10303

LIVING STEEL
Trident/RMBK

Living Steel in head-to-head combat with the giant war machines of the Imperial Robotics Section... Plus the secrets of the DRGN Combat Suit revealed!

LIVING STEEL
10303
SUPPLEMENT

LEADING EDGE GAMES

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PREFACE

08.03.2349: The Invasion Begins.
"Duncan, RA2:

"The space fleets are destroying each other. Either someone has gone mad, or Spectrals have come as we expected. Regardless, we must prepare for evacuation, space bombardment, and full range of air and ground conflict. Begin Operation Roncesvalles. Repeat, begin Roncesvalles.

"Vladimir, OSS HQ"

09.03.2349: The Apocalypse.
"Duncan, RA2:

"Confirmed Spectral presence. Bombardment will begin shortly, landings expected within hours. Proceed with Austerlitz on schedule. Repeat, Austerlitz.

"Vladimir, OSS HQ"

10.03.2349: Day One.
"Vladimir, OSS HQ:

"Contact has been lost with the Avatar Caravan. Viktor, Sol, and Darantz did not report; the encounter must have been brief. There is of course a high likelihood that they are casualties, and we must accept that Avatar has been lost or damaged. My only units in the area report heavy Imperial activity, and no possibility of useful recon. My force is dispersed and occupied with safeguarding the remaining non-combatants and equipment, so I cannot launch the necessary offensive. I suggest we initiate an S-4 investigation, especially if the agents on site report in, and hope to recoup the loss at a later date.

"Duncan, Austerlitz HQ"

Day 58: The Search Begins.
"Vladimir, OSS HQ:

"Outposts have picked up heavy Imperial radio traffic in the vicinity of the Avatar ambush. The odds are very good that they did not realize the importance of the APC during the battle, and are attempting to recover it. I am well away from that area at present, and still occupied with my responsibilities. Knowing how slim the reserve is ever since the attack on the Guard, perhaps we will have to rely on one of the Operation Teams. I have no better suggestion at present, although I hope you have something at your disposal.

"Duncan, Austerlitz HQ"

Day 71: Activation.
"Duncan, Austerlitz HQ:

"Have just issued orders Activating OSS 108. Best information is that they are unprepared, and will likely be overmatched by Imperial forces. If there is anything you can spare, have it ready to pick up their casualties in the event of a disaster. Everything in last report from Sol and Darantz indicates continued presence of sizable detachment of 27th Starmarine, as well as ISS Security and original force which destroyed Caravan.

"If OSS 108 fails to recover DRGN equipment, your units will face ISS Agents equipped with it. Prepare plans for withdrawal from the area in that event, as casualties to non-combatants would be high.

"And pray that OSS 108 surprises us.

"Vladimir, OSS HQ"

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BRIEFING

This Chapter is for player reference. It contains all the information that has been supplied to the **Mission Team**, and should be reviewed by the Gamemaster and all of the players. This Chapter and the Preface are the only parts of the book which should be read by the players.

"Tensions between Trident / RMBK and Imperial authorities reached a new high today with the destruction of the Imperium's Rhand Deep Space Tracking Center by unknown persons. Sources say that the Imperium suspects RMBK involvement in the bombing, although there is currently no hard evidence to support that conclusion. A major investigation is now underway.

"The Imperium has been increasingly critical of RMBK's activities throughout the last year, both for RMBK's provocative social platform, which minimizes caste differences and promotes a degree of social equality, and their equally controversial research projects, which they still refuse to let the Imperium audit. Those secret research projects include the RMBK facility itself, of course, as well as three research centers, called RA1, RA2, and RA3, which belong to Scan Technologies, Inc."

News item, Rhand Starcaste Cable Network, aired on 24.02.2349.

"Relax. If, by some miracle, you survive this procedure, you'll be fine."

Dr. Oscar Schneiderbunk

1.1

MISSION SUMMARY

This Mission takes place shortly after the Awakening. Although the Team is still establishing itself and is unready for a major effort, the situation is considered so important that **Operation Headquarters** has opened communications.

What makes the Mission vital is this; intelligence reports indicate that some of **Trident/ RMBK's** advanced research projects were completed before the invasion and escaped the Spectral bombing. One of these projects, called **"Avatar"**, has fallen into Imperial hands; exactly what the project is or does is unclear.

Another RMBK project, the **DRGN Field Array**, was apparently in the testing stage, and several fully functional DRGN suits were on board a Grav APC which was shot down when the Imperium seized the Avatar Project. Imperial forces are now searching for the downed APC.

Your Operation Team has been given two tasks. First, to find the downed APC and the DRGN equipment it contains before the Imperium does; failing that, the DRGN suits must be recovered from the Imperium or destroyed. And second, to begin tracking down the Avatar Project. Finding this Project is of the utmost importance, and the Team should remain alert for any clues to its location.

> *"RMBK is a part of Trident, a Senior member of the Starguild. Its premises shall therefore not be subject to Imperial entry without the verified consent of the Trident Board of Directors. As you have not been able to comply with this requirement, I must refuse to allow you or your troops to enter.*
>
> *"Any movement of Imperial forces against this installation will be met with immediate force."*
>
> **Response of Colonel O'Reilly, commander of 1st Trident Mechanized Regiment, to the Imperial Guard's demand for entry into the RMBK facility, 27.02.2349.**

MISSION DEFINITION

When Operation Headquarters opened communication with your Team it came as a surprise. You were told in your original orders that you should expect to operate independently for an indefinite time, and were planning on months or years of isolation. Instead, your first communication was received on Day 72, just 12 days after the Awakening.

The orders arrived by **Golem** link, if there is a character with **Golem Encryptor Circuits** in the Team, or via one-way **Laser Communications**. The information in the orders is as follows.

> **Code Omicron Cyclops Operation Team Early Activation. Special Mission Assignment. Priority Gold.**
>
> **Mission OSS316: Recovery of Artifacts from RMBK Advanced Research Projects.**
>
> **Situation:** During the Invasion numerous vehicles and personnel attempted to break out of the **Scan RA2** facility, resulting in open conflict with Imperial blocking forces. One ground caravan, with air cover supplied by a single Grav APC, included numerous RMBK personnel and was carrying critical components for the Avatar Project; project nature undisclosed. The caravan was ambushed and defeated by unknown Imperial forces, and the Grav APC was shot down. The hostile forces were apparently severely damaged in the battle, but captured the caravan vehicles intact. The Grav APC was ignored.
>
> Recent developments indicate that on board the APC were several personnel with fully functional DRGN suits; exact attributes of the equipment are unknown, but apparently significant. This has also come to the attention of the **Imperial Secret Service**, which has ordered a search made in the area of the Grav APC's crash.
>
> Top Priority assigned to preventing the I.S.S. from recovering the DRGN equipment. If possible the DRGN suits should be acquired by the Operation Team, for use by Operation personnel.
>
> A **Recon/Search Team** should be sent to the crash area immediately, and should be prepared for contact with Imperial forces. ORCA Coordinates follow.
>
> **Caution:** Intelligence suggests that the hostile force which originally ambushed the caravan is still in the area, possibly recuperating from the earlier battle. This hostile force is considered extremely dangerous, even if in weakened condition. The caravan guards were top quality personnel, and were unable to protect the Avatar Project. Additional forces may also have been sent by the Imperial Secret Service.
>
> It is therefore strongly recommended that a **Power Armor Response/Tactical Assault Team** be placed On Call in the ORCA as support for the Recon Team.

"Load the bang sticks and pack up the tree shredder – we've got a job to do!"

Officer Eric
Bondsmen Law Enforcement

> *"Free speech? That's just the sort of humanist nonsense I expect from you radicals. Freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and freedom of religion were never "rights"; they were nothing more than short-lived social fads. They only existed within the nation-states because the nations were too weak and ineffectual to stop them, and because the nations couldn't provide what really matters; prosperity, efficiency, and the greatest freedom of all, freedom from uncertainty."*
>
> **Tiber Barnett, Chairman of the Imperial Auditing Committee, in a widely broadcast debate between representatives of the Imperium and Trident / RMBK, 02.03.2349.**

The most important factor for the Team on this Mission is the **Imperial Secret Service (ISS)**. It is clear from the briefing that the opposition is organized and led by the ISS, and it is likely that there will also be direct contact with ISS agents. The Team knows the following basic facts about the ISS.

It was established in 2104 to act as the intelligence gathering wing of the young Imperium. From the beginning it was deeply involved in politics and oppression, and it has never altered that basic agenda. For more than two centuries the ISS has actively supported the best interests of the Imperium itself, often at the expense of the rest of the Starguild, and it has relentlessly hunted down and destroyed political dissidents within the Starcaste as well as the lower classes.

There are two basic types of ISS agents; Enforcement and Intelligence. **Enforcement** agents are the strong arm of the ISS, and are essentially military personnel with limited special training. They are very talented, and generally wear conservative suits with Body Armor underneath, much like Starcaste Bodyguards. **Intelligence** agents handle all the espionage matters for the ISS, and are generally superior to their counterparts in Starguild Law Enforcement. They primarily work undercover, and their appearance and equipment depend entirely on their assignments.

The Team can be sure that whatever ISS agents they meet will be intelligent and effective, and quite willing to use violence to get what they want.

"There have been numerous rumors about secret projects which are allegedly underway in our three Research Facilities here on Rhand, and about some sort of collusion between our corporation and the RMBK division of Trident. We wish to formally declare that the Board of Directors of Scan Medical Technologies, Inc., Rhand Division, have no knowledge of any misdealings or illegalities which may have been perpetrated at these facilities by Scan personnel, and that any improprieties which may have occurred were the results of individual and unauthorized action.

"Moreover, all three of these facilities were seized a short time ago by Trident forces, and our Medical and Research staffs have been evicted. All these personnel are being gathered by our Security forces, and will soon be in custody. Particular efforts are being made to discover the whereabouts of the former Directors of Operations for the three facilities.

"Scan, Inc. releases all rights and privileges in Rhand Research Facilities RA1, RA2, and RA3 for the duration of the current crisis, and hereby requests Imperial intervention and arbitration. Scan, Inc. further pledges full and complete support of any Imperial investigation of the allegations involving the three Research Facilities."
    Scan, Inc. Board of Directors to Colonel Cambronne of the Imperial Guard, 07.03.2349.

Two Teams should be prepared for this Mission; a **Recon Team**, for the initial search for the APC and the equipment, and to determine what Imperial and hostile forces are in the area, and a **Tactical Assault Team**, made up primarily or entirely of Power Armor troops, to support the Recon Team in the event of heavy opposition.

The Recon Team should consist of about 8 people, with an accent on wilderness survival skills and limited combat ability. Particularly important Skills are Scouting, Survival, and Traps and Spotting, with a lesser emphasis on Gun and Hand-to-Hand Combat. Someone skilled in Medical Aid is a necessity on any field mission, of course. While it is not vital for all members of the Mission Team to know Gun Combat, every

member should certainly be well armed and wearing some sort of Combat Suit. It is very important for players to clearly state which characters are carrying Encoders and which have Thralls, as well as who has Laser Communication gear. The same applies to any other special equipment which is taken on the Mission.

The Tactical Assault Team should include most of the Team's Power Armor members, along with any other combat-oriented personnel who can be spared from Base defenses. This Team should be placed in stasis within the **ORCA**, and one or more members of the Recon Team should have the necessary call signal to summon the Team down. This is only possible during Active periods, of course, as shown on the **Player Reference Sheet** which will be given to you by the Gamemaster. The Player Reference Sheet also includes a Map of the area to be searched, a Time Table, and other aids.

Sensors: *"Captain Tyrell, I.S.S. Heimdall is being fired upon. Damage appears serious."*
Command: *"Go to Red Alert and open fire on the Trident Explorer. Message to all vessels: Red Alert. Open Fire. Proceed with TacSpec A62B. Pursue any Trident craft which attempt to flee. End of Message. I can't believe this. Has Trident gone mad?"*
Fire Control: *"Commencing fire, Captain."*
Communications: *"Message transmitted, Captain."*
Sensors: *"Incoming fire, Captain. Vessels from both fleets are engaging."*
Damage Control: *"Damage reports coming in, sir."*
Command: *"This is crazy. Insane. Nobody can win this kind of a fight."*
Excerpt, Bridge Log of the I.S.S. Redoubtable, 08.03.2349. Recovered from the Redoubtable's Emergency Log Capsule, which automatically homed in on the beacon at the Imperial Guard Landing Zone.

1.5

NOTES TO THE PLAYERS

This supplement has been designed for use with **2nd Edition Living Steel**; when there is any significant difference between the two editions, rules are provided for both. One convention from 2nd Edition Living Steel which is used regularly, however, is the **Impulse System**. In the Impulse System, the two-second Phase of Living Steel is divided into 4 Impulses, each 1/2 second long. Players no longer allocate their actions for an entire Phase, but simply spend their actions in each Impulse as they go. The result is a game with less bookkeeping and smoother flow.

The number of Combat Actions a character receives during an Impulse is shown on the following table.

COMBAT ACTIONS PER IMPULSE				
	Impulse			
Combat Actions	1	2	3	4
1	1	0	0	0
2	1	0	1	0
3	1	0	1	1
4	1	1	1	1
5	2	1	1	1
6	2	1	2	1
7	2	1	2	2
8	2	2	2	2
9	3	2	2	2
10	3	2	3	2
11	3	2	3	3
12	3	3	3	3

There are a few other basic points that the players should bear in mind. First, the Recon Team is just that; the members should avoid combat when possible and should definitely shun pitched battles. A second point is that any members of the Recon Team who are seriously injured will probably be better off in Imperial hands, since the Team will not have full medical facilities available. This is because Imperial forces are still operating under the Starguild Articles of War and will give high-quality medical attention to any captives. They will also refrain from serious interrogation of any prisoners until they are largely healed.

"They are all dead. Williams and Lennox knew they could not escape, so they... The fighting has stopped. I can see a little through the vision slits, and I can see the robots that have us surrounded. Robots. I... It's just a matter of time before they come for me. Karstin purged all the data storage devices and I am about to destroy all the printed materials. Karstin and her team were the only ones who really knew how all this worked and now they are all gone. It is such a waste. And I..."
Final moments of a Personal Log found in one of the Avatar vehicles. Transferred to ISS Primary Data Storage for future reference. 09.03.2349.

FINAL NOTES

The remaining chapters of Trident/RMBK are intended solely for the **Gamemaster (GM)**. Chapter 2 gives detailed information on the Background of the Mission, Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the special equipment and opposition encountered on the Mission and the background of the RMBK division, Chapter 5 covers the people likely to be encountered, Chapter 6 defines the ways of handling the Team and this particular Mission, and Chapter 7 is an outline of the Mission itself, as it was designed to be run.

By no means should the last chapter inhibit the GM or anyone else involved. It simply shows how the designers see the mission, and the adventure which has been fully supported. In essence, Chapters 2 through 6 were written to support 7. Feel completely free to move beyond what we have presented.

2

MISSION BACKGROUND

This chapter contains background information for the Gamemaster, and explains the events which have led up to the current situation. There are a number of surprises contained within, including revelations about RMBK, the **Seven Swords Special Service**, and even the **Dragoncrests**. Gamemasters should use their own judgement as to how much of this information to reveal to the players.

"Progress has been particularly good on the Brain Scanning and Personality Programming research. Field testing results are excellent. And design of the Cities is moving pretty quickly. The Robotics thing is just going out for a test now, so we'll know in a couple of months. Well, I'd rather not tell you where we're testing it. Let it be a surprise. Yeah, well, let's just say it is an interesting choice for a test."
> **One side of a telephone conversation between a top-level manager with Imperial Research and Development and a counterpart with the Imperial Secret Service, 24.01.2349.**

2.1

BREAKOUT

On the day of the Apocalypse the confrontation between the Imperium and Trident's renegade RMBK division finally erupted. The spark was provided by the Spectral vessel's attack on the **I.S.S. Heimdall**; within seconds, the Imperials had opened fire on Trident's fleet, believing them to be the source of the attack, and Trident had returned fire. The battle in space was followed almost immediately by conflict on the ground, as Trident's besieged military attempted to break out of the three Scan research facilities (RA 1, 2, and 3), as well as RMBK itself.

The first and fiercest battle was fought at RMBK, where the small RMBK grav vehicle wing faced the bulk of the Imperial grav fleet. The battle was as one-sided as the Imperial military had expected, but to their horror they were on the losing side. RMBK's impossibly swift, skillfully piloted grav vehicles were virtually untouchable, and devastated their opposition. In the space of minutes the remnants of the Imperial fleet had fled, vanishing over the horizon, and the ground forces of RMBK attacked the besieging Imperial troops. Deprived of air cover and faced with two Battalions of the well-organized, highly-trained **Trident 2nd Mechanized Regiment**, the Imperials were forced to fall back. RMBK troops were able to break out of the encirclement in several directions, and by late in the afternoon the engagement had degenerated into light skirmishing as the main bodies of both armies withdrew and dispersed to avoid possible space bombardment.

As soon as the success of the breakout was assured the RMBK grav fleet left the field. Low on missiles and ammunition, they went to engage the remaining Imperial Grav vehicles, to prevent them from attacking the other concentrations of Trident troops. For a time the units of both sides maneuvered through the skies of Rhand, but at last the

Imperium committed its full force to RA1; RMBK followed suit, and the second battle of the day began. The struggle was more equal this time, as the weary RMBK pilots duelled the fresh Imperial craft. By day's end, both fleets were in ruins.

As the fleets engaged over RA1, breakouts began at all three facilities. The battles were fierce, but Trident / RMBK forces quickly found and penetrated Imperial weak points and escaped. Reports reached Imperial intelligence that there were convoys of non-military equipment being escorted through the breakout locations; it was clear that these contained the most important aspects of RMBK's research, as well as a variety of talented non-military personnel.

To the head of the Imperial intelligence network on Rhand, **Colonel Edward Graf** of the Imperial Secret Service, these convoys were far more important than any number of soldiers or combat vehicles. Believing that RMBK had agents highly placed within the Imperial military command, which would account for their unerring ability to find flaws in Imperial deployment, Graf knew he would have to handle the convoys with those units which were part of his own force and therefore outside the military chain of command. He quickly placed his special forces in the path of each breakout, well behind the lines. There, ambushes were established in the most favorable positions available.

Somehow the breakouts eluded his blocking forces at RMBK itself, as well as at RA1 and RA3. Whether the units there had been infiltrated by RMBK or whether the convoys were just lucky, Graf could not be sure.

At Scan RA2 the story was different. Graf had been forced to use the experimental **Imperial Robotics Section** for the ambush, as it was the only unit which could reach the preferred site in time. He had a low opinion of the unit, but it did have advantages; it was a new unit which had operated from its inception under extreme security, and it had only recently arrived on Rhand. It seemed likely that it was free from RMBK influence. As the units of the IRS quickly concealed themselves, the RMBK convoy advanced through the Imperial lines, leaving the battle behind them.

"Your money can talk all it wants; my gun will make the decisions."

Victor Gantz
Vartac Security

"We were coming down to support the caravan when we got hit. Jeffers tried to keep us in the air, but there was no chance. When I came to after the crash, I couldn't move my legs and I was pinned in my flight harness under equipment crates and Emil's body. He'd been out of his harness helping Eric and Rosario when we hit. He died right there, and I couldn't help him. I spent the whole night fading in and out, waiting to die like the rest of them.

"Early the next day a group of Starguild Tourists found me; it was their Ranger who pulled me out. They buried the others, and left the suits right there on the ground. They still have no clear picture of what has happened, and why no Paramedics responded to their ORCA Emergency call, but they are hoping to get back to civilization. Nice thought. They say that if no help comes in a couple of days they will head west, and that they will take me with them. It will be weeks before my injuries heal; when they do, I will slip back to the crash and dispose of the equipment. I hate to wait so long, but I see no alternative. "

Personal Log entry of Corporal Martin Travis, member of the elite Special Air Cavalry Platoon of the 1st Trident Mechanized Regiment, Day 4.

2.2

AMBUSH

RA2 was the site of a research program called the **Avatar Project**. The exact nature of Avatar remains unclear; it obviously had something to do with RMBK's illicit researches into controlled technologies. It was the personnel and equipment that were vital to Avatar that were being brought out of RA2 in the convoy.

The convoy included two **All-Terrain Transports (ATT's)** carrying Technicians and Scientists, two specially modified ATTs that were filled with unique machinery for Avatar, and a single Grav APC for air cover. Nearly a score of people wearing the uniforms of **Trident Military Police** rode shotgun in the ATTs. With a Company of the **Trident 1st Mechanized Regiment** clearing the way, the convoy quickly broke through Imperial

opposition and into the clear. It moved through a range of low, wooded hills on its way to an unknown location. The area had been pronounced safe by Trident Law Enforcement; so far as Trident's capable intelligence network could tell, there were no hostile units nearby. Although Trident Law Enforcement made few mistakes, this was one of their biggest.

Without warning the convoy came under heavy, short-range lase fire. The fire was carefully aimed to avoid any risk to the equipment and personnel carried within the ATTs, but half of the convoy guards fell in the first volley. As the remaining guards got under cover, the Grav APC closed to locate the opposition, to strafe, and to land and unload the team of Trident elites on board; it never got the chance. Gauss machinegun fire opened up from another concealed location, and the Grav APC was crippled. It passed over the convoy at high speed and crashed many miles away.

The attacking force was the **1st Imperial Robotics Section (IRS)**. A full description of the unit is in Chapter 4; for now, it is enough to say that it was an experimental force which used forbidden robotics technology, and had been sent to Rhand specifically to be field tested against RMBK forces. The IRS is made up of two types of "robot" - the first is a large, outmoded, and generally second-rate machine called the MRT-WM1 Morituri, which is controlled by a human pilot. It carries the heavy weaponry (two quad-mounted Gauss Machine Guns), and is used to re-power the other type of robot. The second type is the MRT-WM2 Mantis, a small, multi-limbed robot which is largely self-controlled, is supervised by a remote operator, and which mounts two Lase Assault Rifles. The Mantis is a small, fast, efficient unit, and generates a high volume of fire.

The ambushing force included a single Morituri and 100 Mantises; in seconds, the vast majority of the defending force had been cut down. Somehow three of the convoy's defenders persevered. Each carried a Lase Assault Rifle with a Grenade Launcher attached (LARGL8), and the trio returned fire into the attacking Mantises with deadly efficiency. The Morituri stayed well away from the battlefield; it was far too large a target for even the poorest soldier to miss.

The last three defenders accomplished unbelievable feats; they seemed almost impossible to hit, and even when they were hit they remained in the fight. After one of the defenders had been hit several times, however, it became obvious that they were using Amphicane. As the controllers cursed the obviously defective aiming systems of the Mantises, the battle of attrition continued. The three defenders emptied and reloaded their grenade launchers several times, but finally showed signs of wear; first one, then another fell before the volume of fire generated by the Mantises. When the last one finally collapsed, the controllers were able to take stock of the battle. The full ramifications of the field test were immediately evident; although the enemy force had been defeated, 77 of the Mantis robots had been destroyed, most by direct hits from grenades.

Bewildered by the crippling flaw in the aiming system, the controllers had the remaining Mantises set about gathering salvageable components from the destroyed units, while a squad of Imperial Starmarines moved in and started the vehicles on the trip to IRS headquarters. In the hours that followed, the IRS and its auxiliaries cleaned up the battlefield, leaving only bits of scrap metal to indicate that the robots had been present. The bodies of the defenders were set aside and ignored.

By sunrise, the battlefield had been cleared. And although no one from the IRS noticed, four of the bodies were missing from the pile made of the convoy guards.

"Colonel, please listen to me. You don't seem to fully appreciate the value of the scientific expertise which my team can provide the ISS, regarding the Avatar Project as well as any number of future research situations... What? Hello? Melville, I've been cut off. Get ISS Headquarters again."

"Right. Hello. This is... oh. Yes. I see, I'll tell him. Doctor Fowler, Colonel Graf is in a meeting."

In the office of Executive Scientist Edmund Fowler of the Imperial Robotics Service, Day 1.

Imperial Starmarine with MRT-WM2 Mantis
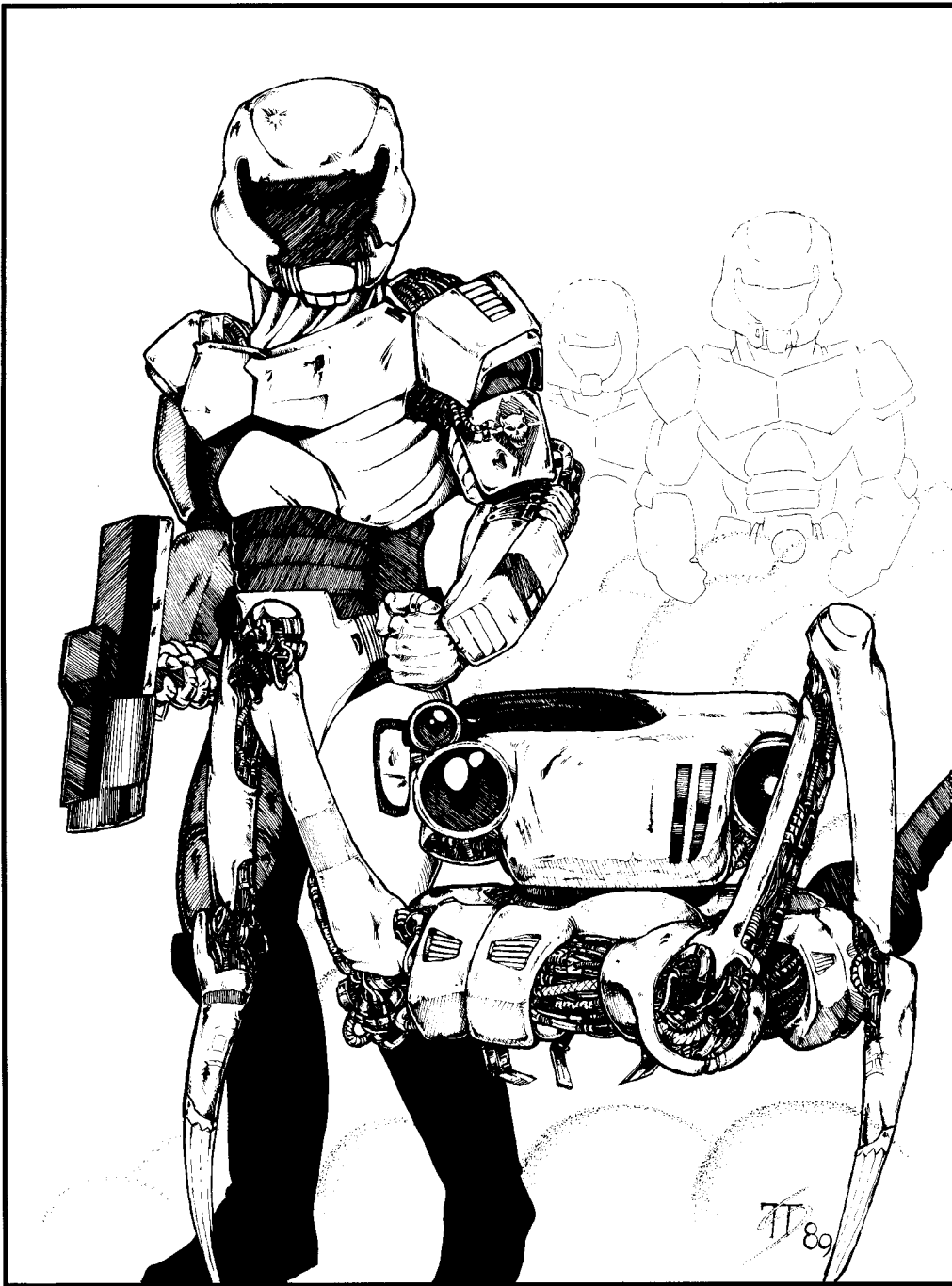
"The field test of the WM-2 Mantis was a functional success, with anomalous post-encounter conditions."

Executive Scientist Edmund Fowler
Director, Imperial Robotics Service

AFTERMATH

The vehicles carrying the Avatar Project were brought to **Executive Scientist Edmund Fowler**, the head of the IRS. He set his technicians to investigating the equipment and then reported the battle and its results to his superior, Colonel Graf of the ISS. Within two hours a sizable contingent of ISS agents, led by **Agent Kasha Briceton**, arrived at the IRS base.

Briceton immediately ordered the IRS to move to a new location, to reduce the risk of hostile pursuit, and commandeered the Avatar Project. Although Fowler objected strenuously, Briceton assumed control over all the Starmarines present, the Avatar Project and

its vehicles, and the technicians who had investigated it. Fowler called Graf to complain; Graf hung up on him. By midnight Briceton and her entourage had the Avatar Project on the road again, and Fowler was told nothing of their destination.

Bitterly, Fowler set about moving the IRS. In the days that followed, as the IRS transferred its base to a ruined Subcon, the battered unit attempted to heal its wounds. A full rework of the Aiming System was begun, and a Company of Starmarines arrived and set about fortifying the new IRS base. Meanwhile, the destroyed Mantises were scavenged for functioning components. The creator of the aiming system, **Research Assistant Anton Ziers**, proved incapable of finding the flaw in his system; this failure, added to the tremendous stress of the Apocalypse, caused him to collapse emotionally and he wandered into the wilderness alone.

"You will control yourself immediately, Lieutenant, and that will be the last time I hear you speak of surrender. We are the Imperial Guard. I do not care who it is that is attacking us, or what the odds are. All of you, follow me. I will show you how a Colonel of the Guard dies."
Colonel Cambronne of the Imperial Guard during the destruction of the 7th Imperial Guard Strike Battalion, Day 42.

2.4

REVELATION

"Fighting Power Armor is bad enough. Now we're supposed to fight Power Armor with Tails?"

Captain Hugh Wilton
Commanding Officer, "E" Company,
27th Imperial Starmarine Regiment,
at the Destruction of the Imperial
Guard

Several weeks passed as the Avatar Project and its guards made their way toward their unknown destination. Graf was not aware of any pursuit by RMBK and his attention was occupied by dozens of other pressing matters, including holding his forces together through the Apocalypse, investigating rumors of Spectral landings, and minimizing the destruction of strategically vital resources.

On Day 31 after the invasion he and his staff were invited by the surviving Imperial leadership to a general conference, to begin the process of reconquering Rhand. Graf declined politely; he had his own plans for dealing with the Apocalypse, and did not want to work any more closely than necessary with other Imperial forces. If nothing else, he had no intention of sharing either his ownership of the Avatar Project or the benefits of his impressive intelligence network. Making his apologies, and concealing his true motivations behind the long history of ISS independence and the sharp inter-service rivalry between the ISS and the Imperial Guard, he declined to attend.

The destruction of the Guard (Living Steel, Section 4.5, or 4.4 in 1st Edition) came as a terrible shock to Graf, and the report he received from his only agent who survived the conference included even worse news; among the troops who had destroyed the Guard were Seven Swords Power Armor, Dragoncrests, and lightly armored soldiers wearing DRGN Combat Suits. It was very clear to Graf that he was in an even more dangerous position than he realized, and that RMBK and its backers were far from defeated. The agent's report on the DRGN Combat Suits was particularly troublesome.

At the time of the breakout, Imperial Grav Gunship pilots had claimed that RMBK's Gunships were unhittable; that claim was now being echoed in the report of the Guard's destruction, which stated that the DRGN-equipped troops were able to withstand direct lase and gauss machinegun fire. No fool, Graf decided to believe in this impossible technology, and came to fully appreciate the Emperor's personal interest in this backwater. He also remembered another battle in which the enemy was unhittable; the ambush of the Avatar caravan. He immediately contacted IRS leader Fowler and ordered him to find the downed Grav APC and to turn over the tapes of the Avatar ambush. He did not explain his reasons, or reveal the possibility that the aiming systems on the Mantises might not be flawed. Ignoring Fowler's offers of assistance and his attempt to attach himself to Avatar, Graf set about organizing his forces to find and defeat RMBK.

"As you know, RMBK forces attempted to escape from the Scan Research Facilities and from RMBK itself shortly before the bombardment. It has come to my attention that more of these troops may have survived than was first thought. Moreover, it appears that certain of their recent technological studies may have been successful, and that there are RMBK units in the field utilizing these technologies. You will therefore suspend your current operations and immediately deploy your entire Section in pursuit of RMBK elements. Data follows..."

Coded transmission from Colonel Graf of the Imperial Secret Service to Agent Kasha Briceton, one of his Section Heads, Day 54.

A BAD DAY FOR COLONEL GRAF

When Colonel Graf reviewed the tapes of the ambush, he did not find the DRGN suits he expected; instead, the opponents of the IRS were a reinforced squad of Military Police, some of whom were inexplicably equipped with **Amphicane**. This in itself was a major cause for concern, however, and he set his headquarters staff to tracking down who these people were.

The faces on the tapes were entered into the ISS computers, which soon produced their identities. A dozen of the guards were what they appeared to be; Trident Military Police. The other six were obviously covert operatives; they had arrived on Rhand using false identities, and each had arrived by a different method. One came to Rhand as a Bondsman worker, another as a high-ranking Landcaste manager, still another as a member of Scan's medical staff... and one even arrived as a member of the Imperial Secret Service. Graf was appalled and furious to discover that his own operation had carefully infiltrated ISS Agent Maris Flegbauer onto Rhand, under the name "Stewart Stelton", as a part of a Starcaste tourist group.

Flegbauer was a mid-level operative, one with a good but not exceptional record, who was to have taken part in surveillance of one of the Subcons which dealt extensively with RMBK. Agent Flegbauer had suffered an "accident" during his first week on Rhand, however, one of several agents who had obviously been neutralized by Trident Law Enforcement. To find Flegbauer's face among the defenders of Avatar was more than just frustrating. It meant that this agent, whoever he really was, had had significant access to ISS files and plans of operations. More importantly, it meant that there were certainly still other enemy operatives inside the ISS.

Graf's instinct was to purge the ISS, to track down and terminate any possible infiltrators. He knew that was impossible, however; he had no replacements available, no recruitment and training organization backing him up, and he could in no way afford the loss of manpower a purge would involve. At best, he could launch a cautious probe through a handful of agents he personally trusted, and attempt to move questionable agents into positions where they would have the smallest opportunities to damage the ISS. He has done this, but remains dissatisfied about the effectiveness of his recent moves and his internal security systems.

Graf has strong suspicions as to the nature of the intelligence force opposing him; he believes they are part of the **Seven Swords Special Service**.

"Turbulence within entire Section. Obvious suspicions that there are one or more Moles within unit. Significant security changes. Am naturally concerned, but no unusual attention has been paid to me so far. Am still assigned to Avatar study team, and we are still en route to its location. Security regarding location tightened, but will continue to update you on my position."

Report from an S-4 agent, code name Xenophon, placed within the ISS, Day 57.

SEVEN SWORDS SPECIAL SERVICE

The heart of the protection for the Avatar Project caravan was provided by six very unusual warriors; members of the **Seven Swords Special Service (S-4)**.

