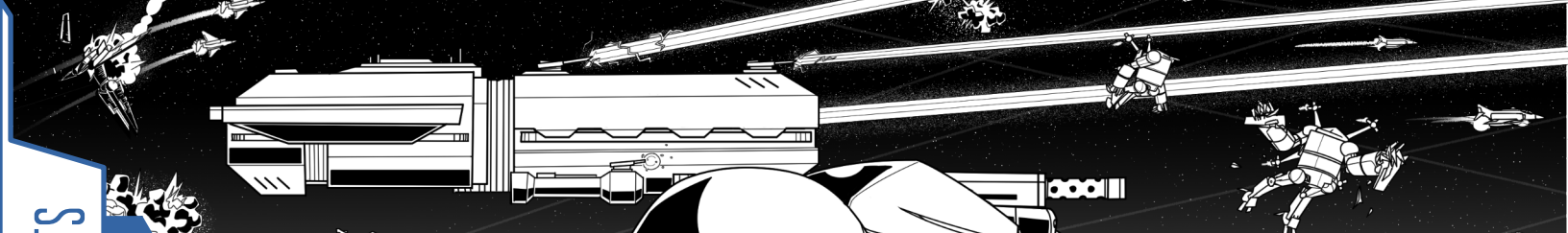


BEAM SABER

A FORGED IN THE DARK GAME BY AUSTIN RAMSAY





CREDITS

Beam Saber is designed by Austin Ramsay.

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

Thank you to all the people supporting me through patreon and Kickstarter.

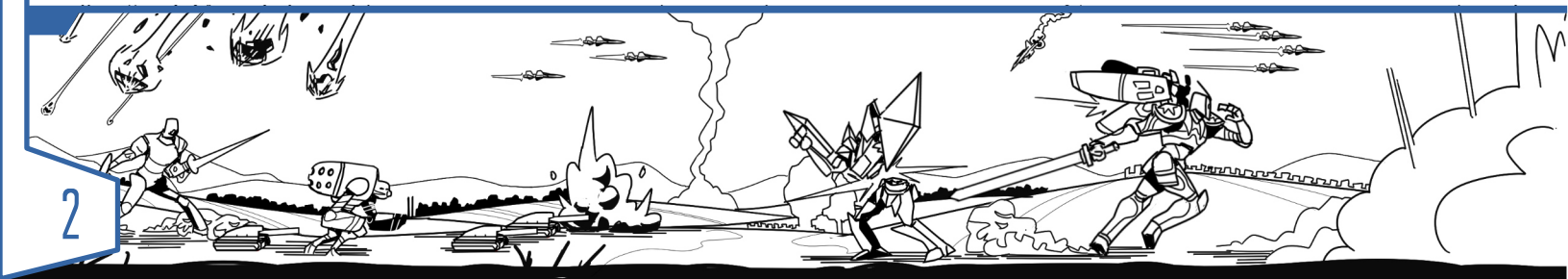
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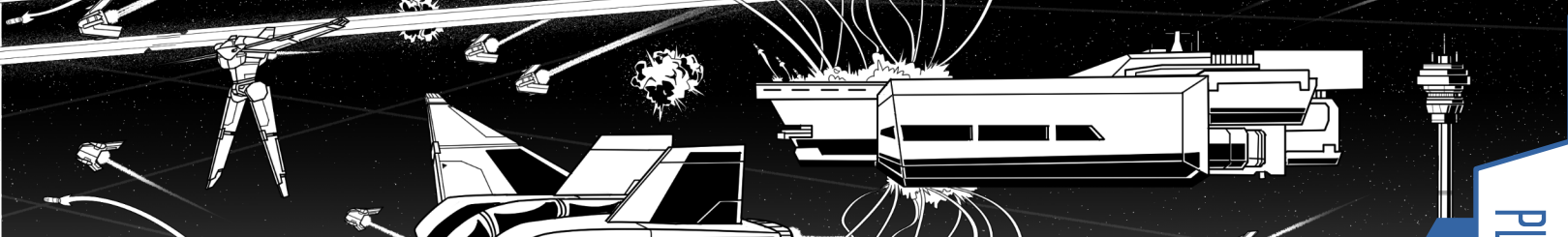
- ◆ Editing and Page Layout by Christine Blight.
- ◆ Opening story by Austin Walker.
- ◆ Microfic by Takuma Okada.
- ◆ Final Editing by Lauren McManamon.
- ◆ Final Layout by Sasha Reneau.
- ◆ Cover art by Vincent Patrick.
- ◆ Interior art by Vincent Patrick, Cory McDaniel, Mal Peters, Christine Blight, Atlas Sellman, Imani Kelker, Roberto Zoreda Ichaso, Andrew Ferris, Ardal Then, Jess Whitmore, Ben Fleuter, and Sasha Reneau.
- ◆ Sensitivity Reading by Shay Erlich, Ray Berry.
- ◆ Cartography by Kate Moody, Christine Blight.

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PLAYTESTERS

Hannah Banks, Ray Berry, Darren Brockes, Cassandra Connors, Steven Dennis, Mara Dyne, EveryZig314, Josh Good, James Horgan, Sarah M, Cory McDaniel, Mephil, Takuma Okada, Mal Peters, Sean R., Erik Rådman, Sasha Reneau, Ethan Steele, Måns Silfwerplatz Thunström, Yabvi, Jessica Whitmore





PLAYER RESOURCES

There are many *Beam Saber* resources for both players and GMs and they can all be found at austin-ramsay.itch.io/beam-saber-resources. These resources include:

- ▶ Printable pilot sheets
- ▶ Printable Squad and Faction sheets
- ▶ Printable reference sheets
- ▶ Printable Region information sheets
- ▶ Printable maps
- ▶ Digital pilot sheets
- ▶ Digital Squad and Faction sheets
- ▶ Digital reference sheets
- ▶ Digital Region information sheets
- ▶ Digital stream overlays

All printable sheets are designed by Sasha Reneau (twitter.com/sasha_reneau).

Maps are designed by Kate Moody (twitter.com/kate_moody).

All digital sheets are designed by Erik Rådman (twitter.com/erikradman) and updated by Cory McDaniel (twitter.com/Hadrian).

Stream Overlays are designed by Cory McDaniel (twitter.com/Hadrian).

If you want some inspiration, try the Beam Saber Bot (twitter.com/BEAM_SABER_BOT)

Check out austin-ramsay.itch.io/beamsaber for additional material including exciting supplemental rules!

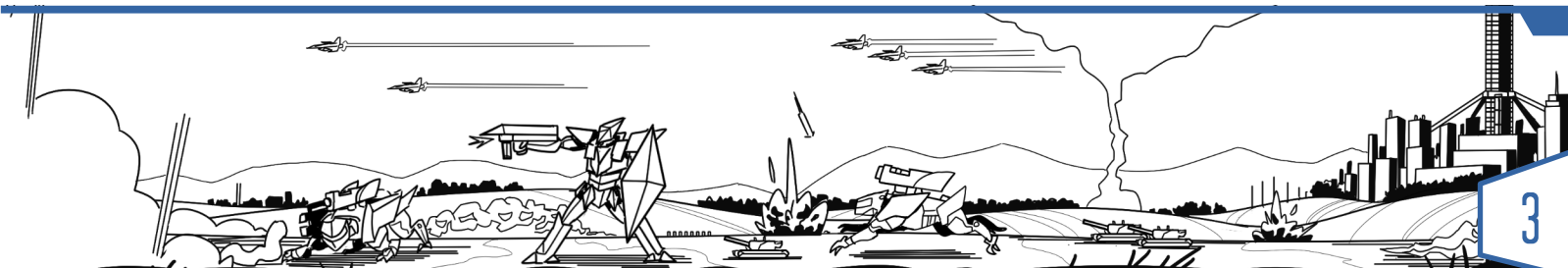


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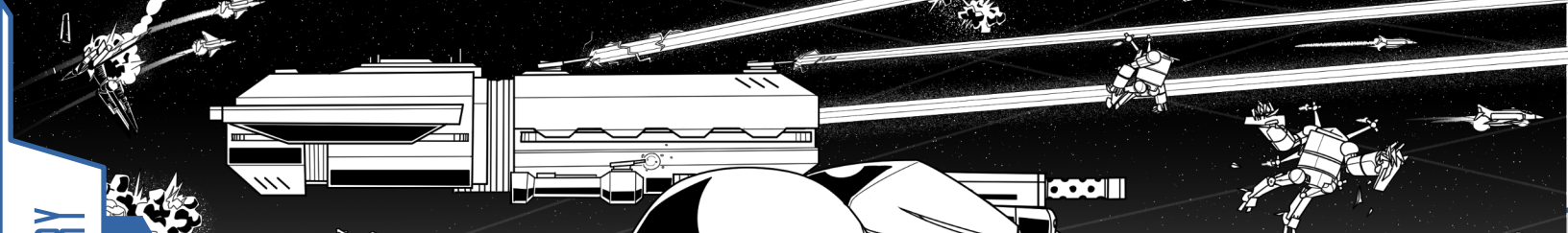
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0: INTRO STORY

Violet Viola could not wait until the explosions began to rock her mech. For the past 10 minutes, she'd been skating her AWW in a clean line across the snow-covered steppe, hovering across fields of frozen wildflowers and between low hillocks. Yet as peaceful as her surroundings were, inside she was a mess of turmoil and tension.

As a captain and designated ace in the DFS' 561st mechanized Infantry Division, Violet was plenty familiar with pre-mission jitters. But normally there were a half dozen ways to manage those. Re-check your AWW's diagnostics. Do some preliminary sensor scans. Crack a couple of jokes with the rest of the unit.

But this AWW—a stolen Norrish blockade breaker called the Neon Bolide—was a risk to pilot as it was, so the idea of poking around its internals wasn't particularly appealing. And jokes weren't on the docket: Keeping radio silence was imperative for this op. Besides, she was alone out here.

This was silent territory. The loud sort of silence, where the air pressure, the passive whine of your machine's electronics, and the pulse moving through your heart, your wrists, and your thumbs becomes deafening. Maybe that's why she felt so tense. If not for the odd fox and the wavering shape of a distant starling flock, she would swear that she was the only living thing left on Earth.

She knew that wasn't true, of course. Any second now, Artillery Commander Ashton Brace—one of Viola's key partners on this operation and, complicating things, also formerly a "key partner" of hers in another way—would launch high-powered artillery rounds from a DFS forward operating base about 20 miles northwest of her current position. If Ash dialed it in right, they should slam into the ground just meters away from her AWW, lifting ice and earth into the air in a manmade hailstorm.

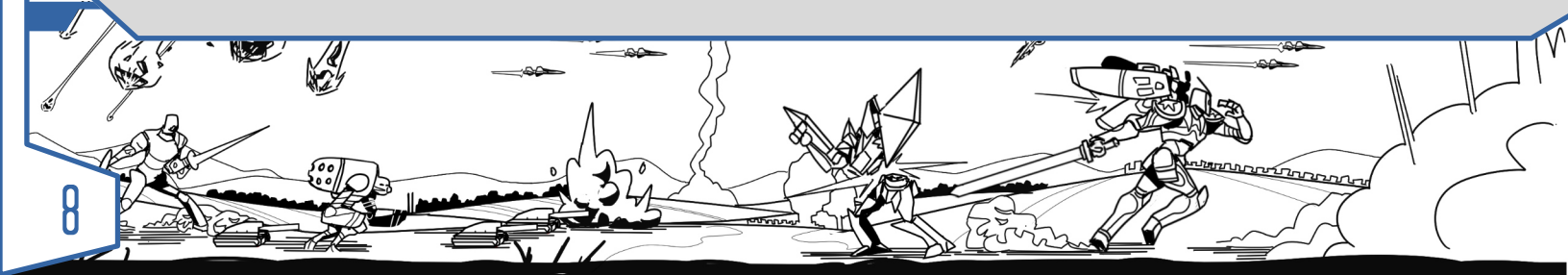
Maybe then, Violet hoped, she'd find her focus. She knew she'd need it.

One week prior...

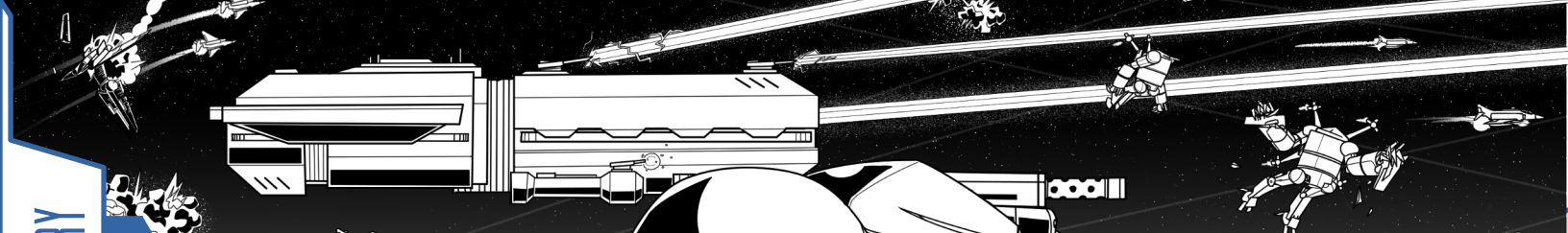
"Even in the most intractable war, dramatic opportunities that shift the balance of power emerge. This is one of those moments." General Ador was the definition of a career officer. His hair had only greyed in the last few years, but his stern demeanor had been with him for decades. "Capitalizing on a moment like this requires more than precision. It requires faith, which is why you three are here."

Violet did her best to hold her posture steady. She'd been pulled off the front line of a brutal, year-long campaign into Celestial Myriad territory, where she gained her confirmed ace status and lost more than a handful of friends. So she knew this would be something big. But a compliment from Ador? It was unheard of, except for when he was about to send someone off on a suicide mission. Is that what this was?

Her two compatriots were less committed to hiding their reactions. Ashton dropped their eyes to the ground, just for a moment. For years, Violet thought that meant that Ashton wasn't confident they could do what was being asked of them—whether that was managing a long-range missile battery or joining Violet on the dance floor—but eventually she learned that it was just a quiet moment of resentment or resignation.







She had less insight on what to make of Cian Song's open-faced gawking, let alone what came out of his mouth next.

"Just tell us you're sending us to die, General." His boiling brogue was playful and practiced, smooth up top, but carefully fried at the end of the ever-so-dramatic statement.

Violet knew of Song by reputation only. He was supposedly "the elite of the elite," a top-rank infiltrator, and a master of deniable operations. A spy, in other words. And now, she was learning, a spy with a big goddamn mouth.

"What I'm sure Commander Song means," Violet said quickly, hoping to intercede before Ador, "is that we're pros. We can take it if..." She paused for a moment. "If you're sending us into something especially hot."

"I know you can take it. That's why you were chosen. And not all of you will be going into the fray. Commander Brace will be sitting right here." Ador rested his hands on an indirect firing station in one corner of the large, deserted war room.

Ash's eyes met with Violet's for a moment. An unspoken apology? A probing glance? Some gestures were irreducible, Violet realized.

Song raised his eyebrows. "And where will Captain Viola and I be headed, then, General?"

"Best to explain the plan all at once, Song. Alabama, show us Operation Flash Flood."

A drawling, sing-song voice pierced the electronic hum of the room. "Right away, General."

Alabama, the base's dedicated proxy, whose invisible presence was easy to forget, kicked into action immediately. A sunrise-bright laser display jolted alive, drawing a floating, 3D map of the planet in the space between the four DFS veterans.

Across the orange-hued atlas, a few spots lit up in blue. The first, marked with a large A, appeared as a bright cylinder nestled within the vast debris field that orbited the planet.

"Some friends of ours in Mr. Song's Intelligence Division recently delivered us this."

"What is it?" Ashton let their curiosity take the space that worry would otherwise demand.

"An orbital cannon."

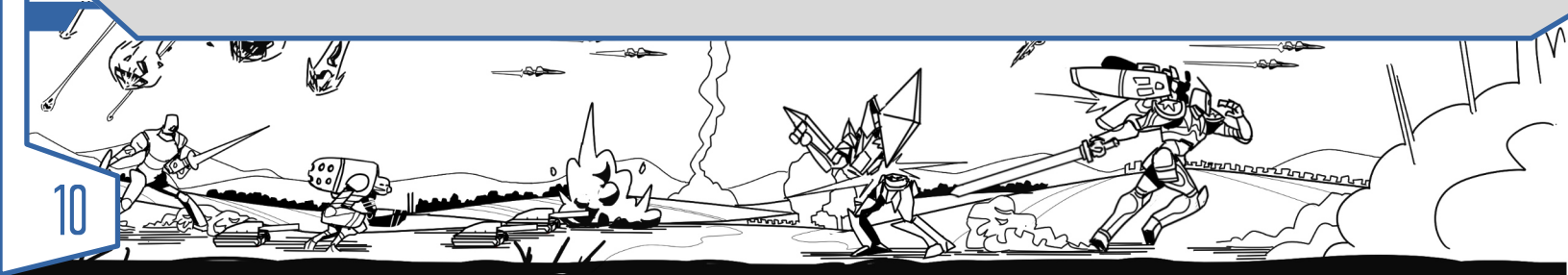
"But that's impossible, sir. The debris field—"

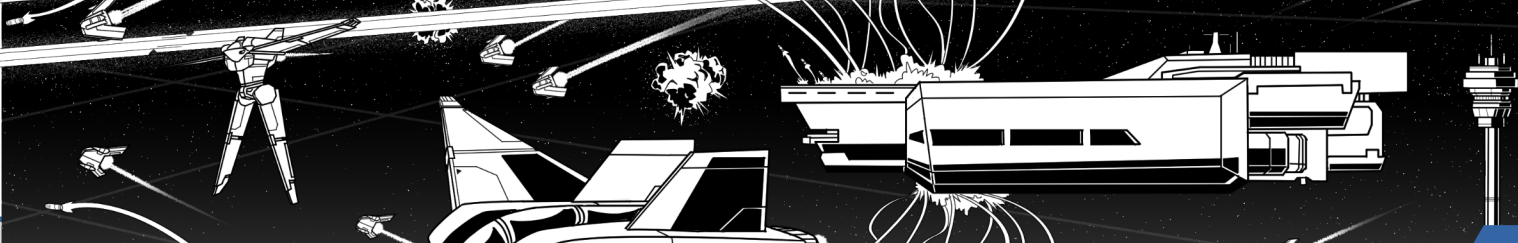
"Yes. Until now, the debris field has kept anyone from bringing new sats online, let alone ones that are meant to deliver munitions groundside. But that's changed. Alabama?"

The proxy refocused the vector light display on a closeup of the cylinder. A rotating info panel popped up, featuring diagnostic data, technical specifications, and the bright, bold banner of Exodus Republic Incorporated. Underneath the station, a name appeared: High Water.

A smirk grew across Song's face. "The corpos built a collision-hardened space gun, and you want us to take it? Didn't know these two did much zero-g work."

"We're certified." Violet's quick rebuttal was automatic more than it was deeply held. The 561st's





work was difficult, but the reward was a sense of pride so deeply embedded that it grew its own heart and pumped its own blood.

"Regardless," Ador said, forcefully cutting off any inter-department bickering that was about to occur, "Song, you will be the only one here heading to Project High Water."

The display zoomed in further, bringing the station into full view before bisecting it like a dollhouse. The proxy then began to cycle through possible interior layouts.

"You and a team of hand-picked operatives will breach this facility and assume control of it. At that point, you will connect Commander Brace to the system's remote fire. From there, they will make the most important shot of their career."

Alabama re-adjusted the map yet again, this time focusing on Earth before zooming into the Norrish Might region. The bright laser lights sketched a vector map of hills, valleys, river tributaries, and a long highway that cut through them. Along the highway, an armored convoy appeared in the charming clarity of bright blue polygons.

Ador continued as three of the vehicle icons were marked with targets. "The supposed 'Adamant Council' of Nor? Well, this convoy will be carrying three of their five members. And we can hit all of them with a single shot from the High Water."

Song swiveled his head around, as if weighing up options at an open-air market. "Three out of five ain't bad, don't get me wrong. But the ruling families have a deep, deep bench, General. Those spots will be filled within a week or two."

"Yes," Violet said, putting the pieces together. "But that's all we need, isn't it, General? Those units we've been pushing into Myriad territory. They're not for hitting the church at all... They're a Norrish invasion force."

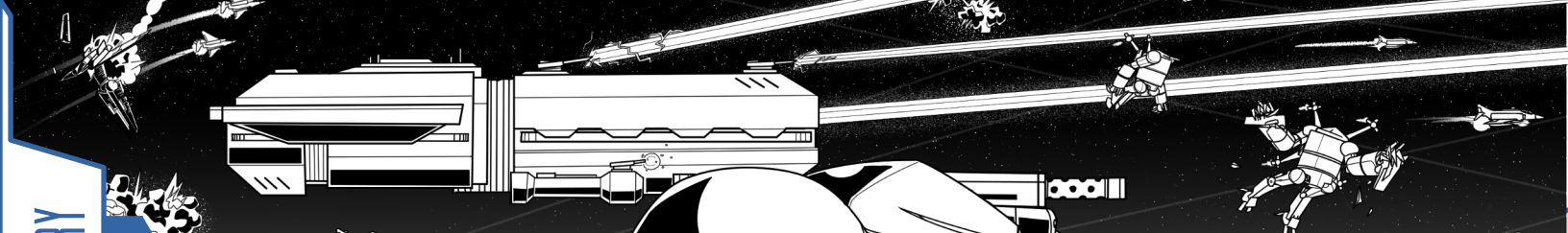
Ador nodded slowly, as if to perform the proper ritual punctuation for the situation. He'd been in charge of the recent advances beyond Journey City and into the so called "Lands of the Faithful." The fighting had been fierce, with many soldiers dead on both sides, to say nothing of the countless civilians whose lives were "destabilized"—to use the DFS' most gruesome euphemism.

"So this whole last year of fighting was, what, a feint?" Ashton's eyes flared—another familiar look for Violet, though one that didn't take an intimate knowledge of Ash to understand. "How many people did you order to their graves for this? For an opportunity to maybe take some territory from the self-appointed kings of space?"

The general's voice grew low and gravely, reaching an approximation of the solemnity he knew was required for moments like these. "Mx. Brace. I'm well aware of your objections to the current campaign. I read and consider every submission to our yearly perspective requests. And I sympathize with your position. Many good soldiers have died—"

"Not only soldiers."

"You're right. Many good people died during the Celestial Campaign. But right here, right now, we have an opportunity to make their sacrifices mean something. We can liberate Might, chase the Norrish nobles out of Izya, and move one step closer to the dream that all of us in this room share—one



where Earth is a democratic planet, where people fight for their beliefs, not on a bloody battlefield, but in the sanctity of a state house."

Ash sighed. They'd flirted with more "radical" ideologies while in Education. But it was what they perceived as a simple lack of realism that drove them away from heterodoxy and back to core DFS doctrine. Now, just as when in school, they slumped back towards compliance with near imperceptibility.

"Of course, sir. Apologies."

"Not needed. I run a free war room. We're at our best when we're speaking our minds."

Violet couldn't imagine a better opportunity to finally ask the deadly question that had been on her mind for minutes now. "General. I see where Commanders Song and Brace fit into this. But as far as I can tell, you don't need an AWV pilot at all."

"You couldn't be any more wrong, Captain..."

--

As it turned out, the only reason that Exodus hadn't used Project High Water to wipe its rivals off the map was because, like any serious artillery, it needed a spotter—someone on the ground close enough to place a laser designator on the target. Even then, nothing was guaranteed. Given orbital mechanics, potential interference from the debris field, and the ever-so-slight time delay, a good shot required both a competent observer in the field and a steady-handed, sharp-minded indirect fire specialist at the controls.

Which was why Violet Viola and Ashton Brace were chosen for this assignment. Over the past few years, they'd risen through the ranks in missions much like these. Violet's acumen as a pilot kept her safe (and her enemies distracted) long enough for Ash to dial in the shot and pull the trigger. They were a one-two punch that could extend the reach of any front.

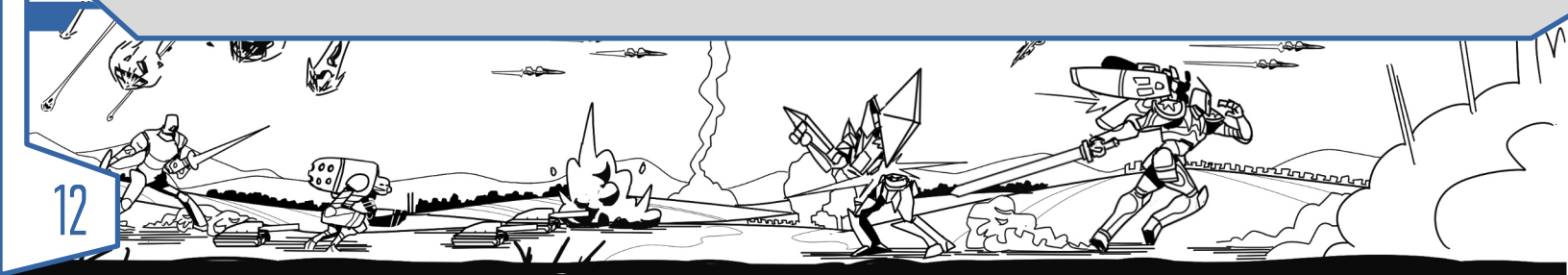
Unfortunately for Violet, this mission wasn't at any front. It was by all definition behind enemy lines. Twice, in some ways.

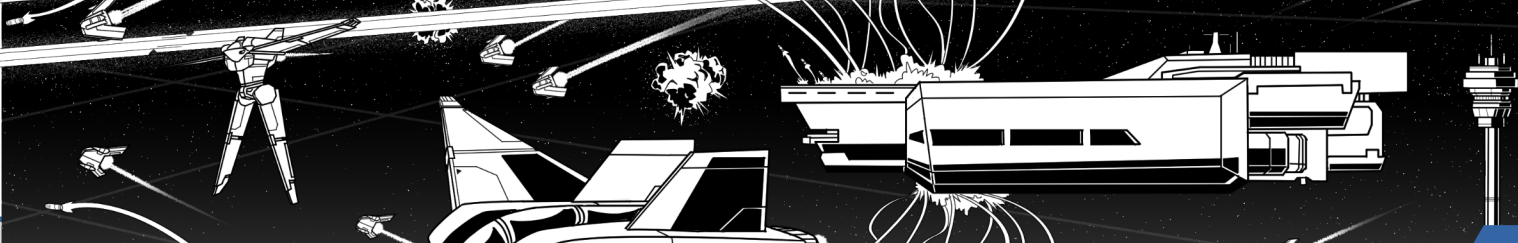
Ten minutes ago, Violet left an FOB in barely-secured Myriad territory. Now, she was crossing into the far reaches of Nor's Might region. If she were in her usual machine—a custom variation of the DFS standard Balisong unit—she would be picked up first by any Celestial Myriad recon units in the vicinity, and second by the vigilant guards of the Norrish convoy she'd be rushing towards.

Which is why she instead spent the last week learning the ins and outs of a stolen Norrish prototype called the Neon Bolide.

Violet found herself growing fond of the unit over the course of the week. Like her custom Balisong, the Bolide was humanoid in shape and lightly armed (carrying only a handheld machine gun for combat encounters). But unlike her usual unit, which prized stability and steady footwork, this machine moved like a well-greased pinball. What set it apart was its distinctive anti-gravity field, a feature that could propel the Bolide across land and sky with incredible mobility and also deflect incoming fire—a sort of ad hoc forcefield.

Designed as a blockade breaker, the AWV had the typical curved and rounded features of Norrish





design. Painted with the standard Norrish teal and black, and sporting a recon division maroon designation stripe, the machine passed as a scout returning home. If it wasn't for the enhanced security brought by the convoy's presence, it would almost certainly get her to Might proper. In a situation like this, however, a little extra convincing would be necessary.

Which is why, finally, the distinctive whistle of incoming artillery shells filled the air as Violet and the Neon Bolide moved across the frozen terrain.

Twenty miles away, Ashton initiated the opening firing pattern, which they'd carefully designed and, if such a word could be applied to the actions of cannons and mechs, choreographed along with Violet during their week of preparation.

Cian was the first to mention in passing that their ploy was like a dance, though it was impossible to know if it was just a joke at the former couple's expense. Sure, their breakup happened on a dance floor last year, and yes, Cian was a spy. But c'mon. Why waste time on trivia about them?

At the time, Violet dismissed the comparison. They were talking about advanced military hardware, not a night out on the town. And besides, Violet knew better than anyone that Ash didn't like to dance. Why risk bringing their history into a mission that was already so fraught?

But now, as a rhythmic barrage of explosions echoed through the hills, playing a driving beat as catchy as any Journey City Top 40 track, Violet could see—could feel—that the argument had merit.

She danced through the explosions. The ground around her shook, and she shook back. The Bolide became an extension of her body—it carried her through the air between blasts, letting her sway, bounce, and twist. Each new blast felt like them, like Ashton, pushing and pulling on her. They couldn't speak. They couldn't look at each other. There was only this: lovely, firm action at a distance.

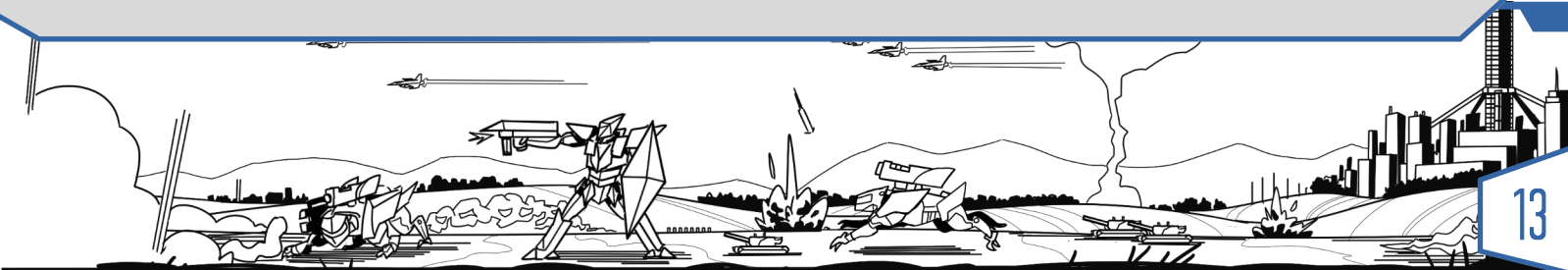
Unlike Violet, Ashton adopted the comparison to choreography right away. Sure, they didn't like dancing, but they were a bookworm with a combined degree in Applied Logics and Liberal Arts. They loved metaphors.

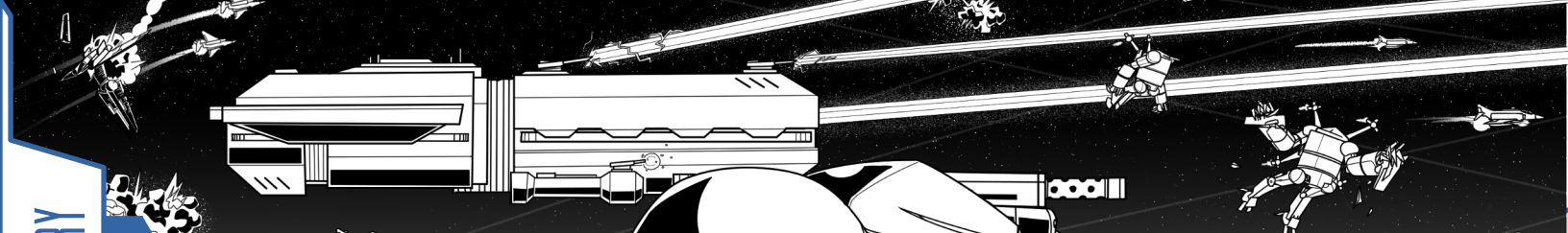
So, they leaned into it. On paper, this plan was only about making it *look* like the Neon Bolide pilot was fleeing for her life. Calculate the right elevation and azimuth, calibrate the gun batteries to account for shifting trajectories, and execute the firing sequence in time. But Cian was right—this was a dance, and even Ash knew that you didn't wow anyone on the floor without adding some flair to the standard steps.

For all of Violet's intuitions about Ash, that was one thing that she never quite understood. How could someone with such devotion to detail and self-expression refuse to bring either of those traits into their relationship? Why did everything feel so perfunctory? Left with pencil, paper, and time, Ash could create a whole world. But ask them to let you into it or, god forbid, let you craft it along with them? Out of the question.

Violet was an orphan turned adopted army brat. She'd spent most of her life finding someone with the warmth that she knew Ash had to offer. So when she learned that Ash kept most of that warmth to herself, the sting was especially sharp. It wouldn't be fair to call Ash cold, but they were distant. Afraid, maybe, that letting someone in all the way carried the greatest risk there was.

But here, now, there was no heavy atmosphere that could come between them, no fear that they





might spot a gesture of rejection. There was only the feeling of finger on trigger, the sound of cannon fire, the low rumble in the air, and the smoke, fire, and spark. If Violet Viola really was riding towards her death, she was glad that she'd found Ash's touch again before getting there.

For a moment, her hand trembled over the comms switch, ready to break protocol so she could send one final farewell to her ex. But before she could, it squawked up at her.

"Unit NB-0223. This is Council Chief Guard Castor Kryvonis. Identify yourself and your circumstance. You are not clear for approach." The speaker's voice was bold and heavy, but his melodic cadence suggested a Norrish accent.

Violet was not so deep into her reverie as to forget what she was supposed to do in this situation.

"Commander, I am part of a classified unit. I am carrying vital information about the DFS dogs and their war with the Celestial Myriad."

"Pilot, do not approach beyond marker alpha. Hold position and wait for escort. If you proceed beyond marker alpha, you will be considered hostile."

Violet's HUD flashed, and marker alpha appeared. It was two miles beyond Ash's artillery range, but nearly ten short of the laser designator's range. If she was going to line up the shot for the High Water, she'd have to take Kryvonis on directly.

"Roger that, sir. Heading to marker apha." The Bolide sped up, skating down a hill. As Violet picked up momentum, she cleared her mind and prepared to pilot right into the enemy's scopes. This better be worth it, she thought. And Cian better have that station.

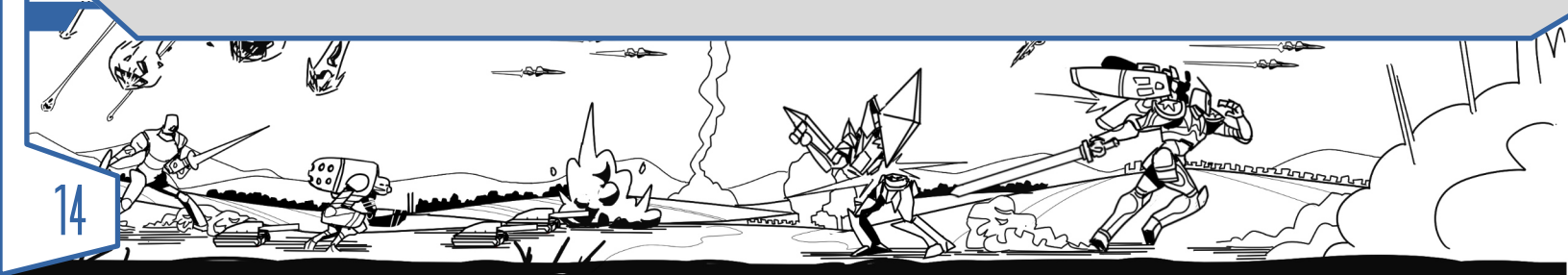
The movies never showed just how incredibly boring intelligence work was—at least if you were an operative worth your salt. A good spy barely gets into any fist fights, rarely sleeps with the enemy, and almost never makes an explosive entrance. It's all staring through binoculars, keeping notes, and delivering dead drops. And none of it has a tense score playing in the background to make the paperwork seem exciting.

All of which is to say that Cian had come to love missions like this one. Not only would he almost certainly get into a fight, he and his unit were also allowed to bring all their favorite toys. Laser cutters. Silenced sub-machine guns. EMP discs. This was anything but the dreaded "on-site procurement."

There was simply no such thing as a quiet plan when it came to a space station breach. So Cian came up with the next best thing: an incredibly loud plan. The bulk of his unit would move in zero-g through the debris field and use breaching charges to enter the station near its engine, disabling or killing any guards to prevent them from scuttling the whole satellite. He and a pair of other agents, meanwhile, would saw their way into the crew quarters with laser cutters. From there, it was a few quick fights through the hallways, maybe some hacking, and onto the bridge.

And bless the flag of true democracy, it went just as planned. A wonderful evening of combat on board a massive gun, floating 1,000 miles above the Earth. Sure, it didn't have the beautiful rhythms of the little dance that Ash and Violet cooked up, but Cian was a little more into improvisation anyway.

Which was good, because moments after uploading Alabama to the control console, he heard



an ominous sound over all the distant gunfire: heavy metal footsteps coming through the door. An ER Inc. Heavy Automated Defense bot, sleek and white, like a fancy corpo car with a few more weapons.

"Hey, Brace? Hang tight. Got a guest up here. Need to give it a proper welcome."



For Ashton, this was the hard part. They'd been confident about the artillery ploy, and they knew that once they had the data from Violet and control of High Water, they could put their shot on target. Those were the things they could control, prepare for, and execute.

But waiting? Waiting was a special hell.

Their displays told the story in simple, vector-lined glory. Commander Song was in some sort of rolling gunfight against a cutting-edge kill drone. It looked like he had a strong position, but the bot was between him and the control console. They wouldn't have control of the orbital cannon until he got past it. He'd pull it off, but it was just a matter of how long it would take.

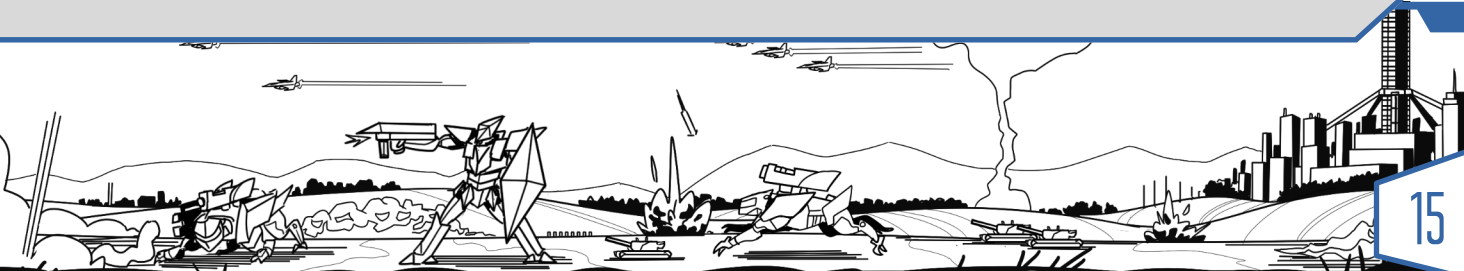
Violet, though, they were less confident about.

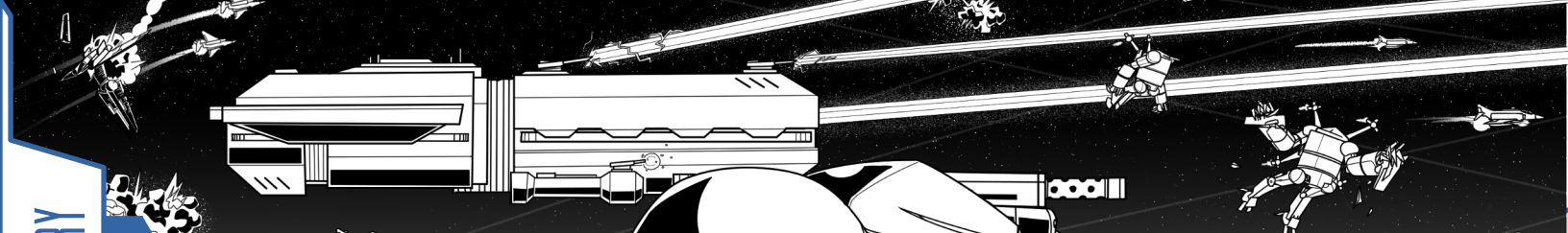
Ash watched as she skated past marker alpha and towards the highway. As soon as she did, the wireframe map lit up with the dashes and dots of exchanged gunfire. They knew that for Violet, this was every bit as loud as the earlier artillery barrage, but far less enjoyable.

Their study of the map, which updated itself with battlefield data beamed back from the Neon Bolide, revealed a troubling situation.

The Norrish commander had sent out three Iron Star units to harry Violet while she was still a couple of miles away from designation distance. It was clear that they wouldn't be any match for her in a stand-up fight, but this wasn't a stand-up fight. While she could easily hold off their attacks with the Bolide's forcefield, they weren't the only ones attacking.

Miles away, the convoy's chief guard had taken up a sniping position. Every time Violet popped her head above one of the hillocks on the approach, he'd snap a shot her way. On the screen, these





appeared as long, bright lines, and Ash followed each one with fear, terrified that it would intersect with the little blue icon that represented Violet's AWW.

It was a sniper's duel unlike any Ash had seen. Violet rode the hills like they were half-pipes, while the Norrish sniper tried to pluck her out of the air like a competitive marksman. With each minute that passed, Violet's increasingly circuitous route brought her closer to the convoy—her laser designator inching nearer to their target.

"C'mon. Vi, you can do this..."

Another line zipped across the screen as the Norrish commander dialed his aim in ever closer to Violet's cockpit. As their fight grew in intensity, the icons marking the convoy sped up in an attempt to push past the fracas and towards the safety of Might.

"Vi, you're almost there. God, I wish you could hear me."

She'd taken down two of the three Iron Stars now. Ash felt themselves wishing they could've seen her do it with their own eyes. Then, another blast from the sniper ripped across the display and—

The screen flickered and stuttered, as if it were struggling to make sense of what happened.

"Alabama?"

"Correcting." A single beep and...

She'd done it. Violet had used the Bolide's anti-grav field to redirect one of the sniper's rounds right back at him! Ash clapped decisively and bit their lower lip as targeting data started streaming through.

Their eyes poured over the numbers coming in, fingers sliding across display screens, tapping in figures and angles. This was it. They laid the firing solution into the machine, lowered their foot onto a pedal under the console to lock it into place, sounded the salvo alarm, and pulled the trigger.

Nothing.

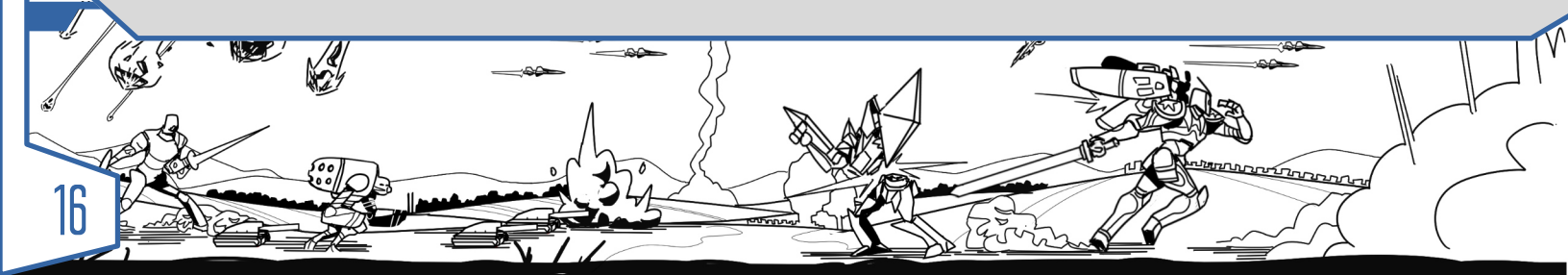
"God damn it, Song!"

He hadn't done it yet. With all the developments, they hadn't checked the High Water display yet. But before they could even look at the station map, something else caught their eye. Something terrible.

"No. There's no way..."

It took Violet Viola the better part of four years to become an ace. In the time since, she'd learned that there were rankings and categories, even among aces. Some aces came hot out of the gate but then cooled down—they were often called chickens, since their records suggested that once they got their ace kills, they started taking lighter duties. Others, especially those who earned the ace star after dozens of missions, were called tortoises—after the old fable about the tortoise and the hare.

But there was a class of ace so superior, they didn't get compared to other pilots at all. These living legends could shape a battlefield all on their own, proving that even a single AWW could be as important as a full company—if it was in the right pilot's hands.



Hovering against the setting sun, floating between Violet and her target, was one such legend.

"Lady Elreth..."

Violet's jaw slacked. Elreth had taken down so many enemies that to call her an ace would be an insult. The only epithet that had ever stuck was one with religious reverence: The Goddess of War and Death.

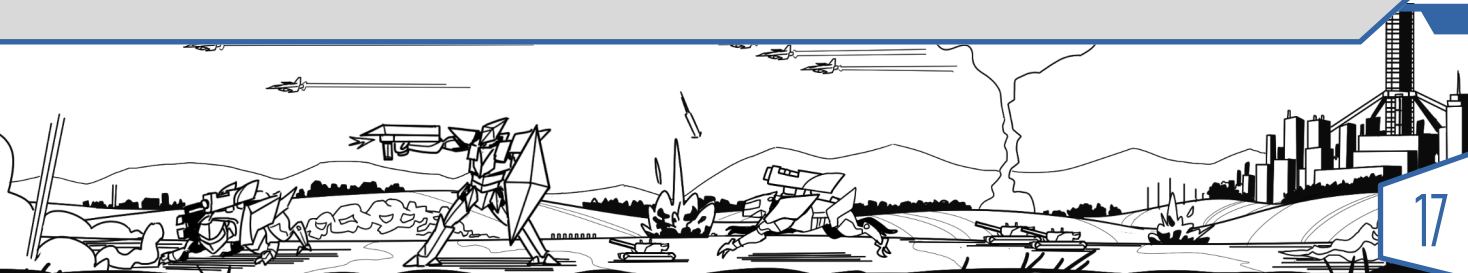
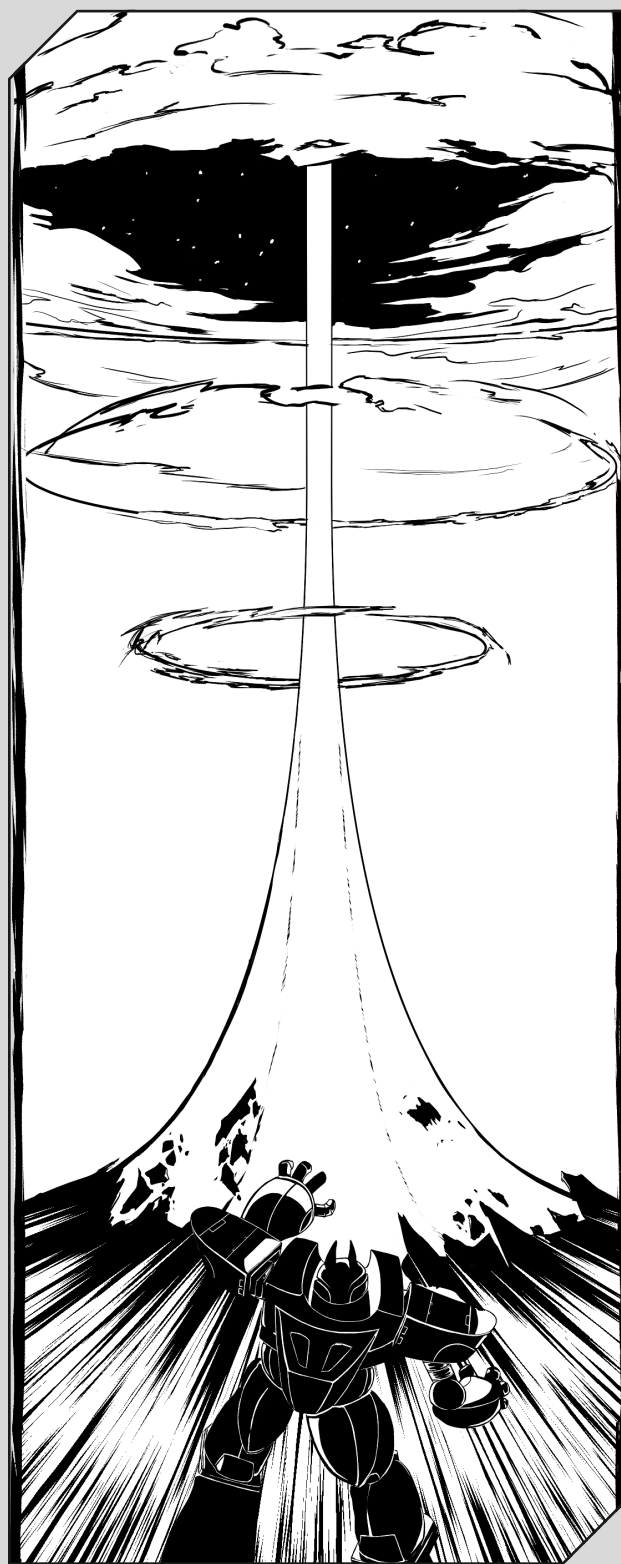
Elreth's machine could barely be called one. Violet had heard the numerous stories about Starfall, passed on by those few who'd seen it in action and lived to tell the tale. In some tales, it was a shining knight, clad in rustic plate and armed with a holy blade. Others described Elreth as a rider more than a "pilot," describing Starfall as something like a cosmic bird, barely controlled as it delivered violence in swoops and dives. Most frighteningly, there were rumors that it was most itself as a terrible arrangement of raw geometry—cubes, spheres, and cones, attached and yet free, each quivering with hostile intent.

But the rumours hadn't prepared her for what was undeniably before her eyes: Today, Elreth's AWV—Starfall, if this was Starfall—was something like an insect or a dragon. Six wings, bladed fins along its head, and a tail that swung with malicious delight. Its exoskeletal plates teemed with energy, and its countless onboard guns jerked and scanned as if each had its own optic nerve.

Lady Elreth's voice boomed, not through the comms, but through the air, cracking like thunder.

"You move with noble grace and singular purpose, yet hide your approach through guile. Deception is not a tool of the worthy. How do you plead?"

Violet took a breath and kept her designator pointed at the convoy that was speeding ever closer to the safety of Might's bunkers.



"I'm," she stumbled for a moment. "I'm not innocent or guilty. I'm a soldier."

"You contradict yourself, pilot. Face me, and earn your worth." Starfall's armored plates flexed open, releasing a burst of hot steam into the evening air.

As if compelled, Violet turned the Neon Bolide towards Elreth and found herself thinking about how beautiful it all was. The steam from the AWW gathered against the sunset. The sound of Starfall's crackling power. The smell of oil and gunpowder filtering through her unit's vents.

It would be, she thought, a perfectly fine final sight to see...

One month later...

"Sir, I maintain the position that I voiced throughout this inquest. As the only ranking officer aboard the High Water at the time of its firing, I can attest directly to the severity of the station's damage and the density of debris between the orbital cannon and the ground target."

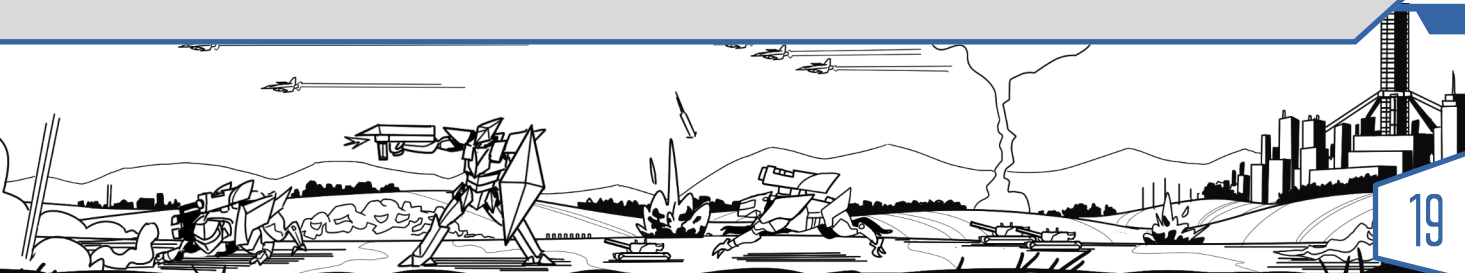
Sitting stoically in the defendant's chair, Ash had to admit that Commander Song was giving it his all on their behalf.

"I am also the only person who could see the firing data as it came into High Water's computer. Given that perspective, it remains my position—spoken as a servant of democracy and a veteran operative—that Commander Brace did not purposefully change their target." Song paused, wondering if he should further editorialize, before indulging himself. "It is admittedly a remarkable coincidence that Lady Elreth was hit by the High Water's cannon instead of the Council convoy. But we live in a world of chance and kismet. When such forces leave us with one more living soldier, I am not keen to complain."

From the back of the room, her right arm still in its cast, Violet Viola let a smile cross her face. She had ridden towards death, and met its goddess. Win or lose, helping her partner through a court martial would be light work.

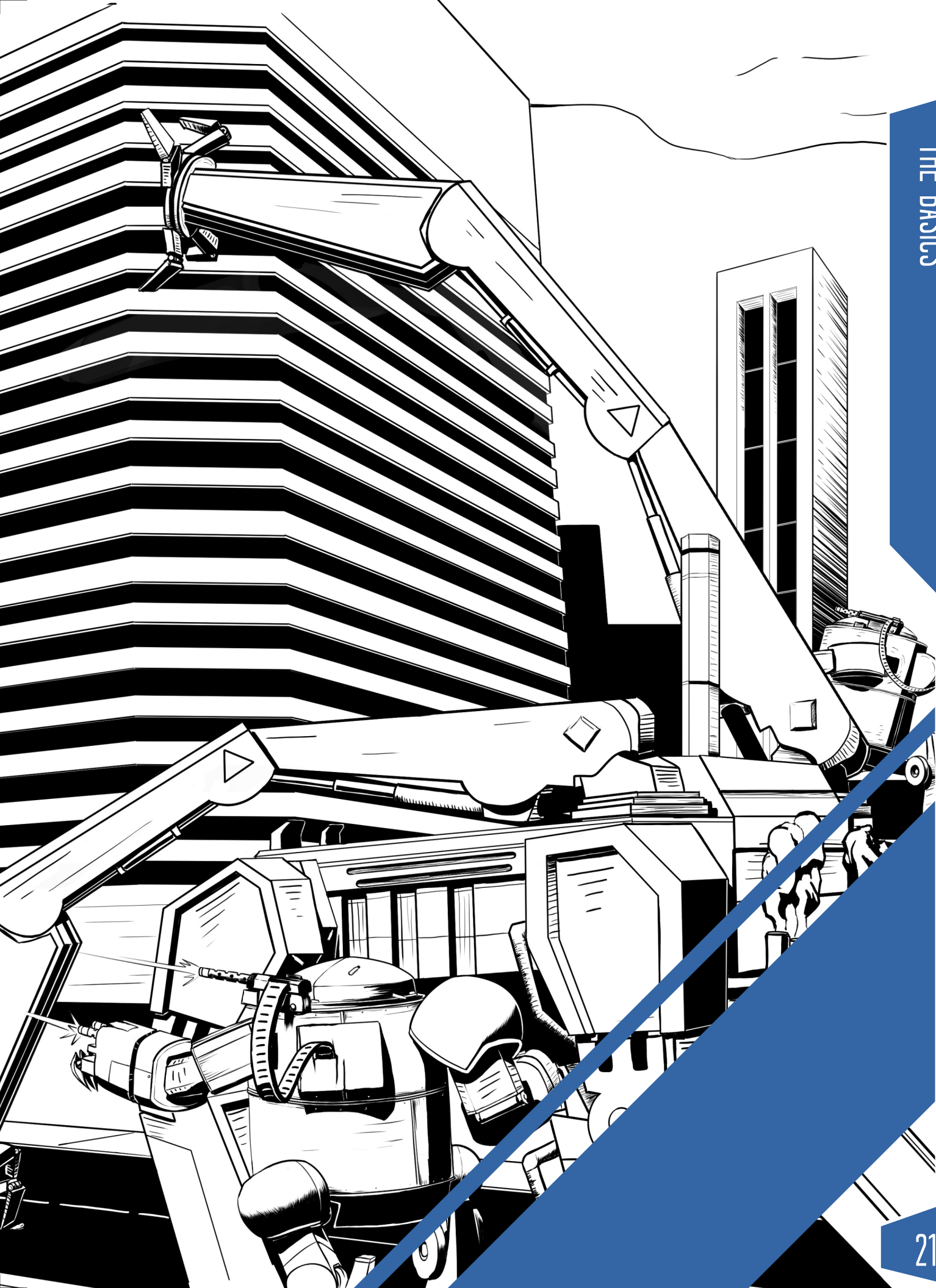
It was what came after—the quiet nights, the dance floors, the deployments—that would take effort. But what they could be together, Violet thought, was the most work-worthy thing in the world.

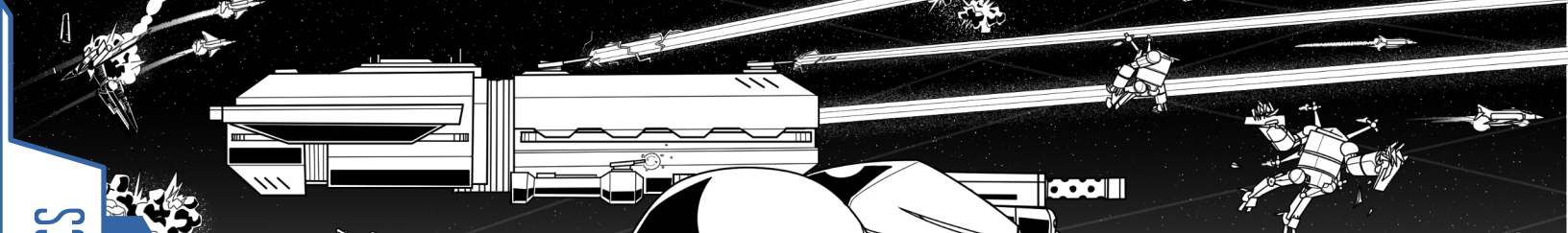




1: THE BASICS







INTRODUCTION

Beam Saber is a game about the Pilots of powerful machines in a war that dominates every facet of life. They're trying to do their time and part in The War, and then get out physically and mentally intact. See, 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.

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

As a game, the way *Beam Saber* plays is simple; you tell a story with your friends. Taking turns, you describe the heroic feats, nefarious deeds, and everything in between to tell a compelling story about these Pilots. Sometimes, the outcome of a Pilot's actions are uncertain—that's when you turn to the dice.

THE SETTING

Centuries after humanity abandoned a rotting Earth, blighted by their follies, the Izyan Conflict's seeds sprouted deep in space as plans unfurled.

The Exodus ships fled humanity's decaying 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. Those that survived found planets to land on, settle, and fight over across the known regions of space. The evacuation left a vacuum of power, but not for long.

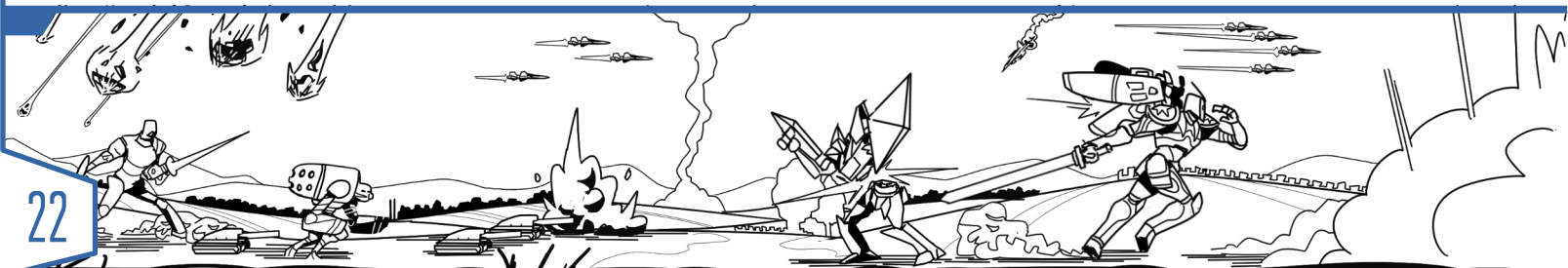
After the Exodus, five Factions rose to power—and thus, The War began. These Factions grapple for authority over humanity. An Autocracy uses its military might to put others under its leader's sway. A Corporatocracy's directing board of corporations desire the profitable control of the populace. A sprawling Democracy's bickering politicians believe that self-directed government must be brought to all people. An Oligarchy says they have the necessary will and cunning to ensure humanity's survival. Lastly, a Theocracy believes that its guidance will push humanity to reach heights worthy of the stars.

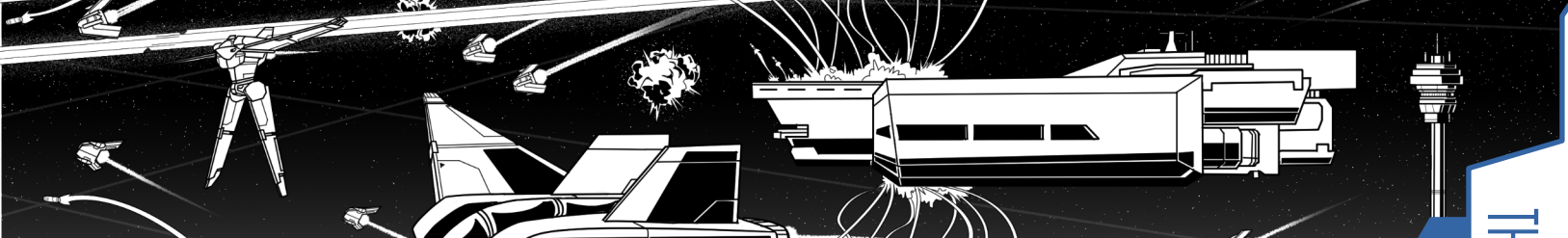
Long into The War, as these Factions battled for control, it was realized that one of the backwater planets involved in the conflict was probably Earth. An Earth, changed by the calamitous intervening years, that was mostly healed by its respite from humanity's swarm. Conquering it would be a great symbolic victory, but other, more valuable worlds continue to be The War's focus.

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.

There are millions of people who lived on Earth before The War found the planet.

Regardless of whether 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 The War in many different ways. Much of that resistance has gathered in the Izya region, where the last independent space elevator stretches into the void.

As the Izyan Conflict seethes, about to boil over, this is where you come in. You can find more setting details in Chapter 10 (page 314), which outlines each Region, Faction, and Squad involved in Beam Saber's core setting.

THE PLAYERS

Each player creates and portrays a Pilot involved in The War. The players' Pilots are part of a squad that completes jobs for the Factions at odds with each other. Together with the GM, they give life to the Pilots and the world around them. The players also create vehicles for their Pilots—machines they wield on mission after mission as they go up against enemy squads and Factions. And maybe, just maybe, when it's all said and done, the Pilots will find some peace at the end of their journey.

THE PILOTS

The Pilots are small in the grand scale of in The War, but they're trying their best to make a difference. The players' Pilots start as nobodies beneath the notice of even their own Faction. But as they crawl out of the meat grinder time and time again, people take notice. Personnel, resources, and glory are awarded to them. However, this prestige comes with 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 ten Pilot types players can choose from. Each Pilot type faces The War in a unique way, and all have a powerful vehicle at their 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.

Players can use any combination of Pilot types in their squad—even if that squad is all Aces or Officers, for example. See Pilot Creation (page 58) to learn more about making Pilots.



THE VEHICLES

Each Pilot has access to a customized vehicle that suits their skills and needs. Some will be machines hardly different from civilian vehicles, while others are lumbering behemoths loaded down with weapons and armor. Each vehicle has unique quirks that Pilots take advantage of to accomplish their missions. As the Pilots repair and upgrade their vehicles, they'll learn more of these advantageous quirks.

THE SQUAD

The Pilots are part of a squad, which the players create through consensus. The players keep track of their squad on a squad "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] neutralize targets.

No matter what squad you choose, you can pursue any kind of mission. These directives simply add focus to the game play. Whether the squad is created before or after the Pilots doesn't matter, but decide as a group which order you will use. See squad creation on page 182 to learn more about the squad types and creating a squad.

Um. How do I start this? This is the first entry in this journal I'm gonna start keeping I guess. A lot of soldiers do, right? At least in the books I read. I start as a Pilot with the Cenotaph tomorrow. If I go missing like the others, if Layla or Hannah or anyone else makes it back here and they wonder what happened to me, I hope this journal helps. I'm... scared. My hands started shaking around lunch and they haven't stopped since. Is that normal? I'm supposed to climb into Bert tomorrow and Pilot him into active combat zones. I'm supposed to use him against other people.

I mean, hopefully we just do our job. We go in after stuff has calmed down, we do cleanup and recovery, we don't run into trouble. I'm really, really hoping we never see combat. Fuck. I don't think writing it down is making me feel any better about it. I think I actually feel worse. No one else made it. Why would I?

Okay Keiko, try to look on the bright side? Harrow's here, and I trust him, and the rest of my squad seems nice enough, even if they're kinda weird. I trust Bert with my life. Yeah. I'll get to travel around Izya and maybe even find out what happened to everyone from the orphanage. Maybe even find some of them alive. And I'm getting paid a lot, enough to buy a farm pretty quickly if I save most of it. I just need to make it out alive.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

THE GAME MASTER

The GM has a number of responsibilities. They describe the world—the battle torn ruins, the bustling communities, the seemingly lifeless spaces that lay between them, and their inhabitants. They play all non-player characters (NPCs), portraying their interests and desires within the game world. They also prepare missions and opportunities for the players, and help facilitate the rules. The GM should be familiar with the full contents of this book, but Chapter 10 gives a specific rundown of how to GM a campaign of *Beam Saber*.

BEFORE YOU START

Before you sit down to play, make sure everyone is excited about *Beam Saber's* concept. Be upfront about the theme; this is a game about extraordinary Pilots trying to survive a grueling, generations-long war. Share some of the media touchstones (page 27) that they might 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, this game may not be for them, and that’s okay.

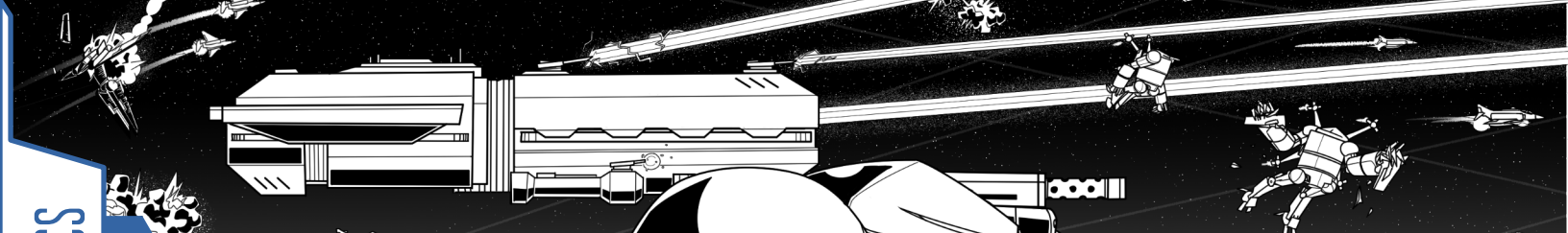
Ideally, everyone should read all of the *Beam Saber* book. You don’t have to absorb everything contained in it, as you can pick up the rules during the game. If you’re the only person in your group who has read the book, don’t worry; everyone can learn together as you play. Even then, the first session (or the second, third, fourth, etc.) doesn’t have to have perfectly expressed rules. Just do your best, and be kind if anyone makes a mistake. Eventually, you will all reach a mutual level of comfort with the rules.

If the GM wants to pace their reading, they could go over the session zero section (page 263), which covers setting up your game. After setting up the campaign, you can then read the basics of play in this chapter. Also, take a look at the Starting Situation (page 304) to get a feel for the parties involved. If you’re creating your own starting situation, look over how to begin a campaign on page 271. It should put your players in a thrilling scenario to kick things off.

PLAYING A SESSION

A *Beam Saber* session plays like the structure of an episode in a TV series. There’s usually a central conflict to resolve by the end of the session that probably feeds into the campaign’s larger narrative, and some supporting side stories. A single session will take around two to six hours as determined by your group of players.

A session usually involves the Pilots on a daring mission followed by their daily life between jobs. The players and GM choose a mission that interests everyone, then roleplay the Pilots receiving the mission from the employer or planning it themselves. The players 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 starts all over again, as the Pilots jump into the next mission.



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, running more than one mission per session, or devoting a session completely to downtime.

Your group will likely cover a major plot thread or two after a dozen or so missions. At this point, consider inserting a break in the narrative—like a time skip or an end to the current story arc. You can then restart with a couple new Pilots, squads, and starting situation.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

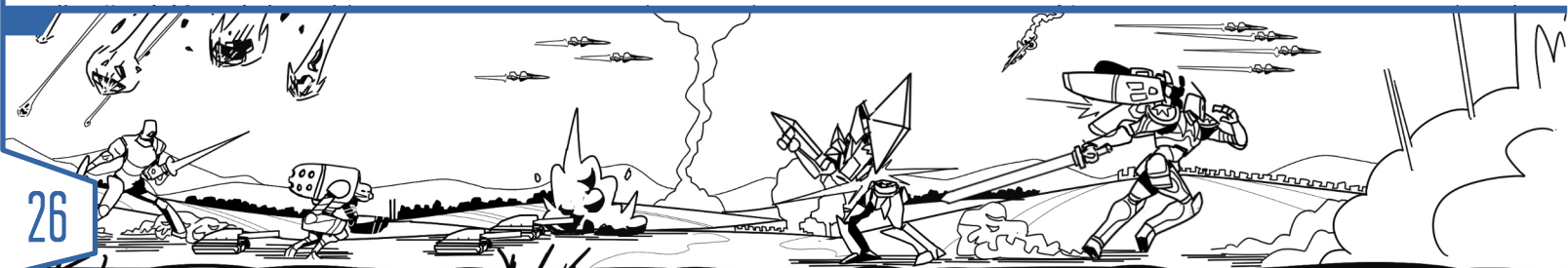
To play, you'll need:

- ◆ One GM and two to four players.
- ◆ Several six-sided dice—ideally four per player, but at least six total. Alternatively you can use an online dice roller such as <https://rolladie.net/>
- ◆ 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. A shared digital document, such as a Google document, can also be used.

MAKING THE GAME YOUR OWN

When we play role playing games, we engage in an act of creation. All of the rules in this game exist to help your group tell 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 open to your interpretation so each group can build a unique world that arises through play. For example, the Pilots' vehicle can run out of power, but this text never specifies what, exactly, fuels them. That detail might never come up in your campaign, but it could be integral to your story. With everyone building the world together, it becomes uniquely yours.



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)

ROLEPLAYING 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

- ◆ Hammer's Slammers series, by David Drake (1979)
- ◆ The Black Company series, by Glen Cooke (1984)

FOR THOSE FAMILIAR WITH BLADES IN THE DARK

If you're coming to *Beam Saber* after playing *Blades in the Dark* or other Forged in the Dark games, this section is for you. It lists some of the 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. That said, you can't solve every problem by having your giant robot step on someone; there will be obstacles at the Pilot scale too.

► **Load:** Both Pilots and vehicles carry a Load of 3, 5, or 6. Players choose their Pilot's Load before the start of each mission, as you would in *Blades*. Vehicles are a little different. Players choose their vehicle's Load during character creation. A vehicle's Load doesn't change throughout the campaign (unless you complete a Long-Term Project to do so).

► **Vehicle Quirks:** Vehicles don't have Stress. They instead use Quirks when pushing themselves or resisting consequences. A player just needs to describe how their vehicle's Quirk gives them an advantage and spend the appropriate amount of Quirks. There are no dice rolled when resisting with Quirks; you just pay the Quirks to get the perk. Lastly, Quirks are never spent when assisting another Pilot or for flashbacks.

► **Drives:** The Pilots generally aren't aiming to retire in luxury by acquiring wealth (though they can do that). They instead pursue something they want to change about the world. The Pilots accrue drive resources (see page 68) as they work towards this vision, which they can spend to change the fiction in your campaign.

► **Downtime Activities:** Players get three downtime activities during the downtime phase to assist with maintaining the health of the Pilots and their vehicles.

► **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 Faction in *Blades*.

► **Pushing Yourself and Collateral Dice:** 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, a player may push themselves AND take a Collateral Die on the same roll in *Beam Saber*. They pay the cost for both, and so get the benefits of both.

► **Assisting and Cutting Loose:** The amount of Stress that a Pilot spends when assisting another Pilot varies. Each Pilot has a Clock representing their relationship with each other Pilot. The more Ticks in the Clock, the more Stress an assist costs them—but they also get more benefits. The Clock fills by taking the Cut Loose downtime activity with that Pilot (which also removes Stress, similar to indulging a vice in *Blades*).

► **Repairing Vehicles:** Pilots need to perform the Repair downtime activity to remove Damage from a vehicle.

THE CORE SYSTEM

This section covers the core mechanics that push the campaign forward. It introduces the game's dice rolls, Clocks, Position, Effect, and determining the outcome of a dice roll. This section is to get you familiar with the basics. Chapter 5 explains in greater detail how dice rolls affect the fiction and vice versa—including how an action roll triggers and resolving consequences.

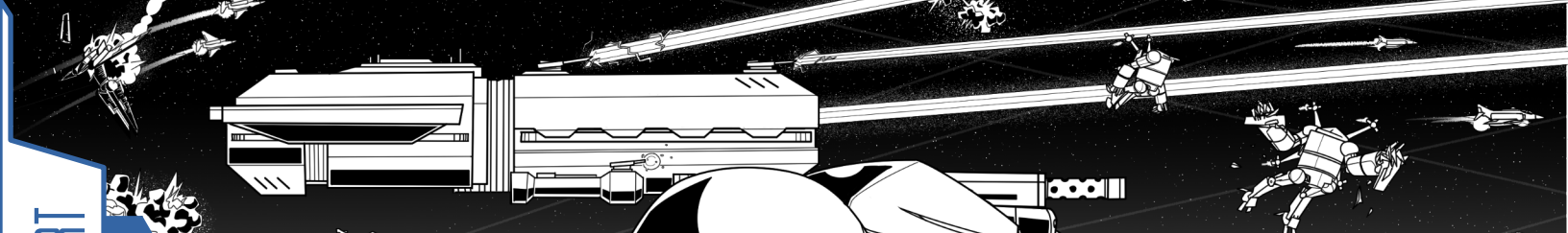
Beam Saber uses six-sided dice (referred to as d6) on all of its rolls. Usually, players or the GM will gather a pool of dice and take the highest number to determine the result. However, there may be times where a person has zero dice to roll (referred to as 0d). If a person has 0d, they roll two dice and take the lowest as their result.

BUILD COMPLEXITY SLOWLY

If the table is new to *Beam Saber* or *Forged in the Dark* games, it's okay to introduce the rules a bit at a time. The rules are designed so you can get by using only action rolls; just use a Risky Position and Standard Effect at first.

When the players ask questions about what they can do, start introducing those more complex rules. If a player wants more dice on a roll, explain Stress and pushing yourself. When the squad combats many foes or a higher Tier foe, tell them about Effect. The game works best when all the rules are in play, but the group can build up to that!

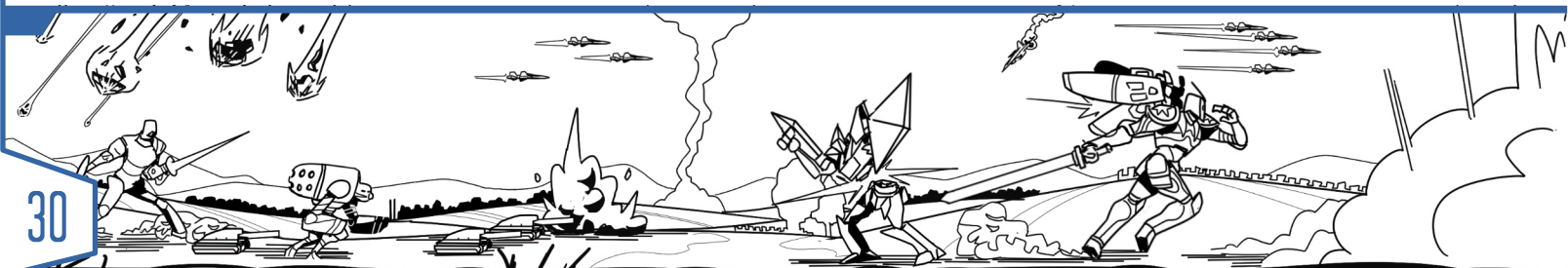
Similarly, you don't have to figure out the whole plot during the first session. Have enough for the first mission, and then add details when you need it. If anyone realizes they made a mistake describing something, don't worry! Just explain what needs to change, and it'll work out.



ACTION ROLL

The action roll is the most frequent cause for a player to roll dice. A player makes an action roll when their Pilot or vehicle attempts something that isn't a guaranteed success. Each attempt has a potential positive outcome and a negative consequence. The GM and player work through the process below to set the stakes and build the player's pool of six-sided dice. The player then rolls the dice to see what happens next. Page [151](#) gives more detail on triggering an action roll and how to choose an action when it isn't obvious.

1. **The player** describes their Pilot's goal and how they intend to achieve it.
2. **The player** selects the action their Pilot uses to fulfill their goal.
3. **The GM** tells the player their Position (how dangerous the action is) and Effect (how effective the action is) if they use that action. Default to Risky Position with Standard Effect if unsure.
4. **The player** mentions any circumstances or special abilities that might alter the Position or Effect.
5. **The player** and **the GM** agree on the final Position and Effect.
6. Add applicable bonus dice.
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 take 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

You may be wondering what an “action” or “action rating” means when building a dice pool. Pilots and vehicles have specific actions they may perform—such as Hunt to track a target or Wreck to use brute force. The player picks the best action that suits how their Pilot or vehicle attempts to overcome an obstacle. Pilot actions are described on page 84, while vehicle actions are described on page 168. Each action also has an **action rating**—the number of points a Pilot or vehicle has in an action (tracked on their character sheet). This number tells a player how many dice begin in their dice pool. If you have an action rating of 2 in Maneuver, you begin with two dice in your dice pool.

If you want to know how to get extra dice for your action roll, refer to bonuses to rolls (page 38). The number of dice rolled can be increased or decreased by certain modifiers such as +1d (add one die) or -1d (subtract one die). Roll the dice when you’ve finished building your pool.

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. See consequences and Harm (page 34) for more detail on action roll outcomes.

And lastly, remember to only make a roll if there’s a risk of failure. If you’re struggling to think of a potential negative outcome, consider making a fortune roll (page 41) or letting the Pilot do it without a roll.

PILOT ATTRIBUTES

INSIGHT >>>>> +1 DOT

- ○ ○ ○ HUNT
- ○ ○ ○ STUDY
- ○ ○ ○ SURVEY
- ○ ○ ○ ENGINEER

PROWESS >>>>> +1 DOT

- ○ ○ ○ FINESSE
- ○ ○ ○ PROWL
- ○ ○ ○ STRUGGLE
- ○ ○ ○ WRECK

RESOLVE >>>>> +1 DOT

- ○ ○ ○ COMMAND
- ○ ○ ○ CONSORT
- ○ ○ ○ SWAY
- ○ ○ ○ INTERFACE

VEHICLE ATTRIBUTES

EXPERTISE >>>>> +1 DOT

- ○ ○ ○ BATTLE
- ○ ○ ○ DESTROY
- ● ○ ○ MANEUVER

ACUITY >>>>> +1 DOT

- ○ ○ ○ BOMBARD
- ○ ○ ○ MANIPULATE
- ○ ○ ○ SCAN

POSITION

Position indicates the level of danger or difficulty associated with the action. The GM sets 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, which is the default Position if there's any doubt. 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 might be a fortune roll (see page 41) instead. Sometimes, it'll make sense to let the Pilot do it. And remember, a Pilot takes 1 XP when they perform a Desperate action.

Here are some guidelines for what an action roll result looks like for each Position.

CONTROLLED POSITION <i>You act on your terms, or exploit a dominate advantage.</i>	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 POSITION <i>You go head to head, act under fire, or take a chance.</i>	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 POSITION <i>You overreach your capabilities, or you're in serious trouble.</i>	<i>On any result, take 1 XP for the Attribute related to the action rolled as you face these drastic challenges. Pilot Attributes are explained on page 63, and vehicle Attributes are explained on page 158.</i> 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.

EFFECT

Effect describes how much a Pilot can change their situation with an action. The GM considers the Pilot's proposed action and goal, and decides if they have Great, Standard, or Limited Effect.

- ◆ If the Pilot faces greater gains than usual, they have Great Effect. The GM details how the additional benefits could manifest. If the Pilot is rolling to fill a Clock, they receive 3 Ticks toward its completion on a roll of 4 or higher. (Clocks are described on page 39.)
- ◆ If a Pilot would make a typical amount of progress, they have Standard Effect. The GM describes the expected outcome. A Pilot would fill 2 Ticks on a relevant Clock on a roll of 4 or higher.
- ◆ If a Pilot would make a small headway, they have Limited Effect. The GM describes the partial or diminished outcome. A Pilot would fill 1 Tick a relevant Clock on a roll of 4 or higher.

The GM uses the following four factors to determine an action's Effect:

- ◆ The action's potency. For example, attacking a tank with a hand grenade (lower Effect) versus attacking a person with a hand grenade (improved Effect).
- ◆ Quality of gear. Fine gear provides improved Effect.
- ◆ Scale of the action. Differences of scale either lower or improve Effect depending on the circumstance, like when a lone person fights a small gang. Scale also applies to differences in size when appropriate.
- ◆ Tier differences between the Pilot and the target. Higher Tier targets provide reduced Effect, while lower Tier targets provide improved Effect.

THE BASICS OF EFFECT

It's possible for a Pilot to achieve nothing with an action. Sometimes an action will be so ineffective, a Pilot has Zero Effect. An action achieves nothing in a Zero Effect situation.

It's likewise possible for a Pilot to achieve above and beyond their expectations in the right circumstances. Great Effect is the highest level of Effect on a roll (except with a crit), but Pilots can dominate the circumstances (see Dominating Effect on page 295) to such a degree that there is no risk involved. Such cases do not need a roll. If a roll is still required because of an action's uncertainty, the only way to succeed past Great Effect is with the unexpected luck of a crit.

When a special ability for a Pilot, squad, or piece of gear provides "improved Effect," apply the improved Effect after the GM determines the base Effect.

After determining an action's Position and Effect, 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 change their Risky Position Standard Effect to Desperate Position Great Effect if they want a more daring, dangerous path. Position can even be lowered from Controlled to Desperate, so that Effect improves from Limited to Great.

CONSEQUENCES

Consequences are the fallout of enemy actions, bad situations, or rolling less than 6 on an action. The GM chooses the consequences based on the fiction and the tone of your campaign. There are six types of consequence:

- ◆ **Reduced Effect** represents the Pilot's execution being hindered. This consequence reduces the expected Effect 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, damaging vehicle gear, or the release of an airborne toxin. The complication could also 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 (see Clocks on page 39). The GM uses the circumstances to determine the complication's severity, and whether it is immediate or delayed.
- ◆ **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 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. 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 suffered by Pilots or vehicles respectively.

Consequences 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, say the enemy is lured into the minefield, but the Pilot also steps on a mine in their haste.

HARM AND DAMAGE

Harm could be an injury that hurts the Pilot physically, mentally, emotionally, or socially. Damage is much the same, but for vehicles. Pilots and vehicles track Harm and Damage in their respective sections of the Pilot's playbook. You'll see Harm and Damage occur at different "levels," each with their own penalty. Level 1 causes reduced Effect, level 2 gives -1d, and level 3 means the Pilot cannot act without pushing themselves or receiving assistance.

When a Pilot or vehicle suffers Harm or Damage, the GM briefly describes the wound and gives a numerical level to match the severity. For example, a kick to the face 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.

Only apply penalties if the nature of the Harm or Damage would impact a Pilot's actions. For example, a Pilot with level 2 Harm: *Twisted Ankle* would take -1d Prowling after a rival on foot. The same Pilot wouldn't receive a penalty for Hunting them through a scope (as they can perform the action without their injured ankle).

A Pilot can handle up to two level 1 Harm, two level 2 Harm, and one level 3 Harm. Vehicles suffer the same scale in Damage. 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 an additional level 3 Harm, they take level 4 Harm instead. Level 4 Harm is a ruinous, permanent injury, often (but not always) representing death. Let the circumstances determine the nature of the permanent affliction.

SELECTING CONSEQUENCES

Below is a list of consequences that can be inflicted on action rolls of 5 or less. When selecting one of the options, show how that change occurs in the fiction—such as a foe disarming the Pilot when moving from a Risky to Desperate Position.

CONTROLLED CONSEQUENCES	◆ Adjust a Clock by 1 Tick. ◆ Reduce Effect by one level (to a minimum of Limited). <i>Only choose this consequence on a result of 4-5.</i> ◆ Create a new Threat Clock, and add a Tick to it. ◆ Move to a worse Position. ◆ The opportunity to use that action passes. The Pilot can use a different action to overcome the obstacle, or it can be attempted again from a worse Position. <i>Only choose this consequence on a result of 1-3.</i> ◆ 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. <i>Only choose this consequence on a result of 4-5.</i> ◆ 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

A Pilot or vehicle can always resist consequences they'd rather avoid. First, the player tells the GM how their Pilot or vehicle resists the problem. If the GM agrees their approach reasonably negates the problem, the consequences automatically reduce... at a cost. The GM tells the Pilot if resisting will negate the consequence or just reduce its severity, and what Attribute applies based on the fiction:

- ◆ **Insight** resists consequences from deceit or empathy.
- ◆ **Prowess** resists consequences from bodily harm or exertion.
- ◆ **Resolve** resists consequences from mental fortitude or stubbornness.
- ◆ **Acuity** resists consequences from a machine being hacked or disoriented.
- ◆ **Expertise** resists consequences from a machine being damaged or strained.

Pilots resist a consequence using their attribute rating. An attribute rating refers to the number of actions under an attribute with at least 1 action point. For example, a Pilot with 1 Study and 3 Survey has an Insight attribute rating of two.

When a Pilot resists a consequence, they roll dice equal to the chosen attribute rating. The Pilot suffers 6 Stress minus the highest die result from the resistance roll. A Pilot fills no Stress boxes if their highest die is a 6, but a result of 1 fills up five boxes. A critical success (two 6s) on a resistance roll heals 1 Stress (instead of spending Stress). The player must commit to suffering that Stress after the roll; they cannot change their mind if they roll poorly.

PILOT ATTRIBUTES

INSIGHT	▶▶▶▶▶ +1 DOT
○ ○ ○ ○	HUNT
● ○ ○ ○	STUDY
● ● ● ○	SURVEY
○ ○ ○ ○	ENGINEER

Vehicles, on the other hand, don't roll dice when resisting a consequence. A vehicle exhausts 4 Quirks minus the chosen attribute rating to a minimum of 1 (even if a special ability would reduce it to zero or less). For example, a vehicle with 1 Maneuver and 2 Battle has an Expertise rating of 2, so resisting with Expertise exhausts 2 Quirks (4 minus the Expertise attribute rating). Quirks are further explained on page 162.

VEHICLE ATTRIBUTES

EXPERTISE	▶▶▶▶▶ +1 DOT
● ● ● ○	BATTLE
○ ○ ○ ○	DESTROY
● ○ ○ ○	MANEUVER

After paying any resistance costs, the GM reduces the consequence by a degree they feel is appropriate. Level 3 Harm may become level 2, while a worse Position might be negated entirely. Use the game's tone to decide whether the resistance roll negates the consequence, or just reduces its impact. Grittier games will have consequences that are reduced, while more upbeat games will have consequences avoided entirely. **Any one consequence can only be resisted once.**

If the GM inflicts multiple consequences, the affected player can choose to resist some, all, or none of the consequences, and make resistance rolls for each. A Pilot or vehicle may also spend Armor to further reduce a consequence after rolling or spending Quirks (see next page).

PILOT AND VEHICLE ARMOR

A Pilot or vehicle can spend Armor to reduce the impact of a consequence. 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). A Pilot may only take Armor and Heavy Armor once each per mission (in other words, you can’t have two sets of Armor or Heavy Armor). For vehicles, the standard vehicle gear “Armor” grants one use per mission, but multiple copies of the Armor can be taken on the same vehicle.

When spending Armor, 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 a piece of Armor is spent, it can’t be used again until the beginning of the next mission.

Vehicles can also sacrifice any gear that takes up at least 1 Load in place of Armor. 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. Vehicle Damage is further explained on page [164](#), and uninstalling vehicle gear is further explained on page [159](#).

Whether Armor completely negates or only reduces Harm or Damage depends on your game’s tone. A campaign with a more adventurous tone will have Armor that completely negates even the worst injuries, allowing Pilots to heroically shrug off attacks. A grittier campaign’s Armor may reduce Harm or Damage by only one level, so any hits are 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, their Armor won’t save them. When Armor isn’t suitable for reducing Harm or Damage in the fiction, but the player still wants to avoid the consequence, they should resist it as normal (see page [36](#)).

SPARK

Each Pilot also has a Spark to spend on special abilities during missions. A Pilot’s Spark represents their determination and grit to get the job done. A Pilot spends their Spark to activate these abilities (tick the Spark box on the character sheet). For example, the Infiltrator’s Shadow ability lets a Pilot spend their Spark to resist a consequence from detection or security measures, or to push yourself for a feat of athletics or stealth. The Pilot could avoid making a resistance roll and instead spend their Spark to activate Shadow if the security camera catches them slipping into a building.

But spend that one Spark wisely. 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 when the Spark is spent.

BONUSES TO ROLLS

Any combination of the following can increase a Pilot's chance of success:

- ◆ The GM or any of the players may suggest a **Collateral Die**, giving the Pilot +1d at an unavoidable cost.
- ◆ The player can 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).
- ◆ One other Pilot may spend an amount of Stress equal to their **Connection** (see page 72) to help the acting Pilot. The acting Pilot receives 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 76 for more detail.

COLLATERAL DIE

Pilots in Beam Saber are desperate survivors, and sometimes they act despite the obvious consequences. To support this premise mechanically, the GM or any player can suggest a Collateral Die to the acting Pilot.

The cost of the Collateral Die occurs regardless of the acting Pilot's level of success. Additionally, Pilots can NOT reduce or negate the bargain with a resistance roll or 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. A Pilot can also turn down any Collateral Die if they don't want to take a bargain, and that's also fine.

The GM has final say on whether a bargain is reasonable or not if needed.

EXAMPLE 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.

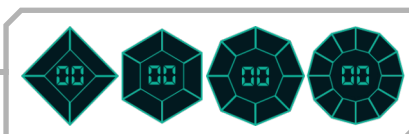
A Rival shows up unexpectedly.

CLOCKS

A Clock measures the progress of an ongoing challenge or approaching issue. Clocks take the form of a circle divided into 4, 6, 8, or 12 segments. The more segments in a Clock, the more complex the challenge or the longer the delay until the issue arrives.

CREATING A CLOCK

Players and GMs may create Clocks to represent their pursuits, threats in their way, and any other time-sensitive task or event. A Clock needs a goal or outcome when it fills, a name, and a number of segments. Players may work with the GM to define a Clock or Clocks for their Pilot's pursuits—such as renovating a ruined building into a dive bar for musical events.



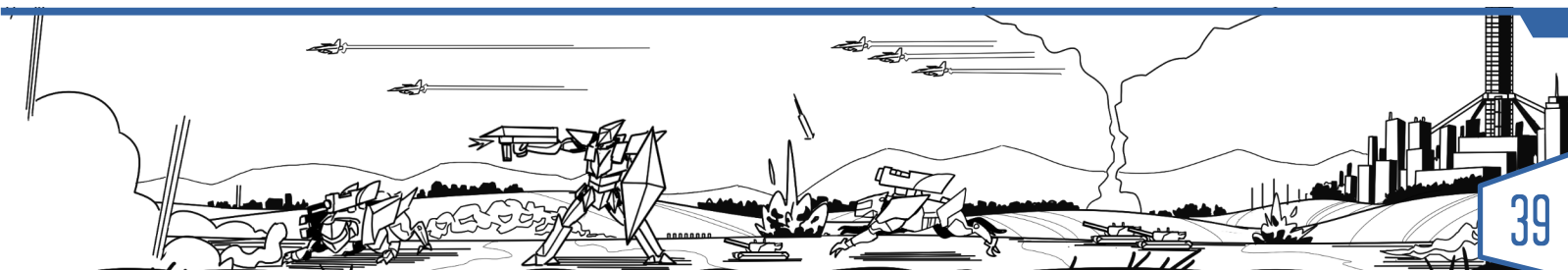
Clocks represent the obstacle or danger, not the method used to fill them. If the a Pilot needs funding for a new piece of tech, name the troublesome Clock "Bored Investors" or "Unstable Prototype." Describing the situation gives players the flexibility they need to approach the task. Don't name it "Talk Up Investors" or "Overheat the Prototype," because that prescribes how the Pilots should accomplish the goal. Extremely complex obstacles that have several steps can be split into multiple Clocks. For example, if the squad is capturing a huge enemy battleship, the ship could have Clocks for "Point Defense Cannons," "Space Marines," and "Security Program." The squad would have to get past each Clock in turn to capture the ship.

Likewise, if the squad is facing multiple opponents or a single very dangerous opponent, an Obstacle Clock can represent the foes' ability to be a continuing threat. The Clock should represent how they're threatening: soldiers fight, guards detect, politicians manipulate crowds, etc. Once that Clock fills, the foe has been evaded, run off, destroyed, talked down, or whatever outcome is fictionally appropriate.

Clocks can also measure the passage of time. These Clocks are usually timers for an approaching threat (though the arrival of friendly reinforcements might also apply). Progress the Clock when a suitable amount of time passes in the fiction. A Clock segment might represent a few seconds, minutes, or hours depending on the scale of time passing. The easiest way to handle Time Clocks is deciding which Pilot is most affected by the Clock, and then filling in a segment every time they make an action roll.

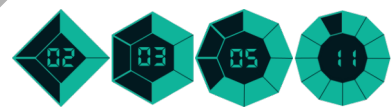
You can also use Clocks to extend the focus of narratively interesting challenges. What qualifies as "narratively interesting" will vary by game and scene. There will be times where bypassing a door is solved with a single roll, but that same door under more dramatic circumstances might be a Clock.

There is no hard and fast rule about how long a Clock should be. The amount of interest there is in the obstacle or goal that a Clock represents should determine the length of that Clock. Defeating a small group of enemies might be represented by a 4 segment Clock, but if greater narrative stakes are placed on them (possibly because they have been fleshed out or are the final obstacle before victory), an 8 segment Clock, or possibly even a 4 segment Clock for each enemy, could be used.



FILLING A CLOCK

Usually, Clocks progress when players make rolls—although the circumstances determine by how much. Progress is measured in “Ticks,” where 1 Tick fills 1 segment of a Clock.



Players typically make action rolls as normal to progress their Clocks, and gain Ticks upon results of 4+. However, the amount of progress depends on the Effect level. If the Effect is Limited, fill a single segment (also known as 1 Tick). Standard Effect gives 2 Ticks, Great gives 3 Ticks. A Critical gives improved Effect, or with Great Effect gives 5 Ticks. With a fortune roll add 1 Tick on 1-3, 2 Ticks on 4/5, 3 Ticks on a 6, or 5 Ticks on a Crit. If a single action could overcome the challenge, the player should instead make an action roll as normal instead of a Clock. A Clock is almost impossible to fill with a single success.

Unlike other Clocks, Connection Clocks and Drive Clocks do not generally gain Ticks when a 4+ is rolled for an action. See page 72 for Connection Clocks and page 68 for Drive Clocks. The GM's Clocks are a slightly different story. They add Ticks based on the type of Clock and what makes sense for the fiction. A GM may add between 1 to 3 Ticks to a Clock as a consequence on a roll. They may also add a Tick to a time Clock if the players pursue their goals cautiously.

Players can prevent troublesome Clocks filling. For example, if a Threat Clock is “Direct Superior Arrives” while a Pilot rummages through the officer’s desk, another Pilot could remove Ticks by stalling the Direct Superior. In that case, the GM would remove Ticks according to the action roll’s Effect level.

COMPLETING A CLOCK

When a Clock fills, the challenge it represents is overcome or the danger comes to pass. If it’s a beneficial Clock, the player receives that benefit immediately; and the same goes for any repercussions or threats.



But if something happens in the fiction that would complete the Clock’s objective or instantly summon the problem, the Clock fills 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 said Clock. Likewise, if the Pilots are filling a “Destroy Samples” Clock, and they set off a nuke inside the building, that Clock is full. Period.

If the players or GM realize that a Clock is no longer engaging or relevant, it’s alright to say that it is instantly filled, instantly emptied, or just disappears without affecting the situation.

GATHERING INFORMATION

There’s always going to be too much going on for the GM to provide the players with every detail they need or want to know. This is where they can gather information on a situation.

When a Pilot wants more specific information, the GM decides if that information is common knowledge, or if there’s an obstacle to acquiring it. The GM should consider the Pilot’s playbook, tragedy, history, and opening to determine if that information should be freely available to them. If it

should, then the GM simply answers the question.

The player should make a fortune roll if the information is not common knowledge, but there is no barrier to learning the information. A 1-3 provides limited information, a 4/5 provides standard information, and a 6 provides great information. Gathering information during a mission will likely take the form of a setup roll (page 76). If the Pilot rolls well, they will frequently gain improved Position or Effect as appropriate in addition to the information. However, a result of less than 6 will cause consequences as usual on a setup roll. Sometimes a complex obstacle blocks the information desired, such as a messy crime scene or an overabundance of archived texts. For instance, if gathering the information requires an extended period of time, the Pilot should begin a suitable Project Clock. The Pilot can ask several questions relevant to the Clock upon its completion (what they would receive from Great Effect on an action roll, page 294).

Each Pilot playbook has a list of questions they might find useful when gathering information. These suggestions are a good place to start, but a Pilot may ask any question they like.

And lastly, gathering information requires a suitable opportunity. The information must either be on hand in the heat of the moment, or acquired ahead of time. You can try again if you don't get the amount of information you wanted, but it'll probably have to be at a later time.

FORTUNE ROLL

The GM can make a fortune roll 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 and the Pilots are not involved, such as two NPCs having a conflict off screen.
- ◆ When there is no clear roll to determine the outcome, such as the effect of injecting an untested drug to keep it out of a competitor's hands.
- ◆ When a player makes 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 number or rating can determine the roll's dice pool. Some examples are:

Major contextual factors should give +1d (if they are advantageous) or -1d (if they are a hindrance) to fortune rolls. If a relevant trait doesn't exist, roll just 1d or build a dice pool based on the applicable contextual factors.

When an NPC squad acts, their Tier can determine the fortune roll. (Tier is explained on page 191.)

When a friendly fire team acts without Pilot supervision, use their Quality for the fortune roll. (Quality is explained on page 294.)

When the power of technology is unleashed in an uncontrolled fashion, you can use its Magnitude for a fortune roll. (Magnitude is explained on page 296.)

When a Pilot gathers information, their relevant action rating can determine the amount or Quality of information they receive.

THE GAMEPLAY CYCLE

Beam Saber's style of play is made up of multiple phases that players move between. The Pilots embark upon a mission for an employer, they return to a downtime phase where they recover and rest up before planning for another mission. Much like *The War*, the game cycles between these two phases until the Pilots retire or meet an end. The free play phase sits parallel to these phases—filling in the gaps for when the Pilots do things that aren't mission or downtime related.

The game starts in the free play phase, which is very fluid. The Pilots have scenes with each other and/or NPCs, they make action rolls when necessary, and suffer the consequences of those actions. Don't worry about exploring the story moment to moment or chronologically during free play. This period lets the Pilots explore their personal stories apart from the entire squad.

When the players are headed to another mission (whether by choice or by something in free play or downtime forcing a mission on them), it's time to plan. Players and the GM may collaborate on what the mission involves, or the GM may prepare a mission ahead of time. Either way, the group covers the Rules of Engagement, the mission's target, objective, employer, Loadout, and a tactic (see *Planning a Mission* for full details). The Pilots may still gather information and perform any last downtime activities during this time. When everyone is ready, free play ends and the Pilots make an engagement roll (page 44) to move into the mission.

On a mission, 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 (see page 287 for more on missions). Once the mission is over, the game moves into the downtime phase.

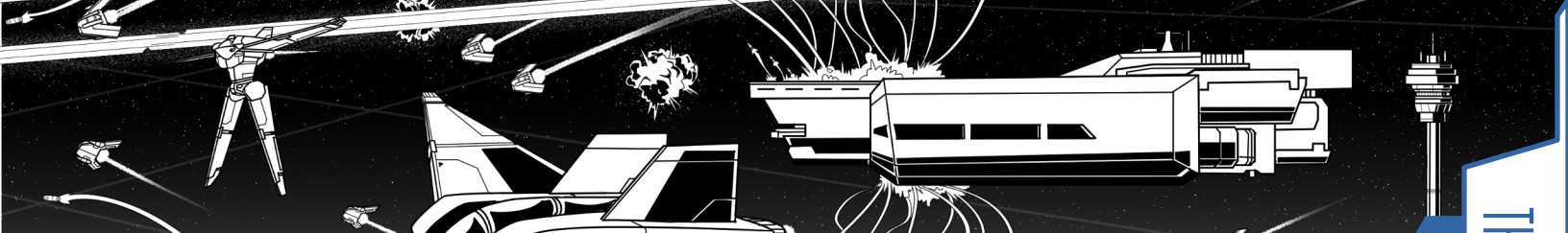
Downtime phases let the squad get their just rewards and take a breather. They'll get resupplied for their efforts, gain and lose Trust with Factions, experience consequences for their actions, and prepare for the next mission. These steps take the form of rewards, Trust, squad Status, entanglements, and downtime activities. The downtime phase is further explained on page 219. After the Pilots complete their downtime activities, the game returns to the free play phase and the cycle continues.

PLANNING THE MISSION

When moving 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 **Loadout**. Select them in that order before the mission begins.

The Employer is the Faction who tasks the squad with completing the mission objective. The employer is 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 (even if the Pilots don't know). Things to consider 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 whether the GM is okay with doing the bookkeeping alone.

If the squad is on a mission for themselves or a squad that isn't working for a Faction, the



employer is Independent. Be warned, working for an Independent employer yields less pay than working for other employers. You can read more about Independent employers on page 203. Striking out on your own is rough, but at least you won't have someone looking over your shoulder.

The squad can always seek out an employer if they want to do a mission that would normally be Independent but still want decent payment. Finding an employer this way 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 with a little convincing.

The Target is the squad (and by extension the Faction) that will be harmed if the Pilots complete their mission. Usually, someone is trying to stop the mission, and overcoming their defenses will damage them in some way. If there 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 goals may have multi-part objectives, all of which must be completed before the end of the mission. Other missions may have side objectives that are not necessary to fulfill the main goal.

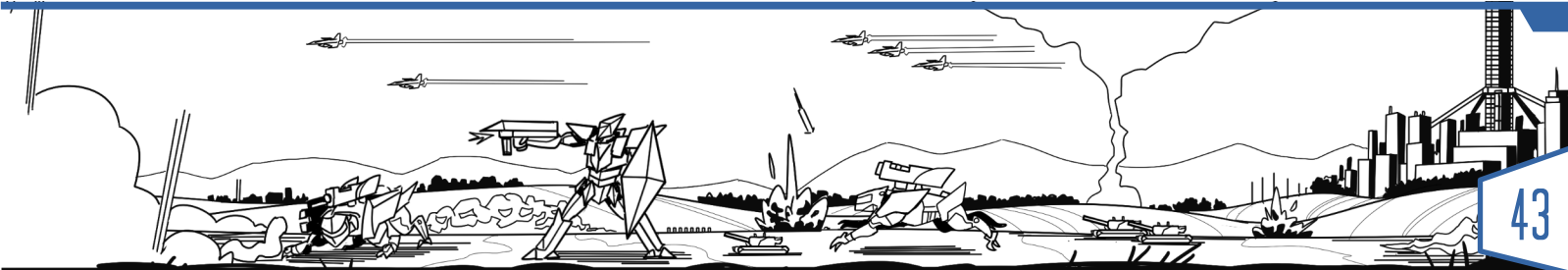
The Rules of Engagement (ROE) are the directives that an employer places on its squads. The ROE define the circumstances, conditions, degree, and manner in which the use of force (or other provocative actions) may be applied. The GM sets the ROE as appropriate for the fiction, though players should speak up if any of the rules ruin the game's fun. A Faction who wants popular support will have more rules about engaging civilians than Factions interested in military victory at all costs. Record the rules in effect for everyone's reference. You can find a list of possible ROE on page 291.

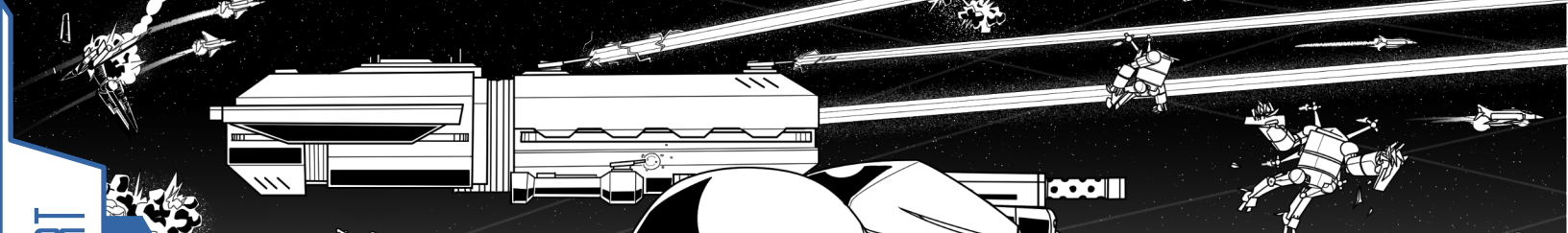
The Tactic is the squad's method for taking on the objective. This is a general strategy, and requires just one detail that explains how the mission opens. Select one of the following tactics, and then determine the detail. Pilots don't need to plan excessively; flashbacks let them bring in special preparations and consideration of unanticipated complications (see flashbacks on page 74).

- ◆ **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, or 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 represents how much pilot gear a Pilot may carry on the mission. During this step of every mission each Pilot decides if they are carrying a Light [Load 03], Medium [Load 05], or Heavy [Load 06] amount of gear on their person. Loadout impacts how people perceive a Pilot during a mission. A Light Load makes the Pilot quicker and less conspicuous; they can blend in with civilians, providing increased Effect when applicable. A Medium Load makes the Pilot look equipped for a difficult task. A Heavy Load slows the Pilot and makes it clear that they are a member of an armed group.

Players don't need to decide what items their Pilot is carrying before the mission. At any time





during the mission, you may declare that your Pilot has any of the Standard Pilot Gear (page 98) or any of their playbook's Specialist Gear. Add the item to your character sheet, and mark the appropriate amount of Load it takes up. You cannot exceed the maximum Load you chose when planning the mission. Items in italics or listed as "Load Ø" do not take up any Load.

Vehicle gear works a little differently, which is covered in Chapter 6. A vehicle's max Load is set upon its creation (and it does not change between missions). Players don't choose vehicle gear before the mission—they debut gear as it's needed when tackling obstacles. However, once a player declares a piece of vehicle gear, that gear is now installed in their vehicle. Installed vehicle gear can only be taken out by spending Materiel between missions.

The Pilots can perform a final downtime activity (if they have any downtime activities remaining or want to spend the appropriate Supply Point) or gather information during or after the mission brief if they want more intel on the job. Such information and assets can reveal the target's strengths and weaknesses. However, a Pilot must have a sufficient opportunity to gather information, which might require a flashback. Now may also be a good time to perform the Acquire Asset downtime activity if the Pilots want any assets for the mission (see acquiring assets on page 221). Remember, Pilots can also acquire assets during a mission with a flashback, so no need to prepare for everything right now.

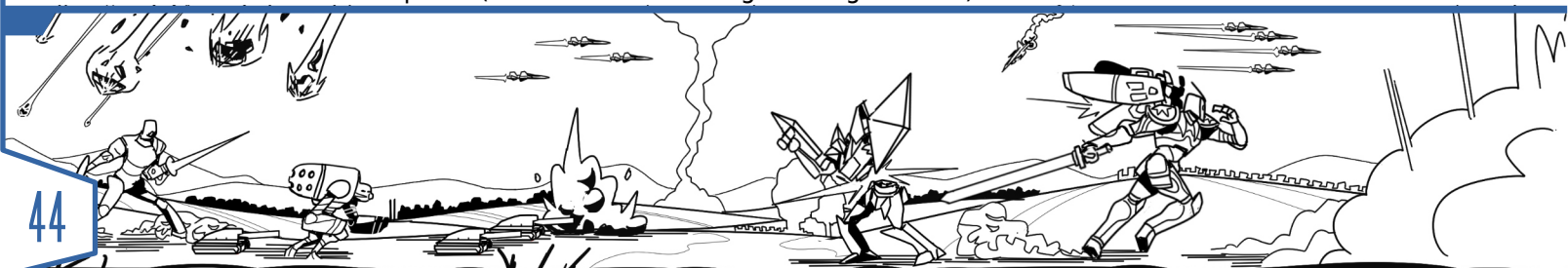
ENGAGEMENT ROLL

After planning the mission, we jump right into the action where we see the squad encounter their first obstacle. Make an engagement roll to see how severe the situation is when the squad gets into it. The engagement roll dice pool starts with 1d for plain old luck. Add additional dice for major advantages, and remove dice for disadvantages. Possible advantages and disadvantages may include 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.
- ◆ Is the squad receiving external support for the mission? Take +1d. Is anyone interfering with the mission (other than the target)? Take -1d.
- ◆ Are there other factors affecting the mission? Take +1d for each one that benefits the squad, and -1d if it hinders them. Factors might include differences in squad Tier, specialized equipment, unusual terrain, and more.

The engagement roll assumes the Pilots are skilled survivors and have prepared to arrive at the first obstacle. There is no need for sneaking closer, checking for traps, or other cautious approaches. The engagement roll result covers those details, so you can start with the action. The engagement roll result indicates how tough things are for the Pilots as they hit the first obstacle. A player makes the roll on behalf of the squad and looks at the highest die. On a 1-3, the squad's starting Position is Desperate, 4/5 gives them a Risky Position, and 6 provides a Controlled Position. Engagement rolls cannot result in a critical success (two or more 6s).

After determining the engagement roll result, take a short break so the GM can figure out how to start the mission. The GM should craft a scene that reflects the starting Position. This Position changes as the fiction develops—if the Pilots pull out some good rolls and make good tactical choices, their Position will improve (and vice versa if things don't go so well).



LINKED MISSIONS

There will be times where a mission requires that 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 attacks the fortifications as a diversion, while the other part sneaks into the enemy base. How this is handled depends on whether the first part needs to succeed before the second part can be attempted.

- ◆ If the first stage of a plan benefits the latter stage (but isn't required for the mission's success), it can be handled with the setup teamwork action (page 76) or through a flashback (page 74). With a success, the setup improves their squadmates' Position or Effect. A failed setup might cause trouble for the second part of the plan. If a Pilot performs a setup before the engagement roll, consider giving the squad +1d or -1d (as appropriate) on the engagement roll as the rest of the squad sets out on their part of the mission.
- ◆ If the first stage of a plan is *required* for the latter stage to be attempted, it should probably be a mission of its own. For example, the squad might be on a mission to steal an enemy Ace's unique vehicle (to use in a later false flag mission). In this case, make each part its own mission with downtime between them as normal.

But for the most part, 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, stage one of a two-stage mission can be simplified with a setup action if it's not interesting to players. If the setup gets a failed roll, hand out consequences as the fiction demands.

END OF SESSION

After a couple of hours of play, you'll probably reach a good spot in the narrative to stop for the day. Other groups will do marathon sessions that can last 8 or more hours! When you finish 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 each Pilot contributed at least 1 Tick to their Rival's Challenge Clock, and whether they filled any Connection Clocks with their Rival or another Pilot. Take 1 XP for each item that occurred.
3. Check if each 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 Region 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 affected they are until they take a break. If you're concerned about another player who says they're 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.

EXAMPLE MISSION

The Cenotaph's Direct Superior, Scratch, has called everyone to the squad's briefing room in their chapel. They have been contacted with a possible mission by Lieutenant Colonel Walsh Johnson of The Jovangellian Empire's Wolf Pack. The Wolf Pack need a third party to return the bodies of some Jovangellian troops to Fort Jovanol from custody of the Democratic Federated Systems (DFS). The DFS are sending a film crew from the 3rd Public Connections Corp along to record the hand off for their own propaganda, and The Cenotaph will be responsible for the documentarians' safety.

The Cenotaph could use some good PR with the Jovangellians after their scrap with The Racoons, so this sounds like a fine opportunity. Not to mention, building rapport with a vanguard squad like the Wolf Pack would be a boon. The players' Pilots, Dredge, Tower, Scarecrow, and Demon, all agree to take on the mission.

GATHERING INFORMATION AND PLANNING THE MISSION

With everyone ready to take on the **mission**, the GM lays out its details. The **employer** is the Wolf Pack, the **target** is the 3rd Public Connections Corp, the **objective** is to deliver the bodies to Fort Jovanol. The **secondary objective** is getting the film crew to the fort safely. The **Rules of Engagement** are: 1) No threatening or using force against civilians, 2) No firing upon or presenting as medical transports or facilities, and 3) No using explosives.

"Before we decide on our tactic, can we gather information about the mission?" asks Sasha.

"Absolutely," says the GM. "What would you like to look into?"

"I want to learn more about this film crew, so I'm going to exchange some emails with them and roll..." Sasha pauses, looking at her pilot sheet. "I don't have any good actions for this, so I guess Consort at zero dice."

"Do you want to push yourself for an extra die?" suggests the GM.

"Nah, this is a gather information roll, right? So there aren't any consequences if I roll badly."

"Alright, then roll two dice and take the lower result."

"Hey! I got a 4 and a 6, so that's a 4."

"Ok, that gets you standard information. You learn that the film crew consists of six people, most notably the host Maria Houston—a D-grade news correspondent for the 3rd PCC. From her file, you can see that she's a Brown woman of moderate height and slender build with long, well-kept dark brown hair. The crew will be traveling in an armored personnel carrier that's been converted into a mobile production studio."

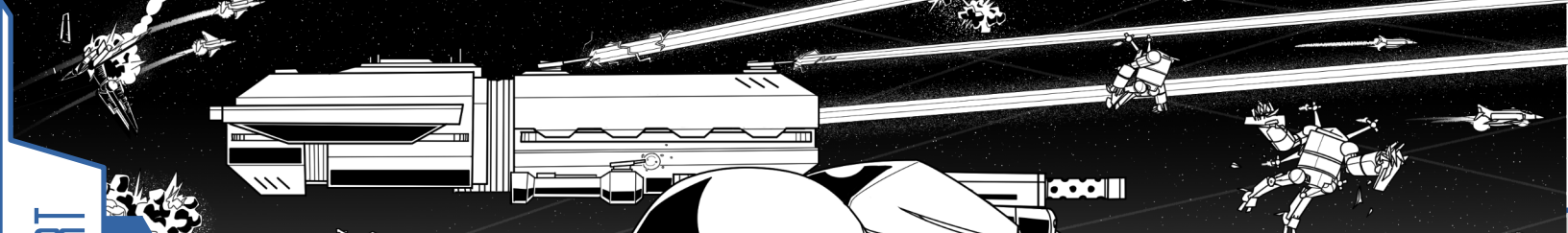
"Good to know. Thanks."

