

CORVUS BELLI iNFiNiTY

THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

MÖDIPHIUS™
ENTERTAINMENT

MERCENARIES

F&F™

WAR! WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR? CASH, CASH MONEY!

Soldiers of fortune, bodyguards, pirates, cut-throats, and heroes. The worst villains and the greatest heroes of the G5 can all be found in this great melting pot of freelancing warriors. From the flickering bulbs of Novvy Bangkok's fighting pits to the luxuriant skyscrapers of San Pietro, there is always someone willing to pay for their problems to be met with belt-fed subtlety and under-barrel discretion. Lone wolves, invisible techno-pirates, and even squads of murdering reavers, the mercenaries of the Human Sphere follow age-old traditions and work for the highest bidder, adapting and using all the latest technologies. Strangers to the ideals of patriotic love or loyalty, hard cash—or even better, solid quantronic credit accounts!—is the way to their hearts, and even more cash is the key to their loyalty.

From the construction of the first orbital elevator to the ongoing conflict in Paradiso, many factions have turned to mercenaries for cost-effective violence and intimidation. Whether escorting doctors and refugees out of Ghezirah, providing close protection for paranoid executives across Neoterra, or brutally resolving a miner's strike in Human's Edge, the mercenaries of the Human Sphere will take your money and get the job done. Never have mercenaries been in higher demand thanks to the political situation in the various theatres of the Sphere, and both Hypercorps and G5 governments employ the services of these soldiers for hire. Sometimes in the open, sometimes undercover, it seems these lords of war are a necessity in the power games of the future.

But the life of a merc isn't all bullets, venture onto the War Market where the cold and pragmatic business of war has never been so civilized. Meet Free Company Captains and review their units according to their performance both in the battle and in Maya. Your preferred company may be cost effective, but are they giving their extra with the Warcors and livestreams? Because in the Human Sphere, everything is about how good you look to the public!

The Mercenaries Sourcebook includes:

- Information on six of the major mercenary companies in the Human Sphere plus independent units such as the glamorous Foreign Company, the despicable Ikari, the discreet Spiral Corps, and the formidable Dahshat Company
- Rules and guidelines to develop your own career in the War Market, plus Lifepaths for Warmongers, Wardrivers, Recruiters, Arms Dealers, and others
- Weapons, equipment, and vehicles to kit your up-and-coming mercenary troops in order to fulfil their latest contract including anti-tank weapons, supplies, enhancement drugs, and pulpibeer!
- Detailed rules on how to create your own Free Company and play a campaign focused on mercenaries.

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XARAKS BATTERY

3

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PANOCEANIA
LIBERTY CARGO LOGISTICS CENTER

5

NOMADS
THE GORGE

6

NA2
MAIN STRIP

7

ALEPH / 0-12
THE GALLERY MAZE

8

NOVYY BANGKOK DOWNTOWN

9

COLONIAL HOUSING AREA

10

INDUSTRIAL HUB





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INTRODUCTION

THE BUSINESS OF WAR

Mercenary. Often considered a dirty word by the allegedly civilised bureaucrats of the G5 nations, many guns-for-hire that tread where others wouldn't dare act more honourably than the double-dealing corporate executives that pay for their services. Of course, there are still plenty of mercenaries that live up to the reputation attached to their chosen career. For no matter a mercenary company's deeds, the memories of such brutal conflicts as the Nanotech Wars and Lunar Colony Wars will always haunt their profession.

Regardless of past or present deeds, however, there is still a thriving market for professional companies that choose to turn war into a business. Hypercorps and megacorps seek out mercenaries for corporate espionage with zero accountability, additional security to protect their interests, or simply to bolster their overstretched forces. Though the life of the average mercenary is often risky, particularly amongst the more disreputable units, it can also be one of opportunity and rich reward — a life free of the ties that shackle ordinary citizens of the Human Sphere.

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

Delving deep into the life of a mercenary and the companies that employ them, this book takes a detailed look at the factors that can make or break an individual and their unit. Serving as an all-encompassing scrutiny of everything Mercenary, this sourcebook includes everything you need to create characters, run campaigns, and immerse yourself completely in your character's outfit.

CHAPTER 1 – FACTION:
MERCENARIES

This chapter provides an overview of mercenary life, including their evolution across the years into the high tech soldiers of fortune that now take the battlefields of the human sphere. The political landscape that applies to mercenaries is also examined, as well the more clandestine operation simply termed black sanctions. The final section looks at methods of including mercenary characters in a game of *Infinity the roleplaying game*.

CHAPTER 2 – MERCENARY
COMPANIES OF NOTE

With so many mercenary companies registered on the War Market, it can be hard for a potential employer — or indeed employee — to choose the

right one for their intended task. This chapter looks at the more famous (and infamous) companies available for hire, including the Dashat Company, Druze Baryam Security, StarCo, Varangian Guard, and more!

CHAPTER 3 – WARZONES
AND CONTRACTS

On a case-by-case basis, this chapter examines how each of the factions in the Human Sphere interacts with mercenary companies. From Ariadna to Yu Jing, and ALEPH to Submondo, every faction with any influence in the interstellar economy has their own methods and viewpoints.

CHAPTER 4 – THE WAR MARKET

An in-depth treatise on that most peculiar of entities that allows O-12 to centralise and regulate the diverse array of mercenary companies operating in the Human Sphere. From a detailed look at its inception, to an examination of how the Wilderness of Mirrors can impinge upon its operation, this chapter provides an invaluable insight into the War Market.

CHAPTER 5 – GEAR

War has been a driving force behind numerous technological advancements throughout humanity's history, and the mercenary companies have spent vast resources on improvements that extend their survivability and operational scope. This chapter highlights some of the unique gear available to them, from the aerocam Remotes of the WarCors, to the Yangwater used by mercs across the Human Sphere, and everything in between.

CHAPTER 6 – VEHICLES

A Private Military Company can find itself under contract on the strangest of battlefields under the worst conditions. The ability to access, supply, and manoeuvre in those warzones is a necessity that many mercenary companies invest heavily in. New TAGs, transports, gunships, and more can be found in this chapter.

CHAPTER 7 – MERCENARY
CHARACTERS

In addition to their affiliation, there are a variety of careers available to a mercenary seeking employment. Players can make their fortune as an Arms Dealer trading their wares to the highest bidder, chase lucrative contracts for their employers as a Recruiter Agent, and run the business aspect



of a mercenary company as a Warmonger. Or they could simply join the sharp end of their chosen firm as a Druze Shock Trooper, Free Company Irregular, or Kaplan Tactical Services Member.

CHAPTER 8 – CAMPAIGNS AND WARMONGERING

From a GM's perspective, a mercenary campaign can offer a plethora of opportunities to run exciting games across a near-infinite number of arenas. For the players, operating as an elite team within a larger unit or starting at the top and dealing with the various aspects that challenge a

mercenary company will offer unique challenges. This chapter offers advice and insight on constructing campaigns that focus on the players hiring out their services.

CHAPTER 9 – ADVERSARIES

As much as mercenaries can serve as the deadliest of foes, they must also contend with the most ruthless of enemies. The adversaries on offer in this chapter include the elite Anaconda TAG Pilot, the shrewd Contract Negotiator, the ruthless Ikari Soldier of Fortune, the deadly Outcast Ninja, and more.



CHAPTER 1

MERCENARIES

Mercenaries have had a long history, with the first records of their use dating from the time of ancient Egypt. From Xenophon's *Anabasis* to Maya dramas like *Olfram's Crew*, mercenaries have enjoyed a mixed popularity. For some they are a necessary evil, for others they are thrill seekers exploiting the violent tendencies of our species, and for others still they are like dark rock stars, heroes and villains both.

In the early days of the Human Sphere the use of mercenaries, at the time still commonly referred to as Private Military Companies (PMCs), was not widely publicised. The employment of PMCs in Africa and the Middle East left the occupation with a reputation for unprofessionalism and a tendency to ignore the rules of war. As nations expanded across multiple systems, and war flared hot across such vast distances, the use of PMCs to support or execute official military operations rose significantly.

Maya grew to become the connective tissue of the human experience, and the movies, news headlines and entertainments it provided highlighted some of the more dramatic missions undertaken by PMCs. The word 'mercenary' became in vogue again, and has stuck, replacing the politically ambiguous PMC with a title that heralds a long history much idealised. These dogs of war are more numerous than ever. Admired and despised, they are sent on gruelling and dangerous operations and used widely as private security. The role of the mercenary is ascending.

Some of the most famous mercenary companies, like the Foreign Company, which includes media darlings and *Arsiteia Champions* on its books, are regularly the subject of Maya dramas and documentaries, and even have their own line of merchandise. Others, like the Free Company of the Star, the most famous company in the Human Sphere, have become idealised visions of an ethical private organisation willing to fight the good fight for those who are unable. Other companies still, like the *Ikari Company*, have a reputation for ruthlessness, criminality, and violence.

Hard-bitten ex-military and thugs willing to risk life and limb for a payday are the stereotypes that come to the public mind when thinking of mercenaries. The soldiers of fortune of popular myth come from a wide and varied set of

backgrounds. Trades people, blue-collar workers, and labourers rub shoulders with former teachers, scientists, and doctors. It is true that a large number of mercenaries are ex-military or those who enjoy a good fight, but the stereotype does not define the profession.

Many companies actively contract mercenary units with a variety of backgrounds and skill sets, because as often as not, when a company lands at a port it means not just the entry of a dangerous group of fighters, but of a whole mix of skills and professions. The arrival of a company often leads to an economic upturn, as many companies encourage their units to continue to work their civilian roles when not on deployment. The most successful mercenary companies run strict training and physical conditioning facilities, where the mercenaries, whatever their backgrounds, are drilled into a professional fighting force. Such training programs are just as necessary for former soldiers, and while combat training is vital, so too is learning how to function as a cohesive unit and execute the tactics and mission types required of the company. The make-up and reputation of mercenary companies run the gamut, and their reception at any specific port of call is just as varied.

Mercenary companies rarely have a single base of operations, and while some have offices in major cities around the sphere, the actual contractors, the mercenary soldiers, are almost always on the move. Few companies own a shuttle of their own, and only the wealthiest possess intrasystem ships. While some contracts will include terms for transportation, it is usually expected that the required soldiers will assemble near enough to the target location for this to be mainly short hop shuttles, air, or ground vehicles. Almost all mercenary companies work hard to maintain a good relationship with traders and cargo haulers. These members of the *Freetrade Brotherhood*, and even the *Haqqislamite Corsairs*, provide the vehicles that allow the Mercenary companies to move from planet to planet or between systems. These arrangements are often *quid pro quo*, with the mercenary company providing protection and muscle for the ships that carry them. Only occasionally will a company use the *Circulars*, and the security teams of *Bureau Aegis* or the *Order of Santiago* are not typically thrilled to see units of mercenaries come on-board.

Lurking on the edges of the Warmarket are the bounty hunters, thieves, and assassins. These are smaller operations that fill distasteful but arguably necessary roles across the Human Sphere. The most accepted of these outside the true mercenaries are, without a doubt, the bounty hunters. Bounty hunters are loosely governed by the Bounty Hunter Syndicate, which supposedly provides a framework that guides the remit and actions of the many bounty hunters who operate across the Sphere. Bounty hunters tend to operate individually, or in small teams, and enjoy an even more varied reputation than the mercenaries. Able to cross national borders in pursuit of their quarry, most law enforcement agencies make use of bounty hunters when the situation demands it. Of course, more often than not a bounty hunter is contracted by corporations, Submondo groups, or by private citizens after revenge or justice.

Many large corporations maintain their own force of mercenaries, and this usually means they will have a bounty hunter or two on their books as well. Bounty hunting is usually about tracking down an individual who has escaped the long arm of the law, but more and more often bounty hunting has also come to mean industrial espionage, assets requisition (aka theft), and information gathering. A bounty hunter of the Human Sphere is usually a dangerous fighter, an unrelenting pursuer, and a diligent tracker, but may just as easily be a gifted hacker or gregarious confidence artist.

In this book, GMs and players will find extensive background information that will allow them to include mercenary outfits or bounty hunters as allies and adversaries. Some of the most famous mercenary companies are detailed, including information about their histories, structures, equipment, and personalities. In addition to fleshing out the rich setting of the *Infinity* universe with these dogs-of-war, the rules and advice provided will allow GMs and players to run characters as mercenaries. Whether working alongside characters from other backgrounds and organisations, or with the play group operating as a mercenary unit, this book will provide the GM with everything they need.

The Warmonger Rules Module includes advice for GMs about the types of campaigns they might choose to run if the characters are mercenaries, from objectives to combat tactics, equipment, and even creating their own mercenary company. The Lifepath system brings the experiences and backgrounds of mercenaries into focus, and this allows players to create mercenary characters with a unique and flavourful history. There is also an extensive array of equipment any dog-of-war might drool over, from specialised military equipment

to weaponry and a collection of flying, ground vehicles, and TAGs used by mercenary companies throughout the Human Sphere. Lastly there is a rogues' gallery of adversaries a GM might choose to include in their campaigns.

Bringing mercenaries, bounty hunters, and their ilk into a game session provides plenty of meat for story-telling and high adventure. Maybe the characters run afoul of a mercenary company working at odds to their own objective, making dangerous enemies in the process. Perhaps the characters are forced to work alongside a mercenary unit, with in-game tension built around how each group believes they should execute their objectives. It could be that the players want to run their characters as a mercenary unit looking for a contract with a larger company. It's possible the players want to run a small mercenary unit taking whatever contracts they can find in the hope of making a name for themselves and growing into a company in their own right. Maybe the characters work together chasing down criminals who have escaped to the dark corners of the Human Sphere. Whether the subject of this book is used to create deadly adversaries, or as inspiration for a group of characters doing what they can to achieve fame and fortune, the possibilities for adventure and mayhem are endless.

THE MODERN MERCENARY

Admired and despised in equal measure, the rise of the modern mercenary has been unstoppable. Used throughout the Human Sphere, in military and private roles, mercenary groups fill a number of vital functions. Their presence in the dramas and headlines on Maya has popularised the profession to a degree, and the recent reclassification by O-12 of some of the larger companies as 'Non-Aligned Armies' (NA2) has resulted in a boom to the industry.

Mercenary companies may be large or small; a corporate organisation with offices, full bureaucracy, and CEO, or may simply be a small team of ex-soldiers, thrill-seekers, or adventurers looking for a pay-day. At their core, even many of the largest mercenary outfits are made up of small units of individuals who may have served together or who share some other commonality. These units are often contracted independently or to larger mercenary companies, which have the benefit of access to ongoing contracts with regular employers. Almost all mercenary companies have a specific uniform and company emblem, but typically switch these out for disruptive pattern uniforms specific to their area of deployment. Many companies follow a similar ranking structure to the armies of the major forces in the Human Sphere, but a handful



of smaller ones, usually created by or drawn from ex-special forces soldiers, follow a more open command structure.

Mercenary companies are most widely employed as private security, protecting corporate or privately held assets, whether they be people, stations, or facilities. These companies run the gamut, from little more than swaggering security guards through to well-equipped and highly-trained, private armies.

A large number of companies operate in aggressive rather than protective roles, either privately funded or under pay from a government or military. These front-line roles may be in warzones, as bounty hunters, assassins, or even performing espionage operations. Those mercenaries used for front-line duties, where the expectation is that they will engage in military action, provide a unique opportunity for their employer, and are often sent on missions that are highly dangerous, borderline illegal, or outright criminal.

The risks inherent to the job are high, and mercenaries are still not granted the rights and protections that are supposed to be applied to enemy combatants under the Concilium Convention. According to this body of international laws, mercenaries have no right to claim the status of a combatant or prisoner of war, both of which are meant to provide some level of protection for the soldiers on both sides of a conflict. The latest move to redefine the larger mercenary companies as Non-Aligned Armies (NA2), and the wider military employment of mercenaries in the ongoing conflicts of the Human Sphere, especially Paradiso, may see some changes to how mercenaries are treated under law, but no such change has yet been made.

Mercenaries are regularly contracted to perform missions that require them to operate across national borders, which cannot be legally sanctioned or executed by official organisations such as intelligence services or law enforcement, or which require the use of soldiers that cannot be traced back to their employers. Missions regularly walk a grey legal line, and many are outright illegal. While they are regularly employed by governments and agencies across the Human Sphere, mercenaries themselves are typically treated with suspicion and disdain, usually mixed with equal measures of fear and awe.

Jurisdiction and the mess of international laws often requires the use of bounty-hunters or agents who can move across borders and execute justice where official legal channels are closed. Employers of mercenary units performing such missions may

be private citizens looking for justice, but are more often corporations, governments, and even O-12. The Bounty Hunters Syndicate is meant to provide some framework and rules on how bounty hunters carry themselves, and what sorts of actions are legal or acceptable, but as always, money talks, and there are always those few who are happy to push beyond the boundaries if the pay is right.

In an age where evercasting and the non-stop news service splashes updates and information around the clock for a hungry audience across the Sphere, many mercenary companies thrive on constant self-promotion. This has been fed by the rise of the War Market, and it has become increasingly necessary for mercenary contracts to include non-disclosure terms. The need to maintain a reputation for integrity to their trade means that while news and stories of mercenary operations are popularly recounted, the details of a vast majority of actual operations are never shared. Of course, there have been a number of well documented mercenary operations, the details of which have been revealed through investigations undertaken in the criminal courts on Concilium or unearthed by a dogged Maya journalist. These persistent glimpses of the truth, mingled with the dramatizations seen on Maya, keeps volunteers signing up in ever higher numbers.

The details of missions, in-so-far as they are available, and how those details enter the public sphere, are often controlled by the mercenary company and are usually carefully constructed by a media agent to represent the company in the best possible light. Having a good reputation and a record for success means a lot, especially when it comes to the War Market. The War Market is an O-12 initiative to inject some level of accountability into the operational practices of mercenary companies. Like the stock market, the value of a company can rise and fall on a range of scales, all of which will impact the public perception of the company, and has shown to have a significant effect on the number of contracts a company is likely to attract.

From an outsider's point of view, it might seem that the obvious missions to send mercenaries on are those too dangerous for 'proper' military personnel. However, it is a simple fact that money earned cannot be spent from the grave. No mercenary is likely to accept a job that looks like certain death. They are professionals and will make their own assessment of whether a proposed operation fits within an acceptable risk range. Companies typically have military strategists who will tap intelligence assets to build as complete a picture of a proposed operation before agreeing to undertake it. Many smaller companies, or units

working freelance, are not in so lucky. There are numerous cautionary tales of small-time mercenary companies biting off more than they can chew by not doing their due diligence before signing a contract.

Ubiquity of equipment is not as common as might be assumed from the dramas on Maya. With most large companies made up of contracted units, these units often bring their own equipment. However, companies do provide for their units though, a majority enforce strict training and fitness regimes, and specialised equipment for specific operations is typically supplied by the company and paid for as a part of the contract. Equipment, including the weapons and ammunition a unit is required to use, may sometimes be supplied by the contractor. This typically happens when the unit is executing an operation on behalf of a corporation or governmental agency that does not want anything left behind that is traceable.

For small companies made up of a single or small number of units, or highly professional large companies that employ rather than contract their soldiers, uniforms, weaponry and training are usually a part of the package. For many companies there is also the contracted or implied expectation that the units they contract will behave themselves as well off mission as they do on mission. Contracts have been torn up for rowdy, violent, or illegal behaviour, but this will largely depend on the company involved.

When a contract is signed it is typically logged with O-12, with the details of its value and contract duration carefully recorded. Payments are then made to a licensed third party, usually a broker, though many of the larger companies represent themselves in this matter. A contract may specify that a percentage of the monies paid may be accessible before signoff, and after signoff there is typically a cooling off period before the remainder of the payment may be accessed of the company. A company will take its slice of any earnings (this varies from company to company), and the remainder will be passed on to the unit or units that executed the contract.

Contract arrangement and payment is a complicated process that is largely monitored by O-12, but it is designed to ensure mercenary companies and those hiring them both have all the usual protections involved with the trading of goods and services. Of course, Black Sanction mercenaries, those hired directly and privately, or those working for Submondo groups avoid all of the procedures imposed by O-12, but the risks are also inherently higher.

THE POLITICS OF WAR

Geo-political analysis of the Human Sphere places humanity in a situation defined as Code: *Infinity*. A state in which the nations and power brokers of the Human Sphere teeter on the brink of war. The Japanese Uprising and the more formal recognition of the Non-Aligned Armies by O-12 has pushed humanity even closer to the precipice. Constant minor skirmishing between Yuling and PanOceanian forces, a lasting remnant of the Neo-Colonial Wars never quite forgotten, have been the staccato rhythm of politics for more than a decade. With the Japanese Uprising, these skirmishes have evolved into larger and more bloody conflicts. The rift in Yuling has seen internecine war across the Human Sphere. Conflicts between the Nomads, PanOceania and ALEPH have been constant, though often buried. The Commercial Conflicts that have riven the economic base of Ariadna's developing resources industry has only devolved further with recent developments on the planet.

The need to legitimise some of the larger private armies and mercenary companies to help support ongoing conflicts in an ever more unstable political landscape has also had a significant impact on the steadiness of the political environment. Alliances, economic ties, mutual dependencies, and treaties are a tangled web that if pulled too severely in any direction will drag the entirety of the Human Sphere with it.

If humanity were alone in a cold universe this confluence of factors would be dangerous and highly worrying, but it is not alone. The threat of the Combined Army is growing. The conflict on Paradiso is becoming more desperate. Rumours that this war has spilled through the Daybreak Blockade in the Paradiso system to Dawn appears to place humanity in a bloody and slow retreat in the face of an implacable enemy. The Tohaa, seen by so many as allies who could stand side-by-side with humanity and hold off the Combined advance, seem to have their own agenda, and new alliances formed through the Japanese Uprising has given them unprecedented and largely unmonitored access to Human Sphere.

An escalation of tension and conflict throughout the Human Sphere has seen the demand for mercenary companies ride a meteoric rise. This is a boom time for mercenaries, but it is also something of a double-edged sword. With the number of contracts increasing, and the 'stocks' of the War Market in a bull rush, a number of companies have undone themselves either by overextending and promising more than they can deliver, or by rushing operations with deadly and at times criminal results.



The need for mercenaries to maintain a reputation for independence, to appear above the petty party politics of the Human Sphere, is essential. While many companies exist that operate purely for a single nation state and its corporations, many others strive to maintain their integrity as independent operators, able to take contracts from a variety of sources. The variety of markers used by the War Market to rate mercenary companies on a public exchange has helped with this thorny problem, but it is not a perfect solution.

With tensions between the nations of the Human Sphere so high, petty politicking between companies, smear campaigns, and insidious rumours can have a significant impact on a company's ratings and the contracts they are offered. It is also not unknown for security and intelligence agencies to falsify companies made up of their own operatives in an effort to gather intel, undermine, or outright attack other nations or corporations. Some of the larger companies are very selective about the contracts they take, not just based on risk assessments and suitability, but also for the

image taking them might create. Taking too many contracts from companies and agencies linked to PanOceania, for example, might be useful fodder for a rival company when both are tendering for a contract from Yuling. 'Can they be trusted?' is a constant question. Successful, independent companies maintain their success by constantly working on their image and being careful about the contracts they take on.

Smaller companies, or those struggling with financial difficulties, can rarely afford to be so choosy. Many companies that would like to operate as independent can find themselves reliant on one client or nation state because they have been forced too often to take contracts from that source, something that may make them an untenable option for rival companies or nations. The appearance of allegiance can be a deadly mistake that forces a small company into a situation of forced dependence on a specific client. Breaking this image can be difficult or next to impossible, and it has led some companies to take drastic actions directly against their usual employers. Such companies have even been marked as traitors,

criminals, or terrorists for attempting to get out from the yoke of their dependence. Disbanding a company and founding a new one has occasionally been a successful strategy, but if the personalities involved are well known, whatever reputations they held with a previous company follows them to the next.

To maintain a reputation for independence, many large companies have personnel on their books who function in the roles of diplomats, negotiators, investigators, and media representatives. These manage the difficult task of maintaining the public image of the company and ensuring the contracts they solicit won't damage the ability of the company to take contracts in the future. These personnel are a vital part of driving up the ratings of large companies on the War Market and are just as important as the soldiers on the ground.

Having the financial depth to employ such personnel is next to impossible for small companies and individual units. Many units are run by the soldiers that make them up, and while they may be experts in the field, their ability to negotiate the political and public waters of the War Market and industry at large is often lacking. This is one key reason why units tend to be contracted to larger companies, as these provide the depth and skill sets the smaller units lack.

'Do your due diligence' is the mantra that defines the most successful mercenary outfits. But the problems inherent with this simple statement are many. More often than not corporations hiring mercenaries do so through nested shell companies that make tracking back to the actual client very difficult. This is typically done for security and privacy reasons, but it is a situation that has been manipulated in the past.

North Sea is a company that stands out in recent history as a cautionary tale. North Sea was an independent and successful company with good ratings in the War Market and a solid reputation. Magnaobra hired a Maya journalist to run an exposé on the company, revealing that almost all of its contracts came from MagnaObra itself, a fact unknown to North Sea. It was implied in the news story that MagnaObra and North Sea were both aware of this connection, and that they had deliberately hid the fact from the War Market through the use of shell companies. The story hit the War Market with force, and while MagnaObra took a publicity hit, it was only short lived. In the process they managed to make North Sea an untenable hire for other corporations. This was a form of hostile take-over carried out by manipulating the public image of the mercenary company.

Operating a mercenary company can be a challenging proposition fraught with difficulties that are hard to manage, but these are the dangerous waters of a high-stakes industry in uncertain times.

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LIFE AS A MERCENARY

'A necessary evil' is the more pragmatic view on mercenaries held especially by the members of governments and corporations who engage their services. Psychopaths, warmongers, and unethical or morally bankrupt criminals are all criticisms levelled at the existence and use of soldiers of fortune. Equally though, and in large part thanks to the popularisation of the profession through Maya, the job of mercenary also comes tinged with an element of hero-worship, adulation, and admiration. Mercenaries and their use is not a concept that is largely unknown or ignored, as at other times in history. Many of them, like Aristeia! Champions, have followers and fans, and produce media content that is lapped up across the Human Sphere. Some even have their own lines of merchandise, from clothing to plushies.

When a mercenary company rolls into port their reception will hinge around their popularity and reputation with the civilian population. With the authorities, it is quite a different matter. The arrival of a mercenary crew is a double-edged sword for authorities like security teams and law-enforcement. A team of trained soldiers arriving in one location can be benign or even positive, and mercenary companies often bring with them people with a variety of useful skills, as well as money to spend locally. However, it is also cause for significant concern, with police and security teams increasing their 'on-duty' numbers to ensure they are best able to deal with any problems should they arise. It is common practice for a mercenary team to report to local law-enforcement almost as soon as they arrive in a location. This has become fairly standard across the Human Sphere and serves to ensure that the authorities are put at their ease as much as possible, and that the mercenaries themselves aren't overly harassed or monitored during their stay.

If a job entails taking aggressive action in a built-up area or station, it is not uncommon for a mercenary company to coordinate with local law-enforcement and critical response teams to ensure that civilian losses do not occur. However, given the nature of the job such coordination is not always

How Mercenaries are treated depends largely on how well known or recognised they are, and what that reputation stands for. Yuan Yuan pirates are regarded broadly as reckless, dangerous, violent, and chaotic. Many bounty hunters are B-Grade Maya celebrities, especially those who release media content after a hunt. Mercenary companies like StarCo are seen popularly as a force for good, soldiers without borders, fighting the good fight for the downtrodden and suffering. Others like the Ikari Company are highly controversial, with the range of popular opinion describing them as terrorists or freedom fighters. The Foreign Company is followed by rabid fans who support them like a loved sports team. They are true celebrities with all the perks and baggage that entails. In truth, many mercenary companies are not widely known, and some keep it this way on purpose, deeming the adulation of a fandom and the associated media presence brings more trouble and difficulty than it's worth.



possible. It may only serve to alert the target, put more law-enforcement on the streets, or the local law-enforcement or security may even be the target.

The relationship between law-enforcement and mercenary companies and bounty hunters is fraught with tension. Law-enforcement are often distrustful of mercenaries, or are openly hostile toward people, especially bounty hunters, they view as trying to do their job for them. While it is common for mercenary companies and bounty hunters to check in with local security or law-enforcement when they arrive in a location, it does not always mean the relationship is going to be cordial or even professional. Law-enforcement are often concerned that the arrival of a mercenary crew is going to lead to trouble they have to clean up afterwards.

Despite the obvious tensions, professional mercenary crews typically do what they can to ensure their actions are not going to provoke an unnecessary response from security or military in the area, and that damage to the infrastructure and people is kept to a minimum. Ensuring they do their job cleanly and without causing a general ruckus will influence a company's ratings in the War Market and is time invested rather than wasted.

O-12 and many nation-states provide identity tags that can be added to the patina of a mercenary soldier registered with a company on the War Market. In some places or cases, these might even allow the mercenaries certain freedoms not accessible to normal civilians, including the right to carry weaponry of a certain class, wear armour, and so on. Most of the time such tags are only visible at certain security levels, so a police-officer or soldier might be able to see a designation in the mercenary's patina, which is otherwise invisible to the general public.

It is often the case that a mercenary chooses not to display whatever tag or authority they have so as not to draw undue attention. Trying to legitimately go about their business as a mercenary or bounty hunter is never an easy task. The desire to move about unmarked and unknown always seems juxtaposed against the desire to ensure they are left alone by the authorities and allowed to get the job done without interference.

Tension is also high between mercenary companies and professional military forces. Jealousy, not unfounded, seems to be the key factor, with military personnel often feeling disgruntled that mercenary companies are well paid, well known, and rarely have to bother with the day-to-day procedures that dominate a soldier's service. 'Hurry up and wait' is a

favourite aphorism describing the life of a soldier across almost all militaries in the Human Sphere, and many military personnel feel that mercenaries never really have to bother with the waiting part, or the things officers find to fill them up.

Of course, the reality is always different than perception. Pay rates for many mercenary companies are often worse than those of full-time soldiers, and the risks are usually just as high, with fewer protections or safety nets in place should things go badly. Much is made of the rivalry between military units and mercenary ones, both claiming title to the rank of best trained and most elite. Again, the truth here is mixed, and varies greatly depending on the military and mercenary units involved. With the reclassification of some of the larger mercenary companies to 'Non-Aligned Armies', a rise in joint operations, especially in fronts on Paradiso and Dawn, seems likely to precipitate a shift from the current state of rivalry and tension toward a more collegiate one, but only time will tell.

Many locations around the Human Sphere, especially orbitals and stations, have very strict regulations about carrying or possessing weaponry, armour, hacking devices or items that can be used to cause damage to infrastructure (even something as benign as a powered multitool may require a permit). When docking in a port, visitors will usually be asked to check in their possessions, any items that are regulated may be required to be locked up in a safe-box or kept on-board whatever vessel the visitor arrived in. Some items may require the purchase or possession of a special permit, and some may be banned completely. This is especially true in habitation domes, stations, or any location where damage to the hull or interior wall could have deadly consequences.

In such locations it is likely that a ranged weapon or hacking device of any sort is totally restricted, and even tools may be limited to cleared personnel only. Depending on the location, being a mercenary with a registered company may be enough to grant a permit (although this may be restricted to a simple side-arm), or permits may be purchasable. Punishments and fines for breaking laws around the possession of regulated items are often severe.

Openly carrying weaponry when not executing a mission is not the norm. Aside from any laws surrounding this issue, it can also attract the wrong sort of attention. Street thugs and gangers want to prove how tough they are by provoking someone who is armed, and Submondo groups are willing to start a fight to gain items they can flip on the black market. The threat of attracting this sort of

negative public attention is especially true if the mercenary involved has some level of fame, and more than one merc has landed themselves in legal trouble because they were being baited by a person trying to look tough in front of their friends.

Fame is a double-edged sword, it can open doors and make things that would be a problem for anyone else just disappear. Equally however, it makes it difficult to operate without attracting attention, and this can mean that as the fame of a mercenary or company increases, certain missions that would require subterfuge or stealth become untenable due to how easily the soldiers may be recognised.

Fame in one place is not fame everywhere, and a unit famous on a small station on the Human Edge is likely going to go completely unrecognised even in nearby stations. Social media and fandom being what they are, however, fame is not something that may be attached to a specific location, it may be within a Maya bubble or community. Mercenary units may lend their faces and names to characters in a Maya series or game, and while it may not be a blockbuster, fans of that content may crop up even in the most unlikely of places. A unit may have been involved in a mission that related to a specific Maya community, and for members of that community the mercenary soldiers of that unit may be loved or hated. The physical location of the members of such communities, as fans of a series or game, may be anywhere in the Human Sphere.

The double-edged nature of operating in such a dangerous occupation and courting fame at the same time can also lead to problems in the field, where specific companies and soldiers are analysed like sports stars for their strengths and weaknesses, their strategies, and preferred plays. Mercenary Operations like the Foreign Company, which can maintain stardom and continue to operate successfully, are rare. In these cases, dynamism and change are the key to success, both for the maintenance of their fan-base and for ensuring they do not become predictable on the field of battle.

BLACK SANCTION

Black Sanction can refer to any contract taken on the War Market that is listed in generic terms, but for which the operational details are either highly illegal or criminal (i.e.: A one-week security operation on Dawn which is actually an assassination). Black Sanction is also sometimes used to describe operations taken directly from a client, or from the Lists, the underground rival to the War Market.

Universally, there is an unsavoury and illegal connotation to the term 'Black Sanction', which refers to mercenaries and missions that involve dirty work, brutality, and a total disregard for the Concilium Conventions. Such operations may include assassinations, attacks on civilian targets, sabotage with the intent to kill, kidnappings, acts of terrorism, and torture, all the way through to merely illegal activities like smuggling, drug running, theft, and the use of force intimidate.

The direct connection of a Black Sanction mission to a mercenary company on the War Market can have dire consequences for that company. Criminal charges aside, the damage to the company's ratings and reputation and the possibility of being delisted from the Market is significant enough that this alone is a substantial deterrent. However, there are always those willing to push the boundaries, they may be in debt enough to make the associated risks worth taking, they may be wanting to make a lot of money quickly, they may be coerced, or they may just not give a damn. Companies like the Druze have long been connected to stories of Black Sanction operations, and Yuan Yuan pirates basically live for them.

Those companies, units, or individuals that regularly take on Black Sanction missions are usually in significant debt to a Submondo group or heartless corporation, being coerced into acting against their own moral code, or are straight-up thugs and psychopaths. Like the host of legally sanctioned mercenary companies, the types and operational strengths of Black Sanction regulars are varied, from wanton marauders to calculated killers, and the missions they are required to fulfil are just as varied.

On the lowest end of the scale are the missions which simply operate outside the law, smuggling Voodoo tech from Paradiso, running guns or drugs for Submondo groups, and corporate espionage and theft. These are usually performed by low-level criminals or mercenary groups hard up for cash. At the very worst Black Sanction missions are designed to sow mayhem and wreak destruction. Missions like public assassinations, the use of mass violence to force a mining colony to abandon its stake, terrorist strikes against civilian targets, or the kidnapping and torture of corporate, military, or government personnel. Rumours and stories swirl around Maya and Arachne of Black Sanction operations approved by governments for false flag terror attacks and weapons testing on populated areas. Those mercenaries who take on the worst types of Black Sanction missions usually fall into one of two camps. There are those who are heedless of their own vile reputations, or revel in



them, and lay happy claim to the terrible things they have done (these are wanted criminals one and all). Or those that operate in the dark, who plan carefully and seek to leave no clue that can trace the horror back to them.

Those mercenaries who have a long history of Black Sanction missions almost always fall into the second camp and represent some of the most dangerous fiends in the Human Sphere. To be connected to killings, torture or atrocities is to place a price tag on your head, and those who are careless, unlucky, or uncaring soon find themselves tracked down by intelligence operatives or bounty hunters to face the full extent of the law for their actions, or they are simply shot dead. To last in the business of taking Black Sanction missions requires both intelligence and connections, to say nothing of the ability and willingness to take any job, no matter how abominable.

Of course, the higher the stakes the higher the pay, and Black Sanction missions are often executed for exorbitant fees. These payments must be carefully hidden, and they may involve donations or payments made to shell companies or charities connected to the mercenary being paid. They may take the form of goods, vehicles, or a host of other resources. A more unusual case has it that one of the largest payments recorded was made in rare and unique items for the Maya game 'Another Day in Hell' (an MMO set on Paradiso), which were then sold to gamers eager to pay cash in exchange. This interesting mode of payment was only discovered because of a Bureau Noir operative who was an avid player and noticed a connection between the accounts selling off the in-game items. It led to a three-year operation and the eventual arrest and subsequent jailing of a number of mercenaries, and their leader Jacinta Reed, for terrorising the trading ships of the Asfour Family freetrading company, and a number of stations on the Human Edge where they had offices. It is assumed Reed and her crew were hired by a rival company, but no arrests for engaging Reed were made.

RUNNING MERCENARIES IN INFINITY

Mercenaries are a mixed bag, and the way they are represented as characters in the game will undoubtedly reflect this. Personalities and moral tendencies aside, there are some issues that players and GMs may have to address, depending on the structure of the character group and their motivations for operating together. This section will look at a number of different options that are most common in terms of running *Infinity* with mercenary characters.

A THORN AMONG THE ROSES

Every group of characters is as varied as the players that make them up. If the group of characters is a random mix of professions, with different backgrounds, skill sets, and motivations, one of the key questions the play group needs to address in order for the group to function cohesively is 'Why are we together?'. The *Infinity* RPG Corebook assumes that characters in the *Infinity* RPG will be operatives for Bureau Noir. While this may not be the case for your playgroup, if your group includes just one or two mercenaries and a mix of other character types such as operatives, soldiers, adventurers or whatever, the players who are running the mercenaries need to work out why their characters are working alongside the others.

The answer to this question may be found in the life goals or current circumstances of the mercenary characters, and these aspects can make for interesting story points that can be leveraged to create difficult choices and raise the tension in a game. Perhaps the mercenary is only with the other characters because a job is a job and they are being paid to be there. Or life as mercenary wasn't working out, and the current situation provides a more reliable source of income.

They could be jaded, burned out by their past experiences or a mission gone wrong, and want to bury themselves among other people to escape the life. Perhaps they hope ticking off some operations with the rag-tag group they are currently with will provide the impetus to get them noticed by the company of their dreams, StarCo, or the Foreign Company. Maybe they wronged their last crew somehow, or were implicated in doing so, and hope to escape notice as they work through the Human Sphere. Or the last operation or two they were on were Black Sanction, and now they want to escape their company or the law. They could be a bounty hunter, and the rest of the party has some connection to their current target.

Whatever reasons exist for the mercenary to be working alongside the other PCs, having a reason can make the character more interesting, dynamic, and fun. Such reasons can also come with a host of implications. These may be reflected in character traits, or they may be in-world implications. If the character is trying to escape the life, why? What if that life or the reason to leave it catches up with them again? If they want to gain attention or reputation enough to join the crew of their dreams, what if they do? If they wronged their last crew or were thought to have done so, this former crew could make for some really interesting ongoing adversaries. If their last mission was Black Sanction, what did they do? What if they are recognised?

'Who's that man you were talking to Rex?'

'Nobody. Don't worry about it.'

What if the law catches up with them, or the old crew? What if it involved family or friends of one of the other PCs? What if, while perusing the bounties available to be claimed, the PC sees the name of one or more of his current group?

Trust and morality can make for interesting story points. Mercenaries are soldiers for hire, so if the bullets start flying, will they stick around to see it out or run to fight another day? Whether the players decide to run a character that is trustworthy and reliable or otherwise is one thing, but equally interesting is what the other PCs make of their mercenary companion. Do they trust them?

This can be worked into a game session to create an interesting dynamic between the characters. Will the merc be left alone with that bag of money? Will they be trusted not to take the offered bribe? Will they back up the other PCs as they promised?

Morality is another good source of story. The life of a mercenary often requires the suspension or shifting of what is deemed morally right. How a mercenary elects to deal with a prisoner, a surrender, an innocent bystander, or witness may come as a shock to the rest of the party, especially if their backgrounds or motivations are significantly different.

Some players will want to create a backstory of nuance and depth. Creating an internal tension between their past choices and the choices that lay before them, pitting morality and motivation against opportunity and circumstance is a great way to achieve that. The background of a mercenary is full of such opportunities. Some players just want to play a hard-bitten merc, the deeper emotional or moral implications of their life be damned. In these cases, the past experiences or actions of the merc may best be reflected through in-world tensions such as adversaries from the past rather than through internal strife.

If the playgroup contains only one or two mercenaries, it is a wonderful opportunity for the players and GM both to bring story and tension into the game. A mercenary is likely to have a chequered past. This provides fodder for creating character depth and internal tension, as well as some in-game, in-world consequences the GM can use to throw a wrench into the play group's plans.

DOGS OF WAR

It may be that the entire group of PCs is made up of mercenaries, or they are a mixed group of professions who want to operate as a mercenary unit or small company. If this is the case the

reasons and motivations for the play group to operate together is much easier to work out. Instead of developing ideas around how the mercenary will integrate with others, the question instead revolves around what the group of PCs is aiming for.

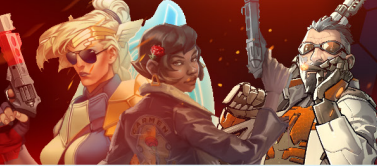
What do they want to achieve? As a unit perhaps they are travelling around hoping to gain experience and notoriety enough to be contracted to a larger company. Perhaps take what contracts they can find. Or they hope to gain enough resources and experience to start their own small company? Maybe they have been working from the lists and want to make the move to more legitimate and less illegal operations on the War Market? Spending some time with the play group developing these goals can be the basis of an entire campaign.

Another interesting aspect to consider is how the PCs wound up together? Sure, they might be a unit of mercenaries now, but how did they wind up working side-by-side? Was it a single incident? Maybe they were all on a ship boarded by pirates, and had to work together to fight them off? Do they share some commonality of background (perhaps they are all ex-operatives or ex-military)?

Having some touchstone of common ground that brought the PCs together helps define the reason for why they stay together, and it helps develop the stories of the characters' lives with consistency. When developing the group goals, some of the PCs might differ, might not care about what the future holds, may have no opinion yet, but having that commonality provides the *raison d'être* for the in-game 'now'.

Tension is a key component in any good story, and the answers to the questions of how the PCs got together and what their eventual goals are can be a great source of tension between characters. As described in the section 'A Thorn Among the Roses' above, the morality of the characters can also provide for some interesting internal and between-character tensions. Perhaps the PCs want to make a name for themselves as a mercenary unit, but one or two of the PCs are happy to take Black Sanction missions while the others are not. What happens if that PC is placed in a situation where they are the one to sign the next contract?

The life of a mercenary is a life of danger and adventure. With the next contract coming from a corporation, a Submondo group, a government agency, or an individual with an agenda, sources for interesting and action-packed story ideas are endless.... Cry 'Havoc!' and let slip the dogs of war!



CHAPTER 2

COMPANIES OF NOTE

QAID FAHESH

Appearance: A tall man of indeterminate age. Vigorous and healthy. He is often described by others as a seasoned businessman with an unflappable calm. His intense gaze is legendary, both for prying free secrets and hiding mysteries that might not be known by any other person alive.

Roleplaying:

- Intense stare that strips the soul bare.
- Restless; always ready to move on to the next thing.
- Impeccable dress sense: flowing scarves and elaborately embroidered tunics.

Background: Fahesh is staggeringly wealthy, and his business interests are hugely diverse. This is part savvy investment strategy, part restlessness and relentless energy. Tall and healthy, he benefits greatly from the biomedical and therapeutic treatments available to wealthy Haqqislamites. Rumours abound that he has undergone a variety of rare and experimental genetic enhancements. Although most people assume Fahesh spends all his time on his island paradise of Zumurroda, in reality he's constantly on the move. Partly this is out of security concerns: like all wealthy Haqqislamites, personal threats and assassination attempts are a part of daily life. Mostly, though, it's because he's always searching for the next adventure or business opportunity.

DAHSHAT
COMPANY

What began as personal project of Qaid Fahesh has since grown into a lucrative business subsidiary of the Boylik Corp. Serving as the private security service and armed response force of the corporation, Boylik have also fostered the private military company into a formidable force with a reputation for getting the job done with no questions asked. They hire out for contracts on the War Market like any other company, but always keep enough troops in reserve to cater to Boylik Corp's business requirements. These are diversified throughout the Human Sphere, touching on virtually every corner of commerce. But Dahshat Company is also about appearances. Though he sits on a board, Qaid Fahesh considers himself the head of an empire, and every empire benefits from a show of force with which to keep its enemies at bay.

Dahshat has a more formal structure than many mercenary companies. It has a relatively rigid hierarchy, and mercs are assigned to units in much the same way as a regular army. There is some additional flexibility to ensure the company can cater directly to Fahesh's varied desires, and recruitment policies are more lax than national service. Nevertheless, Dahshat is an attractive option for mercenaries who miss the order and structure of military life, or wannabe soldiers who never quite cut it in the regular armed forces.

DAHSHAT COMPANY AT A
GLANCE

Typical jobs: Corporate security, personal protection for businessmen and corporate executives, escorting valuable shipments, Zumurroda security.

Common employers: The Boylik Corp's subsidiaries, Fahesh himself, the Silk Lord Sohrab Bey, Amanda Vine's Corporate Spies Maya show, Over/Under Shipping Corporation, other corporations that are seeking a discreet operator.

Tactics: Rely on the appearance of competence and weight of numbers. Patrols and escorts coordinated by officers who aren't necessarily promoted on the basis of ability. Soldiers often stay in garrison in one place for a while, getting to know the local environment.

Typical deployment: A squad of eight privates (Jundi) led by a sergeant (Raqib) and a lieutenant (Mulazim), all wearing red and tan uniforms with rank markings. New Sword of Allah-regulation AS Sayad rifles, tailored light combat armour, earpieces, and berets.

STRUCTURE & ASSETS

Dahshat Company is quietly one of the largest employers of mercenaries in the Human Sphere. They keep a much lower profile than the other major companies – they have no need for glitzy PR campaigns, instead relying on the Boylik Corp's many subsidiaries and business interests to find work. This allows them to fly below the popular radar, despite the ubiquity of their red and tan uniforms throughout the Human Sphere.

Dahshat soldiers are very well supplied, courtesy of the staggering affluence of the Boylik Corp. The Directors, Fahesh included, like their soldiers to look impressive, so their equipment is always well maintained. Company uniforms include unit markings, rank insignia, and decorations, and they are easily mistaken for a regular army. Conversely, the uniforms of the highest ranks – captains and majors – are distinctly lacking in military honours such as medals and tour ribbons, as the Boylik Corp insist the senior officers present a more corporate veneer. Dahshat is one of the few mercenary companies that can boast its own interstellar transport. The Rakhsh is a refurbished corsair ship, named for the noble horse ridden by the hero Rostam in the Persian epic Shahnameh, and

it is predominantly equipped for troop transport. Nevertheless, a large, opulent suite of rooms is reserved for Fahesh and his guests, though it's mostly used by high-ranking corporate clients. The Qaid Fahesh takes great pride in his ship.

ZUMMURRODA AND DAHSHAT

Zumurroda (*Infinity Corebook*, p. 236) is Fahesh's private island, off the coast of Parthalia on Bourak. Essentially free from interference by Haqqislamite authorities, it is both Fahesh's personal resort, and a thriving tourist destination. The island is not heavily militarised; Dahshat's main barracks and storage warehouses are in the outskirts of Dar El Funduq. Nevertheless, Dahshat uniforms are a common sight on the island since they provide security for Zumurroda's high class clientele.

As a perk of employment, all Dahshat soldiers are entered into a yearly lottery for a week's vacation on the island, at the Boylik Corp's expense. Approximately a hundred of these vacations are offered each year, and exceptional service can earn you extra entries into the lottery.

BOYLIK BUSINESS INTERESTS

Vardar Labs, a medical research and pharmaceuticals company based in Medina that specialises in Silk applications. Currently locked in conflict with rival firm Pyxis Pharma. Dahshat serve as both offence and defence in acts of corporate espionage, theft, and kidnapping.

Koson Logistics, a fast courier service owned by Boylik. They have a specialised service that delivers documents without leaving a quantronic trail. Deliveries are performed by a branch of Dahshat, occasionally using regular Dahshat soldiers for defence.

The Remote racing team Divine Spark is financed by the Boylik Corp. Dahshat provides race-day security, both in and out of uniform, as well as fact-finding and (occasionally) counter-sabotage operations against rival teams.

The Boylik Corp has a commercial alliance with the piratical businessman Taner Aksoy, whose three ships lurk in Human Edge. Aksoy's ships are often loaded down with Dahshat soldiers as boarding parties and shipboard defence.

RECRUITMENT

The Dahshat Company prefers recruits with former military or combat service. The Boylik Corp has no desire to spend money on raw recruits. Beyond that, the Company doesn't much care about a recruit's history or record. Anyone is welcome, provided they're willing to sign on the dotted line and personally commit to the interests of the Boylik Corp. What does matter to the Dahshat Company is appearances. The Boylik Corp wants mercenaries who look the part. Sometimes that means giant

men and women who look like they batter down doors for fun. Sometimes it means soldiers who look smart in the crisp red and tan Dahshat uniform. Rare amongst mercenary companies, Dahshat actually operates recruitment offices. These can be found in Dar El Funduq on Bourak, nestled at the base of the space elevator, and on caravanserais throughout the Human Sphere. These offices are basically the entirety of Dahshat's PR arm: impressive-looking rooms staffed by impressive-looking officers.

NOTABLE OPERATIONS

HÚDIÉ UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

During the Japanese Uprising, a significant number of Japanese citizens were looking for ways to escape Yíngguo, the Yu Jing capital on Mars. Many of these escapees passed through Húdié (The Butterfly), where they were aided by a low-key Dahshat unit. These mercenaries kept them safe from StateEmpire patrols and made sure they were smuggled on to friendly transports headed for Earth. Fahesh saw this as an opportunity to curry favour with the new Japanese nation without exposing his Yu Jing business interests to too much risk. He could easily cut loose the Dahshat unit working on Húdié if necessary. The Dahshat Company soldiers never wore the red and tan and did their best to hide their true affiliation.

KEY PERSONALITIES OF DAHSHAT COMPANY

Colonel Ravshan Dostum, Dashat Company Director.

Sanford Beale, Fahesh's current Odalisque and a spy for Silk Lord Sohrab Bey.

Mulazim Elanur Durak, driven recruitment officer in Boushra Caravanserais, Human Edge.

Arezo and **Abha**, twin sisters, one stationed in Sol, one in Bourak.

Lunde, Three Arts/Dahshat fast courier with serious Aristeia! gambling debts.





SECURITY CHIEF ZIAD ARSLAN

Appearance: Wiry and chiselled, with a top knot and a pointed chin beard.

Roleplaying:

- Poorly disguised hoodlum accent.
- Grinning and relaxed, unless he's pushed.
- Loves ostentatious displays of wealth: big guns, fine booze.

Background: Arslan has been a gangster his whole life, rising from nothing to lead Druze Bayram Security. His criminal career started as a lookout before he was even ten years old. By thirteen, he was leading his own gang. Not long after, he set up a Druze smuggling ring in the Free City of Jerusalem, clearing out all black-market opposition from the city. Arslan's roguish demeanour hides a ruthless survival instinct and a knack for taking advantage of the slightest opportunity. Following the Dolly Dagger's raid on the Bayram caravanserai, in which Arslan's mentor Jethro was killed, he was promoted to his current role as Chief Security Officer. He used the moment to build Bayram Security, launching a lucrative new business for his Druze Society masters. In doing so, he cemented his own position near the peak of the criminal organisation.