The origins of S-4 date back to the beginning of the 22nd century, and the creation of the Seven Worlds itself (Dragonstar Rising, Section 7.8). Through all the long years since that time the S-4 has continued to operate even when the Seven Worlds system itself was conquered by the Imperium, and it has been a vital part of keeping the great dream alive. S-4 agents are men and women of tremendous drive and ability, and they are often said to possess unusual powers.

Three of the agents defending Avatar were contemporaries of the Swords. These three, named Sol, Darantz, and Viktor, were placed in stasis at the time of the fall of the Seven Worlds and in the intervening decades they have been awakened for a few brief periods of activity. Their long years of service earned them recuperative powers as great as those of triple Exceptional Merit Swords. Their teammates, Marcus, Zhan, and Rinya, had been with S-4 for shorter periods, and had healing abilities similar to those of double Exceptional Merit Swords. Of the six agents, only Viktor and Marcus died of their wounds. In the space of just a few days, Sol and Darantz were largely healed and set out on the trail of Avatar. Zhan and Rinya were left to continue recuperating, as their healing powers were not as impressive as those of the older agents. They are still in hiding in the woods near the ambush, and are discussed in Section 5.5.

Sol and Darantz are slowly closing in on Avatar; they will reappear in the **Know Only Battle** supplement.

"Have reached Vartac; Avatar is not here, of course. It is apparently headed west, indicating possibility of sea transportation. Request data on likely ports of destination, as well as common maritime activities and sea-going vessels on this planet. Also, we encountered a Squad of the 27th, so we are now suitably armed and equipped. Will report again within fortnight."
Report from Sol, Blue Sword Targa, to Operation Headquarters, Day 36.

RECENT ACTIONS

Colonel Graf is still as interested in the RMBK Grav APC as he ever was, because of the possibility that it was DRGN-equipped or had troops with DRGN Suits on board, and has sent Agent Briceton back to the IRS to guide the search for it. Her first priority is to find and secure any important materials which have survived the APC's crash. Secondarily she is to watch for signs of RMBK or S-4 activity near the crash site.

The first part of her mission is very straightforward. She has sent a Platoon of Starmarines into the area of the crash, and they are methodically searching for the APC. She is aware that parts of the APC were probably jettisoned during the crash, and has instructed her troops to collect any items that might have come from the vehicle, regardless of how unimportant they seem to be. She has not told anyone in the search party exactly what they are looking for. As far as they are concerned, the object of the search is probably just a packet of documents or military plans.

The second half of the mission is more subtle. Graf is quite sure that S-4 is involved with RMBK, and believes that both would search for the APC if there were anything valuable aboard. Briceton is to discover if there is now or recently has been any enemy activity in the area. If possible, she is to lead any opposing force to the IRS base, with the hope of

provoking a confrontation. The main reason for this is to gauge the amount of military power that their opponents wield, so that Graf will have a better idea of who he is up against. Graf and Briceton are not at all concerned with the effect this conflict might have on the IRS.

This strategy could certainly be as dangerous for the Mission Team as it is for the IRS.

"Expedition has arrived on site, and Base Camp has been established. Initial reconnaissance and security measures underway. Area is tranquil and consists primarily of easy terrain; should present no serious obstacles to quick and efficient search. I believe we can anticipate a speedy conclusion to the operation."
Radio message from Operations Officer Lieutenant Benson Gibbs at Search Base Camp to ISS Control in Vartac, Day 58.

2.8

TIMELINE

The major activities related to this Mission are shown on the following Timeline.

02.03.2349 Reports of conflict between elements of 1st Trident Mechanized Regiment and Imperial forces near Scan RA1. Recon elements of 1st Trident defeated and in Imperial hands. All information on the matter censored.

05.03.2349 Coup within Scan offices; Scan orders RA1 to back down, and give in to Imperial demands for entrance.

06.03.2349 Scan troops taken into custody by Trident Mechanized and Law Enforcement units within the three RA facilities. Reports of some conflict.

07.03.2349 Scan military forces side with Imperials. Full siege laid to all three Scan RA facilities.

08.03.2349 Spectral vessel opens fire on I.S.S. Heimdall, triggering space battle between Imperial and Trident fleets.

09.03.2349 Spectral Invasion. Breakout from RMBK and all 3 RA facilities. The IRS ambushes the caravan containing the Avatar Project.

"Has everyone gone crazy around here?"

Officer Eric

Day 1 Avatar caravan arrives at IRS headquarters, as does Agent Briceton. IRS prepares to move, while the survivors of the Vartac Subcon scatter into the wilderness.

Day 35 Elements of the 27th Imperial Starmarine Regiment arrive at Vartac, and secure area for IRS occupation.

Day 42 Imperial Guard and Imperial command units destroyed. Functioning DRGN suits are seen, as well as Seven Swords Power Armor and Dragoncrests.

Day 54 Colonel Graf of the ISS receives a report from one of his agents who witnessed the destruction of the Guard. He orders Agent Briceton to track down the crashed Grav APC. She assembles her forces.

Day 58 A Platoon of the 27th Imperial Starmarine Regiment arrives in the field and begins the search. The location selected is several miles away from the actual crash site.

Day 66   The Starmarines complete their first search pattern and move their Base Camp; the new pattern also misses the crash site.

Day 72   The Operations Team receives its orders.

Day 74   The Team arrives on the Search Grid. The Starmarines complete another search pattern, finding nothing of value, and relocate to a new Base Camp. Their new search pattern includes part of the Search Grid.

"The community they have decided to head for is a Subcon, and it is over two hundred miles away. I have urged them to leave me behind; I pointed out that carrying my litter that distance will be grueling for them but they don't care, which is more than just inconvenient for me. I had expected a bunch of Starcaste to be happy to get rid of me (and yes, there were one or two who were quick to agree), but most of them have been remarkably generous. Casey, the lead Ranger, is particularly kind. Getting away from this group will be more difficult than I had expected."
Personal Log entry of Corporal Martin Travis, Day 6.

TRIDENT / RMBK

In the last few days before the Apocalypse, Trident/RMBK was at the center of a crisis that spanned the Imperium. A decade of RMBK's social independence and scientific research had finally resulted in a multi-level confrontation with virtually every power in the Starguild; the Imperium accused RMBK of violating its charter by developing weapons, many Starguild Corporations murmured at the radical social structure of RMBK's communities, Scan Medical Technologies Inc. claimed that it had been duped into participation in forbidden researches, and even RMBK's parent corporation, Trident, claimed that RMBK's activities were unauthorized and demanded that they be halted.

Now it appears that the people behind RMBK were not destroyed during the Spectral bombing, or by Imperial attack. One or more of RMBK's controversial scientific projects were apparently completed as well, and seem to have survived the disaster.

This Chapter contains the history of Trident, as well as recent background for events on Rhand and detailed information about the **DRGN Field Array**.

"Starlink will revolutionize interstellar travel. The savings in cost and time will open previously unpromising worlds to both colonization and exploitation, and these worlds will free Humanity. As they become profitable and thriving colonies, our constant wars over the few desirable systems will finally come to an end. United in peace and prosperity, Humanity will stand poised for ever greater research, growth, and exploration."
Excerpt from the Starlink Inauguration speech of Italo Benedict, Director of the Imperial Technical Research and Development Department, 05.11.2279.

3.1

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The history of Trident begins in the days of the **Starguild - Dragoncrest War** (2221 - 2251). This conflict was fought for control of the rich Seven Worlds system and saw the powerful Starguild slowly and decisively beaten by the Dragoncrests. Step by step, on world after world, the Dragoncrests defeated the best troops the Starguild had available. By 2246 the eventual outcome was clear to even the most zealous Imperial commander, and the Starguild reduced expenditures to support the war. The Starguild Council, ever conscious of public opinion and anxious to avoid any weakening of their power, began to look desperately for a way of saving face.

They found it in the Imperium's scientific branch, the **Technical Research and Development Department (TRD)**. Early in the 2240's this group of talented scientists began developing a new set of theories about the nature of gravity and its effect on interstellar travel. By the middle of the decade these theories had developed into the very promising **Starlink Initiative**. Starlink was a primary beneficiary of the Starguild's desire to have a noticeable success, and received a great deal of financing.

In 2251, the Starlink Initiative program created the first **Gravity Induced Hyperspatial Transport Device**, usually referred to as a **Grav Gate**. This device eliminated many of the delays associated with normal **Jump Drive** (Dragonstar Rising, Section 6.3), and also extended the maximum jump distance for many ships. It promised to allow much faster travel among the systems that were already established and would revolutionize trade and communications throughout the Starguild. When TRD successfully tested the prototype, the Starguild Council had the distraction it wanted. Promising a time of spectacular expansion, it formally abandoned the Dragoncrest War and threw the resources of the Imperium into development of Starlink.

TRD entered a time of unprecedented prominence and wealth, and began full expansion of Starlink with high hopes. With its good fortune, however, came an increased degree of interference from the Imperium and the Council. Imperial and Starguild advisers became directly involved in the production process, and countless Corporations and Subcons battled for the lucrative contracts offered by the Imperium. With so much wealth and power at stake, corruption, deceit, and inefficiency were commonplace. Many of the largest Senior Guild members went to war with each other, and the rates charged by the Surrogate Houses skyrocketed.

In the midst of this the scientists attempted to fully develop Starlink and met with countless delays and repeated failures. Unrealistic schedules were dictated by Imperial leaders for political reasons. Subcons cut corners to maximize profit, only to have their components fail when tested. Corporate espionage and warfare resulted in damage to several critical production facilities. Plagued with problems, the project advanced only slowly and was years behind schedule by the end of the first decade. The scientists of TRD faded further and further into the background, and by 2268 were only peripherally involved with the project they had created. The executives of the Starguild continued to dominate Starlink until the **Folsom Station Disaster** in 2274.

The Folsom Station Grav Gate, in the **Nimbus 1** system, was nearing completion when the disaster occurred. It was powered by scalar energy beamed from a nearby moon, and used a new power transmission system which was not a TRD design. During the final tests the Power Broadcast unit became misaligned and the raw power did not reach the Power Receiver it was supposed to be aimed at; it hit the Station itself. Dozens of lives were lost immediately, and the disaster was only beginning.

The fault detection systems were also "improvements" over original TRD designs, and did not shut down the Power Broadcast unit. It was several minutes before the manual shutdown systems turned off the broadcast, and in that time the slowly moving beam of power had destroyed most of the Grav Gate and the supporting Space Station. More than two thousand people died during the agonizing minutes of the broadcast, as section after section of the Space Station fell into the beam.

The scope of the disaster caused a storm of outrage. An appalled public demanded a full investigation of the fiasco, and the Starguild moved quickly to censure and demote all personnel who had been involved with Folsom Station. Evidence of negligence, corruption, and ineptitude resulted in criminal charges against numerous Station managers and in the disbanding of four Subcons. A call went up to return control of the project to its creators. Cowed by the dimensions of their failure, the remaining heads of Starlink meekly handed the reins back to TRD.

The story of the Starlink Initiative after that point is uneventful; in 2279 the first production units were put into use, and by 2283 a basic network was functioning smoothly. TRD had proven both its brilliance and its reliability, and had become a respected entity in the eyes of the Starguild and the people.

A decade later the Starguild conquered the Seven Worlds, which was exhausted from a thirty year war with the Dragoncrests. The Council was certainly pleased by the victory, but a few of the most perceptive Corporations were concerned about the rapid growth of Imperial power. The influence of the Starguild Council had been greatly weakened by its role in the Folsom Station Disaster, while TRD and the Imperium were seen as the saviors of the Starlink Initiative and the economy of the entire Starguild. The triumph over the Seven Worlds had also been under Imperial control.
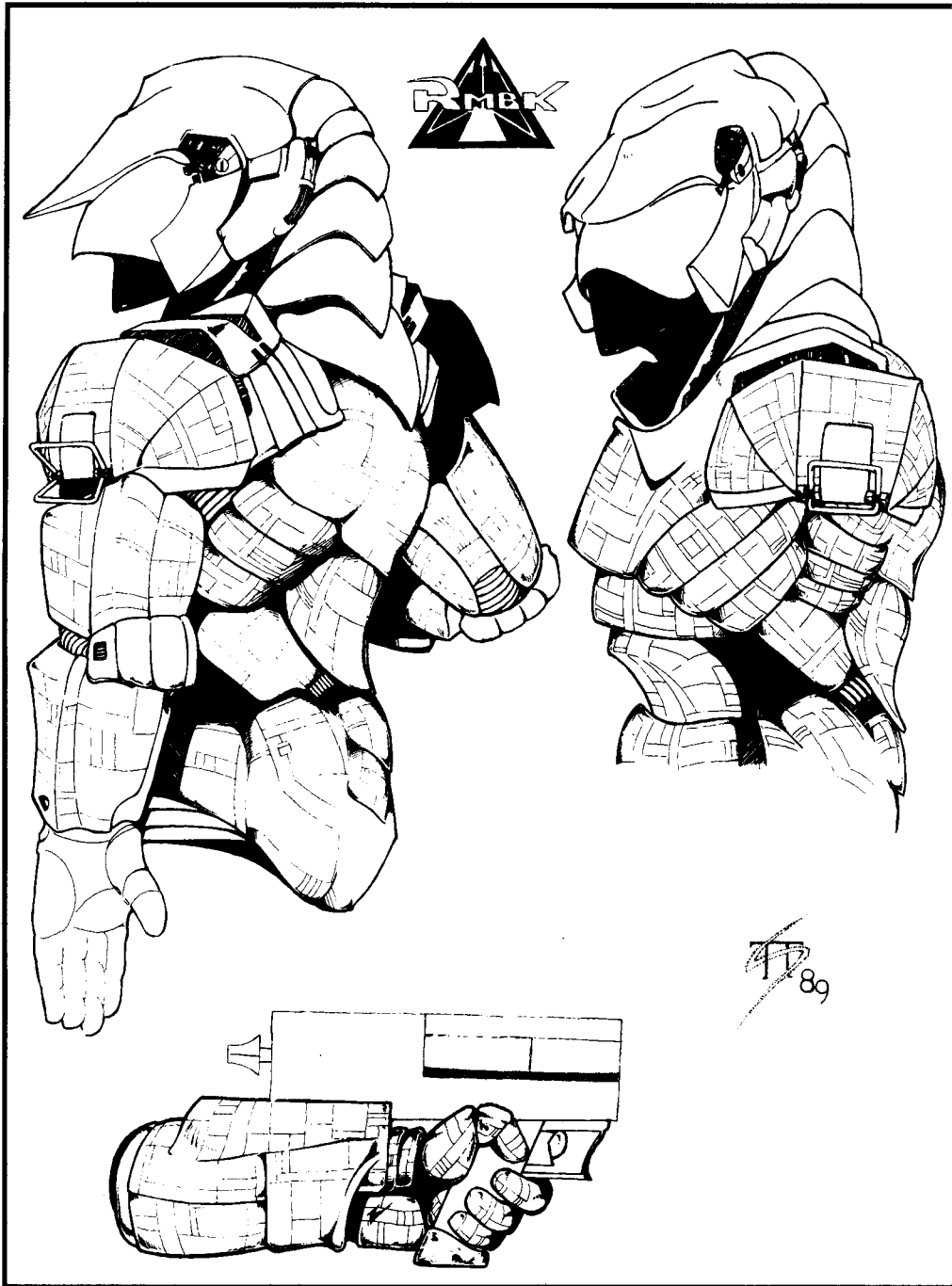
Components of the DRGN Combat Suit

The fears of the Starguild Council were realized when the Imperium, riding a wave of public and Corporate approval, announced its plans to expand the Grav Gate network and establish a program of space exploration managed by TRD. The Starguild Council was quick to see where this would lead: to direct Imperial ownership of any newly discovered worlds.

They moved immediately to defuse the Imperium's scheme by offering the heads of TRD status as a Starguild Corporation with membership in the Senior Guild. Protests followed, including complaints from the Imperium and non-Council members of the Starguild, but the Council refused to back down. They reiterated their offer to TRD.

Given the choice between a wealthy future in service to the Imperium or a potentially wealthier future as an independent Senior Member of the Starguild, the managers and

scientists of TRD opted for freedom. Over forceful Imperial objections, TRD accepted the charter offered by the Starguild Council. The Imperium condemned the move and stepped in to prevent TRD's departure from its control, citing its authority over inter-Corporate disputes.

The Starguild Council, however, held that there was no dispute; that a unanimous action by the Starguild Council was binding, and that the Imperium had no jurisdiction in the matter. To settle the conflict, the **Second Convention** was held in 2295. As with the original Starguild Conventions which were signed in 2065 (Dragonstar Rising, Section 5.4), representatives from all the major powers were present. The debates raged for weeks, with the Starguild Council and the Imperium battling for the support of the undecided members of the Starguild.

The issue was finally settled when **Martin Heisson**, the representative of **Heisson Aeronautics** (Dragonstar Rising, Section 5.1) presented his **"Imperial House"** paper to the Second Convention. Just as his ancestor Mark Heisson, the developer of faster-than-light drive, had created the Starguild in 2060, so did Martin Heisson give it a new shape. He addressed the fears of every member of the Starcaste; that the Imperium was growing too strong, and that soon the Starcaste Corporations would lose control of it. By speaking openly of what they all feared privately, Heisson galvanized hesitant delegates to support TRD's elevation.

He did not stop at that, however. He proposed the creation of an actual Imperial House to maintain the balance of the Starguild. This had been a popular idea nearly a century before (Dragonstar Rising, Section 7.14), but had not been enacted. Heisson brought the idea back, and it was well received. Heisson's plan was to place the properties of this Imperial House in a blind trust, and to invest them equally in all Starcaste Corporations. This, he said, would create a truly unbiased Imperium, one with a direct interest in the well-being of every Corporation.

The delegates were convinced, and support for Heisson's plan was so strong that the Imperium was forced to accept it without struggle. TRD immediately renamed itself **TRIDENT**: Technical Research and Independent Development Enterprises. The recently conquered planet of Hryken was awarded to Trident as its primary holding. Simultaneously, work was begun on the establishment of an Imperial House. It took only a few months to determine that the Heisson Household was acceptable to all as the new Imperial House, and Martin Heisson gladly gave up the family holdings, including a majority of the powerful Heisson Aeronautics, in exchange for the Imperial purple.

Late in 2296, Martin Heisson ascended the throne, the first real Emperor of the Starguild Imperium. He remains in power to this day.

"What do you think this is... a democracy?"

Tiber Barnett
Chairman, Imperial Auditing Committee

"When Benedict turned the reins over to me, I was so grateful, so excited... so young. All I saw were the opportunities. I was going to lead a scientific revolution, and more importantly I had the chance to begin the social changes that I had dreamed of since childhood. I knew that Benedict supported me, and that was a tremendous help. He seemed so certain of everything, and that gave me the certainty that we would win.

"But it has been more than thirty years, and now I am as old as he was then. And in between, I have had to watch the Spectrals devastate Humanity, while we worked to build a weapon to stop them. To watch the Imperials come to Rhand, drawn by those very researches. To watch the hate generated by the idea that Bondsmen should be treated like Humans. To watch the building of tensions, and to know that a war which would destroy all we worked for was one mistake away. And there have been no certainties, ever.

"I suppose that Benedict was not as certain as he seemed. The peace he thought Starlink would bring never came; the prosperity he foresaw was consumed by the greed of the Starcaste, and the rest of Humanity is poorer than ever. Knowing the blind faith that so many have in me, I guess the biggest difference between us is that he fought against a system he had come to despise, while I am fighting to create one in which I believe."

Personal Log entry of Petra Riesen, Director of the RMBK division of TRIDENT, 26.02.2349.

For forty years after its creation, Trident knew only success. Its involvement in Starlink brought it great wealth, and it was ideally located for the exploitation of the resources of the Seven Worlds and the collapsed Dragoncrest empire. Trident also had access to what remained of Seven Worlds scientific facilities, and from these ruins came research material and experimental machinery which led to Trident's development of the **ORCA**. A Trident exploration probe discovered the Rhand system in 2308, and the development of Rhand promised a future of prosperity for the young Corporation.

With the return of the Seven Legions to the Seven Worlds in 2337, the fortunes of Trident changed for the worse. Supported by large numbers of Dragoncrests, the Seven Legions had soon established themselves firmly throughout the system and were in complete control of **Alpha**. As the leaders of Trident attempted to rally the people of **Hryken** and the other worlds to repel the Seven Legions, they found themselves abandoned. Most of the people who lived in the system were defecting rapidly to the cause of the Seven Legions. The leaders of Trident turned to the Starguild for support.

For a short time the Imperium turned its full attention on the Seven Worlds system, and began a concerted effort to drive away the Seven Legions and the Dragoncrests. Before this attempt could mature, however, news of another crisis reached the Emperor and the Starguild Council; the Spectrals had attacked the border planets.

As entire fleets were destroyed by Spectral spacecraft, and as whole worlds collapsed into chaos under the pressure of Spectral invasion forces, the Starguild abandoned its war with the comparatively benign Seven Legions and Dragoncrests. The war against the Spectrals quickly occupied the full attention and production of the Starguild.

This left Trident without support and without a home planet. Corporate headquarters fled to Earth in 2341, and there begged for assistance. In the middle of Humanity's greatest crisis Trident's plight attracted little attention, however, and the greatly weakened Trident soon found itself being dismembered by other desperate Corporations. At the same time, with Trident's finances in disarray, several of its business partners called in their debts. Effectively bankrupt, the leaders of Trident were soon embroiled in legal actions as creditors claimed ownership of Trident's remaining holdings, including the planet Rhand and the RMBK division. Trident successfully fought off these claims, but was not secure until 2347. It was during these years of disputed ownership and absentee management that RMBK openly disavowed the traditions of the Starcaste.

Late in 2347, the leaders of Trident assembled what remained of their fleet and headed for Rhand. They expected the trip to be a long one; Rhand was at the far edge of the Starguild Imperium, and the fleet included a large number of slow cargo craft. The voyage began uneventfully, but once they were past the heavily settled and well-protected portion of the Starguild they were attacked by what seemed to be a rogue Martial House. This House possessed only a small fleet, but was exceptionally ferocious in battle. Trident headquarters initially assumed that the chaos of the Spectral invasion had simply encouraged some unstable elements of the Starguild to engage in piracy. They fought their way past the pirates and continued the voyage.

Less than a month later they were attacked again by the same opponent. It was clear that this was not random piracy, but a conscious attempt to destroy Trident during a time of vulnerability. The second battle was more intense than the first, but the Trident fleet was again victorious. They even recovered the wreckage of a destroyed enemy ship; it bore the insignia of the long-outlawed **Neemis Enterprises**. (Dragonstar Rising, Section 7.13) Neemis Enterprises had survived at the edge of the Starguild for centuries, and was always associated with gun-running, dangerous combat drugs, and piracy. Cursing the fate that brought Neemis Enterprises across their path, the leaders of Trident attempted to lose their pursuer. They followed a circuitous route toward Rhand for three months, but were then attacked again by Neemis Enterprises. They survived this battle, but were forced to dock for repairs.

"This unholy alliance of Human traitors with the most belligerent of alien races will be met, matched, and defeated by the united powers of the Starguild Imperium."

Imperial response to Trident's requrest for assistance against the Seven Legions / Dragoncrest Invasion.

"Save who you can."

Confidential message from the Imperial House to Trident's Board of Directors, shortly after the Spectral Invasion.

This pattern of harassment, conflict, and delay continued through 2348 and into 2349. Several Corporate officers were sent ahead early in 2349 to take control of the increasingly difficult RMBK division, but their ship met with an accident; several pieces of the craft were found in the **Scotia** system, but apparently there were no survivors. At last report the battered Trident fleet was in the **Muersken** system, undergoing repairs and trying desperately to reach Rhand in time to prevent open warfare between the Imperium and RMBK.

They did not really have to worry. The Apocalypse came first.

"Our first battle with Trident was nothing more than a probe to determine the readiness of the enemy. It is obvious that they possess superior numbers, equipment, training, and all other combat essentials. This makes them a perfect target for our fleet, and at last we can avenge the atrocities they committed over a century ago."

Excerpt from the dramatic "Speech To The Faithful" given by the commander of the Neemis Enterprises fleet shortly after their first battle with Trident. It is entirely unclear what atrocities the commander had in mind; Trident is not even a century old. 22.01.2347.

3.3

RMBK AND THE APOCALYPSE

"Who are those guys? Didn't we just blow them up?"

Corporate Trident military official, at the start of the second attack by Neemis Enterprises

Tension between the Imperium and RMBK had been running high for some time, but it reached a new peak in the month before the invasion. The tension had several sources. On the surface, there were issues of free speech and freedom of expression in the arts, as well as the open hostility of RMBK citizens to the increased Imperial presence on Rhand. Adding to the trouble were the RMBK policies of encouraging education for Bondsmen, operating without Landcaste support, and allowing Bondsmen to associate openly with Starcaste.

A quieter issue, but probably the true source of the crisis, was RMBK's research into forbidden technologies. The charter granted to Trident, under which RMBK theoretically operated, allowed a wide range of scientific researches to be pursued by the Corporation, but specifically forbade weapons development, along with all Starguild-banned sciences. These included Genetic Engineering and Artificial Intelligence, as well as a variety of other concepts which the Starguild felt might destabilize society. According to the Imperial espionage network, RMBK's work was deeply involved in virtually every one of the Starguild's forbidden technologies. The only hard data that the Imperium had uncovered, however, were the names of three of the projects; the **DRGN Field Array**, the **Avatar Project**, and **ICON**. These projects were underway at RMBK and at the three Scan RA facilities, which accounts for the high troop concentrations in those areas at the time of the Spectral Invasion.

As the two space fleets opened fire on each other, and as Imperial troops dispersed to avoid possible bombardment from space, RMBK's military broke out of the four beseiged installations. The course of the battle is discussed in Section 2.1. There is no accurate estimate of the number of RMBK vehicles which escaped the four facilities; whatever equipment and personnel they might have been carrying remain a mystery. Within hours of the breakout, the Spectral bombardment began and all four facilities were destroyed.

"Our second battle proves dramatically the dangers of opposing a superior force without the benefits of surprise, position, or maneuverability. Yet a small, skilled unit can wear down a mightier opponent. We need only examine history, and witness the struggles of Carthage against Rome, of the British at Isandhlwana, or the French at Dien Bien Phu."

Excerpt from another "Speech To The Faithful", shortly after the second battle with Trident. The commander once again seems to have a problem with the facts. 16.02.2348.

The RMBK division was created to be Trident's think tank, and it was placed on Rhand for a variety of reasons. First among them was the fact that Rhand was a resort planet located at one edge of the Imperium, and the serenity that accompanied that situation seemed to guarantee RMBK a high degree of freedom from distraction. Since Trident was the sole discoverer of the planet, it was also possible to establish the division as a self-sufficient society with excellent resources and almost unlimited room. The security risks on Rhand were also minimal. As a consequence, of the 12 Trident communities that were placed on Rhand, three were created exclusively for RMBK, and were populated and governed entirely by RMBK personnel.

Unfortunately, it seems that this gave RMBK too much freedom and isolation. It soon established its own identity and began shedding the restrictions of the Starguild; the segregation and oppression of Bondsmen was the first tradition to be abandoned, but others soon followed. Too creative and too valuable to disband, RMBK's society was considered radical by the Imperium and an embarrassment to the rest of Trident. This unusual situation made Rhand a popular spot for free-thinking Starcaste, and the video programs and arts in RMBK communities often satirized Imperial corruption and oppression.

In the three RMBK communities (**Crestview**, **Startouch**, and **Benedict**), Starcaste and Bondsmen lived side by side, without fear or oppression, and without the interference of the Landcaste or the Starguild. The Bondsmen were given good educations and the same sense of freedom as the Starcaste, and as a result they were as creative and resourceful as any member of the upper classes, and thoroughly loyal to RMBK. RMBK's Starcaste even considered themselves primarily a part of RMBK, secondarily a part of Trident, and felt only minor loyalty to the Starguild and the Imperium. These changes were made quietly over twenty years ago, and with each year the effects have become more visible.

These violations of traditional caste practice added to the difficulties that faced corporate Trident after the Seven Legions attacked the Seven Worlds system. The Imperium was naturally incensed, and the leaders of Trident would have disowned or sold their unruly Rhand division if it had not been one of their few remaining assets. As it was, the near-rebellious society was able to survive within the Imperium only because of its value to Trident and its isolation.

In 2342 the ISS uncovered hints of forbidden scientific research, and that quickly brought RMBK's isolation to an end. An Imperial audit of RMBK was initiated, and a token force of Imperial Starmarines accompanied the officials who were sent to Rhand. The size of this force grew steadily, until the entire **27th Starmarine Regiment** was assigned to Rhand in 2348, and was followed by the **7th Imperial Guard Strike Battalion** in early 2349. There had always been a few ISS agents on Rhand, as there were everywhere in the Starguild, but the **ISS** also increased its presence through the decade. By the time of the Spectral invasion there were more ISS agents on Rhand than on any world other than Earth.

"More Imperial Starmarines are coming to Rhand? Gosh, why don't I feel safer?"

Officer Eric

"With each day I am more impressed by their behavior. They have made a decision to work together, and to get everyone to safety, and they are going to do it. Casey in particular is driven to lead them out of this mess. They are adapting to life without civilization; each day they try to contact the ORCA, each day they fail, and each day the fact that something terrible has happened sinks in a little deeper. I have told them what I know, about the fleets and the battles, but none of us really know what to think. A couple are showing signs of strain, but so far Casey is holding them together."
Personal Log entry, Corporal Martin Travis, Day 23.

THE DRGN FIELD ARRAY

The **DRGN Field Array** is an experimental project created by the scientists at RMBK. Because of the secrecy which has surrounded the project it is difficult to say when RMBK began DRGN, or how the scientists were able to make their breakthroughs. It seems likely that DRGN was begun roughly ten years ago, around the time of the Spectral invasion, because its special attributes seem designed for use against the Spectrals. The full DRGN Field Array consists of three items; the **DRGN Combat Suit, DRGN Lase Machine Pistol**, and **DRGN Displacer Unit**.

There were six DRGN-equipped RMBK soldiers on board the Grav APC. The chances of various pieces of equipment surviving are given in Section 5.4.
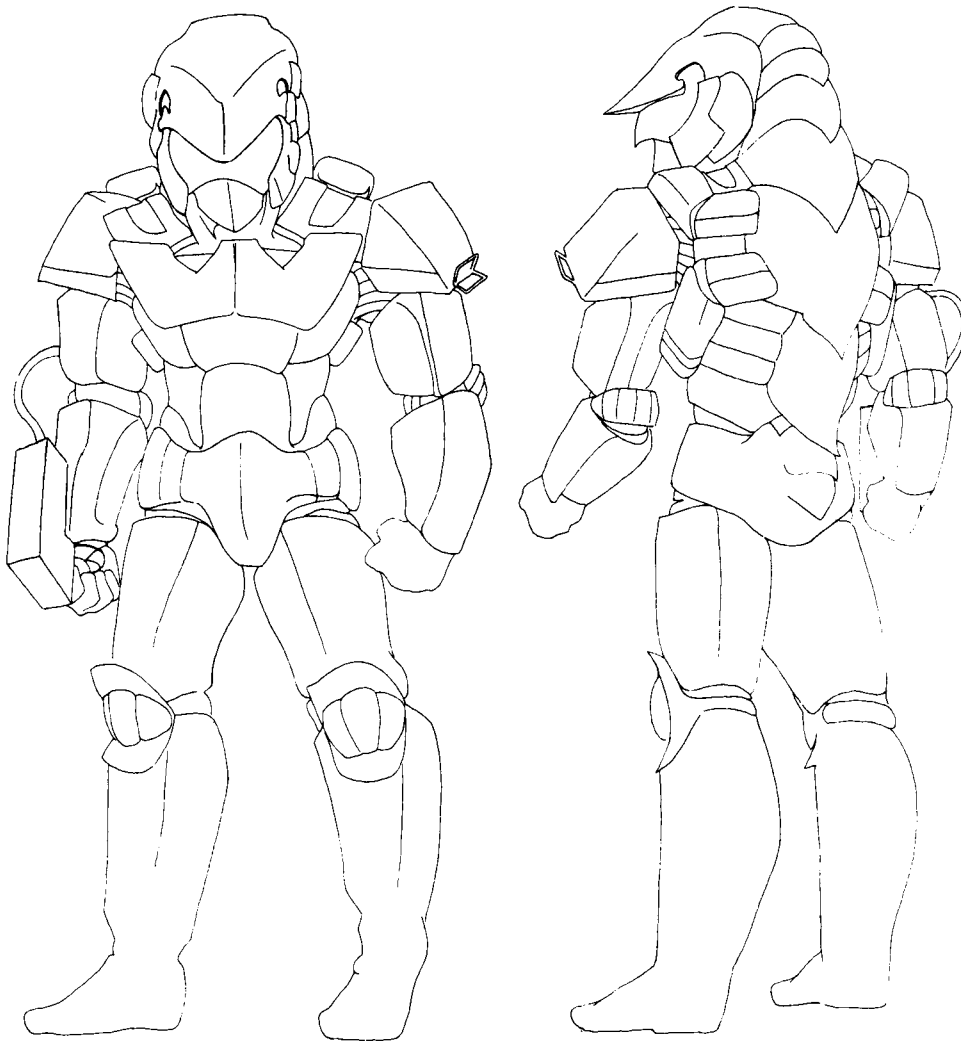
DRGN Combat Suit

The DRGN Combat Suit was initially designed to support the DRGN Displacer Unit (see below), but it also has other systems, including climbing equipment and a highly sophisticated fire control link between the helmet of the suit and the DRGN Pistol. Integrated into the material used to make the Suit is a metallic grid of unknown composition, which is used as a **Ground Net** for the Displacer Field.

The DRGN Combat Suit also has full vacuum and life support ratings, as other Starcaste Combat Suits, and is ideal for internal temperature regulation. The exceptional insulating properties of the Suit's material allow it to support a wearer in sub-zero temperatures without external power sources, and the Suit includes a respirator which pre-warms all breathing air. In warmer environments it radiates excess heat to maintain comfort. This function is under the control of the wearer, and the Suit can be placed in **Isolation** mode; if this is done, it will not show up on normal Infrared sensors. The heat may be stored in the Suit for up to ten minutes, under normal environmental conditions.

Fire Control System: The suit includes a sophisticated aiming system, built around a direct link between the helmet and the DRGN Lase Pistol. This is a **Heads-Up Display**, in which the helmet automatically places a small red dot within the wearer's visor that shows exactly where the DRGN pistol is aimed. If the weapon is set for automatic fire, the projected arc of fire is displayed as a line of dots. This system can be modified to automatically aim for the head and shoulders of the target; this is discussed below, and was clearly intended for use against Spectrals.

The Fire Control System is of no particular value to someone untrained in its use. For someone who learns to use the Fire Control System as a **Qualified Skill**, however, there are significant benefits. The System frees the user from the difficulties of range and sighting according to the following table.

