population, economy and tax contributions (a formula that results in Malcheema Province having the largest number of votes); seats are then filled by direct election from among the common citizenry. The Chamber of Lords seats all Arcturan nobles of baronial rank or higher (currently 113 seats), and all have equal votes. The Prime Minister is "recommended" by parliamentary vote and approved by the duke, who ignores this recommendation at his peril (as a two-thirds majority vote of both chambers can unseat him).

While the duke is legally little more than a figurehead and representative to the Lyran government, the Fyhne dukes are also the largest landlord and investor in Malcheema, giving them significant (but not overwhelming) influence in the government. This is a typically Lyran approach to noble leadership: when unable to rule directly, they use money to secure power. Lesser nobles often replicate this method; the nobility owns most major companies on Arcturus.

As a well-developed world with a functional government, Arcturus has only moderate crime, though a surge of violence in the 3020s caused by the Malthus crime syndicate has left Arcturan law enforcement with stern punishments, modern forensics and an over-active planetary police force desperate to preserve its budgets despite the syndicate's eradication on Arcturus. Most crime on the planet today is white-collar rent and property abuse by noble landlords, who have a habit of terminating leases and evicting tenants on whims (and, in worse cases, extorting and coercing tenants by threatening eviction). The planet's charter protects the civil liberties of the citizens, though strict slander and libel laws can be abused to silence critics of nobles and elected politicians.

Visitors will see entertainment typical of an Inner Sphere world, such as countless regional sports teams and planetary leagues; thousands of channels of cable tri-vid, including serials imported by HPG from across the Inner Sphere; plenty of outdoor activities, permitted by clean air and water; and computer networks. Only in the latter area does Arcturus differ from the norm; except for a number of online sport and combat games, computers are perceived as the domain of the cerebral, and Arcturan culture is somewhat more prone than the Inner Sphere at large to regard intellectual individuals as weak. As a result, Arcturan electronic entertainment lags. On the other hand, Arcturus has some spectacular deserts in otherwise mild climes (difficult to avoid, given its low water coverage) and a local passion for desert hiking (perhaps favored for its low cost; Arcturans spend most of their income on essentials).

Rain is sparse on Arcturus and humans have sprawled over Attenia's most arable lands with bloated suburbs, which drove farming away from the continent. With off-world staple food imports out of the question for 1 billion people, Arcturan agriculture depends heavily on desalinization and protection from storms rolling off the great deserts. This makes food expensive (staples cost 50 percent more than the Lyran average, while luxuries may cost more than twice the norm), and water conservation is strict. Carefully regulated fishing provides most of the protein in Arcturan diets; Arcturus does have some exceptional, if salty, seafood dishes, though most natives seek imported fruits and red meat for their luxury meals. Unwilling to give up domestic water usage, most Arcturan homes and buildings feature water recycling systems that add to the cost of living, but allow regular showers (if not watering the lawn).

Most consumer goods are also expensive (25-100 percent more than the norm) because Arcturus is a resource-starved world. Unable to import goods as it did during the Star League, Arcturus is a poster child of advanced mining and resource extraction. Because of the expense of replacement, consumer pressure has resulted in durable goods that last decades. Battery-powered personal transport is typical, while trains use electrified rails and ships are often fusion-powered because local oil supplies are exhausted. Overall, the cost of living on Arcturus is high; discretionary budgets are small for most citizens.

Arcturus has a strong car culture, eschewing passenger rail for daily commuting. Attenia, Chadrik and Dustina are linked by bridges and tunnels at their closest points, putting most of the world's land area within driving range (though airplanes are preferred for long-range flights). Arcturus is unusual among advanced worlds in that autopilots are rare in cars; local culture prizes skilled drivers, and so many visitors do not initially pass driving exams (and are not allowed to rent cars). Though individuals avoid railways, they are the primary means of moving freight around this dry world, overshadowing long-range trucks.

Finally, Arcturus is noted for its soaring and bombastic architecture, a holdover from its heyday as the capital of the Lyran Commonwealth. These conglomerations of giant domes, Greco-Roman columns and colorful native marble and limestone were something of a joke when introduced, but the style evolved (enforced by governments unwilling to admit their expensive aesthetic mistakes) and is now a hallmark of Arcturan government buildings, mansions and any company that wants to appear elite and professional.

OVAN

Ovan is a Capellan "core" world, relatively close to Sian and rarely raided (mostly for lack of anything to raid). Settled in 2393 by Chinese at the behest of the Capellan government, Ovan is another typical human-inhabited world, at least socially and technologically. Environmentally speaking, Ovan is definitely abnormal.

Physically, Ovan is notable for orbiting a dim red dwarf ("Ember" to locals). Ovan is close enough that its very circular orbit (16 days long) is in a 4:1 resonance with the star (and other resonances with the first and third planets of the system that prevent Ovan from complete tidal lock). The day length does not vary through the short year because of negligible equatorial tilt. Further, Ember is an old star; it shows few flare behaviors common to younger red dwarfs. This means that Ovan is also old, which shows up in its depleted oceans, though a thick atmosphere maintains its habitability.

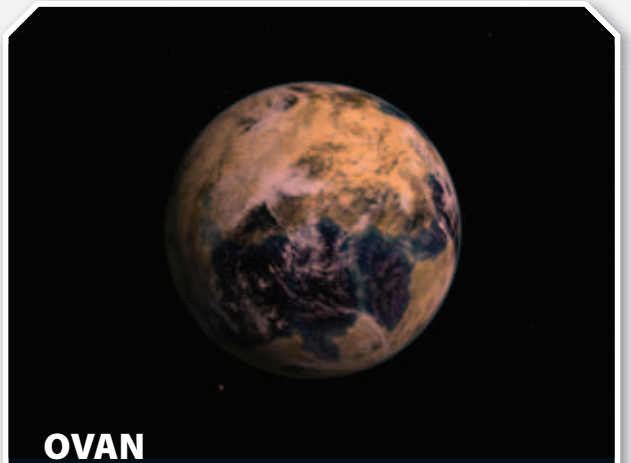
The long days and nights, lack of tilt and circular orbit make an indelible mark on Ovan's weather: air flows from east to west as the rising sun warms and expands it, driving it to the

cool dark side. Rains are extremely predictable, coming at dusk as humid, saturated daytime air begins to cool. This cycle is so dependable and tectonic drift so limited that a "World River" (20 to 500km wide) has been carved around the equator where daily heating and cooling are greatest. This unbroken equatorial ocean is highly saline, reflecting the loss of the planet's oceans over time (estimated to have once covered 85 percent of the planet). Atmosphere has also depleted; Ovan was once swathed in an even denser atmosphere than currently. The ocean's coastline is made ragged by numerous rivers that drain the rainfall from near-equatorial lands. Though Ovan technically has numerous continental plates, the World River basically divides the planet into two approximately equal land masses. Beyond the World River, those lands are extremely dry; many lowlands are covered in salt flats and dust from the long-gone oceans, and the few inland bodies of water are often nearly saturated brines.

Visitors expecting to find a world lit by a dim red glow will be surprised. Ovan is habitable and receives Terran-like illumination (in total wattage). Though reddish compared to Sol, anyone looking at Ember will see a white orb (about four times as wide as Sol) because Ember's surface temperature is comparable to that of a tungsten filament in an incandescent light bulb: it appears white to human eyes. With little high-frequency ultraviolet light, Ovan has no ozone layer, so Ember's meager output of lower UV frequencies largely reaches the ground and causes quick sunburns (several times faster than on Terra). The high infrared output can be literally blinding to visitors who mistakenly stare at Ember, which seems dim enough (in visible light) to look at for extended periods.

Human habitation on Ovan forms continuous bands of cities along the north and south coasts of the World River; transportation is dominated by water traffic, as well as roads and railways that run parallel to the riverbanks). The imaginatively named North and South Metropoli are mostly 1 to 20km in distance from the coastlines, compressed by the demands of keeping farms near major water sources (rivers rarely reach more than 200km inland) and the need of local nobles to keep their peasants under observation. This gives Ovan a high population density in its main urban areas and leaves it virtually uninhabited elsewhere, save for mining operations and nobles' farming estates. Because of the varied terrain along the World River (anything from salt flats to steep cliffs), the architecture of the North and South Metropoli varies considerably; they have picturesque hillside districts popular with the nobility, business districts with modern skyscrapers, and many districts of poorly built, ugly concrete apartment blocks. (In modern Ovan mediaspeak, the announcement of an "urban renewal project" usually refers to the destruction of an apartment block by fire or structural failure.)

Ovan was once an industrial linchpin for the Capellan Confederation. It was long-settled, populous, possessing abundant mineral resources and short transit to planetary jump points, where squadrons of recharge stations cut recharge times by days. This prosperity ended with the Succession Wars, which cut Ovan's access to cheap water filters, destroyed its recharge stations and ravaged its merchant fleets. On-planet raids against Ovan's advanced factories left the world abjectly poor. Standards of living have continued to sink, but this is only partly due to war damage—industry, agriculture and mining reached stable levels in the Second Succession War. After those raids, however, the new government that developed on Ovan reveled in the power it gained over the citizens and has become one of the longest-running and most stable kleptocracies in the Inner Sphere.



OVAN

(Middle Tech, Industrialized, Average World)
Noble Ruler: Lord Chao Liao
Star Type (Recharge Time): M6V (207 hours)
Position in System: 2
Time to Jump Point: 2.34 days
Number of Satellites: None
Surface Gravity: 0.91
Atm. Pressure: High (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 33° C (Temperate)
Surface Water: 24 percent
Recharging Station: Nadir
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Reptiles
Population: 5,187,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: C-B-C-C-C

Unlike the other Great Houses, which generally allow planets to run themselves so long as they support the central government as appropriate (with the definition of "as appropriate" varying sharply from House to House), the Capellan government imposes standardization on its worlds. Ovan's government is officially the Demesnes of Ovan, an interlocking complex of nobles from the House of Scions (dominated by the Lord of Ovan), bureaucrats from the Capellan Ministerial (overseen by the Diem of Ovan, the Lord's appointed planetary administrator), and local caste councils. The Demesnes of Ovan is ruled by a hereditary Lord, Chao Liao, rather than a Lord appointed by the Chancellor. Though convoluted, the various branches have distinct roles (despite power-grabbing by individual members of government) and the official organization is relatively clear, unlike the gridlocked, unmappable nightmare of, say, the Draconis Combine's bureaucracy.

However, Ovan is not a poster child for what many might call the evils of Capellan government. While the Confederation is generally an oppressive police state, simultaneously feudal and communist, it rarely directly abuses people who stick to their place in life and follow the rules. Any citizen (other than the

servitor caste) can expect free schooling, free health care and state pensions, and the castes are not rigid; it is easy to marry across caste lines, test into a new caste, and so on. On Ovan, by contrast, local nobles have come to exercise complete control over the citizenry by their ownership of the desalinization units, power plants and farms, and by careful appointment of cronies and family members in the bureaucracy. They enforce their rule and discourage citizens from seeking aid from the Confederation at large by showing exceeding loyalty to Sian (which looks the other way at reports of abuse from its Ovan nobles); abusing their right to create military ranks by forming huge private militias (mostly gangs of club-swinging thugs); and levying taxes on their fiefs. The difference between Ovan and any other kleptocracy is that the government has learned enough moderation to make their plundering sustainable for generations.