Jess says, "I'd like to look at our patron Faction's most recent intel on the area we'll be passing through. I'll roll my Study, which is two dice... and that's a 2 and a 1. Great."

"Sometimes that's how the dice go," says the GM. "So that gets you limited information. You find the roads through the area, which will make the going easier, but that's about it. Ray or Cass, do either of you want to gather information?"

Cass and Ray don't have anything in mind, so the squad moves on to the rest of the plan.

"OK, so what **tactic** are y'all going to use?" asks the GM.



"Well, they're expecting us AND we're headed to a heavily defended military base, so we shouldn't try anything fishy," suggests Cass. "I think that makes this either a Transport or Social mission."

"Transport sounds good to me, since we don't really know anyone in Fort Jovanol," says Ray, and everyone agrees.

"So, what's the **detail** that completes your tactic? In this case, it'll be a route and means," says the GM.

"I'd say the means is our AWWs," Jess says. "And the route will be the roadways that I studied—the ones between our rendezvous with the film crew and Fort Jovanol."

"Actually, I'm going to ride in the APC with the film crew," says Ray. "I want someone capable behind its wheel, and I can always use a flashback to have my AWW nearby. I'm also going with a Light Load for my Pilot, so I don't make the film crew or guards at the fort nervous."

Everyone agrees that's a good idea, and all take a **Light Load** for their Pilots. Their vehicle Loads were decided when they created them, so that's already been decided.

"Cool. We'll skip ahead to your first obstacle. You've met up with the film crew, and have begun your trip to Fort Jovanol along the roadways that weave between and over the rolling hills outside of Journey City. Your three AWWs and the APC move along at a slow pace due to the road's condition. The roads sometimes cut through the dirt and stone of a hill. Most of the slopes are gentle, but many are tall enough that even Demon can't see over their tops in his Extractor."

"I don't like this," says Cass (Demon's player). "It's too easy to be ambushed, but I don't want Demon to start flying in his AWW because that would make me an obvious target."

"Funny you should mention that," says the GM slyly.

ENGAGEMENT ROLL

"It's time for the **engagement roll**," says the GM. "Let's find out your **Position** as you hit your first obstacle. You start with 1 die for plain old luck."

"Probably gonna need it considering our rolls so far," quips Sasha.

"Is the mission bold or especially complex? +1d for the former, and -1d for the latter," says the GM.

"Not really? We're just going there, and we have permission for a change!" says Ray.

"Ok, no change to the dice then," says the GM. "Does the mission exploit the target's vulnerabilities, or is it ineffective against them?"

"Well, our target, so to speak," says Cass, "is the 3rd PCC, and we're escorting their film crew to something they want to get on camera. So it sounds like they're vulnerable to it, giving us +1d."

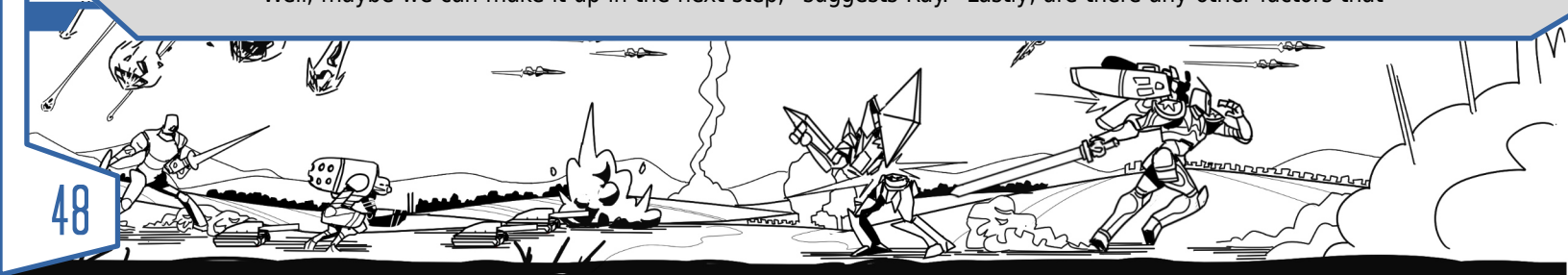
"Yup. Does the squad receive external support for the mission?" asks the GM.

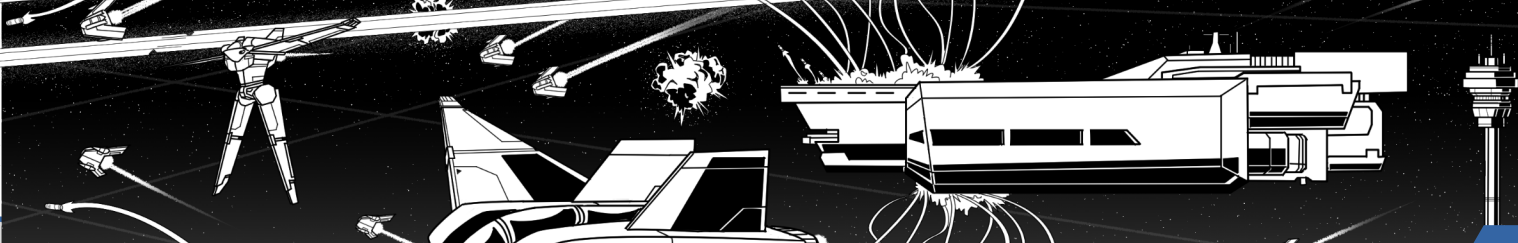
"Hmm, I don't think so. We're kind of on our own for this one, so no dice there," says Jess.

"That's fine," says the GM. "But unfortunately for you, I know the answer to the next question. Is anyone other than the target interfering with the mission? And the answer is yes, which gives you -1d."

"Yikes," says Cass. "I think we're just going to have to eat that -1d."

"Well, maybe we can make it up in the next step," suggests Ray. "Lastly, are there any other factors that





affect the mission? Hmmmm..."

"We probably have legit credentials because the Wolf Pack invited us into Jovangellian territory. That should help us out some," says Sasha.

"Absolutely," agrees the GM. "So that puts you at two dice for the engagement roll. Any other advantages to suggest? I don't have any other secrets that will affect the engagement roll."

The other players shake their heads.

"Ok then! Who wants to roll the engagement roll?"

Everyone mimes reluctance. But Cass says, "Somebody has to take charge, might as well be the Officer." Then she rolls the dice.

CONTROLLED RESULT

The dice come up a 3 and a 6! "Hell yeah!" cheers Cass. "With a **Controlled Position**, we're golden."

"Great, a 6 gives you a success. Who's leading the convoy?" asks the GM.

"I'm probably out ahead in my Claymore," says Jess.

"Makes sense. You come around a hill and see a checkpoint, Scarecrow," the GM says to Jess (Scarecrow's player). "It's a group of four Arquebusier AWWs from the Wrights of the Ascent—a fellow Celestial Myriad squad focused on glorifying the Church by constructing monuments. You watch as they point their anti-AWW machine guns at a pick-up truck, while one of their monks in Pilot's robes speaks to the driver. They have no idea you're there. What do you all do?"

RISKY RESULT

The dice come up a 3 and a 4! "Well, that's not so bad," says Sasha. "We can deal with a **Risky Position**." The other players nod their heads.

"Who's leading the convoy?" asks the GM.

"That'd be me in my Claymore," says Jess.

"Of course Scarecrow is scouting! Why'd I even ask?" jokes the GM. "The road takes you around a hill. Much closer than you'd like is a group of four Arquebusier AWWs that quickly spot you. It's unclear who they're with, but they immediately point their anti-AWW machine guns at you and start jogging towards your Claymore. What do you all do?"

DESPERATE RESULT

The dice come up a 3 and a 2! "Oh nooooo!" groans Ray. "A **Desperate Position** is going to be rough."

"As all of you come around a hill, the road ahead is totaled. Just absolutely ripped up," explains the GM. "The AWWs can make it through, but the APC can't."

"Hm, that's not so bad," says Cass.

"You did not just say that," chides Jess.

"Indeed. I was just about to say that your sensors pick up AWWs closing in on your position from the left," says the GM. "You can't see them yet, as the hills block your line of sight. What do you all do?"

THE AMBUSH

"I'm going to move my Extractor up the hillside to look for an alternate path," says Cass. "I suppose this is Scan, which gives me 0d."

"Unless you want to open up your cockpit and look out," suggests the GM. "Then it could be Survey."

"That sounds really unsafe right now, and I don't think any of my **Quirks** help here. Got a **Collateral Die** for me?"

"You end up silhouetting yourself across the hill top so you can get a better look. This will put the attention on you."

"Uhh," Cass hesitates. "Ok, let's do this. Scan using 1d with that Collateral Die. What's my **Position** and **Effect**?"

"Your Position is Desperate from the engagement roll, with Standard Effect because you don't have anything aiding or hindering your search."

Cass nods, then she rolls the die. "Four. What do my mech eyes see?"

The GM smiles and says, "You spot a bridge over a set of steep ravine walls in the distance, on the side opposite from the approaching AWVs. Since you have Standard Effect, you also get a look at them: three Arquebusiers and one Archer. All of them are from the Wrights of the Ascent, a fellow Celestial Myriad squad."

"What are they doing here?" asks Ray. "We're pretty far inside Jovangellian territory for this mission."

"A good question," says the GM. "But first, the **consequence** from Demon's partial success. Demon, you watch as the Archer aims one of its two arm-mounted railguns at you. Dire warning lights begin flashing in your cockpit, indicating massive damage to your Extractor's torso. Take the '**level 3 Damage: Holed.**'"

"Nope! I'd like to **resist** that," says Cass. "I spot the Archer taking aim, and throw the Extractor down the hill to break line of sight."

"Alright," says the GM. "That sounds like an Expertise Resist because you're avoiding damage to your vehicle. Your vehicle has an Expertise attribute rating of 2, so it'll cost you two Quirks. Describe how you spend them."

"I use my Rapacious Manipulators to claw at the ground while I use the Jumpy Maneuvering. I then shout into our comms, 'There's a bridge not too far away on the other side of the road. Everyone get a move on!'"

"Sounds good. Take '**level 1 Damage: Dented**' instead. What's everyone else doing?"

"Demon said to go, so I'm going!" says Ray. "Tower yanks the wheel of the APC in the bridge's direction and floors it. That's probably Maneuver right? I have 2d in it, so that's good."

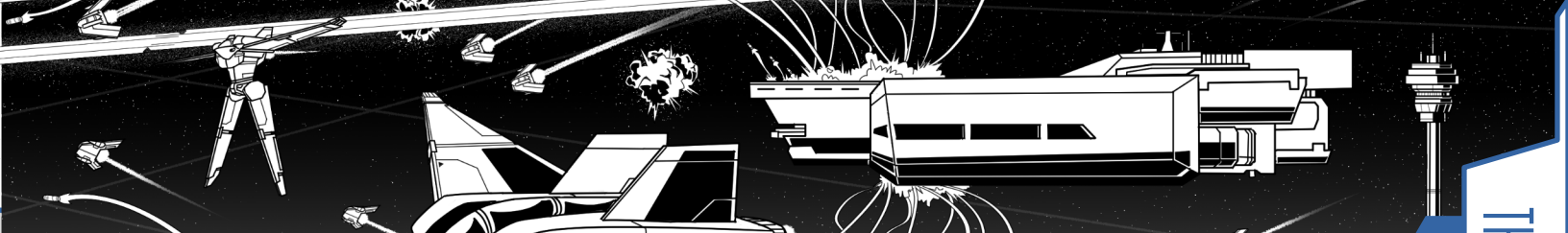
"It'll be a Desperate Position with Standard Effect, since the APC has those big tires," says the GM.

"I'd like to **assist**," says Jess. "I have 2 **Connections** with Tower, so I'm going to spend 2 Stress to give them Improved Position and Effect. I'll do so by laying down covering fire."

"Cool," says the GM. "That changes it to Risky Great."

"Thanks for the cover, Scarecrow!" Ray says (as Tower), then rolls two dice. "It's a 5, so I'm very glad to not be in a Desperate Position at the moment."

"Ok. You start going up the hill, but it's slow going; the field is pretty muddy," says the GM. "The consequence of your partial success is reduced Effect."



"I'd like to resist that," says Sasha. "We really need to get out of here, so my Kettle is going to shove the APC from behind. I'm guessing that's Expertise, which will cost me 2 Quirks." The GM nods in agreement before Sasha continues. "I'll spend Strategically Structured and Disturbing Hover to rearrange the Kettle's skeleton so it's better at pushing. I'll then crank up the hover system to really shove the APC through the mud."

"Awesome!" says the GM. "Ok, the APC and Kettle make it to the bridge. I'm going to start a 6-Tick **Progress Clock** called 'Wrights of the Ascent AWWs.' Since you got a Great success, I'll immediately fill in 3 Ticks."

"Let's get across that bridge," says Jess. "I've got a plan."

"I'm curious! I'm not going to have anyone roll to get across, since Tower did that earlier," says the GM. "The Kettle pushes the APC as fast as it'll go through the mud and over the bridge, while Demon and Scarecrow in their AWWs exchange fire with the Wrights. Everyone's across. So, Scarecrow, what happens?"

"I'm going to have a **flashback!**" Jess says. "Ahead of the squad, Scarecrow scouted the area and placed explosives on the bridge. When they get on the bridge, I'm going to detonate it. It'll blow them up, and bury them in rubble. I want to use Wreck for this, which gives me 1d. I'll also **push myself** for another +1d."

"Ok, that'll cost you 2 **Stress** for pushing yourself and another 2 Stress for the flashback, since setting up the explosives sounds like a bit of a stretch under the circumstances," explains the GM. "This will be Risky because this fight is now on more even footing, and it's Standard Effect. But are you sure you want to do this? Using explosives breaks your ROE: No using explosives. This stunt will cost you **Trust** with the Employer."

"That's fine. If we don't complete the mission, trust won't exactly matter," Jess says and rolls her 2d Wreck. "A 6! Eat C-4, you jerks!"

"That fills another 2 Ticks on the Escape Clock," says the GM. "You hit the detonator and watch as explosions rip along the length of the bridge, tumbling the AWWs into a cloud of rubble and dust. However, one of the Arquebusiers boosts out of the dust cloud using its jump jets and lands on your side of the ravine. It's a little banged up, but definitely still a threat. It levels its arm-mounted Gatling guns at the APC. What do you all do?"

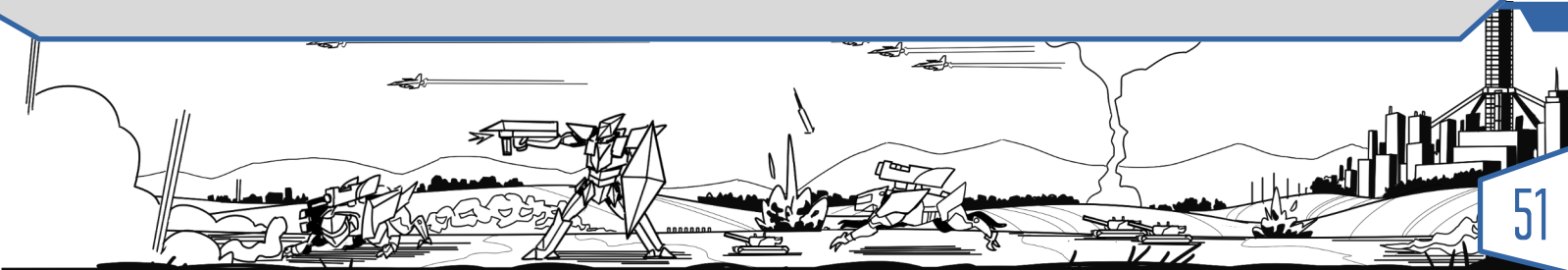
"I reach out to them over the radio," says Ray. "We're both members of the Celestial Myriad, so we should have the same communication codes. 'Why are you doing this? The rest of your squad are buried in rubble, and could use your help!' Hopefully the Pilot will listen. I want to roll my 1d Consort."

"I'm going to assist to give +1d, since I have 1 Connection with them," adds Cass. "Demon says, 'My squadmate's Piloting a Kettle which is designed for rescue work.' Just gonna leave out that it's for finding corpses. 'If you promise to leave us alone, we can help rescue your friends.' I'm also using two **abilities** here: The first is Tactical Genius, so this assist doesn't cost any Stress. The second is Heart To Heart, so they'll be deeply hurt if they break the agreement."

"Nice!" says the GM. "Ok, this'll be Risky Limited. The Arquebusier could shoot the APC, and the Pilot isn't too interested in hearing you out after the bridge incident."

"Well, Limited Effect doesn't matter too much, since I only need 1 more Tick to fill the Escape Clock," says Ray as they roll two dice (1d for Consort and 1d for the assist). "I got a 5. Looks like we're getting out of here."

"Not so fast," says the GM. "A 5 means there's a consequence. Over the radio, the Arquebusier's Pilot says, 'It's nothing personal, we've been tasked with taking out a DFS APC, and we didn't know you were-' But he's cut off as an anti-AWW rocket slams into his cockpit. The Arquebusier drops in the telltale manner of an AWW with a dead Pilot: like a puppet with cut strings."



"What the hell happened?" exclaims Ray.

"The consequence," says the GM. "Those of you outside the APC can see that the rocket originated from it. Poking out of the top hatch is one of the camera operators holding what appears to be a camera with rocket exhaust wafting from it. They nod in satisfaction, get back inside, and close the hatch with a clang. 'Let's move on.'"

FORT JOVANOL

"Uhh, I'd like to question them about that!" says Ray. "Tower's going to let the film crew drive for a bit before having a friendly conversation with the camera person. I spent some time with the Cirque Du Soldat, so I can probably talk shop with them. I'd like to roll my 2d Consort."

"Sure thing," says the GM. "That'll be Controlled Standard."

Ray rolls and gets a 5.

The GM explains, "Since this is Controlled, you get to decide if you take the success AND the consequence, or you can deny both and nothing happens. The consequence is reduced Effect; they aren't really up to talking."

"Better than nothing," says Ray. "What do I learn?"

"Their name is Frill Sobey," the GM begins. "They're White and a bit short, but they have a strong body. Their hair is cut so close to their head that you can't tell if it's blonde or grey, making their age hard to determine. They don't really open up about themselves, but you do get two other pieces of information which they inadvertently reveal. The first is their body language—how they size you up when you approach, their comfort in the APC, and the fact that their hands are never far from potential weapons—shows they have a lot of combat experience, and it's probably some black-ops type stuff. You also learn that they and the other two camera operators only joined this film crew recently—about a year or so ago. Long enough for the other half of the crew to get comfortable with them."

"Well," says Sasha. "I think it's safe to say that the three camera people aren't actually 3rd PCC, which means they could be anyone. Though probably not Jovangellians."

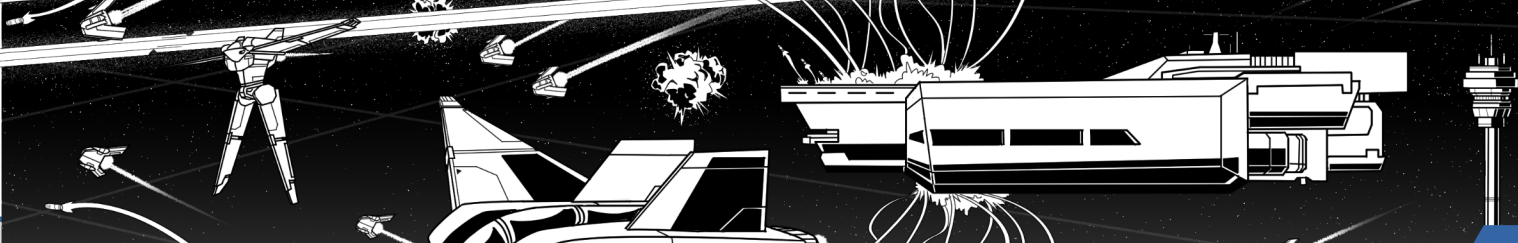
Everyone considers the possibilities for a few moments before the GM says, "Is there anything else, or shall we move on?" When no one objects, the GM continues. "You reach Fort Jovanol without further incident, though you see Jovangellian AWWs tracking your movements when you get close. Apes with their multitude of machine guns, Wolves with their arm-mounted cannons, Lions and their missile racks. It's a bit tense, but you transmit your permissions, and there's no issue. The fort's massive armored walls are taller than an AWW and are slanted to deflect projectiles, with AWW sized trenches in front of them. You are stopped one last time at the gate, but your documents go through without issue. You've reached your destination, so what do you all do now?"

"Well I, Sasha, do not know the process," en says. "But Dredge certainly knows what to do with the bodies we're delivering. So I'll get started on that."

"I'm going to keep an eye on Frill," says Ray. "I don't trust them."

"In that case, I'll stay in my Claymore," says Jess. "Just in case we need the heavy guns for a daring escape."

"I really hope that doesn't happen, considering where we are," says Cass. "Demon's going to go with Dredge in case co needs any help."



"Ok, Dredge and Demon find the fort's hospital by its Jovangellian medical symbol: a winged figure reaching down towards an injured one," says the GM. "You meet up with the fort's head medical officer. He's a flabby Black man, slightly above average height, wearing grey combat fatigues under his lab coat. He's bald and has obvious smile lines around his eyes and mouth. 'Hi, you must be with The Cenotaph. I'm Dr. Here Homage.' He holds out his hand to shake yours."

"I shake his hand," says Cass, "and say, 'Demon.'"

"I do the same," says Sasha. "Then I say, 'I'm Dredge. Where do you want the bodies?'"

"He looks at you funny," says the GM. "'Dredge and Demon, eh? Alright, follow me.' As he leads you away, he disdainfully mutters under his breath, 'Bloody AWV Pilots.'"

Everyone has a good laugh before the GM continues. "He gets into a forklift with a wooden pallet on it and drives it over to the Kettle."

"I start loading the bodies onto it," says Sasha, and Cass adds, "I'm going to help, of course."

"Ok, there's about a half dozen body bags, all told."

"What's the film crew doing?" asks Ray.

"The sound guy and the producer are focused on the host, Maria Houston, as she records a segment for the PCC," says the GM. "One of the other camera operators is filming shots of the base and the body exchange, likely for B-roll. Frill leans against the APC, vaping as he watches the body bags get loaded onto the pallet. Once the forklift starts driving off with the corpses, they call to the film crew that it's time to get going and head into the APC."

"Oh, I don't trust that!" says Ray. "Over my voice mic I say, 'Hey Demon, is there anything weird about those corpses? Frill was paying a lot of attention to them.'"

"Uh oh, maybe there's a bomb in them," muses Cass. "I motion for Dredge to come with me, then jog up to the forklift before it gets inside. 'Hold on a second, Dr. Homage! We need to have a look at those bodies.'"

"He stops the forklift and says, 'Excuse me?'" the GM replies. "The look on his face is a mixture of confusion and nervousness as he glances at some guards standing nearby with submachine guns."

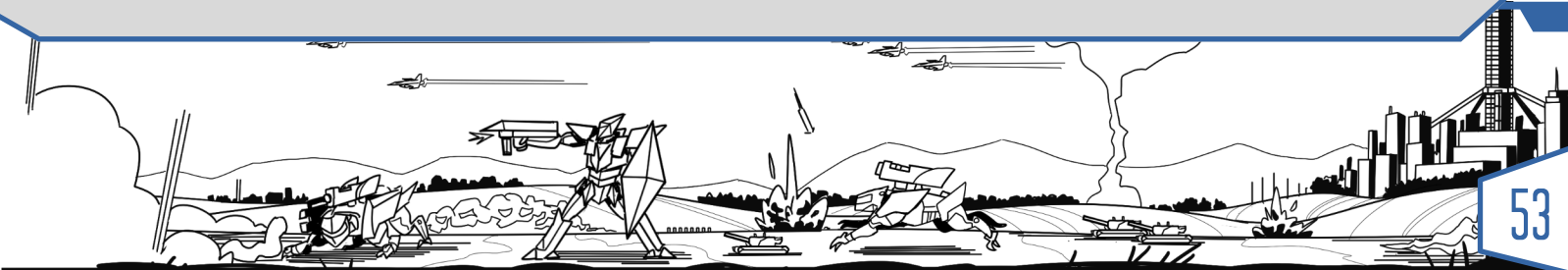
"I'd like to do a **setup action**," says Cass. "I want to calm down the doc so Dredge can examine the bodies without any distractions. I'm gonna Sway him by saying, 'We just want to make sure everything's okay with the bodies before we officially hand them over to you.'"

"Ok, that's Risky Standard because the doc is definitely on the verge of calling the guards," says the GM. "In fact, I'm going to start a **Threat Clock** called 'Guards Attack!' and it will be 4 Ticks. If that fills, y'all are in big trouble."

"In that case, I'm going to push myself by spending 2 Stress to get +1d," says Cass, then rolls her three dice. "Phew, it's a 6."

"You've been open and friendly with the doc so far. He still looks unsure, but he definitely calms down. Dredge can now examine the bodies in a Controlled Position."

"Alright, I open up the first body bag," says Sasha. "And I've got an ability for this! Doctor lets me use Engineer to examine corpses among other things. You said I have a Controlled Position, so I'm just going to roll



my 2d.” Sasha rolls, and en gets a 2.

“Well it could be worse, since you’re in a Controlled Position,” says the GM. “You unzip the bag, and inside is a dead White guy. Something took a chunk out of the top of his head. Jovangellians tattoo their military ID in several spots on their bodies: inner lip, thigh, chest, and so on. They aren’t as easily lost as a dog tag, and they help identify pieces. He’s got autopsy stitches on his torso, showing one was done on him at some point. That said, everything looks fine as far as you can tell.”

“As far as you can tell,” Jess repeats. “That’s not very reassuring.”

“Of course, because you’re in a Controlled Position,” says the GM, “you can try a different action for the same task. You could try again with Engineer at a Risky Position by escalating the situation a little, or you could drop the subject.”

“I’m going to push ahead into a Risky Position,” says Sasha. “I’m declaring that I have a knife for 1 Load, which I use to open up the autopsy stitches. Hopefully my Engineer will be better this time.” The dice come up a 5. “Well, that’s better!”

“There’s some kind of explosive device in the body’s chest cavity,” the GM says flatly.

“Bomb!” exclaims Sasha.

The GM, laughing, says, “Do you just shout that?”

“No, no. Dredge would be calmer about this. I say over my throat mic, ‘Demon, there’s at least one bomb in here. Have the doc get the fort’s bomb squad.’”

“‘Dr. Homage, I need you to listen carefully,’ Cass says with calm authority. ‘Dredge has discovered that someone put bombs in those corpses. We need you to fetch someone to handle this.’”

“Dr. Homage’s eyes go wide, but he nods very slowly, and then power walks toward some nearby guards,” says the GM. “Tower, you hear this over the squad’s comm channel, but you also see the film crew finish packing up to go. When Frill sees the doc walk over to the guards, they frown and hit the button that closes the APC’s loading ramp. This is the consequence from Dredge’s partial success.”

“I dive inside the APC before it closes,” says Ray. “Is that an action roll or a resist roll?”

“It’ll be an action roll because you aren’t negating the consequence,” says the GM. “I’m guessing you’re rolling Prowl for this? If that’s the case, it’ll be Risky Standard.”

“Sounds good,” Ray says as they roll their 2d in Prowl. “6! I’m in!”

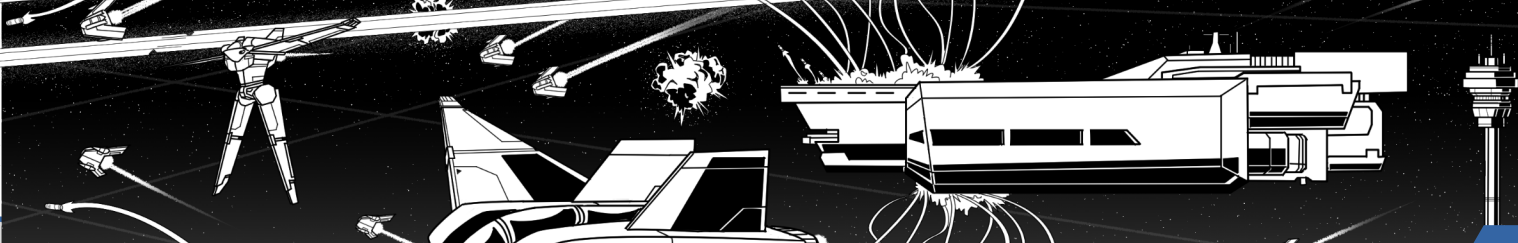
“The APC starts driving away, with one camera operator behind the wheel. The camera operators clearly know things are starting to pop off, but the other half of the film crew looks kind of confused.”

“In the confusion, I pull out a pistol and pistol whip the driver in the back of the head to knock them out. I’m guessing I’d have reduced Effect if I tried Prowl again? If so, I’m gonna roll Struggle for this, even though I only have 1d.”

“That’s correct. Struggle will be Risky Standard.”

Ray rolls the 1d and... “That’s a 1. Oh no.”

“You pistol whip the driver, but Frill recovers quicker than expected,” says the GM. “They grab your hand



holding the gun, and rip it from your grasp. You're now in a Desperate Position."

"Enough of this," says Jess. "I leap forward in the Claymore and catch the APC with its paws. I'm going to roll Manipulate because I don't want to crush it."

"Ok, this will be Desperate Standard," says the GM. "Desperate because Tower could get shot in the chaos, and you might crush the APC. Standard because even though your Claymore is operating on a much larger scale, it doesn't have the manual dexterity you might want for this task."

"I'm going to use Travelling Companion to push myself for +1d," says Jess. "It lets me spend Stress to push with vehicle actions. I'm rolling 2d on this." She rolls the dice and gets two 6s! "That's a crit! Giving me Great Effect."

"Awesome!" says the GM. "You catch the APC between your paws, and it isn't going anywhere. In fact, the sudden stop throws everyone inside to the ground."

"I want to have a Flashback. I'd like to have grabbed a jeep with Dredge, and we're catching up to the APC," says Cass. "And I'm going to open up the APC to take control of the situation with a pistol in hand."

"That'll be 1 Stress for the Flashback, but you don't need to make a roll," explains the GM. "The APC ramp opens. It's a mess inside, everyone's splayed out and there's stuff everywhere. You see an injured Frill make a suspicious grab for their microphone."

"Oh damn!" shouts Cass. "I kick them in the head and carefully pick up the mic. I'm rolling Struggle for that."

"Actually, I'm going to let Scarecrow's critical success ride in this case," says the GM. "Frill isn't really in a state to stop you, so you don't need to roll. You knock them for a loop and grab the mic. At that point, the base's security surround you, and you're all taken into custody."

"I'd like to call upon an **ally** before things go bad," says Jess. "I want to declare Dr. Homage as an ally, since Scarecrow hasn't interacted with him yet. The last time she saw him was when she was a Jovangellian military cadet years ago. She provided cover fire so that his medics could evac wounded. I want to roll Hunt for that." Jess rolls her 2d in Hunt and gets a 6!

"Well, then. Dr. Homage comes through for you and the squad," says the GM. "He vouches for you personally and points out that the rest of The Cenotaph could have just let the bombs go off if they knew about them. Thanks to this, you only get questioned for about 12 hours by base security, no 'enhanced interrogation' either, and are let go. There's no sign of anyone from the film crew. Mission complete!"

The players now go through the Mission Completed process (see page 202) to determine their reward, how Trust and Status change, and what entanglement occurs. After that, they either begin the downtime phase (see page 218) or go through the end of session process (see page 46).

2: THE PILOTS





PILOT CREATION

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

The directions that follow are useful for creating your Pilot step by step. However, you can jump to Appendix B if you want to randomly generate your Pilot in part or in whole.

1. Choose a **playbook**. This will guide your Pilot's methods for carrying out missions.
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 action or vehicle action can exceed 2 points 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 have you experienced the costs of war? This is your **tragedy**.
5. What were you doing after your tragedy, but before you joined the squad? 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 should now have 10 total action points allocated.
9. Choose an **ability** from your playbook.
10. Write your **name, pronouns, call sign, and look**.
11. Write the names of your squadmates on your **Connection sheet**, and put 1 Tick in their **Connection Clock**. Create one **belief** that you have about each other Pilot, or choose an example belief listed in any playbook.
12. If the players' squad hasn't yet been created, move to **squad creation** (page [182](#)).

HISTORY. TRAGEDY. AND OPENING

The War affected everyone. The lucky ones only experience rationing day to day, but many more faced some form of tragedy. The Pilots are not solely tragic figures though; they had a history before The War, and they found ways to live before joining the squad.

Don't worry about fully fleshing out your Pilot's history, tragedy, and opening at character creation. A single detail for each is enough, as you'll develop the character through play. Discovering who they are is part of the game. It also leaves room to bring the other squadmates into your backstory. If you have a lot of backstory details that interest you, keep them—just be open to including new details as the game progresses.



Full Name: Blackberry Reach
Callsign: Tower
Past:
 -Orque du Soldat Performer
 -Framed for murder
 -Serving drinks in dive bars

I don't want to be a Pilot. And I don't mean that like I do about farming, where I started working and it wasn't so bad even if I do wish I was somewhere else sometimes. Was I supposed to be happy about this? I feel like I remember some of the older kids talking about how cool it would be to be a Pilot, but that was a while ago. They probably thought they were going to be heroes, orphans winning The War for the Church. They didn't even get to be martyrs. We got notices that two of them had died. Just a single page form letter for each of them. The other two we didn't hear anything at all. We just knew. The next group was more scared than anything. After that, I don't think anyone went around making promises before they left.

I've made it pretty clear to everyone I know that I wanted nothing to do with The War. But here I am. The Church of the Celestial Myriad is short on soldiers, and I have "combat aptitude" or some other nonsense. I'm the best around at Piloting Bert, and Harrow knows about almost every fight I've gotten myself into. And won. Putting it that way, I guess that's the whole Cenotaph. A bunch of people who don't want to be here but are too good at what they do to go unnoticed.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

HISTORY

A Pilot's history is who they were before their tragedy. Generally, this was a fairly mundane existence, where The War was not something that filled their every thought. Sure, there was rationing, the neighbor's kid got conscripted, and your second cousin moved back in with their parents after the space station they lived on got destroyed. But you could go most days without thinking about things like that. Don't worry about the tragedy looming in your future, because for now? Life is... *normal*. When a Pilot expresses their history during play, they get XP at the end of a 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 some other 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 the target of 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 they get closer to the controls of a war machine day by day. When a Pilot expresses their tragedy during play, they 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.

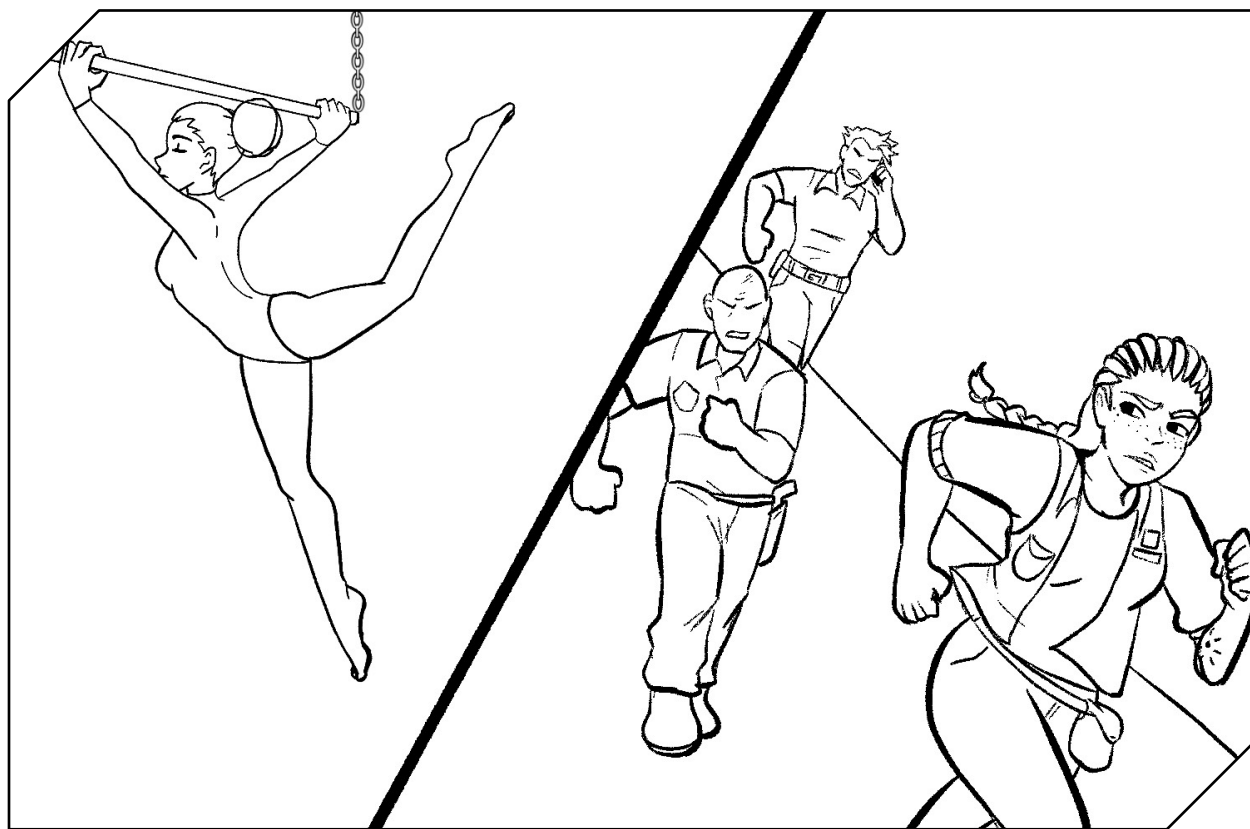
Unwillingly experimented on by unethical researchers.

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 reveals what they did with their life before they joined the squad. It's the time 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 continue with their lives, pretending that their fate is not irrevocably changed and drawn to The War. All will be forced into a new life at the start of the game. When a Pilot expresses their opening during play, they 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.

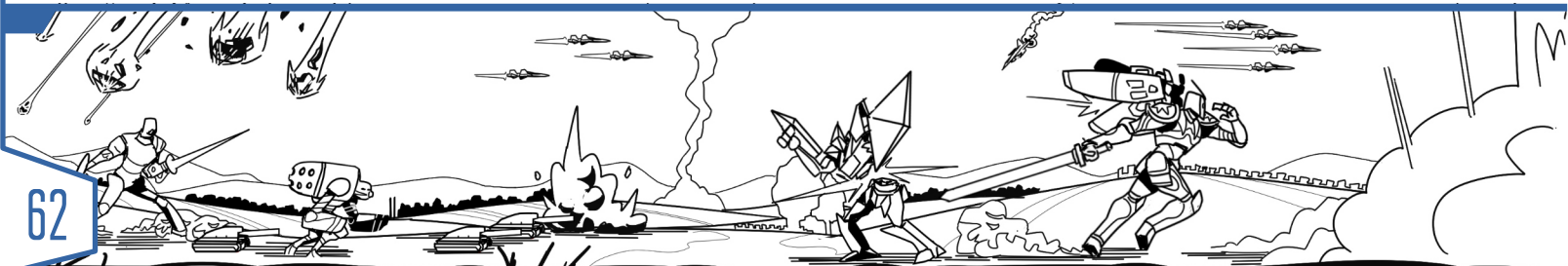
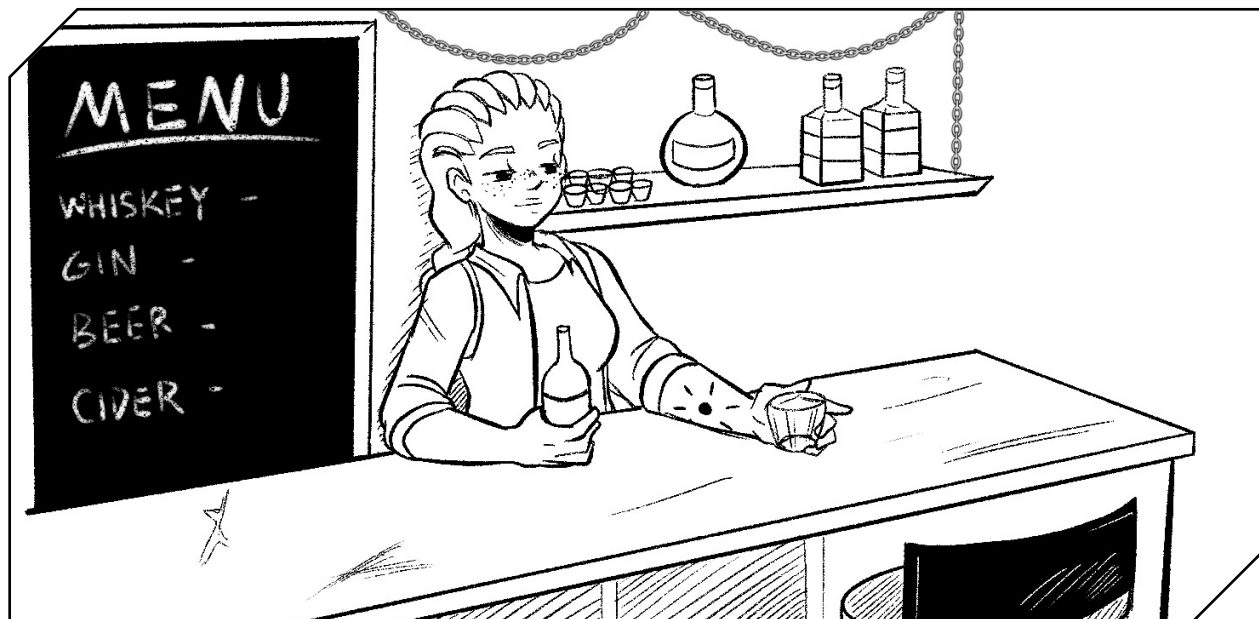
Driving a taxi in areas autocars can't navigate.

Tending to the needs of an admiral as their valet.

Getting by as a sex worker.

Shuffling papers in a cubicle farm.

Serving drinks in a run-down bar.



PILOT ACTIONS AND ATTRIBUTES

When Pilots act as themselves (without their vehicle), their player selects the Pilot action that is most suitable to the situation. There are 12 actions broken up into three attribute groups. An Attribute is a loose description used for determining Resistance rolls (you can find Resistance Rolls on page 36). The three attributes are:

- ◆ **Insight:** Actions involving awareness and observation.
- ◆ **Prowess:** Actions involving physicality and strength.
- ◆ **Resolve:** Actions involving socializing and networking.

When a player creates a Pilot, they can't assign more than 2 points in an action. Once they enter play, all Pilot action ratings max out at 4 points. However, the Mastery Squad Upgrade is required to unlock the fourth point. Pilots have access to the following actions:

INSIGHT ACTIONS

These actions rely upon a Pilot's sharp insights.

- ◆ **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 actions 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 actions use a Pilot's resolve when communicating 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.



PILOT NAME, CALL SIGN, AND PRONOUNS

Names have power. Some are given to us, and some we choose for ourselves. A Pilot's name and call sign can come from any number of sources, and take on a wide variety of stylings. Many will be recognizable as common names, 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 more important is how names and call signs are used by the Pilot they belong to, by their squadmates, and by NPCs. Some characters use names for acquaintances, but will use the call signs for their friends. Some view their name negatively, and adopt their call sign in its place. The opposite of these examples can be true as well, with names taking place of pride, while their call sign is an unpleasant moniker.

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 call signs. 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.

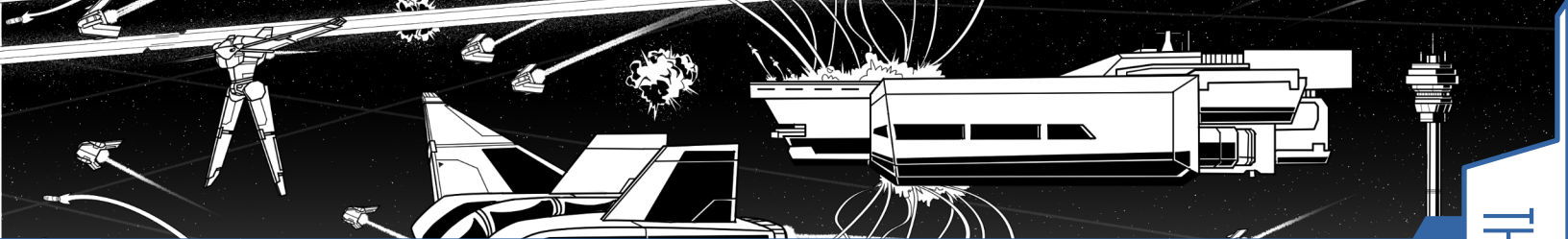
Players select their Pilot's name, which they can base on anything. Don't be afraid to go for a strange name, like Arrow Slide or Territory Jazz. Try saying the name aloud a couple times to see if you like how it sounds.

There are two main ways to pick a call sign: the player chooses it for their Pilot, 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. You should also consider the call sign's origin, and whether your Pilot likes what it means.

If the rest of the squad picks your call sign, it's best if everyone at the table agrees to also let the others choose their call sign too. If you do, make sure you complete one mission and one downtime phase together before choosing call signs for each other. Seeing someone in action gives a better sense of each Pilot's personality, style, and approach to solving problems. Discuss in character, out of character, or switching between the two about possible options for the Pilots' call signs. Make sure every player is comfortable with their call sign, because being called something you dislike every session will likely ruin the fun. It's okay if the Pilot dislikes their call sign, so long as the player likes it.

Pronouns are just as important and powerful as names. These are a key part in expressing a person's identity, as they signal a Pilot's relationship to their gender. Some people 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). Some have no preference at all, so long as they are said with respect (any/all). Some 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 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/zir).

Regardless of how YOU use YOUR pronouns, respectfully use the correct pronouns of the players and characters at the table.



PRONOUN	NOMINATIVE	ACCUSATIVE	POSSESSIVE	REFLEXIVE
He/Him	He	Him	His	Himself
She/Her	She	Her	Her	Herself
They/Them	They	Them	Their	Themselves
Co/Cor	Co	Cor	Cor	Corself
Ze/Zir	Ze	Zir	Zir	Zirself

Demon likes sweet and sour sauce on his chicken nuggets. Tower prefers honey mustard with theirs. But 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. Pilot playbooks intentionally provide vehicle options that let players explore themes of bodies, identity, gender, and sexuality through their characters, so long as no Lines or Veils are broken (see Lines & Veils on page 263).

There's the very real possibility that a player may explore a transition narrative with their Pilot. A character might have the name Hannah and use she/her pronouns at the start of the game, but they can always change. If they decide that they/them pronouns and a different name feel right during the campaign, they can make that swap. Likewise, a character can shift from primarily using their call sign to using their name, or vice versa. Here are some questions to consider when making your Pilot:

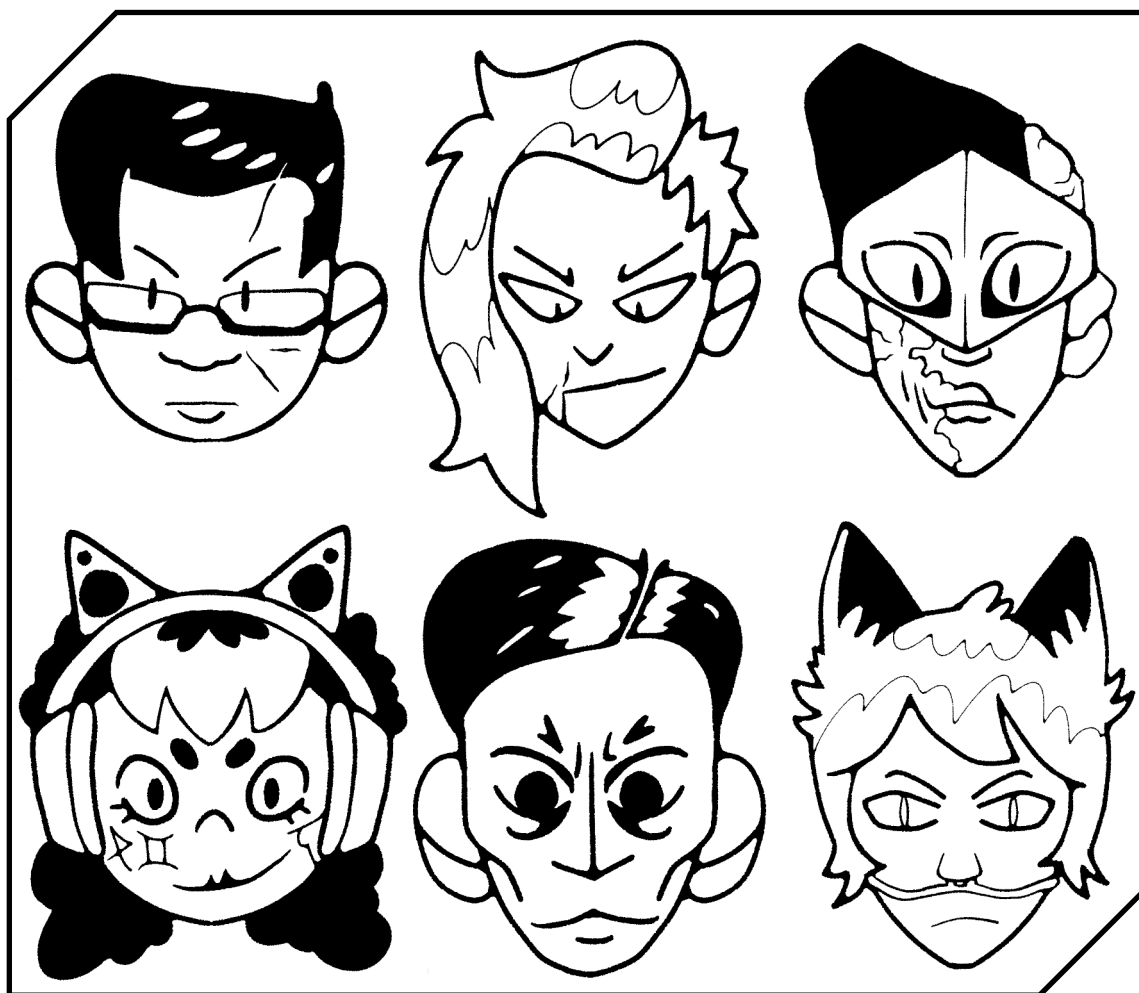
- ◆ What does your character's call sign mean to them?
- ◆ How did they get their call sign?
- ◆ How do they feel about their call sign?
- ◆ What's your character's relationship with their pronouns?
- ◆ How do they feel about how they are perceived?



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. Either way, players get to decide how the game world perceives their Pilot; there is no 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.



PILOTS. CHRONIC ILLNESS. AND DISABILITY

Anyone can become a Pilot regardless of their age, health, or ability. They just need to end up behind the controls of a Vehicle. To that end there are two ways to handle disability and chronic illness in Beam Saber.

The first is that the Pilot's tools that help them deal with their disability (insulin pump, wheelchair, prosthetic limb, etc) function exactly like any other gear. They take up Load and the Pilot's experiences with their disability may modify Position and/or Effect. The second option is for the disability aids to be part of the Pilot's Look. The disability tools don't take up Load and don't provide mechanical benefits.

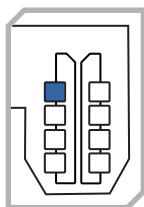
In both cases a Pilot's physicality NEVER gives them a penalty or is part of an obstacle to be overcome unless the Player controlling that Pilot wants that to happen. If a Player doesn't find challenges related to their Pilot's body interesting, they will never appear.

Genevieve's Pilot has Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and often uses supplemental oxygen to help manage it. However, Genevieve isn't interested in stories about how that might be an obstacle to overcome, so they decide that it is only part of their Pilot's Look (an ever present oxygen mask). Thus that disability will never impact play; the mask (or other medications their Pilot might use) will never affect Position and Effect, never be the source of a consequence, and never be an impediment in the narrative.

Kelly wants to see how having difficulty walking while in The War would impact his Pilot's story, so he decides that he has a manual wheelchair that is 0 Load when used, and 1 Load when carried.

While in his vehicle Kelly pursues an enemy through an abandoned town's streets and needs to make a Maneuver roll to keep up. The GM says that this will be Risky Standard, but Kelly suggests that it should be Risky Great; "I've got a lot of experience in my wheelchair giving me an innate sense of physics that helps me work with and against the natural slopes of the ground. Nothing is truly flat, and I can use that to squeeze out a bit of extra speed." The GM agrees, so Kelly has an opportunity to make gains that might surprise his target.

DRIVES



What do you want to change in the world? Each Pilot has an ambition, regardless of how they ended up in The War. Maybe they want 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." Write down your Pilot's drive in a brief sentence that explains what the Pilot hopes to change in the world.

A Pilot's drive comes with two 4-Tick Drive Clocks, which track their progress toward that change. There are three ways a Pilot can add to their Drive Clocks:

- ◆ Whenever a Pilot completes a Long-Term Project that furthers their drive, they may add 1 Tick to a Drive Clock. (This Tick is in addition to the normal benefits of completing that project.)
- ◆ If a Pilot does something new that furthers their drive, they may add 1 Tick as a part of the end of session reward process (page 206).
- ◆ Calling in favors from your patron Faction (Relationship must be at least +1) or other squads (Relationship must be +3). You may add 1 Tick at the cost of lowering your squad's Relationship with your patron Faction by 1, or lowering your squad's Status with the other squad by 3. Ask other players for their permission first, as this decision affects the whole squad.

Repeating an action during a mission or a Long-Term Project during downtime won't give you extra Ticks to your Drive Clocks. It doesn't matter how many times you record an album, only the first one helps you become a pop idol.

If you chose a drive that seems too big or amorphous to affect, it's okay to receive Ticks for relatively small actions. For example, if your drive is "remove the orbital debris cloud," you could get a Tick for 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.

EXAMPLE DRIVES

Here are some example drives, along with example actions that could add progress Ticks.

DRIVE	PROGRESS
Kill the man responsible for destroying my hometown	◆ Defeat your Rival ◆ Learn his weaknesses ◆ Find out where he sleeps
Become a famous pop idol	◆ Get a record deal ◆ 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 ◆ Prove your own competence
Build a horse ranch away from The War	◆ 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

Drives tell the GM what the player is interested in struggling towards. If a Pilot's drive is "get a high-ranking position in the military," it suggests gaining rank is a difficult task in this particular campaign or possibly just for that Pilot. In other campaigns, a single Long-Term Project might be sufficient to achieve that goal. But when a player chooses a drive, the Pilot's resulting story arc is lengthened and thus harder to achieve.

Drives also help bring nearly impossible goals much closer. If a Pilot's drive is "make Journey City the capital of the Jovangellian Empire," that goal moves into the realm of fictional possibility. Actions that wouldn't normally shift the narrative towards that unlikely (or even impossible) goal have the power to make a difference. A Long-Term Project to become pen pals with Regent General Bellimine could add 1 Tick to that Drive Clock, opening the door for the Pilot to convince the Regent that they should 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 could, however, shift the nature of The War by changing how or why it is fought.

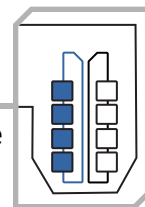
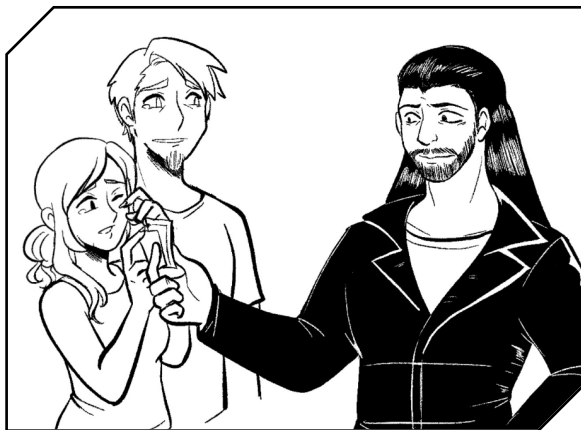
SPENDING DRIVE

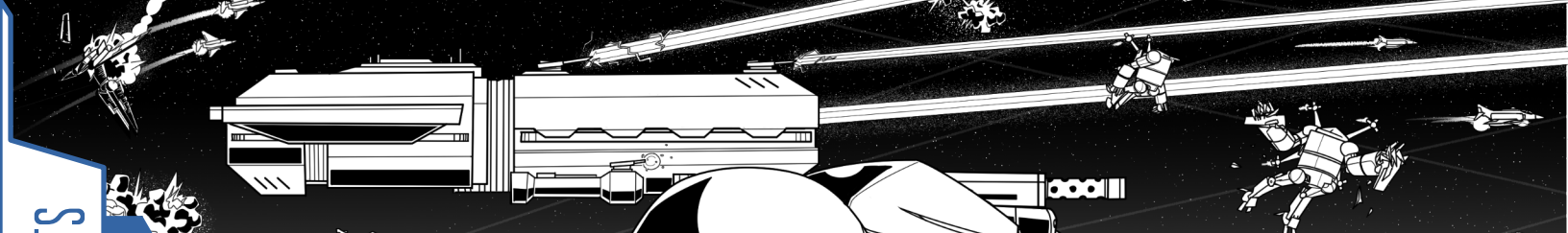
A player may spend one or more completed Drive Clocks at any time to change the world. The more Clocks spent at once, the bigger the change.

- ◆ Spend 1 Drive Clock to negate Harm or Damage of any level, change an action roll or fortune roll result to a 6, or give another Pilot all four benefits on an assist.
- ◆ Spend 2 Drive Clocks to change the life circumstances of one person. This is the only way to permanently defeat a Rival.
- ◆ Spend 3 Drive Clocks to change the circumstances of a squad.
- ◆ Spend 4 Drive Clocks to change the circumstances of a Faction.
- ◆ Any time you spend a Drive Clock, in addition to the normal benefits, you can choose to rewrite your drive.

Once a Drive Clock has been spent, it is emptied of all Ticks. You can immediately start taking actions to refill it by pursuing your Drive, whether you changed it when you spent your Clock or kept it the same.

A Pilot only has 2 Drive Clocks, so multiple Pilots must spend their Drive Clocks to change the circumstances of a squad or Faction. If two or more Pilots spend their Drive Clocks on a single change, designate one Pilot as the leader. Fictionally, the leader is the one who came up with the idea, presented the evidence, organized the squad, and generally took charge to make the change happen. Every other Pilot who spent a Drive Clock adds one Tick to their Connection Clock (see page 72) with the leader. The leader adds one Tick to their Connection Clock with everyone else who spent a Drive Clock.





The GM and players interpret "change" and "circumstances" based on their campaign and their game's tone. Always discuss people's boundaries and the impact these changes may bring before bringing them to bear. In a game where the Pilots are narratively powerful, change might mean convincing the Jovangellian Empire to become a constitutional monarchy, giving political power to the masses. In a less heroic game, spending 4 Drive Clocks might mean that the Jovangellian child empress reaches adulthood in good health.

Spending Drive Clocks is a matter of scale. While the example about the child empress reaching adulthood took 4 Drive Clocks, it could also be a 2 Drive Clock change instead. The difference would be that four Clocks see the empress grow up, and this changes the Jovangellian Empire. While spending two means that she grows up, but is ineffectual and becomes a footnote in history.

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 every Pilot's drive. If a Pilot's drive is "Destroy the Dark Room (a Tier II squad)," they will NEED to spend 3 Drive Clocks to do it. But if they have the opportunity to destroy a different squad (and no other Pilot has that squad involved in their drive), no Drive Clocks need to be spent.

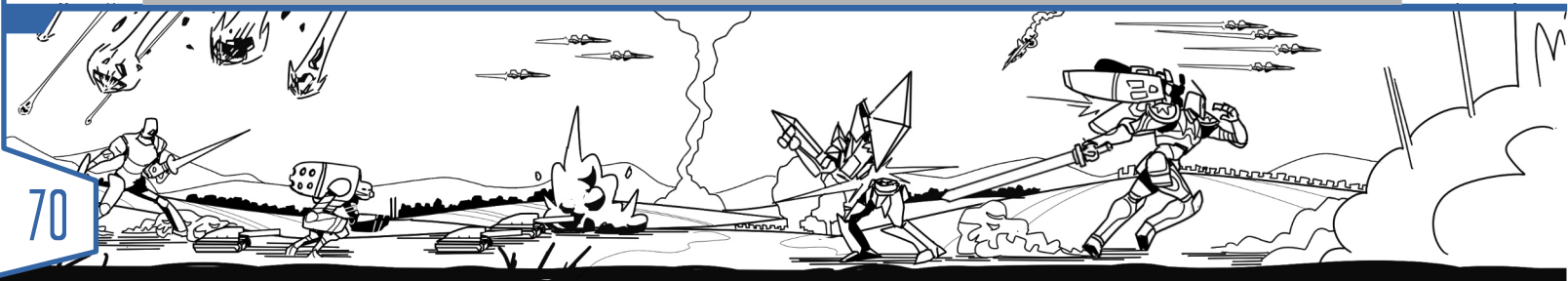
Conversely, Drive Clocks can be spent to change the circumstances of individuals or groups that are not related to any Pilot's drive, instead of setting up opportunities in the fiction to change their situation.

Lastly, check to see if spending your Drive Clocks will impact the other players. Some Pilots have Rivals that have narrative importance to them, and these Rivals are usually parts of a squad or Faction. Rivalries are personal, so players cannot spend Drive Clocks to eliminate another player's Rival without their permission. However, a rivalry doesn't prevent a player from destroying the Rival's squad—the Rival will always survive, and cannot be taken out in such a manner.

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, who are connected to Tower's drive of "Destroy the Dark Room"). In this situation, killing Hartberg requires 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 Clock because she isn't a Rival nor is she 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 his drive. Alternatively, Piani and Slide could instantly be slain by spending 2 Drive Clocks on each of them if the players don'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, they may do so under suitable narrative circumstances, such as filling a Progress Clock called "Get the Wrights excommunicated" (without spending 3 Drive Clocks). However, because the March of Saints are Tier V and the Wrights are Tier I, the complexity of destroying each will be vastly different. The former will likely require multiple Long-Term Projects and a mission, while the latter could be destroyed in one mission by getting all the members into one room and blowing it up.

Alternatively, the squad could spend 3 Drive Clocks to destroy either squad. Doing so would negate the need for projects and missions, but Hartberg would survive as she's Dredge's Rival. Slide



would likewise survive as he is explicitly a part of Unlucky's drive. However, getting rid of the Dark Room is more complicated, since the squad is directly tied to a Pilot's drive. Removing the Dark Room therefore requires spending 3 Drive Clocks 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 Clocks could put it and the Democratic Federated Systems into a true alliance with no betrayal foreshadowed.

You can combine a series of Drive Clocks to affect change one step at a time. However, you must spend your Drive Clocks according to the scale of change. If 2 Drive Clocks are spent putting an ally in a position of Jovangellian power, the squad could also spend another 4 Drive Clocks to have that ally enact the Faction's move into a constitutional monarchy.

FULFILLING A DRIVE

Sometimes spending enough Drive Clocks will create a narrative point where a Pilot should leave the game. When 2 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 outcome, though sometimes it can take the players and GM by surprise—even the player who just filled their Pilot's drive! If that happens, everyone should discuss what that means for the Pilot, the squad, and the campaign. Some of this discussion will depend on the expectations discussed in session zero (see page 263), but it will also depend on how everyone feels in the moment. Consider the following questions when retiring a character under these circumstances:

- ◆ 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? (Adding new Pilots is covered on page 82.)
- ◆ Does the squad stay the same, does it gain a new patron or adopt a new squad playbook, or does it disband entirely?
- ◆ Does the campaign continue, or has the fulfillment of this drive completed the campaign's narrative? (Ending a campaign is covered on page 311.)

Lastly, the changes from spending drive must make sense for your story. If a Pilot has aggressively fought against their Rival for the whole campaign, it's a stretch to spend 2 Drive Clocks so the rival switches sides and aligns with the squad; they're most likely going to die. Likewise, spending those 2 Drive Clocks against a Rival who has just appeared in the mission will not immediately take them out, but it WILL seal their fate once they are defeated.

That said, this situation shouldn't be too much of an issue. To gain Ticks in a Drive Clock, a Pilot must do things that further their drive, so there's a good chance they have already laid the fictional groundwork. In short, when spending Drive Clocks, consider the Pilot's past acts in relation to their goals, and how those acts shape the outcome.

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 you find the relationship, and how competent you are when you need to assist your fellows.

Your Pilot's character sheet contains separate 4-Tick Connection Clocks for each other Pilot in your squad, representing your relationship with that Pilot. Make a belief about that Pilot for each Tick on that Clock (checking in with that player when you do). When the Connection Clock fills, ask the target Pilot for a truth about one of the beliefs tied to them, then reset the Clock to 1 Tick as you see them in a new light. When a Connection Clock resets, erase all the previous beliefs you had about that Pilot and write a new one related to the truth you just learned—it'll take time and effort to understand them again. After they reveal a truth about themselves, you both take 1 XP (you may put this XP into any XP track on the Pilot playbook).

How do you add Ticks to Connection Clocks? Ticks are added each time a Pilot Cuts Loose (see page 223) during downtime. Spending Drive Clocks on another Pilot's plans or receiving them for your own plans also adds one Tick. Lastly, some special abilities, such as the Empath's Carouse, add Ticks under certain circumstances.

PILOT:

1

2

3

▶ Ask a truth, then mark xp and reset to 1, writing a new belief.

PILOT:

1

2

3

▶ Ask a truth, then mark xp and reset to 1, writing a new belief.

PILOT:

1

2

BELIEFS

Pilots in Beam Saber are survivors, and part of their ability to survive is based on 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—but these judgments aren't always correct. These opinions are a Pilot's beliefs.

A belief is a brief statement about how a Pilot feels about another Pilot in their squad. Beliefs are simple, quick, and influential in the rapport between the two Pilots. However, the players need to remember that their beliefs are not necessarily true as they are based on incomplete information and gut instinct.

Pitchfork has the belief "We've fought side by side in the past and I can trust him at my back" in regards to Demon. She believes this to be true, but its validity is brought into question when Demon abandons The Cenotaph by quietly slipping away during a confrontation with The Breath Of Faith.

The amount of beliefs a Pilot has about another Pilot, is equal to the number of Ticks they have in their Connection Clock with that Pilot. Each playbook has some example beliefs, but feel free to write your own. A good belief is:

- ◆ Something 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 Pilot struggles because of the beliefs they have about their fellow Pilots, they can mark 1 XP at the end of session, or 2 XP if it came up more than once.



STRESS

Through luck and force of will, these Pilots overcome many obstacles that would cause others to fall. This ability to survive is represented with Stress. Pilots can spend Stress to give themselves or their fellow Pilots an edge over whatever is in their way. There are five main ways that a Pilot can spend their Stress:

► **Pushing Themselves:** Once per action roll or fortune roll, a Pilot can spend 2 Stress to select one of the following options: Take +1d; Take +1 level of Effect to an action; Take any action while incapacitated (primarily by level 3 Harm). Pushing yourself when you have 0d in an action lets you roll one die (instead of rolling 2d and taking the lowest) which gives you a 50/50 chance of success.

► **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 describes 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.
- ◆ Complicated or there was little chance to make it, it costs 1 Stress.
- ◆ Convolutd, 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 Materiel as appropriate instead of Stress.

► **Assist:** When a Pilot aids another, they spend Stress to give their ally benefits. Assists are explained in the Teamwork section (see page 76).

► **Resistance:** When a Pilot negates a consequence, they take Stress based on their resistance roll. This is explained in more detail in the Resistance and Armor section (see page 36).

► **Special Abilities:** Some abilities let a Pilot spend Stress to activate their 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.

Stress can be removed between missions by spending time with your fellow Pilots and taking the Cut Loose downtime activity. See page 223 for more information.

STRESSING OUT

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

If they remove themselves quietly, the Pilot heals all Stress and chooses a Scar suitable to the event that filled their last Stress box (see Scars below). They leave the current situation in a terrible state, but return later at an appropriate time during the mission.

If they push on recklessly, they can take a Dire Action. A **Dire Action** lets the Pilot ignore their existing Harm or Damage penalties. They cannot spend Stress on this action, nor can they make resistance rolls since their Stress maxed out (but Quirks can be exhausted as normal). If they get a 6

on their Dire Action, they can take another Dire Action when they next act—potentially allowing them to press onward for the rest of the scene. If the result is a 5 or lower (or they choose to take no further actions), 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 heals completely, and they gain a Scar that reflects what filled their last Stress box.

If the players roll a **critical success** (two 6s) on a Dire Action, they:

- ◆ Heal 1 Stress instead of having improved Effect,
- ◆ Are no longer taking Dire Actions (and return to acting normally) and,
- ◆ Avoid taking a Scar and the level 3 Harm caused by the Dire Action.

SCARS

When a Pilot takes a Scar, they are forever changed by The War. During every downtime phase going forward, they will need to Cut Loose at least once or take one Stress per Scar they have at the end of downtime. However, if a Pilot gained a Scar during the previous mission, they do not suffer this Stress from any of their Scars. Scar conditions are not easily removed (though they can be with a suitable series of Long-Term Projects (see page 225), and they affect the Pilot's personality.

If a Pilot suffers the repercussions of their Scars during a session, they mark 1 XP at the end of the session (or 2 XP if they struggled multiple times). Struggling with a Scar can occur through narrative play, such as missing opportunities or needlessly creating trouble, and 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, if you wish).

POSSIBLE SCARS

Cold
 Haunted
 Obsessed
 Paranoid
 Reckless
 Soft
 Vicious
 Fractious

SCARS: RECKLESS COLD SOFT VICIOUS
 PARANOID FRACTIOUS OBSESSED HAUNTED

Paranoid

Obsessed

Each Pilot can sustain up to four Scars. If a Pilot takes a fourth Scar, they can no longer 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 settle down away from The War with a quality of life indicated by the changes they made through spending Drive (as described in the Drives section on page 65). If the Pilot is 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 (and remember your Lines & Veils).

TEAMWORK

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

ASSIST

Describe how your Pilot helps another with their action roll. 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 your Connection with the Pilot, the more Stress you take when assisting them, and the harder you work to aid them. If more than one Pilot wants to assist, you may want to perform a group action instead.

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

You can weaken an obstacle or empower an ally to set a squadmate up for their action. A setup action functions like an action roll. You describe how you want to set up another Pilot, and go through the action roll procedure. On a result of 4+, any squadmate that follows through on your setup action can choose either improved Position or increased Effect on their action roll.

LEAD A GROUP ACTION

You'll sometimes want to overcome obstacles together on a mission—such as everyone sneaking past a security system, or coordinating an attack on a target. If multiple Pilots want to work together on one action, they designate a Pilot as the group leader and choose an action.

The leader describes how they lead the group, and the GM sets the Position and Effect. Everyone decides on their bonus die, and then rolls for the same action. If a Cohort participates in the group action, it adds no dice but modifies the Position and Effect as appropriate to its Scale and expertise.

The group uses the single best result for everyone. If the action rolled is a Pilot action, the leader takes 1 Stress for each participant that rolled 1-3 as their best result. If the action rolled is a vehicle action, the leader exhausts 1 Quirk (or adds one Tick to their Temporary Vehicle Clock; see page 167) if they rolled a 1-3 as their best result, and exhausts another Quirk if at least one other participant rolled a 1-3.

If a Pilot didn't roll as part of the group, they cannot use the group's result. If the roll has a Desperate Position, the leader adds 1 XP into the attribute rolled at the end of the session. You cannot receive an assist on a group action.

Tower, Scarecrow, Demon, and a fire team of Toughs move through an active conflict zone in their vehicles. They need to get through quickly without catching the eye of any combatants. They perform a group action using Maneuver to get everyone out of the battlefield. They're using their vehicles, so the leader will have to spend Quirks. Tower takes the lead, since their Mantis has the most unspent Quirks. The GM sets the Position and Effect as Controlled Standard. But the Toughs worsen the Position to Risky Standard because their numbers draw attention.

All the Pilots roll their Maneuver, but it doesn't go well. Tower and Demon get less than 4, while Scarecrow gets a 5. As Scarecrow's roll was the highest, the group's result is a 5. The leader (Tower) and one other participant (Demon) rolled a 1-3, so Tower must spend two Quirks. A 5 gets the group a partial success with a consequence; they reach the office building they need to enter, but enemy infantry have occupied the building as a consequence. The Pilots will have to go in on foot to remove them.

Demon suggests that he opens fire on the infantry alongside the Toughs 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, Demon suggests leading a Struggle group action. This time, the Toughs improve the Position and Effect to Risky Standard as their numbers even the odds in this struggle. As this is a Pilot action, any 1-3 result will cost Stress.

Demon, Tower, and Scarecrow all roll Struggle, and things go slightly better this time. Demon and Scarecrow both get a 3, costing Demon 2 Stress (one for each result of 1-3). But Tower gets a 6—the group lands a success with no consequences. The enemy infantry are routed!



RIVALS

Pilots have very intense lives, which sometimes leads to fervent encounters with other people—and an antagonistic connection as a result. There's a person out there 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.

A Pilot can acquire a Rival by naming an NPC they want to clash with during the game. The NPC can be present in the current scene, declared during Pilot creation, or be named at any other time. A Rival immediately gains increased narrative significance, as well as the Rival Moves and 8-Tick Challenge Clock that come with their new position.

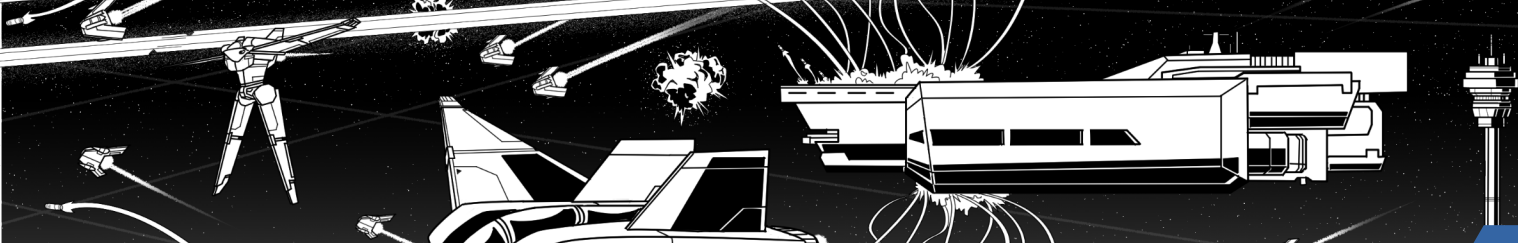
Add the Rival to the Pilot's Connections, mark 1 Tick in their Connection Clock, and write down one belief about them. A Pilot can only have one Rival at a time, but more than one Pilot can share the same Rival.

The Rival's Connection Clock can increase via two ways: The Rival inflicts a consequence on the Pilot, or the Pilot adds 1 Tick to the Rival's Challenge Clock. Both of these can add a Tick once per mission and downtime cycle. When the Connection Clock fills, the Pilot takes 1 XP and asks the GM a question about a belief they have with their Rival (which the GM must answer truthfully). The player then resets the Connection Clock to 1 Tick and writes 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.

However, picking fights can ruin associations. Declaring a Rival lowers the squad's Status with the Rival's squad by 1. Killing a Rival also lowers their squad's Status by 1, as they were an important pillar of morale.

When Rivals appear in missions, they always cause trouble for the Pilots. The GM creates at least one 8-Tick clock (called the Challenge Clock) to represent the obstacle(s) this Rival presents. But Rivals, no matter how friendly, are never to be taken lightly. Pilots may need to overcome several Challenge Clocks, represented by multiple obstacles, before tackling the Rival directly. If several Pilots share the same Rival, they must overcome an additional 4-Tick Challenge Clock for every Pilot with that rivalry.

Hannah Copeland is both Pitchfork and Tower's Rival. When Hannah appears in a mission, the players must fill her 8-Tick Challenge Clock, plus an additional 4-Tick Challenge Clock to defeat her (as she's the Rival of two Pilots).



Once the last Challenge Clock is completed, the Rival is defeated. Keep in mind that defeating a Rival is not the same as removing them from The War. If you want to completely remove them from the story, you must spend at least 2 Drive Clocks to permanently change the course of their life.

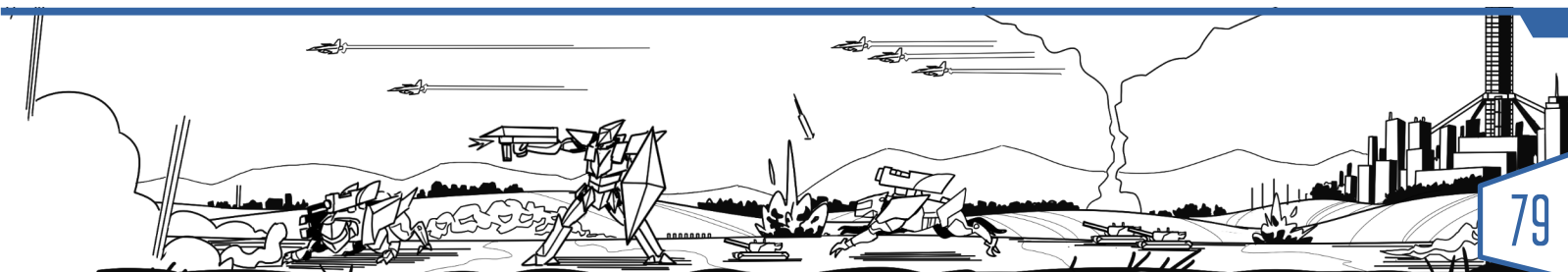
Rivals are very dangerous both during missions and between them. Rivals can inflict a number of consequences (called a Rival Move) at any time equal to the number of Pilots on a mission. However, if more than one Pilot shares the same Rival, the Rival may inflict an extra consequence per additional rivalry with a Pilot. Rivals may inflict consequences before a Pilot acts, on a result of 6, after a fortune roll, literally at ANY time. Players can suggest dramatic moments where a Rival Move may trigger, or the Rival Move can simply trigger as an additional consequence for an action roll. The consequence's severity is the same as the affected Pilot's current Position, and must be appropriate to the fiction.

Hannah Copeland gets four Rival Moves because she is Pitchfork's Rival and there are four Pilots on the mission. If Tower and Scarecrow also had her as a Rival, she would get a total of six Rival Moves (four for the number of Pilots on the mission plus 2 more for Tower and Scarecrow's additional rivalries).

If a Pilot who is Rivals with this person adds at least 1 Tick to the Rival's Challenge Clock, that Pilot can mark 1 XP on their Pilot playbook at the end of the session. This is separate from XP gained due to struggling with a belief about a Rival.

When the Rival's Challenge Clock is filled, the player who has that character as their Rival (or other players with permission from them) may spend 2 Drive Clocks to permanently remove the Rival as a threat. The Pilot can then mark 2 XP in addition to the 1 XP gained from participating in completing the Rival's Challenge Clock. "Permanently removed as a threat" is 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, Pilots can no longer gain XP from them. If a Rival's Challenge Clock is partially or completely filled, but they are not permanently removed as a threat, any Ticks on the Clock are removed as they recuperate.

Rivals should have agency, power, and the ability to mess with the Pilots' plans. They should use abhorrent means to reach 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 childhood friends, current (or former) lovers, tied together by blood, and many others. However, a Pilot's ally is not defined by the nature of their connection, but by the fact that the Pilot can rely on them.

A Pilot can have any number of allies. But 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, it should fit 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.

Once per session, a Pilot can declare 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. On a 4-6, you're on good terms with the ally, and they're likely to help you. On a 1-3, 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 could relate to your past with the ally, the ally's current situation, or something unrelated to the ally. Add the ally to your Connections with a short accompanying description.

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. He rolls a Risky Standard Battle to see how she's feeling about their relationship. He gets a 4, so she's happy to hear from him, but there will be a Risky consequence: Julia is facing disciplinary action for punching a superior officer, and Demon will need to help 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 can help them. Allies are emotionally invested in aiding the Pilot, but can't always be present or do things for them. Sometimes taking advantage of what your ally provides requires an action roll or fortune roll. Allies exist to provide an avenue for the Pilots to accomplish their goals, not to do it for them.

PILOT ADVANCEMENT

As Pilots make their way through The War, they'll build up experience (represented by XP). There are three types of XP: Playbook XP, attribute XP, and General XP. Each type determines how it is gained and which XP tracks it can go into. Pilots can gain:

► **Playbook XP** by Training the playbook during downtime (see page 227) and marking 1 XP box next to "Abilities" 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** for rolling a Desperate action (regardless of the result), or when Training during downtime (see page 227). For example, a Desperate Maneuver roll earns the Pilot 1 XP in Expertise. When an attribute gathers 6 XP, reset its XP track to 0 and add an action point to one of the actions under that attribute. Actions have a max rating of 3, unless the squad has the Mastery Squad Upgrade.

► **General XP** through several methods. The player chooses where they put their General XP, either as playbook XP or attribute XP. At the end of a session, Pilots determine if they:

- ◆ Expressed their tragedy, history, or opening.
- ◆ Struggled because of their beliefs, Scars, or their vehicle's quirks.
- ◆ Addressed challenges with methods determined by their playbook. The Pilot takes 1 XP for each item that occurred, and an additional XP for each item that occurred more than once.
- ◆ If a Pilot contributes at least 1 Tick to their Rival's Clock during a session (see page 78) or fills their Connection Clock with another Pilot or with their Rival, they gain 1 General XP. If they permanently remove their Rival as a threat, they gain 2 General XP.

ABILITIES

► ► ► ► ► ► ► ► +1 DOT

● **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.

VEHICLE ATTRIBUTES

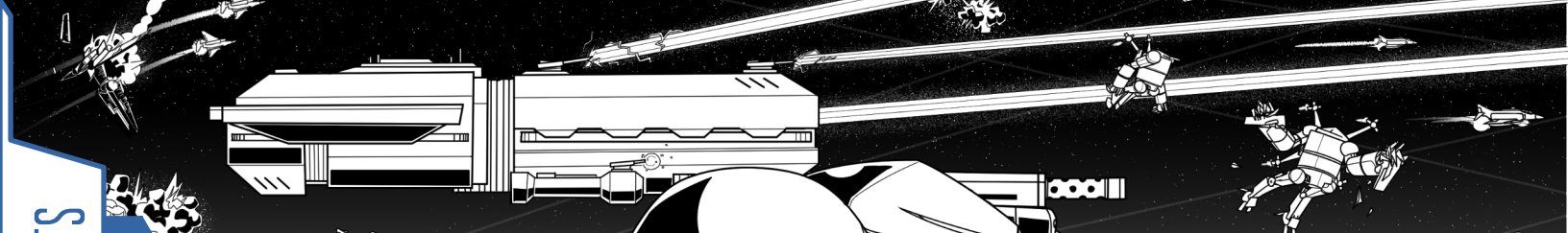
EXPERTISE ► ► ► ► ► ► ► ► +1 DOT

- ○ ○ ○ BATTLE
- ○ ○ ○ DESTROY
- ○ ○ ○ MANEUVER

ACUITY ► ► ► ► ► ► ► ► +1 DOT

○ ○ ○ ○ BOMBARD



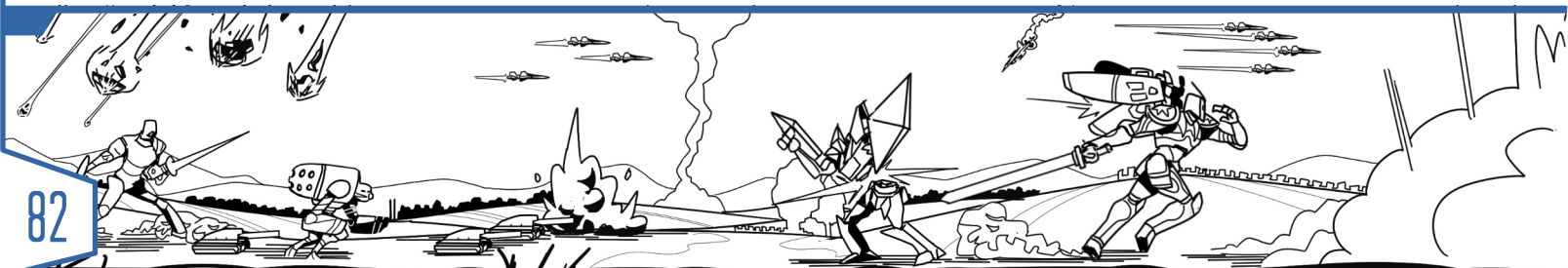


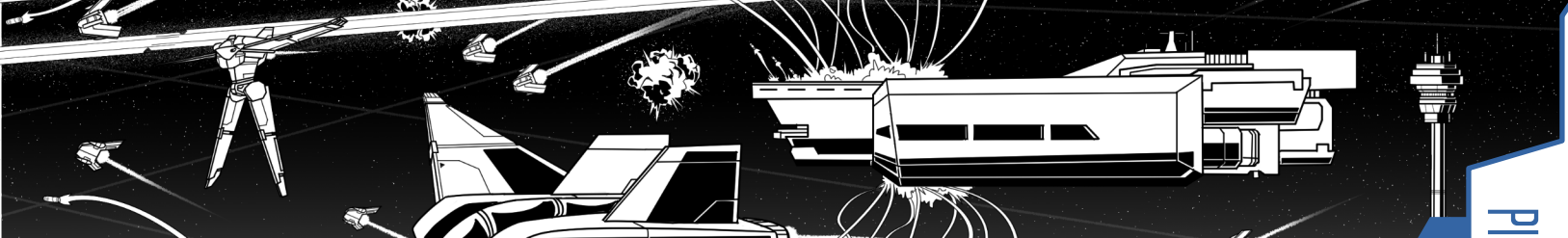
ADDING NEW PILOTS

There are five reasons for a new Pilot to join the squad:

- ◆ A Pilot takes level 4 Harm and dies, so their player creates a new character.
- ◆ A Pilot gets 4 Scars and retires, so their player creates a new character.
- ◆ A Pilot goes AWOL after overindulging (see page 223), so their player creates a new character to play until the old one returns. The player may choose which Pilot they send on future missions, but cannot switch Pilots mid-mission 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.

Where possible, introduce the new Pilot at the start of a downtime phase. This gives the Pilots a chance to interact with them before throwing everyone into a mission. Make sure every other Pilot has 1 Tick in their Connection Clock with the new Pilot when they are introduced. The new Pilot participates in the downtime phase as normal.





PILOT VS PILOT AND PLAYER VS PLAYER

There are two ways to handle conflicts between Pilots. Players can play it out in character without rolling dice, or they can let the dice determine the outcome. If a Pilot acts against another player's Pilot, they may roll an appropriate action, and those involved can make resistance rolls to deal with the consequences. If you turn to the dice, here are some suggested steps for managing the conflict fairly:

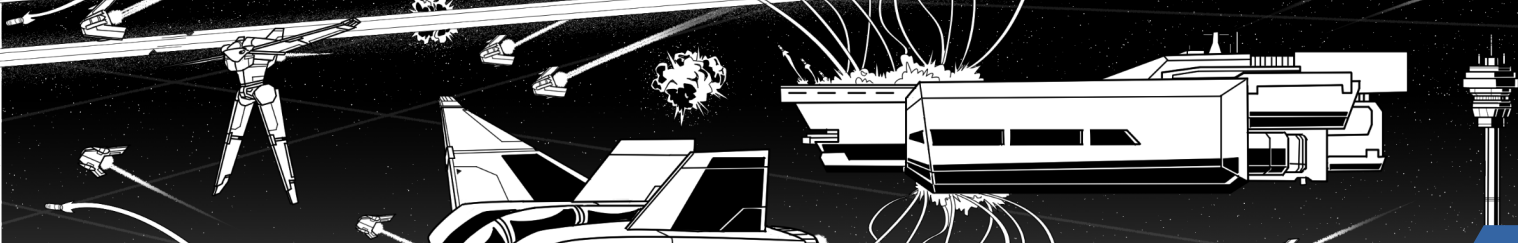
- 1. Examine the source of the conflict.** If the conflict arises from differences between the Pilots, that's usually nothing to worry about. However, never use dice to resolve conflicts between players. If players are at odds, everyone needs to talk the conflict out until you reach a resolution.
- 2. Take a breather.** Stop everything and take stock of the situation when Pilots act against each other. Nothing moves forward until everyone agrees how to handle the conflict—whether that's with dice or talking it out in character. If you need to know who acts 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).
- 3. Accept the method for resolution.** Don't roll any dice or move the story forward until everyone understands what's at stake. Discuss everyone's goals in this moment, what they plan on doing, what they are willing to give, and how their differences might be resolved. Everyone at the table can make suggestions and objections when negotiating the situation. If your group can't reach a unanimous decision on how to resolve the situation, 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.
- 4. Acknowledge the outcome.** If everyone agrees on the method for a resolution, then everyone must accept the outcome. Consequences can always be resisted, but trying to escape the conflict's terms is acting in bad faith.



PILOT ACTIONS IN DEPTH

This section contains extended descriptions and examples of each Pilot action. When your Pilot attempts a challenge or does something with an element of chance, you typically name the action they're using to overcome what's in front of them and perform an action roll (see action rolls on page 30).

COMMAND	to force immediate obedience. <i>Lead a fireteam in combat; strike fear in others.</i>
CONSORT	to mingle with allies and acquaintances. <i>Gain access to resources, intel, people, or places.</i>
ENGINEER	to build or tinker with an object. <i>Develop a non-contagious strain of the flu; fix a broken door.</i>
FINESSE	to handle an object with agility. <i>Secretly draw a pistol; hand off a key to a prisoner.</i>
HUNT	to track targets and attack over great distances. <i>Follow a squad through a ruined city.</i>
INTERFACE	to make electronics an extension of your body. <i>Hack into a technologically advanced vehicle; understand how strange tech works.</i>
PROWL	to move with grace and precision. <i>Climb onto a mech in the middle of battle; sneak past a security camera; stab an unsuspecting foe.</i>
STRUGGLE	to employ lethal or less than lethal violence. <i>Restrain a panicking civilian; exchange gunfire across rooftops.</i>
STUDY	to meticulously examine details for better understanding. <i>Read technical manuals to find a weak point; determine a statement's truth by scrutinizing the speaker.</i>
SURVEY	to observe your surroundings and predict outcomes. <i>Spot trouble before it happens; discover an attacker's vulnerabilities.</i>
SWAY	to persuade with guile, wit, & charm. <i>Negotiate better ceasefire terms; convince a guard that you belong in a restricted area.</i>
WRECK	to act with brutal force. <i>Lift a car off a wounded companion; smash through a locked door.</i>



COMMAND

When you Command, you force immediate obedience. You might lead a fire team in combat, or brow beat a person until they yield to 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 the bar's private area. You tell him that if he doesn't let you in now, your companions will beat him black and blue.

1-3 (Risky opportunity): Just before you make the threat, you see the bouncer's 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 exits, sees you, and flees back into the maze of rooms.

RISKY

A bartender refuses to let you into a bar's private area. 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, gesturing at the VIP area. You can hand over your weapons, or decide to avoid the private area.

DESPERATE

You direct your fire team of Toughs armed with anti-armor sticky grenades to take down the pair of oncoming enemy AWVs.

1-3 (Harm): Tracer rounds fly from the AWVs' machine guns, devastating the fire team. They are now Broken as a few become casualties (see fire team Harm on page 194). The rest take cover as best they can.

4/5 (reduced Effect): Explosions rock one of the AWVs as several of the Toughs land their sticky bombs. As the smoke clears, we see that the AWV 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 score a new contact with your social grace. In a flashback, you might have partied with a courier so that 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 for an owed favor.

1-3 (Risky opportunity): They tell you no, and to drop the subject. You could try a different action (such as pointing out the logical advantages with Sway), or keep leaning on Consort and 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 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 he'll drink enough to spill some corporate secrets.

1-3 (Harm): You reach for the next one, but find yourself on the floor. He grins down at you, clearly not as drunk as you need him to be. Take level 2 Harm: *Sloshed*.

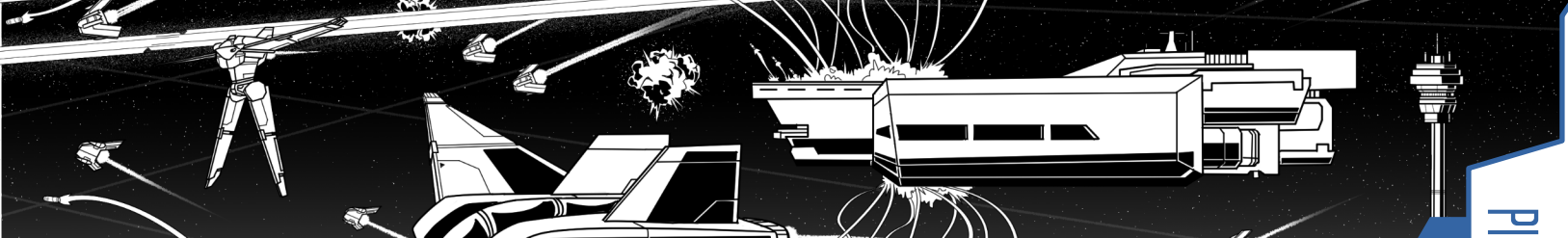
4/5 (cost): You manage to hold your liquor better than he does, so you get the info you wanted. However, it took a LOT of drinks to get here, and it costs you two Personnel.

DESPERATE

Your Rival points 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 and slaps handcuffs around your wrists. "Let's go, loser."

4/5 (Harm): "...You have been fun to toy with," she says, and she 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 at the right time. 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 discreetly disable them.

1-3 (Risky opportunity):

Before you can really get into it, you see some soldiers heading toward 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 you cut your hand on the engine in the rush. Take level 1 Harm: *Sliced*.

RISKY

A crumbling bridge is between your convoy and its destination. You have the tools and experience 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, leaving you in a Desperate Position as you dangle over the canyon.

4/5 (reduced Effect): You've got the bridge repaired enough that the convoy can cross, but they'll have to move at a snail's pace to make sure they don't shake apart your repairs.

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 you break some of your Tools in 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 the info you need, so you decide to impress them with a quick round of The Knife Game at a speed you deem safe.

1-3 (Risky opportunity):

The kids aren't impressed with your speed. You could try to get the info from them another way (with Command, for example), or go faster—entering 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 in the hopes they'll wager their AWWs. When they finally do, you decide to stack the deck in your favor.

1-3 (complication): You're about to shuffle when a familiar voice says, "Mind if I deal this hand?" Your Rival sits down, takes the cards, and gives you a knowing smirk.

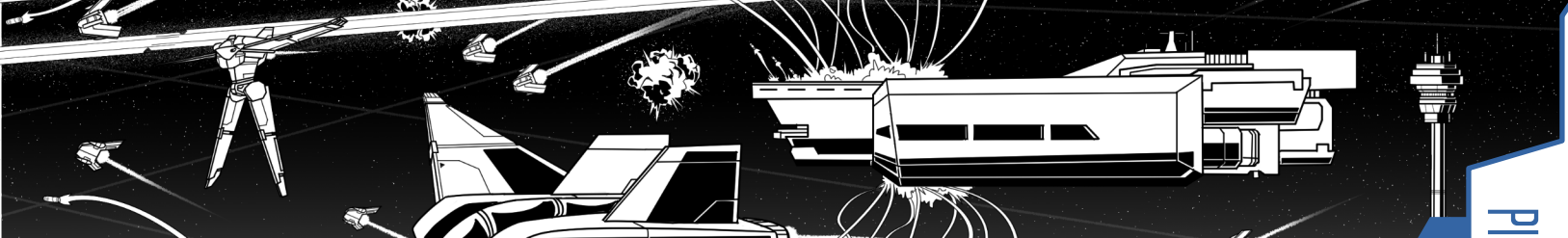
4/5 (Desperate Position): You win the hand! But as you reach for the AWWs' keys, one of them points a gun at you. "You may have won fair and square, but I'm a bit of a sore loser." You are now in a Desperate Position.

DESPERATE

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

1-3 (Harm): The guards are twitchier than expected. 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. You make it to cover, but their goggles nullify your optical camo.



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 complete 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 take cover and shoot in your direction, others move towards your location. You're now 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 shatters and destroys your sniper rifle.

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

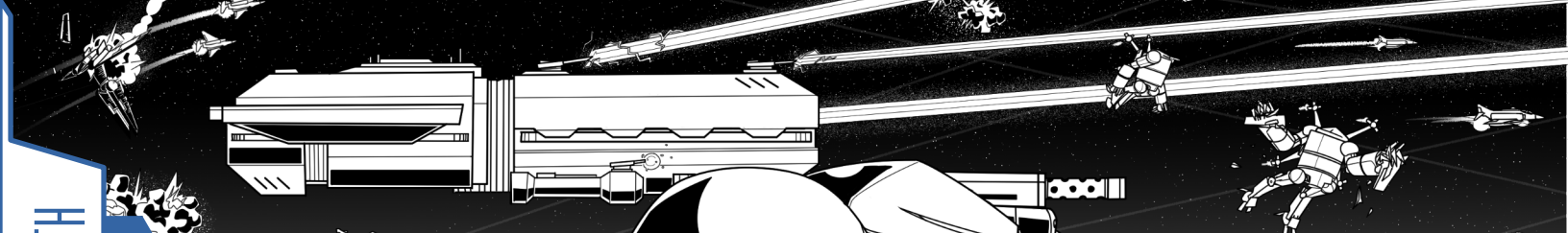
DESPERATE

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

1-3 (complication): You grab whatever cover you can, but you realize it's pointlessness as the "sniper" rises from its concealed location: an Ape AWW 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. 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. You try to control a kid's recreational quad-rotor camera drone to spy on your target.

1-3 (Risky opportunity): The drone has better security than expected, and begins flying erratically. You could watch for threats yourself with Survey, or keep Interfacing and draw attention to yourself (putting you in a Risky Position).

4/5, Harm: You get control of the drone, but keeping an eye on its feed and the conversation requires more concentration 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 door barricades and block the incoming shots.

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

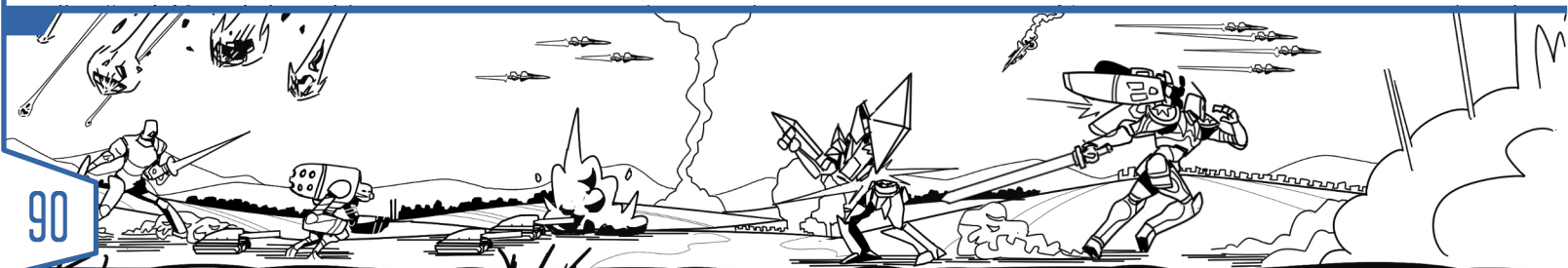
4/5 (complication): Metal barricades slam shut over the door and windows, protecting you from the guards... but also trapping you inside the room.

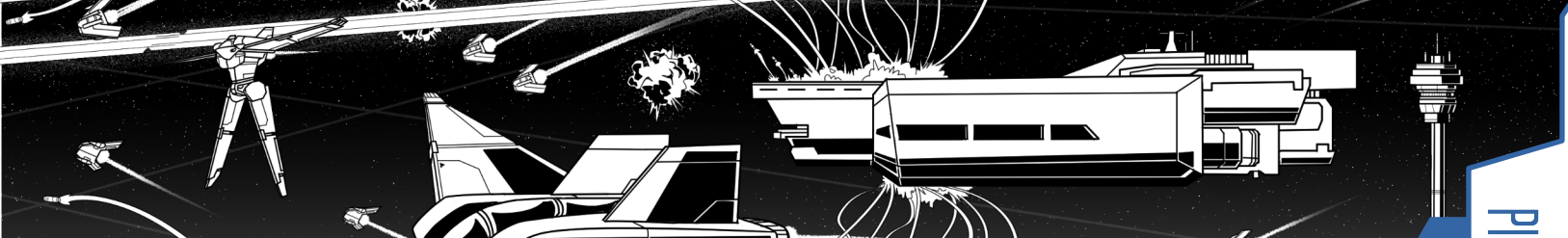
DESPERATE

There is a laser-targeted, long-range missile headed 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 flames.

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 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 do you take to your objective?
- ◆ How natural does this style of movement feel to you?

EXAMPLES

CONTROLLED

You sneak over the perimeter fence of a mercenary facility in the middle of the night. It's dark, and the camera that sweeps across the compound's outskirts doesn't have night vision.

1-3 (Risky opportunity): An unexpected guard patrol moves past the fence a moment before you start climbing. They haven't yet seen you. 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. You have to duck behind a parked truck, unable to make it to the closest building.

RISKY

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

1-3 (Harm): A pair of guards spot you, and they open fire. You catch a bullet before you duck around a corner. Take level 2 Harm: *Shot Shoulder*.

4/5 (cost): You escape the facility, but fail to notice a camera that catches your face. Your employer wanted you to remain unseen, so the squad loses 2 Trust with them.

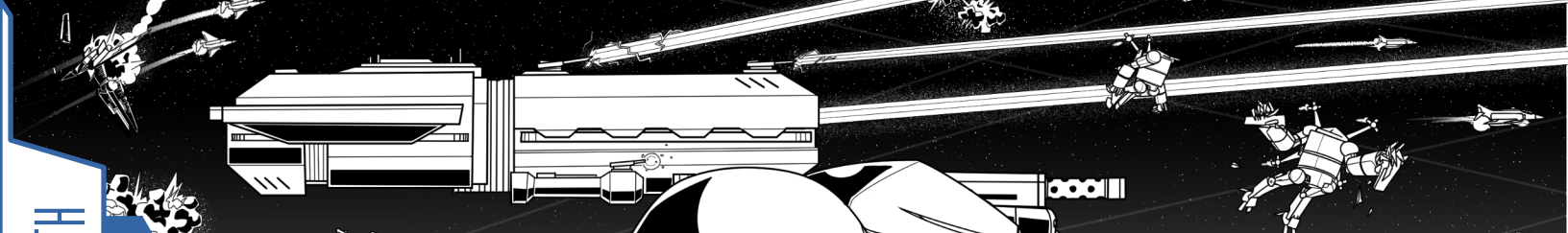
DESPERATE

A few guards in AWVs search for you throughout the compound's outer grounds. One stands between you and your escape route. This is your chance to get onto it and plant some explosives before you escape.

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

4/5 (Harm): You realize the AWV is about to grab you as you finish planting the explosives, so you hit the detonator. The destroyed AWV falls, and you take level 3 Harm: *Exploded*.





STRUGGLE

When you Struggle, you employ lethal or non-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 drag him from the premises.

1-3 (Risky opportunity): As you reach for him, he grabs a scalpel from 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 he isn't a knife fighter), or grab him anyway from a Risky Position.

4/5 (Cost): As he resists your efforts, two of his fingers break when they catch in a safety railing. Your employer wanted him unharmed, so you lose 1 Trust.

RISKY

A biker you are trying to remove from a bar refuses to leave. 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). When you regain your senses, they've pulled out a revolver. You are now in a Desperate Position.

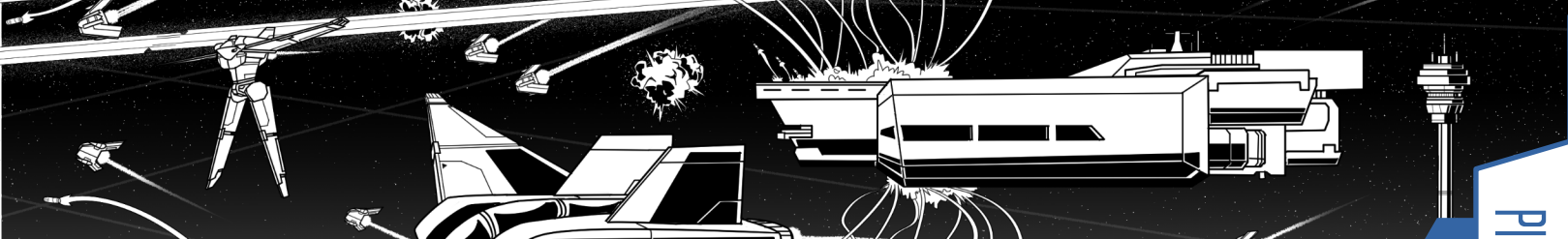
4/5 (complication): Shortly after you drag the biker out of the bar, there's the bark of a siren as a military police jeep pulls up to investigate what exactly you are doing.

DESPERATE

A soldier you are trying to remove from their vehicle's cockpit refuses to leave. 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; you 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 do 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 your Direct Superior's desk while they are away.

1-3 (Risky opportunity): You 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 you could 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 confidential documents. You move to a Risky Position as they loom over you.

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 comes up behind you. You don't notice until she hits you with a wrench. Take level 2 Harm: Clobbered.

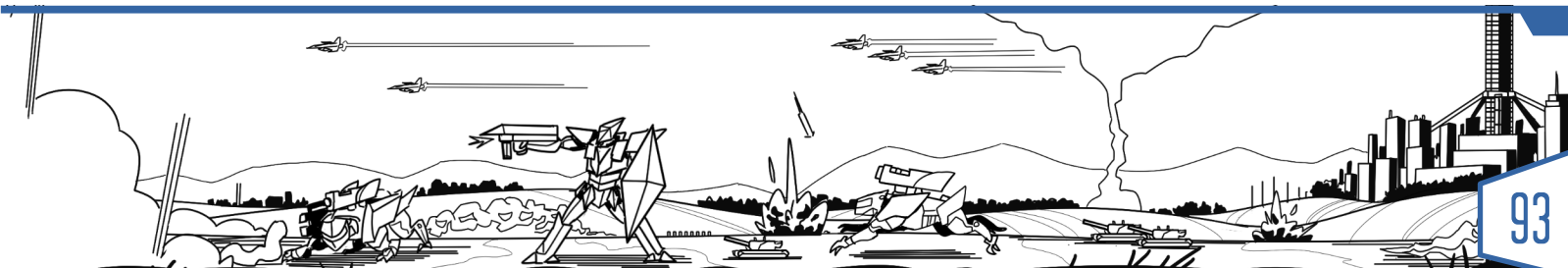
4/5 (cost): The mechanic walks in on you looking through the papers. She says that for 2 Personnel, she didn't see anything. You pay the bribe, and she lets you find what you need.

DESPERATE

In search of secret information about your next mission, you rifle through documents laid out on your Rival's desk 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 fills the room, and you start to lose consciousness.

4/5 (reduced Effect): You find some of the information you were looking for, but you have to drop the papers and leave when you hear your Rival's phone call conclude.



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 is arguing with another squad, giving you the chance to observe their body language for what they are really feeling.

1-3 (Risky opportunity): Before you learn anything, the argument moves closer to your location and puts you in danger. You could try something else to learn more 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 discern some of your Rival's true thoughts. However, the other squad gives in so fast that you don't learn much.

RISKY

Your Rival is fighting your squad, giving you the chance to observe their body language for what they are really feeling.

1-3 (Harm): You don't learn anything. Worse yet, one of your fellow Pilots takes a sword to their chest while you're distracted. They gain level 2 Harm: Sliced.

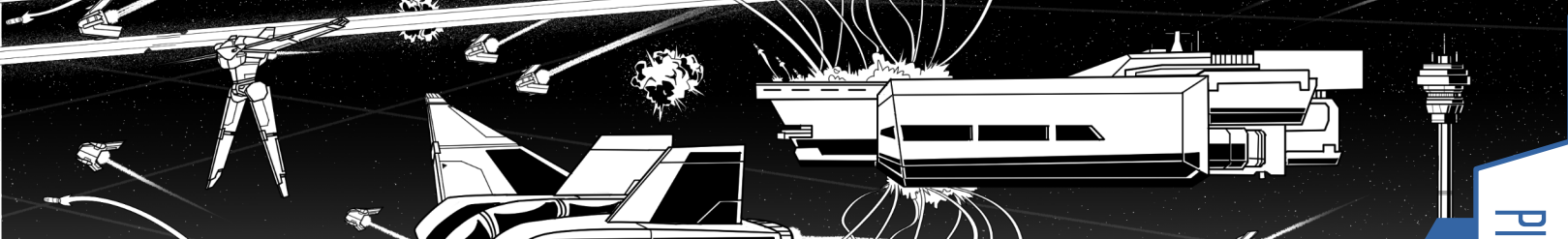
4/5 (complication): You gain some insight into their beliefs, but they call for back up in the meantime. The GM starts a "Reinforcements" Threat Clock and adds 2 Ticks to it.

DESPERATE

Your Rival mocks you from their AWW while trying to kill you. Even though you're on foot, you take this opportunity to observe their speech patterns for how they really feel.

1-3 (Harm): This was a bad idea. Your Rival steps on you. Take level 4 Harm: Squished.

4/5 (complication and Harm): You learn some of your Rival's inner thoughts, but they knock a small building onto you. You're buried in rubble, taking level 2 Harm: Crushed. They leave, thinking you're dead, so 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 a 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 realize 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'll 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 drags on, and the lockdown order reaches the guards. They refuse to let anyone through.

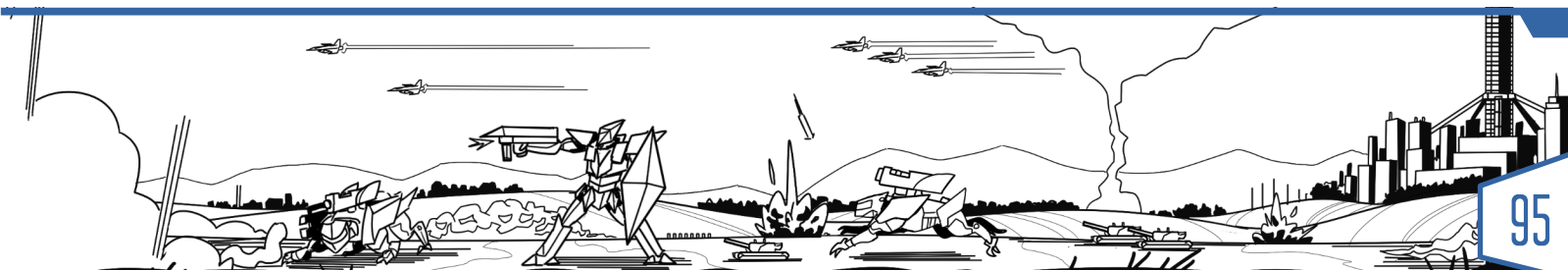
4/5 (reduced Effect): The guard starts up a conversation with you that you can't get out of inconspicuously. When you finally excuse yourself to head for the hanger, enough time has passed to put your objective at risk.

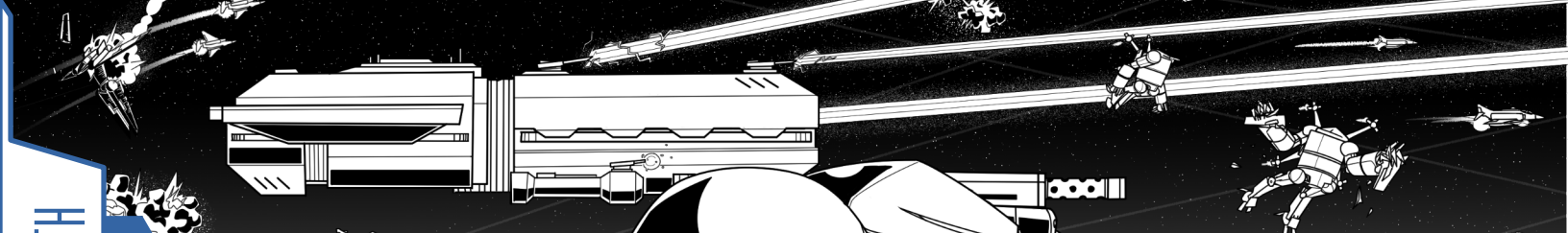
DESPERATE

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

1-3 (complication): The AWW 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 AWW arrives just as the guards let you through, and it punts you into the hanger. Take level 3 Harm: *Smashed*.





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 set the floor to collapse when an enemy steps 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're breaking through an apartment door 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 (at a Risky Position as the spies hear you and grab their guns).

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

RISKY

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

1-3 (worse Position): You are unable to bash in the door. Worse, the attempt activates the automated machine gun turret in the hallway; you are now in a Desperate Position.

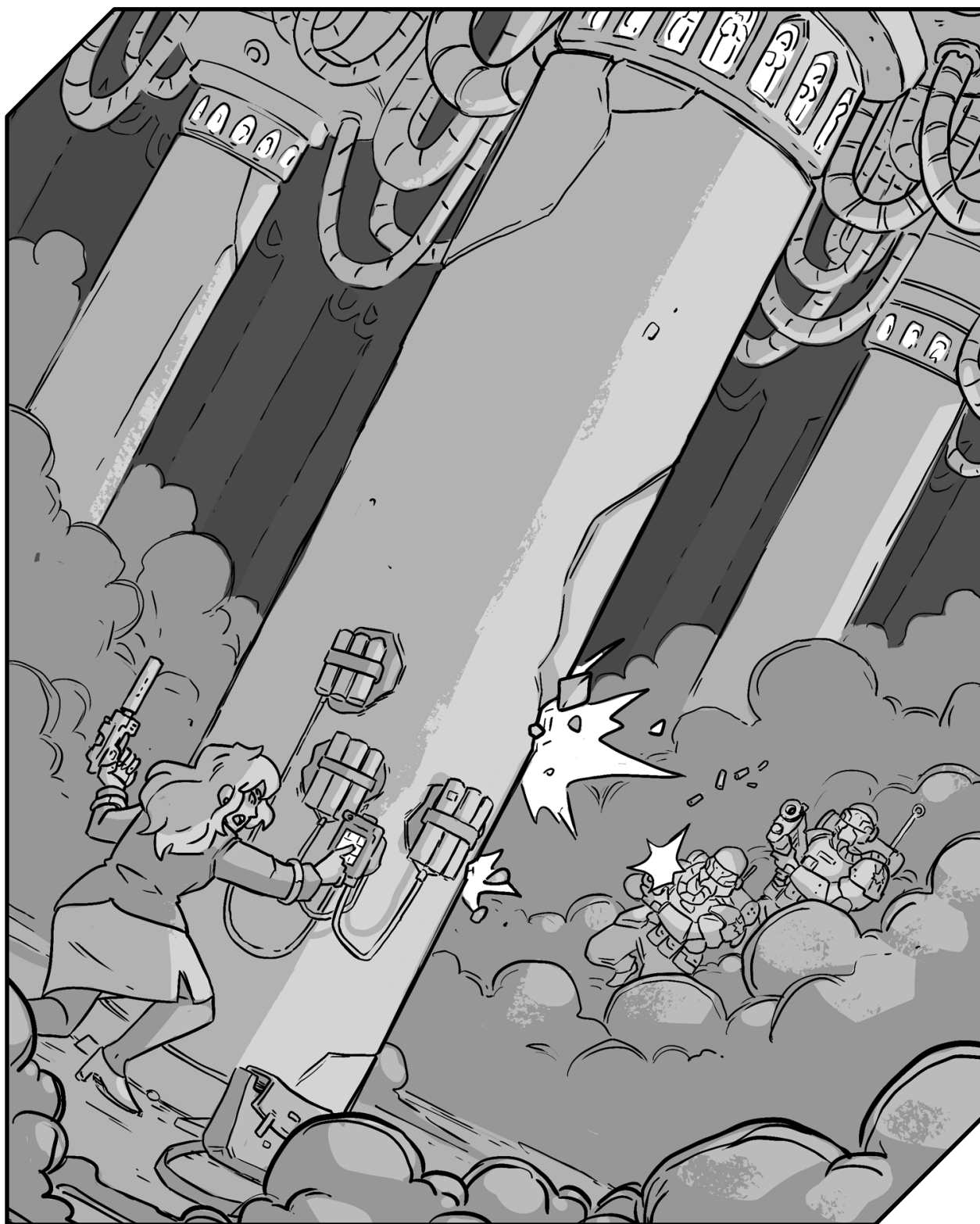
4/5 (Harm): You break the door in, and the spies shoot at you. You take level 2 Harm: *Shot In The Arm*.

