TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE
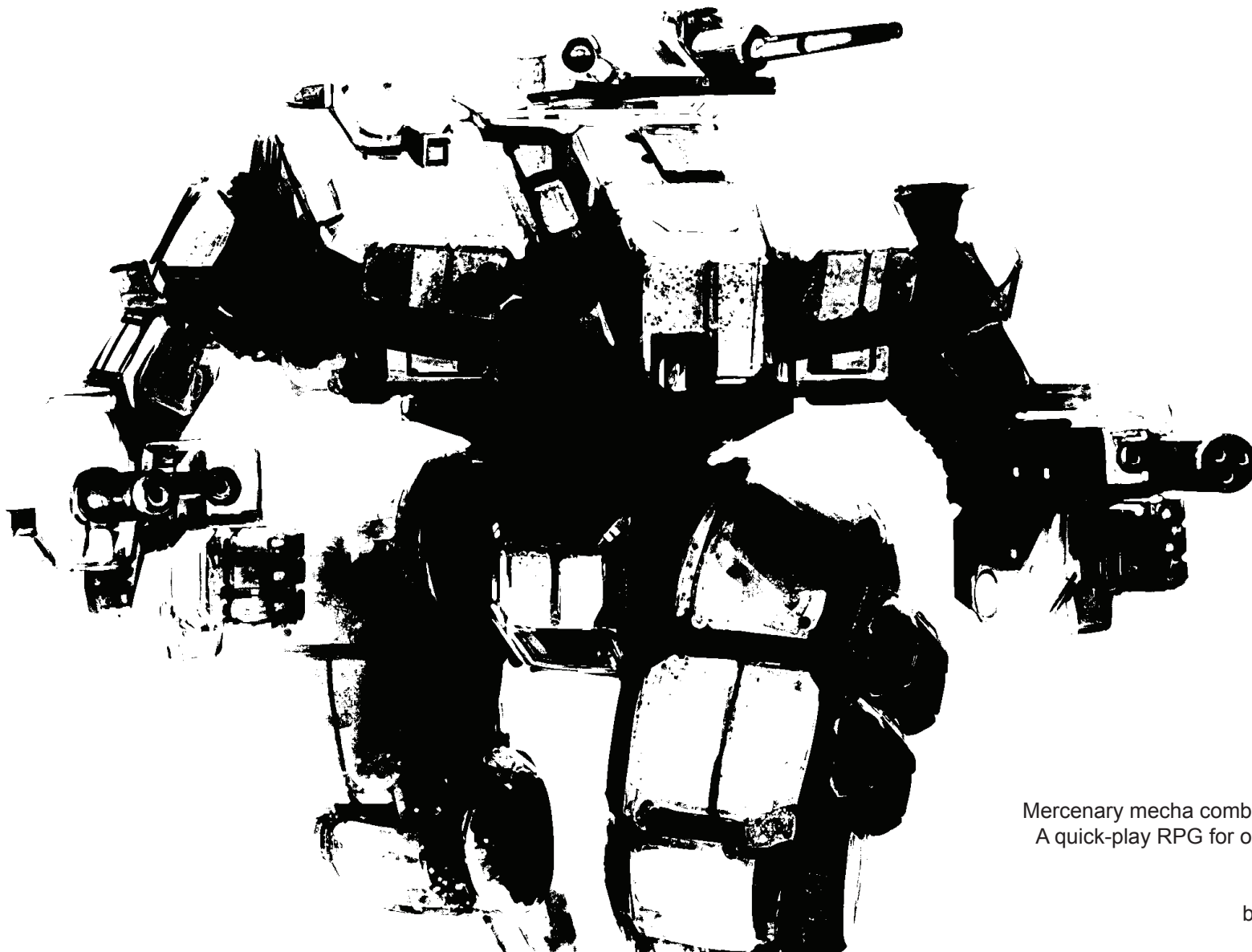
version 0.14

Mercenary mecha combat in a gritty future.
A quick-play RPG for one-shots and short
campaigns.

by Michael Prescott

STARTING OUT

Player characters are members of a mecha mercenary company. Each is the inheritor of a centuries-old combat mech, a relic of a by-gone era of advanced battlefield technology.

COMPANY NAME

When you start play, choose a name for the mercenary company. Choose an origin.

STARTING ASSETS

When you **start play**, roll 2d6 to determine the company's assets and reputation:

2D6	STARTING DETAILS
2-3	None. You'll have to hire dropships to get to the action. Reputation -1.
4-8	Regent dropship with 2 unknown quirks. Reputation -1.
9-10	Troll dropship, 2 quirks, Reputation 0
11-12	Troll dropship, Reputation 0.

CHARACTERS

Players should each choose a different playbook as their character: Mercenary, Hotshot, Veteran, Rigger, Lieutenant, Commander, Prodigy. It's okay to double up on the first four playbooks.

Follow the character creation instructions on the playbook.

HISTORY

All mercenaries start with history with one other mercenary company. Roll on the Other Merc Company table to determine which, then roll on the History table to determine the nature of the relationship with them.

MECH ASSIGNMENTS

When you **recruit a new mercenary** to join the company (i.e. a player creates a character), roll 2d6 +Reputation.

On a miss (6 or less), they get their playbook's default mecha (or exo armor if they prefer). On a hit (7+), they can choose any

2D6	OTHER MERC COMPANY
2	The Only Way [to be Sure]
3	Shell Shockers
4	Astrid's Own
5	"The Mobile Infantry"
6	Johnny's Metal Hand
7	Harrison's Hussars
8	"Sol Quarantine"
9	Red Company
10	Condoterri Bros
11	Báilián
12	Breyer & Associates

2D6	HISTORY
2	You stole something valuable from them (e.g. your mech). They're gonna want it back.
3	They stole something valuable from you (e.g. your previous mech).
4	Former employer, went bad after the Scarol II evac.
5	Always up in your shit.
6	Former mentors, would rather talk about old times than get shit done.
7	Have a knack for working for the other side.
8	Friendly rivalry, but tend to under-bid you. Costs you 1-cash/mission when they're in the same theater.
9	Wouldn't let you join, back when you sucked. They still think you suck.
10	They'll only talk to you through lawyers.
11	They wanna *be* you, it's embarrassing.
12	They have sworn to kill you at all costs. (Who did you kill?)

mech without the *expensive* tag. On a 10+, choose: an *expensive* mech, or a non-*expensive* mech with an extra equipment option.

For a quick start, each character starts with the default mech for their playbook.

If you are playing a multi-session campaign, follow the instructions on the **mercenary company sheet**.

THEATRE DEPLOYMENT

The players must choose a *theatre of war*, an ongoing conflict to which their mercenary company is attached. Not all theaters are available to starting companies.

PLAYING

As in most RPGs, the GM describes the fictional situation around the player characters. The players say how they react: what they say, do, or try to do. The GM says what happens next.

RULES

The core rules are presented as short, self-contained procedures which apply in specific situations.

Play free-form until a rule applies. When it does, follow the rule's instructions, and interpret the results in the context of the current fictional situation.

Players should not treat rules as a *list of things they can do* (this will make the game suck). The game works best, however, when players are putting their characters in situations where the rules are relevant.

ROLLING DICE

Most die rolls are 2d6 plus a pilot stat or mecha attribute. Commonly, a roll of 6 or less is a miss, a failure condition which the GM will interpret to mean something bad happens. A roll of 7+ is a hit: the PC gets what they wanted, but seldom without some complication. A 10+ is a clean break.

THE SWEET SPOT

The GM will vary the pace and detail of play to keep the game focused on the action in and around combat missions.

Friction and conflict comes from contact with the enemy (of course), but also from the fog of war, conflicting priorities (or even loyalties) of allies, the scarcity of supplies, munitions and repair opportunities. Not to mention, straight-up shitty luck.

Play can explore other kinds of conflicts or aspects of the setting, but there you're on your own.

MERCENARY

Choose a name/lineage/background/look:

Name: Selene / Marsen / N'dela / Ajani / Per-ahta / Hanke / Anouk / Liis-Albano / France / Aaron / Leo / Eliška

Lineage: Concordat / Dendrite / Factori / Earth / Roosts / Holdborn / Cysts

Background: promoted exo / base brat / tank rat / prestige academy / sim-baby

Look: stained / vat-fresh / androgynous / reconstructed / fatale / beefy / inked

STATS

Battle +2. Assign +1, +0, -1 to the others.

SPECIAL

Choose two:

- ■ **Steel guts:** When you **head into enemy fire** to get the job done, mark xp.
- ☐ **Shock trooper**: When **you're shooting**, you count as two units when figuring out who's outnumbered.
- ☐ **Close quarters specialist**: When you assault with *initiative*, you may use the nearest enemy mech as 2-cover from the others.
- ☐ **Thug**: Mecha physical combat doesn't count as pushing your hardware.
- ☐ **Forward observer**: When you assess from concealment, your allies take +AOF.
- ☐ **Trigger happy**: In your hands, all armaments have *repeater*.
- ☐ **'Till it glows**: When you **assault**, all your weapons gain *tandem*. *Push your hardware* to avoid a system shutdown from excess heat.
- ☐ **Tough as nails:** Gain 1 more pilot strain box.

BATTLE ☐
TACTICS ☐
HARDWARE ☐
COMMAND ☐

HARM

strain / out / dead

☐☐☐☐|☐|☐

EXPERIENCE

Mark experience when you miss, or when a rule tells you to.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

ADVANCEMENTS

☐☐☐ +1 to a stat (max +3)
☐☐☐☐ Add a playbook special
☐ Take a special from another playbook
☐ Retire and get out of the game

HISTORY

MAULER

The M309 'Mauler' general strike mecha was mass manufactured for export all along the Selenberg Dendrite. Few units still have the original lasers, but they are popular with riggers for their reliability and easy field maintenance.

Speed +1, Evasion 0. Choose two options.

ARMANENT

- ■ Ceres **40mm AC** (3d near/far)
- ☐ Insight-2 **Dual Laser** (2d near/extreme free advanced)
- ☐ Wolfpack SR-78 **Rocket Pod** (2d near obvious salvo/6)
- ☐ Coaxial **MG** (1d near free repeater)

ARMOR

- ■ Granulated composites
- ☐ Series II Symmetric Foam (1-armor advanced)

AUXILIARY

- ☐ Smoke dispenser (concealment, munition)
- ☐ Albedo cloud (1-armor vs lasers, advanced, munition)
- ☐ Grafted subsystem from another model
- ☐ Grafted subsystem from another model

QUIRKS

SPEED ☐
EVASION ☐

MUNITIONS

☐☐☐☐☐☐

DAMAGE

external | critical hits | disabled

☐☐☐|☐☐☐|☐

CRITICAL DAMAGE

- ☐ Armament disabled (choose)
- ☐ Auxiliary system disabled (choose)
- ☐ Cockpit fire (harmful, ongoing)
- ☐ Power plant casing crack spews black smoke, -1 Evasion/Speed
- ☐ Power failure, system shutdown
- ☐ Ammunition explosion (2-damage 2d area messy)

HOTSHOT

Choose a name/lineage/background/look:

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Background: promoted exo / base brat / tank rat / prestige academy / sim-baby

Look: stained / vat-fresh / androgynous / reconstructed / fatale / beefy / inked

STATS

Battle +2. Assign +1, 0, -1 to the others.

