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THE RED STAR

★ CAMPAIGN SETTING ★



d20
system

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THE RED STAR

A Mythic Vistas Campaign Setting for the D20 Modern Roleplaying Game

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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO THE U.R.R.S., COMRADE

Courage. That's what *The Red Star Campaign Setting* is really about. It may be a wildly variant *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* game set in the brilliantly original allegorical world of Christian Gossett's comic book, *The Red Star*, but at heart, it's about is courage. Read a little further and you'll see why.

The strength of allegory lies in its ability to mirror uncomfortable truths in a safe way. Painting the world's problems on a larger-than-life canvas allows for a different perspective on them, one less fraught with strong emotion. Having the bravery to glimpse the world through another's eyes, however, especially one you would normally regard as an enemy, is no small feat.

The world of *The Red Star* mirrors our own, but on a grander scale. The colors are more vibrant, the battles fiercer. The heroes and villains of *The Red Star Campaign Setting* are larger than life in every way — their passions run deeper, their convictions stronger, and their prowess nearly inhuman. They believe with all their hearts in the causes that they

take up, willingly giving up their lives if it will advance their agendas. Many are admirable and a few are contemptible, but there is no arguing against their conviction.

The Red Star Campaign Setting allows you to play such driven heroes in a world that you may just recognize — in between the broad strokes, you will see the world you know; it's the details that make the difference. If you're new to *The Red Star* then you are in for something special, as it is not often in our world of remakes you get to read a setting that is truly original. You may have heard rumors about weird telekinetic weapons called "hooks" and "hailers," about sorceresses who can turn themselves into living beams of energy to lay waste to their state's enemies, about heroes who continue to fight for their people though they have fallen in battle.

Nothing you've heard secondhand will prepare you for just how cool what you're about to read is. We envy you.

Welcome to *The Red Star Campaign Setting*.

A BRIEF WORLD HISTORY

The present is built ever on the foundation of the past, though too often it seems humanity feels the need to repeat old mistakes once they've become novel again. When frightful memories of the searing fires of battle have slipped to naught but ashy recollections, only then do the drums roll, calling a new generation to the fields of war. Every century sees new tactics and new weapons deployed, but few indeed can alter the course of history forever after. The Great Continent always seethed with conflicts over land, wealth, and religion. But this time it was different.

THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

The Great Continent slumbered in a rare peace for over two decades. Imbohl, the courageous leader of the newly united Republics of the Red Star, sat at the head of the Red Council. The Council itself was still preoccupied with rebuilding of their country from the destruction caused by the Revolution as well as convincing their people to embrace less antiquated technology. The Isle of Lions, once a world-spanning monarchy, slowly succumbed to old age — its dreams of empire all but fled. It allowed its overseas conquests to slip away one at a time, as it no longer had the strength to hold them. The New World's grand experiment in democracy, the Western Transnationalist Alliance, remained insular and unconcerned about the rest of the world's affairs.

Onto this stage, smarting from the sting of old insults, strode the Volksreich with the Aryan Nationalist Party and at its helm. Others tried to unite the people of the Volksreich, but none succeeded like Krieger, the leader of the Aryan Party. He and his trusted cadre of officers, whom he referred to as his Inner Circle, promised to lead the Volksreich into a

magnificent golden age once those who oppressed them had been eliminated. The ranks of those "oppressors" included everyone and everything Krieger disapproved of, but were mostly ethnic and religious minorities that couldn't effectively fight back.

As the Aryan's master plan advanced, the Volksreich rose in industry, in technology, in sorcery and even, it must be said, in terrible majesty. The first krawls ever built were designed and constructed by the Volksreich, as were a number of other horribly effective weapons and deadly protocols. Massive factory complexes were constructed throughout their land, and all but a few worked at full capacity day and night. What the silent and oddly still factories were to produce, none could say.

Krieger waited until he had a barely sufficient pretext; on a slight insult, he invaded and seized one of the Volksreich's neighbors. He played the game of politics, fending off the protestations of other world powers by claiming the land properly belonged to the Volksreich and they were only taking back what was theirs, all while he and his Inner Circle plotted their next conquest. Imbohl soon sought out Krieger for a non-aggression pact, but within an hour of meeting the man, he knew one of them would have to die so the other could live. Both signed the treaty knowing it was only delayed the inevitable.

The pact with the U.R.R.S secured, the Aryans immediately turned to conquering the rest of the Great Continent. They seized country after country and used dreadful new long-range weapons to attack the Isle of Lions. Within a year, the Aryans controlled half the continent and there seemed no end to their victories, though the stubborn Lionists would not



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surrender. The Aryans' krawls and their weapons allowed them to dominate all of their opposition. Strange rumors spread, of people going missing, of whole towns disappearing overnight. At first, people dismissed these stories as fairy tales, but soon enough, proof slipped out the Aryans seized people for something ghastly....

As the war expanded and his demented visions came true, Krieger deemed himself a god. He ordered an attack on the U.R.R.S even as his allies roused the deadly ire of the West. As the legions of the Volksreich marched towards the Republics, members of the Red Council met in secret with the Prime Minister of the Lionists and officials from the W.T.A.

Krieger's insanity threatened the entire world, and so the world rose against him. Farmers and doctors, truck drivers and diplomats, teachers and laborers, simple men and women from every walk of life volunteered to fight against the Aryans' murderous insanity. As the West mobilized, the armies of the United Republics of the Red Star strove against the armored might of the Aryans' krawls and their gruesome dark sorceries. This was as no other conflict, for no other war had ever used such technology or fought on such a massive scale.

On the bloody fields of Pravdagrad, over two million courageous Red soldiers gave their lives to halt the Aryan's advance on their capital city, the Citadel. With their great sacrifice and the deadly chill of a northern winter, the Aryan war machine ground to a halt. With spring came a renewal of hostilities, but also fresh Alliance troops, eager for the fray. The struggle stretched from the shores of the sea to the edges of the Eastern Tundra, and no man, woman, or child was unaffected by it.

Even as it became apparent that they couldn't fight a war on multiple fronts, the Aryans strived for some goal inexplicable to any outside of Krieger's Inner Circle. With every loss, the Inner Circle's handpicked troops, known as the Lightning Guard, seemed to become more fanatical and sure of their cause. As they advanced into the heart of the Volksreich's territories, the soldiers of the West and the Red army learned the awful truth together: the Aryans slaughtered "undesirables" in their great factory furnaces, along with the majority of their prisoners of war. The forces aligned against the Aryans redoubled their efforts, firmly convinced of the righteousness of their actions. Great deeds and remarkable heroism became daily occurrences as they strove to end Krieger's diabolical schemes forever. In the end, they won.

His unholy factories bombed, his Inner Circle toppled, his dreams crushed, Krieger set off a suicidal protocol taking the lives of over 3,000 soldiers as he eradicated himself. With his death, the war was effectively over. However, as the smoke cleared, the leaders of the Western Transnationalist Alliance and the United Republics of the Red Star gazed at one another over the rubble of the Great Continent with troubled eyes — and the course of the future was laid...

There are those who claim nothing was gained from the Great Patriotic War, save bitter lessons. This may be so, but if the teacher was cruel, it was also thorough. As all sides sought advantage on the battlefield, the world's technology drastically advanced. While the initial discoveries were all directed towards a combat role, new ideas for plastics, polymers, alloys and more flowed into the private sector in the peace that

followed, along with the veterans who knew how to make use of them. Grievous wounds and battlefield trauma gave rise to daring new forms of surgery and medicinal protocols. Never before had troops, equipment, and armaments been deployed on such a massive scale. The science of logistics came into its own, as Supply Kasters struggled with whole new ways of thinking about underlying support structures for their supply lines, training serving them well for the future. All the trials of the war had served to sharpen the minds of many of those surviving it, and the world became a smaller place as people realized distant events could still directly affect them.

The Global Council and The Ironhold

After the close of the war, the nations of the world were in firm agreement that a power as appalling as the Aryan Nationalist Party should never be allowed to rise again. A forum for the advancement of human rights and a promotion of the understanding between widely differing countries was called for. The fact that advancing technology was shrinking the distance between nations and such a body could go far towards increasing trade did not go unnoticed.

A proposal was put forth to establish a place where all countries could air their grievances. It was hoped clear lines of communication would allow diplomatic resolutions of conflicts instead of armed ones. While all agreed with the idea, in principle, the extant powers of the world — the W.T.A., the U.R.R.S., the Lands of the Dragon, and the Isle of Lions — were not so eager to give over their supremacy to a brand new organization consisting of many of their lessers without some assurances. Thus, the Global Council was formed with the noblest of intentions, but a flaw was laid in its very foundations — its mightiest members ensured its pronouncements would carry little weight against them.

The GC's Grand Hall was placed upon a promontory on the eastern shore of the W.T.A., overlooking the ocean separating the Old World from the New. The Red Council was adamant it wouldn't be placed within their borders, and neither the Dragon Lands nor the Lionists sought the honor. The Grand Hall is a magnificent edifice, with sweeping columns defying gravity using sophisticated rites and protocols. It has played host to the grandest dignitaries the globe has to offer, seen the start of many a noble quest, and been the birthplace of too many base schemes. When smaller countries are beset by famine, pestilence and war, they come to ask the Global Council for aid. Many are answered, though some of the less "significant" countries are prevented from ever getting to ask the question should they disrupt the plans of the most powerful members.

Over the years, the Global Council acted a number of times against petty tyrants and would-be dictators, but there was always an easily discerned pattern to their operations. That which the W.T.A. and the U.R.R.S. found mutually acceptable could be done; that which either government disapproved of could not. There was a name for this phenomenon, a name known to all, but spoken of by few in the GC: the Ironhold.

In the Ironhold's heyday, many of the tyrants the Global Council would've seen removed were placed on their thrones by either the U.R.R.S. or the W.T.A. as the two

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countries came to regard the post-Great Patriotic War world as their chessboard. Both governments calculated every global policy decision with a regard as to how it would affect their rival. If one country made an announcement of some new invention or discovery, the other was sure to follow with a different and supposedly better one within a month or two. Both countries raced forward in all sciences, taking what they learned from the war and building on it to an unprecedented degree. The legendary Red sorcerer-engineer Sergei Korolev designed and constructed the first of the skyfurnaces, while his rival, the brilliant W.T.A. rocket scientist Bob Hutchings, built a vessel capable of traversing space and landing on Luna-1.

As their technologies expanded, so did their ambitions. The governments of both countries sought to bring more and

more people under their sway. For a long time, they both seemed unstoppable, until the West learned in the Kingdom of Jade sometimes power is not enough against a determined foe. One of the great ironies of history is while the United Republics of the Red Star quietly mocked the failure of the Western Transnationalist Alliance, they were all but oblivious to the fissures running through their own country. They too, headed towards a similar defeat — one that would break them beyond all repair.

For over four long decades, the Ironhold gripped the world. With the fall of the United Republics of the Red Star, however, it is no more; the Western Transnationalist Alliance stands supreme as the last true global superpower, dictating what it will and will not do, having grown all but deaf to the pleas of Global Council.

FIGHT FOR YOUR FREEDOM!

Welcome, comrade, to the *Red Star Campaign Setting*.

What will you find in these pages? **Section I: Under the Red Star** describes the essential modifications to the rules and options found in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*, exploring a slew of new classes like the Hailer, the Red Fleet Officer, the Red Trooper, Sorceress, and more. If you want to set your game in places other than the U.R.R.S., the Nistaani Shaman and Warrior and Nokgorkan Resistance Fighter are also available. With new classes, there are also new Skills, like Kast, which allows you to manipulate magic, and Telekinesis, enabling you to control bullets fired from your hailer, perhaps one of the most dangerous of telekinetic weaponry. New Feats let you create telekinetic shields capable of blocking machinegun sprays or psychically launch metal pins into the eyes of your enemies. Of course, no modern game would be complete without an arsenal of new weaponry and body armor, detailing a slew of new firearms and other weapons, some mundane, other powered by the mind.

Section II: The Military Industrial Complex not only describes new rules for military operations, such as indirect fire for example, it also presents an inventory of new vehicles. Herein are mechanical details on the dreaded skyfurnace, the battleship of the skies, capable of transporting over 100,000 tons of men and equipment, crewed by upwards of 25,000 men and women. These vessels never land, and in places like the W.T.O., there are floating cities existing just to supply these massive war machines. If size was not intimidating enough, the sky furnace's weaponry, capable of leveling entire cities, strikes fear into the hearts of the bravest soldier. At the command of the leading nations in the world, sky furnaces are the currency of power.

Rounding out the aircraft, which also includes fighters and transport ships, are the ground vehicles. Dominating every battlefield is the Krawl. Great tracked vehicles, these rolling arsenals are the frontline forces for seizing a territory. Along with a survey of additional transport vehicles, and vehicle armaments, this chapter gives you everything you need to outfit your party or devastating opponents to harry characters fighting for the Resistance.

The heart of **Section II**, however, is not the machinery of war. Instead, it is the magic powering them. Magic employed in the

Red Star Campaign Setting consists of Protocols, functioning similarly to spells in fantasy games. The difference however, is that protocols have developed under the auspices of military need, and so most of these spells serve the needs of units on the battlefield, such as providing medical assistance or raw destructive power. Also differentiating protocols from spells in other settings is the nonlethal damage each inflicts when cast. Protocols drain their casters, and in some cases, casters may take lethal damage instead to bolster their sorcery's potency. Even with these risks, sorceresses are some of the most feared combatants on the Red Star battlefield.

The next component of the *Red Star Campaign Setting* is **Section III: The World**. More than the mechanics of Sections I and II, this is the most important. It serves to familiarize you with the world of the Red Star, defining the national character of the major countries in the modern world, providing full disclosure into the history of not only the U.R.R.S., but also the Isle of Lions, and the W.T.O., and more. Here you can learn all the secrets of the comics, tracing the developments of the modern political arena through Krieger's madness to the tensions between the powers following the Volksreich's fall. Fans of Al'Istaan are not slighted, for this section provides full disclosure on that oppressed land, engaged as it is in a nearly perpetual war with the monolithic U.R.R.S.

The final chapters of **Section III** address the true horrors of the *Red Star Campaign Setting*, describing the mysterious Spiritrealm and its exploitation by ambitious men. The Immortal Template allows players to take the role of characters even after death, and with a selection of Advanced Classes, and spells for Nistaani Shamans, for campaigns centered there. Finally, the book concludes with some pointers on running Red Star campaigns and the statistic blocks for the major characters from the comics.

In short, this book is a great playground for fans of alternate histories, military games, high fantasy, or dark gritty modern campaigns. The *Red Star Campaign Setting* gives you all the components you need for thrilling adventures, fantastic opportunities for dramatic roleplaying, where players take the part of soldiers, resistance fighters, or maybe even common people caught in wrong place at the wrong time. Make this world yours, change what you will, add what you like, and tell your own stories of the Red Star.



SECTION I: UNDER THE RED STAR



CHAPTER ONE: RED STAR CHARACTERS

The *Red Star Campaign Setting* does not use the normal pattern of basic and advanced classes. Characters in the *Red Star* universe usually have strong identities specific to the setting. Given there are no penalties for multiclassing, it should be possible to create any character type from the comics with the rules presented here and the free spirit and the soul thief as described in **Chapter Eight: The Spiritrealm**.

In addition, as most character classes are themselves occupations, the *Red Star Campaign Setting* does not use the standard occupation rules.

The Red Fleet

Most *Red Star Campaign Setting* games focus on characters that are members of, or are closely associated with, the Red Fleet. If this is the type of campaign you will be playing in, the following character classes may be unsuitable for PCs: Nokgorkan resistance fighter, Nistaani shaman, and Nistaani warrior, as well as the Nokgorkan priestess option for the sorceress class. Check with your GM first, however, as there are sometimes ways to fit such an unusual character into the game in any event.

Multiclassing

Although there are no penalties for multiclassed characters, the GM is at liberty to overrule any illogical or unlikely combination if the player cannot provide a satisfactory explanation for it. For example, it would be rare for a character to gain levels in the Nistaani warrior class if she did not start out as a Nistaani, though a Red trooper who “defected,” accepted the Law of the One True God, and was adopted by a Nistaani tribe might be permitted to do so.

More commonly, a former Red trooper, hailer, zek, Red officer or even sorceress who happened to be of Nokgorkan origin might gain levels in Nokgorkan resistance fighter once the war breaks out. Likewise, characters not starting out as Red Fleet officers cannot gain levels in the Red Fleet officer class, unless first promoted to the rank of Junior Lieutenant in the Red Fleet during the course of play.

Options: Double the Reality

The *Red Star Campaign Setting* is a world of larger-than-life heroism. To capture this sense, characters should gain +1 to three abilities of the player's choice, at 4th level and ever four levels thereafter, instead of the standard +1 to a specific ability every four levels. This allows play of well-rounded characters as portrayed in the comics, while not removing the possibility that even high-level characters can

have a few areas of weakness (for example, Maya Antares' relatively poor hand-to-hand combat capabilities).

Also most characters in *The Red Star Campaign Setting* gain significantly more skill points than their counterparts in other d20 games. Again, the heroes depicted in the comic are a highly capable bunch; all have hidden talents of some kind.

For a GM and gaming group preferring a less high-powered game, feel free to ignore these options to bring the characters in your game closer to their counterparts in *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*. In this case, reduce each character class's skill points per level by 2, and likewise reduce the number they gain at 1st level by 8.

Regional Specific Classes

Several of the classes given here, most notably the Nistaani shaman, Nistaani warrior and Nokgorkan resistance fighter, are most effective in particular regions or terrains. The assumption is the campaign is set all around the U.R.R.S. and its neighboring territories, much as the comic books are, so the regional advantages balance. A Nistaani character

is quite rightly more effective in Al'Istaan, and a Nokgorkan in Nokgorka, but this is not a problem with game balance so long as both are occasionally taken out of their native environments.

For campaigns set solely in Nokgorka or Al'Istaan, or games never venturing to either, the GM may wish to award additional feats to characters effectively disadvantaged by the campaign setting. **Table 1-1: Bonus Feats for Campaigns by Region and Character**

Class provides several recommendations for balancing characters for highly focused games. The bonus feats are available when the character reaches the indicated class level, not character level. A bonus feat acquired through this table can be any feat for which the character meets the prerequisites.

The campaign's era makes a difference as to which classes are useful and appropriate; a game set during the War of Al'Istaan will not feature any Nokgorkan resistance fighters, since there are none (or almost none) yet. Likewise, the GM may disallow the Nistaani classes from her game if the War of Al'Istaan is long over, or at the very least require a special reason for the character being present. **Chapter Nine: To The Last of Us!—Running the Red Star** offers several options for structuring a campaign to allow for a variety of character concepts. More information on the various regions described in this chapter are found in their respective chapters later in this book.

CHAPTER ONE: RED STAR CHARACTERS

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CHAPTER ONE: RED STAR CHARACTERS

Table 1-1: Bonus Feats for Campaigns by Region and Character Class

Character Class Affected	Nokgorka-Only Campaign	Al'Istaan-Only Campaign	Campaign in which Characters Never Visit Al'Istaan or Nokgorka
Hailer	5th, 15th	5th, 15th	No bonus
Nistaani Shaman	3rd, 8th, 13th, 18th	No bonus	3rd, 8th, 13th, 18th
Nistaani Warrior	3rd, 8th, 13th, 18th	No bonus	3rd, 8th, 13th, 18th
Nokgorkan Resistance Fighter	No bonus	3rd, 8th, 13th, 18th	3rd, 8th, 13th, 18th
Red Fleet Officer	5th, 15th	5th, 15th	No bonus
Red Trooper	5th, 15th	5th, 15th	No bonus
Sorceress	5th, 15th	5th, 15th	No bonus
Zek	5th, 15th	5th, 15th	No bonus

Allegiances

Unless otherwise noted, each character must choose at least one allegiance as described in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*, and many of the character classes presented in this book list a required allegiance. The world of *The Red Star* is one of extremes, and characters who do not serve a greater cause are rarely suitable candidates to be its heroes.

If you select a class with a required allegiance, the allegiance need not be the most important allegiance to your character.

For example, a Red trooper (required allegiance: the Red Fleet) could choose the following three allegiances: "my brother Jan," "the comrades in my unit," and "the Red Fleet" as allegiances, in that order. In special cases and with the GM's explicit permission, a character may have a different allegiance from that listed (or none at all).

Characters are not required to keep their allegiances, though the GM may decide to disallow further advancement in a particular class if the character fails to maintain appropriate allegiance.

Hailer

Hailers are elite Red Fleet soldiers, trained to carry and fire deadly telekinetic machine guns also known as hailers. Most hailers are male, and most are even more physically impressive than the typical Red trooper. Hailers are often broad, tall and well muscled. These are not exclusive requirements though, and anyone who successfully completes the rigorous training may join their ranks.

Example Hailers

Kyuzo is the best-known hailer. Many other hailers can be seen in the pages of *The Red Star*, usually serving alongside regular Red troopers.

Game Rule Information

Hit Die: 1d12.

Action Points: 6 + 1/2 character level rounded down, every time the character attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The hailer's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are as follows.

Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Drive (Dex), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (current events, history, popular culture, tactics) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move

Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), and Telekinesis (Wis)*.

*See page 39 for details on this new skill.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (7 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 7 + Int modifier.

Required Allegiance: The Red Fleet.

Starting Feats

In addition to the two feats all characters get at 1st level, a hailer begins play with Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Armor Proficiency (heavy), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Telekinetic Autofire, and Telekinetic Firearms Proficiency.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the hailer class.

Hailer Link (Su)

When a hailer candidate is first accepted into a hailer regiment, she gains a hailer link. This is a protocol enhancement permanently cast into the hailer's brain, and allows the hailer to control the various firing options available to the hailer weapon. The hailer may reconfigure her

CHAPTER ONE: RED STAR CHARACTERS

Rank and File NPCs

The Red Star Campaign Setting moves very easily into epic proportions. Everything in this world is painted on a grand scale: battles take place with thousands of soldiers on a side, graveyards take days to ride through, teeming masses of people just trying to live another day fill the cities and everything seems larger than life. Of course, on a backdrop of such detail and grandeur, it takes a cast of thousands to make it come alive.

If the characters are to be the heroes of the U.R.R.S., Nokgorka, or Al'Istaan, there must be common men and women against whom they can be measured. For general-use NPCs and low-ranking enemy soldiers, we recommend using the Ordinaries rules from *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* book and the standard characters found in the **Appendix** of this book.

namesake weapon at will, as a full-round action (even with the speed of a mindlink, some physical reconfiguration is also necessary). All hailer weapons are supplied with at least three options, depending on the Drum used by that particular weapon (see **Chapter Two: Personal Weapons and Equipment**).

Rank: Guard (Ex)

All hailers hold the rank of Guard, at minimum. Hailers are an elite group, and so when a full regiment of hailers is fielded it has the honor of the name "Guards," such as "23rd Hailer Guards." The rank of Guard is equivalent to that of Junior Sergeant, and when a hailer attaches to a standard infantry unit, she functions as a Junior Sergeant for all purposes. Promotion beyond this rank is always possible (see page 36 for full details of U.R.R.S. ranks and promotions).

Weapon Focus

At 1st level, a hailer gains the Weapon Focus feat. This Weapon Focus is always with the hailer. The benefit of this feat applies whether the hailer is employed as machine gun or flamethrower, though it does not apply to the heavy hailer.

Telekinetic Strafe (Ex)

At 2nd level, the hailer learns how to use his or her namesake weapon to strafe. When using any telekinetic firearm on autofire, the character may affect an area four 2m squares long and 1m square wide (that is, any four squares in a straight line), rather than the usual two squares by two squares.

Hailer Training (Su)

At 2nd level, hailers gain advanced training in the use of their weapon. Hailers with 4 or more ranks in Telekinesis can increase the power and speed of their hailer rounds, boosting the range increment of the hailer in machine gun mode to 40m. These benefits apply to both hailers and heavy hailers.

A 6th level hailer with 8 or more ranks in Telekinesis and using a hailer in machine gun mode treats all hailer rounds as armor piercing.

At 10th level, a hailer with 12 or more ranks in Telekinesis further increases the range increment of her hailer in machinegun mode to 50m.

At 14th level, a hailer with 16 or more ranks in Telekinesis treats all hailer rounds as improved armor piercing rounds.

Weapon Specialization (Ex)

At 4th level, a hailer gains weapon specialization with the hailer. The hailer gets a +2 bonus on damage rolls when using a hailer. This applies whether the hailer is employed as machine gun or flamethrower. It does not apply to use with the heavy hailer.

Armor Mastery (Ex)

At 5th level, a hailer can operate with efficiently when in full armor. When the hailer wears heavy armor, increase the Maximum Dexterity Bonus by +1, and reduce the Armor Check Penalty by 1.

At 9th level, a hailer in heavy armor has a base speed of 8m, rather than 6m. Speed reductions for carrying non-armor loads are unaffected.



Table 1-2: The Hailer

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Defense Bonus	Rep Bonus	Class Features
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	+0	+0	Hailer link, rank: Guard, Weapon Focus (hailer)
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	+1	+0	Hailer training: enhanced range (40 m), telekinetic strafe
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	+1	+0	Bonus feat
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	+1	+0	Weapon Specialization (hailer)
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	+2	+1	Armor mastery (+1/1)
6th	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	+2	+1	Hailer training: armor piercing, telekinetic burst fire
7th	+7/+2	+5	+2	+2	+2	+1	Bonus feat
8th	+8/+3	+6	+2	+2	+3	+1	Improved Critical (hailer)
9th	+9/+4	+6	+3	+3	+3	+2	Armor mastery (Speed 8)
10th	+10/+5	+7	+3	+3	+3	+2	Hailer training: enhanced range (50 m)
11th	+11/+6/+1	+7	+3	+3	+4	+2	Bonus feat
12th	+12/+7/+2	+8	+4	+4	+4	+2	Greater weapon focus (hailer)
13th	+13/+8/+3	+8	+4	+4	+4	+3	Armor mastery (+2/+2)
14th	+14/+9/+4	+9	+4	+4	+5	+3	Hailer training: improved armor piercing
15th	+15/+10/+5	+9	+5	+5	+5	+3	Bonus feat
16th	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+5	+5	+5	+3	Greater weapon specialization (hailer)
17th	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+5	+6	+4	Armor mastery (Speed 10)
18th	+18/+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+6	+6	+4	Guide hailer shots
19th	+19/+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+6	+6	+4	Bonus feat
20th	+20/+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+6	+7	+4	Critical strike (hailer)

At 13th level, increase to Maximum Dexterity Bonus of heavy armor by +2, and reduce the Armor Check Penalty by 2.

At 17th level, armor or loads do not reduce the hailer's base speed, allowing for a speed of 10m in any armor.

Telekinetic Burst Fire (Ex)

A 6th level hailer using a telekinetic firearm capable of autofire and having at least five bullets loaded may fire a short burst as a single attack against a single target. The hailer takes a -4 penalty on the attack roll, but deals an extra +2 dice of damage. Firing a burst expends all five bullets.

Improved Critical (Ex)

At 8th level, the hailer's threat range doubles when using a hailer in machine gun mode. This does not apply to the heavy hailer.

Greater Weapon Specialization (Ex)

At 16th level, a hailer gains greater weapon specialization with the hailer. This ability increases the bonus on damage rolls to +4 when using a hailer. This applies whether the hailer is employed as machine gun or flamethrower, though not with the heavy hailer.

Guide Hailer Shots (Su)

At 18th level, a hailer with 20 or more ranks in Telekinesis can use his or her telekinetic powers to guide and control hailer attacks.

In either mode, the hailer may fire round corners or past cover. This allows an attack against any target within range, so long as there is a route to the target. In effect, the target is treated as having two levels of cover less than she actually has; so a target behind total cover instead has three-quarters cover, and a target who usually had only one-quarter or one-half cover instead has no cover at all.

Furthermore, in flamethrower mode, the hailer may 'sculpt' the flames, creating any shape of flamethrower area of effect desired, so long as the volume of the area of effect remains identical. A flamethrower area of effect is normally 2m x 2m x 50m, giving a total volume of 200 cubic meters. The hailer could reshape this into a 4m x 2m x 25m area of effect, a 10m x 10m x 2m area of effect, or any other shape, so long as each dimension has a minimum size of 1 meter and the total area equals 200 cubic meters. The shape does not have to be a cube: L-shapes, curves, or even hollow boxes are all possibilities.

Likewise, in machine gun mode the hailer can affect any 4 adjacent 2m-squares, in any shape, with an autofire attack. She is no longer constrained by the requirement to attack a 4m x 4m space, or to use strafing to attack a 2m x 8m space.

These benefits also apply to the heavy hailer. A heavy hailer's flamethrower volume is 300 cubic meters.

Critical Strike (Hailer) (Ex)

At 20th level, a hailer automatically confirms a critical threat as a critical hit when attacking with the hailer. This applies

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whether the hailer is employed as machine gun or flamethrower. It does not apply to the heavy hailer.

Bonus Feats

At 3rd, 7th, 11th, 15th and 19th, the hailer gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the hailer must meet all the prerequisites of the feat in order to select it.

Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Advanced Two-Weapon Fighting, Alertness, Bersk Wrestling Pin, Bersk Wrestling Kill, Bersk Wrestling Strike, Bersk Wrestling, Burst Fire, Cleave, Combat Martial Arts, Combat Reflexes, Dead Aim, Diehard, Double Tap, Engine Pull Champion, Exotic Firearms Proficiency, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency, Far Shot, Frightful Presence, Great Cleave, Gunnery, Heroic Surge, Improved Damage Threshold, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Railfighting, Simple Weapons

Species

In most *Red Star Campaign Setting* games, all characters are human. However, in a campaign set exclusively in Al'Istaan characters may play a Dune-Ra at the GM's discretion (see the **Dune-Ra** in **Chapter Seven: The World**). Likewise, in the Immortals campaign setting players may take the roles of Immortal characters, though playing these types of characters require a special set of circumstances to play. For details on playing Immortals see **Chapter Nine: To the Last of Us All! — Running The Red Star**.

Proficiency, Stealthy, Strafe, Telekinetic Warrior, Toughness, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus.

Nistaani Shaman

The Nistaani are an ancient people, and their shamans are the custodians of a knowledge and wisdom as old as the land itself. They are effective with spells, but even more with longer rituals, when they call upon the power of the land, its spirits, and the Law of the One True God to achieve effects that would seem incredible even to another spellcaster.

Example Nistaani Shamans

The robed assistants of Kar Dathra are all Nistaani shamans.

Game Rule Information

Hit Die: 1d6.

Action Points: 6 + 1/2 character level rounded down, every time the character attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Nistaani shaman's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are as follows.

Concentration (Con), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Kast (Int), Knowledge (arcana, history, religion) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Research (Int), Ritual (Cha)*, Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), and Survival (Wis).

*See page 39 for details on this new skill.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (7 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 7 + Int modifier.

Required Allegiance: The Law of the One True God.

Starting Feats

In addition to the two feats all characters get at 1st level, a Nistaani shaman begins play with the Archaic Weapons Proficiency and Simple Weapons Proficiency feats.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Nistaani shaman class.

Starting Invocations (Su)

Each Nistaani shaman starts the game knowing three invocations, chosen from the list given in **Chapter Eight: The Spiritrealm**.



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Table 1-3: The Nistaani Shaman

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Defense Bonus	Rep Bonus	Class Features
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	+0	+1	Starting invocations
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	+0	+1	Lead ritual +1
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	+1	+2	Bonus feat
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	+1	+2	Lead ritual +2
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	+1	+3	Invocation
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	+1	+3	Lead ritual +3
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	+2	+4	Bonus feat
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	+2	+4	Lead ritual +4
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	+2	+5	Spell
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	+2	+5	Lead ritual +5
11th	+5	+3	+3	+7	+3	+6	Bonus feat
12th	+6/+1	+4	+4	+8	+3	+6	Lead ritual +6
13th	+6/+1	+4	+4	+8	+3	+7	Spell
14th	+7/+2	+4	+4	+9	+3	+7	Lead ritual +7
15th	+7/+2	+5	+5	+9	+4	+8	Bonus feat
16th	+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	+4	+8	Lead ritual +8
17th	+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	+4	+9	Spell
18th	+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	+4	+9	Lead ritual +9
19th	+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	+5	+10	Bonus feat
20th	+10/+5	+6	+6	+12	+5	+10	Lead ritual +10

Lead Ritual (Su)

At 2nd level, the Nistaani shaman is an expert ritualist, often chosen to lead his or her people in their observances and magic. He or she gains a +1 bonus to all Ritual checks made when leading a ritual. This bonus increases by an additional +1 every two levels thereafter.

Spell (Su)

At 5th level and every four levels thereafter, the Nistaani shaman learns one new invocation of his or her choice. This spell may be chosen from any Nistaani invocations (see page 160). Alternatively, if the Nistaani has access to an

appropriate teacher or black market protocol, she may learn a protocol instead.

Bonus Feats

At 3rd, 7th, 11th, 15th and 19th, the Nistaani shaman gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Nistaani shaman must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Alertness, Animal Affinity, Attentive, Deceptive, Dodge, Educated, Endurance, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency, Focused, Frightful Presence, Guide, Renown, Sorcery Expert, Studious, Track, Trustworthy.

Nistaani Warrior

The Nistaani tribes of Al'Istaan have defended their homeland against foreign aggressors, and the U.R.R.S. is no different from all the rest. The same tactics apply regardless of foe. Guerilla warfare, mastery of terrain, uncompromising ferocity, and using any weapons they have available, whether the deadly hawk talon polearms, or curved swords for which the Nistaani are famous, or modern guns captured from the Red Fleet are all standard tactics for dealing with invaders.

Example Nistaani Warriors

Nistaani warriors can be seen throughout the Battle of Kar Dathra's Gate sequence (*The Red Star*, Books #1 to #4).

Class Information

Hit Die: 1d8.

Action Points: 6 + 1/2 character level rounded down, every time the character attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Nistaani warrior's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are as follows.

Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (religion, tactics) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Navigate (Int), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Ride (Dex), Ritual (Cha), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Telekinesis (Wis)*, Treat Injury (Wis).

*See page 39 for details on this new skill.

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Table 1-4: The Nistaani Warrior

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Defense Bonus	Rep Bonus	Class Features
1st	+1	+1	+0	+1	+1	+0	Regional origin, righteous fury 1/day
2nd	+2	+2	+0	+2	+1	+0	Specialization I
3rd	+3	+2	+1	+2	+2	+0	Bonus feat
4th	+4	+2	+1	+2	+2	+0	Child of sand and rock (survivor)
5th	+5	+3	+1	+3	+3	+1	Specialization II
6th	+6/+1	+3	+2	+3	+3	+1	Righteous fury 2/day
7th	+7/+2	+4	+2	+4	+4	+1	Bonus feat
8th	+8/+3	+4	+2	+4	+4	+1	Specialization III
9th	+9/+4	+4	+3	+4	+5	+2	Child of sand and rock (unhampered movement)
10th	+10/+5	+5	+3	+5	+5	+2	Champion
11th	+11/+6/+1	+5	+3	+5	+6	+2	Bonus feat, specialization IV
12th	+12/+7/+2	+6	+4	+6	+6	+2	Child of sand and rock (stealth)
13th	+13/+8/+3	+6	+4	+6	+7	+3	Righteous fury 3/day
14th	+14/+9/+4	+6	+4	+6	+7	+3	Specialization V
15th	+15/+10/+5	+7	+5	+7	+8	+3	Bonus feat, Child of sand and rock (initiative +2)
16th	+16/+11/+6/+1	+7	+5	+7	+8	+3	Greater righteous fury
17th	+17/+12/+7/+2	+8	+5	+8	+9	+4	Specialization VI
18th	+18/+13/+8/+3	+8	+6	+8	+9	+4	Child of sand and rock (ambush)
19th	+19/+14/+9/+4	+8	+6	+8	+10	+4	Bonus feat
20th	+20/+15/+10/+5	+9	+6	+9	+10	+4	Specialization VII, righteous fury 4/day

Skill Points at 1st Level: (9 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 9 + Int modifier.

Required Allegiance: The Law of the One True God.

Starting Feats

In addition to the two feats all characters get at 1st level, a Nistaani warrior begins play with the Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency feats, and one additional feat chosen from the following list: Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency: Hawk Talon, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency: Nistaani Sword or Slivers on the Wind.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Nistaani warrior class.

Regional Origin (Ex)

At 1st level, a Nistaani warrior must select a regional origin. Each regional origin provides certain bonuses as described below. For more information on the Al'Istaan regions, consult **Chapter Seven: The World**.

Land's Teeth: The mountain tribes of this region are renowned for their stoicism in the face of adversity. A Nistaani warrior from the Land's Teeth gains +1 hit point and gains the Diehard feat as a bonus feat, even if he or she does not meet the prerequisites. See page 42 for information on the Diehard feat.

Dusty Sea: The nomads wandering this desert are fierce yet practical. A Nistaani warrior from the Dusty Sea gains a +1 bonus to all Survival checks. Furthermore, he gains an extra use per day of the Righteous Fury class feature.

Northern Reaches: Though the northern tribes turn their passion to poetry, they are experts with politics. A character from the Northern Reaches gains a +2 bonus to all Craft (writing), Diplomacy, and Sense Motive checks. These skills are always class skills for Nistaani warriors who select this region.

Righteous Fury (Ex)

A Nistaani warrior can fly into a righteous fury a certain number of times per day. While in a fury, a Nistaani warrior temporarily gains a +2 bonus to Strength, a +2 bonus to Constitution, and a +1 morale bonus on Will saves, but takes a –1 penalty to Defense. The increase in Constitution increases the Nistaani warrior's hit points by 1 point per level, but these hit points go away at the end of the fury when the Constitution score drops back to normal. (These extra hit points are not lost first the way temporary hit points are.)

While in the throws of fury, a Nistaani warrior cannot use any Charisma-, Dexterity-, or Intelligence-based skills (except for Balance, Escape Artist, Intimidate, and Ride), the Concentration skill, or any abilities requiring patience or concentration. He can use any feat possessed except Combat Expertise. A fit of fury lasts for a number of rounds equal to 3 + the character's (newly improved) Constitution modifier.