While the city streets appear to be dominated by various forms of organized crime (gangs, tongs, triads, yakuza and so on), there are few places in human space where the saying, "There is no crime because the government doesn't tolerate competition," is more true. The organized crime groups are simply "unauthorized activities" by "impetuous children and underlings." That is, the planet's criminal organizations that extort, steal, smuggle and deal in the sex trade are either deniable moneymaking activities of a local noble, or the local noble's children learning the ropes. The gangs are the foundation of power on Ovan; entry to and advancement in them leads to close connections with the planetary rulers. (Of course, one can climb through castes and the bureaucracy traditionally, but those organizations are minefields of unseen ties to many different noble masters.)

The same nobility that regularly extorts the citizenry with "construction licenses," "insurance," "neighborhood development fees" and other thinly veiled robbery techniques also uses legal authority to extort more money from the citizenry and claim the lion's share of business activities. For example, because of the collapse of pollution controls in the Succession Wars, the World River is not only briny, but also badly polluted (primarily with sewer effluent and agricultural runoff; it is profitable to recycle industrial waste on resource-poor Ovan). The close-packed apartment blocks offer little surface area for individuals to collect rain, so citizens must depend on utilities (noble-owned, of course) for fresh water. While citizens may own real estate, the nobles have seized most of the arable land and thus control food sales. Ovan's big river dams and few fusion power plants are far too expensive for any commoner to own (and defend), so the nobles hold those, too. With ironclad control over water, food and electricity, nobles can raise or lower rates as needed to maintain control over the population.

Over the years, Ovan's leaders have learned to keep their extortion in moderation. Most citizens can get through their lives (which average about 95 years) with only a few beatings and do not lose too many of their immediate friends and family to violence over that time (except for young males). Women, children and the elderly are generally accorded some respect by most gang members. Most nobles use a patronage system, so they have carrots as well as sticks to award to loyal citizens, and nobles who are unusually cruel or greedy are vulnerable to overthrow by peers who can exploit the oppressed citizens' ire. Non-organized crime is relatively scarce because protection rackets genuinely offer some protection; being unable to defend "their turf" usually brings loss of face to a noble or gang, and so independent thieves, murderers and rapists usually fall afoul of militias, gangs and the police at the same time. Most disputes between neighboring fiefs are settled by diplomacy because constant gang violence hurts the bottom line and makes nobles look bad; the so-called "criminals" can be superficially respectful, polite and diplomatic with their victims and rivals. (Crime wars tend to blow up about twice a generation as a new crop of young fools forgets the lessons of the last war about ten to fifteen years back.)

In some ways, life on Ovan can be vibrant and exciting. The long nights can create an exotic carnival atmosphere, where flickering neon announces nightclubs and rain at dusk does nothing to dampen spirits. The bitter chill of late night and predictable morning fogs only add to the atmosphere. Life cannot stop during the long nights, so most citizens adhere to 24-hour schedules, creating the illusion of constant bustle on streets. Socially, the planet is a fierce Darwinian environment that eliminates fools and the weak, with some 3-5 percent of the nobles and their power bases being replaced annually by more successful foes (which may be spouses, children or neighboring nobles); the few nobles who last decades and transfer power peacefully are accorded due respect.

Typical of the Confederation, citizens of Ovan have access to free medical care, though the government clinics are poorly equipped and the planet lacks enough ambulances. (Private clinics are expensive but offer much better care.) Schooling is free through the secondary level, though it primarily serves to indoctrinate citizens into their lot in life (one reason Ovan's current government has lasted so long). Professional fire-fighting is another noble-monopolized service that is vitally important for commoners' firetrap dwellings; unfortunately, quality varies greatly from fief to fief, so most locals have seen apartment towers or whole blocks go up in flames.

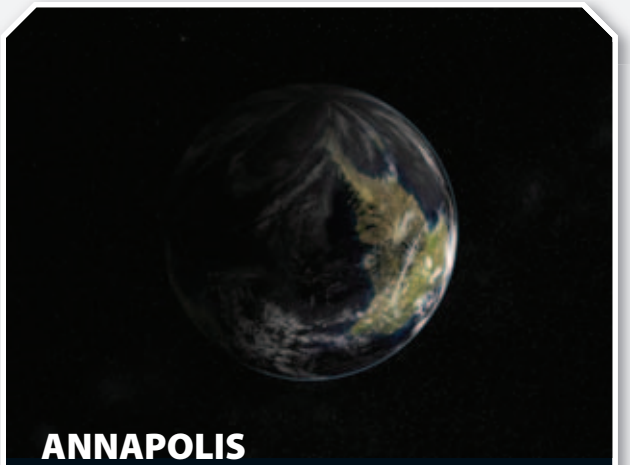
Work ethics are deficient in larger Ovan companies, which are mostly moneymaking machines for nobles. This is most obvious in the low quality of consumer goods and in a construction industry notorious for cutting corners to save money on labor and materials. The hardworking peasantry running the many little shops and businesses that are the foundation of Ovanian life offer a sharp contrast to this endemic corruption.

Visitors will find Ovan's technology average, perhaps somewhat backward. Communication technologies are the least advanced, with wireless communications being the province of nobles, militias and first responders. Vidphones are a mark of the rich; most wealthy families have one voice-only, hardwired phone per home (or apartment hall), and public pay phones charge double (once for the phone, once for the youth gangs that control access to it). While tri-vids are common home items, programming is controlled by the government. (Since the rise of Sun-Tzu Liao, holovids have become more varied and exciting, even though the underlying indoctrination remains.) Ovan has no planetary computer network. Isolated networks are used by large companies and some elements of the bureaucracy, heavily monitored by the Maskirovka.

Feet, bicycles, rickshaws and electric scooters provide short-range transport for peasants, and some wealthier areas have trolleys. Long-distance travel is mostly handled by ships and overcrowded railways. Ships and barges handle most freight transport. Freight trains are generally limited to delivering ores, as most mines are deep inland. Nobles and other VIPs often have access to expensive cars that have priority on highways. Contrary to what might be expected on this relatively impoverished world, most roads in urban areas are well paved; the predictable rains would present a severe erosion risk otherwise, and road construction is another venue for graft. Young and wealthy individuals often make their mark with over-powered, flashy electric motorcycles, and air transport—from VTOLs to airplanes—is restricted to government personnel (automatically including nobles, of course). Exhaustion of petroleum and restricted arable land limits most other transportation to batteries, hydrogen-powered fuel cells and electrified rail.

Visitors, even foreigners, can find this world quite accommodating if they have permission to visit the planet and refrain from saying anything foolish about the Confederation (because anyone contacting off-world visitors will rush to file contact reports). Unlike the xenophobic Draconis Combine, the people of the Confederation understand that foreigners have their place, especially when they have papers demonstrating that the Celestial Wisdom of the Chancellor has found a place for them; to interfere would be to question the Chancellor. Language-wise, English is a rare second tongue after various Chinese dialects.

Unless they are wealthy, visitors and natives alike mostly seek their pleasure in services, alcohol and drugs, and sports. Industrial production is limited on this world by the ever-thieving government and resource shortages, so consumer goods are scarce, expensive and poorly built. Nobles and the tiny class of non-noble wealthy seek imported goods and have begun to lean toward ostentatious displays of possessions in their homes (public displays leave them vulnerable to theft). With food and drink also expensive (and the typical menu usually limited to rice, soya and other simple staples), most of the population tends toward short and thin builds; those with money often demonstrate it by being somewhat plump (though outright obesity is considered tacky).



ANNAPOLIS

(Backward, Undeveloped, Garden World)
Noble Ruler: Akemi Arakaki, Daimyo of Annapolis
Star Type (Recharge Time): G2V (183 hours)
Position in System: 2
Time to Jump Point: 9.12 days
Number of Satellites: 2 (Severn, Proctor)
Surface Gravity: 0.95
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 35° C (Tropical)
Surface Water: 73 percent
Recharging Station: None
HPG Class Type: B
Highest Native Life: Mammals
Population: 3,387,000,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: F-F-B-F-C

ANNAPOLIS

Annapolis was once like New Avalon and El Dorado, a fantastic world with plentiful fresh water, a Terran-compatible ecology, fresh air and excellent mineral resources. Discovered in 2218 and opened for colonization in 2235 to great fanfare, Annapolis was settled by the elite of the Terran Alliance (reflected in its name, drawn from a small town near one of the Alliance's centers of power). The Alliance planned the world as a showcase regional capital to solve crippling communication and control delays to Alliance colonies. Accordingly, Annapolis received massive funding and heavy immigration from Terra.

After that bright dawn, Annapolis ran into tough times (the entire second half of the 23rd century) that set the stage for its present-day situation: a lush, overpopulated (for its technology level) backwater where few of its occupants see beyond the borders of their corn fields. Trouble began after Terran crops (colonial gene-mods broadly resistant to alien pests and microbes) had brutally winnowed certain local microbes into resistant forms that found terrestrial life a perfect host environment. Just as these new superbugs were causing everything from deadly plagues to unsightly skin rashes among colonists faster than overwhelmed medical clinics could cure, the Terran Alliance issued the 2242 Demarcation Declaration and abandoned Annapolis. When the Expansionist Party swept back into power on Terra, they sent ships to rescue Alliance government personnel, but considered the rest of the world a write-off. Loss of much-needed government support prompted technological and economic collapse. The subsequent Exodus from Terra bypassed the (literally) plagued colony, depriving it of fresh blood that might have revived its fortunes.

Annapolis survived through grit, determination and bountiful natural resources. Colonists re-mastered early 20th-century technology and rebuilt industry, overcame the plagues with remnants of higher technology, and created a stable, democratic government. When the Alliance of Galedon extended an invitation to join, Annapolis did so eagerly, having gotten scant support from its North American homeland, let alone the greater Terran Alliance. In the short term, this move brought Annapolis outside investment and technology and a chance to recover. By the dawn of the 26th century, however, Annapolis had only advanced to a more sophisticated mining camp for the Combine. Meanwhile, steady imposition of the Combine's cultural features—like a callous foreign nobility—pushed Annapolis toward its current, backward

state. The Succession Wars dealt the final blow, shattering the planet's relatively undefended advanced industrial centers.

Today, Annapolis resembles a Davion Skid Row world or one of the many independent Periphery planets, despite being a rare garden world. Most of the population lives by subsistence farming of rice paddies and corn fields, and the Kurita nobles who rule the planet do what they can to keep permanent this aesthetic ideal of "pastoral peasantry." In reality, life is brutish and dirty, an all the more tragic state of affairs because Annapolis remains a water- and mineral-rich world (though centuries of industrialized mining reduced its stocks of rare, valuable materials such as germanium). Local peasants are well-fed on average, and Annapolis needs roughly two billion more people before it might face a Malthusian-style collapse at its current crude level of technology (roughly equivalent to Terra's early to mid-19th century, with a dearth of combustion power). Population pressures and the relatively disadvantaged *shugo* noble rank will likely force industrialization over the next few generations.

The coastal capital city of Maryland is, to Combine visitors, the jewel of the planet. The city holds to a strict Japanese aesthetic for even its modern buildings while keeping a simple, clean layout. It includes a walled section for the planet's elite. Rather than a serious fortification, the wall is a traffic-control measure that keeps country bumpkins from streaming into Annapolis' single significant high-tech center. The Walled Sector houses Annapolis' university, which provides an excellent education to the planet's higher nobles; hosts stores, clinics and clubs with off-world imported goods; and contains the sole municipal fusion power plant, as well as ComStar's HPG. It also features off-world-supported repair facilities for advanced technology. Among it architectural landmarks are the Five Pillars, a set of pagoda-styled skyscrapers that hold Annapolis' central government offices. Beyond the Walled Sector, Maryland consists of several sectors of comparatively advanced (Terran 20th century-style) housing and infrastructure that includes the homes of the highest-level members of the planet's overgrown bureaucracy and the capital residences of the planet's noble court. Maryland is a major harbor and rail hub, while fifty kilometers inland from it is Annapolis' main spaceport. These facilities funnel the planet's trickle of exports (usually rare resources and people) off-world in exchange for the advanced technology craved by Annapolis' elite. Urban planning (and police with flamethrowers) prevent slums from accumulating around the city's flanks; only picturesque villages ring Maryland for some 100 kilometers.