SPECIAL

Choose two:

- ■ **Hotshot**: When you **bail on the plan** and abandon *cohesion* to do your own thing, mark xp and +1 to your next roll.
- ☐ **Headhunter:** When you shoot with *initiative*, +AOF.
- ☐ **Slippery:** When you are on the move, incoming fire is -AOF.
- ☐ **Return Fire:** When you **take fire from unseen attackers**, you may return fire anyways.
- ☐ **Incoming!:** When your **squad assaults**, you may join in from engagement range.
- ☐ **Sure Footed:** When you **race through rough terrain**, +1 speed.

BATTLE
TACTICS
HARDWARE
COMMAND

HARM

strain / out / dead

☐☐☐ | ☐☐ | ☐

EXPERIENCE

Mark experience when you miss, or when a rule tells you to.

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

ADVANCEMENTS

☐☐☐ +1 to a stat (max +3)

☐☐☐ Add a playbook special

☐ Take a special from another playbook

☐ Retire and get out of the game

HISTORY

RAIDER

The RCR-7 (rapid close/recon) 'Raider' was Amber Dyanmics' final export production mecha. The much sought-after RCR-9 added additional stealth features, but only existed as a limited prototype run.

Speed +2, Evasion +1. Choose one option.

ARMANENT

- ■ Aeon Systems **21mm AC** (2d near/far repeater)
- ☐ Nightmare-3 **Missile Launcher** (3d far/extreme slow munition)

ARMOR

- ■ Anti-ballistic cladding (0-armor)
- ☐ Assault panels (+1 external dmg box)

AUXILIARY

- ■ Jump system (obvious, munition)
- ☐ Coaxial splintergun (6d AP near munition)
- ☐ Extended range pack (+2 Munitions)
- ☐ Shielded comms (+1 Evasion) [RCR-9]
- ☐ Heat dispersion system (+1 Evasion advanced) [RCR-9]
- ☐ **Camdrones** (munition): When you recon a dug-in enemy, squaddies take +1 to their assault roll.
- ☐ Grafted subsystem from another model
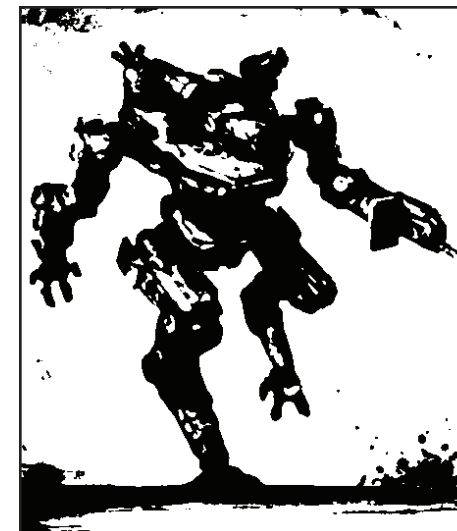
QUIRKS

SPEED
EVASION

MUNITIONS

☐☐☐☐☐☐

DAMAGE

external | critical hits | disabled

☐ | ☐☐☐ | ☐

CRITICAL DAMAGE

- ☐ Armament destroyed (choose)
- ☐ Auxiliary system destroyed (choose)
- ☐ Auxiliary power kicks in, -1 speed
- ☐ Cockpit spidered, +1 harm, -1 forward
- ☐ Hip servo (immobile)
- ☐ Jump system detonates, +1 harm

VETERAN

Choose a name/lineage/background/look:

Name: Selene / Marsen / N'dela / Ajani / Per-ahta / Hanke / Anouk / Liis-Albano / France / Aaron / Leo / Eliška

Lineage: Concordat / Dendrite / Factori / Earth / Roosts / Holdborn / Cysts

Background: promoted exo / base brat / tank rat / prestige academy / sim-baby

Look: stained / vat-fresh / androgynous / reconstructed / fatale / beefy / inked

STATS

Assign +2, +1, 0, -1 to your stats.

SPECIAL

Choose two:

- ■ **Pessimist**: When you burn 2 SNAFU on one roll, mark xp.
- ■ **Lifer**: You have *history* with 2 companies instead of 1.
- ☐ **Make 'em count:** When you *assault*, spend less 1 munition.
- ☐ **Deja Vu:** When you **think you've been here before**, roll +Tactics. On a hit, find 2-cover and say what it is. On a 10+, take +1 to disengage.
- ☐ **Gut feeling:** You can *assess* nearby enemy strength or objectives from the flimsiest evidence.
- ☐ **It's a goddamn trap:** When you **predict a total clusterfuck**, say what it is and burn 1-SNAFU.
- ☐ **Final protective fire:** When you **stand your ground** to cover retreating squaddies, take +1.
- ☐ **Full share:** When a **mission pays out**, you get 1-cash of your own.

BATTLE ☐
TACTICS ☐
HARDWARE ☐
COMMAND ☐

HARM

strain / out / dead

☐☐☐☐|☐|☐

EXPERIENCE

Mark experience when you miss, or when a rule tells you to.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

ADVANCEMENTS

☐☐☐ +1 to a stat (max +3)
☐☐☐☐ Add a playbook special
☐ Take a special from another playbook
☐ Retire and get out of the game

HISTORY

HELLHOUND

The Koral Armaments Hellhound is one of the heaviest mecha still in active service. Originally a front-line assault mech, later pre-CBE variants had adapted the chassis to an assault-support artillery role.

Speed 0, Evasion +1. Choose one option.

ARMANENT

- ■ Twin **15mm AC** (2d near/far repeater)
- ☐ **Longbow Missile** (4d extreme slow indirect munition messy)
- ☐ Saturator **Long Gun** (6d extreme messy area slow 2-munition advanced)
- ☐ Flame-thrower (1d/6dAP tight area messy omni tandem)

ARMOR

- ■ Tensioned Ceram
- ☐ Reinforced back (1-armor in assaults)

AUXILIARY

- ☐ Dual turbine power plant (+1 speed)
- ☐ Magellan NNX targeting gear (+1 AOF to spotted indirect fire)
- ☐ Smoke dispenser (1-armor)
- ☐ Albedo cloud (2-armor vs lasers, advanced, munition)
- ☐ Grafted subsystem from another model
- ☐ Grafted subsystem from another model

QUIRKS

SPEED ☐
EVASION ☐

MUNITIONS

☐☐☐☐☐☐

DAMAGE

external | critical hits | disabled

☐☐☐|☐☐☐|☐

CRITICAL DAMAGE

- ☐ Armament destroyed (choose)
- ☐ Auxiliary system destroyed (choose)
- ☐ Auxiliary power kicks in (-1 speed)
- ☐ Cockpit fire (harmful, ongoing)
- ☐ Cockpit spidered, +1 harm, -1 forward
- ☐ Knee servo (*push hardware* on rough terrain, -1 speed)
- ☐ Power plant casing crack spews black smoke (-1 evasion, -1 speed)
- ☐ Ammunition explosion (2-damage 2d area messy)

RIGGER

Choose a name/lineage/background/look:

Name: Selene / Marsen / N'dela / Ajani / Perahta / Hanke / Anouk / Liis-Albano / France / Aaron / Leo / Eliška

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Background: promoted exo / base brat / tank rat / prestige academy / sim-baby

Look: stained / vat-fresh / androgynous / reconstructed / fatale / beefy / inked

STATS

Hardware +2. Assign +1, +1, 0 to the others.

SPECIAL

Choose two:

- ☑ **Combat rigger:** when you expose yourself to danger to aid a damaged squaddie, *mark xp*.

- ☑ **Repair link:** when you attach to damaged mecha, roll +hardware. On a hit, provide a temporary damage point (max 1). On a 10+, you bring a critically damaged system back online for the rest of the mission.

- ☐ **Kick it:** When you force-restart a critically damaged system, it just works. +SNAFU.

- ☐ **Emergency override:** When you **remotely control a squad mech** whose pilot is *out* or *dead*, make all rolls at -1.

- ☐ **Alert:** When your squad's mecha are up for repairs, you choose the good techs. All mecha get 1-damage repair extra.

- ☐ **Hacksaw:** When you spend downtime to graft a salvaged subsystem onto another mecha, roll +hardware and spend 1-supply. On a hit, it's attached, but with a *quirk*. On a 10+, no *quirk*.

- ☐ **Right where it hurts:** When you **do critical damage** to a mech or vehicle model you're familiar with at near range or less, it's disabling.

BATTLE ☐
TACTICS ☐
HARDWARE ☐
COMMAND ☐

HARM

strain / out / dead

☐☐☐☐|☐|☐

EXPERIENCE

Mark experience when you miss, or when a rule tells you to.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

ADVANCEMENTS

☐☐☐ +1 to a stat (max +3)

☐☐☐☐ Add a playbook special

☐ Take a special from another playbook

☐ Retire and get out of the game

HISTORY

GARGOYLE

Modular close support mech.

Speed +1, Evasion 0. Choose two options.

ARMAMENT

- ☐ Twin **18mm RAC** (2d near/far repeater)
- ☐ Maintenance claw (3d tight free)
- ☐ SKP **missile pod** (4d extreme AA one-shot fast)

ARMOR

- ☑ Alliance Carbon (0-armor)
- ☐ **You just welded all that on?** (+1 external dmg box)

AUXILIARY

- ☑ Modular chassis: grafting always works. Overhauling costs 0-supply.
- ☐ **Salvage lance** (3d tight)
- ☐ **Field re-arming package:** When you rearm a squaddie, give them munitions and roll +hardware. On a 7+, it's quick. On a 10+, you brought lots, they get +1 munition.
- ☐ **Maintenance scanner**: You may *assess* the internal systems of visible mecha.
- ☐ **ROVER**: Remote-operated maintenance mini-rover (Speed +2, Evasion +2, 2-dmg, 1-armor, take no action while controlling it.)
- ☐ Grafted subsystem from another model.
- ☐ Grafted subsystem from another model.

