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MECHWARRIOR®

FASA CORPORATION

THIRD EDITION

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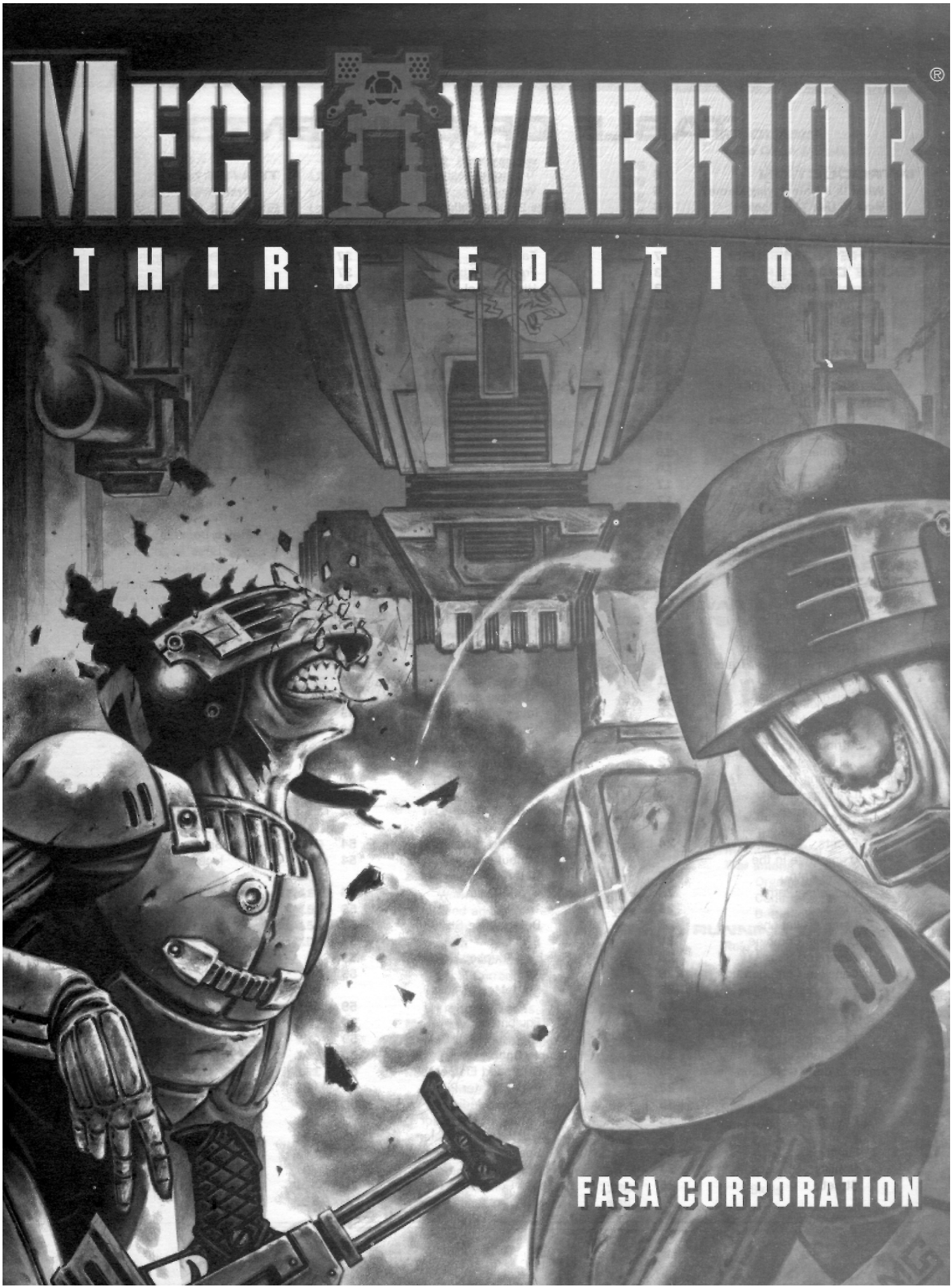

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Special Thanks

To the creators of *BattleTech*, Jordan K. Weisman and L. Ross Babcock III, and the other designers of the first and second editions of *MechWarrior:* Walter H. Hunt, Evan Jamieson, Richard K. Meyer, Mike Nystul, Lester W. Smith and Kevin Stein. This wouldn't have been possible without you.

To the *BattleTech* and *MechWarrior* novelists, whose thrilling stories go well beyond the board game and really bring the universe to life: Robert N. Charrette, Loren L. Coleman, Thomas S. Gressman, Andrew Keith, William H. Keith Jr., Stephen Kenson, Christopher Kubasic, James D. Long, Ardath Mayhar, Victor Milán, Mel Odom, Blaine Lee Pardoe, Donald G. Phillips, Peter L. Rice, Michael A. Stackpole and Robert Thurston.

To Jim Nelson and the rest of the dauntless FASA Art Boyz, who work extra hard to make this book—and every other FASA product—look great. You guys *rule*!

John would like to extend a special thanks to Kevin McCann for coming through with an incredible batch of color artwork that gave a huge breath of life and depth of character to the BattleTech universe.

Kevin McCann Would like to thank his brother Thomas McCann for putting up with the hours of reference photography. No one could have done it better!

Finally, the designer would like to thank his big brother for providing years and years of advice and inspiration. In multiple campaigns of epic scale and depth you showed me what a roleplaying game could be. This book is dedicated to you.

Published by FASA Corporation
1100 W. Cermak Road • Suite B305
Chicago, IL 60608

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A TIME OF WAR

For almost a thousand years, humans have journeyed into the far reaches of space, colonizing thousands of worlds and forming star-spanning alliances. From these grew the five vast star empires that make up the Inner Sphere.

The Inner Sphere was rife with division, as the ruling dynasties warred constantly over colony worlds with valuable resources. These titanic struggles led to the development of BattleMechs: gigantic, humanoid battle machines bristling with lethal weapons. From the twenty-fifth century onward, these walking tanks ruled the battlefields.

As the price of conflict grew, the Inner Sphere tired of war. Eventually, the five ruling Houses joined together in the Star League, a federation led by a First Lord and served by its own army. For nearly two hundred years, the Star League brought the Inner Sphere peace and prosperity.

The sudden death of its First Lord, however, paved the way for an evil genius named Stefan Amaris to stage a bloody coup d'état. The Star League Defense Forces, commanded by the brilliant General Aleksandr Kerensky, refused to accept Amaris' rule. They fought him in a bitter civil war that was the largest conflict ever fought by humanity, before or since. Kerensky's forces won, but at a terrible price. In the chaos that followed, the Council Lords were each determined to step in as First Lord. Despite the efforts of Kerensky to hold it together, the Star League dissolved in thirty years later.

Unable to halt the conflict, Kerensky appealed to his soldiers to join him in leaving the Inner Sphere. Nearly 80 percent of the Star League army heeded Kerensky's call to build a new Star League somewhere far beyond explored space. Kerensky and his followers abandoned their homes and headed into uncharted areas of the galaxy, presumably never to return.

War followed war in the wake of Kerensky's dramatic departure. For nearly three centuries, the Houses of the Inner Sphere fought in vain for the right to rule. These Succession Wars forged new alliances and cost the Inner Sphere precious, irreplaceable technology. Constantly maneuvering for position, the House Lords assumed that the greatest enemy they would ever face was each other.

They were wrong.

While the Inner Sphere sank into barbarism, Kerensky's followers built a new society in the harsh environs beyond known space. They developed a rigid caste system based on eugenics and martial ideals, designed to produce the ultimate warriors. For nearly three hundred years, they were unified by one burning goal: that when the time was right, they would return home and conquer the Inner Sphere. They planned to be the "saviors" of humanity and to rebuild the Star League in their own image. When the warlords of the Clans decided the time had come to launch their invasion, they took their powerful 'Mechs and MechWarriors and drove straight toward Terra, the birthworld of humanity.

Faced with a common enemy, the states of the Inner Sphere united against the threat, establishing a new Star League. Finally victorious in 3060, the Star League halted the Clan invasion and a new era of peace seemed to loom on the horizon. But their trust is fragile, their fledgling alliances fraught with risk. And the Clans, born and bred as warriors, will not suffer peace lightly.

This is but the eye of the storm

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the third edition of *MechWarrior.* What you hold in your hands is an evolutionary leap from previous editions, completely redesigned from the ground up with the intent of transforming the game from a mere roleplaying add-on for the *BattleTech* board game to a full-fledged science fiction roleplaying game set in the vast and dynamic *BattleTech* universe.

Despite its name, *MechWarrior, Third Edition* (*MW3*) is not just a game in which players take on the roles of BattleMech pilots. In fact, it is quite likely the majority of *MW3* characters will never set foot in a 'Mech cockpit. As in the *BattleTech* and *MechWarrior* novels, the majority of the action in the universe takes place out of the cockpit and off the battlefield, and there are a multitude of non-MechWarrior characters that play pivotal roles in the power struggles of the Inner Sphere, Clans and Periphery.

To facilitate this concept, the character creation system has been designed to accommodate any kind of character you can imagine. Starting with a chosen affiliation, such as the Draconis Combine, you follow your character's childhood and early career, building skills and other abilities through actual experiences in the *BattleTech* universe. In this way, even novice players start the game with not only a complete set of game stats but a fleshed-out character background as well.

Also included are a comprehensive equipment guide and an in-depth primer on the history and culture of the *BattleTech* universe. Players are offered this detailed look inside the setting to find out what it's really like to live, love and fight there. We hope you enjoy the ride.

WHAT IS A ROLEPLAYING GAME?

A roleplaying game is part improvisational theater, part storytelling and part board game. It is played by a *gamemaster* who runs the game and a group of players who pretend to be *characters.* These characters are defined by a set of statistics that represent skills and Attributes developed in the character creation process (see p. 21). These are then fleshed out with an invented background and personality. The gamemaster pre-

sents the setting and situation; through their characters, the players interact with the story line and other characters.

Think of it this way: everyone has read a book or seen a movie in which the lead character does something that the reader or viewer finds so utterly wrong that he or she wants to shout out a warning. But no matter what we say, the character will do what the plot demands; we're just along for the ride. Even throwing popcorn won't help.

In a roleplaying game, the players control their characters' actions and respond to the events of the plot. If the player does not want his or her character to go through the door, the character will not. If the player thinks the character can talk him- or herself out of a tight situation rather than resorting to that trusty pistol, he or she can talk away. The script, or plot, of a roleplaying game is flexible, always changing based on the decisions the players make as characters.

The gamemaster controls the story. He or she keeps track of what is supposed to happen when, describes events as they occur so that the players (as characters) can react to them, keeps track of other characters in the game (referred to as non-player characters, or NPCs), and resolves attempts to take action using the game system. The game system comes into play when characters seek to use their skills or otherwise do something that requires a test to see whether they succeed. Specific rules are presented for situations that involve rolling dice to determine the outcome (see *Game Concepts,* p. 13).

The gamemaster describes the world as the characters see it, functioning as their eyes, ears and other senses. Gamemastering is not easy, but the thrill of creating an adventure that engages the other players' imaginations, testing their gaming skills and their characters' skills in the game world, makes it worthwhile. FASA publishes game supplements and adventures to help this process along, but good gamemasters always adapt the game universe to suit their own styles.

In roleplaying, stories (the adventures) evolve much like a movie or book, but within the flexible story line created by the gamemaster. The story is the overall plot, a general outline for what might happen at certain times or in reaction to other events. It is no more concrete than that until the players become involved. At that point, the adventure becomes as involving and dramatic as that great movie you saw last week or that great book you stayed up all night to finish. In some ways it's even better, because *you* helped create it.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is divided into a number of sections, each with its own purpose in defining the *MW3* game system and describing the *BattleTech* universe.

The first section of the book, *Game Concepts,* should be read and understood by all players, especially the gamemaster. It establishes the basis of the entire *MW3* game system—it will be difficult to play without it.

Character Creation takes players through the process of developing a unique character to portray in *MechWarrior* adventures. By making a series of choices about their characters' lives before play begins, players can actually create a background story for their characters at the same time they create a game profile. Following this section is a selection of *Sample Characters* with ready-made character sheets that beginning players can pick up and play immediately, or that the gamemaster can use as ready-made non-player characters. The *Traits* and *Skills* sections define the various special abilities characters can have in the game and provide complete game rules for using each of them.

The *Combat* section adds to the base rules from *Game Concepts*, providing special rules for all kinds of combat situations, including the integration of the *BattleTech* game with your *MW3* characters. Following that is an *Equipment* guide that takes you through the process of acquiring gear for your characters, special rules regarding equipment, and a comprehensive cross section of the most useful and common weapons, armor, electronics and other gear used in the thirty-first century.

Though there is a wide variety of *BattleTech* universe source material in separately available books, *MW3* contains a wealth of information so any player or gamemaster has all they need to get started with only this book. The sourcebook section contains a number of essays on various aspects of the *BattleTech* universe, including *A Brief History of the Inner Sphere, Whistlestop Tour of the Inner Sphere, Government & Law, Society & Culture, The Clans* and *War and its Makers.* Along with these essays, a scrapbook describing the major affiliations of the *BattleTech* universe is provided in the color pages, giving players a complete overview of the vast tapestry of the universe.

Every gamemaster will find the *Running the Game* section useful, as it gives suggestions for adventure and campaign frameworks, a selection of ready-made non-player characters and rules for awarding Experience Points to the player characters after their adventures. At the end of the book is a selection of charts and tables that will be useful to character creation and game play, as well as a blank character record sheet and character creation worksheet.

THE MOST IMPORTANT RULE

In spite of the large quantity of rules and source material in this book, the most important rule of the game is simply to *have fun.* Gamemasters are allowed—encouraged, in fact—to make alterations to the game rules and setting to suit their players' tastes and whims. The *BattleTech* universe as it has developed over the past fifteen years is a remarkable place, but if it doesn't match your style of play as-is, go ahead and change it! This is your game, after all. Enjoy it any way you like.

BY THE NUMBERS

For fourteen years I've been pushing my face into the blades.

I was sixteen when I lied about my age to the recruiter and scratched my mark on the dotted line. I traded in my plow and a lifetime of staring at the business end of a horse, and in return I was handed a Federated Long Rifle and life as seen over a set of iron sights. It was what they promised me, and what they delivered.

That was the day I kicked the dirt of Issaba free from my heels. I've never looked back, never once regretted my decision. Not even when the numbers stretched so thin I thought I wouldn't make it out.

The numbers. Whether you measure them by counting seconds off a watch or simply by heartbeats or breaths, in dangerous situations you played everything by them if you wanted to come out the other side. That's how I live, how I've stayed alive in the trade of foot soldier, private security and now mercenary.

Fourteen years ... and still I count each heartbeat as if it's my last.

This is how it went down:

A light drizzle fell over Solaris City, spattering against ferrocrete surfaces and drumming lightly against parked vehicles. Under the streetlamps, the streets of Silesia, the Lyran Sector, gleamed with the wet look of blue-black steel. Across the surface from me, the walls surrounding the Skye Tiger estate glistened a dark gray.

Skye Tiger was one of several stables that provided BattleMechs and warriors for games in the Solaris arenas. Its main facilities were located outside the city; the estate served as unofficial headquarters and in-city residence for current owner James Stroud. Known for using draconian measures to turn a profit, Skye Tiger was currently clawing for a position among the top five stables. Somewhere along the way it had made an enemy. Well, several enemies likely, but at least one with incentive enough to sponsor this night's mission. My team's job was to knock Skye Tiger down a peg.

The plan was to conduct a standard sabotage raid to punish the Skye Tiger owner. Stroud had recently pulled some political strings and acquired a captured Clan OmniMech. He intended to field the OmniMech in the games as an answer to Blackstar Stable's renegade Smoke Jaguar warrior and the Diamond Shark castoff now fighting for Lion City. It would place Stroud in serious running for prime-time broadcast rights, which amounted to a lot of money and even more influence among the other owners. We were there to deprive Stroud of his new toy before its debut on the morrow. A few cut wires, a well-placed explosive charge or three from the pack I carried ... it should have been easy.

I should have known better.

Three of us huddled in the light rain, cloaked in the shadows of an alleyway. Directly across the street from us stood the maintenance entrance that was to be our entry point. A long twenty meters of well-lit open street separated us from it. The two men standing guard with Rorynex submachine guns looked too alert for my tastes. I could drop them both, but my orders were for minimal bloodshed. This one I'd leave to the special ops veteran.

"Wait here," Stephen said, barely any breath behind his words. No one besides myself, Jaime—our technician and security specialist—and maybe a rat rooting in the nearby garbage might have heard. "Hold things together."

He crept from the mouth of the alley and into the shadow of an abandoned car. Both Jaime and I leaned forward, following Stephen with our eyes as he worked his way in closer. Jaime leaned a bit too far, and I gently pulled her back with a hand laid on her shoulder. I read more curiosity than concern in her bright green eyes. Water beaded and ran off her hood, and enough misted on her brow to run a few drops down the side of her face. I nodded meaningfully toward the guards, then pressed myself back against the building. She bobbed her head in acknowledgment and settled back as well, waiting.

A large van rumbled down the street toward us, its dim lights making a weak stab at the road. A bakery van, already about its early-morning deliveries. I brought up my Intek laser rifle to cover Stephen, sure he would make his move. This was my first time working with him—with either of my teammates, in fact—but some things were a constant on Solaris. Taking advantage of opportunities was one of them.

Stephen moved into the street in a low crouch as the cab

BY THE NUMBERS

of the van blocked him from the guards. A quick dodge around the back bumper and he was sprinting for the maintenance door with both arms extended. The guards were still following the movement of the van. The one on the left noticed the danger first, but too late. I heard the double whisper-coughs of Stephen's dart guns, and both guards jerked from the sting. Another double-cough, and both dropped to the ground before either could do so much as flip off the safety on their weapons.

"*Gehen*," I ordered Jaime, prodding her ahead of me. Unsure if she actually knew Deutsch, I said in English, "Go!" She stumbled into a jog and then raced across the street without a glance in either direction. I was not so complacent. My gaze strafed the upper wall and flicked right and left. Laser rifle leveled, I waited for an alert guard to poke his head over the thick stonework or around a corner.

Nothing. So far, by the numbers.

Stephen had holstered his dart pistols and was already at work on the door lock, a standard electronic keypad. He had the cover stripped off and was digging into the wiring. Bloody *ubermann*. I tapped him none too lightly.

"What is it? I'm busy!"

He'd hardly paid attention to our approach. Jaime waited nearby, shifting impatiently from one foot to the other but not about to interrupt. Stephen obviously made her nervous. I jerked a thumb in her direction. "Isn't that what she's along for?"

Stephen stood half a head shorter than me, but he radiated military competence in the same way that a fine Avanti sedan exudes luxury. His dark brown eyes bored into mine; I noticed a hint of Asian folds at the corners. I watched his face as the preference for relying on his own skill fought with the common sense of using the team's specialist. Reluctantly he nodded and stepped away. Jaime was at the panel at once, her slender fingers picking through the color-coded wiring faster and with greater confidence than Stephen had. He unslung a silenced Kyosa SMG from his right shoulder and turned to help cover the street.

I was still holding things together.

The door buzzed sharply as the magnetic lock worked back the reinforced bolts. Jaime pulled it open. Stephen and I went through first, together. He covered the right side while I swung in to the left. "Clear," I whispered. He answered the same.

Behind a modest mansion that faced Inverness Avenue, Stroud's predecessor had constructed a rather large workshop and a small 'Mech bay. Our entrance deposited us between these two structures, and now we had to decide which to check first. Our sponsor had been unable or unwilling to provide the exact location of the Omni—I'd prefer to think the former. Stephen shrugged and pointed his SMG barrel at the workshop. It was a guess, and obviously so, but I nodded agreement.

Gambling was also a constant on Solaris.

The workshop featured much better security than the maintenance entrance and took far too long to get into. Jaime finally got us through the door, and we found ourselves in a small office. Before we entered, Stephen sprayed a mist out of a

small can into the room. He pointed to his eyes and then traced three lines across the floor—he had detected three laser tripbeams and was silently warning us of their location. We picked our way over them with care, and then had to wait again as Jaime opened the next door.

The acrid scents of old grease and recent hot-metal work assailed us, but other than a few detached 'Mech arms and a separated cockpit system, that was all we found. The workshop did not hold the OmniMech, and the numbers were on the wrong side of our predicted halfway point. Stephen glared at Jaime and me as if it were our fault, then spun on his heel and went back through the office. He didn't wait for us and we had to guess at two of the laser trips.

We caught up to him at one of the 'Mech bay's rear utility doors. Again he was halfway through the security system, deliberating over wire choices. More certain of herself now, Jaime stepped right in and easily picked out the proper combinations that had to be cut and spliced. The lock droned its sharp buzz, and Stephen shouldered his way through without waiting. Light spilled onto the ground from within and voices rose in question. I followed on his heels, turning immediately left to cover his back.

Luckily for Stephen, I ran into a guard who'd been using a water cooler crowded behind the door we'd entered. I jabbed the barrel of my Intek rifle right into his chest over the heart, arresting his move for the pistol riding beneath his left arm. Two other guards sat under the sights of Stephen's submachine gun, seated at a table between a set of stairs and another door.

"Tranq them," I said, prodding this one's hands into the air and then spinning him to face the wall.

The first whispering cough sounded loud in the confines of the room, and I risked a glance back, thinking he had shot them with the silenced SMG. He hadn't, though it remained pressed into the side of one man's neck while he waited for the other to succumb to the tranquilizer. He dealt with the second similarly and then walked over to stick a dart into the neck of my captive.

Jaime was standing near the door, hand hovering over the locking mechanism. "It's keyed from this side," she said, her voice questioning. It *was* a bit strange for the guards to have locked the inner door against entry to their station.

Stephen shrugged and stepped toward the stairs. "I'm heading up."

"We should stay together," I suggested pointedly. Our time was short.

The veteran's gaze was cold. "*I'm* heading up," he said again, nestling a small device into one ear. A thin wire extended out and toward his mouth. "Keep in touch by commlinks, *wakarimasu-ka*?"

I had wondered about his possible Asian origins before now; I had my answer. I knew enough of the common phrases for Drac Japanese. "*Ja*," I answered, "I understand. *Wakarimasu*." I thought it an extra hazard, splitting our forces, but now was not the time to argue.

He took the stairs three at a time, as lithe and light as a cat. I watched him past the first bend, then moved to join Jaime at the door. She was a step ahead of me, already deactivating the lock and pushing the door inward. A hand shot out of the dark beyond and caught her by the wrist, pulling her in and around to block the door and my shot. A crude knife, nothing better really than a piece of sharpened spring steel, pressed at her neck and stifled any scream she might have made.

"You've got no chance," I said quickly, forestalling any lethal move he might make. My laser rifle never wavered. He hid himself well behind Jaime, but not so well that I couldn't center a shot right above his right eye. "Drop the blade and you'll live."

"Until you go cutting into my brain," he said with no little sarcasm.

But then his head peeked around further and frowned. He was looking at the three unconscious guards and comparing their uniforms to my dark gray fatigues. "You're not Skye Tiger."

His confusion and a complete lack of concern for our presence stayed my finger for another few precious heartbeats. I also had the feeling I'd seen his face before. "Very good," I agreed. "And your friends aren't dead, just out."

"They're my jailers, not my friends." Then, realizing his position, the man took his knife away from Jaime's throat and pushed her away. Commendable, except then he nearly bought himself a third eye when he stepped forward quickly in my direction. I was riding the trigger on my laser rifle tightly and nearly burned him down. "You'll take me with you," he said, a touch of relief coloring his strong voice.

The man had the moves of a soldier and acted as if he held the superior position when in reality he was a finger-spasm away from oblivion. I knew the attitude if not the face. "MechWarrior?" I asked.

He nodded. "Erik Gray," he introduced himself.

The Gray Ghost. Now I placed his features, from the fight I had bet on a few months back. He'd managed an impressive showing against Kelley Metz of Tancred Stables. As I recall, he lost—and I did too. Two hundred marks.

Now was not the time to recover a lost wager, though. I shook my head, warning Jaime off. The tech had drawn her Nakjama laser pistol and reversed it for a club, prepared to drop Gray with the others. "Check the other door," I said, nodding back into the room that had served as the MechWarrior's prison. "Does that lead to the bay?" He nodded, warily watching the end of the Intek barrel, which had not wavered. "Guards?"

"None," he answered promptly. "But there will be at least one technician on duty in the controller's room above." He looked up at the ceiling.

Verflu'chen! With the sudden turn of events, I had not put in my commlink. I managed to one-hand the rifle while fishing it from a pocket and inserting it into my ear. I twisted the wire until it rested at the corner of my mouth. "Stephen, there is a tech on duty in the room above us."

"Not anymore," Stephen's voice whispered back. "How did you know?"

Not wanting to get into the story, I simply said, "I've got a POW."

"Kill him." Then, as if remembering the order for minimal violence: "Or knock him cold. I'm in the rafters over the bay now, working my way across to the Omni."

Reaching up, I wrapped one hand over the wire mic. "Why are you here?" I asked Erik.

"Stroud's OmniMech is set up for the Clan direct enhanced-imaging interface. He wants to try some experimental surgery, fitting me with the necessary EI neural implant—better than using a neurohelmet, but apparently turns your brain to jelly after a few years."

"And you cut the low card?"

Gray nodded to the unconscious men. "I *volunteered*. Apparently Stroud slipped a clause into my last contract renegotiation that allows him to make the decision for me. The trial operation is set for morning."

There wasn't time for this; with each pulse I knew the numbers were bleeding away. But then again, we *were* sent to disrupt Skye Tiger's operations, and sometimes you have to listen to your gut. I unclasped the mic. "He's coming with," I told Stephen. "We'll be in the hangar in a sec." I nodded to Erik and swung the laser rifle out of line with his midsection. "If you're coming, move."

He started forward again, but brought himself up short and nodded toward an unconscious guard. "Can I get a gun?"

"No. And stay where I can see you."

I was willing to give the man a chance. I wasn't about to take him completely at face value. As we passed through the room where he had been confined, he grabbed his neurohelmet from off a chair and pulled it over his head. Then he fished under his cot for his cooling vest—something all MechWarriors relied on in the blistering heat of a BattleMech cockpit—and pulled that on as well. Good choices, since both were resistant to bullets and the guards around here seemed fond of the Rorynex.

On the game world, you can only buck the odds so long—then they land on you with their full weight. When it happened, we were halfway across the bay, sandwiched between a partially disassembled *Atlas* and the pristine *Man O' War* OmniMech. The prize was so new that Stroud had yet to remove the Ghost Bear insignia emblazoned across the right leg, though his own Skye Tiger emblem was prominent enough on the chest. Stephen skulked the catwalks twenty meters overhead, a near-invisible shadow in the rafters. Jaime led, while I brought up the rear and kept Erik in sight.

The alarms rang out shrilly, echoing in the immense bay. A laser trip-beam on the floor? Or had a patrol found any one of the five sleeping guards we'd left along our path? Not that it really mattered one way or the other. "We're made!" I yelled out, running for a pile of heavy plastic crates stacked near the OmniMech.

The *Man O' War* towered over us like some armored giant. Twelve meters tall, it commanded the bay just as it would any battlefield or one of the Solaris arenas. Fortunately, it was missing a MechWarrior. Without someone like Erik in the cockpit, the machine was only so much cold metal wrapped around a dampened fusion engine.

Erik and I took cover behind the crates at just the right time. Four guards burst through the same door we had used to enter the bay, SMGs already chattering and slinging about a deadly hail of lead. A ricochet from the leg of the Omni sang past my ear and gouged into the plastic side of one box.

I edged out around the crate—twelve-centimeter autocannon ammunition by the stenciling—and squeezed off two shots with my pulse laser rifle. A spray of ruby darts crossed the bay floor in the blink of an eye, slamming into the right shoulder of one guard. He went down, weapon lost, and writhed about clasping his left hand over the charred ruin of his shoulder. Two nearby guards dove behind the detached *Atlas* arm and began working their way closer while keeping cover behind various parts and equipment.

Then I recalled that the MechWarrior was not in my sight. I spun around, only to find him hunkered down behind the boxes, out of harm's way. He looked calm enough, catching my eye and offering a shrug. Jaime kneeled next to him, arms extended in classic firing position as she fired her Nakjama over the top of their cover. I crabbed over and relieved her of the gun. The numbers were slipping away fast. Too fast.

"Get that door open." I jerked my chin at the heavy metal door only five meters past the Omni. Fifteen meters high and ten wide, it took up a large portion of the wall and was one of two that could be used to bring 'Mechs into the bay. It was also our closest avenue of escape, and Jaime could work on it under partial cover from the crates and the massive feet of the *Man O' War*.

I also knew it would have the tightest security yet; a testament to the priorities of mankind. The estate was warded with good security, but the measures in place to keep someone from walking off with a 'Mech were as strict as possible. Never mind that even if you stole one, there was nowhere to go that it couldn't be tracked.

Jaime's eyes were wide with excitement and fear, but she nodded and scrabbled over to the door's security panel. Bullets thudded into the other side of the crates, which stood up to the onslaught. I risked a glance over the top and saw that two guards had worked their way up to the feet of the *Atlas*. I squatted down and dropped the pistol into Erik Gray's lap. "I hope you know which direction to point that thing."

I was taking a chance, I knew. The MechWarrior might decide that risking the surgery for neural implants didn't look so bad compared with meeting his end in a firefight. But like I said before, at some point your gut instincts can make all the difference. Erik clasped a comfortable grip around the Nakjama, rose up and squeezed off two hasty shots before dropping back just as quickly to sit with his back to the crates and stare at the feet of the Omni.

Well, I could make him deadly, but not brave. I popped up for a few more hasty shots of my own and then took time to reload a new power pack into the laser rifle.

A moment later, switching out another clip, I noticed Erik was gone. Jaime continued to work at the door, heedless of the

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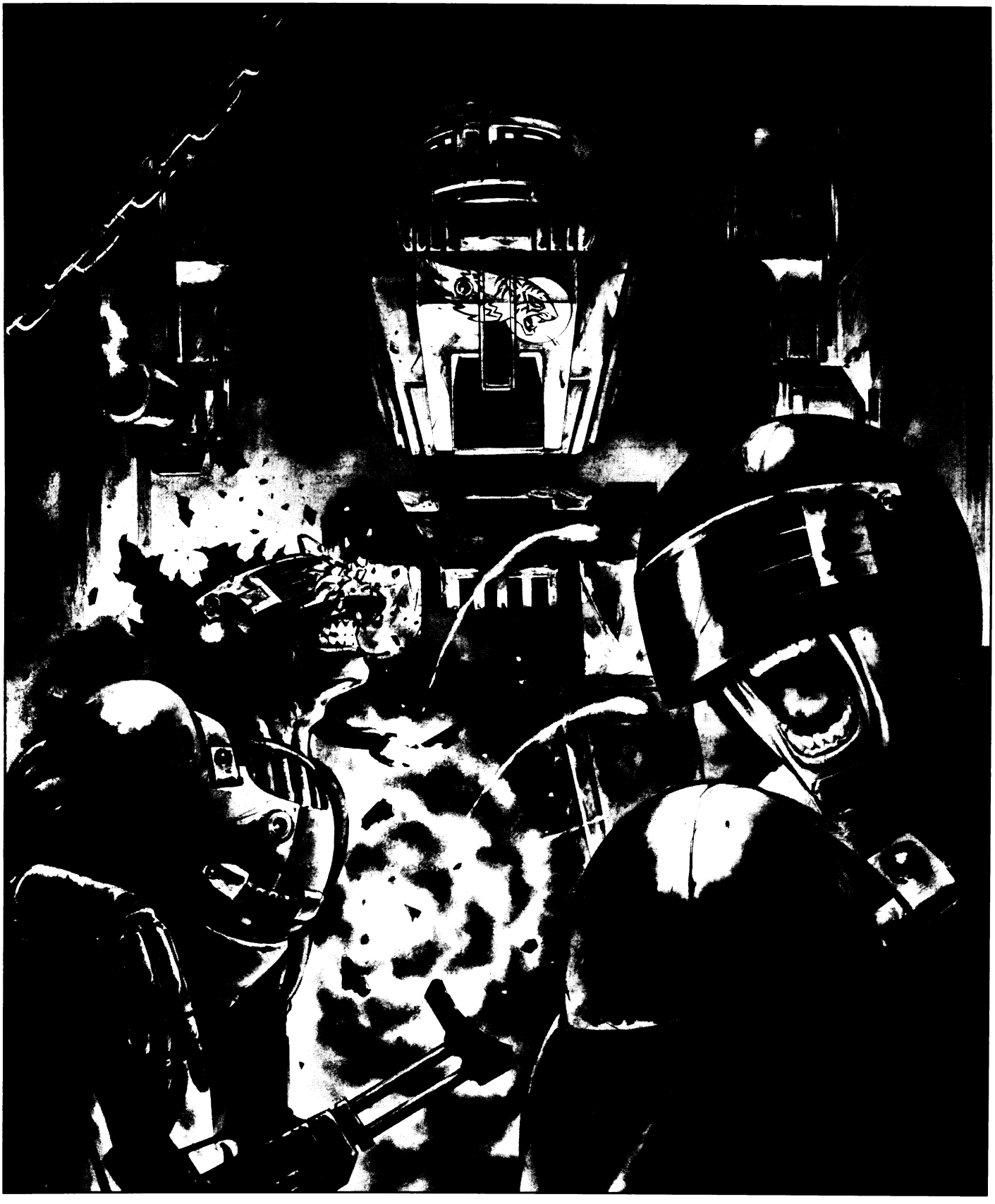

ricochets that bounced off the wall over her head, but of the MechWarrior there was no sign.

"Here they come," Stephen whispered loudly in my ear, and then all thoughts of Erik Gray were forgotten.

Almost directly above, Stephen had clipped a tether to the rafter and now lowered himself down into the bay at a rapid pace. He hung six meters over the floor, one hand on the thin black nylon rope he swung from and the other spraying fire from his silenced Kyosa. I rose into a half-crouch, leveling the Intek laser rifle back along the bay and centering at the rush against us. Two men pitched forward as Stephen's fire tore through them. I chose another in the lead and managed a burst into his midsection and across his legs, cutting them out from beneath him. This stalled the rush, though answering fire cut the air in a sharp whistling rush. One bullet clipped my right arm, and I staggered a few steps to the left and continued to fire.

My power clip emptied again just as I took a direct hit in the chest. The force threw me back with the impact of a small automobile. It hurt to breathe, but then the military had taught us that pain was your friend—it let you know you weren't dead yet. I clapped a hand over my chest, and it came away clean. No blood. My vest had stopped the shot, though the hard twinge of pain with each breath warned of a cracked rib.

Lying on my back, staring up into the rafters of the bay, I saw Stephen take two rounds. The first jerked his leg back, spinning him around. The second grazed his arm and tore it loose from its steadying hold on the tether. He spun out of control, his SMG slipping from his grip and dropping down onto the low wall of battered and abused crates.

I'll give Stephen this much—he rarely hesitates. Having lost his weapon and taken a disabling hit, it was no doubt a matter of seconds before the fire directed against us swept in and hammered him mercilessly into a bleeding corpse. His good hand went to his shoulder and came away with a knife that flashed out once, severing the tether and dropping him six meters to unyielding ferrocrete.

I heard bones break with sickening snaps. His right leg was bent at an impossible angle, and the jagged end of bone from his lower right arm stuck through both skin and the cloth of his fatigues. The breath knocked from him, Stephen gasped in great lungfuls of air and then began swearing in at least three different languages on every pain-filled exhale. The bay floor shook.

Dumbly, for a moment I thought the light tremor was the aftershock of Stephen's hard fall. Then movement caught my eye, and I barely had time to think about dodging before the OmniMech took another ungainly step, narrowly missing Stephen and me. I stared as the 'Mech swiveled about and brought its left arm up. The large-bore autocannon passed right over both of us and into line with the Skye Tiger security. Fire belched outward two meters as a hail of depleted uranium slugs chewed into the *Atlas'* lower legs and the security detail beyond. I had no doubt who was in that cockpit, though judging by the 'Mech's jerky motions I guessed he was driving without the aid of a neurohelmet interface.

If Erik was cutting some corners in his haste or out of necessity for mismatched technology, I wasn't about to complain. Another spray of autocannon fire silenced the majority of our opposition as they bled or fled the bay, not about to stand up against one of warfare's avatars. The massive machine swiveled about in short rocking steps, facing the massive door, which Jaime now abandoned with incredible haste. The autocannon rounds tore into the heavy metal door, punching holes and in some places gashing large rents into the metal, but also smashing the upper supports. Then the 80-ton 'Mech staggered forward, shouldering its way through with the screech of stressed and tearing metal. The door gave way from the wall and folded outward, the assault machine forcing its way out into the damp Solaris night. I heard a lumbering crash as Erik continued to power his way through the wall surrounding the Skye Tiger estate, and then the final ground-shaking fall of 80 tons meeting earth.

Between Jaime and myself, we shouldered Stephen's weight and carried him through the trail of debris left behind the OmniMech's escape. We saw no security in the twenty meters separating the bay from the nearest point of the wall, now a crumbled pile of rubble with the metal foot of a battlefield titan half buried in it.

The rest of the Omni was stretched full-length over the ground on the other side of the wall. It lay into and across Miller Street, wisps of steam rising where the light rain splashed against the heated autocannon barrel. Shouts of command drifted out from the compound as we came up to the OmniMech's head—the first sounds of organized response after the past few chaotic minutes. Erik was climbing out of the open hatch at the back of the armored neck.

I was still holding things together—and the numbers don't get much more strained—but we weren't done yet. Resting a barely conscious Stephen against the *Man O' War's* shoulder, I dug into my satchel and pulled a small brick of explosives out, setting the timer for two minutes. I tossed it up to Erik, who grinned savagely and dropped it into the open cockpit hatch. Then I tossed him two larger bricks, which he stared at quizzically.

"Slap them on the back of the left torso," I told him. "Right over the ammunition dump port." The sympathetic explosions of all that unspent autocannon ammo would tear the OmniMech into so much scrap.

Now we were done. By the numbers.

Or close enough.

GAME CONCEPTS

This section describes the core game system of *MechWarrior, Third Edition* (*MW3*), particularly the way dice are used to determine the success or failure of each character's actions. Additional rules for certain kinds of situations can be found in *Combat* (p. 109) and *Running the Game* (p. 203), but both of those sections build on the concepts presented here. All players and gamemasters should read this chapter carefully.

CHARACTER ABILITIES

All characters, be they player characters or non-player characters (NPCs), have their abilities defined by certain numbers and words that describe their capabilities in game terms. Although there will be more detail about character abilities in the *Character Creation* section (p. 21), for now you need to know that characters have, among other abilities, Attributes and skills.

ATTRIBUTES

Attributes are nine numbers that describe a character's raw physical and mental capabilities, as well as his or her social standing and luck. Attributes are rated on a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being the best possible rating and 1 the worst; most humans fall in the 3 to 7 range.

The Attributes (and their standard abbreviations) are: Strength (STR), Body (BOD), Dexterity (DEX), Reflexes (RFL), Intelligence (INT), Willpower (WIL), Charisma (CHA), Edge (EDG) and Social Standing (SOC). For more information on the Attributes and what they represent, see p. 54.

SKILLS

As the name implies, skills are used to describe what a character can do and how well he or she can do it. Each character has a number of skills, and each skill is rated in the form of a skill bonus expressed as a positive modifier (such as +1). The higher the skill bonus, the better the character is at the skill.

For a list of skills, see p. 57. Detailed descriptions of all the skills start on p. 95.

ACTION CHECKS

In *MechWarrior,* when a character attempts to do something, he or she makes what is called an *Action Check*. Usually an Action Check is based upon the use of an Attribute (an *Attribute Check*) or a skill (a *Skill Check*). To determine whether the action succeeds, the character rolls some dice and follows the procedure described under *Task Resolution* (p. 15).

ROLLING THE DICE

MechWarrior uses two different kinds of dice to resolve all actions: ten-sided dice, called D10 for short, and six-sided dice, called D6 for short. Each player should have two D10 handy, and the group should have at least twelve D6 available to share among all players.

When multiple dice are used in a single roll, the rules will describe it like this: "2D10," where 2 is the number of dice rolled and D10 is the type of dice rolled. In this example, you would roll two D10 and add the results of both dice together. A roll of "4D6" would be rolling four D6 and adding the results of the dice together.

TEN-SIDED DICE (D10)

Ten-sided dice are the most commonly used dice in the game. Note that most ten-sided dice are numbered from 0 to 9; on these dice the zero actually represents ten.

Every Action Check is resolved using a roll of two ten-sided dice (2D10) and adding the results on the dice together. The higher the total on the dice, the better.

Open-Ended Results

Some actions might seem so difficult that they are impossible. However, *MechWarrior* characters can't let that slow them down. Sometimes pure fate can result in spectacular effects. Such a lucky break is represented by the potential of rolling very high results on the Action Check dice. This is called *open-ended* rolling, since there is no maximum result.

An open-ended result occurs when either of the D10s rolled for an Action Check come up as a 10. In this case, the die that scored a 10 (both dice if they both scored 10s) are rolled again, and the result is added to the total. If the roll on this die is also a 10, another die can be rolled and added to the total, and so on. There is no limit to the number of times additional D10s can be added, so long as the player keeps rolling consecutive 10s.

Only player characters and major NPCs are capable of the astounding feats that come with open-ended results. As such, minor NPCs such as thugs and goons cannot make use of the open-ended results rule. The gamemaster determines which NPCs are minor and which are major (see *Non-Player Characters*, p. 205).

> *Jim is making an attack Action Check for his character. He rolls 2D10, and they both come up 10 for a total of 20. He is entitled to roll both dice again and add them to his current total. He rolls again, and the dice come up 3 and 10. Now his total stands at 33, and he can pick up the die that scored a 10 and roll it again. This time it comes up a 7, which ends his rolling streak with a total result of 40.*

SIX-SIDED DICE (D6)

Six-sided dice are mainly used for generating damage from attacks and are also used for certain random tables. Note that rolls involving D6 are not normally subject to the open-ended results rule.

However, rolling damage for attacks is open-ended; each die that scores a 6 is rolled again and added to the total. Keep

rerolling each die that scores a 6 until the die scores something other than a 6.

All characters, including minor NPCs, roll open-ended damage dice; weapons make no distinction between what kind of character is using them!

Moving on to damage, Jim has a weapon that inflicts 4D6 damage. He rolls the dice, and they come up 2, 4, 6 and 6, for a total of 18. He can roll the two 6s again and does so, scoring a 1 and a 6. This brings his total to 25, and there is another 6 he can roll again. This time it comes up a 1, making his final total 26.

TASK RESOLUTION

Sometimes the outcome of a character's actions will be rather automatic. For example, there is no question that your character would be capable of walking down the street, picking up a C-bill note off the ground and putting it in his pocket. Such simple and trivial tasks require no rules to govern them and can be assumed to be automatically successful.

When a character tries to do something and the gamemaster feels that the result of the action is both uncertain and important to the game, then the rules intervene to determine whether the action is successful or not. The gamemaster calls for an Action Check and uses the following procedure.

RESOLVING ACTION CHECKS

When an Action Check is called for, the gamemaster first establishes the difficulty of the task in the form of a *base target number.* Depending on the situation, certain *modifiers* may also apply, which may increase or decrease the target number. The task is then resolved by making a 2D10 Action Check roll; if a Skill Check is being made, the character's appropriate skill bonus is added to the dice result. If the total result is equal to or greater than the target number, the task succeeds. If not, it fails. As for the specific results of success and failure, see *Quality of Success*, p. 17.

Fumbles

Even the best characters fail every now and then. To represent this, any result of 2 on the Action Check dice (both dice come up 1s) automatically fails, regardless of the target number or any modifiers. This failure is called a *fumble*, and at the gamemaster's option can have entertaining negative effects, especially if the character was attempting something foolhardy or trivial. However, it is not advisable to penalize a player *too* much for simple bad luck; he already failed at the Action Check, after all!

BASE TARGET NUMBER

The higher the base target number (TN) assigned to a task, the more difficult it will be. Although sometimes an experienced gamemaster can simply assign a TN and be done with it, in most circumstances a more detailed and precise system is called for. The following rules describe the process of determining appropriate TNs for any task. Additional rules for combat-related actions can be found in the *Combat* section beginning on p. 109.

The base target number for all non-combat tasks is 10. This assumes that the task at hand is of typical difficulty for the related skill, and that the conditions surrounding the task are reasonably favorable. If this is not the case, then modifiers are applied to the target number (see *Modifiers*, p. 16).

Attributes as Target Numbers

In some situations, the chances of an action's success or failure rests mainly on the abilities of another character. The most common example of this is in an attack, where the target's agility is the main factor in determining a hit or a miss.

In these cases, the two most relevant Attributes of the target character are added together to produce a base TN, which is then modified as usual. It is important to note that the difficulty modifiers would not be applied to such a TN, since difficulty is already factored in by the Attributes themselves. Instead, only apply modifiers for conditions and actions (see *Modifiers*, p. 16).

For example, a ranged attack against a moving character would use the target's INT + RFL as the base target number. The target's Intelligence represents (in part) perceptiveness, allowing an Intelligent character to notice an attack and its source quickly and accurately. Good Reflexes then provide the character the means to move his body out of the way of the shot.

It is always up to the gamemaster to decide which Attributes are used to generate target numbers in cases where the rules do not specify them.

Always use two different Attributes when generating base target numbers from Attributes. In some cases, the first Attribute will be obvious, while the second might take more thought. For example, an arm-wrestling contest clearly involves the Strength of your opponent. Your first impulse might be to simply apply Strength twice, but instead you should use Body or Willpower as the second Attribute. Since it represents (among other things) a character's endurance, the most likely candidate would be Body.

Attribute Checks

Some tasks use the character's Attributes rather than skills but are not resolved using another character's Attributes as a target. For example, lifting a heavy weight simply requires STR, or perhaps STR and BOD if the object is especially large. Forcing oneself to overcome a fear requires a WIL Check.

Such actions are called Attribute Checks and will be referred to in the rules as such. For example, when you are called upon to make a WIL Check, it means your character must make an Attribute Check based on his WIL Attribute. Likewise, an Attribute Check using BOD and STR would be called a BOD/STR Check.

The base TN for an Attribute Check depends on whether a single Attribute is used or two are used:

If a single Attribute is used in the Check, the base TN is 15 minus the Attribute in question. If a character has a WIL of 6, then the base TN of a WIL Check for him would be 9 (15 – 6 = 9).

If two Attributes are used in the Check, the base TN is 20 minus both Attributes. A character with a BOD of 4 and a STR of 6 would have a base TN of 10 for a BOD/STR Check (20 – 4 – 6 = 10).

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The base TN can be adjusted depending on the difficulty of the particular task at hand and the conditions surrounding the action. In the example of an attack test, lighting, weather and terrain factors can make the attack more difficult. If the attacker takes careful aim, the attack is made easier. In any Action Check, the gamemaster may choose to apply modifiers to the base TN to reflect the current conditions.

Each modifier will raise or lower the target number depending on the condition, as shown on the Target Number Modifiers Table (p. 17). Circumstances that make the action easier lower the TN, so they are listed as negative numbers. When a modifier makes the action more difficult, it is a positive number that will raise the TN.

Combat Modifiers: Different modifier tables are used specifically for ranged combat (p. 112) and melee combat (p. 113). However, they are both based on this table.

Difficulty Modifiers

As the name states, the *difficulty modifiers* are used when the task at hand is deemed more or less difficult than usual. This is normally due to the complexity of the task. Remember that there are other modifiers for conditions and special actions taken by the character or the target. The difficulty modifiers are used when the "raw" difficulty of the task is harder or easier than normal.

For example, a character is trying to bypass the security codes on a locked vault door. The vault contains valuable military prototypes, so the gamemaster determines that the task is *Very Difficult* as compared with the "usual" security bypass, and assigns a +4 Difficulty Modifier.

The main reason difficulty modifiers are distinct from other types is because they are not used when the target number is derived from Attributes. In those cases, the difficulty is already based on the target's Attributes, and you move on to the conditional and action modifiers. Difficulty modifiers are applied as usual to Attribute Checks, however.

For example, two characters decide to settle their differences in an arm-wrestling contest. The base target number for each character is equal to the opponent's STR + BOD. No difficulty modifiers apply to the TN.

Conditional Modifiers

Ask anyone who has tried to drive a car in the snow, and they can tell you that the conditions surrounding an action can have a drastic impact on its difficulty. The conditional modifiers are used to represent the effects the conditions surrounding the action have on the TN.

Action Modifiers

Characters can take certain special actions that affect the target numbers of their actions, such as taking extra time to be careful and thorough. In addition, other characters can lend a hand to help with the action. These actions are represented by the aptly named action modifiers.

SKILLS

A character's skills can have a profound effect on the success or failure of an Action Check.

Before rolling the dice for an Action Check, the player must determine if his character has an applicable skill for the task at hand. If not, the *Untrained Skill Use* rule applies (see below).

If the character has a relevant skill, then 2D10 are rolled for the Action Check, and the character's skill bonus is added to the total.

Do *not* use the skill bonus to modify the target number; add the skill bonus to the total from the 2D10 open-ended roll.

Note also that a result of 2 on the dice is a fumble and an automatic failure (see p. 15), even if the acting character has a skill bonus to add.

If more than one skill seems to apply to the task, the gamemaster must decide which is the most appropriate. If they all seem equally applicable, use the one with the best skill bonus.

Untrained Skill Use

If a character has no relevant skill to use when attempting an Action Check, the character must roll more than two dice and use the worst two to determine the result. For standard skills, roll 3D10 and use the lowest two dice for the result. In the case of *difficult skills* (shown in boldface on the *Skill List*, p. 63), roll 4D10 and use the lowest two dice for the result.

If both of the lowest dice come up as 10s, the player can reroll and add the results to the total as an open-ended success. These extra rolls are not considered when determining which dice came up the lowest; only the original three dice (or four in the case of difficult skills) are considered.

Characters with exceptionally good (or bad) Attributes might have an easier (or harder) time when attempting tasks they are not trained for. This represents the concept that, all other factors being equal, a smart person would have a better chance of performing an INT-based task than a dumb person if both of them were completely untrained.

To represent the edge that Attributes give characters in untrained skill use, use the untrained TN modifiers shown on the Target Number Modifiers Table. Add together the modifiers for both of the Link Attributes for the skill in question. Apply this total to the TN for the Action Check.

For example, a character is attempting to break the security code on an electronic door lock. This requires the Security Systems Skill, which she does not have. Looking at the *Skill List*

TARGET NUMBER MODIFIERS TABLE

Action Check Type	Base TN
Skill Check, Base Difficulty	10
Skill Check vs. Target's Attributes*	Attribute + Attribute
Attribute Check, Single	15 – Attribute
Attribute Check, Double	20 – Attributes

Difficulty Modifiers*	TN Modifier
Very Easy	–4
Easy	–2
Average	+0
Difficult	+2
Very Difficult	+4
Extremely Difficult	+8

Conditional Modifiers	TN Modifier
Perception	
Target at Point Blank Range	–2
Target at Short Range	+0
Target at Medium Range	+2
Target at Long Range	+4
Target at Extreme Range	+8
Poor Visibility (rain, light snowfall)	+1
Bad Visibility (twilight, heavy snowfall, light fog)	+3
Terrible Visibility (darkness, heavy fog)	+5
Light Cover (sparse trees or bushes, target 1/4 covered)	+2
Moderate Cover (typical woods, target 1/2 covered)	+4
Heavy Cover (dense woods, target 3/4 covered)	+6
Miscellaneous Conditions	
Lack of Proper Equipment	+1 to +3
Excellent Equipment on hand	–1 to –3
Acting Character is Wounded	
Each Minor Wound	+1
Each Serious Wound	+2
Each Critical Wound	+3
Character's Fatigue exceeds WIL	+(excess Fatigue)
Good Conditions (plenty of handholds for climbing)	–1
Poor Conditions (slippery rocks for climbing)	+1
Bad Conditions (icy road for driving)	+2

Action Modifiers	TN Modifier
Acting Character Walking	+1
Acting Character Running	+3
Skilled Character helping (per character)	–1 each (max –3)
Extra Time (per doubling of base time)	–1 each (max –3)
Rush Job (per halving of base time)	+2 each (max +6)

Untrained Skill Use	TN Modifier
Standard skill: roll 3D10, use worst 2	
Difficult skill: roll 4D10, use worst 2	
Apply modifiers for both Link Attributes:	
1	+2
2–3	+1
4–6	+0
7–9	–1
10	–2

* Difficulty modifiers do not apply if the TN is derived from the target's Attributes.

(p. 58), the Link Attributes for Security Systems Skill are DEX and INT. The character has a 7 DEX and a 5 INT; the modifiers for these Attributes are –1 and +0, respectively. This means the character will apply a –1 modifier to the TN for related Attributes, in addition to the usual modifiers.

QUALITY OF SUCCESS

After succeeding (or failing) at a task, it is sometimes desirable to determine exactly how well you did (or how badly you failed). A common example is combat, where you want to know not only whether you hit or missed, but also how much damage you inflicted on the target.

To determine the quality of success or failure, simply determine the Margin of Success (MoS) or Margin of Failure (MoF). This is done by comparing the number rolled on the dice (including skill bonus) to the modified TN. For example, if the TN was 13 and you rolled a 15, the MoS would be 2 because you exceeded what you needed to roll by 2. Likewise, if you rolled an 11, your MoF would be 2.

You can use the Margin of Success and Failure to determine the quality of the result of the Action Check. The Quality of Success/Failure Table (p. 18) provides descriptive values to the various MoSs (listed as positive numbers) and MoFs (listed as negative numbers).

Effects of Quality of Success

In many cases, simply succeeding at any level is all that is required. However, in some cases the quality of success can determine important information about the action. In the case of combat, for example, the type of weapon used is combined with the Margin of Success to determine damage (see *Combat*, p. 114). When interrogating a prisoner, a better MoS will yield more information, and so on.

The specific effects of the MoS for skill use can be found in the description of many skills (see *Skills*, p. 95).

OPPOSED ACTION CHECKS

In some cases an Action Check represents a head-to-head contest between two characters, such as a game of chess or a wrestling match. Success in such a case is based on the result of the opposing character's Action Check. These kind of rolls are called *Opposed Action Checks* because they are directly opposed by another character.

To determine success in this case, both characters make Action Checks with the usual modifiers and so forth. Then compare their Margins of

Success. The character with the better MoS is considered the winner of the contest.

EDGE

Edge is a special Attribute because it represents a character's luck. As such, it can be used to affect the game in ways that other Attributes cannot.

Like other Attributes, Edge is used when the gamemaster determines that an action involves luck, in much the same way as other Attributes involve strength or speed. However, a more overt use of Edge can be called upon when the chips are down and it is literally do or die.

PUSHING YOUR LUCK

The die result of *any* Action Check that directly affects the character, be it something he is doing or something being done to him, can be altered by spending Edge to represent a lucky break. This is called pushing your luck because it can really help your character. The price is that pushing your luck temporarily reduces your Edge Attribute.

Minor NPC's (see p. 206) cannot push their luck.

Before the Dice Roll

Each point of Edge spent before the dice are rolled for an action can increase or decrease the result by two. For example, if a character spent 2 Edge on one of his own actions to improve his chances of success, the result would be increased by +4. On the other hand, if a character spent 1 Edge point to try to stop an enemy from hitting him, the enemy's result would be reduced by 2.

This use is a gamble because the action might have succeeded (or failed) without the Edge. However, it is a more "economical" use of Edge, especially in cases when success is assured and the character simply wants to enhance the quality of the result.

QUALITY OF SUCCESS/FAILURE TABLE

Margin	Result
+9 or better	Spectacular!
+6 to +8	Extraordinary
+3 to +5	Good
+1 to +2	Adequate
0	Barely made it!
–1 to –2	Almost...
–3 to –5	Bad
–6 to –8	Terrible
–9 or worse	Abysmal!

After the Dice Roll

A character can wait and see what the dice say before spending Edge. However, each point spent after the dice roll only increases or decreases the result by one.

Alternatively, the character can spend one Edge point to completely reroll the die result. While this might seem like a better option, the second result stands, even if it is worse than the first, and Edge cannot be spent on the second die roll at all. However, this use of Edge does give you a useful second chance if your roll was way off the mark.

The use of Edge to affect a die roll already made must be announced and resolved immediately after the die roll is made. Once any other die rolls have been made, Edge can no longer be used.

RECOVERING YOUR EDGE

When a character pushes his luck, the Edge spent is temporarily deducted from his Edge Attribute. This affects him as any reduced Attribute would until the spent Edge is recovered.

The reduction is not permanent, so you need not recover the lost Edge through actual character advancement. The character's maximum Edge Attribute represents the character's "average helping" of good fortune. His current Edge represents a reduction in fortune due to pushing his luck. This means that recovering the normal level of Edge requires a sort of "balancing of the scales" fortune-wise. This can be accomplished in three ways, as described below.

The Golden Rule

As they say, what goes around comes around. The best way to recover from that extra dose of luck you got is to "give" luck to other people in the form of good deeds.

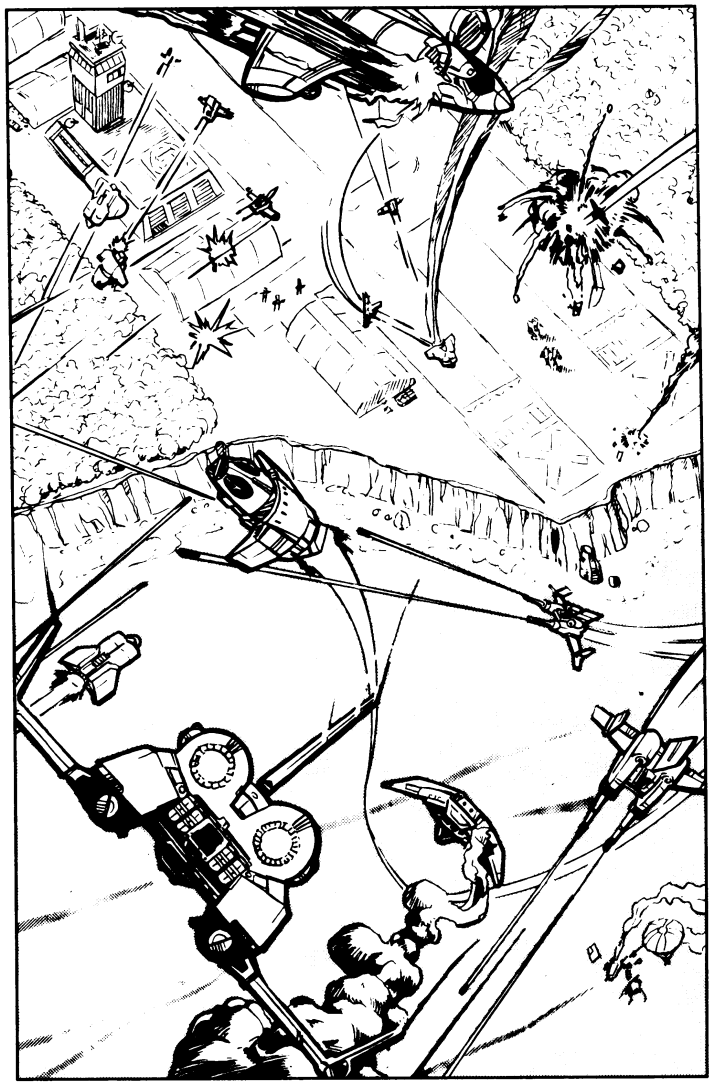
As such, your Edge will bounce back whenever you do something selfless or generous. Note that these acts need not be spectacular (saving a planet from destruction) but on the other hand cannot be trivial (helping an aged ComStar Precentor cross the street). Ultimately, it is up to the gamemaster to decide what deeds are worthy of Edge recovery and how many points are recovered per deed.

The scale of deeds should also be balanced against the character and his station and means. For example, donating a large sum of money to charity might qualify, but what constitutes a "large sum" varies from one character to another.

Karmic Backlash

When something horrible happens to your character, there is an up side: you will regain lost Edge points. Unlike the Golden Rule method, regaining Edge in this manner is never intentional. It represents the balance that occurs when the cosmic dice are weighted against the character; each stroke of bad luck evens out the books even as it sets the character back.

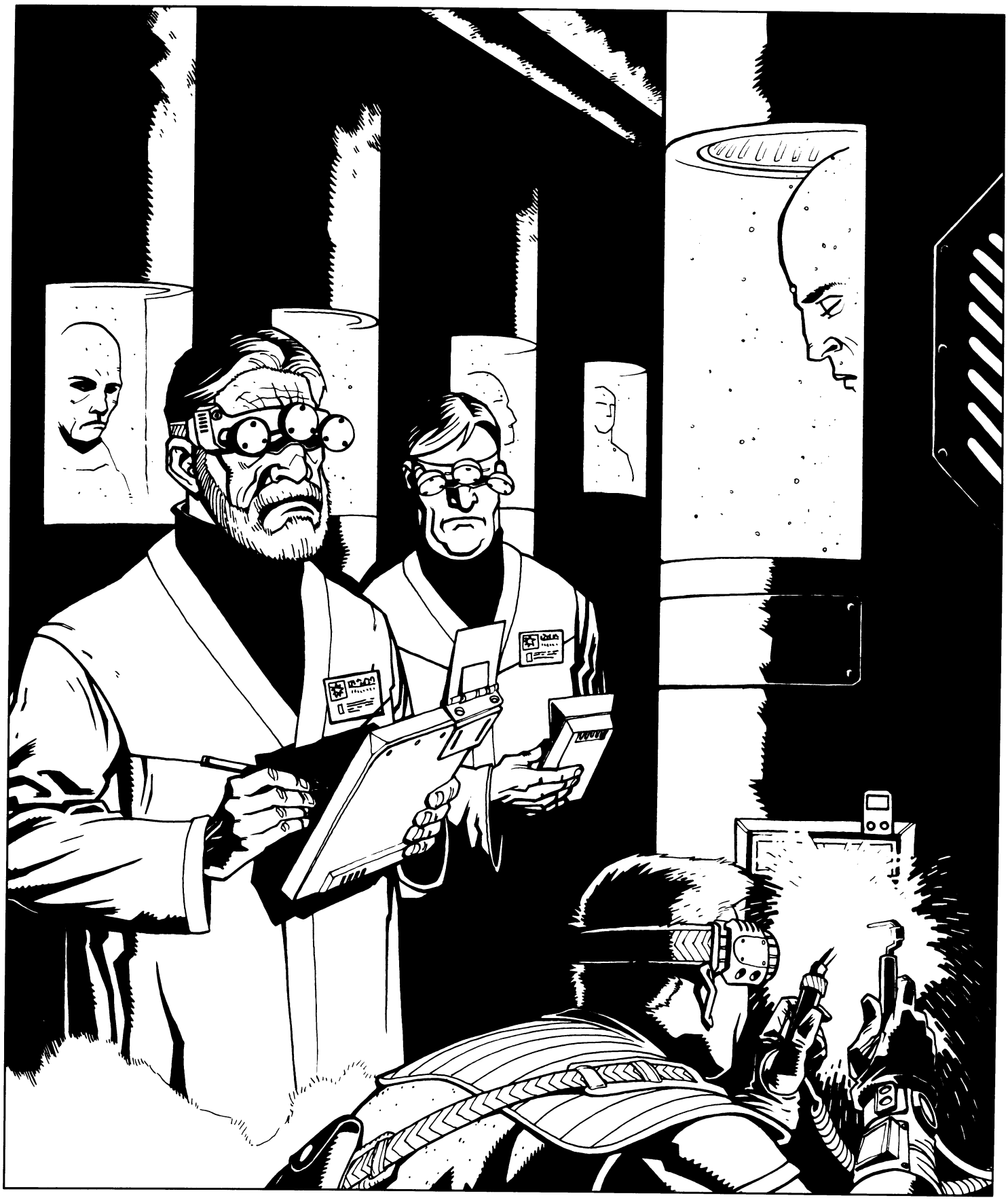
The gamemaster must determine when something is horrible or unlucky enough to warrant Edge recovery. A common example is when the die roll for an important action results in an abysmal failure (especially a fumble), causing the character embarrassment or even injury. Although the failure will hurt the character in the short term, he will at least regain some lost Edge!



Live and Learn

The most "mechanical" way to recover Edge, but the only method open to characters who are both amoral and lucky, is to simply spend accumulated Experience Points (XP). This represents a character learning from his mistakes and applying that knowledge to general competence rather than a specific skill. This competence and preparedness come across to the untrained eye as luck, and in the game it is represented by Edge.

Rules for gaining and spending XP can be found in *Character Advancement*, starting on p. 209.



CHARACTER CREATION

In *MechWarrior,* every player portrays a character in the game. The character is the player's window into the *BattleTech* universe. This section contains rules and pointers for creating characters with unique skills, histories, personalities and styles.

The quickest and easiest way to begin playing *MechWarrior, Third Edition (MW3)* is to turn to the *Sample Characters* at the end of this section, starting on p. 60. These sample characters are fully fleshed-out and ready to play. Just choose one, come up with a name for him or her, and you can begin. Of course, sooner or later you will want to create your own character from the ground up. To do that, follow the steps described below and you will have a character ready to jump into action!

This section begins with an *Overview* of the character creation process. Next, the section describes the *Life Path* and how to use it. Following are descriptions of the various elements that make up a character: Attributes, traits, skills and affiliations. The final subsection, *Finishing Touches,* offers rules and tips for completing your character.

OVERVIEW

The process of creating a character includes the following steps: finding a concept, choosing an affiliation, choosing a Life Path and adding the finishing touches.

FIND A CONCEPT

For many players, the first step in creating a character is coming up with a character concept: an idea of what kind of character you want to play. This concept can be as general as "a MechWarrior" or something much more specific, such as: "A street kid who beat the odds to become a doctor. Drafted into the FedCom military, he used his skills on the Clan front until a stray bullet cost him his hand and his commission. Bitter and haunted by images of war, he sells what remains of his skills to the highest bidder in the Chaos March." The sample characters (p. 60) will give you an idea of the character types that can be found in the *BattleTech* universe.

Some players prefer not to start with a concept. This is perfectly workable, as the *MW3* character creation system is designed to let the player draw ideas from the creation process. Players without a concept should proceed directly to the next step, choosing an affiliation.

Team Play

In order to make the game more fun for everyone, all the players in a campaign should cooperate to create characters that work well together as a team. Because the *MW3* character creation system can sometimes take unexpected turns, players are encouraged to create their characters together and discuss their options as they go through the process. Each player can then make choices to ensure that his or her character will be an important and unique asset to the team.

CHOOSE AN AFFILIATION

Every character has to come from somewhere, symbolized in *MW3* by affiliations. Each affiliation represents the culture and style of a particular region or group in the *BattleTech* universe. Players choose their characters' affiliation based on where the character did the most learning and growing—where he spent his "formative years." For example, if a character was born in the Draconis Combine but moved to the Free Worlds League at the age of two and has lived there ever since, Free Worlds League would be the most appropriate affiliation.

Take a look at the affiliation descriptions starting on p. 26 and the accompanying color plates. Choose the one that best fits your character concept, or simply one that you like. The rules for your chosen affiliation (pp. 26–32) will restrict some of your choices later in character creation but will also provide unique opportunities.

CHOOSE A LIFE PATH

Most of the character creation process takes place in the Life Path, a series of choices beginning on p. 22. These choices will determine your character's story before play begins. What kind of upbringing did you have? Where did you go to school? Were you in the military, and why? What lucky breaks or tragedies did you have along the way? The Life Path determines a character's access to Attributes, skills, traits and more, based on your choices and occasional dice rolls.

This section describes the Life Path before the affiliations because players must understand how the Life Path works in order to make an informed affiliation choice. In practice, you should always choose an affiliation before beginning the Life Path.

ASSIGN ATTRIBUTES, TRAITS AND SKILLS

After completing the Life Path, you can give your character Attributes and traits and determine your character's final skills and skill bonuses. Detailed information and rules for completing this step begin on p. 59.

FINISHING TOUCHES

The final step in creating a character is to round out the character's description, personality, history and any other details: determining a vehicle assignment, purchasing personal equipment (p. 131), finalizing the character's military rank (if any) and so on. Once you've worked out these details, your character is ready to play!

Feel free to leave some of these details vague for the first game or two. Some players prefer to let their characters develop "organically" in game play. For example, a player might not have a specific personality in mind for his character before play starts, but a clash with a Civilian Guidance Corps officer in the first game session might lead him to decide that his character is rebellious and brash.

LIFE PATH

The Life Path is where your character takes shape. By making choices and following the instructions for each choice, you lead your character through childhood, schooling and early career. Going through the Life Path not only gives you a finished character but also puts you well on your way toward completing your character's personal history.

The Life Path is divided into four stages that represent different parts of your character's life: Early Childhood (Stage 1), Late Childhood (Stage 2), Higher Education (Stage 3) and Real Life (Stage 4). Each stage contains several different paths that represent specific kinds of upbringing, education and so on. For example, in the Higher Education Stage, you can choose the University Path or opt for a Military Academy. Specific Life Paths begin on p. 33.

In general, you simply choose a path for your character at each stage and follow the instructions for that path; exceptions are noted in the text. The various paths provide your growing character with skills, traits and other characteristics based on the kind of life he or she is leading at a given stage.

FOLLOWING THE PATHS

Each time your character follows a path, he or she may receive skills and traits (p. 23), or the path may affect the character's Attributes (below). Each path also takes up a certain amount of time, which affects a character's age (p. 59). Additionally, events (p. 24) can occur that may alter the course of your character's life.

Once you have resolved the effects of one path on your character, you have several options for the path you may follow next (you may only take one of these options). These options appear under the *Next Path* header in each path's description. The life stage in which the character follows the path appears after each path name in parentheses.

The *Next Path* listing does not take into account path restrictions that your character must follow. Path restrictions may result from certain events or your character's affiliations (see p. 26). This is especially true of Clan characters, who follow a special set of Life Path rules; Clan path restrictions appear under the *Clan Characters* heading in each stage.

Some paths have entry requirements, called *prerequisites*. In most cases, the prerequisite is a certain affiliation, though some paths require the character to have obtained a certain trait or not to have a certain trait in order to enter. Prerequisites for each path are shown in *italics* directly below the path title.

Subpaths

Some paths include various *subpaths* that represent an extension or specialized focus of the path in question. In many ways, subpaths function as variants on the main path. Some subpaths are mandatory; characters must take them after following the main path (as indicated under *Next Path*). Other subpaths are optional and may be taken if the player desires. Like paths, subpaths often have prerequisites.

Any subpath described as "part of this pass" under *Next Path* may be taken immediately after that path or subpath, without moving on to the next stage. Alternatively, if a character returns to a path at a later point, he or she may take the subpath on this subsequent pass (see *Repeating Paths*, p. 25).

Path Limits

Player characters should experience the highlights of their careers during game play, not while going through the Life Path. Therefore, your character can follow a limited number of paths before beginning play. Every character goes through one Early Childhood and one Late Childhood path. After that, a character can take up to six additional paths, from any combination of the Higher Education and Real Life stages (as appropriate to his or her affiliation and the prerequisites of each path).

Mandatory subpaths such as military Advanced Individual Training (AIT) and University Majors are not considered separate paths for purposes of this rule. However, elective subpaths such as military Special Training and University Schools are considered separate. If a path's status is unclear, the gamemaster decides whether a specific subpath counts as mandatory or elective, based on the path and character in question.

A character can exceed the given limit with the gamemaster's permission, but the gamemaster should keep in mind that a longer career will result in a more skilled (though older) character. Before requesting this option, players should be advised that the Life Path can become increasingly dangerous for those who loiter (see *Repeating Paths*, p. 25). Rather than starting play as a seasoned veteran, players might prefer to skip those extra tours of duty for the sake of their characters' well-being. There's plenty of time to become seasoned during game play!

ATTRIBUTES AND THE LIFE PATH

A character's life can have a serious impact on his physical, mental and emotional development. The Life Path reflects this through the modification of a character's Attribute *minimums* and *thresholds*. These affect the purchasing and assigning of Attributes—a set of numbers that represent a character's basic physical and mental abilities, general fortunes and social standing. (For more detailed information on Attributes and how to use them, see p. 54.) Players can keep track of their Attribute minimums and thresholds on the *Character Creation Worksheet* in the back of the book (p. 218).

Attribute Minimums

Some paths require a character to have an Attribute at a certain level in order to enter: for example, the Nobility Path (in the Early Childhood stage). Because a character must be of noble birth in order to take this path, the path requires a minimum Social Standing Attribute of 5. When assigning specific Attributes later in character creation, a player whose character has taken this path must assign a minimum value of 5 to his character's Social Standing Attribute to reflect the character's noble birth.

All Attributes start with a minimum value of 2, except for Social Standing, which has a minimum of 1. This minimum can be raised by the character's affiliation and Life Path. Use the highest minimum listed for the Attribute; if a subsequent path assigns a lower minimum than one you already have, disregard it. An exception to this rule is the Social Standing minimum for Clan characters; see p. 32.

Attribute minimums can never be lower than 1 or higher than 8. Also, Attribute minimums only apply during character creation. After play starts, these minimums are irrelevant.

Attribute Thresholds

The life your character leads will influence certain Attributes. Though you can choose specific Attribute values, their cost may be affected by Attribute thresholds listed in the Life Path. A higher threshold makes it easier to have that Attribute at a higher value, while a lower threshold makes it harder to have a high Attribute value. All Attributes start with a threshold of 6 except for Edge, which begins at a threshold of 8.

The Life Path and events tell you when to increase or decrease an Attribute threshold by listing the Attribute's abbreviation and a positive or negative modifier. For example, if your character's first path lists STR +1 and BOD –1, this tells you to increase your character's Strength threshold by 1 point (to 7) and reduce the Body threshold by 1 (to 5). These modifiers do not apply directly to Attribute values; instead, they increase or reduce the number of points it may cost you to give your character a certain Attribute value (see *Assigning Attributes, Traits and Skills*, p. 54).

An Attribute threshold cannot drop below 2 or increase higher than 10. Disregard modifiers that exceed these limits.

ACQUIRING TRAITS

Traits represent a character's special abilities or drawbacks that are beyond the scope of Attributes and skills, such as Ambidexterity or Poor Hearing. A character need not have traits to be interesting or powerful; traits are simply intended to add spice to a character beyond what his or her skills and Attributes define.

Characters gain most traits through the Life Path, though players can add or remove some along with assigning their characters specific Attributes and skills. A complete list of traits and what they do appears on p. 78.

Some Life Paths endow a character with positive or negative traits, based on the circumstances of the path and any events that transpire. If a character already has the trait in question, the player should generally disregard it. If the trait has variable levels (see below), or if a character can have it more than once (such as Contact or Enemy), the player may choose to take the trait at a higher level or a second trait of the same type, as appropriate to the character's story.

Traits awarded to a character during the Life Path cost nothing. Players can purchase additional traits when assigning Attributes, traits and skills.

Variable Level Traits

Many traits have several levels. For example, a character can have from one to three levels of the Well-Connected Trait (see p. 89). Levels are variations in a trait's listed cost or value. For example, the three levels of Well-Connected cost 2, 4 and 6 points respectively.

When a variable trait is awarded in the Life Path, the character receives it at the lowest level listed, unless the path states otherwise. If the character gets a trait he or she already has, increase its level by one. For example, a character who already has Well-Connected at a cost of 2 would get it again at a cost of 4, the next level up.

Multiple levels are given in parentheses: for example, Wealth (2). In this case, the character's initial level of Wealth would be 2, or increased by 2 if he already has the trait. Any additional increases beyond the highest level listed do not count, unless the trait can be obtained twice. In this case, the character receives it a second time, starting at the lowest level.

Rank

This special trait represents a character's military rank and is listed in the Life Path as a Promotion or Demotion. A Promotion increases the character's rank, while a Demotion decreases it. A character's rank cannot rise above 10 or drop below 1.

A character's Rank Trait starts off as enlisted (as opposed to officer; see the Rank Trait description, p. 85). If the character earns a commission (gains the Commission Trait), his or her rank drops to 1 (unless stated otherwise) but switches the character to the lowest officer rank.

Opposing Traits

Some traits are diametrically opposed to one another. For example, a certain Life Path may grant a poverty-stricken character the Wealth Trait. Any time a character receives a trait mutually exclusive of a trait he or she already has, the traits cancel each other out. A character with the Poverty Trait who receives the Wealth Trait does not become wealthy, but instead loses the Poverty Trait. If the character gets Wealth again later in the Life Path, he then receives the Wealth Trait.

If a character gets an opposing trait with variable levels, reduce the level of the opposing trait by one rather than eliminating it entirely. For example, if a character has Wealth (2) and the Life Path instructs him to take on Poverty, his Wealth is reduced to 1.

LEARNING SKILLS

Throughout his or her Life Path, your character will learn a wide variety of skills, which represent specific areas of knowledge and/or ability. The types of skills and the character's level of proficiency depend on the choices you make and the random events life throws in your character's way. A complete list of skills and what they do appears in the *Skills* chapter, beginning on p. 95.

All characters start with Language and Perception Skills, as described in Stage 1 of the Life Path (p. 33). The choices a play-

er makes for his character in the Life Path, as well as certain Life Path events, will determine the balance of a character's skills. After completing the Life Path, the player can add a few extra skills to round out his or her character.

Where a path grants a skill, the numbers listed after it represent the Skill Points the character earns toward advancement of that skill. A negative number decreases the number of Skill Points earned for that skill, to a minimum of 1 Skill Point once that skill is awarded. If a path awards points toward "any skill," the player can add those points to any skill the character already has, but not to a new skill. Upon finishing the Life Path, the player adds up the total points earned for each skill to find its skill bonus, using the Skill Points Table (p. 57).

The number of Skill Points earned in the Life Path should not be confused with Skill Bonuses granted for skill advancement (see the *Character Creation Worksheet,* p. 218).

SKILL BONUSES

A skill bonus represents a character's degree of ability in a particular skill. This number is applied to the die roll result for any Action Check involving that skill.

Beginners in a skill have a +0 Skill Bonus. Low as that is, they are still better at the skill than characters who do not have it at all (see *Untrained Skill Use,* p. 16). As a character's ability increases, so does his or her skill bonus. Characters can have skill bonuses as high as +10, though few starting characters display even half this level of ability.

SUBSKILLS

Some skills actually represent groups of related subskills. For example, a character cannot simply have the Technician Skill but must possess a particular aspect of it: Technician/Electronics, Technician/Lasers and so on.

Certain skills have specific lists of subskills, while others have a variety depending on the desires of the players and gamemaster. For example, the Arts Skill covers all kinds of artistic expression, from watercolor painting to clay sculpture to zero-G dancing. All the possibilities do not appear on the Skill List (p. 58) because there are simply too many. Instead, the player (or the Life Path) defines exactly what Arts Subskill(s) a character has. Each skill that consists of subskills is defined in the individual skill description (beginning on p. 95) and marked with an asterisk (*) on the Skill List.

For purposes of game play, every subskill should be treated as a distinct skill. For example, if your character has Technician/Electronics and Technician/Lasers, he or she uses and advances each one separately.

In the Life Path, some subskills are listed as *affiliation.* These skills are related to the character's chosen affiliation (see p. 26). For example, a character from the Capellan Confederation who gains the Academic/Affiliation History Skill actually has the Academic/Capellan Confederation History Skill. If a character receives Language/Affiliation, that skill may represent any primary or secondary language used by that character's affiliation.

For subskills listed as *Any,* the player may choose any subskill, as appropriate to his character's affiliation and background. For example, a character granted an Interest/Any Skill might choose to take Interest/Hiking or perhaps Interest/Science Fiction. You can add these Skill Points to an Any Subskill of the same type, whether it is one your character has already earned or an entirely new subskill. For example, if a player who chose Interest/Hiking receives another Interest/Any Skill, he can add those Skill Points to the Hiking Skill or use them for a new Interest Skill.

Occupational Fields

Most professions entail certain skills. *MW3* arranges these sets of skills in *occupational fields.* Each field consists of several skills related to a particular occupation. The most common fields for *MechWarrior* characters are shown starting on p. 52.

Fields are used in the Life Path to simplify the assignment of skills. For example, rather than listing every Basic Training Skill every time a character earns one, the path simply awards the Basic Training Field. When a field is awarded through the Life Path, the character receives 3 Skill Points toward every skill in that field. The character gets these points every time the field is awarded, even if the character repeats a path.

EVENTS

Everybody grows up. Many kids in the thirty-first century grow up on the streets. But how many street kids were taken in by a group of mercenaries and taught how to drive a tank?

These sorts of unusual *events* make each character's story unique and are the source of unusual skills and traits that might not result from the standard Life Path. Each path's listing includes a table of special events keyed to the appropriate circumstances, which reinforce the character's background at each step of his life.

Unlike the other parts of character creation, events are determined randomly by rolling 2D6 (this roll is not open-ended). Roll once on the event table for each path or subpath your character takes. If taking a subpath, use the event table for the main path under which the subpath is given. If your character takes a single path multiple times, follow the special rules for repeating paths (see *Repeating Paths,* p. 25).

Rolling Boxcars

On an event roll result of 12 (double sixes), you can choose any event on the table (if something looks good for your character) or roll twice for two random events (if you prefer lots of random chance). If you choose to roll twice and roll another 12, ignore that result and roll again until you get a different result.

Event Options

Generating random events adds an element of uncertainty to the character creation process. It can be fun to have the unexpected occur in your character's life, and even unpleasant or unlucky events are guaranteed to add interesting flavor. However, if the players and gamemaster agree, you have a few

options for minimizing or eliminating the randomness of events.

The most extreme option is to disregard events during character creation. This does not mean rolling for events and ignoring only the negative ones, however; players should either use the events as described for their characters or forgo them completely.

Alternatively, enterprising players can tailor existing events to suit their own tastes. If the player has a definite story in mind for his character, he can trade an event that doesn't fit for another event created by the player that affects the character in a similar way. This option requires some extra effort, but it can be very rewarding.

Linda's new character, Delilah Morgan, is going to be a bookish technician with knacks for computers and for getting into trouble. Linda has a pretty good idea of what she wants her character to be like. Starting on the Farm Path (p. 34) in Stage 1, Linda rolls an 8 on the event table: "Already learning how to fix the tractor." This gives Delilah Natural Aptitude with Technician/ICE Skill, which makes perfect sense, so she keeps it. Moving on to High School (p. 38), she rolls a 7: "Local Sports Hero." This doesn't really fit her vision of the character at all, but the gamemaster offers her the chance to come up with her own variation on the event instead. She decides on: "Win local writing contest: Computers +1, Art/Creative Writing +2." This event has a similar combination of one fairly useful skill at +1 and one minor skill at +2, and fits the stage and the character, so the gamemaster allows it.

USING EDGE IN THE LIFE PATH

Because every player character is a unique individual, players will most likely want to sidestep the standard rules at some point during the Life Path. Use the following special Edge rules when you want your character to go somewhere that the Life Path technically doesn't allow, or when the dice conspire against you.

Edge and Path Restrictions

Sometimes a character can get into a path through sheer luck, even if he lacks the appropriate prerequisites. To do this, however, the character must "use up" some luck. You may ignore all the prerequisites for any path, or enter a path not listed in your *Next Path* options, by following the procedure outlined below.

First, and most important, come up with a story about how your character avoided the prerequisites. Tell the gamemaster and write it into your character's history. For example, if your character grew up on the street, but you want her to proceed directly to military school, you will need to explain how she manages this, since the Military School Path requires the White Collar or Nobility Path. You might decide that your character befriended a local mercenary, who turned out to be an alumnus of the school in question. He saw your character's potential and sponsored her for a scholarship.

The gamemaster has complete freedom to accept or reject your idea; some concepts will not fit in his campaign or won't make sense. For example, it would be difficult (if not impossible) to justify an Inner Sphere White Collar boy suddenly finding himself in a Trueborn Sibko.

After figuring out how your character avoided the prerequisites, you must pay the price. Your character's lucky break reduces his or her Edge threshold by 1. Because no Attribute threshold can drop below 2, this reduction limits the number of times a player may avoid prerequisites. If a character's Edge threshold is already 2, the player may not use these rules.

Edge and Events

Sometimes an event comes up that you do not want your character to experience. In most cases, these are negative events; however, sometimes a positive event can be undesirable, depending on your character concept.

After rolling dice for an event, you can increase or decrease the die roll result by 1, or reroll, in the same way that you use Edge during game play (see *Edge*, p. 18). This option allows you to avoid a catastrophe or angle for a positive event. Because your character does not yet have an Edge Attribute, using this option reduces the character's Edge threshold by 1. Unlike during game play, a character may not choose to use Edge before making an event roll. As with using Edge to avoid prerequisites, a player may not use this special rule if his or her character's Edge threshold is 2.

REPEATING PATHS

Characters can repeat paths and subpaths whenever the *Next Path* option allows it. A repeated path or subpath counts toward a character's path limits. If a repeated path has subpaths, the character must skip the main path and go directly to one of the subpaths (assuming the character meets the subpath's prerequisites). For example, if a character who had already taken the University Path and Sciences Major Subpath returns to the University Path, that character would skip directly to another Major Subpath or to the Medical or Field Science School Subpath.

Modifiers to a character's Attribute minimums and thresholds only apply the first time a character takes a path or subpath; disregard them on subsequent passes. Likewise, traits granted by a path or subpath are only bestowed once, even if a character follows the same path several times. Traits earned through events are an exception to this rule.

By contrast, a character who repeats a path or subpath does receive any Skill Points granted by it. Also, if a character repeats a path or subpath that awards a field, that character receives an additional +3 Skill Points to all the skills in that field.

Events and Repeated Paths

Multiple passes through the same path can give a character excellent skills, but continuous repetition carries significant risks. The second time through a path or subpath, modify your event roll result by –1. The third time through, modify it by –2,

the fourth by –3, and so on. (If a modified event roll result drops to 1 or less, treat it as a result of 2.) Because the lower results bring on the worst events, multiple passes through the same path carry greater risk of mishap.

This rule does not apply to subpaths taken immediately following a path or another subpath because these are considered part of the same path. The modifier only applies if a character returns to the path or subpath after leaving it.

AFFILIATIONS

The *BattleTech* universe is vast, with a long and checkered history. Its people come from wildly different backgrounds, in interstellar nations that span hundreds of worlds and thousands of cultures. An *MW3* character is born or raised into one of these affiliations, which has a profound effect on every character's development.

This section describes the most prominent and powerful affiliations in the *BattleTech* universe, including background and character creation material for each one. Players may find it helpful to read *A Brief History of the Inner Sphere* (p. 159) before reading this material; that historical overview will aid in understanding each affiliation as a part of the larger *BattleTech* universe.

USING AFFILIATIONS

Every player must choose an affiliation for each character at the start of character creation. The gamemaster may want to restrict access to certain affiliations based on the direction his campaign will take. For example, Clan characters may not fit into certain Inner Sphere-based campaigns.

Each affiliation description begins with a brief background sketch to give you a sense of its history and culture (see also the color pages for each affiliation). This information should help you choose the right affiliation for your character.

The *Game Material* section for each affiliation includes any extras a character from that affiliation might receive, like bonus Skill Points, traits and other information such as restrictions on what paths they can follow. Keep in mind that player characters get the listed bonus skills, traits and so on because they are exceptional individuals. These do not necessarily apply to every man, woman and child in each affiliation.

DRACONIS COMBINE (HOUSE KURITA)

The first full-scale interstellar military operation was launched in 2303, and it eventually led to the formation of the Draconis Combine in 2319. Unlike other Inner Sphere nations, which were formed through the union of already-established alliances of planets, the Draconis Combine owed its birth to one world and the indomitable will of one man: Shiro Kurita. Though Shiro used political wrangling when it suited him, he constructed the Combine mainly by the sword. Raised in strict adherence to the ancient Japanese code of *bushido* (the way of the warrior), Shiro spread this philosophy as he expanded his empire. Today, seven centuries after its foundation, the Draconis Combine bears a striking resemblance to Japan of the shogun era, where *daimyos*—lords—rule their worlds and military districts while their samurai—mostly MechWarriors—enforce their word as law. From highest to lowest, all act for the greater glory of the Draconis Combine and its ruling House Kurita.

With an eye toward keeping its people under strict control, House Kurita has enforced a rigid social hierarchy: nobility, warriors, middle class, workers and unproductives. Because its rulers place so much emphasis on controlling and channeling the lives of Combine citizens, the realm suffers from a deplorable lack of formal education except in the military, which boasts some of the finer schools in the Inner Sphere. The vast majority of Combine citizens are illiterate. A positive side effect of this deprivation, however, is the emergence of a rich oral tradition, filled with lore that spans centuries.

Because most Combine citizens believe in their society's innate superiority and see other societies and governments as a corrupting influence, they regard most other realms as enemies. Historically, the neighboring Federated Suns and Lyran Alliance have been the Combine's principal foes. The Combine has had infrequent contact with the Free Worlds League and Capellan Confederation, and it tends to regard both with contempt, if somewhat lesser enmity.

The past several decades have exposed distinct demarcation lines in the Combine concerning the status quo of seven centuries. Led by the current Coordinator, Theodore Kurita, numerous reforms have relaxed the rigid social structure while fostering alliances with other Great Houses. The underworld yakuza also have greater leeway for their activities and growth. Many of these changes stem from the Coordinator's efforts to rid his realm of the Clans and retake the worlds they conquered. However, some Combine nobles oppose these changes and seek to return to traditional ways. They have formed a secret society known as the Black Dragons and will stop at nothing to reverse the Combine's course.

Game Material

Primary Language: Japanese

Secondary Languages: Swedenese, Arabic, English

Bonus Skills: Art/Oral Traditions +3, Martial Arts/Karate +2, choose one: Staffs +1, Archery +1 or Throwing Weapons +2

Bonus Traits: Quirk/Xenophobia; Pain Resistance and Combat Sense traits each cost one Character Point less than normal (2 and 3 points respectively) because most Combine characters are so highly disciplined.

Path Restrictions: Draconis Combine characters cannot enter the High School Path. Child labor is legal in most parts of the Combine; if a character cannot qualify for any other Stage 2 or Stage 3 paths, he can go to Stage 4 and enter the workforce, taking a Civilian Job and ignoring the listed prerequisites.

FEDERATED SUNS (HOUSE DAVION)

Many historians have denounced the Federated Suns as an exclusively military power and the instigator of almost every

major war humanity has fought since the twenty-fourth century. Those who focus on the aggression of the recent past, however, fail to recognize this mighty realm's true nature.

Formed with the signing of the Crucis Pact in 2317, the Federated Suns was intended to stand against the Terran Hegemony's unabashed expansion. However, the Federated Suns faced its first major challenges from the Capellan Confederation. Continued Capellan aggression, including interference in the Suns' disastrous twenty-sixth-century civil war, cemented a deep hatred that has burned between the two nations for centuries. Many Federated Suns citizens harbor similar animosity toward their other neighbor, the Draconis Combine, though this enmity stems from the more recent Kentares Massacre.

The Federated Suns has been especially prominent in the thirty-first century. The political and economic marriage of the Suns to the economically powerful Lyran Commonwealth, which together formed the Federated Commonwealth, struck fear in the hearts of many—especially given Prince Hanse Davion's impressive territorial gains during the Fourth Succession War, which coincided with the Federated Commonwealth's inception. During its three decades of existence, this mega-state had considerable influence. However, it proved to be a house of cards that soon came tumbling down. Archon Princess Katherine Steiner-Davion pulled the renamed Lyran Alliance out of the Commonwealth in 3057 but nonetheless claimed the Federated Suns' throne just a few years later. With a leader whom many citizens consider a usurper, tensions are high and relations with this realm's former Lyran allies have cooled considerably. Most people in the Federated Suns consider the war hero Victor Steiner-Davion, former ruler of the Federated Commonwealth and known for defeating the Clans, to be their rightful ruler in exile, and they eagerly await his return.

The Federated Suns' armed forces are known for their proficiency, but many overlook the enormous personal freedoms granted to the realm's people. Citizens of the Federated Suns may choose just about any course for their lives, with great rewards awaiting those who prove themselves. Citizens of member worlds, though possessing no voice in their government per se, may petition for the removal of unjust or incompetent leaders. The education provided by institutions such as the New Avalon Institute of Science is second to none and is available to any deserving citizen.

Game Material

Primary Language: English
Secondary Languages: French, German, Hindi, Russian
Bonus Skills: Protocol/Federated Suns +1

Bonus Traits: While military service is not required of all Federated Suns citizens, affluent families often send their children to one of the nation's many military academies or prep schools. Any character with Social Standing of 4 or more may choose either Natural Aptitude/Strategy or Natural Aptitude/Bureaucracy at no cost.

Path Restrictions: None

CAPELLAN CONFEDERATION (HOUSE LIAO)

The Capellan Confederation is a survivor, thanks to its greatest asset—its people. A Capellan citizen sees it as his or her duty to serve the nation first and himself second; individual rights are therefore subordinate to the needs of the state. Regarded as repressive by most other Successor States and smaller political entities, this simple trait has allowed the Capellan nation to survive and prosper even after the Federated Commonwealth broke its back in the Fourth Succession War. As always, adversity merely strengthens the Capellan Confederation.

While it may be forbidden to question the state or the authority of the ruling House Liao, Capellan citizens enjoy a great deal of freedom in their personal lives. Humankind's various religions and philosophies live together more harmoniously in the Confederation than in any other nation. Racial and sexual discrimination are virtually unheard of. A caste system exists for those who are not warriors or nobility, but it acts more as a means of improving the quality of life for each caste rather than as the kind of rigid stratifier that exists among the Clans and in the Draconis Combine. Individuals are encouraged to better themselves and may marry into a higher caste or qualify for one on their own merits. The only real bias in the Confederation is a favorable disposition toward those citizens who embrace their nation's rich cultural heritage. The Capellan legacy extends back centuries further than that of other Great Houses, having its roots in the ancient heritage of the Han (Chinese) people of Terra.

The Confederation has solid ties with the Magistracy of Canopus and the Taurian Concordat, the two Periphery states with which it has recently formed the Trinity Alliance. Trade, technological aid and mutual military support are the Trinity's cornerstones. By contrast, loyal Capellans rarely feel anything but contempt for the Federated Suns and its ruling House Davion, most recently for ravaging the Confederation during the Fourth Succession War. Other political relations tend to fall somewhere in between these two extremes. Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao is currently attempting to reclaim the worlds of the tiny St. Ives Compact, which seceded from the Confederation thirty years ago under Sun-Tzu's aunt, Duchess Candace Liao.

Game Material

Primary Language: Mandarin (Chinese)

Secondary Languages: English, Russian, Scottish Gaelic, Hindi, Arabic

Attribute Minimums: SOC 3 to be a Capellan citizen (see *Bonus Traits*, below)

Bonus Skills: Martial Arts/Gung Fu +1, Language/Any Capellan Secondary +1

Bonus Traits: Capellans believe strongly in karma and the vagaries of fortune and so receive Exceptional Attribute/Edge. The player must decide if his character holds Capellan citizenship: without citizenship (minimum SOC 3), a Capellan character has the Stigma/Servitor Caste Trait and may not purchase (or receive through events) the Owns Vehicle, Wealth, Well-Connected or Well-Equipped traits.

Path Restrictions: The following paths have an additional prerequisite of Capellan citizenship for Capellan characters: Military School (Stage 2) and all Stage 3 paths, plus all Stage 4 paths except Ne'er-Do-Well (p. 48). Child labor is legal in most parts of the Confederation; if a character cannot qualify for any Stage 2 or Stage 3 paths, he can go to Stage 4 and enter the workforce, taking a Civilian Job and ignoring the prerequisites.

FREE WORLDS LEAGUE (HOUSE MARIK)

Technically a federation rather than a true nation, the Free Worlds League has been plagued by divisive conflicts throughout its history. Until recently, this balkanization greatly limited the League's impact on external events. The current Captain-General, Thomas Marik, a war leader with dictatorial powers appointed "for the duration of the crisis," has done much to centralize power and bring out the nation's true strength.

Citizens of the League value their right to express themselves freely, leading to a broad acceptance of differing cultures and values along with an appreciation for the arts and education. The League is home to a broad spectrum of religions, but their impact on society as a whole has been limited by the generally pragmatic League citizenry, who prefer tangible results to the life of the spirit. Business and the pursuit of material gain, including the recovery of technology, are central to League life. Ironically, though the League pioneered much of the medical technology used during the Star League era, social pressures have since led many to scorn bionics and other replacement technologies, particularly among the lower classes.

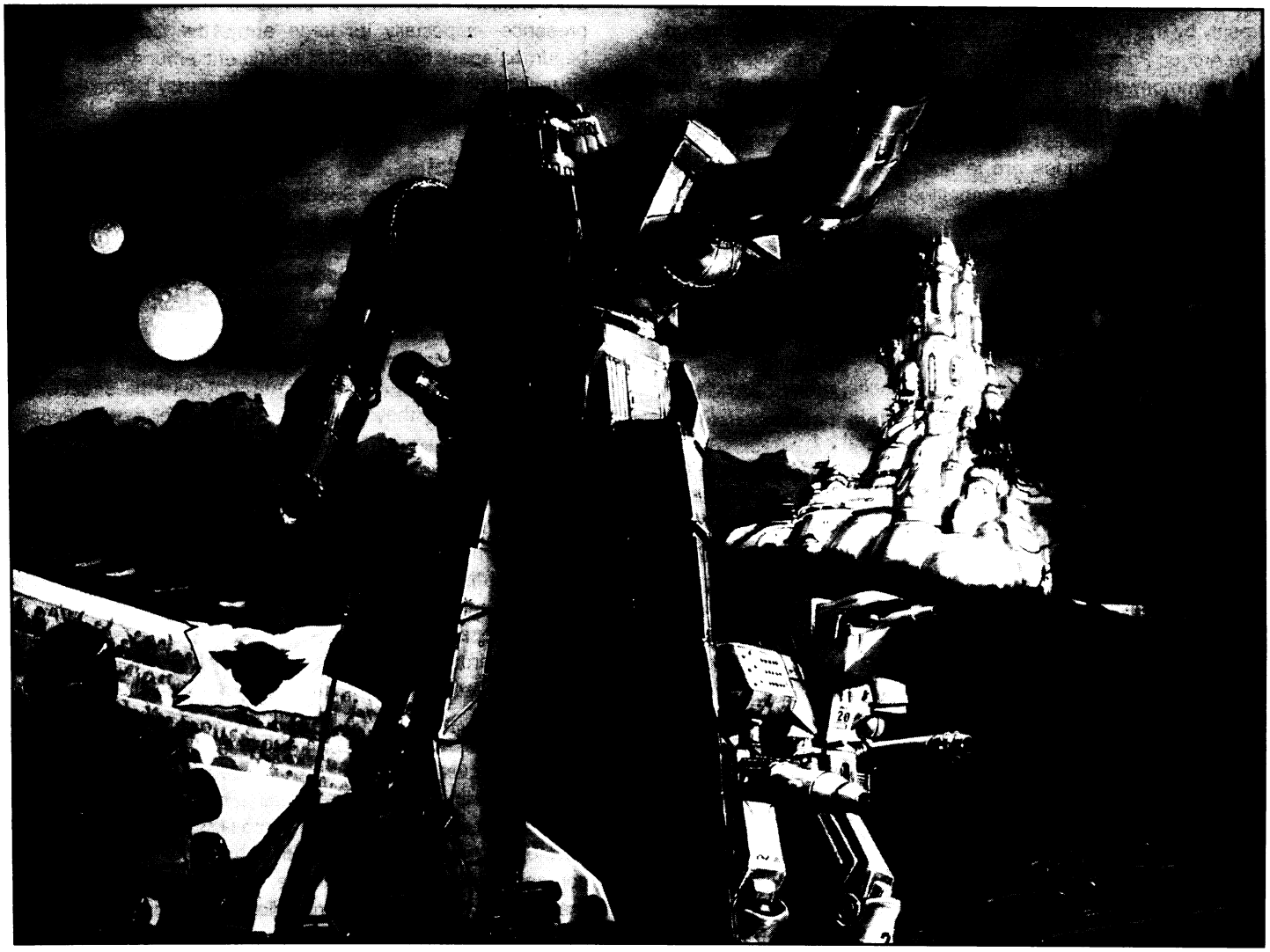
The Succession Wars have colored the League's relationships with its neighbors, though the late 3050s saw détente with its historical enemies, the Capellan Confederation and the Lyran Alliance. While relations remain good with Katherine Steiner-Davion's realm, recent events have soured relations with the Capellan Confederation. Historically on good terms, the League's ties to the Federated Suns were shattered by the formation of the Federated Commonwealth and the Fourth Succession War. The two powers fought a brief war in 3057 after Thomas Marik learned that his only son Joshua had died in the care of Davion physicians at the New Avalon Institute of Science.

Game Material

Primary Language: English

Secondary Languages: Spanish, Greek, Romanian, Urdu

Bonus Skills: Language/Any FWL Secondary +2, Art/Any +1



Traits: All FWL characters who receive prosthetic limbs or other bionic implants at any point receive a Stigma Trait because of the League's widespread anti-bionics prejudice.

Path Restrictions: None

LYRAN ALLIANCE (HOUSE STEINER)

The Lyran Alliance, formerly known as the Lyran Commonwealth, has never been regarded as a military power, but it remains a political and economic force to be reckoned with. Though governed by a feudal system like most of the other Successor States, the Alliance maintains loose control over member worlds and business interests while actively encouraging a thriving capitalist economy. This, along with the fact that its territory includes some of the Inner Sphere's richest and most heavily industrialized worlds, made the Lyran realm an economic superpower almost since its inception.

Because government varies from region to region—sometimes even from world to world—citizens of the Lyran Alliance enjoy varying levels of personal freedom. Most may express their political and religious views freely. Work, trade and profit are the central concerns of most Lyrans, who have grown accustomed to high standards of living. The life of luxury even extends to the Lyran military, where power, privilege and prestige are derived from rank—earned as often as not by whom one knows, rather than what one knows or has done.

Though animosities forged during the three centuries of the Succession Wars remain, the Clan war and its aftermath have changed the political views of many in the Alliance. Combined with the efforts of Archon Princess Katherine Steiner-Davion (popularly referred to as Katrina), these factors have drastically changed relationships between the Alliance and some of its neighbors. Relations with its ages-old foe, the Free Worlds League, are currently quite amicable, while those with the Draconis Combine remain strained. Dealings with the Capellan Confederation, never regarded highly by the Lyrans, are largely neutral, though attitudes vary depending on whom one talks to.

Relations with the Alliance's former companion state, the Federated Suns, remain awkward. The formation of the Federated Commonwealth a generation ago once made for cor-

dial relations, but the hardships of the Clan war—felt most keenly by the Lyrans—placed huge strains on the hybrid nation. The Archon Princess eventually withdrew the Lyran Alliance from the Commonwealth, though the Federated Suns half still refuses to formally recognize the Lyran secession. Now that the Archon Princess has assumed the throne of the Federated Suns as well, many attitudes are in flux. Many Lyrans—particularly those hailing from the often-rebellious Skye region—regard the Federated Suns with anything from disdain to hatred; others, like the citizens in the Arc-Royal Defense Cordon, consider the realm a valuable ally.

Game Material

Primary Language: German

Secondary Languages: Scottish Gaelic, Italian, Swedish, English

Bonus Skills: Negotiation +2, Appraisal +1

Traits: The easy life so common among Lyrans has led to a general distaste for the dirty business of combat. To reflect this, increase the value of the Timid and Combat Paralysis traits by one for characters from the Alliance when purchased after the Life Path.

Path Restrictions: None. Lyran characters who follow the Free Trader Path may add a +1 modifier to their event die rolls.

FREE RASALHAGUE REPUBLIC

In the mid-twenty-third century, citizens of the Federal Republics of Norway, Sweden and Finland emigrated to Rasalhague, a planet far from Terra, to escape oppression. Though conquered by the expanding Draconis Combine and ruled by that realm for centuries, the fiercely independent Rasalhagians preserved their customs and rebelled against their conquerors at every opportunity.

Following the Fourth Succession War, in 3034, Haakon Magnusson declared the formation of the Free Rasalhague Republic, with the support of ComStar. The Lyran Commonwealth and Draconis Combine acknowledged the Republic and gave up control of ancestral Rasalhague worlds within their own borders. Some Combine soldiers opposed their leaders' actions and attacked the newborn Republic in what became known as the Ronin Wars; the Combine declared them traitors and helped the small Republic army defend its nation. Several mercenary units hired during this period took advantage of poorly written contracts or stopped fighting because of them, which fueled strong anti-mercenary sentiment that persists to this day.

The coming of the Clans in 3050 nearly destroyed Free Rasalhague. Savage Clan assaults claimed world after world; by the time the Clans signed the Truce of Tukayyid in 3052, the Republic had shrunk from eighty-four worlds to seven and the KungsArmé (Republic military) had fallen to twenty-six regiments from 206. The current Elected Prince Regent, Christian Månsdotter, has greatly increased the military's size and lessened the general dislike of mercenaries, but he is facing new problems. Having lost Terra to the Word of Blake in 3058, ComStar moved its base of operations to the Republic, a mutually beneficial move for both powers at the time. But ComStar's presence—especially its large army, the Com Guards—has begun to spark anti-ComStar sentiment among the Republic's citizens, who fear that the Com Guards may become an occupation force.

Game Material

Primary Language: Swedish

Secondary Languages: English, Japanese, Swedenese, German

Bonus Skills: Negotiation +1, Interest/Any +1

Bonus Traits: All FRR characters who join a mercenary unit at any time receive the Stigma Trait.

Path Restrictions: The Republic is saturated with orphans of the Clan war; FRR characters may not take the Street Path at Stage 1; instead, they may take the Clan War Orphan Path.

THE PERIPHERY

Beyond the boundaries of the Inner Sphere lie the endless reaches of the Periphery, traditionally home to the independent-minded souls who sought escape from the often-repressive regimes of the Great Houses. The Periphery is the galaxy's frontier, keeping the spirit of exploration and discovery alive and well. The less savory aspects of frontier living are equally abundant; numerous pirate bands and petty bandit kingdoms thrive in this almost lawless region of space. Largely unexplored and sparsely populated compared with the Inner Sphere, the Periphery has nonetheless played a pivotal role in several major interstellar events, including the fall of the Star League.

The Periphery's reputation as a backward and technologically inferior region is only partly true. Though it is indeed underdeveloped industrially and well behind the technology curve compared with the Inner Sphere, it includes scattered regions that boast cultural and technological advancement. The Taurian Concordat is well known for its excellent educational system and high literacy rate, while the Magistracy of Canopus exemplifies some of the most progressive views on human rights in known space.

A Periphery-affiliated player character may choose a home realm from the descriptions below or can come from one of the Periphery's countless smaller nations or unaffiliated worlds.

Taurian Concordat

The Concordat, a large realm with a stable economy and coherent military force, most closely resembles an Inner Sphere power. Of all the Periphery realms, the Concordat is viewed with the most respect by the Inner Sphere. Though often derided as stiff and dull by other Periphery denizens, the people of the Concordat are fiercely independent and resourceful, if somewhat paranoid about outsiders.

Primary Language: English

Secondary Languages: Spanish, French

Attribute Thresholds: CHA –1, EDG +1

Bonus Skills: Negotiation +1, choose one: Pistols +1 or Rifles +1

Bonus Traits: Quirk/Stubborn
Path Restrictions: None

Magistracy of Canopus

The Magistracy is the second-largest Periphery nation, known primarily in the Inner Sphere as a vacation spot. Built around the tourist industry, the Magistracy caters to any whim. Magistracy citizens tend to be free spirits, deserving their reputation for being fair, open-minded and accepting of most people. This widespread attitude has contributed to the Magistracy's commendable record on human rights and other social issues. In terms of technology and education, Magistracy physicians can match some of the best in the Inner Sphere.

The Magistracy has recently strengthened its ties to some Inner Sphere powers, including increased trade with the Free Worlds League and a military alliance with the Capellan Confederation. Magestrix Emma Centrella hopes to ensure her nation's continued survival against the predations of pirates and rogue states in the deeper Periphery; the Canopian military force, though large, lacks experience and depth.

Primary Language: English
Secondary Languages: Spanish, Greek, Romanian, Urdu
Attribute Thresholds: EDG +1
Bonus Skills: Streetwise/Periphery +1, choose one: Fast Talk +1, First Aid +1 or Seduction +1
Traits: As officer ranks in the Canopus military are purchased, characters with a Commission Trait may not have their Rank Trait at a higher level than their Wealth Trait.
Bonus Traits: Stigma/Hedonistic
Path Restrictions: Military service is mandatory in the Magistracy, so characters must choose either Military Academy or Military Enlistment in Stage 3.

Outworlds Alliance

Sandwiched between the Federated Suns and the Draconis Combine, the Outworlds Alliance has survived primarily by keeping a low profile (plus a healthy dose of luck). A poor realm, the Alliance has struggled for generations to stay together. A constant target of pirates and bandit kings, only the exceptional aerospace arm of its otherwise weak military has saved the Alliance form destruction. Traveling armies or exhausted mercenary units regard many Alliance planets as safe havens.

Primary Language: English
Secondary Languages: Japanese, French
Attribute Thresholds: WIL –1, EDG +1
Bonus Traits: Poverty, G-Tolerance
Bonus Skills: Survival +1, Scrounge +1, choose one: Rifles +1, Brawling +1 or First Aid +1
Path Restrictions: All Stage 3 paths take one year longer than normal for Alliance characters.

Minor Realm or Independent World

Numerous small federations and independent worlds exist in the Periphery. Characters from these areas tend to be rough and uneducated; outside the major Periphery realms, no organized infrastructure exists to support advanced education or manufacturing. However, these Periphery characters also tend to be resourceful and have a knack for beating the odds.

Primary Language: English
Secondary Languages: Any
Attribute Thresholds: CHA –1, EDG +1
Bonus Skills: Scrounge +3, Survival +1
Bonus Traits: Poverty; Pain Resistance, Toughness, Sixth Sense (each cost 1 Character Point less)
Path Restrictions: Characters from minor realms or independent Periphery worlds cannot choose the following paths: Preparatory School or Military School (Stage 2); University or Military Academy (Stage 3); Postgraduate Studies (Stage 4).

THE CLANS

To understand the Clans, one must understand its two most basic groups: the warrior caste that rules and the other castes that serve.

Warrior Caste

Born to lead and bred to win: that more than anything else sums up the Clan warrior caste. Formed in the tumultuous days following General Aleksandr Kerensky's Exodus and the Exodus Civil War, the Clans instilled in their members a sense of unfailing loyalty to their new extended families and to the ideals of their founder, Nicholas Kerensky. Shaped as they were by their difficult beginnings on largely resource-poor planets, the Clans learned frugality and conformity above all. From those simple ideals sprang the complex fabric of Clan culture.

First among the five castes that comprise Clan society, the warriors are the rulers. Elitism is rampant among them, and trueborns—those genetically engineered and bred from virtual cloning machines—are considered the truest inheritors of the Kerensky legacy. Only those born from the so-called "iron wombs" are deemed fit for command. Freeborns—those born naturally—are scorned and derided. Many Clans allow freeborn warriors to serve in their militaries, but usually only in restricted capacities. No matter their skills or accomplishments, few freeborns receive the respect they deserve from their trueborn comrades.

Widespread prejudice against freeborns is one of many attitudes central to the Clan way of life. Though a necessary resource, Clansmen outside the warrior caste are considered even lower than freeborn warriors. In addition, many Clans have centuries-old rivalries with one another that constantly fuel new attacks. Members of the Clans' two major political factions, Wardens and Crusaders, fight for dominance even within the same Clan. Finally, all Clansmen are taught from an early age to look down on the "barbarians" of the Inner Sphere.

Clan warriors begin military training almost from the time they begin to walk and talk. With few outside influences to disrupt their instruction, they can easily outperform Inner Sphere soldiers years their senior. That fact, coupled with their technological edge, won the Clans hundreds of planets when they invaded the Inner Sphere. Contrary to initial appearances and

their own beliefs, however, the Clans were not invincible—a humiliating truth not lost on many Clansmen these days.

Civilian Castes

The people of the Inner Sphere see the Clans as a martial society, living to fight and conquer. In truth, though militarism is central to the Clan way of life, Clan warriors form less than one percent of the population. Those deemed unsuitable for warrior life, or who flunk out of warrior training, are assigned to the four civilian castes. The work of these laborers, merchants, scientists and technicians allows Clan society to function.

By Inner Sphere standards, Clan civilians are second-class citizens. Though the people accepted warrior rule in the years following the Exodus Civil War, in many regards it is little different from the Inner Sphere's neo-feudalism. Clan civilians work to support the military, while the military protects the civilians. The few civilians unable to accept this system have dropped out and formed an outcast group, known variously as the dark or bandit caste.

With most civilian efforts going to support the warrior caste, life for civilians can be hard—proportionately more so than in the Inner Sphere. Indeed, the desire of Clan civilians for a better life was one of the driving forces behind the Crusader philosophy, pushing the warrior caste for a return to the perceived Eden of the Inner Sphere. As the Nova Cat and Ghost Bear civilian castes have discovered, however, the Inner Sphere is not the paradise they hoped for.

Game Material

Because Clan society is starkly different from that of the Inner Sphere (see *The Clans,* p. 189, for more information), Clan characters follow some different rules for character creation, especially with regard to the Life Path.

The first choice a player must make is whether his or her Clan character is trueborn or freeborn. Trueborn characters are created by the Clan breeding program to be the ultimate warriors, using in vitro fertilization and gestation in artificial wombs. They may or may not actually become the warriors they were born and bred to be. Freeborn characters are conceived and born in the natural way, and few become warriors. In fact, some Clans prohibit "freebirths" from attaining warrior status.

Clan characters must then choose a caste, which influences all other facets of character creation: warrior, scientist, technician, merchant, laborer or dark (bandit). Trueborn characters must choose the warrior caste.

Primary Language: English

Secondary Languages: None

Attribute Minimums: Warrior: SOC 6; scientist: SOC 5; technician: SOC 4; merchant: SOC 3; laborer: SOC 2; dark: SOC 1. Clan characters ignore Social Standing minimum modifiers in the Life Path unless the path is specifically a Clan Path; in those cases, the new minimum applies even if it is lower than the previous minimum. These minimums also serve as maximums: at the end of the Life Path, a Clan character's Social Standing Attribute must be equal to his Social Standing minimum.

Attribute Thresholds:
MechWarrior: DEX +1, RFL +1
Elemental: STR +2, DEX –1, BOD +1
Fighter Pilot: DEX +2, RFL +2, STR –1, BOD –1
Scientist: INT +1, STR –1
Technician: DEX +1, CHA –1
Merchant: CHA +1, BOD –1
Laborer: BOD +1, INT –1

Traits: Clan characters may not take the Land Grant, Owns Vehicle, Poverty or Wealth traits, except dark caste characters (see *Leaving the Clans,* below).

Equipment: Clan characters who operate within the boundaries of Clan society do not have personal possessions. Instead, their Clan allows them equipment appropriate to their caste and assignment. Clan player characters can have any equipment appropriate to their occupational fields and skills (with the gamemaster's permission and following the rules for *Equipment Ratings,* p. 129). However, a character who leaves his or her Clan must return the equipment. A Clan character who ends the Life Path outside the service of the Clans purchases equipment per normal rules (see *Leaving the Clans,* below).

Path Restrictions: Severe path restrictions apply to Clan characters based on their birth status and caste. These restrictions are described at each stage under the *Clan Characters* heading. Clan characters who do not follow these restrictions are branded as dark caste (see *Leaving the Clans*).

Washing Out of Training: Any event that results in washing out of training means that the character failed warrior training because of some fault or shortcoming. A character can also voluntarily leave training, with the same effects. The results vary depending on the character's status. If the character washes out of the Trueborn Crèche, he or she moves on to Stage 2, Clan Apprenticeship Path. If the character washes out of a Sibko (either trueborn or freeborn), he or she gains the Stigma/Failed Warrior Trait and moves on to Stage 3 as a Clan civilian.

In either case, a freeborn character reverts to his or her original Social Standing Attribute minimum and proceeds as his or her birth caste dictates. A trueborn character is assigned a new caste based on his or her aptitudes, or the player can simply choose a lower caste and adjust the character's Social Standing minimum accordingly.

Leaving the Clans: Some Clansmen "defect," effectively joining the ranks of the dark caste. A character who leaves the Clans at any point in the Life Path—by choosing a path outside the path restriction rules or through a random event—can proceed as an Inner Sphere character following the standard rules, but that character's Social Standing Attribute minimum drops to 1. In addition, he or she will be ostracized from the Clans and acquires the Poverty and Stigma/Bandit Caste (2) traits. The character also loses any of the following traits accumulated up to that point: Rank, Commission, Vehicle, Custom Vehicle, Well-Equipped or Well-Connected. The character can take the Owns Vehicle and Wealth traits, though they must be acquired through the Life Path or purchased later per standard rules.

STAGE 1: EARLY CHILDHOOD

The formative years are vital to a character's development. Many Attributes and personality traits are dramatically affected by this stage, and some paths even provide basic skills. Most important, the path chosen in this stage will have a significant impact on what paths the character can follow later.

Time: Upon completion of this stage, the character is ten years old.