DRUZE BAYRAM SECURITY



Druze Bayram Security are a legitimate mercenary company wholly owned by the Druze Society, one of the most powerful Submondo criminal organisations in the Human Sphere. They are a brutal fighting force, mafia enforcers with a fearsome reputation, and a very thin veneer of respectability. You don't hire the Druze when you're looking for a soft touch. You hire them to make a very clear, very violent statement. Although individual Druze Shock Teams have sold their skills on the War Market for a long time, Bayram Security is a recent development. Formed as an offshoot of the security corps aboard the Druze-owned Bayram caravanserai, it serves a number of purposes: it generates money for the Druze Society, it keeps Druze soldiers sharp and combat-ready, and it gives them ample opportunity to reinforce their deadly reputation through public displays of violence.

THE DRUZE SOCIETY

The Druze Society are a Submondo mafia dating back to the construction of the space elevator in Eastern Africa. To this day, they control the commercial routes through Asia Minor to the elevator. They have also spread throughout Sol and the Fareedat system, where they own the partially constructed Bayram caravanserai near the Paradiso-Concilium wormhole.

Most of these activities are aided by bribery and extortion; the Society has politicians and powerful corporate executives in their pockets, particularly in Bourak's Funduq Sultanate. The Druze Society are the secret masters of docks and warehouses all across the caravanserai network. As well as providing a legitimate source of income, the Bayram caravanserai is a convenient headquarters for many of the Druze Society's illegal activities.

DRUZE BAYRAM SECURITY AT A GLANCE

Typical jobs: Corporate security, personal protection for businessmen and corporate executives, escorting valuable shipments, Zumurroda security.

Common employers: Qapu Khalqi and the Ikari Company (Druze Shock Teams). MagnaObra, Pharmacom, Silk Lords Harald Bey and Samerthize Begum, Tunguskan banking families, and Druze Society kingpins.

Tactics: Druze Bayram Security are a shock force. Fierce and uncompromising, they know how to deliver a message that leaves a target in no doubt. Contracts are followed to the letter, without remorse, conscience, or concern for the law – it's simply business.

Typical deployment: A Druze Shock Team forms the core, brutal mafia enforcers in distinctive yellow, insectile helmets. Supported by bounty hunters, Haqqislamite mountain scouts, surplus military remotes, and even Anaconda TAGs. Equipment varies wildly, but is frequently overkill: HMGs, MULTI Sniper Rifles, and Panzerfausts.

Bayram Security mercenaries make sure that it is safe and secure. Provided, of course, the Society wants you there.

RELIGION AND TAQIYYA

All members of the Druze Society are united by the Druze religion, whose rituals and beliefs are kept secret, reserved only for initiates. They practice taqiyya, the art of concealing your true beliefs by blending in with local customs. Taqiyya extends to the Society's membership rituals, as well as its true plans and goals. The Druze Society does not speak for all Druze people.

STRUCTURE & ASSETS

The core of Druze Bayram Security are the Druze Shock Teams. Each of these is an independent unit, with widely varying expertise and equipment. Some focus on high-tech warfare, using hackers and refurbished PanOceanian Remotes, whereas others rely on HMGs and Panzerfausts to get the job done. Some are hot-blooded, some cold, but all are brutally efficient teams. Security Chief Arslan restructured Bayram Security, and his innovation was to supplement Druze Shock Teams with outside specialists: bounty hunters, Hunzakuts from Bourak's Gabqar mountains, Anaconda TAGs, and others. This has only reinforced their fearsome reputation as an organisation with both the will and the expertise to get even the most unpleasant work done.

KEY PERSONALITIES OF DRUZE BAYRAM SECURITY

Hamza, a heavy with a reputation for impossible strength.

Al-Hakim, Druze Society fixer on call for when operations go bad.

Samira Schreiber, WarCor secretly on the Druze Society payroll.

Pakhet, mysterious Druze Kingpin responsible for Sol Ceres Belt operations, sometimes called Alhakima (The Governess).

Since their owners are a Human Sphere-spanning criminal organisation, Bayram Security units can call on a variety of unusual resources. These include networks of safe-houses and weapons caches, as well as political and legal support from officials in the Society's pocket. Nevertheless, Bayram Security units prefer to operate on their own as much as possible. Partly this is internal politics but calling on Society resources also runs the risk of increased attention from intelligence agencies and law enforcement.

RECRUITMENT

Only members of the Druze faith are permitted in the Druze Shock Teams. A steady flow of Druze seeking experiences beyond their own enclaves find the Druze Society to be an attractive option. They are able to experience the Human Sphere while maintaining links to their spiritual home, climbing the ranks if they demonstrate aptitude, ferocity, and loyalty. Of course, membership in the Druze Society is nothing like the sales pitch given to recruits. Unfortunately, it's already too late by the time most recruits realise this. The Society's mysteries, as well as shared taqiyya, bind Shock Teams together. Each group is loyal to its own, forming tight-knit units that compete for the best jobs, and for favour in the organisation. This constant competition is encouraged by the Society, keeping their fighting force sharp and thirsty for conflict. Security Chief Arslan's external specialists may be completely loyal, but they will never be true Druze unless they convert. Even then, late converts are often treated with suspicion.

REINCARNATION

The Druze believe that death in combat is only a temporary state, that they will be reincarnated to terrorize their enemies once more. The depth of this conviction has led some to suggest that the Druze Society has a literal way to resurrect their best foot soldiers. They may have their own Cube bank or corrupt officials in resurrection facilities.

NOTABLE OPERATIONS

WATTS-HALLDOR-LORD REPRISALS

When the megacorp PingCo, specialising in military comlog development, bought out the interface design company Watts-Halldor-Lord, they expected

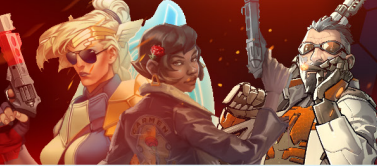
all of the staff to come over as part of the deal. Instead, all three company founders slipped out of their contracts and went freelance. Many of their staff followed suit. PingCo quietly hired Druze Bayram Security. A campaign of terror followed, including the destruction of a maker hub where Lord kept an office, the extortion of Halldor's profits from her company's sale, and the murders of three low-level staff members. As the carnage grew, Watts (thought to be the true brains behind W-H-L) presented himself to PingCo, begging them to hire him at a fraction of his original salary.

Druze Shock Teams, *Infinity Corebook* p. 207

THE GREENFLY ORBITAL RAID

Located in the Ceres Belt, the Greenfly Orbital was a shipping hub frequently used by the Druze Society to move goods to and from Earth. When the Mǎfēng Triad made a play for the Greenfly docks and began extorting money out of transport ship captains, the Druze Society had no intention of allowing this upstart to encroach on their business. They immediately dispatched three Shock Teams and their support units, including an Anaconda TAG. In the resulting violence, every member of the Triad was killed, down to the lowliest enforcer. Over a fifth of Greenfly was depopulated. To this day, the dockworkers pay fealty to the Druze Society.





QUARTERMASTER IDA NYSTROM AND SPECIALIST BEAU BRYANT, IMAGE CONSULTANTS

Appearance: A powerful, elegant woman with a halo of blonde hair and tiny glasses balanced on her nose. A short, round man in a three-piece suit.

Roleplaying:

- Behave like they're always on camera, playing to an invisible audience.
- Sly winks and friendly smiles, particularly when people realise what they're really doing.
- Frequently make physical contact.

Background: Nystrom and Bryant descend upon new Foreign Company recruits like each is a personal project. Bryant is all about your look: distinctive, memorable, practical, the distillation of the personality you're trying to project. Nystrom is all about the team: who are you, what do you do better than anyone else, and how can you look good doing it? The two seem to be all about appearances, but countless Foreign Company recruits have been surprised to realise that under their tutelage, they've managed to hone not only their visual style, but also their fighting skills.

KEY PERSONALITIES OF FOREIGN COMPANY

The Badgers, a team of flashy combat engineers, able to breach any fortification.

Coltrane, a Foreign Company workhorse, serving in all of their backup squads.

Vaudeville Rose, surfs news trends looking for Foreign Company job opportunities.

Qi-Jung, bodyguard to the stars.

FOREIGN COMPANY



Van Orton, warmonger of the Van Orton Military Contracts Foreign Company, knows the value of publicity. It made his career, and he's used it to turn the Foreign Company into the most famous mercenaries in the Human Sphere. The soldiers on his roster are household names, and the Maya broadcast rights to their exploits bring in almost as much money as the mercenary contracts themselves. The Foreign Company focuses on prestige clients and charges rates to match. A lot of their bread and butter is personal security for celebrities. Celebrity tours and performances often become jointly managed media events when high-profile Foreign Company mercenaries are involved. Lest anyone think the Foreign Company are merely celebrity mercenary-wannabes, they maintain a tremendous record in the field. This is perhaps unsurprising since their operations routinely take place in the public eye, with high profile clients. It's a high-stakes game, where failures can have catastrophic consequences for the company's reputation.

THE FIGUEROA ESTATE

The seed money for the Foreign Company came from the Figueroa Estate, a Tunguskan banking family with a dubious history and many shady dealings. Van Orton works hard to keep this connection secret. Nevertheless, rumours swirl around Foreign Company involvement in (extremely) hostile takeovers, unpleasant debt recovery actions, and data security for the notorious Tunguskan banking family.

FOREIGN COMPANY AT A GLANCE

Typical jobs: Anything high profile. Personal security, pirate-hunting, daring raids.

Common employers: Maya celebrities, sports stars, spotlight-loving politicians, flamboyant businessmen. People who appreciate having fame on the payroll.

Tactics: Varies hugely depending on which celebrity Foreign Company mercs are deployed. If it's Hannibal, it will involve an ingenious plan which probably won't be clear to anyone until it comes together. Sometimes it won't even be clear what the real job is until it's done. Foreign Company operatives (virtually) always assume cameras are watching.

Typical deployment: A team of celebrity mercenaries (or aspiring celebrity mercenaries), each with their own personal style and characteristic equipment. Usually ranging from a duo to a squad of five or six, sometimes supported by rank-and-file mercs recruited for this specific job.

STRUCTURE & ASSETS

The Foreign Company's biggest asset is its all-star roster of mercs. They are supported by an army of publicists, image consultants, WarCors, and Maya journalists. The best of these support staff attach themselves to the most successful mercenaries in the company, but even the lowliest recruit will spend some time with a publicity team. Foreign Company mercenaries are also very well equipped. (Unless shabby or out-of-date equipment is part of a carefully-managed image – everyone loves an underdog!) Personal style is crucial, and so the Foreign Company doesn't have uniforms or standard load outs. Each soldier is encouraged to develop their own image (a distinctive one can even help you get recruited) and carry equipment to match.

THE FCS MODERN WIFE

The Foreign Company maintains their own transport ship, the FCS Modern Wife. This ship is famous, appearing in countless Maya dramas, documentaries, and exposés. Its visually impressive profile and military-chic interior are well known. This popularity has its benefits, including priority docking access and the occasional police escort. It does, however, make stealth virtually impossible.

RECRUITMENT

Publicity is the Foreign Company's primary recruitment tool. They are the Human Sphere's coolest mercenary outfit, and that attracts a particular kind of attention-hungry recruit. Given their operational profile, the Foreign Company can afford to be selective. Unlike frontline mercenary companies, they don't need to keep a large number of rank-and-file soldiers on their roster. Publicity is also the route to success in the Foreign Company. Resources, including personnel, equipment, training, and access to the most desirable contracts naturally accrue to the soldiers and captains who draw the most publicity. Van Orton prefers positive publicity, but the Human Sphere loves an anti-hero too. All that really matters is success and ratings. There is a dark side to all this focus on publicity: internal competition. Making a name for yourself is heavily incentivised, and some Foreign Company recruits think the best way to do this is at the expense of their comrades. More than one unit has come apart as a result of internal rivalries.

SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE

The Soldiers of Fortune are an Aristeia! team. They're also on the Foreign Company books, making them the most high-profile merc unit in the Human Sphere.

Hannibal: The Man with the Plan, consummate strategist and natural born leader. A dapper gentleman with a taste for the finer things – especially art – Hannibal uses his brilliant military mind to finance his lifestyle. He served as Van Orton's second-in-command and Chief Strategy Officer until he gathered the wealth and contacts necessary to bankroll the Soldiers of Fortune Aristeia! team. His relationship with the Foreign Company continues, with Van Orton offering him the choicest jobs.

Valkyrie: A towering, muscle-bound warrior with long blonde braids, Valkyrie epitomises her name. When Hannibal found her, she was a vicious pirate. Her origin is a mystery hidden behind "access denied" sigils, and all that's known about her is that you don't want to stand in her way when she shoulders her axe and charges through.

Laxmee: A Maasai from Corregidor, her life changed when her gang raided a barge and found a shipping container loaded down with military gear. Laxmee went straight for the hacking device and never looked back. She travelled the Human Sphere,

building a network of contacts, stealing data and hawking it on the black market, until the day she fell into a digital trap laid by Hannibal.

Señor Massacre: Always running off at the mouth, Massacre is all ego. A grinning skull-masked persona created for underground fighting rings on Corregidor, Massacre was legitimately skilled, but poor impulse control drove him to drugs and debt. He joined the Nomad Military Force to escape, but his time there left him radiation-burned and disfigured by military-grade assault viruses. He once again donned the mask and went freelance, eventually finding his way to Hannibal and Aristeia!

BACKUP

The Soldiers of Fortune are a close-knit team, but they don't always work alone. Sometimes Hannibal's plans require backup. These jobs are a golden opportunity for up-and-coming Foreign Company recruits: a chance to be seen fighting alongside the Soldiers of Fortune, and perhaps even more importantly, a chance for Hannibal to notice you.

UNDERCOVER JOBS

Very occasionally, the Foreign Company is hired out for truly clandestine work. They charge exorbitantly for these jobs, partly due to the challenge of maintaining a low profile, but mostly because they can.

NOTABLE OPERATIONS

THE DEFILER

The Defiler was one of the most reviled pirate ships in the Human Sphere. Their trail of pillage and destruction stretched across four star systems. The audacity of their raids captured the attention of the public, and not even a military escort guaranteed safety. They also captured Hannibal's eye. The Foreign Company accepted a bounty co-financed by the Maya channel Oxyd, whose drone cameras followed every stage of the unfolding chase. Hannibal hatched one of his signature plans to lure the elusive pirate ship into a trap. Foreign Company mercenaries boarded the Defiler, and Hannibal masterminded some of the most thrilling shipboard fighting ever seen on Maya. The true star of the show turned out to be one of the pirates. Valkyrie – still a kid, albeit a massive one – took down four of Hannibal's men before she could be subdued. When she had served her time in prison, Hannibal was waiting for her with an offer she couldn't refuse.

CAPTAIN YOLANDA CARDOSO

Appearance: A short, dark-skinned woman, always wearing a StarCo logo.

Roleplaying:

- Little interest in ceremony or motivational speeches.
- Fiercely loyal and unyielding when it comes to her company and soldiers.
- Never needs to raise her voice.

Background: Mercenary warmongers usually take the rank of colonel. In StarCo it's traditional to take the rank of captain instead because StarCo leaders are frontline combat officers just as much as they are tacticians or commanders. The current StarCo Captain is Yolanda Cardoso, hand-chosen by the Mexican General to replace Henry Cissokho, who (rumour has it) was killed in an off-the-books operation for the Black Hand. Cardoso came over from a long career in the Corregidor Jurisdictional Command. Her transition was rocky, the combination of hostility towards an outsider and her own blunt personality. Nevertheless, the soldiers of StarCo have grown to love her. Not only has she demonstrated considerable strategic and tactical skill, she has shown herself to be a fierce advocate for her soldiers and her company. An uncompromising negotiator raised in the harsh Corregidor Lazareto modules, she prefers contracts with charities and non-profits.

**CAPTAIN BALLOU
OF THE SCS
FIERO**

Appearance: A lanky woman (too many hours in zero-g?) with a fuzz of shaved blonde hair.

Roleplaying:

- Virtually never found in her command chair.
- Treat her with respect and she's got your back.
- Swears like a sailor.

Background: One of StarCo's two re-purposed freighters, the SCS Fiero is Captain Ballou's pride and joy. Not that you'd know it – Ballou demonstrates her affection for her ship by constantly complaining about its failings. There's always some system that's misbehaving, and Ballou always knows about it. Ballou doesn't take kindly to receiving orders from the mercs she transports. StarCo unit commanders quickly learn to treat everything as a polite request. On three occasions, the SCS Fiero has disappeared on (apparently) unsanctioned missions. Ballou and her crew remain silent about these adventures, claiming only that they were personal matters.

**KEY
PERSONALITIES
OF STARCO**

Master Serdant Ian JW, StarCo's main tactical instructor and one of the finest Gestalt Officers.

Lieutenant Nur, a new Corregidor Jurisdictional Command Liaison.

Emily Handelman, intel agent who can provide a direct link to StarCo.

Ramión Ayala, StarCo's contract officer with Volunteers Without Borders.

**FREE COMPANY
OF THE STAR
(STARCO)**

The Free Company of the Star, commonly known as StarCo, is the most famous private military company in the Human Sphere. They have an extremely positive reputation for a mercenary organisation, particularly one whose origins are in the Nomad Mothership Corregidor. This is largely because StarCo focuses on contracts that support freedom and uphold democracy throughout the Human Sphere. This strict ethical position is encoded into StarCo's DNA through a set of guidelines called the Normative Quartet. Guided by these principles, they prefer contracts that support Bureau Aegis peace-keeping missions, non-governmental organisations and charities such as Volunteers Without Borders, and logistics and construction in troubled areas. They're also known for providing training, consulting, and intelligence expertise. StarCo's highly-trained officers are perhaps even more valuable in advisory roles than direct combat operations. It would be unwise to consider these pacifist leanings as a sign of weakness. StarCo was born in the dangerous early days of Corregidor, and they still recruit heavily from its rough, vacuum-hardened warriors. StarCo's deep-space conflict expertise is without par – no other company can boast as much experience in anti-smuggling, trans orbital search and tracking, on-board escort, and space security.

**THE NORMATIVE QUARLET:
STARCO'S ETHICAL PRINCIPLES**

The Normative Quartet are the ethical principles on which StarCo was founded. They provide a threefold benefit: The PR-boost of a noble reputation, a clear differentiator between StarCo and its less-scrupulous

STARCO AT A GLANCE

Typical jobs: Training (Gestalt Officers), security advice and consulting, security in volatile areas and conflict zones, and intelligence gathering.

Common employers: Bureau Aegis, non-governmental organisations, and charities (Freedom International, Children Protection, Volunteers Without Borders, Stop Famine!).

Tactics: Rapid response and professionalism are StarCo hallmarks. Their teams coordinate extremely well, and frequently provide security advice and training services even if it's not officially their role. StarCo units are inappropriate for frontline combat roles, in part due to their cost, but well-equipped to adapt to a rapidly changing environment.

Typical deployment: A single (sometimes Gestalt) officer in an advisory role, often accompanied by a few StarCo bodyguards. Alternatively, an elite, well-oiled team with a diversity of skills and equipment: medics, hackers, Anaconda TAGs, Highlander snipers, and heavy armour support.

competitors, and an imperative to uphold democracy and freedom throughout the Human Sphere. Not coincidentally, the defence of democracy is a founding principle of the Nomad Nation. The Normative Quartet are:

1. Every StarCo contract states that StarCo is committed to respecting the Concilium Convention and international human rights law.
2. StarCo contracts are ruled by strict transparency protocols. Complete contracts are always made available to appropriate authorities for auditing or inspection.
3. StarCo commits to exhaustively verify that their own staff have never committed any human rights violations. All staff resumes are made available to contracting parties and appropriate authorities.
4. In the event of any human rights violations, StarCo will call for an independent, external investigation. This investigation will be handled in accordance with principles of maximum transparency.

STRUCTURE & ASSETS

The Mexican General Juan Sarmiento, the most famous and relevant of Corregidor, understood the value of his people: they were space-worthy but also battle-hardened. Their skills as zero-g construction and maintenance workers were easy to sell. He recognised, however, that no foreign power would be comfortable employing mercenaries with close ties to a rival nation. StarCo was his solution to this problem: founded by Corregidor, recruiting heavily

from Corregidor, but (apparently) independently financed, with an independent chain of command.

This close connection continues to this day, under a special arrangement whereby Corregidor Jurisdictional Command soldiers can take a leave of absence to serve in StarCo. Once their stint in StarCo is up, they return to their old positions with full rank and privileges intact. The mutual benefits of this arrangement are many: StarCo has access to a pool of skilled soldiers who can supplement their pay with lucrative mercenary contracts. Moreover, the dispersal of StarCo units throughout the Human Sphere means the Nomads have soldiers they can call up for active duty wherever they're needed. StarCo also maintains naval assets: two re-purposed freighters known as the SCS Rencor and the SCS Fiero. Their captains are resourceful, and provided they can set the terms of engagement, they can stand up surprisingly well even against small gunships and torpedo vessels.

RECRUITMENT

In addition to its close relationship with Corregidor, StarCo recruits from across the Human Sphere. Its units routinely include soldiers from Ariadna and Haqqislam, as well as corporate security and ex-PanOceanian operatives. Every mercenary company with such diverse hiring practices faces the same problem: how do you integrate a group of soldiers that don't even share a language, let alone common training or operational experience? StarCo have solved this problem with uniquely powerful training methods. The core principle of these so-called Gestalt Techniques is that every new recruit enters at exactly the same level – the lowest – regardless of prior training or experience. A severe training regime follows, in which the new recruits learn to work together, forging an identity as a team. After these difficult early stages, each soldier gradually re-introduces their previous skills and experience. In this way, they become the best fusion of their old and new selves, able to efficiently share their personal expertise with soldiers trained on the same baseline. The effectiveness of the Gestalt Techniques has led to their adoption throughout the Nomad Military Force. Gestalt Officers, trained to teach using this method, are in incredibly high demand. StarCo takes commercial advantage of their expertise by offering their services as instructors to clients.

NOTABLE OPERATIONS

THE ATTEMPTED KIDNAPPING OF SERGEANT SANDRA OKUMO

Sergeant Sandra Okumo is a Gestalt Officer, hired by the Paradiso Coordinated Command to provide

training advice for the rapid integration of multinational taskforces. In transit between El Arsenal and the Elysium-3 orbital, an Ikari Company unit boarded her transport and attempted to kidnap her. Although she and her bodyguard Nils Arnalds managed to keep them at bay until rescue could arrive, this incident is the cause of on-going animosity between StarCo and the Ikari Company.

THE ANDROV-FULLER MINING PLATFORM

A mining facility located in the Orthys Belt of Human Edge, Androv-Fuller was financed by a pair of Earth-based moguls looking to expand their mercantile activities beyond Sol. After suffering a string of damaging pirate raids, the pair used their considerable wealth to employ StarCo to advise on station defence. A week after the StarCo advisors arrived at Androv-Fuller, all communications with the base ceased. The pirate captain Sheth decided to take the mining facility for himself and launched an all-out assault. By the time the dust settled a month later, Sheth's fledgling pirate navy was scattered. Moreover, the command staff of Androv-Fuller was apprehended by the StarCo team for a variety of illegal activities, including attempted breach of the Concilium Convention, and the station was handed over to its workers. The station is still a common recruiting ground for StarCo.

The Mexican General Juan Sarmiento, *Infinity* Corebook p. 173



**COLONEL
GENZO IKARI**

Appearance: A crisp suit and cold, dark eyes.

Roleplaying:

- Barely contained fury.
- Disdain for pleasantries or manners, especially Japanese ones.
- His palm always rests on his katana.

Background: Ikari was an honourable man. Born into a bushi family in Yu Jing, his sense of duty drove him to serve in the Japanese Sectorial Army. Like all Japanese soldiers, he endured the most dangerous assignments and the disrespect of Yu Jing High Command, always fighting with honour and skill. He believed that doing so elevated himself, his family, and his people. Ikari transmitted his ideals to his three children, who followed him into the military. Both of his sons died needlessly during the NeoColonial Wars, but it was the order that his daughter Asumi commit seppuku and the subsequent death-by-sadness of his wife Taname that finally broke Ikari. He saw that his honour and devotion were chains, used by the Yu Jing StateEmpire to bind him and his people. Ikari swore vengeance. He set in motion a years-long plan to leave the StateEmpire. As a parting gift, he ensured that the officers responsible for the death of his children were disgraced or murdered, one by one. Colonel Ikari's hatred is the driving force behind the Ikari Company. He has been a soldier his entire life, but now he is freed from any constraints of honour or nobility, and the soldiers who follow him are the same. They reserve a special hatred for the Yu Jing StateEmpire, and the corrupt Japanese nobility that enable it.

**THE IKARI
COMPANY**

The Ikari Company is infamous for taking any job if the price is right. Ethical and moral issues do not concern them and enter into the conversation only when it is time to negotiate a price. If you're hiring the Ikari for something of dubious legality – and Ikari's clients frequently are – you'll be expected to pay. What you'll get in return is a company of bloodthirsty warriors who will execute their contract without asking any questions. The Ikari Company are frequently accused of illegal practices: breaches of the Concilium Convention, theft, and use of excessive force. So far, no one has managed to officially pin anything on them. There's always just enough doubt that Ikari Company lawyers can slide the organisation out from under prosecution. Part of the service the Ikari Company provides is enough complications to protect themselves and their clients from legal repercussions.

All of this – the lack of morals, brutality, and willingness to skirt the law – springs from the Ikari Company's warmonger, Colonel Genzo Ikari. A former officer in the Japanese Sectorial Army, he has the rage of a once noble and self-sacrificing man who has learned that everything he believed in was a lie.

STRUCTURE & ASSETS

When Colonel Ikari decided to defect from the Yu Jing StateEmpire, he did not go quickly. He took his time, recruiting soldiers who were personally loyal, and who shared his disaffection and rage.

IKARI COMPANY AT A GLANCE

Typical jobs: Whatever the client wants done, no questions asked. Anti-piracy operations in Human Edge, lightning raids (destruction, theft, or both), and strike breaking.

Common employers: Unscrupulous corporations (MinesCorp, Pharmacomp, MagnaObra), criminal organisations, or anyone aiming to hurt Yu Jing.

Tactics: Ikari operations are characterised by speed and force. They hit hard, with little concern for collateral damage or casualties. They are unsubtle and often excessive, but they know how to cover their tracks just enough that no one has been able to successfully prosecute them in Concilium courts.

Typical deployment: Ikari Company units can be wild and unpredictable – furious bikers, screaming Yuan Yuans, and opportunistic Bashi Bazouks descending in a hail of fire. Nevertheless, they often have a core of hardened and well-equipped soldiers who defected alongside Colonel Ikari. These ronin warriors are the true terror in any Ikari operation.

Aided by a dishonourable Yǎnjīng officer called Mr. Daixo, he stole weapons and supplies. He committed treason after treason to set up his fledgling mercenary company. These defectors, with their stolen equipment and well-earned fury, form the brutally efficient core of the Ikari Company. They are absolutely loyal to their Colonel, sharing his beliefs and his ideals. They're the bedrock on which everything else is built. The seat of Ikari Company power is Human Edge. Colonel Ikari fought there for the StateEmpire many times. His familiarity with its isolation and lawlessness made it the logical place to stockpile stolen Yu Jing equipment. Their headquarters in the system is the hidden Sēfurokku station, a safe haven for pirates and corsairs, controlled absolutely by the Ikari Company. They also have a presence on Novvy Bangkok – their first base in Human Edge – as well as security contracts for the Avro-Kaizuka orbital in the Tindarid Trojans. Both are common places to meet and negotiate sensitive contracts with Mr. Daixo.

RECRUITMENT

The core of the Ikari Company are the hand-chosen loyalists recruited when Ikari defected from the StateEmpire. Many of these soldiers came directly from the mobile command centre of the Japanese Sectorial Army in Human Edge, the tactical

deployment and assault ship Yūshi. Like Ikari, these were once noble soldiers, loyal to the StateEmpire and the Japanese High Command. Like Ikari, they have abandoned these loyalties and embraced the ronin philosophy. Since then, Ikari's recruitment practices have dramatically loosened. They now seek out soldiers with the worst reputations: morally flexible, violent, and willing to do whatever they must to earn their pay. Naturally, these soldiers come from across the Human Sphere – Libertos terrorists from Varuna, desperadoes from the Ariadnan south, escapees from the Yu Jing Wú Míng penal regiments, and even renegade Morat soldiers. All that's required to join the Ikari Company is a violent past and moral flexibility. A hatred for Yu Jing is a bonus.

NOTABLE OPERATIONS

NOVYY BANGKOK AND THE BREITSCHWERT GROUP

Novyy Bangkok is a dwarf planet in Human Edge's lawless Homeric Belt. Originally established as a mining colony, its corporate owners the Blinov-Ngamsan quickly went bankrupt. In the resulting power vacuum, Thai Submondo groups called the Chao pho took de facto control. They spread their influence throughout the planetoid, but the evacuation of corporate assets left them in a weak position. The Breitschwert group, a private security service turned rogue, decided to take advantage and launched a violent takeover.

Colonel Ikari, who had been stockpiling stolen materiel in Novyy Bangkok, sided with the Chao pho, and met the Breitschwert boarders in Novyy Bangkok's winding tunnels. The elite core of the Ikari Company, itching for a fight since their defection, were frighteningly effective. Breitschwert were caught unawares, their soldiers all but annihilated in brutal corridor fighting.

Ikari's first major operation was a stunning success, and a brilliant piece of strategy: it secured a base of operations for the new Ikari Company, and it established their reputation as deadly and uncompromising fighters. Moreover, it reinforced Colonel Ikari's own image as a master tactician, a skill for which he is still in high demand. Thanks to the fact that the infamous Harry's Bar serves as an unofficial meeting point, Novyy Bangkok operates as a secondary headquarters for the Ikari Company. The cantina is located in the imaginatively named "Main Strip", wedged in amongst the other casinos and pubs that populate the place. Ikari aren't the official security force of Novyy Bangkok, but they're always called in when the local authorities need support – assuming they have the funds to pay for their services, of course.

THE JAPANESE UPRISING

Colonel Ikari is no fan of Japanese authorities in the Human Sphere. Nevertheless, when the kuge industrial aristocracy approached him through an intermediary (the MagnaObra Corporation), looking for support in Human Edge, the opportunity was too good to pass up: a chance to inflict grievous harm on the StateEmpire, and make the Japanese kuge pay handsomely for the privilege. During the Japanese Uprising, the Ikari Company supported Japanese rebels on Yoake (Dawn) station in the Helicon Belt, and Kibō (Hope) in the Ephesian Trojans. They transported elements of the Tatenokai and provided them with weapons, supplies, and a safe hiding place in the independent Avro-Kaizuka orbital. Whenever the Ikari Company and the Imperial Service clashed, the fighting was savage – both sides share a deep hatred for each other. Ikari Company support was decisive in securing independent stations in Human Edge for the newly risen Japanese. With their contracts now expired, it's an open question how the Ikari Company and the Japanese Secessionist Army will interact when they next meet.



MR. DAIXO

Appearance: Dark shades and an icy smile. Tanned skin and dark beard.

Roleplaying:

- Impassive. Icy smile and no emotion. Speaks softly.
- Appears unexpectedly – Mr. Daixo decides when you meet. Moves hands when speaking, which is unusual for someone of his cultural background.
- Gets very close when he wants to be threatening.

Background: Mr. Daixo is Colonel Ikari's right hand. He is the Ikari Company's fixer, with underworld and intelligence contacts throughout the Human Sphere, and a knack for making difficult problems (violently) disappear. He finds the supplies and equipment needed to keep the company running, and personally negotiates their most important contracts. He even recruits new soldiers for the Company, finding those with the right combination of ferocity and moral flexibility. Surprisingly little is known about Mr. Daixo. His history in the Yǎnjīng intelligence service is characterised by repeated contact with organised crime, drifting further into the world of Submondo until he finally broke with the StateEmpire altogether. His capacity for brutally inventive solutions to tricky problems serves the Ikari Company well.

KEY PERSONALITIES OF THE IKARI COMPANY

- Nameless (Qin)**, a Wú Míng, secretly a Yǎnjīng spy infiltrating Ikari Company.
- Sansō Jun Ikeda**, a Keisotsu defector, obsessed with Ikari.
- Ibo**, a bounty hunter who only takes contracts targeting Yu Jing citizens.
- Takechi Teru**, a boastful and brash low-class samurai from the Tankō Zensenbutai who has an addiction to liquor and companionship.



ADAA, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Appearance: A wetsuit under his combat webbing. Swimmer's shoulders.

Roleplaying:

- Serious and taciturn, there seems little to smile about.
- War is hell. You've lost enough friends to it.
- Humans are naive. We're here to show them the truth.

Background: Twenty years of war against the most brutally oppressive intelligence currently known to the universe is enough to taint anyone's view. The inhabitants of the Human Sphere are only just now getting an inkling of what is to come. Aadaa views it as her duty to enlighten anyone who will listen to the facts: the Combined Army will not rest until they have what they want, and only the Tohaa can teach humanity how to resist. Although she accepted Luubna's invitation to enlist with Spiral Corps, Aadaa chafes under the civility of her current role. Much more used to the violence of battlefields overwhelmed by Morats and other minions of the Evolved Intelligence, Aadaa is the blunt instrument to Luubna's silk glove. If Spiral Corps need to reinforce a point or browbeat someone into submission, Aadaa is the one to take centre stage.

KEY PERSONALITIES OF SPIRAL CORPS

Private Wynham, an Australian female merc; average skills, but very lucky.

Baldie, an ex-Helot Militiaman turned mercenary with no Libertos connections.

Captain Kody Horner, SCAF Maelstrom's CO. Expert pilot, ex-naval officer, and veteran of the Ariadnan Commercial Conflicts.

Chief Gunner Kanzu, SCAF Maelstrom's master-at-arms, possessed of a thick Australian accent and a fearsome reputation.

SPIRAL CORPS



Until recently, Spiral Corps were a failing company. Consisting of only a few squads operating out of a re-purposed mobile mining rig on Varuna, their reputation was poor. Contracts were drying up after a string of failures, and the company was struggling to pay salaries, let alone service its debts. Bankruptcy loomed. Seemingly out of nowhere, Spiral Corps was reinvigorated by an influx of cash at the hands of its new owner, Luubna Kaaram. Having been stranded in the Human Sphere after the fall of the Daedalus Gate, some of the Tohaa – Luubna included – began looking for opportunities beyond the confines of the Trident. The events of the Kurage Crisis focussed the eyes of the masses onto the fact that the Combined Army threat was not only very real, but it could also manifest itself deep inside any system. Suddenly, nowhere was safe. Enter Spiral Corps. This joint Tohaa-human enterprise specialises in the exposure and capture or elimination of Combined Army infiltrators, especially the Shasvastii. Thanks to their diverse range of expertise, Spiral Corps has rapidly established itself as a premium private military company capable of managing the political, physical, and quantronic integrity of high-profile clientele. Though few admit to openly trusting them, many have privately turned to this outfit for their unfailing ability to root out the vipers in a nest.

SPIRAL CORPS AND THE TOHAA TRIUMVIRATE

The Triumvirate are a secret Tohaa conspiracy whose goal is to safeguard their race from the EI. They see themselves as true patriots, willing to do the unthinkable in order to protect Tohaa society (and their position in it). Where other Tohaa seek

SPIRAL CORPS AT A GLANCE

Typical jobs: Historically, private security and escort. Current operations focus on counterespionage, particularly anti-Shasvastii tactics.

Common employers: Initially, medium-sized interplanetary organisations focussed on securing their assets against competitors. A media frenzy in the wake of the Kurage Crisis led to hypercorps engaging them for their expertise concerning alien infiltration.

Tactics: The Spiral Corps are experts at exposing the deeper darkness within the shadows. To do that, they have become masters at cataloguing data for negligible variances, and they are unparalleled in their patience. They analyse, watch, wait, and strike when the enemy is at their most confident.

Typical deployment: Predominantly Tohaa in species origin, Spiral Corps units are a mixture in terms of size and composition, though they're all excellently equipped. As a company that's still finding its feet after a major restructuring, they rarely muster more than ten mercs for any single job. But then they rarely need more.

to preserve and aid the T'zechi Digesters (Infinity Corebook, p. 318) in their knowledge-gathering quest, the Triumvirate would force them to divulge their secrets so they can use them to defeat the EI. Humanity represents an opportunity for the Triumvirate, a distraction to draw the EI away from Tohaa space. Working in the Human Sphere is challenging, however, since Tohaa movement is restricted by O-12. This is where Spiral Corps comes in: the mercenary company provides the Triumvirate with a footprint and some manoeuvrability within the Human Sphere. Above all, the Triumvirate would dearly love to learn where humanity has hidden their only T'zechi Digester. Taken from the Last Cosmolite on Paradiso, it is concealed in a top-secret research facility called the Penny Arcade. The Triumvirate does not know the location of this facility; Spiral Corps provides them with soldiers who can chase down any leads.

STRUCTURE & ASSETS

Until their recent purchase, Spiral Corps was a fairly prestigious mercenary company who had fallen

onto hard times. A scandalous media frenzy related to the persecution of Helots and the resultant abandonment by their employer, MagnaObra, led to frozen assets and the incarceration of any Spiral Corps tactical personnel stationed on Varuna. Virtually bankrupt and seemingly doomed to an ignoble death, Spiral Corps were even on the verge of selling their most valuable asset, the SCAF Maelstrom. Then Luubna Kaaram arrived fresh from the Paradiso Front, and the company's fortune changed overnight. Spiral Corp's sudden windfall has led to a spending spree. After paying for crucial repairs and maintenance, they have begun stockpiling ordnance, including a variety of surplus Remotes. In some cases, they've purchased equipment without the necessary expertise to operate it, hoping to use it as a recruitment tool in areas that they hope to expand into. This spending has triggered red flags in every clandestine agency in the Human Sphere. Particularly as there are rumours that some of the new equipment arriving seem to be lacking purchase orders. Spiral Corp itself has also been completely restructured. The fall of the Daedalus Gate led to an increase in disenfranchised Trident soldiers looking for a new home in a foreign setting. Luubna Kaaram hand-picked those with specialist skills and invited them into her fold. None refused. She was shrewd enough to keep human employees in prestigious positions if their skillset and experience beat the competition from her own species, but no-one is in doubt that Spiral Corps has a Tohaa majority.

RECRUITMENT

Spiral Corps has no real recruitment or training policies in place yet. Until recently, that was simply out of necessity – their poor reputation meant they couldn't afford to turn anyone away. They tended to attract mercs who found it difficult to hire on anywhere else: the desperate, the mediocre, the outright failures. More than a few of their soldiers were reaching the end of their careers, hoping to draw a pay cheque and stay out of danger.

Following their purchase and the retirement of most of the senior staff, Luubna Kaaram has let the worst of Spiral Corp's dead weight go. The core that remains are extremely competent, providing an optimistic outlook for the company's future. For the first time in a while, Spiral Corp is offering attractive recruitment contracts, particularly targeting mercenaries with security tasks or espionage expertise. The former reflects recent equipment purchases, the latter is an order from the company's new owner.

NOTABLE OPERATIONS

THE ASSASSINATION OF DR. ARLO TAKAMATSU

The downward spiral of the company's previous Warmonger began with a straightforward security job. Dr. Arlo Takamatsu was a skilled Remote mechanic, working for a minor circuit racing team called the Kilburn Fast-trackers. His cutting-edge work propelled them to the top, and scouts from the major leagues were sniffing around. The extra attention produced an uptick in threats from rivals and unhinged fans. Neither Takamatsu nor his teammates considered them particularly serious, but they hired a security team from Spiral just in case. Spiral's reputation was a little shaky, but they were cheap, and no one expected they'd actually have to do anything. On race day, a lone stranger breached Spiral's perimeter, walked right up to Dr. Takamatsu on the Kilburn race deck, whispered something in his ear, and detonated an explosive device. Takamatsu and the bomber were both killed instantly. It was a catastrophic security failure, and thanks to all the cameras, a very public one.



LUUBNA KAARAM

Appearance: A towering female Tohaa with a captivating voice.

Roleplaying:

- Skilled businesswoman able to switch from warm smile to menace in an instant.
- Eyes shift slowly and deliberately to absorb every detail.
- Phero-blossom suffers violent tremors occasionally.

Background: Luubna Kaaram is the de-facto leader of Spiral Corps. There is no mistaking her for the company's Warmonger, as she plays up to the role unceasingly. She acknowledges that she saved the company from ruin, uses it as a haven for displaced Tohaa with a burning hatred of the Evolved Intelligence, and provides a service to the Human Sphere by exposing the Shasvastii menace.

Given her media presence and gregarious personality, people assume that Luubna specialises in blunt, aggressive operations. On the contrary, her expertise is subtlety. She prefers to pull strings and direct covert operations, coordinating her mercenaries from a distance to expose the alien menace. For this, she needs soldiers who follow orders precisely no matter their background or species. When covert operations go south, which sometimes happens when Shasvastii are involved, Luubna is quick to highlight the inefficiencies within a corporation's own structure rather than any error that can be apportioned to Spiral Corps.

Tohaa Triumvirate: see *Crossroads of Paradiso*, *Infinity Corebook* p. 319

**EXAMPLE
TAG NAMES**

- Aces
- Eights
- Turtle
- Silver Eagle
- Rain of Fire
- The Beast Within
- Mallard
- Fleeting Breeze
- The Last Word
- Symphony No. 2
- Samantha

MERCENARY UNITS

Big companies like StarCo and the Ikari Company dominate public perception of mercenaries, but the War Market swarms with smaller mercenary units. Some of these are long-running organisations with deep operational histories, others are informal groupings based on similar skill sets, and still others form long enough to bid for a single contract and then go their separate ways once the job is done. Mercenary units frequently subcontract out to the major companies. They fill holes in a larger company or regular military's operational profile, or they provide specialist skills for a specific mission. Usually these agreements are brief, but sometimes mercenary units prove so useful they become semi-permanently or even permanently integrated into command structures. Five significant mercenary units are described below, ranging from the elite Kaplan Tactical Services to the informal network of infowar specialists who call themselves the Wardrivers.

**ANACONDA TAG
SQUADRON**

It beggars belief that the Anaconda TAG Squadron keeps operating. The cost of running a fully-mechanised unit is outrageous: replacement parts, specialised support equipment, trained engineers and pilots, ammunition, and transport. Some believe they must have a hidden benefactor. They point to the ease with which the Squadron obtains supplies from the Nomad Military Force, and the financial support of the obscure Tyomkin Bank on Tunguska, as evidence of the Black Hand's involvement. The Anaconda is a heavy reconnaissance TAG, purchased surplus from PanOceania and upgraded in the Black Laboratories of Praxis. Its armour was lightened using polyceramic compound plates, its interface and movement controls updated, and a swift evacuation system was added. Since the squadron went mercenary, their designs

have diverged even further. Each pilot makes minor modifications to suit their own skills and preferences, often including custom paint jobs.

TAG NAMES

Most Anaconda pilots name their TAGs, treasuring their quirks and personal histories. In the few cases where pilots have retired or been killed, their replacements tend to keep their TAG's name, believing it is bad luck to change.

**ANACONDA TAG SQUADRON
REGULAR CLIENTS**

Mercenary companies: The Anaconda TAG Squadron have an excellent working relationship with StarCo, based on their common Corregidor heritage. They also regularly deploy alongside Druze Bayram Security. Spiral Corps have one TAG pilot, the inimitable Neena Nandwa, on permanent secondment. **Regular militaries:** Anaconda TAGs are permanently integrated into the command structure of the Force de Réponse Rapide Merovingienne, the French-Ariadnan sectorial army.

**BRAWLERS, MERCENARY
ENFORCERS**

Not every mercenary can be highly-trained ex-special forces, no matter how much clients might wish it were so. Rather, the majority are thugs, thrill-seekers, and rough characters who enjoy doing violence but don't have the discipline to cut it in a regular military. Some signed up and washed out, or they were dishonourably discharged. Others never even tried conventional service, instead coming up through organised crime or piracy. Whatever their origins, Brawlers are all over the War Market. They rarely stay with one organisation for long – they get bored, or poor impulse control catches up with them. They're a dime a dozen, but they're useful. Unsubtle, familiar with intimidation tactics and armed assault, ready to do what needs to be done provided there's a payday. Brawlers are barely even an organisation.

The name is an ironic badge of honour, adopted by a certain type of merc following a speech in which the General Councillor of Bureau Athena said that high-risk, high-pay work with no job security and constant threat of death must “appeal to no-one but the lowest denomination of brawler.”

Brawler Regular Clients

Mercenary companies: Brawlers can be found in virtually every mercenary company, although they are particularly favoured by rougher organisations like The Ikari Company and Druze Bayram Security.

KAPLAN TACTICAL SERVICES



The Kaplan Tactical Services consider themselves noble mercenaries with a rigorous code of ethics. They recruit from all walks of life, and they expect their soldiers to display bravery, wisdom, and a spirit of self-sacrifice in the defence of Haqqislam's humanistic virtues. Any breach of these ideals leads to instant dismissal. The KTS believe they're a cut above mercenaries and regular soldiers alike. Kaplan is Turkish for “tiger”. The KTS motto is “Tüm kurtlar Kaplandan korkar”: “All wolves fear the tiger”. The KTS are a branch of Beyhan Resources Sti, owned by the wealthy Silk Lord Hikmet Bey. Beyhan specialises in engineering and construction – the KTS were originally founded to defend Beyhan orbital projects during the chaos of the Silk Revolts. Perhaps unsurprisingly, they specialise in sabotage and counter-sabotage missions; their combat engineers are top-notch and well-equipped. KTS have a long list of security contracts with the Funduq Sultanate, where they are frequent rivals of Druze Bayram Security. Both organisations abide by deeply-held codes, philosophically at odds with each other. They mistrust each other intensely.

KTS REGULAR CLIENTS

Mercenary companies: KTS subcontracts to the Dahshat Company, although they keep each other at arm's length. The Qaid Fahesh doesn't like that he can't completely control them, and the KTS are suspicious of his motives. **Regular militaries:** The KTS are so thoroughly integrated into the Haqqislamite armies of the Funduq Sultanate that they're sometimes known as “the Sultan's tigers”.

VARANGIAN GUARD



The Varangian Guard are a premier unit renowned for their ferocity and fearlessness. Unapologetically Ariadnan, the unit recruits almost exclusively from disaffected Caledonians seeking escape the frontier politics of their homeland.

VARANGIAN GUARD AT A GLANCE

Typical jobs: Frontline combat operations. Supporting national militaries on assaults, holding defensive positions. Peacekeeping duties. Occasional anti-Combined Army advisory roles. **Common employers:** Bureau Aegis (especially on Paradiso).

Tactics: The Varangian Guard fight with military-style tactics blended with ferocity and stubbornness. They coordinate well with regular militaries, and they are often used to supplement their numbers. They are mostly indistinguishable from a regular army unit, except by their unit patches and colourful tartans.

Typical deployment: As a frontline combat unit, the Varangian Guard often deploy in their entirety, or in small, specialised fireteams.

DOUGLAS KIRK, POLITICAL OPERATOR

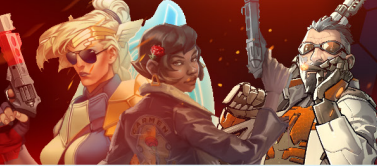
Appearance: Short and round, completely bald, with a tremendous furry moustache.

Roleplaying:

- Funny and friendly.
- Scrupulously (sometimes painfully) honest.
- Shadowed by a pair of Varangian bodyguards.

Background: William McKellar knows that securing the Varangian Guard's future is as much a political exercise as a military one. Though his own fame provides valuable political leverage, he recognises that it is a finite resource, used up if it is deployed too freely. He needs someone he can trust to argue their case, to seek out government contracts, and place his highly-trained soldiers in the positions where they expect to fulfil their contract. Douglas Kirk is McKellar's go-to when he needs to apply political pressure with more subtlety than his own fame allows. Kirk is apparently harmless, and almost impossible not to like. His main political weapon is his honesty: Kirk isn't afraid to say what needs to be said, trusting in the good in others to keep him safe. Kirk lobbies for the Varangian Guard any way he can, particularly with cultivating allies and hunting out new contracts. Kirk has Varangians assigned to guard him at all times. He treats his bodyguards as members of his own family. It's a post that is much sought-after amongst the Varangian Guard.

Ariadnan Expeditionary Corps, *Infinity*
Corebook p. 24



CORPORAL DOUGAL "TEN TOUR" MCNAB

Appearance: A small man with lined eyes, a scraggly beard, and a lax attitude to uniform.

Roleplaying:

- Laden down with all sorts of odds and ends.
- Likes to trade gossip. 'I couldn't help but overhear...'
- Always the second to volunteer, never last.

Background: Corporal McNab is an Ariadnan Expeditionary Corps grunt, and one of the Varangian Guard's best recruiters. He is good friends with William McKellar, having served with the Warmonger during his Expeditionary Corps days. By arrangement with a friendly clerk in Command, McNab is kept moving so he can scout for the sorts of soldiers that the Varangian Guard need. Whenever anybody asks McNab how many tours he has served in the Ariadnan Expeditionary Corps, he always says the same thing: "This is my tenth and last." He rotates through units fast, and he is always well-regarded by his squad-mates and officers.

KEY PERSONALITIES OF VARANGIAN GUARD

Captain Rowenna

Stewart, logistics officer for the Varangian Guard and AEC veteran.

Private Stev, a Shasvastii infiltrator.

The Brothers Koposov, last survivors of a Varangian unit assigned to Paradiso.

Liam Williamson, a bright-eyed raw recruit.

After a tour of Paradiso, the Varangian Guard's commander, William McKellar, realised the opportunities available to those willing to leave Dawn behind and immediately set to gathering like-minded Caledonians. The unit's fearsome reputation has risen exponentially ever since. As one of the most famous veterans of the Ariadnan Expeditionary Corps, William McKellar has proven he is a savvy individual. He understands that the savage frontiers of Dawn shape some of the toughest specimens of humanity seen anywhere in the Human Sphere. Forging those recruits in the jungles of Paradiso and other hotspots across the G5 nations provide them with the skills and experience the unit so crucially needs to be competitive. The Varangian Guard provide tough-as-nails frontline support in hostile territories and combat zones. They regularly contract out to Bureau Aegis, both on Paradiso and elsewhere. Their recruiters can often be found on the Ariadnan frontier, where they engage with unsettled Caledonians, antipodes, and opportunistic representatives from elsewhere in the Human Sphere alike.

STRUCTURE & ASSETS

The Varangian Guard maintain a loose military chain of command. Compared with other mercenary units, this results in a degree of structural and strategic flexibility that suits their fierce nature. Though individual fireteams can often find themselves spread thin, they more than compensate for this with their combat effectiveness and ferocity. Most Varangian fireteams are built around a tough core of veteran soldiers accustomed to fighting in alien environments. The Varangian Guard aren't going to panic when the situation deteriorates, and they can keep it together in chaotic and rapidly-evolving conflicts. The strength of the Varangian Guard is its soldiers, not its equipment. As with the Ariadnan Army, they prefer rugged tools that can be easily maintained in the field. They rely on other organisations for interstellar transport: O-12, when contracted to Bureau Aegis, or the Freetrade Brotherhood. Nevertheless, William McKellar is interested in modern weapons and materiel for the Varangian Guard. He always has an eye open for military surplus that he can purchase, and rumour has it that he instructs his senior officers to turn a blind eye to any equipment that recruits "liberate" when they sign on.

RECRUITMENT

The Varangian Guard recruit primarily from Dawn. This reflects William McKellar's personal goal: rescuing the youth of Caledonia from Dawn's harsh frontier to furnish them with off-world experience and technological expertise. He offers them the chance to pull themselves out of the mire and take control of their own destinies. The clans don't necessarily like the fact that William is stealing their youth from under their very noses, but he simply answers this with 'That's their problem'. Varangian recruitment officers also tour the Ariadnan outposts on Paradiso. Virtually every member of the Ariadnan Expeditionary Corps who shows some promise will be approached as their tour draws to a close. Recruiters receive a commission to supplement their pay for each Ariadnan they recruit who serves out at least a year in the Varangian Guard. These recruiters are typically also combat veterans – who better to assess the suitability of future candidates and entice them to sign? This latter tactic effectively outsources Varangian Guard training to O-12, which not only saves money but also has the benefit of introducing the Ariadnans to modern military strategy, tactics, and hardware.

