

# DARK METAL

## MERCENARIES IN THE DEEP



*A TABLETOP ADVENTURE RPG  
FOR SOLO AND CO-OP PLAY*

# **DARKMETAL™**

## **MERCENARIES IN THE DEEP**

A Sci-Fi Adventure RPG featuring Tabletop Tactical Combat and Solo Play set in the Walking Steel universe

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A big thank you to those around the world who have helped with playtesting, suggestions, and otherwise volunteered their time to this project. The website for this game can be found at <https://darkmetalgame.com/> There are links to our discord and other communication outlets on the top right of the page.

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## **Introduction to Captain Craggler's Craven Corps**

"Say that again?"

"Captain Craggler's Craven Corps"

"That's quite the mouthful."

"Yeah... Captain likes to read."

You made a hrmph noise at that. That's how you remember your first conversation after you officially came aboard anyways. You blink away the effects of the longest comastasis you have ever embarked on. Memories start to stream back into your consciousness.

The Craven Corps was an odd outfit to say the least. You joined Craggler's outfit to get away. Far, far away. It turned out the farther away from the core systems you got, the odder things seemed to get.

Their first destination after you joined was to Lissa's end, a single wormgate system at the end of a colonization chain. There wasn't anything of significant value in the system to make it of interest to anyone of note. It was the typical dead-end system story. With no big corporation or government there with an interest in keeping the peace, different factions with different agendas rose. And inevitably conflicted. Those with enough money hired mercenaries to try and get the edge on the others. Or to protect them from the inevitable criminals and pirates. Mercenaries like the Craven Corps.

"It's Captain Craggler's Craven Corps."

You mumble a bit as you try to blink your eyes back into focus.

"You said, 'Craven Corps'. You know the Captain doesn't like it when we shorten the name. You've been sitting their jabbering to yourself for almost two minutes. Time to wake up."

That was the voice of Sergeant Sonya Ticks.

"Sorry Sticks... Has it been eighty sols already?"

"Yeah... Maybe a little longer than that. Crazy, huh? Time to see what we've been missing. We'll be near the outer planet in a few days."

"How's the ship?"

You still can't see that well, but you think you can almost smell a faint trace of smoke in the air. "Eh, she's in one piece anyways. Craggler and some of the rest have been up for a few days or so. They got it figured out. We're just now waking up the mud heads. Anyways. Shake it off and let's go. There's a meeting in twenty in the conference room."

The "conference room" was actually one of the ship's storage bays in the gravity ring. Captain just liked calling it that to make it sound nicer.

The Captain walked up and began just as the last stragglers made their way in. "Alright fools, I got good news and better news. The good news is, is that Barns is gone. Died in comastasis. Very tragic. I cried I



think. The better news is that there's a new opening for Alpha Squad. And you're all invited to the party."

Barns was Lieutenant Darnby Ullor, formerly from a core world drop infantry unit. He and the Captain had a falling out right before the decision to go into deep sleep and wait out the war was made. Barns didn't want to. Cap did. Barns got a little too vocal a little too publicly. And not just once either.

"Now, I'm not going to lie to ya. Ship's not in great shape. And because of that we were out longer than I meant to be. It's been more like eighty four sols instead of eighty. We need repairs and supplies pronto. Number one on that list is food. We don't have but a morsel or two left, and I reckon you all will be wanting some in the near future."

The Captain waved towards the holoprojector, which sputtered a few times before bringing up a global map of the outer planet.

"Now for the bad news. Things have change since we went night night." The Captain's speech hesitated for a second here. "A lot. More than I thought possible. That's on me. Sorry. There's worse news. There's no new wormgate, even though it shoulda been here sols ago."

The Captain paused there for a few seconds to let the murmuring and sporadic shouts die down. The entire reason they had gone for an exo system loop was to wait for a new wormgate to arrive without getting muddled in unprofitable politics. The original one being destroyed during a battle between AI and human forces. Staying would have meant having to definitively choose a side. And, as Captain said, once you were on a side, that meant working harder for a whole lot less credits.

"Yeah, we're stuck here for now. We need to figure out what's gone wrong. But firstly, we need some feed."

Some bright colored blips flashed in one holoprojector world. "So, here's what we've identified as most likely to have scavengable food, or colonies to trade for food with. I've allotted 10,000 credits worth of ship board goods to each squad for the trading. The one that brings the most food back for the least gets to be the new Alpha squad. Extra credit for not wasting my credits. You got eighteen soldays to figure it out girls and boys. I've sent out data packages to your Sarges for review. Bonus points if you bring me back something I like."

The Captain clicked off the holoprojector and turned to leave, but halted mid stride.

"Ah, one more thing. It's not just the wormgate that's gone bad. As far as we can tell, every planet has had severe problems. Technology has regressed substantially. There is no functioning system wide government as far as I can tell. I know you kids are good at your jobs, but be mindful out there."

And with that, the Captain headed away from the cargo bay.

## **Organization**

Craggler's group of mercenaries doesn't quite follow a traditional military structure. Captain Craggler is the owner, CEO, and Commander in Chief of the mercenary corps and of the ship you are on. The ground force mercenaries are divided into different squads. Each squad has a Leader and a Sergeant, and ranges in size from 2-9 people total. They are roughly 80 squads on the ship of various sizes and skillsets. On the team, the Sergeant is an experienced member of the Corps who is tasked with being the

logistics manager of the squad. They generally no longer participate on campaigns; however, they are occasionally used as a pool of experienced reserves if things go sideways and too many of the squads are already deployed. The Squad Leader is tasked with leading their squad, no matter the size, and completing missions on behalf of the Corps. The Captain uses different means to assign squads to campaigns or missions. The Captain's current mood can have a big impact on this, and within the ranks of the Corps, is commonly referred to as if it were the ship's weather report. Craggler will not hesitate to send additional squads to complete a campaign successfully if needed. Or to hand out punishment to the Squad Leader responsible if it's decided they were at fault. Captain Craggler's Craven Corps has a reputation to uphold, after all.

On the bright side, the Captain is generally very accommodating as long as the job gets done. The mercenaries on board the ship come from all backgrounds and walks of life. And in a variety of both augmented and un augmented body types. There is some tension between some of the all armor wearing self-titled 'pure' human squads and the others. It doesn't really result in any actual in fighting. Not since the Captain spaced all the participants of the last brawl in the mess anyways.

The ship itself is, in many ways, as diverse as the crew. The mangled brain child of the Chief Tech Sergeant, the ship is the conglomeration of a military hull and a civilian midsection with gravity ring. The ring is set to a constant rotation to simulate a reasonable level of gravity for the occupants and has added armor plating for protection. The military hull has mag decks that provide some level of walkability if the proper footwear is worn. The exterior of the ship is adorned with various trophies, relics, and trinkets from the many campaigns they have participated on. Anything of real value is kept inside, however. The ship's configuration is serviceable, but not as combat effective as a pure military hull would be. The Captain avoids putting the ship into harms way as a result and its armament is focused on defensive capabilities.

The ship also has a small contingent of drop ships and defensive fighters. They are expensive. Especially the drop ships, and so the Captain avoids putting them at undue risk.

## **Game Overview**

Dark Metal is a solo or cooperative open miniatures sci fi adventure tabletop tactics game about a group of mercenaries stuck in a star system isolated from the rest of the settled galaxy. The game is primarily narrative driven through a series of campaign books as you fight your way through your problems while trying not to annoy the Captain. No GM is required to enjoy the game.

To get started, you will either create a character and their allies or pick one of the prebuilt teams included with the book.

Next you will choose what scenario you will be playing, either one of the stand alone scenarios included here or available elsewhere, or one of the scenarios from your current campaign.

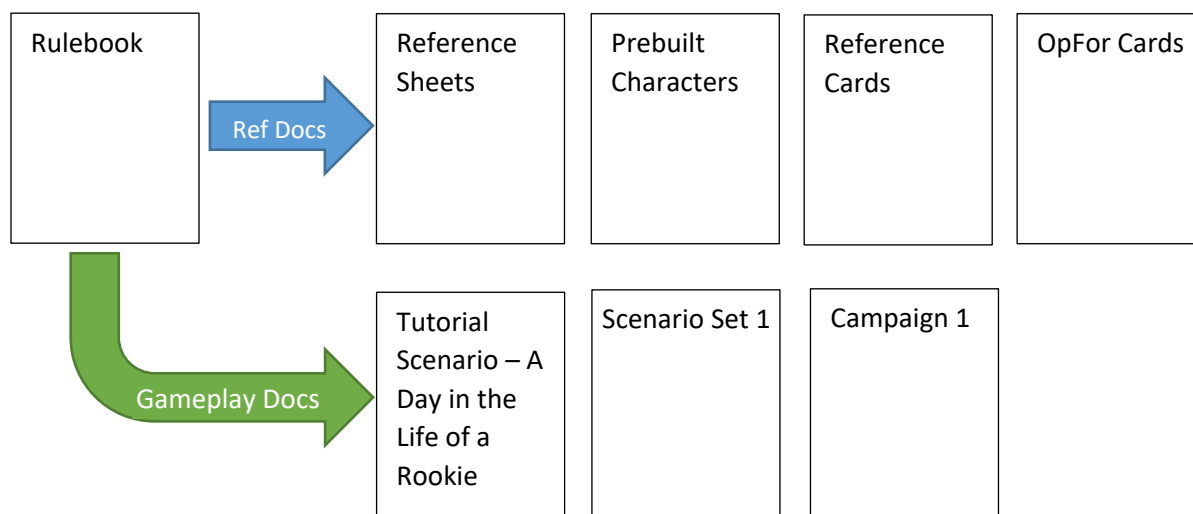
Instructions for the setup of the table is included with each scenario. Gather your chosen miniatures and terrain and set the scenario up. Campaign scenarios generally come with a story book that you'll want to have handy to read as you progress through the scenario.

The movement rate for most characters is 4" or 4 hexes, and combat is performed by rolling a number of d10's and d6's against a target number. Roll at or above the target number with the d10 dice more times than 1's are rolled and the attack connects. Damage is generally fixed per weapon, and you will subtract that amount from the remaining amount of health that the targeted character has.

### **Getting Started Checklist**

1. Read and play through the Tutorial Scenario.
2. Choose a pregenerated character from Prebuilt Characters and print out their sheets.
3. Read through the Game Overview, Main Turn Order, Movement, Combat, Fate, and Getting Started chapters of this Rulebook.
4. Get 5 minis or other proxies to represent your Squad, as well as some enemy tokens.
5. Go to Scenario Set 1 and play Scenario 1.
6. Go to Scenario Set 1 and play Scenario 2.
7. You're now ready for Campaign 1.

## Document Map



The game consists of several documents split into two general categories, reference documents and play documents. Reference documents describe the rules, worksheets, and other reference information needed to understand and play in the game system. Play documents contain the scenarios and campaigns that make up the story and narrative of Dark Metal.

The most important reference document is the Rulebook. However, the Rulebook is not designed as a tool to learn the game. Learning the game is best done by starting with the the tutorial scenario 'A Day in the Life of a Rookie' and then proceeding to Scenario Set 1, only referring to the Rulebook as necessary. If you are familiar with tabletop skirmish or roleplaying games already, it will probably be a better use of your time to jump right into Scenario Set 1, and then the first campaign after that.

The Tutorial Scenario is designed for newcomers to the game and genre. It's a good walkthrough of how the rules play and can serve as a quickstart guide to most people.

The Reference Cards are optional and are only needed if you are creating a custom character from scratch. The Prebuilt Characters already have the correct cards included with them. The cards are included as a way to track the full text of the skills and abilities without having to write them out on the character sheet or refer back to the rulebook.

The OpFor Cards are also optional and are provided to help speedup gameplay. Each card has a summary of the stats for the enemies found within the included scenarios.

The Reference Sheets contain the one page reference sheet, which is a single page summary of the rules of the game. It helps speed up gameplay immensely. However, it requires a basic understanding of the rules to use effectively. The Reference Sheets also contain a blank character and allies sheet, as well as reference material to help create certain ally characters quicker. The last few pages are ally sheets for the allied characters in the Scenario Sets.

Scenario Set 1 is a series of three beginner scenarios that escalate in complexity one after the other. If you can complete scenarios 1 and 2, then you should be able to handle most, if not all, of the scenarios presented in the campaign. Scenario 3 in this set is more complex and challenging. It took me a few attempts to beat it.

Campaign 1 is the first narrative experience in the game. It's 5-8 scenarios in length. The story will continue to build on this campaign as it continues.

## **Miniatures**

Miniatures is the common name given to the small plastic (or, sometimes, metal) figures that often occupy board games, are sold on their own, or are created at home through the use of 3D printing or papercraft. Particularly these days, it is common to see board games sold through Kickstarter come with large numbers of plastic miniatures at very reasonable costs. This is part of the inspiration that drove me to create this game. It's my hope that you can use some of the miniatures you have collected over the years to go on the adventures contained here. Part of the fun of miniatures is in collecting your own army of them. Hopefully this game provides you even greater motivation to grow yours.

Painting miniatures has become a hobby on its own, and many people enjoy this just as much as playing the associated games. It's up to you whether to paint yours or not. Painting will have an effect on the aesthetics, but not on the gameplay itself.

The sizing here has been developed for use with 28mm-32mm miniatures. It's possible to use other scales. You can also fairly easily modify the game distances up or down according to what scale you have chosen.

The game also requires everyday items such as playing cards, tokens of your own choosing, and paper with pencil to track certain information. All of the necessary information to play is contained here. There are (or will be) physical packages to help make playing the game easier for you.

## **Terrain Pieces**

This game is designed to work with both distance-based miniature combat in inches or hex-based movement. I've used both and find that using hex maps can make the game play a little quicker, while distance based movement is more flexible. Either way, having physical pieces to represent the various buildings and walls in the game goes a long way towards increasing the fun factor of this format. You don't need elaborate set pieces. Printed out and folded paper can make for great looking and affordable set pieces. Even plain cardboard boxes of the appropriate sizes will do.

## **Dice**

The combat system primarily uses d10 and d6 dice, and occasionally d4s. You will probably want to have six d10s and four d6s. Two d4s should be sufficient. Extras may be helpful and can be used to track health for individual characters, enemies, or allies.

## **Direction Randomizer**

You will need a way to determine a random direction when it's called for by the game.

One of the simplest solutions that I have seen is to use a d8, d10, d12, or d20 and use the upper point of the numbers face that rolls up to determine direction.

The solution I like the most is to take a d6 and mark two opposite corners of the dice on all three faces of that corner. Paint, sharpies, or even a small razor can be used. By doing opposite corners, you will ensure that a marked corner will always be showing when rolled.



Other solutions include using a coin with an arrow marked on it or spinning a pen.

### **Cards**

There are two types of cards used in the game, reference cards and game cards.

The reference cards are the easiest way to play the game. It is recommended that you print off the skill cards useful for the character that you are using.

The game cards are optional. The game is designed to work either with playing cards as proxies, or official printed cards when they are available. One deck of playing cards is all you will need as proxies.

## **Creating A Character**

Some people enjoy character building and some people do not. Appendix PB contains prebuilt characters and parties for those who would rather get to playing quickly. Whether you wish to use them or not, you may want to read through them to get an idea for themes and backgrounds for your character.

The characters are defined by their base traits, weapons / equipment, and skills. All dice rolls in the game are made either using your base traits or knowledge skills. The Athletics, Precision, and, Instinct traits are used often in combat. Awareness is used both in and out of combat, and is particularly useful for seeing hard to see things. Knowledge skills are more situation specific. Some have positive effects on the character's stats, some are useful in combat, and some are useful in between scenarios. Communication is used to coordinate and guide a squad of allies in combat.

The first thing you need to create your character is a copy of one of the character sheets from this book found in Appendix CS1 or online. We'll go through the process step by step. I would recommend, however, at least skimming through the book once and then circling back to create your character. This will give you some context on what to expect. If making a character still feels confusing, I recommend taking the prebuilt character and party closest to your desired build and playing through the Sim Scenarios. Build your character afterwards and carry over the earned Reputation to your new character.

There are three general paths of construction to consider. One is cybernetics, the second is gene splicing, and the third is armored suit. They can be mixed to some degree, but for the most part you should anticipate picking one and sticking to it.

Cybernetics are focused on the integration of electromechanical systems to their bodies. They offer a wide range of upgrades and integrations, including access to some of the heavier weapons. Cybernetics are shunned by most of the general population. They can greatly increase the weight of a character and leave you vulnerable to certain attacks. Cybers need power for certain moves, like armored suits. Their reduced bulk compared to armor and greater stability compared to a splicer gives them the opportunity to balance Close Combat, Movement, and Shooting ability. They make for good snipers.

