

HORIZON WARS

SCIENCE-FICTION COMBINED-ARMS WARGAMING



ROBEY JENKINS



H O R I Z O N W A R S

ROBEY JENKINS



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INTRODUCTION

War and conflict has been a perpetual and constant part of the human condition since before we learned to stand upright. Beyond our modern horizons lie uncountable thousands more wars, still to be fought, by people, machines and perhaps even other intelligent species that we can scarcely imagine. But knowing that our imaginations too often fall short of what reality delivers has never stopped us trying: that, too, has been a perpetual part of the human condition. In many ways, it can be argued that war and imagination between them have been the two most potent drivers for progress in our evolutionary history.

Horizon Wars embraces both. It is a simple system for playing out fun wargames on future battlefields. It doesn't set out to be a completely faithful re-creation of distant, near-future or modern warfare, but it does aim to capture enough of the flavour and tactics of real combat to allow commanders to immerse themselves in the narrative that unfolds. At the same time, it keeps its head high enough in the clouds to imagine ways of fighting, forces, weaponry and even battlefields that no modern or historical soldier has ever experienced.

The core mechanics are simple to learn, but the breadth of variety is such that it would be almost impossible to play the same game twice.

Alongside the rules, you will hear some echoes of those future wars. They portray a future that could (but probably won't) be ours. Those echoes don't come from a dystopia of perpetual warfare or a grim millennium of relentless conflict. Rather, they come from an unfolding narrative in which war in one form or another will play its part. It is occasionally bleak and frequently darkly comic (for such is life), but it is

"What will war be like, over the horizon? Our world changes, almost daily, in ways we could scarcely have imagined, as new technology is created, new threats and dangers are discovered and the political balance of power shifts. Few forces are a more potent influence on the technological, social and economic status quo than war, so if things seem to be moving fast now, imagine how fast they could move if we all started fighting again..."

- Gasklin Hume, Professor of Futurism and Trend Analysis, University of the West of England (Sept 2113)

"Professor Hume may be dangerously insane but he's not wrong. If we want Britain to regain its place on the international stage, we're going to need to start breaking some faces. The French will probably be a good place to start."

- Joshua Nowakoski, Prime Minister of Great Britain, Private Briefing (Dec 2114)



fundamentally an optimistic vision of our future in which we escape the bonds of gravity tying us to this blue-green ball of tumbling rock and expand into our solar system and beyond. That we are never short of excuses to cross swords with each other and, perhaps, other races that we encounter on new worlds far from our home, is a sad inevitability of the human condition but, at least, it gives us a good excuse for a game!

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY



GETTING STARTED

Apart from these rules, you'll need a few things before you can get started. For a start, you'll need a battlefield to fight over. This may be a floor, a tabletop, a cloth, a wooden board or even a fully sculpted table adorned with custom-built terrain. Any more-or-less flat surface will do. Small games only need about 2'x4' or 3'x3'. Larger games may spread out across an area as large as 4'x6' or even bigger. It will help if you do have some extra obstructions to fight over, too. Battles – at least, interesting ones – are rarely fought over featureless, flat plains. Some buildings, hills, trees, rivers – or alien versions of those – are a great addition to make your battle feel more alive.

You'll also need a battlegroup for each commander to command. A fun and exciting game can be had with forces of just three or four units (called “elements” in these rules), but for those with large collections and the vision of mighty armies clashing in epic conflict, the rules will comfortably accommodate forces of twenty or more elements per side.

MODEL SCALE

There is a popular convention in miniatures wargames to describe scale not in terms of a strict ratio, but by reference to the typical height of an average human male. In these terms, the rules have been written to accommodate miniatures of anywhere between 2mm and 10mm. The smaller scales are great for encompassing the grand sweep of the strategic battle, whilst at the larger scales, the game becomes more about the tactical game of short-range firefights and calculated risks.

The mid-point of 6mm (describing the typical height of an average human soldier model) is where the two extremes of the spectrum are in balance and most of the miniatures depicted in these rules are approximately this scale. Some miniatures ranges are described as being 1/285, describing the more-or-less exact ration between one unit on the tabletop and one unit in real life. This scale is close enough to 6mm as makes no difference.

Of course, the advantage of having a game with a fictional, futuristic setting is that a good deal of leeway exists when it comes to deciding on exactly how large a given model is supposed to be. Players are encouraged to be both imaginative and sensible, but the important thing is that both players understand what each other's models represent and to have fun playing.





You can find a list of companies that makes miniatures ideal for playing *Horizon Wars* in **Appendix 1**.

BASING CONVENTIONS

It is extremely inconvenient and time-consuming to find yourself trying to move half a dozen tiny individual soldier models to represent an infantry squad. It is therefore much easier to place a number of soldiers on a single base to represent your squad.

Similarly, once you've decided upon a base size for your squad, it can be helpful to place all of your forces on bases of the same size. Ranges and distances tend to be measured from base edge to base edge. Without a base, arguments can arise about whether range is measured from the end of a barrel or from the hull of a vehicle or walker.

Your choice of base size is entirely up to you and opposing sides can use different sizes and shapes of base without causing disagreements, quite easily. Any round, square or hexagonal base of a diameter of between 25mm and 35mm is probably a reasonable choice. If your bases are too large, you may have trouble fitting elements down narrow gaps between buildings. If they are too small, they will disappear beneath the mass of larger elements.

Let common sense prevail.

OTHER ITEMS

You'll also need:

- About ten twelve-sided dice, called "D12s" throughout the rules
- A tape measure marked in inches
- A handful of small counters with two different sides: pennies are ideal.
- An army roster – a template for which can be found at the end of this book.
- A calculator may be useful at the start or end of some battles.

Once you've got to grips with the rules, you may also want to add some extra things, such as missions, which might need counters, markers or special terrain. If you add aircraft to your force, you'll also need some way of marking their altitude, such as six-sided dice ("D6s").

PREPARING FOR WAR



THE BALANCE OF POWER

War is rarely fair. When you need a gun, all you'll have is a bow. When you need a squadron of tanks, you'll only have a platoon of infantry. When you need a massive stompy robot, you'll discover that your enemy appears to have cornered the market in massive, stompy robots.

Forces in *Horizon Wars* are almost endlessly customizable and trying to find a perfect balance between individual elements is futile. A light mech, a reconnaissance helicopter and a light infantry squad all take up about the same amount of space in a force organization, but no one would argue they had similar uses in a battle. Some will be perfect for one task, others better suited to another.

That said, an effort has been made to make sure that such equivalent elements, whilst they may not be one another's equals in a straight-up shooting battle, have a broadly similar level of utility. But there is one exception: mechs.

The superiority of mechs in *Horizon Wars* is deliberate. It seems extremely unlikely that piloted or even remote-operated battle robots on the scale of mechs will ever be fielded in real warfare and even less likely that they will become the default war machine of choice. The only reason that such mechanically and logistically complicated and tactically-vulnerable weapons would ever enjoy such a position of dominance on the future battlefield is if they were substantially superior options over every other choice.

For the purposes of *Horizon Wars* we have designed them to be exactly superior enough to the alternatives to make it worth investing in their existence. As a result, it is strongly suggested that, if you want to play a traditional "balanced" game of equal forces with a hypothetically equal chance of success, you agree in advance that only a fixed maximum of points – the currency with which one assembles a battlegroup – can be spent on mechs, with the remainder having to be spent on other assets.

If you still find massive, walking combat robots too improbable for words, then I suggest you just don't include them in your games.

The British assault on Calais took the whole world by surprise. It was as if a whole nation had, as one, gone mad. There were a lot of theories, but little firm evidence, once the dust had settled. Perhaps it was a contamination of the water supply; the inevitable effect of extreme exposure to reality-based entertainment, or the infiltration of the political classes by nationalist extremist sleeper agents. Privately, a lot of the world thought, firstly that the British had just surrendered to their natural inclinations, and secondly that the French had been asking for it for good couple of centuries...

- Extract from *How Did We Get Here From There?* by Danielle Allen (2263)

The first mechanical armoured frames – popularly known as "mechs" – were the unpredictable offspring of the Hume Effect and the apparent group sociopathy of the British military elite who decided that the perfect tool for giving 'the Frogs' a good kicking was a tank that could actually kick.

- Extract from *The New Oxford Spotters' Guide to Mechanical Armoured Frames* (2270)



MUSTERING

“Mustering” is the process of deciding what forces you’re going to take to your battle. Commanders agree with their opponents a maximum number of points that each will spend on their forces – usually an equal number, but some scenarios may suggest different amounts – and then assemble a force using up to that amount. For example, for a quick game, each player might agree to use 9 points.

The elements you can add to your force will cost 1, 2 or 3 points, depending on their size and effectiveness – something called “Presence”, which is explained in more detail later. A heavy mech, a potent battle tank or a squad of special forces will typically cost 3 points, whilst a light mech, a squad of infantry or a small aircraft might only cost 1 point. Elements in between these extremes will cost 2 points.

‘The involvement of the International Melds was unanticipated. The great emergent intelligences that grew out of the gestalt-worker movement had always been influential, but similarly had always been seen as a tool to promote peace and international stability. Their coordinated interference with the anti-British coalition would, modern commentators suspect, have been enough to allow the British war-machine to crush its opposition and cement a hold over Europe that might never have been broken. That the Greater London Meld was a guiding influence in the invasion is undisputed, but its motivation will forever remain a mystery. With the explosion that wiped out British High Command, however, what had been a single, international resistance effort against British expansionism suddenly became two dozen smaller wars, as senior British officers – all of them highly-trained, battle-hardened and charismatic – became like a gallon of petrol poured on the smouldering international scene.

- Extract from *How Did We Get Here From There?* by Danielle Allen (2263)



Some special rules and combinations of forces might allow you add elements to your force for less than their normal cost, or might force you to pay more. This doesn't change an element's Presence for any other purpose, just for the points cost of adding it to your force.

The total points cost of a force is its Force Cost (FC). The combined total of the Presence of each element in the force is its Force Presence (FP). This is explained in more detail in the **Horizon Warriors** section of this book (page 56).

Once complete, your force is called a Battlegroup. The table below gives a rough illustration of how long a game at that size might be expected to last, if both players have a force of the same value.

Force Presence	Approximate length of game (mins)
7	30 minutes
12	45 minutes
15	1 hour
25	2 hours

ELEMENTS

A Battlegroup (BG) comprises a number of elements that the commander chooses. There are lots of different types of element, from immense mechs, to potent aircraft, to light infantry squads. But all elements possess some things in common.

The first of these is an element's stats:

- Presence (P)
- Movement (M)
- Firepower (F)
- Armour (or Agility) (A)
- Defence (D)

Movement, Firepower and Armour/Agility are *active stats*. Presence and Defence are *passive stats*. Together, these are called an element's "stat line".

Furthermore, each element will also have an Arc of Vision and will belong to one of four Element Types.

PRESENCE (P)

The first stat to be aware of is the element's Presence or "P". An element's P has several functions in the game, but the most important is to dictate how many points an element costs to include in your BG, closely followed by calculating your BG's force presence.

A BG's force presence is worked out by adding up the P of each of the elements that comprise the BG. So a BG made up of five elements of P 3, 3, 2, 2 and 1 has a force presence of 11. Its force cost, however, may be affected by other rules. Full details of how force cost is worked out are given in the **Horizon Warriors** section.

An element's P also dictates how effective it is in an assault, and, in some scenarios, how valuable its destruction is to your opponent.

MOVEMENT (M)

Obviously enough, this describes how quickly an element can move. There are three basic types of movement:

- **Cautious:** Mostly used when cautiously passing through areas dominated by enemy forces, the element moves slowly, to maintain its situational awareness on all sides. The element may move up to its M value in inches, and gains a 360° arc of awareness (see **Reactions** on page 33 for details).
- **Patrol:** This is normal movement. The element moves quickly forward, ready to engage targets of opportunity or respond to unexpected threats. The element may move up to twice its M value.
- **Rapid:** The element moves as quickly as it can, sacrificing situational awareness for speed. The element may move up to three times its M. However, it may not shoot in the same turn as it makes a rapid move. This means that an element that has already shot in a turn may not subsequently make a rapid move in the same turn.



Although not all elements are able to use all movement types, these movement types broadly apply to all ground forces. Aircraft – fixed wing and rotary – use a related but different movement system which is explained in the **Aircraft** section.

FIREPOWER (F)

An element's F represents a mix of its volume of fire, its range and its accuracy. This represents that, in *Horizon Wars* very few elements will carry a single form of ranged attack. Mechs may tote heavy laser cannons as well as short-range defensive systems and high-volume light weapons. Even light infantry, as well as their personal weapons, will also carry anti-tank weapons, grenade launchers and specialist anti-materiel systems.

An element's F is the base number of dice it rolls when shooting.

ARMOUR/AGILITY (A)

In raw, pragmatic terms, whether an element is hard to damage because it is heavily armoured or because its agility makes it hard to hit is academic. Either way, A represents how hard an element is to damage.

Enemies shooting at a target element must add the target's A to their range (see page 27).

DEFENCE (D)

Most elements have some degree of counter-measures designed to minimize the impact of an enemy's attack, as well as resources to fix or ameliorate structural damage and injury. D represents both an element's counter-measures and its ability to recover from enemy action.

An element's D is the number of dice rolled to make an Incoming! roll against enemy shooting and to make a recovery action attempt (see page 31).

ARC OF VISION

Not a stat, but a quality also shared by all elements is the arc of vision. An element's arc of vision describes the area it is considered to be "looking at" at any time. The default arc of vision is a 180° arc to the front of the element, but some rules or conditions can increase that to 360°.



Line of Sight (LOS)

If an element can draw a straight line between any part of itself or its base, from within its arc of vision, and any part of an opposing element or its base, then it is said to have LOS. Note that LOS is slightly different to Line of Fire (LOF), for which see page 27.

ELEMENT TYPE

There are four types of element: mech, vehicle, infantry and aircraft. Mechs, vehicles and infantry, for the most part, follow very similar rules with a few exceptions. Aircraft have their own rules that are given in the **Aircraft** section (page 35).

THE MISSION

Once you've assembled your forces, you then need to find out what mission you have been assigned. Missions set out your objectives for the battle, and victory or defeat will be based on how well you do in achieving them.

The **Confrontations** section of these rules, starting on page 71, sets out three options to get you started: a set of five pre-designed battles, ideal for the new commander; a set of tables to generate random missions – called “adventures” - and a short section providing advice and guidance for commanders who want to invent their own scenarios, missions and campaigns.

DESIGN NOTE

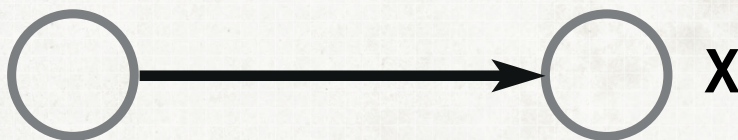
It is the convention to assemble your force, determine your mission and then set up the battlefield, because that's typically how things roll out in real wars: commanders must fit their forces to their mission; but the mission fits the battlefield. However, you can mix things up. For example, one commander can set up the battlefield and choose their deployment, but must randomize their mission afterwards. The other one randomizes a mission and gets to tailor their forces to meet their objectives, but must fight on ground of the enemy's choosing.

THE BATTLEFIELD

As mentioned earlier, you can play on any flat surface, but it's best to have one with a good amount of terrain upon it that will block lines of sight, hamper movement and generally make life a good deal more interesting for the warring parties.

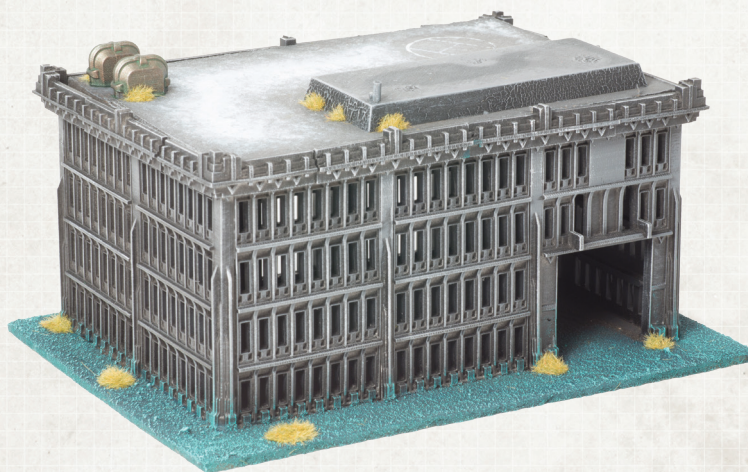
MEASURING DISTANCES

All distances on the battlefield are measured in inches ("). Any part of an inch is rounded up to the next inch, so $6\frac{7}{8}$ " is 7", and $7\frac{1}{8}$ " is 8". Distances between objects and game pieces are measured between the closest two points on each object, including any base. When an object is moved, the distance is measured from and to the same point at the start and end of the movement. This idea is more clearly explained in the diagram below:



TERRAIN

Detailed rules on terrain are given later. It is worth having some simple terrain pieces to make battles much more interesting, though. These can run from simple pieces improvised from empty yoghurt pots and toys through to fully detailed and elaborate sets that are a hobby project in their own right.



THE TURN



DESIGN NOTE

Not everyone likes to see counters on the tabletop, finding it distracting. You can avoid this by having a simple army roster with a space next to each element's roster entry on which to place the action tokens.

However, this also means that your opponent cannot instantly see which of your elements has or has not acted this turn (and vice versa), introducing an element of memory to the game. Some find this an exciting challenge. Others find it distracting from the game's pure tactical quality. It is worth discussing this with your opponent when planning a game.

There is no reason not to go on enjoying your life of freedom and productivity in this new and exciting age for many years to come. You just have to follow some simple guidelines.

1. Stay in your homes during curfew. Your local defence force is dedicated to preventing mercenary bandits from plundering our local HyCell centre, food store and ammunition dump. Despite your IFF patches (sponsored by Tesbury's Supermarket), it is impossible to guarantee your safety during security operations and Lord Tesbury accepts no responsibility for friendly fire casualties incurred during this time.

2. Eat and drink only the resources provided from local stores. Tesbury's Supermarket has your best interests at heart and provides guaranteed-radiation-free foodstuffs at low, low prices. Growing your own food is foolish. And remember: attempting to sell food not approved by Tesbury's Supermarket is a capital offence!

3. Tune in to NewSkies daily! NewSkies is there to give you all the latest news and views from across the cityzone. Accept no substitutes, and remember: listening to unlicensed or external media broadcasts is a capital offence!

4. Obey the instructions of your local defence force. Only by working together can we re-build our great nation, and the defence forces are the epitome of what can be achieved by cooperation. We're all in this together! And remember: failing to obey the instructions of a properly authorised member of the defence force is a capital offence!

- Extract from *We're All In This Together – Prosperity & Security* (2130)

ACTION TOKENS

At the start of each turn, each commander should place two action tokens next to each element. Once all the action tokens have been placed, the commanders roll dice and whoever rolls highest has priority that turn and may select an element to activate first. The commanders then alternate activating elements. If one commander has no more elements to activate, the other commander may continue to activate elements until all the elements on the table have been activated.

Commanders may not elect to "pass" their chance to activate an element.

Each element may be activated once per turn. In each activation, an element may perform up to two actions. When an element performs an action, remove a counter.

RESERVES

Many scenarios allow elements to be held off the table in reserve. Elements in reserve must still be allocated action counters like any other element. At any time, they may use one action to enter play: place the element so that it is adjacent to the commander's table edge (or other table edge from which the scenario rules dictate that entry from reserve is permitted). This counts as a patrol move action, so enemy elements may react to this action as normal. The element may then spend a second action as normal.

Elements in reserve may also be able to perform Indirect Fire (page 28) or Deep Deployment actions if their rules allow.

DEEP DEPLOYMENT

Some elements can enter the fight without having to go through the tedious process of actually walking or driving



there. Instead, they may jump from aircraft or out of low orbit, emerge from tunnels or even take advantage of experimental teleportation devices.