NOTABLE OPERATIONS

THE DEFENCE OF BITTER LAKE

Bitter Lake was a small settlement on the Norstralia continent of Paradiso, a short distance from Ishmailiyya. Situated on a lake at the bottom of picturesque waterfalls, it housed an all-important ALEPH node. During the early stages of the Second Paradiso Offensive, before Paradiso Coordinated Command had a good handle on the size of the Combined Army assaults, two fireteams from the Varangian Guard were sent to bolster AEC forces defending the fledgling settlement. When the true extent of the Combined Army attack on Ishmailiyya became clear, the ALEPH node was remotely bricked. The Varangian Guard were unaware – they had lost their only Wardriver in the first day's fighting and were out on the perimeter amongst the worst of the fighting. Worse, they never received the order to abandon Bitter Lake. The entire Varangian contingent was assumed lost. A few weeks later, a routine air patrol over the region spotted a signal flare. To their surprise, the Varangian Guard were still holding out. They'd lost almost two-thirds of their number, but the settlement and its now-useless ALEPH node were still secure.

WARDRIVERS

The Wardrivers are part (de-centralised) professional association, part informal gathering of hackers and infowar specialists. The loose



organisation includes members from all backgrounds: the lowliest, self-taught street hackers all the way up to military-trained, quantronic warfare experts. Despite this variety of experience and history, the Wardrivers are a close-knit group. They regularly meet in secret locations all across Maya, to discuss everything from technological developments and Maya shows to which units are hiring and who to avoid. A lot of informal training goes on at these meets; this keeps the cohort safe and ensures that a Wardriver patch actually means something. Hiring a Wardriver grants you not only a skilled hacker, but also some degree of access to their network. The downside is that Wardrivers talk: bad clients or commanders get blacklisted. "Blacklisting" can mean anything from trouble recruiting hackers in the future, to repeated denial of service attacks, or even complete digital erasure.

Wardriver Regular Clients

Mercenary companies: The Ikari Company often employs Wardrivers, as do the Foreign Company (typically to provide security against hacking of remote camera feeds). The Varangian Guard also regularly have a Wardriver accompany their units into the field.

Regular militaries: Lacking combat hackers of their own, Ariadna often employs Wardrivers.

YUAN YUANS

Hiring Yuan Yuans is a calculated risk. They're wild and almost impossible to control, looting and rampaging when they should be retreating,

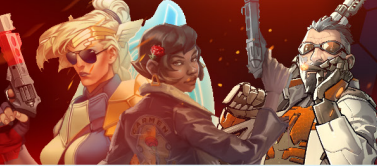


charging when they should be fortifying their position. They're best used as a shock tactic, followed up by more disciplined mercenaries. Yuan Yuans often come in groups with an assortment of personal and familial ties. They ply the space lanes in their patchwork and ramshackle transports, taking whatever opportunities come their way. This personal loyalty can be a boon – it's surprising what a Yuan Yuan is willing to do when they lose a mate. But that loyalty to their own group is the only real attachment a Yuan Yuan recognises. Yuan Yuans are skilled in space combat. They were born and raised on struggling (often failed) asteroid colonies and wrecked or stolen transports. They're clumsier on the ground, so they prefer to drop directly from their own ships into combat. For some employers this is a weird disconnect: you hire a team of low-tech pirates carrying scavenged and stolen equipment, and they bring with them a functional intra-system transport.

Yuan Yuan Regular Clients

Mercenary companies: The use of frenzied Yuan Yuans as a shock tactic is well-suited to the Ikari Company, particularly as their unscrupulous morals fit well with Ikari's merciless behaviour.

Regular militaries: Only the (barely regular) corsair armies of the Funduq Sultanate's Qapu Khalqi are willing to regularly contract Yuan Yuans.

**ARIADNA:****KNOCK KNOCK...**

Lusheng Prospecctions has long tried to extend the territory they hold around their Huā mining facility. Now masked soldiers have been terrorising a settlement close by, and the Kazaks have decided to act. Your mercenary unit is contracted to open the doors to the heavily secured Huā facility. Hacking and force will be required, after that the soldiers of the settlement can vent their frustrations and the army can arrive to break up the struggle. Gāng Tie should get the message.

OUR POUND OF FLESH...

Colonel Antonio García led a mercenary outfit working for the WarTechWorks Inc. corporation, responsible for numerous atrocities. Your contract asks you to find him on Ancontecimento and ask him for the names of the executives that gave him his orders. No-one said you had to ask nicely.

TIME TO COME HOME...

USAriadnan soldier Sam Michaels was enrolled in a new training program run in partnership between the Stavka and Bureau Aegis. There he learned how to navigate the quantronic maze of InfoWar, and he was a promising student. Possessed with some unpatriotic and silly notion that he needed to see the Human Sphere before his term of service was up, he disappeared, last seen on the C8 circular headed from Paradiso to the Human Edge. Bring him home, and alive, if possible. His skills are now too valuable to let wander about.

HAAQISLAM:**MY SON, MY SON...**

Mohammad Aldairwary is the son of a prominent merchant. Destined to assume the mantle of his father and lead the company forward, he has shown little interest in anything except travel, getting into trouble with his dubious friends, and carousing. It is time for the boy to grow up. Find him and bring him home. I'm sure his friends won't be a problem.

HITCHING A LIFT...

Corsair captain Fatima Ali is looking for a reliable mercenary unit to supplement her crew. Her ship, the Shaheen, has a Letter of Marque for non-Japanese Yu Jingese vessels, and she is targeting trade in the Human Edge, near the Bandakar caravanserai. Unfortunately, the merchant ship she targets is a cover for Yu Jingese troopers hell-bent on suppressing a Japanese cell in the area

CHAPTER 3**WARZONES AND CONTRACTS**

Across the Human Sphere conflict rages as spot fires and infernos, some burn hot and swift, others are protracted, a slow grind that takes a long toll of lives. While it's true that a vast majority of mercenary companies earn their money through working security, those that perform front-line combat roles see action all across the Human Sphere.

Mercenaries performing active combat roles risk their lives in battles on Dawn and the fight against the Combined Army on Paradiso. But many of the conflicts throughout the Human Sphere are small scale. Pirates or thugs threatening violence and destruction on a lone cargo vessel or small outpost on the Human Edge, or spec-ops missions to isolated stations manufacturing illicit drugs or subversive media content. These small-scale conflicts involve more mercenary units that might otherwise be supposed, where desperate citizens might rally together to buy protection from the enemies that ravage them, or the station targeted for assault sits outside the jurisdictional remit of a national power. A single company may have units performing operations in dozens of locations at the same time, some relegated to protecting the life of an ungrateful ambassador, others training security teams to improve their skills, units on active duty in a warzone, or even 'on vacation'--a term often used to describe classified or Black Sanction missions.

In this chapter, we will drill down into the factions, the relationships they have with mercenary companies, and the missions that require soldiers of fortune. The object here is not to expansively cover every detail, but to focus on some unique and flavourful themes that GMs can use in their campaigns. At the end of each faction section there are three adventure seeds. These provide ideas for operations that may come from the War Market, the Lists, Black Sanction missions, and Bounty Hunts.

ARIADNA

Ariadna has a long and sordid history when it comes to mercenaries, and Ariadnans generally have a low opinion of mercenary companies. This dislike is deep seated and traces back to the rediscovery of Dawn by the rest of the Human Sphere. The scrabble for control over Ariadna, and the Commercial Conflicts that continue to rage on Dawn's soils over the rich mineral wealth of the planet have seen bloody battles, terrible atrocities, and a litany of war crimes.

While these conflicts served to galvanise the identity of Ariadna as a nation state, the memories of actions past, and the blood still being shed, serve as a constant reminder to Ariadnans that the rest of the Human Sphere disregards them, and they are willing to pontificate and watch while the people of Dawn suffer. Mercenary units in the employ of powerful corporations apply the worst kinds of tactics designed not only to seize ground and take resources, but to break the will of the local peoples by whatever means necessary. To most Ariadnans, the concept of an honourable mercenary is laughable.

Ariadnans are a tough and resilient people, proud of the fact they have held off the ravages of the violently greed-stricken nations and corporations that have long tried to control them. They believe strongly in fighting their own battles and see those nations that hide behind a corporate façade, or pay others to fight while their own men and women risk nothing, as weak. Despite this general dislike of the mercenary trade, many Ariadnans serve as mercenaries, and many mercenary companies work contracts for Ariadnan clients. Not often used in front-line roles where Ariadnan soldiers are available, mercenaries are sometimes hired by small settlements to face off against those hired by an aggressive corporation.

Ariadna, and the Stavka particularly, also make extensive use of bounty hunters and hit squads, carrying justice into the Human Sphere well beyond the jurisdiction or capacity of Ariadnan soldiers. The Stavka have a long list of targets, from seditious turn-coats and mercenary captains who gave the orders that filled mass graves, to corporate executives who callously think that a deeper pocket gives them the right to take what rightfully belongs to the people. Mercenary units are regularly hired to do what the courts of Concilium cannot or will not do to uphold justice for the people of Dawn. Mercenaries may also be employed if they provide access to a skill set, such as hacking, which is hard to find on Ariadna.

Mercenaries hired by Ariadna are most often paid in Ariadnan Rubles, although sometimes raw materials or territory are negotiable in place of a larger fee. Ariadnans are usually cautious about the mercenaries they hire, and they will not have anything to do with a unit or company that has served one of the corporations that pillage the surface of Dawn.

HAQQISLAM

Haqqislam is a small but wealthy nation-state, and while they operate a formidable standing army, the Sword of Allah, as well as the Qapu Khalqi, they also make use of mercenary forces in specific and supplementary roles. While the Sword of Allah does use mercenaries when the Haqqislamite High Command requires it, the most extensive use of mercenaries is undoubtedly the Qapu Khalqi. Their role as a semi-autonomous military force is largely in the security of the Silk Route and the interstellar trade routes. While Haqqislamite soldiers of the Qapu Khalqi are almost exclusively used for security along the Silk Route, mercenary forces are regularly hired for extended periods to supplement security forces on the interstellar trade routes. For mercenaries hired in this role it will most often mean manning trade vessels and performing security detail on the many caravans dotted around the Human Sphere, although it may also sometimes involve more directly aggressive operations. Many mercenaries are also hired by Silk Lords as private security and military forces, protecting their assets and applying pressure to their enemies.

The relationship between the Qapu Khalqi and the many mercenary forces it hires is contracted and professional. The Funduq Sultanate often places contracts in the War Market or through the Lists looking for mercenary companies to work with, with an established preference for small- or medium-sized companies. If the mercenary company performs well, and a positive relationship is established over multiple such short-term contracts, it is often the case the Sultanate will establish extended contracts negotiated directly with the mercenary company or units themselves.

This preference for moving away from the War Market to direct dealing is one of the reasons the Sultanate often works with smaller companies. Within the ranks of the Qapu Khalqi are a host of mercenary troops, from Nomads to Yuan Yuans, Druze teams, StarCo units, and more. The Sultanate is a reliable paymaster, usually paying directly in Haqqislamite Dinar or Concilium Sol. Beyond the Qapu Khalqi, mercenaries are regularly hired by Haqqislamite corsairs or may be contracted by specific caravans to perform security. Corsairs and mercenary companies have a long relationship of interdependence, with many mercenary

LETTER OF MARQUE...

Corsair captain Sadiq Almusawi is operating on the Human Edge with a forged Letter of Marque. While he is small-time enough not to bother with, a recent boarding action taken against a merchant ship with ties to the Funduq Sultanate demands a response. Find his ship and his crew and punish them. It should be brutal enough to send a clear message. If the use of subterfuge is not enough, a small corsair vessel can be appropriated to support.

NOMADS:

A LITTLE HELP...

Small Nomad Mining colony in Human Edge is threatened by a group of pirates who claim to have hacked the mining colony's data-sphere. If they don't hand over the mineral deposits they have mined, the pirates will open all airlocks. Defending the colony will involve hacking and fighting, and if the pirates' base of operations can be found, eliminating them will stop the colony worrying about future attacks.





THE DOORS TO PERCEPTION...

Some clever soul in the Black Labs has developed a quantronic worm that should allow a hacker unprecedented access to the 'mind' of an ALEPH Aspect or Functionary, not that the mercenary crew will know this to begin with. All they know is that they must capture an Aspect of Functionary alive and make the drop in a specific location.

EQUINOX CELL...

An Equinox cell is manipulating the data-sphere of one of the communes on Bakunin with some dire effects. While many of the cell were captured and killed, the leader, Danny Lines, managed to get away in a light freighter headed for Svarlarheima. It is thought he will try and sell his mind-hacking program to a Yu Jingese company operating from the planet's surface. Find him in the ice and snow and bring him back, dead or alive, either is fine.

PANOCEANIA:

THE FINAL FRONTIER...

A system consisting of a T-type brown dwarf and a number of gas-giants was discovered by the Space Exploration Division some years ago. The system is rich in metals, and a number of teams have been working on prefabricated mining stations to be sent there, due to launch next month. The small orbital left to claim the system on behalf of PanOceania has recently recorded numerous pirate vessels in the system. Your job is to ensure the orbital remains intact, if it goes, so too does PanOceania's legal claim. Others may be waiting in the wings for just that opportunity.

TEST OF FIRE...

A facility on the Mithran River, in Septentria on Paradiso, is a secret corporate research facility with high-level quantronic security systems and a full-time security team. A map of the facility is provided with the contract, and files kept on one of the underground servers are worth a lot of money. Get them. By whatever means necessary. On the ground the mercs may notice that the security team appears very well trained. It is actually a Hexahedron facility, and the mercs have been hired by the Hexahedron to test their own defences. A debrief will occur after the mission, presuming there are survivors.

companies eschewing the headache and costs of running their own starship to a reliance on their relationship with the corsairs.

Each corsair is different, and as such relationships between mercenary units or companies and corsair captains is often highly individual. More often than not, mercenary units exchange their berth aboard the corsair vessel for service to the captain when it comes to any boarding actions the corsairs may undertake. This quid-pro-quo relationship will also usually mean that the mercenaries aboard a corsair vessel are regarded as crew for the purposes of dividing any loot gained through boarding actions. More than one mercenary unit has made a career standing side-by-side with a friendly corsair captain.

NOMADS

Nomads love freedom and enterprise and have no compunction about using mercenaries, which they view as a completely legitimate form of business. A majority of the contracts taken by Nomad companies, groups, or bureaucracies, are taken through the Lists, rather than through the War Market. ALEPH's role in running the War Market, as purely functional as it may be, combined with the fact that it is closely tied to Maya on almost every level, means that while some contracts issued by the Nomad nations will appear in the War Market, these are usually few and far between. More than one mercenary company keeps their finger on the pulse of the Lists, not because of the chance to take seedy operations, but for the chance to ensure they don't miss any registered by the Nomads. While the forces of the Nomad nations are more than capable of looking after themselves, they still make extensive use of mercenary companies when looking to execute operations around the Human Sphere. For all the talk of acceptance O-12 likes to express, the Nomad nations are still viewed as vagabonds and feckless wanderers by many of the powers in the Human Sphere.

Using mercenaries in place of their own units when executing a mission can avoid the red tape and headaches of needing to justify and explain themselves every step of the way. Using mercenary companies also provides a level of plausible deniability, especially for missions taken through the Lists. Because the Lists are difficult to track, there is an inbuilt level of uncertainty over who contracted the mercenaries, over what their objectives in executing a specific mission are, and over who paid the bill.

With Nomad motherships and stations home to many of those who fall through the cracks in societies all through the Human Sphere, there is a sizeable Submondo presence always keen

to employ capable fighters to extend their turf, make their deliveries, or send a message to their opponents.

A majority of contracts from the Nomad nations are paid in Nomads Skänder, although Concilium Sol is increasingly used alternative. Quite often the payment terms are quite negotiable, and a variety of goods may be used in place of actual currency. These terms are usually negotiated directly with the handler taking out the contract.

Handlers are often independent businesspeople not tied to specific groups or motherships. They are hired by a client to register an operation through the Lists and will never willingly reveal who those clients are to the mercenaries taking an operation. A mercenary company will know that they have been contracted and paid by a specific handler, but they will not normally know who commissioned the handler to register the operation. Some mercenary companies refuse to take operations registered by handlers, or on the Lists for this reason.

PANOCEANIA

The largest, wealthiest, and arguably most powerful nation in the Human Sphere, PanOceania sits resplendent as a model for success they believe all others would do well to emulate. Holding the most territory requires an enormous standing army to secure from both from domestic instability and from the depredations of rival nations. Projecting power out into the Human Sphere, to protect shipping lanes, defend orbitals, acquire new territory, and hold the line against their enemies and the Combined Army requires that army to be constantly on the move and spread across vast distances. Given the size and depth of the military it is capable of drawing on, the PanOceanian Military Complex doesn't often call on mercenary forces to fill out their ranks. Despite this, mercenary companies are widely utilised throughout PanOceania by the Hexahedron, although this is usually unknown to the mercenaries, and by corporations, outposts, orbitals, merchant vessels and sometimes by the Space Exploration Division.

PanOceania is home to some of the wealthiest hypercorps in the Human Sphere, and a majority of these have sizeable security forces. Largely in the name of protecting their own property (both physical and intellectual) from damage, theft and espionage, the size and armaments of these security forces has been steadily escalating over the last few decades. It has sharp parallels to the military situation of the Human Sphere, a privately-owned arms race in a geopolitical climate in which the political and military clashes of nation states have spilled into the corporate arena.

With the capital, influence, and capacity to operate across the murky legal waters of multiple international boundaries, the hypercorps of PanOceania represent the biggest employers of mercenary companies in the Human Sphere. While many of these fulfil security roles, the use of mercenaries to aggressively push a corporation's interests is widespread. Seizing ground, performing espionage operations, testing security, and bullying the competition are all common uses for mercenary forces. Mercenaries operating for the Hexahedron are most commonly employed on Black Sanction operations, where the ultimate connection to the intelligence service is unknown. Contracts may be issued by shell companies, private individuals, or through an agent. While most of the time the operation will be initiated, executed and paid out with no connection being made to the true employer, it is not unknown, especially for intelligence operations, for a mercenary unit to be debriefed by a government agent afterwards. Missions initiated by the Space Exploration Division may involve defending new ground or resource rich locations, or even clearing away whatever rag-tag settlers or pirates have attempted to lay claim to the Divisions' discoveries. Contracts issued by the hypercorps or government institutions of PanOceania are almost always paid out on time and usually in Oceanas. However, it is usually worth having a lawyer read through contracts issued by the hypercorps.

YU JING

Second only to PanOceania, the StateEmpire has long made extensive use of mercenaries, and a majority of the contracts listed in the War Market from Yu Jingese sources come from corporations. The line between corporate interests and national interests has been blurred with the release of Qingdao Report. This explosive report indicates that a significant number of economic ties between Yu Jingese, PanOceanian and O-12 corporations were politically motivated, allowing an easy route for government agents to move about the Human Sphere and infiltrate the social, economic and governmental structures of their adversaries. The implications of this report were mostly felt in the geopolitical arena, but shockwaves rocked the War Market too. There is rising concern among some of the larger mercenary companies that operations contracted from Yu Jingese private entities are the subversive use of company soldiers to further the political aims of the StateEmpire.

For many companies such concerns mean little. If the employer pays then it matters not exactly who they were or what they were aiming for. But there are enough larger mercenary companies who work hard to ensure that the contracts they take can be

viewed in their totality as demonstrating no bias or collusion, that have given pause to consider what contracts they take from Yu Jingese sources, whether national or corporate. This has freed up many contracts for medium and small mercenary companies eager to fill the void.

With the forces of the StateEmpire currently fighting their own internecine war against the Japanese Sectorial Armies (JSA), there has been a distinct rise in the use of mercenary companies by the Party and against Yu Jingese (JSA) targets. Yuling, despite official hand wringing and disapprovals from across the Human Sphere, has executed its response to the Japanese Uprising with decisive action and extreme force. At the same time, contracts issued by the newly recognised Japanese nation have flooded the War Market in a desperate search for soldiers they can use to supplement their own stretched forces in the fight against their former oppressors. The last year has seen an explosion in both the number of contracts available from Yuling and Japanese sources, as well as an increase in the number of smaller mercenary companies given the opportunity to take contracts they could have only dreamed of in years past.

It used to be that the Yu Jingese StateEmpire and most Yuling corporations liked to work with companies they knew already, or that had ties in some way to the StateEmpire (whether personnel, familial, or economic). This trend has dropped sharply in the last year, and many more companies are finding doors open that were closed to them not too long ago. Of course, Yuling imposes a serious vetting process on all mercenary companies it employs, large or small. As masters of strategically infiltrating the other powers in the Human Sphere, they are careful the same does not happen to them. A vast majority of mercenary contracts taken out by Yuling sources are paid in Yuan, while the contracts issued by the Japanese tend to be paid in Sol. Although Yen is often offered, it is rarely accepted.

ALEPH

It is assumed by a majority of the citizens in the Human Sphere that ALEPH is just a part of the backdrop to life in the Human Sphere. ALEPH is full of helpful advice and support, and helps humanity fight the Combined Army on Paradiso, but is not actively involved in military style operations elsewhere in the Human Sphere. The Utgard Accords forbid ALEPH from deploying the Special Situations Section for missions that do not directly relate to their primary function of enforcing the Non-Proliferation of Artificial Intelligence and Singular AI Laws. While the definitions of these conditions can be stretched and bent, it is often

GETTING AHEAD...

Infamous Pirate Ahad Abdullahai has a penchant for collecting the heads of those he kills in boarding actions. His recent plunder, the Alvora, was carrying the lead scientist Richmond Xu, a software developer for Moto.tronica. He may be dead, but his cube is still inside his head somewhere in Ahad's despicable collection. Bring Richmond home.

YU JING:

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE...

An underground media company in the freezing city of Bei Men, on Yutang, is spreading seditious content in support of the Japanese cause. An espionage mission is required to find out where they are getting their footage and information. Once this information has been gathered, the company can be shut down, violently and permanently.

SUPERNOVA...

Zhi Ruao is the daughter of a prominent Party member. She has it in her head that she is destined to be some sort of Maya Star, and while she has achieved a certain level of popularity, her eventual and inevitable failure will bring shame to the family. She's currently filming some sensaseries in Yinquan, on Paradiso. Bring her home. Yes, she won't want to come, but it's for the best.

THE SNOW TRAIN...

The Yukiressha, or Snow Train, smuggles Japanese citizens and dissidents from Chunqiu on Svarlarheima to the safe haven Kōritawā. Style yourselves as dissidents standing up for the Japanese cause by attacking Yu Jingese soldiers in Chunqiu and ingratiate yourselves with the Japanese enough to be smuggled along one of the Yukiressha routes. At some point on the journey, set off the alert beacon, allowing our Yu Jingese soldiers to descend. This mission could equally be played by reversing the roles, and having the PCs operate for the JSA.

ALEPH:

HACKING CUBED...

A small hacktivist group operating from an orbital on the Human Edge recently made some worrying posts on Arachne that they had managed to hack into the Cube 2.0 and disengage the capacity of a Lhost to initiate Directive 7. While highly unlikely, the implications for the Human Sphere are significant. These dissidents must be rounded up and their leaders brought to Paradiso. Any who are ancillary to purpose should be executed.

**DON'T SAY IT'S MINE...**

A small mining colony in the Dawn system has hit upon an asteroid with a Teseum core and have kept the discovery quiet. They have been using smugglers to shift the material out of the system and are looking for potential buyers. Worth millions, the possession of such a rich opportunity by a small group with ties to PanOceania threatens to destabilise the economic balance of the mining operations in the system and could precipitate an escalation in the Commercial Conflicts. Find out where they are shipping the material, then destroy the colony. The mineral will be returned to Ariadna, as per their sovereign right.

**ALEPH:
HORROR SHOW...**

Notable collector Peter Norris maintains a personal museum and library on a specially designed orbital, Libris. Rumour suggests he has just paid a large sum of money for piece of memorabilia taken from the battlefield on Paradiso, an EI Cube, possibly functioning. It must be obtained, and he must be eliminated. Peter's museum also contains many living specimens, and taking down the security to enter and retrieve the cube may well shut down any security holding the living displays in place as well...

**CORPORATIONS:
WHAT'S THE WORST
THAT COULD HAPPEN?...**

A corporate facility on Paradiso has been overrun by a unit of Morats. Clear them out. The Corporation provides the weapons to be used. Unfortunately, the whole operation is a field test for their weapons. They lured the Morats in. The GM may spend 2 Heat at any time to render the ammunition in any one weapon duds. This may be used multiple times.

BECAUSE YOU'RE WORTH IT...

Esta Parata killed herself, knowing that the contract she had only just signed with Quick Silver Co. would see her resurrected. She may be a brilliant software engineer, but she is lazy when it comes to reading contracts. If she had bothered, she would know her contract with us is not voided in the event of her death, and technically she is still our employee. She has work to finish, so please return her to her desk. No, I doubt our rival will be pleased...

far easier to employ mercenaries when the link between the mission parameters and the clauses of the Utgard Accords are tenuous or shaky. Every mercenary contract issued by ALEPH is untraceable back to ALEPH. While Bureau Toth, Noir, and other intelligence communities around the Human Sphere strongly suspect ALEPH of making use of mercenary forces on a range of missions, the only evidence available is circumstantial or coincidental at best. Dossiers maintained by Bureau Noir, the Hexahedron, and other such agencies are full of operations executed by mercenaries where the mission outcomes seem in some way to coincide with the goals of ALEPH. A great number of these only track back to shell-companies, or mercenary agents rather than the original source.

Such missions generally involve some level of espionage against corporate targets suspected of breaking the Sole AI bills, against targets assumed to be planting Arachne nodes, or against targets suspected of circulating seditious material. A reasonable number of the missions on file are categorised as 'random', because the mission goals cannot be discerned. Supporters of ALEPH within the intelligence community see the random missions as a clear sign that the AI is doing what it needs to do to protect and stabilise the Human Sphere, making the assumption that there must be some reason behind them, even if it is not clear from the outside what that is. For others less willing to allow an AI, even ALEPH, to execute a hidden agenda with paid up soldiers, any mission, from those that appear legitimate to the 'randoms', are viewed in an uncomfortable light.

Missions suspected of being initiated by ALEPH are usually paid in Sol. Tracing the money back tends to lead directly, or through a chain of transfers, to unnamed accounts across a number of private and national banks.

CORPORATIONS

Many of the hypercorps own and operate their own private security forces, and some of these are large enough to be regarded as privately-run armies. In truth however, the forces employed by hypercorps are spread out across the holdings of the company, which may be many hundreds of individual locations across the Human Sphere. Just because a company has a large security force on its payroll, however, does not mean it has no use for mercenaries, the truth is quite the opposite. The world in which the largest corporations in human history operate is a murky one. The use of mercenary forces, often hired by shell companies difficult to tie back to the real owners, are as often Black Sanction as they are legitimately War Market.

Those operations that appear on the War Market are typically related to security and training. Mercenary forces are hired to perform security, train the security forces of the corporation, or to faux-attack corporate facilities under controlled conditions (and usually with weapons that fire dummy rounds or rubber bullets) in order to test, trial and train their own security set-ups.

There are a number of successful mercenary companies that thrive in the industry of testing corporate security through actively engaging with them. This so-called white-hacking or white-attacking missions are penetration testing, designed to probe and find the weak points in the security services already employed by a corporation. Such penetration testing may revolve around infowar or warfare, but most often combine the two.

Black Sanction missions are regularly taken out for the same reason they are executed by governmental agencies, and that, fundamentally, is plausible deniability. Operations undertaken for corporate paymasters may involve shake-downs or the physical destruction of a rival company's facilities, through to industrial espionage and data-theft. Another popular use of mercenary forces, specifically taken by weapons manufacturers, is in active combat roles in warzones around the Human Sphere, field testing newly developed technology, equipment and weaponry. Such contracts will typically stipulate the use of specifically provided weapons for the length (or portion thereof) of the mission, and a thorough debriefing is usually held afterwards with the engineers and product development teams who will make any adjustments required as the product moves forward in its development cycle. This real-world testing of weaponry and equipment destined for the front-line has proven to be well worth the cost. The old saying that 'no plan survives contact with the enemy' is just as true of new technology. While laboratory testing and simulations are useful, they just do not provide the same rigorous testing ground as an actual conflict.

Corporations are a wide banner beneath which many varied entities are bundled together. Hypercorps dealing in currency exchanges or software development through to arms dealers, weapons manufacturers and Silk Lords; all fall beneath this nebulous heading. For the most part corporations are usually fairly reliable when it comes to payment, and more often than not are accommodating in paying the mercenary company in whatever currency the company requires. It is well known, however, that mercenary companies taking on corporate jobs need to ensure they do their due diligence and have a lawyer check over the contract.

O-12

With a host of bureaus to call upon, and the remit to act in support of international laws anywhere in the Human Sphere, it is often surprising for people to learn how regularly O-12 makes use of mercenary companies. In part, it is because O-12 is relatively small given the sheer volume of space it is required to have some sort of presence across, but it is also the result of habit. That habit grew from the creation of the War Market itself. With a new regulatory body and structure created to legitimise and control the employment and operation of mercenary groups across the Human Sphere, O-12 needed to demonstrate that it was viable. It did so not solely through employing a range of carrots and sticks designed to encourage nation states, corporations, and individuals to use the War Market, but also by making extensive use of it themselves. A significant number of operations that would usually fall under the remit of Bureau Aegis were instead turned over to the mercenary companies of the War Market. This allowed O-12 to refocus the activities and personnel of Bureau Aegis to revolve more around security, peacekeeping, and the war on Paradiso. Some commentary from libertarian and politically-motivated pundits has gone so far as to suggest that Bureau Aegis should be downsized or disbanded altogether in favour of the War Market, but such cries have been largely ignored.

Operations commissioned by O-12 tend to be issued by Bureau Aegis as open War Market contracts. These may include security operations for small mining outposts or settlements, pirate hunting, breaking up criminal operations, and supporting O-12 sanctioned military actions (usually on Paradiso). The esteemed mercenary company known as StarCo has shown a particular strength that ensures they are regularly on Aegis's books. Other Bureaus regularly hire mercenaries through the War Market too; Bureau Ganesha often utilises mercenary units to hunt down or stop smuggling operations or pirate groups, Bureau Athena has hired companies for peace-keeping missions, and so on. Bureau Noir also occasionally makes use of mercenary companies, but these are often for Black Sanction or clandestine missions, where the involvement of O-12 is unlikely to be known.

O-12 is a reliable pay-master, utilising the War Market not simply because it is useful to do so, but also to demonstrate that it is useful to do so. Payments and contracts are always upheld, and breach of contracts investigated thoroughly. Payment is usually made in Sol, though they will occasionally authorise payment in other currencies.

For O-12 the utilisation of mercenary companies depends strictly on the ranking of the company in question. Only companies with high ratings will be awarded contracts, and companies found to be in breach of O-12 laws and regulations, like the Concilium Convention, will never be hired unless under extreme circumstances.

SUBMONDO

A great number of mercenary companies make a very tidy income never touching a mission from the War Market. The Lists provide for all the opportunities they could ever hope for, and a large number of mercenaries hired through the Lists find themselves in the employ of Submondo groups. Contracts may be every bit as detailed as those traditionally used in the War Market, or they may be verbal agreements. There is no gold standard that everyone adheres to.

This variance in contracts is often touted, by O-12 and 'legitimate' mercenary companies, as one of the dangers of the Lists, but for those who make their living through them, it is one of the advantages. The lack of bureaucratic oversight and pointless red-tape allows mercenary companies working through the Lists to get on with the business of engaging in operations. That the Lists are home to disreputable and less professional and able mercenary companies is an often quoted opinion disguised as a fact. The truth is that while many of the companies that operate through the Lists may be leaning toward the disreputable, they are no less capable or able than those who operate through the War Market, and there are many companies that use both.

To provide some level of anonymity and protection, both for the client and the mercenaries, a person known as a broker, agent, or fence is often used as the go-between for the two groups; the client (often a Submondo group), and the mercenaries. This layer of protection allows for a level of plausible deniability for the mercenary companies, and a level of identity protection for the clients. Given the types of missions often contracted through brokers, both are very useful features of the service. Any go-between operating in this role will often take a small percentage of the missions they arrange.

While the Lists provide a one-stop shop for the contact information and endorsements of mercenary companies, those that complete one job successfully will often find themselves dealing more directly with the clients who hire them. Successfully completing one mission for a Submondo group can often lead to more work from

IT KEEPS GOING, AND GOING, AND GOING...

A rival arms manufacturer has managed to restructure the bank of cells and cooling ducts systems of the NJR-32 Power System, used commonly on mid-sized Remote Presence Drones manufactured across the Human Sphere. The new design miniaturizes the system, reducing its size and weight without compromising functionality. One operation is to secure a sample of this new technology (or at least the technical files). After testing to ensure our reverse engineered version is functional, a second mission will be contracted to destroy the manufacturing facility. This should buy us time to ensure our version hits the market earlier or around the same time.

O-12:

BUREAU AEGIS...

Soldiers are required to execute a retrieval operation on the surface of Paradiso. A Forward Observation Post on the Norstralian Front has been overrun by the Combined Army. Sneak in and wipe the computer systems before their hackers can crack the security, then demolish the outpost with the supplied D-Charges. Things will likely get hot from that point on, if they haven't already...

O-12:

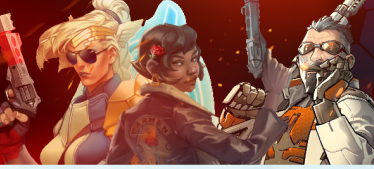
BUREAU TIANDI...

The O-12S Asbolas, an exploration vessel with a crew of 8, has gone missing at the attached co-ordinates. It was surveying the moons of a gas giant on the Human Edge when it stopped sending back updates. Find them, or what happened to them. It may be a simple malfunction or accident, but it could equally be something more dangerous...

SUBMONDO:

WILD THINGS...

The Rosa is a pirate ship we contract from time to time when we know of a ship carrying something we need. After successfully completing their mission, the pirates on-board the Rosa just had to take a peek in one of the crates. Now the ship floats derelict, with a number of Shrike Tardigrades, intended for fighting pits, loose on board. Capturing the beasts alive would be ideal, oh, and some of the crew might have survived. These do not need to be captured alive, or even left alive for that matter...

**SUBMONDO:****FIRE IN THE HOLE...**

A number of mining settlements in an asteroid field have decided to renege on their payments. It would be good to remind them why keeping on paying their bills is worthwhile. The 'Stranger' is one of the small mining operations in the cluster, and these things can be very unstable. A small amount hydrogen released into the oxygen-rich settlement dome and a spark could all be achieved with a just a little force and a little hacking. Hell, the other colonies might just even think it was an accident. But we'll remind them that in order to avoid any more accidents, they had better keep paying their bills...

that group, and over time a sense of connectivity can build between the mercenary and the client to the point where missions are offered directly from people high within the Submondo group.

Submondo groups make significant use of mercenary forces as a way to flex their muscles or achieve specific objectives without directly implicating themselves in the process. This often means that missions are highly illegal and/or political in nature, and may involve executing beat-downs on rival groups, assistance in turf-wars, the running or smuggling of illicit or dangerous goods, snatch-and-grab operations, kidnappings, intelligence operations, assassinations, people trafficking, and a range of other crimes.

A mercenary company operating in these dangerous waters needs to understand the fundamental dangers implicit to taking work in this arena. One of those dangers that can be most significant is the fact that operating for one Submondo group often means acting against another. Making enemies is just one of the risks inherent to the job.

PRIVATE CONTRACTS

While a great many of the mercenary contracts filled through the War Market or the Lists come from governments, corporations, or Submondo groups, a significant portion are registered by other groups or sources. Such people looking to have a contract filled might represent an independent orbital on the Human Edge, a space station unaffiliated with a specific nation or corporation, research facilities that are privately funded, or that collect their funding from a number of governmental or corporate sources, or just private citizens with disposable income and an agenda to fulfil.

Contracts from these sources may be paid from a number of government or corporate sponsorships, as a part of a grant application, privately, or even through crowd funding. In almost every case, contracts derived from these sources reflects the immediate needs of the client, whether it be protection, the procurement of resources, revenge on some other party for that party's previous actions, or something else entirely.

Clients looking for mercenaries or bounty hunters from this variety of sources are filed as 'private', even if they represent a large number of individuals (such as an independent orbital). The types of operations required of these sources is as mixed as the people who register them, and may

involve criminal acts of petty revenge, through to the noble defence of a citizen body unable to defend themselves from an aggressor. Small-time merchants looking for bodyguards, mining outposts threatened by a rampant Submondo group, or a private research facility searching for the fountain of youth that require some resources not able to be acquired through any common marketplace.

Operations may be legal or illegal, in support of a people desperate for their independence and safety, or some bunkum research station manufacturing snake oil. They may be a wealthy private citizen tired of being bullied by corporate thugs or Submondo gangsters, they may be a family looking for revenge against the cult that took their son, or they may be an affluent collector in search of some prized piece for their collection.

Missions undertaken from private sources run the gamut from the reasonable and legitimate, the petty and vengeful, to the strange and bizarre. The Odet family, who own a series of asteroid mines in the Concilium system, hired a mercenary unit to push back against the shipping firm who were bullying them with exorbitant fees and the threat of violence if those fees weren't accepted. Richard Anwar became a wanted criminal after hiring a mercenary unit to exact revenge on the board of directors who voted him out of the CEO's chair. Red Team managed to crowd fund the hiring of a mercenary unit to attack and seize the computer equipment of Green Team during the final of the third, wildly popular, season of 'Groundside', a competitive Maya-based game. While completely unconventional, it was not outside the rules of the game, and deemed technically legal (the mercenaries had strict instructions not to cause significant physical harm to any of the eight members of Green Team). The rules have since been changed to ban this sort of action.

Payment from such a wild variety of sources is always questionable, and while they usually involve money in whatever denomination the client finds easiest, may also include a range of other promises, goods, or services, depending on the client and what they are capable of supplying. It is not unknown for mercenary companies to make useful contacts in the world of shipping and transport, medicine, hacking, engineering, or politics through such contracts. Mercenary companies have found themselves unpaid, or only partially paid, after a mission is completed. Due diligence and a willingness to take a calculated gamble seem the order of the day when taking on private contracts.

CHAPTER 4

THE WAR MARKET

From a stern security officer to the construction of a full company of TAGs, the enterprise of war overshadows the entire Human Sphere. Mayacasts constantly advertise the achievements and services of Free Companies, Hypercorps invest heavily in warmongers capable of protecting their holdings and interests wherever they are, and Holodramas embellish the exploits of the quantronic condottieri. Lives and fortunes are made and lost as easily as the signing of a holo-contract.

Contacting, hiring, and terminating the services of a Private Military Company (PMC) is a process that requires knowledge, urgency, willingness to take very real risks, and resources. Making a mistake when working with a PMC can lead to scandal at best and far worse besides. An angry Mercenary is one thing, an angry armoured column quite another. Thus, in order to reduce situations that might

spill out and lead to armed confrontation, O-12 quite pragmatically created the War Market with the intent to centralise and regulate mercenary operations. A certain degree of civility and legality was imparted to PMC contracting with the creation of the War Market. Those warlords with ambition and common sense saw an opportunity to not only increase their wealth, but also translate those benefits into a very profitable and comfortable retirement that far outstrips the short-lived and scandalous exoduses of infamous pirates and corsairs.

Those who could see beyond the short-term upheaval provided support and validation to the War Market, guaranteeing that future brutality and violations would be kept to a minimum.





HARSH REALITY

Still, it had to be expected that the efforts of the War Market revolved, after all, around the brutality of war, and no matter how much O-12 tried to ensure the proper alignment with the Concilium Convention, terrible violations of human rights still occurred. Conflicts such as the Inner Sol Crisis and the Ariadnan Commercial Conflict saw companies like the Druze acquire infamous renown for their extreme violence during the “negotiation phase” of their contracts. With each conflict, though, the War Market grew in stability and validation. The fortunes of participating companies grew and their service catalogues expanded. Those that could not or were unwilling to adapt simply disappeared, either absorbed by other more powerful companies or obliterated in some dark theatre of action in a remote asteroid in the Human Sphere.

THE FIRST DAYS OF THE MARKET

The carefully observed and measured bazaar known as the War Market or The Exchange was carefully designed to allow participating members to keep tabs on various aspects of PMCs in a constantly growing arms industry that operates across everchanging theatres.

As new wormholes were discovered, stabilised, and explored, the rising demand for ever more versatile security arrangements during the Second Space Race meant that traditional security agencies and mercenary companies had to think bigger. In turn, this demanded capital, human resources, and strict organizational skills.

While some companies like StarCo undoubtedly had an initial advantage over the competition by dint of being able to launch straight into the market, this didn't prevent Free Companies from forming all across the Human Sphere. Some launched with clear business plan and honourable goals, while others – such as Druze Bayram Security, for instance – took to expanding their powerbase in other ways wherever possible. It was soon clear that mercenary endeavours could be highly profitable, but that leaving such a prosperous market unregulated would be a recipe for disaster. Urgent action was needed to avoid falling into an age of piracy in which a mid-sized spacecraft could readily be used to interfere with the development and colonization of a whole system, or small smuggling operations could easily bankrupt intra-system commercial endeavours. After careful discussions with all potential stakeholders, O-12 enacted legislation intended to create a stable jurisdictional system of military outsourcing which would be equitable and transparent whilst still remaining profitable. Enter the War Market.

INSTITUTION

By involving the whole of the Human Sphere and not leaving each power to regulate their own security services, O-12 negated the very real possibility of repeating humanitarian disasters like the Barabara Vita road wars – which were indirectly responsible for the formation of the Druze Shock teams and the Wildcats of Corregidor. The Central American Campaign, the Second Nanotech War, and the Lunar Colony Revolts each saw mercenaries set loose upon civilian populations without any real threat of recrimination from Concilium or the G5 Nations.

At the same time, both Free Companies and corporate contractors willing to become legal enterprises in the new system would make efforts to ensure the non-legal competition was controlled, absorbed, or even removed, allowing for increased profits and business opportunities. By avoiding a militia and corsair conflict where each Power in the Human Sphere would use these irregular fighting forces without any real responsibility, and with the removal of national filiations of these armies, O-12 forced all the involved actors to view the War Market as a business opportunity first and a political tool second (if even that).

The first years of the Market were crucial and it took the joint effort of several entrepreneurial interests and fledgling companies like StarCo, who had a real spacecraft infrastructure to present an inter-system catalogue of services required for the Market, to gain validation across all the potential customers in the Sphere. To this end, Bureau Ganesh worked closely with the G5 and the recently founded Bounty Hunter Syndicate, laying out the rules, taxes, and penalisations for the War Market. During these early days, the main companies signed up in the Market were Corporate contractors and a few Free Companies. As the Second Space Race gained momentum and with the discovery of Human Edge and the start of its Corporate Crises, new Companies surged and the viability of investing in Warmongers through joint efforts became a valid and fast way to profit for those risky enough to gamble in the War Market.

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

At the same time, the different powers of the Human Sphere began to appreciate the advantage of having Free Companies undertake controversial or politically compromising ventures under a legal umbrella. The Megacorps and Hypercorps began investing in security subsidiaries as a cheap and efficient means to both gain access to plausible industrial espionage and guarantee the security of their numerous assets.

The PanOceanian and Yu Jingese Hypercorps also spotted an opportunity to sell outmoded hardware, equipment, and munitions to the up and coming companies, guaranteeing a handsome profit. An army of specialists and auxiliary jobs and posts emerged around the War Market in order to make it more efficient and customer oriented. Recruiters in the form of company contractors and freelance agents, medical specialists, technicians and engineers, information managers and brokers, publicity agencies, financial aides (including

insurance and bond brokers), entertainment purveyors, caterers, Submondo parasites, and, of course, the Wardrivers became part of the ecosystem of the War Market.

By the end of the Ariadnan Commercial Conflicts, the War Market was a solid institution that included the Bounty Hunter Syndicate, dozens of Corporate Security Agencies, and thousands of mercenaries in either a freelance capacity or else on the payroll of one of the mercurial Free Companies of the Human Sphere. Even if O-12 did not fully achieve the creation of a legal and honourable mercenary culture (as contradictory as it sounds), it did establish a solid venue for the trade of stock, interests and resources revolving around the enterprise of War beyond the exclusively political lobbies of the G5 nations. After that, it was only a matter of time before Maya made sure the War Market and the Free Companies became a profitable and even “glamorous” part of everyday life to the citizens of the Human Sphere.

LEGISLATION

When an unregistered Free Company or security enterprise requests access to the War Market, it is subjected to rigorous evaluation by O-12's Bureau Ganesh. From their offices on Baronha, Concilium Prima, the bureau establishes the estimated value of the assets of the applicant company, then translates them to the market through the Initial Public Offering based on how many shares the company wishes to float on the Market. Depending on the type of company – an inter-system Company will have a higher number of shares and value than a small, planet-side security firm, for instance – the range of stock acquisition will vary.

To hire the services of any given company, the interested party can either contact the company's agent to schedule a meeting or speak directly with the company's agents at a WarCon (see below). Again, depending on the type of company and the services offered, this can be a simple request for security personnel or a series of meetings and interviews in order to reach the desired product and pricing. Some companies will have offices to attend customers in several planets (like CSU) while others only have one base of operations, with agents travelling all over the Human Sphere (like Ikari, for example). Once the potential customer has contacted their preferred company, it will be a matter of deciding which of the packages offered by the company's agent suits their needs. The basic unit handled by the War Market is the “Operative Unit” (OU), which refers to a ten- person unit that includes its ranking officer. Originally called a “Battle Group”, the War Market has since

taken to adopting corporate euphemisms in an attempt to disguise the unsavoury nature of the services on offer.

THE EXCHANGE

Beginning with an Operative Unit, customers can hire units ranging from company-sized down to single-figure operatives for specific tasks. Acquiring the services of a single bodyguard or a couple of OUs for security purposes can be simple enough. However, hiring the services of specialized operatives or a full OU company for aggressive actions or inter-system missions is more complicated than buying tickets for the Aristeia! finals. It requires contacts and knowledge of the War Market Stock Exchange, often known simply as “the Exchange”.

While the Exchange is readily accessible through the Stock Market in Maya, it's easy for first time buyers to misread the value of a particular asset and more than one armchair general has found themselves buying a squadron of TAGs instead of the less glamorous light infantry needed to get the job done. Also, acquiring stock in a particular Company does not mean that access is granted to all its services. On the contrary, depending on the percentage of stock, the only perk normally available is direct access to the company's upper echelon.

Of course, larger and more successful companies will have a whole staff for customer services, which includes the pampering of wealthy and important clientele, as the products offered in the War Market do not come cheap. In order to rank in the Exchange, a company has to complete several protocols, which include licensing, obtaining permits, and scoring positively in the War Market measurement system that regulates all movements and procedures among the Free Companies.

The measurement system that orders the War Market Stock Exchange is referred to as the Scales. Based on seven key statistics, these attributes are carefully tracked by complex algorithms which include:

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Closely related to Customer Satisfaction (see below), employment history is crucial in understanding the career and trajectory of the company under consideration. The customer can review past and current assignments, plus the overall performance evaluation of the mercenary company. Updated monthly, it is adjusted according to the current success evaluations of previous contracts. Some Megacorps or nations will simply

THE SCALES

Once it was clear the experiment was sustainable beyond the computer models and single planetary systems, the War Market acquired autonomy and steadily grew into a solid economic structure capable of generating profits and sustaining jobs. Surprisingly, it also led to reforms in the politics of the Human Sphere, as virtually any minor nation could now enforce their own laws and guarantee their security through the Free Companies. The War Market operates in a similar manner to a regular stock market, though many also compare it to sports gambling as the particular outcomes of specific theatres or actions can spell a rise or a decline in stock value. The added presence of live Maya streams adds to the War Market's entertainment value, which is particularly useful for security companies and recruiting agents. Services are offered each participant company with a stock value, with their fees fluctuating according to their client's proposal and oppositional performance reviews, along with restrictions, maintenance costs, and any red flags the company.



not want to be involved with mercenary units that have poor media representation in the client's home system(s). For example, Ariadnan clients would definitely avoid hiring the Druze Society. Red flags are marked under this heading, along with the reasons for the negative evaluation.

COMBAT VICTORY RECORD

An apparently subjective evaluation value, it actually works on an elegant, objective-based algorithm. Ranked from 0 to 100, it measures the average performance of previous combat scenarios based on tactical reviews, live reports, and visual evidence. A perfect score implies decisive victories in all engagements with minimum loss of personnel and materiel, plus the completion of all objectives. Careful analysis of the type of engagement is required in order to avoid being misled on the company's performance. For example, a "pacifying" action against impoverished miners in Human Edge is quite different to a Cube retrieval near the NiemandsZone.

COST EFFICIENCY AND COLLATERAL DAMAGE (CECD) ESTIMATE

In the Human Sphere, all actions have consequences that are more often than not economical. Brutal and careless units like Yuan Yuan pirates simply tend to destroy everything they cannot carry, while other companies tend to "lose" material and equipment in the aftermath of their engagements. Collateral damage estimate is usually a negative value that translates directly to execution costs, bonds, and similar overhead and maintenance factors. Hiring mercenaries known for careless use of munitions will increase your insurance costs, as is the case with one of the current highest CECD companies: the Anaconda Squadron.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND SERVICE EXTENSIONS (CSSE)

A happy customer is a loyal and paying customer. No matter how effective their services, mercenary companies deal with the promise of death and violence, so it's important to keep clients happy. PR for mercenary companies in the Exchange is a lucrative business, as there is always seems to be some reason to complain about a company's work. Keeping the customers content involves not only precise execution of the troops but also bribing and wooing the customer with luxurious entertainments. Thanks in part to their PR programs, big companies like the Foreign Company and SecLock Contingencies have the highest ratings on customer happiness.

PRESENT LEGAL RISK

When your business revolves around destruction,

theft, and sabotage, the Human Sphere's legal systems become a common factor. This heading describes the legal health of the company, along with its capital and legal assets. Almost all companies have one or more lawsuits against them at any given moment. Potential clients can assess a mercenary company's legal liability to ensure they are able to complete the contract they are being considered for. Law firms can attain Megacorp levels of wealth by taking on certain cases, with Tunguska-based lawyers considered the most prestigious and therefore most expensive of them. Free Companies dream of having at least one of these black-clad legal sharks on their payroll. SecLock and StarCo have some of the most solid and experienced law departments in the War Market.

ESTIMATED COMBAT POTENTIAL

Customers expect combat readiness and the ability to complete contracts with the least problems and delays. This factor measures a number of factors including the logistical flexibility of the company (both planetside and intra-system) and their equipment, and then compares against a standard PanOceanian regiment (infantry or armoured, depending). This heading requires deeper analysis by the potential customer, as Combat Potential is not measured against specific services. For example, the celebrated combat readiness of Ikari, Druze, and Dahsat does not imply they are particularly good at hostage situations and humanitarian services.

MEDIA COVERAGE

In the media-driven Human Sphere, all potentially lucrative endeavours will be recorded and streamed to the data sphere. With the rise of Maya channels like Sabot! there is a huge demand for real-life documentaries and newscasts revolving around mercenary life. Warcor and Public Relations managers manoeuvre to ensure they get the best footage to an avid public. A successful mercenary is expected to provide an entertaining spectacle for the subscribers both on and off the field. This aspect is very important to overall profitability, and while it only relates to approximately 10% of the company's overall evaluation, a high Media Coverage rating is crucial for attracting significant investors, clients, and new recruits. Currently, only the Foreign Company of Van Orton has a perfect rating here, as their aggressive campaign both in the media and Aristeia! championship makes it the most popular Free Company throughout the Human Sphere.

