3:16 CARNAGE AMONGST THE STARS

Box Ninja
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A ROLEPLAYING GAME
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HIGH RONNY AWARD WINNER
FOR GAME DESIGN

THREE SIXTEEN

Box Ninja

WRITTEN BY
GREGOR HUTTON

3:16 WAS AWARDED A
HIGH RONNY
FOR GAME DESIGN

the RONNIES

Legal Stuff

DEDICATION:
To my father, James Hutton, and in memory of both my grandfathers Charles Hutton and Cornelius Gillespie.

Contents

0: Tollman's Tale

Vrakkkk-kkkk-kkkkk. Corporal Tollman's Energy Cannon converted the group of rapidly approaching creatures into a cloud of swirling space dust. Vrakkkk-kkkk-kkkkk. Another group, and another, and another. The cannon's gunnery computer was beeping into Tollman's earphones at a rapid tempo. These little green bastards were getting murdered. The Kill Counter on top of the cannon increased by the millisecond. Impassively counting the carnage. The rhythmic beeping was trance-like and hypnotic.

Vra-wheeeeeeee. The energy beam sheared off, missing the target and detonating a pile of rocks instead. Suddenly, from all around little green men raced closer and closer. Tollman's mind flashed back to a time long before…

Tollman was 10 and they'd been playing The Game. In The Game you went into this really dark cave. All the other kids were there with sticks and stones. They poked, prodded, bashed and frightened you while you tried to make it to the back of the cave. You had to get there, overcoming your fear and panic, and grab some moss, slick and wet to touch, from the very furthermost cave wall. Then you had to run over the wet floor of the cave avoiding the tripping feet and thrown rocks to break out into the light.

If you did that then they let you join their gang. It had taken Tollman five or six attempts to get to the back of that cave. But when she did she had learned not to panic or be frightened even when the unexpected happened. She was cool under pressure and had learnt to keep it simple. It was something that had served her well in the Expeditionary Force.

"Never panic, it'll get you dead." A strength.

Back to the present Tollman lowered the cannon and swept a series of ravening beams of energy through the fast-approaching hordes. They fell into clouds of dust. Motes drifting intricately through the alien atmosphere of this hell-hole of a planet.

Vrakkkk-kkkk-kkkkk. The last little green bastard evaporated into a cloud of constituent atoms. The Kill Counter stopped at 97. The tip of the cannon was glowing white hot and the whine of the cooling fans was the only sound left. The encounter was over.

Sergeant Brand looked over the top of the trench, "Corporal, status?"

"All Clear, Sergeant. A series of trenches ahead and then we're done here. After that," she paused, "it's not so certain."

Brand nodded at the Lieutenant next to him in the trench. The first hurdle had been cleared.
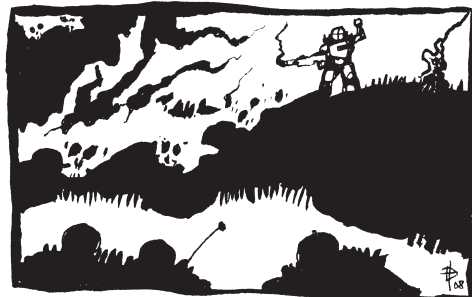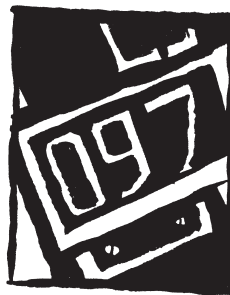
1: What Is This Book?

3:16 is a role-playing game.

There is a very good chance that you already know what this means. If so, please skip ahead to the next column.

OK, still here. So, a role-playing game is an activity that you take part in with a group of people. It's like improvisational theatre, and you create stories together in much the same way that musicians "jam" with each other.

One of the group is called the Game Master (GM, for short) and they have a chapter dedicated to all the things they are responsible for (see p. 42). Briefly, the GM sets the scenes and plays characters and aliens that you will meet in the game (known as "Non-Player Characters" or NPCs).

The others play a character each (called a "Player Character" or PC). Each player is responsible for describing what their character is doing and saying, and for rolling dice when a test is needed for something that their character does.

The aim is to have fun and create stories together.

3:16 is a role-playing game set in the far future.

It's a Science Fiction setting where everyone plays members of the elite 3:16th Expeditionary Force. This military force left Terra over 10,000 strong many years ago with an explicit mission.

Their whole mission was to fight, and defeat, everything in the Universe that they could find. Alien civilizations, intelligences and life of any kind were to be wiped out to protect the future safety of the people home on Terra. Threats were to be neutralized at their source.

Terra is a prosperous place. No one works any more and there is no disease, no hate and no crime or trouble. People are sterile and have to seek the permission of the Terran Council to have children. Successful applicants have medical modifications made that allow for procreation and the children themselves are sterilized at the onset of puberty. They leave childish things behind them and become a citizen of Terra.

Life expectancy is now essentially a meaningless statistic. How long do you want to live for? You only leave this life when you want to, and who would want to?

6

"Tired Of Life? Join The Expeditionary Force And See The Cosmos."—Recruitment Advert

Paradise is reality.

When the Council formed the Expeditionary Forces they found it easy to recruit. After all they offered a life of excitement and adventure. See the cosmos, travel and live life to the full. Don't drop yourself in a suicide booth, serve your fellow Terrans by joining the Force. Child permits were raised as necessary to meet the demand, and everyone rejoiced in the plan.

Later recruiting posters featured wholesome troopers drinking cocktails on a cosmic beach on the edge of known space – an ideal that many wanted to live. Terrans had a taste for this glamourous promise. So they sought adventure in the Force.

For years they have recruited Terrans for the Expeditionary Forces and sent troopers out into space. The players all play characters that joined the elite 3:16th unit. The 16th Brigade of the 3rd Army.

These characters will experience a series of events strung across the vastness of the cosmos. And perhaps one day they will return to Terra.

That is 3:16.

2: Getting Started

To get started on a game of 3:16 you will need someone to be the GM and a number of players. It can work with anything from 1 player upwards, but I recommend having no more than 5 players. I find that three or four players is a good number for play.

So, assuming that you have players and they want to play this game, then what else do you need to get started?

MATERIALS
You will need some character sheets, one for each player and maybe some spares in case a character or three should die during the game. Pencils for marking on the sheets and an eraser are useful too. Miniature figures or counters for each Trooper are handy.

The GM will want paper to take down notes during play, draw maps and so on. Copies of the GM play sheets are useful and coloured glass beads or poker chips are useful for keeping track of the alien Threat level.

Dice are used in the game so you should have a number of these to hand. You will need six-sided and ten-sided dice. Each player should have a few of each type at their disposal.

VENUE
You'll need somewhere to play. You can play at a games club if you are lucky that way, or maybe at someone's house. General social advice holds, of course, when gaming at a venue: be considerate to the host. You'll want snacks and refreshments too.

THEME
The theme for the game is war. And it's a war far from home, and one that in the end you might not agree with. The mood can be seen from the pages of this book. Look at the cover. That's the 3:16 assaulting a planet. The game is about making choices, and what happens as a result of those choices. So play to the Theme.

PREPARATION
All the players should make themselves familiar with the concept of the game. At least let everyone see the book and flip through it. The only part they really need to read before the start of the game is the back cover. If they're keen Sections 0 and 1 are next most important. They can always read, and buy, their own book too.

Whoever is the GM should have read the book in detail. I think it helps if you've read it a few times and mulled it over. I hope it's a quick read and some of the stuff will make a lot of sense once you've started play.

The only bit of preparation that the GM has to make is to read the section on Planets and create one before the first session of play.

GLOSSARY

d6, d10
Six-sided and ten-sided dice.

2d6, 2d10, 3d10, etc.
Multiple dice rolled and added together, e.g. with 2d10 a roll of "5" on one ten-sided die and "7" on the other gives a result of 12.

d100
Two d10 rolled to give a number from 1 to 100. One die gives the "tens" and the other the "units", e.g. a roll of "5" on the tens die and "7" on the units die gives 57. A roll of "10" on a die counts as zero, so "10" on the tens die and "4" on the units die is "04". A roll of "10" on both dice gives "00" meaning 100.

d1000
Three ten-sided dice rolled to give hundreds, tens and units, generating a number between 1 ("001") and 1000 ("000").

AA [Alien Ability]
The score which the GM uses for the aliens in place of FA and NFA. Ranked from 1 to 10.

Ambush
A one-sided attack where the opponent is unable to respond initially.

Combat Round, Combat Sequence
A part of an encounter during which the order of events is determined by dice rolls.

Dominance
Establishing who gets to pick the range for a conflict and to see if there is an Ambush. This is a test of NFA at the start of an encounter.

FA [Fighting Ability]
Used for fighting, rated 1 to 10, with 10 high.

Flashback
A term for a "Strength" or "Weakness" where you invent a previous experience for your character that makes them win or lose on their own terms, respectively.

GM [Game Master]
A participant in the game who plays the aliens. See the GM section on pages 42–49.

Kills, Take a Kill, etc.
"Kills" are the number of aliens you kill with your weapons. "Taking a Kill" means marking off a Health box, which may kill your PC.

NFA [Non-Fighting Ability]
Used for anything that is not fighting.

NPC [Non-Player Character]
A character that is not played by a player, but by the GM instead.

PC [Player Character]
A character belonging to a player.

Player
A participant that plays a character.

Range
Close, Near and Far are the ranges in 3:16.

Threat, Threat Tokens, etc.
A measure of how many times the aliens can take "Kills" on a given planet/mission.

Turn, On Your Turn, etc.
Your *turn* to act in the Combat Round.

3: Character Generation

In 3:16 you will find your character in play. The game will be a discovery of who a character is, rather than setting down a fixed view at the outset and then only playing to that defined role.

Therefore you only need outline the most rudimentary points of your character before you begin play.

NAME
Decide on a name for your character and put it after "Name". For now, just one name is all that we need, for example "Hotchkiss," "Frinks" or perhaps a nickname like "Dog." There is a list on p. 90.

REPUTATION
You now need to pick a "Reputation." This is a short phrase or word that describes just what sort of a human, or not, you are. It should be pointed and encapsulate the mood and feel of your character. Are you… Hot Headed? Ice Cold? Crazy? A Smartass? Honourable? Sleazy? Trustworthy? Loyal To A Fault? A Pig? Make it vivid and fit the theme.

ABILITIES
Split 10 points between the following two Abilities. Each must be given at least 2 points.

FA (FIGHTING ABILITY)
FA covers all kinds of fighting. If you are fighting, whether to kill or not, you will use FA. So, if you want a character that is good at fighting you should put more points into your FA score.

FA governs anything that involves fighting. So firing a rifle or a heavy weapon, throwing a knife, or beheading someone with your bare hands are all examples of using FA. Fighting, basically.

NFA (NON-FIGHTING ABILITY)
NFA covers everything else, i.e. all that is not fighting. So if you are doing something else, whether it involves killing or not, you will use NFA. For a character that is better at things other than fighting you will want a higher score in NFA.

This covers anything, and I mean anything, that isn't fighting. Catching things, understanding strange alien glyphs, climbing, piloting ships, survival knowledge, spotting clues, combat engineering, tactics, being sociable or just plain digging a trench are all examples of using NFA. Basically, not fighting.

KILLS
Kills is the number of creatures you have killed in your career.

Roll a d10 for every point of FA your character has. So if you have 5 points in FA then you roll 5d10 and total that up. You should get a score of about 25–30 if you have an FA of 5.

THREE SIXTEEN

FLASHBACKS

Name: _____

Reputation: _____

Rank: _____

KILLS

Total Kills: _____

Kills This Mission: _____

HEALTH

A Mess ☐

Crippled ☐

Dead 💀

ARMOUR

☐

TICK WHEN USED

FA

FIGHTING ABILITY

NFA

NON-FIGHTING ABILITY

Not Yet Available ☐

Available ☑

Used ☒

STRENGTHS

☑ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

WEAKNESSES

☑ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____
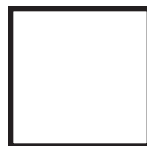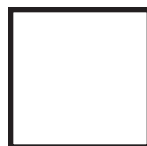
☐ HATRED FOR HOME _____

KIT, MEDALS and NOTES

WEAPONS	CLOSE	NEAR	FAR
_____			
_____			
_____			

HAND-TO-HAND _____ CLOSE RANGE ONLY

FLASHBACKS

You begin the game with access to "Flashbacks" called "Strengths" and "Weaknesses." You'll have more of these available as play continues, **importantly**, however, **do not write any Strengths or Weaknesses prior to play**. You can read about these on p. 24.

RANK

Your characters need Ranks. Who has the **highest NFA**? They are the **Sergeant**. If you have more than one PC with the equal-highest NFA then those players should roll a die each, with the highest roll being made Sergeant, and the next highest roll the Corporal.

If you don't have a Corporal yet (i.e. you only had one candidate for Sergeant) then the character with the **highest FA** is the **Corporal**. Again, if there is more than one character eligible then the players should roll dice. The highest roll is the Corporal.

Everyone else is a Trooper.

KIT AND TRAINING

You will need to write down the Gear and Weapons that you get for your Rank. Also note the "One Use Per Planet" items on p. 89.

LOCK AND LOAD

With all that done, you're a fully created character and member of 3:16. You're now ready to go and kill bugs. Good luck, Trooper, you'll need it, and read up on the effects of your Combat Drugs (p. 86).

TROOPER [RANK 0]

Description
The lowest rank in 3:16 and they can use **Force Weakness** (p. 89).

Responsibility
Order 1: Kill as many lifeforms as you can.

Quote
"I'm just a grunt, the guy at the bottom of the pile. Don't bother me none. Leave the worrying to the brass, down here I just get to kick back and blow bugs to shit. Every day. War, it's fan-tastic."

Other Gear
MandelBrite Armour, knife, hydration tablets, TRMs, medipack, backpack, combat drugs, flares, and an unread field manual.

WEAPONS	CLOSE	NEAR	FAR
ENERGY RIFLE	1	d10	1
or SLUG RIFLE	1	d6	d6
GRENADES	d10	1	–
HAND-TO-HAND	1	CLOSE COMBAT ONLY	

PICK ONE

CORPORAL [rank 1]

Description
A step up from Trooper and the Sergeant's right-hand man.

Responsibility
Order 2: Maximize the kill ratio (bugs killed per Trooper).

Quote
"I'm second-in-command to the Sarge. I'm also the one with the really big gun. Sure, it ain't easy to carry around and it's only got limited range. But it's a carnage machine in the middle distance."

Other Gear
MandelBrite Armour, knife, hydration tablets, TRMs, medipack, backpack, combat drugs, flares, mitt/ball, and a tatty field manual.

WEAPONS	CLOSE	NEAR	FAR
E-CANNON	0	2d10	0
or HEAVY MG	1	2d6	0
GRENADES	d10	1	–
HAND-TO-HAND	1	CLOSE COMBAT ONLY	

PICK ONE

SERGEANT [rank 2]

Description
A Non-Commissioned Officer in charge of a squad of Troopers.

Responsibilities
Order 3: Follow directives issued by the Officers.
Order 4: Protect your squad of Troopers (can use **E-Vac**, p. 89).

Quote
"I've got to keep you fuckers safe. So, listen to me you quivering fuckheads. Dig that fucking trench now or you'll fucking regret it."

Other Gear
MandelBrite Armour, knife, hydration tablets, TRMs, medipack, backpack, combat drugs, flares, radio, and a well-used field manual.

WEAPONS	CLOSE	NEAR	FAR
SLUG RIFLE	1	d6	d6
or HEAVY MG	1	2d6	0
SIDEARM	d6	d6	0
HAND-TO-HAND	1	CLOSE COMBAT ONLY	

PICK ONE

4: How To Play

GAME SESSIONS

3:16 is played in a series of game sessions. Each session usually encompasses an entire mission or two on a planet. Further sessions are more missions on different planets, and play continues in this episodic fashion as time goes on. The whole series of game sessions is referred to as a campaign.

Typically a session will be 3–5 hours long and you may play through 20 or more sessions in the whole campaign.

CHARACTER GENERATION

For the first session the players should create their characters together, see the Character Generation section (p. 10). In future sessions players will play the same characters or bring in new ones to replace those that have died (see "Replacement" on p. 36).

> "So, how do we play it?" I asked. "Simple," said the Sarge, and then he trailed off. That was it. "Simple."

PLANET CREATION

While 3:16 requires no preparation from players, there is a little preparation required by the GM. The GM should generate a planet in advance of the game session (see the Planets section, p. 50).

MISSION BRIEFING

The session begins with a Mission Briefing. This is usually given by the GM, but it could be by a player if their PC is of high rank. Here a senior officer gives the PCs the planet's name, its nature and details of the notable surface features. Scans by the Brigade's ships may also reveal some detail about the creatures on the planet.

> "Your mission today is of vital importance to the very safety of Terra..."—Lt Frinks

SPEAKING AT THE TABLE

When role-playing it's perfectly fine to talk "in character" when telling everyone what your character is doing. So, saying "Listen up, you sods. We are leaving! Get to it! Now!" is perfectly fine.

Or you might want to describe what your character is doing in a more authorial way. This is also fine. "My Sergeant bellows at everyone. He tells everyone that we're all leaving the building straight away and commands them to get out of there real quick."

It's really just a player preference. Both ways are right.

ROLE-PLAYING

Now the game has begun and play continues with the players role-playing their PCs and the GM describing the world around them and acting out the role of NPCs. Role-playing is a group activity and the aim is to create a vibrant verbal space. This will begin at the briefing and the landing on the planet.

It is absolutely OK for any player to make suggestions of added detail to the game world and to propose things to other players.

On making suggestions, if the group agrees that an addition is good then it should become part of the imagined world. You don't need to formally check with everyone that they agree, it will often be obvious by nods of agreement and tacit approval in the actions and reactions of the players. If an idea doesn't work, or breaks the theme, then you'll see that it doesn't fit in. Fine, don't include it. It's a group activity, the authority of the game world rests with everyone, not any one participant more than another.

On the point of proposing things, the veto on what comes out of a PC's mouth and what their PC does and feels rests solely with the player of that character. Everyone can make suggestions on what might be good for "Dog" to do or say, but ultimately it's Dog's player who gets to say exactly what Dog does, or does not, do.

The GM gets the veto on exactly what the aliens are like. The final word on NPC Troopers and Officers also rests with the GM.

ROLE-PLAYING ADVICE

PLAY, DON'T WORK

Play is fun, so embrace the kill-happy machismo and play with it. It's not work, right? You shouldn't be stressing over this.

LIVE THE MOMENT

Each moment might be your character's last, so don't try and plan ahead. Events and dice rolls will throw you a curveball all the time. You'll find that the bigger picture will take care of itself in play.

BE A TEAM PLAYER

Listen to your other players at least as much as you speak. Do share your ideas but learn to enjoy the contributions of others too.

DON'T TRY TO BE TOO CLEVER

If you spend all your time trying to be clever or bring in more twists and turns it'll just be tiring. Instead, just go with the intuitive and obvious answers that pop into your head. Simple is best.

BE DIRECT

Trying to be subtle can be confusing, and trying to make a convoluted plan worse. Be straight to the heart of the matter.

BE OPEN

Be open minded and honest about how you feel. That's the way.

FIRST ENCOUNTER

Once landed on the planet the GM "frames" the scene. This simply means that the GM describes the scene (what it looks like, who is there and so on). This is the *platform* for the scene. Then the GM introduces a *tilt*, a change that sets the scene in motion and leads to first contact. You are now ready for your first encounter, and the GM will commit some Threat Tokens to it to represent the aliens.

By the way, once you have a hang of this, or you are already experienced with such things, it is perfectly acceptable for players to take turns framing the scenes for encounters.

DOMINANCE

Encounters begin with a test of NFA to find Dominance.

To make a test, you roll a d10 and try and score equal to or under your ability (in this case NFA). Successes are ordered from the highest roll to the lowest, so while a low roll gives you success you may need a higher roll to be more successful than your opponent. This is the basic method of all tests in 3:16.

The GM rolls one d10 for all the aliens, and each player rolls a d10 for their PC. Note that a PC does not have to roll a die if they do not want their PC to be watching out for an incoming attack, or the opportunity to make an assault themselves.