Continuation: After following a single path at this stage, most characters will proceed to *Late Childhood* (p. 36). Some affiliations permit a child to enter the workforce after Stage 1; in this case, proceed to the *Real Life* stage (p. 47). You can also end the Life Path here and play your character as a child, in which case proceed to *Assigning Attributes, Traits and Skills* (p. 54).

Clan Characters: Trueborn characters must begin Stage 1 in a Clan Crèche. Freeborn characters start the Life Path based on their caste: scientist and merchant caste characters start on the White Collar Path, technician caste on Blue Collar, laborer caste on Blue Collar or Farm (player's choice), and dark caste on the Back Woods, Farm, Street or Blue Collar paths. If you want your character to be a freeborn warrior, he or she must begin the Life Path in one of the civilian castes.

Free Skills: Regardless of Life Path, all player characters automatically receive 3 Skill Points to be divided as the players choose among their affiliation's primary and secondary Language Skills. Characters also receive 3 Skill Points toward Language/English (all 6 Skill Points can go to the Language/English Skill, if the player desires). Also, all characters receive 2 Skill Points toward Perception. Players can improve all of these skills as normal.

BACK WOODS

Raised in the country, you are hardy but unrefined and uneducated. Your parents subsisted on hunting and gathering, probably in the remote areas of the Periphery or on a less prosperous Inner Sphere world.

Attribute Thresholds: STR +1, BOD +1, RFL +1, INT –1, CHA –1, SOC –1

Traits: Poverty

Skills: Language/Affiliation –1, Scrounge +2, Survival +1, choose one: Swimming +1, Running +1 or Climbing +1

Next Path: Back Woods (2), Farm (2), Street (2)

Back Woods Events

2 Serious hunting accident [Choose one: BOD –1, Lost Limb, Slow Learner]
3 Caught rare virus [Glass Jaw]
4 Hunting accident [Choose one: Poor Hearing, Poor Vision, Unattractive]
5 Family captured by bandits; only you escaped [Escape Artist +1, Stealth +1, Enemy]
6 Made time for a hobby [Interest/Any +1]
7 Started using weapons early [Rifle +1]
8 Home planet had toxic atmosphere [Poison Resistance]
9 Natural hunter [Natural Aptitude/Tracking]
10 Single-handedly hunted and skinned a wolf [Good Reputation, Brave]
11 Adopted by well-to-do relatives [SOC +2, Wealth (2), may take High School as next path]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

BLUE COLLAR

Your family worked for an industrial concern, perhaps a weapons factory or a mining operation. While you had few advantages, your hard-working parents managed to give you a reasonable education, and your future prospects are fairly open.

Attribute Minimums: SOC 3

Skills: Career/Any +2, Interest/Any +1

Next Path: Farm (2), High School (2), Street (2)

Blue Collar Events

2 You're not that far from the street; you nearly got killed in a street fight [Choose one: Combat Paralysis, Lost Limb (2)]
3 Times were really tough [Poverty; must also choose Street Path in Stage 2]
4 You worked alongside your parents at the factory [Career/Any +1, Poor Hearing]
5 Another childhood wasted on holovids [Interest/Holovid Shows +2, Career/Any –2]
6 Family worked on an asteroid mining facility [G-Tolerance, Zero-G Operations +1]
7 Learned many skills in the kid scouts [First Aid +1, Survival +1]
8 Already learning how to fix the family car [Natural Aptitude/Technician/ICE]
9 Started early in sports [RFL +1, Interest/Any sport +1, Swimming +1]
10 Your parents were both in the military, so you grew up an "army brat" [Career/Soldier +1, Pistols +1, may choose Military School or Mercenary Brat as next path]
11 A big job promotion in the family [SOC +1, Wealth, may take Preparatory School as next path]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

CLAN WAR ORPHAN

Lyran Alliance, Free Rasalhague Republic or Draconis Combine Affiliations only

Your family was killed or you lost them during the Clan invasion or a raid. Since then, you've lived on the street and in orphanages. You've had a hard life, but at least you could turn for help to government-run orphanages for victims of the Clans.

Attribute Thresholds: BOD –1, WIL +1, EDG +1, SOC –1

Traits: Poverty, Stigma/Orphan

Skills: Streetwise/Affiliation +1, Perception +1

Next Path: Back Woods (2), Farm (2), High School (2), Street (2), Mercenary Brat (2)

Clan War Orphan Events

2 Caught in the attack that claimed your family [Choose one: Poor Vision (2), Combat Paralysis, Poor Hearing (3), Lost Limb (2)]
3 Skipped orphanage-sponsored classes [WIL –1, Language/Affiliation –1]
4 Can't take it anymore [Addiction]
5 Used as slave labor by orphanage [Introvert, Escape Artist +1]
6 Kicked out of the orphanage [Must take Street Path in Stage 2]
7 Made the best of a bad situation [Scrounge +1]
8 Made friends with orphanage head [Contact]
9 Trapped on Clan-held world for a time [Streetwise/Clan +2, Scrounge +2]
10 Long-lost relative takes you in [Wealth (2), may not choose Street Path in Stage 2]
11 Military-oriented orphanage teacher takes you as his pupil [Brawling +1, Tactics/Infantry +1, may enter Military School if desired in Stage 2]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

FARM

Like trillions of others who supply food to the thousands of human-occupied worlds, you were born and raised on a farm, ranch or other rural food-producing enterprise.

Attribute Thresholds: STR +1, BOD +1, CHA –1
Skills: Animal Handling +2, choose one: Piloting/ Wheeled +1 or Riding +1
Next Path: Back Woods (2), Farm (2), High School (2)

Farm Events

2 Horrible combine accident [Choose one: STR –1, Lost Limb (2), Slow Learner]
3 Drought devastated family and your health [Scrounge +1, BOD –1, Poverty]
4 Family killed in BattleMech crossfire; you haven't been the same since [Combat Paralysis]
5 Least successful farm on the planet [Poverty]
6 Pa takes you hunting all the time [Rifles +1]
7 You start to learn the family business [Administration +1]
8 Already learning how to fix the tractor [Natural Aptitude/Technician/ICE]
9 Home planet had long day/night cycle [Night Vision]
10 Most successful farm on the planet [Wealth]
11 Family killed in BattleMech crossfire; a sympathetic mercenary adopted you [may enter Mercenary Brat Path]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

FUGITIVES

Free Worlds League Affiliation only

One or both parents were involved in a rebellion against the lawful government of the Free Worlds League (during Anton Marik's revolt, the Andurien Crisis, the recent incident in Zion, and so on). You have spent much of your youth on the run or in exile.

Attribute Thresholds: BOD –1, WIL +1, EDG +1, SOC –1
Traits: Poverty
Skills: Streetwise/Free Worlds League +1, Language/Any +1, Zero-G Operations +1
Next Path: Back Woods (2), Farm (2), Street (2), Mercenary Brat (2)

Fugitives Events

2 Enemies targeted your family; you barely survived [Choose one: Combat Paralysis, Lost Limb (2), Poor Vision (2)]
3 Other kids mocked your fugitive status and made life in your adopted home miserable [Timid, Introvert]
4 Your parents' allies raised and supported you, and they indoctrinated you with their political beliefs [In For Life]
5 The faction opposed to your parent(s) includes you among its enemies [Enemy (2)]
6 Ran away from home and fell in with local street toughs [Must take Street Path in Stage 2]
7 Lived outside the League [Language/Any +1]
8 Made the best of a bad situation and took to study [Academic/Any +2]
9 Constantly on the move [G-Tolerance, Interest/Any +1]
10 You are trained to "carry on the fight" [may enter Military School in Stage 2, ignoring prerequisites]
11 Though exiles, your parents maintained many connections [Well-Connected]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

NOBILITY

Most Inner Sphere and Periphery societies maintain a ruling noble class, into which you were born. Living a life of privilege, you have somewhat neglected your physical development in favor of more cerebral pursuits.

Attribute Minimums: SOC 5
Attribute Thresholds: STR –1, BOD –1, RFL –1, INT +1, CHA +1, SOC +1
Traits: Wealth, Well-Equipped, Enemy
Skills: Language/Affiliation +1, Protocol/Affiliation +2
Next Path: Preparatory School (2), Military School (2)

Nobility Events

2 You survive an assassination attempt ... barely [Choose one: Combat Paralysis, Lost Limb (2)]
3 Your parents betrayed the crown, costing them their

wealth and title (if not their lives) [Lose your Wealth and Well-Equipped Traits; for your next path, you are limited to Farm, High School or Street]
4 You have a younger sibling who covets your inheritance [Enemy]
5 Another childhood wasted on holovids [Interest/Holovid Shows +2, Protocol/Affiliation –2]
6 Your family's reputation precedes you, and you must live up to it [Good Reputation]
7 Your family immersed you in culture [Art/Any +1, Language/Any +1]
8 Your family was stinking rich [Wealth, Well-Equipped]
9 Power play elevates your family's status but attracts powerful rivals [SOC +1, Enemy, Wealth (2)]
10 Yours was a soldier's family [BOD +1, RFL +1, CHA –1; character must take Military School or Mercenary Brat next]
11 Relative dies and leaves you his vehicle [Vehicle (2), Owns Vehicle]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

STREET

You grew up on the streets of a big city. Your parents may have been poor or unemployed, or you were an orphan. Life on the streets can be harsh, which makes you hard-edged.

Attribute Thresholds: BOD –1, RFL +1, WIL +1, EDG +1, SOC –1
Traits: Poverty
Skills: Language/Affiliation –1, Scrounge +1, Streetwise/Affiliation +2
Next Path: High School (2), Street (2)

Street Events

2 Nearly killed in a street fight [Choose one: Combat Paralysis, Lost Limb (2)]
3 Tried and sentenced for a crime as an adult, branding you a convict [Bad Reputation, Stigma, Streetwise/Affiliation +1, and must choose Street Path in Stage 2]
4 Literally grew up in the street, without so much as a flophouse to call home [Language/Affiliation –1, Streetwise/Affiliation +1, Stigma]
5 Scarred in a gang war [Blades +1, Unattractive]
6 Ran a thriving three-card monte operation [Gambling +1]
7 Hot-wiring hovercars paid the bills [Technician/Mechanics +1]
8 Narrowly dodged a bullet, but your buddy was killed before your eyes; a serious wake-up call [Brave; character may never choose Street or Ne'er-Do-Well paths]
9 Big score for such a young one [Wealth, Well-Equipped]
10 Adopted by kindly couple [SOC +1, Wealth]
11 Recruited by an interstellar crime ring [Contact, Wealth, Streetwise/Affiliation +2]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

TRUEBORN CRÈCHE

Clan Affiliation only

Born and bred to become a great warrior, you gestated in an iron womb and started life in a Clan crèche. You have been in warrior training since birth. This intense training produces strong warriors with unsurpassed skills but drums the individuality out of them. Few Clan warriors rise from the pack, and even fewer excel outside their assigned fields (represented by the Slow Learner Trait).

Attribute Minimums: SOC 7, Elementals BOD 5
Attribute Thresholds: BOD +1, RFL +1, CHA –1, SOC +1
Traits: Quirk/Clan Honor, Slow Learner, choose one: Elemental Phenotype, Fighter Pilot Phenotype or MechWarrior Phenotype
Skills: Interest/Clan Remembrance +1, Swimming +1, Martial Arts/Military +1
Next Path: Trueborn Sibko (2)

Trueborn Crèche Events

2 Serious training accident [Lost Limb (3) and wash out of training]
3 Training accident [Poor Vision and wash out of training]
4 You just don't have what it takes [wash out of training]
5 Your trainers were hard on you, the runt of the sibko [Glass Jaw, Martial Arts/Military +1]
6 You already have a rival [Enemy]
7 Boundless pride drives you to learn all you can about the Clans [Academic/Clan History +2]
8 A true warrior at heart, but very slow on the uptake [STR +1, but lose all skills gained from this path]
9 You take to combat training like a duck to water [Martial Arts/Military +1, Blades +1]
10 Your inquisitive nature is a boon but constantly gets you into trouble, surat [Fast Learner, Enemy]
11 Your bloodline is renowned, so you have much to live up to [SOC +1, Ambidextrous, Attractive, Combat Sense, Enemy, Good Reputation]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

WHITE COLLAR

Whether Combine businessmen or Lyran traders, your family was involved in commerce or academia. You grew up in a high-rise apartment, a suburban prefab, or perhaps even a DropShip plying the space lanes. In any case, you led a privileged and sheltered early life.

Attribute Minimums: SOC 4
Attribute Thresholds: STR –1
Traits: Wealth
Skills: Academic/Any +1, Language/Affiliation +1
Next Path: High School (2), Preparatory School (2), Military School (2)

White Collar Events

2 Family's organized-crime connections caught up to them [Poverty; character must take Back Woods or Farm path in Stage 2]
3 Parents spoiled you really rotten [Timid, Glass Jaw, Well-Equipped]
4 Your friends on the wrong side of the tracks dishonored your family [Poverty, Streetwise/Affiliation +1]
5 Another childhood wasted on holovids [Interest/Holovid Shows +2, Academic/Any –1, Language/Affiliation –1]
6 Your family immersed you in culture [Art/Any +1, Language/Any +1]
7 Holovid game junkie [DEX +1, Interest/Holovid Games +1]
8 Started early in sports [STR +1, Interest/Any Sport +1, Swimming +1]
9 Your parents were interstellar traders [G-Tolerance, Zero-G Operations +2]
10 Your family was stinking rich [Wealth (2), Well-Equipped]
11 Your diplomat parents dragged you from world to world [SOC +1, Contact (2), Wealth, Language/Any +2, Protocol/Any +1, Zero-G Operations +1]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

STAGE 2: LATE CHILDHOOD

This stage is a turbulent time for most young people, as their bodies grow toward adulthood and their minds struggle to keep up. In some affiliations, early vocational training takes place at this stage, teaching advanced career skills to children who are still relatively young. Other affiliations leave these youths to their own devices: some excel and some fall between the cracks of society.

Time: Upon completion of this stage, the character is sixteen years old.

Continuation: Characters follow only one path at this stage and then go on to Higher Education or Real Life as desired. You can also end the Life Path here and play your character as a teenager; in this case, proceed to *Assigning Attributes, Traits and Skills* (p. 54).

Clan Characters: In Stage 2, trueborn characters who have not washed out of training must take the Trueborn Sibko Path. Freeborn characters who want to become warriors must enter the Freeborn Sibko Path. Other freeborn characters continue their upbringing by taking a Clan Apprenticeship, except for dark caste characters, who follow the normal path rules for Inner Sphere characters beyond Stage 1.

BACK WOODS

Perhaps you grew up in the wilderness or ran away from your family. Maybe you washed out of your sibko and fled to the bandit caste. For whatever reason, your character retreated from society into the wilderness. Living off the land, you learned practical survival skills rather than the academics common to most children your age.

Attribute Thresholds: BOD +1, WIL +1, SOC –1
Traits: Poverty, Introvert
Skills: Blades +1, Climbing +1, Shotguns +1, Stealth +1, Survival +1, Tracking +1
Next Path: Military Enlistment (3), Ne'er-Do-Well (4)

Back Woods Events

2 Mauled by a wild animal [Lost Limb (2)]
3 Industrial corporation forced you from your land, but you fought back [Bad Reputation, Enemy (2), Rifles +1, Stealth +1]
4 Caught in an avalanche [Choose one: Lost Limb or Poor Hearing]
5 Raised by bandits [Well-Equipped, Wealth, Bad Reputation, Enemy, Stigma/Bandit]
6 A planetary climate shift left you in the cold and starving for years [BOD –1, Scrounge +1, Survival +1]
7 You became an accomplished hunter [Archery +1, Perception +1]
8 Yours was a particularly hostile world [Throwing Weapons +1, Brawling +1]
9 Swallowed your pride and went to school in town [Academic/Any +1, Language/Affiliation +1, Gregarious]
10 Worked as a scout for the local garrison [Well-Equipped, Comms/Conv. +1, Tactics/Infantry +1]
11 Uncovered a lostech cache! [Choose either: Vehicle (2), Owns Vehicle and Custom Vehicle; or Wealth (4) and Well-Equipped]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

CLAN APPRENTICESHIP

Clan Affiliation only

The Clan civilian caste places considerable emphasis on vocational training along with traditional knowledge-based education. The most common form is the apprenticeship, where a child works alongside a knowledgeable tradesman for several hours each day.

Attribute Minimums: Scientist caste, INT 4; technician caste, DEX 4; merchant caste, CHA 4; laborer caste, BOD 4
Skills: Academic/Clan History +1, Administration +1, Interest/Any +1, and two other skills by caste: scientist: Academic/Any +2, MedTech +1; technician: Technician/Any +2, Scrounge +1; merchant: Negotiation +2, Appraisal +1; laborer: Career/Any +2, Computers +1
Next Path: Scientist caste: University (3); technician caste: Technical College (3); merchant caste: Trade School (3, Merchant Field only); laborer caste: Trade School (3, not Merchant Field)

Clan Apprenticeship Events

2 Your settlement was captured by another Clan in a brutal firefight, and you got caught in the middle [BOD –1, Combat Paralysis]
3 Accident with machinery or chemicals [Choose one:

Poor Hearing (2), Poor Vision, Lost Limb, Unattractive]

4 You feel you are in the wrong caste, but the Clan won't reassign you [Brave, but lose all skills gained from this path and flee to the bandit caste; take Ne'er-Do-Well (4) or Civilian Job (4) as next path]
5 Frequently beaten for your mistakes [Timid]
6 Fall in with the "wrong" crowd [Streetwise/Clan +1, Addiction]
7 Your master was a slave driver, but he made sure you learned your trade [+1 to any two skills]
8 Like a freebirth, you waste your time reading books [Academic/Any +2, choose one: Computers +2, First Aid +2, Language/Any +2, Interest/Any +3, Technician/Any +2]
9 You have an affinity for this work [Natural Aptitude for any one skill gained on this path]
10 The bandit caste attacked your settlement. Your heroic actions helped drive off the invaders [Brave, Good Reputation, Tactics/Infantry +1; you may choose Freeborn Sibko as your next path, and so your character leaves Stage 2 at age eighteen rather than sixteen]
11 Lucky break. Your skill comes to the attention of the local governor [Contact (2), Good Reputation, Protocol/Clan +2]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

FARM

Your parents couldn't afford to send you off to school or the academy, so you stayed on at the farm. Season after season, you saw your friends go offplanet while you worked your butt off in the fields. You planned to join them someday....

Skills: Animal Handling +2, Career/Farming +1, Piloting/Tracked +1, Piloting/Wheeled +1, Rifles +1

Next Path: Military Enlistment (3), Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Trade School (3)

Farm Events

2 Your carelessness cost your parents their lives [Addiction/Alcohol, Quirk/Traumatic Flashbacks, Stigma/Orphan]
3 Trampled in stampede [Lost Limb, Poor Hearing]
4 Family lost the farm [Poverty]
5 Needed an escape from farm life [Addiction]
6 Family had limited farm equipment [Riding +2, but lose Piloting Skills gained from this path]
7 Young Farmers Club was your second home [Academic/Agriculture +1, Career/Farming +1]
8 Hunted often [Rifles +1, Tracking +1]
9 Found valuable minerals on the farm [Wealth]
10 Went to town for school [Academic/Any +1, Language/Affiliation +2, Computers +1]
11 Learned to fly family's crop duster [Piloting/Aircraft +2, Bombing +1]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

FREEBORN SIBKO

Clan Affiliation only

Though they still regard trueborns as vastly superior warriors, most Clans have come to realize that some freeborns can also excel in combat. Those freeborns who prove themselves fit for warrior training are put through a grueling program designed to make them the best warriors they can be. Casualties in these programs tend to run high, along with the number of dropouts. The losses are exacerbated by the fact that most of the training officers have little regard for their charges and would as happily see them dead as see them pass their Trials of Position.

Attribute Minimums: BOD 3, DEX 4, RFL 3, WIL 4, SOC 6

Attribute Thresholds: BOD +1, WIL +1

Traits: Well-Equipped (2), Quirk/Clan Honor, Stigma/Freebirth Warrior, Promotion (to Rank 2). Also Vehicle (2), unless the character chooses the Infantry Field.

Skills: Career/Soldier +3, First Aid +2, Interest/Clan Remembrance +2, Brawling +4, Navigation/Ground +2, Pistols +2, choose one: Academic/Any +1, Interest/Any +1, Streetwise/Clan +1

Fields: Basic Training and Cavalry **or** Basic Training and Infantry **or** Clan Aerospace Pilot, Clan Elemental or Clan MechWarrior. All field skills start with 3 Skill Points; the player may also add +1 to any two field skills.

Next Path: Police Academy (3), Tour of Duty: Clan (4)

Freeborn Sibko Events

2 You caused the needless death of a trueborn warrior [Bad Reputation (2), Enemy (2), and you wash out of training]
3 Too weak to become a warrior [Glass Jaw, Academic/Any +1, –1 Skill Point to all skills gained from your Military Fields, and you wash out of training]
4 You don't have what it takes, or at least what they say it takes [Timid, Bureaucracy/Clan +2, and you wash out of training]
5 Your training officers give you "special attention" [Introvert, Brawling +1]
6 You sneak out of camp on occasion [Escape Artist +1, Fast Talk +1, –1 Skill Point to any three skills gained from your Military Fields]
7 Like a typical freebirth, you take up a stravag hobby [Choose one: Academic/Any +2, Art/Any +2, Interest/Any +2, Gambling +2, Strategy +1]
8 You took the worst they could throw at you and came back for more [Brave]
9 Natural leader [Good Reputation, Leadership +2, Bureaucracy/Clan +2]
10 You pass your Trial of Position with two kills [Commission (Rank 1), Good Reputation, Vehicle (3), Custom Vehicle]
11 You pass your Trial of Position with three kills! [Commission (Rank 3), Good Reputation (2), Vehicle (5), Custom Vehicle (2)]

12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results; reroll if you get 10 and 11, as those events are mutually exclusive]

HIGH SCHOOL

You attended one of the many schools that give teenagers a basic education, participating in academic studies as well as a healthy dose of athletic and other extracurricular activities.

Traits: Contact

Skills: Academic/Any +1, Computers +1, Interest/Any +2, Streetwise/Affiliation +1

Next Path: Trade School (3), Technical College (3), Police Academy (3), Military Enlistment (3), Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Civilian Job (4)

High School Events

2 Caught in school shooting crossfire [Disabled, Poor Hearing]
3 Gave in to peer pressure [Addiction (2), Timid]
4 Sports injury [Interest/Any Sport +1, Choose one: Disabled, Poor Vision, Poor Hearing]
5 Traumatic relationship [Introvert]
6 Another childhood wasted on holovids [Interest/Holovid Shows +1, lose the Academic and Computers Skill Points gained from this path]
7 Local sports hero [Acrobatics +1, Interest/Any Sport +2]
8 Avid participant in extracurricular activities [Acting +1, Art/Any +1]
9 Bright student [Academic/Any +1, Computers +1, Language/Any +1]
10 Scholarship [Wealth, character may enter University Path in next stage]
11 Planetary honor student [Wealth, Fast Learner, may enter University Path in next stage]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

MERCENARY BRAT

Your parents or guardians were mercenaries, or a mercenary group took you in at a young age. Always on the move, they opted for home (DropShip) schooling. It's what you know. It's all you know.

Attribute Thresholds: INT –1, WIL +1, EDG +1

Skills: Interest/Any +1, choose two: Academic/Any +2, Administration +2, Appraisal +2, Bureaucracy/Mercenary +2, Negotiation +2, Pistols +1, Tactics/Any +1, Technician/Any +1, Training +2, Brawling +1

Next Path: Trade School (3), Technical College (3), Police Academy (3), Military Enlistment (3), Military Academy (3, represents the Outreach Mercenary Training Command), Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Civilian Job (4), Yakuza (4, Draconis Combine Affiliation only)

Mercenary Brat Events

2 Caught in the crossfire [Choose two: Lost Limb, Combat Paralysis, Timid]
3 Parent/guardian lost to mishap/combat; you saw it happen [Combat Paralysis, may not enter Military Academy]
4 Trapped too long on a planet with semi-toxic atmosphere [Slow Learner, Poison Resistance]
5 Just had to get in trouble on Outreach [Enemy, Streetwise/Chaos March +1, may not enter Military Academy]
6 Thought dead and left behind, you burned much accrued karma making it back to civilization [EDG –1, Scrounge +2]
7 Around a mercenary unit, any helping hand is appreciated [Choose two: Career/Any +1, Technician/Any +1, Scrounge +1, Streetwise/Any +1]
8 Spent all your spare time on the DropShip bridge [Comms/Conv. +2, Navigation/Space +1]
9 The unit's scout platoon took you under their wing [Choose two: Demolitions +1, Jump Packs +2, Perception +2, Streetwise/Any +1, Scrounge +1, Survival +1]
10 You tested so well that you began your training early [Choose one of the following fields, but receive +1 Skill Point in each of its skills rather than the usual +3: Basic Training, Infantry, Cavalry, Aircraft Pilot, Basic Technician, Ship's Crew, Scout]
11 Your adoptive family grants you the finest gift of all on your sixteenth birthday [Choose either Wealth (4) and Well-Equipped or Owns Vehicle and Vehicle (2)]
12 Mercenaries rely on luck more than most, but you can tip it in your favor [Roll three times and choose two results, discarding the third]

MILITARY SCHOOL

Some families, most often nobility with a military tradition, ship their children off to military schools in preparation for admission to an academy. In addition to a fine education, these institutions provide a strong early background in tactics and leadership skills.

Attribute Minimums: WIL 3

Attribute Thresholds: CHA –1, SOC +1

Traits: Promotion, but only if next path is Military Enlistment or a Military Academy

Skills: Academic/Military History +2, Computers +1, Leadership +2, Rifles +1, Martial Arts/Military +1

Next Path: University (3), Police Academy (3), Military Enlistment (3), Military Academy (3), New Avalon Institute of Science (3, Federated Suns or Lyran Alliance Affiliation only), New Avalon Military Academy (3, Federated Suns Affiliation only), Sun Zhang MechWarrior Academy (3, Draconis Combine Affiliation only), Ne'er-Do-Well (4)

Military School Events

2 Involved in terrible hazing incident [Glass Jaw]
3 Training accident [Choose one: Lost Limb, Poor Hearing, Poor Vision]
4 You're just not cut out for the military [Timid; may not enter an Academy]

5 You have a rival [Enemy]
6 Accidentally destroyed school property [Poverty]
7 Make friends with the commandant [Contact]
8 Training works almost too well [CHA –1, Brave]
9 Extensive nighttime training [Night Vision, Stealth +1]
10 Qualified for accelerated training program [You gain one of the following fields: Basic Training, Basic Technician, Military Scientist]
11 Relative dies and leaves you his vehicle [Vehicle (3), Owns Vehicle]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

PREPARATORY SCHOOL

These exclusive schools prepare young adults for higher learning. Theoretically, they have superior curricula, but this is not always true in practice. The main advantage of attending such a school is the contacts you make among the upper-class students and their parents.

Attribute Thresholds: SOC +1
Traits: Well-Connected
Skills: Academic/Any +2, Computers +1, Language/Any +1, Protocol/Affiliation +2
Next Path: Technical College (3), University (3), Military Academy (3), New Avalon Institute of Science (3, Federated Suns or Lyran Alliance Affiliation only), Ne'er-Do-Well (4)

Preparatory School Events

2 Developed expensive—and illegal—tastes [Addiction (2), Poverty, Streetwise/Affiliation +1]
3 You had a relationship with the headmaster's son or daughter, got caught and expelled [Lose Well-Connected, –1 to all Skill Points gained from this path]
4 Way too much partying [Addiction, lose Academic and Language Skill Points gained from this path]
5 You shamed the son of a powerful noble [Enemy, SOC –1]
6 Your sweetheart came from the wrong side of the tracks [If you keep him/her, lose Well-Connected but gain Brave. If you back down and break off the relationship, keep Well-Connected, but also become Timid]
7 Weekend cruises with the folks [Piloting/Naval +1]
8 You're great at the 'Mech sims, but all that playing rots your brain [Natural Aptitude/Piloting/'Mech, Slow Learner, Piloting/'Mech +1, Tactics/'Mech +1]
9 Every school needs a "source," and you happened to be in the wrong place at the right time [SOC –1, Contact, Wealth, Appraisal +1, Negotiation +2, Streetwise +1]
10 Honor Student [Contact, Academic/Any +2, Computers +2, Language/Any +1]
11 Relative dies and leaves you his vehicle [Vehicle (3), Owns Vehicle]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

STREET

Beyond early childhood, a character living on the street can hardly avoid getting involved in crime. You are no exception. With no money or family, you've learned everything you know from the school of hard knocks.

Attribute Thresholds: EDG +1, SOC –1
Traits: Contact, Bad Reputation, Enemy
Skills: Fast Talk +1, Pistols +1, Scrounge +1, Streetwise/Affiliation +2
Next Path: Trade School (3), Military Enlistment (3), Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Yakuza (4, Draconis Combine Affiliation only)

Street Events

2 Seriously offended underworld kingpin [Enemy (2), Poverty, Streetwise/Affiliation –1, may not enter Yakuza Path]
3 Caught and sold into slavery, then escaped [SOC –1, Poverty, Stigma/Slave]
4 Caught in gang war [Disabled (2)]
5 Fell in with an even worse crowd [Addiction (2)]
6 Savagely beaten by police [Disabled]
7 Ran "errands" for a local "merchant" [Contact, Appraisal +1]
8 Successful gambler [Wealth, Gambling +1]
9 Adopted by wealthy family [SOC +1, Wealth (2)]
10 Powerful underworld mentor [Contact (2), Well-Equipped, Security Systems +1, Streetwise/Affiliation +1]
11 Joined crime syndicate [In For Life, Wealth (3), Well-Connected, Streetwise/Any +2. If Draconis Combine Affiliation, must take Yakuza as next path.]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

TRUEBORN SIBKO

Clan Affiliation only

At this stage, you begin individual training in MechWarrior, pilot or elemental skills. Before Clan children reach what the Inner Sphere considers adulthood, they have already learned all the skills they need to be full-fledged warriors.

Attribute Minimums: BOD 3, DEX 4, RFL 3, WIL 3, SOC 7
Attribute Thresholds: BOD +1, DEX +1
Traits: Well-Equipped (3), Vehicle (2), Custom Vehicle, Quirk/Clan Honor, Promotion (to Rank 6)
Skills: Career/Soldier +3, First Aid +2, Interest/Clan Remembrance +3, Martial Arts/Military +3, Navigation/Ground +2, Pistols +2
Fields: Clan Aerospace Pilot, Elemental or MechWarrior (as appropriate to phenotype). Rather than the usual +3 points per skill, four skills have +2 Skill Points, two have +4 Skill Points and one has +6 Skill Points (player's choice)
Next Path: Tour of Duty: Clan (4)

Trueborn Sibko Events

2 Training accident [Lost Limb (3) and wash out of training]

3 You do not have what it takes to remain in the sibko [Wash out of training]
4 Your training officer takes a keen "interest" in your development [Wash out of training or take all of the following: EDG –1, Introvert, Addiction (2) and Pain Resistance]
5 You excel in the sims, but the real thing secretly scares the hell out of you [+2 Skill Points to any three Piloting and/or Gunnery Skills, Combat Paralysis]
6 Burned seriously in a training accident [Unattractive, Quirk/Fear of Fire, Pain Resistance]
7 You have a rival [Enemy]
8 Incessant and brutal training turns you into a ruthless combat machine [CHA –1, Introvert, +2 to any four of your Phenotype Field Skills]
9 Your skills come to the attention of the leader of your Bloodname House [Contact (3), Well-Connected]
10 You pass your Trial of Position with two kills [Commission (Rank 1), Good Reputation, Vehicle (4), Custom Vehicle]
11 You pass your Trial of Position with three kills! [Commission (Rank 3), Good Reputation (2), Vehicle (6), Custom Vehicle (2)]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results; reroll if you get 10 and 11, as these events are mutually exclusive]

STAGE 3: HIGHER EDUCATION

In early adulthood, many people continue their education before entering the professional world. Higher education can take many forms, ranging from traditional college to military training. This stage of the Life Path is optional; characters can proceed directly to Stage 4: Real Life, depending on the player's preference and the character's *Next Path* prospects.

Time: Unlike paths in the previous stages, Higher Education paths take variable amounts of time, depending on the complexity of the courses or training. The number of years each path takes is listed under its *Time* heading.

Repeating Paths: Characters can take some paths in this stage several times. Each repetition has different effects, depending on the particular path.

Characters cannot spend unlimited amounts of time in the Higher Education Stage, however. After completing a path in this stage, a character must proceed to the next stage (Real Life) and complete at least one path there before returning to take another Higher Education path. This limit represents the fact that in some affiliations, courses of study are expensive and the character's money will simply run out. Even with state-funded schooling, the state will expect the character to enter the workforce after an appropriate time, in order to repay the state's investment.

Some Higher Education paths include subpaths, which are considered part of the main path. For example, Vehicle Technician Training is a subpath of Technical College and is available to characters who took the Civilian Tech Field. Subpaths listed as "part of this pass" can be taken immediately following the preceding path or subpath, without going through Real Life. Alternatively, a character can move on to Real Life and return to the subpath later. In either case, a character must meet the prerequisites to take the subpath. Prerequisites for choosing certain occupational fields are italicized in parentheses next to the field.

Continuation: Characters can continue in this stage as long as the *Repeating Paths* rules allow. After that, the character may proceed to *Stage 4: Real Life* (p. 47). If you choose to end the Life Path here and play your character as a young adult, proceed to *Assigning Attributes, Traits and Skills* (p. 54). Characters can also return to this stage after following one or more Real Life paths, subject to any listed *Next Path* restrictions.

Clan Characters: Civilian characters and failed warriors proceed to Stage 3 for final training in their caste. Scientist caste characters follow the University Path, technicians the Technical College Path, and merchants and laborers the Trade School Path (merchants must take the Merchant Field; laborers cannot).

MILITARY ACADEMY

Cannot have Combat Paralysis or any of the following traits above the lowest possible level: Disabled, Lost Limb, Poor Hearing, Poor Vision

The finest warriors in the Inner Sphere graduate from the many military academies operated by the Successor States. Some have unique curricula, and so the following represents an average academy or participation in a mercenary apprenticeship.

This path does not necessarily represent officer training, but rather a higher grade of training than that available through standard enlistment. Academy training differs from basic military enlistment mainly in granting access to additional fields of study, including MechWarrior and aerospace fighter pilot training.

After completing military training, a character must complete at least one Tour of Duty in the Real Life Stage.

Time: 1 year
Attribute Minimums: INT 3, WIL 3, SOC 3
Attribute Thresholds: RFL +1, BOD +1, WIL +1, SOC +1
Traits: Promotion, Well-Equipped
Skills: Academic/Military History +2, Leadership +1, Protocol/Affiliation +2, Swimming +2
Fields: Basic Training
Next Path: Advanced Individual Training Subpath (mandatory, part of this pass)

Military Academy Events

2 Serious accident [Poor Hearing, may take no additional military paths, choose one: Combat Paralysis, Glass Jaw, Lost Limb (2)]
3 Not cut out for military life [–2 to all Basic Training skills, may take no additional military paths]
4 Academy tuition puts family in debt [Enemy, Poverty]
5 Training accident [Lost Limb]

6 Too much desk work [Rifles –1, Martial Arts/Military –1, Computers +1, Administration +1]
7 Made a good friend among the command corps [Contact (2)]
8 Rival pushes you to excel [Enemy, +1 to all Basic Training skills]
9 Qualified for cross-training program [May take a second AIT immediately after finishing the first AIT, Special Training or OCS; no more than two AITs may be taken]
10 You're officer material! [May take Officer Candidate School next, then return and continue the Life Path from the same point]
11 Graduated at the top of your class [Promotion, Vehicle (4), Custom Vehicle; may take Officer Candidate School next, then return and continue the Life Path from the same point]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

Mandatory Subpath: Advanced Individual Training (AIT)

Basic Training graduates only

Time: 2 years

Traits: Promotion

Skills: Leadership +1, add +1 to three Basic Training Skills and +1 to any one other skill

Fields: Choose one of the following fields, subject to the listed restrictions:

Aerospace Pilot *(minimum DEX 4, RFL 4)*
Aircraft Pilot *(minimum DEX 4, RFL 3)*
Armored Infantry *(minimum STR 6, BOD 5)*
Cavalry
DropShip Pilot *(minimum DEX 4)*
Infantry
Marine *(minimum WIL 4, may not have TDS Trait)*
MechWarrior *(minimum DEX 3, RFL 4)*
Scientist *(minimum INT 3)*
Scout
Ship's Crew

Events: Do not roll events for Advanced Individual Training.

Next Path: Tour of Duty (4), Covert Ops (4, Scout only) or Special Training (3, part of this pass; take if character enters Scientist, DropShip Pilot, Infantry, Marine, MechWarrior, Armored Infantry or Scout fields)

Subpath: Special Training

AIT graduates only

Time: 3 years

Attribute Thresholds: Add +1 to any one threshold of player's choice

Skills: Leadership +1, +1 to three Basic Training skills, +1 to half the character's AIT skills (round up), and +1 to any one other skill

Traits: Promotion, Wealth, Well-Equipped

Fields: Choose one of the following fields, subject to the listed restrictions:

Doctor *(Scientist Field required, minimum DEX 4, INT 5)*
JumpShip Pilot *(DropShip Pilot Field required, minimum INT 5, may not have TDS Trait)*
Military Scientist *(minimum INT 5)*
Special Forces *(Infantry, Marine, MechWarrior, Armored Infantry or Scout Field required, minimum BOD 4, RFL 4, INT 3, WIL 5)*

Next Path: Tour of Duty (4) or Covert Ops (4, Special Forces or Military Scientist only)

Subpath: Officer Candidate School (OCS)

Entry via event roll only

Time: 1 year

Attribute Thresholds: CHA +1

Traits: Commission (Rank 1)

Fields: Officer Training

Next Path: Per last path followed; add to its *Next Path* options the Tour of Duty: "Social General" Path if the character has the Lyran Alliance Affiliation

MILITARY ENLISTMENT

Cannot have Combat Paralysis or any of the following traits above the lowest possible level: Lost Limb, Poor Hearing, Poor Vision

In this age of perpetual war, the military will take just about anyone into its ranks. However, without the money or connections to get into an academy, you must work your way up from the bottom.

After finishing military training, the character must complete at least one Tour of Duty Path in the Real Life Stage.

Time: 1 year
Attribute Minimums: WIL 3
Attribute Thresholds: STR +1, RFL +1, BOD +1, WIL +1, CHA –1
Traits: Promotion
Skills: Swimming +2
Fields: Basic Training
Next Path: Advanced Individual Training Subpath (mandatory, part of this pass)

Military Enlistment Events

2 Horrible training accident [Poor Vision, may take no additional military paths, choose one: Combat Paralysis, Glass Jaw, Lost Limb (2)]
3 Not cut out for military life [–2 to all Basic Training skills, may take no additional military paths]
4 Owe big to gamblers [Enemy, Poverty]
5 Minor training accident [Lost Limb]
6 Aptitude tests place your training focus on support services [Rifles –1, Martial Arts/Military –1, Comms/Conv. +1]
7 One of your buddies will turn out to be a useful contact [Contact]
8 Sharpshooter [Natural Aptitude/Rifles]
9 Training standout; recommended to the academy by your CO [Promotion; may take remaining military training (if any) in the Military Academy Path]

10 Become supplier of "special" items for the base [Wealth (2), Well-Equipped, Appraisal +1]
11 You're officer material! [May take Officer Candidate School next, then return and continue the Life Path from the same point]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

Mandatory Subpath: Advanced Individual Training (AIT)

Basic Training graduates only

Time: None (included in Basic Training)

Traits: Promotion

Skills: Add +1 to three Basic Training skills and +1 to any one other skill

Fields: Choose one of the following fields, subject to the listed restrictions:

Aircraft Pilot *(minimum DEX 4, RFL 3)*
Basic Technician *(minimum DEX 3)*
Cavalry
Infantry
Marine *(minimum WIL 4, may not have TDS Trait)*
Police Officer
Ship's Crew

Events: Do not roll events for Advanced Individual Training

Next Path: Tour of Duty (4) or Special Training (3, part of this pass if character enters Basic Technician, Police Officer, Infantry or Marine fields)

Subpath: Special Training

AIT graduates only

Time: 2 years

Attribute Thresholds: Add +1 to any one threshold of player's choice

Skills: Add +1 to three Basic Training skills, +1 to half the character's AIT skills (round up) and +1 to any one other skill

Traits: Promotion, Wealth, Well-Equipped

Fields: Choose one of the following fields, subject to the listed restrictions:

Aerospace Technician *(Basic Technician Field required, minimum INT 4)*
'Mech Technician *(Basic Technician Field required, minimum INT 4)*
Police Tactical Officer *(Police Officer Field required)*
Special Forces *(Infantry or Marine Field required, minimum BOD 4, RFL 4, INT 3, WIL 5)*
Vehicle Technician *(Basic Technician Field required)*

Next Path: Tour of Duty (4) or Covert Ops (4, Special Forces or Police Tactical Officer only)

Subpath: Officer Candidate School (OCS)

Entry via event roll only

Time: 1 year

Attribute Thresholds: CHA +1

Traits: Commission (Rank 1)

Fields: Officer Training

Next Path: Per last path followed

NEW AVALON INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE

Federated Suns or Lyran Alliance Affiliations only

The New Avalon Institute of Science (NAIS) is perhaps the best-known and most-respected university in the Inner Sphere. Founded by Prince Hanse Davion soon after he took the Federated Suns throne in 3013, the NAIS quickly became known for its huge library, and soon afterward for the astounding developments made by its faculty and students. Scientists working in NAIS laboratories were instrumental in reintroducing lost technologies to the Inner Sphere after the discovery of the Star League memory core on Helm in 3024.

Because this path covers so many possible careers, the player may choose the specific major his or her character is studying and which subskills go with it, subject to the gamemaster's approval.

The main path represents general study, while subpaths focus on the student's major. Some majors involve learning in specific fields, as described below.

Time: 2 years

Attribute Minimums: INT 5, WIL 3, SOC 3

Attribute Thresholds: INT +1, SOC +1

Traits: Poverty, Well-Equipped

Skills: Bureaucracy/Federated Suns +3, Computers +1, Academic/Any +1, Academic/Any +2, Language/Any +1, Perception +2

Next Path: NAIS Major Subpath (mandatory, part of this pass)

New Avalon Institute of Science Events

2 Caught selling term papers; kicked out of school [Bad Reputation, Enemy, Wealth, Fast Talk +2, –1 to all skills gained from this path, may not take any additional NAIS or University paths]
3 Can't hack the late nights [Addiction]
4 Partied instead of studying [Interest/Any +2, –1 to all skills gained from this path]
5 Your dormitory neighbor keep the volume cranked day and night [–1 to any two skills gained from this path]
6 Managed to shoehorn your classes between hangovers [Interest/Bartending +2, Addiction/Alcohol]
7 Hung out with military students [Contact, choose one: Pistols +1 or Rifles +1]
8 Someone had to figure out how to supply the entire dorm with a live holovid feed: you [Computers +1, Scrounge +1]
9 Got the best professor at the school [Add +3 to any one skill learned in this path]
10 Discovered a rare text in the library [Academic/Any History +3, Wealth, Contact]
11 Made the Dean's List [Good Reputation, EDG +1, +1 to any three skills gained from this path, and add +2 to the event die roll in character's next pass through this path or Postgraduate Studies, whichever comes first]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

Mandatory Subpath: NAIS Major

Time: 2 years

Traits: Well-Equipped

Skills: Any four relevant skills +1, any one field skill at an additional +1

Fields: Choose one: Civilian Tech, Basic Technician, Scientist, Military Scientist

Event: Do not roll an event for NAIS Major

Next Path: Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Civilian Job (4), Postgraduate Studies (4), NAIS Advanced Studies Subpath (3, part of this pass), Covert Ops (4, Military Scientist only)

Subpath: NAIS Advanced Studies

Time: 4 years

Attribute Minimums: INT 6, SOC 4

Traits: Wealth, Well-Equipped, Well-Connected

Skills: Add +2 to half the skills earned from this path so far (round up) and +1 to any four other skills

Fields: Choose one of the following, subject to the listed restrictions:

Aerospace Technician *(Basic Technician Field required)*
Doctor *(Scientist Field required, minimum DEX 4)*
Engineer *(Civilian Tech or Basic Technician Field required)*
'Mech Technician *(Basic Technician Field required)*
Planetary Surveyor *(Scientist Field required)*
Vehicle Technician *(Civilian Tech Field required)*

Next Path: Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Civilian Job (4), Postgraduate Studies (4), Travel (4)

NAIS COLLEGE OF MILITARY SCIENCES

Federated Suns or Lyran Alliance Affiliations only. Cannot have Combat Paralysis or any of the following traits above the lowest possible level: Disabled, Lost Limb, Poor Hearing, Poor Vision

The NAIS also hosts the College of Military Sciences (originally the New Avalon Military Academy, still called that by some). The CMS is the finest academy in the Federated Suns State Command and is regarded by many as the best in the Inner Sphere. With the possible exception of the new Focht War College on Tukayyid, the CMS boasts the most advanced training facilities in existence. Some question how much this actually improves the quality of the education, but few dispute the abilities of CMS graduates to their faces.

Time: 1 year

Attribute Minimums: INT 4, WIL 3, SOC 3

Attribute Thresholds: RFL +1, INT +1, WIL +1, SOC +1

Traits: Promotion, Well-Equipped

Skills: Academic/Any +2, Bureaucracy/Federated Suns +2, Computers +1, Swimming +2

Fields: Basic Training

Next Path: Advanced Individual Training Subpath (mandatory, part of this pass)

NAIS College of Military Sciences Events

2 Boy, did you screw up! A classmate under your command died; you got kicked out of the academy and court-martialed [Stigma/Expulsion from the CMS, Bad Reputation, Bureaucracy/Federated Suns +2, may take no additional military paths]
3 Horribly burned in a training accident [Addiction/Painkillers, Unattractive]
4 Too many late nights in front of a computer [Poor Vision, +1 to any one skill]
5 Managed to shoehorn your classes between hangovers [Interest/Bartending +2, Addiction/Alcohol]
6 The team needed someone to fill in for the rest of the season: you [Choose one: Running +1, Swimming +1, Interest/Any Sport +2]
7 The sarge wasn't just some old-timer spinning yarns—he passed on some "special skills" to his students [Choose two: Climbing +1, Demolitions +1, Escape Artist +1, Jump Packs +1, Security Systems +1, Survival +1]
8 You'll thank sarge later for all those early morning "motivational" runs [BOD +1, Running +2]
9 You participate in an exchange program with another academy [Contact, Protocol/Any +2, +1 to any other skill]
10 It's good to be the cadet corps commander [Contact (2), Vehicle (3), Leadership +3, +1 to any two other skills; may take Officer Candidate School next, then return and continue the Life Path from the same point]
11 Graduated at the top of your class [Promotion, Vehicle (5), Custom Vehicle (2); may take Officer Candidate School next, then return and continue the Life Path from the same point]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

Mandatory Subpath: Advanced Individual Training (AIT)

Basic Training graduates only

Time: 2 years

Traits: Promotion

Skills: Leadership +1, Strategy +2, +1 to any two relevant skills, +1 to any one field skill

Fields: Choose one of the following fields, subject to the listed restrictions:

Aerospace Pilot *(minimum DEX 4, RFL 4)*
Armored Infantry *(minimum STR 6, BOD 5)*
Cavalry
DropShip Pilot *(minimum DEX 4)*
Infantry
MechWarrior *(minimum DEX 3, RFL 4)*

Events: Do not roll events for Advanced Individual Training

Next Path: Tour of Duty (4) or Special Training (3, part of this pass if character enters DropShip Pilot, Infantry, MechWarrior or Armored Infantry fields)

Subpath: Special Training
AIT graduates only
Time: 3 years
Attribute Thresholds: Add +1 to any one threshold of player's choice
Traits: Promotion, Wealth, Well-Equipped, Well-Connected
Skills: Strategy +2, Tactics/Any +2, +1 to three Basic Training skills, +1 to half the character's AIT Skills (round up), +2 to any one other skill
Fields: Choose one of the following fields, subject to the listed restrictions:
JumpShip Pilot *(DropShip Pilot Field required, minimum INT 5, may not have TDS Trait)*
Military Scientist *(minimum INT 5)*
Special Forces *(Infantry, MechWarrior or Armored Infantry Field required, minimum BOD 4, RFL 4, WIL 5)*
Next Path: Tour of Duty (4) or Covert Ops (4, Special Forces or Military Scientist fields only)

Subpath: Officer Candidate School (OCS)
Entry via event roll only
Time: 1 year
Attribute Thresholds: CHA +1
Traits: Commission (Rank 1)
Skills: Strategy +2, Tactics/Any +1
Fields: Officer Training
Next Path: Per last path followed; add to its *Next Path* options the Tour of Duty: "Social General" Path if the character has Lyran Alliance Affiliation

POLICE ACADEMY

Law enforcement officers are needed on most planets, and so there is always a demand for trained police. Though less prestigious than MechWarrior academies, police academies are nonetheless respectable and well-attended.
Time: 1 year
Attribute Thresholds: RFL +1, WIL +1
Fields: Police Officer
Next Path: Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Civilian Job (4), To Serve and Protect (4)

Police Detective Training
Police Academy graduates only
Time: 1 year
Skills: +1 to five Police Officer Field Skills, +1 to any one other skill
Fields: Detective
Events: Use the Police Academy Events table
Next Path: Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Civilian Job (4), To Serve and Protect (4), Covert Ops (4)

Tactical Unit Training
Police Academy graduates only
Time: 1 year
Skills: +2 to four Police Officer Field Skills
Fields: Police Tactical Officer
Events: Use the Police Academy Events table
Next Path: Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Civilian Job (4), To Serve and Protect (4), Covert Ops (4)

Police Academy Events

2	Accident on the firing range [Poor Hearing, choose one: Amnesia, Combat Paralysis, Disability (2)]
3	Framed by a dirty cop [Enemy, Bad Reputation, must take Ne'er-Do-Well Path next]
4	Partner killed in front of you [Quirk/Flashbacks, Addiction]
5	Helped capture crime boss [Enemy (2), Good Reputation]
6	Desk job [Pistols –1, Intimidation –2, Shotguns –1, Computers +1, Comms/Conv. +2]
7	Instructor's pet [Contact]
8	Aced your classes [may enter Police Detective or Tactical Unit training as next path]
9	Sharpshooter [Natural Aptitude/Pistols]
10	Expert cadet [add +2 to all Police Officer Field skills]
11	Decorated for bravery after saving lives on a field assignment [WIL +1, Brave, Good Reputation, Pistols +1, Tactics/Infantry +1]
12	[Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

SUN ZHANG MECHWARRIOR ACADEMY

Draconis Combine Affiliation only. Cannot have Combat Paralysis, Disabled, Lost Limb, Poor Hearing or Poor Vision traits
The largest academy of its kind in the Inner Sphere—graduating more than four hundred soldiers annually—the Sun Zhang MechWarrior Academy (SZMA) is feared and respected throughout the Draconis Combine and the rest of the Successor States. Located on the world of New Samarkand, the SZMA trains BattleMech, aerospace fighter and armored infantry cadets (the latter being a recent addition). The academy is infamous for its harsh and brutal regimen; its cadets are steeped in bushido and instilled with intense loyalty to House Kurita. Combined with exceptional resources and the finest teachers available, the SZMA produces some of the most respected—and privileged—soldiers in known space.
Time: 2 years
Attribute Minimums: INT 4, WIL 4, SOC 4
Attribute Thresholds: RFL +1, WIL +2, SOC +1
Traits: Brave, Well-Equipped, Quirk/Loyalty to House Kurita
Skills: Academic/Any Military Science +2, Martial Arts/Military +2, Blades +2
Fields: Basic Training
Next Path: Advanced Individual Training Subpath (mandatory, part of this pass)

Sun Zhang MechWarrior Academy Events

2	Accused of sedition by the Internal Security Force; you have no choice but to flee [Stigma/Traitor, Enemy (3), may take no additional military paths]

3 You kill a fellow student in an honor duel who turns out to be the cousin of a military district warlord [Enemy (2), Timid]
4 Extensive abuse from an instructor is more than your honor can handle; you snap and attack him [Bad Reputation]
5 Though victorious in your honor duel, you received a terrible facial scar [Unattractive]
6 Obsessed with honor, you neglect your regular studies while practicing your swordsmanship [–2 to any two Basic Training skills, Blades +1, Martial Arts/Military +1]
7 A senior cadet takes you under his wing [+1 to any two Basic Training skills]
8 While training against a line regiment, you become comrades with one of the unit's soldiers, who is an ex-member of a Yakuza-based Ghost Regiment [Contact, Streetwise/Draconis Combine +1]
9 Extensive training reveals your natural aptitude for combat [Combat Sense]
10 Talented and backed by your honorable family, your rise is meteoric [Vehicle (4), SOC +1; may take Officer Candidate School next, then return and continue the Life Path from the same point]
11 Graduate with honors [Promotion, Vehicle (5), SOC +1; may take Officer Candidate School next, then return and continue the Life Path from the same point]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

Mandatory Subpath: Advanced Individual Training (AIT)

Basic Training graduates only

Time: 2 years

Traits: Promotion

Skills: Tactics/Any +2, +1 to any three relevant skills, +1 to any one field skill

Fields: Choose one of the following fields, subject to the listed restrictions:

MechWarrior *(minimum DEX 4, RFL 4)*
Aerospace Pilot *(minimum DEX 4, RFL 4)*
Armored Infantry *(minimum STR 6, BOD 5)*

Events: Do not roll events for Advanced Individual Training

Next Path: Tour of Duty (4), or DEST Training Subpath (3, part of this pass, take if character enters the MechWarrior or Armored Infantry fields)

Subpath: DEST Training

AIT graduates (MechWarriors and Armored Infantry only)

With the possible exception of House Liao's Death Commandos, the Draconis Elite Strike Teams are the most feared and efficient special forces in the Inner Sphere. Candidates are sent to the DEST Tactical Command Center on Pesht for intense training and indoctrination, isolated from the outside world. Teams of five soldiers train together and graduate together to form a new strike team; these years of working together give them unsurpassed efficiency.

Time: 3 years

Attribute Minimums: BOD 4, RFL 5, WIL 6

Attribute Thresholds: BOD +1, WIL +1, CHA –1

Traits: Pain Resistance, Promotion, Well-Equipped (2), In For Life, Quirk/Loyalty to House Kurita (2)

Skills: Tactics/Infantry +3, +1 to two Basic Training skills, +2 to half the character's AIT skills (round up)

Fields: Special Forces

Next Path: Tour of Duty (4) or Covert Ops (4)

Subpath: Officer Candidate School (OCS)

Entry via event roll only

Time: 1 year

Attribute Thresholds: WIL +1

Traits: Commission (Rank 1)

Skills: Leadership +2, Tactics/Any +2

Fields: Officer Training

Next Path: Per last path followed

TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Technical fields such as computer and vehicle repair are taught in small colleges across the Inner Sphere. Civilian pilot schools also fall under this category. Entry requirements are fairly lenient, and tuition is affordable or paid for by the government.

Because this path covers so many possible careers, the player chooses his or her character's specific course (field) and relevant subskills, subject to the gamemaster's approval.

Time: 2 years

Attribute Minimums: DEX 3, INT 3

Skills: Academic/Any Relevant +3, Computers +2

Fields: Choose one: Civilian Tech, DropShip Pilot or Civilian Aircraft Pilot

Next Path: Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Civilian Job (4), Vehicle Technician Training Subpath (3, Civilian Tech Field only, part of this pass), JumpShip Pilot Training Subpath (3, DropShip Pilot Field only, part of this pass), Free Trader (4, DropShip Pilot Field only)

Technical College Events

2 Serious shop accident [Add one year to the time this path takes and choose one: Poor Vision, Lost Limb, Poor Hearing]
3 Needed help to get through [Addiction (2)]
4 Missed a lot of classes [–1 to all skills granted by the field taken]
5 Switched majors mid-course [Add one year to the time this path takes]
6 Lots of all-nighters [Addiction, +1 to any skill]
7 Spent time in space [Technician/Interplanetary +1, Zero-G Operations +1]
8 Held down a good part-time job [Wealth]
9 Extra technical training [Add +1 to any two Technician Subskills]
10 "Borrowed" materials from shop [Well-Equipped]
11 Top of the class [+3 to any two skills, may enter University or Military Academy path next]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

Subpath: Vehicle Technician Training

Technical College (Civilian Tech) required

Time: 2 years

Skills: Piloting/Wheeled +1, add +2 to any two Civilian Tech Field skills

Fields: Vehicle Technician

Next Path: Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Civilian Job (4)

Subpath: JumpShip Pilot Training

Technical College (DropShip Pilot) required

Attribute Minimums: INT 5

Time: 4 years

Skills: Add +2 to any four DropShip Pilot Field skills

Fields: JumpShip Pilot

Next Path: Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Civilian Job (4), Travel (4), Free Trader (4)

TRADE SCHOOL

The Trade School Path represents any institute that teaches non-technical and non-academic trades, such as business, accounting and clerical work. Entry requirements are fairly lenient, and tuition is affordable or paid for by the government.

Because this path covers so many possible careers, the player chooses the character's specific trade (field) and relevant subskills, subject to the gamemaster's approval.

Time: 1 year

Skills: Choose the Merchant Field or the following skills: Bureaucracy/Affiliation +3, Career/Any +4, Administration +3, Academic/Any +2, choose two: Art/Any +3, Career/Any +3, Comms/Conv. +2, Computers +3, Interest/Any +3, Language/Any +3, Piloting/Wheeled +2, or Training +3

Next Path: Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Civilian Job (4), Free Trader (4, Merchant Field only)

Trade School Events

2 Slept through class [Interest/Any +2, but –2 to all Trade School-granted skills]
3 Too much time in front of a computer screen [Poor Vision]
4 Picked up a bad habit [Addiction]
5 Switched majors mid-course [Add one year to the time this path takes]
6 Worked in school office [Administration +1]
7 Worked as a teacher's assistant [Training +2]
8 Made friends with an instructor [Contact]
9 Course included offworld travel [Language/Any +2, Zero-G Operations +1]
10 Intensive computer work [Computers +2, Technician/Electronics +1, Well-Equipped]
11 Won the lottery and stopped working [Wealth (7), Slow Learner, must take Ne'er-Do-Well as next path]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

UNIVERSITY

In the thirty-first century, major institutions of higher learning are rare except on the most prosperous and advanced worlds. Entry to these prestigious facilities is limited, though the children of nobility always seem to get in. Hefty tuition and other expenses tend to drain the typical university student's C-bill accounts, but the education is usually well worth it.

Because this path covers so many possible areas of study, the player chooses the character's specific major and relevant subskills, subject to the gamemaster's approval.

The main path represents general study; the character must take a Major Subpath next that represents his or her specific focus. Only one Major Subpath may be taken in a pass through this path; to take additional majors, the character must repeat this path. Some majors involve learning in specific fields, as described below.

Time: 2 years

Attribute Minimums: INT 4, SOC 3

Attribute Thresholds: INT +1

Traits: Poverty

Skills: Academic/Any +3, Bureaucracy/Affiliation +2, Language/Any +1, Perception +2

Next Path: Sciences Major Subpath (mandatory, part of this pass), Technical Major Subpath (mandatory, part of this pass), Political Science Major Subpath (mandatory, part of this pass), Other Major Subpath (mandatory, part of this pass)

University Events

2 Wild party results in the destruction of a dorm building, several injuries and your expulsion [Bad Reputation, Enemy, –1 to all skills gained from this path, may take no additional University paths]
3 A slave to your studies, your physical and social skills wither [BOD –1, Introvert]
4 Scandalous romance with a professor; you are expelled [Seduction +1, –1 to all skills gained from this path, may take no additional University paths]
5 Studied all day, partied all night [Addiction, –1 to all skills gained from this path]
6 Worked your way through school [Career/Any +2]
7 Worked as a teacher's assistant [Training +1, Administration +1]
8 Course of study included extensive travel [G-Tolerance, Language/Any +1, Protocol/Any +1]
9 Made friends with a professor who turned out to be an ex-military intelligence officer [Contact (2)]
10 A fast study and a sharp test-taker [Fast Learner; reduce the time spent in every University path and subpath by one year]
11 Top of your class [Good Reputation, Wealth, +1 to all skills gained from this path, add +1 to all event rolls in Postgraduate Studies Path]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

Mandatory Subpath: Sciences Major
University Path required
Time: 2 years
Skills: Add +1 to any three skills
Fields: Scientist
Events: Do not roll events for Sciences Major
Next Path: Civilian Job (4), Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Postgraduate Studies (4), Medical School Subpath (3, part of this pass), Field Scientist School Subpath (3, part of this pass)

Mandatory Subpath: Technical Major
University Path required
Time: 2 years
Skills: Add +1 to any two skills
Fields: Civilian Tech
Events: Do not roll events for Technical Major
Next Path: Civilian Job (4), Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Postgraduate Studies (4), Aerospace School Subpath (3, part of this pass), Engineering School Subpath (3, part of this pass)

Mandatory Subpath: Political Science Major
University Path required
Time: 2 years
Skills: Add +1 to any three skills
Fields: Politician
Events: Do not roll events for Political Science Major
Next Path: Civilian Job (4), Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Postgraduate Studies (4), Travel (4)

Mandatory Subpath: Other Majors
University Path required
Create your own major using the following guidelines.
Time: 2 years
Skills: Academic/Any Relevant +4, add +1 to any two skills. Choose three: Academic/Any +3, Acting +2, Art/Any Relevant +3, Administration +3, Career/Any Relevant +3, Computers +2, Language/Any +3, or Training +3
Events: Do not roll events for Other Majors
Next Path: Civilian Job (4), Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Postgraduate Studies (4)

Subpath: Medical School
Sciences Major required
Time: 4 years
Attribute Minimums: DEX 4, WIL 3
Skills: Add +1 to any three skills
Fields: Doctor
Next Path: Civilian Job (4), Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Postgraduate Studies (4), Tour of Duty (4)

Subpath: Field Scientist School
Sciences Major required
Time: 2 years
Skills: Add +1 to any two skills
Fields: Planetary Surveyor
Next Path: Civilian Job (4), Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Postgraduate Studies (4), Travel (4)

Subpath: Aerospace School
Technical Major required
Time: 3 years
Attribute Minimums: DEX 4
Skills: Add +1 to two Civilian Tech Field skills
Fields: Aerospace Technician
Next Path: Civilian Job (4), Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Postgraduate Studies (4), Tour of Duty (4)

Subpath: Engineering School
Technical Major required
Time: 4 years
Attribute Minimums: INT 5, WIL 3
Skills: Add +2 to two Civilian Tech Field skills
Fields: Engineer
Next Path: Civilian Job (4), Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Postgraduate Studies (4)

STAGE 4: REAL LIFE

Once a character has finished school and training, the real challenge of making a living begins. Depending on your earlier path choices, your character has several different options at this stage. As with the Higher Education Stage, the Real Life Stage is optional; however, most characters should go through it at least once, or they will be totally green when play begins.

Time: Real Life Paths take variable amounts of time, depending on the contents of each path. The number of years each path takes is listed under its *Time* heading.

Repeats: After completing a path in this stage, characters who meet the prerequisites may continue in that path, move on to a different Real Life Path or return to Stage 3: Higher Education, following the *Next Path* restrictions as usual. After completing any Real Life Path, a player may end his character's Life Path and proceed to *Assigning Attributes, Traits and Skills* (p. 54).

Clan Characters: Trueborn warriors must follow the Tour of Duty: Clan Path. Freeborn warriors can choose To Serve and Protect instead. Scientist caste characters can choose Civilian Job or Postgraduate Studies; technicians can choose Civilian Job or serve on the front lines in Tour of Duty: Clan; most merchants will follow the Free Trader Path but can also choose Civilian Job; and laborer caste characters toil away at the Civilian Job Path, with no other prospects.

CIVILIAN JOB

Your job in the private sector may be dull, but countless trillions of civilians do this to make a living and keep the war machines of the Inner Sphere going. This path also represents non-combat civil-service jobs.

Because this path covers so many possible careers, the player chooses his or her character's job and relevant sub-skills, with the gamemaster's approval.

Time: 4 years
Skills: Career/Any Relevant +3, add +2 to any two other skills related to this career, +1 to any other skill. Choose one: Academic/Any Relevant +2, Administration +2, Bureaucracy/Affiliation +2, Computers +1, Leadership +1, or Protocol/Affiliation +2
Next Path: Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Civilian Job (4), Travel (4)

Civilian Job Events

2 A freak accident on the job leaves you disabled but compensated through a civil suit [Disabled (2), Wealth (4)]
3 You're fired! [Poverty; must take Ne'er-Do-Well (4) Path next]
4 Involved in harassment scandal [Bad Reputation]
5 There's a war on, and you're drafted [Character's next path is Military Enlistment (3); Clan characters can join a Freeborn Sibko (2), but do not apply the Attribute threshold modifiers listed for that path, and assume the training takes four years]
6 You hate your job and daydream the hours away [–1 to all skills gained from this path]
7 Standard worker drone [+1 to any one skill]
8 You get a raise [Wealth]
9 Hard work pays off with a raise and a promotion [Wealth (2), Administration +1, Leadership +1]
10 Your dedication gets you noticed by government officials, who approve you for advanced training [Wealth, Protocol/Affiliation +2; may choose any Higher Education Path next]
11 You become a primary interstellar representative for your company [Well-Connected (2), Wealth, Language/Any +1, Negotiation +2, Zero-G Operations +1]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

COVERT OPS

Your nation summons you to perform well beyond the call of duty. You will earn significant rewards ... if you survive. The player determines the specific duty covered by this path, ranging from sabotage and infiltration to assassination and fomenting rebellion. Choose appropriate subskills based on your character's particular task.
Time: 1D6 + 1 years
Traits: Alternate Identity, Wealth, Well-Equipped, Enemy (3), In For Life
Skills: Disguise +2, Fast Talk +2, Perception +2. Choose three: Acting +3, Blades +2, Computers +2, Cryptography +2, Demolitions +2, Escape Artist +3, Forgery +3, Gambling +3, Interrogation +3, Language/Any +3, Leadership +2, Martial Arts/Any +2, Pistols +2, Protocol/Any +3, Seduction +3, Streetwise/Any +2, Tactics/Infantry +2
Next Path: Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Travel (4), Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere (4), Yakuza (4, Draconis Combine Affiliation only)

Covert Ops Events

2 Captured and thrown in prison for treason; you escape after several years [Escape Artist +3, Disabled (2), add 2D6 years to the time this path takes]
3 Captured and forced to become a double agent [Bad Reputation, Enemy (3), add 1D6 years to the time this path takes]
4 Nosy reporter uncovers your identity [Good Reputation (2), Enemy, lose Alternate Identity Trait]
5 A close call leaves you scarred and shaken [Timid, Unattractive]
6 Bungled operation gets you a desk assignment [–1 to all skills receiving Skill Points in this path]
7 Uneventful operations [+1 to any skill]
8 Extensive training reveals hidden talent [Choose one: Ambidextrous, Brave, Exceptional Attribute/Any, Natural Aptitude/Any]
9 Numerous successful missions prove your dedication and skill [+1 to all skills receiving Skill Points in this Covert Ops Path, +1 to any four other skills, Promotion]
10 You become a master of "persuasion" [First Aid +2, Interrogation +3, Intimidation +2, MedTech +2, Bad Reputation, Pain Resistance]
11 You are instrumental in setting up a critical defection [Contact (3), Promotion (2), Wealth]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

FREE TRADER

Though interstellar cartels dominate shipping and trade in the thirty-first century, the independent free trader is nonetheless a common sight across the Inner Sphere, especially in war-torn or remote areas where larger corporations are reluctant to operate. In these regions, a resourceful person can make serious profit.
Time: 2 years
Attribute Minimums: CHA 3
Skills: Zero-G Operations +1, Appraisal +2, Negotiation +2, choose one: Fast Talk +2, Interest/Any +2, Protocol/Any +2, Scrounge +1, Language/Any +2
Next Path: Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Civilian Job (4), Free Trader (4, only if character has the Wealth Trait; it takes money to make money)

Free Trader Events

2 Caught smuggling contraband [Streetwise/Any +2, but add 4 years to the time this path takes and choose two: Stigma/Drug Runner, Bad Reputation, Poverty, Enemy]
3 Local crime syndicate makes you an offer you can't refuse [In For Life, Wealth*]
4 A rival muscles in on your territory [Enemy, Poverty]
5 Slow year [Poverty]
6 Pirates harass your shipping lines [Poverty, +1 to any combat-related skill]
7 A mildly prosperous period [+1 to any skill listed in

Merchant Field, +1 to any other skill]
8 Busy year [Wealth*]
9 A valued customer offers a "limited partnership" [Contact, Wealth*]
10 You're in the right place when new markets open up [Contact (2), Wealth (2)*, Negotiation +1, Language/Any +1]
11 The deal of the decade! [Negotiation +2, choose two: Contact (3), Wealth (3)*, Well-Equipped, Well-Connected, Good Reputation (2)]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

*If Wealth reaches the maximum (level 10) through these events, the player may exchange ten Wealth levels for both the Vehicle/Civilian DropShip (7) and Owns Vehicle traits.

NE'ER-DO-WELL

This catchall path exists for characters who just don't fit in. You may be a criminal or simply unemployed. Whatever the case, you work outside the usual bounds of society. Because the specific possibilities are virtually endless, this path gives characters considerable latitude as to the advances they can make.

Time: 1D6 years

Attribute Thresholds: EDG +1

Skills: Streetwise/Any +2, add +1 to any two other skills, choose one: Appraisal +1, Brawling +1, Gambling +1, Seduction +1, Escape Artist +1, Blades +1, Quickdraw +1, Stealth +1

Next Path: Military Enlistment (3), Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Yakuza (4, Draconis Combine Affiliation only)

Ne'er-Do-Well Events

2 Lacking legal status, you are abducted and sold into slavery; you escape and must make a new life for yourself [SOC –1, Alternate Identity, Poverty, Escape Artist +1, add six years to the time this path takes]
3 You really shouldn't have done that! Convicted of a serious crime (player decides whether the character is actually guilty) [Bad Reputation, Streetwise/Any +2, Scrounge +1, choose one: Addiction or Enemy. Add four years to the time this path takes]
4 Your life lacks direction; you lose yourself in substance abuse and holovids [Addiction, Introvert, Interest/Holovid Shows +1]
5 Become obsessed with poker and lose your shirt [Poverty, Gambling +1]
6 Convicted of a minor crime (player determines whether the character is actually guilty) [Streetwise/Any +1, add two years to the time this path takes]
7 Drifting from one location to the next, you meet many "interesting" people [Contact]
8 To improve your image, you join a planetary conservation corps [First Aid +1, Negotiation +1, Scrounge +1, Survival +2]
9 You pull the wife of the planetary governor from the flaming wreck of her hovercar [Wealth, Contact (2)]
10 With no responsibilities, you spend considerable time in self-improvement [+2 to any skill, choose three: Academic/Any +3, Acrobatics +3, Language/Any +3, Martial Arts/Any +2, Perception +2, Piloting/Any +2, Quickdraw +3, Running +2, or Swimming +3]
11 Lady luck smiles; you make a living playing poker [EDG +1, Wealth (3), Good Reputation, Gambling +2]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

University Path required

Depending on your chosen field, this path can involve travel, pure study, exploration or even service in combat zones. Because this path covers so many possible areas of study, the player chooses the character's specific study area and relevant subskills, subject to the gamemaster's approval.

Time: 2 years

Skills: Academic/Any Relevant +3, Academic/Any +2, add +1 to any other skill. Choose one: Appraisal +1, Language/Any +1, Survival +1, Training +1, Zero-G Operations +1

Next Path: University (3), Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Civilian Job (4), Postgraduate Studies (4), Travel (4)

Postgraduate Studies Events

2 Switching of critical samples causes death of personnel; you get fired [Bad Reputation (2), Poverty, –1 to all skills gained from Post-Graduate Studies Path; may not enter University or Post-Graduate Studies paths again]
3 Your field study team gets caught in a border raid [Disabled, Timid]
4 Your studies frequently take you to poorly-lit places [Poor Vision]
5 Caught falsifying records to cover for a friend [Bad Reputation]
6 You take stimulants to keep up with the long hours [Addiction]
7 You get by on adequate skills [+1 to any skill from this path]
8 Your leadership ability puts you in a teaching position [Leadership +1, Training +2]
9 Your studies frequently force you to work alone in the field [Piloting/Hover +1, Navigation/Ground +2, Comms/Conv. +1, Survival +1]
10 Because your studies involve extensive and legitimate travel, you are recruited as a government informant [Alternate Identity, Contact (3), In for Life, Cryptography +1, may choose Covert Ops as next path]
11 Brilliant field work puts you in the limelight [Good Reputation (3), Contact (2), Wealth (2), add +1 to any three skills]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

TO SERVE AND PROTECT

Even in the thirty-first century, crime is a fact of life. Though they go by various names and wear various uniforms, all societies in known space require police forces that share common skills and goals. Service on a police force can be every bit as dangerous as on the front lines in a 'Mech.

Time: 2 years

Attribute Minimums: WIL 4

Skills: Add +2 to any three Police Officer, Police Tactical Officer or Detective Field skills; add +1 to any two other skills

Next Path: To Serve and Protect (4), Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Civilian Job (4), Police Detective Training (3), Tactical Unit Training (3), Military Enlistment (3)

To Serve and Protect Events

2 Captured by a crime syndicate while undercover ... not a good place to be [DEX –1, Pain Resistance, Enemy (2), choose two: Addiction, Disabled, Lost Limb, Poor Vision, Unattractive]

3 Caught taking a bribe (or you were framed) [Bad Reputation (2), lose all Skill Points provided by this pass through this path; may not take additional police paths]

4 Wounded in the line of duty [Disabled (2)]

5 Your partner is killed in front of you [Introvert, Timid]

6 You make an enemy of the local syndicate [Enemy (2)]

7 Uneventful duty [+1 to any one skill]

8 You serve on the bomb squad [Demolitions +3]

9 As a beat cop, you see serious action [Streetwise/Affiliation +2, +1 to any three skills in one Police Field]

10 The department recruits you for deep undercover sting operations, with a healthy dose of danger pay [Alternate Identity, Wealth, Stealth +1, Fast Talk +2, Disguise +2, Streetwise/Any +2]

11 Your heroic efforts on duty earn you the attention of the local nobility [Brave, Good Reputation, Contact (2), Well-Connected]

12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

TOUR OF DUTY: CLAN

Clan warriors only

A Clan warrior lives for battle, and this path is where it all happens! You will either prove your mettle or show yourself unworthy of the legacy of Kerensky. It is all up to you.

Time: 2 years

Skills: +2 to any three skills in a Military Field, choose one: Interest/Clan Remembrance +2, Academic/Clan History +1, Tactics/Any +1

Next Path: Tour of Duty: Clan (4), To Serve and Protect (4, freeborn warriors only)

Tour of Duty: Clan Events

2 A dezgra ambush cuts you off from your unit, but you survived [+2 to any two skills in character's Military Fields, but choose two of the following (or choose one twice): Lost Limb, Poor Vision, Addiction, Poor Hearing, Disabled]

3 Defeated and captured by Inner Sphere surats. Honor demands that you become a bondsman to your captors [Leave the Clans with the usual effects (p. 32), except that the character suffers a lesser Stigma/Inner Sphere Bondsman, rather than the usual Stigma/Bandit Caste (2). Character must take Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere as next path]

4 An honor duel with your commander goes against you [Demotion, Enemy (2)]

5 Your opponent takes your rivalry beyond the battlefield [Enemy]

6 In the occupation zones, you found Inner Sphere ways too tempting to ignore [Bad Reputation (2), choose one: Gambling +1, Seduction +1 or Streetwise/Any +1]

7 Garrison duty on a backwater planet [+1 to any one skill]

8 Assigned to a planet where raids are common [Tactics/Any +1, +1 to any three of the character's Military Field skills]

9 Exemplary service lands you a leading position in a planetary assault [Vehicle, Custom Vehicle, Strategy +1, +2 to any two of the character's Military Field skills]

10 Victory in a Trial of Position brings honor and added responsibility [Commission (Rank 1), Leadership +2. If character already has the Commission Trait, take Promotion instead]

11 Your heroic exploits rate a brief mention in your Clan's Remembrance [SOC +1, Brave, Good Reputation (2), Vehicle, Enemy, +2 to any one skill]

12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

TOUR OF DUTY: INNER SPHERE

From lofty MechWarrior to common grunt, this path is where you put it all on the line. Combat and non-combat military personnel alike must face the enemy in one or more tours of duty. Despite the dangers of this path, a character can earn substantial rewards in skill and rank.

Time: 2 years

Traits: Vehicle (2) for MechWarrior, Aerospace Pilot, Aircraft Pilot, Cavalry and Armored Infantry-trained characters only

Skills: Add +2 to any three skills from your Military Fields, add +1 to any two other skills

Next Path: Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere (4), Police Academy (3), Covert Ops (4, Special Forces or Scout-trained characters only)

Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere Events

2 While on an objective raid, one of your own sells you out [Combat Paralysis, Quirk/Paranoia]

3 Captured! [Escape Artist +2, Scrounge +1, Survival +1, add two years to the time this path takes, and

take one of the following: BOD –2, Combat Paralysis, Lost Limb (2)]

4 You survive the most intense combat your unit has ever seen [+2 to all skills in one Military Field, but must take one of the following traits: Addiction (2), Combat Paralysis, Disability (2), Lost Limb (2)]
5 You make an enemy of your superior officer [Enemy (2)]
6 Heavy combat [+1 to all skills in one Military Field, Disability]
7 Uneventful garrison duty [+1 to any one skill]
8 Raiding missions [+1 to any three skills in one Military Field, +1 to any other skill]
9 After several successful missions, you earn a promotion [Promotion, +2 to any two skills in one Military Field]
10 Conspicuous gallantry in the field and the death of your superior offer you a chance for a field commission [Brave, Commission (Rank 1), Good Reputation. If the character is already an officer, or if you want to decline the commission, take Promotion (2) instead.]
11 You find a lostech jackpot deep behind enemy lines [Choose Owns Vehicle or two of the following: Custom Vehicle (2), Good Reputation (2), Vehicle (2), Well-Equipped, or Wealth (2)]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

TOUR OF DUTY: "SOCIAL GENERAL"

Lyran Alliance Affiliation only, must have Commission Trait

Bribery, politicking and sometimes sheer dumb luck often place the wrong people in the right places, a situation common in the Byzantine military command structure of the Lyran Alliance. Though commonly called "social generals," many of these status-climbers have yet to reach that actual rank.

Time: 2 years
Attribute Minimums: CHA 3, SOC 4
Traits: Contact (2)
Skills: Protocol/Lyran Alliance +3, Bureaucracy/Lyran Alliance +3, Career/Soldier +1
Next Path: Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere (4), Travel (4), Tour of Duty: "Social General" (4, but only if character has at least one Contact Trait)

Tour of Duty: "Social General" Events

2 That last big power play crossed the wrong noble [SOC –1, Demotion, Enemy (3), lose Well-Connected and all Contact Traits]
3 Somebody really doesn't like you! Transferred to the front, where you face heavy combat [+2 to any three skills in a Military Field, Enemy, choose one: Addiction (2), Combat Paralysis, Lost Limb (2)]
4 Caught in a web of intrigue, you must make a choice [if the character goes along with the scheme, take Timid, Well-Connected and In For Life; if he or she refuses, take Brave and Enemy (3), and lose a Contact]
5 One of your meal tickets got ensnared in politicking, and guess who's caught in the mess? [Lose a Contact and gain an Enemy]
6 Passed over for promotion [Bad Reputation, Bureaucracy/Lyran Alliance +1]
7 Slipped a rung on the social ladder [Career/Soldier +1]
8 You gain a sympathetic benefactor [Contact]
9 You kissed the right butt this time [Promotion, Protocol/Lyran Alliance +2, Bureaucracy +1, Leadership +1]
10 You lead your troops to victory—and you didn't know you had it in you! [Leadership +2, +1 to all skills in one Military Field, Good Reputation, Promotion, Title, but choose one of these traits: Disabled (2), Lost Limb (2), Poor Hearing (3), Poor Vision (2)]
11 Persistence pays off as you strike a political mother lode at court on Tharkad [SOC +1, Good Reputation, Title, Wealth, Well-Equipped, choose one: Land Grant or Owns Vehicle. Of course, all that power attracts an Enemy (2)]
12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

TRAVEL

Cannot have Transit Disorientation Syndrome Trait (TDS)

Sometimes, you just want to get away from it all. You have the means, and an extended vacation offers the ideal opportunity. Such a journey also provides space-travel experience and valuable insight into other cultures. And in the *BattleTech* universe, interstellar travel can lead to unexpected excitement....

Time: 1D6 years
Skills: Interest/Any +2, Zero-G Operations +1, +1 to any other skill. Choose one: Art/Any +2, Language/Any +2, Piloting/Any +1, Protocol/Any +2, Survival +1, Swimming +2
Next Path: Ne'er-Do-Well (4) or return to the last path the character took

Travel Events

2 Your travels land you in the crossfire during a rebel uprising [Choose one: Combat Paralysis, Lost Limb (2), Poor Vision (2)]
3 On your first jump, you realize you have developed TDS, cutting your trip short [Transit Disorientation Syndrome, –1 to all skills acquired in this path]
4 Framed for a crime you did not commit, you spend time in jail [–1 to all skills provided in this path and add a year to the time it takes]
5 You swindle a local syndicate for a substantial amount of money [Wealth, Enemy (2)]
6 Your travels take you far from human contact [Introvert]
7 You manage to "take the wheel" during the long DropShip flights [Piloting/Aero +1]
8 You make friends with a DropShip technician, who

passes the time by teaching you what he knows [Technician/Interplanetary +1, Technician/Aeronautics +1]

9 You make many important friends in your travels [Well-Connected, Language/Any +2]

10 You are in the right place at the right time to stop the assassination of a duke [Good Reputation (2), Contact (2). A character with military rank gets a Promotion; otherwise, take Wealth]

11 In a planet's back country, you stumble on an ancient Star League warehouse [Choose Owns Vehicle or two of the following: Custom Vehicle (2), Good Reputation (2), Vehicle (2), Well-Equipped, Wealth (2)]

12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

YAKUZA

Draconis Combine Affiliation only

In the lowest echelons of Combine society, few have any chance to become successful. Often, these individuals turn to organized crime in hopes of gaining respect and riches, pledging themselves as *kobun* (soldiers) to the local yakuza *oyabun* (leader). A yakuza *gumi* (clan) is involved in virtually every kind of criminal venture, with the notable exception of muggings and other violent street crime; it's bad business to brutalize your customers (though rival *gumi* are fair game). This respect for the common man and a strict code of honor separate the yakuza from other organized-crime factions in the Inner Sphere.

Time: 1D6 years

Attribute Thresholds: EDG +1

Traits: In For Life, Quirk/Loyalty to Yakuza

Skills: Fast Talk +2, Streetwise/Draconis Combine +2, Martial Arts/Any +2

Next Path: Ne'er-Do-Well (4), Yakuza (4), Covert Ops (4), Civilian Job (4)

Yakuza Events

2 Caught by the Internal Security Force and imprisoned. Your stay in prison is short but difficult [Combat Paralysis, add 1D6 years to the time this path takes]

3 Rival yakuza gumi enacts vendetta against your gumi [Enemy (2)]

4 Horribly disgraced, but you flee rather than commit seppuku—ritual suicide [Enemy (3), Stigma/Dishonor]

5 Disgraced, you must commit yubitsume (finger cutting) to atone [Bad Reputation, Lost Limb]

6 You fall victim to the substance in which you traffic [Addiction (2)]

7 Moderately successful; you receive your first irezumi—family markings, the famous yakuza tattoos [Intimidation +2]

8 Your loyalty brings you to the attention of your oyabun [Contact (2)]

9 Numerous successful missions give you several irezumi [Streetwise/Draconis Combine +2, choose two: Forgery +1, Gambling +2, Appraisal +2, Throwing Weapons +1]

10 DCMS scouts uncover your natural aptitude for 'Mech piloting and offer you a position in a Ghost Regiment—yakuza-staffed regiments in the Combine military [Natural Aptitude/Piloting/'Mech, Promotion, receive the MechWarrior Field and take the Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere Path next]

11 Your unswerving dedication and loyalty are rewarded. You become a wakagashira-hosa—underling of your gumi's second-in-command [Wealth (2), Well-Equipped, Good Reputation (2)]

12 [Choose one event or roll twice and apply both results]

OCCUPATIONAL FIELDS LIST

Occupational fields consist of several skills that are most commonly used when performing a particular job. The following lists do not include every conceivable skill related to that field, but rather the skills most strongly associated with a field that are used most often in day-to-day operations. When a character receives a field during the Life Path, he or she gets three Skill Points for every skill associated with that field.

The following list is a sample of the most common occupational fields available. Gamemasters should feel free to create new ones as needed to represent occupations appropriate to their campaigns.

Prerequisites are provided for some fields for reference purposes. They help explain why certain skill packages lack what might seem to be basic skills; for example, the Infantry Field lacks the basic skill Rifles because characters have already received that skill in the pre-required Basic Training Field.

Occupational fields are divided into military and civilian groups, alphabetized within each group for ease of reference.

MILITARY FIELDS

Aerospace Fighter Pilot
Prerequisite: Basic Training
- Gunnery/Ballistic/Aero
- Gunnery/Laser/Aero
- Gunnery/Missile/Aero
- Navigation/Air
- Navigation/Space
- Piloting/Aero
- Sensor Operations
- Tactics/Space
- Zero-G Operations

Aircraft Pilot
Prerequisite: Basic Training
- Bombing
- Gunnery/Ballistic/Aero
- Gunnery/Laser/Aero
- Gunnery/Missile/Aero
- Navigation/Air
- Piloting/*choose one**
- Sensor Operations
- Tactics/Air
- *Aircraft or VTOL

Armored Infantry
Prerequisite: Infantry
- Demolitions
- Gunnery/Ballistic/Humanoid
- Gunnery/Laser/Humanoid
- Gunnery/Missile/Humanoid
- Martial Arts/Battlesuit
- Piloting/Battlesuit
- Sensor Operations

Basic Technician
- Gunsmith
- Technician/Ballistics
- Technician/Comms
- Technician/Electronics
- Technician/Lasers
- Technician/Mechanics
- Technician/Missile

Basic Training
- Career/Soldier
- First Aid
- Navigation/Ground
- Rifles
- Martial Arts/Military

Cavalry
Prerequisite: Basic Training
- Artillery
- Gunnery/Ballistic/Conv.
- Gunnery/Laser/Conv.
- Gunnery/Missile/Conv.
- Piloting/*choose one**
- Sensor Operations
- Technician/Mechanics
- * Hover, Naval, Sub, Tracked, Wheeled

Clan Elemental
- Gunnery/Ballistic/Humanoid
- Gunnery/Laser/Humanoid
- Gunnery/Missile/Humanoid
- Martial Arts/Battlesuit
- Piloting/Battlesuit
- Sensor Operations
- Tactics/Infantry

Clan Fighter Pilot
- Gunnery/Ballistic/Aero
- Gunnery/Laser/Aero
- Gunnery/Missile/Aero
- Navigation/Space
- Piloting/Aero
- Sensor Operations
- Tactics/Space

Clan MechWarrior
- Gunnery/Ballistic/Humanoid
- Gunnery/Laser/Humanoid
- Gunnery/Missile/Humanoid
- Leadership
- Piloting/'Mech
- Sensor Operations
- Tactics/'Mech

Infantry
Prerequisite: Basic Training
- Artillery
- Climbing
- Comms/Conv.
- Jump Packs
- Support Weapons
- Tactics/Infantry

Marine
Prerequisite: Basic Training
- Demolitions
- Gunnery/Laser/Space
- Jump Packs
- Security Systems
- Shotguns
- Zero-G Operations

MechWarrior
Prerequisite: Basic Training
- Gunnery/Ballistic/Humanoid
- Gunnery/Laser/Humanoid
- Gunnery/Missile/Humanoid
- Piloting/'Mech
- Sensor Operations
- Tactics/'Mech

'Mech Technician
Prerequisite: Basic Technician
- Technician/Fusion
- Technician/Jet
- Technician/Myomer
- Technician/Support

Military Scientist
- Academic/Military History
- Career/Military Scientist
- Computers
- Cryptography
- Strategy
- Tactics/Any

Officer Training
Prerequisite: Basic Training
Administration
Bureaucracy/Affiliation
Leadership
Pistols
Tactics/Any
Training

Ship's Crew
Career/Ship's Crew
Gunnery/Ballistic/Space
Gunnery/Laser/Space
Gunnery/Missile/Space
Technician/Ballistics
Technician/Lasers
Technician/Missile
Zero-G Operations

Special Forces
Prerequisite: Infantry
Blades
Demolitions
Free Fall
Stealth
Submachine Guns
Survival
Tracking

WarShip Pilot
Prerequisite: JumpShip Pilot
Bureaucracy/Affiliation
Leadership
Strategy
Tactics/Space

CIVILIAN FIELDS

AeroSpace Technician
Prerequisite: Basic Technician or Civilian Tech
Technician/Aeronautics
Technician/Fusion
Technician/Interplanetary
Technician/Jet
Technician/Jump Drive
Technician/Support
Zero-G Operations

Civilian Aircraft Pilot
Career/Pilot
Comms/Conv.
Navigation/Air
Piloting/*choose one**
Sensor Operations
* Aircraft, VTOL

Civilian Tech
Career/Technician
Technician/Comms
Technician/Electronics
Technician/Mechanics

Detective
Career/Detective
Computers
Cryptography
Fast Talk
Interrogation
Perception
Scrounge
Security Systems

Doctor
Prerequisite: Scientist
Administration
Bureaucracy/Any
Career/Doctor
First Aid
MedTech
Surgery

DropShip Pilot
Career/Pilot
Comms/Conv.
Navigation/Space
Piloting/Aero
Piloting/Spheroid
Sensor Operations
Zero-G Operations

Engineer
Prerequisite: Civilian Tech or Basic Technician
Appraisal
Computers
Engineering
Perception
Technician/Fusion
Technician/Support

JumpShip Pilot
Prerequisite: DropShip Pilot
Administration
Computers
Navigation/Jump Drive
Technician/Jump Drive

Merchant
Administration
Appraisal
Bureaucracy/Any
Career/Merchant
Negotiation
Scrounge

Planetary Surveyor
Prerequisite: Scientist
Appraisal
Demolitions
Navigation/Ground
Piloting/*choose one**
Survival
Tracking
* Hover, Naval, Sub, Wheeled

Police Officer
Academic/Law
Career/Police Officer
First Aid
Intimidation
Martial Arts/Military
Pistols
Shotguns
Streetwise/Any

Police Tactical Officer
Prerequisite: Police Officer
Climbing
Demolitions
Rifles
Running
Submachine Guns
Support Weapons
Tactics/Infantry

Politician
Acting
Bureaucracy/Any
Career/Politician
Fast Talk
Leadership
Negotiation
Protocol/Any

Scientist
Career/Scientist
Computers
Perception
Academic/Any
Training

Scout
Comms/Conv.
Disguise
Scrounge
Security Systems
Stealth
Streetwise/Any
Tracking

Vehicle Technician
Prerequisite: Basic Technician or Civilian Tech
Technician/Fusion
Technician/ICE
Technician/Rotor
Technician/Support

ASSIGNING ATTRIBUTES, TRAITS AND SKILLS

By now you have a history for your character, along with a solid sense of who he is and where he is going. The next step is to finalize your character's Attributes, traits and skills. Before doing so, however, review the rules for age on p. 60.

ATTRIBUTES

Every character has nine Attributes. The first seven of these numbers together describe the character's raw physical and mental abilities. Is he weak or strong? Dumb or smart? Fast or slow? The eighth Attribute, Edge, is a general measure of the character's good or bad fortune. The ninth Attribute, Social Standing, represents the character's place among the social strata of his chosen affiliation.

Players assign their characters specific Attribute values after completing the Life Path. The Life Path affects minimum values and the cost to increase Attributes, but the final numbers are the player's to determine. Attributes are rated from 1–10. Most characters fall in the 3–7 range.

In *MW3*, Attributes mainly affect the improvement of skills. Characters with higher Attributes will advance more quickly in related skills than characters with lower Attributes. Attributes have various other effects as well; for example, the Strength Attribute helps determine how much damage a character can inflict in unarmed combat.

The Attribute Table shows the relative values of Attributes and what they mean. The Untrained Target Number Modifier shows how well a character can perform tasks for which he is totally untrained. For rules on using this target number, see *Untrained Skill Use*, p. 16.

ATTRIBUTE TABLE

Attribute Value	General Description	Untrained TN Mod.	Social Standing Inner Sphere	Social Standing Clan
1	Impaired	+2	Slave	Dark (Bandit) Caste
2	Terrible	+1	Lower Class	Laborer Caste
3	Poor	+1	Middle Class	Merchant Caste
4	Fair	—	Upper Class	Technician Caste
5	Good	—	Baronet	Scientist Caste
6	Advanced	—	Baron	Freeborn Warrior
7	Remarkable	–1	Count	Trueborn Warrior*
8	Excellent	–1	Marquess	Trueborn Warrior*
9	Astounding	–1	Duke	Trueborn Warrior*
10	Unbelievable	–2	Sovereign	—

* Higher Social Standing values denote more prestigious bloodlines.

Strength (STR)

A character's Strength represents his or her muscle power and conditioning. Related skills include athletic abilities such as Acrobatics and Swimming. Strength also adds to the damage a character does in melee combat. Any character who expects to get into close combat will likely benefit from a better-than-average Strength Attribute, as will characters who expect to wear heavy armor or carry lots of gear.

Body (BOD)

Very healthy or tough characters should have high Body values. This Attribute represents resilience, stamina and physical well-being. It can also represent sheer size, though a small but tough character can have a high Body Attribute. Body is related to endurance skills such as Climbing and Survival and also plays an important role in a character's resistance to injury. Any character who expects to see combat and survive should have at least an average Body Attribute.

Dexterity (DEX)

Dexterity represents a character's hand-eye coordination and motor control. Related skills include those that involve fine manipulation, such as Forgery and Technician. Dexterity is also related to most combat skills, and so any character expected to make accurate attacks will benefit by an above-average Dexterity Attribute.

Reflexes (RFL)

This Attribute represents a character's agility and quickness. As opposed to Dexterity, Reflexes comes into play when the action requires whole-body movement and quick reactions. This Attribute is related to skills that require sharp response times, such as Piloting and Quickdraw. Many combat skills are related to Reflexes, and this Attribute also serves as the basis for determining Initiative in combat. Any combat-oriented character will benefit from a higher Reflexes Attribute.

Intelligence (INT)

One of the most important Attributes, Intelligence represents a character's perception, comprehension, creativity and reasoning abilities. This Attribute is related to many skills, especially those that involve cognitive ability—for example, Computers and Strategy. Because perception is based on Intelligence, the Attribute combines with Reflexes to determine whethe a character can detect and dodge an incoming attack. As in real life, any character can benefit from high Intelligence.

Willpower (WIL)

A character's Willpower Attribute drives him or her forward in any endeavor, representing a mix of wits, determination and sheer guts. Because the drive to accomplish is often as impor-

ATTRIBUTE MAXIMUMS TABLE

Attribute	Normal Human	Elemental Trueborn	MechWarrior Trueborn	Pilot Trueborn
STR	8 (9)	9 (10)	8 (9)	7 (8)
BOD	8 (9)	9 (10)	8 (9)	7 (8)
DEX	8 (9)	7 (8)	9 (10)	9 (10)
RFL	8 (9)	8 (9)	9 (10)	9 (10)
INT	8 (9)	8 (9)	8 (9)	9 (10)
WIL	8 (9)	9 (10)	8 (9)	8 (9)
CHA	9 (10)	8 (9)	9 (10)	8 (9)
EDG	9 (10)	8 (9)	8 (9)	8 (9)
SOC	9 (10)	8 (9)	8 (9)	8 (9)

Note: Parenthetical values include the Exceptional Attribute trait.

tant as actual knowledge of the subject at hand, Willpower is related to many skills. Characters also use it to resist Fatigue and knockout in combat, so most players have good reason to boost this Attribute.

Charisma (CHA)

Charisma represents a character's presence, charm and persuasiveness. Related skills include those that involve interpersonal contact, such as Leadership and Negotiation. Players may be tempted to slight this Attribute in favor of more obviously useful ones, but high Charisma can open many doors, and preventing combat through negotiation is better than duking it out in many situations.

Edge (EDG)

Some people just seem to be born lucky. In *MW3*, those people have a high Edge Attribute. Though related to only a few skills, this Attribute is valuable for all characters. Unlike other Attributes, Edge can be used in game play to affect the roll of the dice (see *Edge*, p. 18). A little bit of luck can go a long way.

Social Standing (SOC)

The *BattleTech* universe is dominated by feudal and caste-driven societies, and the idea of noble birth is widely accepted. The Social Standing Attribute measures a character's status among the social strata of his chosen affiliation. The specific definition of each level of Social Standing varies by affiliation; generalizations are shown on the Attribute Table (p. 54).

A high Social Standing Attribute denotes noble birth, but not necessarily a noble title. This important distinction is covered in greater detail in the description of the Title Trait (p. 86).

DETERMINING ATTRIBUTES AND TRAITS

During character creation, every player receives 50 *Character Points* to spend on Attributes and additional *positive traits* for his or her character. Players can increase this total by taking on additional *negative traits*, as described below. Traits gained through the Life Path are not part of this equation; their independent costs or values have no impact on the Character Points a player can spend.

Because a character's Attributes and traits draw from a common pool of Character Points, there is bound to be a bit of "back and forth" between them. For example, the Exceptional Attribute Trait can affect the purchase of Attributes. However, players need not finalize character traits before figuring out Attributes.

Though your character's Attributes define him or her physically and mentally and go a long way toward determining how well he or she may advance in ability, Attributes are not the be-all and end-all of character performance in *MW3*. Skills are much more important for most actions than Attributes. A few below-average Attributes are not a serious handicap; just like real people, characters should have weaknesses as well as strengths.

Purchasing Attributes

The cost of an Attribute depends on its Attribute threshold, determined through the Life Path and your character's age (see *Age*, p. 60). The threshold for each Attribute should be listed on your character creation worksheet. The cost in Character Points to raise an Attribute up to its threshold is equal to the desired Attribute value. Raising it above the threshold costs 2 additional Character Points for every point above the threshold.

> *Linda's character Delilah Morgan ended up with a threshold of 6 for her Dexterity Attribute. She wants her character to excel at technical skills, so a high Dexterity Attribute will be useful. Giving Dexterity a value of anywhere up to 6 will cost Linda 1 Character Point per level; for example, DEX 4 costs 4 Character Points, while DEX 6 would cost 6. Raising Dexterity higher than the threshold costs double points, however, so assigning a value of 7 to the Attribute would cost Linda 2 more Character Points for a total of 8. If Linda wanted Delilah to have DEX 8, that value would cost 10 Character Points.*

Attributes also have minimums and maximums. Minimums are determined by the Life Path. Maximums depend on whether your character is a Clan trueborn; for a list of all Attribute maximums, see the Attribute Maximums Table. The numbers in parentheses are the absolute maximum values allowed, taking into account Clan phenotype and the Exceptional Attribute Trait. Regardless of Attribute thresholds, a player may not purchase Attributes at a value higher than a character's maximum or lower than the character's minimum.

When purchasing Attributes, every player should first raise them all to their minimum values, which should be listed on your character creation worksheet. For Clan characters, the Social Standing minimum also serves as maximum; at the end of the Life

Path, a Clan character's Social Standing Attribute must equal his minimum.

After meeting all the minimums, you can use your remaining Character Points to raise Attributes further.

Purchasing Traits

After the Life Path, you may want to give your character more traits to round out him or her. All positive traits list a point value, which must be paid for out of your Character Points. Negative traits list negative values; when you buy a negative trait for your character, you get more points to spend on positive traits or higher Attributes. For example, the Amnesia Trait has a value of –3. If you take it for your character, you can also take a 3-point positive trait such as Toughness, or three 1-point traits, or you may spend three extra points on Attributes.

A list of traits is included for reference below. Complete descriptions of all the traits appear in the *Traits* section, p. 78. Traits marked on the list in **boldface** can only be acquired during initial character creation. A character can sometimes end up with equivalent effects through game play, such as earning money (Wealth) or making friends (Contact), but these are not represented by traits or paid for with Character Points. Other traits can be acquired after character creation.

Character Points can also be spent to get rid of negative traits that were picked up during the Life Path. However, there should be a justification in the character's story for how this occurred; if the gamemaster feels the explanation isn't adequate, the trait may not be removed.

Negative traits can be acquired after character creation through game play, but they do not earn Character Points. For example, if your character suffers a grievous injury that costs him his hand, he does not get to purchase three points of positive traits. Positive traits acquired through game play must be paid for with Experience Points (see p. 210).

In order to prevent players from loading down their characters with dozens of minor negative traits in order to create "super-characters," the character creation system offers diminishing returns for buying lots of negative traits. Only the two negative traits with the highest values that you purchase for your character are worth their full value; all others you buy are only worth half. Keep track of half points; any odd half-point left over at the end of this step is lost.

Mike wants to buy his character some negative traits so that the character can have really high Attributes. He decides that his character is a Slow Learner, has a 1-point Addiction to cigarettes, Combat Paralysis and a Glass Jaw (the guy is a real mess). The two traits with the highest values are Combat Paralysis and Slow Learner, worth a total of 7 points. Glass Jaw and Addiction come to a total of 4 points. At half their listed value, they net Mike only 2 more points, giving him a total of 9 extra points to spend on Attributes or positive traits.

Clan Phenotypes: In *MW3*, a character's *phenotype* is his or her genetic design crafted by Clan scientists. The Clans use three phenotypes, each represented by a trait: Elementals, MechWarriors and Fighter Pilots. Phenotypes include only those characteristics genetically built in. Training and indoctrination are covered by the character's affiliation and Life Path. Unlike other traits, phenotypes do not cost Character Points. If a character is a trueborn Clan warrior, he will receive a Clan phenotype in Stage 1.

TRAIT LIST

Positive Trait	**Point Cost**
Alternate Identity	2
Ambidextrous	2
Attractive	1
Brave	1
Combat Sense	4
Commission**	3
Contact	**1–3**
Custom Vehicle*	**1–6**
Elemental Phenotype	**—**
Exceptional Attribute	**2**
Fast Learner	**3**
Fighter Pilot Phenotype	**—**
G-Tolerance	1
Good Hearing	1
Good Reputation	**1–5**
Good Vision	1
Gregarious	1
Land Grant†	5–10
MechWarrior Phenotype	**—**
Natural Aptitude	**1–2**
Night Vision	1
Owns Vehicle*	**4**
Pain Resistance	3
Poison Resistance	1
Promotion	††
Rank	1–10
Sixth Sense	4
Title	5–10
Toughness	**3**
Vehicle	**1–10**
Wealth	**1–10**
Well-Connected	2/4/6
Well-Equipped	**2/4/6/8**

Negative Trait	**Point Value (Negative)**
Addiction	1–2
Allergy	1
Amnesia	3
Bad Reputation	1–5
Combat Paralysis	4
Demotion	††

Dependents	1–2
Disabled	1–3
Enemy	**1–3**
Glass Jaw	3
In For Life	3
Introvert	1
Lemon*	**2**
Lost Limb	1/3/5
Night Blindness	1
Poor Hearing	1–5
Poor Vision	2/4/6
Poverty	**1**
Quirk	1–2
Slow Learner	**3**
Stigma	1–2
Timid	1
Transit Disorientation Syndrome	1
Unattractive	1

* Can only be taken along with the Vehicle Trait
** Can only be taken along with the Rank Trait
† Can only be taken along with the Title Trait
†† Rank increases are listed in the Life Path as "Promotion," decreases as "Demotion"

DETERMINING SKILLS

To find the final skill bonus for each skill learned during the Life Path, consult the Skill Points Table. This table converts your accumulated Skill Points into skill bonuses.

First, find the number closest to the amount of Skill Points you have earned toward a skill (without going over) in the Normal column. The corresponding Skill Bonus column shows the skill bonus for that skill. If a character has the Slow Learner, Fast Learner or Natural Aptitude trait for the skill in question, use the corresponding column rather than the Normal column.

SKILL POINTS TABLE

		SKILL POINTS EARNED			
Slow Learner	Normal	Fast Learner or Slow + Nat. Apt.	Natural Aptitude	Fast Learner + Nat. Apt.	SKILL BONUS
1	**1**	1	1	1	**+0**
3	**3**	3	3	2	**+1**
8	**7**	6	6	5	**+2**
14	**13**	12	11	9	**+3**
23	**21**	19	17	15	**+4**
34	**31**	28	25	22	**+5**
47	**43**	39	35	30	**+6**
63	**57**	51	46	40	**+7**
80	**73**	66	59	51	**+8**
100	**91**	82	73	64	**+9**
122	**111**	100	89	78	**+10**

For characters with Slow Learner *and* Natural Aptitude, consult the Fast Learner column.

If you have more Skill Points than you need for the skill bonus earned but not enough for the next higher bonus, you can save those leftover points to increase your skills and acquire new ones (see *Skill Point Remainders*, below). Subtract the relevant number in the appropriate column from your accumulated Skill Points and save the remainder for use later.

> *A character has accumulated 10 Skill Points toward the Pistols Skill. The highest number in the Normal column less than 10 is 7, and so the character has attained a skill bonus of +2 with the Pistols Skill. Subtracting 7 from the 10 points earned leaves a remainder of 3 Skill Points, which are added to the character's Skill Point remainders for later use.*

Skill Point Remainders

After figuring out the bonuses for all your character's skills, you will likely have several Skill Points left over. You can use them to increase skills you have or to add a few new skills that round out your character's abilities.

To improve existing skills, consult the Skill Points Table to find out how many Skill Points you need. For example, increasing a +2 skill to +3 costs 6 Skill Points (13 – 7 = 6), assuming you are using the Normal column. You can spend any remainder Skill Points in this manner, no matter the skill for which you originally earned them. Of course, a character can only advance so far beyond the Life Path during initial character creation. To reflect this, players cannot increase any skill bonus more than 2 levels beyond its level after the Life Path. For example, you can increase a +1 skill up to +3, but not to +4 or better.

New skills are likewise purchased using remaindered Skill Points. Costs appear on the Skill Points Table, which shows the required Skill Points in the appropriate column and the resulting skill bonus in the right column. In general, older characters have had more chances to pick up miscellaneous skills, a fact reflected by the *New Skill Limit* shown on the Age Effects Table (p. 60). This limit represents the maximum number of new skills a character can add, and also serves as the maximum total skill bonuses those new skills can have.

Any Skill Points left over from this process become Experience Points (see p. 208).

SKILL LIST

For ease of reference, a complete list of skills and their Link Attributes appears below. Detailed descriptions of all the skills appear in *Skills*, starting on p. 95.

Link Attributes

Each skill has a pair of associated Link Attributes, which are the ones most closely

associated with the learning and performance of the skill. Link Attributes come into play in *Untrained Skill Use* (p. 16) and are instrumental in determining the speed of advancement in skill bonuses (see *Character Advancement*, p. 209). Though not used during initial character creation, they are shown here to give you an idea of the skills that will best suit your character once play begins.

Difficult Skills

Difficult skills are shown on the Skill List in **boldface.** Difficult skills cannot be used by reflex and so are more difficult to learn; using them is virtually impossible for untrained characters. Like Link Attributes, difficult skills are not used in character creation; they are included here for reference.

Subskills

Skills marked with an asterisk (*) actually represent groups of related subskills. Each subskill is separately learned and improved, and a character may have several subskills connected to the same overall skill.

Certain skills include specific lists of subskills, while others have a variety definable by the players and gamemaster. The former appear at the end of the Skill List; for more complete descriptions, see the *Skills* section (p. 95).

SKILL LIST

Skill Name	Link Attributes
Academics*	INT/WIL
Acrobatics	RFL/STR
Acting	CHA/WIL
Administration	CHA/INT
Animal Handling	CHA/WIL
Appraisal	INT/WIL
Archery	DEX/STR
Artillery	INT/WIL
Arts*	varies
Blades	DEX/RFL
Brawling	RFL/STR
Bombing	DEX/INT
Bureaucracy*	CHA/SOC
Careers*	varies
Climbing	BOD/DEX
Comms/Conv.	INT/WIL
Comms/HPG	INT/WIL
Computers	INT/WIL
Cryptography	EDG/INT
Demolitions	DEX/INT
Disguise	DEX/WIL
Engineering	INT/WIL
Escape Artist	DEX/WIL
Fast Talk	CHA/WIL
First Aid	DEX/INT
Forgery	DEX/INT
Free Fall	RFL/WIL
Gambling	EDG/INT
Gunnery/Ballistic*	DEX/RFL
Gunnery/Laser*	DEX/RFL
Gunnery/Missile*	DEX/INT
Gunsmith	DEX/INT
Interests*	varies
Interrogation	CHA/WIL
Intimidation	BOD/CHA
Jump Packs	INT/RFL
Languages*	CHA/INT
Leadership	CHA/WIL
Martial Arts*	RFL/WIL
MedTech	INT/CHA
Navigation*	INT/WIL
Negotiation	CHA/WIL
Perception	INT/WIL
Piloting*	DEX/RFL
Pistols	DEX/RFL
Protocol*	CHA/SOC
Quickdraw	DEX/RFL
Riding	RFL/WIL
Rifles	DEX/RFL
Running	BOD/RFL
Scrounge	CHA/EDG
Security Systems	DEX/INT
Seduction	CHA/WIL
Sensor Operations	INT/WIL
Shotguns	DEX/RFL
Staffs	DEX/RFL
Stealth	INT/RFL
Strategy	INT/WIL
Streetwise*	CHA/WIL
Submachine Guns	DEX/RFL
Support Weapons	BOD/DEX
Surgery	DEX/INT
Survival	BOD/INT
Swimming	BOD/STR
Tactics*	INT/WIL
Technician*	DEX/INT
Throwing Weapons	DEX/STR
Tracking	INT/WIL
Training	CHA/INT
Whips	DEX/RFL
Zero-G Operations	RFL/WIL

***Subskills**

Academics: **various**
Arts: various
Bureaucracy: **various,** by region
Careers: **various**
Gunnery: **Aero, Conv., Humanoid, Space**
Interests: various
Languages: **various** (character's native language is not considered difficult)
Martial Arts: **Aikido, Battlesuit, Gung Fu, Karate, Military, Tae kwon do**
Navigation: **Air, Ground, Jump Drive, Naval, Space**
Piloting: **Aero, Aircraft, 'Mech,** Battlesuit, Hover, **Jump,** Naval, **Quad, Spheroid, Sub,** Tracked, **VTOL,** Wheeled

AGE EFFECTS TABLE

Age in Years	Age Category	Attribute Threshold Modifiers STR	BOD	DEX	RFL	INT	WIL	CHA	EDG	New Skill Limit	Traits
10–12	Very Young	–1	–1	+2	–1	–1	–2	—	—	1	Fast Learner
13–16	Young	—	—	+1	–1	—	–1	—	—	2	—
17–30	Young Adult	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—
31–50	Adult	—	—	–1	—	—	—	—	—	4	*
51–70	Middle Age	—	–1	–2	–1	+1	+1	—	—	5	*
71–90	Old	–1	–2	–2	–2	+1	+2	—	—	6	Slow Learner*
91+	Very Old	–2	–2	–2	–3	+2	+2	—	—	7	Slow Learner & Glass Jaw*

* "Stigma/Past Prime" trait for Clan warriors only

Protocol: **various,** by region
Streetwise: various, by region
Tactics: **Air, Ground,** Infantry, **'Mech, Naval, Space**
Technician: **Aeronautics, Ballistics, Comms, Electronics, Fusion, ICE, Interplanetary, Jet, Jump Drive, Lasers, Mechanics, Missile, Myomer, Rotor, Support**

FINISHING TOUCHES

Now it's time to give your character his or her final polish. The following paragraphs describe rules for finalizing the character's age and choosing your character's starting equipment and vehicle assignment, if any. After completing these steps, your character is ready to play!

AGE

Though the thirty-first century can boast considerable medical advances, humanity has lost much since the days of the first Star League. Even the Clans, which maintain many technologies from that era, have allowed geriatrics to slip into disuse because they value youth and strength above age and wisdom. Despite this, the human lifespan has been extended to the point that the average person can expect to see his 90th or 100th birthday. By that time, his or her physical and mental condition are comparable to that of a seventy- or eighty-year-old in the twentieth century.

All characters end Stage 1 at age ten and end Stage 2 at age sixteen. To find your character's starting age, add the years that passed from any Higher Education and Real Life paths to sixteen. Years are listed under each path's *Time* header; certain events may also have added years.

Game Effects

The Age Effects Table shows the effects of a character's starting age. This table makes gross generalizations about aging; keep in mind that each character possesses distinct Attributes and so might break the stereotype. For example, if your character is stronger than average, the effects of aging on Strength will be less apparent than the table suggests.

The listed *Attribute Threshold Modifiers* work just like those in the Life Path. The *New Skill Limit* applies to the process of determining skills after the Life Path ends (see p. 57). After skill bonuses are calculated, this number restricts the additional skills the player can give his or her character using leftover Skill Points.

As in the Life Path, listed traits gained from age cancel out those diametrically opposite. For example, if a character has Toughness but is Very Old, he or she loses the Toughness Trait rather than gaining the Glass Jaw Trait.

The modifiers listed for each age category are not cumulative; only apply those for the oldest category reached.

BATTLEMECH/VEHICLE ASSIGNMENT

A character with the Vehicle Trait will be assigned a vehicle at this point. Complete rules for assigning vehicles appear in the description of the Vehicle Trait, p. 88 of the *Traits* section.

Owns Vehicle

If your character has the Owns Vehicle Trait, he or she cannot sell his or her vehicle during character creation for cash. The character can try to sell it in actual game play, but should possess the vehicle when play begins. If it is not appropriate for the character to have this trait, the player can exchange it for a trait of equivalent cost with the gamemaster's permission.

EQUIPMENT

Every character starts with 1,000 C-bills (the most widely accepted currency in the Inner Sphere) with which to purchase starting equipment. A character with the Wealth Trait will have more than 1,000 C-bills (see p. 89). A character with the Poverty Trait (p. 85) has only 100 C-bills. For more information on what equipment is available and how much it costs, see *Equipment*, starting on p. 129.

Starting Cash

Any C-bills left over after purchasing equipment become the character's cash-on-hand when play begins. (It's a good idea to save a few bills just in case you need some money before the first paycheck comes in.)

MISCELLANEOUS DETAILS

Now you need only work out a few more minor details. Write everything out neatly on a fresh sheet of paper or on a copy of the character record sheet (p. 217), and you are ready to play!

Name

Come up with a name for your character, or else other characters will have to call him "hey you." In the *BattleTech* universe, names are more or less the same as they are today. If you need inspiration, try a baby-name book or the ever-popular phone-book trick. Grab your local phone book, flip through it quickly and put your finger on a random name. If the first or last name looks good, take it, then flip again for the other name.

A starting Clan character does not have a last name because he has (presumably) not yet earned a Bloodname.

Physical Description

What does your character look like? What does he or she wear? Keep in mind that your character's affiliation can have a major impact on his or her appearance; to get a sense of each affiliation's look and feel, see the color pages.

Personal History

Your character's background story should be fairly easy to create, as you already have the Life Path to build on. Fill in details based on the paths and events the character lived through, and add any other elements as you see fit. Make sure to account for traits purchased after the Life Path. If the character has any Contact Traits, details about those contacts can form the basis of interesting relationships for the character. Likewise, enemies can become the basis for ongoing plots. Be as creative as you can; your character's background determines who he or she really is.

Character Personality

Finally, you need a personality for your character—something that makes him or her a distinct individual. If you don't have one in mind, you can use the Life Path to flesh out various personality aspects. How did your character respond to events in the Life Path? How did his schooling and careers (or lack thereof) affect his outlook on life? Why does he have certain traits, and how have other traits affected the way he relates to others? Use your imagination, and try to give your character at least one or two personality quirks that make him or her stand out. If you're having trouble with details, try basing the character on one from a favorite book or movie. But don't sweat it too much; roleplaying the character is bound to draw out parts of the character's persona that you wouldn't have thought up otherwise.