The Exchange is a stable stock market option, and it updates daily with monthly reports to all investors. The more successful and satisfied the customers, the higher the stocks of a company and the better pay everyone involved receives.

FLUCTUATING MARKETS

After the recent Japanese Uprising and the resultant Kurage Crisis on Dawn, huge fortunes have been invested and lost in the Exchange, which is experiencing one of the most turbulent periods in its history. Alongside the attrition war of the Paradiso front, this means that many Free Companies are beginning to strain their resources, making it an ideal moment for up and coming Warmongers and ambitious soldiers of fortune. This is particularly true on Dawn, where the profile of the hired gun works perfectly with outsiders and frontier people. So far, the reticent politics adopted by Yuling and PanOceania during the Phantom Conflict have meant that a number of scandalous operations have not adversely affected the entire Exchange directly. The vastness of the Human Sphere has also allowed any calamities to mostly be contained within a system. So long as any company involved does not draw any additional attention, relying on this tactic benefits both the stability of the Exchange and a company's employer, who will certainly also suffer the mitigated consequences of such scandals if anyone else becomes involved to clean up the mess.

Even if these rather hypocritical tactics have prevented a collapse, the Exchange still experiences the ebbs and flows familiar to any healthy stock market. Some Haqqislamite analysts, however, insist that the constant growth of the War Market is more symptomatic of an impending crash that will result in the bankruptcy of the majority of the enterprises listed. What repercussions this would have among a population of soldiers armed to the teeth in critical theatres across the Human Sphere is not hard to predict. As one would expect, being listed in the Exchange has its own risks for the unexperienced Warmonger. Selling stocks of your company in an open market invites the fact that third parties can and will influence the development and decision-making processes of said company. In relatable terms, a military unit ruled with an iron fist by the strongest, most cunning warrior suddenly finds their decisions hampered by a Board of Directors as they no longer have the voting majority required to enact their will. Selling stocks is an efficient way to quickly gather resources through an established legal process. Careful administration still needs to be exercised here, however, as these resources are expected to be used to improve performance and further increase profit, such as the recruitment of experienced troops, the purchasing of better equipment, or the undertaking of specialized services, for example. Unfortunately, it is all too common for inexperienced Warmongers to waste their investments on entertainment and hosting. Which is one of the reasons wealthy and successful

Warmongers usually employ a right-hand with an expertise in finances. Such employees are jealously guarded at all times, not least because they hold all of a company's secrets. Buying and selling stock on the War Market can be a double-edged blade, as the all-too real possibility of selling a majority of stock can result in a feral Warmonger being demoted to a captain or worse. Carefully timed sales have left confident buyers in charge of depleted companies, while the former colonel who once led the outfit has fled to the Human Edge with only a few credits to show due to the rigged sale.

HIRINGS AND DISMISSALS

Once a customer has chosen a company, the company's agents are contacted via the Exchange and a standard, regulated contract negotiation begins. No matter the variable factors, the specifics of the contract will always follow the provisions of O-12's Mercenary Hiring Treaty defining the expected behaviour, rights, and obligations for both the mercenary and the hiring party. This treaty, signed by all G5 nations, backs the Concilium Convention, Human Rights Charters, and even Commerce and Salvage Regulations. Alongside several other regulations, mercenary contracts expressly forbid weapons banned by the Concilium Convention, require all civilians to be respected in their basic human rights, state that no engagement actively targets an objective indiscriminately (i.e. identification and background checks should be established), and that all materiel, salvaged vehicles, and cargo are carefully declared as soon as a safe port is reached.

As a minimum, a mercenary contract requires the following items:

SCOPE AND FEES

Each company has different ways of approaching the handling and conditions for specific tasks. StarCo, for example, is renowned for strictly monitoring adherence to the Concilium Convention and Human Rights Charters in its operations. On the other hand, Ikari and Druze are known leave these compliance responsibilities with either the client or a third-party watchdog of questionable capability, capacity, and thoroughness.

CONTACT DURATION AND EXTENSION TERMS

This is extremely important and will be very carefully worded by the company's agents, as an unplanned extension of the contract can generate losses and logistical problems. Usually, contract duration will be expressed as a specific action, such as "escort the Freighter Aquilonia from Venus to the Neon Lotus orbital in Mars", or else clearly



defined by dates, like “the Free Company will carry out operations from August 1st to December 31st NC”. Time extension clauses are usually detailed, and while few mercenaries will offer open-ended contracts, it’s not uncommon for very wealthy customers to provide quarterly retainers to a mercenary company.

PAYMENT TIME AND METHOD

Mercenaries with an agreed contract are subject to contractual arbitration. To streamline this, each company must log a contract’s total value with O-12, and the resultant funds must be deposited with a licenced third-party. The signoff requirements for these third parties can vary, but most work under a timed-release payment clause designed to allow for client appeal and refund procedures.

CONDITIONS FOR CANCELLATION, DISMISSAL AND VOIDANCE

With the increasing presence of the Combined Army in Paradiso, Free Companies are aware now more than ever that conditions sometimes make

it difficult, if not suicidal, to undertake certain contracts. At the same time, this clause protects the customer in case the mercenary simply takes off without warning, allowing for the Red Flagging of both the company and the individuals involved. A dismissal is a contract terminated by the client, and this has direct repercussions in the Exchange on the company’s credit line. In cases of contested claims between a customer and company, the client is advised to ensure his lawyers and backup security are competent, as there are few things worse than incurring the wrath of a mercenary company!

In some cases, it is in the interest of the client to offer the contract publicly rather than privately scour the War Market. This is a very common alternative used by smaller corporations or individuals with tight budgets. Bureau Aegis and many non-profits such as Freedom International, Children Protection, and Volunteers Without Borders will defer to this process if additional security and/or peacekeeping forces are required.



The customer can ask for an audit at any time, whether related to staff, equipment, or even general financial health of the company. Although not very common, NGOs and Bureau Aegis have been known to request strict evaluations of prospective companies before assigning any kind of contract, no matter each company's size. A company can refuse an audit, but those who jump through the hoops usually gain recurring contracts. StarCo's healthy relationship with Bureau Aegis is just one example of the benefits of complying with an audit request.

Public contracts mean that any Free Company is allowed to offer its services for the specifics required by the would-be client. This usually transpires through a Maya publication stating the nature of the mission, its duration, budget, and any other specific requirements. Interested Free Companies then seek to offer that service whilst also appearing attractive to the client through lower prices or additional services. Another type of public contract revolves around the customer providing a general list of services required instead of detailed requirements, which often includes the total budget for the contract. Free Companies then engage in bidding wars, offering services, personnel and reduced prices in order to win the contract. This type of auction usually caters to long-term security contracts that are not anticipating any field action. Choosing the winner in these bidding wars is also a delicate matter. The buyer's agents have to balance pros and cons of acquiring the services of a little known but extra cheap mercenary unit against an experienced unit of veterans freshly out of Paradiso. Greed, resources available, bribes received, and a willingness to push your luck will be some of the factors intervening in the final selection of a Free Company.

While pampering an interested would-be customer in a home or office during an interview is one thing, agents and freelancers can go to extremes to obtain public contracts, including bribery, price dumping, sabotaging the competition, and even blackmail. No matter how clean-shaven, polite and cultured the client, they will sometimes be looking for something "extra" to be carried out beyond the public scope of services rendered by the company. After all, this is the War Market. These additional services require a degree of anonymity, and brokers and agents work to ensure the client's privacy. Any illicit contracts are carried out away from the Exchange and are never registered in the company's sheet of services. Not all companies will work "Off the Exchange", while those who do might not necessarily provide the service that the client is seeking. Strange though it might

seem, not every mercenary will "do anything for a buck". Some mercenaries maintain strict rules of personal conduct and are likely to react badly when propositioned as assassins.

Even if a mercenary willing to perform a nefarious deed can be found, there is still the question of ensuring payment to them. It's not uncommon for a customer engaging a mercenary away from the Exchange to pay them through it regardless. "30 Days Securing Varuna", made legendary by the Maya Series *Death in the Shade*, is a common euphemism for such a contract. In such contracts, the mercenary is employed and paid for a standard security contract regardless as to whether there is an actual job in the location. The mercenary then undertakes whatever private task they have been assigned secure in the notion that they have a legitimate contract for payment of legitimate services. Remember, souvenirs cost extra!

WEAPONS OF WAR

It's a sad reality that human ingeniousness thrives during and wherever there is war. There is also always someone willing to turn a profit from it, and while there will always be men and women willing to shed blood for others, they still need one thing: the tools for that shedding. In a self-replicating loop, mercenaries, Hypercorps, corrupt politicians, ambitious military, intelligence agencies, pirates, and unethical merchants will find ways to stoke the fires of war through the sale of weapons to all sides involved in a conflict, whether old rifles to top of the line TAGs, fresh out of the factory or air-dropped into the middle of a muddy jungle.

Known as War Dogs, these traders in misery focus on logistics, including the transportation of Free Companies to and from their assigned theatres. Securing a route, either through legal or illegal means, is vital, as it allows the gunrunner to have open lines of communication. Having the resources and cargo vessels required to fulfil this endeavour is vital, and War Dogs will stop at nothing to ensure they have the means to carry out their business. Some War Dogs enjoy the clandestine support of their government through intelligence agencies like the Hexahedron, while others are financed by Hypercorps interested in expanding their area of influence. Others endeavour to outsource their transport lines, with some going as far as recruiting pirates and other unsavoury characters. Those working for Submondo are likely not only fencing weapons and logistics, but probably running the full gamut of unsavoury smuggling services, including slavery, drugs, and other highly illegal trades.



THE CONGA CLUB

One of Vaudeville's most famous and exclusive venues, it is also the epitome of every neutral bar and joint. The Human Sphere's Casablanca. In an ironic twist for a bar that enjoys intense media coverage, it is also one of the best places to go unnoticed, as the frenetic nightlife of the club is sure to distract everyone's attention from a discreet meeting in one of the luxurious private rooms or booths. Also, the absence of ALEPH's presence in the mothership makes it particularly attractive for "Off the Exchange" deals. Finally, their signature cocktail, Clone on the Beach, is a must have.

GANNBATE CANTINA

Located in the Avro-Kaizuka orbital, Human Edge, it was a renowned hotbed of Tatenokai agents throughout 176 NC. Mercenaries, pirates, and criminals generally frequent this locale in the aftermath of the JSA Uprising. The fact that it is the main recruitment and business centre for the Ikari Company says more of the Japanese mercenaries than anything else. Off the Exchange deals and hiring from the Lists is a daily and common occurrence, as is random (and usually deadly) violence. Novvy Bangkok residents will kill you if you say this out loud, but the Gannbate cooling liquid Bourbon rivals the finest Caledonian whiskey for kicks and staying power.

BREAK GLASS

In emergency cases, mercenary companies have been known to improvise and hijack or commandeer any available vessels, leaving the tab to be picked by their employees. Larger companies will try to avoid this, as it will certainly affect their ratings, but field operatives are rarely considerate of the company's image when they need to evacuate ASAP. The usual hierarchy for this type of manoeuvre is along the lines of merchant vessels first, unprotected NGO transports, local cargo transports, public transports heading to Circular boarding points, private shuttles, official vehicles, and – in truly desperate cases of emergency – military spacecraft.

The second element to consider is the source of equipment. Depending on the individual and/or company, the acquisition of weapons can be done legally and transparently (e.g. StarCo) through government or Hypercorp deals. The other option, however, is to steal or bribe functionaries in order to get hold of the required arsenal. If the WarDog has been covertly engaged by an intelligence agency, the supplies will have their serial numbers physically or digitally wiped. This hopefully avoids any political scandal if the conflict organised by the agencies doesn't turn out as expected. The same thing goes for contractors working Off the Exchange. Interestingly enough – for spies and investigative journalists at least – investigating the shipments and type of weapons sold by a particular WarDog can reveal much about their contacts, origins, intentions, and, most importantly, backers. Important economic partners are required in order to source and transport certain types of weapons, as demonstrated by the Anaconda Squadron during their creation, which can provide a particularly deadly game of cat-and-mouse for journalist types.

Importantly, it should be noted that independent contractors and WarDogs have nothing of the loyalty expected in the Mercenary contract as stipulated earlier. Unless specifically attached to a particular nation or Hypercorp, WarDogs will usually feel no compunctions in selling weapons to any or all of the parts involved in a conflict, and real humanitarian tragedies have occurred thanks to ambitious WarDogs treating the Concilium Convention with disdain and fuelling civil wars beyond the scope of the conflicts.

THE COMPETITION

Some critics of the War Market, particularly those in Concilium, have pointed out that legitimising mercenary companies is hypocritical and subversive to any real peace efforts. They highlight the fact that for each Free Company operating

legally on the Exchange, there are five more operating illegally, unregulated, and uncontrolled across the Human Sphere at any given point. The system is flawed, they argue. While the War Market engenders as much order and lawfulness as is possible when dealing with mercenaries, it is true that there are mercenary associations and militias that peddle their services via illegal channels. In an effort to confront the War Market, the underworld and Submondo cultures have created the Lists, an underground hiring and contact resource for all the not so legal, disgraced, red flagged, runner up, and rogue mercenary companies and operatives looking for a contract.

A totally underground effort, the Lists provides basic information like costs, availability, services, and contact information. It's assumed that most, if not all, of the companies and individuals included in the directory are open to illegal missions and black operations. In order to have access to the Lists, a person will either need to have contacts in Submondo or at least some passing knowledge of how the underworld operates in relation to hiring hitmen, thugs, and saboteurs. If none of these options are available, a good hacker can conduct a deep search to find Monica Blue, the AI program tasked with organizing and running the Lists. From there, generating an account is a simple enough task.

Although not a closely guarded secret, the Lists is not something openly discussed due to the implications and risks of being linked to such highly illegal activities. Nomad brokers can and do offer services from both the Exchange and the Lists without any sense of guilt, usually as one large holographic spreadsheet ranging from the most respectable in the Exchange to the more accommodating in the Lists. Watching over the shoulder of the members of the Lists, the Free Company Guild stands out as one of the most solid and successful intermediary companies outside of the Exchange. Undercut by the War Market's vast resources and media presence, the Guild act as middlemen for clients and mercenaries that are seeking to avoid the rules and regulations imposed by the Exchange. They make it a point to recruit talented new mercenaries without any of the fuss or extensive training programs that the bigger companies require. An experienced hand with backstage scenarios, the Guild has access to the most vulnerable populations in the Human Sphere, making it easy for them to recruit young and inexperienced personnel without concern for overhead costs or acquaintance with the Concilium Convention.

Known for being relatively modest, the Free Company Guild has recently enjoyed a credit

injection that has many people wondering how and why the irregular company obtained their additional resources. Rumours abound over the Guild fielding a unit of Krakot Renegades in the Paradiso System, which has several intelligence agents worrying about the possibility of the Guild being infiltrated by the Combined Army. Most dismiss it as another rumour generated by War Market aficionados seeking to irreparably harm the Guild's already shady reputation. Finally, the Lists also include a vast directory of freelancers with ratings and performance evaluations so low that no respectable customer would ever think of hiring them. Made up of thugs, disgraced Ronin, and broken bounty hunters who are referred to as the "Unemployables", this file can nonetheless point to an occasional up-and-coming bounty hunter or mercenary trying to make a name for themselves by climbing from the bottom to the top.

WARCON

Although the name is part of an ongoing joke among mercenaries – "Where can I hire White Star? Go to the War Market Convention!" – the concept of Warcon refers to hotels, bars and off-world installations where mercenaries can be interviewed, show off their goods, and hopefully get hired. Warcon also refers to all those places and situations where the agents, brokers, and management operatives of any given company can be met. Usually, only high-end companies like White Star and SecLock will meet in well-respected clubs and exclusive installations where they can guarantee their customer's privacy, which means that other clients looking to hire the services of a mercenary will need to rendezvous with their agents in seedy and sometimes outright dangerous places such as the Conga Club or Harry's Bar.

WILDERNESS OF MIRRORS

Working in the War Market can be as risky as running lucrative accounts in the regular stock exchange, only more deadly as some Warmongers and customers can be very sore losers when it comes to dovetailing assets and resources. Despite Captains and Warmongers always tending to walk away from dire straits more or less intact – usually thanks to the sacrifices of the rest of their unit – nobody really wants to risk a failed mercenary action as it raises too many questions. The consequences in terms of politics, finances, military displacement, and humanitarian efforts wind up being a diplomat's worst nightmare. Anyone entering into business with a mercenary should understand that nothing will be black and white, starting with the interests involved. Whilst it's true that the G5 nations favour the existence of non-aligned armies, that doesn't mean they won't keep

tabs on said independent armies. Secret agents, reporters, corporate spies, and even O-12 inspectors will often infiltrate or shadow the actions of the Free Companies in the field. Meanwhile, the same thing will be occurring at the company's HQ, where industrious spies will seek to obtain as much information from the company and its employers. Few archives are so ripe with sensitive information as those of the Free Companies and Security Firms. If mercenaries are a morally obscure lot, what can be said of anyone willing to hire platoons of men and women to fight a war and kill others in your name? The War Market is not an innocent place where you can make friends and trusty allies. It is one of the most brutal Psywar theatres in the Human Sphere, where backstabbing is an all too real alternative, both literally and figuratively.

In this regard, it is not uncommon for customers to want to avoid any link with both the Free Companies and the operation paid for. False fronts and identities are all too common, as it's quite frequent for an inexperienced or eager Warmonger or Captain to be hired by a non-existent corporation and later be either blackmailed or simply blamed for anything that has gone awry, with all incriminating evidence registered in the Exchange. This is why working Off the Exchange and getting paid via "30 Days Securing Varuna" clauses should be taken seriously, as many a mercenary has been burned this way. Paranoid Warmongers, on the other hand, will keep records and blackmail material on all their customers in case a little leverage is needed in the future. At the same time, it is not uncommon for competitive (if not antagonistic) Colonels and captains to sabotage other companies or even implicate them in illegal activities, such as the planting of ammunition or equipment stolen from the enemy inside a competitor's base. Having a corrupt journalist or diplomat nearby to help shed some light into this situation always helps the cause, taking out competition and leaving juicier contracts ripe for the picking.

EXAMPLE OF SECURITY COMPANY

Ophidiam Antipode Security is a clear example of the rising demand in the War Market being faced by ambitious warmongers. In this case, USAdrianan, Francine Gomez, CEO and founder of OAS, the first and foremost private security service on Ariadna. A veteran sanitary officer from the USAdrianan Marine Corp, Gomez noticed that injured and "orphaned" K-9 members, the brutal Devil Dogs, were discharged and left to their resources, which usually meant a life of hardships for the Dogfaces and more often than not death for the depressed and dysfunctional Antipodes who simply were

THE BLOCKHOUSE

Located in Franklin, USAdrianan, and known as the traditional founding place of the USAdrianan Ranger Regiment, it is also the meeting point of plenty of veterans who may be willing to hire themselves for a quick job either as security or something more creative, so long as the mission and price are right for the zealous USAdrianans. For all the bravado and loyalty to local beers and bourbon, the "Tara Libre" is a nice refreshing cocktail with a splash of the last Coke available in available in the Sphere.

HARRY'S BAR

Another "jewel" of Human Edge, this sordid bar is located in Novvy Bangkok. Mercenary bodyguards are highly recommended if conducting any business there. Still, it's the best den to place highly illegal commissions such as hiring off the Lists or contacting dubious companies like Ikari and the fearsome YuanYuan. Avoid drinking simple water at all costs. The Flaming Dagger will save you from poisoning yourself, though two or three others can get you blind drunk or burnt to a crisp. Do not order one of these in the presence of the SSI.

THE FRACTAL

This virtual bar is said to have its main node somewhere in Varuna, yet it gathers Wardrivers and otaku from all over the Human Sphere where they brag about their latest achievements and gigs. Customers looking for hackers here have to be careful to avoid being swindled by unskilled hacker wannabes though. Being a virtual bar, every type of digital drink is on offer here, though the cool kids stick to hot chocolate. Oddly, the coding for J42m1n3 T34 seems to leave anyone drinking it with a migraine for days.



penned until they ceased to be a problem. Annoyed by this, Gomez also saw an opportunity. After returning to her hometown of Four Tracks, she ran an experiment with a crew of 4 Dogfaces and 1 Antipode which she managed to get hold of as part of a “rehabilitation” program. The result was a solid security unit, and they were hired by Four Tracks customs services to inspect and intercept smugglers.

A year later, Ophidiam has grown into a modest security company that operates across the Human Sphere. It is even starting to accept contracts for the Exclusion Zone, though they have not yet accepted interplanetary contracts. Gomez still hasn’t the resources to apply for a place in the Exchange, but currently Ophidiam has a healthy presence in the Dawn Lists, where they’re gaining renown among Ariadnans and serve as an attraction to non-Ariadnans seeking the opportunity to brag about working with Antipode, Dogface, and Wolver security teams. Currently, Francine has an experienced team of trainers, medics, Antipode controllers, and veterans who accept and train Wolveres, Dogfaces, and Antipodes

undergoing rehab, that she manages to legally sub-hire through military contacts. Currently focused on security services, she is resisting the temptation to field her teams in combat operations as a full military action might have an unpredictable effect on her often impetuous troops.

Once she has enough resources, Gomez plans on listing Ophidiam in the Exchange and opening an office either on Neoterra or Sol, where she hopes to sell her high-quality guards and sniffers to a Hypercorp like Interspace Trust, Compass, or Neon Lotus. She has had moderate success selling her stock to Ariadnans, particularly USAriadnans and Merovingian investors, but foreign investors seem too focused on the Novyy Cimmeria crisis to invest in Ophidiam. As a first step to becoming interplanetary, she is currently brokering a security contract with Yuling officials in Yaochi City so that they can demonstrate their skills when operating away from Dawn. Since Gomez is an Ariadnan, she and her teams are particularly well adapted to the tasks at hand and will quickly demonstrate to all other foreign units how to implement strict security measures.



CHAPTER 5

GEAR

Unlike professional militaries with publicly funded supply chains and requisitions, every piece of equipment a Mercenary company purchases and keeps in their inventory damages their bottom line. As a result, there is constant pressure to reduce costs on every possible axis – maintenance, transportation, sourcing, governmental fees, employee salaries– and seek high-pay, low-risk work. Risk is usually the first compromise a PMC's Warmonger learns to make, Quartermasters stop questioning equipment's origins, Tactical Managers ignore the ethics of effective gear, and individual mercenaries learn to use anything they can get their hands on for an edge. Those who don't, don't last long. Clients often care about public perception as much as they care about results, so it's important to protect one's reputation and avoid red flags. Many PMCs do maintain strong traditions of ethical professionalism. But very few clients understand just how hungry those they hire are, how intensely desperate or broken you must be before you're willing to threaten and fight and kill strangers for nothing more than a paycheck. Or how brutal conflicts outside of Maya's panopticon can become.

Ariadnans understand better than most: wounds are still fresh on the frontier, and many modern Mercenaries served in the Commercial Conflicts. Yu Jing and PanOceania use Mercenaries as a more disposable extension of their own militaries, catspaws for tasks they don't want to take officially, and as a profitable secondary market for military surplus equipment. Corporations generally treat PMCs and Mercenary specialists as just another set of useful contractors, and as a way to project military force without maintaining official militaries. Haqqislamites, and especially Nomads, have a more nuanced relationship with the concept – their lifestyles often mirror Mercenaries, and many spend a portion of their lives as one.

Warmongers negotiate for supplies and equipment as part of their contract, Quartermasters and Tactical Managers insist on certain standardised items, and clients can require the use of particular gear for oversight reasons. But for the most part Mercenaries are permitted and expected to assemble their own unique loadout from whatever they can scrounge, loot, or buy. Well-connected traders, docs, and dealers are a wise merc's best friends.

METACHEMISTRY

MetaChemistry is an O-12 designation for batteries of nano-chemical compounds that enhance physical and tactical fitness and render subjects receptive to augmentation. The procedure is equivalent to a full-body biograft augmentation installation, but instead of gaining an implant, the subject's Resistance tests on future Aug installations are at -2 difficulty for the next four years. If any of these installations generates a complication, the GM can spend 2 Heat to give the subject a new side-effect Trait.

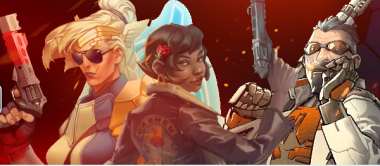
MetaChemistry implants are affordable equivalents of implants that usually require subtle Biograft or Silk technology, and they are uniquely compatible with those who have undergone the process. The extensive redundancies and microflora customisation involved means they are usually full-body Cyberware, and Resistance tests to install them in subjects who have not undergone MetaChemistry are at +2 difficulty.

LIFEPATH METACHEMISTRY OPTIONS

When granted a MetaChemistry implant by a Lifepath event, roll on the table below, then choose whether to A) gain the implant; B) replace a current implant with the new one, or C) gain a MetaChemistry-related Trait (discuss GM and define now).

All augmentation page references are to the *Infinity Corebook* Gear Catalogue, p.361 – 386 For MetaChemistry process or Implant pricing, see Augmentations Table, p.59-60

ROLL	AUGMENTATION
1-2	Attribute Augmentation 2 (Brawn or Agility benefits halved after 1d20 years)
3-4	Bioimmunity Organ equivalent, benefits halved after 1d20 years
5-6	Geko pade equivalents, +1 vigour, -1 resolve
7-8	Neural Shunts, +1 Resolve, -1 Vigour
9-10	Pain Filter equivalents, +2 Resolve, -2 Vigour
11-12	Regeneration Augmentation equivalent. Other augmentations are rejected when installed, but allows the installation of other augmentations later (albeit at +4 complication range to installation Resistance tests)
13-14	Sixth Sense equivalent, and new Trait: Twitchy
15-16	Subdermal Grafts in all locations, only add +1 complication range to Personality-based tests
17-18	Super-Jump, no Maintenance cost, prices to repair halved
19-20	Re-roll, but implant is large instead of full-body. If rolled a second time, it becomes an ordinary-sized implant instead.



AEROCAM (TROOPER)

ATTRIBUTES		
Agility	8	
Awareness	10	
Brawn	10	
Coordination	10	
Intelligence	10	
Personality	6	
Willpower	7	
FIELDS OF EXPERTISE		
Combat	+2	+2
Fortitude	+1	+1
Movement	+1	1
Senses	+1	1
Social	-	-
Technical	+1	1
DEFENCES		
Firewall	10	
Security	-	
Resolve	8	
Morale	-	
Structure	12	
Armour	0	

GEAR: 360° Visor + Recorder

COMMON SPECIAL

ABILITIES: Inured to Disease, Poison, and Vacuum, Superhuman Awareness 1

EYE IN THE SKY: The aerocam can fly continuously for days at a time and move vertically without reduction in speed.

FAITHFUL COMPANION: When an aerocam is controlled by a geist or its native LAI, it gains a Morale Soak of 4, grants its user a Morale Soak of 1, and when it assists on an Observation test, the leader of the test can reroll one d20 (but must accept the result).

FLOCK TOGETHER: Thanks to simple charging/data cradles, additional cambots do not increase maintenance costs.

SEMI-AUTONOMOUS CAMBOT:

When operating autonomously, the aerocam sticks close to its user, continually recording its surroundings and providing feeds of relevant holographic, auditory, and visual data, adding 1 Momentum to the user's successful Observation

GEAR CATALOGUE

360° VISION/VISOR

Lhost biosynthetic vision research at the University of Medina led to the current benign, albeit invasive, installation process of 360° vision augmentations. Users can see in all directions, granting a bonus d20 on Observation tests. Unimplanted 360° visors are less intuitive, adding +1 complication range to those tests as well.

410 FLAGGING

An unofficial Red Flag-equivalent among wardrivers, this designation requires the agreement of over 41% of all registered members (though who counts as registered is an endless source of debate). Though not kicked out, the flagged Wardriver is added to a public listing of reliably unreliable, incompetent, and malicious hackers, gaining the Trait: 410 Flagged. Removing the flag requires a massive achievement on behalf of all Wardrivers, or decades of clean work without any registered complaints. Truly noxious further bad behavior leads to being 820'd: permanent disbarment as a Wardriver. Contact or assistance from anyone in good standing becomes a 410-able offense. It's open season on hackers marked in this way: few survive long.

ACROGENIC BLADE X

Also known as an 'ace' or 'acro' knife, these slim, piercing knives are made from slow-grown crystals cultivated on the exteriors of asteroid habitats for sale to passing visitors, particularly mercenaries and bravos. Though visually stunning and incredibly sharp, assessing one's quality requires a Science (D2) or Lifestyle (D3) test. Force-grown counterfeit blades chip and fracture under stress, shattering completely the first time a complication or Effect is rolled on an attack with one. Unlike other Frangible weapons, however, a real acrogenic blade only reduces the number of [CD] in its damage rating by 1 if X+1 Effects are rolled. (Melee, 1+2X[CD] damage, 1H, Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Piercing X, Subtle 1, Thrown, Unforgiving 2) Acrogen is the scientific term for a flowerless plant, such as a fern or moss, where growth occurs from the tip of the main stem. The term is now primarily used to describe a zero-g crystal cultivation technique for the eponymous blades, despite heated Maya-posts from protesting botanists.

ADHESIVE SOLVENT

A go-to for troublemakers, rioters, and the private security teams that immobilize them, this spray dissolves the gelatinous adhesives used in common crowd-control adhesive ammo. With a Tech (D1) test, a solvent canister can be used in one of several ways. If sprayed on a Scale 0 vehicle, the wielder, or

on a person in Reach, it renders them immune to all damage and effects from Adhesive and Goonade ammo for the scene, and it frees them if already immobilised. If sprayed into an adjacent zone, it has the Area (Close) quality, and gives Scale 0 vehicles or people immobilised by those munitions' effects a chance to escape at -2 difficulty (minimum 0).

AEROCAM REMOTE

An invaluable companion for any War Correspondent, this flying remote incorporates a 360° array of cameras and holographic rangefinders, it can continually record weeks of audio and visual footage for later editing. Many users install sensor arrays to add layers of context and detail to their aerocam's recordings, and locational beacons to ensure they can recover it if lost or stolen.

BAD DOG X

Sold in Caravanserai under the brand name K2o (for Kötü köpek, bad dog in Turkish) as a supposed deterrent to wildlife, when burned and inhaled this drug induces aggression and increases pain tolerance in many species, particularly avians and canines, although humans are immune to its effects. If a Guard Dog or similar working animal protector is exposed to its effects, however, it becomes violently and permanently aggressive against any individual whose scent and appearance it is not already familiar with, gains immunity to Psywar techniques when attacking or pursuing an interloper, and gains X[CD] additional Vigour (and an additional Wound box per Effect rolled). Even the most callous wranglers use the substance sparingly, however, as animals exposed to the substance rarely survive long, permanently losing 1+1[CD] Vigour every week until dead (or dying immediately if an Effect is rolled).

BANDOLIER

Popularised as military fashion during the Commercial Conflicts by mercenaries who took them as trophies from dead Ariadnan troops, modern bandoliers are a band that goes around the chest, with a series of pouches and stick-pads embedded in a smart-layer that slides independently for quick, quiet access, allowing the user to swap between ammo types as a Free Action once a round. Any mercenary wearing one that looks Dawn-made around Ariadnans is stupid, suicidal, or both.

BIDENDUM SUIT

Based on similar principles as high-impact CrashSuits and stylish Bakuninian Flexwear, these Earth-made armoured clothing outfits are laced with string-tube segments that can inflate with dense quick-foam as a Minor action or 2 Heat Reaction, providing short-lived protection against harm. Once inflated, the foam segments provide

2 Armour Soak to hit locations the first time they are struck, and 1 Armour Soak against subsequent attacks for a half-hour. Clearing the string-tube segments with solvent and re-priming their micro-pumps takes ten minutes and a Tech (D1) test, but the suits are surprisingly unobtrusive until inflated, making them ideal uniforms for PMCs with image-conscious clients.

BLITZEN

A linchpin of Kaplan Tactical Service's victories during the Silk Revolts and their ongoing operational strategy, the E/M-pulse-emitting Blitzen is a Panzerfaust variant designed for anti-quantronic impact against enemy systems. It contains two Reloads – once used, the weapon is empty and cannot be used until reloaded. Disassembling the weapon to reload it requires a Tech (D2) test as a Standard Action.

BOOTLEG COMBAT ARMOUR

For infiltration, cover for false flag operations, false claims of military valour, or seamlessly augmenting existing forces, nothing beats wearing the combat armour and uniform of a faction's military forces. Fortunately, for the right price corrupt quartermasters in every human military service will happily supply contraband versions of the real thing, and even falsified quantronic tags and inventory records to elide suspicion. Random inspections and LAI scrutiny can make this unexpectedly costly and dangerous, represented by varying Tariffs per faction.

- ALEPH, Yu Jing, PanOceania: +T3
- O-12, Nomads, Haqqislam: +T2
- Minor Nations, Corporate: +T1
- Ariadna, Mercenaries: +T0

BOUNCE

Named after the low gravity 'Acontecimento Step', and popular with both PanOceanian partiers and undisciplined Mercs expecting brief combat, bounce is a euphoric with an intense comedown. Sold in disposable oral sprays, it is banned in Yu Jing and Haqqislam's territory due to dangerous side-effects if abused. Special Effect: Once administered, the user gains +1 Morale Soak and +4 Resolve for three hours. Once those three hours are up, they heal 4 Mental damage, and quickly descend into deep REM sleep for the next six hours.

Addiction 1 (8 doses), Compulsion 1
Overdose Wound Effect: all overdose damage is doubled and taken as mental damage. Withdrawal 2+2[CD] mental damage, Harm Effect (user takes double mental damage until recovered and suffers intensely personal nightmares).

BULAVA AMMUNITION

Named for an ancient multiple-warhead missile,

these Rodinan rounds are fitted with crude electronics and explosive cores. When the first in a burst strikes, the others nearby explode into a crowd of shrapnel in hopes of additional damage. They are easily suborned – targets with any comms device gain Cover Soak equal to the higher of their Tech or Hacking expertise against them – but can be fired by any weapon capable of firing Normal ammunition, and add Comms, Salvo. (Spread 1, Vicious 1), and Unsubtle to the weapon.

CAMSIGHT

Often contractually required and paired with armour-mounted sensors, this software takes a 5-second snapshot of a ranged weapon's optics and correlated data feeds each time the weapon is fired. This provides details to Tactical Managers, and an audit trail of a mercenary's engagements for internal review, behavioural coaching, termination proceedings, or legal deposition. Installing it requires only a Standard Action and a Tech (D1) test, and it adds 1 bonus Momentum and -1 difficulty to Analysis or Observation tests to form an accurate understanding of a firefight from the user's perspective after the fact. Altering a CamSight's records after the fact requires a Hacking progressive skill test (D3, 6 Momentum, 3 failures).

CUBE SCALPEL

This curved monofilament knife has a retractable adhesive probe. It is designed to rapidly excise and extract an installed cube from the base of a patient's (or target's) skull. Those used by Tohaa Cube Jaegers feature a biological segmented blade spine that is flexible across its entire length and selectively adhesive, substantially speeding extraction. While medical devices for Cube removal are almost as old as Cubes themselves, Human Sphere medical manufacturers have almost entirely converted their production lines to bootlegs of this more efficient and effective design. If used on a corpse, or an unconscious and immobile victim, a cube scalpel allows the destructive removal of a cube as a Standard Action Coordination + Medicine (D1) test, with +2 complication range if the wielder has a Medicine Focus of 2 or less. (Melee, 1+3[CD] damage, 1H, Concealed 1, Monofilament, Subtle 2, Unforgiving 1)

D-SPARY CHARGES

In less than a second, this easy-to-use spray-foam explosive forms a hardened outer skin to direct its energy into whatever surface it is applied to, before catalysing and detonating moments later. In theory, at least. In practice, quality varies wildly, and falsified best-sold-by metadata is common. Setting a D-Spray charge requires only a Minor Action Tech (D0) test at +3 complication range, and the charge detonates in 3 rounds, plus or minus one round per Momentum spent.

Acontecimento Step - see *Infinity Corebook*, p. 224

COLD PEACE

As the Ariadna Commercial Conflicts drew to a close, a series of significant neomaterial discoveries on Svalarheima led many defence contractor marketing analysts to predict a new round of NeoColonial Wars between PanOceania and Yu Jing to fully seize control of the planet once and for all. Widespread production of armour, vehicles, and military materiel adapted to the icy planet's climate ensued, only to be pre-empted by the Ariadnan Commercial Conflicts, and again by the Paradiso Offensives. As a result, unused military surplus equipment with Adapted [Arctic] is available at cut-rate prices throughout the Human Sphere, particularly if one is willing to buy in bulk.



POINT AND KILL

Nomads' sales of lightweight and concealable D.E.P.s to Merovingian traders, and the Metros, Zouaves, and other units they supplied, were a key way they aided Ariadnans' defence of their homelands during the Commercial Conflicts. Many of these disposable weapons are still easily found on Dawn, albeit under the brand name R.E.P., short for "repose en paix", the French equivalent of D.E.P.

(Explosive Charge, 1+4[CD] damage, 1H, Anti-Materiel 1, Disposable, Piercing 2, Spread 1, Unsubtle, Vicious 1)

D.E.P

Always popular with guerrillas and irregulars looking for inexpensive anti-tank power, a D.E.P. is a lightweight single-shot Corregidor-kitbashed Panzerfaust variant. Whether Descanse En Paz – "Rest in Peace" – refers to user or target depends on accuracy. Each D.E.P. contains 1 Reload, and after use, the weapon is empty and cannot be used until reloaded. Disassembling the weapon to reload it requires a Tech (D1) test as a Standard Action.

EXCELRATE

A degenerative drug popular with Ikari personnel and bōsōzoku bikers, ExcelRate allows a user to process battlefield stimuli at incredible speed. EXXO auto-injectors are the most common delivery method, but Nagakura Pharma's derma-patch

blister packs make it easy to track how many doses one's taken – an easy mistake to make in the heat of battle. Special Effect: Once administered, the user gains a bonus d20 on Coordination-based and Awareness-based tests for 1d6 rounds. At the end of that period, the user is Dazed for 1d3 rounds as their perception snaps back to normal. Multiple doses stack, and if Dazed periods overlap, the user is Staggered instead. Addition: 1 (9 doses), Compulsion 1 Withdrawal: 1, 1+5[CD] damage, Harm Effect (+1 Difficulty to Coordination tests due to tremors)

FEUERBACH

These cannons use lightweight, quick-loading projectiles with built-in propulsion for a rapid rate of fire, in exchange for shorter range and less destruction per projectile compared to other launchers. Popular – if expensive – primary weapons for heavy infantry and powered armour squads, they are officially named for their rate



of fire and destructive capacity ("river of fire" in German), but rumour insists the name's actual origin was their designer's fondness for the eponymous German philosopher. Feuerbach are Heavy MULTI weapons, but they fire Needle instead of Standard ammunition in their primary mode and can only fire Explosive rounds in their secondary mode.

(Range L, 2+4[CD] damage, Burst 3/1, Unwieldy, MULTI Heavy, Unsubtle)
Needle Burst Mode (Primary): Piercing 2, Spread 1, Vicious 2
Explosive Round Mode (secondary): Area (Close), Spread 1, Vicious 1

FIREFLIES

Usually delivered via repurposed grenade casings, these Yu Jingese micro-drones blanket an area in low-grade sensors, providing quick-and-dirty telemetric data on opponents in cover. Once thrown or fired into a zone, if the attacker makes an Analysis (D1) test, they can spend Momentum to reduce the effective Cover Soak of targets in the zone by 1[CD] per Momentum spent. If a target's Cover Soak is reduced to 0, they are Marked until they leave their current zone. The benefit can be shared with networked allies as a Minor Action.

FORWARD OBSERVER NARC

Forward Observers are specialists who provide allies and Tactical Managers telemetry data on hostile forces, optimising indirect support fire. To do this, they carry NARCs, state-of-the-art communications equipment used to mark a visible target via a Tech (D1) test, at +1 Difficulty per range category beyond Close. If successful, the target is Marked, allowing all d20s to be re-rolled on ranged attacks against them until the user's next turn – Guided weapons gain further benefits. It can also be used as a Flash Pulse, but tests to do so are at +2 complication range unless the wielder has a Tech Focus of 3 or more.

FUGO AMMUNITION

Used as an intimidation tactic, particularly by Ikari Company enforcers, and for its devastating incendiary potential, this airburst munition saturates an area in a short-lived but incredibly volatile and flammable gel. Instead of dealing damage, anyone not already in full cover or who fails to make an Athletics (D2) Defence Reaction to avoid being coated in the gel takes +3[CD] damage from all attacks with the Incendiary quality for the next 1 + (Effects rolled on the Fugo attack) rounds, and the duration of their Burning X conditions are doubled. Fugo adds Indiscriminate (Close) and Nonlethal to the weapon, and Terrifying 3 against those who have seen it in action.

FULGOR RIFLE

Fulgor ('blaze' or 'bright' in Spanish) is the Corregidoran nickname for a FrancoGermanique Armements SG-5 Alraun2 Combi Rifle when combined with a pre-installed underslung LF-4 light flamethrower. While slightly more expensive than a standard combi rifle, mercenaries and Corsairs prize it for boarding actions and urban combat, in part because it comes with a specialised customisation kit that simplifies repairs or swapping its secondary weapon to a Simple (D0) Tech test.

(Range C/M, 1+5[CD] damage, Burst 2/1, 2H, Expert 1, Multi Light Mod (with light flamethrower installed), Vicious 1)

G-RATIONS

Reformulated from military surplus survival rations by any one of hundreds of grey-market suppliers, these compact nutrient powders are laced with mood-elevating and pain-suppressing neurochemicals. Mildly flavoured and consumed once mixed with water, each unit of G-Rations contains enough nutrients for three weeks. G-Rations add 1 Morale soak and 1 Vigour for the first three weeks of consumption. If consumed continually in place of ordinary food and water over an extended period, they are physiologically dangerous – roll 1[CD] every 3 week period after the first 3 weeks: the user loses the amount rolled in either Vigour or Resolve, their choice, on a 1 or 2, or one of each on an Effect. One lost Vigour or Resolve is recovered each week they eat only healthy and nutritious food, and completely abstain from G-Rations.

GYRE SHELLS

Named for the North Pacific Gyre, a massive region of plastic and garbage on pre-O-12 Earth, these shells explode into pressurized nets of sticky long-chain proteins – similar to those used to restore Earth's oceans – to immobilize their target. While attacks with them do not degrade cover, Athletics tests to avoid being Hindered or Stuck by them are at +1 difficulty. A favourite of Bounty Hunters, gyre shells add Immobilising, Knockdown, Nonlethal, and Spread 1 to the shotgun.

GUSHBLADE

A foul union of high-tech engineering and low-tech spite, these weapons are made of industrial-grade serrated blades embedded in crude piping, alternated with hydraulic micro-pumps that spray the pressurized chemicals inside the pipe on impact. First created by a Nomad Black Ship roaming Human Edge's frontier, they were stolen by desperate workers turned pirate. The design grew popular enough to be explicitly banned under an amendment to the Concilium

MEDIUM COMBAT ARMOUR

VARIANT: KTS

Kaplan Tactical Services takes extensive advantage of their parent company Beyhan Resources STI's pharmaceutical knowhow to enhance performance. KTS security units' armour contains three auto-injectors pre-loaded with mission-specific combat drugs.

TRIBUTARIES OF FIRE

Feuerbach's patent is held by PanOceania's FGA (Franco-Germanique Armements), who only produce a handful every year to maintain their rights, then license it for exorbitant fees to keep profits high. FGA's board of directors keeps Warmonger Qaid Fahesh on a generous retainer for rigorous kinetic enforcement of their rights against counterfeiters.

NARC HUNTING

Every nation has a distinctive version of forward observation equipment to avoid potential subversion and sabotage by opponents. Naturally, they each sell subtly subverted and sabotaged versions of their equipment on the open market, and they often include them in equipment provided to mercenaries in their employ. For 2 Heat, the GM can declare NARC equipment purchased from a particular nation or faction is compromised. Tests to use it against their law enforcement or military forces are at +4 complication range and +2 difficulty, and Infowar attacks against the wielder by their hackers gain +2[CD] damage.



GESELLSCHAFT DER HANDEN

Initially a running joke among Doktor Herbst's closest friends, after seeing imitations of her augmentations used for criminal purposes, Handen joined Moto.aug's staff to ensure they were sold only to worthy recipients. She closely follows the careers and exploits of those who receive them, particularly mercenaries. Those who demonstrate bravery, professionalism, and a keen eye for profit are quietly offered entry into her Society of Hands, a nominally apolitical mercenary and corporate clearinghouse for intelligence and favours, with a remarkably diverse membership of medical researchers and field medics.

QUAKER

Australian slang popularized by Neoterran troopers deployed on Paradiso. Considered a slur anywhere outside their territory, for those with nerve degeneration or tremors from combat drug or augmentation side-effects.

FLAGSHIP BOUNTIES

A favourite of money-minded bounty hunters – and is there any other kind? – 'flagship' bounties are spiked with large rewards from private individuals, attracting intense and even permanently lethal competition. To avoid a cascade of dangerous behaviour, and keep costs down, most of these additional rewards come with strict time limits and caveats for the bounty to qualify. On particularly contentious bounties these caveats can be ambiguous or contradictory, requiring careful documentation to maximise payment.

Convention, illegal to make or own anywhere in the Human Sphere. Despite the ban, gushblades are a mainstay boarding weapon for Yuan Yuan and other suicidally violent pirates.

(2+4[CD] damage, 2H, Grievous, Improvised 1, Toxic 2, Unforgiving 1, Vicious 2)

HAMAKA

A key Caribbean export, TaínoTek's full-enclosure climate-controlled hammocks have been iconic travel gear since the very start of the 2nd space race, when they won a supply contract with the nascent PanOceanian Space Exploration Division, and their logo appeared in the background of the first transmissions from Acontecimento's orbit. Now shops selling them are mainstays of Caravanserais, Commercial Missions, and even Merovingian trading caravans, and company-branded versions are a popular signing bonus among mercenary companies seeking recruits. Their bold colouring and legendary durability have only improved in the centuries since, and the addition of a built-in 2-Oxygen Load lining, 1 BTS against quantronic intrusion, and thoughtful smart-material construction ensures a profoundly restful and undisturbed sleep. Anyone who spends a full night of sleep in a Hamaka has +1 Morale Soak for their first hour after waking up, and they can make either a Resistance (D0) test to recover all of their Vigour, or a Discipline (D0) test to recover all of their Resolve.

HANDEN AUGMENTATION

Co-created by Moto.aug and mercenary surgeon Henrietta "Handen" Herbst after the loss of her notoriously steady hands while defending a Moto.tronica research facility, these versatile replacement hands contain Serum auto-injectors, reinforced servo-joints, extensible finger-segments, and even monofilament scalpels. Wrapped in durable synthskin, they add +1 Armour Soak to the user's arms, and 2 Armour Soak against Called Shot Momentum spends targeting their hands. Installed in pairs, they contain two Serum per hand, add a bonus d20 and 1 bonus Momentum to Medicine tests to provide Serious Treatment or install augmentations, and add Parry 1, Subtle 1, Unforgiving 2, Vicious 1 (and optionally Monofilament) to Unarmed Strikes or attempts to inject a target with a drug, Serum, or poison.

HEADHUNTER SUITE

So prohibitively expensive they are often provided as part of a flagship bounty to favoured bounty hunters, these bulky sensors are purpose-built to detect a single target's DNA and unique olfactory profile. The Headhunter adds 2d20 to in-person Observation tests to detect the target's presence, or Science tests to find forensic traces anywhere they've spent a significant amount

of time. Once found, the suite provides 2 bonus Momentum to tests that benefit from knowing the target's location.

HEAVY SHOTGUN

Technically portable artillery, these scaled-up boarding shotguns are commonly mounted on vehicles or used as an integrated weapon for Remotes, or by individuals with the strength or servosystems to absorb their extreme recoil. They gain Backlash 3 and +3 complication range if fired by someone with a Brawn of 13 or lower, unless mounted on a vehicle, TAG, or emplacement. (Range C, 2+6[CD] damage, Burst 1, 2H/Mounted, Knockdown)

Normal Shells Mode (Primary): Area (Close), Spread 1 AP Slugs Mode (Secondary): Piercing 3

JITTERBUG RATIONS

Available in dozens of flavours, brands, and form factors ranging from dense nutrient bars to shakes or instant noodles, these cases of shelf-stable meal-replacements provide nutrition sufficient for one person for a week, and contain slow-release stimulants and vitamin supplementation to reduce the user's dependence on sleep. The difficulty of Resistance tests to avoid fatigue from sleep deprivation is reduced by one, and users gain a bonus d20 on tests to avoid becoming unconscious or stunned. The rations are damaging if used continually – each week beyond the first a user relies on them reduces Vigour by 1, to a minimum of the user's Resistance focus. Each week without restores 1[CD] Vigour, with complete recovery if an Effect is rolled.

Jitterbug Profitability: Tunguska slang for making just enough to cover expenses.

NEUROKINETICS AUGMENTATION

Illegal throughout the Human Sphere, this nervous system augmentation enhances the user's reaction time and reflexes but can cause serious nerve degeneration over time. Users must constantly control their reactions, and they are easily recognized by their obsessively slow and cautious movements. Users can make warfare reactions for one less Heat but take 1[CD] of Vicious 1 physical damage that ignores all armour each time they do so. If this inflicts a Wound, they permanently lose one Vigour, to a minimum of their Resistance Focus. They gain the Ballistics and Close Combat Quick Draw talents while the augmentation is active, but if it is deactivated – for example by a Breach Effect – they lose access to those talents, as well as any Ballistics or Close Combat talents that depend on them.

NIGHTMARE

Named for the bloodshot eyes and pallid skin of long-term users, this Grade-5 combat drug

suppresses the user's natural fear and hormonal responses, dulling tactically undesirable emotions at the risk of impulsive behaviour and long-term nerve degradation. For six hours after ingesting or injecting the drug, they are immune to intimidation, seduction, fear, and Terrifying weapon effects, and become much harder to predict: Psychology tests targeting them gain +1 Difficulty. At the end of a scene where mental harm is ignored due to Nightmare's effects, the GM gains three Heat. At the end of the Nightmare's six-hour effect, the user takes 1[CD] Physical and Mental damage, ignoring all soak, plus one [CD] per dose taken in the previous month – if a Wound is inflicted, the GM chooses an Attribute to permanently reduce by 1.

NITROV OUTFIT

A Nomad fast-fashion microbrand popular with on-leave Mercenaries dressing to impress, NitroV (as well as its more formal N5 and sexier NVee lines) is available for Middle clothing costs, and it can give the appearance of Upper class apparel for half of each month clothing maintenance is paid. Available in a variety of cuts and styles, the outfits are made of short-lived smart-materials that mimic more expensive fabrics for a few weeks, but stain easily and wear down to a matte grey-green with use, adding +1 complication range to Persuade or Command tests with individuals of Upper social class or higher, or with Lifestyle Expertise of 3 or more.

NUL-ZED ZONBOT

A Russian/English designation (0 in each language) for stripped-down zondbots commonly available at Nomad Commercial Missions, this model retains its mobility and relay capabilities, but its weapons, ODD, and hacking equipment are removed before sale to non-Nomad outsiders. The result is a much cheaper but still reliable Zondbot popular with Mercenary start-ups and tinkerers on a budget.