Elements that can enter play from Deep Deployment may start the game in reserve. The controlling commander must decide at the start of the turn, when action tokens are placed, that a Deep Deployment element will enter play. Instead of placing two action tokens beside the element itself, the commander places the counters on the tabletop to represent where the element will enter play: these counters may be placed in different places.

When the element is activated, place it adjacent to one of the counters and remove the other counter from the table. This counts as an action and enemy elements may react as normal. For the purposes of triggering any special movement rules, an element entering play by Deep Deployment counts as having made a 12" rapid movement with its first action (this applies even if the element cannot, otherwise, perform rapid movement or their rapid move would be more or less than 12").

If multiple elements will enter the game that turn by Deep Deployment, the commander places all the action tokens for all the elements entering that turn. When an element is activated, place it next to any of the action tokens placed for Deep Deployment elements and remove any other one.

It's a new age, ladies and gentlemen. Our war has cut the guts from the bellies of government. The HyCell has kicked in the teeth of the oligarchs. The Neonet is ours to control. We have the power, now, to be kings. The greatest of us have the power to be gods.

- Colonel Woden "Storm" Crowe (2128)



ACTIONS & REACTIONS



ACTIONS

Each element in the game can perform up to two actions per activation. Each time an element performs an action, remove one action token from it. An element may only be activated once per turn. An element does not have to perform its second action but may hold it in order to use it as a reaction later in the turn (see **Reactions** on page 33). However, once an element has completed its activation, it may not be activated again, even if it has not used its second action.

All elements in an army must be activated during each turn.

Actions must be selected from the following list:

- Move
- Shoot
- Move & Shoot
- Charge
- Do Nothing
- Recover

MOVE

Most elements can choose from three types of basic movement action:

- **Cautious:** Mostly used when cautiously passing through areas dominated by enemy forces, the element moves slowly, to maintain its situational awareness on all sides. The element may move up to its M value in inches, but gains a *360° arc of awareness* (see **Reactions** on page 33 for details).
- **Patrol:** This is normal movement. The element moves quickly forward, ready to engage targets of opportunity or respond to unexpected threats. The element may move up to twice its M value.
- **Rapid:** The element moves as quickly as it can, sacrificing situational awareness for speed. The element may move up to three times its M. However, it may not shoot in the same turn as it makes a *rapid* move. This means that an element that has already shot in a turn may not subsequently make a rapid move in the same turn.

DESIGN NOTE

By default, it is assumed that commanders can measure any range or distance at any time with their tape measures or measuring sticks, known as "pre-measuring". There is no need to judge distances by eye, as it is assumed that soldiers of the future will be well-equipped with automatic range-finders and telemetry calculators that will eliminate all need for such guesswork.

However, we recognize that some wargamers have, over many years' practice, honed a fine judgement of tabletop ranges and distances.

It is perfectly possible to play *Horizon Wars* either way. So if you want to allow pre-measuring, go ahead. If you'd rather play it by eye, feel free. Just make sure that all the commanders involved in the battle agree on their preferred method at the outset.

Not all elements are able to use all movement types. For example, some infantry elements, which must move on foot, cannot use the Rapid movement type. Aircraft have a different system for movement entirely, which is explained in the **Aircraft** section (page 35).

Friendly elements may be moved through without impediment, as if they were not there. Opposing elements are treated as impassable (see **Terrain**, page 48) although they may still be charged (see **Charge**, page 29).

This, here, is the ST-16 magrifle, designed to fire up to 15 caseless 5.56mm a second at a range of up to 500m. The third best thing about this baby is that it's entirely explosive-free so, other than a daily oiling to keep the dust and moisture out, you don't have to clean her. The second best thing is that she has no muzzle flash and almost no report, so it's stealthy as ****. But the best thing about her is, without doubt, the way it can fire these mass-reactive flechette rounds that mean that even a near miss is a stretcher case. Only bad thing? She kicks like a *****.

- Colour-Sergeant Andrew Butcher, King's Light Archers (2115)

SHOOT

Shooting in *Horizon Wars* is quick and easy to resolve:

1. **Declare target:** The commander identifies the target of the shooting action and checks that the target is in the active element's line of fire (see below). If it isn't, the commander may choose another target.
2. **Check range:** The range is measured between the closest two points on the active element and its target. This figure is then modified by adding the target's A and any cover (see **Dig In**, p.67) and the end result is the effective range.
3. **Fire:** The active commander then rolls a number of dice equal to the active element's F.
4. **Incoming:** The target commander then rolls a number of dice equal to the target element's D. Remove one die from the Fire roll for every die in the Incoming roll that exactly matches a Fire result. So if the Incoming roll shows a 3 and 8, and the Fire roll shows 5, 8, 8, the shooting commander must remove one 8 from his results.
5. **Calculate hits:** Using the remaining Fire dice, the active commander must then make groups of dice that equal or exceed the effective range. For each group, one hit is scored.
6. **Apply damage:** The target commander now adds the number of hits to the target element's damage track and reduces the target element's active stats by an amount equal to the number of hits (see **Damage** on page 34).

Line of Fire

A potential target must be in an element's default arc of vision *and* its LOS in order to be in its line of fire (LOF).



Shooting Example

Tom's light mech (F3) shoots at Rose's heavy infantry element. Tom checks that the infantry element is in the mech's LOF (it is) and measures the range, which is 8". The target has no cover and an A of 3, so the effective range is 11. He rolls his dice and scores 11, 7 and 4. Rose's heavy infantry has a D of 2. So she rolls two dice and gets 11 and 2.

Rose's 11 exactly matches Tom's 11, so Tom's 11 is removed from his F roll. He is left with a 7 and a 4, which together make 11 – just enough to score one hit.

Had Rose rolled an 8 instead of an 11, Tom would have had two groups: one of one 11, and one of the 7 and 4, both of which equal or exceed the effective range, giving him two hits.

Guide Fire & Indirect Fire

Guide Fire is a special Shoot action that can be performed by elements with this special rule. Instead of using their organic fire assets, they gather and transmit target data to elements with heavier fire power that then use parabolic fire or smart munitions to strike at targets "painted" by the Guide Fire elements.

An element that performs Guide Fire must spend an activation token as normal. They then fire normally, using their own line of fire and range but use the F of any friendly element with the Indirect Fire special rule. However, because data is rarely perfect or complete, the F of the indirectly firing element is reduced by -1.

The indirectly firing element must also spend an action token, although this does not count as activation for them and they may, if they have activation tokens remaining, act or react later in the turn. Indirect Fire may even be obtained from elements in reserve without them needing to deploy onto the table, and they may still deploy from reserve later, as normal. However, an element in reserve that provides

- ****, that thing's fast! How the **** can something that big move that fast?

- Where is it? Where did it go?
- What do you mean you lost it?
It's the size of a ***** house!

- Extract from contact transcript, unknown NATO heavy infantry squad (2117)

Indirect Fire may not subsequently perform Deep Deployment at all.

Guide Fire may not be used as a reaction, and may not be performed as part of a Move & Shoot action.

MOVE & SHOOT

...or Shoot & Move. The action can be performed in either order.

An element may perform a cautious or patrol move as part of a Move & Shoot action. Shooting follows all the normal requirements and restrictions but the element's F counts as half, rounding up.

DESIGN NOTE

It is worth pointing out that assaults are brutal and bloody affairs that only rarely leave either side unscathed. Even the victors are invariably stunned and shocked by the harrowing experience of intimate, hand-to-hand combat.

CHARGE

An element may only move into base contact with an opposing element by performing a Charge action. The movement must be in a straight line and no longer than a normal patrol move. A Charge is performed as follows:

1. Move charging element to 1" from its target or a counter-charging element if relevant (see **Counter-charge**, page 33).
2. All enemy reactions are resolved. Eligible enemy elements may react to a charge even if it is the second action in an activation.
3. If it is able, the charging element then completes its move.
4. Resolve the charge.

Resolve the Charge

To resolve the Charge, each commander rolls a number of dice equal to the P of the fighting element and notes the highest result. The result is then modified as follows:

For every other die showing the same value.	+1
If the element moved, but less than 4", to enter the Assault.	+1
If the element moved 4" or more to enter the Assault.	+2

Each element then takes an amount of damage equal to half its opponent's total, rounding down. See the **Damage** section, page 34. Whichever element takes the most damage (or the non-active element if the amount of damage is equal) is moved directly away from its opponent 1". Remove any action tokens remaining on either element.

Charge Special Rules

The following special rules apply to the relevant element types:

- **Infantry elements** cannot add more than +1 to their assault roll for any reason.
- **Mech/Vehicle elements** cannot Counter-charge.
- **Mech/Vehicle Charges Mech/Vehicle:** Any charge involving just mechs and/or vehicles is resolved exactly as described above.
- **Infantry Charges Infantry:** The charge is resolved as described above, but whichever element loses is destroyed. The other element takes damage as normal.
- **Infantry Charges Mech/Vehicle:** If the infantry element wins the assault roll, the mech/vehicle is destroyed. The infantry element halves the amount of damage it takes, rounding up.
- **Mech/Vehicle Charges Infantry:** If the infantry wins the assault roll, immediately resolve the combat again as "Infantry Charges Mech/Vehicle". If the results are equal, move the mech/vehicle an additional 1" further along the line of its Charge. The action is over. If the mech/vehicle wins the assault roll, move it an additional 1" further along the line of its Charge and remove the infantry element. The mech/vehicle still takes damage as normal.

DO NOTHING

It may sometimes occur that commanders want an element to perform no action. To do so, simply remove a counter as normal. If a commander declares a "nothing" action for an element's first action, opposing elements may react as normal (there are few targets more tempting than an enemy element doing nothing!).

This is a particularly useful action for elements in reserve that the commander does not intend to deploy this turn. As the reserve elements are not on the table, a "nothing" action can't prompt a reaction. The commander can either then pass play back to the opponent or use the second action to bring on the reserve element when the opposing commander cannot react. This represents cautious approaches, distraction tactics or (for elements using Deep Deployment) dummy landings.

Note that an element may also elect to perform a cautious move of 0" instead of doing nothing. In this case, the element gains the benefit of having performed a cautious move (360° arc of vision) but this does not count as a "nothing" action. Hidden or reserve elements must be placed on the battlefield if they perform a 0" cautious move, whereas they don't have to be if performing a "nothing" action.

RECOVER

Damaged elements may perform a Recover action. If they do so, they cannot move or shoot in the same action. Enemy elements may react to a Recover action as normal.

To perform a Recover action, the commander rolls a number of dice equal to the element's D stat and compares the result to the total amount of damage the element has suffered during the game. For each die that shows a result higher than the total amount of damage, the element may restore one point of an active stat up to its original value.

Note that total damage is not reduced by a Recover action, just its effect upon the active stats.

The effects of damage are explained below (page [34](#)).





REACTIONS

Once an element has fully resolved its first action, any opposing element that was able to draw a Line of Sight to the element during any part of its action, which still has at least one action token remaining, and which has not yet reacted, may react. The controlling commander of a reacting element removes an action token from the element, flips any remaining token to black and declares the reaction. Elements may perform the following reactions:

- Move
- Shoot
- Move & Shoot
- Counter-charge

Each element may react only once per turn. Once any opposing elements have reacted, the active element may then perform its second action. Opposing elements may not react to a second action, except a Charge action.

Once a commander has completed the activation of an element, the opposing commander may then choose an element to activate and play continues.

MOVE, SHOOT AND MOVE & SHOOT

The rules and restrictions that apply to these actions also apply when they are performed as reactions.

COUNTER-CHARGE

A Counter-charge is a special action that can only be performed as a reaction to a Charge action. Any one element that is within 1" of the line between the Charging element and its target (including the target) may declare a Counter-charge.

Move the active element towards the target until it is within 1" of the Counter-charging element, then move the Counter-charging element into contact with the active element. The Charge action is then resolved against the Counter-charging element. Note that Counter-charging elements gain the +1 bonus for moving less than 4", as described above.

If an element declares a Counter-charge, no other element may declare a Shoot or Move & Shoot reaction with the Charging element as its target.

We need to think bigger, better, brighter. We cannot afford to aim low. It is not enough to merely reach out and to settle a quiescent world. We need a project that will prove that humankind is not merely a tenant in this universe: we are its master. We are great! We shall do more than just settle a new world; through the Venus Project, we will tame one!

- **Gideon Wang, CEO Vizhnu Corporation, address to the Council of United Cities (June 2266)**

Let me be perfectly clear: I want Gideon Wang dead. I want everyone he ever loved dead. I want everything he ever touched destroyed. This is ***** war!

- **David Zoon (alleged), private conversation with persons unknown (July 2266)**

SPECIAL ACTIONS & REACTIONS

Some special rules, unique to certain types of element or to the scenario being played, will allow elements to perform additional actions and/or reactions. Such special rules will always list whether something can be performed as an action, reaction, or both. For example, some infantry elements benefit from the Dig In special rule (which can be found on page 67).

DAMAGE

Every hit that an element suffers causes 1 point of damage, which is added to a running tally on each element's stat line. For each point of damage, the commander must reduce one of the element's active stats by 1.

ZERO STATS

If a stat reaches 0 as a result of damage, the effect that has will depend upon which stat is at 0:

- If M is 0, the element may not move.
- If F is 0, the element may not shoot.
- If A is 0, the element is destroyed.

CRITICAL HITS

If any of the dice used to achieve the hit is a natural 12, the hit is a critical hit. Normally, the commander who controls the element decides which active stat will be reduced by damage. However, if a hit is critical, the opposing commander chooses which stat to reduce. If multiple hits are caused and only some are critical, the attacker chooses where to apply critical hits before the defender chooses where to apply any other hits.

OVERKILL

If an element that is hit has action tokens remaining, remove one token from the element for every hit it suffers in excess of its P.

AIRCRAFT



As the 'apex predator' of the battlefield, the mech was under little pressure to develop. By contrast, aircraft exploded with diversity. The resource-intensive drone super-fighters of the late 21st Century were largely abandoned. Instead, agility, resilience and anti-armour demands pushed aircraft in multiple directions: strike fighters, battlefield transports, rotary gunships...

Today's aircraft have an unassailable speed advantage over the mechs and avionics engineers have incorporated many of the self-healing mechanisms developed for mechs into aircraft. They can now fly and fight longer than ever. But aircraft are still fragile and, with Als guiding a lot of ground fire, vulnerable.

The tree of evolution for the mech may well have hit something of a dead-end, but for the aircraft, the potential explosion is still only on the 'b' of the bang.

- Extract from *Military Intelligence: Neo-evolution in a Social Context*, Doctor Julianne Malika, Professor of Applied Sociotechnology, New Massachusetts Institute (2278)



If you choose to include aircraft in your Battlegroup, they follow rules that are similar to those given above but with some important changes to reflect their unique nature and more complicated battlespace.

AIRCRAFT ACTIVATION

A commander must activate all his or her aircraft each turn. An aircraft element that is not activated is treated as having disengaged (see page 43). The only exceptions are aircraft that have landed, which do not have to be activated (and cannot disengage).

AIRCRAFT ACTIONS

Most aircraft *must* move in each action of their activation, or else they will crash. However, this may be combined with one of two other possible actions: Shoot or Repair.

Aircraft that can hover (see page 41), when they are doing so, may perform shoot or repair actions without moving. Hovering aircraft must still activate every turn, even if it is just to hover.

Aircraft that have landed may perform move actions to take off, or they may repair. They may not shoot, nor may they combine shooting or repairing with a move action used to take off.

AIRCRAFT LOS

Normally, an aircraft has a LOS of 180° to its front like all elements. However, an aircraft that is hovering (see page 41) may draw its LOS from within a full 360°.

ALTITUDE

Altitude is measured with an abstract scale from 0 to 5, in which 0 is the tabletop (ground level). An aircraft that rises to Altitude 6 or more is considered to have disengaged (see page 43).



The easiest way to mark altitude is with a six-sided die or “D6”, with the altitude corresponding to the number shown on the die. If an aircraft is at Altitude 0 (landed), then either remove the element from its base and place it on the tabletop or place a D6 next to it showing the “6”.

AIRCRAFT MOVEMENT

An aircraft's M consists of a value (*v*) and a bonus (*b*). The value is the number of points allocated to the M when mustering (see **Mustering**, page 57). The bonus is the amount added to that to gain the aircraft's total M. So an aircraft's M is shown as “*v (+b)*”, for example “5 (+5)” or “4 (+0)”. Where the rules specify an aircraft's “M” it means the sum of the two figures. “Mv” refers to the value and “Mb” refers to the bonus.

The default Mb of an aircraft is (+5).

An aircraft *must* normally move a distance at least equal to its Mb per action, or it will crash. An aircraft that moves its minimum distance (“Mb”) must make a Stall test (see **Stalling**, page 46).

Aircraft that can hover don't have to move. Likewise, aircraft that have landed (or not taken off yet) don't have to move.

Before a commander moves an aircraft, he or she must declare what manoeuvre the aircraft is using from the choices below.

BASIC MANOEUVRES

Dead On

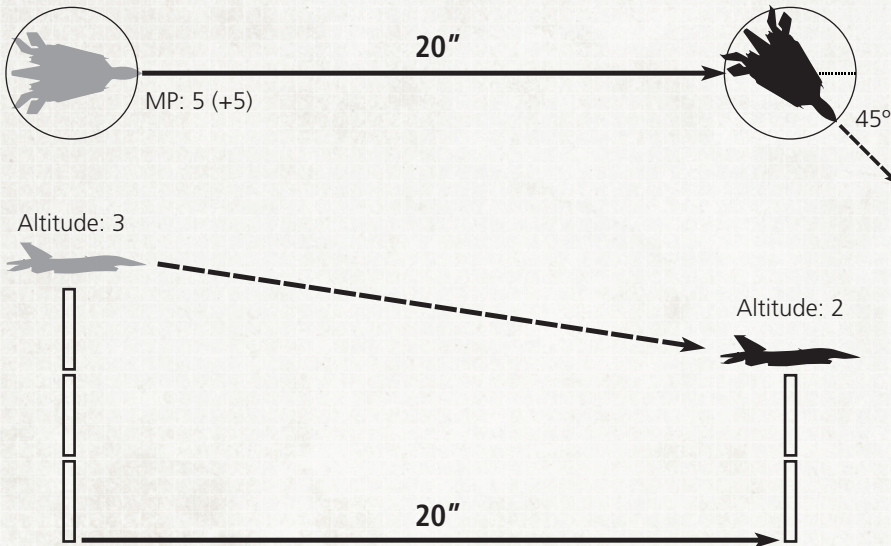
The aircraft moves in a straight line up to three times its M.



An aircraft with M5 (+5) may move Dead On up to 30" without changing altitude.

Bank

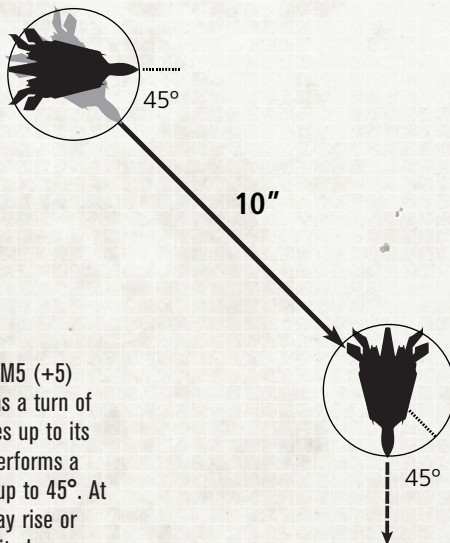
The aircraft moves in a straight line up to twice its M and then turns up to 45° and/or alters altitude by +/-1.



This aircraft, with M5 (+5) performs a bank, moving up to 20" then turning 45°. In the same move it may also rise or drop 1 altitude.

Veer

The aircraft immediately turns up to 45° and/or alters altitude by +/-1. It then moves up to its M and turns another 45° and/or alters altitude by +/-1.



In this Veer, an M5 (+5) aircraft performs a turn up to 45°, moves up to its M (10") then performs a second turn up to 45°. At either turn it may rise or drop up to 1 altitude.

Aircraft pilots and mech pilots have a long-established rivalry based, in part at least, upon what's seen as the mechs' adoption of air-fighting terminology: pilot, frame, wingman, flight, squadron... Mech pilots even adopt call-signs and paint cartoons and pin-ups on their cockpits. There's another one: cockpit."

