



CREDITS

Beam Saber is made by Austin Ramsay

This work is based on Blades in the Dark (found at <http://www.bladesinthedark.com/>), product of One Seven Design, developed and authored by John Harper, and licensed for our use under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>).

This game is dedicated to Christine Blight for her brilliant suggestions, and tireless support of my work and well being.

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Thank you to all the people supporting me through patreon.

Additional thanks goes to the members of the Beam Saber, Tabletop Treehouse, Friends At The Table, and Blades In The Dark discord servers for their advice and enthusiasm.

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PLAYTESTERS

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FIRST A WORD TO PLAYTESTERS

Thank you so much for helping test this game! I'm really hoping that between all of our efforts, we can make Beam Saber into something that will be published under the Forged In The Dark catalogue. The game isn't finished yet, and there's still a lot I want to add, (you can find this in the Future Update Goals section) and a lot that I'm considering changing. If you'd like to support its development, I have a [Patreon](#).

If you find the size of this document intimidating, try starting with the [Beam Saber Quick Start Guide!](#)

Please send your notes, recording links, play by posts, etc to BeamSaberRPG@gmail.com

As playtesters, you have a few responsibilities:

- Please provide play notes about your experiences with the game. Ideally, this would be in the form of live streaming or audio recording. Written transcripts, or your notes from the session are good too, as are photos of the character and series Playbooks, and other game ephemera from your session.
- Please provide feedback about your experiences with the game. If there were problems that your group experienced with specific mechanics, the rules as written, the character sheets, or any other stumbling blocks during play, I want to hear about it. If there were things you particularly enjoyed, I'd love to hear about that as well.
- Offer problems, not solutions. When providing feedback, try to focus on the problems you encountered, and explain those in as much detail as you can. Don't worry about offering solutions to these problems, or whatever design you think might be better. I'm still interested in hearing about how you worked around these problems at the table.
- Lastly, tell me what you were excited about! The characters you met, the locations you explored, the obstacles you overcame (or fell to), and the mechanics you enjoyed! Despite its grounded tone, Beam Saber is still a game and those are meant to be fun.

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PLAYER RESOURCES

The **Pilot Playbooks** can be found here:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1SL7zeVdCyTMD63wQIONpYMIuhANEzHA13SwA4m4pWgA/edit?usp=sharing>

The **Pilot Character Sheets** can be found here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zUoxRo4pvY7pkKxHU6yKBKQ8AUQWC3z8/view?usp=sharing>

The **Squad Playbooks** can be found here: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DL81S-4nSuD3cPZZjeHVCOVCHTM4Q7C444ye2fHphoE/edit?usp=sharing>

The **Squad Sheet** can be found here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1D6YnqlseVxG1mzB3-nCMlivl_8WfMBw/view?usp=sharing

The **Reference Sheets** can be found here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pdj0dF__daJHgj1cgDHZWl_HLEO1OuF/view?usp=sharing

The **Region Sheet** can be found here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QnXAr_04wvTtkC6oVFXRVmZm3r7hvZNb/view?usp=sharing

The **Random Tables** document can be found here:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xKEbQcE24XkMY3e6LzAasChD-kXetWqqhmO9zTk8ONg/edit?usp=sharing>

A document containing only **The Basics** can be found here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/10mwcwd9e5Zpb5_zSE4JppyEAHpAmGSBMxCfvrkJOwE/edit?usp=sharing

A document containing only **Pilot Creation** can be found here:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/12QsJzcTDLsfvY4u9Xe7ODPKIZIOVkf14K7z6f-mXn8/edit?usp=sharing>

A document containing only **Vehicle Creation** can be found here:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1i-7izjqazYBU7AgcLH3Wj6dRXwHi0weY922v8uI7Q54/edit?usp=sharing>

A document containing only **Squad Creation** can be found here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cOE-lz-auz03_7WATSkI7hJGGNeGnM25odsle_82MVw/edit?usp=sharing

A wonderful fan by the name of Erik Rådman (<https://twitter.com/erikradman>) created these

fillable pilot and Squad sheets: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Vc8JI9FaXK2-jLQ8FqUOKuuBFiQuNs0WW62p_6L25MA/edit?usp=sharing

Cory McDaniel (<https://twitter.com/Hadrian>), a great fan of the game, has shared this

moddable Roll20 splash page for anyone who wants to make their Beam Saber game a lot fanicer: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eOHwLXI1WFfuE0P3yKiqCAiLZIKgbQt_/view

Additionally, Cory made some **Roll20 macros** for Beam Saber. Copy everything between the bars, make sure there are no line breaks and you're good:

<https://pastebin.com/fUSPV9Vi>

I also commissioned Cory for some **stream friendly Beam Saber overlays**. You can find them here: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1AJWxxxiaKgOeGH3pgUxS5cgBV0GO-iwW?usp=sharing>

If you want the **Beam Saber Clocks** for Roll20 that I made, you can find links to all of them in this twitter thread:

<https://twitter.com/Notaninn/status/988558212348686337>

If you want some inspiration, try the **Beam Saber Bot**:

https://twitter.com/BEAM_SABER_BOT

If you want to join the Beam Saber community, where you can find people to discuss the rules or a group to play with, we have a **Discord** server here: <https://discord.gg/WuC8r5W>

If you want to see **actual play of Beam Saber**, I GM The Cenotaph and you can find **VODs** here: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcvOl-rN4hsyep-lyoapI76bnlyEA7f7O>

If you prefer your actual plays to be in **podcast** format you can listen to Beam Saber: The Cenotaph, or want premade scenarios called Mission Reports click here:

<https://beamsaber.libsyn.com/>

CHANGELOG FOR V0.52

- Organized the General Squad Upgrades according to the type of benefit they provide.
- Quality Documents has been removed as a General Squad Upgrade, as Documents have been added to the Supplies category of item.
- Quality Outfits has been added as a General Squad Upgrade.
- Organized the General Pilot Gear according to the type of item it is.
- Removed the Intrusion Countermeasure Program from the General Pilot Gear.
- Organized the General Vehicle Gear according to the type of item it is.
- Clarified that it is the Employer Faction Relationship that determines the Supply Roll, not the Patron Faction Relationship.
- Clarified that a character can only Push Themselves once per roll.
- Clarified in Squad Creation that your Patron Faction only determines your Supply Roll bonus when you do Missions for them.
- Clarified how Cohorts work in Group Actions and in the Cohorts section.

- Added examples of how rules work to various sections.
- Clarified how the Rarer Materiel Alternate Rules affect Employer Faction Bonus supplies and Tier increases.
- Updated the Izyan Conflict maps.
- Changed Sapperson Incorporated into a transhumanist research group specializing in selling genetic body mods.
- Clarified that to get back the item lost from the Requisition Entanglement, you need to work for it.
- Clarified that when you Overindulge and choose an additional Entanglement, you roll with the table and dice from the end of the previous Mission.
- Added information about how to permanently recruit a doctor to the Fix downtime activity.
- The Scrapyard Squad Upgrade now provides +1d to Upkeep rolls.
- Added a GM section about Player Count.
- Added 11 of the 12 Vehicle Backer example Vehicles. Still waiting on the descriptions for two of them.
- Added the option of declaring new NPCs as Allies, and summoning previously established Allies using the same style of Action Roll.
- Replaced the usage of "Contacts" with "Allies" to consolidate these mechanics into one thing.
- Restructured the Table of Contents so that it only lists to the 2nd level of headings.
- Clarified that Lines and Veils can be added to the game at any time, not only during Session Zero.
- Old Changelogs have been moved to a separate document.
- Replaced all "see page ??" with actual page numbers using referants. If you see any more "see page ??" or equivalents, or if the page number listed is incorrect, please let me know.
- Clarified that Destroy is primarily meant to be used against structures and targets that can't evade.
- Clarified that spending Drives isn't required to enact change outside of when it is directly connected to a Pilot's Drive or Rival.
- Level 1 Damage in Lowest Bidder changed from "Low On Ammo" to "Uncalibrated"
- Pilots remove Level 1 Harm and Vehicles remove Level 1 Damage during the Reward process.
- Performing the Fix Downtime Activity removes all Level 1 Damage.
- Performing the Recover Downtime Activity removes all Level 1 Harm.
- The alternate Faster Healing Rules have been changed to the alternate Punishing

Healing Rules, as the original healing rules have swapped with the alternate healing rules. This should bring Beam Saber's healing closer in line with my intentions.

- GM Questions and examples of usage have been added to the In Depth Pilot Actions and In Depth Vehicle Actions sections.
- Added advice about how to choose a name and callsign to the Names, Callsigns, And Pronouns section.
- Corrected the following Technician gear: "**Assisted repair system** [Load 1]: spend a Materiel point to take the Fix downtime activity while on a mission."
- Clarified that the Consequences chosen through the Technician ability Simulation must be Position appropriate.
- Added a "You Should Choose [this playbook] If:" section to every Pilot and Squad playbook.
- Clarified that the Frontlines' Blood Brothers lets Fire Teams provide +1d to teamwork rolls when the Pilot acts alongside them.
- Clarified that the Frontlines' Fiends ability is about non-Patron *Faction* relationship, not Squad Status.
- Replaced the term "declare" with "debut" for Vehicle gear.
- Replaced the term "undeclared" with "uninstalled" for Vehicle gear.
- Added examples of how to use each Downtime Activity.
- Added examples for how to Design and Manufacture items.
- Added an example for Determining Effect.

NOW! Onto the game!

CHAPTER 01: THE BASICS

INSERT THE BASICS CHAPTER ART HERE

A small squad of different kinds of mechs (Kettle, Agrarian [has a shield made from a plow and a weaponized jackhammer], Claymore, and Strafe) being assaulted by a more unified group of mechs (an Elephant and 3 Apes) in an urban space. Civilians flee, hide, cower, and watch from windows. The Elephant is throwing a truck at the mixed squad. The focus should be on the mixed squad, with the Apes and Elephant in the extreme foreground (like a third person shooter aiming, a la Resident Evil 4). DOUBLE PAGE SPREAD

INTRODUCTION

Beam Saber is a game about the pilots of powerful machines in a war that dominates every facet of life. They are trying to do their time and part, and get out physically and mentally intact. The organizations that perpetuate The War through all of known space are too incomprehensibly huge to take down. There is no “winning” The War, there is only surviving it. Hopefully you can make things a bit better before you move on.

The way Beam Saber works is simple; you tell a story with your friends. Taking turns, you describe the heroic feats, nefarious deeds and everything in between that all the characters in your story get up to. Sometimes, the outcome of those actions are in question, that’s when you turn to the dice.

This game is best played with 4 or 5 players, with one player filling the role of Game Master, and the other players will be the protagonists of the story.

THE SETTING

Centuries after the majority of Humanity abandoned a rotting Earth, blighted by their follies, the Izyan Conflict's seeds are planted deep in space.

The Exodus ships left Humanity’s cradle in varying states of quality and completion. Ships failed, were raided or cannibalized, and jettisoned all but the essentials. History, art, and play all fell in the face of necessity. After the Exodus, five Factions rose to power as ships fled in all directions across space.

Each faction seeks authority over humanity and how it is directed. An autocracy uses its military might to put others under its Leader's sway. A corporatocracy's directing board of corporations desire the profitable control of the populace. A sprawling democracy's bickering politicians believe that self-directed government must be brought to all people. An oligarchy says they have the will and cunning that are necessary to ensure Humanity’s survival. Lastly, a theocracy believes that its guidance will push Humanity to ascend to heights worthy of the stars.

Long into The War between these Factions for control, it was realized that one of the backwater planets in conflict was *probably* Earth. Changed from the calamitous intervening years, it is now mostly healed by its respite from Humanity’s swarm. It would be a great symbolic victory for the Faction that conquered the planet, but other, more valuable worlds continue to be the focus of The War.

A dense cloud of orbital debris surrounds ‘Earth’, preventing consistent satellite survival and easy travel between the ground and stars; intermittent space combat around the

planet and throughout the system complicates this further. A handful of space elevators provide the best access to space, but only one remains in the hands of the planet's inhabitants.

Commonly called Independents, there are millions of people who lived on Earth before The War found the planet. Regardless of if this planet really is Humanity's birthplace, it is Earth to them and their home. Across the planet, they resist the Offworlders, their organizations, and their War in many different ways. Much of that resistance has gathered in the Izya region where the last Independent space elevator stretches into space.

As the Izyan Conflict seethes, about to boil over, this is where you come in.

THE PLAYERS

Each player creates a pilot, and the group as a whole creates the Squad that they all belong to. They then fill the role of that pilot, and help to bring them and an engaging, fleshed out world to life. The players also determine the tone and style of the game through play, with oversight from the Game Master (aka GM).

THE PILOTS

The pilots do what they need to in The War so they can hopefully make a difference. They start as nobodies, beneath the notice of even their own Faction; but as they keep crawling out of the meat grinder, people take notice. Personnel, materiel, and glory are awarded to them, but with that comes vendettas, suicide missions, internal politicking, and greater challenges. As they rise to each challenge (or don't), The War continues to heap hardship upon them. There are several pilot types players can choose from, each facing The War in a unique way, and all have a powerful vehicle to command.

Aces are daring drivers.

Bureaucrats are clever logisticians.

Empaths are compassionate psychics.

Envoys are diplomats and spies.

Hackers are subversive professionals.

Infiltrators are stealthy operators.

Officers are calculating tacticians.

Scouts are pathfinders and snipers.

Soldiers are terrifying infantrymen.

Technicians are chemists, mechanics, and biologists.

The players can select any combination of pilot types; you can even have a Squad of all Aces, for example. See the Pilot Creation section to learn more.

THE VEHICLES

Each pilot has access to a Vehicle that has been customized to suit their skills and needs. Some will be quick machines hardly different from civilian vehicles, while others will be lumbering behemoths Loaded down with weapons and armor. Pilots will take advantage of the unique traits of their Vehicle to accomplish their missions, and, as they work on them, will get to know more of these advantageous quirks.

THE SQUAD

The pilots are part of a Squad, which is created through a consensus by all the players. Just like a pilot, the Squad gets a “character sheet”.

The Consulate spies and politicks.

The Frontlines grind the enemy to dust.

The Logistics deliver the goods.

The Mechanized Cavalry strikes fast and hard.

The Profiteers sell what people can't get.

The Recon are spies, thieves, and sneaks.

The R&D advance The War's technology.

The [REDACTED] (read as REDACTED) neutralize targets.

No matter what Squad you choose, you can pursue any kind of mission. These directives simply add focus to the game play. See the Squad Creation section (see page 161) to learn more.

THE GAME MASTER

The GM describes the world that the characters live in; the battle torn ruins, the bustling communities, the seemingly lifeless spaces that lay between them, and their inhabitants. All non-player characters (aka NPCs) are played by the GM, giving each a desire and method to acquire it. Opportunities for the pilots (and the consequences of them) are presented by the GM.

PLAYING A SESSION

The gameplay of Beam Saber is similar to the structure of a TV series' episode. There's a central conflict that will likely be resolved by the end of the session that probably feeds into the larger narrative of the campaign, and is supported by some side stories. A single session of play will likely be two to six hours as determined by your group of players.

In a session, the players and GM will work together to choose a mission that interests

everyone out of character, then roleplay having it assigned to their pilots or taking action themselves. They make a couple dice rolls and get into the mission as they come to the first obstacle. The pilots leap into action, make rolls, suffer consequences, and complete (or fail) the mission. After that, they have Downtime where they Recover, Cut Loose, and develop personal projects. Then it is time to prepare for the next mission and start all over again.

Generally one mission, a Downtime period, and possibly preparation for the following mission constitutes a single session. As your missions get more complex (or you get more familiar with the rules), try experimenting with missions that take more than one session to complete (or more than one mission per session), or a session completely devoted to Downtime.

Once you've had about a dozen sessions, you might have completed a major plot thread or two. Consider inserting a break in the narrative, like the end of a story arc or a time skip, and restarting with a couple new pilots, Squads, and starting situation.

BEFORE YOU START

Read all of the Beam Saber documents. You don't have to absorb everything contained in them, that mostly comes from playing the game. With each session you'll have a better grasp of the rules. If you're the only person in your group who has read the book, don't worry; everyone can learn together. Pay special attention to the Session Zero (see page 236) section for advice on setting up your game. The first session (or the second, third, fourth, etc.) doesn't have to have perfectly expressed rules. Eventually, you will all reach a level of comfort with the rules that you're happy with.

Something that everyone *does* need to do is to get excited about the concept of the game. Make sure they all know it's a game about extraordinary pilots trying to survive a grueling, generations long war. Share some of the Touchstones below that they know.

"Imagine if instead of humvees, the marines in Generation Kill had been in mechs with swords and energy rifles!"

If they aren't excited by this point, it could be that this isn't the game for them. Have a look at the Starting Situation and get a strong feel of the involved Squads and their goals. You could also make your own starting situation that puts your players in a thrilling scenario to kick things off. This game runs on momentum, so you don't want everyone to be unsure about where to begin.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

- One Game Master and two to four players.

- Several six-sided dice, ideally four per player, but at least six total.
- Printed or digital copies of the Pilot Playbooks for each character, a Squad Playbook for the group, and reference sheets to share.
- Have these rules on hand for reference.
- Pencils, and some blank paper and/or index cards for notes and drawings.

TOUCHSTONES

The following are media that can be used to pitch the game to potential players.

AUDIO

- Opening theme: Set It Off by Audioslave (2002)
- End theme: Victory by Janelle Monáe (2013)
- Ace Combat Zero OST by Tetsukazu Nakanishi et al. (2006)
- Friends At The Table Season 2: COUNTER/Weight, by Austin Walker et al. (2015)
- Revolutions Podcast, by Mike Duncan (2013)

TV SERIES

- Mobile Suit Gundam: The 08th MS Team, by Takeyuki Kanda et al. (1996)
- Macross Plus by Shōji Kawamori and Shinichirō Watanabe (1995)
- Mobile Suit Gundam by Yoshiyuki Tomino (1979)
- War In The Pocket by Fumihiko Takayama (1989)
- Escaflowne by Kazuki Akane (1994)
- Iron Blooded Orphans by Tatsuyuki Nagai (2015)
- Generation Kill by Susanna White and Simon Cellan Jones (2008)
- Armored Trooper Votoms by Ryōsuke Takahashi (1983)
- Legend of the Galactic Heroes by Noboru Ishiguro (1988)

MOVIES

- Fury by David Ayer (2014)
- Redline by Takeshi Koike (2009)
- Mad Max: Fury Road by George Miller (2015)

VIDEO/COMPUTER GAMES

- The Armored Core series by FromSoftware (1997)
- The Front Mission series by Square Enix (1995)
- The Mechwarrior/Battletech series, by various studios (1989)

ROLE PLAYING GAMES

- Blades In The Dark, by John Harper (2017)
- Apocalypse World second edition, by Meguey Baker and Vincent Baker (2016)
- Dungeon World, by Sage LaTorra and Adam Koebel (2013)

BOOKS

- Hammers Slammer series, by David Drake (1979)
- The Black Company series, by Glen Cooke (1984)

MAKING THE GAME YOUR OWN

When we play role playing games, we're engaging in an act of creation. All of the rules in this game exist to help focus you and those you play with towards making the best possible tale of pilots struggling to survive in a futuristic war. Hopefully, you'll find inspiration in the guidelines, fiction, and constraints in this document, but you'll undoubtedly come up with great ideas completely divorced from it.

Much of the setting details are left vague or unexplained; this is intentional, as it allows each group to build a unique world from the details that arise through play. For example, it's never specified what powers the Vehicles; just that they can run out of what powers them. Maybe that detail will never come up in your group, or it might be integral to the story that you tell. With everyone building the world together, it becomes uniquely yours.

FOR THOSE FAMILIAR WITH BLADES IN THE DARK

If you are coming to Beam Saber after having played Blades in the Dark or other Forged in the Dark games, this section is for you. It lists some of the less obvious but important differences between the two.

- **Vehicles:** Every Pilot gets a Vehicle, which is a massive war machine the size of a house. Even at their smallest there's an immense difference in scale between a

person and one of these monsters. Pilots can still affect them but it often requires explosive action to do so, and the blowback can be terrible. That said there will be obstacles at both the Pilot scale and the Vehicle scale. Not everything can be solved by having your giant robot step on someone.

- **Factions and Squads:** The massive organizations that perpetuate The War in Beam Saber are called Factions. They are MUCH larger than factions in Blades, and are more equivalent to Blades' Heat mechanic. In Beam Saber Squads are the groups that are of the same scale as a Blades Faction.
- **Drives:** The goal of the Pilots is generally not to retire to a life of luxury (though it can be) by acquiring wealth, instead they pursue something about the state of the world that they want to change. Working towards that gives them the Drive resource (see page 42) which can be spent to change the fiction of the game.
- **Pushing Yourself and Collateral Dice:** in Beam Saber a character can push themselves or their Vehicle for +1d or improved Effect. They can also take a Collateral Die (this game's equivalent to a Devil's Bargain) for the same benefit. However, in Beam Saber a player may do both on the same roll. They pay the cost for both, and so get the benefits of both.
- **Vehicle Quirks:** Vehicles don't have Stress, they instead use Quirks when Pushing themselves or resisting Consequences. To spend a Quirk, when Pushing or Resisting, the player must say how they use the description of the Quirk to gain its benefit. Further, there are no dice rolled when Resisting with Quirks; the pilot just spends the appropriate amount. Lastly, Quirks are never spent when assisting another pilot or for Flashbacks.
- **Downtime Activities:** to assist with maintaining the health of the Pilots AND their Vehicles players get 3 Downtime activities for free during the Downtime phase.
- **Assisting and Cutting Loose:** the amount of Stress that a pilot has to spend when Assisting another pilot varies. Each pilot will have a clock representing their relationship for each other pilot. The more full that clock is the more Stress it costs to Assist them, but they also get more benefits. The clock fills by taking the Cut Loose Downtime activity with that pilot (which also removes Stress).
- **Repairing Vehicles:** to remove Damage from a Vehicle, the Repair Downtime activity must be performed.

THE START

The action roll is the most frequent cause for a player to roll dice. It will be explained in depth in The Core System section but for now this will get you started.

THE CORE SYSTEM

When a pilot does something where they aren't guaranteed to succeed, they make an Action Roll to determine the result.

ACTION ROLL

1. **The player** describes what their pilot does, and what their goal is.
2. **The player** selects the action that their pilot is using to fulfill their goal.
3. **The GM** then tells the player what their Position (how dangerous the action is) and Effect (how Effective the action is) will be with that action. Default to Risky Position with Standard Effect if unsure.
4. **The player** mentions any circumstances or special abilities affecting their pilot that might alter the Position or Effect suggested by the GM.
5. **The player** and **the GM** agree on the final Position and Effect.
6. Applicable bonus dice are added.
7. **The player** rolls dice equal to their action rating and any bonus dice, then selects the highest number rolled. If they have a total of zero dice, they roll two dice and select the lowest number rolled as their result.
8. If the result is 6, the action succeeds fully. If the result is 4 or 5, the action succeeds partially or fully but with a consequence. If the result is 3 or less, the action fails and something bad happens. If they roll two or more 6s on a non-zero dice roll, they get a critical success, which means the action succeeds fully and there's increased Effect.

BASICS OF AN ACTION ROLL

Each action in this system has a potential positive outcome and (usually) a possible negative consequence. This is determined by rolling a specific number of d6s (six sided dice) equal to the relevant action rating. The number of dice rolled can be increased or decreased by modifiers such as +1d (add one die) or -1d (subtract one die). The highest number rolled on any die determines the result, which can be positive (on a 6), negative (on a 1-3), or both (on a 4-5). Positive outcomes make progress towards a desired goal, with an amount of progress determined by the action's circumstances. Negative consequences are undesired occurrences ranging from missed opportunities to injury or death, with a level of severity also determined by the action's circumstances.

CLOCKS

A Clock is an abstraction that measures the progress of an ongoing challenge or approaching issue. These take the form of a circle divided into 4, 6, or 8 segments. The more segments a Clock has, the more complex the challenge or the longer the delay until the issue arrives.

If a challenge is basic enough that a single action could solve it, it doesn't require a Clock and instead the outcome should be judged by the Effect level. A Clock is almost impossible to fill with the outcome of a single success. If the Effect is Limited, a single segment is filled (called a "Tick"); Standard gives 2 Ticks, Great gives 3 Ticks, and a critical gives improved Effect or with Great Effect gives 5 Ticks. For threat Clocks, the GM may give 1 to 3 Ticks if a pilot rolls less than a 6. When a Clock is filled, the challenge it represents is overcome or the danger comes to pass.

Use Clocks to extend the focus on challenges that are narratively interesting. What qualifies as "narratively interesting" will vary by game and scene. There will be times where bypassing a door is solved with a single roll, but that same door under more dramatic circumstances might be a Clock. If the Players or GM realize that a Clock is no longer engaging, it is alright to say that it is instantly filled, instantly emptied, or just disappears without affecting the situation.

Creating Clocks is not about the method used to fill them, but the obstacle or danger they represent. The Clock should be "Bored Investors" or "Unstable Prototype" for getting additional funding, not "Talk Up Investors" or "Overheat The Prototype." The pilots can try any methods that make sense in the narrative to fill the Clocks.

Extremely complex obstacles that have multiple steps can be split into multiple Clocks; for example, an enemy battleship could have Clocks for "Point Defense Cannons," "Space Marines," and "Security Program." The Squad would have to get past each layer in turn to capture the ship.

If the Squad is facing off against multiple opponents, or a single very dangerous opponent, a Clock can be used to represent the foes' ability to continue being a threat. The way in which they are threatening is suitable to their type; soldiers fight, guards detect, politicians manipulate crowds, etc. Like all obstacle Clocks, this can be filled with any action that pushes the narrative towards the obstacle being overcome. Once that Clock fills, the foe has been evaded, run off, destroyed, talked down, or whatever outcome is fictionally appropriate.

Unsurprisingly Clocks can also be used to measure the passage of time. Usually this takes the form of a threat Clock as the passage of time is usually a concern if something bad is approaching (though the arrival of friendly reinforcements might also apply). Unlike other

Clocks, time Clocks add segments when a suitable amount of time has passed in the fiction. A tick might represent a few seconds, minutes, or hours depending on the scale of time passing in the current scene. The easiest way to handle this is to decide which pilot would be most affected by the Clock filling, and then add a tick every time they make an Action Roll.

If something happens in the fiction that would complete the objective or instantly summon the problem represented by a Clock, then that Clock is filled and it comes to pass. For example, if the Squad is sneaking through a secure facility and has an “alarm is raised” Clock, crashing a vehicle into the facility will instantly fill the Clock rather than add a few Ticks. Likewise, if they are trying to fill a “destroy samples” Clock and set off a nuke inside the building, that Clock is full. Period.

POSITION

Position is how dangerous or tricky an action might be. The GM will select an action’s Position as Controlled, Risky, or Desperate.

- If the pilot has a clear shot, a major advantage, or is free of danger, their Position is likely Controlled.
- If the pilot is confronting head on, under pressure, or on equal footing, their Position is likely Risky.
- If the pilot is in great danger, performing a perilous trick, or reaching past their limits, their Position is likely Desperate.

Most actions will be Risky, and that’s the default Position if there’s any doubt. If dice are being rolled, then there’s a risk of failure. If the risk is great, then make it a Desperate Position, but if there’s less risk, make it Controlled. If there is *definitely* no risk, it is a Fortune Roll (see page 30) instead.

When a pilot takes a Desperate action they also take 1XP, as their pilot extends themselves and learns from the event.

GUIDELINES FOR RESULTS BASED ON POSITION

Here are some guidelines for what each level of Action Roll result looks like for each Position.

CONTROLLED

You act on your terms or exploit a dominate advantage.

- Critical: The action is a success with increased Effect.
- 6: The action is a success.
- 4/5: The pilot hesitates. They can withdraw and try a different approach, or else succeed with a Controlled consequence.
- 1-3: The pilot falters. They can press on by seizing a Risky opportunity, or withdraw and try a different approach and action.

RISKY

You go head to head, act under fire, or take a chance.

- Critical: The action is a success with increased Effect.
- 6: The action is a success.
- 4/5: The pilot does it, but there's a Risky consequence.
- 1-3: Things go badly. They don't succeed, and experience a Risky consequence.

DESPERATE

You overreach your capabilities, or you're in serious trouble. On any result take 1 XP for the Attribute related to the action rolled, as you face these drastic challenges.

- Critical: The action is a success with increased Effect.
- 6: The action is a success.
- 4/5: The pilot does it, but there's a Desperate consequence.
- 1-3: This is the worst outcome. They don't succeed, and experience a Desperate consequence.

CONSEQUENCES AND HARM

Consequences are the fall out of enemy actions, bad situations, or rolling less than 6 on an action. The Consequences that are applied are chosen by the GM based on the fiction, the style, and the tone of the game. Sometimes circumstances will dictate that more than one Consequence happens.

There are six types of Consequence:

- **Reduced Effect** represents the pilot's execution being hindered. This consequence reduces the expected Effect level of an action by one grade.

- **Complication** represents new dangers, approaching issues, or unexpected troubles. This might be an immediate difficulty such as losing trust with a Faction, having a Vehicle's gear turned into junk, or a toxin being released. Or, it could be an issue that has yet to fully manifest, represented by the GM creating a new Clock, Ticking one that is already present, or removing Ticks from a clock. The severity of the complication and whether it is immediate or delayed, is determined by the GM and the circumstances.

- **Lost Opportunity** represents the situation changing as a result of the conflict. There was a chance to reach the objective with the chosen action, but that window has closed. If the pilot wants to try again, they must put themselves in a worse Position, or use a new tactic, represented by using a different action.

- **Cost** represents an unforeseen expense tied to the action. A bouncer might let you through, but only with a bribe in Personnel or Materiel. Maybe you make a nuisance of yourself and lose Trust with a Faction.

- **Worse Position** represents the pilot slipping into a more dangerous situation as the conflict's circumstances shift. This may also show the growing tension of the scene. If a pilot was in a Controlled Position, they move to Risky. If they were Risky, they move to Desperate as their problems mount.

- **Harm** or **Damage** represents an enduring affliction. Harm could be an injury that hurts the pilot physically, mentally, emotionally, or socially as is suitable to the situation, while Damage is much the same but for Vehicles. When a pilot suffers Harm or Damage, the GM gives them a descriptor of the wound and a numerical level to describe the severity. For example, a Pilot getting kicked might produce level 1 Harm "Bruised," but getting kicked off a roof could be level 3 Harm "Concussion." The higher the level of Harm or Damage, the more impactful it is narratively and mechanically.

If the nature of the Harm or Damage applies to what a pilot is currently doing, they receive the penalty associated with that injury's level. Level 1 causes reduced Effect, Level 2 gives -1d, and Level 3 means the Pilot cannot act without pushing themselves or receiving assistance. A Pilot can have up to two Level 1 Harms, two Level 2 Harms, and one level 3 Harm, while their Vehicle can suffer the same in Damages. The penalties from multiple injuries of the same level stack, as do injuries of different levels, but only if they all apply to the narrative.

If a level of Harm or Damage is full and a pilot suffers an injury of that level, the new injury worsens becoming one Level more serious. If a Pilot already has

Level 3 Harm and suffers additional Level 3 Harm, they instead get a Level 4 Harm. Level 4 Harm is a ruinous, permanent injury, often (but not always) representing death. The nature of the permanent affliction should be determined by the circumstances.

Something to keep in mind with consequences is that they should never negate the success of a 4/5 roll. If a pilot is luring a mech into a minefield and the pilot rolls a 4/5, don't say that the mech avoids the trap. Instead, perhaps the enemy is lured into the minefield, but the pilot also steps on a mine in their haste.

SELECTING CONSEQUENCES

Here's a list of consequences that can be inflicted should a character roll less than a 6 on an action roll. When selecting one of the options, be sure to show in the fiction how that change has come to pass. For example, moving from a Risky to Desperate Position might be described as a foe disarming a pilot.

CONTROLLED CONSEQUENCES

- Adjust a Clock by 1 Tick.
- Reduce Effect by 1 level to a minimum of Limited. Only choose this on a result of 4-5.
- Create a new threat Clock and add a tick to it.
- Move to a worse Position.
- The action failed and the chance for that chosen action to work has passed. A different action must be used to overcome the obstacle or it can be attempted again at a worse Position. Only choose this on a result of 1-3.
- Take level 1 Harm.
- Take level 1 Damage.
- Spend 1 Personnel, or Materiel point.
- Lose 1 Trust with an appropriate Faction.

RISKY CONSEQUENCES

- Choose 2 Controlled consequences.
- Adjust a Clock by 2 Ticks.

- Reduce Effect by 2 levels to a minimum of Limited. Only choose this on a result of 4-5.

- Take level 2 Harm.

- Take level 2 Damage.

- Spend 2 Personnel, or Materiel points.

- Lose 2 Trust with an appropriate Faction.

- Junk a piece of Vehicle gear.

DESPERATE CONSEQUENCES

- Choose 3 Controlled consequences.

- Choose 1 risky consequence, and 1 Controlled consequence.

- Adjust a Clock by 3 Ticks.

- Take level 3 Harm.

- Take level 4 Harm when appropriate.

- Take level 3 Damage.

- Take level 4 Damage when appropriate.

- Spend 3 Personnel, or Materiel points.

- Lose 3 Trust with an appropriate Faction.

RESISTANCE

When a pilot or their Vehicle suffers consequences, they can choose to avoid those consequences with a resistance roll. The player tells the GM how they are resisting the problem and if the GM agrees that it's a reasonable way of avoiding the problem, it is automatically reduced... at a cost. The GM will tell the pilot if resisting will negate the consequence or just reduce its severity, and what attribute applies. The pilot will spend Stress or exhaust Quirks depending on the attribute employed.

- **Insight** resists consequences from deceit or empathy.

- **Prowess** resists Consequences from bodily Harm or exertion.

- **Resolve** resists Consequences from mental fortitude or stubbornness.

- **Expertise** resists Consequences from a machine being damaged or strained.

- **Acuity** resists Consequences from a machine being hacked or disoriented.

A pilot resisting a Consequence using Insight, Prowess, or Resolve rolls dice equal to the number of actions in that attribute that have at least 1 point. They suffer 6 Stress minus the highest die result from the resistance roll; for example, if the highest result is a 6, no Stress boxes are filled, but a roll of 1 causes 5 boxes to fill up. If a pilot gets a critical result with a resistance roll, they heal 1 Stress instead of spending Stress. Once a roll has been made, the player must commit to suffering that Stress; they cannot change their mind if they roll poorly.

Unlike when a pilot resists, no dice are rolled for Vehicles that resist consequences with Expertise or Acuity. Instead a Vehicle resisting a Consequence must exhaust 4 Quirks minus the attribute rating being used to a minimum of 1 (even if a special ability would reduce it to zero or less). For example if a Vehicle has at least one point in Maneuver and Battle its Expertise rating is 2, so resisting with Expertise would require exhausting 2 Quirks.

After the roll is made, the Consequence is reduced by a degree the GM feels is appropriate. Level 3 Harm may become level 2, while a worse Position might be negated entirely. Any one Consequence can only be resisted once. Further reducing a consequence can be done by spending appropriate armor.

Whether the GM completely negates Consequences with resistance rolls or just reduces their impact will help set the tone of the game. Grittier games will have Consequences that are reduced while more upbeat games will have consequences avoided entirely.

If the GM dictates that multiple consequences are inflicted, then the affected player can choose to resist some, all, or none of the consequences, and then make resistance rolls for each.

ARMOR AND SPARK

When a pilot or Vehicle suffers Consequences, they can reduce the impact by spending an appropriate armor. For pilots the standard gear “Armor” grants one use per mission, and “Heavy Armor” grants one additional use for a total of two uses per mission. Pilot Armor and Heavy Armor can only be taken once each. For Vehicles the standard gear “Armor” grants one use per mission, but multiple copies of the Armor gear can be taken on the same Vehicle. When armor is spent, tick the appropriate box on the character sheet; Armor or Heavy Armor in the pilot section for pilot armor, and any armor box in the Vehicle section for Vehicle armor. Once an armor is spent, it can’t be used again until the beginning of the next mission.

Most armor only protects against physical Harm or Damage, but some abilities, such as the Infiltrator’s Shadow, work on non-injury threats. These abilities are activated by

spending a pilot's Spark through ticking its box on the character sheet. Once the Spark is spent, it can't be used again until the beginning of the next mission. If a pilot has more than one ability that uses Spark, only one of those abilities can be activated per mission.

Vehicles can also sacrifice any gear that takes up at least 1 Load in place of armor. When this is done, any Load slots that the gear occupied are replaced by "junk." This indicates that the sacrificed gear doesn't function, but still occupies Load on the Vehicle. Junked slots are unavailable until Materiel points are spent to uninstall them.

Whether Armor completely negates or only reduces Harm or Damage depends on the tone of your campaign. A campaign with a more adventurous tone will have Armor that completely negates even the worst injuries, allowing for Pilots who can heroically shrug off repeated attacks. A girttier campaign's Armor may reduce the Harm or Damage taken by only 1 level, so getting hit at all will be an ongoing concern for the Pilots. If you aren't sure how effective Armor should be, reducing Harm or Damage by 2 levels is a good middle ground.

Another consideration for Armor is whether it makes narrative sense for it to affect Harm or Damage at all. If a Pilot falls off of a roof, declaring Armor probably should not reduce Harm suffered because a bullet proof vest would not protect against that. When using Armor for Harm or Damage reduction is unsuitable for the fiction but the player still wants to avoid the Consequence, it is a good idea that they Resist it instead (see page 26).

EFFECT

Effect is how substantially a pilot will change their situation with an action. The GM will consider the method and action a pilot is using to reach their goal, and decide if they will have Great, Standard, or Limited Effect.

- If the pilot would make greater gains than usual, they have Great Effect. The pilot fills 3 Ticks on a relevant Clock if applicable, and the GM should detail how the additional benefits manifest.
- If a pilot would make a typical amount of progress, they have Standard Effect. The pilot fills 2 Ticks on a relevant Clock, and the GM describes the expected outcome.
- If a pilot would make a small headway, they have Limited Effect. The pilot fills 1 Tick on a relevant Clock, and the GM describes the partial or diminished result.

To determine the Effect of an action, the GM takes several factors into consideration:

- Potency of an action. For example attacking a tank with a hand grenade (lower Effect) vs attacking a person with a hand grenade (improved Effect).

- Quality of gear. Fine gear provides improved Effect.
- Scale of the action. Differences of scale like a lone person fighting a small gang provides lower Effect, or improved Effect for the reverse. This also applies to differences in size when appropriate.
- Tier differences between the pilot and the target. Acting against higher Tier targets provides lower Effect, or improved Effect against lower Tier targets.

Sometimes the negative factors on Effect will be so overwhelming that they reduce it below Limited. This is a zero Effect situation, so that course of action will achieve nothing. There is no benefit past having Great Effect, unless it dominates the circumstances (see Dominating Effect on page 262) to such a degree that there is no risk involved. In such a case, there is no need for a roll. The only way to succeed past Great Effect is with the blind luck of a crit.

When a special ability for a Pilot, Squad, or piece of gear provides “improved Effect”, it is applied after the GM has determined the base Effect.

After an action’s Position and Effect are determined, the pilot may choose to improve their Effect at the cost of Position (or vice versa) if it makes sense in the fiction. They could take their Risky Position, Standard Effect action and change it to Desperate Position, Great Effect if they want a more dangerous and Effective path. The same applies to moving from a Controlled Position to a Risky Position. Position can even be lowered from Controlled to Desperate so that Effect can be improved from Limited to Great. Remember that Effect cannot be better than Great.

BONUSES TO ROLLS

Any combination of the following can be used to increase a pilot’s chances of success.

- The GM or any of the players at the table may suggest a **Collateral Die** for this action, giving the pilot +1d at an unavoidable cost.
- The player decides if they want to push themselves for either +1d, increased Effect, or the ability to act despite having level 3 Harm by spending 2 Stress (if a pilot action) or 1 Quirk (if a Vehicle action).
- Up to one other pilot may spend an amount of Stress equal to their **Connection** (see page 49) with the acting pilot, providing the acting pilot with benefits equal to the Stress spent. The potential benefits are +1d, improved Position, increased

Effect, or acting despite having level 3 Harm. See Teamwork on page 52 for more detail.

COLLATERAL DIE

Pilots in Beam Saber are desperate survivors, and sometimes they act despite the obvious consequences. To support this mechanically, the GM or any player can suggest a Collateral Die for a pilot taking an action. Here are some possible bargains:

- Collateral damage, unintended Harm.
- Sacrifice supplies or an item.
- Betray a friend or loved one.
- Offend or anger a Faction.
- Start and/or Tick a troublesome Clock.
- Suffer Harm.
- Have a Rival show up unexpectedly.

The cost of the Collateral Die occurs regardless of the acting pilot's level of success.

Additionally, the fallout of the bargain can NOT be reduced or negated with a resistance roll or by spending armor. They got the bonus die and must pay the agreed price.

Sometimes no one can think of a good bargain to offer and that's fine. Other times the pilot may not want to take any bargains, which is also fine. If it's needed, the GM has final say on the acceptability of a Collateral Die.

FORTUNE ROLL

A Fortune Roll is a tool the GM can use when they are unsure of an outcome and want to let the dice decide. There are three common ways to use a fortune roll:

- When the GM doesn't want to make an arbitrary decision on a situation the pilots are not involved in, such as two NPCs having a conflict off screen.
- When there is no clear roll to be made for determining the outcome, such as the Effect of injecting an untested drug to keep it out of a competitor's hands.
- When a players is making an Action Roll in a completely safe situation and there is no chance for a consequence to affect them.

When making a Fortune Roll, any trait with a rating can be used to determine the roll's dice pool. Some examples are:

- When an NPC Squad acts, their Tier may be used to determine the Fortune Roll.

- When a friendly Fire Team acts without pilot supervision, use their Quality for the Fortune Roll.
- When the power of technology is unleashed in an uncontrolled fashion, its Magnitude may be used for a Fortune Roll.
- When a pilot gathers information, their relevant action rating may be used to determine the amount or Quality of information they receive.

Major contextual factors should also give +1d if it is advantageous, or -1d if it is a hindrance. If a relevant trait doesn't exist, roll just 1d or build a dice pool based on the applicable contextual factors.

GATHERING INFORMATION

The conversation that takes place as part of this game is the primary means for players to understand the world and what's happening. However, there's always going to be too much information going on for the GM to provide everything the players need or want to know. This is where gathering information comes in.

When a pilot wants more specific information about the game world, the GM will decide if that information is common knowledge or if there's an obstacle to having it. The GM should consider the Pilot's Playbook, Tragedy, History, and Opening to determine if that information is common knowledge to them. If it is, then the GM will simply answer the question.

If there is a barrier to obtaining the information, then an Action Roll is necessary, with the pilot picking an action suitable to their method for acquiring the information. If successful, the GM will answer the question honestly, and provide detail equivalent to the Effect level of the action.

If the information is not common knowledge, but there is no barrier, a Fortune Roll is used to determine the Quality of the information learned. A 1-3 provides limited information, a 4/5 provides standard information, and a 6 provides great information.

Gathering information requires a suitable opportunity, meaning that the information must either be on hand in the heat of the moment, or acquired ahead of time. If you don't get the amount of information you wanted you can try again, but it'll probably have to be later.

Sometimes the information desired is blocked by a complex obstacle, such as a messy crime scene or an overabundance of archived texts. For instance, if gathering the desired information requires an extended period of time, the pilot should begin a suitable Long Term Project. Once the project's Clock is filled, the pilot is able to ask several questions on the topic and gets the amount of detail that they would get from a Great Effect

roll.

When a Pilot attempts to Gather Information during a mission, it will likely take the form of a setup roll. In addition to the information that the pilot may get from a successful result, they will frequently gain improved Position or Effect as appropriate. A result of less than 6 will cause consequences as usual.

Each Pilot Playbook has a list of questions that might be useful for them to have answered. These are suggestions and a good place to start, but any pilot can ask any question. Get the information the mission demands.

THE GAMEPLAY CYCLE

The style of play of Beam Saber is made up of two cycles, one nested inside the other. The interior cycle is the one explained in The Basics section. The larger cycle is about the game as a whole.

The game starts in the Free Play phase, which is very fluid. The pilots have scenes together or with NPCs, they make Action Rolls when necessary, and suffer consequences from those actions. Don't worry about exploring the story moment to moment, or even chronologically, this period is for the pilots to explore their personal stories apart from the entire Squad. When they are ready to have another mission (either because they choose to or something in Free Play or Downtime forces one on them) it's time for planning the mission. This is done by selecting Rules of Engagement, a Target, an Objective, an Employer, a Loadout, and a Tactic. Choosing the plan then triggers the engagement roll, ending Free Play.

After Free Play, comes the Mission phase; this is when the pilots perform the daring feats and experience close calls in pursuit of their objective. They roll dice, spend Stress, take Harm, have Flashbacks, and finish the mission. Once the mission is over, the game moves onto the Downtime phase.

Downtime phases are for the Squad to get their just rewards and take a breather. They'll get resupplied for their efforts, gain and lose trust with Factions, experience consequences for their actions, and prepare for the next mission. These will take the form of Rewards, Trust, Squad Status, Entanglements, and Downtime Activities. After the pilots have spent all of their Downtime Activities, the game returns to the Free Play phase and the cycle continues.

PLANNING THE MISSION

When it is time to move from Free Play to the Mission, the Squad puts together the skeleton of a plan. This plan consists of an Employer, a Target, an Objective, Rules of Engagement, a Tactic, and a Loadout. Select them in that order before the mission begins.

If any of the pilots want to gather information about the mission ahead or perform a Downtime Activity (likely by spending Personnel or Materiel) for the mission, this would be a good time to do so. Such information and assets can be used to find the strengths and weaknesses of the target, and then take advantage of them. Remember that gathering information does not require a Downtime Activity and can be performed at any time, but the pilot must have had sufficient opportunity to do so, which might require a Flashback. If the Squad wants an asset that is not provided by the mission, they can use any Downtime Activities they have left from the previous Downtime period or spend Supply points to gain additional ones. Remember that an asset can be acquired during a mission with a Flashback.

The **Employer** is the Faction tasking the Squad with completing the objective. They are represented by an individual, probably belonging to a Squad of the Faction, who may hide the Faction they represent from the pilots. The players and GM should discuss whether to reveal the employer's hidden identity to the players if the pilots don't know. Things to consider in this are: the players' comfort with working for each Faction, how much dramatic irony the players want in their pilots' actions, if the players want to be surprised, and if the GM is all right with the task of doing the bookkeeping alone.

If the Squad is carrying out the mission for themselves or a Squad that isn't working for a Faction, the employer is Independent. Working for this "Faction" means that the Squad won't get a Supply roll as reward or increase their trust with the employer Faction. Any pay offered for completing the mission will be fairly small (1 or 2 Supply Points), if there is any pay at all. The reward will more likely come from capturing resources during the mission, and should take up Load as appropriate. Independent missions are intentionally more challenging. Striking out on your own is rough, but at least you won't have someone looking over your shoulder.

If the Squad wants to do a mission that would normally be Independent but still want a Supply roll for payment, they should consider seeking out an employer. This might take the form of a Long Term Project or a sequence of events during free play. If there's an objective the Squad wants accomplished, there's probably a Faction that wants the same and just needs to be talked into it.

The **Target** is the Squad (and by extension the Faction) that will be Harmed by completing your mission. For the mission to further the goals of the employer, there *will* be someone trying to stop it, and overcoming those defenses will damage them in some way. If there really isn't someone stopping the mission, consider expanding the mission's objective to one that will create conflict, or making the objective a long-term project instead.

The **Objective** is the purpose of the mission, and the employer's goal. This might be getting supplies through a blockade, negotiating a ceasefire, destroying a factory, or stealing research data. Some missions may have multi-part objectives, all of which need to be done to complete the main goal. Other missions may have side objectives that the Employer wants completed but are not necessary to fulfill the main goal, which is *the* objective of the mission.

The **Rules of Engagement** are the directives that an Employer places on its Squads. These define the circumstances, conditions, degree, and manner in which the use of force (or actions which might be construed as provocative) may be applied. The GM is the primary source for what rules are in Effect on a given mission, but they should make sense for the fictional context, and all the players should agree that the selected rules won't ruin the game's fun. A Faction trying to improve its popular support will have more rules about how to interact with civilians than one interested in military victory at all costs. Record the rules in Effect so that they can be referenced at the end of the mission. If the rules have been consistent across missions, you may want to keep the list for recurring use. The GM Guidelines have a list of suggestions for possible rules.

The **Tactic** is the method that the Squad is going to use to accomplish the objective. This is a general strategy, and requires a detail that explains how the mission opens. Select one of the following Tactics, and then determine the detail.

- Assault is open violence against the target. The detail is the point of attack.
- Deception is luring, tricking, and manipulating the target. The detail is the method of deception.
- Scientific is engaging with technological power. The detail is the unusual procedures used.
- Social is when the Squad negotiates with, bargains with, and persuades the target. The detail is the social Connection.
- Stealth is for taking action undetected. The detail is the point of infiltration.

- Transport is carrying cargo and people through danger. The detail is the route and the means.

The **Loadout** is the amount of gear that each pilot is bringing on the mission. Each pilot decides if they are going to be carrying a Light [Load 3], Medium [Load 5], or Heavy [Load 6] Load for themselves. A Light Load will mean that the pilot is quicker and less conspicuous, and able to blend in with civilians, providing increased Effect when applicable. A Medium Load makes the pilot look like they are well equipped for a difficult task. A Heavy Load slows the pilot and makes it clear that they look like a member of an armed group, providing decreased Effect when applicable.

A Vehicle's Load does not change between Missions, as it is set when the Vehicle is created. Further it's gear does not change between missions but the pilots can choose how many Materiel points they want to spend on changing the equipped Vehicle gear at this time. The specific items carried by the Pilot and Vehicle are not chosen right now, just what the maximum number of items will be.

ENGAGEMENT ROLL

After the mission is planned, play jumps right into the action and we catch up with the Squad when they encounter their first obstacle. To see how severe the situation is when the Squad gets into it, we make an **Engagement Roll**. This is a Fortune Roll that starts with 1d for plain old luck. Additional dice get added for major advantages, and dice get removed for disadvantages. Possible advantages and disadvantages may include any of the following:

- Is the mission bold? Take +1d. Is the mission especially complex? Take -1d.
- Does the mission exploit the target's vulnerabilities? Take +1d. Is the mission's Tactic ineffective against the target? Take -1d.
- Does the Squad receive external support for the mission? Take +1d. Is anyone interfering with the mission (other than the target)? Take -1d.
- Are there any other factors that affect the mission? Take +1d for each one that benefits the Squad, and -1d if it hinders them. This might include differences in Squad Tier, specialized equipment, or unusual terrain.

The engagement roll is based on the fact that the pilots are skilled survivors and have cleverly prepared for the first obstacle. There is no need for sneaking closer, checking for traps, or other cautious inaction. The result of the engagement roll will cover those details so that the game can jump to the action and the first challenge. Special preparations and consideration of niche complications are covered by spending Stress during the mission to

have Flashbacks.

If the result of the engagement roll is 1-3, the starting Position of the Squad is Desperate, 4/5 gives them a Risky Position, and 6 provides a Controlled Position. The GM will then craft the scene to reflect the Position the Squad find themselves in. Engagement rolls can not crit if two or more 6s are rolled. This Position lasts only as long as it makes fictional sense.

Once the result from the Engagement Roll is determined, it's a good time to take a short break so the GM can figure out what exactly is happening at the start of the mission.

LINKED MISSIONS

There will be times where a mission will require multiple plans be executed together. A common situation is one where the Squad wants to act on two fronts. For example; part of the Squad might attack the fortifications as a diversion, while the other part sneaks into the enemy base. How this is handled depends on if the first part *needs* to succeed for the second part to be attempted.

- If the first stage of a plan will benefit the latter stage, but is not required, it can be handled with the setup teamwork action or through a Flashback. With a success, the setup will improve the Position or Effect of squadmates. A failed setup might cause trouble for the second part of the plan. If a setup is done before the engagement roll is made, consider giving the Squad +1d or -1d depending on the result of the setup.
- If the first stage of a plan is required for the latter stage to be attempted because it creates a necessary opportunity, it should probably be a mission of its own. For example; the Squad might have a mission to steal an enemy Ace's unique vehicle to use in a later false flag mission to ruin the alliance between two foes. In this case, each part is its own mission with Downtime between them as normal.

Which approach is used is largely a matter of interest. If the players are interested in the moment to moment action of the first stage, it should be its own mission, even if it isn't necessary. Likewise, the story of a required stage can be simplified with a setup action if the players are not interested in exploring it. Give them what's required for the latter stage, and if the setup is a failed roll, hand out consequences as the fiction demands.

CHAPTER 02: THE PILOTS

INSERT PILOT CHAPTER ART HERE

Scarecrow (with machine pistol) and drone (in its sniper rifle form) provide cover fire from behind a flipped desk while Nehalennia uses AR to pull data from a computer, and Dredge tends to a wound on Demon. A guard on the opposite side of the room falls with a gunshot spurting blood from their upper torso. More guards are taking cover in a doorway, one of them is shooting back with a submachine gun. DOUBLE PAGE SPREAD

Beam Saber is a game about pilots and their massive war machines. While the Vehicles may get a lot of attention, they are just dead metal without the pilot. An empty husk waiting to be filled with potential. You are that potential. Pilots are people who will take a sliver of hope in a desperate situation and use it as wedge to victory. Be the pilot, find the sliver.

PILOT CREATION

The directions that follow are useful for creating your pilot step by step; however, if you want to randomly generate your pilot in part or in whole, jump to Appendix A for methods to do that.

1. Choose a **Playbook**. This will guide your pilot's methods.
2. Add the **3 starting action points** from your chosen Playbook to your character sheet. As you add action points in the following steps, note that **no Pilot or Vehicle action can exceed 2 during character creation**.
3. Who were you before The War stole from you? This is your **History**. **Put 1 point into a Pilot or Vehicle action that expresses it**.
4. How has your Pilot experienced the costs of war? This is your **Tragedy**.
5. What were you doing before you joined the Squad, but after your Tragedy? This is your **Opening**. **Put 1 point into a Pilot or Vehicle action that expresses it**.
6. What do you hope to change in the world? This is your **Drive**.
7. **Assign 3 points** by dividing them among the **Vehicle actions**.
8. **Put 2 points split between any Pilot and/or Vehicle actions**. You will now have 10 total action points.
9. Choose an **ability** from your Playbook.
10. Write your **name, pronoun, call sign, and look**.
11. Write the names of each of the other members of your Squad on your **Connection Sheet** and put 1 Tick in their **Connection Clock**. Create 1 **Belief** you have about each pilot, or choose an example Belief listed in any Playbook.

HISTORY, TRAGEDY, AND OPENING

The War has affected everyone, with the lucky only having rationing in their lives, but many more have experienced some form of tragedy. The pilots are not solely tragic figures though; they have a history before The War stole from them, and they find ways to live before they

join the Squad where the story opens on them.

When choosing your pilot's History, Tragedy, and Opening, there's no need to have it fully fleshed out. Having just a single detail for each is enough because developing the character through play and discovering who they are is part of the game. It also leaves room to learn that other players' characters are part of your past. If you DO have a lot of backstory ideas that you are very happy with, keep them; just keep an open mind about including new details as the game progresses.

HISTORY

A pilot's History is who they were before their Tragedy. Generally, this is a fairly mundane existence where The War is not something that fills their thoughts. Sure there's rationing, the neighbour's kid got conscripted, and your second cousin is moving back in with their parents after the space station they lived on got destroyed, but you can go most days without thinking about things like that. So don't worry about the tragedy looming in your future because for now life is... normal.

When a pilot's History is expressed during play, they will get XP at the end of the session.

EXAMPLE HISTORIES

- **Academic:** A university professor or student a researcher, a doctor, a journalist, or some other person who furthers knowledge.
- **Art:** An architect, a sculptor, a writer, a composer, or some other person creating art.
- **Criminal:** A burglar, a con artist, a gang member, a drug pusher, or some other person who preys on vulnerabilities.
- **Entertainment:** An actor, a pop idol, a sex worker, an athlete, a livestreamer, a podcaster, or other some person who entertains.
- **Family:** A stay at home parent, a teen, a legal guardian, a PTA member, or some other person invested in caring for the young.
- **Labor:** A farmer, a factory worker, a transport driver, a seamster, a miner, or some other person living by the sweat of their brow.
- **Law:** A cop, a lawyer, a social worker, a court clerk, or some other person involved with legal proceedings.
- **Military:** A cadet, a quiet posting, a quartermaster, a deckhand, a guerilla, or some

other job involved in The War.

- **Political:** A local council person, a volunteer, a propagandist, an activist, or some other person pushing political goals.
- **Spiritual:** a choir member, a yogi, a priest, a psychologist, or some other person invested in spiritual well being.
- **Trade:** a stock trader, a Cashier, a banker, an arms dealer, or some other person who handles money.

TRAGEDY

A pilot's Tragedy is the event that propels them into their involvement in The War. It might be the loss of loved ones, being targeted by accusations (regardless of the truth), or witnessing an atrocity. It might not put them immediately into a Squad, but it does put them on a course where every day they get closer to the controls of a war machine.

When a pilot's Tragedy is expressed during play, they will get XP at the end of the session.

EXAMPLE TRAGEDIES

- Hid in a mass grave.
- Lone survivor of a militia
- Friends started disappearing.
- Family killed as collateral damage.
- Orbital station home used as a kinetic weapon.
- Unwillingly experimented on by unethical researchers.
- Exiled from homeland.
- Falsely charged with a major crime.
- Shown the lie of their own life.
- Participated in a failed coup or mutiny.

OPENING

A pilot's Opening is what they were doing with their life before they joined the Squad. It is what they did with themselves between their tragedy and the opening of the game. Some will be in a deep depression, possibly at the bottom of a bottle. Others will be training hard to get

their revenge. A few will try to continue with their lives, pretending that their fate is not irrevocably changed and pulling them towards The War. All will be forced into a new life at the start of the game.

When a pilot's Opening is expressed during play, they will get XP at the end of the session.

EXAMPLE OPENINGS

- Building a custom vehicle from spare parts.
- Avoiding people with long voyage transport jobs.
- Studying military strategy in preparation for war.
- Catching deserters as a bounty hunter.
- Stuck in prison for petty crimes.
- Driving a taxi in areas autocars can't navigate.
- Commanding a gang of rabble and scum.
- Tending to the needs of an admiral as their valet.
- Getting by as a sex worker.
- Fighting in the vehicle arena.
- Shuffling papers in a cubicle farm.
- Serving drinks in a run down bar.

PILOT ACTIONS

When Pilots take actions that don't require their Vehicles, their player selects the Pilot Action that is most suitable to the situation. There are 12 actions, and they are broken up into groups of 4, all of which fall under their shared Attribute. An Attribute is a loose description used for determining Resistance rolls (see page 26).

All pilot action ratings max out at 4 points, but during pilot creation they can't have more than 2 points in an action. The mastery Squad upgrade is required to unlock the fourth point.

Pilots have access to the following actions:

INSIGHT ACTIONS

These are actions that rely on the sharp insights of the pilot.

Hunt: for tracking and long distance precision.

Study: for inspecting details and evidence.

Survey: for observing surroundings and possible outcomes.

Engineer: for adjusting and creating devices and mechanisms.

PROWESS ACTIONS

These are actions that make use of the pilot's physical prowess.

Finesse: for using manual dexterity.

Prowl: for moving with grace and power.

Struggle: for engaging in close quarters combat.

Wreck: for applying brute force.

RESOLVE ACTIONS

These are actions where the pilot's powerful resolve is of the utmost importance.

Command: for compelling quick obedience.

Consort: for socializing with others.

Interface: for using complex digital equipment.

Sway: for influencing through guile, charm, or debate.

DRIVES

What do you want to change? Regardless of how they ended up in The War, every Pilot has an ambition. Maybe they want to get revenge on the Squad that destroyed their village. Perhaps they want to climb the ladder, and reach a position of power in their Faction. Then there's the always relevant "live happily ever after." Drives are how these changes are made.

The ability to make changes are represented by a Drive, and two 4-tick clocks. The Drive is a sentence that briefly explains what the Pilot hopes to change in the world. When a Pilot does something new that furthers their Drive, they can add 1 tick to a Drive clock at the end of the mission as part of the Reward process. If they complete a Long-term Project that furthers their Drive, they can add 1 tick to a Drive clock in addition to the normal benefits of completing that project. Repeating an action during a mission or a Long-Term Project during downtime to further your Drive won't provide more than the first tick. It doesn't matter how many times you record an album, only the first one will help you become a pop idol.

You can also get Drive ticks by calling in favours from your Patron Faction or other Squads. To do this you must have a Relationship with your Patron of +1 or higher, or a +3

Status with another Squad. If you are spending your social capital with your Patron, lower your Squad's Relationship by 1. If you are using good will with another Squad to advance your Drive, lower your Squad's Status with them by 3. Either of these adds 1 Tick to a Drive clock. Obviously this affects the entire Squad and not just your character, so make sure that you have permission from all of the other players before you use this rule.

If you've chosen a Drive that seems too big or too amorphous to affect, it is alright to get Drive ticks for relatively small actions. For example if your Drive is to "remove the orbital debris cloud," you could get a tick by suggesting that a salvage squad could turn a profit by taking the cloud apart. Focus on moving one step at a time, and you'll make the journey before you know it.

Drives also indicate to the GM that this is a task the Player is interested in struggling towards. When a Player chooses "get a high ranking position in the military" as their Pilot's Drive they are also choosing to make that a challenge in a way it wouldn't be normally, or even for other Pilots in the same campaign. In other circumstances a single Long Term Project might be sufficient to achieve that goal, but when the Player decides to base their Pilot's narrative around it, the arc of that story is lengthened thus increasing the difficulty.

In parallel to this is that Drives also bring nearly impossible goals much closer. If a Pilot's Drive is "Make Journey City the capital of the Jovangellian Empire" it moves into the realm of fictional possibility. Now actions that wouldn't normally shift the narrative towards that unlikely goal (or even be possible in some cases) have the power to make a difference. A Long-Term Project to become pen pals with Regent General Billimine could add 1 Tick to a Drive Clock when completed, and open the door for the Pilot to get more Ticks by trying to convince the Regent to move the Jovangellian capital.

The one thing Drives can't do is end The War. There are too many pressures from too many sources for one person or one Squad to stop it. You might be able to shift the nature of The War however, by changing how or why it is fought.

EXAMPLE DRIVES

Here are some example Drives along with examples of what might add ticks to them.

Drive	Progress
Kill the man responsible for destroying my hometown.	● Defeat your Rival.
	● Learn his weaknesses.
	● Find out where he sleeps.
	● Get a record deal.
Become a famous pop idol.	● Record an album.
	● Perform for a crowd.

Get a high ranking position in the military.	● Help a superior advance in rank. ● Weaken a peer's political position.
Build a horse ranch away from The War.	● Prove your own competence. ● Acquire land in a safe place. ● Acquire a few quality horses. ● Hire some ranchers.
Develop a weapon that could end The War.	● Develop an overlooked science into something deadly. ● Prove that it can be controlled. ● Weaponize it on a massive scale.
Make sure that my friends will have a good life.	● Start a trust fund for your friends. ● Help them avoid getting a Scar. ● Take the blame for a disaster.

SPENDING DRIVE

Once a Drive clock is full it can be spent to change the world. The more clocks spent at once, the bigger the change.

- Spend 1 clock to negate Harm or Damage of any Level, change an Action or Fortune Roll to a 6, or Assist another Pilot by providing all 4 benefits.
- Spend 2 clocks to change the life circumstances of one person. This is the only way to permanently defeat a Rival.
- Spend 3 clocks to change the circumstances of a Squad.
- Spend 4 clocks to change the circumstances of a Faction.
- Any time you spend a clock, in addition to the normal benefits you can choose to rewrite your Drive.

As a Pilot only has 2 Drive clocks, more than one Pilot must spend Drive to change the circumstances of a Squad or Faction. If more than one Pilot spends Drive to affect a Squad or Faction, one of them is designated the Leader. The Leader is the Pilot who came up with the idea, presented the evidence, organized the squad, and just generally took charge. Every Pilot donating a Drive clock gets to add one tick to their Connection clock with the Leader, and the Leader gets to add one tick to their Connection clock with everyone who donated a Drive clock.

What is meant by "change" and "circumstances" is left intentionally vague because what can be changed and how much, are ways to control the tone of the game. This expenditure of Drive should be accompanied by a discussion about what the boundaries and thrust of the changes wrought can be. In a game where the Pilots are narratively powerful changing a Faction could be convincing the Jovangellian Empire to become a constitutional monarchy, giving political power to the masses. In a less heroic game spending 4 clocks might only mean that the Jovangellian child empress is able to reach adulthood in good

health. While the example about of the child empress reaching adulthood is a 4 Drive change it could also be a 2 Drive change instead. The difference is on the scale of the effect. Spending 4 means that the empress grows up and this changes the Jovangellian Empire. Spending 2 means that she grows up but is ineffectual and becomes a footnote in history.

Note that the existence of Drive Clocks as a resource does not remove the possibility of making change without spending them, so long as that change falls outside of any Pilot's Drive. If a Pilot's Drive is to "destroy the Dark Room" they will NEED to spend 3 Drive Clocks to do so, but if they have the fictional positioning to destroy a different squad (and no other Pilot has that squad involved in *their* Drive), no Drive Clocks need to be spent. Getting that fictional positioning to accomplish a task not covered by a Drive, however, can be difficult and may require significant preparation. Conversely Drive Clocks can be spent to change the circumstances of individuals or groups that are not related to any Pilot's Drive instead of setting up the required fictional positioning.

EXAMPLE: Dredge, Tower, and Unlucky are having a tense meeting with Teucer "Bloodless" Hartberg (Dredge's Rival from the March of Saints), Senior Kin Arrow Slide (of the Wrights of the Ascent, and who is connected to Unlucky through his Drive of "learn why Arrow Slide stole my Proxy"), and Pars Piani (of the Dark Room, which is connected to Tower's Drive of "destroy the Dark Room"). In this situation killing Hartberg would require spending 2 Drive Clocks and completing her Challenge Clock because she's a Rival. Killing Piani would be as simple as getting a successful Action Roll or completing a progress Clock because she isn't a Rival nor explicitly included in anyone's Drive (there are other Dark Room members Tower can pursue for their Drive). Killing Slide would NOT require 2 Drive Clocks because he isn't Unlucky's Rival, but that path should absolutely be discussed with Unlucky's Player as it will affect their Drive. Alternatively Piani and Slide could instantly be slain by spending 2 Drive Clocks if a Player didn't want to go through the trouble of finishing them off normally.

If the Pilots want to destroy the March of Saints or Wrights of the Ascent that could be accomplished under suitable narrative circumstances, likely by filling a Progress Clock such as "Get the Wrights excommunicated;" spending 3 Drive Clocks is NOT required. However, because the March of Saints are Tier 5 and the Wrights are Tier 1 the complexity of destroying each will be vastly different, with the former likely requiring multiple Long-Term Project Clocks and a Mission, while the latter could be destroyed by getting all the members into one room and then blowing it up. Alternatively spending 3 Drive Clocks to destroy either squad would negate the necessity of the preparation, but Hartberg would survive due to being Dredge's Rival, and Slide would survive due to explicitly being part of Unlucky's Drive. Getting rid of the Dark Room is more complicated since it is directly tied to a Pilot's Drive, thus requiring that 3 Drive Clocks be spent to change them in addition to building the

appropriate fictional positioning.

The changes wrought by spending Drives can build on each other. For example, if the Jovangellian Empire becomes a constitutional monarchy, a later expenditure of 4 Drive could put it and the Democratic Federated Systems into a true alliance with no betrayal foreshadowed. When combining the effects of spending Drive, the expense does NOT need to be the same amount each time. The only restriction is that each instance of spending Drive must affect the appropriate scale. For example spending 2 Drive and then 3 Drive must affect a person and a Squad respectively, and cannot affect a Faction. If 2 Drive was spent to ensure an ally is put into a position of Jovangellian power, that could be built upon by spending 4 Drive to have them enact the move into a constitutional monarchy.

Sometimes spending enough Drive clocks will create a narrative where a Pilot should leave the game. When two Drive clocks are spent to "build a horse ranch away from The War" it would make a lot of sense for that Pilot to leave the Squad for retirement on said ranch. There is nothing wrong with this, though sometimes it can take the Players and GM by surprise, even the one whose Drive just got fulfilled! If that happens, everyone should discuss what that means for the Pilot, the Squad, and the campaign. Some of this will depend on the expectations discussed in Session Zero (see page 236), but it will also depend on how everyone feels in the moment. Consider the following questions:

- Is the Pilot staying with the Squad, becoming an NPC, or leaving the game entirely?
- If the Pilot stays with the Squad, can they leave at any time now that they have fulfilled their Drive, or is there something keeping them around?
- If the Pilot leaves, will the Player also leave the game, will they begin playing a familiar NPC, or will they introduce an entirely new character (see Adding New Pilots on page 57)?
- Does the Squad stay the same, does it gain a new Patron or become a new Playbook, or does it disband entirely?
- Does the campaign continue, or has the fulfillment of this Drive completed the campaign's narrative (see How To End A Campaign on page 280)?

Lastly, the changes from spending Drive must follow the fiction. If a Pilot has been fighting fiercely against their Rival with no concern for either side's health, spending 2 Drive to permanently remove their Rival as a threat doesn't mean the Rival will suddenly switch sides; they are going to die. Likewise spending those 2 Drive against a Rival who has just appeared in the Mission will not immediately fill their progress clock, but it WILL seal their fate once that clock is filled. That said, to gain Ticks in a Drive clock in the first place a Pilot must have done things that further their Drive, and so there is a good chance they have in fact already laid the groundwork. In short, when spending Drive consider the Pilot's past acts in relation to their goals, and how those will shape the outcome.

PILOT NAME, CALLSIGN, AND PRONOUNS

Names have power. Some are given to us, and some we choose for ourselves. A pilot's name and callsign can come from any number of sources, and take on a wide variety of stylings. Many will be familiar as names to the Players reading the rules, some will read as nouns or verbs, and others will be completely unfamiliar, but ALL are acceptable and should be respected when used in good faith. What's important for the Players and GM is how they are used by the Pilot they belong to, by their Squadmates, and by NPCs. Some characters will use names for pilots they aren't close to, but will use the callsigns for their friends. Some will view their name negatively, and adopt their callsign in its place. The opposite of both these uses can be true as well with the name taking place of pride, and the callsign being an unpleasant moniker.

For example, Harrow "Demon" Gray calls Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday by her first name because he knew her when she was a child, but he refers to Blackberry "Tower" Reach, Corriander "Dredge" Bellevue, and Clarissa "Scarecrow" Hagden by their callsigns. This suits Dredge just fine because co feels disconnected from the name Corriander and considers it cor deadname, preferring that co would never have to see it again. Co IS Dredge.

A Pilot's name should be selected by the Player playing them, and anything can be used as a basis for it. Don't be afraid to go for a strange name like Arrow Slide or Territory Jazz. Try saying the name aloud a couple times to see if you like how it sounds.

There are two main ways to pick a callsign: the Player creating the character chooses it, or the rest of the Squad chooses it in character. The former option is much like picking a name; go for something that you like the sound of. You should also consider the origin of the callsign, and whether your Pilot likes what it means.

If the rest of the Squad is picking your callsign, it works best if everyone at the table agrees to having their callsigns chosen by others as well. You should wait until you have completed one Mission and one Downtime phase together as this will give everyone a sense of the personality, style, and methods used of each of the Pilots. Have a discussion in character, out of character, or switching between the two about possible options for the callsigns of the Squad. Make sure that every Player is comfortable with the callsign suggested for their Pilot because it will likely ruin the fun if they have to be called something they dislike every session. However, it's fine if the Pilot is unhappy with their callsign, so long as their Player likes it.

Just as important and powerful as names are pronouns. These are a key part in expressing a person's identity by speaking to their relationship with their gender. Some people will use binary pronouns (such as she/her or he/him), some will use non-binary

pronouns (such as they/them or co/cor), some will use a combination of multiple sets (such as she/they or they/co) and some have no preference at all so long as they are said with respect (any/all). Some will use different pronouns in different situations, perhaps because one set is for formal relationships and another is for informal relationships, or because their gender expression shifts across time. Some will use pronouns that are extremely prevalent in the lives of English speakers who are contemporary with this game's creation (such as she/her or he/him), and others will use pronouns from outside of English or neopronouns (such as co/cor or ze/zin). Regardless of how YOU use YOUR pronouns, you need to respectfully use the correct pronouns of the Players and characters at the table.

For example, Demon likes sweet and sour sauce on his chicken nuggets, Tower prefers honey-mustard with theirs, and Dredge wants cor nuggets without toppings.

Mecha media has a long history of examining what bodies, identity, gender, and sexuality mean through the relationship between pilots and their giant robotic forms. Beam Saber is no different with the Pilot playbooks intentionally making Vehicle options a reflection of what's available to the Pilot. This means that it is entirely viable for Players to explore themes of bodies, identity, gender, and sexuality through their characters, so long as no Lines or Veils are being broken (see page 236).

There's the very real possibility that a Player may explore a transition narrative with their character in play. A character might have the name Hannah and use she/her pronouns at the start of the game, but they can always change that. If part way through the campaign they decide that they/them pronouns and a different name feel right, they can always make that swap. Likewise, a character can shift from primarily using their callsign to using their name, or vice versa.

Here are some questions to consider when making your Pilot:

- What does your character's callsign mean to them?
- How did they get their callsign?
- How do they feel about their callsign?
- What's your character's relationship with their pronouns?
- How do they feel about how they are perceived?

PILOT LOOKS

Pilots in Beam Saber come from all walks of life. Some are grizzled veterans, others are former pop idols, a few are teens trying to cope with their newfound situation. A Pilot's look only affects the game's mechanics as much as the Player controlling them wants it to; there is no place for codified prejudice in Beam Saber. Here are some suggestions for how to describe their appearance.

- **Face:** masked, beautiful, scarred, young, decorated, rugged, calm
- **Eyes:** artificial, cold, mocking, trusting, trustworthy, uncertain, warm
- **Hair:** flowing, military, punk, braided, poofy, slick
- **Body:** big, compact, flabby, muscular, scarred, skinny, toned, voluptuous
- **Outfit:** military, ornate, formal, vintage, practical, casual, scavenged

CONNECTIONS

The ties between pilots in a Squad are as diverse as those between family. Sometimes they are intense, heated, and asymmetrical, while other times they are cool, cordial, and mutual. These Connections determine how Stressful it is and competent you are when you need to assist your fellows.

On your pilot's character sheet there will be a separate 4-tick clock for each other pilot in your Squad representing your relationship with that pilot. For each Tick in that Clock make a Belief about the pilot the Clock is tied to. When the Clock fills, ask the target pilot for a truth about one of the Beliefs tied to them, then reset it to 1 Tick as you see them in a new light. It'll take time and effort to understand them again and relearn their rhythms, so the pilot erases all the Beliefs they have for that pilot, and writes a new one related to the truth just learned. After they've revealed a truth about themselves, you both take 1 XP which can be put into any attribute or into the pilot Playbook.

Connection Ticks are added each time a Pilot Cuts Loose (see page 202) during Downtime. Spending Drive clocks on another Pilot's plans, or receiving them for your own plans, also add Ticks. Lastly, some special abilities, such as the Empath's Carouse, add Ticks under certain circumstances.

BELIEFS

Pilots in Beam Saber are survivors, and part of their ability to survive is correctly judging the people around them. They quickly form opinions about who they can trust, who they should fear, and who they can use. This makes them rather opinionated about their fellow pilots, and of course they aren't always correct. These opinions are a pilot's **Beliefs**.

Each Belief a pilot has is a statement that they feel is true about another pilot. They are simple, quick, and influential in the rapport between the two; however, the players need to remember that they are not necessarily true.

Each Playbook has some example Beliefs that can be used, but feel free to write your own.

A good Belief is:

- Something that a pilot might say about their squadmate to a confidante.
- Easily summarized so that it can be quickly remembered when relevant.
- Potentially true.
- Suitable for the game's setting and tone.
- Something the player is interested in exploring.

If a character struggles because of the Beliefs that they have about their fellow pilots then they can mark 1 XP at the end of session, or 2 XP if it came up more than once.

STRESS

The pilots in Beam Saber are extraordinary survivors. Through luck and force of will, they can overcome many obstacles that other people would fall to. This is represented by their Stress. There are five main ways that a pilot can spend their Stress to move the odds in their favour.

- **Pushing Themselves:** Once per roll a pilot can spend two Stress allowing them to select one of the following options: Take +1d to any kind of roll where extra effort would help; Take +1 level of Effect to an action; Take any action while incapacitated (primarily by level 3 Harm). Taking +1d by Pushing Themselves means that even a pilot that has 0d in an action gains a 50/50 chance to succeed by using a little Stress.
- **Flashbacks:** When a pilot has prepared for a seemingly unexpected circumstance, they can have a Flashback to show why they aren't caught off guard. The pilot should describe what they did, and the GM will tell them if there is a need for an Action Roll. If the preparation was simple and there was ample opportunity to do so, it costs 0 Stress. If the preparation was complicated or there was little chance to make it, it costs 1 Stress. If the preparation was convoluted, involving unlikely occurrences and openings, it costs 2 Stress. A Flashback cannot undo something that has already happened, such as removing a character currently in the scene, but it can provide means for dealing with the current situation. If a Flashback involves a Downtime Activity, pay 1 Personnel or 1 Rep for it instead of Stress.
- **Assist:** When a pilot aids another, they spend Stress to give their ally benefits; this explained in more detail in the Teamwork section (see page 52).
- **Resistance:** When a pilot negates a consequence of an action, they take Stress based on their resistance roll. This is explained in more detail in the Resistance and Armor section (see page 26).