QUIRKS

SPEED ☐
EVASION ☐

MUNITIONS

☐☐☐☐☐☐

DAMAGE

external | critical hits | disabled

☐☐|☐☐☐☐|☐

CRITICAL DAMAGE

- ☐ Armament destroyed (choose)
- ☐ Auxiliary system destroyed (choose)
- ☐ Auxiliary power kicks in (-1 speed)
- ☐ Cockpit fire (harmful, ongoing)
- ☐ Cockpit spidered, +1 harm, -1 forward
- ☐ Knee servo (*push hardware* on rough terrain, -1 speed)
- ☐ Power plant casing crack spews black smoke (-1 evasion, -1 speed)

LIEUTENANT

Choose a name/lineage/background/look:

Name: Selene / Marsen / N'dela / Ajani / Perahta / Hanke / Anouk / Liis-Albano / France / Aaron / Leo / Eliška

Lineage: Concordat / Dendrite / Factori / Earth / Roosts / Holdborn / Cysts

Background: promoted exo / base brat / tank rat / prestige academy / sim-baby

Look: stained / vat-fresh / androgynous / reconstructed / fatale / beefy / inked

STATS

Command +2. Assign +1, 0, -1 to the others.

SPECIAL

Choose two:

- ■ **Harsh lessons:** When your orders get a squad mech critically damaged, mark xp.

- ☐ **Move up!** When you **order a squaddie into danger**, they take +1 to their next roll.

- ☐ **This way!** When you **lead your squad along an iffy shortcut**, +1 SNAFU and roll +tactics. On a hit, it pays off. On a 10+, no +1 SNAFU and take +1 to the *engagement* roll.

- ☐ **Insistent:** When you **fight for your squad's needs** during downtime, roll +command. On a hit, hold 1, on a 10+, 2. Spend hold 1-for-1 for:
  ● An extra 1-damage repair per mech
  ● An extra critical repair attempt
  ● -1 SNAFU to the next mission

- ☐ **Shrewd:** When you **rely on your allies**, take +1 to the roll.

- ☐ **Snap out of it!** When you **command a strained or unconscious squaddie**, mark 1-harm. They recover 2-harm.

- ☐ **Big picture:** When you **pore over your squad's data feeds**, you may *assess* the area around the whole squad.

BATTLE ☐
TACTICS ☐
HARDWARE ☐
COMMAND ☐

HARM

strain / out / dead

☐☐☐☐|☐|☐

EXPERIENCE

Mark experience when you miss, or when a rule tells you to.

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

ADVANCEMENTS

☐☐☐ +1 to a stat (max +3)

☐☐☐☐ Add a playbook special

☐ Take a special from another playbook

☐ Retire and get out of the game

HISTORY

IGUANA

Roost high-tech tank, made before the Sessen arm fell in the Factori wars.

Speed +2, Evasion +1.

Choose two options.

ARMANENT

- ☐ HVDS **Railgun** (4d far/ex advanced)

- ☐ Sancor **20mm AC** (3d near/far repeat)

- ☐ OWL 0.6GJ **pulse laser** (1d far/ex repeat munition)

- ☐ SKP **missile pod** (4d extreme AA one-shot fast)

ARMOR

- ■ Talos Ceramics 8cm A3

- ☐ Anti-projectile REACT skirt (1-armor munition)

AUXILIARY

- ■ Second crew station. When crewed, the Iguana assaults with two weapon systems, and may give *suppression fire* while *booting it*.

- ■ Exo ride-along handles (for 4, -1 Speed when 3+ aboard).

- ☐ **Ballistics μ-sight package**: When the Iguana takes weapons fire, it may instantly return fire at reduced AOF.

- ☐ Grafted subsystem from another model

QUIRKS

SPEED ☐
EVASION ☐

MUNITIONS

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

DAMAGE

external | critical hits | disabled

☐☐☐|☐☐☐|☐

CRITICAL DAMAGE

- ☐ Armament destroyed (choose)

- ☐ Auxiliary system destroyed (choose)

- ☐ Auxiliary power kicks in (-1 speed)

- ☐ Cockpit fire (harmful, ongoing)

- ☐ Cockpit spidered, +1 harm, -1 forward

- ☐ Track damage (*push hardware* on rough terrain, -1 speed)

- ☐ Power plant casing crack spews black smoke (-1 evasion, -1 speed)

- ☐ Ammunition explosion (2-damage 2d area messy)

COMMANDER

Choose a name/lineage/background/look:

Name: Selene / Marsen / N'dela / Ajani / Perahta / Hanke / Anouk / Liis-Albano / France / Aaron / Leo / Eliška

Lineage: Concordat / Dendrite / Factori / Earth / Roosts / Holdborn / Cysts

Background: promoted exo / base brat / tank rat / prestige academy / sim-baby

Look: stained / vat-fresh / androgynous / reconstructed / fatale / beefy / inked

STATS

Command or Tactics +2. Assign +1, +1, 0 to the others.

SPECIAL

Choose two:

- ■ **Big picture:** When you **sacrifice a squaddie's needs** for the good of the company, mark xp.
- ■ **Connected**: Establish *history* with 3 companies, not 1.
- ☐ **Fuck it:** When you **risk the entire mission or the company** to achieve something, burn SNAFU.
- ☐ **Wasn't born yesterday:** When you **spot insignias**, take +1 to the roll.
- ☐ **Make 'em pay:** When you **announce a squaddie's death** over comms, everyone takes +AOF for the rest of the mission.
- ☐ **Eye for talent:** When you **recruit a new company member**, they take +1 to the starting mech roll (max +3).
- ☐ **New orders**: When you **reveal the real mission**, earn 1-SNAFU and roll +Command. On a hit, roll twice on any one mission table and take your pick. On a 10+, you don't need to betray anyone.

BATTLE ☐
TACTICS ☐
HARDWARE ☐
COMMAND ☐

HARM

strain / out / dead

☐☐☐ | ☐☐ | ☐

EXPERIENCE

Mark experience when you miss, or when a rule tells you to.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

ADVANCEMENTS

- ☐☐ +1 to a stat (max +3)
- ☐☐☐☐ Add a playbook special
- ☐☐ Take a special from another playbook
- ☐ Retire and get out of the game

HISTORY

TROLL

Originally Roost battleship components, Sylent trans-orbital lifters were soon adapted for standalone use. By the end of C25, knockoffs were built everywhere.

Speed -1, Evasion -1. Choose one option:

ARMANENT

- ☐ Sylent 'Ringfire' **Plasma Cannon** (3d far omni)
- ☐ 'Harbinger' **Missile** (4d extreme slow indirect obvious munition messy)
- ■ Splintergun array (6d AP near free omni)

ARMOR

- ■ Trans-orbital shielding
- ☐ Assault panels (+2 external dmg box)

AUXILIARY

- ■ Trans-orbital lifter (munition, 2-munition to ascend)
- ■ Huge (expensive, hauls 2-supply)
- ■ Mecha bay (4 berths, 1 door)
- ☐ **TROL-3C**: 2nd mecha bay door, 5th mecha berth
- ☐ **TROL-3F**: Extended range pack (+2 munitions)
- ☐ Geoscan optics (assess from orbit)
- ☐ 'Hound' drone salvage hoversled (carries 1 mech or salvage)
- ☐ Original fusion engine (1-munition ascent advanced interplanetary)
- ☐ Mothership: berths hold fighters; doors have launch/reclaim rails
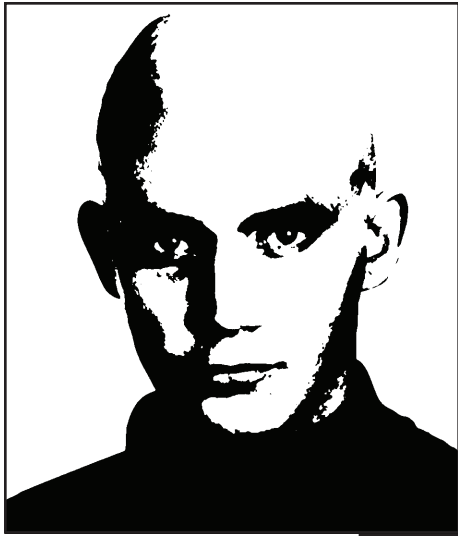
QUIRKS

SPEED ☐
EVASION ☐

MUNITIONS

☐☐☐☐☐☐

DAMAGE

external | critical hits | disabled

☐☐☐☐ | ☐☐☐ | ☐

CRITICAL DAMAGE

- ☐ Armament disabled (choose)
- ☐ Nacelle, +1 munition to lift off
- ☐ Mecha bay doors jammed
- ☐ Deck pressure loss (+1 downtime SNAFU ongoing)
- ☐ Auxiliary power kicks in, -1 speed
- ☐ External optics short out (blind)

BATTLE
TACTICS
HARDWARE
COMMAND

HARM

strain / out / dead

☐☐ | ☐☐ | ☐

EXPERIENCE

Mark experience when you miss, or when a rule tells you to.

☐☐☐☐☐☐

ADVANCEMENTS

☐☐☐ +1 to a stat (max +3)

☐☐☐☐ Add a playbook special

☐ Take a special from another playbook

☐ Retire and get out of the game

HISTORY

PRODIGY

Choose a name/lineage/background/look:

Name: Selene / Marsen / N'dela / Ajani / Per-ahta / Hanke / Anouk / Liis-Albano / France / Aaron / Leo / Eliška

Lineage: Concordat / Dendrite / Factori / Earth / Roosts / Holdborn / Cysts

Background: promoted exo / base brat / tank rat / prestige academy / sim-baby

Look: stained / vat-fresh / androgynous / reconstructed / fatale / beefy / inked

STATS

Assign +2, +2, -1, -1 to your stats, randomly. Wait until you use them.

SPECIAL

Choose two:

☑ **Tendency to stare:** When you **inspect an unfamiliar mecha**, system, or installation in detail, mark xp.

☐ **It would take too long to explain:** When **squaddies carry out your weird or upsetting plans**, they mark xp and you hold 1 weird.

☐ **The long con:** When you first **infect a computer under the enemy's control**, hold 3 weird.

☐ **In their hearts, they doubt**: Spend 2 weird to burn 1 SNAFU.

☐ **It's part of a larger pattern**: Spend 2 weird to adjust a mission roll by 1 in either direction.

☐ **It's not your time:** When you **impose your will on an apparently *dead* squaddie** and spend 1-weird, they recover 3 harm.

☐ **Prescient instincts:** You may *boot it* with +Tactics instead of +Speed.

ANGEL

Sold into the Dendrite after the CBE to help resist Concordat attacks until Kilo Cyst went silent in 27C. Elegantly simple in its design, the Angel is expensive to operate because of its reliance on advanced materials manufacturing.