- Air-Major "Shock" Wilson (2275)

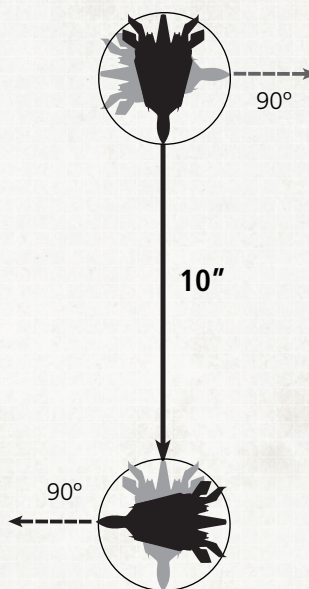
You see those a-frame guys? All square jaws and letter-jackets with their cheerleader girlfriends and stock portfolios? They're all jocks. They've always been jocks. But us? We're the geeks: we got counter-culture, roleplaying games and comic books. Jocks hate geeks – it's the way of the universe. And we're geeks with guns. They hate us more than anything.

- Staff Sergeant "Sandman" Caine (2275)

Hard Veer

As for a Veer, but the aircraft may make turns of up to 90° or change altitude by up to ± 2 . However, the commander must make a Stall test for the aircraft (see page 46). An aircraft making a hard veer may not shoot or repair as part of the same action.

In this Hard Veer, an M5 (+5) aircraft performs a turn of up to 90° , moves up to its M (10") then performs a second turn of up to 90° . At either turn it may rise or drop up to 2 altitude.



ADVANCED MANOEUVRES

These are other possible manoeuvres, such as hovering or taxiing, that apply to specific conditions.

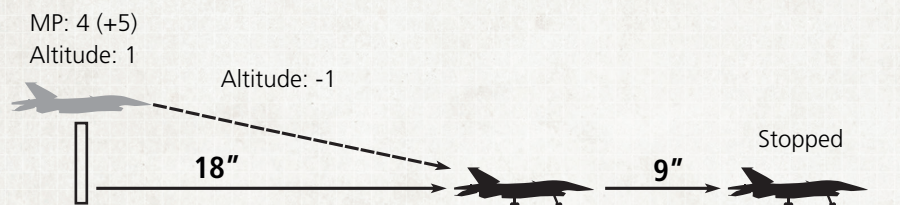
Landing

An aircraft may sometimes have cause to attempt to land in the course of a battle. To land safely, an aircraft must bank to Altitude 0 without turning in the same action. In its next available action, the aircraft must move dead on a distance equal to its M. A landed aircraft loses any actions remaining this turn.

If the final movement of the landing manoeuvre was performed entirely on an area of hard standing (road, runway or similar), the aircraft has now landed safely.

If an aircraft reaches Altitude 0 by any other means, turns in the action with which it lands or lands on an area not hard standing, then it has crashed and is removed from the game.





Taxiing and Take-off

An air frame that has safely landed (or not yet taken off in this battle) may taxi. Taxiing is a movement action that may not be combined with shooting or repair. A taxiing aircraft may move 1" in any direction on hard standing. Any movement not performed on hard standing causes the aircraft to be destroyed.

An aircraft at Altitude 0 may take off if it has hard standing immediately in front of it to a distance at least equal to its M. To take off, it must perform a Dead On move equal to its M (after which it is considered airborne, so no longer requires hard standing) followed by a Bank or Veer which must bring the aircraft to a minimum of Altitude 1.

An aircraft at Altitude 0 that comes into contact with an opposing element is immediately destroyed. An aircraft at Altitude 0 that comes into contact with any element during the aircraft's own activation is immediately destroyed.



This aircraft's first action must be a Dead On move of at least 11". It then performs a Veer, rising immediately to Altitude 1 and then, at the end of its move, to Altitude 2.

Hover

Some aircraft have the ability to hover, such as rotary, VTOL and antigrav aircraft.

An aircraft that can hover may perform a hover manoeuvre instead of a conventional manoeuvre. A hovering aircraft treats its Mb as 0 as long as it is hovering. The hover manoeuvre may be combined with shooting and repair as normal. A hovering aircraft may also treat its M as 0 for the purposes of landing.

A hovering aircraft may perform a special "turn" action. A turning aircraft may turn on the spot to point in any direction, and the action may be combined with shooting or repairing.



Disengaging & Returning

An aircraft that leaves the table edge or rises to Altitude 6 or more is considered to have disengaged. The aircraft is removed from the table but may be activated again in the following turn.

An aircraft that disengages via a table edge may return on either that table edge or on one of the adjacent table edges – which one must be declared as soon as the aircraft leaves the table. An aircraft that disengages by rising to Altitude 6 may return from any table edge which, again, must be nominated by the commander as soon as the aircraft disengages. It is a good idea, if space allows, to place a disengaged aircraft off the table, but adjacent with the edge from which it will return until it does so.

A disengaged aircraft receives two action tokens in the next turn as usual. It must use the first to return to the table and it is then placed with its base touching the table edges from which it has entered the battlespace. This counts in all respects as a normal action, so opposing elements may react. The returning aircraft may then use its second action if the commander wishes, as normal.

If an aircraft does not activate in the turn immediately after it disengaged, it may not return.

RESERVE

Many scenarios allow elements to be held off the table in reserve. Aircraft in reserve are treated as if they have disengaged via the commander's "home" table edge, so may enter play via that table edge or either of the adjacent edges. However, unlike disengaged aircraft, aircraft in reserve can be kept in reserve until they are required. At the start of any turn after the first, the controlling commander may put two action tokens beside any aircraft that are going to enter this turn from reserve – once the commander has done so, the aircraft must then enter play that turn or they count as destroyed. The controlling commander must clearly indicate the table edge from which any frames entering from reserve will arrive at the start of the turn in which they will be activated.

TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT

Transport aircraft will usually operate far from the front line and, even when they enter enemy territory, will do so far from any place that offers a "hot LZ". However, a bold and innovative commander can use such aircraft to steal a vital tactical advantage over a less wary opponent. A number of special situations need to be considered when using transport aircraft.

Beginning The Game Embarked

Elements may start the game embarked on a transport aircraft. The commander must make a written note of which elements are embarked upon which transport aircraft at the outset.

Normal Disembarkation

An element on a transport aircraft may disembark when the aircraft is at Altitude 0. The element enters play as if from reserve but, instead of being placed adjacent to a table edge, it is placed adjacent to the aircraft from which it has disembarked.

Aerial Disembarkation

Elements with the Deep Deployment special rule may disembark from aircraft at Altitude 1+. If the aircraft is on the battlefield, the element deploys using the rules for Deep Deployment except that it places both action tokens adjacent to the base of the aircraft from which it has disembarked. They may still be placed separately, as long as both tokens are adjacent to the base.

If the aircraft on which they are embarked is in reserve, they may not enter by Deep Deployment unless the aircraft has disengaged, in which case they may enter play by the normal rules for Deep Deployment.

Crashed and Destroyed Transport Aircraft

If a transport aircraft crashes or is destroyed mid-air, then any elements embarked upon it are destroyed.

AIRCRAFT SHOOTING

An aircraft shoots in a slightly different way to other elements. The basic principle is the same, but aircraft aren't designed to participate in extended combat operations: rather, they are intended to deploy, deliver a few devastating strikes and then disengage, returning to base to re-arm and re-fuel. To that end, aircraft have, instead of one sort of shooting, two: Engage and Strike.

Engage

The standard shooting action is the Engage, for which the commander rolls a number of dice equal to half the shooting aircraft's F (rounding up).

Strike

A Strike represents the unleashing of an aircraft's most potent weapons, which it has in strictly limited quantities. A Strike uses an aircraft's full F. Each time an aircraft performs a Strike, reduce its F by 1, unless it has lock-on.

LOCK-ON

A Lock-on represents the aircraft pilot attaining a target lock on its prey that will allow it to deliver a surgical strike on vulnerable or critical locations. A Lock-on is performed as an engage, but causes no damage if it hits. However, if the aircraft uses its next action to shoot at the same target, it may perform a Strike without reducing its F.

ALTITUDE RANGE MODIFIER

It is harder for elements to bring their full F to bear on aircraft at higher and lower altitudes. For each point of altitude difference between a shooting element and its target, add +3 to the effective range.

For example, a fast jet with F5 engages an A2 target 9" away and one altitude lower. The commander rolls three dice (half his aircraft's F, rounding up) and gets 3, 8 and 9. The range (9), plus the altitude modifier (3) plus the target's A (2) means the jet needs 14 to hit, so the commander can combine an 8 and a 9 for 17 (a hit), with the 3 spare, so the jet scores a single hit.



CRITICAL HIT!

Aircraft are fundamentally more fragile than ground units partly because of their light construction but also because they are moving at hundreds of knots, sometimes thousands of feet above the ground. They are, therefore, inherently more vulnerable to that lucky hit that takes out a vital system. Critical hits on aircraft do two points of damage to the target aircraft and the shooting commander may allocate the damage to either or both active stats (see **Aircraft Damage**).

EVASIVE ACTION!

This is performed exactly the same way as the Incoming! roll described for regular shooting.

AIRCRAFT DAMAGE

Unlike other elements, aircraft all have only two active stats: M and A.

If the M is 0, then in its next action the aircraft automatically stalls and crashes without chance of repair (although the pilot may gain the opportunity to eject).

If A is 0, the aircraft is destroyed and the pilot does not get a chance to eject.

REPAIR

Luckily, aircraft of the future are built with the ability to manage and repair damage even in flight. An aircraft may perform a Repair action to attempt to fix damage inflicted by enemy hits.

The Repair action is performed exactly as a Recover action described for other elements, above. However, unless the aircraft is either hovering or landed, it must perform a full Dead On move as part of the same action.

STALLING

Some conditions can force an aircraft to take a Stall test. The commander must roll a D12. If the result is greater than the aircraft's M it has stalled. Any action the commander declared is cancelled. Instead, the aircraft immediately drops 2

altitude and moves Dead On a distance equal to its Mb. If the drop in altitude causes the aircraft to reach Altitude 0, it crashes and is removed from the game.

Assuming it does not crash, in the aircraft's next action the aircraft must perform a Repair action as described above. If this is successful, the aircraft does not repair any damage but has managed to re-start its engines and regain control – it moves as described for a Repair action. It loses any remaining actions this turn, but may be activated normally in the next turn.

If, however, it fails its Repair roll, then it is still stalled and moves as described above.

An aircraft with no damage that stalls is treated exactly as described above but will pass its Repair roll on a 2+.

- Holy ****! What the **** was that?
- Keep it cool, Delta. Zulu One, we have multiple bogeys bearing Oh-Niner-Three. One civilian casualty.
- I have visual on enhancement, Sunray. Two aircraft. WangTech X15 Blackfighters, bearing inbound.
- Roger, Charlie. Duck and cover. Fire at will.

- **Partial transcript of the Borehole Incident contact report (suppressed) (2275)**

EJECT! EJECT! EJECT!

An aircraft that has stalled may, instead of performing a repair roll (or if, having stalled due to its Mv reaching 0, it has no chance to repair), eject its pilot. An aircraft whose pilot ejected counts as -1 P for the purposes of games that award points for destroying enemy elements.

Ejected Pilots

If you are new to the game, you may simply assume that successfully ejected pilots just disappear into the terrain to await rescue. If you are playing an Adventure (see **Confrontations**), however, place a counter on the tabletop where the aircraft was destroyed. Whichever force moves an element into contact with this counter first has captured or rescued (depending on your point of view) the pilot. Capturing (or killing) an enemy pilot will reduce a commander's opponent's Momentum by -1; rescuing an ejected friendly pilot will increase a commander's Momentum by +1.

If you feel adventurous, you might think up methods for forcing the ejected pilot to drift before he or she lands or even permit the pilot to attempt to flee for safety once they have landed. If you do so, be sure to let us know how it goes and what rules you used.

I'll tell ya what – there ain't nothin' like ejectin' on Venus, nossir. Even now, with them new water factories and oxygen pumps, an' it's settled down a good sum an' all, it's the wildest ride there is, y'hear? The aircraft ain't so bad, what with the AI co-pilot doin' a hell a lotta math to keep things smooth. We call her Nervous Nellie 'cos of all the rabbitin' on she's doin' 'bout this or that warnin'. But when ya gotta pop the hood and get all up close and personal with the Big Bad Lady, she shows just what it is o' Nellie's so nervous 'bout.

Them Martians? They ain't got a clue.

- **Site Security Officer, Jed Marsham, Venus Region 4 (2278)**

TERRAIN



Never in all of human history have two forces met upon a field as perfectly green and flat as a tennis court, entirely devoid of feature or interest. Who can say what strange new battlefields await us in the distant future? But it is probably fair to say that our conflicts will continue to take place across terrain that seems sometimes to wilfully impede our ability to attain our objectives.

With that in mind then, *Horizon Wars* offers commanders three categories of terrain to choose from.

CATEGORY 1

Cat1 terrain is the sort that should be quick and easy for any commander – young or old, green or veteran – to put down on a tabletop and incorporate into their game. Empty yoghurt pots, books, cardboard tubes, empty boxes... Cat1 terrain covers all of these: solid, impenetrable shapes that block lines of fire, and which cannot be moved through.

Cat1 terrain may be of any shape or size and the following rules apply to it:

- Impenetrable
- Impregnable
- Indestructible

CATEGORY 2

Cat2 terrain is generally terrain that commanders will need to make, purchase or assemble deliberately to be terrain. Being more deliberate in nature, it is treated less generically than Cat1 terrain and so has many different types.

Hill

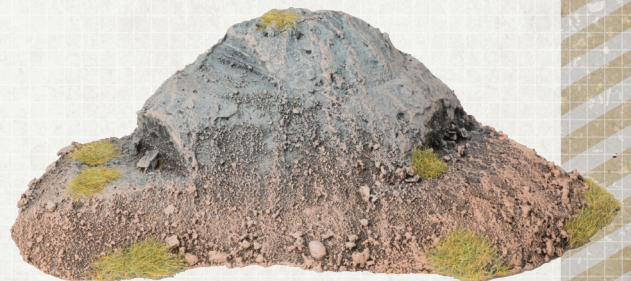
A hill is any generally smoothly-curved shape of any size.

If a hill's gradient is low enough that models can stand upon it without slipping or needing special measures to retain them in place, it has no effect upon fire or movement (except in as much as it blocks LOS). If its gradient is such that models cannot stay securely in place without special measures, then the hill is *difficult*. Hills are also *indestructible*.

He's the god of war, right? And war's, like, days and days of nuthin' happenin', then BANG! The **** hits the fan, yeah? 'Cos that's Mars too, right? Look at it. All peaceful, like. Just dust and clear skies. Then – **** ME! Meteor storms here mean ***** business, right, 'cos of the thin atmosphere. An' the hurricanes whip up out absolutely ***** nowhere. And you're strollin' across a flat plain and BAM! Crust gives way an' you're either fast or you're dead.

Venus reckons it's hard-core, man, 'cos it's all acid storms and **** all day long. But Mars is where it's at. Mars'll wait till you get comfy, yeah? Then he'll slit your ***** throat.

- Senior Exploratory Team Leader,
Aisha Freeman, Mars Settlement
Zone Delta (2278)



Plateau

These flat-topped hills represent either a gentle undulation in the battlefield or a definitive shift in gradient.

Any movement that crosses the edge of the plateau at least once treats the terrain as *difficult*.

The top of a plateau may have a different terrain type to the terrain around it (for example, a plateau may have forest on top of it). The effects of the terrain on top of a plateau also apply.

It is possible to have a plateau upon a plateau.

Plateaus are *indestructible*.

Forest

Any clearly delineated area on the battlefield may be designated as forest (including the whole table). Any trees modelled on the area may provide cover or block LOS as normal. In addition, the entire area is *difficult*.

Forests are *indestructible*.

Ruins

Any clearly delineated area on the battlefield may be designated as ruins (including the whole table). Any actual ruins modelled on the area may provide cover or block LOS as normal. In addition, the entire area is *hazardous*.

Ruins are *indestructible*.

Intact Building

A terrain piece that depicts an intact building and which is around 4 cubic inches in volume may be treated as an intact building. Terrain pieces depicting intact buildings that are larger than this must be clearly divided into sections of around 4 cubic inches or less, which are treated as separate buildings under these rules, otherwise they must be treated as Cat1 terrain.

Any Alert element may move into an intact building as part of its move, without penalty, but may not move out of it again in the same action. An element occupying a building may draw LOS from any part of that building in any direction. Likewise, any other element may draw LOS to the element in the building if it can draw LOS to any part of the building.

As many friendly Alert elements as a commander likes may occupy a single building.

If an element enters a building occupied by an enemy element, the movement is treated as a Charge. If the building is occupied by more than one enemy element,



Oh – my – god! Have you seen the new series? The Venus guys are totally invading the Kappa Settlement; but the Zoonies had this infiltration force at Region 2B and have cut off the supply shipments to the invasion force; and there's this guy, Marsham, in Region 4. He is so totally hot! You have got to watch this. Five stars.

- Zelnia Prosche, RTV Reality Reviewed, Earth Entertainment (2280)



DESIGN NOTE

Flimsy or damaged buildings can be represented by assigning them a lower A value at the start of the game. A fun variation to represent fighting in a city already shattered by war is to roll a die for each building at the start of the game and place it on top of the building to represent how stable it is. Occupying elements with the Dig In special rule can elect to spend actions shoring up the building, allowing them to re-roll the die. The value, though, could go down as well as up, representing botched efforts or accidental damage.

the charging element is considered to have charged all of them: add together all the P values of the occupying elements when calculating how many dice are rolled by the defending side. The damage caused by an enemy in a Charge is split between target elements at the discretion of their commander.

Intact buildings have A8 and cannot Recover. If they are reduced to A0, the building becomes ruins and any element inside is destroyed. However, an element shooting at a target inside a building must declare whether it is shooting at the building or the element inside it.

Swamps

Any clearly delineated area on the battlefield may be designated as swamp (up to and including the whole table). Any trees modelled on the area may provide cover or block LOS as normal. In addition, the entire area is *treacherous*. "Swamps" can be extended to include shifting sand dunes, icefields or other areas where the going can be unpredictable. Swamps are *indestructible*.

Roads & Hard Standing

Roads and other hard standing areas such as city squares or parade grounds can easily be treated simply as another part of the battlefield: this assumes that they are choked with rubble or strewn with debris and abandoned vehicles making them as generally tricky to navigate as anywhere else. However, some roads, runways, landing pads or bridges may have been deliberately cleared or not yet damaged beyond use.

Aircraft can use roads and hard standing to perform landing and/or take-off actions.

CATEGORY 3

Cat3 represents the sort of terrain created as part of a special hobby project, or purchased from a high-end manufacturer to represent particular battlefield effects. It can usually be incorporated into games as some form of Cat2 terrain or perhaps a combination of different Cat2 terrain. When a game is going to include a Cat3 piece, it ought to be central to the commanders' objectives or plans in order to give it the centrepiece status it deserves as, otherwise, the elaborate rules associated with the piece will be largely ignored and the time put into creating it may feel wasted.

The possibilities for Cat3 terrain are endless, but here are some starting suggestions.

Protected Site

The terrain piece may be a place of special historical or religious significance to one or both sides, or it could be a hospital, school or embassy.

A protected site may be special to one or more sides in a battle. A site that is special to all sides will be one around which everyone takes special care not to cause damage or interfere with the site itself. Elements involved in charges that are resolved within 4" of the site count as being -1P to a minimum of 1. LOFs may not lie closer than 2" from the site. Aircraft that move over the site must perform dead on moves and cannot end a move action immediately over the site.

A site that is special to only one or some of the sides involved in the battle has a different effect. The site does not affect opposing sides for whom it is not special, at all. But elements of the side for which it is special count as +1P in Charges resolved within 4" of the site (because they are fighting to protect it!).

If an element performs a Shoot or Move & Shoot action with a LOF within 2" of the site, any Shoot or Move & Shoot reactions to that action by elements for which it is a protected site count as +1F (but may still not shoot on a LOF within 2" of the site).