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A Nistaani warrior may prematurely end righteous fury. At the end of the fury, the Nistaani warrior loses the fury modifiers and restrictions and becomes fatigued (–2 penalty to Strength, –2 penalty to Dexterity, can't charge or run) for the duration of the current encounter (unless he is a 16th-level Nistaani warrior, at which point this limitation no longer applies; see **Greater Righteous Fury** on page 20). A Nistaani warrior can fly into a fury only once per encounter.

At 1st level, he or she can enter a fury once per day. At 6th level, 13th level and 20th level, he can use righteous fury one additional time per day (to a maximum of four times per day at 20th level; five times if the character selected "Dusty Sea" as his regional origin). Entering a fury takes no time itself, but a Nistaani warrior can do it only during his or her action, and not in response to someone else's action.

A Nistaani warrior specifically attacking an enemy of his people, tribe, country or religion (rather than a personal enemy or random antagonist) gains double the benefits and penalties of any righteous fury effect. He effectively gains a +4 bonus to Strength, a +4 bonus to Constitution, and a +2 morale bonus on Will saves, but with a –2 penalty to Defense. Otherwise, righteous fury functions as normal. It is always at the GM's discretion as to whether a doubling of the righteous fury effects is appropriate.

Specialization

At 2nd level, the Nistaani warrior selects a specialization. Depending on the specialization chosen, the Nistaani warrior gains certain special abilities at 2nd level and every three levels thereafter, as described on **Table 1–5: Nistaani Warrior Specializations**.

Beetle Cavalry: These Nistaani warriors use their Susk-Dath beetles not just as mounts but as living krawls, great armored beasts capable of combating and defeating the Red Fleet's forces. See the **Susk-Dath** in **Chapter Seven: The World** for details.

Desert Fighter: Even more than most Nistaani warriors, the desert fighters are masters of the harsh sands of the Dusty Sea. Striking with all the speed and fury of a sandstorm before melting away into the dunes, the desert fighter is feared by Red Troopers and rival tribes alike. Desert fighters also gain an affinity with the creatures of the desert, including the dreaded Dune-Ra. See the **Dune-Ra** in **Chapter Seven: The World** for details.

Holy Warrior: Though Nistaani warriors would all fight to defend Al'Istaan from U.R.R.S. or W.T.A. incursions alike, the holy warrior is utterly dedicated to defeating all infidels no matter where they lie. A holy warrior's faith is source of his power. A Nistaani warrior must have Allegiance: The Law of the One True God as his or her first allegiance to be a holy warrior.

Specialization Benefits

Aura of Courage (Su): The character is immune to fear, protocol-induced or otherwise. Each ally within 4m of the character gains a +4 morale bonus on saving throws against fear effects. This ability functions while the character is conscious, but not if he is unconscious or dead.

Beetle Mount (Ex): The character gains a war-trained Susk-Dath beetle as a mount. This is an exceptional specimen, with +2 to Strength and Constitution, but is otherwise identical to the Susk-Dath beetle as described on page 132.

Beetle Mount Advancement (Ex): Each time **Table 1–5: Nistaani Warrior Specializations** indicates this special ability, the character's Susk-Dath gains +2 bonus HD, +2 to natural damage reduction, +2 Strength and +2 Constitution. Extra Hit Dice improves a creature's base attack bonus and base save bonuses. As Vermin, a Susk-Dath's base attack bonus is equal to three-quarters of its HD. Furthermore, a Susk-Dath has a good Fortitude save.

Desert Camouflage (Ex): The character can use the Hide skill in either desert or mountain terrain even if the terrain doesn't grant cover or concealment

Desert Guide (Ex): The character may allow up to one traveling companion per full three levels to gain the benefits of the Child of Sand and Rock class feature. Guiding in this way takes a certain degree of concentration, and cannot be done during combat or other high-stress situations (though an 18th level Nistaani warrior with this class feature could, for example, assist comrades with setting up an ambush, ceasing to use Desert Guide only at the moment they attack).

Dune-Ra Companion (Ex): The character gains a Dune-Ra companion. This is an average creature of its kind. See the **Dune-Ra** in **Chapter Seven: The World** for details.

Dune-Ra Companion Advancement (Ex): Each time **Table 1–5: Nistaani Warrior Specializations** indicates this special

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Table 1-5: Nistaani Warrior Specializations

Specializations	Level	Beetle Cavalry	Desert Fighter	Holy Warrior
Specialization I	2nd level	Beetle Mount	Natural Empathy	Smite Infidel 1/day
Specialization II	5th level	Mounted Attack	Dune-Ra Companion	Aura of Courage
Specialization III	8th level	Trample	Desert Guide	Smite Infidel 2/day
Specialization IV	11th level	Beetle Mount Advancement	Dune-Ra Companion Advancement	Jihad
Specialization V	14th level	Ride-By Attack	Desert Camouflage	Smite Infidel 3/day
Specialization VI	17th level	Spirited Charge	Dune-Ra Companion Advancement	Word of the Prophet
Specialization VII	20th level	Beetle Mount	Vanish into the Sand Advancement	Smite Infidel 4/day Child of Sand and Rock

ability, the character's Dune-Ra companion gains +2 HD, +1 to natural damage reduction, +2 Strength and +2 Constitution. Extra Hit Dice improves a creature's base attack bonus and base save bonuses. As a Giant, a Dune-Ra's base attack bonus is equal to three-quarters of its HD. Furthermore, a Susk-Dath has a good Fortitude save. A Dune-Ra also gains additional skill points and feats for bonus HD as normal for advancing a monster's Hit Dice.

Jihad (Ex): The character may call upon neighbors and allies to make a holy war on the infidel. This grants a +4 bonus to the modified class level check when using the Champion feat.

Mounted Attack (Ex): While the character rides a Susk-Dath beetle, the penalty for using a ranged weapon while mounted is halved. He instead takes a -2 penalty if the Susk-Dath takes a double move or a -4 penalty if the Susk-Dath is running.

Natural Empathy (Ex): The character can improve the attitude of any creature (animal or otherwise) with a listed terrain type of either Desert or Mountain. This ability functions just like a Diplomacy check to improve the attitude of a person. The character rolls 1d20 and adds his Nistaani class level and Charisma bonus to determine the natural empathy check result. The typical domestic animal has a starting attitude of indifferent, while wild animals are usually unfriendly. The attitudes of sentient creatures, of course, can run the full gamut from Hostile to Helpful. To use natural empathy, the character and the target

must be able to study each other, which means that they must be within 10m of one another under normal visibility conditions. Influencing a creature in this way generally takes 1 minute, but as with influencing people, it might take more or less time depending on the circumstances.

Ride-By Attack (Ex): When mounted and using the charge action, the character may move and attack as if with a standard charge and then move again (continuing the straight line of the charge). The total movement for the round can't exceed double the mounted speed. Neither rider nor mount provokes an attack of opportunity from the opponent attacked.

Smite Infidel (Su): Once per day, the character may attempt to smite an infidel with one normal melee attack. The character's adds his Charisma bonus (if any) to the attack roll. On a successful attack, the character deals bonus damage equal to 1 point per Nistaani warrior level. An infidel is defined as any creature that has an Intelligence of 3 or higher and does not have "The Law of the One True God" as one of his or her allegiances. If the character accidentally smites a creature that is not an infidel, the smite has no effect, but the ability is still used up for that day. Each time **Table 1-5: Nistaani Warrior Specializations** indicates this ability, the character gains one additional smite infidel attack per day.

Spirited Charge (Ex): When mounted and using the charge action, the character deals double damage with a melee weapon (or triple damage with a spear).

Using Nistaani Characters

It is assumed most characters in the *Red Star* campaigns are from the U.R.R.S. pitted against the internal struggles of the state after the fall of Ironhold, or battling Nistaani and Nokgorkan enemies of the state on the nation's many fronts. Some campaigns, though, may change the focus of the game to highlight other people, other regions, telling stories beyond the comics. To meet these needs, this chapter presents several options for games outside of the expected stage. However, as Nistaani invocations directly tie into some of the darkest secrets in the *Red Star Campaign Setting*, information on these spells are found separately from **Military-Industrial Sorcery**, allowing GMs to retain some secrets to uncover through game play if he does not intend on allowing players to take the roles of Nistaani Shamans and Warriors. For more information on Nistaani spells, consult Chapter Eight: The Spiritrealm starting on page 160.

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Trample (Ex): When the character attempts to overrun an opponent while mounted, the target may not choose to avoid the overrun attempt. The Susk-Dath may make one slam attack against any target thus knocked down, gaining the standard +4 bonus on attack rolls against prone targets.

Vanish into the Sand and Rock (Ex): While in desert or mountain terrain, the character can use the Hide skill even while being observed.

Word of the Prophet (Su): As a free action, by expending an action point, the character can utter a word or short phrase from the Book of Law. All infidels (see Smite Infidel, above, for the definition of infidels) who hear the Word of the Prophet must succeed Will saves (DC = 18 + Nistaani warrior's Cha modifier) or be knocked prone, deafened for 2d6 minutes, and stunned for 1d6 rounds. The character must utter the Word during his actions, and not as a reaction to an opponent's actions.

CHILD OF SAND AND ROCK (EX)

At 4th level and every three levels thereafter, the Nistaani warrior's affinity with the harsh terrain of Al'Istaan increases, providing a number of special bonuses. A 4th level Nistaani warrior gains a +2 competence bonus to all Climb, Listen, Search, Spot and Survival checks made in desert or mountain terrain.

- At 7th level, the Nistaani warrior is no longer hampered by moving over desert or mountain terrain, but instead moves at his or her normal speed.
- At 10th level, the Nistaani warrior gains a +4 competence bonus to all Move Silently and Hide checks made in desert or mountain terrain.
- At 13th level, the Nistaani warrior gains a +2 bonus to Initiative checks when in desert or mountain terrain.

- A 17th level Nistaani warrior may prepare an ambush in either desert or mountain terrain. Setting up the ambush requires 2d6 minutes. Once completed, the Nistaani warrior makes a Hide check at a +4 circumstance bonus to move into position. He may substitute a Knowledge (tactics) check for this roll. If the enemy does not detect the Nistaani warrior with a Spot check, the warrior surprises the enemy from the prepared ambush site, and the Nistaani warrior may take a full round of actions during the surprise round, instead of only taking a standard or move action.

CHAMPION

A 10th level Nistaani warrior gains Champion as a bonus feat, without needing to meet any of the prerequisites.

GREATER RIGHTEOUS FURY (EX)

From 16th level onwards, a Nistaani warrior is no longer fatigued at the end of a righteous fury.

BONUS FEATS

At 3rd, 7th, 11th, 15th and 19th, the Nistaani warrior gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Nistaani warrior must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Agile Riposte, Alertness, Animal Affinity, Armor Proficiency, Combat Expertise, Combat Martial Arts, Combat Reflexes, Combat Throw, Dead Aim, Defensive Martial Arts, Dodge, Elusive Target, Endurance, Exotic Firearms Proficiency, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency, Far Shot, Guide, Improved Combat Throw, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Slivers on the Wind, Improved Trip, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Shot on the Run, Slivers on the Wind, Toughness, Track, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus, Whirlwind Attack.

NOKGORKAN RESISTANCE FIGHTER

Nokgorka fights to throw off the shackles of servitude binding it to the U.R.R.S. Almost every Nokgorkan has joined the resistance militia, united under the ancient motto of their people: "To die or live in freedom is our fate."

EXAMPLE NOKGORKAN RESISTANCE FIGHTERS

Makita is a typical example of an Orphan-origin Nokgorkan resistance fighter. Other Nokgorkan resistance fighters include Makita's father, Proto, Turko, and Dushka in the *Run Makita Run* annual, as well as countless troopers and ordinary citizens fighting the Reds in the Nokgorkan war.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Hit Die: 1d8.

Action Points: 6 + 1/2 character level rounded down, every time the character attains a new level in this class.

CLASS SKILLS

The Nokgorkan resistance fighter's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are as follows.

Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (any) (Int), Demolitions (Int), Drive (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (current events, history, popular culture, streetwise, tactics) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Repair (Int), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Treat Injury (Wis), and Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (9 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 9 + Int modifier.

Required Allegiance: The Law of the One True God or The Nokgorkan Resistance.

STARTING FEATS

In addition to the two feats all characters get at 1st level, a Nokgorkan resistance fighter begins play with the Advanced

Table 1-6: The Nokgorkan Resistance Fighter

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Defense Bonus	Rep Bonus	Class Features
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	+1	+0	Area knowledge +1, contacts, origin
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	+1	+0	Sneak attack +1d6
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+1	+2	+0	Evasion
4th	+3	+1	+4	+1	+2	+0	Bonus feat
5th	+3	+1	+4	+1	+3	+0	Sneak attack +2d6
6th	+4	+2	+5	+2	+3	+1	Uncanny dodge
7th	+5	+2	+5	+2	+4	+1	Area knowledge +2
8th	+6/+1	+2	+6	+2	+4	+1	Sneak attack +3d6
9th	+6/+1	+3	+6	+3	+5	+1	Improved uncanny dodge
10th	+7/+2	+3	+7	+3	+5	+1	Bonus feat
11th	+8/+3	+3	+7	+3	+6	+2	Sneak attack +4d6
12th	+9/+4	+4	+8	+4	+6	+2	Improved evasion
13th	+9/+4	+4	+8	+4	+7	+2	Area knowledge +3
14th	+10/+5	+4	+9	+4	+7	+2	Sneak attack +5d6
15th	+11/+6/+1	+5	+9	+5	+8	+2	Defensive roll
16th	+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+5	+8	+3	Bonus feat
17th	+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+5	+9	+3	Sneak attack +6d6
18th	+13/+8/+3	+6	+11	+6	+9	+3	Opportunist
19th	+14/+9/+4	+6	+11	+6	+10	+3	Area knowledge +4
20th	+15/+10/+5	+6	+12	+6	+10	+3	Sneak attack +7d6

Firearms Proficiency, Exotic Firearms Proficiency: SWORD, Personal Firearms Proficiency, and Simple Weapons Proficiency feats.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Nokgorkan resistance fighter class.

Area Knowledge (Ex)

Nokgorka's cities lie in shattered ruins, symbols of the nation's history of warfare. Nokgorkans, from an early age, learn every nook, cranny and back alleyway of the ruins of their hometowns. They are aware of any changes, too, whether wrought by the pounding of Red Fleet artillery or the hasty construction of defenses by other Nokgorkans. Canny resistance fighters turn this knowledge to their advantage; they cannot hope to defeat the U.R.R.S. in direct combat, but a guerrilla war might inflict enough damage to force the Party to recognize Nokgorka's independence. At higher levels, most Nokgorkan resistance fighters have helped construct the defenses and ambush sites themselves.

At 1st level, the Nokgorkan resistance fighter knows the geography of the city intimately, including the locations of all the dead-end routes, ambush sites, suitable sniper platforms and secret short cuts throughout the city. The character gets a +1 circumstance bonus to all Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Search and Spot checks, a +1 circumstance bonus to Defense, and a +1 circumstance bonus to all attack rolls, while in the character's home city. At the GM's discretion, the character may select a new city, but only within Nokgorka and the character must spend a full month doing nothing but exploring the city before these benefits apply.

The bonuses increase by an additional +1 for every six levels attained in this class (+2 at 7th, +3 at 13th, and +4 at 19th).

Contacts (Ex)

A Nokgorkan resistance fighter's biggest assets are her contacts, fellow Nokgorkans whose commitment to the war is equally strong. Most of these are active in one of the resistance groups, but some may be Nokgorkan sympathizers within the Red Fleet itself. The main use of contacts is to acquire useful equipment or weaponry, but they can also give information. Up to once per week, a Nokgorkan resistance fighter may make a Contacts check as follows.

Contacts check = d20 + Nokgorkan resistance fighter level + Charisma bonus

Use a contacts check in the place of a Wealth check (representing the use of a contact to procure a particular item) or Gather Information check (representing the use of contacts to learn about enemy troop movements, new arrivals and so on). In either case, the results manifest in 1d6 hours. You can retry failed Wealth and Gather Information check, by making a Contacts check.

As contacts operate on essentially a favor system, the contacts may ask the character to do favors in return — perhaps disseminating rumors or stealing a grounded Zik fighter plane for example. Failure or refusal to do such favors may result in the temporary or permanent loss of the Area Knowledge: Contacts class feature, at the GM's discretion. Furthermore, an implicit part of any contact relationship is the equipment or information provided must be used to further the Nokgorkan cause, rather than for personal gain. Nokgorkans despise war profiteers, or "carrion," as they are

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sometimes called, and again loss of privileges, or worse, can result for those who exploit the Resistance for their own ends.

Most Nokgorkans may also requisition items of equipment as usual if they work for a resistance organization with a structure and hierarchy. Usually a character should try to acquire the item through contacts first, since this confers permanent ownership. A character who has had no luck with contacts, or who only needs the equipment temporarily and thus prefers to avoid owing any favors for it may be better off requisitioning it.

Origin (Ex)

Each Nokgorkan resistance fighter must select an origin at 1st level. Origin describes what the character did before joining the resistance against the U.R.R.S., and perhaps giving a hint as to her motives for fighting the Reds. Each origin also provides a special bonus as follows.

Avenger: They're dead. Your friends, your family, all dead, killed by Red reprisals and attacks in this atrocity of a war. You dedicate your life to killing Reds, and you're damned good at it. If female, you may acquire the moniker "Black Widow," denoting for your loss and your newfound ruthlessness because of it. You gain a +2 bonus to all damage rolls when within 30m of a target who has at least one level in one or more of the Red Fleet officer, hailer, Red trooper or zek character classes.

Citizen: You're an average Joe or Joanna, an ordinary citizen caught up in this rebellion or war whether you want to be or not. You gain a +3 bonus to all Craft and Profession checks.

Ex-Army: You once fought in the Nokgorkan branch of the Red Fleet, perhaps serving in Al'Istaan itself before

turning against the U.R.R.S. when your nation rebelled. Your military training stands you in good stead when it comes to battling the invading Reds. You gain a +1 bonus to all attack rolls.

Fanatic: Your religion is extremely important to you, and you see fighting the Reds off as something of a religious duty. You gain the Righteous Fury class feature, as though you were a 1st level Nistaani warrior (see page 17 for details).

Orphan: Your parents are dead, and other resistance fighters took you in and trained you. Though only a teenager, you've proven yourself in battle repeatedly, and gaining both respect and assistance from your fellow Nokgorkans. You gain a +2 bonus to all Charisma-based checks relating to other Nokgorkans in your home city, including Contacts checks and appropriate skill checks.

Sneak Attack (Ex)

If a Nokgorkan resistance fighter catches an opponent when she is unable to defend herself effectively from her attack, she can strike a vital spot for extra damage. The Nokgorkan resistance fighter's attack deals extra damage any time her target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to Defense (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the Nokgorkan resistance fighter flanks her target. This extra damage is 1d6 at 2nd level, and it increases by 1d6 for every three Nokgorkan resistance fighter levels thereafter. Should the Nokgorkan resistance fighter score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied. Ranged attacks can count as sneak attacks only if the target is within 10m.

With an unarmed strike, a Nokgorkan resistance fighter can make a sneak attack dealing nonlethal damage instead of lethal damage. A weapon dealing lethal damage cannot be used to deal nonlethal damage in a sneak attack, not even with the usual -4 penalty.

Any creature immune to critical hits is also invulnerable to sneak attacks. The Nokgorkan resistance fighter must be able to see the target well enough to pick out a vital spot and must be able to reach such a spot. A Nokgorkan resistance fighter cannot sneak attack while striking a creature with concealment or striking the limbs of a creature whose vitals are beyond reach.

A Nokgorkan resistance fighter's sneak attack capability is cumulative with any sneak attack gained from other classes, such as zek.

Evasion (Ex)

At 3rd level, whenever a Nokgorkan resistance fighter is exposed to any effect that normally allows a character to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, the Nokgorkan resistance fighter suffers no damage if she makes a successful saving throw. Evasion can only be used when wearing light armor or no armor.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex)

A 6th level or higher Nokgorkan resistance fighter retains her Dexterity bonus to Defense regardless of being caught

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flat-footed or struck by a hidden attacker. (The character still loses her Dexterity bonus to Defense if immobilized.)

Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex)

A Nokgorkan resistance fighter of 9th level or higher can no longer be flanked; she can react to opponents on opposite sides of herself as easily as she can react to a single attacker.

Improved Evasion (Ex)

At 12th level, the Nokgorkan resistance fighter gains improved evasion. This ability works like evasion, except that while the character still takes no damage on a successful Reflex saving throw against attacks henceforth she takes only half damage on a failed save. A helpless Nokgorkan resistance fighter does not gain the benefit of improved evasion.

Defensive Roll (Ex)

A Nokgorkan resistance fighter of 15th level can roll with a potentially lethal attack to take less damage from it. When the Nokgorkan resistance fighter would be reduced to 0 hit points or less by damage in combat (from a ranged or melee attack), the Nokgorkan resistance fighter can attempt to roll with the damage.

A Nokgorkan resistance fighter spends 1 action point to use this class feature. The character then makes a Reflex save against a DC equal to the damage dealt. On a successful save, she takes only half damage. The Nokgorkan resistance fighter must

be able to react to the attack to execute a defensive roll—if the immobilized, she can't use this class feature.

Since this effect would not normally allow a character to make a Reflex save for half damage, the Nokgorkan resistance fighter's evasion class feature doesn't apply to the defensive roll.

Opportunist (Ex)

At 18th level, by spending 1 action point, the Nokgorkan resistance fighter can make an attack of opportunity against an opponent who has just been struck for damage in melee by another character. This attack counts as the Nokgorkan resistance fighter's attack of opportunity for that round. A Nokgorkan resistance fighter with the Combat Reflexes feat can't use this class feature more than once per round.

Bonus Feats

At 4th, 10th and 16th level, the Nokgorkan resistance fighter gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Nokgorkan resistance fighter must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Alertness, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Athletic, Bersk Wrestling, Black Market Connections, Brawl, Burst Fire, Dead Aim, Defensive Martial Arts, Dodge, Double Tap, Elusive Target, Exotic Firearms Proficiency, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency, Far Shot, Gunnery, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Precise Strike, Shot on the Run, Stealthy, Streetfighting, Surface Vehicle Operation, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus.

Red Fleet Officer

Officers of the Red Fleet can be found in many positions within its ranks, from commanding a detachment of krawls or assisting a Skymarshall with the day-to-day running of a skyfurnace.

Example Red Fleet Officers

The various skymarshalls such as Urik Antares are the most obvious examples of Red Fleet officers. Anyone with a commissioned rank, however, will probably have at least one level of the Red Fleet officer class, including Captain Marcus Antares, Captain Alexandra Goncharova, and SRSS-Major Maya Antares.

Game Rule Information

Hit Die: 1d8.

Action Points: 6 + 1/2 character level rounded down, every time the character attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Red Fleet officer's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are as follows.

Bluff (Cha), Computer Use (Int), Concentration (Con), Craft (any) (Int), Demolitions (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Drive (Dex), Gamble (Wis), Gather Information (Cha), Kast (Int)*, Knowledge (any) (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Investigate (Wis),

Navigate (Int), Pilot (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Repair (Int), Research (Int), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), and Treat Injury (Wis).

*See page 39 for details on this new skill.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (9 + Int modifier) x 5.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 9 + Int modifier.

Required Allegiance: The Red Fleet.

Starting Feats

In addition to the two feats all *Red Star* characters get at 1st level, a Red Fleet officer begins play with the Armor Proficiency (Light), Gunnery, and Personal Firearms Proficiency feats.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Red Fleet officer class.

Education or Cross-Training (Ex)

Unlike other character classes, a Red Fleet officer begins the game with (class skill points + Int modifier) x 5 skill points, rather than (class skill points + Int modifier) x 4 skill points. This represents the improved educational system available to the privileged classes of the U.R.R.S. Furthermore, a

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Table 1-7: The Red Fleet Officer

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Defense Bonus	Rep Bonus	Class Features
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	+0	+0	Bonus feat, education OR cross-training, rank OR promotion
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	+1	+0	Bonus feat
3rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	+1	+0	Specialization I
4th	+3	+1	+1	+4	+1	+1	Promotion
5th	+3	+1	+1	+4	+2	+1	Bonus feat
6th	+4	+2	+2	+5	+2	+1	Tactical aid I
7th	+5	+2	+2	+5	+2	+2	Promotion, tactical superiority
8th	+6/+1	+2	+2	+6	+3	+2	Bonus feat
9th	+6/+1	+3	+3	+6	+3	+2	Specialization II
10th	+7/+2	+3	+3	+7	+3	+3	Promotion
11th	+8/+3	+3	+3	+7	+4	+3	Bonus feat
12th	+9/+4	+4	+4	+8	+4	+3	Tactical aid II (standard action)
13th	+9/+4	+4	+4	+8	+4	+4	Promotion
14th	+10/+5	+4	+4	+9	+5	+4	Bonus feat
15th	+11/+6/+1	+5	+5	+9	+5	+4	Specialization III
16th	+12/+7/+2	+5	+5	+10	+5	+5	Promotion
17th	+12/+7/+2	+5	+5	+10	+6	+5	Bonus feat
18th	+13/+8/+3	+6	+6	+11	+6	+5	Tactical aid III (move action)
19th	+14/+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	+6	+6	Promotion
20th	+15/+10/+5	+6	+6	+12	+7	+6	Bonus feat

The Red Fleet in Decline

Depending on when the campaign is set, the GM may alter the feats available to Red Fleet officers, since the training and other resources the Red Fleet has to offer may vary considerably. When the U.R.R.S. attacks Al'Istaan, the Fleet is at the height of its power. It is the pride of the Red Star and the terror of the world.

Nine years later, during the Nokgorkan conflict, the Red Fleet is emasculated, a shadow of its former self. Its officers and troopers are thrown into battle with far less training and equipment than they once had. In game terms, this does not directly weaken the character class — an experienced officer is still an experienced officer, even if there are far fewer experienced officers within the Fleet. It does mean, however, some of the more specialized training is less easily available.

Officers of the Red Fleet at this stage of decline are more likely to learn feats to help them gain a quick ruble or otherwise advance their personal aims. This is not to say all Red Fleet officers during the Nokgorkan conflict are corrupt, but even those who still do their very best to serve the Fleet and look out for their troopers' welfare may need to resort to unorthodox methods.

For this reason, the following alternate bonus feat list may be used for Red Fleet officers in campaigns set after the breakup of the U.R.R.S., when the Fleet is run (or, as some might say, neglected) by the Commonwealth of the Red Star. This list replaces the usual bonus feat list, rather than supplementing it.

Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Alertness, Attentive, Bersk Wrestling Pin, Bersk Wrestling Strike, Bersk Wrestling, Black Market Connections, Brawl, Burst Fire, Combat Expertise, Combat Martial Arts, Confident, Deceptive, Defensive Martial Arts, Dodge, Double Tap, Exotic Firearms Proficiency, Far Shot, Gearhead, Improved Initiative, Low Profile, Medical Expert, Meticulous, Point Blank Shot, Precise Strike, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Quick Draw, Quick Reload, Red Fleet Contacts, Renown, Run, Stealthy, Streetfighting, Surface Vehicle Operation, Toughness, Vehicle Dodge, Vehicle Expert, Weapon Focus, Windfall.

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Red Fleet officer's maximum rank in any class skill is equal to (class level + 4) rather than (class level + 3). Likewise, maximum ranks in cross-class skills are (class level + 4)/2 rather than (class level + 3)/2.

A character taking his starting level in another class and was promoted to Junior Lieutenant, thus being eligible to take levels in Red Fleet officer, does not gain the benefits of the education class feature. A promotion cannot match a lifetime's privilege. Instead, the character is cross-trained to ensure he is suitable for the role of Red Fleet officer. He may choose any two skills which become class skills permanently, whatever his character class.

RANK OR PROMOTION (EX)

At 1st level, a Red Fleet officer has the rank of Junior Lieutenant. See **Rank in the Red Fleet**, on page 36 for more information about rank and its privileges.

A Red Fleet officer who already had another character class and was promoted to Junior Lieutenant, thus being eligible to take levels in Red Fleet Officer, is instead promoted to the rank of Lieutenant on attaining 1st level as a Red Fleet officer.

SPECIALIZATION (EX)

A 3rd level Red Fleet officer chooses a branch of service, learning to be an expert krawl commander, skyfurnace staff officer, engineer officer, sorceress officer or infantry commander. He gains an appropriate special ability starting at 3rd level, and every six levels thereafter.

Engineering Branch: At 3rd level, the character gets a +3 bonus to all Repair checks. At 9th level, he gets a +3 bonus to all Demolition checks. At 15th level, he gets a +3 bonus to all Craft checks.

Infantry Branch: At 3rd level, the character gets a +1 bonus to all attack rolls. At 9th level, the character gets a +1 dodge bonus to Defense. At 15th level, he gets a +1 bonus to all Initiative checks.

Sorcery Branch: Only an officer already having at least one level of sorceress may choose Sorcery as a specialization. The Sorcery Branch provides Advanced Training to its officers, identical to the sorceress class feature. This Advanced Training is always in the character's existing sorcery branch. A character who already has Advanced Training from her sorceress class adds the numbers of Advanced Training from each class together to learn her total Advanced Training number. For example, an 8th level sorceress/6th level Red Fleet officer has Advanced Training II from sorceress and Advanced Training I from Red Fleet officer. Thus she has Advanced Training III, with all the benefits of that sorceress class feature.

At 3rd level, the character gains Advanced Training I, at 9th level, Advanced Training II, and at 15th level, Advanced Training III. See the **Sorceress** class on page 28 for details.

Staff Branch: At 3rd level, the character gets a +2 bonus to attack rolls with vehicular weaponry. At 9th level, the character gets a +2 bonus to Drive and Pilot checks.



Finally, at 15th level, the character gets a +2 bonus to Initiative rolls when piloting, driving, or commanding a vehicle.

PROMOTION (EX)

At 4th level and every three levels thereafter, the Red Fleet officer gains a promotion. Each time **Table 1-7: The Red Fleet Officer** indicates this class feature the character is promoted by one rank. It is possible to gain promotion through gameplay; in effect, promotion as a class feature represents promotion for long service and experience, rather than for any particularly notable deed. A Red Fleet officer wishing to attain the heights of Skymarshal or above needs to "mention in dispatches" several times, probably as well as gaining ranks through the Red Fleet officer class. See **Rank in the Red Fleet** on page 36, for more details on promotion and the benefits of rank.

Tactical Aid (EX)

A 6th-level Red Fleet officer's natural leadership qualities have been enhanced by both experience and training. As a full-round action, the Red Fleet officer may provide tactical aid to all of his allies (including himself) within sight and voice range of his position (usually 20 meters). Tactical aid grants a +2 competence bonus on all attack rolls. The bonus lasts for 1 round per two Red Fleet officer class levels (3 rounds at 6th level, 4 rounds at 8th level, and so on).

At 12th level, the Red Fleet officer may use tactical aid as a standard action. At 18th level, the Red Fleet officer may use tactical aid as a move action, and the competence bonus lasts for the duration of the encounter.

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A character with levels in both Red Fleet officer and Red trooper may add together the numbers after the “tactical aid” entry in his class table, gaining the equivalent tactical aid class feature. For example, a 13th level Red trooper/6th level Red Fleet officer gains Tactical Aid I from her level as a Red Trooper, and Tactical Aid II from her level as a Red Fleet officer; I + II = III, so she has Tactical Aid III, the class feature usually gained by a 17th level Red trooper or 18th level Red Fleet officer.

Tactical Superiority (Ex)

At 7th level, a Red Fleet officer can use superior tactics to counter the opposition’s maneuvers before they even begin. As a free action, the officer makes an opposed Knowledge (tactics) check against an enemy force’s leader. If he wins the opposed check, the enemy officer cannot use his tactical aid ability. The officer can only make this check once in any given combat. Tactical Superiority can cancel a Tactical Aid already in use.

Red Trooper

Skyfurnaces own the skys, but infantry owns the ground. The backbone of the U.R.R.S. forces, Red troopers are defined largely by their proficiency with their trademark weapon, the hook, though in classic U.R.R.S. tradition they are expected to be paragons of excellence in both military skills and sheer physical prowess.

Examples of Red Troopers

Marcus Antares is the quintessential Red trooper. The nameless soldiers killed by Makita as she ran through the ruined Nokgorkan streets were low-level Red troopers.



Bonus Feats

At 1st level, 2nd level and every three levels thereafter, the Red Fleet officer gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Red Fleet officer must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Aircraft Operation, Alertness, Attentive, Bersk Wrestling Pin, Bersk Wrestling Kill, Bersk Wrestling Strike, Bersk Wrestling, Builder, Burst Fire, Combat Expertise, Combat Martial Arts, Combat Throw, Dead Aim, Defensive Martial Arts, Dodge, Double Tap, Educated, Elusive Target, Exotic Firearms Proficiency, Far Shot, Focused, Force Stop, Gearhead, Improved Combat Martial Arts, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Medical Expert, Point Blank Shot, Precise Strike, Shot on the Run, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Quick Draw, Quick Reload, Renown, Sorcery Expert, Surface Vehicle Operation, Surgery, Trustworthy, Vehicle Dodge, Vehicle Expert, Weapon Focus.

Game Rule Information

Hit Die: 1d10.

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down, every time the character attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Red trooper’s class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are as follows.

Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Demolitions (Int), Drive (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (current events, history, popular culture, tactics) (Int), Navigate (Int), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), and Telekinesis (Wis)*.

*See page 39 for details on this new skill.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (7 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 7 + Int modifier.

Required Allegiance: The Red Fleet.

Starting Feats

In addition to the two feats all characters get at 1st level, a Red trooper begins play with the Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency (hook), and Simple Weapons Proficiency feats.

Note Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency (hook) does not grant proficiency with the hook’s more advanced uses, or those requiring additional attachments; the Exotic Firearm Proficiency (hook variants) feat is necessary to use these variant hook weapons. The Red trooper does not receive this as a starting feat, though most high-level Red troopers should select it as a bonus or other feat.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Red trooper class.

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Table 1-8: The Red Trooper

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Defense Bonus	Rep Bonus	Class Features
1st	+1	+1	+1	+0	+1	+0	Weapon Focus (hook)
2nd	+2	+2	+2	+0	+1	+0	Hook training: Defensive Rotation Shield
3rd	+3	+2	+2	+1	+2	+0	Bonus feat
4th	+4	+2	+2	+1	+2	+0	Weapon Specialization (hook)
5th	+5	+3	+3	+1	+3	+1	Improved reaction
6th	+6/+1	+3	+3	+2	+3	+1	Hook training: rapid reconfiguration (move action)
7th	+7/+2	+4	+4	+2	+4	+1	Bonus feat
8th	+8/+3	+4	+4	+2	+4	+1	Improved Critical (hook)
9th	+9/+4	+4	+4	+3	+5	+2	Tactical aid I
10th	+10/+5	+5	+5	+3	+5	+2	Hook training: trip
11th	+11/+6/+1	+5	+5	+3	+6	+2	Bonus feat
12th	+12/+7/+2	+6	+6	+4	+6	+2	Greater Weapon Focus (hook)
13th	+13/+8/+3	+6	+6	+4	+7	+3	Tactical aid II (standard action)
14th	+14/+9/+4	+6	+6	+5	+7	+3	Hook training: rapid reconfiguration (free action)
15th	+15/+10/+5	+7	+7	+5	+8	+3	Bonus feat
16th	+16/+11/+6/+1	+7	+7	+5	+8	+3	Greater Weapon Specialization (hook)
17th	+17/+12/+7/+2	+8	+8	+5	+9	+4	Tactical aid III (move action)
18th	+18/+13/+8/+3	+8	+8	+6	+9	+4	Hook training: disarm
19th	+19/+14/+9/+4	+8	+8	+6	+10	+4	Bonus feat
20th	+20/+15/+10/+5	+9	+9	+6	+10	+4	Critical strike (hook)

Weapon Focus

At 1st level, a Red trooper gains Weapon Focus (hook) as a bonus feat. This applies whether the hook is used as a melee weapon or as a telekinetic weapon. A Red trooper who also has the Exotic Firearm Proficiency (hook variants) feat may also gain the bonus when using the weapon in this way.

Hook Training (Su)

At 2nd level and every four levels thereafter, the Red trooper gains advanced training in the combat applications of the hook. At 2nd level, this training grants her the Defensive Rotation Shield feat as a bonus feat.

At 6th level, a Red trooper can reconfigure a hook for melee attack, telekinetic attack, or (with appropriate attachments) heavy weapon attack as a move action rather than as a standard action. Furthermore, reconfiguring the hook no longer provokes attacks of opportunity.

At 10th level, a Red trooper wielding a hook gains the benefits of the Improved Trip feat, even if she does not meet the prerequisites. A Red trooper who already has Improved Trip gains an additional +2 bonus to the attack roll when using a hook to make a trip attack.

At 14th level, the Red trooper may reconfigure a hook as a free action.

At 18th level, a Red trooper wielding a hook gains the benefits of the Improved Disarm feat, even if she does not meet the prerequisites. A Red trooper who already has Improved Disarm gains an additional +2 bonus to the attack roll when using a hook to make a disarm attack.

Weapon Specialization (Ex)

At 4th level, a Red trooper gains weapon specialization with the hook. The Red trooper gets a +2 bonus on damage rolls when using a hook. This applies whether the hook is employed as a melee weapon or telekinetic weapon. A Red trooper who also has the Exotic Firearm Proficiency (hook variants) feat also gains the bonus when using the weapon in this way.

Improved Reaction (Ex)

At 5th level, a Red trooper gains a +2 competence bonus on initiative checks.

Improved Critical (Ex)

At 8th level, the Red trooper's threat range doubles when using a hook. This applies whether the hook is employed as a melee weapon or telekinetic weapon. A Red trooper who also has the Exotic Firearm Proficiency (hook variants) feat may also gain the bonus when using the weapon in this way.

Tactical Aid (Ex)

At 9th level, the Red trooper is respected by his comrades as a natural leader and highly experienced soldier, even though he may still be a lowly Ranker in rank. As a full-round action, the Red trooper may provide tactical aid to all of his allies (including himself) within sight and voice range of his position (usually 20 meters). Tactical aid provides a +2 competence bonus on attack rolls. The bonus lasts for 1 round per two class levels.

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At 13th level, the Red trooper may use tactical aid as a standard action, and at 18th level, he may use tactical aid as a move action, and the competence bonus lasts for the duration of the encounter.

