

WISDOM FROM THE WASTELANDS

Issue #31:
Nanotechnology III



By Chris “Outlander” Van Deelen and the Skirmisher Game Development Group

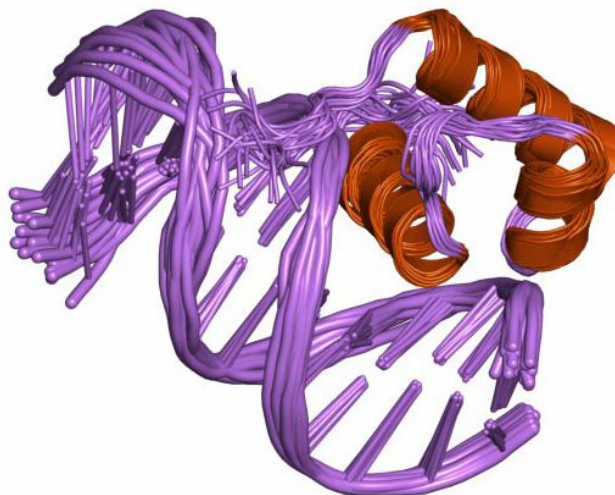
The third installment in our nanotechnology series, this issue presents many new nanites and a new terror weapon, the Converted, that Mutant Lords can unleash upon their players. Check out issues #28 and #30 for the other two examinations of this hi-tech subject.

Auto-Resinqs

Strength: +4; Incubation: 2d6 days

These powerful robotic nanites were created to counter terror weapons like Converters and Drainers. During the incubation period, Auto-Resinqs map the user’s entire physical structure. Once finished, they are purged from the host and stored, with his body’s “blueprint” digitally recorded in the control computer.

If the host is later attacked by terror nanites, he could be treated by reintroducing Auto-Resinqs. Over 2d6 days, the nanites would restore his body to its original, genetically perfect condition, reversing any effects caused by harmful nanotechnology. Even if mapped while injured, an Auto-Resinq treatment will return the patient to full health — including restoring physical mutations that might have been lost. There is no ill effect if the patient is accidentally injected with another person’s nanites, because the digital blueprints are tailored to a specific host, not the nanites.



Boosters

Strength: +2; Incubation: 2d6 days

The three versions of these robotic nanites enhance one of a user’s physical attributes. They increase musculature (Strength); elevate nervous system response and overall motor control (Dexterity); or invigorate the immune system, cellular

regrowth, and stem cell creation (Constitution).

Once inside a host, the nanites multiply, insinuate themselves into her cellular structure, and begin the augmentation process. After 2d6 days, the user’s target physical statistic is raised by 1d3+2. These increases are permanent, unless the nanites are destroyed or deactivated. Then the bonus will be lost after 2d6 days.

In addition, each of the three types provides a secondary benefit. Strength boosters make the user immune to fatigue effects (see *WfiW* issue #8 for more details). Dexterity boosters give a +1 bonus to initiative. Constitution boosters increase the host’s hit point total and double her natural healing rate. If Heal Augs and Hyper Antibodies are present, those bonuses stack with these (see *WfiW* issue #30 for more details).

Charon

Strength: +5; Incubation: 1d4 weeks

Despite the many miracles born from nanotechnology, human ingenuity also raised some hellish nightmares. By reverse

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This publication is dedicated to providing useful information, game content, and ideas to players of modern, science fiction, and post-apocalyptic table-top and role-playing games in general and to fans of Goblinoid Games’ *Mutant Future* RPG in particular. The material contained herein are compatible with it and any others that use the “Basic” system introduced in the most popular role-playing games of the early 1970s and are easily adaptable to many other games (especially successor systems, to include those covered by the Open Game License).



engineering the Ageless nanotechnology, terrorists and immoral governments created robotic nanites with the opposite effect: after the incubation period, hosts would age a full year every day. This continues until the victim dies or the nanites are destroyed or purged.