Elements for which the site is not protected can move into and shoot out of the site if it is not impenetrable and cannot be shot at by elements for which the site is protected. However, at the start of a turn after an element moves into a protected site, all elements for whom the site is protected may perform a free Repair action before any other actions are declared. Opposing elements may not react to this free action.

Command Centre

The terrain piece represents a vital bunker, a communications relay, a satellite control hub or some other site of vital tactical importance to one side in the battle.

The Command Centre counts as a free extra CHQ for the side that is considered to "own" it at the start of the battle. It doesn't have its own action tokens, so cannot be reacted to, but once per turn a friendly element that has not yet been activated can perform an extra action.

If the centre is occupied by an opposing element, this bonus is immediately lost. If at least one opposing element occupies the centre for three turns then, from the next turn, the bonus transfers to the occupying side as long as they remain in situ. Elements occupying the centre may not shoot from it.

If the centre is destroyed while any side is benefiting from the extra action bonus, then all the elements on that side immediately lose one action token to a minimum of zero for the rest of that turn.



Technological Artefact

Perhaps it is the wreck of an alien spacecraft, a secret corporate research base or a mystical ruin from the distant past. Either way, whichever side controls it may well control the very future of the human race!

If an element is in contact with the artefact or occupying it (if it is not impenetrable), then the element may take a special Tinker action (Tinker may not be performed as a reaction). Remove an action token as normal then roll a D12:

D12 Roll	Event
1	Yeeaaarrgh!: The element is immediately destroyed. No other element on that side will dare to make another attempt to tinker.
2	Oops...: The artefact will be destroyed at the end of this turn. Any element still occupying or within 4" of the artefact is destroyed. Any other terrain item within 4" of the artefact is destroyed.
3	Nothing: Nothing (apparently) happens. The action is wasted. The element counts as having performed a "nothing" action.
4	Bzzap!: The element is teleported. The opposing commander may place the element anywhere on the battlefield other than in impenetrable terrain or in contact with an enemy element.
5	Vworp-vworp...: The element is teleported. The controlling commander may place the element anywhere on the battlefield other than in impenetrable terrain or in contact with an enemy element, or into reserve.
6	Ka-boom!: The element suffers a critical hit.
7	Bang!: The element suffers a hit.
8	The red button: The element immediately performs an F7 Shoot action at the nearest opposing element in LOS. If there are no opposing elements in LOS, the shot resolves on the nearest friendly element.
9	The big red button: The element immediately performs an F9 Shoot action at any opposing element on the battlefield.
10	The big, red, flashing button: The controlling commander may immediately destroy any one opposing element on the battlefield.
11	Created a monster: The controlling commander may choose any one result from this list but the opposing commander may then immediately choose any other result.
12	It's full of stars...: The artefact will change the world. The whole galaxy, perhaps. Whatever other objectives either player had in the game are cancelled and the opposing sides must now fight a battle of annihilation. Whichever side has at least one element on the table when the opponent has none at the end of any subsequent turn is the winner. Of everything.

TERRAIN SPECIAL RULES

Difficult

Elements may not move in or through difficult terrain at a rate faster than Patrol. Move & Shoot actions may not be performed whilst moving through difficult terrain.

Hazardous

Elements may move in or through hazardous terrain at a Cautious rate or slower without penalty. If an element moves at a Patrol rate or faster and any part of its movement passes into, out of or through hazardous terrain roll a D12. If the result is less than the total distance moved in the action, the element suffers a (non-critical) hit.

Impenetrable

Impenetrable terrain may not be moved into, onto or through, although movement able to pass directly over it (aircraft or jump frame mechs, for example) may do so. Aircraft and Deep Deployment elements may not land on top of it.

Impregnable

Impregnable terrain cannot be booby-trapped, mined or otherwise made hazardous, although it may lie within an area that may otherwise be mined or booby-trapped.

Indestructible

Indestructible terrain cannot be destroyed by any game effect.

Treacherous

Treacherous terrain is more unpredictable than dangerous. But sometimes it's also dangerous. Each time an element moves in, into, out of or through treacherous terrain, roll a D12. If the result is less than the total distance the element has attempted to move, the element's action is cancelled and any remaining actions are removed. If the result is also a 1, the element suffers a hit as well.

HORIZON WARRIORS



MUSTERING

Mustering is how commanders assemble forces for a game of *Horizon Wars*. There are a lot of options for customizing and improving your different elements, but even so it should only take ten or fifteen minutes to assemble a force list once you are familiar with these rules.

ELEMENTS

All forces consist of a number of elements. An element is a single force choice that moves and fights as one in a battle. Generally, they may be thought of in terms of bases: a single base equals a single element.

COMMAND HQ

Players must choose one element to represent their commander. A CHQ can be a mech or conventional forces. It cannot be an aircraft.

MECH CHQ

A mech CHQ receives the CHQ upgrade for free.

CONVENTIONAL FORCES CHQ

A conventional forces CHQ is free – its P does not count towards the force's total force cost, although it counts as its normal P for all other purposes (disposition, assault etc.). However, it cannot be an artillery or reconnaissance element.

If a player selects a conventional forces CHQ, the following restrictions apply:

- The detachment must contain at least one element of the CHQ's type (including the CHQ) for every 5 full points in the detachment. For example, a 15-point detachment with a heavy infantry CHQ must include at least two more Heavy Infantry elements.

For the purposes only of determining the detachment's force cost, the P of conventional elements is modified depending upon the type of the CHQ, as follows:

Conventional Element Type	CHQ Element Type							
	P	Lt Inf	Mob Inf	Hvy Inf	AB Inf	SF	Lt Cav	Hvy Cav
Lt Inf	1	-	-	+1	-	-	+2	+1
Mob Inf	2	-	-	-	-1	-	-	-
Hvy Inf	2	+1	-	-	+1	+1	+1	-1
AB Inf	2	-1	+2	+1	-	-1	+1	+2
SF	3	-	+1	+1	-1	-	-	+1
Lt Cav	2	+1	-1	-	+1	-	-	-1
Hvy Cav	3	+1	-	-1	+2	+1	-1	-
Lt Arty	2	-1	+1	+1	-1	-	-1	+1
Armd Arty	3	+2	-	-	+2	+1	+1	-1
Recon	2	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-	-

DESIGN NOTE

The rules above are intended to emphasize the fact that force organisations possess a certain... inevitability. If the man or woman in charge is from a certain type of regiment or unit then they will favour a certain type of warfare that is itself supported by certain types of unit.

So, a Light Infantry CHQ must pay 3 points per element to add a P2 Heavy Infantry element to its force, whilst a Heavy Cavalry CHQ would pay only 1 point for the same element.

CHQ SPECIAL RULES

The CHQ – mech or conventional – has the following special rules in addition to any other special rules it already enjoys:

Chain of Command

When the CHQ is activated, it may spend its first activation token to allow any other friendly element that has not already been activated this turn to perform an additional action immediately without, itself, spending an activation token. Enemy elements may react as normal to either the CHQ or to the element on which it expends its activation token.

Guide Fire

See **Shoot**, page 27.

Command Resources

The CHQ has access to logistical and technical support that allows it to enhance



This baby's a work of art. She's an up-armed Z4 Strider Lite with a Quantech G-Power HyCell drive. That's a custom Render multi-rocket launcher with a hundred-round auto-cycling magazine and laser-guidance hard-wired to the AI. On this side we've given her a 9.75mm M29 Tesbury Armaments autocannon. Fifteen rounds a second. Guaranteed a full ten-second burst without coolant lag or your money back. This honey will strip the ablative off a Condor 5 in under three seconds.

I can see from the look on your face that she's got what you're after. What are your plans? Mostly groceries and school run? Or were you looking for something to take to the Maul at the weekends, too?

- Chester Chernowak, "Chester's Mechs" (2285)

and improve the forces it has at its disposal. For every two conventional elements (not mechs or aircraft, because their very presence already indicates an expenditure of influence) in a force the commander receives +1 Command Resources (CR).

CR points may be spent on purchasing tactical upgrades or on enhancing the stats of conventional elements in the force. For each 1 CR spent, a stat (M, F, A or D) may be increased by +1. However, any upgrade applied to a conventional element in a force must be applied also to all other conventional elements of the same type. For example, if a heavy infantry element receives +1 M, then any other heavy infantry elements in the force must also be given +1

M at a cost of 1 CR. If commanders don't have enough CR to make the same upgrade on all the elements of the same type, then they may not spend the CR on those elements.

FORCES WITHOUT A CHQ

It is not compulsory to have a CHQ. For example, all-aircraft forces cannot have a CHQ. Forces without a CHQ are not leaderless. Rather, they represent either forces of a more *ad hoc* nature that are assembled to meet a sudden need, or they represent forces wherein command lies far from the front lines, with orders being conveyed remotely, perhaps even from orbit.

MECHS

Mechs are unlike any other weapon of war in the future. Technologically complex, they are a perpetual challenge to the logistics chains that support them, yet they can deliver more destructive firepower over a greater distance and in a wider variety of hostile environments than any other equivalent piece of materiel. Because of their unique nature, the capabilities of mechs vary immensely from one mech to another, even between mechs that are outwardly extremely similar.

As a result, mechs possess no single or set stat line. Instead, they receive a number of stat points, based upon their P, which commanders can allocate to their stats as they see fit. At least one point must be allocated to each of M, F, A and D. Any number of points can be allocated to upgrades

Mech Type	P	M	F	A	D	Special
Heavy Mech	3	Allocate up to 17 Points				
Medium Mech	2	Allocate up to 14 Points				
Light Mech	1	Allocate up to 11 Points				

MECH UPGRADES

Aces

Any number of mechs can be upgraded with an ace pilot. Each Ace adds +1 to the force cost. Ace pilots can re-roll one D12 per F roll and one D12 per charge resolution.

Weapon Upgrades

Mechs may take a maximum number of weapon upgrades equal to their P. Upgrades have a cost that must be paid out of the mech's allocation of stat points.

Weapon Upgrade	Cost	Effect
Assisted Targeting	1	The mech may re-roll a single F die after the target's D roll. The second roll replaces the first even if it is worse. The result of the D roll applies also to the re-rolled die.
Extended range	Short: 1 Medium/Long: 2	The mech subtracts an amount from the range to any target depending on whether it has the short (-6), medium (-12) or long (-24) extended range. Negative results are counted as positive. For example, a mech with a medium extended range shooting at a target 21" away subtracts 12 to get a range of 9"; a mech with a long extended range shooting at a target 8" away subtracts 24 to get -16", which is counted as a range of 16" to the target. Normal modifiers are then added to obtain the effective range.
Assassin Strike	1	No matter how many hits the mech causes with a Shoot or Move & Shoot action, it only ever counts as causing a single hit unless a hit is critical, in which cases it causes two points of damage, both critical.
Indirect Fire	1	The mech can provide Indirect Fire as described in the Shoot section on page 28.
Anti-aircraft fire	0	The mech counts range to targets at Altitude 1 or more as +1 per point of altitude instead of +3, but always counts as moving when shooting at targets at Altitude 0 (on the ground).

Frame Upgrades

Mechs may take a maximum number of frame upgrades equal to their P.

Frame Upgrade	Cost	Effect
Agile Frame	1	Reduce the F of any mech shooting at a mech with an Agile Frame by 1. An Agile mech may also patrol in difficult terrain and re-roll the dice for crossing dangerous terrain.
Assault Rig	1	In any Charge involving the mech with the Assault Rig upgrade, the mech gains +1P.
Drop Harness	2	Only P1 or P2 mechs can be upgraded with a Drop Harness. Drop frame mechs may deploy by Deep Deployment.
Engineer	1	This frame is limited to one in every five mechs. A mech with the Engineer upgrade that is in base contact with a damaged mech or vehicle may use an action to perform a Recover action. This is resolved like a normal Recover roll, using the Engineer mech's D, but the result is compared to the damaged mech's total damage and the result is applied to the damaged mech.
Fragmentation Screen	1	The first time in any game that the mech either charges or counter-charges, it gains +2P.
Jump Jets	1	Only P1 or P2 mechs can be upgraded with a Jump Frame. A mech with a Jump Frame may make a rapid move in a straight line that ignores any intervening terrain no taller than the mech. Note that the mech is leaping over obstacles, which will place it in the LOS of enemy elements which might otherwise not see it, so jump movement can initiate a reaction even if the mech starts and finishes its movement outside enemy LOS.
Minelayer Upgrade	1	The mech may spend one action, once per game, either to turn one piece of terrain with which it is in base contact into hazardous terrain, or to create a single piece of hazardous terrain that the commander may place on the table in base contact with the mech. If the mech lays a new area of hazardous terrain, it takes the form of a circle 3" in diameter.
Stealth Suite	2	Only P1 or P2 mechs can be upgraded with a Stealth Suite. A mech with a Stealth Suite is not placed on the table at first. Instead, place an empty base the same size as the mech's base on the table to mark its location. If you have more than one mech with a Stealth Frame, you must clearly indicate which marker represents which mech. The mech may perform all of its actions normally. Opposing mechs only count as being able to draw a LOS to a Stealth mech if they can draw LOS to its marker, so if this is concealed, neither shooting at the Stealth mech, nor reacting to it is allowed. Whenever a Stealth mech sustains a hit, the commander may opt, instead of suffering damage, to divert power from the Stealth Suite. In this case, the marker is replaced by the correct mech and the Stealth Suite has no further effect in the game – Stealth Suites cannot be repaired during the game. If an enemy mech scores a critical hit on the mech, the opposing commander may choose to remove the Stealth Suite instead of inflicting damage.

Command Upgrades

The elevated cockpit and vast array of advanced sensors with which the typical mech is equipped make it an ideal command post. But mech commanders are traditionally seen as aloof, distant and cavalier with the lives of those under their command.

Command Upgrade	Cost	Effect
CHQ	0	The element is the designated CHQ of the force and gains the Chain of Command and Guide Fire special rules (see Command HQ). Only one element in any force may be designated the CHQ.
Squadron Commander	1	A commander may declare at the start of any game that 3-5 friendly mechs of the same P form a squadron. One (and only one) mech in the squadron must be given the Squadron Commander upgrade at the cost listed. A commander may activate any mechs in the squadron that are within 3" of the Squadron Command mech at the same time. Each of these must spend an activation token and they must all perform the same action (although they need not shoot at the same target if they shoot, nor move in the same direction if they move). Opposing mechs may not react until all the mechs have completed their actions, but may otherwise react normally.

SUPER-MECHS

The largest mechs for which these rules were designed are P3 mechs. However, there is no reason you could not create larger mechs with P4, P5, P6 or even more! The formula for working out how many points they have to allocate is pretty simple: multiply the P of the mech by 3 and add 8.

However, once you get beyond P3, the number of hard choices a commander must make when allocating their stat points goes down rapidly. P4+ mechs are super-mechs: true gods of the battlefield that can launch irresistible waves of fire from behind impenetrable defences.

They make for fun games and it is a great opportunity to field some of the magnificent models available from a variety of companies. However, we don't recommend such monsters be used regularly and suggest that, when fielded, the game be based around the presence of super-mechs.

For example, one side may be escorting a badly-damaged super-mech back to base when the other side ambushes them in an attempt to prevent the god-machine from ever returning.



CONVENTIONAL FORCES

Conventional forces have evolved to their current state over hundreds of years, responding to changes in the tide of technology. Armour and weapons are constantly shifting back and forth as one defeats the other in a sequence of bounding jumps.

Mechs represent the ultimate marriage of armour, agility and armaments but they are expensive and hard to maintain at the end of an extended logistical chain. As a result, conventional forces are often the first resort of commanders who need a reliable, intelligent ground force.

Still, for all their perennial reliability, conventional forces don't enjoy the design flexibility of an advanced mech. Generally-speaking, conventional forces commanders are given what amounts to a selection of hammers and then required to approach every problem as if it were a nail.

Conventional Element Type	P	M	F	A	D	Special
Lt Inf	1	3	3	1	4	Dig In, Alert, Infantry
Mob Inf	1	5	3	1	2	Rapid, Alert, Infantry
Hvy Inf	2	3	4	3	3	Dig In, Alert, Infantry
AB Inf	2	3	3	1	3	Dig In, Deep Deployment, Alert, Infantry
SF	3	3	3	1	2	Dig In, Deep Deployment, Guide Fire, Alert, Infantry
Lt Cav	2	5	3	3	2	Rapid, Vanguard, Vehicle
Hvy Cav	3	4	5	5	1	Rapid, Vanguard, Vehicle
Lt Arty	2	3	4	2	2	Cumbersome, Deep Deployment, Indirect Fire, Infantry
Armd Arty	3	3	7	3	2	Cumbersome, Rapid, Indirect Fire, Vehicle
Recon	2	5	1	4	1	Deep Deployment, Guide Fire, Alert, Infantry

Light Infantry (Lt Inf)

Light Infantry fight on foot in a dispersed formation that makes them slow, but hardy. They excel at taking and holding vital ground. Light Infantry is generally represented by unarmoured or lightly armoured soldiers with small arms and man-portable support weapons.

Mobile Infantry (Mob Inf)

Very similar to their Light Infantry brethren, the Mobile Infantry typically make use of rapid transports to move faster, although they tend to out-pace their own logistical support. They may use light armoured vehicles, all-terrain bikes, riding beasts or hover-packs; or they could even be mutants, xenofoms or uplifted species with wings or natural speed.

Heavy Infantry (Hvy Inf)

Heavy Infantry make use of the most sophisticated military technology to allow them to move at the same speed as Light Infantry, whilst benefiting from considerable armoured protection and the capacity to carry even heavier weapons. They could be remote-operated frames, powered suits or even genetically modified super-soldiers. In an alien or pseudo-human force, they may benefit from heavy biological exoskeletons.

Airborne Infantry (AB Inf)

Airborne Infantry elements sacrifice some of their logistical support for the ability to enter the battlefield from the air – rappelling from hovering dropships, descending on grav-chutes or even teleporting into the fray. The rules for AB Inf can also be abstracted to cover elements appearing from concealed forward locations, emerging from underground tunnels or even spawning from alien seedpods.

Special Forces (SF)

Every force has its specialists that operate ahead of the main forces, disrupting communications and logistics, capturing vital intelligence and generally making a nuisance of themselves. They may be highly-trained elite forces, local sympathizers or fifth column agitators. They could even be mind-controlled drones or parasitic infections!

Light Cavalry (Lt Cav)

Armoured battlegroups in particular benefit from a fast-moving forward screen that can hit hard against the sort of dispersed infantry formations that threaten the rapid armoured advance. Light Cavalry are the glory boys: playing hit-and-run, funnelling opponents artfully into kill-zones where their heavier allies can annihilate them. Up-armed IFVs or light tanks that sacrifice firepower for greater speed are typical of Light Cavalry.

Heavy Cavalry (Hvy Cav)

Tanks are the mainstay of the Heavy Cavalry element – they may vary in size, but they all carry a serious amount of firepower attached to near-impenetrable armour. However, their speed puts them far ahead of their organic support and, by the time engineering and medical units can reach them, the battle has invariably moved on.

DESIGN NOTE

One of the advantages of infantry over other elements in real combat is their ability to spread out and cover a considerable area, sometimes with as much as 100m or more between members of a squad when in open terrain – something made possible by short-range encrypted radio communication that allows squad leaders to coordinate squad members even out of their line of sight.

The models you deploy on the tabletop represent the core or fulcrum of the entire squad, which will spread out when advancing or concentrate when attacked in close quarters. In this way, a small base of three or four figures can realistically represent a squad three or four times that size in actual bodies.

The way they go on, you'd think the only things fighting, these days, were mechs. But when did you last see a mech go room to room, clearing an enemy bunker complex? When did you last see a mech spend four weeks in a hole in the ground watching the bad guys? When did you last see a mech that could scout a sewer system for irregulars?

I've come up the hard way. Started as a grunt, until they gave me a hardsuit. That was awesome. Now I'm wired into the command seat for a Category 2 heavy battle tank. I'm a god of war, man.

Next step? Mech pilot, for sure. What? You think I want to go crawling through sewers?