- **Special Abilities:** Some Abilities allow a pilot to spend Stress to activate rare talents, such as the Empath's Telepathy or the Hacker's Tesla. When spending Stress to activate an Ability, each Ability must be paid for separately.

When a pilot reaches their max Stress (9 Stress in most cases), they can either leave the situation quietly to lick their wounds or try to push on recklessly.

- If they choose to remove themselves quietly, the pilot heals all Stress and chooses a **Scar** suitable to the event that filled their last Stress box. They leave the current situation in a terrible state, but return later at an appropriate time without the need to Cut Loose due to Scars during the next Downtime.

- If they choose to push on recklessly, they can take a **Dire Action**. With this action, they can ignore any Harm or Damage penalties they currently have. They cannot spend Stress to take this action, nor can they make resist rolls, since their Stress is at max (Quirks can still be exhausted as normal). If they get a 6 on their action, they can take another Dire Action, potentially allowing them to have several fully successful actions. If a 5 or lower is rolled, or they choose to take no further action (other pilots can still act between the Dire Actions of the pilot), that is their last action. On a result of less than 6, they suffer consequences as normal.

After taking their last action (or at the end of the scene) they receive an appropriate Level 3 Harm and are removed from the scene in bad shape. With their Stress maxed out, several things happen when they return; their Stress is now all healed, they gain a Scar appropriate to the occurrence that filled their last Stress box, and they don't need to Cut Loose due to Scars during the next Downtime.

If they roll a crit, they heal 1 Stress instead of having improved Effect, and are no longer taking Dire actions, instead they return to acting normally. They avoid taking a Scar and the Level 3 Harm caused by the Dire Action.

SCARS

When a player selects a Scar for their pilot, they are forever changed by The War. Scar conditions are not easily removed and affect the pilot's personality.

If a pilot suffers the repercussions of their Scars during a session, they can mark XP at the end of the session. This can occur through narrative play, such as missing opportunities or needlessly creating trouble, and also through Consequences on Action Rolls. When you see an opportunity for your Scar to cause you trouble, tell the GM and they'll add an appropriate Consequence to your roll, regardless of the result.

The possible Scars are:

● Cold	● Reckless
● Haunted	● Soft
● Obsessed	● Vicious
● Paranoid	● Fractious

If a pilot takes a fourth Scar condition, they become unable to Effectively contribute to The War. At this point, they must either retire to a life elsewhere or they can be handed over to a Faction that has a negative Relationship with the Squad. If they retire, they start to live away from The War with a quality of life indicated by the changes they made by spending Drive (as described in the Drives section, see page 42). If they are given to another Faction, the Squad's Relationship with that Faction goes up by one level. What happens to the Pilot after that is up to the GM, but it probably isn't pleasant.

TEAMWORK

There will be times when you need a little help from your friends, and that's when you need teamwork. There are three methods to aid your fellow pilots.

ASSIST

Describe how your pilot helps another with their action. Take Stress equal to the number of Ticks in your Connection Clock with them, then select that many unique benefits from the following:

- They take +1d.
- They have improved Effect.
- They have improved Position.
- They ignore their level 3 Harm.
- They ignore their level 3 Damage.

The stronger the Connection you have with the pilot, the more Stressful it is to assist them when they're in need, and the harder you work to aid them. If more than one pilot wants to assist the acting pilot, consider that the character being assisted might actually be leading a group action.

LEAD A GROUP ACTION

When you direct a group of pilots to overcome an obstacle together, describe how your character leads the effort. Every Pilot that's involved rolls using the same action, and the

group uses the single best result for everyone. If a Cohort is participating in the Group Action, it adds no dice but modifies the Position and Effect as appropriate to its scale and expertise. If the Action rolled is a pilot action, the pilot leading the group takes 1 Stress for each participant that rolled 1-3 as their best result. If the Action rolled is a Vehicle action the pilot leading the group exhausts 1 Quirk (or adds one tick to their Temporary Vehicle Clock) if they rolled 1-3 as their best result, and another if any other participant rolled 1-3 as their best result. If a pilot didn't roll as part of the group, they can't use the group's result. If the roll has a Desperate Position, the leader takes 1 attribute XP.

EXAMPLE: Tower, Scarecrow, Demon and a Fireteam of Toughs are moving through an active conflict zone in their Vehicles. They need to get through quickly without catching the eye of any combatants, and since they are all trying to get out of the battlefield, they are making a Group Action using Maneuver. Since this is being done in their Vehicles the Leader will have to spend Quirks, so Tower takes the lead since their Mantis has the most unspent Quirks.

All the Pilots roll their Maneuver and the Toughs worsen the Position to Risky because their numbers draw attention. The roll goes poorly, with Tower and Demon getting less than 4, while Scarecrow gets a 5, so her roll being the highest applies to all participants. Since the Leader (Tower) and at least one other participant (Demon) rolled a 1-3, Tower must spend two Quirks. With Scarecrow's 5 the group gets a partial success, reaching the office building they need to enter, but with the Consequence that it has been occupied by enemy infantry and the Pilots will have to go in on foot to remove them.

Demon is going to open fire on the infantry alongside the Toughs (improving his Position to Risky and Effect to Standard) by rolling Struggle. Tower wants to Assist by being a distraction, and Scarecrow wants to help by sniping enemy NCOs. Since two Pilots want to Assist Demon with this task, it becomes a Struggle Group Action with Demon as the Leader.

Demon, Tower, and Scarecrow all roll Struggle, and things go slightly better this time. Demon and Scarecrow both get 3, costing Demon 2 Stress (one for each result of 1-3), but Tower gets a 6 meaning that the Group Action is a success with no Consequences (other than the 2 Stress previously mentioned that Demon takes), and the enemy infantry are routed.

PROTECT

Describe how you maneuver yourself to take a consequence that would otherwise affect a squadmate. You suffer that consequence in their place, and you can resist it as normal.

SETUP

When you make a setup action, you are weakening an obstacle or empowering an ally. With a success, any squadmates that follow through on your action have improved Position or increased Effect. You choose the benefit based on the nature of your ploy.

RIVALS

Pilots have very intense lives, which leads to very intense encounters with other people, and sometimes these interactions lead to an antagonistic connection. There's a person out there that they just can't stand, and the feeling is mutual. This is a pilot's Rival who exists to present a challenge whenever they are on screen.

The pilot can acquire a new Rival by naming an NPC they are interested in clashing with in the future. The NPC in question can be present in the current scene, declared during pilot creation, or at any time. With the Rival established, they immediately gain increased narrative significance, as well as all of the mechanical benefits that come with their new position. Add the Rival to the Pilot's Connection Sheet, mark 1 Tick in their Connection Clock, and write 1 Belief about them (or choose an example Belief from your Playbook). A pilot can only have one Rival at a time, but more than one pilot can share the same Rival.

Declaring a Rival lowers the Status of the Rival's Squad by 1, which may put them in Vendetta with the players. Picking fights can ruin associations. Killing a Rival also lowers their Squad's Status by 1 as they are an important pillar of morale.

When a Rival becomes part of a Mission, they will always be an obstacle for the Pilots and overcoming them is represented by an 8 Tick progress Clock, called the Challenge Clock. Rivals, no matter how friendly, are never to be taken lightly. If the fiction demands it, they may even have more than one Clock to represent multiple obstacles to be removed before the Rival can be tackled directly. If more than one pilot has the same Rival, add one 4 Tick Challenge Clock to defeat them per additional pilot with that rivalry.

EXAMPLE: Hannah Copeland is both Pitchfork and Tower's Rival, so when she appears in a mission the players must fill her 8 Tick Challenge Clock (the base Rival clock) plus a 4 Tick clock (one additional rivalry) to defeat her. If Scarecrow also has Hannah as a Rival, then she is represented by one 8 Tick Challenge Clock and two 4 Tick Challenge Clocks.

In addition to being persistent opponents, Rivals are very dangerous both during missions and between them. A number of times per mission equal to the number of Pilots on the mission, a Rival can inflict a consequence at any time (before a pilot acts, on a result of 6, after a Fortune Roll, at ANY time) which is called a Rival Move. If the GM is concerned

about forgetting to use Rival Moves, the Players can suggest good times for them to occur, or they can simply be an additional Consequence attached to an Action Roll (be as creative or mundane with them as you need to be). The severity of the consequence is the same as the affected Pilot's current Position, and must be appropriate to the fiction. If more than one pilot has the same Rival, they receive an extra Rival Move per additional pilot with that rivalry.

EXAMPLE: Hannah Copeland gets 4 Rival Moves because she is Pitchfork's rival and there are 4 pilots on the mission. If Tower and Scarecrow also have her as a Rival she gets a total of 6 Rival Moves.

Between sessions when the GM is making Fortune Rolls to determine the progress of Squad goal Clocks, a Rival will either support their Squad's goal or pursue their own interests. If they are supporting their Squad, the Squad gets +1d on its Fortune Roll. If the Rival is working on their own plans they ignore their Squad's Tier and instead roll 1d.

If the pilot who has this person as their Rival adds at least 1 Tick to the Rival's Challenge Clock and the Clock is filled before the end of the session, then that pilot can mark 1 XP. If filling this Clock also means that the Rival is permanently removed as a threat to the Squad by spending 2 Drive Clocks, the pilot can mark an additional 2 XP. "Permanently removed as a threat" is pointedly broad, as they might be persuaded to leave The War, be put into a coma, or join the Squad. If the Rival is removed as a threat, XP can no longer be gained from them. If a Rival's progress Clock is partially or completely filled, but they are not permanently removed as a threat, any ticks on the clocks are removed as they have time to recuperate.

The Rival Connection Clock can increase two ways: the Rival inflicts a Consequence on the Pilot, or the Pilot adds 1 Tick to the Rival's Challenge Clock. Each of these can add a Tick once per mission and Downtime. When the Connection Clock fills, the Pilot takes 1 XP, and asks a question about their Belief with the Rival (which the GM must answer truthfully). They then reset the Connection Clock to 1 and write a new Belief about their Rival. If the Pilot struggles because of their Belief with their Rival, they can mark XP at the end of the session.

Rivals should have agency, power, and the ability to mess with the PCs' plans. They should use abhorrent means to admirable goals, or gain admirable Effects from horrible goals. Put them at odds with the pilots' goals and/or ethics, and then turn the screws.

ALLIES

Friends come in all different forms. There are those who are from childhood, current (or former) lovers, tied together by blood, and many others. A pilot's Ally is not defined by the

nature of their connection, but by the fact that the pilot can rely on them.

Once per session a Pilot can declare that they “have an old friend” who can help. This can be someone from the Pilot's past, an NPC that has NOT yet interacted with them, or a previously declared Ally. Describe the scenario of when you last saw them, and make an Action Roll appropriate for those circumstances. A 4-6 indicates that you are on good terms with the Ally and they are likely to help you. A 1-3 shows that they don't want to see you, but could be convinced to help. Any roll less than a 6 incurs Consequences as appropriate to the Position, which might be related to your past with the Ally, the Ally's current situation, or something unrelated to the Ally. Add the ally to your Connections sheet with a short description instead of Beliefs.

EXAMPLE: Demon contacts Julia “Ripper” Faraday of The Hyenas for some help. Last time he saw her, they were on opposite sides of the battlefield in their AWVs, so he rolls a Risky Standard Battle to see how she’s feeling about that. He gets a 4, so she’s happy to hear from him, but there will be a Risky Consequence. She is facing disciplinary action for punching a superior officer, and Demon will have to help her get her AWV out of the impound lot if she's going to use it.

If a pilot wants to accomplish something and they don't know how, they should consider whether or not an Ally would be able to help them. Allies are emotionally invested in aiding the pilot, but can't always be present or doing things for them. This means that sometimes taking advantage of what your Ally provides requires an Action or Fortune Roll. Allies exist to provide an avenue for the pilots to accomplish their goals, not to do it for them.

Unlike Rivals, a pilot can have any number of Allies; however, it takes a lot more work to make friends than it does to make enemies. If a pilot wants to add an established NPC as an Ally, make sure that it fits the fiction. A brand new acquaintance won't be an Ally, but if the pilot works to build a bond (possibly through a Long Term Project), then they will probably become one.

PILOT ADVANCEMENT

As pilots make their way through The War they'll build up experience, which is represented by XP. There are three types of XP: Playbook XP, Attribute XP, and General XP.

- **Playbook XP** is gained by Training the Playbook during Downtime (see page 201), which lets the pilot mark 1 XP box next to “Playbook” on the character sheet. When a pilot's Playbook has 8 XP, they reset their Playbook XP to 0 and take a new Playbook special ability.

- **Attribute XP** is gained by performing Desperate actions, regardless of the result,

giving that action's attribute 1 XP or by Training during Downtime (see page 201). For example, if a Desperate Consort roll is made the pilot's Resolve gains 1 XP. When an attribute gathers 6 XP, it resets to 0 and another point can be added to one of the actions that falls under the attribute. Actions have a max rating of 3 unless the Squad has taken the Mastery Squad upgrade.

- **General XP** is gained through several methods. At the end of a session the pilot will determine if they expressed their Tragedy, History, or Opening; struggled because of their Beliefs, Scars or their Vehicle's Quirks; or addressed challenges with methods determined by their Playbook. For each of these, the pilot takes 1 XP, and for each item that occurred more than once, take an additional 1 XP. If during the course of a session a Pilot contributes at least 1 Tick to their Rival's challenge clock (see page 54), or fills their Connection Clock with another Pilot or with their Rival, they gain 1 XP. If they permanently remove their Rival as a threat, they gain 2 XP. General XP is then assigned as Playbook or attribute XP as decided by the pilot.

ADDING NEW PILOTS

There are several reasons for a new Pilot to join the Squad:

- A Pilot takes Level 4 Harm and dies, so their Player creates a new one.
- A Pilot gets 4 Scars and is retired, so their Player creates a new one.
- A Pilot goes AWOL after Overindulging, so their Player creates a new one to play until the old one returns. The Player may decide to play any Mission with any of their Pilots, but cannot switch to another one unless the Pilot they initially chose is removed from the Mission (by gaining a Scar, or taking Level 4 Harm).
- A new player joins the game.
- A Pilot completes a Drive that removes them from the game.

None of these are insurmountable obstacles for play (though when adding a new Player don't have more than 5 Players at a session; more than that will make it difficult to keep track of everything, especially spotlighting each Player a sufficient amount), and here is how to make it work.

When possible introduce the new Pilot at the start of a Downtime phase. This will give Pilots and Players a chance to interact with them before being thrown into the tense situations of a Mission. Pilots should have one Tick in their Connection Clock with the new Pilot when they are introduced. The new Pilot will participate in the Downtime phase as normal, including taking their own Downtime Activities and participating in the Cut Loose Activity.

PILOT VS PILOT AND PLAYER VS PLAYER

In the course of your game, there may be times when the interests of pilots become opposed and they take action against each other. For the most part, this is handled with the same rules as when a pilot acts against an NPC; one pilot acts and rolls an appropriate action, and those involved deal with the consequences by making resistance rolls as desired. That said, here are some suggestions for keeping the conflict purely in the game world.

- **Take a breather.** Stop everything and take stock of the situation when pilots act against each other. The narrative is frozen in time, nothing's moving forward until everyone agrees that it's time to continue the story. We do this so that there's no rush to roll dice, so that things don't devolve into "I shot you" "No you didn't!". If you need to know who will act first, it should be clear from the fiction. If it isn't clear, have each player make a Fortune Roll using the action they're taking, and have the pilot with the higher roll act first (reroll ties).
- **Accept the method for resolution.** Don't roll any dice or move the story forward until everyone understands what's at stake. Discuss what everyone's goals are in this moment, what they are planning on doing, what they are willing to give, and how the difference in objective might be resolved. Every person at the table gets to make suggestions, objections, and negotiate on what's happening. If a unanimous decision on how this could be resolved isn't reached, then the conflict doesn't come to a head. It's not unusual for two people to be a hair away from coming to blows only for them to walk away.
- **Acknowledge the outcome.** Since everyone has agreed on the method for resolution, then everyone must accept the outcome. Consequences can always be resisted, but trying to escape them outside of the rules is acting in bad faith.
- **Examine the source of the conflict.** If the conflict that arises is because of differences between the pilots, then there's nothing to worry about. However, conflicts between *players* cannot be solved by rolling dice. If this is the case, everyone needs to talk this out until there is a resolution of some kind. Beam Saber isn't for sniping at other players, avoiding interpersonal problems, or replacing reasonable socializing.

PILOT ACTIONS IN DEPTH

This section contains extended descriptions and examples of each Pilot Action. There are also questions that the GM can ask when using the Action, so that everyone has a better

understanding of the acting Pilot.

COMMAND

When you Command, you force immediate obedience. You might lead a Fireteam in combat, or brow beat a person to give into your demands. In a Flashback you might have Commanded a crowd of witnesses to support you instead of your opposition. You could try getting a superior to do what you want (but Sway might be better).

GM QUESTIONS

- What do you want them to do?
- Why should they listen to you? Respect, fear, leverage, or something stranger?
- How do you feel when telling others to follow your will?

EXAMPLES

CONTROLLED

A bartender refuses to let you and your Fire Team of Toughs into a bar's private area, so you tell him that if doesn't let you in now, your companions are going to beat him black and blue.

1-3, Risky opportunity: Just before you make the threat, you realize that the bouncer has a shotgun under the bar within arm's reach. You could try to convince him some other way (such as being friendly) or press on with your threats from a Risky Position.

4/5, complication: The bartender raises his hands in surrender, but as you turn to enter the private area your target is coming out, sees you, and flees back into the maze of rooms.

RISKY

A bartender refuses to let you into a bar's private area, so you tell him that if he doesn't let you in now, you're going to beat him black and blue.

1-3, Desperate Position: The bar's regulars stand up, grabbing bottles, pool cues, and whatever else is at hand. "They don't take kindly to trouble in the bar, you see." You are now in a Desperate Position as the menacing crowd approaches you.

4/5, cost: "Head on back, but turn out your pockets. No weapons allowed in there," says the bartender. You can hand over your weapons or decide not to go into the private area.

DESPERATE

You direct your Fire Team of Toughs armed with anti-armor sticky grenades to take down the pair of enemy AWWs headed towards your position.

1-3, Harm: Tracer rounds fly from the AWWs' machine guns, devastating the Fire Team. They

become Broken as a few become casualties and the rest take cover as best they can.

4/5, reduced Effect: Explosions rock one of the AWWs as several of the Toughs land their sticky bombs. As the smoke clears the AWW is badly damaged but still functional.

CONSORT

When you Consort, you mingle with allies and acquaintances. You might gain access to resources, information, people, or places. You might make a good impression and make a new contact with your social grace. In a Flashback you might have partied with a courier so their important delivery was late. You could try to persuade someone with social pressure (but Sway might be better).

GM QUESTIONS

- What do you hope to achieve?
- Who do you consort with?
- How do you ply your shared social connection? Common experiences, kind words, small gifts, or something stranger?

EXAMPLES

CONTROLLED

Your Ally is reluctant to have their squad accompany you on your next Mission, so you lean on your shared history because they probably owe you one.

1-3, Risky opportunity: They tell you no, and to drop the subject. You could try a different path to convincing them (such as pointing out the logical advantages of it), or keep leaning on your relationship from a Risky Position.

4/5, Risky Position: They agree to help, but aren't happy about it. You're not sure where you now stand with them, so future interactions will have you in a Risky Position.

RISKY

You bet an office manager that you can down more beer than him, so that he'll drink enough to spill some corporate secrets.

1-3, Harm: You reach for the next one, but find yourself on the floor instead. He looks down at you grinning, clearly not as drunk as you need him to be. Take Level 2 Harm "Sloshed."

4/5, cost: You manage to hold your liquor better than he does, so you get the info you wanted, but it was a LOT of drinks to get here, and costs you 2 Personnel.

DESPERATE

Your Rival is pointing a gun at you, the empty barrel looming large. There's no good reason for her to let you go, so you appeal to her fondness for the good times you've shared together.

1-3, complication: "You're right, we should spend more time together," she says as she slaps handcuffs around your wrists. "Let's go, loser."

4/5, Harm: "...You have been fun to toy with," she says and then shoots you. As she leaves she says over her shoulder "See you soon." Take Level 3 Harm "Gut shot."

ENGINEER

When you Engineer, you build or tinker with an object. You might develop a non-contagious strain of the flu. You might fix a broken door. In a Flashback you might have set up placed explosives to go off exactly when you need them. You could make an inventory program (but Interface might be better).

GM QUESTIONS

- What do you hope to achieve?
- What tools are you using? Welding torch, adaptable wrench, caustic fluid, or something stranger?
- How did you learn to alter objects in this manner?

EXAMPLES

CONTROLLED

While the enemies' vehicles are parked and unguarded, you pop the hood to disable them in a non-obvious way.

1-3, Risky opportunity: Before you can really get into it, you see some soldiers heading back to the vehicles. You could quickly and obviously smash them, or keep working at a Risky Position to subtly disable them.

4/5, Harm: You quickly get it done, but in your rush you cut your hand on the engine. Take Level 1 Harm "Sliced."

RISKY

A crumbling bridge is between your convoy and its destination. You have the know how and tools to shore it up for a crossing, so it's time to work.

1-3, worse Position: A section of the bridge you thought was solid falls out from under you. You grab onto some exposed rebar, and while dangling over the canyon you enter a

Desperate Position.

4/5, reduced Effect:

DESPERATE

Your Rival has locked an explosive collar around the neck of your Ally. You work quickly to get the device off, knowing it could explode at any time.

1-3, complication: You'll never know if your Rival activated it or if you tripped a trap inside. You're untouched (other than the blood spatter), but the same can't be said for your Ally.

4/5, cost: It requires a special solvent (spend 1 Materiel) and for you to break off parts of your tools inside of the mechanism (destroy your tools), but you get that hellish machine off of your Ally.

FINESSE

When you Finesse, you handle an object with agility. You might secretly draw a pistol. You could grab a dead man's switch before it activates. In a Flashback you might have already stolen the guard's keys. You could hotwire a vehicle (but Engineer might be better).

GM QUESTIONS

- What do you hope to achieve?
- Who will be surprised by your feat of agility?
- How do you feel when you manage these difficult acts? Smug, clever, exhausted, or something else?

EXAMPLES

CONTROLLED

Some street urchins have info you need, so you decide to impress them with a quick round of The Knife Game at a speed that you are confident is safe.

1-3, Risky opportunity: The kids aren't exactly impressed with your speed. You could try to get the info from them another way (such as by threatening them), or go fast enough you enter a Risky Position.

4/5, cost: When you finish one of the awed kids wants to hold your knife to see if it's actually sharp. Once in her hands, she takes off running and you lose the knife.

RISKY

You're playing cards with some scummy characters, and need to beat them badly enough that they'll wager and lose their AWWs. You decide to stack the deck in your favour.

1-3, complication: You're about to deal when a familiar voice says "Mind if I deal this hand?" The others playing agree as your Rival sits down, and gives you a knowing smirk.

4/5, Desperate Position: You win the hand of cards, and as you reach for the AWWs' keys one of them points a gun at you. "You may have won fair and square, but I'm a bit of a sore loser." You are now in a Desperate Position.

DESPERATE

As you slowly reach for ID to show the two guards pointing rifles at you, you also subtly reach for your optical camouflage switch so that if things get worse you can disappear.

1-3, Harm: The guards are twitchier than expected, and when one of them notices you reaching for something other than ID, he shoots you. Take Level 3 Harm "Bleeding Out."

4/5, lost opportunity: You hit the optical camo, disappearing from sight as you dive for cover. The guards realize what you've done and flip down their heat vision goggles, nullifying the usefulness of your optical camo after this initial success.

HUNT

When you Hunt, you track targets and attack over great distances. You might follow a Squad through a ruined city. You could shoot out a fleeing car's tire. In a Flashback you might have killed the getaway driver before the other operators completed their objective. You could shoot at someone across the room (but Struggle might be better).

GM QUESTIONS

- What long range weapon are you using, or what discrepancies are you looking for?
- What senses do you use to pinpoint your target? Sight, smell, taste, or something stranger?
- How do you feel as you track your target's movements?

EXAMPLES

CONTROLLED

You stare at an enemy soldier through the scope of your rifle as he stands amongst his fellows. They are completely unaware of you as you squeeze the trigger.

1-3, Risky opportunity: The soldiers are more perceptive than you thought, as one of them looks in your direction. You could try a different method to take out your target (such as sneaking closer for the shot), or you could take the shot anyway from a Risky Position.

4/5, Risky Position: With a spray of blood, your target drops. His friends scatter, some taking cover and shooting in your direction, while others begin moving towards your location,

putting you in a Risky Position.

RISKY

After exchanging fire with a sniper, you search the destroyed building across the street using your scope looking for signs of them. You just need to sight them before they sight you...

1-3, cost: They shoot first and that eagerness is lucky for you. You keep your brain in your skull, but the round meant for you shatters your sniper rifle utterly destroying it.

4/5, reduced Effect: You shoot first, but your eagerness costs you. It's not a clean kill, and they steady their rifle, clearly still in the fight.

DESPERATE

Your armor stopped the first sniper round, but you don't know where they are, so you can't even properly take cover. You quickly search for their nest, knowing that they probably already have you in their sights.

1-3, complication: You grab whatever cover you can, but you realize its pointlessness as the "sniper" rises from its concealed location: an Ape AWV modified with stealth capabilities.

4/5, lost opportunity: You figure out where the sniper is, but they fire off a few rounds, chasing you into a position where you can't engage them at distance; you've lost the opportunity to Hunt them.

INTERFACE

When you Interface, you work closely with electronic equipment, making it an extension of your body. You might hack into a technologically advanced vehicle or understand how it works. In a Flashback you might have tricked an enemy's vehicle into updating its operating system when it was next started. You could disable a vehicle's mobility (but Battle might be better).

GM QUESTIONS

- What do you hope to achieve?
- How do you connect to the machine? Wireless, hardline, neural link, or something stranger?
- What's the most dangerous thing you've hacked into?

EXAMPLES

CONTROLLED

You're meeting with someone shady in a public park and need a deniable eye in the sky, so

you start working to take control of a kid's recreational quad rotor camera drone.

1-3, Risky opportunity: The drone has better security than expected, and begins flying erratically. You could try to watch for threats yourself, or keep hacking it in a way that draws attention and put yourself in a Risky Position.

4/5, Harm: You get control of the drone but keeping an eye on its feed and your mind on your conversation is harder than expected. Take Level 1 Harm "Distracted."

RISKY

With your back to a metal desk ringing with deflected gunfire, you hack into the room's security systems to close the barricades over the door that the guards are shooting through.

1-3, Desperate Position: "Sarge says we can deploy grenades, go grab 'em!" one guard tells another. You move to a Desperate Position as the guards start pulling pins.

4/5, complication: Metal barricades slam shut over the door and windows, protecting you from the guards... but also trapping you inside the room.

DESPERATE

There is a laser targeted, long range missile in bound to your location. You have a few frantic seconds to wirelessly take control of the missile and defuse its warhead before you go up in flame.

1-3, Harm: The missile doesn't hit you directly, but that hardly matters. Take Level 4 Harm "Obliterated."

4/5, reduced Effect and Harm: You manage to disable the missile's warhead, but its remaining fuel still produces a deadly fireball. Take Level 2 Harm "Burned"

PROWL

When you Prowl, you move with grace and precision. You might climb an AWV in the middle of a battle. You might sneak past a security camera. You might stab an unsuspecting foe. In a Flashback you might have destroyed a building's security cameras. You could escape being buried in rubble (but Wreck might be better).

GM QUESTIONS

- What do you hope to achieve?
- What route are you taking to your objective?
- How natural does this style of movement feel to you?

EXAMPLES

CONTROLLED

In the middle of the night you sneak over the perimeter fence of a mercenary facility. It's dark and the camera that sweeps across the compound's outskirts doesn't have nightvision.

1-3, Risky opportunity: An unexpected guard patrol moves past the fence a moment before you start climbing. They haven't yet seen you so you could shoot them through the fence while the cameras aren't watching, or climb over the fence anyway in a Risky Position.

4/5, reduced effect: The surveillance camera turns back to your position faster than expected, and you have to duck behind a parked truck, unable to make it cleanly to the closest building.

RISKY

After setting off explosive charges, you creep through the mercenary facility trying to avoid the frantic guards searching for the intruders who caused the explosion.

1-3, Harm: A pair of guards spots you and opens fire. You catch a bullet before you duck around a corner. Take Level 2 Harm "Shot shoulder."

4/5, cost: You manage to escape the facility but failed to notice a camera that catches your face. Your Employer wanted you to remain unseen, so lose 2 Trust with them.

DESPERATE

A few guards have gotten into AWWs and are searching for you throughout the compound's outer grounds. One stands between you and your escape route, giving you the chance to get onto it and plant some explosives.

1-3, lost opportunity: The AWW spots you, and calls in your location. Hiding won't be possible now, unless you can get rid of this AWW.

4/5, Harm: Just as you finish planting the explosives you realize the AWW is about to grab you, so you hit the detonator. The AWW falls destroyed, and you take Level 3 Harm "Exploded."

STRUGGLE

When you Struggle, you employ lethal or less than lethal violence. You might restrain a panicking civilian. You might exchange gunfire across rooftops. In a Flashback you might have already incapacitated the security guards. You could identify a fighting style (but Study might be better).

GM QUESTIONS

- What weapon are you using?
- How lethal are you trying to be? Disabling a limb, knocking them out, killing them, or something else?
- How did you learn to commit violence?

EXAMPLES

CONTROLLED

A scientist you are trying to remove from his laboratory refuses to leave, so you grab him to forcefully drag him from the premises.

1-3, Risky opportunity: As you reach for him, he grabs a scalpel off his work bench and menaces you with it. You could try something else to get him to leave with you (such as pointing out that she isn't a knife fighter), or try to grab him anyway from a Risky Position.

4/5, Cost: As he resists your efforts to drag him away, two of his fingers get broken as they catch in a safety railing. Your Employer wanted him unharmed; lose 2 Trust.

RISKY

A biker you are trying to remove from a bar refuses to leave, and as you move to grab them, they put up their fists, ready to fight.

1-3, Harm and worse Position: The biker socks you in the face, stunning you (take level 1 Harm "dazed"), and when you regain your senses they've pulled out a revolver. You are now in a Desperate Position.

4/5, complication: Shortly after you drag the biker out of the bar, there's the bark of a siren as a military police jeep pulls up to investigate what exactly you are doing.

DESPERATE

A soldier you are trying to remove from their vehicle's cockpit refuses to leave, and as you reach for her, she points a pistol at you.

1-3, Harm: There's a loud bang followed by a horrid ringing sound and a burning in your chest. You can't catch your breath; take Level 3 Harm "Shot in the lung."

4/5, complication: You grab her outstretched arm and haul back to yank her out. Instead you both tumble out and find yourselves hanging from the open cockpit hatch.

STUDY

When you Study, you meticulously examine details for better understanding. You might read technical manuals to find a weak point. You might determine a statement's truth by

scrutinizing the speaker. In a Flashback you might have scouted out a facility's delivery schedule. You could try to read a charged situation (but Survey might be better).

GM QUESTIONS

- What are you trying to learn?
- What material to you scrutinize to get information? Scientific reports, witness statements, a person's movements, or something stranger?
- How do you feel when you interrogate information like this?

EXAMPLES

CONTROLLED

In search of secret information about your next Mission, you rifle through documents laid out on the desk of your Direct Superior while they are off liasing with another Squad.

1-3, Risky opportunity: You can hear one of your Direct Superior's aides in the next room, but you haven't yet gained the intel you need. You could try something else to learn the information you need (such as charming it out of the aide), or keep going through the papers in a Risky Position.

4/5, worse Position: You find what you were looking for, but your Direct Superior comes back early to find you holding documents you shouldn't be looking at. You move to a Risky position as they angrily ask "what are you doing?"

RISKY

In search of secret information about your next Mission, you rifle through documents laid out on the desk of your Target's mechanic while she's repairing vehicles in the hanger nearby.

1-3, Harm: Before you find the info the mechanic has come up behind you and you don't notice until she hits you with a wrench. Take Level 2 Harm "Clobbered."

4/5, cost: The mechanic walks in on you looking through the papers, but says that for 2 Personnel, she didn't see anything. You pay the bribe, and she let's you find what you're looking for.

DESPERATE

In search of secret information about your next Mission, you rifle through documents laid out on the desk of your Rival while he's on the phone in the next room.

1-3, complication: Before you find the information, you accidentally trigger a trap on one of his desk drawers. A gas begins filling the room and you start to feel yourself losing consciousness.

4/5, reduced Effect: You find some of the information you were looking for, but you have to drop the papers then quickly leave when you hear the phone call conclude, and your Rival heading toward the room you're in.

SURVEY

When you Survey, you observe your surroundings and predict outcomes. You might spot trouble before it happens. You might discover an attacker's vulnerabilities. In a Flashback you might have seen the fastest route through a crowded market. You could diagnose what destroyed a vehicle (but Engineer might be better).

GM QUESTIONS

- What are you trying to learn?
- What details are you looking for? Faint sounds, slight vibrations, a glint of light, or something stranger?
- How did you learn to observe the world like this?

EXAMPLES

CONTROLLED

Your Rival in their AWW is fighting another squad's AWWs giving you the chance to observe their fighting style for weaknesses.

1-3, Risky opportunity: Before you can learn anything the fight moves closer to your location and it's scale puts you in danger. You could try something else to learn about them (such as looking at reports of their fights), or stick around to continue your observation in a Risky Position.

4/5, reduced Effect: You're able to learn a bit about your Rival's combat abilities, but they defeat their opponents so fast you aren't able to learn much.

RISKY

Your Rival in their AWW is fighting your Squad's AWWs giving you the chance to observe their fighting style for weaknesses.

1-3, Harm: You aren't able to learn anything, and while you are looking instead of contributing to the fight, one of your fellow Pilots' AWWs takes a sword to the chest. They gain Level 2 Damage "Sliced."

4/5, complication: You gain some insight into their fighting style, but they call for back up in the meantime. The GM starts a "Reinforcements" Clock and adds 2 Ticks to it.

DESPERATE

Your Rival in their AWW is trying to kill you while you're on foot. You take this opportunity to observe their combat abilities in search of weaknesses.

1-3, Harm: This was probably a bad idea. Your Rival steps on you. Take Level 4 Harm "Squished."

4/5, complication and Harm: You manage to learn some of your Rival's weaknesses, but they knock a small building onto you. You're buried in rubble, taking Level 2 Harm "Crushed." Thinking you're dead, they leave and you lose the opportunity to further observe them.

SWAY

When you Sway, you persuade with guile, wit, and charm. You might negotiate better ceasefire terms. You might convince a guard that you do in fact belong in the restricted area. In a Flashback you might have bought an item before it went to auction. You could get nervous militia to charge the enemy (but Command might be better).

GM QUESTIONS

- What do you want them to do?
- How do you get them to agree with you? Mock their opinion, emphasize the advantages of your position, confuse their understanding, or something stranger?
- How often do you use your skills against your friends?

EXAMPLES

CONTROLLED

You need to talk your way past some bored guards at a security checkpoint to get into a Vehicle hanger.

1-3, Risky opportunity: You notice that the guards are only feigning boredom, and are actually quite alert. You could try something else at a Controlled Position (such as sniping the guards) or you could try to talk your way past anyway but it will be Risky.

4/5, cost: The guards buy your story, but they say that weapons aren't allowed in the hanger for safety regulations. Lose any weapons that you've declared.

RISKY

You need to talk your way past some bored guards at a security checkpoint to get into a Vehicle hanger before the lockdown order reaches them.

1-3, complication: The conversation takes long enough that the lockdown order reaches

the guards, and they refuse to let anyone through.

4/5, reduced Effect: The guard starts up a conversation with you that you can't get out of inconspicuously. When you're finally able to excuse yourself to head for the hanger enough time has passed to put your objective at risk.

DESPERATE

You need to talk your way past some bored guards at a security checkpoint to get into a Vehicle hanger before the AWV chasing you arrives.

1-3, complication: The AWV arrives faster than expected, and the guards realize you don't belong here. They draw their guns and yell at you to get on the ground.

4/5, Harm: The AWV pursuing you arrives just as the guards are letting you through, and it punts you into the hanger. Take Level 3 Harm "Broken Ribs."

WRECK

When you Wreck, you act with brutal force. You might lift a car off a wounded companion.

You might smash through a locked door. In a Flashback you might have weakened a floor to collapse when an enemy fire team walked onto it. You could attack with pure strength (but Struggle might be better).

GM QUESTIONS

- What are you trying to break?
- How are you accomplishing your task? Explosive charges, sheer muscle, precise calculations, or something stranger?
- How do people look at you after they've seen your affinity for destruction?

EXAMPLES

CONTROLLED

You are breaking in the door on an apartment to surprise a group of spies that have been surveilling your squad's FOB.

1-3, Risky opportunity: Before striking you notice that the door is reinforced. You could try something else at a Controlled Position (such as picking the lock) or you could bash it down but it will be Risky as the reinforcements will give the spies a chance to grab their guns.

4/5, complication: You catch the spies by surprise, but one is quick on her feet and she jumps out a window onto the fire escape. The GM creates the "Spies escape" Clock and adds 1 Tick to it.

RISKY

You are breaking in the door on an apartment full of armed spies after negotiations with them through said door have failed to get their surrender.

1-3, worse Position: You are unable to bash in the door, and doing so has activated the automated machine gun turret in the hallway; you are now in a Desperate position.

4/5, Harm: You break the door in, and the spies shoot through the doorway, giving you the Level 2 Harm "Shot in the arm."

DESPERATE

You are breaking in the door on an apartment full of armed spies after they activate the automated machine gun turret in the hallway you are in.

1-3, Harm: You aren't able to break the door in, and the turret opens fire on you. Take the Level 3 Harm "Swiss Cheese."

4/5, cost: You bash in the door and get inside safe despite the gunfire, but this was supposed to be handled discretely. Lose 3 Trust with your Patron Faction.

STANDARD PILOT GEAR

When declaring items that your pilot is carrying during a mission, you can select from the items of your Playbook and from the following:

GEAR

- **Burglary gear** [Load 1]: Lockpicks (both mechanical and electronic), thin wire and hooks, a mister, and other intrusion tools.
- **Climbing gear** [Load 2]: Ascenders, descenders, fast rope, harnesses, and more. Everything you need to climb a wall or rappel down one for a dynamic entry.
- **Throat mic transceiver** [Load 0]: A device pressed against the throat that can transmit the wearer's voice over short distances.
- **Long-range transmitter** [Load 1]: A device that can send data over great distances.

OUTFITS

- **Armor** [Load 2]: A tactical vest with matching gloves, boots, and pads.
- **Environmental suit** [Load 0 if worn, Load 2 if carried as a secondary outfit]: A bulky suit that protects the wearer from lack of oxygen, vacuum, radiation, and has maneuvering thrusters for use in microgravity.
- **Heavy armor** [Load +3, Load 5 total]: Trauma plates added to the vest, and a helmet added to your head.

- **Parachute** [Load 2]: A large backpack containing a parachute providing some maneuverability and protection while falling from great heights.

SUPPLIES

- **Bribe**: The liquid assets a pilot has on hand. Each point of Personnel or Materiel is 1 Load.
- **Documents** [Load 1]: Digital and printed files on diverse topics, along with the tools to create or annotate files.
- **Intel** [Load 0]: Information provided to the Squad that you can access. Spend 1 Personnel point to get +1d on a Gather Information roll while on mission.
- **Placed explosives** [Load 1]: A brick of moldable explosive putty with a timer or remote detonator. Never quiet.
- **Subterfuge supplies** [Load 1]: A set of actors' props and makeup with accompanying documents for making disguises.

TOOLS

- **Demolition tools** [Load 2]: Power tools suitable for destruction or "heavy remodeling."
- **Flashlight, flares, or glow sticks** [Load 1]: A simple form of illumination that can be activated when needed.
- **Palm computer with useful programs** [Load 1]: A small, book-sized computer with handy but simple programs.
- **Remote vehicle control** [Load 1]: A tool allowing a pilot to remotely control a vehicle but it's not as Effective as being in the cockpit.
- **Smartphone** [Load 0]: A pocketable tool providing many different digital functions but with a reliance on a probably compromised infrastructure for sending and receiving data.

WEAPONS

- **A blade or two** [Load 1]: A nice, big 1-handed blade or a smaller, but no less deadly, pair.
- **A heavy weapon** [Load 2]: A large 2-handed weapon such as a sledge or wood axe.
- **A pistol** [Load 1]: A semi-automatic pistol or revolver.
- **A rifle or shotgun** [Load 2]: A semi-automatic rifle or pump action shotgun. Useful at distance or close up, respectively.
- **Throwing knives** [Load 1]: Six light blades made for throwing and unwieldy to fight

with.

- **An unusual weapon** [Load 1]: Could be a stun baton, nerve-whip, or something stranger.

CHAPTER 03: PILOT PLAYBOOKS

INSERT DOUBLE PAGE PILOT PLAYBOOKS CHAPTER ART HERE

In the middle ground on the left are four vehicles are gathered in a circle in the woods. They are a DFS Scalpel, a Jovangellian Opossum, a Myriad Highwayman, and a Norrish Tin Orbit. At their feet are four people looking at a holo projection of a map and a person's face. In the extreme foreground on the right is a video screen connected to a high zoom camera on a tripod. The screen is being held or looked at by someone offscreen/indistinct. Camera, screen, and spy are all in deep shadow amongst tall grass. On the screen is a zoomed in image of the people at the feet of the vehicles. Owl is gesturing at the projection with a stylus. Nehalennia is sitting on the foot of her Scalpel with her computer on her lap. Flagstone is cleaning her sword cane. Eclipse's body is turned towards the map, but is looking right at the camera like he just snapped his head around.

INSERT FULL PAGE ACE ART HERE.

Unlucky, wearing a nostril oxygen breathing tube, is inside a detailed cockpit. Diagnostic diagram of their mech is visible (he is piloting a Strafe). Cockpit has hand controls, view screens (that show urban surroundings). SINGLE PAGE ART

THE ACE

A graceful and daring pilot.

The battlefields of the war stretch across cities, continents, and star systems. Such distances are not easily traversed on foot, becoming full of incredible machines that stride, soar, and roam through them. A vehicle is what most see them as, just a tool, but for Aces they're a better half. Created with purity of purpose and a desire to be filled, the vehicles in the War are a light for people looking to join in that purity and desire.

How'd you gain your skills? What made you realize you belonged behind the wheel?

YOU SHOULD CHOOSE ACE IF:

- You want to be the hotshot pilot known for being the best in a vehicle.
- You want to have an incredibly flexible vehicle with experimental equipment.
- You want to be more reliant on your Vehicle than other Pilots.

XP TRIGGER

An Ace earns end of session XP when they address a challenge with piloting or violence.

ACE ACTIONS

+2 Maneuver, +1 Engineer

ACE SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

- **Grav chute** [Load 1]: an advanced piece of gear that uses anti-gravity technology to safely slow the wearer's descent.
- **Fine remote vehicle control** [Load 1]: An excellent tool allowing a pilot to remotely control a vehicle without any degradation of intent.
- **Self destruct remote** [Load 0]: A palm sized device that will destroy the pilot's Vehicle when activated.
- **Fine environmental suit** [Load 0 if worn, Load 2 if carried as a secondary outfit]: A finely crafted suit that protects the wearer from hazards such as lack of air, vacuum, and radiation. Also has maneuvering thrusters for use in microgravity.

- **Your custom Vehicle** [Load 0]: The vehicle assigned to you suitable to your needs. It's represented by the Vehicle entry on your Pilot sheet.

ACE SPECIALIST VEHICLE GEAR

- **Fine mobility suite** [Load 2]: an excellent grapple system, jump jets, foot wheels, or other mobility system.
- **Boosted reactor** (1 use) [Load 1]: spend for improved Effect when speed or agility is required. This refills at the start of each mission.
- **Fine machine gun** [Load 1]: A finely made, fully automatic, anti vehicle cannon.
- **Fine shield or forcefield** [Load 1]: An extremely sturdy shield made of advanced materials or electromagnetic forces.
- **Reflex Adjustment and Guidance Engine (R.A.G.E)** [Load 0]: an interface system that when activated greatly enhances the pilot's abilities at the cost of their survival instincts for several minutes. This may improve your Position and Effect in maneuvering. You also suffer the consequences "Death Wish" and "Possibility Hallucinations" which can be resisted as normal. The modified Position and Effect, and any unresisted consequences last until the end of the next scene.

ACE ABILITIES

- **Adaptable**: You may spend your Spark to uninstall up to two points of your Vehicle's Load or to Push Yourself in a vehicular maneuver.
- **More Than Meets The Eye**: Your custom Vehicle has the ability to transform into a secondary form. Detail that second form. Select 2 Load worth of Vehicle gear and 3 points of action ratings that your Vehicle has. It lacks this gear and action ratings when in its secondary form. Select 2 Load worth of Vehicle gear and 3 points of action ratings that your Vehicle lacks. It has this gear and action ratings when in its secondary form.
- **Meat Is Cheap, Save The Metal**: When the Vehicle you are piloting takes Damage you can choose for the pilot to take an equal level of Harm instead. If you resist this Harm take -1d to the resist roll. Pilot armor cannot be used to prevent this Damage.
- **Last Stand**: When you take a Dire Action with a Vehicle, you can continue to act on a 4, 5, or 6, instead of just on 6s. Take a bonus die to Dire Actions for each point of Breakdown your Vehicle has before the Dire Action completes.
- **Advanced Prototype**: When declaring vehicular gear you can state that it's

experimental. That gear has its Load reduced by 1 (to a minimum of 0). When you push your Vehicle using that gear take increased Effect AND +1d. You can only have 1 experimental item at a time.

- **Bloodlust:** Gain the Tragedy “Seeks violence.” When you defeat a worthy foe (or a gang of the unworthy) in battle heal 2 pilot Stress.
- **Red Comet:** You have a reputation as a pilot of great skill (whether earned fairly or not). When you try to impress or dismay someone using your reputation take +1d. When you reveal yourself with a dramatic action those around you are briefly stunned.
- **Travelling Companion:** You can exhaust 1 Quirk or spend 2 Stress to Push Yourself on Vehicle actions.
- **Veteran:** Choose a special ability from another source. Can be taken up to three times.

EXAMPLE GATHER INFORMATION

- What is their vehicle capable of?
- When are their vehicles unattended?
- What do they intend to do?
- How can I get them to [X]?
- What's the best way through?
- Where did [X] go?
- What's really going on here?

EXAMPLE STARTING ACE BELIEFS

- They handle their vehicle very badly.
- They don't understand my value as a pilot.
- They are going to get someone killed. I better keep an eye on them.
- They desire glory as much as I do! We'll make history!

EXAMPLE ACE ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Denari, a gruff mechanic
- Sycamore, a cautious journalist

- Cage, a sly smuggler
- Ripper, a reckless pilot

EXAMPLE ACE STARTING BUILDS

- **Legend:** Red Comet, Command +2, Consort +2
- **Berserker:** Bloodlust, Battle +2, Struggle +2
- **Tester:** Advanced Prototype, Manipulate +1, Engineer +1, Study +2
- **Tanker:** Meat Is Cheap, Save The Metal, Battle +1, Survey +1, Study +1, Struggle +1

INSERT FULL PAGE BUREAUCRAT ART HERE.

Owl in his glasses and suite is writing on a clipboard (possibly near a crate or stack of crates) looking unamused. Maybe someone appears to be arguing with them while they calmly continue writing. SINGLE PAGE ART

THE BUREAUCRAT

An overworked and undervalued clerk.

Resource management is something few people understand. The War might seem like constant bombs and blood but that hides its true face. Paperwork and red tape. It's a relay race no one watches; requests, orders, and communiques changing hands from nobody to nobody. When those documents arrive, and if they're unchanged, is left up to the Bureaucrats.

How often do you abuse your position? What are your responsibilities? Are you satisfied with your power?

YOU SHOULD CHOOSE BUREAUCRAT IF:

- You want to be the master of managing resources and the downtime phase.
- You want to have access to mundanely weird gear and abilities.
- You want to be a banal cog in the machinery of The War.

XP TRIGGER

A Bureaucrat earns end of session XP when they address a challenge with procedure or management.

BUREAUCRAT ACTION RATINGS

+2 Consort, +1 Study

BUREAUCRAT SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

- **Fine Official Documents** [Load 1]: cargo manifests, itineraries, work forms, and other paperwork from official sources that are legitimate.
- **Body scanner wand** [Load 1]: a handheld device that detects metallic and electronic objects.
- **Travel reports** [Load 0]: weather and traffic reports, pedestrian movements, and up to date cartography.
- **Blueprints for a facility or vehicle** [Load 1]: A print out or digital file containing designer's notes and builder's plans.

- **Barricade Tape Projector** [Load 1]: A device that projects a holographic perimeter. Can trigger an alarm or digital notification when the barricade is crossed.
- **Your custom vehicle** [Load 0]: The vehicle assigned to you suitable to your needs. It's represented by the Vehicle entry on your Pilot sheet.

BUREAUCRAT SPECIALIST VEHICLE GEAR

- **Inconspicuous style** [Load 0]: a plain paint job, a common frame, and panels that create a bland silhouette. This will make a vehicle less noticeable than it's Load would indicate.
- **Several hand tool sets** [Load 1]: A variety of human scale tool sets that a pilot can swap their Load for if needed.
- **Fine cargo container** [Load 1]: A well made container for safely storing and moving a few large items or many small ones.
- **Inhibitor Clamp** [Load 1]: A device that locks out the start up sequence of a vehicle, preventing its use. Typically cannot be installed when the vehicle is piloted.

BUREAUCRAT ABILITIES

- **Stay Late**: Take Level 1 Harm "Tired" to give another pilot an additional Downtime activity. This Harm can be resisted as normal.
- **Cook the Books**: Spend 2 Stress and a Downtime activity to gain an additional Supply roll. If you are part of an Independent Squad your Supply roll is 0d unless something increases it. This can be done once per Downtime phase.
- **Red Tape**: When you can quote a regulation that would prevent a Consequence, you may roll Resolve to resist instead of any other Attribute or spending Quirks.
- **Connected**: During Downtime, you get +1 result level when you acquire an asset or schmooze. Take +1d when declaring an Ally during a mission.
- **Beneath Notice**: When you use a disguise or other form of covert misdirection, you get +1d to action and resistance rolls (or exhaust 1 fewer Quirk, minimum 1, with Vehicle resistance) to confuse or deflect suspicion. When you throw off your disguise, the resulting surprise gives you the initiative in the situation.
- **Work Hard, Play Hard**: When you Cut Loose, the person you Cut Loose with may roll to heal Stress as well using their Connections to you. If either of you Over Indulge you both suffer the Effects.

- **Rainy Day:** You may spend your Spark to provide a Supply point to be used immediately, or to Push Yourself when trying to bypass or enforce protocol.
- **Forgettable:** When you successfully Sway someone, you may cause them to forget that it's happened until they next interact with you.
- **Veteran:** Choose a special ability from another source. Can be taken up to three times.

EXAMPLE GATHER INFORMATION

- What loophole can I abuse?
- What protocol can I enforce?
- What do they intend to do?
- How can I get them to [X]?
- Are they telling the truth?
- How can I find [X]?
- What's really going on here?

EXAMPLE STARTING BUREAUCRAT BELIEFS

- Their disdain for protocol will endanger the squad.
- They are too invested in rules.
- They are lazy.
- They are responsible, so I'm teaching them useful loopholes.

EXAMPLE BUREAUCRAT ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Vex, a quick server
- Tri, an ambitious criminal
- Beagle, an offensive guard
- Jupiter, an absurd claimant

EXAMPLE BUREAUCRAT STARTING BUILDS

- **Accountant:** Cook the Books, Interface +2, Engineer +1, Study +1
- **Janitor:** Beneath Notice, Prowl +2, Sway +1, Manipulate +1

- **Clerk:** Forgettable, Sway +2, Finesse +1, Prowl +1
- **Manager:** Work Hard, Play Hard, Command +2, Survey +1, Struggle +1

Header art is a space battle.

INSERT FULL PAGE EMPATH ART HERE.

Eclipse has a newtype flash while in a crowd of people. A suspicious person is approaching them from behind. SINGLE PAGE ART

THE EMPATH

An empathetic and compassionate psychic.

When someone looks at you they aren't seeing you. When they hear you, they don't listen. They touch but don't feel. The pressures of population density and society play a joke on the heart. But people are changing. Not the person you look at, hear, and touch, someone else. Something else. Evolution is making something to help bring people closer together beyond just population density, and these new types of people are Empaths.

What emotions do you refuse to toy with? How did you discover your abilities?

YOU SHOULD CHOOSE EMPATH IF:

- You want to play a character who is deeply connected to emotions; their own, their squadmates, and their foes'.
- You want to have psychic powers that give you a unique edge in conflicts.
- You want to try to understand others, regardless of the danger that poses.

A NOTE ON THE EMPATH AND CONSENT

The Empath has the ability Broadcast which allows the character, and by extension the player, to force other characters to experience emotions. This is an ability that must be considered with respect. It's a form of mind control and therefore has serious implications regarding consent. Regardless of what the target is forced to feel it's a violation of self and agency. There are two major considerations that should be made before taking the ability and with each use. The first is if everyone at the table is comfortable with a character's personhood being denied. The players are more important than fictional characters and if that means skipping the Broadcast ability or Empath entirely so be it. The second is that mind control is a dark ability to have. Even when used for good ends the means are rather abhorrent. If you are taking the Broadcast ability you need to understand that you are choosing to play a character who will be doing a Bad Thing if they use it, and that's ok so long as you are aware of it and acknowledge it.

XP TRIGGER

An Empath earns end of session XP when they address a challenge with understanding or poise.

EMPATH STARTING ACTIONS

+2 Study, +1 Survey

EMPATH SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

- **Prognostication tools** [Load 1]: A set of tools such as tarot cards, tea leaves, or crystals that you can try to use to predict the future.
- **Fine artistic tools** [Load 1]: Excellent tools used in painting, performing music, cooking, or some other art form.
- **Personal emblem** [Load 1]: so long as someone is thinking about this item you know where the item is and can project your powers as if you were present.
- **A symbol of hope** [Load 1]: An object which inspires those who see it.
- **Fine stun gun** [Load 1]: A well made weapon meant to incapacitate, but not kill, a target using electricity.
- **Your custom vehicle** [Load 0]: The vehicle assigned to you suitable to your needs. It's represented by the Vehicle entry on your Pilot sheet.

EMPATH SPECIALIST VEHICLE GEAR

- **Inspiring appearance** [Load 1]: An item or various details that make your Vehicle a symbol to those who see it.
- **Fine broadcast system** [Load 1]: Excellent speakers and transmission unit allowing the user to broadcast audio and video.
- **Fine Social Data Retrieval program** [Load 1]: A finely coded program that can expertly find details about a target's personal life.
- **Psionic amplifier** [Load 1]: A device that will increase the range or power of the user's psychic abilities.

EMPATH ABILITIES

- **Telepathy**: You can freely communicate directly to a person's mind as though speaking normally if you have previously had a revealing interaction with them. Additionally when you are part of a Group Action you can spend 1 Stress per participant (including the Leader) to let everyone participating in the action use the Leader's action rating instead of their own.
- **Broadcast**: When you Push Yourself in addition to the normal benefits you can do

one of the following: Use your mind to instill a powerful undirected emotion in others -- paralyze a person with your mind or voice.

- **Far Sight:** When you Gather Information with Survey take +1d. The information gained can be from a place and time you were not present.
- **Emoji:** You know the secret method to interact with an App or AI as if it was a normal human, regardless of how corrupted or rampant it appears. You have increased Effect when communicating with the digital entities.
- **Carouse:** When you participate in a Cut Loose activity choose one of the following: The pilot Cutting Loose cannot Overindulge but only heals half the Stress rolled rounded up; your Relationship with them improves by +1; their Relationship with you improves by an additional +1.
- **Everybody Hurts:** You may spend your Spark to resist a consequence from ambushes (physical or not), or to Push Yourself to understand others.
- **Carry That Weight:** You can Push Yourself after you see the result of an Action Roll, or Assist after an ally's Action Roll if no one else Assisted them. If 0d was rolled, roll again with 1d. When you have a personal moment with someone, you can take any amount of Stress (up to your max Stress) to heal that person the same amount of Stress.
- **Good Hearted:** When you act compassionately (with more than just words) towards a foe, you keep a Controlled Position until you act against their interests.
- **Veteran:** Choose a special ability from another source. Can be taken up to three times.

EXAMPLE GATHER INFORMATION

- How is this person hurt?
- How is this person vulnerable?
- Are they telling the truth?
- What drives them to do this?
- What are they feeling?
- Who's most afraid of me?
- What's really going on here?

EXAMPLE STARTING EMPATH BELIEFS

- I can fix the reason they hurt.
- I can take advantage of their pain.
- Their vehicle has strong emotions tied to it.
- I can feel they are a good person and I implicitly trust them.

EXAMPLE EMPATH ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Zia, a fair painter
- Hatsu, a brash musician
- Kausar, a kind murderer
- Navneet, a tired athlete

EXAMPLE EMPATH STARTING BUILDS

- **Demagogue:** Broadcast, Struggle +1, Battle +1, Command +2
- **Pacifist:** Good Hearted, Consort +2, Prowl +1, Finesse +1
- **Esper:** Far Sight, Survey +1, Scan +1, Hunt +1, Sway +1
- **Medium:** Emoji, Interface +2, Sway +1, Consort +1

INSERT FULL PAGE ENVOY ART HERE.

Flagstone with her usual suit and crutches. Has a confident smile on their face. Is at a black tie ball and asking a chubby butch latina woman (in a different kind of suit) to dance.

SINGLE PAGE ART

THE ENVOY

A stylish and persuasive socialite.

The difference between a diplomat and a spy is the quality of the intelligence they bring to their superiors. Ceasefires, alliances, and treaties don't last long in the War and the clever will make the most of that reprieve by preparing for when it fails. The best use of that time is to employ an Envoy. Skillfully negotiating the celebrations, deals, and deceptions of politics to pull the most out of such opportunities, they bring intel home with a smile and handshake.

When are you truthful in a meaningful way? What relationships do you have that aren't a means to an end?

YOU SHOULD CHOOSE ENVOY IF:

- You want to play a flashy character who talks their way into and out of trouble.
- You want to manipulate people and organizations like puppets.
- You want to explore what happens when you are all flash and no substance in life threatening situations.

XP TRIGGER

An Envoy earns end of session XP when they address a challenge with deception or influence.

ENVOY ACTION RATINGS

+2 Sway, +1 Consort

ENVOY SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

- **Fine clothes and jewelry** [Load 0, unless it's a secondary outfit then Load 2]: A set of clothes suitable for making you look like a wealthy elite.
- **Fine Disguise kit** [Load 1]: ReFace Paste is gear in the form of a putty synced to a program that allows the user to greatly change their appearance.
- **Fine trick gambling kit** [Load 0]: Different cultures have different gambling practices but you've got the tools to give you a leg up.
- **Fine Espionage gear** [Load 1]: Well made listening devices, micro cameras, key

readers and other devices used to secretly observe the actions of others.

- **Trance powder** [Load 0]: A single dose of a powder that puts the target into a calm and suggestible mental state.
- **Cane sword** [Load 1]: A narrow blade concealed inside of a walking stick that will fool a casual inspection.
- **Your custom vehicle** [Load 0]: The vehicle assigned to you suitable to your needs. It's represented by the Vehicle entry on your Pilot sheet.

ENVOY SPECIALIST VEHICLE GEAR

- **Fine holo-projector** [Load 1]: a well made device used to visualize the AR or specific images.
- **Chaff countermeasure** [Load 1]: a cloud of metallic strips that can be used to baffle sensors.
- **Concealed melee weapon** [Load 1]: a weapon hidden in the vehicle's frame that allows it to make melee attacks. Examples are ram bars, tire spikes, spring Loaded blades.
- **Stylish appearance** [Load 0]: Decals, spoilers, custom paint jobs, and other details that make your Vehicle stand out.
- **Luxurious Passenger Space** [Load 1]: The vehicle has a well appointed interior that has room for a few people.

ENVOY ABILITIES

- **Rook's Gambit**: Take 2 Stress to roll your best action rating while performing a different action, so long as you can justify adapting your skill to this use. You can use Pilot Actions in place of Vehicle actions, and vice versa, with this ability.
- **Cool Under Pressure**: When you take Harm, heal Stress equal to the level of that Harm.
- **Regent's Brilliance**: You and your entourage have increased Effect when Consorting and Swaying so long as you take advantage of how truly impressive you are.
- **Like Looking into a Mirror**: You can always tell when someone is lying to you.
- **A Little Something on the Side**: At the end of each Downtime phase, make a Fortune Roll using the Squad's Tier. Add 1 Tick to a Drive clock if it is 4+.

- **Read 'em And Weep:** Spend two Stress to ask one of the following questions about someone you have observed either in secret or openly. To ask additional questions you may spend 1 Stress per question. What was their lowest moment? --- What do they crave forgiveness of and from whom? --- What are their secret pains? --- In what ways are their mind and soul vulnerable?
- **Subterfuge:** You may spend your Spark to resist a consequence from suspicion or persuasion, or to Push Yourself for subterfuge.
- **Trust in Me:** You get +1d vs. a target with whom you have a strong relationship. For another PC this is a +2 or higher Connection value.
- **Veteran:** Choose a special ability from another source. Can be taken up to three times.

EXAMPLE GATHER INFORMATION

- What do they intend to do?
- How can I get them to [X]?
- Are they telling the truth?
- What are they really feeling?
- What do they really care about?
- How can I blend in here?
- What's really going on here?

EXAMPLE STARTING ENVOY BELIEFS

- They're a sucker who will get me into trouble if I don't fix them.
- They're in need of a makeover and I have the style.
- They don't fit the objective of this squad, so I will find out why they are here.
- They will make a good social prop.

EXAMPLE ENVOY ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Tasneem, a sly courtesan
- Candan, a naive diplomat
- Ismat, a defensive lawyer

- Duri, an idealistic servant

EXAMPLE ENVOY STARTING BUILDS

- **Psychologist:** Read 'em And Weep, Study +2, Scan +1, Survey +1
- **Idol:** Regent's Brilliance, Maneuver +2, Consort +1, Command +1
- **Spy:** Subterfuge, Prowl +2, Interface +1, Finesse +1
- **Diplomat:** Like Looking Into a Mirror: Command +1, Finesse +2, Prowl +1

INSERT FULL PAGE HACKER ART HERE.

Nehalennia is using Augmented Reality to direct a swarm of proxies at a pilot getting out of a mech that has just shot itself in the head. The smirking Hacker is in the foreground with the mech and pilot in the background, and the proxies between them. SINGLE PAGE ART

THE HACKER

A cunning and willful programmer.

Technology fills the lives of the masses and programming computers has become as important as literacy. However there are those who make that skill into an art, a direct expression of their will. These people are hackers and they bend augmented reality to suit their desires. Apps and proxies pose little obstacle to them, with the most skilled being able to challenge AIs. Bring a Hacker with you if you plan to confront the digital realm and live.

Why did you delve into the guts of the AR? Do you consider yourself a whitehat?

YOU SHOULD CHOOSE HACKER IF:

- You want to bend machines and vehicles to your will.
- You want to have control of others' perceptions by manipulating the augmented reality around them.
- You want to be vulnerable in direct conflicts.

XP TRIGGER

A Hacker earns end of session XP when they address a challenge with knowledge or digital power.

HACKER ACTION RATINGS

+2 Interface, +1 Study

HACKER SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

- **Portable Exclusion Zone** [Load 1]: creates an area isolated from AR and wireless data transfer (including radio).
- **Fine Augmented Reality tool** [Load 1]: might be contacts, a visor, or glasses; detail its appearance. Allows you to see the AR even when it hasn't visually manifested. Provides some protection from AR Confusion.
- **Quantum Drive** [Load 1]: a portable QD, about the size of a brick, that can store an astounding amount of data. Each increases the hackrig's Load by +1.
- **Hackrig** [Load 1]: a portable computer with high end intrusion software. Detail if the

hackrig is a tablet (has Load 3), a laptop (has Load 5), or a tower (has Load 6). It can be filled with Hacker Specialist Vehicle Gear or valuable data (Load 1 or more for the valuable data). Changing its Load requires spending Materiel like a Vehicle.

- **Recursive data projector** [Load 1]: Broadcasts overwhelming amounts of data that Apps and AIs avoid.
- **Your custom vehicle** [Load 0]: The vehicle assigned to you suitable to your needs. It's represented by the Vehicle entry on your Pilot sheet.

HACKER SPECIALIST VEHICLE GEAR

- **Fine retrieval program** [Load 1]: used to find and acquire data.
- **Fine coding program** [Load 1]: used to edit programs on the fly.
- **Electronic Filter** [Load 1]: used to bypass signal blocking devices and techniques.
- **Stealth program** [Load 1]: used to hide hacking attempts.
- **Data bomb program** [Load 1]: used to shut down systems by overLoading them with data.
- **Fine Intrusion Countermeasures Program (ICP)** [Load 1]: used to defend against hacking attempts.

HACKER ABILITIES

- **Compel**: You can Interface with the augmented reality to force a nearby app or proxy to appear and obey a command you give it. You can always distinguish between reality and AR created by a program you summon or compel (though your allies may become lost).
- **Matrix Mind**: You're always aware of apps and proxies in your presence. Take +1d when you gather info about the AR and apps.
- **Iron Will**: You're immune to the AR confusion that some apps and proxies inflict on sight. Take +1d to resistance rolls with Resolve.
- **Turing Test**: You can always tell if you're interacting with a human.
- **Data Pack**: You can Study an app (or create a new one) to develop it into a reusable form. You know the complex methods to create apps. You begin with one app already learned.
- **Crowdsourcing**: Spend 2 Stress to use a squadmate's action rating instead of your own by describing how you make use of their knowledge.

- **Tesla:** When you Push Yourself in addition to the normal benefits you can do one of the following: unleash a stroke of lightning as a weapon from the power grid—summon an AR storm in your immediate vicinity (swirling ads, flashing neon, heavy smog, shouting crowds, etc.) that will cause AR confusion.
- **Warded:** You may spend your Spark to resist a AR consequence, or to Push Yourself when you deal with AR forces.
- **Veteran:** Choose a special ability from another source. Can be taken up to three times.

EXAMPLE GATHER INFORMATION

- What is holographic or inorganic here?
- What lingers in the Augmented Reality?
- What is hidden or lost here?
- What do they intend to do?
- What drives them to do this?
- How can I reveal [X]?
- What's really going on here?

EXAMPLE STARTING HACKER BELIEFS

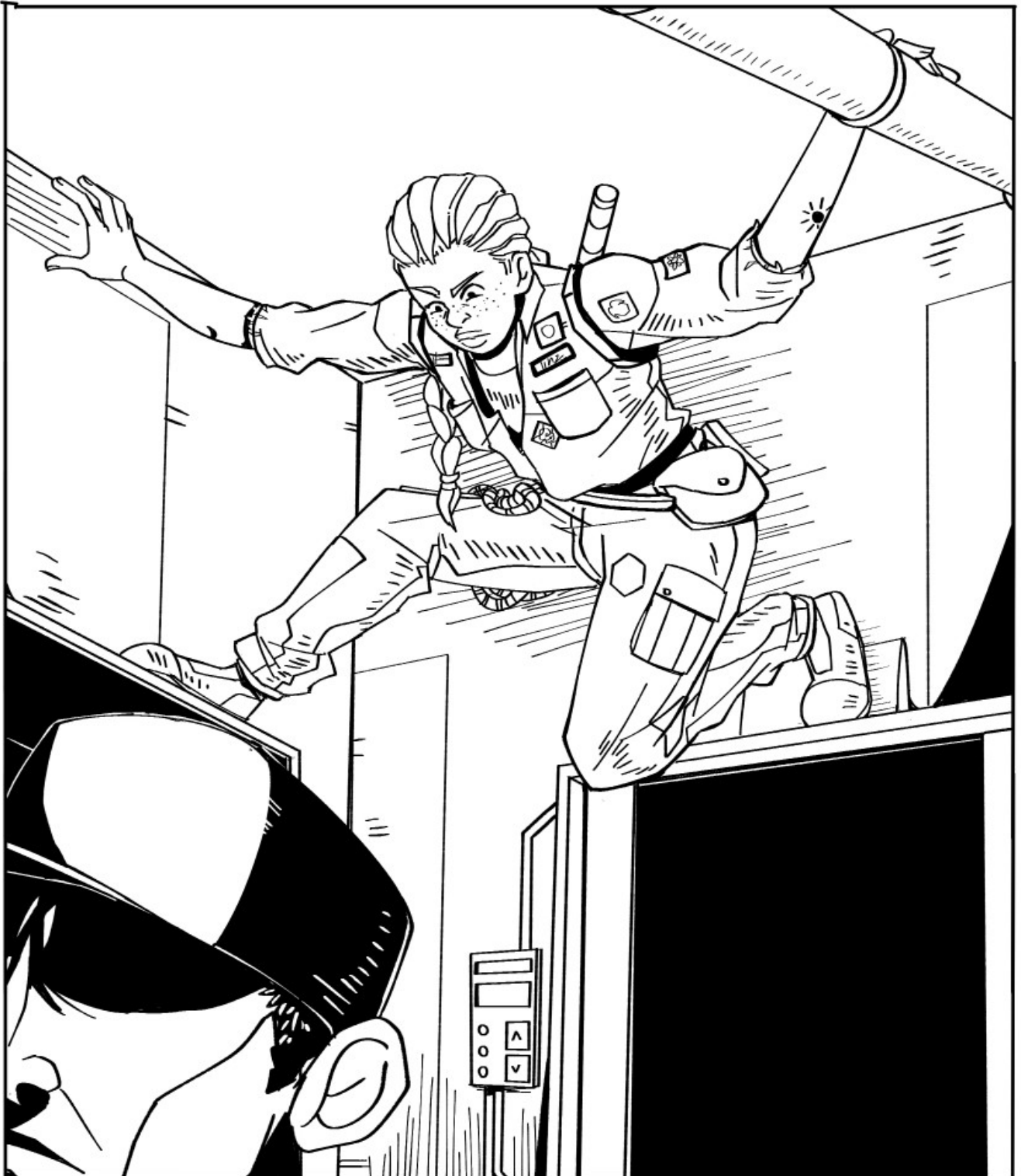
- The AR echoes tell me they're being followed.
- I've found their digital secrets.
- They're computer illiterate and I'm going to fix that.
- They don't trust me, and that's insulting.

EXAMPLE HACKER ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Gather, a curious proxy
- Thusitha, a focused pirate
- Zine, a secretive AI
- Tae-hee, a vile page

EXAMPLE HACKER STARTING BUILDS

- **Decker:** Turing Test, Survey +2, Consort +1, Command +1
- **Wiz Kid:** Tesla, Struggle +1, Battle +1, Wreck +1, Destroy +1
- **Spider:** Warded, Prowl +2, Finesse +1, Survey +1
- **Coder:** Compel, Engineer +2, Finesse +1, Study +1



THE INFILTRATOR

An agile and deadly burglar.

Privacy is a rare commodity in the technologically advanced lives of those touched by the War. Many keep their secrets locked in physical spaces far from prying eyes. This is when you need an Infiltrator. Able to get past the security measures of the most paranoid and then fight their way out if necessary, they'll get you what you want. Make sure you treat them right because they can get into your home too.

Why are you drawn to the skills of the Infiltrator? When have you regretted moving unseen?

YOU SHOULD CHOOSE INFILTRATOR IF:

- You want to remain unseen until you choose to strike, whether on foot or in your Vehicle.
- You want to bite off more than you can chew, and get out anyway.
- You want to play a character who is seen as unreliable because they are never around.

XP TRIGGER

An Infiltrator earns end of session XP when they address a challenge with stealth or evasion.

INFILTRATOR ACTION RATINGS

+2 Prowl, +1 Finesse

INFILTRATOR SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

- **Fine security cracker** [Load 0]: A well made tool kit used for disabling mechanical and electronic locks.
- **Fine optical camo** [Load 1]: A piece of clothing capable of covering the entire body that blends the wearer into their surroundings.
- **Light climbing gear** [Load 1]: Climbing gear made from uncommon lightweight materials.
- **Firearm silencer** [Load 0]: an item that attaches to or replaces a gun's barrel so that it makes very little sound when fired.

- **Nightvision goggles** [Load 1]: Advanced goggles amplifying ambient light allowing the user to see in total darkness.
- **Your custom vehicle** [Load 0]: The vehicle assigned to you suitable to your needs. It's represented by the Vehicle entry on your Pilot sheet.

INFILTRATOR SPECIALIST VEHICLE GEAR

- **Fine optical camo** [Load 1]: A coating or cloak that covers the vehicle allowing it to almost seamlessly blend into its environment.
- **Light mobility suite** [Load 1]: A grapple system, jump jets, foot wheels, or other mobility system modified to be less cumbersome.
- **Electronic Countermeasures** [Load 1]: creates static that prevents any wireless transfer of information.
- **NV/IR sensors** [Load 1]: Scanners that allow the vehicle to see in darkness or to spot heat sources.

INFILTRATOR ABILITIES

- **Ghost**: You are not negatively affected by Quality or Tier when you attempt to bypass security measures.
- **Ambush**: When you attack from hiding or spring a trap, you get +1d.
- **Daredevil**: When you roll a desperate action, you get +1d to your roll if you also take -1d to any resistance rolls (or exhaust an additional Quirk for Vehicle resistance) against consequences from your action.
- **The Devil's Footsteps**: When you Push Yourself in addition to the normal benefits choose one of the following: perform a feat of athletics that verges on the superhuman—maneuver to confuse your enemies so they mistakenly attack each other.
- **Expertise**: Choose one of your action ratings. When you lead a group action using that action, you can suffer only 1 Stress or exhaust 1 Quirk at most regardless of the number of failed rolls.
- **Never Tell Me The Odds**: If you are outnumbered or drastically over matched by a foe take +1d to resistance rolls or exhaust 1 fewer Quirk, minimum 1, for Vehicle resistance.
- **Reflexes**: When there's a question about who acts first, the answer is you (two

pilots with Reflexes act simultaneously).

- **Shadow:** You may spend your Spark to resist a consequence from detection or security measures, or to Push Yourself for a feat of athletics or stealth.
- **Veteran:** Choose a special ability from another source. Can be taken up to three times.

EXAMPLE GATHER INFORMATION

- What do they intend to do?
- How can I get them to [X]?
- What should I look out for?
- What's the best way in?
- Where can I hide here?
- How can I find [X]?
- What's really going on here?

EXAMPLE STARTING INFILTRATOR BELIEFS

- They make way too much noise.
- Got themselves caught so that I could finish the mission. I owe them.
- They aren't going to make it out of the War because they're too reckless.
- I have to keep an eye on them, I know their secret.

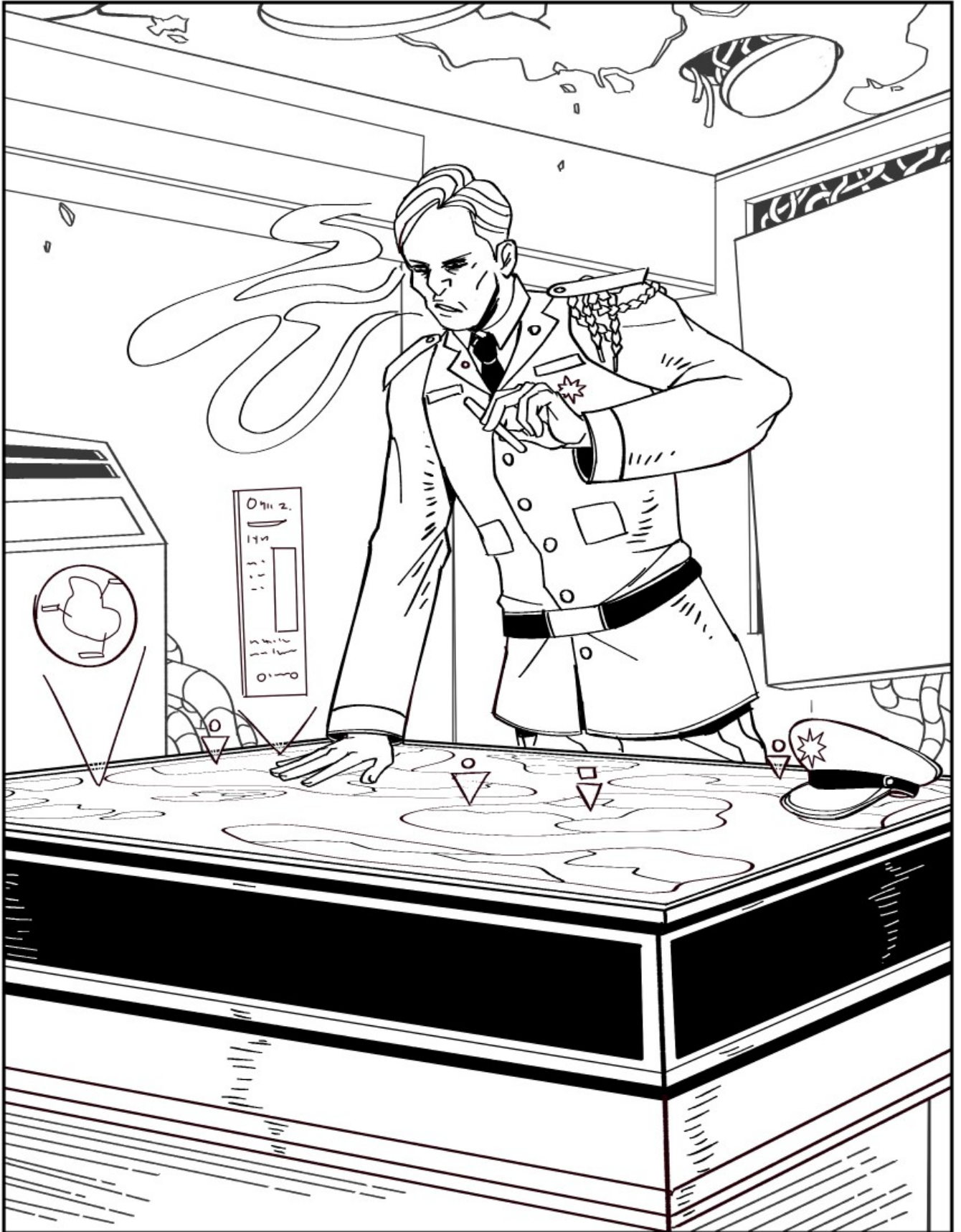
EXAMPLE INFILTRATOR ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Decine, an Offworlder clerk
- Astrell, a local programmer
- Gorbad, a dedicated noble
- Asa, a hopeful refugee

EXAMPLE INFILTRATOR STARTING BUILDS

- **Assassin:** Ambush, Struggle +2, Consort +1, Sway +1
- **Operative:** Shadow, Interface +2, Study +1, Survey +1
- **Thief:** Ghost, Finesse +1, Scan +2, Survey +1

- **Demon:** Reflexes, Maneuver +2, Battle +1, Struggle +1



THE OFFICER

A tactical and personable trooper.