ONIBI MINE

A favourite of the Ikari Company despite repeated legal censure, these simple mines remain dubiously legal thanks to standard IFF and tracking systems. No legitimate weapons manufacturer will make them, but they are widely available on Human Edge's grey market from less-ethical fabricators. Named for the corpse-fire spirits of Japanese legend, their incendiary payloads are laced with long-half-life radioactive isotopes that turn the zone they detonate in into D3 Hazardous terrain for three hours after they detonate, dealing half the mine's usual damage (with all the same qualities) to anyone who fails an Extraterrestrial (D3) test to safely move through or in the zone. They are often manually detonated once friendly forces are safely out of range rather than waiting for enemy forces,

semi-permanently denying an area to invaders or counter-attackers.

(Explosive Mine, 2+4[CD] damage, 1H, Comms, Disposable, Incendiary 2, Indiscriminate (Close), Radiation 2, Terrifying 1)

PACKMOD

Supposedly based on canis lupus pallipes scent organelles, this experimental bio-augmentation is derived from Tohaa pheromonal modulation, and the xeno-transplantation of poorly understood Antipode syncopation membranes. It requires extensive hormonal profiling and tissue samples to ensure compatibility, but successful installation allows 3-6 individuals to act more effectively as a collective – as a pack.

Packmates must acquire the augmentation at the same time at Moto.aug's Svalarheima Ensom Dal facility, and it only functions if they all survive implantation. Once installed, packmates can make the Bolster, Imply, and Rally Psywar actions targeting one another as a Free action at up to Long Range, gain +2 Morale Soak when within Long Range of at least one other packmate, and roll 2d20 when making group tests together. If at Extreme Range or farther from the others for a day or more, packmates lose their Morale Soak bonus, and must make a Discipline (D1) test every six hours or take 1+2[CD] mental damage. If out of contact for a week or more, they add +1 Complication Range to all Personality tests, but cease taking damage. If a packmate dies, survivors lose connection to one another until they each pass a Personality + Discipline (D1) test.

PITCHER

Modified grenade launchers, pitchers increase the effective range of tactical Hackers, firing deployable repeaters as Reloads just as grenade launchers fire grenades. The weapon inflicts no damage and targets a zone rather than a normal target with a Ballistics (D1) test, modified as normal for range. If successful, the deployable repeater lands in the targeted zone and deploys immediately. (Range M, Burst 1, Unbalanced, Munition, Speculative Fire)

PULPIBEER

Tales resound in the Human Sphere's worst watering holes and suspect dives of PulpiBeer's magical qualities. How it can make you appear in unsuspected places without knowing how you got there, drink the night away without a trace of a hangover if paired with just the right spicy noodles, and perform feats of incredible strength and dexterity while stealing all memory of your prowess. Some, far into their cups, will claim the drink has a mind of its own, and lures unsuspecting imbibers on mad quests through the strangest

NUL-ZED ZONBOT

ATTRIBUTES		
Agility	12	
Awareness	10	
Brawn	8	
Coordination	10	
Intelligence	10	
Personality	5	
Willpower	8	
FIELDS OF EXPERTISE		
Combat	+1	1
Fortitude	-	-
Movement	+3	1
Senses	+1	1
Social	-	-
Technical	+1	1
DEFENCES		
Firewall	10	
Security	-	
Resolve	8	
Morale	-	
Structure	8	
Armour	1	

GEAR: climbing plus, repeater

COMMON SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Inured to Disease, Poison, Vacuum.

ARACHNE-ROOTED: When controlled by a geist or its native LAI, a Nul-Zed gains Security Soak of 4 against non-Nomad hackers.

OPEN-SOURCE: Zondbot systems specifications are widely shared, granting -1 difficulty on tests to repair, remove, or add equipment if the mechanic has access to Arachne's datasphere.

ZIPPY LITTLE THING: Zondbots survive by staying mobile. They reduce Defence reactions Heat costs by 1, to a minimum of 0.



places in search of more. Pulpibeer is sold in BigCans suitable for one hour of drinking for one imbiber, SixPacs good for three, and DayKegs good for a continuous twelve hours. After the first three hours a character spends drinking Pulpibeer, and each hour of drinking thereafter, roll 1[CD] for each hour they've drunk in the last 24 hours:

RAMSHACKLE COMBAT JUMP PACK

Not everyone can get their hands on cutting-edge airborne deployment devices, even if they can afford them. But for pirate raiders, hobbyists, or the surprise trooper on a budget, there's always last decade's military surplus to ensure your low-orbit atmospheric entry. When using one for airborne deployment, Pilot tests are at +1 difficulty, with +2 complication range.

RED FURY

Like the Spitfire it is based on, a Red Fury is a mid-range machine gun designed for urban combat. Red Furies are equipped with a more robust firing mechanism, and a heavier chassis and barrel to avoid overheating and dampen recoil during sustained use, allowing for a similar rate of fire without the need for light-weight munitions. The resulting increase in accuracy and Shock impact substantially increases the chance of inflicting deadly wounds – the Combined Army fields heavier and more stable equivalents. (Range M, 1+5[CD] damage, Burst 3, 2H, Spread 2, Grievous, Unsubtle, Vicious 1)

RETI AMMUNITION

Largely deprecated in favour of lighter but more compact Dancer ammunition, these guided heavy rounds are named for double-ended barbed Maori spears tied with cords for easy retrieval. They are only produced by Varuna's Syurga Munitions LLC, which relies on the region's abundant rare earths to keep prices low. Reti ammunition adds Guided, Unsubtle, and Vicious 1 to the weapon.

SAUK & JOAD SENTINELS X

A soldier's most important piece of kit? Veterans are nearly unanimous – reliable and comfortable footwear. After years of marching and standing watch freezing or sweltering in cheaply made boots, S&J Sentinels don't seem nearly as expensive as they might to a rookie. They add two bonus Momentum to Discipline and Resistance tests against cold, heat, or exhaustion from marching or standing watch. Variations compatible with every faction's combat armour are available, where X equals the leg armour soak provided by the armour.

SHIELD-3 CLOVERLEAF

A military sysadmin variant of Shield-1 U-Turn,

this program allows the user to designate friendly targets equal to their Hacking Focus within Long quantronic range. When a Guided or attack is made against one of those designated, the user can make a Hacking (D1) test as a special Reaction to inflict. Hex-pod: 6 meters long, triangular cross-section, 6 x 2 = 12 fills a Shipping-Pod. Stack-crate: .5 to 2 meters long, triangular cross-section, 3 to 12 per hex-pod.

SHVYY POISON

Brewed by Yuan Yuan pirate-chemists and the similarly deranged, SHVYY, aka "shiv", is sold in cheap spraycans and applied to melee weapons with a Tech (D1) test just before combat, lasting for 1d20 rounds plus one round per Momentum spent. It adds Biotech, Grievous, and +4 complication range to the weapon while it lasts. If a complication is generated by the Tech test, the user suffers a Wound.

SKELLETAL REINFORCEMENT X

Common among Martian Yinghuo colonists who regularly visit planets with heavier gravity, and fighters looking for a hidden edge, this full-body augmentation laces the user's skeleton with sculpted titanium, smart-materials, or even bands of Teseum. The resulting tensile strength allows the user to push their body beyond ordinary limits, adding +X Brawn, 1 Internal Armour Soak to all locations, and +X[CD] damage to their unarmed strikes. The augmentation subtly shifts the wearer's balance and mass, and it can be detected with an Observation (D3), Close Combat (D2) or Medicine (D1) test.

For each 1 rolled:	They temporarily gain 1 Security, Morale or Armour Soak (their choice), and +1 complication range to all tests until they stop drinking.
For each 2 rolled:	They temporarily gain +1 Agility, +1 Brawn, -1 Awareness, and -1 Intelligence. Attributes cannot be raised above 18 or lowered below 4, and if one would do so from a roll, it is adjusted 1 in the opposite direction instead. The GM gains 2 Heat.
For each 2 rolled:	They temporarily lose 1 Firewall, Resolve, Vigour, and Cashflow, only recovered if every die rolled on a future roll is an Effect, or after 24 hours of painful sobriety (+2 complication range to all tests). If a temporary damage track is reduced to zero, the drinker takes the appropriate Harm for each blank rolled, immediately falls unconscious, and the GM gains 3 Heat.
Effect 6:	The GM loses 1 Heat and attempts to remember what occurred while drinking increase to the number of Effects rolled (or remain at the same number if less than the current difficulty).

SKUNK-TUBE

This Yungang Corp single-use, under barrel, nano-pulser was supposedly invented to contend

NOR HELL A FURY
Yujinguese Red Furies were designed by Yungang Corp for Pheasant Rank Imperial Agents decade ago and were fairly exclusive until recently. O-12 analysts report Submondo dealers have sold entire cases of fresh-fabbed Red Furies multiple times over the last six months, and several bounty hunters who completed Druze Society contracts received one as part of their reward. The escape by disgruntled Yungang Corp engineer Zhao Kit-Wai from Imperial questioning 18 months ago is likely tied to this newfound abundance.

with Paradiso's predatory flora and fauna, and it is not standard issue for any faction's military. Unofficially, however, its inexpensive construction and devastating payload is popular with soldiers, particularly mercenaries looking for a lightweight room clearer. It is easily identified by its brightly coloured adhesive stripe and designed for installation on weapons with the MULTI Light Mod quality in place of the usual secondary weapon, requiring a Tech (D1) test to do so. Swapping out a used cartridge for a new one is similarly a Standard Action Tech (D1) test.

(Range C, 1+5[CD] damage, 1H, Biotech, Disposable, Subtle 3, Torrent, Vicious 1)

SNIFFER X

Sniffers scan their immediate surroundings for suspect particles or signals using overlapping sensors, giving operators the chance to establish and safely monitor security perimeters. They function as sensor suites with X+1 different sensor types, but deploying one only takes a Standard action because they're designed to set up quickly and easily in the field. Once deployed, they can be used by any networked ally, and have sufficient power to stay active for twelve hours. Characters can treat targets within Close range of an allied Sniffer as within Close range for the purposes of Observation tests, and they take -1 Difficulty and one bonus Momentum on those tests.

(Armour Soak 1, 1 Structure, Fragile, sold in sets of 3).

SPIKE

A favourite of Aristeia! competitors, many of whom sponsor their own brands, a spike is an adhesive patch embedded with gel packets of fast-acting medications that absorb through the skin when the patch is slapped on. Spike can be administered once a round to Absterge physical conditions, inflicting 1+1[CD] damage per dose that ignores armour and BTS. Ten minutes after dosage, the user becomes Fatigued until they get a full night's sleep – multiple doses stack additional condition instances requiring rest.

STASH-CRATE (SIZE) X

A smuggler's favourite, and invaluable for Mercenaries attempting to unobtrusively transport materiel without awkward conversations with customs agents, these crates come in a variety of sizes mimicking standard shipping containers. Each has a dense interior coating that blocks E/M, quantronic, radioactive, and other emissions from its contents, and an elaborate active spoofing system that falsifies sensor and sniffer scans with innocuous imagery, adding +X Difficulty to Observation and Analysis tests to detect its true contents.

If aware of a scan and quantronically connected to the stash-crate, a user can make a special Reaction to force a face-to-face test, testing Intelligence + Science (D1) against the scanner's Observation or Analysis. If successful, they inflict a Metanoia on the scanner, who ignores the stash-crate until something arouses their suspicion. Due their complexity, they cannot be less than a half-metre in any dimension, and larger sizes are less expensive. The following are the most common configurations:

Shipping-Pod: 2.5 meters high, 12 meters long, with a hexagonal cross-section for easy manipulation by remotes and 4-axis magnetic stacking in zero-g.

Hex-pod: 6 meters long, triangular cross-section, 6 x 2 = 12 fills a Shipping-Pod.

Stack-crate: .5 to 2 meters long, triangular cross-section, 3 to 12 per hex-pod.

STASHPOCKET X

Flat shielded pockets without quantronic tags or other identifying branding, a simple sealant-strip along one edge, and a press-adhesive coating one side, stashpockets are commonly used by mercenaries and couriers to smuggle flashbills, drugs, or other small items through customs. Expensive versions incorporate photoreactive coatings to match skin tone, clothing, or surrounding materials, and even embedded E/M countermeasures to baffle sensors. They have Concealed X and add Concealed X to One Handed or smaller items stored inside, but they require an additional 1 Momentum to re-stow the item after

GM OPTION: MODPOCKETS

With GM approval, ModCoats with already-integrated Stashpockets can be common, particularly from Submondo, Nomad, and Merovingian traders – ignore all Tariffs when purchasing ModCoats with built-in Stashpockets. In return, the GM can spend X Heat at any time to reveal an adversary wearing a ModCoat has a ModPocket X installed, with a useful One Handed or smaller item inside.

TACTICAL WEBBING

A full-body system of selectively adhesive belts, braces, and straps to attach equipment to for quick access, tactical webbing allows an attached item to be drawn as a Free Action once a round. However, Thievery tests to steal attached items are at -1 difficulty, and the webbing is obviously and unmistakably military equipment.

TACGEIST UPGRADE X

Mercenary recruits come from a variety of backgrounds, many of them relatively non-violent and free of conflict, so higher-end mercenary companies often offer Geist upgrade bundles to get their charges up to speed quickly. Installed as a

AUGMENTATION

VARIANT: SECLOCK

CSU SIXTH SENSE

SecLock's Corporate Security Units (CSUs) have sophisticated implants to monitor environmental factors – ambient temperature, non-human visual spectrums, wideband audio, airborne chemical concentrations, etc. – and coordinate with Locke, their pseudo-AI, to interpret data and warn about threats before they are consciously aware of them. This adds the Comms Quality to their Sixth Sense augmentation, and Locke's calm confidence removes the Twitchy trait that usually accompanies it, providing 1 Morale soak as long as they remain in quantronic contact with the LAI.

GM OPTION:

MODPOCKETS

With GM approval, ModCoats with already-integrated Stashpockets can be common, particularly from Submondo, Nomad, and Merovingian traders – ignore all Tariffs when purchasing ModCoats with built-in Stashpockets. In return, the GM can spend X Heat at any time to reveal an adversary wearing a ModCoat has a ModPocket X installed, with a useful One Handed or smaller item inside.



MRCY & CO.

MRCY & Company is a clothing manufacturer founded by 1st Ranger Division veterans Moses Renen and Camilla Youphes to make the tough long-wearing apparel they missed from Earth — jeans, boots, work pants — and that Dawn's frontier demanded. Their goods are icons of US Ariadnan culture and frontier fashion. Several recent public contracts with the USARF involved public-private partnerships with hypercorps, leading to widely publicized employee and customer protests. Thanks to a successful public relations campaign, however, their recent bulk sales to Mercenary companies are seen as a sign of their independence from governmental control, rather than a sellout to galactics.

single package, they contain a preset combination of 3X skill ranks, X Talents (provided the Geist has appropriate pre-requisites), and 3X Attribute improvements. While this provides consistency across troop's Geists, such a massive integration requires a great deal of technical skill, adding +X complication range to the Tech or Hacking test to install it. If any complications are generated during installation, the Geist will have +1 Complication range when using skills, talents, or attributes affected by the package. Once purchased, the upgrade can be installed on any number of Geists.

TESEUM HARDCASE

Made out of a small fortune in Teseum, these hard shells for hacking devices were gifted to Wardrivers as thanks for their invaluable aid by Ariadnan employers at the end of their service in the Commercial Conflicts. They are available in limited quantities to hackers who prove themselves Dawn's allies. They add Armoured 4 to the hacking device — of any type — they were made to house, provide +2 BTS vs attacks with the E/M quality, and grant a bonus Momentum on Psywar techniques against Ariadnans and other Wardrivers. They are also inscribed with their new owner's handle when

created: altering the inscription requires a Tech (D3) test.

TESEUM HATCHET

A civilian, one-handed hand axe popular with Ariadnan hunters and farmers, and standard kit for Highlander Cateran irregulars. Teseum hatchets saw bloody use during the Commercial Conflicts, becoming prized memorabilia for mercenaries who raided outlying communities. While a common piece of useful and long-lasting — albeit expensive — kit, a galactic carrying one on Caledonia's frontier, particularly one with a martial look, is on a short trip to a shallow grave. (Melee, 2+5[CD] damage, 2H, Grievous, Non-Hackable, Piercing 2, Subtle 1, Thrown, Vicious 1)

TRIPS X

These simple one-use sensors burst-transmit their readings to authorized users or systems when triggered, before dissolving into forensically useless slag. Like sensor suites, they are always sensitive to X different types of phenomena, and similar to recorders they add 2 bonus Momentum on Stealth tests to conceal them and have an Observation skill target number of 10+X. They



can be combined with a grenade or ammunition reload to create an ad-hoc mine or charge with a Tech (D1) test at +1 complication range, and for two Momentum the resulting explosive does not have the usual Improved 1 quality on its attacks. Especially paranoid mercenaries add them to their gear when in transit to ensure it isn't tampered with or stolen.

USARF FIGHTING UNIFORM (ENVIRONMENT)

The USARF fighting uniform uses photoreactive e-inks alongside extracts from abundant local plants for terrain-customised camouflage patterns. These include Winter Sun for snowy conditions, Sandstorm for southern desert environments, and Forestland for Dawn's dense forests. While incompatible with other kinds of camo, they are quite effective in their target environment, counting as a kit for face-to-face Stealth tests made against targets at Medium range or farther and granting a bonus Momentum to successful face-to-face Stealth tests. A DARPS innovation mass-produced by MRCY & Co., and they are popular with off-world mercs thanks to their durable construction and competitive pricing.

VUVUZELA AMMUNITION

Named for the simple horns used by PanOceanian sports fans, these nonlethal heavy rounds detonate into programmable cacophonies of sound. Used for signaling, assaults, and dispersal of crowds or Antipodes, their audio and guidance libraries are notoriously vulnerable to exploits. Welders lose 2 Firewall per Reload of the ammo they carry. Vuvuzela ammunition adds Deafening, Indiscriminate (Medium), Nonlethal, Stun, Terrifying 2, and Unsubtle to the weapon.

XINGTIAN ARMOUR

Like the Chinese deity that fought on even after decapitation, the self-repairing systems in this Heavy armour from Jeontu JJM allow troops to defy the odds. In addition to the Self-Repairing quality, users can make a Tech (D2) test as a Standard Action once per day to push repair systems beyond their standard parameters, restoring 2 Armour Soak to all locations. The armour requires periodic infusions of special materials and is known to include a variety of Imperial backdoors. It provides no BTS against StateArmy hackers.

X-VISOR

Technological aids, that enhance visual focus, X-Visors increase the effective range and accuracy of the user's aimed gear in combat. They are often added as an upgrade to AR Eye Implants or armour. The user can ignore one difficulty's worth of penalties due to range on Ballistics or Observation tests.

YANGWATER

Slang for stimulant powders often blended with alcohol, Yangwater is laced with compounds that accelerate the user's metabolism and bind with muscle tissue mitochondria, artificially boosting endurance and strength, along with a pleasurable warming sensation. The best night and the worst hangover you'll ever have. Yangwater adds +3 Brawn and +3 Morale Soak until the user sleeps or falls unconscious. For 10 hours after they wake up, fatigue toxins and drug byproducts flood their bloodstream, causing an inescapable headache that reduces Brawn and Morale Soak by 1d6 each, to a minimum of 6 Brawn and 6 Resolve Soak.

HWARANG ARMOUR

Jeontu designers initially named Xingtian armour after the Hwarang (Flowering Knights in Korean), an ancient Korean group of elite warriors, until executives sensitive to political considerations forced a name change and a series of functionality reductions and aesthetic alterations to better suit Imperial biases. Head engineer Gi-yo So-yeon and her team quit in disgust, and after unsatisfactory negotiation with dozens of organizations and corporations, founded Wonhwa Ltd, a now well-regarded crew of independent mercenary armourers. For a modest fee, they will restore Xingtian armour's optimized design, adding a Chameleonwear coating and removing its Heavy Armour quality – this increases its maintenance cost by 1, since it invalidates Jeontu's warranty.

AMMUNITION TABLE

Name	Category	Qualities Added to Weapon	Restriction	Cost	Tariff
Bulava	Standard	Comms, Salvo (Spread 1, Vicious 1), Unsubtle	2 (Ariadna 1, Rodina 0)	3+1[CD]	-
Fugo	Heavy	Indiscriminate (Close), Nonlethal, Terrifying 3 ¹	3 (Submondo 1, Yu Jing 2)	5+1[CD]	T3
Gyre	Shell	Immobilising, Knockdown, Nonlethal, Spread 1	1	4+2[CD]	T2
Reti	Heavy	Guided, Unsubtle, Vicious 1	3 (PanOceania 1, Varuna 0)	4+1[CD]	T1
Vuvuzela	Heavy	Deafening, Indiscriminate (Medium), Nonlethal, Stun, Terrifying 2, Unsubtle	1	3+1[CD]	T2

¹ See entry for details.

ARMOUR TABLE

Armour	Armour Soak				BTS	Qualities	Restriction	Cost	Tariff	Maintenance
	Head	Torso	Arm	Leg						
Bibendum Suit	2/1	2/1	2/1	2/1	0	Hidden Armour 2	2 ²	6+2[CD]	T1	1
Bootleg Combat Armour [Faction]	per armour						+1	+3[CD]	1	+1
USARF Fighting Uniform	1	2	1	1	0	better Stealth in 1 environment, Non-hackable	USAriadna 2 ²	7+2[CD]	T2 ²	-
Xingtian Armour	3	4	2	3	2 ¹	Heavy Armour, Self-Repairing ¹	3 (Yu Jing 1 ²)	11+2[CD]	T2 ²	4

¹ See entry for details. ² Restriction 1 and no Tariff if Buying in Bulk (4 or more).

AUGMENTATIONS TABLE

Augmentation	Category	Type	Qualities	Restriction	Cost	Tariff	Maint
360° Vison	Cybernetic	Replacement (eyes)	Aug	2 (Haqqislam 1)	8+2[CD]	T1	-
Handen Augmentation	Cybernetic	Replacement (hands)	Parry 1, Subtle 1, Unforgiving 2, Vicious 1 Monofilament ¹	4 (Corporate 3, Merc 3)	10+2[CD]	T2	2
Neurocinetics Augmentaion	Cybernetic	Full-Body	Aug	4 (Nomads 2, Submondo 3)	8+2[CD]	T3	1
Attribute Augmentation 2 (MetaChemistry)	Cybernetic	Full-body	Aug ²	2	6+2[CD]	T2	-
MetaChemistry Procedure	Bioware ²	Full-body	1,2	3 (any faction's military 1)	9+1[CD]	T1	-
Bioimmunity (MetaChemistry)	Cybernetic ²	Full-Body	Aug ²	2	10+1[CD]	T2	-
Gecko Pads (MetaChemistry)	Cybernetic ²	Full-body	Aug ²	2	6+1[CD]	T2	-
Neural Shunts (MetaChemistry)	Cybernetic ²	Full-body	Aug ²	2	6+2[CD]	T2	-
Pain Filters (MetaChemistry)	Cybernetic ²	Full-body	Aug ²	2	6+1[CD]	T2	-
Regeneration (MetaChemistry)	Cybernetic ²	Full-body	Aug ²	2	6+2[CD]	T2	-
Sixth Sense (MetaChemistry)	Cybernetic ²	Full-body	Aug ²	2	8+1[CD]	T2	-
Subdermal Grafts (MetaChemistry)	Cybernetic ²	Full-body	Aug ²	2	6+1[CD]	T1	-
Super-Jump (MetaChemistry)	Cybernetic ²	Full-body	Aug ²	2	6+1[CD]	T2	-
PackMod (each packmate)	Silk	Replacement (olfactory system)	Aug	Moto.aug 3 ¹	6+3[CD]	T1	1
Skeletal Reinforcement X	Cybernetic	Full-body	Aug	X	8+X[CD]	T1	1

¹ See entry for additional details. ² See MetaChemistry, p. 47, for additional details.

DRUGS TABLE

Drugs	Restriction	Cost	Tariff
Bad Dog	3 (Haqqislam 1)	3+1[CD]	T3
Bounce	2 (PanOceania 1, Haqqislam 3, Yu Jing 3)	3+1[CD]	T1
ExcelRate	3 (Submondo 1 ²)	3+2[CD]	T2 ²
Nightmare	3 (Yu Jing 2)	3+2[CD]	T3
Pulpibeer BigCan (1 hour)	1	2+1[CD]	-
Pulpibeer SixPac (3 hrs)	1 ²	4+2[CD]	T1 ²
Pulpibeer DayKeg (12 hrs)	1 ²	6+4[CD]	T2 ²
Spike	1 (Aristea! 0)	3+1[CD]	T1
Yangwater	1 (Yu Jing 0)	4+2[CD]	T2

² Restriction 1 and no Tariff if Buying in Bulk (4 or more).

EXPLOSIVES TABLE

Name	Category	Damage ¹	Size	Qualities ²	Restriction	Cost (per 3)	Tariff
BoomRat	Mine	1+4[CD]	1H	Comms, Disposable, Indiscriminate (Close), Unsubtle, Vicious 1	3 (Yu Jing 2 ³)	7+3[CD]	T1 ³
D-Spray	Charge	1+4[CD]	1H	Anti-Materiel 1, Disposable, Piercing 2, Spread 1, Unsubtle, Vicious 1	2 ³	3+2[CD]	T1 ³
Fireflies	Grenade	N/A ²	1H	Disposable, Indiscriminate (Close), Nonlethal, Speculative Fire, Thrown, Unsubtle ²	2 (Yu Jing 1 ³)	5+1[CD]	T1 ³
Onibi	Mine	2+4[CD]	1H	Comms, Disposable, Incendiary 2, Indiscriminate (Close), Radiation 2, Terrifying 1	4 (Human Edge 1 ³ , Submondo 2)	5+2[CD]	T3

¹Do not add Bonus Damage from attributes to explosive devices. ²See entry for additional abilities. ³ Restriction 1 and no Tariff if Buying in Bulk.

MELEE WEAPONS TABLE

Weapon	Damage	Size	Qualities	Restriction	Cost	Tariff
Acrogenic Blade X	1+2X[CD]	1H	Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Piercing X, Subtle 1, Thrown, Unforgiving 2	Human Edge 1, Nomads 2, Haqqislam 2	4+2X[CD]	-
Cube Scalpel	1+3[CD]	1H	Concealed 1, Mono-filament, Subtle 2, Unforgiving 1	3 (Submondo 2, Tohaa 1)	9+3[CD]	T1
Gushblade	2+4[CD]	2H	Grievous, Improvised 1, Toxic 1, Unforgiving 1, Vicious 2	3 (Submondo 2, Yuan Yuan 1)	5+3[CD]	T2
Teseum Hatchet	1+3[CD]	1H	Non-Hackable, Piercing 2, Subtle 1, Thrown, Vicious 1	3 (Ariadna 2)	4+2[CD]	T4 ¹

¹ Tariff only applies to Mercenaries buying from Ariadnan sellers. ² See entry for details.

POISONS TABLE

Poison	Restriction	Cost	Tariff
SHVYY	3 (Submondo 1)	1+5[CD]	T3

PROGRAMS TABLE

Type	Rating	Program	Damage	Qualities	Restriction	Cost	Tariff
SHIELD	3	Cloverleaf	-	¹	2 (Wardriver 1)	4+3[CD]	T1

RANGED WEAPONS TABLE

Weapon	Range	Damage	Burst	Size	Ammo	Qualities	Restriction	Cost	Tariff
Blitzen	L	2+5[CD]	1	2H	E/M2	Munition ¹	³ (Haqqislam 2)	8+1[CD]	T2
D.E.P.	L	2+5[CD]	1	2H	Needle	Munition ¹ , Unsubtle	2 (Nomads 1 ²)	5+1[CD]	T2 ²
Fuerbach	L	2+4[CD]	2/1	Unw	Needle/ Explosive	MULTI Heavy, Unsubtle	3 (PanOceania 4)	10+ 2[CD]	T2
Fulgor Rifle	C/M	1+5[CD]	2/1	2H	Standard ¹	Expert 1, Multi Light Mod(w/ LF installed), Vicious 1	³ (Nomad 2, PanO 2 ²)	7+3[CD]	T2 ²
Heavy Shotgun	C	2+6[CD]	1	2H ¹ /Mou	Normal Shells / AP Slugs	Knockdown	3	9+1[CD]	T1
Pitcher	M	-	1	Unb	Deployable Repeater	Munition, Speculative Fire ¹	3 (PanOceania 2 ²)	8+2[CD]	T2 ²
Red Fury	M	1+5[CD]	3	2H	Shock	Spread 2, Grievous, Unsubtle, Vicious 1	2 (Yu Jing 1 ²)	8+3[CD]	T1 ²
Skunk-tube	C	1+5[CD]	1	1H	-	Biotech, Disposable, Subtle 3, Torrent, Vicious 1	2 (Yu Jing 1 ²)	4+1[CD]	T2 ²

¹ See entry for additional abilities and details ² Restriction 1 and no Tariff if Buying in Bulk (4 or more)

REMOTES TABLE

Remote	Restriction	Cost	Tariff	Maintenance
Aerocam Remote	1 (WarCor 0)	6+1[CD]	T1	¹ ³
Nul-Zed Zondbot	2 (Nomad 1 ²)	8+3[CD]	T2	3

¹ See entry for additional abilities ² Restriction 1 and no Tariff if Buying in Bulk (4 or more)

³ Additional remotes of this kind do not increase Maintenance cost

TOOLS & OTHER ITEMS TABLE

Item	Qualities	Restriction	Cost	Tariff	Maintenance
360° Visor	-	3 (Haqqislam 1)	7+2[CD]	T2	-
Adhesive Solvent	Disposable, Area (Close) ¹	2 (Nomads 1 ² , Submondo 1 ²)	3+1[CD]	-	-
Bandolier	-	1	4+1[CD]	-	-
CamSight	Comms, Expert 1	2 ² (Hypercorp 0 ²)	5+1[CD]	T1 ²	-
Forward Observer NARC	Comms, Armoured 1	3 ²	6+2[CD]	T2 ²	1
G-Rations	-	3 (Mercs 1, Submondo 1)	2+1[CD]	T1 ²	-
Hamaka	Armoured 2, BTS 1	2 ² (Haqqislam 0 ² , Nomads 0 ²)	6+2[CD]	T2 ²	-
Jitterbug Rations	-	1 ² (Nomads 0 ²)	2+1[CD]	T1 ²	-
NitroV Outfit	Fragile	2 ² (Nomads 1 ²)	Per Middle Lifestyle Clothing (1+1[CD])	-	2, Nomads 1
Ramshackle Combat Jump Pack	Disposable, Fragile	1 (Mercenary 0 ²)	3+1[CD]	T2	-
Sauk & Joad Sentinels X	Armoured X	X-1 ²	7+X[CD]	-	-
Headhunter Suite	Comms	2	8+3[CD]	T3	1
Sniffer X	Comms	X (Haqqislam 1 ²)	6+X[CD]	T(X)	-
Stash-Crate [Stack-crate] X	Armoured X, Concealed X ¹	Nomad X, Submondo X-1	1+4X[CD]	T2	1
Stash-Crate [Hex-pod] X	Armoured X, Concealed X ¹	Ariadna X+1, Nomad X, Submondo X-1	3+3X[CD]	T1	1
Stash-Crate [Shipping-Pod] X	Armoured X, Concealed X ¹	Ariadna X-1, Nomad X, Submondo X	7+X[CD]	-	1
Stashpocket X	Concealed X ¹	X-1	X+X[CD]	T(X-1)	-
Tactical Webbing	Non-Hackable	1	5+1[CD]	T1	-
TacGeist Upgrade X	-	3 (Mercenary 2)	1+4X[CD]	T2	-
Teseum Hardcase	Armoured 4, +2 BTS vs E/M	5 (Ariadna 3, Nomads 4, Wardrivers 2)	8+4[CD]	T2	-
Trips X (per set of 3)	Comms, Fragile, Concealed 2	1 ²	2+X[CD]	T(X)2	-
X-Visor	Comms	2	6+1[CD]	T1	-

¹ See entry for additional abilities ² Restriction 1 and no Tariff if Buying in Bulk (4 or more)

CHAPTER 6 MERCENARY VEHICLES

VEHICLE UPGRADE
TIMEFRAME TABLE

Factor	Hours per test
Scale 0	2
Scale 1	3
Scale 2	4
Scale 3	6
Scale 4	8
Scale 5+	12
Chassis or Motive	+2
Comms or Internal	+0
External or Weapons	-1
Rugged	Halves time required, -1 difficulty
Modpods	-1 Scale, -1 difficulty or -2 if also Rugged (see entry below).

While Bounty Hunters and other solitary Mercenaries can usually rely on public transportation infrastructure, and even the wealthiest PMCs rely on Circulars for system-to-system movement, ground and air vehicles are an essential investment: they determine a company's supply chain logistics, mobility between and during jobs, and most importantly its ability to project force in the field.

Due to exclusivity clauses and legislation dating back to the first Concilium Convention, military contractors are often unwilling or unable to sell cutting-edge military hardware to PMCs or non-governmental buyers. This forces company quartermasters to stock their motor pools with what they can scrounge via shady grey and secondary market connections, carefully bid on auctions of outdated military surplus, and if all else fails, convert civilian vehicles into what's needed.

Even when military vehicles are available, transporting them long distances can be prohibitively expensive, so PMCs often bring supplies to mount as much weaponry, equipment, and armour as they can on locally sourced or client-provided vehicles instead, carrying proven combinations of add-ons with them from job to job. Those well-funded enough to cover transit costs usually focus on a small stable of heavily customized vehicles to ensure they can hit the ground rolling, and they modify them for additional utility between jobs. A handful of vehicle sellers offer short-term leases to Mercenaries, though their insurance rates and damage premiums are punishing.

Due to these constraints, well-connected fixers, reliable gearheads, and pilots who know when to press their advantage and when to strategically retreat are the savvy Warmonger's first recruits when starting a venture. These connections safeguard their investment in combat-ready vehicles and upgrades. A few hypercorp jobs in return for loganto considerations early on can save even individual mercenaries a small fortune in expenses – blurring the line even further between employee and independent contractor.

VEHICLE UPGRADES

VEHICLE CUSTOMIZATION AND HARDPOINTS

These rules extend those in Chapter 11 of

the *Infinity* Gamemaster's Guide: see Vehicle Customization on p.135 – 142 for hardpoint categories and common upgrades. In summary, each hardpoint represents the space and capacity to replace, refine, change, or upgrade a specific aspect of the vehicle's function. Different hardpoints accept different types of upgrades, and different vehicles have different quantities of those six types of hardpoints: Chassis, Comms, External, Internal, Motive, and Weapons.

After basic repair and maintenance, vehicle upgrades are the most common duty for Mercenary motor pool technicians, and usually under intense time constraints. Each upgrade uses up one or more of a vehicle's hardpoints, and all the upgrade's listed hardpoints must be available to install it. Conversely, when an upgrade is removed, those hardpoints are freed up for future upgrades. The time to install or remove an upgrade depends on the vehicle's scale and qualities, and the type of upgrade involved.

Installing or removing an upgrade is a complex Tech skill test, with difficulty equal to the number of hardpoints the upgrade uses, total Momentum required equal to the vehicle's Scale +1, and a maximum number of failures equal to twice the technicians Tech Expertise. If multiple complications are generated on a single roll, the test fails. Unless the technician spends Parts equal to the vehicle's Scale +1 the vehicle loses one Hardpoint, either of the technician's choice if they generated at least one success, or the GM's choice if they did not. Once removed, an upgrade can be installed elsewhere.

MERCENARY VEHICLE UPGRADES CATALOGUE

VEHICLE CUSTOMIZATION AND HARDPOINTS

These items are designed for use with the hardpoint rules in Chapter 11 of the *Infinity* Gamemaster's Guide: Vehicle Customization on p.135 – 142 for hardpoint categories and common upgrades, and The Mod Shop table on p.141-142 for pricing. Each upgrade's hardpoint category is listed in parentheses after its name.

AFTERBURNERS X (MOTIVE)

Only applicable to Aircraft with a Thrust rating of 2 or more, this system allows the aircraft to gain a short burst of speed at the cost of powerplant

stress and increased fuel consumption. Afterburners can be used once per turn and up to X times in a scene, and they double the vehicle's Thrust rating for the turn they are activated. The vehicle must be moving in Thrust mode to activate its afterburner system and cannot use the Air Brakes momentum spend during that turn. The system can be used one additional time beyond its rating limit, but doing so pushes the vehicle beyond its safe performance envelope, requiring a D(3) Pilot test to avoid immediately taking X Faults.

AKIMBO TURRET X (EXTERNAL)

As with an ordinary Additional Weapon Mount, this external upgrade turns an External hardpoint into a Weapons hardpoint, which must be operated by a quantum link (whether by a passenger, remote operator, or Geist), and can be disabled by Breaches to the vehicle's network. Unlike conventional mounts, however, each akimbo turret mounts and fires a matched pair of smaller weapons instead of a single one, with the maximum weapon size determined by Scale. Rating 1 turrets can hold a pair of One-handed weapons, Rating 2 a pair of Two-handed or smaller, and Rating 3 Unwieldy, Mounted, or smaller. As with a character dual

wielding weapons, this allows the vehicle's gunner to use the Swift Action Momentum spend by paying only 1 Momentum, rather than the usual 2, so long as both Actions are ranged attacks with the akimbo turret's mounted weapons against the same target – or target zone if the weapons have Area, Indiscriminate, or Torrent qualities.

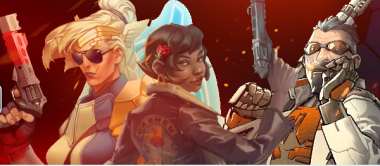
COLLAPSIBLE (CHASSIS + CHASSIS + INTERNAL)

More complete redesign than upgrade, rendering a vehicle collapsible requires replacing key rigid structures with smart materials that fold into empty spaces within the vehicle, or modular pieces that can be partially deconstructed to conserve space and reduce the vehicle's proportions. Converting the vehicle into its collapsed form takes its Scale in hours and a Tech (D2) test, and re-assembling it requires double that time. While collapsed, the vehicle can be stored and transported as though it was one Scale less than usual.

EVAC SYSTEM (INTERNAL)

A Zero-Zero evacuation device (i.e., functional at zero altitude and zero speed) derived from aircraft ejection devices, this system launches upwards to





deliver its occupant – a single protected passenger – from a grounded stationary position to a location far from a compromised or incapacitated vehicle. It uses a small explosive charge to open a pre-set portion of the vehicle's bulkheads, hull, or cockpit, miniature rockets to propel the occupant's seat upwards for an adequate distance, and an anti-shock gel bubble akin to a crashsuit to guarantee a safe and successful landing 1+3[CD] zones away. It also contains a pair of smoke grenades designed to fire at the start and end zones of its brief flight – notoriously unreliable, they only fire if an Effect is generated when determining landing distance.

With a Pilot (D1) test, the occupant can steer somewhat, landing 1 + Momentum spent nearer or farther than they would in ordinary circumstances. Alternatively, they can make a Ballistics (D1) test to manually fire the included smoke grenades at the starting and ending zones of their flight, or a Ballistics (D2) test each to aim them elsewhere. The system takes up a single passenger space, protects a single passenger, and launches automatically if the vehicle takes its last available Fault. It can also be triggered with a Pilot (D0) test as a Minor Action or Reaction by the occupant, by an ally connected to the vehicle's network with a Hacking (D0) test as a Reaction, or by a hostile hacker who makes a successful CLAW-2 Expel attack and spends 2 Momentum.

DEADSEAT (COMMS + INTERNAL)

A favourite of pilots equally comfortable with hacking devices and behind the wheel, this upgrade is only applicable to Single-Seat vehicles or those with a Neural Interface, and an integrated hacking device of any kind. It allows the pilot to assume the role of hacker without penalty – they apply their Firewall and Security Soak to the vehicle they are piloting as usual, and can additionally attempt Infowar attacks with the vehicle's hacking device during their turn, and defend against Infowar attacks against the vehicle as though it was their own network. Due to the dangers involved, they see minimal civilian use outside of elite Tristeryon couriers and overconfident and occasionally highly-skilled mercenaries.

The system connects to a pilot's implanted Neural device (a neural-implanted comlog, neural hacking socket, or similar Comms item with the Neural quality). If the pilot doesn't have one, the seat's headrest can create a Neural connection directly, though this takes a Standard Action to establish each time they assume the vehicle's Hacker role. In either case, feedback causes 1[CD] mental damage each time the vehicle suffers a Fault, 1[CD] physical damage if an effect is rolled for mental damage, and a further 1[CD] firewall damage if a second effect is rolled for physical damage. In exchange,

the pilot gains a bonus Momentum when making Pilot or Hacking tests with the vehicle.

EYEPAINT (COMMS + EXTERNAL)

Most famously sold by Kuraimori's paint producer Mokumokuren before Japan's secession, this paint is embedded with thousands of microscopic recorder beads and light-sensitive polyfilaments. While relatively low-resolution individually, they can collectively create 360° imagery of the vehicle's surroundings and use on-board visual processors to highlight notable details. This grants a bonus d20 to all passengers on Observation tests, though those filling the Pilot, Co-Pilot, Gunner, or Hacker roles have +1 complication range on those tests as well. If the vehicle is Exposed, passengers' attacks with weapons with the Expert quality, such as Combi Rifles, have their Expert quality increased by 1. If the vehicle suffers 1 or more damage from an attack with the Blinding quality, the eyepaint is scrambled during each of the passengers' next turns, adding +1 complication range and no benefit to tests that would ordinarily benefit from the upgrade.

FLARECHAFF ARRAY (EXTERNAL + WEAPON)

Useful only in combination with the ECM upgrade, and on Aircraft with Thrust of 4 or more, this micromissile array fires clouds of smart-magnesium chaff and magnetised micro-munitions to interfere with guidance systems and divert or destroy projectiles. The vehicle's ECM rating increases by 1, the Cover Soak provided by the Jink Aircraft Thrust Mode Momentum Spend against Guided ranged attacks is tripled, and it is doubled against all other ranged attacks.

LUX UP-ARMOUR X (EXTERNAL)

While many manufacturers are reluctant to sell directly to PMCs, when their ArmaLux line of reinforced building cladding suffered from unpredictable cosmetic degradation after only a few years' exposure to the elements, Cosmica Ltda. rapidly pivoted to the Mercenary market. Modular slabs sold in a variety of shapes, sizes, and densities, Lux materials and adhesives are perfect for improvising vehicle armour, converting even civilian vehicles into durable combat-ready transportation for much less than traditional Vehicle Armour upgrades.

The vehicle must be Enclosed, have Scale X or more, and have a Speed of 2 or more before installation – the added weight and bulk reduces Speed by 1, and adds the Cumbersome type if the vehicle does not already have it. Any Rebalanced Mass upgrades eliminate the armour's Cumbersome penalty, rather than their usual benefits. In return for these inconveniences, the vehicle gains +X Armour Soak,

For Evac System upgrade, see p.65.

Passengers firing from an Omniport can benefit from Eyepaint. See Omniport, p.66.

WILDFIRE AND FORGET

Despite attempted censure, the Ikari Company regularly uses flarechaff arrays at low altitudes to "accidentally" set fire to non-combatant housing, hospitals, and other targets forbidden by the Concilium Convention. As with their many other exploits, the charges are mired in O-12 sub-committees by subverted officials, then quietly discarded.

and since the panels are easily replaced, repair times to recover armour soak are halved.

MAGTRAX (CHASSIS + MOTIVE + MOTIVE)

Made of thousands of ferrous segments, sturdy smart-material hubs, and a vectored thrust system, this ground/water transport system can be dynamically configured to suit whatever's needed, though the power requirements involved radically alter the vehicle. It must be at least one of Hover, Tracked, or Wheeled to be upgraded, and gains whichever types it does not already have once installed: switching between modes is a Standard Action Pilot (D0) test. The vehicle's Speed is now 2 in Hover or Tracked mode and 3 in Wheeled mode regardless of prior ratings, but it receives the benefits of all three types in pursuits. For each Effect rolled on a pursuit roll, the vehicle adds +2 to its pursuit roll (Hover + Wheeled), and it ignores 2 Obstacle Soak (Tracked + a unique MagTrax bonus).

MODPODS X (COMMS AND/OR INTERNAL AND/OR WEAPONS)

A motor pool mechanic's dream, this upgrade separates and containerizes X categories of vehicle systems – Comms, Internal, or Weapons – into easily swapped modular housings. This takes up significant space: one hardpoint in each improved category, and the vehicle's max passengers is divided by X (round up, minimum 1 passenger space lost, cannot reduce passengers below 1). In return the vehicle is treated as one Scale smaller for installation, removal, or alteration times for upgrades in the improved categories, and Tech tests to do so are at -1 difficulty, or -2 difficulty if the vehicle is Rugged.

NARC RACK (COMMS + WEAPON)

A scaled-up version of the communications equipment used by Forward Observers to rapidly transmit target telemetry combined with a high-lumen set of spotlights. A NARC Rack allows a vehicle's gunner to mark a single zone within line of sight until the beginning of their next turn with a Tech (D1) test or Ballistics (D2) test. In either case, this is at +1 difficulty per range category nearer or beyond Medium. If successful, all targets in the zone are Marked, allowing all d20s to be re-rolled on ranged attacks against them until the user's next turn. Allied Guided forces gain further benefits: ranged attacks by targets Marked in this way against anyone but the vehicle illuminating them are at +1 Difficulty and +1 Complication range.

OMNIPORT (INTERNAL)

A mechanically simple weapon mounting and gunport for Enclosed vehicles, the Ariadnan omniport integrates with a passenger's weapon of

up to Unwieldy size with a Standard Action (D1) Tech test, allowing them to fire outside the vehicle as if the vehicle was Exposed, while remaining protected by the vehicle's full armour; detaching a weapon is a (D0) Tech test. Omniports can only accommodate one passenger at a time – they must place themselves at its location and manually operate their weapon: ranged attacks through one are at +1 complication range. Since it creates a disruption in its structure, the vehicle loses 2 Structure and two passenger spaces per omniport, and a special 3 Heat or 3 Momentum spend can be made to bypass the vehicle's Armour entirely when attacking a passenger that fired through one on their most recent turn. For 1 Momentum or Heat, a Fault Effect that destroys or disables an omniport can also apply to its mounted weapon.

PACENOTE GEIST UPGRADE (COMMS)

The recompilation of a vehicle's Comms systems to perfectly mesh with Geists' idiosyncratic structures, along with a customised data module to fully familiarise new Geist drivers with every nuance of a vehicle's operating envelope and affordances, this upgrade significantly enhances Geists' ability to pilot the upgraded vehicle. A Geist must also be updated – once – to integrate with Pacenote upgrades. Installation prices for Geists and vehicles are listed separately below, but both are required for an updated Geist to take advantage of the upgrade. When serving as the vehicle's Pilot, an updated Geist gains an additional Momentum on Pilot tests as though the vehicle had Expert 1 (or +1 to the vehicle's existing Expert rating if it already has one), and one additional Pilot Talent of the character's choice, provided it could be accessed via talents the Geist already has (or Ace otherwise). Once installed in a vehicle, any number of Pacenote-acclimated Geists can take advantage of the upgrade, though a Geist can only utilise Pacenote upgrades in vehicles with Scale equal to or less than their Pilot Expertise. Chauffeur Geists ignore this restriction and roll an additional 1d20 when taking advantage of the upgrade.

PULSE ARRAY (WEAPON)

An aimable battery of a dozen or more flash pulse emitters, this vehicle-mounted array floods an area with focused beams of hard light and data. In addition to damage, its discharge inflicts temporary blindness on anyone caught in the affected zone. As with an individual flash pulse, the array's mirrored barrels and smart-material lenses need careful maintenance and tuning to use effectively, requiring the use of the Tech skill instead of Ballistics when attacking. Because of their significant power requirements, they cannot be mounted on Scale 0 or Scale 1 vehicles. The array fires Flash ammo, and in an emergency can

NEWS FLASH

After a series of exposés by Arachne journalist duo FleshR & Wydel highlighting the long-term damaging effects of repeated pulse array and Screambbox array use on civilians, both weapon systems were banned by the Concilium Convention from use by law enforcement or PMCs expected to interact with the public. Unsubstantiated rumours claim Ikari Company troop transports and crowd control trucks are equipped with the banned arrays, disguised as innocuous sensor bands and communications transmitters.



draw on the vehicle's power systems to recharge. With a successful Tech (D2) test, the vehicle's gunner can clear any "out of ammo" Complications affecting the weapon. If the test fails or any Complications are generated, the vehicle suffers 1+5[CD] Structure damage that bypasses all armour, and if a Fault results the weapon is disabled as a Fault Effect. (Range M, 1+6[CD] damage, Burst 1, Mounted, Blinding, Indiscriminate (Close), Unsubtle, removes Marked)

RHINO REINFORCEMENT (CHASSIS + EXTERNAL + INTERNAL)

Improved passenger protection, this upgrade adds layered banks of rechargeable neomaterial crumple zones and internal shock absorbers to the vehicle's exterior and seating, providing superior passenger protection against collisions. Whenever passengers would suffer damage due to the vehicle suffering a Fault from a collision, loss of control, or ranged weapon attack, the upgrade grants passengers +4[CD] additional Armour Soak. It also reduces Backlash when ramming by 1, to a minimum of Backlash 1, but halves passenger space and takes up three hardpoints: one Chassis, one Internal, and one External.

SCREAMBOX ARRAY (EXTERNAL + WEAPON)

Officially an Active Denial System, this vehicle-mounted, nonlethal, directed-energy array disperses unarmoured crowds. Its high-energy beams excite water and fat molecules in the first .4mm of skin, inducing agony that lasts until targets flee the area. Manufacturers claim it causes no lasting physical damage beyond small blisters, as beam wavelengths are too short to penetrate the skin, but the psychological effects can be permanent – physical damage it inflicts is also taken as mental damage, in addition to its Terrifying quality. Full cover or modern armour, even armoured clothing, blocks its effects, but those without full head-to-toe protection or cover must make a Brawn + Discipline (D5) test to take actions other than fleeing the targeted area in terror. (Range M/L, 1+6[CD] damage, Burst 1, Mounted, Indiscriminate (Medium), Grievous, Nonlethal, Spread 1, Terrifying 3, Unsubtle)

SLEEPER HOUSING X (CHASSIS)

Also known as 'rat panels', these smart-material sockets and bodywork casings disguise a vehicle upgrade, adding +X difficulty to Observation tests to notice or discover its real purpose. Depending on the upgrade, the GM can rule it remains disguised even while active. Otherwise, when the upgrade is used, attempts to identify it as the source of attacks, interference, or other advantages are only at +1 difficulty, regardless of the housing's rating. They always require some degree of custom fit, so

the housing is usually purchased in combination with what it disguises – adding one to an already-installed upgrade doubles installation time.

OMNIA Q-CASES

While most sleeper housings are created by hobbyists or Submondo mechanics, Omnia Research & Creation's Q-Case line of modular weapons cases are the perfect starting point for a weapon upgrade housing. They add +2 base cost and +1 Tariff compared to an ordinary sleeper housing, but installation times are halved.

TURBOFANS X (MOTIVE + ...)

An Aircraft Haulage upgrade, turbofans are powerful replacements for a vehicle's powerplant and VTOL engines, allowing it to exert incredible force to lift and manoeuvre heavy cargo, granting +2 Brawn. The upgrade takes up Motive hardpoints equal to the vehicle's Vector Speed, X, and due to the stresses involved cannot be purchased for an Aircraft with Vector Speed of 4 or more.

VEHICLES CATALOGUE

VEHICLE HARDPOINT UPGRADES

Many of the vehicles in this section contain hardpoint upgrades from the *Infinity* Gamemaster's Guide, p.136-140, or the preceding section. These upgrades do not take up hardpoints as they are already installed, and they are listed in parentheses after the number of other available hardpoints of their type; a removed upgrade restores vehicle hardpoints.

For example, Chassis 2 (Ballast) becomes Chassis 3 if the Ballast upgrade is removed.