The government that operates in Maryland is a microcosm of the Combine at large. The current Earl, a young MechWarrior who abruptly inherited the throne from her assassinated father, serves as the planet's Coordinator and quietly oversees the churning politics of the nobility and bureaucracy like a spider in the center of a vast web. Through subtle suggestions (tugs on the web), the Earl of Annapolis can influence the planet while deflecting blame from herself. Akemi Arakaki has proven adept at this means of rule, and unlike many local higher nobles, spends much of her time on Annapolis rather than at Luthien's court (where she understands Annapolis nobles hardly rank above janitors). In her rare public appearances, the Earl is usually overseeing militia and DCMS garrison drills in her BLR-K3 *BattleMaster*, which impresses the locals no end. She has followed in the footsteps of her three predecessors in straightening out the labyrinthine Combine bureaucracy on Annapolis, creating a government somewhat more transparent (to members of the planetary elite, at least) than the Combine norm. The Earl has also mentioned at her planetary court an interest in sensible industrialization to improve the world's fortunes for the betterment of the Draconis Combine (while also greatly increasing the wealth of the local nobles).

Below the rarely seen but always sensed Earl of Annapolis, the government is the embodiment of outsiders' visions of a Combine world. *Tozama daimyos* and *shugos* provide executive rule over successively smaller regions of the planet, with commoner village elders acting as liaisons between the *shugos* and the peasantry. *Shugos* only receive respect from their superiors in public, who consider them jumped-up peasants ruling several villages or a city; the *tozama daimyos* and their families generally have modern homes and are schooled in Maryland.

The pervasive bureaucracy is a stepping-stone for some families to higher status, assuming their sons can pass entrance and placement exams to earn a position. At the highest levels, the bureaucracy is run by officials exiled to Annapolis; their disinterest in this world of "scabby, pale-skinned round-eyes" has allowed recent Earls to straighten out the bureaucracy so it approaches some level of effective government, freeing substantial amounts of taxes for industrialization and infrastructure projects (like better clinics and water supplies).

Beyond Maryland, technology is scarce. The most advanced industrial regions have factories approximating the early 20th century's capabilities, often depending on hydropower or renewable biofuels. These produce the trickle of domestically built motorized vehicles used on the planet, the trains, steamships, and odd tractor or bus. Other technology is usually rare and imported. A typical Annapolis village prides itself on having a solar panel powering a few items like a Star League-era x-ray/convection oven and robotic toy; a fief is proud to host a theater with a century-old tri-vid projector and several holovids to display. Instead of horse couriers that a visitor might expect, a copper wire telephone network reaches to most villages, giving village elders (and paying customers) a means of communicating with central authorities or business associates. *Tozama daimyos* (and some *shugos*) have telephones and tri-vids in their homes (and wealthy *tozama daimyos* may have wireless communicators). Communication services (other than HPG) are provided not by ComStar, but by a local Arakaki-owned company with ties to the Combine firm Tanadi.

Schooling is extremely limited for most of the population. Village headmen and well-off farmers can afford to send their children to the local schools, which give about five years of reading, writing and arithmetic along with several more years of indoctrination into Combine ideology. *Shugos* have access to somewhat better schools, allowing them to provide their serfs with important knowledge of agronomy and animal husbandry. Any bureaucrat has completed local schooling and been educated further by his office as needed. Only the rare *tozama daimyos* and their families (at least, their male relatives) receive excellent educations in Maryland, albeit tinged with indoctrination appropriate to their rank.

Under the current Earl and her father, Annapolis has removed regulations restricting women's educational access (making Annapolis more liberal in this regard than the Combine at large), but has not made a campaign of educating women. As a result, the peasantry's attitudes toward women have not shifted. The largest change is among the families of rural *shugos* and *urban tozama* daimyos, who have come to view an educated woman as one who brings a bigger bride price and can perhaps secure a marriage to a more powerful husband (because, so the reasoning goes, a woman who understands numbers can better manage a household, and a woman who knows the arts can better entertain guests). Improved access to schooling means greater access to the Combine's aptitude tests, and so Annapolis has a larger-than-normal number of women in its DCMS contingent. Annapolis' arts schooling is looked down on by the larger Combine; the planet's "unfortunate" ethnic background allegedly makes its people incapable of producing true artisans.

Medical care is mostly provided by folk practitioners, and Annapolis (per the Combine norm) attempts to ensure that every village has a nearby medicine man. This state of affairs has improved over the past two generations as programs spreading basic medical theories like antisepsis along with fledgling health-care supply businesses have achieved some success. Most fiefs have clinics with basic x-ray machines and other mid-20th century medical paraphernalia, but their under-equipped staffs are usually overwhelmed by the flood of peasants seeking care. Hospitals in Maryland are vastly better, with properly trained doctors and imported equipment, but are only available to nobles and ranking government members. (Rural nobility usually cannot reach Maryland in time to address any real medical emergency.) The clinic in the Walled Sector is cutting-edge, but only available to a few. Nobles often play a role in health care by isolating disease-ridden fiefs. The average life span on Annapolis is one of the lowest in the Inner Sphere at 53 years, though the families of *tozama daimyos* and *daimyos* generally live about 100 years. Their extended health and youth helps convince the peasants that the nobles truly are more than mortal.

Violence and crime are rare on Annapolis. While the nobles' rule might reach the level of criminal activity by some standards, the peasants are mostly a quiet lot, having absorbed steady indoctrination in the Combine's sense of community. In the 2800s, a wave of highway brigands and even marauding bands of criminals pillaged entire villages, but the nobles bought themselves generations of loyalty by rising to the challenge and hunting down the ruffians. Today, harsh penalties (impalement and crucifixion) and the local nobles' sport of hunting criminals like big game keeps most violent and property crimes rare on Annapolis. Horrible deaths meted out to local miscreants lead what little news the peasantry receives, along with glowing reports of the Draconis Combine's off-world military successes.

Visitors, at least those approved by the government, will find that their hard currency (ryu or C-bills) goes a very long way on Annapolis. It is not unusual to be able to rent (or pay the mortgage) on a palatial townhome on the edge of Maryland (with electricity, running water, air conditioning and holovid in the master wing) staffed by a dozen servants on a common DCMS MechWarrior's salary. (The population surplus means extravagant uses of manual labor are the norm on the world.) Off-world currencies are fixed against the price of imported goods, which often cost a peasant's annual income, so those currencies can buy a lot. Most of the planet uses local scrip, and barter in remote areas. Rural peasants tend to assume that off-worlders must be noble, and Combine traditions of hospitality toward noble guests lead them to treat travelers well; typical amenities include being offered residence in a village headman's home, or first selection of tubs in the village bathhouse.

A few Stone Age tribes exist in the planet's deep deserts and jungles, far from the reach of the government and dominant culture. These peoples are some of the most primitive and quixotic groups in the Inner Sphere. For example, deep in the cloud forests of Queen Anne's Land dwells a cargo cult that worships amazingly accurate mockups of Star League-era DropShips. They tend to follow the usual course of cargo cults, prophesying that their great benefactors from the stars (with magical powers and great gifts) will one day return if they maintain their mockups. One of these tribes maintains a six-meter tall, perfect likeness of Aleksandr Kerensky, carved of a type of granite isotopically confirmed to be from a completely different star system than Annapolis.

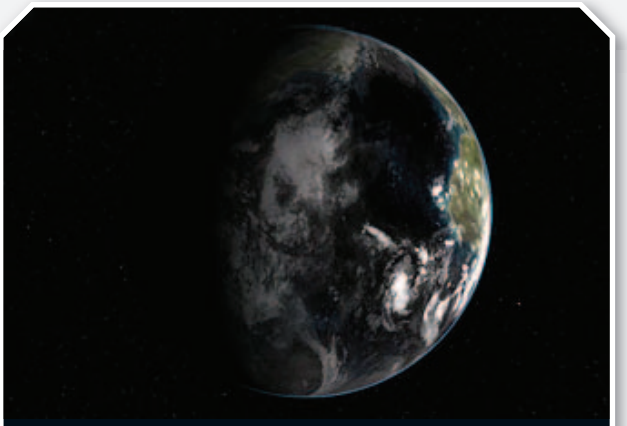
SOLARIS VII

Until 3067, Solaris VII was an example of a well-to-do Inner Sphere world. With its low population, plentiful fresh water, abundant arable land and seemingly boundless resources, it was dubbed (with some exaggeration) "the most naturally habitable planet for five jumps." It has two significant land masses, Grayland and Equatus. Grayland (so named for its dismal and frequent overcast) is broken up by a number of seas and hosts most of the population, including Solaris City. Equatus is considered Solaris VII's wild frontier (though much of Grayland is also sparsely settled), and has a pleasant, temperate climate.

The Free Worlds League originally settled Solaris VII for its natural resources and its location near the Lyran border, which made it a natural trade hub. The variety of raw, untouched terrain on Solaris VII made the world an ideal BattleMech proving ground, and so Solaris' booming industry came to revolve around BattleMechs. With so much live-fire testing, it was only a matter of time before companies began pitting their designs against competitors. The first official competitive test took place in 2695. After the competition, BattleMech manufacturers noticed the popularity (and profitability) of bootleg fight vids. Within a year, more live-fire competitions were being held for the entertainment of locals and the BattleMech manufacturers established the first dueling stables. Not long afterward, the Star League HPG network spread this new form of entertainment to the rest of the Inner Sphere.

Unlike many of its neighbors, Solaris VII was not conquered by House Steiner during the early Succession Wars. Instead, it peacefully changed its allegiance after those neighbors were conquered. This practical decision was primarily influenced by the powerful Lyran economy, which offered more to Solaris VII than continued membership in the Free Worlds (though Lyran military successes in the area were a factor). The planet's loyalty—or at least a determination never to return to the Free Worlds League—was secured when a vengeful Marik fleet scoured Solaris' original cities with nuclear weapons, scarring the planet and narrowly missing Solaris City.

Though the Succession Wars initially drained Solaris VII of skilled MechWarriors and overshadowed its staged conflicts with more dramatic real warfare, the planet eventually thrived. The Succession Wars offered an endless supply of veteran MechWarriors to replace those who had left, and BattleMech



SOLARIS VII

(Middle Tech, Underdeveloped, Garden World)
Noble Ruler: None
Star Type (Recharge Time): K1V (192 hours)
Position in System: 7
Time to Jump Point: 5.18 days
Number of Satellites: 1 (Solaris 7 Able)
Surface Gravity: 1.1
Atm. Pressure: Standard (Breathable)
Equatorial Temperature: 25° C (Cool-Temperate)
Surface Water: 80 percent
Recharging Station: Zenith, Nadir
HPG Class Type: None
Highest Native Life: Fish
Population: 494,937,000
Socio-Industrial Levels: C-B-A-D-C

stables learned to play national rivalries for dramatically improved ratings. Unlike the Succession Wars that raged in real life, someone always emerged victorious from Solaris VII's combat arenas.