Note that a character with levels in both Red trooper and Red Fleet officer may add together the numbers after the "tactical aid" entry in his class table, gaining the equivalent tactical aid class feature. For example, a 13th level Red trooper/6th level Red Fleet officer gains Tactical Aid I from her level as a Red Trooper, and Tactical Aid II from her level as a Red Fleet officer; I + II = III, so she has Tactical Aid III, the class feature usually gained by a 17th level Red trooper or 18th level Red Fleet officer.

GREATER WEAPON SPECIALIZATION (EX)

A 16th-level Red trooper gains Greater Weapon Specialization with the hook. This ability increases the bonus to damage rolls to +4 when using a hook. This applies whether the hook is employed as a melee weapon or telekinetic weapon. A Red trooper who also has the Exotic Firearm Proficiency (hook variants) feat may also gain the bonus when using the weapon in this way.

CRITICAL STRIKE (HOOK) (EX)

At 20th level, a Red trooper automatically confirms critical threats as critical hits when attacking with the hook,

eliminating the need to make a second roll to confirm the critical hit. This applies whether the hook is employed as a melee weapon or telekinetic weapon. A Red trooper who also has the Exotic Firearm Proficiency (hook variants) feat may also gain the bonus when using the weapon in this way.

BONUS FEATS

At 3rd, 7th, 11th, 15th and 19th level, the Red trooper gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Red trooper must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Advanced Combat Hook, Advanced Combat Martial Arts, Advanced Defensive Rotation Shield, Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (heavy), Athletic, Bersk Wrestling Pin, Bersk Wrestling Kill, Bersk Wrestling Strike, Bersk Wrestling, Cleave, Combat Hook, Combat Martial Arts, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dead Aim, Defensive Martial Arts, Defensive Rotation Shield, Diehard, Engine Pull Champion, Exotic Firearms Proficiency, Extended Defensive Rotation Shield, Far Shot, Heroic Surge, Improved Combat Hook, Improved Combat Martial Arts, Improved Defensive Rotation Shield, Improved Disarm, Improved Trip, Mobility, Offensive Rotation Shield, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Power Attack, Precise Strike, Railfighting, Telekinetic Firearms Proficiency, Telekinetic Warrior, Weapon Focus.

SORCERESS

Sorceresses are the U.R.R.S.'s spellcasters, adept with the highly codified spells known as protocols. In terms of short-term raw power, sorceresses are unmatched, though in a prolonged contest of sorcery they may find that Nistaani shamans have the edge. The Red Fleet uses sorceresses in a variety of roles, ensuring an advantage over other armies they meet, especially those relying on purely conventional armament and staff.

EXAMPLES OF SORCERESSES

Maya Antares is the best-known sorceress in *The Red Star*. A Nokgorkan priestess is also briefly depicted in *Run Makita Run*, kasting an *expanse protocol*.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Hit Die: 1d6.

Action Points: 6 + 1/2 character level, rounded down, every time the character attains a new level in this class.

CLASS SKILLS

The sorceress's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are as follows.

Concentration (Con), Kast (Int)*, Knowledge (arcana, history, religion) (Int), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), and additional class skills depending on the sorcery branch chosen at 1st level.

*See page 39 for details on this new skill.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (7 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 7 + Int modifier.

Required Allegiance: The Red Fleet, or (for Nokgorkan priestesses only) the Law of the One True God.

STARTING FEATS

In addition to the two feats all characters get at 1st level, a sorceress begins play with the Personal Firearms Proficiency and Simple Weapons Proficiency feats.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the sorceress class.

SORCERY BRANCH

At 1st level, the sorceress chooses a branch of sorcery from among the following: deck kaster, infokaster, medikaster, sorceress engineer, supply kaster, warkaster, or Nokgorkan priestess. She is trained (or in the case of the priestess, has adapted her own training) specifically for that role. This choice affects the sorceress's training throughout her career, both the initial training in which she was taught all the basic protocols for her branch, and the advanced training to which she is given access.

Players new to *The Red Star Campaign Setting* should select the warkaster branch. Warkasters are the most suitable character role in terms of general utility and they fit easily into most campaigns. Of course, the GM may advise otherwise if she has a particular campaign style in mind.

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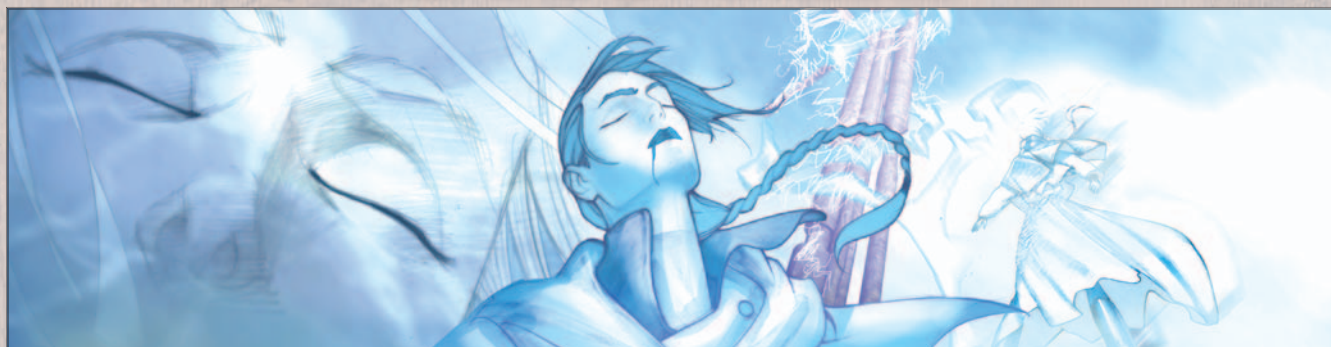
Table 1-9: Sorcery Specializations and Related Benefits

Branch	Benefits
Deck Kaster	<p>Additional Class Skills: Diplomacy (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (tactics) (Int), Pilot (Dex)</p> <p>Basic Training: Aircraft Operation (skyship) feat</p> <p>Protocols Learned: Blast control protocols, defensive field protocol, shield repair protocol</p> <p>Additional Benefits: Promotion to Sorceress-Lieutenant</p>
Infokaster	<p>Additional Class Skills: Computer Use (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Investigate (Int), Knowledge (any) (Int), Research (Int), Speak Language (none)</p> <p>Basic Training: +4 skill points at 1st level, and an additional +1 skill point per class level thereafter</p> <p>Protocols Learned: Burst voltage protocol, cooperative reinforcement protocol, map protocol</p> <p>Additional Benefits: Protocol-enhanced notebook computer</p>
Medikaster	<p>Additional Class Skills: Craft (chemical, pharmaceutical) (Int), Knowledge (earth and life sciences) (Int), Treat Injury (Wis)</p> <p>Basic Training: Surgery feat</p> <p>Protocols Learned: Accelerated healing protocol, paramedic protocol, stimulant protocol</p> <p>Additional Benefits: Protocol-enhanced medical kit</p>
Sorceress Engineer	<p>Additional Class Skills: Craft (chemical, electronic, mechanical, structural) (Int), Demolitions (Int), Disable Device (Int), Knowledge (physical sciences, technology) (Int), Repair (Int), Research (Int)</p> <p>Basic Training: +4 skill points at 1st level, and an additional +1 skill point per class level thereafter</p> <p>Protocols Learned: Expanse protocol, field repair protocol, transpathic detonator protocol</p> <p>Additional Benefits: Choose one — protocol-enhanced electrical tool kit, protocol-enhanced mechanical tool kit, or protocol-enhanced demolitions kit</p>
Supply Kaster	<p>Additional Class Skills: Knowledge (business, tactics) (Int), Navigate (Int)</p> <p>Basic Training: Logistician feat</p> <p>Protocols Learned: Cooperative reinforcement protocol, supply protocol I, supply protocol II</p> <p>Additional Benefits: One double protoclclip</p>
Warkaster	<p>Additional Class Skills: Knowledge (tactics) (Int), Navigate (Int), Spot (Wis)</p> <p>Basic Training: Protocol Gunnery feat</p> <p>Protocols Learned: Armor-piercing protocol — personal, krawl drop protocol, transformation protocol</p> <p>Additional Benefits: 1st level hailer assigned as bodyguard, increases in level along with sorceress</p>
Nokgorkan Priestess	<p>Additional Class Skills: Knowledge (theology, streetwise) (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Ritual (Cha)</p> <p>Basic Training: Black Market Connections feat</p> <p>Protocols Learned: Accelerated healing protocol, expanse protocol, paramedic protocol</p> <p>Additional Benefits: Protocol-enhanced robe granting a +2 circumstance bonus to Move Silently checks</p>

Deck Kasters: Deck kasters serve in Blast Control on ships of the fleet. When warkasters cast *transformation protocols*, deck kasters monitor the process. Many of their protocols focus on the ship, maintaining key systems or creating jumpgates, while others manipulate the body — but to different purposes than medikasters.

Infokasters: These sorceresses work with Informnet, the computer system of the fleet. Their protocols track troops and vehicles, map terrain, assist with communications, and so on. They are effectively “human servers.”

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Medikasters: Medikasters are responsible for preserving the health of the troops to whatever extent is possible. They also boost the alertness of otherwise exhausted troops and they can heal most kinds of damage.

Sorceress Engineers: Everything from writing new protocols to construction and demolition falls under the domain of the sorceress engineers. Their abilities are also useful on the battlefield, as they can dig massive entrenchments in only a few breaths or repair battered armor and weaponry.

Supply Kasters: These sorceresses specialize in logistics: transporting troops, vehicles, fuel and ammunition using *supply gates*. Certain protocols make old rations safe, if not more palatable.

Warkasters: These sorceresses are often on the frontlines, and with good reason: they have an arsenal of powerful offensive/defensive protocols at their disposal. Each warkaster has a hailer as a personal guard.

Nokgorkan Priestesses: Many priestesses were originally Red Fleet-trained, but today they rely on black market protocols from around the world. Inevitably, with the Fleet in decline, U.R.R.S. protocols are the most readily available. Nokgorkan priestesses are usually only available as PC choices in a Nokgorkan campaign.

Basic Training

See **Table 1-9: Sorcery Specializations and Related Benefits** for the basic training the sorceress receives, resulting from her specialization. If the basic training is a feat, the sorceress does not need to meet the usual prerequisites for the feat.

Rank or Congregation

A 1st level sorceress has the rank of Sorceress, equivalent to the rank of Junior Lieutenant. See **Rank in the Red Fleet** on page 36 for more information on promotion and the benefits of rank.

A Nokgorkan priestess has a congregation instead of having an official rank. A priestess may call upon her congregation up to once per week to do battle for her, or to perform some other task. Assume the active members of a priestess's congregation consist of a number of 1st level Nokgorkan resistance fighters equal to the priestess's sorceress level, led by a leader two levels below the priestess's sorceress level (minimum 1st level). For example, a 7th level priestess's congregation would consist of seven 1st level Nokgorkan resistance fighters led by a 5th level Nokgorkan resistance fighter.

Protocol

At 2nd level and every four levels thereafter, the sorceress learns a new protocol. This must be from her branch of sorcery as described in **Chapter Five: Military Industrial Sorcery**. If she has already learned all the protocols in her own branch, she can cross-train and learn a protocol from another branch of sorcery.

Bonus Protocol

At 2nd level and every four levels thereafter, the sorceress may learn an additional new protocol as a bonus protocol if her Intelligence is sufficiently high enough. In the spirit of cross-training between sorceress branches, this may be from her own branch of sorcery or a different branch. A sorceress with a source of black market protocols, or a teacher of non-U.R.R.S. spells, may choose to learn one of those instead.

Table 1-10: Intelligence and Bonus Protocols

Level	Intelligence Bonus				
	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
2nd	Bonus Protocol	Bonus Protocol	Bonus Protocol	Bonus Protocol	Bonus Protocol
6th	—	Bonus Protocol	Bonus Protocol	Bonus Protocol	Bonus Protocol
10th	—	—	Bonus Protocol	Bonus Protocol	Bonus Protocol
14th	—	—	—	Bonus Protocol	Bonus Protocol
18th	—	—	—	—	Bonus Protocol

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Table 1-11: The Sorceress

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Defense Bonus	Rep Bonus	Class Features
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	+0	+0	Sorcery branch and basic training, rank or congregation
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	+0	+0	Protocol, bonus protocol
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	+1	+0	Bonus feat
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	+1	+1	Advanced training +1
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	+1	+1	Protocol mastery, reduced protocol cost (-1)
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	+1	+1	Protocol, bonus protocol
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	+2	+2	Bonus feat
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	+2	+2	Advanced training +2
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	+2	+2	Protocol mastery
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	+2	+3	Protocol, bonus protocol, reduced protocol cost (-2)
11th	+5	+3	+3	+7	+3	+3	Bonus feat
12th	+6/+1	+4	+4	+8	+3	+3	Advanced training +3
13th	+6/+1	+4	+4	+8	+3	+4	Protocol perfection
14th	+7/+2	+4	+4	+9	+3	+4	Protocol, bonus protocol
15th	+7/+2	+5	+5	+9	+4	+4	Bonus feat, reduced protocol cost (-3)
16th	+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	+4	+5	Advanced training +4
17th	+8/+3	+5	+5	+10	+4	+5	Protocol perfection
18th	+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	+4	+5	Protocol, bonus protocol
19th	+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	+5	+6	Bonus feat
20th	+10/+5	+6	+6	+12	+5	+6	Advanced training +5, protocol perfection, reduced protocol cost (-4)

The Intelligence and Bonus Protocols sidebar shows the minimum Intelligence required to gain a bonus protocol at each appropriate level.

Advanced Training (Ex)

At 4th level, the sorceress gains advanced training in her sorcery branch, enhancing the power of their most commonly used protocols. The benefits depend on the branch she chose at 1st level.

Deck Kaster: +1 bonus to all Kast checks with protocols in the deck kaster branch

Infokaster: +1 bonus to all Kast checks with protocols in the infokaster branch

Medikaster: +1 bonus to all Kast checks with protocols in the medikaster branch

Sorceress Engineer: +1 bonus to all Kast checks with protocols in the sorceress engineer branch

Supply Kaster: +1 bonus to all Kast checks with protocols in the supply kaster branch

Warkaster: +1 bonus to all attack rolls with protocol weapons and protocol-enhanced weapons

Nokgorkan Priestess: +1 bonus to all Ritual checks when leading a ritual, and +1 bonus to effective Ritual ranks when participating in, but not leading, a ritual.

At 8th level these bonuses increase to +2, at 12th level to +3, at 16th level to +4, and at 20th level to +5.

Protocol Mastery (Ex)

At 5th level, a sorceress chooses a number of protocols equal to her Intelligence modifier (minimum 1) from those she already knows. She may always Take 10 when kasting these protocols, even if under highly stressful conditions. At 9th level, she chooses another group of protocols equal to her Intelligence modifier (minimum 1).

Reduced Protocol Cost (Ex)

A 5th level sorceress reduces the nonlethal damage she takes by kasting a protocol by -1. This can reduce the damage to 0, but not below 0. At 10th level, this reduction becomes -2; at 15th level, -3; and at 20th level, -4.

Protocol Perfection (Ex)

At 13th level, the sorceress chooses one protocol from among those she has mastered (see Protocol Mastery). Whenever she kasts this protocol, it counts as though she were Taking 20, but takes no longer than the usual kasting time. At 17th level she chooses a second protocol to perfect, and at 20th level she chooses a third.

Bonus Feats

At 3rd level and every four levels thereafter, the sorceress

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SORCERERS

Although the majority of sorcery practitioners in the U.R.R.S. and beyond are female, male sorcerers do exist. The term "sorceress" is used throughout the game, but all rules referring to sorceresses apply equally to male sorcerers.

NOKGORKAN PRIESTESSES

When the U.R.R.S. was at the height of its power, it ruthlessly suppressed religion. This did not prevent the Nokgorkans from worshipping their old faith in secret, though. This is the same ancient religion as that of the Nistaani, the reverence of the Law of the One True God. The Nokgorkan and Nistaani practices are slightly different, however, partly because circumstances forced the Nokgorkans to worship underground for so many years.

Though U.R.R.S. sorceresses are as secular as the rest of the Red Fleet, many Nokgorkans who once served as sorceresses but now fight for the resistance movements were always part of the secretive Nokgorkan religion. They are the natural priestesses of what is now a publicly practiced faith, serving under the Elders — the spiritual and temporal leaders of the Nokgorkan freedom fighters. Revered equally for their prowess with sorcery and their unshakeable faith, the Nokgorkan priestesses use the Red Fleet's protocols as the basis for their spells but adding a distinctly mystical element to their magic.

As an alternate option, a character can play a Nokgorkan priestess (or, less frequently, a Nokgorkan priest). Functionally these are very similar to sorcerers/sorceresses, since both use the codified sorcery known as protocols, but priests and priestesses serve in a more religious role. They tend to be less specialized than Red Fleet sorceresses, though nearly all have been trained by the Red Fleet. Any sorceress character can elect to play a Nokgorkan priestess, rather than a U.R.R.S. sorceress. In effect, she chooses the option "Nokgorkan priestess" rather than one of the other roles, such as warkaster or supply kaster. Except as otherwise noted, Nokgorkan priestesses are identical to sorceresses in every way.

gains a bonus feat selected from the following list. She must meet all the prerequisites as usual.

Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Aircraft Operation, Bersk Wrestling Pin, Bersk Wrestling Kill, Bersk Wrestling Strike, Bersk Wrestling, Brawl, Burst Fire, Combat Expertise,

Combat Martial Arts, Combat Throw, Defensive Martial Arts, Educated, Elusive Target, Exotic Firearms Proficiency, Focused, Gunnery, Improved Combat Throw, Improved Initiative, Protocol Gunnery, Red Fleet Connections, Renown, Sorcery Expert, Surface Vehicle Operation, Strafe, Unbalance Opponent, Weapon Focus.

ZEK

Zeks are members (or survivors) of penal infantry units. As current or former prisoners from all walks of life (many of the political prisoners never having known their crime), zeks have a variety of skills to draw from. Certain sectors of the populace regard genuine criminals as folk heroes, since they are willing to go against the totalitarian regime of Imbohl and his cohorts.

EXAMPLES ZEKS

Chief Engineer Torin is perhaps the most famous zek, renowned for his choice to remain a zek in the service of the U.R.R.S. rather than take the freedom offered to him. Sharik, Razin and their comrades from *The Red Star #5* are also examples of zeks.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Hit Die: 1d6.

Action Points: 6 + 1/2 character level rounded down, every time the character attains a new level in this class.

CLASS SKILLS

All skills are class skills for zeks.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (11 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 11 + Int modifier.

Required Allegiance: None required; may choose any or none.

STARTING FEATS

In addition to the two feats all characters get at 1st level, a zek begins play with the Personal Firearms Proficiency and Simple Weapons Proficiency feats.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the zek class.

FREE SPIRIT (EX)

Zeks are the only character class that need not choose an allegiance at the start of the game. A 1st-level zek may have an allegiance or not, as the player chooses. Characters multiclassing into this class may eliminate or change all their allegiances upon taking this class, representing the betrayal and upheaval they inevitably experienced. Players are

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Table 1-12: The Zek

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Defense Bonus	Rep Bonus	Class Features
1st	+0	+1	+1	+1	+1	+0	Free spirit, prison tattoos, unsung hero (2d6)
2nd	+1	+2	+2	+2	+1	+0	Specialization I
3rd	+2	+2	+2	+2	+2	+0	Sneak attack +1d6
4th	+3	+2	+2	+2	+2	+0	Bonus feat
5th	+3	+3	+3	+3	+3	+0	Skill mastery
6th	+4	+3	+3	+3	+3	+0	Ungung hero (3d6)
7th	+5	+4	+4	+4	+4	+0	Specialization II
8th	+6/+1	+4	+4	+4	+4	+0	Sneak attack +2d6
9th	+6/+1	+4	+4	+4	+5	+1	Bonus feat
10th	+7/+2	+5	+5	+5	+5	+1	Survivor
11th	+8/+3	+5	+5	+5	+6	+1	Ungung hero (4d6)
12th	+9/+4	+6	+6	+6	+6	+2	Specialization III
13th	+9/+4	+6	+6	+6	+7	+2	Sneak attack +3d6
14th	+10/+5	+6	+6	+6	+7	+2	Bonus feat
15th	+11/+6/+1	+7	+7	+7	+8	+3	Skill mastery, survivor
16th	+12/+7/+2	+7	+7	+7	+8	+3	Ungung hero (5d6)
17th	+12/+7/+2	+8	+8	+8	+9	+3	Specialization IV
18th	+13/+8/+3	+8	+8	+8	+9	+4	Sneak attack +4d6
19th	+14/+9/+4	+8	+8	+8	+10	+4	Bonus feat
20th	+15/+10/+5	+9	+9	+9	+10	+4	Survivor

encouraged to discuss such changes with their GM to ensure they fit within the storyline.

Prison Tattoos (Ex)

Almost all zeks end up tattooed at some point while imprisoned. Lacking proper equipment, zek tattooists make do with melted tires for ink and any sharp point for a tattoo needle. The resulting tattoos are crude but recognizable by another zek. Any zek observing another zek may make a DC 15 Spot check to “read” the other’s tattoos, revealing his or her zek class level and in which prisons he has served. Those with a zek tattoo are immediately marked as survivors, and other zeks instinctively give him his due — a reaction they come to expect. Tattooed zeks receive a +2 circumstance bonus to Intimidate checks against everyone. Against zeks who are aware of the tattoos’ significance (the Zek hierarchy is almost as strict as the formalized rank system of the Red Fleet) the circumstance bonus for Intimidate is +4.

Ungung Hero (Ex)

Though zeks’ contributions are never recognized in the official newspapers, their hard work keeps much of the Red Fleet’s war machine running smoothly. They are regularly called upon to succeed at extraordinary tasks as a part of their daily duties, thus they are more effective in their use of Action Dice at all levels.

A 1st level zek chooses the best die from 2d6 when rolling action dice. At 6th level, he or she chooses the best die from 3d6, at 11th level from 4d6, and at 16th level from 5d6. Note that these increases replace the increased action dice all characters get on achieving higher levels.

Furthermore, any time a zek achieves two or more results of “6” as part of one action dice roll, the action point is not lost, though the zek adds one of the rolls of “6” to the chosen roll as usual.

Specialization (Ex)

At 2nd level, the zek chooses a specialization. This can represent official training, a natural inclination, or a little of both. He gains an appropriate special ability as listed on **Table 1-12: Zek Specializations**. The zek gains further abilities every five levels after 2nd, at 7th, 12th and 17th levels.

Agitator: Many zeks were originally imprisoned for political reasons, and often continued their political activism within and beyond the labor camps to which they are assigned. An agitator aboard a skyfurnace or incarcerated in a gulag can potentially turn all the zeks in the area against their former masters.

Criminal: A few zeks are genuinely common criminals, sent to the labor camps as a punishment rather than political convenience. These are tough individuals, though they may not appear as physically powerful as the average hailer, but any surviving long enough to become player character material have indomitable wills to live.

Engineer: These zeks serve as engineers on a skyfurnace or other large vehicle, working alongside dozens of others to keep the vast machine in operation. Experts in any kind of machinery, they coax unusual levels of performance from otherwise mundane equipment. At higher levels they can survive the kind of explosions, electric shocks, and even radioactive blasts that are common hazards on the engineering decks of a skyfurnace—they are hardy enough to simply shrug off such dangers.

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**Table 1-13:
Zek Specializations**

Type	Specializations
Agitator	Specialization I: Bonus Feat: Trustworthy Specialization II: Inspiration Specialization III: Rouse Rabble Specialization IV: Greater Inspiration
Criminal	Specialization I: Bonus Feat: Endurance Specialization II: Damage Reduction 1/- Specialization III: Damage Reduction 2/- Specialization IV: Damage Reduction 3/-
Engineer	Specialization I: Bonus Feat: Gearhead Specialization II: Scrounging Specialization III: Extreme Machine Specialization IV: Energy Resistance
Kutter	Specialization I: Bonus Feat: Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency (Arc Kutter) Specialization II: Bonus Feat: Precise Strike (Arc Kutter) Specialization III: Improved Precise Strike Specialization IV: Demolitions Expert
Wild Talent	Specialization I: Protocol Specialization II: Protocol Specialization III: Protocol Specialization IV: Protocol

Kutter: Kutters are chained to large, shoulder mounted arc-welders in combat, and trained to cut through an enemy's krawl armor and rig demolitions. The survival rate of prisoners becoming kutters is only five percent, but there are always volunteers since survivors gain a full amnesty and release from prison with a small stipend. When it comes to destruction, few equal a kutter's talent.

Wild Talent: A few zeks exhibit the type of psychic skills that would usually qualify for sorcery training, but for whatever reason their talent was judged dangerous or politically inappropriate, and thus they were sent to the labor camps instead.

A zek may change his specialization, with the GM's permission. If so, the zek retains any specialization bonuses already acquired, but each time he is eligible for more bonuses, they are gained as though the zek had the newly chosen specialization. Specializations must always be taken in order. An 11th level zek with Criminal specialization, who changed to Engineer, would gain Gearhead on reaching 12th level, adding to the Endurance and Damage Reduction 1/- acquired through the criminal specialization.

Zek Specializations

Bonus Feat: The character gains the listed feat, even if he does not meet the prerequisites for it.

Damage Reduction: The character gains the indicated damage reduction.

Demolitions Expert: The character may place explosives in half the normal time (usually 30 seconds rather than 1 minute). Furthermore, he never risks setting off an explosive while attempting to disarm it.

Energy Resistance: The character is resistant to most energy effects. Each round, he may ignore an amount of acid, cold, fire, or sonic damage equal to 2 + his Constitution modifier (minimum 1).

Table 1-14: Extreme Machine DC and Repair

Improvement	Craft DC	Repair Chance (d%)
Ranged Weapons		
+1 to damage	15	01-25
+2 to damage	20	01-50
+3 to damage	25	01-75
+2m to range increment	15	01-25
+4m to range increment	25	01-50
Electronic Devices		
+1 equipment bonus	15	01-25
+2 equipment bonus	20	01-50
+3 equipment bonus	25	01-75
Vehicles		
+1 to Initiative checks	20	01-25
+1 to maneuver	25	01-50
+2 to maneuver	30	01-75

Extreme Machine: If it has mechanical or electronic components, the character can maximize its performance. By spending 1 action point and making either a Craft (electronic) or Craft (mechanical) check (as appropriate for the machine in question), the character can temporarily improve a machine's performance — at the risk of causing the machine to need repairs later. The DC for the Craft check depends on the type of improvement made, as shown on the **Extreme Machine DC and Repair** sidebar. The character performs the extreme modifications in 1 hour. The character can't Take 10 or Take 20 on this check. If the check succeeds, the effect of the improvement lasts for a number of minutes equal to his zek class level, beginning when he or someone else first puts the object to use. The character selects the single improvement he wants to make prior to making the check. When the effect ends, the machine reverts to its previous state and the zek player rolls percentile dice. If the roll's result is within the range indicated on the sidebar, the machine requires repairs before it can be used again.

Greater Inspiration: The character can inspire his allies to even greater heights, bolstering them and improving their chances of success. An ally must listen to and observe the character for a full round for the greater inspiration to take hold, and the character must make a DC 15 Charisma check. The effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to the character's Charisma modifier.

An inspired ally gains an additional +1 morale bonus to saving throws, attack rolls, and damage rolls, stacking with the bonus from inspiration for a total of a +3 morale bonus. A character can't inspire himself. The character can inspire a number of allies equal to one-third his zek level, rounded down (to a minimum of one ally).

Zeks and Multiclassing

As zeks begin the game as prisoners (whether within a gulag or serving in a penal battalion of the Red Fleet) a zek may not take a level in any other character class without the GM's permission. In most cases, the zek needs to earn, buy or win his or her freedom before multiclassing.

Improved Precise Strike: The character with a Larhe Exotic Weapon may take a full round to make a single melee attack at his highest attack bonus against an armored vehicle. On a successful attack, the weapon deals the maximum possible damage ignoring all armor.

Inspiration: The character can inspire his allies, bolstering them and improving their chances of success. An ally must listen to and observe the character for a full round for the inspiration to take hold, and the zek must succeed a DC 10 Charisma check. The effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to the character's Charisma modifier. An inspired ally gains a +2 morale bonus on saving throws, attack rolls, and damage rolls. A character can't inspire himself. The character can inspire a number of allies equal to one-third of his zek level, rounded down.

Protocol: Select one protocol or spell of your choice. You know how to cast this protocol.

Rouse Rabble: The zek can turn a crowd nasty. He must spend a full-round action, and select a character toward whom the crowd's distrust will be directed. The crowd must be able to hear and understand the character. Each member of the crowd makes a Will save. The DC is equal to 10 + one-half the zek's class level + Charisma bonus. Those in the crowd who fail their saving throw have their starting attitudes towards the subject of rabble rouse reduced by one-step, such that helpful turns to friendly, friendly to indifferent, indifferent to unfriendly, unfriendly to hostile. The crowd attempts new Will saves whenever the zek uses this class feature against it. As long as at least some members of the crowd continues to fail the Will save, the zek can continue taking full-round actions to worsen their attitude toward a designated character. When the crowd's attitude drops to hostile, it attacks the designated character, or if the latter is not present it instead demonstrates an act of open rebellion, then surges off in search of its enemy and any whom they assume work for him or her. A successful Will save does not restore previous attitude shifts, but it does render the target immune for 24 hours to further attempts by the character to sow distrust and unrest.

For larger crowds, the GM may make just one Will save instead of individual saves. In this case, the crowd uses the average Will save modifier and at a +2 bonus. In this case, however, the zek must fail the save three times before the crowd wholly ignores his rabble rousing. The zek can't use this talent on his allies. Rouse rabble is a Mind-Affecting effect.

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Scrounging: A zek with this ability may substitute a scrounge check for a Wealth check whenever he needs missing machine parts, tools, or indeed almost anything else that might make his job as an engineer somewhat easier. To make a scrounge check, the character rolls 1d20 + the zek class levels + the zek's Charisma modifier against the Wealth DC of the object. Scrounging takes 1d6 hours.

SNEAK ATTACK (EX)

If a zek catches an opponent when he is unable to defend himself effectively from his attack, he can strike a vital spot for extra damage. The zek's attack deals extra damage any time his target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to Defense (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the zek flanks his target. This extra damage is 1d6 at 3rd level, and increases by +1d6 every four zek levels thereafter. Should the zek score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied. Ranged attacks can count as sneak attacks only if the target is within 10m.

With an unarmed strike, a zek can make a sneak attack to deals nonlethal damage instead of lethal damage. A weapon that deals lethal damage cannot be used to deal nonlethal damage in a sneak attack, not even with the usual -4 penalty.

Any creature immune to critical hits is invulnerable to sneak attacks. The zek must be able to see the target well enough to pick out a vital spot and must be able to reach such a spot. A zek cannot sneak attack while striking a creature with concealment or striking the limbs of a creature whose vitals are beyond reach.

A zek's sneak attack capability is cumulative with any sneak attack gained from other classes, such as Nokgorkan resistance fighter.

SKILL MASTERY (EX)

At 5th level, the zek becomes so versed in the use of certain skills that he can use them reliably even under adverse conditions. Upon gaining this ability, the zek selects a number of skills equal to 2 + Intelligence modifier (minimum 1). When making a skill check with one of these skills, he may take 10 even if stress and distractions would normally prevent him from doing so.

A 10th level zek selects an additional 2 + Intelligence modifier (minimum 1) skills to master.

SURVIVOR (EX)

At 10th level, a zek has been through so much — the harsh regime of the labor camps, the unforgiving work of the main reactor chambers on a skyfurnace, perhaps a spot of kutter duty —he is difficult to stop. The zek may reroll any failed saving throw once per day. At 15th level, the zek may reroll any failed saving throw twice per day; at 20th level, three times per day. If necessary, he may reroll the same failed save more than once.

BONUS FEATS

At 4th level and every five levels thereafter, the zek gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the zek must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Aircraft Operation, Alertness, Attentive, Bersk Wrestling, Black Market Connections, Brawl, Builder, Combat Martial Arts, Dodge, Double Tap, Exotic Firearms Proficiency, Force Stop, Gearhead, Gunnery, Improved Brawl, Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Improved Knockout Punch, Knockout Punch, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Precise Strike, Shot on the Run, Streetfighting, Quick Draw, Quick Reload, Spring Attack, Surface Vehicle Operation, Vehicle Dodge, Vehicle Expert, Weapon Focus.

RANK IN THE RED FLEET

All Red troopers, Red Fleet officers and hailers hold a rank within the Red Fleet, even if that rank is only Ranker. Promotions typically happen for in-game reasons, as rewards for notable military successes. Aside from story-based promotions, however, members of the Red Fleet officer character class gain automatic promotion every three levels.

All Red troopers begin the game as Rankers and advance through play. Likewise, hailers start out as Guards, equivalent to Junior Sergeants. Sorceresses and sorcerers always commence the game with the equivalent of Junior Lieutenant rank, but are known simply as Sorceresses (when used as a rank, this is capitalized so as to distinguish it from the character class of sorceress/sorcerer).

Red troopers or hailers promoted to Junior Lieutenant may take levels of Red Fleet officer from that point forward. Likewise, any sorceress who attains the rank of Sorceress-Lieutenant may take levels of Red Fleet officer. This is always optional, though characters who never take levels in Red Fleet officer may (at the GM's discretion) be less likely to attain

promotion than those who do; after all, one is expected to be a "team player" in the Red Fleet, and a newly promoted Junior Lieutenant who trains and spends time with his or her former comrades among the lower ranks is unlikely to be seen as suitable material for further promotion. Exceptional deeds on the battlefield may also result in promotion, but it is slower than if the character took a level or two of Red Fleet officer.

Zeks do not have any rank in the Red Fleet. They are not formally considered part of the military structure and are not paid as such (though they inevitably manage to get money and gear, one way or another). A zek somehow gaining a level in one of the other Red Fleet classes (Red trooper, hailer, Red Fleet officer or sorceress) gains a rank as appropriate for that class.

PRIVILEGES OF RANK

Table 1-15: Ranks and Bonuses lists all the ranks in the Red Fleet and some of the various benefits and privileges

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The Benefits of Rank

Of course, there are benefits numbers in a table just can't reflect. Mainly, a higher-ranking character can give orders to anyone of lower rank. There is potential for friction in the gaming group if one of the PCs has a higher rank than the rest, but so long as the players are all willing to get into the spirit of things, any serious difficulties should be avoidable. One of the key features of playing a game within a military force is the hierarchy is a strict one; it is appropriate for the PC with the highest rank give the others orders, and they should be willing to follow reasonable orders just as they would if they came from an NPC under the GM's control.

An officer who frequently gives unreasonable orders or otherwise abuses her position of power is subject to sanctions, both in and out of the game. NPCs of still higher rank may notice the failings of the PC, and his or her future promotion prospects may be affected and a court martial may even be called in extreme cases. Of course, it is always possible for the lower-ranking PCs to ignore or even actively rebel against orders that might get them killed; after all, the main characters in the comic went rogue by the end of Volume I.

The classic motif of, "Comrade Colonel, I acknowledge that you are a superior officer, but you were clearly wounded in that last exchange of fire and are unfit for duty; I am hereby relieving you of command!" may even be played out. Unpopular officers may find themselves shot in the back and left for dead at the first sign of any enemy activity on which one could reasonably blame an officer's death.... In most cases though, these extreme measures should not be necessary. Players should have a lot of fun with the rank structure. Lesser revenges and rebellions are always possible too, such as carefully calculated verbal responses verging on insubordination but never quite actionable.

Table 1-15: Ranks and Bonuses

Red Fleet Rank	U.R.R.S. Red Fleet			Commonwealth Red Fleet		
	Requisition Bonus	Profession Check Bonus	1-time Wealth Increase	Requisition Bonus	Profession Check Bonus	1-time Wealth Increase
Ranker	—	—	—	—	—	—
Junior Sergeant (or Guard)	—	—	—	—	+1	—
Sergeant	+1	—	—	—	+1	—
Senior Sergeant	+2	—	—	—	+1	—
Starshina	+3	—	—	+1	+2	—
Jr. Lieutenant (or Sorceress)	+4	+1	—	+1	+2	+1
Lieutenant (or Sorceress-Lieutenant)	+5	+1	—	+1	+2	—
Sr. Lieutenant (or Senior Sorceress-Lieutenant)	+6	+1	—	+2	+3	—
Captain (or Sorceress-Captain)	+7	+1	—	+2	+3	+1
Major (or Sorceress-Major)	+8	+2	+1	+3	+3	—
Lieutenant-Colonel (or Sorceress-Lieutenant-Colonel)	+9	+2	—	+4	+4	+1
Colonel (or Sorceress-Colonel)	+10	+2	—	+5	+4	+1
Major-General (or Sorceress-Major-General)	+12	+3	+1	+6	+5	+1
Lieutenant-General (or Skymarshall)	+14	+4	—	+7	+6	+1
Colonel-General (or Sorceress-Colonel-General)	+16	+5	+1	+8	+7	+1
General (or Sorceress-General)	+18	+6	+1	+9	+8	+2
Marshall of Krawls, Marshall of Skyfurnaces, Marshall of Infantry, or Marshall of Sorcery	+20	+8	+1	+15	+12	+2
Senior Marshall of Krawls, Senior Marshall of Skyfurnaces, Senior Marshall of Infantry, or Senior Marshall of Sorcery	+25	+8	+1	+15	+12	+2
Marshall of the Red Star	+30	+10	+1	+20	+15	+2

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attaining such a rank awards. The precise benefits vary depending on the campaign era. During the War of Al'Istaan, and at any time prior to the various civil wars and troubles that culminate in the breakup of the Republics and the Nokgorkan conflict, the Red Fleet is still perhaps the most powerful and feared military force on the planet. Later campaigns, though, see budget cutbacks and rampant corruption ravaging the once-mighty fleet. Officers have difficulty requisitioning forces and equipment, but can line their pockets with black market connections and the sale of some of the more choice weapons and other items from stores.