RESULTS OF THE DOMINANCE TEST

PCs all successful, aliens fail: Ambush by the PCs, the highest successful roll sets the range.
Highest success is a PC: that player gets to set the initial range.
Highest success is the alien: the GM gets to set the initial range.
Everyone fails: the range is set at Far.
Aliens successful, PCs all fail: Ambush by the aliens, the GM sets the range.

If there is a tie then the players who tied can either agree upon a range or they roll dice between themselves. Highest roll wins.

Note that when the range is set all the PCs are initially at the same range. The range is always measured relative to the aliens.
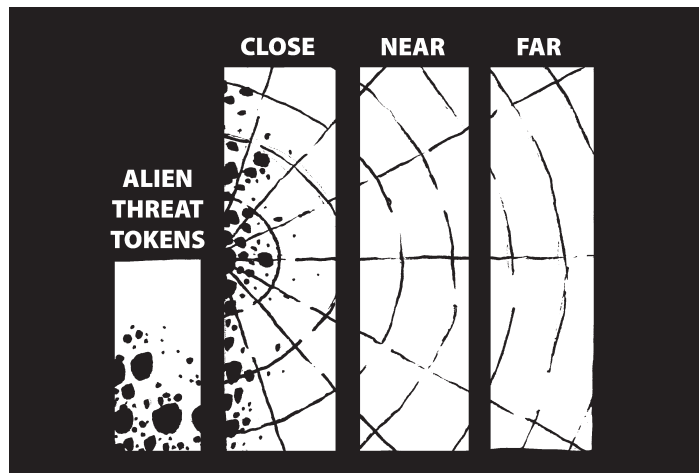
RANGE

There are three ranges for encounters in 3:16 and they are an abstraction of actual distance. The ranges are **Close**, **Near** and **Far**, see the range map, below. You will find it useful to have tokens or miniatures for each of the PCs. These can be placed on the range map to keep track of who is where, relative to the aliens. I use some nice painted miniature figures from a very popular wargame.

Close	Close combat and hand-to-hand fighting.
Near	At a distance optimum for most kinds of ranged weapon.
Far	Far away where weapons generally cause fewer kills.

If you go beyond Far range then the PC has left the encounter, this can happen when a PC chooses to retreat or the GM causes them to change range in combat as the aliens themselves flee.

You will note that weapons do different numbers of "Kills" at different ranges. And you want to kill as many aliens as possible. So you can figure out what the optimum killing range is for your PC.

> "You can say I'm a coward to ambush, Lt. But I'm still alive. Think on that." — Trooper Dog

AMBUSHES

THE ALIENS AMBUSH THE PCs

Every PC takes 1 "Kill". An uninjured Trooper becomes a Mess. A Trooper who is already a Mess gets Crippled. Anyone that was Crippled is now *Dead*. The aliens then set the range.

THE PCs AMBUSH THE ALIENS

The PC that rolled best for Dominance sets the range. Every PC now gets a chance to cause kills. Each player now rolls a d10, and from the highest to lowest roll the PCs cause kills based on their weapons at the set range. Each PC removes one Threat Token (more on this later) as they cause kills, and they add the total kills rolled to their "Kills This Mission" and "Total Kills". if the Threat Tokens reach zero then there are no further creatures left to kill. Anyone with no kills yet (because they rolled too low) gets none. Tough!

ENCOUNTERS, COMBAT ROUNDS AND TURNS

Encounters are split into a sequence of "Combat Rounds". Each Combat Round is a series of fictional events, where each PC and the aliens take "turns" in sequence. Play continues with more Combat Rounds until the encounter ends.

1. Each player decides what their PC is trying to do. They will be using either FA (*fighting*) or NFA (*not fighting*).
   The GM declares for the aliens and always uses Alien Ability. At this stage everyone can change their intent based on what others are trying to do. That's all fine. Once you've figured out who is where and what they're trying to do, we roll the dice.

2. Everyone (players and GM) then rolls a d10 each.

3. Everyone compares their die roll with their ability (either FA, NFA or AA) and judges whether they are successful or not.

   A **success** is a number **equal to or less** than your ability.

   A **fail** is a number **higher than** your ability.

> "Me? Running away? No Sarge, not at all. I was heading for higher ground to set up a killing zone, I swear."—Trooper Dog

4. Successes take turns from the highest to the lowest die roll. The GM asks for successes starting at 10, then 9 and so on.

   On a **success**…
   (**FA**) …**remove one Threat Token** and **cause "kills"**, roll for your weapon at the set range and describe what happens,
   (**NFA**) …**achieve the task attempted**, e.g. you change range by one step (retreating or charging), and you describe it,
   (**AA**) …you **cause a kill to each PC** who either **failed** or **rolled equal to or less than you**, describe the ensuing carnage, *or you can*…
   cancel your own success so that everyone yet to act in the round now "fails". Describe in the fiction how this happens. (Useful when the aliens will otherwise kill your buddies.)

   Ties can't cancel each other and kills are simultaneous. Roll dice (highest wins) to see who goes first if this info is needed.

   If you succeed on FA/AA *before your opponent* then you can also change range by one step *at the end of your turn*. Move the PC(s) on the range chart and describe closing or retreating.

CHANGING WEAPONS

Each PC has a default weapon that they carry into encounters. A PC can change weapon on a successful NFA roll. They can always switch to Hand-To-Hand, a PowerClaw or Grenades without a roll. If the roll fails then the PC can't change weapon.

5.   Failures now take turns from the highest to the lowest die roll. The GM asks for failures starting at 10, then 9 and so on.

On a **failure**…
…you get a "colour narration" adding non-consequential detail or description to the scene, describing your failure.

6.   Encounters continue with further Combat Rounds from Step 1 again until…
- ☠ everyone is dead, *or*
- ☠ a PC uses a Strength, *or*
- ☠ everyone alive is beyond Far Range, *or*
- ☠ no kills are caused for 3 Complete Rounds (a standoff), *or*
- ☠ an event ends the Combat Sequence, *or*
- ☠ the number of Threat Tokens is reduced to zero.

7.   When the encounter ends the GM should place any remaining Threat Tokens back in the general pool of Threat Tokens for the planet unless instructed otherwise. You will be told of exceptions, e.g. using a Strength specifically removes Threat Tokens rather than allowing them to be returned to the pool.

VRAKK-VRAKK VRAK!

"Killing bugs is the second best thing in all of the Cosmos. What's the best thing? Counting them, dumb ass."—Trooper Dog

KILLS

When successful in the combat sequence you kill aliens, and remove a Threat Token, as long as you have a weapon that does more than "0" kills at that range. Whatever your weapon says, that's the kills you add to your "Kills This Mission" and "Total Kills".

So, it might be only 1, or d6 (you kill 1 to 6 *things* depending on the die roll), or d100 (yes, you can kill 1 to 100 with some weapons). Killing PCs does add to your total but only if you make them *Dead*, i.e. not just "A Mess" or "Crippled" but all the way out of the game.

Don't define the exact number of aliens in a fight, their numbers are determined after the fact with these kill rolls. NPCs can "kill" any remaining creatures in the fiction, or extra kills will appear on cue.

ARMOUR

Troopers wear "MandelBrite Armour". It is tough and dependable, and protects the wearer from harsh environments. MandelBrite will insulate against the ice-cold vacuum of space, and from the intense heat of a volcano. A Trooper learns to love his suit, and it will save his life many times over his career.

When you are to take a "Kill" in an encounter you can tick the Armour box instead, and your armour takes the blow instead of you.

Your Armour can only do this **once per planet**, so choose carefully when to use your armour. Remove the tick when you leave the planet.

DRUGS

Combat drugs are a Trooper's secret best friend. Once on each planet they allow a re-roll for FA. Beware, if you then get a 10 on the re-roll you take a Kill (see p. 86).
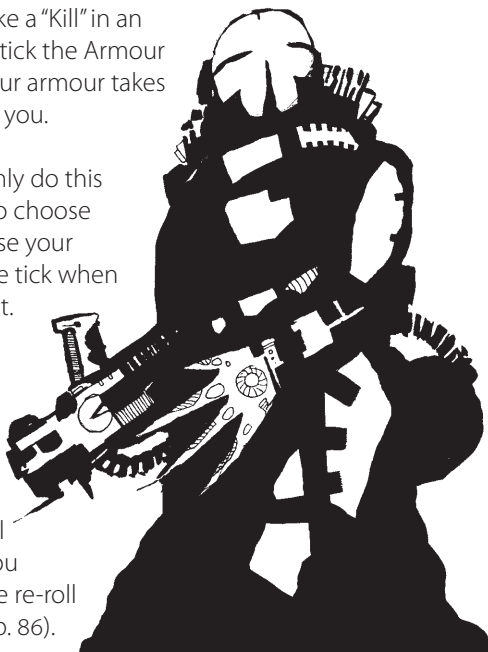
THREAT TOKENS

The GM is in control of these and they measure the alien activity in the encounter. There is a box for them on the range map.

They help pace the missions. The GM has a number of these Threat Tokens to last the whole planet, and they are based on the number of players (*Total Threat Tokens = 5 × Number of Players*).

Kills remove them. Every time a PC succeeds on FA then 1 Threat Token is removed and the player rolls for kills to add to their total.

They activate alien Special Abilities. The GM can spend them to use the unique abilities of the creatures on the planet.

Using a Strength ends the encounter and removes all remaining Threat Tokens. The PC using the Strength rolls for kills with their weapon at its best range as if they had a success.

Using a Weakness removes 1 Threat Token and removes only that PC from the encounter. The encounter continues for everyone else as long as 1 Threat Token remains.

BLIPS ON A SENSOR

I like to use green glass beads to represent Threat Tokens as they are like "blips" on a movement scanner's display. They fit the theme well and are available rather easily from game shops, online retailers and craft stores.

HEALTH

When a PC takes a "Kill" you put a cross in the next available Health box. So, an uninjured Trooper becomes *A Mess*. A Trooper already A Mess would now be *Crippled*. A Crippled Trooper would now be *Dead* (and the little skull shows just about what is left of them).

So, what does "A Mess" mean? Well, there are no game penalties for being injured but your character is surely bloodied and beaten. Perhaps limping with dislocations and other trauma. A mess.

Crippled? Well, by now you are crawling along or fighting through the limits of the pain barrier to stay upright. Again, crippled.

See "Replacement" on p. 36 for what to do when your character is *Dead*, and note that you heal 1 Health Box between encounters.

EMOTIONAL AND EXHAUSTING WOUNDS

Some creatures or attacks don't "kill" in the normal sense. They use attacks designed to subdue you emotionally or mentally, such as piercing howls or intimidation. Typically such attacks are made using AA or NFA. Rather than putting a cross in the Health box you should put an "E" there instead. Effectively you are mentally "A Mess" and then "Crippled". When you reach "Dead" your character is an emotional and mental wreck and is no longer playable. The nearest Trooper will put a bullet in your head to end the misery. Armour is ineffective against these kinds of attack. Tests have found that such attacks by Troopers on aliens are wholly ineffective.

FURTHER ENCOUNTERS

More encounters follow the same pattern as the first except that the overall number of Threat Tokens held by the GM will become lower. The GM varies the number of counters committed to the encounters to pace the game, e.g. the PCs find an alien hive so the GM commits a lot of Threat Tokens to it, or the PCs scout around the edges of an alien civilization so the GM only pushes 1 Threat Token into the encounter. See pp. 29 and 46 for advice on Threat.

HEALING DURING MISSIONS

Between encounters all PCs heal 1 Kill wound (and all "E" wounds). So a "Crippled" PC becomes "A Mess" instead after an encounter.

THE FINAL ENCOUNTER

In the final encounter the GM uses up all remaining Threat Tokens. The GM has advice in the Missions section on managing tokens for encounters and pacing the mission. The Final Encounter is where the aliens make a last stand and fight to the death.

AFTER THE MISSION

When the final encounter has finished the Troopers return to their spaceships and everyone carries out some administrative tasks.

MEDALS

The GM will award medals at the end of the Mission. Acts of heroism should be obvious from the fiction, but also include removing a planet's final Threat Token, no matter how it was done. Fair or foul.

GAINING A LEVEL

Whoever has the most kills in the mission, gains a "Level".

Everyone else rolls a d10. The best roll also gains a Level. If more than 1 PC ties for the highest roll then all the tied PCs gain a Level.

Gaining a Level adds 1 point to either FA or NFA (the player's choice). An ability cannot be raised above 10. The PC also gains one Flashback slot, whichever has the most slots "Not Yet Available". If the PC has an equal number of Strengths and Weaknesses "Not Yet Available" then the player may choose either.

Not Yet Available	☐
Available	☑
Used	☒

HEALING BETWEEN MISSIONS

You heal fully between missions. Dead characters cannot be resurrected, see "Replacement" (p. 36) instead.

DEVELOPMENT

Between missions you develop your PC. This is covered in its own section (p. 32). The developments possible are as follows.

Improve one weapon by a "step" at one range [AUTOMATIC], *and try to*
> gain a new piece of war gear (weapon or vehicle), or
> increase a different weapon than above by one "step", or
> increase your rank (if you used a Strength)
by making a successfull roll **equal to or under** *your NFA on a d10.*

AN EXAMPLE OF COMBAT

Cpl Bam	Tpr Dog	Sgt Alvida
FA: 8, NFA: 2	FA: 7, NFA: 3	FA: 3, NFA: 7

THE ALIENS [4 Threat Tokens]
AA: 6 (Highest FA–2), artificial Eel-beasts with razor hands.

DOMINANCE
The aliens roll a 6 (success). Bam rolls a 6 (fail), Dog a 5 (fail) and Alvida a 3 (success). So the aliens win as they have the highest success. The GM sets the range at Close.

COMBAT ROUND ONE
Alvida uses NFA to try and get to Near Range, while Dog and Bam switch from their default weapons for free to fight Hand-To-Hand using FA. The aliens try to kill 'em all.

The rolls are as follows: the aliens (5, a success), Bam (5, a success), Alvida (1, a success), Dog (9, a failure).

So, starting from the highest success…
• On 5 the aliens cause a kill to every PC. No one elects to use Armour and everyone is "A Mess". The GM describes the beasts clawing them all and slaying some NPC Troopers.
• Also on 5 Bam removes one Threat Token and kills 1 alien. He describes strangling the Eel-beast that slashed him.
• On 1 Alvida moves to Near Range and switches to her Slug Rifle (a successful NFA roll to change range and weapon).

• Finally, any failures get to act. On a 9 Dog gets to add some colour narration. Dog's player describes slashing wildly with his knife and missing several Eel-beasts. He jumps into a trench shouting "Fuck!" over the radio. The round ends.

COMBAT ROUND TWO
Alvida is now using FA to shoot at Near Range. Bam keeps fighting Hand-To-Hand, while Dog switches to Grenades for free (risky move?). The aliens keep trying to slay them all.

The rolls are as follows: the aliens (7, a failure), Bam (6, a success), Alvida (8, a failure), Dog (5, a success).

So, starting from the highest success…
• On a 6 Bam causes kills. He removes 1 Threat Token and kills 1 beast. He describes this, as well as running to Near Range, which he can do as he succeeded before the aliens.
• On a 5 Dog frags 8 (a d10 roll) Eel-beasts in the trench removing 1 Threat Token. As Bam succeeded and Alvida is at Near Range they aren't killed by the grenades. Dog is stoked. He stays put and will use grenades again next turn.
• Now for failures. On 8 Sgt Alvida adds colour narration of taking shots at the beasts and finding them too fast to hit. On a 7 the GM gets colour narration for the Eel-beasts. They are being fought off by the Troopers and try to regroup.

There is still 1 Threat Token left so the encounter continues.

5: Flashbacks

FLASHBACKS

This is one of the key mechanics in the game. Mostly the game fiction is set in the "present," but you can introduce "Flashback" scenes where you describe a moment from your character's past and how it relates to your present situation.

Flashbacks allow you to alter what is about to happen. So, when you see the dice rolled they allow you to jump in and change the fiction before the results of the dice have been resolved.

> **Strength:** win a conflict on your terms
> *or* **Weakness:** lose on your terms

Obviously a Strength is a potent resource for your character. But note that it can be to your advantage to lose on your terms with a Weakness too. Especially when to lose on your opponent's terms would mean death (taking a Kill), or worse.

Don't write anything next to any of the available Flashbacks right now. You only fill these in when you use one in the game. You will create these "in the moment". Flashbacks also provide strong meat for the story and colour everyone's views of your character.

Finally, you can use them proactively when you aren't in immediate danger if you so wish. But note that when you have defined a Flashback it cannot be re-used to help you again in the future and they are strictly limited in number and availability.

STRENGTHS

Strengths change whatever is happening in the fiction. It doesn't matter what was *about to happen* in the story, that now changes.

You quickly describe a flashback to an event in your character's past. A short, sharp description is all that's needed, not a monologue.

Pick a short description of the Strength that your character is showing and write it in next to the available Strength slot on your character sheet. Now put a cross through the box since that slot is now used up. And we now cut back to the present again.

Describe how that Strength is relevant right here, right now, and what it has done to change the present situation in your favour.

GAME EFFECTS

Using a Strength **ends the encounter** and **removes all remaining Threat Tokens** in the encounter. The PC using the Strength rolls for kills with their weapon at its best range as if they had a success.

A Strength **cannot** be used in response to a Weakness. So, if someone decides to lose on their own terms then so be it.

A Strength **cannot** be used in response to a Strength. If a PC uses a Strength to win then they have won. They cannot be trumped by another PC using a Strength of their own to steal the win. These Flashbacks are potent story tools, not chips being bid at auction.

WEAKNESSES

Weaknesses, like Strengths, radically change the events in the fiction of the game. However, the effects are more personal to the PC exhibiting the Weakness and they are often used to lessen an outcome that will be deadly to the PC.

You declare a Weakness like you would a Strength. Again, you quickly provide a flashback to an event in your character's history. This brief snapshot should display some quality about your character that is a weakness. Put a cross through the box since the slot is now used up and we cut back to the present.

Tell us why that Weakness causes you to lose, and how it does so.

GAME EFFECTS

Using a Weakness **removes 1 Threat Token** and **removes only that PC from the encounter**. The encounter continues for everyone else as long as 1 Threat Token remains.

A Weakness **can** be used in response to a Strength. The Weakness lets the PC take the blow on their own terms.

A Weakness is a loss. The group should be wary of players trying to narrate a loss as some sort of victory. To be clear, the weakness has shown some character defect that has led to them being defeated. The defeat may be on their terms but it is still a loss. Not even a draw, a loss. The group as a whole has the final say on this.

AN EXAMPLE OF A STRENGTH

Shevaun's character Sgt Alvida is going to take a Kill in a combat and she is already Crippled, so she says "I'm using a Strength".

She quickly describes the following scene. Sgt Alvida, a few months ago, is on gunnery duty on the troop ship as it travels through a planetary system. Outside a repair team works on the ship's hull.

Suddenly she and the other gunner notice an asteroid on a sharp trajectory coming for the ship. The only way to save the troop ship is to shoot the asteroid, but that will kill the repair team outside on the hull. The other gunner on duty hesitates, he can't make the decision. For Alvida it is easy, she pulls the trigger. Coldly logical.

The asteroid is obliterated, and breaks into smaller fragments harmless to the troop ship but deadly to the crew on the hull. The entire repair team perish. Alvida knows it was the right decision.

She writes in that Sgt Alvida has the Strength "Cold Logic". The encounter is now ended, and all remaining Threat Tokens in this encounter are discarded. Shevaun rolls 2d10 for kills (the best number of kills her weapon does at any range) and gets a total of 12. She adds that to Alvida's "Kills This Mission" and "Total Kills". Shevaun describes how the Sarge's cold logic allows her to carve down the last remaining 12 beasts and end the encounter. It also means that Sgt Alvida has the chance of promotion at the end of the mission, if she survives it (see Between Missions, p. 33).

AN EXAMPLE OF A WEAKNESS

Shannon's character Dog loses and Shannon doesn't want Dog to take a Kill. So she says "Dog is showing a Weakness".

Shannon describes Dog's youth. It is his first day at school and his proud parents take him to class. Hours later they have to return to take him back in shame. Another child took a building block that Dog was playing with and he attacked the other child brutally. Violence in Terran society is unheard of and years of turbulent schooling and drug therapy follow for the sociopathic Dog.

At the first opportunity his parents sign the papers and forcibly enlist Dog in the Expeditionary Force. His application is stamped "Sociopath" and the other troopers are uneasy around him.