Speed +2, Evasion +1. Choose one option:

ARMANENT

☐ Prismatic 8GJ **UV Laser** (4d far/ex quiet advanced)

☐ **Shear field** projector (3d tight messy advanced)

ARMOR

☑ Monofilament fractal carapace (1-armor)

☐ **EM shield** (-AOF munition advanced)

☐ **Ghost ECM** (+1 evasion advanced)

AUXILIARY

☑ **Tech level V** (expensive)

☑ **Immune system**: won't accept grafted subsystems

☐ **Orbital descent shield** (munition)

☐ **Trans-orbital lift thrusters** (munition)

☐ **Computer intrusion package** (munition advanced)

☐ **A/G Nodes** (jump quiet advanced)

☐ It **turns into a goddamn plane**

QUIRKS

SPEED
EVASION

MUNITIONS

☐☐☐☐☐☐

DAMAGE

external | critical hits | disabled

☐☐ | ☐☐☐ | ☐

CRITICAL DAMAGE

☐ Armament destroyed (choose)

☐ Auxiliary system destroyed (choose)

☐ Auxiliary power kicks in (-1 speed)

☐ Auto-escape system engages (mech automatically flees weapons fire)

☐ Reactor jostled (-1 evasion)

WEILER

A Roost Primary Systems mech, legendary for its maintainability and durability. Weilers were never produced in export numbers, and no pre-burst fabs remain, so they are treasured whenever they are uncovered.

Speed +1, Evasion +1. Choose two options.

ARMANENT

- ■ Splitfire **24mm RAC** (3d near/far repeater)
- ☐ Raven 2GJ **chemical laser** (2d far/ex tandem)
- ☐ 5GJ **charged particle arc** (4d near messy repeater indirect)

ARMOR

- ■ Replacement granulated composites
- ☐ Original T3-series lattice (1-armor)

AUXILIARY

- ☐ RAC **cluster rounds** (-1d +AOF)
- ☐ **Aerial target acquisition** package (all weapons gain *AA*)
- ☐ **Anti-acquisition weave** (+1 Evasion)
- ☐ **Auto-med** (-1 harm, munition, advanced)
- ☐ **Gelfoam extrusion system** (-1 external damage, munition)
- ☐ **Anti-acquisition flares** (1-cover, munition)

QUIRKS
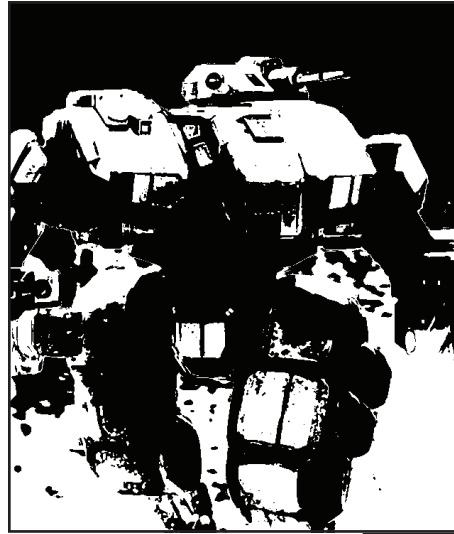
SPEED
EVASION

MUNITIONS
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

DAMAGE
external | critical hits | disabled
☐ ☐ ☐ | ☐ ☐ ☐ | ☐

CRITICAL DAMAGE
- ☐ Armament destroyed (choose)
- ☐ Auxiliary system destroyed (choose)
- ☐ Auxiliary power kicks in (-1 speed)
- ☐ Cockpit fire (harmful, ongoing)
- ☐ Cockpit spidered, +1 harm, -1 forward
- ☐ Knee servo (*push hardware* on rough terrain, -1 speed)
- ☐ Power plant casing crack spews black smoke (-1 evasion, -1 speed)

EXO

Military exo vary from simple strength/endurance-boost frames to fully enclosed stealth nano-mecha. The G-99 is a typical TL IV model.

Speed +0, Evasion +2. Choose two options.

ARMANENT

- ☐ 12mm **snub HMG** (1d near repeat)
- ☐ **Anti-Armor Rocket** (2d near munition)
- ☐ TL V **A-A Rocket** (2d near/far munition advanced)
- ☐ **Limpet mine** (3d tight slow munition)

ARMOR

- ■ Ceram Micro (0-armor)
- ☐ 'Bubblehead' **combat hood** (+1 external)

AUXILIARY

- ■ **Infantry exoskeleton**: repairs/upgrades -1 cost. Stow four in a mecha berth.
- ■ **Nanomech:** Exo upgrades let you choose two options instead of one.
- ■ **Hydraulic hands**: (2d tight) When you **do critical damage**, make a salvage roll at -2. Take -1 ongoing while you carry it.
- ☐ **Orbit-to-HALO** package (munition)
- ☐ 'Ostrich' **leg extensions** (+1 Speed)
- ☐ **Jump system** (munition)
- ☐ **Smoke cannister** (munition)
- ☐ Computer **intrusion package** (munition advanced)
- ☐ **'Black pill' reactor** (+2 munitions)
- ☐ **Auto-cauterizer** (amputations cause only 1-harm)
- ☐ **Anti-acquisition weave** (+1 Evasion)

QUIRKS

SPEED
EVASION

MUNITIONS
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

DAMAGE
external | critical hits | disabled
☐ | ☐ ☐ | ☐

CRITICAL DAMAGE
- ☐ Limb servo (harmful)
- ☐ Running hot (-1 Evasion)
- ☐ Momentary power loss, hit the deck.
- ☐ Leg amputation (2-harm)
- ☐ Arm amputation (2-harm)
- ☐ Head hit (4-harm)

REGENT

The venerable Regent is one of the earliest aerodynamic re-entry/trans-orbital lifters still used in large numbers.

Speed +1, Evasion +1. Choose two options.

ARMANENT

- ☐ 'Thumper' **50mm AC** (3d near/far slow)
- ☑ Tail-mounted dual **18mm RAC** (2d near/far repeat AA)
- ☐ Octopus omnidirectional **AG missile system** (3d far salvo/4)

ARMOR

- ☑ Re-entry shielding
- ☐ Assault panels (+2 external dmg boxes)

AUXILIARY

- ☑ Ground-to-orbit **thrusters** (munition, glide re-entry)
- ☑ **Large VTOL** (*expensive*, holds 1-supply)
- ☑ **Ventral bay** (ramp, holds 1 mech or exo-loaded Iguana)
- ☐ **Roundbelly** variant (holds additional mech/vehicle)
- ☐ **Rapid drop-off mode** ("bounce 'n' fly")
- ☐ **Field re-supply arm:** Convert 1-supply into 6-munitions.
- ☐ **Mech recovery drone sled** (remote operated)
- ☐ **Front-line retrofit** (remove *expensive*)

QUIRKS

[ ]

SPEED ☐
EVASION ☐

MUNITIONS
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

DAMAGE
external | critical hits | disabled
☐ ☐ | ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ | ☐

CRITICAL DAMAGE

- ☐ VTOL thrusters; requires runway to land.
- ☐ Nacelle damage - 2-munition to reach orbit
- ☐ Thrust vectors damaged (-1 Speed)
- ☐ Airframe damage, powered re-entry required (1-munition)
- ☐ Sensor array. -1 ongoing to *assess*
- ☐ Bay doors jammed
- ☐ Compartment seals blown - not vacuum safe

SYLPH

The Sylph is the third generation descendant of the Helical Systems *Aircat* ground support VTOL chassis. Released into the public domain after the Puissance conflict in 24C, the airframe was modularized to quickly adapt between air-to-air and air-to-ground roles.

Speed +2, Evasion +1. Choose two options.

ARMANENT

- ☐ Quad **18mm RAC** (3d near/far repeat munition)
- ☐ 3GJ **HEAP Bomb** (4d near messy 2-munition)
- ☐ **AG missile** (3d extreme munition)
- ☐ HeSys Harpoon II-class **AA missile** (3d extreme AA munition)

ARMOR

- ☑ 8mm Gelcote
- ☐ Asymmetric printed foam (+2 external dmg boxes)

AUXILIARY

- ☑ VTOL Fighter, *flying*
- ☐ **Afterburner** (+1 Speed, munition)
- ☐ **Bomber** configuration (+2 munitions, -1 Speed)
- ☐ Orbital **re-entry shielding** (munition)
- ☐ **Low observability** package (+1 Evasion advanced)
- ☐ High-altitude **reconnaissance optics**

QUIRKS

[ ]

SPEED ☐
EVASION ☐

MUNITIONS
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

DAMAGE
external | critical hits | disabled
☐ | ☐ ☐ | ☐

CRITICAL DAMAGE

- ☐ VTOL thrusters; requires runway to land; must taxi into dropships
- ☐ Thrust vectors damaged (-1 Speed)
- ☐ Sensor array. -1 ongoing to *assess*
- ☐ Flaps damaged; tight maneuvers requre pushing your hardware
- ☐ Hardpoints - rightmost 2 munitions unusable.
- ☐ Compartmet seals blown - not vacuum safe

THE MERCENARY COMPANY

COMPANY STATS

The company starts out with 1-cash, 1-supply, and 0-salvage.

REPUTATION ☐

CASH ☐

SUPPLY ☐

SALVAGE ☐

Your stash of supply and salvage is stored at your operating base.

Your cash is electronic and can't be stolen.

ORIGIN

Pick your company's origin.

☐ **Military traditions:** +1 to rally

☐ **For-profit business:** careful control of spending increases mission pay by 1-cash

☐ **Freedom fighters:** +1 Reputation

☐ **Hoodlums:** description

MILESTONES

The company itself advances every time these things happen:

● The company completes a mission (successfully or not)

● A PC company member is killed or retires

The company advances the first time each of these things happens:

☐ Kill an enemy mech Veteran.

☐ Kill an enemy Commander (any sort).

☐ Destroy a mech company's base.

☐ Disable an enemy dropship

☐ Change theatre deployments

☐ Complete a final mission of a branching campaign.

☐ Pull off a mission with broad political significance.

☐ Completely resolve someone's *history* with another mercenary company

☐ Buy a dropship.

☐ Buy a jumpship.

☐ A player character is killed or retires

ADVANCEMENTS

Auxiliary units (of course) increase the company's payroll, but it's assumed the company's fees are increased correspondingly.