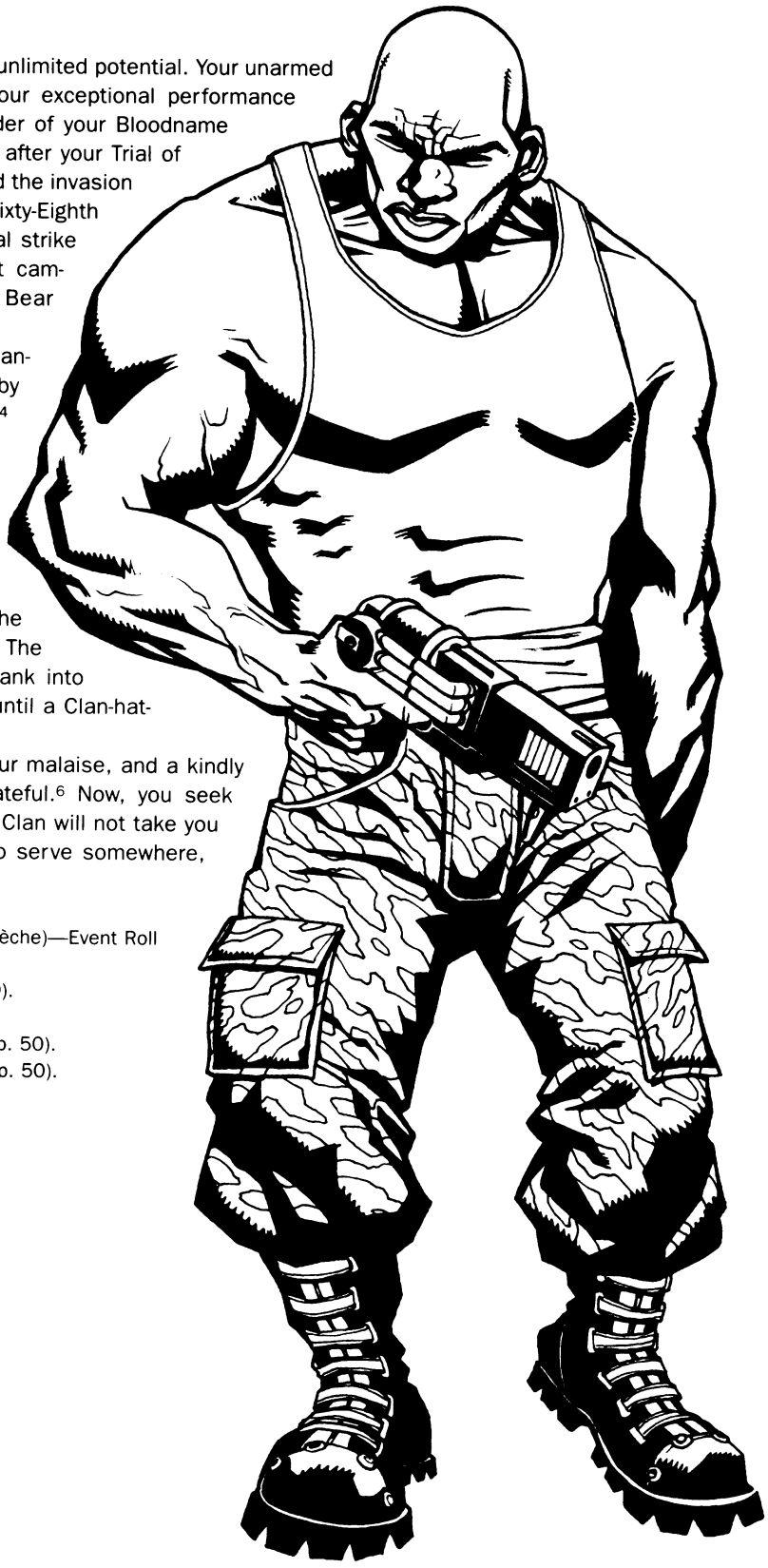
SAMPLE CHARACTERS

Following this section are eight sample characters. New players can use them to start playing right away, without going through the character creation process. Players can also base their own characters on the samples, customizing them by exchanging some of the listed skills and traits for ones of equal value (with the gamemaster's permission). Finally, the gamemaster can use these characters as major non-player characters (see p. 205).

Each sample character entry includes an illustration of the character and a brief story about his or her background. The story was created using the Life Path, with details fleshed out afterward—who the character's Enemies are, what exact Disability he or she has, exactly what kind of Interest the character picked up in college and so on. The footnotes in each story point to exactly what paths and events each character experienced and should serve as a useful example of the character creation system in action.

For each character, a filled-out character record sheet appears on the facing page. This sheet shows all the Attributes, skills, traits and equipment derived from the Life Path, and the character's story. Players may photocopy and use these sheets in games so that they can dive right in and start playing. Please note that some gamemaster intervention was used to round out the histories of the sample characters; it may not be possible to re-create all sample characters using the Character Creation rules. Even so, all of the sample characters provided are perfectly legal for players to use in a campaign.

DISGRACED ELEMENTAL



Once, you were the pride of your sibko, a *ristar* with unlimited potential. Your unarmed combat talents were apparent even in the crèche.[1] Your exceptional performance attracted the attention of Star Colonel Chou Vong, leader of your Bloodname House, who personally awarded you the rank of warrior after your Trial of Position.[2] You graduated into Vong's command and joined the invasion of the Inner Sphere as part of the Star Colonel's Sixty-Eighth Striker Cluster, where your Point participated in a critical strike against a *dezgra* moon-based monitoring station. That campaign earned your unit a place in the Ghost Bear Remembrance.[3]

All that changed on Alshain. In the assault on that planet, you fell in combat and were taken as a bondsman by House Kurita forces even as they evacuated the world.[4] Your capture earned you the enmity of your former comrades, compounded when you learned of Star Colonel Chou Vong's disgrace and removal from command—her association with you added to your own dishonor. As a bondsman, you dutifully served the Combine until you fell in combat once again—this time against Periphery bandits. You haven't been the same since. The Kurita doctors call it "post-traumatic stress syndrome." The Clans call it cowardice.[5] Declared unfit for duty, you sank into depression, wandering aimlessly from planet to planet until a Clan-hating storekeeper wrongly accused you of shoplifting.

Two years in a Combine prison shook you out of your malaise, and a kindly old cellmate taught you that not all Spheroids are hateful.[6] Now, you seek redemption in whatever way you can find it. Though your Clan will not take you back, you believe that there must be worthy masters to serve somewhere, even in the misguided Inner Sphere.

[1] Affiliation: Clan (p. 31); Stage 1: Early Childhood (Trueborn Crèche)—Event Roll 8 (p. 35).
[2] Stage 2: Late Childhood (Trueborn Sibko)—Event Roll 9 (p. 39).
[3] Stage 4: Real Life (Tour of Duty: Clan)—Event Roll 11 (p. 50).
[4] Stage 4: Real Life (Tour of Duty: Clan)—Event Roll 4 – 1 = 3 (p. 50).
[5] Stage 4: Real Life (Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere)—Event Roll 4 (p. 50).
[6] Stage 4: Real Life (Ne'er-Do-Well)—Event Roll 6 (p. 49).

Name Disgraced Elemental

Affiliation Clan (Ghost Bear)

Age 29 **Height** 2.59 m **Weight** 211 kg

MECHWARRIOR®

Character Record Sheet THIRD EDITION

ATTRIBUTES

	Value	Mod.	Max.
Strength	8	–1	9
Body	9	–1	9
Dexterity	5	—	7
Reflexes	7	–1	8
Intelligence	4	—	8
Willpower	6	—	9
Charisma	4	—	8
Edge	5	—	8
Social Standing	1	+2	8

SKILLS

Name	Bonus
Blade	+0
First Aid	+1
Gunnery/Ballistic/Humanoid*	+2
Gunnery/Laser/Humanoid*	+2
Gunnery/Missile/Humanoid*	+2
Interest/Ghost Bear Remembrance	+1
Intimidation	+0
Language/English	+1
Martial Arts/Battlesuit*	+3
Martial Arts/Military Sweep**, Neck Jab***	+2
Navigation/Ground	+1
Perception	+1
Piloting/Battlesuit*	+3
Pistols	+2
Scrounge	+0
Sensor Operations*	+2
Swimming	+0
Stealth	+0
Streetwise/Draconis Combine	+1
Tactics/Infantry*	+2
Technician/Mechanics	+0

* Natural Aptitude

** TN to hit +2; if successful, opponent is knocked prone

*** TN to hit + target RFL and highest Martial Arts Skill bonus; if successful, opponent makes Knockout Test

TRAITS

Brave
Contact (3): Chou Vong
Combat Paralysis
[Initiative: 3D10 and take worst 2]
Enemy: Rival GB Elemental
Elemental Phenotype
Lemon
Poverty
Owns Vehicle
Quirk/Clan Honor
Slow Learner
Stigma/Inner Sphere Bondsman
Toughness [All wounds –1 value]
Vehicle (2): Medium Battle Armor

COMBAT INFORMATION

Armor

Type A: Leather Vest AV (M/B/E/X) 1 /1 /0 /1
Type B: _____ AV (M/B/E/X) ___/___/___/___
Type C: _____ AV (M/B/E/X) ___/___/___/___
Type D: _____ AV (M/B/E/X) ___/___/___/___

Fatigue

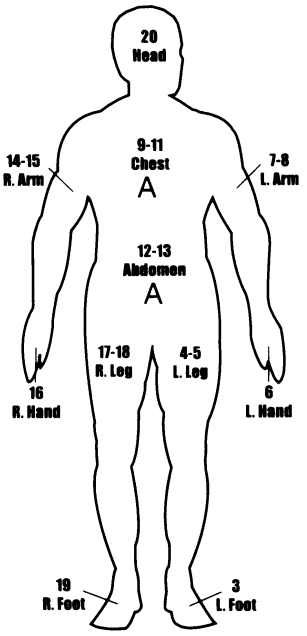
Fatigue≤ WIL ☒☒☒☒☐☐☐☐☐☐
+1 TN per Fatigue> WIL ☒☒☒☒☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
Unconscious if Fatigue > (2 x WIL)

Wounds

Grazing Wounds (WV 1): _____
Minor Wounds (WV 2): _____ +1 TN ea.
Serious Wounds (WV 4): _____ +2 TN ea.
Critical Wounds (WV 8): _____ +3 TN ea.
Deadly Wounds (WV 16): _____ Knockout
Total Wound Value of all Wounds: _____ *
* If total Wound Value > (BOD+WIL), Dying

HIT LOCATION DIAGRAM

Fill in Armor Type (A, B, C, D) and Wounds per Location



Hit Location roll of 2 = Critical Hit AV-1

Weapons	AP•Dmg	Type	Range	Shots	Notes
Revolver	4•4D6	B	8 /18 /40 /90	6	
Needler Rifle††	1•5D6	B	5 /14 /30 /40	20†	Splash; see*
Support Laser††	6•8D6	E	100 /325 /760 /1,500	10	
SRM 2††	6•7D6	B	60 /225 /425 /740	4	Blast
Claw††	2• —	M	— /— /— /—	—	

* AP 0 vs. barriers; † Number of power points used per shot; ††Mounted on battle armor

MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT AND INFORMATION

Basic Field Kit
Fatigues
Revolver Reloads (5)
Elemental Battle Armor (Lemon)††
AV: 9/8/8/8
+4 STR, –1 DEX, –1(–0) RFL
HUD (–1 TN)
LSSU
Jump Pack
HC Military Power Pack (300 Pwr)
Movement [W/R/S]: 17/27/55

Movement (W/R/S): 15 /25 /50 **Experience Points:** 1

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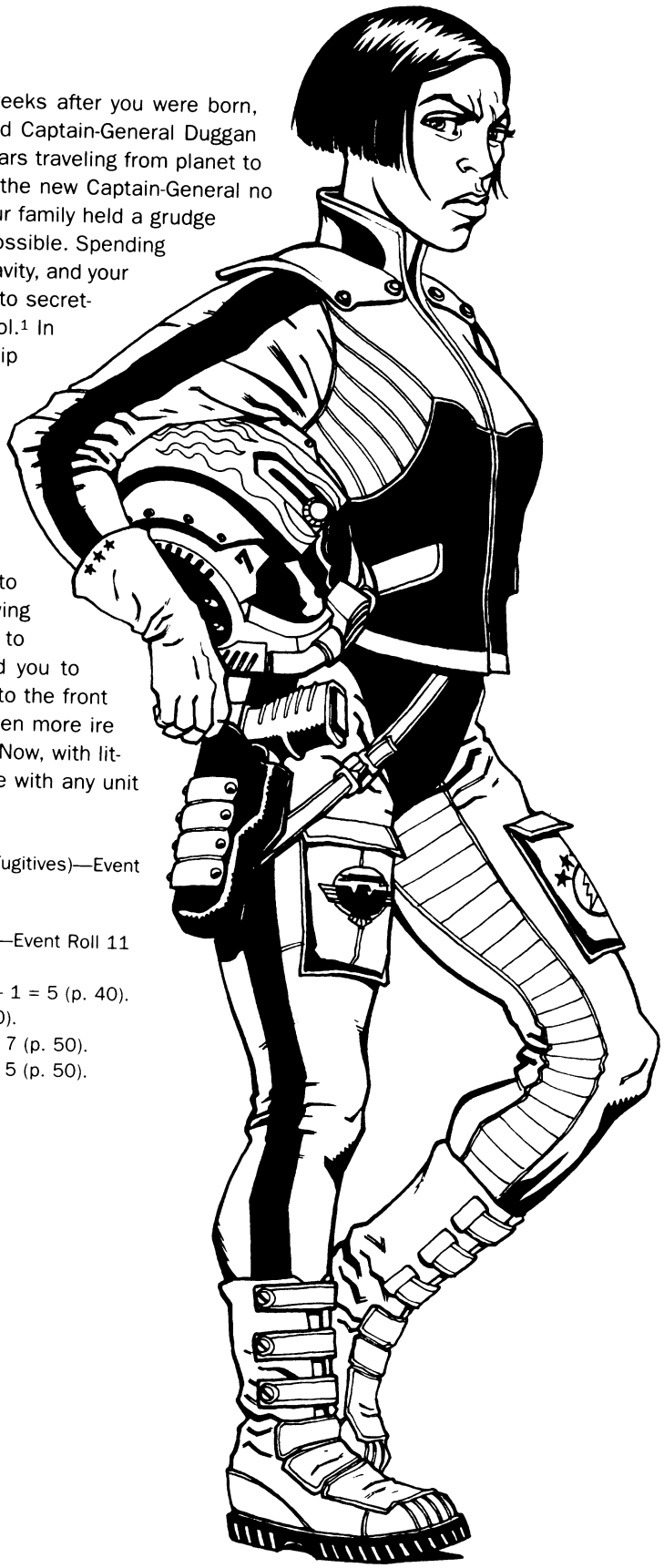
REBEL FIGHTER PILOT



Your parents were soldiers killed in the line of duty weeks after you were born, defending their home province of Andurien against the mad Captain-General Duggan Marik. Taken in by distant relations, you spent your early years traveling from planet to planet in an attempt to avoid the authorities; even though the new Captain-General no longer labeled Andurien and all its people as rebellious, your family held a grudge against the Mariks and aided separatist causes whenever possible. Spending so much time in space acclimated you to the rigors of low gravity, and your flair for aerofighter sims prompted the Andurien resistance to secretly sponsor you for admittance to an exclusive military school.[1] In what started as a ploy to get ahead, you built a real friendship with the headmaster,[2] who saw your potential and recommended you for a place in the prestigious Lloyd Marik-Stanley Aerospace School. You graduated at the top of your class,[3] earning a place in officer candidate school and a commission in the FWLM.[4]

You served with distinction in the Seventh Free Worlds Legionnaires during Operation Guerrero, and you quickly earned a promotion.[5] Your new rank and duties brought you to the attention of Commodore Manfred Teauchborg, your wing commander and a staunch Marik supporter. Determined to make sure you grabbed no more headlines, he reassigned you to backwater garrison duty.[6] All your attempts to make it back to the front got tangled in red tape, even as your attitude earned you even more ire from the commodore, who still holds a grudge against you.[7] Now, with little prospect for a future in the FWLM, you are ready to serve with any unit that will give you a real chance to fly.

[1] Affiliation: Free Worlds League (p. 28); Stage 1: Early Childhood (Fugitives)—Event Roll 10 (p. 34).
[2] Stage 2: Late Childhood (Military School)—Event Roll 7 (p. 38).
[3] Stage 3: Higher Education (Military Academy: Aerospace Pilot AIT)—Event Roll 11 (p. 40).
[4] Stage 3: Higher Education (Military Academy: OCS)—Event Roll 6 – 1 = 5 (p. 40).
[5] Stage 4: Real Life (Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere)—Event Roll 9 (p. 50).
[6] Stage 4: Real Life (Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere)—Event Roll 8 – 1 = 7 (p. 50).
[7] Stage 4: Real Life (Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere)—Event Roll 7 – 2 = 5 (p. 50).

Name Rebel Fighter Pilot

Affiliation Free Worlds League

Age 26 **Height** 1.57 m **Weight** 49 kg

MECHWARRIOR®

Character Record Sheet **THIRD EDITION**

ATTRIBUTES

	Value	Mod.	Max.
Strength	4	—	8
Body	5	—	8
Dexterity	7	–1	8
Reflexes	6	—	8
Intelligence	5	—	8
Willpower	7	–1	8
Charisma	5	—	9
Edge	6	—	9
Social Standing	3	+1	9

SKILLS

Name	Bonus
Academic/ Military History	+1
Art/ Landscape Painting	+0
Administration	+1
Bombing	+1
Bureaucracy/ Free Worlds League	+1
Career/ Soldier	+1
Computer	+1
Gunnery/ Ballistic/ Aero	+2
Gunnery/ Laser/ Aero	+3
Gunnery/ Missile/ Aero	+1
Language/ English	+2
Language/ Spanish	+1
Leadership	+2
Martial Arts/ Military Sweep*	+1
Navigation/ Air	+1
Navigation/ Ground	+1
Navigation/ Space	+1
Perception	+1
Piloting/ Aero	+3
Pistols	+1
Protocol/ Free Worlds League	+1
Rifles	+2
Sensor Operations	+1
Streetwise/ Free Worlds League	+1
Swimming	+1
First Aid	+1
Tactics/ Air	+1
Tactics/ Space	+1
Training	+1
Zero-G Operations	+1

* TN to hit +2; if successful, opponent is knocked prone

TRAITS

Contact: School Headmaster
Commission/Rank (2): Lieutenant
Custom Vehicle
Enemy (2): Manfred Teauchborg
G-Tolerance
Lost Limb: Left ring finger
Stigma: Bionics
Vehicle (6): F-700 Riever [100]
Well-Equipped (2)

COMBAT INFORMATION

Armor

Type A: Flak Vest AV (M/B/E/X) 1 /5 /1 /3
Type B: Combat Helmet AV (M/B/E/X) 5 /6 /5 /2
Type C: _____ AV (M/B/E/X) ___ /___ /___ /___
Type D: _____ AV (M/B/E/X) ___ /___ /___ /___

Fatigue

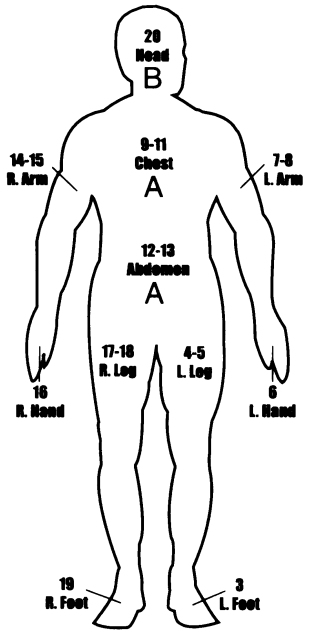
Fatigue≤ WIL ☒☒☒☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
+1 TN per Fatigue> WIL ☒☒☒☐☐☐☐☐☐▨
Unconscious if Fatigue > (2 x WIL)

Wounds

Grazing Wounds (WV 1): _____
Minor Wounds (WV 2): _____ +1 TN ea.
Serious Wounds (WV 4): _____ +2 TN ea.
Critical Wounds (WV 8): _____ +3 TN ea.
Deadly Wounds (WV 16): _____ Knockout
Total Wound Value of all Wounds: _____ *
* If total Wound Value > (BOD+WIL), Dying

HIT LOCATION DIAGRAM

Fill in Armor Type (A, B, C, D) and Wounds per Location



Hit Location roll of 2 = Critical Hit AV–1

Weapons	AP•Dmg	Type	Range	Shots	Notes
Needler Pistol	1•5D6	B	2 /6 /12 /20	10	Splash; see*
			/ / /		
			/ / /		
			/ / /		
			/ / /		

* AP 0 vs. barriers

MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT AND INFORMATION

Basic Field Kit
Medical Kit
Jumpsuit
Light Environment Suit (AV: 4/1/3/1)
Respirator
Needler Pistol Reloads (6)
Type 3 Prosthetic Finger

Movement (W/R/S): 10 /20 /40

Experience Points: 0

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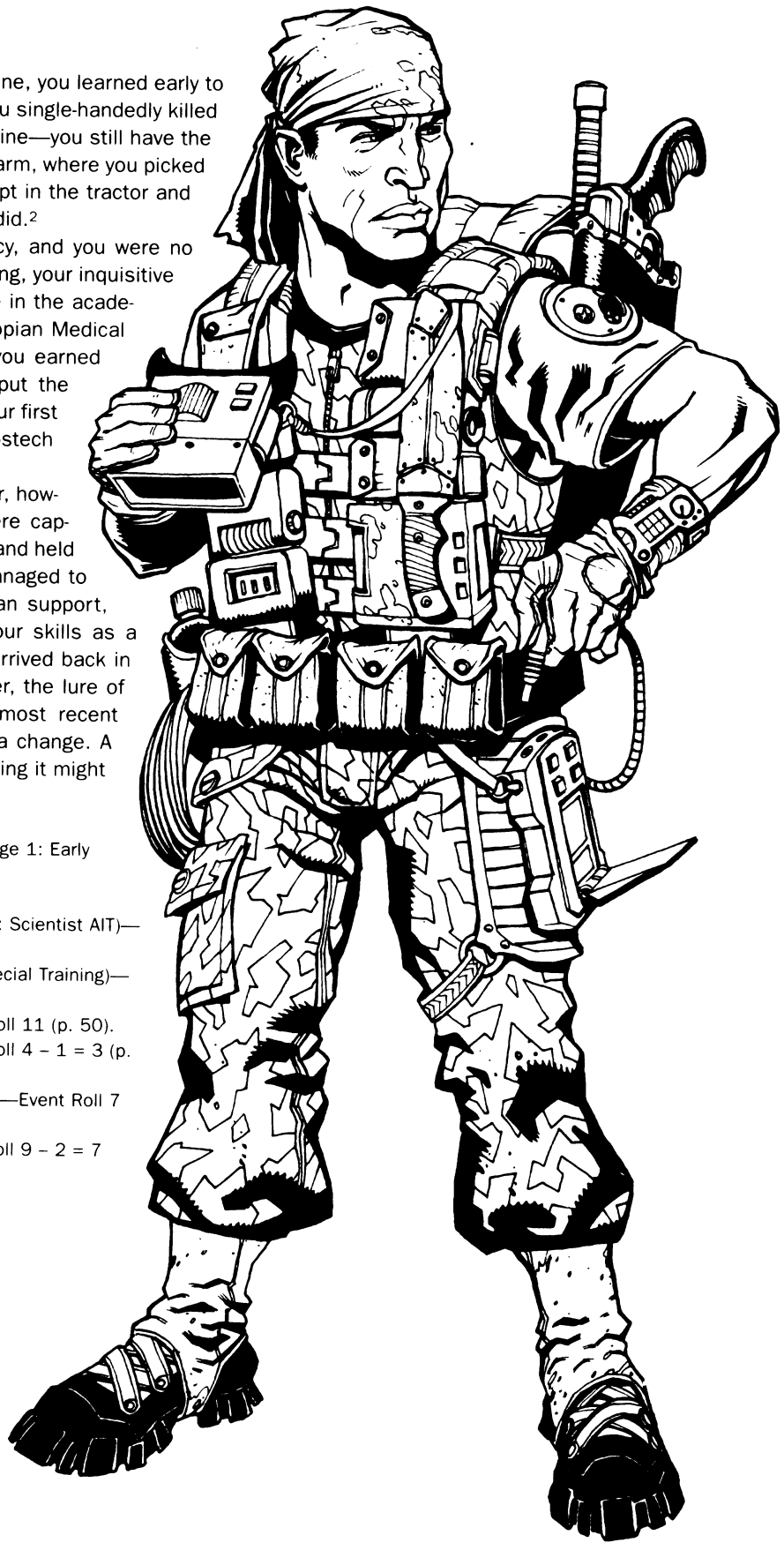
EXPLORER MEDIC

Born in the back woods of the planet New Abilene, you learned early to be tough and resourceful; local legend has it that you single-handedly killed a bear at age three, but it was really a wolf at age nine—you still have the pelt.[1] Seeking better fortune, your family started a farm, where you picked up your obsession with piloting and driving. You slept in the tractor and flew the crop duster more often than your parents did.[2]

Military service is mandatory in the Magistracy, and you were no exception. Within your first few weeks of basic training, your inquisitive nature and aptitude for science earned you a place in the academy on Luxen.[3] You enrolled in the prestigious Canopian Medical Sciences Research and Training Complex, where you earned your first-ranker diamond as a field medic.[4] You put the tracking skills from your youth to good use during your first tour of duty, leading your squad to a cache of lostech relics on an uncharted planet.[5]

All did not go so smoothly in your military career, however. Posted to the arctic world of Thraxa, you were captured in a raid by forces from the Marian Hegemony and held prisoner on a distant planet for two years.[6] You managed to escape and make it offworld; cut off from Canopian support, you traveled on any JumpShip you could, using your skills as a guide and medic to pay your way.[7] Ultimately, you arrived back in Canopian space and rejoined your old unit. However, the lure of exploration proved too much for you. After your most recent stretch of boring garrison duty,[8] you're looking for a change. A whole galaxy is out there, and you're ready for anything it might throw your way!



[1] Affiliation: Periphery/Magistracy of Canopus (p. 30); Stage 1: Early Childhood (Back Woods)—Event Roll 10 (p. 33).
[2] Stage 2: Late Childhood (Farm)—Event Roll 11 (p. 37).
[3] Stage 3: Higher Education (Military Enlistment/Academy: Scientist AIT)—Event Roll 9, spent Edge for reroll (p. 41).
[4] Stage 3: Higher Education (Military Academy: Doctor Special Training)—Event Roll 7 (p. 41).
[5] Stage 4: Real Life (Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere)—Event Roll 11 (p. 50).
[6] Stage 4: Real Life (Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere)—Event Roll 4 – 1 = 3 (p. 50).
[7] Stage 4: Real Life (Travel), spent Edge to enter this path—Event Roll 7 (p. 51).
[8] Stage 4: Real Life (Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere)—Event Roll 9 – 2 = 7 (p. 50).

Name Explorer Medic

Affiliation Periphery (Magistracy of Canopus)

Age 34 **Height** 1.69 m **Weight** 77 kg

MECHWARRIOR®

Character Record Sheet THIRD EDITION

ATTRIBUTES

	Value	Mod.	Max.
Strength	4	—	8
Body	6	—	8
Dexterity	6	—	8
Reflexes	5	—	8
Intelligence	7	–1	8
Willpower	6	—	8
Charisma	3	+1	9
Edge	5	—	9
Social Standing	4	—	9

SKILLS

Name	Bonus
Academic/Biology	+1
Administration	+1
Animal Handling	+1
Bombing	+0
Bureaucracy/Magistracy of Canopus	+1
Career/Doctor	+1
Career/Farmer	+0
Career/Scientist	+1
Career/Soldier	+1
Computer	+1
Escape Artist	+0
First Aid	+3
Interest/Hunting	+1
Language/Greek	+1
Language/English	+1
Leadership	+0
Martial Arts/Military Haymaker*	+1
Medtech	+2
Navigation/Ground	+2
Perception	+2
Piloting/Aero	+0
Piloting/Aircraft	+1
Piloting/Tracked	+0
Piloting/Wheeled	+1
Rifles	+1
Scrounge	+1
Surgery	+2
Survival	+2
Shotguns	+2
Streetwise/Periphery	+1
Swimming	+1
Tracking	+1
Training	+1
Zero-G Operations	+0

* Take 1 Fatigue and add 2D6 damage

TRAITS

Brave
Contact (2): Major on Luxen in MoC
Good Reputation: New Abilene in MoC
Rank (3): First Ranker
Stigma/Hedonist
Wealth (2)
Well-Equipped (4)

COMBAT INFORMATION

Armor

Type A: Ablative/Flak Vest AV (M/B/E/X) 2 /4 /5 /2
Type B: Combat Helmet AV (M/B/E/X) 5 /6 /5 /2
Type C: Combat Boots AV (M/B/E/X) 2 /3 /3 /1
Type D: _____ AV (M/B/E/X) _/_/_/_

Fatigue

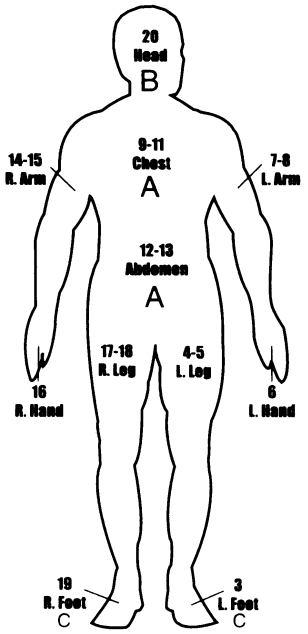
Fatigue≤ WIL ☒☒☒☒☐☐☐☐☐☐
+1 TN per Fatigue> WIL ☒☒☒☒☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
Unconscious if Fatigue > (2 x WIL)

Wounds

Grazing Wounds (WV 1): _____
Minor Wounds (WV 2): _____ +1 TN ea.
Serious Wounds (WV 4): _____ +2 TN ea.
Critical Wounds (WV 8): _____ +3 TN ea.
Deadly Wounds (WV 16): _____ Knockout
Total Wound Value of all Wounds: _____ *
* If total Wound Value > (BOD+WIL), Dying

HIT LOCATION DIAGRAM

Fill in Armor Type (A, B, C, D) and Wounds per Location



Hit Location roll of 2 = Critical Hit AV–1

Weapons	AP•Dmg	Type	Range	Shots	Notes
Pump-Action Shotgun	1•6D6	B	4 /10 /20 /45	6	Splash
Laser Pistol	4•3D6	E	15 /35 /80 /225	2†	_____
Flare Pistol	2•2D6	E	2 /5 /11 /20	5	Indirect
Knife	1•1D6	M	— /— /— /—	—	_____
_____	_____	_____	_/_/_/_	_____	_____

† Number of power points used per shot

MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT AND INFORMATION

Light Environment Suit (AV: 4/1/3/1)
Snow Suit (AV: 1/0/0/0)
Fatigues
Field Communicator
Basic Tool Kit
Rangefinder Binoculars
Hand-held Laser Torch
Noteputer
Pack & Packframe
3 Satchel Batteries (100 Pwr ea.)
2 Power Packs (20 Pwr ea.)
4 Micro Power Packs (15 Pwr ea.)
Solar Recharger
Skimmer
Advanced Field Kit
Advanced Medical Kit
Bubble Tent (2 Occupants)
Climbing/Rappelling Kit
Electronic Compass
Emergency Rations
Field Surgical Kit & Laser Scalpel
Preserving Sleeve
Respirator
Shotgun Reloads (13)
Flare Pistol Reloads (5)
C-bills: 3,000

Movement (W/R/S): 9 /19/38 **Experience Points:** 0

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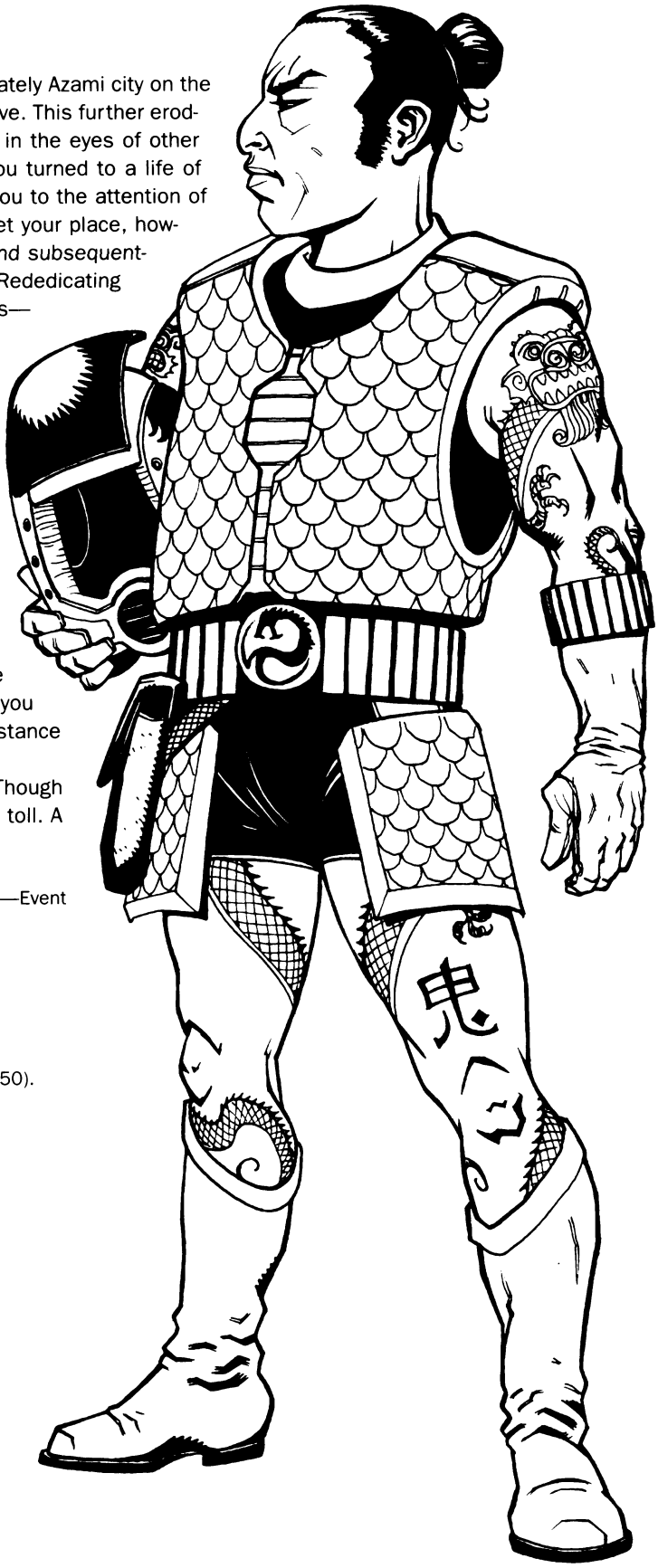
YAKUZA MECHWARRIOR

Born into poverty in a Japanese neighborhood of the predominately Azami city on the planet Arkab, you were forced to associate with local Azami to survive. This further eroded your already shaky Japanese and left you with a social stigma in the eyes of other Combine citizens.[1] With little hope of rising above your station, you turned to a life of crime, where your quick thinking, street smarts and luck brought you to the attention of the local *gumi* at a young age.[2] Your rise in station made you forget your place, however; you got caught trying to run a gambling racket on the side and subsequently enacted the *yubitsume* (finger-cutting) ritual of atonement.[3] Rededicating yourself to the *gumi* earned you the blessings of *irezumi* tattoos—which, in defiance of ancient traditions and in acknowledgement of the more visible status of the *yakuza* in current Combine society, you had placed on your arms and legs—and you spent most of your young adult life learning how to work the streets.[4]

You were in the right place at the right time when *Chu-sa* Christopher Riteccini, executive officer of the Eleventh Ghost Regiment, happened to be visiting your *oyabun*. Riteccini spotted your natural talent for piloting a 'Mech and invited you to join the Ghost Regiment. Soon afterward, the unit started raiding in the Ghost Bear Occupation Zone.[5] One such raid resulted in catastrophe that earned you the enmity of your commanding officer, *Tai-sa* Tomi Ourho.[6] Clan Ghost Bear retaliated in force against your unit, dropping several Clusters onto the world from which the Eleventh operates. Though you survived the most intense combat you have ever faced, the shocking losses around you drove you to substance abuse to overcome fear of your own mortality.[7]

Your deteriorating situation leads you to re-examine your life. Though you are still loyal to the *yakuza*, life on the front lines has taken its toll. A sideline outside the Ghost Regiment may be just the answer....

[1] Affiliation: Draconis Combine (p. 26); Stage 1: Early Childhood (Street)—Event Roll 4 (p. 35).
[2] Stage 2: Late Childhood (Street)—Event Roll 11 (p. 39).
[3] Stage 4: Real Life (Yakuza)—Event Roll 5 (p. 52).
[4] Stage 4: Real Life (Yakuza)—Event Roll 8 – 1 = 7 (p. 52).
[5] Stage 4: Real Life (Yakuza)—Event Roll 12 – 2 = 10 (p. 52).
[6] Stage 4: Real Life (Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere)—Event Roll 5 (p. 50).
[7] Stage 4: Real Life (Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere)—Event Roll 5 – 1 = 4 (p. 50).



Name Yakuza MechWarrior

Affiliation Draconis Combine

Age 33 **Height** 1.72 m **Weight** 70 kg

MECHWARRIOR®

Character Record Sheet THIRD EDITION

ATTRIBUTES

	Value	Mod.	Max.
Strength	5	—	8
Body	5	—	8
Dexterity	6	—	8
Reflexes	7	–1	8
Intelligence	5	—	8
Willpower	6	—	8
Charisma	4	—	9
Edge	8	–1	9
Social Standing	3	+1	9

SKILLS

Name	Bonus
Art/Kuritan Oral Histories	+1
Fast Talk	+2
Gambling	+0
Gunnery/Ballistic/Humanoid	+1
Gunnery/Laser/Humanoid	+1
Gunnery/Missile/Humanoid	+3
Intimidation	+0
Language/Arabic	+0
Language/English	+0
Language/Japanese	+1
Martial Arts/Karate	+2
Feint**, Precision Hit***	
Perception	+0
Piloting/ 'Mech*	+3
Pistols	+1
Rifles	+0
Scrounge	+0
Sensor Operations	+2
Streetwise/Draconis Combine	+3
Staff	+0
Tactics/ 'Mech	+1

* Natural Aptitude

** TN to hit –5 but inflict is half damage (round down); if successful, target must make a Knockdown Test

*** TN for aimed shot receives a –3 modifier

TRAITS

Addiction: Sake
Bad Reputation: Buckminster of DC
Contact: Civilian Guidance Corps
Enemy: Yakuza gumi on Arkab in DC
Enemy (2): Tai-sa Tomi Ourho
In For Life: Yakuza
Lost Limb: Right hand pinky joint
Quirk: Xenophobic to non-Kuritans
Quirk: Loyalty to Yakuza
Rank (1): Hojuhei
Stigma: Raised in the streets
Vehicle: JR7-D Jenner [35]
Wealth (2)
Well-Connected: Arkab in DC

COMBAT INFORMATION

Armor

Type A: Flak Vest AV (M/B/E/X) 1 /5 /1 /3
Type B: _____ AV (M/B/E/X) ___ /___ /___ /___
Type C: _____ AV (M/B/E/X) ___ /___ /___ /___
Type D: _____ AV (M/B/E/X) ___ /___ /___ /___

Fatigue

Fatigue≤ WIL ☒☒☒☒☐☐☐☐☐☐
+1 TN per Fatigue> WIL ☒☒☒☒☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
Unconscious if Fatigue > (2 x WIL)

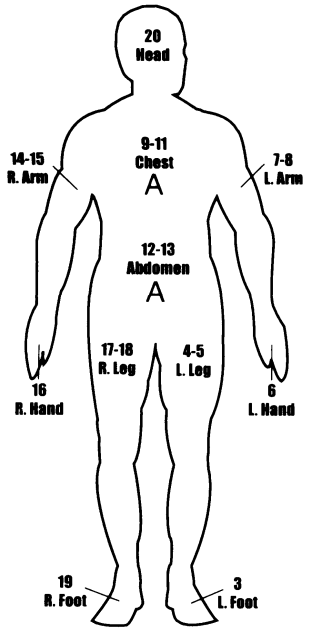
Wounds

Grazing Wounds (WV 1): _____
Minor Wounds (WV 2): _____ +1 TN ea.
Serious Wounds (WV 4): _____ +2 TN ea.
Critical Wounds (WV 8): _____ +3 TN ea.
Deadly Wounds (WV 16): _____ Knockout
Total Wound Value of all Wounds: _____ *

* If total Wound Value > (BOD+WIL), Dying

HIT LOCATION DIAGRAM

Fill in Armor Type (A, B, C, D) and Wounds per Location



Hit Location roll of 2 = Critical Hit AV–1

Weapons	AP•Dmg	Type	Range	Shots	Notes
Laser Pistol	4•3D6	E	15 /35 /80 /225	2†	
Flamer Pistol	2•3D6	E	5 /15 /25 /40	10	Splash; incendiary
			/ / /		
			/ / /		
			/ / /		

† Number of power points used per shot

MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT AND INFORMATION

Fatigues
Snow Suit (AV: 1/0/0/0)
Micro Communicator
Military Power Pack (200 Pwr)
Basic Tool Kit
Flamer Pistol Reloads (10)
Emergency Flares
Basic Field Kit
Medical Kit

C-bills: 3,161

Movement (W/R/S): 12 /22 /44

Experience Points: 0

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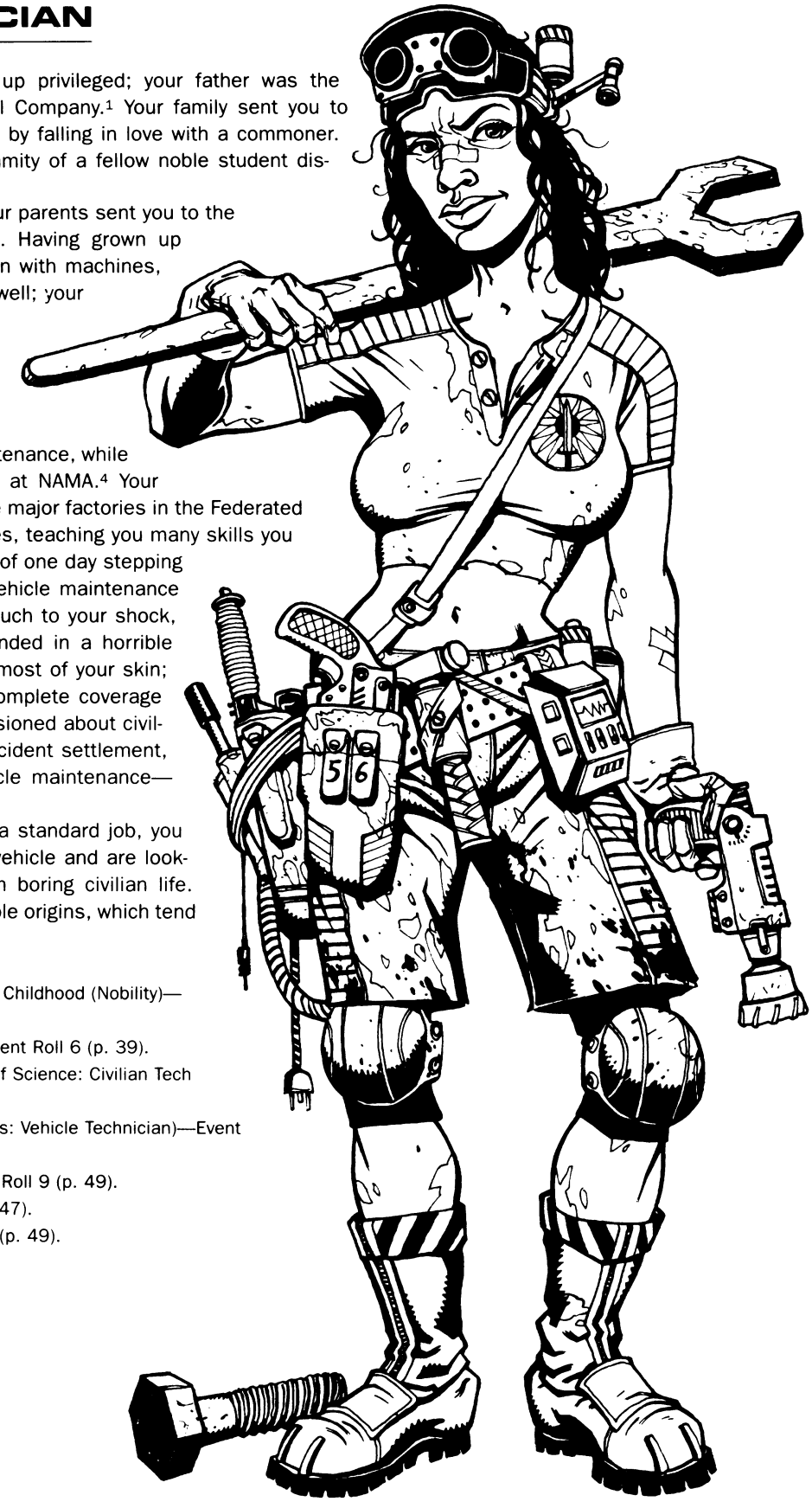
FREELANCE TECHNICIAN

Born on the planet Layover, you grew up privileged; your father was the count/CEO of the local division of Quickscell Company.[1] Your family sent you to preparatory school, where you let them down by falling in love with a commoner. Though you stood by him, you earned the enmity of a fellow noble student disgusted by your "slumming."[2]

In an attempt to raise your standards, your parents sent you to the prestigious New Avalon Institute of Science. Having grown up around vehicles, you had a natural fascination with machines, so you majored in that subject. School went well; your professor excelled in his field, and you went shooting on weekends with your friends at the New Avalon Military Academy. You also indulged your love of poetry by visiting Avalon City's famed Ink District.[3] You soon moved on to advanced studies in vehicle maintenance, while continuing your friendship with your buddies at NAMA.[4] Your postgraduate studies took you on a tour of the major factories in the Federated Suns that produce civilian and combat vehicles, teaching you many skills you never thought you'd possess.[5] In anticipation of one day stepping into your father's place, you took a job as vehicle maintenance specialist at Kallon Industries on Nanking. Much to your shock, you hated it. Your lackluster performance ended in a horrible coolant accident that permanently damaged most of your skin; you cannot tolerate direct sunlight without complete coverage for more than a few hours.[6] Somewhat disillusioned about civilian jobs, but with a lot of money from the accident settlement, you threw yourself into your first love—vehicle maintenance—and mastered every aspect of it.[7]

With plenty of money and no desire for a standard job, you have become adept at fixing just about any vehicle and are looking for any job that will take you away from boring civilian life. However, you can't seem to set aside your noble origins, which tend to make you snobbish.



[1] Affiliation: Federated Suns (p. 26); Stage 1: Early Childhood (Nobility)—Event Roll 7 (p. 34).
[2] Stage 2: Late Childhood (Preparatory School)—Event Roll 6 (p. 39).
[3] Stage 3: Higher Education (New Avalon Institute of Science: Civilian Tech Major)—Event Roll 12, then 7,9 (p. 42).
[4] Stage 3: Higher Education (NAIS Advanced Studies: Vehicle Technician)—Event Roll 7 (p. 42).
[5] Stage 4: Real Life (Postgraduate Studies)—Event Roll 9 (p. 49).
[6] Stage 4: Real Life (Civilian Job)—Event Roll 2 (p. 47).
[7] Stage 4: Real Life (Ne'er-Do-Well)—Event Roll 10 (p. 49).

Name Freelance Technician

Affiliation Federated Suns

Age 33 **Height** 1.70 m **Weight** 67 kg

MECHWARRIOR®

Character Record Sheet THIRD EDITION

ATTRIBUTES

	Value	Mod.	Max.
Strength	5	—	8
Body	5	—	8
Dexterity	5	—	8
Reflexes	4	—	8
Intelligence	8	–1	8
Willpower	4	—	8
Charisma	5	—	9
Edge	6	—	9
Social Standing	8	–1	9

SKILLS

Name	Bonus
Academic/Literature	+2
Academic/Federated Suns Politics	+1
Appraisal	+0
Art/ Poetry	+1
Bureaucracy/Federated Suns*	+2
Career/Technician	+3
Comms/Conv.	+1
Computer	+1
Language/English	+2
Language/French	+1
Navigation/Ground	+0
Perception	+1
Piloting/Hover	+1
Pistols	+1
Protocol/Federated Suns	+1
Rifles	+0
Streetwise/Federated Suns	+0
Survival	+0
Technician/Ballistic	+0
Technician/Comms	+2
Technician/Electronics	+2
Technician/Fusion	+2
Technician/ICE	+1
Technician/Laser	+0
Technician/Mechanics	+2
Technician/Missile	+0
Technician/Myomer	+1
Technician/Rotor	+1
Technician/Support	+2

* Natural Aptitude

TRAITS

Brave
Disabled (2): Problems with sunlight
Enemy: A minor Baronet of the FS
Wealth (5)
Well-Connected: New Avalon in FS

COMBAT INFORMATION

Armor

Type A: Flak Jacket AV (M/B/E/X) 1 /5 /1 /3
Type B: Ablative Jacket AV (M/B/E/X) 3 /1 /6 /1
Type C: Combat Boots AV (M/B/E/X) 2 /3 /3 /1
Type D: _____ AV (M/B/E/X) _ / _ / _ / _

Fatigue

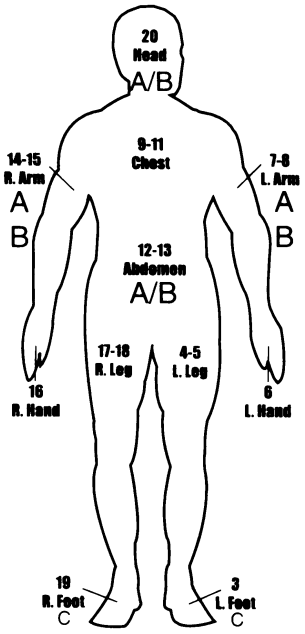
Fatigue≤ WIL ☒☒☒☒☒☒☐☐☐☐
+1 TN per Fatigue> WIL ☒☒☒☒☒☒☐☐☐☐☐
Unconscious if Fatigue > (2 x WIL)

Wounds

Grazing Wounds (WV 1): _____
Minor Wounds (WV 2): _____ +1 TN ea.
Serious Wounds (WV 4): _____ +2 TN ea.
Critical Wounds (WV 8): _____ +3 TN ea.
Deadly Wounds (WV 16): _____ Knockout
Total Wound Value of all Wounds: _____ *
* If total Wound Value > (BOD+WIL), Dying

HIT LOCATION DIAGRAM

Fill in Armor Type (A, B, C, D) and Wounds per Location



Hit Location roll of 2 = Critical Hit AV–1

Weapons	AP•Dmg	Type	Range	Shots	Notes
Laser Pistol	4•3D6	E	15 /35 /80 /225	2†	
			/ / /		
			/ / /		
			/ / /		
			/ / /		

† Number of power points used per shot

MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT AND INFORMATION

Light Environment Suit (AV: 4/1/3/1)
Long-Range Communication Kit
Basic Tool Kit
Cutting/Joining Kit
Deluxe Tool Kit
Electronics Repair Kit
Energy Weapon Clean/Repair Kit
Myomer/Actuator Repair Kit
Vehicle Repair Kit
Weapon Repair Kit
Scanalyzer
Packframe
Hovercar
Personal Computer
Noteputer
Hand-held Laser Torch
Pants/Shirts/Shorts/Footware (2 each)
Coat
4 HC Power Packs (30 Pwr ea.)
2 HC Micro Power Packs (20 Pwr ea.)
HC Military Power Pack (300 Pwr)
HC Satchel Battery (150 Pwr)
Advanced Field Kit

C-bills: 21,974

Movement (W/R/S): 9 /19 /38 **Experience Points:** 1

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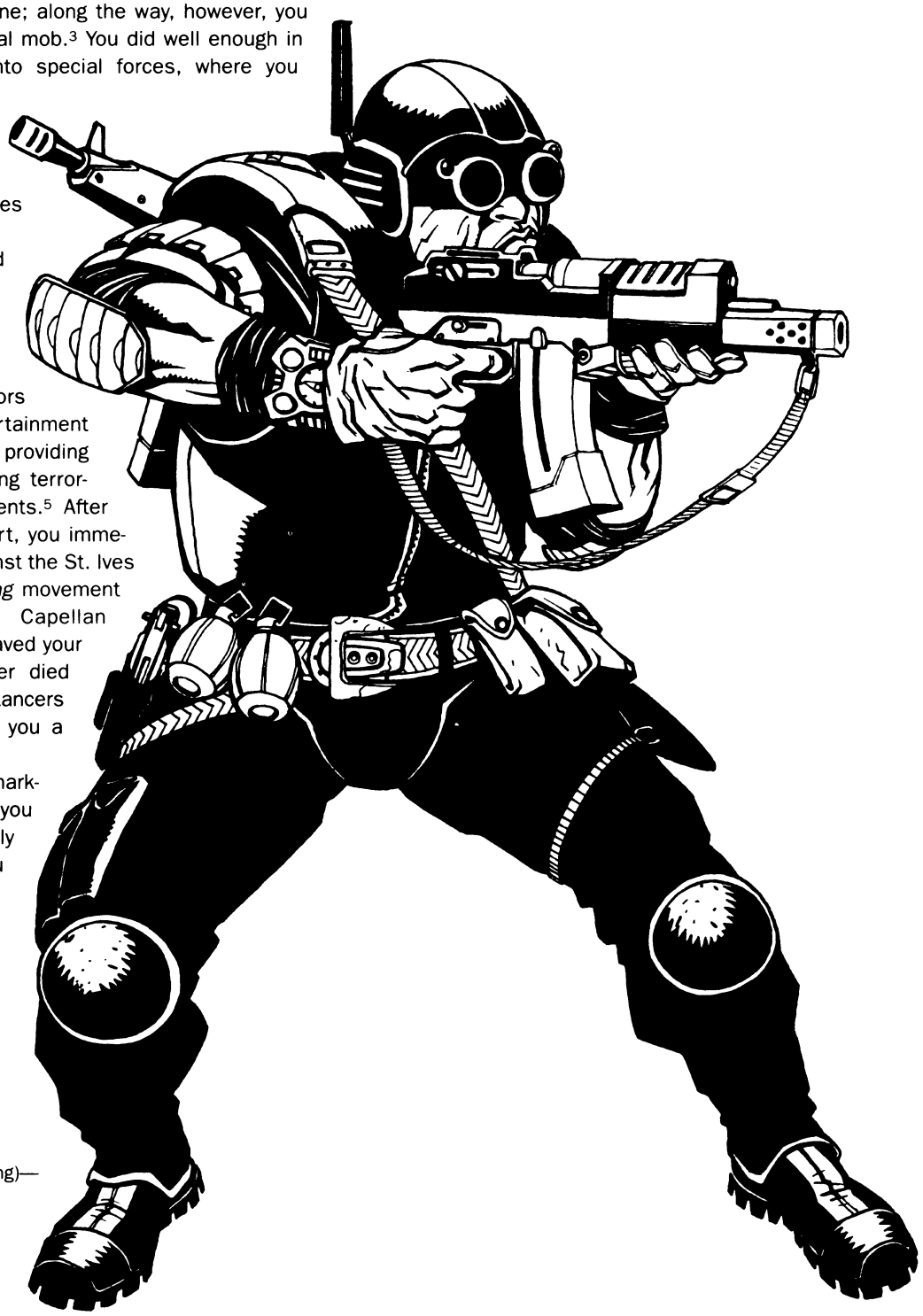
SPECIAL FORCES OPERATIVE

Following the loss of their home on the world of Tikonov in the Fourth Succession War, your parents immigrated to Betelgeuse, where they both worked for Firmir Commercial, an entertainment equipment producer that exports directly to other Successor States.[1] Sent to high school, you excelled above all expectations and won a scholarship for your innovative sales techniques.[2] You spent the summer before leaving for college with your favorite grandfather, who spun yarns of his proud Russian heritage on Tikonov and how the hated Federated Suns stole it from you. The stories made you decide to enlist and become a marine; along the way, however, you ran up a gambling debt with the local mob.[3] You did well enough in your advanced training to move into special forces, where you became good friends with Manu Sharma. Sharma later left Capellan service to help form the Heavy Hell Raisers, a new mercenary unit; your friendship with him gives you ties to mercenary circles.[4]

The invasion of the Federated Commonwealth's Sarna March persuaded you to become a covert operative to further the war effort. Your ties to Firmir Commercial and your knowledge of tri-vid projectors allowed you to become an entertainment salesman in the Disputed Territories, providing invaluable aid to Zhanzeng de Guang terrorists in overthrowing local governments.[5] After your superiors cut your mission short, you immediately signed up for operations against the St. Ives Compact, swept up in the *Xin Sheng* movement along with the rest of the Capellan Confederation. Your heroic efforts saved your unit when your commanding officer died fighting against the Second St. Ives Lancers on Indicass in early 3061, earning you a field commission.[6]

Your elite status gives you a remarkable degree of personal flexibility; you can take any job that does not directly oppose the Confederation, and you always welcome a challenge.



[1] Affiliation: Capellan Confederation (p. 28); Stage 1: Early Childhood (Blue Color)—Event Roll 6 (p. 33).
[2] Stage 2: Late Childhood (High School)—Event Roll 11 (p. 38).
[3] Stage 3: Higher Education (Military Enlistment: Marine AIT)—Event Roll 4 (p. 41).
[4] Stage 3: Higher Education (Military Enlistment: Special Forces Special Training)—Event Roll 7 (p. 41).
[5] Stage 4: Real Life (Covert Ops)—Event Roll 8 (p. 48).
[6] Stage 4: Real Life (Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere)—Event Roll 10 (p. 50).

Name Special Forces Operative

Affiliation Capellan Confederation

Age 23 **Height** 1.72 m **Weight** 74 kg

MECHWARRIOR®

Character Record Sheet **THIRD EDITION**

ATTRIBUTES

	Value	Mod.	Max.
Strength	6	—	8
Body	6	—	8
Dexterity	5	—	8
Reflexes	8	–1	8
Intelligence	5	—	8
Willpower	7	–1	8
Charisma	4	—	9
Edge	7	–1	10
Social Standing	3	+1	9

SKILLS

Name	Bonus
Blade	+1
Career/Soldier	+2
Career/Tri-D Projector Salesman	+0
Demolitions	+2
Disguise	+0
Fast Talk	+0
First Aid	+1
Freefall	+1
Gunnery/Laser/Space	+1
Interest/Entertainment	+0
Jump Pack	+1
Language/English	+0
Language/Mandarin (Chinese)	+1
Language/Russian	+0
Martial Arts/Gung Fu [A]	+4
Dodge[B], Sweep[C], Weapon Style[D]	
Martial Arts/Military	+2
Haymaker[E], Neck Jab[F]	
Navigation/Ground	+1
Perception	+2
Pistols	+2
Quickdraw	+0
Rifles	+2
Security Systems	+2
Shotguns	+1
Stealth	+1
Submachine Guns	+1
Survival	+1
Swimming	+0
Tracking	+0
Zero-G Operations	+1

[A] Natural Aptitude

[B] Opponent's TN to hit +3; you cannot inflict damage

[C] TN to hit +2; if successful, opponent is knocked prone

[D] Use any weapon you are skilled in with Martial Arts (p. 98)

[E] Take 1 Fatigue and add 2D6 damage

[F] TN to hit + target RFL and highest Martial Arts Skill bonus; if successful, opponent makes Knockout Test

TRAITS

Alternate Identity
Brave
Commission/Rank (1): Sao-wei
Contact
Enemy: Triad on Betelgeuse in CC
Enemy (3): FS MIIO (Intelligence)
Exceptional Attribute: Edge
Fast Learner
Good Reputation: Indicass in CC
G-Tolerance
In For Life: Death Commandos
Wealth (2)
Well-Equipped (2)

COMBAT INFORMATION

Armor

Type A: Ballistic Plate Vest AV (M/B/E/X) 4 /6 /5 /4
Type B: Combat Helmet AV (M/B/E/X) 5 /6 /5 /2
Type C: _____ AV (M/B/E/X) _/_/_/_
Type D: _____ AV (M/B/E/X) _/_/_/_

Fatigue

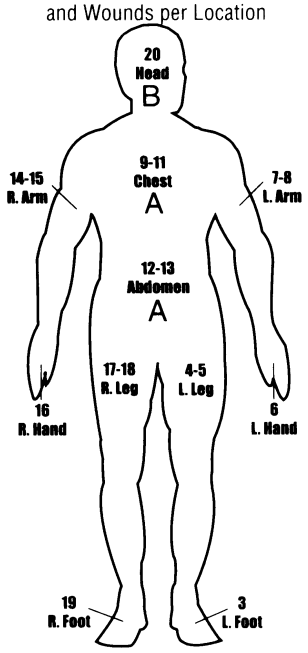
Fatigue≤ WIL ☒☒☒☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
+1 TN per Fatigue> WIL ☒☒☒☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
Unconscious if Fatigue > (2 x WIL)

Wounds

Grazing Wounds (WV 1): _____
Minor Wounds (WV 2): _____ +1 TN ea.
Serious Wounds (WV 4): _____ +2 TN ea.
Critical Wounds (WV 8): _____ +3 TN ea.
Deadly Wounds (WV 16): _____ Knockout
Total Wound Value of all Wounds: _____ *
* If total Wound Value > (BOD+WIL), Dying

HIT LOCATION DIAGRAM

Fill in Armor Type (A, B, C, D) and Wounds per Location



Hit Location roll of 2 = Critical Hit AV–1

Weapons	AP•Dmg	Type	Range	Shots	Notes
Auto-Pistol	3•4D6	B	5 /20 /45 /105	10	Jam on a fumble
Federated Long Rifle	4•5D6	B	35 /85 /205 /450	10	_____
Knife	1•1D6	M	— /— /— /—	—	_____
3 C8 Blasting Blocks	7•10D6	X	— /— /— /—	—	Blast (half radius)
Submachine Gun	3•3D6	B	5 /16 /35 /80	50	Jam on a fumble, see*

*Burst (10/3); Recoil Compensation included

MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT AND INFORMATION

Flash Suppressor (JAF-05)
Holster
Recoil Compensation (SMG)
Night Vision Scope
Micro Power Pack (15 Pwr)
Telescopic Scope
Auto-Pistol Reloads (10)
Federated Long Rifle Reloads (10)
Submachine Gun Reloads (10)
Fatigues
Field Communicator
Vibro Lockpick Set
Solar Recharger
Parachute
Rangefinder Binoculars
Demolition Kit

Movement (W/R/S): 14/24/48 **Experience Points:** 0

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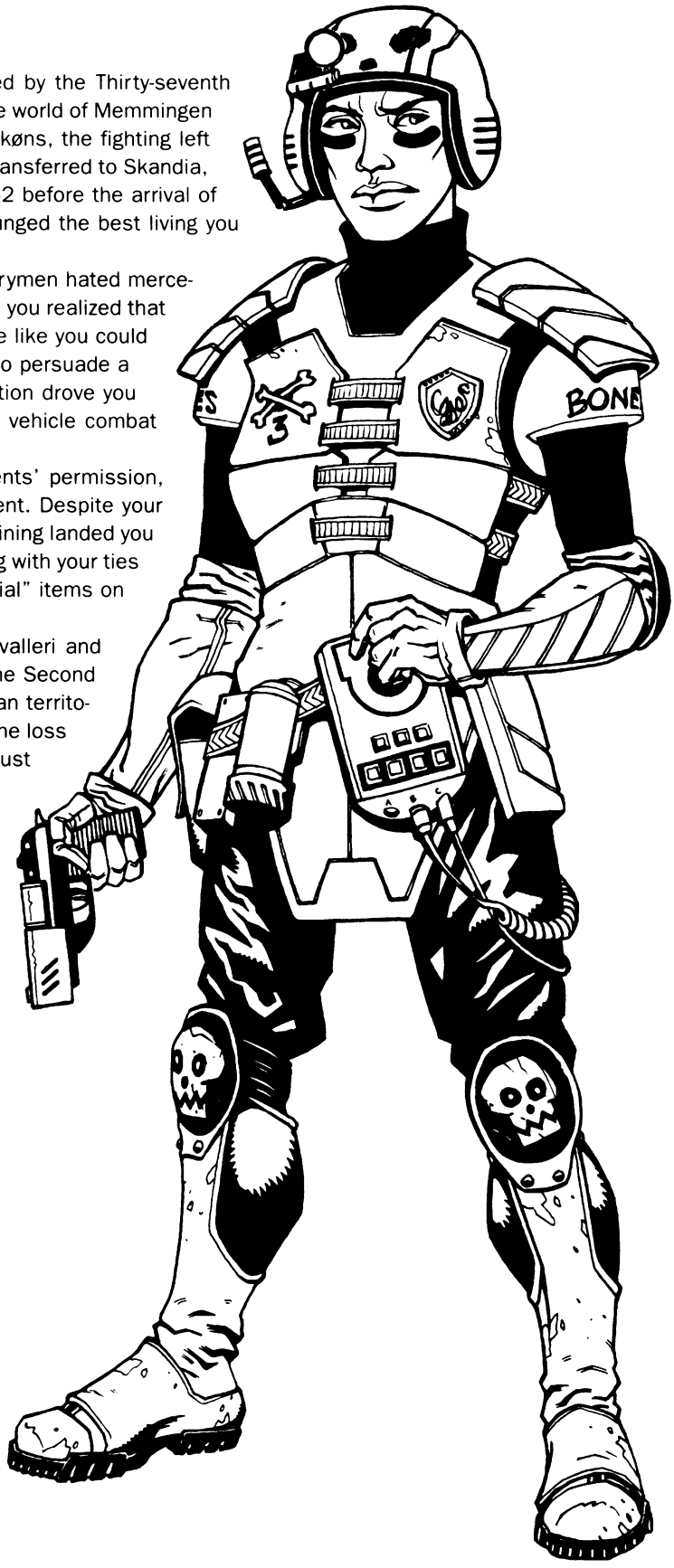
BRASH TANKER

Greenvale, the sleepy little village of your birth, was razed by the Thirty-seventh Striker Cluster of Clan Wolf's Delta Galaxy when they invaded the world of Memmingen in late 3051. Though you hooked up with the fleeing Third Drakøns, the fighting left you an orphan at the age of eight. First taken to Satalice, then transferred to Skandia, you were finally evacuated to the world of Karbala in early 3052 before the arrival of forces from Clan Wolf's Gamma Galaxy. On Karbala, you scrounged the best living you could on the streets.[1]

Though you knew how deeply so many of your fellow countrymen hated mercenaries, you had a burning desire to strike back at the Clans, and you realized that being adopted into a mercenary unit was the only way someone like you could hope to fight them. Intelligent for a ten-year-old, you managed to persuade a family of the Black Outlaws merc unit to foster you. Your ambition drove you relentlessly, and you tested so well that you began training in vehicle combat almost immediately.[2]

Fiercely loyal to Rasalhague, and with your adoptive parents' permission, you left the mercenary unit and signed up for military enlistment. Despite your reputation as a mercenary brat, your natural ability and early training landed you in the fast track for armor training. Good negotiation skills, along with your ties to your former mercenary unit, made you the supplier of "special" items on base.

Upon leaving training, you signed up with the Second Kavalleri and found a berth as the pilot of a Hunter light assault tank with the Second Karbala Heavy Armor Regiment. However, in a raid into Wolf Clan territory, one of your own lancemates sold you out, which resulted in the loss of most of your company.[4] Convinced by this that you cannot trust the regular military, you are looking to return to mercenary work, no matter how large or small the unit, as long as it will eventually lead you back to the Clans and your long-anticipated revenge.



[1] Affiliation: Free Rasalhague Republic (p. 30); Stage 1: Early Childhood (Clan War Orphan)—Event Roll 7 (p. 33).
[2] Stage 2: Late Childhood (Mercenary Brat)—Event Roll 10 (p. 38).
[3] Stage 3: Higher Education (Military Enlistment: Cavalry AIT)—Event Roll 10 (p. 41).
[4] Stage 4: Real Life (Tour of Duty: Inner Sphere)—Event Roll 2 (p. 50).

Name Brash Tanker

Affiliation Free Rasalhague Republic

Age 19 **Height** 1.8 m **Weight** 74 kg

MECHWARRIOR®

Character Record Sheet **THIRD EDITION**

ATTRIBUTES

	Value	Mod.	Max.
Strength	6	—	8
Body	6	—	8
Dexterity	5	—	8
Reflexes	7	–1	8
Intelligence	5	—	8
Willpower	8	–1	8
Charisma	4	—	9
Edge	7	–1	9
Social Standing	2	+1	9

SKILLS

Name	Bonus
Appraisal	+0
Artillery	+1
Brawling	+0
Career/Soldier	+1
Fast Talk	+0
First Aid	+1
Gunnery/Ballistic/Conv.	+1
Gunnery/Laser/Conv.	+1
Gunnery/Missile/Conv.	+3
Interest/Clan Invasion History	+0
Language/English	+0
Language/Swedish	+1
Martial Arts/Military	+1
Haymaker*	
Navigation/Ground	+1
Negotiation	+2
Perception	+1
Piloting/Tracked	+2
Pistols	+1
Rifles	+1
Scrounge	+0
Sensor Operations	+1
Streetwise/Free Rasalhague Republic	+0
Swimming	+0
Technician/Mechanics	+1

* Take 1 Fatigue and add 2D6 damage

TRAITS

Quirk/Paranoia	Well-Equipped
Rank (2): Menig	
Stigma: Mercenary brat	
Stigma: Orphan	
Vehicle (2):	
Hunter Light Support Tank [35]	
Wealth	

COMBAT INFORMATION

Armor

Type A:	Ablative/Flak Suit	AV (M/B/E/X) 2 /4 /5 /2
Type B:	Combat Helmet	AV (M/B/E/X) 5 /6 /5 /2
Type C:	Hv Combat Gloves	AV (M/B/E/X) 3 /4 /4 /3
Type D:	Combat Boots	AV (M/B/E/X) 2 /3 /3 /1

Fatigue

Fatigue≤ WIL ☒☒☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

+1 TN per Fatigue> WIL ☒☒☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Unconscious if Fatigue > (2 x WIL)

Wounds

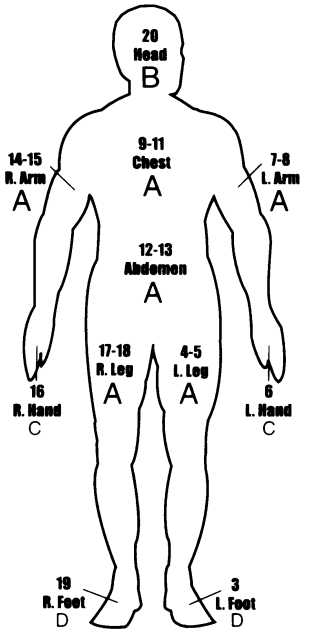
Grazing Wounds (WV 1):		
Minor Wounds (WV 2):		+1 TN ea.
Serious Wounds (WV 4):		+2 TN ea.
Critical Wounds (WV 8):		+3 TN ea.
Deadly Wounds (WV 16):		Knockout

Total Wound Value of all Wounds: _____ *

* If total Wound Value > (BOD+WIL), Dying

HIT LOCATION DIAGRAM

Fill in Armor Type (A, B, C, D) and Wounds per Location



Hit Location roll of 2 = Critical Hit AV–1

Weapons	AP•Dmg	Type	Range	Shots	Notes
Revolver	4•4D6	B	8 /18 /40 /90	6	
Sonic Stunner	0•4D6	E	2 / 5 / 7 /10	1†	Subduing; see*
			/ / /		
			/ / /		
			/ / /		

* Armor has no effect; † Number of power points used per shot

MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT AND INFORMATION

Revolver Reloads (10)
2 Power Packs (20 Pwr ea.)
Fatigues
Field Communicator
Slugthrower Clean/Repair kit
Vehicle Repair Kit
Basic Field Kit
Medical Kit

C-bills: 17

Movement (W/R/S): 13 /23 /46 **Experience Points:** 1

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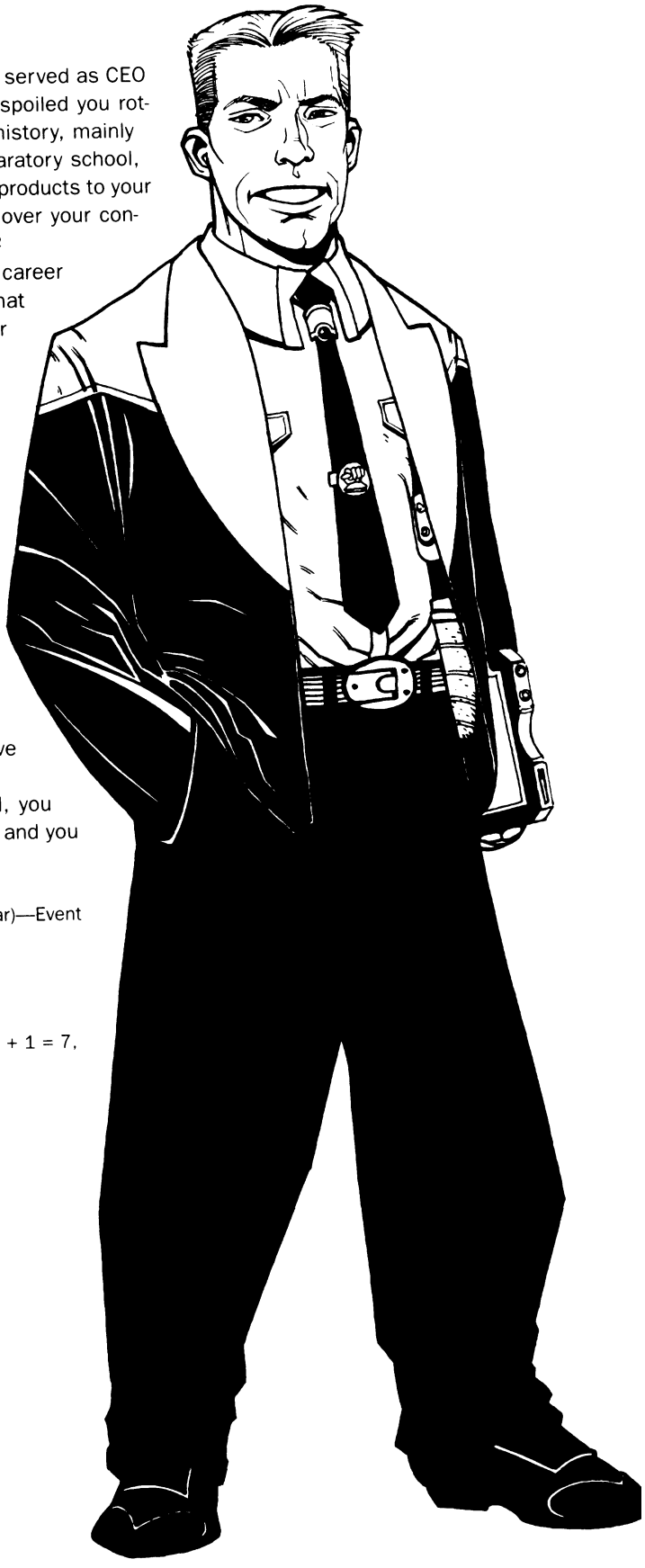
WELL-CONNECTED TRADER



You were born into the Radant family, which for generations has served as CEO of Zettle Metals Incorporated on the world of Califar. Your parents spoiled you rotten. You whiled away the weeks exploring your burgeoning love of history, mainly medieval Japan on Terra.[1] Your parents sent you to the finest preparatory school, where your timid nature trapped you into being the supplier of illegal products to your fellow students; to your surprise, you excelled at it. Embarrassed over your conduct, however, your parents refused to sponsor you to a university.[2]

With little choice, you attended a technical college to pursue a career in linguistics. You switched majors midway through as you realized that your true love lay in making the deal. Instead, you signed up for DropShip pilot training in the hopes of becoming a free trader.[3]

Upon graduation, you were lucky enough to sign on with Jose Ellingsen, son of the legendary salvage prospector Pedro Ellingsen, who owns a small fleet of trading vessels. Your first tour launched you up the ladder as you ventured into the Free Worlds League. There, you made contact with a Word of Blake Precentor and a League planetary official, negotiating a contract to supply them with parts for the construction of several new HPG stations.[4]

Impressed by such a lucky break, Jose sent you to open up markets in the Capellan Confederation. Fired by rumors that House Liao was attempting to open a new BattleMech facility, you made up with your estranged parents and negotiated a deal to trade in metals produced by Zettle Metals Incorporated. Armed with that valuable commodity, you ventured into the Confederation and landed the deal of the decade, signing a contract for exclusive trade of your commodities with Shengli Arms on Victoria.[5]

Wealthy, well-connected and always looking for a better deal, you have confidence in your ability to talk yourself out of any situation, and you usually end up making money while you're at it.

1 Affiliation: Lyran Alliance (p. 29); Stage 1: Early Childhood (White Collar)—Event Roll 3 (p. 35).
2 Stage 2: Late Childhood (Preparatory School)—Event Roll 9 (p. 39).
3 Stage 3: Higher Education (Technical College)—Event Roll 5 (p. 45).
4 Stage 4: Real Life (Free Trader)—Event Roll 9 + 1 = 10 (p. 48).
5 Stage 4: Real Life (Free Trader)—Event Roll 12 – 1 + 1 = 12, then 7 – 1 + 1 = 7, 11 – 1 + 1 = 11, spent Edge for reroll (p. 48).

Name Well-Connected Trader

Affiliation Lyran Alliance

Age 23 **Height** 1.93 m **Weight** 89 kg

MECHWARRIOR®

Character Record Sheet THIRD EDITION

ATTRIBUTES

	Value	Mod.	Max.
Strength	4	—	8
Body	5	—	8
Dexterity	4	—	8
Reflexes	5	—	8
Intelligence	7	–1	8
Willpower	6	—	8
Charisma	8	–1	9
Edge	3	+1	9
Social Standing	5	—	9

SKILLS

Name	Bonus
Academic/ International Commerce	+0
Academic/ Linguistics	+0
Academic/ Medieval Japanese History	+1
Appraisal	+1
Career/ Pilot	+1
Comms/ Conv.	+1
Computer	+1
Language/ German	+1
Language/ English	+0
Language/ Japanese	+0
Language/ Mandarin (Chinese)	+0
Navigation/ Space	+1
Negotiation	+3
Perception	+0
Piloting/ Aero	+1
Piloting/ Spheroid	+1
Protocol/ Capellan Confederation	+0
Protocol/ Draconis Combine	+0
Protocol/ Free Worlds League	+0
Protocol/ Lyran Alliance	+1
Sensor Operations	+1
Streetwise/ Lyran Alliance	+0
Zero-G Operations	+1

TRAITS

Contact: Mafia on Califar in LA
Contact (2): Word of Blake Precentor
Contact (3): Duke Jacob Ling II, CEO of Shengli Arms
Glass Jaw [All wounds +1 value]
Good Reputation (2): Freedom Theater of LA
Wealth (7)
Well-Connected (2): Lyran Alliance
Well-Equipped (2)

COMBAT INFORMATION

Armor

Type A: Leather Jacket AV (M/B/E/X) 1 /1 /0 /1
Type B: Leather Shoes AV (M/B/E/X) 1 /1 /0 /1
Type C: _____ AV (M/B/E/X) ___/___/___/___
Type D: _____ AV (M/B/E/X) ___/___/___/___

Fatigue

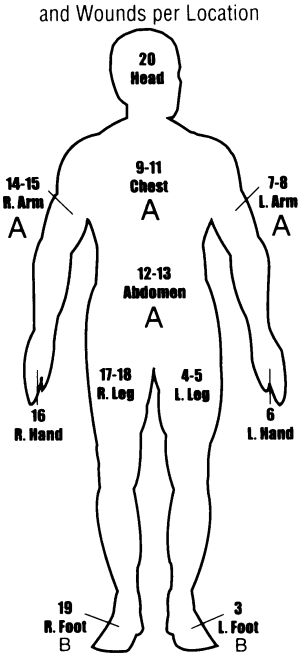
Fatigue≤ WIL ☒☒☒☒☐☐☐☐☐☐
+1 TN per Fatigue> WIL ☒☒☒☒☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
Unconcious if Fatigue > (2 x WIL)

Wounds

Grazing Wounds (WV 1): _____
Minor Wounds (WV 2): _____ +1 TN ea.
Serious Wounds (WV 4): _____ +2 TN ea.
Critical Wounds (WV 8): _____ +3 TN ea.
Deadly Wounds (WV 16): _____ Knockout
Total Wound Value of all Wounds: _____ *
* If total Wound Value > (BOD+WIL), Dying

HIT LOCATION DIAGRAM

Fill in Armor Type (A, B, C, D) and Wounds per Location



Hit Location roll of 2 = Critical Hit AV-1

Weapons	AP•Dmg	Type	Range	Shots	Notes
Needler Pistol	1•5D6	B	2 /6 /12 /20	10	Splash; see*
			/ / /		
			/ / /		
			/ / /		
			/ / /		

* AP 0 vs. barriers

MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT AND INFORMATION

Needler Pistol Reloads (10)
Holster
Longe-Range Communications Kit
Noteputer
Personal Computer
Forgery Kit
3 Micro Power Packs (15 Pwr ea.)
Blazer, Pants, Shirt

C-bills: 247,416

Movement (W/R/S): 9 /19/38 **Experience Points:** 0

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TRAITS

Traits are special abilities or drawbacks a character has that are beyond the scope of Attributes and skills. Traits do not necessarily represent inborn abilities; in many cases they represent learned abilities whose use simply doesn't fit the way skills work in the *MW3* rules. Some traits are used during character creation to represent things like money and equipment.

Rules for the acquisition of traits are found in the *Character Creation* section (p. 23). Each trait has its own unique rules described in this section, and in some cases elaborated on elsewhere in this book (for example, combat-oriented traits are expanded upon in *Combat*).

Traits are divided into two groups: *positive traits*, which help the character, and *negative traits*, which hinder the character. They are listed together in this section for ease of reference but are easily distinguished from one another.

Positive traits have a *cost* listed. This is the cost in Character Points to acquire the trait during the *Finishing Touches* stage of character creation (p. 60). It also serves as the basis of the Experience Point cost to purchase them later in a character's career (see p. 210).

Negative traits are rated in terms of their relative severity by a *value*. This value is the number of Character Points that are gained when it is taken during character creation, and also serves as the basis of the Experience Point cost to remove it later in a character's career.

OPPOSING TRAITS

Attractive	Unattractive
Brave	Timid
Combat Sense	Combat Paralysis
Fast Learner	Slow Learner
Good Hearing	Poor Hearing
Good Reputation	Bad Reputation
Good Vision	Poor Vision
Gregarious	Introvert
Night Vision	Night Blindness
Toughness	Glass Jaw
Wealth	Poverty

Opposing Traits: Certain positive and negative traits are mutually exclusive; you can't have both of them at the same time. In most cases this is self-evident, but the Opposing Traits table lists them for convenience. No character can have both opposing traits (such as Brave and Timid) at the same time. If a character wants to acquire one, he must first eliminate the other.

Multiple Traits: Some traits can be taken by a character more than once, with each trait representing a separate example; these are indicated following the trait name. For example, a character with two Alternate Identity Traits would have two separate forged identities, each with a different name and set of identification credentials. In some cases, these traits may only be taken more than once with gamemaster permission; these traits are noted as such in the descriptions.

TRAIT DESCRIPTIONS

The following entries detail each trait and provide rules for using them.

ADDICTION (multiple trait)

Value: 1–2

The character has developed a serious addiction to something, be it a substance, condition or activity. If the addiction is to a fairly common and inexpensive thing, it is a 1-point trait. If the subject of the addiction is rare and/or exceptionally expensive, it is a 2-point trait.

If the character has no access to the addiction for twenty-four hours, he will become irritable and distracted. All target numbers that involve concentration (including all combat actions) suffer a +1 modifier. After forty-eight hours, the character suffers withdrawal symptoms, such that all target numbers have a +1 modifier and his Initiative rolls are modified by –1. These penalties are doubled after seventy-two hours and persist until the character can appease his addiction or receives professional therapy. Effective therapy requires the MedTech Skill and hours of counseling, and it is no guarantee of a cure. The exact recovery process is up to the gamemaster, but removal of this trait requires therapy as well as the usual expenditure of Experience Points.

ALLERGY (multiple trait)

Value: 1

The character has a serious allergy to a substance or condition defined at the time of trait purchase (for example, an allergy to cotton). The substance or condition must be fairly common (the *mycosia pseudoflora*, a flower originally found only on Andalusia, would be far too rare), and the allergy must be severe enough to cause serious debilitation or death in large doses; otherwise it is not worth a Character Point (a minor itchy rash is an interesting character detail, but it will not net you any Character Points). A character may only have one Allergy Trait without the gamemaster's specific permission.

ALTERNATE IDENTITY (multiple trait)

Cost: 2

This trait means the character has established an alternate identity, complete with travel documents and other identification. It will hold up under normal circumstances, but if the character's identity is brought into question for any reason, the investigating character will have to make an Action Check depending on the situation. For example, a Forgery Skill Check would be used to identify false documents, or Interrogation or

Fast Talk could be used to try to get the character to slip up and contradict his cover story.

Although a character may purchase this trait several times to create multiple alternate identities for himself, maintaining multiple identities becomes increasingly difficult. Characters may assume one alternate identity without penalty. For every additional alternate identity a character assumes, apply a –1 TN Modifier to rolls made when the character is investigated or one of his identities is questioned.

AMBIDEXTROUS

Cost: 2

An ambidextrous character can use both hands with equal ability. This eliminates the +3 Modifier for using the off hand in combat, since the character has no "off" hand.

Note that this trait does not grant a character the ability to perform more than the usual number of actions in a turn. An Ambidextrous character could hold a pistol in each hand but could not make four attacks in a turn; he would still be restricted to two Simple Actions in a turn, and firing either gun one time would count as a Simple Action.

AMNESIA

Value: 3

Quite rare in reality but a staple of fiction, a character with this trait has forgotten who he is and most of his personal history. As such, he has no use of his skills (with the exception of the free skills Language and Perception) after receiving this trait and must gradually "remember" what he can do. Exactly how long this takes is up to the gamemaster; a good pace might be to allow the remembrance of one skill at the end of each play session, most logically a skill the amnesiac either saw being used or was forced to use "untrained" during the course of the adventure.

If the player and gamemaster agree, the gamemaster can actually create the amnesiac's skills and background using the Life Path so that the player actually has no idea what his character is capable of.

ATTRACTIVE

Cost: 1

The character is exceptionally attractive, either physically, fashion-wise or even through pure personality. Whatever the specific source, this attractiveness helps the character in many ways, but it is most advantageous when dealing with those attracted to the character's gender.

In any CHA-related Action Checks involving someone attracted to the character's gender, the character gains a –2 Target Number Modifier. Even those attracted to the opposite gender are affected by attractive people, such that a –1 Target Number Modifier applies in any situation the gamemaster feels appearance might be beneficial.

BAD REPUTATION

Value: 1–5

Your character is known far and wide as a bad person. Specifically how bad and why are up to the player to work out. It is also perfectly acceptable (and rather common for player characters) that the bad reputation is undeserved. The character might have been framed, or it could be a simple misunderstanding.

The number of points Bad Reputation is worth indicate the magnitude of the reputation, and thus how large of an area the character might be known in. For 1 point, the character's reputation only applies to a single planet. A 2-point reputation covers a region of space such as a prefecture or duchy, or even a small interstellar state such as the Free Rasalhague Republic. A 3-point reputation has spread across an entire Successor State or other large realm. A 4-point reputation is known across the entire Inner Sphere or all of Clan space, while a character with a 5-point reputation might be heard of in any sector of populated space.

Note that this trait does not mean every single person in the area knows about the character, but rather that there is a chance they might. Characters with the Bad Reputation Trait receive a +2 Target Number Modifier on all Negotiation, Protocol and Seduction Checks in the affected region. The gamemaster can also apply this modifier to other TNs as he deems appropriate.

A character with Bad Reputation is relatively infamous and well known. As a result, the character receives a +3 Modifier on all skill rolls that involve concealing his identity, such as Disguise.

BRAVE

Cost: 1

A character with this trait is very brave and especially resistant to fear and shock. Any Action Checks that involve these elements (gamemaster's discretion) have their target numbers reduced by 2.

COMBAT PARALYSIS

Value: 4

A character with this trait tends to freeze up in stressful situations, especially combat. Characters with this trait roll 3D10 and use the worst two dice when rolling Initiative in combat. Furthermore, delaying their actions in combat inflicts a +3 Target Number Modifier rather than the usual +2.

In stressful situations outside actual combat where quick reactions are vital, the gamemaster can require a character with this trait to make a WIL Check to act in a timely manner; failure means the character delays for one turn (5 seconds) before acting.

COMBAT SENSE

Cost: 4

A character with this trait is especially sharp and quick-witted in stressful situations, especially combat. Characters with this trait roll 3D10 and use the best two dice when rolling Initiative in combat. Furthermore, delaying their actions in combat inflicts only a +1 Target Number Modifier rather than the usual +2.

COMMISSION

Cost: 3

This trait can only be taken by a character with the Rank Trait who is also in a military organization of some sort. It serves as a sort of "toggle switch" to upgrade the enlisted rank into a commissioned (officer) rank. Officer ranks are listed in the description of the Rank Trait (p. 85).

When a character receives a Commission Trait, he or she immediately reverts to Rank 1, unless another rank is listed in parentheses, such as Commission (Rank 3).

CONTACT (multiple trait)

Cost: 1–3

The Contact Trait provides a player character with an ally or acquaintance who can supply information and aid. The player character purchasing the trait determines the identity of the contact, subject to gamemaster approval. The gamemaster determines the cost of the trait, based on the following guidelines.

A 1-point contact has no real power and limited influence but possesses a great deal of knowledge about a specific field. Normally, this knowledge is limited to the events and history of a specific world or region of space. Examples of 1-point contacts include scientists, merchants and the ubiquitous bartender.

A 2-point contact has a small measure of power and influence in a limited area. This contact can provide information that would be unavailable to most people, including sensitive and secret data. Players must make appropriate skill rolls, however, to persuade this type of contact to divulge such information. Common 2-point contacts include minor nobles, low-ranking military officers and merchant guild leaders.

A 3-point contact wields considerable power and influence and might be able to help the character and his team in significant ways. Unfortunately, such powerful contacts may be too busy to speak to the player characters when the characters need them, and political or financial considerations may prevent the contact from providing certain types of aid. Nevertheless, the benefits of having a connection this high nearly always outweigh the drawbacks. Common 3-point contacts include planetary rulers, aides to House Lords, and high-ranking military officers.

For guidelines on using contacts, see p. 208 of *Running the Game*.

CUSTOM VEHICLE

Cost: 1–6

This trait bonus affects initial BattleMech or vehicle assignment and can only be used in conjunction with the Vehicle Trait (p. 88). In general, the more points spent on Custom Vehicle, the more choice the player will have involving the kind of vehicle he has and its technology level. The effects are summarized on the Custom Vehicle Table.

The effects in the Vehicle Selection column refer to selection within your own affiliation, whether your character comes from the Inner Sphere, the Periphery or the Clans. The Clan Vehicle Selection column applies if you want a Clan-tech vehicle for your character, but the character's chosen affiliation is not Clan.

Random Assignment in own Affiliation is the standard choice, and is free. It allows the character a randomly selected vehicle within his own affiliation. If a Draconis Combine MechWarrior chose this option, he would be assigned to a randomly generated Combine 'Mech. Random 'Mech and vehicle assignment tables can be found on pp. 90–94. Additional tables can be found in the various *BattleTech Field Manual* sourcebooks.

Random Assignment any Affiliation allows the player to choose an affiliation other than the character's chosen affiliation when assigning the vehicle, but the precise type is still determined randomly. For example, the Combine MechWarrior could choose to have a random Free Worlds League 'Mech.

CUSTOM VEHICLE TABLE

Points	Vehicle Selection	Clan Vehicle Selection
0	Random Assignment in own Affiliation	—
1	Random Assignment any Affiliation	—
2	Choice of any Vehicle in own Affiliation	—
3	Choice of any Stock Vehicle	Random Assignment, Second-Line
4	Design own Vehicle	Random Assignment, Front Line
5	—	Choice of any Stock Vehicle
6	—	Design own Vehicle

Choice of any Vehicle in own Affiliation means that the character is limited to vehicles that are commonly deployed by his affiliation, but within that group he can choose any vehicle of the appropriate weight class. If our Combine MechWarrior had a light 'Mech, he could choose a PNT-10K *Panther*, for example. The gamemaster decides if a vehicle is appropriate to a particular affiliation. (Any vehicle in the affiliation's column on the Vehicle Assignment Tables would be appropriate.)

Choice of any Stock Vehicle means that the player may select any vehicle he wants, so long as the design exists in the *BattleTech* universe. The Combine MechWarrior could choose any Inner Sphere light 'Mech, from a *Thorn* to a *Raven* to a *Commando*.

The *Design own Vehicle* option allows the player to actually design his own custom vehicle using the *BattleTech Master Rules* rather than being assigned a stock model. Level 3 technology is not permitted unless the gamemaster permits it and the player can come up with a good rationale (such as an appropriate Contact Trait).

DEMOTION

Value: —

This is not actually a trait, but it is how a decrease in the Rank Trait is listed in the Life Path. Each Demotion lowers the level of the character's Rank Trait by one, to a minimum of 1. A number in parentheses subtracts the number from the level of the character's Rank Trait, to a minimum of 1.

DEPENDENTS

Value: 1–2

A character with this trait has one or more vulnerable relatives or other dependents who make a perfect target for kidnappers and other villains. The value of the trait is based on the vulnerability of the dependents: If the dependent is a reasonably competent adult who lives in a fairly secure location, the trait is worth 1 point. If the dependents are very young or infirm, and/or they are particularly vulnerable to predation (for example, they live alone on a secluded farm, or travel frequently with no escort), the trait is worth 2 points.

DISABLED (multiple trait)

Value: 1–3

A character who is disabled suffers some form of affliction that limits him in some way. The exact definition and effects of the disability are up to the player and the gamemaster.

The point value of the disability is based on the amount of disability inflicted by this trait. A 1-point disability limits the character only in certain limited circumstances, or only restricts a small part of the body, such as a single hand or foot. A 2-point disability restricts the character fairly often or affects a large part of the body, such as an entire arm or leg, or an entire system, such as the digestive tract or circulatory system. A 3-point disability affects the character constantly or affects the entire body.

ELEMENTAL PHENOTYPE

Cost: —

A character with this trait is a trueborn elemental, bred specifically by Clan scientists for the rigors of battle-armor combat. Elementals are huge compared with other warriors, standing from 2 to 2.5 meters tall and disproportionately muscular, making them massively heavy as well. Elementals primarily act as elite infantry shock troops, but they also serve in a variety of other roles, such as security and marines. Elementals who wash out of training most often end up in the laborer caste, where their strength and endurance make them excellent workers.

The primary advantages Elementals receive are modified Attribute thresholds in the Life Path (STR +2, BOD +1, DEX –1) and modified Attribute maximums as noted on the Attribute Maximums Table (p. 56). Because they have been carefully designed and bred over dozens of generations to operate battle armor, Elementals are considered to have the Natural Aptitude Trait (p. 84) for all the skills in the Elemental Field. In addition, all Elementals have the Toughness Trait (p. 87) at no Character Point cost.

ENEMY (multiple trait)

Value: 1–3

The character has attracted an enemy, either a single person or a group. The trait is worth 1, 2 or 3 points depending on the power and influence of the enemy in comparison to the character and the organization he is a part of. A 1-point enemy is about as powerful as the character, while a 2-point enemy is more powerful than the character and a 3-point enemy is much more powerful than the character.

The *Sample Contacts* (p. 208) can also serve as sample enemies, since people likely to be valuable friends are also the kind of people that make dangerous adversaries.

Enemies can provide useful inspiration for the gamemaster's campaign and can serve as excellent motivators for the characters. Enemies should get involved in adventures often enough to be a nuisance, but they should not dominate the group's plot lines. After all, only one character took on the Enemy Trait, so that character shouldn't make the whole group pay for it. If, however, the gamemaster planned on having a certain enemy act as a nemesis for the entire group through much of the campaign, all the characters in the group could take the same Enemy Trait to represent it.

EXCEPTIONAL ATTRIBUTE (multiple trait)

Cost: 2

This entitles the character to have one Attribute 1 point higher than the maximum listed for his phenotype (see the Attribute Maximums Table, p. 56; maximums attainable through this trait are shown in parentheses). Note this trait only increases the maximum, not the Attribute itself or the Attribute threshold. Character Points must be spent to purchase the Attribute as usual, at the usual cost.

This trait can only be purchased one time per Attribute, and a character can only have one Exceptional Attribute unless the gamemaster gives specific permission otherwise.

It is acceptable for a character to take this trait without increasing the Attribute during character creation, allowing that Attribute to be increased 1 point beyond the maximum at a later time through experience and training.

FAST LEARNER

Cost: 3

A fast learner is a quick study and has an excellent memory, resulting in faster skill improvement. Add +2 to the total of the two Link Attributes when determining the cost of skill advancement (p. 211) for all skills.

FIGHTER PILOT PHENOTYPE

Cost: —

Clan scientists have put considerable effort into the fighter pilot phenotype, resulting in the most radical, but ironically least effective, of the Clan trueborn strains. Generations of refinement and sporadic genetic alteration of the pilot breed have resulted in warriors that are fairly short and very lean, averaging 1.7 meters tall and often weighing no more than 50 kilograms. Efforts to increase perceptive ability and reaction times have had the side effect of enlarged craniums and eyes, giving pilots a very distinctive appearance that sometimes causes them to be shunned if they wash out of training, where they work most often in the scientist or technician castes.

The primary advantages pilots receive are modified Attribute thresholds in the Life Path (STR –1, BOD –1, DEX +2, RFL +2) and modified Attribute maximums as noted on the Attribute Maximums Table (p. 56). Because they have been carefully designed and bred over dozens of generations to fly aerospace fighters, pilots are considered to have the Natural Aptitude Trait (p. 84) for all the skills in the Clan Fighter Pilot Field. In addition, all pilots have the G-Tolerance and Glass Jaw traits (below) at no Character Point cost/value.

G-TOLERANCE

Cost: 1

A character with this trait is especially resistant to the stress of high-G maneuvering, most often found in fighter craft and accelerating/decelerating DropShips. All target numbers that relate to the effects of high gravity have a –2 TN modifier for G-Tolerant characters.

GLASS JAW

Value: 3

A character with a "glass jaw" is frail and easy to injure, out of proportion with his endurance and the other effects of the BOD Attribute. As such, the wound value of all wounds is increased by 1 against a character with this trait. This increases the wound value only; the wound type (such as minor) remains the same. For example, a Minor Wound against a character with Glass Jaw has a wound value of 3 rather than 2; it is still a Minor Wound, just at a higher value. Note this has no effect on the Fatigue Only result (see *Damage*, p. 114).

GOOD HEARING

Cost: 1

This trait makes the character's sense of hearing sharper than usual, enough to provide a –1 TN modifier to all hearing-based Perception Checks.

GOOD REPUTATION

Cost: 1–5

A character with a good reputation is known far and wide, and this reputation can open doors and create opportunities (although it can also make it difficult to "blend in").

The point cost for this trait is determined by region in the same way as *Bad Reputation* (p. 79).

Note that this trait does not mean every single person in the area knows about the character, but rather that there is a chance they might. Characters with the Good Reputation Trait receive a –2 TN modifier on all Negotiation, Protocol and Seduction Checks in the affected region. The gamemaster can also apply this modifier to other TNs as he deems appropriate.

A character with Good Reputation is as well known to his adversaries as to his friends. As a result, the character receives a +3 TN Modifier on all Skill Checks that involve concealing his identity, such as Disguise.

GOOD VISION

Cost: 1

This trait means the character's vision is better than usual, enough to provide a –1 TN modifier to all vision-based Perception Checks. Note that this does not affect combat TNs.

GREGARIOUS

Cost: 1

A character with this trait is outgoing and works well in social situations. Naturally, this is a great help in interpersonal dealings, such that any target numbers where the gamemaster feels this ability would apply are reduced by 1.

IN FOR LIFE

Value: 3

Your character is (or was) a member of a large and secretive organization such as the yakuza or some other organized crime group or government agency. Although membership in such groups often provides benefits, it is also said that you can never retire from them; you are "in for life." Even if you are no longer actively working for the organization, it can call on you for favors, or even full-blown missions, at any time. Clearly, this can cramp your style at the worst possible times. It is up to the gamemaster to decide when this trait comes into play, but he should not force the character to work constantly for the secret organization, especially since the other characters in the group will probably be drawn into the missions as well.

INTROVERT

Value: 1

A character with this trait is not very outgoing and has limited insight into the feelings of others. Naturally, this is a hindrance in interpersonal dealings, such that any target numbers where the gamemaster feels this trait would interfere are increased by 1.

LAND GRANT

Cost: Same as character's Title

A Land Grant added to a Title Trait indicates that the character not only holds noble title, but that the title also gives him control over a region. This provides the character with tax income, but administering the region becomes his responsibility (a responsibility most nobles delegate to hired lackeys). See p. 170 for more on nobility and government in the *BattleTech* universe.

The cost of a Land Grant Trait is based on the character's Title Trait; the cost is the same, such that a character with a 6-point Title must pay 6 Character Points for his Land Grant. The size of the grant will be commensurate with the character's noble title.

The intricate workings of land holdings and tax income are beyond the scope of this book. If the players really want to portray landed nobles in *MW3*, the simplest way for the gamemaster to deal with it is to assume that the additional income generated by the land holding is almost entirely offset by the additional costs associated with its operation (such as hiring lackeys to run the holding while the player character is off adventuring). In general, landed nobles should never have to worry about any incidental expenses, such as food, ammunition or fuel. They will also have a permanent residence within the region, usually a mansion or ancestral castle. They will have to deal with other expenses just like other characters.

In addition to the economic benefits, a ruling noble is assumed to be Well-Connected (p. 89) in the region he controls at no additional cost. However, rulers also attract rivals for their power, such that every Land Grant also carries with it a 1-point Enemy who is considered to be a rival to the throne.

This trait is not normally held by Clan characters since the Clans do not manage their property in a feudal system. However, it is conceivable that a Clan-born character could somehow hold title in the Inner Sphere, in which case a land grant might also be possible.

LEMON

Value: 2

There always seems to be one vehicle in every unit that is cursed, and this time it's yours. By reducing the Character Point cost of your Vehicle Trait by 2 points, you take on a "lemon." Your vehicle will have technical problems at bad times and will generally be hard to maintain, repair and even reload. The specific effects this has on your vehicle are up to the gamemaster, although in any case all Action Checks for repairing and maintaining the vehicle have an additional +1 modifier.

LOST LIMB (multiple trait)

Value: 1/3/5

Either through birth defect or injury, this character has lost all or part of one of his limbs. The value of this trait is based on the limb lost. Loss of one or more fingers is a 1-point trait; loss of a single hand or foot is a 3-point trait; loss of a single arm or leg is a 5-point trait. This trait can be taken multiple times for multiple lost limbs.

The specific effects vary depending on the limb lost, though due to the nature of this trait the gamemaster will often have to be the final arbiter on how it restricts a character based on the specific circumstances. These effects assume the character has no prosthetic replacement for the lost limb; for information on prosthetic replacement limbs, see p. 144 of the *Equipment* section.

A lost finger (or two or three ...) results in a reduction in manual dexterity. Any use of DEX-related skills or actions requiring fine use of the hands has a +1 TN modifier. A missing hand can be much more limiting. In general, apply a +2 to +4 Modifier to any DEX-related TNs, depending on the task. A missing arm can be very limiting in certain situations, making some tasks impossible and applying a +2 to +4 Modifier to other tasks.

A lost foot reduces the character's effective RFL by 1 and cuts all movement rates in half. A lost leg reduces the character's RFL by half (round down); makes running, sprinting and evading movement impossible; and cuts walking movement to one-quarter the normal speed.

Note also that if the lost limb is replaced by a fully functional permanent prosthetic (Type 5), the loss is effectively cured, and it is worth no Character Points.

MECHWARRIOR PHENOTYPE

Cost: —

Clan trueborn MechWarriors appear physically identical to "normal" humans, but this appearance is misleading. Generations of selective breeding and subtle genetic manipulation have increased their reflexes and improved their adaptability to the neurohelmet interface so vital to BattleMech control.

The primary advantages MechWarriors receive are modified Attribute thresholds in the Life Path (DEX +1, RFL +1) and modified Attribute maximums as noted on the Attribute Maximums Table (p. 56). Because they have been carefully designed and bred over dozens of generations to pilot BattleMechs, MechWarriors are considered to have the Natural Aptitude Trait (below) for all the skills in the Clan MechWarrior Field.

NATURAL APTITUDE (multiple trait)

Cost: 1–2

The character has a natural flair for one skill, allowing him to advance in that skill more quickly. Add +4 to the total of the Link Attributes when calculating skill advancement for the skill (see p. 211).

The cost of Natural Aptitude is 1 Character Point for a non-combat skill, or 2 Character Points for a combat skill (as determined by the gamemaster). A character may never have more than one Natural Aptitude without the gamemaster's specific permission (Clan trueborns are a notable exception to this rule).

Natural Aptitude must be purchased separately for subskills, with the exception of Bureaucracy, Protocol and Streetwise. In these cases, the aptitude is considered to cover all regional subskills. Of course, separate subskills for each region must be acquired as usual, but the aptitude applies to all of them. For example, a character with Natural Aptitude/Streetwise and the skills Streetwise/Luthien and Streetwise/Capellan Confederation would be considered to have Natural Aptitude with both subskills.

NIGHT BLINDNESS

Value: 1

The character has very poor night vision, such that all target number modifiers for darkness are doubled.

NIGHT VISION

Cost: 1

A character with this trait has better-than-average night vision, although he is not actually able to see in complete darkness. This trait reduces the target number modifiers associated with darkness by half (round down).

OWNS VEHICLE

Cost: 4

Through inheritance, hard work or sheer luck, the character actually owns his BattleMech (or other vehicle) if he spends an additional 4 points on it.

Vehicle Costs

Owning a vehicle can be an expensive proposition. Without the Owns Vehicle Trait, these expenses are taken care of by the unit that owns the vehicle. With this trait, the responsibility of maintenance and upkeep falls on the player character's shoulders. Basic maintenance for any vehicle except spacecraft costs 100 C-bills per week, not counting the costs of repairs or ammunition; the upkeep of DropShips and JumpShips costs 500 C-bills per week.

In addition, every vehicle needs to be attended by a trained technician to stay in working order. If the owning character is actually trained in the appropriate Technician Field(s) for his vehicle, he can take care of this himself provided he has enough free time. Likewise, another player character in his group with the right skills could offer to handle the support requirements. If no such character is available, one will have to be kept on retainer, at an additional cost of 250 C-bills per week.

Of course, this is a vast simplification of the process of vehicle upkeep. Detailed rules for creating and maintaining a military unit can be found in the *BattleTech Field Manual:*

Mercenaries (pp. 135–159). Rules regarding BattleMech and vehicle repair and retrofitting can be found in the *BattleTech Master Rules* (pp. 82–88).

PAIN RESISTANCE

Cost: 3

A character with this trait has exceptional resistance to pain. Characters with Pain Resistance are not stunned by Grazing Wounds, and the total TN modifiers for all wounds are reduced by 1. For example, a character with Pain Resistance who has suffered two Minor Wounds and a Serious Wound would have a total TN modifier of +3, rather than +4.

POISON RESISTANCE

Cost: 1

The character has developed an exceptional resistance to poison, including alcohol and other intoxicants. Most often useful in barroom drinking contests, this also helps the character resist the kind of drugs used by certain interrogators in the Capellan Confederation. In any cases where the gamemaster feels this trait would help, the character receives a –2 Modifier to appropriate target numbers.

POOR HEARING

Value: 1–5

The character has bad hearing and cannot make out sounds as well as most people. Each point of Poor Hearing adds a +1 Modifier to all hearing-based target numbers. Poor Hearing rated at 5 points represents total deafness, making all hearing-based Action Checks impossible.

There are technological devices that can aid or cure this condition. If such a device is permanently installed (such as a bionic replacement), the trait is worth no points to the character.

POOR VISION

Value: 2/4/6

The character has bad vision and cannot see as well as most people. The more points in the trait, the worse the character's vision: for 2 points of Poor Vision, the character suffers a +1 target number modifier for all sight-based Action Checks (including ranged attacks), though this can be corrected with glasses or contact lenses. 4 points represents very poor vision, resulting in +3 to all sight-based TNs that is reduced to +1 if the character wears corrective lenses.

Poor Vision rated at 6 points represents blindness, making it impossible for the character to make ranged attacks against targets farther than Short Range and applying the Terrible Visibility Modifier (+5) to all sight-based TNs (including attacks) regardless of the actual lighting conditions. Because blind characters rely on their hearing, if they also have the Poor Hearing Trait, they must apply the Poor Hearing modifiers to ranged attack rolls. A character who is both blind and deaf (6 points of Poor Vision and 5 points of Poor Hearing) cannot make ranged attacks at all.

There are technological devices that can aid or cure this condition. If such a device is permanently installed (such as a bionic replacement), the trait is worth no points to the character.

POVERTY

Value: 1

A character with this trait is poor. He has no valuable assets and has only 100 C-bills to purchase starting equipment. This trait may not be taken in combination with Well-Equipped, Land Grant or Owns Vehicle.

PROMOTION

Cost: —

This is not actually a trait, but it is how an increase in the Rank Trait is listed in the Life Path. Each Promotion adds 1 to the level of the character's Rank Trait, to a maximum of 10. A number in parentheses adds the number to the level of the character's Rank Trait, to a maximum of 10.

QUIRK (multiple trait)

Value: 1–2

The character has a code of behavior or mental disorder that affects his conduct in certain situations. This trait is defined by the player and can range from a personal code of honor to deeply held religious beliefs to intense phobias. This trait can represent any kind of mental or emotional stricture that is severe enough to force the character to act in certain ways even when it might not be in the character's best interests.

The point value of a Quirk is based on its severity or the character's commitment to it (in the case of vows or codes): A 2-point Quirk is very deeply held, and the character will never under any circumstances intentionally violate it. A 1-point Quirk is serious, but the character can force himself to set it aside with a successful WIL Check at a cost of 1 Fatigue. If the Quirk is less severe than this (i.e., no WIL Check would be required to bypass it), it is too minor to be worth Character Points.

RANK

Cost: 1–10

This trait represents the character's military rank; though there are distinctions in authority similar to rank in civilian organizations, these structures are not normally as organized and codified as the rank structure this trait represents. Non-military characters' ranks should be determined by the gamemaster based on their SOC Attribute and other relevant factors. For information regarding military structure and rank in the *BattleTech* universe, see *War and Its Makers* (p. 194) and *The Clans* (p. 189).

Rank increases are listed in the Life Path as the Promotion Trait, while Rank decreases are listed as the Demotion Trait. Characters need the Commission Trait (see p. 80) to become an officer. Otherwise it is assumed every character is a noncommissioned officer (NCO), otherwise known as an enlisted soldier.

The more points of Rank a character has, the higher rank he has. Cross-reference the trait points with the character's sta-

COMMAND TABLE

Trait Points	Typical Command Level Enlisted	Officer
1	none	Lance
2	none	Company 2nd
3	none	Company
4	Squad 2nd	Battalion 2nd
5	Squad 2nd	Battalion
6	Squad	Regiment 2nd
7	Platoon 2nd	Regiment
8	Platoon	Brigade
9	Lance 2nd	Division
10	Lance 2nd	Corps
11*	—	Army
12*	—	Successor State

* These ranks are not normally attainable by player characters but are included here for comparison.

tus (enlisted or officer) on the Command Table to find the character's general level of command (this may vary depending on the House or Clan in question).

Cross-reference the Rank Trait points with the character's affiliation on the Rank Table (p. 87) to find the character's actual rank name. Use the Officer Ranks table if the character has a Commission; otherwise use the Enlisted Ranks table. If there is no rank at the character's trait point level, use the next lowest rank instead (if you are Rank 1 and no rank name is given, use the next highest rank instead). For example, a Free Worlds League enlisted soldier with 5 points of Rank would be a corporal, since there is no rank listed at the 5-point level. Characters with these "in-between" levels of Rank can be assumed to hold more seniority than other characters with fewer points in Rank but the same rank title, since they are closer to promotion.

Clan Ranks: Clan enlisted ranks are a special case. All "entry-level" soldiers officially carry the rank of warrior. However, there are differing grades of the warrior rank in practice. There is no official rank of squad commander in the Clans, but among conventional infantry a warrior who leads a squad would effectively hold the equivalent of a sergeant's authority. See *War and Its Makers* (p. 194) for more detail on Clan military organization.

SIXTH SENSE

Cost: 4

Characters with the Sixth Sense Trait have "feelings" about unusual or dangerous situations. The chief advantage these characters have is that they are difficult to surprise. Their TN for the Perception Check to detect surprise is modified by –3.

Additionally, other effects of the character's danger sensitivity may apply at the gamemaster's discretion. For example, a character with Sixth Sense may be allowed a Perception Check (with a substantial modifier) to sense approaching danger, such as the approach of an enemy DropShip. The character would not detect the ship like a radar blip but would simply feel that "something was amiss"; perhaps if the character's roll succeeded by a wide MoS, he might tell his companions to "watch the sky."

Sixth Sense is a subtle ability that requires cooperation and communication between the gamemaster and the sensitive character. If this is not possible, the trait is best not used (or restricted to simply the surprise advantage).

SLOW LEARNER

Value: 3

A slow learner has difficulty learning new things and often has a poor memory or attention span. As such, he improves skills with more difficulty than other characters. Subtract 2 from the total of the two Link Attributes when determining skill advancement (p. 211) for all skills.

STIGMA (multiple trait)

Value: 1–2

In *MW3*, a character who is inflicted with a Stigma Trait has some characteristic that earns him the disdain of many people, regardless of whether the disdain is deserved. Often, this is some factor that is beyond the character's control, such as birth circumstances, race or a criminal conviction. Sometimes the life a character leads brings a stigma with it, such as choice of religion, education or even profession.

There are two levels of Stigma, depending on how widely the character will be stigmatized. If the Stigma only applies in a single Successor State, or only applies among the Clans, then it is worth 1 point. If, however, the Stigma is held so widely that it would affect the character in two or more Successor States, or among one Successor State and the Clans, it is worth 2 points.

The effects of a Stigma are almost entirely roleplaying-oriented, and it is up to the gamemaster to determine how it affects play. In general, apply a +1 to +3 TN Modifier to any CHA-related Skill Checks involving characters who hold the stigmatized character in disdain.

TIMID

Value: 1

A character with this trait is especially susceptible to fear and shock. Any Action Checks that involve these elements (gamemaster's discretion) have their target numbers increased by 2.

TITLE

Cost: 5–10

Whereas the SOC Attribute represents the character's social class, the character is not actually titled without this trait. A character with a high SOC Attribute but no Title Trait would be a member of a noble family. For example, a character with a SOC Attribute of 7 could be the first child of a prominent count. However, she has not yet been granted a noble title by her sovereign. She stands to inherit her father's realm, but not until he

RANK TABLE

Trait Points	DC	FS	CC	FWL	LA	FRR	Clan	SL/Generic
				ENLISTED RANKS				
1	Hojuhei	Recruit	—	—	Recruit	—	—	Recruit
2	Heishi	Private	Shia-ben-bing	Private	Private	Menig	Warrior	Private
3	Gunjin	—	—	PrivateFC	PFC	—	—	PFC
4	Go-cho	Corporal	San-ben-bing	Corporal	Corporal	Korpral	—	—
5	—	—	—	—	Sr. Corporal	—	—	Corporal
6	Gunsho	Sergeant	Si-ben-bing	Sergeant	Sergeant	Sergeant	Squad Cmd.	Sergeant
7	Shujin	—	—	Staff Sgt.	Staff Sgt.	—	—	—
8	Kashira	Sgt. Major	—	Master Sgt.	Sgt. Major	—	—	—
9	Sho-ko	—	Yi-si-ben-bing	Sgt. Major	Staff Sgt. Major	Fanjunkare	Point Cmd.	Master Sgt.
10	—	—	—	—	Sr. Sgt. Major	—	—	—

Trait Points	DC	FS	CC	FWL	LA	FRR	Clan	SL/Generic
				OFFICER (COMMISSIONED) RANKS				
1	—	—	—	Lt. Junior Grade	Lieutenant	—	Star Cmd.	Ensign
2	Chu-i	Leftenant	Sao-wei	Lieutenant	First Lt.	Lojtnant	Nova Cmd.	Lieutenant
3	Tai-i	Hauptmann	Sang-wei	Captain	Hauptmann	Kapten	Star Captain	Captain
4	Sho-sa	Kommandant	Sao-shao	Force Cmd.	Kommandant	Major	Nova Captain	Major
5	—	—		—	Hpt. Kmd.	—	—	—
6	Chu-sa	—	Zhong-shao	Lt. Colonel	Lt. Colonel	Överste-Lojtnant	Star Colonel	—
7	Tai-sa	Lt. General	Sang-shao	Colonel	Colonel	Överste	—	Colonel
8	Sho-sho	Hpt. General	—	—	Lt. General	—	—	—
9	—	Marshal	—	General	Hpt. General	—	Galaxy Cmd.	Lt. General
10	Tai-sho	—	—	—	Kmd. General	Generalmajor	saKhan	Major Gen.
11*	Tai-shu	Field Marshal	Jiang-jun	Marshal	General	General	Khan	General
12*	Gunji-no-Kanrei	Marshal of the Armies	Sang-jiang-jun	Captain General	General of the Armies	Överbefälhavare	ilKhan	Commanding General

* These ranks are not normally attainable by player characters but are included here for comparison.

dies or officially passes the title to her—and even then he may designate a different heir in spite of her birth order. In addition, their sovereign could conceivably break with tradition and award the title of count to an entirely different person.