DRGN FIRE CONTROL QUALIFIED SKILL		
Qualified Skill Level	Shot Accuracy Modifier	Bonus to Aim Time
0	None	0
1	+1	0
2	+2	0
3	+3	0
4	+4	+1 Action
5	+5	+1 Action
6	+6	+2 Actions
7	+6	+2 Actions
8	+6	+3 Actions

"Is there anything the DRGN <u>doesn't</u> do?"

Sandy Jorden

DRGN Field Array Specifications

Total Weight:	37.8 pounds
Component Weights	
DRGN Combat Suit:	10.0 pounds
DRGN Lase Machine Pistol:	6.8 pounds
DRGN Displacer Unit:	21.0 pounds
Maximum Operating Time:	2 hours
Armor PF:	2

Primary Attributes

DRGN Combat Suit	DRGN Lase Machine Pistol	DRGN Displacer Unit
Climbing Attachments	Fire Control System	Displacer Field Generators
Fire Control System	Friend / Foe Detector	DRGN Displacer Modules
Friend/Foe Transponder	Overpenetration Limiter	Ground Net Connectors
Grappling Projectors	Target Area Specification	Power Packs
Heat Isolation System	Variable Beam Width	
Survival Package	Variable Rate of Fire	
Video System		

Friend/Foe Transponder: Each suit has a Friend/Foe transponder tied into its team's weapons. This means that a DRGN pistol pointed at a team member will not fire, since the member's transponder is broadcasting. This function was apparently included to safeguard DRGN users in close quarters combat, such as is typical in house-to-house fighting and inside Spectral lairs. It allows users to open fire at anything that moves in dangerous environments without wasting time identifying the target. This is of particular use against the Spectrals, who can locate humans instinctively; DRGN users would lose nothing by broadcasting their locations. If desired, this system can be manually overridden.

Climbing Gear: Also built into the suit is a complete set of Climbing Gear. The boots have crampons and ascenders, which are usually folded back into a compartment in the sole, and there are two grappling hook projectors mounted on the shoulders of the suit. The projectors can be pointed manually, but are usually aimed with the Fire Control System; the wearer simply directs the DRGN Pistol at the grappling hook's target, and the suit's systems do the rest. The rope used in all of the suit's projectors is a light, artificial cord which is capable of supporting 2000 pounds.

For game purposes, the wearer of the suit is always considered to have the benefits of Climbing Gear for Climbing Success Rolls, and is 8th Level Climbing when attempting to Secure Grappling Hooks, owing to the suit's Fire Control System. Additionally, intelligent use of the suit's hook projectors can give the wearer a high degree of safety against falling, depending on the situation and the GM's judgement.

The Suit has another valuable feature; equipment tethers with an auto-retract feature. There are four of these, which can be attached to equipment such as weapons, tools, and so forth. If the wearer lets go of the equipment, the tether automatically snaps it back to its stowed position. This allows the wearer greater freedom in combat and when climbing, and eliminates the risk of vital equipment being dropped or lost.

Other Suit systems include a Beacon locater, short-range communications gear, simple navigational equipment, video recording equipment, and a first aid and drug injection kit.

It should be noted that the DRGN Suit was often presented as the **DRGN Wilderness Survival Suit** in plans and papers submitted to the Imperium. While the auditors did not believe a word of it, the Suit's insulation, climbing gear, equipment tethers, and other features all indicated a non-combat use for the Suit.

"The DRGN Field Array: it's not just for Wilderness Survival anymore."

Esteban Teller

DRGN Pistol

The DRGN weapon also seems to have been designed for close combat with the Spectrals. Its range is quite limited, but again this would not be a factor in a Spectral ship or lair. Additionally, it is designed to prevent serious overpenetration of walls; the small lens and special optics used limit penetration depth to 8 inches at any range. This shallow penetration feature minimizes the risk of shooting friendly troops in the close quarters of a Spectral lair.

When the full DRGN Field Array is in use, including the Displacer Unit, another function of the weapon is activated. This allows the user to automatically aim at the Head and Shoulders area of the target. In game terms, the firer can use the **Firing Around Cover Hit Location Table** without the 1 Action penalty to Aim. The Target Size Modifier is 0.

Displacer Unit

The Displacer Unit is Tech Level 19 equipment, and was under development only at RMBK on Rhand. It fits over the head and shoulders of the DRGN Suit like a backpack, strapping onto the arms and around the chest and abdomen, and looks like a series of light metal scales or plates covering the head, shoulders, and spine of the wearer. Ten standard Lase Power Packs provide power for the unit, which includes critical electronics, four Displacer Field Generators, and the sophisticated DRGN Displacer Module itself. The complete Displacer Unit, including Power Packs and all components, weighs 21 pounds; including the DRGN Combat Suit and Lase Machine Pistol, the total weight of the DRGN Field Array is 38 pounds.

The Displacer Unit produces a field that, working in concert with the special metal of the DRGN combat suit, is an energy and projectile deflector. Note that without that metal, the Displacer cannot function; it is useless if not worn over a DRGN Suit. At the current level of technology, the Displacer subtracts 16 from the **Shot Accuracy** of any shot taken at the wearer. (For players who own 1st Edition Living Steel, subtract 16 from the EAL for either Single Shot fire or Burst Elevation. For Automatic Fire and Shrapnel from 1st Edition, use the standard Auto Hit Chance divided by 10, or BSHC divided by 100.) The maximum Penetration (or RID, for 1st Edition) which can be deflected is 2000 points. For the effects of more powerful impacts, see below under Displacer Field Generators.

If a hit is scored, normal Hit Location and Damage rules are used since the shot is deflected randomly into the target. To clarify, the field does not block certain areas of the target; it just proportionally reduces the effective target size.

Note that the DIsplacer Unit does not offer any special protection from concussion damage. This is because it deflects energies which threaten to penetrate the field on fairly narrow fronts. Concussion damage strikes a very large section of the field simultaneously, and the Displacer is ineffective against that sort of impact.

Current Displacers are first generation units. Their efficiency is low and they have limitations due to overheating and fragility of critical components. After the unit has been used for a total of 1000 Impulses (250 Phases, or a little over 8 minutes), it becomes subject to breakdown. Each time the unit is turned on after 1,000 Impulses of use, and every 100 Impulses of use thereafter, there is a 10% chance that the unit will fail. Once the unit fails, the DRGN Displacer Module must be replaced.

Each component of the Displacer Unit is discussed below.

Power Packs: The Power Packs are located at the base of the wearer's spine. Ten normal Lase Power Packs (.4 pounds each) fit into the unit, and together provide power for 2 full hours of operation. The DRGN Displacer Module on these early units will certainly burn out long before the power gives out, but at least 8 units are required to meet the short-term power demands; the other two are reserves, in the event of damage.

Critical Electronics: An assortment of electronics which link the various components of the unit are gathered behind the wearer's heart. This location generally insures that this critical portion of the unit outlasts the wearer.

DRGN Displacer Field Generators: There are four Field Generators which interact with the metallic grid of the DRGN suit to create the Displacer Field. Each Generator has the capacity to stop 500 points of Penetration or RID; if all four are functional and the suit also has four functional Displacer Modules (see below), then the Field will stop up to 2000 points. If the Penetration of the incoming fire is greater than the value of the Field, then the Field collapses and does not affect the Chance of Hitting or Penetration of the shot. If the Field does collapse, it comes back up immediately; only the shot which caused the collapse penetrates the Field.

DRGN Displacer Module: The DRGN Displacer Module is where the most delicate components of the DRGN Displacer Unit are gathered. When the Displacer Unit gives out after extended use, it is because the circuitry in the Module has burned out. The designers were well aware that these early Modules were fragile, and as a result each DRGN Displacer Unit has bays with enough room for 10 of them. The system is designed so that as one Module gives out, the next one automatically and instantaneously takes over. Unfortunately, there is a severe shortage of these Modules; the DRGN units on board the APC carried only a single Module each.

Each Displacer Field Generator requires a separate Displacer Module in order to function. If there is only one Displacer Module, for example, then only one Field Generator can be active, and the Field will stop 500 points of Penetration. The extra Field Generators are useful only as backup systems in such a case.

"I think the Displacer effect has gone to your head."

Earl Keef
Launch Emergency Team Alpha

Hit Location Tables

The Hit Location Tables for the DRGN Field Array are shown in **Table 3A**. Any time someone wearing the DRGN Displacer Unit is hit in the torso, determine damage to the wearer normally. Then enter **Table 3A** with the Hit Location number rolled and check to see if some part of the Suit has been damaged. The level of damage sustained by the Suit System is determined using the rules in Section 4.3 and **Table 3C**. If the wearer is hit in any Head Hit Location, there is a 10% chance that the Visual Display and Fire Control System will be damaged. If it is damaged, use **Table 3C** to determine the level of damage.

Repairing the peculiar systems of the DRGN Suit is an extremely difficult matter, given their revolutionary design. For the Field Generators, Critical Electronics, and DRGN Modules, use the Repair guidelines found in Section 5.4.

"Casey and Stauffer have gone ahead to get help. The group is low on food and is tiring. We are holed up near a lake and will rest here, at least until they get back. My legs are much better, and I should be able to walk unassisted very soon. I will need to get my strength back quickly, because I suspect that there won't be any help out there, and Casey and the other two Rangers are wearing out fast. I just hope nothing happens to her and Stauffer while they are out there; they are good at what they do, but I don't think that's enough anymore."
Personal Log entry, Corporal Martin Travis, Day 32.

IMPERIAL ROBOTICS SECTION

Created in 2343 as a part of the **Imperial Research and Development Department**, the **Imperial Robotics Section** is the result of covert researches into the military applications of robotics. Brought to Rhand by the **ISS** in early 2349, this unit was to be field tested against renegade Trident/RMBK units, and if successful deployed against the Spectrals. When the Apocalypse began, the IRS was a rear-echelon unit supporting the Imperial forces in combat with Trident/RMBK troops at Scan RA2. As Trident forces evacuated RA2 and Imperial forces dispersed to avoid Spectral bombardment, the IRS encountered and ambushed a caravan of RMBK personnel escorting the Avatar Project. The battle was short and brutal, and at its end the battered IRS had captured the trucks carrying Avatar. The full chain of events is discussed in Chapter 2, and the key personnel of the IRS are in Section 5.2.

Since the battle, the IRS has been stationed at **Vartac**, a ruined Subcon near the ambush site, trying to repair damaged units and awaiting a new assignment.

"Unbiased, yet compassionate. Acting with a sense of balance born not of disinterest or complacency, but an awareness of the fundamental unity of the entire Starguild. This is the Imperial House of the future. Not the empty, ceremonial presence that we have known for so long, but a vital, dynamic force for the growth and success of the entire Starguild Imperium. Who will fill this role? That question is one which need not concern us now. Today we need only decide that a real Imperial House will lead us all into the future. And that is a decision which we cannot delay any longer."
Excerpt from Martin Heisson's "Imperial House" paper, 17.10.2295.

4.1

HISTORY

The Imperial Research and Development Department (IRAD) was established in 2298, to replace the Technical Research and Development branch which was torn from the Imperium in 2295 (Section 3.1.) Since the Starguild was nervous about Imperial power, IRAD was forced to operate on a limited budget. The leaders of the Imperium do not accept restrictions with good humor, however, and through the years have discreetly transferred more and more of IRAD into the Imperial Secret Service. This sort of an operation is unlikely to produce the gigantic technological breakthroughs that were possible in the old days, like the Grav Gates, but the Imperium is happy to settle for smaller projects of special interest, such as brain scanning devices, weapons development, behavioral inhibitors and programming, and beginning in 2343, robotics.

Advanced Robotics has always been restricted in the Starguild, for a variety of reasons. In industry, robotics are an unnecessary luxury; with a vast supply of cheap Bondsmen labor, there is little need for the labor-saving qualities of robotics. Robots in industry are

actively frowned upon, in fact, since the last thing any member of the Starguild wants is for the Bondsmen to have free time. It has long been a matter of policy to keep as many Bondsmen employed as possible, even in unnecessary tasks. As long as they are working and fatigued, they are far less likely to rebel or cause trouble.

Military use of robotics is even more clearly forbidden. As far back as the signing of the Starguild Conventions (Dragonstar Rising, Section 5.4), there has been a complete ban on the use of robots in battle. The military houses promoted the ban, since they had earned their Starcaste status through combat; if the high-technology houses were allowed to develop military robotics, then the military houses would become useless and would soon be reduced to Landcaste or Bondsmen status. The technological houses agreed to the ban on robotics because they knew that the higher technology applied to the battlefield, the greater the destruction, loss of life, and loss of wealth would be. Besides, the effective application of military robotics was decades away, and the military houses were quite definite about banning them.

With the Spectral Invasion of the Starguild, however, robotics began to seem more attractive. By the end of the first year of the war it was known that the Spectrals had a way of 'seeing' sentient beings that rendered traditional tactics futile. It was only a matter of time before someone began creating a military force that would have a chance of concealing itself on the battlefield and while maneuvering. Additionally, by the early 2340's it became clear that there was no room for caution or restraint in the war with the Spectrals. If radical changes were not made, Spectral victory was inevitable.

There was one final aspect to the development of robotics. The Emperor and his top advisers in the ISS felt that once the Spectrals had been turned back, a military force comprised of advanced robotics under direct Imperial control would be enough to shatter the balance of power between the Imperium itself and the Starguild at large; a successful robotics project could lead to the Imperial House holding all power. It is fair to say that in the minds of the Emperor and his aides the last reason was the real one, and the others simply rationalizations.

The early development of the IRS was conducted in extreme secrecy, since it so clearly violated the Articles of War. In 2346, however, with Starguild forces reeling back in defeat all along the front, the efforts of the IRS were revealed to the Starguild Council in a closed session. At that session the Emperor himself, Martin Heisson, discussed the need for the IRS and the progress made in its early development. The Council was certainly desperate; the war with the Spectrals had consisted of one setback after another, in an unbroken chain of defeat. They quickly gave their approval to begin production of the IRS, in a package that included half a dozen other unusual solutions to the Spectral problem.

By the end of 2348 the first IRS prototypes were completed and awaited field testing. Some members of the Council suggested an immediate test against the Spectrals, but the Imperial House and the ISS both preferred a test under more controlled conditions. They argued that if the units were tested on a normal battlefield against the Spectrals, there would be no way to recover any units which were lost, and there would be no reliable data on how effective they were against the enemy. Only a test in a more controlled environment would provide the necessary data. In the view of the Imperial House, the best subject for the test was Trident/RMBK.

The Starguild Council was initially shocked, but representatives of the ISS were quite persuasive. After pointing out that an armed confrontation with RMBK was unavoidable, they listed the advantages of a test against RMBK; the controlled environment, the presence of overwhelming force to support the IRS, the certainty that a failure of the IRS would not result in a lost battle or lost lives. Another key advantage was that the test would draw no attention. The first time the Starguild at large discovered the IRS it would not be as a research project that used forbidden science, or a violation of the Articles of War; it would be as a tough, tested military unit that could save Humanity from the Spectrals.

Early in 2349, the IRS arrived secretly on Rhand. Attached directly to the Imperial Secret Service, it fell under the jurisdiction of Colonel Graf and was not part of the military. Graf was less impressed by the IRS than his superiors, and was deeply involved in an espionage war with Trident/RMBK. As a consequence he was in no hurry to deploy the

unit. When the crisis with RMBK reached its peak he stationed the IRS near Scan RA2, well behind the front lines. It was consequently in an ideal location to prepare an ambush of the Avatar caravan. The ambush is discussed in Section 2.1.

"Well, where do you want me to start? It's so big that you can't possibly miss it. That means it has to be well-protected. But it has so much surface area that to give it decent armor everywhere it can't be much better protected than a man in Power Armor. Now, you think that sounds alright, but it's not. Because a man in Power Armor is small and maneuverable. He can stand behind a wall, or he can lie down, or any number of things. The Morituri? It just stands there and gets shot. And all it takes is one guy with an explosive weapon that has reasonable penetration and you can kiss your big robot goodbye. Now factor in the absurd cost of building, fielding, supplying, and transporting one of these things. It is a bad design. A very bad design. The whole idea is stupid. A great weapon system? Sure. If you're going to war with a bunch of twelve-year-olds."
Davis Steinman, the lone dissenting member of the original Morituri Design Review Committee, 11.06.2178.

COMPONENTS

The IRS fields two types of combat units. The **MRT-WM1** is 32 feet tall, basically humanoid, and designed to defend landing zones and to provide fire support. The **MRT-WM2** units are smaller, 350 pound robots designed for short range combat, especially against Spectrals. What follows is a summary of the background and abilities of each type, and of the IRS' basic support equipment.

MRT-WM1: The Morituri

The first type of combat unit is a manned vehicle/robot called the MRT-WM1, also called the Morituri War Machine. The Morituri was initially developed by the Imperium in 2178 as a manned armored combat chassis. As such it was not a robot, and was well within the Articles of War. It was seen as a sort of super Power Armor; its designers spoke eloquently of its tremendous power and durability, and the great visibility which was provided by the machine's 32 foot height. It was to be used to intimidate and control dissent among the Bondsmen, particularly in the recently occupied Seven Worlds system.

Several problems were immediately encountered. The humanoid design was extremely inefficient for an armored vehicle, because the control and feedback systems necessary to pilot a giant bipedal robot were exceptionally complex. Even when the systems were completed they were awkward and somewhat cumbersome, and moving the Morituri on broken terrain was very slow, very demanding, and very dangerous. There was also too much surface area that needed protection, and the resulting armor was noticeably thinner than desired. Large, expensive power and hydraulics systems were necessary in order to move the great weight of the Morituri with even minimal speed.

The weight of the unit led to another problem; ground pressure. The 70 ton weight of the Morituri rested entirely on its two feet and the resulting pressure was enough to break through most streets, especially once the unit was in motion. This meant that the Morituri was forced to restrict itself to specially reinforced streets and other areas with firm, solid footing.

When tested against unarmed rebels on New Eden it proved quite effective. It was impressive visually, possessed excellent firepower, and quickly put rioting crowds to flight. Units were then sent to Hryken and Alpha, to silence Seven Worlds dissidents, and the design flaws of the Morituri became apparent. The same height that gave the Morituri excellent visibility made it visible to the enemy in turn, and its size meant that even an untrained soldier found the Morituri an easy mark. Additionally, the part of the vehicle which was most exposed was the head, the location of the driver. Casualties among the elite,

"Sure, you get a great view from 30 feet up. But you give your opponents an even better one."

Davis Steinman
Morituri Design Review Committee

highly trained drivers were very high. Its weaponry performed well when the driver had time to position and aim the unit, but in the chaos of house-to-house fighting aim time was rarely granted.

Morituri units sent to the Seven Worlds were rapidly damaged, disabled, or destroyed, and the surviving drivers rechristened their giant robots "Mortuaries". Within a short time, the MRT-WM1 had been pulled from production, and existing units were assigned garrison duties on quiet planets.

The MRT-WM1 enjoyed a brief resurgence in popularity after 2232, when the Larden Uprising began. The Larden had only recently been encountered, and they resented the fact that the Starguild had appropriated their world, evicted them from desired areas, and enslaved a large percentage of their race. A full-fledged rebellion was in progress, and the Starguild needed quick, decisive measures to bring the situation under control. The Larden, though intelligent, were not technologically sophisticated, and the MRT-WM1 was seen as a valuable tool for intimidating the reptiles and destroying those who would not submit.

Unfortunately for the builders (and drivers) of the MRT-WM1, **Neemis Enterprises** (Dragonstar Rising, Section 7.13) began running guns to the Larden at very low prices, and they were soon well-armed. One of the weapons supplied by Neemis Enterprises was the "**Lardenfaust**", which was Larden-portable and fired a powerful shaped-charge rocket. Although the weapon's range was short, it was quite capable of destroying the MRT-WM1. Only a few weeks after Morituri units arrived on the Larden home world of **Cauldron** they were suffering significant casualties and were withdrawn. Since that time, the MRT-WM1 has been an abandoned project. Some units were cannibalized for parts, while most remained in mothballs, carefully stored against future need.

When the IRS began its work it quietly appropriated several of these units for study, as it was felt that the MRT-WM1 had a degree of potential. The units were also readily available, having been designed, built, and paid for more than a century before, and given the limited funds and time available to the IRS these were great advantages. The scientists did what they could to improve them, including equipping them with new hydraulics and power plants, and with quad-mounted Heavy Gauss Machine Guns.

The primary purpose of the MRT-WM1 under current IRS combat procedures is to provide a refueling platform for the MRT-WM2 robots, which are seen as the actual combat units. Secondarily, they fill heavy fire support and point defense roles.

The current specifics of the MRT-WM1 Morituri/Mortuary are discussed in Section 4.4, and are shown on **Table 4**.

MRT-WM2: The Mantis

The MRT-WM2 Mantis robot was designed to meet very specific Imperial demands. They wanted an efficient battlefield robot that could compete with the Spectrals, but they were not interested in truly revolutionary concepts. As a consequence the Mantis is a replacement for a Starmarine, modified for use against Spectrals. If the IRS is allowed to develop for several more years, the WM series may produce some startling new examples of robotics. For now, the Mantis is a fairly straightforward combat machine, which features four Primary and four Secondary limbs, a compact body, and a small, turretlike head.

The **Primary** limbs are used for normal movement and are mounted at corners of the body. They are multiply-jointed and bend in a variety of directions, allowing movement over almost any terrain. The joints are also built to allow the Mantis to stand and move on only two legs, at reduced speed. This function is useful if the Mantis has sustained damage. Since all four legs are identical, the Mantis can move with equal ease in any direction.

The **Secondary** limbs are the Mantis' "hands", and are used for any manipulation which is necessary. Although they are not capable of much subtlety, they are fairly strong and can move most objects of moderate size.

The body houses the support and control systems, including the 6 standard **Starguild Power Armor** power cells which are used by the Mantis. Also mounted on the body are four bays which can be used to house **Auxiliary Packs**. The current generation of Mantises do not have any Auxiliary Packs installed.
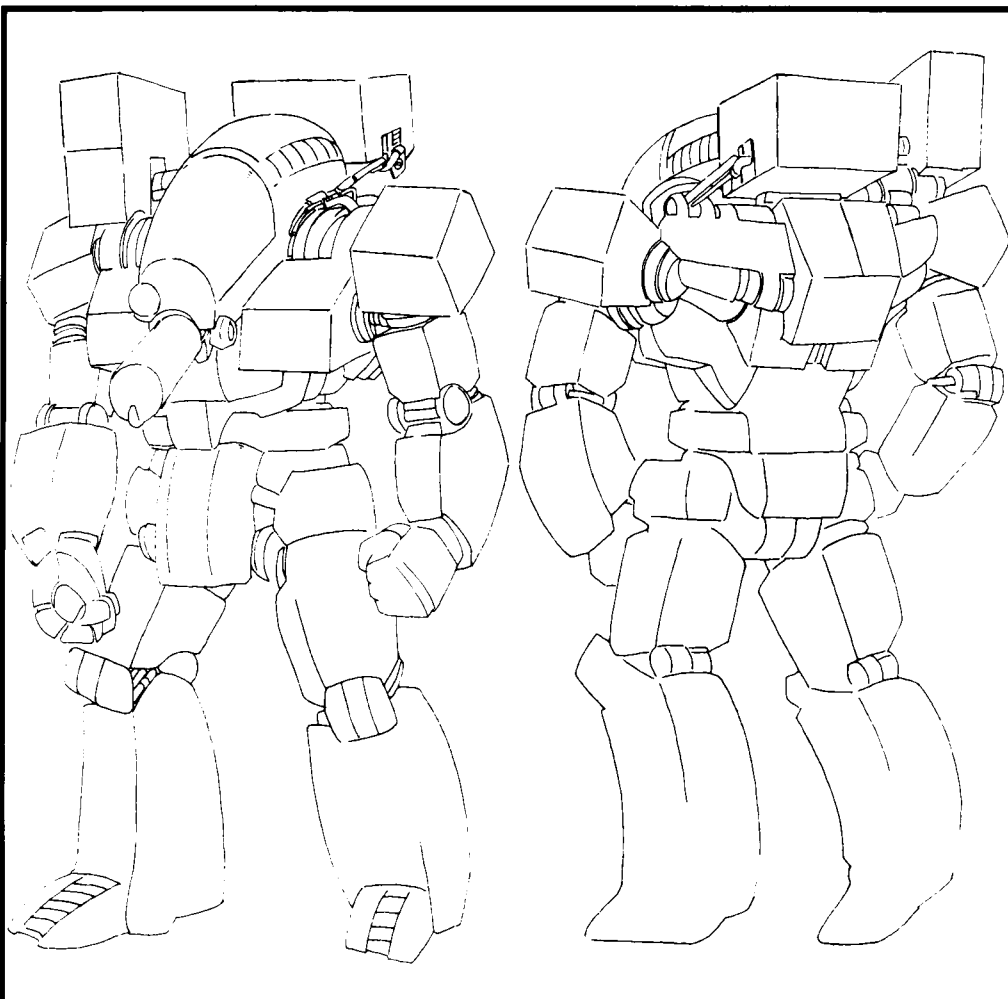
"Kiss your big robot goodbye."

Niki

MRT-WM1 Morituri Specifications

General Data:

Height:	32 Feet
Gross Weight:	70 Tons
Power Capacity:	2 Years
Armor PF:	200 / 180 / 100
Armament:	2 Quad GMG8H
	3.3mm Gauss
	Machine Guns

Major Subsystems:

Armor Canopy	Ammunition Supply
Command Center	Electronics
Fire Control	Power Supply
Head Traverse	Quad GMG's
Pilot Auto Medic	Weapon Control
System Displays	Weapon Traverse
Arm Hydraulics	Ground Sensors
Digit Controls	Leg Hydraulics
Digit Sensors	Power Linkages

The MRT-WM1 Morituri

In the head are two **Bifocal/Ultrasonic** units, modified from standard Power Armor equipment. Only one unit is required for full function; the second unit is redundant, and is activated only if the first is damaged. Also built into the head are two **LAR8's**, the Starguild's Lase Assault Rifle. This gives the Mantis high firepower, as well as an inexpensive, easily replaced weapon system.

The entire surface of the Mantis is protected by thick armor plate, giving it a high degree of durability against all normal battlefield weaponry. The specifications of the MRT-WM2 Mantis are discussed in Section 4.4, and are shown on **Table 5**.

Support Equipment

The **Control Panels** used by the robot Controllers (Section 5.1) are fairly simple. They have a projected grid of the battlefield, and the locations of all Mantises and known friendlies. A computerized system, utilizing data from all the Mantises' Bifocal/Ultrasonics units, places appropriate terrain and any detectable enemies on this map. The controller simply selects a desired target and commands an attack technique for each of the robots under his command. Programmed attack styles range from taking carefully aimed shots while under cover to a full-speed charge with a high volume of unaimed fire. Each individual robot uses its internal programming to follow the order given, and automatically engages the appropriate target. There is also an **Override Control Panel**, which allows the user to take control of some or all of the Mantises, and to selectively shut down other Control Panels.

It was intended that the Mantises become fully independent at a later stage of development. Given the current situation, that seems highly unlikely.

"So I told Ziers about the Morituri's I'd seen when I was with ImpSat. At first he just kind of ignored it, and went on talking, but I finally bashed it into his head. You know, like, hey, Anton. Available. Now. Cheap. Rotten design? Sure. So what? I mean, what do you want for nothing? Puts us months ahead of the competing teams, right? And we can always change the design later, when we have the funding and all. So off he goes to tell Fowler and try to take all the credit himself. I'm just lucky that Cait was there; she shut him up. Jerk. But Fowler gives me the bonus, and Ziers is going, oh, it was just a misunderstanding. Yeah, uh-hunh. So I bought Cait a picture for her office, you know, one of those wilderness things she likes. And I had one of the guys on the production floor do a little quick work on Ziers' car. What a clown. Want another drink?"
Stania Borodin to a friend, during early development of the IRS, 16.04.2346.

4.3

EQUIPMENT DAMAGE RULES

The rules in this Section are used to determine the level of damage sustained by vehicles and equipment during combat. They are included specifically for use with the Morituri, Mantis, and DRGN equipment, but also apply to other equipment used in **Living Steel**.

Every piece of equipment is divided into a number of **Systems**, which represent the general functions of the item. Each System is assigned a **System Class**, which represents the fragility of the System. System Classes range from 1 to 10, and the higher the Class, the more fragile the System. Some items have Redundancy; one or more backup systems which perform the same function as the primary system. Systems which have Redundancy have an asterisk (*) after their System Class and are more durable than normal Systems.

Whenever a piece of equipment is shot, roll on its Hit Location Table to determine which System is hit. If the fire Penetrates the System's armor, cross-index the System's Class with the type of incoming fire on the **System Damage Table (3B)** to find the chance that the System is Disabled. Most of the numbers on the System Damage Table are percentile; roll a number from 00 to 99, and if the number rolled is less than or equal to the number shown on the Table, the System is Disabled. If the number is higher than the one shown, there is no significant damage. If the System has Redundancy, roll randomly to determine whether the primary or one of the redundant systems has been damaged; only when the primary and all redundant systems have been taken out is the System Disabled.

Several entries on the System Damage Table consist of a dagger (†) followed by a number; this indicates that the System automatically takes a number of hits equal to the number after the dagger. Each hit destroys one primary or redundant system; in this way, a System with Redundancy can be Disabled with a single shot.

If someone tries to Repair a Disabled System, the GM should use the **Damage Level Table (3C)** to determine how serious the damage is. Simply choose the section of the table

for the most damaging type of fire which destroyed the unit, roll a ten-sided die, and read down the appropriate System Class column to determine the Damage Level. Damage Levels of Minor (MIN), Major (MAJ), and Replace (REP) are used normally in the Construction and Repair rules. A result of Destroyed means that the System is beyond hope, and cannot be either Repaired or Salvaged.

Example:

The Left Quad GMG of a Morituri (System Class 7) is hit by a Grenade. Checking the System Damage Table, the GM finds that the result is †1; since the Quad GMG does not have Redundancy, it is automatically Disabled. After the battle, the players decide they would like to salvage the Quad GMG. The GM checks the Damage Level Table; for a Grenade hit to a Class 7 System, the result is automatically Destroyed, so the weapon is of no use to the players.

The Hit Location Tables for some equipment do not contain only the System breakdown, but actually define each of the major **Subsystems**. Examples of equipment detailed at this level are the Power Armor in **Dragonstar Rising** and the Mantis. In such cases the following rules apply. If a Subsystem is hit it is automatically Disabled; no roll on the System Damage Table is required. The Disabling hit affects only the Subsystem, and does not automatically shut down the entire System. The effects of Subsystem Damage are given where the equipment itself is described; the Mantis' Subsystems are in Section 4.4.

When explosive weapons hit a Subsystem, they also Disable surrounding areas. Full details on how explosives affect Power Armor are in **Heavy Metal: Power Armor Sourcebook**. For the Mantis, a Rocket Rifle Disables all Subsystems within 10% of the location which is hit, using the In The Open portion of the Hit Location Table. For example, if a 47 were rolled for a Rocket Rifle against a Mantis, all Subsystems from 37 to 57 would be Disabled; in this case, everything from the Critical Components through the Manipulator Arm Drive. For Grenades, every location within 30 of the number rolled is Disabled.

"New Eden, 2188 to 2240: 16 Units Committed; 6 Mechanical Failure, 1 Disabled In Combat, 0 Destroyed, 0 Pilot Fatalities.
Hryken, 2199-2201: 96 Units Committed; 11 Mechanical Failure, 41 Disabled In Combat, 33 Destroyed, 28 Pilot Fatalities.
Alpha, 2199-2201: 92 Units Committed; 13 Mechanical Failure, 19 Disabled In Combat, 46 Destroyed, 40 Pilot Fatalities.
Cauldron, 2234: 40 Units Committed; 2 Mechanical Failure, 4 Disabled In Combat, 16 Destroyed, 13 Pilot Fatalities."
Morituri casualty summary, from its inception until the bankruptcy of Mechanical Research Technologies, the Subcon which designed it.

4.4

THE MORITURI AND THE MANTIS

This section contains the rules necessary for using the MRT-WM1 Morituri and the MRT-WM2 Mantis in the game.

The MRT-WM1 Morituri / Mortuary

The Morituri takes up 2 adjacent hexes on the playing field, one for each foot; its facing should be determined by the GM using common sense. These hexes are not completely full, and rules for avoiding getting stepped on when the WM1 enters someone's hex are below. Each time it takes a step it can move one of its feet either 1 or 2 hexes forward. This activity takes 2 Impulses whether it moves 1 or 2 hexes. The WM1 must take turns moving its feet; first one, then the other. The other restriction on the WM1's movement is that the feet may never be separated by more than one empty hex.

There are two ways that the WM1 can execute a turn. First, it can change facing without moving forward by using 2 Impulses. During this time the feet are moved small distances,

and at the end of the maneuver the WM1 can be placed facing any direction. The only restriction is that one of the two hexes it occupies must be the same as one of the hexes it occupied before making the turn.

The other way of turning involves moving the two feet different distances, or in slightly different directions. The techniques involved are fairly obvious; for example, if the left foot moves one hex and the right one moves two, the WM1 will begin executing a left turn.

Stomping on Someone: The chance that the WM1 will actually step on someone is based on the quickness of the potential victim, not on any effort by the pilot; it is far too clumsy a machine to be able to carefully aim where and when its feet come down. Any time a WM1 steps into a hex containing possible targets, each target must make a Success Roll to avoid being stepped on.

The Base Odds for the Success Roll are 4, with a +2 modifier for each Combat Action. For example, a character with 4 Combat Actions would have a Success Roll of 12 to avoid being Stomped.

If someone is Stomped, the following table is used to determine damage.

Roll	Area Caught Under the Foot	Physical Damage
00-09	Leg	(10) x 70
10-16	Arm	(10) x 10
17-84	Partially Stomped (Legs & Lower Body)	(10) x 1,000
85-99	Fully Stomped	(10) x 10,000

In all cases, Physical Damage is determined by rolling a number from 1 to 10 and multiplying it by the number shown; for example, if a character has his Leg Stomped, the damage taken is equal to 70 times the roll of a ten-sided die. Any limb which is Stomped is considered disabled, and it is recommended that the Permanent Disabling Injuries rules of **Advanced Phoenix Command** be used for injuries of this sort, even if they are never used otherwise.

Damage done is doubled if the victim is on solid ground, such as concrete, and multiplied by 1/10 if the victim is in Power Armor. Power Armor Suit Systems in the crushed area are destroyed, and take REP damage.

The above information is also presented on **Table 4D**.

Crashing: If the WM1 takes a hit which destroys the Critical Electronics location or which knocks the pilot unconscious, then it will fall over. This fall will be in the direction in which it was moving; if the WM1 was stationary, then the GM should determine the direction of the fall randomly.

The WM1 will cover an area 2 hexes wide and 5 hexes long when it falls. Any targets in this area must roll to avoid being Stomped, with a Base Odds of 6. Damage is per Stomp rules.

Due to the high quality of the protective systems within the Morituri, the Pilot will not sustain any damage from the fall.