Shannon writes in that Dog has the Weakness "Sociopathy". The encounter is now ended for Dog, and a single Threat Token is discarded from the encounter. Shannon describes Dog being left on his own to face the aliens as no other troopers want to cover his back. He is overrun and dragged off to the alien hive. In the hive he is coccooned alive in a food store, ready for later consumption.

Dog is eligible for demotion (see p. 35) at the end of the Mission if he survives it. However, as Dog is already the lowest rank of Trooper it is not possible for him to be demoted because of his Weakness. Also, note that as the encounter has ended for Dog, he will heal one wound as he is now "between encounters" (even in the hive).

THINGS FLASHBACKS DO FOR YOU

They're about you and build your character. They help the group progress through missions. They drive the group towards the end game. They can lead to promotion or demotion for PCs.

THINGS FLASHBACKS CAN'T DO FOR YOU

They can't change another character, only your own. They also can't make you win or lose anything except the conflict at hand.

FLASHBACKS ARE "FLASH"-BACKS NOT SCENES

Flashbacks should be kept relatively to the point. They are not "scenes" in themselves that are role-played out with die rolls. When using Flashbacks I encourage players to do two things: (1) make it a group effort – add ideas to make both the Flashback and its effect on the present scene satisfying – and (2) keep it brief. Add detail to your character, but don't derail the fiction in the present.

HATRED FOR HOME

The final Weakness listed on the character sheet for a PC is "Hatred For Home". See page 33 for the notes about this Weakness.

EVENTS

Flashbacks can focus on any event in your character's history. Some examples might be the following.

Why you joined.	Your first kill.
The last thing you did on Terra.	A previous mission.
Your first moments of adulthood.	Your childhood.
An event between missions.	A time you were promoted.

Training for the Expeditionary Force.
The first time you felt betrayed by Terra.
Meeting someone you hate, or care about.
An incident where you were busted back down to Trooper.

"We were being ripped to shreds. Then one of them raked across my helmet with a six-razor-fingered hand. I thought I was a goner. Then I remembered: 'Be Prepared,' our family motto back on Terra. I had grenades, of course, in my pouch! Dad would have been proud as I fragged them into pieces."—Trooper Grant

6: Missions

PLANNING

The GM should have some brief notes about the planet for when the game starts. This will be the planet name, the creatures there and the type of planet. I think it also helps for the GM to sketch out some rough ideas for scenes and places, but to hold them lightly. The players may well take their characters in directions the GM hadn't thought of, so the GM shouldn't be too wedded to those initial ideas. Go with the flow is my advice.

MATCHING THE FICTION TO THE ENCOUNTERS

Missions are a series of scenes and encounters. In the encounters the GM allocates Threat Tokens to measure the opposition to the PCs. All well and good, but what about the fiction?

Well, it is vital that the players and the GM match the encounters and the game as a whole to the fiction.

So when you cause kills you need to describe how it is happening in the story. It's also important that the encounter is not just an abstract event with tokens. Where is it? Who is there? What is happening? What is it telling you about the aliens? Where are they coming from? Where are they going to? And so on.

MISSION BRIEFING

The mission starts with the mission briefing. The GM should play out the role of a Senior Officer, who should be uncaring and unsympathetic. The PCs should be given some objectives for their assault on the planet. The GM can keep them fairly loose but it helps if the first objective is clear. For example, "Go to this particular island and establish a landing point for troop ships".

The PCs are encouraged to role-play their characters in the briefing but don't spend too long on the briefing as the fun is waiting for them in the first encounter on the planet.

FIRST ENCOUNTER

The first encounter on a planet gives the GM and players a good handle on how this session's planet is going to play out. It also gives the GM a chance to use the aliens' Special Ability and for the players to see what it is. If any PCs die then simply have them drop in replacement characters—this is just a normal part of the game. The ending to the first encounter should lead into some more scenes. If the PCs don't have a clear direction the GM should bring one in. But if the PCs have definite places they want to go and things they want to do then the GM should work with that.

FUTURE ENCOUNTERS

The GM simply fits in future encounters where they seem appropriate in the story and allocates Threat Tokens to them. The GM should use them to provoke the PCs and provide adversity.

THREAT LEVEL

The number of **Threat Tokens for a planet** is equal to:

$$\boxed{\text{Number of PCs x 5}}$$

So, with 4 PCs the GM will have 20 Threat Tokens at his disposal. If you are finding missions too much of a grind and want shorter game sessions, you can amend this to [Number of PCs x 4].

THREAT TOKENS IN ENCOUNTERS

The GM shouldn't commit all of the available Threat Tokens at once, of course, they are used to fuel encounters over the mission.

Note that the GM shouldn't put more than [Number of PCs × 2] Threat Tokens into a single encounter. My advice is that you initially make a Mission up of four encounters as standard.

1. The **first** encounter has **3** Threat Tokens.
2. The **second** with **[No. of PCs]** Threat Tokens.
3. The **third** with **[No. of PCs −1**, **+1** or **+2]** Threat Tokens.
4. The **final** encounter with **all remaining** Threat Tokens.

Then vary this on future missions as you find the number of encounters, and their pace, that works best for your group. If the group decides to investigate cautiously then the GM may throw in more low-Threat encounters. Or you may want the first encounter to have the most Threat Tokens as the PCs assault a hostile planet.

SCENES THAT AREN'T ENCOUNTERS

So, are all scenes just encounters? The answer is no.

The Mission Briefing is one clear example of this. You are given instruction on the planet and mission by a Senior Officer and you all role-play your characters. But there is no fight or ambush.

There will be other scenes in the game too where you are just role-playing out your characters. For example, investigating the planet or burying fallen Troopers. These are not encounters either.

ROLE-PLAYING AND ROLLING

So when is the switch made from role-playing to rolling dice? Well, when the PCs head off to somewhere that could be an encounter the GM should decide if it could lead to one. If in doubt you should have the encounter, though the GM need commit only one or two

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FIELD PROMOTIONS

When the most senior ranking PC dies during a mission then the next highest ranked PC is immediately and automatically given a field promotion to the rank of the dead PC. If two or more PCs are next highest ranked then they should make a test of NFA. The highest success (or failing that, the highest failure) is promoted.

This is considered additional to any promotion that the character may achieve with a Development Roll (p. 33) between missions.

Threat Tokens to it. Asking for a Dominance roll is a good way to make sure the role-playing is sharp rather than just talking.

TARGETS FOR MISSIONS

Missions have an over-arcing goal: destroy all life on the planet. However, there will be sub-missions within that, which the GM can use to tie the whole mission together in the story. Each encounter should be tied to the main mission. Here are some ideas of how.

Capturing

The Troopers are sent to capture someone, something or somewhere. If the encounter is successful (all Threat Tokens removed) then the Troopers have captured their target. Failure, such as using an E-Vac, fleeing the encounter, or all using Weaknesses to escape the encounter means that the target is lost or destroyed.

Investigating

These encounters cover investigating accidents, attacks and gathering intelligence. A successful encounter yields information.

Scouting

These encounters are about evaluating or tracking the aliens and finding out information about their whereabouts and behaviours.

Rescuing

Rescue missions are needed when a Trooper is captured or lost on a planet. The task to be accomplished is the rescue.

OUTPOST 1940

"The Captain gave us our mission. We had to push on to Outpost 1940 and hold F Company's flank.

The toughest, and best, four days of your life. That's what the Captain told us, and he was right.

I wouldn't swap anything back on Terra for being with the guys at Outpost 1940 for those four days.

And we made a hell of a killing. Big time."

—Corporal Frood

7: Between Missions

GAINING LEVEL
The PC who killed the most creatures in the mission gains a Level (unless they are at Level 18 already). At least one other PC also gains a Level by rolling highest on a d10. Gaining a Level improves your PC's FA or NFA and makes new Flashbacks available, see. p. 33.

AUTOMATIC IMPROVEMENT
At the end of every mission any surviving PCs gain one "step" of improvement to one weapon at one range for free, see p. 34.

DEVELOPMENT ROLL
Characters also get a **Development Roll** that they can use to…
—increase rank (if you used a Strength), or
—gain a new piece of war gear (a weapon or a vehicle), or
—increase a different weapon by one "step".
> *You do this by making a successfull roll* **equal to or under** *your NFA on a d10.*

LOSING RANK
Finally, between missions you can lose rank. This is possible if you have not increased it with your Development Roll and you used a Weakness in the mission that has just finished, see p. 35.

MEDALS
Wound Badge, with Bar for every 10 wounds
Awarded for the first time you are wounded.

Campaign Medal ————————————●
Awarded for surviving at least one Mission.

Bronze Star
Awarded for surviving 5 missions.

Silver Star
Awarded for surviving 10 missions.

Gold Star ————————————●
Awarded for surviving 20 missions.

Kill Badge, with Bar(s)
Awarded for 100 Kills. Bar awarded at 1000 Kills and thereafter.

The **Crimson Sword** and **Crimson Skull** are prestigious medals awarded for acts of extreme heroism during missions including, specifically, the removal of the last Threat Token from a planet.
—Crimson Sword, with Bar(s) [NCOs, Troopers only]
Awarded for bravery in the field. Bar(s) added for multiple awards.
—Crimson Skull, with Oak Leaves [Officers only]
Awarded for bravery, with inscription "For Terra". Oak Leaves added for multiple awards. Not necessarily awarded for acts *in the field*.

GAINING LEVEL

Gaining a "Level" can happen to your PC at the end of a mission. It has the following effects on your Abilities and Flashbacks.

GAINING FA AND NFA

Gaining a Level adds 1 point to either FA or NFA. The choice of which one increases is solely up to the player. An ability cannot be raised above 10. Also note that you do not re-assign rank based on what your Abilities now are. The highest your FA and NFA can total is 18. Once they total 18 you can no longer gain Levels.

GAINING FLASHBACKS

 The PC also gains one Flashback slot, whichever has the most slots "Not Yet Available". If the PC has an equal number of Strengths and Weaknesses "Not Yet Available" then the player may choose either. Look at the diagram to the right to see how you should record which Flashbacks are Used, Available and Not Yet Available.

HATRED FOR HOME

Notice that one of the Flashbacks is mandated to be "Hatred For Home". This is the final Weakness that is *made available* to a PC when their FA+NFA is equal to 17 or 18. Your PC only *gains* this Weakness as a character trait, though, when he *uses it* in the game

As an option, once a single PC gains access to the Weakness "Hatred for Home" then any other PC can acquire it as an available Weakness *if they want* using one of their existing Weakness slots.

FA+NFA	FLASHBACKS
10	1/1
11	2/1
12	2/2
13	3/2
14	3/3
15	4/3
16	4/4
17	5/4
18	5/5

LEFT: THIS TABLE SHOWS HOW MANY FLASHBACKS A PC HAS AT EACH "LEVEL" (FA+NFA).

BELOW: THIS DIAGRAM SHOWS YOU HOW TO RECORD FLASHBACKS ON THE CHARACTER SHEET.

Not Yet Available ☐
Available ☑
Used ☒

DEVELOPMENT ROLL
GAINING RANK

Initially player characters will be one of the following basic ranks: Trooper, Corporal or Sergeant. After each mission characters may change rank depending on how the mission went for them.

If a PC used a *Strength* in the mission then they can be *promoted*.

The PC makes use of their Development Roll between missions to try and gain promotion. This means that they cannot use the NFA test to improve their existing weapons. But, as you will see, higher ranks do get access to gear and support items that are worth attaining in their own right. They also receive more orders too.

If successful on the NFA test the PC is promoted and gains one rank. The higher ranks in 3:16 are in Section 9 on pages 38–41.

WEAPON KILL "STEPS"							
0	1	d6	d10	2d6	2d10	3d10	d100

GAINING GEAR OR VEHICLES

Note that any gear on p. 86 (*Everyday Trooper Shit*) can be gained without the use of a Development Roll. Just take it.

However, any weapons or vehicles need to be gained by the use of a Development Roll. Popular choices are the Flamer-Gun and PowerClaw. If you fail the roll then you don't get the item.

Note that Vehicles and Bombs require you to be of certain Officer ranks to be able to request them. Feel free to requisition all the cool weapons you want, but remember it takes a successful NFA roll to switch between them during a fight (see p. 19). Also be sure to designate the default wapon that you start all encounters with.

IMPROVING WEAPONS

You can **automatically improve one weapon** at one range between missions. Simply choose the weapon and range then improve the killing power by one step. See the table below left. You can improve a **different weapon** with a Development Roll.

Note that a weapon can be improved by only 2 steps at each range that it can cause kills. The Energy Rifle example is given (right).

The Best profile for a weapon is given in its entry too. A weapon that causes 0 kills at a range can be improved to cause d6 kills with enough experience. However, if your weapon has a dash ("–") at a range then it never causes kills at that range.

EXAMPLE

Trooper Grant has an Energy Rifle, which has the following profile.

WEAPON	CLOSE	NEAR	FAR
ENERGY RIFLE	1	d10	1

After a completed mission Grant's player decides to use his automatic upgrade to improve the Energy Rifle at Close Range. Its new profile is below. Note that Grant's Energy Rifle can't be improved any further until another mission has passed.

ENERGY RIFLE	d6	d10	1

After a further mission Trooper Grant chooses to improve the Energy Rifle at Close Range again. Its new profile is below.

ENERGY RIFLE	d10	d10	1

Note that this weapon has now reached its maximum kills at Close. Any further improvements will have to be at Near or Far Range.
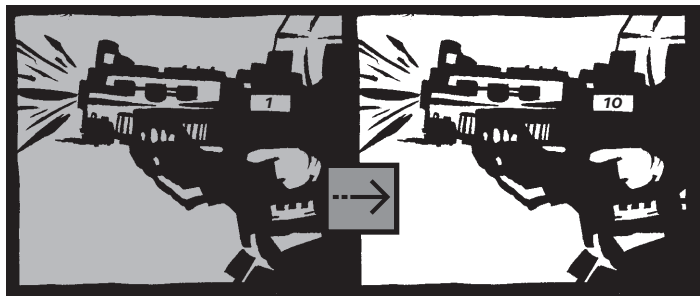
LOSING RANK

It is possible to lose rank too, though it's not always a bad thing.

You can be *demoted* only if (1) you used a *Weakness* in the mission, and (2) you have not just been promoted using a Development Roll in this current "Between Missions" phase.

If a PC meets these criteria then they can be a target for demotion. Another PC can nominate the target PC, as long as they meet those two criteria. A PC can only be targeted once between missions.

The nominator and the target both then make a test of NFA. If the nominator wins the roll then the target loses 1 rank after a court martial. If the target wins, or they both tie or fail then the case is "not proven" and the target retains their current rank.

The good news is that the lowest rank is Trooper, and you cannot be demoted from this.

WHAT IF THE RANK ABOVE YOU IS PROMOTED OR DEMOTED?

So, what happens if the rank above you is promoted or demoted between missions? Do you gain rank like a field promotion?

The answer is no. You only gain rank between missions if you wish to spend a Development Roll on being promoted. Ad hoc promotions occur only in the heat of battle.

8: "Replacement"

Death is absolutely, always, a possibility for a character in 3:16. Should your Armour fail, should you become A Mess and then Crippled, and finally, should you run out of available Strengths and Weaknesses then any further Kills will end your character's life.

Let's be honest, though, it's not as if there are no mechanics in place in the game to keep the character alive. That's quite a book of matches that you've burned through to get here, right? And if that's the case then that's it for your character. Finito. Dead.

Now, I know that some people will grow attached to their characters and plead for them to stay alive beyond their natural departure date. But the GM should ignore their plaintive cries.

Death is a fact of life. The possibility of it is part of the game. And better that your character dies on some hell hole such as Planet Picasso than popping into a Suicide Booth back on Terra. You've died a hero, maybe.

Just because a character is dead doesn't mean that the player can't play the game any more. Because they can and should keep playing. They just need to create a replacement character for the last one.

ABILITIES
Total up the FA and NFA of your now-dead PC. You have this many points to split between the FA and NFA of your new character. No ability can be lower than 2 nor higher than 10.

FLASHBACKS
The Flashbacks your dead PC had "Used" are also "Used" for your new PC *except* that one Strength is made "Available" again. No need to detail what the "Used" ones are, though. Your new PC starts with any "Available" Flashbacks from before, and has at least 1 Strength to help them.

Not Yet Available	☐
Available	☑
Used	☒

RANK
Your new character is either a Trooper, or at least one Rank lower than before. You may choose which Rank you enter the game at, as long as it is lower than the dead character, or a Trooper.

WEAPONS
All your lovely weapon upgrades are gone. Your new character has the basic guns for his or her rank. So, you will have to upgrade them between missions all over again. Tough, that's the way it is.

EXAMPLE
Sgt Smile (FA: 6, NFA: 8, no Available Flashbacks) dies. His replacement can be a Corporal or Trooper with 14 points in FA and NFA, and 1 Strength available. All his weapons are back to basic.

THE LIEUTENANT brewed up something rotten. His lid just blew off, like a kettle on the boil. Thought I saw his skull glow inside-out as it vapourized into a blackening cloud of plasma and soot.

The worst thing was his PowerClaw still twitched a bit afterwards, as if he were still trying to give orders, or something. He was fine from the waist down but the top half was a fucking nightmare.

Twisted metal and popping flesh bubbled over the top and the upper half of the Lieutenant was in two clumps a little bit away smouldering wildly and the steaming mess rimmed in charred streaks and bubbles.

It was only then after taking in that gruesome scene that I was able to complete my message from the Sergeant, "…incoming, Sir. Sarge says it could get a bit messy."

I didn't know whether to salute or not, but I did so anyway. Fucking disaster.

Diary of Trooper Grant, "Planet Picasso" entry.

9: Higher Ranks

When a PC becomes an Officer then they do not leave the other PCs behind. You simply work the rank into the story. The promoted character will, however, have new Orders to follow and new dangers to face. Soon they are no longer commanding just the squad but hundreds, then thousands, of NPC Troopers too.

Should an encounter or planetary assault fail the consequences will be more severe based on their rank. As rank grows so does the PC's authority to make their own decisions about where to assault and how to do so. The GM should hand Mission Briefings and planet choosing over to the players as their PCs gain rank, while retaining the right to pick the alien Special Abilities.

LIEUTENANT [RANK 3] ◆◆

Description
The most-common Officer rank in 3:16. The Lieutenant is the lowest ranking commissioned officer and has responsibility for several squads of Troopers. Lieutenants vary from raw and eager individuals brimming with lofty ideas and lacking experience, to grizzled veterans keen to stay close to their men in the field.

Responsibilities
Order 5: Ensure that no creatures in an encounter survive.
Order 6: Enforce discipline on the lower ranks.

Quote
"Excellent, Sergeant. A most impressive squad that you have there. Tell me, has your squad ever actually seen a bug? Oh, really, that many. Well, what was it like? To see that many of them I mean. I've only ever seen them in books myself, you see. Fascinating."

Weapons and Gear
As Sergeant plus **PowerClaw**.

Resources Available
Drop Pod, you get one on promotion to Lieutenant and can request replacement Pods if required using a Development Roll. Able to call on an **Orbital Bombardment**.

CAPTAIN [RANK 4]

Description
The Captain is in charge of a Company of troops. This normally means all troops on a single troop ship. This is the rank above Lieutenant and brave and intelligent officers hope to be promoted to this more senior rank. The rank of Captain is not without those who are foolish, headstrong and opinionated. This often leads to disastrous consequences for the troops in their command.

Responsibilities
Order 7: Ensure that no creatures on a planet survive.
Order 8: Deliver Mission Briefings and plan assaults.

Quote
"Easy Company. Listen up. Today we dine on death. We will feast on fury. We will unleash our love of Terra, our devotion, as hate on this planet. Troopers, we will fight. And we will win. Let's roll."

Weapons and Gear
As Lieutenant plus **PowerBlade**.

Resources Available
APC and **TPK Bomb**. You get one of each on promotion to Captain. You can request a replacement APC or TPK Bomb if required between missions using a Development Roll.

MAJOR [RANK 5]

Description
The Major is in charge of an independent Company of troops and is responsible for senior missions of great importance. A Major is normally a veteran of harsh engagements in the field and has won many medals. His troops are the very best of the best, the elite of the elite, and are tasked with the toughest missions. The GM gets Threat Tokens equal to [Number of PCs x 6] for such missions.

Responsibilities
Order 9: Complete important missions as directed by senior ranks.
Order 10: Never retreat.