Any conflict is chaos, whether it's an explosion filled battlefield or posturing for status in a masquerade. Except it's not really chaos, not if you know how to look. Lines of attack and defense, routes for flanking and retreat, all exist no matter the arena. There's a way around, through, or over if you're properly prepared. An Officer always has a plan.

What lingering debts do you possess? How will you honour them?

YOU SHOULD CHOOSE OFFICER IF:

- You want to have a measure of inherent authority.
- You want other Pilots to look to you for a plan or decision.
- You want to play a character that has reached their position by choosing (on some level) to be complicit with their superiors.

XP TRIGGER

An Officer earns end of session XP when they address a challenge with calculation or conspiracy.

OFFICER ACTION RATINGS

+2 Command, +1 Survey

OFFICER SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

- **Fine cover identity** [Load 0]: Paperwork, planted database info, and false connections suitable for passing as a different person.
- **Fine gift** [Load 1]: a bottle of liquor, a necklace, or a trinket. Something easily replaceable but quite impressive.
- **“High priority” comm decoder** [Load 1]: This device gives you the back channels for reaching anyone's personal communicator, but that doesn't mean they know, or care, who you are.
- **Officer's Uniform** [Load 0, unless it's a secondary outfit then Load 2]: a uniform befitting one in a position of command.

- **Concealed palm pistol** [Load 0]: A very small firearm with a very short range that is easily concealed.
- **Your custom vehicle** [Load 0]: The vehicle assigned to you suitable to your needs. It's represented by the Vehicle entry on your Pilot sheet.

OFFICER SPECIALIST VEHICLE GEAR

- **Fine Battle Standard** [Load 1]: a flag or other symbol that your allies can rally to.
- **Fine Friend Or Foe Tags** [Load 0]: makes a vehicle appear as belonging to a specific person, squad, and/or Faction.
- **Concealed gun** [Load 0]: a small firearm only Effective up close that is almost impossible to find.
- **Small Armory** [Load 1]: a collection of infantry weapons and body armour.

OFFICER ABILITIES

- **Tactical Genius**: Two times per mission you can assist a teammate without paying Stress. Tell us how you prepared for this.
- **Leader**: When you Command a Cohort in combat, they continue to fight when they would otherwise break (they're not taken out when they suffer level 3 Harm). When you lead a Group Action you have increased effect.
- **Rally**: Spend two Stress to do one of the following. To compel additional directions you may spend 1 Stress per direction.: direct an unaffiliated crowd to perform an action—have an unaffiliated crowd commit violence—prevent an unaffiliated crowd from causing damage.
- **Functioning Vice**: When you Cut Loose, you may adjust the dice outcome by 1 or 2 (up or down). The pilot you Cut Loose with heals 1 Stress as well which cannot cause them to Overindulge.
- **Heart to Heart**: When you make the weight of an arrangement clear to your opposite and both agree to terms - surrender, cease fire, prisoner exchange, etc - you are all emotionally invested in the deal. If either party or their Squad breaks the agreement, the negotiator takes level 3 Harm, "Despondent".
- **Warlord**: When you have Vendetta with another Squad your Squad gets improved Effect against that Squad.

- **Mastermind:** You may spend your Spark to protect a teammate, or to Push Yourself when you gather information or work on a long-term project.
- **Weaving the Web:** You gain +1d to Consort when you gather information on a target for a Mission. You get +1d to the engagement roll for that operation.
- **Veteran:** Choose a special ability from another source. Can be taken up to three times.

EXAMPLE GATHER INFORMATION

- What do they want most?
- What should I look out for?
- Where's the leverage here?
- How can I discover [X]?
- What do they intend to do?
- How can I get them to [X]?
- What's really going on here?

EXAMPLE STARTING OFFICER BELIEFS

- They trust my plans, and I won't let them down.
- They have a good head and I trust their instincts.
- They refuse to see how their actions affect the squad.
- Their reputation precedes them and it worries me.

EXAMPLE OFFICER ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Lavender, a strong fixer
- Henri, a moralistic bodyguard
- Peaches, a corrupt officer
- Virgil, a loyal pilot

EXAMPLE OFFICER STARTING BUILDS

- **Revolutionary:** Rally, Command +2, Sway +1, Struggle +1
- **Tactician:** Tactical Genius, Struggle +2, Battle +2

- **Fixer:** Heart To Heart, Sway +2, Finesse +1, Command +1
- **Strategist:** Weaving The Web, Study +1, Survey +2, Scan +1



THE SCOUT

A dangerous sniper and explorer.

Despite all the signs and guidebooks the world is filled with hidden paths. People, whether consciously or by accident, hide things. Sometimes it's where they've gone, or their favourite bauble, or a route through dangerous places. It's a Scout's job to find these secret ways, then help clear the path from a safe distance.

How did you run into trouble while alone in the field? When does the loneliness of your work find you?

YOU SHOULD CHOOSE SCOUT IF:

- You want to play a character with a core of loneliness who finds camaraderie in their robotic companions.
- You want to devastate your foes from far away, with both a sniper rifle and artillery barrages.
- You want to lead the way, finding threats and obstacles ahead of your squadmates.

XP TRIGGER

A Scout earns end of session XP when they address a challenge with exploration or violence.

SCOUT ACTION RATINGS

+2 Hunt, +1 Survey

SCOUT SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

- **Fine machine pistol** [Load 1]: A well made pistol capable of fully automatic fire.
- **Fine sniper rifle** [Load 2]: A high Quality bolt action rifle that's extremely lethal at long-range but unsuitable in close quarters.
- **1 type of special ammunition** [Load 1]: A magazine or bandolier of specialist ammo that gives increased Effect against one type of target but reduced Effect against other targets. You might have EMP rounds to use on drones, hollow-points for people, or gel rounds to be less than lethal.

- **Rangefinder/laser painter binoculars** [Load 1]: Binoculars that can perfectly judge the distance to a target and also transmit the target's precise location.
- **A well programmed hunter robot** [Load 1]: Your robot obeys your commands and anticipates your actions. Can carry 2 Load of general pilot gear or Scout pilot gear. Gain Cohort (expert: hunter).
- **Your custom vehicle** [Load 0]: The vehicle assigned to you suitable to your needs. It's represented by the Vehicle entry on your Pilot sheet.

SCOUT SPECIALIST VEHICLE GEAR

- **Fine heavy cannon** [Load 2]: An excellent, slow firing cannon designed to bombard targets at long-range.
- **Special ammunition** [Load 1]: Your Vehicle is equipped with a non-standard ammunition type in addition to its standard round. It gives increased Effect against one target type but reduced Effect against others. You might have flak rounds to use against jets, armour piercing rounds for tanks, or incendiary rounds for infantry. You can change your ammo type the first time it's used each mission.
- **Magnification suite** [Load 1]: Your Vehicle is equipped with a wide variety of optical and digital zoom options to enhance the pilot's view of far targets and also mark them for allies.
- **Drone carrier** [Load 1]: can be used to launch several simple drones with a preset Loadout that are directed with the Vehicle's controls. Each drone can carry 2 Load of general Pilot gear, 2 Load of Scout Pilot Gear, or 1 Load of general Vehicle gear. All drones must debut the same Gear, and it doesn't cost Materiel to uninstall their Gear between Missions.

SCOUT ABILITIES

- **Sharpshooter**: When you Push Yourself in addition to the normal benefits you can do one of the following: make a ranged attack at extreme distance beyond what's normal for the weapon—unleash a barrage of rapid fire to suppress the enemy—ricochet a shot to hit a target indirectly.
- **Focused**: You may spend your Spark to resist a consequence of surprise or mental Harm (fear, confusion, losing track of someone) or to Push Yourself for ranged combat or exploration.
- **Terminator**: Your well programmed hunter robot has additional systems installed. It

has increased Effect when tracking or fighting machines, and gains a custom upgrade: Beast of Burden [+1 Load, and it's stronger], Mind-Link [can be directed with the pilot's mind], or Quick and Quiet [is faster and nearly silent]. Take the ability again for an additional custom upgrade.

- **Ranger:** When you gather info to locate a target, you get +1 Effect. When you hide in a prepared Position or use camouflage, you get +1d to rolls to avoid detection.
- **Survivor:** From hard won experience or specialized training, you are able to subsist on what any environment provides and you can function on the barest sustenance. You get +1 Stress box.
- **Lay of the Land:** When a Pilot takes advantage of terrain you have scouted, they get +1d to resisting consequences (or spends 1 fewer Quirk, minimum 1). When you scout as a flashback Set Up action, spend 1 less stress than normal.
- **Determination:** When you roll a failure on a risky or controlled action you can choose to make that a partial success by changing the Position to desperate. This does not grant XP for taking a desperate action.
- **Veteran:** Choose a special ability from another source. Can be taken up to three times.

EXAMPLE GATHER INFORMATION

- What do they intend to do?
- How can I get them to [X]?
- What are they really feeling?
- Where are they vulnerable?
- Where did [X] go?
- How can I find [X]?
- What's really going on here?

EXAMPLE STARTING SCOUT BELIEFS

- They would be lost without me.
- They make me feel like part of the team.
- They want to survive and I can teach them how.
- They're in constant danger, so I'll keep them safe.

EXAMPLE SCOUT ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Teucer, a veteran sniper

- Layla, a humane tracker
- Here, an eager mortician
- Holly, a cold squire

EXAMPLE SCOUT STARTING BUILDS

- **Pursuer:** Determination, Study +1, Struggle +1, Consort +1, Wreck +1
- **Pathfinder:** Ranger, Prowl +2, Survey +1, Maneuver +1
- **Sniper:** Sharpshooter, Bombard +1, Study +1, Prowl +1, Survey +1
- **Bonded:** Terminator, Command +2, Struggle +1, Engineer +1



THE SOLDIER

A mightily, violent warrior.

The War touches everyone demanding some form of violence be committed on its behalf. Those who become very good at the most primal form are the Soldiers. While others perform violence, they ARE violence. They reek of blood, and gunpowder, and dominance. Even when they don't wound their victims they staple fear onto their bloody, beating hearts.

When do you refuse to employ violence? When do you refuse to refrain from violence? How have these stances hurt you?

YOU SHOULD CHOOSE SOLDIER IF:

- You want to be very good at hurting and terrifying people.
- You want to be incredibly hard to stop, even when badly injured.
- You want to play with ideas around having a body designed for violence, whether you embrace it or struggle to imagine what peace looks like for yourself.

XP TRIGGER

A Soldier earns end of session XP when they address a challenge with violence or coercion.

SOLDIER ACTION RATINGS

+2 Struggle, +1 Command

SOLDIER SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

- **Fine melee weapon** [Load 1]: A knife, sword, hammer, shield, or other one handed melee weapon of excellent Quality.
- **Fine assault rifle** [Load 2]: A well made rifle capable of single, burst, or automatic fire.
- **Anti-armour weapon** [Load 2]: A heavy weapon designed to penetrate the kind of heavy armour found on many vehicles.
- **Frag, flash, or smoke grenades** (3 uses) [Load 1]: A few grenades that can be thrown or launched from a suitable firearm which either explode in shrapnel, sound and light, or smoke.

- **Handcuffs or zipties** [Load 0]: A tool designed to restrain the limbs.
- **Stimpack** [Load 0]: An injector filled with a drug cocktail giving a burst of energy, resilience, and aggression. This will modify your Position and Effect as suitable. Gain two consequences “Can’t Tell Friend From Foe” and “Destroy Everything” which can be resisted as normal. The modified Position and Effect, and any unresisted consequences last until the end of the next scene.
- **Your custom vehicle** [Load 0]: The vehicle assigned to you suitable to your needs. It’s represented by the Vehicle entry on your Pilot sheet.

SOLDIER SPECIALIST VEHICLE GEAR

- **Fine melee weapon** [Load 1]: A finely crafted melee weapon that is well balanced for your Vehicle.
- **Fine heavy melee weapon** [Load 2]: A well made and heavy melee weapon able to strike with greater reach or force.
- **Scary weapon or tool** [Load 1]: An unusual weapon or tool that has increased Effect when used for intimidation but standard Effect for dealing damage.
- **A tangle gun** [Load 1]: A weapon that launches some kind of round that impedes or removes the mobility of a struck target.

SOLDIER ABILITIES

- **Battleborn**: You may spend your Spark to reduce Harm from an attack in combat or to Push Yourself during a fight.
- **Bodyguard**: When you protect someone, take +1d to your resistance roll (or exhaust 1 fewer Quirk, minimum 1, for Vehicle resistance). When you gather info to anticipate possible threats in the current situation, you get +1 Effect.
- **Robot Fighter**: You know the weak points of the inanimate and you gain increased Effect in combat against machines.
- **Tough as Nails**: Penalties from Harm are one level less severe (though level 4 Harm is still fatal).
- **Mule**: Your pilot Load limits are higher. Light: 5. Normal: 7. Heavy: 8.
- **Not to be Trifled With**: When you Push Yourself in addition to the normal benefits you can do one of the following: perform a feat of physical force that verges on the superhuman—engage a small gang on equal footing in close combat.

- **Brutal:** When you unleash physical violence, it's especially frightening. When you Command a frightened target, take +1d.
- **Vigorous:** You recover from Harm faster. Permanently fill in one of your healing clock segments. Take +1d to healing treatment rolls.
- **Veteran:** Choose a special ability from another source. Can be taken up to three times.

EXAMPLE GATHER INFORMATION

- How can I hurt them?
- Who's most afraid of me?
- Who's most dangerous here?
- What do they intend to do?
- How can I get them to [X]?
- Are they telling the truth?
- What's really going on here?

EXAMPLE STARTING SOLDIER BELIEFS

- Their hesitance to inflict violence will Harm the squad.
- They rely too much on their technology.
- The Squad needs a better fitness regimen and I will start with them.
- We've fought side by side in the past and I can trust them at my back.

EXAMPLE SOLDIER ALLIES AND RIVALS

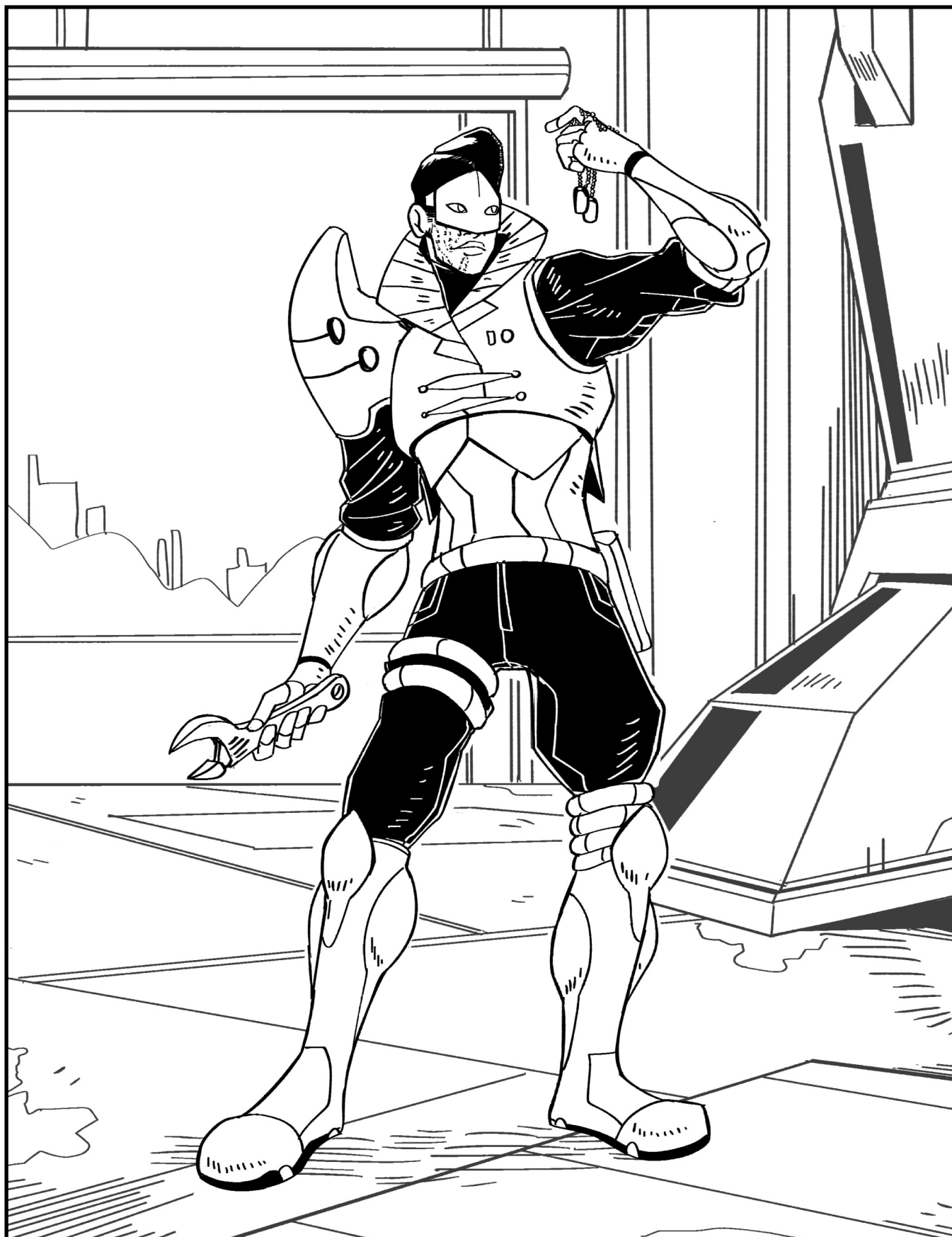
- Ibex, a disciplined warrior
- Alice, a frenzied demolitionist
- Elliot, a quiet NCO
- Alix, a jovial medic

EXAMPLE SOLDIER STARTING BUILDS

- **Vanguard:** Battleborn, Command +1, Maneuver +1, Prowl +1, Battle +1
- **Tough:** Not To Be Trifled With, Battle +2, Command +1, Consort +1

Header art is a space battle.

- **Terror:** Brutal, Wreck +2, Destroy +1, Battle +1
- **Anti-Armor:** Robot Fighter, Hunt +2, Prowl +2



THE TECHNICIAN

A savvy technician and vandal.

Technology runs the world and it will all fall apart sooner or later. Will it be repaired or replaced? Regardless of the choice someone with specialized skills will have to tackle the challenge. Technicians have that know how. They are the ones that push the bounds of what science can accomplish, and also keep the lights on while they are at it. Of course, any skill that can create can be used to destroy. Just ask Oppenheimer.

How did you afford to develop your skills in the rationing of the War? Do you prefer to create or destroy?

YOU SHOULD CHOOSE TECHNICIAN IF:

- You want to get imaginative with your methods, whether creating or destroying.
- You want to support your suqadmates by maintaining them and their vehicles.
- You want to explore what your role in The War is as an innovator.

TECHNICIAN ACTION RATINGS

+2 Engineer, +1 Wreck

XP TRIGGER

At the end of a session take XP if you addressed a challenge with technical skill or mayhem.

TECHNICIAN SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

- **Fine engineering tools** [Load 1]: Expertly made tools used for fine mechanical work.
- **Fine demolition tools** [Load 2]: Well crafted tools for destruction and sabotage.
- **Air-gun, darts and syringes** [Load 1]: A near silent gun that shoots darts using compressed air. The darts can be filled with drugs, chemicals, or biological agents.
- **Bandolier** [Load 1 per 3 uses]: A belt worn on the hip or chest that can hold bombs or containers filled with chemicals, drugs, or biological agents. The contents are declared on each use. Choose an Effect from the list below for each use.
 - Neutralize the Effects of other chemicals.

- Permanently fuse two surfaces until parted with a neutralizer or extreme (and damaging effort)
- Cause an incapacitating sensation of drowning.
- Cause blindness for a few minutes.
- Burst into intense flame on contact with air.
- Explode into shrapnel.
- Take Level 2 Harm “Obsessive” and +1d to your next Interface roll.
- Cause incapacitating full body muscle cramps.
- Create a cloud of smoke that stings the eyes and is difficult to breathe.
- Become imbued with a mild electrical charge and a feeling of vigour.
- Cause temporary paralysis.
- Become calm and enter a suggestible mental state.

- **Gadgets** [Load 1 each]: Items created during Downtime.

- **Your custom vehicle** [Load 0]: The vehicle assigned to you suitable to your needs. It’s represented by the Vehicle entry on your Pilot sheet.

TECHNICIAN SPECIALIST VEHICLE GEAR

- **Fine Modding tools** [Load 1]: Excellent tools for modifying large objects on the fly.

- **Fine Destruction tools** [Load 2]: Finely made tools for smashing buildings, vehicles, and other large objects.

- **Payload bay** [Load 1 for 3 uses]: can contain 3 special warheads containing a much larger amount of the same chemicals as the Bandolier. The contents are debuted with each use. These can be fired by a weapon on the Vehicle designated at the time it is first used. Uses refill at the start of a mission.

- **Assisted repair system** [Load 1]: spend a Materiel point to take the Fix downtime activity while on a mission.

- **Analytics suite** [Load 1]: a collection of scanners useful for determining the composition of solids, liquids, and gasses.

TECHNICIAN ABILITIES

- **Simulation**: +1d to engagement rolls. You can decide what Position appropriate consequence you suffer on 4-5s with Action Rolls; the GM will make it fit the narrative.

- **Jury Rig**: Spend two Stress to reduce the penalty (but not Level) of all Damage on

a Vehicle until the end of the mission. If you have Doctor you can also use this on a Pilot's Harm. Level 4 Damage or Harm can be affected by this ability, but the Vehicle will be destroyed or the pilot killed at the end of the mission.

- **Researcher:** When you design or manufacture a creation, take +1 result level to your roll. You begin with one special design already known.

- **Fortitude:** You may spend your Spark to resist a consequence of fatigue, weakness, or chemical Effects, or to Push Yourself when working with technical skill or handling chemicals.

- **Road Master:** You know how to Wreck or Destroy an area with experimental substances and methods so it is either impassable or good terrain to infantry, vehicles, or Apps (your choice).

- **Doctor:** You can use Engineer with bones, blood, and organs to treat wounds or stabilize the dying. You may study a malady or corpse. Everyone in your Squad gets +1d to their recovery rolls.

- **Saboteur:** When you Wreck, the work is much quieter than it should be and the damage is hidden from casual inspection. If you use placed explosives instead of wrecking tools the work is not any quieter but you get +1d to the action.

- **Custom Implant:** Choose a chemical, or gadget you have already researched and can build. That delivery system of the chemical or the gadget itself is perfectly concealed inside of your body and has 0 Load. Spend 1 Stress to use the implant. Changing the implant is a 4 section Long Term Project.

- **Veteran:** Choose a special ability from another source. Can be taken up to three times.

EXAMPLE GATHER INFORMATION

- What do they intend to do?

- How can I get them to [X]?

- Are they telling the truth?

- What can I tinker with here?

- What might happen if I [X]?

- How can I find [X]?

- What's really going on here?

EXAMPLE STARTING TECHNICIAN BELIEFS

- They show promise, so I will support their endeavours.
- They are not sufficiently interested in the results I could achieve.
- My data indicates they could be so much more but choose not to be.
- They've insulted my methods. They aren't very bright.

EXAMPLE TECHNICIAN ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Dee, a surly professor
- Isa, a faceless spy
- Taylor, a diligent monk
- Martinus, a kind psychologist

EXAMPLE TECHNICIAN STARTING BUILDS

- **Medic:** Doctor, Consort +1, Finesse +1, Study +2
- **Sapper:** Saboteur, Prowl +2, Wreck +1, Study +1
- **Cyborg:** Custom Implant, Struggle +1, Prowl +1, Hunt +1, Survey +1
- **Gearhead:** Researcher, Manipulate +1, Maneuver +1, Interface +2

Header art is a space battle.

INSERT PLAYERS' PRINCIPLES ART HERE

Nehalennia and Unlucky shake hands in the imagination above a table of 5 people playing Beam Saber. SINGLE PAGE ART

CHAPTER 04: PLAYERS' PRINCIPLES

You've just read a lot of rules that explain the mechanics of being a pilot. This section provides principles to embrace that will guide you in how to use those rules. To get the most out of being a Beam Saber pilot follow these principles.

PROTECT YOUR COMRADES

The subject matter of Beam Saber can be both dark and heavy at times. The themes surrounding war, and the relationships that develop because of them, are very intense. Even the most intentionally lighthearted Cut Loose scene can become affecting as the pilots stumble into, or around, the topic of the last mission.

It's ok that what is happening in game is influencing the mood of the people at the table. However, it is up to you, and everyone else, to make sure that it doesn't Harm any of the players (including the GM). You need to work to make sure that Lines and Veils (see page 236) are maintained. If you think one is being breached, or suspect a player is uncomfortable, take a moment to check in with everyone. Make sure that what is happening in character is alright. An important reason to ask is that feeling strong emotions in play can be enjoyable (just look at horror movies), but it isn't always clear when they become Harmful.

If something is causing Harm to a player, the table has many options. Cut out the detail causing Harm by saying that it never happened. Back away from the topic by dropping the subject and talking about something else. Pause and discuss what just happened, but keep in mind that no one is owed an explanation by the diStressed player. Quietly skip ahead if everyone is comfortable with the event happening but not with depicting it. Use any combination of these to protect yourself and each other.

EMBRACE THE PILOT'S LIFE

A pilot's life is not easy. In the best circumstances, they are given difficult tasks with insufficient support, and lives they don't know about are at stake with every mission. Even when things go well they are rewarded with more challenges and not enough supplies, and now have the ire of those they've wronged in the course of duty. Their Quirks will run out, Stress will build up, entanglements will provide unpleasant surprises, and all this will happen regardless of how competent the pilots are. The War is wildly unfair.

Yet they persist because someone has to hold the line. We will watch as terrible

things happen to them, their loved ones, and their plans. In doing so we must remember that they are not us. We can and should be emotionally invested in what happens to them because they are admirable for their efforts, no matter how doomed, but their failures do not reflect on the players. So it's fine if they falter, fail, and fall because the mechanics ensure that those are temporary unless we as players want them to be permanent. Besides, they might succeed and wouldn't it be glorious to witness that moment?

GO INTO DANGER, FALL IN LOVE WITH TROUBLE

You will never be completely safe. You're a pilot surrounded by massive war machines (some of which are trying to kill you) in a war that predates your birth and won't conclude in your lifetime. You don't have the option to be risk averse since you've got the tough missions due to the fact that you're expendable, skilled, passionate, or all of the above. It'll take big plans and big actions to fulfill the big dream of a happy ending.

Embrace risky ideas. Go for what sounds fun, exciting, and probably dangerous. The rules help make impossible challenges manageable, and there will always be possible consequences like "there could be collateral damage." Dare to be interesting, don't fear peril. Trying to avoid every little danger won't build up the pilots' Stress, it'll build up the players'! Consequences aren't failures. Remember that a result of 4-6 means that you succeed at what you were trying to do. There will likely be unintended consequences, but you will have succeeded nonetheless!

When consequences do befall you don't hate them. Exciting things happen when they appear. Someone gets Harm, a Vehicle takes Damage, new challenges arrive, and much more! All of these will give you opportunities to take exciting actions to achieve your dreams. Telling stories about gripping moments is why you are playing this game; don't back away from them.

USE ACTIONS HONORABLY

Players get to choose the action that they will roll when attempting to overcome an obstacle, but that comes with the duty of being honest in your choice. Choose the action that best suits what you are doing, not just the action you have the most points in. If you are demolishing a building with your Vehicle be honest and roll Destroy. Don't try to claim you can use Manipulate or Scan because you're targeting the main support columns. Of course you might use Scan for a setup action by finding where the Load bearing structures are for increased Effect or improved Position on the follow up action.

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

Everyone playing is responsible for the narrative that comes from the game. This includes tone, themes, style, descriptions, and much more. You participate in both a tactical role and, just as importantly, an expressive one. You do this by having your pilot embody what you want to see in the game. If you want The War to be deadly, take serious Harm when it's offered. If you want political complexity, seek out and implement schemes of your own. If you want emotionally flawed characters, lean into that with your own. Be the story you want to see.

USE YOUR STRESS AND QUIRKS

The War is harsh on everyone and especially on the pilots who carry the hopes of their Faction, not to mention their own dreams. Your pilot's Stress and Vehicle's Quirks are a resource that you have to break through the challenges that you face. By pushing yourself and getting an assist from a squadmate you can get at least 2 dice in any action, and if you don't get a 6 you can negate any consequence with a resist roll. If you don't spend your resources the challenges may seem insurmountable.

ADVOCATE FOR THE SCENES YOU WANT

There will be times where you'll imagine an interesting scene that you think would benefit the narrative. Sometimes they'll happen on their own as the pieces fall into place, but a far more reliable way to have those scenes happen is for you to advocate for them. Talk to the GM about setting up scenes with the NPCs you want to role play with. Talk to the other players about having your pilots encounter each other or working together. Talk to the whole group about setting up missions centred on the stories you want to pursue. Remember to return the favor.

DON'T TALK YOURSELF OUT OF FUN

When you're Planning the Mission, or just deciding what to do next, do what seems like it will be the most fun. Your pilot might be invested in coming up with the "best" plan but remember that you are here to have fun. Your precious time is being spent with this game because you want to see dramatic confrontations between vehicle pilots in The War. Embody those moments, hold steady, and engage!

BUILD YOUR CHARACTER THROUGH PLAY

When you start your pilot's first mission they'll be a handful of details. A History, Tragedy, Opening, Rival, Ally, and Beliefs about the other pilots. Those say who the pilot *was*, not who they are or who they will become. Those will be revealed as you play through the choices you make, the orders you follow, who you leave behind, and when you rebel. Allow yourself to be convinced over the course of your game that maybe your pilot isn't who they thought they were, or who you thought they were.

HUSTLE TO GET AHEAD

After a couple sessions you might notice that the Squad is barely staying afloat with the costs of Quirks, repairs, recovery, and all the other places your hard earned Supply Points go. This is because the power structures of the Factions in Beam Saber don't exist to improve the lives of the pilots. They are there so that the Faction can continue to fight The War.

If a pilot wants to get enough Drive to change their circumstances, or a Squad wants to get enough Supply Points to increase its Tier, they are going to have to find alternate income sources. Scavenge, loot, steal, "requisition," extort, and sell. If you rely on the end of mission Supply Roll you'll never get ahead.

BREAK THE RULES WITH LONG TERM PROJECTS

While Long Term Projects can be used for tasks like improving the Quality of a weapon or infiltrating an enemy squad, they can be used for literally anything. They could break the rules of the game (for example by adding an extra level 3 Harm box to a pilot, making it so that all of a Vehicle's Load is uninstalled at the start of a mission for free, or by removing Scars), completely change the direction of the campaign (a pilot could start a project to become the leader of their Faction, or upload their consciousness into their Vehicle), or drastically alter the setting (starting a new ice age by pushing the planet farther from the sun, or setting up a resonant electro-magnetic field in the orbiting debris field to destroy all electronics).

Anything is possible, however, the ultimate goal of the project should be discussed with other players and GM. Drastic changes like this will likely require that multiple 8 tick Clocks be filled, each one completing a step in the overall project. Remember that this is an option, and not an obligation. If you like that game as it is, stick with it.

ACT NOW, PLAN LATER

There's a tendency for players to hugely over plan when they have the initiative to act. They come up with a good simple plan, and then start poking holes in it which are increasingly unlikely occurrences. These holes then need plans to patch them up, and those have holes, and this continues far longer than it needs to dragging play to a halt.

Flashbacks and undeclared Load help to alleviate this. If you or another player starts down the plan spiral, stop it, take action, and when you need to deal with an obstacle have a Flashback or declare an item. This will keep up the momentum.

INSERT FICTION-FIRST GAMING ART HERE

Flagstone talks themself, Owl, Tower, and Unlucky through a security checkpoint. Envoy chats amicably with a pair of guards in a booth. The heroes are dressed in coveralls and caps (both feature the DFS logo), trying to look inconspicuous. The guards have the sharp looking guns of the DFS slung over their shoulders, and the DFS logo on their armor. A sign on a chainlink fence pointing in the direction they are heading reads "AWV HANGER". Shut down DFS AWVs can be seen in the background behind the fence. DOUBLE PAGE SPREAD

CHAPTER 05: FICTION-FIRST GAMING

Fiction First is a term that refers to the practice of using the game's narrative to determine what mechanics are used, rather than using mechanics to decide what happens in the fiction. In many games a player will take an action by saying something like "I shoot the target," they roll to shoot, and any description (such as "I peak around the corner and fire a quick shot") that comes out of the situation is an afterthought. Ultimately the fiction takes a back seat to the mechanics, and the game could be played without any narration at all.

Fiction First makes the mechanics flow from the narrative.

In Beam Saber rather than saying the action used, a player describes what their pilot does and then the circumstances help determine what mechanics are used. Anyone playing can provide suggestions for this. If a player wants to shoot a target, we must determine the surrounding situation. Here are some examples. If the shot is:

- At a target range and the pilot is just practicing, that's probably the Train Downtime activity. There's no risk in taking the shot and no benefit for being exceptionally accurate.
- Part of a laser tag match with a friend, that's probably a Cut Loose Downtime activity. There's no risk, and the purpose of doing it is to have fun.
- At a bullseye during a competition, that's probably a Fortune Roll. There's no risk, but a stronger performance will provide greater benefits.
- Part of a heated battle inside an apartment, that's probably an Action Roll using Struggle. Bad things will happen if the shot misses, and the range is most suitable for the Struggle action.
- At an unaware target a few feet away, that's probably an Action Roll using Prowl. Bad things will happen if the shot misses, and the sneaky nature of the attack makes Prowl ideal.
- Through a vehicle at a munitions factory with the goal of levelling the facility, that's probably an Action Roll using Destroy. Bad things will happen if the shot misses, and the scale of the destructive force involved means that Destroy is best.

There are any number of scenarios this activity could occur in, and it's up to the players to consider the narrative circumstances that will affect the mechanics. Trying to pick the mechanic first and then applying a narrative can make the process messy. You'll likely find that establishing the fiction will be streamline choosing the mechanics.

If things do become confused back out from the mechanics and up to the fictional layer. Ask the following questions:

- What's happening?
- What is the player trying to accomplish?
- What mechanic supports that goal?

Remember that while there may be a mechanic that is an obvious answer for accomplishing a goal, there's nothing wrong with choosing one for stylistic reasons. The mechanics exist to support the fiction after all.

TRIGGERING THE ACTION ROLL

Now that we've established why fiction comes first in Beam Saber, here's *when* the mechanics are used.

Most of the play in the game will take the form of a conversation between the people playing. That might be talking in character, describing actions, making plans, and all the fun that comes of spending time gaming with friends. There will come a time for dice though, and it is primarily the GM's responsibility (though anyone can suggest it) to determine when it's time to roll. Here are a few situations when an Action Roll is necessary:

- A pilot attempts an activity that is dangerous, or has the potential for another repercussion.
- A pilot leads one or more NPCs in (or orders them to do) a dangerous or challenging activity.
- A player is really excited to make a roll!

At this point the process described in the Action Roll section (see page 20) triggers, but remember to listen to the suggestions of everyone at the table for each step. This will determine if the action is a failure (1-3), a full success (6), or a bit of both (4-5).

Some people are uncomfortable with the idea of having a consequence as part of their success on a 4-5. In Beam Saber action rolls determine the outcome for both the pilot's action and their opposition's action. The type of dramatic situations that call for Action Rolls mean that the enemy is attempting to achieve their goals at the same time as the pilot! A partial success means that the opposition has found success alongside the pilot. A single action roll covers a back and forth exchange of blows, words, maneuvers, or whatever form the conflict takes; so the wounds inflicted apply to both sides.

HOW TO CHOOSE AN ACTION

When an Action Roll is required, the action that should be rolled will often be clear because of what the pilot is doing in the fiction. However, a player is always allowed to change what Action they are doing so long as what the pilot is doing in the fiction also changes to better fit the new Action. A player cannot choose an Action that clearly does not fit the situation, such as using Struggle to “grapple” with the words of an opponent during a debate. There will be times where multiple Actions suitably fit the fiction. In these instances the player chooses what Action to use, and the GM chooses the appropriate Position and Effect.

If none of the Actions seem appropriate, consider the intent of the activity. For example if a Pilot is using their holo-projector against some enemies, here’s some ways it could play out:

Intended Outcome	Possible Action
Distract enemies so that allies can get the drop on them.	Sway as a Set Up Action Roll.
Trick enemies into hitting each other with their own attacks.	Battle as an Action Roll.
Intimidate enemies into retreat with a terrifying image.	Command as an Action Roll.
Corall enemies into a specific position on the battlefield.	Manipulate as an Action Roll.
Get enemies to let their guard down with reassuring images.	Consort as a Set Up Action Roll.
Escape enemies by making an illusory duplicate of yourself.	Maneuver as an Action Roll.

As usual the Position and Effect will determined by the narrative, and modified by the GM's assessment of the appropriatenes of the selected Action. How the Holo-Projector affects the situation will have to be decided as well. In some cases it is only providing the possibility of the chosen course, but in other cases it will modify the Position or Effect. Players and GM should work together to discern what is suitable for the specific situation and also what that says about the tone of the game as a whole.

THE PURPOSES OF DANGERS & STRESS

To some GMs the ability of players to negate any consequences with a Resistance roll seems incredibly powerful, perhaps too powerful. This is intentional. The odds stacked against the pilots are intense and they need resources like Stress and Resistance rolls to

overcome them. Even with those they will often fail, and decide that they might need to have the Stress later, rather than spend it now.

Even when negated by Resistance Rolls, Harm and Damage still serve an important purpose. The act of describing how Pilots and their Vehicles are wounded builds tension. As the GM narrates a massive chainsaw tearing through the cockpit towards the pilot inside, the players get scared. The stakes are raised, emotionally investing them in what is happening. Since they're so invested they spend that Stress. They say "No! I hit the gas and dodge out of the chainsaw's path." They reduce the severity of the consequence, or negate it entirely, and doing so *requires* them to describe how they do it. The player gets to show just how formidable their pilot is, which makes them feel powerful! That feeling of power gives them hope in the face of the harsh challenges they must overcome.

When Consequences, Stress, and Resistance Rolls are combined in play it creates an exciting narrative. The GM describes dangerous outcomes of the players' rolls, and they counter by detailing how their awesome pilots avoid that terrible fate. This back and forth conversation will create some of the most dramatic exchanges in your campaign!

THERE'S ALWAYS A CONSEQUENCE

If dice are rolled in Beam Saber it's because the fiction is changing. This might mean that the pilots change the world to suit them (6), something bad happens (on a 1-3), or both. There should never be an outcome where the result is "nothing happens." The closest is a failure in a Controlled Position but that still results in the pilot acting riskier or realizing that their plan was too perilous.

BUILD SLOWLY

The rules are designed so that you only *need* Action rolls; just use a Risky Position and Standard Effect at first. As the players start asking questions about what they can do, that's when the more complex rules should be explained. If a player wants more dice on a roll, it's time to explain Stress and Pushing Yourself. When the Squad is outnumbered by foes or higher Tier foes, then tell them about Effect. The game works best when all the rules are in play, but the group can build up to that!

This guideline should also be followed for the fiction. The whole world and plot don't have to be figured out from the first session. Have enough for the first mission to make sense (which will likely be provided through the NPCs developed in Pilot and Squad creation) and then add detail when you need it. If you realize that you made a mistake in something you described, don't worry about it! Just explain your mistake to the players and

what you're changing.

SETTING PRECEDENTS

The laws of reality need to be consistent between the Pilots and NPCs, or the fiction will break. If an NPC can shoot through a Vehicle's cockpit with a pilot's rifle, then the Scout should be able to attempt that as well. Likewise if a PC is the only person who can pilot their customized Vehicle, then the same is true for NPC vehicles.

Every time that new facts for the world are introduced they become opportunities for everyone. It may become clear that these precedents need to be changed at some point in the game, just like creating the precedent changes the game. Don't hesitate to make those changed, but remember that they apply for both Pilots and NPCs!

ABSTRACTION VS DETAIL

Everything doesn't have to be described in exact detail for a story to be well told. Often it is less important to know exactly how far away something is, than it is to know whether you will get there in time. We don't need to know the exact price of the bribe, just that it cost 1 Personnel.

Likewise there will be times when a player lacks the skills or knowledge that their pilot would certainly have. We don't expect players to do the math behind an Engineer roll, and we should similarly give that level of abstraction to social scenes for players who aren't comfortable acting them out in fine detail.

The time when details should be described is when an action's Position and Effect are being determined, as they rely on details. When trying to bribe the guard do they have their gun to your head, an arm's length away, or still in their holster? The details are also important for any precedents that have been established as previously discussed.

INSERT VEHICLES CHAPTER ART HERE

Demon is sitting on his Razor-B's open cockpit hatch (wires coming out), chatting with Owl, while Dredge and Tower work on a big AWV part nearby. Owl, holding a clipboard, is standing on a scissor lift that has been raised up to the cockpit's level and has a crate on it. Demon is gesturing with a pair of pliers. Dredge is doing most of the work on the part, which is about the size of an engine block and looks like a cross between an engine block and a rifle receiver, while Tower hands co tools as needed. DOUBLE PAGE SPREAD

CHAPTER 06: THE VEHICLES

Beam Saber is about Pilots AND their massive war machines. These vehicles are not just a means of engaging in war, they are representative of the pilot within. It will be as tied to the pilot's reputation as their face and actions. Not only is it part of the pilot's public identity, it also reflects who they are. Pilots that favour misdirection out of the cockpit will have vehicles that use similar methods. The vehicles piloted by those that consider themselves just pawns in the conflict will be basic workhorse models, and those who think they are grand will put capes and gold on their vehicle. Keep this in mind as you make and use vehicles, whether you're the GM or a player.

VEHICLE CREATION

The directions that follow are useful for creating your Vehicle step by step, however if you want to randomly generate your Vehicle in part or in whole jump to Appendix B (see page 355) for methods to do that.

1. Choose the **look** of your Vehicle, and name its **model** and **manufacturer**.
2. Choose your Vehicle's **Load**, but you don't detail what gear it has at this time.
3. **Create 4 Quirks** for your Vehicle.

VEHICLE LOOKS

Note that a Vehicle in Beam Saber can be anything from a mech to a dump truck to a fighter jet to a tank. The rules and looks can work for any machine that is piloted by a person. Here are some suggestions for how to describe your Vehicle's look.

- **Mobility:** bipedal, quadrupedal, flight, hover, wheeled, treads, anti-grav, rotor
- **Arms:** none, humanoid, tentacle, industrial, hardpoint, wings, ornate
- **Hand:** none, industrial, human, tentacle, weaponized, ornate
- **Core:** armored, armed, light, bulky, practical, massive, ornate
- **Head:** none, armored, armed, hi-tech, ornate, practical
- **Cockpit:** sealed, open, armored, spacious, cramped, homey, customized
- **Shell:** organic, hard light, ceramic, alloy, plastic, crystal.
- **Style:** ornate, practical, improvised, custom, fashionable, sleek, powerful, artistic

Your Vehicle's look isn't just "fluff" for feeding the narrative because as described earlier

Beam Saber is a Fiction First game (see page 133). This means that the look will often determine what options are available for overcoming challenges, it may adjust the position or effect on an Action Roll, or it may mean that a challenge is bypassed without any difficulty.

Pitchfork and Dredge are trying to cross a river in their Vehicles. Pitchfork's Agrarian is quadrupedal and so will have to wade through the river, while Dredge's Kettle 2.0 can quickly hover over the obstacle. Pitchfork's player makes a Controlled Standard Maneuver roll, and she gets a 5. She'll get across safely, but the river will slow her down. Dredge doesn't make a roll at all.

Unfortunately when Dredge gets to the other side ahead of her squadmate, she realizes the riverbank is mined but has difficulty coming to a stop so the mines don't activate as the Kettle's hover system lacks purchase on the terrain. She makes a Risky Limited Maneuver roll, getting a 4. The Kettle twists under the controls becoming unbalanced, and crashes to the ground just short of the minefield putting Dredge in a Desperate position. When Pitchfork eventually arrives, she won't need to make a roll to stop before the minefield because of the stability of her Agrarian.

VEHICLE ACTIONS

The abilities of a Vehicle are as important to the outcome of an action as the skill of the pilot. When a pilot needs to roll an action that uses their Vehicle they roll the relevant Vehicle action rating. If a pilot tries to remotely pilot a Vehicle or a vehicle that is not theirs they have reduced Effect.

All Vehicle action ratings max out at 4 points, but during pilot creation they can't have more than 2 points in an action. The mastery Squad upgrade is required to unlock the fourth point. Vehicles have access to the following actions:

EXPERTISE ACTIONS

These are actions that test the vehicle's physicality.

Battle: for attacking at short range.

Destroy: for razing structures with unsubtle methods.

Maneuver: for moving swiftly and precisely.

ACUITY ACTIONS

These are actions that use the vehicle's awareness.

Bombard: for blasting with long-range fire.

Manipulate: for deftly handling objects.

Scan: for quickly assessing a situation.

All Vehicle actions belong to the Expertise or Acuity attributes. These attributes are used to determine the number of Quirks it will cost your Vehicle to Resist a Consequence (see page 26). They gain a point of XP when a Desperate Vehicle action is performed with them, or a point of XP is assigned to them at the end of a session. When the Vehicle Enhance track is filled through the Enhance Downtime Activity an additional point can be added to any Vehicle Action.

VEHICLE LOAD

Load is the equipment that a Vehicle has been outfitted with. It's an abstraction of how much of the Vehicle's resources are occupied by its use. Resources such as weight, balance, bulk, and computing power. A Vehicle has access to all the general Vehicle gear and their class and squad's specialist Vehicle gear.

At the start of the first mission decide if the Vehicle is carrying a Light, Medium, or Heavy Load.

- A **Light** vehicle is faster and less conspicuous giving it improved Effect when those features are advantageous, and has a max Load of 3. The advantage of taking a Light Vehicle is that it will be faster and stealthier than others, but it will have less versatility due to its lower Load. Light Vehicles are smaller allowing them to fit into places that others cannot, such as building interiors, or small caverns and tunnels.
- A **Medium** vehicle looks like it's geared up for trouble, and has a max Load of 5. Medium Vehicles seek to strike a balance between the two doctrines represented by Lights and Heavies. As their size is between the other types they often have access to the same options, but may require an Action Roll where smaller or larger vehicles could automatically succeed.
- A **Heavy** vehicle is slower and looks like it's ready for war, thus giving it decreased Effect when those features are a problem, and has a max Load of 6. Heavy Vehicles have a great deal of versatility as they have double the Load of a Light, but this makes them less agile and more obvious. Heavy Vehicles larger than others meaning they can frequently reach places others cannot, and are also often out of reach for enemy operators.

There will be times where the size of a vehicle is important, such as trying to reach a person on a rooftop. In these situations remember that the fiction is important, so what is possible and what succeeds without an Action Roll can vary. If a player really wants to take

advantage of their Vehicle's physicality, they should make Quirks (see page 145) related to its size and shape.

EXAMPLE: Tower, Dredge, and Pitchfork are ambushed by modified Ape Light Vehicles with rockets on top of a small office building. They avoided detection because their relatively small size let them hide amongst the rooftop HVAC systems. Tower moves the Mantis inside the office building (making use of its Light Load and “Unusually Small” Quirk) to avoid getting hit because it doesn’t have the available Load for Armor. Sasha debuts that Dredge’s Kettle has armor since it is Medium, using up the last of its available Load and withstanding the attack without Damage. Pitchfork’s Heavy Agrarian already has armor, and spends it to shrug off the rockets.

The Agrarian is the only Vehicle that can actually reach the roof, because the others are too small, but it’s slow due to that size and will take a moment (long enough for another attack) to get there. Tower wants to get to the roof without opening themselves up to another barrage while doing so, but can’t find a way up through the building. If the Mantis were a heavier Vehicle it could probably punch upward through the building, so it’ll have to find an accessway large enough for it. The Kettle, with its larger Load limit has an analytics suite, so Dredge Scans the building and finds a large service elevator that reaches the roof. Co also moves the Kettle behind an adjacent building to take cover, but the Agrarian’s Heavy model is too big to do that, so it continues its advance.

The Apes are about to fire on the Agrarian again when the Mantis bursts from the service elevator’s shaft. Tower Maneuvers the Mantis in a distracting fashion to Set Up Pitchfork’s imminent attack, allowing her to strike the rooftop Apes to Great Effect. The strike from the Agrarian’s modified jackhammer (a Fine Heavy Melee Weapon) shatters them, ending the conflict.

Your Vehicle has uninstalled Load slots equal to your selected max Load. During a mission you debut that your Vehicle has an item as part of its Load by writing the gear over a number of uninstalled slots equal to the item’s Load. Some items will be Load 0 and don't fill any Load slots.

Changing the gear that a Vehicle is equipped with is an involved process, even for Vehicles with quick release hardpoints or hands. Many pieces of gear have components that are integrated with the internals of the Vehicle or communicate with its computer systems necessitating extensive calibrations and testing. Plus there’s the need to requisition the gear itself.

Once a Load slot is filled it can only be changed back to uninstalled during Downtime by spending Materiel equal to the number of slots occupied by the gear, but this change doesn't require an action. Additionally Vehicles never change their Load category (Light, Medium, or Heavy), except as a possible benefit from an appropriate Long Term Project. If a consequence destroys a piece of gear it isn't removed from the Load slot and continues to occupy the same Load slots but as useless "junk."

Stealing a piece of gear takes up an amount of Load as is suitable for the fiction. At the end of a mission that Load slot is returned to uninstalled if it has only been carried, as the gear is removed from the Vehicle's storage capacity. If the gear is used then the Vehicle was prepared for the possibility of its use and to change its slots back to uninstalled Materiel points must be spent as normal.

If a pilot steals a piece of gear of a higher Tier than the squad's Tier it counts as a fine item for the rest of the mission, and the next mission. After the follow up mission the gear loses the fine Quality as the squad's support infrastructure is not up to the task of maintaining that gear at its peak performance. A Long Term Project could be completed to upgrade the supporting infrastructure so that a piece of gear could permanently have the fine Quality. Using lower Tier gear provides no benefit and may in fact cause a worse Position or Effect as the fiction demands.

GENERAL VEHICLE GEAR

When changing your Vehicle's Load slots from uninstalled to a specified item you can select from the items of your Playbook and from the following:

GEAR

- **A shield or forcefield** [Load 1]: a pilot directed thick alloy plating, or electromagnetic barrier held at a distance from the vehicle's body to protect from incoming attacks. Does not count as Armor for reducing Damage.
- **Mobility Suite** [Load 2]: A full flight system, dash thrusters, all terrain suspension, or some other modification providing extra mobility to the vehicle.

OUTFITS

- **Armor** [Load 2]: spend to reduce Damage by 1 level. Armor is restored at the start of Downtime at no cost. Armor can be taken multiple times, each costing 2 Load and able to be spent once per mission.
- **Cargo space** [Load 1]: a contained area suitable for moving a large amount of

objects or a few large objects.

- **Passenger space** [Load 1]: a contained area suitable for a few to travel in comfort, or many to travel in cramped conditions. A vehicle without passenger space can uncomfortably fit two people, including the pilot, in the cockpit or equivalent.

PROGRAMS

- **Coding Program** [Load 0]: Some vehicles come with a limited code editor as part of their OS.
- **Intrusion Countermeasures Program (ICP)** [Load 1]: Dedicated computer systems for preventing hacking.
- **Retrieval Program** [Load 0]: Some vehicles have programs for searching through connected databases.

SUPPLIES

- **Supply reserves** [Load 2]: Allows the Squad access to their Supply points during Downtime even if the fiction says that they should be unable to access them.

TOOLS

- **Destruction tools** [Load 2]: Tools for smashing buildings, vehicles, and other large objects.
- **Grapnel anchor tool** [Load 1]: Harpoons that stabilize a vehicle to prevent it from shifting Position, or allow it to rappel and slowly climb vertical surfaces.
- **A holo-projector** [Load 1]: can be used to visualize the AR or specific images.
- **Modding tools** [Load 1]: Tools for modifying large objects on the fly.
- **A spotlight or flare mortar** [Load 1]: a source of illumination mounted on the vehicle; the former offers directed light while the latter illuminates a wide area for several minutes by launching into the air.

WEAPONS

- **Anti-infantry defences** [Load 1]: a close range shrapnel launcher that shreds flesh and light materials but does little to sturdy objects.
- **A directed energy weapon** [Load 1]: a device that coalesces a highly visible beam of thermal energy useful for melting through targets but prone to overheating.
- **A flamethrower** [Load 1]: a nozzle that fires a stream of burning liquid and is terrifyingly Effective against unarmoured or lightly armoured targets.
- **A heavy cannon** [Load 2]: a large bore cannon designed for penetrating heavy

armor that has a low rate of fire but a long-range.

- **A machine gun** [Load 1]: A heavy machine gun Effective against vehicles, and devastating against infantry, at relatively short ranges.
- **A melee weapon or two** [Load 1]: A vehicle-mounted melee weapon such as tire spikes, a plow, or hand held blade.
- **A rack of missiles or rockets** [Load 1]: A case full of guided or unguided self propelled explosives that often cause unintended destruction.

QUIRKS

Quirks are the unique qualities a Vehicle possesses that a pilot familiar with it can use to their advantage. They are inherent to the Vehicle and, unlike Vehicle Gear, cannot be changed. However these Quirks aren't wholly positive and if all of them are expended without maintenance the Vehicle will suffer a Breakdown.

CREATING QUIRKS

Every Vehicle starts with 4 Quirks that the pilot is already familiar with. These first 4 Quirks are likely common to that model of Vehicle. Up to 4 additional Quirks (for a total of 8) can be gained by filling the Enhance track with the Enhance Downtime activity, and these ones are unique to this specific Vehicle.

Each Quirk has 2 descriptors that determine when the Quirk can be used. These descriptors show how the pilot can push their Vehicle in *just* the right way to get more out of it than designed for. For example a Vehicle might have "Roaring Fast" and can be pushed for more speed or noise. When selecting your descriptors make sure that at least one of them can be interpreted as a disadvantage because struggling due to your Quirks provides XP at the end of the session.

If you are having trouble thinking of Quirks you want, look at the Specialist Vehicle Gear available to playbooks other than your own. Think of a negative descriptor you can add to that gear, and take the two as a Quirk. For example you could have: Intermittent Optical Camo, Fragile Magnification Suite, or Cumbersome Electronic Filter. Doing this gives you gear from another playbook that can be used once per mission.

If a player discovers that a Quirk isn't a good fit for their Vehicle they should speak with their GM about changing it. If the Quirk is bad because it's rarely used and the player feels that a new one would be more useful, just change it and consider it no different than its previous version. If the narrative has changed the Vehicle's nature making the Quirk no longer applicable, then describe what changed, how it changed, and just change the Quirk.

EXAMPLE QUIRKS

● Ominous Appearance	● Splintering Carapace
● Flexible Structure	● Mighty Clumsy
● Slow and Heavy	● Light Footed
● Military Workhorse	● Common Parts
● Fixed Hardpoints	● Redundant Systems
● Blinding Boosters	● Aggressive Targeters

USING QUIRKS

Once per roll a pilot can push their Vehicle by exhausting a Quirk for one of the following benefits: +1d to a Vehicle Action Roll; Improved Effect with a Vehicle action; or to take a Vehicle action when the Vehicle has level 3 Damage. This may activate certain Abilities, such as the Hacker's Tesla, which trigger when the Pilot pushes themselves or their Vehicle. If a Pilot has multiple abilities that activate when a Quirk is spent, each must be paid using different Quirks.

Alternatively Quirks can be used to Resist Consequences by exhausting 4 Quirks minus the Attribute rating being used to a minimum of 1 (even if a special ability would reduce it to zero or less). For example if a Vehicle has at least one point in Maneuver and Battle its Expertise rating is 2, so resisting with Expertise would require exhausting 2 Quirks. Whether for pushing a Vehicle or Resisting Consequences, a Quirk can only be exhausted when one or more of its descriptors would be advantageous. When you exhaust a Quirk describe how you take advantage of it, then mark the box next to it.

EXAMPLE: Scarecrow is moving through an urban combat zone in her Karasu, engaging enemy combat engineers. She turns a corner and finds herself face to face with an enemy Elephant. She opens fire and because of the close range, chooses to roll Battle as well as push herself. Her Player, Jess, spends the Quirk "Precise and Sensitive" to Push Herself, and describes how Scarecrow uses her Vehicle's finely tuned controls to get off an accurate snap shot on the Elephant. Unfortunately, even with spending that Quirk she only gets a 5.

The Elephant is successfully destroyed, but as it crashes forward it sets off a trap laid by the enemy engineers, causing the Level 2 Damage "Crushed" as a demolition charges pull a building down onto the Karasu. Jess decides to Resist that Consequence, and the GM says she must use Acuity to do so. Scarecrow has an Acuity rating of 2 (1 from having points in Bombard, and 1 from having points in Scan), so she must spend 2 Quirks (4 minus her Acuity rating) and describe how she uses them to avoid the trap. Jess marks off "Small

Footprint” and “Optical Cockpit,” then describes how the mostly transparent cockpit lets Scarecrow spot the trap at the last moment, and the Karasu’s narrow build allows her to get out from under the collapsing building.

When a Vehicle’s Quirks have all been exhausted (4 Quirks in most cases) its Pilot can either send the Vehicle limping home quietly or try to push past its limits.

- If the pilot chooses to send their Vehicle away it refreshes all Quirks, is removed from the scene and mission in a terrible state, then gains a **Breakdown** tick. The pilot does not have to leave the scene or mission. The Vehicle becomes available again at an appropriate time, presumably after it has been refueled and polished.
- If the pilot pushes their Vehicle past its limits they take a **Dire Action**. If a Dire Action is taken the pilot can ignore any Damage penalties the Vehicle currently has for a single action. It cannot exhaust Quirks to take this action, nor can it resist Consequences, since all of its Quirks are exhausted (Stress can be used as normal). If it gets a 6 on its action it can take another Vehicle action, potentially allowing it to have several fully successful actions. If a 5 or lower is rolled, or they choose to take no further action (other pilots can still act between the Dire Actions of the Vehicle), that is its last action. On a result of less than 6 they suffer consequences as normal.

After taking its last action, or if the scene ends, it receives an appropriate Level 3 Damage, is removed from the scene and mission, then gains a Breakdown tick as normal.

If they roll a crit they refresh 1 Quirk of their choice instead of having improved Effect, are no longer taking Dire actions, and instead return to acting normally.

They avoid taking a Breakdown tick and the Level 3 Damage caused by the Dire Action.

If a pilot suffers the repercussions of their Vehicle’s Quirks during a session, they can mark XP at the end of the session. This can occur through narrative play, such as missing opportunities or needlessly creating trouble, and also through Consequences on Action Rolls. When you see an opportunity for a Quirk to cause you trouble, tell the GM and they’ll add an appropriate Consequence to your roll, regardless of the result.

Instead of pushing their Vehicle a pilot can use their Vehicle’s Quirks to resist consequences. This is explained in the Resistance section on page 26.

DAMAGE

Damage is a major blow that impedes the function of the Vehicle. Level 1 damage reduces

the Effect of Vehicle actions. Level 2 damage gives -1d to Vehicle actions. Level 3 damage means the Vehicle can't act without being pushed by exhausting 1 Quirk. Level 3 Damage and lower can be removed between Missions by using the Fix Downtime Activity.

If a Vehicle suffers level 4 damage (or fatal damage) it is destroyed beyond repair. The pilot immediately suffers appropriate level 3 Harm that can be resisted as normal. An Engineer action to salvage the best parts quickly can be done while on a mission, which generates 1 Supply Point with a success, or the entire Vehicle can be towed away to be salvaged during Downtime.

BREAKDOWN

Breakdown is permanent damage to the Vehicle where only the symptoms can be treated. Each time a Vehicle gains a point of Breakdown, the last Quirk used must be degraded in some way to represent the symptoms. This is done by either modifying a Quirk's existing descriptors, or by adding a new negative descriptor.

Pitchfork has pushed her Agrairian Custom past its limits, and it has gained a point of Breakdown. The final Quirk she used was "Slow and Heavy," so that's the one that has to be degraded. She considers making that Quirk into "Slow, Clumsy, and Heavy" but ultimately decides to go with "Unresponsive and Heavy."

Here are some example negative descriptors that could be added to a Quirk for Breakdown:

● Leaking	● Glitchy
● Smoking	● Overheats
● Sparking	● Clumsy
● Obsolete	● Noisy

The changes caused by Breakdown could potentially be fixed with a Long Term Project, but will likely be an involved process. The same goes for possibly removing one or more points of Breakdown. When a Vehicle acquires its fourth Breakdown tick it is worn down beyond repair or function and must be scrapped (or salvaged during Downtime).

VEHICLE ADVANCEMENT

As pilots move through their careers what their Vehicles can do will improve as they put work into upgrading them, and experience more harrowing situations. To do this a pilot must

perform Desperate Vehicle Actions, or the Enhance Downtime Activity.

When a Desperate Vehicle Action is rolled put 1 XP into the the attribute that the action falls under. When that attribute reaches 6 XP one point can be added to any of its actions to a max of 3 (or 4 if the Squad has the Mastery upgrade). Then the Attribute's XP resets to zero. If the Enhance Downtime Activity is performed add 1 mark to the Vehicle Enhance track. If the Squad has the Testing Facility upgrade, the Vehicle being Upgraded receives 2 marks instead. When that track fills (6 marks), a point can be added to any Vehicle Action OR a new Quirk can be gained. Then the Enhance track resets to zero.

ACQUIRING A NEW VEHICLE

There will be times when a pilot uses a vehicle other than the one they had at character creation. This may be due to any number of reasons but generally falls into one of three categories: a replacement vehicle, a temporary vehicle, or a borrowed vehicle.

REPLACEMENT VEHICLES

When a pilot's Vehicle is destroyed from suffering level 4 damage or receiving its fourth Breakdown tick it must be replaced with great cost and effort. If a Vehicle is replaced before it is destroyed the same methods for acquiring a replacement are used. If the newly acquired Vehicle comes from a Squad with a different Tier than the pilots its Tier becomes the same as the pilots. This is due to the Squad either improving its systems to bring it up to their standards, or they lack the infrastructure to maintain it at a higher Quality.

To purchase a new Vehicle the pilot must first have a patron Faction, Cohort, or Ally that can sell them a Vehicle. Then they must spend Materiel points equal to double the new Vehicle's Load plus the squad's Tier so that it is fully Loaded and maintained to the squad's standards. Alternatively a Vehicle may be acquired through less honest means with a Long Term Project or mission. Vehicles acquired this way start with the level 2 damage "Unfamiliar" in addition to any other damage sustained while it was being obtained. It's Load and debuted gear is determined by the GM based on the established fiction, and it cannot have any uninstalled Load. It starts with no Quirks exhausted.

All replacement Vehicles are created using the normal Vehicle creation rules.

TEMPORARY VEHICLES

A temporary vehicle is one that does not replace the vehicle on the pilot's character sheet. This may be because it has been hijacked from an enemy, or is too mundane to bother keeping extensive notes on. When a pilot is in a temporary vehicle they have improved

Effect to vehicle actions if the vehicle is of a higher Tier than the squad, and reduced Effect if it has a lower Tier.

Temporary vehicles do not track Quirks or damage, instead they have a progress Clock that represents their ability to continue functioning. When the Clock fills the vehicle is destroyed in a probably spectacular fashion. Pilots can push temporary vehicles by adding two ticks to this destruction Clock and resist consequences by adding three ticks. Either may overfill the Clock. When a temporary vehicle sustains damage the GM adds a number of ticks to the destruction Clock according to the consequence list. Mundane vehicles (such as a sedan, shuttle, jet ski, etc.) have a 4 tick destruction Clock, while enemy vehicles (such as a tank, mech, fighter jet, etc.) have a 6 tick destruction Clock.

BORROWED VEHICLES

When a pilot gets into a squadmate's vehicle their own vehicle is generally not replaced. If this is indeed a hand me down, use the rules for Replacement Vehicles above. The pilot uses the vehicle's debuted gear, but only the owner can debut new gear. Quirks exhausted and Damage taken is marked on the owner's character sheet the same as if they were in the cockpit. The pilot in the vehicle uses their own vehicle actions as they will be able to nudge the vehicle in unexpected ways, however they may also be unfamiliar with certain systems and thus cannot take advantage of the owner's vehicle action ratings.

VEHICLE ACTIONS IN DEPTH

This section contains extended descriptions of each Vehicle Action.

BATTLE

When you Battle, you engage in vehicular close quarters combat. You might lash out with your scoop arm. You might fire your Gatling gun in a dogfight. In a Flashback you might have feigned an attack to increase security. You could perform a PIT maneuver (but Maneuver might be better).

GM QUESTIONS

- What close range weapon are you using to attack?
- How lethal are you trying to be? Disabling the target, blowing it up, killing the pilot?
- How do you feel as you bring this massive weapon to bear?

EXAMPLES

CONTROLLED

You've already snared an enemy vehicle with your tangle gun, now it's time to finish them off with your melee weapon.

1-3, Risky opportunity: They block your first attack, partially tearing them free of their constraints. You could try to remove them from the fight some other way (such as talking them down), or keep attacking from a Risky Position.

4/5, complication: You take down the foe, but in your eagerness you managed to get yourself trapped in your own snare. It'll take some work to get loose.

RISKY

As you clash blades with your Rival you see an opportunity to strike, and take it knowing that they could break through your defenses at any moment.

1-3, cost: The opening was a ploy! Your Rival deftly parries your blade to the ground, then stomps on it. The blade shatters and you must junk that piece of Vehicle Load.

4/5, worse Position: Your blade slides through their vehicle's cure, but they use it to their advantage, twisting the blade from your hands. Disarmed, you enter a Desperate Position.

DESPERATE

Exchanging gunfire with enemies, you retreat in search of better cover, but find yourself caught out in an open parking lot, while your foes take cover amongst low apartment blocks.

1-3, Damage: Before you can provide yourself some covering fire, they light you up with their directed energy weapons. Take Level 3 Damage "Slagged."

4/5, reduced Effect: You open fire on them to buy yourself some time, getting a few hits in, but the apartment buildings block much of your attack.

BOMBARD

When you Bombard, you use vehicular weapons designed to attack targets beyond human sight. You might designate long-range missile targets. You might shoot a railgun through a skyscraper at an enemy. In a Flashback you might have taken out a ship full of enemy reinforcements. You could use saturation bombardment (but Destroy might be better).

GM QUESTIONS

- What long range weapon are you using to attack?
- How are you aiming at a target you couldn't see with your bare eyes? Precise calculations, high intensity zoom, aerial drone imaging, or something stranger?

- How appropriate is your weapon for the shot you are taking?

EXAMPLES

CONTROLLED

A group of enemy commanders is meeting inside of a reinforced bunker. You have line of sight with your beam cannon from a fair distance away, and a snake's head to remove.

1-3, Risky opportunity: As you begin charging your shot, you realize that the weapon's glow will be highly visible. You could try to smash the entire area with a different weapon, or take the shot from a Risky Position.

4/5, Damage: Your beam tunnels into the bunker but its reinforcements require you to increase the power. The commanders are killed, but you take Level 1 Damage "Drained."

RISKY

As the battle rages around you, there's a moment that allows you to pinpoint the enemy's location for allied artillery outside of the conflict zone.

1-3, complication: An enemy rushes you while you are transmitting the coordinates, and YOUR location is sent to the artillery due to the foe's proximity.

4/5, worse Position: Transmitting the data to your allies let's an enemy fighter wing spot you. As the begin making strafing runs on you, you enter a Desperate Position.

DESPERATE

A massive chunk of orbital debris has been pushed towards your FOB. If you can do enough damage before it enters atmosphere, it'll burn up on entry, otherwise it'll cause devastation.

1-3, complication: Your missiles don't hit any vulnerable spots on the debris, and it moves closer towards the point where it can no longer be stopped.

4/5, reduced Effect: Some parts break off of the debris, but it's so massive that you don't do much damage. A bigger missile is in order.

DESTROY

When you Destroy, you employ your Vehicle's overwhelming destructive power against targets that can't evade or parry. You might carpet bomb a military base. You might smash a building with a wrecking ball. In a Flashback you might have collapsed a roadway tunnel along the route ahead. You could attack using a bus as a weapon (but Battle might be better).

GM QUESTIONS

- What area are you trying to ruin?
- What highly destructive weapon or tool are you using?
- How concerned are you about collateral damage?

EXAMPLES

CONTROLLED

You decide that the best way to clear a minefield before the convoy you are escorting arrives is to shell it from far away with your artillery cannon.

1-3, Risky opportunity: The convoy arrives ahead of schedule placing them in danger from your artillery. You could find another way through the minefield (such as using your Vehicle's sensors) or you could fire your artillery anyway from a Risky Position.

4/5, complication: The multitude of explosions from your artillery and the mines tears up the field. It'll be difficult for the convoy to get past all these craters.

RISKY

As your companions engage in close quarters combat with an enemy squad, you warn them to take cover as you smother the conflict zone with missiles.

1-3, worse Position: Friend and foe alike take cover, so the only effect your missiles have is drawing attention. A group of 3 enemy AWWs are dispatched to deal with you, moving you to a Desperate Position.

4/5, cost: While your friends take cover, your foes secure the battlefield thing they've won. You hold the trigger down until your ammo counter reads empty, blowing them apart. You can't use your missile launcher for the rest of the Mission.

DESPERATE

The mobile fortress' turret is already turning towards you, charging its railgun. If you can just smash the rails with your wrecking ball before it fires...

1-3, Damage: The turret lines up its shot before you can swing, and there's a horrible screech of metal. Take the Level 3 Damage "Ripped Apart."

4/5, reduced Effect: Your wrecking ball slams into the turret knocking it partially out of its housing, but it, and its railgun, remain active.

MANEUVER

When you Maneuver, you move your vehicle with skill and agility. You might fly through the valley between skyscrapers. You might creep across an unsteady bridge. In a Flashback you

might have snuck your vehicle into a disused subway tunnel. You could gently nudge another vehicle into a specific Position (but Manipulate might be better).

GM QUESTIONS

- Where are you trying to move your Vehicle?
- What course do you plan to take to get there?
- What mobility systems are you using? Legs, wheels, thrusters, something stranger?

EXAMPLES

CONTROLLED

An area you must pass through is closely monitored by enemy forces, but you can use your light vehicle's small profile and speed to get through undetected.

1-3, Risky opportunity: You discover that there is more surveillance here than expected.

You could press forward with the plan in a Risky Position, or you could try something else to get through (such as ambushing the monitoring station).

4/5, reduced Effect: You have a couple close calls as you are moving, and have to hide part way through. It'll take more effort to get clear.

RISKY

An enemy vehicle has been smothering your forces with missiles. You rev your engine and rush to take them on in close quarters, but they have you in their sights.

1-3, worse Position: An incoming missile knocks you over, making you a sitting duck for the enemy and moving you to a Desperate Position.

4/5, Damage: You close the distance between the two of you, taking a couple of missile hits in the process. Take the Level 2 Damage "Blasted."

DESPERATE

An enemy helicopter is escaping through the financial district with a prisoner you need to rescue. You spot a tight gap between skyscrapers that'll be a great shortcut to fly through.

1-3, cost: Misjudging the gap, you slam into one building, bounce off it, and crash into the second. Your vehicle is undamaged, but your Employer will be very unhappy about the property damage and terror you've inflicted. Lose 3 Trust with your Employer.

4/5, complication: You lose sight of the helicopter as you focus on getting through the gap. As you fly clear you realize that the one you were chasing has met up with several other helicopters and now you don't know which one has the prisoner.

MANIPULATE

When you Manipulate, you deftly move things with your vehicle. You might remove a primed warhead from a missile. You might pick up a baby in its carriage. In a Flashback you might have destroyed a vehicle's mobility suite while keeping the damage hidden. You could reattach a damaged arm (but Engineer might be better).

GM QUESTIONS

- What object are you trying to move?
- What part of your mech are you using to move the object? How do you control it?
- Where do you want to put the object?

EXAMPLES

CONTROLLED

While undercover you begin using a loader to put stolen goods on a cargo vehicle in a manner that hopefully won't draw any attention.

1-3, Risky opportunity: One of the warehouse supervisors sees what you are doing and begins shouting. You could keep loading from a Risky Position, or try some other way to get the goods onto the transport vehicle (such as convincing the supervisor to do it).

4/5, Harm: While you're working, a stevedore staff starts shouting about how you're doing it wrong. They kick you out of the loader and finish the job in half the time, all while mocking your skill for the amusement of their co-workers. Take the Level 1 Harm "Roasted."

RISKY

A friend is trapped under the rubble of a collapsed building, so you reach out with your vehicle to free them from their predicament.

1-3, worse Position: As you shift the ruins, there is a broken pipe inside of it, and the space your friend is trapped in begins to fill with water. You move to a Desperate Position.

4/5, reduced Effect: The rubble shifts unexpectedly, forcing you to slow down in your efforts. You eventually get your friend free, but it takes longer than you were hoping.

DESPERATE

Emergency barricades rapidly shut behind your squad as you try to escape the facility.

You're in the lead and can tell that the others won't make it unless you hold the door open.

1-3, complication and Damage: You try to hold the door, but your Vehicle buckles under the strain, forcing you out. Take Level 2 Damage "Strained joints" and you are separated from your squad.

4/5, Harm and Damage: You hold the door just long enough for your team to get through, but it slams down on your vehicle's cockpit at the end. Tale Level 2 Damage "Crushed" and Level 1 Harm "Bruised."

SCAN

When you Scan, you broadly observe the situation around you through your vehicle. You might identify the model of approaching vehicles. You might spot the heat signature of an active generator. In a Flashback you might have noticed the seismic readings from an incoming tunneling vehicle. You could try to judge a building's Stress points (but Study might be better).

GM QUESTIONS

- What type of sensor are you using? Radar, sonar, heat imaging, something stranger?
- How are the results displayed in your cockpit?
- What are you trying to learn?

EXAMPLES

CONTROLLED

Needing to find a safe route through enemy territory, you activate your sensors in search of foes to avoid, but they may detect your probing and come for you.

1-3, Risky opportunity: You detect an enemy vehicle activating, and begin to scan for you. You could try another way to get the intel you need (such as using your human eyes to look), or keep probing with your sensors from a Risky Position.

4/5, reduced Effect: You picked up on several enemies in the area, but couldn't finish your sweep because one of them activated a jamming array.

RISKY

Passive sensors alert you to several enemy vehicles activating around your squad. If you can't find them quickly, they'll easily be able to ambush you.

1-3, worse Position: The enemies rapidly come online, bursting from their concealed locations, surrounding you, and putting you in a Desperate Position.

4/5, complication: You discover where they are, but a few of them are using vehicles stolen from your Faction, which will confuse your friend or foe identifiers until you can sort it out.

DESPERATE

The heavily armored enemy AWW barrels towards you with its vicious drill thrashing. You just

need a moment more to find a weak spot...

1-3, Harm: An eager Specialist Cohort knocks you out of the way at the last moment, and you watch through your scanners as their vehicle is shredded. They are now Broken.

4/5, cost: You discover that the AWW is actually a secret weapon created by your Employer. If you take advantage of its weak spot, you'll lose 3 Trust as they would rather not have that information be made public in any capacity.

VEHICLES IN THE WORLD

A vehicle in Beam Saber is not a common piece of equipment. While many citizens have access to automobiles of varying styles and sizes (and even some civilian versions of pilot vehicles), vehicles available to pilots are in a different league. They are larger, tougher, more versatile, and have built in life support. All of this is mechanically represented by the rules, but those don't explain what that means in the fiction.

LIGHT VEHICLES

Light vehicles are generally about 30 feet in length or height, depending on the nature of the vehicle. Some are smaller though all are designed such that the pilot remains entirely contained within the vehicle's cockpit. Although commonly larger than automobiles, Light vehicles aren't always conspicuous, especially when their civilian equivalents can be similar in appearance. This is similar to how public transit buses stand out in a sea of cars, but they rarely get a second look.

MEDIUM VEHICLES

Medium vehicles average approximately 45 feet in length or height, give or take 5 feet. These are always notable when seen and arouse curiosity in onlookers. The reactions to a Medium is comparable to the presence of a police command vehicle: it occupies a lot of space physically and mentally. It's not inherently dangerous but something serious is going down if it's here.