Weapon Data: The Morituri has two quad-mounted Heavy Gauss Machine Guns. The guidelines for them are as follows, and the Weapon Data is on the table on the next page..

The Aim Time Modifiers shown in the table do not include the Pilot's SAL (Lt. Weismyer's SAL is 12), and suffer from the following restrictions. Because of the machine's wide, clumsy actions, the WM1 may not use any Aim whatsoever during movement. This means that it must come to a complete stop before the Pilot begins accumulating Aim Time. Any shots taken during movement are with Aim Time 1 AC and a -10 penalty to Shot Accuracy.

In addition, the WM1's weapons only have a 60 degree **Field of Fire**, and may only be aimed into the machine's front 180 degrees. If the desired target is outside of the Field of Fire, the pilot must traverse the weapons toward the target before aim may begin. The weapons traverse at 60 degrees per Impulse, and while they are traversing they receive a -10 Shot Accuracy penalty. When the WM1 is at rest, the GMG8H's point directly forward.

The Pilot may Aim both weapons at the same target, in which case his Actions of Aim apply to both weapons, or may Aim the two weapons at different targets. If he elects to do this, he must split his Combat Actions between the weapons.

SPECIAL QUAD MOUNT FOR THE MRT - WM1

GMG8H 3.3 mm Gauss Machine Gun	Aim Time	Aim Mod	Weapon Values	
A larger version of the GMG8L. The data at the right is for each of the 4 Barrels, which means that each hit from the Quad Gauss Machine Gun results in 4 times the normal number of hits. This can obviously be devastating for short-range fire.	1	-30	Ammunition Capacity (per Barrel)	400
	2	-12	Ammunition Weight (per Barrel)	90
	3	-5		
	4	0	Penetration (HRAF)	
	5	5	Standard	136
	6	7	Armor Piercing	384
	7	10		
	8	11		
	10	14	Damage Class	8
	12	17		
	14	19	Effective Range	100

The above information is repeated on **Table 4**.

The WM1 on Defense: The **Morituri Hit Location and Damage Table (4A)** is located at the back of this book and contains the entries below. Several of the Systems are marked with asterisks. This means that there is a redundant system in place in the event of damage. Except where specified below, a Location that has redundant systems will continue to function until it takes two Disabling hits.

Non-Essential Electronics: This Hit Location includes a variety of secondary systems, including communications, lights, diagnostics, and so forth. While hits to this Location are inconvenient for the PIlot and cause a great deal of work for the technician who must repair the Morituri, they have no effect on combat.

Cockpit: This is the area immediately surrounding the Pilot. A Disabling hit to this location destroys the vehicle's Systems Display, which is what allows the Pilot to operate the vehicle from behind the safety of the 200 PF Armored Canopy. With the System Display Disabled, the Pilot cannot see and must eject the Armored Canopy if he wishes to continue to operate the Morituri. This takes 2 full Impulses, and once the Canopy has been ejected the Cockpit area is protected only by a transparent shield with a PF of 20. In addition, there is a 75% chance for each hit to this Location that the Pilot has been hit; roll for Location as if the Pilot were In The Open and wearing a Combat Suit without Armor Panels.

Critical Electronics*: Vital components of the Morituri, including its primary computers and similar objects. Since there is a redundant system, the first Disable to this Location has no immediate effect; a second Disabling Hit results in the immediate shutdown of the Morituri.

Right Arm*: A second Disabling hit to this Location prevents the entire Right Arm from functioning. Future versions of the Morituri are intended to make greater use of the Arms, including mounting additional weaponry and other systems. At the moment, however, the Arms are not used for any combat functions, so this hit has little effect.

Left Arm*: As a hit to the Right Arm.

Right Quad GMG: A Disabling hit to this Location immediately shuts down the weapon.

Left Quad GMG: As a hit to the Right Quad GMG.

"How much talent does it take to just stand there and get shot?"

Davis Steinman

Power Supply: If this Location is Disabled, it indicates that the Power Generator has been hit. The GM should immediately roll to determine the Damage Level, and consult the following list to find the effects.

If the Damage Level is MIN or MAJ, the Power Supply System shuts down normally. The Morituri is immediately deactivated, but there are no other effects.

If the Damage Level is REP, the System shuts down improperly. The heat of the unit is not dissipated correctly, and as a consequence the Power Generator is Destroyed. In addition, there is a 30% chance that the Grav Fuel on board is Destroyed.

If the Damage Level equals Destroyed, the Power Supply system undergoes a catastrophic shutdown. The Power Generator and all Grav Fuel are Destroyed.

Hydraulics*: The first Disabling hit to this Location has no immediate effect; one of the two redundant Hydraulic Systems is no longer functional, but the other system is enough to keep the Morituri in action without hindrance. If the Location suffers a second Disabling Hit, however, the Morituri loses all movement abilities. It may no longer move its Legs or Traverse its weapons, although it may still fire at will into its existing Field of Fire.

Right Leg*: If this Location suffers a second Disabling hit of MIN, MAJ, or REP severity, the Leg locks up immediately. That Leg can no longer be moved, and the Morituri may only pivot around it. There is a 10% chance that the Morituri will fall over and shut down when the Leg is Disabled, and a 10% chance that it will collapse each time the still-functioning Leg is moved thereafter. If it collapses, it immediately shuts down.

If a Leg suffers a Critical hit, it is assumed that it has suffered significant structural damage and can no longer support the weight of the Morituri. The Morituri immediately fall over and shuts down. Note that this is independent of whether the redundant system is still functional; even if it is the first Disabling hit to the Location, the damage is so severe that the unit falls over. The same logic can be applied to hits to the Arms, by the way, although since they are not load-bearing and perform no useful function it will make no difference in the game.

Left Leg*: As a hit to the Right Leg.

The columns of the Table include:

System Class: This value is used in the **Vehicle Damage Rules** of Section 4.3. In brief, it is a representation of how fragile a system is; the higher the System Class, the more fragile the system.

Protection Factor: This is the Protection Factor for each area of the Morituri.

TS Mod: Target Size Modifier. This is used when an attacker wishes to aim at a particular part of the Morituri. Note that persons who are not familiar with the interior of the Morituri may not elect to aim at the Non-Essential Electronics, Cockpit, Critical Electronics, Power Supply, or Hydraulics Hit Locations. They may choose to aim at the Head, which has a Target Size of 10, or at the Torso, which has a Target Size of 14. If this is done, the Hit Location is determined by the roll of a number from 0 to 12, in the case of a Head hit, or from 23 to 55, for the Torso.

The MRT-WM2 Mantis in Combat

At this point in its development the Mantis is a semi-independent robot. All of the Mantises being operated by a given Controller will attack a single target chosen by the Controller, and each will use one of the three following strategies: **Stand and Fire**, making use of cover; **Advance and Fire**; and **Move**.

A Mantis will visually track its target, and will pursue it if the Advance and Fire strategy is used, or if the Controller chooses to have it Move. The Controller can preset a minimum spacing between his Mantises, to prevent them from bunching up. The usual spacing is 1 Mantis per hex, but this is subject to change. The movement rate for the Mantis is the

FRONT VIEW
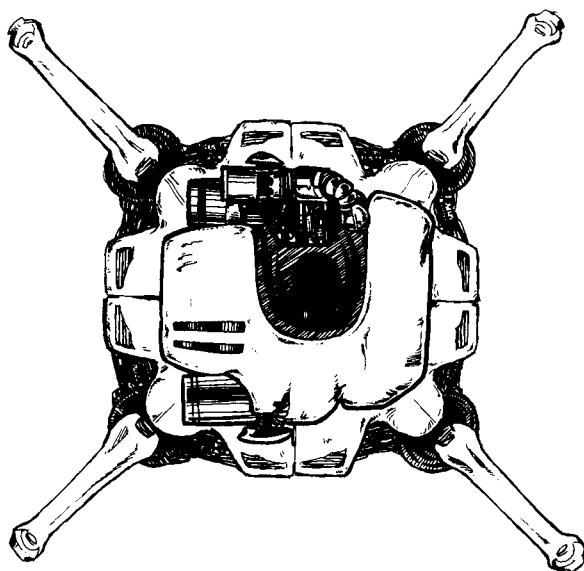
"My Robot's bigger than your Robot."

Weismyer
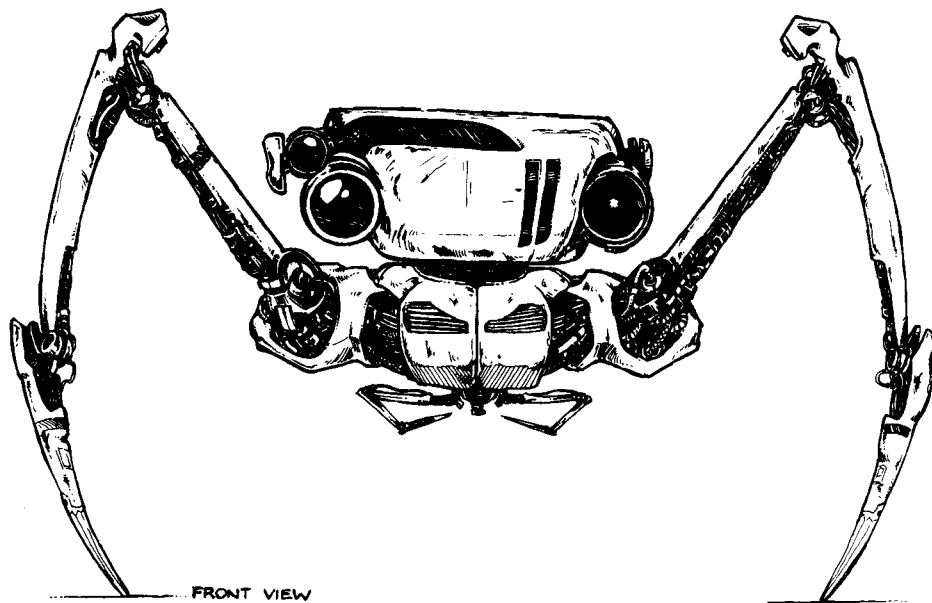
"It'll just make a bigger divot when it falls over."

Prescott

MRT-WM2 Mantis

same whether it is using the Advance and Fire strategy or it is simply Moving. It covers 8 Hexes Per Phase over normal terrain, or 4 Hexes Per Phase across difficult or broken terrain.

When using the Stand and Fire strategy, the Mantis will fire one of its LAR's each Impulse, while aiming the other one. Its basic Shot Accuracy will be 0, if using Automatic Fire, or -4 if on Single Shot.

For the Advance and Fire strategy, the same pattern is followed with Shot Accuracies of -10 for Automatic and -14 for Single Shot. These Shot Accuracies obviously do not include any Target Size Modifiers or other special circumstances.

In all cases, the Mantis automatically uses the Firing Around Cover Target Size Modifiers and Hit Location Table to see if and where it hits its targets.

The **Mantis Hit Location and Damage Table (5A)** contains the following entries.

Head Graze / Void: no effect

Ultrasonics and Bifocal: This unit is vital to the functioning of the Mantis, as it provides all the data for the aiming and moving programs. The first time this location is penetrated, the Mantis must spend 1 Impulse immobile and inactive as the reserve unit is activated. If there is a second hit after the reserve is activated, the Mantis shuts down until it is repaired.

AAS 1 and 2: These are the **Advanced Aiming Systems** incorporated into the Mantis' LAR8's. If one is lost, the Mantis suffers no ill effects; if both are lost, the unit cannot fire.

LAR 1 and 2: These locations are the critical components of the two Lase Assault Rifles built into each Mantis. A hit disables the appropriate weapon.

Fire Control Relay: This is the system which coordinates fire for the Mantis. If destroyed, the Mantis can no longer fire.

Head Servo 1 and 2: These redundant systems power the Mantis' turret / head. Loss of one is harmless; loss of both prevents fire.

Body Graze / Void: no effect

Transmitter 1 and 2: These systems are the link to the Controller. Loss of both disables the entire Mantis.

Critical Components: Including the Mantis' computer center and other vital spots. Loss of this system disables the Mantis.

Power Pack 1 through 6: Each penetrating hit disables 2 of the 6 Power Packs used by the Mantis. As long as 2 are still functioning, the Mantis is capable of continuing to move and fight.

Hydraulic 1 and 2: Loss of both systems stops movement only; the Mantis can still aim and fire normally.

Manipulator Arm Drive: This is necessary for the Mantis to use the Secondary limbs; if destroyed, the Manipulator Arms are disabled.

Leg Drive 1 through 4: Each of these Drives controls a different Primary limb. If one is lost, the Mantis may continue operating normally, but may only move at 1/2 speed. If a second Leg is lost, the Mantis cannot adjust its height to look or climb over cover anymore, but may continue to move at 1/4 speed. If 3 or more Legs are lost, the Mantis is immobilized.

Leg Servo 1 through 4: Each of these has the same effect as the Leg Drive hits above. If either the Drive or the Servo for a Leg is out, then that Leg is useless.

Note that the Mantis uses the **Subsystem Damage** rules of Section 4.3, as opposed to the normal System Damage rules.

> "What do you mean, it's my job? This was strictly a career move."
>
> Ziers' response to Fowler

"Casey and Stauffer returned today; Stauffer's been hurt badly, and Casey is exhausted from carrying him. They didn't make it to the Subcon. They turned back when they ran into two bands of madmen fighting each other, and that's when Stauffer took the cut to the head. Casey managed to find a radio somewhere, and it is obvious that Trident and the Imperium are at war. There is hardly any radio traffic, and what there is is mostly in code. What little info we have picked up makes it sound like everything has fallen apart.

"I'm not sure what is going to happen now. Everyone is tense, some of them are giving me looks like it is my fault because I am with Trident, and the supplies are dangerously low. The only good thing is that I have most of my strength back. I was even planning to leave them this week, and just hoping that help would come first.

"With Stauffer hurt, it looks like I will have to stay. Someone has to get them to safety, and until Casey gets some rest, I am their only hope."

Personal Log entry, Corporal Martin Travis, Day 43.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

There are several different factions involved with the hunt for the DRGN Field Array, as well as certain key locations. This chapter outlines the most important personalities, with their abilities and supporting personnel, as well as **Vartac**, the ruined Subcon which the IRS is using as its headquarters, and the **Crash Site** of the Grav APC..

The important statistics for people who are combat-oriented are contained in the **Combat Personnel Table (6)**, while the statistics for scientists and other personnel are in the **Non-Combat Personnel Table (7)**.

"I can't imagine how you are all going to react to this. I don't know, maybe you're all expecting it. Anyway, there's no point in my continuing to work on the Fire Control System. I can't fix it. I can't even find what's wrong with it. And if I can't fix the Mantis, then I'm really not much use here. Even if I could fix it, I guess it wouldn't matter anyway.

"So I'm leaving. Don't worry – I haven't taken anything with me. I wouldn't want to drag you down any further than I already have. I'm sorry. Goodbye. AZ."

Final message left by Anton Ziers, before he left the IRS and wandered into the wilderness. Day 49.

5.1

IMPERIAL PERSONNEL

There are two sets of Imperial personnel involved in this mission; a Company of the 27th Starmarine Regiment and a detachment of Field Enforcement Operatives of the Imperial Secret Service. Their methods and attitudes are somewhat different and there is a degree of tension between the two groups, especially regarding policies about torture, the interrogation of civilians, and how the survivors of Vartac should be handled. The ISS is in command, however, and Imperial Starmarines have long been accustomed to obeying orders which they find distasteful.

ISS Section Head Kasha Briceton (Born 2303)

Kasha Briceton entered the Imperial Secret Service in 2321, at the age of 18. She was marked for early promotion on the basis of her test scores and psychological evaluation, and quickly proved herself to have even more talent than her superiors had expected.

Her first major assignment was on the planet Alpha, where she was involved in a program to round up and interrogate former Seven Worlds scientists and soldiers. This world was filled with people who still considered themselves citizens of the Seven Worlds, which made the task extremely difficult. Briceton's zeal and cold-blooded efficiency earned her quick promotions, and the fact that she survived numerous firefights and ambushes during her tour also improved her standing with her superiors. By the end of the eight year program, Briceton was considered one of the top field agents in the ISS.

"Let's go violate some civil rights."

Agent Kasha Briceton

The twenty years since that time have seen Briceton involved with top-level security matters throughout the Imperium, and earned her a place under the direct command of Colonel Graf. She retains her enthusiasm for field work, although her rank requires that she spend most of her time making decisions and delegating tasks. She has been cited repeatedly by the Imperium for both valor and ability, and by citizens rights' groups for excessive violence and torture.

Briceton's stats are shown on **Table 6**. For General Skills, she has the Levels shown for a member of the Imperial Guard on the **Non-Player Character Background Table (G-3B)**, (2B in 1st Edition), except that she is not Power Armor Qualified. In addition, she is Skill Level 10 in Infiltration, Espionage, and Perception.

Briceton's personal entourage includes four **Bodyguards**, named Petrov, Gonzalez, Ericson, and Taylor, an **Orderly** named Kelson Davis, and her Grav Vehicle Pilot, Tom Uffert. The Bodyguards are very much the same as normal Starcaste Bodyguards, except with superior equipment and high security clearance. Kelson Davis is a huge man who is Skill Level 10 in Hand-to-Hand Combat, and provides Briceton's close personal defense in addition to his duties as Orderly.

Most of Briceton's Section is currently guarding the Avatar Project, and making certain that it arrives at its destination safely. She does have an elite **Security Detachment** with her, to handle any special situations. Security units like this one are the finest units fielded by the Enforcement branch of the ISS. Their training is intense and oriented toward long-term field assignments and guerilla warfare. This Security Team is led by Agent Lars Tarpin, an aging hero of the ISS.

Agent Lars Tarpin, Security Detachment Leader (Born 2276)

Tarpin is an old man, one who stands at the end of a legendary career in service to the ISS. He was critically injured as a rookie Starmarine in 2294, by a detachment of Black Swords fighting to defend Hryken. Considered disabled and given a medical discharge, Tarpin drove himself through four years of intensive physical therapy and had several operations. In spite of the doctors' predictions, he was found to be physically fit in 2299, and he enlisted in the ISS. The long struggle against pain and disability had changed Tarpin permanently, however; he is fired with a hatred of the Seven Worlds and all the other enemies of the Starguild, and his activities against rebels and dissidents of all kinds have earned him countless medals. He has never faced Seven Worlds warriors again, however, since the Seven Worlds fell shortly after his injury, and he is still waiting for a chance to avenge his injury. He also needs to erase the memory of the one time he felt true fear; when the Black Swords overran his unit during his first battle.

Supporting Tarpin are 4 **Agent Specialists**. Each is a capable Enforcement Agent, and they have also been trained in certain special fields. Smith handles Communications, Jones is in charge of Demolitions, Gomez is the team doctor, and Ivanov is the Heavy Weapons specialist. These abilities will probably not come into play during the course of the Mission, but the GM may find them useful for a future adventure.

The remainder of the squad consists of 4 **Field Agents**, Lee, Petri, Wong, and Schmidt. They are all slightly more skilled in combat than the Agent Specialists, but lack their unusual skills.

ISS Colonel Edward Graf (Born 2296)

Colonel Graf is the most highly regarded intelligence agent of his generation. He entered the ISS in 2318, as a young man, and has served with complete dedication for over 30 years. He came to the attention of the Imperial House in 2325 for his role in combatting agents of the Seven Swords Special Service (S-4) after the **Second Seven Worlds - Starguild War**. S-4 has been a problem to him for much of his life, and it now appears that they are again plaguing him.

He is one of the handful of people who have direct access to the Emperor, and it is likely that when he came to Rhand in 2348 it was at Emperor Martin Heisson's specific request. Why the Emperor would have such an interest in Rhand is open to question, although what

"Those medals aren't for valor. They're for violence."

Briceton

Agent Kasha Briceton receiving a recon report

is now known about RMBK's secret projects and the presence of S-4 operatives clearly justifies his actions.

Colonel Graf is only peripherally involved in this Mission; more will certainly be heard from him at a later date.

Lieutenant Benson Gibbs, Operations Officer (Born 2318)

Gibbs is the officer in charge of the search for the APC. He is a calm, conservative man, one with several years of experience in Staff work, but little in actual field operations. He has full responsibility for all the activity of the search group, and if the APC is found he will be in charge of the preliminary investigation of its contents. These duties will include photography and documentation of the objects in and around the wreckage, and preparing

all the items for immediate transportation. Although he has had few field assignments, he is well qualified for his current task. The GM should note that Gibbs has not been told what he is looking for; he has been ordered to find everything regarding the APC, and that is what he has set out to do. While he is curious about what has prompted the search, he is more concerned with simply getting his job done properly.

The only limitation he has involves how he will respond to a series of firefights between his search parties and the players' Team. As stated before, he is not used to having direct contact with the soldiers in the field, and he does not like the idea of sending these people into consistently dangerous or deadly situations. This attitude does not make him a bad commander; it simply makes him a cautious one. Wherever possible, he will take actions to reduce the risk to the men under his command. The tactics he will use are discussed in Section 6.20, and largely consist of keeping the searchers in larger groups and making sure they avoid ambushes.

Lt. Gibbs has the same skills as those shown for Imperial Law Enforcement on the Non-Player Character Skill Table.

The Staff that Gibbs has working for him includes three **Headquarters Corporals** (who also have no battlefield experience) and two **Electronic Espionage Technicians**. Their attributes are shown on **Table 6**. Lt. Gibbs and his staff are at the Imperial Base Camp, and will remain there until the APC is found.

Lieutenant Lucas Hanesworth, Commanding Officer, E Company, 27th Imperial Starmarine Regiment (Born 2320)

Hanesworth is the senior Lieutenant in the Company, and was previously in charge of the 1st Platoon. The Company commander, Captain Hugh Wilton, was at the Imperial Guard Landing Zone during the destruction of the Guard; he and his Staff officers are currently considered Missing In Action. Hanesworth received temporary assignment to Company Command when Wilton left, and is continuing to fill that role in the absence of any other orders. He and his Company came under the direct orders of Colonel Graf shortly after the destruction of the Guard, and have been working for the ISS ever since.

Hanesworth is from a Starcaste military family and truly believes in the traditional Starguild military values. As a consequence he detests the ISS, but sees no honorable alternative to taking orders from Graf and Briceton. He is hoping for some contact from his military superiors which would pull him out from under Graf's command, but that is a hope which will almost certainly never be fulfilled.

Like all Imperial officers he is dedicated and will willingly send his troops where ordered, but if his units start taking significant casualties he will lose confidence. His training says that in such situations he should call for fire and air support, and those things are not available to him. He has the standard skills of an Imperial Starmarine, per the **Non-Player Character Skills Table** in **Living Steel**.

Hanesworth and his old Platoon remain at Vartac throughout the Mission.

Mantis Controllers

At the time of the Ambush there were 10 people trained to operate the Mantises. In the aftermath of the battle, six of them were returned to normal duty with the 27th Starmarines; only 2 Starmarines and 2 ISS Agents were retained to operate the reduced force of Mantises. The ISS Agents were drawn from Staff personnel, and are not as highly trained as the other Field Agents, while the Starmarines were very normal junior Corporals before being selected for this assignment.

The Skills for all four are listed on **Table 7**.

"Attached is the schedule of (changes) (charges) on Ruvin's Leg Drive modifications. Best (illegible) possible. Very urgent. Performance (illegible) but should be (certain) (curtailed) (detailed) (retained). Look forward to next (stage) (state) (start) and suggest that all personnel be informed of full details soonest."
Bryant Melville's best effort at transcribing a memo written by Research Assistant Willis Schwebberhaffenwurf, Day 58.

The **Imperial Robotics Section (IRS)** is the Team's most deadly opponent in the hunt for the DRGN equipment. It is a dangerous unit, wielding the powers of dozens of sophisticated combat robots, but it is not truly military in nature. Despite its use in combat situations and despite the fact that it was designed for battle, the IRS remains a collection of experimental equipment operated by research scientists and technicians. The history of the IRS is covered in detail in Chapter 4, and the skills of the people discussed below are on **Table 7**.

Most of the information below does not directly touch on the Mission. The scientists will generally be far in the background, and their Skills and personalities are of secondary importance. It is possible for the Team to end up with custody of one or more of the members of the IRS, however, whether as captives or otherwise, and so the information has been included for future use by the GM. If the GM desires, he may generate the Primary and Secondary Characteristics of the scientists using any method he considers suitable.

Executive Scientist Edmund Fowler (Born 2308)

Edmund Fowler is the head of the IRS. Born into a family that is wealthy and influential even by Starcaste standards, he has the air of a natural leader and is possessed of more social and diplomatic skills than scientific knowledge. His high caste standing and ability to deal with people were what won him leadership of the IRS, and in the laboratory he has little aptitude and he assumed no duties.

Fowler's goal at the IRS was not to develop new technologies or to save Humanity from the Spectrals; it was to establish a dynamic image for himself and to advance his career. He was in no way concerned for the future of the program, except in so far as it furthered his own interests. This attitude is typical of the way science and industry are handled throughout the Starguild and accounts for the slow pace of scientific progress in the Imperium. Innovation does not prosper in an environment dominated by politics and short-term financial considerations.

The capture of the Avatar Project has been Fowler's only real opportunity for advancement since the Apocalypse. His well-honed political skills were of little use in dealing with Colonel Graf, however, and his attempt to earn favor with the ISS failed. He is angry and bitter about that failure, and blames his failure on the design team, because of the poor showing of the IRS against the guards of the Avatar Project. Unfortunately he is in an environment where placing blame for a failure means nothing, and succeeding in one's assignment means everything.

Fowler's hopes for power have risen recently, with Graf's new interest in the APC and in records of the firefight with the Avatar guards. Quick to spot an opportunity, Fowler has sworn that he will firmly attach the IRS and himself to Colonel Graf's command.

It should be noted that while Fowler is a purely political creature and is very selfish, he is also competent, hard working, and quite intelligent. His competitive nature has given him a degree of team spirit, and he realizes that he is nothing without the talented people who work for him. It is because of this awareness that he worked so hard to assemble his current team, and he is quite loyal to them in his own way.

Chief Scientist Doctor Herbert Gross (Born 2302)

Herbert Gross is another Starcaste aristocrat, but unlike Fowler he has been immersed in the sciences since childhood. His high intelligence was noted early, and he was placed with other gifted children and given the best opportunities available. Despite these advantages he cannot be considered a genius of any sort, and with a normal childhood he would probably only be above average. On the completion of his studies he was hard working, intensely curious, and possessed of a friendly nature.

PERSONNEL OF THE IMPERIAL ROBOTICS SECTION

"As your leader, let me assure you that none of this is my fault."

Fowler

His 25 year career in research has been filled with disappointment, however. He has found that science means little to the people who make the decisions, and that corporate politics determines who receives the funding and promotions. The winners in the corporations were the managers and politicians; the losers were people like Gross, scientists who sacrificed everything in the pursuit of their duty, and who watched while the best work of their lives was passed over, rejected, or quietly filed away. Experiences of that sort shattered the trusting, well-intentioned Gross, and converted him from a quiet, unassuming scientist with a great love of knowledge into a selfish, competitive bureaucrat who is less concerned with the future of his work than he is with beating his colleagues and having his own way.

Gross' unhappiness is compounded by his growing sense that he is not as talented as he once believed. Although he is theoretically the leader of the research team, he is aware that the greatest contributions have been made by Ziers, Ruvin, and Schwebberhaffenwurf, his three top Research Assistants. That was bad enough, but now that the IRS has run into trouble with the aiming system of the Mantis robots, Gross finds that he is not only unable to solve the problem, he is in fact incapable of understanding it. He cannot see why the current system does not work, he cannot solve its problems, and he cannot convert the suggestions of Ruvin and Schwebberhaffenwurf into any workable new system.

At present, Gross is effectively helpless and very lost. His natural affection for people has been transformed into professional paranoia, his world is in chaos, and his superiors are hard, uncompromising people who do not accept excuses and who do not care that he was once a decent young man with a fair amount of talent and a great love of science. Whatever else may happen, it is likely that Dr. Gross will be one of the many on Rhand who will be overwhelmed by the challenge of surviving the Apocalypse.

Research Assistant Anton Ziers (Born 2322)

Anton Ziers was a personable, ambitious, and genuinely gifted young man. More than any other member of the IRS except for Fowler he possessed the scientific ability and diplomatic skills necessary for great success within the Starguild. Ziers played a pivotal role in coordinating the work of his gifted associates, Teresa Ruvin and Willis Schwebberhaffenwurf, and the combination of his talent and his personality led to him receiving the bulk of the credit for the development of the MRT-WM2 Mantis robots.

He therefore had to shoulder the bulk of the blame when the Aiming System of the Mantis malfunctioned during the ambush of the Avatar Project. For several weeks Ziers tried in vain to discover the flaw in the system; as the pressure built and he became aware of the full scope of the Apocalypse, he collapsed emotionally. Deciding that his future had died when the Apocalypse came, he walked alone into the wilderness. He has not been seen since. Consequently, Ziers does not appear in this adventure; his background and statistics have been included for the sake of completeness, and for GM's who may wish to use him in adventures of their own.

Research Assistant Teresa Ruvin (Born 2320)

Ruvin is descended from a family which has produced many Imperial scientists, and she is one of the best minds of her generation. Born to a pair of founding members of IRAD, she is almost completely lacking in social skills and the customary Starcaste graces. This is no obstacle to her, however, as she cares nothing for the approval or the company of others. Unlike Fowler and Gross, who are merely very bright, she is a true genius.

Her great love is theory, and she has little interest in the practical applications of her work. As a consequence, every part of the IRS bears the mark of her creativity, but she had no involvement in the final design of the systems. Other scientists, especially Ziers, were responsible for turning her ideas into reality.

She has been studying the Aiming System since the ambush and has even created three different systems that might replace the current one, but most of her time is still spent attempting to find the original error. Where lesser scientists like Gross and Ziers lost confidence, Ruvin has proven that she is capable of withstanding self-doubt. As her investigation continues, she has a growing conviction that the problem lies outside the fire

Caitlin Haverlein and Dmitri Prescott

> "I believe mental stability is highly over-rated."
>
> Prescott

control system, and she now doubts that the data from the ambush is correct. Her new system concepts, which are no longer of any interest to her, are probably quite good, but there is no one to interpret her ideas. Dr. Gross is certainly not up to adapting her work; he has never understood her, and is openly disdainful of her behavior and privately jealous of her abilities.

Research Assistant Willis Schwebberhaffenwurf (Born 2319)
Just as Ruvin is obsessed with theory, so is Schwebberhaffenwurf lost in the world of hardware. He is a richly gifted man who can make virtually any device work in the lab. He knows little about turning his lab projects into reproducible items, however, and has never documented any of his work.

Schwebberhaffenwurf's work station is a chaotic sight, filled with a mix of broken and functioning test equipment, jury-rigged components, and half-finished or unused hardware. Mixed in with the clutter are countless scraps of paper and half-filled notebooks, featuring partial formulas, incomplete equations, and incoherent fragments of his thoughts and logical processes. In spite of the chaos, Schwebberhaffenwurf seems to have a very firm grasp in his own mind of exactly what he is doing and which of his theories have and have not worked out. It is of course impossible for anyone else to make sense of his work, but as long as he remains at his station 16 hours a day there is no problem. To date, there has never been a problem.

Research Assistant Dmitri Prescott (Born 2312)

Dmitri Prescott received many of the same advantages as the other members of the Team, but has been unable to perform at the same level. He is certainly intelligent, but he lacks the perception and the motivation to ever be a true scientist. To him have fallen the duties of gathering and organizing the test data which the others interpret. Frustration about his low standing has turned into bitterness for Prescott and, since the Apocalypse, into a genuine desire for destruction. He is the one who runs the robots during their tests, and he has taken to pushing the machines until they suffer some sort of system failure. The rest of the IRS is beginning to worry about his mental health.

Prescott originally trained eight Starmarines and two ISS operatives in the use of the MRT-WM2 Mantises. He was furious at the results of the ambush, however, and has reduced the active Controller staff to two Starmarines and the two ISS agents. These are the only four Controllers who he feels are sufficiently talented to handle "his" robots; the other Controllers are on normal duty, but are still attached to the IRS for obvious security reasons. Prescott has taken control of one set of Mantises himself, as well as retaining the Override Control Panel.

In a more stable environment, where responsible personnel are audited for emotional distress and psychological irregularities, Prescott would have been relieved of his duties long ago.

Research Technician Stania Borodin (Born 2310)

Borodin is a workaholic from the bottom of the Starcaste community. Never given the full advantages of Starcaste heritage, she has spent her life in a variety of jobs, including a very brief term of military service, where she was ejected for refusal to obey orders. Highly independent and driven, she applied herself to technical work in one of the many low-prestige / high-technology jobs which must be filled by Starcaste personnel. Her dedication to her work allowed her access to advanced training, and her career blossomed when she was assigned to IRAD. By far the most difficult aspect of entering IRAD was her security clearance; Personnel was convinced she would be ideal for the work, but Internal Security had considerable hesitation about placing someone ejected from the military into a security-oriented environment.

After willingly undergoing hypnotherapy and conditioning, and after numerous background checks and interrogation sessions, Borodin was given high security clearance. Her work was exemplary, and since that time she has given her superiors no cause to question her ability or her loyalty. The IRS is her third secret project, although it is by far the most sensitive environment she has been in.

She is an innovative and unconventional worker. An excellent example of Borodin's work is her suggestion that the IRS should use the Morituri, which was a long-discontinued design, as a mother unit for the Mantises, instead of creating an entirely new robot. It was certainly not a perfect or final solution, but it was something that was sufficient for the time being and it had the advantages of being available and inexpensive. It is likely that if the IRS is ever able to complete its work it will replace the Morituri with a more intelligent design. In the meantime the IRS is in the field, under budget, and testing the most important aspects of the project. That the Apocalypse has changed everything does not alter the value of Borodin's contribution.

"Sure, it will probably explode. But at least I won't be in it, on it, or near it."

Morituri Technician relieved to be reassigned to Avatar

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Lieutenant Max Weismyer (Born 2329)

Weismyer is a young pilot, just out of Starfleet academy, who on graduation was given the option of piloting Starfleet Tugs and Grav Carriers, or participating in experimental research projects. Not sufficiently gifted for Starfighter or Grav Gunship command, and not psychologically fit to be part of the crew of a larger vehicle, Weismyer is still a competent pilot, and the same flamboyant, melodramatic nature that made him unsuitable for most of Starfleet made him a natural for experimental projects.

He was chosen for the IRS from a pool of similar pilots because of his extreme loyalty to the Imperium, and ISS assessment that he was an excellent security risk. Weismyer quickly adapted to piloting the MRT-WM1 Morituri, and is delighted to be involved in what is obviously a tremendously important, top-secret project. He greets each day with the belief that the fate of humanity hangs on this project alone, and he is completely dedicated to its success.

He is not, however, a student of history, and is one of the few members of the team who is not aware of the battle history of the Morituri, or its nickname. Aside from cautioning him about the machine's limitations and the special dangers to which it exposes its pilot, the others in the unit have chosen not to tell him.