- Corporal of Horse Karim Nastase (2190)

Light Artillery (Lt Arty)

Frequently deployed in support of airborne ops, Lt Arty can deploy by grav-chute or from dropships into support positions to smash enemy threats before they can overwhelm the assault. Their limited mobility allows them to respond to the shifting battle, but they can struggle to keep up with the front line, or to retreat in the face of overwhelming enemy pressure. They may be heavy mortars, single guns, anti-tank teams or light MLRS units.

Armoured Artillery (Armd Arty)

Usually found alongside their Heavy Cavalry companions, Armd Arty often stays away from the main battleground entirely, providing long-range support from reserve to forward observer elements. But they also can deploy forward to deliver direct fire to halt an enemy advance in its tracks. Usually mounted on armoured bodies, these can be siege mortars, large cannons, MLRS or exotic sonic or laser weapons – they could even be mobile guide stations for orbital bombardments.

Reconnaissance (Recon)

The advancing battlegroup needs eyes on the ground. Remote drones, forward observers, skirmishing irregulars... they can all fulfil the reconnaissance role. Their orders are to spot for artillery and stay out of sight, and they are equipped appropriately, frequently with sophisticated camouflage technology. However, once spotted, they are highly vulnerable and may choose to simply melt away rather than stand and fight.



SPECIAL RULES

Different elements have different strengths and weaknesses. Infantry is flexible and resilient, but slow. Cavalry is fast and packs a big punch, but can be fragile. Each element type comes with its own rules to reflect that.

Rule	Effect
Alert	An Alert element always has a 360° arc of vision.
Dig In	This element can Dig In as an action or reaction, finding cover everywhere they can. Elements shooting at elements that have dug in add +3 to the effective range (see Shooting) until the Dug In element next performs a Move or Move & Shoot action.
Rapid	This element can move at high speed. They may perform a Rapid move action. Conventional forces elements without this rule may not make Rapid move actions.
Deep Deployment	This element can enter play from reserve, using the Deep Deployment rules (see Reserves).
Guide Fire	This element can Guide Fire (see Shoot).
Infantry	This element has the type "infantry".
Vanguard	This element operates far ahead of their organic combat support; it may not perform repair actions.
Vehicle	This element has the type "vehicle".
Cumbersome	This element cannot perform Move & Shoot actions.
Indirect Fire	This element can provide Indirect Fire for elements using the Guide Fire special rule (see "Shooting").

CONVENTIONAL FORCES UPGRADES

Tactical Upgrades

The tactical upgrades in the table below are available to conventional elements. Not all upgrades are available to all elements. The table shows which elements are eligible for each upgrade and its effect. The cost of tactical upgrades must be paid out of the CHQ's Command Resources and the usual restrictions apply, so an upgrade applied to one element must be applied to all elements in the force of the same type. If the CHQ has insufficient CR to upgrade all the elements of the same type, then it may not buy the upgrade.

All conventional tactical upgrades cost 1 CR.

Tactical Upgrade	Eligible Elements	Effect
Antigrav	Mob Inf, Hvy Cav, Hvy Arty, Recon	The element may ignore the effects of difficult terrain and may re-roll the dice to see if it is affected by hazardous terrain.
Strike	All	The element may, once per battle, perform a Move & Shoot action with its full F. However, the element's F is immediately reduced by -1 and the maximum value to which it may recover its F value is also reduced by -1.
Traps	Lt Inf, SF	The element may, once per battle, booby-trap a piece of terrain it is occupying. The element spends one action performing the special Trap action, after which the terrain becomes hazardous.

Note that models with the Antigrav tactical upgrade are expected to be represented by appropriate models. However, models that appear to be hovering or to have a hover capability do not have to take this upgrade. In their case, it is

assumed that, whilst they don't run on conventional wheels or tracks, the effect of their less-sophisticated hover capability is such that they are still affected by terrain normally.

AIRCRAFT

Like mechs, aircraft are almost endlessly variable in their capabilities, depending upon the condition of their engines, the quality of their telemetry hardware and software and the exact load-out with which they have been armed for any given mission.

The categorization of aircraft is more complex than for other fighting vehicles. For the sake of simplicity, they've been categorized below as Fighter-bombers, Strike Fighters and Fighters, but the same stat lines can be used to create scout helicopters, mech-transport antigrav units or orbital drop-ships.

Like mechs, each can be allocated up to a certain amount of stat points, but being more fragile and less modular, aircraft get fewer points to allocate. Of course, don't forget they also get their +5 Movement bonus.

Aircraft Type	P	M	F	A	D	Special
Fighter-bomber	3	Allocate up to 15 Points				
Strike Fighter	2	Allocate up to 12 Points				
Fighter	1	Allocate up to 9 Points				

AIRCRAFT UPGRADES

Aces

Any number of aircraft can be upgraded with an ace pilot. Each Ace adds +1 to the force cost. Ace pilots can:

- Re-roll Stall tests.
- Re-roll one die on Strikes.
- Re-roll one die on Evasive Action! rolls.

Tactical Upgrades

Most upgrades have a cost that must be paid out of the aircraft allocation of stat points. An aircraft may have a maximum number of upgrades equal to its P.





Tactical Upgrade	Cost	Effect
Advanced ejection system	1	The vast majority of aircraft possess some form of ejection system that allows the most valuable part of any aircraft – its pilot – to survive to fly another day. But some have more sophisticated systems: automated miniature flight pods that whip the pilot back towards friendly territory, and which are equipped with the latest survival and retrieval equipment. Pilots who eject from aircraft with an AES are automatically considered to have been rescued by friendly forces.
Satellite lock-on	2	Smart munitions are even smarter with orbital targeting support, but installation is complicated and effectiveness is greatest against stationary or predictable targets. An aircraft with SLO always counts as +1 F against targets with M3 or less.

Aircraft Variations

These aircraft have unique abilities and performance types not available to conventional aircraft.

Aircraft Variations	Cost	Effect
Antigrav	3	Antigrav aircraft are the most advanced of those able to hover on the spot, making use of sophisticated antigravity generators that confer impossible-seeming agility. Antigrav aircraft may hover.
Rotary	1	Rotary aircraft may hover but have an Mb of 2 and maximum Altitude 4. If they attempt to rise higher than this, they stall automatically.
Vertical Thrusters	1	An aircraft with Vertical Thrusters can perform hover actions only if they are at Altitude 1.

Transport Aircraft Upgrades

These upgrades determine the type and size of elements that an aircraft may transport.

Transport Aircraft Upgrades	Cost	Effect
Light Transport	1	A Light Transport can carry one of any of the following friendly elements: Lt Inf, Hvy Inf, AB Inf, SF, Recon, Lt Arty
Heavy Transport	2	A Heavy Transport can carry non-aircraft elements with a maximum P equal to the number of times this upgrade is taken. So if the aircraft has Heavy Transport (1), it may carry any element of P1 or less. If it has Heavy Transport (3), it may carry a single element of P3, or one P2 and one P1 element, or three P1 elements.

DESIGN NOTE

Whilst specific rules do not govern this, commanders should use as transport aircraft only models that look as if they could actually contain the size of force embarked upon them.

CONFRONTATIONS



Any game of *Horizon Wars* is a confrontation: two or more sides meeting in a decisive engagement of tactical and strategic importance to all the participants.

Three types of confrontation are described in these rules: set-piece battles, adventures and narrative encounters.

Set-piece battles are designed to operate as a starting-point for new commanders or as an instant resource for people wanting to run a short campaign or tournament using these rules. The table lay-out, force sizes, objectives and victory conditions are fully explained and each has been designed to provide – assuming equal forces – an even chance of victory for each commander.

As some set-piece battles are deliberately intended to favour certain styles of army over others, for competitive purposes it is recommended that you play more than one of the battles in an event.

Five have been provided in these rules. New set-piece battles can be found on the Precinct Omega website (www.precinctomega.co.uk).

For those who are more familiar with the rules, who have played through all the set-piece battles or who just want a quick one-off game, **adventures** are generated by each commander rolling on a set of tables that creates their mission, objectives and tasks.

By their nature, some of these random encounters can make victory much easier for one side than the other. Some balancing mechanisms are suggested, but it is just worth bearing in mind that you may not get an equal match with an adventure.

Narrative encounters are the hardest work for commanders because they must come up with the context and rules for the battle themselves. However, to help commanders who want to design their own narrative encounters, you can find some guidelines, hints and suggestions in this section.

FORCE SIZE

Force sizes are based on the force cost of each player's army (see **Mustering**).

TABLE SIZE

Horizon Wars can be played on tables of almost any size and shape. The size of board commanders will want to use will depend upon the scenario and the size of forces ranging against one another.

The recommended table sizes also indicate whether the game should be played lengthwise (**L**) – from short edge to short edge – or widthways (**W**) – from long edge to long edge for rectangular tables, but commanders should feel free to exercise their imaginations when it comes to using irregular or unusually shaped tables.



DEPLOYMENT

There are a number of ways by which commanders may decide where and how to deploy their advance forces. Probably the easiest is to simply take turns deploying one element at a time until one side has deployed all the elements they want to (or are allowed to) after which the other may then deploy the rest of their advance force.

TERRAIN

The different sections describe who should place terrain in certain areas of the table. Generally speaking, more terrain will deliver a longer play experience.

Cat1

If either commander is new to the game, it is probably best to stick with Cat1 terrain to start with.

Cat2

For a balanced and competitive game between experienced commanders, introduce Cat2 terrain. This is the best level to stick to for tournaments, as it

makes full use of the abilities and strengths of all types of element and makes a strong tactical contribution without causing the game to bog-down or unbalance.

Cat3

Best reserved for narrative scenarios in which the terrain is either central to the objective of one or both players or in which it has a powerful contribution to make to the narrative.

LIMITED RECONNAISSANCE

If commanders are confident with the rules, they may like to make use of the Limited Reconnaissance rule. In this situation, each commander must make a map of the terrain that they are responsible for placing and defining. Any additional special rules that apply to the terrain should be recorded on the map and only revealed to the opposing commander(s) when they move into the terrain or area in question.

HIDDEN DEPLOYMENT

Some elements may begin battles in Hidden Deployment. This is performed exactly as for Deep Deployment, except that the action tokens for hidden elements must be placed on the first turn. However, if a hidden element is not activated in the turn, the counters may be removed and placed in different locations in the next turn.

Hidden Deployment counters may not be shot at. If a Hidden Deployment counter is charged, the controlling commander must decide whether to replace the counter that was charged with a hidden element or to remove the counter and place a hidden element adjacent to another counter.

Elements that emerge from Hidden Deployment may not hide again.

If elements with Deep Deployment are used in a game that also uses Hidden Deployment, the counters used to indicate each must be different and cannot be interchanged.

OTHER SCENARIO RULES

There are a number of other miscellaneous rules that apply to certain victory conditions or situations in scenarios.

EFFECTIVENESS

It is not always necessary to annihilate an enemy to consider them destroyed. An enemy that cannot move, or one that cannot shoot, represents a substantially less threatening prospect than one that remains both mobile and aggressive.

An element with either M or F of 0 is *ineffective*. An element that has at least 1 in all active stats is *effective*.

Darkness, our destiny; death, our necessity. An end to all suffering lies through the gate.

- The Urgyz Inscription (excavated 2301)

What the hell was happening on Earth before the Fall and why, in heaven's name, didn't we notice?

- Constance Shamsi, MCD (2301)

SET-PIECE BATTLES

The set-piece battles have recommended forces sizes depending upon the scale and length of game you want to play, which are matched against recommended table sizes.

Each set-piece battle's description gives a table split down by the size of battle commanders want to fight. The first, large number under each force size is the number of points the commanders have to spend on their army. For example, a Squadron-sized battle using the Deliberate Attack set-piece battle provides each commander with 15 points with which to assemble their force. Whilst points are roughly equivalent to Presence, some forces can add elements to their force for fewer or more points than the elements' P, so the total FP of an army may be more or less than the number of points spent on assembling it.

The next column then lists the Loss a commander begins with. This is the minimum value of Presence that commanders must remove from their forces at the start of the battle. This value is based on the actual P of the elements removed. A command may elect to remove elements with a total P greater than their Loss value.

Set-piece battles will begin with one or more sides having advance forces already engaged in battle, whilst the remainder are in reserve. The tables show the maximum Presence that may be invested in the advance force and the maximum Presence that may be invested in the reserve force, depending upon the size of the battle.

In addition, some advance forces or reserves have restrictions on whether or not aircraft can be included. Where any aircraft may be included within the value of either the advance force or the reserves, this is marked with an "a". Where only aircraft with the Hover special rule may be included, this is marked with an "h".



DELIBERATE ATTACK

In the early stages of a larger conflict, two sides are manoeuvring for advantage. The attacker in this scenario has planned an attack against an enemy position they believe is vulnerable with a view to driving a wedge through it and deep into their opponents' lines.

The defender has been forced to spread themselves thin, leaving a small contingent exposed. However, they have mobile reserves on-call to respond to any aggressive incursions by the enemy.

	Patrol				Patrol+				Troop				Troop+				Squadron			
	Pts	Loss	Adv	Res	Pts	Loss	Adv	Res	Pts	Loss	Adv	Res	Pts	Loss	Adv	Res	Pts	Loss	Adv	Res
Attacker	9	-2	5	5a	12	-3	6	6a	15	-3	9	9a	20	-5	12	10a	27	-6	15	12a
Defender		0	3	8a		0	4	10a		0	5	12a		0	6	16a		0	8	22a
Table size	2'x4' L				4'x4'				4'x6' W				4'x6' W				4'x8' W			

Battlefield

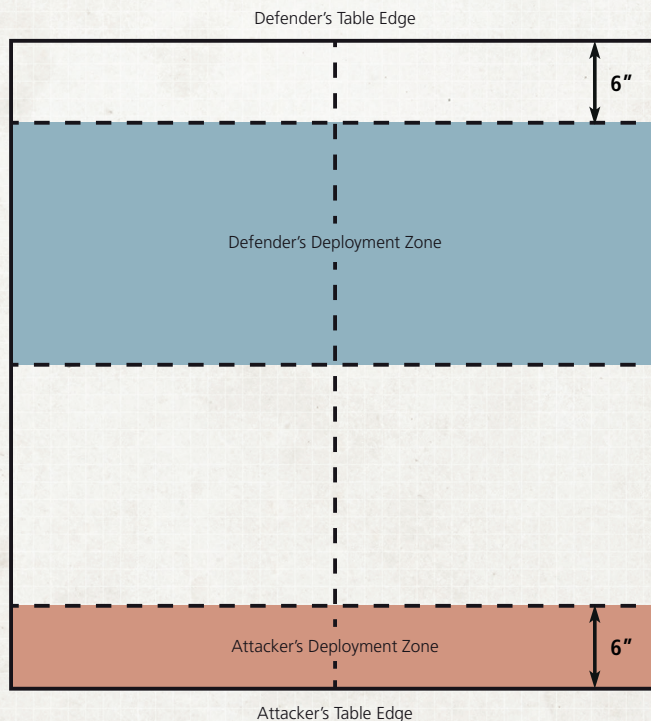
Divide the board into equal quarters. The attacker picks a table edge and one quarter adjacent to that table edge. The defender takes the opposite table edge and the other three quarters.

The attacker then places all the terrain in the attacker's quarter. The defender may then place all the terrain in the other three quarters.

The attacker's deployment zone is an area measured 6" from the attacker's table edge. The defender's deployment zone is an area measured from the centre line back to a line 6" from the defender's table edge. See the diagram at right for an illustration.

Disposition

The attacker must place their advance force in the attacker's deployment zone. The attacker may not deploy any elements from reserve in the first turn, but



up to two elements may enter play from reserve per turn, after the first. Elements entering from reserve must do so from the attacker's table edge.

The defender must place their advance force in the defender's deployment zone and may elect to use the rules for hidden deployment. The defender may not deploy any elements from reserve in the first turn. As long as there is at least one hidden element on the battlefield, one element may enter from reserve per turn, after the first. If there are no hidden elements on the battlefield, up to two elements may enter per turn.

Objectives

The Attacker's Mission...

...is to strike your enemy with overwhelming speed and force, smashing opposition aside faster than the defenders can respond to your advance.

If, at the end of any turn after the first, the defender has two or fewer effective elements on the table, the attacker wins.

The Defender's Mission...

...is to rob the attacker's advance of momentum and coordination. You must delay the attack long enough to bring reserves into play that will halt and repel the enemy offensive.

If, at the end of any turn, the defender has at least four effective elements on the tabletop (not hidden or in reserve) with a combined P of twice that of the starting advance force or more, the defender wins.

Tactical Advice

The attacker must move quickly and decisively. Reserves are best kept to elements entering by Deep Deployment or artillery that can take advantage of the ability of other elements to Guide Fire. Invest in movement first to close the range and maximize the opportunities to engage the enemy. Fast, cheap, light forces can charge hidden elements to force your opponent's hand. Heavier elements can then follow up to concentrate fire and erode your opponent's effectiveness.

If the attacker is hesitant or cautious, this will be an easy battle for the defender. Start with a maximum-sized advance force, reveal it from hiding in the first turn and bring on at least two points per turn. If you can keep your elements effective for three turns, you'll win the game at the end of Turn 4. If, however, your opponent is quick enough, you may find yourself having put all your eggs in one basket. Alternatively, you can keep your hidden elements hidden, bring your reserves to the table slowly and then reveal your hidden elements at the crucial juncture to snatch victory.

THE RESCUE

Following a stalled offensive, a retreat and a rapid enemy advance has left forces cut off behind enemy lines. Some would say “We don’t leave our soldiers behind”; others, that they might have valuable intelligence on the disposition of forces and can’t be allowed to fall into enemy hands. Either way, a desperate mission is launched to reach and recover them to safety.

	Patrol				Patrol+				Troop				Troop+				Squadron			
	Pts	Loss	Adv	Res	Pts	Loss	Adv	Res	Pts	Loss	Adv	Res	Pts	Loss	Adv	Res	Pts	Loss	Adv	Res
Attacker	9	0	2	8a	12	0	3	11a	15	0	4	14a	20	0	6	19a	27	0	8	26a
Defender		0	5	5a		0	7	7a		0	9	9a		0	12	12a		0	18	18a
Table size	2'x4' L				4'x4'				4'x6' W				4'x6' W				4'x8' W			

Battlefield

Divide the board into half from edge to edge (not corner to corner). The attacker picks a half and the table edge fully within that half. The defender is given the opposite half and opposite table edge.

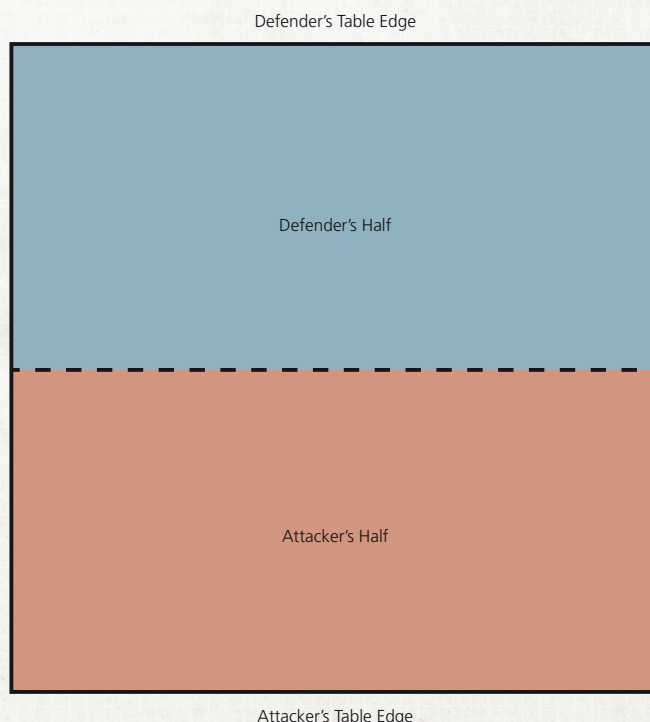
The attacker may then place and define all the terrain in the attacker’s half. The defender may then place and define all the terrain in the other half.