Solaris VII's fortunes waxed and waned after the Fourth Succession War. The relatively quiet twenty years before the Clan invasion were a boom time, as Solaris VII's entertaining violence had little real military competition. The Clan invasion first drove a hysterical outburst of gambling and over-the-top BattleMech matches, since clearly the end times were nigh, but the peace of Tukayyid brought all that to a crashing halt. Solaris VII gradually recovered, despite two "'Mech riots" brought on by national tensions, until the Word of Blake came to the world. Apparently appalled by what they saw as the misuse of technology—BattleMechs used to satisfy greed, plus gambling and bloodlust as entertainment—the Word of Blake invaded in 3068. The Blakist occupation lasted three years before local resistance threw off the invaders in December of 3071, at the cost of nearly leveling Solaris City in the biggest duel Solaris VII had ever seen. Unfortunately, the fragile alliance of resistance forces—a mishmash of nationalities and competing stables—promptly fell apart amid vicious infighting. The regions around Solaris City remain in the grip of these warlords and bands of brigands, leaving most of the planet and its people to hope they continue to be overlooked so they can rebuild their lives.

In 3067, Solaris VII's USILR score was A-A-A-A-B. After years of savage fighting in its industrial heartland and capital city, that score has plummeted to its current rating. Millions of people were rendered homeless in 3071 by the final battles between the Word of Blake and the Solaris Home Defense League, and those refugees who remain in the area are only now rebuilding beyond their slums and camps because of constant battles between splinter factions of the SHDL. The planet's industry has been crippled, and food production barely meets local needs.

The rest of the planet has been spared this violence; aside from hosting refugees and missing nightly arena fights on the tri-vid, the inhabitants hardly notice the Jihad's damage to their world. Most of the people on this once-wealthy planet led small-town, rural lives well below the poverty line of any Great House, and so little has changed for them. Many citizens of Solaris VII are subsistence farmers, fishers and woodsmen scattered across the planet in small towns and hamlets. Though poor and isolated by a shortage of all-weather roads and railways, these towns are not primitive. Efficient solar cells (related to JumpShip sail material), windmills, micro-hydroelectric dams and modern batteries provide steady electricity without central electrical utilities; basic modern appliances like x-ray/convection ovens and refrigerators are common; farmers generally have small tractors (running on hydrogen fuel cells, alcohol or biofuels); and the larger logging operations use WorkMechs. There are (or were) excellent highways on Solaris VII between metropolitan areas, but for most of the population, long-distance travel means an off-road vehicle or boat, particularly on water-rich Grayland and near the coasts. Small airships and STOL light aircraft are also extremely common, staging from small rough fields and allowing travelers to bypass much of the vast, raw terrain. With tri-vids and computers in most homes (or at least the village tavern) and adequate wireless coverage, this scattered population remains in touch with the outside world, least electronically.

The war damage and huge refugee problem around Solaris City has discouraged most rural folk from calling too much attention to themselves. They're poor, yes, but they have clean water, food and a roof overhead…though not enough to share with millions of refugees.

In the five years since the Word of Blake was driven from Solaris VII, the feuding resistance groups have whittled themselves down—a decline exacerbated by the destruction of all 'Mech repair and reconstruction facilities in 3071. The various groups also lost popular support as the factional anger of refugees (who came from sections of Solaris City as balkanized as the Great Houses) shifted to general rage toward all the feuding parties.

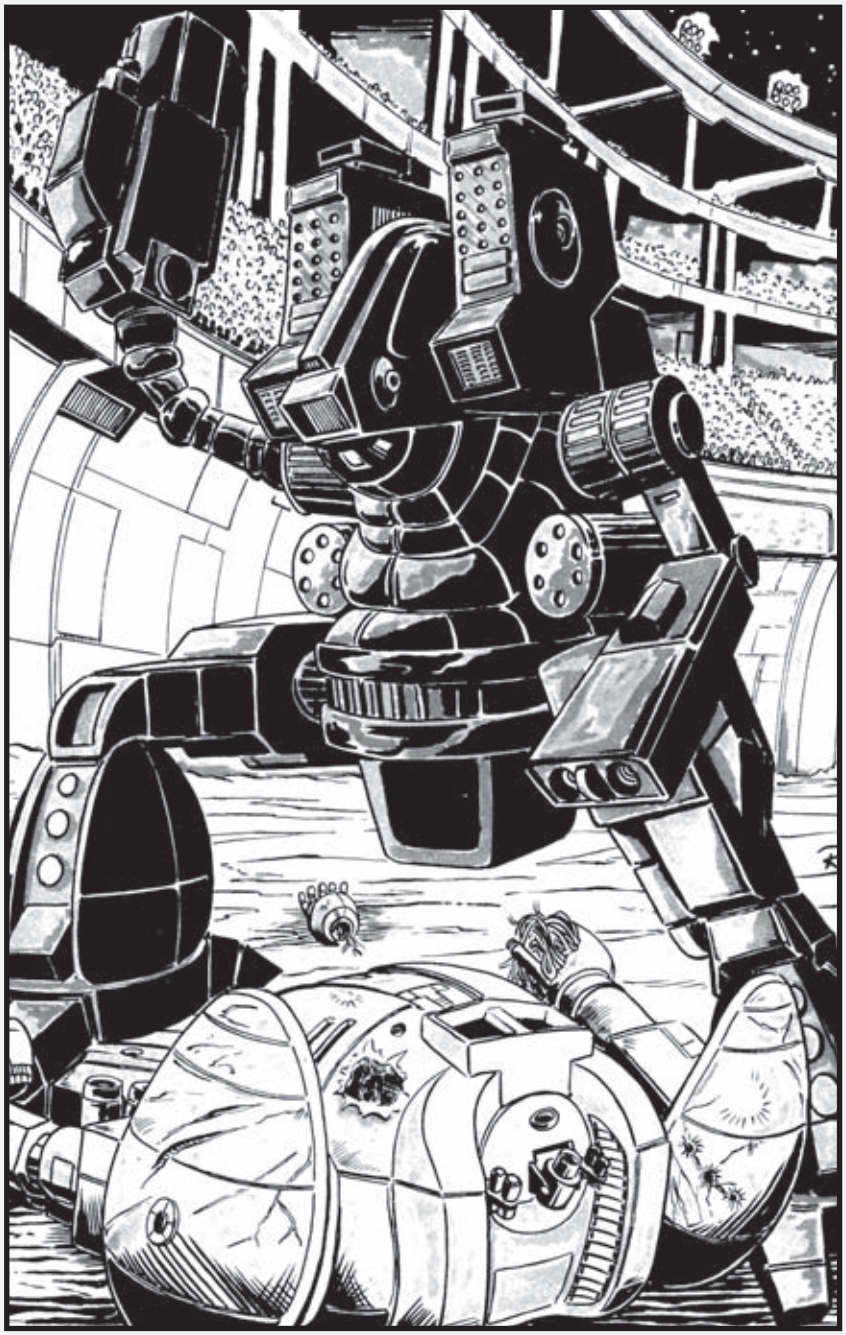
The often-overlooked planetary government has come into its own with the collapse of virtually all other power groups, particularly the media companies that had been the de facto planetary rulers. The government struck a devil's bargain in 3072 with the surviving La Cosa Nostra ("the syndicate") and Triad crime groups, which were the effective overlords of the refugee camps. (The once-prominent yakuza were

virtually annihilated in the 3071 fighting.) These organizations brought order and basic services to the camps and, perhaps as importantly, methodically assassinated or ceased cooperation with the brigands and would-be warlords still causing misery for Solaris VII. The survivors, those reasonable armed groups willing to cooperate, have come to form something approaching a militia for the government in exchange for food, housing and shelter from the ire of refugees.

Two years of recovery have made their mark. Solaris VII has restarted some heavy industries, like steel-making, cement mills and vehicle factories for construction equipment that are allowing the planet to rebuild without outside help. Solaris VII has a lot of experience to draw on; libraries in undamaged cities hold centuries' worth of recovery lessons from the Succession Wars, and many inhabitants come from planets devastated by the Federated Commonwealth Civil War, the Clan invasion, and warfare in the Chaos March. The largely untouched rural population and its resource extraction industry have also contributed heavily. Boom towns are erupting around sawmills and oil fields as housing materials, furnishings and fuel flow into the rebuilding cities. Organized by the syndicate and Triads, the refugees provided an enormous pool of labor to clear wreckage and build new housing from the ruins of Solaris City. Crime has plummeted (because it was hurting the profits of the Triads and syndicate), and entrepreneurs are starting new businesses daily.

Food rations have been above starvation levels for three years, and with employment around Solaris City above 75 percent, most people can now buy food rather than depend on government rations. Barter and ration books have mostly given way to currency, primarily the planetary scrip (still called "teep" by locals, as a contraction of "T.P." for its worthlessness compared to off-world money).

Mandatory schooling for children under age 16 has resumed around Solaris City (an enormous blessing to refugee parents, as the schools effectively represented daycare and one or two free meals a day for children). Unlike the Lyran norm, primary and secondary schooling is temporarily being offered free to the children of the unemployed and those in lower income brackets; the government hopes to phase out this un-Lyran socialism by 3080. Rural families and wealthier urban dwellers still must pay modest annual fees to give their children the usual 12 years of schooling (ages 4 to 16). Unlike worlds damaged by the Succession Wars, Solaris does not lack for teachers; few were actually killed, and the vast rural population has been able to provide an abundance of replacements. Indeed, the rural system of teaching over tri-vid networks and communicators—intended for students too distant from local village schools to attend them—allowed some instruction to resume quickly for refugee families.



In the savage arenas of Solaris VII, politics and intrigue clash with showmanship and technology to brutal effect.

Where once Solaris City was split into six districts, each with virtually its own government and police force (all of whom ignored the *de jure* planetary government), it is now under the planetary government's sole administration. At this stage of reconstruction, factional districts do not exist. Everyone is united in hardship; faction has no meaning in food lines and group shelters. And with virtually no market, no product and no MechWarriors, the media companies that once held such enormous sway here are scrambling to survive while the syndicate and Triads take over their industry.

The revived planetary government, a republic of sorts, is thriving. The pending elections, to which only the quaint rural folk previously paid any attention, are now of great interest to the planet's urban population as they back their patrons. The government's response to the Jihad was far from perfect, and no little empire building occurred among suddenly empowered officials, but it did bring food, shelter and peace to the millions of homeless refugees and is now rebuilding the world. The Solaris Police Department is no longer overshadowed by regional police, and its officers are often welcomed into apartment blocks and shanty towns; response is usually quick to any loud disturbance. Outside the rebuilt center of Solaris City, the SPD is known for its up-armored, off-road Pitbull trucks, heavy firepower and no-nonsense response to troublemakers. In the city center, the SPD is much more low-key, particularly toward tourists.

The downside to this reconstruction is corruption. Solaris VII had its share before, and the areas untouched by war have changed little, but the rebuilding urban regions are now rife with it. By accepting syndicate and Triad aid, the government gave those criminal organizations quiet endorsement. They have promptly filled the power vacuum left by the yakuza and media corporations, and spread beyond it. The SPD is an effective police force, but it is thoroughly owned by the syndicate (to the growing detriment of the Triads, not to mention anyone running afoul of the syndicate). The line between syndicate and government is blurred at the highest levels; some elected officials have come to run refugee political machines much like the syndicate, some syndicate bosses parlay popularity into public office, and most remaining officials are owned by the first two groups. In an environment where desperate refugees would do anything for money, normal moral qualms have crumbled among the citizenry, and people have come to accept that palm greasing might be required for a bigger ration or larger amount of housing aid.