Gene Splicers, or bio editors, are focused on modifying the natural human genetic base with improvements that were evolved directly from the sapiens species, or cross spliced from others. Bio editing is not as shunned as cybernetics are, but depending on the modifications, can still be looked down upon by the general population. They are generally weaker than either cybernetics or armor focused builds in terms of weapons strength. They make up for it with the opportunity for heightened senses and agility, traits that allow them to excel at Close Combat... as long as they can avoid being hit back. They have the most complicated builds.

Armor-focused individuals rely on external technology to make them effective. Their combat suits offer high amounts of protection, although they take time and effort to maintain. The combat suits also block the benefits of most bio editing and cybernetics as they surround the entire body and rely on their own servos to facilitate movement and sensors. They are far bulkier in their suits compared to either of the other builds and this makes them weaker at Close Combat and potentially easier to hit. Their suits run on power packs, and many of their more powerful abilities will drain that power. They are the simplest builds, although not necessarily the easiest to play.

There is not much use in combining the higher tiers of the different groups, however, some of the lower tier equipment can be made into interesting combinations.

## **Creation Steps**

Building a character requires the following steps:

1. Purchase Base Traits (3,000 Rep)
  - a. Fill in the Fates and Locked Dice boxes
2. Choose Knowledge Skills
3. Purchase MES + Weapons + Allies (1,500 Rep)
  - a. Modify Base Traits, and then the Fates and Locked Dice boxes as appropriate
  - b. Record your starting BHP, AHP
  - c. Build Allies, add to Ally sheet

You have 3,000 Reputation points to distribute among your Base Traits. If you do not use all 3,000 Rep points evenly, you may put the extra towards the next level of any of the Base Traits. See Base Traits (p 1813) to read about each of the Traits.

After purchasing Base Traits, you may want to look at the Knowledge tables to pick out where you'd like to put any Knowledge points you obtained in Step 1.

With both the Knowledge table and Base Traits figured out, you can move on to selecting Mods, Equipment, and Splices (MES).

You get 1,500 Reputation points to distribute among your MES selections and hiring Allies. If you do not use all 1,500 Rep points, you may put the extra towards buying MES or other surplus stock later on.

**Step 1 – 3,000 points**

	Ath	Pre	Ins	Awa	Kno	Com
6 - ***						
5 1/2 - ***						
5 - 500						
4 1/2 - 450						
4 - 400						
3 1/2 - 350						
3 - 300						
2 1/2 - 250						
2 - 200						
1 1/2 - 150						
1 - 100						
1/2 - 000						

**Step 2 – Knowledge**

Knowledge	Armorer	Arsenal	Engineering	Explosives	Tracking	Medical	Piloting	Repair	Science	Security	Stealth	Survival	Traps
Armorer													
Arsenal													
Engineering													
Explosives													
Tracking													
Medical													
Piloting													
Repair													
Science													
Security													
Stealth													
Survival													
Traps													

**Step 3 – MES and fill in**

Location	Equipment and Active Inventory	Max Ammo	Current
Hand/Alt Point 1			
Hand/Alt Point 2			
Attach Point 3			
Attach Point 4			
Backpack Slot 1			
Backpack Slot 2			
Backpack Slot 3			
Backpack Slot 4			

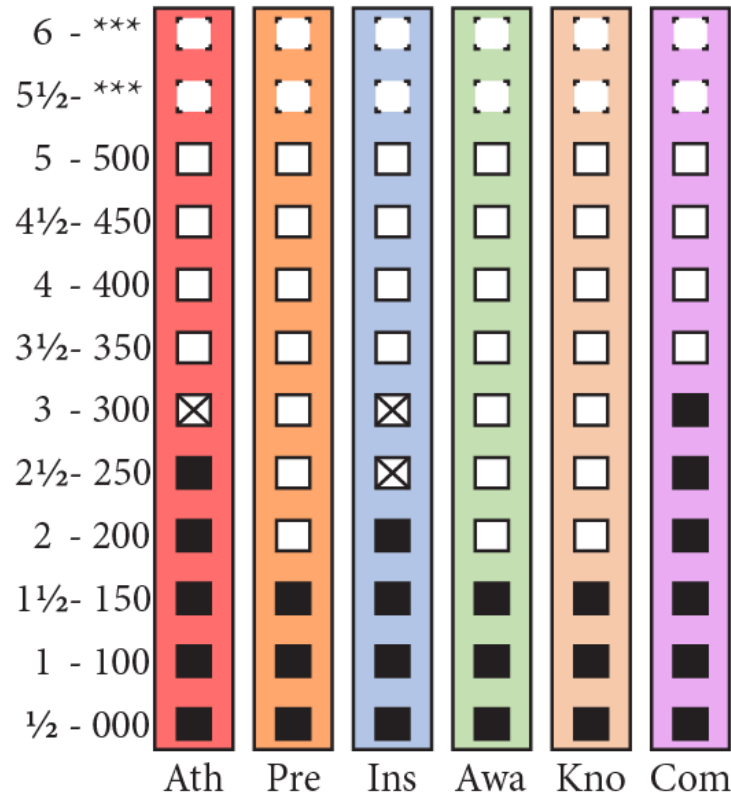
Note that the Communication skill grants bonus Ally Rep Points (ARP), which may be used to purchase Allies and their upgrades as well.

## Base Traits

The Base Trait section of the Character Sheet (Step 1 above) as well as the individual Trait tables have the cost of each level of the trait on the left side. The levels range from 0 to 6 for each trait. The first level, level 1/2, is free. The levels correspond to the number of dice rolled for each check, rounded down. Purchasing level 1 costs 100 Rep points. To go from level 1 to level 1 1/2 costs 150 Rep points. To go from Level 1 1/2 to level 2 costs 200 rep points. To go from level 0 to level 2, add all of the costs for the levels you would like to purchase together to get a total of 450 Rep points.

An easy way to build and track your traits is provided on the character sheet. Shade in or otherwise mark what your current base level is for a particular trait. When an MES enhancement modifies your base trait score, mark that box with an X or another mark distinctive from the mark you made for your base level.





Note that the top two hash boxes (levels 5½ and 6) are there to account for MES effects pushing the capabilities of your Character above and beyond that of normal human limits. The only benefit from this is to expand your Dice pool for that Trait to a maximum of 6.

The build in the example has one skill at level 3, level 2½, level 2, and three skills at level 1½ as base traits, costing a total of 2,900 Rep points. There are 100 extra Rep points left over which can be put towards the next level in any of the six categories. For a solo game, having a Com level of at least 2½ is very beneficial because it allows for up to 4 companions. This particular build is a Melee focused Leader, and would have 3 Ath dice and 3 Ins dice for use in Close Combat, after enhancement points from MES selections are added (represented by the X'd boxes).

## Knowledge Skills

Knowledge skills are detailed in the Knowledge Skills Table (p 34). Each level of the Knowledge Trait grants additional Knowledge skill points, up to a maximum of 55. Each point allows you to purchase another level of a Knowledge Skill, to a maximum of 5 for each skill.

Knowledge					
Armorer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Arsenal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engineering	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Explosives	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hacking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Medical	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Piloting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Repair	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Security	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stealth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Survival	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Traps	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Fill in one circle for each level of skill you have obtained. In the example above, the character has Knowledge Trait level of 1½ and has 3 skill levels in both the Explosives and Medical Knowledge Skills.

## MES and Fill In

Each character has 1,500 Rep points to spend on MES, Weapons, Items, and Allies. In addition, you may have received ARP points from the Communication Trait.

Choosing whether to build a Splice, Cyber, or Armor focused character will determine which tables you will be using for this step. See the Mods, Equipment, and Splices section (p 24) for detailed information.

The character sheet has a free form section where you can list out all of the various effects and actions available to you. You should list out the details of what you purchased for your build here, and then what abilities are available to you as a result. You can also use this space to track your ship board inventory.

The complete list should include:

1. Knowledge Skills
2. Communication Skills
3. MES Skills
4. Inventory not actively carried

There are reference cards available that can be used in addition to writing down MES you have purchased. This makes using 'once per scenario' or other limited use skills much easier. For 'one use' skills, flip the card over after using it. For 'two use' skills you first rotate the skill 90 degrees counter clockwise for the first use and flip it for the second use. The card rotation method can be used to track up to 4 uses of a single skill. You can also place tokens or markers (such as glass) beads on the cards and remove them on every use. One final method is to place a d6 or d4 and use it as tracker to indicate the number of uses remaining.

## Equipment and Active Inventory

This section is for your weapons and inventory that you carry with you on missions. It can be changed out for shipboard inventory items whenever you're back on the ship. Each weapon requires either your hands or an Attach Point to be used, or a Backpack Slot to be carried. Weapons using hands can be used by any of the three builds and are found in the Weapons table (p 30).

Attach points 1 and 2 are on the left and right arms, and attach points 3 and 4 represent the shoulders. Weapons requiring an Attach Point are listed in the Attach Point Weapons table (p 32**Error! Bookmark not defined.**). These weapons are generally used only by Armor builds, but some Cyber builds can also wield Attach Point Weapons. Attach Point Weapons are significantly more powerful than Hand Weapons.

The table also has a column for Max Ammo and Current Ammo. It's recommended that you use an easier to manipulate form of tracking ammo, such as a dice or tokens, rather than pencil on paper during play. Poker chips work well.

Additional equipment you may like to have is found on the Items Table (p 29). This includes the perennial mercenary favorite, grenades.

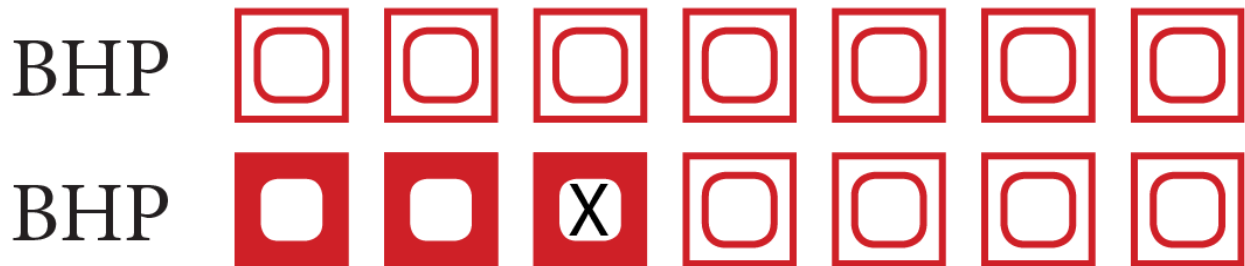
## Health and Power

The default, unmodified, starting Bio Hit Points (BHP) for a Squad Leader is 3 BHP. Most normal humans that you will encounter will have 2 BHP by default. The most common source of Armor Hit Points (AHP) is armor. Almost any human character can wear a combat suit class of armor with no appreciable penalties. This can represent anything from light plate armor to a soft armored jacket. There are a few Cyber mods that can add AHP as well, representing different surgically implanted technical augmentations. BHP above the starting 3 is generally gained through Splice mods, representing the ability of genetic manipulation to create a more robust lifeform.

$$\text{Bio Hit Points (BHP)} + \text{Armor Hit Points (AHP)} = \text{Total Hit Points (THP)}$$

The character's BHP + AHP represents their Total Hit Points (THP). AHP is always lost before BHP unless specified otherwise. In general, both AHP and BHP are interchangeable. There are a few abilities, events, equipment, and other actions that have differing effects depending on how much AHP or BHP the character has remaining.

BHP, AHP, and Power have double boxes. You can use them effectively by shading in the outer box with ink for the maximum / fixed BHP, AHP, and Power. Use a pencil to mark off the middle as it is depleted. Erase and repeat as necessary.



In the above example, the player has marked off his character as having 3 BHP and has suffered 1 BHP Damage during gameplay. Alternatively, you can also place tokens or markers (such as glass) beads on the health area and remove them as the character is damaged. One final method is to place a colored dice, such as a d4 or d6, and rotate it to track the amount of health remaining.

## Fates / Rerolls

Fates have the same double boxes as Health and Power and can be marked the same way. Fate is discussed in more detail in the Fate section (p 58). Each Squad Leader begins the game with one General Fate by default. All other Fate is added through Base Trait levels.

## Building Allies

The Ally Sheet can be found in Appendix CS1.2 – Allies. Detailed instructions on building Allies, as well as some to choose from, can be found in the Squad Building section (p 59).

## **Base Traits**

Base Trait levels are purchased with Reputation points in between Campaigns. Each level of Base Trait provides a corresponding reward, except for Level ½, which is free. Base Traits end at Level 5, however, can be pushed higher with MES bonuses. Each level corresponds with a d10 rolled when using that trait. In Combat, Athletics and Precision help you hit an opponent in Close Combat / Melee and Ranged Combat respectively. Instinct helps you avoid attacks. Awareness helps you detect traps, notice anomalies in the environment, and hit fast moving, stealthy, or camouflaged opponents. Higher levels in a trait also unlock Trait bonuses, most commonly Fates (p 58) and Reserve dice (p 58).

The Trait bonuses can be gained either by raising the Base trait levels or through MES bonuses. MES effects that subtract from a character's Trait level do not remove the bonuses from the character's base Trait levels. A character that has a base Ath of 3, but is wearing Power Armor that drops the Ath dice pool to 2, still receives the 1 Reserve dice bonus from their natural Base trait levels.

### **Athletics**

Useful for striking opponents accurately in close quarters, regardless of the weapon. Someone with high Athletic skill can lock up opponents while effectively delivering damage to them. Push (p 55), Trip (p 55), and Entangle (p 54) all use the Athletics skill.

Athletics			
Level	Cost	Dice	Effect
½	0		
1	100	1	
1½	150		+1 Attribute Fate
2	200	2	
2½	250		+1 d10 Reserve Dice
3	300	3	
3½	350		+1 Attribute Fate
4	400	4	
4½	450		1 Reserve Dice at 10
5	500	5	+1 d10 Reserve Dice
5½	***		
6	***	6	

## Precision

Landing your long-range fire with precision and accuracy regardless of the weapon defines your gunnery ability. Someone with very high precision finds it easier to land shots in combat at range. Also useful for fixing watches.

Precision			
Level	Cost	Dice	Effect
½	0		
1	100	1	
1½	150		+1 Attribute Fate
2	200	2	
2½	250		+1 d10 Reserve Dice
3	300	3	
3½	350		+1 Attribute Fate
4	400	4	
4½	450		1 Reserve Dice at 10
5	500	5	+1 d10 Reserve Dice
5½	***		
6	***	6	

## Instinct

How quickly you are able to make decisions based on what's happening around you. Quick reactions and snap decisions that need to be made correctly to survive are the hallmarks of instinct. Someone with very high instinct finds it easier to avoid damage in combat and to get out of the way of bad things with little warning. Instinct grants Defenders d6 dice to roll against attacks. Note that the Attribute Fate for Instinct allows you to take an automatic 1 on one of your Defense dice.

Instinct			
Level	Cost	Dice	Effect
½	0		
1	100	1	
1½	150		+1 Attribute Fate
2	200	2	
2½	250		+1 d10 Reserve Dice
3	300	3	
3½	350		+1 Attribute Fate
4	400	4	
4½	450		1 Reserve Dice at 10
5	500	5	+1 d10 Reserve Dice
5½	***		
6	***	6	

## Awareness

How perceptive you are of the outside world and how easily you pick up on differences or changes in the environment. Someone with very high situational awareness makes for an excellent private detective or scout and allows the character to detect Stealthed characters (p 43). Very useful for keeping track of fast moving or small enemies and detecting traps.

Awareness			
Level	Cost	Dice	Effect
½	0		
1	100	1	
1½	150		+1 Attribute Fate
2	200	2	
2½	250		+1 d10 Reserve Dice
3	300	3	
3½	350		+1 Attribute Fate
4	400	4	
4½	450		1 Reserve Dice at 10
5	500	5	+1 d10 Reserve Dice
5½	***		
6	***	6	

## Knowledge

Dealing with events in the field requires wide swaths of knowledge. Useful for doing field repairs, analyzing situations, performing medical procedures, and many other things. Someone with high amounts of knowledge can be more effective against certain enemies. Each area of Knowledge can be taken 5 times, with each level adding another die to rolls involving that skill. You can record these on your Character Sheet. Descriptions of the skills are found in the Knowledge Skills Descriptions table (p 33).

Note that high Knowledge characters are effective only when the player remembers to use the skills they have obtained. They are more complex to build and keep track of. Knowledge builds are generally very good at dealing with a wide assortment of situations encountered during gameplay and maximizing the use of their MES.