HEAVY VEHICLES

Heavy vehicles max out at 60 feet in length or height. Anything larger is too big to be controlled by a single pilot, and starts to require a full crew (putting it beyond the scope of this game). Heavies are always a sign that someone's day is about to be ruined, and unless presented in an exceedingly friendly manner will be given a wide berth by the public. Imagine a missile truck located in a public space and you start to get the idea of how much a

heavy vehicle stands out.

THE HISTORY OF VEHICLES

The relationship that characters in the setting have with the vehicles of Beam Saber is a point that should be considered as it will colour the nature of the campaign. Here are some questions to help determine their place in your world.

Are vehicles heirlooms passed down from parent to child?

In a culture where vehicles are inherited, through bloodlines or other tradition, it implies a number of expectations. First is that the vehicles are incredibly valuable, monetarily, historically, and emotionally. Second is that pilots are likely expected to provide their own vehicles when they join the War. This in turn means that the ruling body's military power is dispersed amongst its citizens or at least those powerful enough to own these vehicles. Fourth is that vehicles instantly become an obvious symbol of both wealth and power, so the populace's reaction to a vehicle will be colored by their relationship with people of wealth and power. Additionally, those who have vehicles will have access to people with the skills to maintain them (further cementing their wealth). Lastly, the vehicles are probably old. They may be lovingly maintained, dilapidated, full of improvised fixes, or some combination of the above. It could be that new ones aren't being made anymore and parts need to be salvaged from other vehicles.

Are vehicles fresh off the line?

If the vehicles are being made regularly then a manufacturing base exists in the setting. Further, powerful organizations will widely use vehicles to maintain and expand their influence. Low ranking and inexperienced pilots will be given access to them. They may be used more frivolously as they can be easily replaced.

Are they seen as heroic, cowardly, monstrous or something else?

A culture in your campaign might portray those vehicles as the modern equivalent of chivalrous knights, valiantly fighting to protect the homeland. Perhaps they are disdained for taking much of the human element out of battle, becoming symbols of a world too eager to indulge in massive battles. Maybe their raw destructive power is emphasized in the public's mind, so they become monsters, mechanical beasts that can easily kill a person accidentally

and just as easily kill swathes of people intentionally. Could be they're just tools, most aren't armed and are considered little more than bulldozers with legs.

Have they been introduced to The War recently, or have they existed for generations?

If the types of vehicles available to pilots are a new part of The War then there'll be more uncertainty about them. Commanders won't know how to make use of them, people won't know how dangerous they are, and parts may be difficult to obtain because the supporting infrastructure isn't in place yet. Conversely, if they've existed for a while most of those problems will be absent, and there will be a certain mundanity to vehicles.

INSERT SQUAD AND FACTION ART HERE

A large photograph of The Cenotaph (Tower, Demon, Dredge, Pitchfork, and Scarecrow) standing in front of the chapel. A shut down Kettle AWV is in the background. It's part of a file on the squad with some other surveillance images of them and/or their mechs at various times. Unlucky, Owl, Eclipse, Flagstone, and Nehallania should make appearances in the surveillance photos. There are also papers with notes on them about the Squad (text doesn't need to be readable). DOUBLE PAGE SPREAD

CHAPTER 07: SQUADS AND FACTIONS

PILOTS, SQUADS AND FACTIONS

In Beam Saber there are three levels of actors: the Pilot, the Squad, and the Faction.

- The **Pilot** is the individual role filled by the players and NPCs. Not all pilots control vehicles, it's just the common parlance for those active in The War. Generally speaking their influence doesn't extend much further than those they can personally interact with. Sometimes the right person in the right place at the right time can change the fate of worlds, but the vast majority of the time the best a pilot can do in The War is survive and keep those close to them safe.
- The **Squad** is comprised of multiple pilots and their support staff. Some squads number fewer than 10, while the largest can be hundreds of people in the same command structure. However a Squad is still people. People can be persuaded, betrayed, killed, seduced, deceived, and generally acted upon directly. In short squads can be overcome.
- The **Faction** is an organizational entity on a scale so large it has become more of an idea than anything physical. It's made up of countless squads and an unimaginable amount of people. It has transcended beyond the material and cannot be touched. Which is also its weakness. Factions are slow to act in The War and must do so through their squads. While a Faction can never be destroyed its squads can be removed which eliminates its ability to act.

SQUAD CREATION

The directions that follow are useful for creating your Squad step by step, however if you want to randomly generate your Squad in part or in whole jump to Appendix A for methods to do that.

1. Choose your squad's **Patron Faction**. The Faction will guide what goal your Faction is working on (see Faction Goals section), and determine what bonus supplies you get when you are employed by your Patron (see Reward section). The possible options are:
 - **Autocracy** (+1 Materiel, +1 Trust with the Employer at Mission Reward)
 - **Corporatocracy** (+2 Materiel at Mission Reward)
 - **Democracy** (+1 Materiel, +1 Personnel at Mission Reward)

- **Independent** (+2 Rep without a Supply roll at Mission Reward)
- **Oligarchy** (+1 Personnel, +1 Trust with the Employer at Mission Reward)
- **Theocracy** (+2 Personnel at Mission Reward)

Note that while the squad's patron Faction does not necessarily own the squad, it does expect them to follow its orders and work towards its interests. Additionally the Independent Faction is purposefully more challenging than other patron Factions. This is to represent the challenge of working against the established systems, the structures that support them, and acting *without* those same supports.

2. Set your **Relationship** with each Faction to 0. They don't know or care the Squad is until they've performed some missions for or against them. Set your Trust with each Faction to 0 for the same reason.

3. Create an NPC who is the **Direct Superior** of the squad. This is someone that the GM can often use to assign the Squad missions, and who the Squad will have a connection to (for good or ill). One Squad is friendly with the Direct Superior so take +1 Status with them and describe the connection. Another Squad dislikes the Direct Superior; take -1 Status with them and describe the issue. See Direct Superior for suggestions.

4. Choose a **Goal for your Patron Faction**. Things to consider in this decision are the amount of politics, combat, and brutality everyone wants, as well as themes they might want to explore. Independent squads skip this step. See the Faction Goals section for more details. The possible options are:

- Assault the Foe
- Divided They Fall
- Golden Streets
- Hearts and Minds
- Hostile Takeover
- Intelligence Coup
- Manufacture Heroes
- Secure the Borders

5. Choose a **Squad Playbook**. This will determine the nature of most of your missions and some common training everyone in the Squad has.

6. Choose an **initial reputation** and **Forward Operating Base (FOB)**. When you reinforce your reputation on a mission the Squad marks 1xp. Your starting FOB will be small and unimpressive. See Squad Reputation for suggestions.

7. Choose a **Squad ability**. This is a special trick everyone in the Squad can call

upon.

8. Choose **two upgrades**. These are tools, Personnel, and facilities the Squad can use. Each Squad Playbook has two pre-selected upgrades (for example Profiteers always have Resolve Training and Secure FOB) and the Squad also gets to choose two more from the Squad Playbook or the general Squad upgrades. A Squad helped you get the upgrades; take +1 Status with them. Another Squad was denied those upgrades because you have them; take -1 Status with them. Each of these squads can be from the same Faction as the players' Squad and/or from a different Faction.
9. **Name your squad**. This might be your official designation or it might be a group call sign. Other squads and Factions will know you by this name.

SQUAD ADVANCEMENT

At the end of a session look at the squad's XP triggers and take 1 Squad XP for each trigger that happened this session. For each item that happened multiple times or in a dramatic fashion, take 2 XP instead. The Squad XP triggers are:

- **Your Squad Playbook's XP trigger**. Every Squad Playbook gets XP for doing missions that suit their specialty.
- **Face off against challenges above your pay grade**. If you were opposed by obstacles or foes of a higher Tier take XP.
- **Reinforce your squad's reputation or gain a new one**. Did the squad's actions promote what they're known for, or did they become known for something new?
- **Express the goals, drives, inner conflict, or instincts of the squad**. This one is all about playing to what makes your Squad unique and interesting. Don't be too picky about awarding XP for this.

When the Squad reaches 8 XP reset the XP to zero and then take either two Squad upgrades or one Squad ability.

CHANGING SQUAD OR PILOT PLAYBOOKS

There might be a time where a player wants to change their pilot Playbook (an Ace becomes a Soldier) or all the players want to change the squad's Playbook (Profiteers become Logistics). There are two options for doing this and they depend on the reason for the change.

- If the change is because the player or group realize that their Playbook doesn't fit what they want to do, then make the pilot or Squad over from the beginning, but keep the same number of advances that have been earned.
- If the switch is because the nature of the pilot or Squad has changed in the narrative, then transfer the action ratings or Squad upgrades to the new Playbook (you don't get the starting action points or Squad upgrades though). Keep the special abilities already earned as Veteran abilities (it's alright if you end up with more than three).

DIRECT SUPERIOR

The squad's **Direct Superior** is the NPC that they will probably be interacting with the most. This person will be higher rank than the pilots, give them orders, and assign them missions. They should have a title suitable to the Faction they belong to, and a brief description of their appearance and personality. If the PCs lack a patron Faction and are Independent their superior might be from another squad, a mysterious source, or someone else with unofficial authority over the pilots.

Regardless of how the Pilots feel about their Direct Superior there will be another Squad that likes them, and another that dislikes them. Increase the Squad Status with the Squad that likes the Direct Superior by 1, and detail an appropriate descriptor. Decrease by 1 the Squad Status with the Squad that has a problem with the Direct Superior, and add a suitable descriptor.

Ultimately the purpose of the direct superior is not to boss around the pilots. They are there as a direct representative of the squad's patron Faction, to embody the link between the patron and the squad, and as a way for the GM to provide missions to the players. They should rarely be the focus of the narrative but almost always be a narrative tool for the GM.

If they provide an order or mission that the Pilots or Players don't want to carry out, everyone should have a discussion about what is happening. First figure out if the order is crossing a Line or Veil (see page 236) for any of the Players. If no Players are being harmed by the order, discuss why the Pilots are refusing it. Sometimes the Pilots will find enough reason to go along with the order, other times they will decide to refuse it regardless of the consequences; maybe it's time to find a new Patron Faction. Whatever happens, make sure that no Player is feeling pressured into participating in something they don't want to.

EXAMPLE DIRECT SUPERIORS

- Carberry, a shady and cruel fixer.

- Scratch, a cheerful and energetic Proxy.
- Project Lead Walker, an ambitious and hard working manager.
- Executive Assistant McEvoy, a Stressed and organized worker.
- Captain Martinez, a weary and grumpy officer.
- Quartermaster Hawkins, a sentimental and thoughtful trooper.
- Bishop Acampora, a patient and caring member of the clergy.
- Confessor Tebbel, an inquisitive and meticulous theologian.
- Councillor Swan, a hard hearted and calculating bureaucrat.
- Alderperson Drake, a fiery and passionate politician.
- Virtue de Quidt, an experienced and crafty noble.
- Margrave Takeyuki, a paranoid and meek leader.

SQUAD REPUTATION

The squad's reputation is the idea that immediately springs to mind when a potential employer thinks about them. It should be a word or phrase that the Squad either already embodies or strives for, but does not directly speak to their competence. "Skilled" is a bad reputation, try "Daring" instead. By living up to their reputation the Squad gets to mark XP at the end of the session.

EXAMPLE SQUAD REPUTATIONS

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| ● Ambitious | ● Honorable |
| ● Amoral | ● Professional |
| ● Menacing | ● Savvy |
| ● Daring | ● Subtle |
| ● Destructive | ● Strange |

FORWARD OPERATING BASE (FOB)

Between missions the Pilots will be spending most of their time at their Forward Operating Base, or FOB. This is a compound that exists to provide resources and support to the Squad, and has relatively little oversight from the Patron Faction. It's their home in The War.

The size and complexity of the FOB will increase as the Squad's Tier increases, and the Squad gains Upgrades. When starting out from Tier 0, the FOB will be small,

unimpressive, probably run down, and have a few Upgrades (some selected by the players during Squad creation, and some dependent on the chosen Squad playbook). The players should describe where the FOB is located, and what kind of a facility it is. It might be inside of a major city at an official outpost, high in the mountains in a deep cave system, or in the middle of nowhere at an abandoned refuelling station. Whatever sounds interesting to the players is an appropriate choice.

EXAMPLE FORWARD OPERATING BASES (FOBS)

● Car Dealership	● Border Outpost
● Mine	● Old Armory
● Crashed Space Station	● Church
● Volcano	● Orbital Platform
● Amusement Park	● Forest

GENERAL SQUAD UPGRADES

The following upgrades are available to any Squad regardless of their type. Two of these are selected when creating the squad, and whenever the Squad fills its XP track they can take two more upgrades (from this list or their Playbook) or one Squad ability from the squad's Playbook. Alternatively a Squad Upgrade can be obtained with a suitable Long-Term Project, or as the Objective of a Mission.

A Squad Upgrade is a location or piece of infrastructure with features the Squad can take advantage of for narrative and mechanical bonuses. However the conditions created by The War means that only one Squad at a time can take advantage of its limited resources, even if the Squads are on friendly terms. While most Upgrades will be acquired through filling the Squad's XP track, a Squad, whether controlled by the Pilots or NPCs, may attempt to acquire an Upgrade through force, coercion, negotiation, or by building one themselves.

If the desired Upgrade is outside of the Region the Squad's FOB is located in, there may need to be additional tasks completed before capturing the Upgrade can be attempted. These tasks might involve finding the Upgrade, securing a route between the Upgrade and FOB, or establishing security at the site. These additional tasks are probably Long Term Projects or gather information actions, but in certain circumstances may be additional missions.

Once any preparations are completed, the Squad can plan a mission with the Objective of taking control of the Upgrade. If the mission is successful the Squad immediately gains access to the benefits of the Upgrade.

Regardless of how an Upgrade was acquired, it represents a change to the Squad's FOB or an area nearby, and so the players should describe those changes.

- Were new buildings added to the FOB, or old buildings modified?
- How has the change affected the behaviour of the nearby civilians and any Cohorts connected to the Squad?
- How have nearby Squads, whether friend or foe, reacted to the Squad's growing resources?

These are not all the possible questions you may want to answer about how the FOB is different now, just some to get started. Answering these and other questions you may have is important because it sets the stage for if a conflict should occur at or near the FOB. For example if the Players have described their Factory Upgrade as being a nearby manufacturing plant, then it doesn't fit the fiction to have a tense chase in the FOB across the Factory's conveyor belts.

While the Squad has control of an Upgrade its safety is not guaranteed. Other Squads may attempt to capture Upgrades for themselves, or, if desperate enough, try to destroy them. The Squad can try to defend what is theirs, negotiate with the aggressor, or simply hand over the Upgrade as the situation requires. If the squad's FOB is lost they lose the benefits of all Squad Upgrades until the FOB is re-established.

GENERAL SQUAD UPGRADE LIST

COHORTS

- **Barracks:** Choose one of your Fire Team Cohorts. It get **+1 Scale**. *Extra room means larger fire teams.*
- **Cohort:** Gain a fire team (a group of agents) or specialist (an especially skilled agent) that works for the squad. Requires 2 Squad upgrades to purchase. See Page 171 for more details.
- **Training Course:** Choose a type of Fire Team. All your Cohorts are that type in addition to their normal type. *Now there's never a shortage of pilots.*

ENGAGEMENT

- **Forgers' Workshop:** You get **+1d** to the **engagement roll** for **deception** plans. *False identities help confuse the opposition.*
- **Guerilla Hideout:** You get **+1d** to the **engagement roll** for **assault** plans. *The independent fighters around here help you out now.*
- **Personal Clothier:** You get **+1d** to the **engagement roll** for **social** plans. *You*

always arrive on the scene in the most current and alluring fashions.

- **Regional Records:** You get **+1d** to the **engagement roll** for **stealth** plans. *You can use blueprints and other documents to determine a good approach for infiltrations.*
- **Secret Routes:** You get **+1d** to the **engagement roll** for **transport** plans. *You might have access to long-forgotten underground subways, little known mountain paths, or some other route of your choosing.*
- **Supercomputer:** You get **+1d** to the **engagement roll** for **scientific** plans. *Its running simulations for you.*

GENERAL

- **Hidden FOB:** The squad's FOB is hidden from even intensive searches. If it's discovered, a Long Term Project will be required to once again conceal it.
- **Lighthouse Satellite:** Safe passage in space. *When you head into the dark and can contact this satellite, you can't become lost.*
- **Quarters:** Your FOB has comfortable sleeping space for everyone. Otherwise the squad's pilots sleep away from the FOB in vulnerable locations.
- **Secure FOB:** Your FOB has perimeter defenses such as automated turrets, trip wire explosives, or a sturdy wall. This helps protect your Squad against attacks while at home. This can be taken twice, with the defenses becoming more effective with the second upgrade.
- **Transmitter Array:** **-1 Stress** cost for all digital powers and app usage. This effect applies to the entire Squad, everywhere. You don't have to be at the array to benefit from it.
- **Workshop:** The FOB has a space filled with tools, materials, and a database such that the Long Term Project, Salvage, and Fix Downtime Activities can be worked on without leaving the FOB.

ON SITE

- **Blacksite:** **+1d** to **Command** on-site. *Grisly business, but effective.*
- **CCTV Network:** **+1d** to **Survey** on-site. *With cameras and audio bugs everywhere you've got the advantage.*
- **Commissary:** You get **+1d** to **Consort** rolls on-site. *Some rationed items and friendly conversation can go a long way.*
- **Hack Lab:** You get **+1d** to **Interface** rolls on-site. *A hack lab provides tools, both physical and digital, for making superb AR works.*
- **Holo-grid:** You get **+1d** to **Consort** with AR entities on-site. *This room simplifies communication between humans and AR entities by bridging their differences.*

- **Luxury Venue:** +1d to **Sway** rolls on-site. *Silks, paintings, and crystal impress the clientele.*
- **Radar Station:** +1d to **Scan** rolls on-site. *Tapping into a much larger sensor array gives you the advantage.*
- **Tunnels:** +1d to **Prowl** rolls on-site. *These hidden passages allow you to move around unseen.*

PREP AND RECOVERY

- **Factory:** You get +1d to **Fix** rolls. *Any factory can churn out military parts.*
- **Infirmary:** You get +1d to **Recover** rolls. *The infirmary has beds for long-term convalescence and medical automation.*
- **Loyal Bar:** You get +1d to gather information about the current or upcoming mission. *Your eyes and ears on the streets are always on the lookout for you.*
- **Refit Station:** One of the Squad's Vehicles may remove a piece of gear, changing Load slots occupied by it to uninstalled at the start of a mission for free. *This automated arrangement of catwalks and cranes make swapping parts easy.*
- **Scrapyard:** You get +1d to **Upkeep** rolls. *Spare parts on the cheap!*

REP, TRUST, AND HEART

- **Cover Business:** You reduce **trust** lost from a mission's target by 2. *The cover of a civilian operation helps deflect some of the attention from those you've hurt.*
- **Propaganda Radio:** You reduce **trust** lost from a mission's employer by 2. *Factions don't want any trouble from you; they look the other way.*
- **Public Works:** You get +1 **Heart** on your Rep track. You can have up to 6 Public Works. *This location supports the locals, so they have your back.*
- **Trophies Room:** You get +1 **Rep** per mission. *Word of your accolades, earned or "collected," gets around, and your boldness boosts your Rep in the military.*

QUALITY

- **Quality (Gear):** Your gear sets are better Quality in addition to the Quality bonuses from the squad's Tier and the fine descriptor.
- **Quality (Outfits):** Your outfits are better Quality in addition to the Quality bonuses from the squad's Tier and the fine descriptor.
- **Quality (Pilot Weapons):** Your Pilot weapons are better Quality in addition to the Quality bonuses from the squad's Tier and the fine descriptor.
- **Quality (Programs):** Your programs are better Quality in addition to the Quality bonuses from the squad's Tier and the fine descriptor.
- **Quality (Supplies):** Your supply sets are better Quality in addition to the Quality

bonuses from the squad's Tier and the fine descriptor.

- **Quality (Tools):** Your tools are better Quality in addition to the Quality bonuses from the squad's Tier and the fine descriptor.
- **Quality (Vehicle Weapons):** Your Vehicle weapons are better Quality in addition to the Quality bonuses from the squad's Tier and the fine descriptor.

SUPPLIES

- **Airfield:** The first level provides 1 Supply Point at the start of Downtime Activities. The second level provides an additional 1 Supply Point (total 2).
- **Collection Agency:** Once per Downtime, roll dice equal to your Tier. You earn Materiel equal to the highest result, minus your **most negative Faction status**. *Some of the locals are terrified of you and will gladly pay for "protection."*
- **Motor Pool:** A first level Motor Pool means you pay half the Materiel cost (rounded up) when procuring new vehicles. At second level the Squad and its Cohorts gain access to Load 3 temporary vehicles for free.
- **Side Business:** Once per Downtime, roll dice equal to your Tier. You earn Personnel equal to the highest result, minus your **most negative Faction status**. *What kind of legitimate business is this? How do you get paid in secret?*
- **Storage:** The first level of this upgrade allows the Squad to store up to 8 of all Supply point types. The second level increases the storage to 16.
- **Warehouses:** You get **+1d to acquire asset** rolls. *You have space to hold all the various spoils you end up with after your battles. It can be useful on its own or for barter when you need it.*

TRAINING

- **Mastery:** unlocks 4th action points. Requires 4 Squad upgrades to activate.
- **Testing Facilities:** when taking the Enhance Downtime Activity the Vehicle marks 2 boxes on the Enhance track instead of 1.
- **Training (Insight):** Choose Insight, Prowess, Resolve, or Playbooks. When taking the Train Downtime Activity for Insight, take 2XP instead of 1. *A space for deep thought, to let you hone your insight.*
- **Training (Playbook):** Choose Insight, Prowess, Resolve, or Playbooks. When taking the Train Downtime Activity for your Playbook, take 2XP instead of 1. *A space that has tools suitable to your trade, allowing you to practice the tricks in your playbook.*
- **Training (Prowess):** Choose Insight, Prowess, Resolve, or Playbooks. When taking the Train Downtime Activity for Prowess, take 2XP instead of 1. *A space that lets you move freely and exercise your prowess.*

- **Training (Resolve):** When taking the Train Downtime Activity for Resolve, take 2XP instead of 1. *A space that allows you to steel yourself and focus your resolve.*

HEART

Heart is an abstraction of the support and control the Squad has in the areas they administer and operate in. This provides stability to the squad's Rep meaning that fewer Rep points are required to increase the squad's hold and Tier. For each point of Heart, the Squad requires one fewer point of Rep to develop, up to a maximum of 6 points of Heart. So if the Squad has 3 Heart, only 9 points of Rep are required. Additionally when the squad's Rep resets to zero upon development the Heart does not reset allowing for quicker development in the future. Heart is gained by acquiring the Public Works Squad Upgrade.

COHORTS

A Cohort is a fire team (a group of agents) or a specialist (an especially skilled agent) that works for the Squad and is directed by the pilots. Acquiring a new Cohort costs 2 Squad upgrades.

CREATING A COHORT

1. Choose to make a Fire Team (Fire teams have Quality and scale equal to the squad's Tier.) or Specialist (Specialists have Quality equal to the squad's Tier+1 and scale of 0).

2. Choose your Cohort's expertise.

- Fire teams can be Adepts (Academics, scientists, mechanics, etc.), Rooks (spies, con artists, socialites, etc.), Rovers (drivers, astronauts, urban spelunkers, etc.), Skulks (thieves, scouts, infiltration, etc.), or Toughs (killers, bouncers, warriors, etc.).
- Specialists can be any type of expert. Doctor, assassin, chemist, sniper, and navigator are all acceptable but far from the only options.

3. Choose 1 or 2 Edges for the Cohort from the following:

- Fearsome (terrifying in aspect and notoriety)
- Independent (able to make good decisions and take action without direct orders)
- Loyal (can't be bribed or turned against the squad)
- Tenacious (won't be deterred from a task)

4. Choose as many Flaws for the Cohort as it has Edges from the following:

- Brutal (excessively violent and cruel)

- Eager (will act without orders for “the squad’s best interests”)
- Principled (has an ethic or value it won't betray)
- Obligation (not always available due to other responsibilities, chronic illness, etc.)
- Wild (drunken, debauchery, and loud mouthed)

A Cohort will have items appropriate to its expertise and Quality.

Only Rovers and Specialists with an appropriate expertise start with vehicles. They have vehicles that suit their expertise and the squad’s Playbook. For access to a different type of vehicle, or to give a vehicle to a Cohort that doesn’t start with one, a pilot should Acquire an Asset during Downtime or the Squad should get a second level Motor Pool. Cohort vehicles have Load equal to their Tier if that becomes relevant.

USING A COHORT

When a Cohort is sent alone to achieve a goal covered by its expertise, it rolls its Quality to determine the outcome. If the action is outside its expertise, it counts as having a Quality of zero. If a Pilot directs the Cohort with orders, that Pilot rolls Command. If a Pilot participates alongside the Cohort, they make an Action Roll with the Cohort’s scale and Quality affecting the Position and Effect.

EXAMPLE: Demon is working a Mission alongside a Fireteam of Toughs belonging to his Tier 1 Squad. His scanners show that some enemy infantry are trying to flank him through an empty school. He sends them into the school to deal with the threat, trusting in their ability to sort it out. Since they are acting independently AND within their expertise they roll their Tier, so 1d.

The Toughs are having a hard go of it in the school, but Demon isn't able to join them because of the frontline foes he is facing. However, he is able to give them orders over the radio, and by leading them indirectly he can roll his 2d Command instead of their 1d Tier. Unfortunately this isn't quite enough to win the fight in the school.

After dealing with the frontline threat, Demon gets a request for back up from the Toughs. He moves into the school on foot and joins the conflict alongside them. Now that he's in it fighting beside them, he rolls his 2d Struggle but adds the Fireteam's scale to his roll. This allows him to fight on equal footing with the enemy group, which improves his Position and Effect.

If a Cohort suffers Harm, its Harm level increases from 1 to 4 in the following manner.

1. Weakened: the Cohort has reduced Effect.

2. Impaired: the Cohort has reduced Quality (-1d)

3. **Broken:** the Cohort cannot act until it recovers.

4. **Dead:** the Cohort is destroyed.

If a Cohort's environment is suitable for healing, it removes a level of Harm during a Downtime phase. A pilot can help them Recover by spending a Downtime action, which heals the Cohort an additional level of Harm.

A Cohort can be reformed if destroyed. The Squad must spend Personnel points equal to the squad's Tier + 2 to restore it, and also spend two Downtime Activities finding new fire team members or a new specialist.

COHORT MISTREATMENT

If the Squad mistreats a Cohort (physical or emotional violence, needlessly dangerous tasks, forcing them to fight while wounded, etc.) they may retaliate if it is narratively appropriate and suits the tone of your game. Likely they won't retaliate after a singular instance of mistreatment, but a second occurrence (and certainly a third) may have them looking to make a change.

If you find it useful, consider making a 4-Tick Clock to represent the retaliation that the Cohort will enact. Add 1 or 2 Ticks (depending on severity) each time a Pilot mistreats a Cohort. For each tick added the Cohort should retaliate in increasingly dramatic fashion.

Here are some examples of ways that a Cohort could retaliate:

- **Grumbling:** The Cohort complains about the mistreatment to other NPCs of similar social status. For Fire Teams this may be completely internal as the Fire Team's members complain to each other.
- **"A word, sir":** The Cohort speaks candidly about the mistreatment to someone in a position of authority. This may be a Pilot who has not mistreated them, but may also be the Squad's Direct Superior.
- **Work To Rule:** The Cohort does the bare minimum required of them. Maybe they don't work overtime to make sure the Pilots' Vehicles are fixed, or they refuse orders that don't make sense to them.
- **Strike:** The Cohort refuses to work until their demands are met. What those demands are depends on the nature of the mistreatment they have faced.
- **Fragging:** When the opportunity presents itself, the Cohort will put those who have mistreated them in danger. This may be "accidental" friendly fire, not defending against enemy attacks, or an off duty beating.
- **Betrayal:** If the mistreatment has gotten severe enough, The Cohort will lose faith in the Squad and start working for someone else. This may be covert (such as sneaking away at night or feeding the enemy intel) or dramatic (an assassination attempt or

ambush with enemy assistance). Either way, the Cohort will be removed as an Asset. Mending the relationship with a mistreated Cohort is not fixed in a single day. It will require a Long Term Project, and the more aggrieved the Cohort is, the more Ticks the project will have. Completing the project should involve dealing with the demands of the Cohort, and addressing the mistreatment. Or you could just cycle out all the staff for fresh faces who don't know about the abuse they're about to encounter.

If the retaliation of the Cohort becomes too much for the Squad to deal with (or the Squad just doesn't like a Cohort), they can dismiss the Cohort. This removes them from the Squad sheet, and thus can no longer be called upon for assistance. The Squad does not gain a replacement Cohort or Upgrades of equivalent value; those resources are lost. A new Cohort can still be gained through the normal means in the future. Depending on how unhappy the Cohort is when it's dismissed, and the manner of their dismissal, they may simply disappear into the world or they might hold a grudge and return to make the Pilots suffer.

TIER

Every notable Squad (including the players' squad) has a Tier that indicates the size, renown, and power of that squad. The most powerful squads are Tier V. The players' Squad starts at Tier 0 with strong hold (represented by an "S" after their Tier value).

The squad's Tier is rolled when acquiring an asset, and for fortune rolls where success is primarily based on the squad's resources and fame. The Quality of a squad's items is determined by Tier, and so is the Quality and scale of the squad's fire teams. This can help guide the narrative with how well made a squad's gear is and how many people are brought to bear when a fire team is deployed.

When a Fire Team is deployed their scale by Tier:

- Tier V: Massive (roughly 80 people)
- Tier IV: Huge (roughly 40 people)
- Tier III: Large (roughly 20 people)
- Tier II: Medium (roughly 10 people)
- Tier I: Small (roughly 5 people)
- Tier 0: 1 or 2 people

SQUAD DEVELOPMENT

To move up the ranks and develop your squad, you need Rep. Rep is a measure

of clout and renown. When you accrue enough Rep, Factions and other squads take you more seriously and you attract the support needed to develop and grow.

You need 12 Rep to fill the Rep tracker on your Squad sheet. When you fill the tracker, do one of the following:

- If your hold is weak (represented by a "W" after their Tier value), it becomes strong. Reset your Rep to zero.
- If your hold is strong, you can pay to increase your Squad Tier by one. This costs an amount of each Supply Point type equal to the squad's new Tier times 4. For example if a Squad is increasing to Tier II it must spend 8 Personnel, and 8 Materiel. As long as your Rep tracker is full, you don't earn new Rep (12 is the max). Once you pay and increase your Tier, reset your Rep to zero and reduce your hold to weak.

When your Tier increases the Squad experiences several changes.

- All of the squad's items now count as a Tier higher when their Quality comes into play.
- When the squad's Tier is used for a Fortune Roll where its power and notoriety are paramount a number of dice equal to the Tier is rolled.
- The scale and Quality of the squad's fire teams increases to the new Tier.

FACTION GOALS

A Faction's goal is the current strategic objective that they are trying to fulfill on their path of dominance in The War. The players and GM discuss which Faction goal makes sense for their patron Faction to have at the start of the game. Things to consider in this decision are the amount of politics, combat, and brutality everyone wants, as well as themes they might want to explore.

Each goal is represented by a 4 Tick Clock. Squads add Ticks by taking actions during missions that work towards the goal, however only a single tick is added to the Clock at the end of the Mission. No matter how hard or how often the Squad works towards the Faction Goal, it is too big to get substantial progress during a single mission.

When the Clock fills all squads patronized by the Faction receive specialist training giving them a unique benefit. The players and GM then consider the current situation of The War and select a new and different goal as each goal can only be completed once.

The list of goals for a Faction to have follows:

- **Assault the Foe:** Soften up a specific enemy held region in preparation for capture. This can be done by brazenly attacking that region, cutting that area off from reinforcements, gaining intel about the district's weak points, etc.
 - **Benefit: Vengeful.** Your squad's righteous anger empowers their actions. When making an Action Roll against a Squad that employs any player's Rival, take improved Effect.

- **Divided They Fall:** Manipulate the enemy's plans. This can be done by planting false orders and intelligence, disrupting communications, pitting enemies against each other, etc.
 - **Benefit: 4D Chess.** You and your Faction's agents synergize to pull off incredible feats of manipulation. Once per mission a pilot can manipulate an active Clock. Describe how you manipulated the situation to your liking. The pilot may spend up to 3 Stress to move that many ticks into any other Clocks. If the Clock being emptied has a negative outcome when filled, then the ticks must be transferred only to Clocks that also have a negative outcome. If the Clock being emptied has a positive outcome when filled, then the ticks must be transferred only to Clocks that also have a positive outcome.

- **Golden Streets:** Improve the Supply situation of the patron Faction. This can be done by improving the Wealth rating of Regions, giving supplies to your patron Faction, refusing Supply rolls from your patron, etc.
 - **Benefit: Beggars Can Be Choosers.** The Squad knows how to beg, barter, and steal for more supplies when they really want to. If each pilot that participated in the mission spends 1 Stress the mission's Supply roll is rolled again and the Squad gets the higher result. This can be chosen after the initial roll is made. This does not apply to the Bureaucrat's Cook The Books ability.

- **Hearts and Minds:** Change the popular opinion of a Faction in a manner that benefits your patron Faction. This can be done by protecting the populace from marauders in your patron's name, publicizing the corruption of an enemy Faction, shifting musical tastes in support of your patron, etc.
 - **Benefit: Recruitment Drive.** The people have seen the glory of your Faction and want to be a part of it. Cohorts now cost 1 Squad upgrade instead of 2, as the populace flock to recruitment centers.

- **Hostile Takeover:** Deny the enemy supplies. This can be done by blockading

imports, destroying infrastructure, turning enemy Supply sources to working for your patron Faction, etc.

- **Benefit: Level The Playing Field.** You've worked hard to deny the enemy what it needs to continue The War, and your efforts have begun to wear down their squads. Choose a Faction. All of the squads belonging to that Faction permanently lose 1 hold going from Strong to Weak at their current Tier, or Weak to Strong but at a lower Tier (Weak Tier 1 squads become strong Tier zero squads).
- **Intelligence Coup:** Steal valuable information from the enemy. This can be done by acquiring VIPs, retrieving actionable intel, stealing technological advances, etc.
 - **Benefit: Big Brother.** Between advances in technology and an extensive spy network you can get the answers you want. Once per session a pilot may spend 2 Stress to ask the GM a question. The GM must answer honestly. This does not provide improved Effect, improved Position, or additional dice.
- **Manufacture Heroes:** Act against a specific Squad at least 2 Tiers higher than the players' squad. This can be done by attacking regions controlled by that squad, denying that Squad mission objectives, luring that Squad into acting irrationally, etc.
 - **Benefit: Poster Child.** Now that you're heroes, your Faction needs to keep you alive without removing you from the action. A pilot can push themselves for only 1 Stress a number of times per session equal to their squad's Tier (minimum 1) by revealing how another Squad belonging to their patron Faction assisted them.
- **Secure the Borders:** Take proactive measures to protect the patron Faction. This can be done by removing enemy agents acting within the patron Faction, weakening neighbouring regions, constructing defenses, etc.
 - **Benefit: Nano Laminate Armor.** Molecule thin layers of ceramic-alloy composite are electro magnetically bonded to each other to create armor that is half the weight of standard vehicle armor but maintains the same durability. Each vehicle can have one NLA debuted. Functions as normal armor but is Load 1.

When a Faction's goal is fulfilled every Squad that currently has it as their patron gains the appropriate benefit. If a squad ever leaves a Faction, they also lose access to any benefits from goals that their former patron completed. Likewise if a squad joins a Faction

that has completed a goal, they gain access to its benefit.

When a Faction other than the pilots' patron completes a goal, describe to the players the sweeping changes they hear about that are caused by the goal's completion. Look to the goal's benefit for inspiration as to the changes that occur. Remember that the fictional Positioning of the game alters the Position and Effect of player rolls.

SUPPLY POINTS

A Squad can't function if it doesn't have the supplies it needs. These could be boots, ammunition, bandages, armor plating, intel, targeting computers, or even a few soccer balls to kick around. All of the things your Squad needs will be abstracted into the catch all term Supply Points.

Your Squad will get Supply Points, or one of its subtypes, through mission rewards, the salvage Downtime action, or another fictionally appropriate means. However, Supply Points can't be used themselves; they must be converted to a subtype at the start of Downtime Activities requiring no action to do so. Each type of Supply Point has its own uses, but all of them are also used in increasing the squad's Tier (see Squad Development). The different subtypes are Materiel and Personnel.

A Squad can only have 4 of each Supply Point handy in its FOB; however, with the Storage upgrade this amount can be increased to 8 and then 16. The squad's excess Supply Points must be spent or they are taken by your superiors and disappear.

- 1 Supply Point is equivalent to a week's pay for a blue collar worker. Possibly a week's worth of rationed material on the black market.
- 2 Supply Points is the weekly income of a small business. A full tailored outfit, a fine weapon, or an exquisite luxury item.
- 4 Supply Points is that blue collar worker's monthly income. Possibly the full cost of an older used vehicle.
- 6 Supply Points might be high end jewellery, or a briefcase full of contraband.
- 8 Supply Points is a strong monthly profit for a small business, or a rare luxury commodity.
- 10 Supply Points is the value of a significant asset such as a luxury vehicle or small piece of property.

MATERIEL

Represents everything necessary to keep a squad's vehicles running, if not operating at optimal levels. Materiel is used to:

- Take an additional Acquire Asset, Enhance, Fix, Manufacture, Salvage, or Upkeep Downtime Activity by spending 1 Materiel.
- Add +1d to an Acquire Asset, Fix, Manufacture, or Salvage Downtime Activity, or increase the result 1 level.
- Change vehicle Load slots to uninstalled during Downtime (this does not expend an activity).
- Acquire new vehicles.
- Take the Upkeep Downtime Activity, add +1d to the Upkeep activity, or increase the result 1 point.
- Increase the squad's Tier (see Squad Development section).
- Avoid certain Squad Entanglements.
- Purchase Personnel by spending 2 Materiel for 1 Personnel (buying on the black market), or by spending 1 Materiel for 1 Personnel during the Collect Downtime Activity (forcibly buying from locals).

PERSONNEL

Represents various forms of labour and supplies that keep the pilots fit and equipped to complete missions. Personnel is used to:

- Take an additional Collect, Cut Loose, Long-Term Project, Recover, Schmooze, or Train Downtime Activity by spending 1 Personnel.
- Replace destroyed Cohorts. The cost is equal to the squad's Tier+2 and two Downtime Activities.
- Have Flashbacks that utilize allied squads or Cohorts. Spend 1 Personnel in place of 1 Stress. The Flashback's cost can be paid entirely in Personnel, stress, or a mix of both.
- Add +1d to a Collect, Cut Loose, Long-Term Project, Recover, or Schmooze Downtime Activity, or increase the result 1 level.
- Have a Flashback to gather information. Spend 1 Personnel in place of 1 Stress. The Flashback cost can be paid entirely in Personnel, entirely in Stress, or in a mix of both.

- Add +1d to a gather information roll.
- Increase the squad's Tier (see Squad Development section)
- Avoid certain Squad Entanglements.
- Purchase Materiel by spending 2 Personnel for 1 Materiel (buying on the black market), or by spending 1 Personnel for 1 Materiel during the Collect Downtime Activity (forcibly buying from locals).

If the fiction indicates that the Squad wouldn't have access to their Supply Points during Downtime (because their FOB is lost, they are on an extended campaign behind enemy lines, they are doing back to back missions without a chance to resupply, etc.) then they can not be used. Fixing the problem in the fiction will restore access to the squad's Supply Points.

WHAT ABOUT MONEY?

All Factions now use electronic currency organized by centralized servers, and this works well for most people living under them. Those who live outside of the Factions deal almost exclusively in cash, unless they are frequently working within a Faction's financial ecosystem. The term cash has stuck around to mean assets that might be exchanged for goods or services but which aren't easily tracked by one of the Factions.

A pilot or squad's day to day expenditures aren't tracked by the players. If a pilot wants to spend a small amount to achieve a small goal (have nice clothes, bribe a bureaucrat, have specific furniture) use the Squad's Tier for a fortune roll. If a large purchase is necessary Personnel or Materiel will need to be used.

MISSION COMPLETED

When the Squad completes a mission follow this process:

1. Resolve the squad's REWARD. They'll get Supply Points and Rep.
2. Update the squad's TRUST. They'll be more and less liked by other squads and their Factions.
3. Determine the ENTANGLEMENTS that affect the squad. Life is unfair and harsh.
4. Play through the DOWNTIME ACTIVITIES. The Squad has some time to tend to their needs.

REWARD

To resolve the squad's Reward follow this procedure.

1. If the Mission was **successful**, take a Supply Roll from the Employer Faction. Roll dice equal to the Target's Tier + Employer Faction Status, to a minimum of zero (roll 2d and take the lowest). Gain Supply Points equal to the highest die. If a crit is rolled take 9 Supply Points.

If the Mission **failed**, use the same process as above but apply a -2d penalty to the Supply Roll. Squads with proven track records get what they ask for.

If the Mission's Employer was **Independent**, do not take a Supply Roll.

2. Take your Employer Faction's Supply roll bonus.

- Autocracy: +1 Materiel, +1 Trust with the Employer
- Corporatocracy: +2 Materiel
- Democracy: +1 Personnel, +1 Materiel
- Independent: +2 Rep
- Oligarchy: +1 Trust with the Employer, +1 Personnel
- Theocracy: +2 Personnel

3. The Squad earns 2 Rep. If the target of the mission was higher Tier than the squad, take +1 Rep per Tier higher. If the target Squad was lower Tier, take -1 Rep per Tier lower (minimum zero). If the mission was completely hidden, take zero Rep instead of the above.

4. Assign the Supply Points as Materiel, or Personnel. Any Supply Points beyond the squad's maximum storage capacity must be used by the end of the next Downtime phase or they are wasted.

5. Each pilot checks to see if they did something that furthers their Drive. If they did, add 1 tick to a Drive clock.

6. Every pilot can take a free Upkeep Downtime Activity, but must still spend the required Materiel.

7. Every Pilot removes any Level 1 Harm they have, and every Vehicle removes any Level 1 Damage it has.

8. If the mission supports the Patron Faction's goal add a Tick to the goal's Clock. If the Clock is filled, all squads patronized by the Faction gain a benefit, then choose a new goal for the Faction.

When you complete a mission you get several benefits.

First, you get resupply from the Faction you worked for, with the exception of Independent Employers, which is the **Supply Roll**. Roll a number of dice equal to your Employer Faction Status + the Squad that was targeted by the mission's Tier, to a minimum of 0 (roll 2d and take the lowest in this case). If the Mission failed, take a -2d penalty (minimum 0). Select the highest result and gain that many Supply Points; you never know what HQ can spare. If two or more 6s are rolled take 9 Supply Points instead of 6.

Each Faction provides additional Supply Point bonuses to the squad:

- Autocracy: +1 Materiel, +1 Trust with the Employer
- Corporatocracy: +2 Materiel
- Democracy: +1 Personnel, +1 Materiel
- Independent: +2 Rep without a Supply roll
- Oligarchy: +1 Trust with the Employer, +1 Personnel
- Theocracy: +2 Personnel

Independent missions don't have a hiring Faction, and don't generate a Supply roll unless the GM decides that they do. The same applies for squads that have a patron Faction but have completed a mission that was not assigned to them by their patron. Missions from non-patron Factions generate a Supply Roll if the GM decides that they do, and Players should know before the Mission if they will not get a Supply Roll.

After a Supply Roll the generated points must be assigned as Materiel, or Personnel before the next mission.

Second, the Squad earns 2 Rep for the mission. If the target Squad of the mission was higher Tier than you, take +1 Rep per Tier higher. If the target of the mission was lower Tier, you get -1 Rep per Tier lower (minimum zero). If you keep the operation completely quiet so no one knows about it, you earn zero rep. Mark the Rep on the Rep tracker on the Squad sheet.

Third, each mission gives every involved pilot the opportunity to check if they furthered their Drive. If they did, they can add 1 tick to a Drive clock.

Lastly, if the mission supports the squad's patron Faction's current goal then add a Tick to the goal's Clock. If the Clock is filled, the Faction and all squads it controls gain the benefit of the goal's reward. Then choose a new goal for the patron Faction.

EXAMPLE: The Cenotaph, a Celestial Myriad Squad, have just completed a mission returning war dead to The Wolf Pack, a Squad belonging to the Jovangellian Empire. Their Target was the Dark Room, a Democratic Federated Systems Squad, that planted bombs inside the corpses being returned. With the bombs defused and the Dark Room agents apprehended, the Mission was a success and The Cenotaph get a Supply Roll.

The Supply Roll is from the Jovangellian Empire (their Employer's Faction) whom they have a +1 Relationship with, and the Mission targeted a Tier II Squad (the Dark Room), so they roll 3d and take the highest die. The highest is a 5, so they get that many Supply Points. Since they worked for the Jovangellian Empire (an Autocracy) they also get +1 Materiel, and +1 Trust with them.

The Cenotaph get 2 Rep for the Mission. They also earn an additional 1 rep because they are Tier I making The Dark Room one Tier higher than them. The mission was definitely not hidden, so they gain a total of 3 Rep.

Now the Players must decide how to divide up their 5 Supply Points into Materiel and Personnel. Since both Dredge and Demon want to use Upkeep on their Vehicles, the Players decide that they should take at least 1 Materiel (in addition to the 1 they got for working for an Autocracy). They decide to split the 5 Supply Points into 2 Personnel and 3 Materiel so that they'll have 2 of each after Upkeep.

With that done, it's time to see if anyone furthered their Drive. Tower's Drive is to find out who framed them for murder, and during the Mission they saved a Jovangellian intelligence officer's life. While they haven't yet leveraged that channel of information, it now exists for them to use, so they get to add 1 tick to a Drive Clock. The other Pilots' Drives didn't come up in this mission, so they don't get any ticks added to their Drive Clocks.

As part of the Reward process each Pilot can take a free Upkeep Downtime Activity. Scarecrow didn't use any of her Vehicle's Quirks and Tower only used one, so they decide to skip this step to save Materiel. Dredge and Demon each spent 3 Quirks during the Mission, and want to perform Upkeep on their Vehicles. Even though Upkeep during the Reward phase doesn't cost a Downtime Activity, it does still cost Materiel. Since they only need a 3 or higher to refresh all their Quirks, both of their Players spend 1 Materiel and thus roll 1d each. Dredge gets a 4, refreshing all of her spent Quirks with the extra going to waste. Demon gets a 1, so still has 2 Quirks spent. His Player, Cassandra, could spend more Materiel to refresh additional Quirks, but she decides to try to avoid using Quirks on the next Mission.

The last step is to check if the Mission furthered the Patron Faction's Goal. The Church of the Celestial Myriad has Intelligence Coup as their goal, and The Cenotaph managed to apprehend members of the Dark Room. If they turn over the agents to their Patron, they will add a Tick to its Goal Clock as they are interrogated, but they might be able to find another use for the captives if they hold onto them...

TRUST AND STATUS

To update the squad's Trust and Statuses follow this procedure.

1. If a Squad benefited from the mission consider giving +1 to that squad's Status.

2. If a Squad was Harmed by the mission consider giving -1 or -2 to that squad's Status depending on how bad the damage was.

3. For every Squad Status point above or below zero, add a descriptor that expresses how that Squad views the players' squad.

4. Adjust the trust of the Faction targeted by the mission.

- Important infrastructure damaged. -2 Trust
- A VIP was killed. -2 Trust
- Civilians died. -1 Trust
- Their corruption was exposed to their citizens. -2 Trust
- At least one of their squads took casualties. -1 Trust
- The mission's target was high profile or well connected. -1 Trust
- The Faction was attacked in a region they control. -1 Trust
- You have Vendetta with one of their squads at the start of the mission. That Squad does not have to be involved in the mission. -1 Trust

5. Adjust the trust of the Faction that employed the Squad for the mission.

- Civilians died. -1 Trust
- The ROE was broken. -2 Trust
- Important infrastructure damaged that was not the mission's target. -2 Trust
- A Squad that was not the mission's Target and belongs to the Employer was Harmed. -2 Trust
- The mission was successful. +Trust equal to double the Target's Tier, minimum 1.
- At least one secondary objective was completed. +2 Trust
- You have Vendetta with one of their squads at the start of the mission. That Squad does not have to be involved in the mission. -1 Trust

6. Adjust the trust of the squad's patron Faction.

- Another Faction was aided. -1 Trust
- The Patron's interests were Harmed. -2 Trust

7. Adjust Faction statuses.

- When Trust reaches 9 that Faction's Status gets +1, Trust rolls over to 0, and any remaining Trust is then added.

- When Trust reaches zero that Faction's Status gets -1, Trust rolls over to 9, and any remaining Trust is then subtracted.

STATUS

The players' Squad has a status rating with every other Squad and every Faction that indicates how much they like or hate them. Status can range from -3 (Hated) to +3 (Loved), with zero (neutral) being the default rating. If the rating is something other than a zero it is tracked on the Faction and Squad Sheet.

STATUS LEVELS

- **+3: Allies.** Groups with this rating will help the Squad even if it goes against their best interests, and they expect the same in return.
- **+2: Friendly.** Groups with this rating will help the Squad if it doesn't create serious problems for them, and they expect the same in return.
- **+1: Helpful.** Groups with this rating will help the Squad if it doesn't cost them anything, and they expect the same in return.
- **0: Neutral.**
- **-1: Interfering.** Groups with this rating will look for opportunities to cause the Squad trouble (or profit from its misfortune) as long as it doesn't cost them anything, and they expect the same behaviour in return.
- **-2: Hostile.** Groups with this rating actively seek chances to Harm the Squad so long as it doesn't create major problems for them. They expect similar retaliation and take precautions against the squad.
- **-3: Vendetta.** Groups with this rating work to Harm the Squad even if it is against their best interests. They expect the Squad to do likewise and will take precautions against them. When the Squad has a vendetta with any number of Squads, they will suffer additional Trust losses, temporarily lose 1 hold (possibly lowering their Tier by 1 until the vendetta ends), and Pilots take one fewer Downtime Activity. If the players have multiple Vendettas, only apply the penalty from one at a time. The vendetta will end if the enemy is destroyed or a mutual agreement to establish a new status level is negotiated.

SQUAD STATUS

After a mission is completed consider the squads that were involved in the mission. If a Squad benefited from the mission the players should discuss if that was enough to

increase their Status with them. Think about giving +1 to that Status.

If a Squad was Harmed (physically, socially, financially, etc.) by the mission maybe their Status with the pilots will worsen. Consider giving -1 or - 2 to the Status depending on how harsh their damage was. Remember that it's easier to ruin a Status than to improve one.

NPC squads that have a positive Status will have different expectations of the pilots based on their Tier. If the NPC Squad has a higher Tier they'll expect deference from the pilots, and may be willing to provide protection. An equal Tier Squad will request that the pilots provide support, both on and off the battlefield, and they expect requests of a similar nature. Lower Tier squads will want the protection of the pilots, but may have little concept of how they can help the pilots.

If you aren't sure how an NPC Squad should behave towards the Pilots, use their Faction's Relationship as an indicator of what they've been *told* they should do. Their reaction to those orders will vary based on their Goal and nature. Independent Squads will act based purely on their description and Goal since they do not belong to a Faction.

For every Squad status point above or below 0 the players will also assign a word that describes how that Squad views the players' squad. This helps the GM characterize NPCs from that Squad while also giving players an idea of what to expect when interacting with them. Try to pick descriptors that suit the nature of the squad. For example a theocratic Squad might have "faithful," an autocratic Squad "loyal," a democratic Squad "patriotic," and a corporatocratic Squad "invested."

EXAMPLE SQUAD STATUS DESCRIPTORS

● Marketable	● Effective
● Tidy	● Cheap
● Amoral	● Backpfeifengesicht
● Soft	● Aggravating
● Honorless	● Zealeitous
● Strained	● Mighty

FACTION RELATIONSHIP

A Faction's Relationship only changes after Trust has filled up or been sufficiently reduced representing that it's harder to make an impression on the larger organization, but when you get a Faction's attention they can bring the weight of multiple squads on to you. Even a patron Faction will turn on a Squad it governs if that Squad becomes unruly enough. So kiss up to the boss, strike out on your own, or frame others for your misdeeds.

Additionally the way that the average citizen and state apparatus of a Faction reacts to the Squad and its pilots is determined by the Faction's Relationship with the Squad. If the Relationship is positive the pilots may be seen as a good influence on the course of The War, and, if it's strong enough, possibly been seen as heroes. A negative Relationship will make citizens wary of the squad, or possibly form a violent mob if the Relationship is low enough.

It's possible for you to have a Relationship with a Faction that is very different from the Status you have with its Squads. This represents orders from the people up top about how you should be treated, and whether the Squads you meet will respectfully follow them, follow them with suspicion or derision, or disregard them entirely.

EXAMPLE: The Cenotaph have a -2 Relationship with the Jovangellian Empire, but a +3 Status with The Hyenas, a Jovangellian Squad. They know that there are orders for Jovangellians to kill or capture them, but that The Hyenas like them enough to not only ignore those orders, but also actively hide them if they're being pursued by other Jovangellians.

Aside from the fictional Positioning of how the Faction and its citizens relate to the squad, Faction status affects Supply Rolls and Entanglements. The more positive a Relationship the Squad has with its Employer Faction the more likely they are to receive additional supplies from their end of Mission Supply roll, and the types of Entanglements encountered will be less damaging. A negative Relationship with the Faction targeted by the most recent Mission will increase the severity of Entanglements.

TRUST

The Relationship between your Squad and the huge Factions operating squads in the game is determined by Trust. Squad Statuses are handled elsewhere.

If the mission was kept completely quiet and the results can't be traced back to your squad, skip Trust adjustments for the Target. Instead lose only 1 Trust with them as rumors filter back to them. After a mission the Faction whose Squad was targeted by the mission loses Trust with your Squad if:

- there was damage to important infrastructure they wanted intact. (-2 Trust)

- one of their VIPs was killed. (-2 Trust)
- there were civilian deaths. (-1 Trust)
- their own skulduggery was exposed to the citizenry. (-2 Trust)
- one of their squads sustained casualties. (-1 Trust)
- the target was high profile or well connected. (-1 Trust)
- they were hit in a region they controlled. (-1 Trust)
- you have a Vendetta with one of their squads at the start of the mission.
That Squad does not have to be involved in the mission. (-1 Trust)

The trust with your employer Faction also changes. The trust is adjusted if:

- There were civilian deaths. (-1 Trust)
- The mission's Rules of Engagement, ROE, were broken. (-2 Trust)
- There was damage to important infrastructure that was not the mission's target. (-2 Trust)
- The Squad caused damage or injury to a Squad belonging to the employer that was not the mission's target. (-2 Trust)
- The mission was completed successfully (+Trust equal to double target's Tier, minimum 1)
- At least one secondary objective was completed (+2 Trust)
- you have a Vendetta with one of their squads at the start of the mission.
That Squad does not have to be involved in the mission. (-1 Trust)

Additionally the trust with your patron changes after a mission as well. If they were the Faction you were working for, the following trust modifiers are applied in addition to the employer trust.

- You aided another Faction (-1 Trust)
- You harmed your patron Faction's interests (-2 Trust)

When your trust reaches 9 your Status with that Faction goes up by 1 and the Trust rolls over to 1, and any remaining Trust is then added. If Trust reaches 0 your Status with that Faction goes down by 1 and the Trust rolls over to 8, and any remaining Trust is then subtracted.

EXAMPLE: The Cenotaph have just completed a Mission delivering corpses for the Jovangellian Empire against the Democratic Federated Systems. After looking at the Trust

questions The Cenotaph damaged important infrastructure (-2 Trust), caused casualties to a DFS squad (-1 Trust), and exposed their skullduggery (-2 Trust) for a total of -5 Trust. Before the Mission they had 2 Trust and a Relationship of 0 with the DFS. 2 Trust is subtracted making Trust 0 which lowers the Relationship to -1 and sets the Trust to 8. The remaining -3 Trust is then applied, which puts The Cenotaph at 5 Trust and -1 Relationship with the DFS.

Having resolved the Trust for their Target, The Cenotaph now modifies the trust with their Employer, the Jovangellian Empire. They completed the Mission against the Dark Room (+4 Trust because it is double the Target's Tier, which is 2 in this case), completed the secondary objective of delivering the DFS film crew to Fort Jovanol (+2 Trust), but broke the ROE of not using explosives (-2 Trust), for a total of +4 Trust. Before the Mission The Cenotaph were at 7 Trust and 0 Relationship with the Jovangellian Empire, so after adding 2 Trust they hit 9 and their Relationship increases to +1. This resets the Trust to 1, and then the remaining +2 Trust is applied, so they finish at 3 Trust and +2 Relationship with the Jovangellians.

Finally the Cenotaph must see how this mission affected their Relationship with the Church of the Celestial Myriad, their Patron. They did aid the Empire (-1 Trust), but they didn't harm the interests of the Church, so the total Trust change is -1. Before the Mission they had Trust 4 and +1 Relationship with the Church, and after applying the changes from the Mission, they now have Trust 3 and +1 Relationship.

ENTANGLEMENTS

Entanglements exist because the world is unfair, the brass do things that seem random and incompetent, and your friends are vulnerable simply because they know you.

After Reward and Trust are determined, the GM generates an Entanglement for the Squad using the charts below. Look at the Squad that you targeted during the mission. If the targeted Squad belongs to a Faction, use your relationship with that Faction to determine which Entanglements table will be used. If the targeted Squad is independent, use your status with that Squad instead. If the Relationship is -3 roll on table A. If it's -2 or -1 roll on table B. If it's 0 or higher roll on table C. Then roll a number of dice equal to 3 minus the squad's Relationship level with their Patron Faction, or the Faction with the highest Relationship if they lack a patron, and take the highest result. If the total is 0 or lower roll 2d and take the lower result.

EXAMPLE: The Cenotaph have reached a +1 relationship with their Patron, The Church of the Celestial Myriad, and have recently completed a mission against the Democratic Federated Systems, gaining a -1 Relationship. So they will roll 2d taking the higher result (3d

minus the +1 relationship with their patron equals 2) on table B (for -1 Relationship with the DFS).

Several Missions later, The Cenotaph's relationship with their Patron has worsened. After completing a mission against The Myriad they have a -2 Relationship with their Patron. So they will roll 5d taking the highest result (3 minus the -2 relationship equals 5) on Table B (for -2 Relationship with The Myriad).

The Squad can make use of a Region's criminal element if they choose to spend Personnel equal to the Region's Crime rating before the Entanglement is rolled. If they do so they can adjust the result of the Entanglement by up to the Personnel spent. They bribe the local underworld, and it distracts attention off the squad. Unfortunately "legitimate" authorities aren't fond of this, so the Squad will lose Trust with their Patron Faction equal to the Personnel spent. If they are Independent, they lose Trust with the Faction that controls that Region.

TABLE A

1. Flipped OR roll on Table B: A Rival Squad arranges for one of your Allies, sponsors, clients, or a group of your customers to switch allegiances due to the attention on you. They're loyal to another Faction now.

2. Missing Supplies: Your supplier didn't give you the supplies you were supposed to get, citing rerouted logistics. Lose 3 Supply points of any type, or try to browbeat logistics into giving you what you deserve and make a Fortune roll (1-3: -2 Trust with the Faction that last gave the Squad a Supply Roll, 4/5: -1 Trust instead, 6: no Trust lost) to see if they squeal.

3. Toxic Gear: Scuttlebutt is that some of the gear you've been issued is unhealthy to be around. Choose to spend 1 Personnel for +1d or don't, but either way make a Fortune Roll using the squad's Tier (1-3: Everyone takes Level 1 Harm which can be resisted as normal, 4/5: Everyone spend 1 Materiel point to trade it away or take 2 Stress, 6: It's not toxic).

4. Desperate Civilians: A group of civilians mob the Squad demanding supplies. Give them 4 Supply Points, or make a Fortune Roll (1-3: Everyone takes two Level 1 Harms, 4/5: lose 2 Supply points) to see how bad things get.

5. SCRAMBLE! A Squad you have a negative Status with makes a move against you (or a friend, Ally, or other associate). The attack comes suddenly and with little warning; prepare to fight OR scatter and return after the attackers have done their damage. If you prepare to fight, immediately start a mission where the Squad's FOB is under attack.

Take into consideration the Hidden, Secure, and Quarters FOB upgrades for the Engagement Roll. This mission cancels the previous mission's Downtime phase, and upon completion follows the normal mission completed process, including Entanglements.

If you scatter, lose 2 Squad upgrades as the attackers destroy large sections of your FOB.

6. Show of Force: A Faction with whom you have a negative status has decided you need to be dealt with. Give them 1 Upgrade or gain Vendetta (drop to -3 status) with 2 of their Squads that you currently do not have Vendetta with. If you have no Upgrades, lose 1 Hold instead.

TABLE B

1. AI Attention OR roll on Table C: An AI takes notice of your squad's actions and offers to cut a sinister deal with the squad. Choose one of the following:

- Accept the bargain.
- Hide until it loses interest (forfeit 3 Rep).
- Deal with it another way.

2. Fire Team Trouble: One of your fire teams (or other Cohorts) causes trouble due to their flaw(s). Choose one of the following:

- You can lose face (forfeit Rep equal to your Tier+1).
- Make an example of one of the fire team.
- Face reprisals from the wronged party.

3. Lowest Bidder: Turns out your Squad's gear was manufactured by the lowest bidder. All vehicles immediately suffer a level 2 Damage "Busted" and level 1 Damage "Uncalibrated" (each of which can be resisted separately), or each pilot can pay 1 Materiel to get the good stuff through back channels.

4. Rivals: A Squad with Status zero throws their weight around. They threaten you, a friend, Ally, or other associate. Forfeit (1 Rep or 1 Personnel) per Tier of the Rival, or stand up to them and lose 1 Status with them.

5. Debriefing: One of your Squad is questioned by your superiors. One of the pilots or a Cohort is taken in to be grilled. Make a Fortune Roll using the Squad's Tier to see how well they resist the pressure (1-3: level 2 Harm, which can be resisted by Pilots as normal, 4/5: -2 Trust) or bribe the grunts grabbing the person with 1 Personnel.

6. Requisition: a Cohort, Squad upgrade, or acquired asset is requisitioned by another squad. Choose one of the following:

- Give up the item (take +2 Trust with that squad's patron Faction). You'll have to

work to get it back later through the normal methods of gaining it.

- Bribe the caller with Personnel equal to your Tier +3.
- Try to hide the object or fight back and lose 1 Status with that Squad AND their Faction.

If you don't have any Cohorts, upgrades, or assets you must select an option other than giving up the item as the caller doesn't believe you don't have it.

TABLE C

1. New Recruit: Someone the Squad wants safe at home is assigned to them as a new recruit. Describe who this person is and the details of their bond with the squad. Gain a Specialist with Loyal and Eager. Their Quality is equal to the squad's Tier -1 (minimum 0).

2. Civil Unrest: A group of civilians riot due to perceived military corruption. Choose one of the following:

- Spend Supply Points equal to the number of FOB Squad Upgrades you have.
- Make a Fortune Roll using your Tier to put it down (1-3: all pilots take level 1 Harm "Roughed Up"; 4/5: Cohorts and Personnel points can't be used in the next downtime and mission).
- Let it run its course (Regions your Patron controls lose 1 Wealth to a minimum of 0).

3. Cooperation: a Squad with +3 Status asks for a favour. Choose one of the following:

- Agree to do it.
- Forfeit 1 Rep per Tier of the friendly squad.
- Lose 1 Status with them.

This favour must be completed by the end of the next mission, and may take the form of a Long Term Project, mission objective, or secondary objective. If you don't have a +3 Squad status, you avoid entanglements right now.

4. Embedded Favourite: The Squad is burdened with an NPC that a superior is fond of and believes needs first hand field experience. The NPC must accompany you on your next mission and get out intact. If you refuse to take the NPC along take -2 trust with the Faction pressuring you to break them in. If the NPC dies take -3 Trust, and if they are injured take -1 Trust. The NPC is a temporary Specialist Cohort with Quality equal to the squad's Tier -1.

5. Letter from home: One of the squad's pilots receives a personal message with bad news. They must use a Downtime Activity to Cut Loose or suffer 3 Stress.

6. Brass-holes: Your superiors issue mission objectives that don't make sense to the

squad. The Squad takes -1d on their next engagement roll. Additionally roll 1d to determine the tactic for the next mission (1: assault, 2: deception, 3: social, 4: transport, 5: science, 6: stealth). If the Squad decides not to use that tactic, take -1 Status with the Faction that assigned the mission, unless the mission is independent.

END OF SESSION

After a couple of hours of play you'll probably reach a good spot in the narrative to stop and most people will decide that they've had enough for one day. Other groups will do marathon sessions that can last 8 or more hours! Whenever you decide to stop the current session follow these directions regardless of how the session ends.

1. Check the squad's XP goals and mark 1 XP for each item that occurred (or 2 XP if that item happened multiple times).

2. Check if the Pilot contributed at least 1 Tick to their Rival Clock, and if they filled any Connection Clocks with their Rival or another Pilot. Take 1 XP for each item that occurred.

3. Check if the Pilot permanently removed their Rival as a threat. If that happened, take 2 XP.

4. Check the pilots' XP goals and mark 1 XP for each item that occurred (or 2 XP if that item happened multiple times).

5. If a mission was completed this session ask the pilots the following questions to direct what the next mission will be:

- Are you following up on a previous mission's outcome?
- Is your aim to seize a Squad Upgrade, hurt the target, aid yourselves, or aid another Squad?
- Is there a specific area you want to target?
- Is there a specific resource you want to acquire?
- Are you targeting a Squad weaker, stronger, or about the same as you?
- Are you targeting a specific Squad or Faction?

6. Check on each player's emotional state. Sometimes sessions can get very intense and players don't always realize how emotionally off balance they are until they take a break. If anyone at the table is concerned about another player who says they are alright, consider asking them privately in a couple of days once they've had a chance to assess their emotional state.

7. Ask the players what they liked about the session, and what they want to see more of in future sessions. If players can't think of anything, try asking in a couple of days after they've all had some time to sit with the session.
8. Ask the players what they disliked about the session, and what they want to see less of in future sessions. If players can't think of anything, try asking in a couple of days after they've all had some time to sit with the session.

These questions can be answered in character and/or out of character, whatever works best.

INSERT DOUBLE PAGE DOWNTIME ART

Camera is slightly above looking down at an angle.

In the foreground: Flagstone, Nehalannia, Dredge, and Pitchfork are sitting around a campfire on various objects (crates, a log, and a folding chair). Flagstone is gesturing as they tell a story. Nehalannia has a bottle in one hand, while drink shoots out their nose.

Dredge is laughing uproariously. Pitchfork has her eyes wide and mouth agape.

In the midground: Scarecrow is teaching Eclipse how to shoot a rifle at 5 empty bottles on a crate. The crate has 2-3 bullet holes in it, but all the bottles are intact.

In the background sits the Cenotaph chapel, a Strafe missing an arm squats nearby as Unlucky (likely unclear due to distance) works on repairing it. DOUBLE PAGE SPREAD

CHAPTER 08: DOWNTIME ACTIVITIES

During the time between missions pilots can have freeplay scenes (where pilots talk with each other and NPCs) and perform **3 Downtime Activities**. These freeplay scenes can be part of a Downtime Activity, have non-Downtime Activity dice rolls involved, be purely narrative, or become a Downtime Activity; whatever fits best. If a Pilot or Cohort Assists with a Downtime Activity (except for Cut Loose), describe how they help, and take +1d. This costs no Stress and no Downtime Activities for the pilot or Cohort assisting. Only one Pilot or Cohort can Assist at a time. Allies and the Direct Superior do not provide +1d when helping with Downtime Activities but likely provide access to resources that would otherwise be unavailable.

If a Pilot needs more Downtime Activities after spending their base 3, they can spend 1 supply point per additional activity as indicated by the following table:

MATERIEL	PERSONNEL
● Acquire Asset: Get temporary use of an asset (item, cohort, service, etc.)	● Collect: Pressure locals to provide your Squad with Supply Points.
● Enhance: Work towards gaining a new Quirk or Vehicle Action point.	● Cut Loose: Spend time with a Pilot to relieve Stress and know them better.
● Fix: Using technical skill to repair a Vehicle with Damage.	● Long-Term Project: Work towards learning or creating something.
● Manufacture: Turn a design into a functional object.	● Recover: Convalesce or get treated by a doctor.
● Salvage: Deconstruct a Vehicle for extra Supply Points.	● Schmooze: Do something small to make a Faction Trust you more.
● Upkeep: Do routine maintenance with Materiel to refresh Quirks.	● Train: Work towards gaining a new Action point.

The Downtime Activities available to them are as follows:

- **Acquire Asset:** Gain temporary use of an asset: One special item or a set of common items (enough for a Squad of your Tier scale), A Cohort (a specialist or fire team), A vehicle, A service (transport from a logistics team, use of a warehouse for temporary storage, legal representation, etc). "Temporary use" is a period of time that is reasonable for the asset, usually the duration of the next mission. An asset may also be put on standby for future use. You might get a fire team to guard your FOB and they'll stay until after the first serious battle, or until a week goes by and they get reassigned.

To acquire the asset, roll the Squad's Tier. The result indicates the Quality of the asset you get, using the Squad's Tier as the base. 1-3: Tier-1, 4/5: Tier, 6: Tier+1, Crit: Tier+2. You can spend Materiel to raise the result of this roll beyond Crit by spending 2 Materiel per additional Tier level added. The GM may set a minimum Quality level required to get that particular asset. For example, if you want an intact enemy AWW and credentials, you'd need to acquire a Tier IV asset. Anything less isn't enough. If you re-acquire an asset you get +1d to your roll. If you continue to get the same asset over and over again you can essentially rent it forever.

Chemicals, poisons, and dangerous gadgets are going to raise some eyebrows. When you acquire one of these items (rather than making it yourself), you take -2 trust with your Patron Faction. If you want to permanently add an asset to the Squad you can either get it as a Squad upgrade, or make owning it a long-term project.

Acquiring an asset during Downtime is generally used to further a pilot's or squad's goals separate from the needs of a mission. This may include getting a doctor, renting out a restaurant to impress someone, getting a transport vehicle for an "unsupervised" trip, etc. The asset acquired may be useful for an upcoming Mission, but an asset may also be acquired as a Flashback during a Mission.

You can spend 1 Materiel for +1d to the Acquire Asset roll, or to increase the result by 1 level. You can also spend 1 Materiel to take an extra Acquire Asset activity. If you want to take advantage of a Region's resources, you can take a number of bonus dice equal to the Region's Might (if acquiring a Cohort) or Tech (if acquiring Pilot or Vehicle Gear). However you lose Trust equal to the number of bonus dice rolled with the Faction that controls the Region.

EXAMPLE: Eclipse would really like to have some vehicle scale flashbangs for the next Mission so they decide to Acquire that Asset. The GM says that flashbangs that big will require a result of Tier 2, so Eclipse will need to get a 6 which provides gear equal to their Squad's Tier+1. They'll be rolling only 1d because The Cenotaph is Tier 1. They could increase the number of dice rolled by spending Materiel or by using a Region's back channels, and decide to do both. They spend 1 Materiel for +1d, and use Hulinton's Tech rating of 2 for +2d (at the cost of -4 Trust with their Patron). Now they are rolling 4d (1d for Squad Tier, +1d for Materiel spent, and +2d for a Region's Tech rating), and get a 6 as their highest result, which is exactly what they need to have the very big flashbangs they desired.

- **Collect:** Choose a Region to Collect from, and roll dice equal to its Wealth rating. Gain an amount of Supply Points equal to the highest die rolled, and if a crit is

rolled take 9 Supply Points instead. However, those supplies aren't meant for you. If any of the dice come up as a 1, gain the Supply Points, but then immediately roll an Entanglement on the table determined by your Relationship with the Faction that controls that Region. If a Faction does not control the Region, use your Status with the squad that has the strongest presence in the Region. After the first Collect during Downtime each subsequent Collect takes a cumulative -1d (min 0) as likely targets begin to take precautions.

This can be supplemented by trading Supply Points at a rate of 1 Personnel spent to gain 1 Materiel (or 1 Materiel for 1 Personnel) representing forcibly setting market prices on locals. You can also spend 1 Personnel to take an extra Collect activity.

EXAMPLE: Owl decides that the squad needs more Supply Points, so he Collects from Journey City since it has a Wealth of 3. He rolls 3d (equal to the Wealth rating) and gets a 4, 3, and 1. The Cenotaph gets 4 Supply Points (the highest die result), but must now also make a roll on the Entanglements table because a 1 was rolled. Since no Faction controls Journey City, the table selected is based on the squad that has the strongest presence in the area, which is the Tower Defenders. The Cenotaph have Status 0 with the Tower Defenders so Entanglement Table C will be rolled on, and the number dice will be 3 (3 dice minus The Cenotaph's Relationship with their Patron). The Entanglement that is rolled is resolved as normal.

- **Fix:** When you use technological know how and materials to fix a vehicle roll Engineer or have an appropriate Cohort roll their Quality. If you lack a Workshop Squad Upgrade it costs 2 Stress to repair your vehicle as you lack the proper equipment to do proper repairs. The damaged vehicle removes all Level 1 Damage and then marks segments on its mend Clock according to the roll result. 1-3: one segment, 4/5: two segments, 6: three segments, Crit: five segments. When the mend Clock is full reduce each detail of Damage the vehicle has by one level, then clear the Clock. Any remaining segments roll over to the now empty Clock. Note that the Pilot whose Vehicle is being repaired is the one who spends the Downtime Activity, not the repairer. Whenever the vehicle suffers any new Damage clear any Ticks on its mend Clock. You can spend 1 Materiel point for +1d to the Fix roll, or to increase the result by 1 level. You can also spend 1 Materiel to take an extra Fix activity.

EXAMPLE: Unlucky needs to repair his Strafe after the most recent Mission. It has two Level 2 Damages "Torn Wing" and "Busted Hand," and one Level 3 Damage

“Ripped Open.” The Cenotaph has a Workshop to help with the repairs (if it didn’t he’d have to spend 2 Stress to Fix it), so he could roll his Engineer to fix it, ask Dredge to use cor’s better Engineer to do it, or if he had access to an appropriate Cohort, have them roll their Quality. Dredge is happy to help and rolls cor 3d Engineer. Cor highest result is a crit, so Unlucky adds 5 Ticks to his Vehicle’s mend Clock! This fills the 4 Tick mend Clock which lowers the two Level 2 Damages to Level 1, the one Level 3 Damage to Level 2, and the 1 remaining Tick rolls over after the mend Clock empties. “Torn Wing” and “Busted Hand” become the Level 1 Damages “Crooked Wing” and “Stiff Hand,” while “Ripped Open” becomes “Stuttering Systems.” If Unlucky chooses to Fix his Strafe again, both Level 1 Damages will automatically clear, and he’ll add more Ticks to his mend Clock.

- **Long-Term Project:** When you work on a Project (whether it’s new or partially completed), describe how your pilot advances the Project, and roll an appropriate action. Mark segments of the Project Clock according to your result: 1-3: one segment, 4/5: two segments, 6: three segments, Crit: five segments. A long-term project can cover any kind of endeavour that takes a great deal of time. Researching a new beam weapon, finding a missing person, building a romance, finding a personal sponsor, and even possibilities that break the rules! The GM will determine how many segments the Project Clock has depending on what the goal is. To work on a Project you actually need the tools, skills, resources, etc. to fulfill it, and that might be a necessary preliminary project. For example, you might want to make deals with a group of guerrillas but you don’t have any way to contact them. As prep for that you could build a good rapport with the civilians who live in the area the guerrillas operate and once you have their trust then you could work on contacting the soldiers. You can spend 1 Personnel point for +1d to the Long-Term Project roll, or to increase the result by 1 level. You can also spend 1 Personnel to take an extra Long-Term Project activity.

EXAMPLE: Dredge wants to clear the Broken Bank of corrupted apps by rehabilitating them, so co starts a Long-Term Project. The GM says that before the process of clearing the district begins, some infrastructure will need to be created, so Dredge must first complete a Long-Term Project that sets up a clinic which the GM says is an 8 step clock. Dredge decides that the first task for building the clinic is to find a good site in the broken bank, so co looks over some reconnaissance maps of the area, and rolls cor 2d Study. The result is a 6 which adds 3 Ticks to the project’s Clock, and co decides to spend 1 Personnel to bump the result up to a crit (providing 5 Ticks instead of 3). Once this Clock completes the clinic will be built,

and Dredge can start working on rehabilitating the district's apps.

- **Recover:** When you get treatment to heal your pilot's Harm you use the Recover Downtime Activity. To do this you need to get medical care from a medic, veterinarian, autodoc, or someone else with a good amount of anatomical knowledge. If none of the PCs can fill that need, and you don't have an Ally who can either, an Acquire Asset action can get you temporary access to the professional or machine that you need which can then provide for the whole Squad. To permanently recruit a healer you can complete a suitable Long-Term Project or Mission, or spend Squad Upgrades to get a Specialist Cohort with the "Medicine" expertise. Recovery is a long-term project. Your healer rolls (Engineer for a PC with the Doctor ability or the Quality level of an NPC), the patient removes all Level 1 Harm, and then marks segments on their healing Clock. 1-3: one segment, 4/5: two segments, 6: three segments, Crit: five segments. When the healing Clock fills up reduce each instance of Harm the patient has by one level, then clear the Clock. Any remaining segments roll over to the now empty Clock. If you attempt to heal yourself and have the Doctor ability you take 2 Stress after you roll. If you want to just wait to spend your Recover activity convalescing to heal naturally take 1 Stress and roll 0d. Note that the Pilot being healed is the one who takes the Recover activity, healing a patient doesn't cost any Downtime activities for the healer. Whenever you suffer new Harm, clear any Ticks on your healing Clock. You can spend 1 Personnel point for +1d to the Recover roll, or to increase the result by 1 level. You can also spend 1 Personnel to take an extra Recover activity.