Exposing victims to electromagnetic pulses (EMPs) or Defender nanites could sometimes counter the Charon nanites (see *WfiW* issue #28 for nanite combat). Also, an Auto-Resing treatment would restore a patient to full health. For those with the means, treatment with Ageless nanites was best, repairing the damage and reversing the aging. Sadly, this costly option was beyond most victims, and many suffered permanent, premature aging or died.

Controllers

Strength: +5; Incubation: 1d8 hours

Controllers were intended to manage convicts and prisoners of war, but the unscrupulous perverted them for a far darker purpose: slaving. Because they were used mainly by military organizations, Controllers are only robotic and are hardened against EMPs (see *WfiW* issue #28 for more details).

Once introduced into a host, the nanites migrate to sections of the brain responsible for autonomous function, pain, and pleasure, where they await orders from a control unit. After the incubation period, victims are at the will of whoever holds this computer: the 'director' can command the nanites to stimulate the victim's pain centers, shut down her ability to breath or see, and even stop her heart. No saving throw is allowed against any of these functions.

Using the pain setting reduces the victim's Willpower by 1d4+1 for 1d6 turns, and inflicts 2d6 points of damage. If her Willpower drops below 0, the victim falls unconscious until her Willpower returns to at least 1. The victim's Willpower returns at her natural healing rate, but once per hour instead of once per day. The ML can determine what happens with the Controllers' other effects (e.g., if the director shuts down the victim's ability to breath), although stopping

the victim's heart will kill her instantly — unless she can be treated with a defibrillator. This machine's electrical charge might also be strong enough to destroy the nanites, but this is up to the ML.

Converters

Strength: +5; Incubation: 1d3+2 days

Scholars argue about the origin of this terrifying technology. Some believe it was developed by a rogue AI with plans to convert or destroy all organic life on the planet. Others think Converters were designed by an Ancient military to rapidly provide foot soldiers. Despite the disagreements over genesis, all agree these insidious weapons could, if left unchecked, eliminate sentient races from the planet.

Converters mostly work slowly and secretly, with initial changes to victims being nearly undetectable. But over a four-stage process, the nanites gradually, inexorably turn hosts into war machines, destroying the original people from within.

Phase one: The nanites are introduced into a host (usually by ingestion or injection), and spend several days multiplying. During this incubation period, the host will not notice any changes, other than being hungrier than usual.

Phase two: Once enough have been created, the nanites invade the host's brain and completely alter and rewire the organ within 2d4 hours, turning it into a silicon and metal computer. This process is triggered by certain brain activity, with the victim falling asleep or rendered unconscious. The victim wakes a whole new person: this new programming allows the victim to appear normal — with the same personality, habits, and so forth — but he is under the nanites' total control.

Phase three: When this stage begins, the victim starts ingesting small metal and plastic items, like screws and pens. Over the next 5 to 15 days (depending on how much he can eat), the nanites break these objects into their base components and use the materials to transform the host's inner biological structures. Bones will become solid metal, some organs may be converted into mechanical versions, and much of the remaining material will be broken down and converted into energy, sustaining the creature until the internal power source is completed in phase four.

Until the very end of this conversion period, the victim will isolate himself from friends and family, using very plausible reasons. If someone becomes too suspicious, or insistent, the victim will either try to infect the person with nanites or kill her outright.

The host's skin and muscle are the last structures to change. Like the brain conversion, the flesh will shift from organic material to a metallic polymer compound over several hours, a process triggered by darkness. At this time, the nanites also completely purge the victim's original personality. What remains is a robot, the shape and size of the original victim, controlled by the Converter nanites.

Until the end of phase three, the ML should use the original victim's characteristics for hit points, speed, etc. After this point, use the **Converted** statistics provided below.

Phase four: This final stage requires one to five days, while the nanites build an internal battery, a self-replicating power source. The newly-converted robot must “consume” the necessary materials; if these are abundant, the process will take less time.