Clerical Staff

The Clerical Staff consists of **Caitlin Haverlein**, in charge of accounting, and **Bryant Melville**, who is the secretary to the unit. The sensitive nature of the IRS necessitates that all personnel be members of the Starcaste; this means that certain jobs which are neither impressive nor glamorous must be performed by people who might generally consider themselves to be above such labor. Jobs of this sort are necessarily well-paid, and allow those who hold them to take full advantage of their Starcaste standing.

Haverlein is a happy, attractive woman, and before the Apocalypse she was content in her role as accounting support to the scientists. Born to a mid-ranking Starcaste family and far more concerned with pursuing the privileges of Starcaste life than with furthering a career or gathering power, Haverlein was willing to spend a certain amount of her time dealing with the mundane side of very important work, and then spent the rest of her time enjoying the wealth that the position brought her. The invasion naturally ended her days as a party girl, but her fundamentally positive disposition is allowing her to endure in these extremely difficult times. She is definitely a team player, and her willingness to work and her positive attitude set a good example for others on the team, especially her co-worker Melville. In recent weeks she has assumed the highly visible role of representative from the IRS to the dislocated Starcaste and Bondsmen of Vartac.

Melville lacks the organizational skills of Haverlein, and also her happy disposition. He is the secretary to the unit, and makes no secret of the fact that he does not enjoy his work. The job was necessary for him, however, if he was to continue gambling in his off hours. Since the Apocalypse his attitude has grown more and more sour, and it is clear that he wishes he could leave the unit. Melville does have a redeeming quality; he is fundamentally loyal to the Starcaste and the Imperium. Although he is quite unhappy, he will not abandon the position which he considers his responsibility.

> **"Why did you beep me? This man is dead. Even I can't help him now."**
>
> Dr. Oscar Schneiderbunk, arriving late for surgery

"Look what she gives me. Just look. Three binders filled with her notes, her printouts, and her designs, and absolutely no index. I've looked on the computer, and her files have no organization, just one big directory with a bunch of system-assigned file numbers. She won't interpret it, she just says "It's all in the binders." So it'll take weeks just to figure out what she is trying to do, and from what I've seen, once we sort it out it won't do us any good. Half of this second binder seems to be about ways to make the Leg Drives more efficient. And what does that have to do with the problem in the Aiming System? Nothing. Nothing!

"So you just go on saying 'Teresa Ruvin is a genius.' Go ahead. Fine with me. But I'll tell you the truth. Teresa Ruvin is a lunatic. You don't agree? You work with her."
Chief Scientist Gross to Executive Scientist Fowler, Day 52.

VARTAC

Before the Apocalypse, **Vartac** (Figure 1) was a Subcon involved in land clearing and the establishment of new communities. Devastated by the Spectral bombardment and exposed to the VISR virus, the community dissolved on the first day of the Apocalypse. For more than a month it was looted and fought over by a variety of Refugees and Vissers, but on Day 35 the first elements of the IRS arrived. They set up their base in the least-damaged portion of the Subcon, and received a large store of food from the ISS. Over the course of the following weeks, Vartac has become "civilized", in the limited way of all things since the Apocalypse.

About a hundred Refugees from the surrounding area have filtered back in to work in exchange for food, as have a handful of fairly stable Vissers. Imperial personnel trained in survival techniques are actively teaching the Refugees the most critical skills for surviving the Apocalypse, especially basic agriculture, and other Imperial representatives are establishing a social structure and government for the small community.

The society that is developing at Vartac is still unstable. The IRS is awaiting final orders, Fowler and many other top officers are preoccupied by the problems with the Mantis and their involvement with Avatar and the APC, and the local population is uncertain what role it will play in Vartac's future. In spite of these difficulties, Vartac offers many advantages to Refugees; freedom from Visser rampaging and other raids, a steady supply of food, and contact with an organized Imperial group (and therefore the comforting idea that some parts of their civilization remain). What path Vartac will take in the future is certainly open to doubt, but it is likely that if allowed to grow it will become a significant population center.

Current Population and Society

The original population of Vartac was about 140,000 people, mostly Bondsmen. Only about 35,000 people survived the Spectral bombardment, and of those only 5,000 were not exposed to the VISR virus. Casualties in the month following the Invasion were comparatively light, largely because there was little for the various groups to fight over. In bands of various sizes, the survivors of Vartac faded into the woods.

"Look – I've paid a lot of good money to get where I am today."

Starguild Refugee

The gathering process which began a month ago is a slow one. As word spreads, it is likely that a large proportion of the non-Visser survivors will return to Vartac, but at present there are only about 50 Starcaste, 80 Bondsmen, and 10 Vissers. Of the Starcaste, 18 were members of Vartac Security forces and 4 were Vartac Starforce; these people retain their military equipment and provide the internal security for the Refugee encampment. They are under direct ISS orders, and at present seem very content with their role.

The most important duty performed by this small Security force is preventing unauthorized Refugees from entering the compound or using the limited resources at hand. This is considered necessary because the supply of food that the IRS has is limited, and there is no way that the relative handful of skilled and organized personnel available can feed, clothe, organize, and attend to all the thousands of Refugees and Vissers who live nearby. The criteria used to determine who may become a part of the new Vartac are heavily biased; only the least-talented of the Starcaste are turned away, while a Bondsman must have very useful skills or other attributes to be allowed inside. An encampment of Refugees who were refused admittance to the new Vartac has appeared south of Vartac, in the ruins. These Refugees are mostly unskilled Bondsmen, and are pathetically waiting for the rulers of Vartac to change their minds and allow them in. These are the least brave and the least independent of the Bondsmen survivors; those with more courage or self-respect are in the wilderness.

The Vartac Power Structure

Because this little society is only a month old, there are few solid, reliable systems among its rulers. The IRS is theoretically in control, but Briceton and Tarpin have the right to override any IRS decision at will, and are supported by the Vartac Security force and
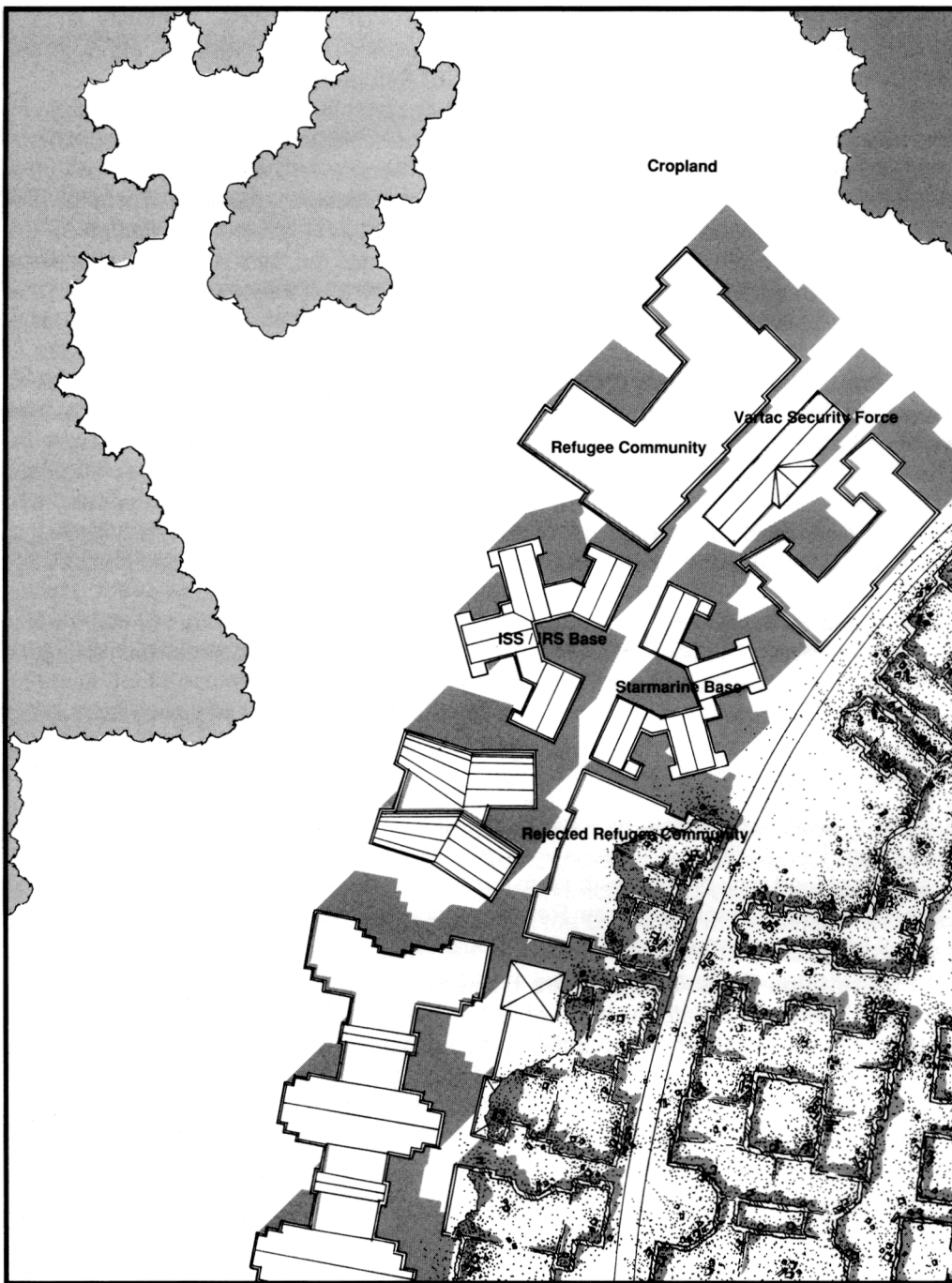
Figure 1: Vartac

Map labels: Cropland, Refugee Community, Vartac Security Force, ISS / IRS Base, Starmarine Base, Rejected Refugee Community

the Company of the 27th Starmarine Regiment. For the moment they have little interest in the Refugee community, although Briceton has quietly placed an Intelligence Agent undercover in each of the Refugee communities. Within the IRS, Fowler would seem to be responsible for the community, but he has virtually no interest in it. It is possible that he feels that if he becomes involved with the Refugees it will reduce his chance of being reassigned to the ISS and Avatar. Regardless, he has ignored the Refugees as much as possible, and except for reserving the right to reject new members of the community, he has allowed their fate to drift.

It is likely that no direct control would have been taken of this small group except for the presence of Caitlin Haverlein. Her old role as IRS Accountant has largely vanished, and her energetic and positive disposition has led her to the most important task at hand. It is

Haverlein who has made most of the decisions regarding the Refugee community, and she is considered to be its head. Briceton and Fowler are both content with this, although she sharply disagrees with them over the rejection of Refugees.

Her desire to accept more Refugees into the community is not simply the policy of a kind heart, however; she is a skilled and practical manager, and believes that more of the efforts of the IRS and the Starmarines should be bent toward educating the Refugees about planting crops and hunting. It is her opinion that intelligent management of the IRS' food stores, combined with an aggressive program of teaching the Refugees the rudiments of primitive living, would be sufficient to get the vast majority of the local population through the first critical year. Once that was done the new Vartac would have a large, stable population base, which would allow for easier technological progress, faster expansion, and a greater capacity for self-defense against Vissers and other threats.

She is also aware that many of those who are thrown out will be back, armed and violent, and where Briceton thinks in terms of killing off any attackers, Haverlein doubts that such a strategy will work in the long run. She feels the best chance is offered by getting everyone inside the community, getting them working, and trying to weave them together. Given Briceton's desire for high security and her extremely harsh opinions of people, and Fowler's elitism and general apathy regarding the fate of the Refugees, it is unlikely that Haverlein will acquire the degree of control she would need to put her plan into effect.

Key Locations

There are several smaller communities within the area of Vartac, all of which are noted in **Figure 1**. A description of each area is given below.

Refugee Community: This area is where the Refugees who have been accepted live. Within the community the Bondsmen are separated from the Starcaste, of course, and the Security forces are isolated from both groups.

Rejected Refugee Community: A few dozen Refugees live in this battered section of the Subcon. The quality of life here is very low, and they are currently subsisting on what scraps of food they brought with them or can find within an easy walk, on the meagre handouts they can scrounge from Refugees accepted into Vartac, and on what they can steal from the community and its new croplands.

27th Starmarine Base: This is where Lieutenant Hanesworth and "E" Company are based. There are 2 Platoons here, while the third is in the field searching for the APC. This base was established separately from that of the IRS for several reasons: the IRS is still attempting to preserve a degree of security; Hanesworth does not want to be associated with ISS units or personnel any more closely than necessary; and Briceton wants to ensure that the IRS will be the only targets if S-4 or RMBK retaliate.

IRS Base: This is where all IRS and ISS personnel are stationed. If the players pursue the Starmarines to Vartac, it is likely that this is the section of the Subcon they will attack. This area is fully described in Section 6.27.

"Which part of this forest is edible?"

Rejected Refugee

"All these berries look the same to me. But I'm pretty sure the ones you're eating aren't poisonous."

Another Rejected Refugee

"Briceton and Fowler are still trying to use the solutions that worked when the world was civilized; they cannot see that now it is a wilderness out there, a wilderness of madmen and danger and starvation. I've spent enough time in the wild to know that it doesn't matter how powerful they were before; the rules have all changed now, and you cannot stop a snowstorm with a memo, or make wheat grow by waving a gun. Right now the wilderness looks like hundreds of Refugees, of all castes, all of them hungry, many of them insane. Fowler would pretend that this wilderness does not exist; close the gates and they will go away, tell them I am in a meeting. Briceton thinks that a bullet is the answer, and would stack the bodies up to form barricades and roadblocks. Neither solution will answer the wilderness, however. Because it will keep coming back, as often as it takes, until it breaks in. And the real answer is to tame it as it comes, and use the parts you have tamed to tame still more of it."
Personal Log entry, Caitlin Haverlein, Day 67.

The APC's pilot was unable to find a large clearing before the vehicle crashed, and settled for slowing down as much as possible and then ditching into a lightly wooded area. There were also a number of large rocks in the vicinity, and the APC finally came to rest at the base of one. It suffered a moderate amount of damage during the crash, but it did not shatter or burn. As a result, it appears to be quite battered but does not look as badly damaged as it actually is.

There are few distinguishing marks near the **Crash Site**; a few trees which have been flattened or damaged, a place where the APC touched down before bouncing further along its path, and, just a short distance from the APC itself, a shallow mass grave. Stones have been stacked on it, but there are no name tags or other insignia. This may worry the players, but the grave has been there since the day after the crash.

It was dug by a group of Starcaste Tourists who came upon the site the day after the crash, and covers the bodies of six of the seven crewmembers of the APC. The seventh member, Corporal Martin Travis, survived; his story is contained in Section 5.5. The Tourists took nothing of value, as they were unaware that the Apocalypse had come. They just did their best to take care of Travis, since they knew that the ORCA had shut down.

Most of the valuable objects are inside the APC, although the six DRGN Suits are scattered on the ground next to it. They were removed from the crew when the Rangers in the Tourist group attempted to give them medical aid, and found it was easier to remove the entire set of equipment, including the Combat Suit, than to disengage the complex linkages between the Combat Suit and the Displacer Unit. A morbid GM may elect to assume that the DRGN equipment was left on the crewmen when they were buried.

The following table shows the equipment which was on board the APC, and the chances that it survived the crash. The GM should roll a number from 0 to 9 for each of the items on the table; if the number rolled is less than or equal to the **Survival Chance** number shown, the item survived the crash. If the number is greater than the Survival Chance, the item was destroyed. Each item should be rolled for individually. For example, the first entry is for a pair of LARGL8's with 5 Magazines each; the GM would roll twice, and for each result of 0 through 4, one of the weapons and its magazines would survive. For simplicity, the GM may roll for groups of items when there is a large quantity, or simply have the appropriate percentage survive.

#	Description	Survival Chance	#	Description	Survival Chance
2	LARGL8 & 5 Mags	4	1	Floorplan Computer	4
6	LAR8	4	1	Set of 12 Floorplan Trackers	4
6	AR8 & 4 Mags	7	1	Scent Tracker	4
2	GMG7L & 18 Mags	5	1	Portable Power Receiver	4
1	LMG8L	4	3	Aux Pack Guns	7
2	MG8L & 5 Mags	7	12	Scatter Pack 107	8
36	Lase Power Packs	7	12	Scatter Pack 43	8
1	Navigation Unit	4	12	Scatter Pack 7	8
2	Auto Medic Kit (stocked)	7	12	Ripple Pack 107	8
1	Auto Medic Restock	7	12	Ripple Pack 43	8
3	Emergency Air Supply	8			

The word "Mags" is short for Magazines, and the Aux Pack Guns are hand-held units which allow the user to fire a normal Power Armor Auxiliary Pack, such as the Scatter Packs and Ripple Packs on board the APC. Each holds a single Pack at a time, and 6 Actions are required to Reload an Aux Pack Gun.

In addition to the items on the table, the following articles automatically survive the crash; 1000 person-days of Rations, 36 Smoke Grenades, 48 Hand Grenades, 12 Tear Gas Grenades, 1 MT II Tool Kit, 1 EL I Tool Kit, and five 200 foot lengths of Rope.

The most important items at the Crash Site are the DRGN suits, of course. The chance that the various DRGN components survived is given on the following table.

Component	Damage Level				
	Superficial	MIN	MAJ	REP	Destroyed
Helm	0-5	6	7	8	9
DRGN Field Generators (4)	0-4	5	6	7	8-9
DRGN Module	0-5	–	–	–	6-9
Power Pack (2)	0-7	–	8	–	9
Critical Components	0-5	–	6	7	8-9
DRGN Lase Machine Pistol	0-5	6	7	8	9
DRGN Combat Suit	0-8	9	–	–	–

The GM should roll to determine the Damage Level of each of the DRGN Components as shown, for each of the six sets of DRGN equipment. Note that there are 4 Field Generators and 2 Power Packs per set. (Each Power Pack represents 5 normal Lase Power Packs.) It is unlikely that any one set will be functional, but the Components are modular and may be easily interchanged. This allows the players to assemble one or more functioning DRGN suits from the available Components.

Repairing the DRGN Field Array

The DRGN Field Array uses very sophisticated technology, of course, which makes Repairs of certain Components difficult. When Repairing the DRGN Helm, Field Units, or Critical Components, the following rules are used. To repair MIN damage, MT II Tools are required, the Base Odds are 10, and the Time required is 16 hours. For MAJ damage, parts must be taken from an identical unit which has sustained MAJ damage or less. If this is done, the other unit is considered Destroyed, MT II and MI II Tools are required, Base Odds are 7 each, and the Time is 32 hours each. REP Damage can be fixed in a similar way; an identical Component of MAJ damage or less is required (and Destroyed in the process), MT II and MI II Tools are needed, and the Base Odds are 4. Units which have sustained Damage Levels of REP or Destroyed are useless for scrap.

The DRGN Module itself may not be repaired in any way with existing tools and knowledge.

"Their behavior is intolerable! Day after day I must listen to their nonsense about the Aiming System, and the effects the Apocalypse will have on us, and how I should take a rest. They don't even understand that that attitude is just what will destroy us. They are already victims of the Apocalypse and they don't know it. Our only chance is a strong defense handled by the morally pure, a defense which cannot be breached by any number of attacking madmen or bandits. We must build Mantises, Mantises, Mantises; only then will we be truly safe."

Personal Log entry, Research Assistant Dmitri Prescott, Day 48.

5.5

"Don't worry about the hole in your shoe. We'll die of thirst long before your feet blister."

Norman Steele
Bondsman Ranger

OTHER PEOPLE

There are three other people in the area of the search who could be important. They are especially useful if the Team is having a difficult time and needs support, or if the GM wishes to introduce strong Non-Player Characters. The NPC's are **Corporal Travis**, the surviving DRGN crewman, and **Zhan** and **Rinya**, two of the S-4 agents who survived the Ambush.

Corporal Travis

Corporal Martin Travis was one of an elite group of Trident soldiers who were selected to be part of the **Special Air Cavalry Platoon**. He received a good deal of additional training, obviously including learning to operate the DRGN equipment which the unit used,

The S-4 Agents: Zhan (front) and Rinya

but also including Survival, Espionage, and other guerilla warfare skills. In game terms, he is 8th Skill Level in Gun Combat, and his other General Skill Levels are equal to the higher of the levels shown for Trident Law Enforcement and Trident Starmarine on the **Non-Player Character Skill Table (G3B)** (2B in 1st Edition.) He is Qualified with Explosive Weapons, but not with Power Armor or Grav Vehicles. He is also 5th Level in the Qualified Skill of DRGN Fire Control, and his statistics are shown on **Table 6**.

Travis was born on Alpha in 2323, the bastard son of a Starmarine. He was adopted into his father's family at an early age, but he still retains memories of his childhood among people who were the impoverished, uneducated descendants of the Seven Worlds. Entering the Trident military at the age of 18, as was expected in his family, he showed a fair amount of promise, but it was clear that there would always be a slight conflict between

his Trident education and his Seven Worlds ancestry. To eliminate the problem, he was transferred to Rhand along with a large number of soldiers with similar histories. RMBK was very receptive to these soldiers, and he soon found himself a member of the 1st Trident Mechanized Regiment. He was assigned to the Special Air Cavalry Platoon in 2343, long before they had any equipment which merited the term "Special", and has been involved in advanced training ever since.

Badly injured in the crash of the APC, he was rescued by a group of Starcaste Tourists. In the weeks that followed, as they carried him through the wilderness and he recovered his health, he formed strong feelings of gratitude and friendship for his saviors. As a result, when he regained his strength and the Tourists were running out of supplies, energy, and hope, he stayed with them. Using the wide range of skills and knowledge he had acquired in his training, he helped guide the Tourists to relative safety at Vartac, knowing that it was far more likely to be under Imperial control than that of Trident.

Travis felt that he had two conflicting obligations; to stay with and assist the friends who had saved him, or to collect the DRGN equipment as quickly as possible, to prevent it from falling into Imperial hands. He made his difficult choice quickly; taking the Tourists' Navigation Unit, which contained the location of the crash, he slipped into the wilderness on their first night at Vartac. It was a good thing for him that he did, because one of the Tourists attempted to turn him in to the ISS. Imperial troops pursued him for a time, but soon gave up the chase.

Travis is currently returning to the Crash Site and is unarmed. As discussed in Section 6.25, the GM may elect to have him return near the end of the Mission, or may introduce him as assistance for a beleaguered Team.

Agents of the Seven Swords Special Service

Four S-4 agents survived the Ambush; two were healthy in a matter of days and left to pursue Avatar, while the other two continued recuperating. These two agents, Zhan and Rinya, are still in the area of the Search, and can be introduced by the GM if desired. They were both awakened about a month ago from long periods in stasis, and although shocked by their situation, they have both adapted well. In fact, they were chosen to be part of S-4 based in part on their prior combat skills and experiences, but largely for having psyches that would adapt well to the uncertainty of life in the S-4.

Zhan is in her mid-20's, and is the elder of the two. Born in 2256, she entered the Red Legion at the age of 19 and spent her entire term of service fighting the Dragoncrests on Alpha. Her career was filled with heroics feats, brilliant tactical gambles, and valiant struggles, and she was a highly-decorated and well-regarded Sword. She "died" in solo combat with a 3rd Tier Dragoncrest in 2282. Because all of her military experiences come from the Second Seven Worlds - Dragoncrest War, her Red Legion personality is uncluttered by many of the horrors of war. She is extremely dynamic and has a very positive attitude toward life, and would obviously be a very valuable addition to the Team.

Her skills are those of a member of a Surrogate Starforce on **Table G-3B** (2B in 1st Edition), except that she is 9th Skill Level in Gun Combat, 5th in Hand-to-Hand Combat, and 6th in Survival. She is not Qualfied with Power Armor or Grav Vehicles, but does have the Explosive Weapons Qualified Skill.

The other S-4 agent is Rinya, who fought in the Second Seven Worlds - Starguild War, which was far more desperate and grim than Zhan's war. Rinya was born in 2271, and was just 20 years old when the Starguild invaded the exhausted Seven Worlds system after the withdrawal of the Dragoncrests. The "War" itself lasted just a few months, although many Seven Worlds warriors fought on for several years after. Rinya was one of those warriors. She was diagnosed as Black Legion after Hryken was bombarded from space, but she continued to fight since there was no facility for retiring her. In 2293 she was holding a battered fortification with a small group of other Seven Legions troops. Starguild forces discovered her unit and attacked repeatedly through a long, bitter day of combat. Rinya was the last of the defenders to remain standing, and was waiting for the next Starguild assault when RQ personnel arrived. Saving those that they could, they also offered to take Rinya along with her comrades; she accepted their offer, and was placed in stasis.

One of her teammates from that last battle was Awakened with her. He was Marcus, a Blue Sword, and was intended to be her caretaker. Unfortunately, he was one of the S-4 agents killed in the Ambush, and so Rinya has little chance of ever recovering from her Black Legion status. Zhan has stepped into the gap, however, and in her own blunt way is guaranteeing that Rinya does not lose hope.

Her skills are the same as those given for a Seven Worlds Starmarine before 2180, on the **Sword Initial Background Table (1A)**, except she is 9th Skill Level in Gun Combat. She is not Qualified with Power Armor or Grav Vehicles.

Both Zhan and Rinya are currently unarmed.

"They won't let us in. We don't have any skills, and the only people they are even considering are the Rangers. But I've been asking questions. It looks like we were right, and the Imperium is at war with Trident. They want information about Trident personnel, anyway. So all we have to do is trade the Trident prisoner we picked up for entrance and sanctuary with the Imperium, and we're set."

"Since when is Martin a prisoner?"

"Shut up. He's the enemy, and he always has been. We just didn't know it."

Conversation between two Starcaste Tourists near Vartac, Day 72.

"Hey, he got more grubs than I did."

Rejected Refugee

"I suppose I should have left them as soon as my legs mended, but I owe them my life, and some of them have become my friends. By staying with them so long I may have jeopardized my real duty, especially because the ISS is here and is apparently looking for the ship. I have to beat them to it somehow, but I can see no chance of securing a vehicle and it is a long walk. I have to trust that their search will go slowly; it is a big wilderness.

"So I will leave as soon as the camp quiets down. Getting the Nav Unit will be only a minor problem, and then I will have to get as far away as possible before dawn, in case there is pursuit by either friend or foe. I just hope that HQ knows the ISS is out here."

Personal Log entry, Corporal Martin Travis, Day 72.

"Shut up and keep digging."

Another Rejected Refugee

6 RUNNING THE MISSION

This Chapter contains all the special information necessary for the GM to run the Mission. While these rules are designed specifically for use on this adventure, they can be applied (with appropriate modifications) to many situations.

6.1

TIME

The 14 Days of the Mission are divided into four hour Periods on **Table1B** on the Player Reference Sheet. The rules for searches and pursuit use four hour increments, and this chart will help the GM and the players keep track of how much time has passed. As noted on **Table 1B**, the first Day of the Mission is 23.05.2349, or Day 74 of the Apocalypse.

6.2

SETTING

Unless you elect to make changes, the Mission orders arrive on 21.05.2349, or Day 72. The next active pass of the ORCA begins on Day 73.

The area of the Mission is near Scan RA2, which is in ORCA District 12. (The ORCA Districts are shown on the ORCA Operations Schedule of 2nd Edition Living Steel and in the Operation Seven Swords supplement.) The active periods are as follows:

Days 73 and 87:	21:00
Days 74 and 88:	16:30
	18:00
	19:30
	21:00

6.3

REST AND FOOD

Characters are only human, and they have to take care of their basic survival needs. For normal operations, characters require 8 hours of **Rest** per day. Rest includes sleeping and eating, as well as brief Team gatherings to exchange the day's information.

If a character does not allocate and receive eight hours of Rest each day, then his or her performance will begin to decline. Players must keep track of how many hours short of full Rest their characters are, and these amounts accumulate through the Mission. For example, if a character only receives 4 hours of Rest per night for two nights, then he or she is 8 hours short. As this deficit builds, the Skill Levels and Combat Actions are reduced, according to the following table.

REST DEFICIT TABLE							
Number of Hours Lost	10	14	16	17	18	19	20
Levels / Actions Lost	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

For each hour lost over 20 another point of Levels / Actions is lost. It is possible for the deficit to be reduced; for each hour of Rest over 8 per day, subtract one from the total. When suffering from fatigue, Skill Levels are reduced in all skills, and should the character's Combat Actions reach 0, then he or she collapses and must sleep for 12 consecutive hours.

When the APC was hit it was going 165 miles per hour, and during the time before it crashed the pilot made a number of course changes. He was fighting to gain altitude, which would kill the APC's velocity, and looking for a relatively level place in which to bring it down.

His efforts obviously made it much more difficult to determine where the APC eventually came down, and the Imperium has only a rough idea of where the Crash Site is. The Mission Team has a major advantage over the Imperium in this, because Operation Headquarters obtained a copy of the final transmissions from the APC's computer. The emergency system involved is a standard one; a damaged vehicle always broadcasts the best information possible back to its base, to make it easier for rescuers to find the survivors and / or wreckage. Because of this computer data, the area the Team must search is only a few miles across.

The **Search Grid** below shows the search area; each Square is a mile across. Note that the map contains three different types of terrain, as well as a number of ridgelines and three peaks. The effect of each of these terrain features is discussed in Section 6.7.
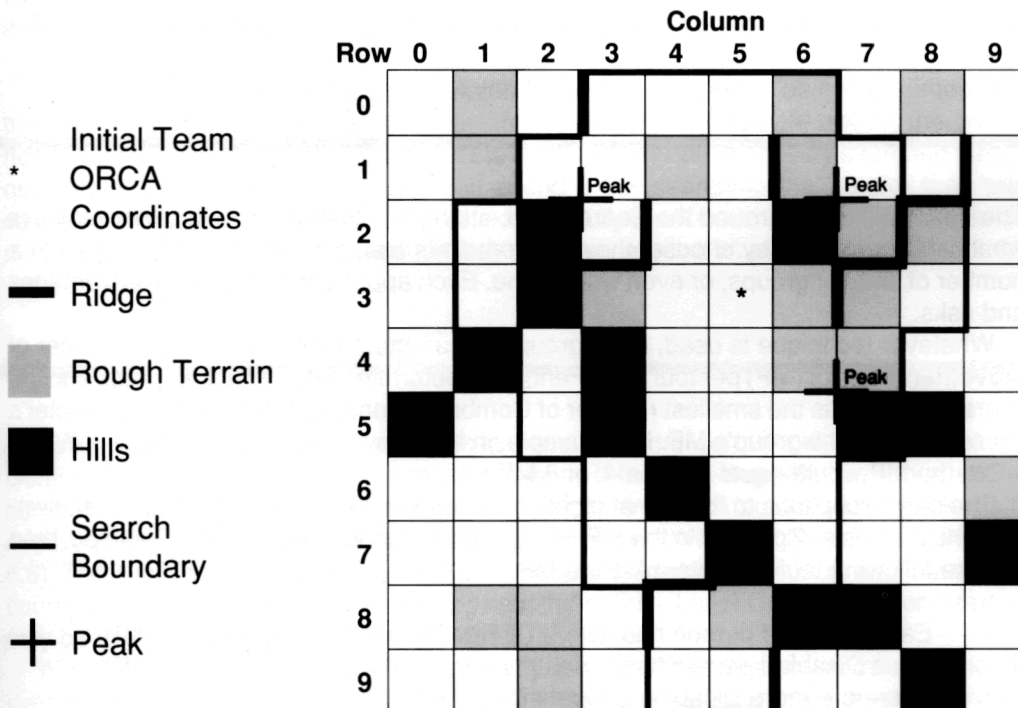
"We bring good things to ruins."

Neemis Enterprises

Search Grid

Initial Team
* ORCA
Coordinates

■— Ridge

▨ Rough Terrain

■ Hills

— Search
Boundary

+ Peak

The single most important piece of information is the location of the APC. The GM may place the APC at random on the Grid by rolling two ten-sided dice; one for Row, and one for Column. For example, rolls of 0 and 4 would put the APC at the top center portion of the grid. The GM may also select a particular place in the Grid, if desired. Note that the APC must be placed within the Team's Search Area, as indicated on the Search Grid.

Once the location of the APC has been determined, the GM should also roll for or assign the placement of the other key pieces of the APC. These are the **Weapon Bay**, the **Power Unit**, and the **Drive Generator**. Each of these items is discussed below in Section 6.25, and may be placed anywhere on the full 10 X 10 Search Grid.

6.5

THE TEAM'S PREPARATIONS

The Team will need to carefully prepare themselves for the Mission, including listing all the equipment they are taking, how many person-days of food they have, and so forth. The GM should also make sure the Team is carrying the following equipment; **Smoke Grenades** (Section 6.19), a **Laser Communicator**, and a **Navigation Unit**. There are several other items which will probably be very useful, including a full range of camping gear, **Oxyspan** and **Amne-forte**, a **Field Medical Kit** and/or **Auto Medic**, and even a **Sonic Barrier**. The Team must also define a standard deployment, for use if the **Tactical Map** (Section 6.10) is necessary. Players should simply state where each character will be on the map, relative to the others. This deployment may be changed at any time by the players, and will certainly be altered if the Team elects to split up during the search. Note that the Tactical Map is on a scale of 5 Hexes per Square, and the deployment should also be on this scale.

The **ORCA Coordinates** received by the Team leave them in Row 3, Column 5 of the Search Grid; this location is marked on the Search Grid with a star. They will also need to define a location (or various locations on different dates) on the map as their **Laser Communications Site**. This site will be vital if they need to call home base, or if Operations HQ has any message for them.

A copy of the Search Grid has been included on the **Player Reference Sheet**, which should be made available to the players at the beginning of the adventure.

6.6

SEARCH RULES

The Team will travel around the Search Grid, attempting to find the APC. They may use whatever approach they choose; they can remain in a single large band, split up into a number of smaller groups, or even work alone. Each approach has different advantages and risks.

Whatever technique is used, each group of characters receives a certain number of **Movement Points (MP)** per four hour Period. To determine the MP for the group, find the character who has the smallest number of Combat Actions, and multiply this character's CA by 2; that is the group's MP. For example, in a group of 4 characters with 6, 6, 7, and 4 CA, the MP would equal 2 times 4, or 8 MP.

The only exceptions to this are at night and if someone is unable to walk on their own. At night, there is a -2 penalty to the MP, for obvious reasons. If someone is Disabled, then use the following table to determine the MP.

Each Disabled person has at least 2 Healthy people to assist	3 MP
Each Disabled person has a Healthy person to assist	2 MP
There are more Disabled people than Healthy people	1 MP

Note that "Disabled" in this sense refers only to characters who are not able to move on their own, and that "Healthy" means someone whose limbs are fully functional. Use the lower MP value of the total shown on the table and the method given above. In all cases, the GM should include the effects of damage on the characters' CA and MP. The effects of healing injuries are discussed in **Living Steel** Section 3.11 (Section 8.3 of 1st Edition).