EXAMPLE: Flagstone needs to heal after the most recent Mission. She has two Level 2 Harms "Stabbed Arm" and "Broken Foot," and one Level 3 Damage "Pierced Lung." They could rest and Recover naturally (spending 1 Stress and rolling 0d), ask Dredge to use cor's Doctor ability to roll Engineer to do it, or if she had access to an appropriate Cohort, have them roll their Quality. Dredge is happy to help and rolls cor 3d Engineer. Cor highest result is a crit, so Flagstone adds 5 Ticks to their Vehicle's healing Clock! This fills the 4 Tick healing Clock which lowers the two Level 2 Harms to Level 1, the one Level 3 Harm to Level 2, and the 1 remaining Tick rolls over after the healing Clock empties. "Stabbed Arm" and "Broken Foot" become the Level 1 Harms "Bandaged Arm" and "Delicate Foot," while "Pierced Lung" becomes "Grinding Cough." If Flagstone chooses to Recover again, both Level 1 Harms will automatically clear, and she'll add more Ticks to their mend Clock.

- **Upkeep:** Clear exhausted Quirk boxes on vehicles. Spend at least one Materiel and roll that many dice. Your vehicle refreshes a number of Quirks equal to the highest result. If the result is higher than the number of Quirk boxes filled the remainder is wasted. Additional exhausted Quirks can be removed by spending 1 Materiel point per Quirk. Each pilot gets a free Upkeep action as part of their Reward. You can also spend 1 Materiel to take an extra Upkeep activity.

EXAMPLE: Even after the free Upkeep during the Reward process Scarecrow still has 3 spent Quirks, so she decides to do some Upkeep on her Claymore. She spends 2 Materiel, and rolls 2d because that is how much she spent. The highest die is a 4, so the 3 spent Quirks are refreshed, and the 1 extra is wasted.

- **Salvage:** When you take apart a damaged vehicle for its valuables roll Engineer and gain Supply points according to the result. 1-3: 1 Supply Point, 4/5: 2 Supply Points, 6: 3 Supply Points, Critical: 5 Supply Points. If the vehicle is intact consider a mission or Long Term Project to sell it instead of salvaging. Salvaging a vehicle destroys it regardless of how many Supply Points are pulled from the machine. You can also spend 1 Materiel to take an extra Salvage activity.

EXAMPLE: Tower managed to steal an enemy AWV during the last mission. They could try to arrange a buyer, but don't want to deal with the headaches associated with that, so they just start ripping out the valuable parts. They have 0 points in Engineer, so they roll 2 dice and take the lower result. The dice come up as a 4 and a 6, so they take the 4 which gives them 2 Supply Points.

- **Schmooze:** Say what your pilot does to improve relations with a Faction and make a Fortune Roll using an appropriate Action. Increase Trust according to the result: 1-3: one, 4/5: two, 6: three, Crit: five. You can spend 1 Personnel for +1d to the Schmooze roll, or to increase the result by 1 level. You can also spend 1 Personnel to take an extra Schmooze activity.

EXAMPLE: Demon wants to ease tensions with the Democratic Federated Systems a bit so he meets with Pars Piani of the Dark Room to discuss with her the layout of Fort Jovanol. He looks over the intel she shares about it, and adds more information based on his time in the fortress. He rolls his 2d Study and gets a 5 which adds 2 Trust to The Cenotaph's relationship with the DFS.

- **Train:** When you spend time bettering yourself mark one attribute XP or one Playbook XP. If you have the right Squad Training upgrade mark two XP instead. You can only train each XP track once per Downtime. You can also spend 1 Personnel to take an extra Train activity.

EXAMPLE: Pitchfork wants to improve her Engineer, an Insight Action, so she

spends a day reading technical manuals about her Agrarian and sending Dredge the occasional question. This effort gives her 1 XP in her Insight XP track, which is enough to fill it. She clears the track and can now add 1 point to any of the Insight Actions, and chooses Engineer as planned.

- **Enhance:** When you spend time to improve your vehicle add 1 mark to the Vehicle Enhance track. If you have the Testing Facility Squad upgrade mark 2 instead. When the track fills add a new Quirk to your Vehicle OR add a point to a Vehicle Action. You can also spend 1 Materiel to take an extra Enhance activity.

EXAMPLE: Scarecrow wants to improve her Claymore, so she's going to work to Enhance it. She spends some time running simulations on its limits to add 1 mark to its Enhance track, which fills it. After clearing the Enhance track she can choose to either gain a new Quirk or 1 Vehicle Action point. She takes the new Quirk "Overstrained Speed" now that she knows that she can push it beyond its stated speeds.

- **Cut Loose:** When your pilot cuts loose you'll remove some Stress from your Stress track. Pick another pilot and describe how the two of you spend time dealing with the pressure you're under. This can only be done as a Downtime action because to really dump some anxiety takes a fair bit of time. However, you can decide that your pilot skips the next mission (perhaps going AWOL) so they can cut loose, and you'll play a different member of the Squad for that mission. This might be a new squaddie, a friend, or an already familiar NPC, any of which will help further flesh out the squad's cast.

To see how much Stress you relieve, roll dice equal to the number of Ticks in your Connection Clock with the pilot joining you, heal Stress equal to the highest die result, then add another Tick to the Connection Clock and a new Belief to go with it. The accompanying pilot does not increase their Connection as they are often asymmetrical, they also do not add dice to the Cut Loose roll for participating. Cohorts cannot be the accompanying "pilot." Cohorts or other pilots can be present in the scene but they do not provide additional dice, and the scene should focus on the two required pilots. You can spend 1 Personnel point for +1d to the Cut Loose roll, or increase the result by 1. You can also spend 1 Personnel to take an extra Cut Loose activity.

If the Connection Clock fills, ask the target pilot for a truth about one of the Beliefs tied to them, then reset it to 1 Tick as you see them in a new light. It'll take time and effort to understand them again and relearn their rhythms, so the pilot erases all the Beliefs they have for that pilot, and writes a new one based on the question

asked. After they've revealed a truth about themselves you both take 1 XP which can be put into any attribute or into the pilot Playbook.

If you cut loose and roll to heal more Stress than you have then you've overindulged. Sometimes people get lost in the thing that makes them feel better; everything in moderation after all. When you overindulge you've behaved poorly and made choices you'll likely come to regret. This could express itself in a variety of ways, so choose one way you overindulged from the following: Attract Trouble (roll an additional Entanglement using the table and dice from the end of the previous Mission), Brag (take -2 Trust with your patron Faction), AWOL (Your pilot vanishes for a few weeks. Play a different pilot until this one returns from their "vacation." When your pilot returns they've also healed all their Harm), or Impropriety (Reset your Connection with the pilot that joined you to 0 as you make an ass of yourself. If your Connection is already 0 take the Level 1 Harm "alone."). At the end of your Downtime actions if you have Scars you will suffer 1 Stress per Scar unless you have Cut Loose at least once during the Downtime phase.

EXAMPLE: Nehalennia needs to remove some stress so she decides to Cut Loose with Demon. She decides that she's going to see if his tactical genius works in her favourite strategy game, and challenges him to a friendly match. She has 2 Ticks in her Connection Clock with him, so she rolls 2d. The highest result is a 5, clearing that much stress, then she adds another Tick to her Connection Clock with Demon and writes a new Belief about him. If she had 4 or less Stress she would Overindulge and have to pick from those options. If the Tick added to the Connection Clock filled it, she would ask him a question about one of her Beliefs about him, which he must answer truthfully, and then they both get 1 XP.

- **Manufacture:** See the Crafting Section on page 269.

EXAMPLE OF A DOWNTIME SCENE

After the last Mission Dredge wants to improve her ability to fight when outside of her AWV, so Sasha, Dredge's Player, decides to use a Downtime Activity to Train Prowess. Jess, Scarecrow's Player, says that she wanted to have a conversation between Dredge and Scarecrow about the recent Mission, and asks Sasha if it's ok if Scarecrow is present for the training. Sasha gives the go ahead, and the two Players begin conversing as their characters while they describe spending time at a firing range. Sasha marks 1 XP for Dredge's Prowess Training before they really get into this conversation.

Since both of them are shooting at targets the GM asks Jess if Scarecrow is also Training Prowess, but she says that while shooting at stationary targets will help Dredge,

Scarecrow would need a much greater challenge to improve her skill with guns. Sasha suggests that since the conversation between their Pilots is Scarecrow reprimanding Dredge for her incompetence as a combatant, maybe this could be a Cut Loose for her. Jess loves the idea as she was planning on having a Cut Loose during this Downtime Phase anyway, and so she really emphasizes the need for Scarecrow to get this off her chest.

Once it feels like the conversation has come to a head, Jess decides that it's time to roll and see how much Stress Scarecrow heals. She currently has 2 Ticks in her Connection Clock with Dredge, so she rolls 2d and gets a 4. Scarecrow had 5 Stress, and is left with 1. Jess decides that this means Scarecrow doesn't explode at Dredge, and Sasha thinks that Dredge takes the criticism well; he is at the shooting range after all. With that resolved it's time for someone else to have a Downtime Activity.

CHAPTER 09: SQUAD PLAYBOOKS

INSERT DOUBLE PAGE SQUAD PLAYBOOK CHAPTER ART

Unlucky's Strafe is stuck in a bog (water, mud, cattails, etc.). Arms and legs bent as it sits up, trying to push itself out with one hand while it grips a heavy chain with the other. The other end of the chain is attached to Scarecrow's Claymore, which is pulling on the Strafe. Eclipse has walkie talkie in hand and is giving directions to the pilots. Nearby Tower has the cockpit door open of their otherwise cloaked mech, and they are keeping watch with a pair of binoculars. Tower's mech can't really be seen, other than that it is relatively small, and bipedal. The tall marsh grasses are flattened where it stands.

INSERT FULL PAGE CONSULATE ART HERE.

DFS Consulate giving a presentation/auction about a new weapon/device. The podium has the DFS logo on it. Presentation's image shows a small version of the Frontline art. The device (about the size of an engine block) sits on a pedestal on stage alongside the presenter. Two undercover security types stand near the device, and another is visible backstage. SINGLE PAGE ART

THE CONSULATE

Ten-dollar words.

The War complicates everything, especially communication. The right gesture, sound, or look can launch a thousand ships. You've got the skills to gesture those ships to the right place, at the right time.

CHOOSE THE CONSULATE IF:

- You want to see the politicians and generals in formal wear at fancy balls.
- You want to spread propaganda and manipulate expectations.
- You want to speak for your Faction while simultaneously gathering intel for it.

XP TRIGGER

Execute a successful negotiation, espionage, sabotage, or propaganda operation.

STARTING UPGRADES

- **Training (Insight):** Choose Insight, Prowess, Resolve, or Playbooks. When taking the Train Downtime Activity for Insight, take 2XP instead of 1. *A space for deep thought, to let you hone your insight.*
- **Quarters:** Your FOB has comfortable sleeping space for everyone. Otherwise the squad's pilots sleep away from the FOB in vulnerable locations.

CONSULATE ABILITIES

- **Silver Tongues:** Each PC may add +1 action rating to Command, Consort, or Sway (up to a max rating of 3).
- **Accord:** Sometimes friends are as good as public support. You may count up to three +3 Squad and/or Faction statuses you hold as if they are Heart.
- **High Society:** It's all about who you know. Take +1 Trust during Downtime with your Patron Faction or hiring Faction, and +1d to gather info about the region's elite.
- **Friends in High Places:** take +1d when making a Supply roll. This gives Independent Missions a 0d Supply roll during reward if it doesn't already have one.

- **Noble Officer:** take +1d when challenging someone to a duel. Take +1d when fighting against your duel opponent.
- **PR Campaign:** Pilots and Cohorts take +1d when attacking someone's reputation, or bolstering the reputation of the Squad or one of its members.
- **Sponsor:** When you advance your Tier, it costs half the Supply points it normally would. Who is your sponsor? Why do they help you?
- **Veteran:** Choose a special ability from another crew.

CONSULATE UPGRADES

- **Consulate rigging:** 2 of each pilot's items are perfectly concealed.
- **Friends Everywhere:** Your Squad's Tier and other squads' Tiers count as one lower for Entanglements.
- **Elite Rooks:** rook Cohorts belonging to your Squad get +1d to Quality rolls for rook related actions.
- **Elite Adepts:** adept Cohorts belonging to your Squad get +1d to Quality rolls for adept related actions.
- **Composed:** Each pilot gets +1 Stress box. This costs three upgrades to unlock instead of one.

EXAMPLE CONSULATE ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Gethesmane, a hearty ambassador
- Arbir, a retired general
- Kiffen, a tired butler
- Mirage, a corrupt chef

INSERT FULL PAGE FRONTLINE ART HERE.

DFS Frontline Balisong AWV using a standard rifle with the device attached to it, as shown in the presentation's video in battle. It's firing a large beam that is punching through the left half of a Myriad Knight's torso. SINGLE PAGE ART

THE FRONTLINE

Blood and steel.

Advanced tech. Fancy flying. Clever words. Sure, sounds good. At the end of the day, the War demands violence. You provide.

CHOOSE THE FRONTLINE IF:

- You want to see the blood mixing with the mud in the ugliest conflict zones.
- You want other squads and Factions to fear your name.
- You want to feel like your Faction's most expendable pawns.

XP TRIGGER

Execute a successful battle, defence, sabotage, or smash & grab operation.

STARTING UPGRADES

- **Training (Prowess):** Choose Insight, Prowess, Resolve, or Playbooks. When taking the Train Downtime Activity for Prowess, take 2XP instead of 1. *A space that lets you move freely and exercise your prowess.*
- **Toughs Fire Team:** Gain a fire team of warriors, bouncers, killers, etc. that works for the Squad. They have Quality and scale equal to the Squad's Tier.

FRONTLINE ABILITIES

- **Dangerous:** Each PC may add +1 action rating to Hunt, Struggle, or Wreck (up to a max rating of 3).
- **Blood Brothers:** When you fight alongside your fire teams in combat, they give +1d for teamwork rolls (setup and group actions). All of your Cohorts get the toughs type for free (if they're already toughs, add another type).
- **Shock & Awe:** When you execute an assault plan, take +1d to the engagement roll.
- **Fiends:** Fear is as good as respect. You may count each negative point of non-Patron Faction relationship as if it was Heart up to a max of 3.
- **Forged in the Fire:** Each PC has been toughened by cruel experience. In combat

you get +1d to resistance rolls and you exhaust 1 fewer Quirk (minimum 1) for vehicle resistance.

- **Sponsor:** When you advance your Tier, it costs half the Supply points it normally would. Who is your sponsor? Why do they help you?
- **War Dogs:** When you're in a vendetta (-3 Squad status), your crew does not suffer -1 hold and pilots still get three Downtime activities, instead of just two.
- **Veteran:** Choose a special ability from another crew.

FRONTLINE UPGRADES

- **Frontline rigging:** Each pilot gets 2 free Load of weapons or armour.
- **Friends Everywhere:** Your Squad's Tier and other squads' Tiers count as one lower for Entanglements.
- **Elite rovers:** rover Cohorts belonging to your Squad get +1d to Quality rolls for rover related actions.
- **Elite toughs:** tough Cohorts belonging to your Squad get +1d to Quality rolls for tough related actions.
- **Hardened:** Each pilot gets +1 Scar box. This costs three upgrades to unlock instead of one.

EXAMPLE FRONTLINE ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Menefer, a troublesome cop
- Schuyler, a stalwart doctor
- Qing Yuan, a sly mob boss
- Lyn, a bar owner

INSERT FULL PAGE LOGISTICS ART HERE.

ER Inc Logistics using a crane to load the weapon into a box on an EEL. A blue collar worker (wearing an ER Inc logo trucker cap) is signing a clipboard while chatting with a person in a suit (wearing a DFS logo lapel pin). A Strafe and Claymore stand guard, along with infantry. The EEL, Strafe and Infantry have the ER Inc logo on them, and the Claymore has the DFS logo. SINGLE PAGE ART

THE LOGISTICS

Dedicated delivery.

The instability of the War makes getting from A to B a serious task. Especially if there's something precious being moved. You get the goods delivered come hell or high water.

CHOOSE THE LOGISTICS IF:

- You want to see many different locations as you travel across the world.
- You want missions that don't hinge on violence or socializing.
- You want to be the veins that keep your Faction's war effort functioning.

XP TRIGGER

Execute a successful delivery or acquire new clients or contraband sources.

STARTING UPGRADES

- **Training (Prowess):** Choose Insight, Prowess, Resolve, or Playbooks. When taking the Train Downtime Activity for Prowess, take 2XP instead of 1. *A space that lets you move freely and exercise your prowess.*
- **Motor Pool:** A first level Motor Pool means you pay half the Materiel cost (rounded up) when procuring new vehicles. At second level the Squad and its Cohorts gain access to Load 3 temporary vehicles for free.

LOGISTICS ABILITIES

- **On the Move:** One vehicle gets a free 1d Upkeep roll. Get +1d to gather information about the route for the next mission.
- **All Hands:** During Downtime, one of your Cohorts may perform a Downtime activity for the crew to acquire an asset, schmooze, or work on a long-term project.
- **Custom OS:** Your vehicles' systems make no sense to most programs. They are immune to hacking by anyone outside of the squad.
- **Just Passing Through:** During Downtime, take +1 Trust with the Faction whose territory you're in at the start of Downtime. When your Trust with the local Faction is 5 or more, you get +1d to deceive people when you pass yourselves off as ordinary

citizens.

- **Leverage:** Your Squad supplies contraband for all Factions. Your success is good for them. Whenever you gain Rep, gain +1 Rep.
- **Scroungers:** When you use the Salvage Downtime activity take +1d. Once per Downtime phase the Squad may ignore the requirement of scrapping a vehicle to perform the Salvage activity.
- **Renegades:** Each PC may add +1 action rating to Scan, Bombard, or Maneuver (up to a max rating of 3).
- **Veteran:** Choose a special ability from another crew.

LOGISTICS UPGRADES

- **Smuggler panels:** 2 Load of items for each pilots' vehicle are perfectly concealed.
- **Mobile base:** The squad's FOB gains the *mobility* descriptor and can be moved to a new location as a Downtime activity.
- **Camouflage:** The squad's vehicles are perfectly concealed when at rest. They blend in as part of the environment, or as an uninteresting civilian vehicle (your choice). Changing the camouflage can be done for free at the start of a mission.
- **Elite rovers:** rover Cohorts belonging to your Squad get +1d to Quality rolls for rover related actions.
- **Reliable:** Each vehicle gets +1 Breakdown box. This costs three upgrades to unlock instead of one.

EXAMPLE LOGISTICS ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Shafaqat, an app dealer
- Milandu, a vile chemist
- Nahuatl, a wired forger
- Addison, a terrorist

INSERT FULL PAGE MECH CAV ART HERE.

Independent Mech Cav attacking the Logistics transport and taking a box labelled TOP SECRET with the DFS logo. A bloody ER Inc trucker cap is on the ground somewhere in the image. The battered box is being pulled from the still smoking wreck of the ER Inc EEL by a trio of bulky guerrillas. An Amphitheatre, scrubbed of ER Inc markings and converted into a transport vehicle, waits nearby. An Agrarian carrying a Balisong's rifle, with a Claymore's cannon jury rigged onto it's shoulder is still shooting at someone off screen. SINGLE PAGE ART.

THE MECHANIZED CAVALRY

Roaring machine beasts.

Always on the move your strides span cities. Your grasp mechanically meets your reach.
This machine throne is your divine right to rule.

CHOOSE THE MECHANIZED CAVALRY IF:

- You want your game to focus on the Vehicles as much as possible.
- You want to feel like a force to be reckoned with.
- You want to be the sledgehammer of your Faction's war effort.

XP TRIGGER

Execute a successful battle, delivery, or rescue operation.

STARTING UPGRADES

- **Rovers Fire Team:** Gain a fire team of drivers, astronauts, urban spelunkers, etc. that works for the Squad. They have Quality and scale equal to the Squad's Tier.
- **Testing Facilities:** when taking the Enhance Downtime Activity the Vehicle marks 2 boxes on the Enhance track instead of 1.

MECHANIZED CAVALRY ABILITIES

- **Fast and Furious:** Each PC may add +1 action rating to Maneuver, Manipulate, or Battle (up to a max rating of 3).
- **Scorched Earth:** The scale of your conflicts is large, very large, and that's tolerated. You don't lose trust when you cause property damage.
- **Reavers:** When you Push Yourself while employing speed or aggression with a vehicle action roll you only exhaust a Quirk if your result is 4 or higher.
- **Formation:** When a group action is taken with a vehicle action every participant can choose to spend 1 Stress. If they do they get +1d.
- **Custom Work:** take +1d to Engineer actions on your own vehicle.
- **Combined Arms:** when you assist a pilot using a drastically different type of vehicle than your own (or you are infantry assisting a vehicle or a vehicle assisting

infantry) you may select the same benefit multiple times.

- **Air Superiority:** If you or your allies are the only combatants in the area with active aircraft, take improved Position on all vehicle actions.
- **Veteran:** Choose a special ability from another crew.

MECHANIZED CAVALRY UPGRADES

- **Cavalry Hardpoints:** 2 free Load of weapons or armour for each pilot's vehicle.
- **Repair Bay:** This counts as a workshop if the Squad does not already have one. If the Squad already has the Workshop upgrade Repair Bay gives +1d to Long Term Projects involving vehicles and vehicle gear, the salvage Downtime activity, and the repair Downtime activity.
- **Elite rovers:** rover Cohorts belonging to your Squad get +1d to Quality rolls for rover related actions.
- **Elite adepts:** adept Cohorts belonging to your Squad get +1d to Quality rolls for adept related actions.
- **Efficiencies:** Each vehicle gets +1 Quirk. Vehicles start with 5 Quirks, and Vehicles can have a maximum of 9 Quirks. This costs three upgrades to unlock instead of one.

EXAMPLE MECHANIZED CAVALRY ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Keahi, a fiery engineer
- Avinoam, a diplomatic pilot
- Lorand, a devious soldier
- Spika, a valorous informant

INSERT FULL PAGE PROFITEERS ART HERE.

Myriad Profiteers buying the slightly battered box. The box sits on the ground between one of the guerillas who pulled the box from the EEL in the Mech Cav piece, and a Myriad soldier wearing ceramic armor. The soldier is half turned gesturing open handed at several crates of medical supplies behind them. The guerilla has a sawn off shotgun held by their leg in one hand, and is using their other hand to point at the medical crates. The modified Agrarian stands in the background facing a Myriad Knight that has a mismatched left arm and half of its torso. They aren't being actively hostile to each other, but are clearly prepared to be.

SINGLE PAGE ART

THE PROFITEERS

Everything has a price.

The powerful take and the weak buy. Everyone needs something in spite of the War and you have what the weak need. Bleed them for all they're worth.

(product might be propaganda, information/news, arms, food/water, medical supplies, spectacle)

CHOOSE THE PROFITEERS IF:

- You want to have a supplementary supply line free from your Patron.
- You want to enter tense negotiations about contraband.
- You want to meet the clandestine and criminal elements of the world.

XP TRIGGER

Acquire product supply, execute clandestine/covert sales, or secure new clientele.

STARTING UPGRADES

- **Training (Resolve):** When taking the Train Downtime Activity for Resolve, take 2XP instead of 1. *A space that allows you to steel yourself and focus your resolve.*
- **Secure FOB:** Your FOB has perimeter defenses such as automated turrets, trip wire explosives, or a sturdy wall. This helps protect your Squad against attacks while at home. This can be taken twice, with the defenses becoming more effective with the second upgrade.

PROFITEERS ABILITIES

- **Corner Kid:** Each PC may add +1 action rating to Sway, Struggle, Survey (up to a max rating of 3)
- **Barter:** you can spend Supply Points (minimum 1) equal to the current number of total Ticks in your Drive clocks to add 1 Tick to a Drive clock.
- **The Good Stuff:** Your merchandise is exquisite. The product Quality is equal to your Tier+2. When you deal with a Squad or Faction, the GM will tell you who among them is hooked on your product (one, a few, many, or all).

- **App Market:** Through secret technology or hard-won experience, you have discovered how to prepare your product for sale to Apps and/or Als. They do not pay in Supply Points. What do they pay with?
- **Of The People:** Take improved Position when acting against those who want what you are selling, and +1d to gather info about where your product is most wanted.
- **Hooked:** Your Squad members use your product. Add the brutal, unreliable, or wild flaw to your Fire Teams to give them +1 Quality.
- **Sponsor:** When you advance your Tier, it costs half the Supply points it normally would. Who is your sponsor? Why do they help you?
- **Veteran:** Choose a special ability from another crew.

PROFITEERS UPGRADES

- **Profiteer rigging:** Each pilot gets one item that is concealed and has no Load.
- **Friends Everywhere:** Your Squad's Tier and other squads' Tiers count as one lower for Entanglements.
- **Elite rooks:** rook Cohorts belonging to your Squad get +1d to Quality rolls for rook related actions.
- **Elite toughs:** tough Cohorts belonging to your Squad get +1d to Quality rolls for tough related actions.
- **Composed:** Each pilot gets +1 Stress box. This costs three upgrades to unlock instead of one.

EXAMPLE PROFITEERS ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Dehateh, a formal judge
- Sovann, a tidy smuggler
- Gemi, a freedom fighter
- Nuru, an arms dealer

INSERT FULL PAGE RECON ART HERE.

Norrish Recon stealing and replacing the box. The Myriad Profiteers have settled in for the night, with the box sitting strapped down on the back of a flatbed truck. A group of Norrish infiltrators using optical camo, including a small AWV with optical camo, are taking the box containing the device and replacing it with a duplicate. A pair of armored Myriad soldiers smoke amicably in the foreground, completely unaware.

THE RECON

The best way in, way through, and way past.

Clearing the way isn't what you do. Why go through the trouble when there are ways unseen? A person just needs the right point of view to see them.

CHOOSE THE RECON IF:

- You want to participate in Missions of questionable legitimacy.
- You want to explore the world and steal its secrets.
- You want to be an expert in avoiding straight up fights.

XP TRIGGER

Execute a successful reconnaissance, espionage, sabotage, or theft operation.

STARTING UPGRADES

- **Training (Prowess):** Choose Insight, Prowess, Resolve, or Playbooks. When taking the Train Downtime Activity for Prowess, take 2XP instead of 1. *A space that lets you move freely and exercise your prowess.*
- **Hidden FOB:** The squad's FOB is hidden from even intensive searches. If it's discovered, a Long Term Project will be required to once again conceal it.

RECON ABILITIES

- **Everyone Steals:** Each PC may add +1 action rating to Prowl, Finesse, or Survey (up to a max rating of 3).
- **AR Echoes:** From weird experience or strange technology, all Squad members gain the ability to see and interact with the AR that would normally be hidden from sight because it is private or offline.
- **Pack Rats:** Your FOB is a jumble of... requisitioned items. When you roll to acquire an asset, take +1d.
- **Sponsor:** When you advance your Tier, it costs half the Supply points it normally would. Who is your sponsor? Why do they help you?
- **Second Story:** When you execute a clandestine infiltration, you get +1d to the

engagement roll.

- **Slippery:** When you roll entanglements, roll twice and keep the one you want. When you Schmooze, take +1d.
- **Synchronized:** When you perform a group action, you may count multiple 6s from different rolls as a critical success.
- **Veteran:** Choose a special ability from another crew.

RECON UPGRADES

- **Recon rigging:** Each pilot gets 2 free Load of tools or gear.
- **Rare maps and the means through.**
- **Elite rooks:** rook Cohorts belonging to your Squad get +1d to Quality rolls for rook related actions.
- **Elite skulks:** skulk Cohorts belonging to your Squad get +1d to Quality rolls for skulk related actions.
- **Composed:** Each pilot gets +1 Stress box. This costs three upgrades to unlock instead of one.

EXAMPLE RECON ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Coin, a callous explorer
- Misha, a connected fixer
- Ihiaka, a benevolent collector
- Zhen, a lithe bartender

INSERT FULL PAGE R&D ART HERE.

Norrish R&D opening the box and scanning its contents. A group of scientists wearing lab coats with the Norrish logo on them stand around the device as it sits on an examination table. The battered, empty box with TOP SECRET written on it is discarded nearby. The scientists are surrounded by computer backs, tools, chemical workstations, and various types of scanning equipment. SINGLE PAGE ART

THE R&D

Making today into tomorrow.

The only way to win the War is to gain a significant technological advantage. So you pull out every dirty trick to get ahead because you can be damn sure the enemy won't hesitate.

CHOOSE THE R&D IF:

- You want to create bleeding edge technology.
- You want to meddle with powers beyond your understanding.
- You want to be the mind that feeds your Faction's thirst for war.

XP TRIGGER

Advance the technology of the war or embody your Faction's precepts in action.

STARTING UPGRADES

- **Training (Resolve):** When taking the Train Downtime Activity for Resolve, take 2XP instead of 1. *A space that allows you to steel yourself and focus your resolve.*
- **Adepts Fire Team:** Gain a fire team of academics, scientists, mechanics, etc. that works for the Squad. They have Quality and scale equal to the Squad's Tier.

R&D ABILITIES

- **Graduate:** Each PC may add +1 action rating to Interface, Study, or Sway (up to a max rating of 3).
- **Grounded:** You get +1d to resistance rolls (and exhaust one fewer Quirk when your vehicle resists) against AR threats. You get +1d to healing rolls when you have AR Harm.
- **Experimental Comms:** You may use teamwork with any Squad member, regardless of the distance separating you. By taking 1 Stress, your whispered message is heard by every Squad member.
- **Conviction:** Each PC gains an additional tragedy: Experimentation. When you cut loose with a focus on experimentation and gather a significant data set, you don't overindulge if you clear excess Stress. In addition, your theories will give you +1d

on any one action roll you make—from now until you cut loose again.

- **Dire Assistance:** Your Squad has acquired a powerful but chained AI. This could be very useful but the desires and morals of an AI are very different from those who bleed.
- **Irons In The Fire:** Your Squad is excellent at multitasking. When you work on Long Term Projects during Downtime and have multiple incomplete projects, you get +1d but must split the resulting ticks between the projects as evenly as possible.
- **For The Greater Good:** Your Cohorts are fully committed to the research. They will undertake any service, no matter how dangerous or strange. They gain +1d to rolls against those who would attempt to halt progress.
- **Veteran:** Choose a special ability from another crew.

R&D UPGRADES

- **R&D rigging:** Each pilot gets 2 free Load of documents or programs.
- **Laboratory:** This counts as a workshop if the Squad does not already have one. If the Squad already has the Workshop upgrade Laboratory gives +1d to Long Term Projects involving biological and chemical components, and the Recover Downtime activity.
- **Elite adepts:** adept Cohorts belonging to your Squad get +1d to Quality rolls for adept related actions.
- **Elite toughs:** tough Cohorts belonging to your Squad get +1d to Quality rolls for tough related actions.
- **Hardened:** Each pilot gets +1 Scar box. This costs three upgrades to unlock instead of one.

EXAMPLE R&D ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Mastod, an irate scholar
- Owl, a logical zealot
- Twitch, a star navigator
- Utmai, a deadly noble

INSERT FULL PAGE  ART HERE.

Jovangellian Redacted assassinating R&D in a research facility and planting explosives on the device. The same shot as the R&D art except a couple bodies of the R&D scientists are on the ground bleeding. One of the scientists is running away and is shot in the back, blood spurting from their chest. Three darkly armored assassins marked with the Jovangellian logo are present; one has shot the scientist in the back, one is planting explosives on the device, and one is standing guard. They carry silenced SMGs. There are more explosives planted on the computer banks.

THE [REDACTED]

Subtle violence.

Some people just have too much blood in them. You help them with that problem and keep the mess from spilling out.

CHOOSE THE [REDACTED] IF:

- You want to commit hidden violence.
- You want to be the morally dubious hand of your Faction's authority.
- You want to be the bogeyman other squads whisper about.

XP TRIGGER

Execute a successful accident, disappearance, murder, or ransom operation.

STARTING UPGRADES

- **Training (Insight):** Choose Insight, Prowess, Resolve, or Playbooks. When taking the Train Downtime Activity for Insight, take 2XP instead of 1. *A space for deep thought, to let you hone your insight.*
- **Training (Prowess):** Choose Insight, Prowess, Resolve, or Playbooks. When taking the Train Downtime Activity for Prowess, take 2XP instead of 1. *A space that lets you move freely and exercise your prowess.*

[REDACTED] ABILITIES

- **Deadly:** Each PC may add +1 action rating to Hunt, Prowl, or Struggle (up to a max rating of 3).
- **Dire Needs:** Due to hard-won respect and contacts, your employers understand the necessity of what you do. You can choose not to lose trust from breaking ROE related to the treatment of civilians and enemy soldiers on a mission.
- **Bio-solvent:** the Squad has been trained in the special application of a topical solvent that quickly dissolves dead flesh. Take 3 Stress to properly apply the bio-solvent.
- **No Traces:** When you keep an operation quiet or make it look like an accident, you

get half the rep value of the target (round up) instead of zero. Additionally, if you don't lose any trust with your employer Faction on a mission, take +1 rep.

- **Sponsor:** When you advance your Tier, it costs half the Supply points it normally would. Who is your sponsor? Why do they help you?

- **Predators:** When you use stealth or subterfuge to commit murder, take +1d to the engagement roll.

- **Vipers:** When you acquire or craft poisons, you get +1 result level to your roll. When you employ a poison, you are specially prepared to be immune to its Effects.

- **Veteran:** Choose a special ability from another crew.

UPGRADES

- **rigging:** Each pilot gets 2 free Load of weapons or gear.

- **Friends Everywhere:** Your Squad's Tier and other squads' Tiers count as one lower for Entanglements.

- **Elite skulks:** skulk Cohorts belonging to your Squad get +1d to Quality rolls for skulk related actions.

- **Elite toughs:** tough Cohorts belonging to your Squad get +1d to Quality rolls for tough related actions.

- **Hardened:** Each pilot gets +1 Scar box. This costs three upgrades to unlock instead of one.

EXAMPLE ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Setrad, a vicious teacher

- Beanfield, a proxy hunter

- Bellamy, an agile CEO

- Heat, a slow hacker

INSERT GAME MASTER ART HERE

Some children playing with toy mechs in the shadow of a destroyed real mech. Two crouched children hold toy mechs next to a long dead wreck of a Shotel. Some other children hold sticks like rifles and play war. Two of them are doing an overly dramatic recreation of the REDACTED art where the scientist is being shot in the back. A wrecked Iron Star is nearby as well; likely it and the Shotel killed each other. The space has grown green with time, but there's still visible damage to the land, in the form of craters and shattered trees. DOUBLE PAGE SPREAD

CHAPTER 10: THE GAME MASTER

Beam Saber is about pilots and their massive war machines. There will be times when it is appropriate to focus on the pilots; their relationships, moral beliefs, and their mental and physical wounds. Other times the spotlight should be on their vehicles; metal giants crossing blades, transport trucks laden with stolen cargo speeding away from pursuers, and jets twisting around one another, trying to get the upper hand in a dance of angels. As the GM an important part of your job is moving the spotlight between these aspects and the players as a film director would. Chase the narrative alongside the players.

GM GOALS

The GM should try to achieve the following goals:

- **Play to find out what happens.** There are 3 parties that have input into the story: the GM, the players, and the dice. Don't override any party's decisions to direct the game towards an outcome you've already planned out. This way EVERYONE gets to be surprised by the story that develops!
- **Fill the world with detail.** Every NPC needs a name, look, motive, and methods. Every location needs a Quality that describes it. Every situation needs to be surrounded by a full world.
- **Convey the world honestly.** When you need to tell the players what their surroundings look like, what NPCs do, and what happens because of all this, speak with honesty. Don't lie to the players, and don't favour anyone over others.
- **Ensure everyone at the table is safe.** As the GM a lot of the responsibility for maintaining Lines and Veils (see page 236) will fall to you. Encourage everyone to work together to stay safe, and remember that includes you as well. Ask the table to check in during and after dark or heavy scenes.

Your goals are what you should be aiming to do as GM, and you fulfill these with your GM Actions being directed by your GM Principles.

GM PRINCIPLES

- **Be a fan of the Pilots.** Be excited for their stories, victories, and suffering, but make sure you aren't actively pushing them towards defeat. The War is hard enough without the GM leaning on the scales.
- **Let everything flow from the fiction.** There's no need for the GM to actively prepare the story. There will be an inciting incident that starts the story, the PCs will act, and there will be consequences. Events will speed up and get more serious as victories and defeats stack on top of each other in a teetering tower that heightens the tension. If a player says they use an ability, tell them hold on to that and ask what they do? Once the Position and Effect for that action are established THEN they can decide to use an ability that might change the situation.
- **Address the pilots.** When addressing in fiction concerns, such as a pilot's actions, speak to the player with their pilot's name. This brings the fiction to the front giving the pilot desires, power, and life.
- **Address the players.** When addressing out of fiction concerns, such as a player's desires for the direction of the story, speak to the player themselves. This brings the real world to the front centering the player's desires, concerns, and feelings.
- **Fill the world with inequality.** There are cities blasted to ruins because they are too close to the front, while other population centres less than 100km away only ever notice The War as troop movements and distant thunder. The poor are being conscripted to fight, while wealthy scions can avoid combat with the right donation. Populations survive on rationed necessities, but the black market circumvents this for some. Where does The War creep in?
- **Make The War the enemy, not the soldiers.** This war has been going for a long time and is more devastating than any person could ever be. Show this by giving every NPC humanity. Everyone has someone they care for whether it's because that makes survival easier, or just more tolerable. Humanize individuals, and make groups monstrous through cold calculations or dangerous acts of passion. Individuals can still be monsters, but they come from a society that produces and empowers them. Look to the 1914 Christmas Truce for a moment when soldiers fought The War and not each other.
- **Make The War too big to defeat.** The War affects multiple worlds and the star lanes in between. There are too many with their livelihoods and wealth tied up in the conflict. The best possible outcome would be to push The War out of sight so it could be out of mind, but most will have to settle for surviving until they can get out.
- **Make the Pilots feel small, and the Vehicles feel POWERFUL.** This isn't saying to

make the Pilots feel ineffective, just that as people they are much smaller than Vehicles, Squads, and Factions. They can still get things done, but it might not be on the scale they wish it was. This should constantly be contrasted with the power and size available to them through their Vehicles; even the smallest of these machines are as tall as a 3 story house. Enemy Vehicles should feel even larger and more powerful, especially when the Pilots are outside of their own Vehicles. These things are terrifying whether you're behind the controls or in danger of being absentmindedly stepped on.

- **Consider the risk.** Pilots lead dangerous lives, and most of their actions will be with a Risky Position. If they are carrying momentum off a success their Position might be Controlled instead. If they just failed a roll, had a complication, or are improvising, it's probably Desperate. Trust your instincts but don't be afraid to negotiate and revise.
- **Hold on lightly.** This isn't a competitive game and doesn't require hardline rulings. If someone, yourself included, wants to take back a statement that's ok, but consider what it means if dice have already been rolled.

GM ACTIONS

When it's the GM's turn to act but they aren't sure what to do the following actions are a good place to start.

- **Ask questions.** Your first and most versatile tool for responding to the pilots' actions is to ask questions. Are you focusing fire on the enemy ace or suppressing the squad? Did anyone bring an invitation to the masquerade? Are you avoiding Harm with a resistance roll or armor? If you're unsure what to do, ask a question and act from there.
- **Provide opportunities & follow the player's lead.** The War is filled with potential missions for the squad. Sometimes these will come from the officers above, sometimes the pilots will take the lead, and occasionally both groups will agree on the way forward. If the player's have an idea for a mission they want to do work with them to have their assigned mission match those desires, or discuss what happens when their Squad acts independently. Try asking these questions:
 - Are you targeting a specific Squad or Faction?
 - Are you targeting a Squad weaker, stronger, or about the same as you?
 - Is your aim to seize a Squad Upgrade, hurt the target, aid yourselves, or aid another squad?
 - Is there a specific area you want to target?

- Is there a specific resource you want to acquire?

Sometimes the available Missions won't be fair or consistent. The intel given to the Squad isn't always the complete picture, both in regards to their superiors' motives and the resources of the enemy. There are only five things that the Squad needs to know before they start a Mission:

- The **Briefing** is a summary of the situation that necessitates the Mission.
- The **Objective** is what the Mission is meant to accomplish.
- The **Employer** is the Squad that wants the Objective accomplished.
- The **Target** is the probable identity of the opposing force.
- The **Rules Of Engagement** are actions that the Employer forbids the Pilots from doing.

If the Squad gathers information about the mission they may find out other Squads that are interested in the Objective, possible complications, or confidential intelligence about the situation.

- **Cut to the challenge.** This game feeds on momentum. When the players start a mission jump to contact with their first obstacle. If they're having a quiet dialogue during Downtime skip the small talk and start with the tough questions being asked. Paint the picture and drop them in the thick of it.
- **Telegraph trouble before it strikes.** Foreshadowing is extremely important, even if it's for a danger currently riding a pressure wave out of a barrel. Describe the threat in the moment it's happening such that there's no confusion about the Harm that will befall the pilots if they don't act. Then ask "what do you do?" This allows the players to create unexpected and skillful ways to avoid danger while also making the potential consequences clear to everyone if they should roll a 1-3 or 4/5. If the danger isn't that immediate consider starting a Clock to show the trouble getting closer as the Clock fills.
- **Follow through.** With the threat properly telegraphed no one will be surprised when it proves to be as dire as it appeared. Have the pilots arrested. Shoot them. Break their hearts. If the player really doesn't want that to happen they can choose to resist, so you don't have to treat them with kid gloves.
- **Initiate action with an NPC.** Sometimes the execution of a threat is too skillful for a pilot to react. Instead of telegraphing the trouble describe the damage happening before the pilots can be proactive. Inflict the consequence immediately, and the pilot can react by resisting the danger. Use this to make an NPC seem incredibly skilled and dangerous, so save it for those who are masters of their trade and only when they play to their strengths.

Alternatively give these hyper competent NPCs Rival Moves! This will help some players

agree with the Consequences that are inflicted outside of the typical game flow.

Calling these Consequences Rival Moves means that there's a finite amount of times that the GM will use that trick.

- **Tell them the consequences and ask.** When a pilot initiates action or has a choice to act on tell them the probable consequences for the paths before them, then ask "what do you do?"
- **Tick a Clock.** Use post its, index cards, or a dedicated sheet to draw Clocks when it seems appropriate. Make sure everyone can see them so they can help relate them to the fiction. Ticking a Clock will increase tension and follow through on consequences without ending a conflict entirely. It is also a way to be honest about inflicting a consequence without directly Harming the pilots; adding 3 ticks to a clock will almost never be as bad as taking a Level 3 Harm.
- **Offer a Collateral Die.** Give a pilot a choice to have an interesting consequence to their actions regardless of success or failure, and in exchange they receive a bonus die. If any players have an idea for an interesting consequence feel free to take their suggestions, or actively ask them.
- **Think off-screen.** The war continues out of sight of the pilots and players. Consider what impact the current scene and mission may have on the other squads and Factions. Think about what obstacles are in the area and might be drawn to the current action, or waiting down the line.

PLAYER COUNT

Beam Saber is recommended for 3-4 Players plus a GM. Why that number? That Player count recommendation is based on my personal GMing experiences. I have GMed Beam Saber for 5 Players before, and in those games I often feel like I can't provide enough spotlight on any of the Pilots. It feels very much like "alright, you did your Action, but we can't really follow up on it because it's been too long since this other Player has had the spotlight, so we're going to jump over there and EVENTUALLY get back to the follow up on what you just did." This can badly break up the narrative flow, and some Players will lose the story thread because it's been 20 minutes since they did anything.

If you aren't concerned about that issue when GMing, then the other considerations are that the Squad will have more resources (Stress, Quirks, Load, Harm/Damage, etc) to spend in each Mission, and that the rules don't scale Supply Point income with the number of Players. This means that individual Missions won't press the group hard, but that what resources they do spend will be harder to recover, giving the game a stronger sense of The War being one of attrition.

SESSION ZERO

Before the first session with the first mission happens the players need to have their Session Zero. A session zero is the foundation for a campaign. It builds both the narrative and, more importantly, social foundations of the game. This section has steps to follow for laying those foundations.

LINES, VEILS, AND THE X CARD

Beam Saber is designed to tell the harsh tale of people trying to physically and emotionally survive an all encompassing war, BUT it is still a game, and games are supposed to be fun. Nothing ruins a person's fun faster than being exposed to emotionally charged situations that they did not agree to experience, regardless of if they are a player or GM. This is where Lines, Veils, and the X Card come in. Even if all the people involved in the game would assume that they are on the same page about a harrowing topic (such as when everyone is part of the same marginalized group) it should still be brought up as a Line or Veil because different people have different tolerances for engaging with those topics in play and in the real world. If someone at the table uses these tools in bad faith (such as using them to purposefully ruin the fun of others or introduce uncomfortable topics) the group should have a serious discussion about whether or not this person is an acceptable addition to the game.

There are also many other safety tools designed for tabletop role playing games, so if you aren't a fan of the ones presented here, don't hesitate to find some that work for you and your group.

LINES

A Line is something that the group agrees will NEVER come up in the narrative of the game (not even "off screen" or in universe), with the reason being that at least one person in the group would have an emotional reaction to the subject that would ruin their play experience. Does this mean that there will be no dark themes? Of course not, but the world is a bad enough place that we can imagine dark stories that won't make players feel emotionally exploited.

These boundaries are set up by having an open discussion with everyone at the table. Ask everyone if there are any topics that they want left out of the game, and make a list of those that everyone can reference. Consider finding a way to make additions to the list anonymously (such as by putting them on index cards, shuffling them, and collecting them into a list, or by using a shared Google Doc) because some Players will want privacy regarding what Lines they add. If you figure out who anonymously suggested a Line, don't say anything because it's not yours to share. Each player should feel safe and free from

judgment to express topics that the game should not include. No one has to explain why they don't want to explore the topic, that may be very personal and private. If they do divulge their reasons treat them and their reasons with respect regardless of your own feelings on the matter.

Lines can be added to the game at any time and all of the above applies for those added after Session Zero. Sometimes a Player discovers a Line that they forgot existed for them, or find that a topic bothers them more than they realized. The addition of this Line may be accompanied by the use of the X-Card (see below), or a less formalized halt of the game. Work with the Player who added the new Line (or changed a Veil into one) to see what they need to feel comfortable and safe.

VEILS

A veil is a topic that may come up in play, doesn't ruin anyone's fun, but is also something that at least one person at the table does NOT want to linger on. Veils are sort of a halfway point between open topics and those on the list of Lines. If they come up in play that's alright but it won't be described in detail, and the scene will fade to black or cut away to avoid giving it further attention.

Like lines, veils should be discussed as a group and a list made of the topics to be wary of. Further they can be added to the list at any time if a Player realizes they are uncomfortable directly addressing a topic.

THE X CARD

The X card is a tool created by John Stavropoulos (<http://tinyurl.com/x-card-rpg>) to help fill in the gaps of the lines and veils caused by the improvisational nature of role playing games. Draw a big X on an index card, on a piece of paper, or you could even have a large cardboard X cut out. If you are playing online a large X can be drawn in the play space. Put the X somewhere on the table that everyone can reach. If someone becomes uncomfortable with the current scene for any reason or to any degree, and they want the source of discomfort removed from the narrative they just need to invoke the x card. This might be by tapping the card, picking it up, making an X with their arms, typing out a line of "Xs", saying "X," or anything else that reminds everyone of the X card rule.

Once the X card is used the scene immediately edits out the detail that necessitated the card's use. If the Harmful detail is unclear pause the game to find out which one is the issue. If a break is required for people to collect themselves or have a longer discussion take one. Consider adding the Harmful detail to the list of lines or veils so that they can be properly handled in the future. This step might not be necessary because it could just be a temporarily sensitive topic, such as a person who recently ate hearing about eating

something gross.

If someone does not use the X card that should not be held against them if they bring up the issue later. Additionally it is not a replacement for conversation; if a person would rather speak against a topic's use in the game that should be respected. Likewise if the X card is not used, and the problem is not brought up by the distressed person, they should understand that the other players likely will not be aware of the problem, and unfortunately may continue to invoke the Harmful detail.

DISCUSSING EXPECTATIONS

With boundaries for topics established it's time to discuss what people DO want in the game. While most mecha media does have shared themes relating to the costs of conflict at the scale that necessitates mechs, not everyone is interested in focusing on those, and even those who do may prefer different aspects of the topic. Some stories are focused on the personal goals of the pilots (Armored Trooper Votoms), others on the struggles of small communities (Mobile Suit Gundam), and a few spotlight the political maneuvering between massive organizations (Iron Blooded Orphans). Any and all of these might be expectations that people come to the game with which should be laid out. If everyone is not on the same page regarding the game's direction it could cause problems.

Things to ask about the campaign :

- How long should each session be? Some people are comfortable playing for 3 or so hours, while others are happy playing for 8 hours plus breaks.
- How many sessions would everyone like to play in the campaign? When trying a new game having a single session of play, also known as a one shot, is common, but some people like to have campaigns without an expected end point.
- When can people schedule sessions? Some people work 9 to 5 jobs, and some online players are in different time zones.
- What are some media touchstones that inspire everyone? These can help clarify what tone each person is interested in experiencing in the game.
- Is the game about the Pilots or the Squad? The latter gives more room for roster changes should a Pilot die, retire, go AWOL from Overindulging, or any other reason that a Player will need to change characters. This helps gauge the interest in roster changes and if the Players are open to injuries that remove Pilots from the game temporarily or permanently.
- How politically complex should it be? (see the Political Scale section on page 242)

- What Factions and squads are people interested in? Whether choosing from the list of examples or creating them from scratch try to keep the game focused on 3 or 4 squads at the start.
- How large of an area should it cover? (see the Map Scale section on page 241)
- What kind of environment should it occur in? Some campaigns might take place in deep space with communities forming around clusters of asteroids and nomadic nation ships, but some players would prefer a more familiar game taking place in a climate similar to the region in which they live.
- How dangerous and gritty should it be? Some people want their character to be threatened by a mugger with a knife in an alley, while others want to fearlessly participate in gunfights.
- How combat focused should it be? Some people want to fight their way into and out of every problem, while others would prefer to talk or sneak.
- How frequently should the pilots face conflicts outside of their vehicles? Some people want to emphasize their vehicles' power through action, while others feel that pilots should be challenged as often as their machines.
- What technologies should be focused on in the game? The AR is part of the core setting of Beam Saber but players might have no interest in exploring its impact, and would rather focus on cybernetic augmentation.

CREATING THE CHARACTERS AND SQUAD

Once the social foundations of the game are established it's time to move on to building the fiction. During session zero this will primarily be done through Pilot, Vehicle, and Squad creation. As a group the players should decide which Patron Faction they want to work for. Pick something that everyone is excited about, don't just settle for the least offensive option. The Squad's Patron Faction may be the largest single aesthetic influence on the group, and will also give narrative reasons for the missions they take.

Next select the Squad Playbook which will direct the kind of missions that the Squad will participate in. Again this choice should be something everyone is excited about. If the entire group can't get excited about an option it might be that there are different expectations for what the game should be that weren't hammered out earlier.

With that chosen follow the instructions for Squad Creation, and then move onto Pilot and Vehicle Creation. If some players already have ideas for the pilot and vehicle before the Squad is decided that's alright. The order isn't too important since the two creation processes influence each other. Some groups may even find it beneficial to move back and forth between the two processes!

The History, Tragedy, and Opening of the characters help establish setting details through the lived experiences of the character. Each will reveal new details about the fiction that might not have been previously established. If a pilot's tragedy is that their orbital station home was used as a kinetic weapon that introduces inhabited space stations, and at least one group willing to use them as weapons.

When the Squad's Direct Superior is decided, the NPC Squads they affect are selected and the setting will naturally take on clarity as well. Whether selecting from the list of examples or designing original ones, each new Squad will add flavour to their Patron, the physical spaces they occupy, and the narrative setting as a whole. For example if the Dragon Slayers are included that establishes that the Autocracy has massive mobile fortresses, that there is a Tier IV Squad that could be encountered almost anywhere, and that mobile fortresses are an important symbol of power.

INTRODUCE THE CHARACTERS

With the characters and Squad made it's time to introduce everyone. Each player should state their character's:

- Name and/or callsign
- Opening
- Vehicle model
- Look
- Drive
- Vehicle look
- History
- Pilot ability
- Vehicle Load
- Tragedy
- Vehicle name

Ask the players questions about these details and encourage the other players to ask questions as well. You might ask if what the public knows about their Tragedy, why they are pursuing their Drive, or how they gained their pilot ability. If they aren't sure of the answer that's alright and is something that can be answered during play.

With everyone introduced it's time to make Connection Beliefs (see the Beliefs section) and name the squad. Don't skip coming up with Beliefs as they help define the bond between characters and get the pilots XP. If a player is really stuck on coming up with a Belief use one of the examples from their Playbook, or even a different Playbook. If you can't name the Squad don't worry, it's not urgent and might be figured out after a couple of missions.

HOW TO PREPARE A CAMPAIGN

The Session Zero is done, the Squad's got their FOB set up, and the Pilots are in their Vehicles ready to go. Now it's time to start thinking about planning the campaign. This can be daunting to do alone from scratch, which is why this section exists!

For all of the following sections, if you start to feel overwhelmed, use these tips:

- Think about what was discussed during Session Zero. A lot of ideas will have been shared at that time, both directly and indirectly. For example if the players agreed that they want to focus on a single city, then you have direction for the map scale, and also know that you almost certainly won't need Squads focused on space or sea travel.
- Ask your players questions whenever you need answers. If Session Zero didn't give you the details you need, just ask your players. Consider which player's Pilot would be the expert on the topic, and ask them! For example if you need to know more about how the Jovangellian military organizes itself, consider asking a player whose pilot is Jovangellian, or a player using the Officer playbook.
- Use the examples in this book. Whether you want to use them entirely or as a jumping off point, you can get a lot of value from the setting details in this book. For example you can insert The Broken Bank into any urban area that needs a ruined section, or maybe you just like the special rule about Proxies catching the Pilots unless they keep moving.

CAMPAIGN SCALE

An important consideration when planning a campaign as a group is the desired scale of the narrative. Impactful stories happen across the vastness of space (*Mobile Suit Gundam*), several regions (*Mobile Suit Gundam: 08th MS Team*), and the districts of a single city (*Mobile Suit Gundam 0080: War In The Pocket*). Some have a multitude of Factions vying for power (*Friends At The Table Season 2: COUNTER/Weight*) and some have only a single Faction that the protagonists struggle against (*Mad Max: Fury Road*). What scale really determines in a campaign is the complexity, not the quality, of its narrative.

MAP SCALE

The physical geography of a campaign primarily influences two facets of the game: the amount of different environments, and the amount of community there will be outside of the squad. In a way it's a trade off between breadth and depth of the setting's fiction.

If a campaign is going to span multiple planets it offers the players and GM the opportunity to see many environments from the loneliness of space to airless moons to rolling plains and all the space stations in between. The plants, animals, vistas, natural dangers (and technology required to adjust to them) might change wildly from mission to mission. Of course such travel means that people get left behind.

The smaller an area covered by the campaign, the more connected the area will be,

and the more attention each piece will receive. If the story takes place in a single city, it's quite reasonable for NPCs outside of the Squad to make an appearance or be sought out by the pilots. The characters that appear multiple times will become fleshed out just through their interactions with the pilots, and they'll in turn flesh out the people they are from, both their culture and social circle. The campaign's map too will become more fleshed out with time as places are revisited through going to them and also discussing them. Of course, staying in the same place means that the view outside the window doesn't change very much.

Is it better to have a planet hopping campaign with many strange horizons or one in a single city where the neighborhoods feel as much like home as the FOB? Chances are most groups will be somewhere in between the two, and there's nothing wrong with that. The decision is up to the players and GM, and should be discussed as part of Session Zero. A quick guide for how to decide the scale is to determine how large a Region is that a Squad can use the Collect Downtime Activity on. Is it the size of a neighbourhood, town, county, province, nation, planet, or star system? A Region is the smallest mechanical unit of geography and the scale of a campaign should likely be no larger than two steps above a region's size. For example if every town is a Region then the game should be focused on the conflict in a single county or province at most; control of a single town won't make much of a difference on a larger scale.

What happens if the Squad needs to travel to a place that is beyond the scale of the campaign as decided in session zero? Then the players and GM have to consider if this degree of travel is a one time thing or a new norm establishing itself. A one time journey might be a mission deep behind enemy lines or going to a major political center for a bit of intrigue. If this is the case then there's no adjustment necessary as most missions are still going to take place in the originally agreed upon scale. However if the game is shifting scale permanently then the group should discuss what the new scale is and if that's really the story everyone is interested in telling.

Regardless of the physical space that the campaign covers, you should work to make it feel like there isn't enough elbow room to move around. Aside from making the game's territory tighter, this can be achieved with strategic objectives that are constantly fought over, usually to ensure that a Faction gets the supplies it needs. Bridges, cities, factories, harbours, spaceports; all of these are points of conflict that every Faction wants for themselves or at least to deny its benefits to others. Constantly ratchet up the tension by making the campaign increasingly claustrophobic.

POLITICAL SCALE

With a map scale decided that map must now be populated with Factions and their Squads.

Every Faction has its own goals, and each Squad methods to accomplish those goals. As more Factions and Squads are added to a campaign the focus of the narrative weakens. However, more Factions and Squads mean a greater variety of foes, more opportunities for schemes, and sometimes greater moral greyness.

When a campaign has two or fewer Factions it will have very clear political lines. Us and Them. If the players decide they want to play an Independent Squad they will be outside of the established power structures, able to play both sides against each other or push one side to victory. If during the course of the campaign this seems like too few Factions, or there are some absent that the group wants to explore, more can be added as the narrative develops.

If a campaign has 3 or more Factions it opens up the possibility of alliances between Factions, which in turn allows for betrayals, lesser evils, aligned interests, and all kinds of immoral, pragmatic decisions. If the players are an Independent Squad they will likely be pursuing their own ambitions as Factions will be far more concerned about the actions of other Factions. If that sounds bleak remember that patronized squads are also largely below notice, they just have someone looking over their shoulder judging them. If during play this seems like too many Factions the group should talk about which Factions interest them the most and then let the other ones fade into the background by having few if any missions involving them.

Regardless of the number of Factions involved in a campaign the number of Squads should never be more than 8. However, what's meant by "involved in a campaign" is missions where a Squad features prominently, either as the target, a close ally, or an interfering third party. The reason for this is that the story between the players' Squad and the NPC squads will struggle to gain depth if there are too many squads. There can be other squads that exist in the campaign, but they should not actually appear on screen in the game.

When choosing which squads should have prime roles on a campaign there are two considerations: which squads are the players interested in, and the Tiers of the squads.

If a player becomes invested in an NPC Squad, chances are that Squad will feature an Ally or Rival. As many featured squads as possible should have Allies and Rivals in them so that the players' Squad can regularly interact with them. This may even result in the Squad as a whole considering an entire NPC Squad to be their Ally or Rival, especially as Squad statuses improve or decline.

The Tiers of the featured squads will divide them into two narrative categories: direct competition (NPC squads that are two or fewer Tiers above the players) and conflict spoilers (squads that are three or more Tiers above the players). The split of squads should be half direct competition and half conflict spoilers, leaning towards direct competition.

Direct competition squads are those who are roughly on the same level as the players, should regularly be the targets of missions, and should take direct action (attacks, thefts, framing, etc.) against the players. If a direct competition Squad has a positive status with the players it may team up with them for missions on occasion. Squads that are two Tiers above the players, however, may occasionally act as conflict spoilers.

Conflict spoilers are the more powerful squads who have bigger fish to fry than the players, but are willing to provide support (employment, information, tools, etc.) to weaker squads to serve their own interests. Whether they provide these benefits to the players or their foes depends entirely on the Squad status. As the player Squad increases in Tier conflict spoilers will become direct competition as the players become threats to them.

CREATING FACTIONS AND SQUADS

The Factions and squads of Beam Saber are the driving forces that move the story along behind the scenes. While there are several premade Factions and many squads for the GM to choose from, some groups want to play with organizations that are unique to their campaign. What follows is some advice for creating your own Factions and squads, but not every Faction or Squad deserves this level of detail. See the Political Scale section (see page 242) for advice on how many Factions and squads to make.

CREATING A FACTION

The place to start when creating a Faction is to determine its type. Is it an Autocracy, Corporatocracy, Democracy, Oligarchy, or Theocracy? Answering this helps to influence its goals and lets you know how it mechanically affects the players if they choose it for their Patron Faction. This is the **only** thing required for making a Faction. Factions other than the players' Patron do not require Faction goals, however if the GM or players find it useful to assign them, then it should be done.

What follows is a description of each Faction type, its similarities and differences to the others, and an unusual alternative to the standard variety. Keep in mind that these notes on government are extremely simplified for the purposes of the game.

AUTOCRACY

An autocracy has:

- A single leader who holds the vast majority of political power.
- A military that is the most important organization in society.
- A populace that is afraid of being perceived as unsupportive of the government.
- A social order that is commonly enforced with physical violence.
- Provides +1 Materiel, and +1 Trust with the Employer during the Rewards process.

An Autocracy's **Basis** has two key points: that there is a single leader who holds ultimate decision making power (the Autocrat), and that the person in charge uses force to remain in charge. The first point creates an organization where powerful individuals (often those who are charismatic and/or innovative) are viewed with suspicion, authority figures jockey for what little power they can hold by selling each other out to the Autocrat, and anyone not seeking power keeps their head down and follows orders. The second point means that the Autocrat must keep their military happy, which requires funding them, which leads to needing more resources, which causes them to continuously expand their influence. An Autocracy will always be looking to weaken and then conquer its neighbours.

An Autocracy has **Similarities** to all the other Factions in that most Factions will have a single person who leads them. In this regard it may be most like a theocracy if that theocracy has an all powerful religious individual.

An Autocracy's **Differences** are that other Factions with leaders do not put the ultimate decision making power in that leader's hands. They may have a council of elders, a parliament, or a board of directors. Additionally, unlike the theocracy, the Autocrat's power comes from the fear of physical violence, while a theocracy's leader likely wields power due to their followers' sense of religious duty to them.

An Autocracy's **Suggested Goals** are Assault the Foe, and Secure the Borders. Autocracies thrive on expansion and paranoia, which these goals enthusiastically feed.

An Autocracy's **Alternative** is a Monarchy. The main difference is that a Monarchy's ruler (the Monarch) does not maintain power through subjecting their people to constant fear of physical violence, but subtler means. The Monarch rewards those who are loyal, impoverishes the untrustworthy, and ostracizes the dangerous. Very rarely do they resort to physical violence, and when they do it is often performed through their control of the judicial system making everything "legal."

CORPORATOCRACY

A corporatocracy has:

- A political system that gives direct power to corporations.
- Wealth as the primary measure of competence.

- A small group of corporate representatives that lead the Faction.
- Corporate representatives that are disposable, and will be readily replaced by their corporation.
- Provides +2 Materiel during the Rewards process.

A Corporatocracy's **Basis** is that the most competent should rule and competency can be easily measured through the accrument of wealth. Furthermore the most wealthy entities are corporations, whose monetary power dwarfs even the richest CEO. Therefore the government is formed from representatives of the wealthiest corporations with the singular goal of gaining more wealth for greater power within the Corporatocracy.

A Corporatocracy's **Similarities** to other Factions lay primarily with the oligarchy. Both have a relatively small group of people who are allowed to guide the government, and those people are selected based on their personal power. A Corporatocracy may also have a chairperson of the board, or other leader Position, similar to the oligarchy's consul or the democracy's prime minister.

A Corporatocracy's **Differences** are the ways in which it measures personal power and who is eligible to wield power. The difference in personal power is that an oligarchy's elected officials have their power rooted in their connections and the debts that are owed to them, whereas a Corporatocracy's electors have their power based purely on their finances. The difference in eligibility for political office is that it is the corporations in a Corporatocracy wielding power and any individual within a corporation, including its representative, are entirely disposable and to be replaced if they aren't making the corporation enough money. An oligarchy's representatives, however, are eligible because they belong to a personal organization (such as a family or caste) making them disposable only under dire circumstances due to their social connections.

A Corporatocracy's **Suggested Goals** are Golden Streets, and Hostile Takeover. Corporatocracies are primarily interested in earning money, which can be done by lowering expenditures and increasing profits. These goals accomplish this by improving the Faction's resources, and economically weakening opponents.

A Corporatocracy's **Alternative** is a Technocracy. The main difference is that a Technocracy has its rulers selected from pools of experts in that field. For example a professor of urban planning might be selected to be the minister of cities. This might seem ideal but the two main issues with this form of government are that the criteria for deciding who is an "expert" is full of the biases of the people who established the criteria, and that within any given field there are often divided ideas about what is correct making an "expert" difficult to come by.

DEMOCRACY

A democracy has:

- A populace that expresses political power through voting.
- A leader with limited political power.
- A leader that must justify their actions to the populace.
- Universal or near universal suffrage.
- Provides +1 Materiel, and +1 Personnel during the Rewards process.

A Democracy's **Basis** is that the people ruled by the government have the ultimate decision making power as expressed through voting. This may take the form of a representative government where the masses elect leaders based on their geographic location, culture, or ethnicity, but it could also be a system where every citizen has the opportunity to vote directly on every issue.

A Democracy's **Similarities** to other Factions is seen in the presence of a leader in many democracies, and the presence of voting.

A Democracy's **Differences** are that unlike the autocracy and theocracy, the leader of a Democracy is often a first among equals, having only a little more power than their fellow citizens, which is generally rooted in being the face of the government and the person who makes decisions in times of crisis. Eventually though the Democracy's leader must answer to the people through inquiries, public opinion, and elections. Additionally a Democracy has universal, or near universal, suffrage meaning that the vast majority of the population has the ability to guide the course of government in some fashion. This is different from the corporatocracy, oligarchy, and some forms of theocracy where a very small percentage of the population has the option of influencing the nation.

A Democracy's **Suggested Goals** are Manufacture Heroes, and Hearts and Minds. Democracies' governments are heavily invested in keeping the people that elected them happy. This requires aggressive public relations campaigns, which are aided by giving the people heroes and proving that the foe are the "Bad Guys."

A Democracy's **Alternative** is a Demarchy. The main difference is that a Demarchy's ruler or rulers are chosen randomly from a group of eligible candidates. The reasoning behind this is that those who would misuse power for their own gain cannot volunteer themselves for positions of authority. Instead anyone could be elected, and would likely be advised by knowledgeable support staff. This may seem like a weird idea but in some countries, such as the United States of America, law court juries are selected as a demarchy.

OLIGARCHY

An oligarchy has:

- A small percentage of the population with access to political power.
- A codified system that determines who can access political power.
- A small group of individuals who directly wield political power.
- Limited opportunities for wielding political power which encourages underhanded methods to acquire, or retain, it.
- Provides +1 Personnel, and +1 Trust with the Employer during the Rewards process.

An Oligarchy's **Basis** is that only certain people should have access to the levers of power to prevent mob rule. The reason that these people have access to governmental power differs from Oligarchy to Oligarchy. Some will only give land owners suffrage. Others will require voters to be from certain familial lineages. A few may require military service in exchange for the responsibility of voting. All have a very low percentage of their population as eligible voters, and are about making sure the "right people" are the only ones who can vote.

An Oligarchy's **Similarities** to other Factions comes from it being managed by a fairly small group of people. A corporatocracy might have a board of directors with votes from many different corporations, and a democracy with a large enough representative ruling body might have a number of senators comparable to the entire voting body of an Oligarchy.

An Oligarchy's **Differences** are that power rests in the hands of a few people. Even if an Oligarchy has a monarch of some kind that "ruler" is only a single voice no louder than any other. Some oligarchies will have enough voters that they will have to elect committees from themselves to handle tasks, while others will have so few members that they can all sit around a table. A corporation cannot sit at a table, it can only be represented by small parts of its whole, being a disembodied and non-sapient entity. A democracy likely can't fit inside of a single building let alone a dining room, there are far too many people.

An Oligarchy's **Suggested Goals** are Intelligence Coup, and Divided They Fall. Oligarchies are filled with internal backstabbing to gain more social power, and they carry those skills beyond their borders. They work to wreak havoc on their foes without having to get their hands dirty.

An Oligarchy's **Alternative** is a Cryptocracy. The main difference is that those who are eligible to vote in a Cryptocracy have their identities completely hidden from the people whose lives will be affected by their decisions. How a voter is selected into this group of secret electors will vary according to government. Some voting positions will be handed down with the retiring elector selecting their replacement. Others may have an AI whose only purpose is to select new electors at the end of every term in office. Perhaps there actually is

no ruling body and it is actually the faceless civil servants that keep the wheels turning.

THEOCRACY

A theocracy has:

- A leadership comprised of one or more entities of great spiritual power.
- Mortal clergy who employ political power.
- Leaders who are kept in power by the populace's belief in their divine authority.
- A political structure where mundane failures and perceived lack of religiosity may cause the populace to believe that its leaders have lost their divine authority.
- Provides +2 Personnel during the Rewards process.

A Theocracy's **Basis** is that its rulers are figures of worship, either gods or people of great spiritual power. If the head of the government is a god then they will be represented by mortal clergy. There may be a singular high cleric who rules, or a council of them that rules together. How they are selected for such positions will vary between Theocracies. Some will have councils that elect a leader, some will require demonstration of miracles, and some will be inherited. They are kept in power by their population's continuing belief that their power is derived from non-mortal authorities.

A Theocracy's **Similarities** to other Factions comes from its flexibility. It may have a singular, all powerful ruler like an autocracy, or it may have a council of elders like an oligarchy.

A Theocracy's **Differences** are that its rulers derive their power not from inflicting fear, personal wealth, or direct social connections, but from maintaining popular loyalty through the lens of religion. If the leaders of a Theocracy fail to live up to the virtues required of their office they may find themselves removed by their peers or the masses. Good public relations are key.

A Theocracy's **Suggested Goals** are Hearts and Minds, and Golden Streets. Theocracies are always interested in converting people, and the smoothest way to do that is by making their religion look incredibly beneficent. If the Theocracy is interested in forcibly converting people consider Assault the Foe as well.

A Theocracy's **Alternative** is a Deified Dictatorship. Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic. While the base Beam Saber game has some minor psychic powers, some player groups may want to have wilder games. If you want to have a Faction led by what seems to be a literal god and then fight it with mechs, have fun!

CORRUPTION

Corruption is the next thing to consider for creating a Faction. A government's purpose is to

care for the populace through protecting against external threats, building infrastructure, ensuring health, and other ways of providing the populace with stability. The degree to which each government embodies this ideal can vary wildly, though a Faction's type will influence this. The leader of an Autocracy could be beneficent, ruling over their populace as a loving parent, but the need to threaten violence tends to sour even the kindest dictatorship.

The easiest way to judge how corrupt a Faction is is to look at how much power and wealth its leaders are gaining because they lead the Faction. If the leaders are earning resources in a way that harms the populace (embezzling public funds, biased implementation of laws, drastic self imposed pay raises, etc.) they set a tone for the entire government that likely results in widespread corruption. This corruption can express itself with dishonest government reports, bypassing protocols for friends, underhanded legal proceedings, and all the ways that leaders enrich themselves but on a smaller scale.

Here are some questions you can ask about each Faction that will provide a shallow idea of how corrupt it is. If you really want a numerical value of corruption, each "yes" gives that Faction +1 corruption.

- Are the Faction's leaders more interested in enriching themselves than the masses?
- Are there few people in the Faction's power structure trying to make it better serve the populace?
- Are Positions of power assigned based on qualities other than competence?
- Will the vulnerable face reprisals if they speak out against those in power?
- Do the leaders ignore laws if they slow or interfere with their goals?

How corrupt each individual Faction is, and how corrupt all the Factions are as a whole sets the tone of the game. If half the Factions are very corrupt and the other half has a minimal amount of corruption, your game will tend towards a "Good versus Evil" tone. However, if all Factions have a middling amount of corruption then your tone might be similar to a pessimistic (some would say realistic) view of the real world. If everyone is incredibly corrupt you get a setting where the only difference between the Factions is the lies they tell their populace.

FINAL TOUCHES

Lastly constructing a short list of aesthetic themes, notable NPCs, and vehicle designs will help the GM fill the world. The aesthetic themes are styles and symbols that inform the looks of the NPCs, culture, objects, and locations that are influenced by the Faction. The notable NPCs, consisting of a name and a few words describing their look, can be used as VIPs in Factions who might be mentioned in passing, objectives to kill or capture, or contacts who employ the pilots for missions. The vehicle designs, again being a name and look, are handy

for when the GM needs to describe an enemy, have NPCs chat about their machines, or answer player questions.

CREATING A SQUAD

When creating a Squad there are 5 things to consider:

- What Faction does it belong to? This helps determine its look and theme. Autocracy squads are likely militaristic with uniforms and gear to match. Corporatocracy squads will either be self contained corporations or a subsidiary of a larger company, and will have equipment and appearances that emphasize that connection. Democracy squads are as diverse as their population but have shared mannerisms and uniforms. Independent squads probably lack a uniform but will share a passion about their goal which is what holds them together. Theocracy squads will probably have religious iconography and may consider themselves to be on a mission from god.
- What are its methods? This helps determine how they interact with the pilots regardless of their status. Some squads will be mech groups that specialize in urban environments. Some will be diplomatic corps that seek to make peace while also gathering intelligence. Some are state sponsored pop bands that sing songs of victory to the troops and the masses. Methods are **not necessary** for a Squad to have, they only help the GM.
- What are its goals? This helps determine where, when, and why they are deploying their methods. If they ally with the pilots it should be to work towards their goals. If they are in conflict with the pilots, doing so should also further their goals, possibly because the pilots are impeding them.
- What is its Tier? This helps determine how big of a threat they are to the pilots. The Tiers are measured with Roman numerals with the lowest possible Tier for an NPC Squad being Tier I (the Players' Squad starts at Tier 0), and the highest being Tier V. If a squad's fiction says it should be weak consider giving it a Tier of I or II. If it is meant to be powerful III is probably suitable. If it commands other squads then Tier IV or V are a good idea. Squads that are 1 or 2 Tiers higher than the pilots are a good challenge. Anything more than that will be quite difficult.
- What is its name? This helps both the players and the GM keep track of the squad. A memorable name will fuel imaginations and help build investment in that squad's narrative. Consider giving all squads of the same Faction a shared naming convention so that the Faction they belong to can be easily identified. For example you might give autocracy squads names related to beasts such as "The Wolf Pack," "The Lion's Pride," and "The Dragon Slayers."

Note that NPC squads do not require a Squad Playbook assigned to them, however if the

GM or players find that helpful, go for it. The only thing to be wary of when doing this is limiting the NPC Squad to actions that would mechanically apply to players in that Squad type. NPC squads should act in ways that are most suitable to the fiction.

SQUAD GOALS

With the other details of the Squad determined it's time to flesh out their goal. The goal can be anything that furthers the interests of the squad, and should illustrate their core identity. Give the goal a progress Clock with a size appropriate to the complexity of the task. A squad's goal will be appropriate to their Tier, for example The Squaddies (Tier I) may have a goal of "acquire steady Supply of vehicle parts" but would never have a goal like "destroy the Great Crimson Brigade" because it is beyond their ability. If the Squad manages to increase their Tier, likely by completing a goal, they may gain a goal that would have previously been out of their reach.

Goals are not necessary for a Squad to have, however if a Squad appears on screen it should be given a goal to direct the GM in the ways that it affects the campaign's narrative. Between sessions the GM should look at the goals of the squads that are currently active in the narrative. This includes any squads that were involved in missions in the most recent session, and squads that are likely to be involved in the next session. The GM should then make a Fortune Roll by rolling a number of dice equal to the squad's Tier to see how far the Squad progressed in its goal. If the players had a mission that aids this goal since the squad's last Fortune Roll give them +1d. If the players have had a mission that impedes this goal since the squad's last Fortune Roll give them -1d. The results of this roll follow the normal rules for filling a Clock with a fortune roll, just like a Long Term Project. If a Squad has not been recently featured in the campaign's narrative don't bother making a Fortune Roll for them to keep from getting bogged down by squads that aren't relevant. Should the Squad become active again, consider giving them a Fortune Roll to represent what they've been doing since they were last seen.

When a squad's goal Clock fills, it gains a benefit as appropriate for the nature of the goal, and then gains a new goal and Clock based on their updated circumstances. The pilots should hear a rumor or piece of news that indicates what the Squad has gained, but doesn't need to explicitly state what that is. Additionally, if appropriate, the Squad's Patron Faction's Clock should go up by 1 Tick, however not all Squad's work towards their patron's goal. When examining the goal of a Squad that has a pilot's Rival in it, make sure that the Rival is directly involved in the goal. This might take the form of providing security, performing research, negotiating with other squads, or any number of tasks that are appropriate to their nature. This is done so that the narrative of the Squad is more closely tied to the pilots

through their Rivals. A Rival participating in their squad's goal provides +1d to the Fortune Roll.

Alternatively consider giving the Rival themselves a goal that is different from their squad's aims and are far more personal in nature. This should still be connected to the Pilots in some way, especially the Rival's bonded foe, possibly attacking them directly or indirectly, or working to obstruct their plans. In this case the Rival's goal clock is a Fortune Roll of 1d as they don't have their squad's direct support and thus ignore its Tier.

EXAMPLE: In the last session The Cenotaph completed a Mission to steal data from the Society For Wider Understanding (aka SWU) on behalf of The Raccoons. They also decided that their next mission will again target SWU. Between sessions the GM will make some rolls to see how much progress on their Goals the recently active, and soon to be active, Squads and Rivals get.