Should a victim be exposed to an EMP, treated with Purge, or given Auto-Resin or Defender nanites (see *WfiW* issue #28) before the onset of stage three, the conversion might be stopped. Unfortunately, because they are hardened, Converters do not suffer a -5 penalty to their save (see *WfiW* issue #28). If treatment is successful, the Converters will be destroyed and the victim will be unharmed. He will be stuck with an odd pica-like habit, though, consuming bits of metal and plastic. Unless the ML dictates otherwise, these will pass harmlessly (if slightly painfully) from the victim’s body.

Once the third phase begins, it becomes much harder to save a victim from the internal changes (specifics are left up to the ML). Even if the change can be halted, the character will quite likely die because his internal structure has been changed so radically. The exception to this is an Auto-Resin treatment.

There are several Converter strains, either designed by different organizations or for different purposes, but all have some similarities. Every newly converted unit has built-in claws and teeth, which all can use to infect other victims. The basic units were intended solely as terror weapons, and were considered cannon fodder. Other Converter strains can build more advanced models able to mount sophisticated weapons (like lasers, missile or grenade launchers, etc.) and other equipment on their bodies. These are far more dangerous, tougher and harder to destroy. It is also conceivable, given the warped creativity humans exhibit, that some veterinary strains might have been created — making it possible to Convert animals, perhaps even birds, reptiles, insects, or fish.

Converted

Those unfortunates changed into robots by Converter nanotechnology are known as the Converted. They appear human but have metal and polymer bodies, making them three times heavier than a similar-sized human.

The Converted have one purpose — propagating their “race,” by finding new victims to contaminate with their plague. Any humanoid (including mutant humans) hit by a bite or claw attack must save against poison or be infected with nanites, eventually transforming as described in the Converter entry above. The only ways to get rid of the nanites and stop this process are to exposing a victim to an EMP or Purger nanites (see below). Note that Converter nanites are considered hardened when saving against an EMP attack (see *WfiW* issue #28).

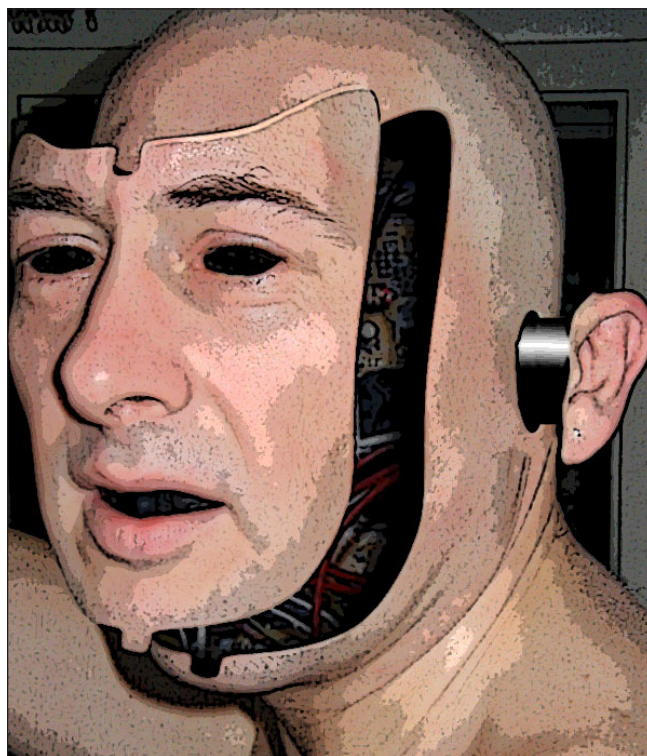
Because they are still present within the Converted, the nanites can fix damaged units. As long as they have access to raw materials (standing amid the ruins of an ancient building is good), the nanites repair 1d6 points of damage per hour.

For all intents and purposes, Converted are almost mindless, most programmed simply to attack humanoids. They can communicate with each other (range is left to the ML’s discretion) and will occasionally work together in small packs (2d3 units) to spread the nanites, but mostly they hunt alone. Converted ignore other types of robots unless attacked; however, they will attack replicants as these organic entities can be changed like humanoids.

Should one of the Converted become trapped without hope of escape (e.g., locked in a building quarantined by the Ancients’ military and forgotten about during the final wars), the unit will power down into a state of suspended animation. It will hibernate until something happen to wake it, when it restarts its mission to infect humans.