Requisition Bonus

The requisition bonus applies to all level checks made to requisition a piece of equipment or other item (see *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*), so long as the item is one reasonably found in a Red Fleet cache or hanger somewhere. There is no limit to what can be requisitioned in this way, other than any limits imposed by the GM; a General can call for the use of a skyfurnace or krawl battalion, just as she should be able to.

Profession Check Bonus

Higher-ranking characters draw better pay, while being acquiring more money from scams, schemes, extortion rackets and other dubious enterprises (particularly in the Commonwealth Red Fleet). This bonus applies to all Profession (soldier) checks (or other Profession checks as appropriate) related to increasing one's Wealth on gaining a level.

One-Time Wealth Bonus

Characters gain small bonuses to Wealth on reaching certain ranks, representing the immediate increase in pay for being of that rank (and thus an improved access to credit) and improved opportunities for corrupt activity.

A Note on Nomenclature

In the same way the chief officer of a ship is always referred to as Captain, whatever actual rank he may hold. The chief officer of a skyfurnace is always referred to as Commander, regardless of actual (which is usually, but not always, Skymarshal).

Starting Equipment and Wealth

The *Red Star Campaign Setting* employs the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*'s Wealth system, but as this setting does not utilize the Starting Occupation system, it requires slight modifications based on class selection. To determine starting wealth, roll 2d4 as normal and add the wealth bonus for the character's class as presented on Table 1-16: Starting Equipment and Wealth plus (if appropriate) the bonus from the Windfall feat (see **Chapter Three: Feats** in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*), plus 1 if the character has ranks in the Profession skill.

As with the standard rules, a character's Wealth bonus increases and decreases through the course of normal play. A character's wealth bonus can never fall below +0, but there is no limit to how high the Wealth bonus can climb. Unlike the standard rules, however, characters are far more likely to requisition and receive equipment from their governments, if Red Star Officers, or other members of the military. Consequently, Wealth bonus is far less important in military style campaigns than it is in other Modern Settings.

Table 1-16: Starting Equipment and Wealth

Character Class	Wealth Bonus	Starting Equipment
Hailer	+0	Hailer, hailer drum appropriate to mission, hailer armor, hailer longknife, molot backup shotgun, 3 magazines of buckshot, dress uniform
Nistaani Shaman	+1	Staff, robes, mashur (non-combat)
Nistaani Warrior	+0	Combat mashur, one weapon chosen from the following: RKG-41 and one magazine of bullets, hawk talon, Nistaani sword, or 5 handfuls of Sha-Osk pins
Nokgorkan Resistance Fighter	+0	Bronja vest, RKG-41 and 3 magazines of bullets, knife, backpack
Red Fleet Officer	+4	Model 17 Samsonov pistol and 3 magazines of bullets, dress uniform
Sorceress	+2	Dress uniform
Sorceress (Nokgorkan Priestess)	+1	Robes
Zek	+0	Dependant on role; typically either basic tools for the job, or a reactor shieldsuit

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New Skills

In addition to the standard skills described in *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*, the *Red Star Campaign Setting* introduces the following new skills.

Kast (Int)

Use this skill to kast protocols. Sorceresses and Nistaani shamans use it to kast their spells.

Check: Each protocol or invocation has a listed Kast DC. Kasting it requires a Kast check against the DC of the spell or protocol used. Some spells have varying results depending on the result of the check — typically based on how much the result exceeds the assigned DC. For more information, see **Chapter Five: Military-Industrial Sorcery** and **Chapter Eight: The Spiritrealm** for more on kasting protocols and spells.

Kast can also be used to kast minor magics not requiring anything as formal as a protocol or spell, not needing protocol components, and not dealing nonlethal damage to the kaster. This is a DC 10 check and requires a standard action to use. Examples include:

- * Color, clean, or soil items in a 1-meter cube.
- * Chill, warm, or flavor 1 kilogram of nonliving material.
- * Produce a small flame, such as might be produced by a match, in the palm of the kaster's hand.

Ritual (Cha)

Rituals closely resemble invocations or protocols, but take longer to kast and are potentially more powerful.

Check: A ritual is the kasting of an invocation or protocol over an extended period, often as a group effort. Most invocations and protocols can be kast as rituals. The effect of the ritual is identical to a standard kasting, but it can achieve far higher check results, thus potentially becoming more powerful.

A ritual takes at least one hour to perform. One character is designated the ritual leader. This is usually the character with the most ranks in Ritual. She may lead a maximum number of additional participants equal to her ranks in Ritual. Each participant must have at least 1 rank in Ritual to participate, but only the leader of the ritual makes a Ritual check (DC of the specific spell) to determine the effectiveness of the invocation.

For each participant with 1 to 9 ranks of Ritual, the ritual leader gains a +1 bonus to his or her Ritual check. For each participant with 10 to 19 ranks of Ritual, the bonus is +2, and for each participant with 20 or more ranks of Ritual, the bonus is +3.

Furthermore, for each additional hour beyond the first, the ritual leader gets a +1 bonus to the Ritual check. A ritual may last up to 8 hours without any problems; for each additional hour, all participants need to make Constitution checks (DC 10 + 1 per hour beyond 8) or collapse with exhaustion. Kasters with the Endurance feat may add +4 to their Constitution check. This does not prevent the ritual from continuing unless the ritual leader is the person who

collapses. Any bonuses gained from the collapsed character are lost.

Always make the Ritual check at the end of the ritual. The ritual leader determines the ritual's length before beginning. Interrupted rituals automatically fail and the participants must start over from the beginning if the kaster wishes to continue. If a disruption lasts more than 10 minutes of an hour, the ritual leader must make a Concentration check against the DC of the spell +1 per designated hour of the ritual. Failure indicates the ritual fails and must be begun anew. Success means the ritual can continue despite the distraction.

An additional benefit of using rituals is the kasting damage splits equally among the ritual's participants, starting with the ritual leader and proceeding in order of the number of bonus points contributed. The more points contributed, the more of the ritual individual shouldered, and the more damage she takes.

See **Chapter Five: Military-Industrial Sorcery** and **Chapter Eight: The Spiritrealm** for more on rituals.

Telekinesis (Wis)

Use this skill to move objects with the power of your mind.

Check: A Telekinesis check allows you to move an inanimate object in your line of sight, as a move action. The DC of the Telekinesis check is based on the mass of the object you wish to move. Moving a 1 kg object requires a check against a DC 15. For every factor of 10 that the mass increases, the DC increases by 5.

Telekinesis

Object Mass	DC	Damage as a Ranged Weapon
Up to 1 kg	15	1d4
Up to 10 kg	20	1d8
Up to 100 kg	25	2d8
Up to 1000 kg	30	4d8
Up to 10,000 kg	35	8d8
Up to 100,000 kg	40	16d8

Telekinesis requires your full attention while using it. Thus, using Telekinesis provokes an attack of opportunity if you use it while in a threatened area. If you use it for prolonged periods, you must succeed Concentration checks if distracted.

You may not use Telekinesis on a living creature.

Skills in the Red Star

Unless otherwise noted, *The Red Star Campaign Setting* uses all the standard skills and feats in *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*. Some adaptation may be necessary, as this setting uses meters instead of feet. Simply replace 5-foot squares with 2-meter squares.

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Attacking with Objects

You may use an object you telekinetically manipulate to make an attack. This requires a ranged attack roll. The range increment is a number of meters equal to one-half your ranks in Telekinesis, rounded down. The object counts as an improvised weapon, so attack rolls are subject to a -4 penalty. Since using Telekinesis is a move action, you may move an object and strike with it as a standard action in the same round. If you continue to use Telekinesis on the same object in future rounds, you may make a full attack if desired.

Telekinetically Neutral Objects

When you manipulate a telekinetically neutral item (see **Telekinetically Neutral Objects** on page 62 for details), you may do so as a free action. Such objects do not require full attention, nor do they provoke attacks of opportunity, or require Concentration checks. You may manipulate multiple telekinetically neutral objects at a time with a DC equal to that required to manipulate their total weight, +1 per additional object moved beyond the first. You can never manipulate multiple objects if any of them are not telekinetically neutral.

Attacking with Telekinetically Neutral Objects

You may perform a full attack action with a telekinetically neutral object since you do not need to take a move action to manipulate it in the first place. Furthermore, the range increment for telekinetically neutral objects is equal to your ranks in Telekinesis.

Combining Telekinetic and Physical Strength

You may use Telekinesis to increase the amount you can carry, pull, push, drag or otherwise manipulate with your body. You make a Telekinesis check as usual, you then move the appropriate amount of kilograms telekinetically, reducing the amount you must personally carry.

Failure

If you fail an attempt to manipulate a telekinetically neutral object, there are no particular ill effects. If you fail to manipulate another non-neutral object, however, you take 1 point of nonlethal damage for each point by which you missed the required DC.

Opposed Checks

Two telekinetic characters may both attempt to manipulate an object. In this case, they make opposed checks, with the winner controlling the object. For telekinetically neutral objects, only the current controller treats them as telekinetically neutral; another character attempting to wrest control of the object from the current controller treats it as though it were not telekinetically neutral, requiring a move action to make the opposed check.

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New Feats

In addition to the standard feats described in *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*, the *Red Star Campaign Setting* introduces the following new feats and modifications to existing feats.

Advanced Combat Hook

Your hook is a deadly threat to your enemies, even when they believe they're out of your range.

Prerequisites: Defense bonus +7, base attack bonus +15, Telekinesis 18 ranks, Combat Hook, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (hook), Improved Combat Hook, Weapon Focus (hook),

Benefit: The benefits of Combat Hook and Improved Combat Hook extend out to the entire first range increment of your hook (up to as many meters as you have ranks in the Telekinesis skill).

Advanced Defensive Rotation Shield

As an expert with the hook, your Defensive Rotation Shield can stop almost anything short of artillery bombardment.

Prerequisites: Defense bonus +5, Telekinesis 10 ranks, Defensive Rotation Shield, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency (hook), Improved Defensive Rotation Shield, Weapon Focus (hook).

Benefit: The deflection bonus from your Defensive Rotation Shield increases to +20, and it now applies to all handgun and longarm attacks. It never applies to vehicular weapons, heavy weapons, telekinetic weapons, grenades and explosives (including grenades fired from grenade launchers mounted under handguns and longarms) or archaic weapons.

Bersk Wrestling

The Bleak Horsemen left little behind when they ravaged the lands of the Red Star, but their legacy remains in this brutal, simple wrestling style, now adopted as the official unarmed combat method of the Red Fleet. You know the basic techniques, which involve grappling and pinning opponents so you can use your Red Fleet knife to finish them.

Prerequisites: Dex 13, base attack bonus +1, Combat Martial Arts.

Benefit: You do not provoke an attack of opportunity when you make a touch attack to start a grapple. You also gain a +2 bonus on all grapple checks you make.

Normal: Without this feat, you provoke an attack of opportunity when you make a touch attack to start a grapple.

Bersk Wrestling Kill

You attain mastery of Bersk wrestling, and can pin a foe and break his neck with one quick twist.

Prerequisites: Str 17, Dex 15, base attack bonus +10, Bersk Wrestling, Bersk Wrestling Pin, Bersk Wrestling Strike, Combat Martial Arts.

Benefit: When you grapple a helpless opponent, you may perform a coup de grace as a free action. You do not need to use a melee weapon to perform a coup de grace against a helpless opponent and you can do so with an unarmed strike.

Bersk Wrestling Pin

Your strength and unrivalled training in Bersk wrestling allows you to hold your opponents immobile — just long enough to cut their throats.

Prerequisites: Str 13, Dex 15, base attack bonus +6, Bersk Wrestling, Combat Martial Arts.

Benefit: When you pin an opponent in a grapple, your opponent must make a Reflex save (DC = 10 + 1/2 your character level + your Dexterity bonus) or be helpless for one round. Furthermore, if she fails the Reflex save, you are able to use a weapon against the pinned character while still maintaining the pin (though you still may not attempt to damage or pin another character).

Bersk Wrestling Strike

You know advanced Bersk techniques, including bone-breaking moves and gruesome grapple-and-stab combination attacks.

Prerequisites: Str 15, Dex 13, base attack bonus +3, Bersk Wrestling, Combat Martial Arts.

Benefit: Whenever you grapple an opponent, and make a successful grapple check to inflict damage, or a make a successful attack with a light weapon against that opponent, you deal an additional +1d6 points of damage.

Black Market Connections

You're a known face on the street, and you get the best deals — as well as profiting from other people's business.

Prerequisites: Int 13, Knowledge (streetwise) 4 ranks.

Benefit: Your Wealth bonus increases by +1. Also, you gain a +4 circumstance bonus to all Knowledge (streetwise) checks to find a black market supplier. When you attempt

Aircraft Operation

There is a new aircraft type for the purposes of this feat: skyships. The skyships category includes skyfurnaces, as well as similar vessels such as skybarges and overstriders.

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Table 1-17: Recruitment

Check Result	Followers
19 or less	0
20–24	2d6 1st level, led by 1 2nd level leader
25–29	2d10 1st level, 2d6 2nd level, led by 1 3rd level leader
30–34	4d10 1st level, 2d10 2nd level, 2d6 3rd level, led by 1 4th level leader
35–39	6d10 1st level, 3d10 2nd level, 2d10 3rd level, 2d6 4th level, led by 1 5th level leader
40–44	8d10 1st level, 4d10 2nd level, 3d10 3rd level, 3d6 4th level, 2d4 5th level, led by 1 6th level leader
45–49	10d10 1st level, 5d10 2nd level, 4d10 3rd level, 4d6 4th level, 2d6 5th level, 1d4 6th level, led by 1 7th level leader
50 and up	12d10 1st level, 6d10 2nd level, 5d10 3rd level, 5d6 4th level, 2d8 5th level, 2d4 6th level, 1d4 7th level, led by 1 8th level leader

to buy restricted items, the black market purchase DC modifier is halved (round down). Furthermore, you can buy a black market item in a matter of hours rather than days; you can buy a licensed item in one hour, a restricted item in two hours, a military item in three hours, and an illegal item in four hours.

Normal: Buying a licensed item takes one day, a restricted item two days, a military item three days and an illegal item in four days.

Champion

Every country has a number of champions — characters recognized throughout the land as defenders of the nation and its people. Smaller regions aspiring to become nations in their own right (for example Nokgorka) may also have champions. The U.R.R.S. calls its champions “Heroes of the Red Star;” other nations also have a specific name for their champions. You are one of these heroes.

Prerequisites: Character level 10, Reputation 4, Allegiance (a nation or region).

Benefit: Double your Allegiance bonus to your Charisma-based skill checks. Furthermore, if you reveal you’re recruiting for a specific cause, you can make spend one day to make a modified character level check (1d20 + character level + Reputation + Charisma modifier + Allegiance bonus). See **Table 1-17: Recruitment** for the breakdown of the followers recruited.

These followers serve your cause, at your behest, but they will not do personal, private missions for you, only those related to the defense of the nation. They are under your command for a few days (usually 1d4 days), long enough to carry out a particular mission or fight a battle. At the GM’s discretion, they may leave if you abuse your command, but in general, they are content to fight and die for you and your cause. It takes 1d3 days to gather the followers. You may recruit further followers to your cause if you desire, but you must keep track of when each leaves, for if you spend too long recruiting, the earliest recruits lose interest and leave. This feat does not grant permanent followers.

Combat Hook

You wield your hook in either close combat or at range with equal facility. You can use the motion of the hook to keep your guard up even when hurling it telekinetically at your enemies.

Prerequisites: Defense bonus +1, base attack bonus +2, Telekinesis 5 ranks, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (hook), Weapon Focus (hook).

Benefit: When you make a ranged attack with your hook, you never provoke an attack of opportunity as long as you make the attack at a range of 8m or less.

Defensive Rotation Shield

By setting your hook in spinning telekinetic motion, you form a temporary shield impervious to most small arms fire.

Prerequisites: Defense bonus +1, Telekinesis 5 ranks, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency (hook).

Benefit: When armed with a hook, you can activate or deactivate your Defensive Rotation Shield as a move action. The shield provides a +10 deflection bonus to your Defense against handgun and submachine gun attacks. Select a direction for the shield to protect you in. The shield then provides its deflection bonus against any attacks coming in from opponents within a 180-degree arc from that direction. You cannot place the shield directly behind you.

Diehard

You’re hard to kill, capable of pushing yourself beyond the physical limits of ordinary men and women when close to death.

Prerequisite: Endurance.

Benefit: When reduced to –1 to –9 hit points, you automatically become stable. You don’t have to make a Fortitude saving throw to see if you lose 1 hit point each round.

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When reduced to negative hit points, you may choose to act as if you were disabled, rather than dying. You must make this decision as soon as you are reduced to negative hit points (even if it isn't your turn). If you do not choose to act as if you were disabled, you immediately fall unconscious.

When using this feat, you can take either a single move or standard action each turn, but not both, and you cannot take a full round action. You can take a move action without further injuring yourself, but if you perform any standard action (or any other action deemed as strenuous by the GM) you take 1 point of damage after completing the act. If you reach -10 hit points, you die.

Normal: A character without this feat and reduced to between -1 and -9 hit points is unconscious and dying.

Engine Pull Champion

As a paragon of Red Star military virtue and physical prowess, you can apply the same iron self-discipline giving you the body of a champion to more cerebral pursuits. Your unparalleled physical strength bolsters your willpower, and vice versa.

Prerequisites: Str 13, Wis 13, base attack bonus +1, Telekinesis 4 ranks.

Benefit: You may add your Strength modifier to your Wisdom modifier for all Telekinesis skill checks, and you may add your Wisdom modifier to your Strength modifier for all melee combat attacks and Strength checks.

Extended Defensive Rotation Shield

You learn to spin your hook around your body, while continuing to rotate it along its axis to provide a shield. This double rotation requires greater telekinetic ability, but enables you to defend against attacks from all sides.

Prerequisites: Defense bonus +2, Telekinesis 6 ranks, Defensive Rotation Shield, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency (hook).

Benefit: When you activate your Defensive Rotation Shield, it circles all around you rather than just in front of you, providing its deflection bonus against all appropriate attacks coming from all directions.

Gunnery

You can use all vehicular weaponry except protocol weaponry.

Prerequisite: Personal Firearms Proficiency.

Benefit: You can fire any vehicle-mounted weaponry without penalty, except for protocol weaponry. If the vehicular weapon is capable of autofire, you may also fire it on autofire without penalty. If the vehicular weapon is capable of indirect fire, you may use indirect fire.

Normal: Characters without this feat take a -4 penalty to any attack rolls made with vehicular weaponry, or -8 if firing vehicular weaponry on autofire; they may not use

CHAPTER ONE: RED STAR CHARACTERS

indirect fire at all. A character with the Aircraft Operation or Surface Vehicle Operation feat takes no penalty when operating a vehicular weapon mounted on the chosen vehicle type, but still may not use indirect fire.

IMPROVED COMBAT HOOK

With your hook, you are ready to attack your enemies the moment they drop their guard.

Prerequisite: Defense bonus +5, base attack bonus +10, Telekinesis 12 ranks, Combat Hook, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (hook), Weapon Focus (hook).

Benefit: When you have your hook ready (either in your hand or used for a defensive rotation shield) you threaten an area up to 8 meters away as if you had reach. You can make attacks of opportunity against, flank, and sneak attack opponents within that area by using a ranged attack from your hook.

IMPROVED DEFENSIVE ROTATION SHIELD

By spinning your hook faster and faster, while incorporating an element of unconscious precognition into the spin to stop specific projectiles, you become nearly invulnerable to small arms fire.

Prerequisites: Defense bonus +2, Telekinesis 6 ranks, Defensive Rotation Shield, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency (hook), Weapon Focus (hook).

Benefit: The deflection bonus from your Defensive Rotation Shield increases to +15, and it now applies to all longarm

attacks with a base damage of 2d8 or less, as well as all handguns and submachine guns. Furthermore, you may activate or deactivate it as a free action.

IMPROVED SLIVERS ON THE WIND

Experts with the Sha-Osk pins can control the path the pins take to their enemy, allowing them to target specific parts of the body — traditionally the face.

Prerequisites: Telekinesis 8 ranks, Slivers on the Wind.

Benefit: You know the technique of telekinetically hurling your Sha-Osk pins directly into an opponent's face rather than simply sending them in his general direction. An attack to the face imposes a -4 penalty on the attack roll, but deals double damage (4d4) on a successful hit. Furthermore, a successful attack to the face ignores all armor other than zero armor or STRIFE armor.

Attacks to the face also have the potential to cause blindness. The target must succeed a Reflex save against a DC 10 + 1/2 attacker's level + attacker's Wisdom modifier or become permanently blinded. Recovery might be possible at the GM's discretion, but only with full modern medical facilities.

LOGISTICIAN

You are an expert in army logistics, knowing the right questions to ask whenever you need to requisition something. You also understand the chain structure of the supply kaster organization, allowing you to get rapid results when you need something quick.

Prerequisites: Wis 13, Profession 4 ranks.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to all Requisition checks. On a successful Requisition check by which you succeed by 5 or more, you acquire the item in far less than the usual time, gaining common items in 3d6 minutes, or uncommon items in 1d4 hours. Otherwise, you gain the items in the normal time.

Normal: Requisitioning takes 24 hours for less common items, or 1d4 hours for common items.

OFFENSIVE ROTATION SHIELD

You can use your hook as a weapon without compromising the integrity of your Defensive Rotation Shield.

Prerequisite: Defense bonus +2, base attack bonus +3, Telekinesis 6 ranks, Combat Hook, Defensive Rotation Shield, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency (hook), Weapon Focus (hook).

Benefit: You may use your hook to attack as normal, either ranged or as a melee weapon, while still gaining the benefits of your Defensive Rotation Shield.

PRECISE STRIKE

Your superb training with your weapon of choice allows you to cut or stab straight through the weak points of your opponent's armor.



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Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +5, Weapon Focus (any slashing or piercing melee weapon).

Benefit: Choose a type of slashing or piercing melee weapon in which you already have the Weapon Focus feat. All attacks you make with the chosen weapon ignore the first ten points of the target's armor. If the weapon is also an armor-piercing weapon, halve any armor beyond the first ten points as usual.

PROTOCOL GUNNERY

You are familiar with the specialist protocols required to shoot vehicular protocol weapons.

Prerequisite: Must have the ability to kast at least one protocol.

Benefit: You can fire any vehicle-mounted protocol weaponry.

Normal: Characters without this feat may not fire vehicle-mounted protocol weaponry at all.

RAILFIGHTING

You are trained in railfighting on the internal rails of a skyfurnace's Combat Grid.

Prerequisites: Balance 4 ranks, Jump 4 ranks, Medium Armor Proficiency.

Benefit: You may use railsuits as a transportation and combat mechanism, not just as armor. See **Chapter Two: Personal Weapons and Equipment** for details on railsuits.

RED FLEET CONNECTIONS

You have a number of connections both within and outside of the usual rank structure in the Red Fleet, and are well aware of whom you need to ask to have a particular favor done.

Prerequisite: Wis 13, Profession 4 ranks, Junior Lieutenant or higher rank in the Red Fleet.

Benefit: Your Wealth bonus increases by +1. You also gain a +2 competence bonus to all Requisition checks and a +2 competence bonus to all Profession checks. Finally, any members of the Red Fleet under your direct command who do not have this feat themselves gain a +1 competence bonus to their own Profession checks, simply due to your presence in their chain of command.

SLIVERS ON THE WIND

You know the Nistaani fighting art of the Sha-Osk, allowing you to use your telekinesis as a weapon to hurl Sha-Osk pins at your enemies.

Prerequisite: Telekinesis 4 ranks.

Benefit: You are proficient in the use of Sha-Osk pins.

SORCERY EXPERT

Your knowledge of sorcery is wide-ranging.

Prerequisite: Kast 5 ranks.

Benefit: You learn one new invocation or protocol of your choice.

Special: You may select this feat more than once. Each additional time you select it, the number of new invocations or protocols (spells) you gain increases by one. Thus, the first time you select the feat, you gain one new spell; the second time, two new spells; the third time, three new spells and so on.

TELEKINETIC AUTOFIRE

You master the difficult technique of shooting a telekinetic weapon at automatic rates of fire.

Prerequisites: Telekinesis 4 ranks, Telekinetic Firearms Proficiency.

Benefit: You can fire any telekinetic firearm on autofire without penalty (provided, of course, it has an autofire setting).

Normal: Characters without this feat take a -4 penalty on attack rolls made with telekinetic firearms set on autofire.

TELEKINETIC FIREARMS PROFICIENCY

Shooting a telekinetic firearm is quite unlike shooting any other type of firearm. You hone your natural telekinetic abilities, and learn to use them to power the assortment of telekinetic firearms available.

Prerequisite: Telekinesis 1 rank.

Benefit: You can fire any telekinetic firearm.

Normal: Characters without this feat may not fire telekinetic firearms at all.

Special: The feats on the Personal Firearms Proficiency tree (that is, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Burst Fire, and Strafe) may not be used in conjunction with a telekinetic firearm. Other feats affecting ranged weapons work as normal. Note the multiplier to range increment for the Far Shot feat applies after any increase for class features or other factors.

TELEKINETIC WARRIOR

You have such fine control over your telekinesis you can use it instinctively to guide thrown grenades or fired bullets in mid-flight.

Prerequisites: Str 13, Wis 15, base attack bonus +3, Telekinesis 6 ranks.

Benefit: You may add your Wisdom modifier to all ranged attack rolls, including grenade attacks and indirect fire.

CHAPTER TWO: PERSONAL WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT

For soldiers of the massive and powerful Red Fleet, including Red Fleet officers, Red troopers, hailers and sorceresses, most equipment is issued as part of their duties rather than purchased personally. Zeks, by contrast, are rarely assigned or issued anything other than what is necessary to do the job at hand, though they often acquire or scrounge other items when possible.

Weapons

This section includes all the personal weaponry likely assigned to characters by the Red Fleet (hailers, hooks, and some conventional weaponry) plus the improvised and stolen weapons used by the Nokgorkans. Nistaani weaponry is also covered, being typically a mix of native hand-to-hand weapons, scavenged Red Fleet gear, and mass-produced armaments supplied by the Western Transnationalist Alliance.

At his or her discretion, the GM may permit or introduce other weapons from *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*, perhaps to fill out the non-Red Fleet/W.T.A. weapons of the world, such as the guns of the Great Continent or Isle of Lions forces. For the most part, however, the weapons presented here replace those given in *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*.

Telekinetic Weapons

Certain weapons are telekinetically powered including the melee weapon known as the hook and all ranged weapons under the Telekinetic Weapons heading. Telekinetic weapons work much like any other, but may only be operated by a character with at least 1 rank in the Telekinesis skill. Furthermore, any character whose ranks in Telekinesis are lower than his or her Base Attack Bonus takes a circumstance penalty equal to the difference between the two on all attack rolls with a telekinetic weapon.

Example: Yuri the 5th level hailer has a base attack bonus of +5, but has foolishly only put three ranks into Telekinesis. All his hailer attacks will suffer a -2 circumstance penalty to all attacks made with telekinetic weapons (5-3=2).

Protocol Weapons

Certain weapons are powered by or enhanced by protocols. The benefits of protocols are further explained in the appropriate weapon descriptions.

Bronson Home Defense Cannon

The Bronson is the most popular personal handgun in the W.T.A. Its popularity spiked after its inventor demonstrated

the deadliness of this powerful pistol through the medium of a "Reality Broadcast" show involving him personally hunting down criminals and suspected Red Agents.

Caso Assault Gun, Mark 16

The CAG-16 was the standard assault rifle of the W.T.A. for many years, though its operational needs now call for small forces with extreme firepower — hence the CPW-20. W.T.A. allies and reservists still use the CAG-16, which remains an effective and time-tested weapon.

Caso Personal Weapon, Mark 20

Though its official designation is CPW-20, the ordinary troopers of the Western Transnationalist Alliance know this protocol-supercharged assault rifle by the ironic name "CaP-gun." The CPW-20 is the most powerful personal firearm devised, rivaling an earlier generation of tripod-mounted heavy machineguns with its accuracy, range, and stopping power. It achieves this distinction by being manufactured using protocols at every step of the way down the assembly line.

Caso only employs sorcerers at its factory in New Lions, and uses a combination of rigorous quality control and the latest hi-tech fabrication techniques to ensure it produces a gun whose standards surpass those of hand-made weapons, but at almost the production rate of any other arms factory. Despite this, limited supplies and high cost mean that only the regular infantry of the W.T.A. forces are issued with the CPW-20; reservists, vehicle crews, and foreign allies will have older weapons, such as the CAG-16 or CSP.

The CPW-20 fires the equivalent of a 40mm armor-piercing round, though in fact the projectiles are almost perfectly conical in shape. Propelled entirely by protocol energy, they are completely without recoil. The most impressive feature of the gun, however, is the near-perfection of the supply protocols used to form the projectile. Nothing so crude as a magazine or power cell is necessary; rather, the weapon's barrel forms a new projectile over 100 times a second, for

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Table 2-1: Ranged Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Type	Range Increment (Area of Effect)	Rate of Fire	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
<i>Handguns (requires the Personal Firearms Proficiency feat)</i>										
Bronson Home Defense Cannon (12 mm autoloader)	2d10	20	Ballistic	8m	S	7 box	Med	2 kg	19	Lic (+1) ²
Caso Security Pistol (9mm autoloader)	2d6	20	Ballistic	6m	S	12 box	Small	1 kg	15	Res (+2) ²
Model 17 Samsonov (9mm autoloader)	2d6	20	Ballistic	6m	S	11 box	Small	1 kg	17	Mil (+3)
Model 79 Samsonov (10mm protocol machine pistol)	2d6+2 ^{4,7}	20	Ballistic	8m	S, A	20 box	Med	1 kg	24 ⁶	Mil (+3)
— Sam-79-G (protocol grenade launcher)	3d6+3 ⁷	20	Slashing	10m (2m)	S ³	Protocol Energy Buildup ³	—	+0.5 kg	24 ⁶	Mil (+3)
Munny Dueling Pistol ¹ , pair (10mm revolvers)	2d6	20	Ballistic	6m	S	6 cyl	Med	1 kg	19	Res (+2) ²
Officer Personal Sidearm ¹ (OPS) (10mm autoloader)	2d6	20	Ballistic	10m	S	20 box	Small	1 kg	20	Mil (+3) ²
<i>Longarms (requires the Personal Firearms Proficiency feat)</i>										
Caso Assault Gun, Mark 16 (5.56mm assault rifle)	2d8	20	Ballistic	30m	S, A	30 box	Large	4 kg	16	Mil (+3) ²
Caso Personal Weapon, Mark 20 (protocol assault rifle)	2d12+2 ^{4,7}	20	Ballistic ³	100m	S, A	Protocol ³	Large	6 kg	25 ⁶	Mil (+3) ²
— CPW-200 (protocol grenade launcher)	5d6+5 ^{4,7}	19–20	Adaptable ³	100m (4m)	S ³	Protocol ³	—	+1 kg	25 ⁶	Mil (+3) ²
Dragunov Sniper Rifle (15mm rifle)	2d12 ⁴	20	Ballistic	40m	S	12 box	Huge	15 kg	22	Mil (+3)
Hook Variants — Hook sniper rifle (12mm rifle)	2.10	20	Ballistic	36m	S	5 box	—	+3 kg	18	Mil (+3)
Kuvalda Assault Shotgun (12-gauge shotgun)	2d8 ⁴	20	Ballistic	10m	S, A	20	Large	4 kg	21	Mil (+3)
Molot Backup Shotgun (12-gauge shotgun)	2d8	20	Ballistic	6m	Single	8 box	Large	3 kg	16	Mil (+3)
RKG-41 Assault Rifle (7.62mm assault rifle)	2d8	20	Ballistic	16m	S, A	40 box	Large	5 kg	15	Res (+2)
RKG-75 Assault Rifle (5.56mm assault rifle)	2d8	20	Ballistic	20m	S, A	50 box	Large	4.5 kg	18	Mil (+3)
— RKG-75-G (protocol grenade launcher)	3d6+3	20	Slashing	30m (2m)	S ³	Protocol Energy Buildup ³	—	+1 kg	23	Mil (+3)
RKS-81 Submachine gun (10mm submachine gun)	2d6	20	Ballistic	10m	S, A	30 box	Large	2.5 kg	17	Mil (+3)

as long as the trigger is depressed, allowing a rate of fire comparable to that of an aircraft-mounted autocannon. The CPW-20 usually comes with the CPW-200, an under-barrel protocol grenade launcher.

Caso Security Pistol

This is the standard sidearm of police and security forces in W.T.A. countries, though many CSPs found their way into the hands of rebels and other quasi-military units around the world. It was originally designed for the W.T.A. army in the years preceding the Great Patriotic War, but is now regarded as outdated by the W.T.A.'s armed forces.

CPW-200

As might be expected, the CPW's grenade launcher is considerably more powerful and sophisticated than its U.R.R.S. equivalents. The main advantage to this weapon is there is no requirement to firing the CPW itself in order to build up protocol energy before firing a grenade. Each pull of

the CPW-200 trigger forms and fires a new protocol grenade, giving the CPW-200 limitless ammunition.

Furthermore, the protocol grenades launched by the CPW-200 are adaptable; the energy released when they "explode" deal whichever damage is most effective against the target, whether slashing, concussion, fire, piercing, or bludgeoning, and is always armor-piercing (the damage reduction of the target is halved against it, rounded down). The CPW-200 targets a 2m-square, like other grenade-like weapons; a miss will usually hit a nearby square (see **Chapter Four: Equipment** in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* for details).

Dragunov 60mm Autocannon

This heavy assault gun has a rotating barrel capable of incredible rates of fire — so much so it's equipped with a bite grip to protect the user's teeth from the recoil. Sorceress Engineers were unable to meet Central Command's requirements for the weapon without a physically damaging

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Table 2-1: Ranged Weapons (continued)

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Type	Range Increment (Area of Effect)	Rate of Fire	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
<i>Heavy Weapons (each requires a specific Exotic Firearms Proficiency feat)</i>										
Dragunov Anti-Krawl Gun	5d10 ^{3,4}	20	Ballistic	30m	S	1 shell	Huge	22kg	18	Mil (+3)
Hook Variants										
— hook machine gun (7.62mm machine gun)	2d8	20	Ballistic	30m	A	50 box	—	+4 kg	18	Mil (+3)
MTK-90 Cannon ¹ (protocol machine gun)	2d8+2 ⁷	19–20	Concussion	30m	A ³	Protocol ³ (2m burst radius)	Large	—	Special	—
SWORD System Mil (+3)	6d10 ⁴	19–20	Concussion	20m	1	1	—	Large	5kg	19
<i>Telekinetic Weapons (requires the Telekinetic Firearms Proficiency feat)</i>										
Dragunov 60mm Autocannon ⁵	4d12	20	Ballistic	60m ³	A	Linked	Large	50 kg	22	Mil (+3)
Hailer (telekinetic squad support weapon) ⁵										
— basic machine gun mode ¹	2d10	20	Ballistic	30m ³	A	250 drum compartment ³	—	—	—	—
— experimental beam weapon mode	5d8	—	Fire	30m ³	S	20 drum compartment ³	—	—	—	—
— flamethrower mode	3d6	—	Fire	(2m x 2m x 50m) ³		18 drum compartment ³	—	—	—	—
— grenade launcher mode	By grenade type	—	By grenade type	30m ³	S	50 drum compartment ³	—	—	—	—
— mortar mode	12d6	19–20	Concussion	100m ³ (12m burst radius)	S	5 drum compartment ³	—	+5 kg	—	—
— rocket-propelled grenade launcher mode	4d10 ⁴	19–20	Concussion	30m ³	A	20 drum compartment ³	—	+2 kg	—	—
Hook Variants										
— hook mortar ⁵	10d6	19–20	Concussion	100m (10m burst radius)	1	1	—	+15 kg	18	Mil (+3)

¹ This mastercraft weapon grants a +1 bonus on attack rolls.

² Western Transnationalist Alliance weapon; add +5 to DC if purchased outside W.T.A. or an allied country.

³ See the description of this weapon for special rules.

⁴ This weapon does armor-piercing damage. See p. 57.

⁵ Telekinetically powered weapon. See p. 46 for special rules.

⁶ Ultra-modern weapon; only available for campaigns set during or after the Nokgorkan conflict.

⁷ Protocol-enhanced damage; damage dealt includes +1 per damage die for protocol enhancement.

amount of recoil, especially to the user's teeth (weapons testing in the U.R.R.S. is an unfortunate duty). Central Command didn't care, and had each proficient trooper issued a bit as part of their assigned kit.

The autocannon is specifically designed for use by a hailer on skyfurnaces to repel boarding parties, though other proficient characters can also use it as well. A hailer (the weapon) is usually inserted into a slot in the autocannon, which both stabilizes firing and assists in accuracy by allowing the operator to use the same protocols he has available for hailer use. Any character attempting to use this autocannon without being armed with a hailer takes a –4 penalty to all attack rolls.

Dragunov Anti-Krawl Gun

The Dragunov anti-krawl gun was designed in the aftermath of the Great Patriotic War, though it was still in service with many reserve units at the time of the war in Al'Istaan. The Red Fleet uses the Dragunov 60mm autocannon or SWORDS in Nokgorka, though many outdated anti-krawl guns have found their way into the hands of the Nokgorkan resistance

groups. SWORDS are rare among the rebels, and are reserved for use against Hydra-Class krawls. The Dragunov is a recoilless rifle rather than a true rocket launcher, firing armor-piercing shells with almost as much power as a vehicular cannon. It is usually deployed with a firer and a loader, who between them can reload the gun in one full round. A lone character takes three full-round actions to reload it. It is intended for use mounted on a tripod or bipod, but can be shoulder-fired by a strong character (minimum Strength 13).

Dragunov Sniper Rifle

Sniper rifles are common throughout the world. The better versions by Caso and others, to which the Western Transnationalist Alliance and certain nations of the Great Continent have access, are considered mastercraft weapons (+1 to all attack rolls). The sniper rifles found in and around the U.R.R.S. are made by Dragunov and are slightly less accurate weapons, though they are still capable of felling a horse from over a kilometer away in the hands of a skilled operative.