If this character had the Title Trait, she would actually function as a titled noble and would wield wide-ranging power over an entire realm. Without the title, she would still have a high degree of influence but little actual power.

The cost of this trait is equal to the character's SOC Attribute; the higher the level of nobility, the more costly the title. Note that Titles above the 8-point level should be forbidden to player characters, unless the gamemaster really wants to deal with games on that level. Be aware that sovereignty over entire sectors of space can take the game way beyond the scope dealt with in this book.

Bloodname

A Bloodname is the Clan equivalent of Title. In the same way as Inner Sphere nobility, a trueborn Clan warrior is of "high birth" in Clan terms, and as such has a high SOC Attribute. However, the Bloodname is the device that grants the character actual political power. This is a tremendous honor, and it bestows the character with huge prestige among the Clans. However, like a noble title, it is also an important responsibility, as it makes the character a voting member of the Clan political system.

A Bloodname is acquired at the same point cost as a noble Title, but the gamemaster is encouraged to restrict characters from starting play with Bloodnames. A Bloodname is the ultimate goal for every Clan warrior, and as such it would be rather anticlimactic for a player character to begin play with one.

TOUGHNESS

Cost: 3

A character with Toughness is very resilient and difficult to injure, out of proportion with his endurance and the other effects of the BOD Attribute. As such, the wound value of all wounds is reduced by 1 against a character with this trait. For example, a Minor Wound against a character with Toughness has a wound value of 1 rather than 2 (this does not affect the wound type, only the wound value). Note this has no effect on the Fatigue Only result, which has its usual effects (see *Damage*, p. 114).

TRANSIT DISORIENTATION SYNDROME

Value: 1

Known as TDS, this syndrome results in the character suffering more than the usual effects of disorientation and physical distress following a hyperspace jump. Immediately following a jump, the character is considered stunned (p. 116) and cannot recover for fifteen minutes. For an additional 2D10 hours after a jump, the character is nauseated and irritable and suffers a +1 Modifier to all target numbers.

If the character must endure another jump before recovering from the effects of the first, the effects are more severe. Rather than being stunned, the character is knocked out after a second jump. The lingering nausea and disorientation effects persist for an entire day, plus an additional 2D10 hours.

UNATTRACTIVE

Value: 1

The character is exceptionally unattractive, through pure physical attributes, horrendous fashion sense, annoying personality or most often a combination of these factors. Whatever the specific source, this unattractiveness hinders the character in many ways, but it is most problematic when dealing with those normally attracted to the character's gender. In any CHA-related Action Checks involving someone attracted to the character's gender, the character suffers a +2 Target Number Modifier. Even those attracted to the opposite gender of the character are affected by the unattractiveness, such that a +1 Target Number Modifier applies in any situation in which the gamemaster feels appearance might be a factor.

VEHICLE

Cost: 1–10

This trait determines the type of BattleMech or other vehicle assigned to the character. The more points spent on this trait, the larger the vehicle assigned to the character. To find the maximum allowable weight class, cross-reference the points of Vehicle Trait with the character's vehicle type (based on his Fields and Life Path experiences) on the Vehicle Class Table. If there is a dash at the character's trait point level, the character is limited to the next lower class of vehicle. For example, if a MechWarrior character has Vehicle 5, he would be assigned a Medium 'Mech, since he does not have enough points for a Heavy 'Mech.

To find the specific vehicle assignment for BattleMechs, roll on the appropriate column of the appropriate Vehicle Assignment Table (beginning on p. 90) corresponding to the character's affiliation; use the Vehicle column on the same table for vehicles and the Aerospace and DropShip tables for fighters and DropShips. The player may choose the maximum allowable weight class or a lighter one, but not a heavier one. The gamemaster may choose instead to assign the character a particular vehicle rather than rolling randomly. In either case, the choice is not up to the player unless he has the Custom Vehicle Trait (see p. 80).

A vehicle gained through the Vehicle Trait does not belong to the character (unless he also has the Owns Vehicle Trait, p. 84), it is property of the unit the character is part of. If the character leaves that unit for some reason, the vehicle stays with the unit. However, if the character joins a new unit, he can expect to be assigned a similar vehicle if one is available.

VEHICLE CLASS TABLE

Trait Points	BattleMech	AeroSpace	Conventional	Battle Armor
10	—	DropShip: Military	—	—
9	—	—	—	—
8	Assault	DropShip: Civilian	—	—
7	—	—	Assault	—
6	Heavy	Heavy	—	—
5	—	—	Heavy	—
4	Medium	Medium	—	Heavy
3	—	—	Medium	—
2	Light	Light	—	Medium
1	None	None	Light	Light
0	None	None	None	None

Battle Armor Assignment

In the case of battle armor, the choice is based entirely on the character's affiliation and the weight class of battle armor available. The gamemaster can also choose to restrict the availability of certain battle-armor types based on the character's specific House or Clan. Note that only the standard medium armor is detailed in this book; other battle armor will be detailed in future products.

Clan: Heavy: Gnome; Medium: Standard Elemental, Undine, Salamander; Light: Sylph

Inner Sphere: Heavy: Kanazuchi, Sloth; Medium: Standard Inner Sphere, Longinus; Light: Gray Death Scout Armor, Kage, Achileus, Infiltrator, Purifier

Vehicle Assignment Tables

The Vehicle Assignment Tables on pp. 90–94 contain tables for randomly assigning player 'Mechs, conventional vehicles, aerospace fighters and DropShips. The tonnage of each vehicle is shown after the name in brackets. Descriptions, illustrations and *BattleTech* game statistics for these vehicles can be found in the various *BattleTech Technical Readouts* and *Field Manuals*.

WEALTH

A character with the Wealth Trait has more starting money than usual, which can be used to buy equipment or banked for

WEALTH TABLE

Wealth Points	Starting Cash
1	2,500 C-bills
2	5,000 C-bills
3	10,000 C-bills
4	25,000 C-bills
5	50,000 C-bills
6	100,000 C-bills
7	250,000 C-bills
8	500,000 C-bills
9	1,000,000 C-bills
10	2,000,000 C-bills

later use. The more points invested in Wealth, the more money the character starts out with. See the Wealth Table for the starting cash at each Wealth level.

Note that this represents liquid cash, not assets. Characters who want to own real estate should take the Land Grant Trait (p. 83).

This trait does not bestow the character with an ongoing source of income. It is up to the player to determine how his character pays the bills. Investment of this wealth could help, but since this is an adventure game, chances are the character will earn his living through his adventures, not through the stock market.

This trait is only used during initial character creation and cannot be acquired later. Characters need to make money the old-fashioned way after play begins.

WELL-CONNECTED

Cost: 2/4/6

A well-connected character possesses a large number of friends, acquaintances and foes. Such a character can call on contacts for information and help but must also watch out for enemies.

The cost of this advantage is based on the area in which the character has potential contacts. The player must choose the specific area when purchasing this trait. For 2 points, the character may use this advantage on a single important world—such as New Avalon or Solaris VII—or within a small state such as the St. Ives Compact or the Saiph Triumvirate. Four points makes the character well-connected within a large state, such as the Free Worlds League or the Outworlds Alliance. For 6 points, the character is well-connected throughout the Inner Sphere or Clan homeworlds.

To use the trait to find a contact, the player character must first spend 2D6 hours looking for a contact. Then the character must make a Streetwise (for criminal or underworld contacts), Scrounge (for merchant or technical contacts) or Protocol (for most other contacts) Skill Check. If the roll is unsuccessful, the player character does not find a contact. A successful roll provides the character with a contact appropriate to his needs. If the skill roll result is a 2, the character has not only failed to find a suitable contact but has also run afoul of an old enemy. The exact consequences of such a mishap are up to the gamemaster.

The contact obtained through the use of this trait functions in the same way as one purchased through the Contact Trait (p. 80). The contact may only be used for the duration of the current game session.

In each game session, a well-connected character may make a number of attempts to locate a contact equal to the number of points spent to purchase the Well-Connected Trait. In all cases, the character may make only one attempt to find a contact per day.

EQUIPMENT TABLE

Well-Equipped Character Points	Maximum Tech Level	Maximum Availability	Maximum Legality
0	+0	B	B
2	+0	C	C
4	+1	D	D
6	+1	E	E
8	+2	F	F

WELL-EQUIPPED

Cost: 2/4/6/8

Through connections, good fortune or other circumstances, a well-equipped character has access to rare equipment. This is represented in game terms by access to gear with higher equipment ratings (see *Equipment*, p. 129). Note that this trait does not provide additional cash with which to purchase said equipment—for that you need Wealth (above).

All characters can have gear rated up to Availability B and Legality B. The maximum tech level of gear for the character is based on his affiliation—most characters can have up to D-rated equipment. The exceptions are Clan characters, who can start with equipment rated up to E, and Periphery characters, who are restricted to Tech Level C.

A well-equipped character can purchase starting equipment beyond these ranges. Every 2 points of Well-Equipped increases the "letter grade" of availability and legality by one, while every 4 points increases the allowable tech level by one letter grade from the standard for his affiliation. These effects are summarized on the Equipment Table.This trait is used only during character creation; gear acquired later in the game can have any level of equipment ratings.

VEHICLE ASSIGNMENT TABLE 1—INNER SPHERE 'MECHS

Light 'Mechs (20–35 tons)

2D6	Draconis Combine	Capellan Confederation	Free Worlds League
2	HM-1 Hitman [30]	JA-KL-1532 Jackal [30]	ZPH-1A Tarantula [25]*
3	JR7-D Jenner [35]	D9-G9 Duan Gung [25]	EGL-1M Eagle [25]
4	OW-1 Owens [35]	RVN-3L Raven [35]	JA-KL-1532 Jackal [30]
5	PNT-10K Panther [35]	UM-R63 UrbanMech [30]	HER-3S Hermes [30]
6	RTX1-O Raptor [25]	FS9-S Firestarter [35]	SDR-7M Spider [30]
7	RTX1-O Raptor [25]	RVN-3L Raven [35]	HMR-3M Hammer [30]
8	KBO-7A Kabuto [25]	SDR-5V Spider [30]	HMR-3M Hammer [30]
9	JR7-K Jenner [35]	UM-R63 UrbanMech [30]	JR7-D Jenner [35]
10	SDR-7M Spider [30]	ZPH-1A Tarantula [25]*	EGL-2M Eagle [25]
11	SDR-9K Venom [35]	JVN-10N Javelin [30]	FNHK-9K Falcon Hawk [35]
12	PNT-C Panther [35]	UM-R60 UrbanMech [30]	ZPH-1A Tarantula [25]*

Medium 'Mechs (40–55 tons)

2D6	Draconis Combine	Capellan Confederation	Free Worlds League
2	KTO-C Kintaro [55]	MS1-O Men Shen [55]	FS9-O Firestarter [45]
3	WFT-1 Wolf Trap [45]	SNK-1V Snake [45]	APL-2S Apollo [55]
4	DMO-1K Daimyo [40]	HUR-WO-R4L Huron Warrior [50]	CDA-3M Cicada [40]
5	SR1-O Strider [40]	VND-3L Vindicator [45]	HER-2S Hermes II [40]
6	BJ2-O Blackjack [50]	DV-7D Dervish [55]	TBT-7M Trebuchet [50]
7	FS9-O Firestarter [45]	VND-3L Vindicator [45]	HER-5S Hermes II [40]
8	SR1-O Strider [40]	BJ-2 Blackjack [45]	HBK-5M Hunchback [50]
9	KIM-2 Komodo [45]	CLNT-2-3U Clint [40]	APL-1R Apollo [55]
10	BSN-3K Bishamon [45]*	SNK-1V Snake [45]	BCN-3R Buccaneer [55]
11	BSN-4K Bishamon [50]*	HUR-WO-R4L Huron Warrior [50]	TR1 Wraith [55]
12	LNX-9C Lynx [55]	MS1-O Men Shen [55]	BJ2-O Blackjack [50]

Heavy 'Mechs (60–75 tons)

2D6	Draconis Combine	Capellan Confederation	Free Worlds League
2	DGR-3F Dragon Fire [75]	THR-1L Thunder [70]	ANV-5Q Anvil [60]
3	AV1-O Avatar [70]	ON1-K Orion [75]	WR-DG-02-FC War Dog [75]
4	SJA-7C Shugenja [75]	JN-G8A Jinggau [65]	YMN-6Y Yeoman [60]
5	BHKU-O Black Hawk-KU [60]	TSG-9H Ti Ts'ang [65]	TMP-3M Tempest [65]
6	DAI-01 Daikyu [70]	CPLT-C3 Catapult [65]	ON1-M Orion [75]
7	DRG-5K Grand Dragon [60]	CTF-3L Cataphract [70]	ON1-M Orion [75]
8	QKD-5K Quickdraw [60]	GHR-5J Grasshopper [70]	CPLT-C1 Catapult [65]
9	CPLT-K2 Catapult [65]	JN-G8A Jinggau [65]	GLT-5M Guillotine [70]
10	MTR-5K Maelstrom [75]	ANV-3M Anvil [60]	YMN-6Y Yeoman [60]
11	SJA-7C Shugenja [75]	GHR-5H Grasshopper [70]	HRC-LS-9000 Hercules [70]
12	NDA-1K No Dachi [70]	WR-DG-02FC War Dog [75]	P1 Perseus [75]

Assault 'Mechs (80–100 tons)

2D6	Draconis Combine	Capellan Confederation	Free Worlds League
2	OBK-M10 O-Bakemono [80]	STC-2D Striker [80]	ALB-3U Albatross [95]
3	NG-C3A Naginata [95]	AWS-9M Awesome [80]	CGR-1A1 Charger [80]
4	TSH-7S Tai-sho [85]	MR-V2 Cerberus [95]	T-IT-N10M Grand Titan [100]
5	SD1-O Sunder [90]	AS7-K Atlas [100]	STK-5M Stalker [85]
6	AS7-C Atlas [100]	Y-H10G Yu Huang [90]	AS7-D Atlas [100]
7	HTM-27T Hatamoto-chi [80]	STK-3F Stalker [85]	AWS-9M Awesome [80]
8	MAL-1R Mauler [90]	Y-H9G Yu Huang [90]	MR-V2 Cerberus [95]
9	CRK 5003-2 Katana [85]	AS7-K Atlas [100]	SRC-5C Sirocco [95]*
10	CGR-3K Charger [80]	AWS-8Q Awesome [80]	MR-V2 Cerberus [95]

Assault 'Mechs (80–100 tons)

2D6	Draconis Combine	Capellan Confederation	Free Worlds League
11	TSH-7S Tai-sho [85]	CP-11-A Cyclops [90]	LGB-7Q Longbow [85]
12	AKU-1X Akuma [90]	T-IT-N10M Grand Titan [100]	GRN-D-01 Grand Crusader [80]

VEHICLE ASSIGNMENT TABLE 2—INNER SPHERE 'MECHS

Light 'Mechs (20–35 tons)

2D6	Federated Suns	Lyran Alliance	Rasalhague
2	RTX1-O Raptor [25]	NTK-2Q Night Hawk [35]	HSR-200-D Hussar [30]
3	GRM-01B Garm [35]	WLF-2 Wolfhound [35]	SDR-7M Spider [30]
4	ALM-7D Fireball [20]	BZK-F3 Hollander [35]	HER-1S Hermes [30]
5	GRM-01B Garm [35]	SDR-5V Spider [30]	JR7-K Jenner [35]
6	WLF-2 Wolfhound [35]	COM-5S Commando [25]	PNT-10K Panther [35]
7	JVN-10P Javelin [30]	FS9-S Firestarter [35]	COM-5S Commando [25]
8	COM-5S Commando [25]	COM-5S Commando [25]	FS9-S Firestarter [35]
9	JR7-D Jenner [35]	JVN-10P Javelin [30]	THE-N Thorn [20]
10	DRT-3S Dart [25]	JR7-D Jenner [35]	JVN-10P Javelin [30]
11	BH-305 Battle Hawk [30]	COM-2D Commando [25]	SDR-9K Venom [35]
12	SPR-5F Spector [35]	TLN-5W Talon [35]	MCY-97 Mercury [20]

Medium 'Mechs (40–55 tons)

2D6	Federated Suns	Lyran Alliance	Rasalhague
2	FS9-O Firestarter [45]	END-6Q Enfield [50]	WFT-1 Wolf Trap [45]
3	ASN-23 Assassin [40]	BTZ-3F Blitzkrieg [50]	STN-3M Sentinel [40]
4	STH-1D Stealth [45]	HCT-5S Hatchetman [45]	ASN-23 Assassin [40]
5	BJ-2 Blackjack [45]	CLNT-2-3U Clint [40]	HBK-5M Hunchback [50]
6	SNT-04 Sentry [40]	CBR-02 Cobra [45]	WHT-2 Whitworth [40]
7	ENF-6M Enforcer III [50]	HCT-3F Hatchetman [45]	HBK-5M Hunchback [50]
8	HCT-5S Hatchetman [45]	NGS-4T Nightsky [50]	VT-5S Vulcan [40]
9	CN9-D Centurion [50]	VL-5S Vulcan [40]	KTO-20 Kintaro [55]
10	NGS-4S Nightsky [50]	CN9-D Centurion [50]	CRB-27 Crab [50]
11	ENF-6M Enforcer III [50]	BSW-S2 Bushwacker [55]	WVE-5N Wyvern [45]
12	SR1-O Strider [40]	STY-3C Starslayer [55]	KIM-2 Komodo [45]

Heavy 'Mechs (60–75 tons)

2D6	Federated Suns	Lyran Alliance	Rasalhague
2	FLC-8R Falconer [75]	CTS-6Y Cestus [65]	GAL-1GLS Gallowglas [70]
3	MDG-1A Rakshasa [75]	GHR-5J Grasshopper [70]	ON1-K Orion [75]
4	AXM-1N Axman [65]	CES-3R Caesar [70]	BMB-12D Bombardier [65]
5	BNDR-01A Bandersnatch [75]	GAL-1GLS Gallowglas [70]	DRG-5K Grand Dragon [60]
6	CES-3R Caesar [70]	PTR-6S Penetrator [75]	DRG-5N Dragon [60]
7	JM6-D3 JagerMech III [65]	CES-3R Caesar [70]	DRG-5N Dragon [60]
8	FLC-8R Falconer [75]	BGS-1T Barghest [70]*	DRG-5K Grand Dragon [65]
9	JM6-DD JagerMech [65]	AXM-1N Axman [65]	CPLT-K2 Catapult [65]
10	MDG-1A Rakshasa [65]	BGS-2T Barghest [70]*	FLS-8K Flashman [75]
11	CTF-3D Cataphract [70]	MTR-5K Maelstrom [75]	CHP-1N Champion [60]
12	PTR-6M Penetrator [75]	DGR-4F Dragon Fire [75]	BL-6-KNT Black Knight [75]

* This is a four-legged (quad) BattleMech.

Assault 'Mechs (80–100 tons)

2D6	Federated Suns	Lyran Alliance	Rasalhague
2	DVS-2 Devastator [100]	STC-2C Striker [80]	HGN-732 Highlander [90]
3	CP-11-A Cyclops [90]	STK-5S Stalker [85]	MAL-1R Mauler [90]
4	GUN-1ERD Gunslinger [85]	PPR-5S Salamander [80]	CGR-3K Charger [80]

Assault 'Mechs (80–100 tons)

2D6	Federated Suns	Lyran Alliance	Rasalhague
5	AWS-9Q Awesome [80]	HA1-O Hauptmann [95]	HTM-27T Hatamoto-Chi [80]
6	VTR-9K Victor [80]	ZEU-9S Zeus [80]	ZEU-9S Zeus [80]
7	VTR-9K Victor [80]	ZEU-9S Zeus [80]	AS7-K Atlas [100]
8	AS7-S Atlas [100]	BNC-5S Banshee [95]	ZEU-9S Zeus [80]
9	VTR-9B Victor [80]	AS7-S Atlas [100]	THG-11E Thug [80]
10	AS7-K Atlas [100]	BRZ-A3 Berserker [100]	CRK-5003-2 Crockett [85]
11	BNC-5S Banshee [95]	ZEU-6S Zeus [80]	BNC-5S Banshee [95]
12	LGB-7Q Longbow [85]	EMP-6A Emperor [90]	KGC-000 King Crab [100]

VEHICLE ASSIGNMENT TABLE 3—THE CLANS

Light (20–35 tons)

2D6	Front Line 'Mechs	Second Line 'Mechs	Vehicles
2	Dasher (Fire Moth) [20]	Jenner IIC [35]	Anhur Transport [30]^{V}
3	Hankyu [30]	Jenner IIC [35]	Asshur Artillery Spotter [20]^{H}
4	Fire Falcon [25]	THE-N Thorn [20]	Donar (Reconnaissance Variant) [21]^{V}
5	Uller (Kit Fox) [30]	Vixen (Incubus) [30]	Donar Assault Helicopter [21]^{V}
6	Cougar [35]	MON-66 Mongoose [25]	Mithras Light Tank [25]^{T}
7	Puma (Adder) [35]	Peregrine (Horned Owl) [35]	Odin Scout Tank [20]^{W}
8	Fire Falcon [25]	Jenner IIC [35]	Zorya Light Tank [35]^{T}
9	Koshi (Mist Lynx) [25]	Piranha [20]	Svantovit Infantry Fighting Vehicle [35]^{H}
10	Koshi (Mist Lynx) [25]	Peregrine (Horned Owl) [35]	Svantovit (Streak SRM Variant) [35]^{H}
11	Uller (Kit Fox) [30]	MCY-97 Mercury [20]	Indra Infantry Transport [35]^{W}
12	Puma (Adder) [35]	HSR-200-D Hussar [30]	Shamash Reconnaissance Vehicle [11]^{H}

Medium (40–55 tons)

2D6	Front Line 'Mechs	Second Line 'Mechs	Vehicles
2	Dragonfly (Viper) [40]	Hunchback IIC [50]	Ares Medium Tank [40]^{T}
3	Fenris (Ice Ferret) [45]	Hellhound (Conjurer) [50]	Ku Wheeled Assault Tank [50]^{W}
4	Pouncer [40]	Goshawk (Vapor Eagle) [55]	Hachiman Fire Support Tank [50]^{T}
5	Nobori-nin [50]	Clint IIC [40]	Ku Wheeled Assault Tank [50]^{W}
6	Ryoken (Stormcrow) [55]	STN-3L Sentinel [40]	Ares Medium Tank [40]^{T}
7	Fenris (Ice Ferret) [45]	Hellhound (Conjurer) [50]	Hachiman Fire Support Tank [50]^{T}
8	Black Lanner [55]	Wyvern IIC [45]	Ku Wheeled Assault Tank [50]^{W}
9	Shadow Cat [45]	Clint IIC [40]	Ares Medium Tank [40]^{T}
10	Phantom [40]	Great Wyrm [45]	Hachiman Fire Support Tank [50]^{T}
11	Black Hawk (Nova) [50]	Goshawk (Vapor Eagle) [55]	Ares Medium Tank [40]^{T}
12	Grendel [45]	CRB-27 Crab [50]	Epona Pursuit Tank [50]^{H}

Heavy (60–75 tons)

2D6	Front Line 'Mechs	Second Line 'Mechs	Vehicles
2	Mad Cat (Timber Wolf) [75]	BL-6-KNT Black Knight [75]	Oro Heavy Tank [60]^{T}
3	Crossbow [65]	Viper (Black Python) [75]	Ishtar Heavy Fire Support Tank [65]^{W}

^{H} Hover ^{T} Tracked ^{V} VTOL ^{W} Wheeled

4	Thor (Summoner) [70]	Thresher [60]	Oro Heavy Tank [60]^{T}
5	Nova Cat [70]	Rifleman IIC [65]	Oro Heavy Tank [60]^{T}
6	Vulture (Mad Dog) [60]	Galahad (Glass Spider) [60]	Ishtar Heavy Fire Support Tank [65]^{W}
7	Mad Cat (Timber Wolf) [75]	Guillotine IIC [70]	Oro Heavy Tank [60]^{T}
8	Cauldron-Born [65]	EXT-4D Exterminator [65]	Ishtar Heavy Fire Support Tank [65]^{W}
9	Night Gyr [75]	Grizzly [70]	Oro Heavy Tank [60]^{T}
10	Loki (Hellbringer) [65]	FLS-8K Flashman [75]	Ishtar Heavy Fire Support Tank [65]^{W}
11	Mad Cat (Timber Wolf) [75]	Rifleman IIC [65]	Oro Heavy Tank [60]^{T}
12	Linebacker [65]	Matador [60]	Athena Combat Vehicle [75]

Assault (80–100 tons)

2D6	Front Line 'Mechs	Second Line 'Mechs	Vehicles
2	Masakari (Warhawk) [85]	Highlander IIC [90]	Huitzilopochtli Assault Tank [85]^{T}
3	Turkina [95]	Behemoth (Stone Rhino) [100]	Mars Assault Vehicle [100]^{T}
4	Man O' War (Gargoyle) [80]	Kraken (Bane) [100]	Huitzilopochtli Assault Tank [85]^{T}
5	Gladiator (Executioner) [95]	CRK-5003-1 Crockett [85]	Mars Assault Vehicle [100]^{T}
6	Daishi (Dire Wolf) [100]	Highlander IIC [90]	Mars Assault Vehicle [100]^{T}
7	Masakari (Warhawk) [85]	Supernova [90]	Mars Assault Vehicle [100]^{T}
8	Kingfisher [90]	Kodiak [100]	Mars Assault Vehicle [100]^{T}
9	Daishi (Dire Wolf) [100]	Supernova [90]	Huitzilopochtli Assault Tank [85]^{T}
10	Man O' War (Gargoyle) [80]	Behemoth (Stone Rhino) [100]	Mars Assault Vehicle [100]^{T}
11	Gladiator (Executioner) [95]	THG-11E Thug [80]	Huitzilopochtli Assault Tank [85]^{T}
12	Blood Asp [95]	Kodiak [100]	Mars (XL Variant) [100]^{T}

VEHICLE ASSIGNMENT TABLE 4—MISCELLANEOUS

PERIPHERY

2D6	Light 'Mechs	Medium 'Mechs	Heavy 'Mechs	Assault 'Mechs
2	THE-S Thorn [20]	CN9-D Centurion [50]	FLS-7K Flashman [75]	CRK-5003-0 Crockett [85]
3	HER-1A Hermes [30]	TBT-5N Trebuchet [50]	GLT-4L Guillotine [70]	THG-10E Thug [80]
4	PNT-9R Panther [35]	HCT-5S Hatchetman [45]	BMB-10D Bombardier [65]	AWS-8Q Awesome [80]
5	SDR-5V Spider [30]	CDA-2A Cicada [40]	CPLT-C1 Catapult [65]	CP-10-C Cyclops [90]
6	UM-R63 UrbanMech [30]	BJ-1 Blackjack [45]	QKD-4G Quickdraw [60]	VTR-9K Victor [80]
7	JVN-10P Javelin [30]	ASN-23 Assassin [40]	GHR-5J Grasshopper [70]	ZEU-9S Zeus [80]
8	FS9-H Firestarter [35]	WTH-2 Whitworth [40]	JM6-S JagerMech [65]	CGR-1A1 Charger [80]
9	COM-2D Commando [25]	VL-2T Vulcan [40]	ON1-K Orion [75]	BNC-3E Banshee [95]
10	MCY-98 Mercury [20]	CLNT-2-3T Clint [40]	LNC25-02 Lancelot [60]	STK-3F Stalker [85]
11	MON-67 Mongoose [25]	DV-6M Dervish [55]	EXT-4A Exterminator [65]	AS7-D Atlas [100]
12	HSR-300-D Hussar [30]	MHL-X1 Marshal [55]	BL-7-KNT Black Knight [75]	HGN-733 Highlander [90]

INNER SPHERE VEHICLES

2D6	Light Vehicles	Medium Vehicles	Heavy Vehicles	Assault Vehicles
2	Yellow Jacket Gunship [30]^{V}	Regulator Hovertank [45]^{H}	Zhukov Tank [75]^{T}	Alacorn Mk VI Tank [95]^{T}
3	Striker Tank [35]^{W}	Goblin Tank [45]^{T}	Patton Tank [65]^{T}	SturmFeur Tank [85]^{T}
4	Mantis Attack VTOL [15]^{V}	Hetzer Wheeled Assault Gun [40]^{W}	Po Heavy Tank [60]^{T}	Schrek PPC Carrier [80]^{T}
5	Hunter Support Tank [35]^{T}	Drillson Hovertank [50]^{H}	Manticore Tank [60]^{T}	Partisan Tank [80]^{T}
6	Saladin Assault Hovertank [35]^{H}	Maxim Hover Transport [50]^{H}	Pike Support Vehicle [60]^{T}	Demolisher II Tank [100]^{T}
7	Saracen Hovertank [35]^{H}	Vedette Tank [50]^{T}	LRM Carrier [60]^{T}	Ontos Tank [95]^{T}
8	Hawk Moth Gunship [25]^{V}	Myrmidon Tank [40]^{T}	SRM Carrier [60]^{T}	Heavy LRM Carrier [80]^{T}

^{A} Aerodyne ^{H} Hover ^{S} Spheroid ^{T} Tracked ^{V} VTOL ^{W} Wheeled

9	Pegasus Scout Hovertank [35]^{H}	Condor Hovertank [50]^{H}	Bulldog Tank [60]^{T}	Schrek PPC Carrier [80]^{T}
10	Scorpion Tank [25]^{T}	Gladius Hovertank [40]^{H}	Von Luckner Tank [75]^{T}	Partisan Tank [80]^{T}
11	J. Edgar Hovertank [25]^{H}	Light SRM Carrier [40]^{W}	Pilum Tank [70]^{W}	Behemoth Tank [100]^{T}
12	Cavalry Attack Helicopter [25]^{V}	Fulcrum Hovertank [50]^{H}	Tokugawa Tank [60]^{W}	Challenger X MBT [90]^{T}

INNER SPHERE AEROSPACE FIGHTERS AND DROPSHIPS

2D6	Light (20–45 tons)	Medium (50–70 tons)	Heavy (75–100 tons)	DropShips (Civilian)
2	TR-7 Thrush [25]	F-92 Stingray [60]	SL-15R Slayer [80]	Mammoth^{S}
3	F-11RR Cheetah [25]	TR-10 Transit [50]	TR-13A Transgressor [75]	Monarch^{A}
4	SYD-Z2A Seydlitz [20]	CSR-V12 Corsair [50]	F-700 Riever [100]	Buccaneer^{A}
5	SPR-6D Sparrowhawk [30]	LCF-R16 Lucifer [65]	STU-D6 Stuka [100]	Mule^{S}
6	SL-21 Sholagar [35]	SL-17R Shilone [65]	CHP-W7 Chippewa [90]	Buccaneer^{A}
7	TR-7 Thrush [25]	F-92 Stingray [60]	SL-15R Slayer [80]	Buccaneer^{A}
8	F-11RR Cheetah [25]	TR-10 Transit [50]	TR-13A Transgressor [75]	Buccaneer^{A}
9	SYD-Z2A Seydlitz [20]	CSR-V12 Corsair [50]	F-700 Riever [100]	Mule^{S}
10	SPR-6D Sparrowhawk [30]	LCF-R16 Lucifer [65]	STU-D6 Stuka [100]	Monarch^{A}
11	SL-21 Sholagar [35]	SL-17R Shilone [65]	CHP-W7 Chippewa [90]	Mammoth^{S}
12	TR-7 Thrush [25]	F-92 Stingray [60]	SL-15R Slayer [80]	Behemoth^{S}

CLAN AEROSPACE FIGHTERS AND DROPSHIPS

2D6	Light	Medium	Heavy	DropShips (Clan)
2	Avar [35]	Jagatai [70]	Sabutai [75]	Miraborg^{S}
3	Vandal [30]	Turk [50]	Jengiz [80]	Titan^{A}
4	Batu [40]	Visigoth [60]	Scytha [90]	Broadsword^{A}
5	Bashkir [20]	Turk [50]	Kirghiz [100]	Union-C^{S}
6	Sulla [45]	Visigoth [60]	Jengiz [80]	Confederate^{S}
7	Sulla [45]	Visigoth [60]	Scytha [90]	Broadsword^{A}
8	Bashkir [20]	Visigoth [60]	Scytha [90]	Confederate^{S}
9	Batu [40]	Turk [50]	Kirghiz [100]	Carrier^{A}
10	Bashkir [20]	Visigoth [60]	Scytha [90]	Sassanid^{S}
11	Vandal [30]	Turk [50]	Jengiz [80]	Lion^{S}
12	Avar [35]	Jagatai [70]	Sabutai [75]	Overlord-C^{S}

^{A} Aerodyne ^{S} Spheroid

SKILLS

In general, Attributes and traits describe what a character *is*. By contrast, skills describe what she *does*. Every character has a set of abilities called *skills* that together account for her areas of proficiency. It is certain that a character will have more knowledge than her list of skills includes, but such knowledge will be inconsequential compared with her skills, and only in areas in which a character is skilled is she truly proficient. All other knowledge is hobby-level at best.

SKILL TYPES

Skills can be divided into two broad categories: standard skills and difficult skills. Difficult skills are listed in **boldface** on the Skill List (p. 59). Each of these categories is defined below.

These two skill types come into play when a character wants to attempt something that would require a skill they don't have, or when determining skill advancement. In general, if a character lacks the necessary skill but attempts the action anyway, improvising for a standard skill is much easier (though still hard) than a difficult skill (see *Untrained Skill Use*, p. 16). Likewise, it is a bit harder to learn and improve difficult skills than standard ones.

All skills have two related Attributes, called *Link Attributes*, that are also used to determine skill advancement and that may affect untrained skill use. The Link Attributes for all skills are listed on the Skill List (p. 58).

STANDARD SKILLS

Anyone can try to climb a hill, run fast or fire a gun. Skilled characters are simply much better at doing these things than unskilled characters. Skills for actions like these are known as *standard skills*. Untrained attempts at using standard skills will have less chance of succeeding than trained attempts but are still within the realm of possibility.

DIFFICULT SKILLS

No matter how smart you are, there is little chance you could sit down at a computer terminal and create a program if you had never learned how to do it. Likewise, the inner workings of a fusion engine are a complete mystery to an untrained character; you can't just grab a wrench and start working. No degree of pounding will cause a faulty HPG transmitter to function, let alone send a properly encoded message. Skills such as these require specialized knowledge and training before they can be attempted with any degree of success.

Languages

Although languages are considered difficult skills, a character's native language is not considered difficult for purposes of his skill advancement. For this purpose, a character's "native" languages are any that are gained during Stage 1 of the Life Path (Early Childhood).

SUBSKILLS

Skills marked on the Skill List (p. 59) and in this chapter with an asterisk (*) actually represent groups of related subskills. You cannot simply have Technician Skill, for example. You must have a particular kind of Technician Skill, such as Technician/Electronics.

Certain skills have very specific lists of subskills, while others have a wide-open variety definable by the players and gamemaster. Each skill consisting of subskills is defined in the individual skill description.

REGIONAL SUBSKILLS

Bureaucracy, Protocol and Streetwise are known as *regional skills*. Such skills vary considerably by region: a character who has in-depth knowledge of the yakuza in Combine space may not be able to navigate the Free Worlds League underworld at all. This character's Streetwise Skill would not be as useful to him outside the Draconis Combine.

These skills must be chosen for a particular area. The area can be as broad as an entire Successor State or the Clans (as a whole), or as narrow as desired. The skill can be learned several times, each covering a different area.

Even outside the proficient region, these skills offer some ability. Using the skill outside the region it is for forces the character to roll 3D10 for the Action Check and use the worst two (as in *Untrained Skill Use*); however, the character may add his skill bonus to the result. In this case, do not apply the Untrained Use Modifiers for Attributes to the target number.

THE SKILLS

This section describes in detail each skill and its use in the game. Not every possible use of every skill can be covered here, although we try to cover the most common circumstances that will come up in play. The gamemaster will sometimes have to use his judgment in the application of skills.

Note that skills that cover the use of a piece of equipment, such as weapon, communications and vehicle skills, are assumed to include the ability to perform basic maintenance such as cleaning, reloading, refueling and so on. More advanced care falls under the heading of other skills such as Technician and Gunsmith.

This is by no means an exhaustive list; players are welcome to invent new skills with the approval of their gamemaster, using this list as a guide.

ACADEMICS*

This skill covers a variety of learned topics such as history, sciences, literature and philosophy. The categories can be as broad or narrow as desired, with narrower topics offering a more in-depth knowledge of the field. The samples listed below offer some broad topics characters might have skill with; of course, there are many more potential Academic Subskills, as

well as numerous narrower versions of these subskills. For example, characters rarely study such a broad topic as "History," but would focus their knowledge on subskills such as "Star League History" or "History of New Avalon."

Sample Academic Subskills: Philosophy, Psychology, Theology, History, Anthropology, Archaeology, Law, Literature, Agriculture, Biology, Astronomy, Geography, Linguistics, Mythology, Political Science, Sociology, Statistics

ACROBATICS

This skill allows a character to move his body quickly and gracefully through complicated maneuvers. Acrobatics gives a character a better chance of accomplishing any action requiring physical agility, such as jumping from a moving vehicle, leaping between rooftops and the like.

Acrobatics increases the character's target number to be hit while making an Evade action, adding his skill bonus to the +1 TN modifier for Evading. A successful Acrobatics Action Check will also help the character break his fall, reducing the damage taken by one wound level with a successful Skill Check (see *Falling*, p. 120).

ACTING

Among their repertoire of abilities, skilled actors can imitate particular people, summon emotional responses at will and convince their audience they are telling the truth when they are in fact lying. Obviously, this has numerous applications in game play. The difficulty modifier for an Acting Check is based on the condition of the target audience. If they are receptive to the "show," they will be an easier target than a suspicious or hostile audience.

ADMINISTRATION

This is the skill of running a business, including the skills needed to manage a large military unit.

Characters with the Administration Skill may be allowed to operate a business on the side with the gamemaster's approval. Such enterprises can provide the character with a steady source of income, as well as numerous roleplaying opportunities. The exact operation of the business should be worked out between the player and the gamemaster. At the simplest level, the gamemaster can have the character make a quarterly Action Check to determine the enterprise's earnings or losses. Multiply the Margin of Success or Failure by 1,000 to determine how many C-bills the business earned or lost. Alternatively, the player and gamemaster can devise as complicated a system of finances as they wish. The level of detail is a matter of taste.

ANIMAL HANDLING

This skill covers all facets of animal care, from feeding and grooming to breeding and training. Characters are most likely to want to use this skill to train animals to help them on adventures. While this can add an interesting element to the game, in practice animal training is a long and difficult process. It is also hardly an exact science; years of training can still result in an uncooperative animal.

For the most effective training, an appropriate species of animal must be started on training at a very young age. At the end of every month in which the animal is trained for at least an hour a day, make an Animal Handling Check, with difficulty modifiers based on the kind of animal being trained (cats are notoriously hard to train, while dogs are well-known for their obedience). Success means the animal is taking to the training. Failure means the animal is not, and another Check must be made in the following month.

After a successful Animal Handling Check, a second Check can be made to see if the animal learns a new command, with the difficulty based on the complexity of the command. Success means the animal has learned the command; failure means nothing new was learned. An animal can learn a limited number of tricks depending on its intelligence, at the gamemaster's discretion.

APPRAISAL

The Appraisal Skill enables characters to appraise the value of items. Since some items are more easily appraised than others, modifiers should be applied to Appraisal Checks based on how common or rare the item is. To determine the value of common items or raw materials such as metals and gems, apply a –2 Modifier to the roll. For appraisals of uncommon materials or items, apply a –1 Modifier. Action Checks made to appraise very rare items, such as Star League technology or seventeenth-century furniture, receive modifiers ranging from +1 to +3, depending on the rarity of the item.

If the Action Check fails, it means that the character either identified the item incorrectly or misjudged its value. The extent of the error depends on the Margin of Failure and the gamemaster's discretion. A rule of thumb is plus or minus 5 percent per point by which the roll fails.

Knowing a commodity's value does not mean the character will get full value for it when he tries to sell it or that he will be able to purchase it at its true worth. Negotiation Skill is used to determine the actual selling or purchase price.

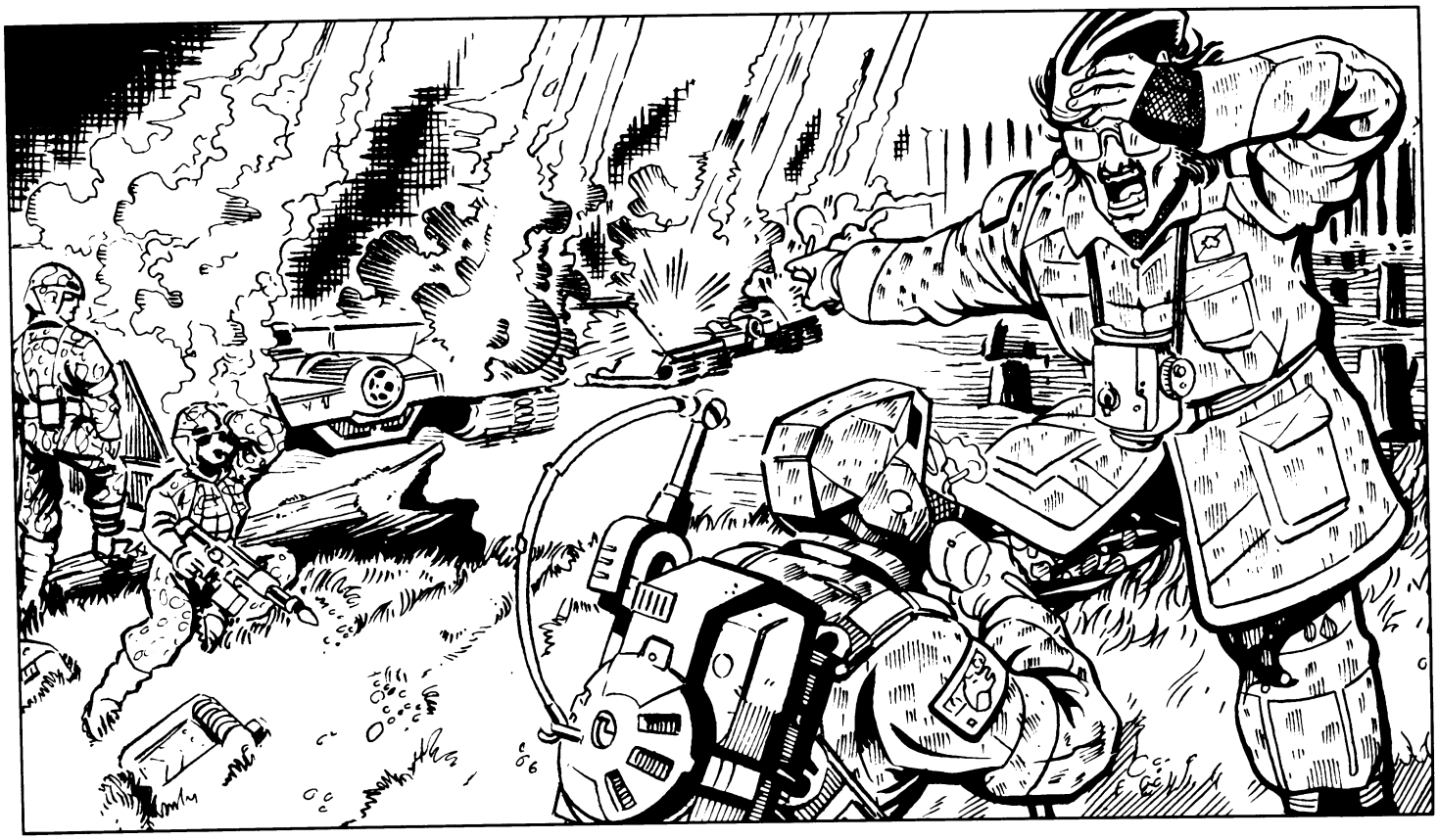
ARCHERY

This is the weapon skill used for making attacks with all kinds of bows, from short and long bows to crossbows.

Additionally, Archery Skill enables characters to jury-rig a badly damaged bow or build a simple bow from scratch. Jury-rigging or building a bow requires basic tools and takes about thirty minutes. Make an Archery Check at the end of this period: success means the bow is functional, though attacks made with it suffer a target number modifier equal to 8 minus the Margin of Success of the Check (to a minimum of +1). Failure means the bow looks fine but will break the first time it is used.

ARTILLERY

This weapon skill is used to fire and spot for all kinds of artillery weapons, from field artillery to artillery mounted in vehicles or 'Mechs.



ARTS*

Subskills of the Arts Skill can include any area of artistic expression, from music to painting to sculpture. Note that the subskills suggested below are broader categories than most characters would have, but they are intended to show the range of possibilities. For example, a character would probably have the Art/Trumpet Skill rather than the Art/Music Performance Skill.

Sample Art Subskills: Architecture, Dance, Music Composition, Music Performance, Illustration, Sculpture, Writing, Painting, Theater, Choreography, Poetry, Weaving

BLADES

The Blades Skill covers the use of all one-handed melee weapons that are not jointed or flexible (in which case the Whips Skill is used, p. 108), whether those weapons are actually bladed (sword, vibroaxe) or not (club, stunstick).

BOMBING

This skill is used for dropping things accurately from aircraft of all types. Most often used to drop bombs, it is also used by crop dusters and in BattleMech combat drops.

BRAWLING

This is the unrefined art of smashing your fist into another person in the effort to knock him out or kill him. It is not as effective as Martial Arts (p. 102), but on the other hand, it is also easier to learn. For clarity, we use the term "you" when referring to your character and "your opponent" when referring to the other character in the melee.

For each skill bonus point in Brawling, the character may choose to learn one of the following maneuvers. See also *Special Maneuvers,* p. 114.

Bear Hug: If successful, your opponent is pinned and cannot make a melee attack in the following turn. At the end of the turn in which a character was pinned, an Opposed Strength Check is made. If the target character is successful, he has broken your grip and may make an attack normally the following turn. If the target is unsuccessful, he remains pinned.

Eye Gouge (Attack): +5 TN, but if it inflicts any Fatigue, your opponent has a +5 Target Number to all attacks for the next 1D6 turns. Note this maneuver cannot be used against a target whose eyes are covered by goggles or a full helmet.

Haymaker (Attack): By taking 1 Fatigue, you may add 2D6 damage.

BUREAUCRACY*

A character with Bureaucracy Skill is trained to operate within the framework of a power structure such as civilian or military administrations. A successful Bureaucracy Check allows the character to locate the person most useful to him in any given office or chain of command. Bureaucracy is a regional skill (p. 95), the subskills for which are based on geographical regions or particular groups such as mercenaries.

CAREERS*

This is a catchall category for an infinite number of special skills related to professions. Since there is an endless supply of unique professions in the *BattleTech* universe, this generic category applies to them all rather than listing them separately. From Judge to Librarian, the possibilities are endless.

Of course, certain professions require additional skills. For example, a doctor needs more than Career/Doctor in order to practice medicine. He would also need First Aid, MedTech, Surgery and other skills. In many cases, the occupational fields (p. 52) offer guidance on these requirements. The final arbiter in these cases is always the gamemaster. As a rule of thumb, if there is an appropriate skill to a profession on the Skill List, a character must have it to be considered professional.

CLIMBING

The Climbing Skill enables characters to scale natural and manmade obstacles. Various conditions affect the difficulty of a climb. Simulate these variables by applying TN modifiers to Climbing Action Checks based on the guidelines found on the Target Number Modifiers Table (p. 17); abundant handholds might offer a –1 Modifier, while slippery rocks or high winds would inflict +1 to +3 Modifiers or worse depending on the severity of the weather.

A failed Climbing Check results in a fall. See the *Falling* section in *Combat*, p. 120, for rules on damage caused by falling.

COMMS/CONVENTIONAL

Characters use the Comms/Conventional Skill when operating communications equipment other than hyperpulse generators. This skill enables a character to jam an opponent's communications or defeat an opponent's attempts to jam his own communications. In either case, the character makes an Opposed Test against the opponent's Comms/Conventional Skill. This skill also includes a knowledge of listening devices and other covert surveillance equipment.

COMMS/HPG

The Comms/HPG Skill allows characters to send interstellar or interplanetary communications via a hyperpulse generator (HPG). A successful Comms/HPG Action Check means that such a communication attempt succeeds. This skill is quite rare, though more and more people outside ComStar are learning it. Many Clan technicians are trained in the operation of HPG stations as well as other similar technologies. See p. 182 for a description of HPGs.

COMPUTERS

The Computers Skill gives the character a working knowledge of computer systems, basic operations and programming. When attempting a complex task such as searching a large database or writing a new program, the character must make an Action Check. The gamemaster assigns a difficulty modifier appropriate to the complexity of the task, the time available to complete it and the hardware and software the character is using.

Additionally, the Computers Skill allows a player to hack into computer systems by making a Computers Skill Check. If a system operator (sysop) is online when a character attempts to hack into a system, an Opposed Test is instead made using the character's and sysop's Computers Skills. If the sysop wins, the would-be hacker is forced offline and any further attempts on the same system receive a +2 modifier.

If the hacking character wins, he breaks into the system, but the sysop may be aware of the intrusion. If the hacker's Margin of Success exceeds the sysop's MoS by three or more, the intrusion goes unnoticed. Otherwise, the sysop is aware of the breach and may shut down the system in 1D6 turns.

Once inside a system, a hacking character can act freely, though complex tasks may require Action Checks (bad failures and fumbles may alert a sysop at the gamemaster's discretion). If a system is being shut down, a hacking character can make one Computer Check per round in an attempt to extract data; these attempts suffer a "pressure" modifier of +1 in addition to all other applicable modifiers.

Gamemasters should note that only the most sensitive data is continually monitored by live sysops.

CRYPTOGRAPHY

Characters use the Cryptography Skill to encode and decode messages. When a character encodes a message, the character's Margin of Success becomes the difficulty modifier for anyone attempting to decode the message. Characters may voluntarily lower their Margins of Success to enable the message's recipient to decode the message more easily. A failed roll means the message has not been properly encoded and will be unintelligible.

Decoding a message also requires a successful Cryptography Action Check. When using a computerized code key, the decoding process requires 1 minute per page. Using a manual key extends the required time to 10 minutes per page. Decoding without a key requires 2D6 + 2 hours per page. All decoding times are divided by the decoding character's Margin of Success (the time is not reduced if the Margin of Success is 0 or 1).

DEMOLITIONS

A character uses the Demolitions Skill to arm, disarm and recognize explosive devices. Modifiers for Action Checks to arm explosive devices are based on a number of factors, ranging from the sensitivity of the explosive used to the complexity of the device's detonation mechanism. Truly complex devices may require the use of other skills such as Computers, Electronics or Security Systems.

The character arming the device sets the difficulty modifier to the Demolitions Action Check used to arm the device. (A low modifier makes arming the device easy but also enables other characters to disarm the device easily.) If the arming Action Check succeeds, the device has been armed. If the roll fails, the arming attempt fails and the character must make a second Demolitions Action Check immediately, using the same modi-

fiers. If this second roll fails, the device detonates and causes appropriate damage to the character and any other targets within the explosive's blast radius.

Disarming an explosive device is even more dangerous than arming one. To disarm an explosive device, a character must make a successful Demolitions Action Check with double the modifier used in the original arming roll. If the disarming roll fails, the device detonates and causes appropriate damage to the character and all targets within the blast radius.

DISGUISE

A character with Disguise Skill can change his appearance enough to be taken for someone else. To create or pierce a disguise requires an Action Check. Under optimum conditions, creating a disguise requires access to specialized equipment such as makeup, contact lenses and costume pieces such as platform shoes or padded clothing. Improvised disguises are possible, but with a significant penalty (+1 to +3 for lack of proper equipment).

When a character uses this skill to create a disguise, the gamemaster should make the Action Check for the character. This prevents the player from knowing how effective his character's disguise will be. The Margin of Success becomes a modifier for any other character attempting to see through the disguise. Conversely, if the roll fails, its Margin of Failure becomes a negative modifier, making it easier for other characters to see through the disguise. If a character disguising himself has a particularly bad roll, the gamemaster may reveal this fact to the character as soon as he looks in a mirror.

To penetrate a disguise, the character making the attempt makes a Disguise Skill Check. If the character does not have Disguise Skill, he may make an untrained Skill Check as normal, but he also gets to add his Perception Skill Bonus to his roll.

Note that Disguise only affects a character's physical appearance. A character who wants to alter his behavior and mannerisms must use the Acting Skill (see p. 96).

ENGINEERING

The Engineering Skill deals with the complex principles of design, manufacture and modification of equipment. This skill allows a character to design equipment from scratch, modify existing designs, check for design flaws and determine how a design would best be executed.

Engineering is one of the most difficult and time-consuming endeavors a character can attempt, often requiring an entire staff of engineers and specialized equipment and computer systems. Something as complex as modifying a BattleMech design can take years and is well beyond the scope of this book. If the gamemaster allows it, such activities can be pursued between game sessions, but bear in mind the impact the proposed design could have on the campaign.

During gaming, Engineering Skill is most often used for minor modifications such as retrofitting a 'Mech with new equipment or making minor design changes such as replacing armor with extra heat sinks. A Skill Check is necessary to make these kinds of modifications without compromising the design integrity of the BattleMech (use this skill instead of a Technician Skill when checking for overall design integrity; see *BattleTech Master Rules*, p. 87).

ESCAPE ARTIST

The Escape Artist Skill is used to break free of personal restraints and bindings, from simple rope to handcuffs and straitjackets. It can also aid characters in escaping from imprisonment or similar large-scale entrapment. Successful Escape Artist Action Checks enable characters to squeeze between cell bars, tunnel under walls, steal a guard's keys, slip out of restraints and so on. However, the skill does not aid characters attempting to pick locks or defeat security cameras. These tasks are covered by the Security Systems Skill (p. 105).

FAST TALK

This skill is used when a character wants to trick, confuse or convince another character verbally. It differs from the Negotiation Skill mainly in that it is used quickly; Negotiation requires a lengthy process of discussion and is primarily used for bargaining. A Fast Talk Check should be used when trying to get into that exclusive club, talk your way past the guard or convince your CO you really weren't off base without permission.

FIRST AID

As the name implies, this skill covers immediate basic emergency medical care. It can fully treat minor injuries, but MedTech and Surgery Skills are required for serious injuries. In these cases, it is used to keep an injured person alive until full-scale treatment can be supplied. For full rules on the use of this skill, see *Healing*, p. 123.

FORGERY

A character with Forgery Skill can produce and detect forgeries. Forgery deals primarily with the techniques for producing forged signatures and documents, though it also gives the character familiarity with equipment that can detect an art forgery by analyzing the chemical composition of paints and paper.

The gamemaster should make the Forgery Action Check for a character creating a forgery, so that the character will be unaware of the forgery's effectiveness. (In the case of a very bad roll, the gamemaster may reveal the result to the character.) The Margin of Success achieved when creating a forgery becomes the modifier for any Forgery Action Check made by a character attempting to detect the forgery. If the original roll failed, the Margin of Failure becomes a negative modifier for any detection rolls.

Characters attempting to forge complex documents or items must begin by making an appropriate Art, Career or Interest Skill Action Check. The skill required depends on the type of forgery. For example, a character attempting to forge a police report would make a Career/Police Officer Skill Check. The roll's Margin of Success is used as a negative modifier to the Forgery Target Number used to create the forgery. The roll's

Margin of Failure is used as a positive modifier to increase the Forgery Skill Check's TN. Characters who lack an appropriate Career Skill or Special Interest must make an untrained Action Check, so their forgeries are unlikely to be convincing.

FREE FALL

This skill is used to safely steer and land in any free fall situation, including parachuting and BattleMech combat drops. Modifiers should be applied to the roll for lighting conditions as well as conditions of the area to be landed in (use this skill in place of Piloting when using the *Dropping Troops* rules in *BattleTech Master Rules*, p. 72). A successful Skill Check results in an on-target landing with no injury. Failure results in an off-target landing and damage as from a fall from a number of meters equal to the Margin of Failure (see *Falling*, p. 120).

GAMBLING

The Gambling Skill gives a character a working knowledge of games of chance and helps him cheat or detect cheating in them. A successful Gambling Action Check enables a character to cheat during such a game. However, each time the character attempts to cheat again during the same game, he must repeat the roll, increasing the target number by 1 each time. A failed roll means the character has been caught in the act. A cheating character may also be exposed if another character makes an Opposed Test using his own Gambling Skill against the cheater and achieves a higher Margin of Success.

The Gambling Skill can also be used to determine a character's success in games of chance. Though roleplaying such games may be more fun, a Gambling Action Check can be used instead to quickly determine a character's success in such games. A high Margin of Success indicates large winnings, while a high Margin of Failure indicates large losses; as a rule of thumb, multiply the character's Margin of Success (or Failure) by 10 to find the percent of the starting stake won (or lost).

GUNNERY*

This skill covers the use of vehicle-mounted heavy weapons such as those carried by BattleMechs (for other heavy weapons, use the Support Weapons Skill, p. 106). Artillery weapons are not used with this skill, even if they are mounted on a vehicle; the Artillery Skill is used instead (see p. 96).

The Gunnery Skill has three subskills based on weapon types and is also divided into four categories based on the way the weapon is mounted. A character must specify both the subskill and category of each of his Gunnery Skills, such as Gunnery/Laser/Humanoid or Gunnery/Missile/Aero.

A character may use a Gunnery Subskill with a category in which he has no skill by rolling 3D10 and using the worst two results as per the *Untrained Skill Use* rule (p. 16), but he can apply his Gunnery Skill Bonus rather than Untrained Use Modifiers for Attributes.

AeroSpace (Aero): This category includes space and atmospheric craft that fire their weapons from fixed wing and nose mounts as opposed to turrets and emplacements. Includes aerospace and conventional fighters, VTOLs, aerodyne DropShips and other aerodyne spacecraft.

Conventional (Conv.): This category includes all conventional ground and naval vehicles (except VTOLs), including static emplacements.

Humanoid: This category represents weapons built-in on a humanoid "body," which includes BattleMechs and battle armor.

Space: This category includes spacecraft that fire their weapons from turrets and emplacements as opposed to fixed mounts. It includes JumpShips, WarShips and spheroid DropShips.

Gunnery/Ballistic

This subskill is used for direct-fire weapons that inflict their damage using a bullet or shell, including autocannons, gauss rifles and machine guns. Tube artillery uses the Artillery Skill, not this subskill.

Gunnery/Laser

This subskill is used for direct-fire weapons that use lasers, flames or charged particles to damage their target by heating it, including all kinds of lasers, particle projection cannons and flamers.

Gunnery/Missile

This subskill is used for all kinds of missile launchers, be they direct or indirect fire, including long-, medium- and short-range missiles as well as variant missile launchers such as streak SRMs and the Clan advanced tactical missile system. Missile artillery uses the Artillery Skill, not this subskill.

GUNSMITH

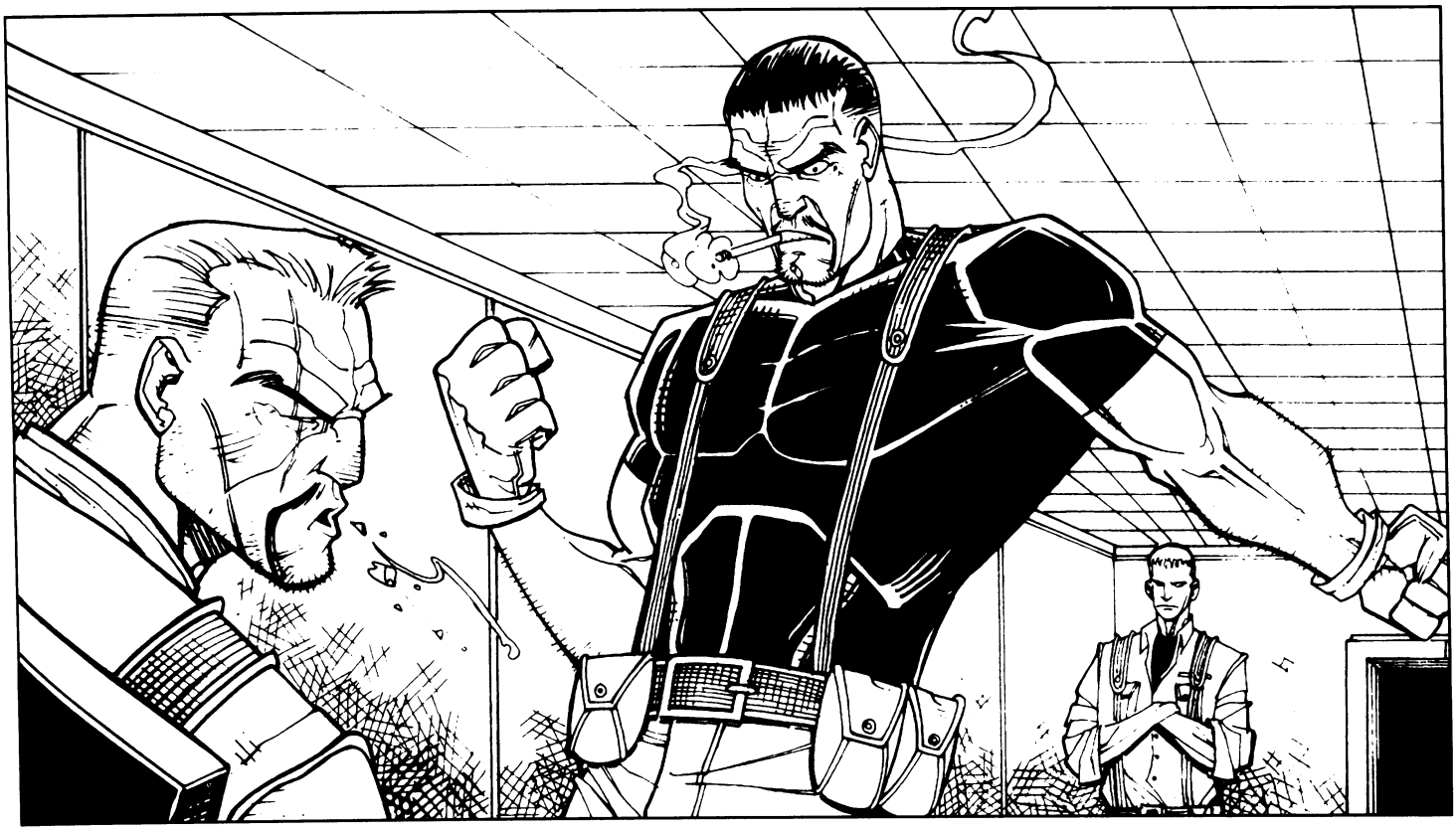
This skill covers the manufacture, maintenance and repair of personal weapons. On his own, a character can reload and perform basic maintenance on any kind of personal weapon. Combined with the appropriate Technician Subskill (p. 107), this skill can be used to build and repair weapons.

INTERESTS*

This group of subskills covers all miscellaneous interests and hobbies that are not covered by other skills, such as holovid shows, Solaris duelists and various sports. Like Career Skills, the potential list of Interests is infinite.

INTERROGATION

A character with Interrogation Skill can attempt to obtain information from any unwilling NPC, making a Skill Check to determine whether he is able to extract the desired information. This skill differs from Fast Talk in that the interrogation process takes more time and can extract far more information. The target number for an Interrogation Check is based on the subject's INT and WIL, unless torture is being used, in which case the tar-



get number is based on the subject's BOD and WIL. If the torture subject has the Brave or Pain Resistance traits, each one applies a +2 Modifier to the interrogator's TN.

Simple questioning may eventually reveal the information the character is seeking, but it is time-consuming and difficult. If more ruthless methods are used, a failed Action Check means the subject dies before the interrogator can extract any useful information. Whatever the case, use only a single die roll to resolve the entire interrogation process.

When both the subject of the interrogation and the character conducting the questioning possess the Interrogation Skill, Opposed Tests are made. If desired, the gamemaster may determine what, if any, information is revealed based on the Quality of Success/Failure Table (p. 18). Spectacular success results in the target "spilling his guts" about everything, while an Adequate success might reveal a single piece of important information.

Note that this skill mainly represents the ability to determine the truth of the subject's statements. Any brute with a pair of pliers or a welding torch can get a prisoner to talk, but it takes a trained interrogator to know if the subject is telling the truth.

INTIMIDATION

This skill is used to impress or frighten characters, most often in an attempt to force opponents to surrender. Such an attempt has a target number based on the target's CHA + WIL, with a +2 if the target has the Brave Trait. An attempt to intimidate a group of characters would use the highest base TN from among all the characters in the group and add +1 for each additional person in the group.

Intimidation is also useful as a complement to such skills as Interrogation, Streetwise and Negotiation under certain circumstances. If the gamemaster decides that Intimidation might help the player's cause, a looming intimidator nearby will apply a negative modifier to the TN equal to the Margin of Success of an Intimidation Check against the target's CHA + WIL (+2 for Brave). This modifier can be no higher than the Intimidating character's skill bonus in Intimidation. A failed Intimidation Check will actually hurt the effort, resulting in a positive TN modifier equal to the Margin of Failure.

JUMP PACKS

A character with this skill knows how to safely and effectively use jump packs as a mode of transportation. Jump Packs Skill Checks are used whenever a character attempts a particularly difficult maneuver, such as deploying from a moving vehicle or jumping in a hazardous area. Failure will result in a fall (see *Falling*, p. 120), although if there is enough altitude, the character might have a chance to recover before hitting the ground.

Note that Jump Packs Skill does not confer any knowledge of battlesuit systems. Gunnery/Battlesuit and Piloting/Battlesuit cover all battlesuit functions, including jumping.

LANGUAGES*

Although English is the lingua franca of known space, there are dozens of other languages and hundreds of dialects in common usage across the Inner Sphere. In the Draconis Combine, for example, the official language is Japanese. Over the centuries, new languages have developed, such as the Swedenese used in the Free Rasalhague Republic, which is an interesting mixture of Japanese and Swedish.

Each affiliation description (p. 26) indicates primary and secondary languages, some of which are automatically known by starting characters and NPCs from that region (see *Free Skills* under *Stage 1: Early Childhood,* p. 33). Additional languages may be acquired through the Life Path or character advancement.

Each Language Skill includes the ability to speak, read and write depending on the skill bonus: +0 confers the ability to understand the language and speak well enough to be understood, but only basic reading and no writing; +1 allows fluent speech and reading, as well as reasonable writing; +2 or better indicates complete fluency in speaking, reading and writing.

Language Skill Checks are only necessary if a character is trying to understand an unusual dialect or read a very complicated or technical document.

Note that even though languages are considered difficult skills, a character's native language is not considered difficult for purposes of his skill advancement.

LEADERSHIP

The Leadership Skill is used to direct and command others in jobs or military operations. Skill Checks are required to determine if subordinates follow the commands issued, with difficulty modifiers based on the complexity of the orders.

If one character with Leadership Skill is designated the leader of a team of characters, and he has some way to keep in touch with his team (such as microcommunicators), he can provide an Initiative bonus to the members of his team (see *Initiative,* p. 110).

MARTIAL ARTS*

The Martial Arts Subskills represent some of the many varieties of unarmed fighting techniques in use in the thirty-first century. Each Martial Arts Subskill is intended to represent a range of similar styles. For example, a character with Martial Arts/Tae kwon do might be using that specific style or another style that focuses on kicking, such as savate or muay thai. For simplicity's sake, we have simply used the most commonly recognized names for these general style subskills.

A character with Martial Arts adds his skill bonus to his Action Check result in melee combat. For each skill bonus point in Martial Arts, the character may choose to learn one of the following maneuvers. See also *Special Maneuvers,* p. 114.

For clarity, we use the term "you" when referring to your character and "your opponent" when referring to the other character in the melee.

Aikido

This subskill represents various defensive forms such as aikido, judo, t'ai chi ch'uan and karate-do. It concentrates on throwing, locking and attempting to neutralize your opponent without striking him.

Aikido Dodge (Defense): Your opponent's TN to hit you is increased by 4, but your character cannot inflict damage this round of melee.

Topple (Defense): Your character's TN to hit is decreased by 2 and you cannot inflict damage this round. However, if you win the round of melee combat, the attacker is knocked prone.

Throw (Defense): A character must have a +2 Skill Bonus or better in Aikido to use this maneuver. Costs 1 Fatigue. If successful, you throw your opponent a number of meters equal to half your Strength (round down), and he lands prone.

Battlesuit

Unlike other Martial Arts, the Battlesuit Subskill confers no special maneuvers. It is simply the skill a battle-armored trooper uses to make melee attacks, adding the skill bonus to his Action Check result.

Gung Fu

Also known as kung fu, this style attempts to familiarize a person with all types of physical combat rather than specializing in one specific area; this includes percussive (offensive) and nonpercussive (defensive) moves, as well as weapon training. Other forms of martial arts covered by this subskill include shaolin, escrima and pentjak silat.

Dodge (Defense): Your opponent's TN to hit you is increased by 3, but your character cannot inflict damage this round.

Sweep (Attack): Your target number to hit is increased by 2, but if successful your opponent is knocked prone in addition to taking normal damage.

Weapon Style: A character must have a +2 Skill Bonus or better in Gung Fu to use this maneuver. It allows you to use any of your known Martial Arts maneuvers with weapons that you are skilled in. Use the lower of your Weapon Skill Bonus or the Martial Arts Skill Bonus for that maneuver to resolve the attack.

Karate

This subskill is a highly offensive martial art form. It concentrates on delivering blows with hands, elbows, knees and feet to vital parts of the body, such as the stomach and throat.

Feint (Attack): Your target number to hit is decreased by 5 but damage is divided in half (round down); target must make a Knockdown Test if you win the round, even if the attack inflicts no Fatigue.

Block (Defense): Your opponent's damage is divided in half (round down) but you cannot inflict damage this round.

Precision Hit (Attack): A character must have a +2 Skill Bonus or better in Karate to use this maneuver. When making an aimed shot at a specific location, the target number receives a –3 Modifier.

Military

This subskill represents the various fighting arts taught by organized militaries and police. It borrows from many martial arts styles and concentrates on extreme offense and little finesse, with the goal of removing an opponent quickly by any means possible.

Haymaker (Attack): By taking 1 Fatigue, you may add 2D6 damage.

Sweep (Attack): Your target number to hit is increased by 2, but if successful your opponent is knocked prone in addition to taking normal damage.

Neck Jab (Attack): A character must have at least a +2 Skill Bonus in Military to use this maneuver. Your target number is increased by the target's RFL Attribute plus his highest Martial Arts Skill Bonus (if any), but if your attack is successful the target must make an immediate Knockout Test. This attack cannot be used against a character in full-coverage armor.

Tae Kwon Do

This Martial Arts Subskill represents tae kwon do and other forms that focus on kicks, such as savate and muay thai. It is most renowned for its emphasis on power; practitioners can destroy wood planks and bricks with their bare hands and feet, not to mention what this does to their human opponents.

Block (Defense): Your opponent's damage is divided in half (round down) but you cannot inflict damage this round.

Roundhouse Kick (Attack): A character must have at least a +2 Skill Bonus in Tae Kwon Do to use this maneuver. Costs 2 Fatigue. You may add 3D6 damage and the attack has an Armor Penetration Value of 1.

Flying Kick (Attack): Costs 1 Fatigue. You can melee attack a target up to two meters away. If you win the round, the target must make a Knockdown Test. In addition, if the target was not in melee combat with you at the beginning of the round, he may not inflict damage on you even if he wins this round of combat.

MEDTECH

This skill represents a wide range of medical knowledge. Essentially, this skill covers all areas of advanced medical care that Surgery does not, including extended care, pharmacology, physical therapy and so on. Rules on the use of this skill can be found in *Healing* (p. 123).

NAVIGATION*

Simply put, Navigation is the skill of finding your way around. Characters with this skill are proficient in use of maps, charts, compasses and other instruments depending on the subskills known. A successful Skill Check is required to make your way from point A to point B through wilderness areas (if there are clearly marked roads and you have an accurate map, this skill is not necessary). Also, if the character is lost, a Skill Check can be used to find his way to civilization.

Navigation/Air

This is the skill of plotting and following a course through the atmosphere of a planet, whether traveling in a VTOL, a standard aircraft, an aerospace fighter or a DropShip.

Navigation/Space

This is the skill of plotting and following a course through interplanetary space, whether traveling in an aerospace fighter, a DropShip or a WarShip.

Navigation/Ground

Also called orienteering, this is the skill of plotting and following a course on the land surface of a planet, whether traveling on foot or in a ground vehicle.

Navigation/Jump Drive

This is the skill of plotting a course for vehicles that use the Kearny-Fuchida hyperspace jump drive. It is a rare and difficult-to-learn skill that requires lengthy calculations and very accurate star maps. This skill is only used to plot hyperspace jump points; use the Navigation/Space Subskill when moving jump-capable vessels from point to point in space using standard drives.

Navigation/Naval

This is the skill of plotting and following a course through the waters of a planet, whether traveling in a surface vessel or a submarine.

NEGOTIATION

A character with the Negotiation Skill is trained in the fine art of conversation and manipulation. A Negotiation Skill Check will affect the outcome of any negotiation in which the character takes part. A successful roll will bring concessions, but a failed roll could mean a stalemate or worse. Negotiation is also useful for interpreting veiled messages. A successful Action Check means the gamemaster can spell out in black and white what might otherwise be hidden in the evasive language a diplomat might use.

This skill is also useful for haggling. Make an Opposed Negotiation Skill Check against the target merchant. A successful roll allows the character to bargain a merchant down. For every point by which the MoS beats the merchant's MoS, the seller will reduce his price by 5 percent (to a minimum of 25 percent of the original asking price). If the character's MoS matches exactly, the merchant stands firm but might throw in a little something extra. If the character fails the roll, the merchant holds fast. Either buy at his price, or go without. A badly failed roll or fumble might result in the merchant becoming insulted and either raising his price or refusing to sell at all!

PERCEPTION

Simply put, this is the skill of noticing things; using your senses to perceive the world around you and interpreting that information quickly and accurately. All characters have some level of Perception Skill, but only trained observers have high

skill bonuses. A successful Perception Check will reveal details that might otherwise go unnoticed. Perception Skill is often used for such tasks as conducting a search and eavesdropping.

This skill is useful in a variety of circumstances. The gamemaster can use Perception Checks to determine who sees an approaching enemy first or to find out if a MechWarrior notices that someone has tampered with the circuitry in his cockpit. Characters attempting to use Stealth are detected by the opponent's Perception Skill in an Opposed Test.

Perception Checks give the gamemaster a good way to keep a story moving and to tell the players how much their characters see and when they see it. Be careful not to overuse Perception Checks, however, or they will bog down the flow of play. As with everything else, resort to game mechanics only when the outcome is uncertain.

PILOTING*

The Piloting Subskills cover the operation of the various vehicles of the thirty-first century, from simple ground cars to the mighty BattleMech. Piloting Skill Checks are required when a character attempts a difficult or dangerous maneuver. Failure indicates the character has lost control of the vehicle and will crash (or fall in the case of BattleMechs).

Piloting Skill can also be used to quickly resolve vehicle chases. The pilot of each vehicle makes an Opposed Piloting Test. If the vehicles have the same maximum speed (flanking for vehicles or running for 'Mechs), only apply the usual modifiers. If one vehicle is faster than the other, the slower vehicle pilot must add a modifier to his target number equal to the amount of kph the other vehicle's maximum speed exceeds his own divided by 10 (round down). For example, a ground car with a flanking speed of 86 kph is being chased by a light BattleMech with a running speed of 119 kph. The ground car is slower, so the TN for its Piloting Roll is raised by +3 ([119 – 86] ÷ 10 = 3.3).

If the chasing vehicle has the higher Margin of Success, the fleeing vehicle is caught. If the fleeing vehicle has a higher MoS, it escapes. If neither pilot succeeded at their Piloting Rolls, both vehicles must roll again, but the faster vehicle gains a –1 Modifier to its TN.

Piloting Subskills

The subskills are listed on the Piloting Subskills Table in related groups of vehicles whose controls are similar enough that a character trained in one will have a reasonable chance of piloting the others. When a character pilots a related vehicle that he has no skill with, use the *Untrained Skill Use* rules for standard skills rather than difficult skills, and apply the character's skill bonus in the related skill rather than the Untrained Use Modifiers for Attributes.

PISTOLS

This Weapon Skill is used to make attacks with all pistol and pistol-like weapons, including revolvers, laser pistols and sonic stunners. Submachine guns, pulse laser pistols and other small burst-fire capable weapons have their own skill (*Submachine Guns*, p. 106).

PILOTING SUBSKILLS TABLE

Aerodyne (Aero): Aerospace fighters, DropShips and spacecraft with an aerodyne configuration.
Aircraft: Conventional fixed-wing aircraft, be it jet or prop-driven.

VTOL: Conventional rotary-wing aircraft.

'Mech: Two-legged "humanoid" BattleMechs.
Quad: Four-legged "quad" BattleMechs.

Battlesuit: All types of battle armor.

Hover: Hovercraft.
Naval: Surface naval vessels including hydrofoils.
Sub: Submersible naval vessels.

Jump: Very large jump-capable space vessels, including JumpShips and WarShips.
Spheroid: DropShips and spacecraft with a spheroid configuration.

Tracked: Caterpillar-tracked ground vehicles.
Wheeled: Wheeled ground vehicles.

PROTOCOL*

A character with Protocol Skill has the social skills to interact with others in a professional and courteous manner and is well-versed in etiquette rules and social rituals specific to the particular regional Protocol Subskill he has. Protocol is crucial for diplomats and nobility, but it is also useful for any character who comes in contact with society's upper echelons.

QUICKDRAW

A character with the Quickdraw Skill can draw a small weapon (gamemaster's discretion) and use it before another individual can react.

The character must make a Quickdraw Skill Check to determine if he can get a shot or a throw off before the enemy has a chance to react. If successful, the character gets one attack with his quickdrawn weapon before the actual start of the first combat turn.

If two characters attempt to use Quickdraw on each other, make an Opposed Test. The character with the higher Margin of Success gets his attack off first.

Note that Quickdraw can only be used at the beginning of a combat encounter and is a surprise move. The gamemaster should determine modifiers according to the enemy's alertness, knowledge of the skilled character's concealed weapon and whether the enemy already has drawn weapons aimed at the character attempting this move.

RIDING

The Riding Skill confers familiarity with all forms of natural land transportation, from horses to more exotic riding animals. The skill also confers the ability to drive carriages and wagons drawn by beasts.

Characters make Riding Action Checks whenever they attempt difficult or dangerous maneuvers while riding an animal or operating a carriage or wagon. The gamemaster sets roll modifiers based on the type of maneuver attempted, the creature's temperament and the character's familiarity with the animal. At the gamemaster's discretion, a failed roll may result in the beast simply continuing to move forward or even throwing its rider.

Chases using riding beasts can be resolved in the same way as vehicle chases (see *Piloting*, p. 104), using Riding Skill in the place of Piloting Skill.

RIFLES

This weapon skill is used to make attacks with all rifle and rifle-like weapons, including assault rifles, sniper rifles and laser rifles.

RUNNING

The Running Skill enables characters to run faster and farther than characters without the skill (see *Movement*, p. 110).

Chases on foot can be resolved in the same way as vehicle chases (see *Piloting*, p. 104), using Running Skill in the place of Piloting Skill.

SCROUNGE

A character with the Scrounge Skill has a knack for acquiring materials that are normally difficult to obtain. This skill assumes the character has a network of contacts able to help him locate whatever he requires and that he is adept at uncovering existing networks or establishing new ones wherever he goes. Locating a desired commodity or service often requires an exchange of favors or other materials and becomes a kind of chain reaction throughout the network.

Locating a desired commodity requires a Skill Check. Assign modifiers based on the value and rarity of the desired commodity, the time the scavenger has for his work and how well-established his network is in the area.

Eventually, a scavenger will be able to find what he is looking for unless the gamemaster decides it is not available. A failed Action Check means that the commodity is not available in the immediate area but does not rule out offplanet shipments or black-market contacts.

Note that the Scrounge Skill does not help the character purchase the commodity at a good price. Once he locates the item sought, the character would use the Negotiation Skill for haggling.

SECURITY SYSTEMS

The Security Systems Skill confers familiarity with security measures such as locks, alarms, remote cameras, motion sensors and so on. Characters must make Security Systems Skill Checks when attempting to defeat such security systems.

When a character has put a new security system into place, his Security Systems Skill Bonus is added to any interloper's target number to defeat the system.

For attempts to defeat locks with Security System Action Checks, the gamemaster should first assign difficulty ratings to all locks. A lock's rating is used to modify the target number of any characters attempting to defeat the lock. Simple or archaic locks should be easy (–2), while advanced locks should have positive ratings.

Defeating some advanced locks, most notably electronic code locks, may require special equipment. Such equipment can be found in electronic security bypass kits (*Equipment*, p. 129), or obtained through the use of the Scrounge or Streetwise Skills. Attempting to open a complicated electronic lock with no equipment at all is futile; the character might as well destroy the door.

SEDUCTION

A character with the Seduction Skill can effectively use wit, guile, looks and pure personal magnetism to charm another character. Note that this skill can be used on individuals of any gender because it does not necessarily involve lustful advances. Rather, the Seduction Skill involves a careful application of compliments and ego boosting that lowers the target's guard and brings him into the seducing character's confidence.

Characters make Seduction Action Checks to determine if their attempts to seduce a target are successful. The gamemaster modifies the target number based on the target's feelings toward the character and character's general approach, which should be established through roleplaying. The TN may also be modified based on the information the character seeks from the target or the actions he wants the target to perform.

Aside from acquiring information, Seduction can also be used to gain trust, favors or preferential treatment in certain situations. It can also provide a helpful foundation for the use of other SOC-related skills such as Fast Talk or Negotiation. The use of such skills on a previously seduced target would receive a modifier of –1 to –3, depending on how effective the seduction was.

SENSOR OPERATIONS

This skill covers the operation of all kinds of sensor systems, especially those found on vehicles and BattleMechs that

are used to locate, identify and attack enemy units. Sensor Operations can also be used to operate remote sensors such as cameras, motion trackers and other surveillance equipment in lieu of the Security Systems Skill.

SHOTGUNS

This weapon skill is used to make attacks with all shotguns and shotgun-like weapons, including needler rifles.

STAFFS

The Staffs Skill covers the use of all two-handed melee weapons such as the quarterstaff and any of the various pole arms used by martial artists. Short one-handed staffs and sticks would use the Blades Skill (p. 97) instead.

STEALTH

The Stealth Skill enables characters to move quietly through all types of terrain. When attempting to use the skill in the presence of guards or other active observers, an Opposed Test must be made pitting the sneaking character's Stealth Skill against the observer's Perception Skill.

Stealth can also be used to camouflage objects and equipment. The gamemaster should base difficulty modifiers on the size and shape of the object to be concealed and the materials available to the character attempting to camouflage it. Camouflage requires several minutes to effect and may only be performed on stationary equipment. Note that camouflage is normally intended for a specific kind of observation. An APC that has been camouflaged to disguise it from aerospace reconnaissance will still be fairly obvious to any infantry in the area, for example.

STRATEGY

A character with the Strategy Skill is familiar with the formulation of battle plans on a grand scale. Strategy is similar to the Tactics Skill (p. 107), except that it deals with broader plans: continental assaults, wars waged on multiple worlds or systems and the like.

When planning a strategy or trying to find a weakness in an opponent's strategy, the character must make an Opposed Strategy Test against the character who formulated the plan. Success or failure will affect the allocation of troops and resources, which, in turn, will affect the outcome of the campaign. This skill also includes familiarity with the different forms of strategy typical of the various forces of the Inner Sphere and the Clans, which may provide valuable insights into an opponent's plan of attack.

Note that this skill should not replace planning by the player characters. If the gamemaster has decided that he wants the setting to be a military campaign, the characters may use this skill to help formulate their strategy, but they should be responsible for coming up with and executing the actual battle plan.

STREETWISE*

The Streetwise Skill confers familiarity with the customs of the lower classes, as well as the workings of criminal and underworld subcultures. A character with this skill can blend in well in the "bad" parts of town (or on "bad" planets such as Dustball and Port Krin).

Successful Streetwise Checks may enable characters to correctly interpret veiled messages or other hidden comments in the speech of criminal and underworld figures, identify criminal hierarchies and deal effectively with street-level contacts such as panhandlers, drug dealers and prostitutes.

Streetwise is a regional skill, and as such a character must choose a particular area subskill for his knowledge, such as Streetwise/Draconis Combine.

SUBMACHINE GUNS

This weapon skill is used to make attacks with all burst-fire-capable weapons that can be fired with one hand, including pulse laser pistols.

SUPPORT WEAPONS

The Support Weapons Skill confers expertise with support weapons such as rocket launchers, machine guns and grenade launchers. Use of this skill can also identify the types of support weapons that opposing forces are using based on their sounds and visible effects.

SURGERY

The most advanced of the medical skills (the others being First Aid and MedTech), Surgery is used to perform operations to repair serious damage to characters, as well as for installing prosthetic or bionic replacement limbs. See *Healing* (p. 123) for complete rules on the use of this skill.

SURVIVAL

The Survival Skill enables characters to survive unprotected in hostile environments that might otherwise prove lethal.

Characters who are exposed to hostile environments for long periods must make weekly Survival Skill Checks to remain healthy. Modifiers should be based on the severity of the environment, available survival gear, and the amount of time the character has been exposed to dangerous conditions (for every successive week add another +1 Modifier). A failed roll means the character suffers "permanent" Fatigue equal to the Margin of Failure. This "permanent" Fatigue is only healed when the character is removed from the hostile environment to a more hospitable one or if subsequent weekly Skill Checks are made. Each successful weekly check reduces this "permanent" Fatigue by 1.

SWIMMING

A character with the Swimming Skill knows the basics of swimming. The skill bonus indicates the character's confidence and expertise. For example, a +0 Skill Bonus indicates a knowledge of basic swimming strokes, while a +3 Skill Bonus or higher indicates advanced abilities that enable the character to perform water rescues or dangerous diving missions. Characters attempting difficult or dangerous maneuvers in the water must make Swimming Skill Checks.

TACTICS*

A character with the Tactics Skill is schooled in the art of war. Unlike the Strategy Skill, which deals with war and logistics on a large scale, this skill deals with individual troopers and machines as well as small units up to a company or so in size.

Characters with the Tactics Skill may add their skill bonus to their Initiative total provided the combat situation is appropriate to their Tactics knowledge. For example, a character with only Tactics/'Mech would gain no bonus to Initiative in combat outside his 'Mech.

Tactics Subskills

The Tactics Subskills are based on the various theaters of battle in the thirty-first century, as summarized below:

Air: Combat in the atmosphere of a planet, whether in aerospace or conventional fighters, DropShips and VTOLs when used in conjunction with air forces.

'Mech: Any combat involving BattleMechs in any environment.

Infantry: Combat involving conventional and/or battle-armored infantry.

Space: Combat in space, including aerospace fighters, DropShips, JumpShips and WarShips.

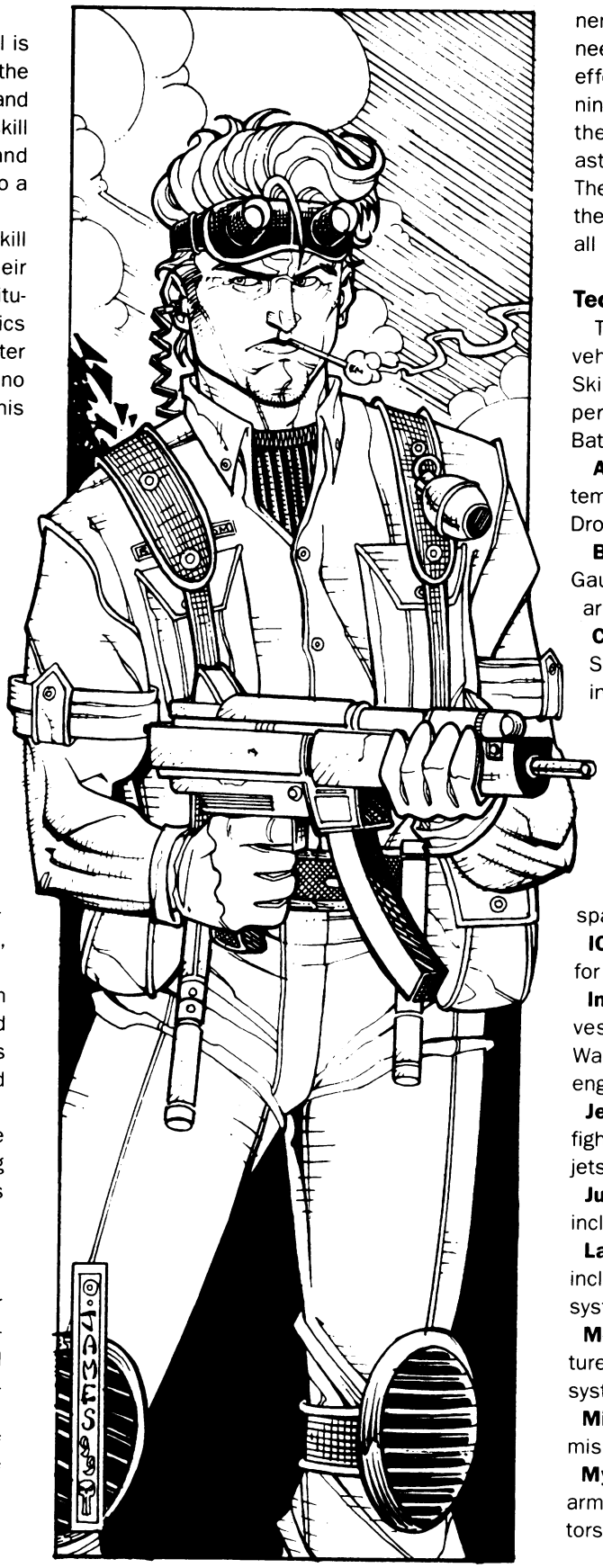
Ground: Vehicular combat on land, including tank, hovercraft and wheeled vehicles, as well as VTOLs when used in conjunction with ground forces.

Naval: Vehicular combat on the surface and underwater, including conventional naval vessels, hydrofoils and submarines.

TECHNICIAN*

The Technician Subskills cover the repair, maintenance and construction of all types of mechanical and technological devices, including combat vehicles and weapons.

Technicians need a wide range of subskills depending on the types of things they build and repair. Each skill area covers a certain group of components, so a full-fledged 'Mech tech will need many of these skills to be able to effect major repairs. Usually, beginning technicians only have a few of these skills and are known as astechs, short for assistant techs. The astechs are supervised by one of the rare technicians who has many or all of these subskills.



Technician Subskills

These subskills are not strictly vehicular; the Technician/Ballistics Skill covers the repair of slug-throwing personal weapons as well as BattleMech autocannon.

Aeronautics: Fixed-wing flight systems found on fighters and aerodyne DropShips and spacecraft.

Ballistics: Includes machine gun, Gauss rifle, autocannon and tube artillery weapon systems.

Communications (Comms): Sensors and communications gear, including ECM and probe systems.

Electronics: Includes targeting systems, computers and control systems for most modern components.

Fusion: Fusion engines, including extra-light (XL), for ground-based vehicles and aerospace fighters.

ICE: Internal combustion engines for ground vehicles.

Interplanetary: Large reaction drives found on DropShips and WarShips, including the fusion engines that power them.

Jet: Jet-drive systems, including fighter engines and BattleMech jump jets.

Jump Drive: KF jump drive systems, including lithium-fusion batteries.

Lasers: Laser weapon systems including pulse laser and PPC weapon systems.

Mechanics: Includes internal structure, armor and ground vehicle drive systems.

Missile: Includes all missile and missile artillery weapon systems.

Myomer: BattleMech and battle-armor musculature, including actuators.

Rotor: Rotor drive systems as found on VTOLs.

Support: Heat sinks and life-support systems for all types of vehicles.

THROWING WEAPONS

The Throwing Weapons Skill confers expertise with all throwing weapons, including knives, spears, tomahawks and even grenades.

TRACKING

The Tracking Skill enables characters to follow the trail left by a character or creature. Gamemasters should modify all Tracking target numbers based on the environment and the subject being tracked. If the subject has the Tracking Skill and is trying to cover his trail, determine success using an Opposed Skill Test.

This skill can also be used to follow or "shadow" a character. A skill roll should be made at every significant intersection or other points where the tracker might lose the trail, such as when the subject moves through a crowd of people. Successful rolls enable the character to keep pace with his subject. A high Margin of Success moves the character closer to the subject. Failed rolls may mean that the subject notices the character tracking him, the character temporarily loses the subject's trail or the character loses the trail permanently.

TRAINING

The Training Skill allows a character to teach skills that he has to other characters. This will make skill advancement easier for the characters being taught if the instructor makes a successful Skill Check. See *Skill Use and Training* (p. 211) for complete rules on the use of this skill.

WHIPS

This combat skill covers the use of all whip-like and articulated melee weapons, including chains and flails.

ZERO-G OPERATIONS

The Zero-G Operations Skill confers experience in zero-G (more properly termed microgravity) environments, most commonly found onboard spacecraft. Characters with the skill are not subject to disorientation or space sickness and may make all Action Checks in such environments without the usual +4 modifier (see *Zero Gravity*, p. 120, for further information on zero-G environments).

COMBAT

In the war-torn *BattleTech* universe, combat is a constant fact of life. Sooner or later, as much as they might try to avoid it, *MechWarrior* characters will inevitably get into a situation that words won't get them out of; then the guns start blazing, and all bets are off.

Since the lives of the characters are on the line during combat, and sometimes the success or failure of a mission can hinge on a fight's outcome, additional rules are necessary to help the players and gamemaster determine what happens in these tense and fast-paced situations.

The following rules expand on the *Game Concepts* chapter (p. 13) to provide an easy-to-play but fairly realistic personal combat system that should be able to handle most of the situations that will arise in game play. The gamemaster should feel free to expand on (or cut from) these rules to cover unforeseen circumstances or make these rules fit better into his own campaign. (However, make sure the players are aware of any changes made to the published rules before you start using them.)

A Brief Note About Reality

It should be noted that the combat system in *MW3*—like the system of its cousin *BattleTech*—is not intended to be a simulation of reality. It was created to resolve combat situations quickly and easily, and the results of attacks are intended to be somewhat realistic, if not "real-world accurate." Above all, fast fun was the main design goal of the *MW3* combat system, and a close second was making it flexible enough to deal with the wide range of weapons and armor available to *MW3* characters. If the specific wound results of a specific gun against a specific armor at a specific range just don't seem to match actual ballistics data, the designer hopes that you will forgive the inaccuracy in favor of playability.

THE COMBAT TURN

In order to keep things organized, combat action is broken up into a series of turns, each of which represents approximately 5 seconds of real time.

During each turn, every character will get an opportunity to act, called a phase. During each character's phase, the character may take a certain number of actions, depending on their complexity.

ACTIONS

A character can only do so much in 5 seconds. To represent this, a character is limited to either one Complex Action or two Simple Actions in his phase. In addition, a character can perform any number of Incidental Actions in his phase (within reason).

Specific examples of each type of action are provided below. These guidelines should be used unless the rules specifically state otherwise. For example, loading a weapon is considered a Simple Action. There are some weapons that require a Complex Action to reload, but that will be included in the description of the weapon.

A character may never perform more than one movement action (walk, run, evade, disengage or sprint) in the same turn.

Incidental Actions

Incidental Actions require little or no attention or physical movement. Although the rules allow any number of Incidental Actions, the gamemaster may want to restrict characters to no more than five per turn to keep the game moving.

Delay Phase
Drop Object
Drop Prone
Engage Opponent (in Melee Combat)
Gesture
Observe
Speak (single word)
Walking Movement

Simple Actions

A bit more involved than Incidental Actions, Simple Actions can be performed by reflex, or with only brief attention or movement. The vast majority of things characters will do fall under the heading of Simple Actions.

Careful Aim
Lead Team
Load Weapon
Observe in Detail
Pick Up/Put Down Object
Ranged Attack
Ready/Draw Equipment
Recover from Stun
Running Movement
Speak (brief phrase)
Stand Up from Prone
Stow/Sheath Equipment
Use Simple Object

Complex Actions

Complex Actions require a character's full attention, and when performed are the only thing a character can do during that turn (aside from Incidental Actions, of course).

Disengage (from Melee Combat)
Evading Movement
Melee Attack
Extinguish a Fire
Recover Fatigue
Speak (conversation)
Spot for Indirect Fire
Sprinting Movement
Use Complex Object
Use Skill

INITIATIVE

During a turn, characters' phases are performed in a certain order. The process of determining the order in which phases are executed is called *Initiative.*

At the beginning of each turn, every character rolls 2D10 and adds his RFL Attribute to the result. The total is his Initiative score. Note that this roll is open-ended like an Action Check, so any 10s rolled are rolled again and added to the Initiative total.

Characters take their phases in Initiative order, starting with the character who has the highest Initiative score. In the event of a tie, the character with the higher RFL Attribute acts first. Further ties are resolved by an additional tie-breaking die roll.

Initiative Modifiers

The following skills, traits and effects modify a character's Initiative roll or score as indicated.

Fatigue: A character who has suffered Fatigue (see *Fatigue,* p. 115) subtracts the number of Fatigue points he has suffered from the Initiative result.

Combat Sense: Characters with the Combat Sense Trait roll 3D10 and choose the best two dice when rolling for Initiative.

Combat Paralysis: Characters with the Combat Paralysis Trait roll 3D10 and choose the worst two dice when rolling for Initiative.

Tactics: Characters with the Tactics Skill may add their skill bonus to their Initiative score provided the combat situation is appropriate to their Tactics knowledge. For example, a character with only Tactics/BattleMech would gain no bonus to Initiative in combat outside his 'Mech.

Leadership: If one character with the Leadership Skill is designated the leader of a team of characters, and he has some way to keep in touch with his team (such as microcommunicators), he can add his relevant Tactics Skill Bonus (if any) to the Initiative rolls of every character in his team if he spends a Simple Action that turn to lead the team. However, the amount added may not exceed his skill bonus in Leadership. For example, a leader with Leadership +1 and Tactics +3 could only add +1 to the Initiative totals of his teammates, although his personal Initiative would gain the full +3. Furthermore, the Tactics Skill Bonuses of two or more characters are not additive, so a character being led would only gain the higher of his leader's or his own Tactics Skill Bonuses.

Delaying

A character need not take his phase when he has the opportunity but can instead delay his phase until later in the turn. The character must tell the gamemaster under what conditions he will take his action, such as "I wait until I see a target come around the corner, then I want to shoot at it." The conditions can be as vague or specific as the player wants, though some condition and reaction must be declared. It is not acceptable to simply state, "My character will wait till later and then do something."

A character can choose to delay part of his phase after using part of it. For example, a character can use a Simple Action to run into position and then declare that he will use his second Simple Action to make an attack against a target of opportunity.

If the stated conditions do not come up at all in the turn, the character's delayed phase moves on into the following turn. He does not roll Initiative but continues to delay from the previous turn. A phase can be held indefinitely in this way. At the end of any turn, a character who is delaying can also choose to stop delaying and roll Initiative normally in the next turn.

When the delaying character takes his phase (or the part of his phase that was delayed), all his Action Checks for that phase have a TN modifier of +2 because the character must react using "snap judgment."

Note that it is impossible for a single character to take more than one phase in a single turn.

Combat Sense: Characters with the Combat Sense Trait reduce the delaying modifier to +1.

Combat Paralysis: Characters with the Combat Paralysis Trait increase the delaying modifier to +3.

Large Combats

In a large combat involving many characters, it may become unwieldy to generate and keep track of Initiative for every character involved. In these situations the gamemaster may employ one of the following options to speed up and simplify game play.

The simplest way is for all the NPCs on each side to have a single Initiative. In the most usual case, this would mean all the enemy characters have a single Initiative, while each player character generates his own Initiative. If there were any NPCs on the friendly side, they would also generate a single Initiative.

Another possibility is for each team to roll a single Initiative. Note that this might not be all the characters on one side and all the characters on the other; it is likely in a large battle that the sides would be divided into tactical units such as squads. In this case, each squad would generate its own Initiative.

In either case, only bonuses due to leaders who have Leadership and Tactics Skills apply; no other Initiative bonuses apply when generating "mass" Initiative. Add only the lowest RFL from among all members of each side (or team) to its Initiative.

MOVEMENT

Movement in *MW3* is kept fairly abstract for simplicity; no maps or rulers are needed in most combat situations. The range between characters should be tracked by the gamemaster for attack and movement purposes. If the tactical situation is complicated, a map of the area can be sketched out on paper, and the positions of each character can be marked in pencil and updated as the battle progresses.

A character's movement speed is based on his Attributes and Running Skill and depends on whether he is walking, running

MOVEMENT TABLE

Movement Mode	Maximum Meters Moved
Walk	RFL + STR
Run/Evade/Disengage	RFL + STR + Running Skill Bonus + 10
Sprint	Run Meters x 2

or sprinting as shown on the Movement Table. Movement can also be restricted by encumbrance if the character is wearing heavy armor or carrying a lot of gear (see *Encumbrance*, p. 133).

Note that a character may never perform more than one movement action in the same turn.

Maps: If the players want a more exact system of determining movement and range, they can use a square or hex grid and use metal miniatures or paper markers to represent each character. A good scale to use is 5 meters per hex or square. Divide weapon ranges and movement rates by 5 (rounding up on .5) to find the equivalent in hexes or squares on the map.

Miniatures: If miniatures and ungridded terrain are used to play the game, movement speeds and weapon ranges can be converted into inches or centimeters. To convert game meters for typical 25–28mm figures, multiply movement rates and weapon ranges by 0.7 (round up on .5) to find the equivalent in inches, or multiply by 2 to find the equivalent in centimeters. Note that these conversions will match the scale of the miniatures, but weapon ranges will probably be very long, requiring a large playing surface. If only a small play surface is available, use a smaller distance scale: measure game meters directly as centimeters or multiply meters by 0.35 to find inches.

WALKING

Walking is an Incidental Action. A walking character suffers only a minor modifier to attacks (+1 TN) but moves fairly slowly. It is important to remember that, even though walking is an Incidental Action, only one movement action can be taken in a given turn.

RUNNING

Running is a Simple Action and allows the character to move farther than walking, but the character suffers a +3 TN Modifier to his actions while running. As a fast-moving target, a running character is harder to hit with attacks.

Disengage: A character who successfully disengages from melee combat (p. 113) may move up to his running distance.

SPRINTING

Sprinting is a Complex Action that requires the character to focus all his attention on speed, moving as fast as possible. A sprinting character can cover a lot of ground but can't maintain the speed for very long. Every sprint action inflicts 1 Fatigue on the sprinter (see *Fatigue*, p. 115). Also, a character can only maintain a sprinting speed for a number of consecutive turns equal to his skill bonus in Running; if the character has no skill bonus, he can still sprint for a single turn. As a fast-moving target, a sprinting character is harder to hit with attacks.

EVADING

Evading is a Complex Action that allows the character to move as fast as running movement and makes him considerably harder to hit as he dodges and weaves, applying a target number modifier equal to his Acrobatics Skill Bonus +1.

RANGED COMBAT

The ranged combat rules are used to resolve any attack made at a distance, including attacks with firearms and thrown weapons. A ranged combat attack is conducted as a Skill Check appropriate to the weapon being used.

LINE OF SIGHT

In order to launch an attack against a target, the attacker must be able to see the target (exception: *Indirect Fire*, p. 119). This is called line of sight, or LOS for short. The gamemaster determines LOS based on the battlefield conditions and each character's actions.

If you are using maps or miniatures to show characters' positions, LOS can be determined by measuring a straight line from the attacker to the target. If there is any obstacle in the way that is taller than both the attacker and the target, the LOS is blocked.

Cover

Not all barriers will completely obscure LOS. Sometimes only part of a character will be visible to the attacker. In this case, an attack can be made, but there will be a TN modifier for the cover. If the *Hit Location* rules are being used, the process for resolving cover is somewhat different (see p. 121).

BASE TARGET NUMBER

The base TN for a ranged attack is based on the target's Intelligence and/or Reflexes, depending on how fast the target is moving in the current turn (or moved in the previous turn, if the target has not yet taken his phase in the current turn).

The base TN to hit a character who is moving at running, evading or sprinting speed (or a character who has successfully disengaged from melee combat) is equal to his INT + RFL.

The base TN to hit a character who is standing still or moving at walking speed is equal to his INT or RFL, whichever is higher.

The base TN to hit a character who is surprised (p. 119) is equal to his INT or RFL, whichever is lower.

The base TN to hit an inanimate object or a completely immobile character (such as an unconscious character or one who is restrained and cannot move) is 1.

RANGED COMBAT MODIFIERS TABLE

Target is	Base TN
Running, sprinting or evading	Target's INT + RFL
Walking or not moving	Higher of target's INT or RFL
Surprised	Lower of target's INT or RFL
Inanimate or completely immobile	1

Conditional Modifiers	TN Modifier
Range	
Pointblank	–2
Short range	+0
Medium range	+2
Long range	+4
Extreme range	+8
Visibility	
Poor visibility (rain, light snowfall)	+1
Bad visibility (twilight, heavy snowfall, light fog)	+3
Terrible visibility (darkness, heavy fog)	+5
Light cover (sparse trees or bushes, target 1/4 covered)	+2
Moderate cover (typical woods, target 1/2 covered)	+4
Heavy cover (dense woods, target 3/4 covered)	+6
Target Size	
Very large (elephant)	–4
Large (horse)	–2
Medium (adult human)	+0
Small (child)	+2
Very small (dog)	+4
Extremely small (cat)	+6
Tiny (mouse)	+8
Miscellaneous Conditions	
Character's Fatigue exceeds WIL	+(excess Fatigue)
Attacking character is wounded	
Each Minor Wound	+1
Each Serious Wound	+2
Each Critical Wound	+3
Good conditions (weapon is braced and steady)	–1
Poor conditions (unsteady footing or grip on weapon)	+1
Bad conditions (high winds)	+2
Attacking with off hand	+3

Action Modifiers	TN Modifier
Attacker taking careful aim	–1/aim action (max. –3)
Attacker walking	+1
Attacker running	+3
Target evading	+(target's Acrobatics Skill Bonus) +1
Target stunned	–2
Target prone	+2
Delayed action	+2
Special Weapons	
Burst-fire attack	*
Suppressing fire	* +2
Grenade attack	+2
Indirect fire attack with spotter	+3
Indirect fire attack without spotter	+6
Aimed Shots (if Hit Location rules are in effect)	
Chest	+3
Arm, leg or abdomen	+6
Head, hand or foot	+9

* The burst-fire modifier depends on the recoil rating of the weapon:
1: +1 per shot fired; 2: +1 per 2 shots fired; 3: +1 per 3 shots fired; and so on1: +1 per shot fired; 2: +1 per 2 shots fired; 3: +1 per 3 shots fired; and so on

MODIFIERS

Various modifiers are applied to the base target number to determine the modified TN, which is the result on the *Action Check needed to hit the target. These modifiers are* based on the Target Number Modifiers Table (p. 17) and expanded to meet the needs of combat situations.

Modifiers based on the condition or actions of the target are always considered to be based on whatever the target did last, even if the target has not acted yet in the current turn (in such a case, the character's action from the last turn would apply).

Modifiers based on the condition or actions of the attacker are based on actions taken this phase; movement modifiers apply even if the movement action is taken second.

Ranged attacks use a unique set of TN modifiers as shown on the Ranged Combat Modifiers Table. The table shows the most common kinds of modifiers players will encounter. The gamemaster is encouraged to use the table as the basis for determining modifiers for any situation not covered specifically by the table.

For example, if a character wants to impress the MechBunnies by hitting the bull's-eye with a thrown knife, the target number would need a target size modifier. The gamemaster determines that the bull's-eye is smaller than a mouse, so the modifier should be higher than +8. After brief consideration, the gamemaster decides a +10 Modifier is appropriate for hitting this bull's-eye.

Pointblank Range

Pointblank range is not listed in weapon descriptions because it is the same for all weapons. If you are 1 meter or closer to your target, then you are at pointblank range.

If the target is at pointblank range and is willing and capable of fighting back, the attack is resolved as a melee combat attack instead (see below).

MELEE COMBAT

In *MW3*, the term *melee combat* is used to describe all close-quarters combat, be it unarmed, with hand-to-hand weapons, or even with firearms. If the attack takes place at a range of less than 1 meter, and both combatants are capable of fighting, and at least one of them wants to engage in melee combat (as opposed to both characters standing there and shooting at each other), the attack is resolved as a melee combat attack.

Unlike taking a shot from a distance, attacking in melee combat involves an element of risk. Bringing yourself close enough to attack someone in melee combat by definition brings you close enough for them to attack you back. As such, each melee combat "attack" actually represents a brief series of strikes, blocks and feints from both combatants, which may ultimately result in the attacker taking

damage rather than the intended target, especially if the target is a better fighter.

Melee combat is resolved as an Opposed Test between the attacker and the target. Both characters use skills appropriate to the weapon or combat style they are using (Blades if wielding a knife, Brawling or Martial Arts if unarmed or even Pistols if you're trying to shoot someone who's engaged you with a gun). This exchange is referred to as a *round* of melee combat.

The character with the higher Margin of Success is considered the winner of that round of combat, and as such will inflict damage on the other character. If both characters score the same MoS, both characters inflict damage on each other. If neither character's roll succeeded, the round of combat is a draw and no damage is inflicted at all.

Engagement and Disengagement

In order to engage a target in melee combat, an attacker must move to 1 meter or closer range and declare his intention to attack. This is referred to as *engagement* and is considered an Incidental Action. Even if the attacker did not actually have an action available to make an attack, the target is still considered "engaged" in melee combat.

Characters who are engaged in melee combat can only attack other characters engaged in the same melee, and all such attacks are resolved as melee attacks, even if a ranged weapon is used. If one of the characters in a melee wants to leave the combat, and at least one of his opponents doesn't want him to leave, he must attempt to *disengage*.

Disengaging from melee is a Complex Action that requires an Opposed Attack Test, with both characters using the opponent's STR + RFL as the base target number. If the character attempting to disengage has a higher MoS, he breaks away and may move in any direction up to his running distance. If the disengaging character's opponent has a higher MoS, the character does not disengage, and the opponent has made a successful attack on the character; use the net MoS to determine damage as a normal attack. If they tie, the character does not disengage but is not struck either.

If a character is attempting to disengage from multiple opponents, the character and his opponents all make Opposed Attack Tests. The character trying to break free must achieve a higher MoS than all of his individual opponents' MoSs to disengage; otherwise he fails. Additionally, any opponent who scores a higher MoS successfully strikes him, determining damage as normal.

BASE TARGET NUMBER

The base TN for a melee attack is based on the target's Intelligence and/or Reflexes, depending on its nature.

The base TN to hit a character who is aware of the attack is equal to his INT + RFL.

The base TN to hit a character who is surprised (p. 119) or otherwise unaware of the attack is equal to his INT or RFL, whichever is lower.

The base TN to hit an inanimate object or a completely immobile character (such as an unconscious character or one that is restrained and cannot move) is 1.

MELEE COMBAT MODIFIERS TABLE

Target Is:	**Base TN**
Aware of attack	Opponent's INT + RFL
Surprised	Lower of opponent's INT or RFL
Disengaging or stopping an attempt to disengage	Opponent's STR + RFL
Inanimate or completely immobile	1

Conditional Modifiers	**TN Modifier**
Character's Fatigue exceeds WIL	+(excess Fatigue)
Character is wounded	
Each Minor Wound	+1
Each Serious Wound	+2
Each Critical Wound	+3
Character is stunned	+2
Character is prone	+3
Good conditions (on higher ground than opponent)	–1
Poor conditions (unsteady footing)	+1
Bad conditions (very unsteady footing)	+2
Using weapon in off hand	+3
Using pistol	+2
Using SMG	+4
Using rifle or shotgun	+6

Action Modifiers	**TN Modifier**
Friendly character within 1 m of opponent	–1/character (max. –3)
Opponent stunned	–2
Opponent evading +(Target's Acrobatics Skill Bonus)	+1
Delayed action	+2
Aimed Attacks (if Hit Location rules are in effect)	
Chest	+3
Arm, Leg or Abdomen	+6
Head, Hand or Foot	+9

MODIFIERS

Various modifiers are applied to the base TN to determine the modified TN, which is the result on the Action Check needed to hit the target. These modifiers are listed on the Melee Combat Modifiers Table. Like ranged combat, the melee combat modifiers are applied to the attacker's TN. Since the target also makes an Action Check, he will need to determine his own TN using modifiers as well. Each character's TN modifiers are calculated based on that character's own point of view and situation.

Modifiers based on the condition or actions of the opponent are always considered to be based on whatever the opponent did last, even if the opponent has not acted yet in the current turn (in such a case, the character's action from the last turn would apply).

MELEE COMBAT DAMAGE

Damage from a successful melee combat attack is based on the net Margin of Success between the two fighting characters: the lower MoS is subtracted from the higher MoS to find the base damage. The winner's STR is added to this damage, as are the damage dice of any melee weapon used. If the winner was using a ranged weapon, use the damage of that weapon and do not add STR.

If the characters tied, damage is generated with no addition for MoS. Each attacker adds his own STR and weapon damage dice as appropriate.

For example, in a melee combat one character has an MoS of 4 and the other has an MoS of 1. The net MoS is 3 in favor of the first character, so his damage will be based on an MoS of 3. If the second character had failed with an MoF of 2, the damage would be resolved using an MoS of 6 (the first character's MoS plus the second character's MoF).

WOUND TABLE

DF*	Wound Type	Wound Value	Combat Effects Summary
0	*Fatigue Only*	0	+1 to all TNs per pt. of Fatigue above WIL
10	Grazing Wound	1	Stunned
15	Minor Wound	2	Stunned; +1 to all TNs
20	Serious Wound	4	Stunned; Knockout Check; +2 to all TNs
30	Critical Wound	8	Stunned; Knockout Check; +3 to all TNs; half movement
40	Deadly Wound	16	Automatic knockout
60	Fatal Wound	32	Instant death

* For AP 0 attacks, the DF is decreased by the target's (BOD – Fatigue).

SPECIAL MANEUVERS

Characters with Brawling or Martial Arts Skills have access to certain special maneuvers, listed in the descriptions of those skills (pp. 97 and 102).

These maneuvers may only be used when using the specific skill, and only if the character has learned the maneuver. The use of a maneuver must be declared before rolling the dice for the round of melee combat. Note that choosing a maneuver does not constitute an action for either character. The round of combat is considered a Complex Action only for the attacker (the character who initiated the round).

Some special maneuvers are used only by the attacker (the character taking a Complex Action to initiate the melee attack) while others are used only by the defender (the character being attacked). In these cases, the maneuver will be listed as "attack" or "defense."

Unless specifically stated otherwise, all effects inflicted are in addition to standard damage. Also, unless specifically stated, all maneuvers may only be used while unarmed.

DAMAGE

Once an attack is determined to have hit the target, the effects of the attack, or its *damage*, must be determined. There are several steps to this process, each described below. First, determine the amount of damage, also called the *Damage Factor*. Then consult the Wound Table to determine the damage effects. If the character is wearing armor, these effects may be modified. The specific effects, including Fatigue, wounds, stun, knockout and knockdown, are applied as detailed below.

DETERMINE AMOUNT OF DAMAGE

To determine the amount of damage inflicted upon the target in a successful attack, start with a base amount as determined by the Margin of Success of the Attack Check. Then roll damage dice (if any) and add the result to this amount; in the case of melee attacks, also add the Strength of the character. This total amount is referred to as the Damage Factor.

Margin of Success

For a ranged attack, use the Margin of Success of the Attack Check as the base amount of damage. For a melee attack, use the net MoS of the Opposed Action Check between the two fighting characters (see *Melee Combat Damage*).

Damage Dice

Whenever a weapon is successfully used to attack someone, roll the weapon's damage dice (see *Equipment Data*, p. 132, and *Weapon Table*, p. 153) and add it to the base damage. Unarmed attacks roll no damage dice unless the special maneuver used indicates extra damage dice.

When rolling damage, the dice are considered open-ended as in an Action Check (see p. 13). Any die that scores a 6 is picked up and rolled again, the additional points added to the total. If that die again rolls a 6, it is picked up and rolled again and so on.

Strength

In the case of melee attacks, add the STR of the attacking character to the damage. If the melee attack was made with a ranged weapon, however, the character's STR is not added to the damage.

DETERMINE DAMAGE EFFECTS

In *MW3*, the Damage Factor is not inflicted directly on the character in any way. Instead, this amount of damage is translated using the Wound Table into the form of nonlethal *Fatigue* and life-threatening *wounds*.

Once the total damage is determined, reference the Wound Table (p. 114) to find what the effects of the attack are. Find the number in the Damage Factor (DF) column closest to the final damage result of the attack, without going over. The corresponding row lists the damage effects for that attack. Fatigue, wound types and other effects are described below.