The group's MP represents the distance which can be covered during a 4 hour Period. The terrain to be covered strongly influences how long it takes to travel through or search a square of the Grid, as shown on the following table.

MOVEMENT POINT COST TABLE		
Square Type	**To Traverse**	**For Full Search**
Clear	1	8
Rough (Light Squares)	1	12
Hills (Dark Squares)	2	16

During a Period, each group of characters will Search its assigned Square or Squares, and will build up MP in them. If the group has accumulated as many points in the Square as given above for **Full Search**, then they automatically find whatever objects of value are in it. If there is nothing of value in the Square, then the Team should simply cross it off on their copy of the Search Grid and move on to the next square.

If at the end of a Period they do not have enough MP for a Full Search, then the GM secretly rolls a number from 1 to the number of MP necessary for a Full Search; if the number rolled is less than or equal to the MP of the group, then their search is successful, if there is anything there to be found. If they roll higher than their MP, then they have failed to find anything. The GM simply informs the players of whether they have found something or not; it is quite possible for a Team to partially search the APC's Square, fail their roll, and unwisely assume that the Square is empty.

Example:
A group of characters spend 6 MP in a Clear Square, which would need 8 MP to be Fully Searched. The GM rolls a number from 1 to 8; if the number is 1 through 6, then the characters find whatever is in the square. If the roll is 7 or 8, then he simply informs them that they have found nothing. Note that there is no difference between a successful roll in an empty Square and a failed roll in the APC's Square.

The MP in a Square may be accumulated from period to period, as it is assumed that the Team is capable of making an organized search. In the example above, the group needed 2 MP to complete their search of the Square; they had effectively searched three-quarters of the Square. When they next spend 2 MP searching the Square they are covering the final quarter, and it will be considered Fully Searched. If they failed their earlier roll to find something in the Square then they automatically find whatever is in it at this time.

"In my career, I've learned to live with death. And now, private, so will you. Except the 'live' part."

Dr. Oscar Schneiderbunk

TEAM SEARCH

It is likely that the Team will establish a base of some sort, if only for their Laser Communications and to make regrouping easier. If they do, they will have to spend a number of MP each day travelling from their base to their Search locations, and back again in the evening. The MP cost for this travel is given above, in the **MP Cost Table** (Section 6.6). The Team can change the location of its base at will, and will probably find that a wise course if the Starmarines begin searching near them. Their Laser Communication site can only be at the prearranged places and dates, however.

When conducting the Search the Team may split up within the same square, to search it more quickly, or they may stay as one group. If they split up each group receives its own

MP value, and the search will be completed far more quickly. On the other hand, if one of the groups runs into an Imperial search party, they will be in much more danger. Rules for Encounters are in Section 6.9.

The Peaks

If the Team has personnel who are skilled in Climbing and if they have brought **Climbing Equipment** with them, they have the option of scaling one or more of the **Peaks** on the Search Grid. Climbing the Peaks is dangerous, but if they are successful it will speed their search through surrounding areas.

First the GM must assign Base Odds to each of the Peaks. Each is rolled separately, and the Base Odds are equal to 7 plus the roll of a six-sided die. Only the GM should know these values, although the Team can attempt to estimate the difficulty of each Peak. To do this a member of the Team with Climbing Skill must come within 2 Squares of the Peak in question, and make a Success Roll with Base Odds of 10 against his Climbing Skill. If he succeeds, then he has accurately assessed the difficulty of the Peak. If he fails, the GM should simply decline to tell the Team how dangerous the Peak seems to be. (Alternatively, the GM may choose to mislead the Team about the danger of the Peak, based on how badly the roll was failed.)

If the Team elects to scale a Peak, they must send a group of at least three people to make the attempt. Every member of the climbing group must have at least 1st Level Climbing. Climbing the Peak takes 3 Periods, and another 3 Periods are consumed in climbing back down. It is only possible to Climb during daylight hours. During each Period of Climbing the group makes a Success Roll, using the leader's Climbing Skill against the Base Odds of the Peak.

If the leader makes the roll, then all is well for that Period. If the roll is failed, then someone in the party has had an accident. Each member of the climbing group (including the leader) must now roll 3 six-sided dice and add their own Climbing or Balance and Footwork Skill. The group member with the lowest total is the one who had the accident; this character must roll a 0 to 9 number and enter it on the **Mishap Table** below. If two or more people tie for the lowest total, then both (or all) roll on the Mishap Table. If the totals are all over 15 then there is no Mishap. In this case the group is sufficiently talented (or lucky) that trouble has been avoided.

MISHAP TABLE	
Roll	**Description**
0-2	Twisted Ankle. The character has a Disabled Leg for the next 3 weeks.
3	Twisted Wrist/Elbow. Disabled Arm for 3 weeks.
4	Weapon Damaged. A random weapon suffers MAJ damage.
5	Weapon Dropped. The weapon has been lost permanently.
6	Other Equipment Damaged. A random piece of large equipment being carried suffers MAJ damage.
7	Other Equipment Dropped. The equipment has been lost permanently.
8	Fall. Character takes (6) X 20 PD injury.
9	Serious Fall. Character takes (6) X 60 PD injury.

For each Peak that is ascended by the Team, they receive 8 MP of Searching in each of the four adjacent Squares. They roll while at the top of the Peak to determine if they find the APC.

Ridges

There are several **Ridges** shown on the Search Grid. These represent steep and treacherous country, and crossing them is difficult and risky.

Crossing a Ridge does not require any extra time, but does involve a Success Roll, much like a Peak. The Base Odds are 8 and the same rules apply as for Climbing a Peak, although it is not necessary for everyone to have Climbing Skill. If the leader makes the

Success Roll, then all is well and the group may move into the desired Square with no loss of time. If the Success Roll is failed, then all the members of the group must roll as above, to see who has had an accident, and check the **Mishap Table** to see what has happened.

The Team can certainly elect to move around the Ridges, but there may be times when speed is of the essence or they are desperate to evade Imperial pursuit.

The Imperium has sent a **Platoon** (3 Squads) of the 27th Starmarine Regiment to search for the APC. Each **Squad** contains 10 Starmarines in Level 1 Combat Suits with LAR8's, 1 **SCC** (Slow Cargo Carrier) **Power Armor** soldier with a BP-GMG8L, and a Sergeant or Lieutenant equipped as a normal Starmarine. A Squad is divided into two **Fire Teams** of 4 Starmarines each and a **Command Team** which includes the officer, the SCC Power Armor, and 2 Starmarines. Each day two of the Squads send their Fire Teams into the field to search for the APC, while the Command Teams and the third Squad remain at **Base Camp**. This gives the Starmarines a total of 4 Fire Teams on the Search. The searching Fire Teams spend 16 hours (4 Periods) in the field. In addition to the Starmarines who remain at Base Camp, there is also the staff which is coordinating the Search, consisting of Operations Officer Gibbs, his three assistants, and two electronics technicians. A **Starmarine Roster** is included on the GM Reference Sheet for convenience.

On Day 82, 2 All-Terrain Trucks (ATT's) arrive at the Imperial Base Camp. On board is a fresh Platoon to continue the search, as well as necessary food and supplies for another week's activity. At this time the first Platoon leaves, taking any casualties with it, and the new, fresh Platoon takes over. Gibbs and his staff remain at the Base Camp throughout the search.

"...and if he'd had a gun."

Axly

As mentioned above, the Imperium does not have as much information about the location of the Crash Site as the Team has. Because of this, they are forced to search a larger area, and will even spend much of their time off the Search Grid. This has been reflected on the **GM Search Grid**, shown on the GM Reference Sheet. The Imperial Base Camp is at Row 6, Column 3, in the Square marked "IBC". The numbers in the various Squares indicate the order in which the Starmarines Search them. The Starmarines' search method is a simple one; the four Fire Teams work in pairs, with the pairs in adjacent Squares. Each pair of Fire Teams is capable of Fully Searching 2 squares per Period; therefore, the Starmarines Search a total of 4 squares per period, and 16 squares per day. Later in the Mission they may change their Search procedure; rules for this are given in Section 6.20.

Depending on the exact speed with which the Search progresses, the GM may elect to make small changes in the order in which the Squares are Searched, for convenience and to keep the Fire Teams in adjacent Squares. Note also that at the bottom of the Grid are quite a few numbers; these represent Squares which are outside the area of the player's Search Grid, but which are being Searched by the Imperium. The GM should treat all of these as normal Clear Terrain Squares, and keep track of the time the Starmarines spend Searching them.

"...and if he had been the enemy."

Axly

If the Starmarines manage to complete the entire 128 Square area of the Imperial Search Pattern, they move their Base Camp directly North 8 Squares and begin the Pattern again. The GM should have little difficulty in repeating the Pattern in the unlikely event this becomes necessary.

Radio Activity

As additional support, the Imperial troops have an **All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV)** with **Espionage Radio Equipment** at their Base Camp. This ATV is the control center for the search, and contains the maps and other information used by the Platoon. The Imperial force will initially be operating without any jamming, as they are not aware of any opposing force in the area, and the Team will be able to pick up their transmissions if a Team member

with Communication Operator skill decides to search the radio band. All messages are in code, but the Team will at least know that someone is in the area, and may recognize Imperial operation techniques.

If the Team uses radio communication it will alert the Starmarines to the presence of an organized force in their area. Imperial commanders are trained to disbelieve in coincidence, and Gibbs will assume that someone else is after the APC. He will change his tactics, as discussed in Section 6.20.

6.9

ENCOUNTERS

With a Platoon of Imperial Starmarines and a full Mission Team operating in such a small area, it is very likely that the two groups will come into contact. An **Encounter** can occur each time that members of the Team are searching or traveling in the same Square as an Imperial force during the same Period.

The actual chance that the groups will come in contact is found on the following table. The GM should determine which group is spending the lowest number of MP's in the area during that period; if either side has more than one unit in a Square, total up the MP's used by the side. Enter that number on the table below, and cross-index it with the terrain type; the number given is the percentage chance that two of the groups will contact each other.

ENCOUNTER ODDS TABLE											
	MP Expended In Square										
Terrain Type	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Clear	27	63	86	94	97	98	99	99	99	99	99
Rough	18	47	72	85	92	95	97	98	99	99	99
Hills	14	40	64	78	87	92	95	96	97	98	99

The GM should simply roll 00-99; if the number rolled is less than or equal to the number shown on the table, there is an Encounter. The column for 0 MP is used if one side is not moving at all, as would be the case for a group of characters who were hiding out, resting, or badly injured.

If there is an Encounter, then the GM may elect to determine what happens by using the Tactical Map, as discussed in the following Section.

6.10

THE TACTICAL MAP

As mentioned above, the **Tactical Map** can be used to simulate any contacts which occur between the Team and the Starmarines. The Tactical Map is a square grid with a scale of 10 yards per square (5 normal 2 yard hexes), and any sheet of graph paper can be used; for convenience a Tactical Map is included on the Player Reference Sheet. The rules given for using the Tactical Map are entirely optional, and if the GM would rather use his own maps and/or role-playing approach to an Encounter, then he should do so. The rules of the following Sections, however, greatly speed both preparation and play.

The first time the Team contacts the Starmarines it is likely that it will be a Fire Team of 4 troopers. This will change later in the mission, as discussed in Section 6.20. Regardless of the opposition, however, there are a number of stages in any contact or combat. Each is covered in the following Sections.

The first issue is to determine how far apart the groups are when they see each other. This is called the **Contact Range**, and is determined by the roll of a ten-sided die on the following table.

		Terrain	
Roll	Clear	Rough	Hills
0	4	2	4
1 - 2	8	4	6
3 - 5	10	6	8
6 - 9	12	8	10
Spotting Range	12	8	12

CONTACT RANGE TABLE

As noted above, each Square represents 10 yards, or 5 normal game hexes. The **Spotting Range** is the maximum distance at which a person can be seen, and is used in the rules below.

Once the Contact Range has been determined, the players' Team rolls three six-sided dice and adds the leader's Traps and Spotting Skill Level. The GM does the same for the Imperial Fire Team. If the Imperial total is greater than the Team's total by 4 or more points, then the Starmarines spot the characters first. If the totals are different by 3 or less points, then the two groups spot each other simultaneously, and if the Team's total is greater by 4 or more points, then they spot the Imperials first.

If one group spots the other first, then they automatically get under cover. At this point the spotting group can elect to let their opponents pass or may Ambush them. If they choose to let the other group pass, then it is assumed that they conceal themselves and cannot be spotted by the other group. In this case the encounter is over, and the group which was spotted has no idea that they have been seen. If there is going to be an ambush, or if the two groups spot each other simultaneously, then play goes to the Tactical Map.

The players' Team is placed on the Tactical Map in their standard deployment, as defined earlier. The GM then rolls a number from 1 to 8 to determine what direction the Starmarines are coming from; a 1 indicates straight ahead, 2 is 45 degrees off to the right, 3 is 90 degrees to the right, and so forth. The Starmarines are assumed to be in a line abreast, with 1 Starmarine per square; the direction they are facing is determined randomly, using the same method described above. (On a 1 they are facing the same direction as the Team, a 2 means they are facing 45 degrees to the right, and so on.) The nearest member of the Imperial Fire Team is placed at the Contact Range from the member of the players' Team who would be closest, and the locations of the rest of the Imperial Fire Team are also marked.

At this point the GM should also place the second Fire Team of the pair. It is placed on the same line as the first Fire Team, at a distance from it equal to the Spotting Range plus the roll of a ten-sided die. It cannot be any closer to the players' Team than the first Fire Team is, but may otherwise be placed either to the right or left at random.

Note that the players should only be told of the locations of those Starmarines who fire or move within the Spotting Range mentioned above; if the GM elects to have certain Starmarines hide or maneuver outside of the Team's view, he may do so. Alert or skilled players will be sure to place flankers at a reasonable distance from the rest of the group,

in order to give warning of any dangerous maneuvers by the opposition. Starmarines and characters alike will generally move at 1 Square per Phase during combat.

Once the groups have been placed on the GM's Tactical Map, play proceeds to the next step; an Ambush, if one group has spotted the other, or to a Firefight, if they see each other. Each is discussed below.

6.13

AMBUSHES

"He who shoots first, lives longest."

Traditional King's Men Proverb

If the spotting team, called the Attackers, wishes to Ambush their opponents, the group which has been spotted (the Targets) rolls again on the **Contact Range Table** to see how close they come to the Attackers. If they roll a distance that is equal to or greater than the actual Contact Range, then the spotting group must Ambush them immediately or let them pass. If the distance is less than the Contact Range, then the Attackers must decide how close to let them come before Ambushing them. Note that the GM may have to adjust the direction of travel for the Targets, to arrange for them to pass by the Attackers at the appropriate distance; common sense should be used.

The Targets receive a **Spotting Roll** every 2 Squares as they approach the Ambush. The Base Odds of spotting the Ambush are 8, minus the lowest Gun Combat Skill Level among the Attackers, plus the Targets' leader's Traps and Spotting Skill Level, minus the Targets' speed in Hexes Per Phase. The speed of the group is 1 Hex Per Phase under normal circumstances, and 5 Hexes Per Phase (1 Square Per Phase) in combat.

For example, assume the Contact Range roll in a Clear terrain Encounter was 6, or 12 Squares (60 hexes, or 120 yards.) The Team leader's Traps and Spotting Skill Level is 4, and he rolls a 14 on three dice, for a total of 18. The Imperial leader's Traps and Spotting Skill Level is 6, and he rolls a 7, for a total of 13. The Team's total is greater by 5 points, so they have spotted the Starmarines and take cover. They elect to Ambush the Starmarines; the GM rolls a 0 for closest Contact Range. This means the Starmarines will pass by the Team at a Range of 4 Squares, or 20 hexes. The lowest Gun Combat Skill Level on the Team is 2, so the chance that the Starmarines will spot the ambush is equal to 8 - 2 (lowest Gun Combat) - 1 (speed of 1 HPP) + 6 (Imperial leader's Traps and Spotting) = 11. The GM will roll for the Imperial Fire Team every 2 Squares of their advance; at 10, 8, 6, and 4 Squares. If the players' Team wishes to open fire before the Imperials are at their closest approach they should simply state the desired distance to the GM. If not, they must trust that the Imperial leader will fail all of his Success Rolls and walk blindly into the Ambush.

If the Ambush is not detected, then the Attackers are allowed to open fire without warning. Each of the Attackers receives the maximum Aim Time for his or her weapon minus 1 to 6 Actions, and the shots are taken at the range determined above. The Targets are assumed to be **In The Open**, without the benefit of cover, and moving at 1 Hex Per Phase. Attackers who belong to organized military units may coordinate fire as desired; those who are not must roll randomly to determine their targets.

Immediately after the opening round of fire, surviving Targets will go to cover; this takes 2 Impulses, during which the Targets are considered to be Ducking. The remainder of the Firefight (if there is one) is run under the guidelines below.

6.14

FIREFIGHTS

Each square on the Tactical Map is assumed to have at least one large terrain feature, such as a rock, large tree, or ditch, which will provide cover for two people. Because of this, all combatants can be under cover after the first two Impulses of contact. From that point forward every combatant is considered to be Firing Over Cover, if they elect to shoot, and completely concealed when not aiming or shooting.

DRGN-equipped Sword accepting the surrender of Weismyer and his Mortuary

The Firefight is run using normal combat rules from this point, with the players selecting and firing at their targets in any manner they choose. The Starmarines will return fire under the guidelines given below, and one or both groups may elect to maneuver. Combatants can only shoot at targets who are within the Spotting Range of the terrain; for example, in Hills, it is not possible to shoot at any opponent more than 12 Squares away. Additionally, it is not possible to shoot at someone who is under cover.

Note that the Combat Actions of the characters should be modified for the weight of the non-combat equipment they are carrying. If they elect to drop their non-combat gear, they must spend 7 Actions to do so. If they are not in possession of the field at the end of the Firefight, they must either pick the equipment back up before leaving, which will take 20 Actions, or abandon the equipment, which will then be captured by the Starmarines.

STARMARINES UNDER FIRE

Soldiers are not perfect machines which aim and fire steadily, oblivious to the activity around them. These rules allow the GM to model what the Starmarines do when under fire from the Team.

In general, a Starmarine who is not being shot at will Aim and Fire at whatever targets are available, and will continue to do so until he comes under fire himself. To determine how he Aims, the GM should select a target for him (either on the orders of the Starmarine's leader, or randomly), and enter the following table with the Range from the Starmarine to his target.

Range	Fire Pattern
less than 20 Hexes	Hip Fire, with 1 Action of Aim
21 to 70 Hexes	Firing Stance, with 1 Action of Aim
71 to 99 Hexes	Firing Stance, with 2 Actions of Aim

"Don't worry. This won't hurt any worse than it did when you first got shot."

Dr. Oscar Schneiderbunk

The Shot Accuracy (or EAL) for each type of Starmarine is given on the Starmarine Roster.

A Starmarine will change this pattern as soon as he feels significantly threatened. This occurs when enemy fire comes too close to him, as defined by his **Critical Distance**. The Critical Distance of the Starmarines in this situation is 20%; that is, anytime someone firing at the Starmarine rolls within 20% of his Odds of Hitting, the incoming fire is coming close enough that the Starmarine feels significantly threatened.

When this happens, the Starmarine will reflexively Duck, cancelling his Fire and Aim Time. After the Duck, the Starmarine rolls each Impulse to see what he will do; on a 0 or 1 he will Quit firing for the duration of the Firefight, on a 2 through 7 he will roll again the next Impulse, and on a 8 or 9 he will Reinitiate and return fire.

This represents the moments of indecision which follow a near miss, and the possibility that the Starmarine will decide to lie low until things settle down. (This system is a streamlined version of the Phoenix Command Morale rules, which may be substituted if desired.)

By using the following **Behavior Under Fire Table**, the rules in this subsection can be applied to almost any battlefield. The GM should assign the Morale Class of the combatants, and apply the rules above.

BEHAVIOR UNDER FIRE TABLE			
Morale Class	**Critical Distance**	**Quit Combat**	**Reinitiate**
Civilian	30	0 - 3	9
Militia	30	0 - 2	9
Green	25	0 - 1	9
Line	20	0	9
Crack	15	0	8 - 9
Elite	10	0	7 - 9
Guard	05	-	6 - 9

There are certain standard modifiers which should be applied to the numbers given above. For units which are in holding actions and awaiting support, add 10 to the Critical Distance and subtract 1 from the Quit / Reinitiate (Q / R) die roll; this represents the fact that there is no point in getting killed before the reinforcements arrive. (These values have already been applied to the numbers given above for the Starmarines, who are Elite troops.) When the support arrives, the values revert to normal. Another 10 should be added to the Critical Distance if the incoming fire is Damage Class 7 or higher. If the trooper is

being fired at by rounds which cannot penetrate his armor, then the Critical Distance is reduced by 30. For soldiers who have clear Fire Superiority, there is a modifier of +1 to the Q / R die roll. The GM should apply other modifiers as seems appropriate.

Note that the modifiers to the Q / R number apply to the die roll. For example, troops with a Morale Class of Civilian will ordinarily Quit on a roll of 0 through 3; if they were awaiting support, 1 would be subtracted from their die roll, and they would Quit on a roll of 0 through 4. Regardless of any modifiers, troops of Green quality or better will always Reinitiate on an unadjusted roll of 9, and those of Line quality or lower will always Quit on an unadjusted 0.

DISENGAGING

It is likely that the players' Team will wish to **Disengage** from the Firefight. There are many reasons for this, and a wise or kindly GM will point them out to Teams which do not think of them on their own. The most pressing reason is that the Team cannot afford to take casualties unless there is a very good reason for it. The Firefights that are likely to occur during the Search are completely senseless, strategically; the Team receives no benefit, no matter how well they do. There are plenty more Starmarines where these came from, and that should be pointed out to the Team if they want to slug it out with every insignificant handful of Starmarines they encounter. Additionally, the Starmarines have sizable rein-forcements on the way, in the shape of at least one more Fire Team and, if they fight long enough, another two Fire Teams from the adjoining Square. These Fire Teams are discussed below, under Support.

It is also possible that the Starmarines will elect to Disengage; this will only happen in situations where the characters are clearly trying to close with and eliminate the Fire Team, and where the Fire Team is also clearly outclassed.

To Disengage, the group must get outside the Spotting Range of the opposing unit. Once everyone in the group cannot be Spotted by any member of the opposition, the group has Disengaged. Note that movement during Disengagement is at a rate of 1 Square per Phase, and the person moving is considered to be In The Open and without cover.

Once the Team has Disengaged, the Starmarines must decide whether to give pursuit. In general they will not chase the characters unless the Scent Tracker has arrived. For their behavior once they have the Scent Tracker, see Section 6.20.

SUPPORT

The Starmarines work in pairs of Fire Teams so that the two units can support each other. It is assumed that they are not far apart, and that the uninvolved Fire Team will move toward its partner as soon as it is notified of a firefight. The GM should have placed the supporting Fire Team on the Tactical Map at the beginning of the Encounter.

To determine how fast the supporting Fire Team moves, the GM should roll the **Caution** of the Fire Team's leader on three six-sided dice; this value should be noted on the Starmarine Roster. The GM then rolls the dice again; if the total is less than or equal to the leader's Caution, then the supporting Fire Team moves toward the firefight at 1 HPP. If the roll is greater than the Caution, then the GM should add 1 HPP to the Fire Team's speed and roll again. He should continue rolling (and adding 1 HPP to the Fire Team's speed) until the roll is less than or equal to the Caution, or until the speed reaches 5 HPP. The supporting Fire Team will move at this speed directly toward their allies, or may deliberately attempt to Flank the characters, as desired by the GM.

Example:
Fire Team A engages the players' Team and immediately signals Fire Team B. The GM rolls for the Caution of Fire Team B's leader and gets a total of 9; he notes this on the Starmarine Roster for future use. He then rolls to see how fast Fire Team B moves toward

the firefight; he rolls 14, 11, 17, and 6. Since he rolled higher than the leader's Caution 3 times before rolling less than or equal to the Caution, he adds 3 to Fire Team B's speed, giving them a speed of 4 HPP. They will move at 4 HPP toward the conflict.

The two Fire Teams from the adjacent Search Grid Square will also move toward the Firefight. They are coming from a much greater distance (150 Squares), but the same rules should be used for their behavior if the Firefight lasts for a protracted period.

6.18

POINT

Perceptive players will soon discover the value of the standard military practice of having someone on **Point**. To put someone on Point, the group simply assigns one particularly brave character to walk several Squares in front of the rest of the group on the deployment for the Tactical Map. This means that only one person will be greatly endangered in the event of an Ambush. A normal distance for the person on Point is one-half of the Spotting Range. As mentioned above, the Team would be wise to put out flankers as well, but they are probably working in small groups and may not be able to afford the manpower.

Again, a kindly GM will tell less experienced players about the value of sending someone on Point, and should certainly remind those with military training that it is a common practice when patrolling potentially hostile areas. The GM may also choose to have the Starmarines keep one member of each Fire Team on Point after the first Encounter with the Team.

6.19

SMOKE

One of the most important factors on a modern or high-tech battlefield is **Smoke**. Smoke is the only form of protection which can be easily carried and deployed during a battle, and which provides almost complete protection from enemy fire. As a consequence it is likely that Smoke will be used heavily by players wishing to Disengage. The rules for Smoke are as follows.

It takes 8 Combat Actions to draw and prepare a Smoke Grenade, and 2 more Actions to throw it. It may be thrown within the character's Square or into any adjacent Square. The Smoke Grenade automatically hits the desired Square; a Square is just too large a target to miss. It detonates on impact, and begins producing a thick cloud of opaque Smoke. It takes 1 Phase for the Smoke cloud to completely fill the Square, and the light breeze present will begin spreading the Smoke down wind. The GM should roll the direction of the wind at random; for every 2 Phases that pass, another Square downwind of the Grenade is filled with Smoke. In this way the Smoke Grenade will form a wall of smoke, which is very dense near the Grenade and gradually thins out the further away the smoke travels.

The effect of the Smoke on combat is as follows. In the Square containing the Smoke Grenade, visibility is completely Blocked (B); no fire is possible through this Square. Visibility is heavily obscured in the next Square, and all fire which passes through this Square is executed with a -10 to the Shot Accuracy (EAL). The next Square forces a -7 modifier, the third is at -5, the fourth at -4, and the fifth at -2. Beyond this point the Smoke has dispersed over a wide enough area that it has no effect on Fire. If the effect of more than one Square of Smoke should be applied to a shot, whether from the same Grenade or from multiple Grenades, the penalties are added together up to a maximum penalty of -14 to the Shot Accuracy (EAL). **Table 2D** on the GM Reference Sheet shows the effects of Smoke.

Troops who are equipped with Ultrasonics (including all Power Armor, including SCC PA) have a limited ability to see through Smoke. Apply a modifier of +6 to the Smoke value, up to a maximum of 0. For example, if the normal Smoke modifier would be -10, the

modifier applied to a trooper with Ultrasonics would be -4; if the modifier was -5, the Ultrasonics would raise it to 0, but no higher. For situations where visibility is completely Blocked, troops equipped with Ultrasonics would have a modifier of -8.

Smoke Grenades are a common piece of Class 3 Equipment, and players who want to make them should use the numbers for 1 pound of Glass / Ceramic (Project 6, Table G-6A) in the Construction Rules. For those using 1st Edition, the Raw Materials necessary are 5 pounds of Standard Chemicals, the Tools are CH II, and the Base Odds and Time are 13 and 4, respectively. Smoke Grenades cannot be Scavenged under the rules of either Edition.

Additional details on the use of Smoke are contained in Section 6.6 of **Advanced Phoenix Command**.

AFTER CONTACT

Once the Imperial troops discover that there is another group of people involved in searching for the APC, they will radically change their approach to the problem. The following guidelines apply.

After the first contact between the two sides, and "contact" in this sense includes the Starmarines picking up the Team's radio broadcasts, Lieutenant Gibbs will modify his search schedule to provide his troops with greater security. The two Squads in the field will operate only 3 Periods per day, and will not leave the third Fire Team at base. The Squad Leader and 1 Starmarine will go with one Fire Team, while the SCC Power Armor and the other Starmarine add their strength to the other. This means that each Fire Team will include 6 Starmarines, instead of 4. They will continue to operate in the same manner, but their reduced time in the field means that they will Fully Search only 12 Squares per Day (2 each, per Period, for 3 Periods.) The GM should adjust the progress on the GM Search Grid accordingly.

If there is another contact with the Team and it is a violent one (involves any exchange of gunfire), Gibbs will escalate his security measures. He will send both Squads into the same Square, in 4 Fire Teams of 6 people each, and will settle for Searching a single Square per Period. The reason for the great reduction in the Search rate is that each Fire Team will be operating with maximum security in mind, and will be attempting to find the players' Team. If the players are in the same Square as the Starmarines at this point, quadruple the normal MP value when entering the **Encounter Odds Table (2F)**. If there is an Encounter, the GM should assume that the 4 Imperial Fire Teams are operating in a box formation with 5 Squares between Fire Teams. Note that this means the players are likely to be confronted with the full weight of both Squads very quickly if they have the misfortune to run into this formation. In addition, the Starmarines receive two rolls when determining which group spots the other, and may use the better roll.

Scent Tracker

The GM must decide at this point if Gibbs feels threatened. If he is taking casualties in his Firefights with the players, or if they have launched an attack on the Imperial Base Camp or any sort of Ambush, he will certainly have good reason to feel threatened. If he does, he will call on the ISS to send in a Scent Tracker. The Scent Tracker will arrive 2 days after Gibbs' request, and will go into the field with the searching Squads.

The next time the Starmarines spot the players' Team, they will put the Scent Tracker to work and will attempt to track the players down. First, the GM should run the Encounter normally. If the players successfully Disengage, the Starmarines will give Pursuit, using the Scent Tracker to find the trail. The Base Odds of keeping on the trail during each 4 hour Period are equal to 2 times the Traps and Spotting Skill Level of the leader, minus the lowest Traps and Spotting Skill Level in the hunted group. The modifiers are +1 for every 10 people in the fleeing unit, +30 (thirty) for a Scent Tracker, and -1 for every 4 hours old the trail is.

"I don't care how you feel. Let's just remember who the Doctor is here."

Dr. Oscar Schneiderbunk

For example, a professional tracker with 8th level Traps and Spotting is pursuing a group of 10 people in which the lowest level in Traps and Spotting is 1st. His Success Roll would equal 16 minus 1 (opposing Traps and Spotting Level) plus 1 (for 10 people), or 16, with a -1 for every 4 hours old the trail was.

The Scent Tracker is obviously an extremely potent tool for this situation, and the players will find themselves in considerable difficulty if they are not able to evade the pursuit. To see if the Team escapes, use the Scouting rules of Section 6.13 with the following modifications. (1st Edition players should use the Pursuit rules given in Section 2.7 of the spiral rulebook.)

Use the Traps and Spotting Skill Levels of the two leaders; the Starmarines have Traps and Spotting of 6. The GM applies all the modifiers which are appropriate, and rolls to see if the Starmarines make their Success Roll; if they do, there is another Encounter using normal rules. (Note that this includes a possibility of either side being Ambushed.) If the Starmarines fail their Success Roll, they must roll in the next Period to make sure they can stay on the trail. If they do, they can continue the pursuit. Given the potency of the Scent Tracker it is unlikely that the Starmarines will lose track of the Team. The Imperials will call off the Pursuit at sunset, however, rather than risk an Ambush in the dark, and this will buy the Team some time. On the following morning, Gibbs will have 18 Starmarines continue the Pursuit while a Fire Team of 6 returns to the Search, covering 1 Square per Period.

Note that if the Team does anything but Traverse Squares when the Starmarines are right behind them they are automatically caught and there is an Encounter. It is not possible for either group to conduct any sort of Search during a Pursuit situation. It is also unnecessary for the groups to move in a straight line; it is quite possible to have an extended Pursuit in an area of only six or eight Squares.

Triangulation

In addition to the above responses, the Imperial ATV has the ability to find the source of radio transmission, and has 2 remote pods placed in the field which are used for triangulation. These pods will be placed after the first contact and will be in the same Square as the Base Camp; they will be used to track down the Team if they use their radios in any way. Even the briefest transmission can be pinpointed after just a few Phases work by the Electronics Techs in the ATV, and if there seems to be a steady source of transmission (i.e., the players are not moving, or broadcast from the same location several times over the course of a few days) then Gibbs will pull one of his Squads out of the Search pattern for a day and will send them to find the source of the transmissions.

If the players are negligent about their use of radios it could obviously be disastrous for them. It is therefore suggested that the GM caution the characters once or twice about casual use of the radio before bringing a Squad of Starmarines down on their base. If the Starmarines do attack the characters, they will be moving in a triangle comprised of their three standard Fire Teams. Each Fire Team will be within 5 Squares of the other two, with the Command Fire Team placed at the rear. Shortly before they launch their attack, or at the moment of contact if they lose the element of surprise, the ATV will be used to jam the players' radio transmissions. This will prevent the characters who are under attack from radioing for assistance or informing the other characters about the nature and size of the attack.

"One more word out of you and I'll perform another unnecessary surgery."

Dr. Oscar Schneiderbunk

6.21

WOUNDED CHARACTERS

If one or more characters are wounded, the Team will find itself in a very difficult situation, as the best medical help they can offer is First Aid. While this will keep most wounded characters alive until the next Active ORCA period, the characters will still have to be tended and will not be able to move on their own power. Since carrying a Disabled character greatly reduces the number of MP for a group, the characters will probably have

to leave the wounded person(s) with one or more guards. This reduces the Team's ability to Search and to fight the Starmarines they are likely to Encounter, and still leaves them with the risk that the Starmarines will find the wounded character(s) by accident.

For wounds of more than a few hundred points it is likely that First Aid will not keep the character alive until the next ORCA cycle. If this happens, the Team is faced with the choice of running a very high risk that their teammate will die unnecessarily, or of letting the Starmarines capture him. This seems like a terrible choice, but the characters should be reminded of some basic points. First, the Starmarines have medical care equal to an **Aid Station** readily available at their Base Camp. Secondly, the Starguild's Articles of War guarantee decent treatment to all prisoners of war, especially the wounded. Because of this, the Starmarines will evacuate all captives via ATV to Vartac, and those with serious injuries will be sent to the **Bondsmen Medical Facility** there. While this may make the Team a trifle nervous, it is quite likely to save the character's life. The GM should note that the Medical Facility at Vartac is just the standard, sophisticated Field Hospital used by the Imperial military. It does not provide the full range of medical services, and is only considered to be of Bondsmen quality for combat-related injuries. Wounded characters will spend 1/10 of their Healing Time (HT) there before being transferred to ISS custody.

All of these factors mean that it will sometimes be wisest for the Team to allow their wounded to be taken into custody by the enemy. Wounded characters left for the Starmarines should not have their Thralls left with them, as that might result in the ISS discovering that the Team has ORCA capability. It is extremely important that this fact be kept secret. Players should also be reminded that the courtesy extended by the Starmarines is something that they have every right to expect in return, and that any Sword worthy of the title will always make sure that prisoners receive the best care possible. This even applies to Black Legion characters, who can still tell the difference between an active enemy and someone who has become a non-combatant.