The only hope of citizens seeking a fair and just government is that the syndicate suppress the crass Triads and follow its pre-Jihad trend of becoming more legitimate. Through the 3060s, the syndicate was a professional organization that only used violence as a last resort and kept the bottom line firmly in mind; vendettas were a waste, only profit mattered. With that mindset, the syndicate made few mistakes. Syndicate incursions into formerly yakuza areas of legitimate business has only increased this hope.

Visitors will find a very different world than pre-Jihad Solaris VII. The glittering spectacle of Solaris City and its six major wards (one per Great House, plus the International Zone) is gone, replaced by a sea of dirty lots (where salvagers have finished their work) and rubble (where they have not). Ugly concrete apartment blocks ring the city as construction crews race to produce durable housing for the millions still living in shanty towns. A group of new casinos, resorts and arenas are operating in the center of Solaris City, and some of the old arenas have resumed operation, but tourism is a fraction of its pre-Jihad levels. Off-world money goes much further now, as desperate locals will take any pittance of a wage. Where laws and decorum once kept certain entertainments behind closed doors (or halted by police and citizens alike), the current environment allows virtually any pleasure to be had in the open, and the syndicate and Triad bosses running the resorts ensure that *anything* is available to wealthy visitors. (By definition, any off-world visitor in the Jihad era must be wealthy to have reached Solaris VII.) The one-time marvel of Solaris City spaceport is gone from the city's southwest corner, along with its polished road, rail and air links to the rest of the planet. Now visitors arrive on its hastily patched ferrocrete landing field with basic hangars and a control tower, to be met by buses beside the grounded DropShip; the new terminal is a bare skeleton that will not be completed before 3079. Colorful, advertisement-plastered barriers, typically fabric or wood, screen the wreckage of the city along the route between the starport and the arenas, a sort of Potemkin Village. The new hotels also use tri-vid windows to hide the wreckage, often by showing "old" Solaris City.

Visitors won't see a decrease in services, however. Personal communicator networks have been restored in Solaris City, and reaching most of the planet always involved ships or aircraft, which have not been greatly hampered by the destruction of railways and roads. The huge online gambling and arena information networks are much smaller, but they were always too vast for one visitor to explore. Businessmen will be happy to find that VEST (and partners) have resumed some BattleMech production (the *Valiant* and *Helepolis*) in 3074, but they depend on imports for virtually all components.

Some BattleMech duels have begun again in the minor arenas of Equatus and those of Solaris City, though most of the new combats have to improvise WorkMechs or else engage in hand-to-hand combat. With the planetary HPG destroyed and unlikely to be replaced before 3080, passing JumpShips serve as data couriers to reconnect Solaris VII's combats with the Inner Sphere. A MechWarrior bringing his own 'Mech to Solaris VII has a lot of clout, though not nearly so much as the MechWarrior who brings a 'Mech, support staff and supplies; Solaris VII's local military (or, rather, arena) industry has yet to recover from the mauling it took. The only question is whether a visiting MechWarrior is astute enough to avoid becoming a tool of the syndicate and Triads, who are not nearly as nice about securing contracts as the pre-Jihad media companies. Supplies can burn and loved ones can disappear if that's what it takes to get a MechWarrior to play by the rules of organized crime.

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A TIME OF WAR

CHARACTER RECORD SHEET

CATALYST game labs

PERSONAL DATA

Name: _____ **Player:** _____

Height: _____ cm **Weight:** _____ kg **Affiliation:** _____

Hair: _____ **Eyes:** _____ **Extra:** _____

ATTRIBUTES

Attribute	Score	Link	XP
STR			
BOD			
REF			
DEX			
INT			
WIL			
CHA			
EDG			

TRAITS (PERSONAL)

Trait	TP	Page Ref.	XP

COMBAT DATA

Condition Monitor

Standard Damage: ○○○

BATTLETECH™

A TIME OF WAR

CHARACTER RECORD SHEET (REVERSE)

CATALYST game labs

BIOGRAPHY

Life Module	Other Notes
1/Early Childhood:	
2/Late Childhood:	
3:	
4:	
5:	
6:	
7:	
8:	
9:	
10:	

INVENTORY

Item	Location	Data/Statistics

C-bills: _____

VEHICLE DATA

Vehicle Model/Name: _____ Vehicle Type: _____ Vehicle Mass: _____

Vehicle Traits: _____

Notes: _____

Vehicle Model/Name: _____ Vehicle Type: _____ Vehicle Mass: _____

Vehicle Traits: _____

Notes: _____

Vehicle Model/Name: _____ Vehicle Type: _____ Vehicle Mass: _____

Vehicle Traits: _____

Notes: _____

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BASIC ACTION CHECK TABLE

Action Check	Target Number
Skill Check (Simple-Basic Skill)	6
Skill Check (Simple-Advanced Skill)	7
Skill Check (Complex-Basic Skill)	8
Skill Check (Complex-Advanced Skill)	9
Attribute Check/Untrained Skill Check (Single-Attribute)	14
Attribute Check/Untrained Skill Check (Double Attribute)	21

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INITIATIVE TABLE

Base Initiative Roll	Individual
Basic Initiative	Base: 2D6
Combat Paralysis	Base: 3D6 (worst 2D6)
Combat Sense	Base: 3D6 (best 2D6)

Additional Conditions*	Individual
Tactics Skill	+Skill level
Leadership Skill (Squad Leaders only)	+Skill level

*To use Skill modifiers, Squad or Team Initiative rules must be in play. For Tactics, the appropriate Subskill is required; For both, the squad leader must be present, active and able to communicate with his troops to apply the modifier.

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ENCUMBRANCE TABLE

STR	Encumbered	Very Encumbered	Overloaded
0	0.1 kg	0.5 kg	1 kg
1	5 kg	10 kg	15 kg
2	10 kg	20 kg	25 kg
3	15 kg	30 kg	50 kg
4	20 kg	40 kg	75 kg
5	30 kg	60 kg	100 kg
6	40 kg	80 kg	125 kg
7	55 kg	110 kg	150 kg
8	70 kg	140 kg	200 kg
9	85 kg	170 kg	250 kg
10	100 kg	200 kg	300 kg
11+	(STR x 15) kg	(STR x 30) kg	(STR x 45 kg)

Note: When computing the weight a character is carrying, round up to the nearest kg for STR of 1+.

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BASIC COMBAT TARGET NUMBERS

Combat Action Check	Target Number (TN)
Ranged Attack	Appropriate Ranged Weapon Attack Skill TN
Melee Weapons Attack (and Defense)	Appropriate Melee Weapon Attack Skill TN
Martial Arts Attack (and Defense)	Appropriate Martial Arts Skill TN
Maintain / Disengage from Grapple	Appropriate Martial Arts Skill TNs*

*Opposed Action Check. Only made after successful melee grapple.

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ACTION CHECK MODIFIERS

Attribute Check Modifiers *(Attributes and Untrained Skills)*	Roll Modifier
Single Attribute	+ Attribute Score
Dual Attribute	+ Sum of Attribute Score

Skill Check Modifiers *(Trained Skills Only)*	Roll Modifier
All Skill Checks	+ Skill Level
Skill Specialization	
Skill is not specialized	+0
Skill is specialized (Specialty applies)	+1
Skill is specialized (Specialty does *not* apply)	–1
Linked Attribute Value	
0	–4
1	–2
2–3	–1
4–6	+0
7–9	+1
10	+2
11+	+ (Attribute ÷ 3)*

Action Difficulty and Special Conditions	Roll Modifier
General Action Difficulty (All Checks)	
Very Easy	+3
Easy	+1
Average	+0
Difficult	–1
Very Difficult	–3
Extremely Difficult	–5
*Vision-based Action Checks (Perception Skill)***	
Target at Point-Blank Range (less than 1 meter)	+1
Target at Short Range (1 to 300 meters)	+0
Target at Medium Range (301 to 600 meters)	–2
Target at Long Range (601 to 900 meters)	–4
Target at Extreme Range (over 900 meters)	–6
Miscellaneous Conditions (All Checks)	
Character is Injured	– (Injury Modifier; see pp. 182-184)
Character is Fatigued	– (Fatigue Points – WIL, minimum 0)
Environmental Conditions	See pp. 230-238
Good Conditions (unencumbered, no hazards)	+1
Poor Conditions (encumbered, minor hazards)	–1
Bad Conditions (very encumbered, serious hazards)	–2

*Round down, to a maximum of +5
**Applies primarily to Perception Skill Checks (other affected actions are at the gamemaster's discretion). General Action Difficulty and Miscellaneous Conditions modifiers (for darkness, concealment and so forth) may also apply.

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MARGIN OF SUCCESS/FAILURE TABLE

Margin	Result	Example
+7 or more	Spectacular	(Perception) Spotted a housefly at 100 meters
+5 to +6	Extraordinary	(Acrobatics) Double-flip while diving into a pool six stories below
+3 to +4	Good	(Computers) Hacked the local interweb game server
+1 to +2	It'll do…	(Surgery) "Well, there will be some scarring…"
0	Barely made it!	(Acting) Two out of three critics found your performance "forgettable."
–1 to –2	Almost…	(Driving) Stopped two meters into the intersection at the red light
–3 to –4	Bad	(Cryptography) One in every three words *might* make sense…
–5 to –6	Terrible	(Stealth) *Snap!* You found the loudest, driest twig in the sandbox!
–7 or worse	Disastrous	(Security Systems) "Warning! Intruder alert! Release the gas!"

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ACTION COMPLEXITY TABLE

Incidental Actions	
Non-Movement	
Crouch	Drop Object
Drop Prone	Gesture
Leaping (Downward)	Melee Defense (except Break Grapple)
Observe Quickly (No Perception Skill)	Sit Down
Speak (Single Word)	Stand Up
Movement	
No Movement	Walking

Simple Actions	
Non-Movement	
Lead Team	Leaping (Upward or Horizontaly)
Load Weapon	Melee Attack
Melee Defense (Break Grapple)	Observe in Detail (Perception Skill)
Pick Up/Put Down Object	Ranged Attack (other than Suppression Fire)
Ready/Draw Non-Crewed Weapon/Small Equipment	Recover From Stun
Speak (Brief Phrase)	Stow (Sheath Equipment)
Use Simple Object	Use Simple Skill (Trained)
Movement	
Climbing (with Climbing Skill)	Crawling
Running	Swimming (with Swimming Skill)

Complex Actions	
Non-Movement	
Careful Aim	Extinguish Fire
Ranged Attack (Suppression Fire)	Ready Large Equipment/ Crewed Weapon
Recover Fatigue	Speak (Conversation)
Spot for Indirect Fire	Use Complex Object
Use Complex Skill	Use Untrained Skill
Movement	
Climbing (without Climbing Skill)	Evading
Sprinting	Swimming (without Swimming Skill)

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STANDARD DAMAGE TABLE

Attack Type	Standard Damage Value
Ranged (Standard)*	Weapon Damage + (Attacker's MoS x 0.25)**
Ranged (Burst-Fire)	Weapon Damage + (Attacker's MoS)
Melee (Unarmed)	(Winner's STR ÷ 4)† + (Winner's MoS x 0.25)†
Melee (Armed)	(Weapon Damage) + (Winner's STR ÷ 4)† + (Winner's MoS x 0.25)†
Falling (Hard Surface)	0.2 x (Falling Distance in meters)††
Falling (Soft Surface)	0.1 x (Falling Distance in meters)††
Area-Effect	Weapon Damage – (Distance from Impact in meters)**

*Also for burst-fire weapon used as suppression fire
**Round down; area-effect damage AP is reduced by 1 per meter of distance, also rounded down.
†Round up; For net MoS, subtract loser's MoS from winner's if both succeeded (or add loser's MoF to winner's MoS)
††Round up; Damage AP = (0.1 x falling distance, rounded normally; 0.5 rounds up)

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MOVEMENT RATES AND COSTS TABLE

MOVEMENT RATES

Movement Mode	Base MPs (Meters per Turn)
Walk	(STR + RFL)
Run	10 + (STR + RFL) + (Running Skill Level)
Sprint	(Running Level) x 2*
Special Movement Modes	
Climb	[(Walking MP) ÷ 2]** + (Climbing Skill Level)†
Crawl	[(Walkign MP) ÷ 4]**
Evade	Running MP
Swim	(Walking MP) + (Swimming Skill Level)†
Turn in Place	0††

*Sprinting creates fatigue each turn (see Fatigue, p. 189)
**Round up
†Half movement (rounding down), if the character lacks the indicated Skill
††Turning in place is a movement rate in which the character moves a negligible distance and thus spends no MPs.