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Hailer

The hailer is a shoulder-mounted, telekinetic machine gun useable with several different kinds of ammunition in various battlefield roles — including flamethrower, if incendiary canisters are available. Hailers are vital on the field, as they are both a “base of fire” solution and serve as bodyguards for warkasters. Because of this, no expense is spared to get them the best the Red Fleet has to offer, including multiply variant weapons and protocol-enhanced ammunition packs. These backpacks are multicompartmentalized protopacks (protocol-enhanced ammunition packs), specifically known as ‘Drums.’ They take their name for the original oil-drum shape of the packs during the Great Patriotic War, and for the distinctive heavy thumping sound made by the first hailer weapons.

Depending on the drum supplied, each hailer has three weapon options available. Each hailer has all the appropriate attachments to reconfigure the weapon appropriately for the ammunition types carried by the drum or drums available. Note that the range increment given for hailer weapons is always a base amount; characters with a high level in the hailer character class can typically coax a much higher range out of these telekinetic weapons.

Hook Variants

The hook is an enormously flexible weapon, capable of modification with a number of additional packs and variants. Red troopers are only issued with hook variants once they are qualified to use them, having either the Exotic Firearms Proficiency (hook machine gun) for the hook machine gun,

Telekinetic Weapons Proficiency for the hook mortar, or the Personal Firearms Proficiency feat for the hook sniper rifle.

Hook Variants (machine gun)

This light machinegun is available for use as a squad support weapon by Red troopers cut off from hailer support.

Hook Variants (mortar)

The hook mortar is a simple weapon, essentially a short tube attached to the hook. The main purpose of the body of the hook here is to provide a solid, straight, well-grounded support for the tube, allowing fire from a stable position. Unlike conventional mortars, the hook mortar does not have any propellant of its own; rather, the tube acts as an amplifier and accelerator for the firer’s own telekinetic ability, and each shell is specially manufactured to be easily movable by telekinetic power.

Hook mortars can fire up to 50 range increments, but may not fire into the adjacent range increment; in effect, the minimum range is 100 meters. As an indirect fire weapon, the hook mortar uses the indirect fire rules (see **Chapter Three: To Fight and Die for the Motherland**). The hook mortar targets a 2m-square, like other grenade-like weapons; a miss will usually hit a nearby square (see *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*).

Hook Variants (sniper rifle)

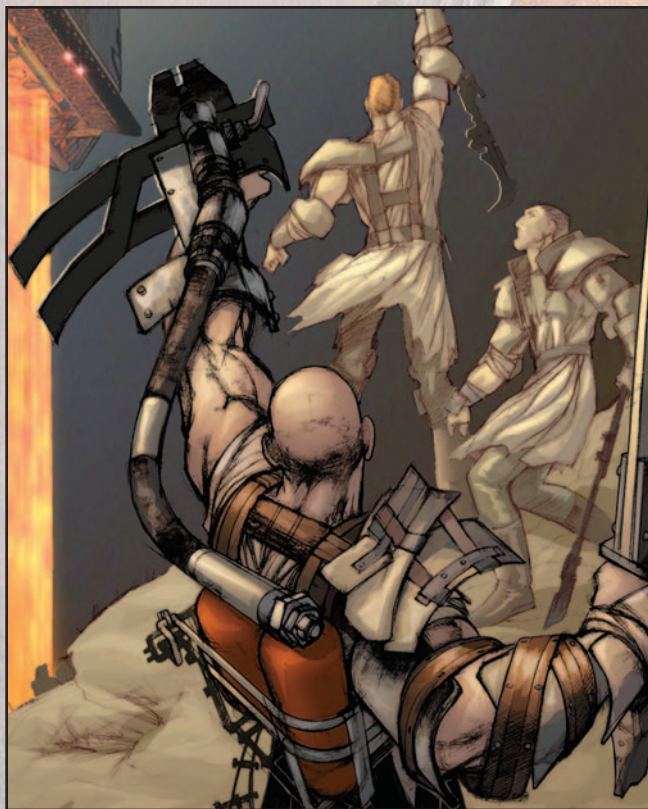
This is similar to the standard sniper rifle, but with a lower caliber. Its barrel is mounted along the shaft of the hook.

Kuvalda Assault Shotgun

Designed as a short-range but powerful weapon for Red Fleet krawl officers who have to leave their vehicles in a combat zone, the Kuvalda is regarded as too heavy for a skyfurnace officer to carry. Each krawl crew seat has a fully loaded Kuvalda and two spare magazines of API ammo (see below) mounted beneath it in an easily accessible compartment.

Unusually for a shotgun, the Kuvalda is capable of fully automatic fire. By virtue of its over-and-under double-barreled design, it is also capable of firing two shots simultaneously, with a single pull of the trigger. Thus, the Kuvalda has three firing settings: single shot, double shot, and automatic.

A Kuvalda firing on automatic obeys the normal autofire rules, and appropriate feats may be used as usual. A Kuvalda firing with both barrels deals an additional 1d8 points of damage, but expends two shells with each shot. There is no particular benefit for having two barrels when using automatic fire; both barrels fire, but alternately to achieve a high rate of fire, rather than simultaneously as for the double shot setting. The Kuvalda is always issued with API (Armor Piercing Incendiary) ammunition, though it may fire ordinary buckshot if so loaded. API ammunition hitting an armored target is only reduced by half the target’s damage reduction (rounded down). If it deals any damage, it deals an additional 1d6 points of fire damage the following round and the target may catch fire if he does not succeed a DC 15 Reflex save. If he fails this save, he takes 1d6 points of damage each round until he extinguishes himself or until he succeeds a Reflex save on a subsequent round.



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Model 17 Samsonov

This antiquated sidearm is testament to the dependability of Republic workmanship. Though it was one of the first weapons to be manufactured by the fledgling U.R.R.S., in the days of the Fourth Chronicle, it is still seen on the battlefield as a junior officers' handgun and general-purpose sidearm.

Model 79 Samsonov

The Model 79 is a compact protocol-powered machine pistol issued only to special forces and to high-ranking Red Fleet officers, usually those of Colonel or above. It is said to have been the main weapon used by the assassins sent to slay Al'Istaan's original leadership, to give the U.R.R.S. a plausible reason to be invited in to take control.

Molot Backup Shotgun

This is a pistol-grip, pump-action shotgun, and serves as the standard secondary weapon issued to hailers.

Munny Dueling Pistols, Pair

These finely made, perfectly balanced revolvers are based on the classic "six-shooter" pattern popular in the early years of the W.T.A. Many of the first political disputes in the W.T.A. were decided by duels using weapons very similar to these, and the tradition lives on with the Munny pistol, still the most popular dueling weapon in the W.T.A. Munny dueling pistols are always sold in pairs. The price includes a padded, impact-resistant hardwood case for the paired pistols.

MTK-90 Cannon

This weapon may only be conjured with the appropriate protocol. It is a huge, ghostly machine gun, translucent in appearance and weightless. The MTK-90 is capable of firing high explosive anti-personnel rounds at 10,000 rounds per minute. See *MTK-90 Protocol* in **Chapter Five: Military Industrial Sorcery** on page 95 for more information on the weapon and how to summon it.

Officer Personal Sidearm (OPS)

This light but powerful handgun is a clear demonstration of the technical prowess of the W.T.A. Though not protocol-enhanced in any way, it is still one of the finest sidearms on the planet.

RKG-41 Assault Rifle

This antique assault rifle is still used by many in the Nokgorkan Resistance and other paramilitary forces the world over. It is ineffective against heavy armor or the defensive shield rotation of an experienced Red Trooper. The RKG-41 was originally designed as the standard infantry weapon of the Great Patriotic War, but its ease of manufacture and use led to its adoption over much of the world, particularly among the allies of the U.R.R.S. and in impoverished regions.

RKG-75 Assault Rifle

Some years prior to the War of Al'Istaan, the U.R.R.S. military launched a revamp of the venerable RKG-41. The RKG-75 closely resembles its ancestor, but advances in military engineering allowed a lighter frame firing a smaller caliber bullet without any significant loss in the power of the rifle.

Modern U.R.R.S. doctrine regards the RKG family of weapons with some disdain, focusing as it does on the hook as a standard infantry weapon and the hailer for squad support. Many units still use the RKG-75, though, particularly those garrisoning the motherland and its outlying republics. U.R.R.S. prison guards and other paramilitary forces without hook training favor it as well.

RKG-75-G

Many RKG-75s were issued with protocol grenade launchers. These weapons were among the first of their kind, and are not nearly as sophisticated as the Sam-79-G or CPW-200 of more recent years. The RKG-75-G is powered by the sorcery buildup of energy from the RKG-75 itself. Once it fires at least twenty bullets, sufficient energy builds up in the lower chamber that the user can pull the lower trigger and fire off an anti-personnel protocol grenade. No more than one grenade is available for use until the first one has been used, regardless of however many bullets of RKG-75 ammunition are fired. If the grenade is not fired, its energy dissipates uselessly three rounds after the machine pistol stops firing.

Firing the grenade launcher is an attack like any other, and can be done as one of the attacks during a full attack action, with the other attacks firing RKG-75 bullets if so desired. RKG-75-G grenades deal damage in a 2m burst radius. The RKG-75-G can only be used with the RKG-75. The RKG-75-G targets a 2m-square, like other grenade-like weapons; a miss will usually hit a nearby square (see *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*).

RKS-81 Submachine Gun

This weapon is similar to the RKG-75, essentially a stripped-down RKG rechambered to fire pistol caliber ammunition. It is a common backup weapon for vehicle crews not deemed sufficiently important to be given Kuvaldas or Model 79 Samsonovs.

Sam-79-G

The most widely issued variant of the Model 79 Samsonov incorporates an under-barrel protocol grenade launcher, powered by the sorcery buildup of energy from the main machine pistol portion of the weapon. Once it fires at least ten bullets, sufficient energy builds up in the lower chamber so the user can pull the lower trigger and fire off an anti-personnel protocol grenade. No more than one grenade is available for use until the first one has been used, however many bullets of machine pistol ammunition are fired. If the grenade is not fired, its energy dissipates uselessly five rounds after the machine pistol stops firing.

Firing the grenade launcher is an attack like any other, and can be done as one of the attacks during a full attack action,

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with the other attacks firing machine pistol bullets if desired. Samsonov grenades deal damage in a 2m burst radius. The Sam-79-G can only be used with the Model 79 Samsonov. The Sam-79-G targets a 2m-square, like other grenade-like weapons; a miss will usually hit a nearby square (see *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*).

Single Shot Weapon (Ordnance: Rocket) Delivery System (SWORD)

This is a shoulder-fired missile weapon capable of destroying a Hydra-class krawl. It deals armor-piercing damage, so the damage reduction of the target is halved (round down) against a SWORD.

Ammunition

Table 2-2: Ammunition details ammunition for firearms and other ranged weapons.

5.56mm, 7.62mm, 12mm Rifle, 15mm

These calibers of ammunition are generally used in rifles, assault rifles, or machine guns, and are sold in boxes of 20 bullets each. The 12mm rifle and 15mm are huge cartridges, generally fired from heavy machine guns but also adapted to a few models of powerful sniper rifles.

60mm

These autocannon bullets are telekinetically neutral partly accounting for their high cost.



9mm, 10mm, 12mm Pistol

These calibers are generally used in pistols or submachine guns, and are sold in boxes of 50 bullets each. The 12mm pistol round is not compatible with the much-larger 12mm rifle-caliber cartridge.

12-gauge Buckshot, 12-gauge Armor Piercing Incendiary

Shotgun cartridges, also known as buckshot, are sold in boxes of ten. The far scarcer 12-gauge API (Armor Piercing Incendiary) shells were designed for the Kuvalda Assault Shotgun and are supposed to be issued only to elite krawl crew, but many find their way into the hands of hailer looking for a more powerful shell for their backup shotguns than mere buckshot.

Dragunov Anti-Krawl Shell

These long, heavy shells come in boxes of five.

Hook Mortar Shell

Issued in cases of five, these large shells are designed for use in the hook mortar. Packed with high explosive, they are ideal for shelling an area.

Hailer Drum

Hailer ammunition is carried in large backpacks known as drums: metal boxes for machine gun and other conventional ammo, or pressurized canisters for flamethrower fuel. Ammunition feeds into the barrel, as a conventional belt for the machine gun bullets or in a segmented tube for most other munitions, including flamethrower fuel. Although this method of ammunition storage allows for an enormous number of bullets to be carried, it potentially makes reloading slower than would otherwise be the case.

Putting on or taking off a hailer backpack (including connecting or disconnecting the ammo feed to the hailer itself) takes 1d6 rounds, or 3d6 rounds for a character without the Telekinetic Autofire feat. For the machine gun, the ammunition comes off the backpack in a linked belt; it is possible for a hailer operator to feed another linked belt through from a second backpack if the first is exhausted, without necessarily putting on the second backpack first. In this case, the hailer needs an assistant to carry the second backpack, or needs to remain stationary and leave it on the ground. Most of the time, hailer have access to protocol-based reloading of their drums. In the field, however, far from supply kasters, emergency measures may need be required.

Depending on the particular drum and other accessories mounted, the hailer may be used in a wide variety of roles. A hailer is a one-man fire support platform, designed to give officers solutions in as many situations as a particular battle might present. The following drums are typically available: *Close Assault* (machine gun, grenade-launcher and flamethrower), *General Purpose* (machine gun, grenade-

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launcher, and rocket-propelled grenade launcher), and *Anti-Armor* (machine gun, mortar, and rocket-propelled grenade launcher).

In each case, the drum incorporates a full load of ammunition for the appropriate weapon loadout. The cost of the drum includes the cost of all ammunition for it and any accessories required to reconfigure the hailer appropriately. Note the mortar weapon may only be used with indirect fire (see **Chapter Three**, page 69). *Experimental* hailer drums (machine gun, experimental beam weapon, grenade launcher) are occasionally available, but characters should note these are prone to malfunction wildly (at the GM's discretion).

Hailer drums are always enhanced with protoclip-style technology (see page 61), enabling them to carry their enormous quantity of ammunition without becoming unbearably heavy to wear. All hailer drums also have the capability to receive new ammunition from a supply kaster's supply protocols, in exactly the same way as a Crate can (see page 61).

Ammunition Weight

To determine how much a loaded magazine weighs, look it up on the **Table 2-3**, rounding the number of rounds in the magazine up. Shotgun shells are a little heavier, so use the weight value for one damage step higher.

Grenades and Explosives

Aralov Blade-Jaw

This is a protocol-enhanced anti-vehicle mine, capable of disabling even an Invasion-class krawl. Only a vehicle massing 1 ton or higher, and not personnel, sets it off. The blade-jaw targets the underside armor of the vehicle, which is usually only one-half the damage reduction of the front armor (rounded down).

Bloodhound

Bloodhound mines are designed to lie buried beneath a thin layer of soil or concealed by debris and junk, until a person approaches within 10m. The bloodhound's built-in sensors scan the target to determine if it is friend or foe. All Red Fleet

Table 2-2: Ammunition

Ammunition Type (Quantity)	Purchase DC
5.56mm (20)	4
7.62mm (20)	4
9mm (50)	5
10mm (50)	5
12mm pistol (50)	6
12mm rifle (20)	6
15mm (20)	7
60mm (20)	11
12-gauge buckshot (10)	4
12-gauge armor piercing incendiary (10)	9
Dragonov Anti-Krawl shell (5)	8
Hook mortar shell (5)	10
Hailer Drum, any non-experimental	15
Hailer Drum, experimental	25

personnel expected to be operating in the bloodhound's area of deployment get badges in advance. Signals from the bloodhounds determine the nature of the potential target. If it is a Red Fleet member, the bloodhound remains concealed in a semi-dormant state.

Any character without the appropriate signal badge triggers the bloodhound. An activated bloodhound flings itself up from the ground and launching towards the target on low-powered protocol charges, reaching the target in less than a second and exploding instantly.

Bluster-Satchel Protocol Charges (CSPC)

A heavy (25kg) pack of explosives used to destroy bridges, buildings and vehicles. The core of the weapon is a plastic explosive variant, but powerful protocols enhance its destructive power.

Concussion Grenade

The concussion grenade deals additional damage if used in confined spaces. When it explodes indoors, note the

Table 2-3: Ammunition Weight

Damage	Weight per Number of Rounds					
	10	20	30	40	50	100
2d6	0.25 kg	0.25 kg	0.25 kg	0.5 kg	0.5 kg	1 kg
2d8	0.25 kg	0.25 kg	0.25 kg	0.5 kg	0.5 kg	1 kg
2d10	0.25 kg	0.5 kg	0.5 kg	0.75 kg	0.75 kg	1.5 kg
2d12	0.5 kg	1 kg	1.5 kg	2 kg	2.5 kg	5 kg
Special Ammunition				Weight		
Mortar Shell, 1				1 kg		
Hailer Drum, any				15 kg		

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Table 2-4: Grenades and Explosives

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Burst Radius	Reflex DC	Range Increment	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Aralov Blade-Jaw	10d10	—	Piercing	—	—	—	Med	10 kg	18	Mil (+3)
Bloodhound	6d6	—	Slashing	2m	16	—	Med	4 kg	14	Mil (+3)
Concussion grenade	3d6	—	Concussion	4m	18	8m	Small	0.5 kg	12	Mil (+3)
CSPC	2d6x10	—	Concussion	10m	20	—	Large	25kg	17	Mil (+3)
Fragmentation grenade	4d6	—	Slashing	6m	15	8m	Tiny	0.5 kg	15	Mil (+3)
Smoke grenade	—	—	—	See text	—	4m	Small	1 kg	10	—
Tear gas grenade	See text	—	—	See text	—	4m	Small	1 kg	12	Res (+2)
Thermate grenade	4d6	—	Fire	2m	12	4m	Small	1 kg	17	Mil (+3)
White phosphorus grenade	2d6	—	Fire	16m	12	4m	Small	1 kg	15	Mil (+3)
Render mine	5d10	—	Slashing & Piercing	4m	15	—	Small	6 kg	17	Mil (+3)

size of the room or corridor in which it explodes. For each dimension of the room (width, breadth and height) less than 6m, the concussion grenade deals an additional 1d6 points of damage. For example, a concussion grenade exploding in a 20m by 4m corridor with a 3-meter-high ceiling deals 5d6 points of damage (base 3d6, +1d6 for corridor width of 4m, +1d6 for corridor height of 3m).

In addition to the damage dealt, a concussion grenade deafens and stuns its targets. Anyone damaged by it must make a Fortitude save against a DC equal to the damage dealt or be stunned for 1 round and deafened for 2d6 minutes.

Fragmentation Grenade

The most common military grenade, this small explosive device sprays shrapnel in all directions when it explodes. The purchase DC given is for a box of 6 grenades.

Smoke Grenade

Military and police forces use these weapons to create temporary concealment. A smoke grenade fills the four squares around it with smoke on the round thrown. On the following round, it fills all squares within 4m, and on the third round it fills all squares within 6m. The smoke obscures all sight, including the darkvision ability granted by night vision goggles. Any creature within the area has total concealment (attacks suffer a 50% miss chance, and the attacker can't use sight to locate the target).

The smoke disperses after 10 rounds, though a moderate wind (16+ kph) disperses the smoke in 4 rounds and a strong wind (31+ kph) disperses it in 1 round. Smoke grenades are available in several colors, including white, red, yellow, green, and purple. As such, they can be used as signal devices. The purchase DC given is for a box of 6 grenades.

Tear Gas Grenade

Military and police forces use these weapons to disperse crowds and smoke out hostage takers. On the round thrown, a tear gas grenade fills a 2m radius with a cloud of irritant causing eyes to fill with tears. On the following round, it fills a 4m radius, and on the third round, it fills a 6m radius. It

disperses after 10 rounds, though a moderate wind (16+ kph) disperses the smoke in 4 rounds and a strong wind (31+ kph) disperses it in 1 round.

A character caught in a cloud of tear gas must succeed a DC 15 Fortitude save or be nauseated. This effect lasts as long as the character remains in the cloud and for 1d6 rounds after he leaves the cloud. Those succeeding their saves but remain in the cloud must make a new save each round they remain in the area. A gas mask renders the target immune to the effects. A wet cloth held over the eyes, nose, and mouth grants a +2 circumstance bonus to the Fortitude save. The purchase DC given is for a box of 6 grenades.

Thermate

Thermate is a modern, improved version of the thermite once used by soldiers in the Great Patriotic War. Thermate does not explode. Instead, it creates intense heat, designed to burn or melt through an object upon which the grenade sits. Military forces use thermate grenades to quickly destroy key pieces of equipment. Used against an object too large or tough to be destroyed outright, a thermate grenade still inflicts significant damage, typically fusing the metal parts together to render the target inoperable.

Thermate continues to burn for 6 rounds, potentially causing additional damage to those within the area of effect if they remain there after the first round. The purchase DC given is for a box of 6 grenades.

White Phosphorus Grenade

White phosphorus grenades use an explosive charge to distribute burning phosphorus across the burst radius. In addition to the normal damage, the white phosphorous grenade deals an additional 1d6 points of fire damage in the following round, and the subject is at risk of catching on fire. Furthermore, the white phosphorous grenade burns for 10 rounds, causing additional damage to those within the initial area of effect if they remain there after the first round.

A white phosphorous grenade also creates a cloud of smoke. Treat a white phosphorus grenade as a smoke grenade (see above), except it fills squares within 16m of the explosion point. The purchase DC is for a box of 6 grenades.

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Render Mine

This is an anti-vehicle mine intended for use against troop carriers and other relatively soft targets. The vehicle's damage reduction applies, though it is halved as usual for mine attacks. Any damage that gets through the damage reduction also injures the vehicle occupants if they are within the burst radius.

Melee Weapons

Arc Kutter

Perhaps the heaviest "melee weapon" ever devised, the arc kutter is not intended for use against personnel, but rather against heavy armored vehicles such as krawls. Against a target that is stationary in relation to the arc kutter operator (for example, a krawl on which he or she is standing, or a grappled enemy), the arc kutter reduces the target's damage reduction in the small region being attacked; no attack roll is necessary after the first attack. Note that a character never adds his or her Strength bonus to damage with an arc kutter.

Example: The arc kutter is used to make an attack against a Hammer-class krawl (damage reduction 30) by Ned, a 12th level zek holding onto

the main turret. In the first round, the zek makes two attacks, the first one hitting and dealing 14 damage. This is not enough to penetrate the krawl's DR, but it reduces the DR to 16 in the immediate area being attacked by the arc kutter. Next attack, Ned hits automatically and deals a further 9 damage, reducing the DR to 7. The following round he makes two more attacks, again hitting automatically, dealing 12 damage then 10. The first attack reduces the DR to 0 and inflicts 5 hit points' damage, while all 10 damage for the second attack comes straight off the krawl's hit points. If Ned were to move away and attack a different area on the krawl, he would be facing a DR of 30 once more. (Note that if Ned had Kutter Training as a specialty, he would be still more effective).

Bayonet (fixed)

Any longarm designated as an assault rifle can incorporate a bayonet. A bayonet always fits a specific type of assault rifle. It does not interfere with the rifle's normal functions when so fitted. An assault rifle fitted with a bayonet may be used as a double weapon, clubbing with the butt and stabbing with the bayonet. A bayonet removed from its assault rifle functions as a knife.

Table 2-5: Melee and Archaic Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Damage Critical	Range Type	Increment	Size	Purchase Weight	DC	Restriction
<i>Simple Weapons (requires the Simple Weapons Proficiency feat)</i>								
Club	1d6	20	Bludgeoning	4m	Med	1 kg	4	—
Knife	1d4†	19–20	Piercing	4m	Tiny	0.25 kg	7	—
Pistol whip	1d4	20	Bludgeoning	—	Small	—	—	—
Red Fleet knife	1d6†	19–20	Slashing	2m	Small	0.5 kg	8	—
Rifle butt	1d6	20	Bludgeoning	—	Large	—	—	—
<i>Archaic Weapons (requires the Archaic Weapons Proficiency feat)</i>								
Bayonet (fixed)*	1d6@/1d6	20	Piercing or Bludgeoning	—	Large	+0.5 kg	7	—
Hailer longknife	1d8@	19–20	Slashing	—	Med	1 kg	9	Mil (+2)
Hammer	1d8	20	Bludgeoning	—	Small	2 kg	4	—
Sickle*	1d6†	20	Slashing	—	Small	0.5 kg	5	—
Spear*	1d8†	20	Piercing	—	Large	2 kg	6	—
<i>Exotic Melee Weapons (each requires a specific Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency feat)</i>								
Arc Kutter*	2d10	20	Slashing and Fire	—	Large	25 kg	9	Mil (+2)
Engineer Ace	2d6†	20	Slashing	—	Large	4 kg	8	—
Greatsword	2d6†	19–20	Slashing	—	Large	2 kg	12	—
Hawk talon*	1d12†	20	Slashing or Piercing	—	Large	2.5 kg	10	—
Hook*~	2d6†	20	Slashing or Piercing Telekinetic*	—	Large	2.5 kg	8	Mil (+2)
Nistaani sword	1d10†	18–20	Slashing	—	Large	2 kg	11	—
Scythe*	1d10†	20	Slashing	—	Large	1.5 kg	6	—
<i>Exotic Ranged Weapon (requires the Slivers on the Wind feat)</i>								
Sha-Osk pins, handful2d4*	—	—	Piercing	Telekinetic*	Diminutive	0.05 kg	8	—

* See the description of this weapon for special rules.

~ Telekinetically powered weapon; see page 46 for special rules.

† This weapon deals armor-piercing damage; halve any damage reduction from armor, rounding down.

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Club

Almost any long, weighty object serves as a club, from a building joist to a length of lead piping. A police officer's nightstick is also a club.

Engineer Axe

This enormous weapon resembles an oversized fire axe. Skyfurnaces carry them for use in emergencies. A skyfurnace's structure is on such a massive scale that an ordinary axe would never cut through it in time, particularly in situations when the skyship's ventral array must be cut loose to save the ship.

Greatsword

Though the greatsword is almost never seen on the physical battlefield, its symbolic value as the Sword of Truth is crucially important to the Red Woman and those who are allied with her.

Hailer Longknife

Resembling the standard Red Fleet knife, but with a blade some 60cm long, the hailer longknife is almost a sword. Hailers are elite soldiers, and even their backup weapons are designed both to be lethally effective and to strike terror into the hearts of their enemies.

Hammer

This is a lump hammer, much loved by rebels and saboteurs for general destruction of people and materiel, but not so useful for knocking in nails.

Hawk Talon

Named from a line in an ancient Nistaani victory poem, the hawk talon is a modern version on the traditional tribal war-spear, adopted to take on the dreaded Red Fleet hook on equal terms. Its curved blade can both stab and slice and the butt features small spikes, allowing use of either end with equal effectiveness. If you use a ready action to set a hawk talon against a charge, you deal double damage on a successful hit against the charging character.

Hook

The Red trooper's primary weapon is a telekinetically enhanced hook, configurable for either close combat or ranged use. It's a 1.5m to 2m long "Swiss-army knife," capable of serving as a compass, sundial, flashlight, splint or even cooking spit; special attachments can be chosen or assigned

to turn it into a machine gun, sniper rifle or mortar, as well (see page 50). A trooper can also telekinetically set his hook in midair, like an *immovable rod* (see Sidebar). Trained troopers can telekinetically spin it in a "Defensive Rotation Shield" (see **Chapter One: Red Star Characters**) capable of blocking most slug-throwers and other forms of ranged attacks.

If you use a ready action to set a hook against a charge, you deal double damage on a successful hit against the charging character. You can use a hook to make a trip attack; if you lose the opposed attack rolls, you may drop the hook to avoid being tripped yourself, or if proficient with telekinetic weapons you need not even drop the hook. If you are proficient with telekinetic weapons, you can reconfigure the hook as a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. If you are not proficient with telekinetic weapons, altering the configuration is a full action and provokes attacks of opportunity.

When used as a ranged weapon, a hook has a range increment of a number of meters equal to the user's ranks in Telekinesis. The user may retrieve the hook as a move action, if he or she succeeds at a DC 10 Telekinesis check.

Alternatively, the hook need not be retrieved — it is quite permissible for the wielder to simply telekinetically hurl it from one target to the next, treating the previous target as the starting point for the next attack.

Knife

Anything from a cook's chopper to a modern tactical folder or small fighting dagger may be treated as a knife. With a blade typically 10 to 20 cm long and an ergonomic handle, this versatile weapon can be used for everyday cutting tasks, self-defense, or assassination.

Pistol Whip

Any pistol can be used simply to reinforce the hand and provide a harder surface with which to punch. In a less military context, brass knuckles, a roll of coins, or a small flashlight all provide the same effect.

Nistaani Sword

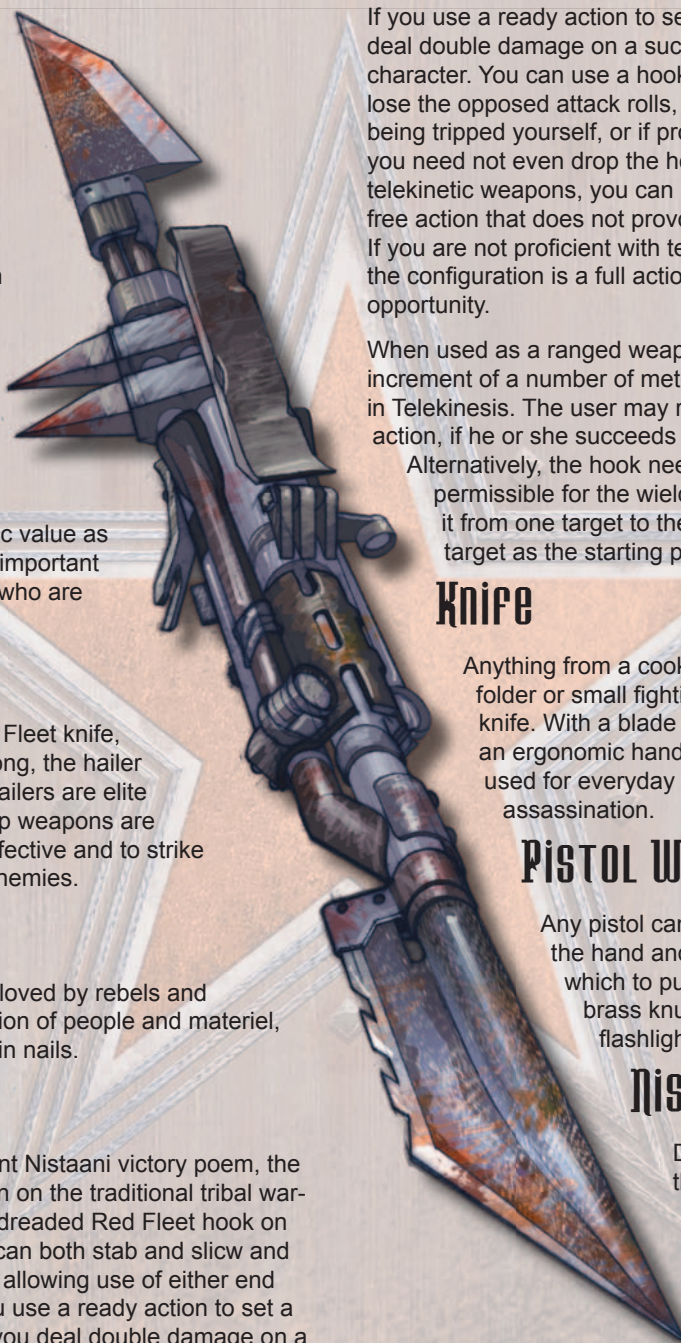
Descended from the tulwar of the old Nistaani warriors, this curved two-handed sword is as lethal at close quarters, even on the modern battlefield.

Red Fleet Knife

This is a strong-bladed, single-edged knife around 30cm long, issued to every Red trooper as a backup weapon in the event his hook is lost or destroyed.

Rifle Butt

The butt of any longarm may serve as an impromptu club.



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Immovable Rod

This rod is a flat iron bar with a small button on one end. When the button is pushed (a move action), the rod does not move from where it is, even if staying in place defies gravity. Thus, the owner can lift or place the rod wherever he wishes, push the button, and let go. Several *immovable rods* can even make a ladder when used together (although only two are needed). An *immovable rod* can support up to 3,600kg before falling to the ground. If a creature pushes against an *immovable rod*, it must make a DC 30 Strength check to move the rod up to 4m in a single round.

Scythe

This old-fashioned farming tool is rarely seen save in the most poverty-stricken regions, but remains an important symbol of death. Any character armed with a scythe may perform a coup de grace as a move action instead of taking a full action. This still provokes attacks of opportunity, as usual.

Sha-Osk Pins

These short silver pins are barely recognizable as a weapon to anyone other than a Nistaani. They are hurled at the face telekinetically.

Because they are easily concealable and used by telekinesis alone rather than needing to be drawn by hand, a character armed with Sha-Osk pins and no other weapons gains a +4 circumstance bonus to her Initiative roll at the GM's discretion, and only if the opponents do not suspect the presence of Sha-Osk pins. Sha-Osk pins have a range increment of a number of meters equal to the user's ranks in

Telekinesis. Nistaani sometimes poison Sha-Osk pins when they really want to make certain of her foe's doom.

Sickle

Although originally designed as an agricultural tool, the sickle has a sharp, curved blade optimal for cutting throats. Any character armed with a sickle may perform a coup de grace as a move action instead of taking a full action. This still provokes attacks of opportunity, as usual.

Spear

One of the oldest of humanity's weapons and still found occasionally on the battlefield, particularly in Al'Istaani, only those who can afford nothing better use it. If you use a ready action to set a spear against a charge, you deal double damage on a successful hit against the charging character. If you use a spear to make a charge while mounted on a war-trained animal such as a Susk-Dath, you deal double damage on a successful attack.

ARMOR

Armor in the world of *The Red Star Campaign Setting* is more than just a means of becoming immune to low-caliber gunfire. Other than the Bronja vest, every piece of armor in the game is also an identifying mark. A character wearing hailer armor is assumed a hailer; one who wears zero armor or STRIFE armor is someone feared the world over.

The GM should enforce penalties to Charisma-based skills (other than Intimidate) for anyone wearing zero armor or STRIFE armor, and have NPCs react accordingly to anyone wearing inappropriate armor for their rank and station. A Red trooper wearing hailer bodyguard armor had better have a good reason, or face a court martial.

Damage Reduction and Armor-Piercing Attacks

Armor in *The Red Star Campaign Setting* grants damage reduction, rather than making the wearer harder to hit. The one notable exception is STRIFE armor, which gives a deflection bonus to Defense in certain circumstances, but even it offers a damage reduction rating.

Certain attacks are designated as armor piercing. The damage reduction of armor is halved (round down) against an armor piercing attack.

Bronja Vest

This is similar to the crew vest, but cheaper and old-fashioned. Bronja is the standard U.R.R.S. material for bulletproof armor, developed during the Great Patriotic War for flak jackets. Today Bronja vests are used by police forces, military personnel from relatively poor or small countries, and mercenaries. The Bronja vest incorporates front and back pockets to add ceramic plates for additional protection, if desired.

Crew Vest

Originally designed for elite fighter pilots, the crew vest uses high-tech lightweight materials to provide excellent protection at a lower weight and bulk than a typical Bronja vest. It has front and back pockets to add ceramic plates for additional protection; though inserting the plates takes the usual time, they can be removed again by simply pulling a tab as a free action. This allows the wearer to rapidly discard the additional bulk in case he must squirm out of a burning cockpit or flee approaching enemies.

The crew vest also incorporates equipment pouches capable of holding up to 5 lb of additional equipment (usually survival gear, flares etc.). Krawl crews and other

CHAPTER TWO: PERSONAL WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT

Table 2-6: ARMOR

Armor	Type	Damage Reduction	Nonprof. Bonus	Maximum Dex Bonus	Armor Penalty	Speed (10m)	Weight	Acquisition DC	Restriction
Light Armor									
Crew Vest	Tactical	4	1	+5	-1	10	2.5 kg	18	Military (+1)
Bronja Vest	Tactical	4	1	+5	-2	10	3 kg	14	None
Officer Greatcoat*	Concealed	5	1	+6	-1	10	2 kg	25*	Military (+1)
Medium Armor									
Railsuit	Tactical	7	2	+4	-3	8	7 kg	24	Military (+1)
Red Trooper Armor	Tactical	6	2	+3	-4	8	6 kg	17	Military (+1)
Heavy Armor									
Hailer Armor	Tactical	9	3	+1	-7	6	12 kg	19	Military (+1)
Hailer Bodyguard Armor	Tactical	8	3	+1	-5	6	10 kg	24	Military (+1)
Reactor ShIELDSUIT	Tactical	5	3	+0	-9	6	15 kg	16	None
STRIFE Armor*	Tactical	15	3	+0	-9	6	20 kg	30	Military +1
Extras									
Steel Plates	Tactical	+2**	+1**	-3**	-3**	8	+3 kg	17	Military (+1)

* Protocol enhanced armor – see text for special rules.

** These game statistics are cumulative with those of the original armor.

ground vehicle drivers are rarely issued with crew vests: U.R.R.S. policy is they should rely on the protection provided by their vehicles.

Hailer Armor

Perhaps the ultimate in non-protocol-enhanced personal armor, hailer armor provides maximum protection by the simple expedient of being thicker, tougher and heavier than any other armor. Hailers are almost always big and strong, capable of wearing even very bulky armor without being significantly impeded. Hailer armor enhances the hailer's sturdy appearance.

Hailer Bodyguard Armor

Hailers chosen to act as bodyguards for sorceresses are the elite of an already exclusive troop type within the Red Fleet. Accordingly, they have armor of even higher quality. Hailer bodyguard armor offers almost as much protection as ordinary hailer armor, but is significantly lighter. More importantly, it is a non-reflective dull gray and designed to minimize noise while maximizing freedom of movement. This allows the wearer to be considerably more stealthy and agile than if she wore ordinary hailer armor.

Officer Greatcoat

Senior Red Fleet officers (Major rank and above) receive protocol-enhanced greatcoats. Officer greatcoats have *autoshields protocol* (see **Chapter Five: Military-Industrial Sorcery** for details) of a power depending on the wearer's rank. They also incorporate experimental, low-power versions of the Crypsis Systems more commonly seen on U.R.R.S. vehicles, allowing the greatcoats to change color to match

their surrounding environment and granting the wearer a +2 equipment bonus to all Hide checks. Finally, they have limited temperature control, granting a +4 circumstance bonus to all Fortitude saving throws concerning extreme heat and cold (but not fire). Note that the Purchase DC is for a Major-rank officer greatcoat; higher-ranking greatcoats have progressively higher costs. In every case, the cost for the greatcoat is identical to the cost for the appropriate Autoshield Protocol Generator it comes with (see page 61). The other elements of the greatcoat are negligible in cost, compared to the cost of the autoshields.