DESPERATE

You break in the door to an apartment full of armed spies after they activate the automated machine gun turret in the hallway that you're presently occupying.

1-3 (Harm): You aren't able to bust open the door, 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 safely despite the gunfire. However, this was supposed to be a discreet mission. Lose 3 Trust with your patron Faction.



STANDARD PILOT GEAR

When declaring items that your Pilot is carrying on a mission, you can select from the items on your playbook and from the following:

GEAR

[○] **Burglary gear:** Lockpicks (both mechanical and electronic), thin wire and hooks, a mister, and other intrusion tools.

[○-○] **Climbing gear:** Ascenders, descenders, fast rope, harnesses, and more. Everything you need to climb a wall or rappel down one for a dynamic entry.

[Ø] **Throat mic transceiver:** A device pressed against the throat that can transmit the wearer's voice over short distances.

[○] **Long-range transmitter:** A device that can send data over great distances.

OUTFITS

[○-○] **Armor:** A tactical vest with matching gloves, boots, and pads.

+ [○-○-○] **Heavy Armor:** Trauma plates added to the vest, and a helmet added to your head.

[Ø worn, ○-○ carried as a 2nd outfit]

Environmental suit: A bulky suit that protects the wearer from lack of oxygen, vacuum, or radiation. It has maneuvering thrusters for use in microgravity.

[○-○] **Parachute:** A large backpack containing a parachute. It provides 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:** Digital and printed files on diverse topics, along with the tools to create or annotate files.

[Ø] **Intel:** Information provided to the squad that you can access. Spend **1 Personnel** point to get +1d on a gather information roll while on a mission.

[○] **Placed explosives:** A brick of moldable explosive putty with a timer or remote detonator. Never quiet.

[○] **Subterfuge supplies:** A set of actors' props and makeup with accompanying documents for making disguises.

TOOLS

[⬢⬢] **Demolition tools:** Power tools suitable for destruction or “heavy remodeling.”

[⬢] **Flashlight, flares, or glow sticks:** A simple form of illumination that can be activated when needed.

[⬢] **Palm computer with useful programs:** A small, book-sized computer with handy but simple programs.

[⬢] **Remote vehicle control:** A tool that remotely controls a specific vehicle, but it’s not as effective as being in the cockpit.

[⬢] **Smartphone:** A pocketable tool providing many different digital functions, but it relies on probably compromised infrastructure for sending and receiving data.

WEAPONS

[⬢] **A blade or two:** A nice, big, one-handed blade, or a smaller, but no less deadly, pair.

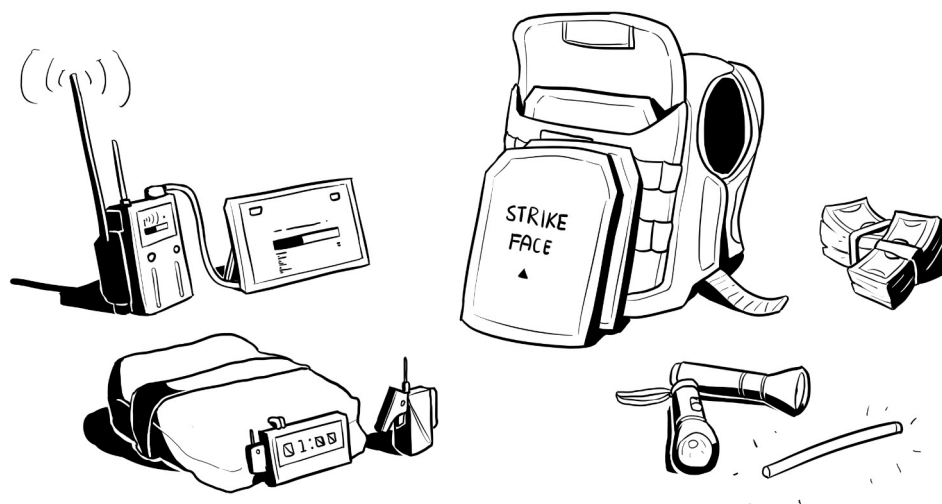
[⬢⬢] **A heavy weapon:** A large, two-handed weapon, such as a sledge or wood axe.

[⬢] **A pistol:** A semi-automatic pistol or revolver.

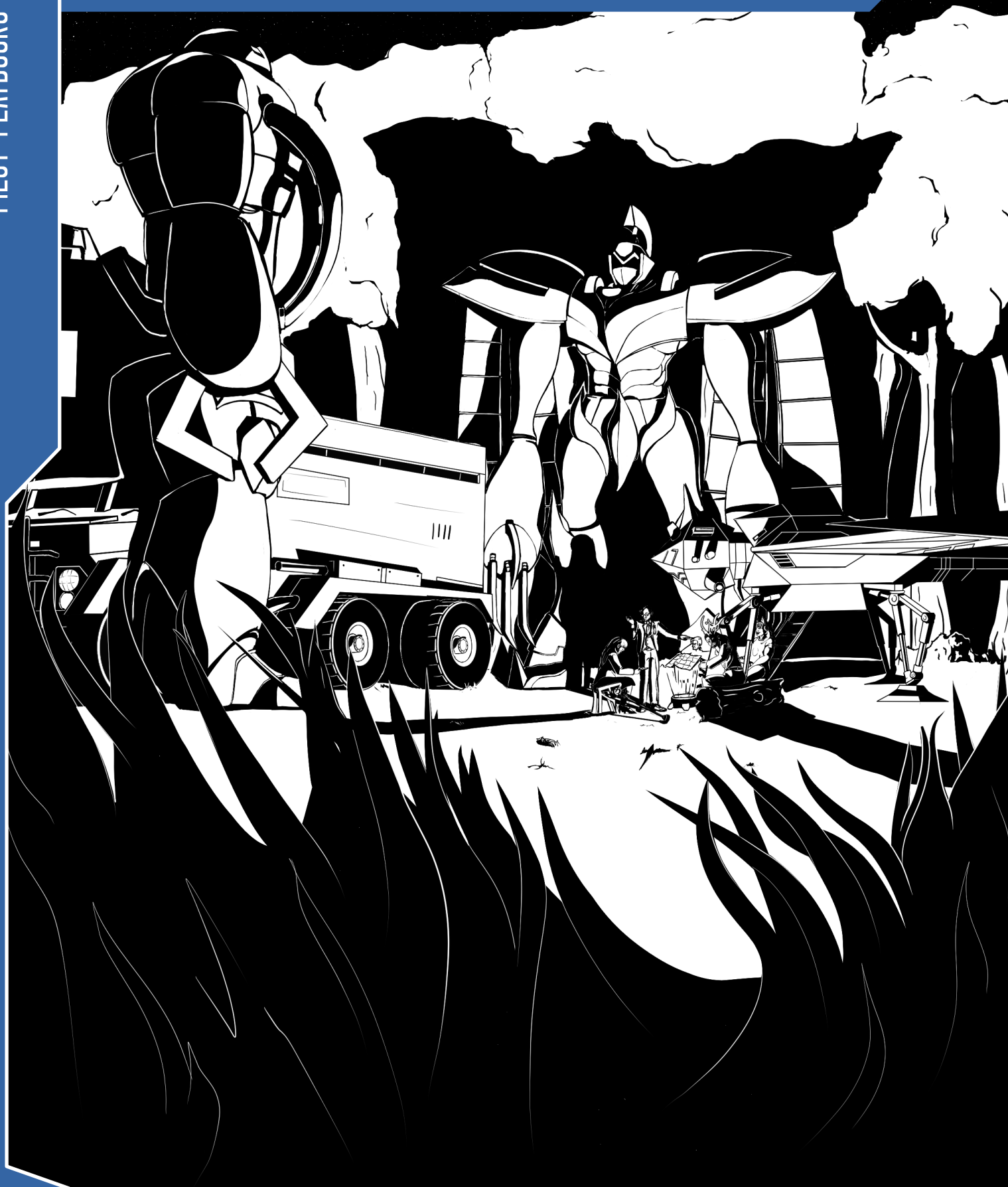
[⬢⬢] **A rifle or shotgun:** A semi-automatic rifle (useful at a distance) or pump action shotgun (useful close up).

[⬢] **Throwing knives:** Six light blades made for throwing (and not hand-to-hand combat).

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



3: PILOT PLAYBOOKS





THE ACE

A graceful and daring Pilot.



Battlefields of The War stretch across cities, continents, and star systems. Such distances are not easily traversed on foot, so we made incredible machines that stride, soar, and roam. Most see a vehicle 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?

CHOOSE THE ACE IF YOU WANT TO:

- ◆ Be the hotshot Pilot known for being the best in a vehicle.
- ◆ Have an incredibly flexible vehicle with experimental equipment.
- ◆ Be more reliant on your vehicle than other Pilots.

XP TRIGGER

Earn end of session XP when you address a challenge with Piloting or violence.

ACE ACTIONS

+2 Maneuver,
+1 Engineer

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 can transform into a secondary form. Detail that second form. Select 2 Load worth of vehicle gear and 3 action points that your vehicle has. It lacks this gear and these action points when in its secondary form. Select 2 Load worth of vehicle gear and 3 action points that your vehicle lacks. It has this gear and these action points when in its secondary form.

► **MEAT IS CHEAP, SAVE THE METAL:** When the vehicle you are Piloting takes Damage, your Pilot may take an equal level of Harm instead. If you resist this Harm, take -1d to the resist roll. Pilot Armor cannot prevent this Damage.

► **LAST STAND:** When you take a Dire Action with a vehicle, you can continue to act on a 4-6 (instead of just on 6s). Take a bonus die to Dire Actions for each point of Breakdown your vehicle has until you stop taking Dire Actions.

► **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 one 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 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.



ACE SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

[◇] **Grav chute:** An advanced piece of gear that uses anti-gravity technology to safely slow the wearer's descent.

[◇] **Fine remote vehicle control:** An excellent tool that allows a Pilot to remotely control a vehicle without any degradation of intent.

[Ø] **Self-destruct remote:** A palm-sized device that destroys the Pilot's vehicle when activated.

[Ø worn, ◇◇ carried as a 2nd outfit]

Fine environmental suit: A well-crafted suit that protects the wearer from hazards, such as lack of air, vacuum, and radiation. Also has maneuvering thrusters for use in microgravity.

[Ø] **Your custom vehicle:** 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:** An excellent grapple system, jump jets, foot wheels, or other mobility system.

[◇] **Boosted reactor (1 use):** Spend for improved Effect when speed or agility is required. This refills at the start of each mission.

[◇] **Fine machine gun:** A well-made, fully automatic, anti-vehicle cannon.

[◇] **Fine shield or forcefield:** An extremely sturdy shield made of advanced materials or electromagnetic forces.

[Ø] **Reflex Adjustment and Guidance Engine (R.A.G.E):** 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, Effect, and any consequences that come to pass last until the end of the next scene.

STARTING ACE BELIEFS

- ◆ They handle their vehicle very poorly.
- ◆ 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!

ACE 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?

ACE ALLIES AND RIVALS

- ◆ Denari, a gruff mechanic
- ◆ Sycamore, a cautious journalist
- ◆ Cage, a sly smuggler
- ◆ Ripper, a reckless Pilot

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

I trust Bert with my life, but he's nothing special. I'm a little jealous of Pilots with fancier AWWs, but at the end of the day, Bert does fine against them. Most of the time. I've seen some Pilots pull off stuff I didn't think was possible. It's hard to describe the way they fight that's different. Like, you know the way really expensive clothes just fit right on people? Not like the hand-me-downs I've got, clothes or AWW. Pilot and AWW moving together like one, like they were made for each other.

Note to self: See one of these, run the other way.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

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 whether 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?

CHOOSE THE BUREAUCRAT IF YOU WANT TO:

- ◆ Be the master of managing resources and the downtime phase.
- ◆ Have access to mundanely weird gear and abilities.
- ◆ Be a banal cog in the machinery of The War.

XP TRIGGER

Earn end of session XP when you address a challenge with procedure or management.

BUREAUCRAT ACTIONS

+2 Consort,
+1 Study

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). You may use this ability once per downtime phase.

► **RED TAPE:** When you quote a regulation that would prevent a consequence, you may roll Resolve to resist instead of any other attribute or spending Quirks.

► **BENEATH NOTICE:** When you use a disguise or other form of covert misdirection, add +1d to your action rolls 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.

► **CONNECTED:** During downtime, you get +1 result level when you acquire an asset or Schmooze. Take +1d when declaring an ally during a mission.

► **WORK HARD, PLAY HARD:** When you Cut Loose with another Pilot, they may roll to heal Stress as well using their Connections to you. If either of you overindulge, you both suffer the effects.

► **RAINY DAY:** You may spend your Spark to gain 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.

BUREAUCRAT SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

[○] **Fine official documents:** Cargo manifests, itineraries, work forms, and other paperwork from official sources that are legitimate.

[○] **Body scanner wand:** A handheld device that detects metallic and electronic objects.

[○] **Travel reports:** Weather and traffic reports, pedestrian movements, and up-to-date cartography.

[○] **Blueprints for a facility or vehicle:** A print out or digital file containing designer notes and builder plans.

[○] **Barricade tape projector:** A device that projects a holographic perimeter. Can trigger an alarm or digital notification when the barricade is crossed.

[○] **Your custom vehicle:** 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:** A plain paint job, a common frame, and panels that create a bland silhouette. This vehicle is less noticeable than its Load indicates.

[○] **Several hand tool sets:** A variety of human-scale tool sets that a Pilot can swap their Load for if needed.

[○] **Fine cargo container:** A well-made container for safely storing and moving a few large items or many small ones.

[○] **Inhibitor Clamp:** A device that locks out the startup sequence of a vehicle, preventing its use. Typically cannot be installed when the vehicle is Piloted.

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.

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?

ALLIES AND RIVALS

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

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

The Cenotaph isn't exactly in the Myriad's good books. Honestly, I'm pretty sure the higher ups hate us. If Bishop Finmal wasn't looking out for us I'm pretty sure we'd all be out of a job. I feel kinda bad for that. Every time I see him those stacks of paperwork look taller, and I wouldn't be surprised if a lot of that had to do with us. He's a good guy. I bet he does more good sitting at that desk alone than the whole Cenotaph. After all, if someone from another faction sends you a letter, you're gonna react differently than someone from another faction showing up inside an AWV.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

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?

CHOOSE THE EMPATH IF YOU WANT TO:

- ◆ Play a character who is deeply connected to emotions—whether it's their own or the emotions of their squadmates and foes.
- ◆ Have psychic powers that give you a unique edge in conflicts.
- ◆ Understand others, regardless of the danger that poses.

XP TRIGGER

Earn end of session XP when you address a challenge with understanding or poise.

EMPATH ACTIONS

+2 Study,
+1 Survey

EMPATH ABILITIES

► **TELEPATHY:** You can communicate directly to a person's mind as though speaking, provided you previously had a revealing interaction with them. When taking part in a group action, you can spend 1 Stress per participant to let others involved use the leader's action rating instead of their own.

► **BROADCAST:** When you push yourself, you can do one of the following in addition to the normal benefits: *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 where you were not present.

► **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.

► **EVERYBODY HURTS:** You may spend your Spark to resist a consequence from ambushes (physical or not), or to push yourself to understand others.

► **EMOJI:** You know the secret method for interacting with apps or AIs as if they were normal humans, regardless of how corrupted or rampant it appears. You have increased Effect when communicating with digital entities.

► **CAROUSE:** When you participate in a Cut Loose downtime 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 an additional +1; their relationship with you improves by an additional +1.

► **CARRY THAT WEIGHT:** After you see the results of an action roll, you can push yourself or assist (if no one else assisted on the roll). If 0d were 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.

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



EMPATH SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

[○] **Prognostication tools:** A set of tools, such as tarot cards, tea leaves, or crystals, that you can use to predict the future.

[○] **Fine artistic tools:** Excellent tools used in painting, performing music, cooking, or some other art form.

[○] **Fine stun gun:** A well-made weapon meant to incapacitate (but not kill) a target using electricity.

[○] **Personal emblem:** 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:** An object that inspires those who see it.

[○] **Your custom vehicle:** 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:** An item or various details that make your vehicle a symbol to those who see it.

[○] **Fine broadcast system:** Excellent speakers and transmission unit that allow the user to broadcast audio and video.

[○] **Fine social data retrieval program:** A finely coded program that can expertly gather details about a target's personal life.

[○] **Psionic amplifier:** A device that increases the range or power of the user's psychic abilities.

A NOTE ON THE EMPATH AND CONSENT

The Empath has the ability **Broadcast**, which allows the character (and by extension the player) to force emotions on other characters. Use this ability with respect for other players and the GM. It's a form of mind control, and therefore has serious implications regarding consent. Broadcast violates self and agency, no matter what emotion is induced.

Ask if everyone at the table is comfortable with seeing this ability in action before taking it. The players are more important than fictional characters, and if that means skipping the Broadcast ability or the Empath entirely, so be it. If Broadcast is in play, remember that it's a dark ability. Even when used for good ends, the means are rather abhorrent. If you take Broadcast, understand that you are choosing to play a character who will likely do a Bad Thing with it—and that's okay, so long as you are aware of it and acknowledge it.

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.

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?

EMPATH ALLIES AND RIVALS

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

EMPATH STARTING BUILDS

- ◆ **Demagogue:** BROADCAST, Command +2, Struggle +1, Battle +1
- ◆ **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

I think I trust people less now, since I started being a Pilot. I feel like before I usually thought the people around me had good intentions. Ever since I started this job I've been backstabbed by someone I saw as a father, front? stabbed? by one of my closest childhood friends. I'm so tired of being betrayed. But for some reason I keep trying. Once in a while, I can still get through to the other side. I save both of us from a fight we don't want to have. Just when I think I'm going to give up on reaching out, someone shows me I shouldn't.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

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 ones 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?

CHOOSE THE ENVOY IF YOU WANT TO:

- ◆ Play a flashy character who talks their way into and out of trouble.
- ◆ Manipulate people and organizations like puppets.
- ◆ Explore what happens when you are all flash and no substance in life threatening situations.

XP TRIGGER

Earn end of session XP when you address a challenge with deception or influence.

ENVOY ACTIONS

+2 Sway,
+1 Consort

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 on a result of 4+.

► **READ 'EM AND WEEP:** Spend 2 Stress to ask one of the following questions about someone you have observed either in secret or openly. You may ask additional questions by spending 1 Stress per question. What was their lowest moment? -- What do they crave forgiveness for 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 player's Pilot, this is a +2 or higher Connection value.

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



ENVOY SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

[Ø worn, ○○ carried as a 2nd outfit]

Fine clothes and jewelry: A set of clothes suitable for making you look like a wealthy elite.

[○] **Fine subterfuge supplies:** ReFace Paste is putty synced to a program that allows the user to greatly change their appearance.

[○] **Fine espionage gear:** Well-made listening devices, micro cameras, key readers, and other devices used to secretly observe the actions of others.

[Ø] **Fine trick gambling kit:** Different cultures have different gambling practices, but you've got the tools to give you a leg up.

[Ø] **Trance powder:** A single dose of a powder that puts the target into a calm and suggestible mental state.

[○] **Cane sword:** A narrow blade concealed inside a walking stick that will fool a casual inspection.

[Ø] **Your custom vehicle:** 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:** A well-made device used to visualize AR or specific images.

[○] **Chaff countermeasure:** A cloud of metallic strips that can baffle sensors.

[○] **Concealed melee weapon:** A melee weapon hidden in the vehicle's frame. Examples are ram bars, tire spikes, spring-loaded blades.

[Ø] **Stylish appearance:** Decals, spoilers, custom paint jobs, and other details that make your vehicle stand out.

[○] **Luxurious passenger space :** The vehicle has a well-appointed interior that has room for a few people.

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.

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?

ENVOY ALLIES AND RIVALS

- ◆ Tasneem, a sly courtesan
- ◆ Candan, a naive diplomat
- ◆ Ismat, a defensive lawyer
- ◆ Duri, an idealistic servant

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, Finesse +2, Command +1, Prowl +1

The worst kinds of missions, the absolute worst, are the ones where we have to dress up and go talk to people. You know what happens on those missions? I get stabbed. I get stabbed by someone with greasy hair and really white teeth. One minute they're talking to a crowd of people and smiling way too big and then suddenly I've got a sword cane in my side because I had to jump in front of a VIP. The thing about these people is they're usually not all that strong and also not great with swords? Still fucking sucks to have a sword stuck inside you!

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

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?

CHOOSE THE HACKER IF YOU WANT TO:

- ◆ Bend machines and vehicles to your will.
- ◆ Control the perception of others by manipulating the augmented reality around them.
- ◆ Be vulnerable in direct conflicts.

XP TRIGGER

Earn end of session XP when you address a challenge with knowledge or digital power.

HACKER ACTIONS

+2 Interface,
+1 Study

HACKER ABILITIES

► **COMPEL:** You can Interface with augmented reality to force a nearby app or proxy to obey a command you give it. You can always distinguish between reality and the 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 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.

► **CROWDSOURCE:** Spend 2 Stress to use a squadmate's action rating instead of your own by describing how you make use of their knowledge.

► **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. (See page 298 for more on app development.)

► **TESLA:** When you push yourself, you can do one of the following in addition to the normal benefits: 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 an 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.



HACKER SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

[○] **Portable exclusion zone:** Creates an area isolated from AR and wireless data transfer (including radio).

[○] **Fine augmented reality tool:** Might be contacts, a visor, or glasses—detail its appearance. Allows you to see AR even when it hasn't visually manifested. Provides some protection from AR confusion (see page 368).

[○] **Quantum Drive:** 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.

[○] **Recursive data projector:** Broadcasts overwhelming amounts of data that apps and AIs avoid.

[○] **Hackrig:** 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 when you uninstall vehicle gear, see page 159).

[Ø] **Your custom vehicle:** 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:** Used to find and acquire data.

[○] **Fine coding program:** Used to edit programs on the fly.

[○] **Electronic Filter:** Used to bypass signal blocking devices and techniques.

[○] **Stealth program:** Used to hide hacking attempts.

[○] **Data bomb program:** Used to shut down systems by overloading them with data.

[○] **Fine Intrusion Countermeasures Program (ICP):** Used to defend against hacking attempts.

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.

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?

HACKER ALLIES AND RIVALS

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

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

Compared to the other Cenotaph AWVs, Bert is a little plain. And kind of old-fashioned. I mean, everyone else has all these digital interfaces and whatever. I'm over here yanking levers and turning dials, and the hatch still has a porthole. There's been a couple times when I've been really glad for that though. See, we don't have an AR or tech specialist. When the others got hit with an AR storm and couldn't use their displays I was fine. I think there was even a time when Tower's AWV got disabled remotely somehow? That's what you get for being too fancy.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

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?

CHOOSE THE INFILTRATOR IF YOU WANT TO:

- ◆ Remain unseen until you choose to strike, whether on foot or in your vehicle.
- ◆ Bite off more than you can chew, and get out anyway.
- ◆ Play a character who is seen as unreliable because they are never around.

XP TRIGGER

Earn end of session XP when you address a challenge with stealth or evasion.

INFILTRATOR ACTIONS

+2 Prowl,
+1 Finesse

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 any consequences from your action.

► **THE DEVIL'S FOOTSTEPS:** When you push yourself, choose one of the following in addition to the normal benefits: 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 suffer only 1 Stress or exhaust 1 Quirk at most, regardless of the number of failed rolls.

► **NEVER TELL ME THE ODDS:** Take +1d to resistance rolls or exhaust 1 fewer Quirk (minimum 1) for vehicle resistance when you are outnumbered or drastically outmatched by a foe.

► **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.



INFILTRATOR SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

[Ø] **Fine security cracker:** A well-made toolkit used for disabling mechanical and electronic locks.

[○] **Fine optical camo:** A piece of clothing capable of covering the entire body that blends the wearer into their surroundings.

[○] **Light climbing gear:** Climbing gear made from uncommon lightweight materials.

[Ø] **Firearm silencer:** An item that attaches to or replaces a gun's barrel so that it makes very little sound when fired.

[○] **Night-vision goggles:** Advanced goggles amplifying ambient light, allowing the user to see in total darkness.

[Ø] **Your custom vehicle:** The vehicle assigned to you suitable to your needs. It's represented by the vehicle entry on your pilot sheet.

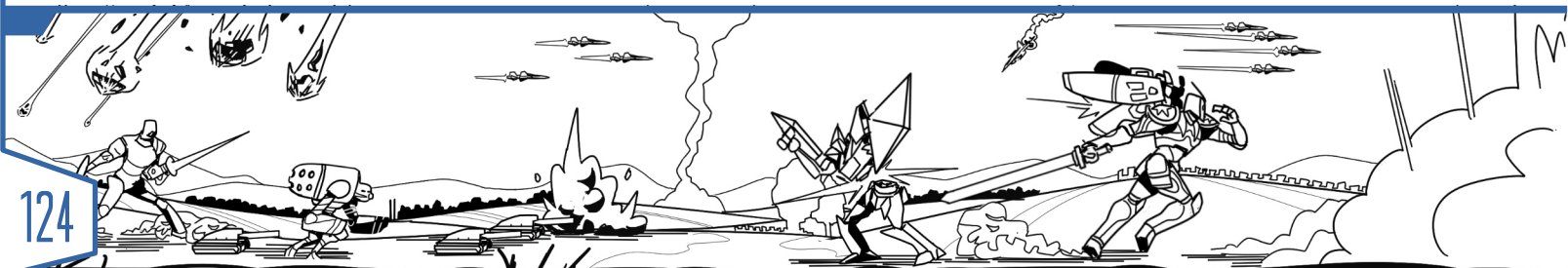
INFILTRATOR SPECIALIST VEHICLE GEAR

[○] **Fine optical camo:** A coating or cloak that covers the vehicle, allowing it to almost seamlessly blend into its environment.

[○] **Light mobility suite:** A grapple system, jump jets, foot wheels, or other mobility system modified to be less cumbersome.

[○] **Electronic countermeasures:** Creates static that prevents any wireless transfer of information.

[○] **NV/IR sensors:** Scanners that allow the vehicle to see in darkness or to spot heat sources.



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.

ALLIES AND RIVALS

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

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?

INFILTRATOR STARTING BUILDS

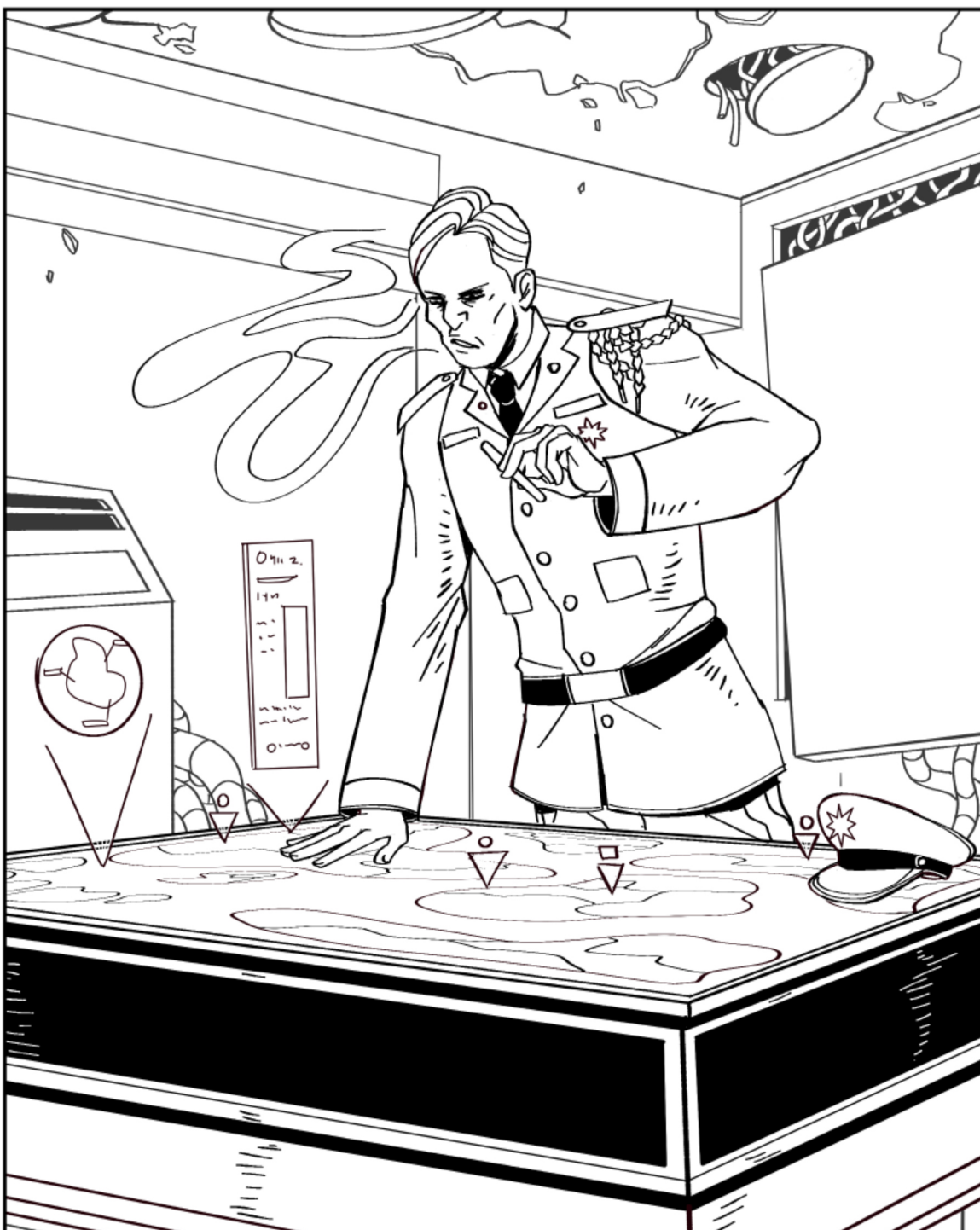
- ◆ **Assassin:** AMBUSH, Struggle +2, Consort +1, Sway +1
- ◆ **Operative:** SHADOW, Interface +2, Study +1, Survey +1
- ◆ **Thief:** GHOST, Scan +2, Finesse +1, Survey +1
- ◆ **Demon:** REFLEXES, Maneuver +2, Battle +1, Struggle +1

Tower and I are kind of in the same boat. I mean being a circus acrobat is a lot more exciting than being a farmer, but neither of us should really be here. There is a pretty big difference between us though. I think Tower is even less suited for this than I am. Sure, they're great at sneaking past other squads. But when it comes to a fight they're next to useless. It's not like I have to worry about protecting them. I've seen them dodge through AWV gunfire on foot, and they've pulled off even more ridiculous stunts in the Mantis. But when there's nowhere to run, I can't count on them to have my back.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

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?

CHOOSE THE OFFICER IF YOU WANT TO:

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

XP TRIGGER

Earn end of session XP when you address a challenge with coordination or a ruse.

OFFICER ACTIONS

+2 Command,
+1 Survey

OFFICER ABILITIES

► **TACTICAL GENIUS:** Two times per mission, you can assist a squadmate 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). You have increased Effect when you lead a group action.

► **RALLY:** Spend 2 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, and so on—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 a Vendetta with another squad, your squad gets improved Effect against that squad.

► **MASTERMIND:** You may spend your Spark to negate a squadmate's consequence, 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.



OFFICER SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

[Ø] **Fine cover identity:** Paperwork, planted database info, and false connections suitable for passing as a different person.

[○] **Fine gift:** A bottle of liquor, a necklace, or a trinket. Something easily replaceable, but quite impressive.

[○] **“High priority” comm decoder:** 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.

[Ø worn, ○○ carried as a 2nd outfit]

Officer's Uniform: A uniform befitting one in a position of command.

[Ø] **Concealed palm pistol:** A very small firearm with a very short range that is easily concealed.

[Ø] **Your custom vehicle:** 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:** A flag or other symbol to rally your allies.

[Ø] **Fine friend or foe tags:** Makes a vehicle appear as belonging to a specific person, squad, and/or Faction.

[Ø] **Concealed gun:** A small firearm that is almost impossible to find. Only effective at close range.

[○] **Small armory:** A collection of infantry weapons and body armor.

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.

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?

OFFICER ALLIES AND RIVALS

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

OFFICER STARTING BUILDS

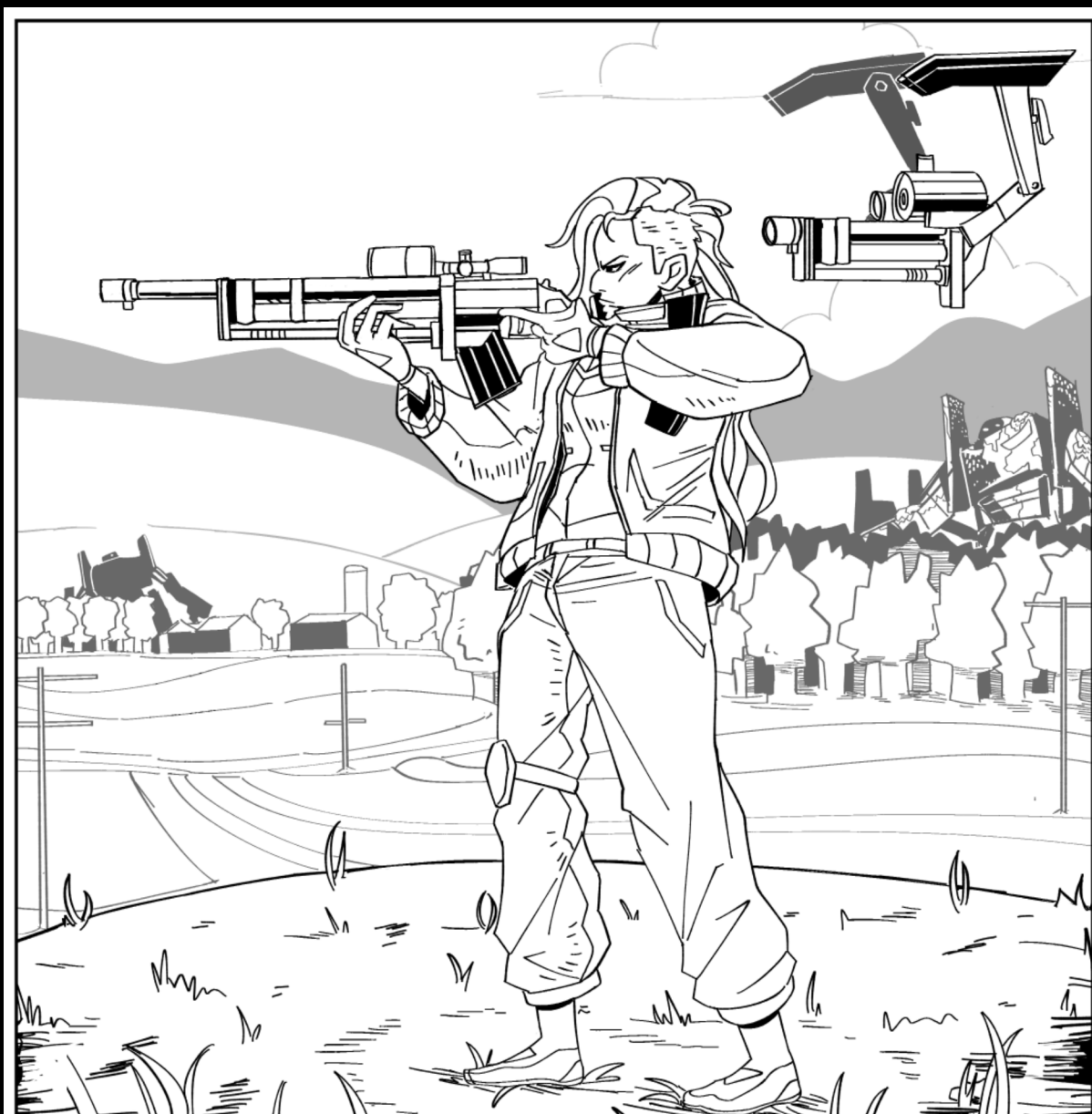
- ◆ **Revolutionary:** RALLY, Consort +2, Sway +1, Struggle +1
- ◆ **Tactician:** TACTICAL GENIUS, Struggle +2, Battle +2
- ◆ **Fixer:** HEART TO HEART, Sway +2, Finesse +1, Consort +1
- ◆ **Strategist:** WEAVING THE WEB, Study +2, Survey +1, Scan +1

I know Harrow led a squad before the Cenotaph, but it was weird because he's just my dad. Not actually, but he's the closest person I have. Had. Anyway, I know as a kid you like, don't know everything about your parents. But when we were out there as a squad he was different. At the orphanage he would tell us to do chores or whatever, but it wasn't the same. Those weren't orders. During a battle he had this weird energy, like he was focusing, but it wasn't just that. The way he would tell us to move, or the way he would say to attack a certain AWW. It felt like he was taking the other squad apart, piece by piece. When he left us. No. When he betrayed us. It didn't make sense. I didn't know the Harrow who made that decision. But I think I'd already realized he wasn't the person I thought he was, out on the battlefield, a while ago.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

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 secrets, 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?

CHOOSE THE SCOUT IF YOU WANT TO:

- ◆ Play a character with a core of loneliness who finds camaraderie in their robotic companions.
- ◆ Devastate your foes from far away, with both a sniper rifle and artillery barrages.
- ◆ Lead the way, finding threats and obstacles ahead of your squadmates.

XP TRIGGER

Earn end of session XP when you address a challenge with exploration or violence.

SCOUT ACTIONS

+2 Hunt,
+1 Survey

SCOUT ABILITIES

► **Sharpshooter:** When you push yourself, you can do one of the following in addition to the normal benefits: 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 information 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 can 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 spend 1 fewer Quirk, minimum 1). When you scout as a flashback setup 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.

SCOUT SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

[○] **Fine machine pistol:** A well-made pistol capable of fully automatic fire.

[○—○] **Fine sniper rifle:** A high quality bolt action rifle that's extremely lethal at long range but unsuitable in close quarters.

[○] **One type of special ammunition:** 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:** Binoculars that can perfectly judge the distance to a target and also transmit the target's precise location.

[○] **A well programmed hunter robot:** Your robot obeys your commands and anticipates your actions. Can carry 2 Load of general pilot gear or Scout pilot gear. Gain Cohort (specialty: Hunter).

[○] **Your custom vehicle:** 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:** An excellent, slow-firing cannon designed to bombard targets at long range.

[○] **Special ammunition:** 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, armor-piercing rounds for tanks, or incendiary rounds for infantry. You can change your ammo type the first time it's used on each mission.

[○] **Magnification suite:** Your vehicle is equipped with a wide variety of optical and digital zoom options that enhance the Pilot's view of distant targets and marks them for allies.

[○] **Drone carrier:** Can 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.

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.

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?

SCOUT ALLIES AND RIVALS

- ◆ Teucer, a veteran sniper
- ◆ Layla, a humane tracker
- ◆ Here, an eager mortician
- ◆ Holly, a cold squire

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

I can't stand working with Riza. I heard she used to be a hotshot Pilot and got discharged from her unit? The thing is, I don't really care! She has this chip on her shoulder and she's just, such a soldier. I guess I hadn't realized it before, but the Cenotaph is mostly civilian adjacent: an acrobat, an architect, a farmer. We're not like Riza, who scouts ahead and then shoots someone through their cockpit from two miles away as a precaution. She's a stickler for call signs and callouts too. I think Riza believes that if we make one mistake we'll be ambushed and killed, and that stresses me the fuck out when I'm already under the pressure of a mission.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

THE SOLDIER

A mighty, violent warrior.



The War touches everyone, demanding some form of violence be committed on its behalf. Those who embody this ferocity in its most primal form are the Soldiers. While others perform violence, they ARE violence. They reek of blood, 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?

CHOOSE THE SOLDIER IF YOU WANT TO:

- ◆ Be very good at hurting and terrifying people.
- ◆ Be incredibly hard to stop, even when badly injured.
- ◆ 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

Earn end of session XP when you address a challenge with violence or coercion.

SOLDIER ACTIONS

+2 Struggle,
+1 Command

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). You get +1 Effect when you gather information to anticipate possible threats in the current situation.

► **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, you can do one of the following in addition to the normal benefits: Perform a feat of physical force that verges on the superhuman -- engage a small gang on equal footing in close combat.

► **BRUTAL:** You're especially frightening when you unleash physical violence. 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.



SOLDIER SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

[○] **Fine melee weapon:** A knife, sword, hammer, shield, or other one-handed melee weapon of excellent quality.

[○—○] **Fine assault rifle:** A well-made rifle capable of single, burst, or automatic fire.

[○—○] **Anti-armor weapon:** A heavy weapon designed to penetrate the kind of heavy armor found on many vehicles.

[○] **Frag, flash, or smoke grenades (3 uses):** A few grenades that can be thrown or launched from a suitable firearm which either explode in shrapnel, sound and light, or smoke.

[Ø] **Handcuffs or zip ties:** A tool designed to restrain the limbs.

[Ø] **Stimpack:** 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.

[Ø] **Your custom vehicle:** 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:** A well-made melee weapon that is balanced for your vehicle.

[○—○] **Fine heavy melee weapon:** A well-made, heavy melee weapon that can strike with greater reach or force.

[○] **Scary weapon or tool:** An unusual weapon or tool that has increased Effect when used for intimidation, but Standard Effect for dealing damage.

[○] **A tangle gun:** A weapon that launches a round that impedes or removes the mobility of a struck target.

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.

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?

SOLDIER ALLIES AND RIVALS

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

SOLDIER STARTING BUILDS

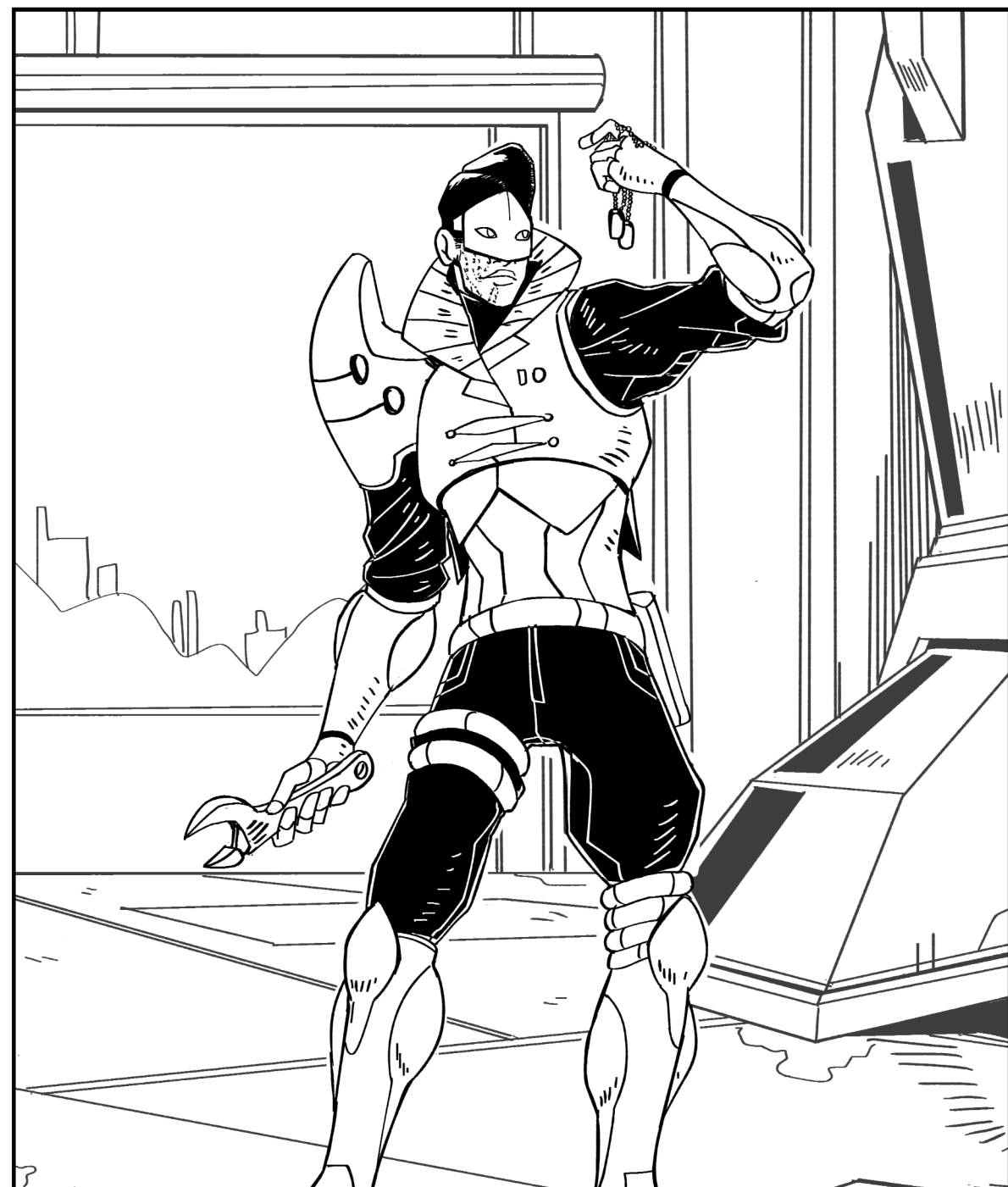
- ◆ **Vanguard:** BATTLEBORN, Command +1, Maneuver +1, Prowl +1, Battle +1
- ◆ **Tough:** NOT TO BE TRIFLED WITH, Battle +2, Command +1, Consort +1
- ◆ **Terror:** BRUTAL, Wreck +2, Destroy +1, Battle +1
- ◆ **Anti-Armor:** ROBOT FIGHTER, Hunt +2, Prowl +2

They said I would make a good soldier. I know my way around Bert, and working on the fields around Hulinton has me in pretty good shape, according to them. I don't know. The training's been weird. I can't quite imagine Bert standing up to another AWV. I'm following their instructions fine so far, but when it comes down to it, can I really hurt another person? And what do I do if I run into someone else from the orphanage on the other side of a battle? I want to bring them back. I want to bring them home. But do I have to hurt them?

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

THE TECHNICIAN

A savvy technician and vandal.



Technology runs the world, but it all falls apart sooner or later. Will it be repaired or replaced? Regardless of the choice, someone with specialized skills must tackle the challenge. Technicians have that know how. They push the bounds of what science can accomplish, and 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?

CHOOSE THE TECHNICIAN IF YOU WANT TO:

- ◆ Get imaginative with your methods, whether creating or destroying.
- ◆ Support your squadmates by maintaining them and their vehicles.
- ◆ Explore what your role in The War is as an innovator.

XP TRIGGER

Earns end of session XP when you address a challenge with technical skill or mayhem.

TECHNICIAN ACTIONS

+2 Engineer,
+1 Wreck

TECHNICIAN ABILITIES

► **SIMULATION:** Take +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 2 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 for 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. The chemical's delivery system 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-Tick Long-Term Project Clock.

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



TECHNICIAN SPECIALIST PILOT GEAR

[○] **Fine engineering tools:** Well-made tools used for fine mechanical work.

[○-○] **Fine demolition tools:** Well-crafted tools for destruction and sabotage.

[○] **Air-gun, darts, and syringes:** A nearly silent gun that shoots darts using compressed air. The darts can be filled with drugs, chemicals, or biological agents.

[○ Each] **Gadgets:** Items created during downtime.

[○] **Your custom vehicle:** The vehicle assigned to you, suitable to your needs. It's represented by the vehicle entry on your pilot sheet.

[○ per 3 uses] **Bandolier:** 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 one from the list below for each:

Permanently fuse two surfaces until they are parted with a neutralizer or extreme and damaging effort.	
Temporarily cause an incapacitating sensation of drowning.	Temporarily cover an area in impenetrable darkness.
Burst into intense flame on contact with air.	Explode into shrapnel.
Take level 2 Harm: Obsessive, and +1d to your next Interface roll.	Temporarily cause incapacitating full body muscle cramps.
Create a cloud of smoke that stings the eyes and is difficult to breathe.	Temporarily become imbued with a mild electrical charge and a feeling of vigor.
Temporarily become calm and enter a suggestible mental state.	Neutralize the effects of other chemicals.

TECHNICIAN SPECIALIST VEHICLE GEAR

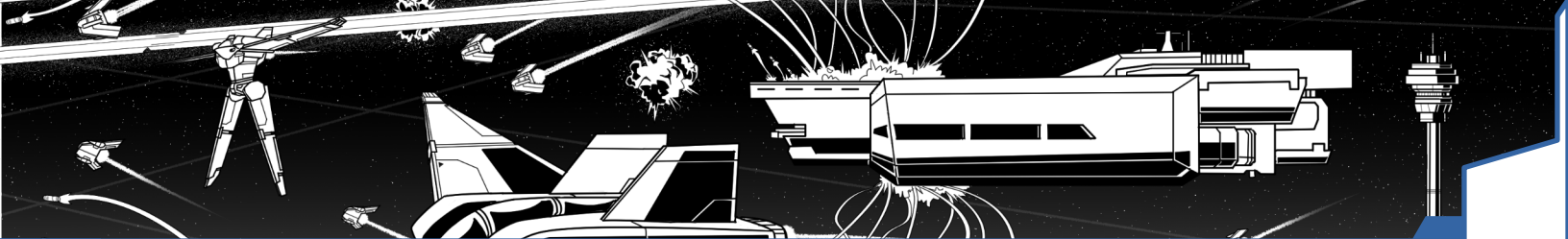
[○] **Fine modding tools:** Excellent tools for modifying large objects on the fly.

[○-○] **Fine destruction tools:** Well-made tools for smashing buildings, vehicles, and other large objects.

[○] **Assisted repair system:** Spend a Materiel point to take the Fix downtime activity while on a mission.

[○] **Analytics suite:** A collection of scanners that determine the composition of solids, liquids, and gases.

[○ per 3 uses] **Payload bay:** Can contain three special warheads that hold much larger amounts of the same chemicals as the Bandolier. The contents are debuted with each use. These warheads 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.



TECHNICIAN STARTING 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.

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]?

ALLIES AND RIVALS

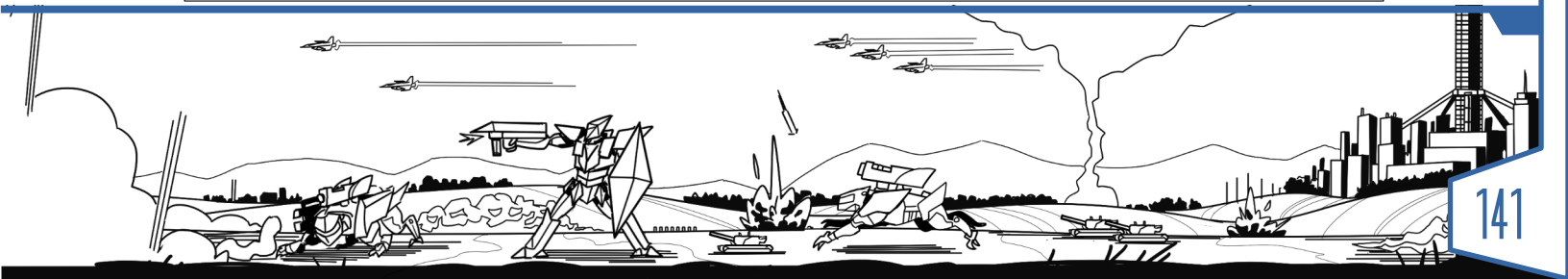
- ◆ Dee, a surly professor
- ◆ Isa, a faceless spy
- ◆ Taylor, a diligent monk
- ◆ Martinus, a kind psychologist

TECHNICIAN STARTING BUILDS

- ◆ **Medic:** DOCTOR, Study +2, Consort +1, Finesse +1
- ◆ **Sapper:** SABOTEUR, Prowl +2, Wreck +1, Study +1
- ◆ **Cyborg:** CUSTOM IMPLANT, Struggle +1, Prowl +1, Hunt +1, Survey +1
- ◆ **Gearhead:** RESEARCHER, Interface +2, Manipulate +1, Maneuver +1

Dredge scares me a little sometimes. I mean, the Magpie is the creepiest fucking AWV I've ever seen. I'm glad it's on our side. I know I shouldn't think like this. Co's only ever been good to me. But knowing what co's capable of makes me wary. Out of anyone on the Cenotaph, Dredge and cor AWV could absolutely do the most damage. And co has. Co's caused so much destruction, sometimes disregarding the safety of the people who live in the area. I always see regret in cor eyes afterward. But it hasn't stopped cor yet.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday



4: PLAYERS' PRINCIPLES



You've just read a lot of rules that explain the mechanics of being a Pilot. This section provides principles that guide you, the players, in how to use those rules. Follow these principles to get the most out of being a *Beam Saber* Pilot.

PROTECT YOUR COMRADES

The subject matter of *Beam Saber* can be dark and heavy at times. The themes surrounding war, and the relationships that develop because of them, are very intense. Even the most lighthearted Cut Loose scene can stumble into or around troubles from the last mission.

Feeling strong emotions in play can be enjoyable (just look at horror movies), but it isn't always clear when they become harmful.



Everyone at the table is responsible for making sure these themes don't harm the players (including the GM). Keep an eye on the group's Lines and Veils (see page 263). Take a moment to ask if everyone is okay when you think one is breached, or you suspect a player is uncomfortable.

If something harms or upsets a player, the table has many options. Use any combination of these to protect yourself and each other:

- ▶ Cut out the harmful detail by saying that it never happened.
- ▶ Drop the subject and talk about something else.
- ▶ Pause and discuss what just happened—provided everyone is okay talking about it. No one is obligated to talk about their feelings or well-being.
- ▶ Quietly skip ahead if everyone is comfortable with the event happening, but not with depicting it.
- ▶ End the session, and ask if people would like to debrief about what happened. Everyone's well-being is more important than the game.



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 affect lives they don't know 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—regardless of the Pilots' competence. The War is wildly unfair.

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. It's fine if they falter, fail, and fall because the mechanics ensure that those moments are temporary unless we as players want them to be permanent. Besides, they might succeed—wouldn't it be glorious to witness that moment?

GO INTO DANGER. FALL IN LOVE WITH TROUBLE

You will never be completely safe, so be bold. You're a Pilot surrounded by massive machines (some of which are trying to kill you) in a war that predates your birth and won't conclude in your lifetime. 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 support your risky or seemingly impossible goals. So dare to be interesting, and don't fear peril. Avoiding every little danger won't build up the Pilots' Stress, but it sure will stress out the players!

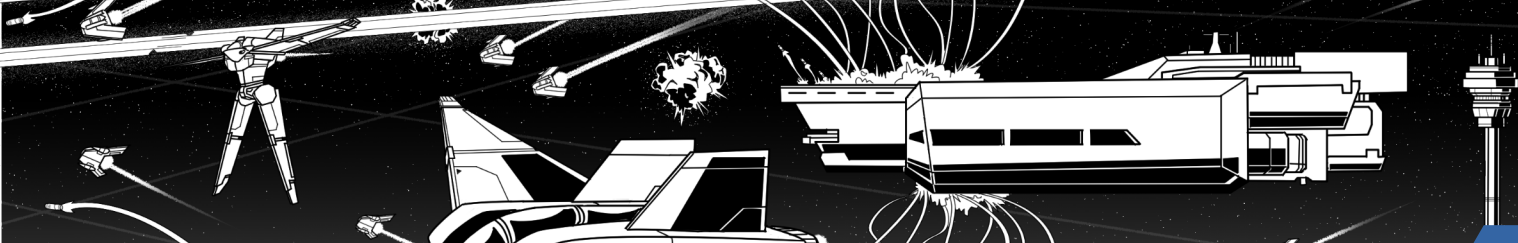
Consequences aren't failures. A result of 4-6 means that you succeed at what you were trying to do. There will likely be unintended consequences, but you will have succeeded nonetheless! When consequences do befall you, don't hate them. Exciting things happen when they appear. Someone gets Harm, a vehicle takes Damage, new challenges arrive, and much more! All of these outcomes will create opportunities for taking action to achieve your dreams. Telling stories about gripping moments is why you're playing this game; don't back away from them.

USE ACTIONS HONORABLY

Players choose the action they use 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 with the highest action rating. If you are demolishing a building with your vehicle, be honest and roll Destroy. Don't 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 identifying the load bearing structures so another Pilot can Destroy them with increased Effect or improved Position.

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

Everyone playing is responsible for the game's narrative. This includes tone, themes, style, descriptions, and much more. You participate in both a tactical role and, just as importantly, an expressive one. Let 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

Your Pilot's Stress and vehicle's Quirks are resources that help you overcome the challenges in your way. By pushing yourself and getting an assist from a squadmate, you can get at least 2 dice in any action. 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

During the session, talk with everyone at the table about what scenes you want to see. Sometimes interesting story beats will happen as things fall into place. But advocating for the scenes that interest you is a far more reliable way to tell your story together. Talk to the GM about setting up scenes with NPCs. Talk to the other players about how your Pilots might work together or fall apart. Talk to the whole group about creating missions that follow the stories you want to pursue. Remember to return the favor.

DON'T TALK YOURSELF OUT OF FUN

Whether you're planning the mission or just deciding what to do next, do what sounds like fun. Your Pilot might stress about executing the "best" plan, but you as a player are here to have fun—whatever the consequence. You're playing this game to experience the dramatic confrontations between 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, and several beliefs about the other Pilots. Those details say who the Pilot was, not who they are or who they will become. You'll reveal who they are through play, based on the choices you make, the orders you follow, who you leave behind, and when you rebel. Let your Pilot surprise you over the course of the game—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. 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

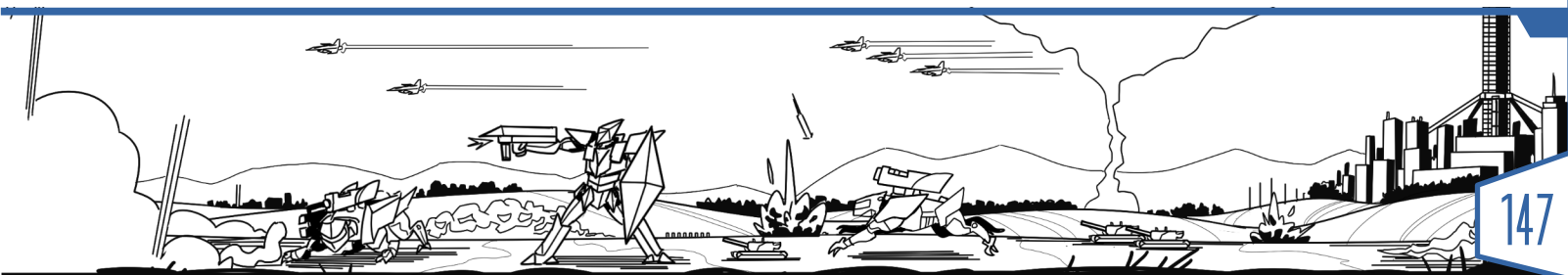
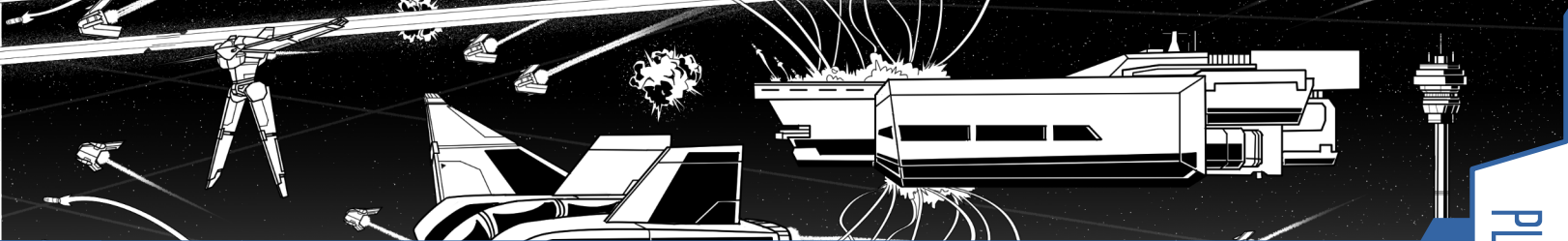
While Long-Term Projects improve the Quality of a weapon or help infiltrate an enemy squad, they can be used for literally anything. They could break the rules of the game (for example, by adding an extra level 3 Harm box to a Pilot, making it so that all of a vehicle's Load is uninstalled at the start of a mission for free, or by removing Scars). Projects can also 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, discuss the project's ultimate goal with other players and GM. Drastic changes will likely require multiple 8-Tick Clocks, each one completing a step in the overall project. Remember that rule-breaking projects are an option, but not an obligation. If you like the game as it is, stick with it.

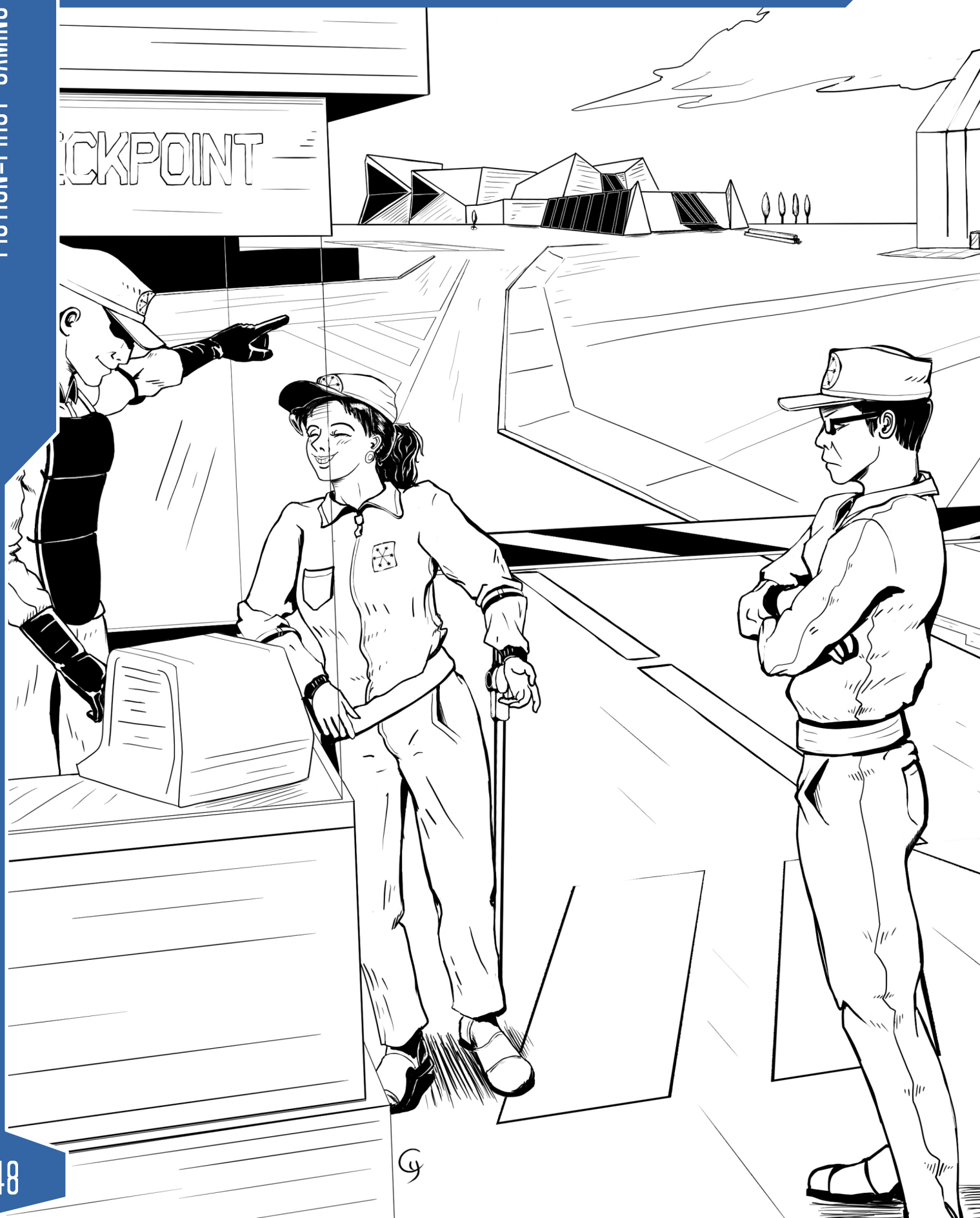
ACT NOW. PLAN LATER

There's a tendency for players to over plan when they have the initiative to act. They come up with a good, simple plan, and then start poking holes in it. These holes then need plans to patch them up, and those plans have holes, and so it continues.

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



S: FICTION-FIRST GAMING





FICTION FIRST GAMING

"Fiction first" refers to the practice of letting the game's narrative determine which mechanics you use—rather than using mechanics to decide what happens in the fiction. In many games, a player takes an action by saying, "I shoot the target." They roll to shoot, and any description (such as, "I peak around the corner and fire a quick shot.") is an afterthought. The fiction takes a back seat to the mechanics, and the game could be played without any narration at all.

Beam Saber uses a fiction first approach: A player describes what their Pilot does, and the circumstances determine what mechanics you'll use. If a player wants to shoot a target, we must determine the surrounding situation. Here are some examples. If the shot is:

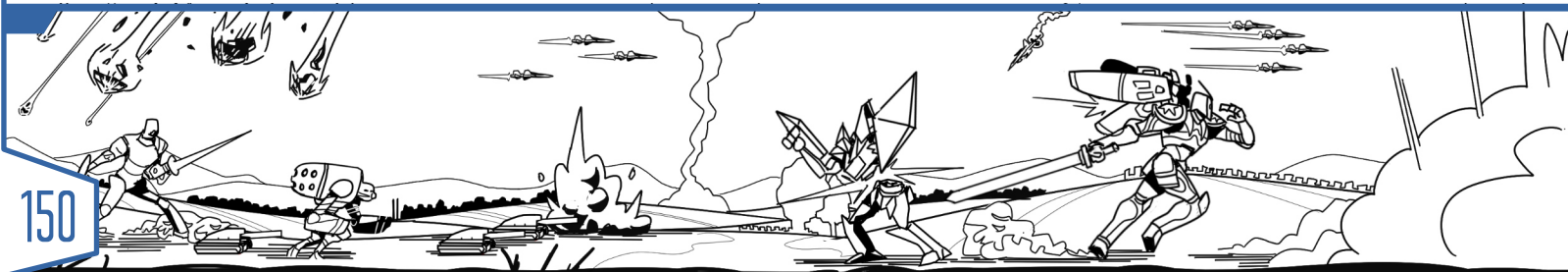
- ◆ *At a target range and the Pilot is just practicing*, that's probably the Train downtime activity. There's no risk in taking the shot, and no benefit for being exceptionally accurate.
- ◆ *Part of a laser tag match with a friend*, that's probably a Cut Loose downtime activity. There's no risk, and 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.
- ◆ *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.
- ◆ *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.

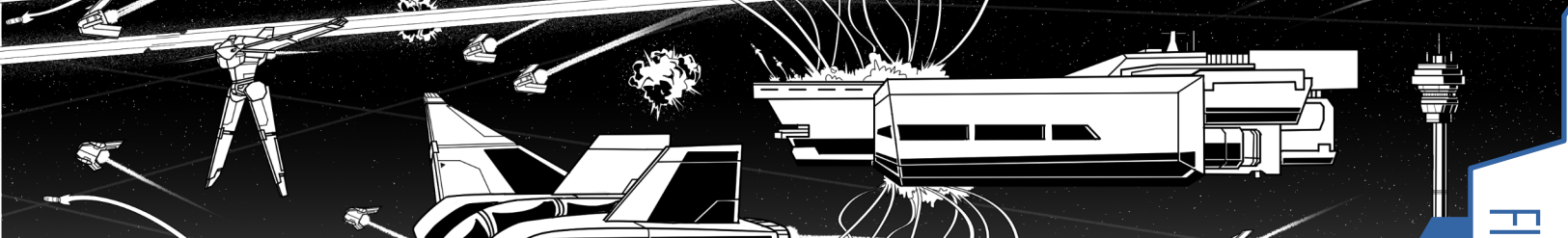
There are any number of scenarios this activity could occur in, and it's up to the players to consider the narrative circumstances that affect the mechanics. Picking the mechanic first and then applying a narrative can make the process messy. You'll likely find that establishing the fiction will streamline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

If things do become confused, back out from the mechanics and talk with each other about what's happening in the story. Ask the following questions:

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.

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





TRIGGERING THE ACTION ROLL

Let's look at how the fiction triggers an action roll. Most of the game involves talking in character, describing actions, making plans, and all the fun that comes with playing games with friends. However, there will come a time for dice. Here are a few fictional situations that would trigger an action roll:

- ◆ A Pilot attempts a dangerous activity, or one with potential repercussions.
- ◆ A Pilot leads or orders one or more NPCs to take on a dangerous or challenging activity.
- ◆ A player is really excited to make a roll!

At this point, an action roll triggers (see the process on page 30). The roll determines if the action is a failure (1-3), a success (6), or a bit of both (4-5).

In Beam Saber, action rolls determine the outcome for the Pilot's action and their opposition's action—the GM doesn't roll to see how hard the opposition hits back. In these dramatic situations, the enemy and Pilot are attempting to achieve their goals at the same time. A 4-5 result means the opposition finds some success alongside the Pilot. A single action roll covers a back and forth exchange of blows, words, maneuvers, or whatever form the conflict takes.

HOW TO CHOOSE AN ACTION

An action roll requires the player to pick the action their Pilot uses to take on an obstacle or challenge. The fiction will usually signal what action is appropriate. However, the player is always allowed to change their approach and the action they're using, so long as the new action fits the fiction too. 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. The player chooses their action, and the GM chooses the appropriate Position and Effect. If no actions seem appropriate, consider the intent of the activity.

Here's six ways you could approach using a holo-projector against some enemies as an example:

The narrative and the GM's assessment of the action determine the Position and Effect. Each example will likely have a different Position and Effect, depending on the circumstances. Players and the GM should discern together what is suitable for the specific situation and the game's tone.

INTENDED OUTCOME

Distract enemies so that allies can get the drop on them.

Trick enemies into hitting each other with their own attacks.

Intimidate enemies into retreat with a terrifying image.

Corral enemies into a specific position on the battlefield.

Get enemies to let their guard down with reassuring images.

Escape enemies by making an illusory duplicate of yourself.

POSSIBLE ACTION

Sway as a setup action roll.

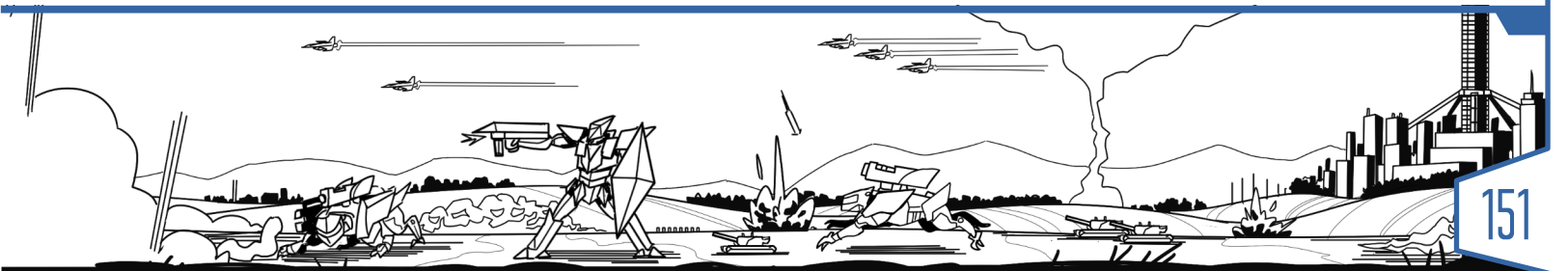
Battle as an action roll.

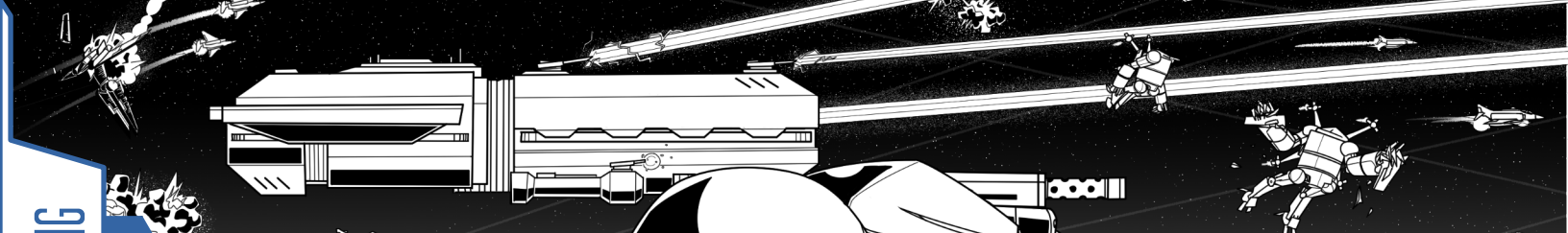
Command as an action roll.

Manipulate as an action roll.

Consort as a setup action roll.

Maneuver as an action roll.





THE PURPOSES OF DANGER AND STRESS

The odds are stacked against the Pilots, and they need resources like Stress and resistance rolls to overcome them. Consequences are always on the table, and the power to change those odds is core to the Pilots' stories.

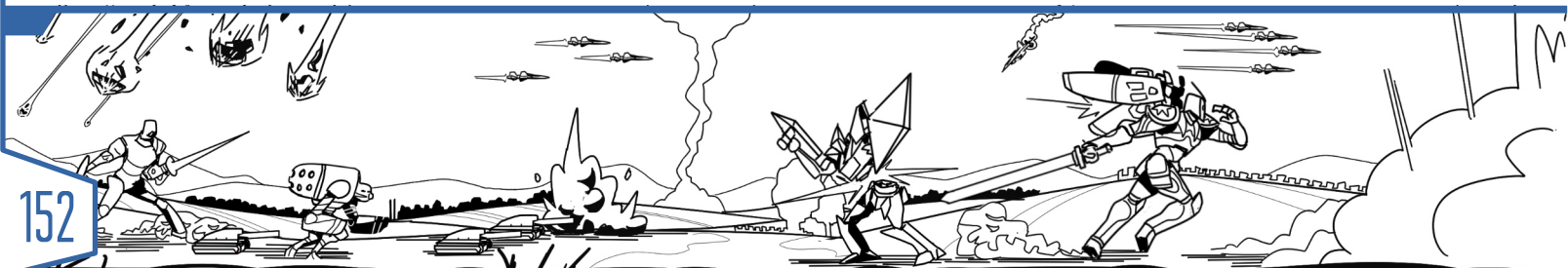
New players and GMs might wonder how resisting consequences pushes the story forward. But Harm and Damage serve an important purpose, even when negated by resistance rolls. Describing how Pilots and their vehicles are wounded builds tension. As the GM narrates a massive chainsaw tearing through the cockpit towards the Pilot inside, the players get scared. The stakes are raised, which build an emotional investment in the story.

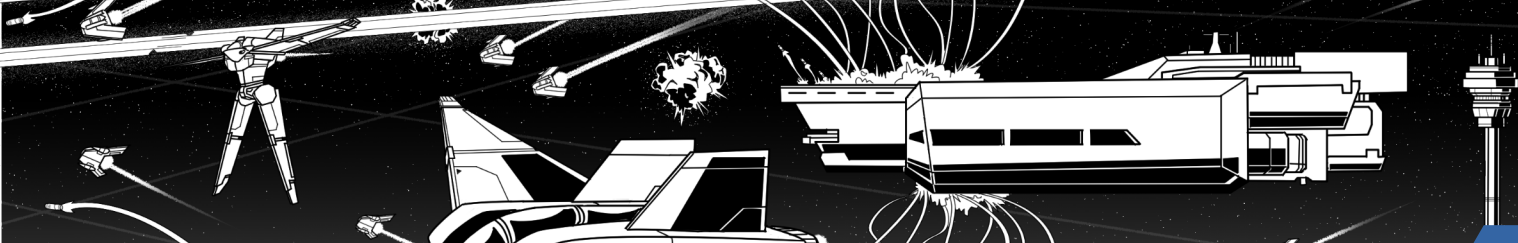
Since they're so invested, they spend that Stress. They say, "No! I hit the gas and dodge out of the chainsaw's path." They are required to describe how they reduce (or negate) the consequence's severity, adding rich details to the fiction in the process. The player shows off their Pilot's grit and resilience, 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 combine in play, it creates an exciting narrative. The GM describes the dangerous outcomes, and the players 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

When the dice hit the table, the fiction changes. The Pilots might change the world to suit them (6), experience something bad (on a 1-3), or both (4-5). There should never be an outcome where the result is "nothing happens." Controlled consequences will be minor, but the result still drives the Pilot into a riskier situation, or makes them realize their plan was more perilous than expected.





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 shot as well. Likewise, if a player's Pilot is the only person who can Pilot their customized vehicle, then the same is true for customized NPC vehicles. Every time new facts are introduced, they become opportunities for everyone.

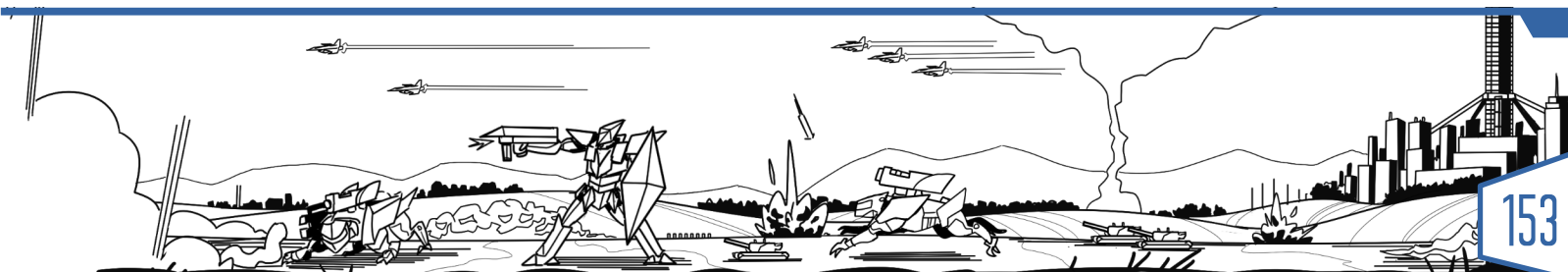
The precedents you set may need to change at some point in the game. Don't hesitate to make those changes, but remember that they apply for both Pilots and NPCs!

ABSTRACTION VS DETAIL

A good story doesn't have to be described in exact detail. It's often more important to know if you'll reach your target in time, rather than knowing the exact distance. The exact price of the bribe isn't important, just that it costs 1 Personnel.

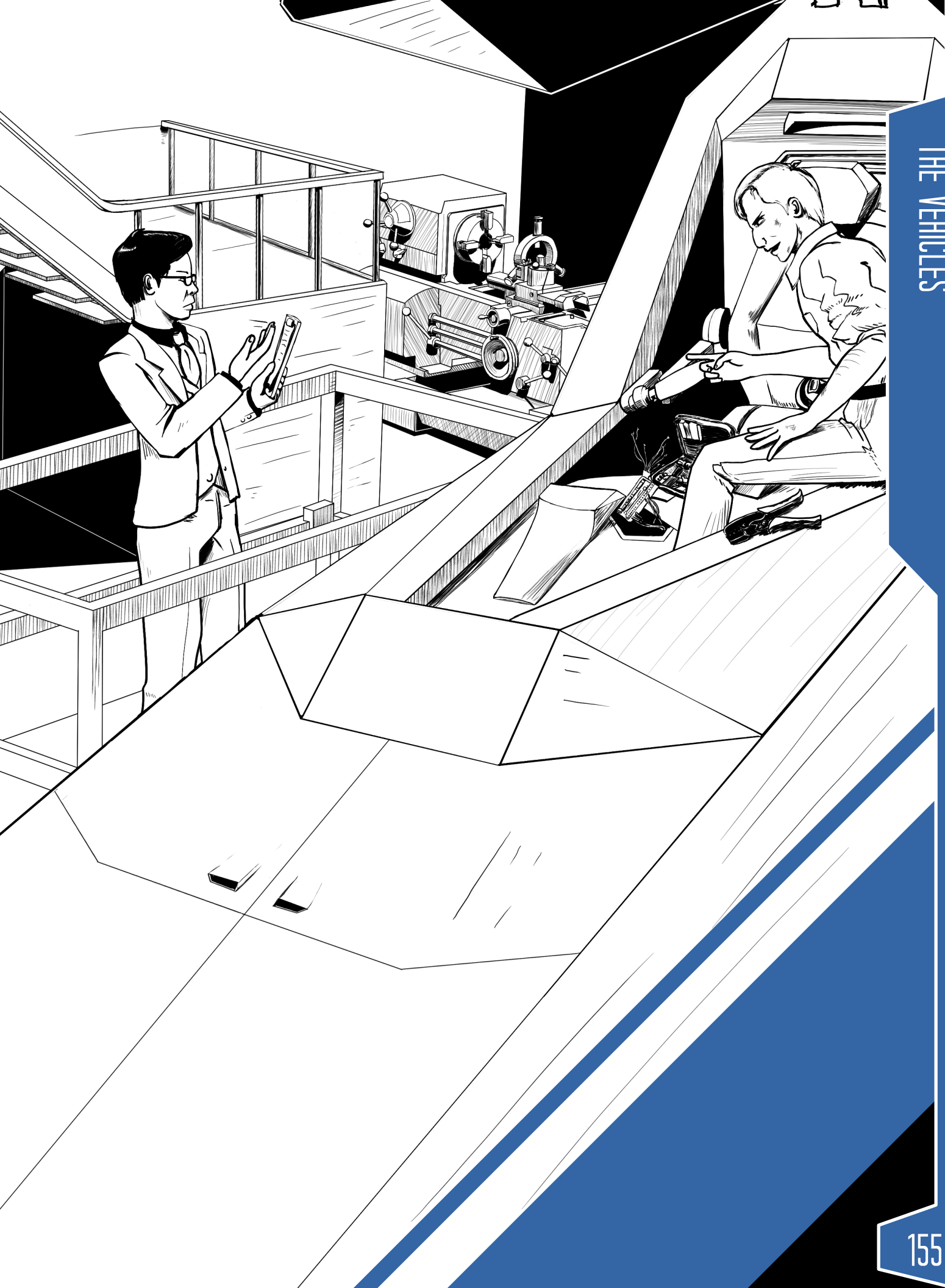
Players probably won't possess the same expertise and skills as their Pilots. We don't expect players to do the math behind an Engineer roll, so a level of abstraction is fine for players who aren't comfortable describing the detail of their actions.

Just make sure you bring out the details when setting an action's Position and Effect. If you're bribing a guard, do they have their gun to your head, an arm's length away, or still in their holster? The detail will impact your Pilot's circumstances and potential consequences.



6: THE VEHICLES



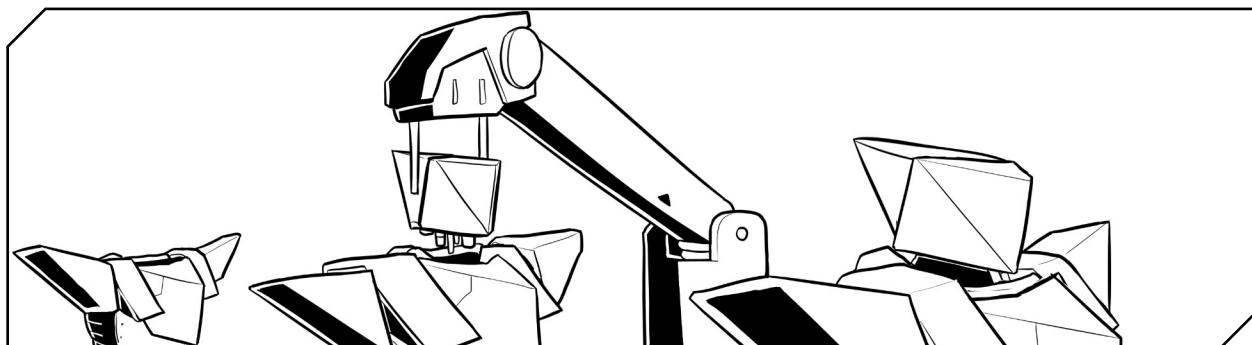


VEHICLE CREATION

A Pilot's vehicle is not just a means of engaging in war, it is representative of the Pilot within. A vehicle reflects both the Pilot's public reputation as their face and actions, and who this Pilot is as a person. Pilots that favor misdirection will have vehicles that use similar methods. Those who consider themselves pawns in the conflict use basic workhorse models, while those who see themselves as grand adorn their vehicle with capes and gold. Keep this in mind as you make and use vehicles, whether you're the GM or a player.

This section provides step-by-step instructions for creating a Pilot's vehicle. However, you can also randomly generate a vehicle in part or in whole using Appendix B (see page 414).

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

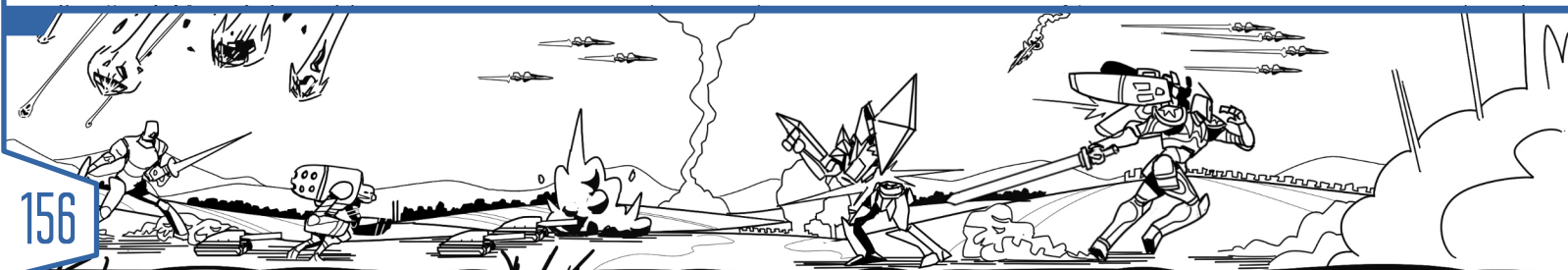


I remember the first day I stepped into Bert. There was all this training before, of course, but being inside an AWW is... hard to wrap your head around until you actually step inside. I'd only seen other AWWs before, the Church ones as they passed through Hulinton, and Bert looked like a rusty tractor compared to them.

I started with the arm. Just lifting it up. It felt so fucking heavy, and I was only pulling on a control stick. I think sometimes it's easy to see an AWW moving from the outside and forget how slow and heavy it still is. Slow, and heavy, and dangerous. We were still in the old barn, and I knew if I lifted the arm over Bert's head it would punch a hole straight through the roof.

I've been thinking a lot lately about how Bert feels different now. All this new armoring and stuff. He's heavier, but with new parts to make up for it. I think he moves better than he used to, but it feels weird and I don't know, bad? A while ago I painted flowers on Bert's head, to make him look less like a pile of junk. They look real out of place now. I get this sinking feeling in my gut looking at them, knowing how much more damage I could do if I'm not careful. There were all these protocols to follow even when I was just Piloting him in a field with no one else around. What happens if I fuck up in the middle of a battle?

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday



VEHICLE LOOKS

A vehicle can be anything (as long as they can ride in or on it)—a mech, a dump truck, a fighter jet, a tank, you name it. The rules and looks work for any Piloted vehicle. Feel free to pick any number of words that describe each part of your vehicle. Just remember to avoid describing weapons or other vehicle gear.

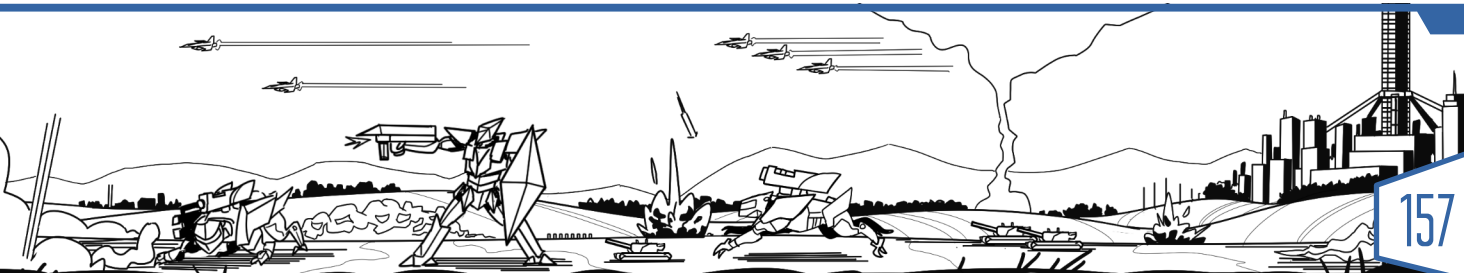
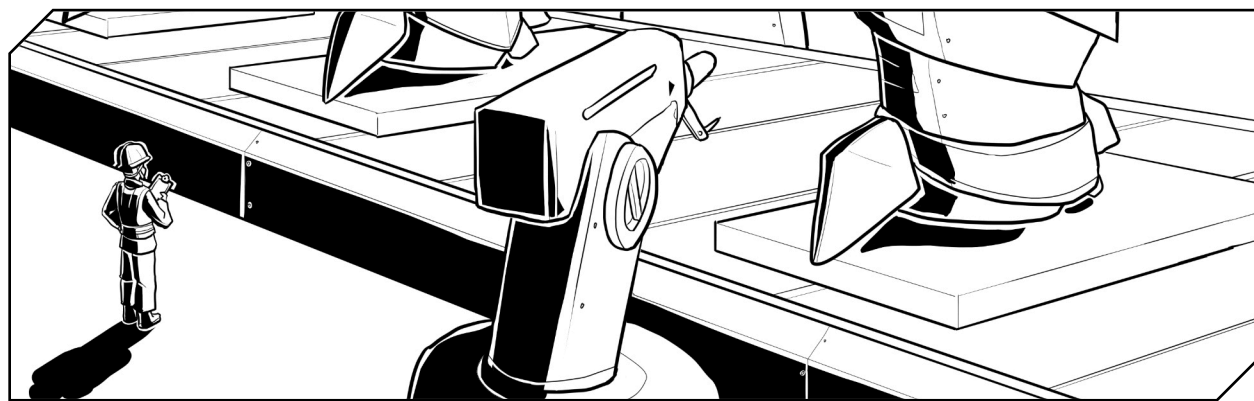
Beam Saber is a fiction first game (see page 148). Your look impacts the fiction when overcoming challenges (but doesn't have strict mechanical benefits, like extra dice). If you're taking on mountainous terrain, a vehicle with treads might have worse Position and Effect than a flying vehicle. In fact, a flying vehicle might bypass the mountains without a problem.

Below are some suggestions for a 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.

Pitchfork and Dredge are crossing a river in their vehicles. Pitchfork's Agrarian is quadrupedal, so it'll wade through the river, while Dredge's Kettle 2.0 can hover over the obstacle. Pitchfork's player makes a Controlled Standard Maneuver action roll, and she gets a 5. She gets across safely, but the river slows her down. Dredge doesn't roll.

Unfortunately, when Dredge gets to the other side ahead of her squadmate, she realizes the riverbank is mined, but she has difficulty coming to a stop to avoid activating the mines. She makes a Risky Limited Maneuver roll, getting a 4. The Kettle twists under the controls, becomes unbalanced, and crashes to the ground just short of the minefield. Dredge is now in a Desperate Position.



VEHICLE ACTIONS AND ATTRIBUTES

When a Pilot commits actions with their vehicle, they roll the relevant vehicle action rating. If a Pilot remotely controls any vehicle, they have reduced Effect. All vehicle action ratings max out at 3 points (or 4 upon unlocking the Mastery Squad Upgrade). However, you may only assign a max of 2 points to one action during vehicle creation.

All vehicle actions belong to the Expertise or Acuity attributes. Each vehicle attribute has three actions:

EXPERTISE ACTIONS

These actions 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 actions use the vehicle's awareness:

- ◆ **Bombard:** for blasting with long-range fire.
- ◆ **Manipulate:** for deftly handling objects.
- ◆ **Scan:** for quickly assessing a situation.

The Expertise and Acuity attributes determine the number of Quirks a player must spend when resisting consequences with their vehicle (see page 162). They gain a point of attribute XP when they perform a Desperate vehicle action, and General XP can also be put into an attribute's XP track. When the vehicle's Enhance track fills through the Enhance downtime activity, an additional action point can be added to any vehicle action, or a new Quirk (see page 162) can be gained.

VEHICLE LOAD

[○] **Load** represents the equipment installed on a vehicle. Load abstracts how much of the vehicle's resources are occupied by its gear use—resources such as weight, balance, bulk, and computing power.

At the start of the very first mission, decide if your vehicle is carrying a Light, Medium, or Heavy Load. Each Load level has its pros and cons: Light vehicles hold less resources but are quicker, while Heavy vehicles are well-supplied but slow and conspicuous. Pick wisely, this will be your Load for the whole campaign (unless you embark upon a Long-Term Project to change your vehicle's Load).

► **A Light** vehicle has a max Load of 3. It's quick and less conspicuous, giving it improved Effect when those features are advantageous. A Light vehicle is faster and stealthier than others, but has less versatility due to its lower Load. Light vehicles are smaller (generally about 30ft tall), allowing them to fit into places that others cannot, such as building interiors or small caverns and tunnels.

► **A Medium** vehicle has a max Load of 5. It looks like it's geared up for trouble. Medium vehicles strike a balance between the two doctrines represented by Lights and Heavies. Their size (generally about 45ft tall) often gives them access to the same options as both, but they may need an action roll where smaller or larger vehicles could automatically succeed.

► **A Heavy** vehicle has a max Load of 6. It's slower and looks like it's ready for war, giving it decreased Effect when those features are a problem. Heavy vehicles offer great versatility, but they are less agile and more obvious than Light and Medium vehicles. Heavy vehicles are larger than others (generally about 60ft tall), meaning they can frequently reach places others cannot, and they are also often out of enemy reach.

Sometimes, the vehicle's size will be important, such as reaching a person on a rooftop. Remember to follow the fiction, so what is possible and what succeeds without an action roll may vary. If a player really wants to take advantage of their vehicle's physicality, they should make Quirks (see page 162) related to its size and shape.

Tower, Dredge, and Pitchfork are ambushed from the top of a small office building by modified Ape Light Vehicles with rockets. Tower moves the Mantis inside the office building (making use of its Light Load and "Unusually Small" Quirk) to avoid getting hit. Sasha states that Dredge's Kettle has Armor, since it is Medium. The Armor uses up the last available Load, but Dredge takes no Damage from the attack. Pitchfork's Heavy Agrarian already has Armor and spends it to shrug off the rockets.

Only the Agrarian can reach the roof, because the other vehicles are too small. But it's slow due to its size, and it'll take a moment to get there (long enough for another attack). Tower wants to get to the roof without opening themselves up to another barrage, but can't find a way up through the building. The Kettle 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. The Agrarian presses on, as it's too big to hide.

The Apes are about to fire on the Agrarian 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 Apes with Great Effect. The Agrarian ends the conflict with a final blow from its modified jackhammer (a fine heavy melee weapon).

INSTALLING AND CHANGING VEHICLE GEAR

Your vehicle begins with uninstalled Load slots equal to your selected max Load. When you hit upon a problem or challenge during a mission, you may debut a piece of gear and place it in a Load slot. Write the gear in an empty slot on your character sheet. Gear with Load 0 doesn't fill a Load slot.

Changing a vehicle's equipped gear 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.

So expect uninstalling gear to cost you. A player can only uninstall a filled Load slot during downtime by spending Materiel equal to the number of slots the gear occupies (so gear with Load 2 requires 2 Materiel to uninstall). The change doesn't cost a downtime activity. If a piece of gear is destroyed, it continues to occupy that slot as useless "junk." You've got to clean it out before installing new gear. Additionally, vehicles can only change their Load category (Light, Medium, or Heavy) through an appropriate Long-Term Project (see page 225).

STOLEN GEAR

Stolen gear takes up an amount of Load as is suitable for the fiction. If you're only carrying the stolen gear, its Load slot frees up at the end of the mission (for no Materiel cost). The vehicle can install the stolen gear if you want to use it on the mission, but you'll need to spend the necessary Materiel points during downtime to uninstall it as per usual.

If a Pilot steals a piece of gear from a squad of a higher Tier, it counts as a fine item for the next two missions. After the second mission, the gear loses the fine Quality, as the squad's support infrastructure is not up to the task of maintaining that piece of gear. A Long-Term Project could be completed to upgrade the supporting infrastructure so that piece of gear retains the fine Quality permanently. Using lower Tier gear provides no benefit and may in fact cause a worse Position or Effect as the fiction demands.

GENERAL VEHICLE GEAR

Vehicles can access all the general vehicle gear, its Pilot's specialist vehicle gear, and the squad's specialist vehicle gear. You may install any of these items on your vehicle (up to its max Load). The general gear is listed below. You can find the Pilot vehicle gear on your Pilot's list of gear, and the squad vehicle gear on your squad sheet.

GEAR

[○] **A shield or forcefield:** A Pilot-directed, thick alloy plating or electromagnetic barrier held at a distance from the vehicle's body to protect it from incoming attacks. Does not count as Armor for reducing Damage, but can alter Position.

[○-○] **Mobility suite:** A full flight system, dash thrusters, all-terrain suspension, or some other modification providing the vehicle with extra mobility.

OUTFITS

[○-○] **Armor:** Spend to reduce Damage by one level. Armor is restored at the start of downtime at no cost. Armor can be taken multiple times—each costs 2 Load and can be spent once per mission.

[○] **Cargo space:** A contained area suitable for moving a large amount of objects or a few large objects.

[○] **Passenger space:** 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

[Ø] **Coding program:** Some vehicles come with a limited code editor as part of their OS.

[Ø] **Intrusion Countermeasures Program (ICP):** Dedicated computer systems to prevent hacking.

[Ø] **Retrieval program:** Some vehicles have programs for searching through connected databases.

SUPPLIES

[Ø-Ø] **Supply reserves:** Allows the squad access to their Supply Points during downtime, even if the fiction says they should be unable to access them.

TOOLS

[Ø-Ø] **Destruction tools:** Tools for smashing buildings, vehicles, and other large objects.

[Ø] **Grapnel anchor tool:** Harpoons that stabilize a vehicle to prevent it from shifting position, or allow it to rappel and slowly climb vertical surfaces.

[Ø] **A holo-projector:** Can visualize AR or specific images.

[Ø] **Modding tools:** Tools for modifying large objects on the fly.

[Ø] **A spotlight or flare mortar:** A source of illumination mounted on the vehicle; a spotlight offers directed light, and flare mortars are launched into the air to illuminate a wide area for several minutes.

WEAPONS

[Ø] **Anti-infantry defenses:** A close-range shrapnel launcher that shreds flesh and light materials, but does little to sturdy objects.

[Ø] **A directed energy weapon:** A device that coalesces a highly visible beam of thermal energy. It can melt through targets, but is prone to overheating.

[Ø] **A flamethrower :** A nozzle that fires a stream of burning liquid. It's terrifyingly effective against unarmored or lightly armored targets.

[Ø] **A melee weapon or two:** A vehicle-mounted melee weapon, such as tire spikes, a plow, or handheld blade.

[Ø-Ø] **A heavy cannon:** A long-range, large bore cannon, designed for penetrating heavy armor. It has a low rate of fire.

[Ø] **A machine gun:** A heavy machine gun effective against vehicles, and devastating against infantry, at relatively short ranges.

[Ø] **A rack of missiles or rockets:** A case full of guided or unguided self-propelled explosives that often cause unintended destruction.

QUIRKS

Quirks are a vehicle's unique qualities. A Pilot who is familiar with those Quirks can use them to their advantage. However, these Quirks aren't wholly positive; if a Pilot expends all of them without maintenance, the vehicle suffers a Breakdown.

CREATING QUIRKS

Every vehicle starts with 4 Quirks, which are probably common to that vehicle's model. A vehicle may earn more Quirks (up to a max of 8) by filling the Enhance track with the Enhance downtime activity. These additional Quirks are unique to this vehicle. There are some examples to the right, but a player can make up their own with the GM.

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. If a vehicle has the "Roaring Fast" Quirk, the Pilot can push their vehicle for more speed and noise. When selecting your descriptors, make sure that at least one of them can be interpreted as a disadvantage, because struggling with your Quirks provides XP at the end of the session.

If you are having trouble coming up with Quirks, 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.

A player can speak to their GM if they discover their Quirk isn't a good fit for them or their vehicle. If your Quirk hasn't seen much action, just change it and move on as if it was always that way. 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
- Flexible Structure
- Slow and Heavy
- Military Workhorse
- Splintering Carapace
- Mighty Clumsy
- Light Footed
- Common Parts
- Fixed Hardpoints
- Blinding Boosters
- Redundant Systems
- Aggressive Targeters

USING QUIRKS

Once per roll, a Pilot can exhaust a Quirk to push their vehicle for one of the following benefits: +1d to a vehicle action roll, improved Effect with a vehicle action, or taking a vehicle action when the vehicle has level 3 Damage. This may activate certain abilities, such as the Hacker's Tesla ability, which triggers when the Pilot pushes themselves or their vehicle. You may only activate one ability per Quirk. If a Pilot has multiple abilities that activate when a Quirk is spent, each must be paid using different Quirks.

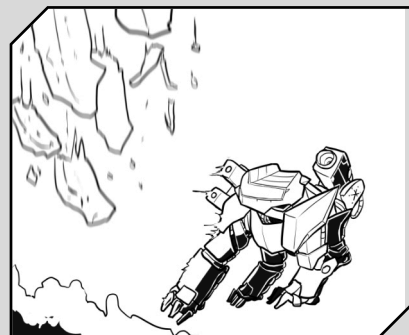
A Pilot can also exhaust Quirks to resist consequences (see page 36) while using their vehicle. The GM picks the attribute the Pilot must resist with, and then they spend Quirks. Resisting costs 4 Quirks,

minus the chosen attribute's rating (to a minimum of 1, even if a special ability would reduce it to zero or less). If the cost is more than the available Quirks, the vehicle can still resist by spending all remaining Quirks. For example, if a vehicle has an Expertise attribute rating of 2 (say, at least 1 Maneuver and 1 Battle), resisting with Expertise costs 2 Quirks.

Whether 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.

Scarecrow moves through an urban combat zone in her Claymore, engaging enemy combat engineers. She turns a corner and finds herself face to face with an enemy Elephant. She opens fire. Because she's close range, she chooses to roll Battle and pushes her vehicle. Jess (Scarecrow's player) spends the Quirk "Oversized Reactor" to push herself, and describes how Scarecrow uses her vehicle's powerful engine to quickly charge and fire off an accurate snap shot on the Elephant. She rolls a 5.

The Elephant is destroyed. But as it crashes forward, it sets off a trap laid by the enemy engineers. The trap causes "level 2 Damage: Crushed" as demolition charges pull a building down onto Jess' vehicle. Jess resists that consequence, and the GM says she must use Acuity. Scarecrow has an Acuity rating of 2 (1 from her points in Bombard, and 1 from her points in Scan), so she must spend 2 Quirks (4 minus her Acuity rating of 2). She also describes how she uses the Quirk and attribute to avoid the trap. Jess marks off "Compact Design" and "Aggressive Targeters." She then describes how the overactive targeting system lets Scarecrow spot the trap at the last moment, and how the Claymore's narrow build allows her to get out from under the collapsing building.



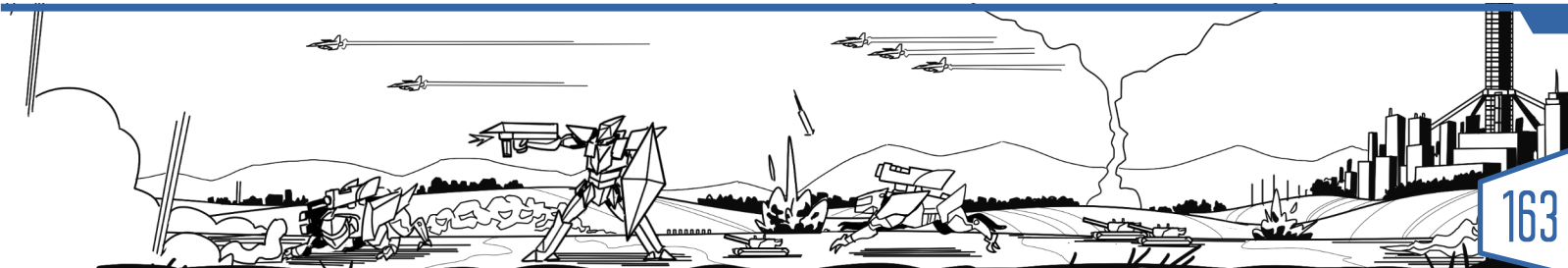
When a vehicle exhausts all of its Quirks (4 Quirks in most cases), its Pilot can either send the vehicle limping home quietly or push past its limits:

- If the Pilot chooses to send their vehicle away, it refreshes all Quirks, is removed from the scene and mission in a terrible state, and 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** (see page 74). The Pilot can ignore the vehicle's current Damage penalties 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 Dire Action, it can take another vehicle action—potentially allowing for several successful actions. If the Pilot gets less than a 6 or chooses to stop taking actions, that's it for them (other Pilots can still act between the vehicle's Dire Actions). On a result of less than 6, they suffer consequences as normal.

After taking its last action or if the scene ends, the vehicle receives an appropriate level 3 Damage, is removed from the scene and mission, and gains a Breakdown Tick.

If the Pilots rolls a critical success, 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 level 3 Damage.



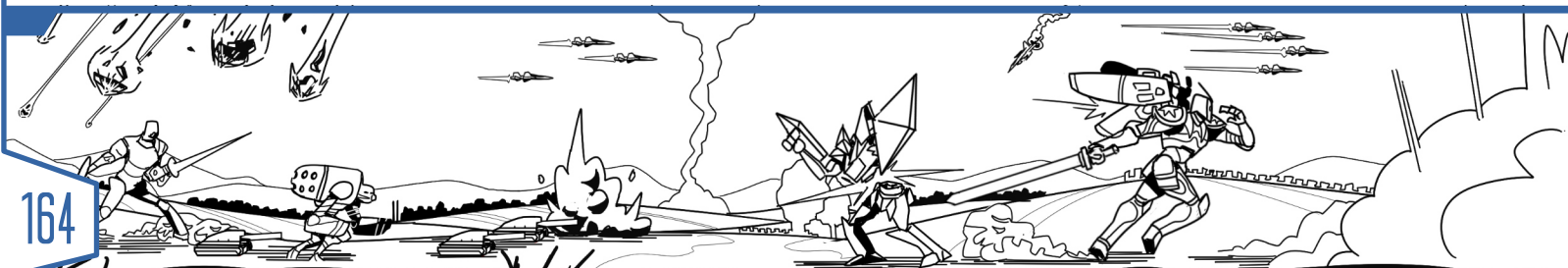
QUIRKS AND EXPERIENCE

A Pilot marks XP at the end of a session if they suffered the repercussions of their vehicle's Quirks during a session. This can occur through narrative play, such as missing opportunities, needlessly creating trouble, or through consequences on action rolls. Tell the GM if you'd like a Quirk to cause you trouble, and they'll add an appropriate consequence to your roll—regardless of the result if you wish.

DAMAGE

Damage is a major blow that impedes a 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 or receiving assistance from a squadmate. Level 3 Damage and lower can be removed between missions by using the Fix downtime activity.

A vehicle that suffers level 4 Damage (or fatal Damage) is destroyed beyond repair. Any Pilots inside the vehicle immediately suffer appropriate level 3 Harm (which they can resist as normal). An Engineer action can salvage the vehicle's best parts on a mission, which generates 1 Supply Point on a 4+. Otherwise, the entire vehicle can be towed away and 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 becomes degraded in some way to represent the symptoms. The player can modify the Quirk's existing descriptors or add a new negative descriptor.

A Pilot can use Long-Term Projects to fix these changes or remove one or more Breakdown points. However, it will likely be an involved process requiring at least one 8-Tick Clock. Use the fiction and tone to inform how hard this process is in your campaign.

When a vehicle acquires its fourth Breakdown Tick, it is worn down beyond repair or function and must be scrapped (or salvaged during downtime).

EXAMPLE ADDED DESCRIPTORS

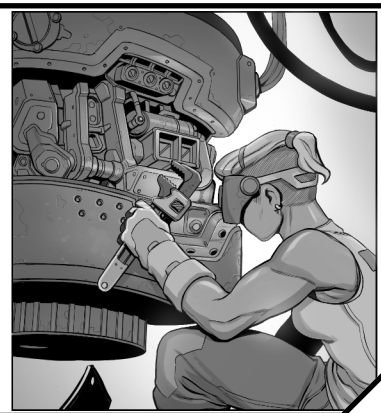
Leaning
Smoking
Clumsy
Sparking
Obsolete
Noisy
Overheats
Glitchy

Pitchfork pushed her Agrarian past its limits, and it gained a point of Breakdown. She must degrade the final Quirk she used: "Slow and Heavy." She considers changing the Quirk to "Slow, Clumsy, and Heavy." But she ultimately decides to go with: "Unresponsive and Heavy."

VEHICLE ADVANCEMENT

Pilots wanting to improve their vehicles must perform Desperate vehicle actions, the Enhance downtime activity, or put General XP into their vehicle attributes. Rolling a Desperate vehicle action immediately earns the vehicle 1 XP in the attribute rolled, and General XP can be put into an attribute at the end of a session (see page 46). When an attribute reaches 6 XP, the player can add one action point to any actions in that attribute (to a max of 3, or 4 if the squad has the Mastery Upgrade). Reset the attribute's XP to zero.

The Enhance downtime activity lets a Pilot mark 1 box on their vehicle enhance track (or 2 boxes if the squad has the Testing Facility Upgrade). When that track fills (6 marks), you may add an action point to any vehicle action or create a new Quirk. Reset the Enhance track to zero.



ACQUIRING A NEW VEHICLE

Pilots will sometimes use a vehicle different to the one created at character creation. This could be due to any number of reasons, but the reasons generally fall into one of three categories: a replacement vehicle, a temporary vehicle, or a borrowed vehicle.

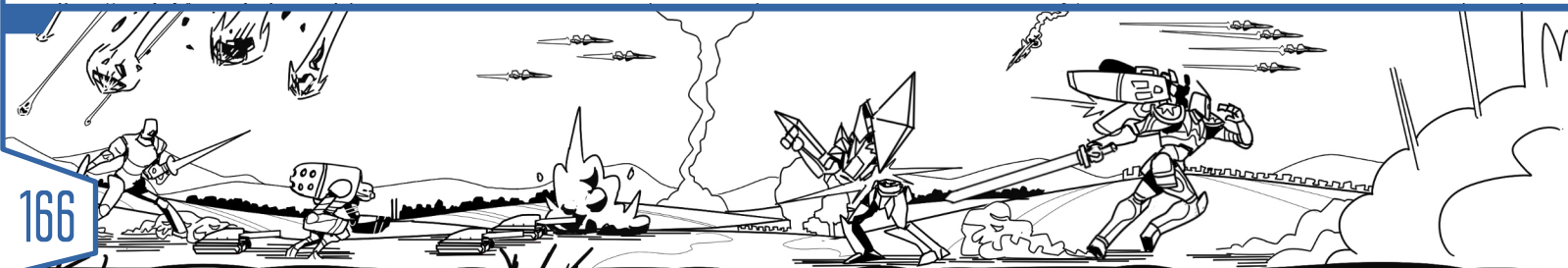
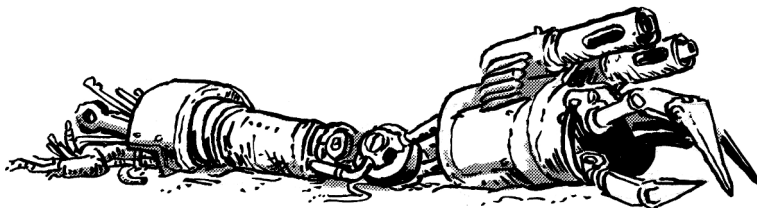
REPLACEMENT VEHICLES

Replacing a vehicle takes a great deal of resources and effort. A Pilot has three routes for acquiring a new replacement vehicle:

- ◆ Purchasing a vehicle. The Pilot must first have a patron Faction, Cohort, or ally that can sell them a vehicle. The Pilot must also spend Materiel Points equal to double the new vehicle's Load, plus the squad's Tier. The player picks the vehicle's Load.
- ◆ Acquiring a vehicle using less honest means through a mission or Long-Term Project. Acquired vehicles start with "level 2 Damage: Unfamiliar" (in addition to any other Damage sustained). The GM determines its max Load and debuted gear it comes with based on the established fiction. It cannot have any available Load.
- ◆ Accepting a squadmate's hand-me-down vehicle. The vehicle comes as-is, with the same Load, installed gear, Damage, and everything else.

Purchased and acquired replacement vehicles:

- ◆ Adopt the squad's Tier level. Either the squad improves its system to their standards (if lower), or the squad lacks the infrastructure to maintain that level of quality (if higher).
- ◆ Are created using the normal vehicle creation rules (starting on page 156).
- ◆ Begin with 4 Quirks.



TEMPORARY VEHICLES

There may be times where a Pilot needs a temporary vehicle—maybe they hijacked an enemy vehicle, or they need a different ride for one mission. Here's what you need to know about Piloting a temporary vehicle:

- ◆ A temporary vehicle doesn't replace the vehicle on the Pilot's character sheet.
- ◆ You gain improved Effect when controlling a temporary vehicle with a higher Tier than your squad, and reduced Effect if it has a lower Tier. (Determine Tier by the squad that usually operates the vehicle.)
- ◆ Temporary vehicles do not have Quirks or a traditional Damage track. They have a Temporary Vehicle Clock representing its ability to function. The vehicle is destroyed (in a spectacular fashion) when the Clock fills. Mundane vehicles (such as a sedan, shuttle, jet ski, etc.) have a 4-Tick Progress Clock, while enemy vehicles (such as a tank, mech, fighter jet, etc.) have a 6-Tick Progress Clock.
- ◆ When it takes Damage, the GM adds a number of Ticks to the Progress Clock according to the consequence list.
- ◆ The Pilot can push their temporary vehicle by adding two Ticks to the Progress Clock, and three Ticks to resist consequences. Either may overflow the Clock, which will destroy the vehicle.

BORROWED VEHICLES

When a Pilot gets into a squadmate's vehicle, their own vehicle is generally not replaced (use the replacement rules if this is a hand me down). Borrowing a vehicle works like this:

- ◆ The Pilot uses the borrowed vehicle's installed gear, but only the owner can debut new gear.
- ◆ Mark Damage and exhausted Quirks on the owner's character sheet, the same as if they were in the cockpit.
- ◆ The Pilot in the borrowed vehicle uses their own vehicle actions and attributes. They can nudge the vehicle in unexpected ways, but this is an unfamiliar rig—you can't take full advantage of its owner's vehicle action ratings.