Lastly, characters in ISS custody (those past 1/10 HT and those captured with little or no damage) will be interrogated regarding their affiliation and their activities. Non-physical means will be used, as defined on the **Action / Reaction Table** under Espionage; the ISS Espionage Skill Level is 8. It is unlikely the ISS will ask about the ORCA, although they will definitely ask if the characters know anything about S-4 (which they presumably do not.)

"Hand me the drain cleaner; this man's arteries are blocked."

Dr. Oscar Schneiderbunk

6.22

IMPERIAL REINFORCEMENTS

If the Starmarines take more than 50% casualties in two of the three Squads involved in the Search, then Lieutenant Gibbs will call for reinforcements. They will arrive two days after his request, and will consist of an entire fresh Platoon (three Squads) of Starmarines. All Fire Team sizes will be doubled, and any additional troops will be used to fortify the Base Camp.

For this purpose, "casualties" are defined as any soldiers who have taken more than 10 PD.

6.23

FINDING THE APC

If the Imperium finds the APC first, the Team will hear a flurry of activity on the radio (if they are listening), and then complete silence a few hours later. The activity will be the notification of the Base Camp of the find, and then the Base Camp notifying the ISS. Within two hours, Agent Briceton will arrive at the crash site in a Grav Carrier. After a careful check for traps, everything pertinent will be quickly stripped from the APC, and Briceton will return to Vartac to study the DRGN equipment with more care.

Over the course of the next two days the Imperials will strip the APC of even those things which are not useful or important, and then they will pack up their base. The ATTs will head back to Vartac overland, and the Team will find themselves all alone on the Search Grid.

If this happens, the next step is for the Team to follow the ATT's back to Vartac. They will not be able to keep up, travelling on foot, but will be able to follow the trail left by the 3 multi-ton vehicles. If the Team does not deduce or discover that the Starmarines are gone in some other way, the GM should let them know about the situation after a two day delay by having Operation Headquarters contact them via Laser Communicator. Their information comes from S-4 agents within the ISS.

If they do not think of following the tracks and cannot find any other means of pursuing the DRGN equipment, the GM should have another message arrive from Operation Headquarters. This message will contain the location of Vartac, along with the information that it is the base of their opponents and the current location of the DRGN equipment and any captured characters.

On the other hand, if the Team finds the APC first, they will be able to search through the wreckage described in Section 5.4. There are no traps here, and there is in fact nothing for the Team to fear. Even marginally perceptive players will notice that someone has been to the crash site; the mass grave is pretty clear evidence. What they will make of the grave is up to them, unless the GM elects to introduce the surviving DRGN crewman (Section 5.5).

It remains only for them to pack up their loot and get to a safe and quiet place until the ORCA becomes Active again. With a little luck, they will be able to avoid the Starmarines. If not, then the Team will have to fight their way to safety.

6.24

EXTENDED MISSIONS

It is possible (though unlikely) that neither side will locate the APC during the first 14 day Mission. If that is the case, then the Team should have additional food, supplies, and if necessary, personnel sent in when the ORCA becomes active on Day 88.

For the Imperium there is no question of an extended mission. A fresh Platoon arrives to relieve the current Search group every eight days, and whenever they complete a full Search Pattern, they simply move their Base and begin again.

6.25

THINGS TO FIND

There are several other important people and objects on the Search Grid. These elements may be incorporated or omitted by the GM as desired. In general, they are to the Team's benefit, and are likely to make the Team's situation better in some way.

The APC's Wreckage

Strewn about the the entire Search Grid (and beyond) are pieces of the Grav APC. After it was hit, the pilot fought to save the vehicle, and then did everything in his power to reduce the speed at which it would hit. This entailed jettisoning all excess weight, including the armor panels, Weapons Bays, Power Unit, and Drive Unit. He was not able to save the craft, however, although he did save the life of a single member of the DRGN squad (see below, and Section 5.5).

Most of the material jettisoned and the APC itself are now of little use, although the hull can be salvaged for 2000 lb of Advanced Metals (as well as a wide variety of electronic components, for use with 1st Edition). The three most important components are discussed below. The information listed will be known to anyone with a fair degree of experience with Grav Vehicles. This includes characters with the Grav Vehicle Qualified Skill as well as Launch Emergency Teams and anyone with Grav Vehicle Repair Skill.

Weapons Bays: The APC had two 1000 pound Weapons Bays, one of which contained a 40mm Grenade Launcher and the other which held a Lase Cannon. All that remains

of these weapon systems is scrap; they are not expensive enough to warrant the installation of a special emergency system. When they were jettisoned they crashed to the ground without any attempt to reduce the shock and are currently valuable only as Raw Materials. For players who wish to Scavenge the Weapons Bays, there is a total of 900 pounds of Advanced Metals available.

Drive Generator: The Grav Drive Generator is a very high technology piece of equipment which weighs roughly 5000 pounds. Because of the high value of the unit, an ejection and recovery system was installed. When it was jettisoned, the recovery system's chutes deployed and the Drive floated to the ground without sustaining additional damage.

Unfortunately, the whole reason the APC was crashing was because this unit sustained significant damage when the vehicle was hit. If repairing the Drive Generator is ever an option, the characters will find that it has sustained two sets of REP damage and three more sets of MAJ damage.

As one of the most sophisticated devices on the planet, it is unlikely that the characters will even be able to find someone to sell it to, let alone fix it themselves. Regardless, if they want to have a 5000 pound conversation piece back at their base, they could take the Drive Generator back with them if they have access to a Grav Carrier or an ATT; it is too large to be transported by ORCA. It cannot be Scavenged.

Power Unit: Like the Drive Generator, the Power Unit uses restricted Starcaste technology and had an ejection and recovery system. Weighing nearly 6000 pounds, the Unit landed safely, although during the emergency shutdown necessitated by the ejection the central Core of the Unit melted itself. This is a normal part of the emergency shutdown, because of the vast amount of heat stored in the Unit. Standard procedure would be to return the Power Unit to a Grav Vehicle Repair Facility, where the Core would be replaced and the Unit restarted. This is not an option for the Team, but if they ever find a place where it can be done, the unit could be restored to full function. When operating, the Power Unit produces over 170 megawatts of power, and with 300 pounds of Grav Fuel it will run for 720 days at full load. It could also be set to its lowest power output level of 1%; at that level it would produce 1700 Kilowatts for 72,000 days. This level of output is more than ample for any reasonable use by the Operations Team.

The Power Unit currently contains 300 pounds of Grav Fuel, which is extremely valuable on its own for trade to anyone with a Grav Vehicle, or for the Team's own future use.

Except for the Grav Fuel, which may be removed by anyone with Grav Vehicle-related skills, the Power Unit may not be Scavenged.

For the GM who wants to keep track of all the details, the APC's Armor Panels are scattered across an area 6 miles wide and dozens of miles long, leading up to the crash site. They are in numerous pieces, and could be Scavenged for a total of 700 pounds of Advanced Metals.

Crash Survivor

As discussed in Section 5.5, one of the crew aboard the APC survived the crash. He is Corporal Martin Travis of the 1st Trident Mechanized Regiment, and he was rescued by a group of Tourists. Over the course of the next weeks he travelled with them to Vartac as he recovered from his injuries, and a short time ago he left them and began making his way back to the crash site, in hopes of protecting the DRGN equipment from the Imperial search party.

Travis will arrive at the Crash Site near the end of the Mission. He will have no trouble finding it; although he was badly injured when he left the area, he has the Navigation Unit that the Tourists were carrying, and which has the location recorded. There is a 10% chance that he will reach the Crash Site on Day 88, and a 10% chance per day thereafter. This means that if the APC is not found during the first 14-day cycle, it is likely that Travis will find it. If he does, he will spend a day packing up the important equipment from the APC

"What – maggots for dinner again?"

Rejected Refugee

and will carry it away with him back into the wilderness. This is obviously a great deal of equipment for a single man to drag behind him through rough country; the GM may wish to allow the Team to find traces of his passage and to attempt to track him down.

On the other hand, the GM may elect to have Corporal Travis encounter the Team before he finds the Crash Site. If he does, he will respond well to the presence of Alpha Team members and will immediately feel comfortable with any Swords in the group. As noted in Section 5.5, he can no longer contact his superiors or any other RMBK personnel, and will probably be quite willing to join with a group that so clearly embodies the ideals he grew up with at RMBK.

Caravan Survivors

As mentioned in Section 5.5, four of the guardians of the Avatar Caravan survived the Ambush. They were members of S-4, and their enhanced healing capabilities allowed them to endure the terrible injuries they suffered. Two of them, Sol and Darantz, were fully healed in a matter of days and went in pursuit of Avatar. The other two, Zhan and Rinya, have completed their healing process and may be used by the GM to support the players' Team.

Zhan and Rinya are in hiding in Row 0, Column 1 on the Search Grid. They are aware of the Mission Team's presence in the area, and were in fact sent to this area to shadow the Starmarines and as backup for the Team. The GM may elect to have them contact the Team if they enter that Square or if the Team is having difficulties.

Imperial Base Camp

If the Team Searches the Square containing the Imperial Base Camp, they use the normal rules to determine if they find it. If they do, use the Contact rules (Section 6.11) to find out whether the Team spots the Base Camp first, or if they are spotted by the Base Camp's sentries.

As noted earlier, there is a full Squad at the Base Camp at all times, and there are usually two Command Teams as well. The Base Camp is little more than a collection of small tents, each of which has a foxhole nearby. The foxholes and sentry posts are connected by slit trenches, and there is a Command Bunker which is fully dug in and protected by sandbags and similar light fortifications. The ATT which serves as Gibbs' headquarters is fully protected by 200 PF Blast Shields.

It should be noted that an unsuccessful attack on the Base Camp will result in the immediate reinforcement of the Search party, as well as the presence of a Scent Tracker (Section 6.20). In the event of a successful attack, the guidelines in Section 6.20 will still be followed, and in addition Briceton's Security Detachment will assist in the search. In three days, another Security Detachment will arrive. The Detachment will include 8 Field Agents identical to Lee, Petri, Wong, and Schmidt, only they will be equipped with Level 2 Armor Panels for their Combat Suits and they will be carrying a mix of LARGL8's, AR8's with Armor Piercing ammunition, and GMG7L's with Armor Piercing ammunition. The Team is presumably incapable of facing this level of opposition, and before the Team gets themselves into hot water the GM might mention to them that there is liable to be a powerful response if they destroy the Base Camp.

6.26

FINDING THE SUBCON

Vartac is located 230 miles south of the Search area. This makes it a 2 day trip for the ATT's being used by the Starmarines, and a 45 minute trip in a Grav Carrier. On foot, however, it would take 16 days to cover the distance.

If the Starmarines find the APC first, or if they have captured members of the Team, then the Team will have to pursue them back to Vartac. The tracks of the three vehicles are easy enough to follow, if the Team arranges to have sufficient food delivered for the trip.

It is recommended that the GM refrain from dragging the Team across the wilderness in this way unless there is a strong desire for a greatly extended Mission; it slows down the pace of the adventure, and allows the ISS too much time to interrogate prisoners or investigate the DRGN equipment. A far better way for the GM to direct the Team to Vartac is using information supplied by the S-4's who are pursuing Avatar. They notified Operation Headquarters of the ORCA coordinates for a location two miles west of Vartac, in the middle of a dense stand of woods; this will prevent anyone from seeing Operation personnel arriving via ORCA. These coordinates should be given to the Team via Lase Communications, and will greatly speed up the Mission.

The GM should also give the Team a rough copy of **Figure 1**, created from supplemental information from the S-4's. The primary communities within Vartac should be labelled, and the GM should also inform the players that the ISS / IRS sector is clearly where any prisoners or DRGN equipment would be taken. Providing this information and the map will reduce the risk of the players blundering through the Starmarines' base or otherwise bringing disaster down upon their own heads. With the information at hand, the Team will presumably decide on a rapid approach from the west side of Vartac, as that is the only approach which offers them any chance of surprise.

If greater time and depth of role-playing is desired, the GM may wish to have the players' Recon Team attempt to infiltrate one of the Refugee communities. If this is done the GM should bear in mind that the ISS and the Imperial Starmarines are quite capable of maintaining security, and that anyone carrying weapons or wearing a Combat Suit or other military equipment will immediately be brought in for questioning. If the players are more discreet, they will find that the location of the prisoners and any loot from the Crash Site will be fairly common knowledge. Additional information about the defenses of the various portions of Vartac will also be obtainable, but the players will have to beware of Briceton's undercover agents among the Refugees. If it is discovered that the characters are gathering information for a possible attack, they will be arrested without delay.

APPROACHING THE ISS / IRS BASE

Given the presence of so many Starmarines at Vartac, it is likely that the players' Team will wish to make a quick, surgical strike on the ISS / IRS base. The layout of Vartac is shown in **Figure 1**, and as mentioned above it limits the number of approaches possible to the Team. From the north, east, and south, the ISS / IRS base is screened by other groups. Any attempt to advance through these areas with armed personnel will obviously put the entire community on alert, and will almost certainly result in big trouble for the Team. From the west, however, the way is clear. The Team will have to advance from the woods across a cleared area, which certainly has risks, but as opposed to getting involved in the city and rubble fighting that any other approach would involve, it is a fairly attractive plan. Although the Team does not know it, this approach has another advantage; it will guarantee that they do not have to fight anyone but the IRS, since Briceton will specifically order the 27th to keep clear. As mentioned earlier, the reason for this is that Briceton wants to know the strength and abilities of whatever RMBK or S-4 forces are pursuing Avatar and the DRGN equipment, and is willing to sacrifice the remnants of the IRS to find out.

There are innumerable possible ways for the Team to attack, and there is no way to cover them all in detail. The most likely variations are as follows.

The generic approach is to have both the Recon Team and the Tactical Assault Team arrive via ORCA in the woods. They would then approach Vartac, and shortly before the next Active pass begins they would launch a direct assault on the ISS / IRS base. (This timing increases the chance that they will be able to withdraw during the Active phase, in the event of an emergency.) The Power Armor troops would engage the Mantises directly, while the other troops attempted to maneuver past the opposition and destroy the IRS Control Center, rescue any prisoners, or find the DRGN equipment.

The players may attempt to be more subtle. For example, the Recon Team could ORCA in, attempt to Infiltrate from one angle or another, and then call in the Tactical Assault Team when the shooting started. An even subtler approach would be to have one or two members of the Recon Team ORCA in and approach the ISS / IRS Base via one of the Refugee communities. If they are sufficiently nonchalant, they can probably get right up to the Perimeter and then call in the Tactical Assault Team. The primary disadvantage to these two methods is the high risk that the arrival of the Tactical Assault Team via ORCA will be seen by the enemy; this is information which cannot be allowed to fall into ISS hands, and the GM should make sure the Team is reminded of this fact. If they can find a private place to bring in the Team this way, however, it is a very effective strategy. If they are sufficiently discreet, the Imperial will assume that they came and left in Grav Vehicles; Vartac is without radar, and is vulnerable to this sort of attack.

Infiltrating Vartac

The chances of penetrating the Perimeter security system of the ISS / IRS Base are found using the normal Scouting and Infiltration rules, and are as follows.

First, four Scouting rolls must be made for the Team to successfully find the Subcon without being seen. The Base Odds are 11, as there are no patrols or other dispersed units in the area, and the highest Scouting Skill Level in the group is added to determine the Success Roll. The Espionage Skill Level of the opposition would normally be subtracted from this total; as the Team is attempting to close in on a disorganized non-military community, the effective Espionage Skill Level is 0. Note that if there is anyone in the Team who has a Scouting Skill Level of 7 or higher (such as a Search & Rescue Alpha), the Team will automatically make its Scouting rolls.

Next the Team must attempt to Infiltrate the ISS / IRS base. This will be significantly more difficult. The normal Infiltration rules are used, with an effective Espionage Skill Level for the ISS of 15, due to Briceton's 10th Level Espionage Skill and the presence of a ring of Ground Sensors and motion detectors. This means that the Success Roll is equal to a -4, plus the highest Infiltration Skill Level in the Team. Each roll will take 15 minutes, and the **Perimeter** is considered to be the edge of **Figure 2**.

If they fail their first roll, they are spotted 500 hexes from the Perimeter, but if they make it they approach to within 100 hexes of the Perimeter before being seen. If they make the first two rolls, they are not detected until they are 20 hexes from the Perimeter, and if they make three in a row they actually enter the Perimeter without being spotted. In the unlikely event this happens, the GM should assume that the battle goes to the next step as soon as any shot is fired, any Mantis is damaged in any way, or any Mantis sees an intruder.

Once they have been spotted, alarms sound within the Perimeter, and the IRS and ISS will begin preparing for the battle. If they are spotted outside the Perimeter the Team will not know about the alarms or the Imperial preparations; Briceton will put the defenses in order as described below, but will take no visible actions whatsoever. She definitely wants a fight with the Team, and cannot risk the possibility that they might withdraw. If the Team is spotted within the Perimeter, they will hear the alarms and it will be far more difficult for Briceton to execute her plans.

Within the Perimeter

Figure 2 shows the area of the ISS / IRS Base. The shaded area is covered with grass, while the rest of the open area is paved. The floorplan shown for the building is the same on all three floors, with one exception; the second and third floors have balconies in the areas with dotted lines at their edges, while the same areas are simply walkways at ground level.

The layout of the IRS / ISS Base is as follows. The IRS Control Center is on the third floor in the room marked "**CC**". The elevators in the building have been disabled, leaving only the stairwells as passages between floors. It should be noted that the upper floors of the building will only support Power Armor in the Light configuration; no other Power Armor may go upstairs without collapsing the floor.

Figure 2: The ISS / IRS Base at Vartac
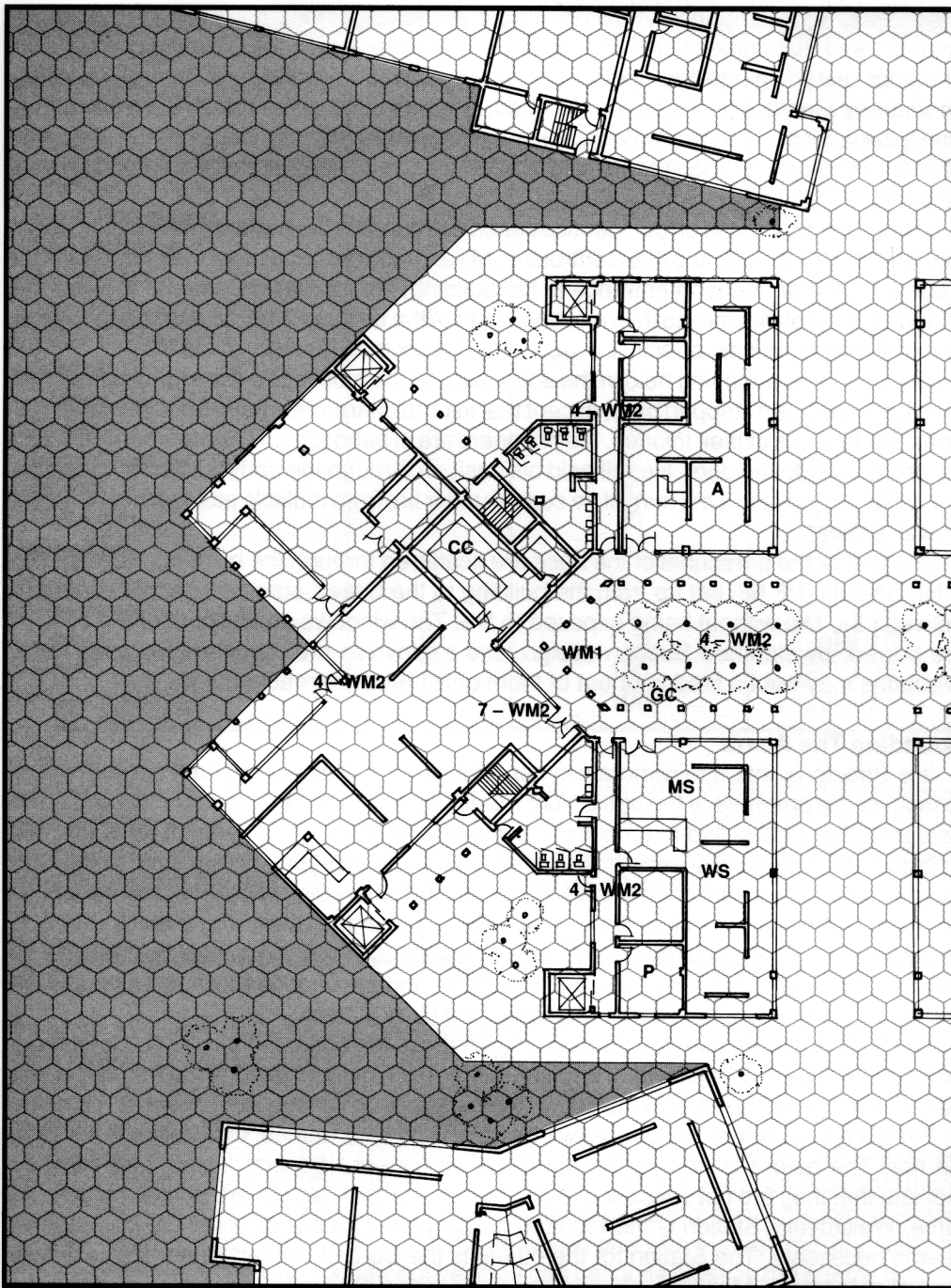
> **"No excuses are acceptable."**
>
> Standard ISS Policy

On the east side of this building is a Courtyard, which contains the Morituri, marked on the map with a **"WM1"**. Its Power Unit is currently being used to provide electricity to the entire Vartac community. Weismyer is likely to be elsewhere in the camp, and the time it will take for him to reach and activate the Morituri is shown in the **ISS / IRS Battle Stations Table** below. In the vicinity of the Morituri is most of the spare equipment of the IRS. The mouth of the Courtyard is blocked by a barbed wire fence with a single, 1-hex wide gap in the middle. The Morituri may step on or through this fence at will, although wherever the Morituri steps the barbed wire is no longer considered a barrier.

Also in the Courtyard is the ISS Grav Carrier, located at the **"GC"** on the map. Explosives were used to allow the vehicle to actually settle into the Courtyard, so none of it is visible above ground level, and a sloping path leads up from the Carrier's door to the Courtyard.

A barrier of dirt and concrete from the hole has been placed all around the Carrier's location, and Blast Shields (PF 102) cover its entire top. Inside the Carrier a complete set of Mantis recording equipment has been set up as well as two Mantis Control Consoles, so that any Mantis activity can be watched, and two units of the robots controlled, from within the vehicle. The Pilot (Uffert), four members of the Security Detachment, and either Miller or Hanson (the ISS Agents who are Mantis Controllers) are at the Grav Carrier at all times.

There are four groups of four Mantises each surrounding the building; their locations are marked "4 - WM2". The two ISS Controllers, Miller and Hanson, control the Mantises in the Courtyard and at the north entrance to the building; the other two Controllers, Ryan and Hawkins, control the ones to the west and south of the building. The location of the reserve unit of seven Mantises, directly controlled by Prescott, is marked "7 - WM2".

Any prisoners are being held in the south wing of the buidling, in the room marked "P". The room has been stripped bare, except that injured chararcters have been provided with beds. Regardless of their injuries, the prisoners are in handcuffs. One member of the 27th is posted outside the door. He will hold his position through the early portion of the battle, but is likely to leave in a big hurry if he comes under fire from multiple attackers or if he sees Power Armor.

The rest of the personnel of the base are scattered through the building. Briceton has Blast Shields (PF 68) set up from the building to the Grav Carrier, so people can move between the two without being exposed to fire. The windows on all floors of the building are barred, by standard Subcon design, and explosives are required to breach them. Weapons may not be fired in or out of them until they are breached.

Sounding The Alarm

It is Briceton's intent to withdraw in her Grav Carrier with all important personnel and to monitor the progress of the battle from a safe distance. Her Agents and most of the IRS personnel have been told to go directly to the Grav Carrier in the event of an alarm, and Briceton has even held several drills to make sure that everyone knows what to do. Only ISS personnel are aware of Briceton's real plans; the others simply believe they have been ordered to retreat to the Grav Carrier for safety, and in the event that a quick retreat is necessary. The **ISS / IRS Battle Station Table** shows how many Impulses it will take for various people to reach their assigned locations, and the chance that certain people will end up at the IRS Control Center instead of the Grav Carrier.

The **% Chance Already at Station** column gives the odds that the person is at his or her proper Station. The GM should roll 00-99 for each person listed; if the number is less than or equal to the number in the Table, the person is on Station when the alarm sounds.

For everyone except the people with asterisks by their names, the Station is the Grav Carrier. The asterisks next to the names of Weismyer, Prescott, Ryan, and Hawkins indicate that they are not supposed to flee to the Grav Carrier, but are part of the defense force. Weismyer's Station is the Morituri; he will power it up and assist the Mantises as seems necessary. The Station for the others is the Control Center, where they will take control of teams of Mantises.

The **% Chance of Going to Control Center** column gives the odds that the person will go to the IRS Control Center instead of the Grav Carrier. For Prescott, Ryan and Hawkins, the Control Center is their appropriate station; for the others, it represents the likelihood that scientific curiosity or loyalty will win out over Briceton's orders.

The **Time to Reach Station** column is obviously used to determine when people are at their Stations. In all cases, the time required is a number of Impulses equal to a 1-20 die roll, plus a set number. For example, Agent Tarpin might require anywhere from 11 to 30 Impulses to reach his Station at the Grav Carrier; 10 plus the roll of a 20-sided die.

If the Team is spotted at a distance of 100 or more hexes from the Perimeter, there will be ample time for all ISS and IRS personnel to reach their stations, and the first and third columns need not be used. If the Team gets to 20 hexes or less, however, the GM should roll for each person to determine where they are and how many Impulses it takes for them to reach their Stations.

ISS IRS BATTLE STATION TABLE			
Name	% Chance Already at Station	% Chance of Going to Control Center	Time to Reach Station (Impulses)
Briceton	30	–	(20) + 10
Each Bodyguard	30	–	(20) + 10
Kelson Davis	30	–	(20) + 10
Agent Tarpin	30	–	(20) + 15
Rest of Security Detach.	–	–	(20) + 10
Miller or Hanson	–	–	(20) + 10
Fowler	5	–	(20) + 10
Gross	–	5	(20) + 20
Ruvin	–	20	(20) + 20
Schwebberhaffenwurf	–	90	(20) + 30
Borodin	–	90	(20) + 20
Haverlein	–	80	(20) + 20
Melville	–	50	(20) + 20
Weismyer*	10	–	(20) + 10
Prescott*	50	100	(20) + 10
Ryan*	50	100	(20) + 10
Hawkins*	50	100	(20) + 10

Blam. Blam. Blam.
Blam. Blam. Blam.
"Hey, stop that. That
hurts. I mean it."

Neemis trooper equipped
with Amphicane

If the Team has been Spotted, then when they cross the Perimeter the Mantises become active and the battle begins. If they have successfully Infiltrated, the GM will have to determine when the alarm sounds and the battle begins. Full rules regarding the activity of the IRS during the battle are contained in the following Section.

6.28

BATTLING THE IRS

The battle between the Team and the IRS can take many forms, depending on the actions taken by both sides. Because of this, much of the responsibility for running the battle must be left with the GM. The following guidelines cover the general tactics used by the IRS, and some of the most likely occurences in the battle.

When the Team crosses the Perimeter, whatever Mantises have them in sight will open fire, while the others will hold their positions in case the attack is a diversion. Note that there is a large area southwest of the building which the Mantises cannot see or fire into; Briceton has said nothing about it to the IRS, and they have no one with enough military ability to spot the problem. If the Team is perceptive, they can get quite close to the enemy without coming under fire by advancing through this area.

As soon as the fighting starts and Briceton has all of her ISS personnel inside the Grav Carrier, she will order Uffert to take off. The Grav Carrier will rise gently to ground level (which will take 4 Phases) and accelerate extremely rapidly directly out of the Courtyard, across the street, and over the building on the far side, which will take only 2 Impulses. The reason the initial liftoff takes 4 Phases is that Uffert is making sure that the Blast Shields which were on top of the Grav Carrier fall off, and that no damage is done to the Carrier or to bystanders in the process. If necessary, he can have the Carrier up to street level in 2 Impulses.

As long as the battle is going well, the other Mantis Controllers will stand by. As soon as 2 Mantises are disabled in whatever group is engaged, however, Prescott will move his 7 Mantises up to support them. Additionally, if any members of the Team actually get into the building, two of the uncommitted sets of Mantises will head for the Control Center while the third supports the Morituri. If the Team manages to bring more than one set of Mantises

under attack at a time, the GM should use his own judgement about exactly how to deploy them. Regardless, protection of the Command Center and the Morituri will be the highest priorities; any prisoners are of minor importance to the IRS. Note that the IRS has planned for this type of battle under the assumption that the 27th would immediately support them; as mentioned above, this is not the case, and the IRS is in big trouble as a result.

Once one of the Mantises in Prescott's group is disabled, he will go berserk. His emotional stability has been suspect for some time, and this battle will probably shatter it. He will order his unit to make an all-out attack on the enemy, setting the Mantises to Advance and Fire until they have overrun the Team's positions. This is probably not a wise tactic, unless the Team gets scared and runs away, since the Mantises will be in the open and firing erratically, while the Team is presumably safely under cover and shooting them to pieces. Once Prescott has lost the majority of this unit, he will use the Override Panel to take control of all the other remaining Mantises. He will launch these into the same sort of headlong assault that presumably destroyed the first set. He will not gather them into a coherent formation before attacking; they will all arrive a few at a time, which should make this an easy fight for the players.

Unless the Team attacks from the street side, they will probably not have to deal with the Morituri. It will remain in the Courtyard, supported by 4 Mantises and waiting for something important to do. If the GM wishes, he can have the Morituri make the trek around the building to wherever the Team is attacking, but he will probably just get a grenade in the face for his troubles.

Another option for the Team is to try to break into the building in a less direct way. The most obvious strategy along these lines is to have a DRGN-equipped character use the Grappling Hook Porjectors to reach a balcony on the third floor. The heavily reinforced doors of the balconies are locked, but if a Rocket Rifle or Grenade round hits the lock area (with a Target Size Modifier of -4), the door will open. Rounds which miss the lock mechanism will simply leave a one or two inch hole in the door. If a Hand Grenade is attached to the outside of the door, it will have a 30% chance of knocking it down; normal Hand Grenades do not have enough Penetration to easily destroy Subcon security doors. Once inside the building, it might be possible to find the Command Center and disable it (or the people in it), since it is without human guards. The internal security systems of the building will inform the people in the Command Center that there is a break-in in progress, however, and a unit of Mantises will be dispatched to stop the characters.

The DRGN Equipment

Briceton is willing to write off the IRS, a unit which she considers disfunctional, and her prisoners, since they seem to have no information about either RMBK or S-4, but she is not so casual in her approach to the DRGN equipment.

In the unfortunate event that the ISS has the DRGN Equipment, almost all of the Components will be on board the Grav Carrier. A single functioning sample of each Component will be in Schwebberhaffenwurf's lab, marked on **Figure 2** with a **"WS"**. While the Team will be able to find and recover this single set, it is highly unlikely that they will be able to stop Briceton from getting away with the others.

If Briceton does escape with the DRGN Equipment, the GM may want to use the Team's pursuit of the equipment as the center of a long-running adventure; this is discussed further in Section 7.2.

The Destruction of the Command Center

Briceton does not take chances with allies as peculiar and inept as the IRS. Because of her native distrust of Fowler and his unit, she has had Agent Specialist Jones of the Security Detachment wire the Command Center of the IRS with a sizable amount of explosives. If the Command Center is captured, or it appears that there is no avoiding its capture, she will have the explosives detonated from the Grav Carrier.

The effect of the explosions is as if a 30mm HEAT Grenade had gone off at each Mantis Console. The damage done is shown in the **Explosive Concussion Table (7D)**. (For 1st Edition, use the data for a 30m Heat round from the Starguild BP-GL in the **High-Tech**

Weapon Data Supplement). When determining the damage, assume that any Controllers who are still operating Mantises are in Contact with the explosion, while the other people in the room are at the distance determined by the following table.

Roll	Distance From Explosion
0 - 3	Contact
4 - 8	0 Hexes
9	1 Hex

Every person in the room should roll on this table; this will include all the Mantis Controllers except the ISS Agents in the Grav Carrier, and any scientists who went to the Command Center instead of the Grav Carrier. Although it was not Briceton's intent that the scientists be injured or killed, she will not lose any sleep over it. If they had had the sense to obey orders, they would be perfectly safe.

Note that no one in the IRS was aware of the explosives in the Command Center. Anyone who survives the blast is likely to have a very different view of the ISS in the future. This means that if the Team investigates the explosion they are likely to acquire the services of any survivors. The scientific and technical abilities of the IRS scientists are quite impressive, and could be of great value to the Team.

In the event that the characters do not capture the IRS survivors and Briceton has to face their recriminations, she has a number of alibis ready. In the aftermath it will become clear that Briceton did not issue any of the orders that are at all controversial; Tarpin had the Command Center wired and blew it up, while the Pilot, Uffert, sent the wrong pre-coded distress signal to the 27th; instead of the one which requested their immediate assistance, he sent the one which requested them to hold their position await further orders.

IRS Stores

The IRS has a cache of weapons and supplies which were captured during the Ambush. They are locked in the room marked "**A**" on **Figure 2**. If the Team reaches this room, and takes the time to open the door, they will find the following items inside.

> 6 LARGL8, without ammunition
> 10 LAR8
> 4 FMP8
> 6 AP5-8
> 5 Injection Kits
> 5 First Aid Kits
> 2 Flashlights

There is quite a bit of other valuable equipment located in the base as well. The IRS set up a machine shop in the area marked "**MS**"; in the shop are one set of MW II and one set of MT II tools, as well as two sets each of MI I and EL I tools. Throughout the building there are spare parts for the Mantises, as well as data recording and test equipment. It is unlikely that the Team will get the opportunity to thoroughly investigate this, if only out of fear that the 27th will attack, but if they somehow have several hours, they might learn a great deal by digging through the IRS's computer files. Included in the files is full data on the ambush, including visual recordings.

Buried in the computer, and also accessible if they are able to talk to any IRS personnel for an extended time (such as a disaffected scientist recovering from an explosion), they will find out that one of the technicians who went with the Avatar Caravan said that they would be travelling by ship down to Solomon Bay, where they would off-load at Bondsmen Community 35 (BC 35). This is half true; they are travelling by ship. Avatar will not be unloaded at BC 35, however. This is a false lead caused by the ISS lying to the technicians. It is possible that the ISS knows of a particular peril at BC 35, and they hoped to lead any pursuit there. If the Team decides to pursue this clue, the GM should feel free to treat the area as a normal part of Rhand, or as one which contains a special danger.