ARMOR EFFECTS

Once the base level of wound is known, the effects of armor are applied (assuming the character is wearing any). This effect is determined by comparing the armor penetration (AP) value of the weapon being used (see *Equipment Data*, p. 132, and *Weapon Table*, p. 153) to the armor value (AV) of the target. If the AP is equal to or higher than the AV, the armor has no effect and the wound result stands. If the AV is higher than the AP, each point by which the AV is higher than the AP reduces the wound effect by one level on the table. If armor reduces the damage down past the "Fatigue Only" level, the attack has no effect at all.

Unless the target's armor reduces the effect below the Fatigue Only level, any successful attack inflicts a point of Fatigue on the target, in addition to any wound effects.

AP Zero Attacks: Tougher characters are more resistant to attacks with a base armor penetration of 0, such as unarmed melee attacks. In the case of attacks with an AP of 0, the Damage Factor is decreased by an amount equal to the target's BOD Attribute minus his current Fatigue. This modifier cannot be lower than 0, so a character with BOD 5 who has suffered 5 Fatigue or more would subtract nothing.

Pointblank Range: Ranged weapons used at pointblank range or in melee combat add a +1 Modifier to their AP value.

Extreme Range: Ranged weapons used at extreme range apply a –1 Modifier to their AP value, to a minimum of 1.

Armor Value

Armor is numerically rated with an armor value (AV) from 0 to 10. The numbers correspond to the overall size and strength of the armor, representing the ability of the armor to disperse the force of an attack and reduce its effect against the wearer. Each type of armor has four ratings, corresponding to the four general damage types: melee, ballistic, energy and explosive. Armor rated at 2/5/1/1 would function as AV 2 against melee attacks, AV 5 against ballistic attacks, and AV 1 against energy and explosive attacks.

Armor Degradation

If the final damage result of an attack is a Grazing Wound or better, all the AVs of the target's armor are reduced by 1 (to a minimum of 0) at the end of that round of combat. This reduction is permanent until repaired. If the highest AV of a piece of armor is reduced to 0 in this way, the armor is destroyed and cannot be repaired.

Vic's character shoots his opponent with a Federated long rifle. Vic's MoS was 8, so his base damage is 8. Long rifles do 5D6 damage, and Vic rolls 1, 4, 5, 5 and 6. Rerolling the 6, he gets another 6 and then a 1. His total damage, or Damage Factor, is (8 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 5 + 6 + 6 + 1 =) 38.

Vic checks the Wound Table and sees that a Damage Factor of 38 is equivalent to a Critical Wound. His weapon is a Type B (ballistic) weapon with an armor penetration of 4. The target is wearing a flak vest, which has a ballistic armor value of 5. The AV is 1 point higher than the AP, so the wound level is reduced by one level, making the result of the attack a Serious Wound and a point of Fatigue. After the attack, all the flak vest's AVs are reduced by 1, since the attack caused a wound.

If the target had been wearing heavier armor, the attack would have been even less effective. Had the AV been 8, the attack would not have caused a wound but still would have inflicted a point of Fatigue. Had the AV been 9 or better, the attack would have had no effect at all. In both these cases, the target's armor would not have been degraded, since neither attack inflicted a wound.

FATIGUE

Fatigue represents the physical and mental exhaustion of combat, which can result from attacks against a character as well as the effort put behind special maneuvers and other actions made by the character. Fatigue represents not only "tiredness" but also the various bumps, bruises, cuts and scrapes that result from combat. None of these injuries will kill a character, but they can wear him down.

Each time an attack is successful, and the target's armor does not reduce the effect below the "Fatigue Only" level on the Wound Table, the target takes a Fatigue point. Other situations that cause Fatigue are stated in the particular rules relating to them.

Effects of Fatigue

Once the amount of Fatigue the character has suffered exceeds his WIL, all of his Action Check target numbers are increased by the amount of Fatigue he has suffered in excess of his WIL. For example, a character with WIL 6 who has suffered 8 Fatigue would have a +2 Modifier to all of his TNs.

The more Fatigue a character suffers, the more susceptible he is to being stunned, knocked out and knocked down. Also, the character becomes more susceptible to wounding from unarmed attacks, and his Fatigue is subtracted from his Initiative. These specific effects are fully explained in the relevant sections of the rules.

High levels of Fatigue will cause a character to fall unconscious: if a character's Fatigue exceeds twice his WIL, he is overwhelmed by fatigue and falls unconscious (see p. 116).

Recovering Fatigue

Fatigue can be recovered during combat by spending a Complex Action. This recovers 1D6 Fatigue (to a minimum of 0 Fatigue). If the situation is dire, a character can spend an Edge point and a Complex Action to eliminate all of his Fatigue with no die roll required.

WOUND EFFECTS

Wounds represent serious injuries that can cripple or kill a character. The more wounds a character suffers, the more likely it is he will suffer permanent injury or die. Each wound type has a wound value assigned to it (see the Wound Table, p. 114). This represents the relative severity of the wound and helps determine a character's overall condition.

Every wound a character takes inflicts a point of Fatigue on the character. Other specific effects of each type of wound are described in the following sections.

Glass Jaw: Characters with the Glass Jaw Trait add 1 to the wound value of all wounds except the *Fatigue Only* result, which still has a value of 0.

Pain Resistance: Characters with Pain Resistance are not stunned by Grazing Wounds, and the total TN modifiers for all wounds taken by the character are reduced by 1. For example, a character with Pain Resistance who has suffered 2 Minor Wounds and a Serious Wound would have a total TN modifier of +3, rather than +4.

Toughness: Characters with the Toughness Trait reduce the wound value of all wounds by 1. This has no effect on the wound value increases from bleeding.

Unconsciousness

If the total wound value of all wounds suffered by the character exceeds his BOD Attribute, he is in danger of dying. He will fall unconscious unless his WIL Attribute is higher than his BOD Attribute, in which case he can force himself to stay awake until the total wound value exceeds his WIL.

The Bleeding Effect

Once unconscious, if the character does not receive successful treatment with the First Aid Skill within 1 minute of reaching this condition, the wound value of his most serious wound increases by 1. This "bleeding" effect continues every minute until the character receives treatment.

Dying from Wounds

If the total wound value of all wounds suffered (including the added wound value for "bleeding") ever exceeds the character's BOD + WIL, he dies unless first aid is immediately applied and more advanced medical care is promptly available (see *Emergency Care*, p. 123).

Stun

Any wound effect beyond *Fatigue Only* will result in the character being stunned. This effect takes place at the end of the phase in which he suffered the wound. A stunned character cannot move (and is considered to have stood still regardless of his last Movement Action if attacked) or make attacks until he spends a Simple Action to recover from being stunned, and he suffers a +2 TN modifier to all actions he must make while stunned, such as defending himself in melee combat.

A stunned character does not suffer any additional effects if he is stunned again before he recovers.

Knockout

If the character suffers a Serious Wound or worse, he might be overcome by pain or shock and knocked out. The target must make a Knockout Check at the end of the phase in which he was wounded. This is a standard WIL Attribute Check with a base TN of 15 minus the character's WIL, plus the target's Fatigue in excess of his WIL (including the Fatigue just inflicted by this attack). Also apply TN modifiers for any wounds the character has suffered (including the wound just inflicted by this attack) as usual. No other modifiers apply to this TN. If this Check is failed, the character is knocked out and falls unconscious immediately.

Obviously, an unconscious character cannot move or take any other action; he is completely immobile and will not wake up on his own (see *Unconsciousness*, above).

> *A previously unwounded character with WIL 6 takes a Serious Wound, forcing him to make a Knockout Check. The base TN for this is 9 (15 – 6 = 9). The character has only suffered 1 point of Fatigue so far, the one inflicted by this attack; this does not exceed his WIL, so there is no modifier to the TN for Fatigue. Serious Wounds add +2 to all TNs, so this is added for a final TN of 11. The player rolls a 13, which is good enough to keep him in the fight.*

Knockdown (Optional)

It stands to reason that powerful attacks would have a chance to knock a character off his feet. However, since this can add a little complexity and bog down combat, it is presented as an optional rule. Some special melee maneuvers or weapons will cause knockdown; those effects are not optional. Checking for knockdown for other kinds of attacks is optional, however; the players and gamemaster should all agree whether knockdown rules will be used in their campaign.

If the number of damage dice rolled for an attack (not including extra dice rolled for open-ended success, but including extra dice for *Burst Fire*, see p. 118) exceeds the target's BOD minus his current Fatigue, there is a chance the attack will knock him off his feet.

After such an attack is resolved, the target must make a *Knockdown Check*. This is resolved as an Action Check using the total damage rolled for the attack minus the target's STR as the base target number. If the target has Acrobatics Skill, he

may add his skill bonus to the die roll. If this check is failed, the character is knocked prone.

WOUND TYPES

The wound types listed on the Wound Table have the following effects.

Fatigue Only

Included here for the sake of completeness, a Fatigue Only result is not actually a wound. In this case, the character is only scraped, bruised or winded by the attack, and suffers no lasting effects. All the attack does is inflict 1 Fatigue point on the target.

Grazing Wound

Wound Value: 1

This is the classic "it's only a flesh wound" result. Attacks that barely hit or barely get through the target's armor will inflict this kind of wound. Examples include a minor flesh wound, a bleeding cut, a deep and painful bruise and so on.

The only immediate effect of a Grazing Wound is that the character is stunned (see p. 116). A number of Grazing Wounds can add up to a serious problem through bleeding and shock, represented in the wound value.

Minor Wound

Wound Value: 2

A Minor Wound is a "real" injury that causes significant pain and requires medical treatment to heal properly. Examples include cracked bones, deep cuts into muscle or slow bleeding wounds.

For each Minor Wound suffered, the character applies a +1 Modifier to all TNs and is stunned.

Serious Wound

Wound Value: 4

Serious Wounds are real trouble. Player characters are usually tough enough to take one or two of these and keep on fighting, but Serious Wounds still need prompt first-aid treatment or the character could suffer permanent disability or even die. Examples include compound fractures and damage to minor organs.

After taking a Serious Wound, a character is stunned and must make an immediate Knockout Check (see p. 116). Also apply a +2 Modifier to all the character's TNs for each Serious Wound suffered.

If a Seriously Wounded character does not receive successful treatment with the First Aid Skill within 5 minutes of receiving the wound, the wound value of the Serious Wound increases by 1. This "bleeding" continues every 5 minutes until the character receives treatment or falls unconscious from total wound value, in which case the bleeding effect rules then apply (see p. 116).

Critical Wound

Wound Value: 8

Critical Wounds are very dangerous and life-threatening but will not kill a character as quickly as Deadly Wounds. In fact, very strong (or strong-willed) characters can even continue to fight (or, if they are smart, rush to a hospital) while suffering a Critical Wound. Examples include severed limbs, serious damage to major organs and arterial bleeding.

After taking a Critical Wound, a character is stunned and must make an immediate Knockout Check (see p. 116). Also apply a +3 Modifier to all the character's TNs for each Critical Wound suffered and divide all movement rates in half (round down).

If a Critically Wounded character does not receive successful treatment with the First Aid Skill within 1 minute of receiving the wound, the wound value of the Critical Wound increases by 1. This "bleeding" continues every minute until the character receives treatment or falls unconscious from total wound value, in which case the bleeding effect rules then apply (p. 116).

Deadly Wound

Wound Value: 16

A Deadly Wound is so serious that only immediate and advanced surgical care will have any chance of saving the character's life. Examples include catastrophic brain or heart damage, the destruction of multiple other major organs such as the lungs or liver and/or the severing of multiple limbs at the trunk.

The "only" combat effect of a Deadly Wound is that the character immediately falls unconscious. The gamemaster should then secretly roll 1D6 and add the character's BOD Attribute to the result. This total is the number of minutes the character has to be hooked up to life support and placed in a doctor's care before he dies (see *Emergency Care*, p. 123).

Fatal Wound

Wound Value: 32

A truly devastating attack can result in damage so total that death is immediate and certain. This level of destruction is rare from personal weapons, but it can come up more often if the attacker is firing a support weapon or vehicular weapon. A character that suffers a Fatal Wound is most definitely dead, and there isn't much left to put in the coffin, either.

WEAPON CHARACTERISTICS

Each weapon profile (see tables beginning on p.153 in the *Equipment* section) will have the following key information:

Damage: A number of D6 rolled for the weapon to determine how much damage it does. This is combined with the Margin of Success to determine the Damage Factor.

Armor Penetration (AP): The weapon's overall ability to penetrate the armor protection of a target. In general, higher-velocity weapons will tend to have better APs than slower projectiles.

Type: The type of damage a weapon inflicts is defined by one of four broad categories to determine how effective certain

types of armor are against it. The categories are: melee (M), ballistic (B), energy (E) and explosive (X). Unarmed attacks are always considered melee attacks.

Notes: Some weapons will have special characteristics, such as burst-fire capability, increased or decreased chance of knockout and so on. Rules for the most common special weapons are found below.

BLAST

Some weapons, most notably explosives, affect all the targets in an area around the point of impact. Such weapons are designated *blast* weapons in *MW3*. Weapons with a blast radius use their full AP and damage against targets within 1 meter of the point of impact. Each additional meter farther out from the point of impact reduces the AP of the attack by 1 (to a minimum of 0) and the damage by 1 die, until the damage dice are reduced to 0; targets beyond that range suffer no damage from the weapon.

Damage is rolled and resolved separately against all targets in the blast area. Also, the Margin of Success is not added to the damage rolled for blast attacks.

Hit Location: The damage from blast weapons is always considered splash damage for purposes of hit location (see p. 121).

Grenades: Grenades have a tendency to bounce and roll after they hit the ground, adding a +2 TN Modifier to any grenade attack.

BURST FIRE

Some weapons such as submachine guns fire a stream of multiple projectiles rather than a single projectile when the trigger is pulled. These weapons are fired multiple times for a single Simple Action, but the multiple shots are resolved as a single attack for game purposes, albeit one with higher damage potential. A burst-fire weapon can fire a single shot if desired, in which case it is used like any other ranged weapon.

Weapons with burst-fire capability are rated by their maximum *rate of fire* and their *recoil rating*. On the Weapon Table (p. 153), this is summarized in the Notes column as two numbers separated by a slash. For example, a standard SMG is listed as having burst (10/2). This means the attacker can choose to fire up to 10 rounds in a single burst, and its recoil rating is 2.

If a weapon is fired in burst mode, the attacker chooses how many shots he'd like to fire, up to the maximum rate of fire listed for the weapon. In the case of burst-fire weapons that use power packs, such as pulse lasers, each shot fired in the burst consumes the standard amount of power points.

The additional recoil generated by firing a weapon in burst mode adds a TN modifier depending on the number of shots fired and the recoil rating of the weapon. If the recoil rating is 1, apply a +1 TN Modifier for every shot fired in burst mode. A recoil rating of 2 means there is a +1 Modifier for every 2 shots fired (or fraction thereof). A recoil rating of 3 adds a +1 Modifier for every 3 shots fired (or fraction thereof), and so on.

The MoS is not added to the damage roll for burst-fire attacks. Instead, if the attack is successful, the damage for the attack is increased by a number of dice equal to the MoS, to a maximum number of extra dice equal to the number of shots fired. Any excess MoS is disregarded.

Rachel's character is firing her SMG at an approaching thug. She decides to fire 5 shots from the weapon and marks off the expended ammo. Since the recoil rating of the SMG is 2, the TN modifier for the recoil is +3 (5 ÷ 2 = 2.5, rounded up to 3).

Rachel rolls well, and the attack hits with a Margin of Success of seven. Instead of adding 7 to the damage rolled, that number of dice is added to the damage dice for the weapon. However, since her character only fired 5 shots in this burst, Rachel can only add 5 dice of damage. The extra MoS of 2 is disregarded.

SUPPRESSING FIRE

Weapons capable of burst fire can be used to saturate an area with projectiles, in the hopes of hitting several targets or simply discouraging the enemy's advance into the area of fire. Such attacks are incredibly inaccurate and consume large quantities of ammunition, but they can be effective against massed formations of enemy or as an intimidation tactic.

A suppressing-fire attack is a Complex Action. The attacker must expend 5 shots per 1-meter-long "line" to fill with weapon fire, the length of the line limited by the weapon's maximum rate of fire. Then make a separate attack roll against every character along the line of attack, as well as any character who enters or crosses the line of attack before the attacking character's next phase begins. Apply an additional +2 Modifier to the normal burst-fire modifier for these attacks, but resolve each hit as a standard single-shot attack (i.e., Margin of Success adds directly to damage, rather than adding dice).

Karl's character Jack Hammer wants to fill a 2-meter-wide corridor with bullets to cover his team's retreat. He's firing an automatic rifle that is rated at burst (15/3). He will need to fire 10 shots to cover the 2 meters. A 10-shot burst from this weapon has a +4 Recoil Modifier (10 ÷ 3 = 3.3, rounded up to 4), plus an additional +2 for suppressing fire. There are two thugs standing in the area of effect at the time the attack is initiated, so Karl makes a separate attack against each of them with the +6 Modifier (plus all other relevant modifiers). Each attack that hits is resolved as a standard single-shot attack. If any additional characters enter or cross the line of fire before Jack starts his next phase, they would each be attacked.

INDIRECT FIRE

Some kinds of attacks can be launched over intervening obstacles at targets the attacker can't see, such as grenades and mortars. These attacks are called *indirect* attacks.

If there is a friendly character who has LOS to the target, and that character has some way to communicate with the attacking character, then the friendly character can act as a spotter for the attack by spending a Complex Action. In this case, the TN has a +3 Modifier. If there is no spotter for an indirect attack, the TN has a +6 Modifier.

SPLASH DAMAGE

Some attacks such as flamers spread their effects over a wide area, "splashing" over more than one part of the target. Such attacks are noted as *splash* in the weapon profiles. These weapons have specific effects if using the *Hit Location* rules (p. 121). Under the standard rules, hits from splash weapons are worked out normally except the armor penetration of the weapon is increased by 1 to represent the weapon's ability to work its way around armor and strike unprotected areas. This does not apply if the target is wearing full-coverage armor such as battle armor.

INCENDIARY WEAPONS AND FIRE

Characters attacked by flamers or other *incendiary* weapons can be set on fire. Also, moving through a burning area might cause a character to be set alight with the same effect. Such unfortunates will suffer automatic flame attacks every turn until they are put out or the fire burns itself out.

Each time a character is hit by an incendiary weapon, the character is set on fire if any of the dice rolled for damage came up as 6s. The character will burn for a number of turns equal to the number of 6s rolled for damage, including any additional 6s generated from open-ended results. Moving through a burning area sets a character on fire on a 1D6 roll of 6.

At the end of each turn a burning character takes an automatic energy weapon (E) hit with AP and damage equal to the weapon that set the fire originally. (In the case of natural fires, use the man-pack flamer AP and damage.) Since there is no attack roll, there is no chance for increased damage due to MoS.

A burning character is also very distracted by the pain and smoke created by the fire, suffering target number modifiers for Bad Visibility and Bad Conditions, for a total TN Modifier of +5.

Of course a burning character may want to put himself out. This is a Complex Action and is automatically successful. However, the character ends the action in a prone position and suffers 1 Fatigue from the vigorous effort. A character within 1 meter of the burning character may extinguish the fire if he has a fire extinguisher or other appropriate equipment. This is also a Complex Action, but it is only automatically successful if using a fire extinguisher. Using sand or water will only work half the time (on a 1D6 roll of 4 or better).

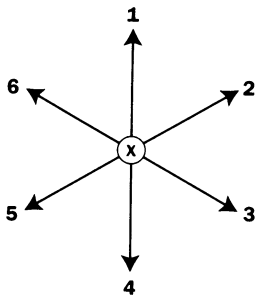
SPECIAL SITUATIONS

Certain special situations can come up in combat that require additional rules. Note that some of these rules are considered *optional*. They enhance realism or detail at the expense of simplicity and should only be used if all players and the gamemaster agree that they are worth the extra effort.

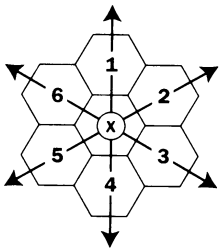
INANIMATE TARGETS

Attacks against inanimate and completely immobile targets are resolved using a base TN of 1, since there is no RFL or INT to figure into the attack. Note that this does not apply to a character who has simply not moved in a turn, but it does apply to

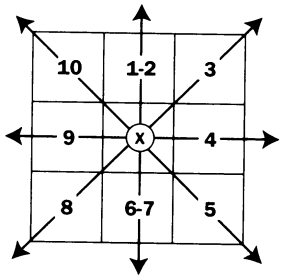
SCATTER DIAGRAM



No Grid (D6)



Hex Grid (D6)



Square Grid (D10)

(X) = INTENDED POINT OF IMPACT

→ = DIRECTION OF SCATTER

an unconscious character or one who is restrained such that he cannot move at all.

SURPRISE

Circumstances may arise in which the target is completely unaware of the attack coming at him. The gamemaster must determine if surprise conditions exist; as a general rule, they require the right kind of battlefield (cover and/or low light to hide in) and a successful Opposed Action Check, using the attacking character's Stealth Skill against the target's Perception Skill. If the attacker scores a higher MoS than the target, the target is surprised. If the Stealth Skill Check fails, surprise is still achieved so long as the target also failed his Perception Check.

Since the target is unaware of the attack, his perception does not figure into the TN to hit him. Use only the lower of the target's INT or RFL as the base TN to hit a surprised target.

Sixth Sense: Characters with the Sixth Sense Trait are difficult to surprise. Their TN for the Perception Test to detect surprise is modified by –3.

SUBDUING ATTACKS

Sometimes an attacker may not want to kill or even injure a target, but rather cause him pain in an attempt to force surrender, or perhaps knock him unconscious.

A *subduing* attack is resolved like a normal attack, but it has no chance of inflicting wounds (though it does still cause Fatigue). Instead, a successful hit will force the target to make an immediate Knockout Check, with all the usual modifiers plus an additional modifier equal to the wound value of the type of wound the attack would have inflicted.

For example, if the attack would have inflicted a Minor Wound, the target would take 1 Fatigue and would make a Knockout Check with an additional +2 Modifier.

Some weapons, such as stunsticks, always attack to subdue. This characteristic is listed in the Notes column on the Weapon Table (p. 153).

FALLING

A character will sustain damage from any fall greater than 1 meter high. Resolve the attack by rolling a number of damage dice equal to the meters fallen, with an AP of 0 and melee damage type (M). If the falling character has Acrobatics or Free Fall Skill, a successful Skill Check lowers the effect of the fall by one wound level (from Minor to Grazing, for example).

ZERO GRAVITY

Zero gravity (correctly termed microgravity) is disorienting to anyone not acquainted with its effects. Normal perceptions of up and down do not apply because there is no downward force to provide orientation, and the sight of people floating at varied angles often disturbs the inexperienced.

The Zero-G Operations Skill reflects the experience and training gained by the crew of JumpShips and DropShips. Characters with the skill may operate in zero-G conditions with little or no penalty. Characters without the skill, however, must add a +4 Modifier to the target number of any Action Check they make in zero-gravity environments.

Characters without the Zero-G Operations Skill must also roll 2D6 whenever they first enter a zero-gravity environment. If the result is less than 6, the character suffers "space sickness," and a +1 penalty applies to all Skill Checks while in any zero-gravity environment from this point forward.

Zero-gravity conditions affect the movement of all characters. Those without the Zero-G Operations Skill move at one-tenth their normal speed. Characters with the Zero-G Operations Skill move at half their normal rate.

Firing recoil-inducing weapons in zero gravity poses problems as well. (Consider laser, PPC, gyrojet, needler and bow weapons as recoilless for this purpose. All other weapons are recoil-inducing.) Any character firing a recoil-inducing weapon without bracing himself against a bulkhead or other solid surface (using a Simple Action) must make an RFL Check. If the roll fails, the recoil of the weapon propels the character backward. The character strikes a nearby bulkhead and suffers 2D6 melee damage (AP 0).

MISSED SHOTS (OPTIONAL RULE)

Ranged attacks that miss the intended target don't just disappear; they might hit another character along the line of fire.

This optional rule adds complexity to the game, but it also adds a realistic element of danger to represent the lead flying around a typical firefight.

Any time a ranged attack misses its intended target, there is a chance the shot will strike a nearby character. The maximum distance in meters a potential secondary target may be from the intended target is equal to the Margin of Failure of the Attack Check. The secondary target must also be in line of sight of the attacker unless the attack was indirect (p. 119). If there are no potential secondary targets, the shot is a clean miss.

The secondary target can be any character or creature. If there are multiple targets within range and LOS, the victim is determined randomly, with no regard to whose side they are on.

Resolve the secondary attack against the new target using all the normal rules, as if the attacker were making an attack against that target. In addition to the normal modifiers, apply an additional +4 Modifier to the TN for the second character. If the attack hits, resolve damage normally.

If it misses, it will only have a chance of striking another character if there is another potential target lying in the same direction from the original target as the secondary target, and if it is within the original MoF range from the original target. Resolve the attack against this tertiary target with an additional +8 Modifier. If this attack misses, there is no further effect.

Suppressing fire is not subject to this rule.

Blast Attacks: In the case of weapons with a blast effect, missed shots will *scatter* rather than resolving as described above, moving the point of impact from the intended target.

To find the direction of the scatter, roll either a D6 (if playing on a sketched map, ungridded terrain or a hex grid map) or a D10 (if playing on a square gridded map) and consult the Scatter Diagram (p. 120). The "X" represents the intended impact point, and the arrow corresponding to the number rolled indicates the direction of the scatter. The attacker is considered to be "down" relative to the target.

The distance of the scatter is based on the Margin of Failure of the attack roll, multiplied by 1 if the attack was made at Short Range, 2 at Medium Range, 3 at Long Range or 4 at Extreme Range. Regardless of the scatter distance dictated by this rule, no attack will scatter farther from the intended target point than the original range from the attacker to the target.

BARRIERS (OPTIONAL RULE)

Walls and other barriers can provide useful cover for characters. Using the standard rules, any attack that strikes a barrier simply disappears. Of course, this approach, while simple, is far from realistic. After all, the blast from a support heavy laser would hardly slow down upon impacting a typical interior wall.

Using this rule, all types of barriers are assigned an armor value, which works in the same way as the armor worn by characters.

If a missed shot (see above) has a chance of striking a target on the far side of a barrier, or if the attacker is simply attacking through the barrier somehow (the attacker can see the target via remote cameras, for example), the armor value of the barrier is added to the AV of the target to determine the effects of the attack.

BARRIER ARMOR RATINGS

Barrier Type	Armor
Window, Standard Glass	0
Window, Safety Glass	1
Interior Wall, Residential or Commercial	2
Interior Wall, Industrial, Military or Shipboard	3
Exterior Wall, Residential or Commercial	4
Window, Ship's Viewport	5
Exterior Wall, Industrial or Military	7
Armored Wall or Vault	9
Ship's External Bulkhead	10

If the attacker seeks to blast a hole in the barrier, resolve the attack against a base TN of 1. If the attack has an AP of 0, subtract the barrier's AV from the Damage Factor in the same way BOD is subtracted when attacking characters. In order to make a crack in the barrier, the attack must inflict a Minor Wound. A Serious Wound result blasts a hole in the barrier large enough to put your hand through, while a Critical Wound result makes a hole large enough to crawl through. A Deadly or Fatal Wound result totally destroys a section of the barrier; the exact size of this section is chosen by the gamemaster based on the structure in question and the type of weapon used.

HIT LOCATION (OPTIONAL RULE)

In the standard combat rules, attacks hit various parts of the body, but the game makes no distinction between them. The effects of wounds are generalized to represent the idea that some hit vital areas and others don't. The wound effects reflect general injury, without getting down to specifics of where each shot hits.

This optional rule allows players to work out exactly where on the target each attack lands, bringing greater detail for armor coverage and wound effects at the expense of simplicity.

A word of caution: while more realistic and descriptive than the standard abstract damage system, the use of hit location can make the game much deadlier. Since few characters wear total-coverage armor, there will often be attacks that strike unarmored locations on an otherwise armored character, resulting in more common wounding and death. The gamemaster should be clear about this with the players, and hit location should only be used if everyone in the game agrees.

DETERMINING HIT LOCATION

After a successful attack Action Check, but before damage is resolved, the hit location is determined by rolling 2D10 and consulting the Hit Location Table (p. 122).

Cover: If part of the target is concealed by cover, do not apply the usual TN modifier when using the hit location rules.

Instead, resolve the attack normally. If the attack strikes a part of the target that is behind cover, the attack will strike the cover, which will add to the target's Armor Value against the attack per the *Barriers* rules (above).

Splash Damage: Weapons that inflict "splash" damage (including attacks from blast weapons) spread their effects out and as such have a nasty tendency to cause the most serious damage of the attack to the least armored part of the target. Roll hit location normally for a splash attack, but the attack may not hit that location. It will actually be resolved against that location or any location adjacent to it on the body (as shown on the Hit Location Diagram on the Character Record Sheet, p. 217), whichever has the lowest armor value.

An elemental fires his heavy flamer at a Combine foot soldier wearing a flak suit, a ballistic plate vest and a combat helmet. The hit location roll is a 7, a hit to the left arm. The adjacent locations are the chest and the left hand. Since the left hand has no armor, the flamer attack is resolved against the left hand. If the character had been wearing heavy combat gloves, the attack would have hit the arm, since it would have had the lowest AV of the three locations.

Aimed Attacks

The hit location table assumes that the character is more interested in hitting the target than in hitting any particular part of the target. Of course, characters might want to aim for specific parts of the target in order to hit an unarmored location, or to try for a killing head shot or a disabling leg shot.

Aiming for the torso (chest or abdomen) applies a +3 modifier to the TN. Aiming for arm or leg locations applies a +6 modifier to the TN. Aiming for a hand, foot or the head applies a +9 modifier to the TN.

If an aimed attack is successful, then no hit location roll is required; the attack strikes the desired location. An unsuccessful aimed attack misses the target entirely.

Blast Damage: Weapons that inflict blast damage cannot be used to make aimed attacks.

Splash Damage: Weapons that inflict splash damage cannot be used to make aimed attacks.

HIT LOCATION EFFECTS

When the hit location is determined, the target player must find the armor that is covering the location hit. The coverage is listed with each piece of armor (see the Armor Table, p. 154). Use the armor in the location hit, rather than the character's overall (torso) armor, when resolving an attack using hit locations.

Under the hit location rules, wounds above Grazing level no longer have a "general" effect on all the character's actions. Wounds inflicted against each location have specific modifiers reflecting the effects those wounds would have on a character's performance. Replace the effects shown on the Wound Table (p. 114) with those listed below.

HIT LOCATION TABLE

2D10 Roll	Hit Location
2	Critical Hit*
3	Left Foot
4–5	Left Leg
6	Left Hand
7–8	Left Arm
9–11	Chest
12–13	Abdomen
14–15	Right Arm
16	Right Hand
17–18	Right Leg
19	Right Foot
20	Head

* Roll again for hit location (reroll 2s) and reduce the target location's AV by 1 for this attack only.

Grazing Wounds are not listed; they have the standard effect regardless of the location on which they are inflicted (Wound Value 1 and target stunned).

Also, all wounds have the usual effects of inflicting 1 Fatigue and stunning the target in addition to their listed effects.

Note that the descriptions of each wound are often not very specific, since the wide variety of weapons in the game prevent every wound type from being accurately described. The gamemaster and player should decide exactly what each wound is based on the combat situation and the type of weapon that inflicted it.

Bleeding: Any wound that has a *bleeds* effect listed will worsen over time. Until such a wound is successfully treated with the First Aid Skill, its wound value will increase by 1 per each passage of the time interval listed (turns, minutes, hours and so on).

Abdomen

Minor: Gut shot [WV 2; Knockout Check; +1 to all TNs]
Serious: Belly gash [WV 4; Knockout Check at +1 TN; +2 to all TNs; half movement; bleeds every 5 minutes]
Critical: Major intestinal damage [WV 8; Knockout Check at +2 TN; +3 to all TNs; half movement; bleeds every minute]
Deadly: Wide hole blasted through gut [character instantly killed]

Arm

Minor: Arm broken [WV 2; +2 to all TNs that use affected arm]
Serious: Arm tendon severed [WV 3; Knockout Check; +4 to all TNs that use affected arm]
Critical: Arm nearly severed, arterial bleeding [WV 5;

Knockout Check; bleeds every turn]
Deadly: Arm severed [WV 10; Knockout Check at +6 TN; Lost Limb (3) Trait; bleeds every turn]

Chest
Minor: Broken ribs [WV 2; +1 to all TNs]
Serious: Minor organ damage [WV 4; Knockout Check; +1 to all TNs]
Critical: Major organ damage and internal bleeding [WV 8; Knockout Check at +2 TN; +2 to all TNs; bleeds every minute]
Deadly: Chest cavity crushed, heart and lungs destroyed [character instantly killed]

Foot
Minor: Metatarsal bones broken [WV 2; half movement; +1 TN to all RFL-linked Skill Checks]
Serious: Foot crushed [WV 3; half movement]
Critical: Foot nearly severed [WV 6; Knockout Check; half movement; +2 TN to all RFL-linked Skill Checks; bleeds every minute]
Deadly: Foot destroyed [WV 8; Knockout Check at +5 TN; Lost Limb (2) Trait; bleeds every turn]

Hand
Minor: Metacarpal bones broken [WV 2; +2 TN to all actions that use affected hand]
Serious: Hand crushed and/or finger severed [WV 3; +3 TN to all actions that use affected hand]
Critical: Hand crushed and finger(s) severed [WV 6; Knockout Check at +2 TN; Lost Limb (1) Trait; bleeds every minute]
Deadly: Hand destroyed [WV 8; Knockout Check at +5 TN; Lost Limb (2) Trait; bleeds every turn]

Head
Minor: Face gashed, bleeds into eyes [WV 2; +3 to all TNs that require vision; bleeds every 5 minutes]
Serious: Concussion [WV 5; Knockout Check at +4 TN; +2 to all TNs]
Critical: Major brain damage [WV 10; instant knockout; bleeds every minute]
Deadly: Head destroyed or severed [character instantly killed]

Leg
Minor: Leg broken [WV 2; half movement; +1 TN to all RFL-linked Skill Checks]
Serious: Leg tendon severed [WV 4; half movement and no sprinting or evading; +2 TN to all RFL-linked Skill Checks]
Critical: Compound fracture, leg nearly severed [WV 8; Knockout Check; half movement and no sprinting or evading; +3 TN to all RFL-linked Skill Checks; bleeds every minute]
Deadly: Leg severed [WV 12; Knockout Check at +6 TN; Lost Limb (3) Trait; bleeds every turn]

HEALING

Injured characters will naturally want to recover so they can go out and get into the line of fire again (to the eternal dismay of their physicians). This section describes the process involved in treating wounds and what happens to characters if their wounds are improperly or incompletely treated.

FAILED TREATMENT

If a character fumbles any treatment roll (i.e., rolls a 2 on the Action Check dice), the target's condition actually worsens: in the case of wounds, the wound value of the target wound is increased by 1; if he is trying to stabilize a dying character, the character dies immediately.

UNCONSCIOUSNESS

Another character can attempt to wake up a knocked-out character by spending a Complex Action. The player of the unconscious character must make an Action Check using the same TN as the Knockout Check (p. 116), with success indicating he will wake up at the beginning of the following turn. If the character attempting to wake him up has the First Aid or MedTech Skill, he can use one of those skills, in which case that player rolls a Skill Check against the same TN as the Knockout Check.

If there are no characters available to wake up the character, or if he's simply in a hurry, he can wake himself up by spending an Edge point and a Complex Action. Recovering takes the entire turn, so the character will be active again in the next turn and all of his Fatigue will be recovered (although he still has all his wounds).

If a character fell unconscious due to overwhelming Fatigue (as opposed to knockout), he will wake up on his own once all his Fatigue is recovered. This takes 5 minutes of rest outside combat conditions or the expenditure of a single Edge point.

EMERGENCY CARE

A character will quickly die once the total wound value of his wounds, including bleeding effects, exceeds his BOD + WIL. A character will die equally quickly if he has suffered a Deadly Wound (using the standard rules; the hit location rules have different effects, see p. 121). A character in this condition has only minutes to live (1D6 + BOD minutes, to be precise), and there is little chance he can be saved without skilled treatment and more than a little luck.

First Aid

The first thing that must be done to save the character is an immediate application of the First Aid Skill by another character. This is considered a Complex Action.

The difficulty modifier for the First Aid Skill Check is equal to the total wound value of all wounds suffered by the target minus the character's BOD + WIL (in other words, the amount

of wound value the character has suffered in excess of his BOD + WIL).

Proper equipment is vitally important in this situation: if the character performing First Aid does not have at least a medical kit (p. 144), the target number is modified by +6 for lack of proper equipment. If the character has a medical kit but not an advanced medical kit (p. 144), the target number has a +3 Modifier.

Other modifiers may apply to the TN as usual for Action Checks (see *Modifiers*, p. 16).

If the First Aid Check succeeds, the target character is stabilized, and any bleeding wounds stop bleeding. The character who performed First Aid must provide continuing life support, such as CPR, to the target. No additional Checks are required, but the treating character must spend a Complex Action every turn and stay in physical contact with the patient at all times. If life support is not maintained, the character reverts to the condition he was in before receiving First Aid; resume the countdown to death from where you left off.

The patient will survive for a length of time equal to his WIL x 5 minutes so long as he receives constant life support. This time is doubled to WIL x 10 minutes if the treating character is using an advanced medical kit. Any minutes a character had remaining to receive First Aid before death are added to this period. At the end of this time, if the character has not yet reached a medical facility staffed by characters with MedTech and Surgery Skills, he dies.

MedTech

If the stabilized character reaches a properly equipped facility in time, the next step in preventing death is the application of various monitors, IV tubes and other life-support equipment, as well as the administration of various drugs. This treatment takes 5 minutes and uses the MedTech Skill.

The difficulty modifier for the MedTech Skill Check is equal to the total wound value of all wounds suffered by the target minus the character's BOD + WIL (in other words, the same modifier the First Aid Check had).

Proper equipment is important in this situation: if the treating character has an advanced medical kit but is not in a fully equipped hospital, the target number has a +3 Modifier. Treatment is impossible without at least an advanced medical kit.

Other modifiers may apply to the TN as usual for Action Checks (see *Modifiers*, p. 16).

If the MedTech Check succeeds, the target character is stabilized. The character who performed MedTech must provide continuing life support to the target. No additional Skill Rolls are required, but the treating character must spend a Complex Action every turn and stay in physical contact with the patient at all times. If life support is not maintained, the character reverts to the condition he was in before receiving First Aid; resume the countdown to death from where you left off.

The patient will survive for a length of time equal to his WIL x 5 minutes so long as he receives constant life support. Any minutes a character had remaining to receive MedTech care before death is added to this period. At the end of this time, if the character has not yet received treatment from a character with the Surgery Skill, he dies.

Surgery

Once the patient is prepped and stabilized, a character with the Surgery Skill can step in and perform emergency treatment to stave off death. The surgery takes 1 hour plus the total wound value of all wounds suffered by the patient times 5 minutes. A character with MedTech must be present throughout the operation to act as a surgical assistant.

The difficulty modifier for the Surgery Skill Check is equal to the total wound value of all wounds suffered by the target minus the character's BOD + WIL (in other words, the same modifier the MedTech Check had).

Proper equipment is important in this situation: if the treating character has an advanced medical kit but is not in a fully equipped hospital, the target number has a +3 Modifier. Treatment is impossible without at least an advanced medical kit.

Other modifiers may apply to the TN as usual for Action Checks (see *Modifiers*, p. 16). The surgical assistant counts as a skilled character helping if he has Surgery Skill.

If the Surgery Check succeeds, the target character is no longer in immediate danger of dying. Continuing attention from a character with MedTech is necessary to maintain a stable condition until the wounds themselves are actually treated (see below). Every 6 hours, a MedTech Check is required to keep the character from "crashing" and returning to critical condition (in which case the whole process must be started over again at *First Aid*, p. 99).

UNTREATED WOUND RECOVERY

Grazing, Minor and Serious Wounds will heal on their own given enough time and rest, but Minor and Serious Wounds will not heal properly without treatment from characters with the MedTech and/or Surgery Skills.

Without any medical treatment, wounds recover at the rate of 1 week for Grazing Wounds, 1D6 weeks for Minor Wounds and 6D6 weeks for Serious Wounds. These healing periods are consecutive, not simultaneous, and lesser wounds are healed first. The character must be resting in a reasonably clean and dry area and take no action more strenuous than eating or going to the bathroom.

If a character recovers from a wound without any treatment at all, he does not heal properly. Based on the kind of injury suffered (using the type of wound and the Hit Location Table), the lasting effects of the injury are described below under *Wound Treatment.*

WOUND TREATMENT

Once a dying character is saved (or if the character wasn't dying in the first place), his wounds can be treated. Each wound must be treated individually, requiring a Skill Check and time to treat, plus additional time for recovery. The skill required and

treatment and recovery times can be found on the Wound Treatment Table (p. 125). Wound-healing times are consecutive, not simultaneous, and lesser wounds heal first.

Once a wound is treated, the character still suffers half the effects of the wound until the wound is fully healed. Strenuous activity while in recovery runs the risk of ruining the treatment and reopening the wounds.

All medical treatment Action Checks have a difficulty modifier equal to the wound value of the wound being treated. Otherwise, the usual modifiers for conditions and actions apply to medical treatment just as they apply to all Action Checks.

WOUND TREATMENT TABLE

Wound Type	Skill Required	Treatment Time	Recovery Time	Untreated Healing Time
Bleeding	First Aid	1 turn	—	—
Grazing	First Aid	1 minute	1 day	1 week
Minor	MedTech	30 minutes	1D6 days	1D6 weeks
Serious	Surgery	WV x 10 minutes	1D6 weeks	6D6 weeks
Critical	Surgery	WV x 15 minutes	2D6 weeks	—
Deadly	Surgery	WV x 20 minutes	1D6+4 months	—

If a wound is not treated successfully or is allowed to heal untreated, the character will be afflicted with permanent effects based on the location of the wound, as listed below. If not using the hit location rules, roll on the Hit Location Table (p. 122) to find a location for the wound so the lasting effects can be determined (plus, the player will know where the scar is).

The specific effects for failed treatment/natural healing are described in the following sections by body location. The gamemaster should add additional effects when appropriate. For example, a character who has difficulty breathing might have a hard time swimming and might be more susceptible to poison gas.

Bleeding Wounds: A bleeding wound cannot be treated until the bleeding effect is treated first (see *Bleeding*, below).

Bleeding

The bleeding effects of wounds can be stopped with a successful First Aid Check. Each wound that is bleeding requires a separate Skill Check, with a difficulty modifier equal to the wound value of the wound. Lack of a medkit applies a +3 Modifier for lack of proper equipment.

Grazing Wound

Grazing Wounds are so trivial that they can be treated quickly using only the First Aid Skill. Even if left untreated, a Grazing Wound will heal itself within a week.

Minor Wound

Minor Wounds can be healed by characters with the MedTech Skill fairly quickly, and given enough time they can heal on their own, though this will leave lasting scars and have other effects as listed below.

Abdomen: Character is easily winded [+1 TN on all Knockout Tests]

Arm: Broken bone knitted in bad position [+1 TN to all actions that use affected arm]

Chest: Character has difficulty breathing [–1 STR for purposes of calculating movement rates and any task that involves endurance]

Foot: Minor limp [–1 meter to all movement rates]

Hand: Healed in misshapen position [+1 TN to all actions that use affected hand]

Head: Large, ugly scar [Unattractive Trait]

Leg: Broken bone knitted in bad position [–1 meter to all movement rates]

Serious Wound

Treatment of Serious Wounds requires the Surgery Skill and considerable recovery time. Human recuperative powers are remarkable, however, and if the bleeding is stanched, even a Serious Wound will heal on its own. Even so, the lasting effects will be serious and could seriously jeopardize a character's career.

Abdomen: Chronic stomach pains and trouble digesting food [–1 BOD]

Arm: Arm heals badly [+2 TN to all actions that use affected arm]

Chest: Character requires transplanted organs but never regains his full health [–1 BOD; Addiction (2) Trait that represents anti-rejection drugs—this trait cannot be recovered from, as the character will die if he ever stops taking the drugs. The Addiction does not apply if the character is treated by doctors who have access to cloned replacement organs that match the patient, such as available to most of the Clans]

Foot: The foot was saved but a toe was lost [Lost Limb (1) Trait]

Hand: The hand was saved but a finger was lost [Lost Limb (1) Trait]

Head: Character suffers from chronic headaches and dizziness [+1 TN to all Action Checks; any fumbled Action Check results in a dizzy spell: the character must make an immediate Knockout Test]

Leg: Serious limp [–1 RFL for purposes of calculating movement rates and TN to be hit]

Critical Wound

A Critical Wound will not heal on its own, and if not successfully treated, it will kill the character. Even if the character's life has been saved and he is on life support (see *Emergency Care*, p. 123), his condition will deteriorate: each day after the injury that he is not treated, his BOD Attribute is permanently lowered by 1 point. If the BOD Attribute reaches 0 in this way, the character dies.

Even if the wound is treated successfully, the character will suffer the effects of a failed treatment of a Serious Wound to the same location (see *Serious Wound*, above).

Deadly Wound

A Deadly Wound will not heal on its own, and if not successfully treated, it will kill the character. Even if the character's life has been saved and he is on life support (see *Emergency Care*, p. 123), his condition will deteriorate: each hour after the injury that he is not treated, his BOD Attribute and BOD Maximum are permanently lowered by 1 point. If the BOD Attribute reaches 0 in this way, the character dies.

Even if the wound is treated successfully, the character will be permanently scarred by his brush with death and suffer the following effects. (If using the hit location rules, some of these effects would have resulted in instant character death. Naturally, disregard these effects if the character is dead.)

Abdomen: Character is severely weakened [–1 STR; –1 BOD; –1 RFL; Disabled (1) Trait]

Arm: Arm is severed and could not be reattached [Lost Limb (3)]

Chest: Character requires several transplanted organs and never regains his full health [–1 STR; –2 BOD; Disabled (1) Trait; Addiction (2) Trait that represents anti-rejection drugs—this trait cannot be recovered from, as the character will die if he ever stops taking the drugs. The Addiction does not apply if the character is treated by doctors who have access to cloned replacement organs that match the patient, such as available to most of the Clans]

Foot: Foot is destroyed and could not be recovered [Lost Limb (2)]

Hand: Hand was severed and could not be reattached [Lost Limb (2)]

Head: Character suffers permanent brain damage [This has all the same effects as a failed treatment of a Serious Wound to the head (p. 125), plus the Slow Learner Trait]

Leg: Leg was severed and could not be reattached [Lost Limb (3)]

VEHICULAR COMBAT

The battlefields of the thirty-first century are dominated by BattleMechs, tanks and other vehicles of war. The complexities of vehicle combat are beyond the scope of this book, but fortunately FASA produces a vehicular combat game set in the same universe as *MechWarrior: BattleTech.*

The following rules explain how to use your *MW3* characters in the *BattleTech* game to resolve vehicular engagements. Use the *BattleTech Master Rules* (*BMR*) to resolve combat except as specifically noted below. The sections are organized and named to correspond directly with the matching sections in *BMR*.

It is also possible to use these rules along with the *BattleTech, Fourth Edition* boxed set. Although there will be a few cases where terminology might be slightly different, it shouldn't affect game play.

PLAYING THE GAME

Although there are 2 *MW3* turns for every 1 *BattleTech* turn (since *BattleTech* turns are 10 seconds long), this fact should be ignored when integrating with *BattleTech* for simplicity's sake.

Initiative Phase

Rather than rolling 2D6 for each side, Initiative should be resolved as an Opposed Tactics Skill Check between the commanders of each side. The side with the highest MoS wins the Initiative for the turn.

WARRIORS

NPC MechWarriors, vehicle crews and infantry units can all be treated exactly as *BattleTech* warriors (*BMR*, p. 14). They should be assigned Gunnery and Piloting Skills as described in the *BMR* (p. 108) or as appropriate to the scenario as determined by the gamemaster. Player characters, as well as NPCs that have pregenerated *MW3* stats, can be quickly converted for use in *BattleTech* using the rules below.

Skills

A *MW3* character's various Piloting and Gunnery Skills are converted to *BattleTech* terms using the BattleTech Skills Conversion Table. Find the character's skill bonus in the left-hand column and follow it to the appropriate column to find the *BattleTech* Piloting or Gunnery Skill.

In the case of Piloting Skills, *MW3* characters will have a distinct skill for each type of vehicle they can operate. The skill appropriate to the vehicle being used in the *BattleTech* game should be converted. For example, if a character has Piloting/BattleMech +4 and Piloting/Tracked +2 and is driving a tank in the current battle, he would convert his Piloting/Tracked Skill to a *BattleTech* Driving Skill of 4.

MechWarrior characters also have a variety of Gunnery Skills for various types of weapons and vehicles. These should be con-

BATTLETECH SKILLS CONVERSION TABLE

MW3 Skill Bonus	BattleTech Skills	
	Piloting (Driving)	Gunnery
Unskilled	7	6
+0	6	5
+1	5	4
+2	4	4
+3	4	3
+4	3	3
+5	3	2
+6	2	2
+7	2	1
+8	1	1
+9	1	0
+10	0	0

BATTLETECH PILOT DAMAGE CONVERSION TABLE

Source of Damage	Damage Type	Damage Dice	Notes
Head hits	M	2D6	—
Falling:			
Successful Piloting Skill Roll	M	1D6	—
Failed Piloting Skill Roll	M	2D6	—
Ammunition explosion	E	4D6	Armor has no effect
Excess heat:			
Heat Scale 15–25	E	2D6	Subduing; Armor has no effect
Heat Scale 26+	E	4D6	Subduing; Armor has no effect
Failed ejection	M	*	Fall from 12 meters
Crew stunned (vehicle)	M	4D6	—
Crew killed, fuel tank hit, or ammo/power plant hit	X	8D6	—
Weapon attack against dismounted character	as weapon	BT Dmg x 3D6	AP = BT Dmg
Physical attack against dismounted character	M	BT Dmg x 3D6	AP 2

* See *Falling*, p. 120.

verted as needed for the current battle, and each skill should be used when firing the appropriate weapon in *BattleTech*. For example, a character who has Gunnery/Laser/Humanoid +6, Gunnery/Ballistic/Humanoid +3 and Gunnery/Missile/Humanoid +4 is piloting a 'Mech. When firing laser weapons, he would use a Gunnery Skill of 2. He would fire ballistic weapons using a Gunnery Skill of 4 and missile weapons using a Gunnery Skill of 3.

DAMAGING A MECHWARRIOR

Minor NPCs that have standard *BattleTech* skills also take damage following the usual rules (*BMR*, p. 15). Player characters are handled a bit differently, since they take damage following the *MW3* rules. Unless stated otherwise, all damage sustained while inside a vehicle results from violent tossing around in the cockpit and is considered as melee (M) damage with an armor penetration value of 0.

See the BattleTech Pilot Damage Conversion Table to see how each type of *BattleTech* damage is converted into *MW3* terms.

Armor: A character piloting a 'Mech can only wear an armored vest; the cockpit is too confined and the temperature too high to wear any other armor. However, the MechWarrior's neurohelmet counts as a combat helmet for any damage that strikes the head. Characters in other types of vehicles can wear any armor desired, although it should be noted that encumbrance can affect RFL-related actions, including Piloting and Gunnery.

Subduing: An entry with Subduing in the Notes column means that the event should be treated as a successful subduing attack with an MoS of 0. Roll for damage and knockout as normal.

Consciousness Rolls

MW3 characters do not have to make consciousness rolls like *BattleTech* warriors; they suffer similar effects when knocked-out or stunned from damage. A knocked out character's vehicle is treated just like a character's who failed a consciousness roll in *BattleTech*, except he recovers consciousness using the *MW3* rules, not the *BattleTech* rules.

A character who suffers a stun result from damage cannot run or jump in the following turn and suffers a +1 Modifier to all attacks in that turn while he recovers from stun.

COMBAT

Characters in vehicles are simple enough to deal with using the rules previously stated. However, if a character is outside a vehicle, things become a bit more complicated.

Characters on the field are considered conventional infantry units consisting of one trooper, or parts of existing battle-armor or infantry platoon units in a *BattleTech* game. All battle-armored characters must be assigned to a battle-armor unit. Similarly, unarmored characters must be assigned to standard infantry platoons.

Character units are categorized by their mode of transportation. Units are considered motorized infantry if they travel with enough small vehicles (such as cars or motorcycles) to transport all members of the unit. If all unit members are equipped with jump packs, the unit is considered jump infantry. If some or all of the unit members are moving on foot, the unit is considered foot infantry.

Character units are further classified by the weapon used by the majority of unit members—rifle, machine gun, flamer, portable laser or SRM. If no weapon choice predominates, the troops are considered a rifle unit by default. (See *Infantry* in *BMR*, pp. 59–66.)

General Rules

Generally, infantry units containing *MW3* characters may use standard *BattleTech* infantry rules. However, if an infantry unit is composed entirely of player characters, the gamemaster may allow the unit to launch individual attacks at a battlefield target, rather than firing as a unit (see *Individual Attacks*, below).

When an infantry unit containing *MW3* characters attacks another infantry unit containing *MW3* characters, the gamemaster

may resolve the combat using the standard *MW3* personal-combat rules. Determine the range between the units by multiplying the *BattleTech* hex range by 30 to determine the range in meters.

Individual Attacks

At the gamemaster's discretion, an infantry unit that consists entirely of player characters may choose to attack a battlefield unit as individuals, rather than grouping their fire together per *BattleTech* infantry rules. Depending on the characters' weapons, skill and luck, this individual-attack option may provide them with more or less firepower than standard *BattleTech* rules.

Under the individual-attack option, each character's shot is resolved using the *MW3* rules with the following modifiers.

The base TN to hit a battlefield unit is equal to 5 plus its *BattleTech* target movement modifier for the turn, times 2. So a target with a +3 Target Movement Modifier would have a base TN of 16 (5 + 3 = 8; 8 x 2 = 16). A +1 Target Movement Modifier results in a base TN of 12 (5 + 1 = 6; 6 x 2 = 12).

Apply the appropriate *MW3* modifiers for range, target size and any other special situations (see Ranged Combat Modifiers Table, p. 112). If the character's unit has moved during the turn, consider the character as having used running movement when determining to-hit modifiers.

Most personal weapons have little effect on the heavy armor of battlefield units; attacks with AP lower then 5 have no chance of causing damage at all. Resolve the attack normally using Armor Value of 10. A result of Grazing Wound or Fatigue Only has no effect. A Minor Wound inflicts 1 point of BattleTech damage; each additional wound level inflicts another point of damage, up to 5 points of damage for a Fatal Wound. Determine hit location using *BattleTech* rules. A hit location roll of 2 does not provide an additional roll for a critical hit.

Attacks Against Characters

Characters are attacked by battlefield units just as if they were infantry units of the appropriate type.

If the characters are in a battle-armor unit, designate which trooper numbers in each squad or Point are *MW3* characters and make a note of it on the Battle Armor Record Form.

In a conventional infantry unit, *MW3* characters will always be the last troopers to be hit. Designate the right-most troopers on the Infantry Record Sheet for the unit as characters (up to the number of *MW3* characters present in the unit). When the damage reaches a trooper designated as a *MW3* character, rather than crossing off the damage box as usual, inflict the full weapon's damage against one of the characters in the unit for each point of *BattleTech* damage remaining (that wasn't used to cross off a non-character trooper). Each character present will be hit only once; if there are fewer points of damage remaining than characters, determine which characters get hit randomly. If there are more points of damage remaining than characters, each character is hit once and the excess damage is wasted.

The damage from *BattleTech* weapons is converted to *MW3* terms by multiplying the *BattleTech* damage value by 3D6. The armor penetration of the weapon is equal to its *BattleTech* damage rating. For example, a Clan extended-range medium laser inflicts 7 damage, so against a *MechWarrior* character it would inflict 21D6 damage with AP 7. This damage is inflicted on each character struck by the weapon.

> *Three player characters are on the battlefield in an infantry platoon that has only eight surviving troopers. The player characters are considered the right-most troopers on the Infantry Record Sheet (the ones numbered 1, 2 and 3). The remaining troopers are represented by the numbers 4–11.*
>
> *A BattleMech hits the unit with a PPC, which inflicts 10 points of BattleTech damage. One trooper is marked off per point of damage until the damage reaches a player character. This means all eight NPC troopers are killed, leaving 2 points of damage to hit the player characters. There are three characters left, so two of them will be hit and one won't. This is determined randomly, so in this case a D6 could be rolled to see which of the three characters is safe: on a 1 or 2, the first character is safe, on a 3 or 4 the second character is safe, and on a 5 or 6 the third character is safe.*
>
> *The two characters who are hit take the full damage for the weapon, which is AP 10 and 30D6; they will need to be very lucky indeed to survive this attack!*

HEAT

Dice rolls to avoid ammo explosions and shutdown are handled a bit differently for BattleMechs piloted by characters with *MW3* game statistics.

Replace the target numbers on the Heat Scale with a Computer Skill Check in the case of shutdown avoids, with the following TN modifiers for difficulty: Heat Scale 14–17 (–4); Heat Scale 18–21 (–2); Heat Scale 22–25 (+0); Heat Scale 26–29 (+2); at Heat Scale 30 shutdown is unavoidable.

Replace ammo explosion avoid rolls with EDG Checks, with the following TN modifiers for difficulty: Heat Scale 19–22 (–4); Heat Scale 23–27 (–2); Heat Scale 28+ (+0).

EQUIPMENT

Humans are tool-using creatures, and to accomplish the tasks they undertake they need equipment. In the thirty-first century, the range of available equipment is staggering: there is a special tool for almost every job and a weapon for every target. The challenge is finding a good source for the equipment. Some gear is rare or illegal; some is only available on a specific planet or in certain Successor States. In *MechWarrior*, tracking down important equipment can even be an adventure on its own!

This section begins with general rules regarding equipment, including rules for *Acquiring Gear* and *Encumbrance*. The balance is devoted to descriptions of equipment that can commonly be found in the *BattleTech* universe. The items are broken down into categories and subcategories, including a cross-section of the most common and important items that can be found throughout known space. This list is not meant to be all-inclusive. Additional equipment will be found in future *MW3* products, and gamemasters are encouraged to design items unique to their campaigns.

Following the equipment descriptions are a series of charts (beginning on p. 153) that provide the information necessary to use the equipment in play, including cost, weight, damage (where applicable) and any other important details.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Every *MW3* character should purchase some basic equipment before beginning the game—be it a noteputer, a hovercar or a rifle. Based on a character's Wealth Trait (or Poverty), a player will have a finite amount of "cash" with which to buy gear (see p. 59). Purchases will likely not end there, as the player will naturally want to buy newer and better equipment throughout the course of his character's life. This section presents ideas on where to spend a character's hard-earned money during game play and what limitations to apply.

EQUIPMENT RATINGS

A series of letter codes called *equipment ratings* determines how easy it is to acquire various pieces of equipment. These three letters represent an item's *tech level*, *availability* and *legality*. The letter codes range from A, the easiest to acquire, to F, the most difficult.

Tech Level

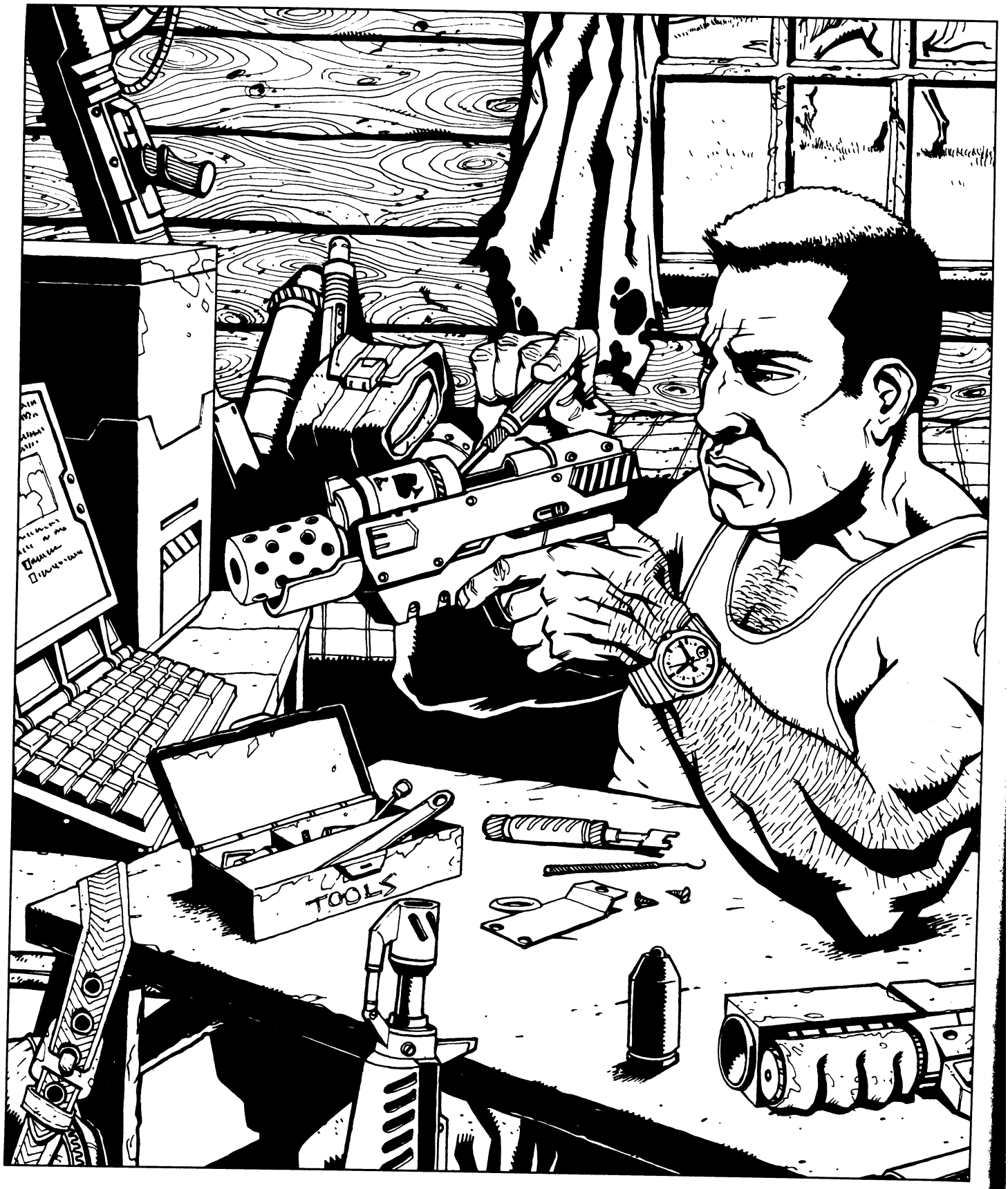
Equipment requires a certain level of technology and industry to produce. Some items, such as knives and clubs, require little in the way of technology, while others are based on research completed only in the past few years. Gamemasters should carefully monitor the tech level of equipment they allow into their campaign, as many worlds will not be able to produce the newest and best goods. Likewise, gamemasters need to make sure the equipment they make available to the characters fits the time period of their campaign.

Level	Technology
A	**Primitive technology.** Requires no industrialization, only hard labor and skill to produce.
B	**Low technology.** Requires basic industrialization, such as that available after Terra's Industrial Revolution.
C	**Medium technology.** Requires advanced industrialization and electronic technology, first available in the twentieth through twenty-second centuries.
D	**High technology.** Requires heavy automated industry, commonly available in all Successor and most Periphery States today.
E	**Advanced technology.** Requires the scientific advances found only during Star League times. All Clans have access to this level of technology, as do the major worlds of the Successor States after approximately the year 3055.
F	**Hyper-advanced technology.** This level was still theoretical during the Star League era, but it has now been achieved by the Clans. Even the most advanced Successor States cannot yet build equipment of this level.

Availability

Supply does not always equal demand. Just because a piece of equipment can be produced doesn't mean it is available in sufficient quantities to supply everyone who wants it. The availability rating describes how difficult a particular piece of equipment will be to find on average throughout known space.

Level	Availability
A	**Very common.** Available throughout inhabited space in huge quantities.
B	**Common.** These items are widely available, but due to materials or cost they are not always manufactured in sufficient quantity to meet demands.
C	**Uncommon.** Such items are sometimes troublesome to find, since they either require rare materials or specific skilled labor or technology to produce. Uncommon items might be unavailable on many planets, yet actually common on the planets where they are manufactured.
D	**Rare.** These are specialty items produced under contract or for a limited market. There are few businesses that sell such items; generally, characters will have to locate a supplier in order to buy rare items.
E	**Very rare.** These items are either no longer manufactured or only manufactured on a few worlds. These are exceedingly difficult to find, and they often carry a price tag well in excess of the "list" price, as they might only be found on the black market or in a personal collection.


TOOLS

Level	Availability
F	**Unique.** One of a kind or close to it. Only a few were ever made or are known to have survived. Advanced prototypes as well as rare antiques and small-run limited-edition items fall under this category.

Legality

While some pieces of equipment can be easily found, their acquisition or use might be illegal. For example, many weapons, including lasers, are regulated on all but the most "frontier" of worlds. Likewise, operators of vehicles such as hovercars and aircraft must be licensed or else they could face stiff fines if caught.

Level	Legality
A	**Unrestricted.** Legal for anyone to purchase and use.
B	**Monitored.** Some legal requirements must be met for purchase or use.
C	**Licensed.** Legal purchase and use require a government license, which is usually easy to acquire.
D	**Controlled.** Illegal on many "civilized" worlds, except to authorized individuals in the government, police or military.
E	**Restricted.** Highly illegal. Private citizens found with this equipment will be imprisoned. Only government and military personnel will have access to this equipment, and only under certain conditions.
F	**Highly Restricted.** Contains top-secret technology or materials. Available only to military or government agents with proper credentials and clearance.

ACQUIRING GEAR

When it's time to spend some of a character's hard-earned C-bills, the gamemaster will need to supply places to shop.

Exchange Rates

If the characters travel, they may need to exchange whatever currency they have on hand into local currency before they can purchase anything. The Exchange Rates Table gives approximate Inner Sphere transfer rates (for more details on Inner Sphere currencies, see p. 180).

(Note that a C-bill is roughly equivalent to three U.S. dollars in 1999.)

EXCHANGE RATES TABLE
Inner Sphere exchange rates, 1 August 3062

Starting Currency	Target Currency: C-bill	S-bill	D-bill	M-bill	R-bill	L-bill	K-bill
C-bill	—	1.30	1.30	1.25	1.70	2.20	1.40
S-bill	0.77	—	1.00	0.96	1.31	1.69	1.08
D-bill	0.77	1.00	—	0.96	1.31	1.69	1.08
M-bill	0.80	1.04	1.04	—	1.36	1.76	1.12
R-bill	0.58	0.76	0.76	0.74	—	0.77	0.82
L-bill	0.45	0.59	0.59	0.57	0.77	—	0.64
K-bill	0.71	0.93	0.93	0.89	1.21	1.57	—

The Clan Kerensky is excluded from this exchange-rate table as no formal method of currency exchange exists between the Clans and the Inner Sphere.

Legal Means

Most of the time, a character will make purchases legitimately, just as in real life. General clothing and personal goods can be found at "department" stores or small shops, vehicles will be on display at huge indoor or outdoor dealers and so on. Large planets (and cities) will have many types of retailers. Small settlements and backwater worlds, however, might only have a single general store that is capable of ordering many specialized items (with a long waiting period) but that only stocks a small assortment of the basic necessities.

In some cases, characters should not be able to simply walk into a store and buy anything they want. The very nature of some of the things they want to buy demands they be handled differently. For example, most military hardware—weapons, ammunition, armor and vehicles—is only sold in bulk directly from the manufacturer or a field salesperson, and then only if the buyer has the proper credentials from a legitimate military organization or government. Trade shows, where hundreds of manufacturers of similar types of equipment (be it military hardware, electronics or sporting goods) gather to show their wares, are a good place to make contacts and arrange for large purchases. Characters can also arrange to purchase things from private citizens—bulletin boards and classified ads still exist in the thirty-first century.

Gamemasters can consult the equipment ratings when taking characters on their "shopping sprees." Common items may be temporarily out of stock or on back order. Some things might need to be special ordered if they are uncommon. Characters looking for rare items may have to invest considerable effort (and money) in tracking them down. It is up to the gamemaster just how hard a particular piece of equipment will be to locate.

The Black Market

On occasion, a character might want to purchase gear that is illegal. Without the proper credentials, this equipment could be impossible to legally obtain. Perhaps the character doesn't want to jump through all of the hoops needed to get the credentials—leaving a paper trail can be dangerous. Or he might want to quietly sell some equipment of his own and avoid the "proper" channels. Characters in these situations will probably want to turn to the black market.

Finding the local black market could turn into an adventure. By their very nature, these seedy sellers are not supposed to be easily found. Therefore, characters looking for a black market will need to use their Streetwise Skill to find the right person who can get them in touch with the right people, perhaps requiring an appropriate bribe or threat. Shady contacts are also very useful for locating black-market outlets.

Whether the equipment in question is even available will, of course, be up to the gamemaster. If it is, then the gamemaster should establish a cost based upon its equipment ratings. In general, commonly available items can be had for far less than retail price ("that drum of lubricant just *fell* out of the DropShip"), while rare and highly restricted items can command more than twenty or thirty times the normal going rate. Of course, good Negotiation Skills could help to bring down the price.

Characters need to exercise some discretion with their new toys. Most law enforcement officials do not treat black-market dealings lightly. If characters are caught with such illegal items, they could be slapped with stiff fines or even imprisoned, depending on what they are apprehended with. Black marketeers prefer to maintain a low profile, so if the characters draw attention to themselves and to where they may have gotten their illegal goods, the people they dealt with may decide to pay them a non-cordial visit. Characters should realize that their dealings with the black market might have consequences down the road.

Gray Areas

There are other avenues for acquiring equipment, including many that are of dubious legality. For example, characters may salvage equipment from a battlefield; some military types have even been known to break down entire vehicles and ship them home piece by piece. While most militaries have strict regulations as to what their people can keep, these rules are commonly overlooked—especially by officers who come home with their own trophies. Police and customs agents might confiscate things that turn up on searches, keeping choice pieces for their own collections.

Perhaps the most common way of circumventing local laws it to travel where the item in question is not restricted and is easily purchased. For example, the Periphery is well known for its lax weapons regulations. Characters can then simply return home with their new "toy"—assuming they can make it through customs, as this constitutes smuggling. So long as characters can justify having the items in some way ("oh, I picked that up while I was fighting the Jade Falcons on Wolcott"), and are not causing other legal problems, they will likely not be hassled.

New vs. Used

Not everything a character picks up in the course of a campaign will be hot off the assembly line. Goods bought from private citizens and objects confiscated or scavenged off the battlefield probably will have seen previous use. Some outfits might openly trade in used items, providing an inexpensive way for characters to purchase equipment otherwise outside their means.

The gamemaster should apply TN modifiers to used equipment in poor condition. The old axiom that states, "Buyer beware: a deal that's too good to be true probably is," is just as relevant in the thirty-first century as when it was written.

The Basic or the Luxury Model

The equipment listed in this section is representative of countless similar products that can be found throughout known space. Some are among the most basic of items. However, artisans and machinists certainly have made some of these "boring" pieces into beautiful and elegant items that deserve to be presented as gifts of honor and passed down to one's children as an heirloom. For example, an ordinary knife costs eight C-bills and is a "common" item. More exquisite pieces, handmade and with finely etched details, are sold at much higher prices. Books remain a status symbol for many family libraries. Small, controlled batches of wines and liqueurs have a far better taste and aroma than do mass-produced varieties. Some vehicles even have their bodies and frames "sculpted" to the tastes of their owners. The gamemaster must set the prices for these "luxury" items, and the availability rating will always be one or two levels higher than the standard for its type.

USING EQUIPMENT

The following sections explain terms that define equipment (*Equipment Data*) and the effects of *encumbrance*. Guidelines for *repair* of equipment are also provided.

EQUIPMENT DATA

Weapons and other equipment will have various ratings and mechanics for reference in game play. Statistics for equipment can be found in the equipment tables, beginning on p. 153. Rules regarding the use of weapons and armor in combat can be found in *Combat* (p. 109).

Armor Penetration (AP): A weapon's potential to pierce armor.

Armor Value (AV): The relative defensive value of armor against the four types of damage (see *Type*, below).

Cost: The cost of the item in C-bills.

Crew: The number of trained personnel needed to operate the equipment. If more than one person is required, the equipment is not truly portable and should be fixed to a static mount or vehicle.

Damage: The damage inflicted by the weapon in D6.

Patch: The cost in C-bills for material to repair a point of armor value (see *Armor Repairs*, p. 133). This does not include the cost of labor.

Power Usage (Pwr use): The number of standard power points the item consumes per use or per the listed interval of time. Energy weapons list power usage in the Shots column of the Weapon Table, p. 153.

Power Capacity: The maximum number of standard power units a power pack can hold with a full charge. As items use up power points, this number will decrease until it is recharged or the current charge reaches zero and the item ceases to function.

Range: The short/medium/long/extreme ranges of a

weapon, in meters. For vehicles, range defines how far it can travel before needing to be refueled.

Recharge Rate: The standard number of power points a recharger can produce each hour.

Refueling Cost: The C-bill cost to refuel a vehicle or item.

Reload Cost: The C-bill cost of ammunition rounds to fully reload the weapon. The cost of an individual round can be found by dividing the Reload Cost by the weapon's Shots.

Shots: The rounds a weapon's magazine holds (and, by extension, the number of standard shots a character can make before needing to reload).

Skill: The skill used in Action Checks with a weapon.

Speed: A vehicle's maximum speed in kilometers per hour (kph).

Type: The type of damage inflicted by a weapon, which determines how armor defends against it. The four damage Types are melee (M), ballistic (B), energy (E) and explosive (X).

Weight: How heavy the item is under standard Terran gravity, in grams (g), kilograms (kg) or metric tons.

ENCUMBRANCE TABLE

STR	Encumbered	Very Encumbered
1	5–9	10–15
2	10–19	20–25
3	15–29	30–50
4	20–39	40–75
5	30–59	60–100
6	40–79	80–125
7	55–109	110–150
8	70–139	140–200
9	85–169	170–250
10	100–199	200–300

ENCUMBRANCE

Characters can only carry so much before they slow and tire. A character carrying more gear than his Strength allows is considered encumbered and will suffer restrictions as described below.

Determining Encumbrance

A character's STR Attribute determines how much gear he can carry before becoming encumbered, as shown on the Encumbrance Table.

To find encumbrance, total the weight in kilograms of all equipment on the character, including items held in the hands. Compare this weight with the range of weights shown on the Encumbrance Table to find if the character is *encumbered* or *very encumbered*. If he is carrying less than the lowest amount shown in the Encumbered column, the character is not encumbered at all. A character can never carry more gear than the maximum shown in the Very Encumbered column.

Encumbering Gear: Some gear, especially armor, is so bulky it creates encumbrance beyond what its weight alone suggests. Each piece of gear a character carries that is listed as "encumbering" (see the Notes section of the equipment tables starting on p. 153) increases his effective encumbrance by one level, after figuring it normally. A character who is unencumbered but carrying two pieces of encumbering equipment is considered to be very encumbered. A character who attempts to carry so much encumbering gear that his effective level would increase beyond very encumbered cannot move.

Effects of Encumbrance

An encumbered character's RFL Attribute is reduced by one. Furthermore, such a character suffers 1 Fatigue point every time he makes a melee attack or moves at sprinting speed. The gamemaster can also apply a +1 TN Modifier to any task that should be made more difficult by encumbrance, especially those involving agility or balance.

A very encumbered character's RFL Attribute is reduced by two. Further, he suffers 1 Fatigue point every time he makes a melee attack and every time he moves at running/evading/disengaging speed. A very encumbered character's movement speeds are divided in half (round up), and the character cannot sprint. The gamemaster can also apply a +3 TN Modifier to any task that should be made more difficult by encumbrance, especially those involving agility or balance.

REPAIRS

When equipment breaks, it must be repaired. Equipment can be damaged in combat or through mishap; any fumbled Action Check with equipment can result in the item being broken.

A broken item requires an appropriate Technician or Gunsmith Skill Check to repair. If an appropriate kit is not available (see *Tools and Gear*, p. 147), the repair attempt must be made with a Lack of Proper Equipment Modifier, or it may be impossible if the gamemaster thinks tools are absolutely necessary for the particular job.

Repair time is up to the gamemaster. As a guide, a weapon or simple electronic or mechanical device takes 1D6 hours to repair, a more complicated device takes 2D6 hours to repair, and anything the gamemaster considers to be very large and complicated can take 3D6 hours or more.

Repairs to BattleMechs and other vehicles can be resolved using the *Scavenging and Repair* rules found in the *BattleTech Master Rules* (p. 82).

Armor Repairs

Armor is routinely damaged in combat and must be frequently repaired. See *Armor Degradation* (p. 115) for rules on how a piece of armor's armor value can be reduced by an attack.

Note that each time armor is degraded, all of its AVs are reduced at the same time. For example, ablative armor is rated 3/1/6/1. After one degradation, its AVs become 2/0/5/0, and after two degradations, 1/0/4/0. Each point of degradation restored to damaged armor affects all four AVs as well, so that

successfully repairing this armor once would restore its AVs to 2/0/5/0, and a second repair would bring it back to its original AVs.

Repairing a point of AV requires a patch of the appropriate type and a successful Technician/Mechanics Skill Check. Apply a difficulty modifier to the TN equal to the total AV lost by armor degradation. A failed Action Check wastes the patch, but the repair can be attempted again. A fumbled Action Check permanently damages the armor, wasting the patch and permanently reducing the armor's AV by 1.

Armor repair, successful or failed, takes 5 minutes times the total AV of the armor, per point of AV repaired. For example, ablative/flak armor has original armor values of 2/4/5/2, for a total AV of 13. Each point of AV repair attempted takes 65 minutes (13 x 5 = 65).

WEAPONS

It is not uncommon for both private citizens and soldiers to carry weapons. All ranged weapons can fire single-shot only (as opposed to burst, see p. 118), unless specified otherwise in the weapon description.

General descriptions of weapons, along with any special rules, are included in this section. Equipment ratings, range, damage and other data for all weapons can be found on the Weapon Table (p. 153).

ARCHAIC/MELEE WEAPONS

These are among the least expensive and most readily available weapons in existence. They are also the least regulated.

Bows

Though primitive in comparison with other weapons, bows are commonly used. Many sportsmen prefer to hunt wild game with their bows. A few special-operations groups also train with bows.

Compound Bow: The modern compound bow is constructed with lightweight alloys and composite materials; a series of pulleys maintains stability and increases overall range. A compound bow can be loaded and fired as a single Simple Action.

Crossbow: While less popular than the compound bow, the crossbow is better at penetrating armor.

Blades

One of the oldest weapons known to man, the bladed weapon is also the most popular.

Knife/Dagger/Bayonet: Found just about anywhere and easily concealed, the knife is a perfect melee weapon. Some are weighted to deliver maximum hand-to-hand damage, while others are balanced for throwing. The bayonet is essentially a dagger designed to attach to the end of a rifle.

Sword: Once the weapon of choice for the professional soldier, the sword is now little more than an elaborate accouterment worn with a dress uniform or given as a special gift. A few schools and societies still teach the art of swordsmanship, however, and swords are sometimes used in shipboard combat to avoid the chance of breaching the hull.

Clubs

A "club" can be anything from a tree limb to a specially manufactured blackjack. Law enforcement and security officers commonly carry collapsible batons while on duty.

Vibroblades

Though on first glance a vibroblade looks like a bulkier version of a standard bladed weapon, it is actually high-tech and lethal. Instead of relying upon a finely honed edge to make cuts, the blade vibrates at an extremely high frequency, allowing it to penetrate flesh and most forms of armor. The vibration causes a distinctive hum that, while often sending an uncontrolled shiver down those who hear it, will alert an attentive opponent. (Attempting to surprise a target with a vibroblade attack offers a –1 Modifier to the target's Perception TN.)

Vibroblade: Somewhat larger and heavier than a knife, the standard vibroblade is still concealable.

Vibrosword: The vibrosword itself is difficult to find, but it is very popular. The Draconis Combine's DEST commandos are trained to use a variant called a vibrokatana and commonly carry them.

Stunstick

The stunstick looks like a standard police officer's club and was developed as a nonlethal weapon for crowd control. When activated, it delivers a powerful neural shock to unprotected or lightly covered skin, often rendering the target unconscious.

Resolve a stunstick attack normally, but do not add the wielder's STR to the damage result. The attack inflicts Fatigue normally, but all wound results are disregarded. However, if the attack would have caused a Minor Wound or worse, the target must make a Knockout Check. If the attack would have caused a Serious Wound, the Check has a +2 TN Modifier; Critical Wound a +4 Modifier; Deadly Wound a +6 Modifier; and Fatal Wound a +10 Modifier to the Knockout Check TN.

SLUG-THROWERS

A "slug-thrower" is a term applying to any personal weapon that propels a bullet or other projectile using some sort of chemical reaction, explosion or magnetic acceleration. Slug-throwers are the most common modern weapons available. Maintenance is easy and inexpensive, making them attractive to individuals on a budget.

Handguns

The slug-throwing handgun is relatively light and easily concealed. It is the standard-issue sidearm for most militaries and police agencies, and it is the civilian self-defense weapon of choice.

Revolver: The oldest basic design still in service, its simplicity and rugged design make it reliable, though it has a limited ammunition capacity.

Auto-Pistol: The auto-loading pistol (often referred to as an automatic) feeds ammunition from a detachable magazine, allowing a higher capacity and a quicker reload time than a basic revolver. These weapons are prone to jams; any fumbled Action Check using an auto-pistol results in a jam. Clearing the jam requires a Complex Action.

Hold-Out Pistol: The smallest and lightest style of firearm in use today, the hold-out pistol is easily concealed and often worn as a back-up weapon. It has a limited ammo capacity, short range and weak stopping power.

Mydron: Somewhat larger than a standard auto-pistol, the Mydron distinguishes itself by firing bursts of up to five rounds at a time. It lacks the stability of a rifle or submachine gun, so it suffers from significant recoil when fired in burst mode. Like the auto-pistol (above), the Mydron will jam on a fumble. Characters use SMG Skill when wielding this gun.

Sternsnacht: Something of an oddity in the annals of modern weaponry, the Sternsnacht became popular in the 2880s, when Solaris VII legend Tag Burton wore this monstrosity during his duels. On more than one instance, in what were surely staged scenes, he popped his cockpit hatch and delivered the killing blow to an opponent's 'Mech with his "Sternsnacht" hand cannon. As the vids of his matches circulated around the Inner Sphere, people wanted to emulate their "hero" and demand for this weapon soared.

Unfortunately, the Sternsnacht didn't exist. The pistol that Burton carried was a hunting rifle heavily modified to function as a pistol. In an attempt to cash in on the popularity, two companies, including the original manufacturer of Burton's modified pistol, flooded the market with their "Sternsnacht" design. Slightly more useful than Burton's pistol, these weapons were massive and suffered from both heavy recoil and muzzle flash. Despite this, countless hordes of enthusiasts purchased their hero's gun until Burton's popularity faded.

The size of the Sternsnacht's bullets limits the weapon's ammunition capacity to three shots, and the recoil increases the weapon's TN modifiers for range by +0/+1/+2/+3 (i.e., a shot at long range is modified by +6).

Rifles

Slug-throwing rifles are the weapon of choice for the budget-conscious. Fired from the shoulder and chambering more powerful rounds, rifles have a greater range and accuracy than pistols.

Bolt-Action Rifle: Much like the revolver, the bolt-action rifle is an ancient design still favored because of its simple and rugged design. The shooter must manually work the bolt to eject spent cartridges and feed new rounds. Characters must expend a Simple Action to work the bolt after each shot.

Automatic Rifle: Somewhat less reliable than a bolt-action rifle, the automatic rifle is more popular because it is easy to reload and is capable of burst fire. Like the auto-pistol (above), the automatic rifle will jam on a fumble.

Federated Long Rifle: The Federated Industries long rifle was originally designed and manufactured for the armed forces of the Federated Suns, but it has since been copied by each of the other Successor States.

Zeus Heavy Rifle: The Zeus was designed for stopping power, giving it a shorter range than many other rifles. Still, it is one of the more popular designs to come out of Federated Industries and has been widely copied.

Submachine Guns

Smaller than a rifle and capable of holding more rounds, the SMG is easily concealable. It is capable of single-shot and burst fire, though it is less accurate firing the latter. An SMG is subject to jamming on fumbles in the same way as the auto-pistol (above).

SMG: The "standard" SMG closely resembles a large pistol with an elongated magazine extending from its grip.

Rorynex RM-3/XXI SMG: Using a slightly smaller bullet to increase its overall range, Rorynex Industries' popular XXI is a potent weapon. Its high-capacity magazine allows full-auto fire, while its explosive-tipped bullets can shred most personal armors. These qualities also make the Rorynex illegal on hundreds of worlds across the Inner Sphere.

Imperator 2894A1 SMG: In contrast to Rorynex Industries' approach, Dr. Uziel Gal chose to use a much larger round in his 2894A1. Combined with a longer barrel, the Imperator is an extremely accurate and deadly weapon.

Shotguns

The shotgun is similar to a rifle, but it has a smooth bore and shorter range. Shotguns usually fire shells containing a number of small pellets or flechettes and deliver a much greater punch at shorter ranges.

Solid Slug Shot: Popular with police for its use in blasting through barriers, shotguns can be loaded with solid slug ammunition rather than the usual pellets. This gives the weapon better armor penetration, but the recoil increases range modifiers in the same way as the Sternsnacht (p. 135).

Pump-Action Shotgun: The pump-action shotgun draws its ammunition from an internal magazine. The stock and a portion of the barrel can be removed to save a kilogram of mass, but at the cost of a permanent +1 TN Modifier and a halving of all ranges.

Gyrojet Weapons

Gyrojet guns are recoilless weapons that fire a self-propelled explosive-tipped projectile. They are often favored over standard slug-throwers because of their quiet operation and high damage potential. Ranges are also significantly increased because gyrojet projectiles do not drop off in velocity until they reach their maximum effective range. Gyrojet weapons are expensive to buy and operate, limiting their use to wealthy collectors and elite special-operations teams. An identifiable characteristic of the weapon is its cone-shaped exhaust plume. In bright light the projectile's exhaust trail can be seen: characters familiar with the weapon need only to make a Perception Check with a +2 Modifier, in addition to all other appropriate modifiers, to detect the approximate location of the shooter. With the aid of infrared sensing gear, the plume can be seen in all lighting conditions, and the Perception Check does not suffer the +2 penalty.

Gyrojet Pistol: Packing a significant punch, the gyrojet pistol is a virtual hand cannon. The bulky pistol is difficult to conceal.

Gyrojet Rifle: The standard cone rifle is the most common gyrojet weapon. Though several different manufacturers produce this weapon, because of the low demand there have been few advances in the design. In fact, they all make virtual copies of the same Star League-era rifle, the SI-445 designed by Heston, Inc.

Needlers

This is a vicious weapon outlawed on many planets. It fires a spray of tiny polymer flechettes, or needles, instead of a bullet. Needlers are quiet, making them the weapon of choice for many assassins. Ammunition consists of polymer-composite blocks that the weapon shreds and fires with a blast of compressed gas, making for a weapon with little to no recoil. The needler has the shortest range of any projectile weapon, making it impractical for anything but self-defense and close-quarters combat. It is ideal for combat aboard space-faring vessels: a needler's armor penetration is reduced to zero against barriers (see p. 121).

Needler Pistol: Lightweight and cheap, the needler pistol is a favored back-up weapon throughout the Inner Sphere and Periphery.

Needler Rifle: The rifle version of the needler holds a larger charge of compressed gas and has a greater range. The size makes it unpopular, as more powerful and smaller weapons are readily available.

ENERGY WEAPONS

The term "energy weapon" correctly brings the image of a laser to mind. They inflict damage with raw energy, usually heat, instead of a solid projectile. Laser weapons are popular but expensive. Soldiers prefer the laser because of its light weight and reliability. Most lasers are rugged and have few moving parts, significantly reducing the potential for breakdown. When they do malfunction, however, repairs cannot be accomplished easily in the field, as specialized skills and tools are required for all but the simplest of jobs.

Laser Weapons

The laser is the staple of the technologically superior army, with superior range and a powerful punch. However, lasers are expensive, placing them well out of the price range of most prospective users. In fact, some estimate that slug-throwers outnumber lasers in the Inner Sphere by more than 20 to 1 (25 to 1 in the Periphery).

All lasers can be set to fire a continuous beam as long as the trigger is held down, effectively turning the weapon into a cutting tool. In this mode, the weapon expends its standard power usage rating every 2 seconds—during this time it can make a 1.5 cm-long cut through a .5 cm-thick piece of steel.

Laser Pistol: The laser pistol is the typical sidearm for many pilots and officers in militaries throughout the Inner Sphere.

Laser Rifle: Standard issue in several large and well-financed militaries, laser rifles are popular, though expensive. They are "power hogs," virtually requiring soldiers to carry a number of additional power packs.

Blazer Rifle: Blazers are considered by many to be the ultimate hand-held weapon, despite their 7 kilogram mass. Essentially two laser rifles packed into one, Blazers deliver a tremendous punch at a respectable range using two stacked laser tubes. Unfortunately, they also consume power at an alarming rate. The user can fire a single barrel only if desired, treating the weapon as a laser rifle.

Pulse Laser Weapons

A significant improvement over standard lasers, pulse lasers literally pulse their beam instead of producing a constant one. This conserves power and inflicts more damage because targets are struck with multiple blasts. Unlike standard laser weapons, pulse lasers can fire bursts.

Pulse Laser Pistol: This is slightly larger and more expensive than a regular laser pistol.

Pulse Laser Rifle: Unlike other laser weapons, the pulse laser rifle has yet to gain widespread acceptance. The weapon's high cost and scarcity make it a weapon of the wealthy.

SUPPORT WEAPONS

Usually heavy and expensive, support weapons give foot soldiers a fighting chance against tanks, BattleMechs and other heavily armored obstacles. These weapons include machine-guns, lasers, particle beams and rockets. They are large and capable of inflicting great damage.

Grenade Launchers

The common foot soldier calls upon this weapon to get out of a sticky situation. Capable of firing a number of different munitions, the grenade launcher is an anti-armor weapon, demolition tool and portable artillery piece rolled into one. Most militaries issue at least one grenade launcher per infantry squad.

Compact Grenade Launcher: This is the most common launcher in use and comes in two models. The first resembles a large pistol with an extendable shoulder stock. The second is mounted underneath the barrel of a rifle and consists of just a barrel and trigger block. The launcher holds one round, and to reload, the shooter must spend a Simple Action to physically open the breech and insert a new round. Though compact grenade launchers use special grenades, for game purposes their effects are the same as minigrenades (below); damage, weight and cost are identical. However, these grenades cannot be thrown by hand.

Missile Launchers

Personal missile launchers, though bulky, are cheap, accurate and effective anti-armor weapons.

Light Anti-Vehicle Weapon (LAW): This inexpensive and disposable one-shot weapon offers infantry a fighting chance against armored adversaries. It is lighter and easier to fire than the SRM launcher, making it the most widely used anti-vehicle weapon.

SRM Launcher: The heavy SRM launcher fires the same ammunition as vehicle and 'Mech-class SRM launchers. It is very encumbering, and each missile weighs in at 10 kilograms, virtually requiring soldiers to set it up in an emplacement and have a vehicle close at hand to haul its ammunition.

Machine Guns

Dependable, inexpensive and easily repaired, heavy machine guns are the support weapon of choice for infantrymen.

Portable Machine Gun: Light enough to be carried by a single trooper, it can be found in almost every infantry squad—alongside the grenade launcher. It consumes a horrendous amount of ammunition, requiring a virtually constant supply (carried either in a vehicle or by other squad members).

Support Machine Gun: Mounted on vehicles and emplacement turrets, this is too massive for a single trooper to carry. It has an extraordinary range for a slug-throwing weapon and fires a round that can damage even heavily armored vehicles. The recoil rating accounts for built-in recoil compensation as well as a static mount; no additional recoil compensation can be added.

Lasers

While far more expensive than their machine-gun brethren, heavy support-class lasers can deliver an incredible amount of firepower. Conversely, they require an incredible amount of power. Even the heaviest of portable power packs provide them only enough charge for a few shots. The support lasers do, however, have a special port that allows them to plug directly into a vehicle or a building power system.

Support Laser: Like the support machine gun, the support laser is too heavy and bulky for an infantryman to carry. However, it can be mounted on battle-armor troopers' battlesuits.

EXPLOSIVES

High explosives are frequently used in combat. Civilians also use them for demolition of old buildings, removal of rock from work sites and even as spectacular light and sound shows during celebrations. Strictly regulated on most civilized worlds, high explosives are easy to obtain for those with the correct licenses or clearances. Many different explosive compounds are available, each with a different price tag. Some, like grenades, are available to the military only. Others, like flares, can be found just about anywhere.

Grenades

Grenades have been an infantryman's most portable support weapon for centuries. Small and lightweight, they are capable of devastating damage. As grenades are usually thrown, they are also one of the few weapons that rely on both the skill and the strength of the user. There are thousands of different grenades, though they fit into just a few main categories, and all share the same game mechanics. All grenades cause blast damage (p. 118) and can be thrown over obstacles as an indirect (p. 119) attack.

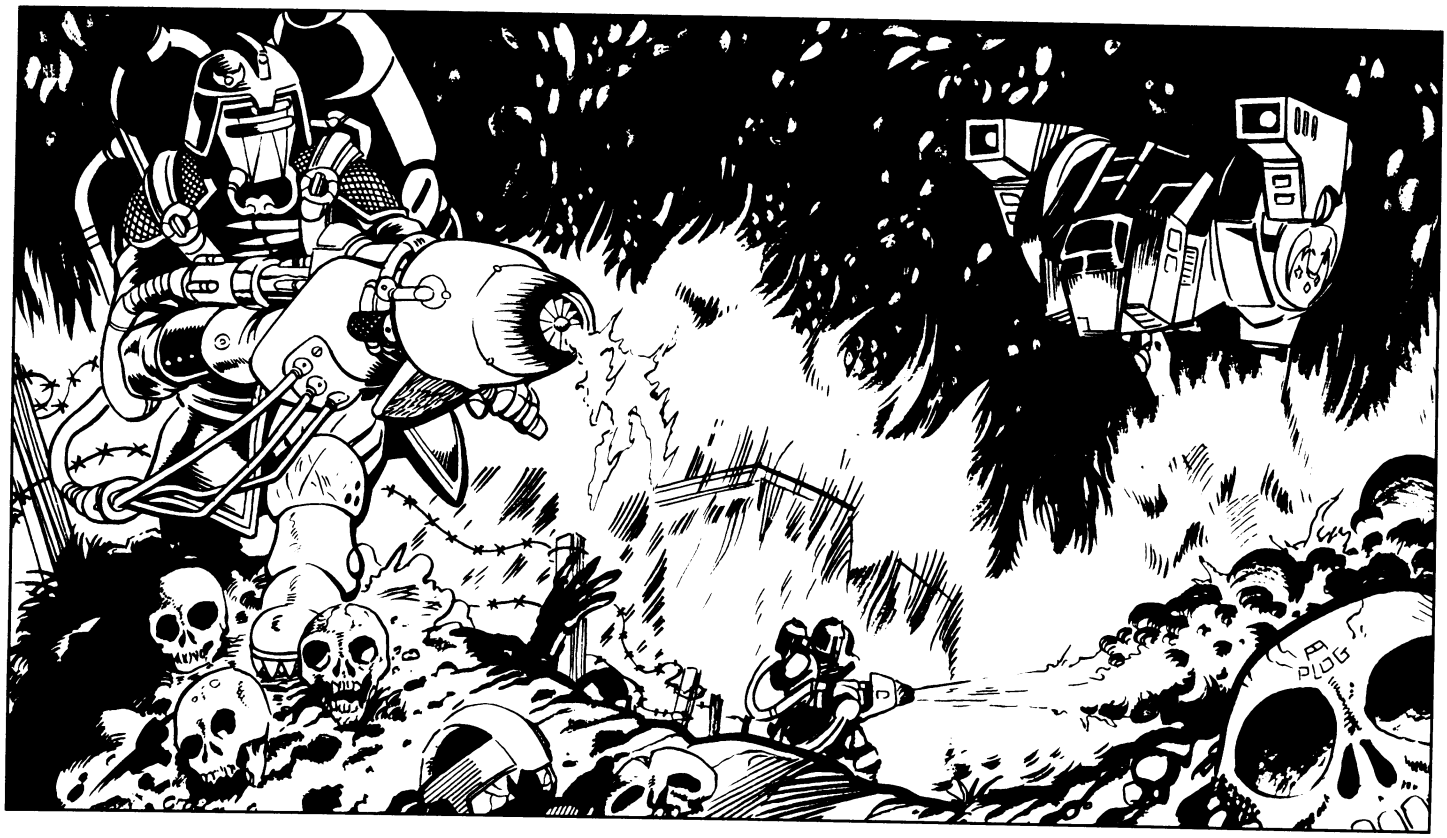
Grenade: The standard grenade is the largest and most commonly issued of high-explosive grenades.

Minigrenade: Slightly more than half the mass of the standard grenade, this has a slightly less powerful charge. It is, however, preferred by soldiers whose job it is to clear out bunkers and other confined spaces, as the blast is less likely to injure the thrower.

Microgrenade: Tiny in comparison to its bigger brothers, this is rarely used by military personnel. Undercover agents and criminals looking for a potent and concealable weapon are the microgrenade's biggest fans.

Demolitions

Demolition charges are designed to cut through or destroy buildings and vehicles. The explosions themselves are relatively contained, as any blast energy not directed at the "target" is considered wasted energy. As such, the AP and damage are reduced for every half-meter from the point of impact, rather than every meter as with other blast weapons.



Demolition Kit: The demolition kit is contained in an air-tight case and provides an engineer everything to set off an explosion—except for the explosives themselves. The kit includes enough detonators, blasting cord, wire, timers and other triggering mechanisms to set a dozen simple timed or fused explosions or three complex booby traps.

C8 Blasting Block: C8 is the explosive of choice throughout the Inner Sphere, even though it is expensive and hard to come by. C8 is a plastique, meaning it is pliable and can be molded into any shape and affixed to almost any surface. It is also very stable and can be dropped, or even set on fire, without fear of it exploding. It requires a special detonator.

Satchel Charge: This is essentially a bag that contains the equivalent of four blocks of C8 and a timer, commonly set for 15 seconds. Infantry units use satchel charges to cripple vehicles and BattleMechs, to create new doorways into a bunker or for dozens of other purposes. The charge must be physically placed on the target, however, potentially opening the soldiers up to deadly fire.

Miscellaneous

Though the following items are technically explosives, as they each contain some small pyrotechnic charge, they do not fit into any standard category.

Emergency Flares: Designed to simply burn, not explode, flares can mark a position or start a fire. Each will burn for 30 minutes. Because they contain their own oxygen supply, flares will burn in heavy rainfall and even underwater.

Flare Pistol: This pistol, included in many survival kits, fires a small aerial flare designed to attract the attention of someone up to ten kilometers away. These pistols come in many different styles, anywhere from the size of a large pen to a small revolver. Though not designed as a weapon, the flare itself does produce an intense flame and can cause serious damage to an unprotected human.

SPECIALIZED WEAPONS

Some weapons defy simple classification. They are meant for limited purposes, often driving their cost up and availability down.

Flamers

A flame thrower, or flamer, delivers a constant stream of burning chemicals and can cover several hundred square meters in very short order. Extremely effective in an anti-personnel role, the flamer's primary use is as a psychological weapon, preying on the nearly universal fear of being burned alive. All flamer weapons are incendiary (p. 119).

Man-Pack Flamer: Soldiers assigned this weapon must carry an encumbering tank on their backs that fuels the flamer itself. With the hit location rules, a critical hit (hit location roll of 2) strikes the fuel tank and causes it to explode—destroying the weapon and inflicting the flamer's damage as a blast effect (damage type X) from the soldier as the point of impact. An aimed shot can be made against the fuel tank with the same modifiers as a head shot.

Flamer Pistol: Flamer pistols are simply a cut-down version of the man-pack. They suffer from a shorter range and much smaller payload, but they are favored in some circles because of their smaller size.

Heavy Flamer: More akin to the flamers used by BattleMechs than the man-pack, the heavy flamer covers the same area but inflicts considerably more damage. The fuel used is even more volatile, making it hazardous to its crew. If the crew is hit by a ranged attack, the gamemaster rolls 2D10. On a result of 18 or greater, the heavy flamer's fuel source explodes and causes the heavy flamer's damage as a blast effect (damage type X) from the crew as the point of impact.

Sonic Stunner

The sonic stunner, like the stunstick, is a nonlethal weapon meant to render a target unconscious. It projects an ultra-high-frequency sound that can stun or knock out the target. The sonic stunner cannot cause wounds. It has the same potential to stun and knock out characters as the stunstick (see p. 134). Armor has no effect on a sonic stunner. Any character wearing battle armor or equipped with bionic replacements in both ears can filter out the sonic stunner's blast and is immune to the weapon.

WEAPON ACCESSORIES

A multitude of accessories and add-ons for just about any type of weapon are available. A few of the most common and useful accessories are listed here.

Holsters

Most holsters are worn on belts, though shoulder-style holsters are also popular. Concealable holsters, worn underneath clothing, are also available, accommodating small pistols.

JAF-05 Flash Suppressor

The JAF-05 was developed during the Star League era as a standard accessory that could be mounted to any SLDF infantry rifle—be it a laser or slug-thrower. Utilizing a number of advanced technologies, the JAF-05 can all but eliminate the muzzle flashes from slug-throwing rifles and even the chromatic burst from a laser rifle. As an added benefit, a sonic dampener reduces the report from slug-throwing rifles. A soldier equipped with a JAF-05 can operate at night with little chance of an enemy picking up on the sound or sight of his weapon fire. Characters must make a Perception Check at a +4 TN penalty to successfully notice someone using a JAF-05 (the +4 penalty is negated if the character making the roll is using an infrared detector, as the JAF-05 cannot mask the weapon's heat signature).

Night Vision Scopes

Night vision scopes function like standard telescopic scopes with night vision features (see *Night Vision Devices*, p. 149). Characters receive the night vision bonus only when firing the weapon; the scope is inconvenient to use otherwise, adding a +1 Modifier to Perception and other Checks.

Recoil Compensators

Burst-fire weapons are effective, but the recoil generated by firing a stream of projectiles at high speed is massive. Many devices have been developed to reduce the effect of recoil, with varying degrees of success. One of the most common kinds of recoil compensation is a gas-vent system that vents the weapon's barrel gases at a specific vector to counter barrel climb. Support weapons can benefit from gyroscopic harness mounts.

In game terms, if a weapon is equipped with any recoil compensation, it increases the cost and weight of the weapon by 10 percent, but the weapon's recoil rating is increased by one point. A weapon with a recoil rating of 2 (+1 TN Modifier for every two shots fired in a burst) fitted with recoil compensation would have a recoil rating of 3 and suffer instead a +1 penalty per three shots fired. In addition, recoil compensation makes a weapon bulkier and more difficult to conceal; apply a –3 TN Modifier to the Perception Check of any character trying to spot such a concealed weapon.

Silencer

Lower-tech than the JAF-05, but significantly more common and cheaper, the standard silencer has been around for more than a thousand years. It reduces the firing noise and muzzle flash of any slug-throwing pistol, rifle or SMG, such that Perception Checks have a +4 TN Modifier to detect the firing. However, a common silencer becomes useless after repeated use; if a character rolls a fumble while using a silencer, it ceases to function. A silencer adds to barrel length, making the weapon more difficult to conceal; apply a –2 TN Modifier to the Perception Check of any character trying to spot a concealed weapon with a silencer attached. The silencer can be carried separately and attached in combat, which is a Complex Action.

Telescopic Scope

Sometimes called sniper scopes, these magnify much like a pair of binoculars or a standard telescope. The scope is normally fitted to a rifle, allowing a shooter to better aim his or her weapon. Characters making use of a telescopic scope must be braced and stationary, but they gain a –2 Modifier to their TNs at medium, long and extreme ranges. Standard telescopic sights cannot be used in darkness, nor do they provide any electronic information. Other versions of these scopes are available (see *Night Vision Scopes*, above, and *Rangefinder Binoculars*, p. 149).

POWER PACKS AND CHARGERS

Energy weapons and electronic devices feed off a power source. Some can simply draw power from a common household or industrial outlet, though this option may be inconvenient or unavailable. Portable power packs fulfill the need to find a permanent source of power, though sooner or later their charge will dissipate. Once they run dry, power packs must be recharged before they can be used again.

Standard Power Packs

These standard batteries are the cheapest and most commonly available.

Power Pack: The common power pack is small and easily stored, typically the size of a pistol's grip and carrying enough charge to power most energy weapons for only a few shots.

Micro Power Pack: Designed for use in small hand-held devices, this pack holds slightly less charge than the standard power pack and is about the size of a coin. This compact design makes the micro pack more expensive than the standard model.

Military Power Pack: Military batteries hold the greatest charge and are also the largest, roughly the size of a backpack.

Satchel Battery: This holds a much greater charge than the standard hand-held power pack. About the size and weight of a full canteen, it is usually attached to a belt or a combat vest.

High-Capacity Power Packs

High-capacity (HC) batteries, which come in the same varieties as standard packs, hold a significantly larger charge. They are less common and more expensive.

Rechargers

Unless otherwise noted, only one power pack can be plugged into a single recharger at any one time. The recharger can provide up to the indicated number of power points per hour, regardless of how many power packs are attached. Rechargers can be used as direct power sources, but they provide only a limited supply per hour.

Fossil Fuel Recharger: Utilizing petroleum fuel, the fossil fuel recharger is a small two- or four-stroke engine that drives a dynamo, which in turn charges the battery. The fossil fuel recharger can accommodate up to three power packs.

Kinetic Recharger: The kinetic recharger works on the same principle as the fossil fuel recharger, but instead of having an engine to drive the dynamo, it instead needs to be manually cranked. It can accommodate up to three power packs.

Solar Recharger: The most expensive of its kind, the solar recharger is also the most cost-efficient. It relies on a supply of ultraviolet light generated by a solar system's primary star. It is fairly rare, and its usefulness may be restricted if the "sun" that it draws power from is often blocked by clouds (rending the solar recharger useless until the weather clears). The solar recharger can accommodate up to five power packs.

Standard Recharger: These "plug" into a standard electrical outlet, drawing the power needed to recharge a power pack from a building's electrical service.

Heavy-Duty Recharger: A heavy-duty recharger differs from the standard charger only in the fact that it can accommodate up to five power packs at a time.

ARMOR AND COMBAT GARB

The proliferation of weapons in the *BattleTech* universe means it is especially important to wear armor. Soldiers have an assortment of field uniform accessories; a few of the most commonly used are listed below.

PERSONAL ARMOR

Several different types of armor are produced throughout known space, each providing varying levels of protection. When choosing armor, cost is not the only factor to take into consideration, as the armors that provide the best protection are also the bulkiest and significantly limit mobility. On the other hand, the lightest armors have little impact on movement or dexterity and provide adequate protection against light pistols (and reduce the effectiveness of heavier weapons).

Armor comes in a number of styles. The armored vest is probably the best known and most common, protecting only the wearer's torso, though some of the heavier vests fully cover the upper half of the body, with coverage extending down past the groin. Armored jackets add arm protection. Armored pants cover the lower extremities, overlapping coverage with the vest or jacket at the waist. Armored suits provide the same protection as the jacket and pants when worn together, though the suits are often manufactured as one single body suit. Helmets, of course, protect the head.

Stacking Armor: It is acceptable to wear several pieces of armor at the same time, and in some cases these will overlap. The protection offered where the pieces overlap is not added together, but is rather the best protection of the individual pieces. In other words, wearing two flak jackets won't do much good, but wearing an ablative vest over a flak suit will offer additional protection from laser weapons that hit the torso. In this case, the armor values on the torso would be 3/5/6/3. Naturally, the weight of all armor worn is added for encumbrance, and no additional armor can be stacked if the character is wearing battle armor.

Flak Armor

Designed to protect the wearer from small-arms fire, flak armor is notoriously ineffective against high-power ballistic rifles and lasers. On the other hand, flak armor is cheap, lightweight and does little to inhibit movement as it is made of a special cloth weave. It is often used by people looking for protection on "backwater" worlds where there is little chance of going up against anyone with a laser or other modern weapon. Flak armor comes as a jacket, pants, suit and vest.

Ablative Armor

Ablative armor was developed in response to the proliferation of laser weapons. Consisting of thin ceramic and composite plates that are resistant to laser fire, ablative armor provides little protection against projectile weapons. Ablative armor's popularity has fallen since the introduction of ablative/flak armor. Ablative armor comes as a jacket, pants, suit and vest.

Ablative/Flak Armor

Ablative/flak armor combines the effectiveness of those types into a single style, making it popular for its versatility.

Though bulkier than its predecessors, the fact that it provides significant protection against every common hand-held weapon is a plus. Ablative/flak armor comes as a jacket, pants, suit and vest.

Ballistic Plate Armor

This consists of thick armor plates made from dozens of alternating layers of laminated carbon fibers and heat-resistant polymers that provide almost unequaled protection against even light support weapons. Plate armor interferes with movement, however, making it unsuitable for most infantrymen. On the other hand, it is ideal for urban fighting and other close-quarters combat where nasty surprises can lurk behind every corner. Many police agencies and special-forces teams issue ballistic plate armor to their tactical units. It is difficult to repair; if a piece of plate armor is reduced below half of its original value, it must be replaced. Ballistic plate armor comes as a suit and vest, and the standard-issue combat helmet is made of a similar material.

Leather Clothing

Leather coats, vests, shoes and gloves are made either from genuine animal hide or from synthetic substitutes.

Heavy Combat Gloves

Too bulky to be commonly worn, these gloves are a combination of flak and ablative plates. They are usually used by riot police and explosives teams.

LOAD-BEARING EQUIPMENT

Soldiers can become overloaded with all of the weapons, ammunition and supplies they are expected to carry. Specialized vests and backpacks can help a soldier carry the maximum possible load while keeping everything organized and easily accessible. Each of the load-bearing equipment items below can be worn over body armor or custom-built onto the armor itself.

Vest

Pouches mounted on the front and sides of the vest provide room for up to eight standard ammunition magazines or power packs and all the basic gear a soldier needs in the field. Mounting points on the back of the vest allow attachment of larger gear, such as military power packs and bedrolls.

Pack

Field packs, also known as rucksacks, can hold enough gear and supplies to keep a soldier functioning in the field for at least two weeks. They are easily attached to a load-bearing vest or packframe and are even easier to remove. Characters expend a Simple Action to drop the pack but must use a Complex Action to reattach it.

Packframe

The packframe is a frame on which a pack can be mounted. It permits a soldier to carry a greater load than just a vest, but it also restricts movement. Small equipment can be mounted on the pack's shoulder straps. Putting on or dropping the packframe is a Complex Action.

COMBAT UNIFORMS

No matter the unit or environment, the uniforms worn by combat troops across known space have similarities. The styles listed below can be found in almost any color and camouflage pattern imaginable and are readily worn with the multitude of different armors and load-bearing variations.

Jump Suit

This is a one-piece uniform popularized by pilots and mechanics.

Fatigues

Fatigues, with their multiple pockets and resilient fabric, are a two-piece uniform (shirt and trousers). They can be found in just about any exchange or even many large civilian clothing stores.

Combat Boots

These are heavy boots designed to protect the wearer's feet against the elements. They are tough enough to deflect some weapon attacks and also provide enough stability to prevent most common sprains and breaks.

Cold Weather Gear

Soldiers often find themselves in environments that require specialized clothing, else they fall victim to the environment. Extreme cold weather is one of the most difficult to adapt to. The following gear, while bulky, can allow a soldier to operate in temperatures down to –15°C.

Parka: These oversized coats are designed to fit over bulky uniforms and other cold-weather clothing. Most parkas include a hood that provides excellent head protection.

Snow Suit: This is a one-piece full-body suit. While extremely warm, these suits are designed to be worn over the most basic of undergarments, prohibiting the use of other clothing or armor.

BATTLE ARMOR

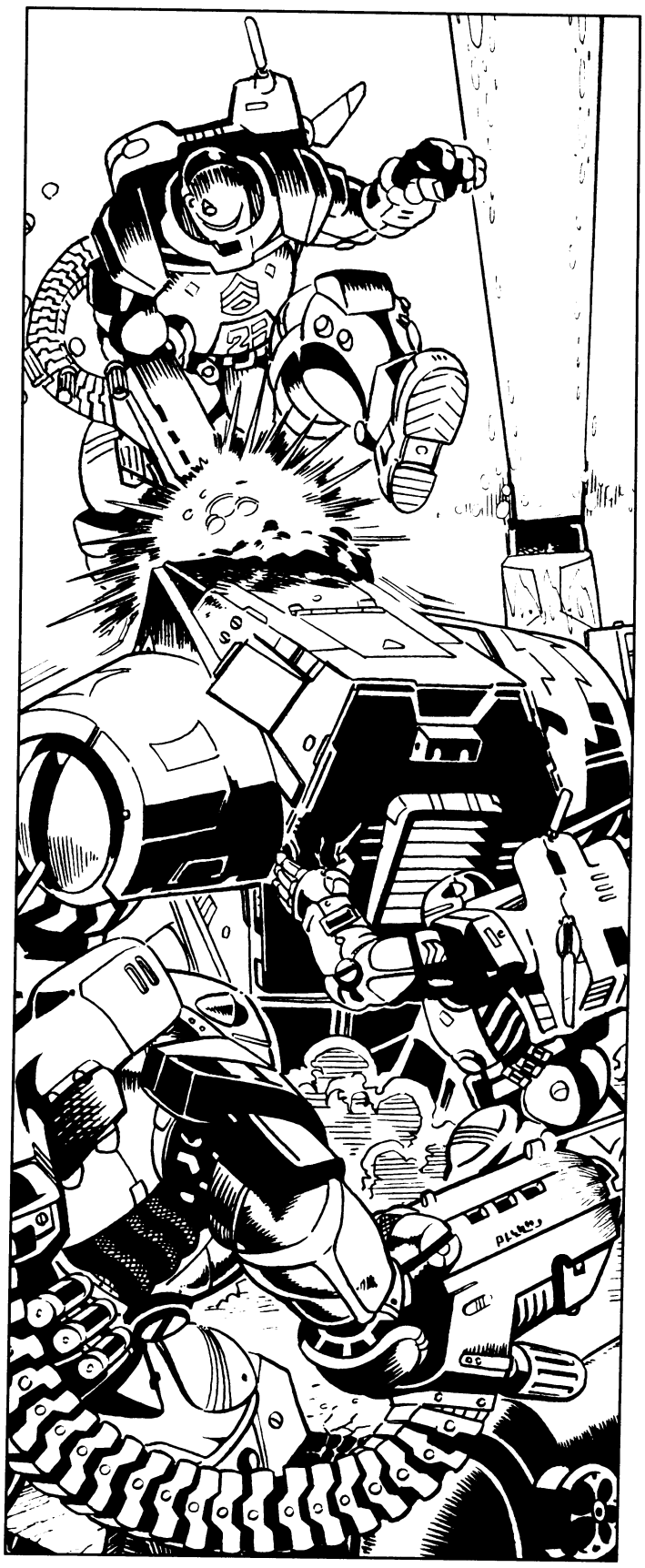
First designed and fielded by the Clans some two centuries ago, powered armor is still a relatively new concept to the Inner Sphere. The suit can withstand damage from the heaviest of weapons. While heavy and cumbersome, the suit is relatively flexible. The pilot's actions are translated into the myomer-enhanced movements of the suit, hence the term "power armor." Many designs are also equipped with jump jets, further enhancing their mobility.

The suits' combat capabilities make them feared across the Inner Sphere and Clan space. Even the lightest of power-armor suits mounts a support-class weapon, while the heaviest suits can mount SRM tubes and even 'Mech-class lasers. Most also have functioning hands or claws; when coupled with the

armor's enhanced strength, these can literally rip the armor plates off a 'Mech or vehicle.

The Clans have used the standard elemental battlesuit for more than a century; nearly every front-line—and even many second-line—unit has been issued the suits. The Inner Sphere powers have been manufacturing their own battle-armor designs for a decade, but the Successor States have only enough in service to equip a few of their elite regiments and special-forces units.

Power-armor troopers have special systems. For example, all suits are environmentally sealed, allowing them to function in space or underwater. A heads-up display (HUD) with infrared capabilities projects data to the trooper's screen. Advanced short-range tactical communications systems are built into every suit, while others can be easily fitted with longer-range and even satellite comm systems (though in the latter case, a portable dish would need to be set up). Built-in sensors monitor the pilot's condition, activating a medipack if circumstances warrant it. Clan power-armor suits are equipped with a more advanced medical system, as well as a mechanism that automatically seals all breaches in the armor with a substance known as HarJel. The suits' myomer-enhanced strength also provides an additional boost in melee combat.