Knowledge			
Level	Cost	Dice	Max Number of Skills
½	0		1 Skill
1	100	1	3 Skills
1½	150		6 Skills
2	200	2	10 Skills
2½	250		15 Skills
3	300	3	21 Skills
3½	350		28 Skills
4	400	4	36 Skills
4½	450		45 Skills
5	500	5	55 Skills
5½	***		
6	***	6	



The Knowledge skills are as follows:

Knowledge Skill Descriptions		
Name	ID	Description
Armorer	Arm	The more you know about personal protective armor systems, the more performance you can eek out of them.
Arsenal	Ars	Familiarity with weapons system and the stuffing of ammo into said systems.
Engineering	Eng	Combat engineering is useful for assessing the weak points in structures, squeezing power out of your packs, and carrying your stuff.
Explosives	Exp	Anyone can throw a grenade. A real artist can repurpose and reshape the explosive compound itself to meet their needs.
Hacking	Hac	Bend electronic devices to your will. Useful when you are that electronic device.
Medic	Med	The art of convincing the body to stop with all the bleeding.
Piloting	Pil	Become one with your vehicle. Not often useful, but very very useful when it is.
Repair	Rep	Being able to repair equipment in the field will win you many friends.
Science	Sci	A bit of science knowledge is very beneficial for splicers.
Security	Sec	Get into places that other people would prefer you didn't.
Stealth	Ste	Sneaky sneaky.
Survival	Sur	Useful for staying alive and using your instincts to get through problems.
Traps	Tra	For people who like to watch other people walk into their own demise.

## Communication

The basis of good leadership and team coordination. Useful for gathering and coordinating followers in combat situations. Someone with high communication skills can use them to inspire allies during combat. Every level increases the Max Ally Value, which is the base maximum value of all your Allies combined. This limits the total value of the Squad you can take on any one scenario. Every 2 Levels of Communication provides a bonus 10 Ally Reputation Points (ARP) that you may distribute as you like among your allies, or to save for a rainy day. Other skills are unlocked as you progress and their descriptions can be found in the Communications Skill table (p 35).

Allies, and the Communication skill, are very valuable while playing the game solo. If you plan to play cooperatively with one or more other characters than it can be more efficient to concentrate on other Traits. For solo play it's recommended to have a Communication skill of at least 2½, costing a total of 700 Reputation points to obtain. This will give you a total of four Allies. Note that the Max Ally Value equals this cost. Allies and building your team is discussed in greater detail in Squad Building (p 59).

This level of Communication also grants you Group Activate, a skill that allows you to pull a number of Allies into the Squad Leader phase.

Communication					
Level	Cost	Dice	Max Ally Value	Max # Allies	Effect
½	0		0	1	
1	100	1	100	2	Group Activate 1 Ally, Bonus 10 ARP
1½	150		250	3	Move It Skill
2	200	2	450		Taunt Skill, Bonus 10 ARP
2½	250		700	4	Inspire Skill
3	300	3	1000		Group Activate 2 Allies, Bonus 10 ARP
3½	350		1350	5	Coordination Skill
4	400	4	1750		Group Activate 3 Allies, Bonus 10 ARP
4½	450		2200	6	Training Skill
5	500	5	2700	7	Add 1 General Fate, Bonus 10 ARP
5½	***				
6	***	6			

## **Mods, Equipment, and Splices**

Mods, Equipment, and Splices (MES) are generally used to reference changes made to a character that are external in nature. These are opposed to the Base Traits and Knowledge Skills, which are more personal in nature. Splices refers to genetic and biological modifications. Mods and equipment can refer to either items or cybernetic and armor based enhancements. These can come with Bulk, Systems, or Cyber points. MES can modify the dice pool stats for Base Traits.

### **Bulk**

Having extra Bulk places some additional considerations on the user for both Cybernetics and Armor. Bulk is a separate trait and only applies if specifically added by certain pieces of MES. Bulk enhances certain equipment, as listed in their descriptions. It also places restrictions on rotation, which adds a different element of danger for the user. Rotation is discussed in Rotation under Movement (p 40).

### **Systems**

The Systems score is a rough look at how complicated and vulnerable the systems installed on your Armor are. In general, the more Systems you have, the more vulnerable you become to Shock. Wearing Armor with a Systems score negates the abilities and enhancements from any MES with a Cyber or Splice score. The effects of Shock on a character with Systems is discussed in EMP and Shock Damage under Combat (p 52).

### **Cyber**

The Cyber score is a rough look at how complicated and vulnerable the cybernetic systems you have are. In general, the more Cybernetic kit you have, the more vulnerable you become to certain attacks. Cybernetic installation is pretty well understood on the average human biology. Start to mess with it and it gets a little trickier. For every level of Splice you have, multiply the cost of a desired Cyber upgrade by that amount + 1.

For example, if you have a Splice 3 score and wish to purchase a device with a Cyber score, the total cost of that device would be multiplied by 4.

Most Cyber doesn't work through Armor. If you wear any Armor with a Systems score, the advantages of any MES with a Cyber score is negated.

The effect of Shock on a character with Cyber is discussed in EMP and Shock Damage under Combat (p 52). Cyber users can also be particularly susceptible to Venom attacks depending on their build. The effect of Venom on a character is discussed in Venom under Combat (p 53).

### **Splices**

Splices are genetic and biological modifications made to enhance (generally) performance in one or more areas. The more splices you have the harder it is to add more. Messing with genetics and your body's ecosystem gets increasingly more complex and costlier the farther away from baseline you are. Cyber also has an effect of the ease of Splicing. If you have 1 Splice or more, multiply the cost of any additional Splice by 2 times your Splice Level and Cyber Level combined. For example, if you have Splice 3 and wish to buy an additional Splice worth 100 Rep points, the cost you would have to pay would be

600 Rep points. You would then be at 4 Splice. If you have 3 Splice and 1 Cyber and wish to buy an additional Splice worth 100 Rep points, the cost you would have to pay would be 800 Rep points. You would then be at 4 Splice and 1 Cyber.

Splices generally don't work through Armor. If you wear any Armor with a Systems score, the advantages of any MES with a Splice score is negated.

Keep in mind that the order in which you purchase Splices will matter. Splices are difficult to take out once they're in. Once per Mission, you may remove a Splice for free and get a refund on the Rep originally spent to acquire it. If you wish to do this more often, removal of the Splice is free, but the cost original cost is not refunded.

Splicers can be susceptible to Venom attacks depending on their build. The effect of Venom on a character is discussed in Venom under Combat (p 53).

### **Hand Weapons**

Weapons are generally either one-handed (1H) or two-handed (2H) and are marked as such on the Weapons table. Some weapons, such as rifles, suffer penalties in Close Combat. These penalties are noted as negative modifiers to the Athletic Dice Pool. This can bring your Athletic Dice Pool to 0, but not below, and this means you will be ineffective at causing damage in Close Combat unless you switch weapons. Switching weapons takes 1 Action and is explained further in the Main Turn Order section (p 36).

Both 1H and 2H weapons take up one hand slot each. However, whenever you are using a 2H weapon, the 1H weapon is stored and not usable. You must Switch Weapons to use the other weapon. This is most commonly used to go from a 2H firearm to a 1H close combat implement.

For example, a normal rookie may be equipped with a Standard Rifle (2H) and a Combat Dagger (1H). when entering Close Combat, the rookie will want to switch the 2H rifle for the dagger at the cost of 1 Action. If they do not, the Close Combat penalties from the rifle will have them rolling no dice, and thus will be completely ineffective. The rifle still only takes up 1H on the inventory sheet, and the Combat Dagger is stowed until needed.

A character may have two 1H weapons or two 2H weapons as well. Both the 1H weapons will be active and can be used in any combination, however each attack will still take 1 Action and they must be used as separate Actions, unless specifically dictated otherwise. A character with two 2H weapons must use an additional backpack slot to hold one of the weapons. This models slinging the second 2H weapon over the back. This extra slot can cause the bearer to gain Bulk if it causes 3 or more Backpack Slots to be used. The Backpacks section has more info (p 26).

### **Attach Points**

Attach Points are structural points on armored suits or certain cybernetic enhancements that allow heavier weapons with high power requirements to be attached. These are listed in the Attach Point Weapons section with the number of Attach Points required abbreviated as AP slots. Generally, these are arm and shoulder attachments. Arm Attach Points preclude a character from using another hand weapon with that arm. The first two Attach Points are located on the hands and using these Attach

Points will preclude the use of that hand for other weapons. Attach Points 3 and 4 are on the shoulders. They cannot be used for Melee weapons.

Unlike Hand Weapons, where a 1H and a 2H weapon can be used in the first two slots, Attach Point weapons always require an Attach Point to be used for each point. Weapons that use more than one Attach Point always use shoulder Attach Point (Attach Points 3 and 4) before another hand Attach Point (Attach Points 1 and 2). For example, placing a MBMR will always use either Attach Points 3 and 4, and either Attach Point 1 or 2. It cannot use both Attach Points 1 and 2.

### **Backpacks**

Characters have a maximum of 4 Backpack Slots that they can use. Use of 3 Backpack Slots or more adds 1 Bulk to the Character. Grenades, medkits, and most deployable items use 1 Backpack Slot. This means that most characters can carry either 2 medkits, 2 grenades, or one of each at no penalty.

### **Changing Equipment and Stats**

It's tricky making a new build for a new game, and sometimes you make a build that feels wrong for your personal preferences. Purchases are based on reputation, and every Merc in the Corps gets some leeway when they change their loadout. You can model this by allowing free exchanges for any equipment installed or purchased for 1 Campaign or less. You have to be back on the ship to take advantage of this. After having a piece of MES for more than 1 Campaign, you will only receive half of the Reputation Points you spent on that piece. Or, alternatively, you can retain that piece in shipboard inventory or give it to an eligible Ally. You can then rebuy or repurchase what you need.

You also get a one-time offer to completely wipe and rebuild your character. The other Mercs will throw a party and everything for you. This is mostly just an excuse for the rest of them to raid the ship's entertainment pot.

Armor Table											
Name	Cost	AHP	Armor	Attach Points	Ath	Ins	Awa	Move	Power	Bulk	Sys
EvoSuit	0	*Environmental protection soft suit for Splicers and Cybers.									
Scramble Suit	100	*Allows 100% Stealth for up to 2 turns per Scenario, must have Cyber of 1 or less.									
Combat Suit	100	1									
Combat Armor	250	4	1	1	-1.5	-1	-0.5			1	1
Power Suit	400	3	1	2	-0.5	-1	-0.5		4	2	2
Power Suit - Agile Print	650	3	1	1		-0.5	-0.5	+1	2	1	1
Power Armor	700	6	1	2	-1	-1	-0.5		6	2	2
Stealth Power Armor	750	4	1	1	-0.5	-1	-0.5		4	2	2
Battle Suit	850	9	2	4	-1.5	-1.5	-1	-1	8	3	3
Battle Armor	1,000	12	2	4	-1.5	-1.5	-1	-1	10	3	3

Splice Table			
Name	Cost	Splice	Effect
Hormone Booster	100	1	Can use once time per scenario. Takes 1 Action. Adds 1 Dice to Instinct rolls for 2 turns. Adds 1 Dice to Athletics rolls for 2 turns.
Cat Reflexes	100	1	Adds 0.5 to Instinct.
Brain Augmentation	100	1	Adds 1 to Knowledge.
Memory Augmentation	100	1	Adds 0.5 to Knowledge.
Cuttle Skin	100	1	Can use 1 Action to gain 25% Stealth when no opposing figures are in LoS. Requires Stealth of at least 1. Adds 1 to existing Stealth skill.
Strength Musculature	100	1	Adds 1 to Athletics. Not compatible with Twitch Musculature.
Twitch Musculature	100	1	Adds 1 to Instinct. Not compatible with Strength Musculature.
Olfactory Editing	100		Treat Stealth at 1 step advantage for detection (ie, for 100% Stealth, roll on 75% table). Not compatible with Armor.
Avian Modification	100	1	Subtract 1 BHP. Subtract 1 Bulk. Subtract 1 Athletics. Not compatible with Twitch or Strength Musculature.
Rapid Clotting Pouch	100	1	Use 1 Action to restore 1 BHP up to 2 times per scenario.
Advanced Liver and Kidney	100		Can remove up to 2 Venom per scenario. Use this ability at any time without using an Action.
Leg Splicing 1	100	1	Adds 1 to Move.
Functional Tail	100		Adds 0.5 to Athletics if Bulk = 0.
Second Heart	200		Increases BHP by 1. Adds 0.5 to Athletics.
Leg Splicing 2	150	1	Adds 1 to Move. Adds 0.5 to Athletics. Requires Leg Splicing 1.
Mongoose Blood	200	1	Adds 1 to Instinct.
Leg Splicing 3	100	1	Adds 1 to Move. With Second Heart, once per level of Splice, allows a free Dash action immediately following a normal Move action. Requires Legs Splicing 2.

Cyber Table			
Name	Cost	Cyber	Effect
Eye Replacement	100		Adds 1 Awareness, and subtracts 1 Instinct.
Glute Capacitor	150		2 Power.
Chest Capacitor	150		2 Power.
Internal Blades	150	1	1 Damage in Close Combat. Unusable if arm has an Attach Point in use. Acts as a Melee Weapon without taking up a Slot for storage.
Plated Dermal Layer	150	1	Adds 1 AHP. Can be bought twice.
Internal Power Cables	200	1	Powering Cyber devices no longer takes 1 Action.
Arm Motion Compensators	200		Adds 0.5 Precision. Requires a Cyber Arm or Synthetic Arm Muscles.
Cyber Arm	300	1	Adds 1 Attach Point. Use 1 Power to add 1 to Athletic rolls until the end of your next turn. This takes 1 Action.
Plated Dermal Layer 2	300	1	Adds 2 AHP. Adds 1 Armor. Adds 1 Bulk. Requires Plated Dermal Layer.
Targeting Network	300	1	Requires Eye Replacement. Adds 0.5 Precision.
Defensive Synapse Net	300	1	Use 1 Power to change 1 of your rolled Instinct dice to a 1. Use this ability only once per turn.
Synthetic Leg Muscles	400	1	Use 1 Power to add 1 Dice to Athletic rolls, 50% to Move, and 50% to Jump (Rounded up) until the end of your next turn. This takes 1 Action.
Synthetic Arm Muscles	400	1	Use 1 Power to add 1 Dice to Athletic rolls, 100% to Throw, and 50% to Climb (Rounded up) until the end of your next turn. This takes 1 Action.
Lung Capacitor	600	1	Adds 7 Power, 1 Bulk, and subtracts 1 Athletics.
Cyber Legs	600	1	Adds 1 AHP and 1 Bulk. Use 1 Power to add 2 Dice to Athletic rolls, 50% to Move, and 50% to Jump (Rounded up) until the end of your next turn. This takes 1 Action.
Dual Cyber Arms	600	2	Adds 1 AHP, 1 Bulk, and 2 Attach Points. Use 1 Power to add 1 to Athletic Dice Pool for Close Combat Attack.

Items Table			
Name	Cost	Slots	Effect
Crappy Trauma Kit		1	Restores 1d4-1 BHP. Refills for free any time you're on board the ship.
Trauma Kit	40	1	Restores 1d4 BHP. Refills for free any time you're on board the ship.
HQ Trauma Kit	70	1	Restores 1d4+1 BHP. Refills for free any time you're on board the ship.
Crappy Armor Kit		1	Restores 1 AHP. Refills for free any time you're on board the ship.
Armor Repair Kit	40	1	Restores 2 AHP. Refills for free any time you're on board the ship.
HQ Armor Repair Kit	70	1	Restores 1d4+1 AHP. Refills for free any time you're on board the ship.
Anti Infantry Mine	30	1	1 Damage at 2" or 2 hex from impact, targets roll for Instinct against a difficulty of 5. If failed, they take 2 additional Damage. Triggers at the end of a turn where a character passed within 1" or 1 hex of its location. Refills for free any time you're on board the ship.
Anti Vehicle Mine	30	1	2 Damage at impact point or impact hex. 3 Pierce. Targets roll for Instinct vs a difficulty of 5. If failed, they take 1 additional Damage. Triggers immediately when a vehicle or character with Armor 1 or more passes over it. Refills for free any time you're on board the ship.
Attack Grenade	20	1	Throwable. 1 Damage at 1" or 1 hex from impact, targets roll for Instinct against a difficulty of 5. If failed, they take 1 additional Damage. Refills for free any time you're on board the ship.
Defensive Grenade	20	1	Throwable. 1 Damage at 2" or 2 hexes from impact. Refills for free any time you're on board the ship.
Backpack Battery	150	1	Adds 2 Power.
Extra Ammo	0	1	Extra ammo for your weapon. Cannot be used for weapons that recharge with Power. Each Slot holds an amount equal to the Max Ammo / starting ammo of that weapon.