VEHICLE ACTIONS IN DEPTH

This section contains extended descriptions and examples of each vehicle action. When your Pilot attempts a challenge or does something with an element of chance, you typically name the action they're using to overcome what's in front of them and perform an action roll (see action rolls on page 30).

BATTLE to engage in vehicular close quarters combat.
Lash out with your scoop arm; fire your gatling gun in a dogfight.

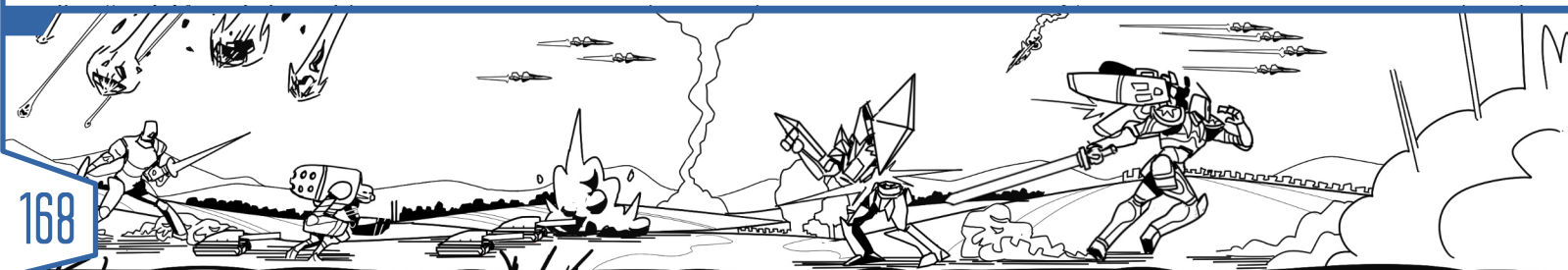
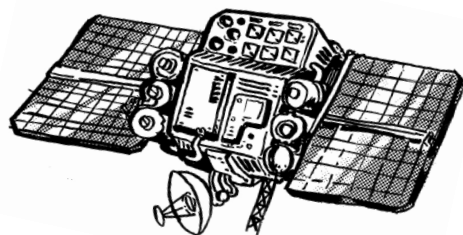
BOMBARD to use vehicular weapons designed to attack targets beyond human sight.
Designate long range missile targets; shoot a railgun through a skyscraper at an enemy.

DESTROY to employ overwhelming destruction through your vehicle. *Carpet bomb a military base; smash a building with a wrecking ball.*

MANEUVER to move your vehicle with skill and agility.
Fly through the valley between skyscrapers; creep across an unsteady bridge.

MANIPULATE to deftly move things with your vehicle.
Remove a primed warhead from a missile; pick up a baby in its carriage.

SCAN to discern the truth around you through your vehicle.
Identify the model of approaching vehicles; spot the heat signature of an active generator.



BATTLE

When you Battle, you engage in vehicular close 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 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, and partially tear free from their constraints. You could remove them from the fight some other way (such as talking them down), or you could keep attacking from a Risky Position.

4/5 (complication): You take down the foe, but your excitement traps you 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. You take it, knowing they could break through your defenses at any moment!

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

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

DESPERATE

While exchanging gunfire with enemies, you retreat in search of better cover. Unfortunately, you get 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 to buy yourself some time. You get several 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 that you can'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 at 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 charge your shot, you realize that the weapon's glow will be highly visible. You could 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, you pinpoint the enemy's location for allied artillery outside of the conflict zone.

1-3 (complication): An enemy rushes you while you're 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 alerts an enemy fighter wing to your location. You enter a Desperate Position as they make strafing runs on you.

DESPERATE

A massive chunk of orbital debris has been pushed towards your FOB. If you can't destroy it before it enters atmosphere, it'll cause devastation as it burns up on entry.

1-3 (complication): Your missiles don't hit any vulnerable spots on the debris. 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 its massive size means you can'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're 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 tear 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 all your missiles do is draw attention. A group of three 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. 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 turns toward 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 remains active and armed.



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 plot to your destination?
- ◆ What mobility systems are you using? Legs, wheels, thrusters, something stranger?

EXAMPLES

CONTROLLED

Enemy forces closely monitor this area, but you could 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 move, 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. You're now a sitting duck for the enemy, 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 disapprove of 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 the narrow gap. As you clear the skyscrapers, you realize it met up with several other helicopters. 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 use a loader to subtly put stolen goods on a cargo vehicle, hopefully avoiding detection.

1-3 (Risky opportunity): One of the warehouse supervisors sees you 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 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 in front 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.

1-3 (worse Position): As you shift the ruins, you find a broken pipe inside of it. That's when the space begins to quickly fill with water. You move to a Desperate Position.

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

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*. You're also 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 as you scramble through. Take 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 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. However, your enemy may detect your probing and come for you.

1-3 (Risky opportunity): You sense an enemy vehicle scanning 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. However, a jamming array cuts off the rest of your sweep.

RISKY

Passive sensors alert you to several enemy vehicles as they activate around your squad. If you can't find them quickly, they'll easily ambush you.

1-3 (worse Position): The enemies rapidly come online, bursting from their concealed locations, surrounding you. You're now in a Desperate Position.

4/5 (complication): You discover where they are, but realize some of them are Piloting vehicles stolen from your Faction. It'll be hard to identify friend or foe until you sort it out.

DESPERATE

The heavily armored enemy AWW barrels towards you with a vicious, thrashing drill. 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. 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. You'll lose 3 Trust with your employer if you take advantage of its weak spot, as they would rather not have that information made public in any capacity.

VEHICLES IN THE WORLD

A vehicle is not an uncommon piece of equipment in Beam Saber. While many citizens can access 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. The following sections describe the story behind these vehicles.

LIGHT VEHICLES

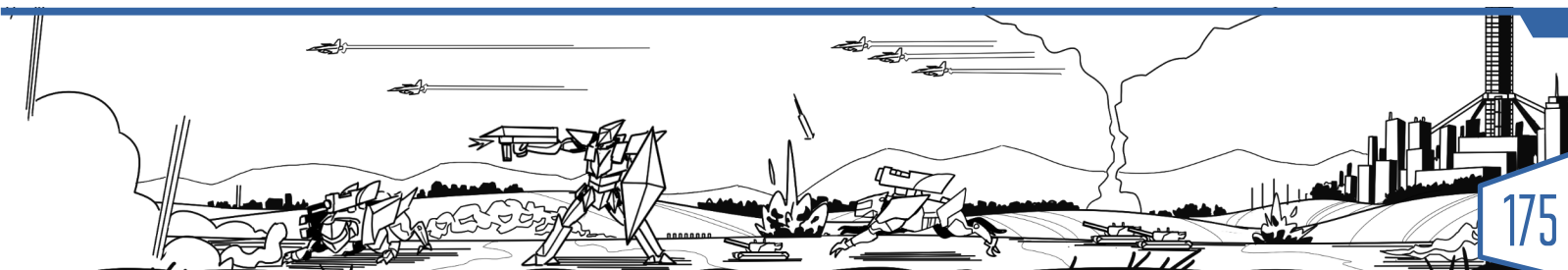
Light vehicles are generally about 30 feet in length or height, depending on the nature of the vehicle. Some are smaller, though all are designed so the Pilot remains entirely contained within the vehicle's cockpit. Although commonly larger than automobiles, Light vehicles aren't always conspicuous—especially 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

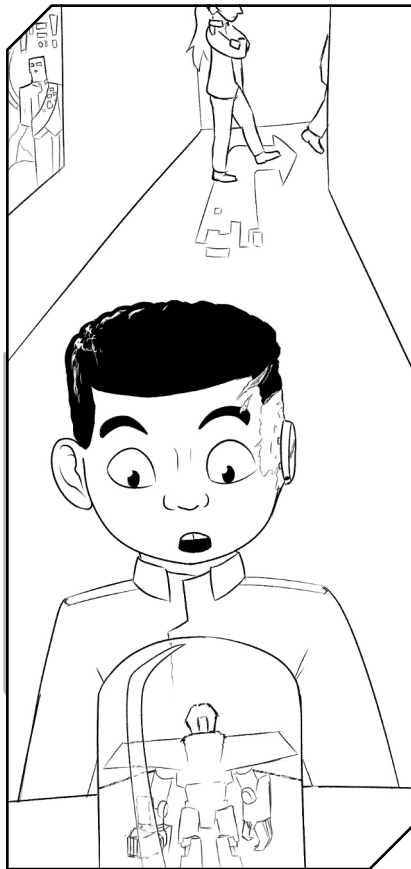
Medium vehicles average approximately 45 feet in length or height, give or take 5 feet. These are always notable when seen, and arouse curiosity from onlookers. The reactions to a Medium is comparable to the presence of a police command vehicle: It occupies a lot of space, physically and mentally. It's 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 requires a full crew proportionate to its size (putting it beyond the scope of this game). Heavies are always a sign that someone's day is about to be ruined. Unless presented in an exceedingly friendly manner, the general public gives Heavies a wide berth. Imagine a missile truck located in a public space—that gives an idea of how much a Heavy vehicle stands out.



THE HISTORY OF VEHICLES



Consider the relationship that characters have with the vehicles of Beam Saber, as it will color the nature of your campaign. Here are some questions to determine their place in your world. These are good questions for everyone to consider during character creation.

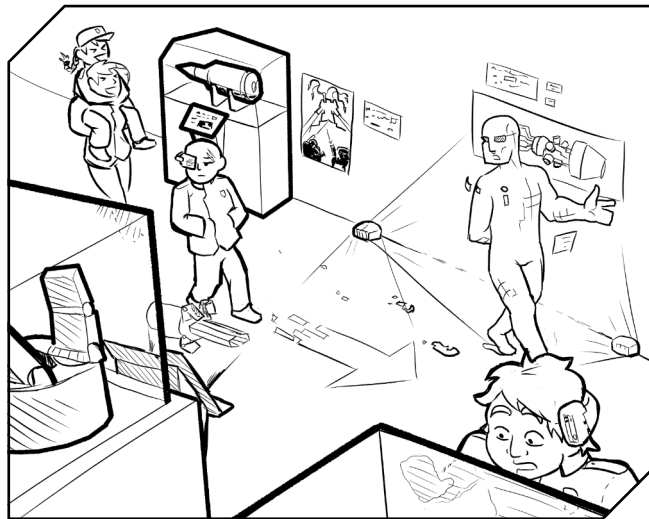
Are vehicles heirlooms passed down from parent to child?

In a culture where vehicles are inherited, through bloodlines or other tradition, it implies a number of expectations:

- ◆ Vehicles are incredibly valuable—monetarily, historically, and emotionally.
- ◆ Vehicles are an obvious symbol of wealth and power.
- ◆ Pilots are usually expected to provide their own vehicles when they join The War.
- ◆ The ruling body's military power, in turn, is dispersed amongst its citizens, or at least those powerful enough to own these vehicles.
- ◆ People with vehicles can access people with the skills to maintain them (further cementing their wealth).
- ◆ 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 must be salvaged from other vehicles.

Are vehicles fresh off the line?

If vehicles are made regularly, then a manufacturing base exists in the setting. Further, powerful organizations will use vehicles to maintain and expand their influence. Low ranking and inexperienced Pilots will have access to them. They may be used more frivolously, as they can be easily replaced.

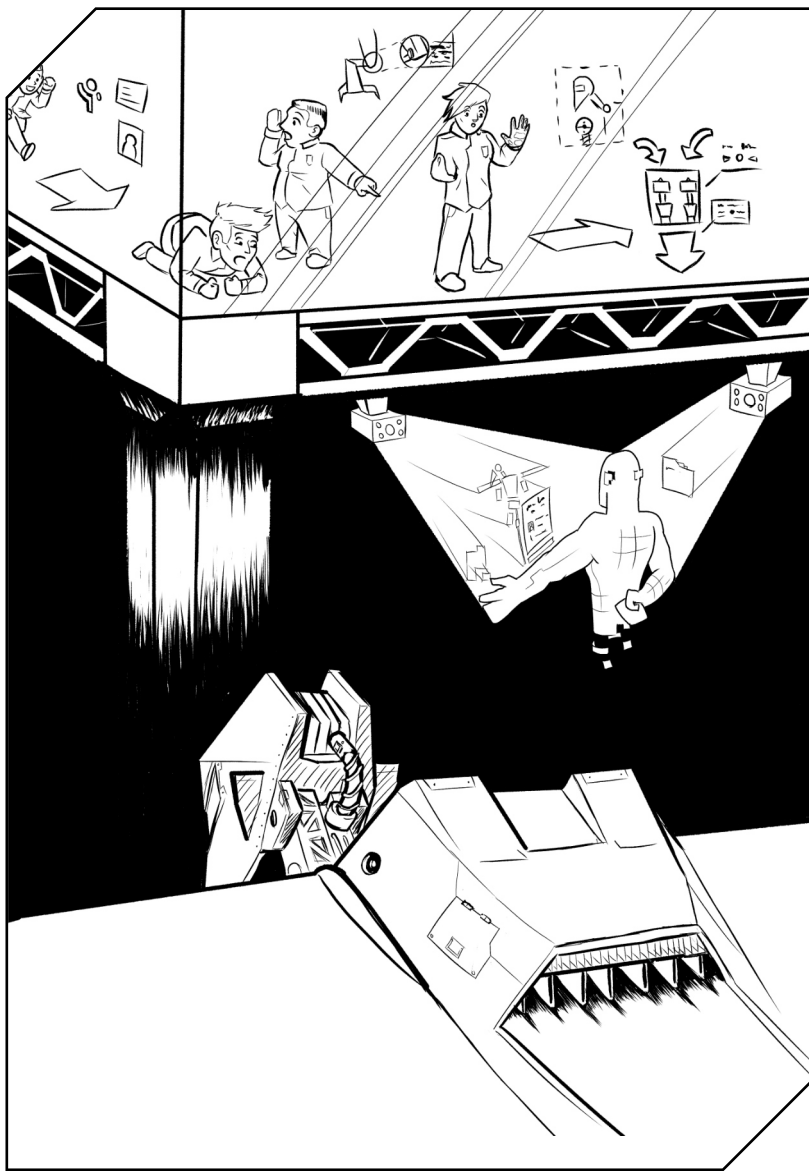


Are they seen as heroic, cowardly, monstrous or something else?

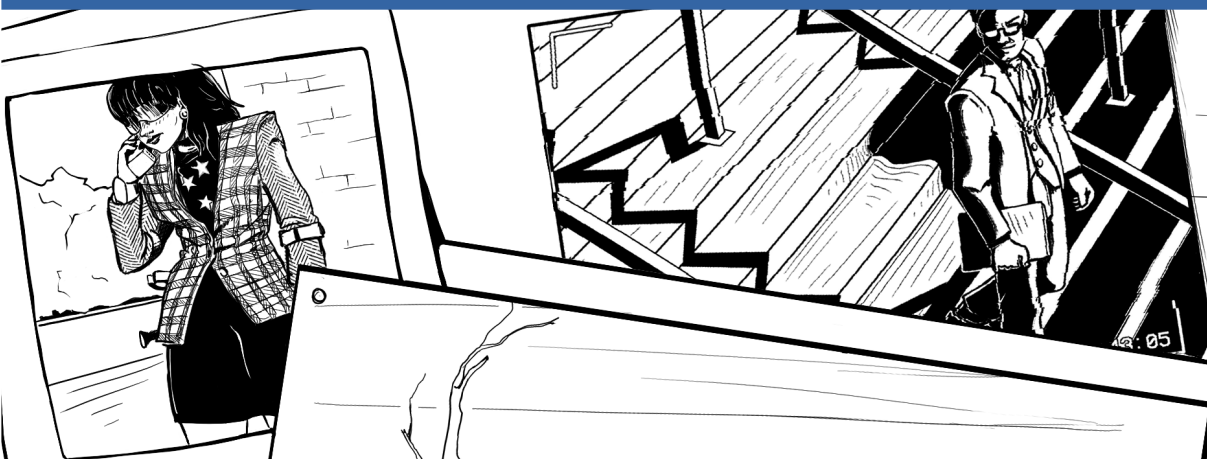
A culture in your campaign might portray those vehicles as the modern equivalent of chivalrous knights, valiantly fighting to protect the homeland. Perhaps others disdained them for taking the human element out of battle, becoming symbols of a world too eager to indulge in massive battles. Maybe their raw, destructive power is emphasized in the public's mind, so they become monsters—mechanical beasts that easily kill a person, accidentally or intentionally. Others may see vehicles as tools, as 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 new to The War, there will be more uncertainty about them. Commanders won't know how to make use of them, people won't know how dangerous they are, and certain parts may be difficult to obtain. If they've existed for a while, most of those problems will be absent—they'll have a rather mundane reputation.



7: SQUADS AND FACTIONS

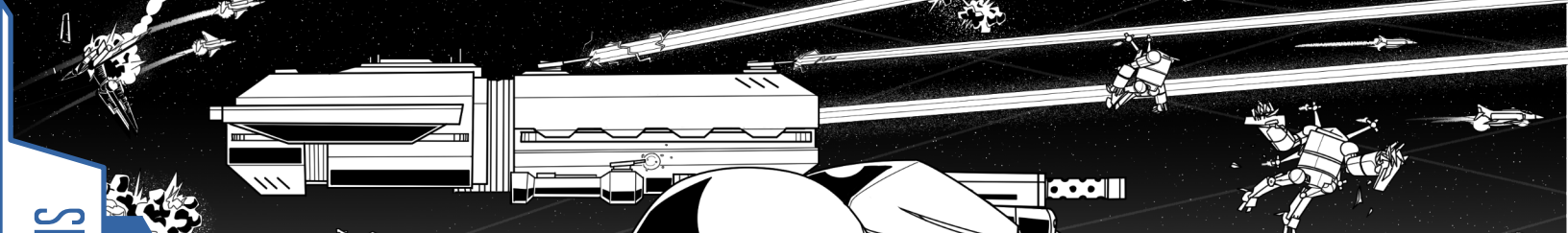


Name: CHEVALIER, EVA
 Alias: aka NEHALEMIA
 Date of Birth:
 Place of Birth:
 Height:
 Weight:
 Eyes:
 Hair:
 Scars/Tattoos:
 DATABASE

IT IS WANTED FOR HACKING YOUR DATABASE. YOU REALLY
 VIFICATION PROTOCOLS. IF YOU MANAGE TO FIND ME I'D BE
 IS FOR A REASONABLE FEE

TE TO ARRESTING AGENCY: r7g(12_0)r7g





SQUADS AND FACTIONS

PILOTS, SQUADS, AND FACTIONS

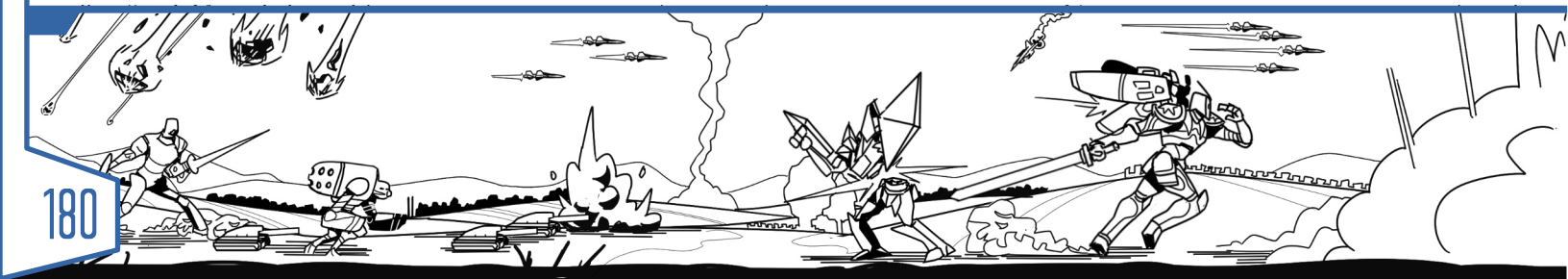
There are three levels of actors in *Beam Saber*: the Pilot, the squad, and the Faction.

- ◆ The **Pilot** is the individual role filled by the players and NPCs. Not all Pilots control vehicles, it's just common parlance for those active in The War. Generally speaking, a Pilot's influence doesn't extend much further than those they can personally engage. 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 made up of 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. A Faction can never be destroyed, but its squads can be removed, which eliminates its ability to act.

The Cenotaph is... my coworkers? Plus like, my dad? I don't know, it's a little weird. They're like, I feel like we're friends. Or at least friendly. We've got each other's backs in the middle of a gunfight even if we argue about stuff sometimes. It's... nice. It kinda reminds me of Layla and Hannah and me when we were little. The way we were close, even though there was sort of a "watching your back" kind of feeling with the orphanage and all. And with Harrow here it really does almost feel like a little family. Ugh. I don't know though. Maybe I'm just desperate to be around people who aren't just complete strangers these days. It's like everyone left because of The War and now I don't even know anyone in Hulinton anymore, not really.

Saying it like that isn't quite right though. Everyone didn't just up and leave. The Church of the Celestial Myriad swept in and dragged everyone away with it. Even though I didn't ask to be part of the Cenotaph, I do care about them. I would do a lot to keep them safe. I have done a lot, a lot that I'm not proud of. But I don't feel the same way about the Church. Why do I keep fighting for them? Why do I keep doing what they say?

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday



SQUAD CREATION

This section provides step-by-step directions for creating your squad. However, you can jump to Appendix B (page 416) if you want to randomly generate your squad in part or in whole.

1. Choose your squad's **patron Faction**. The Faction carries out goals to further its interests in The War (see Faction Goals, page 196), and determines what bonus supplies you get when you are employed by your Patron (see reward section, page 203). The possible options are:
 - ◆ **Autocracy** (+1 Materiel, +1 Trust with the employer at the mission reward)
 - ◆ **Corporatocracy** (+2 Materiel at the mission reward)
 - ◆ **Democracy** (+1 Materiel, +1 Personnel at the mission reward)
 - ◆ **Independent** (+2 Rep without a Supply Roll at the mission reward)
 - ◆ **Oligarchy** (+1 Personnel, +1 Trust with the employer at the mission reward)
 - ◆ **Theocracy** (+2 Personnel at the mission reward)

While the squad's patron Faction doesn't necessarily own the squad, it does expect them to follow its orders and work towards its interests. Note, working with an Independent Faction is intentionally more challenging than working with other Factions. Independents work against the established systems, and so lack the same institutional support.

2. Set your **Relationship** with each Faction to 0. They don't know or care about the squad 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 squad's **Direct Superior**. The GM will often use them to assign the squad's missions. Other squads also have a connection with them (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, so take -1 Status with them and describe the issue. See the Direct Superior section (page 184) for suggestions.
4. Choose a **goal for your patron Faction**. Consider the amount of politics, combat, and brutality everyone wants in the game, as well as themes they might want to explore. Independent squads skip this step. See the Faction goals section (page 196) for more details. The possible options are:

◆ Assault the Foe	◆ Hostile Takeover
◆ Divided They Fall	◆ Intelligence Coup
◆ Golden Streets	◆ Manufacture Heroes
◆ Hearts And Minds	◆ Secure the Borders
5. Choose a **squad playbook**. This determines the nature of most of your missions and some common training everyone in the squad has.
6. Choose an **initial squad reputation** and **Forward Operating Base (FOB)**. When you reinforce your squad's reputation on a mission, the squad marks 1 XP. 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 perform.

8. Choose **two Squad Upgrades**. These are tools, Personnel, and facilities. Each squad playbook has two pre-selected upgrades (for example, Profiteers always have Resolve Training and a Secure FOB). The squad also chooses two more upgrades from the squad playbook or from 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 could 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 know you by this name.
10. If the players haven't created their Pilots yet, begin **Pilot creation** (page 58).

SQUAD ADVANCEMENT

At the end of a session, look at the squad's XP triggers on the squad sheet. Take 1 squad XP for each item 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.** If you played into what makes your squad unique and interesting, take XP. Don't be too picky about awarding XP for this trigger.

When the squad reaches 8 XP, reset the XP to zero, and 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 changing playbooks:

- ◆ If the player or group realize their playbook doesn't fit what they want to do, they make the Pilot or squad from scratch, but keep the same number of earned advances.
- ◆ If the nature of the Pilot or squad changed in the narrative, 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 will probably interact the most with their **Direct Superior** out of all the other NPCs. This person will be higher rank than the Pilots, give them orders, and assign them missions. They should have a title suitable to the patron Faction, and a brief description of their appearance and personality. If the player's Pilots are Independent, their superior might be from another squad, a mysterious source, or someone else with unofficial authority over the Pilots.

Other squads also have relationships with the Direct Superior. One squad likes them, so you take +1 Status with that squad and add an appropriate descriptor during squad creation. Another squad dislikes the Direct Superior, so you take -1 Status with that squad and add an appropriate descriptor during squad creation.

The Direct Superior isn't there to boss around the squad. They're a representative of the squad's patron Faction, providing the link between the patron and the squad. They're also a way for the GM to give the players their mission brief. They should rarely be the focus of the narrative.

The Direct Superior might give an order or mission the Pilots or players don't want to carry out. Pause, and discuss what's happening and how to move forward. Check if the players are uncomfortable or uninterested in following the order, and adjust the order accordingly. If the players are okay, discuss why the Pilots are refusing it. The Pilots will sometimes find enough reason to go along with the order, other times they might refuse it, regardless of the consequences. Maybe it's just time to find a new patron Faction. Whatever happens, never pressure a player into something they don't want to do.

EXAMPLE DEMOCRACIES

Carberry, a shady and cruel fixer.

Scratch, a cheerful and energetic proxy.

Virtue de Quidt, an experienced and crafty noble.

Alderperson Drake, a fiery and passionate politician.

Captain Martinez, a weary and grumpy officer.

Bishop Acampora, a patient and caring member of the clergy.

Confessor Tebbel, an inquisitive and meticulous theologian.

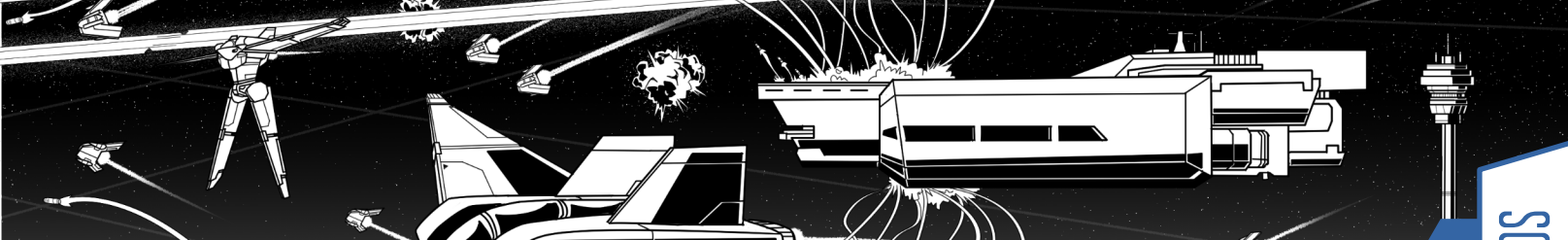
Councilor Swan, a hard-hearted, calculating bureaucrat.

Quartermaster Hawkins, a sentimental and thoughtful trooper.

Project Lead Walker, an ambitious and hardworking manager.

Executive Assistant McEvoy, a stressed and organized worker.

Margrave Takeyuki, a paranoid and meek leader.



FORWARD OPERATING BASE (FOB)

The Pilots spend most of their time between missions at their Forward Operating Base (or FOB). This is a compound that provides the squad with resources and support, and has relatively little oversight from the patron Faction. It's their home in The War.

The FOB's size and complexity increases as the squad increases their Tier and gains Squad Upgrades. When starting out from Tier 0, the FOB is small, unimpressive, probably run down, and has some upgrades (which the players determine during squad creation). The players describe where the FOB is located, and what the facility is like. 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 refueling station. Whatever sounds interesting to the players is an appropriate choice.

EXAMPLE FOBS

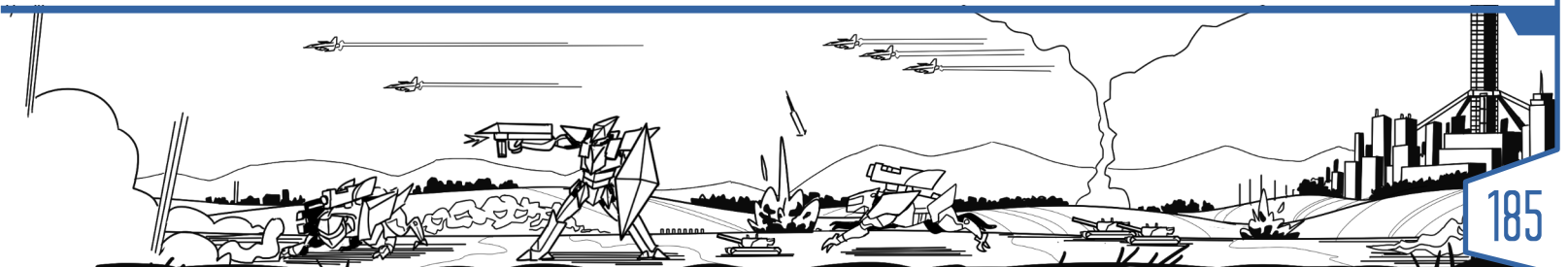
- Car Dealership
- Border Outpost
- Mine
- Old Armory
- Crashed Space Station
- Church
- Volcano
- Orbital Platform
- Forest
- Amusement Park

SQUAD REPUTATION

When a potential employer thinks of a squad, their reputation is the first thing that comes to mind. The squad's reputation should be a word or phrase that the squad already embodies or strives toward, but does not directly speak to their competence. "Skilled" is a bad reputation, try "Daring" instead. The squad gets XP at the end of session by living up to their reputation.

EXAMPLE SQUAD REPUTATIONS

- Ambitious
- Amoral
- Honorable
- Professional
- Menacing
- Daring
- Savvy
- Subtle
- Strange
- Destructive



GENERAL SQUAD UPGRADES

A Squad Upgrade is a location or piece of infrastructure with beneficial features. They make great narrative fodder and give Pilots mechanical benefits or resources to help with their efforts in The War. During a campaign, players may secure extra Upgrades each time they complete the squad XP track—taken from either the general list or squad playbook.

Whenever the squad takes an Upgrade, describe how the FOB or nearby area looks or changes as a result. It'll make the FOB feel real and homey (as homey as one can get in The War).

- ◆ Were new buildings added to the FOB, or old buildings modified?
- ◆ How has the change affected 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, they're just to get you started. Take your time talking about the FOB's changes, it'll help set the stage for when there's a conflict at the base. For example, if the players described their Factory Upgrade as being a nearby manufacturing plant (separate from the FOB), then it doesn't make sense to have a tense chase at the FOB across the factory's conveyor belts.

GETTING UPGRADES WITHOUT XP

Players don't need to rely on XP to get Upgrades. They can embark on a mission or complete a suitable Long-Term Project to secure a Squad Upgrade. As a group, discuss how you might acquire the Upgrade—Pilots will likely need to prepare by gathering information or completing some preliminary Long-Term Projects or a setup mission. When the squad completes their preparation, they can go on that mission or finish that final Long-Term Project with the objective of securing the Squad Upgrade. If successful, the squad immediately gains access to the Upgrade's benefits.

For example, if the Upgrade is outside the FOB's region, Pilots may need to complete additional tasks before attempting to capture the Upgrade. These tasks might involve gathering information on the Upgrade, a mission or Long-Term Project to secure a route between the Upgrade and the FOB, or establishing security at the site.

But keep in mind that The War has everyone stretched thin. Only one squad may use an Upgrade at one time, so you can't share with another squad even if you're on friendly terms. It also means the players' Pilots and other squads alike may attempt to access an Upgrade through force, coercion, negotiation, or by building one themselves.

An Upgrade's safety is never guaranteed. Other squads may attempt to capture Upgrades for themselves, or destroy them if they're desperate enough. The squad can defend their Upgrade, negotiate with the aggressor, or simply hand over the Upgrade as the situation requires. If the squad's FOB is lost, they lose all Squad Upgrade benefits until the FOB is re-established.

GENERAL SQUAD UPGRADE LIST

The following Upgrades are available to any squad, regardless of their type.



COHORTS

- **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 193 for more details.
- **Training Course:** Choose a type of fire team. All of your Cohorts are that type in addition to their normal type. Now there's never a shortage of Pilots.
- **Barracks:** Choose one of your fire team Cohorts. It gets +1 Scale. Extra room means larger fire teams.

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 infiltration.
- **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.
- **Supercomputer:** You get +1d to the engagement roll for scientific plans. It's running simulations for you.



GENERAL

- **Hidden FOB:** The squad's FOB is hidden from even intensive searches. If it's discovered, complete a Long-Term Project to once again conceal it.
- **Lighthouse Satellite:** A safe passage in space. When you head into the dark and can contact this satellite, you'll never become lost.
- **Quarters:** Your FOB has comfortable sleeping space for everyone. Otherwise, the squad's Pilots sleep away from the FOB in vulnerable locations.
- **Transmitter Array:** -1 Stress cost for 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.
- **Secure FOB:** Your FOB has perimeter defenses, such as automated turrets, trip wire explosives, or a sturdy wall. These defenses help protect your squad against attacks while at home. This Upgrade can be taken twice, with the defenses becoming more effective with the second Upgrade.
- **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

- **CCTV Network:** You get +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:** You get +1d to Sway rolls on site. Silks, paintings, and crystal impress the clientele.
- **Private Office:** You get +1d to Command rolls on site. Sitting behind a big desk gives an air of authority.
- **Radar Station:** You get +1d to Scan rolls on site. Tapping into a much larger sensor array gives you the advantage.
- **Tunnels:** You get +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 Pilot may uninstall a piece of gear at the start of the mission for free, opening up a Load slot. It's easy to swap parts with the automated arrangement of catwalks and cranes.
- **Scrapyard:** You get +1d to rolls that refresh Quirks. 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. 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 Relationship. 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 the 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 Relationship. 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 eight 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 of your various spoils gained from battle. It can be useful on its own, or for barter when you need it.

TRAINING

- **Mastery:** Unlocks 4th action points. Requires four 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 (Playbook):** When taking the Train downtime activity for your Pilot playbook, take 2 XP instead of 1. A space that has tools suitable to your trade, allowing you to practice the tricks in your playbook.
- **Training (Insight):** When taking the Train downtime activity for Insight, take 2 XP instead of 1. A space for deep thought, to let you hone your insight.
- **Training (Prowess):** When taking the Train downtime activity for Prowess, take 2 XP instead of 1. A space that lets you freely exercise your prowess.
- **Training (Resolve):** When taking the Train downtime activity for Resolve, take 2 XP instead of 1. A space that allows you to steel yourself and focus your resolve.

HEART

Heart represents the support and control your squad has over areas where they operate. You gain Heart by acquiring the Public Works Squad Upgrade. Heart makes it easier for squads to increase their Hold and Tier. For each point of Heart, the squad requires one fewer point of Rep to develop (up to a maximum of 6 Heart). If the squad has 3 Heart, they only need 9 points of Rep to increase Hold or Tier. Heart doesn't reset when you spend Rep to develop the squad, letting you quickly improve the squad, though it can decrease if the Public Works Squad Upgrade is lost.

TIER AND HOLD

Every notable squad has a Tier that indicates its size, renown, and power, and either "weak" or "strong" Hold. Tier is measured using Roman numerals from 0 (lowest) to V (highest). Hold shows how well a squad can maintain its current position on the ladder. If you lose your weak Hold, you'll slip down a Tier, so watch out. A "W" next to the squad's Tier indicates weak Hold, and an "S" indicates strong Hold.

The lowest possible Tier for an NPC squad is Tier I, but the players' squad starts at Tier 0-S. However, it's possible for Tier I NPC squads to become Tier 0 during play.

Tier generally determines a squad's level of resources. Players use their squad's Tier when acquiring assets and making fortune rolls where success depends on the squad's resources and fame. The squad's Tier also determines the Quality of a squad's items, as well as the Quality and Scale of their Cohorts. A squad's Tier can also guide the narrative in terms of resources and its membership.

When a fire team is deployed, their Scale by Tier is as follows:

- ▶ 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

Rep moves a squad up the ranks and is a measure of clout, renown, and resources. 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 track on your squad sheet. When you fill the Rep track, choose one of the following:

- ◆ If your Hold is **weak** (represented by a "W" after the Tier value), it becomes **strong** (represented by an "S" after the Tier value). Reset your Rep to zero.
- ◆ If your Hold is **strong**, you can pay to increase your squad's Tier by one. Spend Personnel and Materiel equal to the squad's new Tier times 4. For example, a squad must spend 8 Personnel and 8 Materiel to become Tier II (Tier II x 4 = 8 of each resource type). You must spend equal amounts Personnel and Materiel (so no spending 10 Personnel and 6 Materiel for Tier II). As long as your Rep track 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.

If an event (such as an Entanglement) would reduce Rep below zero, it instead stops at zero.

When your Tier increases, the squad experiences several changes.

- ◆ Higher quality items. The Quality of items is equal to the squad's Tier.
- ◆ More dice on fortune rolls. When using the squad's Tier for a fortune roll where its power and notoriety are paramount, roll a number of dice equal to the Tier.
- ◆ Bigger and better Cohorts. The scale and Quality of the squad's fire teams and specialists increases to the new Tier.

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. To create a Cohort:

1 Choose to make a fire team or a specialist.	
FIRE TEAM (Fire teams have Quality and scale equal to the squad's Tier)	SPECIALIST (A specialist has Quality equal to the squad's Tier+1 and a 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 have any type of specialty. Doctor, Assassin, Chemist, Sniper, and Navigator are all acceptable (but are far from the only options)
3 Choose 1-2 Edges for the Cohort... ...and as many Flaws as it has Edges.	
► 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)	► 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, 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 specialty and the squad's playbook. A Pilot can acquire an asset during downtime to give Cohorts access to a vehicle or a different type of vehicle. The squad ability "Motor Pool" also grants Cohorts the same access. Cohort vehicles have Load equal to the Cohort's Tier if it becomes relevant.

USING A COHORT

Pilots can either work alongside a Cohort, send them on tasks alone, or Command them to do tasks alone—each provides different benefits and challenges. If a Cohort tackles a problem alone within their expertise, roll its Quality to determine the outcome. If the task 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 a roll with the Cohort's Scale and Quality affecting the Position and Effect. Any of these rolls can be an action roll or a fortune roll as is appropriate to the fiction.

Demon is working a mission alongside a fire team of Toughs belonging to his Tier I squad. His scanners show that some enemy infantry are trying to flank him through an empty school. He sends the Toughs into the school, trusting in their ability to sort it out.

Demon could leave the Toughs to it—they'd roll the squad's Tier (1d) because they'd be acting independently within their expertise. But instead, he gives them orders over the radio while he handles the frontline foe—letting him roll Command (2d) instead. Unfortunately, he gets less than a 6 on his roll; it isn't enough to win the fight in the school.

After dealing with the frontline threat, Demon gets the Toughs' request for backup. He moves into the school on foot and joins the conflict alongside them. Now that he's fighting with them, he rolls his Struggle action (2d) and adds the Toughs' Scale to his roll. The Toughs let Demon fight on equal footing, so they improve the 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 each downtime phase. A Pilot can spend a downtime action to help them Recover, which heals the Cohort an additional level of Harm.

A Cohort can be reformed if destroyed. The squad spends Personnel Points equal to the squad's Tier + 2 to restore it, and 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 suits the narrative and tone of your game. A singular instance of mistreatment is likely tolerable, but a second (and certainly a third) may have them looking to make a change.

If appropriate, the GM will make a 4-Tick Clock representing when the Cohort will retaliate. Add 1 or 2 Ticks (depending on severity) each time a Pilot mistreats a Cohort. For each Tick added, the Cohort retaliates in increasingly dramatic fashion. Here are some examples of how a Cohort could retaliate:

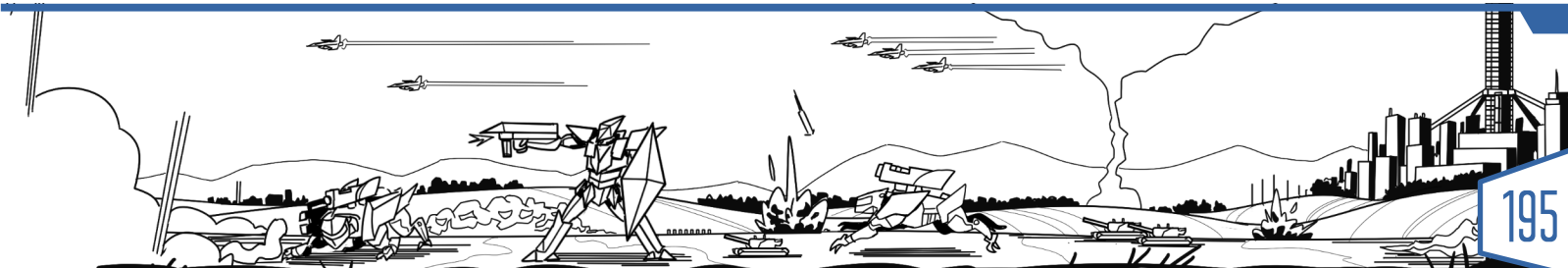


- ◆ **Grumbling:** The Cohort complains about the mistreatment to other NPCs of similar social status. This could be a fire team's members complaining to each other.
- ◆ **"A word, sir":** The Cohort speaks candidly about the mistreatment to someone in a position of authority. This may be a Pilot who has not mistreated them, but may also be the squad's Direct Superior.
- ◆ **Work to Rule:** The Cohort does the bare minimum. Maybe they don't work overtime to fix the squad's vehicles, or maybe 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 their mistreatment.
- ◆ **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 is severe enough, the Cohort will 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 is no longer an asset.

Mending the relationship with a mistreated Cohort requires a Long-Term Project. The more aggrieved the Cohort is, the more Ticks the project will have. Completing the project should involve dealing with the Cohort's demands and addressing the mistreatment. Or you could just cycle out the current fire team for fresh faces who don't know about the abuse they're about to encounter.

The squad can dismiss the Cohort if the retaliation becomes too much (or if the squad just doesn't like a Cohort). Remove the Cohort from the squad sheet. The squad does not gain a replacement Cohort or Upgrades of equivalent value; those resources are lost. Of course, the squad can pick up a new Cohort the usual way in the future.

Cohorts may hold a grudge if things ended on a sour note. Depending on how unhappy the Cohort was when dismissed and the manner of their dismissal, they may return to make the Pilots suffer.



FACTION GOALS

Each Faction has a current strategic goal that will help secure their path of dominance in The War—including the Pilots' patron Faction. The players and GM discuss which Faction goal makes sense for their patron Faction to have at the start of the game. Consider the amount of politics, combat, and brutality everyone is comfortable with when making this decision, as well as the themes everyone might want to explore. Each Faction's current goal is represented by a 4-Tick Clock.

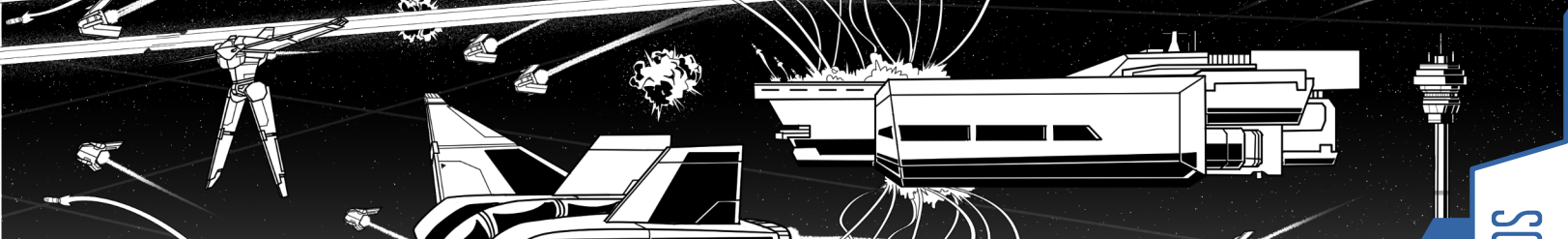
The Pilots will likely work toward their patron Faction's goal during missions. If they successfully advanced the patron Faction's goal, they add one Tick to the Clock at the end of the mission. No matter how hard or how often the squad works towards the Faction goal, getting it done in a single mission isn't possible.

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 War's current situation and select a new and different goal, as each goal can only be completed once.

When a Faction's goal is fulfilled, every squad they currently patronize gains the appropriate benefit. But squads that leave a patron Faction also lose the benefits gained from completing that Faction's goals. Likewise, squads who join a patron Faction gain access to any benefits from completed goals.

Of course, Pilots can expect non-patron Factions to achieve their own goals and benefits during a campaign. The GM will describe the sweeping changes the Pilots hear about when non-patron Factions complete their goals. Be careful, going up against these Factions will alter a Pilot's Position and Effect on certain action rolls.





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.

ASSAULT THE FOE

Soften up a specific enemy-held region in preparation for capture. You could brazenly attack that region, cut the area off from reinforcements, gain 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. You could plant false orders and intelligence, disrupt communications, pit enemies against each other, etc.

BENEFIT: 4D CHESS

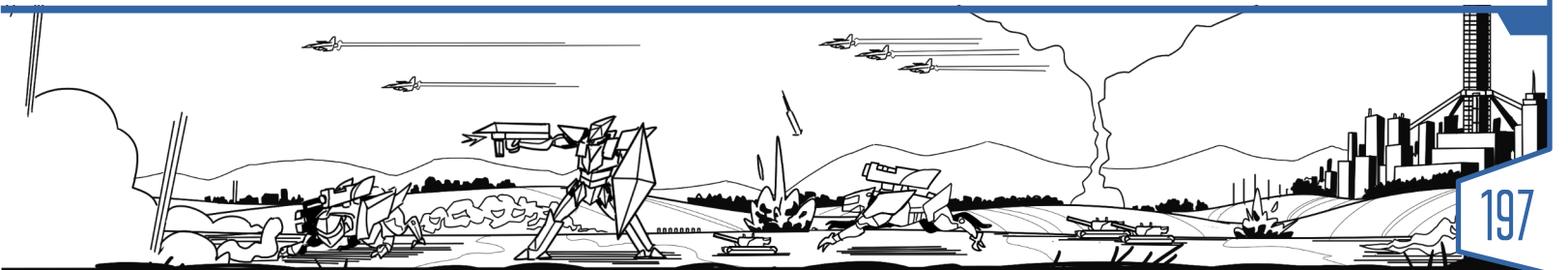
You and your Faction's agents synergize to pull off incredible feats of manipulation. Once per mission, a Pilot can manipulate an active Clock. Describe how you manipulated the situation to your benefit. The Pilot may spend up to 3 Stress to move that many Ticks into any other Clocks. If the Clock being emptied has a negative outcome when filled, then the Ticks can only be transferred to Clocks that also have a negative outcome. If the Clock being emptied has a positive outcome when filled, then the Ticks can only be transferred to Clocks that also have a positive outcome.

HEARTS AND MINDS

Change the popular opinion of a Faction in a manner that benefits your patron Faction. You could protect the populace from marauders in your patron's name, publicize the corruption of an enemy Faction, shift musical tastes in support of your patron, etc.

BENEFIT: RECRUITMENT DRIVE

People acknowledge 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.



GOLDEN STREETS

Improve the patron Faction's supply situation. It could mean 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. If each Pilot who participated in the mission spends 1 Stress (Pilots cannot spend Stress on behalf of other squadmates), roll the mission's Supply Roll again, and the squad keeps the higher result. You may perform this benefit after the initial roll if you wish. This does not apply to the Bureaucrat's Cook the Books ability.

HOSTILE TAKEOVER

Deny the enemy supplies. You could block imports, destroy infrastructure, turn 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 are wearing 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 I squads become strong Tier 0).

MANUFACTURE HEROES

Act against a specific squad at least 2 Tiers higher than the players' squad. You could attack regions controlled by that squad, deny that squad's mission objectives, lure 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. You could remove enemy agents acting within the patron Faction, weaken neighboring regions, construct defenses, etc.

BENEFIT: NANO LAMINATE ARMOR

Molecule-thin layers of ceramic-alloy composite are electro magnetically bonded to each other, creating 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.

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 these things are abstracted into the catch-all term: "Supply Points." Your squad gets 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. The different subtypes are Materiel and Personnel. Each type of Supply Point has its own uses: Materiel keeps vehicles and infrastructure working (see next page for its uses), and Personnel represents the labor and supplies required for completing missions (see next page for its uses). But importantly, both Personnel and Materiel are needed to increase the squad's Tier (see squad development on page 192).

A squad can store 4 of each Supply Point handy in its FOB initially. However, the Storage Upgrade increases the amount to 8 and then 16. Any excess Supply Points must be spent during downtime; your superiors acquire anything leftover, and it disappears. The following table illustrates how resources scale with Supply Points:

AMOUNT	EQUIVALENCY
1 Supply Point (SP)	A week's pay for a blue collar worker. Possibly a week's worth of rationed material on the black market.
2 SP	The weekly income of a small business; a full tailored outfit; a fine weapon; an exquisite luxury item.
4 SP	A blue collar worker's monthly income; the full cost of an older used vehicle.
5 SP	High end jewelry; a briefcase full of contraband.
8 SP	A strong monthly profit for a small business; a rare luxury commodity.
10 SP	A significant asset; a luxury vehicle; a small piece of property.

MATERIEL

Materiel represents everything necessary to keep a squad's vehicles running, if not operating at optimal levels. Materiel is used to:

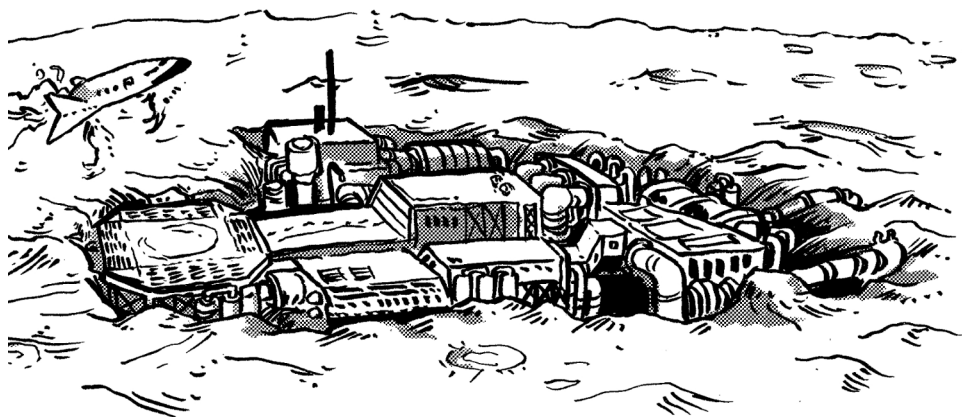
- ▶ Take an additional Acquire Asset, Enhance, Fix, Manufacture, Salvage, or Upkeep downtime activity by spending 1 Materiel.
- ▶ Add +1d to an Acquire Asset, Fix, Manufacture, or Salvage downtime activity, or increase the result by 1 level.
- ▶ Uninstall vehicle Load slots during downtime (this does not expend a downtime activity).
- ▶ Acquire new vehicles.
- ▶ Take the Upkeep downtime activity, add +1d to the Upkeep activity, or increase the result by 1 point.
- ▶ Increase the squad's Tier (see the squad development section on page 192).
- ▶ 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

Personnel represents the various forms of labor 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 by 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 a mix of both.
- ▶ Add +1d to a gather information roll.
- ▶ Increase the squad's Tier (see the squad development section on page 192).
- ▶ 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).

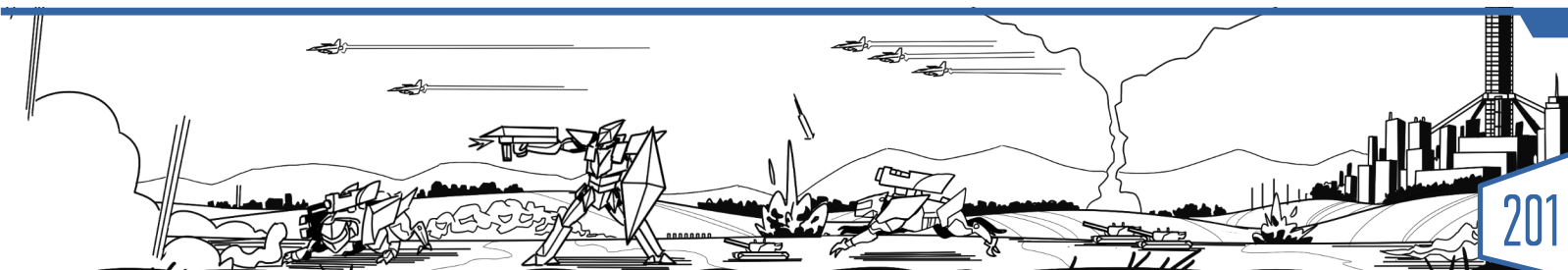
The squad cannot use Supply Points during downtime if the fiction indicates they wouldn't have access to them (because their FOB is lost, they are on an extended campaign behind enemy lines, they are doing back-to-back missions without a chance to resupply, etc.). Fixing the problem in the fiction will restore access to the squad's Supply Points.



WHAT ABOUT MONEY?

All Factions use electronic currency organized by centralized servers, and this works well for most people living under them. Those living outside of the Factions deal almost exclusively in cash, unless they frequently work within a Faction's financial ecosystem. The term "cash" stuck around to mean assets that might be exchanged for goods or services, but aren't easily traced by Factions.

The players don't track a Pilot or squad's day-to-day expenditures. If a Pilot needs a small amount to achieve a small goal (nice clothes, bribe a bureaucrat, have specific furniture), use the squad's Tier for a fortune roll. They'll need to spend Personnel or Materiel for large purchases.



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, STATUS, and RELATIONSHIPS**. 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

When you complete a mission, you get several benefits. Follow this procedure to resolve the squad's rewards. Each step is then explained in full below.

1. If the mission was successful, take a Supply Roll from the employer Faction. Roll dice equal to the Target's Tier + the employer's Faction Relationship, to a minimum of zero (roll 2d and take the lowest). Gain Supply Points equal to the highest die. A critical success grants 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 make a Supply Roll.
2. Add your employer Faction's supply bonus to your squad's resources:
 - ◆ **Autocracy:** +1 Materiel, +1 Trust with the Employer
 - ◆ **Corporatocracy:** +2 Materiel
 - ◆ **Democracy:** +1 Personnel, +1 Materiel
 - ◆ **Independent:** +2 Rep
 - ◆ **Oligarchy:** +1 Personnel, +1 Trust with the Employer
 - ◆ **Theocracy:** +2 Personnel
3. The squad earns 2 Rep. If the mission target was higher Tier than the squad, take additional +1 Rep per Tier higher. If the target 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're wasted.
5. Each Pilot checks to see if they did something that furthers their drive. If they did, they add 1 Tick to a Drive Clock.
6. Every Pilot can spend Materiel then roll dice to refresh Quirks equal to the highest result. Every Pilot removes all level 1 Harm, and every vehicle removes all level 1 Damage.
7. If the mission supported the patron Faction's goal, add 1 Tick to the goal's Clock. If the Clock is filled, all squads patronized by the Faction gain a benefit, then choose a new patron Faction goal.

STEP 1: SUPPLY ROLL

You get resupply from the Faction you worked for (with the exception of Independent employers) using the Supply Roll. First, calculate the Supply Roll's dice pool:

- ◆ On a successful mission, take a number of dice equal to your employer's Faction Relationship + the Tier of the mission's target (to a minimum of 0).
- ◆ On a failed mission, take a -2d penalty (minimum 0) to the Supply Roll.

Roll your dice pool to get your resupply. Gain Supply Points equal to the highest die (or if the dice pool is 0, roll 2d and take the lowest). On a critical success, take 9 Supply Points instead—you never know what HQ can spare.

Skip the Supply Roll for Independent missions (including missions organized by the players' squad), unless the GM decides otherwise. Independent employers don't have the same resources as other Factions.

There may be situations where the Pilots complete a mission for a Faction without the promise of payment, likely because they are being coerced into accepting the job. The GM must tell the players when planning the mission if they will not get a Supply Roll as part of the reward.

The Cenotaph, a Celestial Myriad squad, just finished a mission where they returned 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 transported corpses. With the bombs defused and the Dark Room agents apprehended, the mission was a success.

The Cenotaph get a Supply Roll, as they completed a Faction's mission. The squad have a +1 Relationship with their employer (the Jovangellian Empire), and the mission targeted was a Tier II squad (the Dark Room). They roll 3d (2 for target's Tier and 1 for employer Relationship) and take the highest die. The highest is a 5, so they get that many Supply Points.

STEP 2: SUPPLY BONUS

Your employer gives you some extra compensation for your efforts, depending on the Faction. This bonus applies for both patron and non-patron employing Factions:

- ◆ **Autocracy:** +1 Materiel, +1 Trust with the Employer
- ◆ **Corporatocracy:** +2 Materiel
- ◆ **Democracy:** +1 Personnel, +1 Materiel
- ◆ **Independent:** +2 Rep
- ◆ **Oligarchy:** +1 Personnel, +1 Trust with the Employer
- ◆ **Theocracy:** +2 Personnel

Since they worked for the Jovangellian Empire (an Autocracy) they also get +1 Materiel and +1 Trust with them.

STEP 3: EARN REP

The squad earns **2 Rep** for the mission, whether it resulted in triumph or defeat. If the target was higher Tier than your squad, take an extra +1 Rep per Tier higher. If the target was a lower Tier than your squad, take -1 Rep per Tier lower (minimum zero). If you keep the operation completely quiet, you earn zero Rep. Mark Rep on the squad sheet's Rep track. If you fill the track, you may spend it on a squad advance (see Tier and Hold on page 191).

The Cenotaph get 2 Rep for the Mission. They also earn an additional 1 Rep because they are Tier I and their target, the Dark Room, is Tier II. The mission was definitely not hidden, so they gain a total of 3 Rep.

STEP 4: ASSIGN SUPPLY POINTS

Your squad will get Supply Points in steps 1 and 2, however Supply Points can't be used themselves; they must be converted to Personnel or Materiel at the start of downtime activities.

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.

STEP 5: CHECK DRIVES

Each Pilot checks their drive. If they took steps toward it, they can add 1 Tick to a Drive Clock. See page 68 for more information on Drives.

STEP 6: FREE UPKEEP AND HEAL HARM

Your squad has enough experience and resources to patch up minor scrapes and scuffs without spending downtime activities. Any Pilot may spend an amount of Materiel, then roll that many dice. Their vehicle refreshes a number of Quirks equal to the highest result. Pilots remove all level 1 Harm. Vehicles remove all level 1 Damage. Cohorts may heal one level of Harm if the environment is suitable for healing.

STEP 7: ADJUST THE GOAL CLOCK

If the mission supported the squad's patron Faction's current goal, add a Tick to the goal's Clock. If the Clock fills, the Faction and all its patronized squads gain the goal's benefit. Then choose a new goal for the patron Faction (see the list on page 196). Skip this step if the squad completed a mission for a non-patron Faction.

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. During the mission, Tower 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 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. 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 still costs Materiel. Since they only need a 3 or higher to refresh all their Quirks, both of their players spend 1 Materiel to roll 1d each. Dredge gets a 4, refreshing all of cor 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 she'll just avoid using Quirks on the next mission. Additionally all Pilots remove any level 1 Harm they have, and their vehicles remove all level 1 Damage.

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. However, they might be able to find another use for the captives if they hold onto them...

STATUS AND TRUST

Status measures the Relationship between the Pilots' squad and other squads. Adjust the squad's Status with other squads at the end of each mission, using the following procedure. See page 209 for how Status influences these relationships.

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 (see page 210 for examples).

After assessing Status, the players' squad adjusts their Trust with Factions impacted by the mission. Trust measures the relationship between your squad and the huge Factions manipulating The War. Assess Trust at the end of a mission, unless the mission was quiet. On quiet missions where the results can't be traced to your squad, skip the procedure below (instead, lose only 1 Trust with the target as rumors slowly filter back to the them). If the mission was loud or noticeable, follow the procedure below to adjust Trust between the squad and the Factions affected by the mission. The Trust with your employer Faction also changes. Adjust Trust with the employer Faction 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 (and they were 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. Regardless of the Faction that employed you, apply the following Trust modifiers to your patron Faction in addition to the table above.

- ◆ You aided another Faction. **(-1 Trust)**
- ◆ The patron's interests were harmed. **(-2 Trust)**

When your Trust reaches 9, your Relationship with that Faction goes up by 1, the Trust rolls over back to 1, and any remaining Trust is then added.

If Trust reaches 0, your Relationship with that Faction goes down by 1, the Trust rolls over to 8, and any remaining Trust is then subtracted.

1. 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**

2. Adjust the Trust of the Faction that employed the squad for the mission.

- ◆ Civilians died. **-1 Trust**
- ◆ The Rules of Engagement (ROE) were 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**

3. Adjust the Trust of the squad's patron Faction.

- ◆ Another Faction was aided. **-1 Trust**
- ◆ Your Patron's interests were harmed. **-2 Trust**

4. Adjust Faction Relationships.

- ◆ When Trust reaches 9, that Faction's Relationship gets +1. Trust rolls over to 1, and any remaining Trust is then added.
- ◆ When Trust reaches zero, that Faction's Relationship gets -1, Trust rolls over to 8, and any remaining Trust is then subtracted.

SQUAD RELATIONSHIPS

The players' squad has a Status rating with every other squad and a Relationship with every Faction, indicating how much they like or hate them. Status and Relationship 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 groups, 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

NPC squads that have a positive Status will have different expectations of the Pilots based on the difference between both groups' Tiers. An NPC squad with a higher Tier expects deference from the Pilots, and may be willing to provide protection. An equal Tier means they'll provide the Pilots with support both on and off the battlefield, and they expect requests of a similar nature based on their Status. Lower Tier squads will seek protection from the Pilots, but may not know how they can help in return.

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 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 squad's nature. 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
Tidy
Amoral
Backpfeifengesicht
Aggravating
Zealous
Strained
Effective
Soft
Cheap
Mighty
Honorless

FACTION RELATIONSHIP

Developing Relationships and renown with larger organizations takes time and effort. A Faction's Relationship with the players' Pilots only changes after Trust has filled up or been sufficiently reduced. But when you get a Faction's attention, rest assured they could bring the weight of multiple squads down on 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.

The Faction's Relationship with the squad informs the way average citizens and the state apparatus of a Faction reacts to the squad, too. If the Relationship is positive, the Pilots may be seen as a good influence in the course of The War, and (if it's strong enough) possibly heroes. A negative Relationship makes citizens wary of the squad, and they may form a violent mob if the Relationship is low enough.

The squad's Relationship with a Faction might differ from its Status with other squads within the Faction's control. Squads may hold their own opinions, beliefs, and values separate to their patron Faction. These differing Relationships represent how those at the top treat you when they give you orders, and whether the squads you meet will respectfully follow them, follow them with suspicion or derision, or disregard them entirely.

The Cenotaph have a -2 Relationship with the Jovangellian Empire, but a +3 Status with The Hyenas, a Jovangellian squad. They know the Jovangellian Empire have orders out to kill or capture The Cenotaph, but The Hyenas like them enough to not only ignore those orders, but also actively hide The Cenotaph if needed.

Lastly, Faction Relationship affects Supply Rolls (see page 204) and entanglements (see page 214). More positive Relationships with employer Factions mean a better chance at additional Supply Points and less damaging entanglements. A negative Relationship with the Faction targeted by the most recent mission increases the severity of entanglements.

TRUST

Trust monitors the incremental change in Relationship between the squad and the Factions. Losing or gaining a little Trust doesn't draw much attention. However, lose or gain too much Trust, and it'll change your overall Relationship with a Faction. If the squad hits 9 Trust, they gain a level of Relationship with that Faction. If they hit 0 Trust with a Faction, the squad loses a level of Relationship with that Faction.

The Cenotaph complete a mission for their patron Faction. It didn't go so well, and the squad end up losing 3 Trust with their patron Faction. The Cenotaph's current Trust with them is 2. They remove 3 Trust and hit 0! They lower their Relationship with their patron Faction from 2 to 1. They then reset Trust to 8 and reduce it down to 7 for that 1 remaining Trust. It's not a huge deal, but tensions are growing.

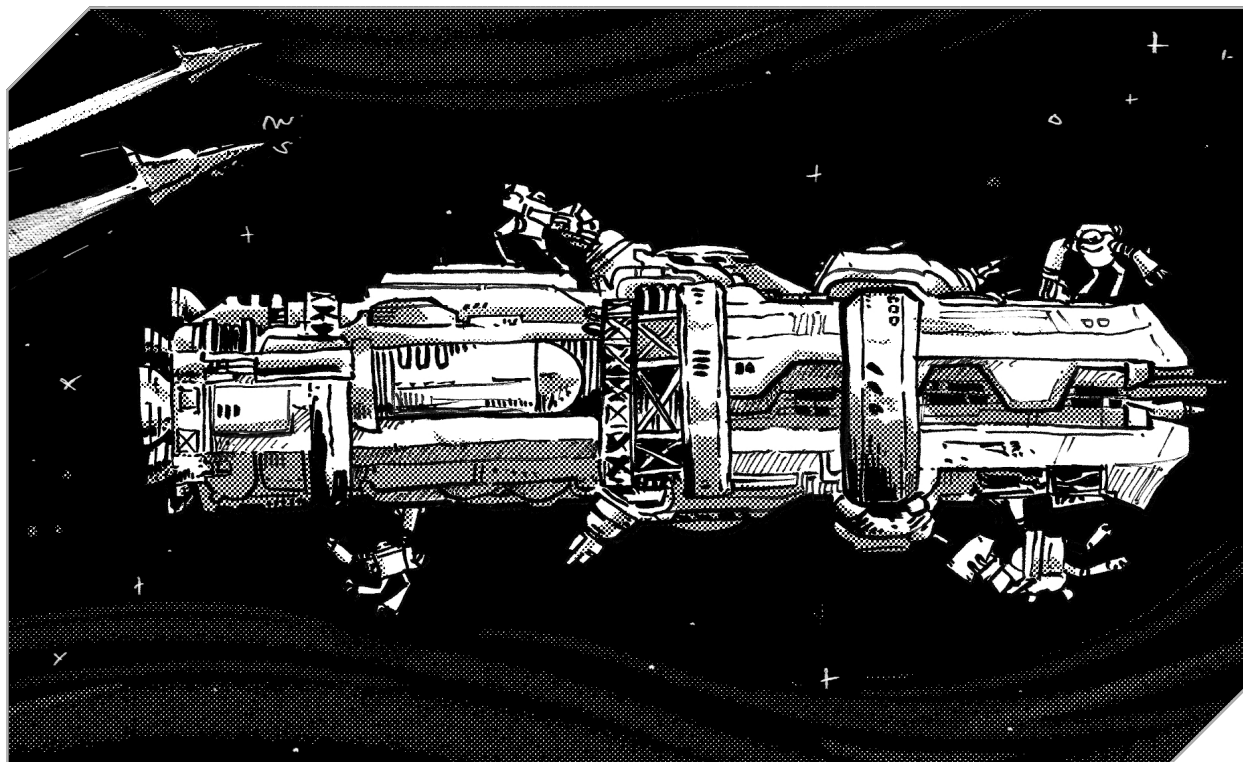
Trust is different to Status—Status measures the rapport between squads (see page 210 for squad Status). Trust is adjusted at the end of a mission. However, if the mission was kept completely quiet and the results can't be traced back to your squad, skip Trust adjustments for the target. Instead, lose only 1 Trust with them as rumors filter back to them.

+3: BELOVED	Citizens and squads that don't know you will help your squad, even if it goes against their best interests. They expect the same in return.
+2: FRIENDLY	Citizens and squads that don't know you will help your squad if it doesn't create serious problems for them. They expect the same in return.
+1: HELPFUL	Citizens and squads that don't know you will help your squad if it doesn't cost them anything. They expect the same in return.
0: NEUTRAL	Citizens and squads that don't know you are indifferent, and won't help you without a good reason. They expect the same in return.
-1: INTERFERING	Citizens and squads that don't know you will look for opportunities to cause your squad trouble (or profit from its misfortune), as long as it doesn't cost them anything. They expect the same behavior in return.
-2: HOSTILE	Citizens and squads that don't know you will seek chances to harm your squad, so long as it doesn't create major problems for them. They expect similar retaliation and take precautions against your squad.
-3: HATED	Citizens and squads that don't know you will actively work to harm your squad, even if it's against their best interests. They expect your squad to do likewise, and will take the necessary precautions.

The Cenotaph have just completed a mission delivering corpses for the Jovangellian Empire against the Democratic Federated Systems (DFS). The players consider the Trust questions for their target: 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. They apply -2 Trust and hit 0 Trust, so the Relationship drops to -1 and sets the Trust to 8. They apply the remaining -3 Trust, which puts The Cenotaph at 5 Trust and -1 Relationship with the DFS.

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 (+2 Trust), but broke the ROE of not using explosives (-2 Trust)—totaling +4 Trust. Before the mission, The Cenotaph were at 7 Trust and 0 Relationship with the Jovangellian Empire. They add the first 2 Trust, pushing the squad to 9 Trust. The Trust track is complete, so their Relationship increases to +1. The Trust track resets to 1, and then the remaining +2 Trust is applied. The squad finishes at 3 Trust and +1 Relationship with the Jovangellians.

Finally, The Cenotaph checks how this mission affected their Relationship with their patron Faction, the Church of the Celestial Myriad. They did aid the Empire (-1 Trust), but they didn't harm the Church's interests (0 Trust), so the total Trust change is -1. They had 4 Trust and +1 Relationship with the Church before the mission. After applying the change, they now have 3 Trust 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. The GM generates an entanglement using table A, B, or C below.

First, figure out which table you're using. If the most recently targeted squad belongs to a Faction, use your Relationship with that Faction. If the targeted squad is Independent, use your Status with that squad instead. Here's how to figure out which table to roll on:

- ◆ If the Relationship/Status 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.

Second, build a dice pool 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). Roll the dice and take the highest result (unless the total is 0, then roll 2d and take the lower result).

The squad can affect the result before the GM rolls the entanglement—but it comes with a cost. They can lean on the region's criminal element by spending Personnel equal to the region's Crime rating (the region being the one where the entanglement occurs, usually the same one the FOB is located in). Players cannot lean on regions where the Crime rating is 0—there's not enough of an underworld presence. If they do, they can adjust the entanglement result up to the Personnel spent. They bribe the local underworld, and it takes attention away from the squad. Unfortunately, "legitimate" authorities aren't fond of this, so the squad loses Trust with their patron Faction equal to the Personnel spent. If they are Independent, they lose Trust with the Faction that controls that region.

The Cenotaph just completed a mission targeting the Democratic Federated Systems (DFS). Their Relationship with DFS is currently -1, so the GM rolls on table B. The Cenotaph have a +1 Relationship with their patron Faction, the Church of Celestial Myriad. The GM rolls 2d and takes the highest (3 minus the +1 Relationship with their patron Faction).

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. The GM rolls 5d and takes the highest result (3 minus the -2 Relationship equals 5) on table B (for -2 Relationship with The Myriad).

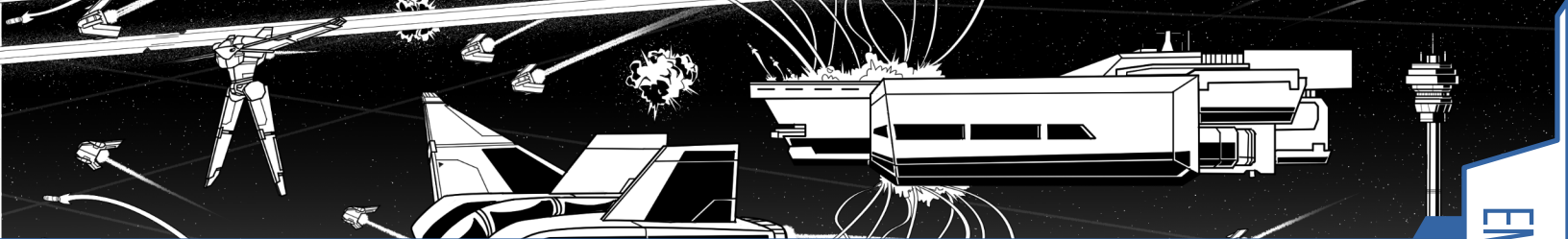


TABLE A	
1	Flipped OR roll on Table B: A rival squad arranges for one of your allies, sponsors, clients, or a group of your customers to switch allegiances due to the attention on you. They're loyal to another Faction now.
2	Missing Supplies: Your supplier didn't give you the supplies you requested, citing rerouted logistics. Lose 3 Supply Points of any type, or try to browbeat logistics into giving you what you deserve with 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 says the gear you were issued is unhealthy to be around. You may spend 1 Personnel for +1d, 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 spends 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 Harm, 4/5: lose 2 Supply Points) to see how bad things get.
5	SCRAMBLE!: A squad you have 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, skip the downtime phase and 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. After the mission, follow the end of mission process as normal, 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 Relationship wants to teach you a lesson. Give them 1 Upgrade or gain Vendetta (drop to -3 Status) with two 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 a 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 "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	Challengers: A squad with Status zero throws their weight around. They threaten you, a friend, an 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 superiors questions your squad. They grill one of your Pilots or a Cohort. 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 who grab 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 get it back later through the normal methods. ► Bribe the caller with Personnel equal to your Tier +3. ► Hide the object or fight back, and lose 1 Status with that squad AND 1 Relationship with 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 believes you definitely 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).	4	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.
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 your FOB Squad Upgrades. ► 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).	5	Embedded Favourite: The squad is burdened with an NPC that a superior favors and believes needs first hand field experience. The NPC must accompany you on your next mission and come back in one piece. If you refuse to take them along, take -2 Trust with the Faction who favors them. If the NPC dies, take -3 Trust. If they return injured, take -1 Trust. The NPC is a temporary specialist Cohort with Quality equal to the squad's Tier -1.
3	Cooperation: A squad with +3 Status asks for a favor. Choose one of the following: ► Agree to do it. ► Forfeit 1 Rep per Tier of the friendly squad. ► Lose 1 Status with them. This favor 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.	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 Relationship with the Faction that assigned the mission (unless the mission is Independent).

8: DOWNTIME ACTIVITIES





DOWNTIME ACTIVITIES

Between missions, Pilots have a downtime phase where they can pursue personal projects, recover from the previous mission, prepare for the next mission, and engage in free play. Each Pilot has **three downtime activities** they can use toward training, projects, healing, preparing for the next mission, and so on—the downtime activities are listed below. Pilots can also engage in free play, where they talk to each other and NPCs—sometimes these scenes are just for color, but you'll need to make an action roll or fortune roll if there are risks or stakes.

If a Pilot or Cohort assists with a downtime activity (except for Cut Loose), describe how they help and take +1d to the roll. Helping 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.

A Pilot can spend 1 Supply Point to take an additional downtime activity. They may spend a 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 learn about them.
Fix: Use technical skill to repair a vehicle.	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.

I think it's really been messing with me. Not having a consistent schedule I mean. Sometimes we're gone on a long mission for ages. Sometimes we don't get called in for a while. I don't know when I'm going to be fighting for my life or when I'm going to sit in the barn doing nothing for three weeks. Every moment in a battle feels like a lifetime, and every break somehow feels like forever and no time at all. I've been trying to rest up as much as I can when we do get some time off. Even after short missions I'm exhausted, and when we're gone for a week or more? I can't move the first day we're back, and that's if I didn't even get hurt. Harrow comes in and checks on me, brings me snacks or whatever. Guess he knows what it's like, but I wonder how he always goes right back to normal after coming home. After a couple days of lying in bed I go check on Bert usually. Sometimes I tinker around a little, try to replace something that's rusted out. After that I finally feel like I can be around people again. So I get chicken nuggets in town and that's kind of it these days. God. Writing it out really makes it seem even worse. I don't do anything anymore! Everything I do when I'm not on a mission is getting ready for the next mission or recovering from the last one. Fuck.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

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 either stay until the first serious battle concludes or stay for a week until they’re reassigned.

To acquire the asset, roll the squad’s Tier. The result indicates the asset’s Quality using the squad’s Tier as the base. 1-3: Tier -1, 4/5: Tier, 6: Tier +1, Critical success: Tier +2. To raise the result of this roll, you can spend 1 Materiel per Tier level, or raise it beyond critical success by spending 2 Materiel per additional level added. The GM may set a minimum Quality level required to get that particular asset. For example, if you want an intact enemy AWV and credentials, you’d need to acquire a Tier IV asset. Anything less isn’t enough. If you reacquire 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), 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 one level.

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.

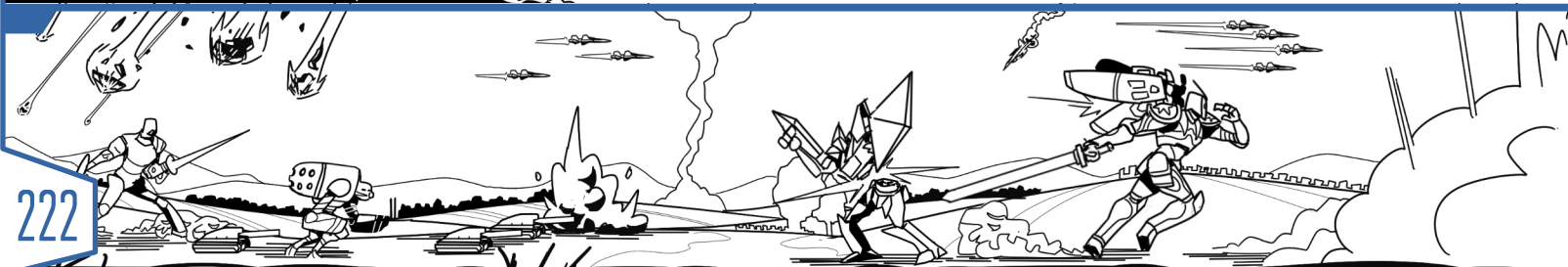
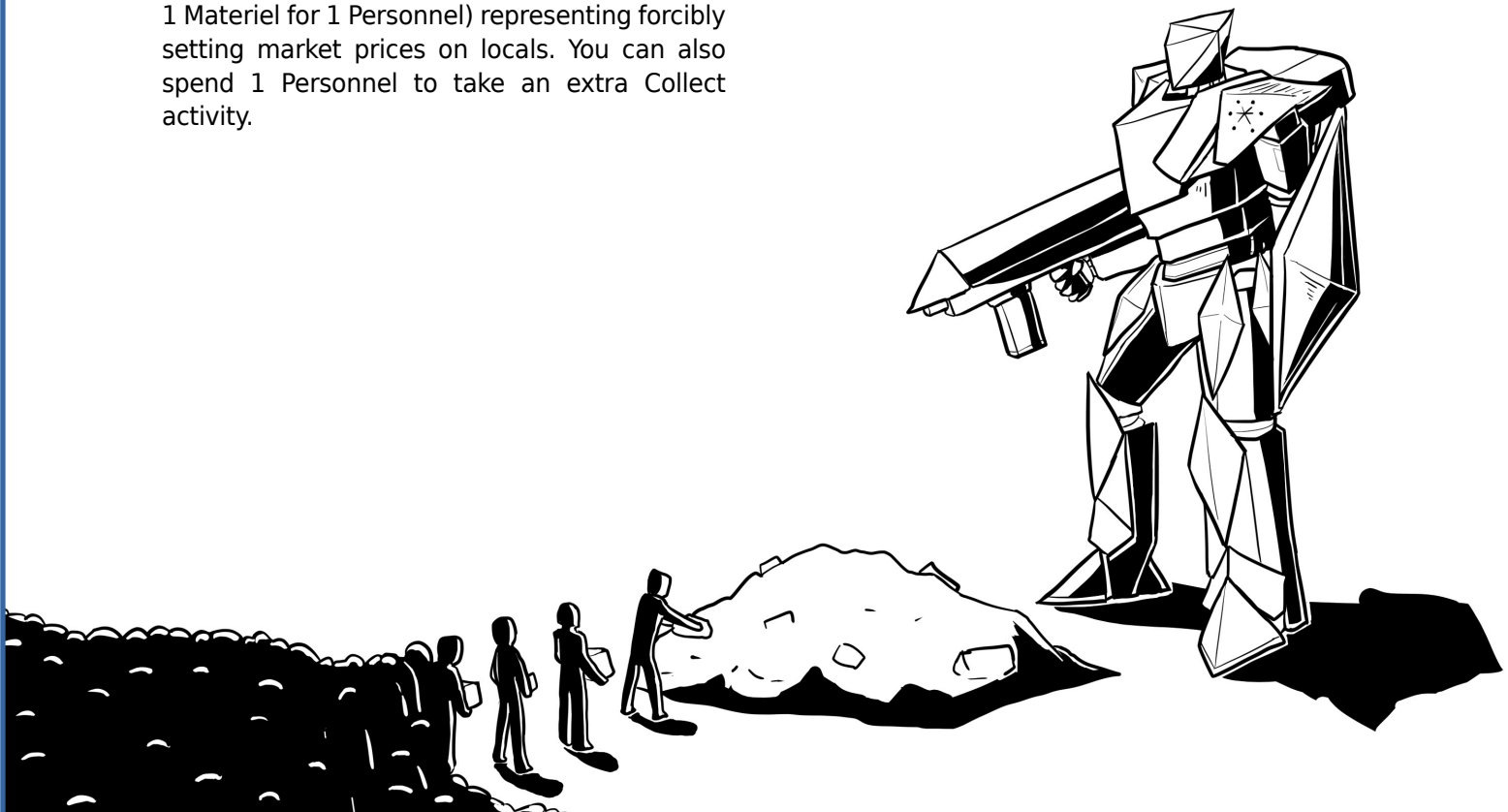
Eclipse wants some vehicle-scale flashbangs for the next mission, so they decide to acquire that asset. The GM says flashbangs that big will require a result of Tier II, so Eclipse will need to get a 6 (as a 6 provides gear equal to their squad’s Tier+1). They roll 1d because The Cenotaph’s is Tier I. They could increase the number of dice rolled by spending Materiel and/or by using the 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). They roll 4d (1d for squad Tier, +1d for Materiel spent, and +2d for the region’s Tech rating), and get a 6 as their highest result—exactly what they need for the flashbangs.

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 (or 9 Supply Points on a critical success). However, those supplies aren't meant for you. If any of the dice come up as a 1, gain the Supply Points and immediately roll an entanglement 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 (minimum 0) as likely targets take precautions.

The supplies gained 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.

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 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—the Tower Defenders. The Cenotaph have Status 0 with the Tower Defenders, so the GM rolls on table C using 3d (three dice minus The Cenotaph's Relationship with their patron). The entanglement rolled is resolved as normal.



CUT LOOSE

Pilots Cut Loose to remove Stress from their Stress track. Pick another Pilot, and describe how the two of you spend time dealing with the pressure. 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 about that Pilot.

The accompanying Pilot does not increase their Connection Clock, nor do they add dice to the Cut Loose roll for participating.

If the Connection Clock fills, ask the target Pilot for a truth about one belief you have about them. Reset the Clock to 1 Tick as you see them in a new light. You both take 1 XP, which can go into either the Pilot's attribute or playbook XP track.

When you Cut Loose and heal more Stress than you have, you **overindulge**. When you overindulge, you've behaved poorly and made choices you'll likely regret. 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).
- ◆ **Impropriety** (Make an ass out of yourself in front of the Pilot that joined you—reset your Connection Clock with them to 0. If your Connection is already 0, take the level 1 Harm: Alone).

Whether you overindulge or not, you can decide to Cut Loose and let your Pilot skip the next mission. If you do, play a different squad member for that mission. This might be a new squaddie, a friend, or an already familiar NPC.

Cohorts cannot be the accompanying "Pilot." Cohorts or other Pilots can be present in the scene (so long as they're not the focus), but they do not provide additional dice. You can spend 1 Personnel for +1d to the Cut Loose roll, or increase the result by one. You can also spend 1 Personnel to take an extra Cut Loose activity.

If you have Scars and don't take Cut Loose as an activity during downtime, you suffer 1 Stress per Scar.

Nehalennia decides to Cut Loose with Demon so she can remove some Stress. She wants to see if his tactical genius works in her favorite 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. She then 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. If the added Tick filled the Connection Clock, she would ask Demon a question about one of her beliefs about him, which he must answer truthfully. They would both then get 1 XP.

ENHANCE

When you spend time improving 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.

Scarecrow wants to improve her Claymore, so she's going to Enhance it. She spends 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 one vehicle action point. She takes the new Quirk "Overstrained Speed," and can now push it beyond its stated speeds.

FIX

When you use technological expertise and materials to fix a vehicle, you or a squadmate roll Engineer (or have a friendly NPC roll their Quality). It costs 2 Stress to repair a vehicle (unless you have the Workshop Squad Upgrade). The damaged vehicle removes any level 1 Damage and marks segments on its Mend Clock according to the roll result. 1-3: one segment, 4/5: two segments, 6: three segments, critical success: five segments. When the Mend Clock fills, 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, the Pilot whose vehicle is being repaired spends the downtime activity, not the repairer—you could spend one downtime activity to have a squadmate roll Engineer fix your damaged vehicle. Whenever the vehicle suffers any new Damage, clear all Ticks on its Mend Clock. You can spend 1 Materiel for +1d to the Fix roll or to increase the result by one level. You can also spend 1 Materiel to take an extra Fix activity.

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). He could roll his Engineer to fix it, ask Dredge to use cor better Engineer to do it, or he could ask an appropriate Cohort to roll their Quality. Dredge is happy to help and rolls cor 3d Engineer. Cor highest result is a critical success, 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 one 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" at level 2. 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

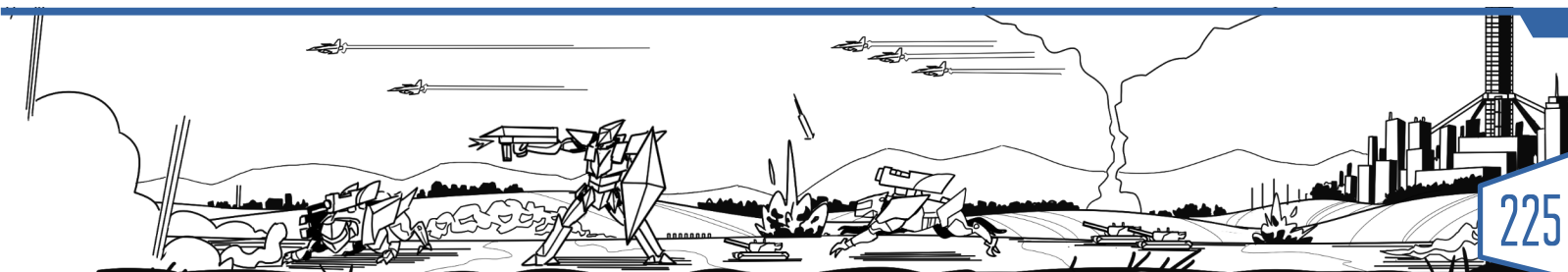
When you work on a project (whether it's new or partially completed), describe how your Pilot advances the project, and roll an appropriate action. Mark segments of the Project Clock according to your result: 1-3: one segment, 4/5: two segments, 6: three segments, critical success: five segments. A Long-Term Project can cover any kind of endeavor 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 determines how many segments the Project Clock has based on the goal. A big project may require multiple smaller projects to complete. You might need to complete a preliminary project to get the right tools, skills, or resources before starting the main project. For example, you might want to make deals with a group of guerrillas, but you don't have any way to contact them. Your preliminary project could be building rapport with civilians who live in the guerrillas' area to build trust before asking them for a contact. You can spend 1 Personnel point for +1d to the Long-Term Project roll, or to increase the result by one level. You can also spend 1 Personnel to take an extra Long-Term Project activity.

Dredge wants to clear the Broken Bank of corrupted apps by rehabilitating them, so co starts a Long-Term Project. The GM says Dredge will need to first create some infrastructure before co begins clearing the district. Dredge agrees to complete an 8-Tick Project Clock that sets up a clinic for the region. Dredge decides the first task is finding a good site for the clinic in the rundown bank. Co rolls 2d Study to look over some reconnaissance maps of the area. The result is a 6, which adds 3 Ticks to the Project Clock. Co also spends 1 Personnel to bump the result up to a critical success (providing 5 Ticks instead of 3). After completing this Clock, the clinic is built, and Dredge can start rehabilitating the district's apps.



MANUFACTURE

See the Crafting Section on page 300. Alternatively, just use a Long-Term Project of appropriate size if you want to simplify the process.



RECOVER

Recover lets you seek treatment to heal your Pilot's Harm. Hurt Pilots need to get medical care from a medic, veterinarian, autodoc, or someone else with a good amount of anatomical knowledge. If no squadmates or allies can fill that need, an Acquire Asset can get you temporary access to the professional or equipment you require. You may permanently recruit a healer by completing a suitable Long-Term Project or mission, or spending Squad Upgrades to get a specialist Cohort with the "Medicine" expertise.

Recovery is a Long-Term Project. Your healer rolls (Engineer for a squadmate with the Doctor ability, or the Quality level of an NPC), the patient removes any level 1 Harm, and then marks segments on their Healing Clock. 1-3: one segment, 4/5: two segments, 6: three segments, critical success: five segments. When the Healing Clock fills up, the patient reduces each instance of Harm by one level, then clears the clock. All remaining segments roll over to the new, empty clock. If you want to let the Harm recover on its own, take 1 Stress and roll 0d (take the lowest die). If you attempt to heal yourself and have the Doctor ability, take 2 Stress after you roll.

You can spend 1 Personnel point for +1d to the roll, or to increase the result by one level. You can also spend 1 Personnel to take an extra Recover activity.

Only the Pilot receiving care spends a downtime activity on Recover; the healer doesn't use up any downtime activities. When you suffer new Harm, remove any Ticks on your Healing Clock.

Flagstone needs to heal after the most recent mission. She has two level 2 Harm "Stabbed Arm" and "Broken Foot," and one level 3 Harm "Pierced Lung." They could rest and Recover naturally (spending 1 Stress and rolling 0d), ask Dredge to use cor Doctor and Engineer action, or have an appropriate Cohort roll their Quality. Dredge is happy to help, and rolls cor 3d Engineer. Cor highest result is a critical success, so Flagstone adds 5 Ticks to their Pilot's Healing Clock! This fills the 4-Tick Healing Clock, lowering the two level 2 Harms to level 1, the one level 3 Harm to level 2. The remaining 1 Tick rolls over after the Healing Clock empties. "Stabbed Arm" and "Broken Foot" become the level 1 Harm "Bandaged Arm" and "Delicate Foot," while "Pierced Lung" becomes "Grinding Cough" at level 2. If Flagstone chooses to Recover again, all level 1 Harm automatically clears, and she adds more Ticks to their Healing Clock.

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 success: 5 Supply Points. If the vehicle is intact, consider a mission or Long-Term Project to sell it instead of salvaging. Salvage destroys a vehicle, regardless of how many Supply Points are pulled from the machine. You can also spend 1 Materiel to take an extra Salvage activity.

Tower managed to steal an enemy AWW during the last mission. They could try to arrange a buyer, but they don't want to deal with the associated headaches. Instead, 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 and receive 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, critical success: five. You can spend 1 Personnel for +1d to the Schmooze roll, or to increase the result by one level. You can also spend 1 Personnel to take an extra Schmooze activity.

Demon wants to ease tensions with the Democratic Federated Systems, so he meets with Pars Piani of the Dark Room to discuss 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, adding 2 Trust to The Cenotaph's Relationship with the DFS.

TRAIN

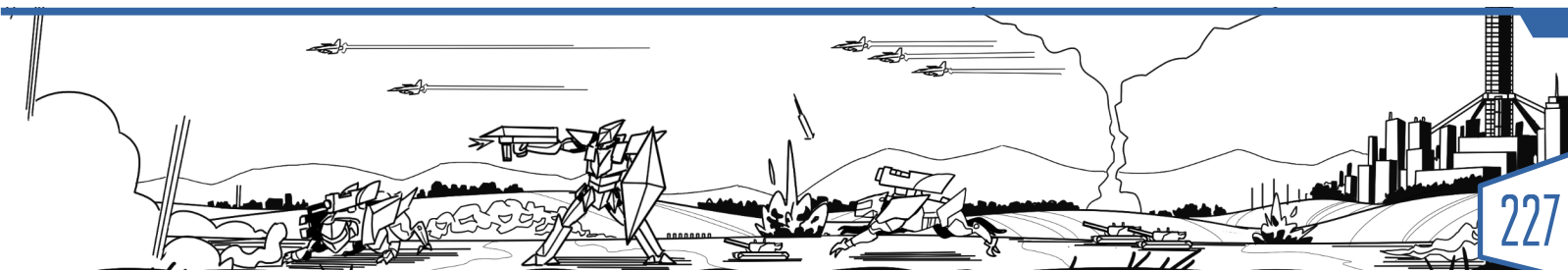
When you spend time bettering yourself, mark 1 attribute XP or 1 playbook XP. If you have the right squad training Upgrade, mark 2 XP instead. You can only train each XP track once per downtime. You can also spend 1 Personnel to take an extra Train activity.

Pitchfork wants to improve her Engineer, an Insight action. She spends a day reading technical manuals about her Agrarian, and sends 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 adds 1 point to any of the Insight actions. She chooses Engineer.

UPKEEP

Clear exhausted Quirk boxes on vehicles. Spend at least 1 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. You may spend 1 Materiel Point per Quirk to remove additional exhausted Quirks after the roll. You can also spend 1 Materiel to take an extra Upkeep activity.

Scarecrow still has 3 exhausted Quirks after the free Upkeep, so she decides to do some more Upkeep on her Claymore. She wants to roll 2d, so spends 2 Materiel. The highest die is a 4, so the 3 Quirks are refreshed, and the extra is wasted.

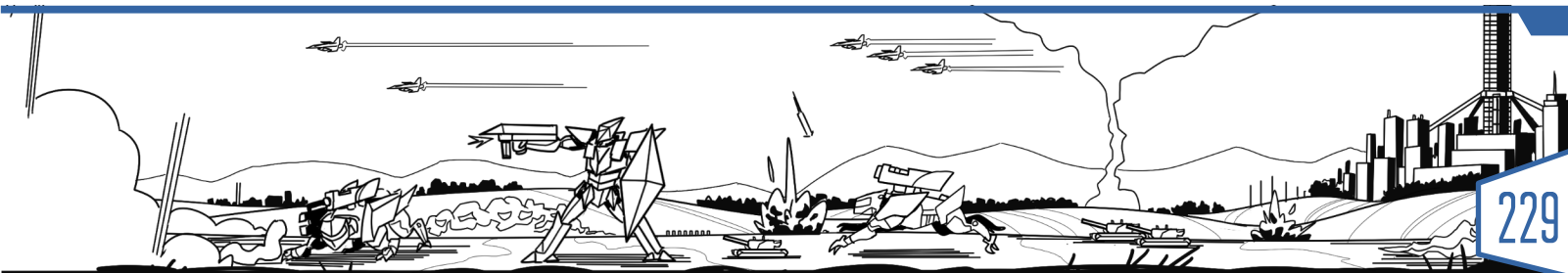
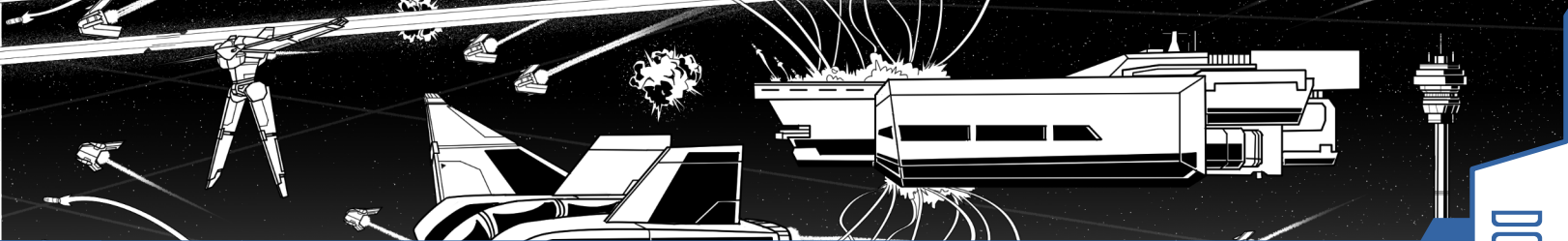


EXAMPLE OF A DOWNTIME SCENE

Sasha (Dredge's player) wants to improve Dredge's ability to fight when outside of cor AWV, so Sasha uses one downtime activity to Train Prowess. Jess (Scarecrow's player) says that she wants a conversation between Dredge and Scarecrow about the previous mission, and asks Sasha if Scarecrow can be present during the training. Sasha gives the go ahead. Dredge and Scarecrow chat in character as they spend time at the firing range. Sasha marks 1 XP for Dredge's Prowess Training.

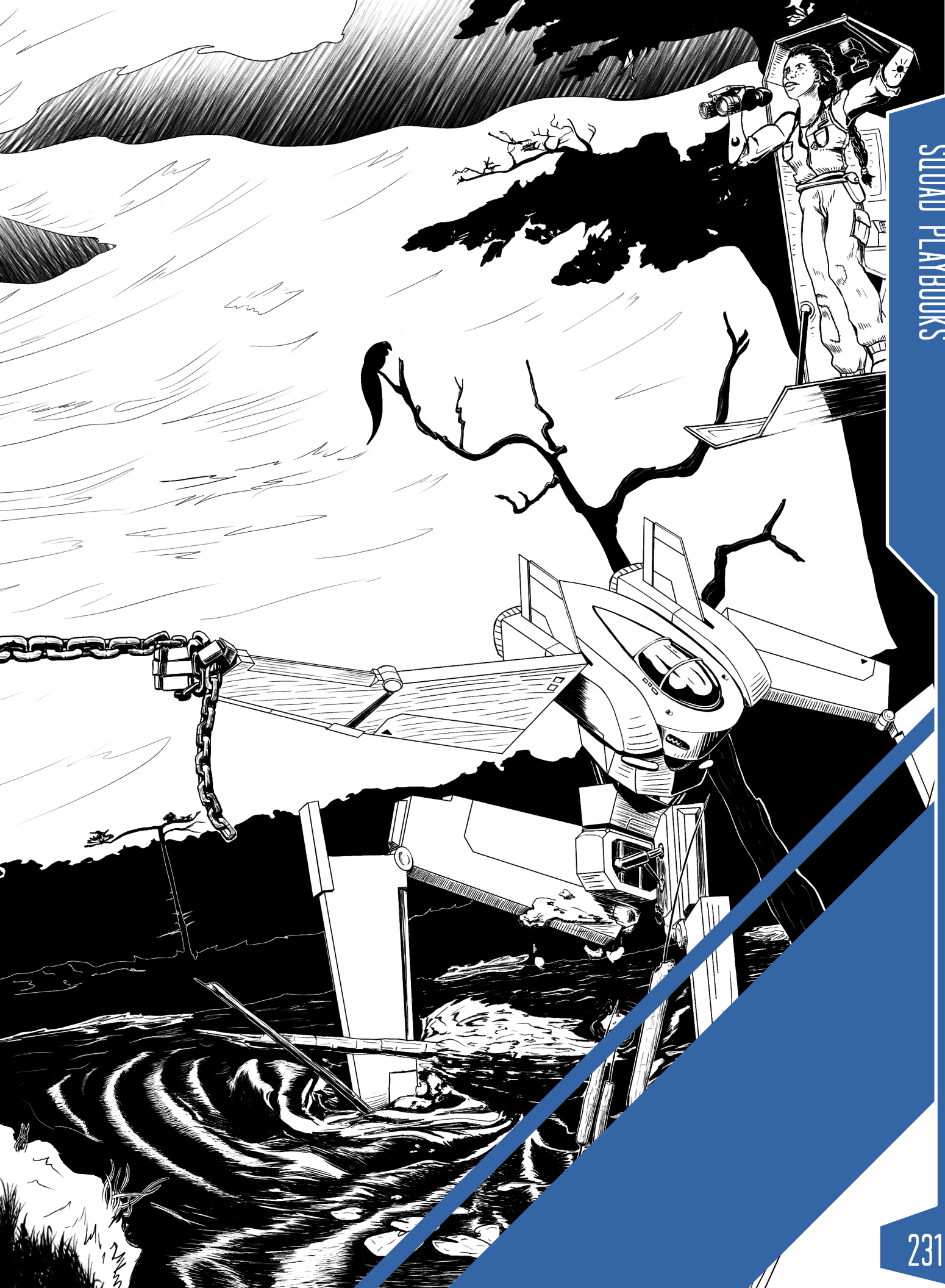
The GM asks Jess if Scarecrow is also Training Prowess, but Jess says Scarecrow would need a much greater challenge to improve her skill with guns. Sasha suggests that since Scarecrow is reprimanding Dredge for cor incompetence as a combatant, maybe Scarecrow Cuts Loose that way. Jess loves the idea, so wraps her Cut Loose into this scene too as she gets this off of her chest.

When the conversation comes to a head, Jess rolls dice equal to the number of Ticks in her Connection Clock with Dredge. She currently has 2 Ticks on the Clock, so she rolls 2d and gets a 4. Scarecrow had 5 Stress, and is left with 1. Jess decides that Scarecrow doesn't explode at Dredge, and Sasha thinks that Dredge takes the criticism well—co is at the shooting range, after all. It's now time for someone else to have a downtime activity.



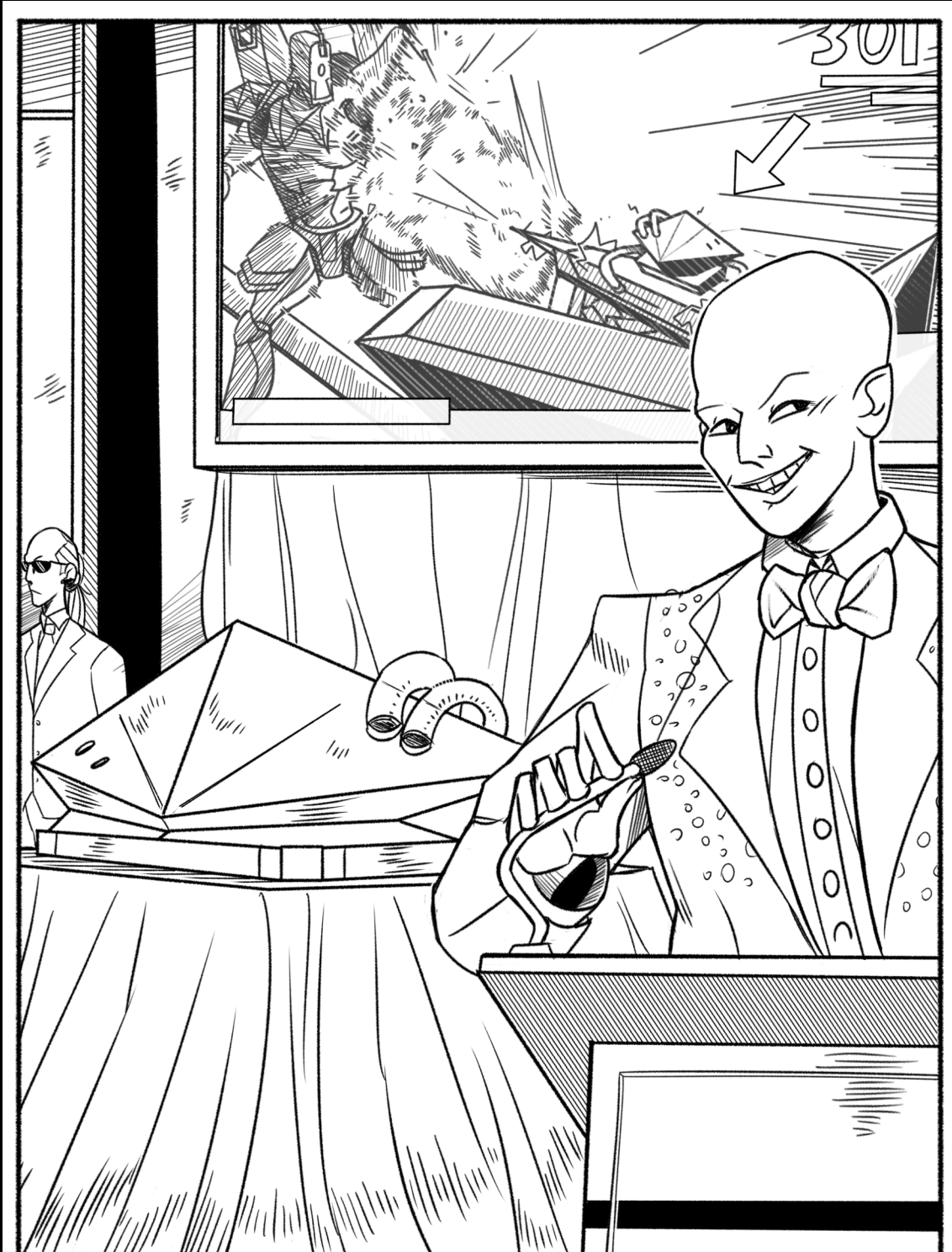
9: SQUAD PLAYBOOKS



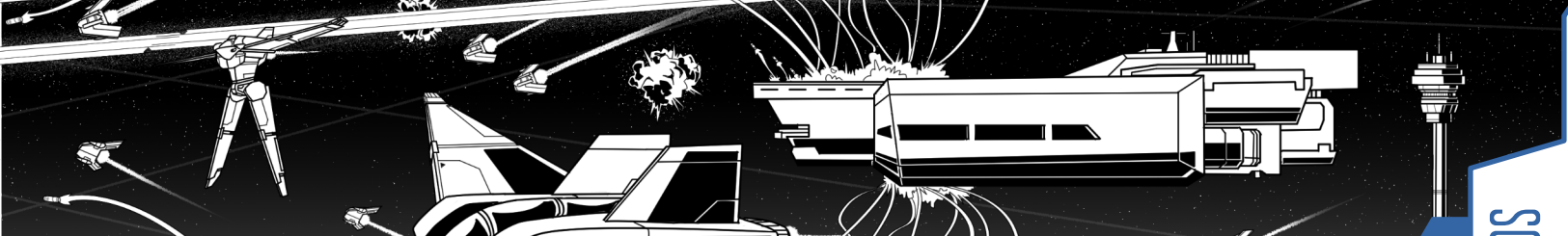


THE CONSULATE

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 toward the right place at the right time.



CHOOSE CONSULATE IF YOU WANT TO:

- ◆ See the politicians and generals in formal wear at fancy balls.
- ◆ Spread propaganda and manipulate expectations.
- ◆ 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):** 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 Pilot 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 were Heart.

► **HIGH SOCIETY:** It's all about who you know. Take +1 Trust during downtime with your patron Faction or employer Faction, and +1d to gather information about the region's elite.

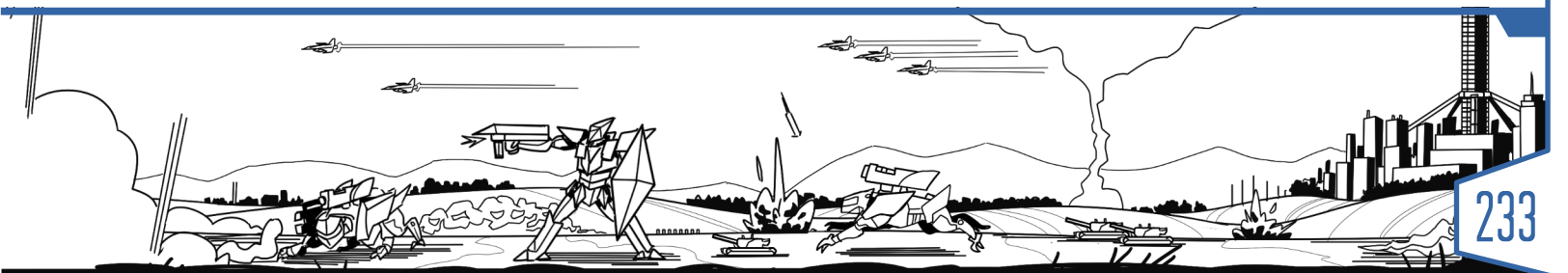
► **FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES:** Take +1d when making a Supply Roll. This gives Independent missions a 0d Supply Roll during reward if it doesn't already have one.

► **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 squad playbook.



CONSULATE UPGRADES

► **Consulate Rigging:** Two 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 Adept:** 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 Squad Upgrades to unlock.

EXAMPLE CONSULATE ALLIES AND RIVALS

► Gethesmane, a hearty ambassador

► Arbir, a retired general

► Kiffen, a tired butler

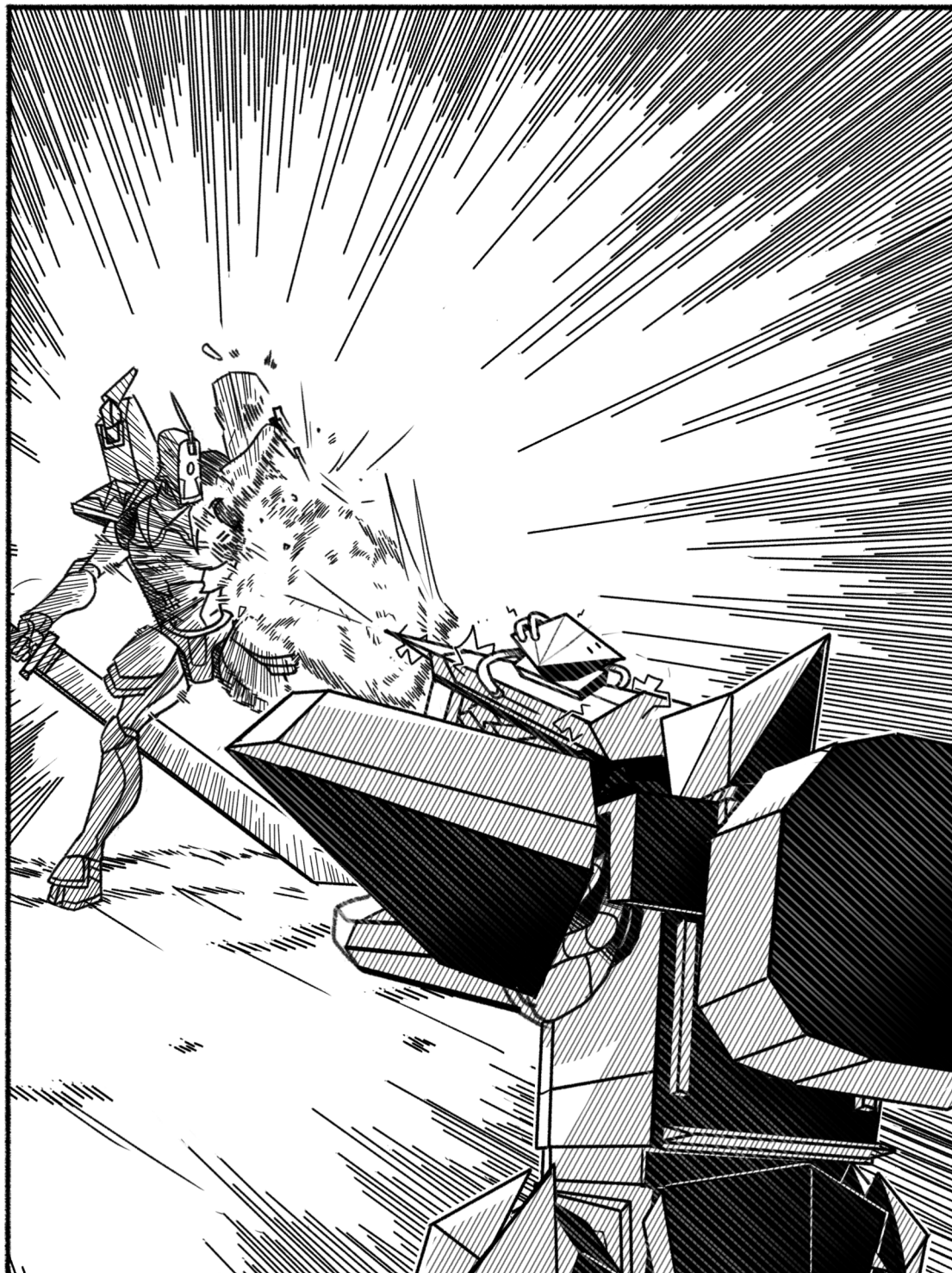
► Mirage, a corrupt chef

This is true about life in general, too, but like, the consequences of our actions in The War? Really unpredictable and unfair. Sometimes we lose face just for misunderstanding one small part of our orders. Sometimes there's massive collateral damage, but another Myriad squad comes in and talks everyone down, gets on the cameras, and makes the whole thing fade away. All of their AWWs were spotless ceramic and gold detailing too, I can't imagine any of them ever see combat. I wonder about them sometimes. I guess there's ways to avoid The War, even if you have to be involved somehow.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

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 FRONTLINE IF YOU WANT TO:

- ◆ See the blood mixing with the mud in the ugliest conflict zones.
- ◆ See other squads and Factions fear your name.
- ◆ Feel like your Faction's most expendable pawns.

XP TRIGGER

Execute a successful battle, defense, sabotage, or smash & grab operation.

STARTING UPGRADES

► **TRAINING (PROWESS):** When taking the Train downtime activity for Prowess, take 2 XP instead of 1. *A space that lets you move freely to 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 Pilot 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 were Heart (up to a max of 3).

► **FORGED IN THE FIRE:** Cruel experiences have toughed each Pilot. 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. Pilots still get three downtime activities (instead of just two).

► **VETERAN:** Choose a special ability from another squad playbook.

FRONTLINE UPGRADES

► **Frontline Rigging:** Each Pilot gets two free Load of weapons or Armor.

► **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 Squad Upgrades to unlock.

EXAMPLE FRONTLINE ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Menefer, a troublesome cop
- Schuyler, a stalwart doctor
- Qing Yuan, a sly mob boss
- Lyn, a bar owner

Harrow told me someone from the Paladins of Saint Ngabutho has been asking after me. Didn't really tell me much more, but like, are they thinking of transferring me? Can't think of another reason unless I'm in deep shit, and for that, the Breath would probably look into it. It would definitely be a promotion, but... I don't know if I could do it. The Paladins are who keep the other factions from moving in on Myriad territory, and even other Myriad squads are afraid of them. It would almost certainly be nonstop skirmishes, and I would be right at the front of an offensive. I'm no good with artillery.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

THE LOGISTICS

Dedicated delivery.



The War's instability 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 LOGISTICS IF YOU WANT TO:

- ◆ See many different locations as you travel across the world.
- ◆ Conduct missions that don't hinge on violence or socializing.
- ◆ Be the veins that keep your Faction's war efforts functioning.

XP TRIGGER

Execute a successful delivery, or acquire new clients or contraband sources.

STARTING UPGRADES

► **TRAINING (PROWESS):** When taking the Train downtime activity for Prowess, take 2 XP instead of 1. *A space that lets you move freely to 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:** During the reward process, one vehicle gets a 1d Upkeep roll that doesn't cost Materiel. 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 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.