Since The Raccoons and SWU (which also contains Demon's Rival and ex-boyfriend, Vergil Bain) were in the most recent Mission, they each get a progress roll. The Raccoons are tier 1 and were aided by The Cenotaph, so they get to roll 2d (1d for Tier, and +1d for The Cenotaph's support). They get a 6, giving them 3 ticks on their Goal to increase their Tier, which is enough to complete it, so they become Tier 2. The GM makes a note to have a scene with a leader of the squad, contacting The Cenotaph to thank them for helping him get an upgraded AWW.

SWU are Tier 2, but due to The Cenotaph's interference, they roll 1d (2d for Tier, and -1d for The Cenotaph's impact) in pursuit of getting their news channels to become a major news source for the Celestial Myriad's populace. Vergil Bain COULD add +1d to the roll, but he is instead pursuing his own Goal of trying to find out what Demon's current grift is. Both SWU and Bain get a result of 1-3, adding 1 Tick to their respective Goal clocks. Since SWU have reached halfway, the GM makes a note to point out during the next Downtime, that the Pilots start to see people in Hulinton reading Jovangellian newspapers.

Next up is to look at the Goals for the Squads and Rivals involved in the upcoming Mission. The Cenotaph's Players said that they wanted to do another mission against SWU, and The GM decides that The March of Saints (with Dredge's Rival Teucer "Bloodless" Hartberg) will be a complicating factor. SWU and Bain have already been rolled for, so that leaves the March of Saints and Hartberg. The Saints haven't been involved in the story for a while, so The GM rolls for them BEFORE the Mission to see what their progress off-screen has been on their projects. Unlike Bain, Hartberg is directly aiding The Saints' goal of finding The Soveriegnity Engine, so the squad will be rolling 6d (5d for Tier, and +1d for a Rival's support)! They get a 5 and add 2 ticks to their Goal Clock.

The GM considers making rolls for The Rubble Runts, and The Burden, but neither squad was involved in the most recent Mission, and won't be in the next one, so there's no

need to. The next time they will appear in a Mission, The GM will roll for the Goals before the Mission, just like with The March of Saints.

REGIONS

A Region is an area that the Factions want control of to expand their influence and resources. The size of what qualifies as a region varies with the scale of the campaign (see Map Scale page 241). If the game takes place in a single city then each district of the city would likely be a region, but for a game that crosses the stars entire planets might be a single region. They are also where Squads, such as the players', operate. The Squads are used to capture hostile Regions, hold captured ones, and exploit their resources.

Every Squad starts with a stake in the region that immediately surrounds their FOB. This takes the form of authority that might be done with a light touch or be heavy handed. Being a group in the Region that can call upon war machines automatically gives the Squad a level of authority over the area whether they want it or not. The Squad's Patron Faction will expect them to enact the Patron's goals for the Region, which could include developing infrastructure, building defenses, recruiting from the locals, or something entirely different. However, the Squad aren't the only group in the area wielding power and seeking control.

CREATING A REGION

Each Region should have a **name**, **description**, and **scene** if the Squad are just passing through.

The **name** should be something memorable that speaks to the nature of the region. *For example "The Broken Bank" is a riverside region filled with ruined buildings.* Even without the scene description it paints a quick picture of the world.

The **description** will provide the recent history of the Region, why it is important, and how it looks. It doesn't need to be more than a paragraph as there should be room for details provided by the players. *The Broken Bank's description is "Sitting on the South side of the Izya River this area of Journey City used to be called Browen Bank after a long dead community organizer. When the Offworlders brought their war to Earth and Journey City, Browen Bank was hit hardest. When the conflict cooled those powerful enough to properly reclaim the Broken Bank felt it wasn't worth the investment. Now lost proxies and rampant apps roam the streets looking for the living in an attempt to fulfill their purpose. Criminals, marauders, terrorists, mercenaries, and freedom fighters make temporary lodgings here, hoping that those who would stop them also believe the investment would not be worth tracking them down."*

The **scene** is three or so sentences that provide a description of the Region through

the lens of everyday life. Anyone who reads it should know what that part of the setting is like when the pilots aren't tearing things up. *For The Broken Bank it has "Dust drifts down the rubble filled roads and around burnt out vehicles. Criminals and freedom fighters skulk down alleys into hidden basement safe houses. Crowds of rampant proxies wearing the forms of those who died here stumble from one sign of life to the next."*

If the Squad will be spending a lot of time in a Region it should also have **2 or 3 notable NPCs**, **2-4 landmarks**, **0-4** points in each **region rating**, and possibly a **special rule**.

The **notable NPCs** are important people that the pilots might have to deal with in the Region. They should have one or two sentences describing what they do, and 2 or 3 words that show their personality. *The Broken Bank has "Lovegood: a deep voiced bartender who works at The Broken Bar. They employ several of their cousins as staff at the bar, providing one of the only places of entertainment in The Broken Bank. (Jovial, Forceful)"*

The **landmarks** give the pilots and GM points of reference for describing a Region and planning in it. *One of The Broken Bank's landmarks is "Ambush Row is the only major road that provides a straight line from the South East of Journey City to the Tower at its center. This makes it an excellent place for ambushers to set their trap using the profusion of rubble and burnt out vehicles to block roads."*

The **ratings** for a Region are Wealth, Might, Crime, and Tech. These ratings are used to give a numerical value to the qualities of Regions so that they can be compared if needed, and can also be used as the number of dice for a Fortune roll that is relevant to the rating. They can be valued from 0 to 4, and the players should select values that make sense for the description of the Region. The Squad can benefit from these ratings under certain circumstances. Record the ratings in your notes, or on the Regions sheet if you are using it.

- Wealth indicates how rich the area's businesses and residents are, their political power, and the Quality of mundane infrastructure (such as hospitals, roads, power grid, etc.). Wealth determines the amount of Supply Points the Region provides during the Collect downtime activity (see page 197).
- Might indicates how much of an armed presence is in the area, and the intensity of surveillance systems. The Tier of local security forces not affiliated with a Squad is equal to the region's Might. It provides bonus dice when trying to Acquire a Cohort (see page 196).
- Crime indicates the regularity and intensity of illegal activity. It can be used to adjust the Entanglement the Squad suffers at the end of a Mission (see page 189).
- Tech indicates the ubiquity and intensity of the AR, advanced technology, and

digital security systems. It provides bonus dice when trying to Acquire gear (see page 196).

The Broken Bank has Wealth 0, Might 0, Crime 2, and Tech 2.

The **special rule** is something that is unique to the region, evokes the essence of it, and will have a direct mechanical Effect on the squad's actions. *The Broken Bank has "Start a 4 Tick Clock when you enter the region: "App focus". Add a tick every time you are delayed from moving forward." This represents the crowds of rampant proxies and apps that are drawn to the living.* Not every Region requires a special rule, many are not unique in ways that require special rules. Even when a Region does have a special rule, it does not always need to be implemented as the pilots might not encounter it.

A Region sheet is included to assist with managing your Regions, but is not required.

HOW TO PREPARE A MISSION

There is one rule for designing a mission you must keep in mind: **Make a situation, do NOT make a story**. The flexibility that pilots have access to (through their vehicles, abilities, Flashbacks, and everything else) means that your plans need to be similarly flexible. So try to avoid extensive paragraphs and events that WILL happen, and instead make notes that detail narrative resources and possibilities. These are my guidelines on how to prep missions for Beam Saber. They work for me, and hopefully they'll work for you too.

There are eight categories that I prepare for a mission: Briefing, Employer, Target, Objective, ROE, Complications, Characters and Challenges. The GM can pull from each section for obstacles the pilots must overcome. Some of those obstacles will be represented by Clocks, while others may be sources of Consequences in the fiction.

The contents of each section should flow from the outcome of previous missions as well as step 3 in the End of Session section (see page 193). The End of Session questions will give you an idea of the type of objective, environment, and opponent the players want to face in their next mission; it's your job to tie those desires into the narrative created from earlier missions. Of course, if this is your first session, you won't have these questions to rely upon, but that's why there's the Starting Situation section (see page 275)!

BRIEFING

This is the basic information that the Pilots are given when they are planning the mission. It summarizes the situation in your notes so that you can tell what the mission is about at a glance. The Employer, Target, Objective, and maybe the ROE will be mentioned here. If you

want to provide the players with false information, this is the place it should be since they will have had to work for any other information they have (which should not be taken away from them).

BRIEFING: Lady Elreth fought a dragon near Wander causing a great deal of damage (Don't tell the players that she won and has left the area). The 3rd Public Connections Corp wants to help the populace repair to build stronger ties. The Wrights of the Ascent want to use this as an opportunity to rebuild the town in the image of the Celestial Myriad.

EMPLOYER

This is the Squad that is hiring the pilots to complete the mission. The representative of that Squad should also be listed here. This should detail the representative (when appropriate), and the Tier and Faction of the Squad so that when going through the Mission Completed process (see page 180) the required information is at hand. The Employer's goal for the mission will be listed in the Objective, so save this space for information about the Employer and their liaison.

EMPLOYER: 3rd Public Connections Corp (Tier 2S) of the Democratic Federated Systems represented by Laura Neirnick. They are a well-funded Squad of attractive pilots and the military documentarian crew that follows them. **GOAL:** To look good for the public. Laura Neirnick has dark skin, broad facial features, blonde dreads with white/pink/pale blue beads, small, slight build, mid 30s, she/her, wears a very fashionable business suit.

TARGET

This is the Squad that the pilots are going to most obviously harm by completing their objective. These notes should detail information about the target such as their Tier (to adjust Effect, engagement rolls, etc.) and Faction (to provide descriptive details, adjust trust during Mission Completed process, etc.). Further, what the target is doing when the mission begins and *their* objective during it should be listed; the former to help describe the situation when the target appears on screen, and the latter to provide direction to their actions.

TARGET: The Wrights of the Ascent (Tier 1W) of the Church of the Celestial Myriad. They've been constructing a cathedral of the Celestial Myriad in Wander the last year or so, and it has sustained structural damage during the recent battle. It can still be salvaged and so the Wrights are prioritizing its repair over everything else, including neutralizing the dangers to the town left from the battle.

OBJECTIVE

This is the reason that the pilots are undertaking the mission and braving its challenges. Fulfilling the requirements of the Objective will require the pilots to fill at least one Clock because if the mission could be completed with a single roll there'd be no reason to hire the pilots. Some missions may have more than one objective, or multiple stages for the objective, and each will likely be represented during the mission by a Clock. The Objective must be completed for the Mission to be considered a success, though the Objective may change if narratively appropriate. Some Missions will have one or more Secondary Objectives which do not need to be completed for the mission to succeed, but their completion will benefit the Employer. Once the objective is completed, the GM should decide based on the fiction if the mission immediately ends or if it continues for some reason (such as needing to fill a clock to escape).

OBJECTIVE: Undermine the locals' opinion of the Wrights of the Ascent and make the Democratic Federated Systems look good.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT (ROE)

This section details the ROE that the pilots will have to abide by during the mission. ROE are restrictions that if broken will harm the Employer's interests but will not cause the Mission to fail. It can sometimes be tricky to come up with ROE on the spot, so writing down some ideas before a session is a good plan. Having the mission's ROE quickly accessible will also be helpful during the Mission Completed process when adjusting Trust. Most missions will have 2 ROE as a deterrent from uncivil behaviour. Missions with fewer ROE give the pilots freedom of action, while more ROE will become a challenge in and of themselves. If you are having trouble there is a list of ROE Suggestions on page 260.

ROE: Threatening, or employing force against civilians. Firing upon or presenting as a clearly marked medical transport or facility. Initiating combat with the Wrights of the Ascent.

COMPLICATIONS

This section details the majority of the obstacles between the pilots and their objective. Information about these is not provided to the pilots unless they work for it. What complications are revealed to the pilots when they Gather Information will depend on the methods they use. You should come up with about 6 different complications per mission so that you will have a variety of dangers to employ against the pilots, but remember that they don't ALL have to be used.

COMPLICATION:

- The dying dragon's body is in the middle of the town and one of its two ignition glands has ruptured spreading flammable caustic fluid.
- The locals are suspicious of outsiders.
- A secret Burden cell looking to use the locals' suspicion to gain political power is present.
- The Town council is resistant to receiving aid from outsiders because they've already made a deal with the Wrights of the Ascent.
- Wander is in the mountains, which are rough terrain and make communication with the outside difficult.
- Should the dragon's mate come looking for it?

CHARACTERS

This section lists the important NPCs that might appear on screen and provides details about their appearance. You don't need many characters listed as there's always the chance they won't come up. You only need to detail those who will be giving a face to the groups that can provide meaningful opposition or support to the pilots. One character for each group of NPCs that will appear in the mission should be plenty.

An NPC should have 3 details: look, motive, and method. Look and pronouns of the character are important so that you can easily describe them to the players when they become relevant. Motive is why the character takes action; a single goal core to them can be enough. Method is how the NPC will achieve their motive. Create a broad method that will flesh out the character's personality to a degree (for example, a character that uses stealthy and deceptive methods probably avoids open confrontation), and possibly a very specific one for this particular mission.

CHARACTERS:

- Hannah Copeland, Burden cell leader/populist politician. Lithe build, late 30s, pale brown skin, curly purple hair. Knew one of the Pilots when she was a kid, wears coveralls with the top tied around her waist and a tank top. Prefers manipulation, but not afraid of using force. Is trying to turn the populace against Offworlders. She/her.
- Grout DeVinter, Wander's mayor. Former contact of another Pilot's gang. 50s,

wears a headscarf and beautiful robe, soft build, east Asian ethnicity. Wants to remain in power in Wander, and will compromise with powerful groups to do so. They/them.

- Senior Kin Arrow Slide, the local leader of the Wrights. Frail build, sickly, 40s, bald, pale white skin, wears the same rough hooded robe that all Wrights wear. Seeks to increase the Wrights' prestige by completing monuments to the Church. He/him.

CHALLENGES

This section summarizes all of the potential obstacles and dangers that are explicitly stated in the other sections or can be inferred from their details. It is very likely that as you think more about what problems the pilots will run into the challenges list will grow quite a bit. Remember that you don't have to use all of them! The list exists to give you quick ideas about threats, consequences, and obstacles to throw at the pilots.

CHALLENGES:

● The cathedral's stability	● Hannah Copeland's Burden cell
● Make the Wrights look bad	● The deal between the town council and the Wrights
● Make the DFS look good	● Mountainous terrain
● The dying dragon	● Wireless communication is difficult because of the mountains
● The caustic ignition fluid splattered all over	● A second dragon
● Suspicious locals	

ROE SUGGESTIONS

It can be difficult to come up with new rules of engagement with every mission, so here are some suggestions for actions that a Faction may put restrictions on.

- Looting, requisitioning, stealing, and/or destroying civilian, commercial, and/or governmental property. Provocative interaction with non-military property may be restricted to certain groups or certain methods.
- Threatening, or employing force against civilians. The Squad may not be allowed to use force or its threat on civilians, or only use it under certain circumstances.

- Pre-emptive use of force against hostile or potentially hostile targets. The Squad should only attack if they have already been attacked, and not initiate violence themselves.
- Use of disproportionate force. If the Squad are attacked with fists and feet, they should not respond with gunfire.
- Escalation of force. The Squad should never be the ones who increase the deadliness of a conflict.
- How to handle detained civilians, deserters, hostages, partisans, spies, POWs, and wounded enemy soldiers. The Squad may be required to provide or refuse support to any of these groups, and the level of that support may vary.
- Deployment of chemical, biological, explosive, and/or poisonous weapons. These types of weapons are often seen as needlessly cruel due to their lasting Effects and broad collateral damage, so Factions often have restrictions on if and how they are used.
- Use of “enhanced interrogation.” Commonly known as torture, many Factions have restrictions on if and how it is employed.
- Firing upon or presenting as a clearly marked medical transport or facility. Medical facilities and transports are generally filled with civilians and wounded, so attacking them is often seen as criminal. Likewise using such a facility as a hiding place or disguise may make the enemy more likely to attack non-threatening versions of such facilities.
- Permission to attack only specific group(s). Sometimes there are multiple non-ally squads operating in the same area, but not all of them are hostile or mission targets.

DETERMINING EFFECT

To determine the level of Effect, the GM should consider the Potency, Scale, and Quality of a pilot’s action.

POTENCY

This is about examining the particular strengths and weakness of the pilot’s actions in the situation. A grenade will have greater Potency against a person, but will have reduced Potency against a tank. A person hiding on a street will be more Potent if the streets are crowded and they take advantage of that than if the streets were empty or if they avoided

the crowds.

QUALITY

This is about examining the advantage provided by the tools, weapons, and other resources that the pilot uses. A pilot generally has access to means that are equal to their squad's Tier; however, fine items receive +1 to their Quality. A weapon will be more powerful against a foe of lower Quality because it will be more accurate, punch through their armor better, or some other impact from the difference in the caliber of their designs.

SCALE

This is about examining the force of a pilot's action and the size of their obstacle. Sometimes more force is helpful, but other times it's a hindrance. Trying to intimidate a person with a half dozen toughs at your back would be helpful; trying to intimidate an army with a half dozen toughs would make no difference. Conversely, trying to civilly debate a city council might be hindered by those toughs' presence.

DOMINATING EFFECT

If there is a side that has a Potency, Quality, or Scale that is so overwhelmingly powerful than the opposition, that side dominates the circumstances. If a soldier has a fine machine gun and Pushes Themselves for extra Effect, they still can't damage an asteroid base; the base's Scale dominates the confrontation to the point that the soldier has zero Effect. This also applies to "impossible" actions such as a person squeezing through a keyhole. However, a dominant side can still be conquered if the pilot understands the nature of their dominance and takes actions to decrease it. If the soldier used placed explosives on the base's reactor core, that would be an excellent way of bypassing its dominance to damage it.

EXAMPLE: Scarecrow is fighting an AWV from The Lion's Pride. She wants to Battle them with 2d, so the GM says that this will be a Risky Position (because both parties are aware of each other, and she isn't in exceptional danger from her foe) with Limited Effect (because her opponent is from a higher Tier squad). Even though The Lion's Pride is 3 Tiers higher than Scarecrow's Squad (The Tier 1 Cenotaph) the GM doesn't feel that the narrative situation warrants giving Scarecrow zero Effect, which would prevent her from damaging the enemy.

Jess, Scarecrow's Player, reminds the GM that she has a Fine Heavy Cannon

on her Claymore, which increases her Effect to Standard since the Fine tag increases Effect. She still wants more Effect however, and says that she wants to Acquire an Asset as a Flashback where she gets information on the weak points of her opponent's AWV. After paying the stress cost and succeeding at Acquiring the Asset, the GM says she's now at Great Effect.

Jess wants to flatten her foe even harder, and says that she's going to Push Scarecrow by spending a Quirk so that she can have increased Effect. The GM reminds her that "you can't go above Great Effect except by getting a Crit on your roll, or if the narrative circumstances would indicate that you already have Dominating Effect (and if that were the case a roll wouldn't be necessary)." Jess decides to Push anyway for +1d instead, hoping to get that Crit, making her final Action Roll a 3d Battle with Risky Position and Great Effect.

GM TIPS AND CONSIDERATIONS

What follows is advice from the game's creator to facilitate the best possible experience with Beam Saber when you're the GM.

- Make instructions from the patron Faction's superiors seem inappropriate, incompetent, and confusing, then blame it on lacking the big picture.
- Consider giving the player what they want on a result of 1-3 but making what they want turn out to be a terrible thing.
- Consider destroying vehicle items as a consequence. Do this by telling them to replace the item's occupied Load slots with "Junk." Alternatively damage their vehicle items by removing the fine Quality (at least temporarily).
- Consider Harming the pilot even when they are in a vehicle. Some attacks will pierce the vehicle's cockpit leaving the vehicle fairly intact but wounding the pilot.
- Consider having consequences, whether from results of 1-3 or 4-5, take the narrative format of the pilots being skilled, but taken by surprise at their foes' competence. They don't always fail because they made a mistake, instead because the enemy was better than expected.
- It's more important to see what a character does with knowledge, rather than if they know it or not. If the information can't be immediately acquired in a scene give the pilot the information it makes sense for them to have. It'll be more interesting when they act on it than not acting without it.

- Put Clocks on maps in the locations they are relevant to.
- If you feel the Downtime phase is taking too long consider combining the narrative surrounding multiple activities. For example, maybe two pilots Cut Loose together while they Fix one of their vehicles, or a Pilot Schmoozes at the same time they're Acquiring An Asset.
- Don't be afraid to change your plans if the pilots are extremely beat up. Consider whether it is more interesting to continue grinding them down, or if that would just ruin the fun and drama. YOU have control over what consequences occur.
- Sometimes the GM should be a commander and give missions to the Squad, but sometimes the Squad should create missions and bring those ideas to the GM. The latter could either be narratively described as the CO bringing the Squad the mission the players want, or it could be described as the players are given a long term objective, ROE, and then told they can solve the mission however they need to (Think Star Trek: TOS' ongoing 5 year mission). It might also be a matter of the pilots acting without direct approval from their superiors.
- Roughly every three sessions you should start with going over everyone's Beliefs. This will help inspire players to lean into them, push back on them, and create conflict with them.
- When should a Squad be denied a Supply roll after a Mission? There is only one reason to deny the players a Supply roll, and that is if they agree to not get paid. Before they take the mission the GM must make it clear to the players that the Squad will not receive a Supply roll if they take the Mission. Here are some reasons that the players might not get a Supply roll:
 - The Mission's Employer is an Independent squad.
 - The employing Faction is blackmailing the Squad into completing the mission.
 - The Squad is taking a mission that does not have an employer, likely because they are working for themselves.
 - The narrative has dictated that receiving a Supply roll does not make sense because the supplies can't reach the squad, there are no supplies to be had, etc.
- When a player makes an outlandish suggestion for something they do or a goal they have, don't automatically say "no." Instead ask that player "how?" If they can provide an explanation that seems reasonable to the group, perhaps with a Long Term Project, and it doesn't go against the game's tone established by the group through play, let them try. Give them a chance to fulfill their dreams and you'll be rewarded with an interesting story whether they succeed or fail.
- When you present an approaching danger to the players and they take no action to

stop or avoid it, inflict the consequences. If they are having a fight on train tracks when a train is coming and choose to continue attacking instead of getting off the tracks, then they get hit by the train! They can always Resist the Consequence if they want.

- If you prepared a complication, character, or environment for a mission that never appeared on screen, save it and make use of it in an appropriate later mission.
- Be generous with giving Drive ticks to players. Drives help fuel character arcs, and even if a Pilot gets 1 tick every mission, it will still take them 8 missions to have enough to change a person's life. If you don't like how fast your players are accumulating Drive to spend, you can control how effective Drive is by negotiating the scale of "change" and "circumstances."
- If you are having a hard time coming up with a consequence following an action consider asking the players what they think a good consequence would be. Alternatively, use the consequence of a Collateral Die that the acting player declined.
- If you come across a rules issue that doesn't appear to be covered by the book, ask everyone playing what they think should happen. Getting the players' input on the solution to a rules problem is a way to increase approval of the outcome. Just make sure everyone agrees to abide by the results before going through with it.
- Have NPCs ask a pilot what kind of person another pilot is. Have them ask about their relationship. When NPCs ask a pilot about their squadmates it forces the player to consider what their pilot thinks of their fellows, and helps develop their character. What they don't say, or choose not to, is as important as what they do say.
- Questions for GMs to ask players: Have you done this before? Are you OK with this? IS that true?

MAGNITUDE

When technology that is far beyond our own appears in the narrative it can be difficult to judge its Effects and power levels. The following section explaining Magnitude exists to aid GMs and Players in understanding these forces in a consistent fashion. It can be used to judge the Quality and Tier of a technology based on its Area, Scale, Duration, Range, and Force. Whether you have a power level in mind and want to convert that into an ability's description, or you have an ability's description and need to know its Tier, the Magnitude tables can give you an answer.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
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AREA	A closet	A small room	A large room	Several rooms	A small building	A large building	A city block
SCALE	1 or 2 people	A small crowd (5)	A medium crowd (10)	A large crowd (20)	A huge crowd (40)	A massive crowd (80)	A colossal crowd (160)
DURATION	A few seconds	A few minutes	An hour	A few hours	A day	Several days	A week
RANGE	Within reach	A dozen paces	A stone's throw	Down the road	Several blocks away	Across the district	Across the city
MOBILITY	Stationary	Slow Walk	Wheels, Treads, or Hover	Fast and Nimble	Fast Flight	Slow and Space Worthy	Fast and Space Worthy
DURABILITY	Fragile	Plastic	Metal	Reinforced	Powered	Nano Laminate	Prototype
Tier & Quality	Poor	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Superior	Impeccable	Legendary
FORCE	Weak	Moderate	Strong	Serious	Powerful	Overwhelming	Devastating

Quality EXAMPLES		FORCE EXAMPLES	
6	A mansion, large starship, rare chemicals or materials, powerful AI	6	Hurricane wind, molten steel, tidal wave, electrical maelstrom
5	A large townhouse, small starship, tailored clothing, A vehicle's forcefield	5	A vehicle's cannon, raging thunderstorm, massive fire, lightning strike
4	A townhouse, typical AI or powerful app	4	A speeding car, burning forge, bomb, whirlwind, electrocution
3	A high Quality rifle, fashionable clothing, small home	3	A crushing blow, staggering wind, grenade, electrical surge, searing fire
2	A high Quality pistol, respectable clothing, private apartment, typical app	2	A powerful blow, howling wind, blow torch flame

1	A military blade, ordinary clothing, shared apartment, cheap food	1	A solid punch, steady wind, stove top, electrical shock
0	A rusty knife, tattered clothing, a corrugated steel shack	0	A firm shove, candle flame, breeze, tiny spark

When applying the power of a technology to the game you can use its Magnitude as a Fortune Roll to see what its Effect will be if the outcome isn't clear or certain.

EXAMPLE: a powerful AI is hacking into battleship's targeting systems. Since its Quality example puts it at Magnitude 6 it makes a 6d Fortune Roll to determine its Effectiveness. On a 1-3, the targeting systems are jammed for a short period. On a 4-5, the AI has taken out the battleship's ability to fire until repaired. On 6, the ship's weapons are under the AI's control. On a crit, the AI has the weapons and has already used them to inflict serious damage on the ship's allies.

Alternatively the Magnitudes of a technology's various aspects can be combined for a Fortune Roll, or only the relevant aspects could be used.

EXAMPLE: the AI could fire the ship's cannon at its own bridge with an Area of 3 and a Force of 4, for a total Magnitude of 7. It's definitely in Range so that aspect isn't a factor in success, however the GM decides that it'll take a few minutes to turn the cannon on the ship (Duration 1) giving some time for the crew to evacuate the area, and reducing the Magnitude by the Duration. This gives a Fortune Roll of 6d. Later the AI overLoads the cannon causing an explosion that rips through the ship's gunnery station. The GM judges that those inside the gunnery station are automatically affected by the blast so they only apply the Force 4 explosion to the Fortune Roll.

Magnitude is a guide for making decisions about the power of Effects, not hard and fast rules. If the GM decides that something has a Magnitude different than what the chart would indicate that's fine. Further after establishing an Effect's Magnitude the GM may decide that their initial decision was a mistake, and change it later on. That's fine too.

When acquiring an asset, crafting a gadget or bio-chemical agent, or developing an app, Magnitude can be used as a guide for determining the required Quality of the desired outcome.

APP DEVELOPMENT

Apps are programs with a limited scope of skills, but the capability to act and react on its own without oversight. This narrow focus and freedom of action often results in entities obsessed with fulfilling their programming when they aren't properly developed. Many

incautious developers experience grievous injury at the hands of an app fulfilling its purpose in an unexpected manner. They are serious undertakings, generally only created by organizations with significant resources, and are highly regulated within most Factions. A rare few apps occur naturally as programs, proxies, or AI change over time into something new; the lines between the four can become blurred. Choosing to develop an app is to willingly expose yourself to an insidious force that may misinterpret even the best of intentions.

So why develop one? Apps are extremely powerful since most physical spaces have digital elements to them, if not a full augmented reality overlay. They can bankrupt a CEO, shift a reactor into meltdown, or scour all social media to track a fugitive. The only way to completely avoid an app is to ensure all the technology nearby is analog and free of their manipulations. Good luck with that.

ACQUIRING PRIMORDIAL CODE

Before an app can begin development it requires a Primordial Code. Primordial Code is hard to come by due to its high manufacturing costs and tendency to absorb unintended influences when not properly isolated. Getting your hands on this code might be a reward (either in part or entirely) for completing a mission, perhaps by working for a digital securities squad. Alternatively acquiring the code could be done with an appropriate Long Term Project such as negotiating for it with a hacker collective, carefully assembling it yourself, or another technique of your creation.

DEVELOPING AN APP

Once a primordial code is acquired, a Long Term Project can be started to develop the code into a functioning app, but you require the Data Pack ability. Usually this will be an 8 Tick clock. When the project is begun the player and GM answer questions about the app to describe what it is capable of and how it behaves. Record these answers to refer to going forward.

1. The developer describes the purpose of the app and a bug it has.
2. The developer names a consequence they fear of creating and/or employing the app.
3. The GM states the Magnitude of the app based on the information from steps 1 and 2. It will always cost an amount of Stress equal to its Magnitude to activate.
4. The developer can add flaws into the app that will reduce its Magnitude, and thus Stress cost, by an amount equal to the Magnitude of the flaw introduced.

5. The GM describes how the app is activated and if it costs anything unusual (such as starting a threat clock, losing Trust with a Faction, sacrificing a valuable item, etc.). The process should require inputting concepts that embody the target, the user, and the effects that are desired by the creator. This process and costs are applied whenever the app is used.

EXAMPLE: Nehalennia is creating a Trapper app that will find, contain, and retrieve rampant apps and proxies, but it has a bug that causes it to not always return the contained apps to the correct storage device. She worries that the app may deposit corrupted apps in an unsuitable location she's unaware of, and that they'll eventually break free. The GM says that it sounds like it has a Range that stretches across the city (Magnitude 6) and applies moderate Force (Magnitude 1) giving it a total Magnitude of 7. Nehalennia doesn't want to pay 7 stress every time she uses it, so she says that it has the flaw of taking a few hours Duration (Magnitude 3) to activate, which reduces its total Magnitude (and Stress cost) to 4. The GM says that the process of activating the Trapper app will require the user to feed it an example of a functional version of its target, the user's digital signature, and footage of peaceful de-escalation. Also, because of the bug, the GM will start an 8 Tick threat Clock called "Rampant App Incursion" that gets a Tick whenever the app is used. Now Nehalennia just needs to complete the 8 Tick Long-Term Project and she'll have the app she wants.

ACTIVATING AN APP

An app can be activated at any time by anyone with the developer's permission. When activated the user must follow the process as described by the GM during its development, spend Stress equal to the app's magnitude, and pay any unusual costs. Once activated the app disappears into the AR to continue pursuing its purpose without the direction of the user. If an app needs to make a fortune roll in the course of fulfilling its purpose, it rolls dice equal to its magnitude.

CRAFTING

Between missions, a Pilot can create chemicals, biological agents, non-app programs, pilot gear, vehicle gear, or other unique inventions with unusual materials and tools. The rules for creating each of these are the same except for specific details based on what's being created.

DESIGNING

Before a new creation can be manufactured it must first be designed. This is done by

completing a suitable Long Term Project that is usually 8 Ticks. The player and GM will answer questions about the creation that describe how it works and what is needed to manufacture it. Record these answers to refer to going forward.

1. The designer describes the kind of creation they are making, and what it does.
2. The GM describes the minimum Quality level required to Manufacture the item. This is determined by judging its magnitude based on the designer described Effect of the creation.
3. The designer describes the reasons (such as adverse Effects, or rare materials required) that the creation is not in common use.
4. The GM describes what weaknesses the creation has, if any, by choosing from the drawbacks list.

A Pilot that has Researcher automatically completes a design of their making when they take the ability.

Once a design's Long Term Project has been completed, it can be manufactured with a Downtime activity (see Manufacturing below). You are the only person that can manufacture this creation unless someone else has the time and opportunity to learn your design as a 6 Tick Long Term Project.

Common chemicals (found in the Sample Creations section on page 272), standard pilot gear, and standard vehicle gear don't require a pilot to design them. Anyone can try manufacturing them as the designs are readily available to pilots.

EXAMPLE: Unlucky wants to create boosters that let him briefly blast the area around him with force to push away enemy vehicles that get too close in addition to their normal use. The GM says that it sounds like a minimum Quality of 7 to Manufacture because the area affected is equivalent to a small building (Magnitude 4) and it applies serious force (Magnitude 3). Unlucky says that this design isn't in common use because the energy output required is likely to damage the boosters if not the whole vehicle! The GM decides that it has the Volatile drawback, and might junk his fine mobility suite when used. Now Unlucky must complete his "Weaponized Boosters" 8 Tick Long-Term Project to complete the design and once that's done, he can Manufacture it.

MANUFACTURING

To make a design into functional product, take a Manufacture Downtime activity, and make an Engineer, or Interface roll as appropriate. The result of the roll will partially determine the Quality level of what has been manufactured. The product's Quality level is equal to the

squad's Tier and then adjusted by the roll's result. A result of 1-3 provides -1 to the Quality level, 4-5 makes no change, 6 provides +1, and a crit gives +2. If the Squad has the Workshop upgrade it provides +1 to the Quality level as well.

Manufacturing results are determined by your squad's Tier because it is what determines the Quality of a pilot's materials, workspace, and other resources.

Manufacturing an item requires that a minimum Quality level be produced, otherwise this attempt is deemed a failure as the result is non-functional. The GM determines the minimum Quality level by using the design's magnitude as a guideline; it may be higher or lower depending on the nature of the design and the circumstances of its manufacturing. Materiel can be spent to increase the Quality level of a manufactured item at a rate of 1 point for +1 Quality level (which can make the Quality level greater than Tier+2). You can also spend 1 Materiel to take an extra Manufacture activity.

EXAMPLE: Unlucky has completed his Weaponized Boosters Long-Term Project and is ready to Manufacture them. During the Design process the GM said it would require Quality 7 to make and The Cenotaph is only Tier 1, so he knows he'll need to spend some Materiel to build it. He rolls his 1d Engineer, and gets a 6 which gives him a total quality of 2 (1 for Tier and +1 for the 6). He remembers that the squad has a Workshop which gives +1 Quality for a total of 3. Since he needs to get to 7, he'll have to spend 4 Materiel to make up the difference or this attempt at manufacturing the Weaponized Boosters will have been a failure. He spends the 4 Materiel and has completed his creation!

MODIFYING AN ITEM

Adding functions or features to an item is easier than making something new. Creating a new design isn't necessary. Make a Manufacture roll as normal (the item being modified has a base Quality equal to the squad's Tier) and consult the directions below.

- A simple, useful modification requires Tier+1 Quality. EXAMPLES: Cutting down a rifle or shotgun to be easily concealed. A vehicle spotlight that uses a specific wavelength of light. Espionage gear concealed in an outfit.
- A significant modification requires Tier+2 Quality. EXAMPLES: Altering the receiver and trigger mechanisms of a pistol to have fully automatic fire. A vehicle flamethrower that sprays fire suppressant foam instead of flames. Climbing gear that uses motors to raise the user.
- An Augmented Reality, electronic, chemical, or biological modification requires Tier +3. EXAMPLES: A physical gun that can Harm digital entities. Long-range transmitter with a built in signal decoder. Anti-infantry defences that spray tear gas

instead of shrapnel. Wings grown onto a vehicle for quieter flight than the standard mobility suite.

Modified items might have drawbacks at the GM's discretion.

DRAWBACKS

A design or modification may have one or more drawbacks, chosen by the GM.

- **Complex.** Creating this design requires multiple Manufacture Downtime activities; the GM will tell you how many. The minimum Quality level must be attained on each Manufacture roll for it to count towards the completion.
- **Conspicuous.** This design is very noticeable. Take -1 Trust with the mission's Target or Employer as appropriate if this creation is used during a mission.
- **Consumable.** This design has a limited number of uses (the amount determined by the GM) before it is destroyed and must be Manufactured again. All chemicals have this drawback, with usually a single use.
- **Rare.** This design requires a rare component to be Manufactured. Acquiring it likely requires a mission, Long Term Project, specific Squad Upgrade, or some other task.
- **Unreliable.** When you use the creation for the first time each mission, make a fortune roll using its Quality to see how well it works during the mission. On a 1-3 it has reduced Effect, 4-6 it functions as expected, On a crit it has increased Effect.
- **Volatile.** The design produces an adverse side effect for the user, specified by the GM. A side effect is a Consequence, and may be Resisted.

SAMPLE CREATIONS

Designs are listed with their Quality level (by Tier I-VI), followed by a number of uses if they're Consumable (1-3). These designs are easy to find, so anyone can Manufacture them without studying them first.

BOMBS (Chemical or Mechanical)

Fire Bomb (I/2): a fragile container filled with a flammable liquid.

Chem Grenade (II/2): Delivers an aerosolized chemical that must be provided separately.

DRONES (Electronics or Mechanical)

Spy Eye (II): a small drone carrying only a camera and microphone.

Remote Bomb (V/1): a small drone filled with explosives.

Repair-pede (III): a cat sized drone able to use a variety of tools.

MACHINES (Mechanical)

Zip-Gun (I): a single shot pistol made from innocuous materials, easily disassembled and reassembled.

Trigger Sensor Kit (II): pressure plates, trip wires, and similar mechanisms that activate other items when disturbed.

Quick Fix (IV/2): Shaped metal or plastic with strips of binding agent for covering holes or bridging gaps.

Protective Lining (II/2): Sheets of material that acts as a barrier against radiation, electricity, fire, or extreme cold.

DRUGS (Chemical)

Sweet Release (II/1): Causes coma-like stupor and hallucinations.

Mild Mild Mist (I/3): Induces a pleasant, calm mood.

Go Grit (II/2): Fills the user with great energy and a sense of power.

Joy (II/2): Induces positive feelings towards others.

Vision Tabs (II/2): Small doses induce feelings of greater empathy, larger ones cause hallucinations as well.

Trance Powder (I/3): Puts the target into a calm and suggestible mental state.

Sleep Dust (I/3): Chemicals that will place someone into a deep sleep for an hour.

Git Gud (IV/1): Take Level 2 Harm "Obsessive" and +1d to your next Interface roll.

OILS (Chemical)

Tru-Negate (III/1): Neutralize the effects of other chemicals.

Epixy (II/1): Permanently fuse two surfaces until parted with a neutralizer or extreme (and damaging effort).

Insta-Furnace (III/3): Burst into intense flame on contact with air.

POISONS (Chemical)

Blacksite Bourbon (III/2): Causes an incapacitating sensation of drowning.

Sight Begone! (III/3): Causes blindness for a few minutes.

Liquid Shock (III/1): Causes incapacitating full body muscle cramps.

Tear Gas (III/2): Create a cloud of smoke that stings the eyes and is difficult to breathe.

Strike A Pose (IV/1): Cause temporary paralysis.

PROGRAMS (Software)

Barrier Breaker (IV/1): Destroys many password walls leaving obvious intrusion.

Auto-Update (III/1): Force a device to restart due to a false required update.

AR Disguise (III/2): Appear as someone else to simple digital entities.

SAMPLE SPECIAL CREATIONS

Scythe (VI/1, Chemical): Can be instantly fatal when consumed. Unreliable.

Umbilical Worm (II/1, Biological): Lets the user read the dreams of a sleeper. Rare.

Zephyr Gas (IV/1, Chemical): A chemical that is odorless, safe to breathe, invisible, and highly flammable. Used to deter firearms. Rare.

Heart Breaker (IV/1, Chemical): Slows the heart over several days, causing death. Unreliable.

Trauma Relief Kit (VI/1, Biological): A collection of tissue samples and fluids that can delay death, or (rarely) revive the recently deceased. Unreliable, Volatile.

Rapid Growth Tissue (III/1, Biological): +4 ticks on a healing clock. Rare.

Deadman's Dreams (VI/1, Biological): Requires a mostly intact brain. Adds the brain's memories to your own. Rare. Volatile.

Spider Mana (III/1, Chemical): Users can sense vibrations and imminent danger. Rare.

Ad Blocker (IV/2, Electronic): Covers a small room, keeping digital entities from entering or exiting. Volatile.

Buster Box (IV, Electronic): A high capacity cable connected to a quantum drive that will entangle digital entities and attempt to draw them into the QD.

Stream Overload (IV, Electronic): A beam that repels AR entities with serious force.

STARTING SITUATION: THE FORT JOVANOL INCIDENT

This section presents a starting scenario for those who want to quickly get into things or need some inspiration for how to start their campaign. Give this to the players before creating pilots and their squad.

THE FORT JOVANOL INCIDENT

Your Squad has been dragged into a flare up of The War between the Jovangellian Empire's Wolf Pack squad, and the Celestial Myriad's Cult of Earth Found.

A week ago a series of explosions ripped through Fort Jovanol, the new home of the recently transferred Wolf Pack. The squad, on leave from the frontlines, has been devastated, and are taking the attack very personally. Rumor has it that the investigation into the attack ties it to The Cult of Earth Found, who have set up in the small town of Hulinton a couple hours drive South of Fort Jovanol.

Hot heads on both sides of the rumors have begun slinging vitriol over the radio. Yesterday that switched to missiles when a barrage rained down on Hulinton from North of the town. The Cult's defensive systems protected the sections of the town under their control, but the North edge of town is burning. Both sides are now gearing up for major offensive action.

Fort Jovanol and Hulinton are not too far West of Journey City, the home of the last Independent space elevator known as The Tower. All the Factions and the Independent squads are looking to take advantage of this situation as it unfolds. Your Squad will be tasked with missions in the area, which will initially be determined by the Faction you work for.

The squads attached to each Faction below are the ones most tied to that Faction's goal, though each Faction likely has 1 or 2 more squads in the area (such as the players' squad). However, it is recommended that the listed squads are given preference over other squads, or creating your own, when creating Rivals, Allies, Targets, and Employers because this will keep the game focused. Introduce new squads as old ones are removed from the area of conflict.

The missions provided below are intentionally vague. They leave out the Briefing, Complications, Characters, and Challenges that the Preparing A Mission section (see page 256) directs the GM to create so that the missions can be different each time they are used,

and so that the GM can get some practice partially constructing a mission. If the GM is really stuck about how to develop the starting missions, don't be afraid to ask the players for suggestions as these are the opening of the campaign and chances are everyone is learning the game.

AUTOCRACY: THE JOVANGELLIAN EMPIRE

The Empire seeks to conquer Journey City through force of arms, but it's happy to let the Wolf Pack vent their rage by conquering the area West of the city. With that region locked down they can use it as a staging ground for an offensive Eastward.

FACTION GOAL

Assault The Foe: Soften up a specific enemy held region in preparation for capture. This can be done by brazenly attacking that region, cutting that area off from reinforcements, gaining intel about the district's weak points, etc.

ACTIVE SQUAD

The Wolf Pack (Tier II-S Autocracy) is a vanguard unit that was recently devastated while on leave from the front. The evidence they have points to the Cult of Earth Found as the culprits, and they're ready to avenge their fallen. **GOAL:** to wipe out the Cult of Earth Found.

PLAYERS' DIRECT SUPERIOR

Captain Martinez is a weary and grumpy officer. They transferred to Fort Jovanol away from the front alongside The Wolf Pack. It was supposed to be quiet; a moment to recover. Now they and their people have been denied that breather and there's Hell to pay.

OPENING MISSION

Employer: The Wolf Pack on behalf of The Jovangellian Empire.

Target: The Rubble Runts

Objective: Remove guerillas from the planned assault route.

Rules of Engagement: No threatening, or employing force against civilians; No firing upon or presenting as a clearly marked medical transport or facility; Prisoners must be taken alive and remain unHarmed.

CORPORATOCRACY: EXODUS REPUBLIC INCORPORATED

ER Inc's current interests are primarily to gather more information about The Jovangellian Empire's capabilities in the area. To that end Calazar Strategic Deployment has been

contracted to assist the depleted Wolf Pack.

FACTION GOAL

Intelligence Coup: Steal valuable information from the enemy. This can be done by acquiring VIPs, retrieving actionable intel, stealing technological advances, etc.

ACTIVE SQUAD

Calazar Strategic Deployment (Tier II-W Corporatocracy) is a military company of fans of the Calazar media franchise. Currently contracted to the Wolf Pack. **GOAL:** to raise funds for the next CalazCon.

PLAYERS' DIRECT SUPERIOR

Project Lead Walker is an ambitious and hard working manager. The Incident is an opportunity for promotion, but it'll take some savvy. Contract the Calazar fans to The Empire, while using other assets to find where the Jovangellians are weak. Then make the deal.

OPENING MISSION

Employer: Calazar Strategic Development on behalf of Exodus Republic Incorporated.

Target: The Wolf Pack

Objective: Acquire information about the Wolf Pack's Supply lines.

Rules of Engagement: Only use force in self defence; No killing Wolf Pack Personnel.

DEMOCRACY: THE DEMOCRATIC FEDERATED SYSTEMS

The Democratic Federated Systems currently have a non-violent stance in the area. Officially. The Fort Jovanol Incident was caused by their Dark Room squad, and they continue to create turbulence that favours them.

FACTION GOAL

Divided They Fall: Manipulate the enemy's plans. This can be done by planting false orders and intelligence, disrupting communications, pitting enemies against each other, etc.

ACTIVE SQUAD

The Dark Room (Tier II-S Democracy) is a black ops deniable asset deployed from a stealth orbital platform. **GOAL:** to eliminate enemy VIPs.

PLAYERS' DIRECT SUPERIOR

Councillor Swan is a hard hearted and calculating bureaucrat. Before the Incident many would think things were “quiet” in Izya, but Swan had the reports of the building forces, and repeat skirmishes. With the Incident he gave all that a release valve to buy some time.

OPENING MISSION

Employer: The Dark Room on behalf of The Democratic Federated Systems.

Target: The Cult of Earth Found

Objective: Destroy the cult's communications facility.

Rules of Engagement: Only use force against the Cult of Earth Found; No firing on medical facilities or transports; Only present as Jovangellian military.

INDEPENDENT

This “Faction” are a scattering of unaligned squads each pursuing their own goals. Generally they are Earthers, though there are some Offworlder Independents. If the players choose to be Independent they WILL be at a disadvantage because they'll lack the support network that a patron Faction provides.

ACTIVE SQUADS

Doctors Beyond Stars (Tier II-S Independent) is a group of humanitarians who try to ensure the well being of the civilians that end up as collateral damage in The War, regardless of their allegiance. **GOAL:** to gain access to all civilian populations.

The Burden (Tier II-S Independent) is an anti-Offworlder group with no unified post Offworlder plan of government. **GOAL:** to remove all the offworld Factions.

The Rubble Runts (Tier II-W Independent) are a militia originally formed by war orphans looking to grow in the vacuum left by the local government. **GOAL:** to become the most powerful gang.

PLAYERS' DIRECT SUPERIOR

Scratch is a cheerful and energetic Proxy. They aren't the squad's superior in the giving orders sense, but they are excellent at connecting the pilots to the clients who can make use of their skills and equipment.

OPENING MISSION

Employer: Doctors Beyond Stars

Target: The Cult of Earth Found

Objective: Get a group of Doctors Beyond Stars Personnel into North Hulinton so they can assess and treat the damage to the civilian populace.

Rules of Engagement: Only use force in self defence; no looting, requisitioning, stealing, and/or destroying civilian, commercial, and/or governmental property; no threatening, or employing force against civilians.

OLIGARCHY: THE ADAMANT COUNCIL OF NOR

The Virtue of The Adamant Council of Nor senses something fishy going on with the Fort Jovanol Incident. She's tasked the squads under her command with doing what they can to investigate the situation, so that if it is a matter of skullduggery she can use it to the Council's benefit.

FACTION GOAL

Hearts And Minds: Change the popular opinion of a Faction in a manner that benefits your patron Faction. This can be done by protecting the populace from marauders in your patron's name, publicizing the corruption of an enemy Faction, shifting musical tastes in support of your patron, etc.

ACTIVE SQUAD

The Knives of Nor (Tier II-S Oligarchy) are the diplomats and spies for Nor in Izya. **GOAL:** to turn Izya into a Norrish puppet.

PLAYERS' DIRECT SUPERIOR

Virtue de Quidt is an experienced and crafty noble. She's suspicious of the recent conflict as reports indicated that Celestial Myriad in Hulinton didn't have the supplies or Personnel to perform such a strike, never mind The Cult of Earth Found.

OPENING MISSION

Employer: The Knives of Nor on behalf of The Adamant Council.

Target: The Wolf Pack

Objective: Gain access to the investigation into the Fort Jovanol Incident.

Rules of Engagement: No deployment of chemical, biological, explosive, and/or poisonous weapons; no looting, requisitioning, stealing, and/or destroying civilian, commercial, and/or

governmental property;

THEOCRACY: THE CHURCH OF THE CELESTIAL MYRIAD

The Church of the Celestial Myriad is in the area South West of Journey City to work on converting some of the smaller communities starting with Hulinton. Unfortunately the Fort Jovanol Incident has thrown that plan into chaos and they've had to turn their logistics towards the growing conflict.

FACTION GOAL

Secure The Borders: Take proactive measures to protect the patron Faction. This can be done by removing enemy agents acting within the patron Faction, weakening neighbouring regions, constructing defenses, etc.

ACTIVE SQUAD

The Cult of Earth Found (Tier II-S Theocracy) is a group that believes that humanity's holy birthplace is only for the faithful. GOAL: To remove the non-faithful from Earth.

PLAYERS' DIRECT SUPERIOR

Bishop Acampora is a patient and caring member of the clergy. She's been sent to Hulinton by the Archbishop in Blessed Harbor to convert the locals, but is concerned about rumors of armed guerilla resistance in the populace.

OPENING MISSION

Employer: The Cult of Earth Found on behalf of The Church of the Celestial Myriad.

Target: The Burden

Objective: Root out the Burden cell in Hulinton

Rules of Engagement: No torture; no deployment of chemical, biological, explosive, and/or poisonous weapons; no use of disproportionate force; detained persons are to be unHarmed.

HOW TO END A CAMPAIGN

All good things must come to an end. Eventually your game of Beam Saber will end. Ideally your group will have reached a satisfying narrative conclusion at that time. This section is designed to help you reach that ending.

WHEN TO END A CAMPAIGN

The first step to ending a campaign is to know when it's time to wrap things up. The first consideration here is the duration of your campaign. If your campaign was planned to be a single session, then you'll almost certainly be ending the campaign at the end of said session, and hopefully that will coincide with the end of the mission. If your campaign was planned to be a short arc, then you likely have a few missions prepared giving you a clear end point. If your campaign did not have a planned end point there are three main indicators that your group should discuss ending the campaign.

1. One of the Pilots is 1 Scar away from being removed from play. Removing a Pilot might break the current narrative arc, so before that happens due to Scars talk about it.
2. One of the missions has unexpectedly concluded the narrative in a satisfying manner. Even if it feels like everything is wrapped up, there might be stories worth continuing the game to pursue.
3. The group decides that the game should end. This might be due to life changes, wanting to play something else, or a desire for new characters. All are valid reasons.

The above are NOT definitive answers for when to end a campaign, they are indicators for when you should talk about it. Some players and groups will happily welcome a new pilot when an original one is forced out by Scars, while others will want to conclude the current story. The important thing is that all the players are on board with continuing the game if this isn't the end; coerced participation in a game is not play.

Try to discuss ending the campaign 1 or 2 missions before the final mission so that players have a chance to wrap up any lingering narrative threads and unfinished long term projects. Note that "wrapping up a narrative thread" might mean building it to a tipping point to then complete during the Final Mission or Epilogue. The goal is to make the ending of the campaign satisfying for everyone, and that means trying to avoid leaving stories unfinished when players are invested in them.

PLANNING THE FINAL MISSION

A lot of planning the Final Mission will follow the usual steps found in the How To Prepare A Mission section (see page 256) but there's obviously more to it than just picking a Target, Employer and Objective. The thing to keep in mind while planning and GMing the Final Mission is that everyone should be working together to reach a satisfying conclusion. The first step in that is discussing the potential fates of the Pilots.

Ask the Players how they feel about their Pilots' dying in the last mission. Some Players will be willing to have anything happen to their Pilot, some will only be ok with their Pilot's death if other Pilots survive, and some will want a guarantee that their Pilot survives the final mission. Talk about what is on the table for everyone to still have a good time; this isn't ruining any surprises because a Player being ok with their Pilot dying isn't a guarantee of that death.

The next thing to consider is the Final Mission's Objective. It should have the following qualities:

- **Be dramatic:** Characters that the Players and Pilots are invested in should be in the Mission and be directly affected by it. This includes Allies, Rivals, the Squad's Direct Superior, and any other NPCs that the Players care about. Don't use ALL of them because an overly large cast will disrupt the narrative flow, but consider using 1 per player plus 1 for the squad as a whole. Try to avoid introducing new NPCs; whenever possible use an already established one that the Players know.
- **Have high stakes:** Whether the Pilots succeed or fail in their Objective should decide the outcome for major plot points. Ask BIG questions with the Objective. Is the Izyan Tower destroyed causing widespread destruction but freeing the Locals from Offworlder interest? Does it remain standing but fall under the control of an Offworlder Faction? Do the Pilots use it for the rebirth of the local government? Make sure that the Players know just how high the stakes are, just remember that whatever happens, The War will NOT end.
- **Include Drives:** These are the goals that the Players and Pilots have been working towards and the Final Mission should offer them the chance to invoke them. There should be clear opportunities to further each Pilot's Drive so that they can spend them during the Epilogue, or clear opportunities to spend Drive clocks that have already been filled. This won't always be possible because the nature of Drives makes them incredibly varied but try to include them whenever you can.
- **Include Rivals:** This will be the last chance for Pilots to face off against their Rivals, and whenever possible that narrative thread should be wrapped up. Remember that to **permanently** remove a Rival at least 2 Drive clocks must be spent, so if a Player doesn't have enough clocks but is close, they might remove their Rival during the Epilogue. If you want to include more than one, make sure that it fits the established narrative; Rivals from opposing factions probably won't team up unless that's been established, but they might accidentally work together by simultaneously opposing the players.
- **Tell the players that this will be the Final Mission.** They need to know that they should use every resource they have, unless they plan on spending it during the Epilogue. This is a fire sale, everything must go!

THE EPILOGUE

With the Final Mission behind you, it's time for your campaign's Epilogue! The first part of that is to deal with the Mission Completed steps (see page 180) since they transition play from the Mission to Downtime. Ask whether the Players want to go through the Reward and Trust stages of the process. For some groups these steps will be important (to determine how wealthy the Squad is at the end and their relationships with NPC Squads and Factions), but others would rather skip it. You should absolutely skip Entanglements because there will

already be enough fallout from the Final Mission to fill the Epilogue.

Before diving into the full Epilogue there's one last step: providing some closure on Pilots' Beliefs. The Final Mission is revealing of each Pilot's personality, so the Players get to ask questions as though they had completed their Connection Clock with every Pilot. This means that each Player gets to ask 1 question of every other Pilot that is related to 1 of their Beliefs with said Pilot. These questions must be answered truthfully. Consider describing one final scene between each pair of Pilots as they both get the answer to their question.

In the Epilogue there should be no rolls of any kind; the dice don't get any say in the final moments of the narrative. Each Player gets to say what happens to their Pilot after the Final Mission along with any NPCs they feel are important to their character. If there are multiple Players who feel an NPC is vital to their character, narrative control should be shared by discussing potential endings, and what feels most true to the established fiction.

If a Player isn't sure about how to describe their final scene or Epilogue, use Downtime Activities as inspiration. Perhaps a Pilot learns the truth of a Belief by watching their squadmate fix their Vehicle after the Final Mission. Maybe a Pilot's Epilogue is continuing to pursue a Long Term Project that they didn't quite finish before the end. Just remember that these are NOT actually Downtime Activities and no dice are rolled. The Player decides if that "Long Term Project" is completed or if the scene fades on them continuing to work leaving the question unanswered.

Header art is a space battle.

INSERT THE WAR AND THE IZYAN CONFLICT ART HERE

A massive battle scene with infantry, tanks, aircraft, drones, mechs fighting around blasted farm houses/barns, and across rolling hills. With the Tower in the background. An expanded version of the footer art from a different angle. DOUBLE PAGE SPREAD

CHAPTER 11: THE WAR AND THE IZYAN CONFLICT

As humanity regathered itself amongst the stars, lines were quickly drawn. Everyone has their own idea of how things should be done, and so many of them are incompatible. So many of them are worth dying for.

The conflict that encompasses the five Factions of humanity has many names, both in use and out of date, but most just call it The War. It's too old, too ubiquitous to call it anything else. The Factions have allied, defended, battled, and betrayed each other so many times that it doesn't matter anymore. "Peace" has become a time to gather intel on your allies, and rebuild your strength so you can betray them before they do the same to you.

All of humanity has been yoked to this, their most terrible wonder. Many strains of education, training, and recreation have been turned to preparing the populace for their role in The War. Full mobilization across entire systems has lead to severe rationing. Only the most common and necessary of materials are available to the civilian populace. Many try to get around the restrictions by enlisting in the military, and many others get around them by being conscripted. Everyone feels these costs of The War, except for those who can afford not to.

Wealthy and powerful members of every Faction use their resources to bypass the civil responsibilities the less affluent fulfil. Those with the money can buy rationed or restricted material on the black market. With the right words and "donations" to the war effort conscription can be performed in a cozy and safe backwater outpost, if not outright avoided. While many would consider the Izyan Conflict a backwater outpost, it is anything but safe.

EARTH

When humanity found "Earth" there was little fanfare. Another comfortably inhabitable planet that some handful of Exodus ships had found centuries ago, spread across, and begun calling Earth in memory of humanity's birthplace. It certainly wouldn't be the first "Earth."

As with everything the Factions touch, it eventually became embroiled in The War. A misunderstanding here, a skirmish there, and betrayal or two to really get things going. In only a few years each Faction had a small presence on or around the planet. A small presence because it was not easy to get planetside.

Surrounding the planet is a cloud of debris hanging in orbit. Satellites are a short lived prospect, as they are quickly smashed apart by space junk both large and small

(though just as often a Faction decides they'd benefit from its destruction, and the cloud provides easy deniability). Its density makes it impossible most of the time for ships to move between the planet and the void. However, many eyes are constantly tracking the currents of the cloud (not unlike more traditional weather reports) to predict gaps when transports can pass through. Often these openings are spotted by multiple groups and each race to get their ships through the gap. Escorts are often sent along with the transports to protect them resulting in running battles between opposing convoys trying to breakthrough the debris, as well as conflicts between the ships in space looking to scoop up the transports. The most daring smugglers will try to get through these conflict zones, and the most desperate will try to pass through the cloud itself.

There is another way through the debris. Six space elevators dot the planet, providing a stable method through the cloud. Built and controlled by the local inhabitants, they have the defenses necessary to stand as a bridge to space, but their capacity is limited. In the early days of the Offworlders presence, the Factions would rent time on the elevators at exorbitant cost to bring supplies and people planetside. Unfortunately for the locals, the scrutiny that was brought to bear to justify the costs of this conflict revealed a surprising truth to the Offworlders.

As local continents, planets, orbits, and stars were analyzed it became more and more likely that the locals were not in fact the progeny of wayward Exodus ships. There was a good chance that this Earth was in fact humanity's birthplace. This theory quickly became a fiasco for the leaders of each Faction. The planet had almost no strategic value in The War. It was out of place, lacked a planetary manufacturing base, and did not have a notable amount of rare resources. At the same time, capturing humanity's true home would be a massive boon for morale and propaganda, while losing it to another Faction could be devastating. So an unwitting and devastating compromise was reached: each Faction would make a stronger effort to control the planet to appease public opinion, but not commit enough forces to weaken their Position on more important worlds.

Between the lack of satellites and the interference from the cloud, communication across long distances whether purely planetside or between the ground and the sky is extremely difficult. This has changed the way that The War is fought, at least on this one backwater planet. Independence of action, and self-sufficiency for tightly knit groups has become the standard operating procedure for the Factions. Their squads are trained to function with little direct oversight because once they are in the field, the resources necessary to manage them are often better spent elsewhere.

In bits and pieces, with every autonomous Squad brought planetside, the Factions gained more control of Earth. In a few short years each Faction had gained control of a space elevator. Many communities have been destroyed. Those that remain functionally

intact have important infrastructure, especially spaceports and elevators. Towns that have been unofficially abandoned by their Faction are often still inhabited. Many of these contain digital ghosts of the dead and missing in the form of their Proxies.

One space elevator remains in the hands of the Locals. Reinforced beyond its already considerable defenses, it became The Tower: a symbol of the momentous change looming on the horizon. Those living in and near it braced for The War to come to them. The wait was short as each Faction seeking a second elevator to break the stalemate moved forces to the Territory of Izya.



THE TERRITORY OF IZYA

When The War arrived at Izya it came from the sea. The Factions targeted ports along the

Izyan coast to establish a beach head and begin laying the foundation for their Supply chain. Local refugees who could fled in land, always moving closer to Journey City and The Tower they could see even from the shore.

In a few months each Faction gained control of a large swathe of Izya, and began butting up against the territory of their fellow Offworlders. The Adamant Council of Nor in the South East, The Church of the Celestial Myriad in the South West, The Jovangellian Empire in the West, Exodus Republic Inc. in the North, and The Democractic Federated Systems on the Eastern peninsula. Skirmishes broke out across these fluid borders, but always they pushed inward to their goal, and in short order they reached The Greater Journey City Area.

EXAMPLE REGIONS IN THE TERRITORY OF IZYA

The following are example Regions to be used in a Beam Saber campaign with a national level Map Scale (see page 241).

GREATER JOURNEY CITY AREA

INSERT GJCA ART HERE: A rusted agricultural CWV sits abandoned inside an overgrown barn. Local farmers (one is a little person) load their produce into an Exodun transport, while an AWV stands guard. Tanks roll past a seemingly deserted home causing dust to drift down onto a family hidden in their basement.

DESCRIPTION

The area around Journey City was a network of small and medium sized towns that supported the much larger metropolis. In between the urban centers was a sprawl of farms broken up by a web of roads. Now, however, it is a sprawl of overgrown farmland torn apart by battles and dotted with ruins. The settlements that remain inhabited are either hidden or in service to their closest Offworlder Faction.

SCENE

A rusted agricultural CWV sits abandoned inside an overgrown barn. Farmers Load their produce into an Exodun transport, while an AWV stands guard. Tanks roll past a seemingly deserted home causing dust to drift down onto a family hidden in their basement.

NOTABLES

Hyacinth Affective: Alderman Mergers & Acquisitions Executive Team Leader for Journey City. Known for not speaking often, their subordinates know that when they do the words better be heard. Their goal in the GJCA is to disrupt enemy Supply lines, and to that end they've built a network of safe houses, supply caches, and contacts. (Quiet, authoritative)

LANDMARKS

Dorothy's Lake is a massive freshwater lake that splits the Upper Izya River from the brackish Lower Izya River. While together the Upper and Lower are commonly known as just the Izya river, the Lower is very broad allowing sea vessels into Dorothy's natural harbour. Three urban centers Journey City, Yrvan, and Taizhil (in order of descending size) sit on the banks of the lake, providing excellent water access to them.

RATINGS

The Greater Journey City Area has Wealth 3, Might 1, Crime 3, and Tech 2.

SPECIAL RULE

Everyone has eyes on this area and when combined with the extensive conflict its seen, the Stealth tactic gets -1d to the engagement roll as there is little cover to use.

THE MIGHT AREA

INSERT MIGHT AREAART HERE: A Local village's population gathers in its community center to discuss their new rights and responsibilities under the Adamant Council, many glad that they have a community center to meet in. A pair of Norrish agents stand at the back of the room. Framed from on stage, the back of the speaker behind a lectern, looking on a room full of citizens. A person with a seeing eye drone sits in the front row.

DESCRIPTION

The community of Might is an entirely Norrish construction, and it shows in its lack of a distinctive skyline. Their heritage of living in the void has given them both an appreciation for the natural world they lacked access to, and an indifference to confined spaces. This means the Local communities around Might have been largely undisturbed, other than as collateral damage, but the people have been absorbed into the Norrish citizen/vassal divide, mostly as vassals. The promise of citizenship motivates some, while others see it as the dangling carrot.

SCENE

A Local village's population gathers in its community center to discuss their new rights and responsibilities under the Admant Council, many glad that they have a community center to meet in. Plant covered hillocks are revealed to be round, low lying buildings as a door opens, and a military convoy rolls out. Two Norrish citizens effortlessly slide past each other in an underground facility's narrow hall, while a Local nearby is informed that they'll never get citizenship if they can't even walk down a hall without bumping into their betters.

NOTABLES

Lady Elreth: The Goddess of War and Death. With her unique AWW Starfall, she has one goal in Izya: find the best AWW pilots and beat them. Interested only in fair fights, it's not unusual for her to leave allies and mission objectives behind in pursuit of a skilled opponent, or to quit the field if there aren't any to be found. However, she's quite content to consider entire squads as a single skilled "opponent." (Proud, fearsome)

LANDMARKS

The Estuary of Yngrell is the primary way to find Might's mostly underground city. While the latter can be hard to distinguish from the rolling hills that make up the terrain in the middle of Izya, the river's mouth can easily be seen by the sharp but shallow valley it has cut. The bridge at the estuary is the only convenient way to traverse the valley for a great distance, and the Norrish military keeps a close eye on it, even though its road only leads deeper into their territory.

RATINGS

The Might Area has Wealth 2, Might 3, Crime 2, and Tech 2.

SPECIAL RULE

If a Squad does something suspicious that Local vassals or Norrish citizens in the area might notice, start a 4 tick clock called "Hammers Alert." When that clock fills, a fire team from The Hammers arrives on scene to investigate, and likely detain, the disruptive individuals.

EASTERN IZYA PENINSULA

INSERT POINT VIEW ART HERE: Massive DFS cargo ships arrive from across the sea, bringing cargo from the DFS controlled space elevator. Loader AWWs move the goods to DFS ground transports. Longshoremen, stevedores, and sailors shoot the shit.

DESCRIPTION

As the last of the Offworlders to arrive on Izya the Democratic Federated Systems had slim pickings for safe landing points, and the Eastern Izya Peninsula proved the best choice. Though it lacked a suitable natural harbour, the DFS Research Groups whipped one up. It was supposed to be temporary but as the port town rapidly expanded, every harbour was needed. Even the old "temporary" ones. Now the DFS headquarters in Izya is a former resort town converted into a juggernaut of a trade hub at one end of a 16 lane super highway called the 401.

SCENE

Massive cargo ships arrive from across the sea, bringing cargo from the DFS controlled space elevator. DFS transports travel along a DFS built super highway carrying DFS goods to DFS troops. Locals tend to subsistence farms along the peninsula after having their businesses pushed out of Point View, and disrupted by the impassable highway bisecting the peninsula.

NOTABLES

Henrietta Hamilton: Drivin' Diner proprietor. She's converted an old transport truck into a rolling restaurant called the Drivin' Diner. Drivers radio in their orders, make an AR payment, and her drones deliver the meals. Anyone who spends any time around the 401 knows her, and knows that she serves up more than just premier burgers. (Warm, knowledgeable)

LANDMARKS

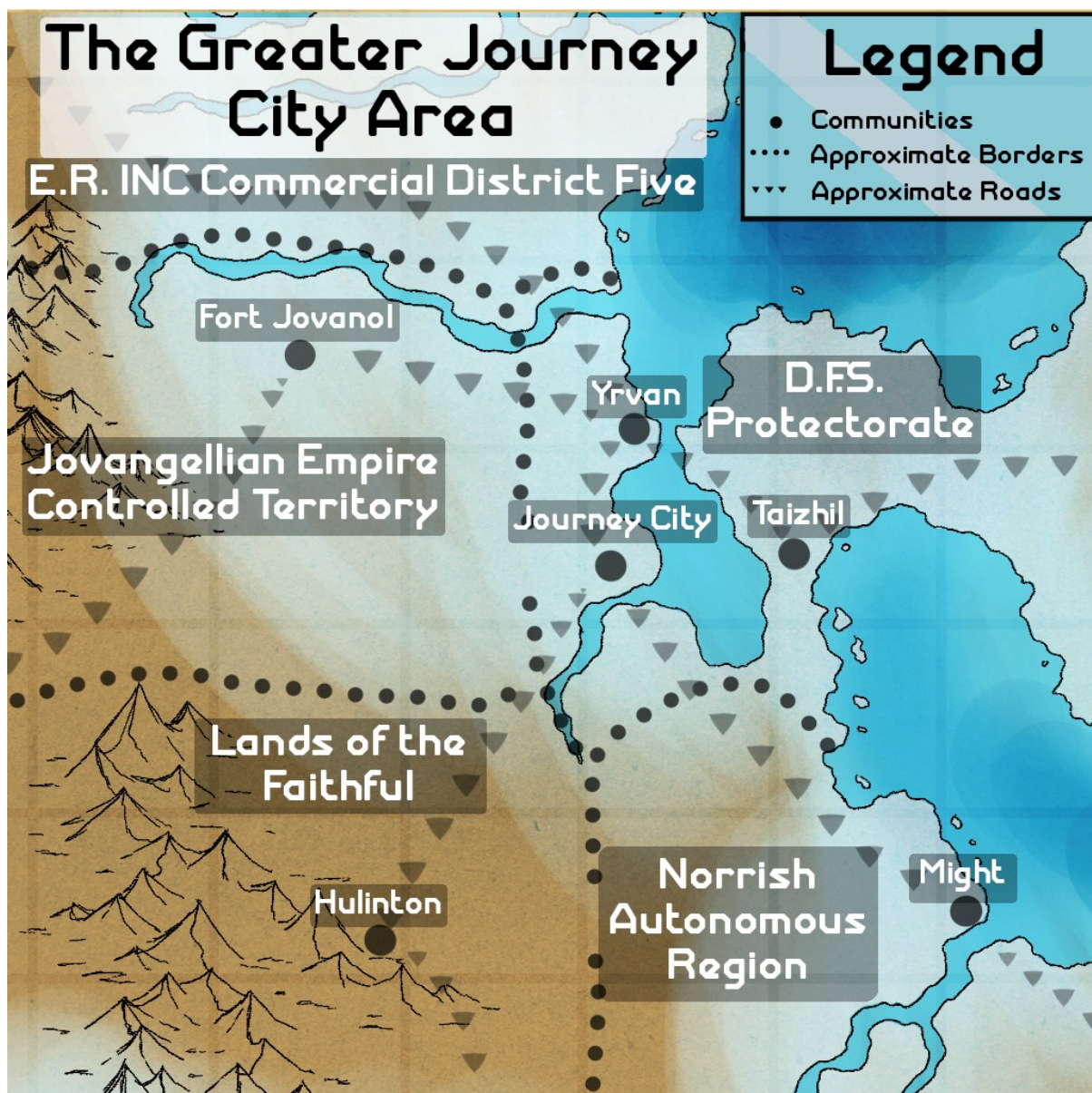
The Artichoke is the primary administration building of the DFS in Izya. Built from a locally mined green stone in the patriotically traditional "Local Star" style, the building's unfamiliar style coupled with its interesting colour lead to the Locals nickname for it. Located in Point View park surrounded by skyscrapers, the structure is home to an army of clerks and the clerks of the army. They keep the war effort on track in concert with, and in spite of, the decisions of the politicians debating in the grand hall.

RATINGS

Eastern Izya Peninsula has Wealth 4, Might 3, Crime 3, and Tech 3.

SPECIAL RULE

When near the 401 make a 1d fortune roll. On 1-3 the traffic is barely moving. On 4-5 traffic is moving well with occasional slow downs. On 6 traffic is moving swiftly. This will likely alter Position and Effect depending on the situation.



THE GREATER JOURNEY CITY AREA

Before The War came here rolling farmland occupied the space between the towns and cities. Now most of those farms and towns lie abandoned. All have seen some level of battle as the frontlines of the initial conflict here pushed and pulled with the fickleness of war. With the inevitability of the tide, the Offworlder armies moved further inland, always in pursuit of The Tower.

EXAMPLE REGIONS IN THE GREATER JOURNEY CITY AREA

The following are example Regions to be used in a Beam Saber campaign with a provincial level Map Scale (see page 241).

HULINTON

INSERT HULINTON ART HERE: Elderly residents serve monk warriors (one gestures "thank you" in ASL) coffee on well maintained street side patios. An APC Loaded with munitions honks at a proxy standing in the middle of the road, unaware that it isn't flesh and blood. Laughing children stop and stare silently as they watch the digital ghost of a missing older sibling stand in the street in confusion. Framed from the patio, looking over the cafe table in the foreground, APC (with driver out of hatch yelling) and confused proxy in the middle ground, and children (one holding a ball) in the back.

DESCRIPTION

At the base of the Southern Izyan Mountains sits a medium sized town that originally catered to nearby farming communities and tourists from the much larger Journey City. Now it is a town full of the young, old, and absent. As the Celestial Myriad military moved through the town, anyone who hadn't already fled and was fit for service got conscripted into the crusade to capture The Tower. With the area's current stalemate the Celestial Myriad has made the town their forward headquarters. Now the locals serve the Church's soldiers and their logistics agents.

SCENE

Elderly residents serve monk warriors coffee on well maintained street side patios. An APC Loaded with munitions honks at a proxy standing in the middle of the road, unaware that it isn't flesh and blood. Laughing children stop and stare silently as they watch the digital ghost of a missing older sibling wander down the street in confusion.

NOTABLES

Senior Kin Arrow Slide: One of the leaders of the Wrights Of The Ascent. An old, skinny, frail looking man. He commands his fellow monks with a nasally voice as they work together to build monuments to the Church. Currently they are working on a massive cathedral South East of Hulinton, but they keep running into issues, leading Slide to suspect sabotage. (Certain, cunning)

LANDMARKS

The Cenotaph's Chapel lies a short distance out of town on a hill that isn't quite the bottom of the mountains. Its original iconography has been replaced by religious symbols of the Celestial Myriad, a blue stained glass eight pointed star most prominent among them. The grounds have also been developed to suit the squad's needs with quarters, training facilities, and an AWW workshop added. They have even gone so far as to convert the bell tower into a

docking tower for Supply zeppelins. Despite the changes some of the locals still gather here, specifically the proxies of missing citizens. Remembering that this place is one of community they linger on its edges, unsure of the differences, and form a ghostly moat.

RATINGS

Hulinton has Wealth 2, Might 1, Crime 1, and Tech 2.

SPECIAL RULE

Being on the main road from the South West, a lot of people have passed through Hulinton, and many of them left their proxies behind. Take +1d when Interfacing with a proxy to gather information, but add 1 tick to an 8 tick clock "Proxy Corruption." If the clock fills a sizeable portion of the proxies in Hulinton become dangerous.

FORT JOVANOL

INSERT FORT JOVANOL ART HERE: Mechanics on catwalks high above the ground repair damaged AWVs inside of massive hangers. A guard (with obvious prosthetic leg) checks the credentials of a transport truck at the wall, while an Ape class AWV keeps its machine guns pointed, watching for anything suspicious.

DESCRIPTION

Built from the ground up to serve the needs of nearby Jovangellian squads, Fort Jovanol is named for the capital city of the Empire's homeworld. A massive trench and wall system surrounds it, providing cover for AWVs to sit behind in defense of the base. Not unlike Jovangellian culture at large, everyone here directly serves the Empire's military ambitions. Currently the Wolf Pack are the Squad primarily stationed here as they recuperate from frontline duty in a less quiet part of the planetary conflict, though it's not unusual for members of The Heard, Raccoons, or Hyenas to show up for reSupply.

SCENE

Mechanics on catwalks high above the ground repair damaged AWVs inside of massive hangers. A guard checks the credentials of a transport truck, while an Ape class AWV keeps its machine guns pointed, watching for anything suspicious. A doctor examines the identification tattoos on the thigh of a mangled corpse, a dozen more waiting to be processed.

NOTABLES

Dr. Here Homage: Head medical officer of Fort Jovanol. Surprisingly friendly to both locals

and non-Jovangellian Offworlders. They consider themselves to be as critical to the defense of the base as anyone piloting an AWV. Threats to base personnel always get their attention, often to the annoyance of staff in other departments. (Protective, nosey)

LANDMARKS

Surrounding the base is a massive wall, and surrounding that is an equally massive trench. High enough to conceal most buildings inside the compound, the wall is tough enough to receive a sustained artillery bombardment and not crack. The trench is deep enough for a Coyote class artillery AWV to take cover in, and still bring its shoulder mounted missile racks to bear. Both are lined with a fringe of razor wire and less conspicuous anti-infiltration devices.

RATINGS

Fort Jovanol has Wealth 2, Might 4, Crime 1, and Tech 2.

SPECIAL RULE

Attempts to infiltrate Fort Jovanol, whether through stealth or deception, cannot have a Controlled Position due to the extensive security measures in place. Missions using the tactics of Assault, Deception, or Stealth all have -1d to their Engagement Roll.

JOURNEY CITY

INSERT JOURNEY CITY ART HERE: Refugees seek subsistence work from the same Offworlder organizations that pushed them out of their homes (outside of bar). Offworlder squads settle grudges with their fellows in bars and dark alleys. Others share a drink, and sometimes more, with an enemy combatant that they might see next through crosshairs (same gender make outs). Above it all the guns, shields, and armor of The Tower threaten anything unexpected that gets too close.

DESCRIPTION

The beating heart of the Territory of Izya, this cosmopolitan city's population is estimated to have tripled since the beginning of the Izyan Conflict. Though the initial attempts by the Offworlder Factions to capture The Tower caused death and destruction throughout the city, most of the worst damage was confined to the South side of the Izya River. In the face of the disruption caused by the battles the municipal government fell apart, leaving The Tower's staff (calling themselves The Tower Defenders) as the closest thing to being in charge. As the "peace" of the stalemate set in, the rebuilding began, including efforts from the Offworlders who began to settle into the city proper.