Weapons Table				
Name	Cost	Slots	Ammo	Effect
Attack Grenade	20	1S		Throwable. 1 Damage at 1" or 1 hex from impact, targets roll for Instinct against a difficulty of 5. If failed, they take 1 additional Damage. Refills for free any time you're on board the ship.
Defensive Grenade	20	1S		Throwable. 1 Damage at 2" or 2 hexes from impact. Refills for free any time you're on board the ship.
EMP Grenade	40	1S		Throwable. 1 Damage at 1" or 1 hexes from impact. Causes Shock. Refills for free any time you're on board the ship.
Machine Pistol	20	1H	8	1 Damage. -1 toHit. For range > 5, +2 toHit. For range > 10, +6 toHit. Max Range 20.
Heavy Pistol	20	1H	6	1 Damage, Pierce 1. For range > 4, +2 toHit. For range > 8, +6 toHit. Max Range 20.
Melee Weapon	0	1H		1 Damage in Close Combat.
Standard Rifle	25	2H	10	1 Damage at Normal Difficulty. -2 to Ath Dice in Close Combat.
Combat Shotgun	25	2H	10	1 Damage at -1 toHit. Treats Concealment as Cover. -1 to Ath Dice in Close Combat. Max Range 12.
Heavy Rifle	35	2H	6	1 Damage at +1 toHit. 1 Pierce. -3 to Ath Dice in Close Combat.
Shock Striker	100	1H	3	1 Damage, Close Combat only. Causes Shock to both user and target. Use 1 Power to add 3 Ammo.
Palm Shocker	100		1	1 Damage, 1 Pierce, Close Combat only. Causes Shock. Each hand can hold one Palm Shocker. Can only be used with at least 1 free hand. Must be entangled with opponent to use. Use 1 Power to add 1 Ammo.
Palm Plasma Jet	100		1	2 Damage, 2 Pierce, Close Combat only. Each hand can hold one Palm Jet. Can only be used with at least 1 free hand. Must be entangled with opponent to use.
Armed Melee Weapon	150	1H	1	1 Damage in Close Combat. Use 1 Ammo to cause 1 Pierce and +1 Damage.
Energy Melee Weapon	150	1H	1	1 Damage in Close Combat. Use 1 Ammo to cause Shock damage and +1 Damage. Use 1 Power to add 1 Ammo.
Energy Staff	170	2H	1	1 Damage at 2" or 2 hexes from character using Athletics. Use 1 Ammo to cause Shock damage. When defending against a Close Combat attack, add 1 Instinct Die. Use 1 Power to add 1 Ammo.
Energy Spear	170	2H	1	1 Damage at 2" or 2 hexes from character using Athletics Dice Pool. Use 1 Ammo to cause Shock damage and +1 Damage. Use 1 Power to add 1 Ammo.
Model 739 Mil Spec M-Rifle	200	2H	20	1 Damage at Normal Difficulty. Use 2 Ammo to cause 2 Damage at +2 toHit. -2 to Ath Dice in Close Combat.
Beam Rifle	200	2H	6	1 Damage at Normal Difficulty. If Aimed, for every succesful Die rolled (after subtracting misses) do 1 Damage to target. -2 to Ath Dice in Close Combat. Use 1 Power to add 6 Ammo.

Weapons Table				
Name	Cost	Slots	Ammo	Effect
Model 740 Mil Spec M-Rifle	225	2H	20	1 Damage at Normal Difficulty. Use 2 Ammo to cause 2 Damage at +2 to Hit. -1 to Ath Dice in Close Combat. Does not use Ammo in Close Combat.
Grenade Launcher	250	2H	3	Grenades can be fired as if from a rifle with a Max Range of 16. The impact point is your target. If you miss, follow the normal rules for a grenade. Takes 1 Action to reload, uses normal grenades. Pick the type of grenades in the launcher at the beginning of the scenario. Rifle holds 1 grenade. -2 to Ath Dice in Close Combat.
Model 742 Mil Spec M-Rifle	275	2H	20	1 Damage at Normal Difficulty. Use 2 Ammo to cause 2 Damage at +2 to Hit. -3 to Ath Dice in Close Combat. Holds 1 grenade that can be fired as if from a rifle with a Max Range of 12. The impact point is your target. If you miss, follow the normal rules for a grenade. Takes 1 Action to reload, uses normal grenades. Pick the type of grenade in the launcher at the beginning of the scenario.
MagGripper Set	200			Causes 1 Damage on Hit in Close Combat. Cannot use this weapon and another melee weapon, except for palm strike devices. Cannot use with Bulk >0. The power pack for the device will only last for 4 turns per mission, after which the character will fall if they do not reach the ground through normal movement first. It can be recharged in between scenarios with 1 Power, but not during a scenario.
Tesla Cracker	200	2S		Use 2 Power to fire one Range 3 shot or 1 Power to fire a Range 2 shot. 2 Damage, causes Shock, only hits those with Cyber or Systems >0. Does not pass through solid objects and will hit allies. You can use the Power for other systems and can recharge the backpack. Comes with 2 Power.

Attach Point Weapons				
Name	Cost	AP	Ammo	Effect
Carry Pack	50	1		Adds 2 Backpack Slots.
Armor Melee	50	1		1 Damage. Can hit up to 2 enemies that are w/in 1" of each other and the attacking character.
Missile Launcher	200	1	2	3 Damage at 2" or 2 hexes from impact, targets roll for Instinct against a difficulty of 5. If failed, they take 2 additional Damage. If the target is missed, the shot goes 1d6" in a random direction, exploding early if its path takes it into a piece of Cover.
Power Shotgun	200	1	12	2 Damage at -2 toHit at a Max Range of 12.
Power Pack	200	1		Adds 4 Power.
HC Grenade Launcher	200	1	6	Grenades can be fired as a normal Ranged attack, Max Range of 16. The impact point is your target. If you miss, follow the normal rules for a grenade. Comes with 6 grenades of your choice.
PW A-Melee	250	1		Causes Damage equal to Bulk. Can hit up to 2 enemies that are w/in 1" of each other and the attacking character. Use 1 Power to add 1 Pierce, Shock, and 1 to Athletic Dice pool for your next Close Combat attack.
Armor M-Rifle	300	1	30	Use 1 Ammo to cause 1 Damage at -1 Difficulty. Use 2 Ammo to cause 2 Damage at +2 Difficulty, 2 Pierce.
PE Cannon	400	1	20	Use 1 Ammo to do 1 Damage. Use 2 Ammo to do 2 Damage at +2 Difficulty toHit. Use 1 Power and 3 Ammo to do 1 Damage to all targets at 1" or 1 hex from impact point. Use 1 Power and 1 Action to add 10 Ammo.
Heavy Beam Rifle	400	1	20	Use 1 Ammo to do 1 Damage at -1 Difficulty toHit. Use 1 Power to add 1 Pierce and to roll target's Defense dice first, then roll your Attack dice one at a time. Stop rolling dice once you get a successful hit (ie, more successful Attack dice than 1s). Add the remaining unrolled dice as Damage. Use 1 Power to add 20 Ammo, this takes 1 Action.
Plasma Spray	600	1	4	Use 1 Ammo to do 1 Damage and 1 Pierce in expanding 3" range cone. Area is 3" wide at 3" distance, tapering down to 1" at 1" distance and 0 at 0. Use same pattern with hexes (3 hexes wide at 3 hex distance, 1 at 1, each following wave must be touching all hexes in previous wave). Use 1 Power to add 4 Ammo, this takes 1 Action.
MBMR	800	3	60	Can Attack up to 3 different targets that are all within 1" of the first target with 1 Damage at Normal Difficulty. Use 1 Ammo for each attack you make.
Electrolaser	800	2		Use 1 Power to do 4 Damage at -2 Difficulty to hit with 2 Pierce and Shock. Can only be fired once per turn.
Leg Boosters	*	1		*Costs 300 per Bulk point. Adds 1 to Move.
Arm Boosters	*	1		*Costs 300 per Bulk point. Adds 1 to Athletics.

Knowledge Skills Table		
Name	Kno Lev	Effect
Glacis Stance	Arm 1	Once per Scenario, if your Armor is 1 or more, you can sacrifice 1 Action to ignore the first AHP of damage you take until your next turn begins.
Joint Swing	Arm 3	Once per scenario, make a free Dash action at the beginning of your turn, before any other Action.
Overpower	Arm 5	If your Armor score is greater than 1, push your joints past the limit and make a Close Combat check with additional Attack Dice equal to your Bulk. Either use 1 Power or lose 1 BHP.
Every Single Round	Ars 1	Add 10% Ammo, rounded up, to a weapon or piece of equipment that has at least 4 Ammo.
Found Something	Ars 3	Once per Scenario, spend 1 Action while standing next to a defeated enemy that had a ranged weapon (or could reasonably have had a grenade) and gain 1 Defensive Grenade. If you do not have a free Slot or Hand, you must use the grenade on your next Action. This is a single use grenade, and does not refill for free aboard in between scenarios or campaigns.
Got Them	Ars 5	Once per Scenario, add 2 to any Attack roll, after your roll.
Weak Spot	Eng 1	Add 1 Damage to any attack doing 1 Damage or more you make against a structure (i.e. door, building, bridge).
Emergency Power	Eng 3	Once per Scenario, Add 1 additional Power for 1 BHP damage to your character if your max Power capacity is 4 or less, or for no damage if the max capacity is greater than 4 Power.
Weight Balancing	Eng 5	Can hold up to 3 Slots of items without adding any additional Bulk.
Jerry Rigged Boom	Exp 1	Turn any grenade into a timed explosive device. Time is measured in turns, must be at least 1 turn, and explodes when the deploying character takes their next turn.
Mine Now	Exp 3	Attempt to recover an explosive device for your own use. Roll against a difficulty of its damage value times 4, with a minimum difficulty of 5. If you succeed, recover it as a placeable timed explosive with the same stats taking up 1 slot of space for every 2 damage. If you fail it goes off immediately.
Reshape	Exp 5	Change a 360 degree explosive device that does at least 1 Damage into an 180 degree explosive device. Determine the orientation on placement, add 1 to the Damage, and keep the range the same.
Trick Wiring	Hac 1	Reduce Cyber by 1 if total Cyber is 4 or more.
Cyber Boost	Hac 3	Add 1 turn to a Cyber ability or device with a turn limit of 2 or more.
Metal Shoulder	Hac 5	If Cyber is 3 or more, add 1 AHP.
Patch Em Up	Med 1	Can heal 2 BHP in between scenarios on any Character.
Flexskin Saver	Med 3	Normally a trauma pack is exhausted after one use. Instead, roll once for the initial use of the trauma pack (if applicable) and subtract the HP used. Trauma pack can be used until HP is reduced to 0.
Med Packer	Med 5	Can assume a roll of 3 in lieu of rolling a 1d4 for any medpacks this character uses.
Living Metal	Pil 1	Add 10%, rounded up, to the AHP of a vehicle with at least 5 AHP.
Redline	Pil 3	Add 1 to the Move of a vehicle with Move of 6 or more.
Sierra Hotel	Pil 5	Reroll a failed Piloting check once per Scenario.
Patch Slap	Rep 1	Can heal 2 AHP in between scenarios on any Character.

Knowledge Skills Table		
Name	Kno Lev	Effect
Metal Saver	Rep 3	Normally a repair pack is exhausted after one use. Instead, roll once for the initial use of the repair pack (if applicable) and subtract the HP used. Repair pack can be used until HP is reduced to 0.
Repair Packer	Rep 5	Can assume a roll of 3 in lieu of rolling a 1d4 for any repair packs this character uses.
Robust Genetics	Sci 1	If Splice is 3 or more, add 1 BHP.
Body Tuning	Sci 3	Can add 1 additional use per Scenario to one mod with a Splice rating.
Genome Studies	Sci 5	Reduce Splice by 1 if total Splice is 4 or more.
Alarm Rigger	Sec 1	Subtract 1 from any difficulty check you perform to disable an alarm with your Security skill. Use this skill once per Security Skill level you have per Scenario.
Secure Door	Sec 3	A door may be secured, forcing any opposing forces to spend an additional Action to open it (they do this automatically).
Smooth Operator	Sec 5	Attempts to open doors or other physically locked objects that use your Security skill cost 1 less Action than stated. For most locks this becomes a free Action. Use this skill once per game turn.
Shadow Hugger	Ste 1	Can Stealth at 25% with no equipment. Takes 1 Action to enter Stealth in this manner, and there must be no hostile characters in Line of Sight.
Stealth Overload	Ste 3	Can use Stealth Armor or Scramble Suit for more than 2 turns by taking 1 BHP damage for every additional turn.
It Was Nothing	Ste 5	Once per Scenario, ignore the results of 1 Detection Roll against this Character.
Flesh Wound	Sur 1	Once per Scenario, add +1 to a BHP healing item used by or upon this Character.
Not Dead Yet	Sur 3	If this Character has their BHP lowered to 0 or lower, roll a Survival check against difficulty 7, plus the amount of damage past 0 the Character has taken, if any. If successful, return the Character's BHP to 1. The Character skips their next turn. This skill may only be used once per Scenario.
Focus	Sur 5	Add 1 additional dice for any Knowledge Skill check for yourself once per Scenario. You must be able to roll at least 1 die before adding this bonus.
I Made It Myself	Tra 1	Use 1 Action to turn any grenade into a trap. Trap activates when a character passes within 1/4" of its center (or same hex). This trap can be thrown like a normal grenade.
Trap Reversal	Tra 3	Turn a trap you placed into a remotely triggered trap. Sacrifice 1 Action in your next turn to trigger the trap at any point during the opposing force's movement phase.
Reshaper	Tra 5	Trap now triggers for enemies instead of for you. Roll at a difficulty +2 to Succeed based on the disarm difficulty. If it is a door trap, you can still open the door, and it will now trigger when an enemy character passes through the threshold. Triggers immediately on a failed roll.

Communication Skills Table		
Name	Com Lev	Effect
Group Activate	Com 2	Allows you to activate a number of additional Allies equal to your Communication trait during the Squad Leader phase that are within 3" of your Squad Leader.
Move It	Com 3	Once per Scenario, grant an additional Move to any one of your Allies within 6". This does not use any of their Actions.
Taunt	Com 4	Once per Scenario, one enemy in your LoS will attack you instead of any other Character for 1 turn.
Inspire	Com 5	Once per Scenario, one of your Allies within 6" can make 2 Attacks in 1 Action instead of 1.
Coordination	Com 7	Once per Scenario, your Group Activate skill can be used centered around another one of your Characters. Your Squad Leader still gets a turn. The Group Activate number still represents the max number of Allies that may be activated.
Training	Com 9	Each scenario you complete, you gain 1 additional ARP that you can assign to any of your Allies present for the scenario.

## **Main Turn Order**

The game loop is performed in the following order:

1. Time Progression
2. Event Phase
3. Squad Leader Phase
4. Opposition Phase
5. Neutrals Phase
6. Ally Phase

If it is the first turn of the game, set the Scenario Timer to 1. Every other turn you will progress the timer by 1 turn. No scenario should last more than 20 turns, unless otherwise specified. If you have gotten to 20 turns in a scenario without either completing or failing the scenario, you have failed the scenario.

During the Event phase you should follow the instructions of the scenario. Generally, there will be a randomized or fixed event on every turn or every other turn. Randomized events will use cards, either proxy playing cards and a table lookup or official printed cards, to deliver good (haha) news to the player as the scenario develops.

During the Squad Leader phase, each Squad Leader present takes their turn. The one with the least amount of Reputation goes first by default. If there is a tie regarding Reputation, then you should roll a die to decide which Squad Leader goes first. You can decide on another method, such as age, but should try to keep it simple to encourage good game flow. The Communication skill Group Activate allows Squad Leaders to bring a number of their Allies into the Squad Leader Phase. Squad Leaders can also decide to defer their Actions until the Ally phase.

The Opposition phase is where you get hacked, clawed, or shot at. Try to stay alive out there. Recovery and disposal fees are expensive and come out of the bonus pool. Opposition forces that are in direct combat with Squad Leaders or Allies activate first. Afterwards, opposition forces activate at the players' choice. In general, I stick with top to bottom and then left to right on each row of enemies to maintain some neutrality.