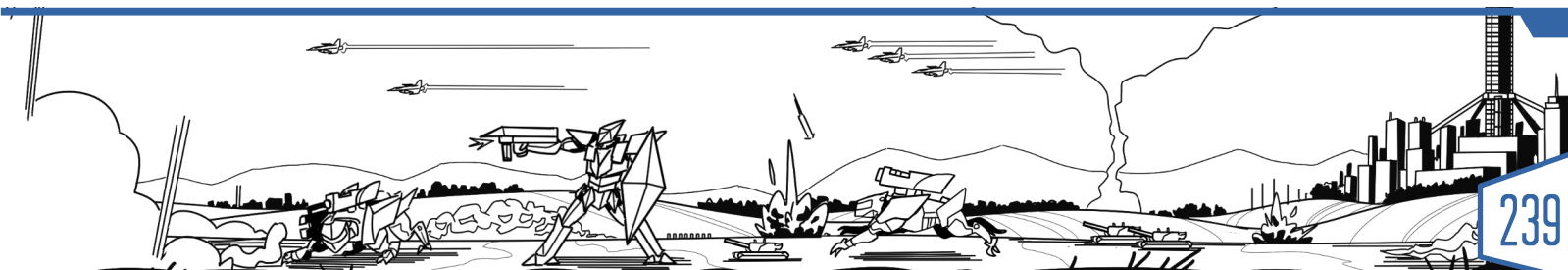
► **JUST PASSING THROUGH:** During downtime, take +1 Trust with the Faction whose territory you're in at the start of downtime. When your Trust with the local Faction is 5 or more, you get +1d to deceive people when you pass yourselves off as ordinary citizens.

► **LEVERAGE:** Your squad supplies contraband for all Factions. Your success is good for them. Whenever you gain Rep, gain an extra +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 Pilot may add +1 action rating to Scan, Bombard, or Maneuver (up to a max rating of 3).

► **VETERAN:** Choose a special ability from another squad playbook.



LOGISTICS UPGRADES

► **Smuggler Panels:** Each Pilots' vehicle can carry two Load perfectly concealed.

► **Mobile base:** The squad's FOB gains the "mobile" 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 Squad Upgrades.

EXAMPLE LOGISTICS ALLIES AND RIVALS

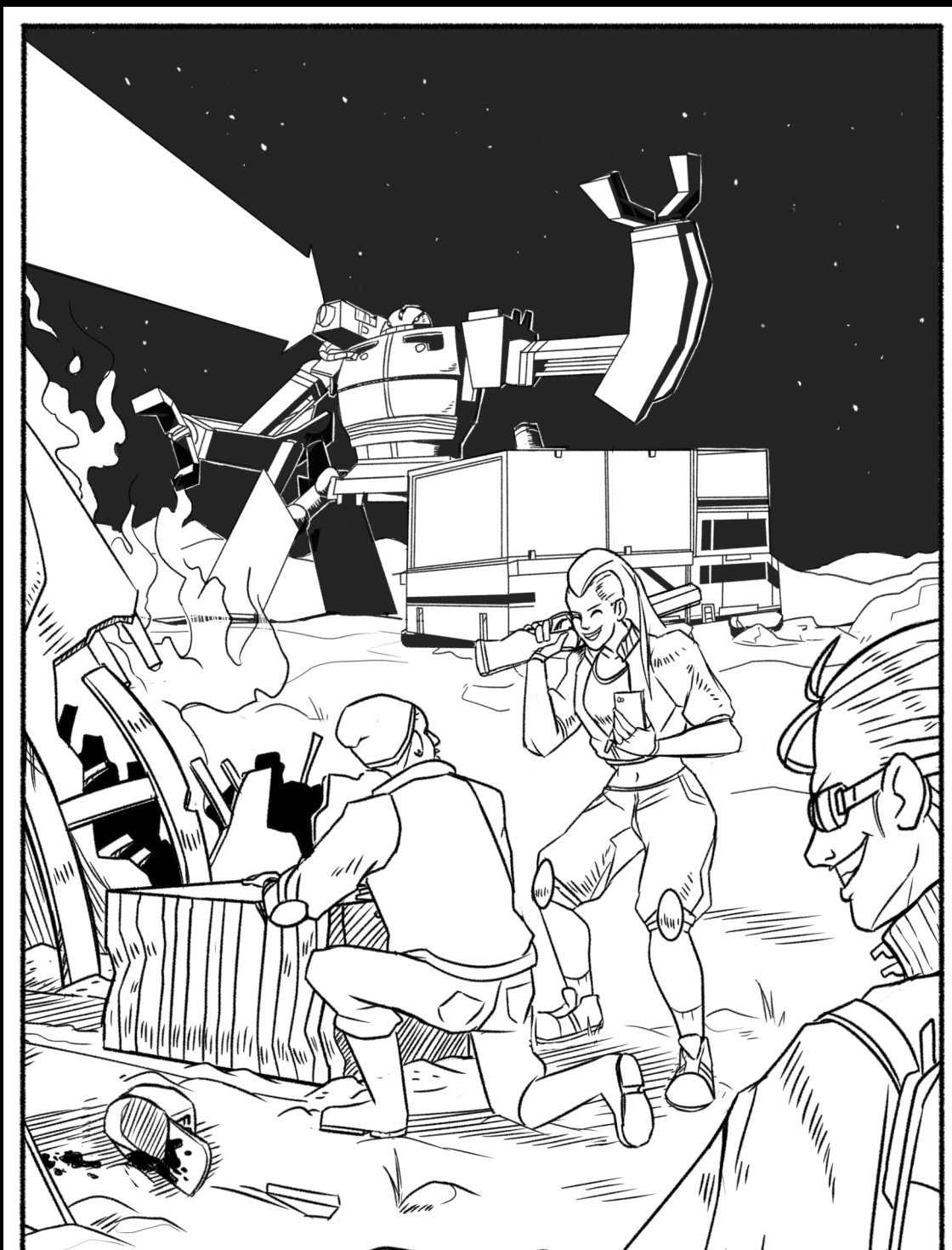
- Shafaqat, an app dealer
- Milandu, a vile chemist
- Nahuatl, a wired forger
- Addison, a terrorist

It's funny that I'm with the Cenotaph sometimes. We're not really a combat squad at all, and fighting's the only thing I'm good at. I mean, I know I'm the protection. Dead bodies and wrecked AWVs hold information that can turn the tide of The War, and there are plenty of people interested in that information. But I can't help feeling like we could avoid a lot of battles if we just had someone who was better at talking than everyone we have right now. Especially me. We're all still alive though, and that's what's most important. I'm going to do my best to keep it that way.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

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 MECH. CAV. IF YOU WANT TO:

- ◆ Focus on the vehicles as much as possible.
- ◆ Feel like a force to be reckoned with.
- ◆ Be the sledgehammer of your patron 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 work 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 Pilot may add +1 action rating to Maneuver, Manipulate, or Battle (up to a max rating of 3).

► **SCORCHED EARTH:** The scale of your conflict 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 may spend 1 Stress. Any Pilot that does gets +1d.

► **CUSTOM WORK:** Take +1d when you Engineer one of your squad's vehicles.

► **COMBINED ARMS:** When you assist a Pilot who uses 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 an active aircraft, take improved Position on all vehicle actions.

► **VETERAN:** Choose a special ability from another squad playbook.

MECHANIZED CAVALRY UPGRADES

► **Cavalry Hardpoints:** Each Pilot's vehicle gets two free Load of weapons or Armor.

► **Repair Bay:** This counts as a Workshop Upgrade 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, 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 Squad Upgrades to unlock.

EXAMPLE MECHANIZED CAVALRY ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Keahi, a fiery engineer
- Avinoam, a diplomatic Pilot
- Lorand, a devious soldier
- Spika, a valorous informant

Every time we run into Lady Elreth, it hits me how much of a difference there is between us. Like not just me, the whole Cenotaph. I do most of the repairs on Bert alone. Lady Elreth is the only Pilot in a whole squad dedicated to upkeep and other support for her AWV Starfall, and there's plenty of stories about how she's wiped out whole squads alone. The wildest part of all of this for me is the fact that no one even knows exactly what Starfall is. No one who's faced it head on has survived. What kind of AWV can even do all that?

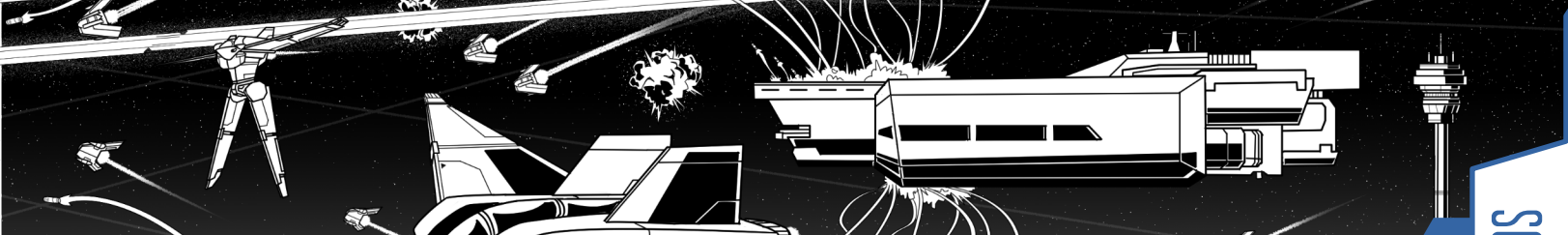
From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

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—propaganda, information, news, arms, food, water, medical supplies, spectacle, you name it.



CHOOSE PROFITEERS IF YOU WANT TO:

- ◆ Have a supplementary supply line free from your patron.
- ◆ Enter tense negotiations about contraband.
- ◆ Meet the clandestine and criminal elements of the world.

XP TRIGGER

Acquire product supply, execute clandestine or covert sales, or secure new clientele.

STARTING UPGRADES

► **TRAINING (RESOLVE):** When taking the Train downtime activity for Resolve, take 2 XP 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. These defenses help 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 Pilot may add +1 action rating to Sway, Struggle, or 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).

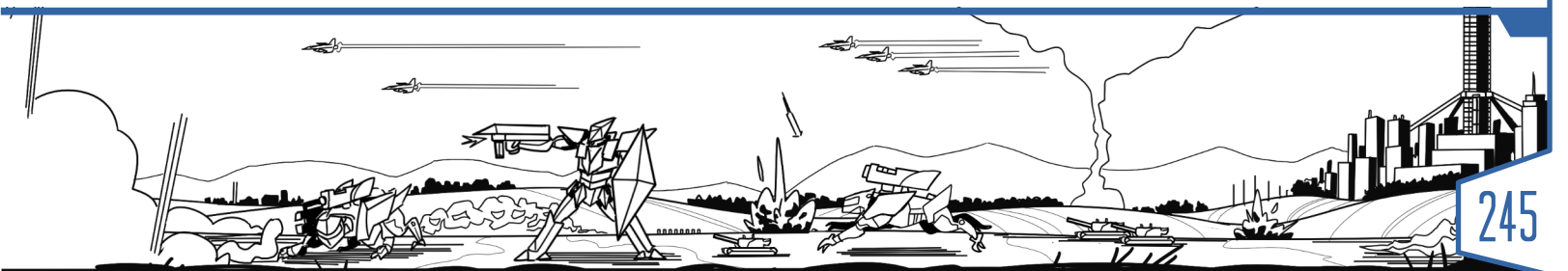
► **APP MARKET:** Through secret technology or hard-won experience, you have discovered how to prepare your product for sale to apps and/or AIs. They do not pay in Supply Points. What do they pay with?

► **OF THE PEOPLE:** Take improved Position when acting against those who want what you are selling, and +1d to gather information about where your product is 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 squad playbook.



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 Squad Upgrades to unlock.

EXAMPLE PROFITEERS ALLIES AND RIVALS

- ▶ Dehateh, a formal judge
- ▶ Sovann, a tidy smuggler
- ▶ Gemi, a freedom fighter
- ▶ Nuru, an arms dealer

I can't understand anyone who just wants to make money off of all this. Harrow keeps telling me that everyone has their reasons, everyone needs to eat. I know. I always try to remember that. But what happened today... We were recovering a Saint's body. The battle had taken place in the middle of a town, and they needed medical supplies badly. The only squad close by was the Raccoons. They had the supplies, but they charged us fifty times the actual price. When we got back, I overheard Harrow on comms with someone: the Raccoons had returned to that village and taken everything back at gunpoint.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

THE RECON

The best way in, way through, 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 RECON IF YOU WANT TO:

- ◆ Participate in missions of questionable legitimacy.
- ◆ Explore the world and steal its secrets.
- ◆ Be an expert in avoiding straight up fights.

XP TRIGGER

Execute a successful reconnaissance, espionage, sabotage, or theft operation.

STARTING UPGRADES

► **TRAINING (PROWESS):** When taking the Train downtime activity for Prowess, take 2 XP instead of 1. *A space that lets you move freely to 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 Pilot may add +1 action rating to Prowl, Finesse, or Survey (up to a max rating of 3).

► **AR ECHOES:** From a weird experience or strange technology, all squad members gain the ability to see and interact with private or offline ARs that would normally be hidden from sight.

► **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 squad playbook.

RECON UPGRADES

► **Recon Rigging:** Each Pilot gets 2 free Load of tools or gear.

► **Geographic Intel:** 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 Squad Upgrades to unlock.

EXAMPLE RECON ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Coin, a callous explorer
- Misha, a connected fixer
- Ihiaka, a benevolent collector
- Zhen, a lithe bartender

I like hearing about the Doctors Beyond Stars and Cirque du Soldat from Dredge and Tower. I'm a little jealous too. I've finally gotten to see Journey City and the tower up close with the Cenotaph, but compared to the others I've barely seen anything. I wonder what it's like exploring all over, ignoring faction lines, bringing help and entertainment instead of guns and trouble. The thought that a town would be excited to see outsiders, that sticks with me. What if I had gotten to be a part of a squad like that? Bert's too loud and slow, but maybe I wouldn't even need an AWV with them.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

THE R+O

Making today into tomorrow.

The only way to win The War is to gain a significant technological advantage. You pull out every dirty trick to get ahead because you can be damn sure the enemy won't hesitate.

CHOOSE R+D IF YOU WANT TO:

- ◆ Create bleeding edge technology.
- ◆ Meddle with powers beyond your understanding.
- ◆ 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 2 XP 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 Pilot 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, every squad member hears your whispered message.

► **CONVICTION:** Each Pilot 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 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 squad playbook.

R+D UPGRADES

► **R+D Rigging:** Each Pilot gets 2 free Load of Tools or Supplies.

► **Laboratory:** This counts as a Workshop if the squad does not already have one. If the squad 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.

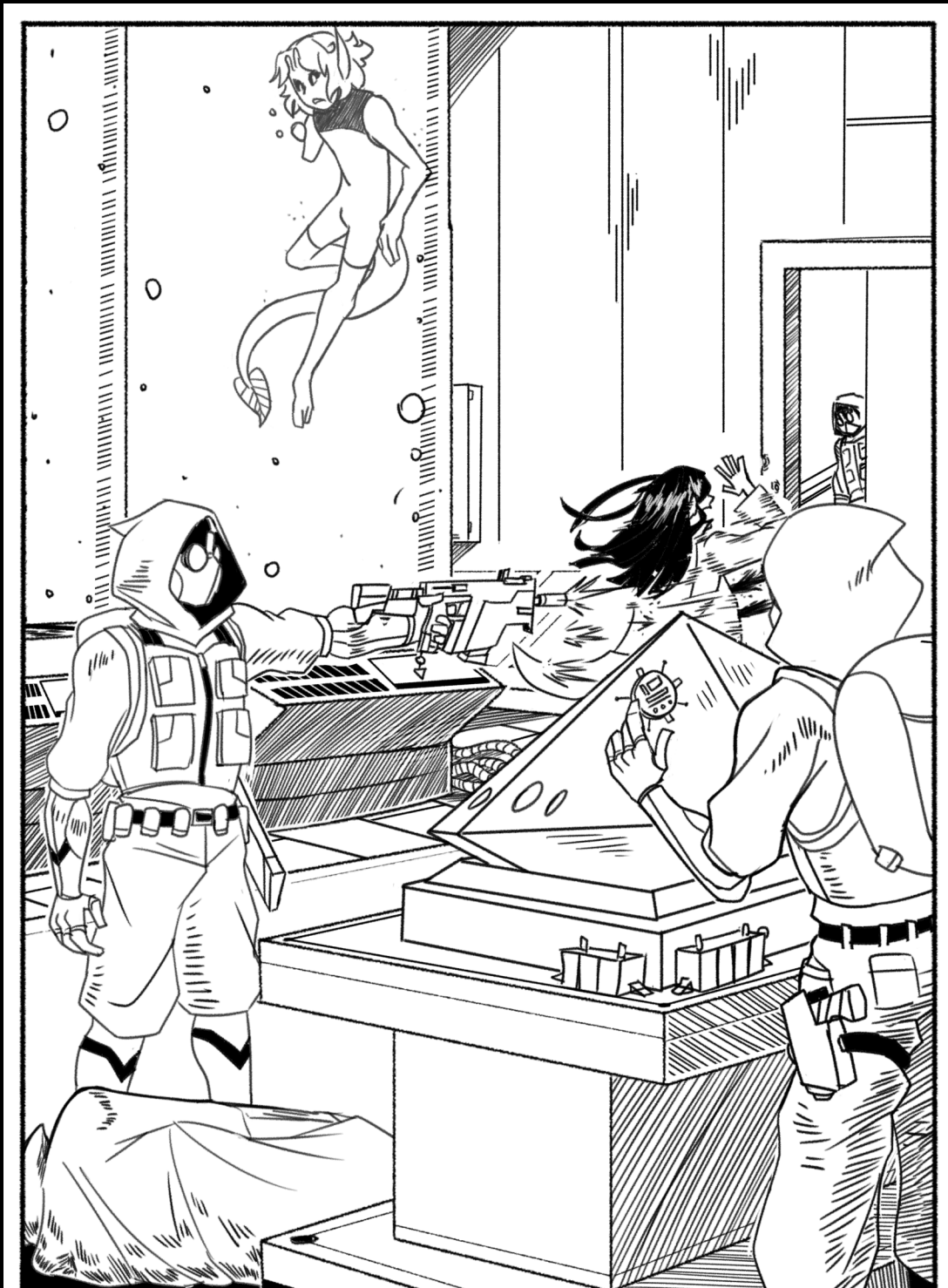
► **Hardened:** Each Pilot gets +1 Scar box. This costs three Squad Upgrades to unlock.

EXAMPLE R+D ALLIES AND RIVALS

- Mastod, an irate scholar
- Owl, a logical zealot
- Twitch, a star navigator
- Utmai, a deadly noble

The war is fought with giant machines. At least that's what I thought right? Before I joined the Cenotaph. So much of The War does revolve around AWVs, not just their power, but their image, too. But I wonder how long that will last. We found fragments of research in the wreckage of a DFS AWV. Seriously messed up. This wasn't wires and circuits. It was blood and nerves. I didn't really get it, but I could see how shocked Dredge was even behind cors mask. I asked cor about it later, and co would only tell me, "They're augmenting... it's inhumane. It's disgusting. Keiko, I hope you never see the results of this."

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday



Some people just have too much blood in them. You help them with that problem, and keep the mess from spilling out.

CHOOSE [REDACTED] IF YOU WANT TO:

- ◆ Commit hidden violence.
- ◆ Be the morally dubious hand of your Faction's authority.
- ◆ Be the bogeyman other squads whisper about.

XP TRIGGER

Execute a successful accident, disappearance, murder, or ransom operation.

STARTING UPGRADES

- **TRAINING (INSIGHT):** When taking the Train downtime activity for Insight, take 2 XP instead of 1. *A space for deep thought, to let you hone your insight.*
- **TRAINING (PROWESS):** When taking the Train downtime activity for Prowess, take 2 XP instead of 1. *A space that lets you move freely to exercise your prowess.*

ABILITIES

► **DEADLY:** Each Pilot 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.

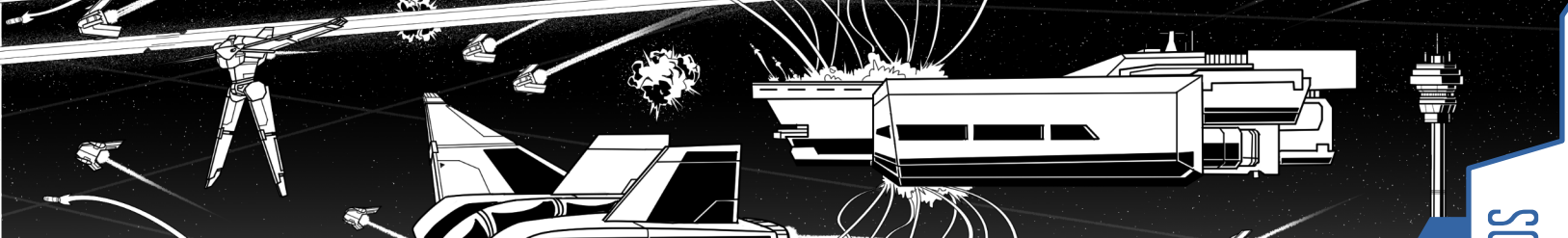
► **NO TRACES:** When you keep an operation quiet or make it look like an accident, you get half the Rep value of the target (rounded up) instead of zero. Additionally, if you don't lose any Trust with your employer Faction on a mission, take +1 Rep.

► **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 immune to its Effects.

► **VETERAN:** Choose a special ability from another squad playbook.



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.

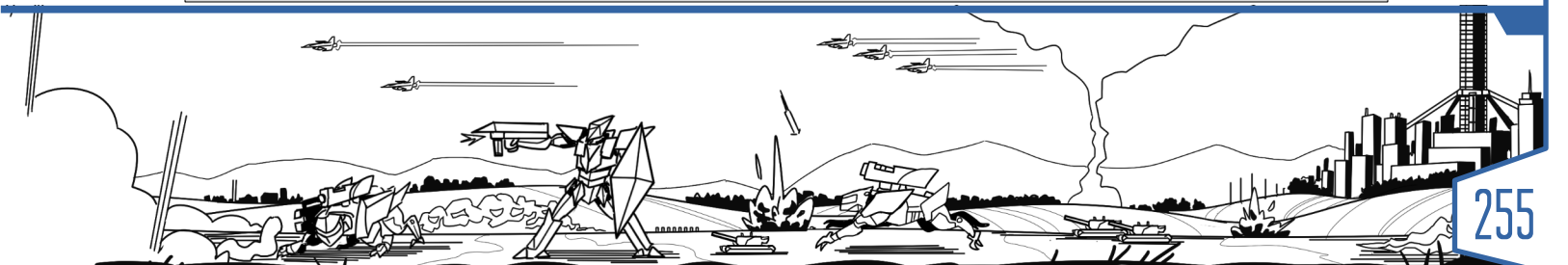
► **Hardened:** Each Pilot gets +1 Scar box. This costs three Squad Upgrades to unlock.

EXAMPLE ALLIES AND RIVALS

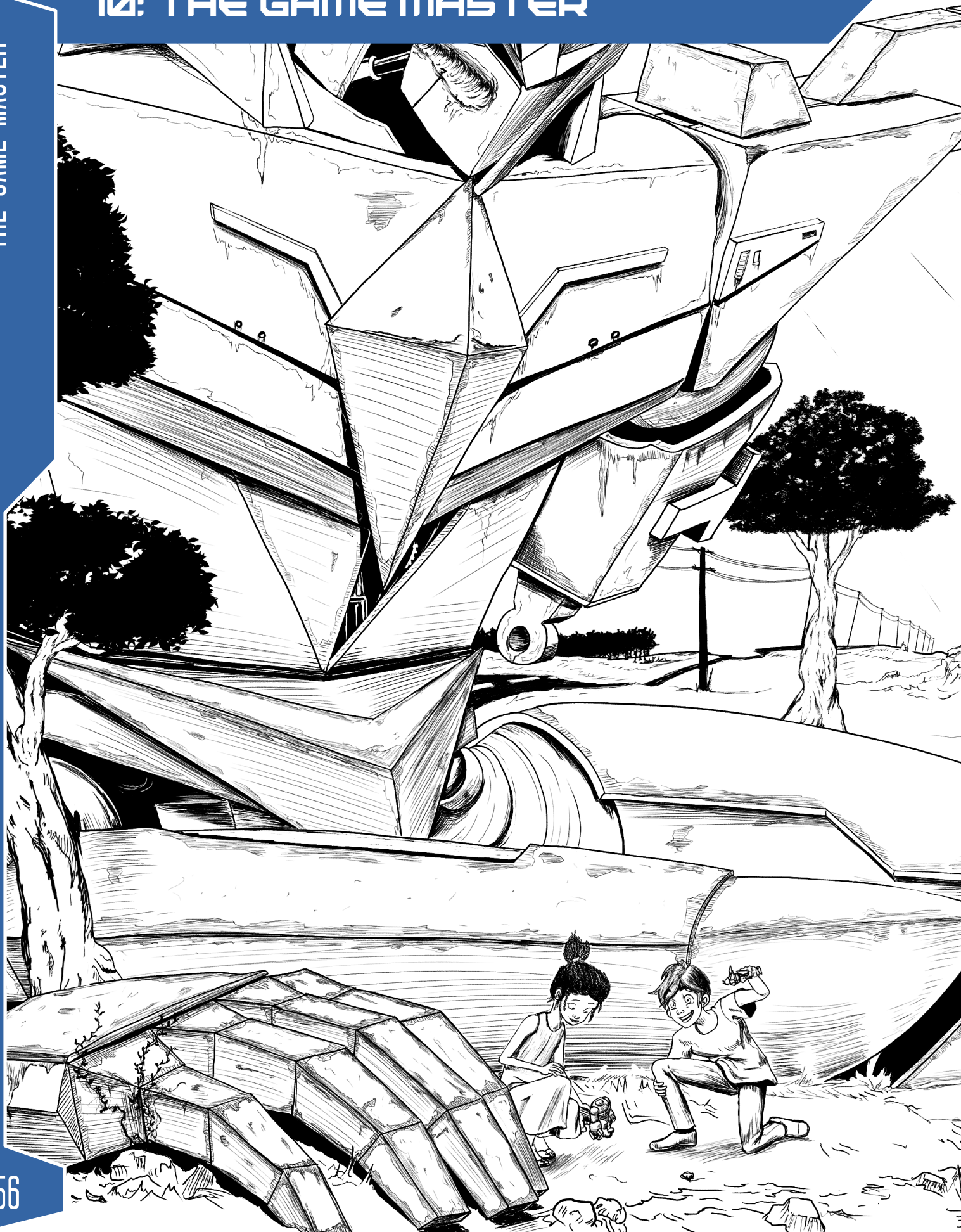
- Setrad, a vicious teacher
- Beanfield, a proxy hunter
- Bellamy, an agile CEO
- Heat, a slow hacker

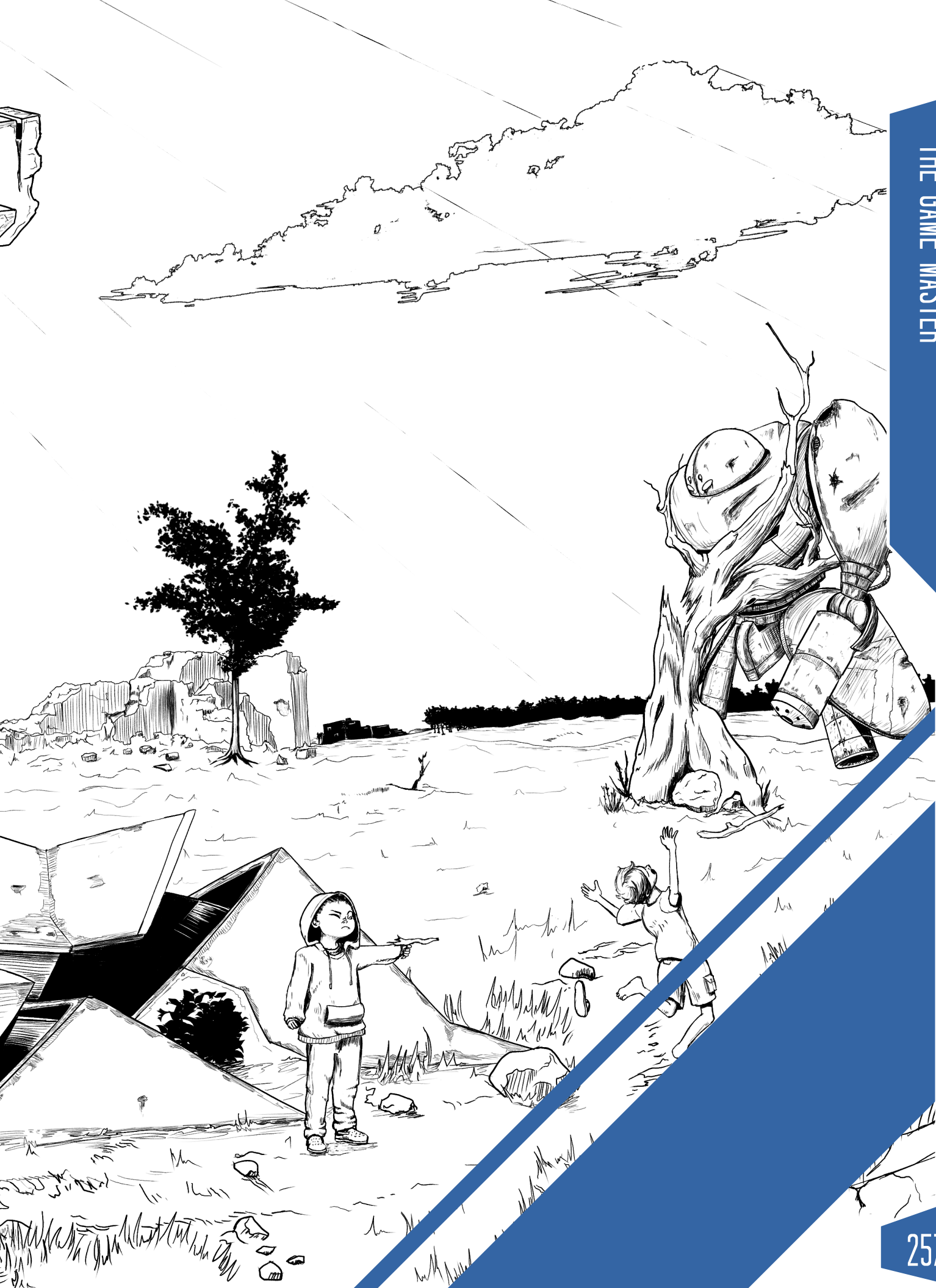
I've seen some seriously fucked up things. The Cenotaph has been outgunned in so many situations I've lost track of how many times I thought, "we're going to die." But this last mission doesn't even compare to those. I watched another squad disappear. We had no info on this squad that ambushed us. No identifying markings. The instant they appeared, there was a comms blackout. Harrow had told me about squads like this before, and I thought it was like a ghost story. But I really saw them pour something on those bodies. I watched them dissolve into nothing.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday



10: THE GAME MASTER





THE GAME MASTER

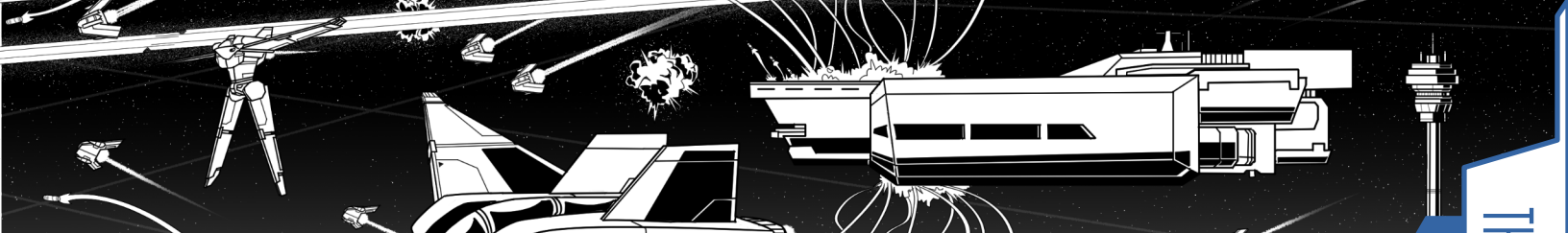
Beam Saber is about Pilots and their massive war machines. There will be times when it is appropriate to focus on the Pilots—their relationships, moral beliefs, and their mental and physical wounds. Other times, the spotlight should be on their vehicles—metal giants crossing blades, transport trucks 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, you'll move the spotlight between these aspects of the game as a film director would.

GM GOALS

The GM should strive toward these four goals every session:

- ◆ **Play to find out what happens.** There's no need for the GM to actively prepare the story. After all, there are three parties that have input into the story: the GM, the players, and the dice. If the players or dice take the game in an unexpected direction, go with it. Chase the narrative alongside the players. 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.** Speak with honor when you tell the players what their surroundings look like, what NPCs do, and what happens because of all this. Don't lie to the players, and don't favor 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 263) falls to you. But encourage your table to share that work so everyone stays safe. And remember, that includes your safety as well. Ask the table to check in during and after dark or heavy scenes.

Beam Saber uses GM Principles and Actions to help you achieve these goals.



GM PRINCIPLES

You should strive toward meeting these GM Principles during every session. They help the game flow easier and give you an idea of how to portray the world and the people living in it.

► **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 will be an inciting incident that starts the story, the players' Pilots 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, ask them to first describe what their character does—get an idea of what the story and stakes look like. Establish Position and Effect if it requires a roll, then the player can decide to use an ability that might change the situation.

► **Address the Pilots.** Address the players with their Pilot's name when in-fiction concerns arise, such as their Pilot's actions. 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 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 centers less than 100km away only ever notice The War as distant thunder. The poor are conscripted to fight, while wealthy scions 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 on for a long time, and it's 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 calculation

I'm really grateful for my squad. And for Scratch, I guess. For a commanding officer, they're not all that bad, even if their suits are atrocious. I think maybe COs are just bad in general. Maybe that's because when we interact with officers from other squads we only see the face they put on to deal with other squads, that negotiating side of them, but that really hasn't left a good impression on me like, ever. Even when we worked with Layla and the Rubble Runts, things were a little weird. I didn't like that at all, that feeling that I couldn't fully trust her despite how much I care for her.

It's like, I do actually get the sense that Scratch cares about us. But they're also looking out for themselves first. When the Cenotaph does well, they're the one benefiting from that, and I get the sense that if things went real bad they wouldn't hesitate to use us as a scapegoat. There have been some missions that felt like such an obviously terrible idea, that I can't help but wonder if Scratch was getting something extra on the side that they weren't letting on about. Or the times they asked us to follow really unreasonable ROE, which they said was because of the higher-ups. Was that really true? I don't know. All I know is those orders aren't worth shit if they're going to put the squad in danger. I just wish everyone else saw them the same way.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

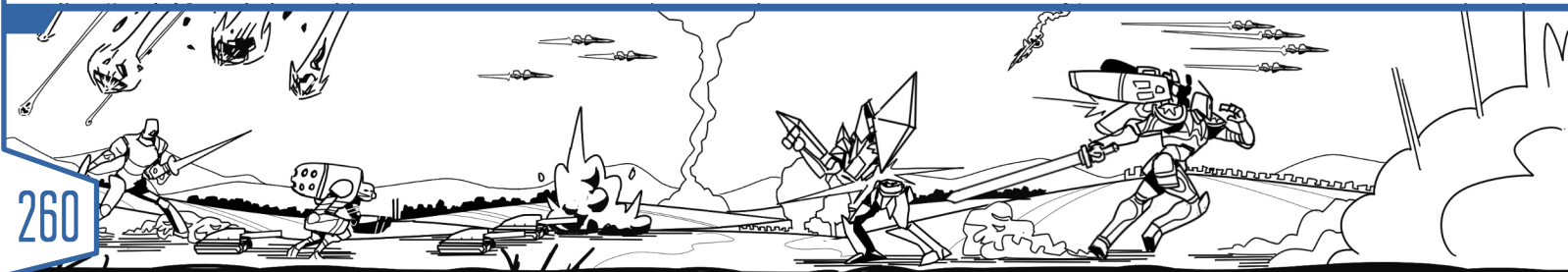
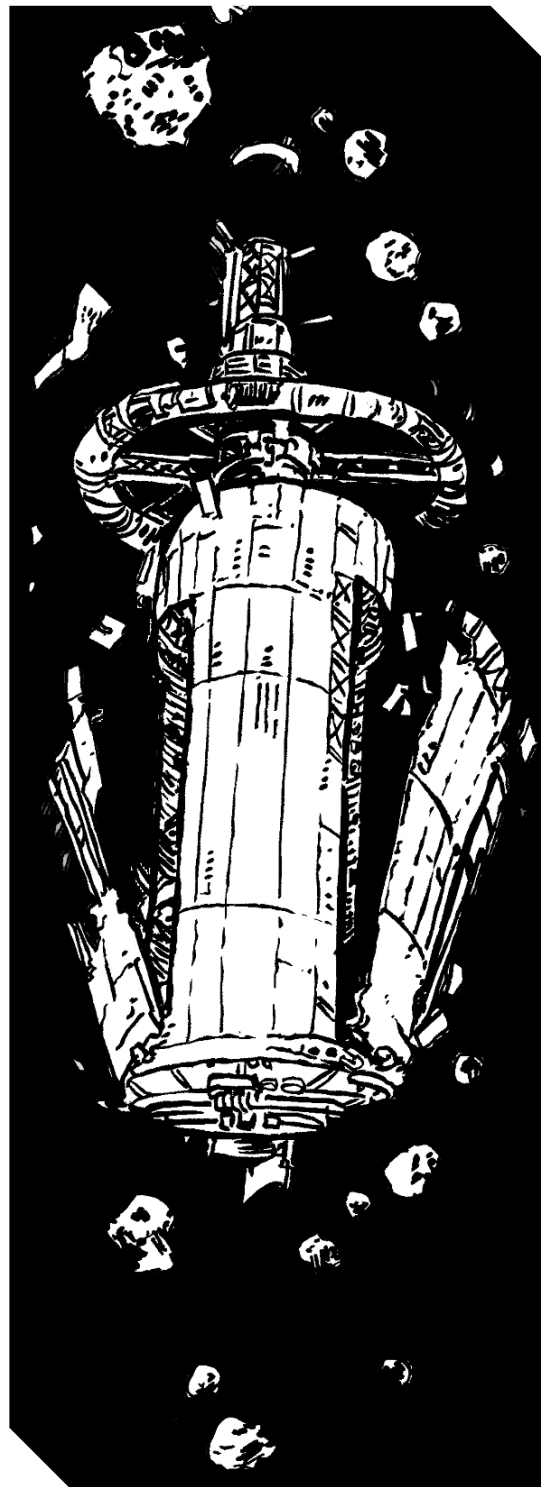
or dangerous acts of passion. Individuals can still be monsters, but they come from a society that produces and empowers them. Look to the 1914 Christmas Truce for a moment when soldiers fought The War and not each other.

► **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 about making the Pilots feel ineffective. But rather, reminding the players that their Pilots 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. Show this principle through the contrasting power and size available to them through their vehicles; the smallest machines are as tall as a three-story house. Enemy vehicles should feel even larger and more powerful, especially when the Pilots are outside of their own vehicles. These machines are terrifying, whether you're behind the controls or in danger of being absentmindedly squashed.

► **Consider the risk.** Usually, Pilots find themselves in a Risky Position—after all, they lead dangerous lives. But if they're carrying the momentum of a success, their Position might be Controlled. 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 okay. But if you do, consider what it means if dice have already been rolled.



GM ACTIONS

The game typically flows between the players and the GM—either the GM sets up what's happening and asks the players what they do, or the players assert what they want to do, and the GM lets the world respond. But if you're not sure what to do next, the following actions are a good place to start.

► **Ask questions.** Questions are your most versatile tool for responding to the Pilots' actions. You could ask a player: Are you focusing fire on the enemy Ace, or are you suppressing their 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 go from there.

► **Provide opportunities and follow the players' lead.** The War is filled with potential missions for the squad. Sometimes these missions 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 players have an idea for a mission, 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 Region 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 regard to their superiors' motives and the enemy's resources). There are only five things 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 (ROE)** are actions that the employer forbids the Pilots from doing.

Of course, players may gather information about the mission, such as other squads with a vested interest in the objective, possible complications, or confidential intelligence about the situation. But if they begin planning too much, remind them that they can perform flashbacks (page 74).

► **Cut to the challenge.** This game feeds on momentum. When the players start a mission, jump to their first obstacle. If they're having a quiet dialogue during downtime, skip the small talk and start with the tough questions. 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, make the stakes clear so there's no confusion about the potential Harm or Damage, and then ask: "What do you do?" This setup allows the players to create unexpected and skillful ways to avoid danger while also making the potential consequences clear. 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. 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. This GM action makes 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 (see page 78)! 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 an action or has a choice to make, tell them the probable consequences for the paths before them, then ask: "What do you do?"

► **Tick a Clock.** Ticking a Clock increases tension and follows through on consequences without ending a conflict entirely. It's 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. Remember, keep these Clocks visible to the players so they get a sense of the time, pacing, and seriousness of the conflict.

► **Offer a Collateral Die.** Give players a choice: Offer a bonus die with an interesting consequence (that happens regardless of success or failure), or refuse the die and take a bigger gamble on their roll. If players have an idea for an interesting consequence, feel free to take their suggestions or actively ask them.

► **Think offscreen.** 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 which might be waiting down the line or drawn to the current action.

PLAYER COUNT

Beam Saber is recommended for 3-4 Players plus a GM. Why that number? When I've GM'ed *Beam Saber* for five players before, I often feel like I can't provide the Pilots with an equal spotlight. 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 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 disrupt the narrative flow, and it risks players losing the story thread because it's been 20 minutes since they did anything.

Another consideration for larger player counts is resource management. Larger squads give the game a stronger sense of attrition in The War. They have more resources (Stress, Quirks, Load, Harm/Damage, etc.), but 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 the resources they do spend will be difficult to recover, making their losses hit hard.

SESSION ZERO

Session zero takes place before the first session with the first mission. A session zero is the foundation of a campaign—it's the time to discuss tone, create Pilots and vehicles, and do a little worldbuilding. It builds the narrative and, more importantly, social bonds within the game. This section has steps to follow for laying those foundations.

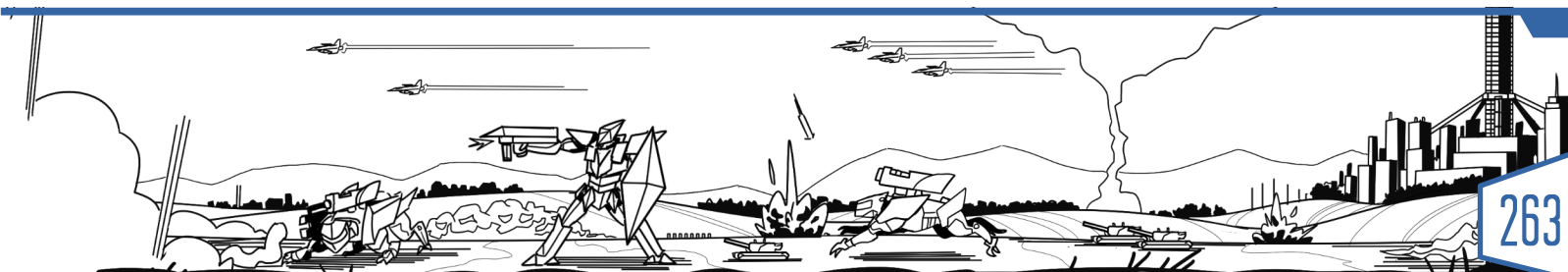
LINES, VEILS, AND THE X CARD

Beam Saber is designed to tell the harsh tale of people physically and emotionally struggling through 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 emotionally charged situations that they didn't agree to experience, whether they're a player or the GM.

This is where Lines, Veils, and the X-card come in handy (explained below). Use these tools to establish clear boundaries for the upcoming game, even for things that may seem obvious. You may think one topic is a clear no-go area for your table, but remember that people may have different tolerance levels for engaging in difficult, real-world themes. It's best to start on the same page, rather than get there partway through a campaign.

If someone at the table uses these tools in bad faith (such as using them to purposefully ruin the fun of others or to introduce uncomfortable topics), the group should have a serious discussion about whether this person is an acceptable addition to the game.

There are also many other safety tools designed for tabletop role-playing games. If you aren't a fan of the ones presented here, don't hesitate to find some that work for you and your group. But whatever your choice, safety tools are mandatory for your *Beam Saber* campaign.



LINES

A Line is something that the group agrees will NEVER come up in the game (not even “off screen” or in-universe). Lines are a way to exclude material that would ruin the play experience for at least one person at the table. For example, you might put a Line on spiders if they give you a negative emotional reaction—that means no spider-shaped mechs, crawling through spider-infested air ducts, and so on. 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 don’t leave players feeling emotionally exploited.

To create Lines, ask the table for topics they want to be left out of the game, and make a list for everyone to reference during play. Try to make this process anonymous if possible—such as everyone writing their Lines on separate index cards for the GM to read aloud anonymously, or using a shared Google Doc. If you figure out who anonymously suggested a Line, don’t say anything about it. Each player should feel safe and free from judgment to express their Lines.

No one has to explain why they don’t want to explore the topic—it may be very personal and private, and talking about it may bring back unpleasant feelings. People are welcome to voluntarily divulge their reasons, but everyone should treat these discussions with respect and understanding.

Anyone may add Lines to the list after session zero. Sometimes, a player discovers a Line they forgot existed, or a topic comes up that they hadn’t anticipated. You might not think to name “spiders” as a Line in a game about machines of war, but you might want to if someone describes their vehicle as having spider-like limbs. The addition of this Line may be accompanied by the use of the X-card (see below), or a less formalized pause of the game. Work with the player who added the new Line to see what they need to feel comfortable and safe.

VEILS

A Veil is a topic that may come up in play, but won’t ever be in focus or lingered upon in the fiction. Veils usually exist to help bring up troubling content without causing anyone at the table harm. If the Veil comes up in the game, you might fade to black, describe it in the most basic detail, or allude to it off-screen. For example, a Veil on “spiders” might mean describing the cobwebs on a vehicle to show its state of disrepair, but not the creatures living inside.

Veils should likewise be discussed as a group and put on a list for reference during the campaign. Anyone can add Veils to the list during the game, for whatever reason. Again, no one should be pressured into discussing their Veils in detail.

THE X CARD

X

The X-card is a tool created by John Stavropoulos (<http://tinyurl.com/x-card-rpg>) to help manage topics on the fly during a role-playing game. Draw a big X on an index card, on a piece of paper, or on any material you have on hand. For online games, you can draw a large X in the play space or use a group text chat. Put the X somewhere in the play space where everyone can access it.

If someone wants to cut out or change something that comes up in a scene, they can invoke the X-card. This might be by tapping the card or picking it up. However, tell players they can also say “X-card,” type “X-card” in a group chat, make an “X” with their arms, or any other means of communication suitable to your group. Everyone at the table must have safe access to the X-card.

When someone uses the X-card, immediately edit out the detail that necessitated the card’s use. If the harmful detail is unclear, pause the game to identify the content (but don’t probe into why it’s harmful). Consider taking a break so people can collect themselves or discuss how to change the scene if needed. Add the harmful detail to your Lines or Veils if needed, so everyone knows how to handle the topic in the future. You may not need to if it’s a temporarily sensitive topic, such as a person who recently ate hearing about eating something gross.

Above all, remember that everyone’s well-being is more important than the game. Don’t hold it against someone if they’re okay with a topic now, and then later decide to X-card the topic. Additionally, these tools create space for a conversation (to whatever level people are comfortable); they don’t replace the conversation. If a person would rather speak against a topic’s use in the game, that should be respected. It’s okay if someone wants to leave the campaign because they’re not having fun (and that includes you, GM). Talk with the person first to see if you can make changes to increase their fun. But if they’re done, don’t push it. Likewise, it’s not the GM’s job to make other people have fun, so protect your well-being too. Either way, a player leaving may end the campaign, and that’s okay. You can always start another.

DISCUSSING EXPECTATIONS

With boundaries established, it's time to discuss what people DO want in the game. Mecha media does have its themes, tropes, and archetypes, but players will likely have their own specific ideas they want to explore. After all, some mecha stories focus 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*).

The best *Beam Saber* campaigns start with an agreement on what themes you'll bring out in the game. If you don't, you'll likely see players pull the story in conflicting directions that weaken the campaign—which in turn may cause problems for you and the other players.

Discuss with your group (and remember to give your input too):

◆ **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?**

It's common to play a single session (also known as a one shot) when trying a new game. But some people like to have campaigns without an expected endpoint.

◆ **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 wants to experience in the game.

◆ **Is the game about the Pilots or the squad?**

Choosing a focus helps gauge the table's interest in roster changes, Harm, and removing Pilots from the game (temporarily or permanently). A squad-focused game implies more roster changes should a Pilot die, retire, go AWOL, or any situation that requires a player to change characters. Those stories will likely touch upon changing group dynamics, loss, and feeling expendable. Whereas Pilot-focused games focus more on the long-term relationships between these Pilots as they struggle through The War together—losing a Pilot is a big blow to the squad.

◆ **How politically complex should it be?**

(see the political scale section on page [273](#))

◆ **What Factions and squads do people want to see?**

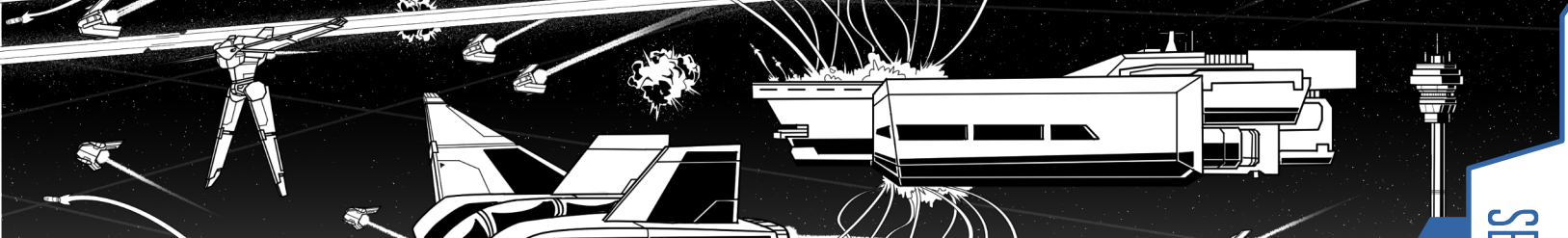
Focus on three or four squads at the start, whether choosing from the examples or creating them from scratch.

◆ **How large of an area should the campaign cover?**

Consider whether the campaign focuses on a national, planetary, or galaxy-sized scale of conflict (see the map scale on page [271](#)).

◆ **What environments do we want to see in our campaign?**

You could play in deep space, with communities formed around clusters of asteroids and nomadic nation ships. However, some players may prefer a game set in a climate similar to the region where they live. Your choice will impact how technology works, so choose what will be fun for everyone.



◆ **How dangerous and gritty should our campaign be?**

Some people want to feel the adrenaline of a dice roll when threatened by a mugger with a knife, while others want to feel fearless as they describe their Pilot in a blazing gunfight.

◆ **How combat focused should we be?**

Some people want to fight their way into and out of every problem, while others would prefer to talk or sneak. Some may even want to avoid combat entirely by having the game focused on encounters that aren't life and death, such as vehicle-based sports.

◆ **How frequently should the Pilots face conflicts outside of their vehicles?**

Some people want to emphasize their vehicle's power through action, while others feel that Pilots should be challenged as often as their machines.

◆ **What technologies do we want to see in the game?**

AR is part of Beam Saber's core setting, but players might have no interest in exploring its impact, and would rather focus on cybernetic augmentation.

CREATING THE CHARACTERS AND SQUAD

Once you have an idea of the tone and scope of your campaign, it's time to make your squad of Pilots. First, players pick a Faction to patronize the players' squad (unless they decide to work for themselves). Pick a patron Faction that excites everyone, don't just settle for the least offensive option. The squad's patron Faction may be the largest aesthetic influence on the group, and it also gives narrative meaning to the missions they take.

Next, the players select a squad playbook. This playbook should thrill everyone, as the playbook will influence the missions this squad runs. If players can't decide, pause to reconsider the tone and expectations of your campaign. Maybe there was something the group overlooked during Lines and Veils or discussing expectations.

Create your squad and the FOB after choosing a squad playbook. Then players create their Pilots and vehicles (page 58 and 156 respectively). If some players already have ideas for their Pilot and vehicle before deciding on the squad, that's alright. The two creation processes influence each other. Some groups may even find it beneficial to move back and forth between squad creation and Pilot creation!

A Pilot's history, tragedy, and opening help establish setting details through the character's lived experiences. If a Pilot's tragedy involved a Faction that used the Pilot's orbital station home as a kinetic weapon, it introduces civilian space stations and Factional willingness to use them as weapons. In fact, every decision from here on out colors the NPC squads, their patron Faction's focus, and other interpersonal squad and Faction dynamics.



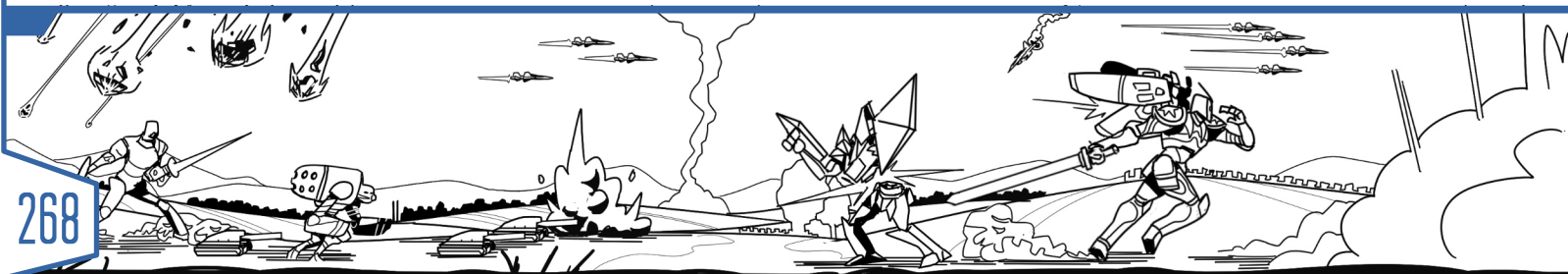
INTRODUCE THE CHARACTERS

With the characters and squad made, it's time to introduce everyone. Each player should state their character's:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| ◆ Name and/or call sign | ◆ Opening | ◆ Vehicle name |
| ◆ Look | ◆ Drive | ◆ Vehicle model |
| ◆ History | ◆ Pilot ability | ◆ Vehicle look |
| ◆ Tragedy | | ◆ Vehicle Load |

Ask the players questions about these details, and encourage the other players to ask questions as well. You might ask how much the public knows about a Pilot's tragedy, why they're pursuing their drive, or how they gained their Pilot ability. It's okay if they don't know the answer yet, it can be answered during play.

Finally, discuss the Pilots' beliefs about each other and name the squad. Beliefs define the bond between Pilots and give XP opportunities, so don't skip them. If a player is really stuck on a belief, consider using an example from their playbook (or even a different playbook). If you can't name the squad, don't worry. You can figure it out after a couple of missions.



GM TIPS AND CONSIDERATIONS

What follows is advice from the game's creator to help GMs facilitate the best possible Beam Saber experience.

- Make instructions from the patron Faction's superiors seem inappropriate, incompetent, and confusing, then blame it on the Pilots for missing the big picture.

- Consider giving the player what they want on a result of 1-3, but make what they want turn out to be a terrible thing.

- Consider destroying vehicle items as a consequence. Tell the players to replace the item's occupied Load slot with "junk." Alternatively, damage their vehicle items by removing the fine tag (at least temporarily).

- Consider harming the Pilot, even when they are in a vehicle. Some attacks may pierce the vehicle's cockpit, wounding the Pilot but leaving the vehicle intact.

- Consider using consequences, whether from results of 1-3 or 4-5, to show that the Pilots are skilled, but were just taken by surprise. They don't always fail because they made a mistake, sometimes it's bad luck or a more competent enemy.

- 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, instead of not acting without it.

- Place Clocks on maps in the locations where they apply.

- If you think the downtime phase is taking too long, consider combining multiple activities into the same narrative. For example, maybe one Pilot Cuts Loose alongside another Pilot as they Fix a vehicle, or perhaps a Pilot Schmoozes at the same time they Acquire an Asset.

- Don't be afraid to change your plans if the Pilots are extremely beat up. Consider the game's tone and story. Is it more interesting to grind them down, or would that just ruin the fun? You have control over the consequences.

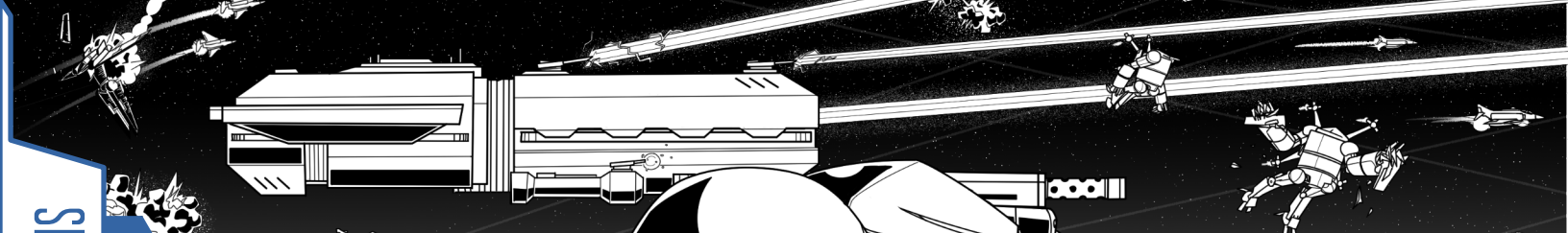
- Sometimes the GM should give missions to the squad, and sometimes the players should suggest missions to the GM. The latter could involve the GM speaking as the CO to the squad about the upcoming mission, or they could give the squad a long-term objective, ROE, and expect the squad to figure out an approach (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, go over everyone's beliefs. This will remind players to lean into them, push back on them, and create conflict with them.

- There may be times when the squad won't receive a Supply Roll after a mission, however, you must tell the squad they won't get one before they accept it. Players can negotiate with the GM, and Pilots can make rolls to sweeten a situation. But ultimately, the players decide whether they do or don't accept missions for reduced compensation. Here are some reasons that the players might not get a Supply Roll:

- ◆ The mission's employer is an Independent squad.
- ◆ The employing Faction blackmails the squad into completing the mission.
- ◆ The mission doesn't have an employer (for example, the Pilots are working for themselves).
- ◆ The narrative dictates that receiving a Supply Roll doesn't make sense—the supplies can't be reached, there are no supplies to be had, etc.





► When a player makes an outlandish suggestion, don't automatically say, "No." Instead, ask that player, "How?" If their explanation seems reasonable to the group and doesn't go against the game's tone, let them try. Maybe their idea makes more sense with a Long-Term Project than a single action roll. Give them a chance to fulfill their dreams, and you'll be rewarded with an interesting story.

► When you present an approaching danger to the players and they take no action to stop or avoid it, inflict the consequences. If they're fighting on train tracks and you describe a nearing train whistle, they should get hit by the train if they ignore the sound and keep fighting. They can always resist the consequence if they want.

► If the complications, characters, and other details you prepared don't come up in the session, save them for a more appropriate time later. No need to waste good prep.

► Be generous with giving drive Ticks to players, as drives fuel character arcs. If a Pilot gets 1 Tick every mission, it will take a whopping eight missions to save up enough Drive Clocks to

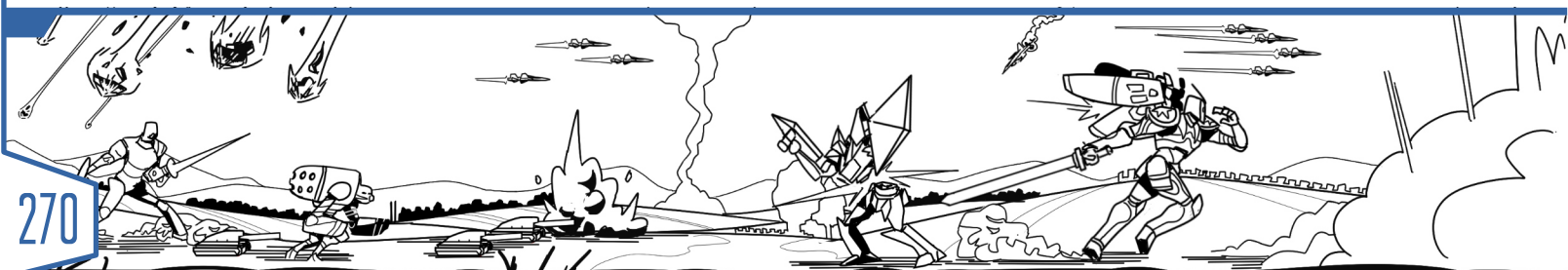
change a person's life. If you don't like how fast your players are accumulating drive Ticks, you can control how effective drive is by negotiating the scale of "change" and "circumstances."

► If you can't think of a consequence for an action roll, you can ask the players to suggest one. 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 will 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 about their squadmates: What kind of person their squadmate is, why they're in a bad mood, how their relationship is going. It'll encourage the players to express the squad's dynamics (which may be worth XP at the end of the session), and helps develop characters' personalities.

► Questions for GMs to ask players: *Have you done this before? Are you OK with this? IS that true?*



HOW TO PREPARE A CAMPAIGN

The session zero is done, the squad's set up their FOB, and the Pilots are ready to go. Now it's time to start thinking about the campaign. This can be daunting to do alone, which is why this section exists!

If you start to feel overwhelmed, use these tips:

- ◆ **Think about session zero.** Your players shared what excites them, so draw from that energy. For example, if the players want to focus on a single city, you know you won't be focusing 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! 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 (page 338) into any urban area that needs a ruined section.

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

A campaign's physical geography primarily influences two facets of the game: the types of environment, and the communities that exist outside of the squad. You'll have some idea of how this looks after session zero.

If your players want to explore multiple planets, you'll see a variety of differing geography. The plants, animals, vistas, natural dangers, and technology may change wildly from mission to mission. Pilots won't know exactly how to prepare and may find their vehicles caught off guard by a planet's unique defenses.

On the other hand, campaigns focused on a smaller area will pay more attention to city-scale conflicts and local politics (rather than space-wide politics). It's 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 through their interactions with the Pilots. In turn, they'll flesh out the



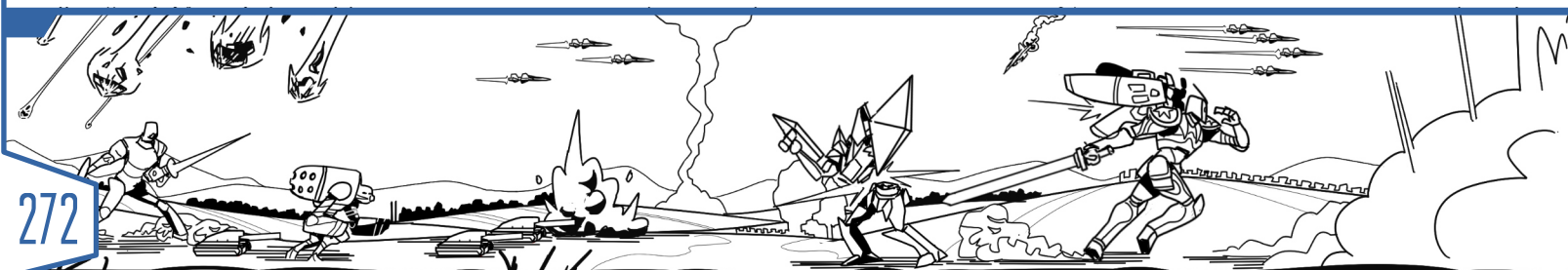
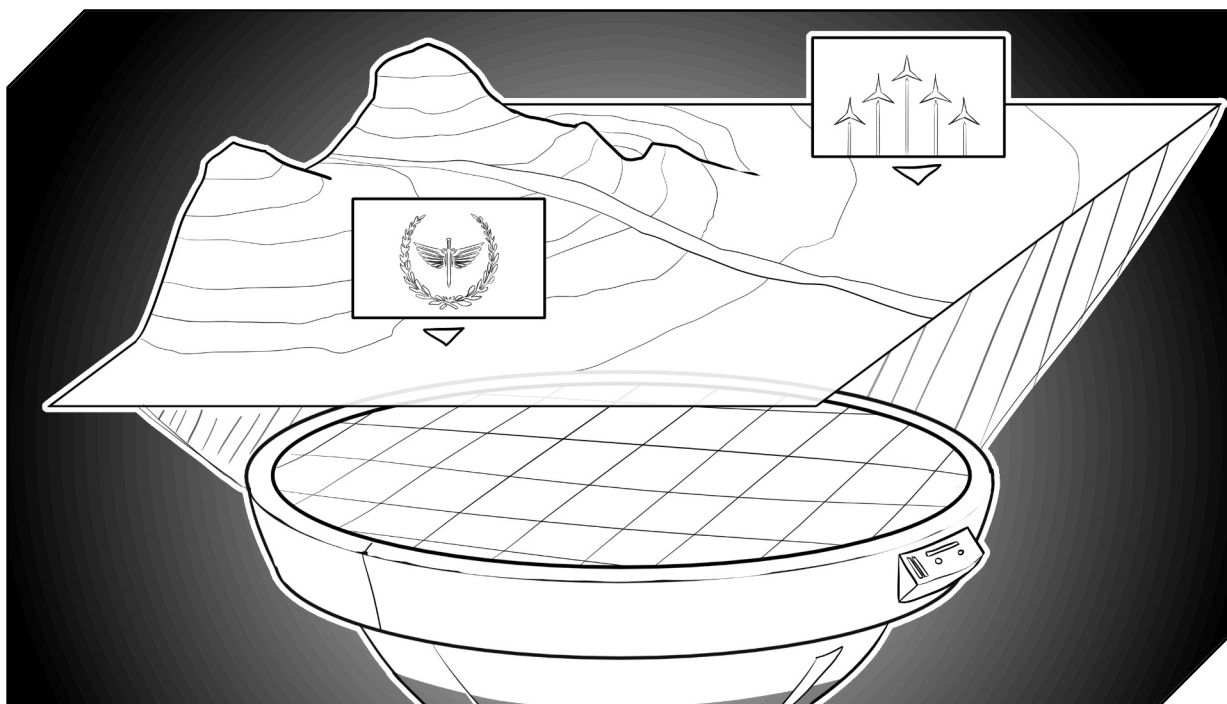
communities they are from, both their culture and social circles. The campaign's map, too, will become more fleshed out with time as places are revisited or talked about. Of course, staying in the same place means that the view outside the window doesn't change very much.

Is it better to have a planet-hopping campaign with many strange horizons or one in a single city? Your campaign will likely see a mix of the two, but it's okay if your group skews more toward space over land and vice versa. It'll likely shift over the campaign's duration.

When starting a campaign, first consider the size of the squad's FOB or downtime area. Is the region the size of a neighborhood, town, county, province, nation, planet, or star system? A region is the smallest mechanical unit of geography, and a campaign's scale should be no larger than two steps above a region's size. For example, if every town is a region, the game should focus on conflicts within a single county or province at most.

What happens if the squad needs to travel to a place beyond the scale agreed at session zero? Everyone should consider whether this degree of travel is a one-time thing or a new norm. A one-time journey doesn't need significant adjustment, as most missions will take place upon the scale agreed at session zero. If the game shifts to a larger scale permanently, the group should discuss how this impacts the story.

Regardless of the map's scale, make sure the players have limited elbow room throughout the campaign. This feeling can be achieved with strategic objectives that are constantly fought over. Bridges, cities, factories, harbors, spaceports—all of these are points of conflict that every Faction wants to control in some capacity.



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 has 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. Find some middle ground between the two.

Campaigns of two or fewer Factions have very clear political lines—us and them. If the players pick an Independent squad in this scenario, they can play both sides against each other or push one side to victory. If things get stale, you can add a third or fourth Faction to the campaign.

Campaigns with three or more Factions create possibilities for Faction alliances, which in turn allows for betrayals, lesser evils, aligned interests, and all kinds of immoral, pragmatic decisions. If the players choose an Independent squad, they will likely pursue their own ambitions, as Factions will be far more concerned about the actions of other Factions. If you feel like there are too many Factions in play at one time, talk with the players about which Factions they want to spotlight right now.

No campaign should have more than eight “active” squads. Active squads are those feature prominently, either as the target, a close ally, or an interfering third party. There can be other squads that exist, but they should not be attached to meaningful story arcs. Otherwise, the story binding Pilots to NPCs becomes too loose or vague.

But how do you choose which NPC squads to feature? First, consider which squads interest your players. If a player becomes invested in an NPC squad, chances are that squad will feature an ally or Rival—perfect for intrigue and drama. Next, consider the NPC squads’ Tier. Divide the featured squads by Tier into two categories: direct competition (NPC squads with two or fewer Tiers above the players) and conflict spoilers (squads with three or more Tiers above the players). Aim for an even split of direct competition and conflict spoilers (leaning towards more direct competition if given the option).

Direct competition squads are roughly on the same level as the players. They should regularly be the targets of missions and should take direct action (attacks, thefts, framing, etc.) against the players’ Pilots. Direct competition squads that have a positive Status with the players may occasionally team up with them on missions. Sometimes, squads two Tiers above the players may act as conflict spoilers.

Conflict spoilers are powerful squads who have bigger fish to fry, but may provide support (employment, information, tools, etc.) to weaker squads if it serves their own interests. Whether they provide these benefits to the players or their foes depends entirely on the squad’s Status with them. As the players’ squad increases in Tier, conflict spoilers become direct competition.

CREATING FACTIONS AND SQUADS

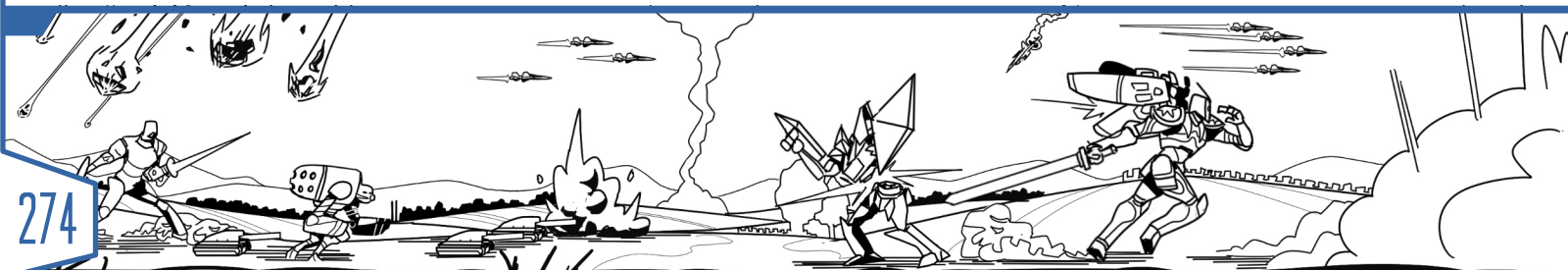
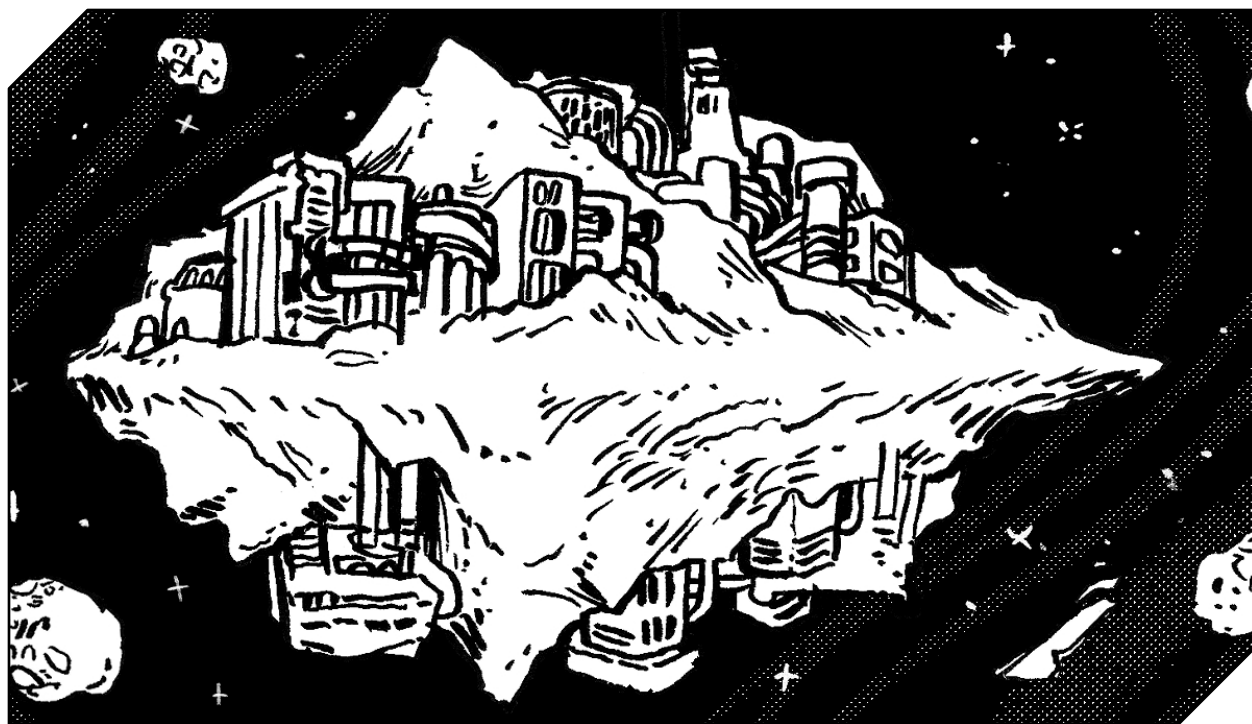
While there are premade squads and Factions, your group may want to create organizations unique to the campaign. Below you'll find advice for creating your own Factions and squads, but not every Faction or squad deserves this level of detail. See the political scale section (page 273) for advice on how many Factions and squads to make.

CREATING A FACTION

First, determine the Faction's type. Is it an Autocracy, Corporatocracy, Democracy, Oligarchy, or Theocracy? The answer influences its goals, and lets you know how it mechanically affects the players if they choose it for their patron Faction.

The type is the **only** thing required for making a Faction. However, you may find it useful to give Factions their own goals. If you're not sure how a Faction would react to a situation, their goal can give you some ideas.

What follows is a description of each type's **basis**, its **similarities** and **differences** to the others, **suggested goals**, and an unusual **alternative** to the standard variety. Use these details to flesh out a Faction however you see fit. 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.
- ◆ Access to +1 Materiel and +1 Trust during the reward process.

An Autocracy's **basis** has two key points: 1) there is a single leader who holds ultimate decision-making power (the autocrat), and 2) 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 (usually 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 wants to weaken and then conquer its neighbors.

An Autocracy has **similarities** to all the other Factions in that most Factions have a single leader. In this regard, it may be most like a Theocracy if that Theocracy has an all-powerful religious individual.

An Autocracy **differs** from the Factions that do not put the ultimate decision-making power in their leader's hands. Other Factions 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 through subtler means. The monarch rewards those who are loyal, impoverishes the untrustworthy, and ostracizes the dangerous. Very rarely do they resort to physical violence. But when they do, it is often performed through their control of the judicial system by 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.
- ◆ Access to +2 Materiel during the reward process.

A Corporatocracy's **basis** is that 1) the most competent should rule, and 2) 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. Its government is formed of 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 guide the government, and those people are selected based on their personal power. A Corporatocracy may also have a board chairperson or other singular leader, similar to the Oligarchy's consul or the Democracy's prime minister.

A Corporatocracy's **differences** are 1) how it measures personal power, and 2) who is eligible to wield power. Personal power in a Corporatocracy purely depends on a person's financial power, whereas oligarchies elect officials with power rooted in their connections and the debts owed to them. The difference in eligibility for political office is that the corporations themselves wield power in a Corporatocracy, and any individual within a corporation, including its representative, is entirely disposable. An Oligarchy's representatives, however, are eligible because they belong to a personal organization (such as a family or caste), making them disposable only in 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. They improve the Faction's resources and economically weaken opponents to achieve this goal.

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 as the Minister of Cities. This might seem ideal, but this government's criteria for selecting "experts" are usually full of its biases. On top of that, any given field is often divided on what is "correct," making it hard to identify an "expert" who can speak for everyone.

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.
- ◆ Access to +1 Materiel and +1 Personnel during the reward 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 are seen in the presence of a leader and the presence of voting.

A Democracy is most **different** from the Autocracy and Theocracy. A democratic leader is often a first among equals, having only a little more power than their fellow citizens. They are typically the face of the government and make decisions in times of crisis. Eventually, a Democracy's leader must answer to the people through inquiries, public opinion, and elections. Additionally, a Democracy has universal, or near universal, suffrage—a vast majority of the population has the ability to guide the course of government in some fashion. This is different from the corporatocracies, oligarchies, and some forms of Theocracy, where a tiny 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 often involve creating heroes and proving that the foes 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. A demarchy is set up so those who would misuse power for their own gain cannot volunteer themselves for positions of authority. Instead, anyone could be elected in a demarchy, 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.
- ◆ Access to +1 Personnel and +1 Trust during the reward process.

An Oligarchy's **basis** is that only certain people should have access to the levers of power to prevent mob rule, but the reason for having this governmental power differs from Oligarchy to Oligarchy. Some will only give landowners suffrage. Other grounds for suffrage include military service and familial lineage. All have a very low percentage of their population as eligible voters, ensuring the "right people" are the only ones who can vote.

An Oligarchy's **similarities** to other Factions come 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 they have a monarch of some kind, that "ruler's" voice is no louder than any other. Some oligarchies will have enough voters that they will have to elect committees to handle tasks, while others will have so few members that they can all sit around a table. Meanwhile, a corporation cannot sit at a table as a disembodied, non-sapient entity; it can only be represented by small, sentient parts of its whole. A Democracy likely can't fit inside of a single building, as there are far too many people.

An Oligarchy's **suggested goals** are Intelligence Coup and Divided They Fall. Oligarchies are filled with internal treachery to gain social power, and they carry those skills beyond their borders. They wreak havoc on their foes without getting their hands dirty.

An Oligarchy's **alternative** is a cryptocracy: the identities of those who are eligible to vote in a cryptocracy are completely hidden from the people whose lives will be affected by their decisions. How a voter is selected will vary. Some voting positions will be handed down, with the retiring elector selecting their replacement. Others have an AI who selects new electors at the end of every term. There might be no ruling body, and it's the faceless civil servants who 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 a perceived lack of religiosity may cause the populace to believe that its leaders have lost their divine authority.
- ◆ Access to +2 Personnel during the reward 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 that rules together. How they are selected for such positions varies between theocracies. Some will have councils that elect a leader, some will require demonstration of miracles, and some will be inherited. The population's continuing belief that their power is derived from non-mortal authorities keeps them in positions of leadership.

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 maintain power with popular loyalty through the lens of religion, not through inflicting fear, personal wealth, or direct social connections. 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 when creating a Faction. A government's purpose is to care for the populace through protecting it against external threats, building infrastructure, ensuring health, and other ways of providing the populace with stability. However, the degree to which each government embodies this ideal can vary wildly. 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 a Faction's level of corruption is by looking at how much power and wealth its leaders possess because they lead the Faction. If the leaders earn 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 may involve dishonest government reports, bypassing protocols for friends, underhanded legal proceedings, and all the other ways that leaders enrich themselves.

Here are some questions you can ask about each Faction that will indicate its level of corruption. 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 only a small number of people within the Faction's power structure interested in better serving 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?

Both an individual Faction's corruption and the general corruption of all Factions help set the tone for your campaign. A game will tend towards "Good versus Evil" if half the Factions are very corrupt and the other half experience minimal corruption. However, if all Factions have a middling amount of corruption, then your tone might reflect a pessimistic (some would say realistic) view of the real world. If everyone is incredibly corrupt, you get a setting where you can only differentiate Factions based on the lies they tell their populace.

FINAL TOUCHES

Construct a short list of aesthetic themes, notable NPCs, and vehicle designs for the Faction. The aesthetic themes are styles and symbols that inform the Faction's culture, fashion, infrastructure, and locations. Give its notable NPCs a name and a look, so you've got characters ready for when you need a Faction VIP, target to kill or capture, or contact for employment. Give its vehicle designs a name and look, so you're ready to describe the enemy when the fighting starts.

CREATING A SQUAD

When creating a squad, there are five things to consider:

► **What Faction does it belong to?** The answer 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 are instead held together by their shared passion. Theocracy squads will probably have religious iconography and may consider themselves to be on a mission from god.

► **What are its methods of operating?** 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. A squad doesn't need methods, but they may help the GM characterize the squad.

► **What are its goals?** Goals help determine where, when, and why they are deploying their methods. A general idea will do for now, as the next step involves fleshing out its goals. An alliance with the players' Pilots should work towards the NPC squad's goals too. Any conflict with the players' Pilots should also further their goals, such as when the players' Pilots impede their progress.

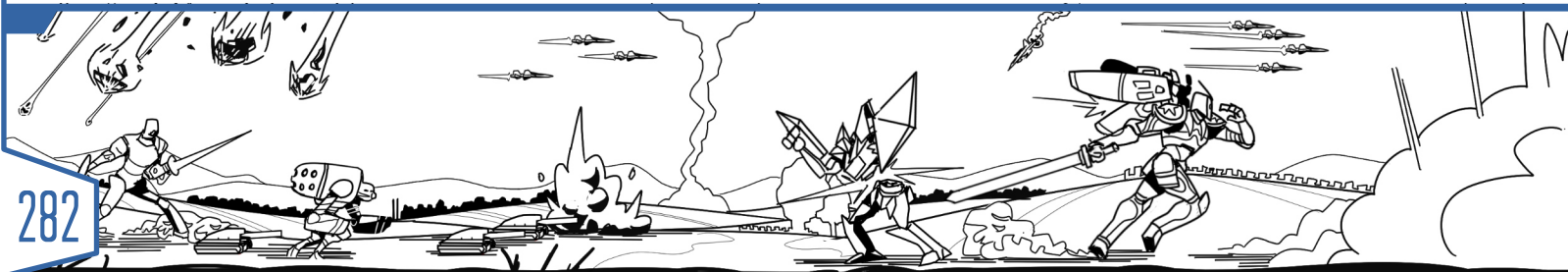
► **What is its Tier?** Tier determines how big of a threat they are to the Pilots (see page 191 for more on Tier). Let the fiction guide your decision. Give small, weak, or struggling squads Tier I or II. Consider Tier III for more powerful, individual squads. Squads that command other squads are usually Tier IV or V. Squads that are 1 or 2 Tiers higher than the Pilots are a good challenge. Anything higher will be quite difficult.

► **What is its name?** A memorable name will fuel imaginations and help build investment in that squad's narrative. Consider giving squads within the same Faction a shared naming convention so you can easily identify their connection to each other. For example, Autocracy squads could have names related to beasts, such as "The Wolf Pack," "The Lion's Pride," and, "The Dragon Slayers."

The GM doesn't need to complete a squad playbook for NPC squads, but if doing so would help you run the campaign, go for it. If you do, don't use the NPC squad's abilities and mechanics as written. NPC squads should act in ways that are most suitable to the fiction.

SQUAD GOALS

It's time to now flesh out the squad's goals. Only squads who interact with the Pilots and their plans need goals, as they help the GM direct the campaign's narrative. The goal can be anything that furthers the squad's interests and should illustrate their core identity. But keep the goal appropriate to the squad's Tier. For example, the Squaddies (Tier I) may have the goal of "acquire a steady supply of vehicle parts," but would never have a goal like "destroy the Great Crimson Brigade (Tier IV)" because they'd get crushed in an instant. The Squaddies could increase their Tier over time before taking a shot at the Great Crimson Brigade, though. Give the goal a Progress Clock with a size appropriate to the task's complexity.



RIVAL GOALS

A Rival can contribute to their squad's goals between missions. They might provide security, perform research, negotiate with other squads, or any other task that is appropriate to their nature. Adding a narrative detail ties the squad closer to the Pilots.

However, a Rival may have their own personal goal that is different from their squad's aims. Whatever the goal, connect it to the Pilots—especially the Rival's bonded foe. Give the Rival an appropriately sized Clock for the goal. Rivals may either contribute to their squad's fortune roll OR progress their own personal goal between sessions, but not both.

PROGRESSING FACTION, SQUAD, AND RIVAL GOALS

The GM progresses NPC squad, Faction, and Rival goals between sessions. The GM looks at the NPC squads, Rivals, and Factions that are currently active in the narrative. This includes any squads, Rivals, and Factions that were involved in recent missions, or will likely be involved in the next session. For each active NPC squad, the GM makes the following fortune roll to see how they progress their goal:

1. Create a dice pool using dice equal to the NPC squad's Tier.
2. If the players completed a mission that aided this goal since the squad's last fortune roll, take +1d to the pool.
3. If the players completed a mission that impeded this goal since the squad's last fortune roll, take -1d from the pool.
4. If a Pilot's Rival contributed to their squad's goal, take +1d to the fortune roll.
5. Roll the dice. On a 1-3 add 1 Tick to the Goal Clock, 4/5 add 2 Ticks, 6 add 3 Ticks, and on a Crit add 5 Ticks.

If a Rival chooses to pursue their own personal goals, they make a 1d fortune roll, as they lack direct support from their squad (so they ignore the squad's Tier). A Rival can only contribute to their squad's goal or their personal goal between sessions.

If the NPC squad's actions also helped out their patron Faction's goal, consider adding 1 Tick to the patron Faction's Goal Clock too. When a squad's goal Clock fills, it gains a benefit appropriate for the nature of the goal. It then gains a new Goal Clock based on their updated circumstances. The Pilots should hear a rumor or piece of news that indicates what the squad has gained (but you don't need to explicitly share all the details). Additionally, completing the NPC squad's Goal Clock may add 1 Tick to their Faction's Goal Clock if appropriate.

In the last session, The Cenotaph completed a mission on behalf of The Raccoons (a squad) to steal data from the Society for Wider Understanding (SWU, another squad). Their next mission will again target SWU. However, the group ends the session there.

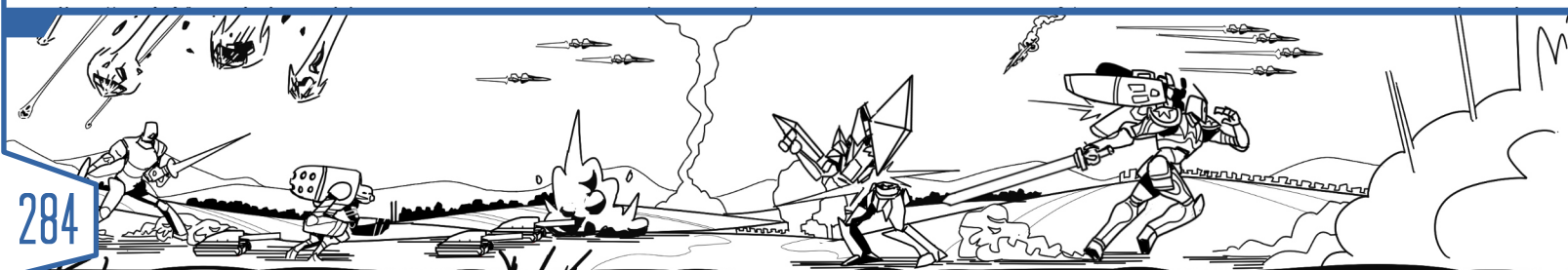
Between sessions, the GM first progresses the goals for recently active NPC squads. The Raccoons and SWU (which also contains Demon's Rival and ex-boyfriend, Vergil Bain) were in the most recent mission, so they each get a roll. The Raccoons (Tier I-S) were aided by The Cenotaph, so they get to roll 2d (1d for Tier and +1d for The Cenotaph's support). They get a 6, which gives them the 3 Ticks they need to complete the Goal Clock—increasing from Tier I-S to Tier II-W. The GM makes a note to have a scene with a leader of the squad thanking The Cenotaph for helping him get an upgraded AWW.

SWU is Tier II-S, but they roll 1d due to The Cenotaph's interference (2d for Tier and -1d for The Cenotaph's impact). The result is a 2, giving them 1 Tick toward their news channels becoming a major news source for the Celestial Myriad's populace. That 1 Tick gets SWU halfway through their Clock, the GM makes a note to point out that people are reading Jovangellian newspapers on the street during the next downtime.

Vergil Bain COULD have added +1d to SWU's roll, but he instead pursues his own goal of finding out Demon's current grift. Bain rolls 1d and gets a 3, adding 1 Tick his Clock as well.

Next, the GM progresses the goals of squads affected by the upcoming mission. The Cenotaph's players 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 rolled, so the GM rolls for only The March of Saints and Hartberg to see what they've been doing in the background. Hartberg ignores their personal goal to aid The Saints' goal, so the GM rolls 6d for The Saints (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 two other squads that have been involved in the story—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 the GM doesn't roll. The GM will roll their goals before the next mission where they're involved, just like with The March of Saints.



REGIONS

A region is an area that Factions want to control so they can expand their influence and resources. Regions are where squads, such as the players' squad, operate. Squads are used to capture hostile regions, hold captured ones, and exploit nearby resources. A region's size depends on your campaign's scale (see map scale page 271). If the game takes place in a single city, then each city district will likely be a region. For a game that crosses the stars, entire planets might be a single region.

Patron Factions expect their squads to fulfill Faction goals in the regions surrounding the squad's FOB. They might order the squad to develop infrastructure, build defenses, recruit from the locals, or something entirely different. The squads, who can call upon war machines, almost always have the means to fulfill these orders. But can you spare the resources, or is the order distasteful to your morals? 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. However, the squad isn't the only group in the area wielding power and seeking control.

CREATING A REGION

Each region should have a **name**, **description**, and **scene** at a minimum, even if the squad is just passing through. As a rule of thumb, campaigns need roughly one region per Faction to begin, and you can add more as needed.

The **name** should be memorable and speak to the region's nature. For example, "The Broken Bank" is a riverside region filled with ruined buildings. Even without the scene description, it paints a quick picture.

The **description** provides the region's recent history, why it is important, and how it looks. Keep the description to no more than a paragraph so the players can add details, too. The Broken Bank's description is: "Sitting on the south side of the Izya River, this area of Journey City used to be called 'Brown Bank' after a long-dead community organizer. But when the Offworlders brought their war to Earth and Journey City, Brown Bank was hit the 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 signs of life 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 describe the region through the lens of everyday life when the Pilots aren't tearing things up. The Broken Bank's scene is: *"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 wander down the street wearing forms of the deceased, stumbling from one sign of life to the next."*

If the squad will spend a lot of time in a region, give it **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. Give each NPC one or two sentences describing what they do, and two or three 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 and provide one of the Broken Bank's only places of entertainment. (Jovial, Forceful.)"*

The **landmarks** give the players and GM points of reference within the region. One of The Broken Bank's landmarks is: *"Ambush Row, the only major road that provides a straight line from southeast Journey City to the Tower at its center. It's an excellent place for ambushers, who use the profusion of rubble and wrecked vehicles to set traps and block roads."*

The region's **ratings** are Wealth, Might, Crime, and Tech. Each rating uses numerical values from 0 to 4. Ratings can be used as dice pools on fortune rolls affecting the region, and measure the quality of living between regions. The players select values that make sense for the region's description. The squad can benefit from these ratings under certain circumstances. Record the ratings in your notes, or on the region's sheet.

► **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 222).

► **Might** indicates how much of an armed presence is in the area, and the intensity of surveillance systems. If the region has local security who aren't affiliated with a squad, their Tier is equal to the region's Might. Might provides bonus dice when trying to Acquire a Cohort (see page 221).

► **Crime** indicates the regularity and intensity of illegal activity. It can adjust the entanglement at the end of a mission (see page 214).

► **Tech** indicates the ubiquity and intensity of AR, advanced technology, and digital security systems. Tech provides bonus dice when trying to acquire gear (see page 221).

The Broken Bank has Wealth 0, Might 0, Crime 2, and Tech 2.

The **special rule** is unique to the region, evokes its essence, and has a direct mechanical effect on the squad's actions. Give special rules a trigger so they only occur when the Pilots encounter them. Not every region requires a special rule—many are not unique in ways that require special rules. The Broken Bank has: *"Start a 4-Tick Clock when you enter the region: 'App Focus.' Add a Tick every time the Pilots are delayed from moving forward. When it fills, corrupt proxies and apps assault them." This rule represents the crowds of rampant proxies and apps that are drawn to the living.*

You may use the region sheet to keep track of these details, but it is not required.

PREPARING A MISSION



Keep this one rule in mind when preparing a mission: **Make a situation, do NOT make a story.** The Pilots have many tools on hand to overcome problems (their vehicles, abilities, flashbacks, and everything else), so you'll need to be similarly adaptable. Avoid preparing extensive paragraphs and events that WILL happen, and instead make notes that detail narrative resources and possibilities.

I prepare for a mission with eight categories in mind: **Briefing, employer, target, objective, Rules of Engagement (ROE), complications, characters, and challenges.** The GM can pull from each section for obstacles during the mission. Some of those obstacles will have Clocks, while others may be the consequence of action rolls.

I create these sections using the previous missions and step 3 in the end of session section (see page 46). The end of session questions will give you an idea of what the players want to face on their next mission. However, you're welcome to use the starting situation for your first mission, (see page 304), as you won't have shared history or previous missions to draw from.



BRIEFING

A **briefing** contains the basic information that the Pilots receive when they plan the mission. It's a short summary of your notes, so everyone knows the mission's context and goals at a glance. The employer, target, objective, and maybe the ROE will be mentioned in the briefing. You could provide the players with false information here if you wanted, since they will have opportunities to gather information before the mission (which shouldn't be taken away from them).

BRIEFING: Lady Elreth fought a dragon near Wander, causing a great deal of damage (but don't tell the players that she won and has left the area). The 3rd Public Connections Corp wants to build stronger ties with the populace by repairing the damage. The Wrights of the Ascent see this as a way to both rebuild the town and improve the Celestial Myriad's image.

EMPLOYER

An **employer** is the squad that hires the Pilots to complete the mission. List the squad's representative here, too, as well as the employer's general goal. Detail the representative (when appropriate) and the squad's Tier and Faction, so this information is on hand when going through the mission completed process (see page 202). Save any information about the mission objective for the "objective" section.

EMPLOYER: The 3rd Public Connections Corp (Tier II-S) of the Democratic Federated Systems, represented by Laura Neirnick. They are a well-funded squad of attractive Pilots that have a military documentarian crew with them. **GOAL:** 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

The **target** is the squad that will be most harmed if the Pilots complete their mission objective. Note the relevant information about the target, such as their Tier and Faction. This information should include what the target is doing when the mission begins, and the target's mission objective (should it be listed). The former helps describe the situation when the target appears on screen, and the latter tells you how they should act.

TARGET: *The Wrights of the Ascent (Tier I-W) of the Church of the Celestial Myriad. They've been constructing a cathedral of the Celestial Myriad in Wander. However, it sustained structural damage during the recent battle. Target objective: The Wrights are prioritizing the cathedral's repair over everything else, including neutralizing the remaining danger to the town.*

OBJECTIVE

The **objective** states why the Pilots are on a mission. The Pilots will need to complete at least one Clock to complete the mission objective (because the employer wouldn't need help on anything smaller). Some missions may have more than one objective. Other objectives may have multiple stages, each represented by its own Clock.

The Pilots must complete the objective(s) to consider the mission a success, though the objective(s) may change if narratively appropriate. Secondary objectives may be optional, but the employer will be more impressed if they're completed. Upon completing the objective, the GM decides whether the mission immediately ends there or 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.*

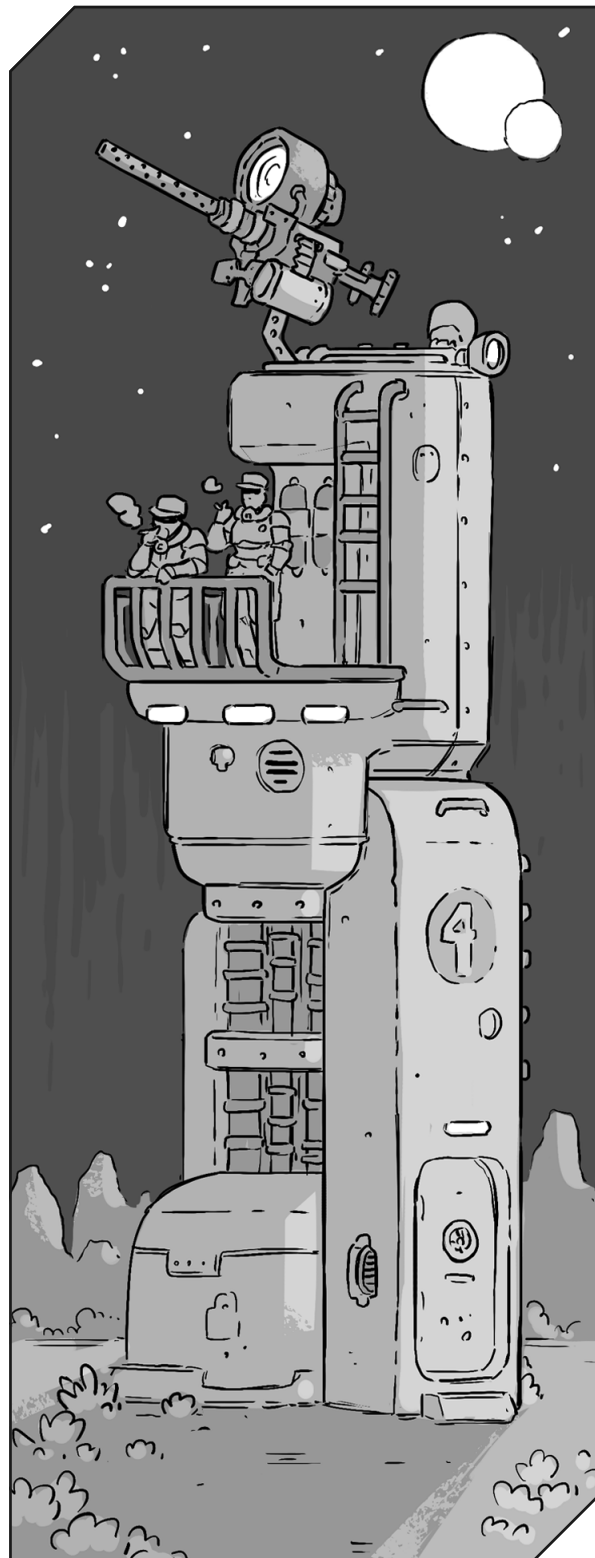
RULES OF ENGAGEMENT (ROE)

Rules of Engagement (ROE) are the rules imposed on the Pilots by their employer. Pilots who break the ROE harm the employer's interests, but will not cause the mission to fail. Write down some ideas for ROE between sessions—they're useful to have on hand before the mission starts.

Missions with fewer ROE give the Pilots more freedom, while more ROE become a challenge in and of themselves. If you are having trouble, there is a list of ROE suggestions on the next page. Most missions will have two ROE as a deterrent from uncivil behavior.

ROE:

- 1) *Threatening or employing force against civilians.*
- 2) *Firing upon or presenting as a clearly marked medical transport or facility.*
- 3) *Initiating combat with the Wrights of the Ascent.*



ROE SUGGESTIONS

If you need ideas for new Rules of Engagement, here are some suggestions for ways Factions can restrict the Pilots' actions.

- ◆ 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 threaten or use force on civilians (or maybe they can 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 is attacked with fists and feet, they should not respond with gunfire.
- ◆ Escalation of force. The squad should never 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. Factions often have restrictions on if and how they're used, as these types of weapons are often seen as needlessly cruel due to their lasting effects and broad collateral damage.
- ◆ 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, hiding in a medical facility or using one as a disguise may encourage enemies to attack non-threatening 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.



COMPLICATIONS

Complications detail the majority of obstacles between the Pilots and their objective. Pilots don't get information about complications before the mission, unless they gather information. However, the complications that are revealed to the Pilots will depend on the methods they use. Come up with about six different complications per mission, but remember that you don't need to use them all—just introduce them as you need them.

COMPLICATION:

- ◆ *The dying dragon's body is in the middle of the town. One of its two ignition glands has ruptured, spreading flammable caustic fluid.*
- ◆ *The locals are suspicious of outsiders.*
- ◆ *A secret Burden cell (Tier II-S) 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. The rough terrain makes communication with the outside difficult.*
- ◆ *Should the dragon's mate come looking for it?*

CHALLENGES

Write down the potential dangers explicitly stated or implicitly inferred from the other sections. You'll likely think of more as the Pilots face complications and consequences, so the list will grow quite a bit. Remember, you don't have to use all of them! The list exists to give you ideas for threats, consequences, and obstacles on the fly.

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*

CHARACTERS

Detail some important **NPCs** who might appear on the mission. You don't need many characters listed, as there's always the chance they won't come up. Write down the NPCs who give a face to the groups involved that could provide meaningful opposition or support to the Pilots. One character for each group involved in the mission should be plenty.

Each NPC should have four details: **Look**, **pronouns**, **motive**, and **methods**. Describe the character's look and pronouns as the person becomes relevant. Their motive is why they take action (a single goal that's core to them can be enough). An NPC may have two methods to achieve their motive—a broad method that fleshes out their personality to a degree (for example, someone who uses stealthy or deceptive methods probably avoids open confrontation), and possibly a specific motive 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 a tank top and coveralls with the top tied around her waist. Prefers manipulation, but isn't 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. Will compromise with powerful groups to remain in power in Wander. 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.*



DETERMINING EFFECT

Effect signals how much a Pilot can expect to achieve from their action. It helps players and the GM create a shared understanding of the situation, the stakes, and the possible outcomes. The GM determines Effect by considering the potency, scale, and Quality of a Pilot's action.

POTENCY

Potency establishes the particular strengths and weaknesses of the Pilot's actions against an obstacle. Consider the fiction surrounding the Pilot—a grenade has greater potency against a person, but reduced potency against a tank. A person hiding on a street will have better potency if they take advantage of busy crowds. They have reduced potency if they avoid those crowds.

QUALITY

Quality refers to advantages provided by tools, weapons, and other resources. A Pilot can generally access items that are equal to their squad's Tier. However, Pilots may also have access to "fine" items, which provide +1 to their Quality. For example, the Technician has "fine engineering tools" which give +1 Quality to engineering-related activities.

A weapon will be more powerful against a foe of lower Quality. The weapon will be more accurate, punch through their armor better, or some other impact that shows the difference in skill and preparedness.

SCALE

Scale defines 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. Intimidating one person with half a dozen Toughs at your back is one thing; intimidating an army with a half dozen Toughs is a different story. Conversely, a civil debate with city council may be hindered by the Toughs behind you.

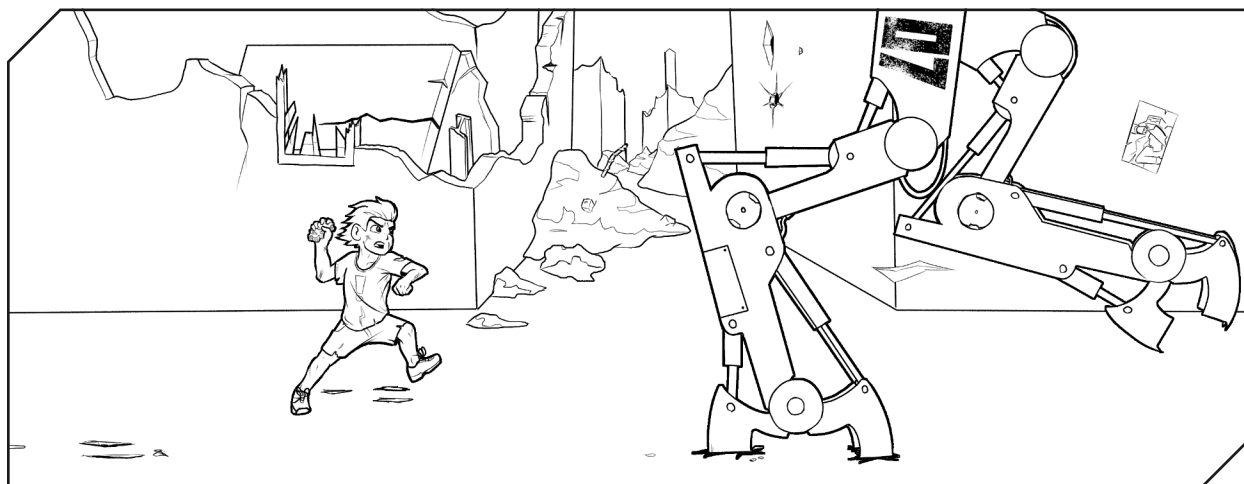
DOMINATING EFFECT

If there is a side with an overwhelmingly powerful potency, Quality, or scale, that side dominates the circumstances. If a soldier with a fine machine gun 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 Pilot can conquer a dominant side if they take actions to decrease its power. If the Pilot places explosives on the base's reactor core, they weaken the base's situation—leaving it vulnerable to other attacks.

Scarecrow is fighting an AWV from The Lion's Pride. She wants to Battle them with 2d. The GM tells her it's 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). While The Lion's Pride is Tier IV and Scarecrow's squad is only Tier I, the GM thinks Scarecrow is in a spot to do some damage (as opposed to zero Effect, which would prevent any damage to her enemy).

Jess (Scarecrow's player) reminds the GM that she has a fine heavy cannon on her Claymore, which increases her Effect from Limited to Standard (since the +1 Quality from the fine tag improves her Effect by one level). Jess also says she wants a flashback to Acquire an Asset, where she got information on the weak points of her opponent's AWV. The GM says it'll cost her 1 Stress. She pays the Stress cost and succeeds at acquiring the asset. The GM says she's now at Great Effect.

Jess wants to flatten her foe, so asks if she can spend a Quirk to push Scarecrow for further increased Effect. The GM reminds her that she can't go above Great Effect, except by getting a critical success on her roll in this situation. Jess instead pushes herself for +1d, hoping to get that Crit. She makes her final action roll: A 3d Battle with Risky Position and Great Effect.



MAGNITUDE

When technology that is far beyond our own appears in the narrative, it can be difficult to judge its effects and power levels. Magnitude provides a consistent means of describing technology in your campaign. It can judge the Quality and Tier of a piece of 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.

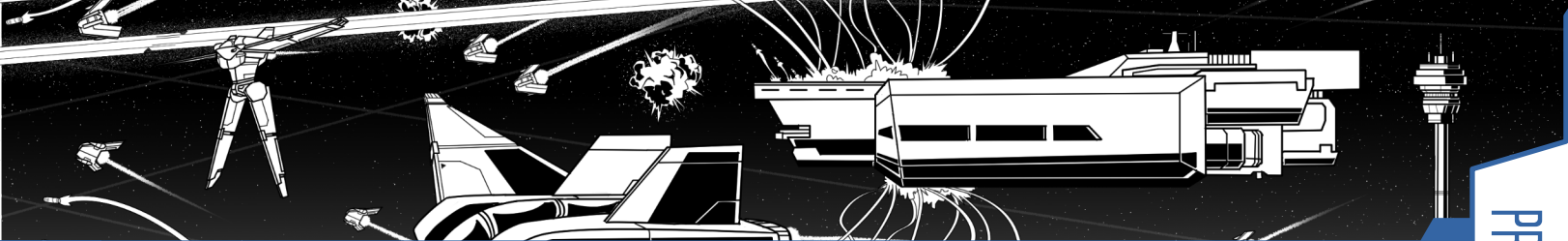
Use Magnitude as a guide, not as hard and fast rules. It's okay to deviate from the charts below if it suits your fiction. If you establish an effect's Magnitude and later want to change it, that's fine too.

When acquiring an asset, crafting a gadget or bio-chemical agent, or developing an app, Magnitude can help determine the required quality of the desired outcome.

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.

When applying the power of a technology, you can use its Magnitude as a fortune roll to see what its Effect will be if the outcome isn't clear or certain.

	QUALITY EXAMPLES	FORCE EXAMPLES
0	A rusty knife, tattered clothing, a corrugated steel shack	A firm shove, candle flame, breeze, tiny spark
1	A military blade, ordinary clothing, shared apartment, cheap food	A solid punch, steady wind, stove top, electrical shock
2	A high-quality pistol, respectable clothing, private apartment, typical app	A powerful blow, howling wind, blowtorch flame
3	A high-quality rifle, fashionable clothing, small home	A crushing blow, staggering wind, grenade, electrical surge, searing fire
4	A townhouse, typical AI or powerful app	A speeding car, burning forge, bomb, whirlwind, electrocution
5	A large townhouse, small starship, tailored clothing, a vehicle's forcefield	A vehicle's cannon, raging thunderstorm, massive fire, lightning strike
6	A mansion, large starship, rare chemicals or materials, powerful AI	Hurricane wind, molten steel, tidal wave, electrical maelstrom

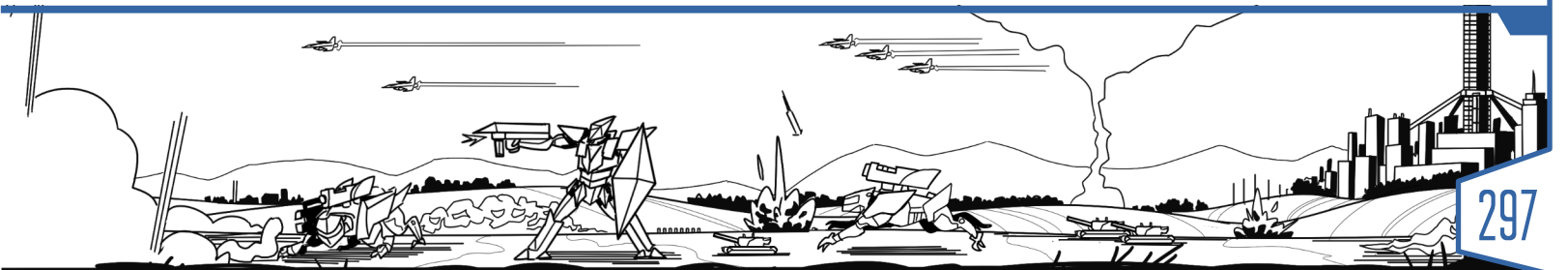


	FORCE	TIER & QUALITY	DURABILITY	MOBILITY	RANGE	DURATION	SCALE	AREA
0	Weak	Poor	Fragile	Stationary	Within reach	A few seconds	1 or 2 people	Closet
1	Moderate	Adequate	Plastic	Slow walk	A dozen paces	A few minutes	Small crowd (5)	Small room
2	Strong	Good	Metal	Wheels, treads, or hover	A stone's throw	An hour	Medium crowd (10)	Large room
3	Serious	Excellent	Reinforced	Fast and nimble	Down the road	A few hours	Large crowd (20)	Several rooms
4	Powerful	Superior	Powered	Fast flight	Several blocks away	A day	Huge crowd (40)	Small building
5	Overwhelming	Impeccable	Nano-laminate	Slow and space worthy	Across the district	Several days	Massive crowd (80)	Large building
6	Devastating	Legendary	Prototype	Fast and space worthy	Across the city	A week	Colossal crowd (160)	City block

A powerful AI is hacking into a battleship's targeting systems. Its Quality example puts it at Magnitude 6, so the GM makes a 6d fortune roll to determine its effectiveness. On a 1-3, the targeting systems jam for a short period. On a 4-5, the AI has taken out the battleship's ability to fire until it's repaired. On 6, the ship's weapons are under the AI's control. On a critical success, the AI has the weapons and has already inflicted serious damage on the ship's allies.

Alternatively, you can make a fortune roll by combining the Magnitude of a technology's various aspects or only its relevant aspects.

The AI could fire the ship's cannon at its own bridge with an Area of 3 and a Force of 4, for a Magnitude of 7. It's definitely in range, so that aspect isn't a factor in success. However, the GM decides it'll take a few minutes to activate the ship's cannon (1). This gives the crew some time to evacuate the area, reducing the Magnitude by the . The fortune roll dice pool is now 6d (Force + Area - Duration). Later, the AI overloads the cannon, causing an explosion that rips through the ship's gunnery station. The GM judges that the blast affects those inside the gunnery station, so they make a fortune roll using the cannon's Force 4 for the dice pool.



APP DEVELOPMENT



Apps are programs with limited skills, but the capability to act and react on their own without oversight. This narrow focus and freedom of action often result 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.

Apps 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. Developing an app means risking exposure to an insidious force that may misinterpret even the best of intentions.

So why develop one? Apps are extremely powerful. Most physical spaces have digital elements, 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. You can only avoid apps in places with completely analog technology that is free of their manipulation. 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. The Pilots might receive this code as a reward (either in part or entirely) for completing a mission, perhaps by working for a digital securities squad. They could also complete a Long-Term Project to acquire this code, such as negotiating for it with a hacker collective, carefully assembling it themselves, or another technique.



DEVELOPING AN APP

A Pilot needs the Data Pack ability before they can use the Primordial Code to develop an app. If they have both the ability and a Primordial Code, they can start a Long-Term Project to develop their app. Most Long-Term Projects for developing apps are 8-Tick Clocks. When the Pilot starts their Long-Term Project, the player and GM work through the steps below to establish what it can do and how it behaves. Record these answers for future reference.

1. The developer describes the app's purpose and one bug it has.
2. The developer names a consequence they fear will occur by creating and/or employing the app.
3. The GM states the Magnitude of the app based on the information from steps one and two. It always costs an amount of Stress equal to its Magnitude to activate.
4. The developer can give the app flaws to reduce its Magnitude (and thus Stress cost). Every flaw reduces the Magnitude by 1.
5. The GM describes how the app is activated, and whether it costs anything unusual (such as starting a Threat Clock, losing Trust with a Faction, sacrificing a valuable item, etc.). The activation process should require inputting concepts that embody the target, the user, and the effects that its creator desires. The process and costs are applied whenever the app is used.

Nehalennia is creating a Trapper app that will find, contain, and retrieve rampant apps and proxies. However, it has a bug that causes it to not always return the contained apps to the correct storage device. She worries the app may deposit corrupted apps in an unsuitable location without her realizing, and that they'll eventually break free. The GM figures 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 the app. She gives it the flaw of taking a few hours Duration (Magnitude 3) to activate, reducing its total Magnitude (and Stress cost) to 4. The GM says that activating the Trapper app requires 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. The GM also decides that, upon activation, the bug always triggers 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

Anyone with the developer's permission can activate an app. The user must follow the activation process established 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 pursue its purpose without direction from the user. If an app needs to make a fortune roll while 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. The rules for creating items are generally the same across item types, except in some specific instances.



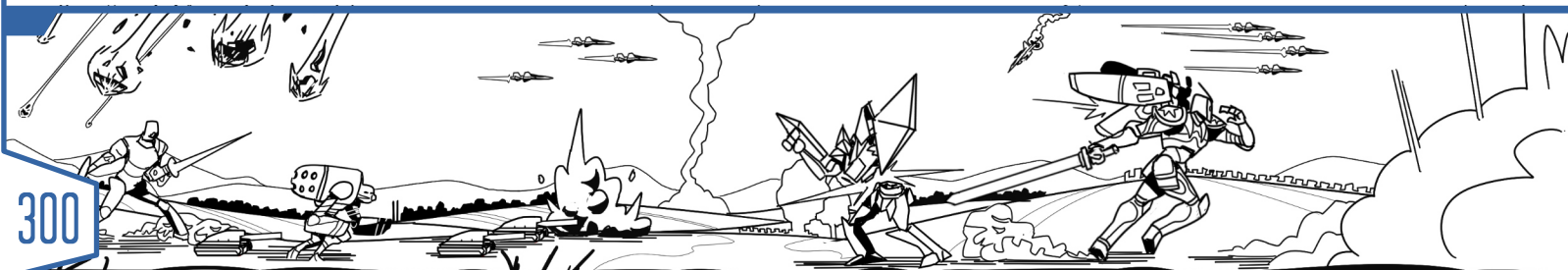
DESIGNING

An object must have a design before someone can craft it. The creator must complete a suitable Long-Term Project to make or acquire a design (usually 8 Ticks), or complete a mission that provides a design as its reward. The player and GM work through the following four steps to figure out the design. Record these answers for future reference. Pilots with Researcher are the exception, as they automatically complete a design of their making when they take the ability.