Quote
"Troopers, our mission is of great importance and is full of danger. I'll be honest with you, some of us, maybe all of us, will die today. These deaths will not be in vain. Let's kill these bastards for Terra."

Weapons and Gear
As Captain plus **Kinetic Field Armour Transmitter**. **Flame-Gun** or **Shotgun**.

Resources Available
Drop Ship. You get one on promotion to Major. You can request a replacement Drop Ship if required using a Development Roll.

LT COLONEL [RANK 6]

Description
Normally the highest ranking Officer in the field on a mission is a Lieutenant Colonel. They are superior in rank to the Major and report directly to the Colonels at Brigade HQ. They are sometimes simply called "Colonel" by troops in the field. They are possibly the highest rank that an ordinary Trooper will ever meet. The GM gets Threat Tokens equal to [Number of PCs x 7] when there is a Lt Col.

Responsibilities
Order 11: Oversee the destruction of life on planets.
Order 12: Ensure that senior ranks are informed of insubordination.

Quote
"This planet has been identified as carrying life, that if it is not destroyed could, in time, threaten our home world. Our beloved Terra. I am tasking you, Major, with obliterating the planet's core. Nothing must leave this planet alive. Nothing."

Weapons and Gear
As Major.

Resources Available
Paradise Bomb. You get one on promotion to Lt Colonel. You can request a replacement if required using a Development Roll.

COLONEL [RANK 7]

Description
The rank of Colonel is one of the oldest in existence. In 3:16 it is the second highest field rank possible. Colonels are staff officers in between the Lt Colonels commanding in the field and the Brigadier directing the Brigade. As a Colonel a PC will be expected to take a great deal of authority and responsibility for the 3:16. He will also have to answer for his failures directly to the Brigadier.

Responsibilities
Order 13: Identify planets for destruction and inform Lt Colonels.
Order 14: Kill those who disobey orders.

Quote
"This planet looks like a peaceful planet, no? But it is not. There is something of the night about it. Its treachery is shown in its attempts to escape detection. I have no choice but to destroy the entire star system. Prepare the Starkiller missile. Fire on my mark."

Weapons and Gear
As Lieutenant Colonel.

Resources Available
Starkiller. You get one on promotion to Colonel. You can request a replacement if required using a Development Roll.

40

BRIGADIER [rank 8]

Description
The highest officer rank that a PC can reach in 3:16 is that of Brigadier. You are in charge of the whole 16th Brigade of the 3rd Army of the Expeditionary Force. The Brigadier answers to the Terran Council and directly to the General of the 3rd Army.

The Brigade currently has someone of this rank, of course, so promotion to this rank requires the present Brigadier to be dead.

Responsibilities
Order: 15: Kill all life in the Cosmos.
Order 16: Ensure that the Expeditionary Force does not return to Terra under any circumstances.

Quote
"I have a job to do. You either help me, or you die. Possibly both. Which is it to be?"

Weapons and Gear
As Colonel.

Resources Available
The Device, a weapon capable of turning a d10-parsec area of space into a rich star-forming region. It can be used only once.

BECOMING THE BRIGADIER
There is only one Brigadier in 3:16 and initially the Brigadier is a very distant figure. When characters gain rank they will find themselves closer to the Brigadier and the inner circle of Colonels.

It is possible to achieve this rank through Field Promotion if the current Brigadier were to fall in battle. Low animal cunning is the least of the talents you will need to have to gain this rank. The position wields considerable power and responsibility.

a: The Game Master

The role of the Game Master in the group can certainly be an enjoyable one. You will have the freedom to come up with cool planets and strange aliens week-after-week, challenging the players to take them on and win.

It is also a role that is not for everyone, and while some groups will want to take turns being the Game Master, others will happily settle into having a bunch of players and one GM.

Either works, it depends entirely on what works for your group. Both ways are completely valid.

If you are the GM then this chapter is here to help you.

FOUR IMPORTANT THINGS FOR BEING THE GM

Here are the things you should always bear in mind when running a game of 3:16. These might be different from what you're used to, so even people that have been a Game Master in other games before should take note of these ideas.

1. NPCS AND ALIENS ARE ADVERSITY

The NPCs and aliens are there to provide adversity for the PCs, and to provoke the players into action and reflection. Don't lose sight of this. That said, do add "personality" to your NPCs and aliens.

While it's easier to let your NPCs and aliens go when they're not sympathetic, don't make them evil. Aliens especially are fighting back the only way they know how to against a hostile assault.

2. DON'T TELL PLAYERS HOW THEIR PC FEELS

In this game the PCs may commit despicable acts of mass carnage, and probably smaller and meaner acts of vengeance too. Possibly to each other. It's important that you let the players decide how their characters feel about such things.

So, never tell a player that their character feels guilty, or embarrassed or emotional about something. It is clearly up to the player to decide how their charater feels.

It is perfectly OK for you, and other players, to embellish detail upon kills and betrayals. But leave the PC's feelings to the player.

3. JUDGE AS ANY OTHER PLAYER WOULD

In the game there will be moments where you have to make decisions. These will be tactical in some cases (should you try and have the Aliens flee the carnage?) or moral in others (would the Lt Colonel send the group into the face of yet more death?).

You should make your judgements as if you were any other player. Don't go easy on the PCs just because you think that's what you're supposed to do. Would the PCs go easy on the aliens or the Officers and fellow Troopers in the Brigade? I think not.

The PCs look out for themselves, right? So should you. The game system will sort out the answers of what happens next, and everyone will have to react to that. Don't prejudge.

4. RE-INCORPORATION

You should look out for story elements that can be repeated later. This can range from simply taking note of which aliens the players liked best, so that you can have them re-appear on missions after number 20. But it can also mean taking note of betrayals, double-crosses, etc. so that you can provoke the PCs with them in the ongoing story. Look out for symbolism in the actions of the PCs and re-use them. Also track who has used Orbital Bombardments.

If one of the PCs says he will never do something ("I'll never shoot someone in the back") then you should try and challenge that assertion on future missions. So keep an eye out for things that can be re-incorporated into the fiction to create recurring themes.

GM TECHNIQUES

FRAMING

Framing scenes is really easy and you shouldn't worry about it. You just need to visualize the scene and let everybody know the following information.

> 1. Where is it?
> 2. What is it like? Think of the 5 senses.
> 3. Who is there?
> 4. What is everyone currently doing?

This is the 'platform', it is static. You have just set the scene so far. Now we pause, and then add a 'tilt' to propel it into motion.

> 5. What has just happened?

EXAMPLE

You're on the colder side of the island, where salty air blows off the sea. Thick trees rise up like angry fingers to form a thick forest leading miles inland. Troopers are cutting down trees to clear a larger landing area. (Platform)

Bang! A drop ship crash lands on fire. It is spewing fuel and has clearly been shot down. (Tilt)

Following on from this you role-play out the scene. How is everyone reacting? Who is doing what? Anyone running to help the injured? Looking around for incoming attacks? Diving for cover? Cracking out a Cancer Stick and saying something witty? I wouldn't necessarily go straight into an encounter here with a Dominance roll. See where the players take the story first. If they do nothing then have it be an attack. However, if they role-play out something else then have that lead you to the encounter.

> I would recommend the following tips.
>
> **1.** Don't over-describe or be too elaborate. Hit the strongest senses and be lean in your words.
> **2.** Take on board additions from others about what is there and what they are doing, especially when forming the platform.
> **3.** Flavour the scene when you frame it but don't "cook" it. That will come through the role-playing during the scene. Think of framing as preparing the ingredients, but make the meal in play.

PC VERSUS PC CONFLICTS

These are really just the same as encounters, except that as the GM you don't have any Threat Tokens involved. Just follow the rules as you would for a normal encounter, though.

DOMINANCE

1. Test for Dominance.
1a. If it's an Ambush then the winner gets a free kill, of course.
1b. The winner gets to set the range.

COMBAT SEQUENCE

2. Roll for the Combat Sequence, with PCs using either FA or NFA depending on what they are doing.
2a. FA successes cause "kills" and you put an X through a damage box. Note that unlike an encounter you only get kills for your "Total Kills" if you actually make the other PC *really dead*.
2b. NFA successes can cause "exhaustion" in the opponent if you are trying an emotional attack. Put an "E" in the box rather than a cross to show it is "exhaustion" and not killing damage.
2c. If one PC gets a better success than their opponent then they can change range. In this case place both PCs at the same range on the map, i.e. they are both at Close, Near or Far.

ENDINGS

3a. One side may yield at any point if the other side accepts.
3b. The conflict continues until someone is dead or mentally exhausted (all boxes filled in and taking "E" damage).

FLASHBACKS

4. PCs are able to use Strengths and Weaknesses, of course, if they have them available.
4a. On a Strength the user of the Flashback wins. They get to describe their Strength and how it makes them win in the current conflict.
4b. On a Weakness the user of the Flashback loses, but on their own terms. The procedure is the same as for a Strength.

EXAMPLE

Say, for example, Trooper Smile wants to shoot Lieutenant Frinks. Smile's player describes how he is setting up an ambush. Smile's player says "I'm shooting him in the back! So it's an automatic Ambush, right?"

No, actually. You still need to make that test for Dominance, as Lieutenant Frinks has a chance to sense the ambush coming, and in fact may Ambush Trooper Smile in his own way.

So, let's follow this case through.

Trooper Smile   **Lieutenant Frinks**
FA: 7   NFA: 3   FA: 4   NFA: 8

Dominance
Both roll "1"s and so they are tied. They roll dice to split the tie. Frinks rolls a "10" and Smile an "8". Frinks wins and sets the range at Far.

Combat Sequence

Trooper Smile's Energy Rifle can kill at Far Range (i.e. the kills are not zero) and so he uses FA to take a shot. Meanwhile, Frinks declares he is bullying Smile via the comm system in the MandelBrite suits. He is working on him mentally, wearing him down. Smile rolls "7" (a success) and Frinks a "1" (also a success, but lower).

Smile hits first. He shouts "Incoming" over the comm system and alludes to an attack. Frinks chooses to use his Armour to take the kill. Frinks is successful too, and causes one Exhaustion damage to Smile. Armour can't absorb this and Smile marks an E in "A Mess".

Next turn, sees Frinks roll a "2" and Smile a "3". Frinks is now "A Mess" with actual damage, and Smile "Crippled" with Exhaustion. Smile then yields as he can't afford any more Exhaustion damage and says he has run the attackers off. Frinks puts Smile on latrine duty.

At the end of the non-fighting conflict all exhaustion damage is removed and the winner can impose an order on the loser. This will not remove rebellious thoughts or change how they feel though.

PC VERSUS NPC CONFLICTS

These are the same as PC versus PC conflicts except that you use the AA of the planet for the FA or NFA of the NPC. For "health" NPCs only have one "kill" box, so they are either physically killed by the PC (if they use FA) or exhausted (if they use NFA). You may deem that an officer has two "kill" boxes rather than one.

THREAT TOKENS

Threat Tokens manage the adversity to the PCs on a planet.

USE THEM TO "POWER" ENCOUNTERS

If you want a short engagement then commit only a couple of Threat Tokens to it. Doing this will ensure that you have more encounters, though each one will allow for, and cause, fewer kills.

If you want a bigger fight then commit more Threat Tokens to the encounter than the number of PCs. This means that everyone has a chance to get killed and cause kills. Be careful about committing too many Threat Tokens, though. You want to make sure the final encounter is the "big one" otherwise it will be anti-climactic.

For the final encounter commit all your remaining Threat Tokens to the cause. Note that you shouldn't have more Threat Tokens than twice the number of PCs, though. If you have more Threat Tokens remaining than this limit then you should commit the excess Threat Tokens to an encounter preceding the finale.

USE THEM FOR SPECIAL ABILITIES

Spend Threat Tokens on the Special Abilities. Don't be afraid of using them. They are unique (for the first 20 missions, anyway) so use them while you can. They present differing challenges to the Troopers and that's part of the game.

Use the Special Ability in the first encounter to get it out there.

DON'T PULL YOUR PUNCHES

Don't be afraid of killing the PCs. They have Strengths and Weaknesses to remove themselves from encounters if they want to. They can also call in E-vacs and Orbital Bombardments if they are in over their heads. Finally, they can always get a replacement.

PACE THE MISSION USING THE ENCOUNTERS

Don't make all your encounters have the same number of Threat Tokens. Change it up to give a rhythm to the game session. If the Troopers are hunting bugs you might want to drip feed them a few low-Threat encounters then smash them with a bigger challenge later. Maybe you then push low-Threat encounters their way again before building to a big finale.

Set a tempo, and make it predictable in a good way.

CHOOSING RANGE

If you have a high AA then you should try and pick Close range if you are given the chance. Generally, this range will yield low kills for Troopers unless they resort to grenades (which kills Troopers too). Also, it makes it harder for the Troopers to leave the encounter.

If you have a low AA and the aliens are fearful of the Troopers then set the range at Far. That way you can end the encounter for as many of the Troopers as possible on an alien victory in a Combat Sequence. It also, generally, yields low kills. I would recommend avoiding Near Range in general as it usually suits the PC's guns.

CHOOSING AA FROM THE LIST

There are many choices for working out AA for a planet (p. 50 in the Planets section), which one should you choose for a planet?

The ones where you average FA and NFA will give a middling difficulty for the PCs and should present even challenges to the group throughout the campaign. I would use these for the standard planets.

The ones where you choose AA based on the highest attribute in the group will give tough challenges on early missions, but less pronounced challenges on later missions. So, you should aim to use these early if you want to make a planet hard for the group. Because it's likely that most of the group have equally high attributes on later missions these may seem anaemic if held off until later in the campaign.

Conversely, AA based on the lowest attribute will be weak at first but far more powerful later on in the campaign.

Finally, at some point you will have to use the 5 and 10 values. I suggest that you use 5 early in the campaign and 10 much later, but it's up to you.

There may be a lot of pathos in presenting a grizzled veteran unit late in a campaign with a benign planet of humans and only an AA of 5 to save them. Or you could always roll AA randomly.

IT'S ABOUT THE MISSIONS

In the early part of the campaign it should be about the missions. The players will find their characters in their reactions to adversity and the situations they find on each planet. They will have tasks to complete and encounters to survive. Missions and their encounters will be the main rhythm of the game.

Still, as the GM you should be spiking the story with moral dilemmas arising out of the PCs' actions. Every 4th planet throw in *something* that will cause the players to think outside the mission.

IT'S NOT ABOUT THE MISSIONS

In the later part of the campaign the PCs will have different levels of FA and NFA, differing rank and varying amounts of available Flashbacks. They will also have different agendas that they want to achieve. Here missions still happen but you will find they slip into the background as the beat of game becomes all about the characters and their desires. Especially when a character gains the available Weakness "Hatred for Home". Events will then start shooting off from the possibility of that Weakness being used.

And those moral issues? Are there disagreements between the senior ranks about the missions. Talk amongst the grunts of rebellion? Things that remind the PCs of home? As GM especially pick up on used Flashbacks and bring them in. What if the senior ranks make a grave error and blame it on the PCs? Sources of conflict should start to come from within the Force.

And when it's not all about the missions still throw planets in front of the PCs. The players may be selecting the targets though.

Also note that when PCs become Officers you should allow them to define what Missions are and which planets they are setting course for. As the GM you will be choosing the planet Special Abilities, but the highest ranking PC may well be driving where the group is going in the fiction. Possibly back towards Terra.

At high rank hand more authority over orders to the players.

ROTATING GAME MASTER

Some people always like being the GM and that's fine. If your group is happy with that then you should stick with it.

However, 3:16 does allow you to take turns in being the GM. To do this everyone should create a PC. You do not get to play your own character or have them involved when you are being the GM. At the end of every mission that you GM though, your character gains one of two things: (1) a level, or (2) a weapon upgrade. Whichever one you pick, you must pick the other choice for your character next time you GM.

You should keep a master list of planet choices used for your campaign. Just pass this on to the next GM so they can see what is available for them when making a planet. They can then pass it on to the next GM with their choices crossed off.

HELPING THE GROUP TELL STORIES

One of the key parts of being GM is to help the group tell stories. So, don't shoot down what the players are trying to do. Work with them. They should be working with you too. While the PCs are fighting the bugs, the players are not fighting the GM.

Be mindful to say "Yes, and…" rather than "No" at ideas. Follow their lead if they are taking one. "You want to search the caves for bugs?" Then that's where the next encounter is going to be. Let them make NFA rolls and consult their Field Manuals too. Role-play out the trip to the caves and their preparations. Maybe give them a +1 to their NFA for the forthcoming Dominance Roll if they prepare well. Then frame a scene, tilt it and roll for Dominance.

However, take the lead if the PCs are at a loss and unsure of where to go next. "Smoke billows from the middle of the forest. You think the aliens are that way." Don't sit on your hands, help them.

You're a participant too. So pass ideas to the players if you have good ones. Don't leave all the weight on their shoulders to come up with narration. And listen to their ideas for your aliens too.

SPOTLIGHT

Shine the spotlight around. If one player always acts first in a scene then use the tilt to direct the spotlight at another player. The PCs are all part of a group, so don't always focus on one character in that group.

b: Planets

PLANET CREATION AND PLAY

Follow these simple steps when creating your planets. See the Missions section (p. 29) and the GM section (p. 46) for advice on Threat Tokens and pacing the encounters on planets.

CROSSING OFF AND MAKING CHOICES

It's important that you, the GM, pick (or choose randomly) from the lists before play begins. So you know what is on the planet. Think about what sort of challenge you want to provide for the upcoming game session. Take care to note the Special Abilities and pick one to play with that you find interesting. Read its rules carefully. Once used you won't be able to pick it again until the whole list is exhausted. When you need more planets later on in the campaign just follow the pattern of using artist's names.

When you have exhausted the other lists then further missions allow you to pick from the whole list again, but without the "pick one" restriction. This time pick 2 or 3 Special Abilities for play.

MORE THAN JUST BOXES

It's important that you make the planets and aliens more than just their boxes chosen from the lists. So instead of "Artificial Lifeforms" with

ALIEN ABILITY

Choose or roll one of the following ways of working out the AA.

- ☐ 1 .... Lowest FA amongst the PCs
- ☐ 2 .... Lowest FA + 1
- ☐ 3 .... Lowest FA + 2
- ☐ 4 .... Lowest NFA
- ☐ 5 .... Lowest NFA + 1
- ☐ 6 .... Lowest NFA + 2
- ☐ 7 .... Highest FA
- ☐ 8 .... Highest FA − 1
- ☐ 9 .... Highest FA − 2
- ☐ 10 .... Highest NFA
- ☐ 11 .... Highest NFA − 1
- ☐ 12 .... Highest NFA − 2
- ☐ 13 .... [Highest FA + Lowest NFA]/2 (round up)
- ☐ 14 .... [Highest FA + Lowest NFA]/2 (round up) + 1
- ☐ 15 .... [Highest FA + Lowest NFA]/2 (round up) + 2
- ☐ 16 .... [Highest NFA + Lowest FA]/2 (round up)
- ☐ 17 .... [Highest NFA + Lowest FA]/2 (round up) + 1
- ☐ 18 .... [Highest NFA + Lowest FA]/2 (round up) + 2
- ☐ 19 .... AA = 5
- ☐ 20 .... AA = 10

the "Ambush" ability add some style of your own. Make them Eel-beasts, for example. The aliens and planets are the GM's chance to shine and you should try to come up with entertaining aliens.

NAMES
Choose or roll a name for the planet and cross it off the list below.

☐ 1	Bosch	☐ 11	Michelangelo
☐ 2	Caravaggio	☐ 12	Monet
☐ 3	Cézanne	☐ 13	Picasso
☐ 4	Degas	☐ 14	Pollock
☐ 5	Dürer	☐ 15	Rembrandt
☐ 6	Goya	☐ 16	Renoir
☐ 7	Holbein	☐ 17	Reubens
☐ 8	Kandinsky	☐ 18	Titian
☐ 9	Klimt	☐ 19	Warhol
☐ 10	Matisse	☐ 20	Whistler

BASIC PLANET DESCRIPTION
Choose or roll a planet description and cross it off the list below.