REPUTATION

☐ **Increase reputation:** +1 (max +3)

☐ **Increase reputation:** +1 (max +3)

☐ **Increase reputation:** +1 (max +3)

SPECIALISTS

☐ **Security detachment:** armed security who will guard your operating base

☐ **Off-world depot:** will guard your stash

☐ **Maintenance team:** generates an extra critical repair opportunity

☐ **Medical team:** surgeon and two assistants, restores 2-harm to everyone after each mission

☐ **Logistics team:** they secure you an extra 1-supply after each mission

☐ **Contract lawyer:** Before each mission, roll +Reputation. On a hit, for this mission you get the benefit of one contract term perk you don't currently have.

OPERATING BASE

☐ **Prefab HQ:** a collapsible briefing and situation room, you can set up at your forward operating base. +1 forward to a pre-mission regional assessment, if you're able to make one.

☐ **Prefab Barracks:** a collapsible barracks and R&R room. Restores 1-harm to everyone after each mission.

☐ **Medical pod:** a collapsible TL VI medical facility. If staffed by a medical team, this gives you a custom move: roll +nothing, on a hit you restore 1-harm to a character thought dead on the last mission

AUXILIARY UNITS

These are NPCs who have joined the mercenary company much like the player characters have.

Each should be assigned a random NPC personality that affects them in play.

Any vehicles they bring with them are owned by them; they benefit from the deployment-provided repairs but any extra comes out of the company's options.

If the company provides them replacement or upgraded vehicles, those belong to the company.

☐ **Flight crew:** a space-rated flight crew to fly one of your dropships

☐ **Tank crew:** an auxiliary tank platoon signs on; they bring 3 medium tanks or 2 heavy tanks

☐ **Air support:** an auxiliary air unit signs on with two Sylphs.

☐ **Exo team:** a unit of six exo, or four exo and an Iguana

☐ **Combat resupply team:** a flight crew plus Buffalo VTOL, can ferry supply and salvage to and from your operating base

CONTRACT TERMS

Enhancements to your terms of employment.

☐ **Plum operating base:** while deployed, you are given a premium operating base which is protected, isolated, or hidden

☐ **Intel hookup:** -1 SNAFU/mission

☐ **Prime salvage rights:** You get to keep any off-world mercenary tech you haul back to your operating base.

FIELD OPERATIONS—1
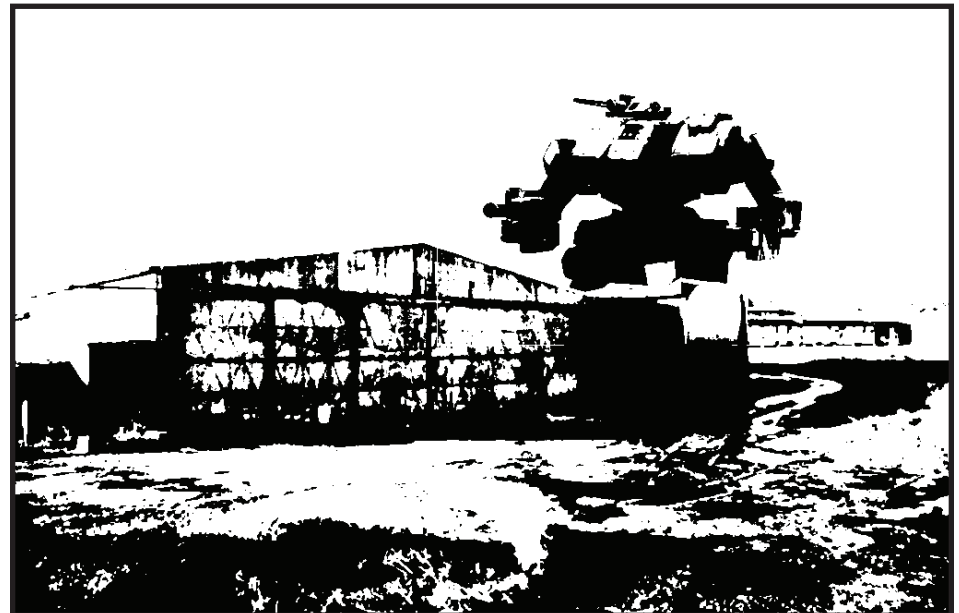
BRIEFING

When you **lead the analysis of briefing intel**, roll +Tactics. On a 7-9 or 10+, learn 1 or 2: a battlefield danger / a location of tactical significance / important enemy details.

When the **mission begins**, the company gains SNAFU points based on the theatre.

ENGAGEMENT

When you **engage with the enemy**, roll +Tactics. On a 10+, choose two. On a 7-9, choose one:

● You seize the **initiative**. For now, you can act while the enemy must react.

● You maintain unit **cohesion**. Your forces are positioned where you want them and are ready for immediate action.

● You have a **tactical advantage**; establish a superior position, find cover/concealment, identify key enemy targets, etc. as established.

COMBAT RULES

ASSAULT

When you **lead an assault on the enemy** to seize territory or gain a tactical advantage, spend 1-munition and exchange weapons fire. Roll +Battle. On a hit, you take the objective. On a 10+, the GM decides if they are exposed, lose cohesion, or surrender.

SUPPRESSION FIRE

When you **hammer the enemy's position with weapons fire**, spend 1-munition and exchange fire at -AOF.

Roll +Battle. On a hit, you give an ally an opportunity. Also, the GM chooses: the enemy is rattled, or they take cover and cede the initiative. On a 10+, you also give +1 to the next allied roll.

TAKE COVER

When you **take cover from incoming fire** roll +Evasion. On a hit, you scramble to established *cover* or *concealment*, but you lose

initiative. On a 10+, keep the *initiative* if you had it and return fire at -AOF.

PUSH IT

When you **push your hardware beyond its limits**, take 2d incidental and roll +hardware. Manifest a *quirk*. On a hit, it works out okay. On a 10+, either avoid damage or gain advantage from your risky move.

Using this rule for overloading a system, driving off cliffs, falls, rough terrain, shoving through ruins, collisions, hanging on to enemy mecha.

WEAPONS FIRE

When you **give or take weapons fire**, roll the weapon's dice. Each die can have no effect, do D=Damage, or C=Critical Hit.

AOF	1	2	3	4	5	6
Incidental	-	-	-	-	D	D
Direct	-	-	-	D	D	D
Concentrated	-	-	D	D	D	C
Precision	-	D	D	D	C	C

ACCURACY OF FIRE

By default, weapons fire is *direct*. Concentrated fire requires exposed/confined, unsuspecting, or immobilized targets. *Precision* fire is carefully aimed fire at non-evading targets.

WEAPON FIRE MODIFIERS

RANGE	DISTANCE
Tight	0-50m
Near	50-300m
Far	300-1000m
Extreme	1000-2000m

Range (too close, too far) reduces weapon dice by 1d/step.

Cover reduces dice by 1d (berms, ditches, heavy forest) or 2d (freeway supports).

Concealment and *Flying* reduce AOF.

When you **reduce dice below 1d**, reduce AOF instead.

When you **reduce AOF below Incidental**, reduce dice instead.

SUPPORT RULES

ASSESS

When you **assess the situation**, ask a question and roll +Tactics. On a hit, choose one: you get details / you do it without taking long or additional exposure to danger. On a 10+ both, plus the big picture.

BOOT IT

When you haul ass to **get there first**, **in time to help**, or to **get the hell out of there**, roll +Speed and take enemy fire as established. On a hit, you make it. On a 10+, reduce incoming AOF or +1 to your next roll.

Over short distances, Speed is comparable across vehicles classes. Over longer distances, ground vehicles cannot outpace aircraft; aircraft cannot outpace space ships.

ON THE MOVE

When you **spend a long time on the move**, spend 1-munition.

INFILTRATE

When you use **move to a position** using *concealment*, roll +Evasion. On a 7-9, choose one, on a 10+ choose 3: it doesn't take long / bring a squaddie with you / you notice an opportunity or useful detail.

HELPING

When your unit has *cohesion*, anyone can join assaults or fire missions except as established. (The rest may *boot it*.)

RALLY

When you **rally the unit** before or during the action, roll +command. On a 10+ hold 3; on a 7-9 hold 1. Spend hold to give benefits to squaddies:

● The unit regains *cohesion* (now).

● I've got your six! +AOF to next shot

● Look out! -1d to incoming fire

IMPOSE YOUR WILL

When you **impose your will**, roll +command. On a hit, they do what you want or they take 1 strain. On a 10+, 2 strain.

(Strain is *harm* that doesn't tick *out* or *dead* boxes.)

RELYING ON ALLIES

When you **rely on NPC allies**, roll +rep. On a hit, they come through. On a 10+, with enthusiasm. On a miss, they're useless, MIA, or betraying you.

SPOT THEIR COLORS

When you **spot a familiar face or insignia**, say who you think it is and roll +Reputation. On a hit, you're right. On a 10+, the GM will tell you their angle.

SALVAGE

When you take an hour to **strip a mech, installation, or ship for salvage**, roll +hardware and do 5 damage. On a hit, choose: it's *sweet* (worth 1-cash), it's *useful* (it's 1-supply) On a 10+, also choose: it's a functional upgrade (as established) / it only takes ten minutes.

DAMAGE

Each D or C result from weapons fire crosses off a box on the target's damage track. Critical hits skip the external boxes on the track.

When you cross off a critical damage box:

● The pilot takes 1 harm

● Choose a critical damage result

ARMOR

Each point of armor blocks one D or C-type damage, always absorbing 'D' first. Armor works once per volley of incoming fire/assault (not once per weapon).

SNAFU

SNAFU points can be paid down over the course of the mission, by 'burning' them to worsen the odds of rolls:

For each point of SNAFU you burn, roll an additional die, and remove the highest roll from the results. Up to 2 SNAFU can be burned on a single roll.

Any large-scale resolution is eligible: always **engagement** rolls, **opportunity** rolls, and **relying on allies**. Assess for long-term recon efforts. Combat rule rolls are never eligible (however significant).

GM SNAFU

The GM can spend SNAFU at any time to reveal a truly terrible problem. (Like, *the dropship won't start* terrible.)

LEFTOVER SNAFU

If the mission ends with SNAFU remaining, it's applied to the opportunity roll.

HAULING

Cash takes up no cargo space.

An empty mech berth can hold 3-supply/salvage. Mecha (with arms) can carry 1-salvage; exo can only carry sweet salvage (it's smaller and more valuable).

DOWNTIME

When you end the mission by returning to safety, make an opportunity roll and take all the benefits of your deployment.

FREE ACTIONS

Use these actions freely during downtime.

STOCK UP

When you **buy and sell** at a properly *stocked* base, station, port, etc. swap points of *supply*, *sweet salvage* and *cash* can be traded 1-for-1.

RE-ARM

When you **reload company mecha**, burn 1-supply, top up munitions in all normal mecha, or a single *expensive* mech.