Unlucky is interested in creating boosters that let him blast enough force to push away enemy vehicles that get too close (in addition to a booster's normal use). The GM decides it's 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 force will likely damage the boosters, if not the whole vehicle! The GM gives it the Volatile drawback, which might junk his fine mobility suite when used. Now Unlucky must complete his "Weaponized Boosters" 8-Tick Long-Term Project Clock to complete the design. Once that's done, he can manufacture it.

1. The designer describes their intended creation and what it does.
2. The GM determines the minimum Quality level required to manufacture the item. They judge its Magnitude based on the description in step one.
3. The designer describes why their creation is not in common use (such as adverse effects, or rare materials).
4. The GM describes the creation's weaknesses, if any, by choosing from the drawbacks list (page 302).

Common items, such as common chemicals (found in the sample creations section on page 302), standard pilot gear, and standard vehicle gear don't require a design. Anyone may manufacture them, as the designs are readily available.



MANUFACTURING

Pilots can manufacture products during downtime, using the Manufacture downtime activity. The designer can get started as soon as they complete their design. They can also give the design to someone else to manufacture if they like. If they do, the manufacturer must complete a 6-Tick Long-Term Project Clock to learn the design.

First, the GM sets the minimum Quality level that must be produced, otherwise the attempt results in a failed, non-functional item. The GM uses the design's Magnitude to help set the minimum Quality level—it may be higher or lower, depending on the design's nature and the circumstances of its manufacturing.

The person manufacturing the design makes an Engineer or Interface roll as appropriate. The result partially determines the product's Quality level. 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 critical success gives +2. If the squad has the Workshop Upgrade, it provides +1 to the Quality level as well.

The manufacturer can spend Materiel to increase the Quality level of a manufactured item at a rate of 1 Materiel for +1 Quality level (which can make the Quality level greater than Tier+2).

Unlucky completes his Weaponized Boosters design and is ready to manufacture them. During the design process, the GM said it would require Quality 7 to make. 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 2 Quality (1 for Tier 1 and +1 for the 6). The squad has Workshop, which gives +1 Quality for a total of 3. He also spends 4 Materiel to get the 7 Quality he needs to manufacture the boosters.

MODIFYING AN ITEM

Adding functions or features to an item is easier than making something new. Make a Manufacture roll as normal to modify an item (the item being modified has a base Quality equal to the squad's Tier) and consult the directions below. The number to hit for a success is the squad's Tier plus the complexity of the modification.

► A simple, useful modification requires a result of Tier +1 Quality. *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 a result of Tier +2 Quality. *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. *A physical gun that harms digital entities. Long-range transmitter with a built-in signal decoder. Anti-infantry defenses that spray tear gas instead of shrapnel. Wings grown onto a vehicle for quieter flight than the standard mobility suite.*

The person modifying the item makes an Engineer or Interface roll as appropriate. The result partially determines the product's Quality level. 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 critical success gives +2. If the squad has the Workshop Upgrade, it provides +1 to the Quality level as well.

The manufacturer can spend Materiel to increase the Quality level of a manufactured item at a rate of 1 Materiel for +1 Quality level (which can make the Quality level greater than Tier +2).

Modified items might have drawbacks at the GM's discretion.

DRAWBACKS

The GM may choose one or more drawbacks below when modifying or designing a product. Note, all chemicals have the drawback "Consumable," and are usually single use.

► **Complex.** 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 and/or employer as appropriate if this creation is used on a mission.

► **Consumable.** This design has a limited number of uses (the GM says how many) before it is destroyed.

► **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. On a 4-6, it functions as expected. On a critical success, it has increased Effect.

► **Volatile.** The design produces an adverse side effect for the user, as specified by the GM. A side effect is a consequence and may be resisted as usual.

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 a Primordial Code or original design.

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 (ELECTRONIC 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 they are parted with a neutralizer or extreme and damaging effort.
- ▶ **Insta-Furnace** (III/3): Burst into intense flame on contact with air.

POISONS (CHEMICAL)

- ▶ **Drowned Man's Dreams** (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 muscles to lock temporarily.

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.

SITUATION:

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 starting situation to the players before creating the 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 Wolf Pack, on leave from the frontlines, has been devastated, and is taking the attack very personally. Rumor has it that the attack was tied 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 are slinging vitriol over the radio. Yesterday that switched to missiles when a barrage rained down on Hulinton from the north of 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 of the Factions and the Independent squads want 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 who employs you.

The squads attached to each Faction below are the ones most tied to that Faction's goal, though each Faction likely has one or two more squads in the area (such as the players' squad). It's recommended to choose Rivals, allies, targets, and employers from these squads (or ones your group created). Introduce new squads as old ones are removed from the area of conflict.

This mission leaves some details for the GM to decide. The GM prepares the squad's briefing, complications, characters, and challenges (see preparing a mission on page 287). This approach lets you use the starting scenario for multiple campaigns, and gives you some practice at partially constructing a mission. If you're really stuck, don't be afraid to ask the players for suggestions. It's a campaign opening, 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. You could brazenly attack that region, cut that area off from reinforcements, gain 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: 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:

1. No threatening or employing force against civilians.
2. No firing upon or presenting as a clearly marked medical transport or facility.
3. 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. You could acquire VIPs, retrieve actionable intel, steal 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:** Raise funds for the next CalazCon.

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:

1. Only use force in self-defense.
2. No killing Wolf Pack personnel.

PLAYERS' DIRECT SUPERIOR

Project Lead Walker is an ambitious and hardworking 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.

DEMOCRACY: THE DEMOCRATIC FEDERATED SYSTEMS

The Democratic Federated Systems (DFS) 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 favors them.

FACTION GOAL

Divided They Fall: Manipulate the enemy's plans. You could plant false orders and intelligence, disrupt communications, pit 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: Eliminate enemy VIPs.

PLAYERS' DIRECT SUPERIOR

Councilor Swan is a hard-hearted and calculating bureaucrat. Before the incident, many thought things were "quiet" in Izya. But Swan's reports of the building forces and repeat skirmishes tell a different story. 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:

1. Only use force against the Cult of Earth Found.
2. No firing on medical facilities or transports.
3. Only present as Jovangellian military.

INDEPENDENT

This “Faction” is 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 in The War, regardless of their allegiance.

GOAL: 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: Remove all the Offworld Factions.

The Rubble Runts (Tier II-W Independent) are a militia originally formed by war orphans looking to fill the vacuum left by the local government.

GOAL: 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 damage to the civilian populace.

Rules of Engagement:

1. Only use force in self-defense.
2. No looting, requisitioning, stealing, and/or destroying civilian, commercial, and/or governmental property.
3. No threatening or employing force against civilians.

OLIGARCHY: THE ADAMANT COUNCIL OF NOR

The Virtues of The Adamant Council of Nor sense something fishy going on with the Fort Jovanol incident. She's tasked the squads under her command with investigating the situation. If there is evidence 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. You could protect the populace from marauders in your patron's name, publicize the corruption of an enemy Faction, shift 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: Turn Izya into a Norrish puppet.

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:

1. No deployment of chemical, biological, explosive, and/or poisonous weapons.
2. No looting, requisitioning, stealing, and/or destroying civilian, commercial, and/or governmental property.

PLAYERS' DIRECT SUPERIOR

Virtue de Quidt is an experienced and crafty noble. She's suspicious of the recent conflict, as reports indicated that the Celestial Myriad in Hulinton didn't have the supplies or personnel to perform such a strike, never mind The Cult of Earth Found.

THEOCRACY: THE CHURCH OF THE CELESTIAL MYRIAD

The Church of the Celestial Myriad is in the area southwest of Journey City to convert some of the smaller communities, starting with Hulinton. Unfortunately, the Fort Jovanol incident threw that plan into chaos, and they've turned their logistics towards the growing conflict.

FACTION GOAL

Secure The Borders: Take proactive measures to protect the patron Faction. This could involve removing enemy agents acting within the patron Faction, weakening neighboring regions, constructing defenses, etc.

ACTIVE SQUAD

The Cult of Earth Found (Tier II-S Theocracy) believes that humanity's holy birthplace is only for the faithful.

GOAL: Remove the unfaithful from Earth.

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:

1. No torture.
2. No deployment of chemical, biological, explosive, and/or poisonous weapons.
3. No use of disproportionate force.
4. Detained persons are to be unharmed.

PLAYERS' DIRECT SUPERIOR

Bishop Acampora is a patient and caring member of the clergy. She was sent to Hulinton by the Archbishop in Blessed Harbor to convert the locals. But she's concerned with rumors of armed guerilla resistance in the populace.

HOW TO END A CAMPAIGN

All good things must come to an end. Ideally, your group will reach a satisfying narrative conclusion at that time. This section should help you reach that ending.

WHEN TO END A CAMPAIGN

Know when it's time to wrap things up. Consider the duration of your campaign first. If your campaign was planned as a single session, then you'll almost certainly end the campaign after that session. If your campaign is a short arc, then you likely have a few missions that drive you to a clear end point. If your campaign doesn't have a planned end point, use these three indicators to know when you should discuss ending the campaign:

1. One of the Pilots is one Scar away from being removed from play. Removing a Pilot might break the current narrative arc, so talk about it before that happens.
2. A mission unexpectedly concludes the narrative in a satisfying manner. Ask the group if there are any remaining stories they want to wrap up.
3. The group decides 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.

Use the above as indicators, not as definitive reasons for ending a campaign. Some 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. Just make sure everyone wants to keep playing, as coerced participation in a game is not fun.

Where possible, discuss the campaign's ending one or two missions before the final mission. Players can then wrap up lingering narrative threads and unfinished Long-Term Projects. "Wrapping up a narrative thread" might mean building it to a tipping point, and then completing it during the final mission or epilogue. Avoid leaving stories unfinished, especially when players are invested in them.

PLANNING THE FINAL MISSION

Planning the final mission follows the usual steps found in the section on how to prepare a mission (see page 287), but there's a little more to it. Try to prepare the final mission so it helps the Pilots reach a satisfying conclusion together.

First, ask the players about the potential fates of their Pilots. Are they okay with their Pilots dying in the last mission? Some players will be open to a tragic fate, others may be okay with dying so long as other Pilots survive, and some will want their Pilot to survive. Talk about how to navigate these interests so everyone still has a good time. This discussion won't ruin any surprises—just because a player is okay with death doesn't make it a guarantee.

Second, consider the final mission's objective. It should have the following qualities:

► **Be dramatic:** The NPCs that the players and Pilots care about should be directly affected by the mission—allies, Rivals, the squad's Direct Superior, and anyone else. Don't use ALL of them, as a large cast will disrupt the narrative flow. But consider using one important NPC per player, plus one for the squad as a whole. Avoid introducing new NPCs on the final mission.

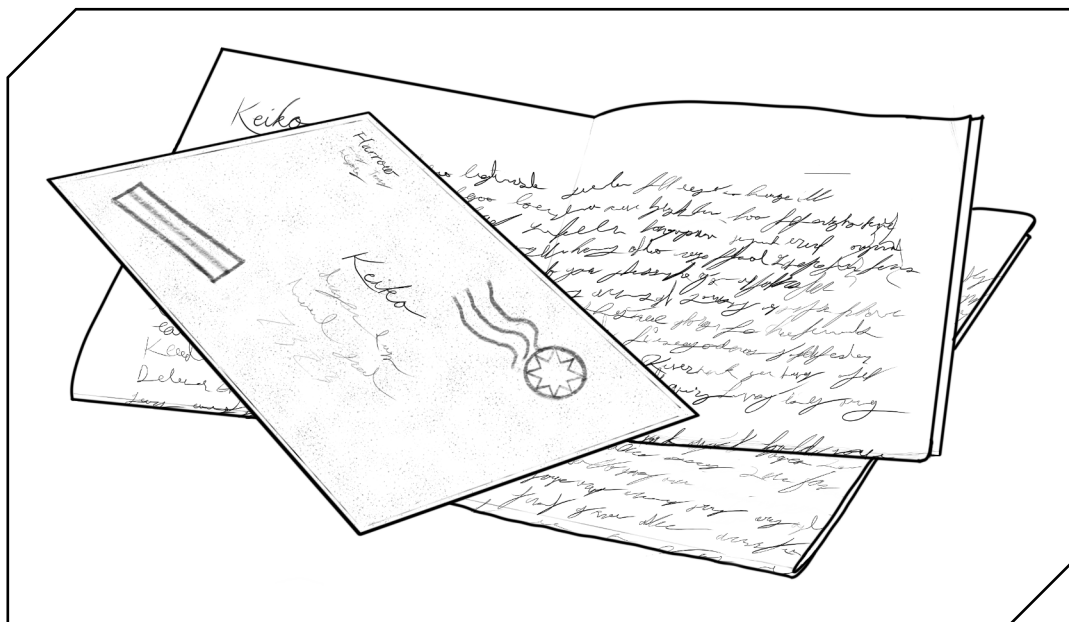
► **Have high stakes:** The Pilots' success or failure should decide the outcome for major plot points. Ask BIG questions with the objective. Is the Izyan Tower destroyed, causing widespread destruction while freeing the locals from Offworlder interest? Does it remain standing, but falls under the control 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. Oh, and whatever happens? The War will NOT end.

► **Include drives:** The Pilots have spent the campaign working towards their drives, so give them a chance to invoke them on the final mission. Provide clear opportunities for each Pilot

to either complete their Drive Clocks or spend their completed Drive Clocks. This won't always be possible because drives can be 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. Remember that Pilots must spend at least two Drive Clocks to permanently remove a Rival. If a player has one and completes the second during the final mission, they could remove their Rival during the epilogue. If you want to include more than one Rival in the final mission, make sure that it fits the established narrative. Rivals from opposing factions wouldn't team up unless they've worked together before. But they might accidentally work together by simultaneously opposing the players.

► **Tell the players that this will be the final mission:** Then they know to exhaust every resource to achieve their goals unless they plan on spending resources 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! Note that no dice are rolled during the epilogue, as the group gets final say over how the story ends. Work through the mission completed process (see page 202), 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 are important (as they determine the squad's wealth and relationships with NPC squads and Factions), but others would rather skip them. Always skip entanglements, there will be plenty of fallout from the final mission to fill the epilogue.

Before diving into the full epilogue, there's one last step: Receiving some closure on the Pilots' beliefs. The players get to ask questions as though they had completed their Connection Clock with every Pilot. Each Player may ask one question of every other Pilot that is related to one 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.

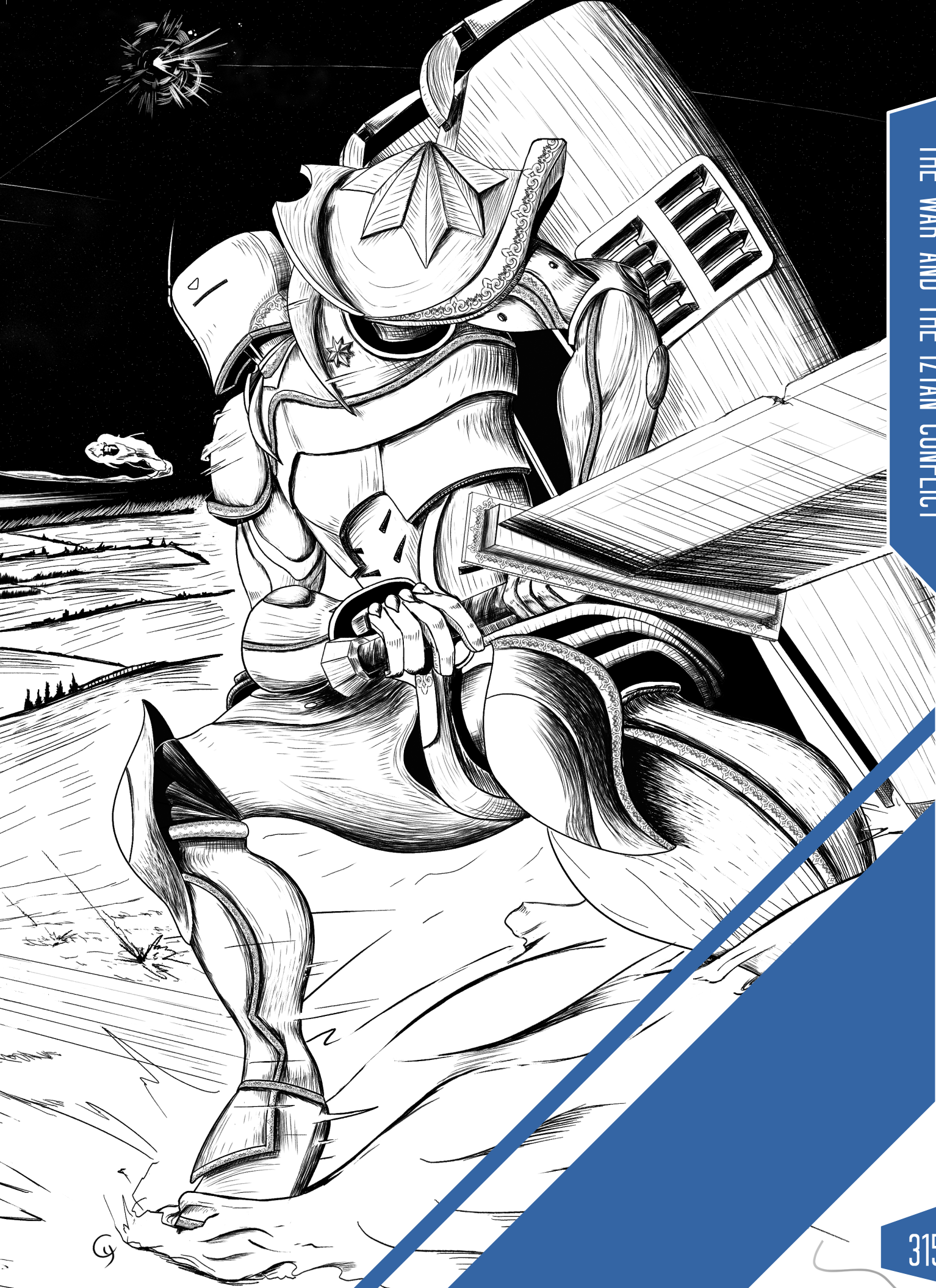
Each player then says what happens to their Pilot after the final mission, along with any NPCs that are important to their character. If multiple players feel an NPC is vital to their character, narrative control should be shared by discussing potential endings, and what feels most true to the established 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 pursuing a Long-Term Project that they didn't quite finish. Just remember, don't roll dice here—these are NOT actually downtime activities. The player decides if that "Long-Term Project" is completed, or whether the scene fades as they continue their work.



11: THE WAR AND THE IZVAN CONFLICT





THE WAR AND THE IZYAN CONFLICT

As humanity regathered itself amongst the stars, lines were quickly drawn. Everyone has their 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" is a time to gather intel on your allies and rebuild your strength so that 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 were turned to preparing the populace for their role in The War. Full mobilization across entire systems has led 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 pains of The War, except for those who can afford workarounds.

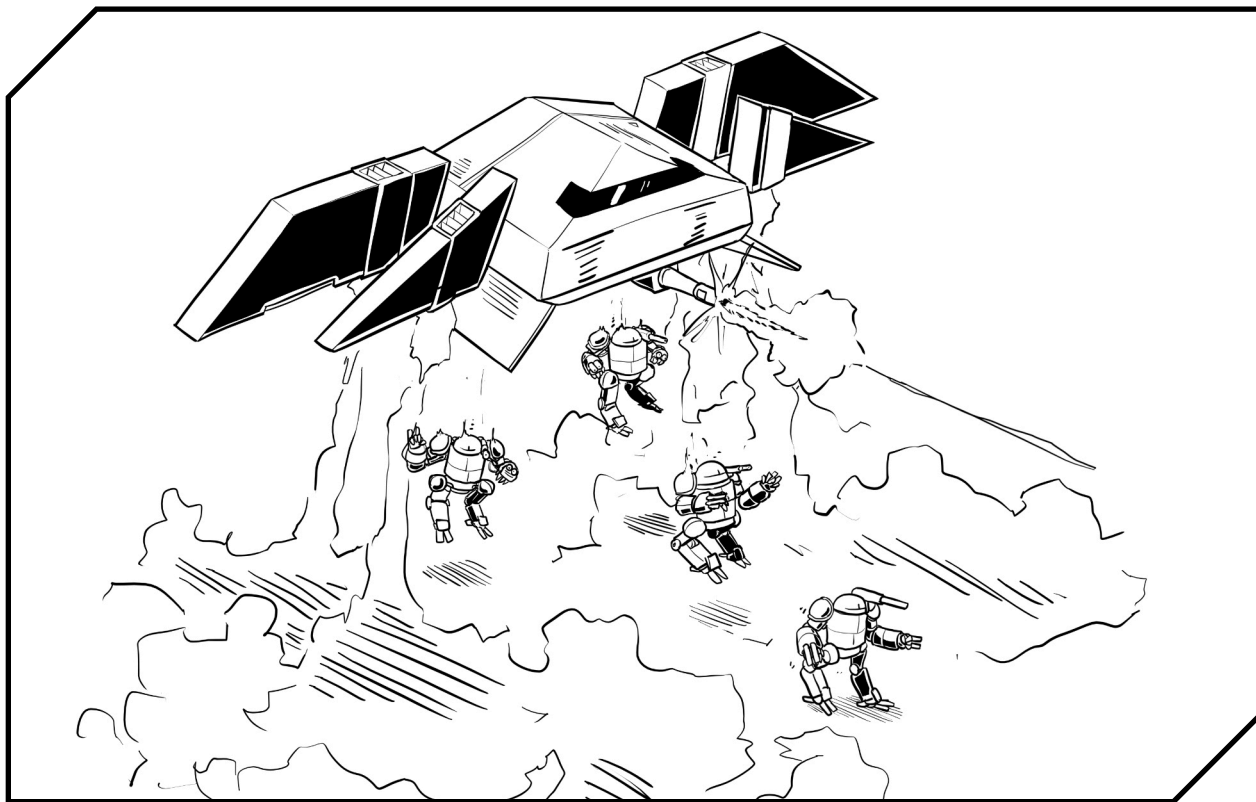
Wealthy and powerful members of every Faction use their resources to bypass the civil responsibilities that the less affluent fulfill. Those with the money can buy rationed or restricted materials on the black market. With the right words and "donations" to The War effort, conscription can be performed in a cozy and safe backwater outpost, if not outright avoided. But while many would consider the Izyan Conflict a backwater outpost, it is anything but safe.

EARTH

There was little fanfare when humanity found "Earth." Earth: Another comfortably inhabitable planet that a handful of Exodus ships found centuries ago, spread across, and began calling "Earth" in memory of humanity's birthplace. It certainly wouldn't be the first "Earth."

As with everything the Factions touch, Earth eventually became embroiled in The War. A misunderstanding here, a skirmish there, and a 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 constantly track the currents of the cloud (not unlike more traditional weather reports) to predict gaps when transport units can pass through. Often, these openings are spotted by multiple groups, with each racing to get their ships through the gap. Escorts often support the transports to protect them, resulting in battles between opposing convoys as they break through the debris, as well as conflicts between the ships in space looking to scoop up vulnerable ships. The most daring smugglers maneuver through these conflict zones, and the most desperate try to pass through the cloud itself.



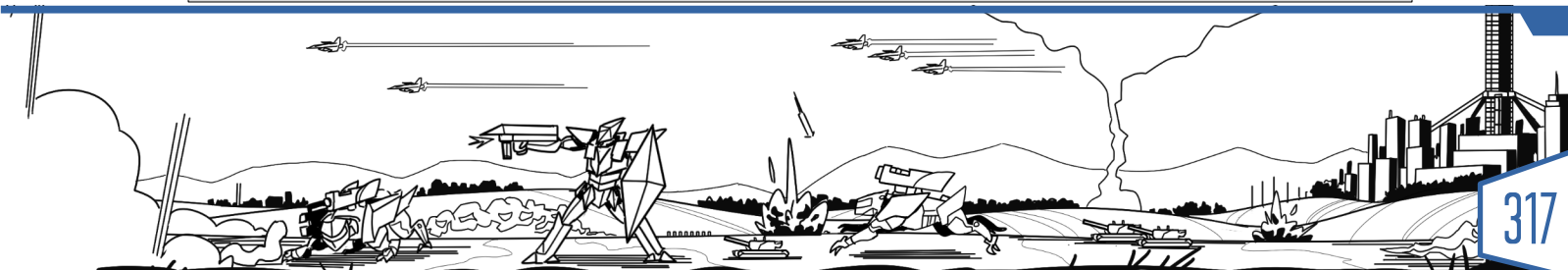
There is another way through the debris. Six space elevators dot the planet, providing a stable method through the cloud. Built and controlled by the local inhabitants, they have the defenses necessary to stand as a bridge to space, but their capacity is limited. In the early days of the Offworlders' presence, the Factions rented 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

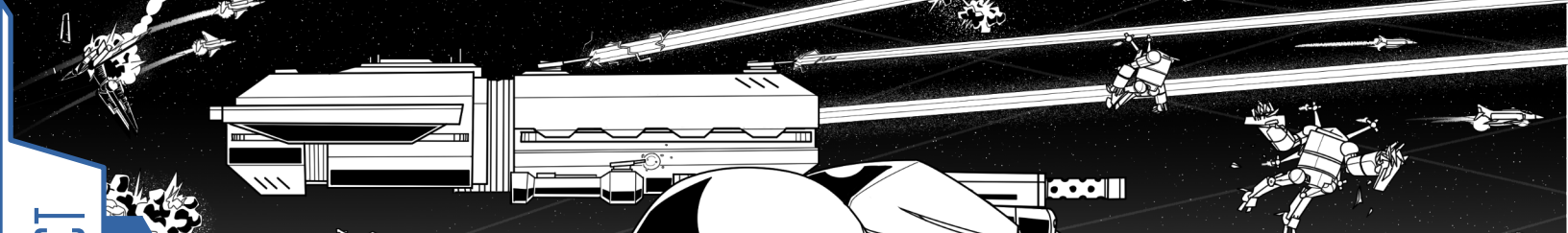
I should have paid more attention in history class. Harrow told me to when I got that 57 on a midterm, but it didn't really do much. Now that I'm actually a part of The War they were teaching us about all that time, I keep wondering if any of it would have been helpful. I guess not. Maybe. I heard plenty about what was going on no matter how little I paid attention in class. It's unavoidable. It's all over the news. It's all anyone talks about. Our lives depend on it, and it takes our lives away.

How did things get this bad? How are they still going? I don't think there's any explanation that makes sense to me. It's just awful. Everyone I know is tired of The War. I don't care if Izya really is on Earth or whatever. No one who actually lives here cares. It's all for show, and our lives don't matter to whoever's up there in space giving orders. Why can't they just leave us alone?

We all want The War to end, but I don't know what that would look like either. It's not like things can just go back to the way they were. No one's naive enough to believe that, not after the Broken Bank. If it became totally clear that another planet was actually Earth, and the Factions just up and left, they would abandon us. We would just be this war-torn, middle-of-nowhere planet, with no one to help us rebuild.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday





costs of this conflict revealed a surprising truth to the Offworlders.

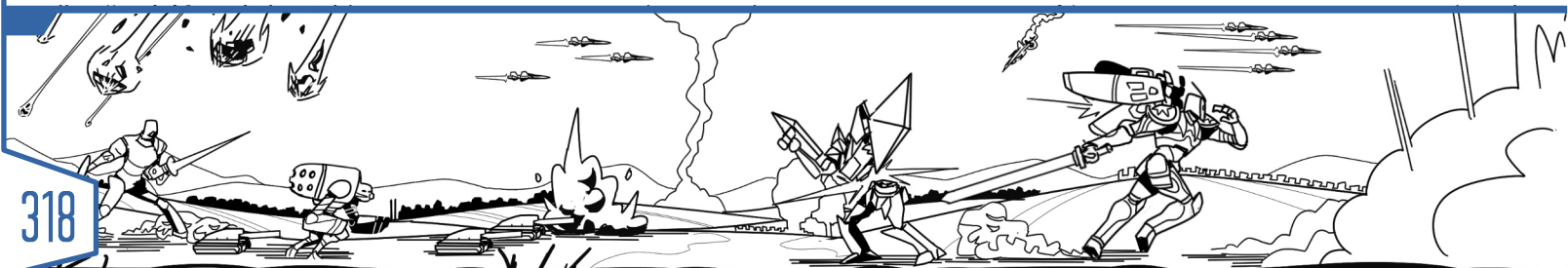
As local continents, planets, orbits, and stars were analyzed, it became more and more likely that the locals were not the progeny of wayward Exodus ships. There was a good chance that this Earth was, in fact, humanity's birthplace. This theory quickly became a fiasco for the leaders of each Faction. 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 challenge changed the way that The War was 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 gained control of a space elevator.

Many communities have been destroyed. Those that remain 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 folk 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. The wait was short, as each Faction seeking a second elevator to break the stalemate moved forces to the Territory of Izya.



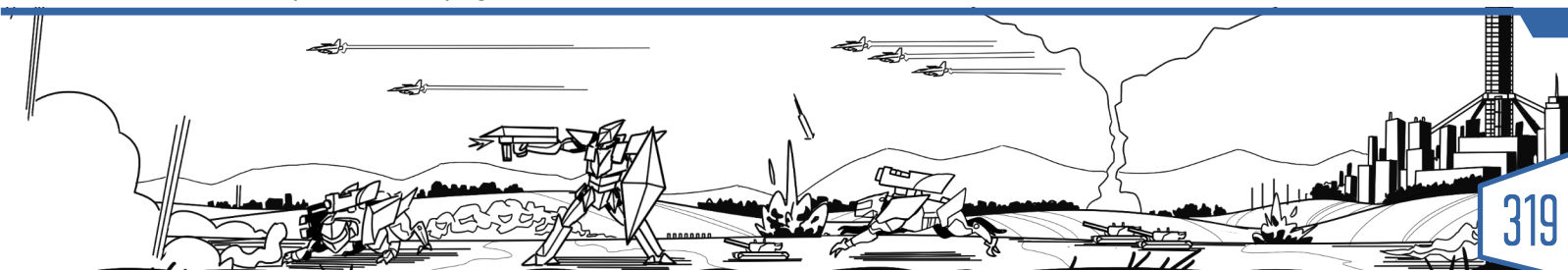
THE TERRITORY OF IZYA

When The War arrived at Izya, it came from the sea. The Factions targeted ports along the Izvan coast to establish a beachhead and began laying the foundation for their supply chain. Local refugees fled inland, always moving closer to Journey City and The Tower, which they could see 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 southeast, the Church of the Celestial Myriad in the southwest, the Jovangellian Empire in the west, Exodus Republic Inc. in the north, and the Democratic Federated Systems (DFS) on the eastern peninsula. Skirmishes broke out across these fluid borders, but they always pushed inward to their goal. In short order, they reached the Greater Journey City Area.

The following are example regions you can use in your campaign with a “national” level map scale (see page [271](#)).



GREATER JOURNEY CITY AREA

RATINGS: Wealth 3, Might 1, Crime 3, Tech 2

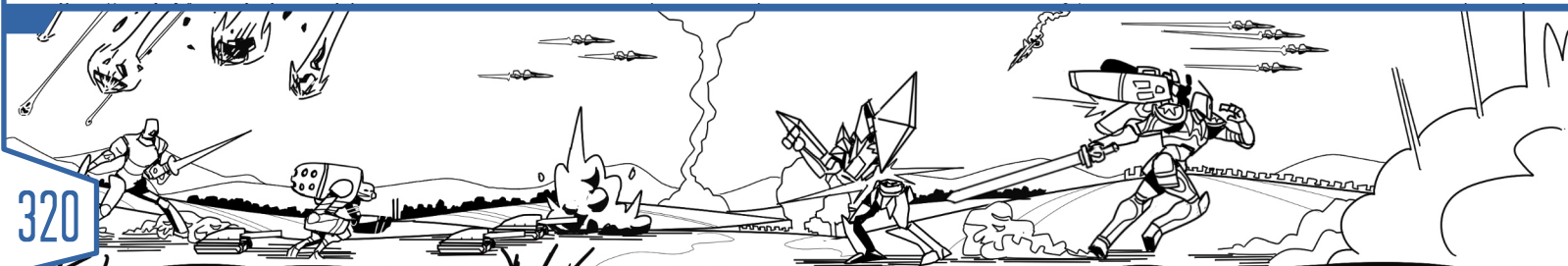


DESCRIPTION

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. The inhabited settlements that remain 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 ER Inc. 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. 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. Together, the Upper and Lower are commonly known as just the Izya River. The Lower River is very broad, allowing sea vessels into Dorothy's natural harbor. Three urban centers, Journey City, Yrvan, and Taizhil (in order of descending size), sit on the lake banks, providing excellent water access.

SPECIAL RULE

Everyone has eyes on this area. When combined with the extensive conflict it's seen, the Stealth tactic gets -1d to the engagement roll as there is nowhere to hide.

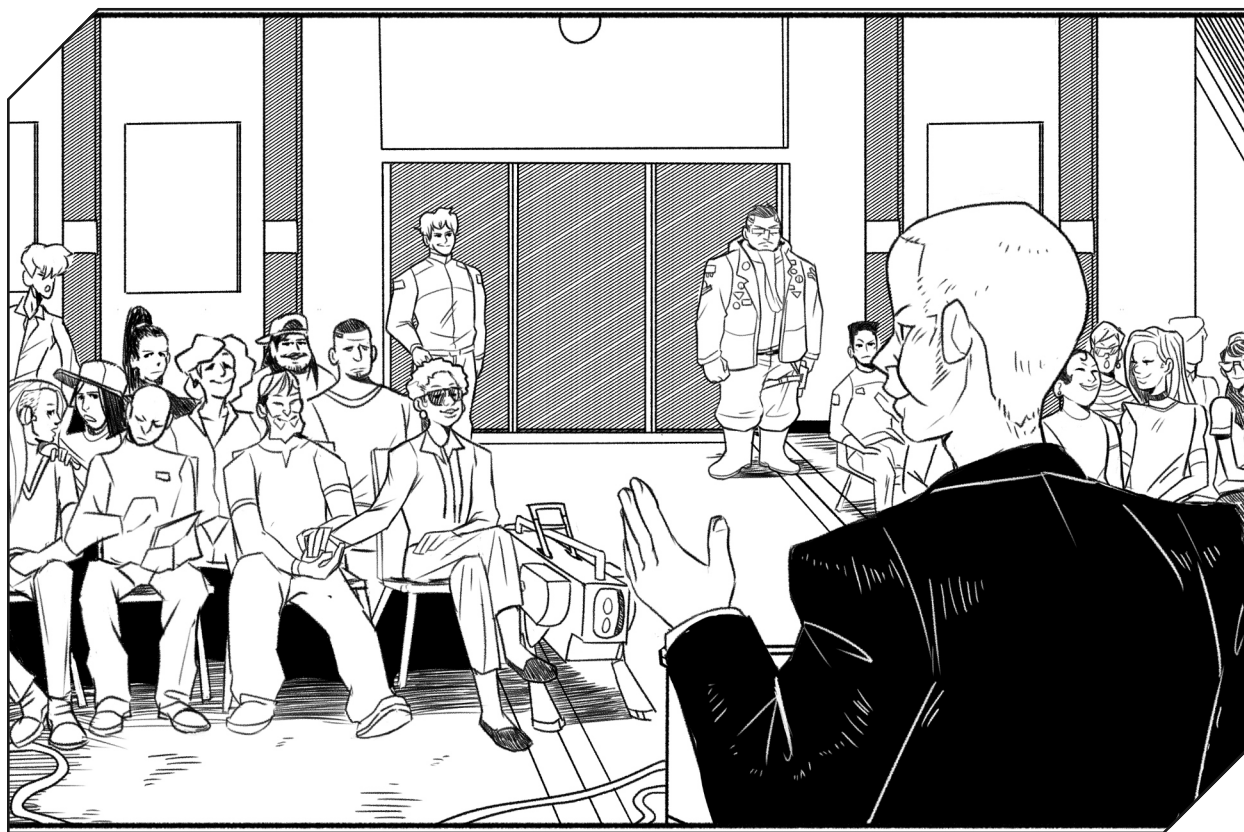
God. It's so bad. Every time we pass through, it hits me. All these wrecked buildings, all these abandoned farms. I think it's because it makes me reckon with the fact that Hulinton could have ended up like this if we hadn't been farther out. Or maybe I'm afraid that The War will come to Hulinton, and then it'll look just like this.

I wonder where the survivors are. Every now and then I see lights on in those buildings. I'll see a barn leaning way too far to the right with a lamp swinging slowly inside. I hope you're alright in there.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

THE MIGHT AREA

RATINGS: Wealth 2, Might 3, Crime 2, Tech 2

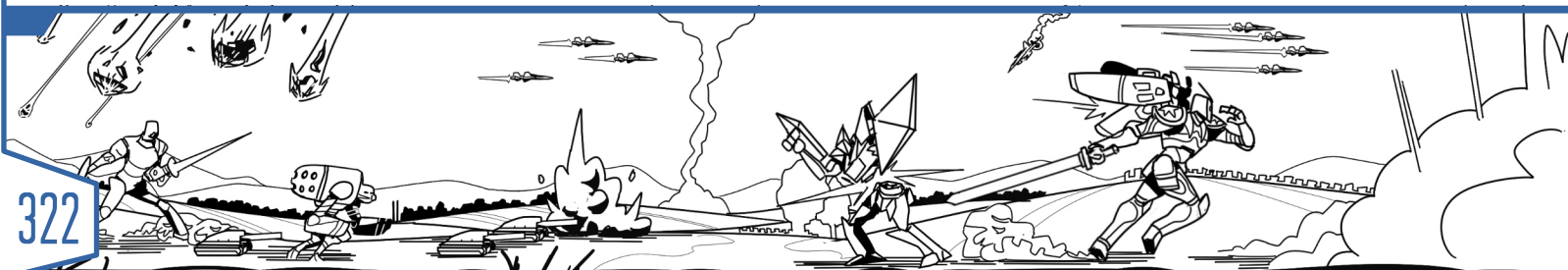


DESCRIPTION

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 and an indifference to confined spaces. Thus local communities around Might have been largely undisturbed as a result, other than as collateral damage. However, the locals were absorbed into the Norrish citizen/vassal divide, mostly as vassals. The promise of citizenship motivates some, while others see it as a dangling carrot.

SCENE

A local village's population gathers in its community center to discuss their new rights and responsibilities under the Admant Council. 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. At the same time, 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.



LANDMARKS

The Estuary of Yngrell is the primary entrance into Might's mostly underground city. It's hard to distinguish the estuary from the rolling hills that make up the terrain in the middle of Izya. However, its river mouth can easily be seen by the sharp but shallow valley it has cut over time. The bridge at the estuary is the only convenient way to traverse the valley for a great distance. However, the Norrish military keeps a close eye on it, even though its road only leads deeper into their territory.

NOTABLES

Lady Elreth, The Goddess of War and Death. With her unique AWW Starfall, she has two goals 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. She may quit the field if there aren't any to be found. She's also quite content to consider entire squads as a single skilled "opponent." (Proud, fearsome.)

SPECIAL RULE

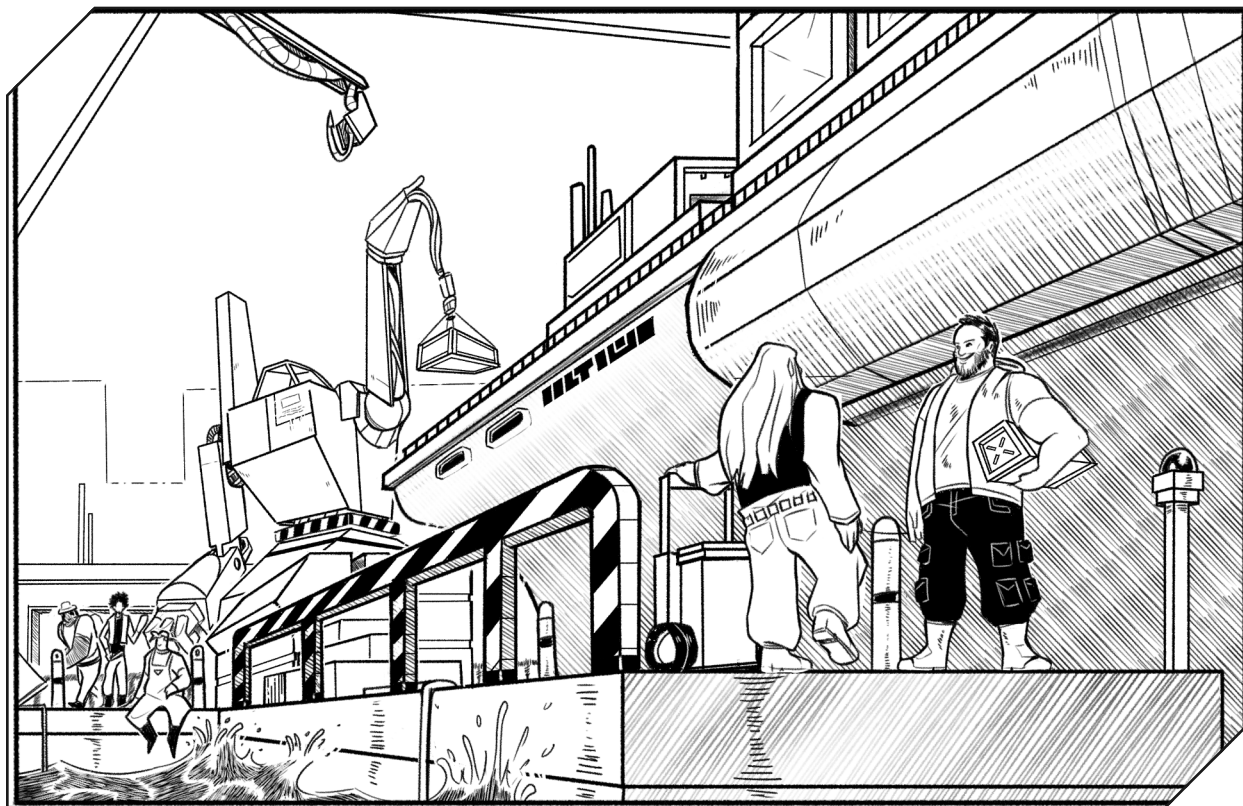
If a squad does something suspicious that local vassals or Norrish citizens in the area might notice, start a 4-Tick Clock called "Hammers Alert." When that Clock fills, a fire team from The Hammers arrives on scene to investigate and likely detain the disruptive individuals.

I have such weird feelings about the Might Area. Like, I really like the views, but going on a mission is awful. It sure is beautiful there though. It reminds me of the area around Hulinton, but not quite? It's different, but familiar. At the same time, the way the Norrish build their bases makes it hell to navigate without being seen or getting ambushed. Seeing a fully armed AWW burst out of what you thought was a hill is enough to make your heart jump out of your throat. But again, it's complicated. Living underground like that keeps the civilians pretty safe, or so I hear.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

EASTERN IZYA PENINSULA

RATINGS: Wealth 4, Might 3, Crime 3, Tech 3

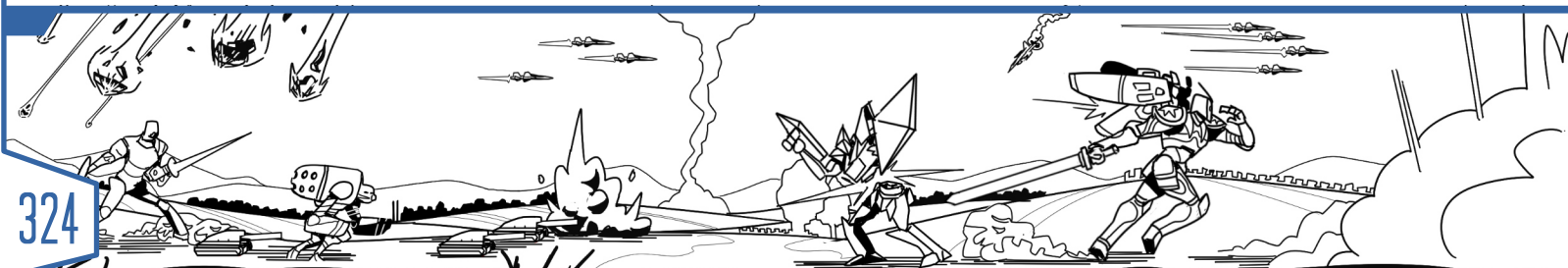


DESCRIPTION

As the last of the Offworlders to arrive on Izya, the DFS had slim pickings for safe landing points, and the Eastern Izya Peninsula proved the best choice. Though it lacked a suitable natural harbor, the DFS Research Groups whipped one up. It was supposed to be temporary, but every harbor was needed as the port town rapidly expanded—even the old "temporary" ones. 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 superhighway 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 superhighway, carrying DFS goods to DFS troops. Locals tend to subsistence farms along the peninsula after their businesses were pushed out of Point View, and disrupted by the impassable highway bisecting the peninsula.



LANDMARKS

"The Artichoke" is the primary administration building of the DFS in Izya, built from locally-mined greenstone. The locals nicknamed it that based on its color and unfamiliar, DFS "Local Star" style. Located in Point View park and 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 politicians debating in its grand hall.

NOTABLES

Henrietta Hamilton, Drivin' Diner proprietor. She 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 time around the 401 knows her, and knows that she serves up more than just premier burgers. (Warm, knowledgeable.)

SPECIAL RULE

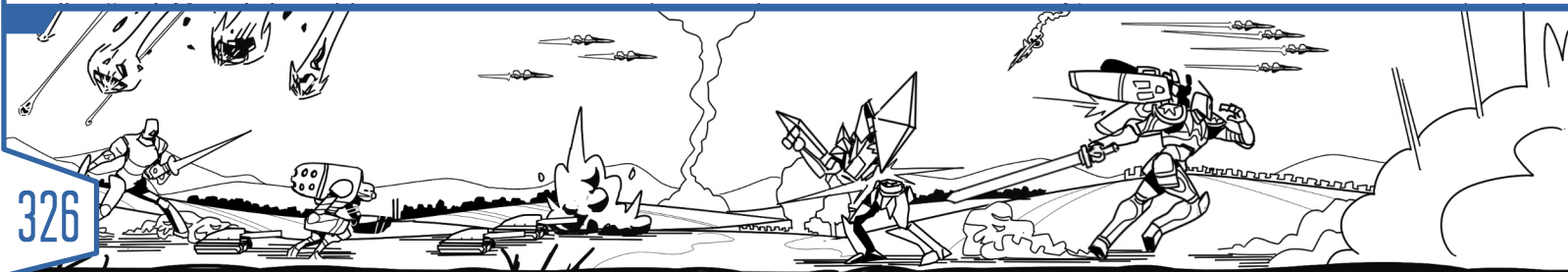
When near the 401, make a 1d fortune roll. On a 1-3, traffic is barely moving. On a 4-5, traffic is moving well with occasional jams. On a 6, traffic is moving swiftly. This will likely alter Position and Effect depending on the situation.

The peninsula's too noisy, too full of smog and traffic. But it's wonderful too. The first time I saw a big cargo ship coming in, I thought it was carrying a spaceship. I couldn't imagine another reason for a boat that big. And of course, I dream about Henrietta Hamilton's burgers at least once a week. The whole point of Drivin' Diner is good food on the go, but if you've never been you HAVE to go at least once and sit down and eat inside. There's barely any seats, there's always a line, but it moves fast and I swear there's nothing like those burgers when they're right off the griddle.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

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. Every one has seen some level of battle, as the frontlines of the initial conflict pushed and pulled with the fickleness of war. With the inevitability of the tide, the Offworlder armies moved further inland toward The Tower.





The following are example regions you can use in a campaign with a provincial-level map scale (see page [271](#)).

HULINTON

RATINGS: Wealth 2, Might 1, Crime 1, Tech 2

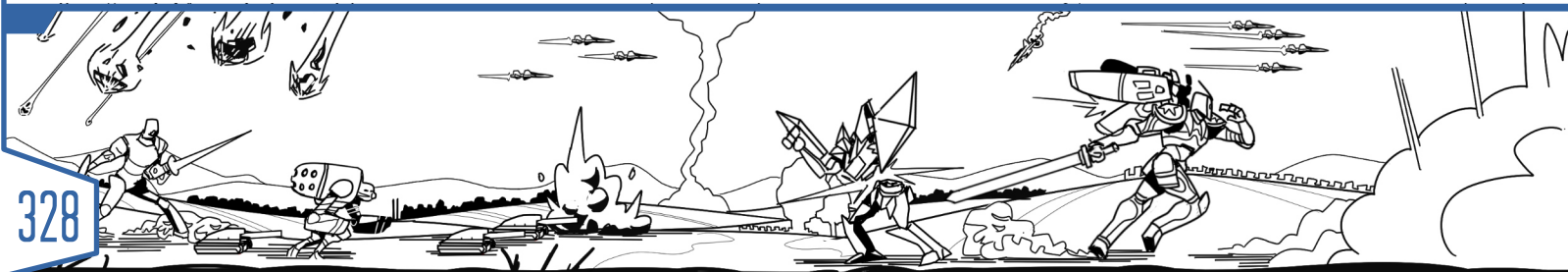


DESCRIPTION

At the base of the Southern Izyan Mountains sits a medium-sized town that originally catered to nearby farming communities and tourists from 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 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.



LANDMARKS

The Cenotaph's Chapel lies a short distance out of town in the mountains' foothills. Its original iconography was replaced with religious symbols of the Celestial Myriad—a blue, stained glass, eight-pointed star most prominent among them. The grounds were developed to suit the squad's needs: quarters, training facilities, and an AWV workshop. They even went 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. The proxies remember that this place is one of community. They linger on its edges to form a ghostly moat.

NOTABLES

Senior Kin Arrow Slide, a leader of the Wrights Of The Ascent. An old, skinny, frail man. He commands his fellow monks with a nasal voice as they build monuments to the Church. They are currently working on a massive cathedral southeast of Hulinton. However, they keep running into issues and Slide suspects sabotage. (Certain, cunning.)

SPECIAL RULE

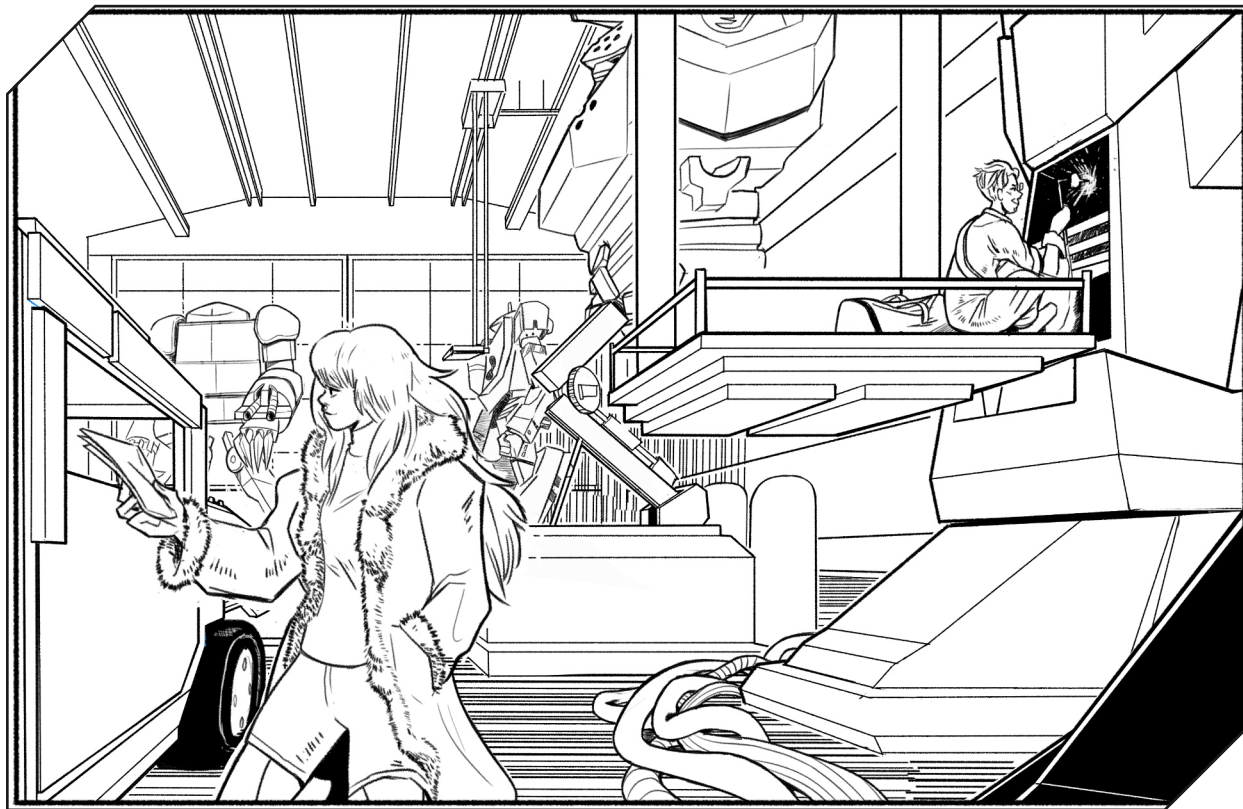
A lot of people have passed through Hulinton over the years, as it's on the main road from the southwest. Take +1d when Interfacing with a proxy to gather information, but add 1 Tick to an 8-Tick Clock "Proxy Corruption." If the Clock fills, a sizeable portion of the proxies in Hulinton become dangerous.

This is home, I guess. I've never lived anywhere else at least. When I was really little, I thought The War would never really touch here. The food from our farms would make its way to the frontlines, and that's the only difference we would make. Then all the older kids around town started going away. The battles kept getting closer and closer. More and more Myriad AWVs passed through, and most of them looked like they got real fucked up. Even if the fighting never actually gets to Hulinton, The War is definitely here.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

FORT JOVANOL

RATINGS: Wealth 2, Might 4, Crime 1, Tech 2

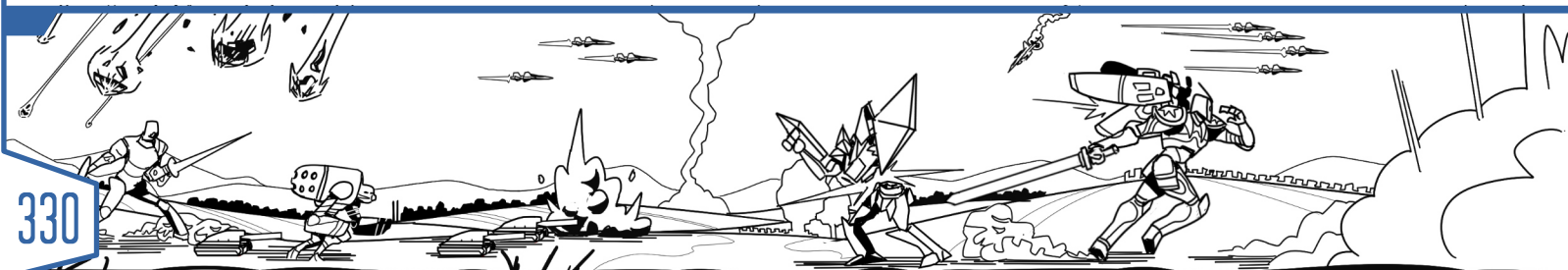


DESCRIPTION

Built from the ground up to serve the needs of nearby Jovangellian squads, Fort Jovanol is named after the capital city of the empire's homeland. A massive trench and wall system surround it, providing cover for AWWs 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 AWWs inside of massive hangers. A guard checks the credentials of a transport truck, while an Ape class AWW 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.



LANDMARKS

Surrounding the base is a massive wall, and surrounding that is an equally massive trench. The wall is high enough to conceal most buildings inside the compound, and tough enough to receive a sustained artillery bombardment without cracking. The trench is so deep, a Coyote class artillery AWV could take cover in it and still bring its shoulder-mounted missile racks to bear. The trench and wall are lined with a fringe of razor wire and less conspicuous anti-infiltration devices.

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.)

SPECIAL RULE

Attempts to infiltrate Fort Jovanol, whether through stealth or deception, cannot have a Controlled Position due to its extensive security measures. Missions using the tactics of Assault, Deception, or Stealth all have -1d to their engagement roll.

Everything about the Fort is just the worst. Even though The War influences almost everything on Izya, most buildings or AWVs have multiple purposes. There are combat squads, but they're not the majority. Except for the fucking Jovangellian Empire. They're the only faction obsessed with winning The War through military dominance, and Fort Jovanol is like the physical embodiment of that desire. It's disgusting. And terrifying. One wrong move in there gets you about fifty bullets to the chest, and those big fuck-off walls and the trench make it almost impossible to escape if it goes real bad. I still can't believe we managed to get in and out alive.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

JOURNEY CITY

RATINGS: Wealth 3, Might 2, Crime 3, Tech 2

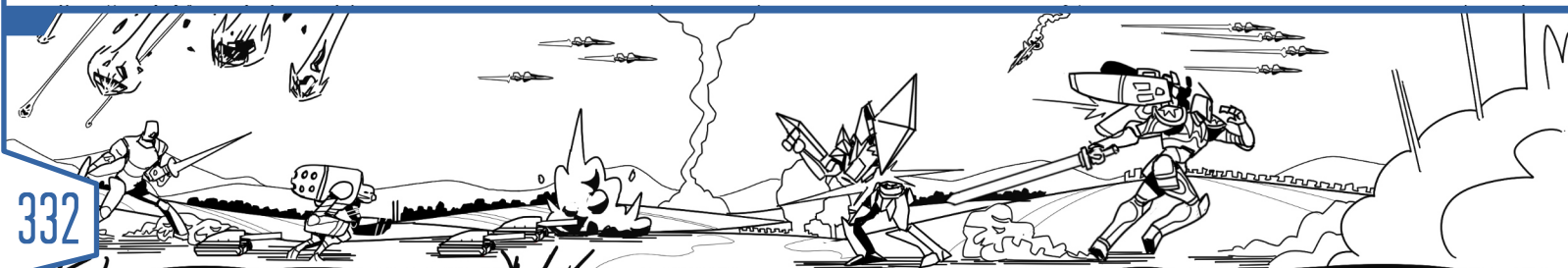


DESCRIPTION

The Territory of Izya's beating heart, this cosmopolitan city's population is estimated to have tripled since the beginning of the Izyan Conflict. While the Offworlder Factions' initial attempts to capture The Tower caused death and destruction throughout the city, the Izya River's south side saw the worst. Subsequently, 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 settled in 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; they were either absorbed by larger organizations or became independent contractors. Offworlder squads settle grudges with their fellows in bars and dark alleys. Others share a drink, and sometimes more, with an enemy combatant who they might see through crosshairs the next time they meet. Above it all, the guns, shields, and armor of The Tower threaten anything unexpected that gets too close.



LANDMARKS

The Tower stands in the city center, impossibly huge. The area near its base was cleared of all buildings to maintain its defensive sightlines. The plaza is often 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.

NOTABLES

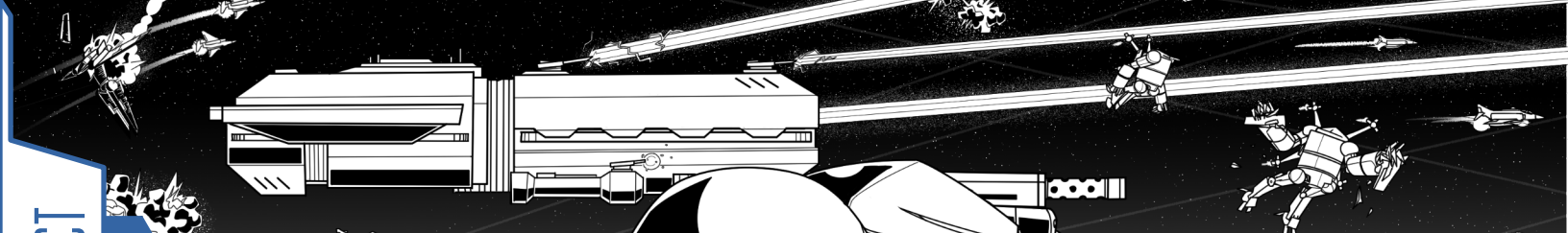
Vanessa "Vest" Vestibula, Captain of the Squaddies. She's still resentful that she and those she leads were not recruited by the Offworlders when the Journey City Police Department collapsed. She now selfishly provides protection to locals that can afford it. The very behaviors she exhibits now are the reason that she was never picked up. (Selfish, cruel.)

SPECIAL RULE

Journey City is dedicated to its own survival now. If you bribe someone with 1 Materiel or Personnel, take +1d and improved Effect (if narratively appropriate). Don't be surprised if someone takes a bribe against you.

"In the shadow of the Tower, we set our arms aside." Harrow taught me that old saying ages ago. I heard so many things about Journey City growing up, like how it's a paradise or a den of sin. These days I'm just glad I don't have to watch my back as closely when we're there, at least near the Tower. It usually gets me thinking about how the ceasefire here could be spread across Izya. And then? I remember how much artillery is hiding just under the surface. I don't want to live in a world where that's everywhere you turn. But for a moment's rest? I'll take what I can get.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday



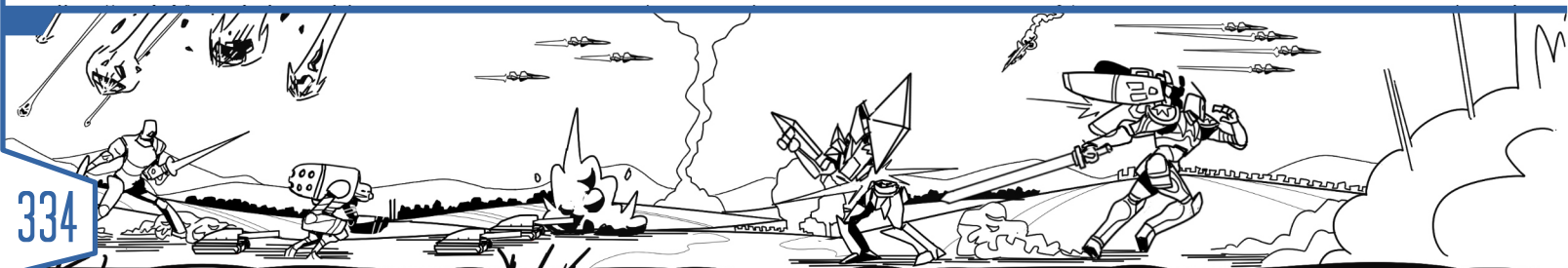
JOURNEY CITY

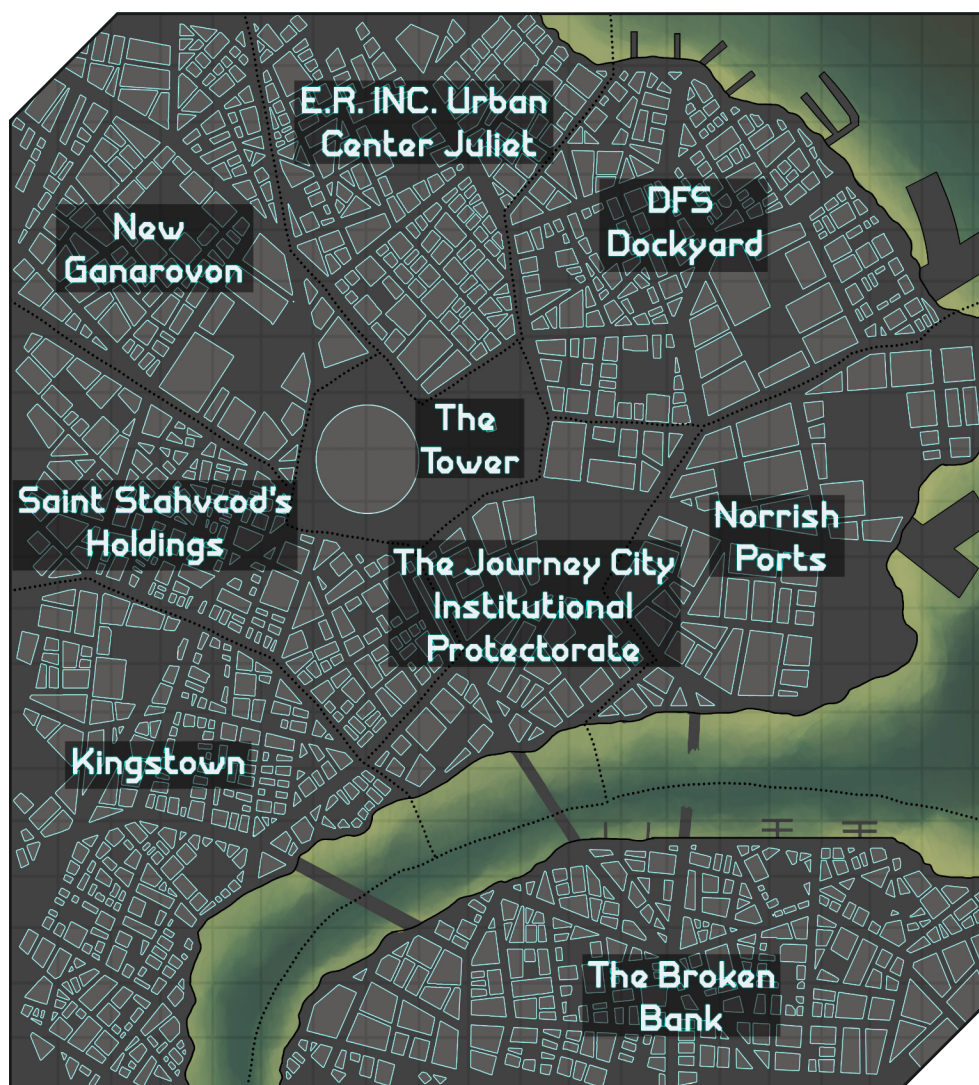
The locals fortified The Tower as each Offworlder Faction raced to capture it for themselves. The locals began calling themselves “the Tower Defenders” as they found new hope in the chaos. They thought if they held out long enough, the Offworlders would devastate each other in their ambitions.

The battle began with small skirmishes as scouting patrols and reconnaissance flights crossed paths. More and more squads joined in, and while it paled in comparison to conflicts on worlds that mattered, it was the fiercest battle Izya had 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 with an apparent upper hand.

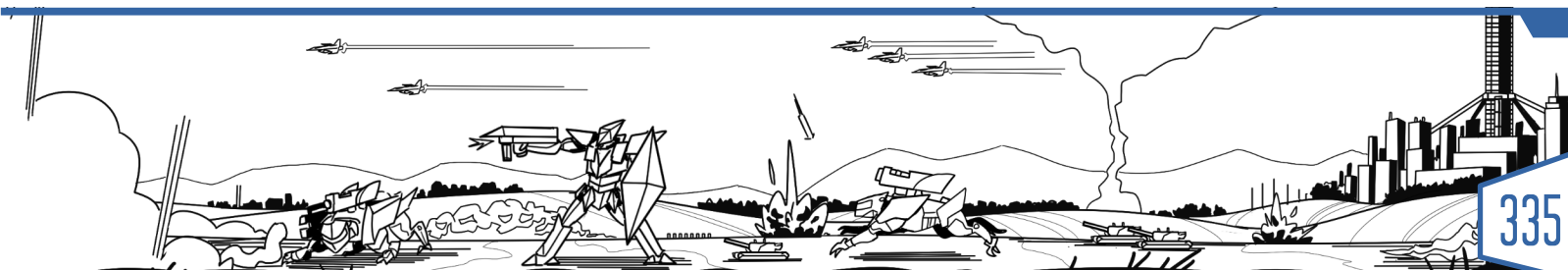
The worst of the fighting occurred on the south side of the Izya River, where the DFS, Celestial Myriad, and Norrish militaries sought control of the city's industrial base. The entire area was rubble when the fighting ended—including the Twinler & Red headquarters campus, which had designed, built, and maintained The Tower. Thousands were jobless, homeless, wounded, and/or dead in that neighborhood alone.

Even though Izya reached an uneasy (and unofficial) peace after this battle, the Tower Defenders’ position would only worsen. The Journey City municipal government collapsed under the crisis of maintaining the city under current conditions. Offworld Factions recruited locals employed by the city (police, telecom workers, waste management, and many more) who could provide them with life's necessities. The Tower Defenders stood as the last symbol of a legitimate local authority.



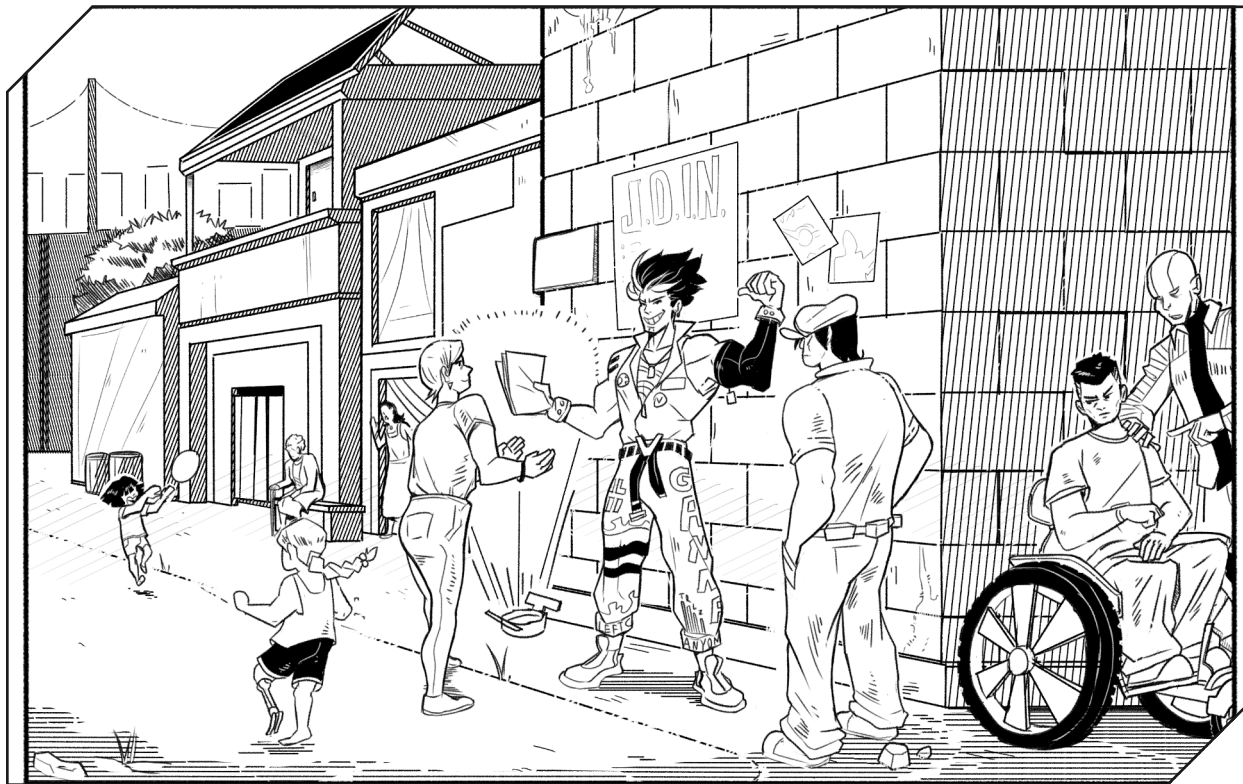


The following are example regions you can use a campaign with a city level map scale (see page 271).



KINGSTOWN

RATINGS: Wealth 1, Might 2, Crime 3, Tech 2

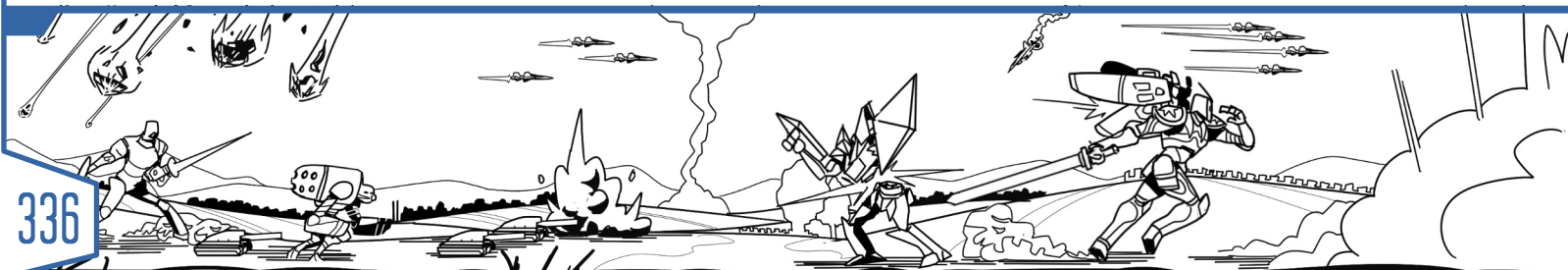


DESCRIPTION

Kingstown is named after Kate King, the long-dead crime boss. It comprises the southwest corner of the city and is known for being an overcrowded, low-income district that 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. The district's residents maintain much of the infrastructure, seen in the skilled but improvised repairs.

SCENE

Children play 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 Runtz and the Burden whisper in their ears. Ambitious recruiters from Offworld Factions preach, nag, and cajole the locals with promises of a better future.



LANDMARKS

The Yard is a bus depot that the locals reclaimed when it became clear that the Journey City Transit Authority was dead and gone. It's now a market where shopkeepers sell 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.

NOTABLES

Hannah Copeland, head of the Kingstown Burden cell, has fought Offworlders her entire adult life. She's watched friends and family die, and has learned bitter lessons along the way. Intelligence agencies suspect she's the most powerful Burden leader. (Patient, vicious.)

SPECIAL RULE

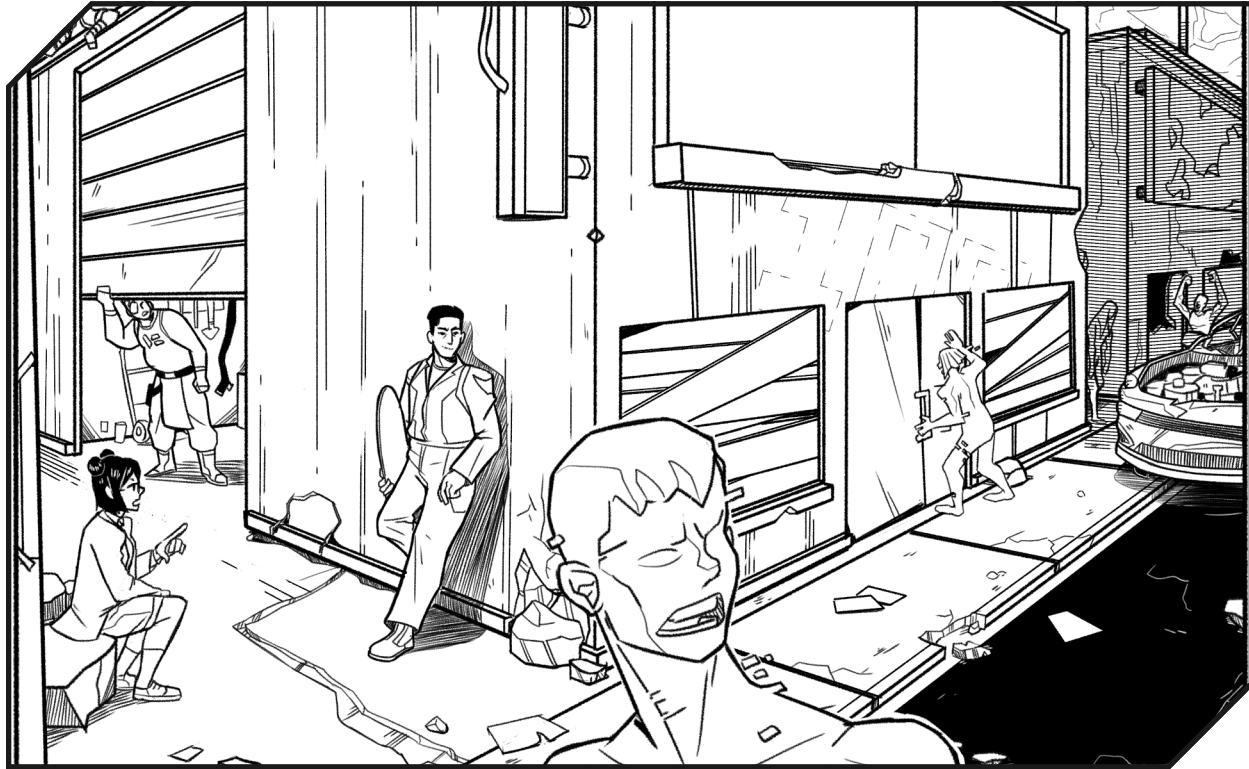
Kingstown looks out for its own, and those who have struggled share what they can. If you come from an impoverished background, take +1d on Consort, gather information, and Acquire Asset rolls within Kingstown.

Kingstown seems so fragile. Maybe a weird thing to say about a place full of some of the toughest people I know, but it's just how it feels. A friend of Layla's took me up to their garden on the roof, and it took my breath away. From the street, it's hard to see anything except concrete, but from the rooftops? Splashes of greenery, rainbow murals, streamers, and broken glass decorations. It could so easily turn into the Broken Bank all over again. All it would take is one bad AWV brawl. And I keep hearing rumors about Hannah, holed up somewhere in there. I have to find her before that happens.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

THE BROKEN BANK

RATINGS: Wealth 0, Might 0, Crime 2, Tech 2

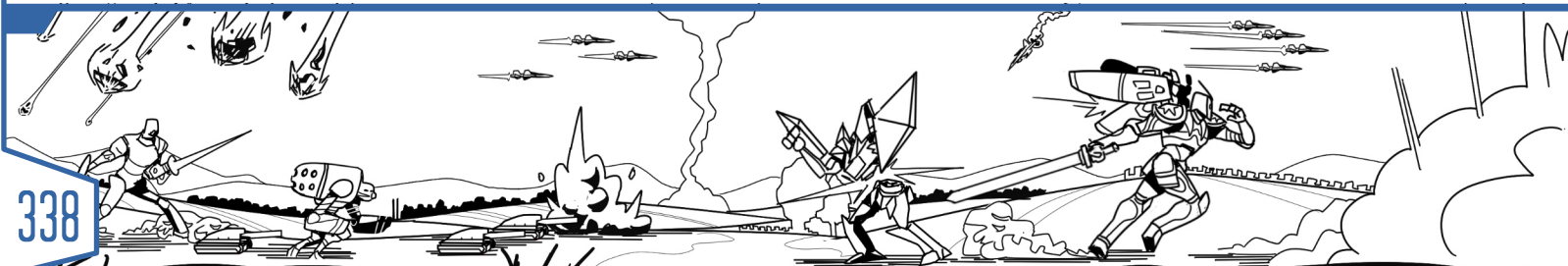


DESCRIPTION

Sitting on the south side of the Izya River, this area of Journey City used to be called the "Brown Bank" after a long-dead community organizer. But when the Offworlders brought their war to Earth and Journey City, the Brown Bank was hit the hardest. When the conflict cooled, those powerful enough to 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 wear the forms of those who died here and stumble from one sign of life to the next.



LANDMARKS

Ambush Row, the only major road that provides a straight line from southeast of Journey City to the Tower at its center. It's an excellent place for ambushers, who use the profusion of rubble and wrecked vehicles to set traps and block roads.

NOTABLES

Lovegood, a deep-voiced bartender who works at The Broken Bar. They employ several of their cousins as staff at the bar and provide one of the Broken Bank's only places of entertainment. (Jovial, forceful.)

SPECIAL RULE

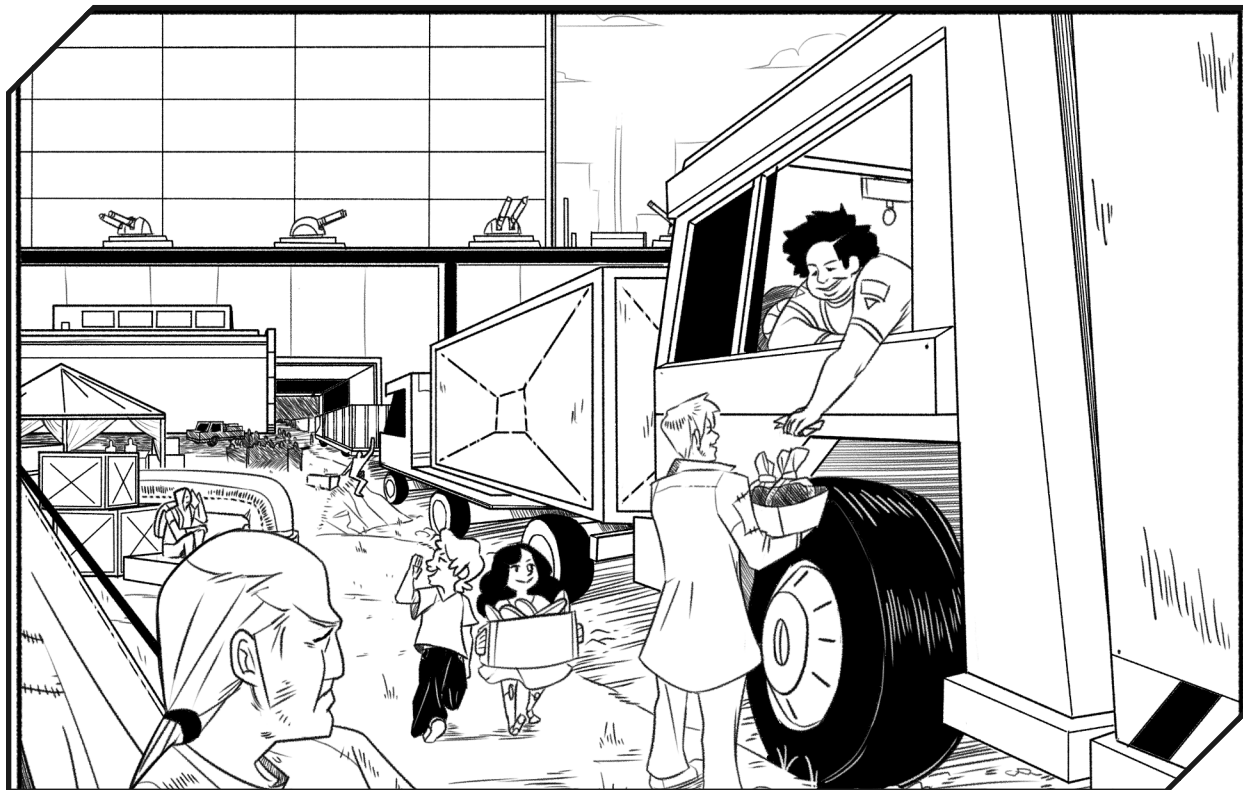
Start a 4-Tick Clock when you enter the region: "App Focus." Add a Tick every time the Pilots are delayed from moving forward. When it fills, corrupt proxies and apps assault them.

I hate going to the Broken Bank, especially for missions. It's depressing, it's super dangerous. There's too much cover, all of that cover is wrecked civilian buildings, and that bums me out. Any of that wreckage could be hiding an ambush. If that wasn't enough, there's all the AR and proxy mess going on all the time. The proxies especially, they get glitchier by the day. You can still barely recognize the ones that were supposed to look human, but only just. The way they are now, they're nightmare fuel: stuttering frozen smiles, too many limbs, and everything covered with a layer of static and missing parts.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

THE TOWER

RATINGS: Wealth 3, Might 3, Crime 1, Tech 2



DESCRIPTION

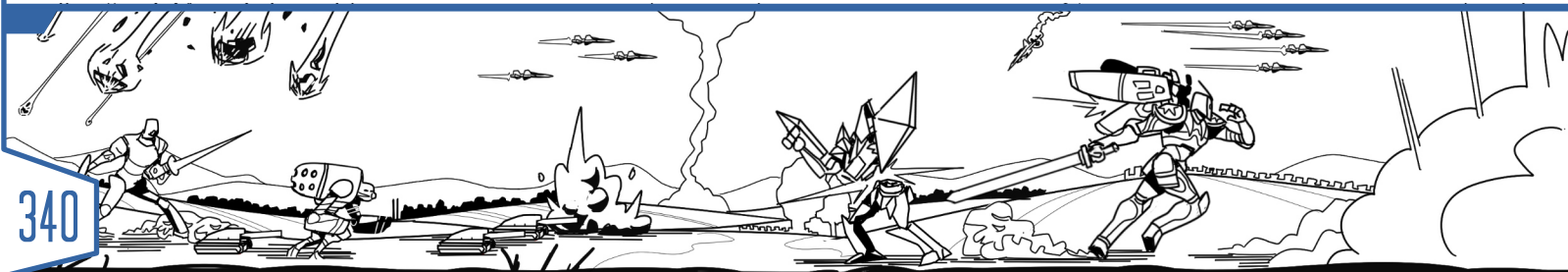
The Tower is one of the six space elevators on the planet, and is the last not held by Offworlders. Before The War came to the planet, these elevators brought resources planetside, such as reclaimed material from the debris cloud and Helium 3 from the system's largest gas giant. It's now a fortress of an unimaginable scale.

The grounds around The Tower used to be full of warehouses and offices dedicated to moving goods through the elevator. But when fortifications began, the nearby buildings posed a problem—civilians had sheltered in them, and they provided cover for enemy combatants.

The buildings were torn down and replaced with a massive plaza. Now transport vehicles sit there 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. The Tower's automated guns sway back and forth as it looks for threats, like bristles on the hide of a massive beast. A steady stream of vehicles moves through the cavernous entrance to the underground loading facility at all hours of the day.



LANDMARKS

The loading facility is a massive underground hanger, large enough for even the biggest 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 manage.

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 paperwork clearly displayed so that the automated defenses don't ruin her day. She's more interested in things running smoothly, rather than being fair. (Bored, stressed.)

SPECIAL RULE

If a vehicle approaches The Tower's plaza and either activates a weapon system or fails to broadcast proper credentials, it immediately takes "level 2 Damage: Blasted" as the automated defenses open fire.

On a really nice day, you can see the Tower way off in the distance. When we were really little we talked about going there. It seemed like another world. And now I've been to that other world, fought battles there, almost died there. Really isn't any better than here. Considering the amount of times my life has been in mortal danger there, you could probably say it's worse actually. But something about it still calls to me. I guess really it's just the gateway to another world and we're all just fighting to get through, to space. Away from this war.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

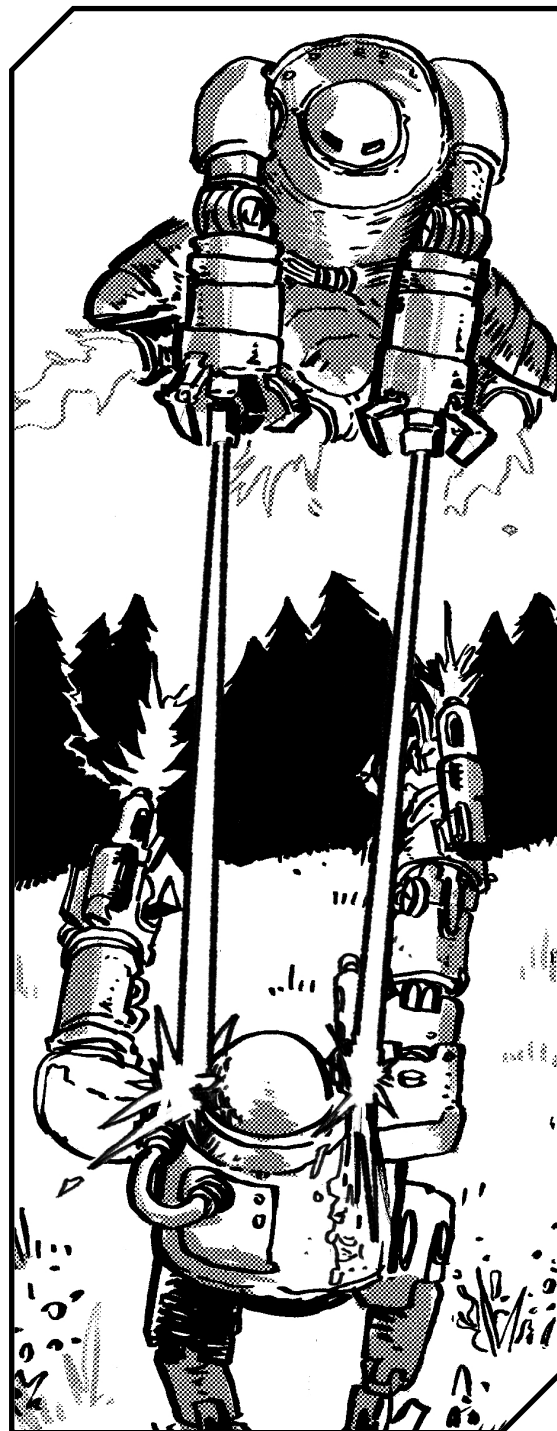
ARMORED WALKING VEHICLES (AWVs)

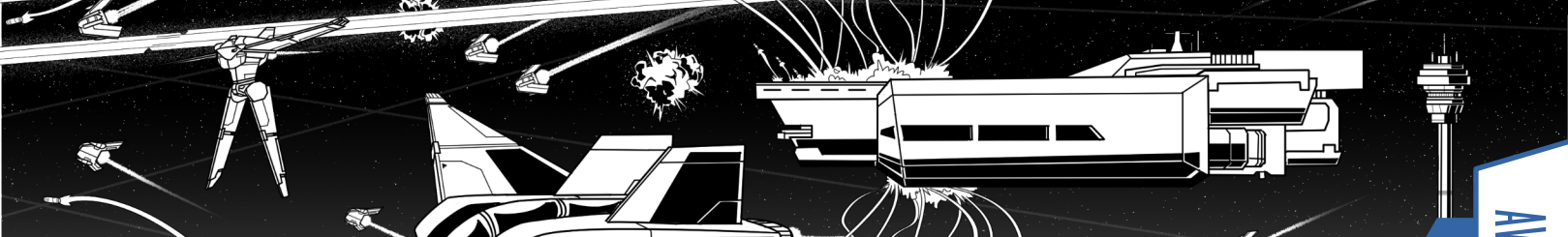
AWVs (pronounced ah-vee) were created to deploy land vehicles on unfamiliar planets with incredibly varied terrain, but were soon adapted to environments outside of their original purpose. This adaption was part necessity and part familiarity, as the Exodus ships of humanity had limited Materiel and Personnel.

It was easier and cheaper to modify already manufactured AWVs than create ones from scratch. This approach was encouraged by the small pool of Pilots most ships had available, and the introduction of the Predictive Control program (or Pre-Con), which builds on an AWV'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 AWVs of old.

The meaning of AWV has changed over time. Originally, it was the acronym for the massive, walking, military vehicles used by Factions. But as the civilian populations became more familiar with them, AWV became a catch-all term for any vehicle with sufficient gravitas—whether bipedal vehicles, massive tanks, or fighter-bombers. This trend was especially true for vehicles that blurred the line between those distinctions, such as submarines that could deploy legs and move on land.

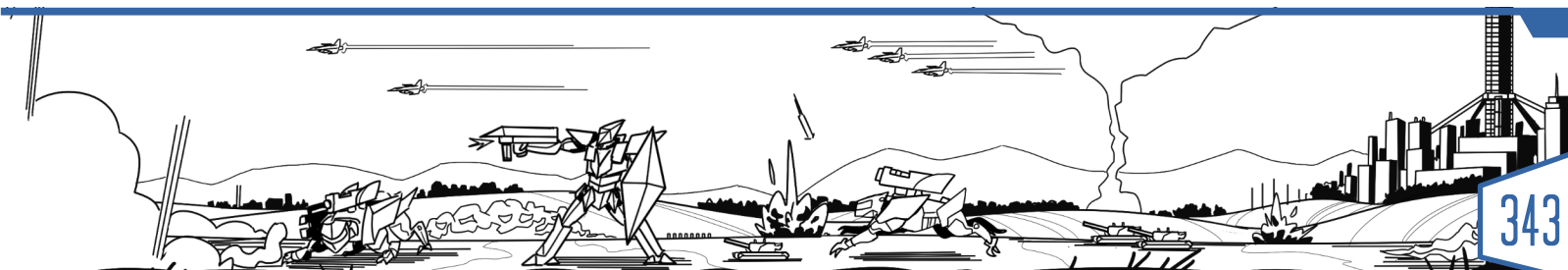
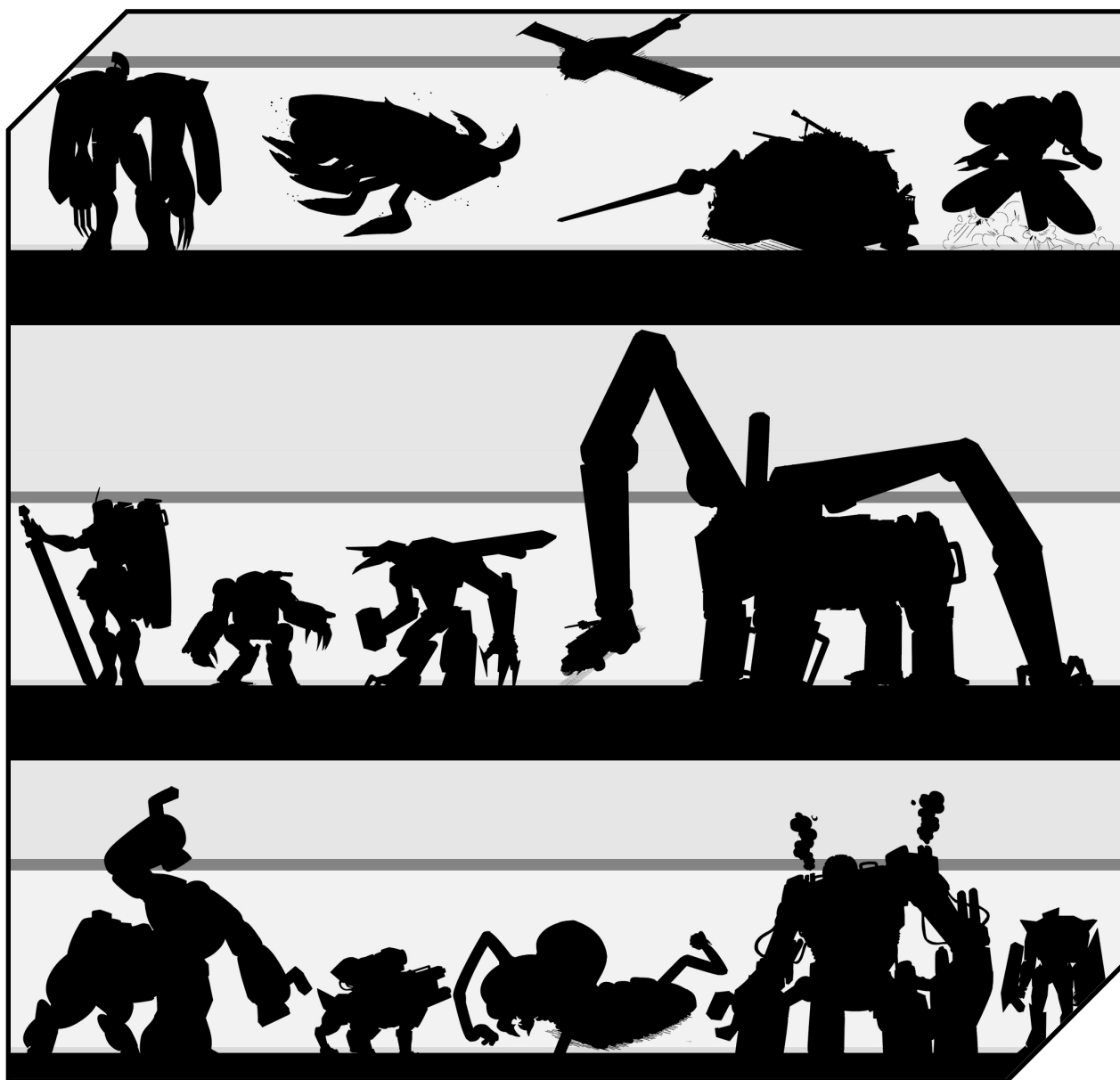
As so often happens with military technology, civilian AWVs were made available to those outside the military. Civilian Walking Vehicles (or CWV, pronounced see-vee) are a very niche product. Individuals who can afford them use them as a status symbol; there's nothing quite like getting stuck in traffic in your 30-foot 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 are 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 ARMORED WALKING VEHICLE SPECIFICATION GUIDE

Players may use the following examples as ideas for their vehicle, and GMs may use it as inspiration for NPC vehicles. While these examples list intended Load and action ratings, these are just suggestions. Similarly, NPCs vehicles don't use the rules for Light, Medium, or Heavy, they're 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.

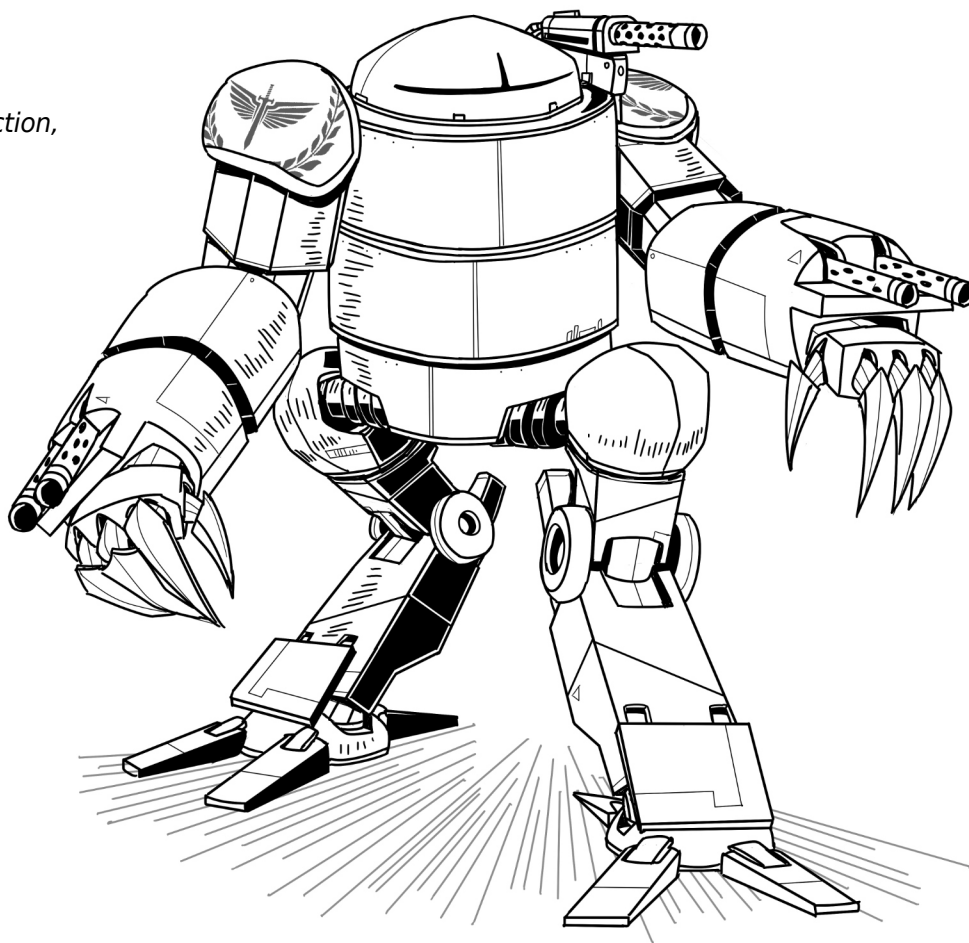
Suggested Quirks:

Stable Platform,

Clawed Hands,

Simple Construction,

Loads of Guns



MODEL: ELEPHANT

Manufacturer: Whittaker Fine Goods Company

Faction: Autocracy; The Jovangellian Empire

Role: Cargo hauler; the powerful arms and flatbed can carry many supply containers or transport whole AWVs if necessary.

Intended Load: Heavy

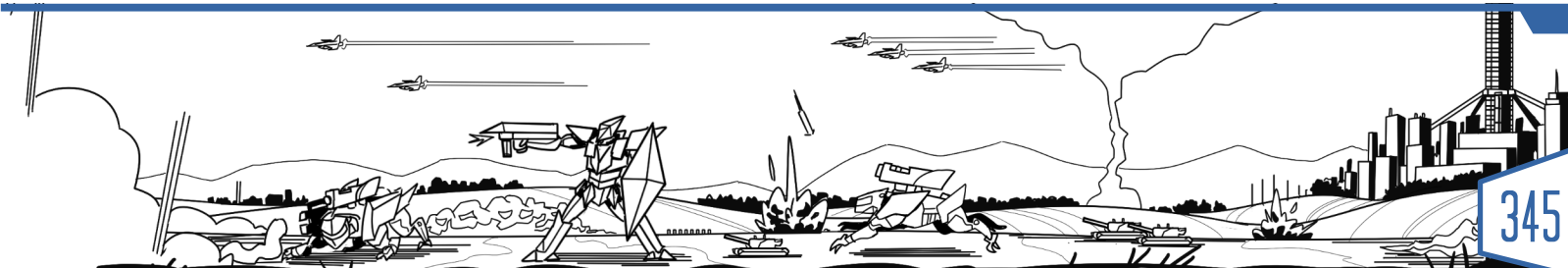
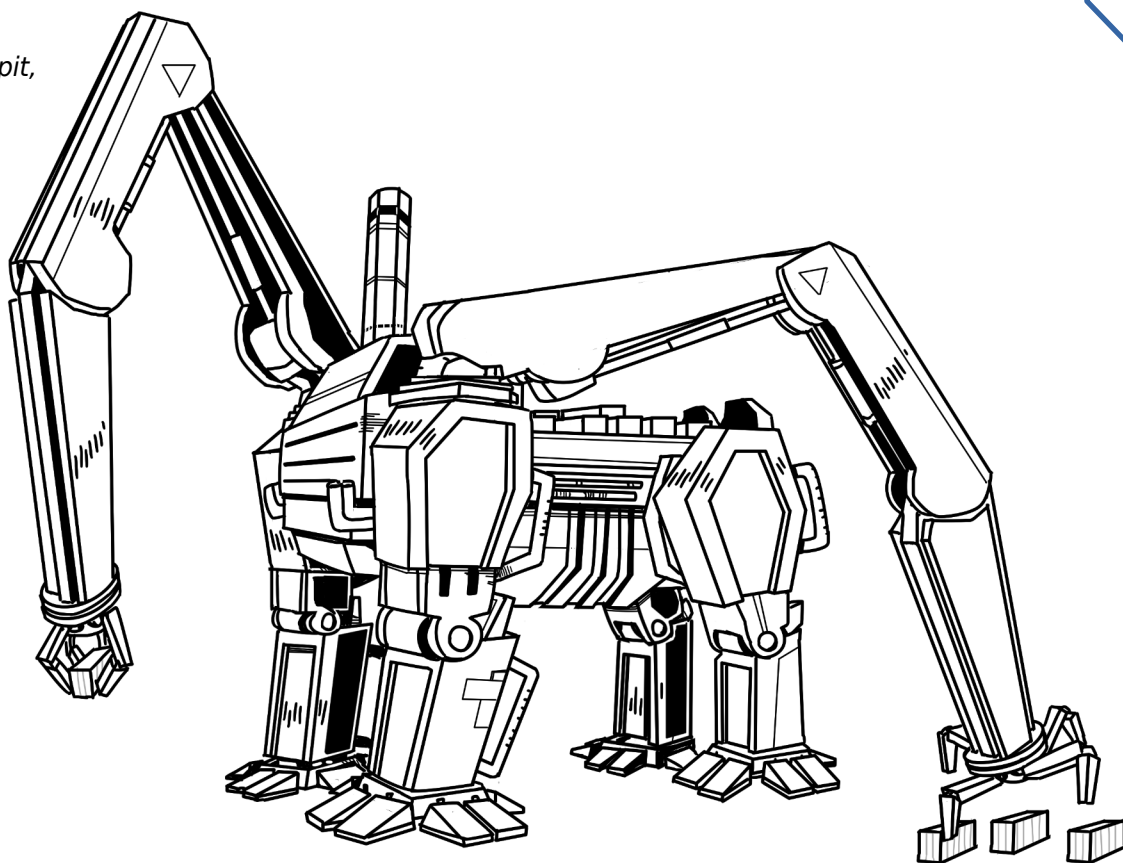
Standard Loadout: Cargo Space, Grapnel Anchor Tool.

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. The cockpit provides 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*



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 through 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. 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. Many veteran Opossum drivers nickname or form (decidedly one-sided) camaraderie with their unit's app.

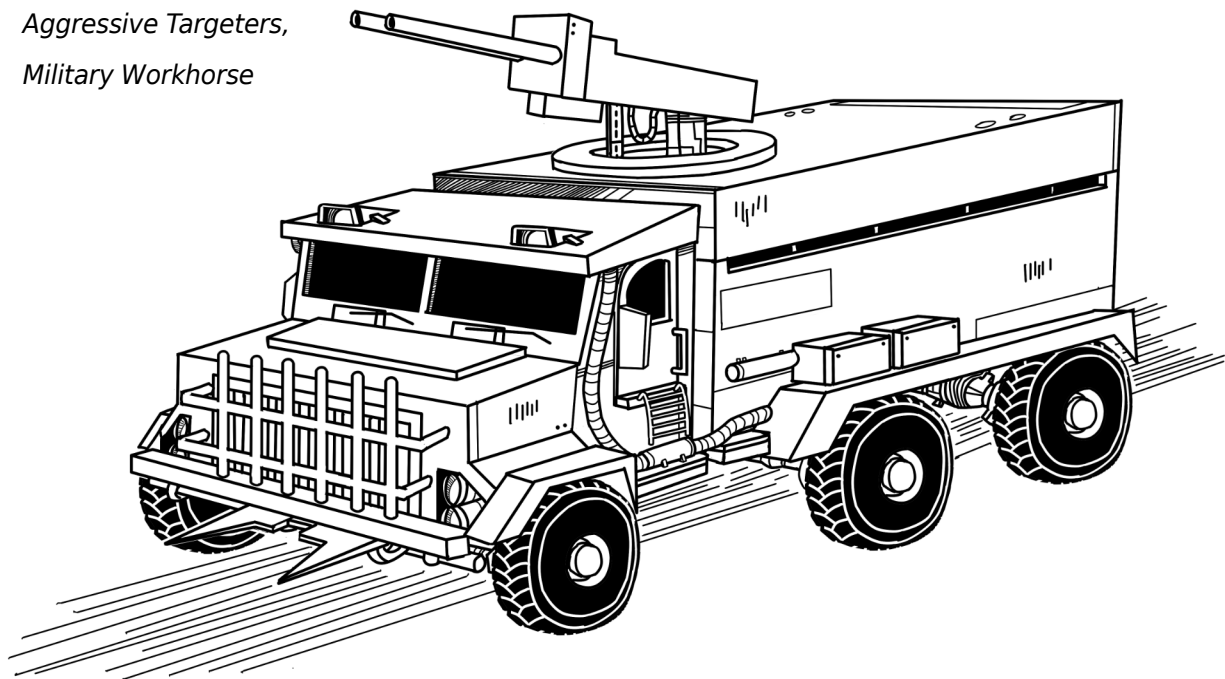
Suggested Quirks:

Machine Gunner App,

Rugged Design,

Aggressive Targeters,

Military Workhorse



MODEL: SWAN

Manufacturer: Victorious Aeronautics

Faction: Autocracy, the Jovangellian Empire

Role: Heavy cargo transport and gunship. Designed to move a pair of AWVs, a mass of infantry, or a combination of both to a combat zone and then provide support fire.

Intended Load: Heavy

Standard Loadout: Tilt wing turbines, massive cargo space, and a chin-mounted cannon.

Action Points: 2 Manipulate, 1 Battle

Appearance: An oddly rectangular flying wing design with integrated tilt wing turbines allows it to move surprisingly large loads to and from cramped locations. Its ruggedness despite its lack of armor leads to its love/hate relationship with airborne troops; enemy fire tends to pass through the aircraft causing little damage except to the cargo inside. Once at a combat site, the cargo hatches on the bottom allow its contents to be deployed immediately, and its chin-mounted cannon provides direct fire heavy ordnance.

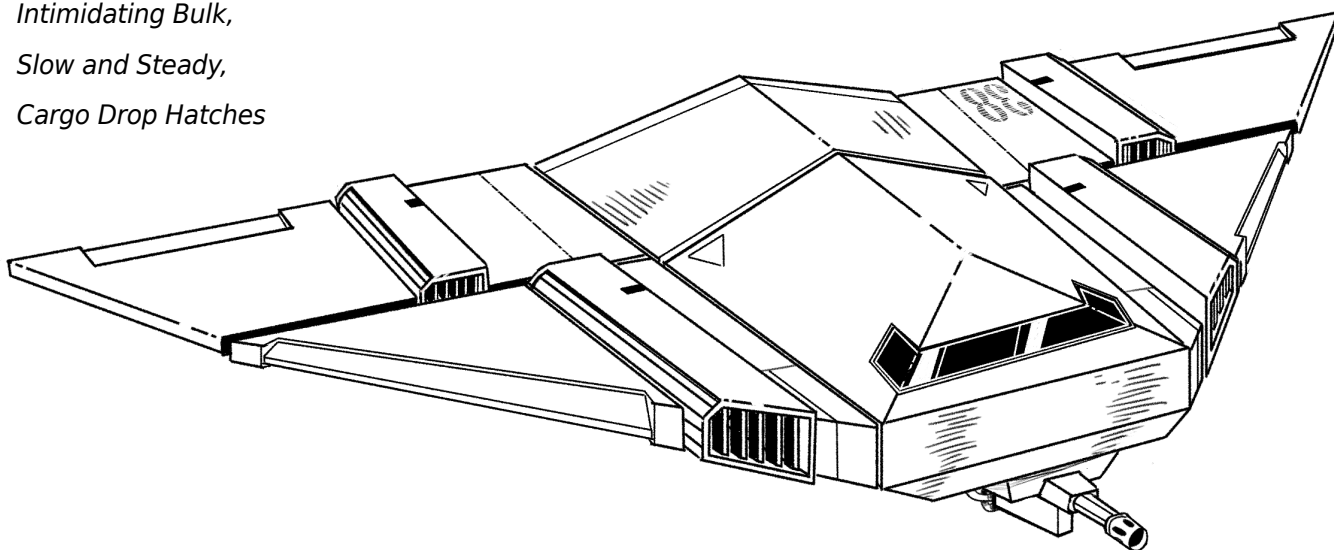
Suggested Quirks:

Hollow Body,

Intimidating Bulk,

Slow and Steady,

Cargo Drop Hatches



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 shovel-shaped head has several "jaws" designed to move earth. Its back is primarily storage and expands upwards to accommodate load using its arms as additional structural support, giving the Kettle its eponymous shape at capacity. Its underbelly is a concave array of rods that repel the ground, generating an unusual sound commonly called the Knell. Its many arms are long, many-jointed, and extendable, designed for propping up debris, but they're 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.

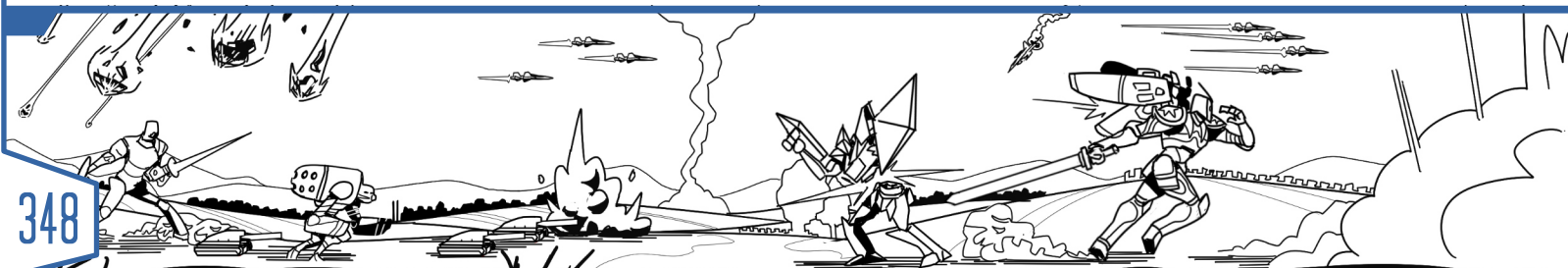
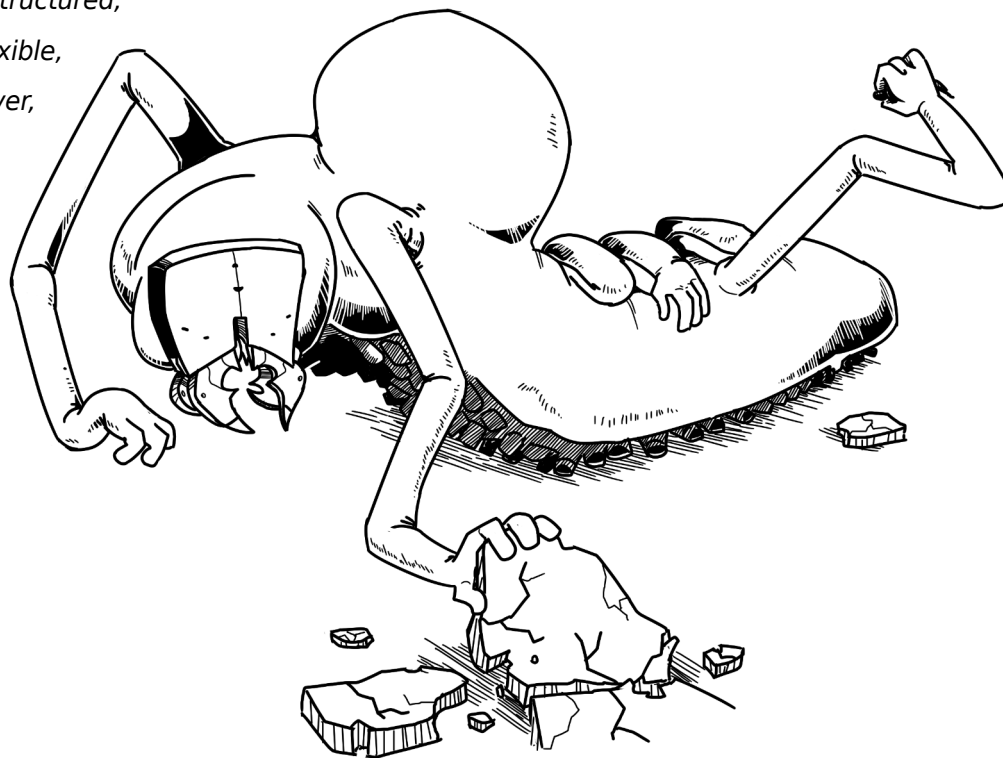
Suggested Quirks:

Strategically Structured,

Rubbery & Flexible,

Disturbing Hover,

Ominous



MODEL: KNIGHT

Manufacturer: Spirit Forge Cloister

Faction: Theocracy; The Church of the Celestial Myriad

Role: As a brawler, it rapidly closes to melee range with its boosters, disrupting the AWVs designed for fighting at longer ranges.