If you have any Neutrals per the scenario they go here. Neutrals include characters that are allied with you but not under your direct command or control.

Ally phase is where the rest of your squad(s) get to make a difference. It's the last phase of the turn. Make it count.

## Actions and Activation Loop

Each character can make 2 Actions per turn unless otherwise specified. Some actions, such as Dash, require a previous action to have occurred. The Actions can be taken in any order as decided by the player.

### First Action

- Move
- Jump
- Use Item
- Aim
- Close Combat
- Switch Weapons
- Shoot
- Throw
- Use or Prepare Ability / Interact
- Stand
- Entangle
- Push or Trip
- Rotate

### Second Action

- Move
- Jump
- Dash
- Dodge
- Use Item
- Close Combat
- Switch Weapons
- Shoot
- Throw
- Use Ability / Interact
- Entangle
- Push or Trip
- Rotate

Move actions, including Dash and Dodge, are discussed in the Movement section. In short, Move is a character's normal Move action. Dash allows a character to Move an additional half of their movement, rounded up, as well as grants the character an additional Defense dice until their next activation. Dodge modifies the previous Move action into a defensive one and grants the character 2 additional Defense dice until their next activation. Stand allows a character to recover from the Fallen condition.

Using Items follows the rules of the item used.



Combat actions, including Aim and Entangle, are discussed in the Combat section. In short, Aim allows the character to add additional Attack dice to the character's next attack, whether Close Combat or Shoot. The number of additional Attack dice is equal to your Situational Awareness dice pool, divided by two and rounded up. Entangle pits one character's Instinct + Athletics dice against another.

Use Ability / Interact uses an ability that you have innately or of a piece of equipment, bio mod, or cybernetics. Sometimes these are used to interact with the environment, such as opening a door or hacking a computer. Prepare Ability is needed for some abilities to function and will be noted by the applicable ability.

### **Dice Rolling**

In Dark Metal, players will toss a number of ten-sided dice (d10) equal to the applicable skill's Dice Pool plus additional modifiers. For some throws, especially those involving combat, the character's opponent will toss a number of six-sided dice (d6) at the same time. Each roll is made against a difficulty number, and the act of the throwing all the dice is called a Difficulty Check or Skill Check. Any dice that has a number equal to or above the difficulty check number counts as a success. Any 1s that are showing count as a failure. This includes 1s on both the d10s and d6s that are thrown. A failure erases the highest success. So a player who rolls two dice and rolls both a 10 and a 1 fails the roll they were trying to make. A player who rolls a 10, 9, and a 1 against a difficulty of 8 passes the roll with the 9.

There are MES that can modify the Difficulty or Skill check number. These are often labeled as +1 toHit or -1 toHit. Any toHit with a positive number (+1, +2, +3, etc) means that it is more difficult to make the roll.

For example. A Machine Pistol does 1 Damage at a -1 toHit for a target at Range 5 or closer. This means that the Difficulty Check against a target would be lowered by 1. So, instead of hitting on a 6, 7, 8, 9, or 10 when rolling a d10 to attack, the attack would hit on a 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, or 10. This is a 10% improvement in the hit probability.

At Range 5, the Difficulty Check is now at +2 toHit. Instead of hitting on a 6, 7, 8, 9, or 10 when rolling a d10 to attack, the attack would hit on a 8, 9, or 10. This decreases the probability of a hit.

Combat is discussed in depth in the Combat section (p 45)

### **Skill Checks**

Difficulty or Skill Checks work in the same basic manner as Combat Rolls. Roll a number of d10 equal to the number of points in the skill that is being challenged versus a difficulty number.

For example, there is a computer present in the room your are in that is vulnerable to Hacking with a Difficulty of 6. If one of your characters has the Hacking skill, they may move to the computer and attempt to use it. They roll a number of Dice equal to their Hacking skill, in this case, three d10. They roll a 1, 6, and 8. The 1 cancels out the 8. The player still succeeds with the 6 and activates the computer.

### **Reserve Dice**

A mechanic that is available only to the Squad Leader player characters is Reserve Dice. This system allows Squad Leaders to modify dice rolls, depending on their Trait levels. It is discussed under the Fate section (p 58).

## Movement

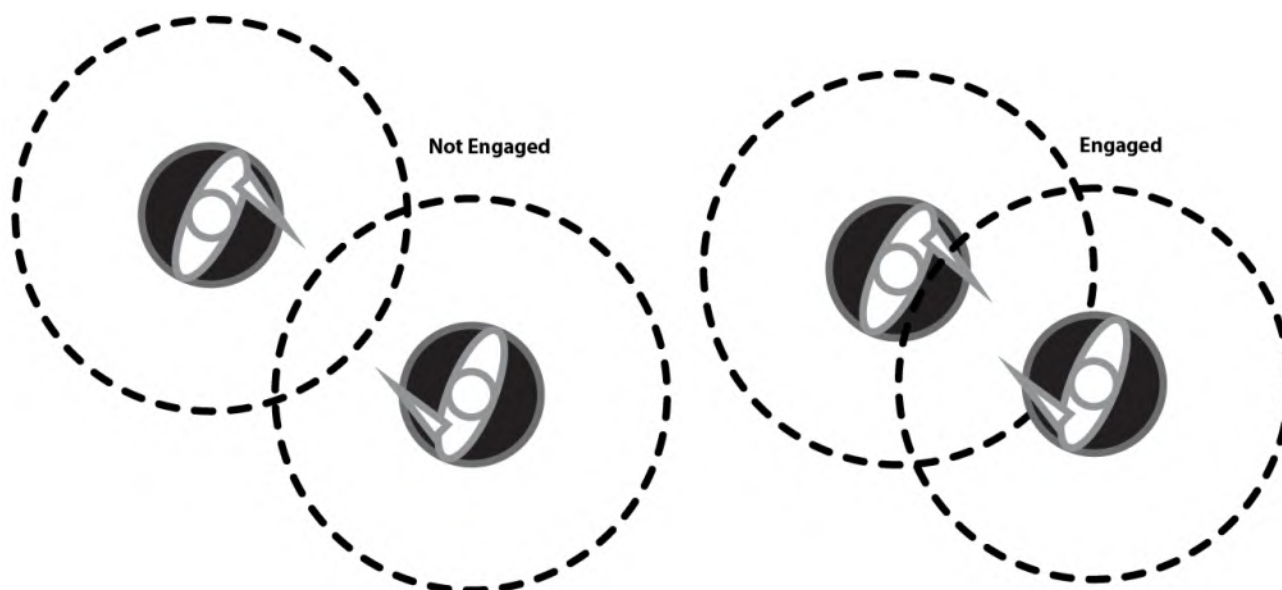
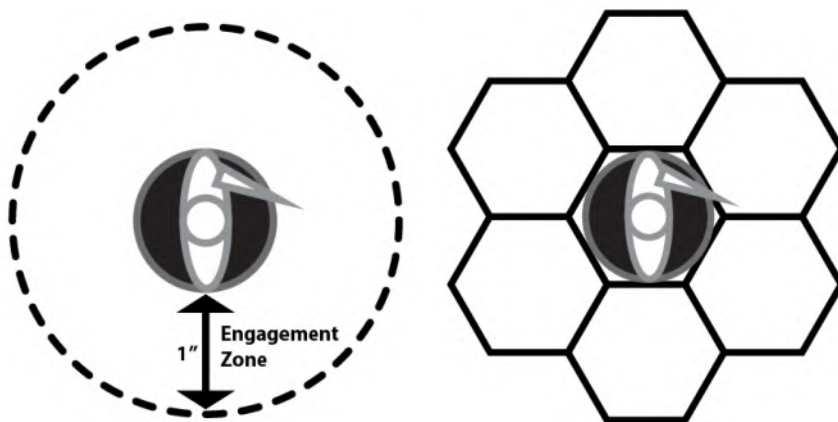
Dark Metal can be played either using distance or hex movement. The distances will be listed in inches by default. You can convert into centimeters by multiplying the distance listed by 2.5. You can convert to hex based movement by considering every inch to be one hex. Gameplay is enjoyable using either distance base or hex based movement and positioning.

This section is listed in order of importance. Understanding Engagement, Using Abilities, Rotation, and the Fallen state are critical to gameplay. The remaining topics can be skipped if you're looking to get started quickly.

### **Engagement**

Whenever a figure moves within 1" of an opponent they become engaged in close-range combat. For hex play this would be when a figure is next to another (ie, with no hexes in between). The center of the figure's base, or the center of the figure's head if it has no base, is used to determine whether it has entered engagement or not. If a figure moves out of this range, the opposing figure is granted one free close combat

attack. After resolving this, the two figures are no longer engaged in close range combat. Note that characters can move up to 1" while staying within this range without disengaging at the cost of 1 Action. Note that with multiple characters in Close Combat, maneuvering like this without disengaging from another opposing figure becomes extremely difficult. Engagement can happen during any point of a character's movement. By default, opposition forces will always engage when able. This can be



overridden by their AI, the scenario, or for other specific reasons.

Engaged characters cannot perform a ranged attack while engaged unless specifically allowed by a skill. All of their attacks will be made using the Athletic trait once engaged, unless specifically allowed otherwise by a skill.

Once engaged, the player can move both figures next to each other by one of two means. If the moving character has movement left, they can move up against the opposing figure. Otherwise both figures should move half the distance towards each other. This is not required; they can remain at a distance of less than 1", but greater than adjacent to one another, as long as they are acknowledged as remaining engaged in close combat. Moving the characters closer together can make tracking engagements easier. If a figure cannot physically fit next to another figure already engaged in close combat (i.e., a situation where there are already multiple contacts in close combat with each other and it's just too crowded) then that figure cannot engage in close combat. For hex units this isn't an issue.

A character can disengage in combat, as long as they are not entangled, by simply moving away. Each opposing character that was in engagement range of the disengaging character at the time of disengagement makes a single Close Combat Attack against the disengaging character. This is called an Opportunity Attack.

### **Use Ability / Interact / Skill Checks**

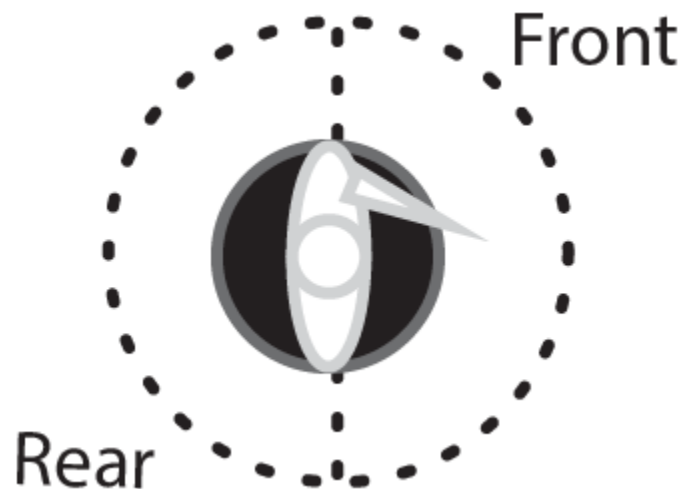
While playing a scenario your character may be forced to, or have the option to, use a Skill or Ability on the environment or an object. These will often be labeled as 'Skill Checks' in the scenario. Each Skill Check will have a Difficulty number associated with it. Roll a number of d10s equal to the character's Ability or Skill. If you roll more dice that meet or exceed the Difficulty of the Skill Check than 1s, then your character has succeeded at that Skill Check. There should be instructions for success or failure as part of the text describing the Skill Check.

For example, a character approaches a door that requires a Security check of difficulty 3 to open. The character has a Security skill of 2. They roll two d10s and get a 5 and a 2. Since they have one success and no failures, they succeed the check and open the door.

Unless otherwise specified either explicitly or narratively, Skill Checks can be repeated until you are successful.

### **Rotation**

Rotation rules only apply if a character has a Bulk score of 1 or more. In Dark Metal, a character can instantly rotate if they are of Bulk of 0 or less and are not subject to bonuses from rear attacks. This does not require an Action. For characters of Bulk 1 or more, rotation does matter and will cost an Action. Close Combat attacks from the rear 180 degrees opposite of the character's facing will have an additional 1 Attack Die bonus. A figure subject to rotation that is attacked from the rear

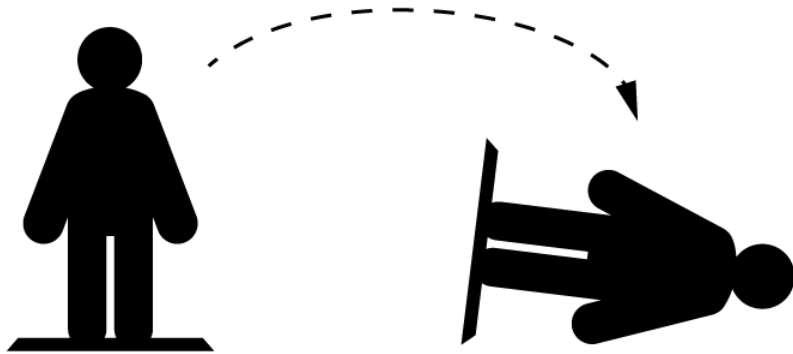


rolls no Defense dice. Note that this bonus does stack with other bonuses. Keep the backs of your armored companions covered.

Rotation also limits your available attacks to the front 180° arc of the character performing the Attack. Characters with a Bulk score of 0 or less can attack in any direction at any time.

### **Fallen**

Various conditions can cause a character to involuntarily no longer be standing on their feet. If Fallen, place a character on its side at its location. The character must use 1 Action to collect themselves and stand back up. They may stand up in any rotation. Opposing force characters will face their nearest enemy by default.



While Fallen, the character cannot dodge and cannot roll any defense dice. Rotation rules no longer apply to a Fallen character. Attacks against a fallen character gain a 1 Attack Die bonus. A character attacking or firing at a Fallen character can choose to attack any side of the fallen character, if there is any differentiation. Opposing forces will attack whichever side has the least amount of HP, if there is any differentiation. A character who falls during their turn forfeits the rest of their Actions, and the next character immediately begins their turn. Fallen characters cannot Attack other characters and do not count as engaged when determining Opportunity Attacks against an opponent.

Characters may voluntarily fall at any time for 1 Action. This can potentially be useful to bring a character into full cover instead of partial cover as a defensive move.

### **Dash**

Dash allows a character to Move an additional half of their movement, rounded down. For a character with 2 or 3 movement, this is more of a lurch than a dash, as they would only get an additional 1 movement. A character with 5 movement would gain an additional 2 movement.

### **Dodge**

Dodge modifies the previous Move action into a defensive one and grants the character 2 additional Defense dice until their next activation. A Dodge action must follow a movement action of at least 1" to be effective. This cannot be the result of a 'free' movement, such as repositioning characters in engagement. In other words, you cannot stand still and flail your arms around expecting someone to miss a shot at you.

### **Going Out of Bounds**

A character may move themselves or one of their allies off the playable area at any time to escape the scenario. Anything the character is carrying is secured and will be available in between missions and in the next mission as if they had been on the board when the scenario completed. However, the character

cannot re-enter the gameplay area, cannot lend their skills to assist in any way, and cannot swap inventory or allow the use of any items they were carrying for the remainder of the scenario. They will receive normal Reputation points and other boons and banes as if they were present at the end of the scenario. Opposing forces may sometimes retreat in a similar manner if specifically allowed, in which case they are not counted as killed for any purpose. No character can be forced off involuntarily (i.e., in case of movement forced by explosives, pushes, or other means). Simply translate their displacement along the border of the map edge. This is not meant to be an exploit, and if space is available, one can simply extend the playspace as long as the displaced figures are able to immediately move back on the board with their next action.

### Jumping

A character can jump over obstacles, terrain, traps, or just for fun up to 50% of their Movement, rounded down, 1 minus their Bulk. This applies only if their Movement is 3 or higher. Otherwise they cannot jump for any appreciable distance.

$$\text{Jump Distance} = 50\% * \text{Move (rounded down)} - \text{Bulk}$$

The height of their jump is equal to 50% of the height of their character.

