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Executive Solutions

By Michael Tresca

NOTE: This article, while usable on its own, is best used with Ronin Arts' Modern: Mercenary Manual, also by Michael Tresca.

Corporal Bristol was sweating. He had good reason. He had been called into a meeting with the CEO. The CEO rarely conducted one on ones with anybody. Those were usually reserved for the high potentials. Bristol knew he wasn't a high potential. Not anymore, anyway.

Bristol knew a few other guys who had been called up to the top floor. There was Harry and that knife fight. Jesse and his indiscretion with one of the grunts. Ted and his infamous civilian accident. A few others. They were very tight-lipped about what happened, probably because they signed a non-disclosure agreement.

Bristol stood nervously in the cramped elevator. Every floor they stopped at on the way up was agony. He wore his best suit, but he didn't wear it well. he was more accustomed to wearing fatigues in the field than a suit in the office.

Other Executive Solutions hacks tried not to stare at him too closely. As the elevator reached the higher floors, Bristol could tell they were wondering what was up. At the floor just before the CEO's level, gave him a thumbs up and muttered, "Good luck."

It sounded more like a eulogy.

Bristol bit his lip. He knew this had to be about Brendan. He knew what he was going to say too.

The door whisked open with a metallic woosh of finality.

The gorgeous blonde at the desk, her hair back in a tight bun, peered over at him through her glasses.

"Corporal Bristol?"



"Yes."

"Mr. Roberts will see you now."

Bristol nodded. Then he took a deep breath and walked towards the glass doors that parted as he arrived.

When he entered, Bristol felt like he was walking into someone's living room rather than the office of the most powerful security organization in the world.

He walked in, not knowing what to do with himself. Roberts was quietly tapping away on a laptop, his back to him. He was behind a massive desk. All Bristol could see was the closely cropped hair

"Hi Jack, please excuse my back. The press misquoted me and made our last contract out to be a million dollars higher than it really was. If I don't fix it we'll never get another deal."

Bristol tried to mutter something. He put his hands in his pockets.

Another minute of typing passed.

"Have a seat over there on the couch Jack."

Bristol sat down gingerly on the leather couch. There was a red folder on the table. The tab read,

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“Bristol, Jack” on it.

Finally, Roberts got up and sauntered over to sit across from him on an equally posh leather recliner.

He leaned back into the seat.

“So Jack. How’s it going?”

Bristol swallowed. “Fine, Mr. Roberts. Thank you for asking. And yourself?”

Roberts nodded.

“Fine, fine. Look, Jack. I asked you up here because you did something extraordinary that I haven’t seen in a long time.”

This was it. “You mean Sergeant Brendan.”

Roberts paused. “No. I mean the personnel carrier.”

“Sir?”

“You willingly surrendered a personnel carrier. That’s thousands of credits we handed over to Deadline, Inc. Our direct competitor. But were one of our high performers. So I’m not willing to give up on you just yet.”

Bristol relaxed. So that was it. Money. He should have known.

“Your pay will be docked for the amount.”

That wasn’t so bad.

“Yes sir,” he said after Roberts didn’t say anything.

Roberts leaned forward. Bristol noticed for the first time that he had piercing dishwater gray eyes. He never saw the man’s eyes because he always wore sunglasses when he wasn’t in the office.

“And I’m putting you on a sixty-day plan.”

The sixty-day plan. It meant Bristol was in trouble. He was on official warning. If he screwed up, he would be kicked out of the company. His every move would be watched.

“Understood sir,” Bristol said with less confidence.

Roberts reached forward and opened the folder. He took a gold pen out of his front pocket and placed it on the papers.

“I need you to sign this.” He smiled for a second and then added. “You can read it if you like.”

Bristol knew better. He didn’t add insult to injury by poring over the documentation. He signed. Bristol had heard of such documents before. He was quite sure that he signed something that allowed them to fire him if he screwed up without resorting to litigation.

Roberts stood up and put his hand out. Bristol sprang up out of the couch and shook it. It was a firm grip.

“There, that wasn’t so bad. I know you’ll turn this around soon.”

Bristol forced a smile. Whatever, he just wanted to get the hell out of there. He started to walk out.

“Oh, and Jack?”

He paused and turned.

“Take better care of my vehicles next time,”

Roberts said with the slightest hint of menace in his voice, “they’re not yours to give.”

“Yes sir,” Bristol muttered. Then he got the hell out of there.