MOVEMENT COSTS

Terrain/Situation	MP Cost (per meter)
Clear Terrain	1
Rough Terrain	+1
Difficult Terrain	+3
Blocking Terrain	Impassable
Change Elevations	+1 per meter of elevation
Maneuvers	
Crouching/Sitting	+1
Dropping Prone	+0
Turning (0-120 degrees)	+0
Turning (each 60 degrees over 60)*	+1
Leaping Up/Horizontal	+2
Leaping Down	+1
Standing Up	+2
Encumbrance	
Encumbered	x2
Very Encumbered	x3
Overloaded	1 MP Maximum

*Or fraction thereof

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DAMAGE NOTATION TABLE

Armor Penetration Factor		Base Damage Factor	
Code	Effect	Code	Effect
B	Ballistic	A	Area-Effect
E	Energy	B	Burst-Fire
M	Melee	C	Continuous Damage
S	Special	D	Subduing/Disabling Damage
X	Explosive	S	Splash Damage

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BASIC COMBAT MODIFIERS

Conditional Modifiers	Roll Modifier
Range (Ranged Combat Only)	
Point-Blank Range	+1
Short Range	+0
Medium Range	–2
Long Range	–4
Extreme Range	–6
Target's Cover (Ranged Combat Only)	
Light Cover (Target 5-25% concealed)	–1
Moderate Cover (Target 26-50% concealed)	–2
Heavy Cover (Target 51-75% concealed)	–3
Full Cover (Target 76-100% concealed)	–4
Other Characters in Line of Fire	–1
Movement (Ranged and Melee Combat)	
Attacker Walking/Treading Water	–1
Attacker Running/Crawling/Swimming	–2
Attacker Jumping/Gliding/Flying	–3
Target Moved 10-45 meters	–1
Target Moved 46-75 meters	–2
Target Moved 76-105 meters	–3
Target Moved 106-150 meters	–4
Target Moved 151+ meters	–5
Target Evading	–(Target's Acrobatics Skill, Max –4)
Target Jumping/Gliding/Flying	–2
Target Crawling/Prone	–1
Target Immobile	+4
Target Size (Ranged and Melee Combat)	
Monstrous (Ex: Whale, DropShip)	+5
Very Large (Ex: Elephant, BattleMech)	+3
Large (Ex: Horse, battle armor, ground car)	+1
Medium (Ex: Adult human, refrigerator)	+0
Small (Ex: Young child, coffee table)	–1
Very Small (Ex: Dog, desktop computer)	–2
Extremely Small (Ex: Cat, book)	–3
Tiny (Ex: Mouse, micro-communicator)	–4

Conditional Modifiers	Roll Modifier
Attacker Actions/Conditions (Ranged and Melee Combat)	
Attacker Encumbered	–1
Attacker Very Encumbered	–2
Attacker Overloaded	–3
Attacking Secondary Target/ Defending vs. Melee	–1
Attacking with Off-hand	–1
Attacker is Fatigued (see Damage Effects)	–(Fatigue points – WIL)
Attacker is Injured (see Damage Effects)	–(Injury Modifier, see p. 182)*
Miscellaneous Conditions (Ranged and Melee Combat)	
Environmental Conditions	See pp. 230-238
Target Stunned/Surprised	+2
Attacking from Behind	+1
Using Off-Hand	–1
Aimed Shot** (Ranged and Melee Combat)	
Chest	–2
Arm, Leg, Abdomen (Wing/Fin)	–3
Head, Hand, Foot (Tail)	–5
Additional Ranged Attack Modifiers (Ranged Combat Only)	
Attacker Taking Careful Aim	+(1 per Careful Aim Action, max +3)
Friendly Character in Melee with Target	–2
Burst-Fire Attack	–Recoil Modifier
Splash or Area-Effect (Blast) Attack	+2
Suppression Fire Attack	–1
Indirect Attack (with Spotter)	–2
Blind Fire/Indirect Attack (without Spotter)	–4†
Additional Melee Combat Modifiers (Melee Combat Only)	
Attacker Stunned/Surprised	–6
Friendly Character in Melee with Target	+2
Crawling/Prone Target in Melee Range	+2
Using Ranged Weapon in Melee Combat	–2
Attempting Grapple (Attacker Only)	–1
Grappling Attacker vs. Grappled Target	+2
Grappled Target vs. Grappling Attacker	+1

*If Hit Location rules are in use, do not apply general Injury modifiers to actions. **Only if Hit Location rules are in use. †Do not apply Full Cover modifier when using Blind Fire or Indirect Fire (without spotter)

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BARRIER INTEGRITY TABLE

Points	Example
0-1	Easily shattered (crystal, glass or paper construction)
2-3	Flimsy (interior doors, light furniture, tree branch/sapling)
4-5	Modest (interior walls, exterior doors, heavy furniture, tree trunk)
6-10	Tough (exterior walls, industrial equipment)
11-20	Ironclad (reinforced walls, airlock hatches, military equipment)
21-50+	Impregnable (armored walls, solid rock)

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SPECIFIC WOUND EFFECTS TABLE

Effect	Description
Dazed	Character suffers 1D6 additional Fatigue damage points
Deafened	Character suffers critical damage to ear equal to Level 3 Poor Hearing (see p. 122)*
Blinded	Character suffers critical damage to eye equal to Level 3 Poor Vision (see p. 122)*
Internal Damage	Character suffers 1D6 additional Standard damage points (check for bleeding)*
Knockdown	Character must make a RFL Attribute Check to avoid falling, applying Injury modifiers
Shattered Limb	Character cannot use the affected limb (check for bleeding)*

*Surgery Skill required to stabilize/repair this wound type; apply a –2 modifier to all Surgery Checks

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BATTLE ARMOR BAR TABLE

Tactical Armor	BAR (Clan)	BAR (Inner Sphere)
1	4/4/5/4	4/4/5/4
2	5/5/6/5	4/5/6/5
3	6/5/6/5	5/5/6/5
4	7/6/6/6	6/6/6/5
5	7/7/6/6	7/7/6/6
6	8/7/6/6	8/7/6/6
7	8/7/7/7	8/7/6/6
8	9/7/7/7	9/7/7/7
9	9/8/7/7	9/8/7/7
10	9/8/8/8	9/8/8/7
11	9/9/8/8	9/8/8/8
12	10/9/8/8	9/9/8/8
13	10/9/9/8	10/9/8/8
14	10/9/9/8	10/9/9/8
15	10/9/9/9	10/9/9/9
16	10/10/9/9	10/10/9/9
17	10/10/9/9	10/10/9/9
18	10/10/9/9	10/10/9/9

Fire-Resistant Armor: Fire-resistant armor provides a BAR of 10 vs. any Incendiary damage.
Exoskeletons: Unless the extended life support system is installed, lower all BAR values for exoskeletons by 2 (to a minimum of 0) to reflect their open construction.

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BARRIER ARMOR TABLE

BAR	Sample Barrier/Object
0	Paper/Cloth Banner; Paperback Book; Keycard
1	Window, Standard Glass; Hardcover Book; Compad
2	Window, Safety Glass; Interior Wall/Door, Residential/Commercial; Personal Computer
3	Interior Wall/Door, Industrial/Military/Shipboard; Particleboard Table/Desk
4	Exterior Wall/Door, Wood/Sheet Metal; Solid Wood Table/Desk
5	Window, Ship's Viewport; Cement Patio Furniture
6	Armored Window, Industrial/Military; Commercial Power Generators
7	Exterior Wall, Industrial/Military; Industrial Power Generators
8	Reinforced Exterior Wall, Industrial/Military; Military Power Generators
9	Armored Wall; Vault Door/Wall; BattleMech Canopy Armor
10	Ship's External Bulkhead; BattleMech Armor; Solid Rock

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LOCATION EFFECTS TABLE

Location	Damage Multiplier	Combat Effects
Head	x2	Roll 1D6: 1-4 = Dazed; 5 = Deafened; 6 = Blinded
Chest	x1	Roll 1D6: 1-3 = No added effect; 4 = Dazed; 5 = Knockdown; 6 = Internal Damage
Abdomen	x1	Roll 1D6: 1-2 = No added effect; 3-4 = Dazed; 5 = Knockdown; 6 = Internal Damage
Arm	x0.5	All actions using affected arm suffer –1 roll modifier (max –2)†
Leg	x0.75	Knockdown; reduce all movement by 2 meters/turn (to a min. of 0 meters/turn)†
Hand*	x0.25	All actions using affected hand suffer –2 roll modifier (max –4)†
Foot	x0.25	Knockdown; reduce all movement by 1 meter/turn (to a min. of 0 meters/turn)†

*If the affected hand is holding an object or grappling, the wounded character must make an immediate DEX Attribute Check (applying all Injury and Wound Effect modifiers) to avoid releasing the held object.
†Any hits to a limb that would otherwise exceed the maximum listed effects (such as an arm-based roll modifier of –3 or a reduction of the character's Walking MP to less than 0) render the limb Shattered (see below).

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FATIGUE ACCUMULATION TABLE

Situation	Fatigue Accumulation
Damage-Based Fatigue	
Non-Subduing Damage	+1 per Hit
Subduing Weapon Damage	+(Weapon Damage) per Hit
Subduing Melee Damage	+(Melee Attack Damage) per Hit
Continuous Movement Fatigue*	
Walking	+1 per BOD Minutes
Running/Crawling	+3 per BOD Minutes
Swimming/Climbing	+1 per BOD Turns
Sprinting/Jumping	+1 per Turn
Encumbered Movement	+1 per BOD Minutes
Exertion	
Character Requires STR Attribute Check	+1 per Turn
Fatigue Effect Multipliers	
High/Low Gravity**	x Gravity (G) Rating†
Glass Jaw/Handicap Trait	x 2†
Toughness/Fit Trait	x 0.5†

*Applies only if character spends full time period using the listed movement rate (or a faster one) without rest.
**Applies only to Continuous movement, Sprinting/Jumping movement and Exertion Fatigue; halve this modifier (rounding normally) if character has the G-Tolerance Trait

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HIT LOCATIONS TABLE

ANGLE OF ATTACK MODIFIERS

Attack Direction	Modifer
From Left Side	–1
From Right Side	+1
From Front or Back	+0
From Above	Reroll Leg Results*
From Below	Reroll Head Results*

*Second location result stands, even if it is identical

HIT LOCATION ROLL

Roll (2D6)	Location
2 or less	Head
3	Left Foot
4	Left Hand
5	Left Arm
6	Torso*
7	Legs**
8	Torso*
9	Right Arm
10	Right Hand
11	Right Foot
12 or more	Head

*Roll 1D6: 1-4 = Chest; 5-6 = Abdomen
**Roll 1D6 and add Attack Direction modifier: 3 or less = Left Leg; 4 or more = Right Leg

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SURGERY SUCCESS/FAILURE TABLE

Surgery MoS	Injury Recovery Level
+3 or better	Full Recovery
+0 to +2	Partial Recovery
–1 to –2	Limited Functionality
–3 to –5	Permanent Effect
–6 or lower	Patient suffers additional 1D6 damage from bleeding*

*Surgery Check must be repeated immediately

TACTICAL SKILLS TABLE

Action	Single Warrior	Multiple Warriors
Non-Infantry Units		
Initiative	Driver/Pilot	Commander
Movement	Driver/Pilot	Driver/Pilot
Ranged Combat Action	Driver/Pilot	Gunner*
Artillery Fire	Driver/Pilot	Gunner or Commander
Melee Combat Action	Driver/Pilot	Driver
Infantry Units		
All Actions	N/A	Squad/Platoon Leader**

*If the unit has multiple weapons, it may have one gunner for each.