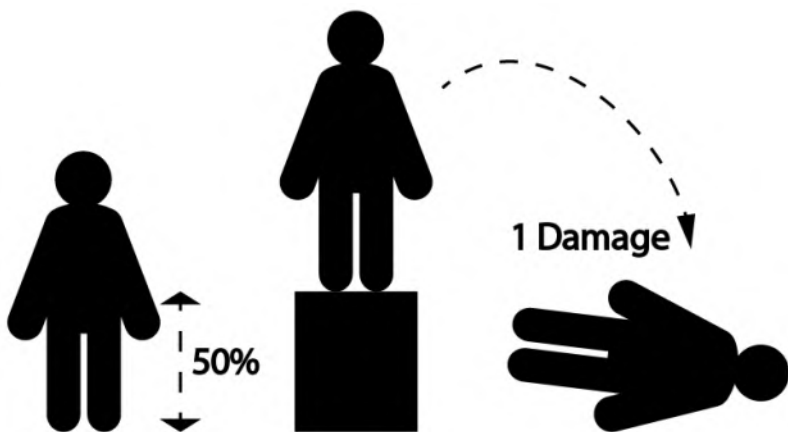
Characters performing a jump must make an Athletics check against a difficulty equal to the distance they are jumping multiplied by 2.

$$\text{Jump Difficulty Check} = \text{Jump Distance} * 2$$

They must declare where they are jumping to prior to their roll. If they fail, they can take 1 BHP damage to abort the jump (resulting in no movement and the use of their Action) or jump half the intended distance and land in the Fallen state.

### Falling from Heights

If a character falls from a height that is equal to or greater than half of their own height, they take damage equal to the body lengths fallen above half of their height, rounded up. A character may roll Athletics vs a difficulty of 7. Each success reduces the damage taken by 1. If they take no damage as a result of a fall, they will land on their feet. If they do take damage as a result of the fall they land on the ground in the Fallen state and lose the remainder of their turn.



$$\text{Falling Damage} = (\text{Height (based on character height)} - \# \text{ of Successes for Ath vs 7}) \text{ rounded up}$$

For example, if Terry has an Athletics level of 3 and falls from a distance of  $1.75 \times$  their character's height, they would roll three Athletics Dice against a Difficulty of 7. If the resulting roll is a 3, 5, and 7, they would have one success. The Damage calculation would be 1.75 rounded up to 2, for a total of 2 Damage. Each success subtracts 1 Damage, so the character would take the remaining 1 Damage and would gain the Fallen state. Their turn would then be over.

## Stealth

Stealth is largely optional during the game. Normally as soon as two characters enter into line of sight they have seen and can engage each other. If one character is under stealth conditions they can attempt to sneak up on the other. Stealth requires a stealth suit or stealth armor to be activated, or an appropriate skill. Equipment based stealth uses active camo and dampening devices to hide the occupant. Stealth is detected by a Situational Awareness check that is made any time a stealth character performs:

- A Move related action (normal movement, dash, jump, etc) in Line of Sight of another character.
- A hostile action with an unsuppressed firearm or device in Line of Sight of another character.
- A hostile action directed against another character.

The distance to the stealth character is measured from where it first entered the line of sight of the detecting character during a Move action, or if a non-Move action, from where that action is performed. Once a character is detected it remains detected unless it spends one entire turn out of the line of sight of any hostile character.

Awareness Difficulty Check at Stealth Strength				
Distance	Full	75%	50%	25%
<=24	10	10	9	8
<=18	10	9	8	7
<=12	9	8	7	6
<=6	8	7	6	5
<=3	7	6	5	4
<=1	4	3	3	--

Attacking another character in close combat while in stealth grants the stealthed character the following bonuses:

- 1 automatic 10 on an additional Attack Die when attacking and 3 additional Defense dice when defending, if undetected for the first strike. (This means you start combat with +1 Attack Die, and that +1 is a 10.) Note that attacking someone leads to your automatic detection and being struck in Close Combat also leads to an automatic detection.
- 1 additional Attack Die and 1 additional Defense die if detected but still using active full stealth. This only works with Stealth Armor or a Scramblesuit.

An example. Timmy the Tommy Gun Tickler is looking out across an open field where Kitty Kat is trying to sneak across. Kitty is 7 hexes (or inches) away and moves across at 25% Stealth, and Tommy rolls SA vs 5 after looking up the table. Timmy rolls 2 dice and gets a 3 and a 4. Timmy does not detect Kitty. The next turn, Kitty makes a move towards Timmy and has a Move of 7. Kitty is now in range of Timmy and

makes a first strike undetected. Kitty's normal Athletics score is 2, but for this roll adds 1 additional dice at 10 to her Attack Dice Pool. Timmy has 1 Instinct. Kitty rolls a 2 and 4 on the d10s and a 2 on the d6. Both of the attack rolls are failures, but the additional 10 that is added for an undetected for first attack makes it a successful attack and Kitty deducts the weapon's damage from Tommy's HP.

# **Combat**

## **Combat Rolls**

Combat is performed by rolling a number of d10 and d6 dice to determine a hit (the Attack Roll), and then applying the appropriate amount of damage to the victim. Some weapons require an additional roll to determine damage, and those occur at this time. Based on the skill tables and any specific equipment modifiers, the number of dice rolled in a Combat Roll varies greatly. Both offensive and defensive dice are rolled at the same time. For every die that is equal to or above the Attack Roll toHit value, you tally a successful hit. For every die, both defense and offense, that rolls a 1, you tally a miss. If the successful hits exceed the misses, you have hit your target and may proceed to damage it.

Characters often have to switch between Ranged Combat weapons and Close Combat weapons. It is recommended you use a coin or other flippable token to keep track of this. Most Ranged Weapons have a Close Combat penalty. Switching weapons removes this penalty.

Damage is done on a per-weapon basis and is noted on your character sheet and in the scenario for opponents.

The Combat section contains the most rules. Keep in mind that the reference sheet provided with this game is a one sheet summary of all the rules, including modifiers for terrain. The character sheets or cards contain summary reference information for each weapon the character has. The basics that you need to understand to get started are the Attack Roll, Dice Pool Modifiers, Health, Line of Sight, Cover and Concealment, Close Combat, and Shooting into Close Combat.

## **Attack Roll**

The Base Attack Roll toHit value is 6. This means that, by default, a d10 that rolls as a 6, 7, 8, 9, or 10 counts as a hit toward the target. This is a 50% chance to roll a hit per d10. A roll with a +1 toHit has a total toHit value of 7, meaning that a 7, 8, 9, or 10 will count as a hit towards the target. This is a 40% chance to roll a hit per d10.

The Attack Roll is primarily affected by the size of the target. Most targets are Average sized and receive no adjustment.





**Large**  
-1 toHit



**Average**



**Small**  
+1 toHit



**Tiny**  
+2 toHit

The sizes Tiny, Small, Average, and Large roughly correlate with the following:

Tiny – Small Cat, Large Rat, Toaster

Small – Half Average Human, Dog, Washing Machine

Average – Average Human, Deer, Full Size Refrigerator

Large – Horse, Car, Dining Room Table (on its side)

The Attack Roll number is further modified by other factors as applicable. One of the most common factors is your opponent's Armor value, which is multiplied by 2 and added directly to the Attack Roll (read more on p 49). This and other Attack Roll modifiers are notated by a +# toHit or -# toHit. A positive or + toHit makes it harder to hit a target. A negative or – toHit makes it easier to hit a target.

The Attack Roll number is meant to model how difficult it is to hit an opponent in a way that will cause them harm. The larger a target is, the easier they are to hit. The better Armor a target has, the harder it will be to find a weakpoint to cause any real damage.

The changes in the Base Attack Roll are summarized in the two tables below. Each table contains the same modifiers and Base Attack Rolls in two different formats.

Base Attack Roll - Lookup			
Target Size			
Tiny	Small	Average	Large
8	7	6	5

Base Attack Roll - Mods			
Target Size			
Tiny	Small	Average	Large
+2	+1	6	-1

## Dice Pool Modifiers

Where the Base Attack Roll changes the number that you are aiming for with d10 rolls, Dice Pool Modifiers add or subtract dice to your rolls. It is important to note that there are no modifiers when attacking a target in the open who has only performed a standard Move or Attack in the previous turn. Many of your Combat Rolls will have no Dice Pool Modifiers unless you choose to employ tactics that use these modifiers.

The basic Pool modifiers are:

### Attack

- Add 1-3 Attack Dice if Aiming.
- Add 1 Attack Die for each Supporting Attacker that has already attacked the same target character in Close Combat (max +2).
- Add 1 Attack Die when attacking a Fallen character or the rear of a character with Bulk of 1 or more.
- (Optional) Add 1 Attack Die if the attacking character is attacking the same opponent consecutively (max +1).

### Defense

- Add 1 Defense die for each Defender that is adjacent to the Attacker that is not within engagement range of another enemy figure, not including the defending character.
- Add 1 Defense die for each piece of partial concealment between the Attacker and Defender.
- Add 2 Defense dice for each piece of full concealment between the Attacker and Defender.
- Add 2 Defense dice for each piece of partial cover between the Attacker and Defender.
- Add 4 Defense dice for each piece of near full cover (i.e., just enough to peak around the corner or top and shoot) between the Attacker and Defender. Note that any more cover than this would block Line of Sight.
- Add 2 Defense dice for a Dodge.
- Add 1 Defense die for a Dash.

## Health

Your overall ability to take further damage is measured in Hit Points (HP) and is split between Biological HP (BHP) and Armor HP (AHP). A normal human has 2 BHP by default. Armored suits and other mods add further ability to take damage. Squad Leaders start with 3 BHP. AHP always takes damage first due to external forces, such as weapons fire, melee combat, and explosions. Once AHP is depleted, your BHP takes damage. If a character runs out of BHP they are knocked out of the scenario and can be removed from play. Or laid down as a warning for all.

Health can be tracked either using the pencil and paper method (p 17), with tokens, or a die.

## Line of Sight

Line of Sight is an imaginary line drawn from one character to another. Any obstructions, characters, or other objects that would interfere with the imaginary line would block Line of Sight. This includes walls,

whether they physically exist in the play space or not. If there is nothing but clear space between the two characters, they have Line of Sight to each other. Line of Sight is often abbreviated as LoS.

### Supporting Attacker

For each Ally that is in Close Combat range (1" or less or 1 hex) with the same target Opponent that the character is attacking and that is not within 1" or 1 hex of another Opponent, and has already attacked the same character, the attacking character can add 1 additional Attack Die to their roll. The limit for this is 2 additional dice. Put in another way, the second attacker of a Target in Close Combat on the same turn gets +1 Attack Dice. The third attacker of a the same Target in Close Combat on the same turn gets +2 Attack Dice. +2 Attack Dice is the limit for this bonus.



An example. Charlie and Heather are attacking Bandit, the bandit. All are engaged in Close Combat. Charlie attacks Bandit first with 2 Ath dice, but misses. Heather attacks Bandit next. Heather normally has 2 Ath dice, but because she is attacking the same opponent that another allied character has attacked in the same turn, she adds 1 additional Attack Dice to her roll. She rolls a total of 3 dice. Heather hits and eliminates Bandit A.

### Supporting Defender

Similar to a Supporting Attacker, a Supporting Defender adds 1 additional Defense Dice to a target that is being attacked when the Supporting Defender is within engagement range (1" or 1 hex) of the Attacker, up to a maximum of 2 additional Defense Dice.

Supporting Defenders bonuses only apply for Close Combat attacks.



In the above examples, the Bandit and Mary are engaged in Close Combat and the Bandit is attacking Mary. Since Stronk is in engagement range of the Attacker and not engaged with another opponent, Mary gains 1 additional Defense Dice when rolling against the attack.



This example has the same effect as the previous one. The Bandit and Mary are engaged in Close Combat and the Bandit is attacking Mary. Since Stronk is in engagement range of the Attacker and not engaged with another opponent, Mary gains 1 additional Defense Dice when rolling against the attack.

### **Armor and Piercing**

Each level of Armor provides a +2 toHit to attacks, both in Close Combat and Ranged Combat. Note that this can make an attack impossible. Each level of Armor is countered by a level of Piercing. Pierce has no benefit if it exceeds the target character's Armor level.

### **Cover and Concealment**

Cover is anything that prevents or obscures line of sight to the character in cover and is capable of stopping a weapon used against the character in cover. Concealment is anything that prevents or obscures line of sight to the character, but that will not stop a weapon used against the character.

For example, a concrete wall would be considered cover. A plywood wall would be considered concealment. The trunk of a redwood tree would be cover. A bush would be concealment.

Partial cover or partial concealment is anything that covers less than 75% of a character, but more than 25% of a character. This includes things such as low fences, bushes, or a table laying on its side.

Full cover or full concealment represents objects that can be shot around reasonably. Such as the corner of a building or a concrete barrier just the right size to shoot over. They provide at least 75% cover or concealment to the figure. It's important to note that in order to attack an opposing figure, the attacking character must have line of sight to the character it is attacking. 100% cover or concealment would prevent LoS.



**Full Cover**  
**+4 Def Dice**  
**Full Concealment**  
**+2 Def Dice**

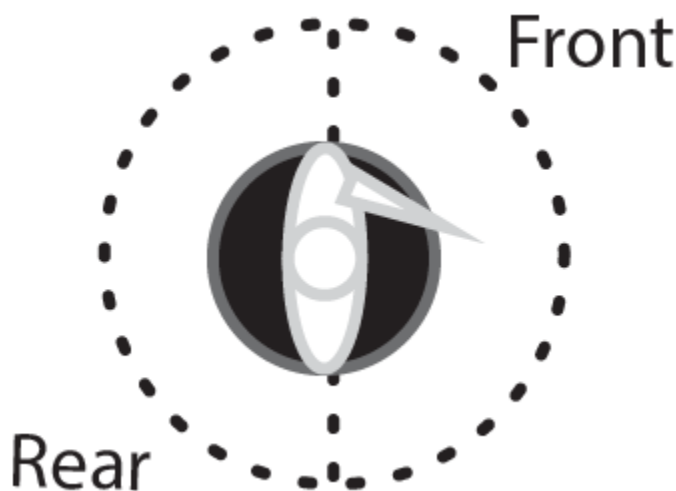


**Partial Cover**  
**+2 Def Dice**  
**Partial Concealment**  
**+1 Def Dice**

A character that is less than 1", or adjacent to if using hexes, of a piece of Cover or Concealment does not receive a penalty for shooting through the piece of Cover or Concealment they are next too. This models them shooting over or around the Cover or Concealment while still maintaining it as a barrier to their opponents.

### Rotation

A character having Bulk of 1 or more must track their Rotation when performing combat actions, including Close Combat and Ranged attacks. Being subject to Rotation limits your available attacks to the front 180° arc of the character performing the Attack. Characters that are being attacked from the rear 180° arc do not roll Defense dice, and their attackers roll 1 additional Attack die. Refer to Rotation in the Movement section for more information.



## **Switch Weapons**

Use this to change your weapons from Close Combat to Ranged or another alternate weapon the character is carrying. This is very useful for those using rifles or other two-handed weapons that need to change out for a Close Combat weapon or different configuration. Switching weapons takes 1 Action. Switching weapons from ranged to Close Combat also removes the Ath penalty associated with many weapons in Close Combat. However, to use the Ranged weapon again you must take an additional 1 Action to switch back to your Ranged weapon from your Close Combat weapon. The easiest way to track whether a character is ready for Close Combat or Ranged is through the use of a two sided token.

Under normal rules, switching between a Close Combat and a Ranged weapon does not modify your inventory. Most characters have two Hand slots available. Your character may carry a one handed (1H) weapon in each hand slot, or a two handed (2H) weapon in one hand slot and a one handed (1H) weapon in the other hand slot. No character may carry two 2H weapons in the hand slots. The second 2H weapon would have to go in the backpack slots and would take up two slots while stored there.

You can use this to transfer weapons between characters, but note that characters other than your Squad Leader can only use weapon types that they were originally assigned. For example, an Ally can use an upgraded Melee Weapon only if they originally had access to a Melee Weapon. An Ally, such as a Bio Animalus, that has no access to Melee or Ranged weapons may not be assigned either of these types of weapons.

### **Switch Weapons – Storage Rules (Optional)**

As an optional rule you can track changes in inventory with more detail when you switch weapons. A two-handed weapon takes up 2 Backpack Slots. A one-handed weapon takes up 1 Backpack Slots. You can also drop a weapon on the ground, but must recover it to your hands or Backpack before moving again using another Action.

Note that using these optional rules can cause characters to gain or lose Bulk depending on their inventory when the switch is made. Characters with Bulk should follow the Rotation rules as appropriate.

## **Close Combat**

See the Engagement section under Movement for Close Combat engagement rules.

Characters engaged in Close Combat cannot fire Ranged weapons, unless specifically allowed by a skill. By default, Ranged weapons used in Close Combat default to the same characteristics of a basic melee weapon, and do 1 Damage.