Executive Solutions (ES) was formed in 1989 and registered in South Africa and Great Britain. It is the most powerful mercenary force on the planet, owning two oil fields and even its own air force. Executive Solutions has its tentacles in a wide variety of businesses, with 50 subsidiaries that range from computer software to adult education. It also has several mining interests.

It specializes in military expertise to achieve security and stability in any region. Executive Solutions achieves this goal through the deployment of trained military veterans. Executive Solutions avoids working for rebellions or religious factions and purports to work exclusively for legitimate governments and businesses, as defined by the United Nations. There have been accusations that

despite Executive Solutions’ claims, some of their mercenaries have been involved in attempting uprisings.

Agenda: A mercenary organization that provides a full range of military services.

Structure: A conglomerate of 12 companies and 50 subsidiaries.

Symbol: The stylized letters “ES” inside a circle.

Most Common Allegiance(s): Executive Solutions.

Requisition Limit: (50) military.

Overview

Executive Solutions provides the full gamut of services, including advisory training, battle strategies, combat air patrol, clandestine warfare, medical aid, special forces, sniper training, equipment capabilities, and armored warfare.

Executive Solutions’ reputation is self-perpetuating. Everyone believes it must be a great organization since it’s so huge and that it got that way by being the best company there is. This isn’t really true, but the press is enamored with Executive Solutions. It doesn’t hurt that one of the companies Executive Solutions owns is a media broadcasting company.

Jeremy Roberts, certainly a pseudonym, was once an intelligence officer in South Africa. He has many contacts in the South African military and regularly recruits from the corps there. Roberts isn’t just the captain; he’s also the CEO. Sometimes, the second title is more powerful than the first.

The CEO and de facto leader of Executive Solutions is, not surprisingly, the image of the ultimate executive. Behind his back, some call him the uberexecutive. To his face, they call him sir.

Structure

Executive Solutions wisely does not keep a permanent standing force during times of peace. Instead, its personnel are scattered to other military firms and contract work until required. Executive Solutions runs itself like organizations of the past. It doesn't use specialist teams; it uses ten man grunts led by a corporal. Occasionally, a specialist will lead the team instead. Additionally, Executive Solutions maintains a database of over 2,000 soldiers who it can call upon if need be.

Roberts is a firm believer in retaining his top performers and getting rid of his bottom 10%. He routinely fires anyone who does not perform up to expectations and keeps a rigorous skill assessment system in place to ensure mercenaries are the best in their game. This makes for a hard driving, no holds barred culture that cultivates only the most cutthroat, devious, and aggressive mercenaries. It also makes Executive Solutions the ultimate mercenary training ground, if one can stand the heat.

Roberts only controls the military operations. In reality, The Board backs the company. The Board consists of twelve CEOs from the various companies that constitute the actual power behind Executive Solutions and also explains how the company manages to have so much influence. The twelve companies pool their resources together and utilize Executive Solutions to further their own aims. It is the ultimate monopoly nightmare. Each CEO's Charisma (18 or higher) adds to the company's Leadership Pool.

Bases of Operations

Jeremy Roberts, CEO of Executive Solutions, works out of his corporate tower in New York. The company owns the entire skyscraper and prides itself on the sleek style created by famous architects nobody remembers.

Resources

Executive Solutions has more resources than any mercenary company to date and more than some small countries. Military equipment is never an obstacle. Executive Solutions purchases equipment built to last that is easily maintainable.

Executive Solutions' reach is long. It is affiliated with over 50 different subsidiaries, ranging from diamond and gold mining operations to computer software and air transport. Although Executive Solutions' primary service is military capabilities, it actively mines for gold and drills oil in a variety of third world countries. In conjunction with its operations, a security force of mercenaries always goes along with it.

Salaries for Executive Solutions vary, but can be up to 1,300 credits per month, depending on experience and area of expertise. Instructors are paid substantially less, around 250 credits monthly, while pilots receive considerably more, at nearly 700 credits a month. When performing their duties in dangerous work, the salaries increase proportionally. Executive Solutions does provide life insurance for its mercenaries.

Thanks to its multiple mining facilities and companies, Executive Solutions makes in excess of 3 million credits annually. In essence, Executive Solutions has a limitless budget.