☐ 1	Arid world	☐ 11	Low gravity
☐ 2	Asteroid belt	☐ 12	Mountainous terrain
☐ 3	Cloud/gas planet	☐ 13	Pleasure planet
☐ 4	Dense atmosphere	☐ 14	Poisonous atmosphere
☐ 5	Desert world	☐ 15	Radioactive
☐ 6	Electrical storms	☐ 16	Rain world
☐ 7	Forested surface	☐ 17	Reefs and coral islands
☐ 8	High gravity	☐ 18	Temperate
☐ 9	High humidity	☐ 19	Volcanically active
☐ 10	Ice covered	☐ 20	Water world

BASIC CREATURE FORM
Choose or roll a form for the aliens and cross it off the list below.

☐ 1	Advanced Humanoids	☐ 11	Humanoids
☐ 2	Apes	☐ 12	Insectoids
☐ 3	Artificial lifeforms	☐ 13	Mineral-based forms
☐ 4	Birds or Flying Beasts	☐ 14	Oozes
☐ 5	Corrupt Troopers	☐ 15	Plants
☐ 6	Dinosaurs	☐ 16	Rays, sharks or fish
☐ 7	Dogs	☐ 17	Reptiles or Amphibians
☐ 8	Felines	☐ 18	Sentient planet
☐ 9	Furred Creatures	☐ 19	Shadow Beasts
☐ 10	Giants	☐ 20	Sirens

ALIEN SPECIAL ABILITY
Choose or roll a Special Ability for the planet inhabitants.

☐ 1	Ambush	☐ 11	Induce Weakness
☐ 2	Armour	☐ 12	Isolate
☐ 3	Boost Ability	☐ 13	Lasting Wounds
☐ 4	End Encounter	☐ 14	Leaping
☐ 5	Enrage	☐ 15	Rapid Movement
☐ 6	Exploding Bodies	☐ 16	Reduce Visibility
☐ 7	Flee	☐ 17	Regeneration
☐ 8	Ignore Armour	☐ 18	Stop Technology
☐ 9	Ignore Wounds	☐ 19	Suicide
☐ 10	Impair	☐ 20	Swarm

PLANET DESCRIPTIONS

Arid world
The planet is too dry to support vegetation and has a parched, bleached look. The surface is a mixture of deserts, canyons and large fields of strewn rocks and boulders. The days are hot and unrelenting while the nights are harshly cold.

Asteroid belt
This former planet is now a series of asteroids gravitationally contained around a star. Individual rocks vary in size from tens of metres to a few kilometres at the largest. None has an atmosphere and most contain hidden caves, holes and crevices.

Cloud/gas planet
From space this planet is shrouded in a thick covering of cloud cover, often of dizzying colours and patterns. The surface, if there is one, is bathed in the eerie glow of its star shining through multiple layers of stratified cloud. Visibility is poor. It's possible that the inhabitants of the planet live on cities floating in the clouds, or in fortresses on the surface cowering under the clouded sky.

Dense atmosphere
The stand-out feature of this planet is its dense atmosphere. The air is thick like soup and movement is difficult for those used to a thinner environment. Inhabitants of such places tend to be shaped and propelled in ways more akin to living in water, for example with fins and jets on their bodies. The air here is also likely to be filled with heavier gases and at a higher pressure making it difficult for Troopers outside of their MandelBrite suits.

Desert world
This planet is covered in desert conditions on more than 95 per cent of its surface. Deep layers of drifting silt and sand texture the planet and give it a majestic appearance. While some deserts are bleached to the colour of pale bone others are exotically bright. Notably difficult to navigate by sight this planet can appear barren and uninhabited from orbit. Do not let this fool you, for beneath the surface complex creatures thrive. It is often said that anyone walking on a desert planet should do so with an irregular gait, lest they awake the sleeping horrors beneath the sand.

Electrical storms

This planet has a highly charged atmosphere and electrical storms are a daily, if not hourly, occurrence. The weather here is harsh and highly variable. The storms can play havoc with communications between units of troops on the surface. They also make contact with the ships in orbit difficult too. The electrical storms can be thrilling and spectacular to look at, though, and many Troopers will marvel at fury unleashed from the skies on this planet.

Forested surface

Lush and vivid vegetation covers the surface of this forest planet. Travel by foot is hardest where the trees and bushes are at their thickest. The overhead canopy also hinders easy transport from ground to the air. Visibility is often poor and the dense jungles can send Troopers mad. The forests on the surface are teeming with diverse lifeforms but the creatures are often well camouflaged and hard to identify, apart from the ones that are poisonous to eat or even touch. Make the plants on this planet exotic and vivid.

High gravity

High-gravity worlds often have strangely formed creatures living on them, which of course must be killed all the same. The unique gravitational conditions of these planets also make it hard work for Troopers to move and fight on the surface. Make a point of highlighting the awkward conditions that this high-gravity world presents to even the most mundane task such as lifting up a dropped TRM from the ground.
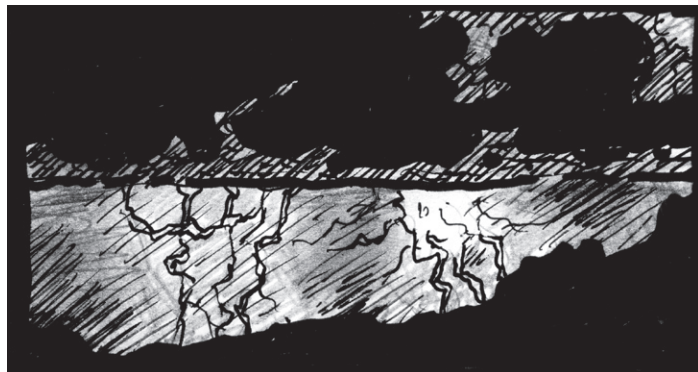
High humidity

The humidity of this planet is its most notable feature. You may want to consider if it has rain forests and a high level of surface water too. The atmosphere here will play havoc with guns and electrical instruments and the high humidity can bring extreme discomfort to Troopers too. MandelBrite Armour can suffer temperature control malfunctions in these conditions and it's not certain if it's worse being in or out of the suit.

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Ice covered

Bright white with a high albedo, ice-covered worlds present unique problems for Troopers. Often creatures will blend naturally into the surface or even burrow below it, making it difficult for them to be tracked effectively. The planet also has extremely cold temperatures at night and searing surface glare during the day.

Low gravity

Smaller planets tend to have lower gravity than Terra and these can be as awkward for Troopers as high-gravity worlds. The creatures and plants that have thrived in this environment can often seem very strange. The atmosphere on this planet is also likely to be very thin and at best equivalent to high-altitude, if breathable at all.

Mountainous terrain

The outstanding feature of this planet is its impressive and varied range of hills and mountains. These surface features make travel by foot awkward and tiring. The mountains also afford many opportunities for ambushes by the native creatures. Another notable point about a mountainous planet is the diversity of conditions that it contains. The gentle valleys between the mountains are very different from the foothills and frozen peaks.
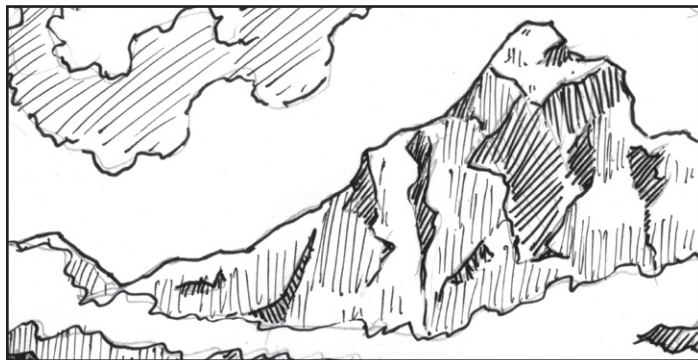
Pleasure planet

This world is a place of hedonistic abandon. It could be this way naturally with touch-sensitive rocks and plants covering the surface, or perhaps it has been constructed to be a world fulfilling the basest needs of lifeforms. Decide if the planet is home to large circular cities provide thrilling pleasures of the flesh and mind, or if it is a naturally pleasuring planet of idyllic beauty and lush form.

Poisonous atmosphere

The atmosphere on this world marks it out as being unusual, and deadly. The surface features noted from space could make it out to be any of the other planet types, but the corrosive and caustic atmosphere of this planet is its most significant feature. Armour stains rapidly, food perishes on contact and Troopers vomit and die upon being exposed to the air here.

Radioactive

This planet is either naturally radioactive or has been the victim of a nuclear disaster in its past. Sensitive radiation counters break in seconds on this planet and the shrill hissing of the MandelBrite's crude built-in radiation detector accompanies the Troopers everywhere they go on this planet. Suffice to say the inhabitants here are mutants, deformed and desperate.

Rain world

Driving rain sweeping across the globe mark this planet out as a miserable and unrelenting place to go. The surface is mainly land but covered in lakes, rivers and seas. Clouds and storm fronts drive continuously across the world depositing harsh, belting rain at a near constant rate. Visibility in the heaviest rains can be terrible and the mud underfoot is often treacherous.

Reefs and coral islands

This is a water world that has an abundance of reefs and low-set coral islands. The planet appears a pleasing colour from space and the sight of its lagoons and sparkling sandbars will thrill Troopers as they descend to the surface. However, this idyllic beauty often masks the true nature of the reefs and the islands.

Temperate

A temperate world is one that is quite like Terra. It has polar regions, rain forests, deserts, mountains and seas. The GM should decide how far advanced technology is on the planet and whether it has cities or not. The Troopers will have to travel across widely varying zones of the planet to eradicate all the life here. The GM should give thought to what aspects of the temperate world that he wants to feature in the game, and vary the encounters based on that.

Volcanically active

From space this planet looks violent and spectacular. Large plumes of smoke and molten rock spit high into the atmosphere and at night the surface is etched with rivers of lava streaking across the surface. Seismic shocks, tsunamis and pyroclastic flows are some of the dangers that Troopers face on a volcanically active planet. The creatures here live with these conditions on a daily basis and have adapted to suit. This can lead to exotic creatures indeed.

Water world

A water world is a planet that is entirely covered in liquid. Some have ice at the poles, but that is not always the case. There are no islands or reefs here, and the inhabitants of the planet live in the highly stratified layers of the ocean. Nearest the surface the water pressure is lower and the temperature higher. Here buoyant creatures and plants bathe in the light of the local star. Deeper down the water is colder, the pressure higher and the light almost non-existent. At the very furthest depths sulphur seams and molten rock can heat up the water to dangerously high temperatures. The creatures that thrive in these conditions are deadly. The GM should decide if this planet features scientific bases either floating on the surface or moored to the bedrock deep below.

"Sarge? It's like a fuckin' eel with razors for hands and a bulbed head."—Trooper Dog

CREATURE FORMS

Advanced Humanoids

These are vaguely humanoid creatures but are far advanced from humans. They may be a civilization that is unfathomably old or the remnants of an ancient star-faring race that once traversed the Cosmos. What technology and ways of defending themselves do these creatures have? And how will they react to seeing the 3:16?

Apes

These are ape-like creatures and can be human-sized or much larger. They may be savage and feral natives to the planet or perhaps they have a complicated space-faring society and scientists much like Terra. The GM can twist them or play them straight up.

Artificial lifeforms

These creatures are not natural. They have been constructed for some purpose. By whom, and for what, is for the GM to decide. Perhaps they are Eel-beasts designed for killing in an experiment that went wrong? Or maybe they are robots that have gained sentience? Tie the creation story to earlier or later missions.

Birds or Flying Beasts

A wide-ranging creature type that can cover anything from birdmen to flying lizards or space eagles. The notable feature of these aliens is that they are able to fly in some way. Or perhaps

they are flightless birds like the Dodo? Though I doubt that these creatures will go as quietly into the night as that bird did.

Corrupt Troopers

These "aliens" are an army group of Troopers from Terra. They have given up on killing everything in the Cosmos and have resorted to other activities. This is, of course, punishable by death on the orders of the Brigadier. They will be identically armed to the PCs and the GM can decide if they are more or less experienced. You can also decide whether these Corrupt Troopers are sympathic characters or not. Have they simply had enough of killing or have they set up concentration camps or are pillaging planets for gold and other valuables. Do they mirror the PCs in any way?

Dinosaurs

A variety of dinosaurs roam this planet. Pick a dinosaur or two and combine it with the planet type to come up with an interesting combination. Perhaps they are raptors, quick and attacking from unexpected angles. Or maybe they are large powerful dinosaurs with teeth as big as your hand and claws that can rip through sheet steel like it was paper.

Dogs

Dogs, wolves and dingoes are the order of the day here. Pack animals that have a strong group ethic. The GM can make the creatures humanoid if he so wishes, or he could have them be wild animals with razor sharp teeth and a taste for blood.

Felines

Cats, lions or cat-like humanoids are covered by this creature type. Take cats as the starting point and invent a twisted version of them as the aliens. Perhaps they have the ability to travel through space and time, or are notably quicker, larger and stronger than normal cats owing to the planetary conditions they've evolved under.

Furred Creatures

The GM should decide what sort of fur-covered alien is on the planet. Why the fur? Is it an ice planet or is it useful for swimming in cool waters? Are these small furred creatures or are they bear-like and much larger than humans? Are they armed with shotguns and bandoliers of grenades? Perhaps the creatures have bizarre rites and oral histories that tell of people who will fall from the stars and must be slain to protect their way of life.

Giants

Giant beasts are the enemy here. Are they giant beetles, moths or lizards? The GM has a free hand to create any type of creature and make it far larger than normal. A good tip for a GM is to take a small creature, such as a sandworm, and make it a giant.

Humanoids

These creatures are humanoid in form, while not actually being human. Pick a feature of humans and exaggerate it to come up with your humanoids, or pick a creature like a pig and make a humanoid race of space pigs with it.

Insectoids

Spiders, ants, bees and other bugs should be your inspiration for these creatures. Pick an insect or group of insects and give them a twist. Do they have a civilization? What do they look like? What are their customs? What tactics do they use in war and what are the ambitions of their civilization? Have a distinct hierarchy of soldiers, workers and queens, for instance, that you can work with.

Mineral-based forms

These are not carbon-based but silicon-based lifeforms. They can be as obviously mineral-based as "rock monsters" or they can appear to be relatively humanoid but with a hard silicate skin and no discernible organs.

Oozes

Pools of aggressive and caustic ooze, sometimes with eyes and tentacle-like limbs are the type of creature described by the Ooze category. This also covers things like jellyfish that may be rather exotically airborne.

Plants

Plant-based lifeforms present a horrific challenge to the Troopers. Think of Venus Flytraps, aggressive vines and grasses. From Triffid-like lifeforms to spore-spitting fields of flowers there are many ways that plants can be made interesting and terrifying. There is also the option for the creatures to be roughly humanoid but made of plant matter rather than flesh and bone. Pick a plant and twist it.

Rays, sharks or fish

These types of enemy need not be limited to the seas, though you would most commonly expect to find this category on a water world. They could be airborne, swimming in a thick atmosphere or in the stratified layers of a gas giant. Rays, sharks and fish can move rapidly and are typically fierce predators. They may also have ranged attacks of spit poisoned darts and lethal spines.

Reptiles or Amphibians

Space Toads, lizard people, Crocodilians, Cosmic Newts and other types of amphibious alien are covered by this category. These cold-blooded creatures may have spawning grounds that they protect to the last, or they may lay eggs to grow in number. Horrifyingly they may need to lay their eggs *inside* something warm, like a weak prey on their home planet or the abdomen of a Trooper, for instance. These creatures may be very *cold blooded* in outlook.

Sentient planet

The planet itself is a life form and it is the final Threat Token needing to be destroyed in the mission. It will send various inhabitants of the world against the Troopers when using its Threat Tokens. How the planet came to be this way and how it thinks and reacts is up to the GM. Give the planet a personality influenced by the kind of world it is. So a volcanic planet may be angry and ill-tempered, while a ice planet may be more cerebral and cool in its outlook.

Shadow Beasts

These creatures are made of shadow, they are the absence of light. They flit rapidly across terrain and may unleash vicious scything attacks. The shadows should be made unique by the GM, and they are a good opportunity to re-incorporate nightmares and visions from earlier planets. These tenebrous beasts should be horrific inhuman *things* that will stop at nothing to kill the Troopers.

Sirens

Sirens are creatures of temptation. They may appear to be human, but they are not. They typically look like attractive members of the opposite sex and manifest themselves as drinking cocktails and enjoying themselves. Each manifestation may be specific to the individual Trooper, or they may be a shared vision. Sirens try to tempt Troopers to lay down their weapons and join them. Attacks on Troopers may be through sensory overload, spiked drinks, barbed poisons or by the Sirens dropping their false appearance and outright assaulting the Troopers in an horrific form.

ALIEN SPECIAL ABILITIES

When the text below mentions spending Threat Tokens these can be from the current encounter's Threat Tokens or from the general Threat Tokens for the planet that are not committed to this encounter. Either is a source for powering the Abilities.

Ambush

By expending 1 Threat Token this ability gives the aliens an Ambush on the PCs without having to roll at the start of an encounter. How the aliens use this ability is up to the GM. They may materialize out of thin air, burrow up to the PCs from below or swoop down from the clouds. In any case they can automatically Ambush the PCs if they spend a Threat Token unless the PCs have an item (Drop Pod, say) that already gives them an Ambush in the encounter.

Armour

The aliens have Armour. Once per encounter the GM can declare that all kills against the aliens in that Combat Round will be void. It does not cost any Threat Tokens to use this ability.

Boost Ability

Boost Ability allows the aliens to be more effective in an encounter. For every Threat Token expended the Alien Ability is raised by 1 for the whole encounter. The most that AA can be raised to by this special ability is 10. How this is achieved in the story is left to the GM to decide, as it will be particular to these aliens.

End Encounter

By expending 1 Threat Token the encounter is ended after the aliens turn in the combat sequence. They all vanish from combat through whatever means makes sense. The method may even be mystifying to the Troopers. Threat Tokens remaining in the encounter at the point the encounter is ended are returned to the general pool of Threat Tokens for the planet.

Enrage

These beasts grow stronger the more they are provoked. By expending 1 Threat Token this ability raises Alien Ability by 1 point for each turn of combat. So, in the first round the GM rolls using AA, then in the next turn AA+1, and so on. The maximum AA possible is 10.

Exploding Bodies

When at least one Threat Token is removed from an encounter through kills in the Combat Round the GM can expend 1 Threat Token to cause a kill to all PCs at Close Range. The PCs affected are showered in caustic matter from the exploding alien bodies.

Flee

Fearful of death these creatures are very adept at escaping from combat. The aliens automatically change range against every PC by one step on the aliens' turn, i.e. they run away successfully without having to make a roll. Depending on what the GM rolls this may be before or after the PCs attempt to kill them.

Ignore Armour

The attacks from the creatures ignore any and all types of Armour, including the Kinetic Armour Fields of the higher ranks. The attacks themselves are either armour piercing, radioactive or otherwise capable of damaging the Troopers through their MandelBrite Armour and protective vehicles. It does not cost the aliens any Threat Tokens to use this Special Ability. Simply their attacks cannot be stopped except by the flesh of the Troopers.

Ignore Wounds

A resolute species, these aliens can ignore grievous wounds and continue fighting. The GM spends a Threat Token and any kills caused in the current combat round are ignored. Successful PCs do not add any kills to their total as the beasts keep attacking them and do not die.

Impair

The aliens have the ability to impair the effectiveness of the Troopers. How they do this is up to the GM. It could be that they quickly learn how to counter the attacks of the Troopers, or that they are very adept at confusing the Troopers with swift movements or bright colours. For every Threat Token spent by the GM the FA and NFA of the Troopers is reduced by 1 for the encounter. So, if the GM spends 2 Threat Tokens then all PCs will have an FA and NFA two points lower than normal. For example, Trooper Smile with an FA of 6 and an NFA of 4, would be reduced to an FA of 4 and an NFA of 2 for the encounter in this case.

Induce Weakness

This Special Ability allows the aliens to try and induce a weakness in the target PC. It costs one Threat Token to attempt this, and each PC can have only one Weakness induced on them during the mission. When the GM spends the Token the aliens try to force a Weakness on the PC using their AA on the next turn. If successful then the target PC must use a Weakness if they have one available. If you have no Weaknesses available then you are immune to this alien attack.

Isolate

By spending a Threat Token the aliens isolate the PCs from the rest of the Expeditionary Force. This may be done by transporting them through a hole in space–time, by some sort of technological device or by leading them into a dense cave system, the exact nature is up to the GM. The effect is that the PCs cannot call on E-Vacs, Orbital Bombardments or other support items to end the encounter. They must face their enemy in isolation.