**Applies if using infantry cohesion rules only. Though the squad/platoon leader makes all rolls, the Skill ratings for the unit must be the average (rounded normally, with .5 rounded up) of all troopers in the squad/platoon.

SKILL CLASS CONVERSIONS

Unit Type	Gunnery Skill	Piloting Skill*
Aerospace Fighter, Small Craft, Satellite	Gunnery/Aerospace	Piloting/Aerospace
Aircraft, Airship, Conventional Fighter	Gunnery/Air Vehicle	Piloting/Air Vehicle
Artillery Weapon	Artillery**	As Unit Type
Battle Armor, Power Armor, Exoskeleton	Gunnery/Battlesuit†	Piloting/Battlesuit†
BattleMech, IndustrialMech	Gunnery/'Mech	Piloting/'Mech
Ground Vehicle (Wheeled, Tracked, Hover)	Gunnery/Ground Vehicle	Driving/Ground Vehicle
Infantry	Small Arms†	Climbing†
Naval Vehicle (Surface, Hydrofoil, Submarine)	Gunnery/Sea Vehicle	Driving/Sea Vehicle
ProtoMech	Gunnery/ProtoMech	Piloting/ProtoMech
Rail Vehicle	Gunnery/Turret	Driving/Rail Vehicle
Spacecraft (DropShip, JumpShip, WarShip)	Gunnery/Space	Piloting/Spacecraft
Space Station	Gunnery/Space	Piloting/Spacecraft
Turret (Fixed)	Gunnery/Turret	None (Not Applicable)
VTOL or WiGE Vehicle	Gunnery/Air Vehicle	Driving/Air Vehicle

*In Total Warfare play, all Combat and Support Vehicles refer to their Piloting Skill as Driving. Infantry (including conventional and battle armor) also do not use a Piloting Skill, but possess a rough equivalent called Anti-'Mech Skill, which covers their ability to scale an active unit to plant charges and execute attacks. For battle armor, this is the Pilot/Battlesuit Skill; for conventional infantry, this is reflected by the Climbing Skill.

**Artillery weapons may be employed by virtually any unit type, but differ significantly from other weapon types. When using any artillery weapon, the Artillery Skill replaces the unit's normal Gunnery Skill. The appropriate Piloting Skill for an artillery-equipped unit is therefore whatever is appropriate for the unit that carries the artillery weapon.

†When acting as a squad or platoon under one commander, the Skill level used for an infantry unit must be the average score (rounded normally, .5 rounds up) of all combined troopers in the squad or platoon. Also, battle armor units using non-mounted infantry weapons (such as a rifle held in armored gloves) must use the relevant Small Arms or Support Weapons Skill instead of Gunnery.

VEHICULAR ACTION COMPLEXITY TABLE

Incidental Actions	Simple Actions	Complex Action
Non-Movement	*Non-Movement*	*Non-Movement*
Activate/Deactivate AMS	Bracing (see p. 84, *TO*)	Dodge**
Activate/Deactivate Heat Sink(s)	Careful Aim	Physical Defense/Shielding
Activate/Deactivate MASC	Ejection (Manual)	Restart Shutdown Vehicle
Avoid Shutdown	Execute Attack (Excluding Charge, Ram and Death from Above)†	Speak (Conversation)
Drop Prone	Hull Down (Quad 'Mechs and vehicles only; see p. 21, *TO*)	Spot for Indirect Fire
Dump Ammunition	Observe in Detail (Perception Skill)	Use Complex Skill
Eject (Automatic)	Sensor Lock	*Movement**
Observe (Quickly)	Speak (Long Sentence)	Charge/Ram/Death From Above
Pick Up/Put Down Object	Use Simple Skill	Climb (see p. 22, *TO*)
Select Ammunition Type	*Movement**	Evade (see p. 18, *TO*)
Select Fire Mode	Crawl (see p. 20, *TO*)	Sprint (see p. 18, *TO*)
Sensor Sweep	Jump Movement	
Speak (Brief Phrase)	Leap (see p. 22, *TO*)	
Standing Up from Prone	Run/Flank/Max Thrust	
Torso Twist/Rotate Twist		
*Movement**		
No Movement		
Walk/Cruise/Safe Thrust		

Note: This table reflects actions performed while operating battle armor or vehicular units in tactical combat. For dismounted characters or conventional infantry, consult the Action Complexity Table in *Personal Combat* (p. 167). References to *TO* indicate rules found in the *Tactical Operations* rulebook.

*Vehicles may use only one Movement Type per tactical combat turn. **Only possible if the character has the Dodge Maneuver Advanced Pilot Ability. †Certain special attacks may be classified as Complex Actions.

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VEHICULAR MOVEMENT COSTS TABLE

Movement Action or Underlying Terrain	Cost per Meter Moved (meters spent)	Prohibited Units
Standard Movement Cost	1	—
Clear, Paved, Bridge, Road	+0	Naval*
Rough	+1	Wheeled, Naval
Woods		
Light	+1	Wheeled, Hover, VTOL, WiGE, Naval**
Heavy	+2	Ground Vehicles, Naval**
Water		
(up to 2 meters deep)	+0	Naval*
(2 to 6 meters deep)	+1	Ground Vehicles†
(7+ meters deep)	+2	Ground Vehicles†
Building		
Light Construction (CF 0–15)	+1	VTOL, WiGE, Naval††
Medium Construction (CF 16–40)	+2	VTOL, WiGE, Naval††
Heavy Construction (CF 41–90)	+3	VTOL, WiGE, Naval††
Hardened Construction (CF 91–150)	+4	VTOL, WiGE, Naval††
Rubble	+1	Wheeled, Naval‡
Elevation Change (+/– 6 meters over 30 meters)	+15	Surface Naval§
Elevation Change (+/– 12 meters over 30 meters)	+30	Ground Vehicles, Surface Naval§§
Elevation Change (+/–18 meters over 30 meters)	-2.5 per meter	All except VTOLs and Subs

Additional Movement Actions	Movement Cost Per Action	Prohibited Units
Facing Change (per 4 degrees)	1	—
Facing Change (per 60 degrees)	15	—
Drop Prone ('Mech only)	15	‡‡
Drop Prone (ProtoMech or Battle Armor only)	5	‡‡
Hull Down (Quad 'Mechs and vehicles only)	30	‡‡
Stand/Rise (from Prone/Hull Down)	30	‡‡

*Wheeled vehicles gain an extra 15 meters per turn on Paved/Bridge/Road terrain; Wheeled Support Vehicles without the Off-Road Chassis modification pay 2 meters per meter of movement on Clear or Shallow Water terrain; shallow-draft boats, like life rafts and kayaks, may enter Shallow Water terrain.

**Wheeled units with Monocycle or Bicycle chassis modifications may enter Light Woods normally, but not Heavy Woods; VTOL and WiGE units must fly over such terrain.

†Ground vehicles with Amphibious Chassis modifications may enter as if a surface naval vessel; Hovercraft and WiGEs may fly over this terrain as if Clear; IndustrialMechs must be equipped with environmental sealing and a fuel cell, fission or fusion engine.

††Non-infantry units must make a Piloting/Driving Skill Check when entering this terrain below roof level and through anything but an opening large enough to accommodate the unit. Apply a –1 roll modifier for Medium Construction, –2 for Heavy and –5 for Hardened. A failure means the unit takes damage equal to 10 percent of its tonnage (round up, in vehicular armor points). Meanwhile, the building takes an equal amount of damage to its CF.

‡'Mech units must make a Piloting Skill Check once per 30 meters of terrain traversed (or fraction thereof), falling on a failure.

§Applies to all ground units attempting to ascend/descend an incline, VTOLs changing altitude and submarines changing water depth, but not to units falling, crashing or sinking.

§§Applies to 'Mechs attempting to ascend/descend an incline, VTOLs changing altitude and submarines changing water depth, but not to units falling, crashing or sinking.

‡‡Dropping Prone, going Hull-Down and Standing/Rising Up are not technically counted as movement actions in tactical combat. Use of Prone and Hull Down maneuvers reduce the unit by one size class when targeted by infantry units (see Stacking and Size, p. 209).

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ANTI-INFANTRY WEAPONS TABLE

Vehicular AI Weapon	AP/BD	Max Hexes
AP Gauss Rifle	8B/6BS	24
Light Machine Gun	7B/5B	12
Machine Gun	8B/6B	24
Heavy Machine Gun	8B/6B	36
Micro Pulse Laser	6E/6B	24
Small Pulse Laser	7E/6B	24
Flamer	6E/6CS	48

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RAPID-FIRE WEAPON TABLE

Weapon Type	Maximum Shots per Turn
Ultra Autocannon	1
Rotary Autocannon	3

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MECHWARRIOR/PILOT/CREW DAMAGE TABLE

Event	Damage (AP/BD)
MechWarrior	
Cockpit Location hit by Weapon or Physical Attack	1B/3
Damage from Falling	1M/3
Internal Ammunition Explosion	0E/4D*
Center Torso Destroyed by Artillery	10X/20
MechWarriors and Fighter Pilots	
Unit Overheats by 15+ points (w/Life Support Damage)	0E/2
Unit Overheats by 25+ points (w/Life Support Damage)	0E/4
Conventional Vehicle Crew	
Critical Hit: Commander/Driver Hit	5B/4 (to Commander/Driver)
Critical Hit: Crew Stunned†	0M/5D* (to all Crew)
Crew Killed†	5B/10 (to all Crew)

*Damage unaffected by armor.

†In the case of multi-hex vehicles (such as trains and Very Large Naval Vessels), only the crew in the segment (hex) of the vehicle struck suffers this effect.