REARMOR

When you **rearmor company mecha**, burn 1-supply, repair all damage boxes in 3 normal mecha, 6 exo, or a single *expensive* mecha.

CRITICAL REPAIR

When you **repair a critical damage effect**, spend 1-supply and roll +hardware. On a miss, it becomes an unknown quirk (max 3 quirks). On a hit, it's repaired. On a 10+, you make do without the 1-supply.

Advanced systems take 2-supply instead.

When **critical damage is repaired**, cross out that critical damage option. You can't choose crossed-out options while there are other undamaged choices.

MEDICAL CARE

When you **get the best medical care** money can buy, spend 1-cash and restore 4-harm.

QUIRKS

Unknown quirks are problems lurking in a mech. When a quirk *manifests* as a specific problem, determine what it is by rolling:

2D6	QUIRK
2	Leaks superconductant. Mech becomes *expensive*.
3	Loses power whenever you miss a *push the hardware* roll.
4	Heat shielding cracked. -1 Evasion.
5	Double-ejects ammunition. Permanently fill 1-munition.
6	Targeting computer glitch: shots at *extreme* always miss.
7	Asymmetric EM signature makes mech easily identifiable.
8	Climate control failure makes pilot grouchy. -1 to Assess.
9	Delicate. An *external* damage box becomes a *critical* damage box.
10	Nanoscopic stress fractures. Permanently fill leftmost damage box.
11	Spews black smoke. Evasion -1.
12	Feedback—*external* damage to the mech causes *harm* to the pilot.

OPPORTUNITIES

After each mission there's a random opportunity. You can burn SNAFU on this roll.

OVERHAUL

When you completely **overhaul a unit**, burn 1-supply, remove 1 quirk, and uncross one critical damage result so that it can13 be chosen again.

UPGRADE

Vehicle/mecha upgrades cost 2-cash. Advanced *upgrades* cost double. Upgrades to *expensive* vehicles cost double.

(e.g. Original fusion engines for your Troll cost 8-cash.)

Upgrades for exo come in kits that apply the same upgrade to up to 4 exo.

When upgrades are available, choose your preferred upgrade and roll:

2D6	UPGRADE
2-5	Not available. Choose again and re-roll.
6	Critically damaged. Half price!
7-9	Good as new.
10-12	Knockoff costs 1-cash less.

BUYING MECHA

When you **have the chance to buy a mech/vehicle**, say what model you're looking for and roll +Reputation.

ROLL	RESULT
2-4	Wreck: It's a model you want, but it's *disabled* (armor track all ticked), depleted and has d3 critical damage. Half price!
5-8	Wrong model, with d2 unknown quirks.
9-11	Desired model, 1 unknown quirk, randomly chosen options.
12+	Sweet find: the model you want, with the options you want.

SELLING MECHA

When you try to **find a buyer for a vehicle**, roll +Reputation, -1 if there are quirks or damage, -1 if there's critical damage.

On a miss, a shit offer comes in at 1/4 market price. On a hit, choose: 1/2 price right now, or full price after next mission. On 10+, full price now.

NEW CONTRACT

Jump the system (1-cash) and choose a new theatre of war for your next deployment. Burn 1-SNAFU if you have any.

COSTS

EXPENSE	CASH
Hired Regent for 1 mission	1
Hired Troll for 1 mission	2
Interplanetary trip	1
Inter-system jump	2
1-supply	1
Medical care	1
Exo	3
Mecha/Vehicle/Ship	12
Expensive Mecha/Vehicle/Ship	24
Jump Ship	80

THE GM BITS—1

TURN ORDER

2GTB2 doesn't have an "I go, you go" turn sequence, even in combat. PC vs. NPC action is often simultaneous.

A common pattern is to tell the PCs what they perceive—tip them off to what the enemies are doing (or starting to do) or what's happening in the environment—then ask them how they react.

They'll make a choice, which will determine what (if any) resolution rules apply as the action is resolved.

GM: The Weiler opens fire with its rotary autocannon, exploding the brickwork next to you. What do you do?

The PC might react by scrambling for cover, hold their ground and returning fire, or ignoring the incoming fire entirely to do something desperately urgent. Each of these could trigger different resolution rules.

Move spotlight around as you would in non-combat situations—just more quickly.

Coordinated, simultaneous action is not a given.

With initiative and cohesion, a PC assault might involve everyone contributing weapons fire.

When they've lost cohesion, they act alone (unless they're commanding a group). Worse, their actions are still sequential. Your lead-ins might imply bad things happening to other PCs.

GM: Xu, as you crest the hill you see a spray of missiles arcing down towards Sheil. What do you do?

GM MOVES

As GM, you're describing what the characters see and experience. But behind the scenes you're making choices about *what* to describe, what their challenges are, and what's going to happen next. Use these GM "moves" as inspiration. The primary move is:

● **Tell them what's happening** and **ask them what they do**.

ON THE MOVE

● show them the big picture

● declare a big sweep of time goes by

● Set a scene presumptively

● Drop them into the action

PERCEPTION MOVES

● When they're in control, **talk to them as if they are their mecha**. They see and move as gracefully as with their own bodies.

● When they're hurting, **talk to them about their fragile bodies, the smoke in the cockpit, and the unresponsive controls**.

● **Paint the scenery a bit at a time**. There's no need to describe everything at once.

● When a lot is happening at once, only **tell them the most prominent stuff**, the rest is impressions.

BATTLEFIELD MOVES

● When they lose initiative, roll over them with enemy plans.

● When they lose cohesion, make coordination cost precious time.

● When they lose situational awareness, make them act on what little they know, or spend precious time learning more.

ENEMY MOVES

● act with the initiative

● seize a tactical advantage

● rally somewhere

● Inflict fire

● pin them and flank them

● retreat through rearguard defenders

● tempt them with apparent weakness or confusion

● ambush them

FOG OF WAR MOVES

● ambiguous evidence

● remind them what they don't know

WAR IS HELL MOVES

● Allies aren't where they are expected

● Allies don't do what they're supposed to

● Conflicting orders

● Drag them into logistical bullshit

● Not enough time, not enough stuff

DOWNTIME MOVES

● Give them news of the war

● That's some bullshit right there

NPC UNITS

When you introduce NPC units into the game, roll to determine a trait. Use this for individuals, old enemies, auxiliary units and NPC commanders.

Roll a Fortune and a Trouble. If the Trouble contradicts the Fortune, only the Trouble applies.

NPC GROUP TRAITS

1D6	FORTUNE	TROUBLE
1	Elites	Green
2	Favored	Hunted
3	Locals	Reckless
4	Reliable	Savages
5	Veterans	Total Fuck-Ups
6	Well Supplied	Vengeful

MERC COMPANY TRAITS

1D6	FORTUNE
1	Bushwhackers
2	Heavies
3	Nightstalkers
4	Sharpshooters
5	Swarm
6	Treadheads

Bushwhackers spring ambushes and fade into concealment.

Elites are skilled and tested. They've been in this situation before, and they know exactly what to do. +1d to weapons fire.

Favored units have friends in high places; they can pull strings and expect heroic measures when they're in trouble.

Green units start out keen (+AOF), but soon get pinned, retreat, or rout.

Heavies tend to have lots of big mecha like Hellhounds and Maulers.

Hunted units have made an enemy, whether they know it or not. Maybe someone on the other side, maybe not.

Locals know the short cuts, the pot holes, and the hiding spots.

Nightstalkers treat night-time like day, and seem unperturbed by smoke and obscurity.

Reckless units don't retreat or take cover when they should. +1d when they assault.

Reliable units are there when you need them. +2 to command, rally, etc.

Savages cause chaos, focus on the weak, and waste time looting.

Sharpshooters eat live-fire drills for breakfast, +AOF.

Swarm companies are 50% larger than usual, with extensive reliance on swift, light mecha and vehicles. When they maneuver, they take up many positions.

Total Fuck-Ups can't do anything right. +1 SNAFU if they're on your side, -1 if your enemies are stuck with them.

Treadhead mercenary companies rely on vehicles extensively, especially tanks.

Vengeful units waste time and take risks to punish enemies that have pissed them off.

Veterans don't fall for your bullshit, and aren't easily forced into acting unwisely. They're survivors, and will disobey orders rather than do something dumb.

Well Supplied units have the best gear. Their mecha (if any) have an additional upgrade or two.

FORCE REFERENCE

UNIT	TYPE	TL	SP	EV	ARMAMENT	DMG
Regulars	Infantry Squad	III	-1	+0	RPG (2d near slow), mortars (1d far slow ind area)	1/3AP
Special Forces	Infantry Squad	III	-1	+2	RPG (2d near slow)	1/1-armor
Chameleons	Infantry Squad	IV	-1	+3	RPG (2d near slow)	1/1-armor
Grummon	Supply Truck	III	+1	+0	7.5mm MG (3d AP near/far rpt), 2x Infantry Squad or 6x Exo	2
Spock APC	Armored Transport	III	+1	+0	21mm AC (2d near/far repeater), 1x Infantry Squad or 3x Exo	3/1-armor
York 6A	Light Tank	III	+2	+1	85mm AC (2d near/far slow)	3/1-armor
Canard	Medium Tank	III	+1	+0	105mm AC (2d near/far slow)	4/1-armor
Aberdeen	Battle Tank	III	+1	+0	120mm AC (3d near/far slow)	5/1-armor
Hydra	Mobile AA	III	+1	+2	SKP missile launcher (4d extreme AA munition fast)	3/1-armor
Harrow	Mobile Artillery	III	+0	+1	120mm artillery (3d extreme indirect area)	2/1-armor
Banshee	Infantry VTOL	III	+2	+1	13mm RAC (2d near/far rpt), 1x Infantry squad or 6x Exo	4
Buffalo	Armor VTOL	III	+0	+0	Quad 12mm RAC (3d near/far rpt), 2x tanks/mecha	5
TA-5	Exoskeleton	III	-1	+1	13mm AC (1d near rpt)	2
G-99	Exoskeleton	IV	+0	+2	13mm AC (1d near/far rpt)	2
Ambler	Scout Mech	III	+2	+0	20mm AC (2d near/far)	4/1-armor
Raider	Scout Mech	IV	+2	+1	21mm AC (2d near/far repeater), jump system	4/1-armor
Emmett-C	Strike Mech	III	+1	+1	Dual 105mm (4d near slow)	5
Hound	Strike Mech	IV	+2	+0	Dual Laser (2d near/ex free adv)	4
Viking	Heavy Strike Mech	III	+0	-1	Dual 105mm (4d near slow), jump system	5/1-armor
Siren	Heavy Strike Mech	IV	+0	-1	Quad laser (4d far/ex AA-capable)	6/1-armor
Weiler	Heavy Strike Mech	IV	+1	+1	24mm RAC (3d near/far repeat), laser (3d far/ex tandem)	6/1-armor
Willow	Artillery Mech	III	+1	+0	Dual RP (3d far obv ind salvo/3)	5
Assassin	Artillery Mech	IV	+1	+2	Trident 80mm Artillery (5d ex obv ind area salvo/2)	5/1-armor