Game Rules

Piloting a battlesuit is not an easy task. An armored infantry trooper must possess the skills to pilot the suit (Piloting/Battlesuit) and the physical strength and stamina needed to work it (BOD 6+, STR 6+). Characters without the appropriate Piloting Skill and/or high enough STR or BOD who are trying to pilot a suit will have a difficult time of it. Such a character will suffer a point of Fatigue every turn he moves faster than walking speed or fights in melee combat. In addition, if the character uses sprinting or evading movement, uses jump jets or fires any kind of support weapon from the suit, he must make a BOD Check or suffer a Grazing Wound from the stress the suit puts on his body.

Battlesuits are custom-fitted to their pilots, a potential problem to characters looking to simply "put one on and run with it." Most suits can, of course, be readjusted for a new pilot. This process can be completed in 1D6 x 10 minutes, though the assistance of an unarmored character with the Piloting/Battlesuit Skill will cut the time required in half. Using a suit not custom-fitted or adjusted inflicts a +2 TN Modifier to all Action Checks.

Standard Clan and Inner Sphere battle-armor suits have several universal hardpoints, allowing troopers to custom-configure their suits with weapons. Two different classes can be mounted: heavy armor-defeating weapons, such as missiles and lasers, and lighter secondary weapons for anti-infantry use. Each battlesuit can usually carry one primary and one secondary weapon, though some can carry more—the text for each suit will specify how many of each it can carry. Rechargeable power packs are provided for energy weapons, while mounting points and pouches are available for extra ammunition maga-

BATTLE ARMOR PRIMARY WEAPONS

BattleTech Weapon	MW3 Equivalent Weapon	Ammunition Provided
Flamer	Heavy Flamer	10
Machine Gun	Support Machine Gun	40
Small Laser	Support Laser	HC Military Power Pack
SRM 2	SRM Launcher	4

BATTLE ARMOR SECONDARY WEAPONS

Weapon Name	Ammunition Provided
Flamer	20
Gyrojet Rifle	20
Laser Rifle	HC Satchel Battery
Needler Rifle	40
Pump Shotgun	30
SMG	100

zines. Each trooper in the same squad or Point usually carries the same primary weapon, though the secondaries are commonly left up to the preference of the individual trooper. Commonly used primary and secondary weapons are listed on the Battle Armor Weapons tables. Characters use their appropriate Gunnery/Humanoid Skill when firing the primary weapon(s) but use the appropriate small-arms skill (Rifles, SMG and so on) when firing the secondaries.

Support weapons mounted on a battle-armor suit do not require a crew, nor do they encumber the user of the suit.

The advanced systems of a battlesuit allow its operator to use a Complex Action to fire any or all of the suit's weapons in a single turn, with a +1 TN Modifier applying to all such shots.

These primary and secondary weapons are specially designed for use with battle-armor suits. Acquiring the weapons is easy enough for individuals in units that employ power armor. However, they are difficult to come by otherwise. Characters with the appropriate Technician Skill (ballistic, laser or missile) can attempt to modify a standard weapon for use with a battle-armor suit. In addition to the weapon itself, the character will need specialized parts costing ten times the value of the weapon itself. The character then makes a Technician Check with a +2 Modifier, representing the difficulty in making the modification. If the roll succeeds, the weapon is modified. If it fails, the weapon will appear fully usable until it is fired, in which case it will fail. Gamemasters will determine the exact nature of the failure based on the MoF.

The suit itself significantly enhances its wearer's physical strength, though at a cost in manual dexterity. The description of each battlesuit lists the nature of these modifiers. Whenever engaging in a physical attack, the player must use the Martial Art/Battlesuit Skill.

The internal systems provide a number of benefits. The HUD improves the trooper's accuracy when using his integral primary and secondary weapons. All ranged weapon attacks are made at a –1 TN Modifier. Additionally, most suits have enhanced optics, providing the same benefits of rangefinder binoculars, infrared detectors and night vision goggles. Long-range military communicators are also built into each suit. Medipacks (for IS battlesuits) or LSSU (for Clan battlesuits; see p. 144) keep a trooper functioning at peak performance. The jump jets, for those suits fitted with them, function as the standard jump pack.

Battlesuits can be sealed to protect the wearer from extreme temperatures and environments. Each has its own onboard oxygen reserve, providing up to a dozen hours of air before needing to be recharged. Battlesuits can enter water but will sink to the bottom unless they are fitted with a raft or other flotation device. While underwater, characters must expend a Simple Action to walk at half the normal rate or a Complex Action to move at full walking speed. Jump jets will not work while submerged.

Clan Elemental Battle Armor

The standard Clan elemental battle-armor suit mounts one primary and one secondary weapon, plus a detachable SRM-2 pack. Treat the SRM pack as an SRM launcher that can fire one or two missiles in a turn and has one additional reload (thus the launcher carries a total of four missiles). Once the missiles have been expended, the launcher can be jettisoned to improve mobility.

The suit is equipped with a strong claw for climbing or ripping the armor plates from a 'Mech or vehicle. The battlesuit grants a +4 to the STR of the wearer and makes melee attacks with AP 2.

The suit also features integral jump jets.

Attributes: STR +4; DEX –1; RFL –1 until SRM pack is jettisoned, then normal RFL

Movement: –1 m to all movement rates until SRM pack is jettisoned

Inner Sphere Standard Battle Armor

Though modeled on the elemental battle armor, the Inner Sphere version can carry either one primary weapon or two secondary weapons. It does not mount an SRM pack.

The suit grants an STR bonus of +3 to the wearer and makes melee attacks with AP 2.

The suit also features integral jump jets.

Attributes: STR +3; DEX –2; RFL –1

Movement: –2 m to all movement rates

MEDICAL AND SURVIVAL EQUIPMENT

While science has come a long way, many of the tools and procedures used in medical treatment have not significantly

changed in centuries. Rules for the treatment of injuries can be found in *Healing*, p. 123.

BASIC EQUIPMENT

The most basic of medical equipment is enough to treat common injuries. In the case of serious and life-threatening injuries, at best these kits can be a stopgap measure that can keep a person alive long enough for someone with advanced medical training and equipment to take over.

Medical Kit

The personal medical kit contains enough bandages and other supplies to tend all minor wounds. It can also be used to keep a critically wounded character alive long enough for a medic or doctor to tend to the wounds. A character performing First Aid needs such a kit to avoid a Lack of Proper Equipment Modifier.

Advanced Medical Kit

This includes a more extensive array of equipment, including various drugs and basic monitoring equipment, and can be used by a combat medic to treat a critically wounded character. A character performing MedTech Skill needs such a kit to avoid a Lack of Proper Equipment Modifier.

Medipatch

This is a specialized drugpatch that should be applied directly to a wound. It contains several antiseptics, painkillers and other chemicals designed to fight infection and speed the healing process. A medipatch is consumed when used and applies a –2 TN Modifier to any First Aid or MedTech Skill Check.

Stimpatch

The stimpatch is another common variant of the drugpatch. It instantly introduces a powerful stimulant into the blood supply, meant to help rouse a person from Fatigue or unconsciousness. The stimpatch also injects a chemical meant to temporarily increase oxygen flow throughout the body. Use of a stimpatch will immediately allow a character to recover from a stun and reclaim 2 Fatigue points. Additionally, a character using a stimpatch will apply a –2 TN Modifier to any Knockout Checks. Characters can gain the benefits from only one stimpatch at a time. The effects of a stimpatch will wear off after 10 minutes.

An unconscious character can be awakened with a stimpatch, which requires only a Simple Action. However, the shock to the system means the character receives none of the other usual benefits of the patch.

Medipack

The medipack is a small, thin box, contoured to fit snugly to the thigh of a MechWarrior or aerospace pilot. It uses a number of different medical sensors to constantly monitor the condition of the wearer. Based on those observations, the medipack will administer a series of painkillers or stimulants, helping to keep the wearer alert and combat-ready. The pack can either draw power by plugging into a cockpit power jack or can use its internal battery, which works for up to 48 hours. The pack can dispense up to a dozen doses of medications before needing replenishment, though these medications must be replaced at least once a month whether used or not.

A medipack will deliver a dose of medication each time its wearer takes a wound or gets stunned. The dose will prevent the character from being stunned and will allow him to ignore all TN modifiers caused by Minor Wounds or less (Serious Wounds or worse have their usual effects). The wound value of all wounds still counts as usual. Finally, any Knockout Checks are made with a –2 Modifier to the TN, so long as the doses have not all been used up.

Clan LSSU

The Clans developed a more sophisticated version of the medipack, designated the Life Support Sustaining Unit (LSSU). Initially the LSSUs were only available to elementals, but Clan MechWarriors and pilots are now using this device. The Clan LSSU functions like the medipack (above), except it contains twice as many doses of medication.

Preserving Sleeve

Medics and doctors use the preserving sleeve to treat serious injuries to a limb until full care can be given. The sleeve is slipped over the injured limb and inflated, controlling any bleeding and stabilizing the limb. It will keep a Serious or Critical Wound to a limb free from infection for up to 36 hours (assuming the wound was initially treated successfully with First Aid to stop any bleeding). Additionally, the preserving sleeve can be set to apply heat or cold. A sleeve will immobilize a limb, preventing any further damage. The net effect is a –2 Modifier to the TN of the Surgery Skill Check to treat the wound.

ARTIFICIAL LIMBS

In preindustrial times, simple hooks or pegs served as replacement limbs. Now, prosthetic limbs perform all the functions of the original limbs. Despite advances in modern medical technology, artificial limbs cannot be made stronger than the original limb. Although super-strong limbs can be constructed, the remaining natural muscles in the wearer's body cannot accommodate the high stresses.

Any character with a Surgery Skill Bonus of 2 or higher can install a Type 1 artificial limb. More advanced limbs are available only in hospitals and must be fitted by a doctor with a Surgery Skill Bonus of 5 or higher.

Characters who receive artificial limbs must train for six weeks to gain full use of the new limb. Actions attempted before the end of the training period are resolved as if the character is still missing the limb.

If using the hit location rules (see p. 121), artificial limbs sustain damage as if they were natural limbs, losing function and being destroyed as usual by wound effects. However, with the exception of a Type 5: myomer replacement, damage to artificial limbs does not cause the character any wound value and

does not stun the character, nor must the character make a Knockout Check. Fatigue is sustained normally. A Type 5: myomer replacement functions as a normal limb for damage purposes.

Damage suffered by artificial limbs can be repaired with the appropriate skills, such as Technician/Electronics for Type 3 and 4 limbs. Damaged myomer limbs must be repaired at a specially equipped hospital and requires Surgery and Technician/Myomer Skills.

Modifiers to Action Checks for replacement limbs are based on the modifiers for the Lost Limb Trait (p. 83).

Type 1: Simple Limb

These primitive artificial limbs include rudimentary functional prostheses, such as hooks or pegs, and crude cosmetic replacements. Any target numbers that use DEX-related skills requiring the use of Type 1 limbs reduce the modifiers from the Lost Limb Trait by one. A character with a Type 1 leg cannot run, and his walking movement is reduced to one-third its original value. If the character has two Type 1 legs, his walking movement is reduced to one-eighth its original value. A character with two Type 1 legs must use a cane or crutches or make a successful RFL Check each turn to keep from falling.

Type 2: Useful Limb

These replacements perform more functions. For example, a Type 2 hand might be a mechanical claw, and a Type 2 leg might have springs to aid movement. A character with a Type 2 hand cannot use some equipment, such as guns, because finger holes might be too small. Some devices might have keyboards that require fingers. However, characters can acquire equipment modified for use with Type 2 limbs. Typically, such equipment costs twice as much as standard equipment. Any target numbers that use DEX-related skills with the use of Type 2 limbs reduce the modifiers from the Lost Limb Trait by two. A character with a Type 2 leg cannot run, and his walking movement is reduced to one-half its normal value. The walking movement of a character with two Type 2 legs is reduced to one-fourth of the original value.

Type 3: Prosthesis

A Type 3 replacement is shaped and operates like the original limb, but it is made from dull, flesh-colored plastic. This replacement enables a character to use all equipment he could normally operate with a natural limb, although his actions are somewhat slower. Any target numbers that use DEX-related skills reduce the modifiers from the Lost Limb Trait by three. A character with a Type 3 leg can walk and even run at normal speed. Characters with two Type 3 legs cannot run, however.

Type 4: Advanced Prosthesis

These metal and plastic limbs do not look like flesh and blood, but they can be covered with a fairly convincing latex sheath at a nominal cost. Close inspection or combat damage reveals the limb as artificial. A Type 4 replacement functions with slightly less dexterity than the original but can perform all the same functions. Any target numbers that use DEX-related skills reduce the modifiers from the Lost Limb Trait by three. There are no restrictions on movement.

Type 5: Myomer Replacement

Myomer replacements are prohibitively expensive but are the most lifelike. An additional 5,000 C-bills per limb buys detailed cosmetic finishing that makes the replacement virtually indistinguishable from the original without a medical examination. Characters with Type 5 limbs have no limitations or restrictions on movement or motor control. For all practical purposes, the Type 5 replacement functions as a natural limb.

BIONIC EAR REPLACEMENT

A functional replacement for the human ear has been available for hundreds of years. Modern technology has improved the device so that hearing can be fully restored with no difference in sound tone or quality. Only characters with a Surgery Skill Bonus of +4 or higher can implant these devices, and they must do so in a hospital. A successful Surgery Action Check means the ear replacement succeeds. A failed roll indicates that the replacement surgery is unsuccessful and additional attempts will not succeed.

BIONIC EYE REPLACEMENT

Bionic eyes have been available for the past 600 years, but their complexity has made them expensive and rare even among the Clans. These implanted replacements perform as well as human eyes, but only the best medical facilities can support the complex surgery bionic-eye installation requires. Implanting bionic eyes requires a minimum Surgery Skill Bonus of +5 and a hospital. A +2 TN Modifier applies to the Surgery Check. A successful roll indicates the implantation succeeds. A failed roll indicates that the replacement surgery is unsuccessful and additional attempts will not succeed.

ADVANCED MEDICAL TOOLS

The tools listed below are designed for doctors and other highly trained medical professionals.

Laser Scalpel

The laser scalpel is the perfect tool for surgeons (and even hobbyists), but it has little to no use as a weapon due to its extremely limited range.

Field Surgical Kit

Doctors do not always have the luxury of using their skills in hospitals. The field surgical kit provides all of the basic tools a doctor needs when a hospital is either unavailable or too distant. Surgeons in the field who use this kit, in addition to a portable medical monitor and life-support unit, suffer no skill penalties for Lack of Proper Equipment and actually gain a –2 bonus to any medical skill TNs.

MEDICAL MONITORS

Though doctors are trained to diagnose medical problems, unless the wound is readily visible they may not be able to accurately size up the situation. However, a number of diagnostic machines are available to help. These machines are capable of looking inside a patient without the need for any incisions and can provide immediate information to the physician.

Portable Medical Monitor

The size of a briefcase, this displays the patient's vital information. Doctors stationed in remote regions rely on them.

Life-Support Unit

Medevac teams that transport critically injured patients use these. They are not easily portable—at least without the use of a vehicle. A life-support unit can supply oxygen, transplanted blood and medicines to a patient and has the capability to deliver both cardiac and neural shocks, hopefully keeping the patient alive until better-trained medical personnel can treat him or her. Use of a life-support unit extends the time a dying character can survive (see *Emergency Care*, p. 123) to WIL x 15 minutes. If used in conjunction with a portable medical monitor, medtechs working in the field suffer no skill penalties for Lack of Proper Equipment and actually gain a –1 bonus to any medical skill TNs.

SURVIVAL GEAR

Whether on an uninhabitable planet, in a room filled with gas or simply camping in the mountains, characters will need some amount of specialized gear. The following will help them survive all but the worst environments.

Basic Field Kit

Some equipment is absolutely necessary if a person is to survive in the wilderness. The basic field kit contains all of those items for one individual. This includes a compact sleeping bag, canteen, fire-starting devices, a knife, two days' worth of emergency nutrition tablets and so on. A character with this kit can use the Survival Skill without suffering a Lack of Proper Equipment Modifier.

Advanced Field Kit

The advanced field kit includes all of the same items as the basic kit but has enough equipment for a person to survive several weeks in the wild. Some of the items included are an inflatable mattress, thermal blankets, miniature stove and lantern and the like—all packaged in a single rucksack. This item allows a character to use the Survival Skill without suffering a Lack of Proper Equipment Modifier.

Bubble Tent

Relatively lightweight and easy to set up, bubble tents provide shelter even in the harshest environments. The tent must be set up in an environment in which a human can breathe. The tent contains a climate-control system that can bring extreme temperatures into the realm of comfort for the average human and even has a basic sanitary subsystem attached. This climate-control system uses a fair amount of power, requiring either frequent rechargings or attachment to a constant power source; the unit usually runs off a satchel battery. A bubble tent is resilient against cuts and tears. They are manufactured in a number of different sizes, though the largest can only accommodate a maximum of a dozen occupants (not taking into account personal gear, which can easily take up occupant space).

Filter Mask

Commonly known as a gas mask, a filter mask is designed to remove most of the impurities from a normally breathable atmosphere. The mask covers the wearer's entire face and includes clear eye lenses that can accommodate external equipment such as night vision devices. It can be worn with a standard combat helmet. A special filter system, which must be changed every 24 to 72 hours—at the gamemaster's discretion, based on the level of contamination—provides protection against most atmospheric taints, though it affords little defense against biological agents.

Respirator

Where filter masks simply make the air more breathable, respirators draw oxygen from their own internal supply, allowing a person to operate in a vacuum, at extremely high altitudes or even underwater. Like filter masks, respirators commonly cover the wearer's entire face. Because its air supply is self-contained, the wearer will not fall prey to any atmospheric contaminants (though some contaminants will attack any skin not protected by an environment suit). The respirator includes a tank that can provide 4 hours of breathable air. Additional tanks can be worn, but these increase the mass of the respirator system and automatically encumber the wearer; up to three total tanks can be worn, but this makes the character very encumbered.

Environment Suits

Environment suits seal the wearer in an airtight suit that protects against hostile environments and biological and chemical agents. They do not restrict the wearer's motions, and they afford an unobstructed view from a polarized faceplate. An air supply must be attached, such as an air tank or a direct connection to a ship's life-support system. These suits work on an overpressure principle, helping to ensure that if the suit is somehow punctured, any possible contaminants are prevented from entering. Environment suits worn in areas where biological weapons were used are normally destroyed to prevent any accidental contamination of "clean" areas.

Light Environment Suit: This is the most commonly used suit of its ilk, designed for standard and low-pressure environments only. These suits are constructed from resilient polymers that maintain enough flexibility to allow wearers a full range of motion. They can be worn over standard work clothing, though frequent users commonly wear only light garments under their suits to keep from overheating.

Personal Environ Bag

A component in many survival kits, the personal environ bag is a one-man shelter similar to the bubble tent. Commonly referred to as the "body bag," this emergency shelter is literally just large enough for one person to barely fit into, and it can keep that person alive in a hostile environment, assuming the bag is kept charged and enough food is available.

Climbing/Rappelling Kit

The kit contains one hundred meters of high-tensile-strength cord, a harness, ascenders and descenders, pitons, hand and foot spikes and other minor components. These kits must be replenished (pitons are left behind, spikes are worn down and so on) after each use for 15 C-bills. Any equipped character making a Climbing Action Check applies a –2 Modifier (Excellent Equipment on Hand) to the target number.

Electronic Compass

The compass is perhaps one of the most important pieces of equipment to both the infantryman and outdoorsman. On worlds without any modern navigation or communications satellites in place, the compass will point in a known direction based on the magnetic poles. As long as a fairly detailed map is available, the compass user will be able to navigate. If electronic beacons are in place, the electronic compass will also tell its user exact planetary coordinates. Characters with a compass can use the Navigation Skill without suffering a Lack of Proper Equipment' Modifier. If detailed maps are also available, the gamemaster might apply an Excellent Equipment on Hand Modifier.

Emergency Rations

Emergency rations come in a few different styles. The cheapest and smallest are supplement pills, which provide for all of the nutritional needs of the average person but do little to sate the appetite. More expensive, but also far bulkier, are individual ration packets. These contain entire preserved meals—either dehydrated or hermetically sealed—that can be consumed right out of the package or heated and served in a more civilized fashion. No matter the style, while emergency rations are enough to sustain soldiers and others in the field, they are universally hated and are shunned if any sort of "real" food is available.

TOOLS AND GEAR

Every *MW3* character needs more than just weapons and a first-aid kit. Many of the items characters will use are covered in this section.

COMMUNICATIONS

A myriad of different communications systems can be found across the thousands of inhabited systems of the galaxy, each filling a different niche. Satellites or orbiting spacecraft relay transmissions to isolated locations and link the planet to any other settlements throughout the system.

Almost every industrialized world, and certainly most military bases, will also have a wireless network connected to the wired network, giving people the ability to talk to just about anyone on the planet. However, characters might find that the communicators they buy on one world do not work with the network in place on another.

Most military units, and many corporations, use an independent system for their communications. The equipment can vary from simple radios, which work only on a line-of-sight basis, to advanced models that combine laser, microwave and low-frequency transceivers. Many of these communicators use some form of encryption or scrambling to help ensure that even if their enemies intercept their transmissions, the data cannot be decoded.

Civilian Equipment

Civilian communications equipment is cheap and readily available on most modern worlds. However, it cannot interface with the advanced systems used by military and corporate agencies.

Civilian Communicator: Pocket-sized and relatively inexpensive, civilian communicators are a standard. They transmit only on the radio spectrum, and for the most part they are only capable of voice transmissions. Some exorbitantly priced models do, however, have a camera and vid-screen built in—and are available for five times the cost. These normally make use of a public communications network. Alternatively, members of a group can communicate directly with one another by simply choosing a different setting, forgoing use of the comm net entirely. Use in this mode is limited to a range of only ten kilometers.

Civilian Microcommunicator: These operate the same as the civilian communicator, except they are much smaller. Most are easily concealed as buttons on clothing or worn as jewelry. None has the capacity to receive video, though some do have built-in cameras. If used outside a comm network, they only have a range of two kilometers.

Standard Vid-Phone: Nearly every home and office has at least one video phone.

Advanced Equipment

More expensive than the commonly available civilian equipment, but also much more secure, these pieces of advanced communications equipment provide the necessary link between soldiers and their commanders.

Military Communicator: The personal communicator is issued to just about every soldier and police officer. It is capable of transmitting a scrambled signal on a multitude of frequencies and can be hand-held or built into a soldier's helmet. The range is ten kilometers, even outside a local comm net. Common accessories include remote earphones and microphones.

Military Microcommunicator: Microcommunicators are tiny transceivers commonly used by anyone who wants to maintain a low profile. They can be concealed in just about any type of clothing, or even hidden in a person's ear. Military microcom-

municators have a limited range—no more than two kilometers—requiring the use of repeaters such as a nearby character with a field communicator.

Field Communicator: This model is more powerful and capable than the military communicator and is typically used by field commanders to coordinate with their units and superiors. Its advanced systems allow the user to simultaneously monitor up to six different channels, send and receive data-burst transmissions and even transmit video from a camera or an electronic scope (such as NVD goggles or telescopic sights). This communicator can also act as a repeater, receiving specific coded signals and automatically re-transmitting them, either on the same frequency or on a different one, up to twenty-five kilometers.

Long-Range Communications Kit: Normally used at the company level and higher, long-range kits not only have the best overland range of any man-portable communications device but can also make contact with spaceborne vessels and satellites. This long-range kit can simultaneously monitor more than two dozen frequencies and can transmit and receive video signals, in addition to all of the other capabilities of the field communicator. Two dishes provide the means for orbital microwave or laser communications, offering effectively unlimited range, though characters must attach a support laser to the kit in order to *make* laser transmissions to orbiting craft.

TOOLS

The tool kits and equipment listed below contain just about everything a tech or mechanic would need—other than spare parts—to repair almost any piece of advanced machinery.

Basic Tools

Many repairs and modifications can be accomplished with rudimentary tools. Almost anyone who drives or pilots a vehicle keeps a tool kit handy just in case, and tinkerers and handymen use these kits to make their modifications or build their projects.

Basic Tool Kit: This contains a variety of simple tools and fittings commonly used in repairs and construction projects. This kit also includes a tool belt/vest combination with enough hooks and compartments to hold all of the included tools and supplies. A character performing any Technician Skill needs such a kit to avoid a Lack of Proper Equipment Modifier. Certain large jobs will require a repair kit at the gamemaster's discretion.

Deluxe Tool Kit: Where the basic tool kit is enough for simple jobs, the deluxe tool kit contains everything else a professional mechanic or tradesman needs. Many of the basic tools are duplicated in this kit, but a multitude of additional specialized tools, including many powered tools and accessories, are also included. The deluxe tool kit comes with its own portable storage container. A character performing any Technician Skill not only avoids a Lack of Proper Equipment Modifier but also gains a –1 TN Modifier for using a deluxe kit. Certain large jobs will require a repair kit at the gamemaster's discretion.

Hand-Held Laser Torch: The personal laser torch has fast become one of the most popular tools on the battlefield. Immensely useful for both cutting apart and welding pieces of metal such as armor plates and structural pieces, this has become standard gear for many pilots and soldiers. In cutting mode, the laser torch expends its power use rating every turn, and in that time it can make a ten-centimeter-long cut through a centimeter-thick piece of steel. In welding mode, it consumes half its power rating every turn, but it can only join five centimeters of metal together in that time.

Repair Kits

While basic tool kits are enough to make simple repairs, they fall far short when it comes to fixing advanced pieces of equipment such as BattleMechs and aerospace fighters. Each particular type of system requires particular skills to use and its own set of specialized tools and spare parts. Repair kits are far too massive to be carried, requiring their own carts. These kits must be restocked every three months—assuming the kits are used weekly to either repair or maintain the advanced equipment. Restocking costs 20 percent of the original price of the kit. Repair kits come in the following types: aerospace, cutting/joining, electronics, myomer/actuator, vehicle and weapon.

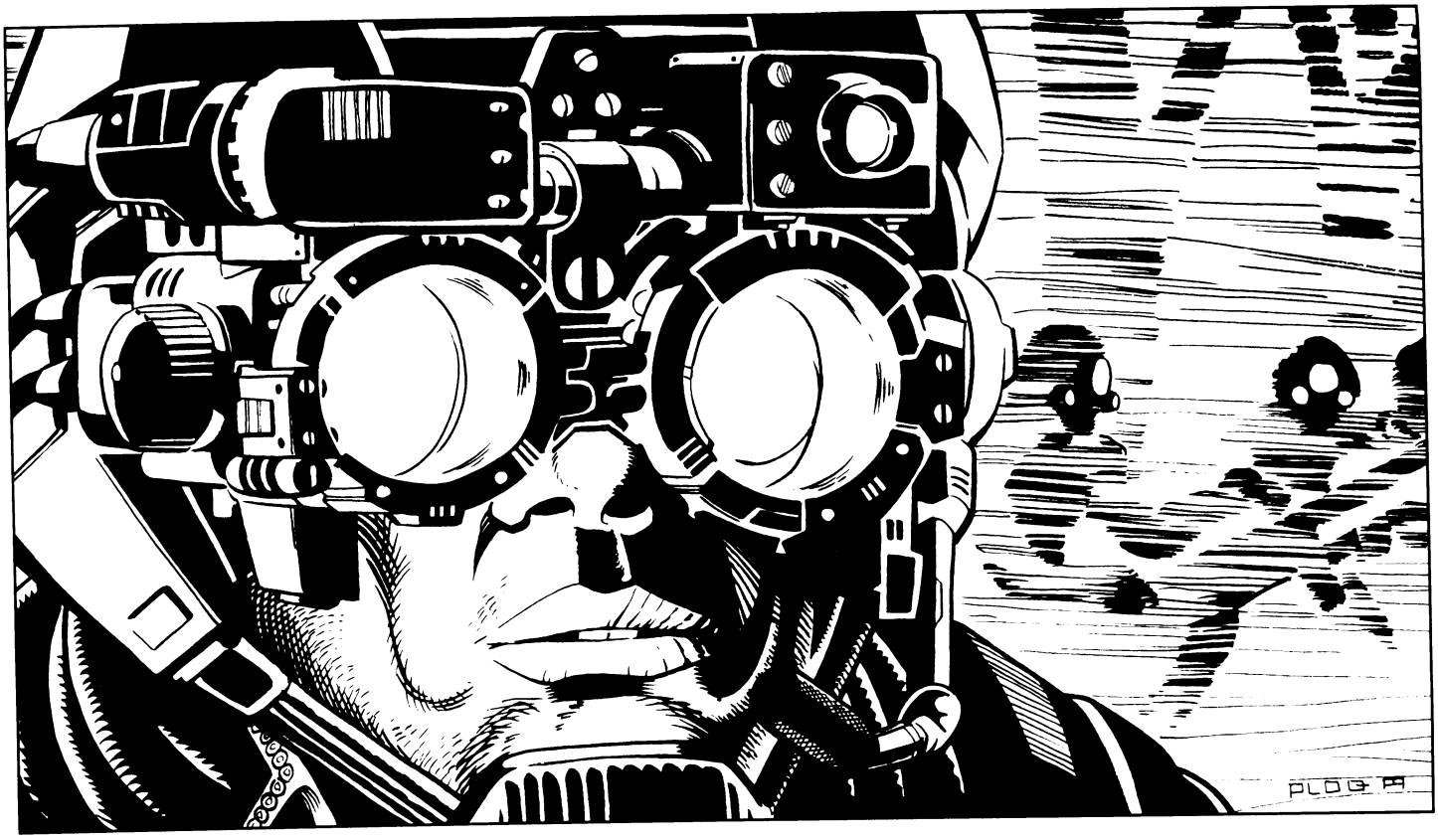
Weapon Cleaning/Service Kits: No matter how reliable a weapon is, after days or weeks of constant use without cleaning, it will jam or fail. Every foot soldier carries the basic tools to keep his weapon in good shape. The basic skills to clean and service weapons are included with the weapon skills themselves. Characters with the Gunsmith or appropriate Technician Skills can also use these kits to adjust or modify their weapons. Both energy weapon and slug-thrower kits are available; each kit has everything a soldier needs to keep a frequently used weapon clean and functioning for up to a year. The kit can be refilled for 25 percent of the cost of the entire kit.

Electronics

Noteputer: Though not used specifically to repair a damaged piece of machinery, the ubiquitous noteputer is every bit as useful as spanners and saws. Characters can use this to reference electronic books, compose letters, send and receive data messages (if connected to a communications device), play games or even play musi- and vid-chips. Commonly measuring fifteen centimeters square, most models can be folded and stored in pockets, and most have the capability to read from and write to standard data chips.

Personal Computer: Much larger than a simple noteputer, personal computers perform all the same functions but are less expensive and usually more capable. When using Academic Skills or conducting research, characters can gain skill modifiers for using a personal computer with access to the appropriate software, at the gamemaster's discretion.

Scanalyzer: This is a powerful analytical device used by doctors and engineers. Characters insert a small amount of the material they wish to analyze into the scanalyzer. After 4D6 turns of analyzing, the device produces a list of the substance's elemental and molecular components, its flash and melting points, conductivity and radioactivity and a host of other reports. The scanalyzer is barely smaller than a standard briefcase, making it



popular with engineers and scientists who work extensively in the field. Having a scanalyzer on hand offers a –1 TN Modifier (Excellent Equipment on Hand) to any relevant Skill Check.

OPTICS

The human eye is one of the finest instruments, but it can see only so far and in only so many spectra. Literally thousands of different manmade instruments have been manufactured to enhance the naked eye, but only a few of those have survived the years.

Rangefinder Binoculars

Rangefinder binoculars combine the principles of optical magnification with several microelectronic devices. The magnification and focus are easily adjusted by two controls. With the 400-power zoom, characters can see just about anything out to the horizon on a clear day. A tiny infrared laser is measures the exact range of whatever object is highlighted under the cross hairs, while other information, such as approximate wind direction and speed, temperature and relative light level are also displayed. Any of these readouts can be enabled or disabled by the push of a button. The rangefinder includes night vision circuitry as well as an infrared detector that can identify concealed heat signatures at long ranges. At a range of twenty-five meters, it can pick up on the heat given off by a rodent, or even the footsteps of a human who walked by within the past ten minutes. It can pick up an animal the size of a human at a kilometer, while animals or vehicles the size of an elephant could be detected up to several kilometers away. Active 'Mechs can even be seen ten or more kilometers away. Weather and heat status can affect the information.

Night Vision Devices

Night vision devices (also called NVDs) are used by both civilians and soldiers. They operate on a number of different principles, but the net effect is a virtual transformation of night into day. Characters using NVDs are not subject to any darkness penalties, though other conditional modifiers still count, such as fog or rain.

NVDs have several drawbacks. Colors cannot be distinguished while using an NVD—at least not without a sophisticated computer not usually available to a grunt in the field. Depth perception is also hampered, a characteristic that can surprise someone not used to using an NVD. On the other hand, the fact that virtually all penalties for darkness are negated by the use of one makes up for those deficiencies. Characters firing a ranged weapon receive a +1 cumulative TN Modifier at each range bracket (+1 at short range, +2 at medium range and so on), while they receive a standard +1 TN Modifier when performing any other delicate action that relies on fine eyesight.

Night vision scopes for weapons are described on p. 139.

Goggles: Almost every modern military issues NVD goggles to their soldiers when night combat is expected. The goggles can be attached to a helmet or worn on a headband.

MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT

Lock Picks

Lock picks have come a long way over the years. Of course, a laser pistol or block of C8 can usually accomplish the same job—it's just noisier and leaves evidence behind.

Basic Lock Pick Set (Vibro Lock Pick Set): The basic set contains picks, probes, bars, wrenches, pliers and the like; in short, everything needed to bypass a mechanical locking mechanism. For cases where less subtlety is required, a small vibroblade that can cut through a lock's internal workings can be included (for a substantially greater price). This kit allows a character to use the Security Systems Skill on mechanical locks without suffering a Lack of Proper Equipment Modifier.

Electronic Security Bypass Kit: This electronic set looks like a small noteputer or calculator and includes leads that can be attached to a lock's terminals. Additionally, the kit often includes a small driver set and other manual tools designed to remove faceplates and access panels. With this, characters can use the Security Systems Skill on electronic locks and other security devices such as motion detectors without suffering a Lack of Proper Equipment Modifier.

Jump Pack

The jump pack, developed several hundred years ago, gave infantrymen the ability to overcome just about any obstacle in their way. The jump pack is a backpack thruster unit that can either assist a person in making powerful leaps or allow him to fly through the air. Any use of a jump pack is extremely noisy, making a stealthy approach impossible. A jump pack contains 1,000 fuel points.

The assisted jump mode is the most common and fuel-efficient way to use the pack. The soldier launches himself from the ground and travels up to a hundred meters in any direction, passing over obstacles as tall as twenty meters. Characters can make one such powered leap each turn at the cost of a Simple Action and can land with any desired facing. They must make a successful Jump Pack Skill Check with modifiers based on the landing site's terrain. Each such jump expends 5 fuel points.

Alternatively, characters can use the pack to fly, an extremely dangerous maneuver that also consumes quite a bit of fuel. Characters must take off just as with the assisted jump and can travel up to one hundred meters in that first turn. Instead of landing, however, they choose to remain in the air. Once airborne, the character can fly up to 150 meters per turn but must make a successful Jump Pack Check to maintain a controlled flight. An unsuccessful roll means the character careens out of control. If the MoF was 2 or less, he or she simply loses control and must expend a Complex Action and make a successful Control Check next turn to regain control. If the MoF was 3 or more, the character slams into the ground (or some other obstacle) and suffers falling damage. Characters can also hover and can land at any time. Each turn of flight (or hovering) requires a Simple Action. The jump pack expends 2 points of fuel per ten meters flown, with a minimum of 10 points expended per turn.

Disguise/Make-up Kit

This includes all of the basic materials a make-up artist needs to create prosthetic pieces and wigs. Attempts to disguise someone as a specific person are impossible without such a kit. Making a disguise that simply alters a character's appearance is easier, and the kit gives a –2 Modifier to the TN of such a Disguise Skill Check. The kit includes enough supplies to create four disguises before it needs to be replenished at a cost of 250 C-bills.

Parachute

The most common form used today is the parafoil, which deploys on command and can allow an experienced user with the Free Fall Skill to glide on thermals and wind currents for extended periods of time.

Forgery Kit

The forgery kit should be used in concert with a noteputer. It includes a variety of inks, papers, magnetic and electronic readers and writers, optical scanners and just about everything else needed to forge passes and authorizations. A character using the forgery kit receives a –2 Modifier to the TN of a Forgery Skill Check. The kit is required for complex forgeries of official documents or licenses. It includes enough supplies to create up to ten complex or thirty simple forged documents before it needs to be replenished for 25 percent of the cost of the entire kit.

Verigraph

This is perhaps the most advanced security device in operation. It attaches to electronic documents and makes it impossible for someone other than the intended recipient to access the data. The verigraph itself is a thin chip that scans the DNA of the person trying to access the information it is guarding. If this scan matches the stored DNA signature that was "burned" into its circuitry, the verigraph will allow access. A person trying to break into the data can bypass the verigraph if he possesses the appropriate training, which is why such information is usually encrypted as well. Any such manipulation would be blatantly obvious to anyone later trying to access the same information. Verigraphs, because they are almost impossible to forge (+10 TN Modifier), are usually built into passports and other forms of important identification. Verigraphed documents are almost universally accepted as identifications all across the Inner Sphere and Periphery.

EVERYDAY LIFE

Every *MW3* character has a personal life. While the cost of living may vary widely across the stars, the items listed in this section represent the average for what can be found in the middle-class areas of most major cities. The items and services listed below are the same as found in society now, unless otherwise noted.

CLOTHING

Just about every type of clothing a character might wear can be found on the table on p. 156, from casual clothes to work clothes with several pockets to hold tools and odds and ends.

FOOD

Characters will have to eat, and bars and restaurants also make good settings for meeting contacts. Except where noted, the costs listed on the table (p. 156) are per meal.

Soldiers usually have little choice in where they dine, at least while they are on maneuvers. Mess halls are usually only set up in the field for company-sized or larger units. All active military bases also have them. Many mess halls are notorious for serving poor meals.

HOUSING

Housing in the *BattleTech* universe is remarkably similar to present-day housing, whether an apartment, a condo or a house. Likewise, military housing is the same, whether barracks, private apartments or prefabricated housing communities.

Hotels

Tube: The "tube" is literally no larger than a coffin, giving a person just enough room to sleep. Complexes full of tubes are often built in spaceports or jump-point stations. They are also built in ghettos, giving transients and other homeless a free, if not clean, bed. The tubes themselves are lockable, with a small adjacent compartment for luggage. Each floor of one of these complexes can hold up to a hundred tubes, in addition to bathroom facilities and a common area. There is no room service and no concierge. Except for those operated on major space stations and aerodromes, most of these tube complexes are rather run-down and are often populated by an unsavory crowd (making them a great place to find underworld contacts).

Dive: Dives are better than tubes as you at least get a private room. Managers often give rates by the hour, the night or the week. Service is poor at best, and anyone renting a room should not expect clean linens. On the other hand, the residents and employees are used to minding their own business, a characteristic that makes these hotels popular with people who don't want to attract attention.

Standard: Characters can expect a few more amenities from a standard hotel. The hotel is kept clean, room service is available (if expensive) and employees are usually helpful.

High-Class: Expensive high-class hotels are popular with businessmen and vacationers because of the amenities. They have their own fine-quality restaurant, laundry services, complimentary transportation to and from major sites, a helpful and knowledgeable concierge, private conference rooms and a host of other services. These hotels do not easily tolerate disruptions, but they will handle any problems with discretion (offending characters will often face criminal charges and a substantial bill for damages).

Luxury Suite: Most of the top hotels have their uppermost floors dedicated to luxury suites. A suite has a large living room, two or more bedrooms, a full kitchen or kitchenette and a bar. The largest encompass entire floors and have private elevators and parking areas.

Base Officer/Enlisted Quarters

Military personnel sometimes travel as part of a large unit, in which case they will either live in the field or bunk in common quarters. Other times, they travel alone or with a small detachment. Every military base has special transient quarters set aside for this. The type of billeting and service available are on par with a standard hotel, though the rates are much less. Only military personnel and their dependents may take advantage of BOQs or BEQs.

TRANSPORTATION

The vehicles listed below are commonly found on most inhabited planets, and all use either electric motors or internal combustion (IC) engines. IC engines are used on poor worlds or those where petroleum is produced.

Electric/Motor Bike

Motorcycles have between two and four wheels and are inexpensive to operate.

Skimmer

The skimmer is a personal hovercraft shaped much like a three- or four-wheeled motorcycle. It is capable of much greater speeds, however, and can traverse just about any kind of terrain. Skimmers are favorites of military scouts and adolescents.

Compact Electric Ground Car

An electric car needs to be "plugged in" for a few hours to recharge its batteries. Alternatively, it can run off a satchel battery. Most major cities have recharge stations where drivers can swap their drained satchel battery for a fully charged one—for a fee. An electric car is small, seating two man-sized passengers, with a small area for cargo.

Hovercar

Hovercars are large, fast, noisy—at least to those outside the vehicle—and expensive to run. They employ large hoverfans, protected by a hoverskirt, which are powerful enough to physically lift the vehicle off the ground, allowing it to float on a cushion of air. Most of these are roomy enough to seat four or more persons in addition to cargo.

Truck

Only two people can comfortably fit into a truck's cab, but it can carry up to 2 tons of cargo in its bed—or, in lieu of cargo, up to twelve people.

Heavy Cargo Hauler

Much larger than a standard truck, a heavy cargo hauler can carry loads of up to 20 tons in its trailer.

EQUIPMENT

TRAVEL

Characters will likely want to charter a means of going off-planet, or to a remote region of the same planet. The costs listed for the methods below are per ride or flight.

Public Transport

Buses and trains are usually found only in large cities, running on set routes and schedules.

Taxi Ride

Taxis can be found in most large cities and can ferry characters just about anywhere they want to go in that city (at a much higher price than standard public transportation).

Atmospheric Flight

Most characters will not own their own aircraft, or have immediate access to someone else's, and will have to charter transportation. Most locations on a planet can be reached this way within ten to twelve hours.

Suborbital Flight

Suborbital transport lines are reserved for the most heavily populated planets. Characters can reach places on the other side of a planet in about an hour, but these transports will only operate out of specific aerodromes and spaceports. Suborbital shuttles are also used to ferry passengers up to low-orbit stations.

DropShip Flight

DropShips are the only vehicles that can transport passengers and/or cargo out of planetary orbit to other places in a star system, such as to a moon or jump point.

Inter-System Travel

Characters looking to travel to a different star system will need to book passage on a DropShip that has similarly booked travel with a JumpShip. JumpShips (carrying DropShips) travel routes between several well-inhabited star systems, and many DropShips have been modified to serve as passenger liners. Characters on remote planets will have to book passage on a cargo rather than passenger vessel, spending the length of the journey in whatever cramped quarters are available. Additionally, transportation into and out of dangerous areas, such as planets under attack, can cost double or more.

Interstellar Tour

Some agencies arrange tours to a number of different planets. These tours, while expensive, are much cheaper than if one were to book each leg of the journey separately.

ENTERTAINMENT

Tri-Vid Set

Almost every residence has at least one tri-vid set. Programs are transmitted over the air, or characters can drop in a vid-chip and watch a prerecorded movie or show. Tri-vid sets come in a variety of sizes.

Personal Music Set

Characters can both play and record musi-chips on this small device. Tiny earpieces are included if the listener does not want to bother others.

Holovids

Holovids refer to either feature movies or regular broadcast programming. Because of the vast distances and times involved in transmitting holovids across the Inner Sphere, each nation and region (and sometimes even each planet) produces its own programs. Vids are imported from other regions, however, and as a result popular programs can often "make the rounds" of the Inner Sphere over the course of months or years. Holovids can be viewed at a public theater or rented or purchased on data chip for home viewing.

Cameras

Tri-vid cameras record either still shots or full-motion audio and video. A single data chip can store up to two hours of video or 15,000 still images. The resolution of the still image is eight times better than the full-motion video. While the tri-vid camera is palm-sized, a number of attachments are available, including NVDs and telescopic lenses (see *Optics*, p. 149).

Music

Just as with holovids, each region of space has its own music fads. Oftentimes a group will find fame in a remote region with their first release years or even decades after it was first recorded. More than once a music company has even tried to sign one of these groups, only to find that its members were long since dead. Interstellar concert tours are rare because of the expense of JumpShip travel, but local orchestras and pop bands can be found on every major world. The most common form music takes is the ubiquitous musi-chip, a fingernail-sized chip holding up to two hours of high-quality sound.

Print Media

While the print media is basically dead—shipping paper across interstellar distances carries an astronomical price tag—it lives on in a virtual form. Publishing houses still produce written media, only instead of physically printing them, they store them on data chips that consumers plug into their noteputers or tri-vid sets. Some people still prefer a hard copy they can carry around with them, however—in which case they must physically print the selections they want. A variety of written materials are available, from fiction and nonfiction books to daily and weekly news reports to literally millions of magazines catering to every interest.

WEAPON TABLE

Item	Skill	Equipment Ratings	AP• Damage	Type*	Range in Meters S/M/L/E	Shots	Cost/ Reload	Weight	Notes
Archaic/Melee Weapons									
Compound Bow	ARC	C/A/A	2•2D6	B	10/25/70/160	1	15/2	1 kg	Simple Action load & fire
Crossbow	ARC	A/A/A	3•2D6	B	5/16/30/70	1	10/1	2 kg	—
Knife/Dagger/Bayonet	BLA	A/A/A	1•1D6	M	—	—	8	250 g	—
Knife (thrown)	THW	A/A/A	1•1D6	M	STR x 1/2/3/4	—	8	250 g	—
Sword	BLA	A/A/B	1•2D6	M	—	—	30	3 kg	—
Club or improvised	STF	A/A/A	1•1D6	M	—	—	—	2 kg	—
Vibroblade	BLA	D/B/C	3•2D6	M	—	1†	100/††	350 g	—
Vibrosword	BLA	E/C/D	3•3D6	M	—	1†	300/††	4 kg	—
Stunstick	BLA	C/A/B	0•4D6	E	—	1†	200/††	200 g	Subduing; do not add STR
Slug-Throwers									
Revolver	PIS	B/A/C	4•4D6	B	8/18/40/90	6	40/1	500 g	—
Auto-Pistol	PIS	C/A/C	3•4D6	B	5/20/45/105	10	50/2	500 g	Jam on a fumble
Hold-Out Pistol	PIS	B/B/E	3•3D6	B	2/5/8/20	2	20/1	200 g	—
Mydron	SMG	C/B/E	3•2D6	B	6/22/40/90	20	100/4	1.5 kg	Burst (5/1); jam on a fumble
Sternsnacht	PIS	C/D/D	3•6D6	B	5/15/38/70	3	200/1	2.5 kg	Range mods +0/+3/+6/+11
Bolt-Action Rifle	RIF	B/A/B	4•4D6	B	40/115/225/500	5	60/1	3 kg	S. Action to work bolt after each shot
Automatic Rifle	RIF	C/A/D	4•4D6	B	30/75/170/415	30	80/2	4 kg	Burst (15/3); jam on a fumble
Federated Long Rifle	RIF	C/A/D	4•5D6	B	35/85/205/450	10	120/3	5 kg	—
Zeus Heavy Rifle	RIF	C/B/D	5•5D6	B	35/80/190/420	5	200/3	8 kg	—
Submachine Gun	SMG	C/A/D	3•3D6	B	5/16/35/80	50	80/5	3 kg	Burst (10/2); jam on a fumble
Rorynex RM-3/XXI	SMG	D/C/E	3•2D6	B	3/12/28/60	100	80/10	3 kg	Burst (15/2); jam on a fumble
Imperator 2894A1	SMG	C/B/D	4•2D6	B	5/18/40/85	50	100/5	4 kg	Burst (10/2); jam on a fumble
Pump-Action Shotgun	SHT	B/A/B	1•6D6	B	4/10/20/45	6	40/1	4 kg	Splash
Solid Slug Shot	SHT	B/B/D	4•6D6	B	4/10/20/45	6	—/4	—	Range mods +0/+3/+6/+11
Gyrojet Pistol	PIS	D/C/E	3•4D6	B	8/25/70/165	2	450/1	2.5 kg	No AP reduction for ex. range
Gyrojet Rifle	RIF	D/B/D	4•5D6	B	35/90/275/500	10	1,250/100	7 kg	No AP reduction for ex. range
Needler Pistol	PIS	D/A/D	1•5D6	B	2/6/12/20	10	50/1	300 g	Splash; AP 0 vs. barriers
Needler Rifle	SHT	D/B/D	1•5D6	B	5/14/30/40	20	75/2	1 kg	Splash; AP 0 vs. barriers
Energy Weapons									
Laser Pistol	PIS	D/A/D	4•3D6	E	15/35/80/225	2†	750/††	1 kg	—
Laser Rifle	RIF	D/B/D	4•4D6	E	60/205/465/1,100	5†	1,250/††	5 kg	—
Blazer Rifle	RIF	D/D/E	5•4D6	E	65/220/485/1,180	10†	2,190/††	7 kg	—
Pulse Laser Pistol	SMG	D/C/D	3•2D6	E	12/30/70/195	2†	1,000/††	1 kg	Burst (5/2)
Pulse Laser Rifle	RIF	D/C/D	3•3D6	E	40/130/275/595	4†	2,000/††	5 kg	Burst (10/4)
Support Weapons									
Grenade Launcher	SUP	C/B/E	**	X	15/40/90/150	1	290/**	3 kg	As minigrenade
LAW	SUP	C/B/E	6•5D6	B	55/200/335/560	—	350	4 kg	—
SRM Launcher	SUP	C/D/E	6•7D6	B	60/225/425/740	2	1,500/450	30 kg	Blast; encumbering
Portable Machine Gun	SUP	C/B/D	5•4D6	B	30/85/200/460	75	1,000/10	11.5 kg	Burst (15/3); encumbering
Support Machine Gun	SUP	C/C/E	5•5D6	B	45/100/250/625	100	1,750/50	44 kg	Burst (20/5); crew: 2
Support Laser	SUP	D/D/E	6•8D6	E	100/325/760/1,500	10†	10,000/††	72 kg	Crew: 3
Explosives									
Grenade	THW	C/A/E	5•10D6	X	STR x 1/2/3/4	—	20	600 g	Indirect; blast
Minigrenade	THW	C/B/E	4•8D6	X	STR x 1/2/3/4	—	10	450 g	Indirect; blast
Microgrenade	THW	C/C/E	3•6D6	X	STR x 1/2/3/4	—	2	200 g	Indirect; blast
C8 Blasting Block	DEM	D/B/D	7•10D6	X	—	—	50	1 kg	Blast (half radius)
Satchel Charge	DEM	D/C/E	8•12D6	X	—	—	210	4.5 kg	Blast (half radius)
Flare Pistol	SUP	C/A/B	2•2D6	E	2/5/11/20	5	25/2	400 g	Indirect
Specialized Weapons									
Man-Pack Flamer	SUP	C/A/E	2•5D6	E	8/20/35/70	12	100/2	15 kg	Splash; encumbering; incendiary
Flamer Pistol	PIS	C/B/E	2•3D6	E	5/15/25/40	10	50/1	1.2 kg	Splash; incendiary
Heavy Flamer	SUP	C/B/E	2•7D6	E	8/20/35/70	3	200/200	25 kg	Splash; crew: 2; incendiary
Sonic Stunner	PIS	D/B/B	0•4D6**	E	2/5/7/10	1†	100/††	600 g	Subduing

*Damage Types are abbreviated as: M = Melee, B = Ballistic, E = Energy, X = Explosive. **See weapon description for rules.
† This represents the number of power points used per shot, not the number of bullets in a magazine.
†† These weapons use Power Packs, so they do not have a standard reload cost.

WEAPON ACCESSORY TABLE

Item	Equipment Ratings	Cost	Weight	Notes
Holster	B/A/A	20	150 g	—
Flash Suppressor (JAF-05)	E/D/D	1,000	675 g	+4 Perception TN
Recoil Compensation	C/B/D	*	*	Recoil rating +1
Silencer	C/B/D	25	100 g	+4 Perception TN; good for only 10 shots
Night Vision Scope	D/B/A	125	450 g	–2 TN at M/L/E ranges; no night TN mods, see p. 112
Telescopic Scope	C/A/A	30	200 g	–2 TN at M/L/E ranges

* Cost of Recoil Compensation is 10 percent the cost of the weapon; Weight is 10 percent the weight of the weapon.

ARMOR & COMBAT GARB TABLE

Item	Equipment Ratings	AV M/B/E/X	Cost/ Patch	Weight	Coverage*	Notes
Flak Armor	C/A/B	1/5/1/3				
Jacket			100/10	3.5 kg	Torso, Arms	—
Pants			75/10	5.5 kg	Legs	—
Suit			150/10	8.6 kg	Torso, Arms, Legs	—
Vest			50/10	2.8 kg	Torso	—
Ablative Armor	D/A/C		3/1/6/1			
Jacket			750/20	2.6 kg	Torso, Arms	—
Pants			500/20	4 kg	Legs	—
Suit			1,000/20	6.3 kg	Torso, Arms, Legs	Encumbering
Vest			400/20	2.1 kg	Torso	—
Ablative/Flak Armor	D/B/C	2/4/5/2				
Jacket			600/15	4.1 kg	Torso, Arms	—
Pants			400/15	6.3 kg	Legs	—
Suit			800/15	9.8 kg	Torso, Arms, Legs	—
Vest			300/15	3.2 kg	Torso	—
Ballistic Plate Armor	D/C/D	4/6/5/4				
Suit			1,600/50	22 kg	Torso, Arms, Legs	Encumbering
Vest			600/50	8.8 kg	Torso	—
Leather (or synthetic)	A/A/A	1/1/0/1				
Jacket			50	2 kg	Torso, Arms	—
Vest			25	1.2 kg	Torso	—
Shoes			25	.8 kg	Feet	—
Work Gloves			20	—	Hands	—
Heavy Combat Gloves	C/B/B	3/4/4/3	125/15	1 kg	Hands	+3 to DEX-related TNs
Load-Bearing Equipment						
Vest	B/A/A	1/5/1/1	20	400 g	Torso	—
Pack	B/A/A	—	10	100 g	—	—
Packframe	C/A/A	—	45	1 kg	—	Encumbering
Jump Suit	B/A/A	—	24	300 g	Torso, Arms, Legs	—
Fatigues	B/A/A	—	30	500 g	Torso, Arms, Legs	—
Combat Boots	B/A/A	2/3/3/1	48/10	2 kg	Feet	—
Parka	C/A/A	1/0/0/0	48	2 kg	Head, Torso, Arms	—
Snow Suit	C/A/A	1/0/0/0	72	3 kg	Full	Encumbering
Elemental Battle Armor	F/C/F	9/8/8/8	500,000	NA	Full	see *Battle Armor* (p. 141)
Inner Sphere Battle Armor	E/E/F	9/8/7/7	400,000	NA	Full	see *Battle Armor* (p. 141)
Combat Helmet	C/A/B	5/6/5/2	200	2 kg	Head	+2 to Perception TNs

*Coverage for armor is abbreviated as follows—**Torso:** Chest and Abdomen

Note: If the hit location rules (p. **XX**) are not being used, the armor worn on the Torso counts as the overall armor.

POWER PACK & RECHARGER TABLE

Item	Equipment Ratings	Cost	Weight	Power Capacity	Notes
Standard					
	Power Pack	D/A/A	5	250 g	20 —
	Micro Power Pack	D/A/A	10	15 g	15 —
	Military Power Pack	D/A/B	40	4 kg	200 —
	Satchel Battery	D/A/A	20	2 kg	100 —
High-Capacity (HC)					
	Power Pack	D/B/A	15	300 g	30 —
	Micro Power Pack	E/C/A	30	20 g	20 —
	Military Power Pack	D/B/B	120	6 kg	300 —
	Satchel Battery	D/B/A	60	3 kg	150 —
Rechargers					
	Fossil Fuel Recharger	C/A/A	50	10 kg	15 per hourRefueling cost: 2 per hour
	Kinetic Recharger	C/A/A	10	2 kg	5 per hour —
	Solar Recharger	D/B/A	200	1.5 kg	45 per hour —
	Standard Recharger	C/A/A	10	150 g	50 per hour —
	Heavy-Duty Recharger	C/A/A	50	400 g	200 per hour —

MEDICAL & SURVIVAL EQUIPMENT TABLE

Item	Equipment Ratings	Cost	Weight	Notes
Medical Gear				
Advanced Medical Kit	C/B/B	250	2 kg	—
Artificial Limbs				
Type 1: Simple Limb	A/A/A	75	—	—
Type 2: Useful Limb	B/A/A	various	—	Cost: 750 (Arm/Hand); 250 (Leg)
Type 3: Prosthesis	C/B/A	various	—	Cost: 7,500 (Arm/Hand); 10,000 (Leg)
Type 4: Advanced Prosthesis	D/C/A	various	—	Cost: 25,000 (Arm/Hand); 17,500 (Leg)
Type 5: Myomer Replacement	E/E/A	various	—	Cost: 200,000 (Arm); 100,000 (Hand); 125,000 (Leg); 50,000 (Foot)
Bionic Ear Replacement	C/A/A	100,000 per ear	—	—
Bionic Eye Replacement	E/B/A	220,000 per eye	—	—
Clan LSSU	F/C/D	2,200	325 g	24 doses; reload cost: 100
Field Surgical Kit	D/A/B	800	11.5 kg	—
Laser Scalpel	D/A/C	50	100 g	Pwr use: 1; range: 25 cm
Life-Support Unit	E/B/B	8,500	22.5 kg	Pwr use: 3
Medical Kit	C/A/A	10	250 g	—
Medipack	E/C/D	400	400 g	12 doses; reload cost: 75
Medipatch	D/A/B	10	10 g	—
Portable Medical Monitor	E/B/B	2,200	13.3 kg	Pwr use: 1
Preserving Sleeve	D/A/B	25	500 g	—
Stimpatch	D/A/B	2	9 g	—
Survival Gear				
Advanced Field Kit	C/A/A	100	15 kg	—
Basic Field Kit	B/A/A	10	5 kg	—
Bubble Tent	D/A/A	200/occupant	3 kg empty	Pwr use: 1/hr/occupant; patch cost: 5; encumbering
Climbing/Rappelling Kit	C/A/A	150	10.3 kg	—
Electronic Compass	C/A/A	30	100 g	—
Emergency Rations	C/A/A	2	1 kg	—
Light Environment Suit	C/B/B	200	5 kg	AV: 4/1/3/1 (full coverage, patch cost: 35), encumbering
Filter Mask	C/A/A	5	425 g	Reload cost: 2/5 filters
Personal Environ Bag	D/A/A	300	4 kg	Pwr use: 1/hr; patch cost: 10
Respirator	C/A/A	50	2.5 kg	Reload cost: 2

MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT

Item	Equipment Ratings	Cost	Weight	Notes
Communications				
Civilian Communicator	C/A/A	45	100 g	Pwr use: .2/hr; range: 10 km (LOS)
Civilian Microcommunicator	D/A/A	175	5 g	Pwr use: .2/hr; range: 2 km (LOS)
Field Communicator	D/A/B	200	1 kg	Pwr use: 1/hr; range: 25 km
Long-Range Communications Kit	D/C/B	400	5 kg	Pwr use: 5/hr; range: 50 km ground/2,500 km to satellite
Military Communicator	D/A/B	50	100 g	Pwr use: 1/hr; range: 10 km
Military Microcommunicator	D/B/B	200	1 g	Pwr use: 1/hr; range: 2 km
Standard Vid-Phone	D/A/A	35	400 g	—
Tools				
Basic Tool Kit	C/A/A	250	10 kg	Encumbering
Deluxe Tool Kit	D/A/A	750	50 kg	Encumbering
Hand-Held Laser Torch	D/A/A	40	950 g	Pwr use: 1/turn
Noteputer	C/A/A	500	500 g	Pwr use: .1/hr
Personal Computer	C/A/A	250	3 kg	Pwr use: 1/hr
Scanalyzer	D/C/B	5,000	3 kg	Pwr use: .1/turn
Repair Kits				
Aerospace Repair Kit	D/B/A	2,500	310 kg	—
Cutting/Joining Kit	C/A/A	1,250	175 kg	—
Demolition Kit	C/B/D	200	2 kg	—
Electronics Repair Kit	D/A/A	2,000	40 kg	—
Energy Weapon Clean/Repair Kit	D/B/A	850	2.5 kg	—
Myomer/Actuator Repair Kit	D/B/A	3,000	260 kg	—
Slug-thrower Clean/Repair Kit	C/A/A	100	3 kg	—
Vehicle Repair Kit	C/A/A	1,000	225 kg	—
Weapon Repair Kit	D/A/A	1,500	200 kg	—
Optics				
Night Vision Goggles	D/B/A	220	600 g	No night TN mods, see p. 112
Rangefinder Binoculars	D/B/A	200	500 g	—
Miscellaneous				
Basic Lock Pick Set	B/A/C	100	365 g	—
Disguise/Make-up Kit	C/B/A	1,000	6.5 kg	—
Electronic Security Bypass Kit	D/B/D	1,200	290 g	Pwr use: 1
Emergency Flares	B/A/A	10	600 g	—
Forgery Kit	D/C/E	1,225	5 kg	—
Parachute	C/A/A	78	8 kg	Encumbering
Verigraph	D/A/A	360	—	—
Vibro Lock Pick Set	D/D/D	2,000	520 g	Pwr use: 1

PERSONAL VEHICLES

Vehicle	Equipment Ratings	Cost	Refueling Cost	Range	Speed (KPH)	Notes
Electric Bike	C/A/B	675	—	385 km	80/135*	—
Jump Pack	D/A/C	3,100	200	**	**	Encumbering
Motor Bike	B/A/B	745	8	385 km	80/135*	—
Skimmer	D/B/B	2,200	18	430 km	115/190*	—
Compact Electric Ground Car	C/A/B	3,385	—	850 km	110/180*	—
Hovercar	D/B/B	8,700	22	600 km	160/240*	—
Truck	C/A/C	4,500	20	900 km	110/170*	Loaded 115 kph flank
Heavy Cargo Hauler	C/A/C	23,200	72	1,500 km	70/160*	Loaded 100 kph flank

* This represents the Cruise and Flank speeds respectively, in kilometers per hour.
** See the rules for *Jump Pack* (p. 150) for information on range and speed.

PERSONAL GEAR AND EXPENSES

Item	Equipment Ratings	Cost*	Notes
Clothing	A/A/A		
Coat		8–55	—
Dress		20–44	—
Fedora/Hat		12–15	—
Footwear		17–50	—
Jacket/Blazer		28–36	—
Pants		8–23	—
Running Suit		22	—
Shirt		3–15	—
Shorts		6	—
Skirt/Kilt		22–25	—
Sweatshirt		5	—
Food			
Bar/Tavern	A/A/B	1–5/drink	—
Groceries	A/A/A	30/week	—
Fast Food	C/A/A	2.5	—
Typical Restaurant/Club	A/A/A	4	—
Fancy Restaurant	A/B/A	10	—
Mess Hall	B/A/A	1.5	—
Housing			
Single Bedroom Apartment	A/A/A	175/month	—
Two-Bedroom Apartment/Studio	A/A/A	200/month	—
Three Bedroom Apartment/Condo/House	A/B/A	225/month	Total purchase cost: 90,000
Hotels			
Tube	C/A/A	3/night; 15/week	—
Dive	A/A/A	7/night; 30/week	—
Standard	A/A/A	35/night	—
High-Class	B/B/A	100/night	—
Luxury Suite	B/C/A	350/night; 2,000/week	—
Base Officer/Enlisted Quarters	B/A/A	18/night; 60/week	—

* Cost varies depending on quality of item or service.

TRAVEL AND ENTERTAINMENT

Item	Equipment Ratings	Cost	Notes
Transportation			
Public Transport	C/A/A	.5	—
Taxi Ride	B/A/A	1/10 km	—
Atmospheric Flight	C/A/A	various	Cost: 1st class, 50; 2nd class, 25; coach or short trip, 15
Suborbital Flight	C/B/A	various	Cost: 1st class, 100; 2nd class, 50; coach, 25
DropShip Flight	D/B/A	various	Cost: 1st class, 4,500; 2nd class, 3,000; coach, 1,400; steerage, 800
Inter-System Travel	D/B/A	2,200–4,000	Cost is per jump
Interstellar Tour	D/C/A	various	Cost: 1st class, 42,000; 2nd class, 36,000
Entertainment			
Tri-Vid Set	C/A/A	220	—
Personal Music Set	C/A/A	20	—
Holovids			
Theater	C/A/A	3	—
Rental	C/A/A	1	—
Own		C/A/A	5 —
Tri-Vid Camera	C/A/A	375	—
Music			
Concert	C/B/A	10	—
Musi-Chips	C/A/A	various	Cost: recorded, 4; blank, 1
Print Media			
Books	C/A/A	3	—
Newsprint	C/A/A	1/week	—

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INNER SPHERE

The creation of the great star empires and the formation of the human society known as the Clans begins with humanity's long-ago first steps into space. Among the ancient nations of Terra, the dissolution of traditional alliances and enmities in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries created an era of unprecedented peace and cooperation, in which all societies turned their energies toward the advancement of the human race. By 2020, the ground-breaking research of two scientists—Thomas Kearny and Takayoshi Fuchida—led to the development of a fusion reactor capable of powering a starship. In 2027, the Alliance starship *Columbia*, powered by the first Kearny-Fuchida fusion engine, made its historic journey to Mars. With that brief voyage, humanity's migration from Terra began.

In 2102, the scientific community began paying renewed attention to pan-dimensional gravitational mathematics, a theory first advanced by Kearny and Fuchida eighty years earlier. Though twenty-first-century scientists had scoffed at it, twenty-second-century physicists used Kearny and Fuchida's work to develop the first faster-than-light ship in an intensive research effort known as the Deimos Project. Deimos produced the first Kearny-Fuchida drive, which created a space warp around a starship through which the craft could "jump" distances of up to thirty light-years. On 5 December 2108, Terra launched the first so-called JumpShip, the TAS *Pathfinder*, on its famous round trip between Terra and the Tau Ceti system.

The ability to travel between star systems in the blink of an eye led to an unparalleled expansion to other worlds. The first human colony of New Earth, established on Tau Ceti IV in 2116, paved the way for hundreds of others. Under the banner of the Terran Alliance, humanity spread as quickly as its ancestors had once swarmed over Terra. By the year 2235, an Alliance survey counted more than six hundred human colonies scattered across a sphere roughly eighty light-years in diameter. However, this colonial expansion carried within it the seeds of its own destruction. Self-sufficient colonies far from their founding worlds began agitating for home rule, and in 2236 a group of worlds at the edge of human-explored space declared independence from Terra. The Colonial Marines, dispatched to quell the rebellion, failed miserably. Within six years, the Alliance government had reluctantly granted independence to all colonies farther than thirty light-years from Terra.

RISE OF THE HEGEMONY

Over the next several decades, a combination of political infighting and the economic strain of supporting so many colonies—a burden greatly exacerbated by rampant corruption—ate away at the fabric of the Terran Alliance. Tales of colonists starving to death sparked riots among sympathetic Terrans, while the ranks of the poor, dispossessed and angry grew. In 2314, the unrest erupted into Alliance-wide civil war. The Alliance Global Militia, which had remained uneasily neutral throughout the long years of strife, stepped in at the behest of James McKenna, an admiral in the Alliance Global Navy. Using his newfound authority as the Alliance's savior, McKenna tore down the corrupt Alliance government and established the Terran Hegemony in its place. In 2316, a grateful public elected him the Hegemony's first director-general.

During McKenna's twenty-three years in office, he launched three military campaigns to bring independent colony worlds back under Hegemony control, in the belief that only unity could truly bring peace and prosperity. The first two campaigns, though difficult, were largely successful; the third, launched in 2335, was not. The aging McKenna left control of the final campaign to his son Konrad, whose persistent refusal to follow standard procedure eventually ended in disaster. In 2338, Konrad led his naval convoys blindly into the heavily mined Syrma system, losing all but two of his twenty-nine troopships. This failure gave heart to the worlds opposing the Hegemony, which had begun to ally with one another to protect themselves from the Hegemony's expanding influence.

Konrad's disgrace left McKenna without an heir to take his place. Upon McKenna's death in 2339, the Hegemony's High Council passed the leadership of the Hegemony to his third cousin, Michael Cameron. The new director-general immediately began efforts to cement good relations with the allied colony worlds, which had by this time formed independent nations.

In 2351, Cameron made a decision whose cultural repercussions would echo for centuries. He created the Peer List, establishing the equivalent of a feudal nobility whose members owed their exalted rank to their achievements. Among the first to receive a title was Dr. Gregory Atlas, lauded for his work on refining myomer bundles. These incredibly powerful synthetic muscles were an integral part of early WorkMechs; when powered by a fusion reactor, myomer bundles give a BattleMech its strength and mobility. Though Dr. Atlas would not live to see the first BattleMech used in action on 5 February 2439, his work changed the face of war.

Cameron's Peer List also led to the creation of feudal ruling families in the various independent states surrounding the Hegemony. In the latter half of the twenty-fourth and the early twenty-fifth centuries, tensions between these fiefdoms escalated into open war. Humanity's interstellar nations fought battle after battle, each more savage than the last, culminating in the unspeakable massacre of thousands of civilians on the world of Tintavel in the Capellan Confederation. The Confederation's leader, Chancellor Aleisha Liao, responded to the tragedy by devising the Ares Conventions—a set of rules that, rather than trying to prevent war, legitimized its conduct. On 13 June 2412, the Hegemony and all other nations signed the Ares Conventions, agreeing to limit the use of nuclear weapons and cease assaulting civilian targets. Though hailed as an act of peace, the Ares Conventions in effect made war

acceptable. Many of the signatory states wasted little time in abusing the privilege.

THE STAR LEAGUE ERA

The Hegemony engaged in its share of battles over the next century or so, but equally often it served as a mediator between warring parties. Despite the Hegemony's history of military expansion, Terra's presence at its heart gave it a certain credibility as a peacemaker. Ian Cameron, who became director-general in 2549, expanded the Hegemony's peacemaking role and negotiated an end to a number of conflicts. In 2556, Ian persuaded the leaders of the Free Worlds League and the Capellan Confederation to sign the Treaty of Geneva; this famous document laid the groundwork for the formation of the Star League, the interstellar alliance that all too briefly ended wars and advanced the general welfare of humanity. The Lyran Commonwealth signed the treaty in 2558; the Federated Suns, in 2567. With the inclusion of the Draconis Combine in 2569, Ian Cameron achieved his dream of uniting virtually all of humanity under one leader.

Led by the enlightened Cameron dynasty, the Star League gave its citizens peace and prosperity for nearly two hundred years. Though even the Star League could not wipe out the human need for conflict, it kept disputes between its member-states under firm control. After Lord Simon Cameron's tragic death in 2751, the rulers of all the member-states served as regents for Simon's young son, Richard Cameron, but unfortunately abused their positions to jockey for personal power. The lonely Richard turned to Stefan Amaris, ruler of the Rim Worlds Republic in the far-off Periphery, for friendship and advice. Amaris hated the Camerons and used his false friendship with Richard to destroy the Star League from within. On 27 December 2766, Stefan Amaris murdered Richard and took control of the Star League.

Within weeks of this coup d'état, General Aleksandr Kerensky, commander of the Star League Defense Force, launched a bitter, thirteen-year war to liberate the League from the usurper's grasp. On 29 September 2779, Kerensky led the assault against Amaris's last stronghold on Terra. In the face of overwhelming force, Amaris surrendered. Kerensky ordered SLDF troops to summarily execute him, his family and his closest aides for their crimes against humanity.

In late 2780, the power-hungry Council Lords stripped Kerensky of his title as Protector of the Realm and ordered him to disperse all SLDF units to their peacetime locations. Bereft of central leadership, the member-states of the Star League vied with one another for control of the League. Unable to agree on which of them should become the new First Lord, the lords officially dissolved the High Council in August of 2781, left Terra and began to build their own power bases. When the various lords attempted to persuade SLDF units to back their bids for power, General Kerensky took drastic action. On 14 February 2784, Kerensky proposed to his troops that the SLDF should leave the Inner Sphere and found a new society based on the ideals of the now-defunct Star League. In late November 2784, more than 80 percent of the SLDF departed with Kerensky's Operation Exodus. The bewildered people of the Inner Sphere, mourning the loss of their hero, comforted themselves with the belief that Kerensky and his people would return when humanity needed them.

CENTURIES OF WAR

In the resulting power vacuum, the rulers of the realms now called the Successor States fought endless, brutal wars, each seeking to re-establish the Star League under his own leadership. Throughout three hundred years of conflict, the Successor Lords accomplished little save to blast humankind virtually back to the Stone Age. By the end of the third so-called Succession War, humanity had lost nearly every technological advance that the Star League had made possible. Only stringent restrictions on destroying JumpShips and other irreplaceable technologies of war allowed interstellar combat to continue. The fighting ground down to endless border skirmishes in which no combatant could gain a significant advantage.

One of the few technologies that survived was the hyperpulse generators that made interstellar communication possible. These were jealously guarded by the Holy Order of ComStar, founded by Star League Minister of Communications Jerome Blake in order to preserve communications during the coming years of war. The organization gradually evolved into a cult that worshiped Blake's writings and dedicated itself to guarding technology's secrets.

STEPS TOWARD PEACE

By the turn of the thirty-first century, common wisdom among Successor State militaries held that conquest of the Inner Sphere through conventional warfare was impossible. Those who wished to found a second Star League had to find another way. In 3020, Archon Katrina Steiner of the Lyran Commonwealth sent a peace proposal to her fellow Successor Lords, but only Prince Hanse Davion of the Federated Suns showed any interest. In 3022, the Archon and the prince concluded a secret alliance that would bind their realms together through Hanse Davion's marriage to Katrina's daughter and heir, Melissa Steiner. This union joined two families and two nations into a single strong realm, combining the prosperous Lyran Commonwealth with the militarily powerful Federated Suns. It also put the Draconis Combine in an uncomfortable position between two of its greatest enemies and led the smaller Capellan Confederation and Free Worlds League to fear conquest by the emerging Federated Commonwealth.

After months of secret negotiations among the Capellan Confederation, the Draconis Combine and the Free Worlds League, all three signed the Concord of Kapetyn in 3024. Intended as a counter to the Federated Commonwealth, this triple alliance provided for mutual support and defense. It also guaranteed that any renewed war would engulf the entire Inner Sphere.

The first decades of the new century also saw the beginnings of a technological renaissance, set in motion by the unex-

pected discovery in 3024 of a Star League-era memory core. Copies of the core soon found their way to each Successor State, leading to a boom in industry and the revival of precious, lost technologies in varied fields, from medicine to military hardware. Calm settled over the Inner Sphere, as the constant warfare between its nations shifted to the scientific arena. As usual, however, the peace was only temporary.

FOURTH SUCCESSION WAR

On 20 August 3028, Hanse Davion and Melissa Steiner held their wedding on Terra in the presence of their fellow Successor Lords. At the reception following the wedding, as he fed Melissa a piece of wedding cake, Prince Hanse announced, "Wife, in honor of our marriage, in addition to this morsel I give you a vast prize. My love, I give you the Capellan Confederation!" With those words, Hanse Davion launched the Fourth Succession War.

In a series of military "exercises" held between 3026 and 3028, Hanse had moved vast numbers of troops under the guise of training. He had also reorganized his army, regrouping battalions and regiments into Regimental Combat Teams consisting of one or more regiments of BattleMechs plus armor, infantry and artillery support. This organization gave Davion troops overwhelming advantages. Training, traveling and fighting together gave them unusual cohesion in the field, making them a far more effective fighting force than the enemy units they faced. In 3028, the RCTs poured into the Capellan Confederation in seven successive waves, cutting it in half.

Such large-scale mobilization did not come without cost. The vast demand for JumpShips and DropShips to ferry troops across space reduced commerce between worlds to essential items, inflicting economic hardship on many planets. In addition, ComStar opposed Hanse Davion's war and placed the Federated Suns under interdiction, relaying no messages to, from or between Federated Suns worlds. Hampered by the interdiction and satisfied with his conquests, Hanse Davion sued for peace in 3029. The battered Capellan Confederation agreed willingly to the Federated Suns' terms, desperate to free its scant military resources for use against other enemies. Despite the Kapetyn treaty, the Free Worlds League had exploited the Confederation's weakened state, taking more than a few Capellan worlds; if it hoped to survive as a nation, the Confederation could no longer afford war with the Davion realm.

SKIRMISHES AND PLOTS

Between 3029 and 3039, the Successor States jockeyed for power through covert dealings and small skirmishes in lieu of outright war. The Federated Commonwealth completed the integration of its militaries, governments, economies and conquered worlds, forming the largest and most powerful realm in the Inner Sphere. Meanwhile, the Draconis Combine took one lesson from the Fourth Succession War to heart: it overhauled its military. In his role as the Combine's Gunji no Kanrei, or Deputy of Military Affairs, Theodore Kurita took several steps to ensure his nation's safety. He revamped the Draconis Combine Mustered Soldiery, upgrading training and loosening the command structure to reward personal initiative. In his most controversial act, Theodore signed a compact with ComStar, granting independence to several Combine worlds in exchange for ComStar's Star League-era BattleMechs. Though prepared for storms to follow, Kurita believed the compact was in the Combine's best interests and knew he could justify it militarily if necessary. On 13 March 3034, the affected worlds announced the formation of the independent Free Rasalhague Republic.

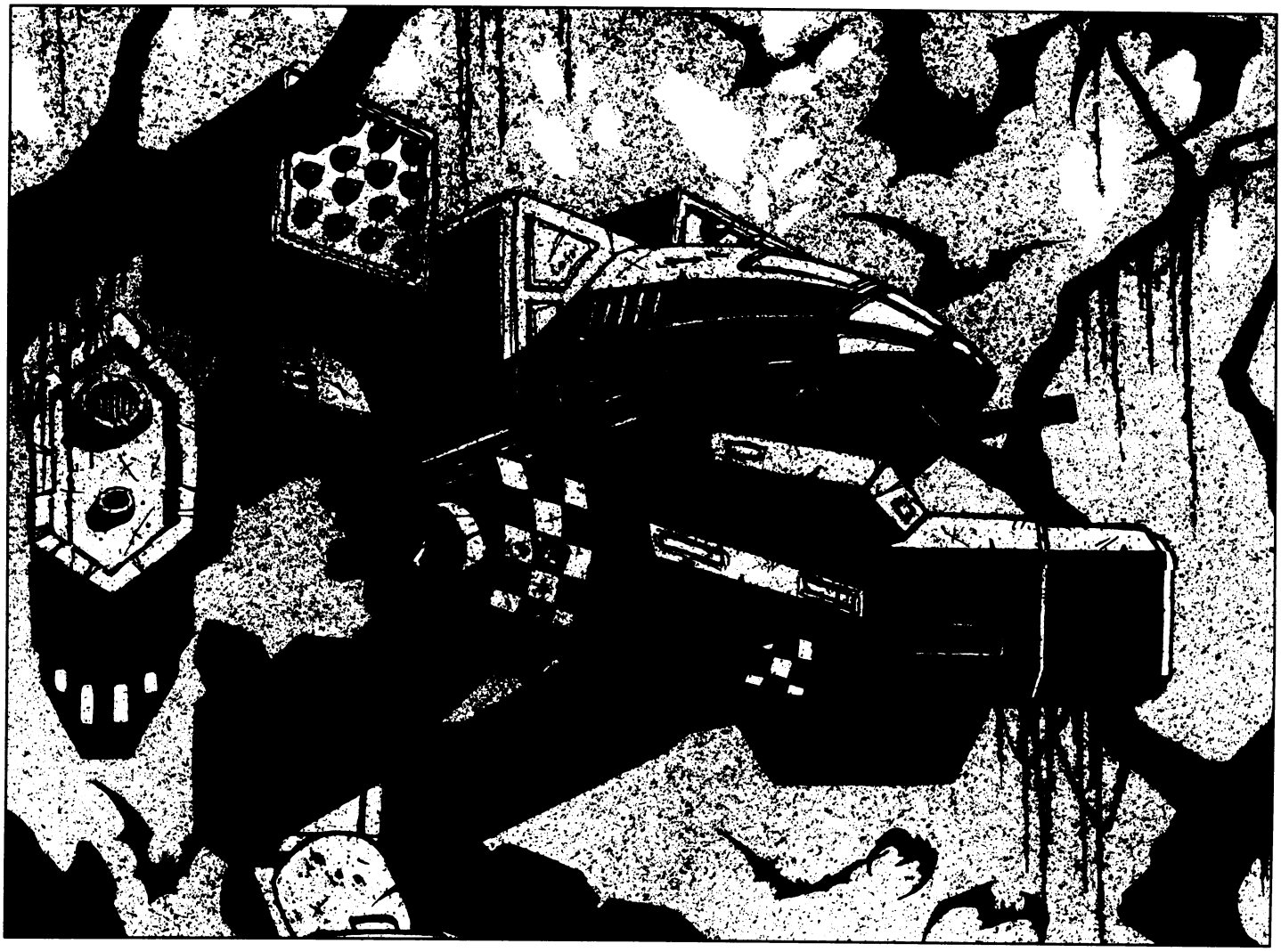
Despite Theodore Kurita's support, the declaration of independence touched off a minor rebellion within the Combine, as reactionary commanders refused to pull their military units from the new republic. Theodore declared the reactionaries *ronin*—lordless—and sent his own units to drive them from Free Rasalhague. Theodore's troops and various mercenary groups joined the Republic's KungsArmé in battle against the *ronin*, but poor contracts negotiated in haste paid most of the mercenaries too much money for too little fighting. Free Rasalhague won its freedom, but its citizens learned to loathe mercenaries.

In April 3039, Hanse Davion set in motion the second great wave of his war to unite the Inner Sphere under his rule. He launched a two-front attack on the Dieron district of the Draconis Combine. The first assault wave succeeded brilliantly, but before Hanse could launch a second wave, the Combine counterattacked and threw the Commonwealth on the defensive. Aided by the Star League 'Mechs ComStar had provided, Theodore Kurita gambled with the fate of his nation and won. By attacking in the teeth of the Davion onslaught, Theodore made Hanse Davion believe the DCMS was stronger than it actually was. By October 3039, Davion chose to cut his losses and make peace.

The War of 3039 accomplished little, save to remind the Successor States of the severe cost of war. A few worlds changed hands, but the balance of power remained the same. Aside from a skirmish in 3041, in which the Tenth Lyran Guards took the world of Skondia from the Combine, the states of the Inner Sphere seemed content to rebuild their realms in peace. Military readiness and overcharged rhetoric still ruled the day, but the Successor States had—at least temporarily—grown tired of war. The Inner Sphere enjoyed ten years of peace, which ended abruptly on 13 August 3049.

ENEMIES FROM BEYOND

In that year, while hunting pirates in the Periphery near the Free Rasalhague Republic, a detachment of the famed Kell Hounds mercenary unit met and succumbed to a mysterious fighting force on a godforsaken planet known as The Rock. Casualties included Phelan Kell, only son of the Hounds' founder Morgan Kell and cousin to Victor Steiner-Davion, Hanse and Melissa's eldest son. Phelan was listed as missing, presumed killed, but the Inner Sphere did not learn his true fate until several months later. The Kell Hounds' defeat was the first of many battles lost to the Clans, mighty warriors descended from the long-vanished SLDF.



THE WARRIORS OF KERENSKY

The men and women who had followed Kerensky in order to preserve the ideals of the Star League had made planetfall on five worlds called the Pentagon. Within two decades, they had degenerated into a vicious, fratricidal conflict later known as the Exodus Civil War. Determined to salvage something from the wreckage of his father's dream, Kerensky's son Nicholas led his loyal followers on a second Exodus to a safe haven, where together they forged the eugenics-based warrior society later known as the Clans.

Returning to the Pentagon worlds, the Clans conquered them and began preparing for the day they would return to the Inner Sphere and restore the Star League. In 3005, they sent a unit of Clan Wolf warriors as a vanguard—Wolf's Dragoons, soon to become a famed mercenary unit in the Inner Sphere. The Dragoons fought for each of the Successor States in turn, testing the strength of their militaries and sending intelligence back to the Clans.

CLAN INVASION

In March of 3050, the Clans struck in force, hammering the Draconis Combine, the Free Rasalhague Republic and the Lyran side of the Federated Commonwealth. Wave after wave of Clan attacks followed, executed with blinding speed and ruthless efficiency. Using their technologically superior OmniMechs and tenacious armored infantry, known as Elementals, Clan warriors cut down their Inner Sphere opponents like wheat before a scythe. Four Clans rolled across the Inner Sphere in the first wave: Smoke Jaguar, Ghost Bear, Jade Falcon and Wolf. All took their share of planets, but Clan Wolf conquered more worlds than all of its compatriots. Inner Sphere forces launched a few successful counterattacks, but those strikes came too little and too late. The Clan juggernaut thundered on, halted only when an unlikely catastrophe struck.

On 31 October 3050, a Rasalhagian pilot named Tyra Miraborg crashed her *Shilone* fighter into the Clan flagship *Dire Wolf*, killing the Clans' war leader. The death of the ilKhan accomplished what six months of desperate fighting had not; the Clans ended their assaults, garrisoned the worlds they had conquered

and pulled much of their military strength out of the Inner Sphere. For several months, during what was later dubbed the Year of Peace, the leaders of the Clans debated who should be the new ilKhan. In mid-3051, they chose Khan Ulric Kerensky of Clan Wolf to lead a renewed assault against the Inner Sphere.

During this lull, Colonel Jaime Wolf of Wolf's Dragoons had summoned the leaders of the Successor States to the world of Outreach. There, Wolf revealed that he and his fellow Dragoons were actually Clan warriors—and that, believing Clan conquest of the Inner Sphere would not restore the Star League, they were prepared to aid the Inner Sphere against their own people. The Inner Sphere leaders spent the better part of that year formulating a combined response to the overwhelming Clan threat. Setting aside centuries of mistrust, Hanse Davion and Theodore Kurita sealed a non-aggression pact between the Federated Commonwealth and the Draconis Combine. Davion also extracted material aid from the Free Worlds League by promising its leader, Thomas Marik, that he would devote the considerable resources of the New Avalon Institute of Science toward curing Thomas's son Joshua of leukemia.

In November of 3051, the Clans renewed their invasion. In January of 3052, Clans Smoke Jaguar and Nova Cat attacked the Combine capital of Luthien. In an act of unexpected political courage that sealed the loose alliance between the Federated Commonwealth and the Draconis Combine, Hanse Davion sent the Kell Hounds and Wolf's Dragoons to help defend his age-old enemy's homeworld. The trust engendered by Davion's action enabled both nations to devote all their efforts to fighting the Clans.

Despite the close cooperation between the Federated Commonwealth and the Draconis Combine, the Inner Sphere's unity remained largely an illusion. ComStar had negotiated with the Clans soon after the initial invasion, and upon the Clans' return to the Inner Sphere, the order offered to administrate Clan-conquered worlds. ComStar's leader, Primus Myndo Waterly, intended to use the Clan conquest to bring about the collapse of civilization; ComStar would then step in as humanity's savior, gaining power over all of human-occupied space. However, when Waterly discovered that the Clans intended to conquer Terra, ComStar's homeworld and the cradle of humanity, she abruptly changed her tactics. At the urging of her Precentor Martial, Anastasius Focht, Waterly struck a deal with the invaders and sent the Com Guards to fight Clan forces on the backwater world of Tukayyid. If the Clans won that battle, ComStar would give them Terra. If they lost, the Clans would halt their advance for fifteen years. Unknown to the Precentor Martial, Waterly also set secret plans in motion to strike at the Clans and the Inner Sphere simultaneously while the battle for Tukayyid raged.

The Com Guards defeated the Clans on Tukayyid in May of 3052, in a horrific bloodbath that cost ComStar's forces dearly. While the Com Guards were fighting and dying on Tukayyid to save the Inner Sphere, Primus Waterly gave the go-ahead to her agents. They launched Operation Scorpion, a series of covert attacks on worlds in the Clan Occupation Zones and on communications sites across the Inner Sphere. Waterly hoped to cripple the Inner Sphere and the Clans through this bold gambit, enabling her ComStar loyalists to seize power. The strikes failed; upon Focht's return from Tukayyid, he deposed Waterly and began a massive reform of ComStar.

VICTORY AND CHANGE

The end of the Clan invasion brought other changes in its wake. Hanse Davion died of a massive heart attack at the end of the war. Chancellor Romano Liao of the Capellan Confederation died at the hands of an assassin, leaving her son Sun-Tzu on the Celestial Throne. Sun-Tzu immediately began to build a power base, allying himself to House Marik through an engagement to Thomas Marik's illegitimate daughter, Isis. Within a few short years, Theodore Kurita succeeded his father Takashi as Coordinator of the Draconis Combine. Ryan Steiner, a perennial thorn in the side of the Federated Commonwealth's rulers, began agitating for an independent Isle of Skye. ComStar, meanwhile, split into two factions over Precentor Focht's reforms. The reactionary group, calling itself Word of Blake, emigrated to the Free Worlds League planet of Gibson with Thomas Marik's blessing.

On 19 June 3055, a bomb blast at a charity event on Tharkad killed the Federated Commonwealth's beloved Archon, Melissa Steiner. Authorities failed to apprehend a suspect. Ryan Steiner, riding the crest of anti-Davion sentiment he had spent years cultivating, accused the new Archon, Prince Victor Steiner-Davion, of engineering Melissa's death. Ryan's native Isle of Skye, already seething with secessionist fever, erupted in open rebellion. Victor's sister Katherine tried to mediate between her brother and the rebel faction, with little success.

In April 3056, Victor's aide and Katherine's lover, Galen Cox, fell victim to a bomb attack in a Solaris hotel that narrowly missed Katherine. Four days later, an unknown assassin shot Ryan Steiner dead. Suspicion centered on Sven Newmark, an expatriate Rasalhagian who served as Ryan's aide. Many people, however, suspected that Victor ordered Ryan's death to silence his allegations about Archon Melissa Steiner. In an effort to defuse the Lyran hostilities, Victor declared the Lyran world of Tharkad and the Davion world of New Avalon co-capitals. He then shifted his government to New Avalon and left Tharkad in Katherine's hands, naming his sister as his official regent. This move, coupled with Ryan's death, quelled the rebellion—but the brief peace would not last.

Victor arrived on New Avalon to the disturbing news that Joshua Marik was dying of leukemia, despite the best efforts of the NAIS to save him. The Federated Commonwealth still desperately needed war materiel that only the Free Worlds League could provide, so Victor could not afford to lose the only hold he had over Thomas Marik. After consulting with his senior advisers, Victor replaced the dying child with a double. Marik, however, had his suspicions. A generation ago, the Capellan Confederation had nearly succeeded in replacing Hanse Davion with a double; to ensure the survival of his nation, Marik believed, Victor Davion might attempt the same trick. Marik took

steps to confirm Joshua's identity, unaware that Sun-Tzu Liao was doing the same for his own reasons. Liao wanted war with the FedCom in order to take back lost worlds, but he lacked the military strength to succeed on his own. By proving FedCom deception over Marik's heir, he hoped to push Marik into a joint war against the Commonwealth.

In September of 3057, two days after Capellan commandos attempted to kill Joshua's replacement, Thomas Marik claimed positive proof that the Joshua Marik on New Avalon was a duplicate. In retaliation for his real son's death, Marik sent troops into the Commonwealth's Sarna March.

A horrified Katherine publicly denounced Victor's deception, recalled all Lyran troops to her half of the Federated Commonwealth and announced the formation of the Lyran Alliance. She then declared her nation neutral, securing the Free Worlds League border and leaving that nation free to fight the Federated Commonwealth. Taking advantage of Marik's invasion, Sun-Tzu Liao sent Capellan troops into the Sarna March to reconquer worlds his grandfather had lost during the Fourth Succession War. Aided by Katherine's neutrality and united by their hatred for House Davion, Marik and Liao prosecuted their war against the Federated Commonwealth with surprising speed and success.

As the threat of a wider war in the Inner Sphere loomed, political infighting among the Clans intensified. The Clans had long been divided into two camps: the Crusaders, who sought to restore the Star League through conquest, and the Wardens (which included Wolf's Dragoons), who believed their responsibility lay in safeguarding the Inner Sphere until the Great Houses re-established the Star League. Many of the Clans, especially Clan Jade Falcon, chafed under the truce that ilKhan Kerensky had signed and seized any excuse to break it. Opposition to the Truce of Tukayyid soon erupted in the Refusal War, a bitter civil war between Clans Jade Falcon and Wolf. Under orders from ilKhan Kerensky to ensure Clan Wolf's survival, a significant portion of Wolf warriors fled to sanctuary in the Inner Sphere. Phelan Kell—who had not died in action on The Rock, but instead had risen among his Clan captors to become Khan Phelan Ward of Clan Wolf—led this remnant to the Kell Hounds' homeworld of Arc-Royal. The rest of Clan Wolf fought a losing battle against the Jade Falcons.

Both conflicts ended suddenly, in a surprising series of twists. Having taken back from Victor Davion the worlds that had once belonged to the Free Worlds League, Thomas Marik concluded a peace treaty with the Archon prince. Sun-Tzu Liao, unwilling to continue his own campaign without Marik's backing, grudgingly agreed to end hostilities. The Kell Hounds, having refused Katherine Steiner's demand for aid in defending the Lyran Alliance, established an anti-Clan defensive zone centered on Arc-Royal. By this act, the mercenary unit carved its own fiefdom out of Katherine's realm. In the oddest turn of events, the Wolves who had battled the Jade Falcons briefly merged with that Clan and then won freedom from their Jade Falcon conquerors. This new Clan, led by the highly intelligent Khan Vladimir Ward, briefly called itself Clan Jade Wolf until Vlad killed Falcon Khan Elias Crichell. That act gave him the clout to revive his Clan as the "new" Clan Wolf. Intelligence indicates that Khan Vlad will stop at nothing to destroy Khan Phelan, leader of the Wolves in exile.

THE UNIVERSE TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

The first five years after Tukayyid, tumultuous though they were, seemed positively tranquil compared with the explosive events of 3058–3061. Those years saw many of the certainties accepted by both the Clans and the Inner Sphere violently overturned, giving way to a new order fraught with possibilities and perils.

In the wake of House Liao's invasion of the Sarna March, the Word of Blake seized its chance and captured Terra, cradle of humanity and ComStar's stronghold. Troop movements from the Free Worlds League into the so-called Chaos March provided cover for the Word of Blake Militia to move several divisions within striking distance of Terra, just as the high demand for mercenary troops in the March decimated ComStar's forces. Brion's Legion, a mercenary unit that had constituted nearly half the strength of ComStar's Terran Defense Force since the Fourth Succession War, abruptly canceled its contract in favor of a higher-paying Chaos March assignment. Unwilling to relocate Com Guard forces from the Clan border, ComStar's Precentor Martial replaced Brion's Legion with another mercenary unit—the Twenty-First Centauri Lancers. The Lancers, however, never arrived on Terra. Instead, the Word of Blake sent its own troops, which masqueraded as the Lancers for long enough to move the rest of their forces into position.

In late February 3058, the Word of Blake struck. The Com Guards on Terra, taken by surprise and unable to use the planet's formidable defenses because of Blakist sabotage from the inside, fought a bloody but ultimately futile battle across every continent. By early March, the Word of Blake held Terra in an iron grip that has yet to be dislodged. Precentor Martial Focht of ComStar declined to attempt the reconquest of Terra as long as the Clans remained a greater threat to the Inner Sphere.

During those same months, Clan Jade Falcon drove deep into the Lyran Alliance and captured several planets, until Inner Sphere forces halted them on the world of Coventry. Conceived as a show of strength in the aftermath of the Refusal War, the Coventry campaign was to have far more ominous consequences for the Clans than the Falcons could have anticipated. On Coventry, the Falcons met a coalition force from across the Inner Sphere, led by Prince Victor Steiner-Davion of the Federated Commonwealth. The Inner Sphere and Jade Falcon armies were evenly matched; neither side could win Coventry without a protracted and bloody battle, and both commanders realized it. At the same time, Khan Vlad of Clan Wolf was threatening the Falcons with strikes at worlds in the Jade Falcon occupation zone. Prince Victor invoked the Clan rite of *safcon* to ensure a safe landing for his troops and then offered Falcon Khan Marthe Pryde the only honorable way out—*hegira*, the traditional right of a defeated enemy to leave the field with forces

and honor intact. Under other circumstances, Pryde might have refused, but with the Wolf Khan making clear his intent to attack her Clan's holdings, she could not afford to leave those worlds defended by mere garrison troops. She accepted *hegira,* and the Jade Falcons left Coventry without another shot being fired.

The success of the coalition force on Coventry taught the Inner Sphere that old enemies could bury their differences in the face of a common enemy. Before the year was out, Prince Victor and other Inner Sphere leaders would act on that lesson, launching the campaign that obliterated a once-mighty Clan and ended the invasion of the Inner Sphere.

THE STAR LEAGUE REBORN

In October 3058, the leaders of the various Inner Sphere powers gathered on the Lyran capital of Tharkad to accomplish peacefully what they had failed to achieve during centuries of war—the rebirth of the Star League. Despite the deep divisions among them, the rulers of the Inner Sphere agreed to join for a single purpose—to end the Clan threat. The new Star League chose to prove its strength by destroying a single Clan: the Smoke Jaguars. Initially, the Star League intended only to drive the Jaguars out of their occupation zone. However, information from a Clan traitor enabled them to strike at the Smoke Jaguars' homeworld as well.

Throughout 3059 and 3060, Clan Smoke Jaguar died at the hands of the Inner Sphere. Their occupation zone overrun, their homeworld in ruins and their warrior caste decimated, the Jaguars essentially ceased to exist. The Inner Sphere force then turned its attention toward the rest of the Clans. Lacking the might to defeat the entire Clan military, Prince Victor Steiner-Davion led his forces to Strana Mechty, in the heart of Clan space. There, they defeated the Crusader Clans in a hard-fought Trial of Refusal. The Crusaders' defeat ended the invasion, leaving them locked in their occupation zones or driven from the Inner Sphere entirely.

Clan Nova Cat, which had sided with the Inner Sphere in obedience to the mystic visions of its leaders, received its own fiefdom in the Draconis Combine. Their fellow Clans abjured them for their "treason" and seized their holdings in Clan space. Clan Ghost Bear, which chose not to fight in the Trial, has also become a permanent presence in the Inner Sphere. They now occupy the Ghost Bear Dominion, part of what was once the Free Rasalhague Republic, from which they guard the Inner Sphere against incursions by Crusader-minded Clans unwilling to accept defeat. What other plans they may have remain anyone's guess.

Clan Steel Viper suffered the most humiliating fate of all the invading Clans, next to the shattered Smoke Jaguars. Thinking to take advantage of Jade Falcon weakness in the aftermath of the Refusal War, the Vipers challenged Falcon dominance of their shared occupation zone. After their campaign of conquest failed, the Vipers left the Inner Sphere rather than be destroyed by the Falcons.

As the man who defeated the most fearsome threat the Inner Sphere had ever known, Victor Steiner-Davion should have been the hero of the hour. In the eyes of many, he was—but his own people were not among them. The prince had left his youngest sister, Yvonne Steiner-Davion, as regent on New Avalon in his absence. He returned to find Yvonne deposed and the Federated Commonwealth in the hands of Katherine Steiner-Davion. Apparently, Katherine had been plotting the takeover for years, as a prelude to becoming the next First Lord of the Star League. Even without a realm, however, Prince Victor remained a political force to be reckoned with. At the Second Whitting Conference, Precentor Martial Anastasius Focht of ComStar announced his retirement and named Victor as his successor. The new Precentor Martial used his position to vote Coordinator Theodore Kurita, rather than his sister, into the post of First Lord.

The newborn Star League remains calm, but tensions are simmering beneath the surface. Prince Victor has so far made no attempt to regain his lost throne, unwilling to inflict a civil war on his people. The fact remains, however, that Precentor Martial Steiner-Davion has a crack military force at his disposal, and increasing numbers in the Federated Commonwealth are beginning to view him as a hero for his defeat of the Clans. Archon Katherine sits uneasily on the throne of New Avalon and may yet be provoked into rash action. Meanwhile, Clans Jade Falcon and Wolf remain committed to renewing the invasion. Clan Wolf formally repudiated the results of the Strana Mechty Trial, and Clan Jade Falcon is unlikely to abide by an outcome so offensive to its pride. Neither Clan has the strength to move in force yet, but each is rebuilding at a swift pace. The Capellan Confederation has begun military action against the independent St. Ives Compact, intent on recapturing it. And in the Draconis Combine, the presence of the Nova Cats and the stresses of reabsorbing Jaguar-held worlds have breathed new life into reactionary movements opposed to the Coordinator's liberalization of Combine society. For the moment, his position remains strong, but no one can say how long that will last.

Once again, the Inner Sphere is poised precariously between peace and war. At any moment, the balance of power may shift, setting BattleMechs on the march and worlds ablaze.

A WHISTLESTOP TOUR OF THE INNER SPHERE

Cartographers divide the known universe into several regions. The best known is the Inner Sphere, the densely populated swath of worlds located roughly within five hundred light-years of Terra. Five Successor States make up this region—the Federated Suns, the Capellan Confederation, the Free Worlds League, the Lyran Alliance and the Draconis Combine—along with such minor states as the Free Rasalhague Republic, the St. Ives Compact and the petty nations of the Chaos March.

The Outer Rim, more often called the Periphery, lies just outside the Inner Sphere. "The Periphery" also refers to the cluster of nations in that outer region, including the Outworlds Alliance, the Taurian Concordat, the Magistracy of Canopus and numerous pirate kingdoms. Though they encompass large areas of space, these realms are sparsely populated and underdeveloped compared with the Inner Sphere.

The remainder of known space, the Deep Periphery, contains solitary colonies and a few small nations. Only a handful of these, such as the mercantile Hanseatic League, rival even the minor Periphery states in terms of economic or military power; most are extremely primitive. Officially, the Clan homeworlds lie in the Deep Periphery, though Clan territory—encompassing a roughly 200 light-year sphere, about 1,300 light-years coreward of Terra—is widely considered a distinct region.

For a map of the Inner Sphere, see the beginning of the color pages.

FEDERATED SUNS

The Federated Suns occupies roughly a quarter of the Inner Sphere, spinward and rimward of Terra. It incorporates hundreds of worlds, ranging from agrarian idylls to planets bristling with high-tech megacities. The official language of the Federated Suns is English. For much of the past thirty-odd years, the Federated Suns and the Lyran Commonwealth together made up the Federated Commonwealth, a nation of vast military and economic power. The Lyran worlds seceded in late 3057, effectively undoing that alliance.

Archon Princess Katherine Steiner-Davion, leader of the Lyran Alliance since its formation, currently also rules the Federated Suns from its capital of New Avalon. Though her popular support is strong in the Federated Suns, her brother's popularity continues to erode her influence within the military.

New Avalon

The Federated Suns capital is a temperate world similar to Terra. Prized and originally settled for its fertile farmlands, it remains a prime exporter of foodstuffs. The planetary capital of Avalon City is home to the Royal Court and to one of the Inner Sphere's best-known research facilities, the New Avalon Institute of Science (NAIS).

All five of New Avalon's continents teem with native and Terran life. New Avalon wheat is a staple crop throughout the Inner Sphere; the fur of the silver ice snake-weasel, a predator native to the New Scotland region, is highly prized as trim on luxury clothing.

Kittery

The Federated Suns seized the agricultural world of Kittery from the Capellan Confederation in 3005. Resistance was initially fierce; the Kittery Tong, a guerrilla band, took every opportunity to target FedSuns personnel. The secession of the St. Ives Compact from the Confederation brought Kittery under the influence of Candace Liao, Duchess of St. Ives. The presence of a Liao ruler calmed the situation, though Kittery has recently seen an upsurge in Capellan nationalism.

Outside its farmlands, dense jungles cover much of Kittery. Travelers in these wild regions risk running into vicious native predators such as the godan, a dog-sized lizard that hunts in packs of up to twenty.

LYRAN ALLIANCE

Formerly part of the Federated Commonwealth, the Lyran Alliance is one of two realms governed by Archon Princess Katherine Steiner-Davion. Originally the Lyran Commonwealth, it was once the strongest mercantile power among the Successor States. Recent wars and perennial secessionist activity in outlying regions, however, have drained the Lyran economy. Located rimward-coreward of Terra, the Alliance lost many worlds in the Clan invasion, including the provincial capital of Tamar (now the Clan Wolf regional capital). English and German are the official languages of the Alliance.

Tharkad

The Lyran capital is a cold, rocky world with harsh winters and an arctic zone that extends down to the thirtieth parallel. The original colonists imported many Terran plants and animals, and pine forests, deer wolves and caribou abound in Tharkad's higher latitudes. The Lyran Royal Court and the Estates General (the Lyran parliament) are housed in the government complex known as the Triad, one of Tharkad City's most prominent landmarks. Mining and refining, winter sports and tourism are the pillars of the planetary economy.

Hesperus II

A rugged, mountainous world racked by vicious storms, Hesperus II boasts one of the largest 'Mech manufacturing plants in the Inner Sphere. Its factories have made it a target for every major power save the Capellan Confederation, as well as the center of a long-ago coup attempt. Arable land is scarce, limited to the Melrose Valley and the terraced hillsides around Maria's Elegy, the planetary capital.

DRACONIS COMBINE

The Draconis Combine, located coreward-spinward of Terra, is ruled by the Kurita family. Its culture parallels that of ancient Japan, emphasizing personal honor and martial ability. The official language of the Combine is Japanese, though English is widely spoken.

Staunchly militaristic, the Combine has repeatedly clashed with its neighbors, though it reached an understanding with the Federated Commonwealth during the Clan invasion that allowed each nation to concentrate on battling the invaders. In the first years of the Clan invasion, the Combine lost large swaths of territory to Clans Ghost Bear, Nova Cat and Smoke Jaguar. As part of the reborn Star League, it helped crush the Jaguars and absorbed the Nova Cats. Recently, Coordinator Theodore Kurita appears to have normalized relations with the Ghost Bear Dominion.

Luthien

The Combine capital world is heavily industrialized, its landscape dominated by ugly, sprawling cities. Much of its air and water is contaminated, earning it the nickname "Black Luthien." The planetary capital of Imperial City is a stark exception to this rule. Its classical Japanese architecture, rich with teak and marble and surrounded by verdant parks, makes it one of the most breathtaking cities in the Inner Sphere. Clan attacks devastated large areas around Imperial City, but considerable effort has since been made to rebuild.

Al Na'ir

The Al Na'ir system has not yet developed habitable planets, but its mineral-rich asteroid fields have encouraged the Combine to establish asteroid colonies and construct space stations. Luthien Armor Works operates an orbital BattleMech factory in the system, defended by numerous weapons platforms. Navigation in Al Na'ir is difficult and dangerous, even for experienced pilots.

FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

Historically, the Free Worlds League has been the most fractious of the Successor States, a federation of petty fiefdoms located rimward-antispinward of Terra. The official language of the Free Worlds League is English, though many regions use other languages.

Thomas Marik, who became Captain-General in 3036, has centralized power to an unprecedented degree and made the League one of the Inner Sphere's richest nations. However, the League's economic success conceals its political fragility. Many League politicians find Marik's dealings with the Word of Blake highly suspect, and more than a few have voiced opposition to Marik's rule.

Atreus

For a capital world, Atreus is surprisingly undeveloped. With the exception of fishing and aerospace manufacture, the planet's most prominent industry is government. Because Atreus relies heavily on imported goods, its inhabitants fear blockade more than invasion. The House of Government on Atreus is the only capitol building in the Successor States still standing on its original site—the others have all been relocated or destroyed.

Andurien

Andurien is a study in contrasts. Currently ruled by the Humphreys family, descendants of those who helped forge the Free Worlds League, the planet is known throughout the League for its beautiful botanical gardens, which stretch north of the capital city of Jojoken. The gardens' beauty belies the planet's tumultuous history; it and neighboring worlds seceded from the League in 3030 and joined the Magistracy of Canopus in a war against the Capellan Confederation. A decade-long struggle ensued before Andurien and its sister worlds were finally pacified and restored to the Free Worlds League.

CAPELLAN CONFEDERATION

The smallest of the Successor States, the Capellan Confederation occupies a sliver of space directly rimward of Terra. Over the years it has lost many of its worlds to other nations. The current Chancellor, Sun-Tzu Liao, has spent his reign attempting to retake those lost planets and is currently locked in a bitter struggle to recapture the independent St. Ives Compact. The official language of the Capellan Confederation is Mandarin, though English is widely spoken.

Sian

The Capellan capital is famed for its vast oak, pine and bamboo forests, in which leopards and giant pandas roam. The early colonists introduced most of the planet's wildlife and carefully nurtured its ecosystem to resemble Terra's Asian continent, home of the Liao family that became Sian's rulers. In the centuries since colonization, however, increasingly profitable mining operations have devastated many wilderness areas.

The Chancellor's summer palace lies at the southern end of the Wuhan continent and has been closely guarded ever since Federated Suns forces raided the world in 3029.

St. Ives

Best known for its electronics industry, the largest in the Confederation, St. Ives became the capital of the St. Ives Compact after the Compact worlds seceded from the Confederation in 3030. St. Ives rejoined the Confederation in 3062, after a major military engagement forced Duchess Candace Liao to withdraw from the world. The planetary capital of Tiantan bears numerous scars from that struggle, which included the use of nerve gas by Capellan extremists. Life across the planet is slowly returning to normal, though tensions remain high.

FREE RASALHAGUE REPUBLIC

Originally part of the Draconis Combine, Rasalhague was allowed to secede in 3034 as part of a deal between Theodore Kurita and ComStar to supply the Combine with Star League-era

military hardware. Less than twenty years later, the Clan juggernaut swallowed up all but seven Rasalhague worlds. Only the intervention of ComStar and the Battle of Tukayyid prevented the nation from disappearing entirely. Rasalhague remains essentially a ComStar protectorate; the order relocated its headquarters there after the Word of Blake conquered Terra.

ComStar's pervasive presence has drawn opposition from Rasalhague's new leader, Elected Prince Regent Christian Mansdötter. A staunch advocate of Rasalhagian nationalism, Mansdötter has begun to make trouble for what he terms ComStar's "occupying" force.

The official language of the Republic is Swedish; English and German are also commonly spoken.

Tukayyid

Until 3052, Tukayyid was a backwater agricultural world, known for its high-quality grain and spectacular scenery. Then the Clans and ComStar agreed to fight a proxy battle on Tukayyid to determine control of Terra, vaulting the sleepy little planet into the pages of history. After twenty-one days of bitter conflict, ComStar won a fifteen-year truce from the Clans. Native farmers returned to find their lands devastated, littered with the debris of war. Over the past decade, however, the Free Rasalhague Republic and ComStar have made impressive strides in restoring the world.

CHAOS MARCH

Originally Capellan territory annexed by the Federated Suns in the Fourth Succession War, the area immediately rimward of Terra was thrown into confusion by the Marik-Liao assault on the Federated Commonwealth in 3057. Many planets became de facto independent, though the Confederation has made slow but sure gains among the rimward worlds. During the past four years, the coreward worlds within thirty-nine light-years of Terra have slowly come under the influence of the Word of Blake, though Blakist control is contested by ComStar and numerous petty warlords.

Outreach

Once a major Star League facility and home to the SLDF Martial Olympiad, Outreach was seized by the Capellan Confederation and subsequently fire-bombed by the Free Worlds League in the First Succession War. As part of the short-lived Tikonov Free Republic, it joined the Federated Suns after the Fourth Succession War, and the mercenary group Wolf's Dragoons took it as an independent landhold. The Dragoons rebuilt the planetary economy and reopened many "lost" manufacturing facilities that they used to strengthen their forces. Under the Dragoons' suzerainty, Outreach and its capital of Harlech have become the center of mercenary activity in the Inner Sphere. In recent years, the difficulty of getting to Outreach—which lies in the heart of the Chaos March—has prompted some to suggest reopening the hiring halls on Galatea, the so-called Mercenary's Star in Lyran Alliance territory.

Terra

Terra has always occupied an important place in the heart of humankind. The birthplace of humanity, it became the crown jewel of the Terran Alliance, the Terran Hegemony and finally the Star League. With the fall of the Star League following the Amaris Civil War, ComStar took control of Terra and sealed it off from other worlds. In 3057, Terra fell to a radical splinter group of ComStar known as the Word of Blake.

With the widest mix of cultures, languages, religions and ethnic groups of any human-inhabited planet, Terra serves as a touchstone for humans on other planets, regardless of how many thousands of light-years and hundreds of centuries separate them.

CLAN OCCUPATION ZONE

The Clan invasion placed large sections of the Federated Commonwealth, Free Rasalhague Republic and Draconis Combine under Clan rule. The spinward region, occupied by the Smoke Jaguars and Nova Cats, was liberated in 3059 and returned to the Combine. The rest remains under Clan control.

The Steel Vipers and Jade Falcons shared the farthest anti-spinward section until 3061, when the Vipers attempted to gain total control of the territory. Their campaign backfired, giving the Falcons control of all fifty-three worlds. Sudeten is the Jade Falcon regional capital.

Despite recent losses to the Ghost Bears and Hell's Horses—the latter of which have established a three-world enclave between Wolf and Ghost Bear territory—Clan Wolf controls the largest swath of Clan-occupied territory. Clan Wolf leaders have made a point of establishing good relations between the Wolves and the native population, allowing both to prosper. The Wolf Clan regional capital is Tamar.

The Ghost Bears shocked their fellow Clans and the Inner Sphere by relocating to their Inner Sphere holdings, a region of mostly Combine planets centered on Alshain and now known as the Ghost Bear Dominion. Factions within the Combine regard the Bears as an occupying force and are blocking efforts toward official recognition of the Dominion as a nation.

Alshain

A mineral-poor world with a temperate climate, Alshain has few large production facilities save for its single BattleMech factory. This low level of industry has left its vast pine forests almost untouched. Until Clan Ghost Bear conquered it in December of 3051, Alshain had a proud history as a prominent Draconis Combine world. The Ghost Bears wasted little time bringing the'Mech factory back on-line, and it has since become the Bears' primary facility. In 3060, the Bears chose Alshain as their Inner Sphere capital.

Twycross

The third planet of seven, Twycross is renowned for extreme climate changes, caused by its F01V-type sun and proximity to a large, hot gas giant. The arid Plain of Curtains frequently suffers a titanic sandstorm dubbed the Diabolis by locals, with winds clocked at more than 350 kph.

For centuries, Twycross was a regional capital in the Lyran Commonwealth, until the Jade Falcons conquered it in June of 3050. Though the Federated Commonwealth briefly recaptured it in September of that same year, the Falcons quickly repulsed the FedCom forces, and the planet remains firmly under Falcon control.

THE PERIPHERY

The Periphery contains countless nations, some as small as a single planet. Others, like the Magistracy of Canopus and the Taurian Concordat, occupy dozens of worlds. Renowned for its rugged independence and unwillingness to bow to the Inner Sphere, the Periphery is home to everything from pleasure circuses and police states to pirate kingdoms and technophobic enclaves.

Canopus

First settled in 2530 by a band of ex-Free Worlds League soldiers, Canopus IV soon became the capital of the Magistracy of Canopus. Extensive immigration to this mineral-rich world led to a population explosion and rapid industrialization. Over the next several centuries, the planet suffered wide-scale strip mining, which left soil erosion and ecological damage in its wake. Radical shifts in the planet's weather pattern have begun to appear in recent decades, and many naturalists fear that past practices have irreparably damaged the planetary ecosystem.

In addition to being the seat of Canopian government, Canopus IV is the home base of one of the last remaining entertainment conglomerates in the Periphery.

Antallos

A prosperous trade world following its colonization in 2674, Antallos was sacked several times during the Succession Wars. After a particularly savage attack by the Draconis Combine, which resulted in unprecedented civilian casualties, the planet fragmented into city-states, each of which has since attempted to subjugate its neighbors. In the past century, the city-state of Port Krin has gained dominance through outright conquest, off-world dealings with House Kurita and a profitable traffic in slaves. Today, Antallos and especially Port Krin are a haven for the desperate, the criminal and the renegade—a port of call for every pirate operating in the Periphery, including bandit-caste Clansmen.

GOVERNMENT AND LAW

GOVERNMENT TYPES

With the exception of the Free Rasalhague Republic and—in theory, if not in practice—the Free Worlds League, the Great Houses of the Inner Sphere are each ruled by a single individual who wields immense power and shapes the future of trillions. However, the nature of these de facto dictatorships varies considerably. In the Draconis Combine, the word of that individual—the Coordinator—is law, and obedience is expected. However, the Archon of the Lyran Alliance and the Captain-General of the Free Worlds League are subject to restraint by an elected body—the Estates General and Parliament, respectively.

These dictatorships, benign or otherwise, sprang up in direct response to mankind's expansion to the stars. After the collapse of humanity's first wave of expansion, regional power brokers arose in the absence of a central government and largely wrought the nations that exist today, binding nearby planets together in a form of feudalism. The vast distances between planets made interstellar travel a rarity, and since the HPG system was not developed until 2630, interstellar communication was impossible. This meant that each world enjoyed a high degree of autonomy, and the feudal warlords who ruled them rarely faced the possibility of being overthrown by an invading military force. This system largely remains in place today, resulting in a patchwork of mostly independent local governments overseen by a neo-feudal lord. There are dozens of variations, but the most common are listed below.