ANACONDA TAG X

Best known as the iconic mounts of the Anaconda Mercenary TAG Squadron, ordinary Anacondas are obsolete PanOceanian Reptile Series heavy reconnaissance TAGs, with below-average armour and chassis reinforcement, a built-in FGA MLN Panzerfaust, and one of two loadouts of basic integrated weaponry. Unused spaces in the chassis, however, along with modern miniaturisation techniques, allow considerable alteration.

For the right price, or the right friends, Praxis' Black Laboratories will partially replicate their Anaconda Squadron revamp – lightweight, polyceramic-compound plate armour, an evac system, superior neural interfaces and kinetic actuators, even Bakunin techno-warlock-grade firewall hardening. Accounts from Anaconda-pilot mercenaries who've faced the Squadron TAG-to-TAG and survived to tell the tale indicate the Black Labs keep some secrets in reserve, even from trusted outsiders and their fellow Nomads.

VEHICLE UPGRADES TABLE

Upgrade	Categories	Restriction	Cost	Tariff
Afterburners X	Motive	X	6+X[CD]	T(X)
Akimbo Turret X	External	2	4+2[CD]	T2
Collapsible	Chassis + Chassis + Internal	3 (Nomads 1, PanOceania 2)	6+3[CD]	T1
Evac System	Internal	1	4+4[CD]	-
DedSeat	Comms + Internal	1	5+1[CD]	T1
Eyepaint	Comms + External	1 (Japan 0)	(Scale) + 2[CD]	T2
Flarechaff Array	External + Weapon	2	5+3[CD]	T1
Lux Up-Armour X	External	1 (Hypercorp 0, Mercenaries 0)	3+X[CD]	-
MagTrax	Chassis + Motive + Motive	3	7+3[CD]	T1
Modpods X	Comms +/- Internal +/- Weapons	1 (Haqqislam 0, Nomads 0)	3+1[CD]	-
NARC Rack	Comms + Weapon	3 (PanOceania 1, Yu Jing 1)	3+3[CD]	T2
Omniport	Internal	1 (Ariadna 0)	8+3[CD]	T1
Pacernote Geist Upgrade	Comms	(Scale - 1)	6+1[CD]	T2
Pulse Array	Weapon	3	7+4[CD]	T1
Rhino Reinforcement	Chassis + External + Internal	1	7+1[CD]	T1
Screambox Array	External + Weapon	3 (Yu Jing 2)	8+1[CD]	T3
Sleeper Housing X	Chassis	X (X-1 Illicit)	2+2X[CD]	T3
Turbofans X	Chassis + ...	2	2(Scale) + X[CD]	T(X)

GEIST UPGRADES TABLE

Upgrade	Effect	Cost Increase
Pacernote Geist Upgrade	Expert +1, single Pilot Talent (see entry)	+4[CD]

VEHICLE COSTS TABLE

Vehicle	Scale	Speed	Strength	Armour	BTS	Impact	Restriction	Cost	Tariff
Anaconda TAG X	2	2	16 (+1)	4+X	4+X	3+5[CD]	X+2	12+2X[CD]	T(X)
Bokböceği TAG	2	2	16 (+1)	8	5	3+5[CD]	4 (Haqqislam 3, Mercenary 3)	13+1[CD]	T2
DinerPod	2	2	14 (+1)	3	3	2+5[CD]	1	10+1[CD]	-
Efreet Transport	3	2/4	14 (+3)	2H	3	8+8[CD]	3	12+2[CD]	T2
Hitchcock DSV	1	3	11 (+1)	2H ¹ /Mou	3	2+4[CD]	3 (Mercenary 2)	12+1[CD]	T1
Manta LCH	1	4	11 (+1)	Unb	4	2+4[CD]	3	12+3[CD]	T1
Rackham Buggy	1	4	10 (+1)	2H	2	2+4[CD]	1	8+2[CD]	T1
Roc Transport	5	5	15 (+5)	1H	3	9+10[CD]	4	16+2[CD]	T2
S4 Sunda Truck	2	3	15 (+2)	3	4	3+6[CD]	1	10+2[CD]	T2
Traintank	2	3	13 (+3)	3	4	8+7[CD]	3 (Rodina 1)	8+2[CD]	T2
ZQ-88 Gunship	3	3	12 (+1)	3	3	4+5[CD]	2	9+3[CD]	T3

¹ No Tariff for Mercenaries

REMOTES TABLE

Remote	Restriction	Cost	Tariff	Maintenance
Randgrid Casket-Drone	3 (At least one career phase as a Bounty Hunter, Remote Operator, Medical, or Police: Restriction 1 and Tariff 1)	11+1[CD]	T2	5 - Medicine or Tech Focus, minimum Maintenance 1



For Evac System upgrade, see p.69.

For Enclosed and other vehicle type details, see *Infinity* GM Guide, p. 124.

For Neural Interface and Expert X, see *Infinity* GM Guide, p. 137-138.

Enclosed, Ground, Hands, Single-Seat, Walker

Attributes: Scale 2, Speed 2, Brawn 16 (+1)

Details: Max. Passengers 1, Impact 3+5[CD] (Knockdown)

Hardpoints: Chassis 1, Comms 2, External 1, Internal 1, Motive 1, Weapons 0

Defences: Structure 14+X, Firewall 8+X, Armour 4+X, BTS 4+X

Standard Weaponry:

Panzerfaust: Range L, 2+5[CD] damage, Burst 1, 2H, Munition, Piercing 2, Spread 1, Unsubtle, Vicious 2

Loadout Alpha:

Spitfire: Range M, 1+5[CD] damage, Burst 3, 2H, Spread 2, Unsubtle

Light Flamethrower: Range C, 1+4[CD] damage, Burst 1, 2H, Incendiary 3, Munition, Terrifying 2, Torrent

Loadout Bravo:

HMG: Range L, 2+5[CD] damage, Burst 3, Unwieldy, Spread 1, Unsubtle

Chain-Colt: Range C, 1+4[CD] damage, Burst 1, 2H, Concealed 1, Torrent, Vicious 1

Special Abilities:

Black Secrets: At rating 2+, add an internal Evac System upgrade. At rating 3, also add comms Neural Interface and Expert 1 upgrades. In conflict with Nomad Military Forces or the Mercenary TAG Squadron, lose all X benefits to BTS, and add +X complication range to Acrobatics, Hacking, and Observation tests.

Custom Comfort: Personalised smart-material cushioning and environmental mods are standard even for stock Anacondas, providing +1 Morale Soak.

ZG-Jets: Ignore penalties imposed by zero-g conditions.

BOKBÖCEI TAG

Formerly mounts for Haqqislam's prestigious Maghariba Guard, after a bare minimum of Artefaktech XPR-1 Bokböceği (beetle in Turkish) were upgraded into XPR-5 Akreps, the remainder were dumped into grey and secondary markets to recoup project costs. While they lack Akreps' optics, claws, and articulated tail mount, Bokböceği's six-legged redundancy, respectable anti-ballistic defence, and troop-transport capacity makes them an ideal reliable PMC TAG, and one that doesn't break the bank. The Bokböceği's best features, at least as far as motor pool mechanics are concerned, are the weapons mounted on stubby armour-shrouded arms beneath its chin. Foremost is the CineticS Tausug Heavy Machine Gun. Largely designed around it, the construction minimises the weapon's recoil and barrel heating for surprisingly accurate sustained fire and gives easy access for repair and maintenance. A Heavy Flamethrower,

similarly accessible, supplements the Tausung but can cause serious discomfort for the pilot if overused.

Enclosed, Ground, Single-Seat, Walker

Attributes: Scale 2, Speed 2, Brawn 16 (+1)

Details: Max. Passengers 1, Impact 3+5[CD] (Knockdown)

Hardpoints: Comms 0 (ECM 1), External 0 (Running Boards)

Defences: Structure 14, Firewall 9, Armour 8, BTS 5

Axial Weapon:

HMG: Range L, 2+5[CD] damage, Burst 3, Unwieldy, Spread 1, Unsubtle

Secondary Weapons:

Heavy Flamethrower: Range C, 2+5[CD] damage, Burst 1, 2H, Incendiary 3, Munition, Terrifying 2, Torrent

Special Abilities:

Braces: External running boards can hold up to four passengers, and the pilot can take Pilot (D1) Guard Reactions against ranged attacks that target them.

Clamber: Can ignore difficult or hazardous terrain X with a Pilot (D(X-1)) test.

AKA SCRUBS

Attempting to capitalize on comparatively strong XPR-1 secondary sales, Artefaktech released several poorly received variants under the XPR-S Scarab designation. "Innovations" included replacing its heavy pistols with notoriously unreliable light flamethrowers, the axial HMG with a MULTI model that significantly compromised structural resilience and adding a loud underbelly track system for road speed. They shuttered development after five years of continuously poor sales, but overproduction in the interim created a well-distributed supply of XPR-compatible spare parts, which keeps Bokböceği and Akrep maintenance prices low.

DINERPOD

This self-propelled food truck's awning, seating, cooking surfaces, and even the vending machines at its nose and tail all retract into a narrow oblong housing, presenting a seamless exterior when closed up or in self-cleaning mode. In transit, it has surprisingly high ground clearance, with only small spherical wheels at the corners in contact with the ground. But when it expands, the interior becomes a full – if compact – kitchen with a full-length counter, and it can extend a variably transparent roof and walls against the elements or sun, and full-length picnic tables for additional seating.

Vending machines at either end provide additional (and often less expensive) drinks or other amenities, with housings that serve as a small awning while

For Enclosed and other vehicle type details, see *Infinity* GM Guide, p. 124.

For ECM X and Running Boards upgrades, see *Infinity* GM Guide, p. 137 and p.138 respectively.

perusing one's options. Popular with independent restaurants and hypercorp megabrands alike, they are ubiquitous at outdoor events or urban sidewalks and marketplaces, serving as casual spaces to grab a bite, browse Maya, enjoy a pleasant day, or meet with friends. Exclusive brands, served via DinerPod at private events, are a common *loganto* perk.

Cumbersome, Enclosed/Exposed, Ground, Remote 1, Self-Repairing, Wheeled

Attributes: Scale 2*, Speed 2, Brawn 14 (+1)

Details: Max. Passengers 0, Impact 2+5[CD] (Knockdown)

Hardpoints: Chassis 0 (Collapsible x2*, Environmental Conditioning), Comms 1 (Repeater), External 1 (Smart Coating), Internal 1 (Collapsible*),

Defences: Structure 15, Firewall 10, Armour 3, BTS 3

Special Abilities:

Extendo-Seating: With one minute and a Tech (D0) test, the pod can shift to one of several modes, as long as doing so will not place a human in danger. While it can only travel in its collapsed mode and cannot carry passengers, it can accommodate up to 5 staff in the kitchen, 10 bar customers, and 15 on the patio.

- 1 zone, kitchen only, enclosed for 2[CD] Armour Soak, and fully Environmentally Conditioned for 1 Morale Soak and +1 BTS
- 2 zones, kitchen (1[CD] Armour Soak), and bar seating beneath an awning
- 3 zones, adding a 3rd patio zone, with or without roof and walls. If both, 1[CD] Armour Soak and Environmental Conditioning for patio and bar.

LAI Hospitality: When controlled by its native LAI, the DinerPod gains a Morale and Security Soak of 3 and grants +1 Momentum to customer service tests.

EFREET TRANSPORT

Artefaktech's flagship VTOL dropship, the Efreet is designed to rapidly deploy troops into enemy territory, provide fire support, and rapidly exfiltrate them should the battle turn against them. Its durable and collapsible construction can satisfy even the pickiest techs and transport-conscious quartermasters, and at price points that tempt even the tightest-fisted Warmonger. The birdlike fuselage, integrated weaponry, multiple exits, and underwing engines are sufficiently battle-proven that buyers insist on the design: even imitators such as Compass' GT-4 Griffin and Interspace Trust's A-9 Ibis, while legally distinct, have almost identical functionality.

The catch is that much of that design's cost-cutting simplification comes at the expense of

creature comforts – temperature control, vibration suppression, seating beyond fab-foam and Kevlar straps – otherwise considered standard, making for a seriously rough ride. Its quantronic defences are respectable for the price, however, and its chin-mounted HMG and akimbo Combi Rifle ball turret beneath its tail help clear and cover landing zones – ensuring survival goes a long way toward re-earning troopers' affections, and many 'freets are beloved PMC mascots.

Aircraft, Enclosed, Ground, Hover, Rugged

Attributes: Scale 3, Speed 2/4, Brawn 14 (+3)

Details: Max. Passengers 18, Impact 8+8[CD] (Knockdown)

Hardpoints: Chassis 1 (Collapsible x2, Convertible*), Comms 1 (ECM 1), External 3, Internal 3 (Collapsible), Motive 1 (Turbofans x2), Weapons 1 (Akimbo Turret, HMG)

Defences: Structure 28, Firewall 14, Armour 3, BTS 4

Axial Weapon:

HMG: Range L, 2+5[CD] damage, Burst 3, Unwieldy, Spread 1, Unsubtle

Rear Ball Turret:

Akimbo Combi Rifles (x2): Range C/M, 1+5[CD] damage, Burst 2, 2H, Expert 1, MULTI Light Mod, Vicious 1

Special Abilities:

Aces High: The forward zone is taken up by stations for a pilot and a co-pilot: either can serve as gunner without penalty, and they can assist the other with Pilot or Ballistics tests. Unless both have Pilot Expertise of 3 or more, Pilot tests to manoeuvre the aircraft are at +1 difficulty.

Cargowalls: Instead of a retractable roof, a rear ramp or fuselage doors on either side of the rear two cargo zones can be opened with a Minor Action by the pilot or co-pilot, changing that section to Exposed for easy movement of cargo or passengers. If done while airborne, that zone becomes Difficult Terrain 3.

Modular Interior: The two rear cargo zones can each hold one Shipping-Pod's worth of materiel, though only one Scale 2 vehicle at most between them.

Rough Ride: At the start of each hour of flight, crew or passengers with Brawn + Pilot Expertise + Resistance Expertise of 12 or less must make a Resistance (D1) test to avoid taking 2[CD] Nonlethal physical and mental damage, which cannot be recovered while a passenger. Each passed test doubles the time until the next required test, removing it permanently once 4 tests are passed.



For Aircraft and other vehicle type details, see *Infinity* GM Guide, p. 124.

For Convertible and Turbofans upgrades, see *Infinity* GM Guide, p. 136-139.

For Akimbo Turret and Collapsible upgrades, see p.64.

HITCHCOCK DSV VARIANT: SEA STINGER

Though it compromises the sub's stealthy profile, some PMCs replace their Hitchcock's hands and Weapons hardpoint with an Ariadnan water-proofed AKNovy Drozhat AP HMG and extra ammo stores, repurposing it for sub-hunting and aquatic fire-support.

HITCHCOCK DSV

Officially designated the SSV Gazelle, this stealthy single-seat Deep-Submergence Vehicle picked up its nickname, "Hitchcock", from test pilots who would suddenly surface to surprise monitoring scientists during acceptance testing. It has a cramped, lie-down cockpit and no defences beyond its manipulator arms' claws, but the teardrop-shaped hull incorporates TO Camo sheathing and sound-suppression baffles that effectively shield it from sensor detection. So effectively, in fact, that outside analysts are uncertain why the Hexahedron allows its sale, rather than insist on 10-year exclusivity clauses as is usually required of military contractors. The consensus is a hidden flaw somehow exposes it to PanOceanian Military Complex sensors. But even on Varuna its pricing makes it ideal for PMCs offering coastal and oceanic infiltration.

Enclosed, Hands, High-Performance, Single-Seat, Submersible, Watercraft
Attributes: Scale 1, Speed 3, Brawn 11 (+1)
Details: Max. Passengers 1, Impact 2+4[CD] (Piercing 2, Knockdown)

Hardpoints: Chassis 1 (Rebalanced Mass), Comms 0 (Deflector-1, Neural Interface), External 0 (Camouflage*), Internal 0, Motive 1, Weapons 1
Defences: Structure 16, Firewall 16, Armour 3, BTS 5

Special Abilities:

A Teardrop in the Ocean: +2 difficulty to Observation tests to detect it provided it makes only Manoeuvre or Careful Piloting movement and its arms are retracted, except against ALEPH, Yu Jing, or PanOceanian military sensors.

Jump Scare: Make a Pilot (D1) test to disable camo and suddenly surface, inflicting 4+2[CD] Piercing 2 mental damage to surprised observers.

Lifeboat: Ignores penalties imposed by pressure, even at extraordinary depths.

MANTA LCH

This swift Littoral Combat Hovercraft's flying-wing fuselage resembles its namesake, presenting a narrow silhouette to oncoming enemy fire, but requiring the crew – pilot, gunner, hacker – to lay face-down in their respective stations, which takes some getting used to. A short-lived line from Motronica and an offshoot of early Stingray TAG



platform research, they are ideal for coastal defence and Infowar strikes, though only a handful remain on the open market, at price points reflecting their rarity, cutting-edge construction, and TAG-grade Infowar defence system. When purchased directly from Moto.tronica, the craft can optionally be acquired without its stock Agallocha weapon system, providing 2 Weapon hardpoints instead.

Enclosed, High-Performance, Ground, Hover, Nimble, Watercraft

Attributes: Scale 1, Speed 4, Brawn 11 (+1)

Details: Max. Passengers 3, Impact 2+4[CD] (E/M, Knockdown)

Hardpoints: Chassis 1 (Rebalanced Mass), Comms 0 (Deflector-1, Hacking Terminal [Hacking Device], Neural Interface), External 0 (Camouflage), Internal 0 (Impact Protection), Motive 1, Weapons 0 (Flash Pulse, HMG)

Defences: Structure 16, Firewall 16, Armour 4, BTS 6
Mounted Weapons:

Flash Pulse: Range M, 1+5[CD] damage, Burst 1, 1H, Blinding

HMG: Range L, 2+6[CD] damage, Burst 3, Unwieldy, Spread 1, Unsubtle

Special Abilities:

Agallocha: If equipped with the stock weapon system, after a successful Flash Pulse attack on a target, the Manta's gunner can make a Swift Action Momentum spend for only one Momentum to make an HMG attack on the same target.

Low-Profile: Gains +3 Soak per Cover die Effect, Hasty Piloting or Flat Out movement adds +1 difficulty to ranged attacks on it until the pilot's next turn.

Rough Ride: At the start of each hour of flight, crew with Brawn + Pilot Expertise + Resistance Expertise of 12 or less must make a Resistance (D1) test to avoid taking 2[CD] Nonlethal physical and mental damage, which cannot be recovered while a passenger. Each passed test doubles the time until the next required test, removing it permanently once 4 tests are passed.

Sealed Hull: Getting into or out of the Manta requires a Standard Action, and Quick Entry/Exit vehicular momentum spends to enter or exit are impossible.

RACKHAM BUGGY

Affordable enough for the stingiest quartermaster, this stripped-down, lightly armoured, all-terrain military buggy can be disassembled into an easily shipped flat pack in less than an hour by a skilled technician. It can be reassembled at the end of the journey in less than three hours. Its basic integrated firewall, reliable power supply, and dead-simple component wiring make it easy to add communications upgrades. While it can't haul much

cargo, it can accelerate to near-suicidal speeds very quickly – the ideal vehicle for recon, perimeter checks, or flanking manoeuvres on budget.

Exposed (+1[CD] Cover), Ground, Nimble, Rough Terrain, Wheeled

Attributes: Scale 1, Speed 4, Brawn 10 (+1)

Details: Max. Passengers 2, Impact 2+4[CD] (Knockdown)

Hardpoints: Chassis 1 (Collapsible x2), Comms 3, External 2, Internal 1 (Collapsible), Motive 1, Weapons 1

Defences: Structure 9, Firewall 6, Armour 2, BTS 2

Special Abilities:

Flatpackable: With a D(1) tech test, can be converted into an Unwieldy and easily shipped package in an hour, or back into a functioning vehicle in two hours. The time required can be halved a single time for one Momentum.

Bare Metal: If the vehicle moved four or more

RANDGRID CASKET-DRONE

Used for the rapid medical evacuation, or medevac, of critically injured patients from accidents and battlefields, casket-drone remotes have lost some of their life-or-death importance since the introduction of Cube technology, but they remain essential for medically stable transit. Bounty Hunters find them especially useful for transporting bounties, since they can repair any incidental damage caused during capture, provide a record of safe custody while transporting them to the client, and keep the subject in a conveniently immobile induced coma throughout. Named for one of the Norse Valkyries who carried the slain to Valhalla, the Randgrid is an excellent representative of modern casket-drone design. Oblong and rectangular, it resembles a soft-edged casket with an articulated leg and jet-rotor at each corner. Sides and lid can retract for easier loading and care, a smart-material interior accommodates patients of nearly any size, and a built-in AutoMediKit and eight-Serum reserve do everything possible to ensure survival, spending maximum Serum each until the patient is stable (no longer suffering from conditions besides unconsciousness).

HELLO, NURSE!

Until recently the PanOceanian corporation Vulcain had an enviable hold on the casket-drone market, thanks in part to savvy product placement in an early Candy Double plotline and a catchy follow-up marketing campaign. Following the recent escape – which some sources tagged as a kidnapping – of its Projects Director, Henryk Mahlke, to Yu Jing competitor Jizhong, a series of covered-up issues with the Valkyrie line were strategically leaked, demolishing Vulcain's stock price, and placing a

HITCHCOCK DSV VARIANT: SEA STINGER

Though it compromises the sub's stealthy profile, some PMCs replace their Hitchcock's hands and Weapons hardpoint with an Ariadnan water-proofed AKNovy Drozhat AP HMG and extra ammo stores, repurposing it for sub-hunting and aquatic fire-support.

For Rebalanced Mass, Deflector X, Hacking Terminal, Neural Interface, Camouflage, Impact Protection, and High-Performance upgrades, see *Infinity* GM Guide, p. 137-140.

NARCHAM BUGGER

The sole product of Shentang startup McDull's Krewe, these new Rackham buggy kits include ambiguously sourced Running Board and NARC Rack upgrades, in a similarly modular and easily dis/assembled style that barely increases shipping footprint. Repeatedly investigated for supposed Triad ties (and threatening better-connected manufacturer's profits), they are in talks with Tunguska's Tyomkin Bank to fund scaled-up production, necessitated by a recent successful StarCo supply bid, and to cover sunk costs from a failed attempt to develop a Screambox-integrated prototype for the Ikari Company.



RANDGRID CASKET-DRONE (ELITE)

ATTRIBUTES		
Agility	9	
Awareness	9	
Brawn	9	
Coordination	9	
Intelligence	12	
Personality	6	
Willpower	9	
FIELDS OF EXPERTISE		
Combat	-	-
Fortitude	+1	1
Movement	+2	2
Senses	+1	1
Social	-	-
Technical	+2	2
DEFENCES		
Firewall	12	
Security	-	
Resolve	8	
Morale	-	
Structure	8	
Armour	0	

GEAR: AutoMediKit **Common**

Special Abilities: Inured to Disease, Poison, Vacuum

Valkyrie: When controlled by its native LAI, the remote gains a Security Soak of 4, a Morale Soak of 2, and has a target number of 12 on AutoMediKit Treat tests.

Bedrest: If a Fault is suffered from an attack or impact, the patient (if any) suffers only 2+2[CD] Spread 1 Stun damage.

Quadrotors: As a Minor Action, can move to a zone within Long range on the ground or the zone above in the air, and if it starts its turn airborne moves as a Vector 2/Thrust 4 Aircraft.

considerable number of Randgrid, Skuld, and Hildir models onto the secondary market.

ROC TRANSPORT

Made by the Gökmen Aeronics corporation, this gargantuan airborne cargo-and-troop transport is most notably flown by Haqqislam's Sword of Allah state army's desert combat wing, but also sold under culturally targeted brand names to other markets and militaries: the Hakawai to PanOceania, the Fenghuang to Yu Jing, and so forth. A staple of Human Sphere militaries and usually heavily altered after purchase, Roc-class aircraft are popular rentals for large Mercenary companies on extended planetary contracts; delivering vast quantities of materiel into inhospitable environments is practically their job description.

Aircraft, Cumbersome, Enclosed, Ground, Hover, Rugged

Attributes: Scale 5, Speed 2/5, Brawn 15 (+5)

Details: Max. Passengers 67, Impact 9+10[CD] (Knockdown)

Hardpoints: Chassis 4 (Convertible*), Comms 3 (Expert 1, Repeater), External 5, Internal 15, Motive 3 (Turbofans x2), Weapons 5

Defences: Structure 60, Firewall 20, Armour 3, BTS 5

Special Abilities:

Aces High: The forward zone is taken up by stations for the pilot, co-pilot, and an optional gunner or hacker. Unless both pilot roles are filled by characters with Pilot Expertise of 3 or more, tests to manoeuvre the aircraft are at +1 difficulty. The co-pilot can also assist the pilot or gunner with Pilot or Ballistics tests.

Cargowalls: Rather than a retractable roof, wall sections on either side of the fuselage in the Roc's four cargo zones can open with a Minor Action by the pilot or co-pilot, changing that section to Exposed for easy movement of cargo or passengers. If done while airborne, that zone becomes Difficult Terrain 3.

Modular Interior: The four rear cargo zones can each hold a Shipping-Pod's worth of materiel and vehicles up to Scale 2, or a total of five Shipping-Pods' worth between them if every cargo zone has identical contents, or two Scale 3 vehicles and no other cargo besides the vehicle's crews.

S4 SUNDA TRUCK

Purpose-built for the genetic engineering hypercorp EXXO's field scientists, a thriving aftermarket for these Rhino-reinforced trucks among off-road enthusiasts led to the S4 Sunda, a model refactored for the general public. Named for a Javanese rhinoceros recently returned from extinction by the company's archaeogenetic division, it has built-in environmental conditioning, respectable bio-filters, high ground clearance, and

durable modpadded construction for easy repair and alteration. These features make them an easy pick for PMCs operating on the frontier anywhere near an EXXO-Transit Rental Centre, though purchasing one outright is safest, since those centres also serve EXXO's scientists and Loğanto, which can suddenly spike rental and leasing prices, or even cut off rentals entirely during high-demand periods. Exposed (+3[CD] Cover), Ground, Rough Terrain, Rugged, Wheeled

Attributes: Scale 2, Speed 2, Brawn 15 (+2)

Details: Max. Passengers 4, Impact 3+6[CD] (Knockdown)

Hardpoints: Chassis 2 (Environmental Conditioning, Rhino Reinforcement), Comms 1 (Modpods), External 1 (Rhino Reinforcement), Internal 1 (Kit Locker, Modpods, Rhino Reinforcement), Motive 1 (Terrain Adaptation), Weapons 2 (Modpods)

Defences: Structure 24, Firewall 6, Armour 4, BTS 3

TRRAINTANK

Used to transport cargo on the Transtartaric Railway, and then via heavy-duty treads overland from the nearest station to their destination, traintanks are the indispensable backbone of Rodinan supply lines to otherwise-isolated Tartary stanitsas.

Enclosed, Hands, Linked, Non-Hackable, Rail, Rugged, Single-Seat, Tracked

Attributes: Scale 2, Speed 2, Brawn 13 (+3)

Details: Max. Passengers 17, Impact 8+7[CD] (Knockdown)

Hardpoints: Chassis 1, Comms 0, External 2 (Running Boards), Internal 0, Motive 0 (Haulage, Tracked), Weapons 2

Defences: Structure 16, Firewall 0, Armour 4, BTS 0

Special Abilities: **Cargowalls:** Wall sections on either side of the boxy cargo zone can hinge open with a Pilot (D0) test, exposing it for easy movement of cargo or passengers.

Stack 'em: The cargo zone can hold a Shipping-Pod's worth of materiel. Up to three cargo zones can be stacked on a single Traintank's engine-base, though each cargo zone beyond the first adds +1 complication range to Pilot tests.

Tanky: No Non-Hackable penalties if driver has Pilot Focus of 3 or more.

ZQ-88 "NINETAT" GUNSHIP

A Yu Jing gunship design that's been continually updated and improved since before humanity colonized the stars, the first ZQ-88 established a category of nimble hover-capable weapons platforms which completely supplanted their attack helicopter predecessors. Now replaced in turn by TAGs and Remotes, they remain incredibly popular with PMCs for urban combat fire support and forward deployment on a budget. Designated the ZQ-88 Shi Jin after the Chinese epic Water Margin's nine-tattooed outlaw, they are almost universally

For failed terrain tests, see Out of Control! in the *Infinity* GM Guide, p. 127.

For Convertible, Expert 1, Repeater, and Turbofans upgrades, see *Infinity* GM Guide, p. 136-139.

referred to as “ninetats”, inspiring countless mercenary pilot’s retro-gaudy tattoos and halo-icons. After decades of refinement, the design is easy to maintain and disassemble for long-distance transport, but it retains its sinister trilaterally symmetric fuselage and trio of vectored-thrust engines on articulated superstructures. The most recent iteration answers generations of grunts’ prayers: the three-soldier complement of infantry now rides inside the central hub, rather than strapped beneath its engine-limbs.

Aircraft, Enclosed, Ground, Hover, Imposing, Nimble, Rugged, Single-Seat

Attributes: Scale 3, Speed 3/4, Brawn 12 (+1)

Details: Max. Passengers 4, Impact 4+5 [CD] (Knockdown)

Hardpoints: Chassis 1 (Collapsible x2), Comms 1, External 1, Internal 1 (Collapsible), Motive 1, Weapons 1

Defences: Structure 15, Firewall 12, Armour 3, BTS 3

Mounted Weapons:

Nanopulser: Range C, 1+5[CD] damage, 1H, Biotech, Subtle 3, Torrent, Vicious 2

Spitfire: Range M, 1+5[CD] damage, Burst 3, 2H, Spread 2, Unsubtle

HMG: Range L, 2+5[CD] damage, Burst 3, Unwieldy, Spread 1, Unsubtle

Special Abilities:

9-Flip: The pilot can make Fast Turn Momentum spends for only 1 Momentum; making an Air Brakes spend after doing so reduces its speed to 2

Drop Doors: The three passenger seats are isolated compartments with independently servo-hinged floors, allowing entry or exit as a Free Action, or as an Athletics (D0) Reaction at any point in the vehicle’s movement during a turn.

Overwatch: If attacking from at least one zone above targets on the ground or in a building, ranged attacks are at -1 Difficulty, and any Cover Soak is halved.

For Rhino Reinforcement upgrade, see p.67.

For Environmental Conditioning, Kit Locker, and Terrain Adaptation upgrades, see *Infinity* GM Guide, p. 136, p.139, and p.140.

For Air Brakes and Fast Turn, see Aircraft Thrust Mode Momentum Spends, p.132.





CHAPTER 7

MERCENARY CHARACTERS

MERCENARY
ADOLESCENT
EVENT TABLES

D6	CAREER
1-3	Mercenary Adolescent Event Table
4	Adolescent Event Table A ¹
5	Adolescent Event Table B ¹
6	Adolescent Event Table C ¹

1 – *Infinity*
Corebook, p.49-52

“At no point in human history has it been easier to turn money into violence.”
—Konrad Sokolov, Xperydes Omni-national Valuation Analyst. Presentation to the executive board on War Market etiquette.

OPTIONAL RULE: DEBT

Being a Mercenary can be a high-pressure gig. New Mercs are constantly trying to keep up with their peers and prove their worth. But when your peers have the advantage in experience, equipment, and impressive scars, you need any advantage you can get. Sensing an opportunity, plenty of vendors have started offering merchandise on credit, getting more than their money's worth in interest payments over the course of the loan. Mercenary characters can acquire “phantom Assets” to spend during Decision Nine by taking out loans. By taking on 1 point of Maintenance, they gain 5 Assets to acquire gear, Augmentations, and Weapons. Once play begins, the Maintenance cost can be eliminated by paying off the debts, though it costs 7 Assets for each point of debt Maintenance. Other Maintenance costs cannot be reduced this way, and any Assets acquired in this fashion disappear if not spent before the end of Decision Nine.

Every Mercenary comes from somewhere. Even if they're born to the industry, they still claimed factional allegiance somewhere before committing to the War Market. M-Corp laws keep mercenary companies from having citizens per se, so mercenaries still maintain nominal citizenship in their heritage faction for convenience if nothing else. Mercenary characters can be created using the variant rules in this chapter, rather than those in the *Infinity Corebook*. If doing so, the entries presented here supersede their counterparts in the corebook.

MERCENARY LIFEPAATH
DECISIONS

The Lifepath Decisions outlined on p. 38 of the *Infinity Corebook* should be followed with the following exceptions for characters belonging to the Mercenary faction.

DECISION SEVEN –
ADOLESCENT EVENT

Characters in the Mercenary Faction roll on the Yu Jing Faction Adolescent Event Tables.

DECISION EIGHT – CAREERS

Instead of rolling on the appropriate Faction Career table in the corebook, characters in the Mercenary Faction roll on the Mercenary Faction Career Table, as well as the Mercenary Faction Career Event Tables. For their first career, they can choose to roll on their heritage's Faction Career Table, either by spending a Life Point, or acquiring a 5 Asset debt.

DECISION SEVEN –
ADOLESCENT EVENT

The decision to become a Mercenary is rarely made lightly or casually: it's often the direct result of impactful events. Unsurprisingly, plenty of career mercenaries are spurred into the field by events which occurred during their youth. Roll 1d6 to determine which Adolescent Event Table to use, then roll 1d20 to determine your Adolescent Event.

DOUBLE AGENTS

In the espionage-rich world of *Infinity*, double (and even triple) agents are rare, but not unheard of. Due to the nature of their work, Mercenaries make attractive candidates. But whether a character is

sent to infiltrate, or develops divided loyalties, Double Agents have a lot to keep track of.

Upon rolling a result of Double Agent, immediately roll again. Keep rolling until you get a result other than 15, 16, or 20. That faction is your “current faction” that you're sent to infiltrate. Double Agents have two factions: their current faction, and their “true faction” where their loyalties actually lie. By default, Double Agents use their current faction when determining careers, restriction, tariffs, etc. If they wish, they can use their true faction in its place, though this is risky; any rolls involving your true faction double their complication range (so a complication range of 1 becomes 2, a range of 3 becomes 6, and so on).

In a Wilderness of Mirrors campaign, Double Agents have two different handlers; one each for their current and true factions. When giving out covert objectives, the true faction handler will be cognizant of the Double Agent's need to protect their cover; this may require altering covert objectives. GMs are encouraged to use their discretion.

If a Double Agent's current faction becomes suspicious, it will take steps to ascertain the character's true loyalties. If their cover is ever blown, a Double Agent can no longer use their current faction when making rolls; though that's likely the least of their concerns. Decision Eight: Careers Very few Mercenaries are born to the life: though many take to it as though they were. Mercs commonly enter the War Market from some other walk of life, bringing their skills, experience, and scars with them. Mercenary characters can, if they so desire, roll on their heritage's Faction Career Table (*Infinity Corebook*, p. 55), to represent their life before going Merc. Doing so either requires spending a Life Point, or taking on a 5 Asset debt, representing challenges faced in the transition to their new life.

RED FLAGS

To a Mercenary, reputation is more than a matter of semantics: it's the lifeblood of their career. While a good rep on the War Market takes time and effort to cultivate, a bad one can only take a moment. Going off-script, refusing to follow orders, desertion: actions like these can earn Mercenary

MERCENARY ADOLESCENT EVENT TABLE

D20	ADOLESCENT EVENT	SUGGESTED CHARACTER TRAIT	OPTIONAL EFFECT
1	While flying to a Circular, your ship was boarded by pirates. The Mercenaries hired to provide security were outnumbered and outgunned: yet they somehow got you through to safety.	Hero Worship	Gain +1 to Resolve.
2	Someone close to you was killed, while Hypercorp security forces stood and watched.	Vendetta	Increase the complication range of Discipline tests by +1.
3	Your childhood crush got accepted into a prestigious Mercenary training program. Before you were parted, you swore to find each other again.	Hopeless Romantic	Gain a... rival? Ally? Bit of both? Whatever the circumstances, gain a Mercenary contact.
4	You fell in with a rough crowd: not everybody from that scene lived long.	Fatalistic	Gain +1 rank in Thievery.
5	While exploring an uninhabited planetoid, you accidentally stumbled across a pirate den. While you managed to escape, the pirates didn't take kindly to you exposing their hideout.	Pirate Problems	Gain +1 rank in Extraplanetary. Additionally, a pirate organization is hunting you, and is unlikely to pass up opportunities to do you harm.
6	You became obsessed with underground fighting rings, even trying your luck in a handful of brutal bouts.	Bloodthirsty	Increase the difficulty of non-intimidation Persuade skill tests by +1. Gain +1 rank in Resistance.
7	Washed out of university, burned out of your apprenticeship, banned from re-entering the corporate enclave: you and rules had a strained relationship.	Rebel Heart	Increase the difficulty of Personality-based tests by +1 when dealing with authority figures, or members of the Corporate Faction.
8	Your supposed best friend stabbed you in the back while you were at your most vulnerable.	Suspicious	Reduce Morale by 1.
9	While trying out new drug concoctions with your friends, you had a nasty interaction from which you never quite recovered.	Scorched Immune System	Contagions, including drugs and poisons, generate +1 bonus Momentum on tests against you. A cure exists, but it will cost 3+6[CD].
10	Enamoured with heroic tales of masked vigilantes, you tried your hand at crime fighting...or, as the courts called it, "reckless vigilantism." Time in jail did little to cool you off, however: now the crooks couldn't get away.	Loose Cannon	Spend 1d6 years in jail before starting your first career. The underworld knows your name: add +2[CD] to Psywar attacks against Submondo.
11	Other kids might have had playground equipment: you had abandoned asteroid mines to cause a ruckus in.	Rock-Legs	Gain +1 rank in Extraplanetary.
12	They say that before embarking on a journey of revenge, you should first dig two graves. Clearly, they never met you: that entire organization is going to pay for what they did. For what they took from you.	Organizational Vendetta	Gain an organizational nemesis that you've sworn vengeance upon. Add +2[CD] to attacks against its members, who gain +1 bonus Momentum on attacks against you.
13	You spent a summer on your uncle's farm, working with livestock. Contrary to your expectations, you thoroughly enjoyed yourself.	Barnyard Manners	Gain +1 rank in Animal Handling.
14	You ran away from home and joined a Free Company.	Traumatic Memories	You can freely select Free Company Irregular for any career phase.
15	You got involved in the racing scene: the riskier, the better. Except when you lost.	Adrenaline Junkie	Gain +1 rank in Pilot. Gain a 2 Asset debt.
16	Your parents or guardians were always running from something. Late one night, they told you they loved you, and to run. You haven't seen them since.	Missing Family	The stress has taken a toll on your health: reduce Vigour by 1. At least you honed your skills during the sleepless nights: gain +1 rank in Analysis.
17	Your aunt was a top Merc in her time. When she decided to retire to an office, she left you her custom armour, though her legacy seems to weigh a lot more.	Weighty Legacy	Gain a suit of Signature Armour (Heavy). For better or worse, other Mercs know your name: generate +1 bonus Momentum -- but increase complication range by +2 -- on all Personality-based tests with Mercenaries.
18	You interned with a small team of storm chasers out in the Human Edge. While a career in meteorology might not be in your future, an addiction to danger looks to be.	Thrill Seeker	Increase the difficulty of all Willpower-based tests by +1. Gain +1 to your Awareness.
19	Your parents were Mercs. Your cousins are Mercs. You always assumed you'd follow in their footsteps. Then you met someone who was part of something bigger than themselves, and it gave them purpose. You couldn't help but wonder if it could do the same for you.	Vendetta	You defect to a new faction. Roll on the Faction Table (Infinity Corebook, p. 41) to determine your new allegiance. On a roll of 15, 16, or 20, you haven't actually defected: you're a Double Agent (see p. 76).
20	There wasn't supposed to be any fighting nearby, yet factions clashed, catching you in the crossfire. Waking up, you realized that in war, the battlefield always loses.	Anti-Nationalist	Your character died and was resurrected. See the rules for Resurrection in the Infinity Corebook, p. 54.



MERCENARY FACTION CAREER TABLES

D20	CAREER
1	Special Forces ¹
2	Intelligence Operative ¹
3	Bounty Hunter ¹
4	Remote Operator ¹
5	Ship Crew ¹
6-7	Corporate Security Unit ³
8-9	Free Company Irregular
10	Mercenary Officer
11	Wardriver
12	Recruiter Agent
13	Arms Dealer
14	Hitter
15	Druze Shock Trooper
16	Warmonger ²
17	Kaplan Tactical Service Member ²
18-20	Roll on Faction Table of Your Choice

¹ Career from *Infinity Corebook*.
² Career has a prerequisite of belonging to this faction. You can't hazard this career unless you're of the matching faction. If you roll into this career, you automatically fail your defection check. You can override these limitations by spending 1 Life Point (in which case you were somehow undercover while working the career).

MERCENARY CAREER EVENT TABLES

D6	CAREER
1-3	Mercenary Career Event Table
4	Career Event Table A ¹
5	Career Event Table B ¹
6	Career Event Table B ¹

1 – *Infinity Corebook*, p. 56-58

characters the Red Flag character trait. They are not only haunted by their rep in future dealings, it makes finding and keeping work that much harder. Characters with the Red Flag trait add +1 difficulty to all hazard tests on the Lifepath.

ARMS DEALER

It might not be the most violent era in humanity's history, but it's certainly among the better-armed. With the popularity of Aristeia!, carrying personal armaments is more fashionable than it's been for centuries, with affluent citizens proudly sporting a duelling pistol on their hip, or a decorative necklace of microgrenades to match their evening gown.

The modern Arms Dealer enjoys benefits that their contemporaries never did. It's tough for a detective to crack down on a dealer when their boss is a customer. Even so, these new developments primarily impact an Arms Dealer's place in society, not their bottom line. Mercenary companies, professionals seeking the best tools, and selling in bulk to gangs, militias, governments, pirates, and the like; that's how Arms Dealers pay the bills. Whether they come by their stock honestly or not, Arms Dealers fill an important niche in the Human Sphere's economy, and they'll be the first to remind you of that.

Attributes

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
-	+2	-	+1	+1	+2	+3

Mandatory Skills: Discipline, Lifestyle, Observation
Elective Skills: Ballistics, Persuasion, Stealth
Earnings Rating: 1+5[CD]
Gear: AR Eye Implants, Armoured Clothing (several styles), Heavy Pistol, Nanopulser

CORPORATE SECURITY UNIT

Most mercenary jobs involve as little contact between client and company as possible. Corporate bean counters don't mix well with grizzled professional

fighters because the cultural gap is too wide to overcome. But when working in Corporate Security, expectations are entirely different. Corporate Security Forces are expected to fit seamlessly within their client's corporate culture, providing a polished, professional face to a modern security apparatus. The pay is competitive, the work is steady, and the job usually boils down to keeping all involved parties honest. That said, when things get hot – as they eventually do – Corporate Security forces are expected to act swiftly, decisively, and precisely; collateral damage and rowdy antics are a good way to get fired. SecLock Contingencies' CSU units are widely considered the gold standard, lending the position its name, but countless private firms offer their own Corporate Security Units. They're expensive, but the old adage holds true: you really do get what you pay for.

Attributes

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+1	+2	+1	+2	+1	+2	+1

Mandatory Skills: Discipline, Lifestyle, Observation

Elective Skills: Ballistics, Persuasion, Stealth

Earnings Rating: 2+1[CD]

Gear: AR Eye Implants or Climbing Plus or Gecko Pads, Sixth Sense or Subdermal Grafts (all hit locations except head), Armoured Clothing (Uniform) or Pistol

DRUZE SHOCK TROOPER

Working under the auspices of the Bayram Security Company, Druze Shock Teams are perhaps the Druze Society's most notable export. You do not hire a Druze Shock Team when you want something protected. You hire them when you want unscrupulous thugs to make a gigantic mess of a situation, leave naught but ashes in their wake, and retain your deniability. While the vast majority of Druze Shock Troopers are not only members of the Society, but Druze themselves, they've been known to employ individuals from any background provided that they can hold up their end of the bargain. That bargain is violence, brutality, and the wanton destruction of targets with no questions asked. Generally speaking, Druze Shock Troopers are bad people, though they can always be worse. And for the right price, they'll be worse in the direction of your enemies.

Attributes

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+2	+1	+2	+1	+1	+1	+2

Mandatory Skills: Ballistics, Resistance, Thievery
Elective Skills: Persuasion, Hacking, Tech
Earnings Rating: 1+2[CD]

Gear: Combi Rifle (with 3 Normal Reloads) or Killer Hacking Device, Viral Pistol, Medium Combat Armour
Special: Criminal Career

FREE COMPANY IRREGULAR

Smaller Free Companies fill an important niche in the War Market. Staffed by professionals from a variety of backgrounds, Free Companies aim for a diverse array of skillsets. That way, they never need to rely on outside help. A Free Company Irregular could be wiring light fixtures one day, and in a firefight the next. They often moonlight in the civilian sector when not on assignment. Contrary to the usual image of stim-addicted, violent, adrenaline junkies, Free Companies enjoy a wholesome, down-to-earth reputation. After all, their arrival doesn't just mean professional soldiers are available. It means a diverse crew of professionals are now available at competitive rates.

Attributes

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+1	+1	+2	+2	+2	+1	+1

Mandatory Skills: Athletics, Ballistics, Observation

Elective Skills: See Free Company Specializations

Earnings Rating: See Free Company Specializations

Gear: See Free Company Specializations

Special: When taking this career for the first time, roll on the Free Company Specializations Table to determine your specialization. Once you've determined your specialization, you no longer roll upon taking this career, but if desired, you can attempt an Average (D1) hazard test to repeat this career in the specialization of your choice. In any case, you can instead spend 1 Life Point to simply choose your specialization.

FREE COMPANY SPECIALIZATIONS

People wind up in a Free Company for a variety of reasons, and they pick up an array of skills while out on assignment. These backgrounds might well outnumber the stars in the sky, but they can generally be sorted into a few different categories.

HITTERS

Whether it's political, personal, or simply business, there's always been those who believe the world would be a better place without one specific person. Thus, there's always been a small but resilient community of Hitters ready to take the job. Hailing from every background, ethnicity, and gender, Hitters provide discreet and thorough services for those who can meet their prices. Nobody takes being murdered lightly, even in a world where resurrection is possible, and the cost is lost time and memories rather than life itself. Hitters walk a precarious line across legal jurisdictions and personal vendettas, to say nothing of the fact that it's incredibly difficult and time-consuming to plan a murder that can't be traced to your client. Or you, for that matter. A given Hitter rarely has more than one job in a year because getting it done right takes time. But when you want it done right, you hire a professional. Then you get out of their way.

Attributes

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+2	+2	+1	+1	+1	+1	+2

Mandatory Skills: Discipline, Stealth, Thievery

Elective Skills: Ballistics, Close Combat, Stealth

Earnings Rating: 1+6[CD]

Gear: Sniper Rifle or Wetspike, Breaking & Entering Kit or Cosmetics Kit, Garrotte

FREE COMPANY DRIFTER

Much like Earth's fabled French Foreign Legion, or joining the modern clergy, Free Companies often act as a refuge for people trying to escape their past. Free Companies don't care where you came from, so long as you bring useful skills to the table. Drifters always have a trick or two up their sleeves.

FREE COMPANY GEARHEAD

Take a quick look around any Free Company's camp, and you'll see something that needs fixing. Keep looking, and you're likely to see a gearhead wander by, grumbling to themselves, and somehow getting it back in working order. It's said that a Free Company Gearhead can get more done in one day with spit, adhesives, and cursing than a city repair team accomplishes in a week. Either way, the work keeps them thick-skinned, cynical, and tough.

FREE COMPANY MEDIC

Anyone with serious medical experience is highly sought-out by Free Companies, by local communities when they come into port. From dentistry to STD tests, most Medics are kept busy enough by their own company to act as a second career, although they usually make low-cost, discreet services available to the local community.

FREE COMPANY QUANTRONIC EXPERT

More an IT professional than full-time hacker, a Free Company's Quantronic Experts often spend more time cleaning out malware from people's Comlogs than in InfoWarfare. And while they don't have the reputation of the Wardrivers, more than one enemy has made the mistake of underestimating them. It rarely happens twice.

FREE COMPANY SPECIALIZATIONS TABLE

D20	Specialization	Elective Skills	Gear	Earnings
1-6	Drifter	Persuasion, Stealth, Thievery	Breaking & Entering Kit, Fake ID 1, Wetspike or Assault Pistol	0+4[CD]
7-12	Gearhead	Discipline, Resistance, Tech	Armoured Clothing (Coveralls), Flash Pulse, Powered Multitool	1+2[CD]
13-16	Medic	Medicine, Psychology, Survival	Armoured Clothing (Medical Uniform), Basic Medical Supplies, Stims (3)	2+2[CD]
17-20	Quantronic Expert	Education, Hacking, Tech	Hacking Device, Repair Kit	2+1[CD]



MERCENARY CAREER EVENT TABLE

D20	CAREER EVENT	GAME EFFECT
1	Mercs wind up on different sides of a conflict all the time. It's nothing personal. But you keep seeing the same face again and again. And they're gunning for you every time.	Gain a Nemesis rival who is hunting you.
2	You're supposed to keep your hands to yourself, but this job made it difficult.	You can acquire 6 Assets and gain the trait Red Flag, or you can generate +1 bonus Momentum on your next hazard test.
3	Desperate to keep up with your peers, you cut a deal to get some bleeding edge tech on the cheap. The aug works fine, but now your Geist "improves" your text and translated speech with various advertisements, and you can't turn it off.	Gain the Sixth Sense augmentation. Gain trait: Invasive Adware. This trait can be removed by spending XP, but also requires paying off a 10 Asset debt.
4	While getting drinks with your company, a brawl breaks out. Everybody enjoys it so much, that it becomes a semi-regular outing, getting you banned from bars, clubs, and houses of worship across the Human Sphere.	Gain Trait: Known Troublemaker. Gain +1 rank in Close Combat.
5	Waxing nostalgic about your childhood, you return to your old neighbourhood to find it in dire straits. Warm memories are chased away by old acquaintances looking for a handout.	Either gain a debt worth 7 Assets or gain the Trait: Sellout.
6	You were just following orders. Nothing you could have done. At least, that's what you tell yourself when the nightmares keep you awake at night.	Gain Trait: Haunted.
7	You win some, you lose some. Well, you just lost a big one in decisive fashion, and you'll be picking up the pieces for a while.	Reduce Resolve by 1.
8	Your client had strict rules in place for the job, with a zero-tolerance policy. Yet you broke them anyway, costing you the gig. Why?	You are Fired (see Infinity Corebook, p. 54). Gain Trait: Red Flag, or some other character trait related to the experience.
9	It was just another skirmish. But this time, your friends didn't make it through.	Gain Trait: Sole Survivor. Increase Resolve by +1.
10	The client couldn't pay what they were supposed to, but at least they tried to make it up to you with supplies.	Reduce your Earnings by 1. Gain 4 different Standard Reloads, some Basic Medical supplies, and a USAdrianan Entrenching Tool.
11	During an attack, you wind up saving a VIP's skin. Needless to say, it leaves a big impression on them.	Gain an Ally in a random faction. You can freely select the Bodyguard career at any point during the Lifepath.
12	Orders are orders. Civilian safety wasn't part of the mission objectives, and you weren't getting paid to be a hero. But even knowing the consequences, you still broke ranks to get them to safety.	Unless you're working the Kaplan Tactical Service Member career, gain the character trait: Red Flag. Gain an ally in a random faction, who will remember what you risked for them.
13	If it can go wrong it will, right? Well, it just did, in spectacular fashion. With luck like this, you might legitimately be cursed.	Gain Trait: Wrong Place, Wrong Time
14	Nobody planned for you to be in charge. Then again, the people in charge didn't plan to get shot, either. Still, you carried the day.	Increase your Social Status by 1 step. You can freely choose the Mercenary Officer career for your next career phase.
15	A contact you'd previously worked with offers a share of their take to let them crash with you for a week. It seemed too good to be true. When a Bounty Hunter kicked in the door, you realized it was.	Gain 3 Assets. Also, either gain a Bounty Hunter rival or a Criminal Record.
16	A Hypercorp talent scout approaches you with an offer they hope you can't refuse.	You can defect to the Corporate faction at this time. If you do, increase your Earnings by +1.
17	You never considered yourself afraid of spiders. But after this last job...	Gain Trait: Arachnophobia. If a Jorōgumo or other arachnid deals you a Wound, suffer a Metanoia effect as well.
18	Your client omitted some information, and the job went bad. Of course, you got saddled with the blame.	You are Fired (see Infinity Corebook, p. 54).
19	You knew that the job was risky going in. At least, that's what you wrote down. You awaken a year later in a state-of-the-art Lhost, with no memory of what transpired, and a note that simply says "Good job. We're even."	Your character died and was Resurrected, as well as Fired. (see Infinity Corebook, p. 54). You can choose a Standard Lhost at no Life Point Cost or deduct 1 LP from the Cost of a Lhost of your choice.
20	Mercenaries respect few laws besides Murphy's: that is to say, that if something can go wrong, it will. Given the maelstrom of Interesting Times in which you find yourself, that seems to be holding true. Buckle up.	Roll again three times on the Career Event Table for this career phase. (When spending a Life Point to choose a specific event, you may not choose this result. If you roll duplicate events, it means some similar event has occurred. If you roll Murphy's Law again, add additional rolls.