CONVENTIONAL

Motorized infantry platoon: 3x Regulars, 3x Spock APCs

Airborne infantry: 3x Special Forces, 3x Banshee VTOLs

Tank platoon: 2x York 6A, 2x Canard

Heavy tank platoon: 3x Aberdeen

HQ tank platoon: 2x Aberdeen

Artillery platoon: 3x Harrow, 1x Hydra AA

Mobile Exo platoon: 2x Spock APC, 4x TA-5 Exo

Advanced Exo platoon: 1x Iguana, 4x G-99 Exo

MECHA

TL III SQUADS

Recon: 2x Ambler, 1x Emmet-C

Assault: 2x Viking, 2x Emmett-C

Heavy assault: 3x Viking, 1x Willow

Support: 3x Willow, 1x Ambler

TL IV SQUADS

Recon: 2x Raider, 1x Hound

Assault: 2x Weiler, 2x Hound

Heavy assault: 2x Siren, 2x Weiler

Support: 2x Assassin, 1x Siren

LARGER FORCES

Base garrison: 8x Infantry, 4x Canard, 2x Aberdeen

Urban occupation infantry company: 4x motorized infantry platoons (total 12x Spock APCs, 12x Regulars)

Front-line tank company: 2x tank platoon, 3x heavy tank platoon, 1x HQ tank platoon

Planetary offensive detachment: 3x heavy tank platoon, 1x TL III assault mecha platoon

Off-world mercenary company (TL IV): 1x Assault squad, 1x support squad, 1x recon squad, 1x Advanced exo platoon

WEAPON TAGS

AA anti-aircraft weapons only engage *flying* target, but with no AOF penalty

advanced systems require an extra 2-supply to repair from critical damage

area/n attacks affect up to *n* targets *near* their primary target

expensive vehicles must be resupplied and repaired separately from others

free weapons never require munition spends

indirect weapons fire over or around intervening obstacles (potentially bypassing cover) at -AOF

interplanetary vehicles

messy weapons cause substantial collateral damage

munition spend 1-munition to use (in addition to any spend required by rules)

one-shot weapons can only be used once

quick weapons go first, if there's doubt

quiet weapons don't give away the firer

repeater spend 1-munition for +1d damage, or to hit multiple targets at -1 AOF

tandem weapons can be freely used alongside other weapons

salvo/n like *repeater*, but spend up to *n* extra munitions for +1d each

slow weapons go last, if there's any doubt

DETACHMENTS

Infantry: Squad (5-10 soldiers), Platoon (3-5 squads), Company (4-6 platoons)

Armor: Platoon (3-5 vehicles), Company (4-6 platoons, ~20 vehicles)

Mecha: Squad (4-6 mecha), Company (3 squads)

Aircraft: Flight (3-5 aircraft), Squadron (4 flights), Wing (3 squadrons)

HUMAN SPACE

It's 28C, 2800 years after humanity began spreading out into the galaxy. Jumps ships spread out from Earth along veins of hyperspatial equivalence. There, they found an endless network of resource rich star systems dotted by marginally habitable worlds.

THE CBE

In 25C, a cataclysmic gamma burst event (CBE) from the galactic core began snuffing out worlds, blasting off atmospheres and shifting or breaking hyperspace veins.

THE SELENBERG DENDRITE

A long, branching filament of hyperspace veins connecting a hundred systems. It was the first major vein to be colonized, and the first to be struck by the CBE.

Due to its lie along the galactic arm, the Dendrite systems were all affected within a ten-year span, leaving no time for preparation or evacuation.

The cataclysm interrupted Earth's influence, and fractured the survivors of the Dendrite into a hundred tiny nations competing for resources.

Today, affiliation with 'the Dendrite' is a statement of human unity (though the means of achieving unity differ radically throughout the Dendrite).

THE CONCORDAT

With a century to prepare, the worlds rimward of the dendrite began a massive ship-building effort in an attempt to move as much of their population as possible onto to jump-capable ships.

The survivors of this project jumped through the CBE wave to find themselves the unchallenged masters in a crippled galaxy.

The Concordat was founded from this opportunity. It is comparatively small in population, but maintains its supremacy by violently opposing tech level VI development and the production of TL V weaponry anywhere within the Dendrite.

Concordat jump ships can travel along higher-order hyperspatial potentials, letting them make jumps that other ships cannot. As such, Concordat controlled space is a long, diffuse network superimposed on the rest of human space.

Characters from Concordat are usually exiles or defectors. (Facism doesn't work out for everyone.)

FACTORI

The first robotic Factori ships were observed in 28C, far behind the wave.

Its origin is disputed, but the popular theory is it began as an automated pre-colonial support system at the far end of the Dendrite. Damaged by the CBE, it began self-replicating.

The Factori control minds seem uninterested in technological development, so they can only jump along the most stable veins.

Factori spreads slowly, starting bizarre terraforming, resource extraction, and automated factory production wherever it goes.

Factori project ships occasionally produces ghost habitats, seemingly ready for humans to move into, although these are generally in inconvenient or uninhabitable spots.

Factori IFF can be spoofed, with care, which has allowed a few human communites (some quite large) to co-exist within Factori projects. Characters of Factori lineage are from these communities.

They live alongside the robots, peacefully or parasitically, as Factori operations are vulnerable to determined 'poachers'.

Factori weapons development is primitive, but their 'immune responses' are destructive, overwhelming, and poorly aimed. Purposeful or collateral damage to Factori operations is treated severely.

Factori minds suck at conversation, but they do understand resource needs and trade,

Many have been known to sell resources for human cash, which they use to buy advanced tech supplies for mind maintenance or specialized projects. A few Factori centers have been transformed by visiting humans into pleasant trade habs.

Travel by Factori jump ship is a common way to get around (and for dropships with spoofed IFF, very cheap).

HOLDBORN

Babies are born in space every day, but the holdborn consider space their home. A majority of the Rimward wave-jump ships didn't join the Concordat. Many of their inhabitants settled on Dendrite worlds as they became habitable again, but the ships still remain.

They're non-militarized, and they maintain a frosty understanding with the Concordat.

CYSTS

Very high TL worlds, usually in systems unreachable by crappier jump systems. Powerful interferometers (or post cards) show the the rings they're building, but they're deeply isolated, with the exception if Kilo Cyst which stood in philosophical opposition to the Concordat, and sold high-tech arms into the Dendrite for a few centuries before going quiet.

Cyst families sometimes return to the Dendrite for philanthropic, ethical, religious or other reasons.

EARTH

Mostly ice-covered now; still a huge population center, but deep under the glaciers. Insular, Earth is in many ways a prototypical cyst.

The blast side of Caplan IV is a million square clicks of sun-drenched desert, and the location of one of the Dendrite's most drawn-out wars.

The Republic of Darna and the polar Fiedan Conjugate have been fighting for forty years to control the resource rich territories (bedrock radioactives) and a network of hundreds of pre-blast facilities.

The Republic military is funded by five refining guilds. The guilds compete ruthlessly, and their mistrust and lack of cooperation extends into strategic and tactical planning.

As the Republic military planning committees are composed entirely of guild personnel, missions are regularly compromised by guild interference:

● Missions may be loaded down with guild-specific side objectives.

● Missions may have been deliberately planned to interfere with other friendly operations.

● Missions may have been designed to harm the reputation of a planning committee leader, rather than to achieve a military objective.

● Supply lines and logistical support are erratic at best.

● Officers are regularly replaced, so missions are planned by inexperienced personnel.

The Republic's active propaganda operation blames the constant screw-ups and on Fiedan operatives, the troops themselves, or the excesses of off-world mercenaries.

The atmosphere on deployment bases tends to be bureaucratic, bloody-minded and suspicious. Occasionally, fights break out between units aligned with different guilds.

Companies taking contracts with the Darnan Republic are advised to be careful.

The good news is that they'll take just about anybody.

EMPLOYMENT

Reputation: Any

Mission Pay: 2-cash/PC

Mission Starting SNAFU: +4d Direct

Resupply: 3-supply/mission, stocked

Repair: 2-damage/mech, 2x critical repairs

Medical Plan: 2-harm/mission, medical treatment 1-cash

Salvage: +1 cash for TL V+ salvage

Buy/Sell: -1 to mecha sales, reputation irrelevant

2D6	MISSION TYPE
2	Garrison duty
3	Ambush
4	Escort
5-6	Defense
7-8	Patrol
9-10	Raid
10-11	Assault
12	Offensive

2D6	ALLIES / OPPOSITION
2	Off-world merc mecha company*
3	Artillery platoon + light tank platoon
4	TL III assault mecha platoon
5	Counter-sabotage patrol: 2x APC, 8x TA-5 Exo
6	d2 Tank platoons
7	Fiedan TL III recon mecha squad (2x Ambler, 1x Emmett-C)
8	6x Grummon trucks, roll for escort
9	d3 Motorized infantry platoons (3x Spock APC, 3x Infantry each)
10	Roll twice*, ignore this entry
11	Air support (3 Sylphs)
12	Front-line tank company*

* +2 cash if this is known mission opposition

2D6	PLACES
2-4	Orbit denial battery (93a)
5	Rocktop rail launch facility
6	Convergence supply depot (SD 238)
7	Transport causeway "444"
8	Gzilt thorium refinery
9	Andorris Canyons
10	Balliac Lake Bed (dry)
11	Mesa Fields
12	Salt Crustfields

SNAFU EXAMPLES

A nearby allied mission has gone awry

Post-insertion new orders

The rust-bucket evac vehicle is down 8km away for maintenance.

Surprise! Your mission is actually a diversion to distract from the real mission. Double the opposition.

Magnetic grit storm: 3d Direct

Misidentification leads to friendly fire—air strike, artillery, or a 'welcome home' salvo.

Shortages: 1-supply resupply, no buying.