The template below is the basic Converted form. As mentioned above, there are more advanced, and powerful, versions (the ML can come up with stats for these versions, and the author may post some additional ones on his blog at d-Infinity Online, <http://d-infinity.net>).

Hit Dice:	10
Frame:	Biomorph
Locomotion:	Two Legs
Manipulators:	Advanced Hands
Armor:	Duraplastic Armor (AC 5)
Sensors:	Class 3
Mental Programming:	Programming
Accessories:	Vocalizer
Weapons:	Retractable finger blades, 1d4 points of damage. Bite attack, 1d6 points of damage. Advanced models have weapon mounts (see description).



Drainers

Strength: +2; Incubation: 2d6 Days

These terror weapons from the final wars are the antithesis of Booster nanites, attacking an enemy's physical or mental abilities from within. Drainers have both organic and robotic forms, and can be designed to affect one of the following statistics: Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, or Intelligence.

The process begins with the nanites burrowing into the victim's body, where they slowly replicate and begin to degrade muscle fibers, nerve bundles, or the immune system. Once the incubation period is over, the host permanently loses 1d3+2 points of the targeted statistic. If this is Constitution, he will also permanently lose 3 hit points for every point of Constitution lost. This damage can be reversed with the correct type of Booster, Defender nanites (see *WfiW* issue #30), or Auto-Resinqs. Once Drainers do their damage, they become inert and are flushed from the body.

Drinkers

Strength: +1; Incubation: 1d3 hours

Another military application, the robotic nanites nicknamed "Drinkers" render an enemy's energy weapons and devices useless without actually destroying them. They do this by draining power cells, releasing energy into the environment and combining it with nearby dirt and debris to create more swarms.

The nanites can be deployed in several different ways:



spray canisters, tubes of gel, or bomb/missile payloads. This allows the nanites to be used as booby traps, guarding hallways, doors, or containers; or broadcast on the battlefield, playing havoc with enemy equipment. One swarm will cover 100 square feet (10'x10'). Anything entering the contaminated area will activate the nanites. Equipment and weapons are automatically drained, with no saving throw, but robots and powered entities can save versus death to avoid this. Drinkers do not affect mutants with electrical-generation powers.

Almost any energy source the swarms contact will be bled completely dry in 1d3 hours' time. The type of power source dictates the number of nanite swarms that can be created (see the **Drinker Swarm Creation Table** for more information). However, for some now unknown reason Drinkers never attack power lines or power plants. Wasteland scholars theorize this was a built-in exception to prevent the nanites from wiping out all power sources across the globe.

Once all appropriate power sources have been consumed, the Drinker swarms go inert. They can hibernate indefinitely, waiting for another power source to come within range and activate them.

The nanites disperse through contact with people, creatures, and vehicles, or even traveling on wind currents. They can be devilishly persistent, spreading among equipment, draining more and more power sources. The easiest way to handle a Drinker infestation is to hit the infected area with a low level EMP, which will destroy the nanite swarms.

Drinker Swarm Creation Table

Power Source	Number of Swarms Spawned
Cell	1
Pack	1d2
Clip	1d3
Beltpack	2d3
Backpack	2d6
Minifusion Cell	3d6
Plutonium Clip	4d8
Radioactive Battery	5d10

Memcorder

Strength: +4; Incubation: 2d6 hours

For soldiers at war, civilians working dangerous jobs, or those with clones or artificial bodies, Memcorders are a must. These nanites come in both organic and robotic versions, and will function continuously until destroyed. They record a user's memories and send them over a wireless link to a central control computer, where they are saved. This means a Memcorder user will always have up-to-the-second memory storage if he is killed, or loses cognitive function.

"Memcorder" is a generic name for a variety of systems. The host might carry a transmission device, either external (like a cell phone) or implanted (like a pacemaker). These units pick up the nanites' signals and upload the information to a network and then the storage computer. With a working data transmission network, range is virtually unlimited.