Executive Solutions' power is unparalleled amongst other mercenary companies due its air force. It has several jumbo jets at its disposal, capable of transporting troops anywhere in the world. It also has access to fighter jets and fully armed gunships. In short, Executive Solutions has the firepower of a full-fledged military force on the land and in the air. Despite its formidable resources, Executive Solutions always makes contractual requirements for necessary arms and weapons.

Involving the Heroes

Executive Solutions can act as the all-powerful force, reinforcing new mercenaries and training them like a regular military group. On the other hand, they are also the ultimate corporate villains, smiling in dark suits with a contract in one hand and a gun in the other. Due to their extensive resources and influence, the likelihood of a mercenary company crossing Executive Solutions is very high.

Using Executive Solutions

Executive Solutions can be a cutting edge mercenary company in a Modern campaign or a futuristic conglomerate in a Futuristic campaign. The CEO, Jeremy Roberts, has a cybernetic implant and an advanced class for Executive Solutions officers in the field.

As enemies, Executive Solutions make the ultimate bad guys. They have more resources, better intelligence, and a lot more firepower than small nations. Heroes will always be looking over their shoulders and Executive Solutions will never be far behind.

As employers, Executive Solutions is a self-contained world of skullduggery and backstabbing, lies and videotape. Every employee is closely monitored and, as he or she ascends in the ranks, receives more and more cybernetics that also allows the company to track the employee's activities. There is also plenty of room for corporate intrigue as the heroes struggle with the morality of global and local politics.

As rivals, Executive Solutions mercenaries are ruthless. They have no qualms about lying or bullying the competition and have enough corporate lawyers to defend their activities afterwards.

Learning About Executive Solutions

The heroes can gather information about Executive Solutions through the use of the Knowledge (business) or Research skills. The charts below represent the amount of detail a hero can collect by using each skill.

Knowledge (Business)

Executive Solutions is a publicly traded company that produces an annual report. As a result, there's a lot to know about the mercenary company that might not normally be available. Of course, nobody ever said it was all true...

DC 1: Jeremy Roberts is CEO of Executive Solutions.

DC 5: Executive Solutions is a massive conglomerate that provides a full range of military solutions.

DC 10: One of the companies Executive Solutions owns is a media broadcasting company, and it uses its influence to control the press.

DC 15: Jeremy Roberts, certainly a pseudonym, was once an intelligence officer in South Africa.

DC 20: Executive Solutions has a policy in place to remove the "bottom 10% performers" of its organization—it annually drops employees who don't make the cut.

DC 25: The Board of Directors consists of twelve CEOs from the various companies that constitute the actual power behind Executive Solutions and also explains how the company manages to have so much influence.

DC 30: Executive Solutions employees who seriously screw up a mission have been known to mysteriously disappear.

Research

Research checks represent a hero's ability to collect data about an organization through fact-finding efforts like trips to the library and browsing the Internet.

DC 1: Executive Solutions is made up of 12 core companies.

DC 5: Executive Solutions provides the full gamut of services, including advisory training, battle strategies, combat air patrol, clandestine warfare, medical aid, special forces, sniper training, equipment capabilities, and armored warfare.

DC 10: Executive Solutions is affiliated with over 50 different subsidiaries, ranging from diamond and gold mining operations to computer software and air transport.

DC 15: Although Executive Solutions' primary service is military capabilities, it actively mines for gold and drills oil in a variety of third world countries.

DC 20: Thanks to its multiple mining facilities and companies, Executive Solutions makes in excess of 3 million credits annually

DC 25: Executive Solutions has access to jumbo jets, fighter jets and fully armed gunships.

DC 30: Executive Solutions maintains a database of over 2,000 soldiers who it can call upon if need be.

Members

Roberts is considered by some to be a corporate drone. His broad frame is always in a plain blue or black suit with a sensible tie. His close-cropped hair and otherwise angular, bland features makes him more akin to a featureless robot. Amongst his suck ups and peons, he is virtually indistinguishable, which is the way Roberts likes it. He is also never without his amber-tinted sunglasses.

Jeremy Roberts (Charismatic Hero 5/ES Officer 7):

CR 12; Medium-size human; HD 5d6+0 plus 7d8+0; HP 50; Mas 10; Init +6; Spd 30 ft; Defense 18, touch 18, flatfooted 16 (+0 size, +2 Dex, +6 class); BAB +9; Grap +9; Atk +9 melee (1d6+0, weapon), or +11 ranged (1d6+0, weapon); FS 5 ft by 5 ft; Reach 5 ft; SQ Nightvision optics; AL Executive Solutions; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +9; AP 6; Rep +9; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Occupation: Military (bonus class skills: Demolitions, Knowledge (tactics)).