Disposition

The attacker starts the game with their advance force in Hidden Deployment in the defender’s half. All hidden elements begin the game with four points of damage. This must be applied to reduce the element’s M to a maximum of 1.

Any remaining damage may be applied at the owning commander’s discretion. The remainder of the attacking force begins in reserve. Up to two elements may enter from reserve per turn, including the first.

The defender must place their advance force in the attacker’s half. The remainder of the defending force begins in reserve. As long as there is at least one hidden



element on the battlefield, one element may enter from reserve per turn, including the first. If there are no hidden elements on the battlefield, up to two elements may enter per turn.

Objectives

Whoever has the most points at the end of the battle wins. If both commanders have the same number of points, the battle is a draw.

The Attacker's Mission...

...is to recover the advance force. So for each element in the attacker's advance force that the attacker moves across the attacker's table edge, the attacker gets one point.

The Defender's Mission...

...is to locate and destroy the enemy elements behind their lines before they can escape with vital intelligence. For each element in the attacker's advance force that the defender destroys, the defender gets one point.

Tactical Advice

Victory for the attacker is all about timing. If the hidden elements make a break for it too soon, they'll be too slow to escape and will be caught between the defender's advance force and the defender's reserves. The attacker must keep the advance force hidden long enough to distract the defender's advance force with incoming reserves. Then, when the hidden elements are revealed, it will be a matter of striking a balance between performing recover actions to improve their mobility and actual movement actions to get where they need to go!

The defender, meanwhile, must avoid being distracted by the attacker's feinting movements. Stay mobile and responsive and try to dedicate some light, expendable elements to revealing the hidden elements so as to force the attacker's hand and disrupt the careful timing they need to win.



FAILED AMBUSH

The defenders' harbour area has been located by their enemy, who has moved quickly to surround the defenders. However, the attackers' ambush isn't yet completely ready when the defenders' sentries spot their manoeuvres. The trap has been sprung early! The attackers must move now or their prey will escape.

	Patrol				Patrol+				Troop				Troop+				Squadron			
	Pts	Loss	Adv	Res	Pts	Loss	Adv	Res	Pts	Loss	Adv	Res	Pts	Loss	Adv	Res	Pts	Loss	Adv	Res
Attacker	9	0	0	9a	12	0	0	12a	15	0	0	15a	20	0	0	20a	27	0	0	27a
Defender		-2	7h	0		-3	9h	0		-3	12h	0		-5	15h	0		-7	20h	0
Table size	2'x4' L				4'x4'				4'x6' W				4'x6' W				4'x8' W			

Battlefield

The defender places all the terrain on the table.

Disposition

Place a marker in the centre of the table. The defender's advance force must all be placed within 6" of this point. The attacker has no advance force and the whole force begins in reserve. The attacker may bring a number of elements in from reserve each turn equal to the turn number plus 1 – so 2 on the first turn, 3 on the second, 4 on the third, etc.

Objectives

Make a note at the start of the number of elements the defending commander controls.

The Attacker's Mission...

...is to successfully execute the ambush, despite the loss of perfect timing. If the attacker can destroy or render ineffective at least half of the defender's elements, the attacker wins. Any other result is a draw.

The Defender's Mission...

...is to break out of the ambush in an organized fashion. If at least half of the defender's elements move off the same table edge, the defender wins. Any other result is a draw.

Tactical Advice

Careful target selection is essential to victory for the attacker. Like a pride of hunting lions, the attacker needs to pick off the weak and isolated in the defender's force. But at the same time, be wary of allowing the most agile enemy elements to escape.

Commit strength against strength to hamstring the fastest, and weakness against weakness to whittle down the least mobile or most vulnerable. Working out which table edge the defender is aiming for will make it far easier to concentrate your reserves in the right direction to meet the enemy escape head-on.

The defender needs to play a careful game of bluff: commit the right forces in the right direction to sell the enemy a dummy. Once they're committed the majority of their reserves in the wrong direction, your fastest and most agile must rush for the exposed exit point, while the least mobile – hopefully loaded up with ordnance – provide a rear-guard defence to slow the enemy counter-attack.

RECONNAISSANCE IN FORCE

The attackers know that enemy forces are occupying the area, but their positions are concealed and the exact threat they present is unknown. A heavily-armed battlegroup has been dispatched to shake up the area and draw out the enemy.

	Patrol				Patrol+				Troop				Troop+				Squadron			
	Pts	Loss	Adv	Res	Pts	Loss	Adv	Res	Pts	Loss	Adv	Res	Pts	Loss	Adv	Res	Pts	Loss	Adv	Res
Attacker	12	-3	9a	6a	15	-3	9a	7a	20	-5	9a	9a	27	-7	9a	14a	36	-9	9a	21a
Defender		0	9h	9a		0	12h	10a		0	15h	12a		0	20h	15a		0	27h	20a
Table size	2'x4' L				4'x4'				4'x6' W				4'x6' W				4'x8' W			

Battlefield

The defender places and defines all terrain.

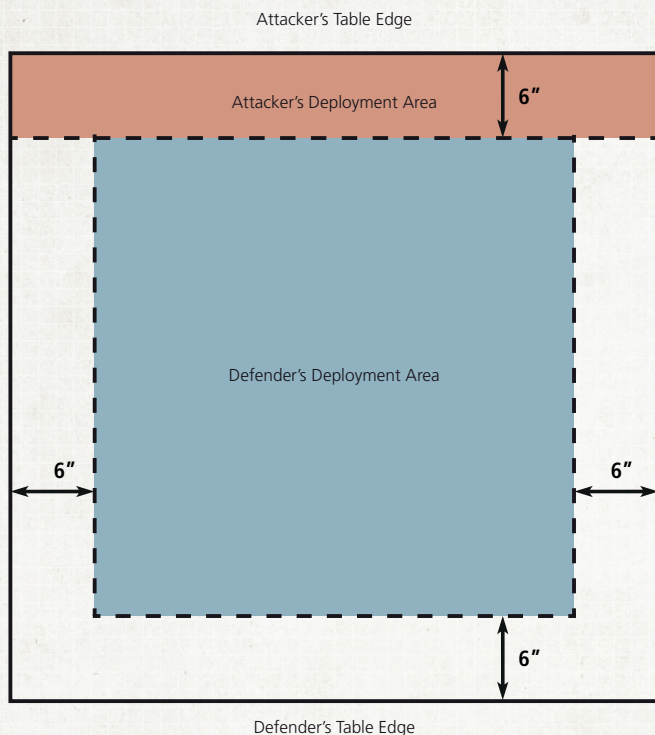
Disposition

After all terrain is placed, the attacker may choose any table edge. The attacker's advance force deploys no further than 6" from the attacker's table edge. In the first turn, no elements may enter from reserve. In subsequent turns, up to two elements may enter per turn. The attacker's reserves must enter from the attacker's table edge.

The defender places six point markers on the tabletop. Point markers must be at least 6" apart and at least 6" away from a table edge. Once all the point markers are placed, the defender must then secretly note the size of his/her advance force. The remainder are placed in reserve.

At the start of each turn, including the first, the defender must deploy at least one element from the advance force using the rules for Deep Deployment, except that both action tokens must be placed within 6" of the same point marker. This represents the attackers receiving intelligence concerning possible enemy hiding places. Elements in the defender's advance force may not perform Nothing actions in the turn they enter play.





The defender's reserves may enter from the table edge opposite the attacker's. The defender may not deploy any elements from reserve using Deep Deployment. Up to two elements may enter from reserve per turn, including the first.

Objectives

At the end of the turn in which the last of the defender's advance force is revealed, if the attacker has fewer points on the battlefield than the starting advance force, but more than half that value, the game is a draw: the attacker has obtained valuable intelligence, but at a punishing cost that will make acting upon the intelligence very hard.

The Attacker's Mission...

...is to hang around long enough to identify all the enemy force

locations before withdrawing to safety, whilst using an aggressive force presence to deter counter-strikes. If, at the end of any turn, the defender's entire advance force has been deployed, and the attacker still has an effective force presence on the battlefield at least equal to his/her advance force size, the attacker wins.

The Defender's Mission...

...is to focus enough force upon the attacker to drive their reconnaissance away before they can gather adequate intelligence about the defender's force dispositions. If, at the end of any turn, the total presence of the attacker's elements on the battlefield falls to less than half the presence of the advance force, and the defender has not deployed the whole advance force, the defender wins.

Tactical Advice

This is a waiting game for the attacker. If you can avoid engagements for long enough for all of the defender's advance force to expose itself, the game is in the bag. However, your enemy won't sit around and let you win: the attacker needs to use tactical positioning to make it as hard as possible for the defender to focus force upon his elements.

The defender's challenge is much harder. Forces will need to be revealed from the advance force fast enough to deliver effective fire upon the attacker that the attacking forces are reduced to meet the victory conditions, but each new element revealed is a tick closer to your opponent's possible victory.

SAFE CORRIDOR

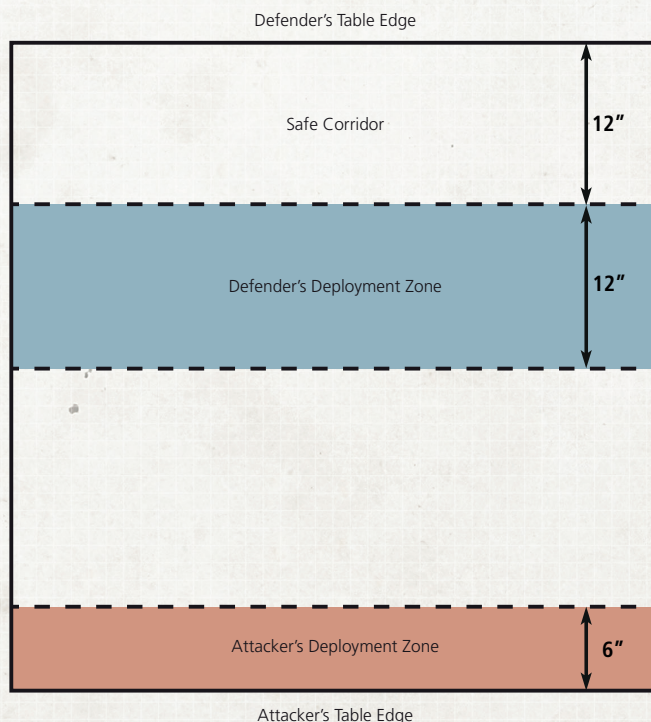
Wanted criminals/undesirables/cowardly traitors are escaping from justice having called upon support from the enemy. The attackers must break through the defenders' cordon to dish out retribution against their targets. The defenders, meanwhile, have been ordered to defend a safe route for innocent civilians to escape the warzone. The bloodthirsty attackers will let no one leave!

	Patrol				Patrol+				Troop				Troop+				Squadron			
	Pts	Loss	Adv	Res	Pts	Loss	Adv	Res	Pts	Loss	Adv	Res	Pts	Loss	Adv	Res	Pts	Loss	Adv	Res
Attacker	12	0	8a	8a	15	0	9a	9a	20	0	15a	12a	27	0	20a	15a	36	0	27a	20a
Defender		0	12h	6a		0	15h	8a		0	20h	12a		0	27h	15a		0	36h	20a
Table size	2'x4' L				4'x4'				4'x6' W				4'x6' W				4'x8' W			

Battlefield

Divide the table in half across the middle (not diagonally). The attacker takes one half and the table edge fully in that half. The attacker's deployment zone lies between the attacker's table edge and a line 6" from the table edge. The defender takes the other half and opposite table edge. The area between the defender's table edge and a line 12" from the defender's table edge is the safe corridor. The defender's deployment zone lies between the safe corridor and the halfway line.

The attacker places all the terrain in the attacker's half. The defender places all the terrain in the defender's half, except in the safe corridor, which must be kept clear of terrain.



Disposition

The defender's advance force deploys in the defender's deployment zone. The defender may keep forces in reserve, but may not use Deep Deployment in this confrontation.

The attacker's advance force deploys in the attacker's deployment zone. The remainder are placed in reserve.

On the first turn, place a token representing evacuees at one end of the safe corridor, adjacent to the table edge. The evacuees receive one action per turn to which other elements cannot react. The evacuees may only perform Move actions and have the following profile:

	M	F	A	P	D	Special
Evacuees	4	0	1	1	2	Vanguard

The defender may activate the evacuees exactly as any other element, but evacuee tokens must stay within the boundaries of the safe corridor.

Each turn after the first the defender may place up to three more evacuee tokens on the same table edge as the first until a total of nine evacuee tokens have been deployed.

Objectives

Whichever side gets five points first is the winner.

The Attacker's Mission...

...is to destroy the faithless traitors hiding behind the skirts of your enemies! For each evacuee token destroyed, the attacker gains 1 point.

The Defender's Mission...

...is to protect the innocent civilians and victims of your enemy's crimes! For each evacuee token that crosses the table edge opposite the one by which it entered the defender gains 1 point.

Tactical Advice

The attacker's instinct will be to thrust aggressively through the defender's protective screen to start squishing the fragile evacuees. However, there are two basic strategies for the attacker in this scenario and which one to choose will depend upon the defender's own approach.

The defender may either focus its protective force tight up near where the evacuees will enter play in order to "escort" them along the safe corridor, or the defending forces will spread out, more or less evenly, along the route in static fire positions in order to maximize their ability to deliver full F enfilade fire upon an advancing threat.

In the former situation, the attacker may want to spread out in order to harry the defender's forces with a small number of elements whilst moving the remainder in a pincer movement that should sweep down upon the evacuees. In the latter, the attacker may rather want to concentrate force upon a single weak point to punch through into the safe corridor and, there, cause havoc.

The defender should think carefully about whether to move back into the safe corridor or to press forward towards the attacker's advance. A canny use of reserves to move up and fill gaps left vacant by aggressive responses will be essential.

ADVENTURES

Few things in life are predictable and war even less so. "No plan survives contact with the enemy", to paraphrase von Moltke. When you've got to grips with the set-piece battles, or just fancy confronting a mission without the advantage of pre-planning, then commanders can agree that they will each go, instead, on an Adventure.

"Adventure" is, of course, the cynical foot soldier's sarcastic term for any hot encounter with the enemy that emerges unplanned and unprepared.

Before any battle in which the commanders agree to fight an Adventure, each should generate a situation, a mission and a purpose.

Situation

In an adventure, the situation is the context that sets the scene: what was the commander's force doing when it found itself thrust into the unexpected?

As well as providing entertaining background, it also sets certain parameters on how commanders construct their forces, how they are disposed and how much knowledge they have of the terrain that confronts them.

Mission & Purpose

Even a force that finds itself adventuring must have started with a mission, and its masters will still be expecting it to achieve or at least to purposefully pursue its mission. Commanders who keep focussed on the mission will erode their opponent's momentum and may press on to victory.

A force's purpose is why it is undertaking its mission at all. A force that is struggling to fulfil its mission can still focus on its purpose. If they fulfil the parameters of their purpose, they will bolster their own momentum.

Force sizes

Commanders should agree a force cost to which each will build after agreeing to



fight an adventure but before determining the situation. These will usually be the same value, but if the commanders are playing adventures as part of a campaign or league then the values may be different.

Winning an Adventure

Adventures are less about winning than they are about staying on course, focussing on the objectives and not dying. When one commander is reduced to zero or less momentum at the beginning of a turn, he or she has lost. That commander's forces are stalled and broken: dead, captured, fleeing or lost. If, at the start of a turn, both commanders are reduced to zero momentum or less, then the battle is a draw.

For tournaments, campaigns or leagues, the more momentum a winning commander has when his or her opponent is reduced to zero, the more decisive the victory.

MOMENTUM

Commanders who find themselves in an Adventure know that the crucial factor is to sustain their momentum. Once it is broken, their plans fall apart, their missions are failures and their adventure is at an ignominious end.

Calculating Momentum

At the start of an adventure, commanders calculate their starting Momentum. This is their FP, after applying any losses, plus or minus any modifier as a result of their situation (see below). At the start of each turn after the first, the starting Momentum is reduced by an amount equal to the P of every friendly element destroyed so far and by an amount dictated by the opponent's mission. It is then boosted by an amount dictated by the force's purpose.

For example, Max had a FP of 15 at the start of the game and rolls the "All's quiet..." situation. As a result, he suffers no losses but does suffer -2 Momentum. So he starts the battle with 13 Momentum. After two turns, he has lost a Light Infantry element (P1) and his opponent, with the Advance mission, has an element 24" up the board. So Max suffers -1 Momentum for his losses and -2 Momentum for his opponent's advance, leaving him with 10 Momentum.

Using Momentum

At the start of each turn, commanders take a number of action tokens equal to their momentum, which they must then allocate to their elements. No element may have more than two action tokens. Having surplus momentum means a force is driving itself beyond the level it can sustain. Surplus momentum counts towards a force's total momentum but cannot be allocated as actions tokens and will cause the force to suffer *momentum damage*.

Momentum Damage

Commanders with more Momentum than they can allocate as action tokens at the start of any turn (including the first) immediately suffer that many hits upon their BG, which they can put on any element of their choice (including elements in reserve). This represents the natural impact of stress and damage caused by having to fight and move at high intensity.

SITUATIONS

A commander's situation covers things like how ready the force is for a fight and how well they know their terrain.

Context

The context describes the situation as the commander understands it. This may or may not be fully accurate, so opposing commanders may have situations that seem contradictory. For example, both sides may be **Winning** or even **Losing**. The context may only apply to the commander's own area of the conflict or their understanding may be distorted by bad intelligence or propaganda. Situations in

DESIGN NOTE

If playing in a competitive environment but using Adventures to generate random missions, it should be considered mandatory to have commanders muster their BGs before they know what mission they will be playing.

If the planned game isn't competitive, but one player is more experienced than the other, it may be sporting to let the less experienced player plan their BG only after their situation and mission have been created, whilst the more experienced musters his or her BG before the situation is generated.

which one side thinks that **All's Quiet** while the other side is at **High Intensity** represent occasions in which only one side knows it's fighting!

Contradictory contexts are, in fact, half of the fun, as they represent the classic position of the front-line commander: having to sort fact from rumour and intel from optimism. Players may like to use an Adventure as inspiration to launch a narrative campaign (see **Narrative Encounters**).

Loss

The least amount by which the commander must reduce his or her FP before the battle begins. Losses are not in reserve and don't subsequently count as casualties:

they are simply removed from the commander's order of battle and play no part in the conflict.

Momentum (Mom)

The amount by which the commander must increase or reduce his or her starting Momentum.

Advance Force (Adv)

The maximum proportion of FP that may be deployed on the table at the start of the battle. Because these battles are fought with variable FP, Adv is expressed as a decimal fraction of the total FP. To find the right value, multiply your FP by the decimal traction and round fractions to the nearest 1 FP.

Reserve Force (Res)

The maximum proportion of FP that may be held in reserve at the start of the battle. As with Adv, Res is expressed as a decimal fraction.

So, for example, an FP 21 BG in the **Opening Salvoes** situation has a maximum advance force of $21 \times 0.4 = 8.4$; which rounds down to 8. Its maximum reserve is $21 \times 0.85 = 17.85$; which rounds up to 18. So the commander may deploy elements in advance with a total P no greater than 8, and may keep an amount of elements in reserve with a total P no greater than 18.

Terrain

After the context has been determined, but before rolling for missions, the commanders should set up the table by agreeing on a table size and then agreeing how much terrain they will use. Once the total amount is agreed, each commander take turns selecting terrain pieces up to the number given in the table below, starting with whichever commander has the lower number (or toss a coin

if the same). Once one has taken their allocated number, the other continues until they reach their number. If there are still terrain pieces after both players have taken up to the number of pieces indicated, start again.

The commanders then alternate placing items on the battlefield until all have been placed.

DESIGN NOTE

If, after taking all of your terrain, both players agree that more terrain would be fun, alternate taking more pieces until both agree that they have enough, then place terrain as normal.