KAPLAN TACTICAL SERVICE MEMBER

For many Mercs, being seen as a public nuisance is part of the deal. The reputation of being loud, selfish, and generally unfit for polite company follows most Mercenaries like their shadow. It's just something to get used to. Unless, of course, they work for Kaplan Tactical Services. A subsidiary of Beyhan Resources, Inc., with origins in the Silk Revolts, the Bourak-based KTS enjoys a heroic status throughout Haqqislam; a halo that extends to all its members, regardless of their origin. KTS recruits from all walks of life, from every corner of the Human Sphere. Its employees are expected to behave themselves and are held to KTS' robust code of ethics without exception. This has led to a resilient esprit de corps, with Kaplan Members regarding themselves as not only a cut above their mercenary peers, but most – if not all – national militaries as well. Call them pretentious if you must, but KTS prefers to let its results speak for themselves.

Attributes

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+2	+2	+1	+2	+1	+1	+1

Mandatory Skills: Ballistics, Discipline, Observation

Elective Skills: Acrobatics, Medicine, Tech

Earnings Rating: 2+2[CD]

Gear: CombiRifle, MediKit or Powered Multitool, Light Combat Armour (Kaplan Tactical Services-Branded)

MERCENARY OFFICER

More than just unit commanders, Mercenary Captains and Colonels are equal parts soldier, project manager, entrepreneur, and legal advocate. If that sounds like it's too many roles to juggle, wait until you see the schedule they keep. Captains are responsible for finding work, setting up long-term contracts, and perhaps most importantly, gauging whether or not a given client is going to screw them over. Colonels handle a company's logistics, everything from making sure that permits are up to date, to large-scale equipment acquisition.





Then of course, there's the small matter of actually leading troops into battle, with captains leading their individual teams, while colonels take charge in larger skirmishes and manage the company through long-term conflicts. Still, there's a sense of community that's conspicuously absent from most military regiments. Mercenary Officers form tight bonds with their troops that go beyond simple responsibility. But when the shooting starts, there's no question as to who's in charge.

Attributes

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+1	+2	+1	+1	+1	+2	+2

Mandatory Skills: Analysis, Command, Discipline

Elective Skills: Ballistics, Psychology, Resistance

Earnings Rating: 2+2[CD]

Gear: AR Eye Implants or Military Geist, Light Combat Armour, Pistol or Rifle

RECRUITER AGENT

Competition in the War Market can be fierce. There's plenty of work to go around, but convincing a prospective client to give you that work — or knowing about the job in the first place — is a tall order for many Mercs. Recruiter Agents are dedicated professionals who make forming those connections their stock in trade. Freelance Agents represent individual Mercenaries — protecting their interests, finding jobs, making sure that they've got access to plenty of ammo — in ways that a Captain couldn't even if they wanted to. A Captain's responsibility is to their unit, whereas an Agent advocates for their client. Some Recruiter Agents work directly for larger mercenary companies, usually working as dedicated talent scouts, seeking to bolster their company's ranks with the very best freelancers, as well as with freshly-poached talent from their direct competitors. But whatever their role, their work is essentially the same, to make sure that Mercs are getting paid. And of course, that they get their cut.

Attributes

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+1	+2	+1	+1	+1	+2	+2

Mandatory Skills: Lifestyle, Observation, Persuade

Elective Skills: Discipline, Education, Psychology

Earnings Rating: 2+2[CD]

Gear: Armoured Clothing (Business Casual), Negotiator's Suite (7 Days Access)

WARDRIVER

Though many use the term interchangeably with "mercenary hacker," proper Wardrivers — an oxymoron if ever there was one — are part of a decentralized group of semi-aligned private Maya Clusters, comprised of like-minded mercenary hackers. Taking their name from early vehicle-based military InfoWarriors, every WarDriver has a unique handle, and employs a colour-coded system denoting their area of expertise: White-class for defence, Black-class for assault, Grey-class for multipurpose capability; and so on. Not every Wardriver is an active hacker. Their Lilac kitbashing community creates one-of-a-kind hardware and software to give their members an edge, and it is as fiercely innovative as any quantronic infiltrator. While there's no shortage of internal competition, at the end of the day, Wardrivers always have each other's backs. While they might be on opposite sides of a conflict, or they are hired by competing firms to chase the same goal, once the job is done those distinctions will fade, and they'll always be Wardrivers.

Attributes

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+1	+2	-	+2	+3	+1	-

Mandatory Skills: Hacking, Observation, Tech

Elective Skills: Hacking, Pilot, Stealth

Earnings Rating: 1+3[CD]

Gear: Assault Hacking Device or Defensive Hacking Device or White Hacking Device, Boarding Shotgun

WARMONGER

At the end of the day, a mercenary company is a business. A business rooted in violence — or at least the potential for violence — but a business all the same. The people who run them need to have all the savvy and acumen expected of any corporate executive, while also being able to speak the language of the soldiers, vagrants, and maniacs that comprise the bulk of their workforce. Some see their teams as just another asset to be managed, part of a larger portfolio, a profitable — albeit volatile — element of their larger business plan. For some, it's a vanity project; a chance to play armchair general with others' lives, experiencing the thrill of warfare without ever risking their own necks. Others still are grizzled veterans in their own right, former mercenary soldiers applying their expertise to this new battlefield. Whatever their background, without Warmongers, there would be no War Market. And that means no Mercenaries, at least not in the modern sense.

Attributes

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
-	+2	-	-	+2	+3	+2

Mandatory Skills: Discipline, Lifestyle, Persuasion

Elective Skills: Analysis, Command, Education

Earnings Rating: 2+5[CD]

Gear: Armoured Clothing, Nanopulser, Negotiator's Suite (13 Days Access)

FREEBOOTER

"Allegiance is for suckers." "Loyalty is a myth." "What's yours is mine, and what's mine is heavily guarded." Whatever maxim they adhere to, Freebooters are beholden to no authority beyond themselves, their commander, and whatever local authorities can track them down. Pirates, scavengers, and adventurers, when they're not lurking on a trade route, or harassing merchant vessels, many a Freebooter also plies their trade on the War Market. For clients willing to swallow their pride, Freebooters offer a remarkably straightforward service. They understand that their employers are likely looking for cheap cannon fodder, amoral thugs, or otherwise expendable assets. And they're very comfortable with that. And if it seems like they're not too worried about their low pay, it's probably because they intend to steal everything that isn't nailed down while on assignment.

Attributes

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
+2	+1	+2	+2	+1	+1	+1

Mandatory Skills: Close Combat, Tech, Thievery

Elective Skills: Extraterrestrial, Pilot, Spacecraft

Earnings Rating: 1+1

Gear: Sickblade, Smoke Grenades (2)

FREEBOOTER GEAR TABLE

Special: In addition to the above gear, roll one d20 and one d6, then consult the Freebooter Gear Table and gain the listed gear.

D20	1-2	3-4	5-6
1-6	Armoured Clothing (Outdated Fashion)	Heavy Pistol (with 3 Normal Reloads)	Ramshackle Combat Jump Kit
7-9	Chain Rifle (with 2 Normal Reloads), Adhesive Grenade	Ballistic Vest, Nitrocaine (2 Doses), Tactical Bow, Basic Medical Supplies	Stun Grenade, Viral Grenade, EM Grenade, Banshee Grenade
10-13	Painkillers (7 Doses)	Light Flamethrower	D-Charges (6)
14-15	Hard Hat, 3 Normal Reloads, Repair Kit	Engineering Waldo 1, Powered Multitool	Modcoat, Long; Aletheia Kit, Bottled Water
16-17	XO Suit, CombiRifle, Climbing Kit	Sports Padding, 3 Picks, Cosmetics Kit	Spotbot, USAriadnan Entrenching Tool
18-20	AutoMediKit	Silk (2 Doses)	Rifle (with 5 AP Reloads)





CHAPTER 8

WARMONGERING 101

“People walk the mercenary path for any number of reasons. Excitement, bloodthirst, relative freedom from national constrictions, plus a million others. Ultimately, though, a mercenary’s life can be boiled down to one thing: pay. This is Ikari’s prime consideration in accepting a contract and a great influence on how we recruit the best. Potential employers of Ikari might think that they have chosen us, particularly as we are almost always required to fulfil a contract with no questions asked. In truth, however, it is us who chooses them based upon how much they are willing to pay.”

-- Colonel Genzo Ikari extolling the merits of Ikari membership to potential applicants in the visitors’ mess hall at Novyy Bangkok.

At once different and similar to the default *Infinity* campaign, which establishes the players as Bureau Noir agents operating in shades of grey, mercenary campaigns provide a great deal of freedom for both GMs and players alike. Particularly in respect of short-term goals and story arcs. However, there are a number of nuances that will need consideration when establishing a mercenary campaign. Some of these aspects will apply to every type of campaign, while others can be completely optional or ignored altogether in others.

WHAT CAME BEFORE

This Warmongering chapter is intended to tie together all the information seeded throughout the book as a basis for GMs to create exciting campaigns that provide a challenge to mercenary companies of every ilk. Previous campaign chapters within sourcebooks for *Infinity* the Roleplaying Game have been designed with a specific faction in mind, and while this chapter certainly explores campaign design through the lens of the non-aligned, the very independence of most mercenary companies provides a great deal of latitude that might otherwise be restricted in a specific faction campaign.

That said, there are certainly a number of campaign options explored within this chapter that can be applied to the campaign options presented within other faction sourcebooks and vice versa. The *Ariadna* sourcebook offers advice on mercantile campaigns, which not only offers plenty of opportunities for a merc outfit to gain employment but might also provide useful insight

into the logistics of moving goods and materiel for operations. The *Haqqislam* sourcebook looks at corsairs and the questionable antics they undertake for profit, which is certainly of relevance to any merc unit trying to establish an income. Finally, the *ALEPH* sourcebook provides a discourse on campaigns that focus more on military action and objectives than anything else, which is definitely pertinent to warmongering for money.

It’s highly unlikely that the PCs wind up fighting back-to-back with the Steel Phalanx, of course, but the PCs could always find themselves caught up in the kind of high impact action that Achilles eats, sleeps, and breathes. Some of the subjects discussed in this chapter, then, will parallel material already available in the faction sourcebooks mentioned here, though they will now be viewed through the lens of a mercenary outfit and their particular requirements or areas of interest.

BATTLEFIELD TOURS

As mentioned above, various *Infinity* RPG sourcebooks offer different methods for designing and running a campaign set within the Human Sphere. A mercenary campaign is an excellent setting to explore any one of these or even tie aspects of them together. Logistics, profiteering, and battlefield objectives are part and parcel of a Warmonger’s life.

CAMPAIGN SCOPE

The campaign’s scope in terms of the depth of the PCs’ involvement should be considered alongside the components that drive it. This can be evaluated by the types of role and level of management that the PCs will be adopting.

THE ALPHA TEAM

The PCs are the heart and soul of their outfit, whether that’s a small unit that only encompasses themselves or a larger unit with multiple employees on the books. While they will certainly face their own challenges during the course of a session, the PCs will need to consider the logistical and financial aspect of transporting themselves and any additional personnel or materiel. This can be even more nuanced if there are multiple theatres for the various branches of the company to contend with.

Aside from logistics, the PCs will also need to deal with contract handling and the financial intricacies of running their company. One PC can take centre stage as the overall leader of the mercenary unit with the other PCs providing supporting roles. Alternatively, any major decisions can be voted for by a committee of characters, with the most votes deciding the outcome. This type of scope works well where the PCs are engaged in guiding and growing a mercenary company, particularly if they each have their own management role within the company (and consequently they all enjoy distinct opportunities to shine within their area of expertise).

GROUND RULES

Some cautionary notes should be considered if the Alpha Team style of campaign is being employed and one player is taking on the overall leadership mantle of the mercenary company. With one person being the final arbiter of decisions that make or break the company, there is a small risk of the game devolving into arguments and chaos at the table, or even worse, player-versus-player combat within the game. Either of which can lead to hurt emotions and tension outside of the game. Because of this risk, it's extremely important to establish some ground rules for the management of the company at the outset. While this list is by no means exhaustive, ground rules can cover things like:

CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP: The players agree to consider a change of leadership if bad decisions are endangering the campaign and the company. This can be a simple vote with a majority decision winning. The GM gains one vote during split decisions. The players agree to respect the outcome and continue using any ground rules previously established.

GM INTERVENTION: Though railroading by forcing a player along a particular path in a game is never advised, the GM can agree with the players that any repercussions for an ill-considered decision will be enacted via the props of the setting the players are part of, rather than undertaken directly by each other. For instance, if the leader of a company sends their troops into a situation that they're ill-prepared for and in the face of sound advice, the NPC officer in charge of the mission is the one to kick open the leader's door and vent in their face.

ONE MERC TO RULE THEM ALL: In a similar manner to the RESPECT heading below, the other players within the company agree that the person taking on the pinnacle leadership role is the final decision-maker. The players in supporting roles can offer advice, which will be acted upon when not doing so will have a detrimental effect on the

company, but the leader is the ultimate shot-caller. If a sensible counterpoint to the advice is provided and the leader makes a decision against the advice, their resolution should be respected. Any fallout from the decision should be handled via GM Intervention, above.

RESPECT: While the company's leader is the final decision-maker, they should agree to respect their team's input. If the PC in charge of finances states that a mission shouldn't be undertaken because it will result in a loss, the leader should consider this advice and act on it when reasonable. Each other PC's input should be respected and valued when offered, with an agreement to act upon unless a reasonable counterpoint can be offered. For instance, the leader might provide a counterpoint that fulfilling the mission will open doors to even bigger pay-outs following the initial financial outlay.

BOOTS ON THE GROUND

The PCs are a small cog in a large machine. The Warmonger points at a target and expects his bidding done. In the scope of this campaign, the PCs will probably care little for the logistics of how they arrive at their location. All of the transfer arrangements for themselves and their equipment are taken care of 'off-screen', which allows them to arrive with the minimum of fuss and get straight to the task at hand. The PCs also aren't likely to be bothered with the intricacies of the company's finances. So long as they're paid at the end of the job, everyone's happy. This type of scope works well where each game session is its own self-contained narrative with a fixed objective (though each session can still link together as part of a larger interconnected story).

MIDDLE MANAGEMENT

Somewhere between the scope of the previous two, this places the PCs into a larger organisation with personnel in their charge. They aren't pulling the strings of the outfit, but they do have subordinates to consider. The PCs can readily spend a handful of sessions dealing with a large objective and might only need to consider their immediate unit's logistics on a scale that relates to a budget provided by their overseers. While financial considerations in terms of succeeding at a given objective are certainly a factor, the PCs can focus more on which missions they undertake for their company, rather than which contract to win. This type of scope is perfect for PCs that enjoy elements of both bookkeeping and action, but don't particularly wish to track every aspect of their associated mercenary company.

With a little bit of tinkering and plenty of delving into the other chapters of this book, the default

Bureau Noir style of campaign from the *Infinity Corebook* can be tailored to cover the “Boots on the Ground” scope presented above. Simply replace Bureau Aegis and O-12 with the group’s mercenary outfit and their paymasters and then plan away. Even the Wilderness of Mirrors aspect of the game is a straightforward transfer in this type of game. Aside from the objectives, which works well in a “Boots on the Ground” style of campaign, much of this chapter relates to “The Alpha Team” and “Middle Management” headings of the campaign’s scope.

MERCURIAL MOODS

Establishing the overall mood for a campaign and the underlying mood for each session will help determine pacing and engagement. Subtle use of music and props to translate a campaign’s mood will enhance the experience for everyone involved – take care, though, as the mood and anything supporting that shouldn’t be overpowering. Remember that a mood can fluctuate. The PCs might be enjoying the sun on the golden beaches of Varuna one moment, and then contending with a Libertos terrorist attack the next, so the story (and

any music) should be subtly adjusted accordingly. If the PCs are then required to follow a group of subversive Omn into the oppressive and alien deeps of Varuna’s oceans, the mood can shift once again. While there are many moods that will work for a mercenary campaign, some particularly apt ones for warmongering include:

COMRADES IN ARMS: Any good soldier knows that their own life and that of their comrades will be extended if they guard each other’s backs. Though the PCs might rub each other the wrong way when off the field, they pull together and put their lives on the line for each other when the bullets start to fly. Light-hearted banter, plutonic bonds, and comradeship set the main mood.

KNIFE EDGE: In terms of both finances and battlefield assignments, the life of the average mercenary is far from easy. Wondering where the next batch of credits will come from and what will need to be done to secure their transfer will be an intense experience. This mood lends itself to tension alongside determination or inevitability. Just be sure to give the PCs some lighter moments amongst the angst.



SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE: The Human Sphere encompasses a vast amount of space that includes multiple systems and planets, any one of which might have need of mercenaries to get a particular job done. The overarching mood can be quite light-hearted, then interspersed with tension and danger.

FREEBOOTING THEMES

Just as the mood chosen for a campaign and its component sessions can help ground the players' involvement, so too can the theme help to focus their goals and drives. Keep in mind that themes can alter during the course of events just as much as the mood can. The PCs might enjoy being foot soldiers bouncing from mission to mission at the start of a campaign, but eventually they may develop a hunger for determining their own fate by establishing their own mercenary outfit. Rather than try to force it unnaturally, GMs should aim to be guided by the natural flow of the game. There are many themes that would suit a mercenary campaign, but some especially apt ones include:

DISTANT FRONTIERS: The Hypercorps have their own exploratory branches, of course, but why risk their personnel on unknown frontiers when they can employ expendables instead? There are fewer insurance policies to worry about then. With a Distant Frontier theme, the players can expect to be operating far from the core systems of the Human Sphere. Maybe they're part of a hidden mercenary base, undertaking clandestine ops in a remote region, or supporting a deep space science mission in Human Edge or beyond. The opportunities for adventure are limitless, but so are the dangers. Finite resources, strange and exotic lifeforms, and the predations of rival teams are all very real threats that can help inform the mood.

NO REST FOR THE WICKED: There are countless skirmishes and *Code: Infinity* situations taking place across the Human Sphere on any one standard Sol day, which provides plenty of opportunities for an active mercenary group to hop from conflict to conflict. Everchanging battlefields, objectives, and opponents keep each session fresh, though this likely comes at the cost of an overarching narrative. A military style briefing or "This message will self-destruct in five seconds" style introduction could even be used at the start of each session to set the mood and objective. The PCs might not know where they'll find themselves from session to session, but they can be sure that each session will be different. This type of theme lends itself well to the Boots on the Ground type of scope mentioned previously.

HONOUR BEFORE CREDIT: To the average corporate executive and citizen of the Human Sphere, the term 'mercenary' is liable to draw disdain and prejudice. However, not every mercenary is a gun-for-hire looking to trade in other peoples' misery. Units such as StarCo strive hard to shed these preconceptions, as have the PCs in this type of campaign. They might be working for cash, but they value principles and honour foremost, even if it means great personal cost. Sacrifice, the cost of holding on to ideals, and hearts and minds are all great sub-themes that directly relate to the main theme. Of course, the theme could just as easily descend into one of corruption and decadence if the PCs continue to make the wrong choices, but they should feel they're responsible for their own destiny either way.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

As any good mercenary knows, not every conflict takes place on a Warfare battlefield. Neither is every conflict won at the end of a gun barrel. Much of the advice in this chapter may seem focussed on the physical plane, but with plenty of Warcors and Wardrivers operating alongside many companies, there should also be ample opportunities to explore conflict — or the avoidance thereof — in the Infowar and Psywar arenas.

Introducing Psywar to a session through intense contract negotiation is a simple and effective way to introduce a social scene, but there are also plenty of other opportunities to ramp up the social tension. Perhaps the mercenaries need to win over the hearts and minds of a local civilian population in order to gain valuable supplies, or they are required to undertake non-aggressive crowd control in order to deal with a threat. Infowar, on the other hand, often supplements Warfare, meaning the PCs might need to hack open security doors and contend with security systems to achieve their objective, or fend off the actions of enemy hackers during a conflict. Some interesting mixes can also be considered where Infowar and Psywar are concerned, such as stealing sensitive data from a corporate representative to provide the PCs with an edge during contract negotiations. Ultimately, though resolving a conflict in one way or another is how a mercenary makes money, this needn't be limited to the confines of the Warfare arena.

STARTING A PMC

If the PCs have decided to establish their own outfit, every Warmonger will need to follow a few basic steps in order to get their PMC ready for the War Market:



1. REGISTER

Every PMC needs to register with the War Market (or the Lists if they're operating outside of conventions). Agree on a name for the outfit.

2. DECIDE WHO LEADS

Whether it's an NPC, PC, or council that combines both, an outfit needs people in a position of command. If one player steps forward to be the leader, this should be at the agreement of everyone else. The PCs and GM should establish the boundaries of leadership at the outset and remind players that their characters are part of an established military command. Who takes orders from whom and is there a process for questioning orders? If the leader is an NPC, then the GM can work with the group to decide on their background and relationship with the PCs. Is the leader a grizzled military veteran, savvy businessman, or bored rich kid? Do they have any personality quirks? What are their leadership qualities? Are there any contracts they won't consider?

3. ESTABLISH THE CORE TEAM

The core team should definitely revolve around PCs, though it can readily include NPCs if there are areas that need filling out. What roles do the PCs fulfil and what is their area of expertise? How are the PCs connected, if at all? Did some of them serve in the same unit or on the same front line? Are they connected by blood ties?

4. RECRUIT UNITS

Decide on the size of the outfit and recruit units to fill out the roster. This can be established by the GM based on the campaign, or everyone involved can agree on it. The units provided later can be used as a baseline, but GMs should feel free to create their own. When not on operations, each unit requires 1 Capital per quarter year to finance it. Capital is discussed under Managing a PMC.

5. ESTABLISH SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

Determine any special equipment the PMC and its component units possess. Each unit is considered fully equipped at PMC creation, but do they have any extra qualities such as power armour upgrades, non-standard weaponry, or specialist training? Does the PMC have any transportation in terms of planetary or interplanetary assets?

6. ESTABLISH UPKEEP

To maintain their Lifestyle ratings, the core team and leader require 1 Capital per quarter. Each component unit also requires 1 Capital per quarter when not on operations (their wages are paid by the contract when on operations). Resupplying, maintaining, and administrating the PMC equates to 1 Capital per 2 units over a year, rounding up.

7. ESTABLISH STARTING WAR FUNDS

So that they don't disappear as soon as they register, each PMC begins with a starting War Fund equal to 1 Capital per unit under their command, plus 1 for the core team. Assume that any upkeep has been paid for the first six months following a PMC's registration on the War Market.

MANAGING A PMC

There are a million and one aspects that a Warmonger will need to consider to successfully grow and maintain a PMC. Not everything can be covered within this book, but the following rules provide an outline for GMs and players to handle a few of the key factors that will need to be considered when organising and operating a PMC.

KEEP IT FUN

Not every rule included here needs to be used. For instance, if the GM and/or the players don't have a head for numbers, assume an accountant or other NPC handles the financial aspects and hand-wave this area to some degree. Unless their outfit is extremely wealthy, the players won't be able to buy up units of TAGs or spend inordinate amounts on new technology, but there should rarely be a problem with day-to-day operations. The point being that the campaign should remain fun. If being bogged down in the minutiae of operating a PMC is sucking the fun out of the campaign, consider reducing or offloading the aspects that are stifling the game and move on.

CAPITAL

The first element that needs to be considered is the sheer magnitude of transactions between PMCs, their potential employers, and any companies that provide the mercenary outfit with resources. Where the Acquisitions rules (p. 238 of the *Infinity Corebook*) are sufficient for a character purchasing individual items and even for smaller units consisting of only one or two fireteams, they are too small-scale for the dealings that take place on the Warmarket. The rules included here to handle a PMC's finances delve into the world of negotiations and corporate assets, which are themselves further expanded on in the *Hypercorps* sourcebook. The wealth of a corporation or large PMC is tangibly different to an individual's salary and material wealth, and it exists in such concentrated quantities that it grows with time: beyond a certain critical mass, wealth accumulates by itself. A mercenary outfit's financial resources are known as their War Fund. Operating on this macroeconomic scale requires a different perspective to normal acquisitions. The

central difference is that companies operating on this scale trade in Capital. Each unit of Capital will have a short description, which describes what that Capital represents, as well as one of the following keywords: Sapient, Financial, Natural, or Manufactured. This description has no effect by itself, but it may provide opportunities or influence how it can be used in trade and negotiations, or to build something larger. The keyword ties into the rules described under Synergy below, with each keyword representing a category of Capital.

DEFINING CAPITAL

Each unit of Capital represents significant economic power or substantial amounts of resources, such as a large quantity of credit or stocks and shares in a particular company or fund, ownership of certain land or resource rights, a portion of a property portfolio, the equipment or facilities for producing something rare, a skilled workforce, patents or other intellectual property, replacement suits of power armour, an armoury stocked full of high-tech weaponry and ammunition, or something similarly valuable. Various activities that a PMC or corporation undertakes relate to the transient nature of Capital in the grand scheme of the Human Sphere's economics, such as a corporation providing financial compensation or fixed resources (Financial or Manufactured Capital) to hire elements of the PMC (Sapient Capital) to destroy a rival's ore production facility (reducing the rival corporation's Natural Capital). This is handled mainly through broad abstraction and the GM's discretion, as the *Infinity* RPG is not a macroeconomic simulator. At the most basic level, each unit of Capital can be traded on a one-to-one basis for another unit of Capital – any two units of Capital are considered to be worth roughly the same. However, trading any amount of Capital normally involves some amount of negotiation, so a company may get more or less for the Capital they trade.

SYNERGY

Certain combinations of Capital can be worth far more than the sum of their parts. Each unit of Capital has an associated keyword and description which provides information as to what the Capital is.

- **Sapient Capital** is resources related to intelligent beings and their capabilities. This includes a PMC's component units, but also covers anything which springs from humans, Lesser AIs, aliens, and similar intelligences. This normally takes the form of labour and skills, social connections, privileged information, access to political systems, trust and

reputation, influence, or power.

- **Financial Capital** relates to money directly – large quantities of valuables, ownership of debts, investment portfolios, bearer bonds, property, or similar monetary assets. It is the most versatile type, but it can't really achieve much by itself.
- **Natural Capital** relates to resources which exist naturally in the environment, and normally includes land, and renewable or non-renewable resources.
- **Manufactured Capital** covers artificial resources, such as infrastructure, machinery, tools, factories, and similar which can be used to create goods, move resources, and manufacture products for sale, as well as the manufactured goods themselves.

Particular combinations of Capital keywords produce Synergy Capital by working especially well together. This works in two ways:

- For every four Capital with the same keyword, the character gains one extra Synergy Capital.
- For every full set of Capital – four units, one with each keyword – the character gains one extra Synergy Capital.

Synergy Capital cannot be traded directly or liquidated (see Liquidity sidebar) – it only appears from other Capital owned – but it functions in the same way as other Capital in all other regards.

DEVILISH DETAILS

No negotiation happens in a vacuum. Even the ones that happen in the literal vacuum of space – more than a few deals relating to the Exchange are made aboard Circulars – have an impact that ultimately reaches far beyond those directly involved. Allies and competitors alike will have their fortunes shift as a result of any new dealings, and in any market, there is a complex web of connections and relationships between the various corporations, shareholders, hedge funds, and other groups.

As a result, when setting up negotiation scenes relating to the engagement of a PMC, the GM should assign some details to the party seeking to hire their services. The engaging group is simply called a Company in game terms, and all Companies – including the PMC – include a number of common details that define the scope of negotiations they can undertake. This section provides some guidance on quickly creating them.

Each Company consists of the following details:

- **Name:** The operating name of the Company, whether it exists as a PMC, corporation, a lobbyist group, a hedge fund, or some other business entity.
- **Scale:** The size of the Company. This is a

LIQUIDITY

Capital represents something far more valuable than just money: each unit of Capital has the potential to make a company much wealthier over the long-term. But sometimes it's necessary to quickly convert some of those investments into cash.

A character can attempt to liquidate a single unit of Capital, turning it into a number of Assets. This represents a sale that prioritises speed over value, and thus may only provide a fraction of the Capital's theoretical worth. This requires that the character attempt a Lifestyle test, at a Difficulty of their choice: success means that the character gains a number of assets equal to twice the chosen Difficulty plus their Lifestyle Expertise. (For example, a character who chose a Difficulty of D3 with Lifestyle Expertise 4 would gain 10 Assets – 6 from twice the Difficulty, plus 4 from their Lifestyle Expertise.) Momentum may be spent to improve this further, gaining +1 Asset per Momentum spent.

There is no reliable means of turning Assets back into Capital: it's difficult to break into that level of society with cash alone, even for those who might otherwise be considered wealthy. Gaining Capital is left at the GM's discretion.



number, equal to the amount of Capital the Company has, which indicates the size and resources of the Company.

- **Quality:** The typical quality of the Company's representatives – negotiators, lawyers, and similar. This will be listed as one of three categories: Basic, Talented, or Exceptional. Representatives of Basic skill make tests with a TN of 9 and Focus of 1. Add 2 to representative's TN and 1 to their Focus for each skill level above this.
- **Leverage:** Not every Company will have this. Some Companies have a particular advantage in negotiations and other dealings owing to their position in a market, sensitive information held against their opposite number, or some other factor. If a Company has Leverage relating to their opposite number during the bargaining, it may only be used once during that session. Timing is everything. When used, Leverage adds 1d20 and 1[CD] damage to a test during a negotiation between two Companies.

In addition, each Company will have a relationship with at least two other Companies. The GM may decide to give a Company a relationship with more than two Companies, but they shouldn't have relationships with more than half the total number of Companies created. Each relationship is rated Hostile, Poor, Good, or Aligned. Any Companies which do not have a relationship to one another are considered to have a relationship of Neutral. Each relationship step away from Neutral increases or decreases the difficulty of tests by 1 (Hostile +2, Poor +1, Good -1, Aligned -2).

CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

It's a given that mercenaries work under contracts. Doing so ensures the unit gets paid and the hiring party is largely protected from recriminations. The type of campaign and themes that have been chosen will largely dictate whether a contract negotiation is relevant at the table or not but involving them occasionally can provide just as much tension as any Infowar and Warfare scenario is able to offer.

While Chapter 6: Warzones & Contracts and Chapter 7: Warmarket offer some guidance on where those contracts can take place and what form they take, there are some peripherals relating to said contracts that need answering. The advice here assumes the PCs wish to engage in contract negotiations to some degree, of course. This list is not exhaustive.

- **Representative Focussed:** Are the PCs handling the contract negotiating themselves, or using a proxy? If they are holding the meetings themselves, who is

the representative sitting on the other side of the table (which could be AR or VR also)? If they're not, how are the offers and counteroffers relayed?

- **Two-Way Street:** Unless working on a theme of desperation, an offer the PCs receive should rarely be the only one on the table. Likewise, if the PCs are scouring the Warmarket for an objective to pursue. GMs should keep several objectives handy for contract procurement and rotate them regularly.
- **Wiggle Room:** Contracts provide financial incentive and guarantees, but how much flexibility is there in relation to these? Can the PCs negotiate a higher fee? If so, what's the ceiling? If a lower fee is accepted, can better guarantees be provided? Or vice-versa?

REPRESENTATIVE QUALITY

Every Company lists the quality of its representatives. In terms of the PMC, the players can take part in the negotiation using their own skills, or else hire someone to carry them out on their behalf. The GM may use this as guidance to write up NPC negotiators and similar, but they can also use the quality rating directly to establish a negotiator's abilities. The NPC may attempt Analysis, Education, Lifestyle, Observation, and Persuade tests using a Target Number, Focus, and bonus Psywar damage determined by the quality rating. The NPC also has Resolve equal to their Target Number, and a base amount of Morale Soak equal to their Focus.

QUALITY RATING	TARGET NUMBER	FOCUS	Bonus Psywar Damage
Green	7	0	-
Regular	9	1	-
Veteran	11	2	+1[CD]
Elite	13	3	+2[CD]

AT THE TABLE

Put simply, the PMC has something to offer that the engaging Company would like to make use of. Whether that is in the form of boots on the ground, a TAG company, or specialist interstellar transportation avenues, needs to be established at the outset of the negotiation.

KEEPING IT SIMPLE

A single unit of Capital can represent a great many things. So far as PMC's are concerned, however, this is likely to be in the form of troops, vehicles, logistical support, and weaponry. Although each unit of Capital will have a differing comparative

cost in real terms when viewed next to each other, assume each to carry an initial fixed cost of 1 Capital: Every Warmonger worth their salt knows that they need to not only pay their staff, but also garner profit. The extra funds will then pay for repairs, expansion, and additional equipment, allowing the PMC to take on larger contracts in the future. Most Warmongers approach negotiations, therefore, with a 3:1 ratio in mind in terms of Capital. That's to say that a single unit of the PMC's Capital will require three times as much Capital from the engaging Company in order to procure their services. Hiring a unit of foot soldiers will need 3 Capital. Adding a TAG squadron to the mix will require 6 Capital, and so forth. This system assumes that the 3 Capital from the engaging Company is split into 3 components. One Capital covers staff wages and any resources they require for the term of the contract, another covers repairs and replenishment, and the final relates to the PMC's profit. Warmongers can opt to begin the bargaining process from a position lower than this, of course, but those who regularly do so rarely stay in operation on the War Market for long.

COMPROMISE

The unit of 1 Capital is the absolute baseline a Warmonger can expect to receive for an equivalent resource. If the negotiation is ever brought to this point, the Warmonger must either accept the deal or else walk away. The remaining 2 Capital essentially form the bargaining points for the negotiation. This remains true for baseline Capital in negotiations concerning multiple resources. If a contract relates to a unit of infantry and a squadron of TAGs equates to 2 Capital, then the PMC effectively has 4 negotiating Capital from a starting position of 6, with negotiations ending if the baseline of 2 is ever reached. Either party can accept the negotiation at any point. It's recommended that negotiations conclude when a number of Metanoia equal to the baseline Capital has been inflicted. If the baseline Capital is 3, for instance, which would provide 6 bargaining Capital (9 Capital in total minus 3 baseline), the negotiations should still conclude once 3 Capital have been bargained away.

Most Companies won't think in terms of the Warmonger's profit, as in they won't purposefully set out to reduce the Warmonger's assumed 1 Capital profit. Instead, they'll seek to bargain on terms that eat into that profit in other ways. If the contract is in another system, they might still expect the PMC to provide their own transportation to the site. Or they might stipulate that there are no salvage rights on a contract relating to anti-piracy. They could also expect a PMC to resupply

and repair their own equipment. Each Metanoia that the Company inflicts in the negotiation allows them to effectively bargain away 1 of the PMC's negotiating Capital. Conversely, each Metanoia the PMC inflicts allows them to gain 1 Leverage on a subsequent test. Once again, it's recommended that the negotiation concludes once a number of Metanoia has been inflicted equal to the baseline Capital established at the start of the negotiation.

SEALING THE DEAL

War Market contracts can be relatively simple or infinitely complex, but everyone agrees that the rules surrounding them require expertise and an ability to handle continual adjustments to terms by O-12. The rules presented here are an abstraction of the bargaining procedure that takes place when a Company is seeking to engage a PMC. The thrust and counterthrust of the negotiation can be roleplayed out or handled with a few key dice rolls that condense the excitement. As with any abstraction, however, the actual reasoning behind the process can become a little unclear.

A Warmonger getting what they want for their services is core to the negotiation. The engaging Company paying the least for those services serves as the core counterpoint. Approaching the negotiation and keeping these goals in mind will allow both players and GMs to roleplay the encounter using their respective character's personality while relying on the rules to handle specific reference points. At the heart of it, negotiations are a Psywar affair that relate to the profit or loss associated with the contract under negotiation.

If a Company is hoping to secure the services of a PMC, they'll need to consider that they probably have other offers. They'll need to make an offer good enough to entice the Warmonger without bankrupting themselves. If the offer is good enough, both sides can start negotiating the details, making Psywar attacks and other actions back-and-forth to adjust the deal in smaller ways to each side's benefit. Leverage is how each side will push to get their way (making a Psywar attack more effective), attempting to inflict Metanoia and concessions on the other side until someone agrees to the deal.

CONTRACTUAL OBJECTIVES

A PMC can be engaged to deploy on any number of operations across the entirety of the Human Sphere. From Sol to Paradiso on operations ranging from Cube recovery to anti-piracy patrols, the corporations of the G5 nations have any number of



MERCENARIES AND THE VEIL

The Subterfuge Intensity rules in Chapter 7: Behind the Veil of the *Infinity* RPG Gamemaster's Guide also work really well where mercenary companies are concerned, particularly if there are a number of covert operations being conducted. The rules will allow GMs to tailor scenarios that involve clandestine operations even more finely. They also provide rules for affecting the PMC's reputation with any other factions that have an interest in the outcome of the operation, allowing for the PCs' actions to grow their reputation in both positive and detrimental terms within the shadowy world of black ops.

'Black Ops? I don't quite know what you're asking me. We're an upstanding Private Military Company who operate fully within the rules as defined by the Exchange. Now take your assignment...hmmm, that much, eh? Well now. How is your golf handicap?'

--Mr. Daixo, Ikari Company, to an unknown client during a meeting on the Avro-Kaizuka orbital.

RANDOM CONTRACTUAL OBJECTIVE TABLE

D20 ROLL	MISSION OBJECTIVE
1-2	Clandestine Op
3-5	Defensive Retainer
6	Distraction Force
7	Extraction
8-9	Garrison Retainer
10	Gather Intel
11	Instruction Cadre
12	Recover HVT
13-14	Relief Force
15-16	Security Retainer
17	Spearhead Offensive
18-20	Tactical Raid

uses for soldiers of fortune when they don't wish to risk their own personnel. The following table and descriptions provide the basis for a number of operations that mercenaries can be engaged for, though the list is by no means exhaustive.

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CLANDESTINE OP

The PMC's potential employers want something handled off the grid. This means that it will never be traced back to them, or at the very least they can cling to plausible deniability. Acts of terrorism – whether through Warfare or Infowar – to destabilise rival factions, assassinations, and theft of data all fall under this category. Not every PMC will even consider engaging in this type of activity, officially at least. The punishment for working "Off the Exchange" will be severe if caught, and will certainly include disbarment from the Exchange, plus potentially a prison sentence or worse.

Optional Rules: Working "Off the Exchange" is not only dangerous, but also often highly illegal. Any mercenary that chooses to do so is usually either highly skilled and sought after, or a vainglorious fool. For the duration of the contract, all PMC units and any allies within a scenario can reroll 1d20 on failed Willpower tests and gain 1 bonus Momentum for any attempts at stealth or deceit. The new result must be accepted. Until the end of the contract, the GM begins each session related to the contract's fulfilment with 1 additional Heat per PC. Successful fulfilment of the contract grants an additional 2[CD] Capital, with Effects counting as 2. Failing to fulfil the contract and being exposed will result in dismissal from the Exchange and possibly worse.

DEFENSIVE RETAINER

A PMC contracted to a defensive retainer have been tasked with a garrison duty that has additional requirements. Operating from a fixed base that they will need to defend, the units on task can also be expected to provide relief to other forces in the vicinity, undertake peacekeeping patrols, perform riot duties, and any number of additional tasks they

agree to. These types of contract often run for a fixed term that ranges anywhere from six months to a year.

Optional Rules: Most PMCs train their troops under one of two mindsets: hearts and minds or martial law. If the leaders of the PMC choose hearts and minds, the PCs can reroll 1d20 on Persuade tests when interacting with the local populace. If they choose martial law, they can instead roll 1d20 on Command tests when interacting with the local populace. In both cases, the new results must be accepted. Regardless, the presence of the PMC has disturbed the local economy, increasing the complication range of all Lifestyle tests by 1 for the duration of the contract. Successfully completing the contract will provide 1 additional Capital.

DISTRACTION FORCE

It's a well-established tactic for military commanders to undertake an apparent main thrust only for it to later be discovered that this was nothing more than a diversionary ploy to hide the main goal. Whether aware of it or not, the PMC have been hired as a diversionary force in a theatre of operations. They could be tasked as an assault force in a warzone, disturbance force in peaceful territory, or harassing force behind enemy lines. The PMC need to make themselves as big a target as possible, but also need to make sure they survive until the true main force arrives. Trust in the engaging Company should be explicit.

Optional Rules: Hit-and-run tactics, smoke and mirrors, and hammer blows are the order of the day for PMCs undertaking these types of contracts. Pre-theatre training focusses on speed and manoeuvrability. PCs and their allies within a scenario gain 1 Momentum on Acrobatics and Pilot tests related to movement during the period of this contract. Whenever the GM pays Heat for reinforcements, they may include 1 additional Trooper for free during scenarios relating to this contract. Successfully completing the contract will the cover the upkeep of any units engaged in its completion for one quarter of a year. Failing to fulfil the contract requires the PMC's leader to make a Daunting (D3) Command test. If they succeed, all of their units return. On failure, one unit of their choice fails to return.

EXTRACTION

Similar to HVT recovery tasks, extraction raids relate to the procurement of someone or something from another hostile party. There is also, of course, the likely chance that a person being extracted will be hostile to those extracting them, making the contract that much more difficult to fulfil. A PMC engaging in an extraction should

always ensure the legality of the operation, as the last thing they need is to be hauled in front of O-12 on kidnap charges. Some extractions, therefore, might be better off termed as clandestine ops.

Optional Rules: Smash-and-grab operations such as these usually focus on arrival, recovery, and departure. Planning and focus are key to the success of the operation. For the duration of the contract, the PCs and any allies can reroll 1d20 when making an Analysis or Discipline test during a scenario (the new result must be accepted). Adversaries within a scenario gain an additional [CD] of Cover Soak from any cover they use. Fulfilling the contract will net the PMC an additional 1[CD] Capital (Effects count as 2). Failing the contract costs the PMC 1[CD] of Capital in legal fees.

GARRISON RETAINER

Similar to a defensive retainer, but usually in a much more relaxed capacity, garrison retainers require the PMC to occupy a strongpoint or series of defensive structures and provide protection to the local populace. Some G5 nations employ mercenary units on garrison retainers so that they can send their own units to battle, while others are simply so overstretched that they simply cannot cover the entirety of their ever-expanding borders. Garrison retainer assignments on core worlds are considered as R&R by most regulars.

Optional Rules: Defensive tactics and use of structures for protection are the focus of drills for these types of contract. The PCs and their allies gain +1[CD] Cover Soak when defending a position or using cover during any scenario relating to the fulfilment of the contract. Adversaries gain 1 Momentum on Stealth and Thievery tests to remain hidden amongst the local populace. Fulfilling the contract nets the PMC 1 additional Capital.

GATHER INTEL

Understanding the enemy's intentions, movements, and disposition provides an essential advantage to both attack and defence. All too often have allied commanders deployed their forces in response to intel they received, only to find they were duped into overstressing their position. This is true whether facing an enemy on the battlefield, within Maya, or across the table in a boardroom. The engaging company are seeking to get ahead of their opponent, and they want the PMC to do the digging. Much like extraction contracts, the gathering of intelligence can border on clandestine ops.

Optional Rules: Slipping through the cracks in defences – whether physical or quanontronic – and

digging through detritus can often net better results than the direct approach. The PCs and their allies gain 1 Momentum on Hacking and Stealth tests during scenarios relating to the completion of this campaign. Danger levels often intensify, however, allowing the GM to add 1 Heat to their pool whenever a PC makes such a test (regardless of success or failure). Fulfilling the contract will net the PCs 2 Leverage that can be used during any future contract negotiations. Failing to fulfil the contract means the GM gains 2 Leverage to use against the PCs during a future contract negotiation.

INSTRUCTION CADRE

Given the sheer scope of operations that a mercenary outfit can undertake across a virtually limitless array of battlefields, it's small wonder that corporations and G5 nations sometimes turn to PMCs to train their own troops for specialist theatres. Instruction cadres can also relate to the training of insurgents behind enemy lines, however, or the development of militia in remote locations. The latter assignments are considered almost as favourably as garrison retainers, while insurgent training is reserved only for the most hardened and disciplined amongst the outfit's number.

Optional Rules: There is a clear focus on the train-the-trainer techniques for these types of contracts, with discipline and instructional methods given a high priority. For the duration of the contract, PCs and their allies gain 1 Momentum on Command tests relating to local authorities and Education tests related to instruction and training. Adversaries gain 1 Momentum on Stealth and Thievery tests to remain hidden amongst the local populace. Fulfilling the contract in a peaceful region nets the PMC 1 additional Capital. Fulfilling a contract to train insurgents nets the PMC an additional 1[CD] Capital, with Effects counting as 2.

RECOVER HVT

It's a sad and unfortunate fact that civilians are all too often embroiled in the bitter struggles between opposing forces. Some civilians end up on the front line due to their capacity to aid the war effort in a unique way. Capturing such high value targets (HVTs) offers promising rewards for enemy forces. Captured HVTs are often well-protected by the enemy, making their recovery particularly difficult. Where the Combined Army is concerned, humanity's commanders also hope and pray that the HVTs can be freed before a Sepsitor has been employed....

Optional Rules: In a similar manner to when they have taken on distraction or extraction contracts, PMCs train their units to strike with speed and precision whilst shielding their target from the



If you look after people, they look after you. It's the same in business. Look after the money, and it soon starts looking after itself. It isn't hard. Now the HexaDome is where I get to leave all of that behind. I get to look after myself. That's where I get to have real fun.'

--Hannibal, Aristeia! star and Foreign Company strategist, in a rare interview with Final Boss, sports commentator for VissioRoma channel.

assault as much as possible. For the duration of the scenario in which they are seeking to recover their target, the HVT the PCs and their allies have been assigned to recover receives +2[CD] Armour Soak against any damage received as a result of an attack by one of its members, which includes attacks with the Blast and Indiscriminate quality. The PCs and their allies can choose to ignore this rule at any time. Adversaries can reroll 1d20 when making Discipline and Resistance tests during the same scenario, but they must accept the new results. Successfully fulfilling the contract will net the PMC an additional 1[CD] worth of Capital. Failing to fulfil the contract will cost the PMC 1[CD] in legal fees. (Effects count as 2 in both instances.)

RELIEF FORCE

More than they'd like to admit, the G5 nations find themselves overstretched and outnumbered on complicated battlefronts. Particularly where Paradiso is concerned. It often makes better sense to turn to the War Market and hire in troops than throw more of their own into the grinder and leave somewhere else weakened. A relief force is sent in to bolster a warzone, so the PMC can expect to be going in hot. Typically, an engaging company is already in a precarious position when they seek the support of a mercenary outfit, so a PMC might start a negotiation with some Leverage to bargain with.

Optional Rules: The PMC know that they'll be landing in a warzone, so they train to strike hard in order to grab themselves a foothold. For the duration of the contract, the PCs and any allies gain +2[CD] to damage rolls when attacking enemy equipment and war materiel in any scenario relating to the contract's fulfilment. Until the end of the contract, the GM begins each session related to the contract's fulfilment with 1 additional Heat per PC. Fulfilment of the contract nets the PMC an additional 1[CD] of Capital. Failing to fulfil the contract requires the PMC's leader to make a Daunting (D3) Command test. If they succeed, all of their units return. On failure, one unit of their choice fails to return.

SECURITY RETAINER

Corporations will always seek to protect their own assets against clandestine ops, extraction missions, and other enterprises that target their key resources. Who better to guard against these undertakings than the very personnel that engage in such activities? Whether a person, place, piece of data, or item of equipment, the PMC have been engaged on a security detail to protect a particular asset. Most often, the asset is in a protected location on a populated core world, but some are also hidden in remote and dangerous locations.

Optional Rules: The protection of the asset and

understanding of the environment in which they're deployed are both critical to the successful completion of the contract. For the duration of the contract, the asset the PMC have been assigned to protect receives +2[CD] Armour Soak against any damage received from an attack by one of its members, which includes attacks with the Blast and Indiscriminate quality. The PCs and their allies can spend 1 Momentum on any attack to ignore this benefit – they might decide to try and cause a vehicle surrounded by enemies to explode, for instance. Whenever the GM pays Heat for reinforcements, they may include 1 additional Trooper for free during scenarios relating to this contract. Successfully fulfilling the contract will net the PMC 1[CD] of Capital. Failing to fulfil the contract damages the PMC's reputation, providing the GM with 2 Leverage to use against the PCs during future contract negotiations.

SPEARHEAD OFFENSIVE

Sometimes, a PMC isn't just asked to reinforce a battlefield or warzone, but they're also required to take over operations and lead the offensive against the enemy. They might even be required to launch the offensive and establish the warzone. Regardless, the PMC can expect to be at the thick of the fighting. Being the lynchpin of the assault means they're assured of support, but it doesn't lessen the danger any.

Optional Rules: The PMC train their personnel hard to ensure they remain at the centre of the battle in the thick of the fighting. After all, it's what they're being paid to do, and reputation is everything. The kill or be killed intensity fires their blood and drives them to new heights of prowess. For the duration of the contract, the PCs and any allies involved in a scenario relating to the contract gain 1 Momentum on their melee and ranged attacks. Being on the frontline in the thick of the action intensifies the danger, so the GM adds 1 Heat to their pool at the start of each combat round in a scenario. Successfully completing the contract will cover the upkeep of any units engaged in its completion for one quarter of a year. Failing to fulfil the contract requires the PMC's leader to make a Daunting (D3) Command test. If they succeed, all of their units return. On failure, one unit of their choice fails to return.

TACTICAL RAID

The most common type of contract offered on the War Market, a tactical raid provides a fixed objective for a PMC to conduct an operation against. Unlike other contracts that likely require months or years to fulfil, a tactical raid can be completed within weeks of the digital signature being received. Tactical raids often target assets or installations that are outside of conventional jurisdictions, meaning they're fair game and won't

attract repercussions for the PMC. They're often risky and take place far from supply lines, which translates to a certain amount of Leverage at the bargaining table. Tactical raids sometimes stray into clandestine ops and extraction territory, but as they mostly take place outside of O-12 jurisdiction, there's little anyone can say about it.

Optional Rule: Unhurried training and slick drills are key to success, as is detailed planning and contingencies. For the duration of the contract, Heat costs relating to the seizing of initiative are doubled. Rarely do the defenders give up their ward without a fight, however. For the duration of the contract, any adversaries involved in a scenario relating to the contract gain 1 Momentum on their melee and ranged attacks. Fulfilment of the contract nets the PMC an additional 1[CD] of Capital. Failing to fulfil the contract requires the PMC's leader to make a Daunting (D3) Command test. If they succeed, all of their units return. On failure, one unit of their choice fails to return.