Railsuit

The railsuit's main function is to propel the wearer at high speed along a skyfurnace (or other military-industrial edifice) by making use of the skyfurnace's internal rail grid. More about this use can be found in the section on railfighting (see **Chapter Three: To Fight and Die for the Motherland**). The railsuit is highly protective armor far less restrictive of movement than most. Its powerful exoskeletal legs provide a +4 equipment bonus to all Jump and Balance checks, canceling out the railsuit's armor penalty with respect to those skills.

Reactor ShIELDSUIT

This thickly layered suit provides a +4 bonus to Fortitude saves to resist environmental hazards of all kinds. It also provides its full damage reduction against energy-based attacks of all kinds, including fire, radiation, and electricity. Skyfurnace reactor crews always wear reactor shieldsuits to protect themselves against the deadly levels of heat and other hazards found in the reaction chambers of the mighty skyships of the Red Fleet.

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Red Trooper Armor

This is based on an armored vest of ballistic cloth, with an additional array of hard composite plates to provide melee combat protection to the arms, upper legs and torso. The plates are held together by a webbing structure and can easily be removed as a free action or put on as a full-round action (treat the remaining armor as a Bronja vest if the plates are removed).

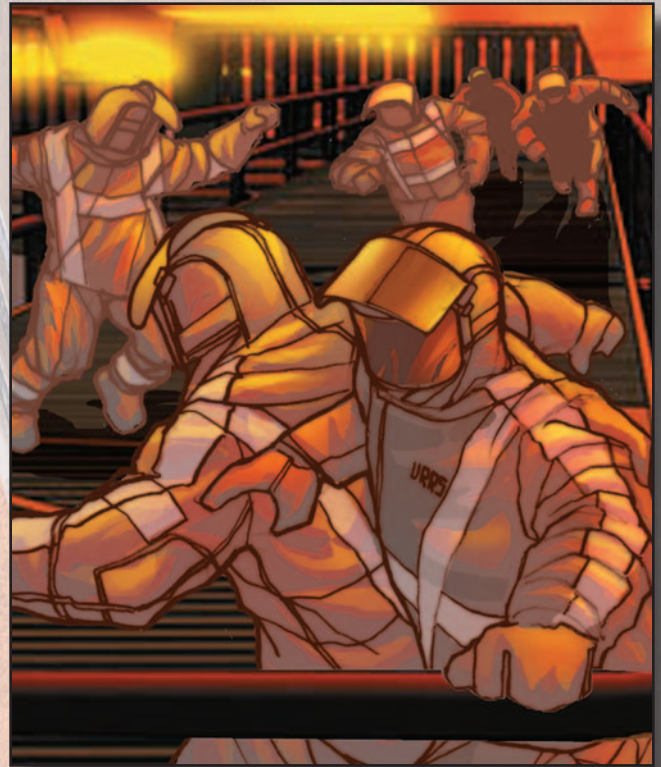
Steel Plates

These rigid ballistic plates may be added to any light armor, providing increased protection to the most vulnerable areas of the body. Two plates are included, one for the chest and one for the back. Light armor with steel plates inserted temporarily becomes medium armor. So long as the armor is not worn at the time, the two plates can be removed as a full-round action or inserted in 2d4 rounds. Although the W.T.A. and its allies use ceramic plates for such additional protection, the U.R.R.S. sticks to the tried-and-trusted technology of steel — the same steel with the same weight-reducing protocol enhancements as are used on many of its krawls and other armored vehicles.

STRIFE armor

The Strategic Tactical Reconnaissance & Infiltration Field Envelope (STRIFE) system is more than personal protection. With its reactive strobe-shield protocols, it can prevent an enemy missile or protocol attack from even reaching the armor itself, let alone the wearer within it.

Any time a heavy weapon attack or any non-scheduled protocol effect comes within 10 meters of an activated STRIFE unit, it deploys one of its reactive strobe-shield protocols. This provides a +12 deflection bonus to the wearer's Defense, a +12 bonus to all Reflex saves against area effect weapons, and a +12 bonus to all saving throws against protocol effects for one round. In addition, the powerful stroboscopic side-effect of the shield protocol causes any character who can trace a line of sight to the STRIFE armor (however far away) to make a DC 25 Reflex save or be blinded for 1d6 minutes, unless his or her eyes are shielded in some way.



STRIFE armor incorporates sufficient reactive protocols for six uses, but these may be recharged in the field by a quick radio call for sorcery support. STRIFE armor is equipped with full anti-glare shielding as part of its suite of protective functions, rendering the wearer immune to the stroboscopic shield and most other blinding effects. STRIFE also incorporates state-of-the-art sensory enhancement, including passive infrared vision, low-light vision, a thermographic sensor and an active hearing sensor (which additionally provides complete protection against hearing damage from loud noises and explosions).

STRIFE armor's outer surface incorporates a chameleon system which, when activated, completely negates the armor penalty to Hide checks and provides a further +4 bonus to all Hide checks. The chameleon system can be activated for up to 24 hours at a time before needing to be recharged; a further day in bright sunshine will achieve this.

A Note on Helmets

All of the armor presented above incorporates a protective helmet of some kind, whether the lightweight comms headgear worn by aircrew or the visored ballistic helmets used by infantry. In game terms, however, there is no penalty for not wearing a helmet. Characters in the comic tend to lose theirs (perhaps sometimes deliberately) once the action heats up, and it is very much in keeping with the art style and heroic genre of *The Red Star* for PCs to do the same. Quite simply, a Red trooper or hailer in full armor and other gear, minus the helmet, looks a lot cooler than a similar character rendered faceless by headgear.

The only disadvantage to losing one's helmet is an informational one; almost all Red Fleet helms have heads-up displays built-in, feeding detailed information about enemy forces, enemy protocol use and other vital battlefield information to the wearer, all thanks to the local Infokasters.

CHAPTER TWO: PERSONAL WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT

PROTOCOL-ENHANCED EQUIPMENT

Certain weapons, items of equipment, types of armor and special ammunition can be enhanced with the right protocols. These are included here, though rules for manufacturing them are given in **Chapter Five: Military-Industrial Sorcery**.

Usually only officers or special forces units have protocol enhancements available for their weaponry, although ammunition enhancements are more common. Availability of protocol enhancements is always at the GM's discretion, and depends on factors ranging from rank to importance of mission to one's ability to con the supply officer or make purchases through the black market. Generally, wealth checks and requisition checks can be made as usual, with appropriate modifiers, but the GM is always free to rule a particular enhancement to be completely unavailable from time to time. Equally, for some missions it may be entirely appropriate for the PCs' superior officers to issue them all with protocol enhanced weapons, protoclips, and whatever other fine gadgetry they can carry.

Weapon Enhancements

The basic protocol enhancement for any weapon is Damage Enhancement I. This increases the damage dealt by the weapon by +1 for every die of damage usually dealt. For weapons that always come with Damage Enhancement I, the bonuses are already figured into the damage listed in **Table 2-1: Ranged Weapons**.

Other enhancement protocols also exist. These are detailed below along with their nominal cost. The following protocols apply only to the personal weapons detailed in this chapter; the vehicular weapons listed in **Chapter Four: Red Fleet Vehicles** require their own protocol enhancements, which are identical to those listed here but have a Purchase DC +5 higher.

Note some of the weapons listed in **Table 2-1: Ranged Weapons** are inherently protocol-powered, or otherwise protocol-enhanced. These are detailed on a case-by-case basis in the weapon descriptions.

PROTOCOL UTILITY SMOKE GRENADES

Known affectionately as Pugs, these user-configurable smoke grenades are highly versatile. With a mental command from the thrower (as a free action), the grenade can alter the color and even shape of the smoke it emits. This can be used for signaling, target designation, concealment and anything else the user can think of. Pugs are identical to standard smoke grenades, but with a DC 15 Purchase per case of ten grenades.

Ammunition Enhancements

Many ammo clips, pouches and crates in *The Red Star Campaign Setting* are protocol-enhanced. This can allow for far greater quantities of ammunition to be carried than would otherwise be possible.

Example: An Artillery Unit is assigned a certain number of crates of shells. The quantity is approved by a deck kaster, who then orders the supply kaster, who uses a crate supply protocol to "designate" these shells as accessible through the crates that will be taken into the field by the Artillery Unit, effectively multiplying the capacity of the field gun without multiplying the Unit's carry weight.

Ammo Pouch

Protocol-enhanced ammo pouches automatically pull new magazines into them from a sorcery linked ammo reserve. When the soldier pulls his or her magazine, the pouch it was

Table 2-7: Weapon Enhancements

Protocol Enhancement	Purchase DC	Restriction	Benefit
Damage Enhancement I	25	Mil (+3)	Damage increases by +1 per damage die
Damage Enhancement II	30	Mil (+3)	Damage increases by +2 per damage die
Damage Enhancement III	35	Mil (+3)	Damage increases by +3 per damage die
Armor Piercing I	30	Mil (+3)	Weapon gains the armor piercing quality
Armor Piercing II	35	Mil (+3)	Weapon gains the armor piercing quality, but its targets' damage reduction is divided by three against it (round down) rather than halved
Protocol Piercing I	27	Mil (+3)	(Available for ammunition only, and bought by the bullet.) On a natural roll of 16-20, this bullet bypasses the target's autoshields, if any. Further more, this bullet deals double damage to all autoshields if it does not bypass them
Protocol Piercing II	35	Mil (+3)	(Available for ammunition only, and bought by the bullet.) This bullet bypasses all autoshields

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Table 2-8: Ammunition Supply Enhancements

Ammunition Supply	Benefit Enhancement	Range	Wealth	Restriction DC
Ammo pouch	Refills with new, identical clip as soon as one is removed	10 km	25	Mil (+3)
Crate, 50 kg ammo content	Crate weighs only 5 kg	100 km	20	Mil (+3)
Crate, 100 kg ammo content	Crate weighs only 10 kg	100 km	25	Mil (+3)
Crate, 150 kg ammo content	Crate weighs only 15 kg	100 km	30	Mil (+3)
Protoclip, double	Double ammunition capacity	—	20	Mil (+3)
Protoclip, triple	Triple ammunition capacity	—	25	Mil (+3)
Protoclip quadruple	Quadruple ammunition capacity	—	30	Mil (+3)

pulled from refills if the soldier is in range of such support. There is no limit to the number of times this can be done. Each ammo pouch can hold up to three 50-bullet magazines, or a larger number of smaller magazines.

CRATE

The crates are a long distance solution. Based on the same principle as the ammo pouch, they are a one-use item. The ammo assigned to them can be accessed at far longer ranges than the clips and pouches. The protocol is kast as part of an attack plan.

PROTOCLIP

A protoclip is a magazine capable of holding double, triple, or even quadruple the normal capacity of rounds at no extra weight. In effect, space and mass are distorted within the protoclip. Protoclips may not be refilled manually except by sorceress engineers. Note the Wealth DCs of protoclips do not include the cost of the ammunition, which must be arranged separately. Hailer ammo is also usually enhanced in this way, with the protocol-enhanced backpacks being known as protopacks (see page 50).

ARMOR ENHANCEMENTS

A variety of protocol enhancements can be kast or generated by specially engineered suits of armor. The officer greatcoat (see page 58) already has several protocol enhancements that come as standard issue, but other armor can also be enhanced.

AUTOSHIELDS

The best-known autoshield protocol generators are mounted on the Red Fleet's officer greatcoats but they can be added to any armor. An autoshield protocol generator (APG) creates a force-field of protocol energy around the wearer on her mental command. Each garment or armor incorporating an APG is protocol-tailored to the intended wearer, who gets a specific mental command word via a protocol kast directly into his or her brain, much like the hailer protocol allowing hailers to mentally reconfigure their guns.

Activating or deactivating the APG is a free action that can be performed at any time, so long as the wearer is not flat-footed.

An autoshield has a number of hit points protecting the wearer against all Ballistic, Concussion, and ranged Slashing damage. It does not protect against melee damage or any kind of ranged Piercing or Bludgeoning damage. Any damage of the appropriate type that would injure the wearer is deducted first from the autoshield's hit points.

Damage comes off the autoshields before applying the effects of damage reduction from armor. Ultra-heavy autoshields have their own damage reduction, reducing any damage affecting the autoshield's hit points, but is only effective when the shield is active.

The autoshield's hit points are also reduced by 1 hp per round when activated. Autoshields reduced to 0 hp are not destroyed, but are temporarily rendered inactive (switched off). An APG regenerates lost autoshield hit points at a rate of 1 hp per round after the autoshield is switched off.

Table 2-9: Autoshields

Name	Hit Points Reduction	Damage DC	Purchase	Officer Greatcoat Rank
Light Autoshield	100	—	25	Major
Medium Autoshield	125	—	27	Lieutenant-Colonel
Heavy Autoshield	150	—	30	Colonel, Major-General
Ultra-Heavy Autoshield I	150	4	35	Lieutenant-General, Colonel-General
Ultra-Heavy Autoshield II	150	8	40	General
Ultra-Heavy Autoshield III	150	12	45	Marshall, Senior Marshall
Ultra-Heavy Autoshield IV	150	16	50	Marshall of the Red Star

CHAPTER TWO: Personal Weapons and Equipment

Autoshields, being configured to the wearer's own mind, cannot usually be activated by anyone else, even if another character acquires them somehow. One method of disabling that configuration is *alter protocol*. See **Chapter Five: Military-Industrial Sorcery** for details on *alter protocol*

PROTOCOL-Enhanced Equipment

CLOTHING

Various protocols may be incorporated into clothing. Most commonly this is high-end kit, such as enhancements to the Officer Greatcoats listed on page 58, but even the Nokgorkan resistance fighters sometimes have protocol-enhanced gear provided by their priestesses. For example, in *Run Makita Run*, Makita's hat and coat have some temperature control and stealth enhancements that still function despite the obviously tattered nature of her clothes.

Generally, clothing gives a maximum equipment bonus as follows: +4 to Fortitude saves relating to extremes of heat and cold, +10 to Hide checks, and/or +4 to Move Silently checks. Each +1 bonus adds +1 to the Purchase DC of the garment, with the minimum Purchase DC before additions being 14. For example, Makita's clothing grants a +1 equipment bonus to Fortitude saves against extreme temperatures, +2 equipment bonus to Hide checks and +2 equipment bonus to Move Silently checks, for a total Purchase DC of 19 (14 + 1 + 2 + 2). Armor granting a bonus to Hide checks uses the same type of protocol enhancement as Crypsis systems camouflage paint for vehicles (see page 83).

TOOLS

Most tools and items of professional equipment are available with a protocol enhancement. This increases the Purchase DC by +2 or to 16, whichever is higher, but grants a +2 bonus to all relevant skill checks.

SORCERESS and TELEKINETIC Equipment

SORCERESS Equipment

PROTOCOL Component Case

This is a briefcase-sized box, heavily protected by both protocols and mundane lightweight armor plate to be virtually indestructible by either sorcery or shell (damage reduction 6, sorcery resistance +8). It contains enough heavily padded space for up to 3 kg of protocol components, and accessible by a character holding it as a free action. All Red Fleet sorceresses are assigned a case as soon as they graduate.

PROTOCOL Enhancement Station

This field installation eases the kasting of *jumpgate transfer protocols*, *gate transfer protocols*, and *supply protocols* (see **Chapter Five: Military-Industrial Sorcery**) into the area within its range, thereby strengthening lines of supply. Sorceresses kasting any of the aforementioned protocols within range receive a +4 equipment bonus to the appropriate Kast checks, raised to +8 if both the location sent from and

the location sent to are within range of Protocol Enhancement Stations. The smaller stations are often set up by special forces teams in advances of broader troop movements.

TELEKINESIS-Neutral Objects

Certain items such as hooks and Sha-Osk pins are telekinesis-neutral; that is, they may be manipulated with the Telekinesis skill far easier than other items of a comparable size and weight. Most objects require a great deal of mental effort and concentration to shift telekinetically, but telekinesis-neutral objects have been manufactured from materials treated with special protocols to reduce their "telekinetic inertia" to virtually nothing.

A telekinesis-neutral version of any item of equipment imposes a +3 increase to the Purchase DC. Hooks, Sha-Osk pins, and the ammunition for telekinetic firearms are already appropriately treated, and the increased cost is reflected in the Purchase DCs for such items.

Note that it is impossible to modify an object to become telekinesis-neutral after its manufacture.

Table 2-10: Sorceress Equipment

Sorceress Equipment	Purchase DC	Weight	Notes
Protocol Component Case	10	0.5 kg	Holds 3 kg of protocol components
Protocol Enhancement Station, Portable	15	10 kg	Enhances appropriate protocols that are either sent from, or arrive at, a location within 10 meters
Protocol Enhancement Station, Outpost	20	500 kg	Enhances appropriate protocols that are either sent from, or arrive at, a location within 500 meters
Protocol Enhancement Station, Headquarters	—	10,000 kg	Enhances appropriate protocols that are either sent from, or arrive at, a location within 10 kilometers

CHAPTER TWO: Personal Weapons and Equipment

Other Equipment

Most items from the General Equipment list in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* can be acquired in the world of *The Red Star Campaign Setting*, though the GM is at liberty to restrict any items that do not fit his interpretation of this world.

Drop Line Harnesses

A drop line harness is a high-tech climbing, abseiling and grappling harness. It comes with a variety of high-strength cable-ropes, each capable of carrying 1,000 kg of weight if need be. These can be pre-set to drop a set distance then arrest the user's fall safely, allowing very precise and carefully controlled abseiling. A variety of end-mounts are available for the drop lines, including powerful electromagnets, hydraulic grippers that fit inside crevices, and titanium alloy grappling claws that can find a hold even on an armored vehicle's surface. A drop line harness provides a +2 equipment bonus to all Climb checks (enabling the type of anti-krawl tricks used by Makita in *Run Makita Run*), has a Purchase DC of 12, and weighs just 5 kg. A protocol-enhanced version is also available (see **Protocol-Enhanced Tools**, on page 62).

Hook Accessories

In addition to the weapon, compass, sundial, splint and cooking spit options for the standard hook, a hook can have special options or configurations to suit the Red Fleet's operational needs. The following table shows pieces of equipment that can be added to the basic hook, as well as their cost and weight. Unless otherwise noted, the items of equipment are identical in function to their equivalents in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*, except they may only be used when attached to a hook.

Monocular (various)

Though configured for use by one eye to reduce weight

and cost, these are otherwise identical to the equivalent binoculars. The only exception is the night vision monocular, which is identical to night vision goggles (and thus does not provide the benefits of binoculars).

Zero Options

This special hook add-on has ultra-compact versions of the following tools: vice-wrench, crowbar, welder and chainsaw. Zeroes carry it for use in destroying materiel. A character using these tools can deal 3d6 points of damage per round to any vehicle or other inanimate object, so long as he or she is undisturbed. If outside the vehicle, the character will need to first spend one round per 20 points of damage reduction or part thereof cutting through the outer layers of the armor, before beginning to deal 3d6 damage per round to the object's hit points.

Mashurs

The mashur is a veil, originally worn by the Nistaani warriors to keep the sand out of their eyes. Even in ancient times, however, it had another use, when the Sha-Osk pins became commonplace on the battlefields of Al'Istaan. A Nistaani discovered that by using a slightly heavier weave of cloth for the mashur, it could to provide a defense against Sha-Osk attacks.

In any case, the practice became widespread throughout Nistaani society. Today many mashurs are sorcery-enhanced or contain highly sophisticated electronic systems, allowing them to perform a variety of informational, sensory enhancement and communications functions in addition to protecting the face.

As a general note, mashurs are only available in Al'Istaan. The design of mashurs is very regionally distinct, and a Nistaani can typically tell (Spot check, DC 15) the age and place of manufacture of a mashur.

Table 2-11: Hook Accessories

Object	Weight	Purchase DC
Bolt cutter	1.5 kg	4
Fire extinguisher	1 kg	8
Monocular, standard	0.5 kg	6
Monocular, night vision	0.5 kg	16
Monocular, rangefinding	0.5 kg	13
Monocular, electro-optical	1 kg	17
Zero options	4 kg	15

Table 2-12: Mashurs

Object	Benefit	Weight	Purchase DC
Mashur, combat	+4 deflection bonus vs. Sha-Osk pins only	0.25 kg	2
+ radio communicator	As basic walkie-talkie	+0.25 kg	8
+ military communicator	As professional walkie-talkie	+0.25 kg	16
+ night vision enhancement	As night vision goggles	+1 kg	18
+ flash protection	As flash protection goggles	+0.5 kg	16
+targeting sorcery	+1 circumstance bonus to all ranged attacks	+0.25 kg	22





**SECTION II:
THE MILITARY
INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX**

CHAPTER THREE: TO FIGHT AND DIE FOR THE MOTHERLAND

Red troopers fought for the Motherland since long before there was a United Republics of the Red Star, when they were not even Red troopers — just peasants and workers battling to defend their handful of earth against rival tribes, or against the Bleak Horsemen, or against the tyranny of the Ancient Dynasties. More than at any other time in their history, though, they fought against the Volksreich in the Great Patriotic War — and died under Volksreich guns and lightning storms.

Westerners scoff at U.R.R.S. participation in the Great Patriotic War, hinting the Red Fleet's only contribution was as cannon fodder to occupy the forces of the enemy, that Imbohl and his generals simply threw their troops carelessly into the breach. It is true the soldiers of the Fleet paid the highest price of any nation, evidenced by the war graveyards so massive they require their own rail systems. Yet what Western analysts tend to see as a futile waste of lives, a patriotic soldier of the Fleet might have felt was a necessary sacrifice. Those who did not serve in the Fleet in the days of its glorious, unshakeable self-confidence simply cannot comprehend the fervor of its troopers, often simple farm boys before they signed up to defend their homes. They willingly gave their lives when necessary, dying in their millions to turn back Krieger's tide of evil.

In truth, too, their sacrifice was not in vain, nor was it lacking in military insight. Imbohl's generals were prepared to sacrifice the lives of their soldiers, but only when crucial from a military perspective. Their grasp of the strategy and tactics of large-scale krawl, skyfurnace and protocol warfare was unmatched by the end of the war, and the courage and dedication of their troops was similarly peerless.

The lessons learned in those dark days shaped U.R.R.S. military doctrine to the present. The first, and most important, was "Not One Step Backward!" This was the motto of the Red Fleet during the Great Patriotic War. Imbohl demanded absolute determination on the part of every member of his army. Red troopers, more than once, shot at other retreating Red troopers with warning shots—at least to begin with—to serve as reminder of this dictum. Were the Lands of the Red Star ever attacked again from without, this motto would doubtless serve them in good stead once more. Unfortunately, it is less applicable to a nation on the attack, and if any lives were truly wasted rather than sacrificed in the Great Patriotic War, a far higher proportion of the dead in the Al'Istaan War died for no reason.

Still, a military doctrine is a military doctrine. The contemporary leaders of the Red Fleet — perhaps less capable than those of the Patriotic War, perhaps just less daring — continue to fight as though they battled Krieger's vast conventional armies

instead of guerrilla warriors fighting for their freedom from U.R.R.S. oppression. Thus, massed bombardments from skyfurnaces, huge krawl advances, artillery support and other large-scale warfare is practiced even against foes who will not stand and fight, but destroy by subtlety, guerrilla warfare, and spells of unprecedented power.

Nonlethal Damage

Nonlethal damage works somewhat differently in the world of *The Red Star*. Most characters do not get knocked out with one punch, however powerful — unless they've already been kasting a lot of protocols.

Dealing Nonlethal Damage

Certain attacks deal nonlethal damage. Other effects, such as heat or being exhausted, may also deal nonlethal damage.

When you take nonlethal damage, keep a running total of how much you've accumulated. *Do not deduct the nonlethal damage number from your current hit points.* It is not "real" damage. Instead, when your nonlethal damage equals your current hit points, you're staggered; when it exceeds your current hit points, you fall unconscious.

Nonlethal Damage with a Weapon that Deals Lethal Damage: You can use a melee weapon that deals lethal damage to inflict nonlethal damage instead, but you take a -4 penalty on your attack roll.

Lethal Damage with a Weapon that Deals Nonlethal Damage: You can use a weapon that deals nonlethal damage to deal lethal damage instead, including using an unarmed strike, but you take a -4 penalty on your attack roll.

Staggered and Unconscious

When your nonlethal damage equals your current hit points, you're staggered. You can only take a standard action or a move action in each round. You cease being staggered when your current hit points once again exceed your nonlethal damage. When your nonlethal damage exceeds your current hit points, you fall unconscious. While unconscious, you are helpless.

Healing Nonlethal Damage

You heal nonlethal damage at the rate of 1 hit point per hour per character level. When a protocol or other effect cures hit point damage, it also removes an equal amount of nonlethal damage.

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CHAPTER THREE: TO FIGHT AND DIE FOR THE MOTHERLAND



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Table 3-1: Carrying Capacity

Strength	Light Load	Medium Load	Heavy Load
1	up to 1 kg	2–3 kg	4–5 kg
2	up to 3 kg	4–6 kg	7–9 kg
3	up to 4 kg	5–9 kg	10–14 kg
4	up to 6 kg	7–12 kg	13–18 kg
5	up to 7 kg	8–15 kg	15–23 kg
6	up to 9 kg	10–18 kg	19–27 kg
7	up to 10 kg	11–21 kg	22–32 kg
8	up to 12 kg	13–24 kg	25–36 kg
9	up to 14 kg	15–28 kg	29–42 kg
10	up to 15 kg	15–30 kg	31–45 kg
11	up to 17 kg	18–34 kg	35–51 kg
12	up to 20 kg	21–40 kg	41–60 kg
13	up to 23 kg	24–46 kg	47–69 kg
14	up to 26 kg	27–52 kg	53–78 kg
15	up to 30 kg	31–60 kg	61–102 kg
17	up to 38 kg	39–76 kg	77–114 kg
18	up to 45 kg	46–90 kg	91–135 kg
19	up to 53 kg	54–106 kg	107–159 kg
20	up to 60 kg	61–120 kg	121–180 kg
21	up to 70 kg	71–140 kg	141–210 kg
22	up to 80 kg	81–160 kg	161–240 kg
23	up to 91 kg	92–182 kg	183–273 kg
24	up to 106 kg	107–212 kg	213–318 kg
25	up to 121 kg	122–242 kg	243–363 kg
26	up to 139 kg	140–278 kg	279–417 kg
27	up to 157 kg	158–314 kg	315–471 kg
28	up to 182 kg	183–364 kg	365–546 kg
29	up to 212 kg	213–424 kg	425–636 kg
+10	x4	x4	x4

Table 3-2: Encumbered Speeds

Previous Speed	Current Speed
8m	6m
10m	8m
12m	10m
14m	12m

Heavily Encumbered Speeds

8m	4m
10m	6m
12m	6m
14m	8m

Table 3-3: Hampered Movement

Condition	Additional Movement Cost
Difficult terrain	x2
Obstacle ¹	x2
Poor visibility	x2
Impassable	—

¹ May require a skill check

Unusual Terrains

When the Red Fleet was first formed, the worst obstacle the krawls and infantry had to slog through was occasional knee-deep mud. The Isle of Lions and the W.T.A. supplied some of the first U.R.R.S. krawls to help counter the threat of the Volksreich, but these were designed for desert environments, and unable to cope with clogged tracks. Still, the enemy was as disadvantaged by the terrain as the Fleet were, so it was of little concern. Today, however, the valiant soldiers of the U.R.R.S. often seem to be battling foes capable of using the local terrain — be it desert or ruined buildings — to their own advantage with guerrilla warfare.

Hampered Movement

Difficult terrain (including most deserts, hills and mountains, jungles and dense forests, and tundra), obstacles (commonly encountered in ruined cities), or poor visibility can hamper movement. When movement is hampered, each 2-meter square counts as two squares, effectively reducing the distance a character can cover with a move action. If more than one condition applies, multiply together all additional

costs that apply. (This is a specific exception to the normal rule for doubling.)

In some situations, your movement may be so hampered you don't have sufficient speed even to move 2 meters (1 square). In such a case, you may use a full-round action to move 2 meters (1 square) in any direction, even diagonally. Even though this looks like a 2-meter step, it's not, and thus provokes attacks of opportunity normally. (You can't take advantage of this rule to move through impassable terrain or to move when all movement is prohibited to you.) You can't run or charge through any square that would hamper your movement.

Railfighting and the Combat Grid

All skyfurnaces have an interior Railsystem, consisting mostly of the "Combat Grid" or simply "the Grid."

A character traveling and fighting on the endless rails of the Combat Grid must wearing a railsuit (see **Chapter Two: Personal Weapons and Equipment** for details). The many prongs of the railsuit are protocol-engineered to catch and ride rails. A character in a railsuit can propel herself along a Combat Grid at incredibly high speed, leaping from rail to rail (typically with a Jump check — DC 15 to DC 20). He or she does not need to ride the rails standing up, but can hang, slide, roll or drag, using the many sets of attachments the railsuit supplies. This allows for a full use of any dodge bonuses, as well as maneuvers such as flanking, grappling, and so forth.

CHAPTER THREE: TO FIGHT AND DIE FOR THE MOTHERLAND

Scale, Distance, and Weight

The *Red Star Campaign Setting* uses the metric system. The 5-foot squares of *d20 Modern* are replaced by 2-meter squares. All rules that would usually apply to 5-foot squares instead apply to 2-meter squares.

Weights are also given in the metric system, so revised Carrying Capacity and Encumbrance tables are used. As a guide, one kilogram is equal to 2.2 pounds. For converting equipment from the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*, divide the listed weight by 2.2 and round to the nearest half or quarter kilo, according to preference and common sense.

The railsuit draws power from the Grid, allowing for speeds of up to 200 meters rather than the character's usual speed. For long distance trips, they can actually lie down and let the railsuit do the work.

It is possible to isolate the Combat Grid by closing a series of massive bulkheads known collectively as "The Vault." This is sometimes done to hinder a Zero or enemy infiltrator's attempts to move freely from one target to another.

Not all Combat Grids are on a skyfurnace. Industrial plants of all kinds, defensive installations, and underground fortresses all use railsystems and combat grids, as well as anywhere else where fast transit is required. Railsystems are not only meant for combat but for basic transportation, so cargo and passenger freighters, railbikes, gun platforms and other kinds of vehicles may also move along the world's many railgrids.

Indirect Fire

Certain weapons are capable of indirect fire. When firing indirectly, a wielder points the weapon upwards launching the shell into the sky, hopefully to land on or near the target. This method of attack is considerably less accurate than direct fire, at least on the initial shots, but the more shots aimed at the same location, the more accurate it tends to become.

An indirect fire attack is always made at a specific 2-meter square, rather than directly against an opponent. All the rules for thrown explosives apply (see the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*), except indirect fire attacks may never be made



in the first range increment. A penalty of -10 is applied to all indirect fire shots, and all range penalties apply as usual.

A miss when an attack is made from between 6 and 10 range increments uses the middle portion of the thrown explosive deviation diagram to determine direction, but the shell deviates by 1d6+3 2-meter squares, rather than 2 2-meter squares. A miss at 11 to 15 range increments deviates by 2d10+3 2-meter squares, and a miss at 16 to 20 range increments (the maximum) by 3d20+3 2-meter squares.

Each shot thereafter at the same square gains a cumulative +1 ranging bonus; by the 11th shot at the same square, the penalty is cancelled out (-10, +10) and by the 12th shot the indirect fire actually starts to get more accurate than direct fire, as the gunner zeroes in on a precise point. If the gunner ever gets a direct hit on a square, he or she gains a +4 to all

subsequent attack rolls on the same square (in effect, the same firing settings may be retained, though minor changes in the wind and weather mean that absolute precision is impossible). A gunner who changes targets and aims at a new square loses all accumulated bonuses.

Table 3-4: Indirect Fire Modifiers and Effects

Modifier

All indirect fire
Each shot after the first
Previous direct hit
Miss at 2-3 range increments
Miss at 4-5 range increments
Miss at 6-10 range increments
Miss at 11-15 range increments
Miss at 16-20 range increments

Effect

-10 modifier
Cumulative +1 modifier
+4 modifier
Deviation by 1 2-meter square
Deviation by 2 2-meter squares
Deviation by 1d6+3 2-meter squares
Deviation by 2d10+3 2-meter squares
Deviation by 3d20+3 2-meter squares

CHAPTER FOUR: RED FLEET VEHICLES

As the Red Star Campaign Setting is principally a Modern Setting, characters can expect to find all manner of contemporary civilian vehicles as described in the d20 Modern Roleplaying Game, from subcompact cars to passenger aircraft. However, this world is an alternate history, with many similarities, but many differences as well. There shouldn't be a Ford Motors, GMC, or AMC for that matter. Instead, try to come up with names that evoke a connection, being similar, but without an overtly obvious connection.

Vehicle Overview

The following new vehicles are available to both characters in the Red Fleet and many of their opponents (who tend to use scrounged or captured U.R.R.S. vehicles themselves). Note the civilian vehicles already listed in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* may be used without modification in *The Red Star Campaign Setting*, but all military vehicles are replaced by the ones given in this chapter.

Four new entries can be found on **Table 4-2: Military Vehicles**. These are Weight, Hardpoints, Weapons, and Extras, and are explained below. Also, the Cargo and Passengers entries are slightly different from their *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* equivalents.

Cargo\ Passengers

All the military vehicles in *The Red Star Campaign Setting* are re-configurable to a greater or lesser extent. In almost all cases, however, their passenger accommodation is considerably more basic than is a Western luxury vehicle or even troop transport, often consisting of no more than a simple collapsible metal bench for a number of passengers. For this reason, any amount of cargo space can be swapped out for passenger space, or vice versa, at a ratio of 100 kg to 1 passenger.

Weight

This entry gives the vehicle's weight in tons. One ton equals 1000 kg. The weight of a vehicle determines how much of another vehicle's cargo capacity it takes up as cargo.

Hardpoints

A hardpoint is a potential mount for a military weapon. Some of the more powerful weapons require more than one hardpoint, and some take up cargo space. Two figures are given for this category, the second in brackets. The first figure is the total number of hardpoints available on the vehicle before any weapons are fitted. The second figure is the number remaining after the vehicle's standard loadout of weapons has been fitted. **Table 4-3: Vehicular Weapons** gives the number of hardpoints each vehicular weapon takes up.

Weapons

The vehicle's usual array of weapons is listed here. If a vehicle mounts more than one weapon of a particular type, the number is listed in brackets.

Extras

Any Vehicle Options (see page 83) this vehicle is fitted with as a factory standard are noted here.

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Air Vehicles

Overstriker

This is akin to a destroyer escort for skyfurnaces. Certain wealthy commercial combines also have similar vessels to use as cargo carriers, or even pleasure ships. In the Red Fleet, overstriker are typically assigned in groups of four to six as escorts for skyfurnaces.

Skybarge

Scarcely larger than a modern overstriker, this is an older model skyfurnace from the years after the Great Patriotic War and throughout the rest of the century. Some still see

service in supply roles or in the militaries of smaller or less advanced countries. A skybarge is potentially a terrifying sight to infantry and other ground forces, but is no threat to a true skyfurnace.

Skyfurnace

Originally designed by Sergei Koralev, the skyfurnace is a heavily armored warship used for the rapid deployment of infantry and certain military vehicles, as well as supporting siege operations. Though an airship, it never actually lands. Massive towers with skyscraper-height installations built to accommodate skyfurnaces serve to resupply these warships. There are also floating permanent bases; these are favored

CHAPTER FOUR: Red Fleet Vehicles



CHAPTER FOUR: RED FLEET VEHICLES

Named Skyfurnaces

The named skyfurnaces presented here have all been modified according to the rules above on skyfurnace enhancements and options. Any statistic not listed here is assumed to be identical to that of a standard skyfurnace.

Pirin

Cargo Capacity: 110,000 tons

Damage Reduction: 62

Hit Points: 1700

Speed: 150 (15)

Weaponry: 48 isolator tunnels, 6 main ventral blast furnace coils, 20 Markov truss cannons, 1 000 heavy DSHK deck guns, 87 BHX Rykov hook missiles, 132 KGT Sickle drop missiles, and 112 medium Shadow anti-aircraft missiles

Hardpoints: 1450 (29)

Konstantinov

Cargo Capacity: 100,000 tons

Damage Reduction: 70

Hit Points: 1,500

Speed: 150 (15)

Weaponry: 48 isolator tunnels, 6 main ventral blast furnace coils, 26 Markov truss cannons, 1,000 heavy DSHK deck guns, 106 BHX Rykov hook missiles, 132 KGT Sickle drop missiles, 112 medium Shadow anti-aircraft missiles, 20 Katyushas (1000mm)

Hardpoints: 1,550 (0)

Solaris

Cargo Capacity: 108,000 tons

Damage Reduction: 60

Hit Points: 1,500

Speed: 180 (18)

Weaponry: 48 isolator tunnels, 6 main ventral blast furnace coils, 20 Markov truss cannons, 1 000 heavy DSHK deck guns, 87 BHX Rykov hook missiles, 132 KGT Sickle drop missiles, and 112 medium Shadow anti-aircraft missiles

Hardpoints: 1450 (29)

Taktarov

Cargo Capacity: 100,000 tons

Damage Reduction: 60

Hit Points: 1,500

Speed: 150 (15)

Weaponry: 48 isolator tunnels, 6 main ventral blast furnace coils, 36 Markov truss cannons, 1,100 heavy DSHK deck guns, 94 BHX Rykov hook missiles, 136 KGT Sickle drop missiles, and 121 medium Shadow anti-aircraft missiles

Hardpoints: 1650 (0)

by the Western Transnationalists for their own skyfurnaces, since they've have the resources to build them.

Named skyfurnaces include: *Firin*, known for her durability; *Konstantinov*, the flagship, known for her armor but also with excellent firepower; *Solaris*, known for her speed (she survived the Battle of Kar Dathra's Gate by an emergency ascent, dropping her ventral array); and *Taktarov*, known for her firepower. Twelve furnaces were lost in the Battle of Kar Dathra's Gate in Al'Istaan, including the *Aurora*, *Beria*, *Kaganovich*, *Vyshinsky*, and *Yagoda*.