D12 Roll	Context	Disposition				Terrain
		Loss	Mom	Adv	Res	
1	All's Quiet: This was supposed to be another boring day. The enemy was supposed to be miles away and no trouble expected. So what the heck...?	0	-2	0.50	0.75	6
2	Storm In A Teacup: The higher-ups are flexing their muscles to look good and, as usual, you're the one who gets to stand in the cross-hairs.	0	-1	0.75	0.50	5
3	Opening Salvoes: Hard times are a-coming, but right now it's just scouting missions, testing the water. Isn't it?	0	0	0.40	0.85	4
4	Open Warfare: This game has kicked off, but it's too early to say which way the cards are going to fall. One way or another, you plan to win.	-1	+1	0.55	0.70	3
5	High Intensity: The conflict is on a knife edge and everything could hang on your success or failure. No pressure, then.	-2	+2	0.40	0.85	2
6	Winning: Reports from the front are positive and it seems that the enemy is falling back in disarray before your might. So what...?	0	+1	0.50	0.75	2
7	Losing: Things are not going your way and your whole side is on the back foot. Is this a chance to restore the balance?	-1	0	0.75	0.50	3
8	Tactical Withdrawal: You've been forced to abandon your position and move back to an alternative location.	-1	-1	0.85	0.40	4
9	Full Retreat: All around you, your allies and comrades are abandoning the conflict for whatever safety they can find. Don't you owe it to your soldiers to follow suit?	-2	-2	0.90	0.35	5
10	Beaten: Your side has been decisively crushed and the enemy is now mopping up. Your force is intact but dispirited. Is there any coming back from this?	-3	-2	1.00	0.25	6
11	Insurgency: The war is over, but you won't give up. At every turn you will fight the invader and this looks like a perfect opportunity!	-2	+2	0.25	1.00	7
12	Everything's Under Control: You know exactly what's going on around here. Pick one of the contexts above.	-	-	-	-	n/a

MISSIONS

A commander's mission is more specific than the situation and consists of two parts: the action and the purpose.

Action

The action describes the primary activity that the commander's BG is supposed to be doing. If commanders fulfil the parameters of their action, they will erode their opponent's momentum.

Effect

This describes what the BG must do in order to erode the opponent's momentum.

Deployment

This describes the shape and size of the space in which the commander's advance force must be put on the table at the start of the battle. The shapes are either squares or rectangles and one side must touch the commander's chosen table edge.

Roll for first-turn priority before deployment. Whichever side wins priority for the first turn may instead choose to deploy second. Whichever commander deploys second then gets to activate an element first.

D12 Roll	Action	Effect	Deployment
1-3	Advance: Press forward rapidly and let nothing stand in your way.	Measure the distance between your table edge and your effective element furthest from it. For every full 12", reduce your opponent's Momentum by 2.	6"x6"
4-6	Hold: Stand firm and let none pass.	For every two elements you have on the battlefield, reduce your opponent's Momentum by 1.	6"x18"
7-9	Patrol: Establish your presence in the area by moving widely	At the end of each turn, measure the distance between your two elements that are the furthest apart. For every full 12", reduce your opponent's Momentum by 2.	6"x12"
10-12	Withdraw: Move back in orderly fashion to prepared locations.	At the end of each turn, measure the distance between your table edge and your effective element nearest to it. For every full 8", reduce your opponent's Momentum by 2.	12"x12"

Purpose

The purposes is what the commander hopes to achieve by pursuing their mission. It may be simply to destroy the enemy: remove their ability to fight. It may be to protect friendly forces, important facilities or innocent civilians. It may be, as part of a greater strategy, that their only desire is to fix the enemy in place, preventing them from contributing to some other part of the greater battle. Or their purpose might be disruptive: forcing the enemy to use up vital logistical resources.

D12 Roll	Purpose	Effect
1-3	Destroy: Enemy forces in the area must be killed or captured.	For each enemy element reduced to A0, increase your Momentum by 1.
4-6	Protect: Interfere with enemy forces' ability to fight.	For each enemy element reduced to F0, increase your Momentum by 1.
7-9	Fix: Prevent enemy forces from being able to manoeuvre.	For each enemy element reduced to M0, increase your Momentum by 1.
10-12	Disrupt: Force the enemy to deplete their logistical resources.	Each time an enemy element performs a Recover action (whether or not it is successful), increase your momentum by 1.

The effects of a mission's purpose are calculated based on the results of the previous turn. So in a Destroy mission, a commander counts every element reduced to A0 in the previous turn to increase his or her momentum, but not elements destroyed in turns before that (as they've already had that bonus in the previous turns).

NARRATIVE ENCOUNTERS

The third type of mission players may like to try are Narrative Encounters. In some ways these are the easiest to organize, because you are essentially making it up as you go along. However, it can be hard to know at the outset whether your idea for a Narrative Encounter will necessarily work. Here are some top tips for creating your own Narrative Encounters, and see also the next section – **A Short History of the Future** – for four distinct but linked settings for games of *Horizon Wars* that might help you get started with creating your own campaigns.

1. KEEP IT SIMPLE, KEEP IT CONFLICT

Especially while still learning the game, it is a good idea to keep Narrative Encounters fairly simple, with a single, clear objective for each side. In some cases both sides can share an objective, either because both want to achieve the same thing or because one side wants to prevent the other from achieving a certain mission. For example, if the objective is a downed pilot, one side may want to rescue the pilot and the other to capture her. Or if one side wants to destroy a communications outpost, the other may want to prevent them from doing so.

Alternatively, each side may have a different objective, but each interferes with the other. It is very important to make sure that the opposing forces are actually forced into conflict when giving different missions. If it is possible for each side

to achieve its mission without ever firing a shot at its opponent, the game may prove very dull.

When coming up with different missions for each side, it is worth making it so that, if either side achieves its objective, it will be the worse for their opponent. For example, if one side is able to reach that communications array, it will be able to disrupt its enemy's communications so they won't be able to use Indirect Fire or Deep Deployment, and any aircraft that disengage may not re-enter the battle.

2. BE INSPIRED BY (HI)STORY

Historical battles are a great source of ideas for narrative encounters and objectives. Thermopylae, Agincourt, Gettysburg, Ypres, Monte Cassino, Dien Bien Phu, Goose Green... Famous battles of Earth's history are a terrific starting place when coming up with ideas for your own battles. In the Charge of the Light Brigade, for example, one player might start only with Light Cavalry, P1 mechs and Mobile Infantry and cannot deploy reserves until they have breached the heavy mech line of the opponent. Dare you ride into the Valley of Death?

And as well as history, we have a wealth of fictitious battles from the worlds of science fiction and fantasy upon which we can draw to inspire us. Tolkien's Battle of Minas Tirith can easily become a heavily defended, tightly-packed urban area. The defender deploys infantry in as many buildings as they can and cannot bring on reserves until the start of the fifth turn. At the end of the turn in which the last of the defender's reserves enters the table, the game ends and whoever is occupying the most buildings is winner. Destroyed buildings count as occupied by the attacker.

Do bear in mind, however, that the victorious generals of history didn't become victorious by playing fair and waiting for their opponent to assemble a nicely formed battle line in perfect symmetry with their own. Narrative battles inspired by history or fiction are inevitably going to be unfair for one side or the other. Commanders can either look on this as part of the challenge or, for a more balanced experience, fight the battle one way and, after taking a note of the results, switch roles and fight it again.

3. GO CAMPAIGNING

A logical extension of re-fighting the same battle but switching sides is to fight a connected series of battles, usually called a campaign.

There are endless ways to fight a campaign, but to give the sense of a connected narrative, it helps if, in each battle, whoever wins and loses will determine some aspect of the next battle. But don't put all the advantages into



the hands of the winner. Victory can often make life harder for the winning commander: a rapid advance and the collapse of enemy forces may mean the commander's BG outpaces its logistical support (all elements gain the Vanguard special rule), or allied forces (reserves cannot enter the battle until after the fifth turn). Or it may mean facing greater concentrations of enemy defenders (defender receives +3 FP in the next battle).

However, it is an axiom of military planning that one reinforces success. So a winning force may benefit from improved air support (attacker receives +3 FP that must be spent on aircraft), access to more up-to-date intelligence (one enemy element in Hidden Deployment must be revealed before the first turn) or just from catching up with advance forces (the attacker's BG gains +3 FP that must be spent on SF, Recon or AB Inf).

**A SHORT HISTORY
OF THE FUTURE**



ERA I: THE BURNING

Where did it all start?

With the British, certainly. But why there? It seems the answer will never be known. Perhaps a batch of contaminated horse lasagne – a dish that became remarkably popular across the island in the second half of the 21st century – spread a neurological pathogen? Some commentators at the time referred to Mad Dog Disease, which was said to be present in the infected who went out in the midday sun. Another popular hypothesis involved the distribution of a form of immuno-resistant zombie virus via the National Health, whilst some of the more credible psychological theorists pointed to the potent combination of stage-managed “reality” television and increasingly traumatic imported crime drama from Scandinavia that may have created a “perfect storm” of morbid depression and attention-seeking in the national psyche.

Whatever the truth, the British nation rose up, almost as one, in a single, devastating, utterly unexpected attack upon their old enemy, the French. The attack – Operation *Plantagenet* – struck on 25 October 2115. Despite a storm of complaints in the United Nations, the British insistence that they were liberating historically-British lands illegally occupied by the French since 1453 caused enough of a legal delay in an internationally-coordinated military response that the British offensive smashed through the astonished French defenders to occupy and control Paris in less than four weeks.

The British spearhead was dominated by the presence of a completely new form of war machine: mechs.

Until *Plantagenet*, military operations in the twenty-first century had grown increasingly remote. From unmanned aerial vehicles used in reconnaissance and, later, direct strikes, developed nations created sophisticated drones; first as support units for conventional forces and, eventually, as standard operating units in their own right. The 2103 United Nations intervention in Zimbabwe, for example, consisted of 35 human operators leading over 4,000 remotely-operated drones.

The British scaled-up technology from drones into massive frames as heavy and well-armed as traditional tanks, and then embedded the remote operators inside them as pilots. The result was an aggressive, adaptive and terrifying creation that could react faster, more intuitively and far more unpredictably than the French drone forces – especially in the hands of the eccentric British pilots whose reputation for maverick genius was established in this dark time.

The Spanish and Argentinian governments were the most vocal by far in their condemnations of British aggression and, on Christmas Day 2115, in the Solidarity Strikes – so called because their governments insisted they were made in solidarity with their French allies – they invaded Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands, respectively. The British over-reaction was as shocking as it was (in hindsight)

predictable, as submarines already positioned in the Atlantic launched direct, massive nuclear retaliations on Madrid and Buenos Aires.

American, Russian and German prevarication – primarily founded upon a mutual sense that the French had basically been asking for it for six hundred years – ended in a stroke. But what should have been an opportunity to crush the New British expansionism in a single, devastating blow was lost.

The world of the early twenty-second century was interconnected in a way unlike anything before or since. Hundreds of millions of workers spent the majority of their lives co-mingled in thought collectives known as melds. Melds made use of their members' ability to parallel process in order to create models of productivity that generated quadrillions of dollars internationally, but their members largely spent their working days engaged in trivial tasks or pursuing personal entertainment. A conservative estimate calculated that if all the cute cat videos circulating within the melds were genuine, cats would have to outnumber humans more than ten to one.

The melds were, essentially, super-intelligent collective minds that often held opinions both alien to and diametrically opposed to the opinions held by the majority of their actual constituent minds. And the largest melds, deeply invested in their host nations' defence networks, were adamantly opposed to retaliatory action against the British. The melds refused to explain why, but many outside observers suspected a belief in the Hume Effect – a hypothesis that argued that technological stagnation was inevitable unless humanity immersed itself in total international war.

The influence of the melds was sufficient to stall the combined counter-attack on British assets and to disrupt the response for long enough that the British forces broke into hundreds or possibly thousands of independent battlegroups that began a campaign of asymmetric warfare for which their opponents were entirely unprepared. The New British had developed a form of warfare, based upon their mechs, that used new energy technology, information infrastructures and theories of command and delegation that made them able to operate almost indefinitely without orders or external support. Left to exercise their own initiative, the various battlegroup commanders scattered: some struck back directly at their attackers and were, for the most part, killed or captured, although the damage they did was immense. Others focussed upon the rear echelons and logistical support of their enemies, seizing resources for themselves and crippling their opponents' ability to react. Many simply slid away, using the plundered resources of Paris to finance their covert extractions across the Mediterranean to Africa, over the Atlantic to South America or through the Black Sea and into the Central Asian republics. In the territories of these economic outliers, the skills and technology of the ruthless British commanders were welcomed with open arms.

So what should have ended in a hammer blow broke into a series of hundreds of running battles, which went on to spawn thousands more. By the end of 2116,



just a year after the launch of Operation *Plantagenet*, the world was in flames.

The Burning shattered human society. Countryside and farmland was laid waste by destructive battles. The United States tore itself apart in the Second Civil War, made worse by spill-over from Canada and Mexico, where French and Spanish anti-British feeling found expression through Quebecois separatism and anti-Americanism. Across the world, ancient borders evaporated and national governments toppled or collapsed daily. Cities, desperate to preserve not only their fragile populations but also their economic independence, threw up power-hungry defence shields, closed their doors and abandoned the outside world.

Nuclear weapons – the taboo smashed by the British attacks that left vast nuclear wastelands in the Iberian peninsula and southern tip of the Americas – were launched or detonated a dozen more times and the land outside the shields began to wither and die.

Famine, plague, war and death bestrode the face of the Earth and prophets foretold the end of days...

BATTLES IN THE BURNING

The time of The Burning stands not all that far from our own. It encompasses many sorts of battle – fleeting skirmishes all the way to mighty conflicts – and many sorts of terrain, from the frozen Siberian wastes where the mighty Oil Czars would eventually hold sway, to the teeming factory cities of central Africa. But it is restricted to Earth, and to a time of scarce resources when the technology that would define future wars would be in its infancy.

Mechs, despite being era-defining, were new beasts. Nevertheless, they were also very much the fulcrum about which the rest of any force would turn. To represent this, for every full 6 points in a commander's BG spent on conventional forces (not mechs or aircraft), they receive 1 extra point to spend on a mech (this can be a free P1 mech, or reduce the cost of a P2 or P3 mech to 1 or 2 points respectively). However, mechs during the Burning were still relatively unsophisticated, so may not take any upgrades (although they may still be used as a CHQ).

Similarly, aircraft can only be given the Rotary, Vertical Thrusters and/or Light Transport upgrades.

Conventional forces cannot take the Antigrav upgrade.

ERA II: THE COLONIAL WAR & THE MAUL

There was only so long even humans could sustain such stupidity. The melds had been crippled by the billions of deaths that followed The Burning, but a handful sustained themselves on the co-mingling of thousands or just hundreds of surviving members: their intelligence was dwarfed, but their intellect became far more humane as their members ceased to be passive non-participants but active and determined.

The melds re-invented themselves, first, as feudal overlords, then as corporate executives, then as political visionaries... and then they vanished. The meld membership grew from the tiny number at the final years of The Burning, back to millions as the world re-built itself along new lines and then, one day, when it seemed that humankind stood on the brink of a new, meld-led golden age, the meld members found themselves inexplicably disconnected, unable to re-integrate with the meld. The hardware wasn't faulty – and still had a myriad uses – but the software that had governed the melding process for over a hundred and fifty years had simply ground to a halt. And the fact was that the software's development had, for so long, been guided by the melds themselves that its complexity was far beyond what human minds would comprehend.

Cut adrift from the meld, charismatic humans seized back control of power in the new global society and, seeking a fresh adventure to crown a new era, turned their eyes to space.

This was the age of the enlightened megacorporation: massive conglomerates formed on the same democratic and inclusive principles as the vanished melds. Benign competition was a driver to success and development. So when two of the greatest megacorps separately announced plans to colonize, respectively, Mars and Venus, the world cheered for a new era of human achievement.

Publicly the competitors – FutureZ and Vizhnu – were supportive and encouraging of each other, celebrating successes and commiserating with failure. But behind closed doors, each was realizing the terrifying sink-holes of investment to which they had hitched their reputations. The pressure to make the colonization efforts pay off were immense before even the first missions had landed. Had FutureZ and Vizhnu been as transparently open as their corporate philosophies espoused then each would have seen their own troubles reflected in the other. A rapprochement might have seen them merge to their mutual benefit. But instead, ignoring their founding principles, the leaders of each threw themselves further and further into the red.

The first skirmishes were between competing branches within each corporation – FutureZ on Mars and Vizhnu on Venus. Desperate to announce a quantifiable success, executives from each drove their subordinates harder and harder until the only way to attain the necessary figures was to attack neighbouring projects to steal their resources. Project leaders recruited mercenaries from the Central

European wastelands and North American Radiologs, accustomed as they were to daily conditions of lethal radiation and toxin poisoning that were the norm in the new colonies. It wasn't long before the idea of inserting competing colonies on each other's planet came to minds in both sides.

The breakout of open warfare on Mars and Venus coincided almost perfectly with the total collapse of Vizhnu and FutureZ, the twin pillars upon which Earth's entire developed economy was based. It was an interplanetary disaster. On Venus and Mars the opposing sides were fighting no longer for success but for survival itself. On Earth, it was a market free-for-all as ruthless entrepreneurs fought (sometimes literally) to control the assets of the fallen giants.

One of the functions that the old meld hardware still maintained was access to a vast entertainment and information resource, and the demoralized and indigent population of Earth increasingly retreated to the safe escapism it offered. Meanwhile, those with the resources fought to control the media by which that escapism was delivered, and few subjects were more exciting to the jaded and over-stimulated Terran minds than the wars on Mars and Venus.

The commoditization of warfare led to dramatic changes in how the Martian and Venusian factions fought one another. Supply runs from Earth provided strategic impetus for otherwise foolish or insane battle plans, designed by the war-editors of the competing media outlets to provide their viewers with unparalleled stimuli. The result was the extension of the Colonial Wars by years longer than they could have sustained themselves without partisan Terran support, the loss of thousands of lives and, perhaps most astonishing of all, a mass-migration of Terrans to the embattled warzones: people from the peaceful city-states of Earth whose addiction to the second-hand thrill of piped conflict feeds was such that nothing could feed their hunger but direct, personal immersion in the real-life adrenaline-rush of actual combat.

Alarmed at the increasing dependency of their population on war and death, major forces of Earth were able to persuade – by force where necessary – the primary media corporations to withdraw their sponsorship, with an instant, dramatic effect upon hostilities on Mars and Venus. The Terran public outcry was massive and immense, but the corporations refused to reinvest in the distant war. Instead, they instituted The Maul.

The phenomenon of national and international sports had never really returned after The Burning, which had left the surviving population of Earth with an abiding suspicion of nationalist ideologies. But support for the different factions of Mars and Venus throughout the Colonial War had reignited the idea of partisan support along non-regional lines. In simple terms: everyone liked belonging to a team. The Maul sought to build on this instinct to provide a sensible transition from uncontrollable, bloody warfare to less-violent sports. Mechs had been the stars of the Colonial Wars – at least as far as its enthusiasts were concerned – and so they were made into the stars of The Maul, too.



Massive arenas were constructed, replicating some of the more accessible conditions of Mars and Venus: blasted wastelands dotted with shattered habitation pods and laced with deadly traps; concealed pits; minefields; tanglewire. Teams – usually two, but sometimes three or more – set upon each other in a vicious approximation of war.

The Maul was an unparalleled success and fortunes were made overnight. The best mercenary mech pilots of Mars and Venus returned from their former battlefields to instant stardom and multi-million credit contracts to fight (“play”) for the most successful and popular teams. The stadiums themselves were packed and vast sums of money were exchanged in betting syndicates. But whilst the professional game evolved gradually into a well-organized, slick marketing affair with corruption under tight control, a second, equally-popular community grew up alongside it: the amateur game. The most popular of these was the amateur pick-up circuit. Small arenas were opened up for four hours every weekend, and anyone with a mech could turn up, join a side and participate in The Maul. With the Earth still dotted with the skeletons of abandoned towns and forgotten cities, arenas could be established in a few hours, fought over and vanish again in under a day. And, whilst technically illegal, the territory beyond city limits was still largely abandoned and neglected.

Deaths in the professional game were rare, thanks to emergency ejection pods and strict rules about stomping on ejected players. But the amateur sport was far less regulated and pirate media feeds fed an appetite for carnage.