Lasting Wounds

The wounds caused by the aliens do not heal between encounters. Their attacks are so potent that they are only healed after the planet has been left behind. This special ability does not cost any Threat Tokens to use. How these wounds are lasting is left up to the GM to describe. They may be poisonous, deeply cut to the bone, chemically active or mysteriously lasting beyond anything that Terran science can comprehend.

Leaping

The aliens can move great distances rapidly and may move two range steps in combat. This Special Ability does not cost any Threat Tokens to use. How they "leap" is open to the GM's interpretation, it could be by jumping through space and time, using rocket packs or simply through physically powerful jumping.

Rapid Movement

By spending a Threat Token the aliens can shift to any range in combat on their turn. Simply move all PCs to the new range chosen by the GM. In the fiction the creatures appear suddenly at the new range, either through a scientific or mystical method. The exact nature of how this occurs may be incomprehensible to the Troopers. The aliens cannot end an encounter using this Special Ability, the best they can do is to change the range to Far and use a normal success on a following Combat Round to move the PC(s) beyond Far Range.

Reduce Visibility

This Special Ability means that kills cannot be caused at Far Range by either the aliens or the Troopers in combat. It does not cost any Threat Tokens to use this special ability. The reduced visibility may be caused by smoke or clouds used by the aliens to impair targeting. Or the effect may be caused by terrain features such as tunnels or canyons that prevent kills being caused at Far Range.

Regeneration

By spending one Threat Token the GM returns to the encounter any Threat Tokens removed in the most recent Combat Round. The PCs get to keep the kills they caused (since the creatures were killed) but they have now regenerated and arisen to continue the fight. For example, the PCs remove 4 Threat Tokens in a Combat Round. The GM then spends one Threat Token from the planet's general pool of Threat Tokens and the 4 removed Tokens are returned to

the encounter. How the aliens regenerate in the story is up to the GM. The destroyed body parts may coalesce into a pool or ooze with protruding misshapen limbs, or the dead creatures may lurch back to their feet and resume the battle.

Stop Technology

By spending a Threat Token the aliens prevent any technology from working in the Combat Round. This means that the usual Trooper weapons (guns, bombs and missiles) will simply fail to work. Hand-To-Hand attacks are unaffected by this ability and may be the Troopers' only method of attack.

Suicide

The aliens can attack the Troopers with devastating suicide attacks. The GM sacrifices 1 Threat Token to cause an automatic kill against the Troopers in a Combat Round. A sacrificed Token counts as a roll of a "1" on a d10. The GM can sacrifice only 1 Threat Token in this manner in a single Combat Round. As long as the GM has other Threat Tokens left in the encounter a normal attack roll can also be made in addition to the sacrificial attack.

Swarm

These creatures attack in vast numbers hoping to overwhelm their opponents by swarming them constantly at Close Range. On the aliens' turn in the Combat Round all PCs are moved to Close Range on the range map by this ability. It does not cost any Threat Tokens for the aliens to use the Swarm ability.
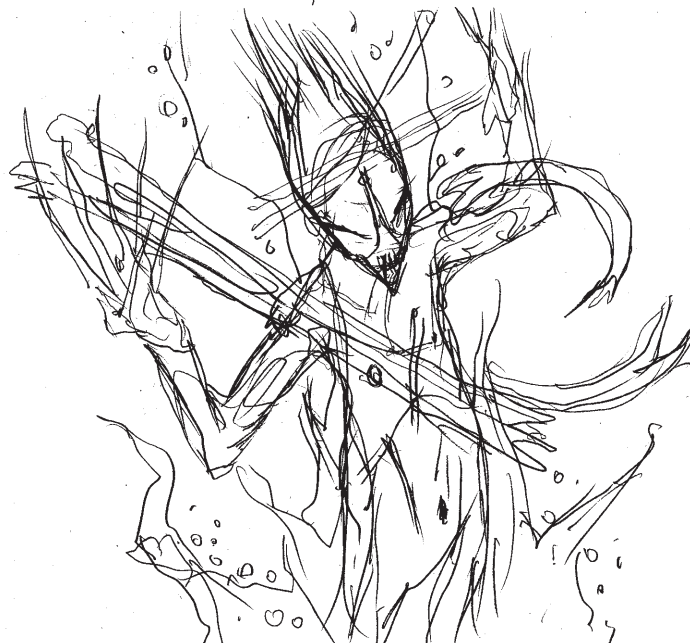
"They were on top of us before we could even get our movement sensors out. These Eel-beasts ambushed us every fucking time, almost like they were MADE to do this shit. Fuckers."—Trooper Dog

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c: An Example Planet

Here is an example of a planet where I made some decisions on the setting for this session and then created a mission out of them. To the right you can see the choices I made from the lists. I can't re-use any of these until I have exhausted all the options. I need to decide a few other things too.

NPCs

I decide to sketch out a few NPCs that I might need during the mission. I decide that "Lt Goodman" will be giving the briefing. I note to myself that he is a career desk-soldier and is a somewhat aloof and condescending individual.

He is going to be there to push the PCs if I need to, and I aim to make him a bit of a hate figure. I also pencil in that he says one thing to the PCs and then does another. He claims to have a sympathetic ear.

I also write down that there is a Trooper Carson who is useless at following orders. He always does the wrong thing and can't be relied on in a crisis.

I hold both these characters and the ideas loosely, though. They're not PCs, just some adversity.

MY CHOICES

Alien Ability
For AA I choose the "highest NFA".

☐	9	Highest FA – 2
☒	10	Highest NFA
☐	11	Highest NFA – 1

Planet Name
Just picking one from the list I go for "Goya" for this session.

☐	4	Degas
☐	5	Dürer
☒	6	Goya
☐	7	Holbein
☐	8	Kandinsky

Creature Form
Scanning over the choices I decide that I'd like to use "Dinosaurs". At the moment I haven't got an exact idea in mind, but I pick it from the list and I'll see what I can come up with.

☐	5	Corrupt Troopers
☒	6	Dinosaurs
☐	7	Dogs

Planet Description
Next up is Planet Description. Maybe it's the mood I'm in but I go for "Forested surface". I'm getting a better idea for my dinosaurs on this forest world.

☐	5	Desert world
☐	6	Electrical storms
☒	7	Forested surface
☐	8	High gravity
☐	9	High humidity

Special Ability
Finally I choose the Special Ability. I pick the first one on the list. I'll see how the PCs react to being the targets of ambushes by my dinosaurs.

☒	1	Ambush
☐	2	Armour
☐	3	Boost Ability

MY IDEAS FOR PLANET GOYA

Threat Tokens
This depends on the number of players. I'll have 4 players, so that's 20 Threat Tokens to last the whole planet.

Encounter Plan
I decide to split the planet up into 4 encounters, following the guides from p. 29. With 20 Threat Tokens I'll have encounters with 3, 4 and 5 Threat Tokens. The final encounter with then follow with all the remaining Tokens. I'm also remembering that each encounter will spend one Threat Token to use the Ambush Special Ability, so I reckon I should have 4 Threat Tokens left for the final battle.

Cool Scene Ideas/Images
I pencil down some ideas.

> • *Thick, lush, green rain forests.*
> • *Troopers having to clear a landing point in the trees.*
> • *A pile of steaming dung with Trooper bones in it.*
> • *Quick, chameleon-like Raptor dinosaurs.*
> • *The dinos spit acid and needles for ranged attacks.*
> • *A huge "Mother" dinosaur appears at some point.*

Missions
My rough ideas for missions are: the PCs being sent to find the first landing team; hunting down a pack of beasts that killed the first landing team; killing the final nest of dinosaurs when it is located.
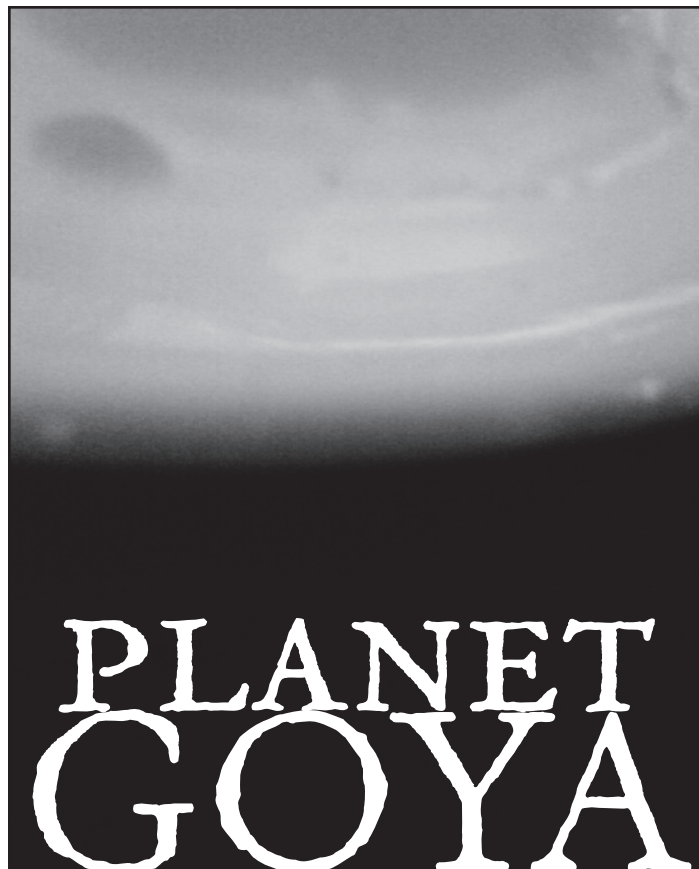
PLANET
GOYA

Ambush

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FIND OUT THE AA

You'll find out the AA from the abilities of your PCs. In my case the AA is equal to the highest NFA. This turns out to be 5. Make a note of it somewhere easy to find, it's not a secret number.

MISSION BRIEFING

Lt Goodman is an asshole, and I make a note to really play it out.

His line will be that the team aren't good enough to be chosen for the first wave of assault on the planet. But something has coming up. Able Company has lost contact with their first squad down and the Lt has to send a reserve group down to find them.

This is the group of PCs. They're given a map of the planet (useless, looks like a continuous canopy of forest) with the last known location marked. The Sergeant is also given a spare radio pack to pass on to the squad from Able Company when they find them.

FIRST ENCOUNTER

I'm not sure how the role-playing will play out at the briefing, but when it's done I frame the PCs on to the planet. I make a note to play it loose and see how the players go about it. I'm hopeful they will come up with a plan, and I can then just react to that.

When they've done a little investigating I will have Lt Goodman contact them and ask for an update. When distracted I will Ambush the PCs by spending a Threat Token. I'll commit 3 Threat Tokens to the first encounter and I think that might be a nice, sharp shock.

If the PCs win they will find the dead landing party nearby.

FOLLOWING ON FROM THAT ENCOUNTER

How that encounter plays out I don't know yet, and I'll just have to react to where the dice and the group are taking the story.

Encounters (player or GM led)

The players may start tracking the dinosaurs or set up traps looking for further encounters. I can riff off the players and place encounters where they make sense. If they set up a really plausible trap I might not use the Ambush ability, and just roll for Dominance instead. I'll use the Ambush ability for the final encounter for sure, though.

Scenes (player or GM-led)

Not everything is an encounter, though. That's important. I'll want to throw some scenes in where people can play their characters.

ENDING THE MISSION

When I get to the final encounter the mission will end with the final Threat Token. I'll watch out for dropping in the huge "Mother" dinosaur before then. Someone will kill it, but it's still just one kill. I note that I might keep it alive until the final Threat Token goes. The PC who removes the final Threat Token on the planet maybe gets the kill on that massive beast. Or maybe it dies earlier on.

POST-PLANET ADMINISTRATION

Also I'm going to make sure that we have time at the end of the session to go through all the post-planet administrative tasks.

Medals

Every survivor gets a **Campaign Medal**. Anyone wounded gets a **Wound Badge**. Causing more than 100 Kills gets a **Kill Badge**. Anything *really* heroic gets rewarded with a **Crimson Sword**. The killer of the last dinosaur gets a Crimson Sword automatically.

Gaining A Level

The PC that killed the most gains a Level. Get everyone else to roll a d10. The highest roll also gets to gain a Level.

Development and Development Rolls

Every PC gets to improve one weapon automatically.

Then walk everyone through their Development Rolls: **improve a different weapon**, **gain another weapon** or **try to gain rank**.

d: Example Of Play

CHARACTER CREATION

The group creates characters together, and the character sheets are shown on pages 70 to 73.

Following the rules on p. 12 you can see that Wheeler becomes the Sergeant because he has the highest NFA (5).

Jones is then the Corporal as he has the highest remaining FA (7).

McNeil and Fraser are just ordinary Troopers.

PLANET CREATION

We just use Planet Goya from pages 65 to 68. AA is 5 in this case.

MISSION BRIEFING

Lt Goodman gets the Sergeant to assemble the Troopers. He's in a foul mood and berates them on their tardiness and how poorly trained they are. He is not pleased that he has been forced to use the squad, "after the last time", but they are all he has to hand. The landing party for Alpha Company has gone missing shortly after contacting Planet Goya and he needs someone to find them and hand them a new radio pack. An "easy" job he says.

LANDING ON PLANET GOYA
[20 Planet Threat]

The PCs along with about 30 NPC Troopers get into a Drop Ship and are taken to the surface. The GM makes them all roll for NFA to see if they are sick on the way down. Only Fraser keeps his cool with a roll of 2. The others flip up the helmets on their MandelBrite suits and coat the inside of the Drop Ship in vomit.

On landing the Troopers run down the ramp, through the slurry of vomit and worse. Everything seems A-OK as the Drop Ship departs and they soon find the impacted Drop Pods of Alpha Company.

A quick NFA check by Wheeler, consulting his Field Manual, orients the group and he soon has them in a 5-metre pattern combing the forest for signs of life and Alpha Company's landing party.

Lt Goodman soon contacts Wheeler to ask why he hasn't reported back yet. The Troopers smugly play ball while the Sarge has to placate Goodman. A failed NFA roll by Wheeler doesn't help.

Just after the Lieutenant has signed off and the Troopers have reformed their 5-metre pattern the GM asks for Default Weapons.

Default Weapons

The GM checks who is carrying exactly what weapon. Wheeler has his Sidearm out, Jones the E-Cannon, while Fraser and McNeil carry an Energy Rifle and Slug Rifle, respectively.

FIRST ENCOUNTER
[3 Encounter Threat, 17 Planet Threat remaining]

Ambush [Cost: 1 Threat Token]
The GM spends a Threat Token and uses the Special Ability "Ambush". There is no roll for Dominance the dinosaurs ambush the Troopers automatically. The attack is quick and bloody. Vicious Raptors surprise the whole squad, even though they are on highest alert and everyone takes a Kill. Wheeler elects to use his Armour, and it is now ticked saving his skin. Everyone else is A Mess. The dinosaurs set the range at Close.

Combat Round 1
[3 Encounter Threat, 16 Planet Threat]
Everyone rolls and we get the following order:

McNeil (6), Jones (4), Dinosaurs and Wheeler (2), Fraser (1).
All successes and no failures! On a 2 the Kills will be simultaneous.

McNeil kills one with his Slug Rifle removing a Threat Token, Jones has bashed one to death with the butt of his E-Cannon having switched to Hand-To-Hand for free. There is 1 Threat Token left.

On their turns both McNeil and Jones elect to move themselves to Near Range, describing how they climb trees to get some distance from the remaining dinosaurs. They are moved on the range map. On a 2 the Raptors slash Wheeler and Fraser for a Kill each. Wheeler

is now A Mess, while Fraser is Crippled (again, he doesn't use his Armour). A Raptor bites deeply into his leg and he screams.

Also on a 2 Wheeler shoots d6 dinosaurs and removes the final Threat Token. He rolls a 5! Wheeler's player describes the Sarge showing them how it's done and putting a bullet in the fifth dinosaur that was attached to Fraser's stump of a leg.

On a 1 Fraser gets a colour narration since there are no dinosaurs left to kill. He describes gunning down whole swathes of foliage, but the kill counter on his gun still reads zero. His player says that he passes out from blood loss and the encounter ends.

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THREE SIXTEEN

FLASHBACKS

Name: _WHEELER_

Reputation: _Shrewd Judge of Character_

Rank: _Sergeant_

KILLS

Total Kills: _15_

Kills This Mission: _____

HEALTH
A Mess ☐
Crippled ☐
Dead 💀

ARMOUR
☐

TICK WHEN USED

FA
FIGHTING ABILITY

| 5 |

NFA
NON-FIGHTING ABILITY

| 5 |

STRENGTHS
☑ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____

WEAKNESSES
☑ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____
☐ HATRED FOR HOME _____

Not Yet Available ☐
Available ☑
Used ☒

WEAPONS

WEAPONS	CLOSE	NEAR	FAR
Heavy MG	1	2d6	0
Sidearm	d6	d6	–

HAND-TO-HAND _1_ CLOSE RANGE ONLY

KIT, MEDALS and NOTES
MandelBrite Armour, knife, hydration tablets, TRMs, medipack, backpack, combat drugs, flares, radio, and a well-used field manual.

THREE SIXTEEN

FLASHBACKS

Name: _JONES_

Reputation: _Stupid and Loyal_

Rank: _Corporal_

FA FIGHTING ABILITY

$\boxed{7}$

NFA NON-FIGHTING ABILITY

$\boxed{3}$

KILLS

Total Kills: _41_

Kills This Mission: _____

HEALTH

A Mess ☐

Crippled ☐

Dead

ARMOUR

☐

TICK WHEN USED

Not Yet Available ☐

Available ☑

Used ☒

STRENGTHS

☑ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

WEAKNESSES

☑ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ HATRED FOR HOME _____

WEAPONS	CLOSE	NEAR	FAR
E-Cannon	0	2d10	0
Grenades	d10	1	–

HAND-TO-HAND _1_   CLOSE RANGE ONLY

KIT, MEDALS and NOTES

Mandel Brite Armour, knife, hydration tablets, TRMs, medipack, backpack, combat drugs, flares, mitt/ball, and a tatty field manual.

THREE SIXTEEN
FLASHBACKS

Name: _____*FRASER*_____

Reputation: ____*Eternal Optimist*____

Rank: _____*Trooper*_____

FA
FIGHTING ABILITY

| 6 |

KILLS
Total Kills: _____*45*_____

Kills This Mission: _____

NFA
NON-FIGHTING ABILITY

| 4 |

HEALTH
A Mess ☐
Crippled ☐
Dead

ARMOUR
☐
TICK WHEN USED

Not Yet Available ☐
Available ☑
Used ☒

STRENGTHS
☑ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____

WEAKNESSES
☑ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____
☐ HATRED FOR HOME _____

WEAPONS

WEAPONS	CLOSE	NEAR	FAR
Energy Rifle	1	d10	1
Grenades	d10	1	–

HAND-TO-HAND _____*1*_____   CLOSE RANGE ONLY

KIT, MEDALS and NOTES
Mandel Brite Armour, knife, hydration tablets, TRMs, medipack, backpack, combat drugs, flares, and an unread field manual.

THREE SIXTEEN

FLASHBACKS

Name: _McNEIL_

Reputation: _Sarcastic Pig_

Rank: _Trooper_

FA FIGHTING ABILITY

6

NFA NON-FIGHTING ABILITY

4

KILLS

Total Kills: _48_

Kills This Mission: _____

HEALTH

A Mess ☐
Crippled ☐
Dead

ARMOUR

☐
TICK WHEN USED

STRENGTHS

☑ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____

WEAKNESSES

☑ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____
☐ _____
☐ HATRED FOR HOME _____

Not Yet Available ☐
Available ☑
Used ☒

WEAPONS

WEAPONS	CLOSE	NEAR	FAR
Slug Rifle	1	d6	d6
Grenades	d10	1	–

HAND-TO-HAND _1_ CLOSE RANGE ONLY

KIT, MEDALS and NOTES

MandelBrite Armour, knife, hydration tablets, TRMs, medipack, backpack, combat drugs, flares, and an unread field manual.

BETWEEN ENCOUNTERS

The PCs are now between encounters and all heal 1 wound. Wheeler, Jones and McNeil were a Mess and are all now uninjured. Fraser was Crippled by the raptors but has been improved to only A Mess after use of a medipack. He wakes up and says he feels like shit. The Sarge tells Fraser that he's happy he feels like shit, since if he can feel anything then he's fit enough for duty.