Crew and Staff

The command crew for a skyfurnace typically consists of the following, starting at the top of the chain of command: Skymarshall (commander), Chief Engineer, Chief Protocol Engineer, Chief of Security, Head Deck Kaster, Head Medical Officer, Infantry Commander, Krawl Drop Commander, Markov Cannon Commander, ZIK Elite Squadron Leader. The total crew and passenger complement varies depending on the ship and mission; it can range anywhere between 10,000 and 25,000. It usually includes Red troopers, warkasters and hailer guardsmen, with quarters and provisions. Most of the actual crew members required to fly a skyfurnace and operate its weaponry are Red Fleet Officers, zeks, and deck kasters. Officers must spend six years at the Academy before graduating to skyfurnace duty.

The Zero

Of special note among the crew are Zeros elite Red assassins. All Red Fleet skyfurnaces have secret political officers on board, who are always ready to crush a mutiny if necessary. These are known as Zeroes.

In *The Red Star, Volume 2, #2*, Volkov was able to invoke a special order that sent his own Zero to infiltrate the *Konstantinov* and try to crush the uprising (Urik had already taken care of his Zero during the mutiny). They are named "Zeros" because nobody knows their identities, even other Zeroes. They are trained in locked leather masks with which they are forbidden to tamper. Zeros are the deadliest, most ruthless soldiers at the disposal of Central Command.

In the Zero's repertoire of attacks is the ability to take down an entire skyfurnace using specially built demolitions charges placed at key junctures within the superstructure of the vessel. They wear railsuits to permit full use of the Combat Grid for their activities, and carry specially modified hooks configured with a wide range of demolition tools.

Controlling a Skyfurnace

A skyfurnace is usually piloted by the Head Deck Kaster, assisted — or if need be, replaced — by a small crew of senior deck kasters. Only deck kasters have the necessary powers and sensitivity to take full advantage of a skyfurnace's capabilities. A skyfurnace that goes out of control (often as a result of a failed *jumpgate transfer protocol*, but also sometimes due to battle damage or for other reasons) goes into a tumble, with the severity dependent on the amount by which the Pilot check was failed. See **Table 4-1: Skyfurnace Tumbles** for more information.

CHAPTER FOUR: Red Fleet Vehicles

SKYFURNACE NOMENCLATURE NOTE

Most skyfurnaces are named after prominent people from the real-world Russian Revolution and its downfall after the Bolshevik takeover. Skyships in the service of the antagonists are named after villainous figures from this history, whereas protagonist vehicles are named after historical heroes; the *Konstantinov*, for example, is named after the middle name of Marshal Konstantinovich Zhukov, the commander responsible for holding back the Nazis in WWII. The following are some suggested skyfurnace names for your own campaigns, if you do not choose to use the already-named vessels.

Protagonists: Glazunov, Khristenko, Loza, Skornov, Zemska

Antagonists: Beria, Brezhnev, Kaganovich, Kirov, Molotov, Orlov

PHYSICAL STRUCTURE

The total length of a skyfurnace varies slightly by skyfurnace, though two to three kilometers is typical. Weight is around 300,000 tons. Each skyfurnace is divided into a complex system of sectors and subsectors, usually named by a letter for the sector and a number for the subsection within that. For example, Subsector B8 would be the 8th subsector in B Sector.

Vertically, each skyfurnace is also divided into eight decks named for the first eight letters of the Greek Alphabet: Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, Epsilon, Zeta, Eta, and Theta Decks. Each deck is far taller than a single level, since most decks must contain vast apparatus or subsidiary vehicles, such as krawl columns.

BLAST CHAMBERS

These cavernous chambers are vital to the skyfurnace's most powerful attack mode — full ventral immolation. A reactor crew mans each blast chamber. More information on blast chambers and their use can be found on page 82.

CORRECTIVE ENGINES

These small rocket thrusters are found in a number of places over the skyfurnace's exterior, pointing in several different

directions. They are used for attitude adjustments, such as evasive action as a skyfurnace is capable of (which is not a great deal), and dealing with turbulence, among other things.

GATE CHAMBERS

The supply kasters of the Kasting Deck (see below) make use of gate chambers to make kasting *gate transfer protocols* with greater ease. A sorceress can take a day to “attune” to all the gate chambers on a particular skyfurnace she is aboard, allowing her to make full use of the increased range offered by these chambers when *gating* to them.

KASTING DECK

The central deck of any skyfurnace is the Kasting Deck, typically the workplace of some 500 to 800 deck kasters along with a mix of around 600 to 1,000 warkasters, supply kasters, medikasters, sorceress engineers and infokasters. The kasting deck includes a number of gate chambers. This is where a *jumpgate transfer protocol* will be kasted from, if a skyfurnace is to be transported to a new battleground.

Almost every aspect of skyfurnace flight and combat is controlled and powered here, by rank upon rank of deck kasters. Most provide their personal sorcerous energies directly, so vast numbers of *shield reinforce protocols* can

Table 4-1: Skyfurnace Tumbles

Control Roll Failed By	Result
1–5	Class I Tumble. The skyfurnace spins off to one side in a movement that resembles the skid of an earthbound vehicle. No height is lost, but all weapons fire from the skyfurnace is at a –2 penalty for the duration of the spin. A new DC 10 Pilot check may be made as a full action, with success indicating that the tumble ends.
6–10	Class II Tumble. As Class I tumble, but the penalty is –4 and the Pilot check DC is 15.
11–15	Class III Tumble. As Class I tumble, but the penalty is –6 and the Pilot check DC is 20.
16–20	Class IV Tumble. As Class I tumble, but the penalty is –8 and the Pilot check DC is 25. Furthermore, there is a slight vertical component to the tumble. The skyfurnace loses 1d4 x 100 meters of altitude per round of the tumble, and all crew not strapped down must make DC 15 Reflex saves each round or be dealt 1d6 damage.
21 or higher	Class V Tumble. The skyfurnace tumbles end over end, plummeting towards the ground. No weapons fire is possible from the vessel until it is brought back under control (DC 30 Pilot check as a full action). Each round it tumbles, the craft loses 3d6 x 100 meters of altitude; and all crew not strapped down must make DC 20 Reflex saves or be dealt 2d6 damage.

CHAPTER FOUR: Red Fleet Vehicles



be cast during a battle as necessary, or a number of deck kasters can divert their attentions to providing support for the kasting of a *jumpgate transfer protocol*.

Quarterdeck

Skyships from the Isle of Lions have a small additional deck above the top deck on the rear quarter of the vessel, called the quarterdeck. Most of the high-ranking officers, including the Commander, are expected to stand on the quarterdeck during combat, exposing themselves to the worst of enemy fire, as a demonstration of their faith in their own battle plans and a nod to the nautical traditions of the Isle. Full command and communications apparatus are thus installed on the quarterdeck. Other countries do not include a quarterdeck on their skyships.

Siege Locks

These extendable bridges are used for grappling or boarding. A siege lock can extend out from nothing up to 200 meters in one round, locking on to anything it comes into contact with at the other end by a combination of powerful electromagnets and vast titanium grappling claws.

Top Deck

Like the top deck of a sea ship, this deck is uncovered by any roof, leaving anyone aboard it unprotected by the skyship's damage reduction (though they still have cover against attacks from below). For this reason, it is not used during battles, only for assemblies, infantry drills, and other non-combat purposes. Top deck is more formally known as Alpha Deck.

Ventral Array

A skyfurnace's ventral array is the massive substructure of grillwork that includes the ventral blast coils. The ventral array can be cut away to reduce the risk of the main ventral tanks

rupturing or exploding. This has the side effect of making the skyfurnace far faster and somewhat easier to maneuver, giving a +1 to all Pilot checks made with respect to it and +20 (+2) to Speed. Cutting away the ventral array takes at least two minutes of heavy work with engineer axes (see page 58 for details on the engineer axe). A ventral array contains 500 of the skyship's base 1500 hit points (or one-third of its hit points, if it has more than 1500).

Work Lifts

These elevator shafts transport zeks to their various duties aboard skyfurnaces. Multi-level, open-air elevator cars, known as "cages" to the zeks, hold up to three squads of 60 men total.

Weaponry

The precise weaponry found aboard a skyfurnace varies by the ship, though virtually all have 48 isolator tunnels in 16 batteries of three, as well as 6 main ventral blast furnace coils. These are built into the skyfurnace's structure, and so cannot usually be swapped for another weapon. A typical loadout for the remaining weapon capacity follows: 20 Markov truss cannons, 1 000 heavy DSHK deck guns, 87 BHX Rykov hook missiles, 132 KGT Sickle drop missiles, and 112 medium Shadow anti-aircraft missiles.

Vehicular Carrying Capacity

Precise vehicular carrying capacity varies by skyfurnace and mission. Again, the following loadouts are typical, but not universal. Note all vehicles carried also have support by appropriate stores of fuel and ammunition, as well as hangers and repair shops.

Krawls are organized in columns of 25. A typical loadout would be 15 Invasion-class krawl columns and 10 Hammer-class krawl columns. Furthermore, up to three Hydra class krawls can be constructed from their various components

CHAPTER FOUR: Red Fleet Vehicles

Table 4-2a: Military Vehicles

Name	Crew	Pass	Cargo	Init	Maneuver	Top Speed	Defense	Damage Reduction
Skyships								
Overstriker	500	100	10,000 tons	-8	-8	200 (20)	2	40 (+8)*
Skybarge	750	500	15,000 tons	-8	-8	150 (15)	2	30 (+6)*
Skyfurnace	10,000	15,000	150,000 tons	-8	-8	150 (15)	2	60 (+12)*
Other Aircraft								
Bullpup MiG (fighter)	1	0	20 kg	-2	-2	1400 (140)	8	10
ZIK Zero Inertia Kraft (fighter)	1	0	10 kg	1	1	1500 (150)	9	5
ZIK Zero Inertia Kraft Bomber	2	0	50 kg	0	0	1000 (100)	8	5
Krawls								
Hammer Class Krawl (tracked tank)	5	0	500 kg	-4	-4	90 (9)	6	30 (+6)*
Hydra Class Krawl (tracked tank)	24	90 (+20*)	2000 kg	-8	-8	70 (7)	2	50 (+10)*
Invasion Class Krawl (tracked tank)	10	0	750 kg	-4	-4	80 (8)	6	40 (+8)*
Other Land Vehicles								
Armored Personnel Karrier (tracked APK)	3	12	250 kg	-4	-4	95 (9)	6	20
Dragunov SPG (tracked self-propelled gun)	8*	0	100 kg	-4	-4	80 (8)	6	20
Hoverkraft	4	7	2000 kg	-2	-2	120 (12)	8	15
Hydra Class Krawl Track (tracked APK)	2	30	400 kg	-4	-4	70 (7)	6	50 (+10)*
Kleaver Half-Track (tracked APK)	5	20	500 kg	-2	-2	100 (10)	8	15*
Nomad Half-Track (tracked APK)	5	8	750 kg	-2	-2	110 (11)	8	15*
Extras								
Krawl Drop Casing	—	—	*	—	—	*	—	10*

* See text for special rules

(see **Hydra-class Krawl**, page 77). Constructing a Hydra-class krawl is typically a 12- to 36-hour process, depending on how unusual the Hydra loadout is and how many zeks a Commander allocates to the task. All three can be assembled simultaneously if required.

Self-propelled guns are often attached directly to krawl columns in the command structure, usually at a ratio of five Dragunov SPGs per krawl column. This allows every krawl column to have indirect fire support available. At the discretion of the Commander, the SPGs may instead be deployed separately; there is usually one SPG per five krawls aboard a skyfurnace.

Armored Personnel Karriers may be carried in various quantities. Usually a skyfurnace will expect to deploy its troops directly onto the battlefield via *gate transfer protocols*, but occasionally stealth or logistics necessitates the use of APKs. Typically a skyfurnace might have 20 APKs, 10 Kleaver half-tracks and 3 Nomad half-tracks.

ZIKs (Zero-Inertia-Kraft) are a form of combat aircraft. ZIKs have highly specialized roles, and are not always present in a Skyfurnace's arsenal. ZIK capacity varies by skyfurnace and

mission, but three ZIK squadrons, two elite ZIK squadrons and one ZIK bomber squadron would be typical, with 20 aircraft in each squadron.

Bullpup MiG fighters are also carried, usually one squadron of 20. These are held in place in the ventral array, just to the sides of the ventral blast coils. Each fighter has a fore and aft stop which can be released at the touch of a button; the aircraft then lurches forward and downward, going into freefall on release.

Infantry Capacity

Red Fleet infantry are organized in battalions of 600 each, with each skyfurnace typically taking five to ten battalions onboard. Given a skyfurnace's total passenger capacity of 15,000 people, transporting twenty to twenty-five battalions of troops would theoretically be possible without reducing the vessel's regular crew, but that would leave very little surplus capacity for krawl and other vehicle crews, ground vehicle and aircraft maintenance technicians, warkasters, and support staff.

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Table 4-2B: Military Vehicles

Name	Hit Points	Size	Weight	Hardpoints	Purchase DC	Restriction
Skyships						
Overstriker	300	C	30,000 tons	100 (0)	54	Mil (+3)
Skybarge	400	C	40,000 tons	75 (0)	54	Mil (+3)
Skyfurnace	1500*	C	300,000 tons	1450 (29)	56	Mil (+3)
Other Aircraft						
Bullpup MiG (fighter)	35	H	20 tons	4* (0*)	51	Mil (+3)
ZIK Zero Inertia Kraft (fighter)	25	L	10 tons	@* (0*)	52	Mil (+3)
ZIK Zero Inertia Kraft Bomber	30	H	25 tons	5* (0*)	53	Mil (+3)
Krawls						
Hammer Class Krawl (tracked tank)	80	G	50 tons	3* (0*)	48	Mil (+3)
Hydra Class Krawl (tracked tank)	150	C	500 tons	5* (0*)	50	Mil (+3)
Invasion Class Krawl (tracked tank)	100	G	150 tons	6* (0*)	49	Mil (+3)
Other Land Vehicles						
Armored Personnel Karrier (tracked APK)	60	G	20 tons	1	43	Mil (+3)
Dragunov SPG (tracked self-propelled gun)	65	G	50 tons	1	44	Mil (+3)
Hoverkraft	30	H	10 tons	2	44	Mil (+3)
Hydra Class Krawl Track (tracked APK)	150	G	50 tons	1*	—	—
Kleaver Half-Track (tracked APK)	60	H	15 tons	3	42	Mil (+3)
Nomad Half-Track (tracked APK)	50	H	10 tons	2	40	Mil (+3)
Extras						
Krawl Drop Casing	20	*	10%	—	12	Mil (+3)

Skyfurnace Enhancements and Options

In addition to the options listed later in this chapter and available for any vehicle (see page 83), skyfurnaces are customized according to the needs of the Red Fleet and the whims of their Commanders. For every 2,000 tons of cargo capacity given up, to a maximum of 20,000 tons, the skyfurnace can gain either an additional +20 hardpoints, an additional +2 to Damage Reduction, an additional +5 (+0.5) to top speed, or an additional +50 to hit points.

Other Air Vehicles

The following conventional aircraft are carried into the theatre of war aboard a skyfurnace, and then launched to destroy whichever targets the Commander gives them. Note the air vehicles in this section, being much smaller than skyships or krawls, may not mount any weapon taking up more than one hardpoint, even if they would usually have sufficient hardpoints to do so.

Bullpup MiG

This is a medium-sized fighter plane with enough room for a single pilot. It can be used in the role of a strike/attack aircraft if need be, though its most common use is as a heavy fighter escort for skyfurnaces. In urban fighting around Nokgorka, it was pressed into service in a ground attack and close reconnaissance role, outfitted accordingly with twin Model MK-132 25mm self-ranging burst guns and

a pair of KGT Sickle drop missiles, rather than its usual loadout of three medium Shadow anti-aircraft missiles and a single self-ranging burst gun.

Zero Inertia Kraft (ZIK)

This small fighter plane has an inertialess protocol engine (see page 83), making it one of the most maneuverable vehicles in the world. As a relatively new innovation, the inertialess protocol drive has so far been fitted only to ZIKs of various kinds.

ZIKs are used for general-purpose combat, as their weaponry is flexible enough to function in an anti-aircraft, anti-krawl, anti-infantry and even anti-skyfurnace role. Certain elite ZIK squadrons fly modified ZIK fighters, at a Purchase DC increase of +2 each, which grant a +1 bonus to all relevant Pilot checks and a +1 bonus to all attack rolls with the mounted weaponry.

Zero Inertia Kraft Bomber (ZIK Bomber)

ZIK bombers were the first variant of the ZIK fighter to be released. Retaining the ZIK's sleek lines and protocol-enhanced I.P. (inertialess protocol) engine (see page 83), the ZIK bomber is the most maneuverable aircraft in its size class. It somehow finds space for a full complement of five Sickle drop missiles, however, allowing it to devastate ground installations and troops.

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Table 4-2c: Military Vehicles

Name	Weapons	Extras
Skyships		
Overstriker	Markov truss cannon (10); heavy DSHK deck gun (25); BHX Rykov hook missile (10); medium Shadow anti-aircraft missile (15)	Protocol-reinforced armor, protocol shielding systems, Crypsis systems
Skybarge	Markov truss cannon (2); heavy DSHK deck gun (50); BHX Rykov hook missile (6); Katyusha 600mm (3)	Protocol-reinforced armor, protocol shielding systems, Crypsis systems
Skyfurnace	Markov truss cannon (20); heavy DSHK deck gun (1 000); BHX Rykov hook missile (87); KGT Sickle drop missile (132); medium Shadow anti-aircraft missile (112)	Protocol-reinforced armor, protocol shielding systems, Crypsis systems
Other Aircraft		
Bullpup MiG (fighter)	Model MK-132 25mm self-ranging burst gun; medium Shadow anti-aircraft missile (3)	Crypsis systems
ZIK Zero Inertia Kraft (fighter)	Model MK-132 25mm self-ranging burst gun; BHX Rykov hook missile	Crypsis systems
ZIK Zero Inertia Kraft Bomber	KGT Sickle drop missile (5)	Crypsis systems
Krawls		
Hammer Class Krawl (tracked tank)	Forward cannon, 221mm; arc-firing protocol mount; Katyushas, 500mm	Protocol-reinforced armor, protocol shielding systems, Crypsis systems
Hydra Class Krawl (tracked tank)	Forward cannon, 2000mm (3); arc-firing protocol mount; Katyusha rocket battery (1000mm)	Protocol-reinforced armor, protocol shielding systems, Crypsis systems
Invasion Class Krawl (tracked tank)	Forward cannon, 315mm; composite Zhukov capacitance cannon (2); arc-protocol firing mount (4)	Protocol-reinforced armor, protocol shielding systems, Crypsis systems
Other Land Vehicles		
Armored Personnel Karrier (tracked APK)	Model MK-132 25mm self-ranging burst gun	Crypsis systems
Dragunov SPG (tracked self-propelled gun)	Howitzer, model MK-132 25mm self-ranging burst gun	Crypsis systems
Hoverkraft	Model MK-132 25mm self-ranging burst gun, BHX Rykov hook missile	Crypsis systems
Hydra Class Krawl Track (tracked APK)	Model MK-132 25mm self-ranging burst gun	Protocol-reinforced armor, protocol shielding systems, Crypsis systems
Kleaver Half-Track (tracked APK)	Model MK-132 25mm self-ranging burst gun; R5-K close defense lance-protocol batteries (2)	Crypsis systems
Nomad Half-Track (tracked APK)	Heavy hauler; arc-protocol firing mount	Crypsis systems
Extras		
Krawl Drop Casing	—	—

Land Vehicles

Krawls

Ever since the Great Patriotic War, the armored assault vehicles known as krawls have been the bulwark of the Red Fleet, even more than skyfurnaces. Skyfurnaces may command the skies, but only krawls and infantry can take and hold the land beneath.

Hammer Class Krawl

Hammer Class krawls can be deployed by skyfurnaces from a high altitude (using an armored crate or “drop casing,” supported by sorcery. See page 94 for more information on

the protocols involved.). A Hammer-class has a crew of five, including a commander, driver, protocol gunner (sorceress), conventional gunner, and loader.

Hydra Class Krawl

The Hydra Class superkrawl is a group of modular heavy weapon / transport systems that can be configured according to the needs of the conflict. The precise specifics of this are up to the GM. It is suggested that as with the other krawls, the main guns themselves cannot be removed or replaced easily, but variant bodies and turrets are available (with perhaps 12 hardpoints added for each main gun that is not carried).

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The shells for a Hydra Class's main guns are too large to store many within the krawl itself; a complement of supply kasters is assigned to the vehicle to help resupply as necessary. Hydras, at some four stories tall and wider than a two-lane highway, are too big to be deployed in a drop casing and are instead teleported via *jumpgate transfer protocols*.

Each of its treads can be armed and fielded independently, functioning as a troop transport (see page 79). The three treads each hold 30 passengers and are each maintained by two engineers with the official titles of driver-mechanic and gunner-mechanic, meaning that they are qualified both to keep a track in good working order when it is attached to a krawl, and to operate it and its weaponry when detached.

The crew of 24 includes the six driver-mechanics (two per track), a commander, a driver, a relief driver, a sorceress engineer and two zeks as her assistant engineers, three supply kasters and three zeks as assistants (with all six acting as reloaders for the main guns), four gunners, one medikaster, and one warkaster (as protocol gunner).

The additional 20 passengers carried are the "Deck Squad," a score of Red troopers stationed on the upper hull of the Hydra class krawl, ready to respond to boarding actions and other infantry threats. They were traditionally armed with submachine guns, leading to their nickname in the Great Patriotic War: the "avtomatchiki," or "automatics." Older troopers still refer to the deck squad as 'avtomatchiki', though today they use a mix of hooks and RKS-81 submachine guns. If need be, they can be replaced after battles with reserve troops from the complement carried in the tracks.

Invasion-Class Krawl

Invasion Class krawls are larger and more powerful than the Hammer Class, but are otherwise similar. They can be deployed by skyfurnaces from a high altitude (using an

armored crate or "drop casing", supported by sorcery). The crew of ten includes a commander, driver, four protocol gunners (usually warkasters or sorceress engineers), three gunners, and a loader.

Other Land Vehicles

A variety of transport and other land vehicles are available to the Red Fleet, and are often stolen or otherwise acquired by their Nokgorkan and Nistaani enemies.

Armored Personnel Carrier (APK)

The APK is used to transport troops to the frontline. Although it carries little or no weaponry, it does include firing ports allowing its occupants to shoot their personal weaponry from inside the vehicle, with nine-tenths cover.

Dragunov Self-Propelled Gun (SPG)

The Dragunov SPG is the basic artillery weapon of the Red Fleet. U.R.R.S. military doctrine calls for SPGs to have a frontline role, alongside krawls and skyfurnaces, using its main gun in both direct fire and indirect fire as required. There are many kinds of SPGs throughout the world, all with essentially similar game statistics. A Dragunov has eight crew members: a commander, driver, two gunners, and four loaders. Only the first four crew positions are inside the vehicle; the loaders either use a separate transport of their own, or ride atop the vehicle's hull.

Drop Casing

An armored crate or framework used to drop vehicles, mainly krawls, from a skyfurnace at Rapid Deployment Altitude (RDA). A drop casing weighs 10% of the weight of the krawl it contains. Its armor is added to that of the krawl inside in the

CHAPTER FOUR: Red Fleet Vehicles

event of any attack targeting the krawl itself while still within the drop compartment. Note that if a drop casing itself is attacked and reduced to zero hit points, the krawl within will tumble to the ground immediately, being dealt full damage for the fall. *Krawl drop protocols* must be kept to ensure the safe landing of each vehicle.

Hydra Class Krawl Track (Tracked APK)

This is a single track from the Hydra-class krawl, detached from the main vehicle (or never assembled into it) and used as a heavily armored, if rather slow and under-gunned, armored personnel carrier. Note that the hardpoint on a Hydra Class krawl track is only accessible when the track is not attached to the rest of the krawl; thus, if this track is encountered after the remainder of its krawl has been destroyed, it will almost certainly be unarmed.

Kleaver Half-Track

The Kleaver serves as a type of armored personnel carrier. Its armor is relatively light, making it unsuitable for direct battlefield use. Usually troops aim to dismount before entering combat if they expect to face krawls and similar dangers. It does carry significantly more troops than the

standard APK, however, as well as being faster. It also carries sufficient armament to act in a support role for its troops, so long as it can stay well away from enemy krawls and artillery.

The Kleaver has a crew of five: a commander, driver, gunner, protocol gunner and a loader. Like most half-tracks, the Kleaver-class has either no roof, or only an unarmored waterproof roof; in either case, the passengers do not get the benefit of its damage reduction, unless attacked from below.

Nomad Half-Track

This vehicle is favored by special forces teams. Of the crew of five, the commander is often a veteran trooper or warkaster, the driver is usually a medikaster, the gunner and loader are hailers, and the protocol gunner is a warkaster. This allows for a staggeringly powerful special forces team, especially when combined with eight or so elite Red troopers. As with the Kleaver Class, the Nomad half-track does not have an armored roof, leaving the passengers reliant on their own personal armor to defeat enemy fire.

Hovercraft

This is an amphibious vehicle used mainly for high speed travel over water. It can transport troops or cargo as necessary.

Vehicular Weapons

The following new vehicular weapons are available for military vehicles to mount. All require the Gunnery feat in order to use them.

Arc-Protocol Firing Mount

A protocol gunner, usually a low-ranking warkaster, fires the arc-protocol firing mount. The weapon taps directly into the protocol gunner's life force to launch a devastating arc of white-hot electrical energy. It is typically mounted on an Invasion-class krawl, though other vehicles also use them. The gun deals 1 point of nonlethal damage to the kaster each time she fires the gun, due to the energy she must expend.

BHX Rykov Hook Missile

The hook missile is a general-purpose missile suitable against aircraft, skyships, krawls, other vehicles, and infantry targets. It is an armor-piercing weapon, so only half the damage reduction (rounded down) of the target counts. This is due to its shaped charge, concentrating most of the force at the target that takes the hit directly. As a side-effect of this, any targets damaged by being in its burst radius rather than taking a direct hit are only dealt half damage and may count their full damage reduction.

Composite Zhukov Capacitance Cannon

Usually mounted on an Invasion Class krawl, this massive gravito-electric cannon is powered directly by the krawl's

main power plant. Its "ammunition" replenishes at a rate of 1 shot per round. It can be fired in two modes, standard charge and overcharge. A capacitance cannon on overcharge deals double the normal damage, but has a -2 penalty to hit and uses up the equivalent of 5 shots, rather than just one.

Forward Cannon, 221mm

This large main gun is mounted on Hammer Class krawls, allowing them to take on enemy krawls up to Hydra Class size, if armor-piercing rounds are used.

Forward Cannon, 315mm

This is the 315mm cannon is usually found on an Invasion Class krawl. Even without armor-piercing rounds, it is capable of attacking most krawls with some degree of success; with armor-piercing rounds, it could even take on a skyfurnace.

Forward Cannon, 2000mm

Perhaps the largest cannons in the world, these guns are big enough for a man to stand in. They fire shells the size of a small car and are capable of devastating bombardment missions. They are only ever found on Hydra Class krawls, each of which mount three of these monstrous weapons. A forward cannon takes a full round to reload with two loaders operating it; one of these must usually be a supply kaster, transporting the shell into the crew compartment with a *supply protocol*.

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Table 4-3: Conventional Vehicular Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment (Area of Effect)	Rate of Fire	Magazine	Hardpoints	Purchase DC	Restriction
BHX Rykov									
Hook Missile	2d8x10 ³	19-20	Concussion	500m (10m radius) ³	1	1	1	25	Mil (+3)
Composite Zhukov									
Capacitance Cannon	1d4x10 ³	20	Fire	50m	S	30 ³	1	25	Mil (+3)
Forward Cannon,									
221mm	1d6x10	20	Ballistic	80m	S	120 int.	Structure ⁴	—	Mil (+3)
315mm	1d8x10	20	Ballistic	100m	S	88 int.	Structure ⁴	—	Mil (+3)
2000mm	3d8x10	20	Ballistic	200m	S ³	1 int.*	Structure ⁴	—	Mil (+3)
Heavy DSHK									
Deck Gun	1d6x10	20	Ballistic	50m	A	Linked	1	24	Mil (+3)
Heavy Hailer ¹	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	22	Mil +3
machine gun mode	4d10	20	Ballistic	30m	A	500 box	—	—	—
flamethrower mode	4d6	—	Fire	(3m x 2m x 50m) ³	1	20 box	—	—	—
rocket-propelled									
grenade launcher mode	8d10 ⁴	19-20	Concussion	30m ³	A	40 box	—	—	—
Howitzer									
315mm	2d4x10	19-20	Concussion	50m/500m ³ (30m radius) ³	S ³	40 int.	Structure ⁴	—	Mil (+3)
Katyusha									
400mm	1d8x10	19-20	Concussion	50m ³ (2m radius) ³	A	18 rack	1	21	Mil (+3)
500mm	1d10x10	19-20	Concussion	100m ³ (4m radius) ³	A	12 rack	2	22	Mil (+3)
600mm	1d12x10	19-20	Concussion	150m ³ (6m radius) ³	A	6 rack	3	23	Mil (+3)
1000mm	1d20x10	19-20	Concussion	200m ³ (8m radius) ³	S	1	4	24	Mil (+3)
KGT Sickle Drop Missile	8d6 ²	20	Slashing	250m ³ (20m radius) ³	1	1	1	20	Mil (+3)
Markov Truss Cannon ¹	2d6x10	20	Ballistic	200m	A	1000 int.	5	30	Mil (+3)
Medium Shadow Anti-									
Aircraft Missile ^{1,3}	1d4x10	19-20	Concussion	1000m (10m radius)	1	1	1	26	Mil (+3)
Model MK-132 25mm Self-									
Ranging Burst Gun ¹	3d10	20	Ballistic	150m	A	1000 int.	1	22	Mil (+3)
Ventral Blast Furnace Coil	10d6 ²	—	Fire	0m (300m radius) ³	S	1 ³	Structure ⁴	—	Mil (+3)

¹ This mastercraft weapon grants a +1 bonus on attack rolls. ² This weapon does special damage. See the weapon description. ³ See the description of this weapon for special rules. ⁴ This massive weapon must be built into the structure of the vehicle at the time of manufacture; it takes up no hardpoints per se, and cannot usually be left off the vehicle.

Table 4-4: Protocol Vehicular Weapons (REQUIRES THE PROTOCOL GUNNERY FEAT)

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment (Area of Effect)	Rate of Fire	Magazine	Hardpoints	Purchase DC	Restriction
Arc-Firing Protocol									
Mount	4d10+4	—	Electricity	40m	S	—	1	25	Mil (+3)
Isolator Tunnel Beam	10d10+10	—	Force	Kaster levels x 10	S	—	Structure ⁴	—	Mil (+3)
R5-K Close Defense Lance-									
Protocol Battery	6d10+6	—	Fire	10m	A	—	1	24	Mil (+3)

¹ This mastercraft weapon grants a +1 bonus on attack rolls. ² This weapon does special damage. See the weapon description. ³ See the description of this weapon for special rules. ⁴ This massive weapon must be built into the structure of the vehicle at the time of manufacture; it takes up no hardpoints per se, and cannot be left off the vehicle.

It is possible for a character to clamber into one of these cannons and fire weaponry directly into the heart of the krawl, hopefully setting off an explosion — if fired at just the right moment, as the crew opens the breech to reload. Assume any attack occurring on a round when the crew reloads can do this. Attacking at the right moment bypasses all armor. If the attack deals at least 30 points of damage, it causes the shell to explode and if it is a high explosive armor-

piercing shell it deals its full damage to the krawl without the benefit of the krawl's armor. If the 2000mm cannon's shell was not of the high explosive armor-piercing variety, it does not explode. In either case, the attack renders the cannon inoperative if it deals 30 or more points of damage in the initial attack. Of course, the character needs to climb into position first, past the deck squadron's guns (see page 78) and the krawl's secondary weapons.

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Heavy DSHK Deck Gun

This massive-caliber autocannon is a standard fixture of skyfurnace decks. Each cannon has an adjustable gunner seat and a customizable control set; any character with the Gunnery feat who has a chance to spend a full round adjusting his preferences in the seat gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls with that particular DSHK gun, so long as another user does not alter the preferences in the meantime.

Most DSHK guns come with 1,000 rounds of ammunition linked into a massive belt that weighs some 500kg; a further belt can be linked to it if necessary, a full-round action for two loaders assuming they have a handcart or similar device to maneuver it about (or a friendly supply kaster). DSHK deck guns defend a skyfurnace against boarding actions and attacks from light aircraft; they are not powerful enough to be effective against other skyfurnaces except in the case of the rare lucky shot.

Heavy Hailer

This is a large, swivel-mounted hailer, firing two high-caliber, side-by-side streams of bullets about a meter apart. The twin-barreled heavy hailer requires the Gunnery, Telekinetic Weaponry, and Telekinetic Autofire feats to fire. Almost all heavy hailer operators are trained hailers; telekinetically firing two hailers at once is very difficult for other troopers. Heavy hailers are most commonly mounted on Nomad-class half-tracks.

Heavy hailers have three different modes of fire, but both barrels always fire in the same mode at any one time. Like the Dragunov autocannon, the heavy hailer has a slot in the side into which the hailer fits his own personal hailer weapon, synchronizing the two systems together for maximum efficiency and accuracy. Unless noted otherwise, all the characteristics of hailers and hailer ammunition also apply to heavy hailers and heavy hailer ammunition. See **Chapter Two: Personal Weapons and Equipment** for full details on the hailer.

Howitzer, 315mm

This massive artillery piece fires high explosive rounds. With four loaders available, the howitzer may be fired every second round. Firing and loading are both full-round actions. If only three loaders are available, reloading takes two full-round actions; if only two loaders are available, four full-round actions. A single loader cannot reload the gun alone. The howitzer may be fired using either the indirect fire rules (see page 69), in which case it has a range increment of 500 meters, or direct fire mode with a range increment of 50 meters.

Isolator Tunnel Beam

On skyfurnaces, warkasters use these (with the aid of deck kasters) to cast devastating *transformation protocols*. A broadside of these can destroy enemy vessels. Even with the intervention of deck kasters who work to stabilize the sorceress by kasting the *transformation protocol*, only 1 in 30 warkasters survive isolator tunnel duty. That is not to say that only 1 in 30 survive each shot, but a particularly combat-heavy tour of duty may include one shot every minute for several hours. Eventually, something goes wrong with a

Table 4-5: Isolator Tunnel Malfunctions

Die Roll	Malfunction
1	Assembly Problem: DC 15 Fortitude save or be dealt 8d6 damage due to incorrect reassembly
2-3	Coolant Fluid Malfunction: The warkaster is drowning (see d20 Modern Roleplaying Game). She will drown in coolant fluid unless rescued, or unless she somehow frees herself.
4-6	Biofeedback Shock: The caster is dealt 2d6 damage, with a successful DC 20 Will save halving the damage.

protocol or the equipment.... The fact most warkasters serve something of an apprenticeship on isolator tunnel duty before moving on to less risky roles within the Fleet only enhances the risk. Though they have the benefit of a full Academy education, nothing quite prepares new sorceresses for the stresses of a full-blown battle on isolator tunnel duty.

On a natural roll of 1 with an isolator tunnel beam, there is a risk of serious injury to the warkaster who embodies the beam when she attempts to return to normal. Roll 1d6 and consult the Isolator Tunnel Malfunctions Table to determine the precise nature of the malfunction.



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Katyusha

Katyushas are massive single-shot rockets, with smaller calibers available in packs and capable of being autofired. Katyushas are ineffective during the first range increment of their flight. They take a certain amount of time to arm. If a katyusha strikes a target less than one range increment away, it deals only one-quarter normal damage. That damage is bludgeoning damage, with no chance to inflict a critical hit and no area of effect. Katyushas armed properly are high explosive armor-piercing weapons — the damage reduction of armor is halved against them, but they only deal half damage (with no armor piercing quality) to targets in their explosive radius but not hit directly. Katyushas come in 400mm, 500mm, 600mm and 1000mm sizes.

KGT Sickie Drop Missile

The drop missile is intended for use against ground targets, particularly soft targets such as infantry and unarmored vehicles. Its range increment applies to horizontal motion only; it may drop vertically for any distance without penalty, being more like a guided bomb than a missile in any case. On striking the ground, it detonates with devastating force, hurling massive, razor-sharp, curved blades of shrapnel in all directions. Any characters within the area of effect may attempt DC 25 Reflex saves for half damage. Vehicles and other targets in the area take full damage with no saving throw.

Markov Truss Cannon

Nominally a conventional weapon, the Markov cannon incorporates a powerful protocol-enhanced targeting computer which analyzes apparently random possibilities with unparalleled precision. Each bullet is semi-smart and semi-guided, signaling new data back to the targeting computer instantaneously for analysis and course changes. In effect, this gives the cannon superb range and uncanny accuracy.

Medium Shadow Anti-Aircraft Missile

Built for accuracy rather than damage, the Shadow homes in on all possible emissions signatures the target has, including heat, light, gravitic, radar, magnetic and even protocol emissions. Using its intelligent protocol-enhanced software routines, it shadows the target, calculating an approach vector by which it will be almost completely undetectable. Unlike most explosive weapons, this is not an armor-piercing shaped charge, but deals full damage to all targets in range. Since aircraft are usually lightly armored but evasive, it is more useful to have a fully effective near miss than a powerful punch on a direct hit.

Model MX-132 25mm Self-Ranging Burst Gun

This is a very accurate, if somewhat underpowered, heavy machine gun or light autocannon. It is found on a variety of vehicles, particularly when space and weight are at a premium.

R5-K Close Defense Lance-Protocol Batteries

This is fired by a protocol gunner, usually a low-level warkaster. The R5-K is most often seen mounted on a Kleaver Class half-track. A lance-protocol battery fires large numbers of close-range, flechette-like spikes of flame, created and shaped by protocol energy. The kaster takes 1 point of nonlethal damage each time she fires a single shot from the gun, or 1d2 every time she uses autofire, due to the energies she must expend.