The Terran city-states entered an ever-descending spiral into stagnation and decadence, while the war-hardened populations of Mars and Venus watched in disbelief as they slowly recovered and made their worlds into (barely) habitable spheres.

BATTLES IN THE COLONIAL WAR

Fighting on Mars and Venus saw soldiers thrust into the most dangerous combat environment ever before experienced by humankind. Moreover, they had to face it without even having the sort of armoured, artillery or logistical support that forces on Earth would have enjoyed.

Mechs at this time were growing more sophisticated but far from Earth, maintenance was a perpetual challenge. They may be equipped with Anti-aircraft and Assisted Targeting weapon upgrades, and Engineer, Agile or Minelayer frames, but only a maximum of half the total FP may consist of mechs.

Aircraft may have any upgrades except Antigrav.

Conventional forces may not include Light Infantry, Airborne Infantry, Special Forces, Heavy Cavalry, Light Artillery or Armoured Artillery.

Fighting on Venus

The vicious caustic atmosphere will tear through any gap, turning serious hits into lethal ones. Any critical hit, as well as causing critical damage as usual, also causes a second, normal hit.

Fighting on Mars

Mars is a terrible place to be left stranded, so elements wouldn't risk becoming immobile for any reason. Any element reduced to M1 is treated as destroyed (it has limped away from the battle in the hope of returning to base). Elements may not start the battle with less than M3.



BATTLES IN THE MAUL

As a sport, The Maul went through many changes in its life. In the early days, it was merely a free-for-all bent towards mutual annihilation. In due course, teams formed and rules were laid out. Some even played with massive steel balls and goal pits in which they could score points.

The Maul is fought only with mechs. Aircraft and conventional forces are not allowed.

The Maul lends itself to imaginative scenarios that would make little sense in a real military environment. "Capture the flag" is the most obvious starting point, in which each side designates a point in their deployment zone as the flag. The first side that can reach their opponent's flag and take it all the way back to their own deployment zone is the winner. But there are lots of other possibilities. If you have multiple players, try a Maul with just one or two mechs each. Last one standing is the winner!

ERA III: THE NEW COLONIAL AGE

Earth's slow decline was hastened on the 22nd August 2300, when the asteroid 23987 Ammit collided with the home-world with disastrous effects. The experience of The Burning was as nothing compared to the after-effects of Ammit's Fall. The cities at its impact zone – a four thousand-mile-wide area from the edge of the Himalayas to the Mediterranean Sea – were shattered by immense earthquakes whose effects reached across Africa, Europe and Asia. The heat blast killed everyone and everything within a hundred miles and beyond that thousands were hideously burned. Cities on the far side of the world were rocked by the collision, but otherwise largely unscathed. But in the days that followed, a vast cloud of dust rose up into the atmosphere, sweeping across the planet and choking out light and life.

A winter fell like nothing in human experience. The ice caps expanded. The oceans were sucked dry. Plants and animals died. Humans... retreated.

But Ammit was no surprise to anyone. The observers from Venus and Mars had seen the asteroid beginning its million-mile descent. Earth-based astronomers had been well aware of its approach and the danger it presented. Communications between the worlds were slow, but not uncordial and no one was alarmed by Ammit: after all, all three worlds had space-based resources more than adequate to deflect, destroy or even capture Ammit for further study and exploitation. In many ways, its collision course was a fascinating diversion from Earth's continued slump into the self-obsession and degeneration that had seen the migration to Venus and Mars continue throughout that time.

But before Earth could announce its plans or intentions for Ammit, all communications ceased. There was no warning. There was no explanation. The entire planet simply seemed, in electromagnetic terms, to go black. Then, a couple of days later, Ammit struck.

The devastation of the mother-world rocked the Colonial populations. Various rescue attempts were attempted from the surviving orbital facilities. The survivors from the orbital stations and from the lunar bases were as mystified by the communications black-out as anyone, and keen to descend to the Terran surface to see what was left of their homes. The answer proved to be "very little". A handful of survivors – fewer than a thousand out of a population of billions – were rescued before it became impossible to sustain rescue efforts at that distance from the Colonial home-worlds. Several teams of Terrans insisted on returning to Earth, promising to stay in communication for as long as possible, but the majority returned, with their rescuers, to Mars or Venus.

It is hard to say, looking back, where the blame lay for the next war. The Martians somehow became convinced that the Venusians had learned something of vital interest from a survivor about events on Earth, and they decided

to return to the mother-world to prevent something – it is vague what they thought it was – from falling into the wrong hands. The Venusians, meanwhile, claim only to have observed the Martian return and wished to assist or support.

Of course, neither the Martians nor Venusians were, themselves, unified cultures or communities. Each was riven with internal conflict, disagreements and differences of opinion that – perhaps unsurprisingly, given their frontier mentality and long Colonial War – often broke out into sporadic violence. Both worlds could have found at least one faction that would disagree with at least one central conviction of every other faction. The only things that all the factions on each world agreed on – openly, anyway – was that their colonial world was better than that other colonial world, and that Earth would have been marvellous if it hadn't been for all the Terrans. So when, first, it seemed that most of the Terrans had been wiped out and, second, that there was a chance the other lot might lay claim to the mother-world and its secrets before they could, it was a short step to confrontation.

The New Colonial Age cannot, perhaps, be fairly called a war, though. The silent agreement that space conflict was forbidden remained largely unbroken. And although there were some inter-faction conflicts on the home-worlds that may well have been prompted or sponsored by enemies on the other home-world, all the real fighting was restricted to Earth: a world that was large, varied and broken enough that the thinly-spread forces of Mars and Venus could roam it for weeks or even months without so much as glimpsing the forces of their notional enemies.

None the less, when fighting did break out, it was fierce, brutal and unforgiving. No quarter was given, none was asked, and prisoners were taken only for interrogation followed by execution. Philosophically-speaking, Mars and Venus had taken very different turns and neither saw any chance of turning back.



The Martian factions saw, in Earth, the tragic remains of a golden past. The broken mother-world was, to them, something to be rebuilt and repaired. When, very occasionally, they came across pockets of desperate human survivors, the Martians treated them as a sort of cross between spoiled infants and honoured ancestors – to be treated with care and compassion, but also firmness, for their own good. A great deal of the Martians' time was spent analysing the damage upon the Terran biosphere, assessing what had survived and what might yet recover.

The Venusians, meanwhile, considered Earth a broken relic, fit only to be stripped of what remained before being abandoned forever. They had no interest in the Terran survivors except for their ability to point them towards the remains of the technology corporations whose last discoveries and creations the Venusians hungered for the most.

Both sides focussed their efforts on the American continents, as far from the impact site as possible, and on the populated areas that were, of course, also the focus for the major scientific and technological research centres. The result was a race to track down the lost technology of the fallen Earth, to either put it to use repairing the terrible damage done by Ammit – for the Martians – or to spirit it away to contribute towards the Venusians' own strange agenda.

The hunt went on, sporadically, for decades. Analysts on Mars and Venus would sift through the latest discoveries and whatever digital or paper records could be found, looking for answers. Permanent beachheads were established on the Moon and in Earth orbit from which to press operations forwards, but progress was slow and the results of questionable economic value.

It was the Venusians who were first to realize that developments by several Terran research groups, the impact of Ammit and the E/M blackout might all, actually, be connected, when they identified the inter-relationship of several highly advanced assemblies. But whilst the Martians didn't have the advantage of the partial assemblies, they did piece together several of the consulting documents that gave them first sight of the full picture: the SLAPdrive – a practical method of faster-than-light travel that would have opened not only the solar system, but the whole galaxy to human exploration. But to function, the drive had to have, at its core, a quantity of exotic matter, held in perfect stasis: something that should not be possible. Surely, the opposing scientists reasoned, there must be, somewhere, the facility to create the drive.

Several inquiring minds wanted to know whether, if as was suspected, a side-effect of the SLAPdrive would have been Earth's E/M blackout, which would mean that the SLAPdrive had been used just days before the Fall. The Venusians were driven with an almost-religious fervour to secure the drive for themselves. The Martians were certain that the riddle of The Fall would be solved if the records of the SLAPdrive's factory, wherever it was, could be secured.

The conflict that had been half-hearted and occasional now took on an intensity not seen since the Burning as both sides zeroed in on the factory's location.

At this point, the Venusians' greater urge for victory told against the Martians. Suicide attacks and a commitment of soldiers and materiel to the battle that seems insane to their enemies gave the Venusians the power they needed to sweep aside the baffled and exhausted Martians. Within weeks, though, the Venusians withdrew, having gutted the facility of its machineries, and the Martians moved in to collect what scraps and crumbs they could from what little was left.

The New Colonial War ended abruptly. Five years later, Martian observers reported an E/M blackout on Venus and, when ships finally reached that world, months later, the world was empty. Its laboriously terraformed surface stood unmonitored. Its sprawling cities lay vacant. Even its orbital shipyards were abandoned.

The solar system had been surrendered to the Martians.

BATTLES IN THE NEW COLONIAL ERA

Battles took place on both Venus and Mars during the New Colonial Era, although they were very occasional and fought for limited objectives – typically to steal a piece of information or valuable intelligence concerning operations on Earth. The distances involved meant that such extended operations were almost impossible to sustain.

The Earth – shattered and broken by the Fall of Ammit – is the site of most battles but, unlike the battles of history, these were fought not for territory or conquest but more like the ancient Viking raids that sought to plunder and flee. It was also marked by distinctly different philosophies on the opposing sides.

Army selection in the New Colonial Era is unlimited except that aircraft may not have the Antigrav upgrade.

Martian Forces

Having evolved in the sparse atmosphere of Mars, Martian forces are unused to operating in coordination with aircraft, but are rarely without a mech in support, even of conventional forces. Martian forces may not have aircraft with a total P greater than one-fifth (20%) of the FP, but may take an extra P1 mech at no cost.

Venusian Forces

Venusian aircraft pilots are some of the most gifted ever to have lived, having cut their teeth in the lethal atmosphere of their home-world. Venusian forces can include one aircraft Ace for no cost.

ERA IV: THE AGE OF EXPANSION

The Earth had enjoyed many extended periods of peace, often thought of as “golden” ages, but the time that followed the departure of the Venusians, that came to be known as the Great Surrender, was not only the longest peace in human history but also a period in which the peace was consistent and continuous. With not one but three planets from which to choose, along with the moons of the outer planets that were now open to exploitation, and hundreds of orbital habitats, the human race had all the space, resources and opportunities it could have desired.

Science and the arts advanced hand in hand as concepts of mind and identity were broken down and reassembled along with the very constituent parts of life and death themselves. Artificial and biological intelligences lived in harmony, the boundaries between each shifting and blurring. Whole virtual universes were created and explored. Hundreds of thousands of extinct species were restored and reintroduced to Earth, as atmospheric manipulation rolled back the terrible impact of The Fall. Even Venus enjoyed the introduction of genetically altered plant and insect species specifically designed for its still challenging atmosphere. Mars proved more resistant to sustaining independent life, but was still bestowed with a basic ecosystem and thin atmosphere.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the secrets of the SLAPdrive didn't stay hidden for long, and the Solar Hegemony dispatched dozens of AI probes throughout the galaxy in search of life or new worlds to settle. Whilst the majority reported back with little to show for their effort, a few failed to return. It didn't take long for a clear picture to form: probes sent to certain specific areas of the galaxy didn't come back.

As the harmonious community of the Hegemony continued to evolve and develop in peace and tranquillity, there was, nevertheless, an under-current of nervousness. So interconnected were the minds of humans – a term used for all self-actualised intelligences – in the Hegemony that what was known by one could easily and quickly become known by all. A few of the greater minds tried their best to sequester the information being gleaned cautiously from the Dark Zones, as they were known, but even the fact that knowledge was being sequestered was, itself, cause for alarm.

What had felt like the dawning of a bright new age of galactic expansion quickly began to feel like a blade, hung threateningly over the heads of the Hegemony's citizens. The solar system was a candle burning in the vast gulf of darkness. Beyond its weak light lay monsters: monsters that they had incautiously stirred with their probes and information gathering. Monsters that would, surely, come visiting before too long, and which might bring back the terrors of past wars if the Hegemony didn't make itself ready to receive them.



Almost without realizing it was doing it, the Hegemony began to prepare for war. The shipwrights whose past creations had been structures of inconceivable grace and slenderness now began to assemble vessels better prepared to face the night. The carriage of weapons became, once more, *de rigueur*, along with the study of martial arts and duelling. New walkers, inspired by the designs of ancient mechs in museums and galleries, were built with which citizens performed stylized “re-enactments” of historical battles, poring endlessly over dusty tactical manuals and armaments catalogues.

With many humans inhabiting near-indestructible bodies and, in any case, able to restore themselves from back-ups in the event of actual death, bolder souls began engaging in real battles: first one-on-one, then in teams and, eventually, in collisions of hundreds of mechs, tanks, aircraft and brave foot soldiers. The peaceful and enlightened folk of the Hegemony were released from the fear of



death and the consequences of loss and battle. They felt strong. They felt dangerous!

With a collective sigh of relief, they realized that, whatever the terrible gulfs of the Dead Zones held for them – the lost tribes of Earth; the insane Cult of Venus, or new and powerful alien races and threats unimagined – they were more than ready to face them.

So it was that, in the attitude not of explorers or scientists, but of conquerors, the Hegemony's fleets set out across SLAPspace and into the Dark Zones.

BATTLES IN THE DARK

In the Age of Expansion all bets are off. The galaxy is a vast place and anything you can imagine is at least possible. This is where commanders can really exercise their imagination on worlds that are home to bizarre alien empires, ravaging hordes, weird landscapes or twisted echoes of Earth's lost tribes.

In The Dark, forces may find their way through to strange parallel dimensions where techno-barbaric human empires are locked in eternal combat with alien conquerors and other, weirder threats. Or jaded generals may re-enact the battles of history but on worlds of much lower (or higher) gravity. Tanks and mechs may find themselves swamped and torn apart by mighty legions of fragile foot soldiers, or immense super-mechs may stand alone in defiance of wave after wave of lesser creations.

To give even the faintest hint of the possibilities of the battles possible beyond the horizon would require another book in its own right. But you can begin to add some Dark flavour to your battles with the following special rules:

Low Gravity

Movement on this world is easy – too easy. All non-aircraft elements count as Rapid. However, any element that performs a Rapid move must move the full distance and cannot move less far. In addition, to perform a Move & Shoot action or reaction takes two action tokens.

High Gravity

Movement on this world is much harder than on worlds of Earth-like gravity. No element can perform Rapid move actions. Rotary aircraft cannot be used at all and any aircraft that stalls at Altitude 1 crashes automatically.

Native Antipathy

Vicious indigenous fauna and flora will attack any invader that doesn't keep moving. At the end of any turn, any element that did not perform at least one Patrol or Rapid move action automatically suffers one non-critical hit.

APPENDICES



APPENDIX 1: MODELS & MINIATURES

15mm.co.uk

Despite their name, 15mm.co.uk has a modest range of 6mm infantry, covering heavy, light, recon, special forces and a couple of alien types. Larger than most 6mm ranges, the human miniatures measure about 8mm to the top of the head, which means they can table fairly comfortably against a smaller 6mm range or a larger 10mm range.

Angel Barracks

A relative newcomer, Angel Barracks produces a small but expanding range of SF professional military and irregular wastelander types, plus a selection of alien life forms and – almost uniquely – a selection of civilian models. They also have a cost-effective range of 6mm resin buildings with a colonial/frontier theme.

Brigade Models

A forerunner in the realm of 6mm science fiction, Brigade Models' range is extensive covering every sort of conventional element found in Horizon Wars, plus a few more. Their company packs represent a great value "army in a box". Also, their *Squadron Commander* range is an excellent source of appropriately scaled aircraft in a variety of styles, sizes and capabilities.

Dark Realm Miniatures

With four distinct factions of 6mm science fiction – humans and three alien races – Dark Realm has a lovely mix of aesthetics and includes both mega walkers and enormous alien beasts.

Darkest Star Games

The 6mm sci-fi range from Darkest Star Games has something of a retro vibe about its antigrav tanks and spacesuit-wearing soldiers, but also has some with a strong near-future feel – wheeled APCs and light infantry, as well as several different designs of mech.

EM4 Miniatures

The ultimate budget source for mechs and aircraft, EM4 sells a set of five plastic mechs and a set of twelve plastic aircraft. Whilst the material and casting quality isn't up to most wargames plastics standards, the price is hard to argue with.

Hawk Wargames

Their 10mm *Dropzone Commander* range includes a large selection available in hard plastic with excellent detail and five distinct factions. They also have terrain options in both resin and printed cardboard.

Microworld Games

As well as being a retailer for other 6mm SF ranges, Microworld also sells its own 6mm SF range covering four distinct human and alien factions. Their range is broad enough to comfortably represent most of the conventional and aircraft elements in *Horizon Wars*.

Onslaught Miniatures

One of the very few 6mm ranges available in hard plastic, Onslaught's line is of a science-fantasy style that would be perfect for Era IV gaming. With eight factions now, and rising, it's a diverse and dynamic option.

Plasmablast Games

With three high-tech factions, digitally sculpted and beautifully cast, Plasmablast's range is fairly small but set to expand.

Spartan Games

Spartan's *Firestorm: Planetfall* is a growing range of high-tech 10mm science fiction, whilst their well-established *Dystopian Wars* range is a 2mm-scale range with a Victorian science fiction setting that nevertheless still works well at a range of scales.

Troublemaker Games

UK-based Troublemaker Games has a similar aesthetic to Onslaught, albeit with a very different selection of factions and cast in metal rather than plastic. Their *Cybershadows* mechs are particularly worth checking out.

Wargames Emporium

This retail operation is also the owner of the *Command Horizon* range of 6mm SF miniatures which covers three human and alien factions, with a broad range of conventional forces, light mechs and aircraft.

APPENDIX 2: PLAY SUMMARY

Movement	
Cautious Move	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to M" • Gain 360° arc of vision • Can be part of Move & Shoot action
Patrol Move	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 2xM" • Can be part of Move & Shoot action
Rapid Move	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 3xM" • Cannot be used in same activation as Shoot or Move & Shoot action
Charge Move	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 2xM" • Must be straight line • May not be a reaction • Stop active element 1" from target, resolve all reactions then finish charge
Counter-charge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 1" • Must contact enemy element • May only be a reaction

Shooting	
Stand & Shoot	Roll dice equal to F value
Move & Shoot	Roll dice equal to ½F value, rounding up
System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declare target: Check active element's line of fire. Choose another target if necessary. • Check range: Measure between closest two points on active element and target. Add target's A and any cover modifier to get effective range. • Fire: Roll dice equal to the active element's F or ½F as appropriate. • Incoming: Target rolls dice equal to its D. Remove one die from the Fire roll for every exact match in the Incoming roll. • Calculate hits: Group remaining Fire dice into groups that equal or exceed the effective range. Each group equals one hit. • Apply damage: Target adds the number of hits to its damage track and reduces its active stats.

Charge	
System	Roll dice equal to P; discard all but the highest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add +1 for each dice showing the same value as the highest • Add +1 if the element moved • Add +1 if the element moved more than 4"
Normal Resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opposing element takes damage equal to the final value, rounding down • Whichever element takes most damage moves 1" away from opposing element
Special Resolutions	
Infantry Charges Infantry	Whichever takes most damage is destroyed
Infantry Charges Mech/Vehicle	If infantry wins, vehicle is destroyed. Infantry halves damage it takes, rounding up
Mech/Vehicle Charges Infantry	If vehicle wins, infantry is destroyed; move vehicle on 1". If infantry wins, immediately resolve again as if infantry charged vehicle. If draw, vehicle moves on 1"
Special Rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infantry never adds more than +1 to dice roll • Vehicles cannot Counter-charge

Damage & Recovery	
Normal Damage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For each hit, apply one point of damage and reduce F, M or A by 1 • If A is 0, element is destroyed
Recover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recover action may not be combined with Moving or Shooting • Roll dice equal to D. For each result greater than total damage, increase F, M or A by 1 • May not raise stat above starting value • May not be a reaction

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