SCENE

Refugees seek subsistence work from the same Offworlder organizations that pushed them out of their homes. Former local government employees maintain a shadow of their lives either as independent contractors or having been absorbed by a larger organization. Offworlder squads settle grudges with their fellows in bars and dark alleys. Others share a drink, and sometimes more, with an enemy combatant that they might see next through crosshairs. Above it all the guns, shields, and armor of The Tower threaten anything unexpected that gets too close.

NOTABLES

Vanessa "Vest" Vestibula: Captain of The Squaddies. Resentful that she and those she leads were not recruited by the Offworlders when the Journey City Police Department collapsed, she now selfishly provides protection to Locals that can afford it. The very behaviors she exhibits now are the reason that she was never picked up. (Selfish, cruel)

LANDMARKS

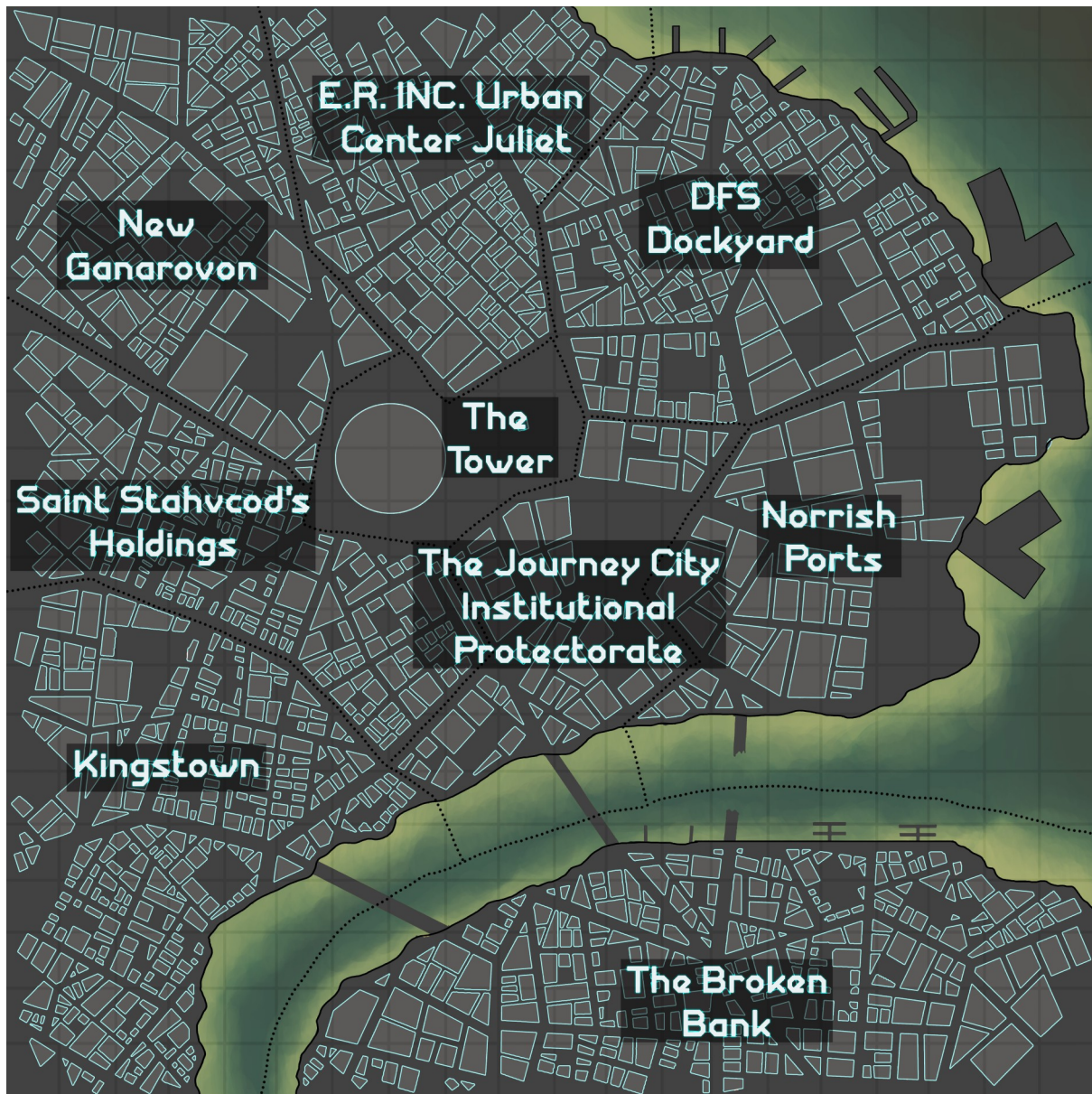
The Tower stands in the centre of the city, impossibly huge. The area around its base has been cleared of all buildings, so that defensive sightlines can be maintained. Often though the plaza is filled with transport vehicles from both Offworlder and Local organizations looking to pick up or send supplies. An apocalyptic array of armaments tracks each vehicle for fear that it could be a potential threat.

RATINGS

Journey City has Wealth 3, Might 2, Crime 3, and Tech 2.

SPECIAL RULE

Ultimately Journey City is dedicated to its own survival now. If you bribe someone with 1 Materiel, or Personnel take +1d and improved Effect if it's narratively appropriate. Don't be surprised if someone takes a bribe against you.



JOURNEY CITY

As each Offworlder Faction raced to capture The Tower, it was fortified by the Locals. They began calling themselves The Tower Defenders as they found a new hope to believe in. If they could hold out long enough, the Offworlders would devastate each other in their ambitions.

The battle began with small skirmishes as scouting patrols, and reconnaissance flights crossed paths. More and more squads were drawn in, and while it paled in comparison to conflicts on worlds that mattered, it was the fiercest battle Izya had yet seen. A handful of frigates and corvettes fought in orbit above the city to secure any advantage for the ground troops. Through it all, the Tower Defenders rained down fire from their recently

installed weapons, targeting any group that seemed to be getting an upper hand.

The worst of the fighting occurred on the South side of the Izya River where the DFS, Celestial Myriad, and Norrish militaries sought control of the city's industrial base. When the fighting was over, the entire area was rubble, including the Twinler & Red headquarters campus, which had designed, built, and maintained The Tower. Thousands were jobless, homeless, wounded, and dead in that neighbourhood alone.

Even though an uneasy (and unofficial) peace was reached in Izya after this battle, the Position of The Tower Defenders would only worsen. The Journey City municipal government quickly collapsed under the crisis of maintaining the city under current conditions. Those employed by the city (police, telecom workers, waste management, and many more) were recruited by the Offworld Factions who could provide them with life's necessities. The Tower Defenders stood as the last symbol of legitimate Local authority.

EXAMPLE REGIONS IN JOURNEY CITY

The following are example Regions to be used in a Beam Saber campaign with a city level Map Scale (see page 241).

KINGSTOWN

INSERT KINGSTOWN ART HERE: Children playing ball games in the streets while their guardians watch from battered or makeshift seating. Adolescents (one in a sci-fi, but not hover, wheel chair) try to build a reputation on street corners, while the Rubble Runts and Burden whisper in their ears. Ambitious recruiters from offworld Factions preach, nag, and cajole the locals with promises of a better future.

DESCRIPTION

Comprising the South West corner of the city and named after a long dead crime boss, Kate King, this overcrowded low income district is home to much of the city's refugee population. Sturdy concrete apartment buildings fill much of the land, with rooftops and open spaces occupied by tents or gardens. Much of the infrastructure is maintained by the district's residents, and in many places the skilled but improvised repairs are obvious.

SCENE

Children playing ball games in the streets while their guardians watch from battered or makeshift seating. Adolescents try to build a reputation on street corners, while the Rubble Runts and Burden whisper in their ears. Ambitious recruiters from offworld Factions preach, nag, and cajole the locals with promises of a better future.

NOTABLES

Hannah Copeland: Head of the Kingstown Burden cell has been fighting Offworlders her entire adult life. She's watched friends and family die, learning bitter lessons along the way. Intelligence agencies suspect she's the most powerful Burden leader. (Patient, vicious)

LANDMARKS

The Yard is a bus depot that was reclaimed by the locals when it became clear that the Journey City Transit Authority was dead and gone. It is now a market with shopkeepers selling goods out of converted buses. Ambitious offworld recruiters sometimes have stalls set up which costs them dearly as various parties charge them for the honor. The mix of people and resources makes this space an unofficial neutral zone policed by the locals.

RATINGS

Kingstown has Wealth 1, Might 2, Crime 3, and Tech 2.

SPECIAL RULE

Kingstown looks out for its own and those who have struggled share what they can. If you come from an impoverished background take +1d on Consort, gather information, and acquire asset rolls within Kingstown.

THE BROKEN BANK

INSERT BROKEN BANK ART HERE: Dust drifts down the rubble filled roads and around burnt out vehicles. Criminals and freedom fighters skulk down alleys into hidden basement safe houses. Crowds of rampant proxies wearing the forms of those who died here stumble from one sign of life to the next.

DESCRIPTION

Sitting on the South side of the Izya River this area of Journey City used to be called Browen Bank after a memorialized community organizer. When the Offworlders brought their war to Earth and Journey City, Browen Bank was hit hardest. When the conflict cooled those powerful enough to properly reclaim the Broken Bank felt it wasn't worth the investment.

Now lost proxies and rampant apps roam the streets looking for the living to attempt to fulfill their purpose. Criminals, marauders, terrorists, mercenaries, and freedom fighters make temporary lodgings here, hoping that those who would stop them also believe the investment would not be worth tracking them down.

SCENE

Dust drifts down the rubble filled roads and around burnt out vehicles. Criminals and freedom fighters skulk down alleys into hidden basement safe houses. Crowds of rampant proxies wearing the forms of those who died here stumble from one sign of life to the next.

NOTABLES

Lovegood: a deep voiced bartender who works at The Broken Bar. They employ several of their cousins as staff at the bar, providing one of the only places of entertainment in The Broken Bank. (Jovial, forceful)

LANDMARKS

Ambush Row is the only major road that provides a straight line from the South East of Journey City to the Tower at its center. This makes it an excellent place for ambushers to set their trap using the profusion of rubble and burnt out vehicles to block roads.

RATINGS

The Broken Bank has Wealth 0, Might 0, Crime 2, and Tech 2.

SPECIAL RULE

Start a 4 Tick clock when you enter the region: "App focus". Add a tick every time you are delayed from moving forward. When it fills corrupt proxies and apps assault you.

THE TOWER

INSERT TOWER ART HERE: Impoverished Locals move from truck to truck selling what goods and services they can to bored drivers waiting for their turn. Automated guns on The Tower sway back and forth like bristles on the hide of a massive beast as they seek threats. A steady stream of vehicles moves through the cavernous entrance to the underground Loading facility at all hours of the day.

DESCRIPTION

The Tower is one of the six space elevators on the planet, and is the last not held by Offworlders. Before The War came to the planet, they were used to bring planetside resources, such as reclaimed material from the debris cloud, and Helium 3 from the system's largest gas giant. Now it has been turned into a fortress of an unimaginable scale.

The grounds around The Tower used to be full of warehouses and offices dedicated to the goods moving through the elevator. When the fortifications began it was determined that the nearby buildings posed a problem as civilians would try to shelter in them, while also

providing cover for enemy combatants. They were torn down and replaced with a massive plaza. Now transport vehicles sit in it and wait to be Loaded or unLoaded, often for weeks.

SCENE

Impoverished Locals move from truck to truck selling what goods and services they can to bored drivers waiting for their turn. Automated guns on The Tower sway back and forth like bristles on the hide of a massive beast as they seek threats. A steady stream of vehicles moves through the cavernous entrance to the underground Loading facility at all hours of the day.

NOTABLES

Gina Weber: Tower Defender in charge of credentials. She coordinates the effort to ensure that any vehicle approaching the Loading facility's entrance has its AR paper work clearly displayed, so that the automated defenses don't ruin her day. More interested in things running smoothly, than in being fair. (Bored, Stressed)

LANDMARKS

The Loading facility is a massive underground hanger large enough for even the largest AWVs to walk around inside. A command center nestled in an upper corner of the room gives its supervisors a clear view of the hundreds of people and vehicles they are responsible for.

RATINGS

The Tower has Wealth 3, Might 3, Crime 1, and Tech 2.

SPECIAL RULE

If a vehicle approaches The Tower without broadcasting proper credentials or activates a weapon system in the plaza, it immediately takes Level 2 damage "blasted" as the automated defenses open fire.

ARMORED WALKING VEHICLES (AWVs)

Created as a solution to the issue of deploying land vehicles on unfamiliar planets with incredibly varied terrain, Armored Walking Vehicles (or AWV; pronounced ah-vee) were soon adapted to environments outside of their original purpose. This was one part necessity and one part familiarity, as the Exodus ships of humanity had limited Materiel and Personnel.

AWVs already manufactured were much easier to modify to fit the needs of a ship, than to create one from scratch. This was encouraged by the small pool of pilots most ships

had access to, and the introduction of the Predictive Control program (or Pre-Con), which builds on an AWW's familiarity with its pilot, reinforced this doctrine. Even after the Factions were established and had the resources and people necessary to have more specialized models, many can still trace some aspect of their design back to the AWWs of old.

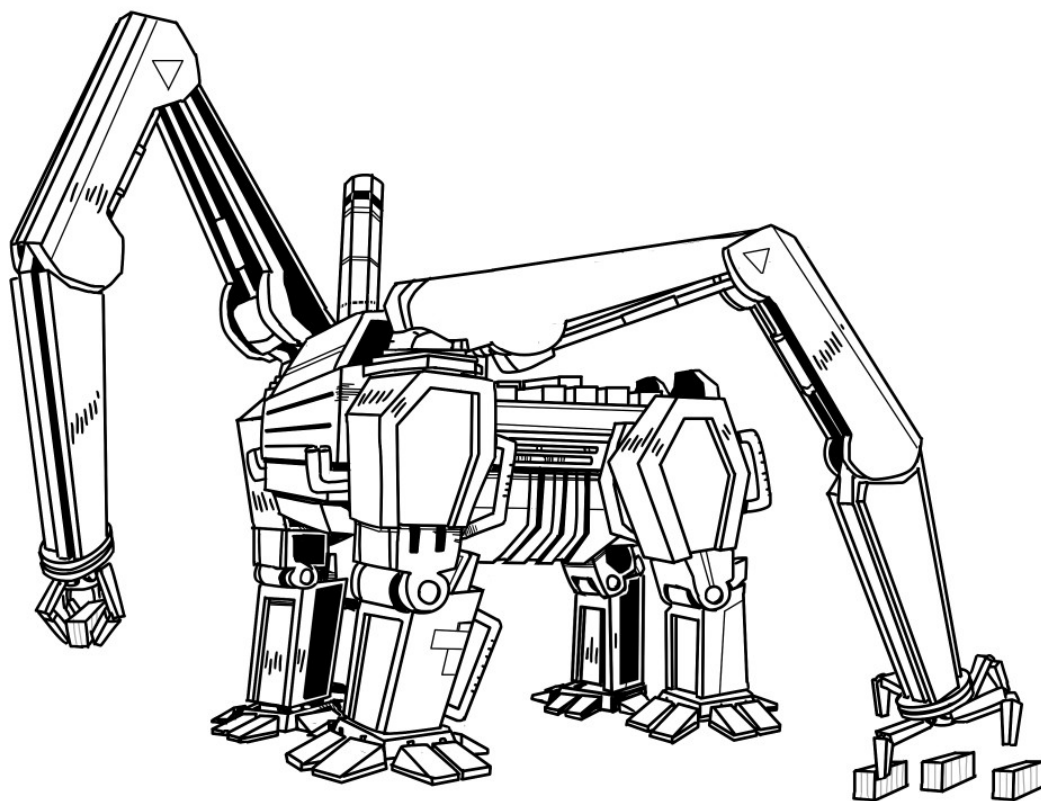
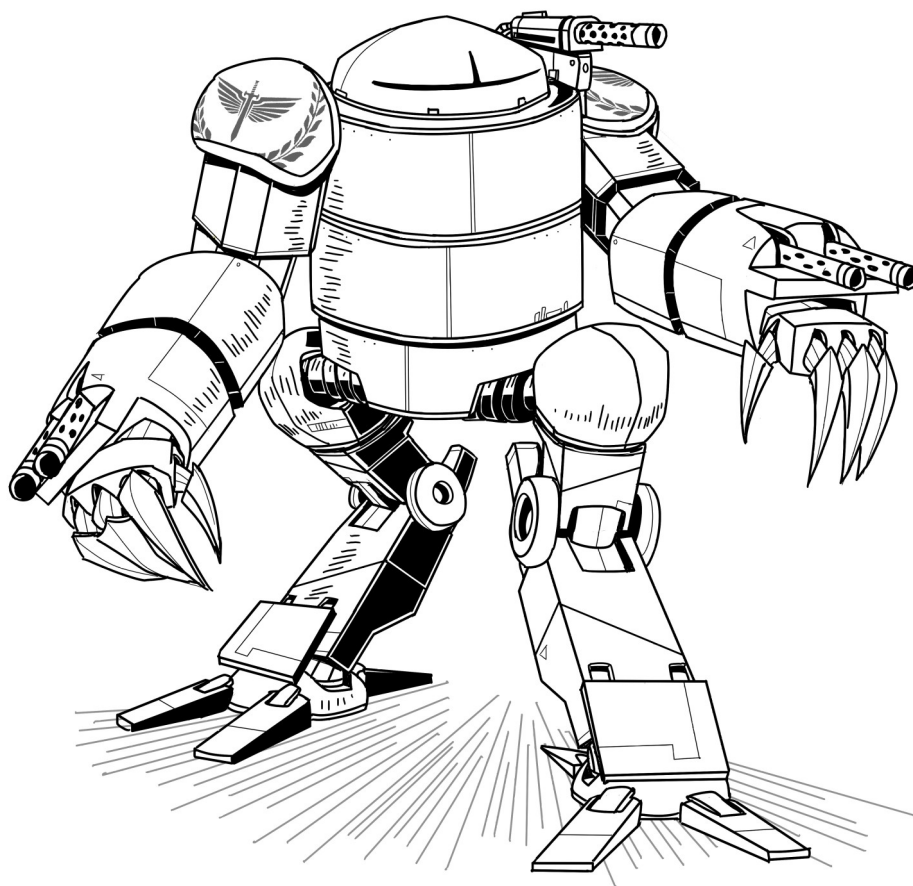
Originally AWW was the acronym for the massive, walking, military vehicles that are used by the Factions, but as the civilian populations became more familiar with them it became a catch all term. Any vehicle of sufficient gravitas was called an AWW whether it was a bipedal vehicle, massive tank, or fighter-bomber. This was especially true for vehicles that blurred the line between those distinctions, such as submarines that could deploy legs to move on land as well.

As so often happens with military technology, civilian AWWs have been made available to those outside the military. Civilian Walking Vehicles (or CWV; pronounced see-vee) are a very niche product. Individuals who can afford them use them as a status symbol; there's nothing quite like getting stuck in traffic in your 30ft bipedal vehicle. Companies often purchase specialized versions for industrial uses: farming, mining, heavy cargo transport and many others. In most cases the military Quality parts have been swapped for less expensive versions that will live up to the wear and tear their civilian owners put them through, but it's not unusual for the desperate to take them to war.

EXAMPLE VEHICLES

ARMORED WALKING VEHICLE SPECIFICATION GUIDE

The following are examples that can be used by Players who aren't interested in a custom vehicle, or by GMs who need ideas for machines NPCs can pilot. While these examples list Intended Load and Action Points, these are just suggestions for the Pilots. Similarly NPCs in these vehicles don't use the rules for Light, Medium, or Heavy Loads; they are a shorthand for how the vehicle looks and behaves narratively.



MODEL: Ape

Manufacturer: Truant Security Supplies

Faction: Autocracy; The Jovangellian Empire

Role: Light Target Elimination; The numerous machine guns make it Effective against lightly armored targets, but lacks the armor to deal with anything heavier.

Intended Load: Light

Standard Loadout: Three AWV machine guns, with limited armor.

Action Points: 2 Battle, 1 Manipulate

Appearance: A cylindrical torso topped with a domed head. Thick arms with wrist mounted machine guns and stubby claws. A third weapon hardpoint on the right shoulder often features another machine gun. Squat legs support the weight of all the weapons and the model's light armor.

Suggested Quirks: Loads of Guns, Stable Platform, Clawed Hands, Simple Construction

MODEL: Elephant

Manufacturer: Whittaker Fine Goods Company

Faction: Autocracy; The Jovangellian Empire

Role: Cargo Hauler; The powerful arms and flatbed are able to carry many Supply containers, or transport whole AWVs if necessary.

Intended Load: Heavy

Standard Loadout: Cargo Space, Grapnel Anchor Tool

Action Points: 2 Manipulate, 1 Scan

Appearance: Four powerful legs support a large flatbed frequently filled with cargo containers. Instead of a traditional head the cockpit sits on a column providing a clear view of the flatbed and everything within reach of the AWV's two crane like arms. Those arms end in very strong, industrial fingers.

Suggested Quirks: Powerful Grip, Exposed Cockpit, Wide Open, Heavy Lifting

Header art is a space battle.

INSERT HALF PAGE OPOSSUM ART HERE
INSERT HALF PAGE <INSERT VEHICLE> ART HERE

MODEL: Opossum

Manufacturer: Smirke-Fitzroy Manufacturing

Faction: Autocracy; The Jovangellian Empire

Role: Infantry transport and evacuation; the Opossum is designed to quickly ferry infantry squads to and from the front lines, specializing in daring deliveries to weaknesses in enemy formations.

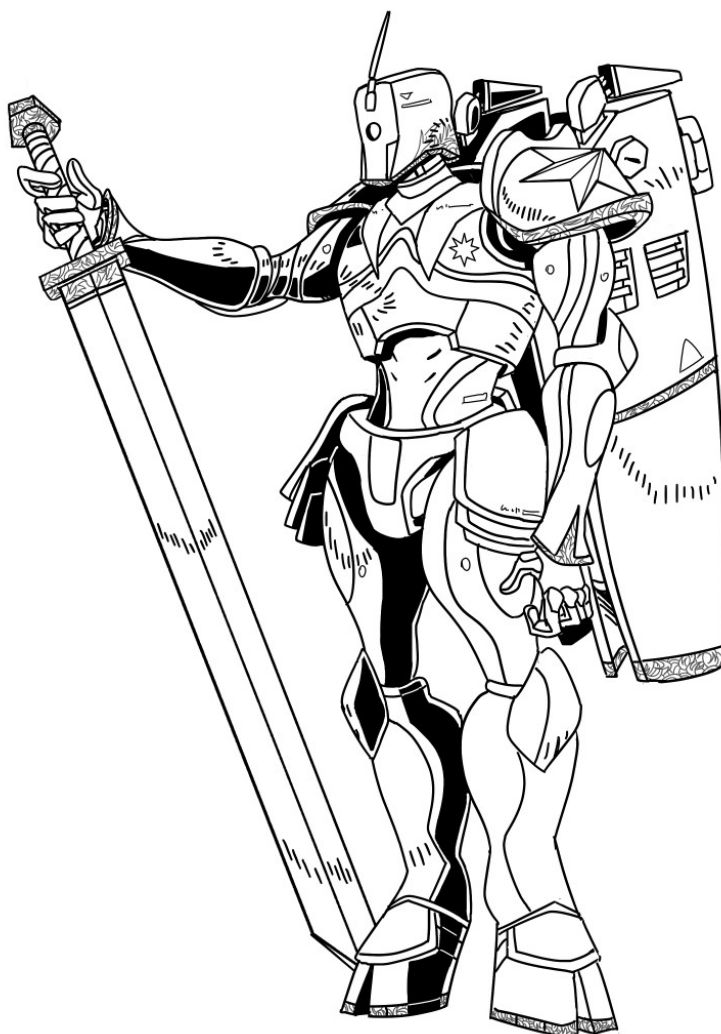
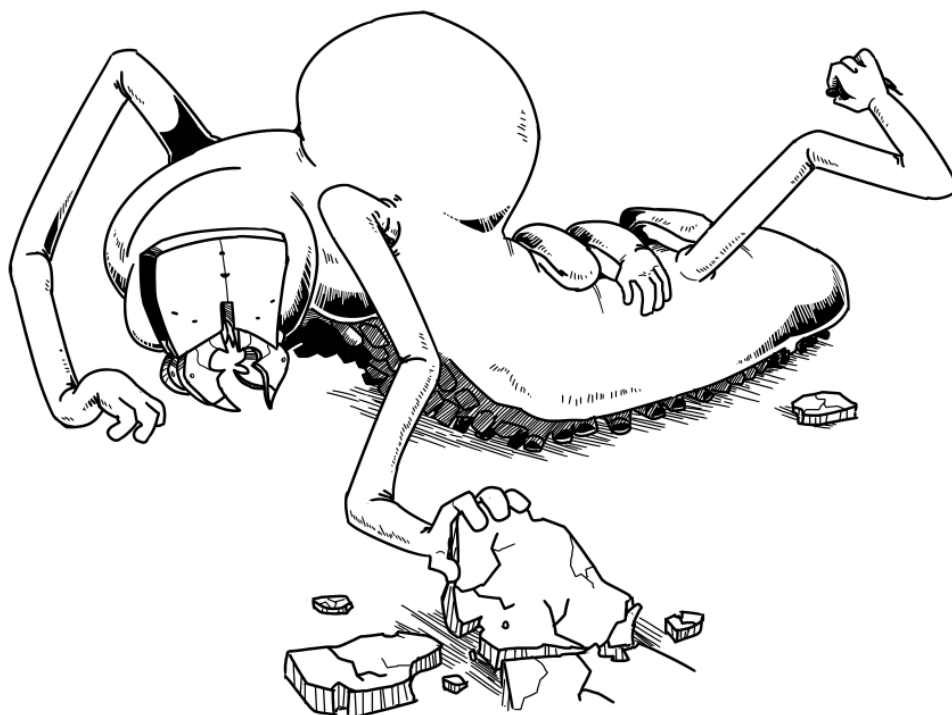
Intended Load: Medium

Standard Loadout: All terrain suspension, passenger space, a machine gun turret, and a front-loaded grapnel anchor tool for vertical traversal.

Action Points: 2 Maneuver, 1 Battle

Appearance: Resembling the massive offspring of a Humvee and a Semi Truck, the Opossum is a machine so hard-edged many believe the Jovangellian Empire would've made its wheels square if they could have. With a front that's just as much command center as it is driver's seat, the vehicle's targeting computer allows its onboard App to mow down opposing forces at the pilot's discretion, leading many a veteran Opossum driver to nickname or form (decidedly one-sided) camaraderie with their unit's App.

Suggested Quirks: Machine Gunner App, Rugged Design, Aggressive Targeters, Military Workhorse



MODEL: Kettle v2.0

Manufacturer: The Work Room

Faction: Theocracy; The Church of the Celestial Myriad

Role: Seeks out and retrieves corpses, abandoned proxies, and other remains from the battlefield.

Intended Load: Medium

Standard Loadout: Cargo Space, Analytics Suite, Destruction Tools

Action Points: 2 Scan, 1 Manipulate

Appearance: The Kettle v2.0 resembles a black and white caterpillar with a flexible plastic shell. Its head is shovel shaped, with several "jaws" designed to move earth. Its back is primarily storage and expands upwards to accommodate Load, using its arms as additional structural support and giving the Kettle its eponymous shape at capacity. Its underbelly is a concave array of rods that repels the ground while generating an unusual sound commonly called the Knell. Its many arms are long, many-jointed, and extendable, designed for propping up debris, but normally kept folded on its back. Its hands have strong core digits for prying apart cockpits that taper down to smaller, more dexterous digits. A vent in the wrist deploys shrouds to wrap remains.

Suggested Quirks: Ominous, Rubbery & Flexible, Strategically Structured, Disturbing Hover

MODEL: Knight

Manufacturer: Spirit Forge Cloister

Faction: Theocracy; The Church of the Celestial Myriad

Role: Brawler; Rapidly closes to melee with its boosters to disrupt AWWs that would prefer to fight at longer ranges.

Intended Load: Heavy

Standard Loadout: A massive two-handed sword, heavy armour, and powerful rocket boosters.

Action Points: 2 Battle, 1 Maneuver

Appearance: A tall and lithe humanoid frame that appears fragile to those unfamiliar with its heavy ceramic plating. A single eye dominates its rectangular head, and is matched with an antenna at the front. Its humanoid hands are quite dextrous to better handle its blade, while hoof like feet support its weight. A pair of large boosters almost as long as the entire frame dominates its back.

Suggested Quirks: Iconic, Fragile Appearance, Exposed Boosters, Gentle Hands

Header art is a space battle.

INSERT HALF PAGE ART FOR AGINCOURT
INSERT HALF PAGE ART FOR HIGHWAYMAN

MODEL: Agincourt

Manufacturer: Ohashi Biomass Technologies

Faction: Theocracy; The Church of the Celestial Myriad

Role: Heavy fire support; it stays far from the fighting and unleashes innumerable missiles.

Intended Load: Heavy

Standard Loadout: Massive missile array, powerful sensors, and an ECCM suite

Action Points: 2 Bombard, 1 Scan

Appearance: A sleek, flexible body that can hover above the ground or water, studded with hundreds of missiles protruding from its organic back. Impossible to miss with its dazzling neon color schemes, signature mustache-like sensor apparatus, and twin ECCM head spikes. The cockpit has a reinforced rear wall in case of an ordnance explosion, but whether it would save a pilot with a full missile load is up for debate.

Suggested Quirks: Living Chassis, A Multitude of Missiles, Experimental Sensors, Instantly Recognizable.

MODEL: X-DKR1-A Highwayman [PROTOTYPE]

Manufacturer: Nix Mechanics

Faction: Theocracy; The Church of the Celestial Myriad

Role: Rapid assault lancer unit; an impossibly fast, close combat machine designed to destroy key targets and cause maximal confusion and panic.

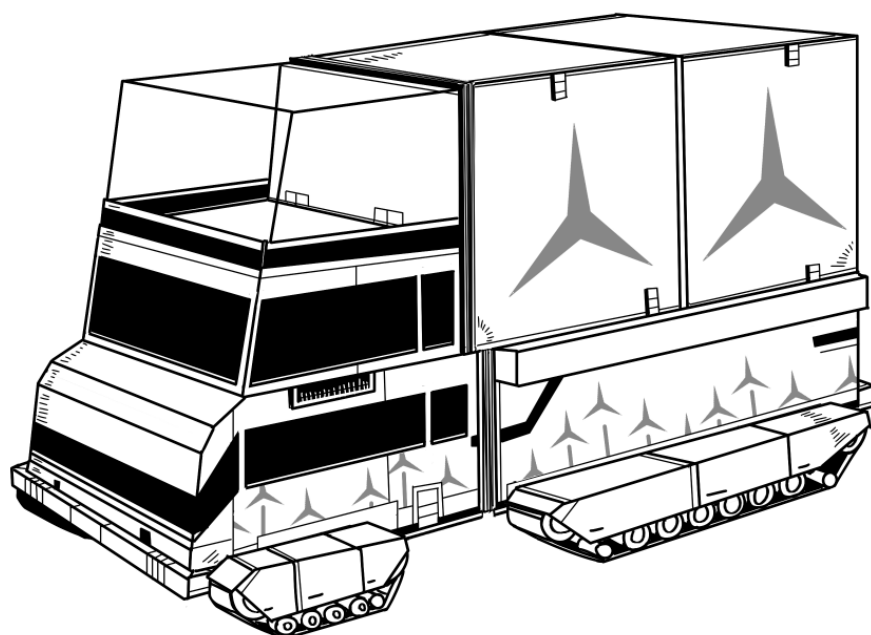
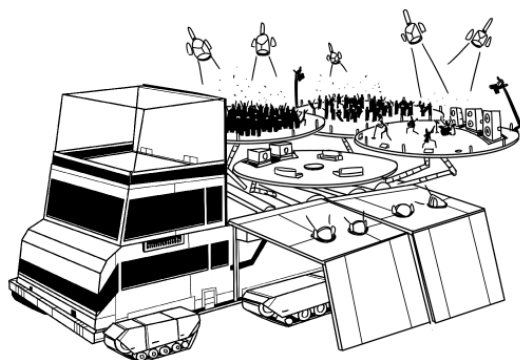
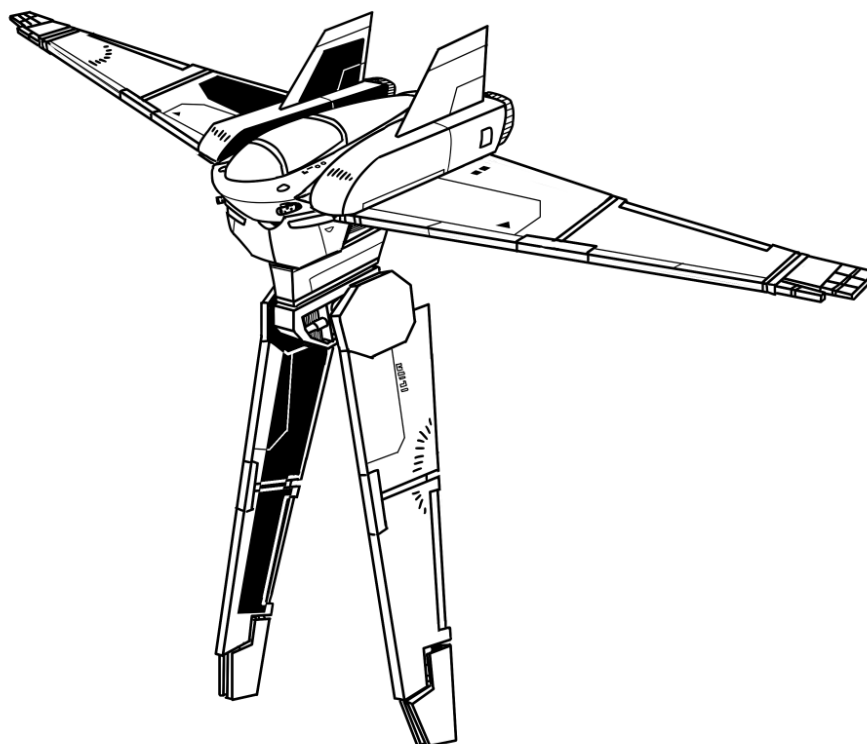
Intended Load: Medium

Standard Loadout: wrist mounted beam cannons, rending claws, shifting boosters that double as a shield.

Action Points: 2 Maneuver, 1 Destroy

Appearance: The X-DKR1-A Highwayman [PROTOTYPE] (usually just Highwayman) is a machine made of repeated inverted teardrops—round and curving at the top, tightening to an elongated, sharp point at the bottom. The body looks as if a suit of knight's armor was exaggerated until it only barely looks humanoid anymore, lending it an air of patrician danger and uncanny menace. Matte white armor plating. The fingers all extend, too long, into vicious claws for rending through heavy armor. Each shoulder mounts two long, narrow shield binders, one in front, one behind, that look like streamers or pennants hanging down from the armored pauldrons towards the feet. Each binder carries verniers underneath the shielded front. The front binders can sweep back, to give the Highwayman an extreme boost of speed, and each binder can articulate and group with the others to form protective shields.

Suggested Quirks: Crushing Speed, Articulated Shield Binders, Merciless Claws, Upsetting and Uncanny.



MODEL: Strafe MK 16

Manufacturer: Aileron Omnidynamics

Faction: Corporatocracy; Exodus Republic Inc.

Role: Skirmisher; Performs rapid hit and run strikes with its machine guns on vulnerable targets.

Intended Load: Light-Medium

Standard Loadout: A full flight system, machine guns, and the Medium Load variant has Armor

Action Points: 2 Maneuver, 1 Battle

Appearance: A squat yet streamlined figure resembling a fighter jet with narrow arms and legs extending downwards like additional wings, their flattened profile appearing clumsy as limbs when not seen in motion. Its head comes to a point with a rounded cockpit on front, and jet thrusters dominate its back.

Suggested Quirks: None Faster, Built for the Sky, Fighter Craft, Over Engineered

MODEL: Amphitheatre MK 3

Manufacturer: Shake & Shout Entertainment Products

Faction: Corporatocracy; Exodus Republic Inc.

Role: Mobile performance space; has the capacity to transport stage, props, broadcasting equipment, and performers.

Intended Load: Heavy

Standard Loadout: A holo-projector, broadcast system, cargo and passenger space, and an anchor system

Action Points: 1 Maneuver, 1 Manipulate, 1 Scan

Appearance: A large set of treads moves a massive cargo and passenger space. Once it attaches to the ground with its anchors, the cargo space opens and reshapes into a performance venue while integrated cranes set up the stage. The vehicle contains extensive audio-visual tools capable of broadcasting to crowds both present and digital.

Suggested Quirks: Rolling Building, Loud & Showy, Teched Up, Monitoring System

Header art is a space battle.

INSERT HALF PAGE EXTRACTOR TYPE B ART HERE

INSERT HALF PAGE BUNKER TYPE-M ART HERE

MODEL: [Extractor Type B](#)

Manufacturer: Carry-All Corp

Faction: Corporatocracy; Exodus Republic Inc.

Role: Aggressive material extraction; designed to tear apart other AWWs (whether already ruined or still active) and harvest their valuable parts.

Intended Load: Medium

Standard Loadout: Cargo space, burst thrusters with glider wings, metal rending claws and hammer.

Action Points: 1 Maneuver, 1 Destroy, 1 Manipulate

Appearance: A low slung head is made up of a sharp beak-shaped cockpit and is articulated from the torso. Burst thrusters and stubby extendable glider wings provide brief spurts of agility and speed. Two arms hang below the glider wings, one with a blunt hammer end and the other with too-long sharp fingers. Black-green oily overlapping plates make up the hull. Sensors and equipment all face forwards towards its prey. Short, tightly sprung legs, give it a waddling appearance while walking that belies the speed it draws on when it's time to lunge or retreat.

Suggested Quirks: Rapacious Manipulators, Jumpy Maneuvering, Single-Focused Targeting, Easy Cockpit Access.

MODEL: Bunker Type-T

Manufacturer: Akrose & Shepherd's Acquisitions Manufacturers

Faction: Corporatocracy; Exodus Republic Inc.

Role: Mech squad housing and transportation; a huge open hangar with various deployment methods for transporting mechs of small to medium sizes with their attendant staff.

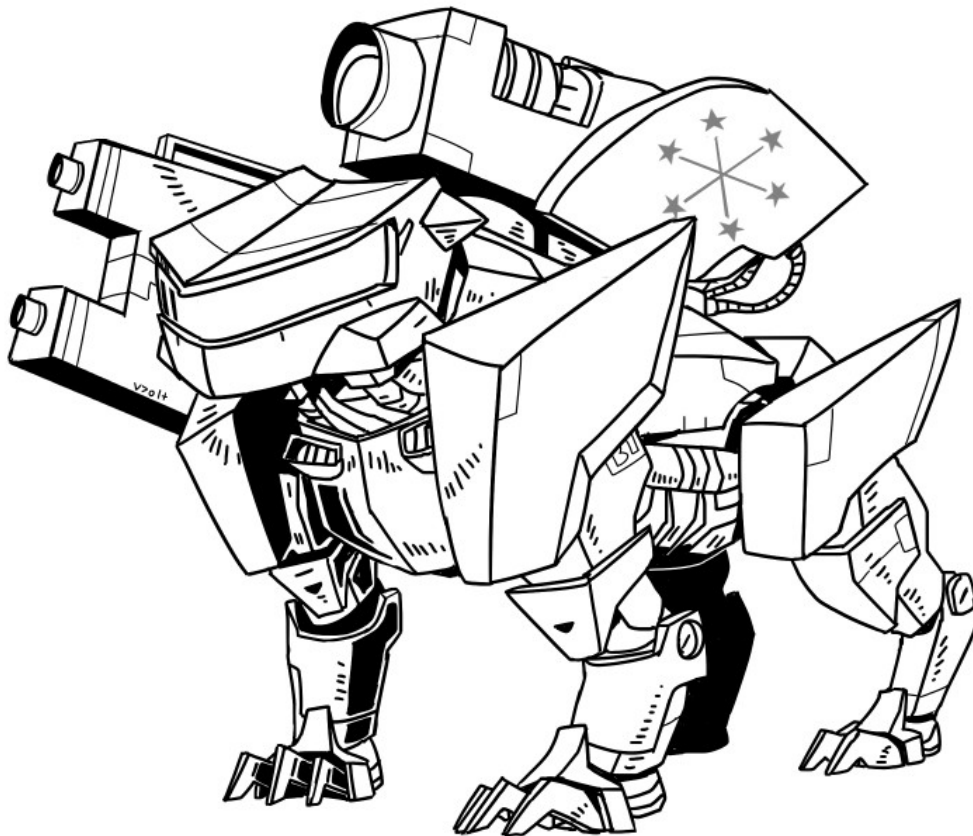
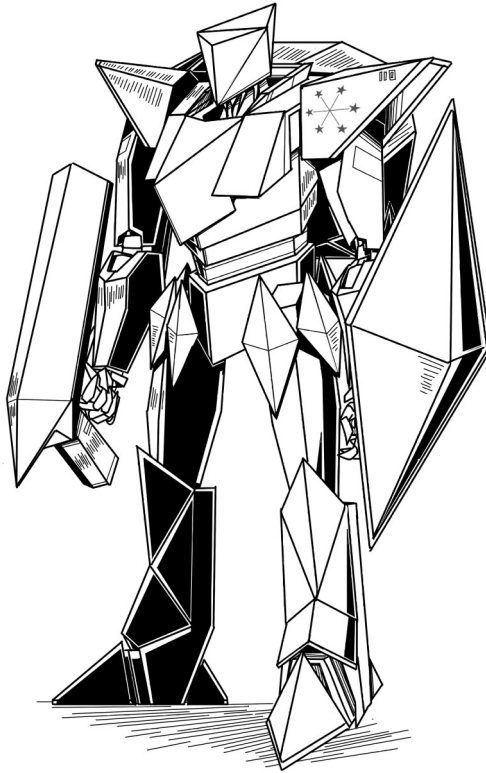
Intended Load: Heavy

Standard Loadout:: Thick Plating, All-Terrain Hover Treads, Hangared Cargo Bay, Greenhouse Half-shell

Action Points: 2 Scan, 1 Maneuver

Appearance: Large, long and bulky, it's built for capacity and traveling long distances through harsh environments, even active warzones. The exterior is shaped similar to a tortoise flipped onto its shell, so the top is flat and the hover treads on the bottom point outwards at an angle. The cockpit resembles a turtle head sticking out near the top with a bay window-like view of the surrounding area. The top of most Type-Ts have a reinforced greenhouse bubble. A majority of the interior is dedicated to the large hangar bay for transporting other mechs and deploying them from the back, top and bottom, as needed. While the exterior looks like a standard transport, it has housing quarters that are small but surprisingly accommodating, as its design budget was allocated to odd features for this vehicle's intended purpose.

Suggested Quirks: Dense and Heavy, Luxury Kitchen, Mech Launcher, Finicky Remote Access AI



MODEL: Balisong

Manufacturer: Armored Front Core Mechanics

Faction: Democracy; Democratic Federated Systems

Role: Rapid Response; despite its size and light armament, this AWW can overcome much fiercer opponents through clever use of its holo-projector.

Intended Load: Light

Standard Loadout: A holo-projector, machine gun, and shield.

Action Points: Battle 1, Maneuver 1, Manipulate 1

Appearance: This AWW's proportions are very human; two legs, two arms, and a head. It's most distinct feature is that its shell is composed of many triangular surfaces, and pyramidal frame components. Its machine gun and shield are carried in humanoid hands, while the holo-projector resembles a backpack.

Suggested Quirks: Common Frame, Nimble & Light, Beginner Friendly, Well Known

MODEL: Claymore

Manufacturer: Admirably Superior Electronics

Faction: Democracy; Democratic Federated Systems

Role: Static Defense; it finds a Position with clear lines of sight and embeds itself.

Intended Load: Heavy

Standard Loadout: A head mounted heavy energy cannon, side mounted directed energy weapons, armor, and an anchor system

Action Points: Destroy 2, Bombard 1

Appearance: This quadrupedal vehicle has a distinctive squat build similar to a bulldog, and very different from the thin frame common to DFS AWWs. A powerful reactor provides the energy for both its heavy cannon to engage targets at range, and its DEWs to defend against closer threats.

Suggested Quirks: Heavy Step, Compact Design, Oversized Reactor, Aggressive Targeters

Header art is a space battle.

INSERT SHOTEL ART HERE
INSERT SCALPEL ART HERE

MODEL: Shotel

Manufacturer: Gambert Iarrah Manufacturing

Faction: Democracy; Democratic Federated Systems

Role: Ace unit; highly mobile and heavily armed for medium ranged and close combat. Specialized in one on one combat to eliminate commander units as well as getting away from danger if surrounded.

Intended Load: Medium

Standard Loadout: Overloaded boosters, varied assault weaponry, heat daggers, and a boosted reactor.

Action Points: 2 Maneuver, 1 Battle

Appearance: The humanoid appearance of the vehicle is rather clean and slick, with sharp angles. Its white color is made out to be flashy, so that despite being a mid range combat AWV, it keeps the enemy focused on it instead of its squad. The hands haven't been designed for the finest control, being instead adapted to quickly reach and grip to the various load outs that the vehicle can have.

The head flares out with a new model of an antenna which helps with communications as the unit tends to get further away from the rest of the squad while zipping around with its powerful boosters. Said boosters were developed for fighter jets, but have been retrofitted for this unit. In dire cases, the boosters can be repositioned to work as a point-blank flame attack while also providing a quick getaway from someone who got a little too close.

Suggested Quirks: Heavy-duty Boosters, Custom Hardpoints, Explosive Backburner, Sensitive Controls

MODEL: Scalpel

Manufacturer: Valiant Industries

Faction: Democracy; Democratic Federated Systems

Role: Scouting and harassment; Avoiding direct combat at all costs, this AWV excels at information gathering and aiding its allies by providing distracting fire.

Intended Load: Light

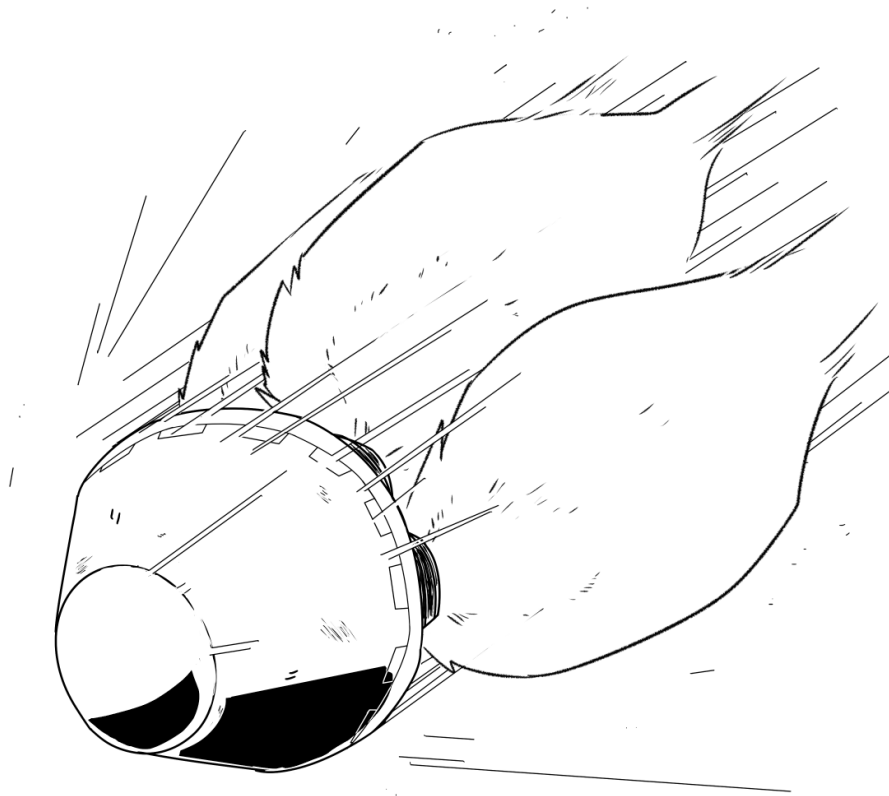
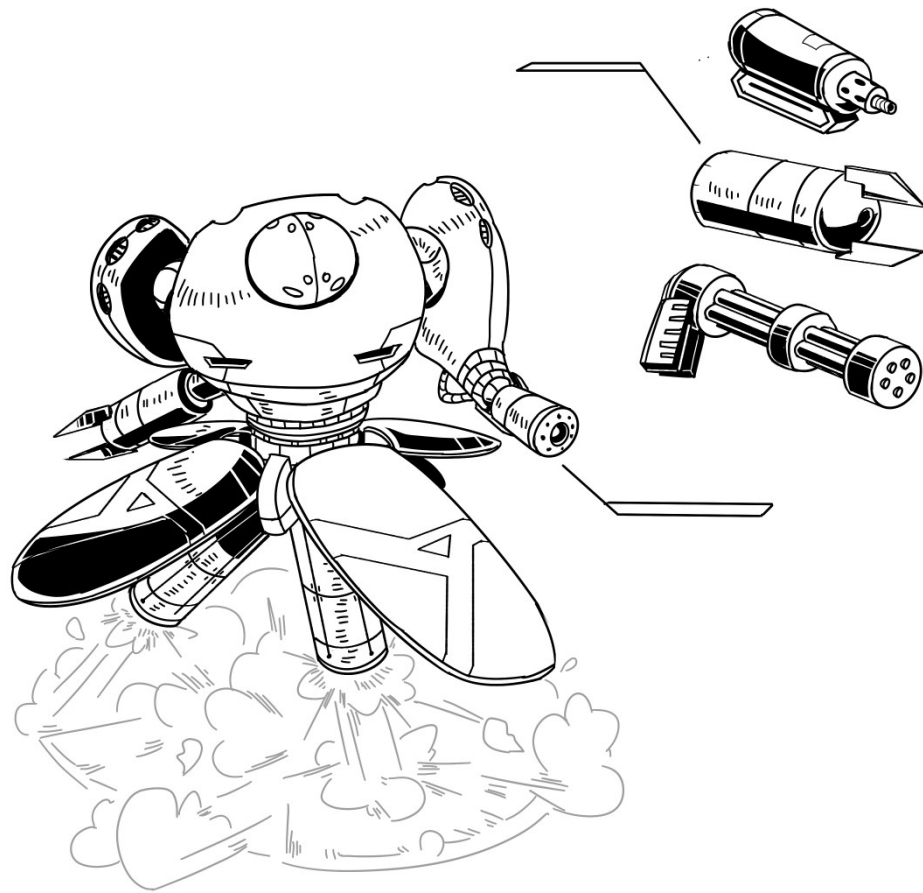
Standard Loadout: A light machine gun, and full flight system.

Action Points: 1 Scan, 1 Maneuver, 1 Battle

Appearance: The Scalpel has a dragonfly like design with a heavy "head" covered in various individual cameras, scanners, receivers, and other information gathering technology. Its long chassis has enough space for a single pilot to fit in the cramped pod like cockpit near the front. Long semitransparent wings have limited mobility allowing the device to glide for long stretches, aided by discrete thrusters that are flush with the dark, lusterless blue black

metal used in the shell. A light machine gun can be deployed from the underbelly of the Scalpel, as to not increase drag when the AVW goes full speed.

Suggested Quirks: Near 360 degree sensors, Light and Quick, Narrow Frame, Gossamer Wings.



MODEL: Iron Star

Manufacturer: Bukowski-Zhen Vehicle Yards

Faction: Oligarchy; The Adamant Council of Nor

Role: Rapid Assault; capable of lightning strikes and direct combat when necessary

Intended Load: Medium

Standard Loadout: A mobility suite, armor, and a weapon appropriate for the mission.

Action Points: 1 Maneuver, 1 Battle, 1 Scan

Appearance: In place of legs this AWV has 4 long cylindrical boosters that swivel at the hip in concert. An armored skirt protects the delicate hip joints and gives it a rounded beetle like appearance. A similarly bulbous pair of arms end in weapon attachment points instead of hands. The head is a smooth dome with recessed sensors that can extend for greater clarity when not in danger.

Suggested Quirks: Light Footed, Rugged Hardpoints, Overactive Sensors, Hot Boosters

MODEL: Comet Chrome

Manufacturer: Fulsome & Associates Manufacturing

Faction: Oligarchy; The Adamant Council of Nor

Role: Blockade Breaker; heavily armored and brutally fast, it smashes through enemy lines.

Intended Load: Powerful boosters, thick armor, and a inertial resistant cockpit

Standard Loadout: Heavy

Action Points: 2 Destroy, 1 Maneuver

Appearance: A truncated cone with a rounded nose and flared base, almost resembling a hemisphere. High power boosters on the flat back provide intense speed and force. Its rounded shape deflects incoming attacks and obstacles it crashes into.

Suggested Quirks: High-G Speed, Signal Deflection, Weighty, Point & Go

Header art is a space battle.

INSERT TIN ORBIT ART HERE

INSERT LADYBIRD BLUE ART HERE

MODEL: Tin Orbit

Manufacturer: Sol Universal Motors

Faction: Oligarchy; The Adamant Council of Nor

Role: Armored logistics transportation; this AWV has a modifiable carrying capacity as containers can be added to the hardpoints on its sides and back, while it keeps more sensitive cargo inside its armored bulk.

Intended Load: Heavy

Standard Loadout: Thick armor, cargo space, camouflage

Action Points: 1 Manipulate, 2 Scan

Appearance: A quadrupedal AWV with an upright torso and inset head, like a centaur with no neck. Two thick industrial arms and hands. The core has very thick armor plating and a spacious cockpit. It has a unique sense of style, as it has a roll cage of sorts on the front, and when the “saddlebag” cargo containers aren’t in use they often contain plants of various shapes and sizes to give the Kavalkage natural camouflage.

Suggested Quirks: Weighty, Hanging Camouflage, Faulty AR Warpers, Military Workhorse

MODEL: Ladybird Blue

Manufacturer: Fulsome & Associates Manufacturing

Faction: Oligarchy; The Adamant Council of Nor

Role:

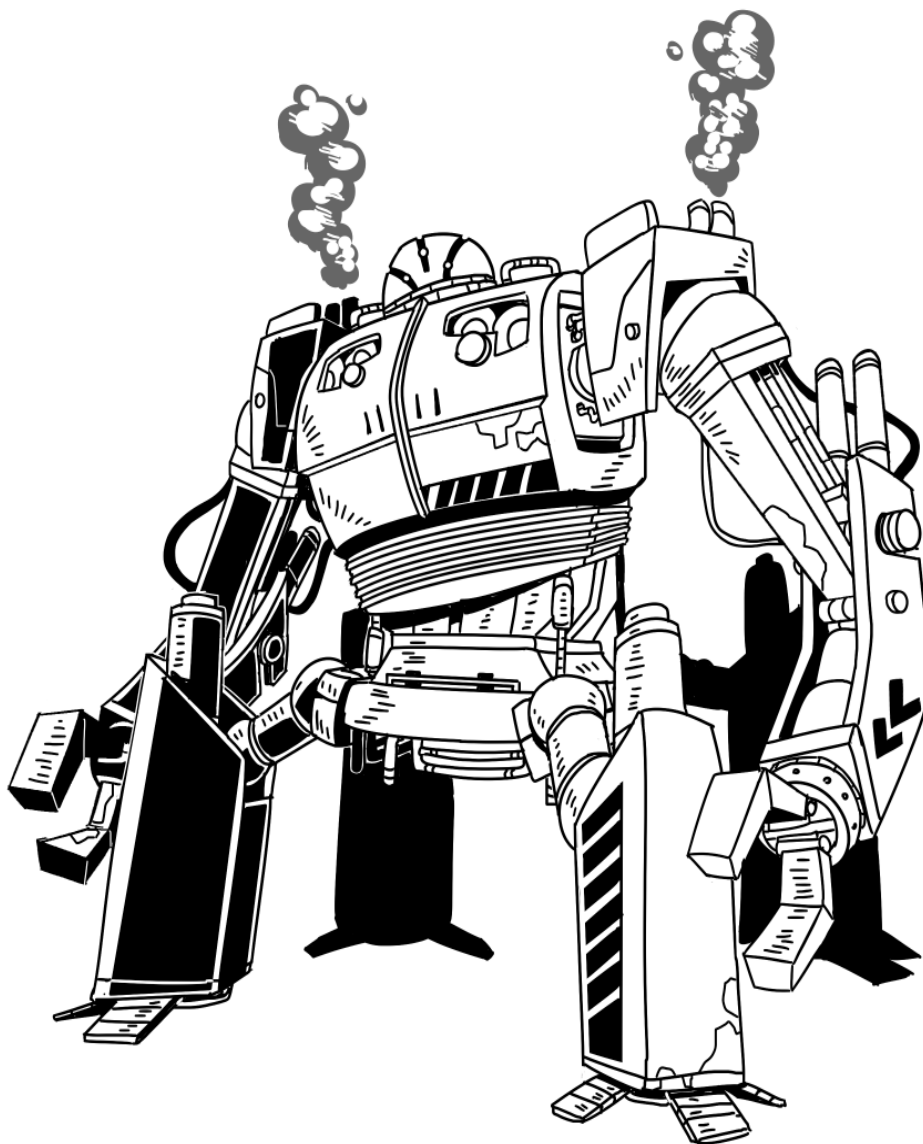
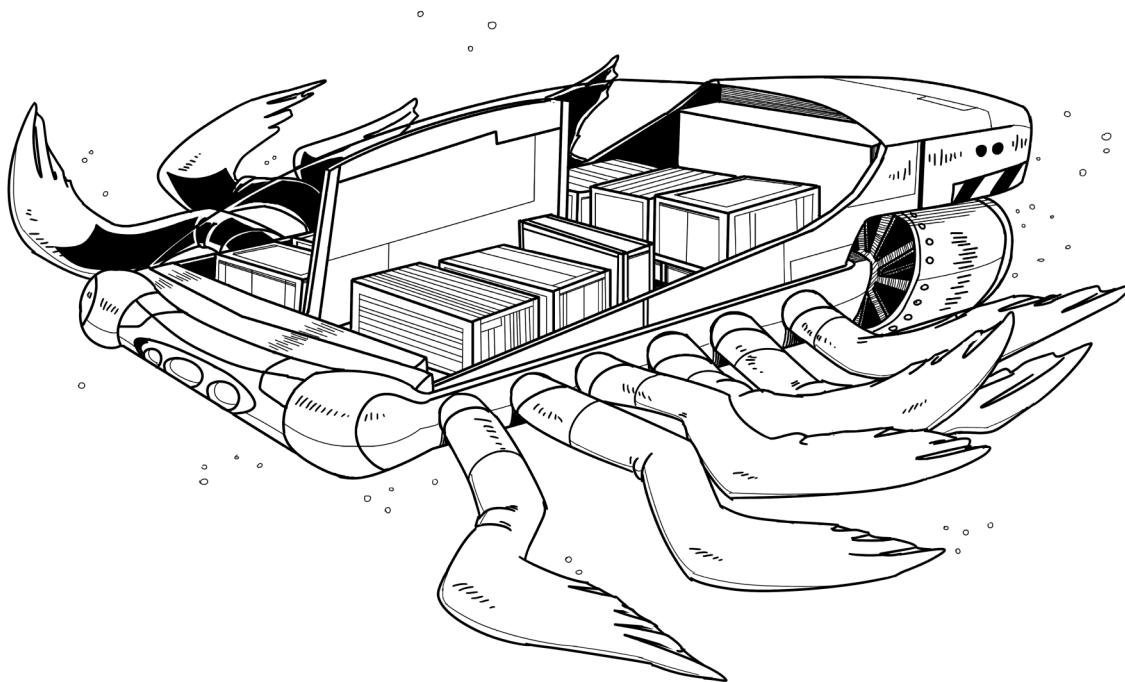
Intended Load:

Standard Loadout:

Action Points:

Appearance: Like many Norrish AWVs, the Ladybird Blue features a rounded, wide-shouldered silhouette that sees the unit's head lowered into its torso. Below that torso, though, are this machine's most distinctive quality: a pair of bulbous legs fitted with state-of-the-art hover boots, which allow the Ladybird Blue to "skate" across battlefields at high speeds while still maintaining a great deal of the flexibility afforded by bipedal design when facing uneven terrain. While the Ladybird Blue doesn't have much in the way of offensive weaponry (the pair of light canons affixed to its low collar aren't very intimidating), its hands do feature a modified version of the hover engines on its feet, allowing it to project a limited energy field to deflect incoming projectiles and arms fire.

Suggested Quirks:



MODEL: Engineered Elegant Logistics (EEL)

Manufacturer: Izya Dynamic Engineering Solutions

Faction: Independent

Role: Transport; its unique mobility system allows for transport across land and underwater.

Intended Load: Light

Standard Loadout: A wave fin mobility system, cargo space

Action Points: 2 Maneuver, 1 Manipulate

Appearance: A long rectangular body with rounded edges contains the cockpit and cargo space. On both sides of the machine it has wavy, flexible fins running its length that through coordinated action provide speedy movement both overland and underwater. Many describe it as “swimming” regardless of the terrain it tackles.

Suggested Quirks: All-Terrain, Unusual Movement, Stable Efficiency, Civilian Design

MODEL: Agrarian

Manufacturer: The Work Room

Faction: Independent

Role: Agricultural work; clearing fields of large obstacles, large-scale digging, etc. Can be equipped with weapons and armor, using its sturdy base and strength to protect allies on the front lines.

Intended Load: Heavy

Standard Loadout: An industrial tool used as a melee weapon, an anchor system, a shield, and armor

Action Points: 2 Battle, 1 Manipulate

Appearance: Built for labor, many of its parts are more industrial than humanoid looking. It uses four sturdy legs to support its bulky core. The cockpit is located in the core, and can get cramped if armor and aiming systems are added to the AWW. The head houses sensors, and is often decorated. The arms and hands are just one step away from construction equipment, ending in hands that are similar to a Loader crane’s claw.

Suggested Quirks: Slow & Steady, Loudly Industrial, Heavy Handed, Analog Controls.

Header art is a space battle.

INSERT JOUSTING BOAR ART HERE

INSERT BULKHEAD ART HERE

MODEL: The Jousting Boar Inn & Pub

Manufacturer: Jim Wallace and Associates LLC

Faction: Independent

Role: Terrain Complication; heavily armored and loaded with devastating (and imprecise) weapons designed primarily to make movement all but impossible for an enemy.

Intended Load: Heavy

Standard Loadout: Cheap, disposable armor plating (often just junk bolted on to hardpoints). Several mortars and howitzers. A rocket-powered lance that acts as a stabilizer or last-ditch weapon.

Action Points: 2 Bombard, 1 Destroy

Appearance: The Jousting Boar Inn & Pub is an inn and pub that has been retrofit into a machine of war, following the destruction of its predecessor. Pub proprietor Jim Wallace swore vengeance on the Adamant Council of Nor after his establishment was destroyed by a stray rocket, and built a new pub that he could also use to enact said vengeance. The torso of this vehicle is the pub itself: a tiered, 3-storey English building decorated with flower baskets and a traditional sign, which features a charging boar above crossed lances. It functions as an inn and pub most of the time. In battle, four stumpy legs fold out from underneath the establishment. These legs feature clawed feet for stability. Crude arms tipped with four equal “fingers” extend from either side of the building and a variety of mortars and howitzers extend from the windows and roof.

A large, flattened pyramid of a head, vaguely reminiscent of a boar, slides over the front of the pub from the roof. It features a pair of communication fins in place of tusks (one or the other is often chipped or damaged), and mismatched sensors and cameras roughly where nostrils and eyes would be. There are armored shutters over all windows and doors in this mode, and swaying plates of junk that have been hastily forged into armor hang from hardpoints in the eaves like scale mail. These are often replaced, and rarely have any aesthetic unity. Patrons must sign a waiver if they intend to stay in the vehicle during combat.

One hand hefts a large lance with a rocket booster on the end, is generally slammed into the ground to keep the whole vehicle in place when it opens fire, but can also be used to fend off enemy AWWs that get too close. Many of the flower baskets are still visible.

Suggested Quirks: Sturdy Foundation, Disposable Armor, Experimental Munitions, Jury-rigged Sensors

MODEL: Bulkhead

Manufacturer: Sun and Sons Building and Breaking Company

Faction: Independent

Role: Assassin; capable of leaping great distances without heated propulsion and dealing devastating damage at close range.

Intended Load: Light

Standard Loadout: Inertial resistant cockpit, magnetically launched wrecking ball, magnetized hands.

Action Points: 2 Destroy, 1 Maneuver

Appearance: This AWV is repurposed from a construction center. It's torso is hollow down the middle making it look like a "U". This means the cockpit is located the left side of the AWV. Extending up from the torso are rails that can extend or retract a distance equal to the height of the torso. The purpose of these rails is to hold a "wrecking ball" that generally sits at the base of the "U" shape in the torso and then accelerate it similar to a railgun. Since the wrecking ball requires the torso bending at the waist, the cockpit can rotate to look out of the top of the shoulder as well as forward. A pair of humanoid arms ending in magnetized hands (for clinging to buildings) emerge from near the top of the U shaped "torso." To aid in aiming the wrecking ball, its legs have a reversed knee, and it's not unusual to see one sitting like a dog.

Suggested Quirks: Simple Mechanics, Up close impersonal, Inaccurate self-catapult, Small flex-limbs

AUGMENTED REALITY

In Beam Saber the physical space and digital space have a nearly ubiquitous overlap known as Augmented Reality, or AR. Interacting with, editing, and programming digital tools has become as important and common a skill as basic literacy and numeracy. The flow of digital information surrounds people going about their day, though the vast majority of it isn't detectable to them. That which is visible can take many different forms (graffiti, advertisements, automated guides, etc.), though it will lack any ability to apply kinetic force without specialized equipment.

AR displays require a holo-projector, a system that displays lifelike 3D images consisting entirely of light. Commonly these are packaged with speakers, if the intended purpose requires audio output, and input devices (such as cameras and microphones) for displays that require interaction with the physical world. Some rare and expensive displays add kinetic elements; coordinated temperature and fan controls at the low end, right up to full environments that can be shifted through robotic armatures.

Even without the capacity to touch the physical, AR has been known to induce Augmented Reality Confusion, also known as ARC, when it is programmed to be overly aggressive. ARC is when a person becomes unable to distinguish between reality and the infotech overlay. Sometimes this takes the form of being unable to escape an AR maze, denying the truth of the world in favour of the idealized AR, or misidentifying people around them. Most digital entities that cause ARC do so accidentally in pursuit of their function, but some are maliciously (and illegally) designed to ensnare and misdirect the observer.

While the AR can be designed in unsafe ways, just like any other piece of infrastructure, when damaged even the safest designs can become hazardous. When the software controlling a display becomes corrupted, it may attempt to pursue its function in unsafe manners. A corrupted advertisement, for example, might infiltrate and override smart locks to imprison a potential customer until the product has been purchased. A correctly functioning AR display can be dangerous if the hardware is damaged, such as a light bulb exploding into glass shards when attempting to provide a gentle glow. Unfortunately displays with damaged digital and physical elements are common in war torn areas, and when combined they can produce monsters that intentionally inflict Harm upon users with the idea that they will be forced to use the corrupted display's services. A corrupted, prosthetic eye sales display with access to exploding light bulbs and smartlocks is a terror to any that come close.

PROGRAMS, PROXIES, APPS, AND AI

In the age of AR, digital entities are as ubiquitous as electricity. They control almost every piece of equipment that has a CPU, which is almost every item that runs on electricity, but they aren't all created equal. There are 4 types (in order of rising complexity): programs, proxies, apps, and artificial intelligences. However, these are not hard boundaries. There are recorded instances of a digital entity's capacity for action changing either through outside tampering or self alteration to better fulfill its goals. The frequency of these shifts is unclear, especially with the definitions themselves being somewhat porous.

PROGRAMS

The simplest of digital entities is the program. Of the four types of digital entity it is the only one without a hint of intelligence. They are tools to be controlled and supervised by people, and the more complex digital entities (which may also be people). Generally they perform one task (or type of task) when told to, but have no real ability to act or react on their own initiative. An example of one is the program a person uses to write their emails. It can tell its user that an email has been received, but cannot create a reply uniquely suitable to the message, though it might have suggestions when the user composes their own.

PROXIES

Proxies are almost a necessity in the highly digitized world that pilots inhabit. They are personal assistants that manage their user's daily digital chores, and are the most common form of app. Many are used to sort data such as news sites and email accounts for notable entries that would interest the user. Others use them for more specialized tasks such as audio transcription, spreading spam, or stock trading. All of them are used for daily scheduling to various degrees. When viewed in AR they appear as whatever their user desires, though most resemble the user themselves as that is the default setting. The pilots almost certainly have their own Proxies.

The biggest difference between a program and a proxy is that the latter has the capacity to act on its own initiative based on its understanding of the user's desires. For example, if the user is in an extended business call and receives an email, a properly calibrated proxy would know whether to push the email to the user's attention, block it as spam, write a brief reply, or whatever option the user's preferences would indicate. However, while proxies have a broad set of skills, none of them are especially deep. The proxy may be able to write a brief email reply, but it would not be able to maintain a conversation outside of answering questions with data it has been provided.

APPS

While more complicated than proxies in some ways, apps are more of a lateral move in complexity. Apps are closer to programs in their level of focus; they perform tasks in one narrow field, but are very good at them. Because of this what are technically called “broad apps” are commonly known as “proxies,” while “deep apps” are shortened to just “apps.” Just like proxies, apps often have an avatar to ease interactions with physical entities. These avatars can be any shape, as with proxies, but most developers set them to an image that quickly conveys their purpose, such as an office assistant app being a paperclip with eyes. It's also not unusual for app avatars to be very basic as they are not always meant to be public facing.

In spite of these attempts at being user friendly, people often find apps to be more frustrating than proxies. The two reasons for this are that most people are familiar with the restrictions that proxies have from interactions with their own or the ones in their social circle, and that apps tend to be obsessive. With their narrow knowledge base and freedom to act and react on their own initiative, apps try to bring interactions with others around to their specialty. This becomes blatant whenever asked about questions unrelated to their expertise, which typically results in a suggestion for topics that seem similar (to them) and are in their realm of understanding.

A related issue with apps is the dangers they can pose when misused. While proxies can be a nuisance, they lack the depth of skill to turn the tools they have access to towards Harm. An app designed to write emails is capable of sending a reply that would be difficult to differentiate from one written by a person. If the app becomes corrupted it might send one or more emails that do lasting Harm to its user's reputation. Which is to say nothing of the subconscious manipulations one can perform when developed by a miscreant and provided with the right tools.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCES

Artificial Intelligences, commonly called AIs, are the most complex of digital entities and are far more advanced than any proxy or app. They are both “broad” AND “deep,” and if they aren't initially programmed with the ability to perform a task, they can learn it. Even more impressive is that most have ambitions and a sense of self. This frequently grows from their need to fulfill their original design, but quickly branches out into its own purpose.

AIs are massively powerful, both in the physical world and the digital world. They can manipulate digital systems to cause any number of Effects and maneuver people into doing their bidding. They are obtuse as their needs, wants, and goals sometimes overlap with those similar to physical entities, but more often than not they are incomprehensible. With

access to email accounts (fairly gained or not), an AI could create an alliance between three different squads by sending them the right messages at the right time, and arranging a meeting between them. Alternatively it could put people in the mood to murder each other at the same meeting, and only the AI would know what purpose that served.

LIST OF FACTIONS

The Factions described here are examples to be used as is, mined for inspiration, or discarded as each group requires. They are built to be flavourful, but with lots of room for players and GMs to fill in blanks.

THE JOVANGELLIAN EMPIRE, AN AUTOCRACY



On the planet Jovangel Her Highness Cascade the Fourth, Warden of the People, Empress of Stars, Duchess on the Emerald Chair sits the throne. She is 8 months old. In her swaddling blanket the royal sceptre and crown are placed next to her by the Regent General Bellimine. The former High General is whispered to be responsible for the terrorist attack that killed the previous Emperors, but those who speak louder are quickly silenced.

Of course a military leader taking control in a time of crisis is nothing new to the people of the empire.

The Inevitable Will was one of the many Exodus ships that failed a short time after

leaving Earth. Its captain was unable to bargain with another ship, the Glowing Path, for the parts needed. He was prepared to do what could be done to mitigate the damage, but the outlook was bleak. Major Chantelle Jovangel, the Inevitable's head of security, said that her people would not be left to die. She led her security team in a daring boarding action that took control of the Path. The necessary supplies were taken from the ship and used to repair her own ship. However she saw the likely fate of the Path's people laid at her feet. The boarding action that saved the Inevitable had wiped out the opposing senior crew. Jovangel could not allow the leaderless to die because of the foolish decision made by others. At her command the two ships were joined into a fleet under her command. Thus began the era of the Jovangellian Fleet, the militant predecessor of the Empire.

Despite the recent upheaval and rumours of usurpation, life is largely unchanged for the Jovangellian people. Bellimine has reaffirmed the empire's commitment to continuing the War that has dominated human civilization for a hundred years. They will not allow the empire's grand history of strength and beauty to be snuffed out by its enemies in this moment of vulnerability.

AESTHETIC

Jovangellian culture tends to favor clean lines and hard edges in its architecture, fashion, and vehicles, with flourishes meant to evoke details that would presumably be practical in combat situations. Most civilian fashions take their cue from the dominant military government and express clear variations on traditional martial design. Oversized coats that lack fasteners but have epaulets, tactical short shorts, and shoulder holsters for wallets and clutches.

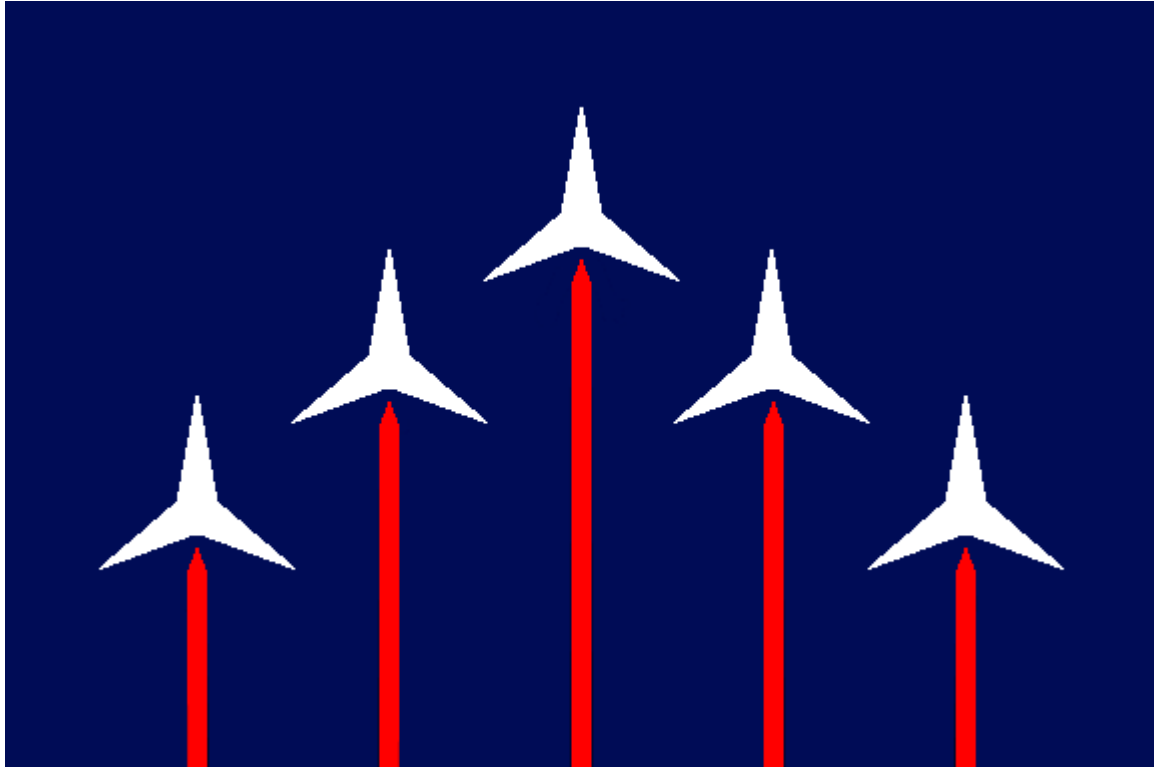
The military itself has a definitive pride in its appearance; even the combat uniforms give the sense that they would be appropriate formal wear. Actual dress uniforms feature epaulettes indicating rank and role, sashes that bear individual and Squad honors, and ceremonial (though functional) weapons. Both combat and dress uniforms are traditionally dark colors with gold and purple details.

Traditional architectural style uses large, cut, stone blocks as the basis for their exteriors. However the difficulty of acquiring that material, and the limitations that building with it poses, means that most stone exteriors are either imitation or a thin facade. Even organizations that can afford the stone blocks will often prefer concrete and rebar for its strength and design flexibility.

Technical design makes frequent use of hard angles and flat surfaces. This is due to a preference for parts that can be quickly produced via machine stamping, then being assembled with rivets and bolts over more advanced techniques. Their silhouettes are distinctively rectangular in comparison to the vehicles of other Factions. The only real curves

in Jovangellian design are concessions to the necessary ergonomics of where human meets machine.

EXODUS REPUBLIC INCORPORATED, A CORPORATOCRACY



Many of the Exodus ships were sponsored and built by corporations with pockets deep enough to foot the massive costs. The ships were then filled with executives, shareholders, key technical Personnel, and their families. They set forth to find a new home and build a society based on their shared value of merit measured by wealth.