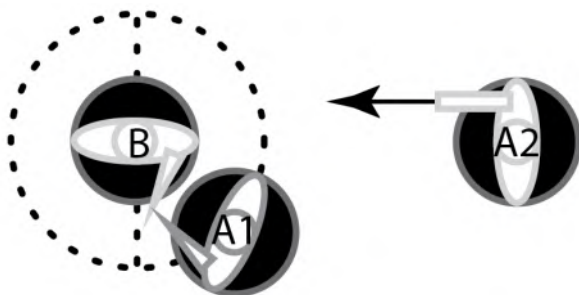
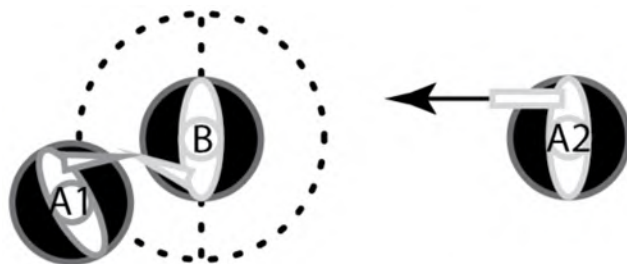
Most Ranged weapons have penalties for use in Close Combat, making switching weapons a necessity for most characters as they close in with the enemy. This penalty is noted as a -# of Ath dice in the weapon's description.

### **Shooting into Close Combat**

Shooting into Close Combat is divided into two situations; shooting into an engagement where the target is behind the 180° arc of any friendly relative to the shooter, and shooting into an engagement where the target is in front of the 180° arc of any friendly relative to the shooter. In both cases, the

shooting character must have clear LoS to the target to attempt a shot. Either use the center of base of the model to determine whether it is in front or behind the 180° arc, or the approximate center of the torso of the model. Choose either option, but apply it consistently throughout the game.

When the friendly engaged in close combat has the enemy in between them and the shooter, and the shooter is firing into the rear 180° arc of the enemy, the shot progresses as normal with one exception. If the shooter fails their shot, the friendly takes the damage instead of the enemy. In this example, A2 is firing at B, while their ally A1 is attacking. They make their attack roll as normal. If A2 fails their attack roll, A1 takes damage instead of B. Note that if A1 has B Entangled, then this rule is disregarded, and a miss will not harm the friendly A1.



When the friendly engaged in close combat is on the wrong side of the enemy in relation to the shooter, the shot progresses as if it has one additional layer of full concealment in place (+2 defense dice). If the shooter fails their shot, the friendly takes the damage. Add these defense dice for each friendly in Close Combat with the target and on the wrong side of the 180° arc. Randomly pick 1 of the potential friendlies using a dice roll

and apply the damage to them. In this example, A2 is firing on B, and their ally, A1, has the center of the base in the rear 180° arc relative to the shooter. The enemy, B, adds 2 defense dice to their roll. If A2 misses their shot, A1 takes the damage meant for B.

Note that since the opposing force cannot be engaged with the opposing force, their characters are not subject to being shot on a missed shot into an engagement. You must have LoS to the character you wish to shoot.

### EMP and Shock Damage

EMP or Shock damage can cause disruption to your cybernetic and suit systems, forcing them to restart and recalibrate. Shock damage only affects characters with a Systems or Cyber score greater than 0. Whenever you take EMP or Shock damage, the target character is Stunned for a number of Actions equal to the Shock level of the attack multiplied by the Cyber and Systems score combined. For each level of Stun, the character automatically spends 1 Action to reduce the level of Stun by 1 on their turn. This means that 2 levels of Stun are eliminated every character turn. The character cannot perform any Actions or roll any Instinct dice until Stun is reduced to 0.

$$\text{Shock} * (\text{Cyber} + \text{Systems}) = \# \text{ of Actions Stunned}$$

You may roll your Knowledge dice against a difficulty equal to your Cyber and Systems numbers combined and multiplied by 2 to try and prevent or reduce the Stunned condition.

### Roll Knowledge vs (Cyber + Systems) \* 2

For each success, reduce the duration of the Stunned condition by 1 Action.

Reduce the number of turns remaining in the Time Progression phase. You may reroll the above check in the Time Progression phase to see if you can recover early. Each success reduces the number of Actions remaining by 1.

For example, if a character has 3 Cyber and 1 Systems as a result of implants and a power suit, they would roll their Knowledge dice vs a Difficulty of 8. Let's say they are hit by a weapon with Shock 1 and acquire four levels of Stun before their turn occurs. Place 4 tokens or a die with the number 4 face up next to their character or on their character sheet. If they had a Knowledge of 2 and rolled an 8 and a 6 on their d10s, that would reduce the total Stun level by one. Reduce the tokens to 3 or rotate the die to show the number 3 on top. During their turn, they would remove another two levels of Stun to bring the total to one. During the Time Progression phase they can again roll their Knowledge dice vs 6. If they roll a 2 and a 3, they will have missed on both rolls and will not be able to lower the Stun level until it is their turn. During their next active phase, they spend 1 Action to reduce and remove the last remaining Stun level. They can then spend their remaining Action for their turn normally.

Shock weapons require Power to operate, or Ammo that represents equivalent charges.

### **Venom**

Venom damage causes lingering effects to Biological HP. Each level of Venom adds a counter to the affected character. A character affected by Venom at the beginning of their turn loses 1 Action and has their Move reduced by 1. On each turn that the character takes, remove 1 Venom token after they have begun their turn.

Armor levels decrease the effectiveness of Venom while the character still has AHP. If the character has an Armor level of 1 or more, the Venom level of an attack is decreased by the remaining AHP of the character. Note that this is the character's current AHP and not their maximum AHP. This makes Venom ineffective against many Armored opponents.

Every point of Venom in an attack adds 1 to the current Venom count of the target (subject to the above conditions). If a Defender is subjected to two separate Venom 1 attacks in the same turn, they will receive two Venom tokens. If a Defender is subjected to two separate Venom 2 attacks in the same turn, they will receive four Venom tokens.

### **Aiming**

An Aim action allows the character to add additional Attack dice to the character's next attack, whether Close Combat or Shoot. The number of additional Attack dice is equal to your Situational Awareness dice pool for a Shoot action, divided by two and rounded down. This means that at Squad Leader Awareness levels 1-2, the attacker gets 1 additional Attack die, at levels 2½ to 4½, they gain 2 Attack dice, and at level 5 or more, they gain 3 Attack dice. For Allies and Opposing Forces, the math is a bit different because they only have Dice Pool numbers and not levels. For an Ally or Opposing Force that is aiming, at levels 1-2 they get 1 additional Attack die, at levels 3-4 they get 2 Attack dice, and at level 5 or more they gain 3 Attack dice.



## Throwing

Your character's throwing distance is equal to its Athletic Dice pool multiplied by 2. Items thrown into the open with no obstacles between the character and its target require a Precision check of difficulty 3. Characters can only throw items over objects that would be considered partial cover or concealment vertically for the thrower. This means they should not cover more than 75% of the throwing character's height were the character to be using it for cover. The difficulty is plus 3 for one piece of cover, and then plus 1 additional difficulty level for each piece of cover beyond that. If the roll is failed, the item is moved back 1" or 1 space from its intended target for each point below the difficulty level your highest roll landed. For instance, if your difficulty level was 5 and the highest you rolled was 3, you would move back 2" from the intended target towards your character. Note that the minimum is zero, meaning the object landed on top of you. This may or may not come with regrets.

## Entangle

A character that has been Entangled by another loses 1 Action per turn until it breaks free. It can break free by killing the target or spending an Action to Unentangle. Note that Unentangling happens after the Entangled character misses their first Action. Meaning that an Entangled character that has the normal 2 Actions and Unentangles will not be able to perform any other Actions that turn.

Unentangling happens automatically if the Entangler disengages, Falls, or meets their demise.

In order to keep a character Entangled, the character who performed the Entangling must spend 1 Action to maintain the Entangle per turn. There is no further skill check for this. If they choose not to do this, the Entangled character is Unentangled on their next turn.

A character can only Entangle one character at a time, and each character may only be Entangled by one character at a time.

Characters that Entangle an enemy such that the enemy is in between them and a friendly firing a Ranged weapon are not at risk of being hit by the firing friendly. The Shooting into Close Combat section has a good example for this (p 51).

The Entangle check is made as follows. The defender rolls their Athletics and Instinct dice. Note that the Instinct dice remain as d6 in this check. The highest number they roll is the difficulty number for the attacker. The attacking character rolls their Athletics dice. If the highest number the attacking character rolls equals or exceeds the defender's highest roll, the defender is now Entangled. Entangling costs 1 Action to perform. The character doing the Entangling can perform a Close Combat Action against the Entangled. The character doing the Entangling can move away from the Entangled character, freeing them immediately, without receiving the normal Opportunity Attack from disengagement.

Attacker rolls Athletics d10

Defender rolls Athletics d10 and Instinct d6

Attacker wins if they have the highest number showing on all the die, or if they tie with the Defender.

## **Push**

A push attack can be made by one character against another as an Action while in Close Combat. A Push is resolved by both characters rolling a number of dice equal to their Athletics dice pool plus their current Bulk vs a difficulty of 5. Whichever character has the most successes wins.

If the attacking character wins, the defending character is pushed by 1" plus 1" for each point of Bulk the attacking character has, minus each point of Bulk the defending character has. The defending character is pushed back in a straight line originating from the center of the attacking character's base through the center of the defending character's base. If the defending character wins, the attacking character is now fallen. In the event of a tie, nothing happens to either character.

Dice Pool = Athletics Dice Pool + Bulk

Roll Dice Pool Attacker vs 5 and Dice Pool Defender vs 5

If Attacker has more successes than Defender, then Push Defender = 1 + Attacker's Bulk – Defender's Bulk Spaces

If Defender has more successes than Attacker, then Attacker is now Fallen

If Attacker and Defender have equal success, then nothing happens

## **Trip**

A Trip is resolved similarly to how a Push is, but the results are different. A Trip attack can be made by one character against another as an Action while in Close Combat. A Trip is resolved by the attacking character rolling a number of dice equal to their Athletics dice pool plus their current Bulk vs a difficulty of 5. The defending character rolls a number of dice equal to their Athletics dice pool plus their current Bulk plus their instinct vs a difficulty of 5. Whichever character has the most successes wins.

If the attacking character wins, the defending character is now Fallen. If the defending character wins, the attacking character is now Fallen. In the event of a tie, nothing happens to either character.

Dice Pool Attacker = Athletics Dice Pool + Bulk

Dice Pool Defender = Athletics Dice Pool + Bulk + Instinct

Roll Dice Pool Attacker vs 5 and Dice Pool Defender vs 5

If Attacker has more successes than Defender, then Defender is Fallen

If Defender has more successes than Attacker, then Attacker is now Fallen

If Attacker and Defender have equal success, then nothing happens

## **Death**

Death in Dark Metal is not impossible, but it is improbable if you can get to the proper medical facilities in time. Lucky for you the Craven Corps' ship is outfitted with almost everything you could imagine in that department. You can thank the Captain for that. As well as the Craven Corps' insistence on having emergency brain life support technology implanted in your noggin. Although, the scuttle is that that's

really only because the Captain hates not having accurate after action reports on failed missions. If you or an Ally end a scenario with 0 HP or less, you can consider yourself knocked out for the rest of the campaign, but will return at full health the next time you have access to the ship. This applies to all Ally characters except for Recruits. Although you can petition the Captain for particularly promising Recruits (an automatic success), in general they aren't seen as worthy of complex revivals. There is no penalty for dropping to 0 HP as such. Except the jesting of the other Squad Leaders. Unless you choose to follow the optional Injury rules below.

### Injury (Optional)

If you'd like, you can play with the optional injury rules. The ship's medical facilities are capable of restoring almost any damage imaginable with time. Some Squad Leaders or their squaddies keep injuries as a mark of honor. If you choose to do so, the physical rehabilitation programs on board the ship will help you adjust. Often you will see some other aspect of yourself improve. If you remove the injury in the future, you will also lose the boon that came with it.

If you fall below 0 HP during a scenario, roll two d6. You may choose one of the two results and suffer one of the injuries from the following Injury Table:

Injury Table		
Roll	Injury	Effect
1	Eye Damage	Lose 1 Awa and 1 Ath. It's hard for you to deal with Close Combat and other Athletic checks with your reduced field of vision. After 2 campaigns, gain 1 Ins and 1 Pre as you adjust and heighten your other senses in response.
2	Crippled Leg	Lose 1 Move and 1 Ins. You're just not as mobile anymore. After 2 campaigns, gain 1 Awa and 1 Pre. You've learned to take everything you do slower and with more deliberation. Because you're slower now.
3	Crippled Arm	Lose 1 Ath and 1 Pre. Your arm is all ganked up. After 2 campaigns, gain 1 Awa and 1 Ins. You've learned to be more mindful and careful.
4	The Shakes	Lose 1 Pre and 1 Awa. Dealing with nerve damage makes you constantly irritated. After 2 campaigns, gain 1 Com and 1 Kno. You've learned how to communicate a bit better after having to rely on others to do your shooting for you
5	Broken Rib	Lose 1 Ins and 1 Ath. Holy crap this hurts. Like every single breath. After 2 campaigns, regain the lost 1 Ins and 1 Ath. You're lucky that all the moving about you did helped it heal back in place.
6	Wicked Scar	Lose 1 Kno. You look way more rad now. Lose an additional 1 point of good looks and gain 1 point of 'I've seen some ^&!'. Those points don't actually do anything. This injury won't heal on its own, you can either keep it or leave it.

In addition to the above, for all injuries but a Broken Rib, you gain an additional 10% Reputation bonus at the end of every scenario. Round up to the nearest 1 Reputation point.

If you choose the same injury multiple times, you gain the negative effects of the injury again, but can only ever receive the positive benefits once.

## Combat Example

Moroc has an Athletics dice pool of 3 dice, an Instinct pool of 2 dice and is wielding a knife. Moroc is in Close Combat with two Bandits. Each Bandit Has an Athletics pool of 2 dice, and an Instinct pool of 1. None of the three have the Armor characteristic. Moroc has 3 HP and both of the Bandits have 2 HP.

Moroc goes first and attacks Bandit A by rolling 3 d10 Athletics dice.

Moroc gets a 4, 7, and 8 on the 3 d10s vs a difficulty of 5 (for an average size target <3" distance). Moroc also rolls 2 d6 Defense dice, 1 for the Bandit's Instinct and an additional 1 for there being 2 defending Bandit's with no other Attackers. The 2 d6 result in a 2 and a 1. The 1 cancels out Moroc's roll of 8, but the remaining 7 is enough to hit. Moroc does 1 Damage to Bandit A.



Moroc attacks Bandit A again, rolling a 4, 5, and a 1 on the d10s. The two d6 are a 2 and 6. Moroc misses the second attack.

Bandit A now attacks, rolling 1 die for their Athletic score and rolls a 3 on their d10 and a 4 and 3 on Moroc's Instinct dice against a difficulty of 5. This attack misses. Bandit A attacks again, rolling a 10 on the d10 and 1 and 5 on the d6 dice. The 1 cancels out the 5 and Bandit A does no damage.

Bandit B attacks. Since Bandit B is attacking the same target as Bandit A, Bandit B gains an additional attack die and rolls a 3 and an 8 on their d10 dice, and a 1 and a 3 on Moroc's defense dice. The 1 cancels out the 8. This attack Misses.

Bandit B attacks for a second time and rolls a 10 and an 8 on the d10 dice, and a 2 and 2 on the d6 dice. Bandit B hits Moroc for 1 Damage. Moroc now has 2 HP.

The current turn ends and the next one begins.

Moroc attacks Bandit A, rolling a 9, 7, and 6 on the d10s against a difficulty of 5, and 1 and 3 on the d6 dice. The attack hits and Bandit A loses their last HP and falls. Moroc attacks Bandit B and rolls a 1, 6, and 7 on the d10s and a 1 on the d6 dice. Bandit B no longer has the support of an additional defender. The 1s cancel out both of the successes and it is now the Bandit's turn.

Bandit B no longer has the advantage of a second attacker. They attack with only 1 d10, rolling a 6, while Moroc's defense dice roll as 1 and 1. Bandit B misses and attacks a second time, rolling a 2. They miss again.

The current turn ends and the next one begins.

Moroc attacks Bandit B and rolls a 3, 2, and a 7 on the d10s and a 2 on the d6. Moroc hits Bandit B for 1 Damage. Moroc attacks again, rolling a 4, 8, and 10 on the d10s and a 1 on the d6. Moroc hits for a final time and the last Bandit falls while Moroc shouts 'Fatality!'.

Moroc wins.

## **Fate**

Fate plays an important part in the culture of Captain Craggler's Craven Corps. If you didn't believe in it before arriving, you do now.