Intel was completely wrong, you're 30km from where you need to be

2D6	UNIT DISPOSITION
2	Total disarray: on fire, repairing
3	Mired in some logistical nightmare
4	Resupplying
5-6	On the move, weary
7	On the move, alert
8-9	Geared up, ready for action
11	Digging in, fortifying, alert
12	Fighting

2D6	OPPORTUNITY (-SNAFU)
2	Resentful regulars stage friendly fire, or a base-side ass-kicking.
3	Theft at base: lose d6 supply/cash.
4	The good techs arrive; overhaul up to 3 mecha.
5-6	Mech or Vehicle has come up for sale. Roll at -2 on the Mecha chart.
7-8	Cycled out for R&R. Everyone heals 2-harm. Roll another *opportunity*.
9-10	Dropship for sale (-1 to the *buy* roll)
11-12	Contract has expired. Renew for 3-cash/mission, or spend 1-cash to change theaters.

PLATEAU OFFENSIVE OF 28.04C

As an alternative to randomly generated missions, this is a campaign of linked series of missions, representing an offensive deep into Fiedan Conjugate territory.

Players start with mission A or B, and can select connected missions after that.

A: EYES ON CITY 31

Fiedan special forces have dropped an ECM node into City 31, that's letting them or-bit-drop exo into abandoned refinery city.

We're holding back their heavy reinforce-ments, but the force concentration is stop-ping us from advancing.

Get in, hit that ECM and get out. Move quick-ly, the place is thick with exo.

SNAFU: Actually, there's an Iguana as well.

SNAFU: "New orders: the main force is mov-ing north, support the 82nd Banshee VTOL infantry in clearing the exo."

B: LAST TRAIN FROM RLF

Fiedan's 2nd division is actively pulling out of the Rocktop Rail Launch Facility; the rail has been firing constantly to evac as much thorium as they can.

We have forward eyes in the plaza, so we know the RLF is only guarded by a York light tank platoon. Inject fast, disrupt the launches until the main armor division can reinforce you.

SNAFU: The Yorks are actually waiting for a merc recon mecha squad to do a VIP extraction from the launch facility.

SNAFU: A full thorium hauler convoy arrives, with escorting Canard tanks and Grummon infantry squads. They intend to launch the thorium.

C: CRACKER JACK RUN

A retreating Fiedan light armor company has been held up by a grit storm. Take them out before they get away.

SNAFU: The grit storm picks up again, just as your dropship lands.

SNAFU: It's a trap. They are supported by a flight of Slyph ground support fighters.

SNAFU: It's actually the terrain that slowed them; they drove 300m onto a mineral crust over a brine slough and are now hung up. Depth varies from 1m-4m.

D: PARKING LOT BLUES

4th Wing has destroyed three companies of armor on the Sorona Flats. Finish off survi-vors and patrol the area until ground forces arrive.

SNAFU: It's a civilian convoy. It's horrible.

SNAFU: Off-world mecha mercs are salvag-ing. A squad plus salvage trucks and a Troll.

E: RUMBLE IN THE RED

A huge fleet of automated thorium extractors (8-dmg) operates here, protected by a Fie-dan regulars TL III mech platoon. Keep them busy until a control team (Darna elite infantry in 2x Banshee VTOLs) can identify and con-trol the fleet command vehicle.

SNAFU: VTOLs brought down by friendly fire (some automated AA was stranded there last year). Rescue them, 5km east of fleet.

**SNAFU:** 5 extractors conceal rocket pod booby traps (4d near far salvo/2)

F: THE BIG WHITE LIGHT

The plateau's distributed lasing array (DLA) has fried all our orbital assets. We need it stopped, but intact: penetrate the control center built deep in the Chey Cliff mine and take control.

The mine is 2km long straight-ish tunnel into the plateau side. Expect suicidal resistance from a platoon of Emmetts and Vikings. Air insertion will get you fried, you'll need to walk in (-1 munition).

SNAFU: The mine lights are out. Headlights work to *tight* range, but make you *exposed*.

SNAFU: Fiedan has moved a bunch of lase nodes to fire down the mine shaft (2d blinding).

FIEDAN PLATEAU
000120-000133
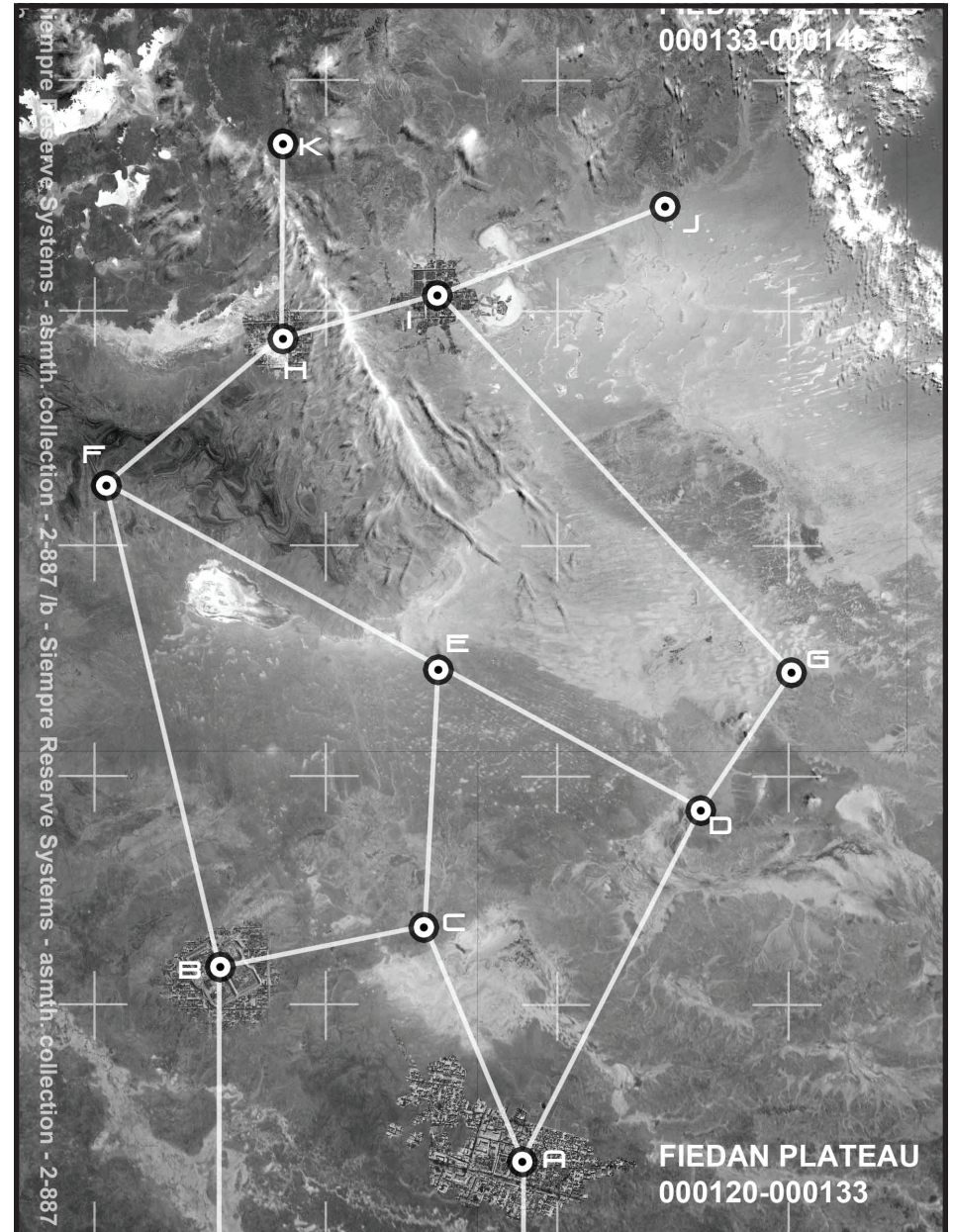
SNAFU: Stray comms reveals your mission is a diversion, and there's probably *two* pla-toons of mecha down here.

SNAFU: HQ thinks you're dead, and is start-ing to blast the DLA with long artillery. Better hurry, or your pay bonus will be gone.

G: FLYPAPER GULCH

A rapid blitz has managed to bring a company of Hydra AA in range of a Fiedan canyon VTOL forward air base. The Sylphs on the ground can't take off, but their light armor is threatening to push back the Hydras.

Get in there and fuck up that airfield before the Sylphs can launch.

SNAFU: Fiedan chameleons are standing up ECM pods to jam the Hydra's targeting systems. If this keeps up, we're gonna get strafed to pieces.

SNAFU: There's a Troll on the canyon floor with a platoon of Aberdeen tanks.

H: TOP OF THE WORLD

Fiedan has stalled our massive armor push to reach Delta city on the upper plateau. Off-world mecha company with a load of Assassins has made the ascent impossible.

Drop in behind them with some other mercs we've hired [roll for which], and get that heat off us before they're able to stop the assault entirely.

SNAFU: The LZ is extremely hot. 2x Sylph, 2x Raiders are waiting.

SNAFU: AA from Delta city takes out your companion dropship's lift engines at 500m, no survivors.

SNAFU: HQ calls off the armor push, you're high and dry.

I: BAD NEWS FIRST

Echo City is a dense network of industrial and logistics operations. We're going street by street to clear out Fiedan resistance. Take the south-east district and work your way to city center where you'll need up with 8th company for the final push into the north refinery district.

Expect resistance of any kind: infantry, heavy armor, Fiedan mecha, off-world mercenaries.

SNAFU: Skyscraper collapse pins several of your vehicles (2d direct).

SNAFU: Several of the street approaches to the center are mined (3d incidental messy).

SNAFU: Raiders are waiting on top of reinforced buildings.

SNAFU: 8th company makes way better time than you, but starts taking long-range, heavy artillery at the city center.

J: FOUR TOWERS

Four towers is a pre-blast jump ship construction facility. Four struts, each a kilometer tall, once supported a continent-class colony ship meant to save a million lives.

At least two off-world mecha companies that are giving us a hard time are operating from here. Hit and run is the name of the game: disable their dropships to cut their operating range.

SNAFU: A squad of Raiders is on patrol with camdrones. Gonna make it hard to sneak up.

SNAFU: Your ride out of here has been spotted by two Angels.

K: PAYDAY SURPRISE

Comms intercepts reveal that a contract dispute with [mech company] has resulted in Fiedan confiscating a Weiler and a Long Gun Hellhound. The mecha have been stashed in a refinery depot near Mesa 221. They're due to be shipped out today. If you're fast, that's some sweet salvage.

SNAFU: [Mech company] stole them back this morning and is ground sledding them out east toward their dropship now. Fiedan armor is pursuing.

SNAFU: Early morning pre-emptive assault: a flight of heavy VTOLs drops a squad of Fiedan TL III heavy mecha on your doorstep. Wake up, soldier!

After completing mission 'K', the company automatically gets a contract expiry opportunity.