The Troopers now discovered the rotting corpses of the Alpha Company landing party by following the tracks of the raptors that ambushed them. Trooper Carson says they should contact the Lieutenant, as if Wheeler needed any reminding. He tells Carson to start digging graves, since he seems to have so much time on his mind for thinking. McNeil predictably says something sarcastic at this point and gets put on grave-digging duty too. He fails the NFA roll and makes a pig's ear of the graves he's digging.

SECOND ENCOUNTER
[4 Encounter Threat, 12 Planet Threat]

Having stopped for a well-earned TRM break the Troopers are ambushed again by more dinosaurs. The look-outs never saw or heard them coming, the dinos just appeared from out of thin air again. Everyone takes a kill, and no one uses their Armour yet.

The GM sets the range at Far and describes spit-poisoned spines arcing through the air at the PCs from the forest.

Fraser is back down to Crippled as a dart slams into his good leg, while Wheeler, Jones and McNeil are A Mess again.

Trooper Carson's head is split in two by a huge barbed needle and he falls into the grave he has just spent the last hour digging. One of the players suggested this and the group agreed it was fitting.

Combat Round 1
[4 Encounter Threat, 11 Planet Threat]
Rolls: Jones (7, using FA) and the dinosaurs (4) are successful, while McNeil (10), Fraser (7) and Wheeler (6) are failures.

On 7 Jones Cancels his success so that everyone yet to act in the round fails. Jones is described as shredding the forest and the dead corpses all around with his E-cannon. In the mess and exploding debris everyone takes cover in the freshly dug graves. No one causes or takes any kills and Jones loses the chance to move to Near Range. (Note he would have caused 0 kills at Far Range had he not cancelled, but he would have been able to change range.)

Combat Round 2
[4 Encounter Threat, 11 Planet Threat]
Rolls: Wheeler (1, using NFA) is successful, while Jones (9), the dinosaurs (8), McNeil (7) and Fraser (7) are all failures.

Wheeler was using NFA to change range and makes his way from the graves into the forest. He's now at Near Range and switches to his Heavy MG. "Come on in you fuckers," is all he says. He could have used his success to leave the encounter but chose not to.

The colour narrations from the dinsoaurs involve loud shrill shrieking and belching caustic spit high into the air, missing the Troopers. The squad open up with everything they have in all directions and kill nothing. The kill counters read zero.

Combat Round 3
[4 Encounter Threat, 11 Planet Threat]
Rolls: Fraser (5) and the dinosaurs (5) are tied with a success, Wheeler (4), McNeil (3) and Jones (1) are also successful.

The kills of Fraser and the dinosaurs will be simultaneous. Fraser decides to use his Armour. Otherwise he would have had to use a Strength or Weakness to stay alive, or someone else could have used a Strength to end the encounter before the aliens acted.

On 5 the dinosaurs cause a kill to everyone. Fraser stays Crippled as he uses his Armour. Wheeler, McNeil and Jones are all now Crippled too. Acidic ichor rains down on the whole area from the throats of the dinosaurs and everyone is screaming in pain. Most of the rest of the squad of NPC Troopers are dead.

Also on 5 Fraser removes a Threat Token and kills a dinosaur belching deadly venom (Energy Rifle causes 1 Kill at Far Range).

On 4 Wheeler kills 9 dinosaurs (2d6 roll) at Near Range. Note that Wheeler and the rest of the PCs can't change range this round as their successes were not *before* the dinosaurs caused their kills.

On 3 McNeil kills only 1 (d6 roll) at Far Range. He curses his luck.

On 1 Jones doesn't remove the final Threat Token, since his E-cannon does 0 kills at Far Range. The encounter continues.

Combat Round 4
[1 Encounter Threat, 11 Planet Threat]

Rolls: Wheeler, McNeil and the dinosaurs all get a 5 and succeed! Jones is also successful (1), while Fraser (10) fails.

McNeil and Wheeler would normally have to roll a d10 each to see who gets to remove the final Threat Token and get the kills. However, everyone is going to take a kill and Wheeler and Fraser have used up their Armour for this planet already. Disaster!

It's Wheeler who gets in with a Strength first. He crosses off his available Strength and describes a moment from his past. The Strength he writes in is "Deadly when backed into a corner". His flashback is to a planet where he was cornered by a fearsome tentacled beast that had killed his Sergeant. He strangled it to death when it had him cornered and his demise looked assured.

The GM removes the final Threat Token from the encounter and Wheeler gets to roll the best kills from his weapon. He rolls 12 (2d6) and jubilantly describes hosing down the last 12 dinosaurs and saving the squad. He'll maybe get a medal for this and he knows he has a chance at promotion too if he wants it.

BETWEEN ENCOUNTERS AGAIN

The Troopers heal up again, but now they are all at A Mess. They can only heal further by taking on more encounters. And the GM still has 11 Planet Threat Tokens left.

The PCs then plan a trap for the dinosaurs. It's convincing enough —they set out some dead Troopers as bait without telling the Lieutenant—and the GM decides not to use the Ambush Special Ability for the encounter. It is a normal Dominance Roll and the Squad wins it. They then set the range at Near and manage to kill all the dinosaurs after a short struggle.

However, Fraser is killed in the encounter. His player decides not to use a Strength or Weakness to save him and brings in a new Trooper called Torres instead. Torres has all his Health Boxes unmarked and inherits all Fraser's unused Flashbacks. Maybe the cynical Torres will have better luck than the doomed Eternal Optimism of Fraser.

FINAL ENCOUNTER

The final encounter is a bloody affair and it ends with McNeil using a Strength to end the battle and kill the final dinosaurs on the planet. He is awarded a Crimson Sword for removing the planet's final Threat Token and he gains a chance for promotion.

BETWEEN MISSIONS

Wheeler ended up killing the most dinosaurs and goes up a Level. Torres (10) also gains a Level, while Jones (3) and McNeil (1) don't.

They all advance one weapon at one step. Then they all use their Development Rolls. Wheeler advances to Lieutenant with a roll of 4 on NFA. Torres successfully gains a PowerClaw and Jones gets a Flame-Gun, while McNeil fails to get a Rocketpod.

"I've lost feet, fingers, ribs, friends, enemies, Sergeants, Corporals, sanity and enough blood to fill a swimming pool back home twice over. So don't tell me about losses, Lieutenant. Don't."—TrooperDog

"Corporal, I believe your squad is the one with 'Trooper Dog' in it. He insulted me this morning when I asked him to search for my lost pet pig. He is an insolent upstart and a psychopath if his medical records are to be believed. Put him on Point Duty and see if you can lose him in some hell hole somewhere."—Lieutenant Frinks

"Good job, Dog. This food is fuckin' A. I love the taste of bacon in the morning."—Cpl Torres
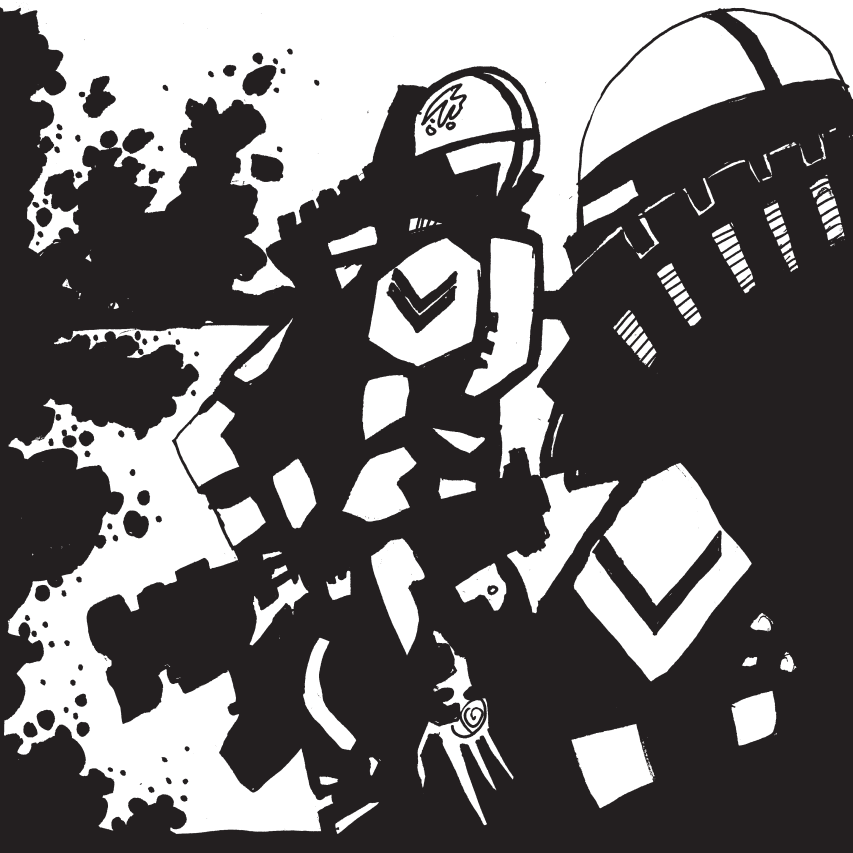
e: War Gear

Here are weapon profiles and lists of gear that your Troopers will want to use throughout their expeditions into the far reaches of the Cosmos.

Weapon Name

Weapon Description

Weapon Image

ENERGY RIFLE

The Energy Rifle is the standard piece of kit for Troopers. With a virtually endless supply of shots this energy weapon allows killing over a range of distances. Great for carving down hordes of alien life forms given the opportunity.

ENERGY RIFLE	CLOSE	NEAR	FAR
Basic Profile	1	d10	1
Best	d10	2d10	d10

The Basic Profile For The Weapon

The Kills The Weapon Causes At Close, Near And Far Range

Kill "Steps": 0, 1, d6, d10, 2d6, 2d10, 3d10, d100

The Best Possible Profile Should You Advance Each Range By Two "Steps" Over A Series Of Missions

ENERGY RIFLE
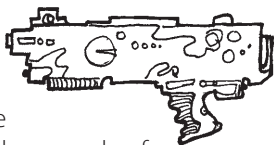
The Energy Rifle is the standard piece of kit for Troopers. With a virtually endless supply of shots this energy weapon allows killing over a range of distances. Great for carving down hordes of alien life forms given the opportunity.

ENERGY RIFLE	CLOSE	NEAR	FAR
Basic Profile	1	d10	1
Best	d10	2d10	d10

E-CANNON

This heavy duty death-dealer is the sort of weapon that bad, bad people dream about at night. Heavy to carry and hard to run with, but these souped-up versions of the Energy Rifle are the kings of carnage. Point at the enemy.

E-CANNON	CLOSE	NEAR	FAR
Basic Profile	0	2d10	0
Best	d6	d100	d6

SLUG RIFLE

The "Slugger" fires actual bullets and so has greater killing power at range than energy weapons do. However, it is slower to fire and has one hell of an amount of recoil. But for the Trooper who happily trades bruises for bugs in the dust, this is the weapon of choice. Fires with a satisfying crack.

SLUG RIFLE	CLOSE	NEAR	FAR
Basic Profile	1	d6	d6
Best	d10	2d6	2d6
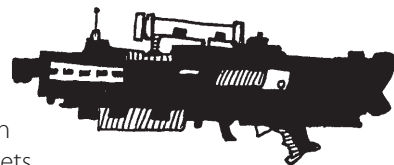
HEAVY MG

The Heavy Machine Gun unleashes torrents of bullets out of its muzzle when the trigger is depressed. Slow to load and known for its jumpy recoil this is often a vehicle-mounted weapon. Ineffective at long distances but kill-happy when at Near Range.

HEAVY MG	CLOSE	NEAR	FAR
Basic Profile	1	2d6	0
Best	d10	3d10	d6

HAND-TO-HAND

[CAN AUTOMATICALLY SWITCH TO THIS WEAPON]

This covers attacks with fists, feet, knees, swords, axes, knives, broken bottles, tins of pre-processed food, garrottes, clubs, staves, empty or broken guns, wrenches and, of course, head-butts. You can always switch to Hand-To-Hand as a weapon even if you failed on your last turn. It's humanity's most basic weapon.

HAND-TO-HAND	CLOSE	NEAR	FAR
Basic Profile	1	CLOSE COMBAT ONLY	
Best	d10	CLOSE COMBAT ONLY	

POWERCLAW

[CAN AUTOMATICALLY SWITCH TO THIS WEAPON]

The PowerClaw is a close-combat weapon mounted on a Trooper's left or right arm, depending on the owner's preference. It makes a potent weapon and can be switched to, like Hand-To-Hand, even if you failed on your last turn. A new twist on fist attacks.

POWERCLAW	CLOSE	NEAR	FAR
Basic Profile	d6	CLOSE COMBAT ONLY	
Best	2d6	CLOSE COMBAT ONLY	

SIDEARM

The Sidearm is a standard piece of kit for Sergeants and Officers. Whilst Troopers may happily frag anything that moves, including each other, the wielder of a sidearm calmly dispatches critters in close combat with accurate shots from this automatic pistol.

SIDEARM	CLOSE	NEAR	FAR
Basic Profile	d6	d6	–
Best	2d6	2d6	–

POWERBLADE

PowerBlades are weapons like the ChainAxe, ElectroSword or MagneticMaul. These close-combat weapons use similar technology to the PowerClaw but with the added leverage of swinging, cutting and thrusting attacks.
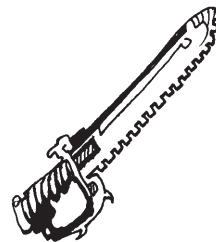
POWERBLADE	CLOSE	NEAR	FAR
Basic Profile	d10	CLOSE COMBAT ONLY	
Best	2d10	CLOSE COMBAT ONLY	

GRENADES

[CAN AUTOMATICALLY SWITCH TO THIS WEAPON]

A Trooper's best friend when trying to clear caves and buildings. They cut down friend and foe alike, and officers take a dim view of being "fragged". You can always switch to grenades as a weapon.

SPECIAL EFFECT: Grenades cause a kill to any PC at Close Range with the aliens who failed their die roll this Combat Round.

GRENADES	CLOSE	NEAR	FAR
Basic Profile	d10*	1*	–
Best	2d10*	d10*	–

FLAME-GUN

This is absolutely deadly at the very closest range. Jetting super-heated chemical death the Flame-Gun is a popular choice of Troopers looking for a new weapon that will cleanse planets of alien scum by the fiery barrel load.

FLAME-GUN	CLOSE	NEAR	FAR
Basic Profile	2d6	1	–
Best	3d10	d10	–

ROCKETPOD

The Rocketpod is a truly long-range weapon. It fires volleys of small missiles at targets at the very farthest ranges. It requires some skill to score more kills at targets that are nearer and it is incapable of killing at Close Range. Many a Trooper is proud of the fire his Rocketpod can rain down.

ROCKETPOD	CLOSE	NEAR	FAR
Basic Profile	–	0	2d10
Best	–	d6	d100

SHOTGUN

The Shotgun is a rapid-firing close-assault weapon that causes mass carnage at Close Range. Popular with Troopers that have to fight up close and personal the Shotgun usually sees action on at least a few missions over the course of a campaign.

SHOTGUN	CLOSE	NEAR	FAR
Basic Profile	d10	d6	–
Best	2d10	2d6	–

VEHICLES

ACQUIRING VEHICLES
You must be of the appropriate rank to get a vehicle. You gain your first one for free on attaining your new rank. However, if destroyed then replacement vehicles can be acquired for future planets by using a Development Roll between missions.

THE DROP SHIP [RANK OF MAJOR AND ABOVE]
The Drop Ship is a space-to-surface landing craft, bristling with weapons and capable of carrying many Troopers into battle. You can use it as much as you like in missions until it is destroyed.

One PC is designated as the Commander. That PC rolls on NFA for the Drop Ship in the Combat Sequence, and it causes d10 Kills at any range. The Drop Ship is Crippled if it takes a kill and destroyed if it takes another kill. It can be repaired between encounters. It also provides an extra Armour tick for anyone inside. Obviously, when inside the Drop Ship all PCs are at the same range. Anyone can choose to leave the Drop Ship on their turn, and they are placed at the range that the Drop Ship is at when they exit.

DROP PODS [RANK OF LIEUTENANT AND ABOVE]
Gives the PCs an automatic Ambush for a planet's first encounter. Drop Pods are destroyed if you lose this first encounter or use an E-Vac or Orbital Bombardment in the encounter.

THE APC [RANK OF CAPTAIN AND ABOVE]

The APC is a ground-based Armoured Personnel Carrier festooned with gun ports, smoke launchers and a turret-mounted chaingun. It can automatically change range each turn if desired.

One PC is designated as the driver. That PC rolls on NFA for the APC in the Combat Sequence, and it causes d6 Kills at any range.

If the APC takes a kill then it is Crippled (but can be repaired between encounters). When Crippled the driver and Troopers inside usually disembark. If abandoned like this the APC is not targeted any further by the aliens and can be rescued at the end of the encounter as long as the PCs win the fight.

If it continues to be used and takes a further kill then it is destroyed and anyone still inside takes a kill. A destroyed APC is no longer available for future missions.
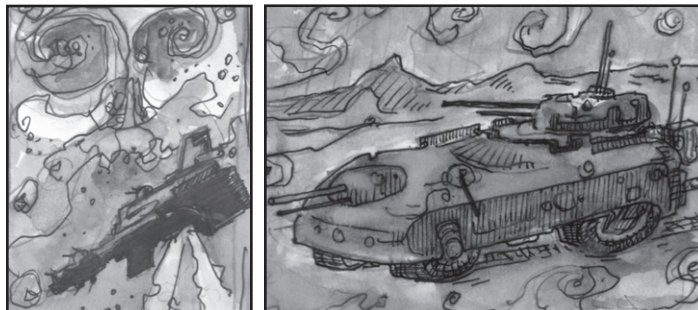
Characters in the APC are immune to kills as long as the APC is undamaged.

Obviously, everyone inside the APC is at the same range. Anyone can choose to leave the APC on their turn, and they are placed at the range that the APC is at when they exit the vehicle.
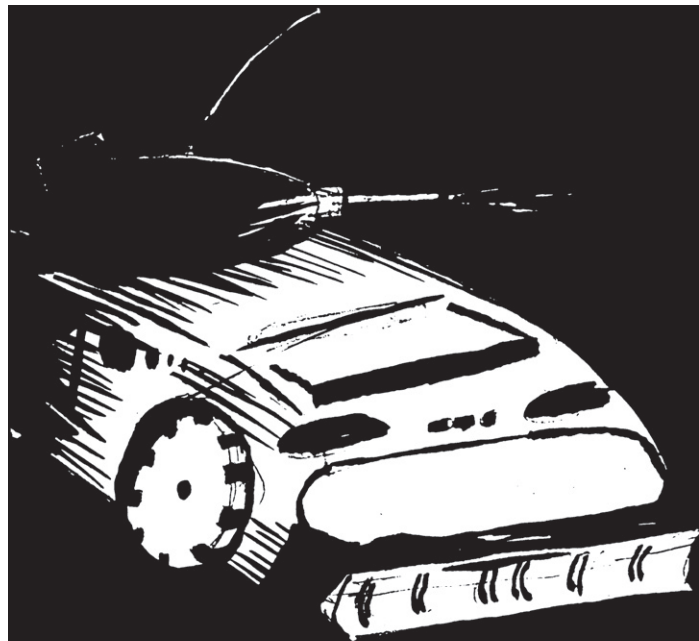
STARKILLER

[RANK OF COLONEL AND ABOVE]

The 3:16 has a limited number of Starkiller missiles. These obliterate star systems that are deemed too dangerous to assault directly. The Starkiller collapses the target star and sends it supernova.

The player declares that their PC is using a Starkiller at the Mission Briefing and marks the planet choice off the list. They describe what happened and add [d1000 × 10] Kills to their Total Kills and gain a medal. The Mission Briefing for a new planet then follows. The PC starts the new mission with 0 Kills This Mission.

THE DEVICE

[RANK OF BRIGADIER]

The Device is the weapon of last resort for the Brigadier. When activated it will turn d10 parsecs of space centred on the Brigade's ships into a rich star-forming region. The effect is that it will destroy the Brigade, the local star and 2d6 surrounding star systems.

This has one use only. Don't count the kills, it ends the game.