DICTATORSHIPS

Dictatorships are controlled by a single person or a close-knit cabal of individuals (e.g., a family or similar organization) whose authority is absolute. There is considerable variation in such governments. Some are "popular" governments, often exploiting some past injustice to gain popular support, while others are imposed by force of will or military might, maintaining power through intimidation and terror. The origins of many such governments in the Inner Sphere lie with the Succession Wars, usually through local military commanders seizing authority during a crisis and then refusing to relinquish it.

Dictatorships often depend on the charisma and personal force of will of their leaders and rarely survive the death of those leaders. If rulership successfully passes to a second generation, the government is more correctly termed an oligarchy (if ruled by a group) or an autocracy (if ruled by an individual).

OLIGARCHY/AUTOCRACY

The key element to oligarchies and autocracies is that governance is restricted to an individual (autocracy) or a small subset of the population (oligarchy), with no direct participation by the general public. In fact, the power of autocracies and oligarchies is absolute, with no constitutional restraints; citizens usually have no legal rights. Many oligarchies and autocracies do consult with the rest of society to forestall insurrections—usually through a puppet group that claims to represent the people—though final decisions remain solidly in the hands of the elite.

Hereditary monarchies are perhaps the best-known examples of autocracies, while examples of oligarchies include self-perpetuating bureaucracies and corporate fiefdoms. The Draconis Combine is an autocratic state, while the Clans represent a militaristic oligarchy. The Lyran Alliance is considered by many to be an autocracy, though its government establishes some parliamentary power and follows the feudal model.

Theocracies are a subset of oligarchies, with governance by a religious elite. The best example of a theocracy is the Word of Blake, though there are numerous smaller examples throughout the Inner Sphere.

FEUDAL STATE

The principal distinction between a feudal state and an autocracy/oligarchy is that in the former, a good deal of the authority is delegated to a number of vassals who have sworn fealty to the reigning power. In turn, these vassals run their fiefdoms as sub-states, usually as a parliamentary monarchy or an autocracy.

Feudal states are the most common form of government in the Inner Sphere, and each of the Great Houses contains some form of noble class. The Federated Suns is the classic example of a feudal state, although most Inner Sphere nations incorporate some elements of feudalism in their government systems.

REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

In a representative democracy, governmental decisions are made by a select group of individuals elected by the population. The exact nature of these representatives varies wildly—some are elected for specific meetings while others serve for life—but they work on behalf of the population as a whole. The right to vote for representatives is usually granted to all adults, though some societies place restrictions on such rights—usually the completion of military service.

The Free Worlds League is theoretically a representative democracy, with each province sending elected representatives to the Parliament on Atreus. However, Resolution 288 grants the Captain-General special powers; for this reason, some regard the League as a de facto military dictatorship.

Likewise, the Free Rasalhague Republic is technically a representative democracy even though much of the government's power rests with an individual, the Elected Prince.

DIRECT DEMOCRACY

In direct democracies, the general populace has a direct say and participation in the affairs of government, with all major decisions (and often many minor ones) thrown open to a public plebiscite. In many such democracies, especially communist and anarchist enclaves, no centralized government exists, and

decisions are made on a local level. Large-scale decisions in a direct democracy can be cumbersome, as it may take time to poll the populace and determine a consensus. Direct democracies can be volatile and vulnerable to outside manipulation.

DISORDER

Though rare in the Inner Sphere, save perhaps in war zones, a complete breakdown of social structure and authority is commonplace on many of the less-civilized Periphery worlds. Given a lack of defined government or civil cooperation, control is often disputed between two or more individuals or groups. Bandits and pirates thrive in these areas of chaos and lawlessness.

TITLES AND NOBILITY

In keeping with their feudal origins, every nation in the Inner Sphere includes some type of noble class. Many noble titles are common to several nations, having originated on Terra in the millennia before humankind journeyed to the stars.

Terran nobility originated with the feudal system of government most prevalent in the Middle Ages, when a sovereign delegated responsibility for various areas to select subjects in exchange for a personal oath of fealty. These subordinate leaders were granted a patent of nobility allowing them to use a title commensurate with their importance.

The nobility had virtually died out when Michael Cameron, the first elected ruler of the Terran Hegemony, recognized the system's practical application as a means of exerting control over humankind's expanding sphere of influence. The ever-widening expanse of colonies had clearly grown beyond the capacity of a single ruler or even a single dynasty to control directly; as for direct democracy, the expense and difficulty of space travel and the limits of communications technology across the vast reaches of colonized space made that system of government equally impractical. Over the centuries, especially since the fall of the first Star League, the concept of a noble ruling class has taken hold throughout the Inner Sphere. Unlike its historical predecessor, Cameron's system of nobility does not discriminate by gender. Nobility in the thirty-first century is largely hereditary; though most sovereigns can grant titles to their subjects, this practice is relatively rare even among MechWarriors, those modern-day knights.

The most common noble titles and their regional equivalents are described below.

PRINCE/PRINCESS

Unlike most other noble titles, the title of prince is not awarded by a sovereign, but instead applies to absolute or near-absolute rulers or their heirs apparent in a hereditary monarchy. Among the rulers of the Successor States, only the head of the Federated Suns is known as a prince (more accurately, First Prince), though several Periphery lordlings have adopted similar titles in an attempt to legitimize their rule. The title of Prince or Princess Imperial denotes the heir to the Federated Suns throne, though officially that title is only awarded after the heir has served five years in the military.

The status of the Federated Commonwealth's head of state, known as the Archon Prince or Princess, is currently in dispute. Officially, the Archon Prince outranks the First Prince, who serves as regent on New Avalon, and the Archon, who serves as regent on Tharkad.

Protocol dictates that any head of state be treated as the peer of a prince, though only the Capellan rank of Chancellor and the Combine rank of Coordinator are direct equivalents. The Captain-General of the Free Worlds League and the Elected Prince of Rasalhague are temporary positions, but they are accorded equivalence of rank as a courtesy.

A prince or princess is generally addressed as "your highness" or "highness."

DUKE/DUCHESS

Aside from sovereigns and their heirs, dukes and duchesses are the pinnacle of the nobility, governing territories on behalf of their state's rulers. These holdings, known as duchies, can range from a single important world to a collection of border worlds. The most powerful dukes, frequently called grand dukes, great dukes or archdukes, outrank lesser dukes and almost always rule dozens of worlds. The Arc-Royal Defense Cordon in the Lyran Alliance and the Duchy of Oriente in the Free Worlds League are the best-known of the current grand duchies. Even these prominent territories, however, pale in comparison with the vast marches of the Federated Suns, each of which contains more than a hundred worlds.

In most Successor States, a duke has near-absolute authority over his holdings, with considerable independence from his liege lord. To the subjects in a given duchy, the duke or duchess, rather than the nation's sovereign, frequently represents the most visible and immediate authority. Given this degree of power and freedom, duchies often become the focus of independence movements—for example, the perennially secessionist Duchy of Andurien in the Free Worlds League. Some duchies are independent states whose rulers have retained the rank of duke for political reasons. Dukes of the Draconis Combine, by contrast, largely lack such independence. In general, they control only the civilian aspects of government, while military authority—and the real power—remains in the hands of the warlords.

Most duchies are hereditary, though the sovereign of a realm may influence their distribution. Some duchies are actually held by the crown. For example, the Lyran Duchy of Tharkad is reserved for the Archon, while the Capellan Chancellor is also the Duke of Sian.

A duke or duchess is addressed as "your grace."

MARQUESS/MARQUESSA

The rank of marquess/marquessa (known as marquis, marquise or marchioness in the Free Worlds League and lamas/lamia in the Capellan Confederation) often denotes the governor of a frontier dependency or an administrator of a key locale. These nobles are usually subordinate to the local duke; some hold a purely symbolic position, with no real responsibility.

The exact territory governed by a marquess or marquessa ranges from a single continent on a rich world to an entire world in a multi-planet duchy. The post of marquess is generally hereditary, though some territories are reserved for the children of dukes.

The Lyran title of margrave (or margravine), though similar in many ways to the rank of marquess, is a temporary title given to the commander of a front-line military district. It is not hereditary, but is passed on to the next military commander of the region. However, many margraves receive baronies as rewards for their service.

A marquess is addressed as "my lord," a marquessa as "my lady."

COUNT/COUNTESS

Officially subordinate to a duke or marquess, many counts—known as earls in the Federated Suns, grafs in the Lyran Alliance and shonso/shonsa in the Capellan Confederation—have nonetheless amassed considerable power and wealth. Their holdings, known variously as counties or earldoms, may range from a city to a continent, or occasionally an entire world. Some powerful counts style themselves "archcount" or "landgrave," with authority rivaling that of a marquess. The rank of count is hereditary. Like a marquess or marquessa, a count is addressed as "my lord" and a countess as "my lady."

BARON/BARONESS

The lowest of the true noble ranks, barons vary widely in power and influence. Some of these titles are mere honorifics bestowed on junior members of higher-ranking noble families; other baronies are associated with feudal responsibilities, often martial ones. Most baronies encompass a single town or fortress; a few extend to cover a whole continent or a world, though the latter are rare. In the Capellan Confederation, the equivalent of a baron is a warlord, though that title carries nowhere near the power of the Combine military rank of the same name. Mandrinn and mandrissa are equally common equivalent titles.

A baron is addressed as "my lord," a baroness as "my lady."

BARONET

The rank of baronet is an honorary title conferred for service to the state, often associated with a martial decoration. It is usually hereditary but confers little power. The Capellan ranks of diem and refrector are the exception; roughly equivalent to a baronet, these nobles retain considerable administrative authority. Though diem and refrectors have noble privileges, neither rank is officially accorded noble status.

A male baronet is addressed as "sir" followed by his full name; his wife is addressed as "lady," followed by her husband's surname. A female baronet is addressed as "dame," her husband as "lord" followed by his wife's surname.

KNIGHTHOOD

Though distinct from true nobles, orders of knighthood often operate under charters from their nation's sovereign and thus represent an extension of the nobility. Of the hundreds of knightly orders scattered across the Inner Sphere, most are militaristic, religious or both, and they hold to their own customs, traditions and philosophies. Membership in an order is often bestowed as a reward for battlefield performance, though many orders exist that recognize civil achievements in the media, science or literature.

Despite the romanticized associations of the word "knighthood," most people in the Inner Sphere regard the ancient concept of chivalry—the gallantry, courtesy and honor expected of medieval knights—as outdated and unrealistic. The few exceptions, such as the Free Worlds League's Knights of the Inner Sphere, are generally seen as taking themselves much too seriously.

Few knightly orders use the traditional "sir" or "dame" prefix, preferring to add "knight of ..." to each member's name or other titles on formal occasions.

LAW AND ORDER

Though each Successor State maintains its own body of laws, the influence of the original Star League has given rise to many similarities. In many nations, originally identical base laws have been altered over the years by different precedents and rulings.

THE LEGAL SYSTEM

Criminal law contains the broadest array of similarities, diverging widely only in the severity of punishment. For example, all societies in known space regard murder as a grave offense.

SAMPLE CRIMES AND PUNISHMENTS

Crime	Lenient Punishment	Harsh Punishment
Slander/libel	Fines	Indentured servitude
Vandalism	Fines or community service	Work camp
Racketeering	Fines or imprisonment	Work camp
Petty theft	Imprisonment (6 months–1 year)	Amputation
Negligence	Fines or imprisonment (1+ years)	Indentured servitude
Assault	Imprisonment (1–5 years)	Work camp
Manslaughter	Imprisonment (5–10 years)	Execution
Grand theft	Imprisonment (10–25 years)	Amputation and work camp
Kidnapping	Imprisonment (10+ years)	Work camp
Murder	Imprisonment (10+ years) or execution	Execution
Treason/espionage	—	Execution

However, murder in the Capellan Confederation and the Lyran Alliance is punishable by execution, while life imprisonment is the standard penalty in the Federated Suns. Similarly, most realms punish theft with imprisonment; some societies, however, take severer action, such as the amputation of a thief's hands.

In general, fines, community service or a term of imprisonment are the more lenient punishments meted out for various crimes. Harsh punishments range from a term of indentured servitude or time in a work camp to execution. Indentured servitude is frequently considered a lighter sentence than work-camp labor; the former may bring reasonable treatment from compassionate masters, while camp conditions are almost always harsh.

Civil law is much more diverse, relying on countless cultural and religious factors. For example, many of the legal prerogatives of Capellan or Combine nobles would be regarded as infringing on civil liberties in the Free Worlds League. Similarly, contract stipulations valid in one nation may not apply to another, though in most cases the parties can find common ground.

Regional variations often wreak havoc with a nation's legal system. This problem is particularly acute in the Free Worlds League, where the League constitution enshrines the rights of local regions and thereby poses difficulties for law enforcement and the judiciary. Laws regarding weapons are perhaps the most common regional problem. On many border or undeveloped worlds, possessing and wearing firearms is legal and even expected. On more developed worlds, particularly in urban areas, openly sporting a weapon is usually illegal and may be punishable by severe fines or imprisonment. Covert transportation or even ownership of a weapon without appropriate licenses may also be proscribed. Such variations in the law can occur on a single world, with differing interpretations between rural and urban areas.

The legal process varies just as wildly from nation to nation and planet to planet. Most common are variations on the jury system, in which arguments for and against a case are presented to a randomly selected panel of citizens that decides the matter. In some cases, most often those involving complex legal matters or appeals, the jury is replaced by a panel of professional magistrates—for example, the Capellan Chancellery Courts.

The feudal system of government dominant throughout known space means that the local ruler often plays a part in the legal process, usually as a magistrate or to hear appeals. In many realms, the sovereign stands outside the system and can manipulate it to his or her own ends. Royal pardons and the right to commute sentences are the most common expressions of the power of the senior nobility.

POLICE FORCES

Law enforcement agencies, both local and national, exist in various forms throughout the Inner Sphere. Each police force has its own standards and procedures.

Local forces, which range from lone sheriffs and deputized members of the community to well-organized planetary militias, are generally concerned with maintaining day-to-day order. Except in the smallest communities, law enforcement is divided into specialized branches: patrolling, investigation, research and administrative support. Some local forces also maintain tactical units, trained to handle small-scale combat situations without calling in the national army.

National agencies exist to ensure stability within a realm, and so are trained to work across the often divergent legal systems of various regions. Many are closely linked to state intelligence agencies, forming a domestic law enforcement service responsible for dealing with criminal acts and other events on a national scale: organized crime, terrorism, counterespionage and so forth.

Most police officers, local or national, are trained in unarmed and armed combat as well as investigative skills. Patrol officers and administrators usually wear distinctive uniforms to make them easily identifiable and to enhance their authority (one of the most distinctive is the "candy stripe" outfit worn by the Draconis Combine's Civilian Guidance Corps). Investigative officers also wear uniforms, but only on formal occasions. Both uniformed and plainclothes officers usually carry small-caliber firearms, stunners or shotguns. Lightweight personal body armor is also common, particularly in urban areas.

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

The Inner Sphere forms an ovoid roughly a thousand light-years in diameter, comprising some two thousand colonized worlds contested by five major nations, the invading Clans and a host of petty states. These worlds range from marginal agricultural colonies to cosmopolitan centers of industry.

Holding together this interstellar society is a daunting task. It requires efficient travel between worlds, well-established lines of communication and a centralized bureaucracy; without these things, society will inevitably fragment into isolated, disparate worlds. Temporary breakdowns in communications and central authority led to the formation of the Successor States and plunged the Inner Sphere into the violent chaos of the Succession Wars. Nothing, however, strains the bonds of interstellar community more than the awesome distances that separate populated worlds.

The inevitable isolation imposed by the sheer vastness of space has given rise to a wild diversity of cultures throughout the Inner Sphere and Periphery, with all the wonder and chaos that implies. On some worlds, a single culture dominates; others are a hodgepodge of different beliefs and social groups. Some hark back to distinct societies on ancient Terra, while others reflect a mix of influences. Unfortunately, this diversity brings with it cultural friction and even outright xenophobia between many worlds. Cultural bigotry, exacerbated by isolationist impulses, is partly responsible for the militarism common to nearly every nation in the Inner Sphere. The average citizen accepts warfare against "the enemy" as a fact of life, an attitude reinforced by war's profound influence on media and the arts. The general deterioration of Inner Sphere educational systems is another consequence of this military emphasis, which diverts considerable resources from other areas of endeavor.

Three hundred years of intermittent warfare have left the Inner Sphere with more than a few battle scars, arresting and even reversing centuries of scientific and technological process. The fratricidal squabbling of the Great Houses and the marauders of the Periphery bandit kingdoms would likely disappoint those who imagined that leaving Terra for the stars would finally enable humans to create a peaceful utopia. Those who envisioned a galaxy of struggling colonies enslaved by a monolithic bureaucracy might rejoice. The truth rests somewhere in between.

PLANETARY CONDITIONS

Humankind occupies more than two thousand worlds in the Inner Sphere alone, encompassing a wide range of planetary types, flora and fauna. Many can support human life without technological intervention; others have been modified to suit humans.

Though many worlds discovered during the early years of colonization could technically support life, most suffered from a shortage of drinkable water. Heavy-metal contamination was common, and most fledgling colonies relied on imported water until processing plants could be assembled. The expense of the processing equipment limited colonization until the founding of the Ryan Cartel, which transshipped ice to new colonies. Later, enterprising inventors developed cheap purification units. Dependent on processing equipment as they are, many worlds remain at the mercy of mechanical breakdowns even in the thirty-first century.

Atmospheric composition is another key element of planetary environments. Oxygen is essential for humans and other Terran life forms, but too much is as dangerous as too little. Gases such as nitrogen are also required. Carbon dioxide (CO_2) is vital for plants, but high levels can be toxic to animals. Inhabitants of worlds with high oxygen or CO_2 levels wear special masks that reduce gas concentrations to acceptable levels, as well as filtering out other atmospheric contaminants like sulfur or viral agents. Unless sealed respirator units are used, overall atmospheric pressure must fall within certain limits; too high or too low causes lung damage.

Weather and climate also play an important role in shaping colonization, though technology allows humans to adapt to a wide range of conditions. Many worlds are too cold or too warm, and there are limits to the cost-effectiveness of air conditioning and heating technologies. Other worlds suffer violent storms, forcing settlement underground as on Twycross, or architectural adaptations to resist the raging tempests. In many cases, respirators akin to those for tainted atmospheres are required to prevent inhalation of atmospheric dust.

Most human-occupied worlds have gravity levels between half and one-and-a-half times that of Terra. Greater extremes can be harmful or cause physical alterations. For example, people born on low-G worlds are often taller than those from Terra-like worlds, but they find "normal" or high-G worlds uncomfortable or even dangerous. Conversely, those born on high-G worlds tend toward more compact and muscular frames.

The last major factor in human colonization is native life. Differences in amino acids make many native species incompatible with Terran life forms, prompting colonists to rely on imported Terran crops and livestock. Unfortunately, the differences rarely prevent native predators from snacking on colonists. Thus far, humanity has yet to encounter other sentient life forms.

Where native life is compatible with Terran life, a whole new array of problems arises. Though digestible, some native flora and fauna will likely be poisonous to humans and Terran animals. Combined with the risk of viral agents and bacteria, this prompts even established settlements to stay on their guard. Many new viruses entered circulation as humankind emigrated to the stars, and not all of them are treatable with vaccines.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE 31ST CENTURY

Thirty-first-century life abounds with wondrous machines and high-tech weapons, most of recent origin. Until just a few decades ago, devices now taken for granted were only pipe

dreams, held by many to be mere legends from the long-ago glory days of the Star League. Others could be manufactured only by automated factories, the secrets of their underlying technologies long forgotten.

A complete account of the events behind the change is beyond the scope of this work. The following excerpts offer an overview of humanity's technological reversals of fortune, along with brief looks at a few of the most important technological breakthroughs in the past millennium.

TOUGH FALL

—From *Forecasts from the Past: Secrets of the Star League Revealed*, Dr. William Squire, NAIS Press, 3041

Few would argue that the human race has reached the limits of what we can achieve. The journey toward ascension is a never-ending stairway, taking us higher and higher, always extending beyond our wildest hopes. Occasionally we hit a plateau, a brief rest stop where we can catch our breath and see the big picture. A few shortsighted individuals mistake this for the final step, never seeing the rest of the stairway that rises in the distance. And because these fools are often the most outspoken, the rest of humanity listens. Only when the likes of Newton, Einstein or Kearny and Fuchida make their incredible discoveries does the stairway again emerge from the fog of ignorance, allowing us to continue on our journey.

The path is slippery, however, and occasionally we fall backward. Sometimes whole civilizations are lost, as with the wonderful cities built by the Mayan Indians of Terra's Americas. Other times only the knowledge is lost, as with the ancient Egyptians or the Inner Sphere following the fall of the Star League.

Until the Star League's demise, we were headed in the right direction. The fusion reactor and the KF drive allowed us to conquer the stars. Terraforming enabled us to conquer Mother Nature. Advancing medical technology allowed us to conquer disease after disease. We had not, however, conquered humanity's most primal flaws—jealousy and greed.

The Succession Wars that raged for almost two and a half centuries nearly dragged the human race back to the Stone Age. Nuclear firestorms ate up laboratories and factories, consuming their scientific secrets and the researchers who had unlocked those mysteries. By the dawn of the thirty-first century, each of the Successor States was in dire straits. The technologies they had come to rely on had virtually vanished, with only a few automated factories still capable of manufacturing much-needed devices like the KF drive. Some pieces of technology, such as the myomer implantation device and the gauss rifle, could no longer be produced at all. Humans coined a new word—lostech—to describe these lost technologies.

During the dark ages of the Succession Wars, the quality of life declined to a low not seen in centuries. Many remote worlds were reduced to subsistence farming, with no technology more advanced than a beast pulling a metal plow. Some colonies simply vanished. The men and women who could have helped to pull the Inner Sphere out of these desperate times were instead kept busy building the machines of destruction that had caused humanity's fall. We had little hope of stopping the downward spiral, which continued to accelerate ...

RECOVERY

—From *The Universe Today*, Dr. Andrea Paliwoda, ComStar Archives, 3058

The 3030s and 3040s were almost entirely devoted to the recovery of lostech, made possible by the discovery of the Star League memory core on Helm in 3024. With few exceptions, most notably Prince Hanse Davion's war in 3039, the Successor States concentrated all their efforts on unlocking the technological secrets of the past. Each, of course, hoped to be the first to redevelop the one weapon that would let them conquer their neighbors and re-create the Star League under their leadership.

Though reinventing the wheel took time, by the fifth decade of the thirty-first century, the people of the Inner Sphere were beginning to reap the benefits of the rediscoveries. The standard of living rose as new medicines were introduced and factories were repaired and upgraded after centuries of neglect. This technological resurgence breathed new life into the shattered economies of the Successor States, which stimulated further research and development programs.

The dark ages were slowly fading, as institutions like the NAIS almost daily announced the development of another new vaccine or device or technique for building something lighter and stronger. By 3050, the Inner Sphere had unlocked most of the technological secrets lost after the fall of the Star League (though many of these technologies were still in their prototype stages and years away from practical everyday use). Just in time, as it turns out—in 3050, the Clans came back to reclaim their lost home through military conquest.

CATCH-UP

—From *Our Century, Part IV;* Kana Sohiri, *Digest of Our Times*, Tharkad Press, 3060

At first, many of our generals believed the Clans were invading aliens from some unknown planet deep in the galactic core. Many people have since ridiculed that error—but given the evidence available to them, the mistake was understandable. The Clans possessed technology far superior to anything our armies had ever fielded, and they used completely foreign tactics. Elementals in battle armor, which looked to us like some kind of mythical monsters, further convinced many that the Clans were not human.

When we finally found out that we were fighting fellow humans, the discussions turned from "What are they?" to "How did they develop those weapons ahead of us?" At least in retrospect, the answer is simple. They didn't fight two and a half centuries' worth of Succession Wars.

While the Inner Sphere wasted its energies in conflict, the Clans built a society a thousand light-years away. With the knowledge of the Star League and many of its top scientists, they continued to develop new and better technologies. Medical and planetary sciences wiped out deadly plagues and made it

HIGH-TECH BREAKTHROUGHS: THE BATTLEMECH

—From the *Abridged Encyclopedia Galactica*, Universal Press, 3062

With its debut in 2439, the BattleMech radically altered the way humans waged war. BattleMechs were faster, more maneuverable and more versatile than conventional tanks, and combat commanders immediately recognized their value. Even now, six centuries later, the 'Mech remains "king of the battlefield."

Generally humanoid in appearance (though several models use a less conventional four-legged design), BattleMechs commonly range from ten to fourteen meters in height and weigh anywhere from 20 to 100 tons. An intricate skeleton of titanium alloy "bones" forms the 'Mech's basic structure. Around it are attached "muscles" made of bundled fibers, called myomers. These myomers expand or contract like human muscles when exposed to varying levels of electrical current, giving the 'Mech its impressive strength and mobility. A "skin" of hardened armor, of varying thickness, makes the 'Mech virtually invulnerable to small arms and provides considerable protection against heavier weapons.

Fusion reactors furnish the energy needed to power the 'Mech's systems and myomers. Each BattleMech also mounts a massive gyroscope, giving it the stability to move its mass. A device known as a neurohelmet picks up the neural impulses of the pilot and transmits them to the 'Mech's control systems. The pilot uses his or her own sense of balance to keep the BattleMech upright and can make constant corrections to the vehicle's movements with a degree of control impossible for joysticks and foot pedals alone. Heat sinks, interconnected by a complex cooling system, dissipate the massive amounts of heat the 'Mech generates. BattleMechs are designed for combat and can mount several weapons and/or electronics packages. Some are built with jump jets that allow them to jump over obstacles.

A new development, introduced to the Inner Sphere by the Clans, permits technicians to quickly modify the configuration of specially designed BattleMechs. A series of common connections and mounting hardpoints allows these OmniMechs to carry a wide variety of weapons and other equipment, which can be easily attached and disconnected. OmniMech technology allows battlefield commanders to fine-tune their forces on the fly to meet unexpected challenges.

possible for humans to live on even the most hostile planets. The Clans created a eugenics program that birthed thousands of genetically enhanced babies every year and devised weapons of war capable of devastating damage.

Naturally, they cut a swath hundreds of light-years across through the Inner Sphere. We fought them the only way we could: dirty. But we knew that if we hoped to defeat the Clans, we had to level the technological playing field. So we assigned our scientists to rip apart every bit of Clan technology we captured and reverse-engineer it. We had to bridge the gap, or we'd die trying ... .

LOOKING TOWARD DAWN

—From *Putting Down the Bully*, Dr. Andrea Paliwoda, ComStar Archives, 3062

... The reborn Star League defeated the most powerful Crusader Clan on its own homeworld because we finally bridged the technology gap. Clan weapons are still more powerful and more efficient than ours, and the Clans have far better production capabilities. But more and more of our factories are retooling their assembly lines every day to build advanced weapons and the vehicles to carry them into battle.

The Clans retain their technological superiority, and likely will for some time. The Inner Sphere has come a long way in the past four decades—possibly the quickest renaissance in the history of humankind—but we are still decades behind Kerensky's descendants, and the Periphery realms are in even worse shape. The most advanced of them has barely begun to produce equipment the Successor States have had for decades, while the technological level of the average Periphery nation is below that of the Inner Sphere at the height of the Succession Wars.

DAILY LIFE

Throughout human-occupied space, the basics of daily life remain the same. On every world, people get up in the morning, go to school or work, take personal or family time and usually spend less than five minutes contemplating their place in the larger scheme of things. The details, however, can make all the difference.

On the technologically advanced "core worlds" of each Inner Sphere nation, technology is taken for granted, even if—especially if—it is vulnerable. JumpShips, HPG communications, holovision, barely understood computers—all of these are easily lost and impossible to replace, a hard truth hidden beneath a carefully crafted façade of superiority. For citizens of these worlds, politics and military concerns are more topics for civil debate than for life-or-death decisions. Deprivation most often makes itself felt as mere inconvenience to daily routine or a shortage of luxury items.

Most of the other Inner Sphere worlds, as well as the most advanced Periphery worlds, more clearly understand the precariousness of the Inner Sphere's technology. On such worlds, everyday circumstances make people more aware of the frailty of technology. Businessmen may converse via cell phone on their way to work, but they get there riding a horse or a donkey. The latest luxury hovercraft may be parked next to a vehicle fueled by methane collected from its owner's farm. Many of these "middle class" worlds rely on foodstuffs or other critical shipments from nearby planets. The specter of war looms heavily; raids are a part of life, and some areas still bear the scars of battle.

Finally, there is the Outback: the collective name for worlds that suffer constant deprivation, due to their remote location or

the simple misfortune of lying near war-torn borders. Most Periphery planets are Outback worlds, with standards of living as far below the core worlds as a Third World country was from a First World one on ancient Terra. What little technology exists is treated like a miracle and rarely taken for granted. In some areas the incongruities can strike observers as ludicrous: hunting game with bow and arrow or a hundred-year-old rifle, only to bring it home and cook it in a microwave. In the remotest regions of backwater planets, a merchant DropShip landing can be cause for a local holiday. Most people on these worlds care nothing about politics, though those on border worlds tend to be avid followers of military news. Skirmishes, victories, defeats and treaties can all have a major impact on their lives.

LANGUAGE

Humankind likely would never have reached the stars without a common language through which scientists could share ideas. A common language opens up markets, expands technology and brings people closer together.

By the twenty-first century, English had become the lingua franca shared by most nations. Terra adopted it as the official language in 2092; by the time of the great colonial expansion, most colony ships carried English with them. More than one interstellar nation, however, turned to other tongues as primary languages, retaining English as a language of trade and politics. The population of the thirty-first century is generally bilingual, speaking English as a primary or secondary language. Many people speak three or more languages, depending on their level of education. Some nations have developed their own patois, such as the "Swedenese" blend of Swedish and Japanese spoken in the Free Rasalhague Republic.

WORK

Even in the thirty-first century, many children follow their parents into careers. On Outback worlds, entire families often work side by side in the same industry. Among the middle classes on all worlds, education largely determines who does what. Apprenticeship is the most common method of schooling, and most parents start their children early in learning a trade. Only the upper classes or citizens of more advanced, highly developed worlds can claim greater freedom of choice. Upper-class children are born to privilege, and most prefer stepping into a parent's shoes to striking out on their own. With its neo-feudal system influencing most areas of life, the Inner Sphere is not easy on individualists.

In the Draconis Combine, which groups its people into four loosely defined classes, sons traditionally follow their fathers, while wives and daughters are relegated to the home. Few break out of that pattern, unless aptitude tests select a child for further training. For all Combine citizens, the military is an honorable alternative. Even a lowly infantryman in the service of House Kurita garners some respect from the middle and lower classes. The Capellan Confederation uses a similar caste system but encourages its citizens to seek a higher caste if they have the talent for it. More important than family tradition is service to the state, and parents are encouraged to show pride in children who better the family's social position.

MECHWARRIOR REFRESHMENT

The alcoholic drink most associated with MechWarriors is the PPC, named after the BattleMech heavy weapon. First introduced on Solaris VII, where a few "manly" MechWarriors pointedly favored it, the drink has become a stereotype of MechWarrior fiction. In fact, most MechWarriors avoid any drink that you have to swallow quickly before your mouth goes numb.

Four shots of grain alcohol poured into a brandy snifter are the drink's basic element. Each variant of the PPC is named for a Great House, depending on what is used to dilute the grain alcohol. A Steiner cuts it with two shots of peppermint schnapps. A Marik uses two shots of ouzo, and a Davion either two shots of bourbon or, in the Capellan March, tequila. The Liao variant cuts the drink with a double shot of plum wine, the Kurita version with sake. Taking the grain alcohol straight is sometimes called a Periphery PPC—or just plain foolish.

Both of these Asian-influenced societies display sharp divisions between the workers and their social betters. For example, the Combine encourages artistic expression only among the noble or warrior classes; ordinary workers rarely have the leisure for such pursuits. In the Capellan Confederation, where work must always improve the state, much of the white-collar work force no longer exists. "Nonproductive" positions such as independent lawyers and most middle managers were eliminated as "parasitic leeches under which only the degenerate Federated Commonwealth and Free Worlds League suffer," to quote deceased Chancellor Romano Liao.

At the other end of the spectrum lie the Free Worlds League and, to a slightly lesser extent, the Lyran Alliance. Both realms exhibit an individualistic streak, where children grow up and search for "their own angle." The scion of a prosperous or well-placed family might follow in his or her parents' footsteps, but the average person sees nothing wrong with searching—or scamming—for an alternative. It is no coincidence that the Free Worlds League contains a higher proportion of lawyers than any other nation; on some worlds, they surpass the number of doctors.

FOOD AND DRINK

Food and drink across the Inner Sphere vary from nation to nation and world to world. The Federated Commonwealth favors what is still known as Continental cuisine, from the old Terran continent of Europe. The Lyran half of the Commonwealth leans toward German and Italian cooking, while the Federated Suns half shows a slight bias toward French and Spanish fare. Both substitute the bio-engineered quillar, the largest crop in the Commonwealth, for many of the usual ingredients. The quillar can be processed into several textures and flavors, making it very versatile. Juices and sodas are the most popular nonalco-

holic drinks; on the stronger side, tastes in the FedCom run the gamut.

Neither state has ever placed imported foodstuffs under political sanction. The Federated Suns, historically worried about feeding its people, finds a hands-off attitude toward edibles practical. Nor has Asian cooking lost any of its popularity, despite hostilities over the years with the Combine and the Confederation. In addition to the quillar, the FedCom is known for naranji, a purple citrus fruit, and fine wines. The Lyran Alliance's most sought-after export is the Timbiqui line of beers, from the border world of the same name. Their famous Timbiqui dark has even attracted the attention of many Clan warriors, prompting the Diamond Sharks to make a generous offer for an exclusive license to import the beverage into Clan space.

The Free Worlds League offers an interesting mix, slightly favoring Mediterranean over Continental cuisine. Lamb is the most popular meat, and spices often tend toward an unusual blend of sharp and sweet. Traditional Asian cooking has come back into favor in the past decade, prompted by warmer relations between Houses Marik and Liao. Dark coffees are a popular drink, as are liqueurs and ouzo. With an eye toward profit margins, the League exports some of the most prized foodstuffs in the Inner Sphere—most notably the tart kincha fruit to the Capellan Confederation and Niihau honey to the Lyran Alliance.

The Capellan Confederation depends on rice for the same reason that ancient Cathay on Terra did: acre for acre, more people can be fed on rice than on other grains. Slivers of meat or fish, traditionally prepared, spice up the meal and reinforce the Confederation's Chinese heritage. Soups and noodles are also favorite food items. Other popular cuisines include Indian and Russian. Tea and rice wines are the most common drinks; in general, only the upper castes can afford the more expensive plum wines.

The Confederation is one of the few states ever to outlaw certain foods. Chief among those was the kincha fruit, which grew only on the world of Shuen Wan. When House Marik conquered that planet, Maximillian Liao banned the kincha. Only after Sun-Tzu Liao's engagement to Isis Marik and the subsequent thawing of relations was the fruit once again allowed within Confederation borders. Many also claim that an unofficial ban exists against Continental cooking, especially the German cuisine favored in many parts of the Lyran Alliance. In truth, however, most such cooking is too heavy for Capellan tastes. The usual Continental styles, including German, can be found in larger cities within the Confederation.

Rice decorated with meat and fish is likewise a staple in the Combine, but from aesthetic preference rather than necessity. Combine citizens prize Asian dishes, particularly Japanese ones, for their origin and simplicity. Scandinavian cuisine is the most common alternative, a holdover from the many years in which Rasalhague was part of the Combine. Continental cooking is available but rare. Tea is the refreshment of choice, though sake is also extremely common. The Combine is famed for its immense variety of fish; certain rare species are among the few foodstuffs it exports.

ENTERTAINMENT

Whether a night on the town or a holiday getaway, each Inner Sphere nation has its own diversions to offer, from music to holovid programming to vacation spots.

In character with its polyglot origins, the Free Worlds League boasts many competing diversions, all available for a price. Pay-per-view holovid extravaganzas are common, as are live tours by bands, magicians and other entertainers from across the Inner Sphere. The most profitable national pastime, however, is gambling. The League is home to the independent planet of Kyeinnisan, also known as the Gambler's World. Eagle's Nest, the Cave and Light City are the best-known gambling palaces, each able to house the population of a small city within their huge, rambling complexes of casinos, hotels, auditoriums and ballrooms. Four-card Drax is the most popular game, attracting high-stakes players from every Inner Sphere and Periphery nation.

The Federated Suns half of the Commonwealth tends to sneer a little at the League's high-glitz, low-glamour establishments. Only the Gambler's World gets any respect from the FedSuns, which boasts eighteen of the twenty-eight worlds on the official Riviera-style "circuit." From the Ammon Ocean Resorts on New Syrtis to El Dorado's Casino City to Sun Prairie's New Monaco, there is no end of getaways for those who can afford them. The Federated Suns is also home to Three House Entertainment, the only agency of its kind with licenses for travel into and out of the Federated Commonwealth, the Draconis Combine and the Capellan Confederation. New Avalon Publishers, the Inner Sphere's single largest book publisher, has its home office on the FedSuns capital, with remote publishing and distribution centers in every nation. In the Combine, the NAP office is a loose affiliate of Luthien Press.

The Lyran Alliance has always maintained an impressive mass entertainment industry. Alliance producers are into everything, from music and sensory discs to holovid dramas. Surprisingly, rather than offering escape from the usual grind of politics and warfare, the Alliance capitalizes on it. The barely fictionalized account of House Steiner's rise, produced as *The Steinhearts*, is one of the longest-running series ever created by Tharkad Media Associates. As popular as any fiction are the Auburn histories, written by members of the famous Auburn family, court historians on Tharkad for generations. Melissa Auburn's latest publication, *The Black Widow: In Memoriam*, stayed on the interstellar top ten list for an incredible thirteen months. A Lyran production team also created the *Immortal Warrior* series, a holovid action-adventure show in which the main character shares half his screen time with incredible explosions, carries a small fortune in weapons, never runs out of ammunition and expends about eight lives per episode.

The Capellan Confederation imports most of its high-profile entertainment, rather than directly subsidizing what it calls "unproductive labor." Popular imports include the *Immortal Warrior* series (held up as proof of natural Lyran aggression) and Three House Entertainment's theatrical and musical troupes. Lately, the Chancellor has allowed Canopian pleasure circuses—traveling DropShips stuffed with casinos and other flashy entertainment—into the Confederation, as a gesture to the Magistracy of Canopus and to reward Capellan soldiers for their recent hardships. The Confederation's largest entertainment event is the Quarterly 'Mech Games, held on New Hessen and Westerhand. Similar to the bouts on Solaris, these games draw new talent to the Confederation.

Combine citizens can vacation at low-key resorts on every planet. House Kurita has recently begun vidcasting the Kensai Kami martial competitions, allowing its citizens to watch some of their best MechWarriors battling each other. In a demonstration of Theodore Kurita's freer policies regarding mass entertainment, the Solaris 'Mech duels are finally being broadcast within Combine borders. Despite its historically xenophobic tendencies, the Draconis Combine allows outsiders at a few entertainment events and vacation spots. The worlds of Nirasaki and Atria, two of the plush resorts frequently visited by Combine nobility, are part of the Riviera-style circuit for anyone able to obtain visitors' permits. Nirasaki also hosts the annual Hiyake solar yacht races, the premier event in that sport. The world of Dieron hosts a yearly naked-blade tournament, which evolved from the older Combine tradition of blood sport. This tournament is for professionals and by invitation only. The sponsors sell secondary vidcasting rights to other nations for a high price.

SOLARIS VII: THE GAME WORLD

Without doubt, the crowning achievement of the Lyran entertainment industry is Solaris VII, popularly dubbed the Game World. For more than 250 years, its massive stadiums have hosted live BattleMech combat for the public's viewing and betting pleasure. Gifted warriors have proved themselves on Solaris, while others went down to ignoble defeat. The Game World has given rise to MechWarrior legends: Gray Noton, Justin Xiang, Amanda Hamilton and Kai Allard-Liao, just to name a few. It provides a way for warriors and nations to channel their aggressions while giving the viewing public a popular diversion.

Representatives from each Successor State and some smaller nations maintain 'Mech stables and work with Solaris City to keep up the stadiums. 'Mech-on-'Mech bouts, team events, invitationals, grudge matches, the annual tournament to choose the Champion of Solaris—the variations are endless. Even some renegade Clan warriors appear in Solaris arenas, though by all reports the idea of combat as entertainment sickens most who consider themselves true Clan warriors.

EDUCATION

"In any society, education is the most powerful tool of propaganda."

—From *Further Sayings of Shiro Kurita*, Imperial Press, Luthien; date unknown

In times of war, education is among the first areas to suffer. On many worlds, particularly those run by large agro-combines, even secondary school is considered a luxury. Other worlds, while valuing education, lack proper schools and competent teachers. Governments almost always acknowledge that these problems must be addressed but often fail to fix them.

PRIVILEGES OF WAR

In every Successor State and Periphery realm, one fact holds true for education: more opportunities exist for those inclined toward the military. Of course, even in the military, who you are can determine the opportunities you have. The third son of a subsistence farmer on an Outback world has little chance of becoming a MechWarrior; he's much more likely to end up as grunt infantry. In this as in all else, rank has its privileges.

Every Inner Sphere nation boasts at least one premier martial school: the NAIS College of Military Sciences, Tharkad's Nagelring, the Combine's Sun Zhang Academy, the Capellan Warrior Houses and the Allison MechWarrior Institute in the Free Worlds League. Graduates of such schools can claim prestige equal to the alumni of most purely academic colleges; the cream of thirty-first-century warriors are specialists with a top-flight education.

Even civilian universities have been touched by war. Many offer courses in military science, providing a path to officer training. More often than not, research work is aimed at rediscovering or understanding the principles behind lost military technologies, and several scholarships exist for those who agree to place their services at the disposal of the government. Even in more politically open nations, citizens get a clear message early in life: service to the nation guarantees education.

In the Draconis Combine, the upper crust receives a stellar education, perhaps the best in the Inner Sphere. Most Combine citizens, however, receive free but low-quality schooling. The Combine's heavy emphasis on the needs of the state over the student tends to stifle creativity and free thought. Students are typically barraged with aptitude tests, with failures weeded out and funneled into technical schools.

The Capellan Confederation possesses one of the Inner Sphere's most comprehensive basic school systems, though as with the Combine, the student's right to knowledge must give way to the needs of the state. All citizens are entitled to free primary and secondary schooling; where necessary, the government often bears the expense of transporting children to worlds where these services are available and pays for their room and board. The schools are often low-quality, however, and the curriculum includes an inordinate amount of political indoctrination. The Confederation has very few higher-level schools. Its small number of colleges and universities are the province of nobility, warriors and those few from the lower castes who can prove their academic worth.

The Free Worlds League and Lyran Alliance both boast fair systems of education that most people can afford. The League relies on nationwide standards to help ensure student competence. Secondary schooling, however, is extremely expensive, a problem the League has yet to solve. In the Lyran Alliance, cost is even more of an issue, with top-quality education through the university level generally available only to the wealthy. The basic school system, however, is sound enough to make even an average education a good one. Of the Successor States, the Alliance rates highest in the quality of the average individual's education.

The Federated Suns half of the Commonwealth has always had difficulty getting teachers, funds and supplies to worlds that need them. Those fortunate enough to live on core worlds have countless choices and opportunities; in the Outback, the traveling DropShip "vagabond" schools are the only game in town. The ruling House has too often faced the choice of feeding or educating its huge population. The nation possesses some of the best higher-level schools in the Inner Sphere, but all are located on New Avalon or one of the other core worlds.

Periphery nations feel the lack of education most bitterly. Perennially cash-strapped, they must work hard to provide even fair primary schools, and these are rarely available to the entire population. Secondary schools and colleges are still rare in the Periphery, though that is starting to change.

MONEY AND COMMERCE

Money is essential to Inner Sphere and Periphery societies, facilitating trade of goods, services and information. However, different currencies and methods of use complicate transactions. The following paragraphs offer a brief run-down on local currencies, exchange rates and electronic funds, along with a small section on the cost of common goods.

LOCAL CURRENCIES AND EXCHANGE RATES

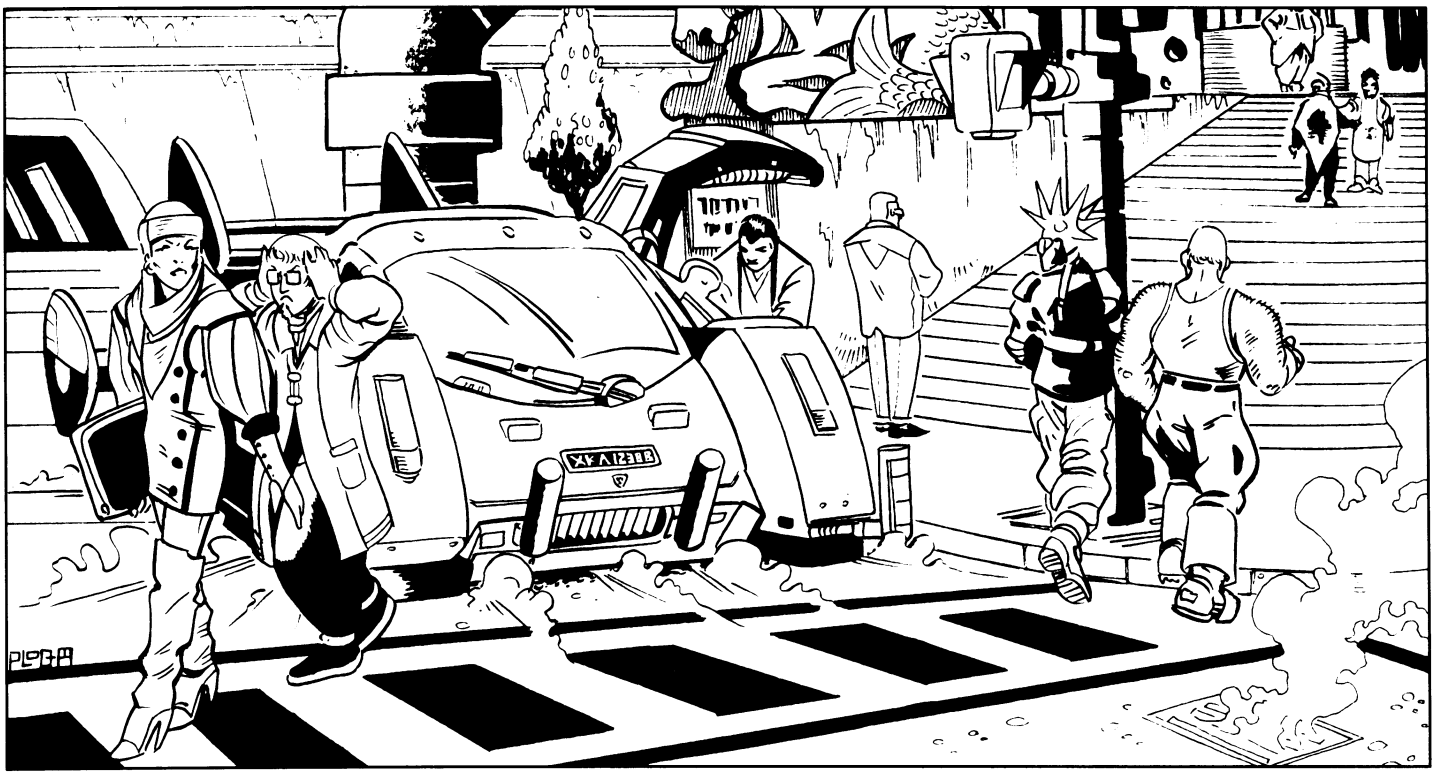
The single currency used by the Inner Sphere during the time of the first Star League vanished after the Amaris coup and the Succession Wars that followed. New national currencies arose in its place, generically called House bills (H-bills); today, these monies account for almost 90 percent of the currency used in the Inner Sphere. The rest are ComStar bills (C-bills) or planetary scrip (worthless anywhere except the planet on which it was issued).

Lyran Alliance

The currency of the Lyran Alliance, and the Lyran Commonwealth before it, is the kroner (symbol: K or S-bill). Each kroner is subdivided into 100 pfennigs. Most major transactions are carried out electronically, but notes and coins remain common. Coins exist in 1, 5 and 10 pfennig denominations, made of copper alloy; 25 and 50 pfennig, made of silver alloy; and 1 and 5 kroner, of gold alloy. All coins are minted on Tharkad, with the Steiner emblem on one side and the Archon's image on the other. Paper notes exist for 5, 10, 50, 100, 500, 1,000 and 10,000 kroner, all of which are color-coded and readily distinguishable. One side of each note bears the Archon's image and the Steiner insignia, while the other depicts a famous scene from Lyran history.

Federated Suns

Like the Lyran Alliance, the Federated Suns has reverted to its pre-FedCom currency, the pound (symbol: £ or D-bill). Each



pound is subdivided into 100 pence, though some Francophone regions of the Federated Suns use the term "centime" instead. Coins exist in 1, 2, 5 and 10 pence denominations (aluminum) and 20 and 50 pence (silver alloy). Each coin bears the First Prince's head on one side and either the Davion insignia or that of the March capital where it was minted on the other. Notes exist for 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 500 and 1,000 pound denominations. The material used for these notes varies by mint. Those printed on New Syrtis and New Avalon use a hard-wearing but flexible plastic, while those minted on Robinson are made of paper. Each denomination is distinguished by color and size, with larger notes at greater value. One side of each shows the Davion insignia and the image of the First Prince, while the other shows famous historical figures.

Free Worlds League

For all its internal divisions, the Free Worlds League has always had a strong economy. Its currency, known as the eagle (symbol: E or M-bill), reflects this. The collapse of the Federated Commonwealth and the Draconis Combine's economic difficulties have made the eagle the second-strongest currency in the Inner Sphere. Divided into 100 cents, the eagle is perhaps the most diverse Inner Sphere currency, with each member-state of the Free Worlds League allowed to print its own variant. Though other denominations exist, the most common coins in the League include 1, 5, 10 and 25 cent pieces (usually copper alloy) and 50 cent and 1 eagle pieces (silver alloy). The most common notes are 1, 5, 10 and 20 eagle bills, though denominations up to 1 million eagles exist in some areas.

Free Rasalhague Republic

The currency of the FRR is the krona (different from the Lyran kroner), which is divided into 100 aurar. Use of the krona (symbol: KA or R-bill) declined markedly in the years following the Clan invasion, when it was largely replaced by the ComStar C-bill. The recent resurgence of nationalist sentiment in the Republic, however, has prompted wider use of the krona. Coins come in 1, 5, 10 and 40 aurar denominations, all copper alloy. Notes exist in 1, 5, 25 and 100 krona denominations.

Capellan Confederation

Traditionally reflecting the weakest economy in the Inner Sphere, the Capellan yuan (symbol: Y or L-bill) has strengthened in recent years. Coins dominate the convoluted Capellan monetary system. Each yuan is divided into 10 jiao and each jiao into 10 fen. Coins exist in 1, 2 and 5 fen denominations (copper alloy); 1, 2 and 5 jiao (silver alloy); and 1, 5, 10 and 50 yuan denominations (gold alloy). All Capellan coins have a hole bored through the center, allowing them to be carried on money strings. Notes also exist in 10, 50, 100 and 1,000 yuan denominations, but they are considerably less common than coins.

Draconis Combine

The Draconis Combine's economy has been hard hit by the Clan invasion and the strain of reintegrating former Smoke Jaguar worlds. Consequently, the value of the Combine ryu (symbol: D or K-bill) has dropped considerably, though its long-term prospects remain good. Each ryu is divided into 100 yen. The Combine government is constantly changing the make-up of

HPG Communications

—From the *Abridged Encyclopedia Galactica*, Universal Press, 3062

Based on the same principles that allow a JumpShip to travel between the stars, the hyperpulse generator, or HPG, can instantly transmit a signal across a distance of up to fifty light-years. Following its first public demonstration in 2630, the HPG radically altered life in human-occupied space. Before the advent of the HPG, people relied on a "pony express" system of JumpShips to transport important orders, news and mail between inhabited systems, which often took months or even years. HPG transmissions could reliably reach the remotest regions of known space in a fraction of that time, enabling governments to carry out operations efficiently and ordinary people to communicate with friends and relatives on far-distant worlds. Immediately after the first successful test of the technology, the Star League began to build HPG stations on planets across known space.

ComStar still operates most of the functioning HPGs, almost all of which trace their origins to Star League times. ComStar inherited the HPG network following the fall of the Star League; it held a monopoly on interstellar communications for almost two and a half centuries, until the events of recent years sundered the organization. The Word of Blake, ComStar's rival splinter group, currently controls a sizable portion of the HPG network.

The HPG network consists of transmit/receive stations on most inhabited worlds. Stations receive "A" or "B" status, based mainly upon the size of a world's population. Class A stations are the network's main hubs, while Class B stations form the nodes. Each station transmits all the messages it has been paid to send to all other stations within its range. Those stations then add their own messages to the batch and pass them on to the next stations in line, and so on, until the messages reach their final destination. Though sending hundreds and thousands of copies of the same message around the galaxy may appear inefficient, it ensures that messages reach their destinations as swiftly as possible. To avoid confusion, each station automatically deletes messages that have already passed through its system.

Each station normally transmits on a set schedule. Messages are processed serially and placed in a queue until they can be transmitted. Class A stations transmit the most often, usually once every six hours. Class B stations transmit far less frequently. During Star League times, they transmitted once every twelve hours; today most B stations average transmissions only once every few days. The actual schedule depends mainly on the number of waiting messages and how many other stations are within range.

Sometimes, transmissions can be agonizingly slow. A message from Tharkad takes an average of six days to reach Terra; the same message might take months to reach the most distant Periphery world. Priority transmissions can be sent more quickly, but at a significantly higher cost because the stations that pass the message must be aligned correctly.

its currency; at the time of the last revision in 3060, the denominations were 1, 5, 10 and 20 yen coins (copper alloy); 50 yen, 1 ryu and 5 ryu coins (silver alloy); and 10, 20, 50, 100 and 500 ryu notes. The 1,000 and 10,000 ryu notes used before 3060 are rare, but they remain legal tender in the Combine. Each prefecture mints its own coins and notes, but there is little difference among them beyond the name of the mint, which is embossed on the edge of coins or as a watermark on notes.

ComStar

C-bills make up roughly ten percent of the currency in the Inner Sphere. Originally intended as a medium of payment for ComStar's services, they have become widely accepted across the Inner Sphere and Periphery, serving as a second currency in most states. As the stablest of the Inner Sphere currencies, the C-bill is ideal for international transactions. Some have suggested adopting the C-bill as the currency of the new Star League, but this idea has met with considerable resistance. C-bills are mainly used in electronic format, but hard money exists in 1, 5, 10, 50 and 100 C-bill notes. Several coins, known as demis, are used in ComStar-administered territories, but their use outside these areas is limited. Instead, smaller sums are usually handled in the local currency.

ELECTRONIC FUNDS

Though cash remains in common use for small sums (usually under 100 C-bills in value) and is mandatory for sums under 1 C-bill, electronic funds—also known as plastic—are widely accepted for larger transactions. "Smart cards" are electronic debit cards that record transactions, communicating with the bank that holds their account. Most such cards are only usable on the planet of issuance, to avoid the difficulties of interstellar record keeping (though, as most people never leave their homeworld, this problem rarely arises). Those who travel regularly have several other options.

Frequent travelers can increase the range of worlds where their card is accepted, usually for a fee of about 1,000 C-bills per world per year. They arrange "shadow accounts" with local banks, the records of which are reconciled with their home bank via ComStar's HPG network. As such accounts are usually checked only once a week, it is possible to defraud the system via "cloned" cards; however, sophisticated electronic safeguards in the card keep such criminal activity to a minimum.

Accounts with ComStar, reconciled daily, are securer and are also accepted throughout the Inner Sphere. C-bills are accepted virtually everywhere, without the conversion penalties that may accrue using H-bill accounts in another realm. The high cost of these accounts, however—a blanket fee of 10,000 C-bills per year—usually restricts them to trading companies, mercenary units and other large groups rather than private individuals.

A frequent traveler may also carry a certified card, which does not have a corresponding account. Instead, funds are

stored on the card itself, heavily encrypted and subject to rigorous security checks. Such cards cost ten percent of their certified value.

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

Getting the news to billions of people on thousands of worlds is a herculean task. Efforts typically begin at the community level with gossip, locally printed news sheets and radio. From there, they move up to planetary districts served by major radio stations and video broadcast companies. The largest vidcasters cover world events, as do some news sheets, which supply the in-depth coverage the vidcasters often gloss over. Vidcast companies typically broadcast holovid material, top-line video that uses three-dimensional imaging. Few, however, can produce such material. Holovid production companies exist only on major worlds, typically as part of the huge media conglomerates that help tie worlds together into a nation.

Sharing news between worlds, or between separate districts on a world, depends on the news itself and the method of disbursal. The news must be relevant, or at least high-profile, to interest readers, listeners and viewers who may be separated by many light-years. The method of transmission must be timely and cost-effective, like the HPG network managed by ComStar and the Word of Blake. Larger, multi-world vidcasting companies produce much of the reliable and relevant news reporting, along with the Interstellar Associated Press. Like smaller-scale associated press organizations on most planets, ISAP sifts through local news for pieces that might be of interest to other worlds and then places them "on the wire." These features are sent to selected worlds, where local vidcasters, radio stations and news sheets can choose stories the public might find of interest.

News of national significance—public addresses by prominent nobles, war coverage, natural disasters and politically important events—is often routed through an approved source, such as multi-world vidcast networks or ISAP. The proliferation of scandal vids, however, testifies to the voracious appetite of the general public for the "real story." These services rely on the bare minimum of facts, using them to formulate wild and often salacious theories. The biggest draw of the scandal vids, even for those skeptical of their stories, is their knack for being first with any hint of something newsworthy.

Though each Successor State has established an overall policy regarding control of the media, individual worlds and districts on a world may often tighten these guidelines as necessary.

Historically, the Federated Suns and the Lyran nation have practiced minimal censorship, though their governments keep sensitive information secret. On occasion, they even resort to espionage and merciless pressure to ensure that it stays buried. Reporters and vidcasters tend to comply rather than risk stronger censorship in the future. By comparison with their counterparts in other Successor States, FedSuns and Lyran media personnel have an easy time, and they generally prefer to keep it that way. The Federated Suns relies heavily on the Federated News Services and Federated Independent Broadcasters to keep the nation informed; the main broadcaster in the Lyran Alliance is the Commonwealth Press division of the Donegal Broadcasting Company. Their relative openness comes at a price, however; both nations suffer more than other realms under the glaring cameras of scandal-vid producers.

As a collection of loosely organized principalities, the Free Worlds League defies strict, nationwide controls on the press. What one duchy tolerates, its neighbor might heavily restrict. The usual rules tend to get bent, however, when dealing with information that a neighboring (read: rival) League region might find politically sensitive. In such cases, a duchy might well violate its own standing policies just to see its rival squirm. Learning to walk that fine line puts intense pressure on the news media. Even scandal vids take care how they report the news in the Free Worlds League, though they usually get their stories across with the maximum leeway. Being a newsperson in the Free Worlds League is reportedly one of the most nerve-racking professions in the Inner Sphere.

Not surprisingly, the Combine and the Capellan Confederation exert greater control over their respective news services. The Draconis Combine government heavily regulates its media firms, which must also pass muster with the arm of the Internal Security Force known as the Voice of the Dragon. Only preapproved news may be broadcast or printed; the penalty for illegal transmissions is death. Similarly, the Special Services Branch of the Maskirovka, the Capellan secret police, generates all official news releases pertaining to Capellan state affairs. To maintain an illusion of free expression, however, the Confederation allows ISAP to send its news stories into and out of the Capellan state. The Chancellor relies on local diems to quash any unauthorized or inappropriate reporting. By slipping its own prepared pieces in with independent but harmless news items, the Confederation maintains solid control over the thoughts of its citizens.

THE ARTS

Even in the worst of times, the arts flourish. The Succession Wars, however, destroyed the unity among artists that prevailed in the days of the Star League. Star League-era artists could safely borrow elements of various national heritages, and they often created bold new styles in doing so. Most noted art critics lament the loss of this synergy in favor of increasing emphasis on art tied to one or a few specific cultures. However, this reversion has also had its advantages. Among other things, the study of the diverse art forms prevalent in the various Successor States lends insight into their inner workings.

In the Free Worlds League, the combination of aesthetics and technology has spawned several new art forms. The grace of null-G dance, a League innovation, is appreciated throughout the Inner Sphere and Periphery. Abstract myomer art is the current rage, holding an uneasy fascination for a people who generally find bionics such a disturbing concept. Price tags are all

too prominent on League objets d'art, however, bringing into the open the commercial element that has always lurked beneath art's surface.

The Capellan Confederation and the Draconis Combine sprang from cultures long known for their elegant art forms, but the Confederation has historically suffered from government manipulation of its most talented artists to endorse a pro-Liao or at least a pro-Confederation stance. This insistence on "correct thinking" has ruined many promising talents and buried several who might have stood out in a flood of similar material. Nonetheless, sorting through the chaff can bring rewards to the fortunate. Despite the government's heavy hand, some Capellan artists manage to produce "alternative" work, at their own expense and often at great risk. Such works are in huge demand outside the Confederation.

Nohkabu theater, one of the Draconis Combine's finest art forms, is unfortunately deemed the private possession of that realm. On rare occasions, a gifted troupe is allowed to perform for outsiders; permission to do so is considered among the highest compliments. No official holovids of these performances have been released, though bootleg copies exist. Only slightly more obtainable are pottery, painting and other arts and crafts. The province of the nobility and the warrior class, such art rarely travels outside the Combine. Art objects become the personal treasures of the family, shared only with close friends.

Both halves of the Federated Commonwealth are historically known for their endowment and appreciation of the arts—the wealthier Lyran half more for the former, the FedSuns more for the latter. The Lyran Alliance is still the only Successor State in which artists can hope to make a decent living without finding a wealthy benefactor or relying on state subsidies. The Alliance has become famous for its itinerant musicians and dramatists, who travel and perform in the ancient tradition of Terran troubadours. In the FedSuns, Avalon City boasts some of the Inner Sphere's largest centers for artistic expression. Both states are known for their art connoisseurs, enjoying not only the work of native artists but those of other realms as well.

Despite the region's general penury, some of the finest work currently being produced is coming from the Periphery. The Outworlds Alliance is known for its homemade crafts, while the Taurian Concordat and the Magistracy of Canopus are earning reputations for powerful, cutting-edge works in several disciplines.

RELIGION

Humans have always been spiritual creatures. When the colony ships ranged out from Terra in search of new worlds on which to settle, they sought guidance and support from their religious beliefs as well as the freedom to worship as they saw fit.

In the tumultuous thirty-first century, many people feel more than ever the need for spiritual guidance and support. Four major interstellar wars and several smaller-scale "isolated actions" have taken their toll on religious belief, though not to the extent many had predicted. While some people have become disenchanted with religion, more have turned to the precepts of one or several religions and philosophies to help them achieve some peace in a seemingly chaotic universe. This ability to simultaneously adopt principles from various religions may be the first important step toward true religious tolerance.

SPIRITUALITY AMONG THE STARS

Humanity has adopted—and adapted—countless religions and sects. The following are the dominant religions, with the greatest numbers of followers.

Christianity

Christianity has survived in many forms. The schism of 2772 gave rise to an offshoot of Roman Catholic orthodoxy, the New Avalon Catholic Church, which House Davion supports as a way to promote patriotism in Federated Suns space. The Combine is less enthusiastic about Christianity but permits it as long as it remains small and quiet. Latter Day Saints, Evangelists, Scientologists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Lutherans and Baptists are just a few of the popular Christian sects that have survived the centuries. Many believe that Jesus Christ was the son of the one true God, though other sects see Jesus as simply a holy man whose ideals and philosophies were divinely inspired.

Judaism

Despite the vast changes in human society over the millennia, Judaism has remained remarkably loyal to its ancient foundations. Its different movements—of which Reform, Conservative and Liberal Judaism are the most common—vary more in custom and practices than in any alterations to the divine teachings of the Torah. Judaism exists in every Inner Sphere nation, though it is underground in the Draconis Combine.

Islam

A Muslim is "one who submits himself to Allah," surrendering himself unconditionally to the divine will. This demanding concept has been misused by political and religious leaders throughout the centuries to inspire fanaticism, and it is still used that way in some areas of the Inner Sphere. Fortunately, most modern sects temper their interpretations of Islam's core belief. Islamic sects range wider than any other religion between fanatical and liberal wings, and the faith periodically suffers from internal clashes. The Azami sect, which voluntarily included many principles espoused by House Kurita, is the only variant of Islam to find acceptance in the Draconis Combine.

Hinduism

A collection of beliefs and practices more than a single defined religion, Hinduism has survived and flourished over the millennia because of its "something for everyone" appeal. Ancient Hinduism ranges from village goddess cults to the doctrines of classical Hindu philosophers; the religion also includes more modern gurus, many of whom established cults that have lasted for centuries beyond them. Hinduism, along with most other Asian religions, is flourishing in the Draconis Combine, as well as in smaller enclaves throughout the Inner Sphere.

Buddhism

Fundamental Buddhism is a tradition of thought and practice associated with Siddhartha, the original Buddha. It aims at achieving deliverance from the cycle of birth and death and possessing direct knowledge of the universe's true nature. Of the various Eastern religions, Buddhism is the most strongly favored throughout the Inner Sphere; the Draconis Combine in particular virtually endorses the Zen tradition. In contrast, Buddhist temples and followers were targeted in the Federated Suns' infamous "Oriental Purge," after House Kurita invaded the FedSuns during the First Succession War. The purge led to more deaths and disrupted more lives than any religious conflict since. Perhaps in response, House Davion now encourages the growth of all religions, new and old.

ALTERNATIVE RELIGIONS

Many sages, the most recent being ComStar's founder Jerome Blake, have claimed that anyone can define a religion. It takes two people to form an orthodox religion. Add a third and you will likely get heresy. In other words, there may be as many permutations of spiritual thought and practice as there are people in existence. The following paragraphs describe three of the best-known alternative faiths.

The Unfinished Book

Founded in the Federated Suns in the late thirtieth century, the Unfinished Book movement has capitalized on that realm's prevailing religious tolerance. Put forward by Father Ovidon, the first Chairman Elder of the Suns' Interfaith Congress, the Unfinished Book movement attempts to collect the holy words and fundamental precepts of many religions in a single volume. This religion has swept into every Successor State and Periphery nation. Among its followers are the dutiful members of a hundred different faiths, as well as those who claim no other religion than the Unfinished Book itself.

The One Star Faith

In 2801, merchant Simon Kroeger of the Lyran Commonwealth inadvertently founded a new religion based on a vision of Aleksandr Kerensky's Exodus fleet. He became a reluctant prophet to those seeking the paradise Kerensky had supposedly discovered. When the Clans returned to the Inner Sphere, the One Star Faith suffered a schism. A small percentage, outraged that Kerensky's descendants had "defiled" their spiritual dream, joined the Lyran military to fight the Clans. The remaining believers incorporated the Clans into their dogma and now welcome the chance to bring them into the fold.

The Word of Blake

A radical splinter group of ComStar, the Word of Blake holds fast to ComStar's historical tradition of mysticism. As the Holy Order of ComStar did before its recent reform, the Word of Blake sees technology as sacred and regards the keeping of technological secrets as a spiritual obligation. Despite their mystic bent, the Blakists are anything but unworldly. Just a few years ago, they conquered Terra in a brilliantly planned military campaign, and they are continuing to expand their political power base in the Inner Sphere and Periphery.

RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

Generalizations are a dangerous thing, especially with regard to religious tolerance within any given Inner Sphere or Periphery nation. However, certain generalities can be made about the practice and acceptance of religion in various realms.

The Federated Suns half of the Commonwealth is a bizarre blend of religious freedoms and hypocrisy. The state has never actively suppressed any religion, but its people have risen up on occasion to strike at a perceived threat, as in the Oriental Purge. Though House Davion frequently encourages religious freedom for political purposes, members of this Great House generally take religion more seriously than most. The Federated Suns was the birthplace of the Unfinished Book movement, which has made great strides in blurring the boundaries among disparate faiths.

The Lyran Alliance also promises religious freedom and has often promoted religious harmony. The Interfaith Congress that produced the Unfinished Book movement was modeled after the Lyran Commonwealth Religious Council, founded in 2590. The council analyzes incidents with religious overtones and educates the masses about various religions. A large part of the council's success comes from the average Lyran citizen's practical nature, which over the years has tended to downplay religion's importance. A Lyran may value religion, but no more—and in some cases less—than a solid education and good health. This attitude has helped keep serious religious feuds to a minumum, though some maintain that this lack of fervent belief will claim its price in the future (or the hereafter).

The Draconis Combine replaced most organized religion early on with state-endorsed philosophies meant to support Oriental culture and specifically House Kurita's rule. Much of the *Dictum Honorium*, a detailed code of conduct for good Combine citizens, can be laid at the feet of Shiro Kurita, the nation's founder. A dynamic man who acted as his realm's spiritual as well as temporal leader, he swept the people up in a pro-Combine euphoria that allowed him to bend ideology to his own purposes. Under the less-rigid rule of Coordinator Theodore Kurita, several major religions have established tentative footholds in the Combine, sharing the fringes with those exotic cults that have always been a low-profile part of Combine society.

The Free Worlds League harbors the greatest number of religious conflicts. Different faiths frequently clash, as do sects within a faith and even variations of different sects. This factiousness mirrors the relative lack of central authority that has plagued the League since its inception. The League has essentially re-created over hundreds of star systems the same conflicts common among old Terra's nations. Recurrent strife has limited the growth of new religions and philosophies, as well as hindered development of forward religious thinking such as generally prevails in the Lyran Alliance and Federated Suns.

House Liao holds up the Capellan Confederation as a place of true religious harmony, though most claim that harmony

TRANSIT DISORIENTATION SICKNESS

Most people suffer mild discomfort during hyperspace travel, but a few suffer a more extreme reaction. These unlucky individuals experience hallucinations, often manifesting as radical changes in perception. The effects usually subside within seconds or minutes of a jump, though a few people have been driven into catatonia by the experience.

Physical symptoms affect a larger group of people, mainly nausea and dizziness. Jumping through space disturbs the inner ear, prompting physical reactions similar to those of weightlessness. These symptoms can affect even individuals who do not suffer conventional space sickness.

In a very few cases, a jump sends an individual into shock, making urgent medical attention necessary. All JumpShip and DropShip crews are trained in first aid, and medical kits are positioned at key points throughout every vessel. Long-term rehabilitation, however, depends on the skills of professional medical staff. It is almost impossible to identify sufferers of this extreme reaction before the onset of symptoms, but once diagnosed, the patient is barred from interstellar travel.

exists in spite of the Liaos' best efforts. The state has never adopted a formal religion and only interferes directly when religious disputes threaten the state. In such cases, state retaliation is swift and merciless. For centuries, however, House Liao has worked indirectly to replace formal religious beliefs with state-approved philosophies—specifically the Korvin Doctrine, the Sarna Mandate and the Lorix Order, which promote the Confederation's attempts to expand, uphold the ultimate authority of the Chancellor and the state and provide the dictums requiring all citizens to support both of the above. Among the government's tools for "encouraging" these philosophies are philosophical examinations and courts of inquiry for those deemed to hold questionable beliefs. As long as Capellan citizens maintain respect for the state, however, they may worship as they see fit.

Among the smaller Periphery nations, most religions maintain a low profile and are tolerant of other faiths. Many Inner Sphere religious scholars travel to the Periphery every year to study with its inhabitants. The religious harmony of the Taurian Concordat and the Magistracy of Canopus in particular are examples from which the Inner Sphere could learn.

Despite the Inner Sphere's neo-feudal bent, no scion of any Great House claims the "divine right" of rulership that was a hallmark of historical feudalism on Terra. In ancient Terran feudal society, rulers often claimed they were chosen by God and thus had a divine right to govern their people as they saw fit. In modern times, the only people known to make this claim are occasional cult leaders and minor rulers, particularly in the Periphery states.

TRAVEL

Though several Inner Sphere and Periphery nations place restrictions on mobility, personal travel is common, from horseback to well-established public transport systems and privately owned cars. Extensive networks of JumpShips and DropShips carry people and goods between the stars, though the exorbitant costs of interstellar transport make such voyages a once-in-a-lifetime experience for most people.

INTERPLANETARY AND INTERSTELLAR TRANSPORT

DropShips and JumpShips transport Inner Sphere and Periphery citizens from world to world, the latter using the Kearny-Fuchida drive to ferry the former across light-years of space. The KF drive allowed humankind to spread far beyond Terra, and ever since it has helped knit the sprawling vistas of colonized space together.

JumpShips and the Kearny-Fuchida Drive

—From the *Abridged Encyclopedia Galactica*, Universal Press, 3062

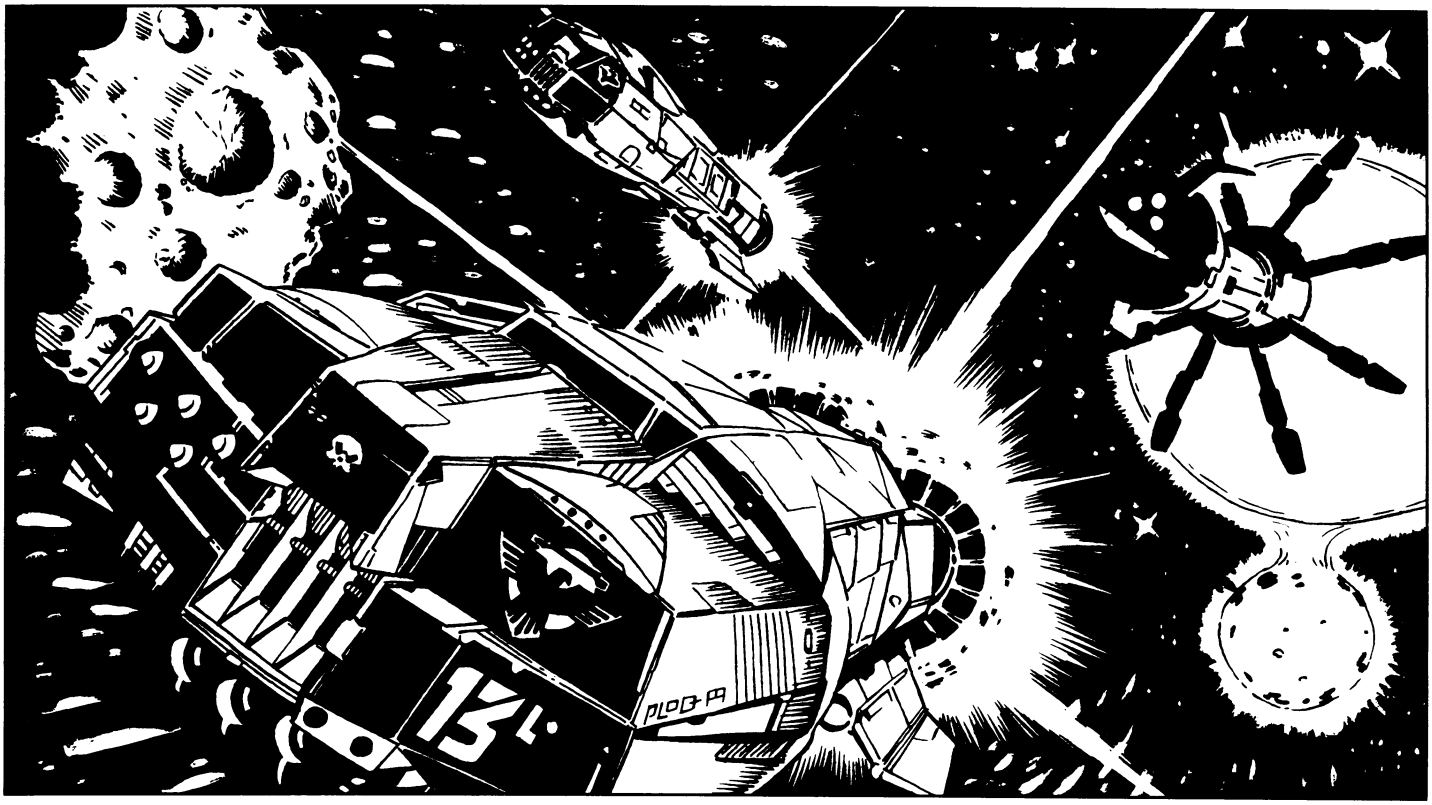
Though small refinements have been made to the KF drive since the first starship "jump" in 2107, the underlying principles remain true to the theories put forward by Kearny and Fuchida in 2018.

In the simplest terms, a ship with a KF drive can instantly travel to another point up to thirty light-years away. Of course, several conditions limit this form of travel. For example, the drive often accounts for most of a JumpShip's mass, which limits the amount of cargo and smaller ships it can carry. Because of this, JumpShips do not have interplanetary drives. Instead, they rely on cargo ships equipped with interplanetary drives, known as DropShips. Most JumpShips can carry one or more DropShips.

A JumpShip can only jump to and from predetermined points in space, known as jump points. The standard points are located "above" and "below" the plane of the star system, directly to the north and south of the star's poles. These points usually lie hundreds of millions of kilometers from the star, far out of its gravity well; even weak gravitational tides can rip a JumpShip apart. The jump points' remote location means that JumpShip passengers and cargo must spend several days aboard a DropShip, traveling between the JumpShip and its planet of origin or destination.

Some JumpShip captains, usually those transporting illicit cargos, use pirate jump points. These nonstandard points are free from gravitational tides, formed by the motion of the system's planets and moons around its star. Because these pirate points move constantly, only the most skilled navigators attempt to use them.

A JumpShip's KF drive requires a considerable amount of energy, far more than fusion reactors alone can supply. The drive is commonly charged with a solar sail, a solar energy collector often a kilometer or more in diameter. Solar sails are the preferred method for recharging JumpShip drives because the energy they collect is free, though occasionally JumpShip captains will buy a charge from a recharge station or use their own fusion reactors to charge the drive. In any case, the drive must



be charged slowly, usually over six to nine days. A drive can be charged in a shorter amount of time, but these quick-charges may damage it. Such damage can cause a misjump, potentially stranding the JumpShip and its crew in an unknown system or even destroying the drive. Each jump uses up a full charge.

A few JumpShips mount lithium-fusion batteries, which can store enough energy to make a second jump immediately following the first. This prohibitively expensive system is extremely rare, generally only affordable by a Successor State.

Merchant- and *Invader*-class JumpShips carry civilian and military DropShips between stars. Expensive and hard to replace, these vessels are considered almost sacrosanct; few militaries or mercenary units will target one under any circumstances. Heavily armed and armored combat JumpShips, also called WarShips, can maneuver like DropShips to bring their firepower to bear. With very few exceptions, these rare vessels are owned solely by national governments.

DropShips

The term DropShip was coined in the twenty-second century to describe the huge, cargo-carrying shuttles transported by JumpShips. Over time, these ships evolved into vessels carried on the hull of a JumpShip and literally dropped free upon arrival.

Shipbuilders have developed many DropShip designs over the centuries. Dozens of types remain in service, including attack craft, cargo vessels and passenger liners. However, every DropShip falls into one of two categories: aerodyne or spheroid. Aerodynes resemble conventional aerospace craft, using wings and lifting surfaces to operate in atmosphere. Spheroids are round or egg-shaped and rely on their drive systems to provide lift. Aerodynes are more maneuverable than spheroids, though the structural and control systems required limit their cargo capacity and size, drastically increasing their cost of operation. Aerodynes also require long runways on which to land, whereas spheroids can make VTOL landings under almost any conditions. Spheroid DropShips are therefore more common, particularly for cargo transport and various military purposes. The small size and agility of aerodynes make them ideal attack craft.

Microgravity is uncomfortable and unhealthy in the long term, so most DropShips maintain a facsimile of Terran gravity by constantly accelerating for half their journey between the JumpShip and their destination. At the halfway point, the craft reverses its attitude, placing its engines toward the intended landfall and decelerating for the second half of the journey. This procedure allows the crew to operate in the equivalent of Terran gravity for most of the voyage. It also provides the fastest means of system transit, albeit at the expense of fuel.

Vessels short on reaction mass may accelerate sharply at the start of their journey, coasting much of the way to their destination. This inertial transfer is much more fuel-efficient than the conventional method, but it takes much longer, meaning that the crew must spend extended periods without artificial gravity. This process has fallen out of favor in recent decades, with the advent of more efficient fuel-flow systems.

Almost every DropShip, even those owned by civilians, is adequately armed to defend itself against micrometeorites and pirate attacks. Unlike JumpShips, DropShips are considered fair game in naval engagements. If severely overmatched, most will surrender after token resistance.

Though all but the largest DropShips can make planetary landings, most carry a collection of smaller fighters and shuttles for defense and to facilitate deep-space cargo transfers. Shuttle transfers are quicker and less dangerous than docking operations between DropShips weighing several thousand tons.

The time it takes to travel between a system's jump points and a planet may vary as widely as two to 138 days, depending on the type of star and its gravitational field. Most trips last between four and eighteen days, with an eight-day average.

Lithium-Fusion Batteries, Hand-offs and Command Circuits

The need to recharge the JumpShip's drive core slows down most interstellar journeys, which routinely take a week per thirty-light-year jump. At that rate, crossing the Inner Sphere would take thirty-four weeks. To cut down that time, humans have developed several strategies.

Quick-charging the drive core from the vessel's fusion reactor is one strategy, though it depletes the vessel's limited fuel stocks and risks drive damage. A lithium-fusion battery, standard equipment on many military JumpShips and WarShips, allows a vessel to safely make two jumps in quick succession. However, the cost of the batteries has prevented widespread civilian use.

Many civilian passenger lines and military branches save time by arranging for their DropShips to be passed from one JumpShip to another. Known as handing-off, this process avoids the lengthy delays of recharging, but missed connections or delays can stretch journeys by several weeks. Military and government groups can establish a command circuit, a dedicated chain of ready-charged JumpShips that can carry a DropShip across vast distances in a matter of hours. Civilians rarely use command circuits, as keeping JumpShips idle is extremely expensive.

ONPLANET TRAVEL

Methods of travel onplanet vary considerably between worlds. Some planets favor long-distance travel and have well-established transportation systems. Others favor a more sedentary existence, with even local transport strictly limited.

Supersonic aircraft and suborbital DropShip flights are staples of long-distance travel, allowing access to any part of a planet in a matter of hours. A few worlds, including Terra, boast high-speed surface transport systems like maglev trains that can reach speeds up to a thousand kph. Because the cost of such systems is exorbitant when compared with suborbital flights, they are limited to the oldest and most populous worlds. A few planets also use seagoing transports and dirigibles, though such methods of travel are regarded more as luxuries than practical ways of getting around.

AVERAGE SUSTAINED OFF-ROAD MOVEMENT RATES

Mode of Transport	Speed
Walking	5 kph
Mule/elephant/raxx	15 kph
Camel	20 kph
Horse/tabiranth	25 kph
Heavy transport	50 kph
Jeep	75 kph
Jet sled	80 kph
Ground car	95 kph
Skimmer	100 kph
Speeder	185 kph
'Mechs/military vehicles	(*BattleTech* MP x 10.8) kph
Hydrofoil	160 kph
Submersible	60 kph

Privately owned cars and vans are common, especially in rural areas. Most of these are internal-combustion vehicles, powered by petrochemicals or a solid hydrogen-based fuel. Though efficient battery-operated vehicles are popular, their use is generally restricted to urban areas. The pinnacle of personal transports are vehicles powered by compact fusion plants. Such vehicles have become increasingly popular in the past two decades; some, like the GM Tiger, are widely regarded as status symbols. Most such vehicles are wheeled and can reach speeds up to 150 kph; top-of-the-line models can reach almost 300 kph on open roads.

Many urban centers, and rural areas on well-developed worlds, are equipped with auto-nav systems that allow onboard computers to control vehicles. These systems aid in route planning and traffic management, particularly on expressways where computer control is mandatory in the high-speed lanes (200+ kph). The speed limit in most urban areas is fifty kph.

To limit overcrowding, many cities have built comprehensive public transportation systems, including buses, metro systems and local railways. These provide a simple and cost-effective way of moving large numbers of people. To encourage their use (and to recover the cost of construction), many authorities levy high taxes on private vehicles.

On the least-developed worlds of the Inner Sphere and Periphery, animals are commonly used for riding and transporting goods. Horses are the most common; oxen, camels and elephants are also used, depending on local conditions. More specialized mounts include the tabiranth—a feline native to the Marik world of Jardine, prized as a hunting mount—and the odessan raxx, a large but docile lizard common on many Inner Sphere planets.

THE CLANS

Though the forebears of the Clans were the SLDF troops who followed Aleksandr Kerensky into exile more than two and a half centuries ago, Clan culture bears little resemblance to those origins. The following section provides a brief overview of Clan society.

THE CASTE SYSTEM

The Clans recognize distinct castes, akin to those of the Hindu culture or the social stratification of the Draconis Combine. The core of the Clan caste system is the belief that an individual's genetic make-up predisposes him or her to a particular form of work. Most children enter the same caste as their parents, but extensive testing allows scientists to determine if the assigned caste is appropriate. During schooling, a child's skills and aptitudes are constantly assessed; this may result in a change of caste. More often, such tests reinforce caste assignments and serve to direct Clansmen into their caste's appropriate subclass.

The Clans have five official castes: warrior, scientist, technician, merchant and laborer. A sixth caste, called the dark or bandit caste, exists unofficially. In general, the warrior caste is at the top of the hierarchy, followed by scientists, technicians, merchants and laborers in descending order. However, different Clans have their own variations on this social ranking pattern. The defunct Smoke Jaguars, for example, regarded the four civilian castes as barely fit to breathe air next to warriors. Clan Blood Spirit, by contrast, sees all of its castes as integral parts of its society, making inter-caste strife rare. Clan Diamond Shark's emphasis on mercantile profit has given its merchants clout unmatched in other Clans, though they must still bow to the warriors. Clan Ice Hellion merchants receive far different treatment, suffering from their warriors' prejudiced belief that merchants are inherently corrupt.

The Clan legal system reflects the warrior caste's prominence, generally favoring warriors over civilians in cases where they are pitted against each other. In the most obvious advantage, a warrior can attempt to escape a guilty verdict by fighting a Trial of Refusal against it. If he wins this single combat, the verdict is nullified. Civilian caste members, by contrast, must accept the verdict and punishment they are given.

Warrior Caste

The warrior caste protects and rules each Clan. Their preeminence came in the wake of the Exodus Civil War, after two decades of vicious fighting had bludgeoned the civilian population into accepting any conditions to ensure peace. In every Clan, the warrior caste is subdivided into MechWarriors, aerospace pilots, Elementals and a paramilitary police force. Only Bloodnamed members of the warrior caste may vote in Clan Councils or be elected Khan and thus rule a Clan.

Scientist Caste

The scientist caste controls the Clans' research and development efforts, along with education and health-care systems. Many scientists are "test-downs" from the warrior caste.

The caste is best known for creating and running the eugenics program, a cornerstone of Clan society. Control over it gives members of this caste considerable unofficial power and has earned them more freedom of action and attitude than other castes. Occasionally, their prominence goes to their heads, and Clan warriors must bring errant scientists back into line.

Technician Caste

As their name suggests, technicians maintain the equipment used by various Clan castes. Many maintain military equipment for the warrior caste; others serve the merchant and laborer castes. Technicians can range from armorers, electrical engineers and computer programmers to the crews of DropShips, JumpShips and WarShips. They serve virtually everywhere in Clan society, including front-line combat units.

Merchant Caste

No society can operate without raw materials and other goods; the merchant caste ensures that the Clans have everything they need. Merchants trade among fellow Clans and other powers, as well as manufacturing goods and exploiting raw resources. The Clans with the strongest economies also tend to have the strongest militaries, but warriors generally take care not to give the merchant caste sufficient power to challenge them.

Laborer Caste

The laborer caste is the lowest official rung of Clan society. They are the builders, miners and farmers, their lives dominated by physical labor. Though they often lack the formal education of other castes, laborers are nonetheless highly skilled in their areas and play a vital role in Clan society.

Dark (Bandit) Caste

Occasionally, a misfit individual is expelled from Clan society. These dregs of the Clans join the unofficial dark caste; because many turn to crime to survive, they are also often called the bandit caste. This caste operates outside traditional Clan society and is generally ignored or attacked for what their fellow Clansmen see as their "dishonorable" behavior. Warriors spoiling for a fight frequently target dark caste settlements and bases, if worthier foes are unavailable.

freeborn vs. trueborn

The distinction between freeborns and trueborns applies to all castes, though the rift between the two is most apparent among warriors. Trueborns are fertilized in vitro and brought to term in an artificial womb, under the auspices of the eugenics program; freeborns are born naturally. Discrimination against

freeborns is rife in the Clans; they are regarded as genetically inferior, the result of random combinations rather than a finely honed bloodline. Most freeborn children come from officially approved genetic matches, but that fact does little to dispel the prevailing prejudice. The preponderance of trueborns in the warrior caste is accepted as further evidence of trueborn superiority; the only trueborns among the civilian castes are those who wash out of warrior training.

Freeborn genes cannot be used in the breeding program unless the freeborn warrior acquires a Bloodname, an almost impossible feat for a freeborn. Ironically, the rare inclusion of those freeborn genes prevents genetic stagnation in the warrior caste.

BLOODNAMES

To a Clan warrior, a Bloodname is everything. Without a Bloodname, a warrior has no place in the breeding program and is barred from the higher positions in Clan society. Only Bloodnamed warriors can serve on a Clan Council or the Grand Council of all the Clans or aspire to lead their Clan as its Khan or Loremaster.

Bloodnames originated with Nicholas Kerensky, who decreed that only the descendants of the eight hundred warriors who accompanied him into exile and formed the Clans would be allowed to use surnames. He also decreed that no more than twenty-five people could hold any given Bloodname at one time; new bearers would earn available Bloodnames through a series of ritual battles, collectively called the Trial of Bloodright.

Whenever a Bloodnamed warrior dies, a Trial of Bloodright is held to determine the name's new bearer. The Trial is a contest among thirty-two warriors, thirty-one of whom are nominated by existing Bloodnamed warriors and Clan notables. The final place is determined by a grand melee among other hopefuls. The Trial battles are fought over several rounds. The ultimate victor gains the right to bear the Bloodname and can only be stripped of it by a Trial of Refusal, a Trial of Abjuration or death.

CLAN TRIALS: THE HONOR ROAD

Honor guides all relationships between individuals and Clans, through rituals that limit the effects of conflict in Clan society. The so-called honor road grew from Nicholas Kerensky's desire to avoid repeating the horrors of the Exodus Civil War. To an extent, he succeeded—but like the Ares Conventions in the Inner Sphere, the system has also legitimized warfare as a means of settling disputes.

Honor works on several levels. Most important is the honor of the Clan, followed by that of one's unit or caste and finally individual honor. On most occasions, these different levels work in harmony. To deal with the occasional conflicts that arise, the Clans have developed rituals and trials to minimize strife. The most common are described below.

Surkai, The Rite of Forgiveness

All castes practice surkai. This rite acknowledges wrongdoing and willingness to accept punishment; the strength to admit mistakes and accept the consequences is considered a virtue in Clan society.

Trial of Grievance

When a dispute cannot be resolved by other means, the Trial of Grievance comes into play. Among warriors, this Trial is a duel, fought with or without equipment, the winner of which is deemed to be in the right. The fight takes place within an area known as a Circle of Equals, though the space need not be a literal circle and can range from a few meters to tens of square kilometers in size. Civilian castes also treat the Trial of Grievance as a contest but tailor the competition to the skills of the participants. For example, disputing merchants might gather revenue over a predetermined period; whoever earned more would win the Trial.

Trial of Refusal

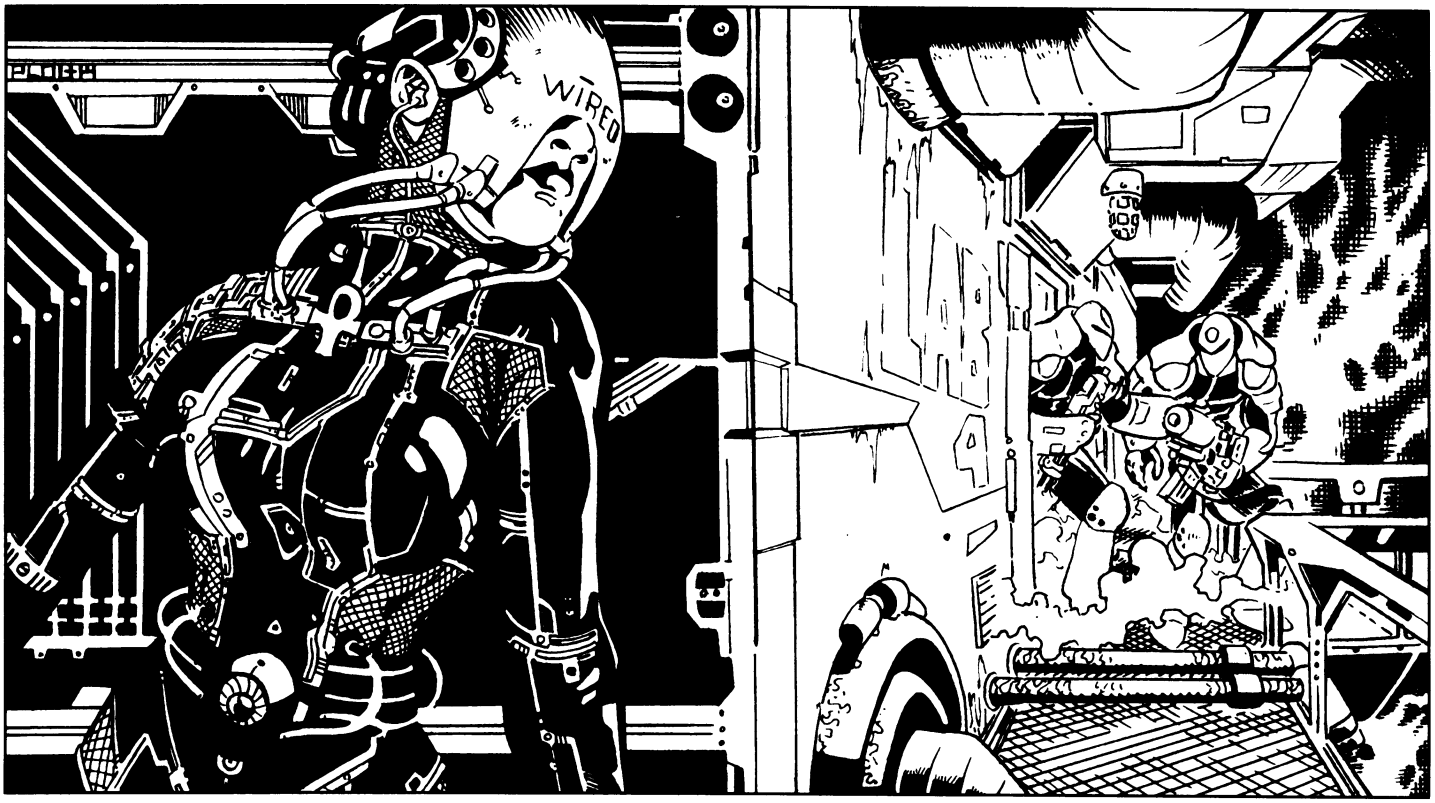
When disputes arise within the warrior caste, the Trial of Refusal provides a mechanism whereby warriors can challenge decisions. Like the Trial of Grievance, the matter is decided by force, with might making right. The challenger declares what forces he or she will use to challenge the disputed decision; the defenders then declare their forces, which reflect the voting majority on the original decision. For example, if a vote passed by a two-to-one ratio, the defenders may field twice as many forces as the challengers. In practice, however, this ratio is often reduced by bidding among the defenders for the honor of upholding the decision.

Several restrictions apply to the Trial of Refusal. A challenge must come from within the appropriate body—for example, a Trial of Refusal against a Grand Council decision must be made by a member of the Grand Council—or by someone cited in the decision. No one can challenge the outcome of a Trial of Refusal, though additional concerned parties can stage additional Refusals, which usually occur simultaneously. Clansmen also cannot challenge a Satarra, the Clan Council's right of veto regarding disputes between castes.

Trial of Possession

The Trial of Possession uses force to determine ownership or control of property: anything from a BattleMech or genetic legacy to a world. Usually Clans trade for items they need, but the Trial of Possession allows them to seek control of assets they cannot acquire by other means. The winner gains or retains control of the asset in question.

The attacking force in a Trial of Possession issues a challenge to the current owners of the property, stating its identity and objective, followed by a request for the defenders to name the forces they will use to maintain possession. This process is known as the *batchall.* Once the defender has replied, the attacking units bid among themselves to determine who will fight. Great honor is attached to using the smallest possible force to win the encounter.



Trial of Position

The Trial of Position plays a key role in Clan society, testing warriors to determine their position in the Touman (the Clan armed forces). Every warrior undergoes at least one Trial of Position upon graduating from cadet training. Additional trials throughout a warrior's career play a major role in determining promotions and demotions.

Though the exact details vary among Clans, a cadet's initial Trial of Position involves defeating opponents in deadly combat. The cadet must defeat at least one warrior to gain warrior status. The more enemies defeated, the higher the rank the new warrior earns. One victory grants warrior status, two the rank of Star Commander and three the rank of Star Captain.

Trial of Bloodright

Perhaps the most significant trial for warriors, victory in a Trial of Bloodright grants the right to use a Bloodname and earns the warrior's DNA a place in the eugenics program. Unlike other trials, which are generally fought between two groups, the Trial of Bloodright is a competition among thirty-two warriors, fought in several rounds.

Other trials and rituals

The Clans engage in several lesser or more specialized rituals, which occur less frequently than those described above. These include the Rite of Absorption, in which an entire Clan is swallowed up by another, and the Trial of Abjuration, in which individuals or groups may be cast out of the Clans. Well known but rare is the Trial of Annihilation, the Clans' ultimate punishment. Whenever an individual, a unit or even an entire Clan has been found guilty of a grave crime, their fellow Clansmen attempt to exterminate them through this trial. If the "guilty" are lucky enough to survive, they are exonerated.

GOVERNMENT

The warrior caste governs the Clans indirectly, through several bodies and selected individuals. Participation in governing is restricted to Bloodnamed warriors, though non-Bloodnamed warriors may observe the proceedings. The Bloodnamed of each Clan gather in Clan Councils to decide matters by a simple majority vote. These Councils have near-absolute power over members of their Clans, their actions subject to review by outside bodies only when they affect the Clans as a whole. In many cases, however, the Clan Councils delegate nonmilitary matters to civilian administrative bodies.

Each Clan Council elects two of its members as Khans, who serve as rulers of the Clan and as its representatives on the Grand Council. Officially, these individuals are the Clan's best warriors, but in practice the posts generally go to the most skilled politicians. Traditionally, the most senior Khan serves as head of the Clan, overseeing relationships between castes and with other Clans. The junior Khan, called the saKhan, acts as the Clan's warlord. The exact distribution of these tasks depends on the Clan and Khans in question.

The Khans of each Clan compose the Clan Grand Council. The Grand Council meets when required to resolve disputes

between Clans or to discuss matters affecting the Clans as a whole. Its members have far-ranging authority when dealing with Clan-wide matters, but their power is strictly limited in matters concerning a single Clan. The Grand Council traditionally meets in a Grand Kurultai, a face-to-face gathering in the Hall of Khans on the Clan capital of Strana Mechty. It can also meet in "virtual kurultai" via HPG. In times of crisis, the Grand Council can elect an ilKhan, a war leader with Clan-wide authority. Throughout Clan history, only ten such individuals have been chosen.

CLAN POLITICS

Two opposing factions dominate Clan politics. The first, known as Wardens, believes the Clans should serve as protectors of the Inner Sphere. The second, called Crusaders, advocates the military conquest of the Inner Sphere and the reformation of the Star League with the Clans at its head. Both factions use the writings and speeches of Aleksandr and Nicholas Kerensky to justify their positions, but demands by the civilian castes to return to the "lost paradise" of the Inner Sphere eventually led to the Crusaders' rise. Currently, with the destruction of Clan Smoke Jaguar and the Crusaders' loss to the Inner Sphere in the Great Refusal on Strana Mechty, the Wardens dominate Clan politics. Though they favor isolationism, the Wardens crave martial victories as much as any Clansman. Despite being unwilling participants in the invasion of the Inner Sphere, they considered it a matter of honor to do their best. That their success in capturing territory reduced Crusader influence was an added bonus.

A lesser division within the Clans also exists between those chosen to invade the Inner Sphere and those left behind. Animosity flares frequently between these two groups, souring relations in both Warden and Crusader camps and leading to several cross-faction alliances.

ECONOMY

The Clans have developed a strong economy to support their military infrastructure. The merchant caste oversees all aspects of industry, predominantly manufacturing, mining and farming. Monolithic trading houses control the distribution of goods within each Clan and oversee transactions with other Clans and outsiders.

Though the Clans possess such elements of high finance as futures speculation and the like, the concept of making money for its own sake is foreign to them. By and large, the Clans have no use for cash. Instead, they use work credit, essentially a barter system for acquiring goods and services from the Clans' central authority. Any work credit not used reverts to the control of the Clan that earned it; in addition, all goods remain the property of the Clan and may be redistributed at will.

The Clans' single currency, called a kerensky (symbol: KE), is used almost exclusively by the merchant caste in electronic form to smooth mercantile exchanges and allow financial institutions to operate. Hard cash exists for limited use—small coins in 1, 5, 10 and 20 kerensky denominations, and rectangular blocks in 100, 1,000, 100,000 and 1,000,000 denominations. The coins and blocks are pressed in gold and contain ID chips and chemical compounds to prevent forgery. By the best available estimate, the average exchange rate is 1 kerensky = 5 C-bills.

The primary distinction between Clan and Inner Sphere economic systems is the motivating force behind them. The Clans trade for what they need; the Inner Sphere gives people what they want. Efficiency is central to Clan economics, and recycling is an essential part of daily life. Clan merchants deal mainly in essentials rather than luxuries, for which the average Clansman sees little use and so does not value. However, a trickle of luxury goods from the Inner Sphere has recently begun arriving in Clan space, and some predict that the Inner Sphere's consumer culture will bring down the Clans from within.

TECHNOLOGY

The advanced weaponry used by the Clans has spawned the belief that all Clan technology is vastly superior to the Inner Sphere's. Clan technology is undoubtedly more advanced; however, the gap is not as wide as it initially appeared. The Clans have focused most of their research on military technologies—weapons, genetics, computing and materials chemistry. They have made few advances in civilian technologies, where the Clans lag far behind the Inner Sphere. The Clans' fixation on the Star League has also stagnated their technological development. Much of the equipment they use differs little from that of the Star League in the late twenty-eighth century.

The one exception is medical technology, where spin-offs from the eugenics program have given the Clans a phenomenal advantage. Using highly advanced life support and regeneration techniques, the Clans can regrow any part of the body save the brain. Their genetic modification techniques are similarly sophisticated. The eugenics program uses these extensively, along with artificial gestation systems known as iron wombs. Though such systems are far from new, the need for a rapid population increase prompted Nicholas Kerensky and his scientific teams to abandon the ethical restrictions on the use of such technologies that had existed since the end of the twentieth century. The Clans have since accepted artificial gestation so completely that many Clansmen regard natural birth as disgusting and unclean.

CLAN SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Most works published on the Clans have focused almost entirely on their military, their Inner Sphere holdings or their technology. Little has been written about Clan society as a whole, and many of the existing works are biased. A better understanding of Clan civilian culture might enable the people of the Inner Sphere to coexist peacefully with the descendants of Aleksandr Kerensky.

Language

The root of Clan language is Star League English, the language of government and commerce in the Terran Hegemony

and the original Star League. Like many things associated with the first Star League, the Clans revere this language, to the point where contractions in speech are socially proscribed as un-Clanlike. The Clans' tendency toward formality reinforces this tradition; they consider the use of contractions in speech and writing ill-mannered and sloppy.

Religion

Most Clansmen will say they are not religious, but a closer look at Clan society offers a different picture. Religion's typically major role—providing a focus for human spiritual longings—has largely been usurped by Kerensky's Hidden Hope Doctrine, which made a sacred dream of the Clans' eventual return to the Inner Sphere. However, religion in various forms remains widespread among the Clans. Classic religions exist together with strange, hybrid creeds that have developed since the Exodus. The doctrines of many, however—Buddhism's prohibition on taking life, or the Judeo-Christian-Muslim belief in an almighty God—are incompatible with the martial, genetically engineered, supremely self-confident Clan society, preventing their widespread acceptance.

Clans Cloud Cobra, Coyote, Goliath Scorpion and Nova Cat have all developed their own forms of spirituality. The Cloud Cobras follow what they call "The Way," a belief in God (or fate, depending on your point of view) in all forms. The adherents of specific religions in this Clan gather in groups called Cloisters, though these groupings have as much to do with political and personal power as with religion.

The Coyotes, Scorpions and Cats frequently use visions to guide them. The Coyote tradition derives from ancient Native American cultures; vision quests and communing with nature are a central part of their lives. Nova Cat beliefs are similar, though their source is less identifiable; deprivation and hardship are central to both. In stark contrast, the Goliath Scorpions use addictive and often lethal hallucinogens to alter their perceptions in an attempt to rediscover the past. This practice is almost solely responsible for limiting the Scorpions' progress.

The Arts

Most people of the Inner Sphere see Clan culture as drab, utilitarian and military, bent solely on conquest. They might be surprised to learn that the Clans have well-developed artistic traditions. The visual arts are widely practiced by Clansmen of every caste. A warrior is as likely as a merchant to be a painter or sculptor. Certain crafts, however, are closely tied to specific castes. For example, pottery is most common among the artisan subclass of the merchant caste. Much of Clan art extols the Clans' past achievements, particularly the victories of each Clan and the mythology surrounding their founders. The Kerenskys are a favorite subject, as are great warriors, Clan totems and landscapes.

Media

The Clans maintain tight control over print and broadcast media, but no two Clans regard them in exactly the same way. At one extreme, the Smoke Jaguars rarely allowed "nonessential" broadcasts and so had virtually no media industry. At the other, the Diamond Sharks pioneered the extensive Chatterweb information network, and their well-developed media empire rivals many in the Inner Sphere. The rest of the Clans lie somewhere in between.

Where the Inner Sphere broadcast media tend to be profit-driven, Clan trideo tends toward indoctrination—even more so than in the Capellan Confederation or the Draconis Combine, where information is also commonly manipulated or withheld. Commercials are unknown, a benefit that many in more open Inner Sphere societies might appreciate.

WAR AND ITS MAKERS

Since the dawn of recorded history, humanity has had little respite from war. Even during the widely hailed peace of the first Star League, its member-states waged thinly disguised, covert wars against one another.

Though the advent of the BattleMech in the twenty-fifth century helped give war a new shape, an event a century earlier bears even greater responsibility for war's new face: the signing of the Ares Conventions in 2412. The Ares Conventions, widely hailed as humanity's salvation, outlawed weapons of mass destruction and protected civilians in wartime. Prior to their signing, major battles frequently spread into cities, killing millions of noncombatants. The Conventions largely ended such atrocities, but they also legitimized war as a means of settling disputes.

When the usurper Stefan Amaris assassinated First Lord Richard Cameron and plunged the Inner Sphere into chaos in 2766, he threw the Ares Conventions to the winds. His forces used atomic weapons against civilian targets, pillaged the worlds they took from the Star League and slaughtered hundreds of millions. The Star League Defense Force eventually defeated Amaris and his followers, but the once-mighty Star League lay in tatters. During the first of the so-called Succession Wars, the House Lords battling for control of the Inner Sphere paid as little attention to the Ares Conventions as Amaris had done. Billions perished in nuclear firestorms designed to cripple an enemy's economy; billions more died when they got in the way of the mighty BattleMech armies that clashed on border worlds. Atrocities became standard operating procedure as each Successor State tried to smash its neighbors into the Stone Age.

The ferocious pace of the Succession Wars faltered, however, as the tremendous losses inflicted on each nation took their toll. Throughout the latter years of the third millennium and beyond, the Ares Conventions once again became the underlying principle of warfare. Abiding by them was the only way the Successor Lords could wage war at all, or hope to prevent humanity's general descent into primitive chaos.

The Succession Wars ground on until the early years of the thirty-first century, when two key events radically altered the face of the Inner Sphere: an unprecedented alliance between the Federated Suns and the Lyran Commonwealth, and the discovery of a Star League-era memory core.

The alliance of two supremely powerful nations redrew the political map, prompting the remaining three Successor States to sign a non-aggression pact that divided the Inner Sphere into two rather than five spheres of influence. Though the formation of the Federated Commonwealth also touched off the Fourth Succession War, that conflict lasted a mere two years before its major combatants sued for peace. The Successor States preferred to spend their revenues and resources in exploiting the memory core, each hoping to be the first to rediscover valuable lost technologies. Technological advances contributed to a Sphere-wide economic recovery, which spurred even greater interest in research and development. Border skirmishes and raids occasionally punctured the calm, but these seemed insignificant compared with the constant warfare of old.

The peace lasted for almost twenty years, broken only when the seemingly unstoppable Clans appeared and began gobbling up dozens of star systems in their drive for Terra. Former enemies temporarily put aside their differences and fought together to halt the Clan onslaught, even as they exhorted their scientists to bridge the technological gap between the Inner Sphere and the invaders. The Com Guards' famous victory over the Clans on Tukayyid bought the Inner Sphere a fifteen-year breathing space, which it put to good use. Technological and political developments conspired to bring about a new incarnation of the Star League in 3058; not quite three years later, the new Star League armies had crushed one Clan and defeated the Crusader Clans in a small-scale proxy battle according to Clan tradition.

Though the Clan threat still looms on the horizon, the events of recent years have greatly diminished it. With the apparent rout of the Clan enemy, the Successor Lords seem to be reverting to mutual suspicion and conflict. War is once again becoming the political tool du jour, and internal unrest menaces several nations even as old foes threaten from outside. Unable as ever to conquer human ambition and greed, the nations of the Inner Sphere and Periphery turn where they have always turned—to the makers of war.

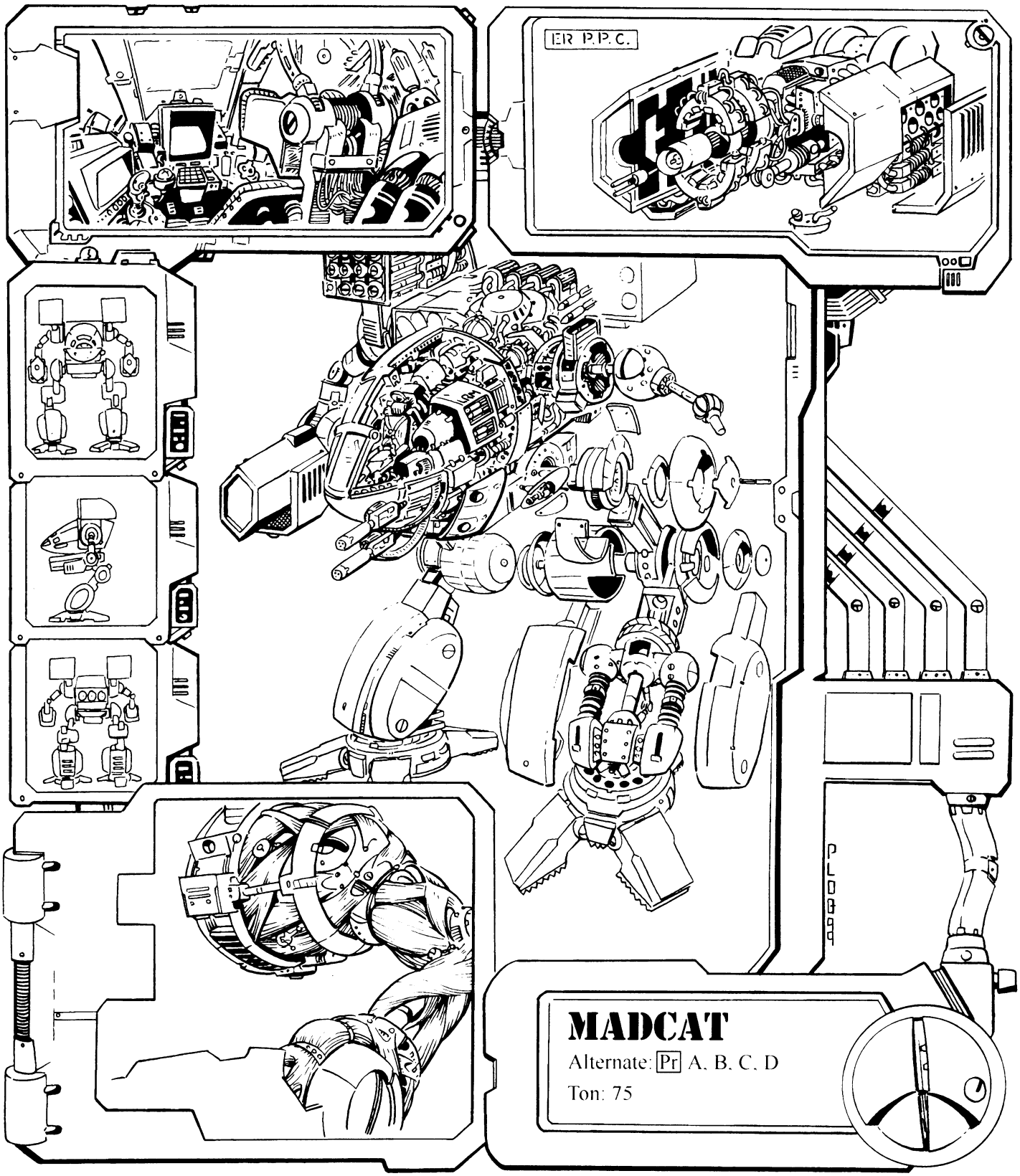
WEAPONS OF WAR

Though each Inner Sphere military has its own structure, they use similar equipment and tactics. Gone are the heroic infantry charges and hand-to-hand combat that typified much of war on ancient Terra. Gone, too, are the long-range duels that relied on technology rather than courage. Modern warfare is a hybrid of the two: soldiers, wearing potent killing machines like giant suits of armor, now engage their foes in a deadly duel.

BATTLEMECHS

Since its creation more than six hundred years ago, the BattleMech has been the favored weapon of lords and generals. A giant walking robot bristling with sophisticated weapons, the 'Mech has yet to lose its place as king of the battlefield. An entire social class formed around those who piloted these increasingly important war machines. These so-called MechWarriors, the modern incarnation of knights, were given the monumental task of defending their homelands and their rulers. The romantic image of the MechWarrior-knight has eroded somewhat over the past few decades, but it remains strong in the hearts of the Inner Sphere's people.

During the Succession Wars, many MechWarriors owned their 'Mechs and passed them down through generations. That custom has changed radically during the past half-century. Nowadays, only the Great Houses can afford the massive



MADCAT

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amounts of new construction that followed the rediscovery of so much lostech. Consequently, House militaries now own most 'Mechs in service in the Inner Sphere.

AEROSPACE FIGHTERS

Capable of quickly and accurately delivering concentrated fire from the air and then fading into the distance, aerospace fighters are an integral part of battle. They also protect JumpShips and DropShips in space, provide air superiority over a battlefield and destroy enemy air forces.

Though potent battlefield weapons, aerospace fighters alone cannot win a war. Commanders must still use ground forces to seize territory from an adversary. At times, aerospace fighters are also at the mercy of nature. Though designed to work in all climates and types of weather, a particularly heavy storm—especially one with high winds or ice and snow—can severely hamper or even crash a fighter.

As with BattleMechs, many fighters in the past were heirlooms passed from parent to child. Now, however, most belong to House militaries. Many trading and shipping cartels also own fighters, which help safeguard their valuable DropShips and JumpShips.

ARMORED INFANTRY

Armored infantry bridge the gap between the standard infantry soldier and the BattleMech. Created to balance the Elemental infantry fielded by the Clans, powered armor suits enable regular infantrymen to damage or even destroy BattleMechs. Fielded in large quantities, armored troops can decimate an unprepared enemy. In close quarters, such as urban combat or boarding actions, they provide the additional protection and firepower needed to overwhelm a larger and better-prepared enemy.

Though the first Inner Sphere battle-armor suits entered production less than a decade ago, almost a dozen different designs are already in service. Many are specialized for particular types of missions; a few can handle any combat environment.

Each major Inner Sphere power fields several regiments of battle armor. These units are never deployed as regiments, however, because each House military owns relatively few armor suits. Instead, armored infantry are assigned to special operations forces and elite search-and-destroy teams that can make the best use of this limited resource.