"If you contact the Ops Team, tell them Darantz wants his flashlight back."

Sol to HQ

THE MISSION

This Chapter contains a brief **Plot Summary**, so the GM will have a clear idea of what the designers intended to have happen (before the GM and the players got their hands on things), as well as a variety of supporting material. Also included are alternative and future uses for the material in this supplement, and some information about what is coming up in the next few months.

7.1

PLOT SUMMARY

What follows is a brief description of how the Mission was designed to be run. The GM should not feel limited by this, or that there is something wrong with the Mission taking a different turn; this just summarizes what would be expected, and is a solid storyline that the GM can steer the players back to if desired.

The Team selected includes a Sword and 7 Alphas; 2 are Search and Rescue, 1 is a Fire Fighter, 1 is a Paramedic, 1 is from a Launch Emergency Team, 1 is Landcaste Law Enforcement, and the last is a Trident Starmarine. All are equipped with Level 2 Combat Suits.

> **"Can we get some artificial intelligence for Axly? It would have to be an improvement."**
>
> Damien

On Day 74, at 16:30, the Team arrives at Row 3, Column 5. They spend the rest of the Day setting up camp and scouting the immediate area. At first light of the next day they split into two groups and begin their Search. Each group contains 2 of the combat-trained personnel and 1 of the Search and Rescue Alphas.

On Day 79 they encounter an Imperial Fire Team; a brief skirmish ends when the characters withdraw with one of their number lightly wounded. They elect to regroup, and continue the Search with all 8 characters together. Two days later they have their second encounter, and this time they settle into a serious firefight as they feel they have the advantage. They defeat the first Fire Team they face, but are then attacked by the second Fire Team and are forced to withdraw. Two of their number have now been significantly injured, and the players elect to administer First Aid to them and leave them near the battlefield. The Starmarines take them into custody and send them back to Vartac for medical care.

The Team continues Searching, while the Starmarines have both Squads Searching a single Square per Period. On Day 83, the Team finds the Power Unit; they mark the location and move on. The next Day they encounter the Starmarines, but avoid being spotted. Declining the opportunity to Ambush them, the Team slips away unnoticed.

On Day 85, the twelfth day of the Mission, the Team finds the APC. After carefully investigating the area, they collect the DRGN equipment and other loot and withdraw to an area away from where the Starmarines seem to be Searching. They make one quick trip back to their original site to get in touch with HQ, and are told of the coordinates of Vartac. When the ORCA becomes Active at 21:00 on Day 87, the Team is ready and they move to the Vartac coordinates.

They spend that night testing the DRGN equipment, and in spite of a general lack of technical ability they figure out what it is. Assembling two sets that function, they spend the rest of the night arguing about who gets to wear them.

The next day they approach Vartac, and one of the Team gets out of his military gear and enters the Rejected Refugee community. He gets information which confirms what HQ told the Team, but little else of any use. He rejoins the Team, and they call down the Tactical Assault Team, consisting of six Power Armor Swords and 3 combat Alphas, and then begin their attempt to Infiltrate the ISS / IRS Base. Hearing no alarms, they believe they are doing pretty well; in fact, they fail all three rolls. Waiting in the Grav Carrier, Briceton cannot believe the low quality of the S-4 pursuit.

It is 17:30 when the Team crosses the Perimeter. They noticed the area the defenders cannot fire into, and they advance through it quickly. When they come in sight of the Mantises, several grenade-launcher equipped Swords open fire; in a few moments, two Mantises are down. Prescott's unit advances from its position in reserve as the firefight continues. Although the Team is not able to make any forward progress, their grenade fire is effective and the other two Mantises are destroyed by the time Prescott's squad arrives.

It is only a matter of moments before Prescott's Charge begins, and the carnage is horrendous. As Prescott Overrides the other Controllers and summons the remaining 12 Mantises, the Team advances into the building. Their casualties are light; 1 Alpha down, and two Swords on Herculon. Once inside the building there is an ugly little melee, as Mantises arrives from various directions and open fire at short range. The battle is short and very violent, but again the players have the advantage. By the time the battle ends, the Team has fanned out through the building looking for their two captured Teammates.

While they are searching, the Team stays alert for items of value. Collecting what is available, they keep a close watch on the Courtyard; the Morituri has moved and there is no sign of enemy activity. Two Alphas reach the third floor, and Briceton decides to make sure that nothing of value is captured. The charges in the Command Center go off, killing Prescott and Schwebberhaffenwurf and leaving Gross badly injured.

The explosion reminds the Team that they shouldn't be wasting time, so they quickly regroup and head back for the woods, where they can use the ORCA in private. As they head across the open area, Weismyer lumbers the Morituri around the corner and brings his guns to bear. His first bursts miss, and are answered by a volley of grenade and Rocket Rifle fire. The Morituri lives up to its nickname, as Weismyer is killed by a grenade, but the Power Supply is undamaged; Vartac will continue to have power.

Briceton, of course, escaped early in the battle. The Grav Carrier skimmed out the back of Vartac and the players never even saw it. They do not realize that the ISS has now seen both their Seven Swords Power Armor and their DRGN suits in action. For her part, Briceton finds it hard to believe that the Team really represents either RMBK or S-4; surely either organization would have put together a more impressive, more organized assault. On the other hand, there is no denying the meaning of the Seven Swords Power Armor. Slightly perplexed, Briceton begins laying her next set of plans.

For now, however, the Team is content; they have captured several valuable items, given the DRGN equipment a thorough test, and recovered their Team members. The cost has been low; the wounds of the Team are all from Lase fire, and everyone survives.

What the Team does next is open to question, of course. Some want to clean up Vartac and chase out the Starmarines; others think that is just a good way to get killed. At 19:30 the ORCA becomes Active again, and the Team returns to the relative safety of their base.

"Don't worry. This won't hurt any more than it did when you first got Stomped."

Dr. Oscar Schneiderbunk

7.2

The GM should use common sense to determine what happens once the dust settles. If the IRS Command Center is intact, Briceton will have the Grav Carrier return when the Team is gone and life will go back to normal at Vartac, with all the misery that implies. If the Command Center is destroyed, then the surviving IRS robots and scientific personnel

AFTERMATH AND
FUTURE USES

will be moved to another site and the non-scientific staff, including Fowler, will remain at Vartac as administrators. Regardless, the real power at Vartac will still be in the hands of the ISS, even once Briceton has gone on to other assignments. Lt. Hanesworth and the 27th will still be taking orders from the ISS, and Haverlein will still be fighting with Fowler and the ISS representative about how to get Vartac organized with a minimum of suffering. The combination of ISS leadership and the presence of a full Company of Starmarines means that the Team will not be able to simply walk in and take over; the Team will probably have to tread softly in this area for some time to come.

As for the Team's situation, it is likely they will have DRGN equipment at their disposal, which will be extremely valuable, as will any other salvage from the APC or the IRS. If the Team has been careful, they will have taken few serious casualties; the combination of light casualties and significant new equipment should make them very happy.

On the other hand it is quite possible that the Team will have failed in one or more parts of its Mission, and this provides the GM with the basis for future adventures. The most serious failure is if Briceton gets away with the DRGN equipment. She will deliver the equipment to an ISS base somewhere for long-term research, and it is likely that S-4 will be able to get at least limited information regarding its location and protection. In that case, the Team could be sent to conduct a Recon of the area, to recover the DRGN equipment, or even be used as a diversion for an S-4 attempt to recover it.

Another possibility is to have the Team attempt to set up negotiations with members of Vartac who are unhappy with the policy of rejecting Refugees, while avoiding ISS suspicions. This sort of activity would be very much like a long-term espionage mission, and would require both good luck and a great deal of skill given the opposition. If the Team attempts this, the GM should assume that there will always be a few ISS Enforcement Agents at Vartac, to oversee Fowler's activities. These Agents, plus the undercover agents within the Refugee communities, should keep things lively for the Team.

The GM should note that if the Team has taken serious losses, in spite of the low volume of fire from the searching Starmarines and the disorganized defenses of the IRS, then it might be best to keep them away from organized military units for a while. Many role-players have little experience with battlefield tactics, and even if their opponents are disorganized, it is quite reasonable for them to have trouble with the dangers associated with well-armed, well-equipped opponents. Groups like this will be more comfortable with traditional role-playing challenges, and the GM should feel free to reduce the amount and accuracy of enemy gunfire.

One final bit of information: the 1st Imperial Robotics Section is not the only unit of its type on Rhand. The 2nd and 3rd Sections are also present and fully functional. They were originally in reserve awaiting the results of the first field test; that went so poorly that Graf has kept them on the shelf. Although they lack technical and scientific support, each has a Morituri with a Pilot and 100 Mantises with 10 trained Controllers. The GM may choose to have one of these units reinforce Vartac, or otherwise introduce them to plague the characters at a later date.

Variations

There are obviously a number of different possible courses which can be taken in this Mission. In addition to the variety of plot twists contained within the Mission itself (who gets to the APC and when, captured characters, and so forth), there are a number of alternatives available to the GM and the players. Many of these have been mentioned elsewhere, including the option of introducing Corporal Travis or the S-4 agents, and the various approaches to Infiltrating Vartac, but others are available for a creative GM.

Here is an example that is ideal if the Team finds the DRGN equipment but would like to recover their prisoners wthout going head to head with the IRS. They could try to capture one or more Imperial personnel and arrange for an exchange of hostages. Briceton will discover after a few days that her prisoners do not know anything about S-4 or RMBK, so she will have little interest in keeping them. Lieutenant Gibbs and his assistants are good candidates for a prisoner exchange. Arranging the exchange is also an ideal vehicle for espionage-related role-playing.

"There is such a thing as having too much bran in your diet."

Rejected Refugee

Although the Team has (hopefully) recovered the DRGN equipment, the Avatar Project is still in enemy hands. The Team will take the next step in pursuit of Avatar in **Know Only Battle**, available in the autumn of 1990. This supplement tells the story of Xenophon, an S-4 agent inside the ISS, and of a Platoon of Starcaste Power Armor who have become Vissers. It will also bring the Team face to face with some of the most deadly guerilla fighters on Rhand. As you might guess from the title, the Black Legion also figures prominently in this supplement.

For GM's who are interested in further development of the Vartac area, **Renaissance and Ruins: The Vartac Sourcebook** will be also be out this fall. Included will be many of the personalities of the Vartac communities, including the Tourist group that saved Travis from the APC wreckage. Other source material includes information about technology at Vartac which survived the Bombardment, details of disbanded Trident forces in the area, and information about the other ground caravans which left RA2, as well as a system the GM can use to determine the future of Vartac; crops and food production, population growth, and the effects of Vissers and the coming winter.

We have received a number of letters asking about the differences between the First (boxed spiral) and Second (hardcover) Editions of **Living Steel**. Frankly, there are quite a few of them. It has been substantially rewritten and reedited, making it a good deal easier to read and play. We also included a new Basic Combat System, which is the same as the one used in the soft-bound edition of **Phoenix Command**. This system is noticeably quicker and simpler and is therefore probably more suitable for role-playing, although the concepts have not been changed. Weapon data has been streamlined, and the tables have been reorganized, however, giving a system that is much more user-friendly.

If you are happy with the First Edition writing and combat system, however, there is only one part of Second Edition that you will probably want, and that is the real purpose of this note. We included all the material from the **Operation Seven Swords Supplement** (#10301) in the Second Edition, because much of the information was just too important to leave out; that also accounts for the increase in price, by the way. When Second Edition came out, we naturally discontinued **Operation Seven Swords**, since the vast majority of First Edition players already had it.

Operation Seven Swords includes information on:
 The History of the Seven Worlds;
 Seven Legions Descriptions and Active Duty Assignments;
 Ringer Biomodifications and Professional Skills, and Non-Combat Ringers;
 Alpha Team Descriptions, Skills, and Special Equipment;
 ORCA Satellite System Detail and Operations Schedule;
 Notes on Starcaste Society; and
 The Awakening, a starter kit for an Apocalypse Scenario.

For those of you who missed it while it was in the stores, we are making it available by mail order only, at a special discount. Just send us $2.50, plus $1.50 for postage and handling, and we will send it out to you. Yes, a whole four bucks. It was $7.95 in the old days, by the way. As always, members of LEGionnaire do not have to pay postage, so for you it's just $2.50. As you can see, we are not making this offer for the money; we genuinely want you to get this material, because it makes the game much better.

Our address for all correspondence and mail orders is P.O.Box 70669, Pasadena, CA, 91117. Look forward to hearing from you.

SEARCH GRID / 1A

Column

Row	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

(Row labels 0–9 with grid. Peak markers at row 1/col 3, row 1/col 7, row 4/col 7. Asterisk * at approximately row 3/col 5.)

TIME TABLE / 1B

Day	Time Period					
	0000 0400	0400 0800	0800 1200	1200 1600	1600 2000	2000 2400
74						
75						
76						
77						
78						
79						
80						
81						
82						
83						
84						
85						
86						
87						

ORCA SCHEDULE / 1C

Day 73	21:00
Day 74	16:30
	18:00
	19:30
	21:00
Day 87	21:00
Day 88	16:30
	18:00
	19:30
	21:00

TACTICAL MAP

REST DEFICIT / 1D

Rest Deficit (hours)	Levels / Actions Lost
10	1
14	2
16	3
17	4
18	5
19	6
20	7

SEARCH GRID 2A

Column

Row	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0										
1				Peak				Peak		
2	108	101		68	69	76		84	85	92
3	107	102		67	70	75*	78	83	86	91
4	106		98		71	74	79	82 Peak	87	90
5		104	97		72	73	80			89
6	41	40	33	1 IBC		9	16	17	24	25
7	42	39	34	2	7		15	18	23	
8	43	38	35	3	6	11			22	27
9	44	37	36	4	5	12	13	20		28

29 30 31 32 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 93 94 95 96
109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128

MOVEMENT TABLE 2B

Search Grid Square Type	To Traverse	Full Search
Clear	1	8
Rough (Light Grey)	1	12
Hills (Dark Grey)	2	16

CONTACT RANGE TABLE / 2C

Roll	Clear	Terrain Rough	Hills
0	4	2	4
1 - 2	8	4	6
3 - 5	10	6	8
6 - 9	12	8	10
Spotting Range	12	8	12

SMOKE TABLE / 2D

Range in Squares	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
ALM Human Vision	B	-10	-7	-5	-4	-2	0
ALM with Ultrasonics	-8	-4	-1	0	0	0	0

STARMARINE ROSTER / 2E

Squad Member	Shot Accuracy Hip	1AC	2AC	1st Sqd (Caution =) PD	Active	Duck	Quit	2nd Sqd (Caution =) PD	Active	Duck	Quit	3rd Sqd (Caution =) PD	Active	Duck	Quit
Squad Leader	-15	-9	2												
SCC Pwr Armor	-21	-15	-4												
Private 1	-15	-9	2												
Private 2	-15	-9	2												
1st Team Leader	-15	-9	2												
Private 3	-15	-9	2												
Private 4	-15	-9	2												
Private 5	-15	-9	2												
2nd Team Leader	-15	-9	2												
Private 6	-15	-9	2												
Private 7	-15	-9	2												
Private 8	-15	-9	2												

ENCOUNTER ODDS TABLE / 2F

Terrain Type	MP Expended In Square 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Clear	27	63	86	94	97	98	99	99	99	99	99
Rough	18	47	72	85	92	95	97	98	99	99	99
Hills	14	40	64	78	87	92	95	96	97	98	99

Ambush Spot SR = 8 - (lowest Attacker CSL) + (Target Trap SL) - (Target Spd HPP)

STARMARINE MORALE / 2G

Critical Distance	20%
Reinitiates Combat	0 - 1
Remains Ducking	3 - 7
Quits Combat	8 - 9

Range (hex)	Fire Pattern	
00 - 20	Hip Fire	1 AC Aim
21 - 70	Fire Stance	1 AC Aim
71 - 99	Fire Stance	2 AC Aim
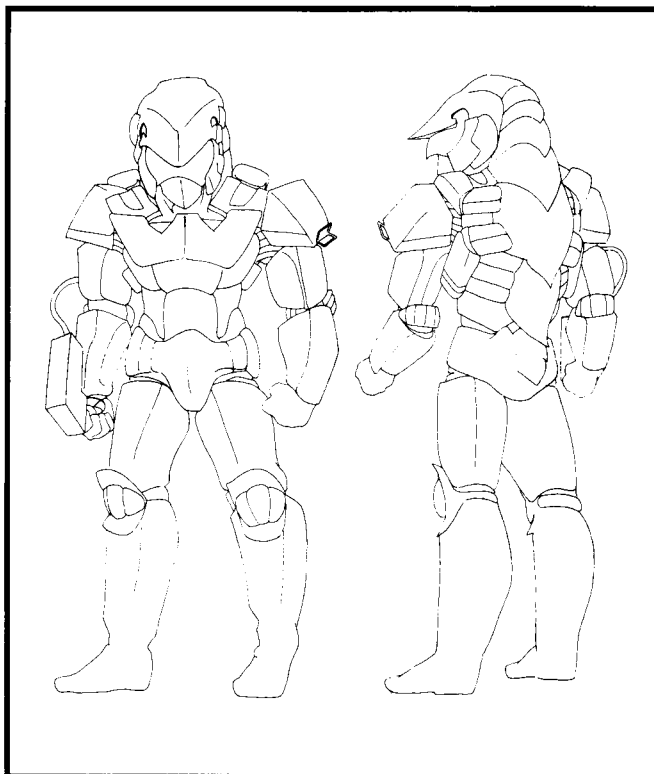
DRGN HIT LOCATION AND DAMAGE TABLE / 3A

For use when the user is **In The Open** only

Hit Roll	Hit Location	Subsystem Damaged	Subsystem Class
22-23	Chest	Field Generator #1	8
24	Base of Neck	Field Generator #1	8
25	Heart	Critical Electronics	10
26	Spine	Field Generator #2	8
27	Spine	Field Generator #3	8
28	Spine	Field Generator #4	8
29	Spine	DRGN Module*	10
30	Spine	Power Pack*	8
31-32	Abdomen	Field Generator #2	8
33-34	Abdomen	Field Generator #3	8
43-44	Pelvis	Field Generator #4	8
45-47	Pelvis	DRGN Module*	10
48-50	Pelvis	Power Pack*	8

* Roll to determine which of the ten components is damaged

SYSTEM DAMAGE TABLE / 3B

Type of Incoming Fire	System Class									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Lase	01	02	04	08	15	27	47	72	92	99
Projectile Small Arms	02	03	06	11	21	38	62	85	98	†1
Rocket Rifle	04	07	14	27	46	71	92	99	†1	†2
Grenade / Explosive	11	20	35	58	83	97	†1	†2	†3	†4

DAMAGE LEVEL TABLE / 3C

Level of Damage	Lase System Class				Projectile Small Arms System Class				Rocket Rifle System Class				Grenade / Explosive System Class			
	1 - 4	5 - 6	7 - 8	9 -10	1 - 4	5 - 6	7 - 8	9 -10	1 - 4	5 - 6	7 - 8	9 -10	1 - 4	5 - 6	7 - 8	9 -10
MIN	0 - 2	0 - 1	0	-	0 - 1	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MAJ	3 - 6	2 - 4	1	0	2 - 5	1 - 3	0	-	0 - 2	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
REP	7 - 8	5 - 8	2 - 6	1 - 3	6 - 7	4 - 7	1 - 5	0 - 2	3 - 4	1 - 3	0 - 2	-	0 -1	0	-	-
Destroyed	9	9	7 - 9	4 - 9	8 - 9	8 - 9	6 - 9	3 - 9	5 - 9	4 - 9	3 - 9	0 - 9	2 - 9	1 - 9	0 - 9	0 - 9

GROUND VEHICLE DATA TABLE / 3D

Vehicle		Driver	Passenger	Void	Pwr Train	Suspen.	Tires	Engine	Fuel Tnk
ATV	TS Mod	9	12	13	6	5	8	6	4
	Hit Roll	00 - 07	08 - 31	32 - 84	85 - 87	88 - 88	89 - 94	95 - 97	98 - 99
	Armor PF	2	1	1	8	6	1	20	1
	System Class	1	-	-	8	6	9	7	8
ATT	TS Mod	9	18	17	11	8	10	11	9
	Hit Roll	00 - 00	01 - 48	49 - 90	91 - 92	93 - 93	94 - 95	96 - 97	98 - 99
	Armor PF	2	2	2	12	7	2	45	5
	System Class	1	-	-	8	6	4	7	8
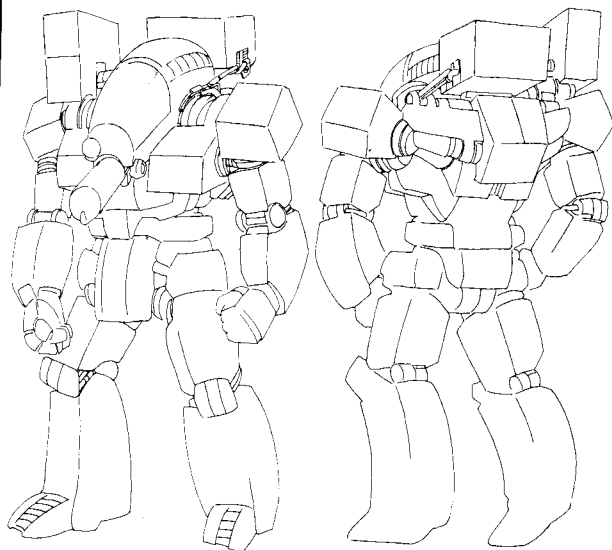
MORITURI HIT LOCATION AND DAMAGE / 4A

HIT ROLL	SYSTEM NAME	SYSTEM CLASS	PROT. FACTOR	TS MOD
00-03	Non-Essential Elec.	4	100	6
04-10	Cockpit	2	200	8
11-12	Critical Electronics	4*	200	4
13-16	Right Arm	1*	100	8
17-22	Left Arm	1*	100	8
23-23	Right Quad GMG	7	180	0
24-24	Left Quad GMG	7	180	0
25-44	Power Supply	3	180	12
45-55	Hydraulics	3*	180	10
56-77	Right Leg	1*	100	12
78-99	Left Leg	1*	100	12

* Redundant System, takes two Disabling hits to knock out.

WM1 OVERALL SPECIFICATIONS / 4B

Height:	32	feet
Gross Weight:	70	tons
Power Capacity:	2	years
Armor PF:	200 / 180 / 100	

Armament: 2 Quad-Mounted GMG8H 3.3mm Gauss Machine Guns (Heavy)

Major Subsystems:

Head

Armor Canopy	Pilot Protective Harness
Command Center	Pilot Evacuation System
Systems Displays	Pilot Auto Medic
Fire Control	Head Traverse

Torso

Armor Panels	Quad GMG's
Hydraulic Systems	Weapon Control Circuitry
Electronics	Weapon Traverse
Power Supply	Ammunition Supply

Arms

Armor Panels	Digit Control Circuits
Hydraulic Servos	Digit Cameras
Tear Gas Projectors	Digit Sensors

Legs

Armor Panels	Mantis Power Linkages
Hydraulic Servos	Ground Sensors

WEAPON SPECIFICATIONS / 4C

AIM TIME	AIM MOD	WEISMYER'S BASE SA	WEAPON VALUES	
1	-30	-18	Ammunition Capacity (per Barrel)	400
2	-12	0		
3	-5	7	Ammunition Weight (per Barrel)	90
4	0	12		
5	5	17		
6	7	19	Penetration (HRAF)	
7	10	22	Standard	136
8	11	23	Armor Piercing	384
9	13	25		
10	14	26	Damage Class	8
12	17	29		
14	19	31	Effective Range	100

STOMPING ON SOMEONE / 4D

BASE ODDS (to avoid Stomp): 4, +2 per CA of Target

ROLL	AREA CAUGHT UNDER FOOT	PHYSICAL DAMAGE
00-09	Leg	(10) X 70
10-16	Arm	(10) X 10
17-84	Partially Stomped (Legs & Lower Body)	(10) X 1,000
85-99	Fully Stomped	(10) X 10,000

WM1 MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION / 4E

- Occupies 2 normal hexes (2 yards each)
- Each Step takes 2 Impulses, and covers 1 or 2 hexes
- Legs must move alternately
- May Turn in Place; uses 2 Impulses
- All Shots while Moving are with 1 Action of Aim and -10 to SA
- Each Gun has a 60 degree Field of Fire; may aim separately
- Guns may fire into front 180 degrees only

FRONT VIEW

MANTIS HIT LOCATION AND DAMAGE / 5A

Hit Location Roll			
Firing Over Cover	In The Open	Subsystem Name	Prot. Factor
00-39	00-10	Head Graze / Void	30
40-57	11-15	Ultrasonics / Bifocal*	10
58-62	16-16	Advanced Aiming System #1	10
63-66	17-17	Advanced Aiming System #2	10
67-72	18-19	Lase Assault Rifle #1	10
73-78	20-21	Lase Assault Rifle #2	10
79-82	22-22	Fire Control Relay	30
83-91	23-24	Head Servo System 1	30
92-99	25-26	Head Servo System 2	30
	27-33	Body Graze / Void	30
	34-34	Transmitter 1	30
	35-35	Transmitter 2	30
	36-38	Critical Components	30
	39-40	Power Packs 1 & 2	30
	41-42	Power Packs 3 & 4	30
	43-44	Power Packs 5 & 6	30
	45-49	Hydraulic System 1	30
	50-54	Hydraulic System 2	30
	55-60	Manipulator Arm Drive	30
	61-64	Leg Drive System 1	30
	65-68	Leg Drive System 2	30
	69-72	Leg Drive System 3	30
	73-76	Leg Drive System 4	30
	77-83	Leg Graze	30
	84-87	Leg Servo System 1	30
	88-91	Leg Servo System 2	30
	92-95	Leg Servo System 3	30
	96-99	Leg Servo System 4	30

WM2 OVERALL SPECIFICATIONS / 5B

Height:	24 / 48 inches
Gross Weight:	350 pounds
Power Capacity:	72 hours
Armor PF:	30 / 10
Armament:	2 LAR8 Lase Assault Rifles

Major Subsystems:

Head

Armor Panels	Modified LAR8's
Head Servos	Aiming Systems
Visual Systems	Fire Control Relay

Torso

Armor Panels	Transmitters
Electronics	Power Supply
Hydraulic Systems	Leg Drives
Secondary Arm Drive	Auxiliary Pack Bays

Primary Limbs

Armor Panels	Leg Servos

WM2 MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION / 5C

Combat Strategies:
- **Move**; Moves 8 HPP in normal terrain, 4 HPP in difficult terrain
- **Advance and Fire**; Fires one weapon per Impulse SA is -10 for Auto Fire, -14 for Single Shot. Moves as above
- **Stand and Fire**; Fires one weapon per Impulse SA is 0 for Auto Fire, -4 for Single Shot
- If one Leg is lost, unit moves 1/2 speed
- If two Legs are lost, unit moves 1/4 speed
- Loss of Fire Control Relay disables both LAR8's
- Loss of Critical Components or of both Transmitters or Bifocals disables unit

AFFILIATION	CHARACTERISTICS										SHOT ACCURACY					
NAME	STR	INT	WIL	AGI	ARMOR	PF	WEAPON	SAL	CA	KV	1	2	3	4	5	EXP
Imperial Secret Service																
Agent Kasha Briceton	12	18	18	14	CS L1	16	LARGL8	14	8	72	-10	1	6	9	12	1.6
Skills in Section 5.1																
Petrov	16	14	16	17	CS L1	16	LARGL8	14	9	64	-10	1	6	9	12	1.6
Gonzalez	16	13	16	18	CS L1	16	LARGL8	14	9	64	-10	1	6	9	12	1.6
Ericson	16	14	16	17	CS L1	16	LARGL8	14	9	64	-10	1	6	9	12	1.6
Taylor	16	15	16	17	CS L1	16	LARGL8	14	9	64	-10	1	6	9	12	1.6
Kelson Davis	18	8	16	17	CS	2	FMP8	10	10	80	-8	-1	0	1	2	1.0
Agent Lars Tarpin	14	16	18	14	CS L1	16	LAR8	12	8	54	-9	2	5	8	10	1.4
Skills in Section 5.1																
Agent Spec. Smith	12	14	14	16	CS L1	16	LAR8	12	6	42	-9	2	5	8	10	1.4
8th Communications																
Agent Spec. Jones	14	13	16	14	CS L1	16	LAR8	12	7	48	-9	2	5	8	10	1.4
8th Demolitions																
Agent Spec. Gomez	13	15	16	12	CS L1	16	LAR8	12	6	48	-9	2	5	8	10	1.4
6th Medical Aid																
Agent Spec. Ivanov	14	14	14	15	CS L1	16	LAR8	12	7	42	-9	2	5	8	10	1.4
8th Heavy Weapons																
Field Agent Lee	13	12	16	14	CS L1	16	LAR8	13	6	56	-8	3	6	9	11	1.5
Field Agent Petri	13	11	15	14	CS L1	16	LAR8	13	6	52	-8	3	6	9	11	1.5
Field Agent Wong	13	11	16	14	CS L1	16	LAR8	13	6	56	-8	3	6	9	11	1.5
Field Agent Schmidt	13	10	15	14	CS L1	16	LAR8	13	6	52	-8	3	6	9	11	1.5
Pilot Tom Uffert	10	16	16	16	CS	2	LMP8	10	7	32	-9	1	4	7	9	1.0
27th Starmarines																
Lt. Lucas Hanesworth	13	16	16	12	CS L1	16	LAR8	12	6	48	-9	2	5	8	10	1.4
Skills in Section 5.1																
Platoon Leaders	13	16	16	13	CS L1	16	LAR8	12	6	48	-9	2	5	8	10	1.4
Squad Leaders	15	15	16	13	CS L1	16	LAR8	12	6	48	-9	2	5	8	10	1.4
SCC Power Armor	12	15	17	14	SCC PA	60	GMG8L	14	7	68	-15	-4	2	7	10	2.0
Starmarines	13	12	15	13	CS L1	16	LAR8	12	6	45	-9	2	5	8	10	1.4
Search Detachment																
Lt. Benson Gibbs	12	17	16	11	CS	2	LAR8	10	6	32	-11	0	3	6	8	1.0
Staff Corporals	10	15	14	10	CS	2	LMP8	10	5	28	-9	1	4	7	9	1.0
Electronics Techs	10	14	13	10	CS	2	LMP8	10	5	26	-9	1	4	7	9	1.0
8th Elec. Espionage																
Other Personnel																
Zhan	15	13	18	17	CS L1	16	LAR8	15	10	81	-6	5	8	11	13	1.7
Rinya	16	14	18	17	CS L1	16	LAR8	15	10	81	-6	5	8	11	13	1.7
Cpl. Martin Travis	15	14	16	14	None	0	FMP8	14	9	64	-4	3	4	5	6	1.4

AFFILIATION NAME	GENERAL SKILLS	PROFESSIONAL SKILLS	OTHER SKILLS	HOBBIES
Imperial Robotics Section Exec. Sc. Edmund Fowler	Civilian, except: 9th Diplomacy	6th E1 7th E2	6th Politics 8th Economics 8th Business 4th Clerical	7th Golf 6th Tennis 6th Bridge 6th Connoisseur
Chief Sc. Herbert Gross	Civilian, except: 3rd Diplomacy	8th E2 8th Electromagnetics 6th Astronomy	5th Politics 6th Clerical	
RA Anton Ziers	Civilian, except: 7th Diplomacy	7th E2 3rd E1	3rd Politics	6th Golf 5th Tennis 5th Connoisseur
RA Teresa Ruvin	Civilian	8th E1 12th E2 10th Mathematics 10th Physics 8th Computer Sci.		6th Running 6th Aerobics
RA Willis Schwebberhaffenwurf	Civilian	11th E1 9th E2 8th MI 6th MW 8th MT 6th EL 6th Computer Op 6th Computer Rep.	6th Test Equip. Op. 6th Test Equip. Rep.	9th Chess
RA Dmitri Prescott	Civilian	7th E1 5th E2 7th Computer Op.	7th Clerical	
RA Stania Borodin	Civilian, except: 3rd Diplomacy 2nd Gun Combat 2nd Type B Skills 2nd Type C Skills	3rd E1 3rd E2 6th Computer Op.	8th Clerical 4th Communication	6th Card Game 6th Carousing
Lt. Max Weismyer	Imp. Starmarine	8th Grav Pilot	5th Morituri Qual.	
Caitlin Haverlein	Civilian	7th Clerical 8th Accounting 3rd Computer Op.		7th Flirting 4th Carousing
Bryant Melville	Civilian	8th Clerical 3rd Computer Op.		8th Gambling
Mantis Controllers ISS Agent Miller	Trident Law Enf.		5th Mantis Qual.	
ISS Agent Hanson	Trident Law Enf.		5th Mantis Qual.	
Starmarine Cpl. Ryan	Imp. Starmarine		4th Mantis Qual.	
Starmarine Cpl. Hawkins	Imp. Starmarine		4th Mantis Qual.	

MANTIS DAMAGE LOG / 8A

WM – 2	Loss of all boxes in any Column Disables the Weapons					Loss of all boxes in any Column Disables WM – 2				Loss of one box 1/2 Move Loss of two boxes 1/4 Move Loss of three boxes no Move			
	Sonics	AAS	LAR	FCR	HSS	Trans	Crit	1-2 3-4 5-6	Hyd	1 LD/LS	2 LD/LS	3 LD/LS	4 LD/LS
1	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
21	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
22	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
23	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

MORITURI / MORTUARY DAMAGE LOG / 8B

	Pilot Display	Critical Elect	Rght Arm	Left Arm	R GMG	L GMG	Pwr Supply	Hydraulics	Rght Leg	Left Leg
WM – 1	☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐	☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐

L.E.G.IONNAIRE

LIVING·STEEL

Trident/RMBK

Everyone thought the DRGN Combat Suit was harmless.
They were wrong.

A Grav Vehicle from Trident/RMBK has been shot down in the wilderness. On board are the secrets of RMBK's advanced science, including the answer to the mysteries of the DRGN Combat Suit. Your team has been assigned to the search...but the Imperium is also hunting for the downed vehicle, with all the forces at its disposal.

Your search will take you deep into the wilderness, through the ruins of a bombed-out Subcon, and into deadly combat with the most powerful Imperial unit you have ever faced: the top-secret Imperial Robotics Section, a covert unit which uses illegal technology to do the bidding of the Imperium.

Trident/RMBK will test the skills of your entire Operation Team, from the Swords in their **Living Steel** to the members of the Alpha Teams. Those who pass the test will wield the full power of the DRGN Combat Suit, and will be ready to take the next step in the quest for RMBK's lost technology.

Trident/RMBK is a scenario for the **Living Steel High-Tech Adventure Game**, and begins to reveal the story of Trident's renegade RMBK division and its technological breakthroughs. Background on Trident/RMBK is included, as well as Skirmish and Search rules, and complete information on the Imperial Robotics Section.

LEADING EDGE
GAMES