Skills: Balance +3, Bluff +11, Climb +3, Computer Use +5, Craft (electronic) +4, Craft (mechanical) +4, Demolitions +5, Diplomacy +7, Disable Device +6, Disguise +3, Drive +6, Escape Artist +3, Forgery +6, Gather Information +9, Hide +5, Intimidate +9, Investigate +4, Jump +3, Knowledge (Current Events) +7, Knowledge (Tactics) +9, Knowledge (Technology) +4, Listen +2, Move Silently +5, Navigate +4, Pilot +3, Profession +3, Repair +4, Research +4, Search +5, Sense Motive +5, Sleight of Hand +4, Spot +4, Survival +2, Swim +2, Treat Injury +2, Tumble +4

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Armor Proficiency (powered), Deceptive, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Leadership, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Renown, Windfall.

Talents (Charismatic Hero): Fast-Talk, Coordinate, Charm.

Talents (ES Officer): Leadership (ES Officer), Uncanny Survival, Tactical Expertise, August Leadership, Tactical Mastery.

Nightvision Optics

Early in his career, Roberts lost his sight but the company replaced it with cybernetic darkvision. His eyes were replaced with ocular implants that enable Roberts to see better in the dark.

Benefit: Roberts gains darkvision out to a range of 60 feet.

Type: Internal.

Hardness/Hit Points: -/2 (per eye).

Base Purchase DC: 19.

Restriction: None.

ES Officer

The Executive Solutions officer corps possesses background and experience in everything from assassinations to guerilla warfare.

Requirements

To qualify to become an ES Officer, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +2.

Skills: Diplomacy 6 ranks, Knowledge (tactics) 6 ranks.

Feat: Personal Firearms Proficiency.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the ES Officer advanced class.

Hit Die: The ES Officer gains 1d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points: The ES Officer gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills: The ES Officer's class skills are as follows: Bluff (Cha), Computer Use (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (behavioral sciences, civics, history, physical sciences, tactics, theology and philosophy), Read/Write Language (none), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (none).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Int modifier (4 + Int modifier for nonhumans).

TABLE 1: ES OFFICER

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+1	+0	+0	+2	Leadership	+1	+1
2nd	+2	+0	+0	+3	Uncanny survival	+1	+1
3rd	+3	+1	+1	+3	Bonus feat	+2	+1
4th	+4	+1	+1	+4	Tactical expertise	+2	+2
5th	+5	+1	+1	+4	August leadership	+3	+2
6th	+6	+2	+2	+5	Bonus feat	+3	+2
7th	+7	+2	+2	+5	Tactical mastery	+4	+3
8th	+8	+2	+2	+6	Commanding presence	+4	+3
9th	+9	+3	+3	+6	Bonus feat	+5	+3
10th	+10	+3	+3	+7	Action trust	+5	+4

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the ES Officer advanced class.

Leadership: By providing supervision and guidance, an ES Officer can improve an ally's chances of succeeding at a skill check. Instead of making a skill check to aid another, the ES Officer makes a Diplomacy check (DC 10). He cannot take 10 or take 20 on the check. Success grants a competence bonus on the ally's skill check equal to the ES Officer's Charisma bonus or Reputation bonus, whichever is greater. The ally must be within sight and hearing distance of the ES Officer and must be able to understand him. AN ES Officer cannot use this ability on himself.

Uncanny Survival: Beginning at 2nd level, an ES Officer can add one-half his class level to his Defense for 1 round, once per day. (The bonus applies to the ES Officer's touch and flat-footed Defense, as well.) He must declare he is doing this at the beginning of his turn, and the Defense bonus lasts until his next round of actions.

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, the ES Officer gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the ES Officer must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Armor Proficiency

(light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Armor Proficiency (heavy), Armor Proficiency (powered), Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mobility, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Renown, Shot on the Run.

Tactical Expertise: Starting at 4th level, as a full-round action, an ES Officer can use his tactical knowledge to coordinate allies. Allies to be affected must be within sight and hearing distance of the ES Officer and must be able to understand him.