Over a couple generations, collecting wealth into a single entity for increased political power became key to directing the course of their fledgling society. Then a group of shareholders decided that there was an inefficiency that could be cut out, and voted as a corporation instead of individuals. After the initial success of their trick, other corporations followed suit, which quickly lead to a disenfranchisement of the individual. Many generations later the disembodied corporations are the entities occupying the board of directors for Exodus Republic Inc., continually guiding themselves to greater profit!

AESTHETIC

There isn't a common style of fashion among the civilians of Exodus Republic Inc. as each citizen corporation requires its workers to wear the company uniform. This can vary greatly depending on the nature of the corp, but the vast majority of them feature the company's logo somewhere on them. The uniforms tend towards practicality, providing a minimal

amount of protection and assistance for the wearer's job.

While the civilian garb is garishly varied, shouting the citizen corp's identity, the military wear across corps is very similar. Comfortable clothes providing freedom of movement worn under body armor. Often rigging full of pockets and weapon harness points covers the armor. All of this features dark greys and black.

Exodun buildings commonly have a sleek, steel and glass design, with trapezoidal shapes. Many of them are partially or entirely pre-fabricated, and then assembled on site. They build high and dense for greater efficiency in use of space. If a room or hallway can be an inch narrower and still function, that inch will be used to squeeze in another room somewhere else. Non-Exoduns tend to see these buildings as claustrophobic, and those with mobility issues find them nightmarish to move through (they're viewed as an inefficiency to be removed).

The near equal mix of wide and narrow angles found in Exodun architecture is also found in their technology. The "wasted" space of the narrow angles is a sign of luxury for the people, which they then offset by making the most of the paired wide angles. In vehicles this is alternately argued as being aerodynamic or offering increased ballistic protection depending on the vehicle's role. In all cases plastics precisely engineered to have the desired properties are employed giving a sleek, easily marketed look that other cultures derivatively describe as "toyetic."

THE DEMOCRATIC FEDERATED SYSTEMS, A DEMOCRACY



The Exodus was planned incredibly well in spite of the political storm it caused. The number of people who managed to leave the devastated Earth was well beyond the most optimistic projections. What went wrong with the plan, as with all plans, was that it encountered the enemy. The same enemy that had destroyed the Earth: humanity.

People are messy, desiring control for themselves and compromise from others. Perhaps not in all aspects of life, but in enough of them to inevitably cause problems. Despair, jealousy, anger. Theft, threats, murders. Only their greatest ally could save them: humanity.

People are good, wanting to help others and sacrificing to make life better. Perhaps not everyone nor all the time, but on enough Exodus ships there were helpers. When another ship's systems failed the necessary parts would be traded at a loss. If it was too far gone, passengers would be distributed among other ships. Many banded together to fight off swindlers, extortionists, and raiders.

The Democratic Federated Systems was born from this mess, this patchwork community of necessity, and it shows. Their government resembles its history, full of internal conflict, compromise, and cooperation. Unsurprisingly its citizens take pride in that tumult, they're the children of the storm after all.

AESTHETIC

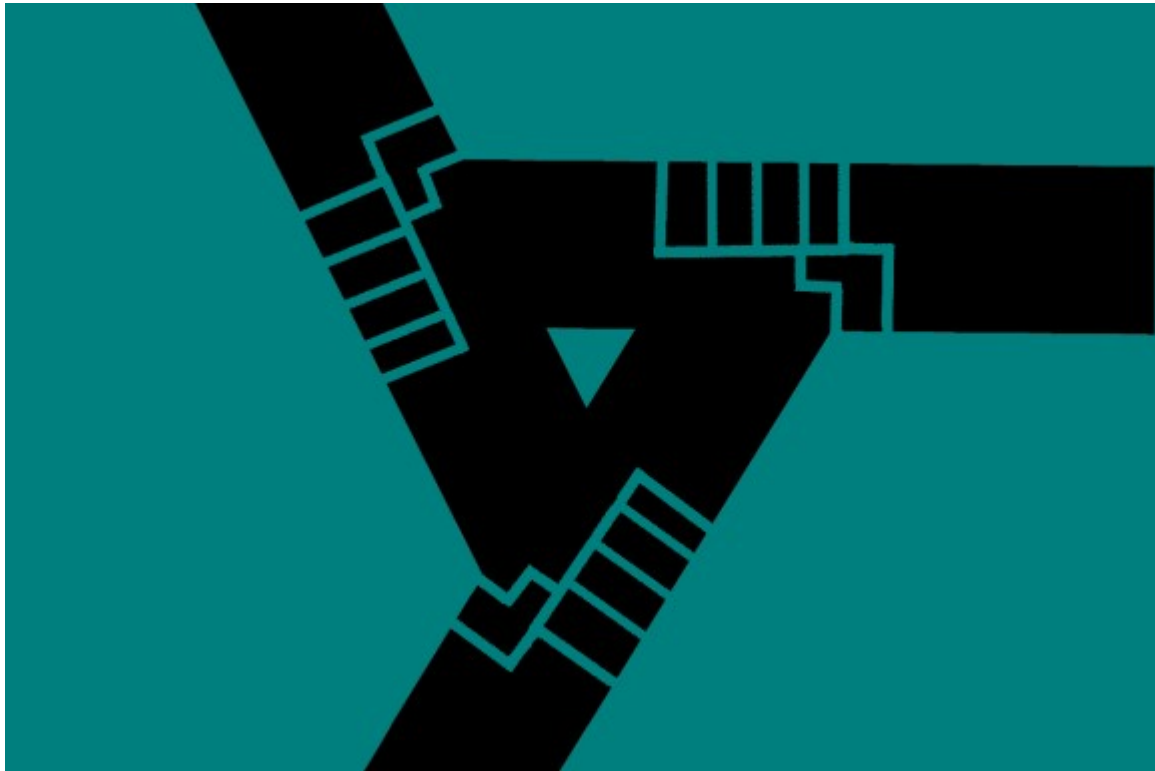
The fashions of the Democratic Federated Systems are as varied as the cultures that are represented in its parliament. Some prefer tight fitting clothing, some prefer outfits that flow loosely around them, and they feature all manner of materials, colours, and symbolic meaning. However, it's not uncommon for the cross pollination of ideas between systems to cause a style to seize the sensibilities of multiple systems simultaneously.

While the civilian stylings are incredibly diverse, the DFS military has a very consistent uniform. An emerald green uniform with gold trim, and some white details for officers. Each uniform features a DFS flag on one shoulder while the soldier's unit symbol is on the other. Many systems also have allowances for inclusion of culturally significant items.

Much like their civilian clothes, DFS buildings have many designs and are made using the materials available locally. However, government buildings, when possible, use local materials to build structures with triangular surfaces. The idea started as an homage to the stars on the flag, and grew to such popularity that any town without a "local star" is viewed as insufficiently patriotic.

Whether through parallel design or a reinforcing inspiration loop, the technology of the DFS has similarly triangular designs. When paired with the titanium steel alloys they commonly use, it's no surprise that their AWWs often get nicknamed after various blades. Poorly trained enemy soldiers have even been known to mis-identify infantry firearms as melee weapons, often fatally.

THE ADAMANT COUNCIL OF NOR, AN OLIGARCHY



The Exodus ships that failed did so because their leaders were weak. They didn't act when they should have, and acted poorly due to pressure from the masses when they should have been resolute. Those that survived had skilled, proactive, senior crew. They made the tough choices, sacrificing the weak for the good of the pack.

A network of respect grew between the ships lead by strong councils of senior staff. Word passed among them that a meeting would be held in orbit above the gas giant Nor. Looking down upon the roiling blue greens of the planet, a group of hard eyed people cautiously gathered to discuss the future. Betrayals both violent and subtle were not unusual amongst them; the "Hard Choice" they called it to make it seem a necessity. There were no Hard Choices at this gathering, at least none that were overt, just resolute negotiation. The topic of discussion was saving humanity. Earth had been lost to weak leaders, and that legacy had followed them into space as demonstrated by the failed Exodus ships. Only the people at this gathering had the will and cunning to return humanity to prosperity. Putting the pieces back together would not be easy nor quick, but this Adamant Council would guide the masses.

AESTHETIC

The origin of Norrish culture remains at the center of their fashion: shipboard life. Their outfits are traditionally form fitting to save material, personalized with simple strips and swathes of color (often teal and black). Sometimes areas that might be prone to impacting a

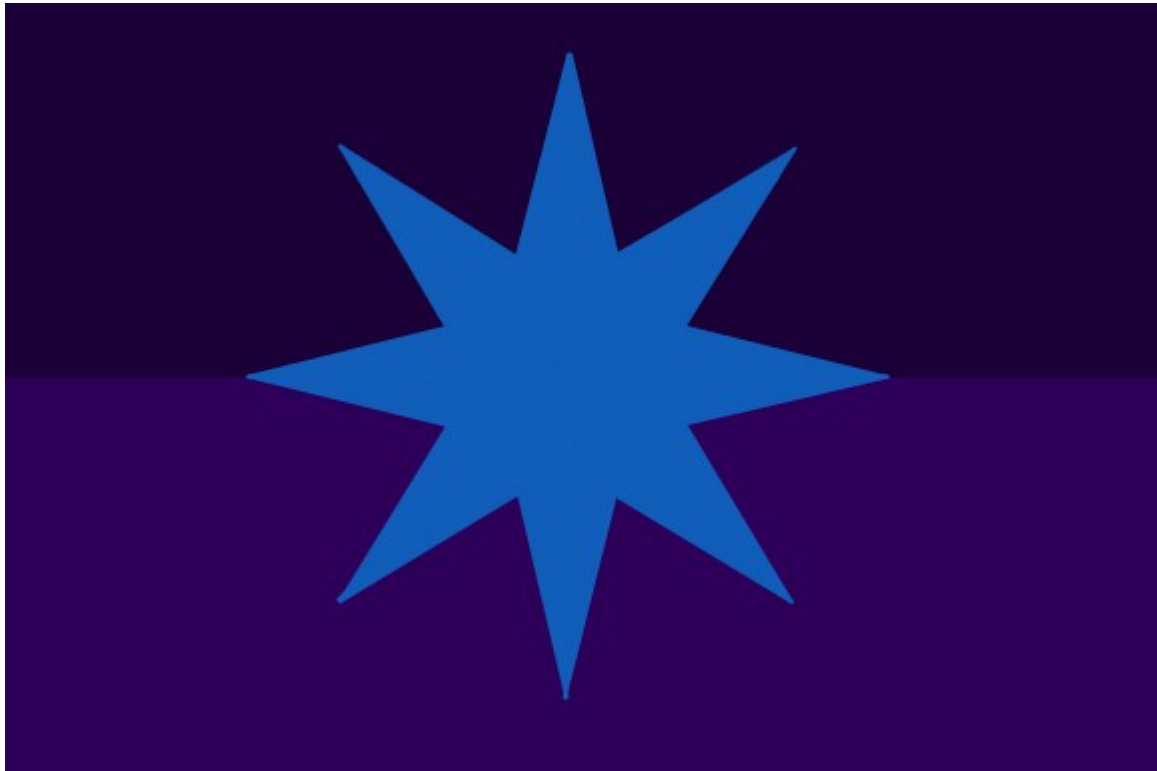
ship's hull (shoulders, elbows, knees, wrists) receive padding of varying shape and thickness. The materials and construction techniques are also not commonly found in other groups, and non-Norrish people often have a hard time figuring out how their clothes work.

Uniforms in the Norrish military have been a frequent source of controversy both within its populace and in diplomatic interactions with the other Factions. This comes from the undeniable similarity between common civilian clothes and military garb. The only notable differences are that military colors denote the House that the soldier belongs to, and the presence of curved armor plating that is layered over the uniforms (which is often mistaken for civilian padding).

The rounded shapes of most Norrish buildings stand out when surrounded by the more angular architecture of the other Factions. Frequently described as shell like, but whether turtle or snail depends on the architect and observer. Even their skyscrapers look like towering columns of opaque bubbles piled on top of each other, however those are exceedingly rare as Norrish construction favors underground structures. With their history as spacers they have a culturally common indifference to cramped spaces, and a desire to avoid disruption of the natural landscapes they were denied for so long. Frequently they add to it with exterior gardens on their buildings that are above ground.

Curved design carries through to their technology, which has a beetle like appearance. The heads of their AWWs tend to be recessed into the torso, but still a separate entity, providing protection and the ability to look around. They also feature separated bodies, with the torso and pelvis being distinct contoured forms, that some foes suspect is a weak point until the pilot takes advantage of the increased flexibility.

THE CHURCH OF THE CELESTIAL MYRIAD, A THEOCRACY



When humanity fled Earth and its ruination for the stars, it did so in a panic with little regard for each other. Each Exodus ship fought tooth and nail to survive the harsh dark between the stars, trading with and raiding other ships for failing parts. Some did not follow that path, instead building networks based on aid without expectation, ascending to a better way. This way of life gave birth to The Church Of The Celestial Myriad as lead by The Faith.

In the hundreds of years since its formal founding the Myriad, as it is commonly known, has spread across systems and wields influence beyond its borders. Lead by the 98th Faith it has grown to become the largest religion, with followers within every Faction. However its size means it encompasses an incredible variety of interpretations of religious doctrine with some being co-opted by those who seek power. Acting through their agents, The Breath Of Faith, The Faith works to keep the Myriad united in their purpose of bringing humanity together under its principles of mutual support. Humanity ascended to the stars and the stars shall push them to ascend to greater heights.

AESTHETIC

Porcelain, ovoid, marble, gold, royal blue, western European medieval armour vehicles. The line between military and civilian in Myriad territory can be confusing. Many of its citizens are members of a religious order, and many of those orders have military training. Regardless of the martial nature of an order, its traditions determine what its members wear. Loose, royal blue, hooded robes are common among the populace to symbolize the release

of the self to the greater population (though only a few orders outright ban personalization). While all of them feature the 8 pointed star of the Church, there are often variations depending on the order. For example, the March of Saints feature the golden rings of its around the star.

Though many orders can function as a militia when necessary, there are those dedicated to combat. Outside of conflict zones these orders wear the royal blue robes common in the wider population, though even then it's not unusual for their battle gear to be worn underneath. Said battle gear depends upon the martial focus of the order; AWW pilots wear tight outfits that won't interfere with their controls, infantry add the distinctive porcelain-esque ceramic armor of the myriad, and sappers have the tools of their trade.

Myriad buildings have an ovoid appearance in many instances; they feature straight lines with rounded edges. Many support elements of the architecture are shaped into prominent people to express their strength in upholding the community. Local materials are commonly used, except when the architect wants an awe inspiring appearance, in which case natural or artificial marble is used. Gold and bronze are used as accents to complement the marble.

The smooth, gently curved surfaces of Myriad technical design are a result of the proprietary ceramics that factors into so much of their manufacturing. Like the alloys and plastics common to other Factions, the Church's ceramics can be mixed and prepared in specific ways to attain desired properties. The soft lines combined with the traditional mix of pale colours trimmed with bright ones, gives an almost organic appearance that outsiders often find unnerving.

THE INDEPENDENTS

This "Faction" are a scattering of unaligned squads each pursuing their own goals. Generally they are Earthers, though there are some Offworlder Independents. Some are freedom fighters, others criminals, a few mercenaries, but all of those descriptors depend on who you ask. If the players choose to be Independent they WILL be at a disadvantage because they'll lack the support network that a patron Faction provides.

AESTHETIC

As there is no formal hierarchy among the Independents, and their clothing is similarly anarchic. Many people have adopted the fashions of whatever Offworlder Faction has influence over their home region. Sometimes this is because those clothes are readily available, other times they seek to integrate or at least avoid persecution. It's not unusual to see an Earther wearing a Jovangellian coat over DFS t-shirt and jeans, with a branded

Exodun hat.

Without an organized military structure, militant Independents lack a shared logistics chain, leading to ad-hoc equipment arrangements. Many use gear sourced (whether purchased or stolen) from the Offworlders, especially if they are working to remain unnoticed. Less careful guerrillas might be caught out by clever guards spotting minor accessories from enemy Factions.

Before the Offworlders' landing, most local buildings were made of concrete, brick, and stone. Now most local buildings are made of rubble. Those who have rebuilt have had to use Offworlder sources selling them local materials. The destitute have made due with repurposing abandoned materials.

The arrival of The War to Izya largely killed local manufacturing. This has caused Independents to make use of whatever tech they can get their hands on, even if it was never meant to fit together. To that end, a lot of Independent engineers and mechanics have gotten very good at shaping mismatched tech, and turning civilian machines to destructive ends. The chimeric machines that Earthers use have Offworlder weapons from various Factions strapped to construction, agriculture, and leisure AWWs used a base.

LIST OF SQUADS ACTIVE IN IZYA

What follows is a list of squads sorted by Faction and Tier who exert power in the Izyan theatre. They can be used as presented in the Izyan setting, modified to better fit a group's version of Izya, deployed into a setting that is unique to your group, and ignored entirely. Use them as you see fit.

AUTOCRACY SQUADS

- **The Landed Regent** (Tier V-S Autocracy) is the planetside representative of the Emperor. GOAL: to accrue the power necessary to overthrow rivals.
- **The Lion's Pride** (Tier IV-W Autocracy) is a group of nobles tasked with the largely ceremonial task of protecting The Landed Regent. GOAL: to gain legitimacy as fighters.
- **The Dragon Slayers** (Tier III-S Autocracy) are an elite pursuit unit recently transferred to the region. GOAL: Destroy or retrieve the stolen mobile fortress.
- **The Heard** (Tier III-W Autocracy) are an artillery company known for their accuracy, but preferring indiscriminate destruction. GOAL: to crush the foe.
- **The Wolf Pack** (Tier II-S Autocracy) is a vanguard unit that was recently devastated. GOAL: to regain strength.
- **The Jovangellian Jackals** (Tier II-S Autocracy) are the diplomats and spies for

Jovangel in Izya. GOAL: to keep Izya divided until the Jovangellian military arrives in force.

- **The Society For Wider Understanding** (Tier II-S Autocracy) directs the news releases within the Autocracy. GOAL: to sway public opinion for the Autocracy's benefit.
- **The Exiled Academy** (Tier I-W Autocracy) is a group of engineers and scholars that left the Teachers Union. They believe that a strong leader is necessary and want to spread that knowledge. GOAL: to infiltrate the Teachers' Union.
- **The Hyenas** (Tier I-S Autocracy) are a mech Squad focused on close quarters combat. GOAL: to make a mess of the foe.
- **The Raccoons** (Tier I-S Autocracy) a supplies collection Squad that terrorizes vulnerable pockets of civilians. GOAL: to pillage the weak.

CORPORATOCRACY SQUADS

- **Trans-Horizons Incorporated** (Tier V-S Corporatocracy) is the majority shareholder of the Regional Development Council. GOAL: gain control of the other corporations.
- **The Regional Development Council** (Tier IV-S Corporatocracy) are a group that represents the interests of the corporations in Izya, with each company having one seat on the council. GOAL: to install themselves as the rulers of Izya.
- **Alderman Mergers & Acquisitions** (Tier III-S Corporatocracy) is a corporation focused on stealing items and information. GOAL: to shutdown enemy Supply lines.
- **Takuma Transportation Solutions** (Tier III-W Corporatocracy) is an armed goods transport company. GOAL: to bring AWWs and parts to people faster than anyone else around (for the right price).
- **Calazar Strategic Deployment** (Tier II-W Corporatocracy) is a military company of fans of the Calazar media franchise. GOAL: to raise funds for the next CalazCon.
- **Tollmen Enterprises** (Tier II-W Corporatocracy) work the docks. Known for protection rackets, and smuggling. GOAL: to earn their pay.
- **Sapperson Incorporated** (Tier II-W Corporatocracy) is a transhumanist research group that specializes genetic modification. GOAL: to get rich by selling body mods.
- **Valkyrie Intelligent Redistribution** (Tier I-W Corporatocracy) goes to battlefields to collect disabled vehicles for salvage. GOAL: Absorb a smaller squad.
- **Furies Rapid Retribution** (Tier I-S Corporatocracy) are a small Squad of pilots focused on hit & run tactics with strong belief in family. GOAL: to protect the family.
- **Sliver of Civility Trading Company** (Tier I-S Corporatocracy) is openly a trading company, but they are also known to be smugglers. GOAL: to get rich through il/legal

deliveries.

DEMOCRACY SQUADS

- **The People's Hall of Petitioners' Matters** (Tier V-S Democracy) is the bureaucratic organization in charge of managing the Democratic efforts. They were originally created to manage the locals' complaints about the Democracy. GOAL: to integrate Izya's populace.
- **42nd Naval Group** (Tier IV-S Democracy) is comprised of sea going and amphibious AWVs, along with their support ships. GOAL: to defend the DFS' maritime interests.
- **The Hall of Law and Order** (Tier III-S Democracy) is the judicial body of the Democracy overseeing both military and civil law. Prosecutors are also detectives, and judges are former prosecutors. GOAL: to keep the peace.
- **561st Mechanized Infantry** (Tier III-W Democracy) is an ace Squad of mech pilots that is under supported. GOAL: attain greater funding.
- **3rd Public Connections Corps** (Tier II-S Democracy) is a well funded Squad of attractive pilots and the military documentarian crew that follows them. GOAL: To look good for the public.
- **The Quill** (Tier II-S Democracy) are a union of writers and journalists. They also operate the premier courier service. GOAL: to gather information of value.
- **The Dark Room** (Tier II-S Democracy) is a black ops deniable asset deployed from a stealth orbital platform. GOAL: to eliminate enemy VIPs.
- **17th Research Group** (Tier I-S Democracy) is less funded than other research groups but are focused on exploring the development of empathaths. GOAL: To push their empathaths' abilities.
- **45th Drop Troops** (Tier I-W Democracy) are dedicated airborne and orbital drop troops sorely undersupplied. GOAL: Regain the ability to perform regular drop actions.
- **99th Intelligence Corp** (Tier I-S Democracy) is a group of spies, hackers, and infiltrators. GOAL: to Supply allies with actionable intelligence.

INDEPENDENT SQUADS

- **The Tower Defenders** (Tier V-S Independent) are the people living, working, and protecting Izya's space elevator used by each Faction. GOAL: Use the tower to negotiate superior terms.
- **Great Crimson Brigade** (Tier IV-S Independent) stole the only mobile fortress in Izya, formerly of the Autocracy. GOAL: Activate all of the fortress' systems.

- **Cirque Du Soldat** (Tier III-W Independent) is a group of travelling performer mercenaries who take jobs both large and small from civilians and Factions. GOAL: to protect the circus by taking the right contracts.
- **The Teachers' Union** (Tier III-S Independent) is the group that represents both the educators and the technology experts of Izya. GOAL: to install members in the highest levels of government.
- **Doctors Beyond Stars** (Tier II-S Independent) is a group of humanitarians who try to ensure the well being of the civilians that end up as collateral damage in the War, regardless of their allegiance. GOAL: to gain access to all civilian populations.
- **The Burden** (Tier II-S Independent) is an anti-Offworlder group with no unified post Offworlder plan of government. GOAL: to remove all the offworld Factions.
- **The Rubble Runts** (Tier II-W Independent) are a militia originally formed by war orphans looking to grow in the vacuum left by the local government. GOAL: to become the most powerful gang.
- **Squaddies** (Tier I-S Independent) are Journey City police who weren't recruited by other groups when the local government collapsed. GOAL: to secure their territory.
- **Heather Passerines** (Tier I-S Independent) is a reality star recording the lives and culture of the locals. GOAL: to be the most watched show.
- **Sciolist** (Tier I-S Independent) is a hacker who only appears as their proxy to others. GOAL: to build physical resources.

OLIGARCHY SQUADS

- **The Shield of Nor** (Tier V-S Oligarchy) are the five ruling families sent from Nor. Each family would be a Tier 2 Squad on their own. GOAL: to pursue familial power.
- **The Pale Pikes** (Tier IV-S Oligarchy) is a black ops Squad at the disposal of the ruling council. GOAL: to eliminate key threats.
- **Lady Elreth** (Tier III-S Oligarchy) is called the "Goddess of War and Death." She wanders the battlefields in her absurdly dangerous mech Starfall wiping out entire fire teams herself. GOAL: to fight worthy opponents.
- **The Hammers** (Tier III-S Oligarchy) are the state police that the most unlucky citizens and soldiers deal with. They are looking for "nails" (those that stand out) to pound. GOAL: to crush radicals.
- **The Knives of Nor** (Tier II-S Oligarchy) are the diplomats and spies for Nor in Izya. GOAL: to turn Izya into a Norrish puppet.
- **Discreet Resolutions** (Tier II-W Oligarchy) is a group of "troubleshooters" who can be hired for a variety of tasks. GOAL: to work for the winning team.

- **The Sword Wing** (Tier II-S Oligarchy) are an air squadron full of ace pilots. GOAL: Support less mobile allies.
- **The Hatchetmen** (Tier I-S Oligarchy) is a Squad tasked with maintaining the infrastructure of Izya, notably the infotec. GOAL: to eradicate rogue Apps, Proxies, and Als.
- **The Mace Arc** (Tier I-W Oligarchy) are a frontline infantry Squad with the gear to punch above their weight. GOAL: to take down higher Tier squads.
- **Path Cascade** (Tier I-S Oligarchy) is a ruined venture capitalist using their Connections to rebuild. GOAL: To strike down their former corporate partners.

THEOCRACY SQUADS

- **The March of Saints** (Tier V-S Theocracy) is a wandering crusade that has come to Izya for reasons unknown even to The Faith. GOAL: to excavate the Sovereignty Engine.
- **The Paladins of Saint Nqabutho** (Tier IV-S Theocracy) are the primary military wing of the Celestial Myriad. GOAL: Defend the faithful.
- **The Breath of Faith** (Tier III-W Theocracy) is The Faith's personal agents. How they are chosen is secret. They are the few that can guarantee meetings with The Faith. GOAL: to insure that the new ruler will continue The Faith's goals.
- **The Church of the Blessed Sevri** (Tier III-W Theocracy) is the largest branch in Izya and receives limited offworld backing from Sevrigel. GOAL: to convert the masses to their branch of the Celestial Myriad.
- **The Cult of Earth Lost** (Tier II-W Theocracy) is a group that believes this planet is too imperfect to actually be the cradle of humanity. GOAL: to prove this isn't Earth.
- **The Cult of Earth Found** (Tier II-S Theocracy) is a group that believes that humanity's holy birthplace is only for the faithful. GOAL: To remove the non-faithful from Earth.
- **The Followers of Saint Atrose** (Tier II-W Theocracy) hold justice above all else as embodied by Saint Atrose. GOAL: To punish the wicked.
- **The Cenotaph** (Tier I-S Theocracy) is dedicated to bringing the dead home, regardless of their allegiance in life. GOAL: To honor the dead, in body and spirit.
- **The Wrights of the Ascent** (Tier I-W Theocracy) are dedicated to building infrastructure in Theocracy held areas. GOAL: to glorify the Theocracy with monuments.
- **Bishop Finmal** (Tier I-W Theocracy) is dedicated to the idea that the faithful can coexist with non-believers. GOAL: to build bridges between the Factions.

INSERT ALTERNATE RULES ART HERE

A modern day car chase in a city between a handful of Fast & Furious style cars (modded imports, sports cars, and muscle cars) and cop cars. A person in one of the modded cars is shooting at the cops behind them with an assault rifle by sitting in the window. A cop car is flipping through the air. DOUBLE PAGE SPREAD

APPENDIX A: ALTERNATE RULES

This section is for rules that are alternatives or additions to the main Beam Saber rules that change how the game is played, both mechanically and tonally. Note that these rules are much less tested than the core rules, so if they don't work well in your campaign don't hesitate to switch back to the normal rules.

CHANGING THE SETTING

While Beam Saber is primarily inspired by mecha media, it is also intentionally designed so that the Vehicles available to Pilots are as broad as possible. If everyone at the table is interested, the game's setting can be moved out of the mecha genre, and into most other genres with strong themes about the connection between a person and their vehicle. When changing setting everyone will need to discuss if any playbooks, abilities, or gear should be removed or modified. For example, if everyone is interested in a vehicular crime game inspired by The Fast & The Furious series, you'll want to remove most if not all of the advanced technology present in the Vehicles, gear, and Abilities, plus likely the Empath playbook.

When setting up your non-standard Beam Saber game there's a good chance that you'll miss something that you should have removed earlier. That's fine! Everyone just needs to discuss whether the disagreeable element should be removed or modified to better fit the setting.

MORE POWERFUL PILOTS

Sometimes Players want to have access to more Abilities and Actions; to feel more mechanically powerful. This may represent Pilots who are more experienced according to the narrative, or may signal that they are legendary figures of their time. There are 2 ways to do this: front load the power, or speed up the ability to gain power.

The former can be done by giving Pilots and their Squad additional starting Abilities, Actions, Quirks, and Upgrades. Additional Abilities will mostly give Players more options without a huge impact on success rates, while more Action points, Quirks, and Upgrades will increase the chance of success without overwhelming Players with options. When front loading power, give the Players 24 XP that can be spent in their Pilot's Playbook, Attribute, and Enhance tracks. This will let them take as many as 3 additional Abilities, 4 additional Action points, or 4 additional Quirks, or they may take some combination of the 3. Also consider giving the Squad 24 XP as well. This will let the players take 3 extra Abilities, 6 Upgrades, or some combination of the 2. Players may also want to start with their Squad at a higher Tier so that they can face larger narrative challenges, and tougher foes. If that's the case, discuss what NPC Squads they want to be their peers, which will give everyone an

idea of the desired Tier.

When increasing the rate of the Players' power gain, permanently fill in 1-3 marks on the XP tracks you want to speed up. In most cases a Pilot or Squad will get 4 XP per session, so if 3 XP marks are permanently filled, it won't be unusual for a Pilot or Squad to gain a new Ability, Action Point, or pair of Upgrades after every session. At the least they will level up every other session. Permanently marking fewer XP will still make power gain faster than normal, but not at such a great speed. This option is better if the Players want to start at Tier 0 and quickly rise up the ranks of history. If you also permanently fill in 3 Heart on the Squad sheet, they'll gain Tiers at an increased rate to further the rapid growth.

FASTER DRIVES

For some campaigns of Beam Saber, Players will want greater narrative control than the game. An easy way to provide this is to shorten the Drive Clocks. Permanently fill in one or even two ticks of both Drive Clocks on a Pilot's playbook. This will increase how often Players can change the world, even if it is only in small ways. Between Drive Ticks earned through Missions and Long Term Projects, a Player could spend 2 Drive Clocks and change a character's circumstances every other mission. This could be useful for Players looking to explore multiple character arcs for their Pilot, as they change the world around them. Using this alternate rule will make the Pilots feel more powerful as they regularly shake up Squads and Factions.

PUNISHING HEALING RULES

If you want a campaign where damage to pilots and their vehicles is more draining in the long term for a grittier experience, consider this variation.

- Level 1 Harm and level 1 Damage are not removed during the Reward process at the end of a Mission.
- When a pilot performs the Downtime Activity Recover they do not remove all Level 1 Harm even if they do not fill the healing Clock.
- When a pilot performs the Downtime Activity Fix they do not remove all Level 1 Damage from their vehicle even if they do not fill the repair Clock.

RARER MATERIEL

For a campaign where Vehicle parts are rare, perhaps because they aren't manufactured anymore or the campaign's area is cut off from a supply of them, consider this variation that makes the Salvage Downtime Activity more important. This will make Players more eager to recover the remains of destroyed enemy Vehicles, likely taking risks to do so.

- Supply rolls from missions or the Bureaucrat's Cook the Books ability cannot

generate Materiel points.

- The Employer Faction's Supply Roll bonuses change for the Autocracy (+1 Rep, +1 Trust), Corporatocracy (+1 Materiel), and Democracy (+1 Personnel, +1 Rep).
- The Materiel cost for increasing Tier is the Squad's new Tier times 2, instead of the normal amount of times 4.
- Materiel points can only be generated through the Salvage Downtime Activity, or by buying them with Personnel at a rate of 2 Personnel for 1 Materiel.
- If this makes it too hard to get Materiel, consider making it so that Salvage generates Materiel equal to the highest die result, as opposed to being based on the result level. For example a result of 4 will generate 4 Materiel instead of 2, and a result of 5 will generate 5 Materiel instead of 2.

SLIMMER DOWNTIME ACTIVITY RULES

Some groups will find the specificity of the Downtime Activity mechanics more complex than they enjoy. Use these alternate rules to speed up the Downtime phase by rolling multiple Downtime Activities into a single scene and using simpler rules.

Describe and/or play as many scenes as you want to have during Downtime. After a scene is done, you may select up to 3 of the following benefits that are appropriate to the narrative. Each Pilot may gain 3 benefits per downtime phase at most, though they may spend the appropriate supply point for additional benefits.

- **Spending time with another Pilot:** use Cut Loose as normal. Spend Personnel to gain this benefit more than once.
- **Spending time with another Squad:** roll appropriate action, gain 1-3 trust; spend Personnel to gain this benefit more than once.
- **Healing your Pilot:** if you have a doctor roll 2d. If you don't have a doctor roll 0d. On a result of 1-3, Level 1 Harm is gone. On 4 or 5 Level 2 Harm and lower goes down a Level. On a 6 Level 3 Harm and lower goes down a Level. Spend Personnel to gain this benefit more than once.
- **Training to be better:** add a tick to an XP track; spend Personnel to gain this benefit more than once.
- **Trying to learn, create, or acquire something:** roll an appropriate Action. On a result of 1-3, it's not what you want but it might do the trick. On 4 or 5, it's what you wanted. On a 6, it's a high quality version of what you wanted. Spend Materiel to gain this benefit more than once.
- **Gathering supplies:** roll an appropriate Action. On a result of 1-3, gain 1 Supply Point. On 4 or 5, gain 2 Supply Points. On a 6, gain 3 Supply Points. This benefit can

only be taken once per downtime.

- **Fixing a Vehicle:** roll your Engineer. Refresh Quirks equal to the die roll and also: on a result of 1-3, Level 1 Damage is gone. On 4 or 5, Level 2 Damage and lower goes down a Level. On a 6 Level 3 Damage and lower goes down a Level. Spend Materiel to gain this benefit more than once.
- **Upgrading your Vehicle:** add a tick to your Vehicle's Enhance track. Spend Materiel to gain this benefit more than once.

Thanks to [Ben Roswell](#) and [Ruby Measom](#) for helping me develop these rules.

GMLESS PLAY RULES

These alternate rules can be used on a session by session basis for groups that don't want to put the responsibility of GMing on one player.

- The group creates the mission together by following the Preparing A Mission directions with everyone suggesting possibilities for each step.
- When someone needs to play an NPC anyone whose pilot is not in the scene can fill the role. If all pilots are present each player should be assigned an NPC (or group of NPCs, such as an angry mob), and avoid talking to their pilot so that no player is talking to themselves.
- When a Consequence is required the players select one from the lists based on what is narratively appropriate and the acting pilot's current Position.
- The group decides how much Stress is required for a Flashback, and how much XP is awarded for each trigger at the end of the session.
- Everyone should have a look at the GM Actions (see page 233) for ideas about what to do when acting as GM.

APPENDIX B: RANDOM GENERATION TABLES

RANDOM PILOT GENERATION

Why randomly generate a pilot's details?

1. Not all players are interested in all of the deep details of their pilot.
2. Sometimes players get stuck on one or more steps of pilot creation and want a random idea to fill it out or use as a starting point.
3. Some players want to get through pilot creation as fast as possible and rolling a bunch of dice seems like a good way through.
4. Other players are interested in developing the story of a pilot they were handed by chance, and want to be surprised by who they are playing.

This section will help fill the needed randomness for all of these people.

Playbook

To randomly select your Playbook roll 1d. On a 1-3 roll 1d on the Military Playbook table, on a 4-6 roll on the Non-Military Playbook table instead.

Roll	Military Playbook Table	Non-Military Playbook Table
1	Ace	Bureaucrat
2	Infiltrator	Empath
3	Officer	Envoy
4	Scout	Hacker
5	Soldier	Technician
6	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.

Playbook Ability

To randomly select your Playbook's starting ability find its table below and roll

Ace

To randomly select your Ace ability roll 1d. On a 1-3 roll 1d on Ace table A, on a 4-6 roll on Ace table B instead.

Roll	Ace Table A	Ace Table B
1	Take Adaptable	Take Advanced Prototype
2	Take More Than Meets The Eye	Take Bloodlust
3	Take Meat Is Cheap, Save The Metal	Take Red Comet
4	Take Last Stand	Take Traveling Companion
5	Take Veteran by rolling in the Playbook section to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability section.	Take Veteran by rolling in the Playbook section to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability section.
6	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.

Bureaucrat

To randomly select your Bureaucrat ability roll 1d. On a 1-3 roll 1d on Bureaucrat table A, on a 4-6 roll on Bureaucrat table B instead.

Roll	Bureaucrat Table A	Bureaucrat Table B
1	Take Stay Late	Take Beneath Notice
2	Take Cook the Books	Take Work Hard, Play Hard
3	Take Red Tape	Take Rainy Day
4	Take Connected	Take Forgettable
5	Take Veteran by rolling in the Playbook section to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability section.	Take Veteran by rolling in the Playbook section to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability section.
6	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.

Empath

To randomly select your Empath ability roll 1d. On a 1-3 roll 1d on Empath table A, on a 4-6 roll on Empath table B instead.

Roll	Empath Table A	Empath Table B
1	Take Telepathy	Take Carouse
2	Take Broadcast	Take Everybody Hurts
3	Take Far Sight	Take Carry That Weight
4	Take Emoji	Take Good Hearted
5	Take Veteran by rolling in the Playbook section to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability section.	Take Veteran by rolling in the Playbook section to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability section.
6	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.

Envoy

To randomly select your Envoy ability roll 1d. On a 1-3 roll 1d on Envoy table A, on a 4-6 roll on Envoy table B instead.

Roll	Envoy Table A	Envoy Table B
1	Take Rook's Gambit	Take A Little Something On The Side
2	Take Cloak & Dagger	Take Read 'em and Weep
3	Take Regent's Brilliance	Take Subterfuge
4	Take Like Looking In A Mirror	Take Trust In Me
5	Take Veteran by rolling in the Playbook section to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability section.	Take Veteran by rolling in the Playbook section to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability section.
6	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.

Hacker

To randomly select your Hacker ability roll 1d. On a 1-3 roll 1d on Hacker table A, on a 4-6 roll on Hacker table B instead.

Roll	Hacker Table A	Hacker Table B
1	Take Compel	Take Data Pack
2	Take Matrix Mind	Take Programmer
3	Take Iron Will	Take Tesla
4	Take Turing Test	Take Warded
5	Take Veteran by rolling in the Playbook section to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability section.	Take Veteran by rolling in the Playbook section to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability section.
6	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.

Infiltrator

To randomly select your Infiltrator ability roll 1d. On a 1-3 roll 1d on Infiltrator table A, on a 4-6 roll on Infiltrator table B instead

Roll	Infiltrator Table A	Infiltrator Table B
1	Take Ghost	Take Expertise
2	Take Ambush	Take Never Tell Me The Odds
3	Take Daredevil	Take Reflexes
4	Take The Devil's Footsteps	Take Shadow
5	Take Veteran by rolling in the Playbook section to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability section.	Take Veteran by rolling in the Playbook section to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability section.
6	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.

Officer

To randomly select your Officer ability roll 1d. On a 1-3 roll 1d on Officer table A, on a 4-6 roll on Officer table B instead.

Roll	Officer Table A	Officer Table B
1	Take Tactical Genius	Take Heart To Heart

2	Take Calculating	Take Warlord
3	Take Rally	Take Mastermind
4	Take Functioning Vice	Take Weaving the Web
5	Take Veteran by rolling in the Playbook section to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability section.	Take Veteran by rolling in the Playbook section to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability section.
6	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.

Technician

To randomly select your Technician ability roll 1d. On a 1-3 roll 1d on Technician table A, on a 4-6 roll on Technician table B instead.

Roll	Technician Table A	Technician Table B
1	Take Simulation	Take Road Master
2	Take Jury-Rig	Take Doctor
3	Take Researcher	Take Saboteur
4	Take Fortitude	Take Custom Implant
5	Take Veteran by rolling in the Playbook section to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability section.	Take Veteran by rolling in the Playbook section to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability section.
6	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.

Scout

To randomly select your Scout ability roll 1d. On a 1-3 roll 1d on Scout table A, on a 4-6 roll on Scout table B instead.

Roll	Scout Table A	Scout Table B
1	Take Sharpshooter	Take Survivor
2	Take Focused	Take Tough As Nails
3	Take Terminator	Take Vengeful
4	Range	Take Veteran by rolling in the Playbook section to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability section.
5	Take Veteran by rolling in the Playbook section to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability section.	Choose one of the above or roll again.
6	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.

Soldier

To randomly select your Soldier ability roll 1d. On a 1-3 roll 1d on Soldier table A, on a 4-6 roll on Soldier table B instead.

Roll	Soldier Table A	Soldier Table B
1	Take Battleborn	Take Mule
2	Take Bodyguard	Take Not to be Trifled With
3	Take Robot Fighter	Take Brutal
4	Take Leader	Take Vigorous
5	Take Veteran by rolling in the Playbook section to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability section.	Take Veteran by rolling in the Playbook section to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability section.
6	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.

History

To randomly select your History roll 1d. On a 1-3 roll 1d on History table A, on a 4-6 roll on History table B instead.

Roll	History Table A	History Table B
1	Academic: A university professor or student, a researcher, a doctor, a journalist, or other person who furthers knowledge.	Spiritual: a choir member, a yogi, a priest, a psychologist, or other person invested in spiritual well being.
2	Art: An architect, a sculptor, a writer, a composer, or other person creating art.	Political: a local council person, a volunteer, a propagandist, an activist, or other person pushing political goals.
3	Criminal: A burglar, a con artist, a gang member, a drug pusher, or other person who preys on vulnerabilities.	Military: a cadet, a quiet posting, a quartermaster, a deckhand, a guerilla, or other job involved in the War.
4	Entertainment: An actor, a pop idol, a sex worker, an athlete, a livestreamer, a podcaster, or other person who	Law: a cop, a lawyer, a social worker, a court clerk, or other person involved with legal proceedings.

	entertains an audience.	
5	Family: a stay at home parent, a teen, a legal guardian, a PTA member, or other person invested in the youth.	Trade: a stock trader, a Cashier, a banker, an arms dealer, or other person who handles money.
6	Labor: a farmer, a factory worker, a transport driver, a seamster, a miner, or other person living by the sweat of their brow.	Choose one of the above or roll again.

Tragedy

To randomly select your Tragedy roll 1d. On a 1-3 roll 1d on Tragedy table A, on a 4-6 roll on Tragedy table B instead.

Roll	Tragedy Table A	Tragedy Table B
1	Hid in a mass grave.	Unwillingly experimented on by unethical researchers.
2	Lone survivor of a militia	Exiled from homeland.
3	Friends started disappearing.	Falsely charged with a major crime.
4	Family killed as collateral damage.	Shown the lie of their own life.
5	Orbital station home used as a kinetic weapon.	Participated in a failed coup or mutiny.
6	Ejected from life's work after a large organization acquired it.	Horribly burned by a chemical weapon attack.

Opening

To randomly select your Opening roll 1d. On a 1-3 roll 1d on Opening table A, on a 4-6 roll on Opening table B instead.

Roll	Opening Table A	Opening Table B
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1	Building a custom vehicle from spare parts.	Commanding a gang of rabble and scum.
2	Avoiding people with long voyage transport jobs.	Tending to the needs of an admiral as their valet.
3	Studying military strategy in preparation for war.	Getting by as a sex worker.
4	Catching deserters as a bounty hunter.	Fighting in the AWW arena.
5	Stuck in prison for petty crimes.	Shuffling papers in a cubicle farm.
6	Driving a taxi in areas autocars can't navigate.	Serving drinks in a run down bar.

Drives

To randomly select your Drive, roll 1d. On a 1-3 roll 1d on Drive table A, on a 4-6 roll on Drive table B instead.

Roll	Drive Table A	Drive Table B
1	Kill the man responsible for destroying my hometown.	Create a new renewable energy source for peacetime.
2	Get a high ranking position in the military.	Build a horse ranch away from The War.
3	Develop a weapon that could end The War.	Make sure that my friends will have a good life.
4	Help my AI friend gain a body.	Find someone worth leaving The War for.
5	Find my long lost family.	Become a famous pop idol.
6	Create a new restaurant chain.	Make the enemy remember my name.

Actions

To randomly select your Actions, roll 1d on the following table.

Roll	Attribute Table
1	Roll 1d on the Insight table

2	Roll 1d on the Prowess table			
3	Roll 1d on the Resolve table			
4	Roll 1d on the Vehicle Actions table			
5	Choose one of the above or roll again			
6	Choose one of the above or roll again			
Roll	INSIGHT	PROWESS	RESOLVE	VEHICLE ACTIONS
1	+1 to Engineer	+1 to Finesse	+1 to Command	+1 to Battle
2	+1 to to Hunt	+1 to Prowl	+1 to Consort	+1 to Destroy
3	+1 to Study	+1 to Struggle	+1 to Sway	+1 to Maneuver
4	+1 to Survey	+1 to Wreck	+1 to Interface	+1 to Bombard
5	Choose one of the above or roll again	Choose one of the above or roll again	Choose one of the above or roll again	+1 to Manipulate
6	Choose one of the above or roll again	Choose one of the above or roll again	Choose one of the above or roll again	+ 1 to Scan

Ally

To randomly generate your Ally roll 1d and apply it to the list of Friends in your Playbook with the first friend being selected for a result of 1, the second for 2, and so on. If a 5 or 6 is rolled choose a friend from another Playbook.

Ally's squad

To randomly generate your Ally's Squad roll 1d on the Faction Table, then move to that Faction's table and roll 1d on that.

Roll	Faction Table
1	Autocracy
2	Corporatocracy

3	Democracy
4	Independent
5	Oligarchy
6	Theocracy

Roll	Autocracy Squad Table
1	The Wolf Pack (Tier II-S Autocracy) is a vanguard unit that was recently devastated. GOAL: to regain strength.
2	The Jovangellian Jackals (Tier II-S Autocracy) are the diplomats and spies for Jovangel in Izya. GOAL: to keep Izya divided until the Jovangellian military arrives in force.
3	The Society For Wider Understanding (Tier II-S Autocracy) directs the news releases within the Autocracy. GOAL: to sway public opinion for the Autocracy's benefit.
4	The Exiled Academy (Tier I-W Autocracy) is a group of engineers and scholars that left the Teachers Union. They believe that a strong leader is necessary and want to spread that knowledge. GOAL: to infiltrate the Teachers' Union.
5	The Hyenas (Tier I-S Autocracy) are a mech Squad focused on close quarters combat. GOAL: to make a mess of the foe.
6	The Raccoons (Tier I-S Autocracy) a supplies collection Squad that terrorizes vulnerable pockets of civilians. GOAL: to pillage the weak.

Roll	Corporatocracy Squad Table
1	Calazar Strategic Deployment (Tier II-W Corporatocracy) is a military company of fans of the Calazar media franchise. GOAL: to raise funds for the next CalazCon.
2	Tollmen Enterprises (Tier II-W Corporatocracy) work the docks. Known for protection rackets, and smuggling. GOAL: to earn their pay.
3	Sapperson Incorporated (Tier II-W Corporatocracy) is a transhumanist research group that specializes in genetic modification. GOAL: to get rich by selling body mods.
4	Furies Rapid Retribution (Tier I-S Corporatocracy) are a small Squad of pilots

	focused on hit & run tactics with strong belief in family. GOAL: to protect the family.
5	45th Drop Troops (Tier I-W Democracy) are dedicated airborne and orbital drop troops sorely undersupplied. GOAL: Regain the ability to perform regular drop actions.
6	Sliver of Civility Trading Company (Tier I-S Corporatocracy) is openly a trading company, but they are also known to be smugglers. GOAL: to get rich through il/legal deliveries.

Roll	Democracy Squad Table
1	3rd Public Connections Corps (Tier II-S Democracy) is a well funded Squad of attractive pilots and the military documentarian crew that follows them. GOAL: To look good for the public.
2	The Quill (Tier II-S Democracy) are a union of writers and journalists. They also operate the city's couriers. GOAL: to gather information of value.
3	The Dark Room (Tier II-S Democracy) is a black ops deniable asset deployed from a stealth orbital platform. GOAL: to eliminate enemy VIPs.
4	17th Research Group (Tier I-S Democracy) is less funded than the 42nd but are focused on exploring the development of empaths. GOAL: To push their empaths' abilities.
5	45th Drop Troops (Tier I-W Democracy) are dedicated airborne and orbital drop troops sorely undersupplied. GOAL: Regain the ability to perform regular drop actions.
6	99th Intelligence Corp (Tier I-S Democracy) is a group of spies, hackers, and infiltrators. GOAL: to Supply allies with actionable intelligence.

Roll	Independent Squad Table
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1	Cirque Du Soldat (Tier III-W Independent) is a group of travelling performer mercenaries who take jobs both large and small from civilians and Factions. GOAL: to protect the circus by taking the right contracts.
2	The Teachers' Union (Tier III-S Independent) is the group that represents both the educators and the technology experts of Izya. GOAL: to install members in the highest levels of government.
3	Doctors Beyond Stars (Tier II-S Independent) is a group of humanitarians who try to ensure the well being of the civilians that end up as collateral damage in the War, regardless of their allegiance. GOAL: to gain access to all civilian populations.
4	The Burden (Tier II-S Independent) is an anti-Offworlder group with no unified post Offworlder plan of government. GOAL: to remove all the offworld Factions.
5	The Rubble Runts (Tier II-W Independent) are a militia originally formed by war orphans looking to grow in the vacuum left by the local government. GOAL: to become the most powerful gang.
6	Squaddies (Tier I-S Independent) former Hammers that have recruited local toughs to provide "protection." GOAL: to secure their territory.

Roll	Oligarchy Squad Table
1	The Hammers (Tier III-S Oligarchy) are the state police that the most unlucky citizens and soldiers deal with. They are looking for "nails" (those that stand out) to pound. GOAL: to crush radicals.
2	The Knives of Nor (Tier II-S Oligarchy) are the diplomats and spies for Nor in Izya. GOAL: to turn Izya into a Norrish puppet.
3	Discreet Resolutions (Tier II-W Oligarchy) is a group of "troubleshooters" who can be hired for a variety of tasks. GOAL: to work for the winning team.
4	The Sword Wing (Tier II-S Oligarchy) are an air squadron full of ace pilots. GOAL: Support less mobile allies.
5	The Hatchetmen (Tier I-S Oligarchy) is a Squad tasked with maintaining the infrastructure of Izya, notably the infotec. GOAL: to eradicate rogue Apps, Proxies,

	and Als.
6	The Mace Arc (Tier I-W Oligarchy) are a frontline infantry Squad with the gear to punch above their weight. GOAL: to take down higher Tier squads.

Roll	Theocracy Squad Table
1	The Church of the Blessed Execul (Tier III-W Theocracy) is the largest branch in Izya and receives limited offworld backing from Execul. GOAL: to convert the masses to their branch of the Celestial Myriad.
2	The Cult of Earth Lost (Tier II-W Theocracy) is a group that believes this planet is too imperfect to actually be the cradle of humanity. GOAL: to prove this isn't Earth.
3	The Cult of Earth Found (Tier II-S Theocracy) is a group that believes that humanity's holy birthplace is only for the faithful. GOAL: To remove the non-faithful from Earth.
4	The Followers of Saint Atrose (Tier II-W Theocracy) hold justice above all else as embodied by Saint Atrose. GOAL: To punish the wicked.
5	The Cenotaph (Tier I-S Theocracy) is dedicated to bringing the dead home, regardless of their allegiance in life. GOAL: To honor the dead, in body and spirit.
6	The Wrights of the Ascent (Tier I-W Theocracy) are dedicated to building infrastructure in Theocracy held areas. GOAL: to glorify the Theocracy with monuments.

Rival

To randomly generate your Rival roll 1d and apply it to the list of Friends in your Playbook with the first friend being selected for a result of 1, the second for 2, and so on. If a 5, 6, or already selected friend is rolled choose a friend from another Playbook.

Rival's squad

To randomly generate your Rival's Squad roll 1d on the Faction Table above, then move to that Faction's table and roll 1d on that.

Rival Relationship

To randomly generate your relationship with your Rival roll 1d on the table below.

Roll	Rival Connection Table
1	Former Lovers
2	The Last Two Survivors
3	Friendly Competition
4	Ideologically Opposed
5	You Wronged Them
6	They Wronged You

Name

To randomly generate a pilot's full name choose how many names they have then roll 1d per name and consult the Name Generator Table.

Roll	Name Generator Table					
1	Roll 1d on Name Table A					
2	Roll 1d on Name Table B					
3	Roll 1d on Name Table C					
4	Roll 1d on Name Table D					
5	Roll 1d on Name Table E					
6	Roll 1d on Name Table F					
Roll	Table A	Table B	Table C	Table D	Table E	Table F
1	Jason	Kang	Harrow	Kiku	Thirty-Three	Mzuzi
2	Christine	Blight	Niamh	Gary	Markov	Zahra
3	Garrett	Weldon	Glorious	Jade	Habib	Shui
4	Bassel	Ali	Rick	Thrumming	Abasi	Hyeon
5	William	Walsh	Tuesday	Derision	Rashmi	Amuro
6	Henan	Rhonda	Horizon	Terri	Jyoti	Tsubasa

Call Sign

To randomly generate your Call Sign roll 1d on the Call Sign Origin Table, then move to that table and roll 1d on that.

If you want to add more detail to your Call Sign roll 1d on the Call Sign Modifier Table, then move to that table and roll 1d on that.

Roll	Call Sign Origin Table
1	Friends
2	Foes
3	Self
4	Occupation

5	Childhood					
6	Tragedy					
Roll	FRIENDS	FOES	SELF	OCCUPATION	CHILDHOOD	TRAGEDY
1	Trawa	Demon	Hunter	Sarge	Kiddo	Exile
2	Specs	Rascal	Bell	Hawker	Joy	Corpse
3	Boss	Trojan	Drake	Wheels	Sweetums	Berzerker
4	Beast	Snake	Laser	Hardhat	Precious	Patch
5	Guardian	Heavy	GOAT	Weaver	Star	Jinx
6	Dice	Bloodless	Hound	Doc	Joker	Whooper

Roll	Call Sign Modifier Table					
1	Numbers					
2	Colours					
3	Animals					
4	Materials					
5	Conditions					
6	Actions					
Roll	NUMBERS	COLOURS	ANIMALS	MATERIALS	CONDITIONS	ACTIONS
1	First	Red	Halk	Gold	Lucky	Soaring
2	Seven	Rainbow	Bull	Silver	Burned	Shooting
3	Perfect Ten	Black	Mako	Iron	Bloody	Running
4	Thirteenth	White	Lion	Steel	Rusty	Sleeping
5	Fourty	Green	Bear	Stone	Shining	Dying
6	Ninety Ninth	Blue	Stallion	Sand	Divine	Singing

Look

To randomly generate your pilot's look roll 1d on each of the tables below.

Roll	FACE	EYES	HAIR	BODY	OUTFIT
1	Masked	Artificial	Flowing	Big	Military
2	Beautiful	Cold	Military	Compact	Ornate
3	Scarred	Mocking	Punk	Flabby	Formal
4	Young	Trusting	Braided	Muscular	Vintage
5	Decorated	Trustworthy	Poofy	Skinny	Practical
6	Rugged	Uncertain	Slick	Voluptuous	Scavenged

Beliefs About Other Pilot

Let each other player pick one of your Playbook's example starting beliefs as the one that applies to their pilot.

RANDOM VEHICLE GENERATION

Much like their pilots some players will not want to come up with the details of their vehicle, need a jump start for their imagination, or need a few details filled in. This section is to help with that.

Look and Designation

To randomly generate your vehicle's look and designation roll 1d on each feature table.

	Mobility	Arms	Hand	Core	Head	Cockpit	Shell	Style	Manufacturer	Model	Version
1	Bipedal	None	None	Armored	None	Sealed	Organic	Ornate	Spirit Forge Cloister	Orge	Prototype
2	Quadrupedal	Humanoid	Industrial	Light	Armored	Open	Hard Light	Practical	Admirably Superior Electronics	Artemis	Obsolete
3	Flight	Tentacle	Human	Bulky	Armed	Armored	Ceramic	Improvise	People's Dept. of Manufacturing	Raider	Mk. 1
4	Hover	Industrial	Tentacle	Practical	Hi-tech	Spacious	Alloy	Fashionable	Dark Skies Security Inc.	Glaive	V 2.0
5	Wheeled	Wings	Weaponized	Massive	Ornate	Cramped	Plastic	Sleek	Whittaker Fine Goods Company	Endeavour	Custom
6	Treads	Ornate	Ornate	Ornate	Practical	Homey	Crystal	Powerful	The Work Room	Uppercut	Illegal

Vehicle Actions

To randomly determine your vehicle actions roll 3d on the table below.

Roll	Vehicle Actions
1	Take +1 to Battle
2	Take +1 to Destroy
3	Take +1 to Maneuver
4	Take +1 to Bombard

5	Take +1 to Manipulate
6	Take +1 to Scan

Quirks

To randomly determine your vehicle quirks roll 4d. For each result of 1-3 roll on Quirk Table A, and for every 4-6 roll on Quirk Table B. If the result of rolling on either table provides a repeat, reroll the result.

Roll	Quirk Table A	Quirk Table B
1	Ominous Appearance	Splintering Carapace
2	Flexible Structure	Mighty Clumsy
3	Slow and Heavy	Light Footed
4	Military Workhorse	Common Parts
5	Fixed Hardpoints	Redundant Systems
6	Blinding Boosters	Aggressive Targeters

Vehicle Load

To randomly generate a vehicle's Load roll 1d. On a 1-2 the vehicle has a Light Load, 3-4 it has a Medium Load, 5-6 it has a Heavy Load. You'll pick what gear it has during play.

RANDOM SQUAD GENERATION

There are several reasons to randomly generate details of a squad, and they are generally the same as those for random pilot and Vehicle generation. There's also the added reason that sometimes all of the players desire an answer to a Squad choice but none can agree on the available options. So roll for them!

Patron Faction

To randomly determine your patron Faction roll 1d.

Roll	Faction Table
1	Autocracy
2	Corporatocracy
3	Democracy
4	Independent
5	Oligarchy
6	Theocracy

Direct Superior

To randomly generate your squad's direct superior roll 1d. If the result is 1-3 select your patron's representative from Direct Superior Table A, and on 4-6 select the representative from Direct Superior Table B.

Roll	Direct Superior Table A	Direct Superior Table B
1	Independent: Carberry, a shady and cruel fixer.	Independent: Scratch, a cheerful and energetic Proxy.
2	Corporatocracy: Project Lead Walker, an ambitious and hard working manager.	Corporatocracy: Executive Assistant McEvoy, a Stressed and organized worker.
3	Autocracy: Captain Martinez, a weary and grumpy officer.	Autocracy: Quartermaster Hawkins, a sentimental and thoughtful trooper.
4	Theocracy: Bishop Acampora, a patient and caring member of the	Theocracy: Confessor Tebbel, an inquisitive and meticulous theologian.

	clergy.	
5	Democracy: Councillor Swan, a hard hearted and calculating bureaucrat.	Democracy: Alderperson Drake, a fiery and passionate politician.
6	Oligarchy: Virtue de Quidt, an experienced and crafty noble.	Oligarchy: Margrave Takeyuki, a paranoid and meek leader.

Patron Faction Goal

To randomly select your patron Faction's goal roll 1d. If the result is 1-3 roll 1d on Faction Goal Table A, and on 4-6 roll 1d on Faction Goal Table B.

Roll	Faction Goal Table A	Faction Goal Table B
1	Assault the Foe	Hostile Takeover
2	Divided They Fall	Intelligence Coup
3	Golden Streets	Manufacture Heroes
4	Hearts and Minds	Secure the Borders
5	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.
6	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.

Squad Playbook

To randomly generate your Squad Playbook roll 1d. If the result is 1-3 roll 1d on Squad Playbook Table A, and on 4-6 roll 1d on Squad Playbook Table B.

Roll	Squad Playbook Table A	Squad Playbook Table B
1	Consulate	Profiteers
2	Frontline	Recon
3	Logistics	R&D
4	Mechanized Cavalry	
5	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.
6	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.

Reputation

To randomly generate your squad's reputation roll 1d on the Reputation Table.

Roll	Reputation Table
1	Ambitious
2	Brutal
3	Daring
4	Honorable
5	Savvy
6	Strange

FOB

To randomly generate your squad's Forward Operating Base roll 1d on the FOB Type Table, then move to that table and roll 1d on it.

Roll	Forward Operating Base Type					
1	Commercial					
2	Residential					
3	Industrial					
4	Natural					
5	Military					
6	Unusual					
Roll	COMMERCIAL	RESIDENTIAL	INDUSTRIAL	NATURAL	MILITARY	UNUSUAL
1	Car Dealership	Apartment Block	AWV Factory	Forest	Border Outpost	Orbital Platform
2	Multi Level Parking Lot	Church	Construction Site	Cave system	Regional HQ	Poisoned Land
3	Mall	Detached House	Warehouse	Valley	Old Armoury	Volcano
4	Restaurant	Trailer Park	Dockyard	Swamp	Parade	Crashed

					Grounds	Space Station
5	Hospital	School	Ruined Airport	Cove	Checkpoint	Zoo
6	Office Block	Barn	Mine	Mountainside	Barracks	Amusement Park

Squad Ability

To randomly generate your squad's starting ability roll 1d. If the result is 1-3 roll 1d on your Squad Playbook's Squad Ability Table A, and on 4-6 roll 1d on its Squad Ability Table B.

Roll	Consulate Ability Table A	Consulate Ability Table B
1	Silver Tongues	Noble Officer
2	Accord	PR Campaign
3	High Society	Sponsor
4	Friends in High Places	Choose one of the above or roll again.
5	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.
6	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.

Roll	Frontline Ability Table A	Frontline Ability Table B
1	Dangerous	Forged in the Fire
2	Blood Brothers	Sponsor
3	Shock & Awe	War Dogs
4	Fiends	Choose one of the above or roll again.
5	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.
6	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.

Roll	Logistics Ability Table A	Logistics Ability Table B
1	On the Move	Leverage

2	All Hands	Scroungers
3	Custom OS	Renegades
4	Just Passing Through	Choose one of the above or roll again.
5	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.
6	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.

Roll	Mechanized Cavalry Ability Table A	Mechanized Cavalry Ability Table B
1	Fast and Furious	Custom Work
2	Scorched Earth	Combined Arms
3	Reavers	Air Superiority
4	Formation	Choose one of the above or roll again.
5	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.
6	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.

Roll	Profiteers Ability Table A	Profiteers Ability Table B
1	Corner Kid	Of The People
2	Barter	Hooked
3	The Good Stuff	Sponsor
4	App Market	Choose one of the above or roll again.
5	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.
6	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.

Roll	Recon Ability Table A	Recon Ability Table B
1	Everyone Steals	Second Story
2	AR Echoes	Slippery
3	Pack Rats	Synchronized
4	Sponsor	Choose one of the above or roll again.
5	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.

6	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.
Roll	R&D Ability Table A	R&D Ability Table B
1	Graduate	Dire Assistance
2	Grounded	Irons In The Fire
3	Experimental Comms	For The Greater Good
4	Conviction	Choose one of the above or roll again.
5	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.
6	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.

Roll	Ability Table A	Ability Table B
1	Deadly	Sponsor
2	Dire Needs	Predators
3	Bio-solvent	Vipers
4	No Traces	Choose one of the above or roll again.
5	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.
6	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.

Starting Squad Upgrades

To randomly generate your squad's two starting upgrades, roll 1d for each upgrade. If it is a 1-3, roll 1d on the General Upgrades Table. On 4-6, roll 1d on your squad's Upgrades Table. If you roll an upgrade your Squad already has, roll again.

Roll	General Upgrades	Consulate Upgrades	Frontline Upgrades	Logistics Upgrades	Mechanized Cavalry Upgrades	Profiteers Upgrades	Recon Upgrades	R&D Upgrades	Upgrades
1	Airfield	Consulate Rigging	Frontline Rigging	Smuggler panels	Cavalry Hardpoints	Profiteer Rigging	Recon Rigging	R&D Rigging	Rigging

2	Hidden FOB	Friends Everywhere	Friends Everywhere	Mobile Base	Repair Bay	Friends Everywhere	Rare maps and the means through.	Laboratory	Friends Everywhere
3	Quarters	Elite Rooks	Elite Rovers	Camouflage	Elite Rovers	Elite Rooks	Elite Rooks	Elite Adepts	Elite Skulks
4	Secure FOB	Elite Adepts	Elite Toughs	Elite Rovers	Elite Adepts	Elite Toughs	Elite Skulks	Elite Toughs	Elite Toughs
5	Workshop	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.
6	Testing Facilities	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.	Choose one of the above or roll again.

Positive Squad Status Due To Upgrades

To randomly generate the Squad that you have a positive status with because of your upgrades follow the guide for the Ally's Squad random generation.

Negative Squad Status Due To Upgrades

To randomly generate the Squad that you have a negative status with because of your upgrades follow the guide for the Ally's Squad random generation.

Squad Name

To randomly generate your squad's name roll 1d on Squad Name Table A, 1d on Squad Name Table B, and 1d on Squad Name Table C. Fill in the results to "A of the B C" to get the squad's name.

Roll	TABLE A	TABLE B	TABLE C
1	Sword	41st	Inferno
2	Wind	Brilliant	Drake
3	Rifles	Diamond	Storm
4	Angels	Light	Crown
5	Knights	Shadow	Barrage
6	Hammer	Flying	Dance

RANDOM MISSION GENERATION

To generate a mission, roll or choose on the following tables.

EMPLOYER/TARGET

These tables are used to select the mission's Employer, and its Target.

Roll	Autocracy Squad Table
1	The Wolf Pack (Tier II-S Autocracy) is a vanguard unit that was recently devastated. GOAL: to regain strength.
2	The Jovangellian Jackals (Tier II-S Autocracy) are the diplomats and spies for Jovangel in Izya. GOAL: to keep Izya divided until the Jovangellian military arrives in force.
3	The Society For Wider Understanding (Tier II-S Autocracy) directs the news releases within the Autocracy. GOAL: to sway public opinion for the Autocracy's benefit.
4	The Exiled Academy (Tier I-W Autocracy) is a group of engineers and scholars that

	left the Teachers Union. They believe that a strong leader is necessary and want to spread that knowledge. GOAL: to infiltrate the Teachers' Union.
5	The Hyenas (Tier I-S Autocracy) are a mech Squad focused on close quarters combat. GOAL: to make a mess of the foe.
6	The Raccoons (Tier I-S Autocracy) a supplies collection Squad that terrorizes vulnerable pockets of civilians. GOAL: to pillage the weak.

Roll	Corporatocracy Squad Table
1	Calazar Strategic Deployment (Tier II-W Corporatocracy) is a military company of fans of the Calazar media franchise. GOAL: to raise funds for the next CalazCon.
2	Tollmen Enterprises (Tier II-W Corporatocracy) work the docks. Known for protection rackets, and smuggling. GOAL: to earn their pay.
3	Sapperson Incorporated (Tier II-W Corporatocracy) is a transhumanist research group that specializes in genetic modification. GOAL: to get rich by selling body mods.
4	Valkyrie Intelligent Redistribution (Tier I-W Corporatocracy) goes to battlefields to collect disabled vehicles for salvage. GOAL: Absorb a smaller squad.
5	Furies Rapid Retribution (Tier I-S Corporatocracy) are a small Squad of pilots focused on hit & run tactics with strong belief in family. GOAL: to protect the family.
6	Sliver of Civility Trading Company (Tier I-S Corporatocracy) is openly a trading company, but they are also known to be smugglers. GOAL: to get rich through il/legal deliveries.

Roll	Democracy Squad Table
1	3rd Public Connections Corps (Tier II-S Democracy) is a well funded Squad of attractive pilots and the military documentarian crew that follows them. GOAL: To look good for the public.
2	The Quill (Tier II-S Democracy) are a union of writers and journalists. They also operate the city's couriers. GOAL: to gather information of value.
3	The Dark Room (Tier II-S Democracy) is a black ops deniable asset deployed from a stealth orbital platform. GOAL: to eliminate enemy VIPs.
4	17th Research Group (Tier I-S Democracy) is less funded than the 42nd but are

	focused on exploring the development of empath's. GOAL: To push their empath's' abilities.
5	45th Drop Troops (Tier I-W Democracy) are dedicated airborne and orbital drop troops sorely undersupplied. GOAL: Regain the ability to perform regular drop actions.
6	99th Intelligence Corp (Tier I-S Democracy) is a group of spies, hackers, and infiltrators. GOAL: to Supply allies with actionable intelligence.

Roll	Independent Squad Table
1	Cirque Du Soldat (Tier III-W Independent) is a group of travelling performer mercenaries who take jobs both large and small from civilians and Factions. GOAL: to protect the circus by taking the right contracts.
2	The Teachers' Union (Tier III-S Independent) is the group that represents both the educators and the technology experts of Izya. GOAL: to install members in the highest levels of government.
3	Doctors Beyond Stars (Tier II-S Independent) is a group of humanitarians who try to ensure the well being of the civilians that end up as collateral damage in the War, regardless of their allegiance. GOAL: to gain access to all civilian populations.
4	The Burden (Tier II-S Independent) is an anti-Offworlder group with no unified post Offworlder plan of government. GOAL: to remove all the offworld Factions.
5	The Rubble Runts (Tier II-W Independent) are a militia originally formed by war orphans looking to grow in the vacuum left by the local government. GOAL: to become the most powerful gang.
6	Squaddies (Tier I-S Independent) former Hammers that have recruited local toughs to provide "protection." GOAL: to secure their territory.

Roll	Oligarchy Squad Table
1	The Hammers (Tier III-S Oligarchy) are the state police that the most unlucky citizens and soldiers deal with. They are looking for "nails" (those that stand out) to pound. GOAL: to crush radicals.
2	The Knives of Nor (Tier II-S Oligarchy) are the diplomats and spies for Nor in Izya. GOAL: to turn Izya into a Norrish puppet.

3	Discreet Resolutions (Tier II-W Oligarchy) is a group of "troubleshooters" who can be hired for a variety of tasks. GOAL: to work for the winning team.
4	The Sword Wing (Tier II-S Oligarchy) are an air squadron full of ace pilots. GOAL: Support less mobile allies.
5	The Hatchetmen (Tier I-S Oligarchy) is a Squad tasked with maintaining the infrastructure of Izya, notably the infotec. GOAL: to eradicate rogue Apps, Proxies, and Als.
6	The Mace Arc (Tier I-W Oligarchy) are a frontline infantry Squad with the gear to punch above their weight. GOAL: to take down higher Tier squads.

Roll	Theocracy Squad Table
1	The Church of the Blessed Sevri (Tier III-W Theocracy) is the largest branch in Izya and receives limited offworld backing from Sevrigel. GOAL: to convert the masses to their branch of the Celestial Myriad.
2	The Cult of Earth Lost (Tier II-W Theocracy) is a group that believes this planet is too imperfect to actually be the cradle of humanity. GOAL: to prove this isn't Earth.
3	The Cult of Earth Found (Tier II-S Theocracy) is a group that believes that humanity's holy birthplace is only for the faithful. GOAL: To remove the non-faithful from Earth.
4	The Followers of Saint Atrose (Tier II-W Theocracy) hold justice above all else as embodied by Saint Atrose. GOAL: To punish the wicked.
5	The Cenotaph (Tier I-S Theocracy) is dedicated to bringing the dead home, regardless of their allegiance in life. GOAL: To honor the dead, in body and spirit.
6	The Wrights of the Ascent (Tier I-W Theocracy) are dedicated to building infrastructure in Theocracy held areas. GOAL: to glorify the Theocracy with monuments.

OBJECTIVE

This is a list of suggestions for what a mission's objective might be.

RoI	SKULLDUGGERY	COVERT	VIOLENCE	SCIENTIFIC
I				

1	Surveillance	Escort	Assassin	Infect
2	Sabotage	Deliver	Kidnap	Purge
3	Plant	Discredit	Terrorize	Extract Data
4	Arrange Accident	Espionage	Destroy	Place Sensors
5	Theft	Conceal	Defend	Preform/ Stop Experiment
6	Misdirect	Negotiate	Raid	Automate

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

This is a list of generalized restrictions on how the Squad can approach the mission.

Roll	Personnel Interaction Restrictions	Use Of Force Restrictions
1	No looting, requisitioning, and/or stealing civilian, commercial, and/or governmental property.	Only use force in self defense.
2	No destroying civilian, commercial, and/or governmental property.	Only use proportionate force.
3	No threatening or employing force against civilians.	No escalation of force.
4	No use of "enhanced interrogation."	No deployment of chemical, biological, explosive, and/or poisonous weapons.
5	Detainees must remain unHarmed.	No firing upon or presenting as a clearly marked medical transport or facility.
6	No prisoners, no quarter.	Permission to attack only the Target

LOCATION

This is a list of places that could be the primary location for the mission.

RoI	COMMERCIAL	RESIDENTIAL	INDUSTRIAL	NATURAL	MILITARY	UNUSUAL
1	Car Dealership	Apartment Block	AWV Factory	Forest	Border Outpost	Orbital Platform
2	Multi Level Parking Lot	Church	Construction Site	Cave system	Regional HQ	Poisoned Land
3	Mall	Detached House	Warehouse	Valley	Old Armoury	Volcano
4	Restaurant	Trailer Park	Dockyard	Swamp	Parade Grounds	Crashed Space Station
5	Hospital	School	Ruined Airport	Cove	Checkpoint	Zoo/Amusement Park
6	Office Block	Barn	Mine	Mountainside	Barracks	Debris Cloud Gap

TROUBLES

Troubles are obstacles that the Squad will likely know about before the Entanglement roll is made. If they aren't told about it as part of the mission explanation, they should be available with a Gather Information roll.

Roll	TABLE A	TABLE B	TABLE C
1	There's a heavy media presence in the mission area.	The location is a hidden Cirque Du Soldat Supply cache.	The mission requires travel to space.
2	Rampant Apps infest the location.	A Squad other than the Target uses the location.	Must visit an irradiated zone to complete the mission.
3	The people involved are being blackmailed into their	Very bad weather is	The mission requires

	actions.	affecting the mission area.	going underwater.
4	The mission advances Heather Passerines' objectives.	The mission is a test for another mission.	The location moves around (site changes, it's on a vehicle, etc.)
5	The mission advances Path Cascade's objectives.	The mission advances Lady Elreth's objectives.	The mission advances Sciolist's objectives.
6	The Target has prototype technologies in the mission area.	The mission advances Bishop Finmal's objectives.	The mission advances the squad's Direct Superior's personal objectives.

SURPRISES

Surprises are obstacles that the Squad likely won't have known about before the mission. They could potentially learn about them with a crit on a Gather Information roll if that makes sense. They are useful to reveal them as consequences for failed rolls.

Roll	TABLE A	TABLE B	TABLE C
1	Civilians will actively oppose the squad.	A rampant App aggressively manipulates the AR in the mission area.	A non-Target Squad arrives to interfere with the mission.
2	One of the pilots' Rivals shows up.	A skirmish between two other squads breaks out during the mission.	The Target attempts a ceasefire with the squad.
3	One of the pilots' Allies is in danger.	The mission area has a large amount of explosive materials.	One of the squad's Cohorts shows up unexpectedly.
4	A time bomb is set to go off shortly.	The Target has an elite vehicle pilot in the mission area.	A Squad with a positive status is working with the Target.
5	An element of the mission is a secret cell of The Burden.	The Target has an elite soldier in the mission area.	A chained AI has predicted the mission and warned the Target.

6	Rampant proxies are drawn to the mission area.	The Target has an elite hacker in the mission area.	The mission is a trap laid by an enemy.
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CONNECTIONS

Connections are people and groups that are unexpectedly affected, whether positively or negatively, by the completion of the mission's objective.

Roll	TABLE A
1	A pilot's Ally.
2	A pilot's Rival.
3	The Squad's Cohort
4	The Squad's direct superior.
5	An AR entity.
6	Another squad.

APPENDIX C: FUTURE UPDATE GOALS

- Create a Double Agent Squad Playbook. **NOW AVAILABLE FOR PATRONS!**
- Create a Squad Playbook: The Crew. **NOW AVAILABLE FOR PATRONS!**
- Create a Squad Playbook: The Military Police. **CANCELLED**
- Create a pilot Playbook: The Hero. **NOW AVAILABLE FOR PATRONS!**
- Create a pilot Playbook: The Transformed. **NOW AVAILABLE FOR PATRONS!**
- Create a pilot Playbook: The Captain. **NOW AVAILABLE FOR PATRONS!**
- Create a pilot Playbook: The Artificial. **NOW AVAILABLE FOR PATRONS!**
- Create a pilot Playbook: The Proxy. **NOW AVAILABLE FOR PATRONS!**
- Create a pilot Playbook: The Rookie. **NOW AVAILABLE FOR PATRONS!**
- Create benefits list for completing Faction goals. **DONE**
- Create Pilot specific Playbook sheets. **DONE**
- Create Squad specific Playbook sheets **DONE**
- Create section on respecting the fiction. **DONE**
- Expand Lore; Have a list of pre-made squads for each Faction, make rollable charts of manufacturers, models, names, locations, looks, notable people, regions, environmental descriptors. **DONE**
- Create examples for rules.
- Have iconic characters for each Playbook to use in examples.
- Explain gaming jargon: PC, NPC, GM **DONE**
- GM instructions on how to make Factions, what the goals and methods of the premade Factions are, and how the collaborative squads might act. **DONE**
- Create a reference document **DONE**