CONVENTIONAL FORCES

High-tech combat units such as BattleMechs may get all the attention, but conventional forces often bear the brunt of combat. Cheap to equip and easy to train, armor and standard infantry units outnumber all other types of combat unit in the Inner Sphere by a ratio of more than fifteen to one. Such units often make up a planet's only permanent garrison. Most major militaries and mercenary forces also assign armor and infantry units to support BattleMech operations.

Armor units include tanks, VTOLs, armored personnel carriers and any other type of vehicle that can mount a weapon and armor. Cheap and easy to produce, combat vehicles are found on almost every inhabited world.

VTOLs (Vertical Take-Off and Landing) are helicopters and jet-powered craft that can lift off and land without a runway. Highly maneuverable and capable of landing almost anywhere, VTOLs are often assigned to reconnaissance missions, where their relative fragility is less of a liability. Cargo-carrying VTOLs also transport troops and supplies to and from remote or hard-to-reach locations.

Tracked vehicles such as tanks are the most resilient type of armor and can maneuver through all but the roughest terrain. Their slow speed is a drawback, however, and their treads are often difficult to repair or replace. Cheaper and easier to maintain, wheeled vehicles are more common than their tracked cousins. They tear up the roadways much less than tracked vehicles, making them ideal for garrison troops. They cannot easily traverse rough terrain, however, and often get stuck in thick mud and bogs.

Hovercraft are the fastest ground vehicles and can go over water, where other vehicles cannot. However, they have drawbacks as well. Because they glide on a pocket of forced air, they cannot travel through even lightly wooded areas. Their airskirts also make tempting targets for enemy gunners; a well-placed shot can easily cripple a hovertank.

The standard infantryman is the most common battlefield unit. Infantry grunts are readily recruited and quickly trained in basic combat. They can be armed with simple slug-throwing rifles, laser weapons or even shoulder-mounted missiles. They can also be trained to plant explosives that can cripple vehicles and even BattleMechs.

Several specialized combat vehicles are also in service across known space, but their use is limited. With the advent of space travel and the DropShip, seafaring warships quickly became obsolete. The only waterborne naval vessels still in use are simple patrol boats that guard a planet's shorelines and waterways from pirates and other criminals. Conventional fighter aircraft are the only specialized vehicles that still see widespread use. Designed to operate only in an atmosphere, these fighters can usually fly no higher than 50,000 meters. Their cheap cost and ease of use offset their vulnerability to aerospace fighters and make them perfect for planetary garrisons that operate with limited funds.

DROPSHIPS, JUMPSHIPS AND WARSHIPS

Though most DropShips and JumpShips are not designated as combat units, they are as integral to a thirty-first-century military force as armor and the autocannon. They are the lifeline that connects human-occupied worlds, the only way to travel across the stars.

DropShips may be aerodyne or spheroid in shape. Some specialized DropShips, called assault ships, are designed for space and aerial attacks. Almost all DropShips are armed, though only assault ships and the largest 'Mech-carrying DropShips bear more than simple defensive armaments.

JumpShips, normally protected by the unwritten laws of war, carry few weapons—usually only enough to blast debris from space. WarShips, on the other hand, are designed to be the ultimate machines of destruction. Built around a compact KF drive, WarShips mount a devastating array of weapons that can instantly vaporize almost any smaller spacecraft. Hideously expensive to build and maintain, these WarShips offer DropShips and JumpShips the greatest possible protection.

Though the WarShip fleets of the Inner Sphere once numbered in the thousands, the Reunification War against the Periphery and Kerensky's Exodus vastly depleted them. The rest were destroyed during the Succession Wars, along with the technology to build them (though ComStar secretly preserved several WarShips at hidden bases across the Inner Sphere and beyond). Only recently have the Successor States recovered the necessary knowledge and started to rebuild their WarShip fleets.

FORCES OF WAR

With few exceptions, armed forces across the Inner Sphere employ similar organizational and command structures. Even ComStar and its splinter group, the Word of Blake, use a structure that most professional soldiers would recognize. Only the Clans organize their forces in a completely different way.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The lance (or infantry platoon) is the smallest ground force fielded and is normally composed of four vehicles. Platoons are made up of squads, which contain seven or more men. A company usually comprises three lances or platoons. Three companies make a standard battalion, three battalions a standard regiment. In larger and better-equipped units, an additional command lance is often attached to each battalion, allowing the commander to better direct his forces. Likewise, command companies are often attached to regiments and larger formations.

Aerospace units employ a similar structure, except that aerospace units deploy only two fighters per lance. A squadron, analogous to a company, comprises three lances. Wings (battalions) are made up of three squadrons. Larger permanent units are rare, but existing aerospace regiments are made up of three or more wings. Just as with ground forces, command lances are often assigned to wings, while most aerospace regiments have an additional command squadron.

The most common formation deployed is the regiment. Forces smaller than a regiment are often deployed on limited assignments, but such units often cannot survive significant losses and therefore cannot effectively prosecute a lengthy campaign. Except for specialized units and smaller mercenary commands, each sub-unit of a regiment normally contains the same type of equipment ('Mechs, tanks and so on).

Inner Sphere militaries also use formations larger than the standard regiment. Infantry and armor regiments commonly support BattleMech regiments, best exemplified in the Federated Commonwealth's Regimental Combat Teams. Based on Star League formations of the same name, the RCT combines a BattleMech regiment with three armor and five infantry regiments and other supporting elements, including two aerospace wings. House militaries use no standard formations larger than an RCT, though occasionally they assemble a large task force for the duration of a military operation.

Support staff for large formations includes such essential personnel as medics, technicians, scouts, cooks and so on. Though most of these are noncombatants, they are as necessary to a unit's smooth operation as MechWarriors, fighter pilots or infantry troopers. Scouts seek out enemy positions and relay vital intelligence to the combat troops; technicians repair damaged vehicles and equipment; medics patch up the wounded; and as for cooks, a famous military dictum has it that "an army travels on its stomach."

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF INNER SPHERE MILITARIES

GROUND UNITS

Formation	Composition	Number of Units
Squad	—	7 troopers
Lance	—	4 vehicles
Platoon	4 squads	28 troopers
Company	3 lances or platoons	12 vehicles/84 troopers
Battalion	3 companies	36 vehicles/252 troopers
Regiment	3 battalions	108 vehicles/756 troopers

AEROSPACE UNITS

Formation	Composition	Number of Units
Lance	—	2 fighters
Squadron	3 lances	6 fighters
Wing	3 squadrons	18 fighters
Regiment	3 or more wings	54+ fighters

HOUSE REGULARS VS. MERCENARIES

Though each Successor State can call on dozens of BattleMech regiments as well as scores of armor and infantry units, their present-day armies are a mere fraction of the forces they were once able to field. The Succession Wars significantly weakened each major power, creating holes in their defenses. As a result, the Successor States and other nations often rely on mercenary forces to bolster their military strength.

Rather than regular members of a nation's armed forces, mercenaries are soldiers of fortune, men and women who serve and fight because they are paid to do so. According to popular myth in many places, a mercenary's only loyalty is to his or her paycheck, and mercenary troops will take advantage of every possible loophole. Units dissatisfied with their deal may even break their contracts and pillage their former employers.

Fortunately for the people of the Inner Sphere and Periphery, much of the myth is false. Though some bad apples

exist, hundreds of reputable mercenary units operate across known space, with more forming each day. While most new mercenary units fold within a year, those that survive are virtually guaranteed employment as long as they complete their assignments professionally. Many larger mercenary commands forge close, long-term bonds with their employers, such as the one the Gray Death Legion has built with the Lyran Alliance. Others, like the Northwind Highlanders, have roots deep in history and have consistently shown unflagging courage in battle.

Less-reputable units are those that break their contracts for various reasons or violate the Ares Conventions. Most of these units are currently operating in the Chaos March or the Periphery, where employers don't know or don't care about their backgrounds or the methods they use to complete an assignment.

Employers who want to hire reputable units turn to the mercenary hiring halls on Outreach. A complete database of all registered mercenary units, including their histories and ratings (the latter based on composition, experience and leadership), is available to all prospective employers, while the resident Mercenary Review and Bonding Commission mediates any contract disputes.

COMMAND STRUCTURE

Though they share similar organizational structures, each major Inner Sphere and Periphery power has its own unique rank structure. To add to the confusion, different rank structures are commonly used for ground and naval forces. However, certain commonalities do exist. Military personnel are usually either officers or enlisted. Officers must usually attend an academy or other institute of higher learning to obtain a commission. Enlisted personnel are the backbone of an organization and make up the bulk of each military force.

Some specialized personnel, such as MechWarriors and technicians, can hold positions between the two standard categories. Some may not have received formal officer training but have unique skills that warrant a higher initial grade than the enlisted ranks normally allow. Depending on the organization, these personnel usually hold a rank comparable to the lowest officer or to a sergeant.

The following paragraphs list common ranks among military units. Naval ranks appear in parentheses. Though these ranks do not always translate directly into a comparable rank in another military, they provide a rough comparison. See also Rank Table, p. 87.

A private (spaceman) is the lowest standard enlisted rank, though new enlistees are often called recruits until they complete basic military training. Privates make up the bulk of infantry, armor and support units. The rank of corporal (petty officer) is the next step up, given to soldiers who prove themselves after one or more years of service; corporals command small groups of enlisted personnel such as infantry squads and vehicle crews. Corporals are promoted to the rank of sergeant (chief petty officer) after several years of exemplary service and are given

greater responsibility, including the command of squads, sections (two or more squads), technical crews or even entire platoons. Master sergeants (master chief petty officers) are the most senior enlisted personnel and are given a great deal of authority, often commanding a unit's entire enlisted complement.

Lieutenants (ensigns and lieutenants, junior grade) are the first step in the officer ranks; these fresh officers command a platoon or lance. A lieutenant with proven leadership abilities is promoted to captain (lieutenant) and given responsibility for an entire company of troops. Promotion to major (lieutenant commander) requires significant leadership abilities and an aptitude for tactics and administration; majors command battalions, while lieutenant commanders often command a DropShip or a department aboard a large vessel. Lieutenant colonels (commanders) are often senior battalion commanders and/or regimental executive officers; commanders serve as DropShip captains and WarShip executive officers. Exemplary officers with a knack for strategy, leadership and politics can reach the rank of colonel (captain) or better, commanding full regiments or large space vessels.

In large organizations like the House militaries, officers may progress past the rank of colonel. Brigadier generals (commodores) command multi-regiment forces and small space fleets. Major generals (rear admirals) command entire military regions (usually a dozen or more planets), while lieutenant generals (vice admirals) command several military regions. Generals (admirals) command a House's entire armed force.

TRAINING

Militaries rely on several different methods to train their soldiers. The simplest and cheapest are "boot camps"—facilities that train raw recruits in the fundamentals of infantry combat and teach them basic military skills. Some of the more advanced camps also train them to operate tanks and other combat vehicles. Each of these camps can turn out hundreds or thousands of soldiers per year, so every major military (as well as quite a few larger mercenary units) operates at least one camp. Boot-camp graduates are often committed to only a few years of service.

Though enlisted soldiers are easy to train, the same cannot be said for officers or BattleMech and aerospace pilots. These soldiers take years to train, at significantly higher cost. Each major armed force relies on one or more military academies to produce these valuable personnel, usually requiring a minimum service commitment of four to six years. Private academies exist throughout the Inner Sphere, but tuition is often exorbitant. Admission to any of these academies is very competitive. At the end of the course of study, graduates receive a degree and a military commission.

Though academy graduates are much sought-after, they make up the minority of MechWarriors and aerospace pilots, most of whom enter an apprenticeship program. Many mercenary commands offer such apprenticeships, while more affluent families hire private tutors to train their children. The course of study is long, often starting at the age of twelve or thirteen and continuing for six or more years. The apprenticeship method uses a hands-on approach to training and produces a pilot who knows his or her machine inside and out. Those who complete these apprenticeships usually enter service with a mercenary unit, though every House military will take apprenticed pilots and MechWarriors.

THE COM GUARDS

Officially founded in 2933, the ComStar Guards and Militia give the usual organizational structure a unique twist. Rather than the standard lances, companies, battalions and so on, the Com Guards' organization is based on the number six. This system, while different on the surface, translates easily into standard terms.

The smallest Com Guard formation is the Level I unit, composed of a single 'Mech, vehicle or infantry platoon. A Level II unit consists of six Level I units, effectively a demi-company. A Level III unit, made up of six Level IIs, is the same size as a battalion. The Level IV unit, commonly called a division, is made up of six Level IIIs, or the equivalent of two standard regiments. Six Level IV units normally compose a Level V unit, or army. Following the huge losses on Tukayyid and the secession of the Word of Blake, ComStar armies currently comprise only four divisions apiece. ComStar fields a grand total of twelve armies; the Word of Blake fields ten divisions.

The Com Guards use combined-arms rather than standard unit composition, which segregates different types of equipment into separate units. The Com Guards use combined-arms composition to surprise and defeat unprepared enemies. In defensive operations, which account for most of their assignments, the Com Guards have an unmatched ability to adapt to the constantly changing nature of the battlefield.

METHODS OF WAR

Though each House military once boasted the ability to place a full BattleMech regiment and a dozen or more support regiments on nearly every inhabited world, those days are long gone. After the ravages of the First Succession War, generals were forced to adjust to a different style of fighting.

Throughout the Succession Wars, the Successor States continued to vie for control of important worlds and their industries. Unable to field divisions and corps in these operations, commanders often had to rely on a single regiment to take their objective, usually battling defending forces of equal or lesser size. When large forces did clash, they rarely fought to the death. Units that were clearly outmatched with no chance of a safe withdrawal simply capitulated. The commander of the victorious force would then allow the defeated force to withdraw from the planet in exchange for a ransom, usually a lance of equipment per battalion allowed to retreat.

Objective raids became a popular substitute for planetary assaults during the Succession Wars. With the costs of plane-

tary assaults rising, military commanders often opted to raid an important enemy depot or manufacturer for the parts and supplies needed to keep their own forces operating. Because of these raids' limited scope, commanders often used smaller BattleMech units: battalions, companies and occasionally even lances. In recent years, however, these practices have fallen by the wayside. Prince Hanse Davion's massive lightning strikes during the Fourth Succession War flew in the face of accepted combat doctrine, but they enabled his forces to seize half of the Capellan Confederation.

The appearance of the Clans prompted almost every major military force to throw out the commonly accepted principles of war. From the beginning of the Clan invasion, it was clear that this new enemy had its own methods of waging war, which in the end provided the Clans' only weak point. The Inner Sphere's only hope of halting the technologically superior Clan juggernaut was to use the Clans' alien customs against them. In the face of down-and-dirty Inner Sphere tactics, the Clans' insistence on "honorable" combat became a liability.

Following the Star League's recent, massive counterassaults against the Clans, the future of warfare in the Inner Sphere is uncertain. The Inner Sphere realms temporarily set aside their differences to battle the Clans, but war is once again breaking out now that the Clan threat has receded. Large-scale operations involving dozens of BattleMech regiments are becoming increasingly common, though the House militaries are not yet large enough to make them standard practice. For the time being, a hybrid of large- and small-scale warfare will likely prevail.

WAR AMONG THE CLANS

The Clans have developed unique organizational structures and methods of war. Spared the ravages of the Succession Wars that almost forced the Inner Sphere into the Dark Ages, Clan technology is far ahead of the best the Inner Sphere can boast. This technological disparity initially allowed the Clans to decimate the Inner Sphere's best units. The Clans introduced the OmniMech and battle armor to the field, which should have won them the war. Their tactics, however, ultimately cost them victory by allowing Inner Sphere forces to stalemate their advance.

Though the Clans are by no means monolithic, each Clan employs essentially the same structure and customs.

ORGANIZATION

Much as the Com Guards base their organization around the number six, Nicholas Kerensky organized his Clans around the number five. The Point is the most basic unit in Clan militaries, or Toumans. A single BattleMech, two aerospace fighters or vehicles, five Elementals (Clan armored infantry) or five infantry squads (five men each) make up a Point. Five Points compose a Star. Where Inner Sphere lances and companies often merge into larger formations in battle, Clan Stars almost always maintain their cohesion. A variation on the Star, the Nova, teams an OmniMech Star with an Elemental Star. This arrangement provides Clan commanders with additional fire-

CLAN MILITARY ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Formation	Composition
Point	—
Star	5 Points
Binary	2 Stars
Trinary	3 Stars
Cluster	3–5 Binaries/Trinaries
Galaxy	3–5 Clusters

power, especially in assaults against fortifications or in constricted terrain.

In units larger than a Star, Clan organization becomes more complex and less rigid. Binaries, made up of two Stars, and Trinaries, made up of three Stars, are fielded in almost equal numbers throughout the Clans and are usually employed in the same types of missions. Supernova Binaries and Trinaries replace their standard Stars with Nova Stars. Clusters normally consist of three to five Binaries and/or Trinaries, often with an extra command Star (or Nova). Galaxies, the largest Clan unit fielded, normally consist of three to five Clusters, in addition to a command Binary or Trinary. Most Clan Toumans field anywhere from six to twelve Galaxies.

Within a Clan Touman, warriors are designated as front-line, second-line or solahma troops. Front-line troops, usually trueborn warriors, receive the choicest assignments and serve as their Clan's primary assault forces.

Most front-line Galaxies and Clusters are combined-arms forces, employing OmniMechs, Elemental infantry and aerospace fighters. Each Clan's military doctrines determine its specific force compositions and strategies. Some Clans field Galaxies composed almost entirely of aerospace fighters, while others have built entire Elemental Galaxies. These are exceptions to the rule, however.

Second-line units make up a Clan's reserve and garrison forces. Most of those assigned to second-line units are less skilled than front-line warriors or are older warriors who have not proved worthy of a continued front-line assignment. Clans that allow freeborns to serve in their Toumans usually assign them to second-line units regardless of their skills.

Second-line units normally fulfill garrison and other support duties, freeing up a Clan's front-line units for high-visibility assignments and important campaigns. Because of this, second-line units rarely possess the newest 'Mechs and other combat equipment. Second-line units that do field 'Mechs rarely possess OmniMechs, and few have any Elemental infantry. Standard aerospace fighters are common, as are conventional vehicles.

Solahma troops consist of the oldest warriors still in service, warriors who failed to achieve battle glory and warriors disgraced in some way. These troops are organized into infantry Clusters and given the least prestigious assignments, such as

hunting bandits. Some Clans arm solahma units with outdated vehicles or BattleMechs. A Clan involved in a major campaign may order its solahma units to hold a location or attack in the face of overwhelming odds. Though solahma troops are not expected to survive in such instances, they hope to bring honor to their Clan through such final service.

COMMAND STRUCTURE

Unlike Inner Sphere militaries, the Clans have no enlisted personnel but consider all of their warriors officers. All members of warrior sibkos (sibling companies, made up of cadets from the same bloodlines) go through a grueling training program that prepares them to become Clan warriors. These training camps teach sibko cadets Clan history and philosophy, as well as strategy and tactics. The average Clan cadet can quote entire passages from his or her Clan's version of the epic Remembrance, but he or she often lacks leadership and other interpersonal skills—a side effect of the Clans' "might makes right" philosophy.

At the end of a cadet's training, each undergoes a Trial of Position. If the cadet survives and makes at least one "kill," he or she is officially a warrior. A cadet who fails the Trial or fails at any other point in training is reassigned to a lower caste, where his or her skills can better serve the Clan. Some progressive Clans have begun to allow secondary Trials of Position for placement in second-line units.

Clan rank structure is simple. Warriors with no rank are called by their professional title: MechWarrior, Elemental, Pilot and so on. Point Commander is the lowest standard rank (all MechWarriors by definition are Point Commanders, though only the vainest would use that title). A Star Commander leads a Star; in the case of a Nova Star, the 'Mech Star Commander commands the entire Nova. A Star Captain commands a Binary or Trinary; a Supernova's commander is usually the 'Mech unit leader. Clusters are commanded by a Star Colonel, Galaxies by Galaxy Commanders.

The naval service uses most of the same ranks. Naval Star Captains command a DropShip or JumpShip. Star Commodores (equivalent to Star Colonels) command a Star of DropShips or JumpShips, or command a WarShip. Star Admirals, the equivalent of Galaxy Commanders, lead a Star or more of WarShips.

An entire Clan is commanded by its Khans. The senior Khan, or kaKhan, usually leads the Clan as a whole, while the junior Khan—the saKhan—commands his or her Clan's Touman. Other high-ranking officials, such as the Clan Loremaster, often hold significant authority within their Touman, though their exact duties are dictated by the customs of their Clan.

BATTLEFIELD CUSTOMS

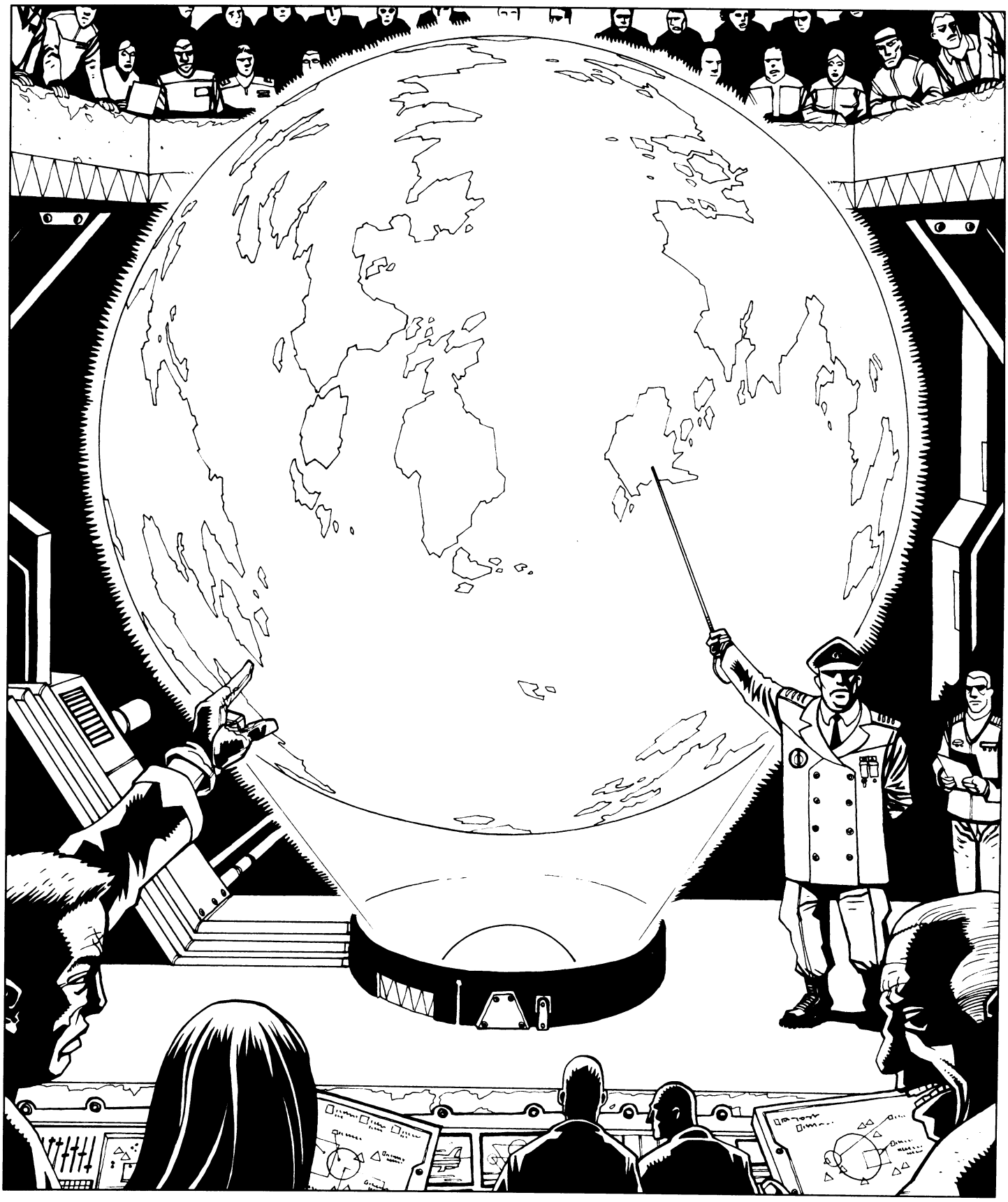
The Clans' difficult formative years led them to develop a unique set of battlefield customs. Above all, they abhor waste. The Clans will not shed one more drop of blood, destroy one more 'Mech or kill one more warrior than they must to achieve victory. This sentiment is most evident in their customs of zellbrigen and bidding.

In bidding, which many warriors consider an art form, an attacking Clan commander asks his opponents what their strength is and what units they will bring to the field of battle. He then adjusts his own forces to closely match the enemy's, ensuring that he risks the fewest resources possible no matter how bloody the battle. If two or more commanders are vying for the same battlefield assignment, they will bid against each other, with the battle going to the commander who made the lowest bid. Of course, an overeager commander may go too far and bid a smaller force than he can win with. Commanders who make this mistake rarely get a chance to repeat it.

Zellbrigen refers to the Clan code of battlefield conduct. Much like the samurai code of honor, zellbrigen demands that Clan warriors engage in one-on-one duels, though a clearly superior warrior may take on more than one opponent. An unengaged warrior may not interfere in another's duel until reinforcements arrive or an opposing warrior is freed from his own duel.

If a warrior purposely targets an opposing warrior already involved in a duel, that action may open the entire fight to a melee. When this happens, every warrior involved may target any member of the opposing force. Such melees are often damaging to a warrior's honor, however, so they happen infrequently.

Each Clan interprets zellbrigen in a slightly different way, frequently depending on the opponent being fought. Clan warriors facing long-hated enemies or those whom they consider honorless will often forgo zellbrigen and simply launch an all-out attack. This custom, once virtually anathema, is becoming more prevalent throughout the Clans since the Truce of Tukayyid.



RUNNING THE GAME

MechWarrior is unique among the line of *BattleTech* products. Where other *BattleTech* games focus on combat, *MW3* is centered on roleplaying. It allows players to be the protagonists in a story of their own devising and to play out the lives of their individual characters. While combat does occur, it is the interaction between unique characters in diverse settings that fuels *MW3*.

Gamemastering is a challenging but rewarding experience. It can be difficult to roleplay a plethora of non-player background characters, but it is also rewarding to see one's friends enjoy themselves while exploring the world you have created. Though a gamemaster needs a good grasp of the rules and the game's fictional background, skillful gamemasters learn to make game mechanics so transparent that the story being created through roleplaying takes center stage.

This chapter contains material designed to help the gamemaster accomplish these goals. Included is a discussion of the *Role of the Gamemaster*, plus tips on *Getting Started* and *Non-Player Characters*. Of prime interest to the players will be the sections on *Rewards* and *Character Advancement*.

ROLE OF THE GAMEMASTER

What exactly is a gamemaster? The gamemaster's role in the game can be divided into two main tasks: storyteller and referee.

GAMEMASTER AS STORYTELLER

The setting in a roleplaying game is like an imaginary environment, a virtual stage. The players need a supporting cast to interact with, and they need enemies. Most of all, however, they need a story that ties it all together, so their adventures can be as exciting and rewarding as any they have seen in movies or read in novels. It is the gamemaster's task to provide background and continuity for the game.

Gamemastering is, first and foremost, the art of interactive storytelling. A gamemaster's primary mission is to provide the challenge in the player characters' lives, the struggles they must surmount on their way to greatness (or their decline into the gutter). There is more to this task than simply giving the players a few random enemies to fight their way through. For the game to be realistic—for the challenge to make sense—there must be a *story* behind it all. The gamemaster provides the core of that story.

To make the story as interesting as possible, the gamemaster should fully develop the details that complete the story. The reality of daily life for *MW3* characters is drastically different from that of the players themselves; presenting details that convey this fact during gameplay serves to ground the group more firmly in the "reality" of the *BattleTech* universe. Likewise, larger events based on the background of the complex universe may also have an effect on the characters. War and political intrigue on a grand scale often have effects on even the smallest and most independent of worlds in one way or another. Even if it is just a report in the evening newsvids, the politics that prompt a conflict between nations may have an impact on a small band of adventurers struggling in the Periphery or living in the heart of Clan space.

The players also must be aware that their characters have backgrounds of their own. Their affiliations may color their personal views, and their histories—already given dimension by the Life Path system—are a starting place to get a feel for who they are. As the players describe the actions their characters take in the course of an adventure, they should also consider the details. Why are they doing what they do? Why can't someone else do it better? Is this even something the character *should* be doing? These details make the story more realistic, and thus a more engrossing and fun experience.

Because the story unfolds both from the gamemaster's base plot-line and through the actions the player characters make in response to whatever challenges they face, the adventure can quickly take on a life of its own. If the story is dramatic enough, this living adventure can take a path that none of the players anticipated, making for an extremely rewarding roleplaying campaign.

GAMEMASTER AS REFEREE

As a referee, the gamemaster's duty is to keep the story moving and exciting while also keeping it fair. It is for the gamemaster to decide when (or if) a roll is needed, or when and under what conditions an event may happen. It is also for the gamemaster to decide such things as when EDG points are regained, or what the results of a near miss actually are. Motivated by the plot of the adventure, and supported by the rules of the game, a good gamemaster can fill in any "gray areas" in the course of a game, such as the results of a particularly bad or close roll of the dice. If a ruling comes into conflict, the gamemaster has the final word in any gaming group, though that word should at all times be fair to the other players.

Good organizational habits and a thorough working knowledge of the game system are a definite plus when running any roleplaying game. Gamemasters should have all basic materials such as dice, pencils, erasers and statistic sheets of major NPCs on hand and ready to go when needed. The time it takes a gamemaster to search for such things, or to look up the most basic of rules, can slow an otherwise exciting moment to a crawl and very rapidly sap the life from a game.

GETTING STARTED

The universe of *BattleTech*, with hundreds of worlds and nearly as many starting points for adventures, can be a bit overwhelming for both novice and experienced gamemasters. The obvious first step in starting any roleplaying adventure, after selecting a brave soul to serve as gamemaster, is to get all the players to make up their starting characters, as described earlier in this book. Before the actual natures of the characters are chosen, however, the players should answer a simple question: what kind of game are you going to run?

This question is mostly decided by the gamemaster, who should already have the beginnings of a plot in mind before the campaign begins. However, the players should not be without a say in the matter, since they will be the main "actors" in the story. A direction, or at least the hint of one, is necessary if the players are to have a chance at choosing appropriate characters for themselves. After all, nobody wants to be the one who decided to be a merchant from the Taurian Concordat, only to find the rest of the party and the gamemaster had set their sights on a campaign in the Clan homeworlds! Setting is a key element in choosing the right roles for an adventure.

CAMPAIGN TYPES

The wide variety of cultures and technology levels presented in the *BattleTech* universe offer an unlimited selection of exciting campaign settings. The following short list of possible starting adventures or campaign settings is intended to provide gamemasters with a few ideas and to get the creative juices flowing.

Adventurers

The characters are thrill seekers, traveling to exotic locations throughout the Inner Sphere and Periphery. They may be looking for lost treasure and relics of the old Star League, bounty hunting or just playing the role of wandering mercenaries, ready for any task—legal or otherwise.

This setting allows the characters to encounter a wide range of fringe societal elements in both the Inner Sphere and Periphery. It also presents many opportunities for the characters to make a name and reputation for themselves.

Clan

You are front- or second-line Clan warriors stationed on a world in the Inner Sphere Occupation Zones. It hasn't been easy dealing with the guerrilla tactics employed by the Inner Sphere *surats* who constantly harass your posts. Nor are you pleased with the local officials, who constantly complain of the conditions on the world since your Clan liberated them from the Inner Sphere barbarians. And now you've just heard that the Galaxy Commander will be here within the month for an inspection. To top things off, the freebirths among the unit have been acting up again. Perhaps it is time to teach them a lesson.

Clan-based campaigns tend to be more militaristic in nature, but there are many out-of-the-cockpit problems that may arise for the characters. Some or all of the player characters could be from the civilian castes, bringing an entirely different feel to the game.

Covert Operatives

Competition between governments, major corporations and trading cartels is fierce in the thirty-first century. There is never a shortage of missions for well-trained teams: extraction, sabotage, surveillance and even assassination. The characters may find themselves on missions to a variety of planets, investigating factory sites, gathering intelligence about new prototypes or performing surgical strikes. The risks are great, as such targets are usually well-defended. In fact, an alternative concept for an adventure or campaign is for the player characters to serve as counter-agents, protecting key facilities or individuals from such attacks.

Explorers

The characters are deep-space explorers searching for new resource-rich worlds or elusive Star League caches of lostech, or perhaps to establish contact with wayward civilizations. Most affiliations have launched some sort of explorer force project, hoping to increase the size of their empire or seek out new trading partners and allies.

If your characters are Clan, they may be warriors with a civilian attachment, sent to locate and possibly recover items from the old Star League. These treasures would then need to be returned to Clan space. Of course, these items aren't likely to be given up easily by those who currently possess them or by other forces (Inner Sphere or Clan) competing for the same items.

Whatever the path taken, exploration opens up many possibilities for finding and interacting with unique societies that may not have seen outside human contact for centuries. Unexplored worlds also provide the opportunity to clash with harsh environments and alien creatures.

Free Traders

The characters are merchants plying the space lanes, looking for new markets for their goods, or just trying to pay the bills. Though they try to keep a low profile, they continually find themselves getting involved in things they shouldn't. Dropping into a hot zone with a battle raging nearby, smuggling, making border runs for illegal goods or being conscripted by the military for a rescue mission are only a few examples.

For Clan characters, specifically merchant-caste characters, this setting can involve even more danger. Clan merchants are always eager to seek new buyers for their products outside the Clan Occupation Zones; technically these areas are off-limits, but who can resist the potential rewards?

Freedom Fighters

The characters are rebels on a disputed world on the border between two affiliations, or even deep within an affiliation's holdings, struggling for freedom against those in power.

All character types fit well here. The characters must function on limited resources, and the game play would be both dramatic and dangerous. Places rife with rebellion in the Inner Sphere include the Chaos March and the Federated Commonwealth, where the Lyran and Federated factions simmer on the brink of civil war.

This option works well for Clan characters as well, if they enjoy taking a little risk. For example, the Clanners find themselves captives to an Inner Sphere affiliation and have decided that being a bondsman to a barbarian is intolerable. They are intent on fighting their way free and making the trek back to

their Clan. Of course, once the characters arrive back in Clan space, there are many issues to deal with, most notably the potential loss of honor for being captured in the first place. The characters may then have to work twice as hard to regain their positions.

Media

The interstellar media is big business in the thirty-first century, and your characters are field reporters investigating the hottest stories. In the war-torn *BattleTech* universe, more often than not those stories involve combat, putting you in the line of fire to get to the bottom of the story. Once you've gotten close to the scoop, it's only a small step to becoming personally involved.

Almost any character type can become involved in a media campaign, but the best-suited are charismatic types such as merchants, politicians and anyone with a decent Acting or Negotiation Skill. Technicians are always needed to keep the cameras and vehicles rolling, and reporting from dangerous zones requires the addition of security specialists, most often ex-military.

Mercenaries

Soldiers-for-hire have existed nearly as long as warfare itself, and never has the ground been more fertile for the enterprising mercenary unit. Everyone but the Clans is actively hiring mercs these days, most often in anticipation of conflict, but sometimes to use in missions where deniability must be maintained. As a result, mercs find themselves in every kind of situation, from pointless garrison duty to high-risk raids.

A mercenary campaign naturally fits well with MechWarriors and other soldiers. However, there is no shortage of support duties to be performed, from medics to technicians to aircraft and spacecraft pilots. Some mercenary units are remarkably unmilitary in character, allowing civilians and soldiers to work side by side with little in the way of a formal chain of command; getting the job done is all that matters.

Pirates and Bandits

The characters are raiders, preying on the Successor States and Clans for supplies, for survival or just for kicks. Characters will be forced to deal with limited resources and the hazards of being wanted criminals. While they may enjoy some freedom from reprisal in the isolation of space, eventually the long arm of the law (whether Clan or Inner Sphere) will catch up with them.

A potential variant of this hook is for the characters to be freedom fighters, using their abilities and whatever resources they can scrape together to cause problems for the rival affiliation that has captured their homeworld. Outlaws to some, they are heroes to the subjugated people of their home.

One further option is to have the characters playing noble thieves. In classic Robin Hood style, they raid from the rich and powerful and give to the poor of the surrounding worlds. This may prove quite risky, but the rewards, both material and spiritual, are worth it.

Regular Military

Every affiliation operates a standing military, and the characters are part of it. A strict chain of command provides less freedom than some types of campaigns, but as a member of a large and organized army, supply and repair are less of a problem. Characters can worry less about paying the bills and concentrate on accomplishing the mission at hand.

This setup is ideal for novice gamemasters and ones with limited time, since the NPC commanders can hand down specific orders (your adventures), which the player characters are obliged to follow. Since the mission can stray little from the path you set, it helps keep the players on track and forces you to deal with fewer surprises.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

With the exception of the players' characters, every person in the *BattleTech* universe is a non-player character (NPC) that the gamemaster can use as the cast of his stories. It is up to the gamemaster to create and portray each of these characters in a believable and enjoyable manner.

Populating a campaign with interesting NPCs is no small task, so this section is devoted to helping gamemasters get started. It includes sample NPCs the gamemaster can use as is, as well as guidelines for creating new NPCs and bringing them to life.

MAJOR NPCS

Whether the players' archenemy, a major personage in the Inner Sphere or a critical non-player member of the players' team, supporting characters are often essential to a good story. Unlike the random generic characters that come and go countless times in the course of an adventure, major NPCs are fully developed. The only difference between major NPCs and the player characters is that the gamemaster controls the NPCs.

The fairest way of creating these important NPCs is simply to use the same character generation rules the players did at the start of the campaign. If the gamemaster doesn't have the time to go through the whole Life Path system, simply assigning appropriate skills and traits is certainly acceptable, using the *Sample Characters* (p. 60) and the player characters themselves as a guide.

If they are intended to be a major challenge, augmenting these NPCs beyond the typical starting level may be necessary from time to time, which can be accomplished simply by boosting skill bonuses and giving them expensive equipment. An archenemy, for example, may have a hideous amount of previously earned and used Experience Points, boosting her skills and Attributes to the point where the player characters cannot hope to defeat her easily (and certainly not on the first encounter). On the other hand, another major NPC might be a veteran technician who has about the same experience as the player characters have earned, only devoted to specific areas that make him an invaluable addition to the ranks, but not so much that he can substitute for a player.

From a dramatic perspective, introducing these important NPCs should vary from the norm to let the players know that they have met someone who stands out from the rest of the background. Maybe it is in the way these individuals talk, or the way they carry themselves. Maybe they are bold and walk right up to the player characters when everyone else shies away, or they have been stalking the players for some time and only now *allowed* themselves to be noticed. However it is accomplished, the player characters should probably know when they have met someone important, lest the entire effort of creating the character be wasted as they dismiss this fully developed NPC out of hand.

MINOR NPCS

The vast majority of NPCs encountered by the player characters will be minor NPCs, from the guy who sold you that Sternsnacht pistol to the waiter at the local bistro, from the gruff sergeant to the hapless street punk who points the way to the yakuza hide-out.

In most cases, minor NPCs need only a personality and a brief physical description. If they possess useful skills that are likely to come into play, the gamemaster should note these as well. Make sure the basic motivations of each minor NPC are figured out before the player characters meet them; that way making consistent decisions for them will be easier. For example, if you know ahead of time that a particular merchant is a money-grubbing penny pincher but is also a collector of Star League relics, you will know that he is unlikely to be flexible in haggling unless the player characters bring a piece of lostech to the bargaining table.

Rarely does a significant threat lie in a single individual with no henchmen. While many NPCs will require no real game stats, the enemy soldiers, security guards, hired thugs and irate bar patrons whom the player characters run afoul of will need some numbers to back up their combat threat. It always helps to have game stats for these kinds of characters ready before the game so the play doesn't grind to a halt while you page through the rules.

To save you the trouble of coming up with all those numbers yourself, a few pre-generated generic NPCs that can fit in a variety of situations are presented below. Each one has a few built-in options to be customized by the gamemaster depending on exactly whom they represent. Feel free to add special skills and equipment as needed for the adventure at hand (not all minor NPCs will be armed, but each type is supplied with equipment appropriate to his station in case he *is* used as a combatant).

Each minor NPC is listed with a *Primary* Skill. This will be a different skill depending on what kind of character it is. In the case of combatant characters, the Primary Skill will be a weapon skill matching whatever the character is listed as having (the top weapon on the list if there are several); a character armed with a pistol would use Pistols as his Primary Skill. Non-combatant characters would instead use the Primary Skill for something related to their jobs; for example, a salesperson might have Negotiation as his Primary Skill.

The character's *Secondary* Skill should be for a secondary weapon (if a combatant) or a hobby or Interest Skill (for non-combatants). The Secondary Skill might be something unusual such as Martial Arts, Stealth or Technician depending on where the NPC is encountered and under what circumstances.

All characters have Language and Perception Skills, so these are not listed unless the character has an unusually high skill bonus. Add them if it becomes necessary.

Bystander

This character is one of the faceless trillions who fill every inhabited planet. Though rarely a threat from a combat point of view, bystanders might be held as hostages needing rescue, or serve as particularly poor henchmen for bottom-rung criminals.

Attributes

STR	4	WIL	4
BOD	5	CHA	4
DEX	5	EDG	4
RFL	4	SOC	3
INT	5	Move	8/18/36

Skills

Career/*Any*	+3
Primary	+2
Secondary	+1

Equipment

Leather Jacket [1/1/0/1]
Auto-pistol [3•4D6; 5/20/45/105; 10 shots]

Thug

These guys are better than a bystander, but not by much. This character can represent a security guard at a civilian installation or one of the thugs for a better-quality boss. Minor nobles might have this type as guards, and these stats can also represent prominent non-combat NPCs.

Attributes

STR	5	WIL	5
BOD	5	CHA	4
DEX	6	EDG	5
RFL	6	SOC	3
INT	5	Move	11/21/42

Skills

Career/*Any*	+4
Perception	+2
Primary	+4
Secondary	+2

Equipment

Flak Jacket [1/5/1/3]
Revolver [4•4D6; 8/18/40/90; 6 shots]
Knife [1•1D6; 5/10/15/20]

Soldier

This character is a professional fighter, be it military, police or criminal. He has been well-trained and well-equipped. Use this kind of opposition when you want to give the players a real challenge, or as the leader of a group of thugs.

Attributes

STR	6	WIL	6
BOD	6	CHA	5
DEX	6	EDG	6
RFL	6	SOC	3
INT	5	Move	12/22/44

Traits

Brave

Skills

Brawling	+2
Career/*Any*	+4
Perception	+3
Stealth	+2
Primary	+5
Secondary	+3

Equipment

Ablative/Flak Jacket [2/4/5/2]
SMG [3•3D6; 5/16/35/80; 50 shots; Burst 10/2]
Vibroblade [3•2D6; Pwr Use 1]

Elite

So tough that they barely qualify as "minor," elite NPCs are just as their name says. Used singly as an ideal leader for a band of thugs or soldiers, groups of elite might be found guarding major installations and high-ranking crime bosses or nobles. They are often a match for the player characters one-on-one, so only a clever plan and a little luck will beat them in an even fight.

Attributes

STR	6	WIL	7
BOD	6	CHA	6
DEX	7	EDG	5
RFL	7	SOC	4
INT	6	Move	12/22/44

Skills

Career/*Any* +5
Martial Art/Military +4
Perception+4
Running +2
Stealth +3
Primary +6
Secondary +4

Traits

Brave
Combat Sense

Equipment

Ballistic Plate Vest [4/6/5/4]
Automatic Rifle [4•4D6; 30/75/170/415; 30 shots; Burst 15/3]
Laser Pistol [4•3D6; 15/35/80/225; Pwr Use 2]
Vibrosword [3•3D6; Pwr Use 1]
Minigrenade [4•8D6; 6/12/18/24; Indirect; Blast]

CONTACTS

Contacts are NPCs that a character has a relationship with thanks to the Contact Trait (see p. 80). Gamemasters should not allow contacts to be mere spigots of information that players can turn on and off at will. Contacts should be fully developed characters with their own desires, goals and motivations. Players should have to perform some roleplaying to gain information from them, or at least succeed in appropriate skill rolls (such as Negotiation or Protocol Checks).

The gamemaster should consider whether a player character's contacts "fit" with the player character's personality. For example, a criminal-turned-mercenary character is not likely to have a grand duke as a contact, regardless of how many points the player spends. The players and gamemaster should work out these considerations together. As always, the gamemaster's decision is final, but it should be fair as well.

Sample Contacts

To get you started, here are some likely contacts for each of the affiliations in this book, listed with a recommended trait point cost in parentheses. Point costs might vary depending on the type of campaign you are playing and are subject to gamemaster approval. Details of these various contacts can be found in other sourcebooks that detail the *BattleTech* universe.

Draconis Combine: Civilian Guidance Corps Officer (1), Geisha (1), Internal Security Force Agent (2), Yakuza *Oyabun* (2), District Warlord (3), Order of the Five Pillars Illuminati (3)

Federated Suns: Priest of the Unfinished Book (1), Vagabond School Headmaster (1), NAIS Professor (2), Training Battalion Commander (2), Ministry Head (3), MIIO (secret service) Regional Controller (3)

Capellan Confederation: Philosophical Examiner (1), Zhanzeng de Guang Guerrilla (1), Death Commando (2), Planetary Diem (2), Sian Court Retainer (3), Warrior House Master (3)

Free Worlds League: Arms Merchant (1), Andurien Separatist (1), Knight of the Inner Sphere (2), SAFE (intelligence) Agent (2), Word of Blake Precentor (3), Member of Parliament (3)

Lyran Alliance: Free Trader (1), Solaris Duelist (1), Lohengrin Anti-Terrorist Officer (2), Estates General Representative (2), Lyran Intelligence Corps Branch Commander (3), District Margrave (3)

Free Rasalhague Republic: Anti-ComStar Activist (1), Clan Ghost Bear Warrior (1), ROM Agent (2), Hertig (duke) (2), ComStar Precentor (3), Varldherre (world ruler) (3)

The Periphery: Gambler (1), Lostech Prospector (1), Colonial Marshal (2), Diamond Shark Merchant (2), Explorer Corps Precentor (2), Bandit King (3)

The Clans: Sibko Training Officer (1), Solahma Warrior (1), Cloister ecKhan (2), Agent of the Watch (2), Bloodname House Leader (3), Clan Scientist-General (3)

REWARDS

After finishing an adventure, the characters will expect some kind of reward. Depending on the mission, this might be cash, equipment, a promotion or simply the satisfaction of a job well done. However, in addition to these tangible and intangible rewards, every character will improve through training and practice. Few things in a roleplaying campaign can compare to the satisfaction of building a character over the course of a campaign until his abilities and fame reach legendary proportions. This is handled in game terms through the awarding of Experience Points (XP). (The use of XP to improve a character is described on p. 210.)

Determining how much experience an adventure is worth is something that each individual gamemaster must decide. As this aspect of the game is crucial to the evolution of the player characters over time, a rough guide of Experience Point awards based on select conditions is provided below. However, not all roleplaying campaigns are created equal, and what works nicely for one group could be horribly stingy or disgustingly generous in others. Thus it is up to the gamemaster to decide upon a fair awarding of experience for his game.

Experience points should be awarded at the conclusion of an adventure, whether that adventure took several actual game sessions or a single evening. For these purposes, an adventure is defined as a mission or excursion with a definable beginning, middle and end. If the campaign is at a freeform level where it is difficult to discern the end of one adventure and the beginning of another, simply award XP at reasonable intervals, such as every other game or at the end of any game in which a significant event occurred.

The Experience Awards table (p. 209) presents some basic awards for various activities in the game. The gamemaster should give every character an award from each of the categories presented: Mission, Campaign, Roleplaying and Miscellaneous. Adding together the points earned from each category will result in the total XP award for that character.

These awards are only guidelines, and the gamemaster should award whatever XP he feels is appropriate. Be careful not to hand out too many XP for minor adventures, and keep in mind that threats should be measured as compared to the group, not as compared to starting characters or the average person. Otherwise the awards will spiral out of control as characters advance and the highest skill levels will become too easy to obtain.

Mission

The mission award is given equally to all characters in the group, based on the level of success in the adventure that has just ended. There are three values listed for each level of success, and these are based on the threat level of the adventure: if the opposition was weaker than the characters and provided little challenge, use the first award. If the opposition was a threat, but the characters were fully up to the task, use the second award. If the adventure was fraught with danger and the characters were outmatched, use the third award.

Campaign

This award obviously only applies if the characters are taking

EXPERIENCE AWARDS

Action	XP Award
Mission (Group)	
Total failure	0/1/2
Partial success	1/3/5
Total success	2/5/8
Campaign (Group)	
Adventure off-track	1
Advanced minor campaign goals	3
Advanced major campaign goals	5
Roleplaying (Individual)	
Totally out of character	0
Often out of character	1
Usually in character	2
Always in character	3
In character despite danger	4
Entertained the group	+1
Miscellaneous (Individual)	
Minor subplot started/resolved	1
Major subplot started/resolved	3
Devised clever plan	+1
Critical feat accomplished	+1

part in an ongoing campaign; it represents the part this adventure took in the campaign's ongoing story. If the adventure played a key part in the campaign, thanks to the characters' actions, an award here is appropriate. Note that a single point is awarded even if the adventure was completely off-track; this represents the minimum XP award for participation in the adventure. This award is given to all characters in a group equally.

Roleplaying

Since *MW3* is a roleplaying game, it stands to reason that the players should be playing their characters, not simply rolling dice and marking off ammunition. As such, experience is awarded for good roleplaying. While it's certainly not the gamemaster's job to judge the acting skills of his players, the point of this award is to reward players for having their characters act in ways that are appropriate to the characters' personalities, backgrounds and traits. If a player defined his character as a boastful bully but played him as a timid wimp, clearly he was not "in character."

Sometimes it will not be in a player's best interest to play in character, especially when his favorite character's life is on the line. A character who was held in a brutal Capellan POW camp, and who has been described as hating all Capellans with a passion, would not simply stand by as a drunken Capellan soldier beat up a defenseless servitor. However, attacking the soldier would certainly bring big trouble down on the character and his comrades, so such a rash action would place him in grave danger. The safe thing to do is swallow his pride and look the other way. However, the in-character thing to do is stop that drunkard and show him what brutality *really* means. Playing in character in situations like this, when it would be "better" to not play in character, is rewarded with the highest level of XP.

Finally, a bonus XP is offered for character play that was especially entertaining to the group, even if it wasn't particularly in character. If the gamemaster likes, this can be awarded by a vote of the players themselves to the most entertaining character of each adventure.

Miscellaneous

This category covers any other kind of XP awards the gamemaster wants to give.

An example of a miscellaneous award is the starting or resolution of subplots. Subplots outside the campaign story can add depth and realism to the game, and for the most part it is up to the players to suggest subplots they would like for their characters and then make sure they follow them to some kind of resolution. For starting characters, their traits can be natural places to seed subplot ideas. An Addiction can be very serious, providing plenty of roleplaying possibilities in the course of shaking the Addiction or gaining a new one. Getting rid of that Bad Reputation, whether or not it is deserved, can be a long-term goal fraught with danger. Enemies are another obvious source of subplots, as are other traits such as Title, Stigma, Dependents, Commission and, of course, Amnesia.

Starting up a new subplot, as well as bringing one to resolution, is worth an XP award based on the scale or severity of the subplot. The gamemaster should feel free to increase the award and even award some points to the other characters in the group, if the resolution of a subplot was particularly dangerous or important.

NPC EXPERIENCE

Not only player characters get better with age. If the gamemaster feels the extra record keeping is worth it, XP can be awarded to major NPCs after each adventure they take part in. In this way, the villain who keeps escaping also gets cleverer, his right-hand man becomes a better shot and the characters will have to do more than wait the villain out to stop him. If the opposition can keep up with the player characters (at least somewhat), the campaign will remain more challenging as it progresses.

Allies and trusted assistants could benefit from XP awards as well, in the same manner as enemies. It would be silly for an elite MechWarrior to still be saddled with a green tech after years of working together, just because the tech was green back when they started out. In a case like this, the players could keep track of an ally's XP, work out her skill advancement and so on. This gives them more control over the progression of the group and reduces the gamemaster's already heavy workload.

CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

As a character becomes involved in various adventures and completes missions, he gains new insight into his skills. Along the way, he may also learn entirely new skills, improve his

AGING TABLE

Age in Years	Age Category	Attribute Modifiers STR	BOD	DEX	RFL	INT	WIL	CHA	EDG	Traits
13	Young	+1	+1	–1	—	+1	+1	—	—	Slow Learner
17	Young Adult	—	—	–1	+1	—	+1	—	—	—
31	Adult	—	—	–1	—	—	—	—	—	Stigma/Past Prime*
51	Middle Age	—	–1	–1	–1	+1	+1	—	—	—
71	Old	–1	–1	—	–1	—	+1	—	—	Slow Learner
91	Very Old	–1	—	—	–1	+1	—	—	—	Glass Jaw

* This trait applies to Clan warriors only

Attributes or even get rid of a nasty negative trait. Collectively this process is known as character advancement, and it is through this process that each character grows as it is played, simultaneously becoming more effective and more interesting as time passes.

AGING

As a character ages, his Attributes and traits may change. Check the Aging Table every time the character has a birthday. If the character's new age corresponds exactly to one of the ages listed in the Age in Years column, apply the Attribute modifiers and traits shown in the corresponding row.

These effects are cumulative, unlike those effects shown on the Age Effects Table used at the end of character creation. Also unlike those modifiers, which only adjust the Attribute threshold, these affect the actual Attribute itself and the maximum value for that Attribute.

Traits gained from aging follow the *Opposing Traits* rule (p. 78), as in character creation.

ATTRIBUTES

Attributes can be increased, though the player must justify the increase to the gamemaster. Appropriate effort must be applied, such as exercise, study and so on.

An Attribute can be increased at an XP cost equal to the Attribute value you are increasing it to times 25. So to increase an Attribute from 5 to 6 would cost 150 XP (6 x 25 = 150).

Attributes can never be increased beyond the maximum as shown on the Attribute Maximums Table (p. 56), taking into account your character's age, phenotype and any Exceptional Attribute Traits.

Edge Recovery

Characters can recover Edge temporarily spent in game play at a significantly lower cost than increasing the Attribute itself. Each Edge point recovered costs 20 XP. Note that this is not the only way for EDG to be recovered (see *Recovering Your Edge*, p. 19).

TRAITS

Positive traits can be purchased, or negative traits removed, through expenditure of XP. However, the character must have good reason for gaining or losing the trait, and in some cases, some traits will simply be out of reach. This is up to the gamemaster to determine based on the campaign.

The cost of a new trait is its value in Character Points (see the table on p. 57) times 100.

The cost to get rid of a negative trait is its absolute value (i.e., drop the minus sign) of its Character Point value times 100. For example, it would cost 200 XP to get rid of a negative trait with a value of –2.

If a character gains a trait, or the equivalent of a trait, through game play, it neither costs nor gains the character XP. For example, if a character loses a limb in battle, he does not suddenly gain hundreds of Experience Points. Likewise, characters can gain money through game play, and this does not require the acquisition of the Wealth Trait.

SKILLS

Skills can be improved and new skills learned through the expenditure of XP.

Learning New Skills

Acquiring a new standard skill costs 10 XP; a new difficult skill, 20 XP and the gamemaster's approval. The character must have some plausible rationale for acquiring the skill, and the player must explain to the gamemaster how it is the character went about learning the new skill. New skills always start with a skill bonus of +0.

Skill Use and Training

Every time a skill is used successfully during play, make a hash mark next to that skill on the character sheet. Make only one mark per skill, regardless of how many times it is used or trained. Any given skill will only ever have one mark or no mark beside it.

At the end of each adventure, every character can choose to spend some time training in one chosen skill (that does not already have a hash mark beside it). If there is an available char-

acter with the skill in question (at a skill bonus equal to or higher than the training character) and the Training Skill, the trainer may make a Training Check using the target character's skill bonus as a modifier to the target number. If the Action Check is successful, the target character may add a hash mark to the chosen skill. If the Action Check is unsuccessful, the target character may not add a hash mark to the skill. A character *can* score a hash mark for a skill he does not yet have in this way.

Skills that have hash marks next to them may be improved at a bonus (see *Skill Advancement*, below). When they are improved, the hash marks are erased.

Skill Advancement

Skill advancement is affected by Link Attributes and traits, as well as successful use and training. High Link Attributes make skill advancement faster, while low Link Attributes slow it down. This represents the fact that some people are simply better disposed to learning certain skills because of their natural abilities. For example, strong and fast characters will pick up on athletic skills faster than couch potatoes and so on. Also, difficult skills will be harder to increase than standard skills, and skills that the character actually uses or is trained in will be easier to increase than those that are neglected.

A skill bonus can only be increased one level at a time. For example, you can increase a skill from +2 to +3, but not from +2 directly to +4. First, the skill must be increased to +3, and at least one adventure must pass before the skill can be increased again to +4.

The *base cost* to increase the skill bonus is the skill bonus you are increasing it to. For example, increasing a skill bonus from +2 to +3 has a base cost of 3.

To find the actual cost of increasing the skill bonus, you need to know the *advancement multiplier* for that skill. To figure out the multiplier, first add together the two Link Attributes for the skill. Then add any applicable modifiers for the following traits and other factors. Subtract this total from thirty to find the advancement multiplier for the skill. Multiply this by the base cost to find the actual cost in XP of advancing the skill to the next bonus level.

Fast Learner: A character who has the Fast Learner Trait applies a +2 to the Link Attributes total for all skills.

Slow Learner: A character who has the Slow Learner Trait applies a –2 to the Link Attributes total for all skills.

Natural Aptitude: The Natural Aptitude Trait only applies to one skill and applies a +4 to the Link Attributes total for that skill.

Difficult Skill: After initial character creation, difficult skills are harder to learn and improve than standard skills. If the skill is difficult (listed in **boldface** on the Skill List, p. 58), apply a –2 modifier to the Link Attributes total. Note that, though languages are considered difficult, a character's native languages are not considered difficult for purposes of skill advancement.

Skill Use and Training: A skill that has actually been used successfully or trained successfully since it was last improved (see *Skill Use and Training*, p. 210) gains a +1 Modifier to the Link Attributes total. This will be indicated by a hash mark next to the skill, which is erased at the time the skill is improved.

Rachel wants to improve her character's Rifles Skill. Currently, the skill is rated at a bonus of +3, so the next level would be +4. This means the base cost of increasing the skill is 4. Looking at the Skill Table, Rachel sees that the Link Attributes for Rifles are DEX and RFL. This is good because her character has high Attributes in this area: a DEX of 6 and RFL of 7. Adding them together, she comes up with 13. Checking her character sheet, Rachel sees a hash mark next to the Rifles Skill, meaning she has used it successfully or trained with it since the last time the skill bonus was increased. This adds another +1, for a total of 14. The skill multiplier is therefore 16 (30 – 14 = 16), making the cost of increasing the skill bonus 64 XP (4 x 16 = 64). Rachel's character currently has only 50 XP, so she will have to play a bit more before she can increase the skill.

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Name _____

Affiliation _____

Age _____ Height _____ Weight _____

MECHWARRIOR®

Character Record Sheet THIRD EDITION

ATTRIBUTES

	Value	Mod.	Max.
Strength			
Body			
Dexterity			
Reflexes			
Intelligence			
Willpower			
Charisma			
Edge			
Social Standing			

SKILLS

Name	Bonus

TRAITS

COMBAT INFORMATION

Armor

Type A: _____ AV (M/B/E/X) ___/___/___

Type B: _____ AV (M/B/E/X) ___/___/___

Type C: _____ AV (M/B/E/X) ___/___/___

Type D: _____ AV (M/B/E/X) ___/___/___

Fatigue

Fatigue≤ WIL ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

+1 TN per Fatigue> WIL ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Unconscious if Fatigue > (2 x WIL)

Wounds

Grazing Wounds (WV 1): _____

Minor Wounds (WV 2): _____ +1 TN ea.

Serious Wounds (WV 4): _____ +2 TN ea.

Critical Wounds (WV 8): _____ +3 TN ea.

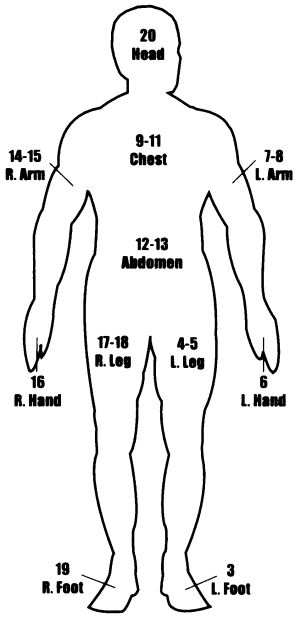
Deadly Wounds (WV 16): _____ Knockout

Total Wound Value of all Wounds: _____ *

* If total Wound Value > (BOD+WIL), Dying

HIT LOCATION DIAGRAM

Fill in Armor Type (A, B, C, D) and Wounds per Location



Hit Location roll of 2 = Critical Hit AV–1

Weapons	AP•Dmg	Type	Range	Shots	Notes
			___/___/___		
			___/___/___		
			___/___/___		
			___/___/___		
			___/___/___		

MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT AND INFORMATION

Movement (W/R/S): ___/___/___ Experience Points: _____

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Name _____

Affiliation _____

Age _____ Height _____ Weight _____

MECHWARRIOR®

Character Record Sheet THIRD EDITION

ATTRIBUTES

	Value	Mod.	Max.
Strength			
Body			
Dexterity			
Reflexes			
Intelligence			
Willpower			
Charisma			
Edge			
Social Standing			

SKILLS

Name	Bonus

TRAITS

COMBAT INFORMATION

Armor

Type A: _____ AV (M/B/E/X) ___/___/___

Type B: _____ AV (M/B/E/X) ___/___/___

Type C: _____ AV (M/B/E/X) ___/___/___

Type D: _____ AV (M/B/E/X) ___/___/___

Fatigue

Fatigue≤ WIL ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

+1 TN per Fatigue> WIL ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Unconscious if Fatigue > (2 x WIL)

Wounds

Grazing Wounds (WV 1): _____

Minor Wounds (WV 2): _____ +1 TN ea.

Serious Wounds (WV 4): _____ +2 TN ea.

Critical Wounds (WV 8): _____ +3 TN ea.

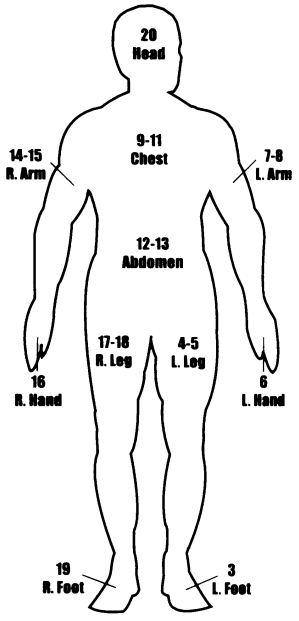
Deadly Wounds (WV 16): _____ Knockout

Total Wound Value of all Wounds: _____ *

* If total Wound Value > (BOD+WIL), Dying

HIT LOCATION DIAGRAM

Fill in Armor Type (A, B, C, D) and Wounds per Location



Hit Location roll of 2 = Critical Hit AV–1

Weapons	AP•Dmg	Type	Range	Shots	Notes
			___/___/___		
			___/___/___		
			___/___/___		
			___/___/___		
			___/___/___		

MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT AND INFORMATION

Movement (W/R/S): ___/___/___ Experience Points: _____

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OCCUPATIONAL FIELDS

MILITARY FIELDS

Aerospace Fighter Pilot
Prerequisite: Basic Training
Gunnery/Ballistic/Aero
Gunnery/Laser/Aero
Gunnery/Missile/Aero
Navigation/Air
Navigation/Space
Piloting/Aero
Sensor Operations
Tactics/Space
Zero-G Operations

Aircraft Pilot
Prerequisite: Basic Training
Bombing
Gunnery/Ballistic/Aero
Gunnery/Laser/Aero
Gunnery/Missile/Aero
Navigation/Air
Piloting/*choose one**
Sensor Operations
Tactics/Air
*Aircraft or VTOL

Armored Infantry
Prerequisite: Infantry
Demolitions
Gunnery/Ballistic/Humanoid
Gunnery/Laser/Humanoid
Gunnery/Missile/Humanoid
Martial Arts/Battlesuit
Piloting/Battlesuit
Sensor Operations

Basic Technician
Gunsmith
Technician/Ballistics
Technician/Comms
Technician/Electronics
Technician/Lasers
Technician/Mechanics
Technician/Missile

Basic Training
Career/Soldier
First Aid
Navigation/Ground
Rifles
Martial Arts/Military

Cavalry
Prerequisite: Basic Training
Artillery
Gunnery/Ballistic/Conv.
Gunnery/Laser/Conv.
Gunnery/Missile/Conv.
Piloting/*choose one**
Sensor Operations
Technician/Mechanics
* Hover, Naval, Sub, Tracked, Wheeled

Clan Elemental
Gunnery/Ballistic/Humanoid
Gunnery/Laser/Humanoid
Gunnery/Missile/Humanoid
Martial Arts/Battlesuit
Piloting/Battlesuit
Sensor Operations
Tactics/Infantry

Clan Fighter Pilot
Gunnery/Ballistic/Aero
Gunnery/Laser/Aero
Gunnery/Missile/Aero
Navigation/Space
Piloting/Aero
Sensor Operations
Tactics/Space

Clan MechWarrior
Gunnery/Ballistic/Humanoid
Gunnery/Laser/Humanoid
Gunnery/Missile/Humanoid
Leadership
Piloting/'Mech
Sensor Operations
Tactics/'Mech

Infantry
Prerequisite: Basic Training
Artillery
Climbing
Comms/Conv.
Jump Packs
Support Weapons
Tactics/Infantry

Marine
Prerequisite: Basic Training
Demolitions
Gunnery/Laser/Space
Jump Packs
Security Systems
Shotguns
Zero-G Operations

MechWarrior
Prerequisite: Basic Training
Gunnery/Ballistic/Humanoid
Gunnery/Laser/Humanoid
Gunnery/Missile/Humanoid
Piloting/'Mech
Sensor Operations
Tactics/'Mech

'Mech Technician
Prerequisite: Basic Technician
Technician/Fusion
Technician/Jet
Technician/Myomer
Technician/Support

Military Scientist
Academic/Military History
Career/Military Scientist
Computers
Cryptography
Strategy
Tactics/Any

Officer Training
Prerequisite: Basic Training
Administration
Bureaucracy/Affiliation
Leadership
Pistols
Tactics/Any
Training

Ship's Crew
Career/Ship's Crew
Gunnery/Ballistic/Space
Gunnery/Laser/Space
Gunnery/Missile/Space
Technician/Ballistics
Technician/Lasers
Technician/Missile
Zero-G Operations

Special Forces
Prerequisite: Infantry
Blades
Demolitions
Free Fall
Stealth
Submachine Guns
Survival
Tracking

WarShip Pilot
Prerequisite: JumpShip Pilot
Bureaucracy/Affiliation
Leadership
Strategy
Tactics/Space

CIVILIAN FIELDS

AeroSpace Technician
Prerequisite: Basic Technician or Civilian Tech
Technician/Aeronautics
Technician/Fusion
Technician/Interplanetary
Technician/Jet
Technician/Jump Drive
Technician/Support
Zero-G Operations

Civilian Aircraft Pilot
Career/Pilot
Comms/Conv.
Navigation/Air
Piloting/*choose one**
Sensor Operations
* Aircraft, VTOL

Civilian Tech
Career/Technician
Technician/Comms
Technician/Electronics
Technician/Mechanics

Detective
Career/Detective
Computers
Cryptography
Fast Talk
Interrogation
Perception
Scrounge
Security Systems

Doctor
Prerequisite: Scientist
Administration
Bureaucracy/Any
Career/Doctor
First Aid
MedTech
Surgery

DropShip Pilot
Career/Pilot
Comms/Conv.
Navigation/Space
Piloting/Aero
Piloting/Spheroid
Sensor Operations
Zero-G Operations

Engineer
Prerequisite: Civilian Tech or Basic Technician
Appraisal
Computers
Engineering
Perception
Technician/Fusion
Technician/Support

JumpShip Pilot
Prerequisite: DropShip Pilot
Administration
Computers
Navigation/Jump Drive
Technician/Jump Drive

Merchant
Administration
Appraisal
Bureaucracy/Any
Career/Merchant
Negotiation
Scrounge

Planetary Surveyor
Prerequisite: Scientist
Appraisal
Demolitions
Navigation/Ground
Piloting/*choose one**
Survival
Tracking
* Hover, Naval, Sub, Wheeled

Police Officer
Academic/Law
Career/Police Officer
First Aid
Intimidation
Martial Arts/Military
Pistols
Shotguns
Streetwise/Any

Police Tactical Officer
Prerequisite: Police Officer
Climbing
Demolitions
Rifles
Running
Submachine Guns
Support Weapons
Tactics/Infantry

Politician
Acting
Bureaucracy/Any
Career/Politician
Fast Talk
Leadership
Negotiation
Protocol/Any

Scientist
Career/Scientist
Computers
Perception
Academic/Any
Training

Scout
Comms/Conv.
Disguise
Scrounge
Security Systems
Stealth
Streetwise/Any
Tracking

Vehicle Technician
Prerequisite: Basic Technician or Civilian Tech
Technician/Fusion
Technician/ICE
Technician/Rotor
Technician/Support

AGE EFFECTS TABLE

Age in Years	Age Category	Attribute Threshold Modifiers								New Skill Limit	Traits
		STR	BOD	DEX	RFL	INT	WIL	CHA	EDG		
10–12	Very Young	–1	–1	+2	–1	–1	–2	—	—	1	Fast Learner
13–16	Young	—	—	+1	–1	—	–1	—	—	2	—
17–30	Young Adult	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—
31–50	Adult	—	—	–1	—	—	—	—	—	4	*
51–70	Middle Age	—	–1	–2	–1	+1	+1	—	—	5	*
71–90	Old	–1	–2	–2	–2	+1	+2	—	—	6	Slow Learner*
91+	Very Old	–2	–2	–2	–3	+2	+2	—	—	7	Slow Learner & Glass Jaw*

* "Stigma/Past Prime" trait for Clan warriors only

SKILL LIST

Skill Name Link Attributes	
Academics*	
INT/WIL	
Acrobatics	
RFL/STR	
Acting	
CHA/WIL	
Administration	
CHA/INT	
Animal Handling	
CHA/WIL	
Appraisal	
INT/WIL	
Archery	
DEX/STR	
Artillery	
INT/WIL	
Arts* varies	
Blades	
DEX/RFL	
Brawling	
RFL/STR	
Bombing	
DEX/INT	
Bureaucracy*	
CHA/SOC	
Careers*	
varies	
Climbing	
BOD/DEX	
Comms/Conv.	
INT/WIL	
Comms/HPG	
INT/WIL	
Computers	
INT/WIL	
Cryptography	
EDG/INT	
Demolitions	
DEX/INT	
Disguise	
DEX/WIL	
Engineering	
INT/WIL	
Escape Artist	
DEX/WIL	
Fast Talk	
CHA/WIL	
First Aid	
DEX/INT	
Forgery	
DEX/INT	
Free Fall	
RFL/WIL	
Gambling	
EDG/INT	
Gunnery/Ballistic*	
DEX/RFL	
Gunnery/Laser*	
DEX/RFL	
Gunnery/Missile*	
DEX/INT	
Gunsmith	
DEX/INT	
Interests*	
varies	
Interrogation	
CHA/WIL	
Intimidation	
BOD/CHA	
Jump Packs	
INT/RFL	
Languages*	
CHA/INT	
Leadership	
CHA/WIL	
Martial Arts*	
RFL/WIL	
MedTech	
INT/CHA	
Navigation*	
INT/WIL	
Negotiation	
CHA/WIL	
Perception	
INT/WIL	
Piloting*	
DEX/RFL	
Pistols	
DEX/RFL	
Protocol*	
CHA/SOC	
Quickdraw	
DEX/RFL	
Riding	
RFL/WIL	
Rifles DEX/RFL	
Running	
BOD/RFL	
Scrounge	
CHA/EDG	
Security Systems	
DEX/INT	
Seduction	
CHA/WIL	
Sensor Operations	
INT/WIL	
Shotguns	
DEX/RFL	
Staffs	
DEX/RFL	
Stealth	
INT/RFL	
Strategy	
INT/WIL	
Streetwise*	
CHA/WIL	
Submachine Guns	
DEX/RFL	
Support Weapons	
BOD/DEX	
Surgery	
DEX/INT	
Survival	
BOD/INT	
Swimming	
BOD/STR	
Tactics*	
INT/WIL	
Technician*	
DEX/INT	
Throwing Weapons	
DEX/STR	
Tracking	
INT/WIL	
Training	
CHA/INT	
Whips	
DEX/RFL	
Zero-G Operations	
RFL/WIL	

TRAIT LIST

Positive Trait	Point Cost
Alternate Identity	2
Ambidextrous	2
Attractive	1
Brave	1
Combat Sense	4
Commission**	3
Contact	**1–3**
Custom Vehicle*	**1–6**
Elemental Phenotype	**—**
Exceptional Attribute	**2**
Fast Learner	**3**
Fighter Pilot Phenotype	**—**
G-Tolerance	1
Good Hearing	1
Good Reputation	**1–5**
Good Vision	1
Gregarious	1
Land Grant†	5–10
MechWarrior Phenotype	**—**
Natural Aptitude	**1–2**
Night Vision	1
Owns Vehicle*	**4**
Pain Resistance	3
Poison Resistance	1
Promotion	††
Rank	1–10
Sixth Sense	4
Title 5–10	
Toughness	**3**
Vehicle	**1–10**
Wealth	**1–10**
Well-Connected	2/4/6
Well-Equipped	**2/4/6/8**

Negative Trait	Point Value (Negative)
Addiction	1–2
Allergy	1
Amnesia	3
Bad Reputation	1–5
Combat Paralysis	4
Demotion	††
Dependents	1–2
Disabled	1–3
Enemy	**1–3**
Glass Jaw	3
In For Life	3
Introvert	1
Lemon*	**2**
Lost Limb	1/3/5
Night Blindness	1
Poor Hearing	1–5
Poor Vision	2/4/6
Poverty	**1**
Quirk	1–2
Slow Learner	**3**
Stigma	1–2
Timid	1
Transit Disorientation Syndrome	1
Unattractive	1

* Can only be taken along with the Vehicle Trait

** Can only be taken along with the Rank Trait

† Can only be taken along with the Title Trait

†† Rank increases are listed in the Life Path as "Promotion," decreases as "Demotion"

SKILL POINTS TABLE

	SKILL POINTS EARNED				
Slow Learner	**Normal**	**Fast Learner or Slow + Nat. Apt.**	**Natural Aptitude**	**Fast Learner + Nat. Apt.**	**SKILL BONUS**
1	**1**	1	1	1	**+0**
3	**3**	3	3	2	**+1**
8	**7**	6	6	5	**+2**
14	**13**	12	11	9	**+3**
23	**21**	19	17	15	**+4**
34	**31**	28	25	22	**+5**
47	**43**	39	35	30	**+6**
63	**57**	51	46	40	**+7**
80	**73**	66	59	51	**+8**
100	**91**	82	73	64	**+9**
122	**111**	100	89	78	**+10**

ATTRIBUTE TABLE

Attribute Value	General Description	Untrained TN Mod.	Social Standing Inner Sphere	Social Standing Clan
1	Impaired	+2	Slave	Dark (Bandit) Caste
2	Terrible	+1	Lower Class	Laborer Caste
3	Poor	+1	Middle Class	Merchant Caste
4	Fair	—	Upper Class	Technician Caste
5	Good	—	Baronet	Scientist Caste
6	Advanced	—	Baron	Freeborn Warrior
7	Remarkable	–1	Count	Trueborn Warrior*
8	Excellent	–1	Marquess	Trueborn Warrior*
9	Astounding	–1	Duke	Trueborn Warrior*
10	Unbelievable	–2	Sovereign	—

* Higher Social Standing values denote more prestigious bloodlines.

TARGET NUMBER MODIFIERS TABLE

Action Check Type	**Base TN**
Skill Check, Base Difficulty	10
Skill Check vs. Target's Attributes*	Attribute + Attribute
Attribute Check, Single	15 – Attribute
Attribute Check, Double	20 – Attributes

Difficulty Modifiers*	**TN Modifier**
Very Easy	–4
Easy	–2
Average	+0
Difficult	+2
Very Difficult	+4
Extremely Difficult	+8

Conditional Modifiers	**TN Modifier**
Perception	
Target at Point Blank Range	–2
Target at Short Range	+0
Target at Medium Range	+2
Target at Long Range	+4
Target at Extreme Range	+8
Poor Visibility (rain, light snowfall)	+1
Bad Visibility (twilight, heavy snowfall, light fog)	+3
Terrible Visibility (darkness, heavy fog)	+5
Light Cover (sparse trees or bushes, target 1/4 covered)	+2
Moderate Cover (typical woods, target 1/2 covered)	+4
Heavy Cover (dense woods, target 3/4 covered)	+6
Miscellaneous Conditions	
Lack of Proper Equipment	+1 to +3
Excellent Equipment on hand	–1 to –3
Acting Character is Wounded	
Each Minor Wound	+1
Each Serious Wound	+2
Each Critical Wound	+3
Character's Fatigue exceeds WIL	+(excess Fatigue)
Good Conditions (plenty of handholds for climbing)	–1
Poor Conditions (slippery rocks for climbing)	+1
Bad Conditions (icy road for driving)	+2

Action Modifiers	**TN Modifier**
Acting Character Walking	+1
Acting Character Running	+3
Skilled Character helping (per character)	–1 each (max –3)
Extra Time (per doubling of base time)	–1 each (max –3)
Rush Job (per halving of base time)	+2 each (max +6)

Untrained Skill Use	**TN Modifier**
Standard skill: roll 3D10, use worst 2	
Difficult skill: roll 4D10, use worst 2	
Apply modifiers for both Link Attributes:	
1	+2
2–3	+1
4–6	+0
7–9	–1
10	–2

* Difficulty modifiers do not apply if the TN is derived from the target's Attributes.

RANGED COMBAT MODIFIERS TABLE

Target Is	**Base TN**
Running, sprinting or evading	Target's INT + RFL
Walking or not moving	Higher of target's INT or RFL
Surprised	Lower of target's INT or RFL
Inanimate or completely immobile	1

Conditional Modifiers	**TN Modifier**
Range	
Pointblank	–2
Short range	+0
Medium range	+2
Long range	+4
Extreme range	+8
Visibility	
Poor visibility (rain, light snowfall)	+1
Bad visibility (twilight, heavy snowfall, light fog)	+3
Terrible visibility (darkness, heavy fog)	+5
Light cover (sparse trees or bushes, target 1/4 covered)	+2
Moderate cover (typical woods, target 1/2 covered)	+4
Heavy cover (dense woods, target 3/4 covered)	+6
Target Size	
Very large (elephant)	–4
Large (horse)	–2
Medium (adult human)	+0
Small (child)	+2
Very small (dog)	+4
Extremely small (cat)	+6
Tiny (mouse)	+8
Miscellaneous Conditions	
Character's Fatigue exceeds WIL	+(excess Fatigue)
Attacking character is wounded	
Each Minor Wound	+1
Each Serious Wound	+2
Each Critical Wound	+3
Good conditions (weapon is braced and steady)	–1
Poor conditions (unsteady footing or grip on weapon)	+1
Bad conditions (high winds)	+2
Attacking with off hand	+3

Action Modifiers	**TN Modifier**
Attacker taking careful aim	–1/aim action (max. –3)
Attacker walking	+1
Attacker running	+3
Target evading	+(target's Acrobatics Skill Bonus) +1
Target stunned	–2
Target prone	+2
Delayed action	+2
Special Weapons	
Burst-fire attack	*
Suppressing fire	* +2
Grenade attack	+2
Indirect fire attack with spotter	+3
Indirect fire attack without spotter	+6
Aimed Shots (if Hit Location rules are in effect)	
Chest	+3
Arm, leg or abdomen	+6
Head, hand or foot	+9

* The burst-fire modifier depends on the recoil rating of the weapon:
1: +1 per shot fired; 2: +1 per 2 shots fired; 3: +1 per 3 shots fired; and so on1: +1 per shot fired; 2: +1 per 2 shots fired; 3: +1 per 3 shots fired; and so on

MELEE COMBAT MODIFIERS TABLE

Target Is:	Base TN
Aware of attack	Opponent's INT + RFL
Surprised	Lower of opponent's INT or RFL
Disengaging or stopping an attempt to disengage	Opponent's STR + RFL
Inanimate or completely immobile	1

Conditional Modifiers	TN Modifier
Character's Fatigue exceeds WIL	+(excess Fatigue)
Character is wounded	
Each Minor Wound	+1
Each Serious Wound	+2
Each Critical Wound	+3
Character is stunned	+2
Character is prone	+3
Good conditions (on higher ground than opponent)	–1
Poor conditions (unsteady footing)	+1
Bad conditions (very unsteady footing)	+2
Using weapon in off hand	+3
Using pistol	+2
Using SMG	+4
Using rifle or shotgun	+6

Action Modifiers	TN Modifier
Friendly character within 1 m of opponent	–1/character (max. –3)
Opponent stunned	–2
Opponent evading +(Target's Acrobatics Skill Bonus)	+1
Delayed action	+2
Aimed Attacks (if Hit Location rules are in effect)	
Chest	+3
Arm, Leg or Abdomen	+6
Head, Hand or Foot	+9

MOVEMENT TABLE

Movement Mode	Maximum Meters Moved
Walk	RFL + STR
Run/Evade/Disengage	RFL + STR + Running Skill Bonus + 10
Sprint	Run Meters x 2

QUALITY OF SUCCESS/FAILURE TABLE

Margin	Result
+9 or better	Spectacular!
+6 to +8	Extraordinary
+3 to +5	Good
+1 to +2	Adequate
0	Barely made it!
–1 to –2	Almost...
–3 to –5	Bad
–6 to –8	Terrible
–9 or worse	Abysmal!

HIT LOCATION TABLE

2D10 Roll	Hit Location
2	Critical Hit*
3	Left Foot
4–5	Left Leg
6	Left Hand
7–8	Left Arm
9–11	Chest
12–13	Abdomen
14–15	Right Arm
16	Right Hand
17–18	Right Leg
19	Right Foot
20	Head

* Roll again for hit location (reroll 2s) and reduce the target location's AV by 1 for this attack only.

BARRIER ARMOR RATINGS

Barrier Type	Armor
Window, Standard Glass	0
Window, Safety Glass	1
Interior Wall, Residential or Commercial	2
Interior Wall, Industrial, Military or Shipboard	3
Exterior Wall, Residential or Commercial	4
Window, Ship's Viewport	5
Exterior Wall, Industrial or Military	7
Armored Wall or Vault	9
Ship's External Bulkhead	10

WOUND TREATMENT TABLE

Wound Type	Skill Required	Treatment Time	Recovery Time	Untreated Healing Time
Bleeding	First Aid	1 turn	—	—
Grazing	First Aid	1 minute	1 day	1 week
Minor	MedTech	30 minutes	1D6 days	1D6 weeks
Serious	Surgery	WV x 10 minutes	1D6 weeks	6D6 weeks
Critical	Surgery	WV x 15 minutes	2D6 weeks	—
Deadly	Surgery	WV x 20 minutes	1D6+4 months	—

WOUND TABLE

DF*	Wound Type	Wound Value	Combat Effects Summary
0	*Fatigue Only*	0	+1 to all TNs per pt. of Fatigue above WIL
10	Grazing Wound	1	Stunned
15	Minor Wound	2	Stunned; +1 to all TNs
20	Serious Wound	4	Stunned; Knockout Check; +2 to all TNs
30	Critical Wound	8	Stunned; Knockout Check; +3 to all TNs; half movement
40	Deadly Wound	16	Automatic knockout
60	Fatal Wound	32	Instant death

* For AP 0 attacks, the DF is decreased by the target's (BOD – Fatigue).

Name _____

Player _____

MECHWARRIOR®

Character Worksheet THIRD EDITION

ATTRIBUTES

	Min.	Thresh-Hold	Max.	Value/Cost
Strength	___	___	___	_____
Body	___	___	___	_____
Dexterity	___	___	___	_____
Reflexes	___	___	___	_____
Intelligence	___	___	___	_____
Willpower	___	___	___	_____
Charisma	___	___	___	_____
Edge	___	___	___	_____
Social Standing	___	___	___	_____

LIFE PATHS AND EVENTS

Affiliation: _____

Early Childhood Age: 10
Path: _____

Late Childhood Age: 16
Path: _____

Higher Education & Real Life
Path 3: _____ Years: _____

Path 4: _____ Years: _____

Path 5: _____ Years: _____

Path 6: _____ Years: _____

Path 7: _____ Years: _____

Path 8: _____ Years: _____

STANDARD SKILL POINT TO SKILL BONUS

1	3	7	13	21	31	43	57	73	91	111
+0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8	+9	+10

TRAITS: FILL IN TRAITS AND POINT COSTS/VALUES

_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____

SKILLS: FILL IN SKILLS AND SKILL POINTS EARNED

Skill	Skill Points Accumulated	Skill Bonus	Points Remain
_____	_____	_____	_____

Total Skill Point Remainder: _____

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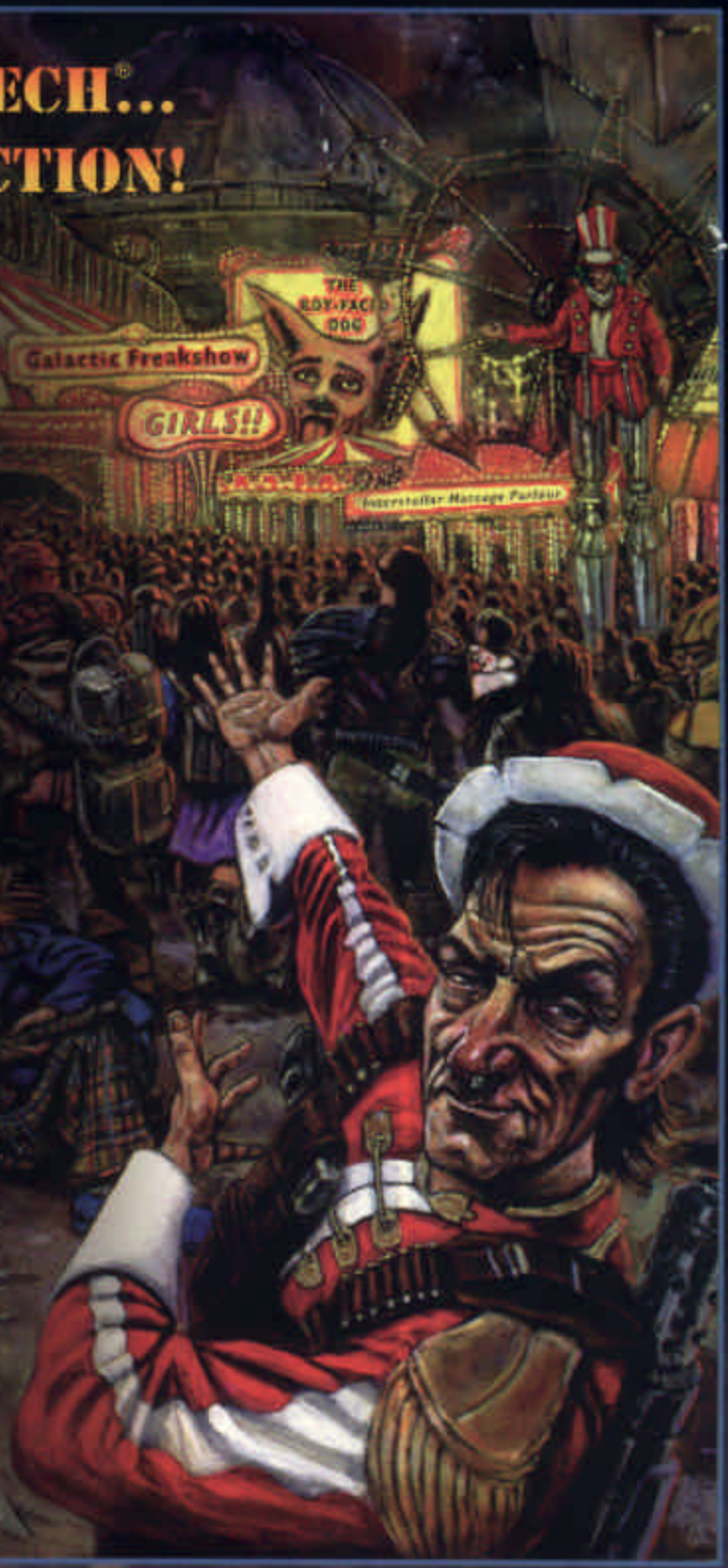

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52500
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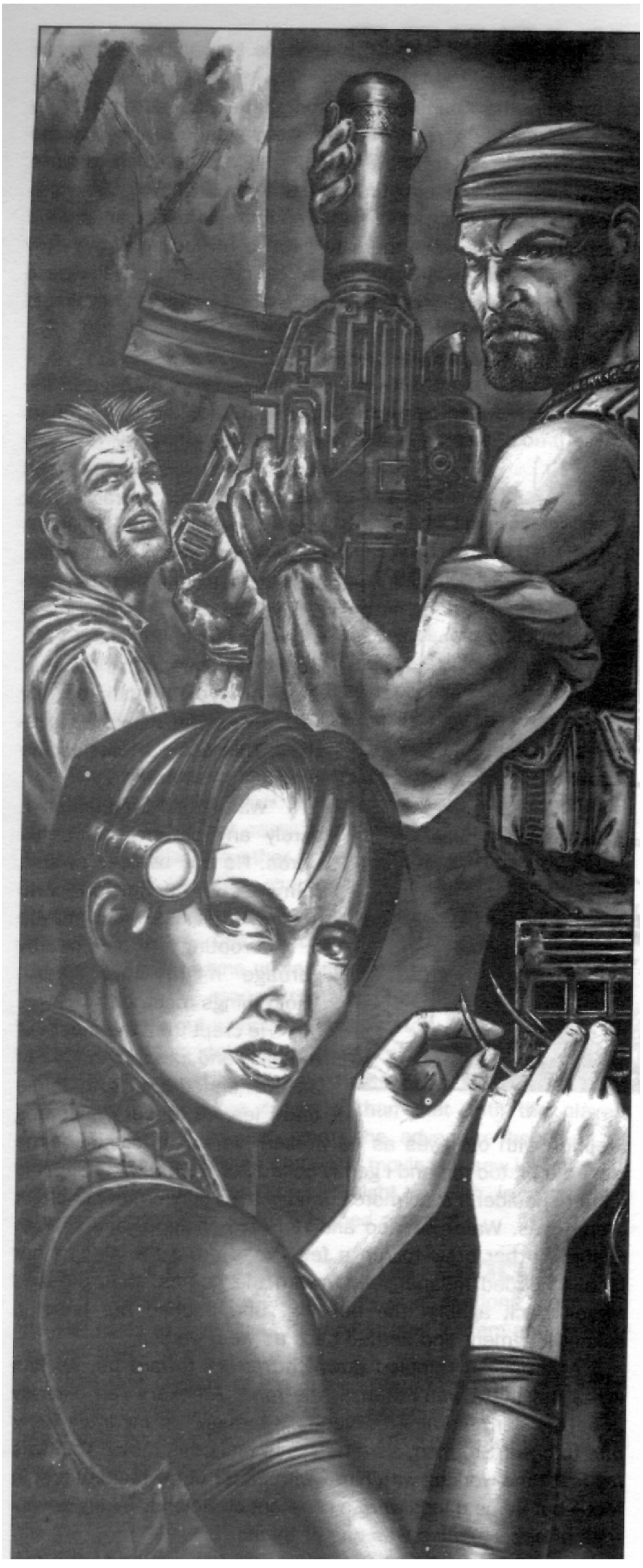
ISBN# 1-55560-386-6 $ 25.00



BY THE NUMBERS

COMBAT

Deep Periphery: With alien flora and fauna dominating every new planet colonized, humans must carry their own food and drink.

Sternsnacht Pistol: The Sternsnacht heavy pistol is a rugged and reliable sidearm.

Aerospace Pilot: Unlike most militaries in the Periphery, the Outworlds Alliance gives its aerospace pilots superb training and topnotch equipment.

Caste Clash: A Jade Falcon MechWarrior demands to know why the technician has not finished repairs on his 'Mech, while a member of the scientist caste looks on indifferently.

Clan Blood Spirit

Clan Cloud Cobra

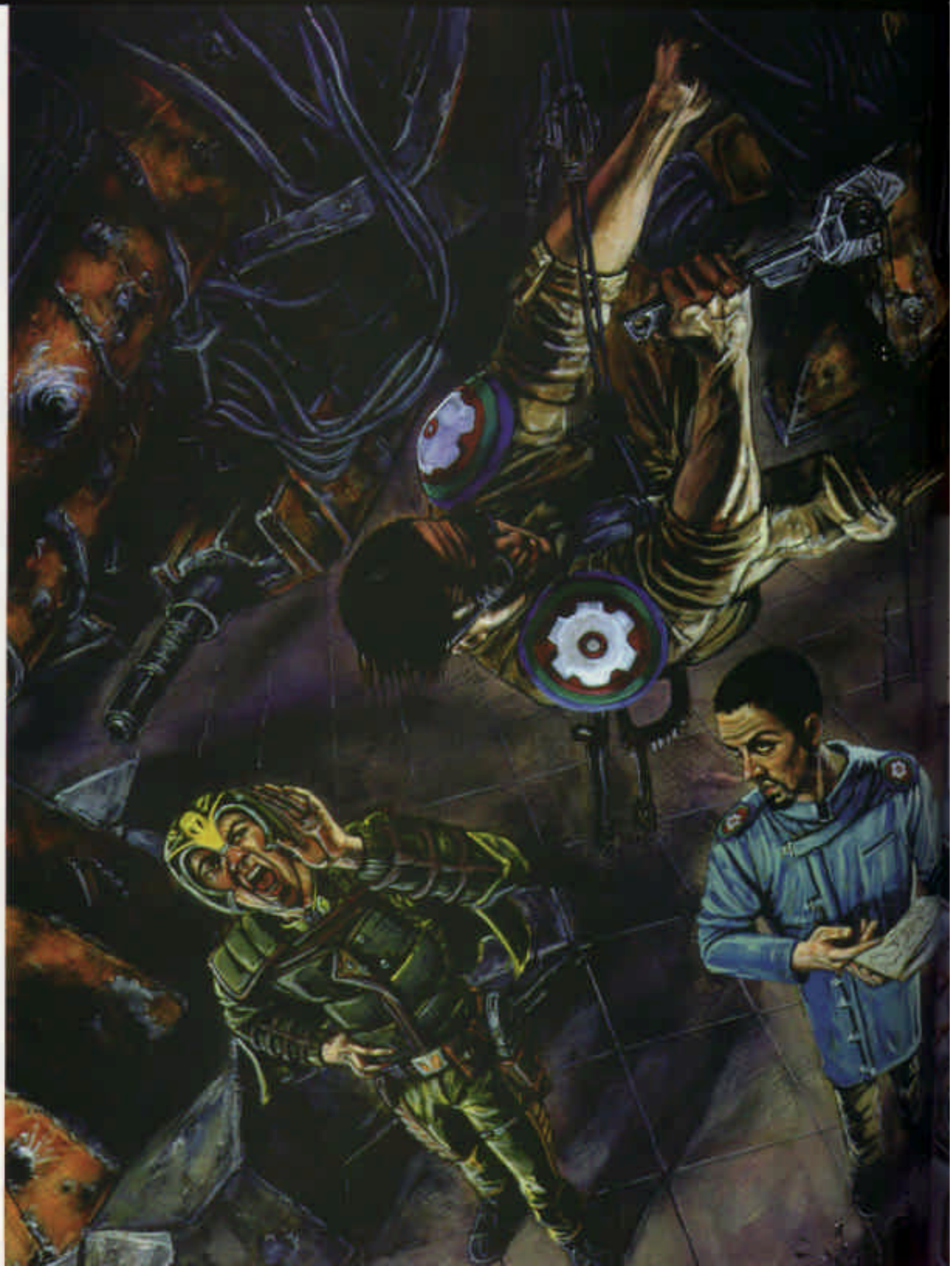
Clan Coyote

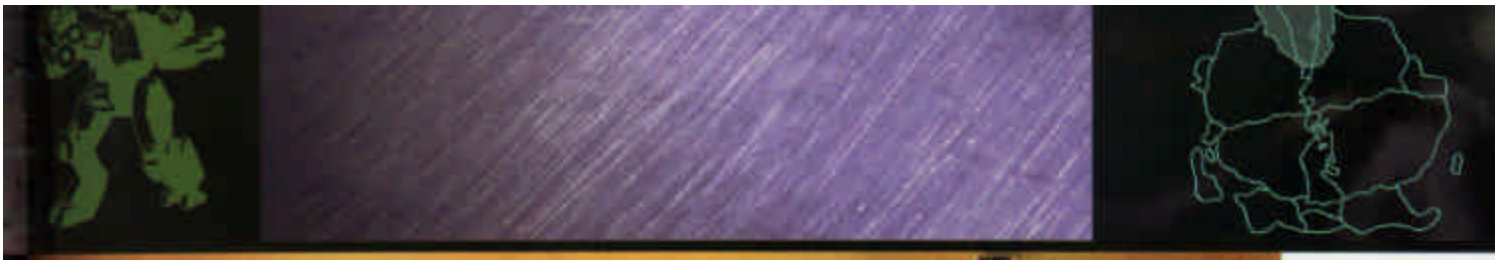
Clan Diamond Shark

Clan Fire Mandrill

Clan Ghost Bear

Clan Goliath Scorpion





Might Makes Right: A Ghost Bear Elemental and Diamond Shark MechWarrior face off in a Circle of Equals to resolve a Trial of Grievance.

Elemental: A staunch Crusader among a Clan of Wardens, this Elemental's immense size and impressive physique mark him a warrior born.

Hell's Horses Uniform: This warrior can be identified as a Hell's Horses tank commander by her dual pistols and distinctive crested helmet.

Bondcord: Warrior caste prisoners are afforded the honor of being bondsmen. They wear a bondcord to signify their status, and in time can be adopted into their new Clan.

Clan Hell's Horses

Clan Ice Hellion

Clan Jade Falcon

Clan Snow Raven

Clan Star Adder

Clan Steel Viper

Clan Wolf

FREE RASALHAGUE REPUBLIC

Independence day: An old princedom, Rasalhague was conquered centuries ago by the Draconis Combine. They fought a constant struggle for independence and finally achieved it in 3034, only to be conquered again by the Clans less than twenty years later.

Menig (Private)

Korpral/Kavallrist (Corporal)

Sergeant (Sergeant)

Fanjunkare (Sergeant Major)

Löjtnant (Lieutenant)

Kapten (Captain)

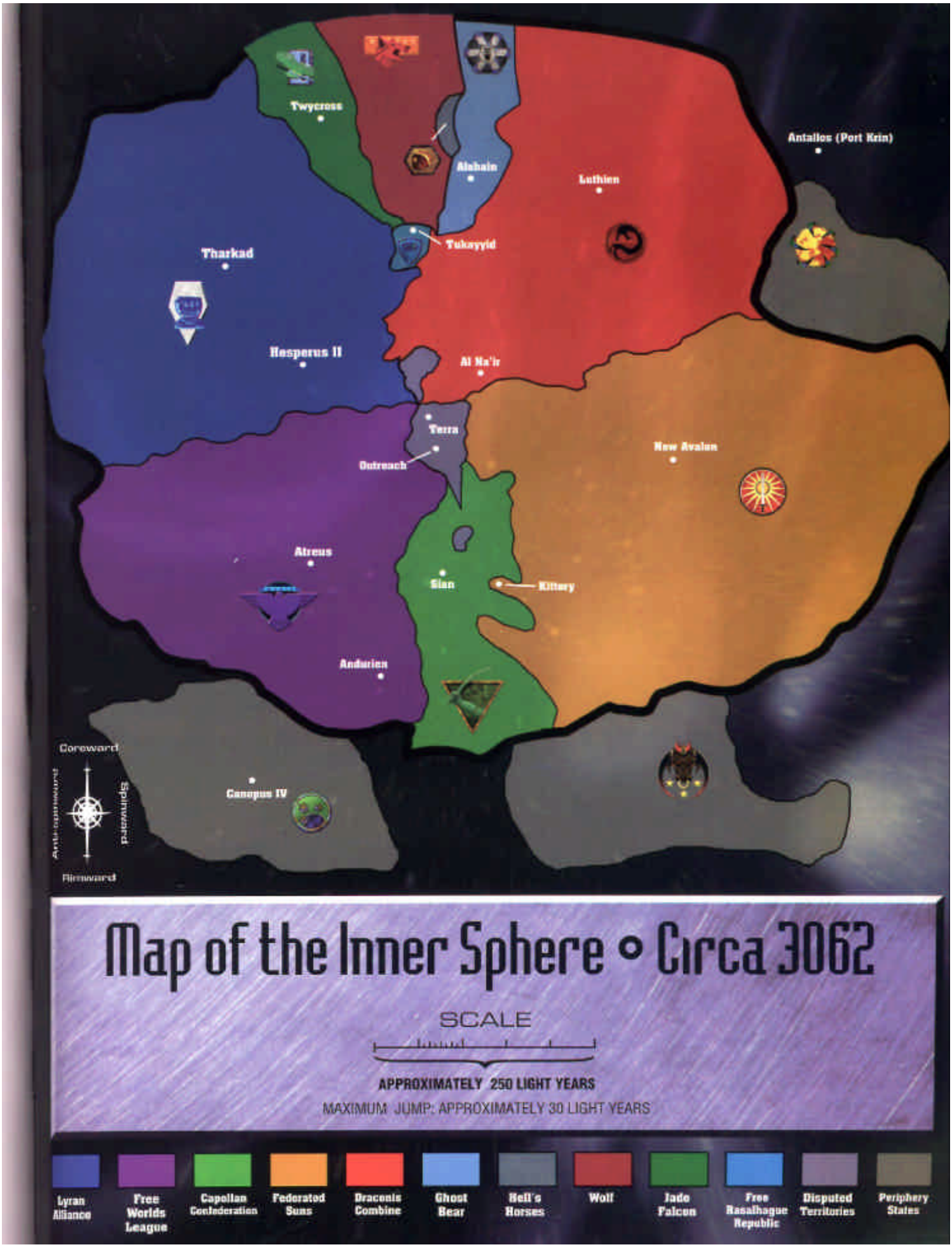
Major (Major)

Överste-Löjtnant (Lieutenant Colonel)

Överste (Colonel)

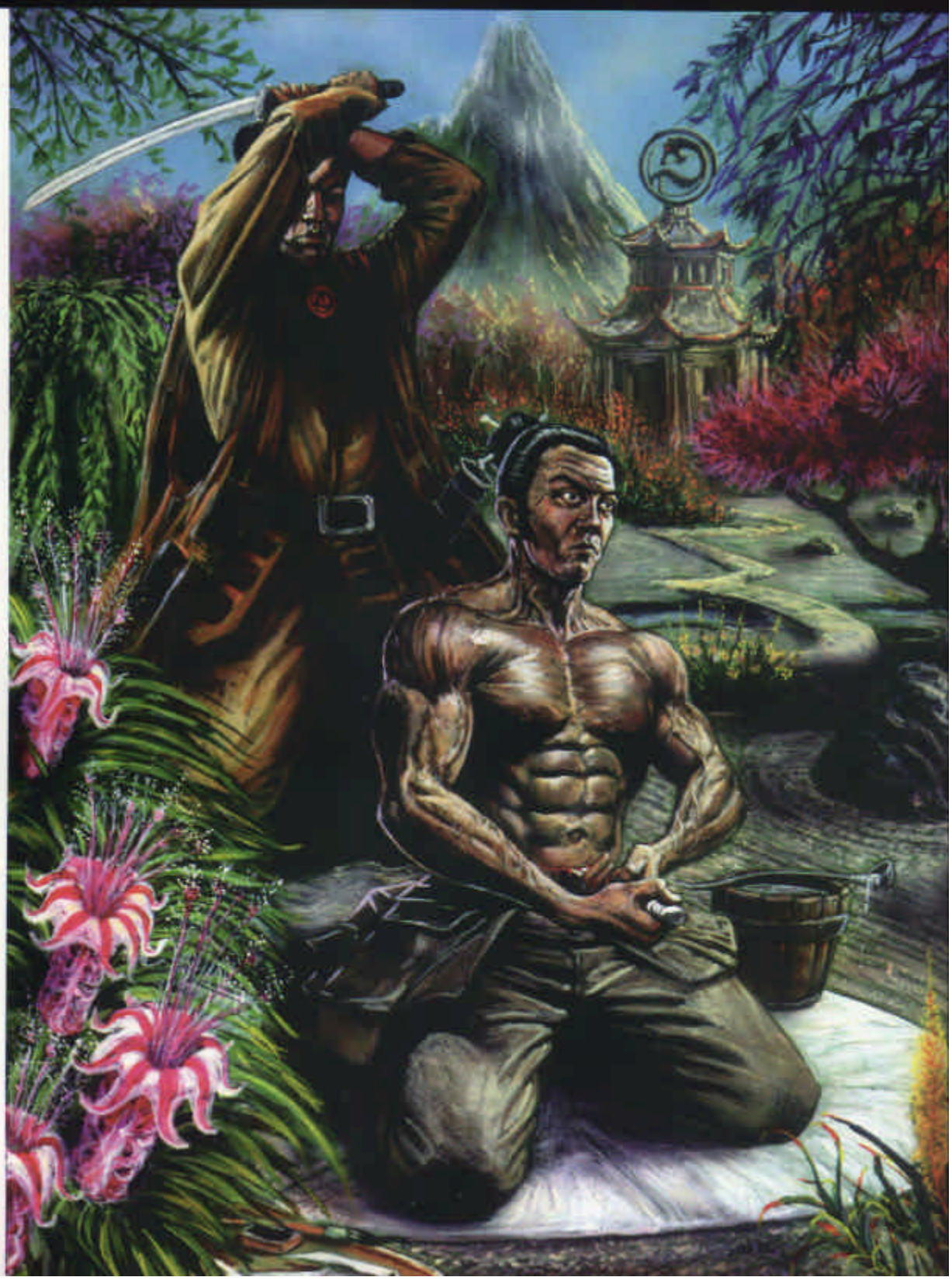
Generalmajor (Major General)

Överbefälhavare (Commander-in-Chief)


Twycross
Alshain
Luthien
Antallos (Port Krin)
Tukayyid
Tharkad
Hesperus II
Al Na'ir
Terra
Outreach
New Avalon
Atreus
Sian
Kittery
Andurien
Coreward
Spinward
Rimward
Canopus IV
Map of the Inner Sphere • Circa 3062
SCALE
APPROXIMATELY 250 LIGHT YEARS
MAXIMUM JUMP: APPROXIMATELY 30 LIGHT YEARS
Lyran Alliance
Free Worlds League
Capellan Confederation
Federated Suns
Draconis Combine
Ghost Bear
Hell's Horses
Wolf
Jade Falcon
Free Rasalhague Republic
Disputed Territories
Periphery States

DRACONIS COMBIN

Seppuku Ceremony: A disgraced warrior absolves his loss of honor through *seppuku*—ritual suicide—while an honored friend stands ready as the *kaishaku-nin*, prepared to strike off the warrior's head before he dishonors himself a second time by showing pain.



Heishi (Private)

Gunjin (Lance Corporal)

Go-cho (Corporal)

Gunsho (Sergeant)

Shujin (Master Sgt)

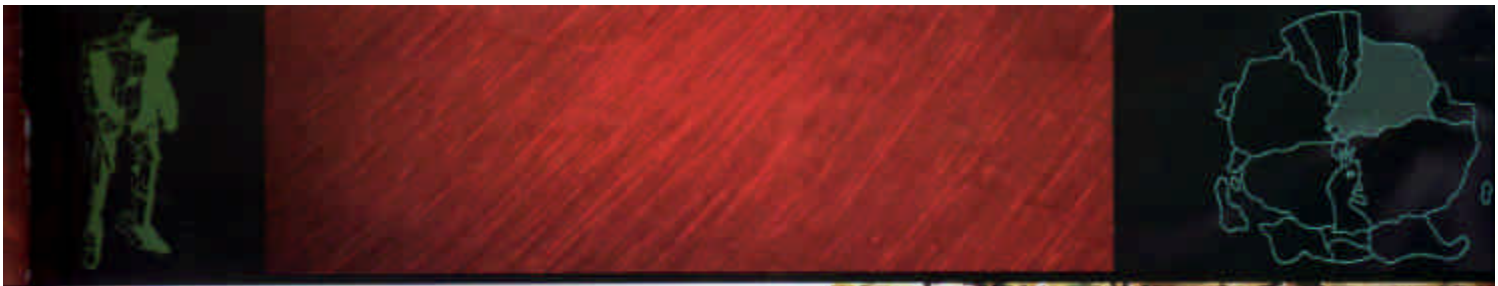
Kashira (Talon Sgt)

Sho-ko (Sergeant Major)

Chu-i (Lieutenant)

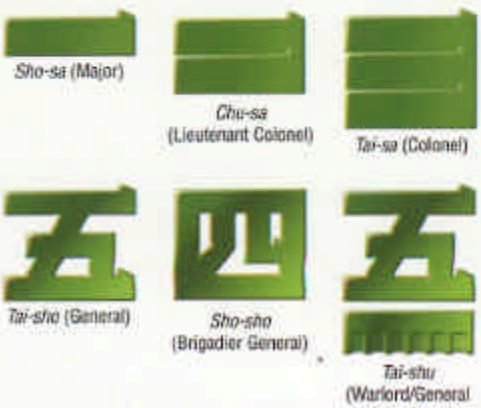
Senior Master Petty Officer

Tai-i (Captain)



Daisho: Since ancient Japan, the paired swords of a daisho—the katana and wakazashi—have embodied the spirit of bushido. Graduates of the premier Combine Military schools receive a daisho.

Uniform: A veteran infantry soldier enjoys a steaming cup of sake between shifts.



Proving Grounds: The New Avalon Institute of Science was founded to reverse the rapid loss of technology and knowledge that occurred during the Succession Wars. Its exceptional laboratories continue to produce new technologies.

Recruit

Private

Corporal

Sergeant

Sergeant Major

Leftenant

Hauptmann

Kommandant

Leftenant General

Hauptmann General

Marshal

Field Marshal

Marshal of the Armies

Tramp JumpShip: The Vagabond Schools—old JumpShips and converted *Mule*-class DropShips—visit isolated worlds of the Federated Suns in an attempt to improve that nation's literacy rate.

Spurs: Federated Suns MechWarriors proud wear this antiquated symbol representing caval

Uniform: This infantryman from the Royal Brigade of Guards demonstrates the growing schism in the troubled Federated Commonwealth by displaying only the symbol of House Davion.

CAPELLAN CONFEDERATION

Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao: The Celestial Presence, Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao of the Capellan Confederation, flanked by his loyal Death Commandos.

Shia-ben-bing (Recruit)

San-ben-bing (Corporal)

Si-ben-bing (Sergeant)

Yi-si-ben-bing (Master Sergeant)

Sao-wei (Lieutenant)

Sang-wei (Captain)

Sao-shao (Major)

Zhong-shao (Lieutenant Colonel)

Sang-shao (Colonel)

Jiang-jun (General)

Sang-jiang-jun (Senior General)

"Fine words and an insinuating appearance are seldom associated with true virtue". From the teachings of K'ung-fu-tzu.

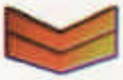
Award: The Liao Grand Cordon of Merit is awarded to any individual or group, regardless of station, that defends the Confederation above and beyond the normal demands of duty.

Street Scene: New allies and territorial conquests, along with a resurgence of interest in Chinese culture, support House Liao's proclamation of Xin Sheng (new birth) for the Capellan Confederation.

FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

Riots: With the least stable central government of any Great House, the Free Worlds League has always supported a tradition of independence among its various member states. The world of Lopez is no exception: demonstrators clash as a branth soars overhead.

Private
(Spaceman)


Private, First Class (Able Spaceman)

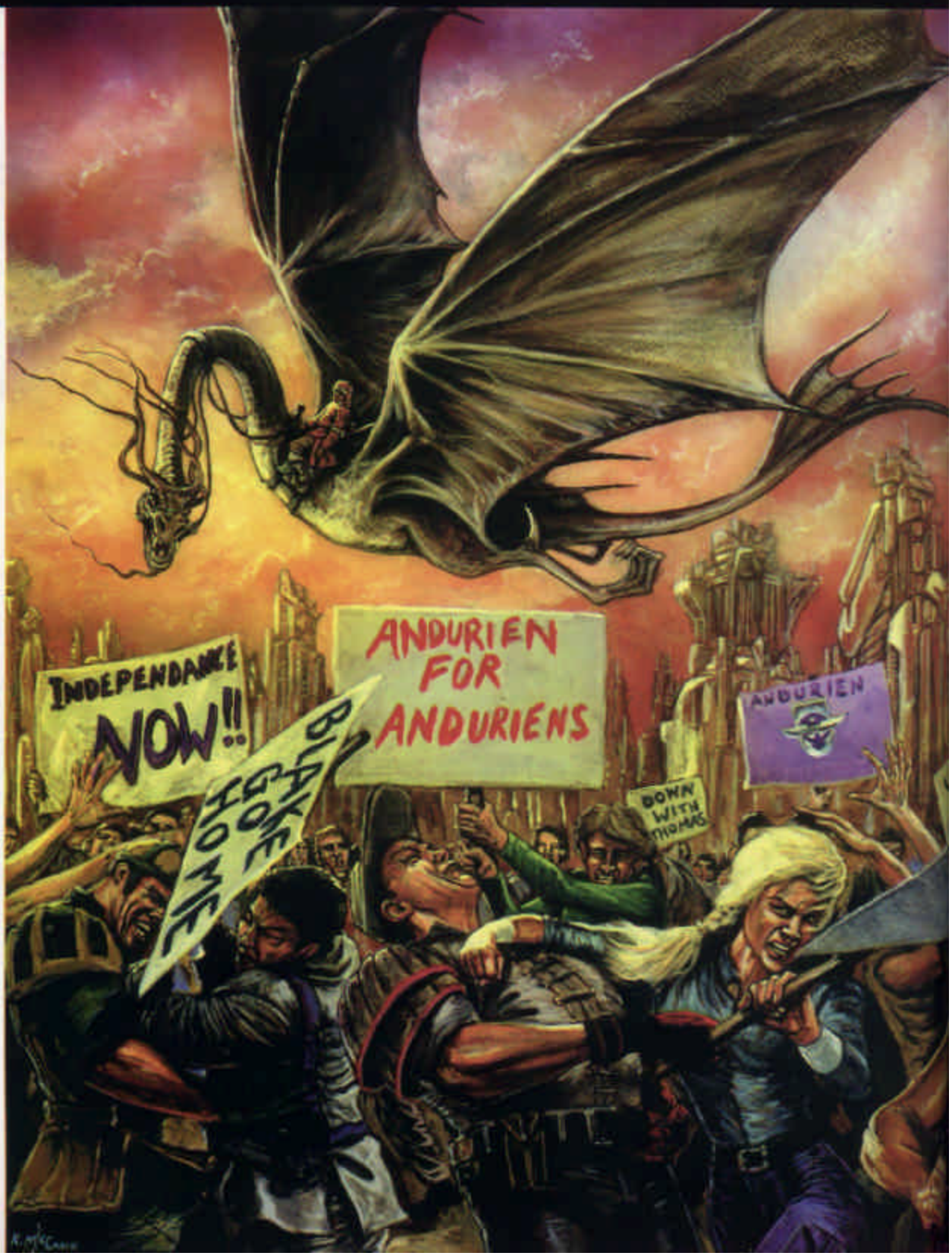
Corporal (Petty Officer Second Class)

Sergeant (Petty Officer First Class)

Staff Sergeant (Chief Petty Officer)

Master Sergeant (Senior Chief Petty Officer)

Sergeant Major (Master Chief Petty Officer)



LYRAN ALLIANCE

'Mech Patrol: With the philosophy that bigger is always better, the Lyran military has a deserved reputation for fielding the maximum number of assault 'Mechs possible, regardless of the situation, as proved by this garrison patrol in the streets of Tharkad.

Lieutenant-Colonel

Colonel

Lieutenant-General

Hauptmann-General

Kommandant-General

General

General of the Armies

Archon

Rank Has Its Privileges: Despite efforts to eliminate the problem of "social generals," climbing the ranks of the LAAF still depends more on political skill than martial prowess.

Uniform: The new Lyran Alliance Armed Forces uniform, as worn by this infantry soldier, clearly shows the LAAF's ties to the former Lyran Commonwealth.

Money: Consummate merchants, the Lyrans have always dealt in monetary exchanges, including ComStar-issued C-bills.

THE PERIPHERY

Step Right Up! In the uncharted reaches of the Periphery, a pleasure circus from the Magistracy of Canopus features performers and exotic life-forms that astound even the most jaded traveler.

Circinus Federation

Outworlds Alliance

Taurian Concordat

Marian Hegemony

Magistracy of Canopus