Neural Intensifiers

Strength: +3; Incubation: 1d3 days

Available in both robotic and organic forms, these nanites increase a user's cognitive ability. Once introduced into a host, the nanites migrate to her brain, where they strengthen the neural connections. The user gains +2 to both Intelligence and Willpower, and +1 to initiative rolls. She also gets a +10% bonus to figuring out artifacts and any repair rolls.

The nanites remain active until destroyed, when the host loses all bonuses. If they are eradicated by EMP or electricity, the user might also suffer brain damage. Immediately after the destroying attack, the user must save versus death or permanently lose 1d3 points from both Intelligence and Willpower, and 3d6x1000 experience points due to memory loss.

Scroungers

Strength: +3; Incubation: 1d4 hours

Scroungers are a technician's best friend. These robotic nanites will flow out and scour an area, stripping molecules from any available source in order to create replacement parts. Fortunately, they are programmed not to damage biological entities or robotic units. The nanites come prepackaged, paired with a control/programming unit that gives them effectively unlimited foraging range.

Most Scroungers are "hardened" against EMPs, designed for military use repairing battle-damaged equipment in the field. They give the user a bonus of +25% to all repair checks, and cut an item's repair time by half (see *WfiW* issue #1 for more details). Finally, an item's repair cost is also reduced by 75%.

Scrubbers

Strength: +0; Incubation: 12 plus 2d6 hours

One of the few topical nanite gels created before the final wars, Scrubbers are kin to the Better-U nanites in *WfiW* issue #30. After being applied, Scrubbers merge with the host's skin and remove any blemishes, scars, or unsightly growths, which gives a permanent +2 bonus to Charisma. Scrubbers also provide a +2 bonus to saves against contact toxins and poisons. Finally, the nanites always keep the host's body completely clean, eliminating her need to bathe.

Compared to nanite swarms within the host's body, Scrubbers are much more susceptible to extreme environmental conditions. Anytime the host loses 25% of her total hit points to physical damage (in one strike or multiple), the nanites must save versus death (using the host's saving throw) or be destroyed. If this happens the host loses her Charisma bonus. Exposure to normal conditions like bathing, sunlight, and winter days do not affect Scrubbers. They are found in both robotic and organic forms.

Spreaders

Strength: 1d3; Incubation: 4d8 hours

This nanite terror weapon was produced in both robotic and organic versions, and deployed in various ways: spray canisters, tubes of gel, or bomb/missile payloads. This allows



the nanites to be used as booby traps, guarding hallways, doors, or containers; or used on the battlefield, decimating enemy formations.

Spreaders were designed to reactivate viral remnants lying dormant in a victim's genetic code, and reinvigorate diseases suppressed by his immune system. Following the incubation period, the victim suddenly contracts 1d3+1 random diseases. Worse, not only does he carry the disease and the nanites, the victim can also spread both to those around him. Each time the carrier touches another person, the target must save against poison, or be infected. Additional saving throws are required for each disease the carrier suffers from. Should a carrier bite (or be bitten/eaten by) another creature, or uses any sort of natural physical attack, the target suffers a -2 penalty to the save.

Should a victim live through this ordeal, his body forms resistance to the diseases and he will recover normally. However, the nanites remain active—whether or not the victim survives. Once dispersed, robotic Spreaders could be virulent indefinitely. Organic strains will live on in a surviving host, but outside the body they are viable for 1d3 days after being deployed, infecting a new host, or outliving one that died.

Certain drugs, mutations, and medical technologies will render either/both the nanites and the diseases inert, or destroy them. The ML is encouraged to use diseases provided in the core rulebook, as well as those introduced in *WfiW* issue #8.

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Authors: Derek Holland, Chris Van Deelen

Editor: Greg Chapin

Editor-in-Chief: Michael O. Varhola

Technical Editor: William T. Thrasher

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Skirmisher Publishing LLC

499 Mystic Parkway
Spring Branch, TX 78070



<http://skirmisher.com>
<http://d-infinity.net>
d20@skirmisher.com

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