The ES Officer must make a Knowledge (tactics) check with a DC equal to 15 + the number of allies affected. He cannot take 10 or take 20 on the check. If the check succeeds, all affected allies gain a competence bonus on attack rolls or a dodge bonus to Defense equal to the ES Officer's Reputation bonus. The ES Officer chooses which of the two benefits to impart and must impart the same benefit to all affected allies. The benefits last for 1 round. If the check fails, the ES Officer's allies gain no benefit, but the action is still spent. AN ES Officer cannot apply the benefits of this ability to himself.

August Leadership: The ES Officer gains this ability at 5th level. It works like the leadership ability (see above), except the ES Officer adds his Charisma bonus and his Reputation bonus to the ally's skill check.

Tactical Mastery: At 7th level, the ES Officer requires less time to direct his allies. This ability is similar to tactical expertise (see Tactical Expertise, above) but requires an attack action instead of a full-round action.

Commanding Presence: At 8th level and beyond, an ES Officer can use an attack action and his commanding presence to enable an ally or weaken a single foe's resolve. Enabling an ally requires an attack action and a successful Diplomacy check (DC 20). If the check succeeds, the ES Officer can negate any one of the following harmful conditions affecting a single ally: cowering, dazed, fatigued, nauseated, panicked, shaken, or stunned. The ally to be affected must be within sight and hearing distance of the ES Officer and must be able to understand him. The ES Officer cannot use this ability on himself.

Weakening a foe's resolve requires an attack action and a successful Intimidate check (DC = target's level check). If the check succeeds, the target is shaken for a number of rounds equal to 1d6 + one-half the ES Officer's class level + the ES Officer's Charisma modifier. The target must be within sight and hearing distance of the ES Officer and must be able to understand him. A target that resists the ES Officer's attempt to weaken its resolve is immune to the ES Officer's use of this ability for 24 hours.

Action Trust: At 10th level, the ES Officer's mere presence inspires, safeguards, and motivates his allies. As a free action, an ES Officer may spend one of his action points to modify an ally's attack roll, skill check, ability check, level check, or saving throw result by +2d6 (applying a bonus of +2 to +12).

The ally to be affected must be within sight and hearing distance of the ES Officer to gain the benefits of the ES Officer's spent action point. An ES Officer may use this ability once per round, and not on himself (he gains the normal benefits for spending an action point on himself). Any character may transfer some or all of her action points to the ES Officer

as a free action. The ES Officer must consent to the transfer, and these action points become the ES Officer's to spend as he sees fit.

It was a very windy day for training exercises. Bristol hadn't been given any particularly lucrative contracts, but he expected that. The company was like a big animal. He had wounded it. It would take time for it to trust him again.

They were standing at attention. Bristol figured it was some sort of parade exercise. He could see the CEO off in the distance, talking to some guests who were sitting on bleachers.

Executive Solutions' guests were never mere dignitaries. Sometimes they wore disguises. They were everyone from Hollywood actors to multimedia moguls to dictators from Third World countries.

"...you can see," Roberts was saying, "these men are standing several hundred meters away. It's inconceivable."

Some of the audience members nodded. Bristol couldn't catch everything they were saying due to the roar of the wind.

Bristol looked over at his comrades. There was about twenty of them. He recognized a few.

The gorgeous blonde walked over to Roberts with a large suitcase. She lugged it with surprising ease.

"As you can see," Roberts said, "it's actually very lightweight." Then he said something about his secretary. The audience laughed.

Bristol craned his head. Yeah, he knew a few of the guys. There was Harry. Harry looked bored. He looked back over at Bristol and smirked.

Roberts opened the suitcase. The mercenaries couldn't see what was in it from their position, Roberts was facing away from them.

"...track up to twenty targets simultaneously. Which is why I've arranged...demonstration."

Bristol flinched. Something was wrong.

He looked over. Harry was to his right. Ted was to

his left. Jesse was behind him.

Bristol cleared his throat. "Hey guys?"

"Shut up," hissed Ted. "I'm on the last day of my sixty-day plan and you are NOT going to screw this up for me!"

Bristol had his answer.

Every one of them was on a sixty-day plan. Every one of them had signed that contract.

Oh God...

The CEO turned and in his hands was a large rifle that he held with one hand. A megaphone was in the other.

"Gentlemen, as agreed in your contracts, you are now reaching the end of your sixty-day plan. Thank you for your participation."

Bristol turned, but nobody else had figured it out. Why didn't he read the contract!

"You're all fired."

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