The Game Master should never have the Brigadier use this weapon. Should a PC become the Brigadier they may use it if they wish.

KINETIC FIELD ARMOUR

[RANK OF MAJOR AND ABOVE]

Officers of the rank of Major and above have Skull "pips" on their insignia. This skull hosts a Kinetic Field Armour transmitter, which allows the Officer to avoid kills in any one encounter on a planet.

They simply declare at the start of an encounter that they are using their Kinetic Field Armour and they will be immune from any weapons that can be stopped with Armour for that whole encounter.

TPK BOMB

[RANK OF CAPTAIN AND ABOVE]

A localized nuclear bomb in simple-to-use grenade form.

SPECIAL EFFECT: The TPK Bomb causes 1 Kill to every PC in the encounter at Close Range, including the user. Total up how many PCs have taken a kill. That is the number of Threat Tokens removed. For each Threat Token removed the TPK Bomb yields d100 Kills. So 4 Threat Tokens removed gives 4 separate d100 rolls added together. Armour cannot protect against these kills.

TPK BOMB	CLOSE	NEAR	FAR
Profile	d100*	–	–

PARADISE BOMB

[RANK OF LT COLONEL AND ABOVE]

A non-localized nuclear bomb in easy-to-use grenade form.

SPECIAL EFFECT: The Paradise Bomb causes 1 Kill to every PC in the encounter, including the user. Total up how many PCs have taken a kill. That is the number of Threat Tokens removed. For each Threat Token removed the Paradise Bomb yields d100 Kills. So 4 Threat Tokens removed gives 4 separate d100 rolls added together. Armour cannot protect against these kills.

PARADISE BOMB	CLOSE	NEAR	FAR
Profile	d100*	d100*	d100*
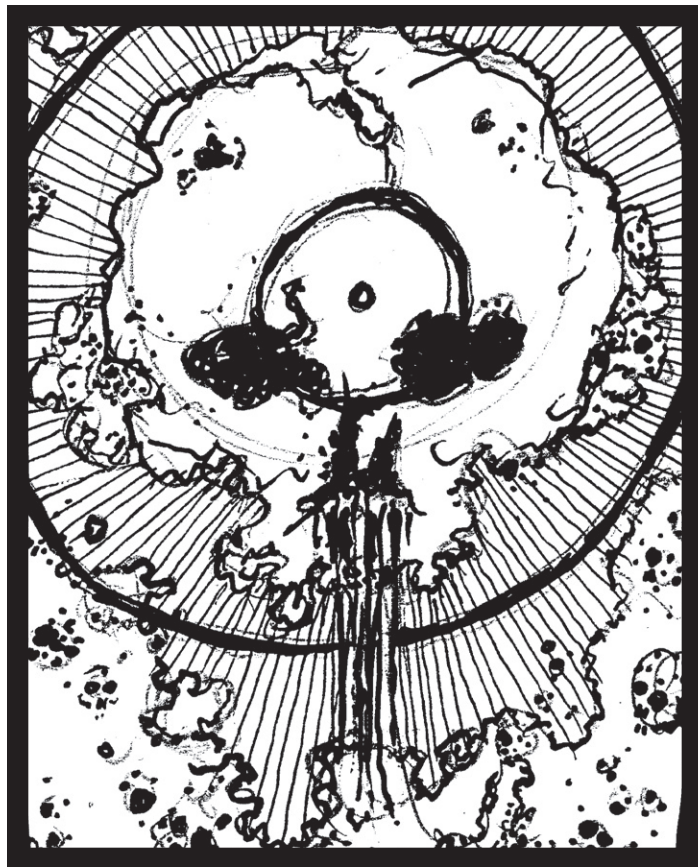
EVERYDAY TROOPER SHIT

CANCER STICKS
These slim white sticks come in packs of 20 and smoulder quietly to themselves while giving you cancer. Highly addictive, they have a pleasant habit-forming method of use: rip open the packet, strike along the box and then place in the mouth. Inhale, Savour, Exhale, Repeat. They even come in Maple Syrup and Blueberry flavour.

COMBAT DRUGS
A cocktail of endorphins and mood-altering pills that turn normally docile Terrans into frothing kill-machines. They either grant great sexual potency or ruin your libido. Once a planet these let you re-roll a d10 on an FA test. But, on a roll of 10, you take a kill yourself.

ENTRENCHING TOOLS
Easily assembled shovel for digging in all conditions and soils. Doubles as an effective and bloody hand-to-hand weapon.

FIELD MANUAL
This is a Trooper's best guide to keeping himself alive and sane while blowing shit up all across the Cosmos. Surprisingly useful.

FLARES
Simple to use flares that illuminate battlefields and can be used for sending distress signals to commanders in the field.

HOLO-SHOW
These little boxes are a Trooper's best friend when far from home. Press the friendly orange button on the Holo-Show's lid and you can flick through countless images and movies of your friends and family back home on Terra, all in life-like three-dimensions.

HYDRATION TABLETS
These helpful tabs give you clean water out of just about anything. Pop them straight into your mouth with some carbs to get a somewhat bland watery slush. Foul tasting but life-saving.

MITT AND BALL
A leathery glove and a polymer ball can bring endless hours of fun and exercise for Troopers between encounters. Officers look upon such activities as team-building and useful. It certainly keeps a Trooper's mind off thinking about the bigger picture.

PERSONAL MEDIPACK
The box of tricks you use to patch yourself up between fights.

RADIUM GUM
A soft chewable gum that is habit forming and cancer-giving.

TRM [TROOPER READY MEALS]
Trooper Ready Meals are shit. Not literally, no, but they taste dreadful. They do keep you powered up for killing and that's all the Sarge cares about. A popular target for Trooper scorn.

MAKING USE OF YOUR GEAR

Everyday Trooper shit can be used for a whole host of things. The players and GM are encouraged to give +1 bonuses to FA and NFA for a following roll if they are used to prepare something well.

For example, the Troopers make an NFA roll to dig a series of trenches. Those that are successful on the NFA roll get a +1 bonus to their FA or NFA on their first roll only in the upcoming combat.

MANDELBRITE SUITS

In play you should be describing your MandelBrite suits as having fanciful and sometimes useful fittings. I've seen players describe motion sensors, health monitors for the squad, temperature and humidity gauges as well as a squad urine monitor.

The suits have visors that can flip up easily when required, either for a better look at something or to pop a quick cancer stick in the mouth.

ONE USE PER PLANET

These items are able to be used only once per planet. So, once they have been used they cannot be used again until you are on another planet.
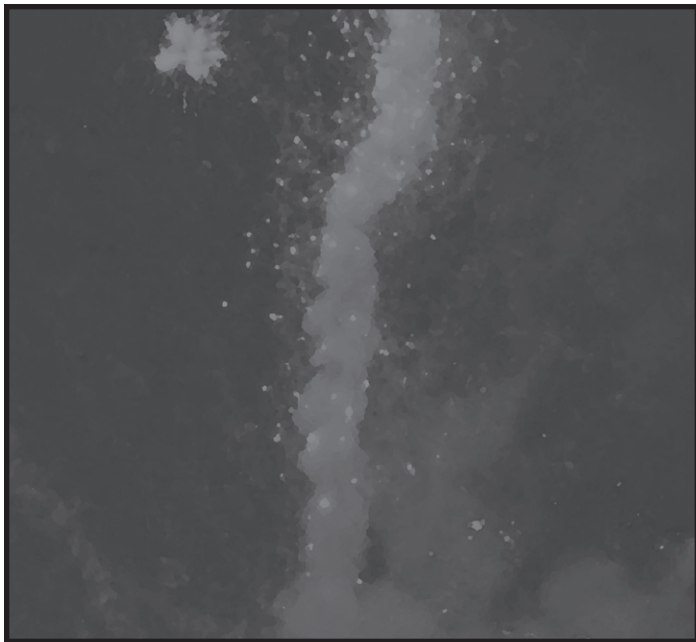
ORBITAL BOMBARDMENT
[OFFICERS ONLY; KILLS: D1000]

This is where the planet is shelled from space by the support vehicles of the Brigade. It is a desperate and bloody measure.

Every enemy on the planet is killed and ALL the PCs take a Kill for their troubles. The Orbital Bombardment ignores any Armour, so this will automatically turn any PC into, at best, a Mess and possibly render some of them dead if they were already Crippled.

This damage can be avoided with the use of a Strength or Weakness, if the PC has one available and is willing to use it.

To call in an Orbital Bombardment the PC must be an Officer (Rank 3 and above). It is called in with a success on NFA on the Officer's turn. Failure means the call fails, but it is still available next turn.

After the mission more senior officers will grill the character on why they called in the Orbital Bombardment. A test of NFA must be successful to avoid demotion of 1 rank. It is not possible for the Officer who called in the strike to be promoted for this mission. Note that the Officer is awarded d1000 kills to their total, though.

If the same player calls in an Orbital Bombardment on another planet in the future it automatically kills their PC. Hubris is a bitch. A player cannot ever use Orbital Bombardment more than twice.

E-VAC
[HIGHEST RANK ALIVE ONLY; ENDS COMBAT]

This is where the Troopers are all evacuated from combat before it ends. Drop ships and pods swoop down to spirit the PCs away while mopping up any remaining alien resistance at the site.

An extreme measure and only able to be called in by a PC who is of the highest rank in the group (NPCs do not count as part of the group). So this strictly means that the highest ranking (joint highest, even) PC is the only one able to call on this support item.

To succeed the PC must be successful on a roll of NFA as part of the combat sequence. Only one PC can call on it at a time.

If successful then all the Threat Tokens from this encounter are discarded by the GM. If it is the final encounter then the planet is considered to be completed as there is no Threat remaining.

All PCs take a Kill, which Armour can prevent if they have it available. Strengths and Weaknesses can also be used if desired.

Should the PC fail on the NFA roll then the E-Vac is still available on future turns. Of course, that PC may die this turn and it will be up to a new Highest Rank Alive PC to call in the E-Vac next turn.

Life is shit sometimes, for sure, and this is often the only way out.

FORCE WEAKNESS
[LOWEST RANK ALIVE ONLY; USES WEAKNESS]

This is where a player forces a PC other than their own to use a Weakness up, even if they do not want to do so. It can only be attempted once per planet, and the first eligible PC to declare its use has used the attempted "Forced Weakness" for this planet.

The PC using this effect rolls on their NFA. If they are successful then on their turn in the combat sequence the target PC must use a Weakness and fail. The Weakness chosen and its effects are entirely up to the target to decide.

If the target has no Weaknesses "Available" then they are immune to Forced Weakness, since they have none waiting to be exposed.

If the PC fails then the target is not compelled to show any weakness and is not forced to spend a precious Flashback.

This forcing of a Weakness can only be used by the lowest rank in the group. So this strictly means that the lowest ranking (joint lowest, even) PC is the only one able to call on this item.

While Troopers do speculate about their fellow grunts, typically it is the Officers that the Troopers think are weak and will get everyone in a mess. Lower ranking Officers often see weakness in their more senior colleagues too.

f: Play Sheets

GM PLANET SHEETS

TROOPER NAMES

If you're stuck for Trooper names, just pick or roll one off this list.

1	Abe	21	Miller
2	Bell	22	Mulholland
3	Brooks	23	Murphy
4	Carson	24	Myers
5	Coghill	25	Nall
6	Couper	26	Ortiz
7	Criner	27	Rivera
8	Dolan	28	Rooths
9	Drake	29	Sander
10	Dunlap	30	Scarlett
11	Fuller	31	Sellars
12	Goodman	32	Shields
13	Grieb	33	Sims
14	Hall	34	Stacy
15	Hart	35	Stokes
16	Hicks	36	Storm
17	Hunt	37	Tarver
18	Jeffcoat	38	Ward
19	Malan	39	Young
20	McCready	40	Zeno

ALIEN ABILITY

Choose or roll one of the following ways of working out the AA.

- ☐ 1 Lowest FA amongst the PCs
- ☐ 2 Lowest FA + 1
- ☐ 3 Lowest FA + 2
- ☐ 4 Lowest NFA
- ☐ 5 Lowest NFA + 1
- ☐ 6 Lowest NFA + 2
- ☐ 7 Highest FA
- ☐ 8 Highest FA – 1
- ☐ 9 Highest FA – 2
- ☐ 10 Highest NFA
- ☐ 11 Highest NFA – 1
- ☐ 12 Highest NFA – 2
- ☐ 13 [Highest FA + Lowest NFA]/2 (round up)
- ☐ 14 [Highest FA + Lowest NFA]/2 (round up) + 1
- ☐ 15 [Highest FA + Lowest NFA]/2 (round up) + 2
- ☐ 16 [Highest NFA + Lowest FA]/2 (round up)
- ☐ 17 [Highest NFA + Lowest FA]/2 (round up) + 1
- ☐ 18 [Highest NFA + Lowest FA]/2 (round up) + 2
- ☐ 19 AA = 5
- ☐ 20 AA = 10

NAMES

Choose or roll a name for the planet and cross it off the list below.

- ☐ 1 Bosch
- ☐ 2 Caravaggio
- ☐ 3 Cézanne
- ☐ 4 Degas
- ☐ 5 Dürer
- ☐ 6 Goya
- ☐ 7 Holbein
- ☐ 8 Kandinsky
- ☐ 9 Klimt
- ☐ 10 Matisse
- ☐ 11 Michelangelo
- ☐ 12 Monet
- ☐ 13 Picasso
- ☐ 14 Pollock
- ☐ 15 Rembrandt
- ☐ 16 Renoir
- ☐ 17 Reubens
- ☐ 18 Titian
- ☐ 19 Warhol
- ☐ 20 Whistler

BASIC PLANET DESCRIPTION

Choose or roll a planet description and cross it off the list below.

- ☐ 1 Arid world
- ☐ 2 Asteroid belt
- ☐ 3 Cloud/gas planet
- ☐ 4 Dense atmosphere
- ☐ 5 Desert world
- ☐ 6 Electrical storms
- ☐ 7 Forested surface
- ☐ 8 High gravity
- ☐ 9 High humidity
- ☐ 10 Ice covered
- ☐ 11 Low gravity
- ☐ 12 Mountainous terrain
- ☐ 13 Pleasure planet
- ☐ 14 Poisonous atmosphere
- ☐ 15 Radioactive
- ☐ 16 Rain world
- ☐ 17 Reefs and coral islands
- ☐ 18 Temperate
- ☐ 19 Volcanically active
- ☐ 20 Water world

BASIC CREATURE FORM

Choose or roll a form for the aliens and cross it off the list below.

- ☐ 1 Advanced Humanoids
- ☐ 2 Apes
- ☐ 3 Artificial lifeforms
- ☐ 4 Birds or Flying Beasts
- ☐ 5 Corrupt Troopers
- ☐ 6 Dinosaurs
- ☐ 7 Dogs
- ☐ 8 Felines
- ☐ 9 Furred Creatures
- ☐ 10 Giants
- ☐ 11 Humanoids
- ☐ 12 Insectoids
- ☐ 13 Mineral-based forms
- ☐ 14 Oozes
- ☐ 15 Plants
- ☐ 16 Rays, sharks or fish
- ☐ 17 Reptiles or Amphibians
- ☐ 18 Sentient planet
- ☐ 19 Shadow Beasts
- ☐ 20 Sirens

ALIEN SPECIAL ABILITY

Choose or roll a Special Ability for the planet inhabitants.

- ☐ 1 Ambush
- ☐ 2 Armour
- ☐ 3 Boost Ability
- ☐ 4 End Encounter
- ☐ 5 Enrage
- ☐ 6 Exploding Bodies
- ☐ 7 Flee
- ☐ 8 Ignore Armour
- ☐ 9 Ignore Wounds
- ☐ 10 Impair
- ☐ 11 Induce Weakness
- ☐ 12 Isolate
- ☐ 13 Lasting Wounds
- ☐ 14 Leaping
- ☐ 15 Rapid Movement
- ☐ 16 Reduce Visibility
- ☐ 17 Regeneration
- ☐ 18 Stop Technology
- ☐ 19 Suicide
- ☐ 20 Swarm

3:16

RANGE MAP

PLACE TROOPERS
AT RANGE RELATIVE
TO THE ALIENS

ALIEN
THREAT
TOKENS

CLOSE   **NEAR**   **FAR**

THREE SIXTEEN

FLASHBACKS

Name: _____

Reputation: _____

Rank: _____

KILLS

Total Kills: _____

Kills This Mission: _____

HEALTH

A Mess ☐

Crippled ☐

Dead

ARMOUR

☐

TICK WHEN USED

FA

FIGHTING ABILITY

☐

NFA

NON-FIGHTING ABILITY

☐

Not Yet Available ☐

Available ☑

Used ☒

STRENGTHS

☑ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

WEAKNESSES

☑ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ HATRED FOR HOME _____

KIT, MEDALS and NOTES

WEAPONS

	CLOSE	NEAR	FAR

_____

_____

_____

HAND-TO-HAND _____   CLOSE RANGE ONLY

Index

Colophon

3:16 was originally written and illustrated in under 24 hours as an entry in the **Ronnies** games design competition. That was in October 2005, and the game has come a long way since then. Along with Joe Prince's excellent boxing game **Contenders**, 3:16 won a prestigious **High Ronny Award** in that competition. You can view the original 24-hour version on the BoxNinja website. There is also link to a Polish translation by Tomasz Pudło.

Where were the roots for this game? One of the first role-playing games that I played was **Traveller** run by my neighbour Paul Miller. He was into the computer game **Elite** and the Frank Herbert **Dune** novels, and I think you can see the influence he had on me.

Later inspirations were Will Worthey's home brew Science-Fiction game **Millennium**, which was Space Opera mashed up with films like **Aliens**, **Leviathan**, **Outland** and **Predator**. Great stuff. And the one that was key to my work on 3:16 was a really drifted game of **Traveller 2300 AD** run by a guy called Kizo. He used to completely ignore the combat system in that game and just roll dice to see how many creatures we'd killed. Little did he know his genius.

So, by the mid-1990s I was working on an SF game called **Cluster**, which I always hoped to go back to. To my delight I won't have to as 3:16 is everything I tried to write in Cluster but simply couldn't.

Developing the game from its original version was a long road. In the meantime I published **Best Friends**, which is an RPG about as diametrically opposed to 3:16 as you can get, a complete contrast.

The pieces really started falling into place at GenCon 2007 where I had a great talk with Ron, Julie and Mayuran about the system. Without them, this book would not be here at all. And the final inspiration came from David Donachie's fantastic game **Solipsist**.

The landscape format is because of the cover image by Paul Bourne. Other influences are **Agon** (John Harper), **Spione** and **It Was a Mutual Decision** (Ron Edwards), **Labyrinths & Lycanthropes** (Joe Prince), and **Carry** (Nate Paoletta). The theme and look is heavily informed by **2000AD**, **Warhammer 40,000**, **Starship Troopers**, **Halo Jones**, **Aliens** and Mil-Blogs and books about the Iraq war.

Anyway, crack out the beers and just play.
Gregor Hutton
7 July 2008, Edinburgh, UK

FONTS

Adobe® Myriad® Pro was designed by Robert Slimbach and Carol Twombly. It has a warmth and readability that result from the humanistic treatment of letter proportions and design detail.

Old Claude by Paul Shaw simulates an old cut of the classic Garamond type designs of the 16th and 17th centuries, with pronounced rough edges and coarse letter shapes.

3:16 is an **award-winning** RPG about **Carnage Amongst The Stars**. Play a squad of **kill-happy** Troopers **slaying civilizations** all across the Cosmos.

- ☠ **Elegant**, simple game system
- ☠ Very **low-preparation** to start
- ☠ **Complete** game in one book
- ☠ Designed for **campaign** play

Electronic Version
Adobe PDF file

July 2008 Edition

Published by BoxNinja, Edinburgh, UK

Box Ninja

boxninja.com

This high-octane Science-Fiction role-playing game written by Gregor Hutton (BEST FRIENDS) has your Space Troopers killing bugs all across the Cosmos. You'll advance in rank, improve your weapons, slay civilization after civilization, and find out who you are through an innovative "Flashback" game mechanic.

See where your tour of duty in the 3:16th Expeditionary Force takes you and your friends. Join in Terra's plan to kill every living thing in the Universe to protect the home world. Revel in the kill-happy machismo and enjoy a campaign of Carnage Amongst The Stars.

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the RONNIES

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