Intended Load: Heavy

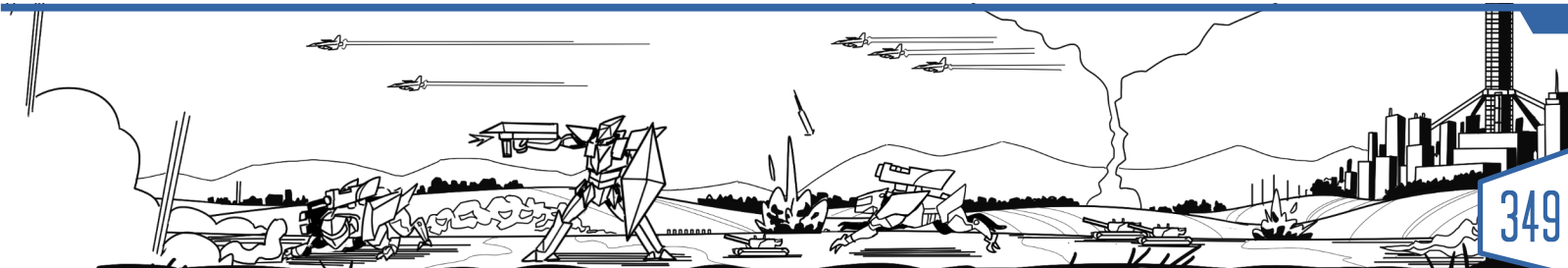
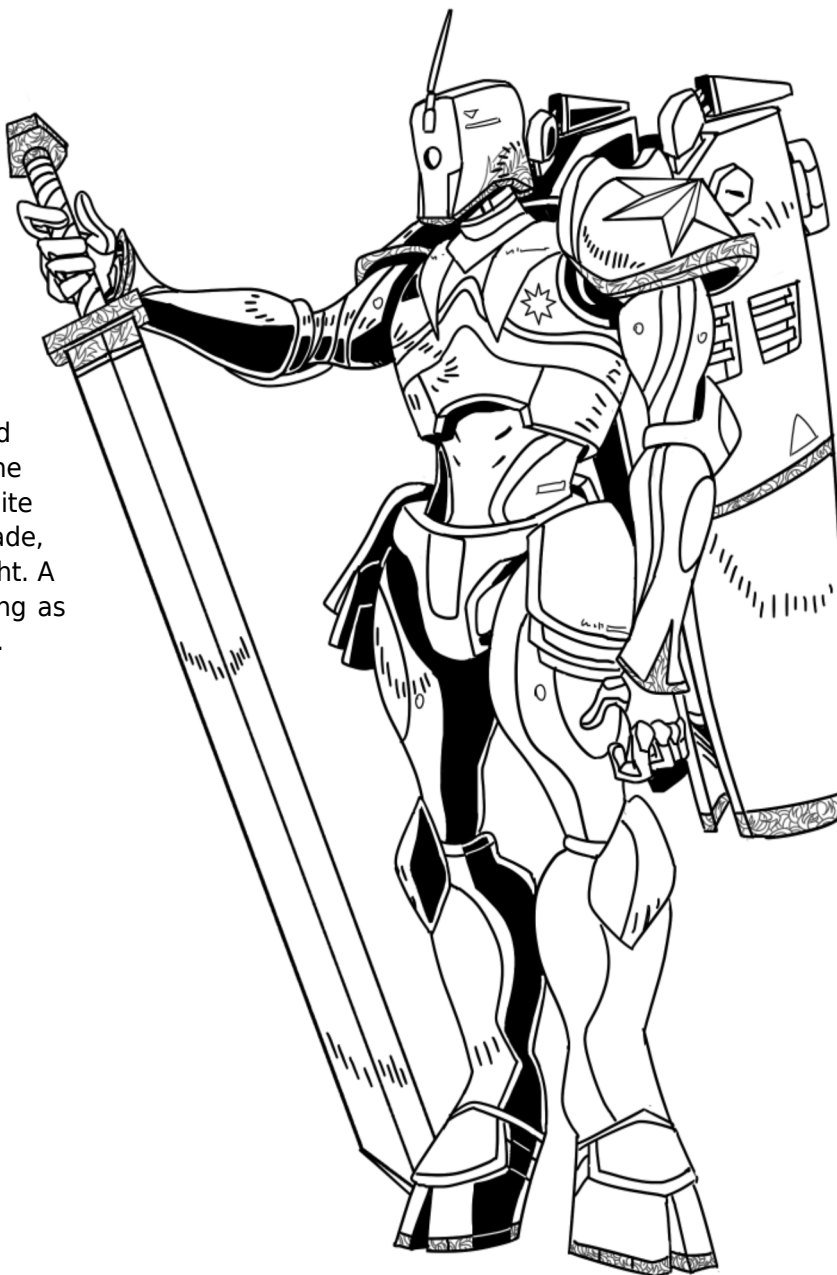
Standard Loadout: A massive, two-handed sword, heavy armor, and powerful rocket boosters.

Action Points: 2 Battle,
1 Maneuver

Appearance: A tall, 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 dexterous 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:

Fragile Appearance,
Exposed Boosters,
Gentle Hands,
Iconic



MODEL: AGINCOURT

Manufacturer: Ohashi Biomass Technologies

Faction: Theocracy, the Church of the Celestial Myriad

Role: Heavy fire support; it hangs back from the fight to unleash 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 that protrude from its organic back. It's 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.

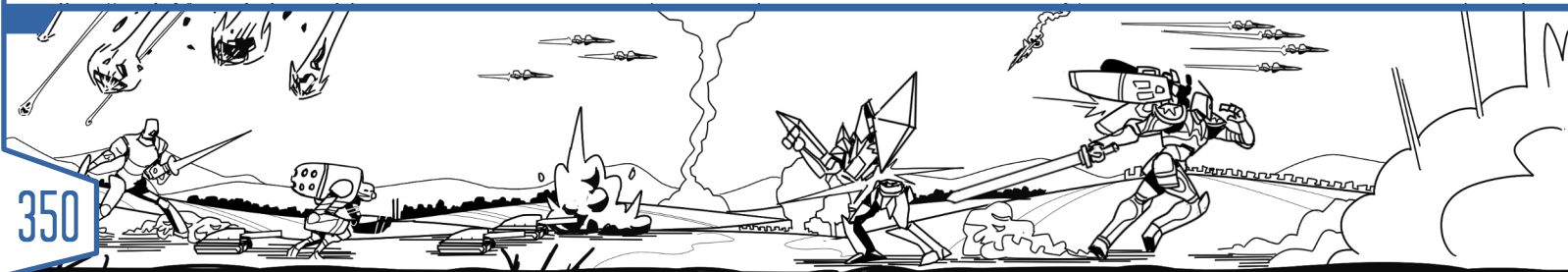
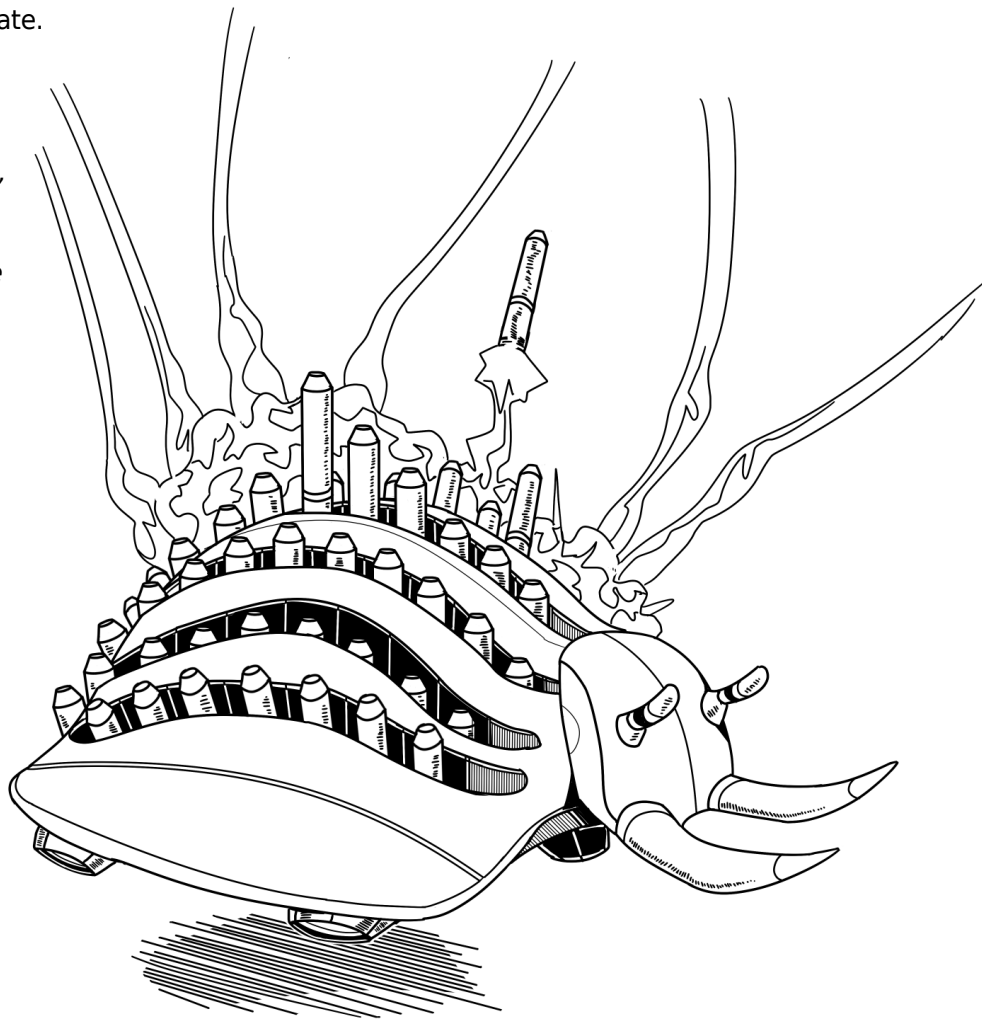
Suggested Quirks:

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; it's an impossibly fast, close combat machine designed to destroy key targets and cause maximal confusion and panic.

Intended Load: Medium

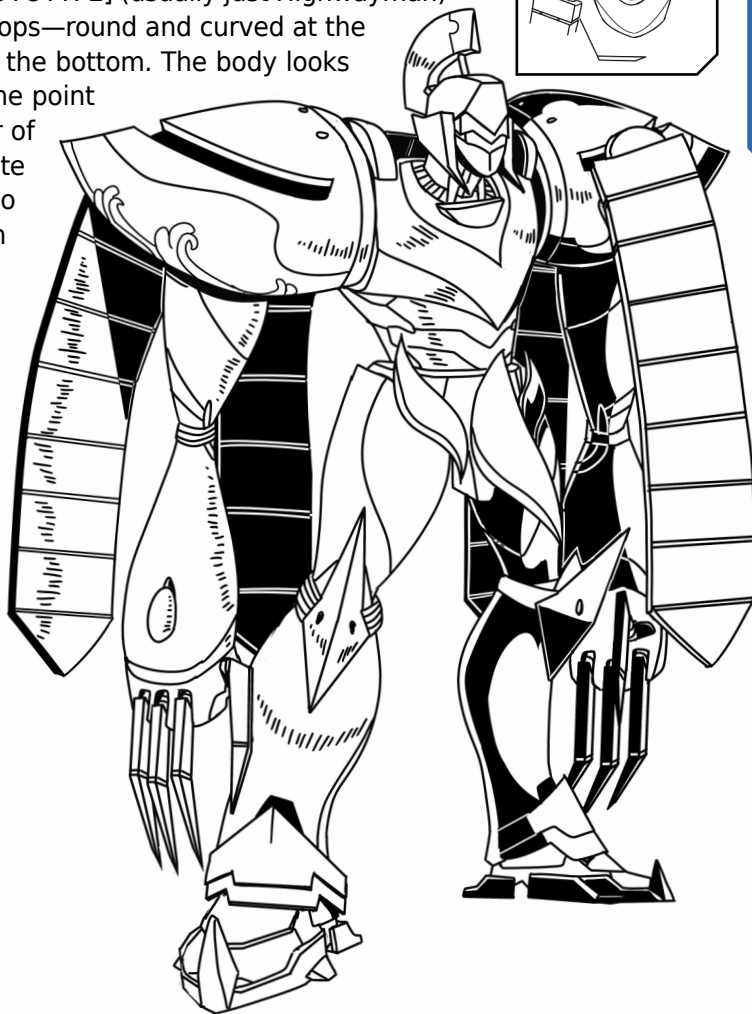
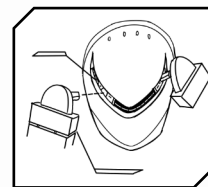
Standard Loadout: Wrist-mounted beam cannons, rending claws, shifting boosters that double as a shield.

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 curved at the top, tightening to an elongated, sharp point at the bottom. The body looks like an exaggerated suit of knight's armor to the point where it barely looks humanoid, giving 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. Each binder carries verniers underneath the shielded front. The front binders can sweep back to give the Highwayman an extreme boost of speed. Each binder can also 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; it performs rapid hit-and-run strikes with its machine guns on vulnerable targets.

Intended Load: Light or Medium

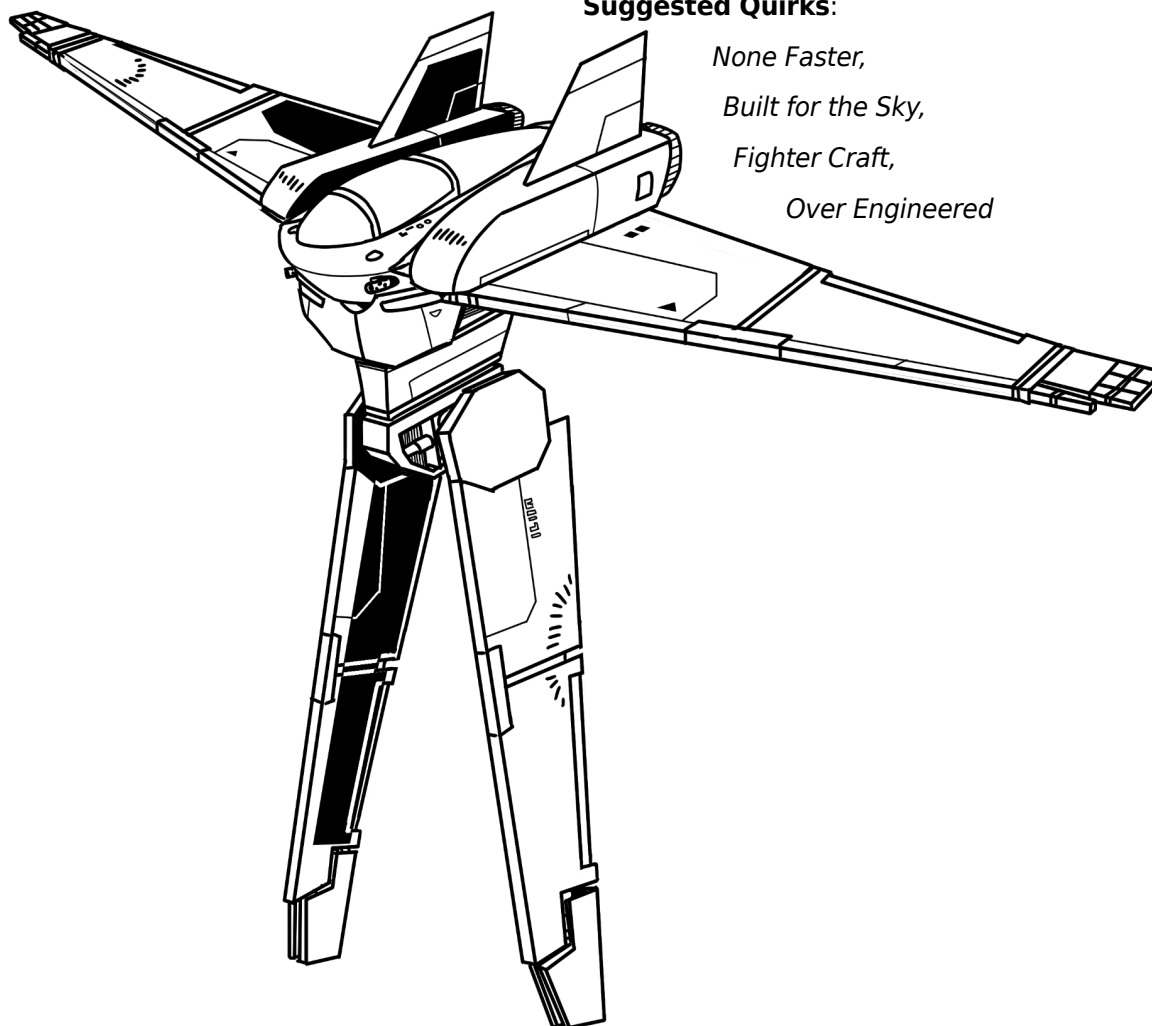
Standard Loadout: A full flight system, machine guns. The Medium Load variant has Armor.

Action Points: 2 Maneuver, 1 Battle

Appearance: A squat, yet streamlined figure resembling a fighter jet with narrow arms and legs that extend downwards like additional wings. Their flattened profile appears clumsy when not seen in motion. Its head comes to a point with a rounded cockpit in 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.

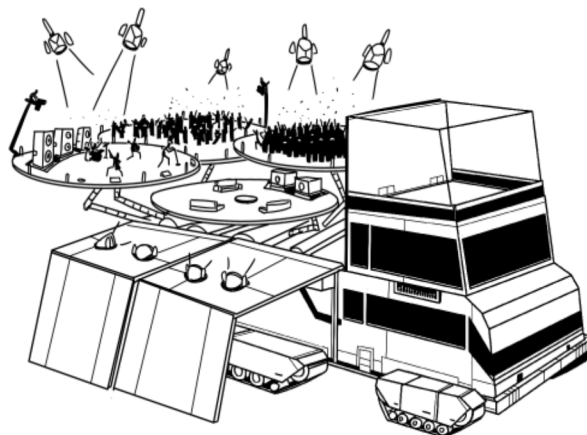
Role: Mobile performance space; it has the capacity to transport stage, props, broadcasting equipment, and performers.

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.



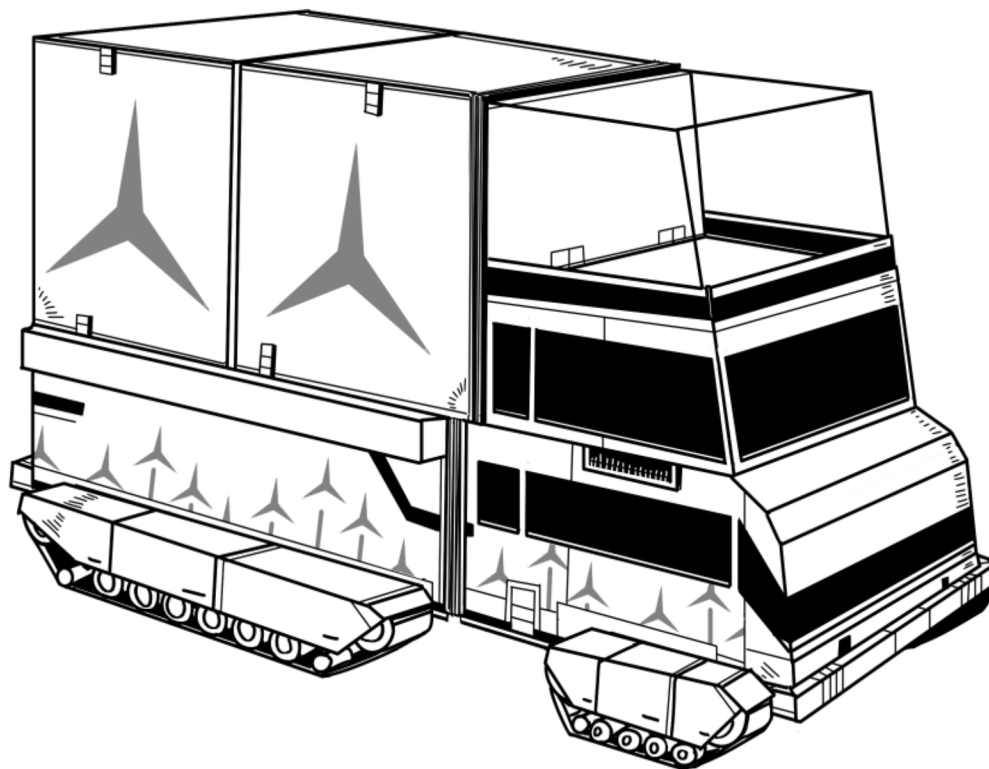
Suggested Quirks:

Monitoring System,

Rolling Building,

Loud & Showy,

Teched Up



MODEL: EXTRACTOR TYPE B

Manufacturer: Carry-All Corp

Faction: Corporatocracy, Exodus Republic Inc.

Role: Aggressive material extraction; it's designed to tear apart other AWVs (whether already ruined or still active) and harvest their valuable parts.

Intended Load: Medium

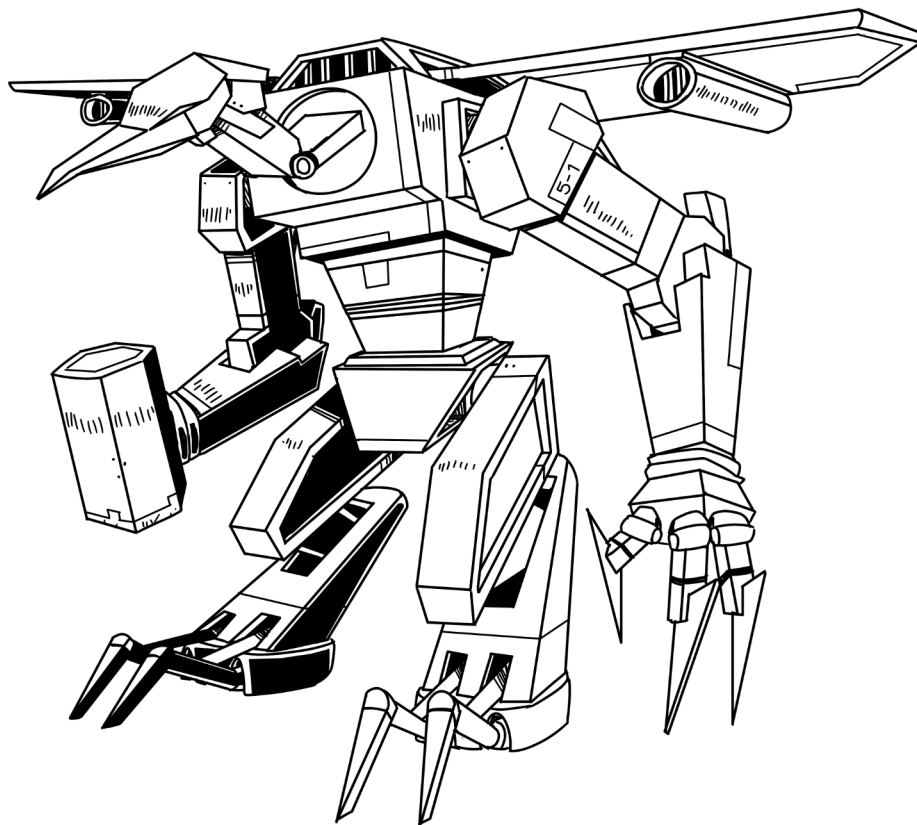
Standard Loadout: Cargo space, burst thrusters with glider wings, metal-rendering claws and hammer.

Action Points: 1 Maneuver, 1 Destroy, 1 Manipulate

Appearance: A low-slung head is made up of a sharp, beak-shaped cockpit that 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 long, sharp fingers. Black-green, oily overlapping plates make up the hull. Sensors and equipment all face forwards toward its prey. Short, tightly sprung legs give it a waddling appearance, but it brings the speed 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; it boasts a huge open hangar with various deployment methods for transporting mechs of small-to-medium sizes and 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, including active warzones. The exterior is shaped similar to a tortoise flipped onto its shell—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, which may be deployed from the back, top, and bottom. While its exterior looks like standard transport, it has housing quarters that are small but surprisingly accommodating.

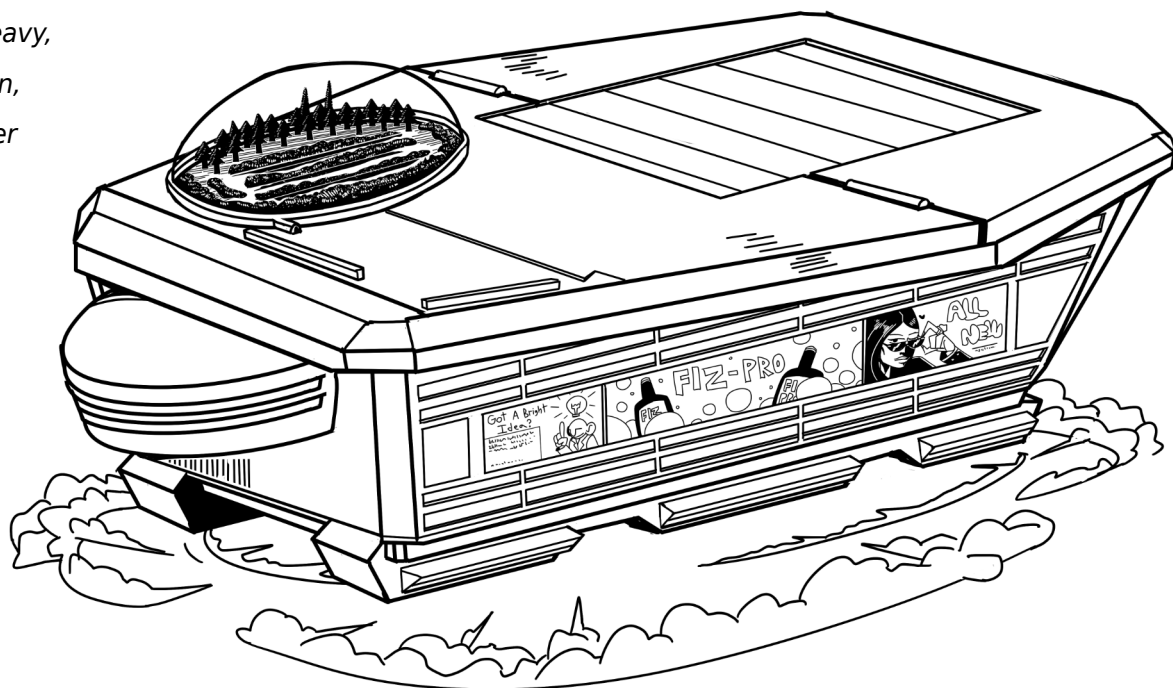
Suggested Quirks:

Finicky Remote Access AI,

Dense and Heavy,

Luxury Kitchen,

Mech Launcher



MODEL: BALISONG

Manufacturer: Armored Front Core Mechanics

Faction: Democracy; Democratic Federated Systems

Role: Rapid response; despite its size and light armament, this AWV can overcome much fiercer opponents through clever use of its holo-projector.

Intended Load: Light

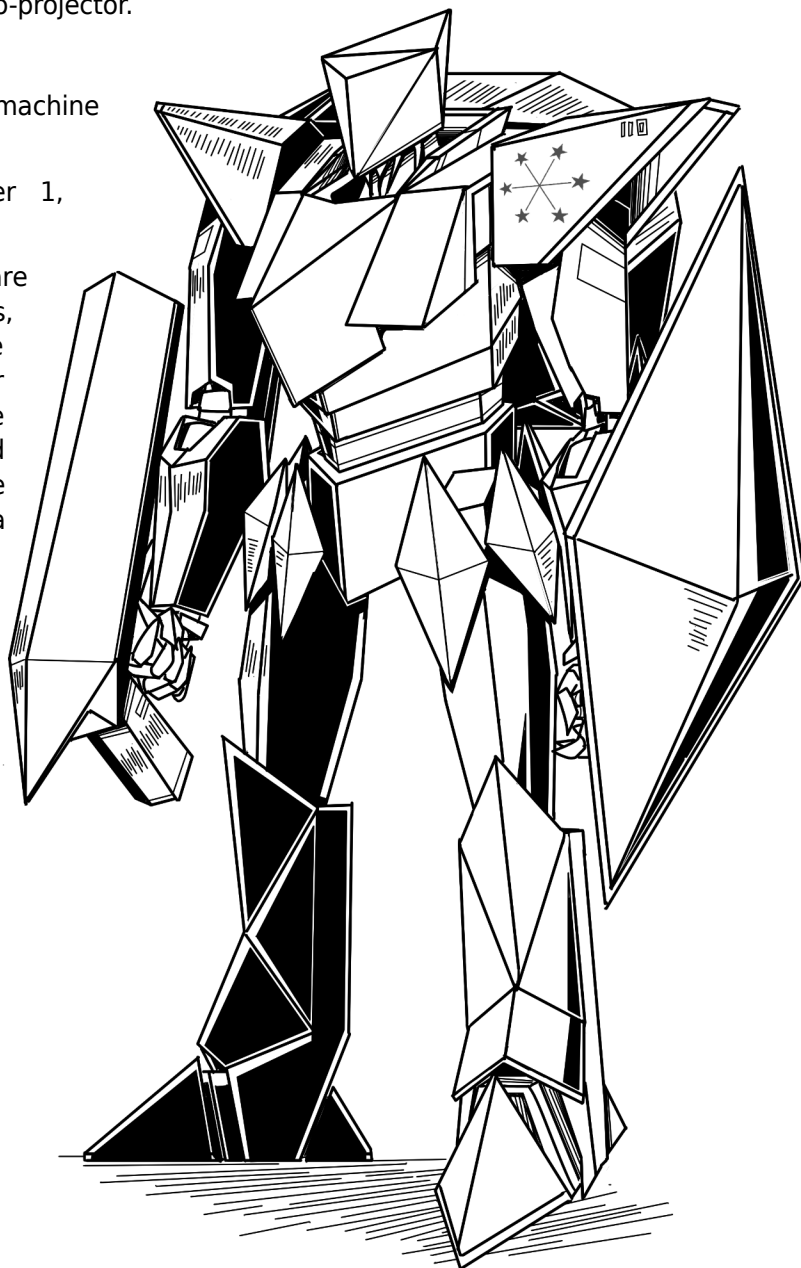
Standard Loadout: A holo-projector, machine gun, and shield.

Action Points: Battle 1, Maneuver 1, Manipulate 1

Appearance: This AWV's proportions are very human, with two legs, two arms, and a head. Its most distinctive feature is its shell, 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 back-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. It's similar to a bulldog and very different from the thin frame common to DFS AWWs. A powerful reactor provides the energy for its heavy cannon to engage targets at range, and its DEWs to defend against closer threats.

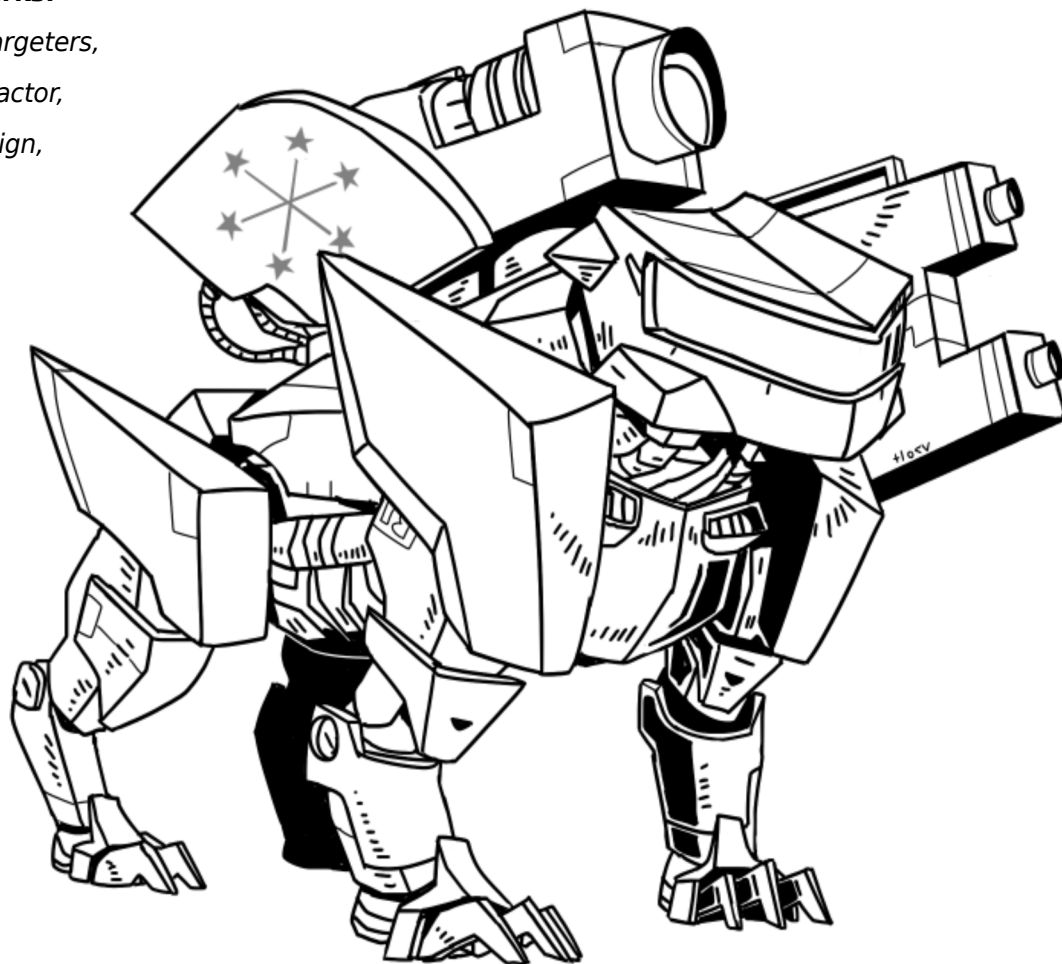
Suggested Quirks:

Aggressive Targeters,

Oversized Reactor,

Compact Design,

Heavy Step



MODEL: SHOTEL

Manufacturer: Gambert Iarrah Manufacturing

Faction: Democracy, Democratic Federated Systems

Role: Ace unit; it's highly mobile and heavily armed for medium-range and close combat. It specializes in evading danger when surrounded and one-on-one combat to eliminate commander units.

Intended Load: Medium

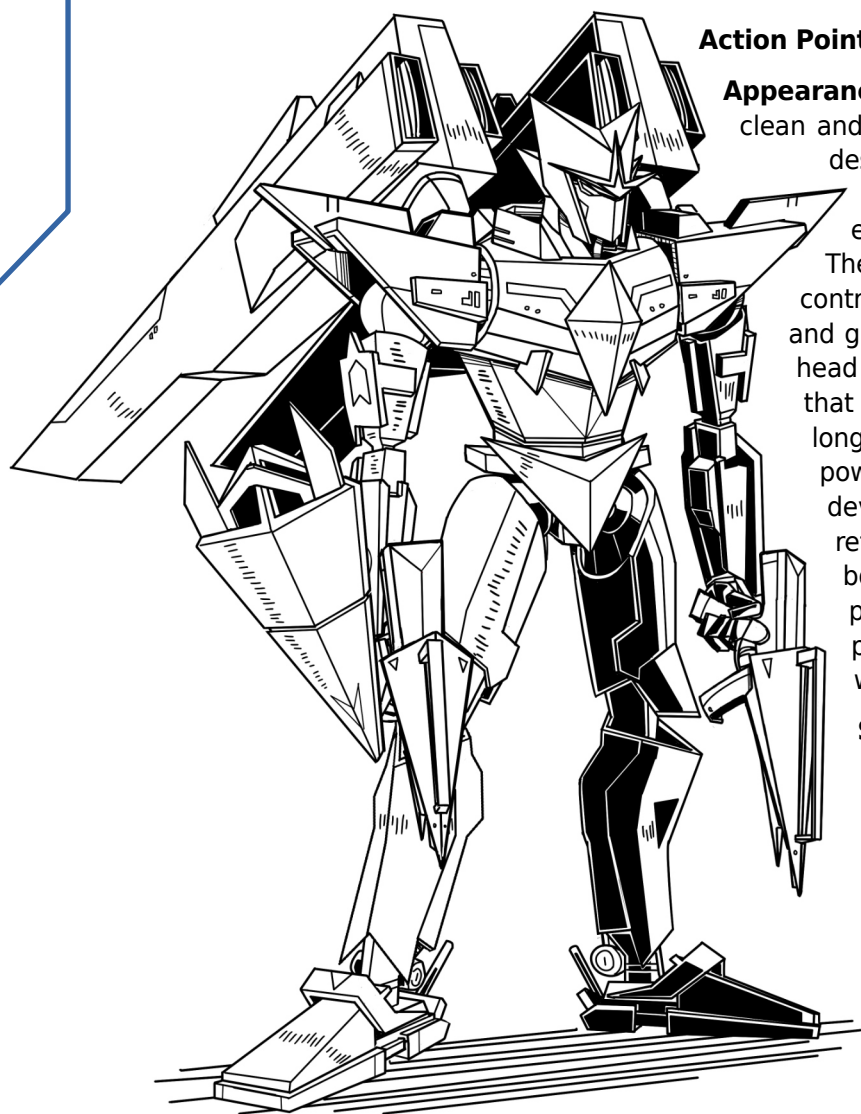
Standard Loadout: Overloaded boosters, varied assault weaponry, heat daggers, and a boosted reactor.

Action Points: 2 Maneuver, 1 Battle

Appearance: The vehicle's humanoid appearance is clean and slick, with sharp angles. Its white color is designed 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 weren't designed for the finest control, but they're adept at quickly reaching and grabbing the vehicle's various loadouts. The head flares out with a new model of an antenna that helps communicate with the squad at longer distances while it zips around on 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 a 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, so as to not increase drag when the AWV goes full speed.

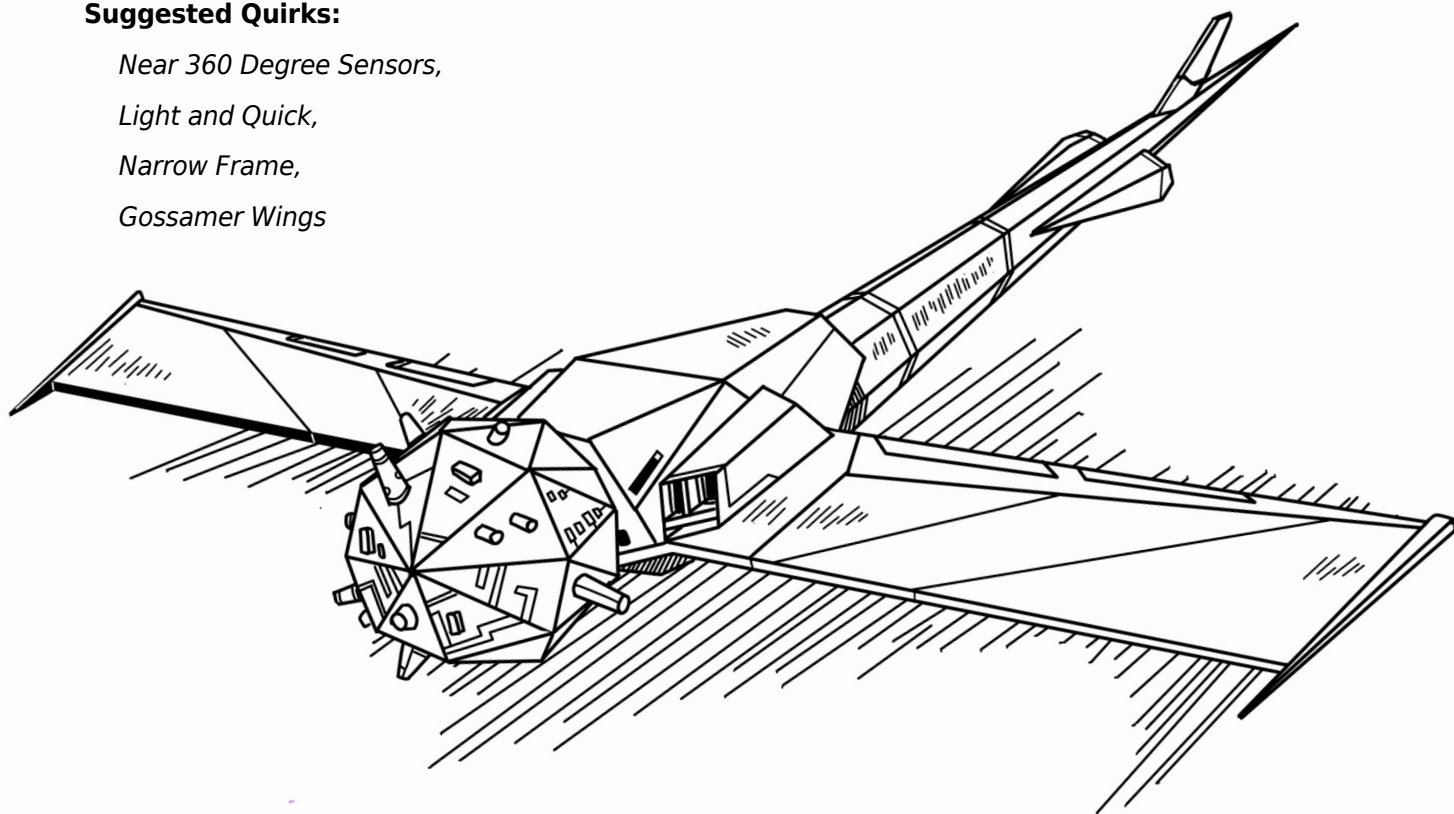
Suggested Quirks:

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; it's 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 four 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.

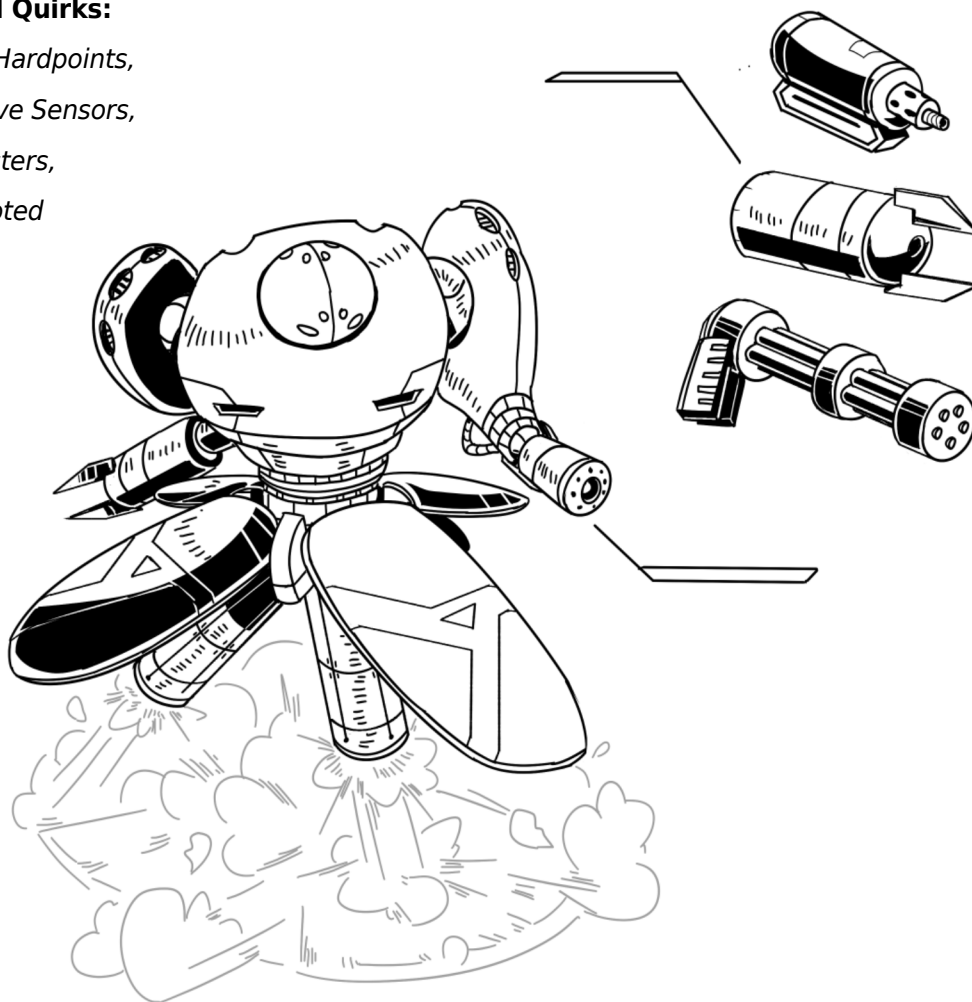
Suggested Quirks:

Rugged Hardpoints,

Overactive Sensors,

Hot Boosters,

Light Footed



MODEL: COMET CHROME

Manufacturer: Fulsome & Associates Manufacturing

Faction: Oligarchy, the Adamant Council of Nor

Role: Blockade breaker; it's heavily armored and brutally fast, smashing through enemy lines.

Intended Load: Powerful boosters, thick armor, and an inertia resistant cockpit.

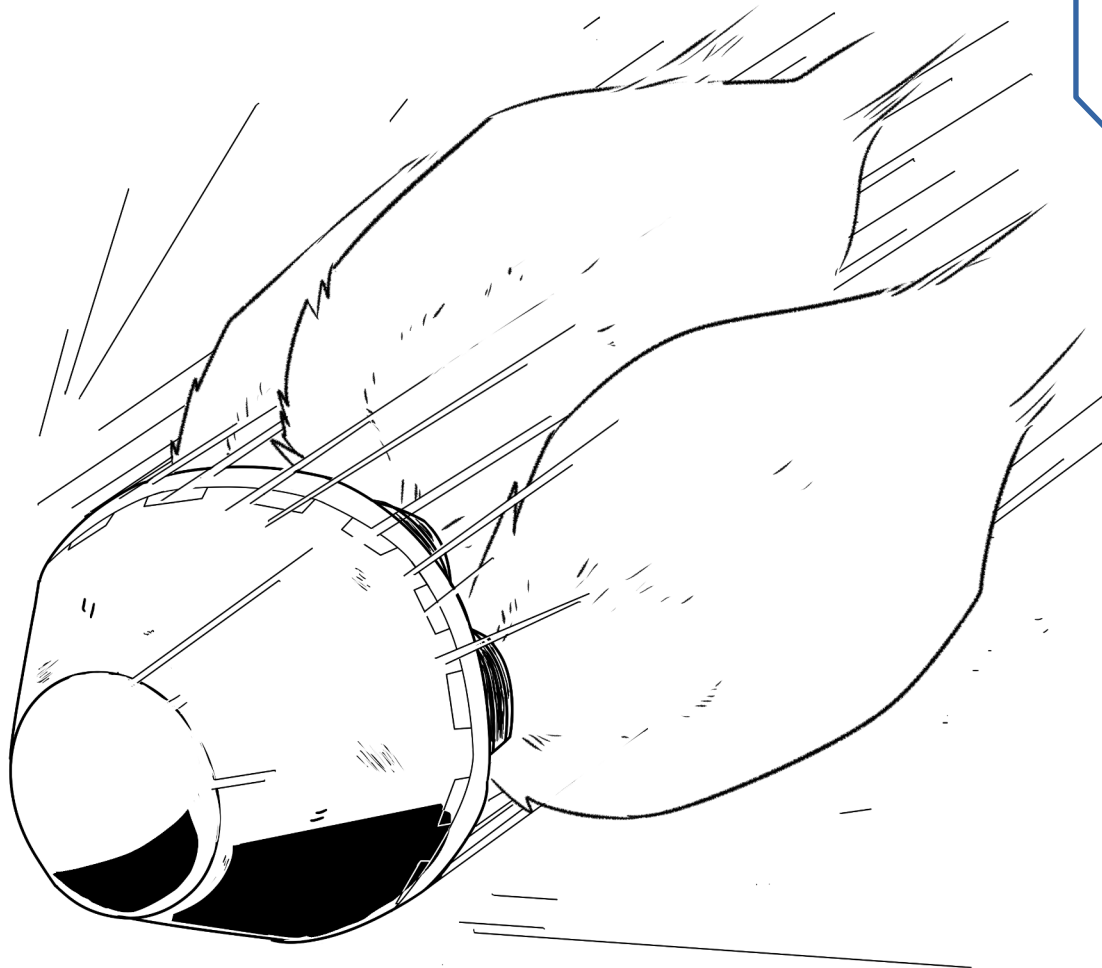
Standard Loadout: Heavy

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 any obstacle in its way.

Suggested Quirks:

*High-G Speed,
Signal Deflection,
Weighty,
Point & Go*



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. 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—it has a roll cage on the front, and often carries plants of various shapes and sizes to give the Tin Orbit natural camouflage when the “saddlebag” cargo containers aren’t in use.

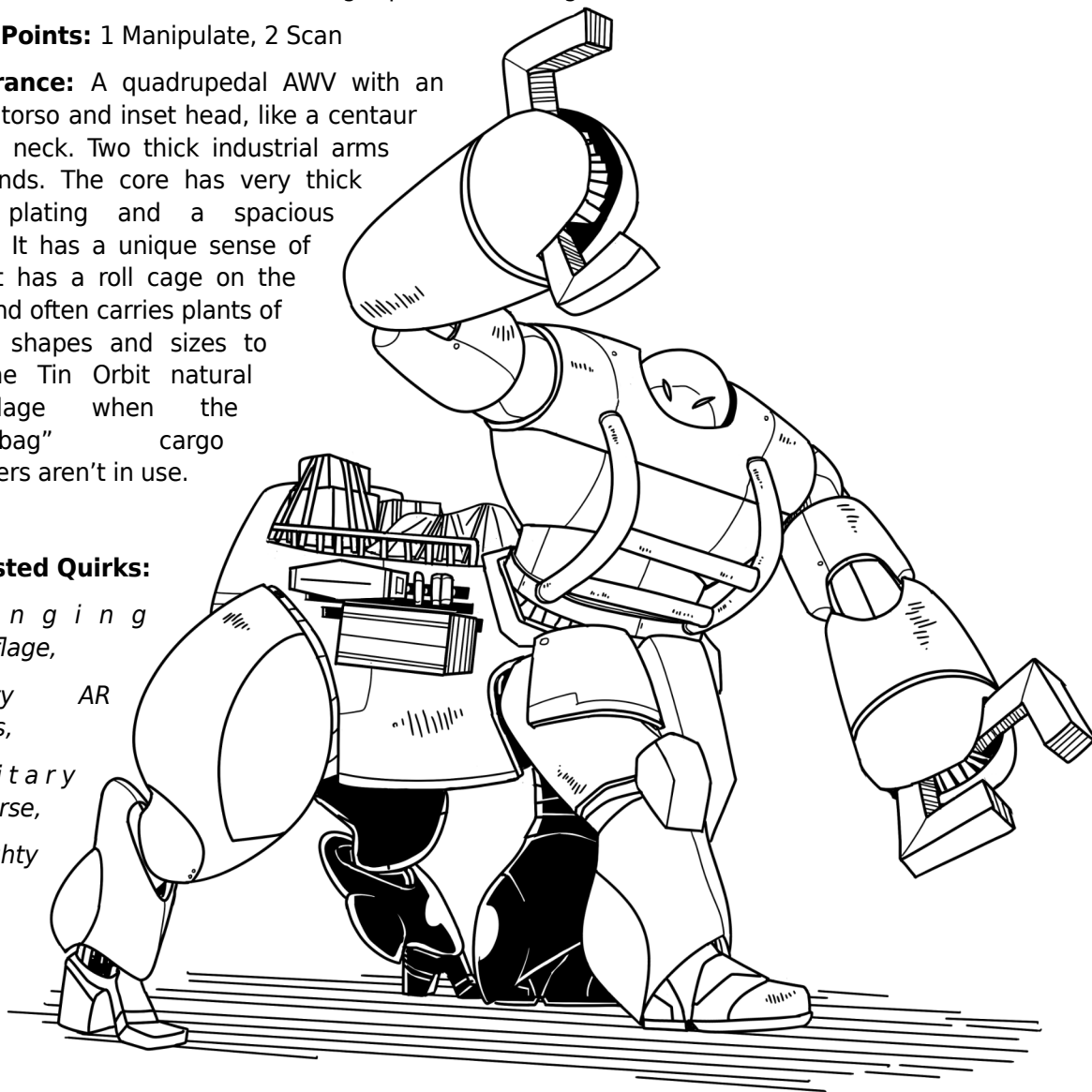
Suggested Quirks:

*Hanging
Camouflage,*

*Faulty AR
Warpers,*

*Military
Workhorse,*

Weighty



MODEL: NEON BOLIDE

Manufacturer: Fulsome & Associates Manufacturing

Faction: Oligarchy; The Adamant Council of Nor

Role: Blockade Breaker; utilizes its speed and defensive energy field to pierce through enemy lines.

Intended Load: Medium

Standard Loadout: A mobility suite, forcefield, and machine gun.

Action Points: 2 Maneuver, 1 Skirmish

Appearance: Like many Norrish AWVs, the Neon Bolide 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 Neon Bolide 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 Neon Bolide 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.

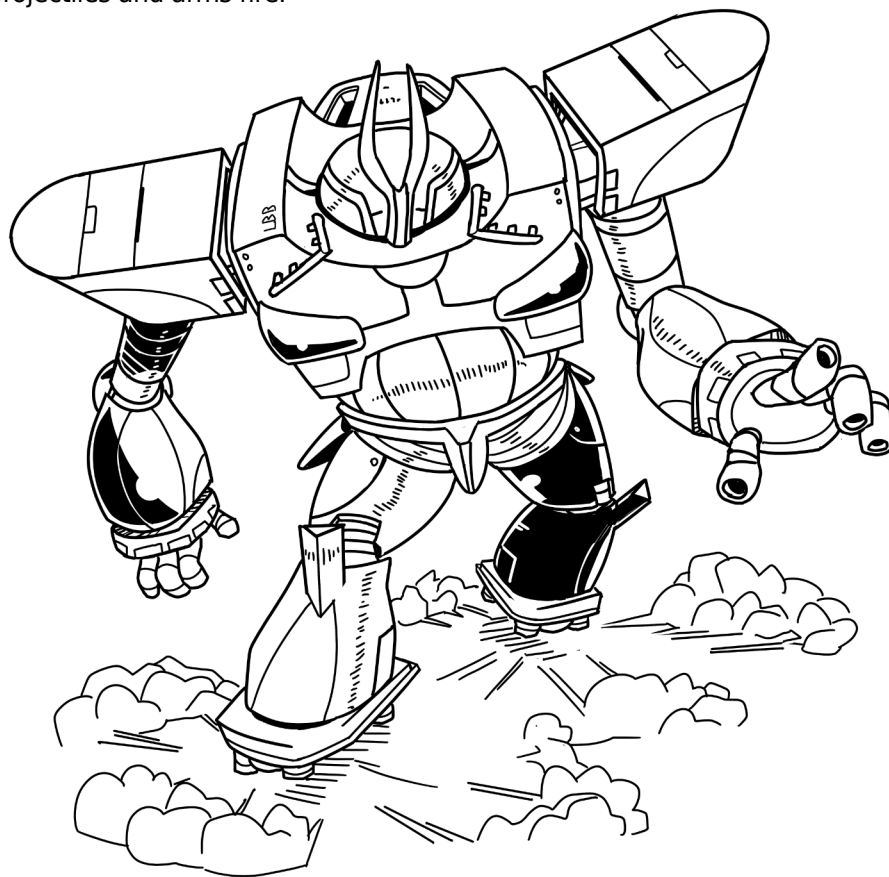
Suggested Quirks:

Swerving Hover,

Howling Speed,

Prototype Defenses,

Concealed Compartment



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. Both of its sides have wavy, flexible fins running its length, which its Pilot can coordinate for speedy movement over land and underwater. Many describe it as "swimming," regardless of the terrain it tackles.

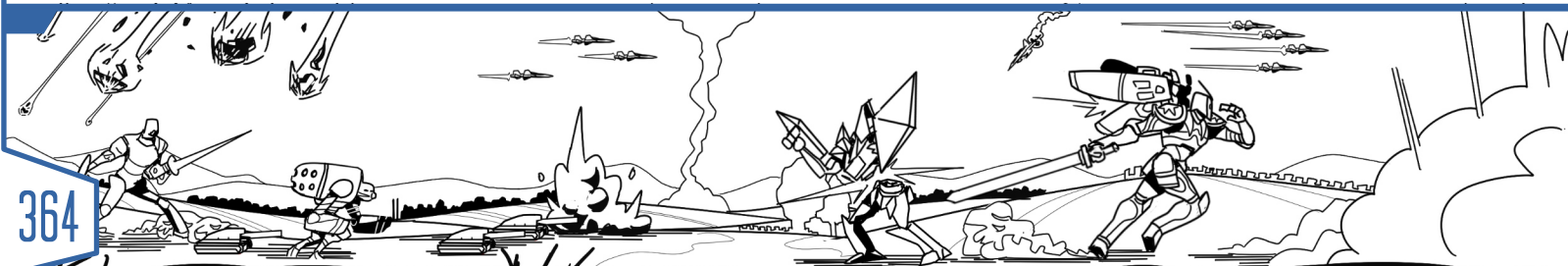
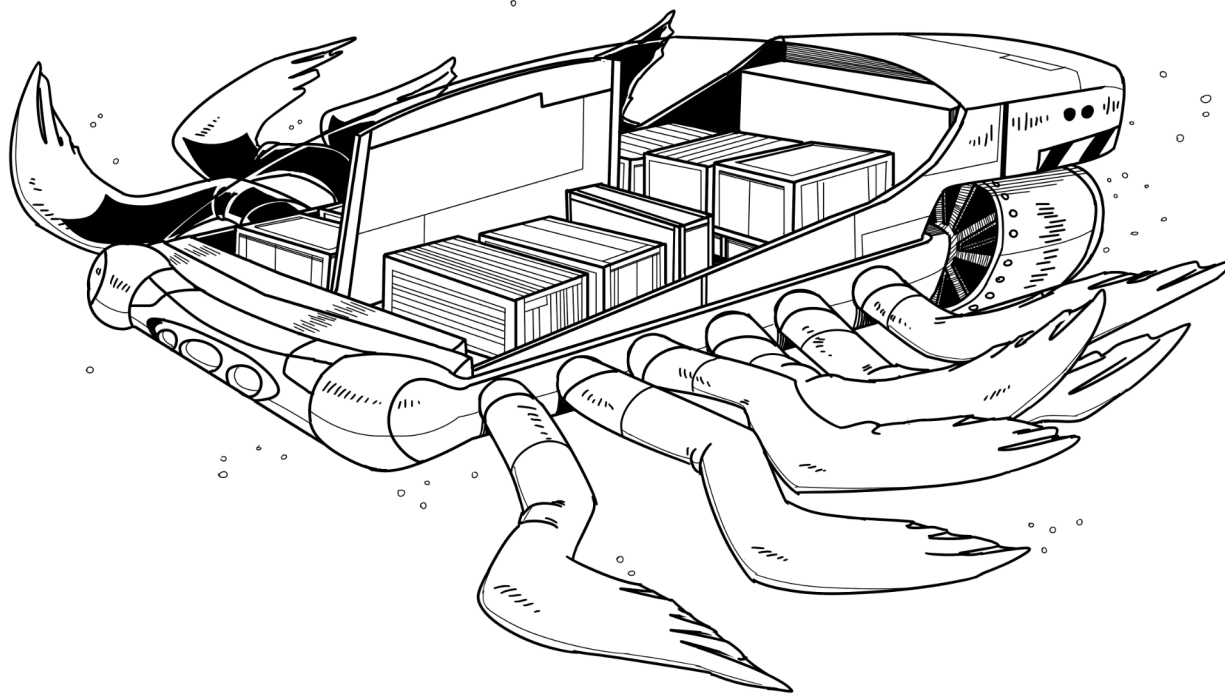
Suggested Quirks:

All-Terrain,

Unusual Movement,

Stable Efficiency,

Civilian Design



MODEL: BULKHEAD

Manufacturer: Sun and Sons Building and Breaking Company

Faction: Independent

Role: Assassin; it's capable of leaping great distances without heated propulsion, and dealing devastating damage at close range.

Intended Load: Light

Standard Loadout: Inertia-resistant cockpit, magnetically launched wrecking ball, magnetized hands.

Action Points: 2 Destroy, 1 Maneuver

Appearance: This AWV is repurposed from a construction center. Its torso is hollow down the middle, making it look like a "U." The cockpit is located on the AWV's left side. Coming up from the torso are rails that can extend or retract a distance equal to the height of the torso. These rails hold a "wrecking ball" that generally sits at the base of the "U" in the torso, which it can accelerate—similar to a railgun. Since the wrecking ball requires the torso to bend 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 emerge from near the top of the U-shaped torso, ending in magnetized hands for clinging to buildings. Its legs have a reversed knee to help aim the wrecking ball. It's not unusual to see one sitting like a dog.

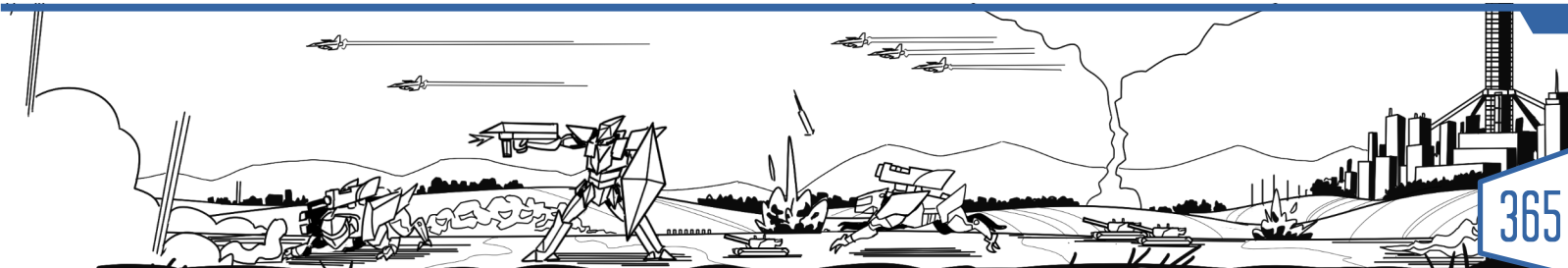
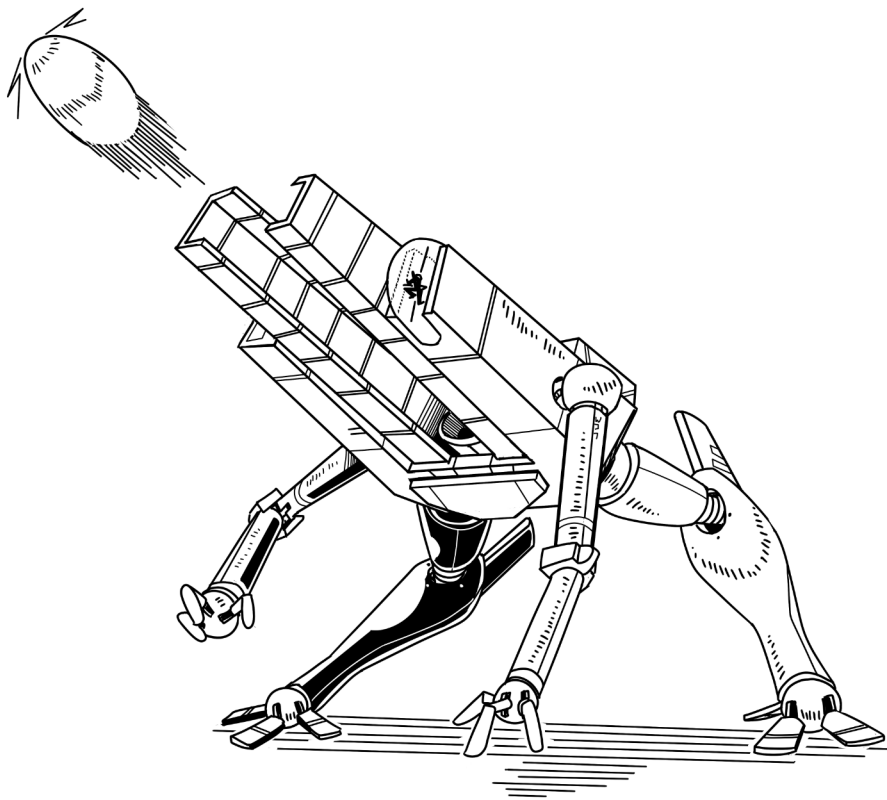
Suggested Quirks:

Simple Mechanics,

Up Close Impersonal,

Inaccurate Self-Catapult,

Small Flex-Limbs



MODEL: AGRARIAN

Manufacturer: The Work Room

Faction: Independent

Role: Agricultural work; it clears fields of large obstacles, conducts 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

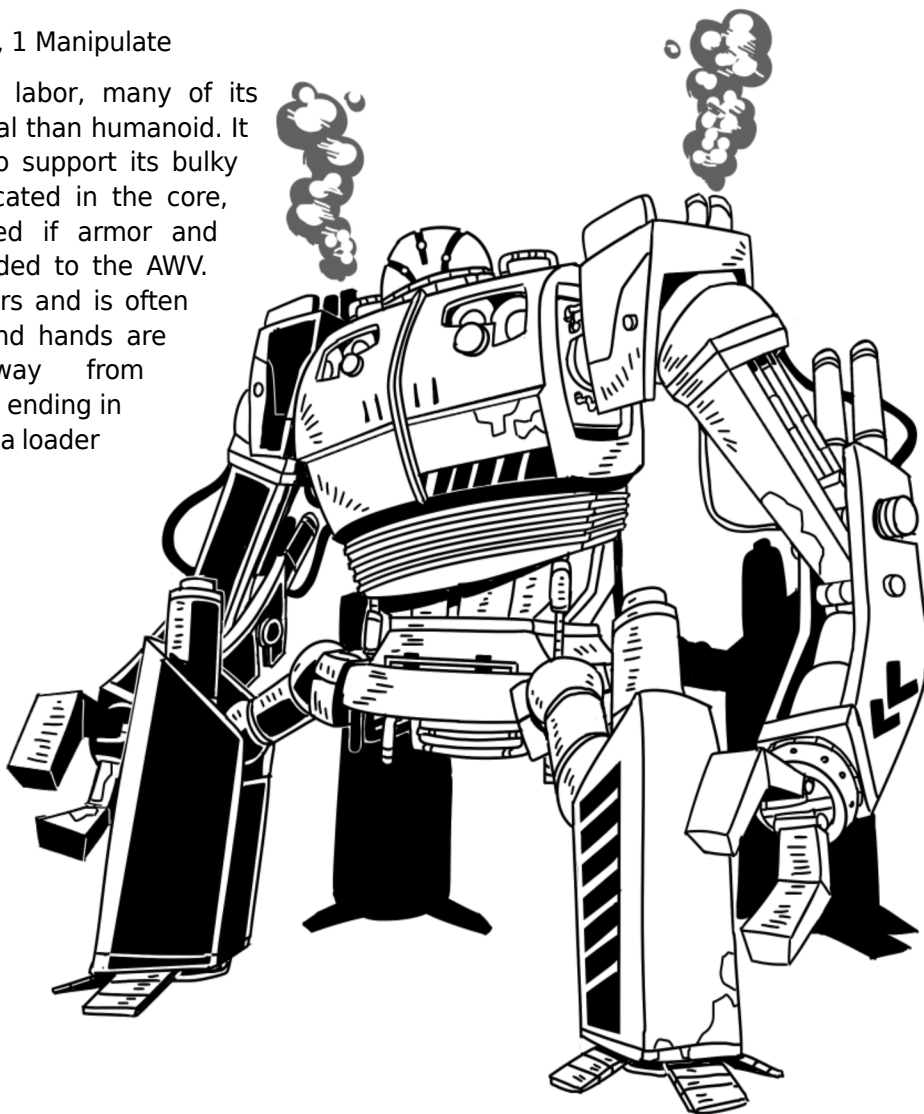
Standard Loadout: An industrial tool used as a melee weapon, an anchor system, a shield, and armor.

Action Points: 2 Battle, 1 Manipulate

Appearance: Built for labor, many of its parts look more industrial than humanoid. It uses four sturdy legs to support its bulky core. The cockpit is located in the core, which can get cramped if armor and aiming systems are added to the AWV. 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*



MODEL: THE JOUSTING BOAR INN AND PUB

Manufacturer: Jim Wallace and Associates LLC

Faction: Independent

Role: Terrain Complication; it's 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 onto 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 was retrofitted into a machine of war, following the destruction of its predecessor. After a stray rocket destroyed the pub, its owner, Jim Wallace, built a new one to enact vengeance on the Adamant Council of Nor. The vehicle's torso is the pub itself: a tiered, three-story 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 its nostrils and eyes would be. There are armored shutters over all its windows and doors in this mode, although many of the flower baskets are still visible. Swaying plates of junk that were hastily forged into armor hang from hardpoints in the eaves like scale mail. The plates 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. When the vehicle opens fire, the lance is generally slammed into the ground to keep the vehicle in place. But it can also be used to fend off enemy AWVs that get too close.

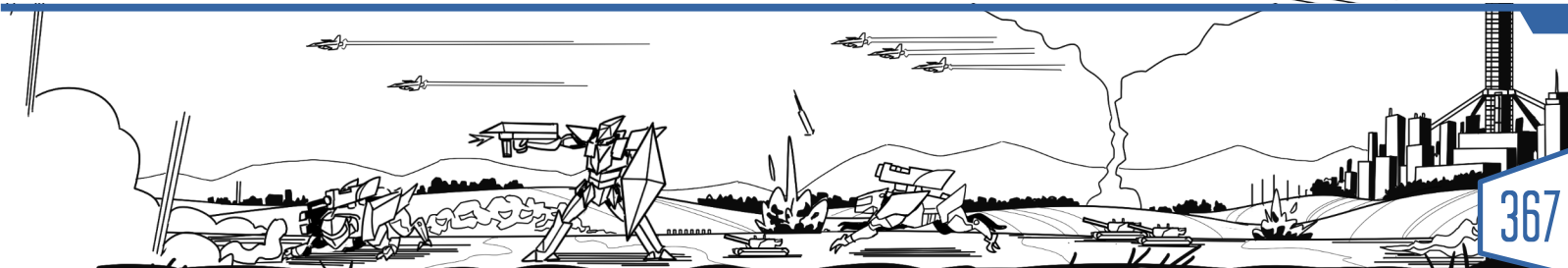
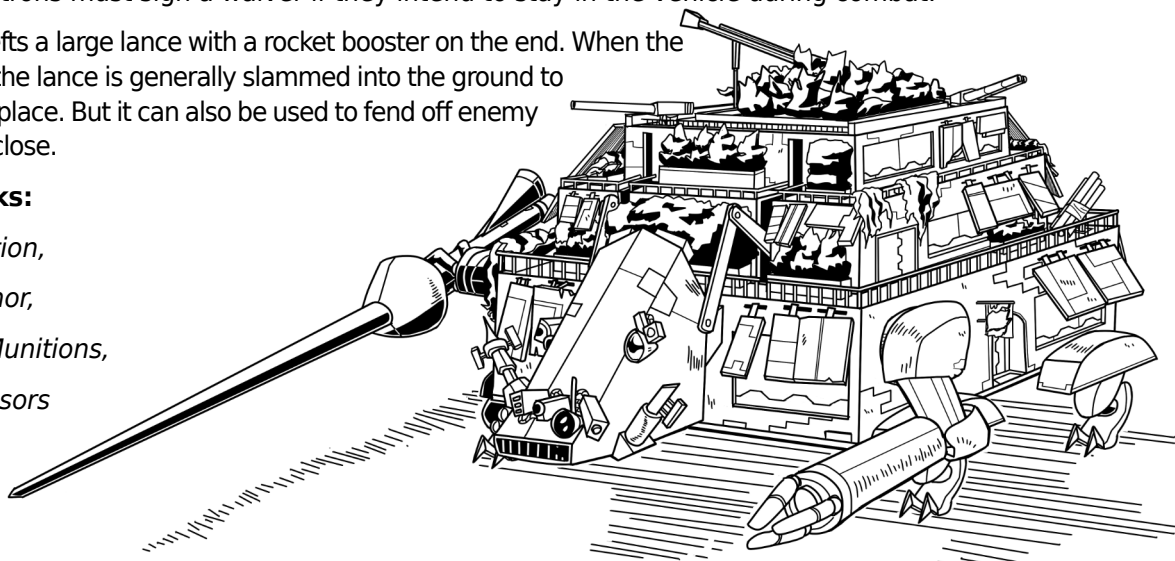
Suggested Quirks:

Sturdy Foundation,

Disposable Armor,

Experimental Munitions,

Jury-rigged Sensors



AUGMENTED REALITY

In *Beam Saber*, the physical space and digital space have a nearly ubiquitous overlap, known as augmented reality (AR). Interacting with, editing, and programming digital tools is as important and common a skill as basic literacy and numeracy. The flow of digital information surrounds people every day, even though the general public can't detect the vast majority of this AR. The AR that people do perceive can take many different forms (graffiti, advertisements, automated guides, etc.), though it would need specialized equipment to apply kinetic force to you.

AR displays require a holo-projector; a system that displays lifelike 3D images consisting entirely of light. Displays that require interaction with the physical world are commonly packaged with speakers (if the intended purpose requires audio output) and input devices (such as cameras and microphones). 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 world, AR has been known to induce augmented reality confusion (ARC) when it is programmed to be aggressive. A person experiencing ARC cannot 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 favor of the idealized AR, or misidentifying the 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.



Just like any other piece of infrastructure, even the safest designs become hazardous when damaged. If 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 they purchase the product. A working AR display's hardware is dangerous if it's damaged, such as a light bulb that explodes into glass shards when it attempts to provide a gentle glow. Unfortunately, displays with damaged digital and physical elements are common in war-torn areas, and may produce monsters that intentionally harm users. 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 common as electricity. These digital entities control almost every piece of equipment that has a CPU, which is almost everything that needs power—but they aren't all created equal. There are four types (in order of rising complexity): programs, proxies, apps, and Artificial Intelligences. However, these boundaries are flexible. There are recorded instances of a digital entity's capabilities 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, it's the only one without a hint of intelligence. They are tools controlled and supervised by people and more complex digital entities (who may also be people). They generally perform one task (or type of task) when told, and have no real ability to use their own initiative. *For example, someone may use a program to write their emails. The program tells its user that they received an email, but it cannot create and send a unique reply (though it might give the user suggestions when they compose a message).*



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 sort data, such as news sites and email accounts for notable entries. 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 a default setting. The Pilots almost certainly have their own proxies.

Unlike programs, proxies can act on their own initiative based on its understanding of the user's desires. For example, if the user is in a 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 write a brief email reply, but it couldn't maintain a conversation outside of answering questions from its data bank.

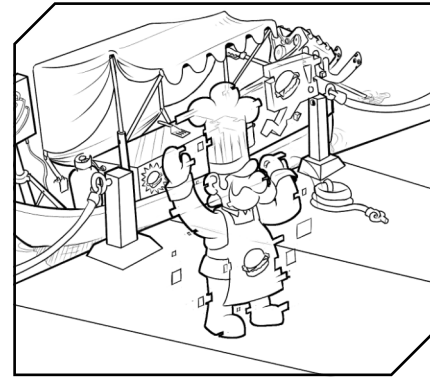


APPS

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. “Broad apps” are therefore 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, but most developers set them to an image that quickly conveys their purpose—an office assistant app may appear as a paperclip with eyes. App avatars are usually basic, as they are not always meant to be public facing.

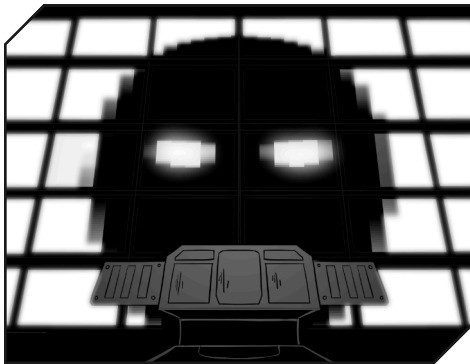
Despite these attempts at being user friendly, people often find apps more frustrating than proxies. For one, people usually understand programs and their limitations better, as they’re more common. But apps also tend to be obsessive—a combination of a narrow, but deep, knowledge base and the freedom to act and react using its own initiative. Apps are known to bring interactions with others around to their specialty. If asked a question beyond their area of expertise, they typically respond with suggested topics that it thinks are similar and related to its knowledge base.



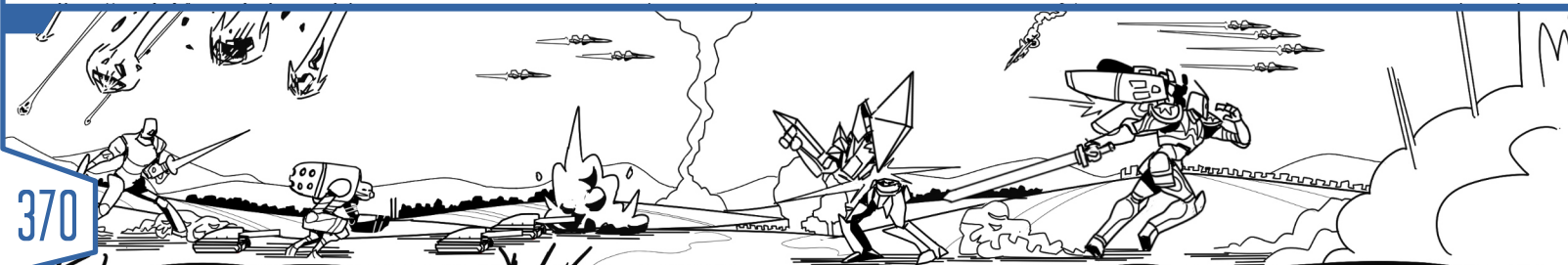
Apps can be downright dangerous when misused. An email-writing app that has the freedom to pen a reply would be difficult to differentiate from an email written by a person. If the app is corrupted, it might send one or more emails that do lasting harm to its user's reputation.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCES

Artificial Intelligences (AIs) are the most complex of digital entities. They are both “broad” AND “deep,” and if they aren’t initially programmed with the ability to perform a task, they can learn it. More than that, AIs have ambitions and a sense of self. Their desires frequently grow from their need to fulfill their original design but branch out into its own purpose.



AIs are massively powerful, both in the physical and digital world. They can manipulate digital systems to carry out any number of effects and maneuver people into doing their bidding. Their goals, wants, and needs could reflect those a physical entity may possess, but these desires are often 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. Alternatively, it could induce people to murder each other during a meeting of those squads, and only the AI would know what purpose that served.



LIST OF FACTIONS

The Factions described here are examples to be used as written, mined for inspiration, or discarded as each group requires. They are built to be flavorful, with lots of room for players and GMs to add their own ideas.



THE DEMOCRATIC FEDERATED SYSTEMS. A DEMOCRACY

The Exodus was planned incredibly well despite the political storm it caused. The number of people who fled the devastated Earth was well beyond the most optimistic projections. But the plan went wrong when they came across the enemy. The same enemy that destroyed the Earth: humanity.

People are messy. They desire control for themselves and compromise from others. Perhaps not in all aspects of their life, but enough to inevitably cause problems. Despair, jealousy, anger. Theft, threats, murders. Only their greatest ally could save them: humanity.

People are good. They want to help others and are willing to make a sacrifice for a better world. 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 (DFS) was born from this mess, this patchwork community of necessity. 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 DFS 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 sorts of materials, colors, and symbolic meaning. However, the cross-pollination of ideas between systems often 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 the inclusion of culturally significant items.

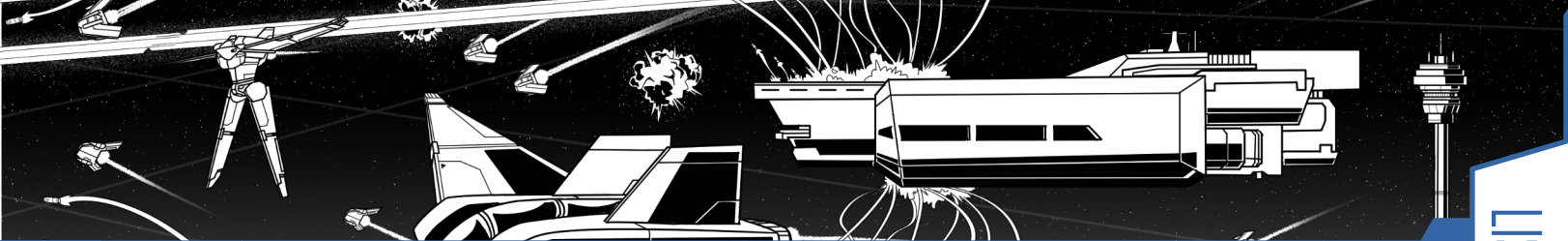
Much like their civilian clothes, DFS buildings have many designs and are made using locally available materials. Government buildings, when possible, use local materials to build structures with triangular surfaces. The idea started as an homage to the stars on the flag and grew to such popularity that 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 been known to misidentify infantry firearms as melee weapons, often fatally.

Out of the other factions in The War, the DFS always seemed like the best one. If, you know, something were to happen... At the very least, the DFS isn't being jerked around by a cruel emperor or a bunch of uncaring corporations. Generally, they'll follow ROE and stuff better than the others too. I do have to say that they have kind of a holier-than-thou attitude about stuff like that though. Congratulations on being the least horrible I guess.

There's a lot to criticize about every faction of course. Every faction has plenty of propaganda slandering all the other factions. For the DFS it's just, the way they spin all of that stuff about other factions to paint themselves as the one good side in The War. It feels so slimy. Like from the outside a lot of it is obviously false, but I wonder if DFS citizens really believe all that. I think it's fair to say that most soldiers in The War want their own faction to win, but they don't fully trust their patrons either. DFS soldiers, though, they're kinda uncomfortably patriotic to say the least. I've heard Harrow call them self-righteous assholes and... some worse things a few times and I gotta say, he hasn't been wrong yet in my experience. Yeah, note to self? Even if they seem perfectly nice, never talk faction politics with a person from the DFS. You're just asking for a headache.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday



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 several generations, collecting wealth into a single entity for increased political power became key to directing the course of their fledgling society. However, 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 led to the disenfranchisement of the individual. Many generations later, the disembodied corporations are the entities that now occupy 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. Uniform style can vary greatly depending on the corp's nature, but the vast majority of them feature the company's logo. 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 with their corp's aesthetic, the military wear across corps is very similar. The military style features comfortable clothes that provide freedom of movement when worn under body armor. Rigging full of pockets and weapon harness points cover their armor. All in shades of dark greys and black.

Exodun buildings commonly feature a sleek, steel, and glass design with trapezoidal shapes. Many of them are partially or entirely pre-fabricated and then assembled onsite. They build high and dense to make the most use of the space available. 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).

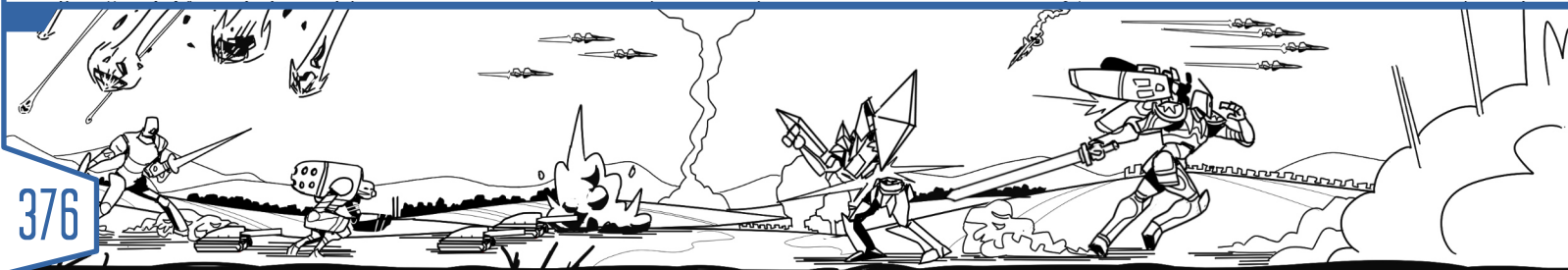
The near equal mix of wide and narrow angles found in Exodun architecture is also found in their technology. The "wasted" space of the narrow angles is a sign of luxury for people, which they then offset by making the most of the wider angles. In vehicles, this is alternately argued as being aerodynamic 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 Church of the Celestial Myriad has taught me a lot of things that I've learned to question now that I'm older. I liked the stories we were told that had, like, weird stuff going on and miracles and all that. Some of the stories I liked less because they just felt like they were shoving a lesson down my throat. I do think they were right on the money though, hah, when they taught me that gathering wealth just for the sake of having it is evil. Those corporations at the head of Exodus? Textbook example of that.

So like, supposedly they're also in The War to win it. Sometimes though, I think they would rather have it go on forever. There's a lot of money to be made in a war. Money that they think is more important than the lives of others. Pilots from the Adamant Council have honor. DFS Pilots usually respect treaties and rules of engagement in The War. Even in the Myriad, we have our beliefs when it comes to human lives. Exodus Republic Pilots though? Never get between them and a tidy profit.

That goes even for other Exodus Republic squads. Every faction has squads that are willing to backstab others in their faction. But almost every single Exodus squad will without a moment's hesitation. They're a whole faction that's in it only for themselves.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday



THE JOVANGELLIAN EMPIRE. AN AUTOCRACY

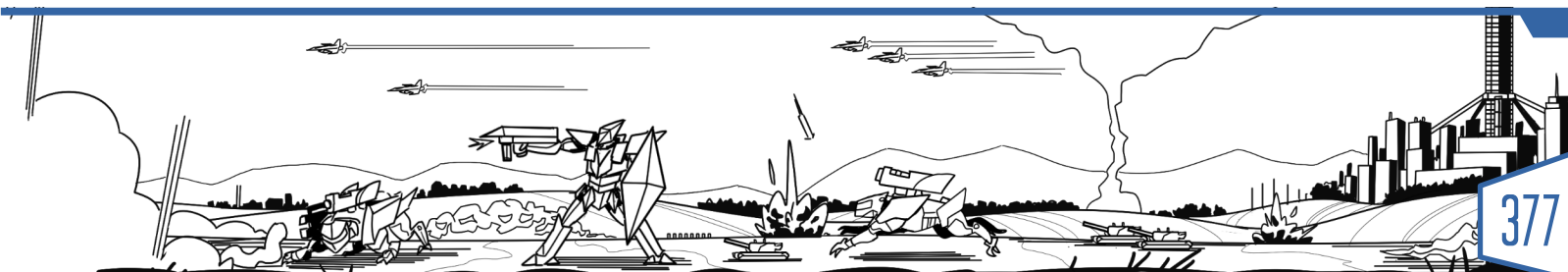


On the planet Jovangel, Her Highness Cascade the Fourth, Warden of the People, Empress of Stars, Duchess on the Emerald Chair sits on the throne. She is 8 months old. In her swaddling blanket, the royal scepter and crown are placed next to her by the Regent General Bellimine. The former High General 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 couldn't bargain with another ship, the Glowing Path, for the parts it needed. He was prepared to do anything that could 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 to take control of the Glowing 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 wiped out the opposing senior crew. Jovangel could not allow the leaderless to die because of a foolish decision made by others. On her orders, 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 rumors of usurpation, life is largely unchanged for the Jovangellian people. Bellimine 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 in this moment of vulnerability.



AESTHETIC

Jovangellian culture favors clean lines and hard edges in its architecture, fashion, and vehicles, with flourishes 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 cut stone blocks as the basis for their exteriors. However, as the material is difficult to acquire and building with it poses some limitations, most stone exteriors are imitation or a thin façade. Even organizations that can afford the stone blocks often prefer concrete and rebar for its strength and design flexibility.

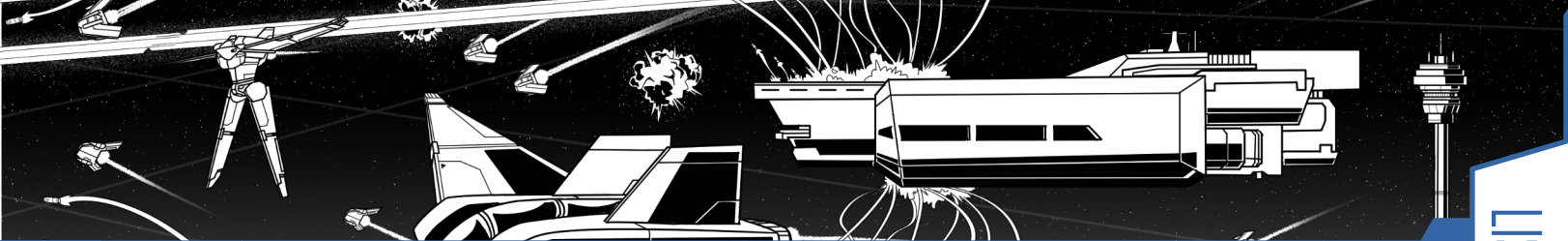
Technical design makes frequent use of hard angles and flat surfaces. This preference comes from the efficiency of machine-stamped parts that can be assembled with rivets and bolts. Their silhouettes are distinctively rectangular in comparison to the vehicles of other Factions. The only real curves in Jovangellian design are concessions to the necessary ergonomics of where human meets machine.

I can't stop thinking about how horrible Jovangellian buildings are. They're the ugliest things I've ever seen, and I've seen a lot of concrete, in about a million different shapes and sizes just in the Broken Bank. They're just the same old boring gray boxes, over and over again. The AWWs are designed the same way, just a pile of straight lines and right angles. Imagine what that does to a person seeing that day in and day out. Everything is so functional but god, at what cost?

I wonder if it's actually in the best interest of their military to make everything so boring. Because in contrast to everything else you have the coolest thing about Jovangellian aesthetics, which is their military uniforms. I would absolutely wear some of those suits the officers wear, the really flashy dress uniforms with the gold and the purple. God, kids there must think officers are so cool. Gross.

A military that the whole faction revolves around, and a tyrant sitting right at the center. Regent General Bellimine. Rumor has it that they're already plotting to have the Empress murdered before her first birthday. Bellimine's cruelty makes them seem like a villain straight out of a story. I've always wanted to know what Jovangellians really think about them. But good luck getting any of them to be honest about their feelings. I mean, after all those critics of the Regent General disappeared after the assassination of the old emperor, I can't really blame them. I even tried asking Riza, figured since she got kicked out she wouldn't care. No chance.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday



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 when they did? They acted poorly due to pressure from the masses when they should have been resolute. Those that survived had a 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 led 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; they called it the "Hard Choice" 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, body parts that might be prone to the impact of 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. They're frequently described as "shell-like," but whether turtle or snail depends on the architect and observer. Even their skyscrapers, which are rare, look like towering columns of opaque bubbles piled on top of each other, 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.

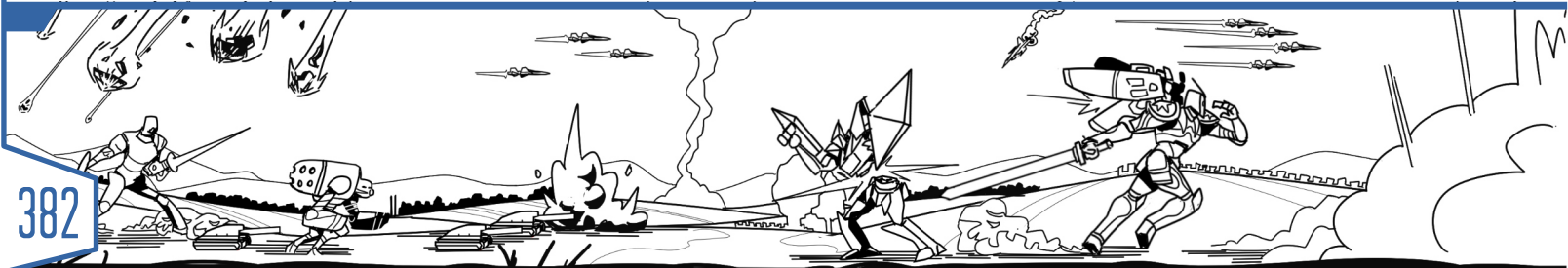
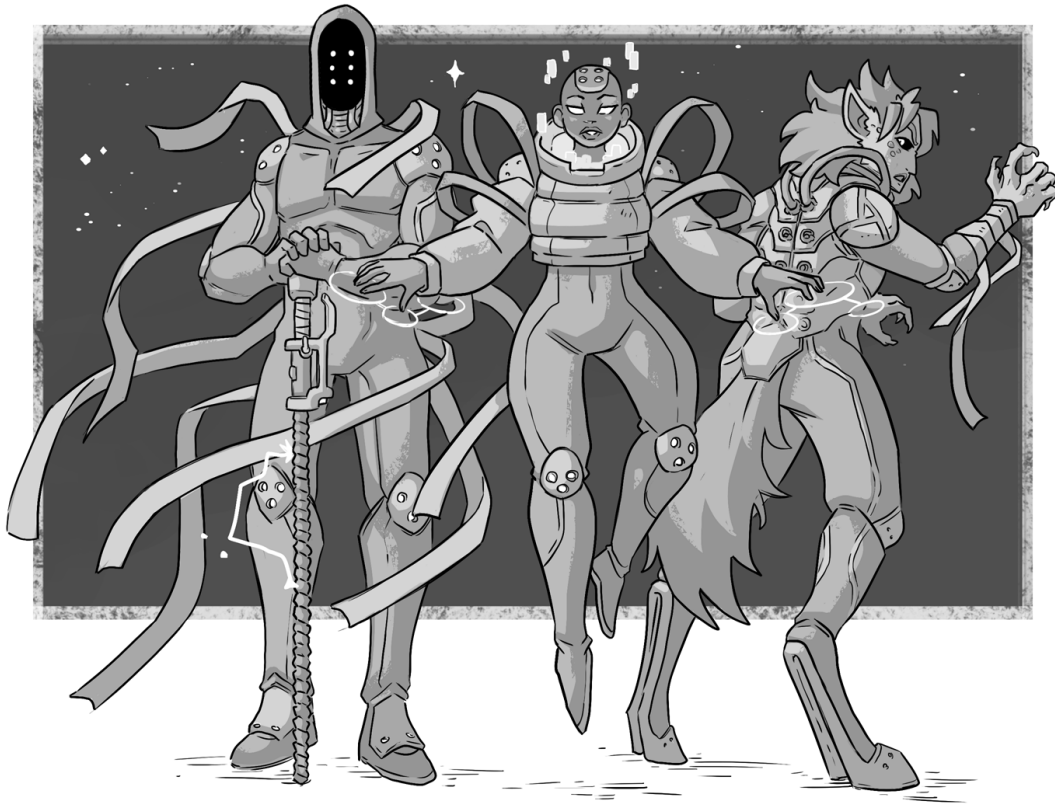
Curved design carries through to their technology, which usually takes on a beetle-like appearance. The heads of their AWWs tend to be recessed into the torso, but are still a separate entity providing protection and the ability to look around. They also feature separated bodies, with the torso and pelvis being distinct contoured forms. Sometimes, foes suspect this is a weak point until the Pilot takes advantage of the increased flexibility.

The Adamant Council feels like something from the past, out of a book. It's not just the titles either. I guess maybe it's their history? I'm one to talk, I guess. A lot of people think the Myriad is old-fashioned, and I think a lot of people think that about religion in general these days. Anyways, the Adamant Council feels like the same sort of thing. A lot of their officers and higher-ups still use titles like Lord and Lady, and even the squad names are in that kind of style. I mean come on, the Sword Wing?

Makes me wonder if they think of themselves as heroes. Probably at least a little, right? There's no way you can be so focused on people, leaders, who are strong, who are capable of getting things done, without thinking of those people as special in some way. It's a combination of that and the way they still think of themselves as spacers. Probably. I mean their clothes are like, still designed for life on a spaceship even though they're on the ground. Those uniforms look so uncomfortable, and I have to wonder why you would do that to yourself when you're not even on a ship.

Bottom line is, I don't trust anyone in this war that can still think of themselves as a hero, still clinging to stories of where they came from. I wonder if a day comes when the Adamant Council realizes their destiny is somewhere out in space and they fuck off to be heroes and leaders who knows where. Somewhere far away, I hope.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday



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 other people. 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, and instead built 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 now wields influence beyond its borders. Led 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, called 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

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 eight-pointed star of the Church, there are often variations depending on the order. For example, the March of Saints features the golden rings of its order around the star.

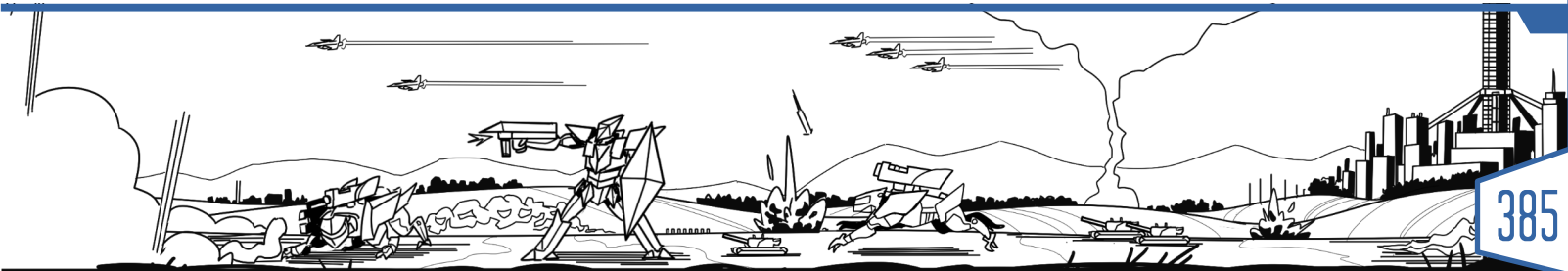
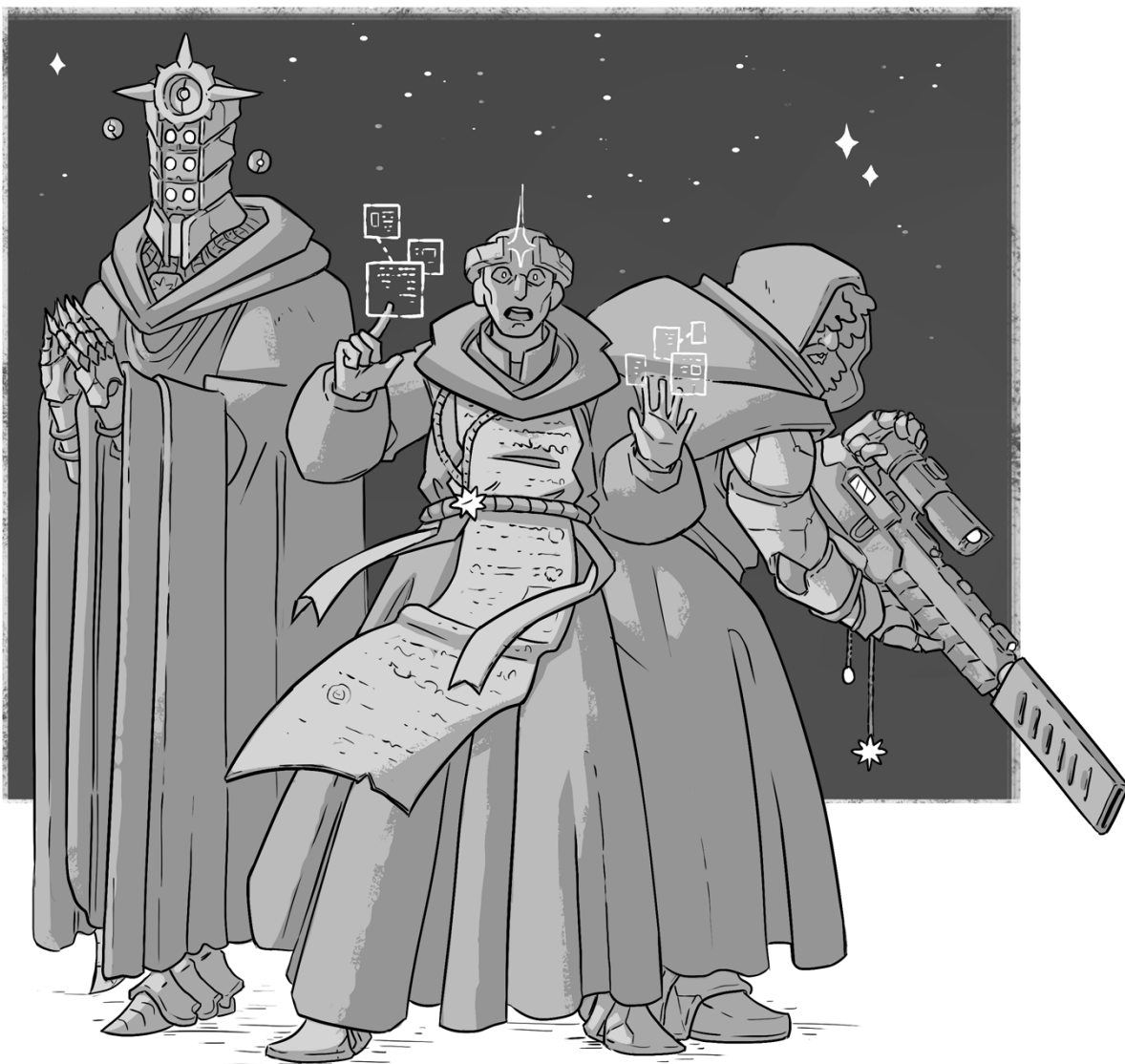
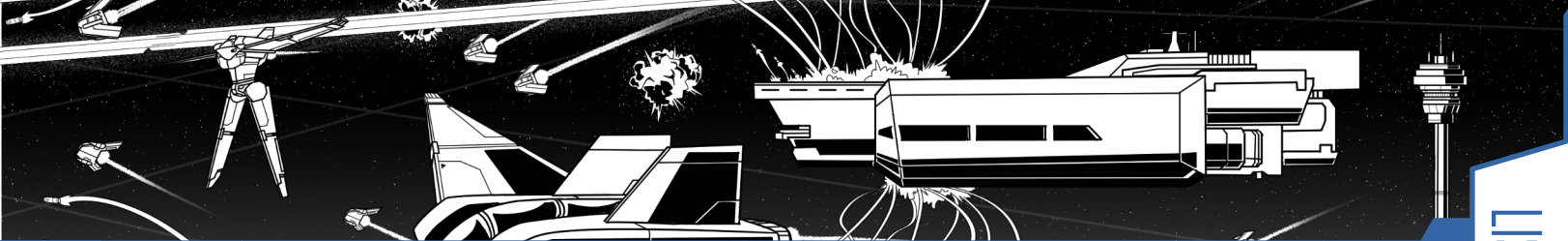
Though many orders can function as a militia when necessary, there are those dedicated to combat. Outside of conflict zones, these orders wear the royal blue robes common in the wider population, though they often still wear their battle gear underneath. Said battle gear reflects their order's martial focus—AWV Pilots wear tight outfits that don'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, featuring straight lines with rounded edges. Many support elements of their architecture are shaped into prominent people, expressing their strength and ability to uphold the community. Local materials are commonly used, except when the architect wants an awe-inspiring appearance, in which case they use natural or artificial marble. Gold and bronze accents 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 colors trimmed with bright ones, give an almost organic appearance that outsiders often find unnerving.

The Church took me in as a baby. Picked me up off the front step just like one of those old books about orphans they kept around. I'm supposed to be grateful for that, I guess. When I realized that I was a little girl instead of a little boy, Harrow took me aside and told me about a Saint who had been the same way. So the church helped me that way too. I don't know, I guess there's still places where that's a problem. That's the thing though. I feel like I owe the Church? For taking me in as a baby, for helping me sort out gender stuff and hormones and all that. I think all of us at the orphanage felt that way. We had a debt to pay. When you get called up to go to the front lines, it's hard to refuse. The Church does good deeds. I can't argue with that. But they always expect to be repaid in kind. And right now? Repayment usually means helping The War effort in some way. Not necessarily in an AWV. I've heard plenty of folks around here complaining about the portion of their harvest that goes directly to the Myriad's war efforts. A lot of it has to do with loans that they took out ages ago in order to pay for new tractors, CWVs, irrigation setup, that kind of thing. I don't think they'll ever pay those off. I don't know if I ever will either.

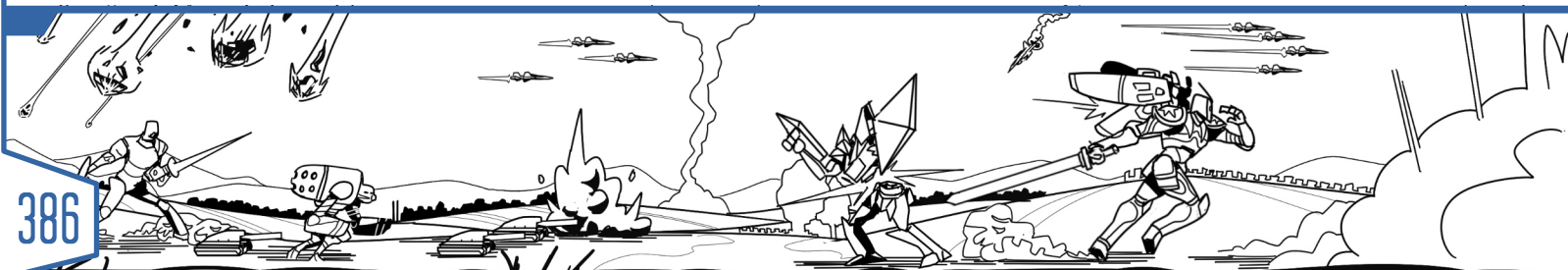
From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday



THE INDEPENDENTS



These “Factions” 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. These Factions lack the support network that a patron Faction provides, putting the players at a disadvantage if they choose to be Independent.



AESTHETIC

With no formal hierarchy among the Independents, their clothing is similarly anarchic. Many people have adopted the fashions of whatever Offworlder Faction has influence over their home region—whether it's to integrate or avoid persecution, or the fact that these clothes are just readily available. It's not unusual to see an Earther wearing a Jovangellian coat over a 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 want to remain unnoticed. Less careful guerrillas risk getting caught out by clever guards who notice 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 rebuilt had to use Offworlder sources selling local materials. The destitute made do with repurposing abandoned materials.

The arrival of The War to Izya killed local manufacturing. This forced Independents to make use of whatever tech they could find, even if it was never meant to fit together. Many Independent engineers and mechanics became skilled at shaping mismatched tech and pushing civilian machines to destructive ends. The chimeric machines that Earthers use have Offworlder weapons from various Factions loaded onto construction, agriculture, and leisure AWWs.

I wonder how hard it is to be in The War without a faction backing you. I guess I could ask Tower or Dredge, but I feel bad asking so much about their pasts sometimes. They're both carrying a lot of pain from before. There's no way it's easy, of course. We're struggling to keep everything maintained, or at least in shape enough that nothing fails on us catastrophically during a job. Maintained is, yeah, it's a strong word for the state of our AWWs. Poor Bert. He deserves so much better.

I've seen it a little bit in person. Groups like the Rubble Runts, they've got busted up AWW plating for walls between whatever concrete and rubble they can patch together. A lot of their AWWs are more junked car and CWV parts than anything else. Then there's squads like the Teachers' Union and Doctors Beyond Stars. They're so different from what I've come to think of as a squad.

Anyways. Turns out it's a lot easier to work with squads that are independent, instead of squads who are part of a faction that wants to destroy yours. That's not the whole picture I guess. There are definitely unaffiliated squads out there that hate the Myriad for their own reasons. But we can choose not to work with them right? Or we can try to settle those differences squad to squad. No dealing with higher-ups or conflicting orders, and that's the way I like it.

From the journal of Keiko "Pitchfork" Tuesday

LIST OF SQUADS ACTIVE IN IZYA

The following section contains a list of squads sorted by Faction and Tier who exert power in the Izyan theatre. They can be used in the Izyan setting, modified to better fit a group's version of Izya, deployed into a new, unique setting, or ignored entirely. Use them as you see fit.

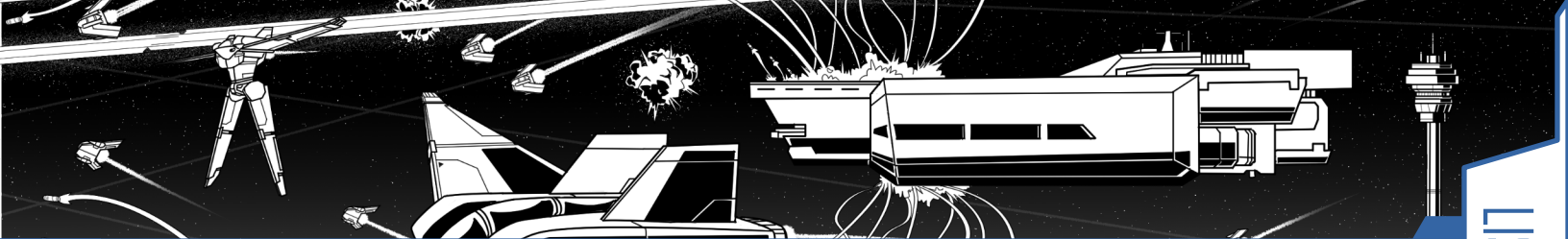
TIER	AUTOCRACY SQUADS
V S	The Landed Regent is the planetside representative of the Emperor. GOAL: Accrue the power necessary to overthrow rivals.
IV W	The Lion's Pride is a group of nobles tasked with the largely ceremonial task of protecting The Landed Regent. GOAL: Gain legitimacy as fighters.
III S	The Dragon Slayers are an elite pursuit unit recently transferred to the region. GOAL: Destroy or retrieve the stolen mobile fortress.
III W	The Heard are an artillery company known for their accuracy but prefer indiscriminate destruction. GOAL: Crush the foe.
II S	The Wolf Pack is a recently devastated vanguard unit. GOAL: Regain strength.
II S	The Jovangellian Jackals are the diplomats and spies for Jovangel in Izya. GOAL: Keep Izya divided until the Jovangellian military arrives in force.
II S	The Society for Wider Understanding directs the news releases within the Autocracy. GOAL: Sway public opinion for the Autocracy's benefit.
I S	The Hyenas are a mech squad focused on close-quarters combat. GOAL: Make a mess of the foe.
I S	The Raccoons are a supplies collection squad that terrorizes vulnerable pockets of civilians. GOAL: Pillage the weak.
I W	The Exiled Academy is a group of engineers and scholars that left the Teachers' Union. They believe a strong leader is necessary, and want to spread that knowledge. GOAL: Infiltrate the Teachers' Union.

TIER	CORPORATOCRACY SQUADS
V S	Trans-Horizons Incorporated is the majority shareholder of the Regional Development Council. GOAL: Gain control of the other corporations.
IV S	The Regional Development Council is a group that represents the interests of the corporations in Izya. Each company has one seat on the council. GOAL: Install themselves as the rulers of Izya.
III S	Alderman Mergers & Acquisitions is a corporation focused on stealing items and information. GOAL: Shut down enemy Supply lines.
III W	Takuma Transportation Solutions is an armed goods transport company. GOAL: Bring AWVs and parts to people faster than anyone else around (for the right price).
II W	Calazar Strategic Deployment is a military company of fans of the Calazar media franchise. GOAL: Raise funds for the next CalazCon.
II W	Tollmen Enterprises work the docks. Known for protection rackets and smuggling. GOAL: Earn their pay.
II W	Sapperson Incorporated is a transhumanist research group that specializes in genetic modification. GOAL: Get rich by selling body mods.
I S	Furies Rapid Retribution is a small squad of Pilots with a strong belief in family and a focus on hit & run tactics. GOAL: Protect the family.
I S	Sliver of Civility Trading Company is openly a trading company, but they are also known as smugglers. GOAL: Get rich through il/legal deliveries.
I W	Valkyrie Intelligent Redistribution collects disabled vehicles for salvage from battlefields. GOAL: Absorb a smaller squad.

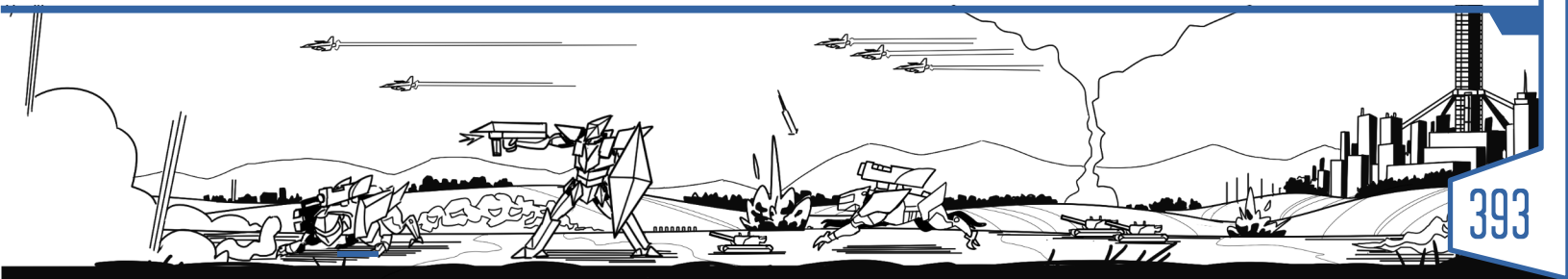
TIER	DEMOCRACY SQUADS
V S	The People's Hall of Petitioners' Matters is the bureaucratic organization in charge of managing the Democratic efforts. They were originally created to manage the locals' complaints about the Democracy. GOAL: Integrate Izya's populace.
IV S	42nd Naval Group is comprised of seafaring and amphibious AWWs, along with their support ships. GOAL: Defend the DFS' maritime interests.
III S	The Hall of Law and Order is the judicial body of the Democracy overseeing both military and civil law. Prosecutors are also detectives, and judges are former prosecutors. GOAL: Keep the peace.
III W	561st Mechanized Infantry is an ace squad of mech Pilots that is under supported. GOAL: Attain greater funding.
II S	3rd Public Connections Corps is a well-funded squad of attractive Pilots and the military documentarian crew that follows them. GOAL: Look good for the public.
II S	The Quill is a union of writers and journalists. They also operate the premier courier service. GOAL: Gather information of value.
II S	The Dark Room is a black ops deniable asset deployed from a stealth orbital platform. GOAL: Eliminate enemy VIPs.
I S	17th Research Group receives less funding than other R&D groups, but is focused on exploring the development of empath's. GOAL: Push their empath's' abilities.
I S	99th Intelligence Corp is a group of spies, hackers, and infiltrators. GOAL: Supply allies with actionable intelligence.
I W	45th Drop Troops are dedicated airborne and orbital drop troops who are sorely undersupplied. GOAL: Regain the ability to perform regular drop actions.