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VEHICULAR MISSILES TABLE

Number of Missiles per Volley				
1-point Missile*	2-point Missile*	3-point Missile*	BD	Strike Zone Radius
1 to 5 missiles	1 to 3 missiles	1 to 2 missiles	6A	5 meters
6 to 10 missiles	4 to 5 missiles	3 to 4 missiles	6A	7 meters
11 to 15 missiles	6 to 8 missiles	5 to 6 missiles	7A	10 meters
16 to 25 missiles	9 to 12 missiles	7 to 8 missiles	8A	12 meters
26 to 35 missiles	13 to 18 missiles	9 to 11 missiles	9A	14 meters
36 to 40 missiles	19 to 20 missiles	12 to 14 missiles	10A	15 meters
41+ missiles	21+ missiles	15+ missiles	12A	20 meters

**Total Warfare* damage points

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UNIT SIZE AND VOLUME TABLE

Unit Type	Size Class	Length x Width x Height (in meters)
Creatures*		
Tiny (Mouse)	Tiny	0.01 x 0.01 x 0.01
Extremely Small (Cat)	Extremely Small	0.2 x 0.1 x 0.1
Very Small (Dog)	Very Small	0.3 x 0.2 x 0.3
Small (Wolf)	Small	0.6 x 0.4 x 0.5
Medium (Leopard)	Medium	2 x 1 x 0.8
Large (Horse)	Large	4 x 2 x 2
Very Large (Elephant)	Very Large	10 x 6 x 4
Monstrous (Whale)	Monstrous	30 x 15 x 10
Human		
Infant/Toddler	Very Small	0.2 x 0.2 x 0.3
Child (age 3-12)	Small	0.5 x 0.5 x 1.2
Teenager/Adult	Medium	1 x 1 x 2
Elemental (unarmored)	Large	1.5 x 1.5 x 2.3
Vehicular Units**		
Battle Armor/Exoskeleton	Large	2 x 2 x 3
ProtoMech	Very Large	4 x 4 x 6
Small Vehicle (<0.5 tons)	Large	5 x 4 x 2
Medium-Heavy Vehicle (0.5-100 tons)	Very Large	9 x 3 x 3
Super-Heavy Vehicle (>100 tons)	Very Large	12 x 6 x 5
'Mech (Biped)	Very Large	2 x 4 x 12
'Mech (Quadruped)	Very Large	6 x 5 x 9
'Mech (Biped, Prone)	Large	12 x 6 x 2
'Mech (Quad, Hull Down)	Large	6 x 5 x 4
Fighter/Aircraft	Very Large	18 x 14 x 5
Small Craft/Small Airship	Monstrous	60 x 25 x 18†
Medium-Heavy Airship	Monstrous	150 x 50 x 25†
Large Naval Vessel (>500 tons)	Monstrous	120 x 30 x 30†
DropShip (Spheroid)	Monstrous	85 x 85 x 80†
DropShip (Aerodyne)	Monstrous	140 x 130 x 30†

*For reference purposes only (presumes shape of a typical Terran quadruped mammal, not including tail).
**Vehicular unit "footprints" (length and width) are those of the hull/feet area, and do not include additional length for weapon muzzles, hoists and the like.
†For reference only; AirShips, Large Naval Vessels and DropShips can vary greatly in actual size, though all are classified as Monstrous units.

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NPC TO PLAYER RATIO TABLE

NPC	Player:NPC Ratio
Thug	2
Soldier	1
Savant	0.1
Boss	0.5

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BATTLE ARMOR WEAPONS TABLE

Weapon (Battle Armor Version)	AP/BD	Notes
Gauss Weapons		
David Light Gauss Rifle	6B / 5	Shots: 15
King David Light Gauss Rifle	8B / 7	Shots: 15
MagShot Gauss Rifle	6B / 7	Shots: 10
Grand Mauler/Tsunami Gauss Rifle	6B / 6	Shots: 5
Anti-Personnel (AP) Gauss Rifle	7B / 6BS	Bursts: 50; Burst Mod: +2; Recoil: 0
Grenade Launchers		
Micro Grenade Launcher	5X / 8S	Shots: 20; Ordnance Type: B
Grenade/Heavy Grenade Launcher	6X / 10S	Shots: 20; Ordnance Type: C
Machine Guns		
Light Machine Gun	6B / 5B	Bursts: 50; Burst Mod: +1; Recoil: 0
Machine Gun	7B / 6B	Bursts: 50; Burst Mod: +1; Recoil: 0
Heavy Machine Gun	8B / 6B	Bursts: 50; Burst Mod: +2; Recoil: 0
"Bearhunter" Autocannon	9B / 8B	Bursts: 20; Burst Mod: +3; Recoil: –1
Mortars		
Light Mortar	6X / 11AS	Shots: 20; Ordnance Type: D
Heavy Mortar	6X / 12AS	Shots: 40; Ordnance Type: E
Recoilless Rifles		
Light Recoilless Rifle	6X / 10S	Shots: 20; Ordnance Type: C
Medium Recoilless Rifle	6X / 11S	Shots: 20; Ordnance Type: D
Heavy Recoilless Rifle	6X / 12S	Shots: 20; Ordnance Type: E
Flamers		
Flamer	3E / 7BCS	Bursts: 10; Burst Mod: +3; Recoil: 0
PPCs		
Support PPC	6E / 14S	Shots: 15
Plasma Weapons		
Plasma Rifle	5E / 10CS	Shots: 20
Needlers		
"Firedrake" Support Needler	3B / 6BCS	Bursts: 30; Burst Mod: +2; Recoil: 0
Lasers		
Small Laser	7E / 12	Shots: 30
Medium Laser	6E / 8	Shots: 30
ER Micro Laser	5E / 8	Shots: 30
ER Small Laser	6E / 8	Shots: 20; Clan version: BD +2
ER Medium Laser	6E / 10	Shots: 20; Clan version: BD +2
Micro Pulse Laser	5E / 4B	Bursts: 17; Burst Mod: +1; Recoil: 0
Small Pulse Laser	5E / 5B	Bursts: 14; Burst Mod: +2; Recoil: 0
Medium Pulse Laser	6E / 7B	Bursts: 12; Burst Mod: +1; Recoil: 0; Clan: BD +2
Heavy Small Laser	6E / 10	Shots: 20; –1 to attack roll
Heavy Medium Laser	7E / 14	Shots: 20; –1 to attack roll
*Missiles (per Launcher Tube)**		
SRM/Advanced SRM/Streak SRM	6X / 12S	Shots: 1 per Tube; Ordnance Type: E
MRM	6X / 11S	Shots: 1 per Tube; Ordnance Type: D
LRM	6X / 10S	Shots: 1 per Tube; Ordnance Type: D
Rocket Launcher	5X / 8S	Shots: 1 per Tube; Ordnance Type: C

NOTE: These weapons are "heavy" versions of personal combat weapons mounted on battle armor only. As noted under Vehicular Units Targeting Infantry (p. 210), all battle armor attacks against conventional infantry, characters and creatures are resolved using personal combat rules. To find the effective range for these weapons, consult their Total Warfare range values and convert to meters by multiplying their hex ranges by 30.
*Missile launchers may target as many adjacent 1-meter areas as there are tubes in the launcher's rack, or they may be fired on the same individual target.

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BATTLE ARMOR MELEE MODIFIERS TABLE

Battle Armor Feature	AP/BD Modifier	Martial Arts	Melee Weapons
Chassis Type			
Quadruped	+2M / +2	+2*	N/A
Biped/Humanoid	+1M / +1	+1	+1
Chassis Weight			
PA(L)/Exoskeleton (0-400 kg)	+0M / +0	+0	+1
Light (401-750 kg)	+1M / +1	+1	+1
Medium (751-1,000 kg)	+2M / +2	+2	+1
Heavy (1,001-1,500 kg)	+2M / +3	+2	+0
Assault (1,501-2,000 kg)	+3M / +3	+2	–1
Manipulators			
Armored Glove	+0M / +0	+0	+0
Basic Manipulator	+1M / +0	–1	+0**
Battle Claw	+2M / +1	–2	+0**
Heavy Battle Claw	+2M / +2	–3	–1**
Salvage Arm	+0M / +0	–3	–3**
Industrial Drill	+2M / +1	–3	–3**
Cargo Lifter	+0M / +4	–4	–4**
Manipulators with Magnets	+0M / +0	+0	–1
Manipulators with Vibroclaws/Vibroblades	+4M / +5	+1	+3
No Manipulators	–1M / –1	–2	–3**
Other Features			
Has VTOL or UMU System†	+0M / +0	–1	–1
Has Mine or Sensor Dispenser System†	+0M / +0	–1	–1
Detachable Missile Pack (Jettisoned)	+0M / +0	+0	+0
Detachable Missile Pack (Attached)	+0M / +0	–1	+0
Mimetic Armor	+0M / +0	+1	+1

*Quadrupeds may only attempt charging melee attacks.
**Melee weapons cannot be held in these manipulators; this modifier therefore applies to any melee weapons mounted in the corresponding arm.
†Non-cumulative; modifier applies if the battlesuit carries either or both of these systems.

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BASE SALARY TABLE (C-BILLS)

Position	Monthly	Annually
MechWarrior	1,500	18,000
Aerospace Pilot	1,500	18,000
Vehicle/Artillery Crewman	900	10,800
Aircraft Pilot	900	10,800
Regular Infantry	750	9,000
Specialist/Spec Ops Infantry	960	11,520
Battle Armored Infantry	960	11,520
Scout Infantry	1,050	12,600
DropShip Crewman	1,000	12,000
JumpShip Crewman	750	9,000
WarShip Crewman	1,200	14,400
'Mech/Fighter Technician	800	9,600
Battle Armor Technician	800	9,600
Vehicle Technician	640	7,680
Medic	640	7,680
Doctor	1,500	18,000
Administrator	320	8,320
Quality/Expertise	**Field Average**	**Multiplier**
Assistant/Able-Body*	>1	x 0.5
Green	>2	x 0.75
Regular	>3	x 1.0
Veteran	>4	x 1.5
Elite	>5	x 2.0
Infantry: Anti-'Mech Field	N/A	x 1.5

*Assistants/Able-Bodies are short-term hires or astechs who work with the force on an as-needed basis.
†The Infantry: Anti-'Mech Field multiplier is cumulative with the normal Quality/Expertise Rating multiplier, but only to infantry unit types.

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EXPERIENCE AWARD TABLE

Game Outcomes	Awards
Group	
Mission*	
Failure	0/1/5
Success	1/3/7
Outstanding Success	2/5/9
Campaign†	
Players Advanced Campaign	3/5/7
Campaign Completed	5/10/20
Individual	
Character Development	2/4/6
Role-playing	1/2/3
Stayed In-Character (even when it was unwise)	1
Achievements‡	1
Entertainment	1

*A session may include multiple missions, but unless you're wrapping up a Moderate or Difficult mission from a prior session, the scope of multiple missions in one session will usually be Trivial.
†It is possible to have multiple campaigns occurring at the same time. If a session includes progress on multiple campaigns, multiple campaign awards may be warranted.
‡Achievements may occur several times per session, but this should be rare.

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BONUS TABLE

Mission Completion	Trivial	Moderate	Difficult
Failure	0%	0%	0%
Success	1%	3%	5%
Outstanding Success	2%	6%	10%

Campaign Completion	Trivial	Moderate	Difficult
Failure	1%	2%	3%
Success	5%	10%	20%
Outstanding Success	10%	20%	40%

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MONTHLY EXPENSES TABLE

Government Expenses	C-bills
Taxes	30%
Housing	**C-bills**
Base Quarters	240
1 Bedroom Apartment	175
2 Bedroom Apartment	200
3 Bedroom Apartment	225
Duplex House/Condo	300
Small House/Condo	400
Medium House/Condo	500
Large House/Condo	600
Small Mansion	10,000
Medium Mansion	15,000
Large Mansion	20,000
Utilities (% of monthly housing cost)	**C-bills**
Basic	10%
Expanded Services (including entertainment and network connectivity)	20%
Food (per person)	**C-bills**
Cheap	120
Quality	240
Luxury	480

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