Fate in Dark Metal allows you to reroll dice. It refreshes when you get a decent night's sleep (about 6 hours), which is generally in between scenarios. As a Squad Leader with your own story and fate, you get to partake in its glory. This is not true of your companions and other non player characters.

### **General and Attribute Fate**

There are two kinds of Fate in Dark Metal. One is General Fate and the other is Attribute Fate. General Fate, or G-Fate, allows you to reroll any dice at any time that you have rolled that involves your character or one of your allies that you control. This includes opposing dice. Attribute Fate, or A-Fate, is additional Fate that applies only to its corresponding Trait and can only be used to reroll dice of that Attribute.

### **Reserve Dice**

Fate is also what drives the Dice Reserve system. If you have developed enough in a particular area and have opened up 'reservable' dice slots, then you have gained this ability. This is driven by the Base Trait levels. Each Dice Reserve slot holds a d6 or d10 and allows you to adjust a roll that you failed.

At the beginning of the scenario, for every Base Trait at 2½ or above, but below 4½, roll one d10 and place it into the appropriate Dice Reserve slot with the result that you rolled. For a Base Trait level of 4½, your dice is automatically placed at the full value of 10. At Base Trait level 5 you receive one die locked at 10 and one additional die which you roll.

At any time during the game, when you make a roll involving the attribute that you have a reserve die for, you make subtract points from the reserve die and transfer it to one of your rolled die. The purpose of this is to change a failed roll to a successful roll. Keep the Reserve Die with the correct value face up on your character sheet, reducing it as you use it. When it's exhausted, remove the appropriate die until the next scenario begins.

For example. If you are rolling 3 Athletic dice against a difficulty of 7 and the opponent has 2 dice to defend with, the results might be:

8, 4, 6 on the d10 Athletic Dice, and 1, 3 on the D6 defense / Instinct Dice

Since the 1 cancels out one success, the roll has failed. You only need a single point to change the 6 to a 7 and make the roll succeed. You can remove one point from your Athletic Reserve Dice and add it to your rolled die to succeed on the roll.

### **Rebounding Fate**

Any time your Squad Leader character takes BHP damage (not AHP), they may recharge a single point of either Fate or Reserve Dice. This Rebounding Fate only refills used Fate, and cannot add Fate above the amount your character had at the beginning of the scenario.

## **Reputation**

In Dark Metal, your accumulated reputation takes the place of experience points found in most games. In Craggler's outfit, reputation is what gets you new equipment, training from experienced mercs, and the notoriety to attract better companions. You gain reputation by completing objectives, succeeding at missions, defeating opponents, and bringing back desirable swag. In between campaigns you and your squad can spend your earned reputation on the equipment and skills tables. It is possible to lose reputation, for instance, by arguing with the Captain. Don't argue with the Captain unless you're really really sure about it.

## **Squad Building and Multiplayer**

Your Communication trait impacts your ability to gain, coordinate, and maintain a Squad full of mercenaries. Higher levels of Communication grant you a greater number of both support options and maximum squad mates for a mission. However, note that the more Leaders involved in a drop, the less attention you will be able to direct towards your squad, thus limiting their numbers. If more than one Squad Leader (i.e., human player) is deploying, divide the total Allies Cap (ie, the number of Allies granted to each Squad Leader by the Communication trait) each by the number of Squad Leaders participating in the scenario. There are examples of the calculation below. Each Squad Leader may always have at least one Ally on the field, no matter what the resulting number is. Round down when making this calculation.

Number of Players Ally Adjustment Example		
Number of Players	Base Number of Allies	New Number of Allies
1	4	4
2	4	2
3	4	1
4	4	1

You may build or change your Squad before any campaign, but not between scenarios unless specifically allowed. Extra squad mates that you have that don't drop with you will remain comfortably on the ship. They may even stop to think how you're doing every once in a while.

Unlike you, your squaddies earn Ally Reputation Points (ARP). For each successful scenario, any allies of yours that participated actively with you gain 1 ARP. For each successful campaign you complete, all of your allies, even those that didn't participate with you, gain 1 ARP. This ARP is in addition to those gained during a scenario. ARP measures how much influence you have with a particular ally. Gain enough and they will upgrade their equipment at your behest.

Most Allies will have upgrades available to them. You can spend their earned ARP on upgrading their skill level, or you can have them purchase basic equipment using a conversion of 1 ARP for 10 equivalent Reputation Points. Equipment bought with ARP becomes their equipment and it may not be shared. If they deploy with default usable items, such as med kits, grenades, and ammo, these automatically fill on return to the ship / end of a campaign at no additional cost to you or them.

### **Max Allies and Number of Players Example**

If a Squad Leader has a Communications trait level of 2½, granting them 4 Max Allies, and there are 3 players, than the max number of allies that Squad Leader can bring is 1 Ally. Note that this does not effect the Max Ally Value. Meaning that the player could take only 1 Ally, but they can use the entire amount of the Max Ally Value for that Ally if they have the Rep or ARP to spend.

## Recruits

Recruits are always free and are drawn from whatever scrubs found their way on the ship, local ‘talent’, and prisoners who are looking to get out of the brig before the Captain spaces ‘em. Thus, they can look like just about anyone. By default, they have one basic melee weapon of your choice and one basic weapon (Standard Rifle, Machine Pistol, Heavy Pistol, Combat Shotgun). They can upgrade to any weapon that they can wield (i.e., they need armor with an Attach Point to wield the weapons that require it). Remember that they must still spend an Action point to switch from a two-handed weapon to a one-handed weapon, such as when switching weapons for Close Combat.

Marines in this game are generally more skilled at Close Combat than their standard Infantry counterparts. This is to represent a greater focus in ship board combat in their role as a space force infantry, where they are better trained for fighting in confined corridors. Standard Infantry spend more time focusing on perfecting their ranged combat techniques for more open warfare.

Rep points you spend on recruiting Allies and purchasing equipment for them are fully refundable if that Ally or Equipment is removed, with a limit of one such refund every campaign. ARP is also refundable, but only for the Squad Member using it, and, similarly, can only be done once per campaign.

Type	Upgrade Cost	Move	Ath	Pre	Ins	Awa	Kno	BHP	Default Skills
Recruit	0 RP / 0 ARP	4	1	1	0	0	0	2	
Standard Infantry	75 RP / 10 ARP	4	1	2	1	1	0	2	Ars 1
Veteran Infantry	125 RP / 15 ARP	4	2	3	1	2	1	2	Ars 1, Sur 1
Elite Infantry	100 RP / 15 ARP	4	2	4	1	2	1	3	Ars 1, Exp 1, Sur 1
Recruit	0 RP / 0 ARP	4	1	1	0	0	0	2	
Standard Marine	100 RP / 12 ARP	4	2	2	1	1	0	2	Ars 1
Veteran Marine	100 RP / 15 ARP	4	3	2	1	1	1	2	Ars 1, Sur 1
Elite Marine	200 RP / 25 ARP	4	4	3	2	2	1	3	Ars 1, Sur 1, Tra 1
Standard Inf / Mar									
Sniper	325 RP / 37 ARP	4	1	4	1	3	1	3	Ars 1, Ste 1, Sur 1
Elite Sniper	100 RP / 10 ARP	4	1	4	1	4	1	3	Ars 1, Ste 1, Sur 1

See Appendix R1 for the Recruit upgrade tree. Ars = Arsenal, Ste = Stealth, Exp = Explosive, Sur = Survival, Tra = Traps



## Medic

A field-trained medical professional, combat Medics are capable of both fighting and administering aid to wounded mercs. Note that Medics can only carry Trauma kits unless otherwise specified. This means no grenades. They are generally more Knowledgeable than their peers. Medics have access to the same armor as Recruits. However, they are limited to a standard rifle, combat shotgun, machine pistol, heavy pistol, standard melee weapon, energy staff, armor m-rifle, and armor melee for weapons.

	Rep/ARP Cost	Rep Gain	Move	Ath	Pre	Ins	Awa	Kno	BHP	AHP	
Rookie Medic	75 / 10	2	4	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	Med 1
	<p>Rookie Medic fresh outta training. Still good at patching wounds and can shoot well enough. Carries 2 Standard Trauma kits, each capable of restoring 1d4 BHP. Each Trauma pack can only be used 1 time. Refills after every campaign for free.</p> <p>Has 1 Medic Knowledge level and can heal up to 2 BHP in between scenarios to the character of your choice.</p> <p>By default, wears a Combat Suit and carries a standard rifle and combat dagger. While wielded, the rifle does 1 Damage and has a -2 Ath modifier for Close Combat. It has 20 ammo. The combat dagger does 1 Damage in Close Combat.</p>										
Medic	200 / 25	3	4	2	3	1	2	2	3	1	Med 3
	<p>This Medic has been around the block a bit more.</p> <p>Carries 2 Standard Trauma packs, each capable of restoring 1d4 BHP. Trauma packs can be used 1 BHP at a time until empty, even across multiple turns. Refills after every campaign for free.</p> <p>Has 3 Medic Knowledge level. Can heal up to 2 BHP in between scenarios to the character of your choice. The Medic may choose up to 1 non-Medic additional Knowledge skills.</p> <p>By default, wears a Combat Suit and carries a standard rifle and combat dagger. While wielded, the rifle does 1 Damage and has a -2 Ath modifier for Close Combat. It has 20 ammo. The combat dagger does 1 Damage in Close Combat.</p>										
Elite Medic	300 / 40	4	4	2	4	1	2	3	3	1	Med 5
	<p>This Medic has considerable experience in the field.</p> <p>Carries 2 HQ Trauma packs, each capable of restoring 4 BHP. Trauma packs can be used 1 BHP at a time until empty, even across multiple turns. Refills after every campaign for free.</p> <p>Has 5 Medic Knowledge level. Can heal up to 3 HP of BHP in between scenarios to the character of your choice. The Elite Medic may choose up to 3 additional Knowledge skills.</p> <p>By default, wears a Combat Suit and carries a standard rifle and combat dagger. While wielded, the rifle does 1 Damage and has a -2 Ath modifier for Close Combat. It has 20 ammo. The combat dagger does 1 Damage in Close Combat.</p>										

## Field Mechanic

A field ready armor and combat repair specialist, Field Mechanics are capable of both fighting and effectively patching armor damage in combat. Note that Field Mechanics can only carry Repair kits unless otherwise specified. This means no grenades. They are generally more Knowledgeable than their peers and are generally referred to as “Mechies” by the rest of the mercs. Mechanics have access to the same armor as Recruits. However, they are limited to a standard rifle, combat shotgun, machine pistol, heavy pistol, standard melee weapon, grenade launcher, armor m-rifle, power shotgun, plasma spray, and armor melee for weapons.

	Rep/ARP Cost	Rep Gain	Move	Ath	Pre	Ins	Awa	Kno	BHP	AHP	
Rookie Mechie	75 / 10	2	4	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	Rep 1
	<p>Rookie Mechanic fresh outta training. Knows the ins and outs of patching up personal armor and can shoot well enough.</p> <p>Carries 2 Standard Repair kits, each capable of restoring 1d4 AHP. Each Repair pack can only be used 1 time. Refills after every campaign for free.</p> <p>Has 1 Repair Knowledge level and can heal up to 2 AHP in between scenarios to the character of your choice.</p> <p>By default, wears a Combat Suit and carries a combat shotgun and combat dagger. While wielded, the shotgun does 1 Damage at a -1 modifier (easier to hit with) with a max effective range of 12” and has a -1 Ath modifier for Close Combat. Concealment is treated as Cover with the shotgun. It has 10 ammo. The combat dagger does 1 Damage in Close Combat.</p>										
Mechie	200 / 25	3	4	2	3	1	2	2	3	1	Rep 3
	<p>This Mechie has been around the block a bit more.</p> <p>Carries 2 Standard Repair packs, each capable of restoring 1d4 BHP. Repair packs can be used 1 AHP at a time until empty, even across multiple turns. Refills after every campaign for free.</p> <p>Has 2 Repair Knowledge level and can heal up to 2 AHP in between scenarios to the character of your choice. The Rookie Mechie may choose up to 1 non-Repair additional Knowledge skills.</p> <p>By default, wears a Combat Suit and carries a combat shotgun and combat dagger. While wielded, the shotgun does 1 Damage at a -1 modifier (easier to hit with) with a max effective range of 12” and has a -1 Ath modifier for Close Combat. Concealment is treated as Cover with the shotgun. It has 10 ammo. The combat dagger does 1 Damage in Close Combat.</p>										
Elite Mechie	300 / 40	4	4	2	4	1	2	3	3	1	Rep 5
	<p>This Mechie has considerable experience in the field.</p> <p>Carries 2 HQ Repair packs, each capable of restoring 4 AHP. Repair packs can be used 1 AHP at a time until empty, even across multiple turns. Refills after every campaign for free.</p> <p>Has 3 Repair Knowledge level and can heal up to 2 AHP in between scenarios to the character of your choice. The Rookie Mechie may choose up to 3 non-Repair additional Knowledge skills.</p> <p>By default, wears a Combat Suit and carries a combat shotgun and combat dagger. While wielded, the shotgun does 1 Damage at a -1 modifier (easier to hit with) with a max effective range of 12” and has a -1 Ath modifier for Close Combat. Concealment is treated as Cover with the shotgun. It has 10 ammo. The combat dagger does 1 Damage in Close Combat.</p>										

## Combat Animalus

The Craven Corps has a selection of Cyber and Spliced combat animals available. They are weak and cannot carry any items, but are quick and have high mobility. The two most common forms are dog and cat derivatives such as wolves and panthers. Animaluses are relatively fragile compared to armored humans, but are also easy to repair and resuscitate, and so are still popular among the merc squads.

	Rep/ARP Cost	Rep Gain	Move	Ath	Pre	Ins	Awa	Kno	BHP	AHP	
Basic Animalus	0	1	6	1	0	2	2	0	1	0	Small
	Cyber or bio enhanced land animal form, most commonly a wolf or large cat. Can look like a normal animal or something less natural. Cannot carry items or perform Trip. Immune to Trip.										
Cyber Animalus	50 / 5	1	6	1	0	2	2	0	2	0	Pie 1, Cyb 1, Small
	Cyber enhanced land animal form, most commonly a wolf or panther. Can look like a normal animal with some extra metal bits or something far more mechanical. Cannot carry items or perform a Push. Immune to Trip. The Cyber Animalus requires 1 Power at the end of every Scenario to be active in the next Scenario (when departing from the ship or when an unlimited Power source is available, this occurs for free).										
Bio Animalus	50 / 5	1	6	1	0	2	2	0	2	0	Ven 1, Spl 1, Small
	Bio enhanced land animal form, most commonly a wolf or large cat. Can look like a normal animal or something more twisted. Cannot carry items or perform a Push. Immune to Trip. The Bio Animalus Venom can be used up to 6 times per Scenario. Each stack of Venom on an opponent causes the opponent to lose 1 Action on the Bio Animalus' following turn. It is not effective on opponents with Armor of 1 or more while they still have AHP remaining.										

Pie = Pierce, Cyb = Cyber, Ven = Venom, Spl = Splice

# **Getting Started**

## **Starting Your Adventure**

If you haven't chosen a prebuilt character or created one, now would be a good time to go do so. Your next step will be to start your journey. This book should have come with the first Campaign and a set of Sim Scenarios. The Simulator Scenarios are simpler and shorter than the Campaign and are meant to give you a look at how the game plays before launching into the campaign. As such, it has a variety of gameplay elements sprinkled throughout. Some of the other mercs will be watching your performance, so it's also a good way to eke out some extra Rep before starting on the Campaign.

## **Saving Your Game**

Your character sheet, ally sheets, and after action reports are designed to allow you to track and grow your teams as the progress through the game scenarios and campaigns. In addition, a quick overhead picture with a cell phone is often enough to capture the current game state and allow it to be reset after cleanup.

## **Tracking Enemy Health**

Most players will use dice placed next to the minis in play to track their current health. The number of health points are kept deliberately low, and a handful of d6 dice should fulfill most of your needs. Tokens may also be used, or it can be tracked on a separate sheet of paper.

## **Players Adjustment**

There will be several times in the Scenarios where NoP will be referenced. This stands for Number of Players. This factor is used to up the difficulty or number of enemies when multiple Squad Leaders are present. If you are playing solo, this number is always 1. If you have more than one human player, adjust accordingly. If you find the difficulty too hard or too easy, you can adjust by moving this number up or down. The most important objective is always to have fun!

The max number of Allies you can carry into the scenarios is adjusted by the NoPs involved. Divide the max number of Allies you normally have by the NoPs, rounded down.