CLOSING THE CONTRACT

The objectives enable GMs and players to define the outlines of the contract, which is the reason that they have been employed in the first place. The actual timeline involved in the fulfilment of the contract can span a considerable length, especially if long journeys and the transportation of multiple units are involved, and particularly if the PMC are becoming embroiled in protracted conflicts. To speed up the process of contract fulfilment, the entire period of the contract can be broken down into a number of key action scenes that relate to the overall objective. GMs and players can play through the entire period of the contract if they wish, but this will significantly slow the expansion of their PMC. With the objective in mind, GMs should break the contract down into between one to three key scenes. Each scene should be connected, even if only loosely, and should answer a number of key points and follow-up questions.

ACTION SCENE CHECKLIST

To make the most of an action scene relating to the objective, GMs should consider answering these key points.

ELEVATOR PITCH

A short description of the scene, the environment it takes place in, and its connection to the overall objective. To help set the scene and mood during the game, this can be even be passed to the players as a brief from their intelligence operatives or commanders.

'With civil unrest spilling over in Akuna Bay and production facilities being affected, Pharmacomp are searching for Libertos sympathisers among the Ateks. Hot weather and warm rains only fray tempers further in the favelas on the outskirts of the industrial sector.'

'Human Edge is a hotbed for humanity's fringe elements, including pirates. Cosmica Ltd. pay well to keep their supplies flowing, but that doesn't mean they remain incident free. The most recent shipment has reported an attack by pirates, but sensors are unable to confirm due to the region's effect on sensors.'

DIFFICULTY

How difficult is the scenario intended to be? This relates to the adversaries involved and/or the information that can be gained during the scenario. It will also need to be considered against both the Objectives and Stakes. If the Combined Army need to steamroll over the PMC's position in order to break into humanity's rear guard, then the stakes are extremely high and an EI Avatar might be included to commensurately increase the danger. Then again, a routine peacekeeping patrol through the refugee camp outside of Valkenswijk might expose the team to little more than pickpockets, but it will serve to meet objectives relating to morale. Difficulty can also be related to the three aspects of conflict. A scenario that features a moderate risk in terms of Warfare might become deadly if Infowar has a dangerous impact.

OBJECTIVE

Not only the overall objective of the contract, but the objectives of each party involved in the scenario. In the first example under Elevator Pitch, Pharmacomp want to root out Libertos elements and their sympathisers, but will they want to do so gently or with maximum authorised force? For their part, the sympathisers want to avoid discovery and prevent any harm to the community. The Libertos terrorists, on the other hand, will likely care little for any harm that befalls the humans – friend and foe alike. GMs should make a note of each faction's objective so that they can refer to it when playing the scenario out. A short note relating to the major players' objectives and how they relate to the contract's fulfilment can also be included. If you need an objective on the fly or would like to include an element of randomness to your faction, use the Random Scenario Objective Table. Roll a descriptor to determine the overall purpose of the scenario and then an objective to determine the intent behind the purpose. The descriptor and objective may not seem naturally related, but it can be a fun and rewarding exercise to connect the two together. PCs tasked with negotiating

'Insurmountable odds? I don't understand, compadre. I am Señor Massacre. There is nothing that I can't overcome with my blades or my wit.'

'What about Diva Davinia? Wasn't she responsible for you supposedly giving up close protection work?'

'Well now, amigo, there is no need to get personal. Are you ready to duel?'

--Señor Massacre, Aristeia! star and Foreign Company contractor, when being interviewed by Sabot over his current employment with the mercenary outfit.



The rules here also introduce a unit's skill level as a trait, which serves as a combination of training and morale.

GREEN: Units with the Green quality increase the complication range of the Force Commander's

Command test by 2 during an Engagement (*Infinity* RPG Gamemaster's Guide p. 114).

REGULAR: Units with the Regular quality gain no additional positive or negative modifiers to their tests.

VETERAN: Units with the Veteran quality add 1 Momentum to the Force Commander's Command test during an Engagement (*Infinity* RPG Gamemaster's Guide p. 114).

ELITE: Units with the Elite quality add 1 Momentum to the Force Commander's Command test during an Engagement and can ignore any complication generated on the test (*Infinity* RPG Gamemaster's Guide p. 114).

a conspiracy might find themselves delivering political leaflets on the turf of their employer's rival faction; being assigned to destroy historical data might involve corrupting local records to hide a trail; and negotiating Combined Army activity means the PCs might find themselves acting as patsies for the procurement of VoodooTech. GMs can also build specific rewards or penalties into the scenario that directly relate to success or failure. If the PCs succeed at the scenario's objective, maybe they begin the subsequent session with additional equipment or an extra Infinity Point, for instance, or perhaps even bonus Capital at the end of the entire contract. Likewise, if they fail to complete the objective, perhaps a rival faction gains more allies or equipment, or the GM begins the subsequent session with additional Heat points. There should be relatable consequences for the status of an objective.

ENVIRONMENT

The environment has an undeniable impact on the PCs' preparations and the scenario itself. Making a note of these effects beforehand and translating

them to the players will make for exciting dynamics during the game. Not every environment needs to be represented in the Warfare sense either. Perhaps there is a strange magnetic disturbance affecting Infowar aspects, or crowds of people at the scene impact Psywar attempts. Make a note of all three dynamics if necessary.

PARTICIPANTS

Who are the key participants of the scene? The PCs and their adversaries will clearly be the focus, but are there any other individuals or groups that could have an impact on the narrative and/or systems in play? Innocent bystanders, irate sympathisers, local law enforcement, corporate executives, and alien infiltrators are just some examples of other parties that might be present.

STAKES

Closely associated to objectives, stakes relate to the elements that each faction involved stands to gain or lose. For the PCs, it might simply be a case of losing their contract. The scenario's outcome, however, will also have an effect on



everyone involved (and even some who aren't). What happens if the PCs uncover sympathisers? Does it lead to more unrest and do the Libertos begin taking a direct hand against them? Do Pharmacomp want the PCs to dig deeper for information relating to the Libertos cell? And is some other party covertly assisting the Libertos with their efforts?

STYLE

The theme and mood of the campaign can come into play here, though the contract can also introduce a number of new elements. Are there any specific visuals that need relating? What other sensory elements can provide a focus? Also consider the pacing of the scenario. Is it a slow, rambling, roleplay-heavy scenario that introduces the PCs to different characters in Valkenswijk's refugee town? Or is it a slow-building scenario that ramps up the tension until the Libertos spring their trap?

LARGE SCALE WARFARE

The following stat blocks relate directly to Chapter 10: Large Scale Warfare of the *Infinity* RPG Gamemaster's Guide. Enacting combat with these rules is an excellent way to represent large PMCs conducting military operations within a session, particularly if they're supporting the troops of other factions.

DROPSHIP SQUADRON

Armoured dropships used to ferry ground forces and provide tactical air support during assault or defence.

Pace	4	Impact	4[CD], Piercing 1		
Size	3	Strength	12	Resilience	3
Traits	Airborne, Close Support, Regular, Transport				

DRUZE SHOCK TEAM

Power armoured infantry with a fierce reputation for getting the job done, sometimes too successfully.

Pace	1	Impact	5[CD], Grievous, Vicious 1		
Size	3	Strength	10	Resilience	4
Traits	Shock Troops, Veteran				

ANACONDA TAG SQUADRON

A unit of Anaconda TAGs from the mercenary company of the same name. Professionalism and heavy armour pack a serious punch.

Pace	1	Impact	5[CD], Vicious 1		
Size	2	Strength	8	Resilience	3
Traits	Elite, Shock Troops, Skirmishers				

TRAKTOR MUL BATTERY

A battery of sturdy Ariadnan Remotes with one purpose: pounding the enemy into submission.

Pace	1	Impact	8[CD], Area (Close), Suppressive, Piercing 1, Vicious 1		
Size	2	Strength	8	Resilience	4
Traits	Artillery 3, Regular, Supporting Fire				

ARAGOTO SENKENBUTAI SQUADRON

A small group of motorised warriors who race into action with deadly precision.

Pace	3	Impact	5[CD], Piercing 2 (from Skirmishers trait), Vicious 1		
Size	2	Strength	8	Resilience	3
Traits	Infowarriors 2, Regular, Skirmishers				

WARCOR ATTACHÉ

Skilled pilots operating armoured, mobile, mechanised suits. These TAGs are relatively small and lightweight, allowing them to move quickly into position in support of other Forces.

Pace	2	Impact	4[CD], Piercing 2 (from Skirmishers trait), Suppressive		
Size	1	Strength	5	Resilience	1
Traits	Infowarriors 1, Veteran, Skirmishers				

WARDRIVER UNIT

Mercenary hackers offering their services as cybercombat operatives, Wardrivers work diligently and seemingly effortlessly to protect their fellow soldiers from quantronic dangers.

Pace	2	Impact	7[CD], Piercing 2, Vicious 1		
Size	2	Strength	2	Resilience	2
Traits	Infowarriors 3, Regular, Scouts				

RANDOM SCENARIO OBJECTIVE TABLE

D20	SCENARIO DESCRIPTOR	D20	SCENARIO OBJECTIVE
1	Explore	1	Schematics (weapon, base, ship, plane, vehicle) Schematics (weapon, base, ship, plane, vehicle)
2	Recover	2	Technological/scientific discovery
3	Attack	3	Subversive elements
4	Destroy	4	A weak point
5	Protect	5	An access gate
6	Deliver	6	Escape route
7	Capture	7	Conspiracy
8	Find/Locate	8	Chemical formula
9	Negotiate	9	Criminal activity
10	Reconnoitre	10	Covert operations data
11	Divert	11	Assets
12	Distract	12	Rival faction
13	Expose	13	Submondo secrets
14	Hide	14	The truth to a cover up
15	Evacuate	15	What is at the location
16	Patrol	16	What happened at the location
17	Guard	17	A traitor's identity
18	Steal	18	Historical data
19	Insert	19	Cartographical data
20	Rescue	20	Combined Army activity



CHAPTER 9

ADVERSARIES

CRY HAVOC!

It is a special kind of person who seeks out a life as a mercenary. It is an even more special kind of person who remains a mercenary after the first bitter and scarring taste of what that life can hold. They are a varied bunch: some with honour, others without, some working for the next pay cheque, or glory, or reputation. The wise will carefully weigh the odds, and only play if they believe those odds are in their favour. They train and plan carefully, while others recklessly play the hero. The reputation of the mercenary, as a concept, is one largely built on rumour and on the glorification or vilification of a group of people sometimes painted the hero, sometimes the monster. It is an occupation that has seen a rebirth of its image, with Maya dramas extolling the virtues of private

soldiers, often displayed as vigilantes doing what law enforcement cannot. They have their share of villains too. In truth, those who stay the course, who serve and survive, are a hardy bunch. Tough and reliable, they fight not just for the next payday, but also for the reputation of their unit and their company. The vagaries of the War Market are influenced by how well a job is done, and good standing is essential in order to secure future contracts. It is not a glorious job, whatever the Maya dramas spin. It's difficult and often brutal, requiring well-drilled soldiers to go places and fight fights that corporations and nations cannot or will not do themselves. Those that manage to survive a few contracts are hard, unrelenting, professional, and resolute. They are close knit and mix only with their own kind, and they make terrible foes.



ANACONDA TAG PILOT

Anaconda TAG units originated as a Nomad mechanized squadron, disbanded prior to the NeoColonial Wars. Somehow strings were pulled and the squadron was reborn as a fully mechanized mercenary unit. They served throughout the NeoColonial Wars and the Commercial Conflicts, during which they formed a strong and lasting relationship with the Force de Réponse Rapide Merovingienne. Anaconda TAG pilots are cocky and self-assured, but they have the experience and grit to back up their arrogance. To make it to a fully-fledged Anaconda TAG Pilot requires years of simulated training, followed by on-the-ground experience. Anyone that has earned the badge of Anaconda pilot, and has been issued their own TAG, represents a massive investment for the unit. These people are tough, well-drilled, experienced, and some of the best pilots in the Human Sphere.

ATTRIBUTES		FIELDS OF EXPERTISE			
Agility	10	Combat	+2	1	
Awarenes	9	Fortitude	+0	0	
Brawn	8	Movement	+3	2	
Coordination	11	Senses	+1	0	
Intelligence	9	Social	+1	0	
Personality	7	Technical	+2	0	
Willpower	8				
DEFENCES					
Firewall	11	Resolve	8	Vigour	8
Security	1	Morale	2	Armour	2

ATTACKS:

Knife: Melee, 1+3[CD], 1H, Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Subtle 2, Thrown, Unforgiving 1
Spitfire: Range M, 1+5[CD], Burst 3, 2H, Normal, Spread 2, Unsubtle

GEAR: Light Combat Armour

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Cocky: Anaconda TAG Pilots are well known for their arrogance. They gain a Morale Soak of 2.

Like my own Skin (1 Heat): An Anaconda TAG Pilot may reroll any dice that did not score a success when making a Piloting test, but they must accept the new result.

BRAWLER ENFORCER

Some degree in a suit once said that mercenary work must 'appeal to no-one but the lowest denomination of brawler.' Chances are they never saw the dark side of the real world, the blood and the violence. Brawlers take the name as a badge of honour. The simple fact is that there are many jobs that those who like to keep their clothes clean and their boots shiny just aren't

willing to face, but they still need to get done. Brawler Enforcers are just those people, willing to take pretty much any job that pays. They are experts in the tactical delivery of extreme violence. It won't earn them any commendations, but a reputation to be feared is award enough.

ATTRIBUTES		FIELDS OF EXPERTISE			
Agility	10	Combat	+3	3	
Awarenes	9	Fortitude	+2	1	
Brawn	9	Movement	+1	0	
Coordination	10	Senses	+1	1	
Intelligence	8	Social	+0	0	
Personality	8	Technical	+0	0	
Willpower	8				
DEFENCES					
Firewall	8	Resolve	10	Vigour	11
Security	1	Morale	1	Armour	2

ATTACKS:

Knife: Melee, 1+3[CD], 1H, Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Subtle 2, Thrown, Unforgiving 1

Rifle: Range M, 1+5[CD], Burst 2, 2H, Standard, MULTI Light Mod, Vicious 1

Light Shotgun: Range C, 1+4[CD], Burst 1, Unbalanced, Normal Shells, Knockdown

GEAR: Light Combat Armour

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Common Special Abilities: Menacing 1

Hard: Brawler Enforcers are tough as nails.

They gain a Morale Soak of 1.

Ultra-Violence: Specialising in brutal interventions, a Brawler Enforcer may re-roll any [CD] from the current attack once.

CONTRACT NEGOTIATOR

Every private citizen or company that engages Mercenaries does so through one or more Contract Negotiators. Usually a private citizen or small business will engage a company that specialises in contract negotiations in the War Market or through the Lists. This company will tap one of their contract specialists to hammer out the details of the arrangement and engage with the contract negotiator representing the Mercenary unit or company. Corporations and governments have specialised personnel whose role is contract negotiation, and these will deal with the mercenary companies directly. Of course, the specifics vary wildly, especially when negotiating with a company sourced through the Lists. Deals often involve more than the exchange of money, and many less honest merc groups have been known to try and sneak nasty little surprises into contracts when they think they can get away with it. The best thing for



anyone seeking to hire a mercenary is to follow the civilised route. They should engage a specialist who understands the usual terms and arrangements, and who has experience in the market.

ATTRIBUTES		FIELDS OF EXPERTISE			
Agility	7	Combat	+0	0	
Awarenes	9	Fortitude	+0	0	
Brawn	7	Movement	+0	0	
Coordination	7	Senses	+1	0	
Intelligence	9	Social	+1	1	
Personality	8	Technical	+2	1	
Willpower	8				
DEFENCES					
Firewall	11	Resolve	8	Vigour	7
Security	1	Morale	2	Armour	1

ATTACKS:

Knife: Melee, 1+3[CD], 1H, Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Subtle 2, Thrown, Unforgiving 1

Pistol: Range R/C, 1+4[CD], Burst 1, 1H, Standard, Vicious 1

GEAR: Armoured Clothing

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Gift of the Gab: Able to talk themselves in or out of any situation, a Contract Negotiator gains 2 Morale Soak.

Honey Smile (1 Heat): A Contract Negotiator can re-roll any of the dice rolled when making a Persuasion or Psychology skill test.

CUBE JÄGER

If a special person goes missing in action, and that person is a corporate asset with knowledge too valuable to let slip, they become a target. Whatever the reason, and every mission has its own, there are a long list of people willing to pay for the services of the Cube Jägers. Elite and experienced in battle, comfortable operating behind enemy lines, and as skilled with a scalpel and medkit as with a gun, the Cube Jägers are a unit that specialises in the retrieval of cubes.

ATTRIBUTES		FIELDS OF EXPERTISE			
Agility	10	Combat	+2	0	
Awarenes	10	Fortitude	+0	0	
Brawn	9	Movement	+3	1	
Coordination	10	Senses	+1	1	
Intelligence	9	Social	+0	0	
Personality	7	Technical	+3	1	
Willpower	8				
DEFENCES					
Firewall	12	Resolve	8	Vigour	9
Security	1	Morale	3	Armour	2

ATTACKS:

Knife: Melee, 1+3[CD], 1H, Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Subtle 2, Thrown, Unforgiving 1

Rifle: Range M, 1+5[CD], Burst 2, 2H, Standard, MULTI Light Mod, Vicious 1

Light Shotgun: Range C, 1+4[CD], Burst 1, Unbalanced, Normal Shells, Knockdown

GEAR: Light Combat Armour, Medikit

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Immune: Cube Jägers are tough and hardy, through training and bloody experience they have developed an immunity to things that would knock others off their feet. When attacked Cube Jägers treat Shock Ammunition as if it is Standard Ammunition.

Seen it All: Cube Jägers have seen things that would make even the toughest weep, they gain a Morale Soak of 3.

Deft Hands (special): Specialising in Cube retrieval, Cube Jägers may reduce the Difficulty of any Medicine test made to retrieve a Cube by 1 for every 1 Heat Spent (up to a maximum of 2).

DAHSHAT TROOPER

Dahshat Troopers are mercenary soldiers who are often treated like Qaid Fahesh's personal army. From security detail to body-guard work and military escort duty, Dahshat's contracts cover a wide range of services. Dahshat soldiers are typically ex-military, always well equipped, and often rely on visual intimidation and display of force to get the job done. That is not to say they aren't capable. Dahshat isn't one of the most successful mercenary companies in the Human Sphere for nothing!

ATTRIBUTES		FIELDS OF EXPERTISE			
Agility	9	Combat	+2	1	
Awarenes	8	Fortitude	+0	0	
Brawn	9	Movement	+1	0	
Coordination	9	Senses	+1	0	
Intelligence	7	Social	+0	0	
Personality	7	Technical	+1	0	
Willpower	7				
DEFENCES					
Firewall	8	Resolve	7	Vigour	9
Security	2	Morale	0	Armour	3

ATTACKS:

Knife: Melee, 1+3[CD], 1H, Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Subtle 2, Thrown, Unforgiving 1

Combi Rifle: Range C/M, 1+5[CD], Burst 2, 2H, Standard, Expert, MULTI Light Mod, Vicious 1

Light Shotgun: Range C, 1+4[CD], Burst 1, Unbalanced, Normal Shells, Knockdown

GEAR: Medium Combat Armour

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Image (1 Heat): Dahshat Troopers look threatening, well trained, and expert. Dahshat Troopers can re-roll any of the dice rolled when making a Persuasion skill test.

Overwhelming Force (2 Heat): Dahshat Troopers operate in numbers. The GM may call in reinforcements at the cost of 2 Heat per Trooper.

DRUZE HACKER

Uncompromising, capable, and deadly, the mercenaries of the Druze society are highly trained and well-equipped. Druze hackers are widely regarded as some of the most dangerous in their field, able to cut through quantronic defences and specialising in pinpoint attacks against identified targets. Druze Hackers are often hired in supporting roles, or operate as a part of Druze Shock Teams, where their ability to stun and attack a target through their own quantronic network fits perfectly with the assassination, extortion, and riot control missions the Druze are well known for.

ATTRIBUTES		FIELDS OF EXPERTISE			
Agility	8	Combat	+2	0	
Awarenes	9	Fortitude	+2	0	
Brawn	8	Movement	+1	1	
Coordination	10	Senses	+2	1	
Intelligence	11	Social	+0	0	
Personality	7	Technical	+3	1	
Willpower	10				
DEFENCES					
Firewall	14	Resolve	12	Vigour	10
Security	2	Morale	2	Armour	3

ATTACKS:

Knife: Melee, 1+3[CD], 1H, Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Subtle 2, Thrown, Unforgiving 1

Combi Rifle: Range C/M, 1+5[CD], Burst 2, 2H, Standard, Expert, MULTI Light Mod, Vicious 1

Pitcher: Range M, -, Burst 1, Unbalanced, Deployable Repeater, Munition, Speculative Fire

GEAR: Medium Combat Armour, Assault Hacking Device or Killer Hacking Device.

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Quantronic Experts: Druze Hackers may re-roll one D20 when making a Hacking Test but must accept the new result.

Druze: Followers of a secret religion, Druze Hackers gain a Morale Soak of 2.

Brutal: Druze Hackers gain one Heat, which they may use on any tests related to Hacking.

FOREIGN COMPANY CLOSE PERSONAL PROTECTION (CPT)

Close personal protection can mean a lot of things. For any other mercenary company this usually means a quiet bodyguard detail, but for the Foreign Company, it means high stakes and high ratings. While the Foreign Company does take contracts performing bodyguard detail for a range of politicians and celebrities around the Human Sphere, they are most famous for their work protecting Maya stars and Sensaseries personalities casting from some of the hottest warzones in the Sphere. If a star is travelling to Paradiso to take a snapshot of the frontline, or a reporter has gained an interview with some kingpin Submondo boss, chances are they will be protected by the Foreign Company. This kind of work looks glitzy, but the dangers are very real, and the stakes are massive. Any other company that has a bad day can swallow it and move on to the next job. The Foreign Company makes its business from the publicity that goes along with their work, and trading on reputation means you must be able to back it up when the lead is flying. Make no mistake, while the Foreign Company CPT revel in their celebrity, they are more than capable of following through on their reputation!

ATTRIBUTES		FIELDS OF EXPERTISE			
Agility	8	Combat	+2	1	
Awarenes	9	Fortitude	+2	0	
Brawn	9	Movement	+1	0	
Coordination	10	Senses	+2	0	
Intelligence	9	Social	+3	0	
Personality	9	Technical	+1	0	
Willpower	9				
DEFENCES					
Firewall	10	Resolve	11	Vigour	11
Security	2	Morale	3	Armour	3

ATTACKS:

Knife: Melee, 1+3[CD], 1H, Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Subtle 2, Thrown, Unforgiving 1

Combi Rifle: Range C/M, 1+5[CD], Burst 2, 2H, Standard, Expert, MULTI Light Mod, Vicious 1

GEAR: Medium Combat Armour, AR Eye Implants, Recorder.

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Famous: Foreign Company CPT gain 1 Heat, which may be spent on any test related to the Social Field of Expertise.

Reputation: Foreign Company CPT know that they have a reputation to fulfil, they gain 3 Morale Soak.



IKARI SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

The Ikari Company is well known for accepting any job, for a price, without worrying about troublesome things like the lawfulness or morality of the job being offered. Ikari Soldiers of Fortune are capable warriors, experienced in a range of actions and theatres. They are also more than willing to bend or break the rules of what is acceptable or legal in order to fulfil a contract. The Ikari Company is known for the brutal efficiency with which it gets the job done. They are often hired by Corporations to fulfil morally questionable actions such as breaking up strikes and strong-arming or killing vocal opponents or activists who have become a problem. The Ikari Soldiers of Fortune aren't interested in bleeding heart stories or questions around the legitimacy of a mission, all they want to know is whether the money has been paid.

ATTRIBUTES		FIELDS OF EXPERTISE			
Agility	9	Combat	+2	1	
Awareness	8	Fortitude	+2	0	
Brawn	9	Movement	+0	0	
Coordination	9	Senses	+1	0	
Intelligence	7	Social	+0	0	
Personality	6	Technical	+0	0	
Willpower	8				
DEFENCES					
Firewall	7	Resolve	10	Vigour	11
Security	1	Morale	2	Armour	2

ATTACKS:

Knife: Melee, 1+3[CD], 1H, Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Subtle 2, Thrown, Unforgiving 1

Boarding Shotgun: Range C, 1+5[CD], Burst 1, 2H, Normal Shells/AP Shells, Knockdown, Medium MULTI.

Light Grenade Launcher: Range M, 2+4[CD], Burst 1, Unbalanced, Heavy, Grenades, Area (Close), Munition, Speculative Fire.

GEAR: Light Combat Armour.

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Immoral: Ikari Soldiers of Fortune don't really care what the job is, as long as they are getting paid to do it. They gain 2 Morale Soak.

Experienced: Ikari Soldiers of Fortune may re-roll one D20 when making a Combat Test but must accept the new result.

KAPLAN TACTICAL SERVICES

Originally founded to protect to protect Beyhan orbital projects, Kaplan Tactical Services has evolved into a mercenary unit with a reputation for reliability and principles. Kaplan soldiers adhere to a stringent moral code, and they will not accept jobs that contravene or test their vision of the Haqqislamite faith. They are capable soldiers, well known for their engineers and capability when it comes to sabotage and counter-sabotage missions.

ATTRIBUTES		FIELDS OF EXPERTISE			
Agility	9	Combat	+2	1	
Awareness	9	Fortitude	+1	0	
Brawn	8	Movement	+2	0	
Coordination	10	Senses	+1	0	
Intelligence	10	Social	+1	0	
Personality	8	Technical	+2	0	
Willpower	9				
DEFENCES					
Firewall	12	Resolve	10	Vigour	9
Security	1/2	Morale	4	Armour	2/3

ATTACKS:

Knife: Melee, 1+3[CD], 1H, Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Subtle 2, Thrown, Unforgiving 1

Spitfire: Range M, 1+5[CD], Burst 3, 2H, Normal, Spread 2, Unsubtle

ATTACKS (Elite):

Combi Rifle: Range C/M, 1+5[CD], Burst 2, 2H, Standard, Expert, MULTI Light Mod, Vicious 1

Adhesive Launcher: Range M, 1+6[CD], Burst 1, Unwieldy, GOO, Munition

D-Charges: Charge, 2+6[CD], 1H, Anti-Materiel 2, Comms, Disposable, Piercing 3, Spread 1, Unsubtle, Vicious

GEAR: Light Combat Armour

GEAR (Elite): Medium Combat Armour

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Faithful: Kaplan Security Service soldiers are deeply religious and bound by a code of ethics. The gain 4 Morale Soak.

Saboteur (Elite): Kaplan Security Service soldiers gain 1 Heat which may be spent on any skill tests involving explosives. Additionally, any explosives they use gain +2[CD] Damage.

KRAKOT RENEGADES

Renegade Morats willing to sell their services to anyone who can pay their price, the Krakot Renegades are the most brutal solution to any problem requiring force. Berserk, chaotic, and

unpredictable, they will achieve the mission parameters, but they bear no responsibility for the damage incurred in the process. Krakot Renegades delight in the fury of combat. They are Morat criminals who have escaped a sure death penalty to live out their purpose for war.

ATTRIBUTES		FIELDS OF EXPERTISE			
Agility	10	Combat	+3	2	
Awarenes	8	Fortitude	+2	2	
Brawn	13	Movement	+1	1	
Coordination	10	Senses	+1	0	
Intelligence	8	Social	+0	0	
Personality	6	Technical	+0	0	
Willpower	8				
DEFENCES					
Firewall	8	Resolve	10	Vigour	15
Security	-	Morale	2	Armour	2

ATTACKS:

Morat Scimitar: Melee, 1+7[CD], Unbalanced, Grievous, Non-Hackable, Vicious 2

Chain Rifle: Range C, 1+6[CD], Burst 1, 2H, Normal, Spread 1, Torrent, Vicious 1

Red Fury: Range M, 1+5[CD], Burst 3, 2H, Shock, Spread 2, Grievous, Unsubtle, Vicious 1

GEAR: Light Combat Armour

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Morat Aggression: The Morat's brutal outlook grants them a Morale Soak of 2.

Berserk: The Krakot Renegades are ferocious in close combat. When dealing damage in melee, they will inflict a bonus +2[CD] in damage (included in stats above).

OUTCAST NINJA

As long as there have been ninjas, there have been outcast ninjas, those for whom the discipline and lack of recognition was too much to bear, or too much against their nature. With the Japanese Uprising, and the division of Ninja clan loyalties between the StateEmpire and the Japanese Empire, there are some ninja for whom neither side, or even both, represents something they no longer believe in or can follow. Outcast ninja are silent killers, experts in infiltration and exfiltration, and masters of disguise and deception. They are able to get close to people and into places few would dare attempt. They are also trained killers, able and deadly. Extremely few in number, the legendary ghost, Saito Togan, is the most well-recorded of the clanless ninja to stalk the Human Sphere.

ATTRIBUTES		FIELDS OF EXPERTISE			
Agility	11	Combat	+3	2	
Awarenes	10	Fortitude	+0	0	
Brawn	10	Movement	+3	1	
Coordination	10	Senses	+1	0	
Intelligence	8	Social	+1	0	
Personality	6	Technical	+1	0	
Willpower	8				
DEFENCES					
Firewall	9	Resolve	8	Vigour	10
Security	-	Morale	-	Armour	1

ATTACKS:

Sword: Melee, 1+5[CD], Unbalanced, Non-Hackable, Parry 2, Vicious 1

Tactical Bow: Range C, 1+3[CD], Burst 1, 2H, Any Arrow, Non-Hackable, Subtle 2, Vicious 2

GEAR: Armoured Clothing

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Catlike: As it so happens, Ninja leap off their fair share of buildings. They treat any distance fallen as being three zones shorter when calculating damage.

Kenjutsu: When making a melee attack, the Ninja can reroll up to 3[CD] but must accept the new results.

STARCO GESTALT OFFICER

Experts at instilling the discipline and high-level training that the Free Company of the Star is famous for, the Gestalt Officers of StarCo are some of the most highly sought after trainers in the Human Sphere. Masters of how to get a disparate group of individuals to work as a tight-knit team that is interdependent and co-reliant is a rare talent.

ATTRIBUTES		FIELDS OF EXPERTISE			
Agility	8	Combat	+2	0	
Awarenes	9	Fortitude	+1	0	
Brawn	8	Movement	+1	0	
Coordination	8	Senses	+1	0	
Intelligence	12	Social	+2	1	
Personality	10	Technical	+3	1	
Willpower	8				
DEFENCES					
Firewall	15	Resolve	9	Vigour	9
Security	-	Morale	2	Armour	1



ATTACKS:

Knife: Melee, 1+7[CD], Unbalanced, Grievous, Non-Hackable, Vicious 2

Pistol: Range C, 1+6[CD], Burst 1, 2H, Normal, Spread 1, Torrent, Vicious 1

GEAR: Armoured Clothing, Analysis Suite

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Experienced Educators: A Gestalt Officer can use the Technical Field of Expertise in place of Social when making Command or Persuade Tests.

Seen It All: A Gestalt Officer has heard all the excuses before, they gain a Morale Soak of 2.

VARANGIAN GUARD VETERAN

The Varangian Guards have a reputation as being the best of the best when it comes to mercenary operations against the Combined Army. Mostly drawn from the Ariadnan Expeditionary Corps, these soldiers each have many tours of experience serving and training for combat in the unpredictable environment of Paradiso's jungles. This high-intensity experience has made them formidable warriors in any sphere of operation, but on Paradiso, they are premier.

ATTRIBUTES		FIELDS OF EXPERTISE			
Agility	10	Combat	+3	2	
Awarenes	9	Fortitude	+2	2	
Brawn	11	Movement	+1	0	
Coordination	11	Senses	+2	0	
Intelligence	8	Social	+0	0	
Personality	6	Technical	+0	0	
Willpower	8				
DEFENCES					
Firewall	8	Resolve	10	Vigour	13
Security	2	Morale	2	Armour	3

ATTACKS:

Teseum Claymore: Melee, 2+7[CD], 2H, Grievous, Non-Hackable, Parry 2, Piercing, Vicious 2

Chain Rifle: Range C, 1+6[CD], Burst 1, 2H, Normal, Spread 1, Torrent, Vicious 1

GEAR: Medium Combat Armour, Multispectral Visor

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Experienced: A Varangian Guard Veteran has served enough tours of duty not to lose their head when the shells start landing, they gain a Morale Soak of 2.

Jungle Specialists: Having served and trained for the jungles of Paradiso, Varangian Guard Veterans gain 2 Bonus Heat which they may use during Warfare Scenes that take place in the Jungle.

YUAN YUAN PIRATE

Unpredictably chaotic is probably the best way to describe the Yuan Yuan Pirates. They lack discipline, consistency, and a reliability, but they make up for all their shortcomings through the shock value they bring. Often plying the space lanes in the search for anything vulnerable enough to attack, they board their target vessels like a howling wind. In ground combat they prefer to operate through air-insertion, coming in from their own ships in low orbit.

ATTRIBUTES		FIELDS OF EXPERTISE			
Agility	12	Combat	+3	2	
Awarenes	8	Fortitude	+0	0	
Brawn	12	Movement	+2	2	
Coordination	9	Senses	+1	0	
Intelligence	6	Social	+0	0	
Personality	7	Technical	+0	0	
Willpower	6				
DEFENCES					
Firewall	6	Resolve	6	Vigour	12
Security	-/1	Morale	-	Armour	-/2

ATTACKS:

Plasteel Pipe: Melee, 1+4[CD], Unbalanced, Improvised 1, Non-Hackable, Stun

Chain Rifle: Range C, 1+6[CD], Burst 1, 2H, Normal, Spread 1, Torrent, Vicious 1

Flash Grenades: Grenade, 2+4[CD], 1H, Blinding, Disposable, Indiscriminate (Close), Non-Lethal, Speculative Fire, Thrown, Unsubtle, removes Marked

ATTACKS (Elite – in addition to above):

Boarding Shotgun: Range C, 1+5[CD], Burst 1, 2H, Normal Shells/AP Shells, Knockdown, Medium MULTI

GEAR: None

GEAR (Elite): Light Combat Armour

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Crazed (Elite): The Yuan Yuan are ferocious in close combat, when dealing damage in melee they will inflict a bonus +2[CD] in damage (included in stats above).

Impetuous: Yuan Yuan Pirates will always act in a turn as if they have Seized Initiative.

Booty Mad: Yuan Yuan Pirates are particularly susceptible to bribes, shiny things, and things that aren't tied down. In any negotiation or persuade attempt with a Yuan Yuan, the offer of money or goods (of a reasonable quantity) will gain any offering character a bonus 2 Momentum which they may spend on that negotiation or persuade attempt.

FATHER LUCIEN SFORZA

Former man of the cloth, Father Lucien Sforza is still devout, pious, and a man of God. He is also one of the most feared bounty hunters in the Human Sphere. Intelligent and dispassionate, commanding and imposing, with all the saintly poise of a gentleman, and the smile of a lion. Father Lucien Sforza still wears the collar of his former career, despite working as Bounty Hunter for more than 30 years. Those targets sentenced to die are often found with a neat pattern of four bullet holes in the shape of a cross. This is the mark of a monster hunter, a connection that is as carefully deliberate as his hunts. Father Sforza carries himself with a quiet confidence, but he can impose himself on a room with a cutting word or movement. He prefers to hunt those who are marked to die, it cuts out the messy business of having to drag what is left of them back to whoever issued the contract. He is not known for wanton cruelty but is happy to use any means required to get the job done efficiently. He is a shark. He doesn't kill for the joy of it, it's just in his nature.

ATTRIBUTES		FIELDS OF EXPERTISE			
Agility	11	Combat	+4	2	
Awarenes	10	Fortitude	+1	0	
Brawn	9	Movement	+3	0	
Coordination	11	Senses	+2	1	
Intelligence	11	Social	+3	1	
Personality	9	Technical	+2	1	
Willpower	9				
DEFENCES					
Firewall	13	Resolve	10	Vigour	10
Security	1	Morale	4	Armour	2

ATTACKS:

Knife: Melee, 1+3[CD], 1H, Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Subtle 2, Thrown, Unforgiving 1

Stun Baton: 1+4[CD], 1H, Non-Hackable, Knockdown, Subtle 1, Stun.

Heavy Pistol: Range R/C, 2+4[CD], Burst 1, Unbalanced, Standard. Unforgiving 1, Vicious 1.

MULTI Rifle: Range C/M, 1+5[CD], Burst 2/2, 2H, Standard. Viral, Expert 1, Medium MULTI, MULTI Light Mod, Vicious 1.

Viral Ammunition adds: Biotech, Grievous, Toxic 2.

Adhesive Launcher: Range M, 1+6[CD], Burst 1, Unwieldy, GOO. Munition.

GEAR: Light Combat Armour

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Man of Faith: As a former man of the cloth, Father Lucien Sforza maintains an unshakable faith in his righteousness and duty, he gains a Morale Soak of 4.

Holoprojector 1* (2 Heat): Father Lucien Sforza is a master of using holoprojector technology to confuse and misdirect the enemy. For 2 Heat he can make himself look like any of his many programmed alter egos. It takes a Daunting (D3) Observation Test to notice that his appearance is holographically modified.

Holoprojector 2* (2 Heat): For 2 Heat Father Lucien Sforza can project up to two other holographic alter-egos anywhere within Close. It takes a Daunting (D3) Observation test, or a Challenging (D2) Hacking or Analysis test to notice these are holograms. Each hologram will act in accordance with a pre-programmed suite of behaviours and responses, tweaked on the fly by Father Lucien Sforza and his Geist. *In an Infowar Scene Holoprojector 1 may be used to make Father Sforza appear to be some other entity in the Zone being analysed. Holoprojector 2 may be used to spoof the presence of up to two other entities. Any Breach Effect inflicted on Father Sforza will reveal the holographic nature of both Holoprojector 1 and 2.

SEÑOR MASSACRE

One-time champion of a highly illegal fighting ring on Corregidor, before the fame and the drugs took control, Señor Massacre is a phenomenon. He had amassed 34 victories in the ring, six more than the next most successful fighter, before he took his first beat down. Between the haze, shakes, and lagging reaction time, he went from a sure bet to a let-down. Mired in debt and seeking a way out of the hole he had dug for himself, he enlisted in the Nomad Military Force. He served with distinction until a boarding action on a San Jiao battlecruiser left him disfigured with radiation burns and scars from military-grade viruses. Discharged from duty, Señor Massacre turned to the one career that offered the most opportunity for his uniquely trained skills set. Over the years that followed he served throughout the Human Sphere in a number of famous and infamous operations. His place in the spotlight as a member of the Soldiers of Fortune Aristeia! team allows him to sometimes take up work with the opulent Foreign Company mercenary outfit. Highly aggressive and with little regard for his own safety, he is capable of pulling off missions others would describe as impossible. He is a deadly foe, masked in the persona he developed and maintained from his early days in the fighting fighting rings of Corregidor. Much has



been said and written about him, but one thing everyone can agree on is that where he goes, death follows!

ATTRIBUTES		FIELDS OF EXPERTISE			
Agility	13	Combat	+4	3	
Awarenes	10	Fortitude	+3	1	
Brawn	11	Movement	+3	0	
Coordination	12	Senses	+2	1	
Intelligence	9	Social	+1	1	
Personality	8	Technical	+1	0	
Willpower	7				
DEFENCES					
Firewall	10	Resolve	10	Vigour	14
Security	2	Morale	3	Armour	3

ATTACKS:

Sword: Melee, 1+5[CD], Unbalanced, Non-Hackable, Parry 2, Vicious 1

Stun Baton: 1+4[CD], 1H, Non-Hackable, Knockdown, Subtle 1, Stun.

Heavy Pistol: Range R/C, 2+4[CD], Burst 1, Unbalanced, Standard. Unforgiving 1, Vicious 1.

Breaker Combi Rifle: Range C/M, 1+5[CD], Burst 2, 2H, Breaker. Biotech, Breaker, Expert 1, MULTI Light Mod, Piercing 1, Vicious 1.

GEAR: Medium Combat Armour

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

No F*#@s to Give: Señor Massacre appears to lack any predilection to self-preservation, he gains a Morale Soak of 3.

Regeneration (2 Heat): For 2 Heat Señor Massacre may recover one Harm Effect or three Stress.

Dual Blades: Señor Massacre wields two-swords with the ease that a normal person wields one. In Melee the values of the Parry and Vicious Qualities of his Sword is doubled (Parry 4, and Vicious 2).

SCARFACE AND CORDELIA

When the Yǎnjīng decided to play their usual game of messing with PanOceanian interests by secretly supplying and training some young, hot-headed revolutionaries from the Independent Corporate Republic of the Meteora Group, they unknowingly set Joe Turner on a path of destruction and havoc. Being trained as a TAG pilot in a secret Yǎnjīng facility was one thing, being fed a dangerous cocktail of Grade-5 combat drugs was quite another. The drugs changed Joe, already an angry young man, and turned him into a violent sociopath with the reactions of a cat, front-line combat training, and a temper that ran so hot it was molten. After

the revolt he found that the place he had fought for no longer wanted him, so he left, making his way as a mercenary TAG pilot. Still reliant on the Grade-5 drugs, and hopping from system to system serving in whatever conflict was happy to pay for him, he traded his old Yǎnjīng issued TAG with a Ramhorn-327, and over the years modified it so heavily that internally it's like no other TAG in the Sphere. During one of those conflicts he managed to take out an O-Yoroi, with only a sword slash to the face of his Ramhorn in damage. Proud of his achievement, he never had it repaired, and so came by the nickname Scarface, a badge he wears with delight. A strange tragedy took his parents, and this violent mercenary found himself looking after his little sister, Cordelia. With this new responsibility he finally managed to kick his drug habit, though he still has a temper like a wounded bear. Dragged from warzone to warzone, Cordelia took to engineering and mechanics like a fish to water, and soon enough the pair became an inseparable duo. Scarface and Cordelia are described as the monster and the fairy godmother. He's still one of the most dangerous TAG pilots in the Human Sphere, and she has tweaked the Ramhorn to precision.

JOE SCARFACE TURNER

ATTRIBUTES		FIELDS OF EXPERTISE			
Agility	12	Combat	+3	3	
Awarenes	10	Fortitude	+3	1	
Brawn	10	Movement	+4	3	
Coordination	14	Senses	+2	1	
Intelligence	9	Social	+0	0	
Personality	7	Technical	+0	0	
Willpower	8				
DEFENCES					
Firewall	9	Resolve	11	Vigour	13
Security	0	Morale	2	Armour	0

ATTACKS:

Knife: Melee, 1+3[CD], Unbalanced, Non-Hackable, Thrown, Vicious 1

Light Shotgun: Range C, 1+4[CD], Burst 1, Unbalanced, Normal Shells. Knockdown.

GEAR: Ramhorn TAG (use the stats for the Anaconda, found in this book on Pgs XX.

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Been there, shot that: Joe Scarface Turner has served in a huge number of conflicts, seen it all before, and gains a Morale Soak of 2.

Assault: Every time Joe Scarface Turner generates Momentum, he gains 1 extra Momentum.

Frenzied: Once Joe Scarface Turner has taken any

form of Stress Damage, he becomes frenzied and may 'Seize the Initiative' at no Heat cost.

CORDELIA

ATTRIBUTES			FIELDS OF EXPERTISE				
Agility		10	Combat		+2	1	
Awarenes		10	Fortitude		+2	0	
Brawn		9	Movement		+2	1	
Coordination		10	Senses		+2	1	
Intelligence		14	Social		+2	1	
Personality		9	Technical		+4	2	
Willpower		8					
DEFENCES							
Firewall		18	Resolve		10	Vigour	11
Security		1	Morale		2	Armour	2

ATTACKS:

Knife: Melee, 1+3[CD], Unbalanced, Non-Hackable, Thrown, Vicious 1

Assault Pistol: Range R/C, 1+4[CD], Burst 2, Unbalanced, Standard. Vicious 1.

Combi Rifle: Range R/C, 2+4[CD], Burst 1, Unbalanced, Standard. Unforgiving 1, Vicious 1.

D-Charges: Charge, 2+6[CD], 1H. Anti-Materiel 2, Comms, Disposable, Piercing 3, Spread 1, Unsubtle, Vicious 2.

GEAR: Light Combat Armour, Engineering Waldo, Repair Kit, Powered Multitool

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Courageous: Cordelia has seen more conflict than most, she gains a Morale Soak of 2.

Been around: Cordelia has grown up in warzones, she gains a bonus D20 to any Stealth test made to avoid being detected.

Expert: Cordelia gains a bonus D20 to any Tech tests made when dealing with TAGs, if the TAG she is working on is Scarface, she also gains a bonus 1 Momentum.

TEARLACH MCMURROUGH

First serving in the Cameronians as a volunteer Dog-Warrior, Tearlach McMurrough was trained in the arts of combat and set loose on the enemy. Over the term of his service he fought in the Commercial Conflicts and in a number of other skirmishes around Dawn. Once his term of service was done, he chose not to re-enlist, taking work instead as a mercenary. Massive, powerful, terrifyingly fast, and with the temper to match his appearance, Tearlach McMurrough is a demonic force of destruction on any battlefield.

ATTRIBUTES		FIELDS OF EXPERTISE			
Agility	12	Combat	+4	3	
Awarenes	10	Fortitude	+3	1	
Brawn	14	Movement	+3	2	
Coordination	11	Senses	+3	1	
Intelligence	9	Social	+0	0	
Personality	7	Technical	+0	0	
Willpower	7				
DEFENCES					
Firewall	9	Resolve	10	Vigour	17
Security	0	Morale	2	Armour	2

ATTACKS:

Teseum Chopper: Melee, 1+5[CD], Unbalanced, Non-Hackable, Piercing 4, Vicious 2.

Chain Rifle: Range: C 1+6[CD], Burst 1, 2H, Normal. Spread 1, Torrent, Vicious 1.

Grenades: Grenade, 2+4[CD], 1H. Area (Close), Disposable, Indiscriminate (Close), Speculative Fire, Spread 1, Thrown, Unsubtle, Vicious 2.

GEAR: Light Combat Armour

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Common Special Abilities: Keen Senses (smell)

Immune: Any time an Effect is rolled when dealing damage to McMurrough, any Weapon Qualities provided by non-explosive and non-viral Ammunition are ignored.

Transform: Lurking inside every Dogface is a monster, waiting to break free. At the cost of 1 Heat, they can transform into their Dog-Warrior form, adding +2 to their Brawn, Agility, and Armour. They also unlock the "Dog-Warrior" abilities listed below. At the end of the scene, they return to normal, suffering the Fatigued condition.

Common Abilities (Dog-Warrior): Fear 1, Superhuman Agility 1, Superhuman Brawn 1, Menacing 1, Monstrous.

Aggression (Dog-Warrior): Possessed of unmatched primal fury, the Dog-Warrior's attacks might not always connect, but they hurt like hell when they do. When making a Combat test, they can reroll up to 4[CD] but must accept the new result.

Snarling Beast (Dog-Warrior): All Personality-based tests not based on intimidation are made at +2 difficulty.

Super-Jump (Dog-Warrior): The Dog-Warrior can vault over obstacles up to their height without penalty. The difficulty of skill tests to move through difficult terrain are reduced by one.

VALERYA GROMOZ

Growing up an Atek in PanOceanian society does bode well for your prospects. As a young woman



living with her parents in a remote village in Albania, the only prospects she was told she'd have were as a waitress or a prostitute, probably both. A mind like Valerya doesn't sit well with such impositions, however, and working as a waitress allowed her access to the technicians servicing a nearby satellite tracking station. She smiled, laughed, and most of all, she listened. She learned what she could from the technicians of her hometown, before deciding that her prospects lay out there, living large in the Human Sphere. Valerya Gromoz made her way to the East African Space Elevator and managed to secure a job as a script kiddie, then served for five years with the Nomad Foreign Company, gaining valuable combat training and experience. After leaving the Foreign Company, she worked with a Haqqislamite Corsair crew for three years. After that she decided she knew enough to strike out on her own, as an independent mercenary battlefield hacker. Her record is excellent, and her reputation as a Wardriver to be feared is growing...

ATTRIBUTES		FIELDS OF EXPERTISE			
Agility	9	Combat	+2	1	
Awarenes	11	Fortitude	+2	1	
Brawn	9	Movement	+2	0	
Coordination	10	Senses	+3	1	
Intelligence	13	Social	+2	0	
Personality	9	Technical	+4	2	
Willpower	9				
DEFENCES					
Firewall	17	Resolve	11	Vigour	11
Security	1	Morale	2	Armour	2

ATTACKS:

Knife: Melee, 1+3[CD], 1H, Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Subtle 2, Thrown, Unforgiving 1.

Pistol: Range R/C, 1+4[CD], Burst 1, 1H, Standard. Vicious 1.

Combi Rifle: Range C/M, 1+5[CD], Burst 2, 2H, Standard. Expert 1, MULTI Light Mod, Vicious 1.

Pitcher: Range M, -, Burst 1, Unbalanced, Deployable Repeater, Munition, Speculative Fire.

GEAR: Light Combat Armour, Hacking Device

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Experienced Hacker: When making an Infowar Attack, Valerya Gromoz may reroll up to 4[CD].

TAG Hunter (2 Heat): One of the tricks Valerya Gromoz has picked up over her years of experience is a knack with TAGs. If Valerya manages to Inflict Firewall Harm to a target TAG, she may activate the vehicle's eject system for the cost of 2 Heat.

YOJIMBO

There are two stories that describe the origins of the mercenary known as Yojimbo, and both are perhaps as unbelievable as each other. In the first Yojimbo is a recreation, manufactured by the CEO of a Japanese Mega-Corporation to serve as a bodyguard. After a falling out he was forced to wander as a Ronin, masterless and with only his wits and swords to rely on... In the second story Yojimbo was an ex-Domaru, slain by the Yakuza for some shady reason. He was brought back to life by the Ninja Fukurō Clan in a Lhost and trained to be a deadly swordsman. Abandoned by the ninja clan after a scandal, he took the name Yojimbo after the character from the Kurosawa film. Of course, neither of these stories could be true. What is known is that Yojimbo is one of the deadliest swordsmen alive. A virtuoso with his katana, he has cut a swathe through innumerable enemies. Often forced to work unseemly jobs due to his penchant for handing out IOU 'Giri Cheques', which are often traded, sold, or stolen, he is a blade for hire, and has never left a contract unfulfilled.

ATTRIBUTES		FIELDS OF EXPERTISE			
Agility	14	Combat	+4	3	
Awarenes	11	Fortitude	+2	1	
Brawn	10	Movement	+4	2	
Coordination	11	Senses	+2	1	
Intelligence	8	Social	+0	0	
Personality	8	Technical	+1	0	
Willpower	8				
DEFENCES					
Firewall	9	Resolve	10	Vigour	12
Security	1	Morale	2	Armour	2

ATTACKS:

Sword: Melee, 1+5[CD], Unbalanced. Anti-Materiel 1, Non-Hackable, Parry 2, Vicious 1

Nanopulser: Range C, 1+5[CD], Burst 1, 1H, -, Biotech, Subtle 3, Torrent, Vicious 2.

Contender: Range M, 1+4[CD], Burst 1, Unbalanced, DA. Anti-Materiel 1.

GEAR: Light Combat Armour, Motorcycle

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Blade Master: When making a Melee Attack, Yojimbo may reroll up to 5[CD].

Flurry (1 Heat): Yojimbo may pay 1 Heat to make a second Melee attack against the same or a different target in range.

Hand-Crafted Blades: Yojimbo's swords have the Anti-Materiel 1 Quality.

Expert Rider (1 Heat): When on a motorcycle, Yojimbo may Spend 1 Heat to make a Pilot test as a Minor Action.

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