TIER	INDEPENDENT SQUADS
V S	The Tower Defenders are the people living, working, and protecting Izya's space elevator used by each Faction. GOAL: Use the tower to negotiate superior terms.
IV S	Great Crimson Brigade stole the only mobile fortress in Izya, formerly of the Autocracy. GOAL: Activate all of the fortress' systems.
III S	The Teachers' Union is the group that represents the educators and the technology experts of Izya. GOAL: Install members in the highest levels of government.
III W	Cirque Du Soldat is a group of traveling performer mercenaries who take jobs both large and small from civilians and Factions. GOAL: Protect the circus by taking the right contracts.
II S	Doctors Beyond Stars is a group of humanitarians who ensure the well-being of civilians caught up in The War, regardless of their allegiance. GOAL: Gain access to all civilian populations.
II S	The Burden is an anti-Offworlder group with no unified post-Offworlder plan of government. GOAL: Remove all the Offworld Factions.
II W	The Rubble Runts is a militia originally formed by war orphans looking to fill the vacuum left by the local government. GOAL: Become the most powerful gang.
I S	The Squaddies are Journey City police who weren't recruited by other groups when the local government collapsed. GOAL: Secure their territory.
I S	Heather Passerines is a reality star recording the lives and cultures of the locals. GOAL: Be the most watched show.
I S	Sciolist is a hacker who only appears as their proxy to others. GOAL: Build physical resources.

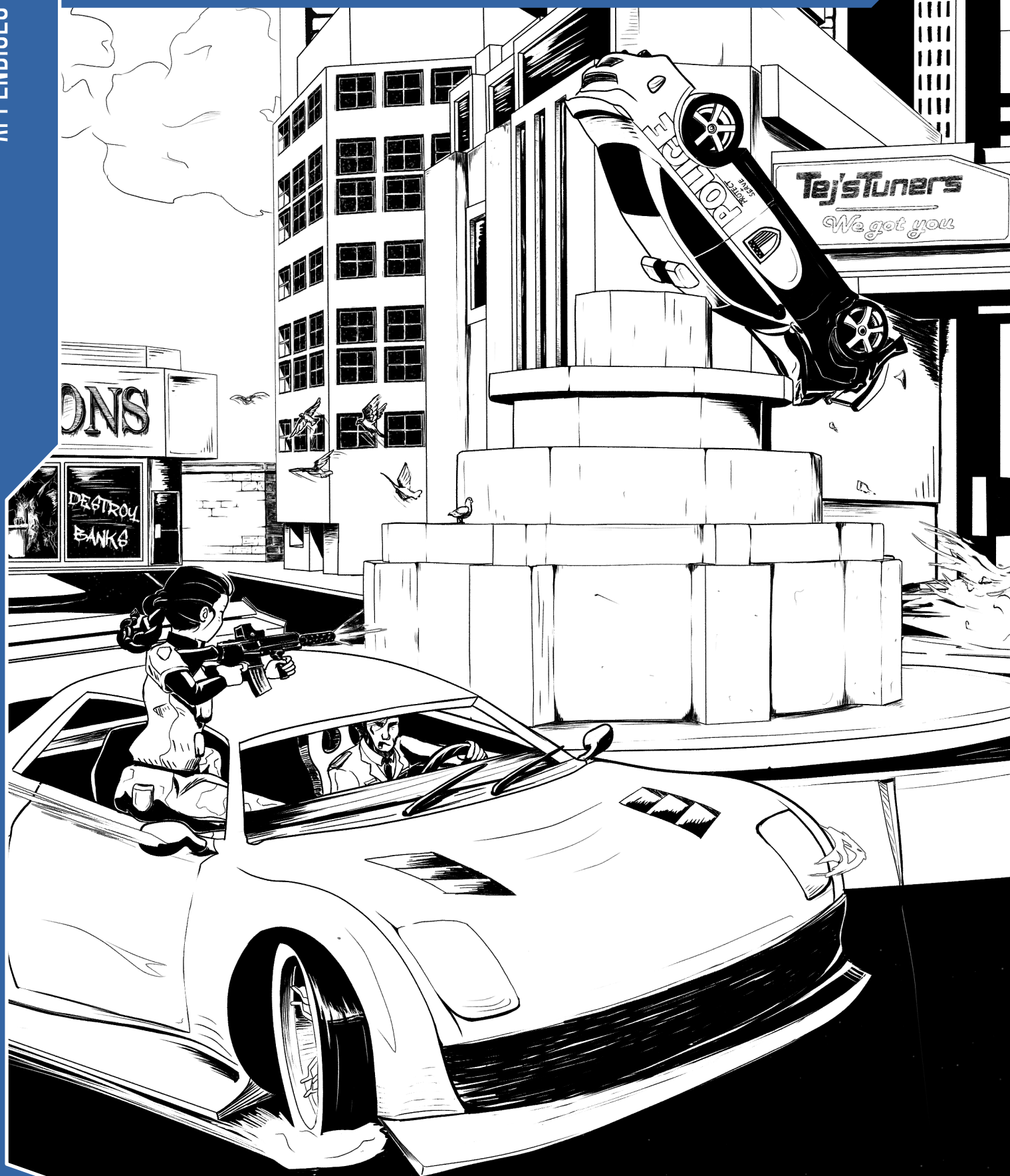
TIER	OLIGARCHY SQUADS
V S	The Shield of Nor are the five ruling families sent from Nor. Each family would be a Tier II squad on their own. GOAL: Pursue familial power.
IV S	The Pale Pikes is a black ops squad at the disposal of the ruling council. GOAL: Eliminate key threats.
III S	Lady Elreth is called the "Goddess of War and Death." She wanders the battlefields in her absurdly dangerous mech, Starfall, wiping out entire fire teams herself. GOAL: Fight worthy opponents.
III S	The Hammers 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: Crush radicals.
II S	The Knives of Nor are the diplomats and spies for Nor in Izya. GOAL: Turn Izya into a Norrish puppet.
II S	The Sword Wing is an air squadron full of ace Pilots. GOAL: Support less-mobile allies.
II W	Discreet Resolutions is a group of "troubleshooters" for hire on a variety of tasks. GOAL: Work for the winning team.
I S	The Hatchetmen is a squad tasked with maintaining the infrastructure of Izya, notably the infotec. GOAL: Eradicate rogue apps, proxies, and AIs.
I S	Path Cascade is a ruined venture capitalist using their connections to rebuild. GOAL: Strike down their former corporate partners.
I W	The Mace Arc is a frontline infantry squad with the gear to punch above their weight. GOAL: Take down higher Tier squads.



TIER		THEOCRACY SQUADS
V	S	The March of Saints is a wandering crusade that came to Izya for reasons unknown, even to The Faith. GOAL: Excavate the Sovereignty Engine.
IV	S	The Paladins of Saint Ngabutho is the primary military wing of the Celestial Myriad. GOAL: Defend the faithful.
III	W	The Breath of Faith is The Faith's personal agent. How their members are chosen is secret. They are the few that can guarantee meetings with The Faith. GOAL: Ensure the new ruler continues The Faith's goals.
III	W	The Church of the Blessed Sevri is the largest branch in Izya and receives limited Offworld backing from Sevrigel. GOAL: Convert the masses to their branch of the Celestial Myriad.
II	S	The Cult of Earth Found believes that humanity's holy birthplace is only for the faithful. GOAL: Remove the unfaithful from Earth.
II	W	The Cult of Earth Lost believes this planet is too imperfect to actually be the cradle of humanity. GOAL: Prove this isn't Earth.
II	W	The Followers of Saint Atrose hold justice above all else, as embodied by Saint Atrose. GOAL: Punish the wicked.
I	S	The Cenotaph is dedicated to bringing the dead home, regardless of their allegiance in life. GOAL: Honor the dead, in body and spirit.
I	W	The Wrights of the Ascent are dedicated to building infrastructure in Theocracy-held areas. GOAL: Glorify the Theocracy with monuments.
I	W	Bishop Finmal believes the faithful can coexist with non-believers. GOAL: Build bridges between the Factions.



12: APPENDICES





APPENDIX A ALTERNATE RULES

This section contains alternative or additional rules that change how Beam Saber is played, both mechanically and tonally. Note that these rules received less testing than the core rules. If they don't work well in your campaign, don't hesitate to switch back to the normal rules.

GMLESS PLAY RULES

Use these alternate rules 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 using the directions for preparing a mission (page [287](#)), with everyone suggesting possibilities for each step.
- ◆ When an NPC enters the scene, anyone whose Pilot is not present can fill the role. If all Pilots are present, assign NPCs (or groups of NPCs, such as angry mobs) to players as it makes sense for the scene. Don't pick an NPC that is close to your Pilot; otherwise you'll be talking to yourself.
- ◆ When a consequence happens, the players select one from the lists based on the acting Pilot's current position and what is narratively appropriate.
- ◆ The group decides how much Stress is required for a flashback.
- ◆ The group decides how much XP is awarded per trigger at the end of the session.
- ◆ Everyone should be familiar with the GM Actions (see page [261](#)).

CHANGING THE SETTING

Your group can easily move the game's setting out of the mecha genre and into other genres and themes if you want—so long as the connection between vehicle and Pilot is present. When changing setting, everyone should discuss whether to remove or modify any playbooks, abilities, or gear. For example, if your group wants to play a vehicular crime game inspired by *The Fast & The Furious*, you should remove most, if not all, of the advanced technology present in the vehicles, gear, and abilities, plus the Empath playbook. When setting up your non-standard Beam Saber game, there's a good chance that you'll miss something you should've 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 more access to abilities and actions so they feel mechanically powerful. There are two ways to do this: front load the power, or speed up the ability to gain power, both of which are explained below. Narratively, these more powerful Pilots could be more experienced, or perhaps they're legendary figures of their time.

Pilots and squads can front load the power by taking additional starting abilities, actions, Quirks, and Upgrades. Additional abilities give players more options without a huge impact on success rates, while more action points, Quirks, and Upgrades increase the chance of success without overwhelming players with options. When front loading power, give the Players 24 XP to spend on their Pilot's playbook, attributes, and Enhance tracks. This will let them take as many as three additional abilities, four additional action points, or four additional Quirks, or some combination of the three. Also, consider giving the squad 24 XP as well. The squad may then take three extra abilities, six Upgrades, or some combination of the two. Players may start with a higher Tier squad so that they can take on larger narrative challenges and tougher foes. If they do, discuss which NPC squads they want to be their peers, which will give everyone an idea of the desired Tier.

If you increase the rate at which the Pilots and their squad gain power, permanently fill in 1-3 marks on the XP tracks you want to speed up. In most cases, a Pilot or squad gets 4 XP per session, so if 3 XP marks are permanently filled, Pilots and squads should gain a new ability, action point, or pair of Upgrades every session or two. Permanently marking fewer XP will still let the Pilots gain power faster than usual, 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. The squad could also permanently fill in three Heart on the squad sheet to gain Tier quickly.

FASTER DRIVES

For some campaigns, players want greater narrative control over the game. Consider giving them shorter Drive Clocks if they do. Pilots can permanently fill in one or two Ticks of both Drive Clocks on their playbook. The more Drive Clocks a Pilot completes, the more change they bring to the world—even if it's only in small ways. With this boost, players will likely complete two Drive Clocks every other mission. Choose this option if your players want to explore multiple character arcs with their Pilot, or regularly shake up squads and Factions.

PUNISHING HEALING RULES

Consider this variation if your group wants a grittier experience that tests Pilots and their vehicles over the course of the campaign.

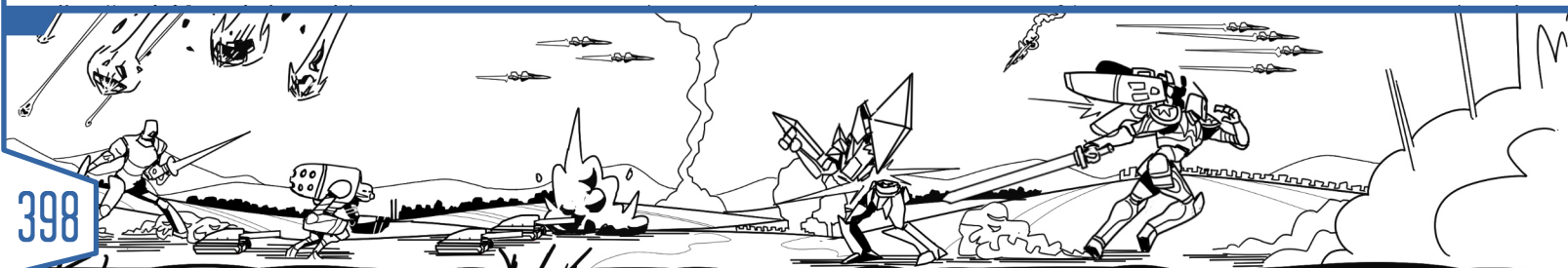
- ◆ Do not remove level 1 Harm and level 1 Damage during the reward process at the end of a mission.
- ◆ When a Pilot performs the Recover downtime activity, they do not remove all level 1 Harm (even if they do not fill the Healing Clock).
- ◆ When a Pilot performs the Fix downtime activity, they do not remove all level 1 Damage from their vehicle (even if they do not fill the Mend Clock).



RARER MATERIEL

If you want resources to be a challenge, consider this variation. Perhaps vehicle parts are incredibly rare because they are no longer manufactured, or the campaign's area is cut off from its supply. Whatever the reason, it will make the Salvage downtime activity more important. Players will need to take risks as they recover the remains of enemy vehicles to restore their own.

- ◆ 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 Materiel becomes too scarce, consider altering the Salvage ability so Pilots generate Materiel equal to the highest die result (as opposed to using the result level). For example, a result of 4 generates 4 Materiel (instead of 2), and a result of 5 generates 5 Materiel (instead of 2).



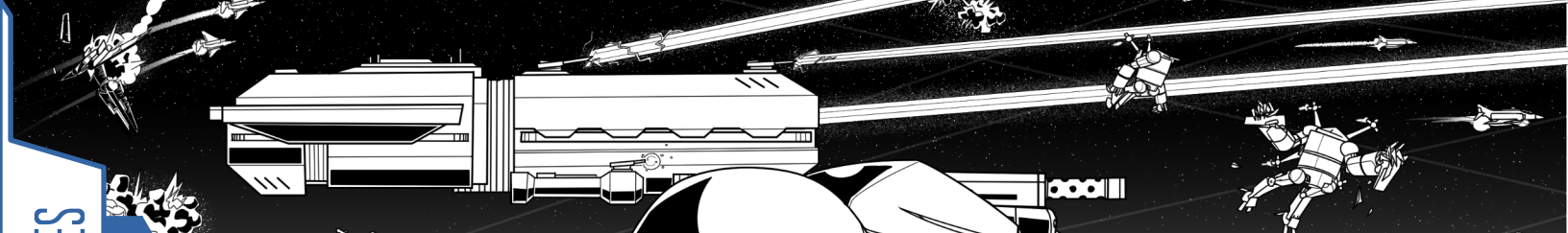
SLIMMER DOWNTIME ACTIVITY RULES

Some groups may find the downtime activity mechanics more complex than they enjoy. These alternate rules are simpler and speed up the downtime phase by rolling multiple downtime activities into a single scene.

Describe and/or play as many scenes as you want during downtime. When a scene ends, you may select up to three of the following benefits that are appropriate to the narrative. Each Pilot may still spend Supply Points to take 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 an 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, remove all level 1 Harm. 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.
- ◆ **Pilot training:** Add a mark to an XP track on your Pilot playbook. 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, remove all level 1 Damage. 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 Rufus Roswell and Ruby Soleil-Raine for helping me develop these rules.



BEAM SABER SUPPLEMENTS

If you want additional great Beam Saber material (playbooks, settings, missions, and more), you should check out the Beam Saber supplements by Austin Ramsay, and the Beam Saber Supply Drops!

You can find Austin Ramsay's other Beam Saber work at austin-ramsay.itch.io. There you can find the following Beam Saber supplements:

THE GROWING CONFLICT

This supplement features new ways to play including 10 new Pilot playbooks, 5 new squad playbooks, 2 new settings, and rules for forming and managing a Faction.

STARDUST MEMENTO

It features missions, regions, downtime events, squads, and AWWs that tell a complete story. Join the Jovangellian resistance in a series of guerrilla actions heavily inspired by Mobile Suit Gundam 0083: Stardust Memory.

THE DRACULA

A Pilot playbook for Beam Saber. The Dracula has strange and unsettling powers, but weaknesses that are equally strange. They feed on others and sleep on a bed of soil in their coffin-mech.

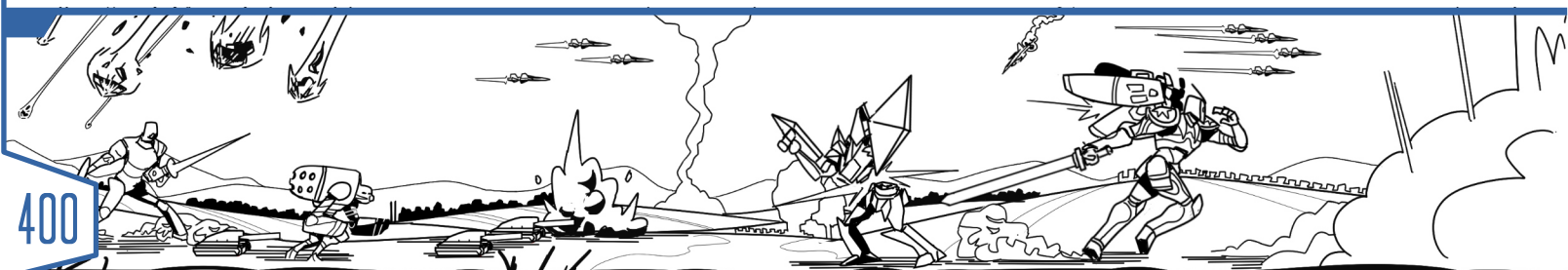
RUSH WARS

The world of Rush Wars is an alternate universe where cars have an even greater importance than in our world. They are both an identity and a conduit for power. Those esteemed few who can tap into a car's true potential become Heroes and Villains the likes of which haven't been seen since the Trojan War.

BEAM SABER SUPPLY DROPS

If you go to itch.io/c/1120578/beam-saber-materials you can find a collection of Beam Saber Supply Drops. These are supplements made by game designers other than Austin Ramsay. In that list, you'll find new settings, playbooks, and thoughts on how to GM Beam Saber.

EXPAND YOUR BEAM SABER EXPERIENCE!



APPENDIX B: RANDOM GENERATION TABLES

RANDOM PILOT GENERATION

Why randomly generate a Pilot's details?

- ◆ Not all players are interested in all of the deep details of their Pilot.
- ◆ Sometimes players get stuck on one or more steps of Pilot creation and want some ideas to help them out.
- ◆ Some players want to get through Pilot creation as fast as possible, and rolling a bunch of dice seems like a good way through.
- ◆ 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.

	MILITARY PLAYBOOK	NON MILITARY PLAYBOOK
1	Ace	Bureaucrat
2	Infiltrator	Empath
3	Officer	Envoy
4	Scout	Hacker
5	Soldier	Technician
6	Choose one of the above or roll again	

PLAYBOOK ABILITY

To randomly select your Playbook starting ability, find its table below and roll 1d. On a 1-3 roll 1d on table A, on a 4-6 roll on table B instead.

ACE

	TABLE A	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 table to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability table	
6	Choose one of the above or roll again	

BUREAUCRAT

	TABLE A	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 table to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability table	
6	Choose one of the above or roll again	

EMPATH

	TABLE A	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 table to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability table	
6	Choose one of the above or roll again	

ENVOY

	TABLE A	TABLE B
1	Take Rook's Gambit	Take A Little Something On the Side
2	Take Cool Under Pressure	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 table to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability table	
6	Choose one of the above or roll again	

HACKER

	TABLE A	TABLE B
1	Take Compel	Take Data Pack
2	Take Matrix Mind	Take Crowdsourcing
3	Take Iron Will	Take Tesla
4	Take Turing Test	Take Warded
5	Take Veteran by rolling in the Playbook table to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability table	
6	Choose one of the above or roll again	

INFILTRATOR

	TABLE A	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 table to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability table	
6	Choose one of the above or roll again	

OFFICER

	TABLE A	TABLE B
1	Take Tactical Genius	Take Heart To Heart
2	Take Leader	Take Warlord
3	Take Rally	Take Mastermind
4	Take Functioning Vice	Take Weaving the Web
5	Take Veteran by rolling in the Playbook table to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability table	
6	Choose one of the above or roll again	

TECHNICIAN

	TABLE A	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 table to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability table	
6	Choose one of the above or roll again	

SCOUT

	TABLE A	TABLE B
1	Take Sharpshooter	Take Survivor
2	Take Focused	Take Lay of the Land
3	Take Terminator	Take Terminator
4	Take Ranger	Take Determination
5	Take Veteran by rolling in the Playbook table to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability table	
6	Choose one of the above or roll again	

SOLDIER

	TABLE A	TABLE B
1	Take Battleborn	Take Mule
2	Take Bodyguard	Take Not to be Trifled With
3	Take Robot Fighter	Take Brutal
4	Take Tough as Nails	Take Vigorous
5	Take Veteran by rolling in the Playbook table to select another Playbook, then roll on that Playbook's ability table	
6	Choose one of the above or roll again	

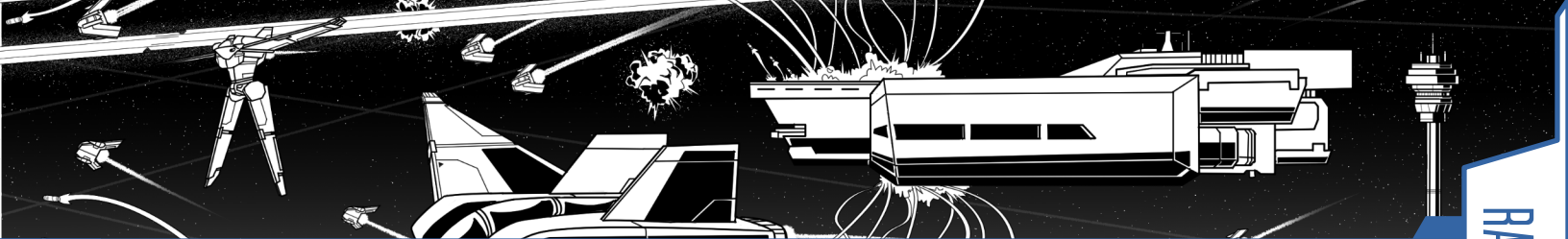
HISTORY

To randomly select your History, roll 1d.

On a 1-3 roll 1d on table A,

on a 4-6 roll on table B instead.

	TABLE A	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 entertains an audience	Law: A cop, a lawyer, a social worker, a court clerk, or other person involved with legal proceedings
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 table A,

on a 4-6 roll on table B instead.

	TABLE A	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

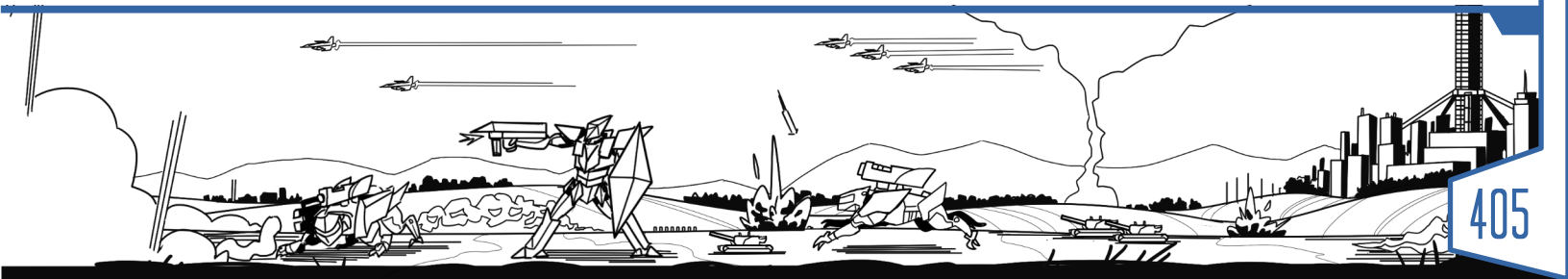
OPENING

To randomly select your Opening, roll 1d.

On a 1-3 roll 1d on table A,

on a 4-6 roll on table B instead.

	TABLE A	TABLE B
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 table A,

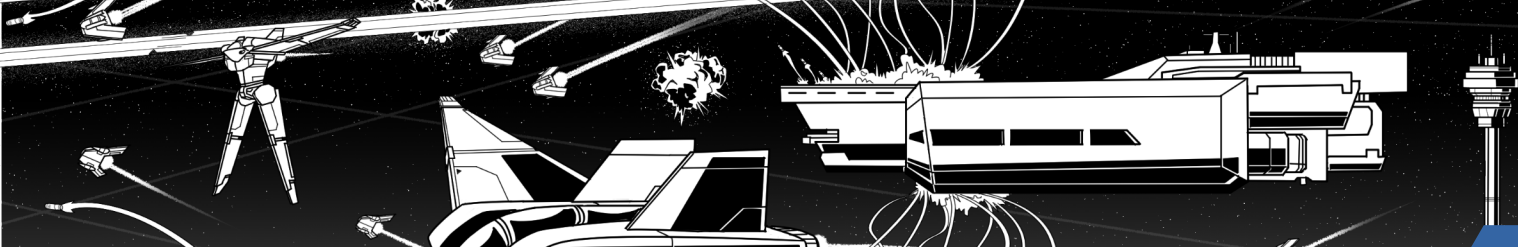
on a 4-6 roll on table B instead.

	TABLE A	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 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

ACTION RATINGS

To randomly select your action ratings, roll 1d on the following table.

ROLL 1D ON...	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Insight table	Prowess table	Resolve table	Vehicle Actions table	Choose one or roll again.	
	INSIGHT	PROWESS	RESOLVE	VEHICLE ACTIONS		
1	+1 to Engineer	+1 to Finesse	+1 to Command	+1 to Battle		
2	+1 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				+1 to Manipulate	
6					+1 to Scan	



ALLY

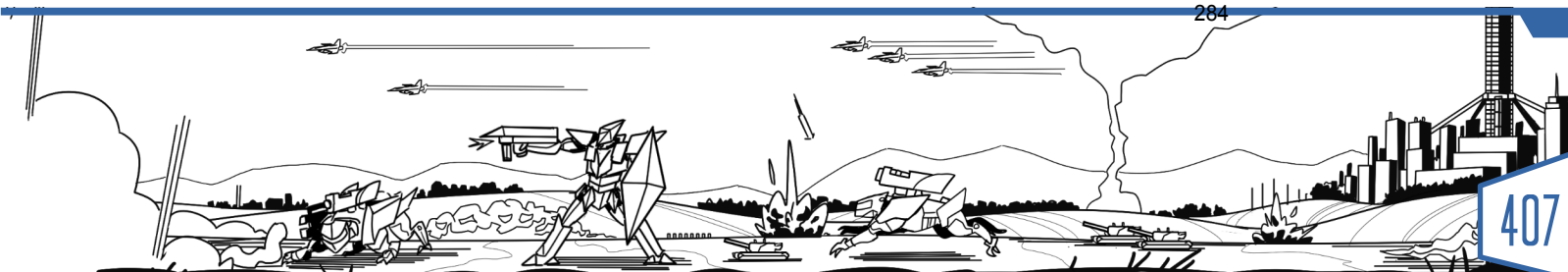
To randomly generate your ally, roll 1d and apply it to the list of friends in your playbook, with the first friend being selected for a result of 1, the second for 2, and so on. If a 5 or 6 is rolled, choose a friend from another playbook.

ALLY'S SQUAD

To randomly generate your ally's squad, roll 1d on the Faction table below. Then, move to that Faction's table and roll 1d on that.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
FACTION	Autocracy	Corporatocracy	Democracy	Independent	Oligarchy	Theocracy

AUTOCRACY SQUAD TABLE	
1	The Wolf Pack (Tier II-S) is a recently devastated vanguard. GOAL: Regain strength
2	The Jovangellian Jackals (Tier II-S) are the diplomats and spies for Jovangel in Izya. GOAL: Keep Izya divided until the Jovangellian military arrives in force
3	The Society for Wider Understanding (Tier II-S) directs the news releases within the Autocracy. GOAL: Sway public opinion for the Autocracy's benefit
4	The Exiled Academy (Tier I-W) is a group of engineers and scholars that left the Teachers' Union. They believe a strong leader is necessary, and want to spread that knowledge. GOAL: Infiltrate the Teachers' Union
5	The Hyenas (Tier I-S) is a mech squad focused on close-quarters combat. GOAL: Make a mess of the foe
6	The Raccoons (Tier I-S) is a supplies collection squad that terrorizes vulnerable pockets of civilians. GOAL: Pillage the weak



CORPORATOCRACY SQUAD TABLE

1	Calazar Strategic Deployment (Tier II-W) is a military company of fans of the Calazar media franchise. GOAL: Raise funds for the next CalazCon
2	Tollmen Enterprises (Tier II-W) work the docks. Known for protection rackets and smuggling. GOAL: Earn their pay
3	Sapperson Incorporated (Tier II-W) is a transhumanist research group that specializes in genetic modification. GOAL: Get rich by selling body mods
4	Furies Rapid Retribution (Tier I-S) is a small squad with a strong belief in family and a focus on hit & run tactics. GOAL: Protect the family
5	Valkyrie Intelligent Redistribution (Tier I-W) goes to battlefields to collect disabled vehicles for salvage. GOAL: Absorb a smaller squad.
6	Sliver of Civility Trading Company (Tier I-S) is openly a trading company, but they are also known as smugglers. GOAL: Get rich through il/legal deliveries

DEMOCRACY SQUAD TABLE

1	3rd Public Connections Corps (Tier II-S) is a well-funded squad of attractive Pilots and the military documentarian crew that follows them. GOAL: Look good for the public.
2	The Quill (Tier II-S) are a union of writers and journalists. They also operate the city's couriers. GOAL: Gather information of value
3	The Dark Room (Tier II-S) is a black ops deniable asset deployed from a stealth orbital platform. GOAL: Eliminate enemy VIPs
4	17th Research Group (Tier I-S) receives less funding than other R&D groups, but are focused on exploring the development of empaths. GOAL: Push their empaths' abilities
5	45th Drop Troops (Tier I-W) are dedicated airborne and orbital drop troops who are sorely undersupplied. GOAL: Regain the ability to perform regular drop actions
6	99th Intelligence Corp (Tier I-S) is a group of spies, hackers, and infiltrators. GOAL: Supply allies with actionable intelligence

INDEPENDENT SQUAD TABLE

1	Cirque Du Soldat (Tier III-W) is a group of travelling performer mercenaries who take jobs both large and small from civilians and Factions. GOAL: Protect the circus by taking the right contracts
2	The Teachers' Union (Tier III-S) is the group that represents the educators and the technology experts of Izya. GOAL: Install members in the highest levels of government
3	Doctors Beyond Stars (Tier II-S) is a group of humanitarians who ensure the well-being civilians caught up in The War, regardless of their allegiance. GOAL: Gain access to all civilian populations
4	The Burden (Tier II-S) is an anti-Offworlder group with no unified post-Offworlder plan of government. GOAL: Remove all the Offworld Factions
5	The Rubble Runts (Tier II-W) is a militia originally formed by war orphans looking to fill the vacuum left by the local government. GOAL: Become the most powerful gang
6	The Squaddies (Tier I-S) are Journey City police who weren't recruited by other groups when the local government collapsed. GOAL: Secure their territory

OLIGARCHY SQUAD TABLE

1	The Hammers (Tier III-S) 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: Crush radicals
2	The Knives of Nor (Tier II-S) are the diplomats and spies for Nor in Izya. GOAL: Turn Izya into a Norrish puppet
3	Discreet Resolutions (Tier II-W) is a group of "troubleshooters" for hire on a variety of tasks. GOAL: Work for the winning team
4	The Sword Wing (Tier II-S) are an air squadron full of ace Pilots. GOAL: Support less-mobile allies
5	The Hatchetmen (Tier I-S) is a squad tasked with maintaining the infrastructure of Izya, notably the infotec. GOAL: Eradicate rogue apps, proxies, and AIs
6	The Mace Arc (Tier I-W) is a frontline infantry squad with the gear to punch above their weight. GOAL: Take down higher Tier squads

THEOCRACY SQUAD TABLE

1	The Church of the Blessed Sevri (Tier III-W) is the largest branch in Izya, and receives limited Offworld backing from Sevri. GOAL: Convert the masses to their branch of the Celestial Myriad
2	The Cult of Earth Lost (Tier II-W) believes this planet is too imperfect to actually be the cradle of humanity. GOAL: Prove this isn't Earth
3	The Cult of Earth Found (Tier II-S) believes that humanity's holy birthplace is only for the faithful. GOAL: Remove the unfaithful from Earth
4	The Followers of Saint Atrose (Tier II-W) hold justice above all else, as embodied by Saint Atrose. GOAL: Punish the wicked
5	The Cenotaph (Tier I-S) is dedicated to bringing the dead home, regardless of their allegiance in life. GOAL: Honor the dead, in body and spirit
6	The Wrights of the Ascent (Tier I-W) are dedicated to building infrastructure in Theocracy-held areas. GOAL: Glorify the Theocracy with monuments

RIVAL

To randomly generate your Rival, roll 1d and apply it to the list of friends on your Pilot playbook. Pick the first friend on 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 Pilot playbook.

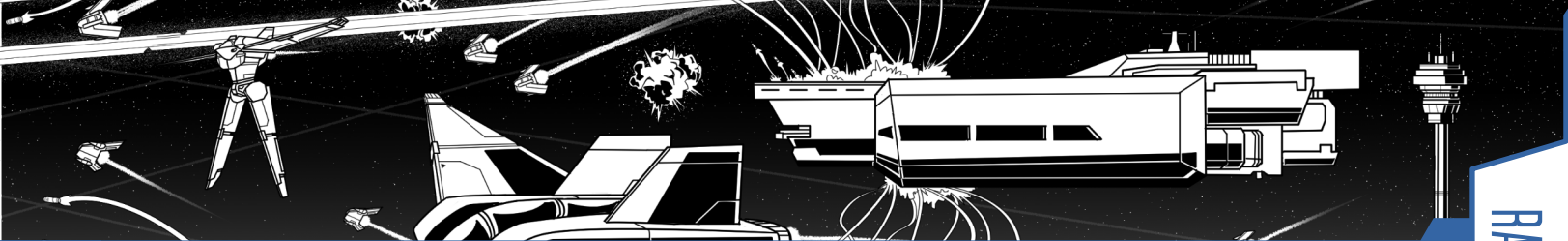
RIVAL'S SQUAD

To randomly generate your Rival's squad, roll 1d on the preceding Faction Table. Then, move to that Faction's table, and roll 1d for the result.

RIVAL RELATIONSHIP

To randomly generate your relationship with your Rival, roll 1d on the table below.

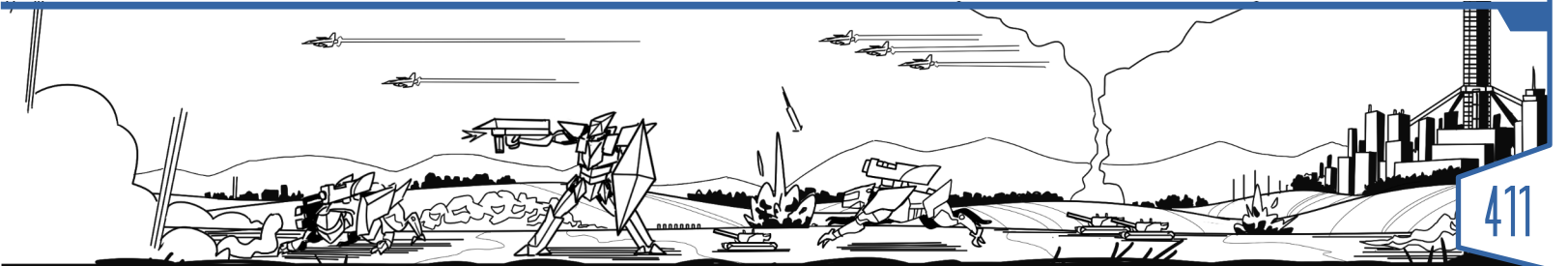
YOU WERE...	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Former Lovers	The Last Two Survivors	Friendly Competition	Ideologically Opposed	You Wronged Them	They Wronged You



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 1D ON...	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Name Table A	Name Table B	Name Table C	Name Table D	Name Table E	Name Table F
	A	B	C	D	E	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



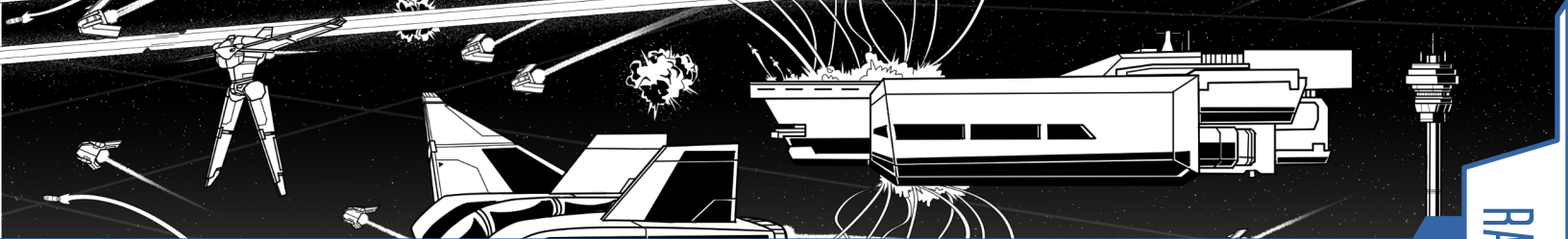
CALL SIGN

To randomly generate your call sign, roll 1d on the call sign Origin Table; then move to that table and roll 1d on that.

ROLL 1D ON...	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Friends	Foes	Self	Occupation	Childhood	Tragedy
	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

If you want to add more detail to your call sign, roll 1d on the Modifier Table; then move to that table and roll 1d on that.

ROLL 1D ON...	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Numbers	Colors	Animals	Materials	Conditions	Actions
	#S	COLORS	ANIMALS	MATERIALS	CONDITIONS	ACTIONS
1	First	Red	Hawk	Gold	Lucky	Soaring
2	Seven	Rainbow	Bull	Silver	Burned	Shooting
3	Perfect Ten	Black	Mako	Iron	Bloody	Running
4	13th	White	Lion	Steel	Rusty	Sleeping
5	Forty	Green	Bear	Stone	Shining	Dying
6	Ninety Ninth	Blue	Stallion	Sand	Divine	Singing



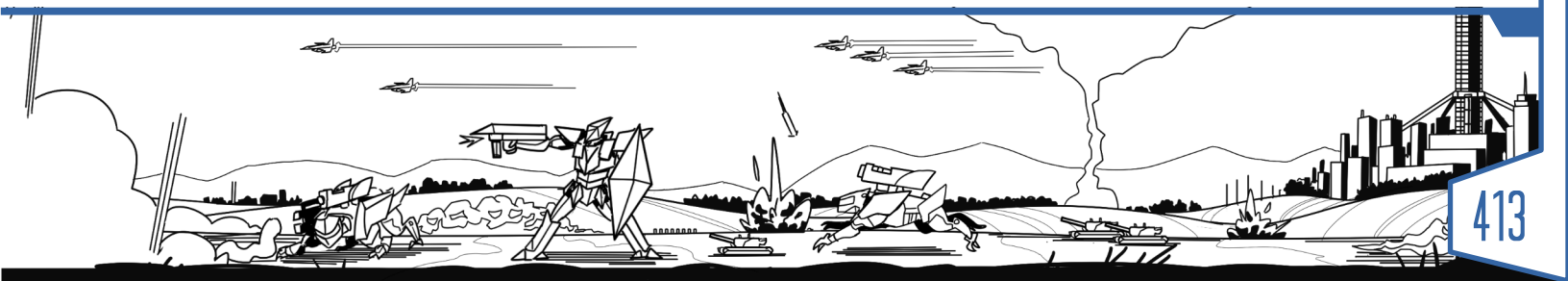
LOOK

To randomly generate your Pilot's look, roll 1d on each of the columns below.

	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

Each other player picks one of your Pilot playbook's example beliefs. This is your Pilot's belief about them.



RANDOM VEHICLE GENERATION

If you want to randomly create your vehicle, need a jump start to get going, or are missing a few details, this section is here to help.

LOOK AND DESIGNATION

To randomly generate your vehicle's look and designation, roll 1d on each feature table.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
MOBILITY	Bipedal	Quadruped	Flight	Hover	Wheeled	Treads
ARMS	None	Humanoid	Tentacle	Industrial	Wings	Ornate
HAND	None	Industrial	Human	Tentacle	Weaponized	Ornate
CORE	Armored	Light	Bulky	Practical	Massive	Ornate
HEAD	None	Armored	Armed	Hi-tech	Ornate	Practical
COCKPIT	Sealed	Open	Armored	Spacious	Cramped	Homey
SHELL	Organic	Hard Light	Ceramic	Alloy	Plastic	Crystal
STYLE	Ornate	Practical	Improvised	Fashionable	Sleek	Powerful
MANUFACTURER	Spirit Forge Cloister	Admirably Superior Electronics	People's Dept. Of Manufacturing	Dark Skies Security Inc.	Whittaker Fine Goods Company	The Work Room
MODEL	Ogre	Artemis	Raider	Glaive	Endeavour	Uppercut
VERSION	Prototype	Obsolete	Mk. 1	V 2.0	Custom	Illegal

VEHICLE ACTION RATINGS

To randomly determine your vehicle actions, roll 3d on the table below.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
+1 TO..	Battle	Destroy	Maneuver	Bombard	Manipulate	Scan

QUIRKS

To randomly determine your vehicle quirks, roll 4d.

For each result of 1-3, roll on table A. For every 4-6, roll on table B. If the result of rolling on either table provides a repeat, reroll the result.

	TABLE A	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.

	1 2	3 4	5 6
LOAD	Light	Medium	Heavy

Pick what gear it has during play.

RANDOM SQUAD GENERATION

Use this section to randomly generate the group's squad in part or in whole. These tables are particularly helpful if the group can't decide on part of their squad. Feel free to roll if you can't come to an agreement!

PATRON FACTION

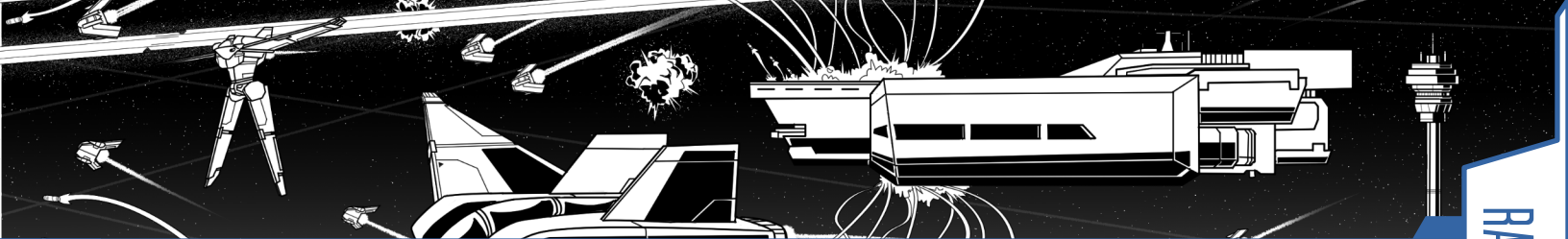
To randomly determine your patron Faction, roll 1d.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
FACTION	Autocracy	Corporatocracy	Democracy	Independent	Oligarchy	Theocracy

DIRECT SUPERIOR

To randomly generate your squad's Direct Superior, roll 1d.

	1 2 3	4 5 6
INDEPENDENT	Carberry, a shady and cruel fixer	Scratch, a cheerful and energetic Proxy
CORPORATOCRACY	Project Lead Walker, an ambitious and hard working manager	Executive Assistant McEvoy, a stressed and organized worker
AUTOCRACY	Captain Martinez, a weary and grumpy officer	Quartermaster Hawkins, a sentimental and thoughtful trooper
THEOCRACY	Bishop Acampora, a patient and caring member of the clergy	Confessor Tebbel, an inquisitive and meticulous theologian
DEMOCRACY	Councillor Swan, a hard hearted and calculating bureaucrat	Aldersperson Drake, a fiery and passionate politician
OLIGARCHY	Virtue de Quidt, an experienced and crafty noble	Margrave Takeyuki, a paranoid and meek leader



PATRON FACTION GOAL

To randomly select your Patron Faction's goal, roll 1d.

On a 1-3 roll 1d on table A, on a 4-6 roll 1d on table B instead.

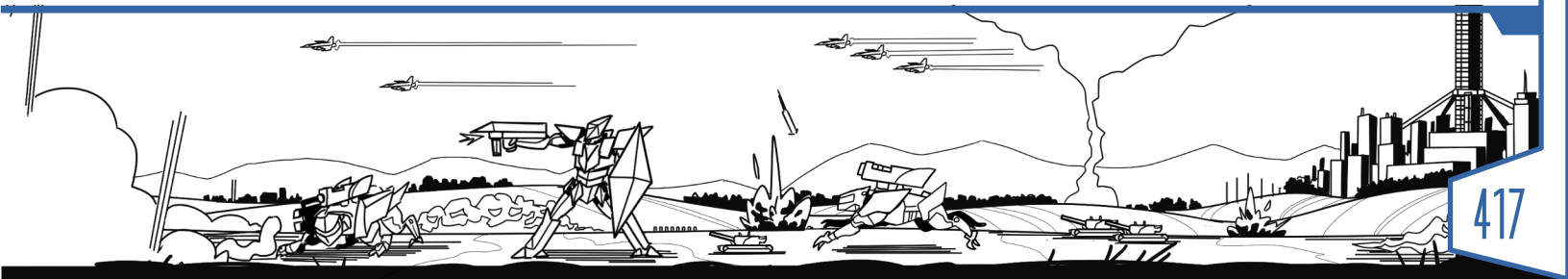
	TABLE A	TABLE B
1	Assault the Foe	Hostile Takeover
2	Divided They Fall	Intelligence Coup
3	Golden Streets	Manufacture Heroes
4	Hearts And Minds	Secure the Borders
5	Choose one of the above or roll again	
6		

SQUAD PLAYBOOK

To randomly select your Patron Faction's goal, roll 1d.

On a 1-3 roll 1d on table A, on a 4-6 roll 1d on table B instead.

	TABLE A	TABLE B
1	Consulate	Profiteers
2	Frontline	Recon
3	Logistics	R&D
4		Mechanized Cavalry
5	Choose one of the above or roll again	
6		



REPUTATION

To randomly generate your squad's reputation, roll 1d on the Reputation Table.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
REP	Ambitious	Brutal	Daring	Honorable	Savvy	Strange

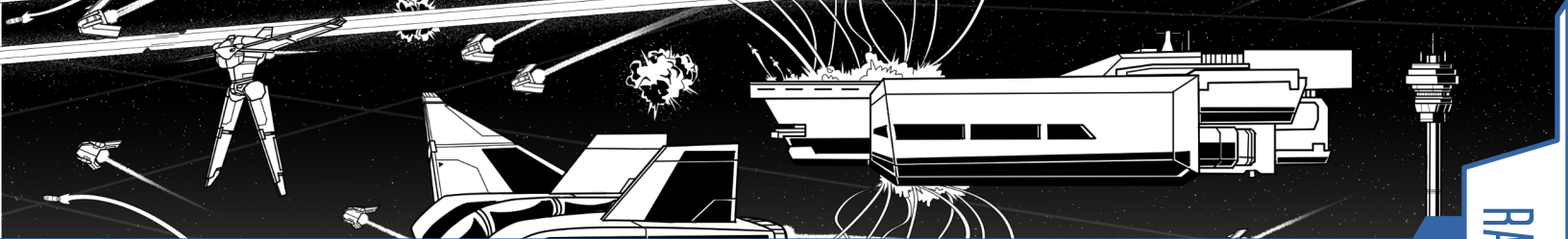
FOB

To randomly generate your squad's Forward Operating Base, roll 1d on the FOB Type Table:

	1	2	3	4	5	6
TYPE	Commercial	Residential	Industrial	Natural	Military	Unusual

...then move to that table and roll 1d for the result.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
COMMERCIAL	Car Dealership	Multi Level Parking Lot	Mall	Restaurant	Hospital	Office Block
RESIDENTIAL	Apartment Block	Church	Detached House	Trailer Park	School	Barn
INDUSTRIAL	AWV Factory	Construction Site	Warehouse	Dockyard	Ruined Airport	Mine
NATURAL	Forest	Cave System	Valley	Swamp	Cove	Mountain-side
MILITARY	Border Outpost	Regional HQ	Old Armory	Parade Grounds	Check-point	Barracks
UNUSUAL	Orbital Platform	Poisoned Land	Volcano	Crashed Space Station	Zoo	Amusement Park



SQUAD ABILITY

To randomly select your squad's starting ability, roll 1d on your squad's table below. On a 1-3 roll 1d on table A, on a 4-6 roll on table B instead.

CONSULATE

	TABLE A	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	
6		

FRONTLINE

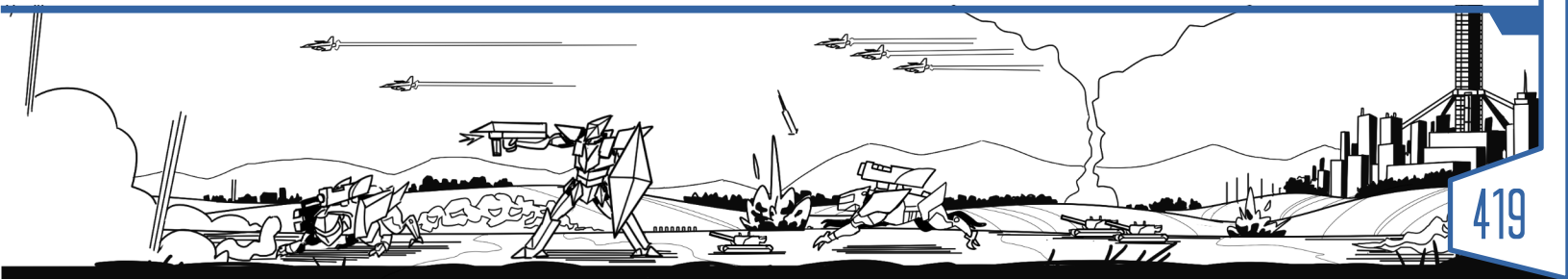
	TABLE A	TABLE B
1	Dangerous	Forged in the Fire
2	Blood Brothers	Sponsor
3	Shock & Awe	War Dogs
4	Fiends	Choose one of the above or roll again
5	Choose one of the above or roll again	
6		

LOGISTICS

	TABLE A	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	
6		

MECHANIZED CAVALRY

	TABLE A	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	
6		



PROFITEERS

	TABLE A	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	
6		

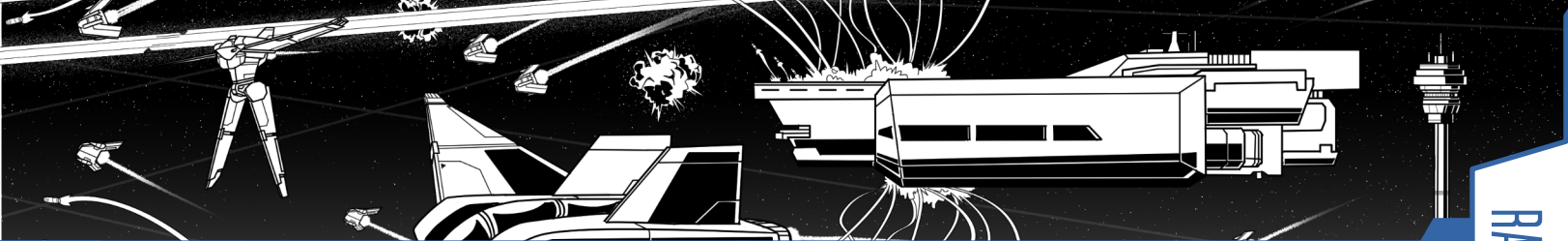
RECON

	TABLE A	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	
6		

R&D

	TABLE A	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	
6		

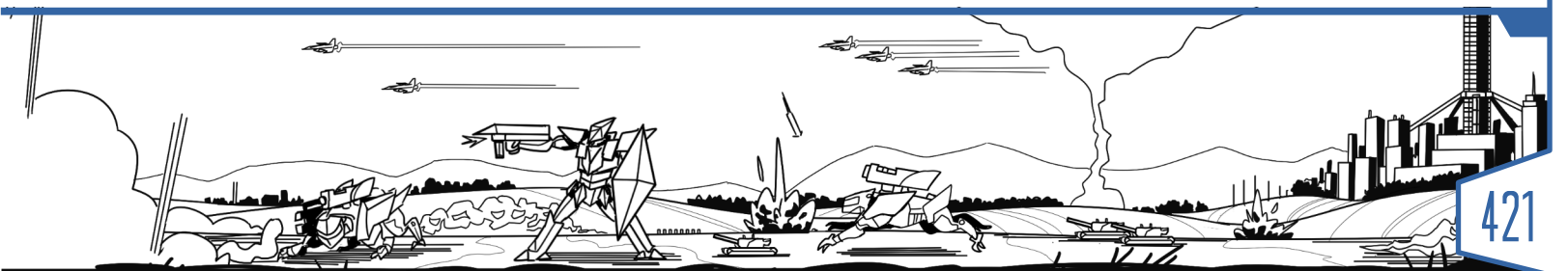
	TABLE A	TABLE B
1	Deadly	Sponsor
2	Dire Needs	Predators
3	Bio-solvent	Vipers
4	No Traces	Choose one of the above or roll again
5	Choose one of the above or roll again	
6		



STARTING SQUAD UPGRADES

To randomly generate your squad's two starting Upgrades, roll 1d for each Upgrade. On 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 that your squad already has, roll again.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
GENERAL	Airfield	Hidden FOB	Quarters	Secure FOB	Workshop	Testing Facilities
CONSULATE	Consulate Rigging	Friends Everywhere	Elite Rooks	Elite Adepts	Choose one or roll again	
FRONTLINE	Frontline Rigging	Friends Everywhere	Elite Rovers	Elite Toughs		
LOGISTICS	Smuggler Panels	Mobile Base	Camouflage	Elite Rovers		
MECHANIZED CAVALRY	Cavalry Hardpoints	Repair Bay	Elite Rovers	Elite Adepts		
PROFITEERS	Profiteer Rigging	Friends Everywhere	Elite Rooks	Elite Toughs		
RECON	Recon Rigging	Geographic Intel	Elite Rooks	Elite Skulks		
R&D	R&D Rigging	Laboratory	Elite Adepts	Elite Toughs		
	Rigging	Friends Everywhere	Elite Skulks	Elite Toughs		



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 (page [407](#)).

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 Rival's squad random generation (page [410](#)).

SQUAD NAME

To randomly generate your squad's name, roll 1d on table A, 1d on table B, and 1d on table C. Fill in the results as "[A] of the [B] [C]" to get the squad's name. *A result of 5, 3, and 6 gives: Knights of the Diamond Dance.*

	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

Use these tables to select the mission's employer and its target. Choose a Faction for the employer and target, then roll 1d for each.

AUTOCRACY SQUAD

1	The Wolf Pack (Tier II-S) is a recently devastated vanguard unit GOAL: Regain strength.
2	The Jovangellian Jackals (Tier II-S) are the diplomats and spies for Jovangel in Izya. GOAL: Keep Izya divided until the Jovangellian military arrives in force
3	The Society for Wider Understanding (Tier II-S) directs the news releases within the Autocracy. GOAL: Sway public opinion for the Autocracy's benefit
4	The Exiled Academy (Tier I-W) is a group of engineers and scholars that left the Teachers' Union. They believe a strong leader is necessary and want to spread that knowledge. GOAL: Infiltrate the Teachers' Union
5	The Hyenas (Tier I-S) is a mech squad focused on close-quarters combat. GOAL: Make a mess of the foe
6	The Raccoons (Tier I-S) is a supplies collection squad that terrorizes vulnerable pockets of civilians. GOAL: Pillage the weak

CORPORATOCRACY SQUAD

1	Calazar Strategic Deployment (Tier II-W) is a military company of fans of the Calazar media franchise. GOAL: Raise funds for the next CalazCon
2	Tollmen Enterprises (Tier II-W) works the docks. Known for protection rackets and smuggling. GOAL: Earn their pay
3	Sapperson Incorporated (Tier II-W) is a transhumanist research group that specializes in genetic modification. GOAL: Get rich by selling body mods
4	Valkyrie Intelligent Redistribution (Tier I-W) collects disabled vehicles for salvage from battlefields. GOAL: Absorb a smaller squad
5	Furies Rapid Retribution (Tier I-S) is a small squad with a strong belief in family and a focus on hit & run tactics. GOAL: Protect the family
6	Sliver of Civility Trading Company (Tier I-S) is openly a trading company, but they are also known as smugglers. GOAL: Get rich through il/legal deliveries

DEMOCRACY SQUAD

- 1 **3rd Public Connections Corps** (Tier II-S) is a well-funded squad of attractive Pilots and the military documentarian crew that follows them.
GOAL: Look good for the public
- 2 **The Quill** (Tier II-S) is a union of writers and journalists. They also operate the city's couriers.
GOAL: Gather information of value
- 3 **The Dark Room** (Tier II-S) is a black ops deniable asset deployed from a stealth orbital platform.
GOAL: Eliminate enemy VIPs
- 4 **17th Research Group** (Tier I-S) receives less funding than other R&D groups, but is focused on exploring the development of empaths.
GOAL: Push their empaths' abilities
- 5 **45th Drop Troops** (Tier I-W) are dedicated airborne and orbital drop troops who are sorely undersupplied.
GOAL: Regain the ability to perform regular drop actions
- 6 **99th Intelligence Corp** (Tier I-S) is a group of spies, hackers, and infiltrators.
GOAL: Supply allies with actionable intelligence

INDEPENDENT SQUAD

- 1 **Cirque Du Soldat** (Tier III-W) is a group of traveling performer mercenaries who take jobs both large and small from civilians and Factions.
GOAL: Protect the circus by taking the right contracts
- 2 **The Teachers' Union** (Tier III-S) represents the educators and the technology experts of Izya.
GOAL: Install members in the highest levels of government
- 3 **Doctors Beyond Stars** (Tier II-S) is a group of humanitarians who ensure the well-being of civilians caught up in The War, regardless of their allegiance.
GOAL: Gain access to all civilian populations
- 4 **The Burden** (Tier II-S) is an anti-Offworlder group with no unified post-Offworlder plan of government.
GOAL: Remove all the Offworlder Factions
- 5 **The Rubble Runts** (Tier II-W) is a militia originally formed by war orphans looking to fill the vacuum left by the local government.
GOAL: Become the most powerful gang
- 6 **The Squaddies** (Tier I-S) are Journey City police who weren't recruited by other groups when the local government collapsed
GOAL: Secure their territory

OLIGARCHY SQUAD

- 1 **The Hammers** (Tier III-S) 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: Crush radicals
- 2 **The Knives of Nor** (Tier II-S) are the diplomats and spies for Nor in Izya.
GOAL: Turn Izya into a Norrish puppet
- 3 **Discreet Resolutions** (Tier II-W) is a group of "troubleshooters" for hire on a variety of tasks.
GOAL: Work for the winning team
- 4 **The Sword Wing** (Tier II-S) is an air squadron full of ace Pilots.
GOAL: Support less-mobile allies
- 5 **The Hatchetmen** (Tier I-S) is a squad tasked with maintaining the infrastructure of Izya, notably the infotec.
GOAL: Eradicate rogue apps, proxies, and AIs
- 6 **The Mace Arc** (Tier I-W) is a frontline infantry squad with the gear to punch above their weight.
GOAL: Take down higher Tier squads

THEOCRACY SQUAD

- 1 **The Church of the Blessed Sevri** (Tier III-W) is the largest branch in Izya and receives limited Offworld backing from Sevrigel.
GOAL: Convert the masses to their branch of the Celestial Myriad
- 2 **The Cult of Earth Lost** (Tier II-W) believes this planet is too imperfect to actually be the cradle of humanity.
GOAL: Prove this isn't Earth
- 3 **The Cult of Earth Found** (Tier II-S) believe that humanity's holy birthplace is only for the faithful.
GOAL: Remove the unfaithful from Earth
- 4 **The Followers of Saint Atrose** (Tier II-W) hold justice above all else, as embodied by Saint Atrose.
GOAL: Punish the wicked
- 5 **The Cenotaph** (Tier I-S) is dedicated to bringing the dead home, regardless of their allegiance in life.
GOAL: Honor the dead, in body and spirit
- 6 **The Wrights of the Ascent** (Tier I-W) are dedicated to building infrastructure in Theocracy-held areas.
GOAL: Glorify the Theocracy with monuments

OBJECTIVE

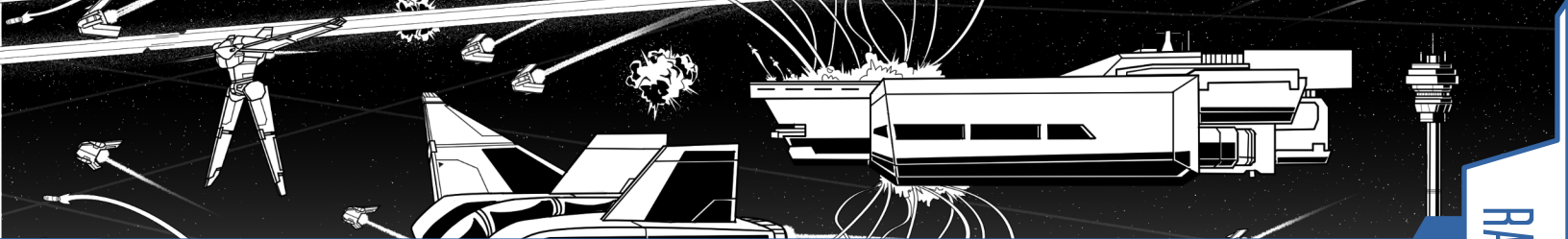
This is a list of suggestions for mission objectives. Choose a column and roll 1d for the result.

	SKULLDUGGERY	COVERT	VIOLENCE	SCIENTIFIC
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	Perform/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. Pick either the Personnel Interaction Table or Use of Force Table, and roll 1d.

	PERSONAL INTERACTION	USE OF FORCE
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

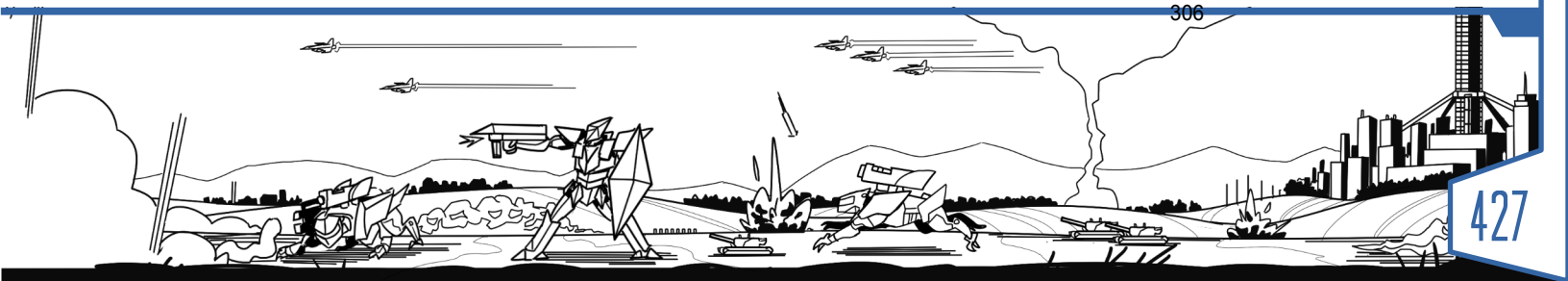
This is a list of places that could be the primary location for the mission. Pick a row and roll 1d to get the location type.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
COMMERCIAL	Car Dealership	Multi-Level Parking Lot	Mall	Restaurant	Hospital	Office Block
RESIDENTIAL	Apartment Block	Church	Detached House	Trailer Park	School	Barn
INDUSTRIAL	AWV Factory	Construction Site	Warehouse	Dockyard	Ruined Airport	Mine
NATURAL	Forest	Cave system	Valley	Swamp	Cove	Mountain-side
MILITARY	Border Outpost	Regional HQ	Old Armory	Parade Grounds	Check-point	Barracks
UNUSUAL	Orbital Platform	Poisoned Land	Volcano	Crashed Space Station	Zoo/Amusement Park	Debris Cloud Gap

CONNECTIONS

Connections are people and groups that are unexpectedly affected, whether positively or negatively, by completing the mission's objective.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
AFFECTED	A Pilot's ally	A Pilot's Rival	The squad's Cohort	The squad's Direct Superior	An AR entity	Another squad



TROUBLES

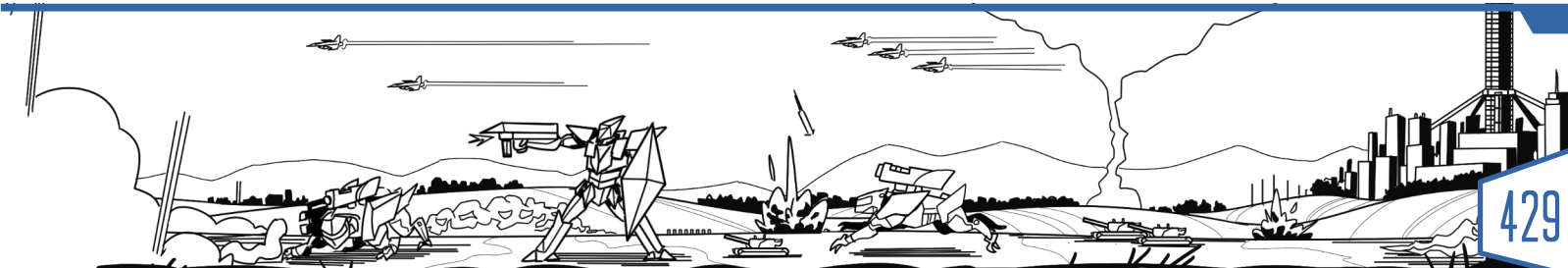
Troubles are obstacles that the squad will likely know about before the engagement roll. If they aren't told about obstacles as part of the mission explanation, they can learn about them with a gather information roll.

	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 actions	Very bad weather affects the mission area	The mission requires 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

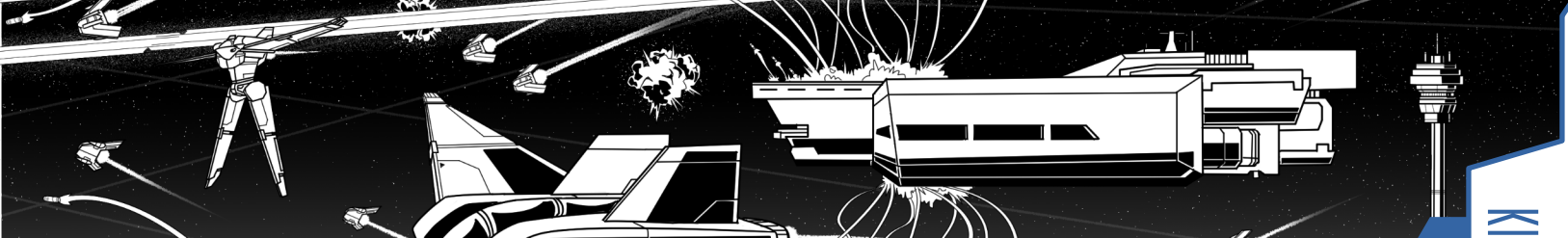
Complications are usually problems the squad can't anticipate before the mission. They could learn about them if they roll a critical success on a gather information roll (and it makes sense for them to gain this knowledge). Complications make for fun consequences on failed rolls.

	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 Pilot's 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 Pilot's 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 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

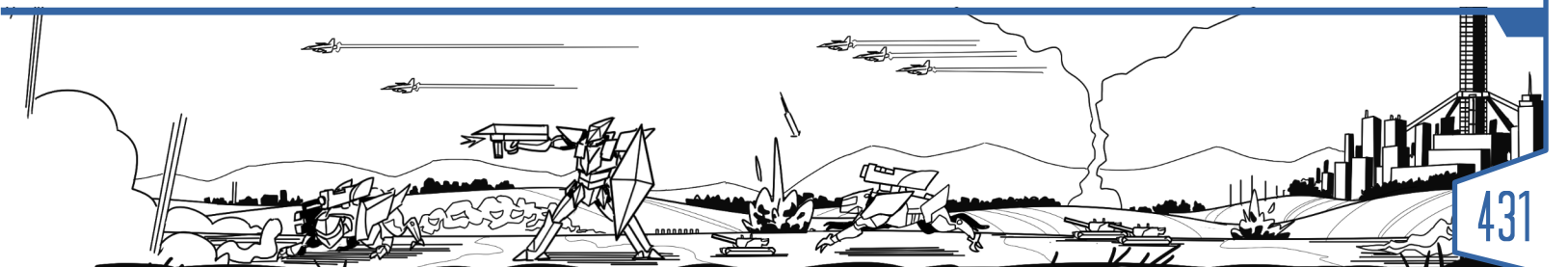


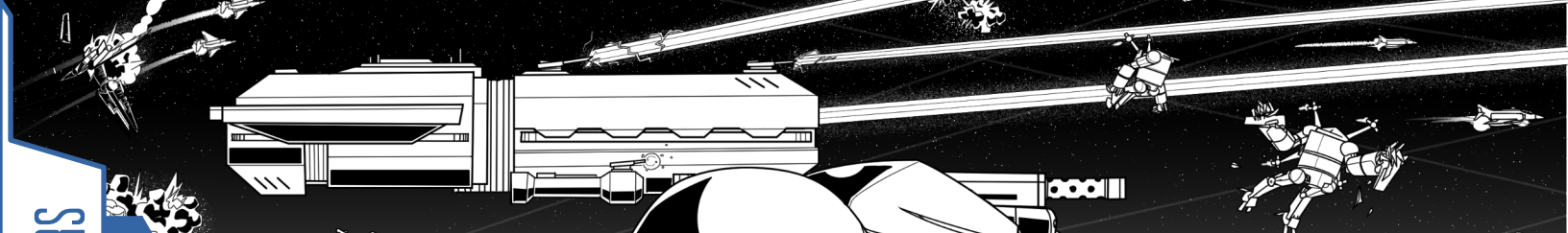
APPENDIX C: KICKSTARTER BACKERS

PROXY TANGO — BLAINE MOORE — ANDY JONES — ANON — NOAH BOGART — BECKY SCOTT FAIRLEY
 SEAN DMR — MILES WILLIAMS — JORDAN HIGGS — TRAITOROUS ALFNDRATE — JOSH A LONG — AGARTIAN 5CARLETTEROSE
 — GARY CHADWICK — LIBBY HORACEK — THOMAS V CUNNINGHAM — TAYLOR LABRESH — CALLIOPE VON VERACHTUNG —
 ANTHONY DePASQUALE II — MATTHEW VELEZ — WRIGHT RICKMAN — ELLIOT McVEIGH — E. THORNBUR — KYLE AYRES —
 JOE CRAIG — NICK CHRISTILLES — MORGAN GATE-LEVEN — ANDREW SKINNER — JESSIE W. — JEX THOMAS — ALEX CALIGIURI
 — S. GATES/AUGUST — MT. QUINN — REM SPEEDWAGON — PHILIP W ROGERS JR — KAI POH — JAMES MALLOY — DAVIDE
 QUARTUCCI — RICHARD EVANS — TYLER CRUMRINE — HAWK HAINES — STEELE STERNBERG — STEPHEN NARY — FRASER —
 CIAN BOOTH — ADAM COKER — A.K. BROWN — DREW FOX — MORGAN JACKSON — SCOTT A WACHTER — LUCAS BELL —
 SNOW McNALLY — TYLER DENNEN — IDA AILES — THERedGoat138 — MAX — ADAM FLYNN — GEORGE BANKS — T.J.
 TAGUE — JAKE PRITCHARD — KEVIN DOYLE — JOHN ROBINSON — GRAVES — CHRIS MOBBERLEY — EVAN TORNER — ANDERS
 SMITH — CHRISTOPHER LAMPE — HANNAH MCBRIDE — AARON LIM — JORDAN DeWITT — PAT MURPHY — SAM L — LUCA
 "LeK" CARIONI — MARK BASCHE — CHRIS ROHLING — JUSTIN LANCE — MINA McJANDA — JASON PITRE — AJ NORDSTROM
 — DAVID JUNGHANS — ERIC ALEXANDER ARROYO — ELI DOBROMYLSKYJ — JOSHUA PEVNER — GENEVIEVE MARTIN — BRIAR
 SOVEREIGN — PERSYCHAN -VALOS YOUNGBLOOD — RON BECK — JOE UPTON — MIGUEL F. SANTIAGO IRIZARRY — KRISTEN
 MACLEAN — JORDAN CARTER — AUSTIN L. — NULLPUNKT — LUCAS MOODY — NICOLA URBINATI — JACKSON BRANTLEY
 MIKE R — BOBBY J. JENNINGS — RJ RUTHVEN — JONATHAN RAEDER — LONDRIEVED — KYLE ANDERSON
 JEFF STOLARCYK — THEO DuBOSE — BRANDON STRUBLE — JASON E POLLOCK — CALVIN METCALF — ZACH SULLIVAN —
 CASSANDRA CONNORS — AARON WELSHER — JOSEPH ABRAHAMSON — PAUL K — BEN HALE — GRACE FEEHAN — JOSHAPI
 — ANDY ZEINER — REV. JOHN RILEY HOPKINS XIII — MADS PHELPS — COLIN PADGETT ARNOLD — JULIANNE HARDSTONE —
 DAN H — HENRY TREMAINS — JOHN WILLCOX-BENEY — ALEC NELSON — JARRETT JACKSON — LIAM MOHER — DANIEL
 LALOGGIA — KYLE BEDELL — HANNU — BRETT OHLAND — DANIEL RODGERS — SEAN PHILLIPS — SHAWN 'DEEP' MORRIS —
 CORY MCDANIEL — ANTHONY PUHL — WILLIAM NEIL SCOTT — JAKOB SLANKSTER — NOEL WARFORD — JESSE HUEGEL —
 MIKAEL TYSVÆR — MACKENZIE JOHNSON — TIM PATTON — JASMINE BARLOW — RYAN WOLF — CHRIS LONGHURST — MAX
 POLUN — PANU "POSSESSED" LAUKKANEN — DAKOTA PAULSON ANDRES — DREW MALLAND — DYLAN — DANIELLE LINCOLN
 — JEFF CREWS — DEREK REINING — ANNE — DEVIN NELSON — SAVANNAH MADLEY — J. DRUMMOND — ALLICE — TEDDY
 MCKAY — TARAN WINNIE — THEOTIME GM — SALAMANKOR — MIKEYKELLS — MADELEINE BO — ANDREW DOOLEY — RYAN
 BEDELL — MATTHEW GRAVELYN — JUSTIN LARSEN — RICHARD WILSON III — QUINN POLLOCK — NOA HEINRICH — JIM LINDLEY
 — CALEB WORKER — CAP'N WAYLARK — DAX RICHARDSON — PHIL "STOPPABLEFORCE" ULRICH — EV HELMS — GATIS
 MELKUS — THOMAS E. WHITNEY — NORA CHERNOV — DONGWON SONG — RENE ANTUNES — JIM B. — PATRICK BURCHNER
 — HERMAN S. LILLEG — ALEXIS LOCKWELL — LIAM W — CODY CLAASSEN — JJ — Q. DAVID JONES — PAUL KRUEGER —
 MATT BROOKS — KITHRI HONEYVINE — MATT E MYERS — TOM DICKINSON — BRENDAN MCLEOD — AKEMI MANIWA — CHAD
 MORRISON — JORGE LUIS "JORLU" DE ALBA — JOHN C. — KERRI COFFEY — CHRIDS — DOE — HOLLY (@KACYHASTHECANDY)
 — DANIEL KORN — MARK SIEMS — DAVID BLOCK — BRYCE MIGHELL — JONATHAN "BUDDHA" DAVIS — FINBAR DEANE-STOTT
 — MATT PICT — JAMIE JOHNSON — KARL SCHEER — DANI "JAU" BADROCK — LUKAS SCHMITT — DANI DEE — RICHARD
 KREUTZ-LANDRY — SKYLER NELSON — WINZYNB — KENDRICK HERNANDEZ — CONNOR SHERIDAN — MARGARET LOEHRKE
 — LOREN PETERSON — ALEX KIMMELMAN — STEVE GALLANT — Z. SCHRAP — SHAWN HALL — SHERIFF JETSAURIAN —
 MICHAEL WEBB — SIMON SWEETMAN — JOSHUA KANTHARIA — KEITH GAUDRY-GARDNER — BRENDEN STRICK — JEREMY AUER
 — DARREN MIGUEZ — ALEX MASKILL — JACK O'SULLIVAN — MIKE REED — PHILIP DOUGLAS — DAVID MORRISON — KIT
 KINDRED — SAM JENKINS — JON LEMICH — NATHANIEL MACDONALD — PATRICK LOWELL — JYN D.F. — TOMMY FIX —
 IZENDALE — ADAM — JC HAY — A. C. SMINGLEIGH — RYAN SNYDER — SARAH BATCHELDER — BEN TELS — CHRISTOPHER
 WARD — STACIE WINTERS — PAUL NEWSHAM — WILL SCOTLAND — ADRIAN — ZACHARY NORWIG — JOSHUA DeGAGNÉ —
 OLIVIA VITOLO — RICH PIRARO — SARAH M — MATT METFORD — GABE GONZALEZ — JONATHAN HANSON — SKY GRANT —
 EVAN SAFT — ADIRA SLATTERY — JOSEPH BIXBY — COLIN J — ALEX JONATHAN BROWN — NIELS KOBSCHÄTZKI — CHRIS GIESY
 — ADAM BELL — GEORGE MARTINEZ JR. — DUSTIN "SLAMHOUSE" NGUYEN — KYLE THOMPSON — ALAN COOKE — JEANNE
 YUN KO — COLIN MITCHELL — GARRETT H. BEARD — POOR SEAL (~•Ω~) — SINDELLA — SPENSER ISDAHL — ALLEN

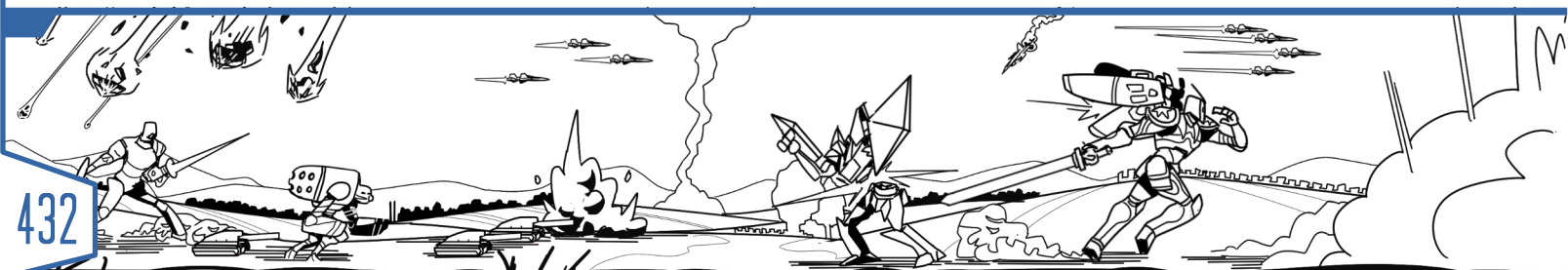


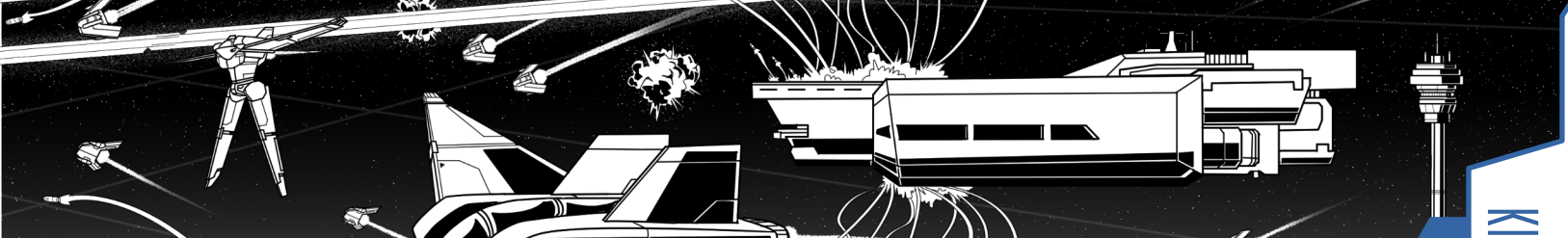
BOSTIC — KEVIN AND SARAH ROBBITTS-TERRY — K. BARNES — ERIKA MAYBE — NICK FOWLER — DANIEL BENNETT — KRIS MILLER — CHRISTOPHER M. SNIERAK — ENKUFKA — RUBY SOLEIL-RAINE — IAN RICHENS — NAOMI KIMMEY — MORGAN WEEKS — ADAM SCHAFER — THOR SUNDQVIST — LEONSHADE — KATIE DAVENPORT — MAX KAEMMERER — JYRI R. — CASEY CROOK — MADELEINE WALTON — DANNY — EMILY CURTIS — AIDAN MANCINI — MH — JENNIFER PRIOR-SANDERSON — JOHN AHSLSCHWEDE — ANDREW J. PYTEL — JACOB HATHCOCK — JAMIE EGGLESTON — CHARLIE ETHERIDGE-NUNN — CASSIE JONES (PORGLEZOMP) — QUINN VEGA — STEFAN ADAMS — THOM CHIOVOLONI — WITT YAO — BRYCE DUZAN — SI — LAURA MEGINNIS — GREG COBB — KYLE KIEFER — ADAM BLOOM — SKOTT BECHARA — KHONG — CLAIRE ECKELMAN — MORGAN AITKEN — DAVID NOVAK — JARED "GNOME" KNIGHT — IAN O'DEA — AMBERLY WARLICK — VIDITYA VOLETI — NICKY SUTTER — SLIPPERY BRANDON — DYLAN HILL — NICHOLAS MARSHALL — ADUMBRATUS — JOHN HARPER — COLIN A. O'CONNOR — NICHOLAS BARRY — ASHLEY MACKENZIE — ELLIE SIMS — WES — ANTHONY CHANZA — DER WAFFLE MOUS — OCTOBER INSTITUTE — JAMES LYNES — JOHN WARE — MAKKI — W RYAN CARDEN — PAUL & TIGGY — Q LEEDHAM — MAX CARLAFTES — SARAH MCCORMACK — FIONNA ADAMS — DAVE AGNEW — SONNY MOORE — ALICE H. — BERTIE ANDERSON — LC CAMPOS — IAN URBINA — ERIC GARCIA — NEMO ARMISTICE HANA — ZANE JONES — MARK MULLENIX — ROSS B. — KURT MITCHELL — BLACKCOAT — MAIKERUX — DANIEL CASTRO — REMI GARREAU — COLIN URBINA — WYLDIE MAXWELL — CIAN MARKEY — THOMAS ANDERSON — PHILLIP STEDER — NOAH KUNIN — ADRIEN "KOKOOW" BUONO — JAMES MCKNIGHT — ADAM SEATON — EVE SECRET — DREW MORGAN — KELLY M — MICHAEL KUBIAK — LUCAS VALENSA AND THE AKROSE SHEPARDS — RANDALL WUNDER-SMITH — LEVI DWYER — AARON BOEHM — THALJI — ADAM MANSFIELD — MICHAEL CROWLEY — ERICK VALLEJOS — DUSTIN K. MILLER — TALEN 'HI RACHEL' LEE — LOKI, TILLY, & MURPHY — SKYLER CROSSMAN — NICK BALL — SHAWN DRAPE — MATTHEW GRIER — [NAME REDACTED] — JOHN BOWDRIDGE — TIM DENEY — ALEX CASE (COUNTZEROOR) — VINCENT BERRY — NICO TRICK — CHRIS BARSOTTI — EY — PETER GATES — DANIEL GOLLERY — JIM EUROPA ROGERS — EDWARD R. — AISLING JENSEN — DEMONBISMUTH — JR LONERGAN — TIM KUEHLHORN — LEVI PHIPPS — ASH ROBERSON — STEVEN DEVITO — KELLY GRIFFIN — JONATHAN WROBLEWSKI — ARTHUR LACE — MATT FENNELL — ANDY BROWN — GRIFFIN POST — OTACON — MARK STIEGEMEIER — ERIK CF — TERRY L GILBERT JR — JOE BRYANT — CESARIO DELINALL — @ITSMRBEARDSTL — HANNAH "HANNARCHY" READ — BRETT VOLZ — MICHAEL SCHWARTZ — COREY CHANEY — KEITH "D.T. KATZE" PATRICK — BRIAN W McDOWELL — MARK WATSON — FOGLET — SUSANTD — PATRICK HILLIGOSS — MICHAEL ARSERS — ELIJAH BERMEJO — BYRON DEMING — BEN BUCKLEY — MALIK OTTLEY — KAMALA KARA ARROYO — MARK WOOD — AZHREI VEP — RAINBOW RODENT — ANGELO PILEGGI — JOSH SEGAL — NITSUABO — ANON — MARK BRAASCH — ALISON FLEMING — ESTHER NELSON — GNOME ARCHIVI — CAMERON WEBB — ACAR ALTINSEL — AUDREY PAIEMENT — BEN DAWES — ANDREW CHERRY — MATHEW M — N/A — GARETH ANDERSON — XYLEMICARIOUS — XAN COX — QUEEN GHIDDI — ANGELJELLO22 — JACK GULICK — MATT BOOTHMAN — TY BUCEK — RUSSELL SAUR — DMITRY DEEMON CHERVYAKOV — PAUL THOMPSON — JARVIS MISHLER — LT. COMMANDER AXIOMATIC CHAIRCHECK — JACK ALLAN — CHRIS STUBBINGS — JONNY KENT — EDWARD AVENT — IZZY M — MIKE MOL — PHIL HANLEY — CURT MEYER — COLE "RETOROX" KLASSEN — CHRISTOPHER NEAL-KNIGHT — NIAL O'DONNELL — ERICA "VULPINFOX" SCHMITT — KOLBEY ARAUJO — JULIAN LILLY — CARL HAYMAN — JUNE BAKER — MICHAEL FLYGARE — MINERVA S — SEAN LINCOLN — JAMES PIERSON — JONAH EISENSTOCK — EMMA FISHER — JOSEPH NOLL — NATHAN HICKS — NAT OLIN — ANDREW — GRANT LOWE — BRIAN ROSS EDWARDS — TUOMAS LEMPIÄINEN — JACOB N WALKER — JAKE TOPOLIE — CALE — RYAN PERCY — BILL GARRETT — NATHANIEL WILLIAMS — TREY ROBERTS — STEPHEN TAYLOR — MICHAEL ALEXANDRE — SHAWN BROFFMAN — SEAN KNUDSEN — CROY SALINAS — OMARI L. BROOKS — REID BAMBRIDGE — KEVIN HAUCK — WILLIAM STOKES — JOSHUA JAVIER RIOS — HELEN @GAGTHER — DEREK BAXTER — ROB ADAMA — IRIS GADGET — KORY RODABAUG — APRROY — JACOB HOEY — MIKEY "QUANTUMDOT" ZEE — JARED RASCHER — KATIE CHIN — CHRISTOPHER RAY ARNDTS — EUANSMITH — LARRY KENNEY — GRIFFIN DEGAETANO — JONATHAN PENA — JESSE MORGAN — HANNAH BANKS — MICHAEL FELDHUSEN — BRADEN LEAGUE — ALAN J. LEMASTER — NICO TECZA — ELIZABETH SHRUMM — SWIZZARD — COLIN MACDOUGALL — CHLOE CONLEY — TREVOR BART — JONATHAN HEDDLESTON — FABBY GARZA MARROQUIN — IAMRUINOUS — ANDREW GALLAGHER — QDRN — EVAN SPILLAR — JONATHAN SATTERTHWAITE — JAKE OLBERT — L.M.G. — DANIEL ANTHONY — MOBILE SUIT BREAKDOWN: THE GUNDAM ANIME PODCAST — DJ MADEIRA — MICHAEL SANDS — PHLOG — LACHY M — AMANDA DISILVESTRO — JOSIE TOUHOUSIE — W. GAGE BERRY — GRUNGLE — VEL MINI — SLIGSIXTY — JERRY L MEYER JR — JULIE MONONYM — NICK GENDER-BOELDT — CODY GOSHORN — FENIC FOX — SCOTT SCHREITER — LUCAS NAFZIGER — CHRIS STOKER — JACOB BICKERTON — KWYNDIG — MAL MCCASLAND — MATTHEW COVERDALE — CHAD D — MIKE LLANEZA — ELEANOR



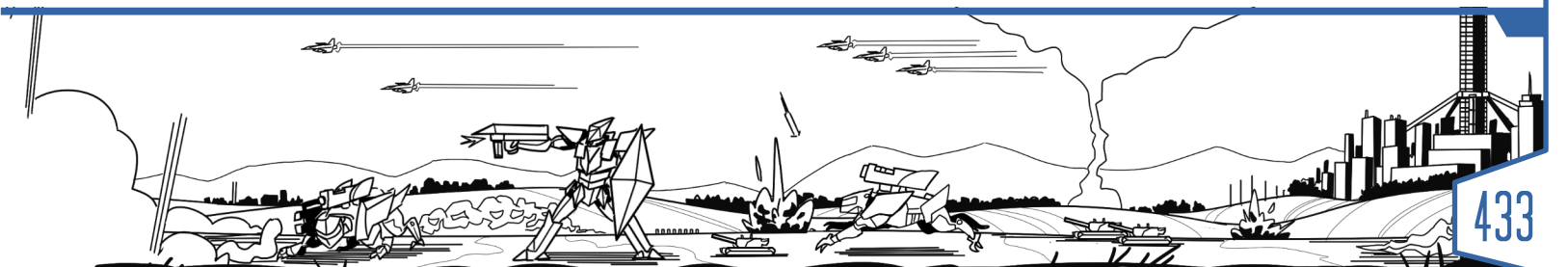


WROBLEWSKI — COMRADE ZOE — ZEB BERRYMAN — ALEXANDRE L'HEUREUX — RYAN C. GOODWIN — JOE CAMPBELL —
 CHRIS MITCHELL — JONATHAN AMES — DAVID N DANIELS — ANGEL ESTREMER — KEVIN SIEGL — MIKE RATLIFF — OSMINA
 DEVERAUX — CEE STURDY — HANK CAPP — JAYLA N. — A.S.W. — IDO MAGAL — JUNIPER — CASKET JONES — ISAAC
 MACFARLANE — ED INGOLD — ALEXIA TRIPP — JOE PERRY — SPIKE McCLANE — STEW WILSON — DELUSIONOODLE — BASIL
 LISK — TORI MAELYS — ASLAN SILVA — JACQUELINE LOVE — TIM OSBURN — JANTAXE — ETHAN REMKES — AMOOSSEN —
 BILLY WRIGHT — MÄNTYNEN PETRI — PETE HOFFMAN — DAVID M MANSFIELD — ALEX MELTSNER — NIÑO ABUEG — HANNAH
 GODBY — LUC RISTAU — LESTER WARD — JON BUCKLEY — KYLE RECTOR — ZELDRAN — MATT MCKINLEY — KARCH — N/A
 — CHRISTIAN FLEURY — VIOLET ANDERSON — MICHEL LICHAND — JIGAWIK — CHRISTOPHER CHEN — MAB — IAN C — WILL
 HUDSON — GREMLINLEGIONS — NICK D. — SAZUROI — SAMIR EL AOUAR — MIKE PRINKE — STONE CROW TMW — TREVOR
 WILLIAMSON — AHRTIMMER — TIM POPELIER — BOBBY GIANTSBANE FABIAN — NICK PACE — MATT REITER — MICHAEL P.
 CHARLTON — BRIAN A — IZACK WILLIAMS — TYLER BUCHANAN — ROOSTER HOGFISH — DUST WITTE — MATTHEW DUNCIL
 — SURE, WHY NOT — NATHAN KRUEGER — RAFAEL SABINO — DEREK "DEWAR" HARWELL — ANDREW JOHNSTON — CALLUM
 CORBETT — JOE D — FISH — PAUL AREZINA — GUILHERME MARTINEZ — RICARDO SEDAN — DANIEL HAWKINS — ZEE
 HUSELID — DANIEL R ENGLAND — RYAN MACGILLIVRAY — VITOR "CYBERVITOR" ANTUNES — ZACHARY JENNINGS — ZASABI
 — CALEB BAUERMEISTER — CODY BOKER — MIKE CALVO — BARTIMAEUS — ZHAKYRIA — JAMES "J.J." JEFFERSON — GRIFFIN
 HOFFMANN — LLOYD PYES — ADAM OEDEKOVEN — BW DIEDERICH — LILLY WHITEHEAD — MR. ENCYCLOPEDIA — ZACHARY
 HODGENS — THE FOOL — MUNAWAER AINIWAER — ASHOK MURTHY — JOE LEONARD — MATT FRIEND — JOSIAH KEESHIG —
 SETH FLAGG — SOL — JOHN D. MOORE — ALEXIS "POETFOX" LONG — YOURPAL EMMA — JON ODISHOO — JACKY LEUNG —
 NARANLL — SEAN LEMME — ELI BERG-MAAS — F — JEFF DEAN — EGG AND AMES — MICHAEL JAMES BOYLE — ADENUGBE
 VORMAWOR — AARON K — J LOWE — NICO WESTBROOK — TONY FROM PLUS ONE — ANDY STYX — AARON "WOLF SAMURAI"
 ROUDABUSH — PATRICK MAHONEY — JUSTIN MORRIS — HANNA FENIMORE — RUBY BATTY — TRISTAN BIGORNIA — ALEC
 WILLIS — ANDREA PAVAN — AZUJAX — MARIA FANNING — ERIC IACONO — ALEX KALLAM — LEGENDARY VERMIN — DREW
 CARLTON — BRANDON METCALF — FRANKY THOMAS — KAVITA PODURI — JACOB A. — TYLER B BRENNAN — GRAHAM S.
 DUNBAR — QUINN — RONALD BRIGHTWELL-KELLEY — LIZ WEIR — NEIL MOLLOY — MARSHALL TEMPLE — SAMUEL HADEN
 — IZZE C. SYKES — REMUS DOUGLAS — KID SPANNER — IAN M — GEORGE VOUDOUSIS — ADAM ALBRIGHT — AVI V —
 KIEREN SZ. — JAMES R. GASKIN — ALEXANDER "LAVNCELOT" FIGLIN — THOMAS BLICK — JULIAN PONSFORD — MITCHELL
 GRAHAM — TRISTAN LONEY — SIDNEY STRAUB — DELDON — CYRUS BUNCH — TODD ROWLATT — DAVID HOLLINS — LUKE
 FREITAG — J HEWES — SIMON MOODY — NICK CADIGAN — HARRIGAN — JAMES K SANDERS — WYATT SMITH — CASEY
 "WARVIGILENT" CAIN — JACK M — LIKE JIYANG — ANN HEDONIA — NICK — PATRICK KIRKNER — MATTHEW LIND — ROB
 SISCO — BRANDON GEORGE — MATT B RENTON — WARREN FINNIE — AARON JONES — PATRICK VAN BRUNT —
 ROBOJOJO SMASH — ETHAN C DAVENPORT — STEVEN NGU — CAMERON SAIFIZADEH — MYNAR LENAHA — ADAM COLLIER
 — SASHA DE'ATH — JADE H — ANDREY TKACHEV — STUART HODGE — BRITT A WILLIS — BREON STEWART-GUARINO —
 ANDREW JAKES — ALFIE KIRK — DENNIS MALLOY — ASHE P — ANONYMOUS — TABITHA GRAHAM — LAMINATED MOTH —
 KISHIKAWA MASASHI — DALTON STEPHENS — COUNTESS LYDIA — MINOHOONOO — TRAVIS DVORACEK — SAMUEL MITSON —
 TRIP SPACE-PARASITE — MATTHEW HERNANDEZ — BDUB — JOHN MEHRHOLZ — JOSIAH BECKETT — ROSS TAYLOR — CORY
 MACKS — MAX LEE — ALEX HARTMAN — W.A. McMURRAY — AN GRAVES — HAYLEY KEPICS — LUCAS HAASUM — JUSTIN
 MACNEIL — JASON — AARON GABLE — ERIC LIAW — GETTY RITTER — HUW WEBB — TRAVIS GLIDEWELL — ERIC AND ADAM:
 ONE OF THEM HAS PLAYED BEAM SABER AND THE OTHER DIDN'T KNOW SO NOW THEIR FRIENDSHIP IS ON THE ROCKS BUT ALSO THERE
 IS NO LIMIT ON THIS TEXTBOX SO WE'RE GOING TO JUST KEEP TYPING TO SEE WHERE THIS ACTUALLY CUTS OFF IN THE BOOK AND ALSO
 THAT THING ABOUT THEIR FRIENDSHIP BEING ON THE ROCKS IS LESS ABOUT ONE HAVING NOT PLAYED BEAM SABER AND MORE ABOUT
 THE OTHER HAVING STOPPED LISTENING TO FRIENDS AT THE TABLE DESPITE LIKING IT ALSO HEY, WHOEVER IS WRITING THIS IN THE
 BOOK, FEEL FREE TO CUT THIS OFF WHEREVER IN THE TEXT OR I GUESS INCLUDE IT ALL IF YOU THINK IT'S A FUNNY ENOUGH BIT TO
 TAKE UP AS MUCH SPACE AS THIS DOES, I DON'T KNOW, I'M NOT A COMEDY WRITER — ADAM CELLON — SIMON CHRISTENSEN —
 BLAST — MICHAEL KALBER — ADAM ANDERSON — NATHANIEL H — SAKAI NOMICHI — DOUG WILLIAMS — NICK GARCIA —
 KEVIN MANNING — ALICE KYRA — DONOGH MCCARTHY — NATE — PHIL CORPUZ — ANGEL CONCHAS CASTANEDA —
 CHRISTINE BLIGHT — SKWIZIKS — POTATOWOLF420 — JR KARGBO — SWEET POTATO — THE ELFIEST ELF — THE CALAMITY
 OF BLUE PROPHECIES — WILL BOYKO — FRANCIS HELIE — HAZYL — SIMON WARD — KIRBY — MATTHEW SIADAK — FELIX
 ISAACS — EDOUARD CONTESSE — W.W. — ALEXANDER BROCK MCCORD — EM MARKO — EMILY CONKLIN — MICHAEL CHAN

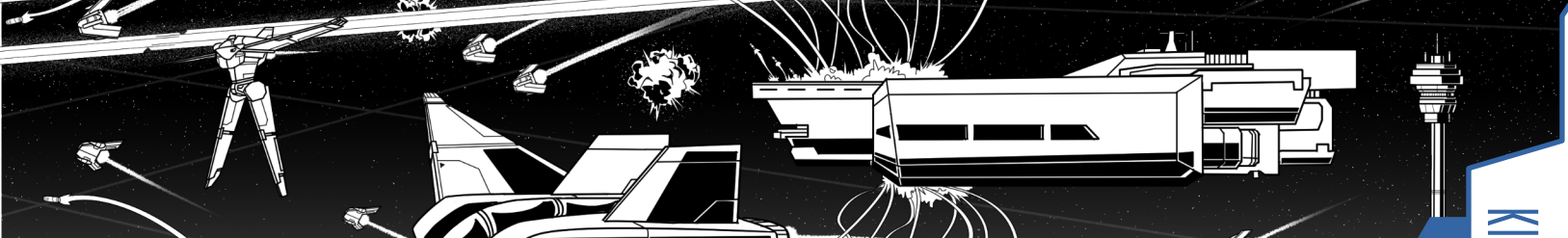




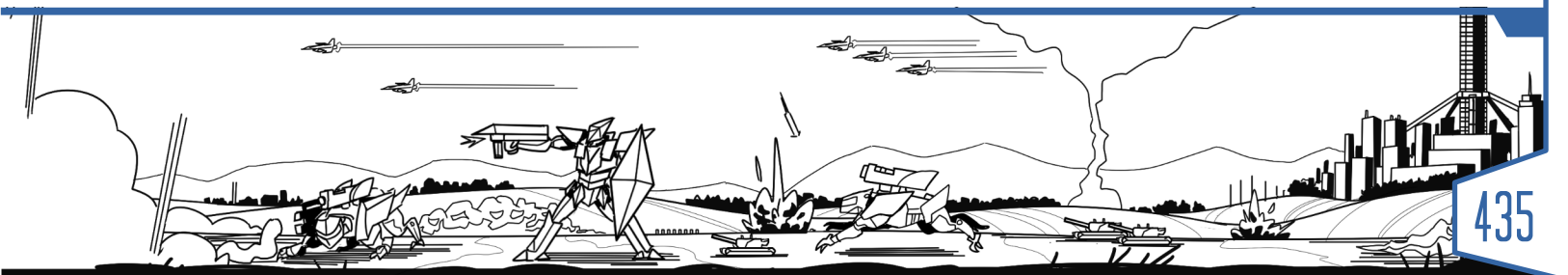
— MICHAEL REICHELT — ED MORRISH — AJ ELLIS — PETER DRUMMOND — MARVIN YUEH — DAVID BROCKWAY — ROBIN NEAL — SCOTT AF — WILDER VON SCHONFELDT — DEVON GEORGE — AUSTIN D CAUDILL — EILEEN LIU — GOURDCAPTAIN — GARY GOODWILL — MITCHELL COOPER — CASEY "GEOSTATONARY" JOHNSON — KYLE CURRIE — SAM PARRISH — AIDANTE — D MATH — DAVE 'CYBER' COLLINS — ARJUNA CHATRATHI — Q PEIFFER — MINH PHAM — JIM BRADFIELD — SARA WAITS — RUBY ARIEL LILITH SAINT DENNIS — BOB RUNNICLES — ROB WILSON — MR. POJO — MATT GEORGE — PAXTE — BRIAN STAFFORD — LEE BARNES — IAN KEEGAN — CLAIR ROSS — ADAM RAJSKI — DET. SGT. KEATON KUMAR — JOSH "JOLLY" SOREY — DENNY ABRAHAM — JAMES DILLANE — NIAMH SCHÖNHERR — NICK DETWEILER — BRAD OSBORNE — KALEB SHULLA — KEVIN — PENITENT — EDIFANOB JINX — BILLY YOUNG — SAM BRIAN — GRAYBEARDHALT — WILL STRAUBE — LIAM MURRAY — ATIO VORBELD — !? — EOIN ROCHE — GREG MUTHIG — DREW BIDDLE — CHRISTOPHER HUNT — JCM — DREW WENDORF — STEVE DISCONT — THOMAS ANDERSON — ONEEYE01 — SARSON THE BLUE — FOTIS PAPADOGEORGOPoulos — D.K. IMHOFF — MICHAEL SCHRAG — IRRIGO-DEPTHS — MENDEL SCHMIEDEKAMP — THE GOOD KING WORM — JOSH HOROWITZ — JAKOB LOTERBAUER — BRANDON SUNTHORN CAPELLINI — JASON DUNCAN — AARON HARRISON — DANIEL ALLSHOUSE II — ALEX LAUPAMA — DEREK M — BLOCK_OF_YCE — ALEXANDER RINN — TOASTCRUST — LILY LIAW — HALAKU — MATT OAKLEY — ROSS LLEWALYN — D. 'MECHA' MOY — DAVID NOLAN — MORGENGABE — ERIC "AMPERSAND" NELSON — ELIJAH BENSON — 1954796132 — SEAN PENT FALLON — D. M. MOORE — MRKILLERLAIN — IAN MEISINGER — IAN F STEFFEN — HUNTER ROBERTS — ZAK STRASSBERG — LUKAS MYHAN — DEIRDRE KHAN — TYLER RIEGLE — VIOLINJOSH — BEN K ROSENBLUM — PEDRO(TE) — JUSTIN CROCE — TING — TONY ENG — NATHANIEL SOUTHWORTH-BARLOW — RYAN K. — RAD — WILL — ANTHONY SMITH — RHYS DAVIS — RABBIT — POLYAMOROUS_Q — RUSSELL N. RAMEY — RIVER W — ANDREW "TEMERITUS SENDS HIS REGARDS" BARBEL — SKORKAB VIR — PHIL KNEITINGER — ED8PR — ADAM DONOVAN — BERYL S. — SHERC — JAMIE MCKELVIE — STEVE PHELEY — ANDY KOCIS — JOHAN JAURIN — J. EVAN NYQUIST — JACQUELYN MARINA — ZACH CULLIMORE — MORGAN HILL — LOUIS COOMBS — BEARS — J PATRICK STEBBINS — CAMILLE JOHNSON — KARL BERGER — MALLORY KUHLE — BLAKE RICE — DANNY ATWOOD — LEIGH A. JONES — JEANBS ED I GENTILUOMINI — CHARLES STUART — G. YUKIO DIAZ — TRISTAN RIDDEN — RICHARD 'VIDIIAN' GREENE — JONATHAN LIN — KATE DOLLARHYDE — TOM FRITCHMAN — RICHARD CHAN — RODRIGO QU4RESMA — BRYAN ROMBOUGH — JOHN/GWYNN TEMPLETON — LUNDIE KYE — MALENA JENSEN — TODDHOWARDVEVO — ARU/ARDYDO — BENJAMIN HARTMAN — ELI SEITZ — COLIN MORLEY — CARRIE JOSEPH — MIKE K — BRIAN BINH — BIG HENRY — BIG AL THE LAWYER — SIDNEY SALUD — "CURSE" JOHNSON — TAYLOR SKIDMORE — PARA WALSON — DREAD PRIEST — FREDRIK LYNFGALK — BRYAN BOMES — TEGANEDEN — JOE MEYER — ANDREW MARTINEZ — FRAZER GAULT — ANDRIJA POPOVIC — ALICE AUTUMN — ROBIN REUSCH — MARTY PRICE — JIM BURZELIC — MO — MAX KAEHN — JASON CARTER — JAHN-MICHAEL MYRVOLL — ANDREAS BJARELID — LUKE FRODSHAM — KASSANDER DE ZEEUW — ANTHONY HANSEN — BENJAMIN "BLACKLOTOS" WELKE — WILLIAM LAMKIN — BASIL BUTERBAUGH — BENJAMIN FELTHAM — RIAN McMANAMON — MATT CUNNINGHAM — BRANDON PERKINS — ZACHARY KETTEL — JAYSON STEVENS — JON KENNY — BOB LAWTON — TRISTAN WOODWARD — BEN ADAMS — CASEY BENSON — MICHAEL S. REBOK — AMY BRIGHTER-SAX — JEAN LORENZ ALVAREZ — DAVID SOOKOCHOFF — BASHEER GHOUSE — TTT — CAILLECH — PATRICK WILLETTE HEALEY — CHRIS QUERFURTH — MATTHEW BLAKLEY — JUSTUS GOLDSTEIN-SHIRLEY — BRIAN COOKSEY — LARS SUTTON — D.W. FRIES — BRIAN GILLICK — FELIX GREGORY — AURA ♣ V — OPHELIA FAUST — MORGAN VICTOR FRIEL — ELIJAH HINSCH — CANCAKES — STAR STEPHENSON — KENNY YOUNG — ERMINTRUDE ERWIN — YURI FIRMINO — MICHAEL THALER — KRISTOPHER NGUYEN — PERTTU KOSOMAA — DJ CHATMAN — ELLIOT I. — SQI — AIDAN BONACCI — KYLE DOOB — PATRICK MCCARTHY — KIWI APTERYX TOKOEKA — PAIGE OTTOMSUN — CONNOR ROOKE — EVE TESSEL — COYNE BON — SHANE FERGUSON — JIMS — VERSO LUNATACTICS — PIPER WILLETT — MIRANDA CELADON — DOUG LUNSFORD — KAI AVEDOVECH — EDEN FLAKS — PSEUDONOUN — DAVID MADDEN — JESSE SHERRY — VESTA — ROBERT MELTON — JESSE RAEN — SHAY SHEMANSKI — ALEXANDER TRIFAN — ZACH BAIN — NICK ARMET — BEEDEEHAZE — ROSEN — EMILY — AMANDA ATKINS — JAMES MATTHIESEN — GUILDMASTER RYAN — JOÃO CUNHA — FINLEY — VINCENT FURSTENBERGER — OLIVER "KANNIK" BOLLMANN — DARCY MURPHY — CAM COLGATE — ATEŞ DOSLUOGLU — ARRAN BOYD — PAIGE TURNER — CROW — AGNES AZNABLE — ELLIOT CLARK — ROSELIA QUINZEL — RAIN ZERO — ALEX SIMONIAN — EMILY DARWIN — RYAN GIGLIO — TIMOTHY MCGOWAN — VILENESKO — SCIENCEGAR SCIENCEBOLT — MERLLE — MARY B. GENN — NO THANKYOU — COLTON BROUWERS — MATT BROWN — STUART WILSON — ALEX KLIMENKO — JESSE ALEXANDER — MATTHEW GUZDIAL — CODY McNALLY — NATHAN SALVADOR — EVAN McDEVITT & REBECCA SEIDEL — TOM HOWARD — COLE F. — MIEKO CANDON — HIEI — J.STRAINIC — EVAN TENG — JOSHUA TROSCLAIR — EDMUND CHU — WESTON LEIGH HUMPHREYS — TROGDOR JAY —



MAX — CAMERON PUTNAM — CHRISTOPHER KERINS — LAURA HOLZ — JOE SCULL — ALEX KERGOZOU — CLUNKER —
 MICHAEL GOMEZ — MICAH KESSELMAN — HAWK GIRL — MARIA ELDEY KRISTÍNARDÓTTIR — TROUFETTE — ZA WARUDO —
 BLAKE — PHILLIP BAILEY — KURT ZDANIO — DILLON CONLAN — NEVYN HOLMES — NO CREDIT, PLEASE — NICOLAJ WILD —
 TONI RHEKER — JASON TEMPLETON — BRIAN FOSTER — ARVID KOPP — JOHN LYNDON — NOLA PFAU, HER MOST RESPLENDENT
 — PHILIP HINDLEY — LUCY VALK QUILL — LAMP — KP THE ILLUSTRATOR — KAY SHARROCK — STEVE MOORE — ANTHONY
 LAFFAN — BRIAN SHAFFER — CALEB COPPOLA — DAVID BELL 3 — CHRISTOPHER LAGINJA — JOSIAH SONG — THIAGO
 REINHARDT MARTEN — PHIL AMES — DAVID ROSE — JAMES MEREDITH — CODEMARVELOUS — RICH RANALLO — STEPHEN
 MASSON — NATHAN GEARSANDKEYS — MICHAEL G. HOWARD — ALEC ROMERO — FELAN PARKER — TYLER SUTTON —
 VICTOR C — GREG MANIZZA — SETH HARTLEY — LINDSEY S. — DAVID E. DALTON — LOTT VANFIELD — WES ILIFF — ERIC
 N SAMUELS — NICK BARABACH — DANTE L. JOHNSON — JAMES KNEVITT — GABE R. — TRICK DEMPSEY — EVIL HAT —
 ANDREW ARMINIO — ALAN D KOHLER — ROBIN T — MATTHEW WALUSEK — BEN MUNISE — NICK BATE — SCOTT SMITH —
 STERLING BATES — BRETT BAMBRIDGE — MARKUS KLARWEIN — KYLE EDWARDS — PAUL SIMMS — TRISTAN SMITH — RYAN
 B. — CHARLES ANTHONY GILLESPIE V — BRENNAN DAWSON — TYLER MCBRIDE — ALEXANDER "KEOTA" CLOWES — MICHELLE
 S — BRIAN HUBBARD — POPINFRSH — DRU LAW — SHAUN KELLETT — PETER KAHLE — RYAN LONGAIR — MATTY WILKERSON
 — SCOTT DERUBY — AUDREY L — ALEX JACKSONSKI — PARKE HULTMAN — MATT FRAZITA — ALEX ESSERY — CAYCE POPP —
 MATT K-B — JOSEPH GORDON — BEN ROBINSON — BEN H — ALTERFORM — NICK "GARAXIEL VNUTHER" DUMAS — PASCAL
 LAPRISE — AJAR — ANDREW BURKE — NICK D. — JOHN ROBERTS — ANDREW CLARK — TAQUIN J. — DANIEL WAGNER —
 ALEXANDRA GUSTAFSON — MICHAEL MARSHALL — LUKE BAILEY — JEFF H — BRIAN KOLSETH — ELEANOR MCHUGH — CENGIZ
 K — DAN — TIMOTHY O'NEAL — GREGORY "PROTAGONIST" PARSONS — JESSE GILLESPIE — BEN POBORSKI — PAUL
 ATHERTON — FRANKLIN J WILLOUGHBY — EVAN JONES — STAR EAGLE — JAN KUTYLA — XANDER CROWLEY — CARO ASERCION
 — COLIN PRESTON — CHARLES BANCROFT — MARIA M — STEVEN HANLON — JOHN MCCLOUD — LOUIE NELSEN — DAVID
 VEHONSKY — CORA NOBLE-BRAY — LAURA FORBES — CHAD QUANDT — CHRIS LYNN — RJ BLILEY — ROGER ALLEN — EVAN
 L. — LAURENT DS — DANIEL HARBARGER — ALYSSA WONG — ARIC Yael — SATYA OMER — RYAN FOX — JIMMY TROTTER
 — REMI D'AMOURS — JOSEPH PEABODY — BENJAMIN SETZER — CHRISTINE PREVAS — ETIENNE — TRAVIS PALM — KRISTÓF
 KOVÁCS — ADAM GOLDMAN — JAMES CATLING — ALLEN PERCEFULL — ROBERT T. GARDNER — CHRIS WINCHELL — JOE
 HACKER — ALEX FRICKE — KEES KALONICK — NINA SILVER CH. — GRANT — OLIVIA JOSEPH — IS THIS WHERE I PUT MY
 NAME? — CARSON EADES — SAROUFALL — TRASHBABY — SCOTT — VICENTE CARTAS ESPINEL — HAYDEN CHURCHILL — JOHN
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 DARTH PINKHIPPO — ZACH MCDUFFEE — MIKE RIVERSO — JOHN PATRICK VILLALON — MICHAEL GARDER — CONNOR PONNOR
 — JAMAL L. WILKINS — STIRLING AUGUSTUS DUNCAN — SOPHIE TILLBROOK — ALICE SOUTHEY — KIERAN — LAN_OHANZEE
 — PATRICK SUMMERS — CODY TAPPAN — BRANDON SAPP — MATT HUFSTETLER — LIAM CONLON — JAKE CARDIS — HANK
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 ZACHARY PETTICHORD — CLINT SLOCUM — JOHN GLOSS — DARREN BRUM — MAX DEV — GEORGE PITRE — "JERSEY" JOE
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 GRAHAM T OWENS — CARL BLACK — JAMES WYNN-LAWRENCE — PRESTON JOHNSON — DAVE LOUGHIN — NADEIN REX —
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 MERCER — DOUGLAS PEACOCKE — JONATHAN SYSON — SAM RICHARDS (@MYTHALORE) — THE PHATASSDRAGON — STRAS
 "THUNDER" ACIMOVIC — DAN VEHSLAGE — NLEPDX — NACCIRALTWENTY — JONATHAN BREESE — CARL ENGLE-LAIRD —
 CHLOE LEIGHTON — BRIAN DOUGLAS — SEAN ANDWRAON — MILA LIDIA ALBERS — MEG & VINCENT BAKER — MARGARET
 JOSEPHINE — ANDREW MAUNEY — A. S. — CARL D KILLIAN III — BRIAN CSERNAK — COLE MCMULLEN — CHARLES F WYSOR
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