Ventral Blast Furnace Coil

These six massive rings beneath a skyfurnace are each over 300 meters across, making them by far the largest and most devastating weapon in *The Red Star Campaign Setting*. A blast chamber powers each coil. It takes six hours to prepare a blast chamber for a ventral blast, though they can be held in readiness indefinitely. A Commander who orders a full ventral blast — all six ventral coils firing simultaneously — must wait six hours before he can fire again. For a sustained assault, individual ventral coils can be fired independently depending on the needs of the Commander, potentially allowing for a more limited firing every hour if the ventral coils are used in a staggered order.

A ventral blast unleashes a great blast of flame, heat, and concussive force, bursting open vehicles, blasting down buildings and frying people over an enormous area. Characters within its area of effect may attempt DC 25 Reflex saves for half damage, as they scurry to find some minimal cover or protection.

Note that if more than one blast furnace coil is fired simultaneously, there is a small amount of overlap between the blasts, resulting in an area of effect like a round-cornered oblong some 3000 meters long by 600 meters wide.

The impact of a ventral blast over water is jokingly referred to as a “steambath” by furnace crews, since an entire lake can be vaporized within a few minutes by the intensity of the prolonged heat. A traditional Red tactic is to deny enemy forces natural supplies of drinking water using such methods; the same “scorched earth” policy applies to crops and other natural food supplies.

Another side effect of ventral blasts occurs within dense urban areas. The streets in the city of Bahamut, for example, are uninhabitable for hours or even days after a blast due to the persistence of swirling superheated vapors. Scars and burns are common enough sights on the faces of Nokgorkans these days. Superheated vapors do 2d6 damage, with a DC 20 Reflex save avoiding the damage entirely.

Yet another example of a type of ventral blast is the “liquid fire” variant. This is a napalm-style flood of molten accelerant, devastating to ground based personnel. This is used frequently in the War in Nokgorka in an attempt to flush out the expansive subterranean bases used by the Resistance. It is achieved by using a lower temperature blast and igniting the high volume of blast fuel. Liquid fire does slightly less damage (7d6) but is far more difficult to protect against (DC 30 Reflex save for half damage), and seeps down beneath the surface into any tunnels or excavations that may be below ground.

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Table 4-6: Vehicular Weapon Ammunition

Ammunition Type (Quantity)	Weight	Purchase DC	Notes
Forward Cannon, 221mm (10)	500 kg	20	—
Forward Cannon 221mm high explosive armor piercing (10)	500 kg	25	Gains critical multiplier 19–20 and the armor piercing quality (but no burst radius)
Forward Cannon, 315mm (10)	1000 kg	22	—
Forward Cannon, 315mm high explosive armor piercing (10)	1000 kg	27	Gain critical multiplier 19–20 and the armor piercing quality (but no burst radius)
Forward Cannon, 2000mm (1)	2000 kg	27	—
Forward Cannon, 2000mm high explosive armor piercing (1)	2000 kg	32	Gains critical multiplier 19–20 and the armor piercing quality (but no burst radius)
Heavy DSHK Deck Gun (1000)	500 kg	23	—
Heavy Hailer (full box)	50 kg	16	Contains full ammunition loads for all three weapon modes
Howitzer, 315mm (10)	1000 kg	24	—
Markov Truss Cannon (10)	1500 kg	25	—
Model MK-132 25mm Self-Ranging Burst Gun (100)	50 kg	12	—

Vehicle Options

The following options are available as add-ons for vehicles. Each option listed takes up either cargo space within the vehicle, hardpoints atop it, or both.

Note that several of the vehicles come with one or more of these options already. Where appropriate, this is noted in the vehicle's entry on **Table 4-1: Military Vehicles**, and has already been added into the vehicle's Purchase DC and Cargo Capacity on that table.

Crypsis Systems

Crypsis systems — self-correcting camouflage — are standard on military vehicles throughout the world. The vehicle changes color like a chameleon, adapting to its environment. This is a simple protocol engineered into the paint. Any vehicle with Crypsis systems is spotted only by an observer making a Spot check with a +5 modifier to the DC. A better-quality system is available, increasing the Spot DC by +10, but vehicles painted with it are significantly more expensive than those with a standard Crypsis system.

Inertialess Protocol Engine

Aircraft other than skyships may mount this protocol-enhanced drive system, at a cost of +2 to their Purchase DC. An inertialess aircraft has its Maneuver bonus increased by +2.

Vehicular Weapon Ammunition

Vehicular weapon ammunition is often available in several types, depending on the purpose desired and the targets it is to be used against. See **Table 4-6** above for more information.

Protocol-Reinforced Armor (PRA)

The armor on some vehicles is reinforced with sorcery, providing additional damage reduction unless disabled by offensive protocols. A vehicle with protocol-reinforced armor has its damage reduction increased by +20% (rounded down). Protocol-piercing rounds (see page 60) ignore this increased damage reduction.

"Salamander" Self-Regenerative Armor (SRA)

Advances by the Western Transnationalist Alliance spurred research into armor with a limited ability to repair itself in the field. The cost and complexity of such armor prevented its introduction into the Red Fleet, though there are rumored to be some prototype vehicles. A vehicle fitted with this system has its cargo capacity reduced by 500 kg (if Large), 1,000 kg (if Huge), 2,000 kg (if Gargantuan) or 4,000 kg (if Colossal). SRA restores 1 hit point per round to the vehicle if it is damaged.

Table 4-7: Vehicle Options

Option	Purchase DC	Weight
Crypsis Systems	+1	—
Advanced Crypsis Systems	+2	—
Inertialess Protocol Engine	+2	200 kg
Protocol-Reinforced Armor	+5	—
Salamander Self-Regenerative Armor	+10	500+ kg; see text

CHAPTER FIVE: MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL SORCERY

The *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* regards magic and psionics as something beyond the capabilities of most people. However, in this setting, magic is the heart of technology. Sorceresses establish lines of communication between units, fuel the weaponry of the dreaded skyfurnaces, even serving on the frontlines against the nation's enemies. With magic as an accepted part of the world, viewed as a natural phenomenon, instead of being the province of bizarre occultists, demonologists, or psychics even, the world powers exploit it as they would any other natural resource. This chapter presents the full rules for the codified sorcery of the U.R.R.S., though it could serve as the model for magic systems of other nationalities.

General Concepts

Many characters have abilities that might be regarded as supernatural. The Telekinesis skill, for example, is common to soldiers throughout the world, who have a variety of different combat uses for it. They do not generally regard it as sorcery per se, since it is such an ordinary part of their lives. For them, it is just another survival skill, like being able to fire a gun or drive a krawl.

Protocols are something more than mere psychic powers, though. For the dedicated sorceress, a variety of different effects are possible — some of them devastating, others spectacular, others just extremely useful.

There are cultural differences in the practice of sorcery. The Nistaani, for example, favor shamanic magic in contrast to the industrialized version used by the Red Fleet. This chapter concentrates on the U.R.R.S.'s protocol magic, though it is possible for non-U.R.R.S. personnel to use it. For more information on Nistaani invocations, see **Chapter Eight: The Spiritrealm**.

PROTOCOLS

U.R.R.S. personnel use protocols rather than spells. The spells from *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game* are not typically used in this setting, and should be considered unavailable to characters trained in Nistaani or U.R.R.S. kasting methods. Protocols require components, but spells (known as invocations within *The Red Star* by their kasters) do not. In reflection of this, protocols are more powerful than spells, but less flexible. The method of kasting spells is the same as kasting protocols.

Every time a sorceress kasts a protocol, the sorceress makes a Kast check (using the Kast skill described on page 39). The appropriate protocol component should be present if possible. A character without the correct protocol component may still attempt to cast a protocol, but has a -10 circumstance penalty to his or her Kast check and may never Take 10 or Take 20 on the roll.

Success on the Kast check indicates the sorceress kasts the protocol correctly. The check result is compared to the protocol's description. Results above the required target

number can increase the range of the protocol or determine the effectiveness of the spell. The higher the result, the better the effect and/or the harder it is to resist the effects. A failure indicates that the protocol does not take effect.

Whether the Kast check succeeds or fails, the sorceress takes the appropriate damage for kasting the spell. This is usually a small amount of nonlethal damage — see **Kaster Physical Systems Safety Wards** on below, and **Overkasting**, on page 86 for more information — and is determined by the protocol being kast. This damage is halved (rounded down) if the Kast check result is at least

10 higher than the DC for the protocol. The damage is avoided entirely if the Kast check result is at least 20 higher than the DC.

Characters heal nonlethal damage caused by kasting a protocol at the usual rate.

Hazards of Sorcery

Usually, a sorceress can keep kasting until reaching a state of exhaustion, or even death — every protocol takes a little out of her, but this may not be very noticeable if she is already healthy and rested. The more powerful protocols are always painful in one way or another, severely taxing

the sorceress's physical and mental capabilities. The nonlethal damage, as described above, reflects this.

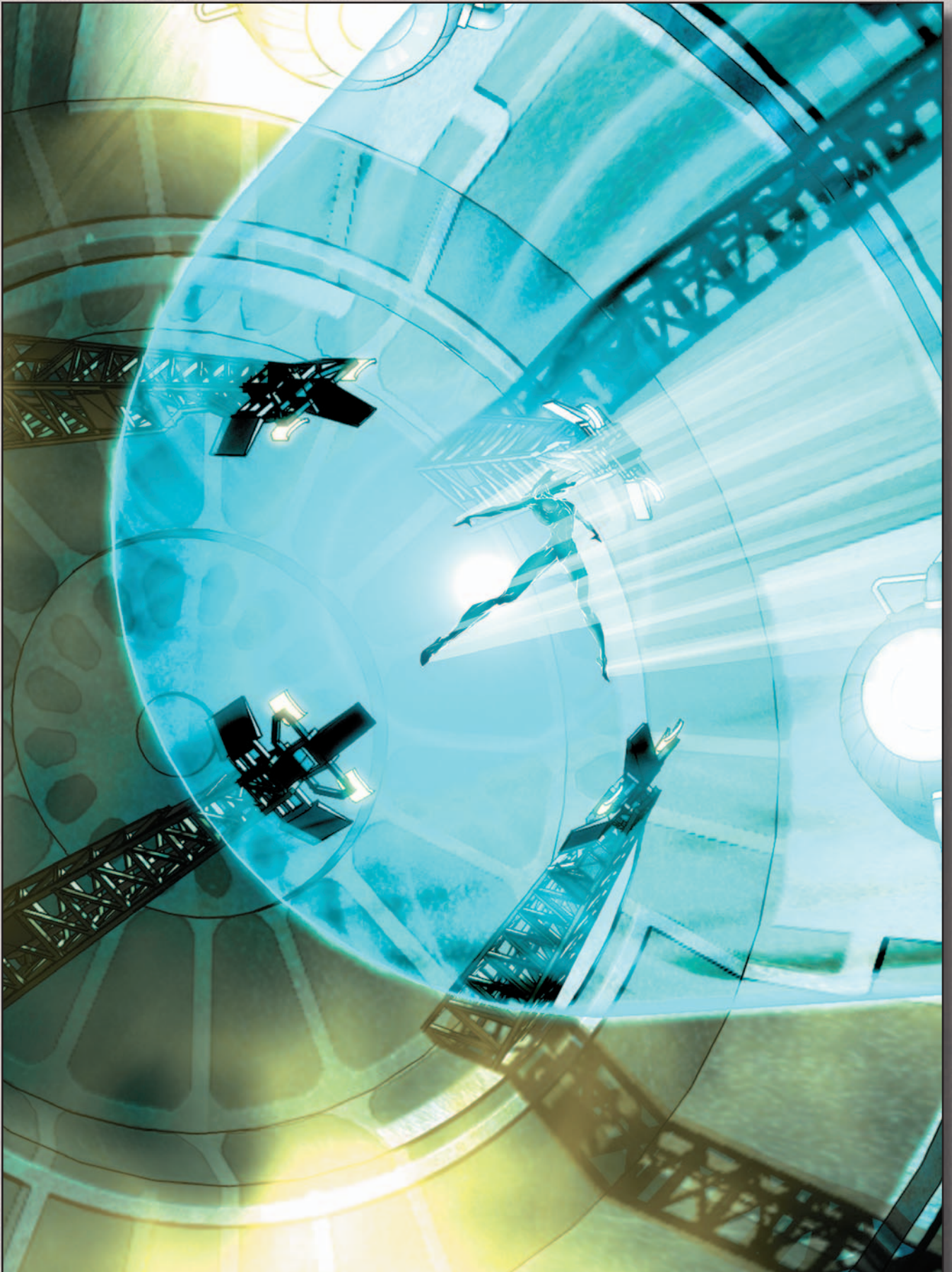
Kaster Physical Systems (KPS) Safety Wards

KPS Safety Wards are a set of continuous "background" protocols learned by all sorceresses. They prevent the magical energies flowing through a sorceress from permanently injuring her. A sorceress can drop her KPS Wards to increase a spell's power, but this is risky and not recommended. Dropping KPS Wards changes the damage dealt to the kaster from nonlethal damage to lethal damage, though the amount of damage dealt is unaffected.

Dropping KPS Safety Wards is a free action and can have any one of the following effects as appropriate to the spell, at the kaster's option.

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- * Increase the range of the protocol from Touch to Close, from Close to Medium, or from Medium to Long.
- * Reduce the casting time from one full round to one action, or from one action to one free action.
- * Double the area of effect
- * Double the number of targets affected (except if the range is Personal).
- * Gain a +8 bonus to effective Kast skill check, solely for the purposes of defeating sorcery resistance.
- * Multiply a non-random numerical effect of the spell by 1.5 (rounded down), before adding any bonuses from overcasting.

Dropping KPS Safety Wards can be done in combination with overcasting.

OVERCASTING

Overcasting boosts the strength of a protocol but significantly drains the kaster's health. This is usually done in combination with dropping KPS Safety Wards in a last ditch effort to save one's comrades or kill one's enemies.

In order to overcast, the kaster must first select how much she wishes to overcast. There is no set limit to the Grade one can overcast to: from "Overcast to Grade I," "Overcast to Grade II," "Overcast to Grade III," and so on. Most protocols allow a near-infinite expansion of effect from overcasting allowing the kaster to choose the power level appropriate to the effect desired.

Each grade of overcasting deals 1d4 points of Constitution damage, which the kaster recovers at a rate of 1 point per day. However, kasters whose KPS Safety Wards are up and who attempt an Overcast are not in danger of killing themselves. Constitution damage dropping their Constitution score to 0 instead drop to 1. Should this occur, the protocol automatically fails. Should the character not have her KPS Safety Wards in place and take sufficient damage to kill her, the protocol fails as well.

A kaster who is not concerned about her own life may instead select "Overcast to Fatal." Only a kaster who has dropped her KPS Safety Wards can "Overcast to Fatal." When doing so, the character takes 1d4 point of Constitution damage. The character takes additional 1d4 points Constitution damage until the player has a Constitution of 1 or 0. If reduced to a 1 Constitution, the sorceress is still alive, but falls unconscious for 3d6 minutes. If reduced to Constitution 0 or below, she dies. The total number of dice rolled equals the final Grade of overcasting, applied to the protocol in question as appropriate.

Example: Maya Antares has a Constitution of 12. She selects "Overcast to Fatal" during the defense of the Konstantinov against the Taktarov (The Red Star, Volume 2, issue 3). To save time, rather than rolling each 1d4 separately, her player rolls 3d4 to begin with, since that could potentially reduce her Constitution to 1 or below. The rolls come up 8, so she rolls another d4, this time getting a 3. 11 points is sufficient to reduce Maya to a Constitution of 1, and she collapses unconscious for 3d6 minutes. Had she rolled a 4 on the last d4 roll, bringing her total to 12, she would have been dead. In either case, she Overcast to Grade IV, casting her chosen protocol at an extreme level of power.

The effects of overcasting depend on the protocol, and are listed for each appropriate protocol. A protocol not listing an overcasting effect cannot be overcast.

Note that a reduction in Constitution also reduces a character's base hit points, which is often sufficient to knock a sorceress unconscious through accumulated nonlethal damage, even if the Constitution damage does not kill her in itself. Should the sorceress die, the protocol still goes into effect as planned.

Sorceresses cannot overcast invocations/spells.

How to Read a Protocol Description

Many of the entries listed as part of each protocol description are identical to those found in spell descriptions (see *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*). The exceptions are given below.

Protocol/Spell Type: Rather than detailing the precise technical school of magic a protocol falls under, this entry shows the country of origin and (if U.R.R.S.) the type of sorceress to whom the protocol is usually taught.

Nonlethal Damage: This is the amount of nonlethal damage dealt to the kaster by kasting the spell.

Component Purchase DC:

Protocol components are expensive to manufacture, and are given out only with great care by the supply kasters responsible for logistics. It is not uncommon for sorceresses to run out of appropriate protocol components in mid-mission. The purchase DC given here applies both to attempts to purchase the protocol component and attempts to requisition it. Protocol components cannot be bought on the open market; they must be bought on the black market, and are classed in every respect there as Military (+3).

Component Weight: Most protocol components are about the size and weight of a half-pound container of food.

Kasting Time: Some protocols have a kasting time of "one free action." In most cases, this action can be taken at any time, so long as the kaster is not flat-footed. No more than one protocol or spell may be cast in any one round, however, no matter how short the kasting times.

Kast Check DC: The DC for the kaster's Kast check. See page 39 for more information about the success or failure of Kast checks.

Range: Protocol ranges are very similar in effect to those given in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*, but are always based directly on the kaster's check result, meaning results can vary wildly from what was intended, either exceeding or failing to meet the kaster's expectations. For this and other reasons, most experienced

sorceresses use their Protocol Mastery class features to master the more combat-oriented protocols first, so they gain a degree of certainty in their kasting where precision really matters.

Area: All area effect protocols may be "sculpted" by the kaster's mental command of the kaster as the protocol is kast. For example, the kaster may select a smaller size than maximum if desired, and/or designate specific regions within the area of effect that are completely untouched by the protocol. She may even go so far as to choose which 2-meter squares are affected within the

area of effect and which are not. (For an example of this in the comics, see Maya's kasting of *krawl drop protocol* in *The Red Star* #7).

Saving Throw: Determine all saving throw DCs by this formula:

$$10 + (1/2 \text{ kaster level}) + \text{kaster's Charisma bonus.}$$

Kaster level is the total class levels of all character classes for which Kast is a class skill: sorceress, Nistaani shaman, Red Fleet officer, and zek.

Sorcery Resistance: Sorcery resistance works similarly to spell resistance in *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*, but with some important differences. The sorcery resistance for creatures or vehicles is given as a positive number, such as +5 or +10. If a creature with sorcery resistance is targeted by a protocol, the Kast DC needed to affect it will be increased by the target's sorcery resistance.

An area effect protocol may fail completely if a single sorcery resistant creature is within its area of effect, due to the raised DC. If more than one sorcery resistant creature or object is within the protocol's area of effect, only the highest sorcery resistance value is used.

Almost all protocols and spells are affected by sorcery resistance, even those kast onto inanimate objects, such as armor-piercing protocols kast onto weapons. The major exception to this is that permanently protocol-enhanced items, as crafted by sorceress engineers, are not usually affected by sorcery resistance. Specifically designed protocol-piercing protocols are usually less severely affected by sorcery resistance.

a Female ART?

In the U.R.R.S. and throughout the world of *The Red Star Campaign Setting*, women make up the majority of spellcasters, but this is not without exception. Men are not restricted in what sorcery they may learn, though they often use such abilities in conjunction with external objects such as krawls and combat aircraft. It is even theorized such weapons as hooks and hailers and their wielders are another example of male sorcery working through external focuses.

Table 5-1: Range

Extreme Range	Kast check result x 100 meters
Long Range	Kast check result x 10 meters
Medium Range	Kast check result x 4 meters
Close Range	Kast check result in meters
Personal	*
Range expressed in Meters	*
Touch	*

* As their equivalents in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*.

U.R.R.S. PROTOCOLS

The U.R.R.S. is one of the world leaders in protocol design, with only the Western Transnationalist Alliance coming close to its reputation. Traditionally, the W.T.A. has preferred technology to sorcery, but recently it has opened up far more to the possibilities of sorcery as a means of waging war — particularly when combined with its advanced technology. The U.R.R.S. has a long folk history of sorcerers good and wicked alike, however; it has a good array of reliable, battle-proven protocols to choose from, and more sorceresses in the Red Fleet than in all the other standing armies of the world combined.

ACCELERATED HEALING PROTOCOL (AHP)

U.R.R.S. (Medikaster, Nokgorkan Priestess)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d4
Component Purchase DC: 15
Component Weight: 0.25 kg
Kast Check DC: 17
Kasting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Close (Kast check result x 1 meter)
Target: One creature
Duration: See text

This protocol restores a number of lost hit points equal to the Kast check result. The target's body clock is temporarily accelerated, healing wounds at an incredible rate. The protocol takes one round to have its full effect, so the target regains the appropriate number of hit points one full round after kasting.

Overkast: Increase the healed hit points by +10 per grade.

ARMOR PIERCING PROTOCOL, PERSONAL (APP-P)

U.R.R.S. (Nokgorkan Priestess, Warkaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d3
Component Purchase DC: 15
Component Weight: 0.25 kg
Kast Check DC: 12
Kasting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Medium (Kast check result x 4 meters)
Effect: One non-vehicular weapon
Duration: One round
Saving Throw: N/A
Sorcery Resistance: Yes

This protocol assists in penetrating armor. The weapon affected acquires the armor piercing quality, along with any ammunition it fires. Any time it strikes a creature, vehicle or other target with damage reduction, this spell halves the damage reduction. A target with sorcery resistance is only affected if the Kast check result exceeded the sorcery resistance DC.

Overkast: Grade 1, damage reduction divided by three rather than halved; Grade 2, damage reduction divided by four rather than halved; Grade 3, damage reduction divided by five rather than halved; and so on.

ARMOR PIERCING PROTOCOL, VEHICULAR (APP-V)

U.R.R.S. (Deck Kaster, Nokgorkan Priestess, Sorceress Engineer, Warkaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d6
Component Purchase DC: 19
Component Weight: 0.5 kg
Kast Check DC: 16
Kasting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Long (Kast check result x 10 meters)
Effect: One vehicular weapon
Duration: One round
Saving Throw: N/A
Sorcery Resistance: Yes

This protocol is identical to *armor piercing protocol, personal* except as noted above. Most users of either this or the APP-V protocol refer to whichever one they use most often simply as an APP or *armor piercing protocol*, only using the full name for the version they rarely use. Thus, a krawl crew warkaster and an infantry unit warkaster both talking about *armor piercing protocols* will be speaking of two slightly different protocols.

Overkast: As for *armor piercing protocol, personal*.

AUTOSHIELDS PROTOCOL (ASP)

U.R.R.S. (Nokgorkan Priestess, Warkaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d6
Component Purchase DC: 16
Component Weight: 0.25 kg
Kast Check DC: 15
Kasting Time: 1 full round
Range: Personal
Target: Self
Duration: One day, or until the autoshield runs out of hit points.
Saving Throw: N/A
Sorcery Resistance: N/A

The *autoshields protocol* protects the sorceress with a wall of force in all directions, which appears instantaneously when she is attacked so long as she is aware of the attack. A heads-up display shows the kaster the percentage of strength remaining in the shields.

Autoshields works identically to the *autoshields protocol* enhancement for armor or clothing (see page 61) except as follows: if the *autoshield* produced is ever reduced to 0 hit points, the protocol ends immediately. The shield cannot regenerate if reduced to 0, though it regenerates as normal if deliberately switched off.

An *autoshield* kast with this protocol has 30 hit points and no damage reduction.

Overkast: *Autoshield* has +15 hit points per grade.

Table 5-2: U.R.R.S. PROTOCOLS BY SPECIALTY

Deck Master

Armor Piercing Protocol, Vehicular (APP-V)
Blast Control Protocols (BCP)
Cooperative Reinforcement Protocol (CRP)
Defensive Shield Protocol (DFP)
Jumpgate Transfer Protocol ("Jumpgate" or JTP)
Protocol Resistance Shields Protocol, Vehicular (PRSP-V)
Shield Reinforce Protocol (SRP)

Infokaster

Burst Voltage Protocol (BVP)
Cooperative Reinforcement Protocol (CRP)
Jump Information Protocol ("Slave Protocol" or JIP)
Map Protocol (MAP)
Reenact Protocol (RE Protocol or REP)
Supply Protocol I (SUP-1)
Stealth Protocol (STP)
Stimulant Protocol ("Stim Shot" or SSP)
Transpathic Signal Protocol (TSP)

Medikaster

Accelerated Healing Protocol (AHP)
Defensive Shell Protocol (DSP)
Final Mercy Protocol (FMP)
Instant Medical Protocol (IMP)
Paramedic Protocol (PMP)
Shield Reinforce Protocol (SRP)
Stimulant Protocol ("Stim Shot" or SSP)

Nokgorkan Priestess

Accelerated Healing Protocol (AHP)
Armor Piercing Protocol, Personal (APP-P)
Armor Piercing Protocol, Vehicular (APP-V)
Autoshields Protocol (ASP)
Defensive Shell Protocol (DSP)
Expanse Protocol (EXP)
Paramedic Protocol (PMP)
Supply Protocol I (SUP-1)
Transpathic Detonator Protocol (TDP)
Transpathic Signal Protocol (TSP)

Sorceress Engineer

Armor Piercing Protocol, Vehicular (APP-V)
Burst Voltage Protocol (BVP)
Defensive Shell Protocol (DSP)
Expanse Protocol (EXP)
Field Repair Protocol (FRP)
Protocol Resistance Shields Protocol, Vehicular (PRSP-V)
Shield Reinforce Protocol (SRP)
Supply Protocol I (SUP-1)
Supply Protocol II (SUP-2)
Stimulant Protocol ("Stim Shot" or SSP)
Transpathic Detonator Protocol (TDP)

Supply Master

Cooperative Reinforcement Protocol (CRP)
Expanse Protocol (EXP)
Gate Transfer Protocol ("Gate" or GTP)
Jumpgate Transfer Protocol ("Jumpgate" or JTP)
Krawl Drop Protocols (KDPs)
Protocol Resistance Shields Protocol, Area (PRSP-A)
Supply Protocol I (SUP-1)
Supply Protocol II (SUP-2)
Supply Protocol III (SUP-3)
Supply Protocol IV (SUP-4)

Warkaster

Armor Piercing Protocol, Personal (APP-P)
Armor Piercing Protocol, Vehicular (APP-V)
Autoshields Protocol (ASP)
Burst Voltage Protocol (BVP)
Defensive Shell Protocol (DSP)
Defensive Shield Protocol (DFP)
Drop Protocol (DRP)
Expanse Protocol (EXP)
Gate Transfer Protocol ("Gate" or GTP)
Jumpgate Transfer Protocol ("Jumpgate" or JTP)
Krawl Drop Protocols (KDPs)
MTK-90 Protocol (MTKP)
Protocol Resistance Shields Protocol, Area (PRSP-A)
Protocol Resistance Shields Protocol, Personal (PRSP-P)
Protocol Resistance Shields Protocol, Vehicular (PRSP-V)
Shield Reinforce Protocol (SRP)
Stealth Protocol (STP)
Transformation Protocol (TFP)

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BLAST CONTROL PROTOCOLS (BCP)

U.R.R.S. (Deck Kaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d2

Component Purchase DC: 10

Component Weight: 0.25 kg

Kast Check DC: 15

Kasting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Long (Kast check result x 10 meters)

Target: One isolator tunnel, and one willing warkaster within it

Duration: Concentration (to a maximum of 2 minutes)

This set of protocols is used to monitor and oversee a warkaster in an isolator tunnel (see page 81). With it, the deck kaster may alter the target's heart rate, body temperature, breathing patterns and virtually every other vital function, tuning her to be a perfect weapon of war, the embodied will of the state.

A set of *blast control protocols* must be continued for at least a full minute to properly prepare the target warkaster for kasting a *transformation protocol*.

If the *blast control protocols* are not kast correctly (that is, if the deck kaster fails her Kast check), the warkaster in the isolator tunnel is unable to kast her *transformation protocol* (see page 98).

If the deck kaster's concentration lapses during the *blast control protocols*' duration, the *transformation protocol* can be kast normally, but the warkaster take 5d6 points of damage at the end of the *transformation protocol*'s duration, when she attempts to return to normal. This also occurs if the warkaster kasts the *transformation protocol* after being the subject of the *blast control protocols* for less than a full minute.

If the deck kaster's Kast check for her *blast control protocols* succeeds by 10 or more, the warkaster gains a bonus of +2 to all her attack rolls while affected by her *transformation protocol*.

Overkast: Overkasting increases the warkaster's attack roll bonus for her *transformation protocol* attacks by +1 per grade. This protocol is almost never overkast, however, as each grade of overkasting increases the damage dealt the warkaster by +1d6, should the deck kaster's Concentration fail. It also increases the DC of the Concentration checks by +5 per grade.

BURST VOLTAGE PROTOCOL (BVP)

U.R.R.S. (Infokaster, Sorceress Engineer, Warkaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d6

Component Purchase DC: 17

Component Weight: 0.5 kg

Kast Check DC: 18

Kasting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Long (Kast check result x 10 meters)

Area: Sphere of radius (Kast check result x 5) meters

Duration: Instantaneous (see below)

Saving Throw: See text

Sorcery Resistance: Yes

Use *burst voltage protocol* to target enemy electrical systems. In its standard form, the protocol affects all electrical or electronic systems as follows.

The target rolls 1d20, adding +10 if the system in question is shielded (almost all dedicated military technology is shielded). If the target is larger than Medium size, add +1 for Large, +2 for Huge, +4 for Gargantuan, and +8 for Colossal. Larger vehicles and other electrical devices are more robust than smaller ones, typically having improved safety systems. Consult the following table:

BURST VOLTAGE PROTOCOL

Modified d20 Roll	Effect
1-3	Electrical systems are severely damaged (may not be used again until repaired), and on fire
4-6	Electrical systems are severely damaged (may not be used again until repaired)
7-15	Electrical systems are out of action for 1d6 rounds, then come back online.
16+	No effect.

Though the protocol itself is instantaneous in its action, the damage done may well cause problems for far longer than the protocol lasts.

Overkast: There is a -4 penalty per grade to the modified 1d20 roll to determine the protocol results. In addition, all creatures and objects within the area affected take 2d6 points of electricity damage per grade. They receive a Reflex save for half damage.

COOPERATIVE REINFORCEMENT PROTOCOL (CRP)

U.R.R.S. (Deck Kaster, Infokaster, Supply Kaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d10

Component Purchase DC: 16

Component Weight: 0.25 kg

Kast Check DC: 16

Kasting Time: 1 full round per additional kaster involved

Range: Close (Kast check result x 1 meter)

Effect: Up to one additional kaster per point of Kast check result.

Duration: See text

Saving Throw: See text

Sorcery Resistance: See text

The *cooperative reinforcement protocol* allows multiple kasters to work together in kasting a single protocol, such as creating a *transfer protocol* big enough to fit a skyfurnace through it. This allows the kaster of the CRP to lead the other kasters in what is in effect a ritual (see the Ritual skill on page 39), but substituting Kast skills for Ritual skills in every respect, and with the total time taken reduced.

A CRP takes one full round to kast per kaster involved, and never gets bonuses for longer kasting times. At the end of the kasting time, the kaster kasts the next protocol, gaining bonuses to his or her Kast skill check. For each participant with between 1 and 9 ranks of Kast, the kaster gains a +1 bonus to her Kast check; for each participant with 10 to 19 ranks of Kast, the bonus is +2; for each participant with 20 or more ranks of Kast, the bonus is +3.

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Defensive Shell Protocol (DSP)

U.R.R.S. (Medikaster, Nokgorkan Priestess, Sorceress Engineer, Warkaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d8

Component Purchase DC: 18

Component Weight: 0.75 kg

Kast Check DC: 17

Kasting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (Kast check result x 4 meters)

Effect: Hemisphere of radius (Kast check result x 2 meters)

Duration: Until cancelled, or until shield runs out of hit points.

Defensive shell protocol is an immobile defensive shield used during battle to protect severely wounded individuals who are unable to defend themselves. It is also used during heavy shelling to protect vehicles and soldiers.

Defensive shell protocol creates a shield very similar to that of the *autoshields protocol*, but with the following differences. The shield created cannot move (though it does not impede the movement of those within it), and has 100 hit points. The shield stays in place continuously, rather than switching on automatically as for *autoshields protocol*; however, it decays at a far slower rate, losing only 1 hit point per minute rather than 1 hit point per round.

Overkast: Shield has +25 hit points per grade.

Defensive Shield Protocol (DSP)

U.R.R.S. (Deck Kaster, Warkaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 2d6

Component Purchase DC: 20

Component Weight: 1 kg

Kast Check DC: Varies, see text

Kasting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch (must be aboard vehicle at the time)

Effect: One vehicle

Duration: Until defensive shield runs out of hit points.

Sorcery Resistance: No

As *autoshields protocol*, except *defensive shield protocol* protects one vehicle and all its occupants. The shield has 250 hit points. The shield stays in place continuously, rather than switching on automatically as *autoshields protocol*; however, it decays at a far slower rate, losing only 1 hit point per minute rather than 1 hit point per round. The size of the vehicle determines the Kast check DC.

Defensive Shield Protocol

Vehicle Size	Kast Check DC
Medium or smaller	20
Large	21
Huge	22
Gargantuan	24
Colossal	28

Overkast: Shield has +50 hit points per grade.

Drop Protocol (DRP)

U.R.R.S. (Warkaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d8

Component Purchase DC: 19

Component Weight: 0.25 kg

Kast Check DC: 20

Kasting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Area: Circle of radius (Kast check result x 0.5 meters), excluding the kaster's 2-meter square

Duration: Instantaneous.

Saving Throw: Reflex negates

Sorcery Resistance: Yes

This protocol causes the ground to fall away around the kaster, dropping all assailants into the depths of the Earth. A chasm in the earth opens with a depth of (Kast check result) x 10 meters, dealing appropriate falling damage to all affected by it.

Those within the area of effect may attempt a Reflex save to get out of the way altogether (if within 4 meters of an



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unaffected 2-meter square) or catch onto a hold part-way down if not within 4 meters of an unaffected 2-meter square. A failed Reflex save indicates the subject fall, taking falling damage as normal (1d6 per 4m fallen).

Overkast: Increase the Reflex save DC by +2 for each grade.

EXPANSE PROTOCOL (EXP)

U.R.R.S. (Nokgorkan Priestess, Sorceress Engineer, Supply Kaster, Warkaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d4

Component Purchase DC: 15

Component Weight: 0.5 kg

Kast Check DC: 17

Kasting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (Kast check result x 4 meters)

Area: Bridge 2 meters wide and up to (Kast check result x 2 meters) long

Duration: Concentration.

This protocol creates a bridge of reddish energy to facilitate transportation across craters, or across streets above ground level. The bridge is supernaturally strong and can support any weight, but it is vulnerable to damage (100 hit points). Anyone crossing it also risks the kaster losing concentration or being killed, either of which cause the bridge to disappear instantaneously.

Overkast: An additional bridge can be created for each grade, joined onto either the first to simply make it longer, or side-by-side to enable larger numbers of troops to cross rapidly.



FIELD REPAIR PROTOCOL (FRP)

U.R.R.S. (Sorceress Engineer)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d8

Component Purchase DC: 15

Component Weight: 0.5 kg

Kast Check DC: 10

Kasting Time: 1 full round

Range: Touch

Target: One vehicle

Duration: Instantaneous.

Sorceress Engineers use this protocol to repair damage to vehicles — patching holes in armor and fixing structural damage. The protocol does not address mechanical problems, such as a ruined engine. It can repair any vehicle that has at least 1 hit point, restoring lost hit points equal to the Kast check result.

Overkast: Restore a further +30 hit points per grade.

FINAL MERCY PROTOCOL (FMP)

U.R.R.S. (Medikaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d2

Component Purchase DC: 10

Component Weight: 0.25 kg

Kast Check DC: 10

Kasting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: One willing creature with 0 hit points or less

Duration: Instantaneous.

Saving Throw: None (but see text)

Sorcery Resistance: No

Use *final mercy protocol* to provide merciful release to badly injured comrades if no imminent means of restoring them to health is at hand. The target must be willing; an unwilling target cannot be affected at all. The protocol instantly and painlessly kills the target.

Note: It is possible even for an unconscious character to be willing to die, at the GM's discretion. This protocol detects a willingness to die on the part of the spirit inhabiting the body; there is no need for the character to confirm this with speech.

Overkast: One additional creature can be touched per grade.

GATE TRANSFER PROTOCOL ("Gate"/GTP)

U.R.R.S. (Supply Kaster, Warkaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d4

Component Purchase DC: 17

Component Weight: 0.25 kg

Kast Check DC: 14

Kasting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (Kast check result x 1 meter), plus see text

Area: Square gate of 2 x 2 meters in size

Duration: Kast check result x 1 minute, or until cancelled

This protocol creates a pair of linked freestanding "gates" to transport soldiers and their equipment. Any creature or

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object touching the gate instantly transports to the other gate. Kast vertically near the ground, these gates can be used for evacuations; "siege gates" are usually cast horizontally at a small elevation for assaults. Gates can be color-coded when cast so troopers know basic information on destination, which unit should enter or exit which gate, etc.

One of the two gates must appear within Close range of the kaster (Kast check result x 1 meter). The other gate may appear either anywhere within Extreme range of the kaster (Kast check result x 100 meters), or in any skyfurnace gate chamber the kaster is attuned to (see page 73), at the kaster's choice. The gates may rest on the ground, or not, as the kaster prefers.

Instant Medical Protocol (IMP)

U.R.R.S. (Medikaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d6
Component Purchase DC: 20
Component Weight: 0.5 kg
Kast Check DC: 20
Kasting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Close (Kast check result x 1 meter)
Target: One creature
Duration: Instantaneous

This protocol restores a number of lost hit points equal to the Kast check result. Furthermore, it restores 1d3 lost ability points (target's choice as to which ability points are restored first), cures blindness and deafness (whether temporary or permanent), and removes any diseases the target might have.

Overkast: Increase the healed hit points by +15 per grade.

Jump Information Protocol ("Slave Protocol" or JIP)

U.R.R.S. (Infokaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d8
Component Purchase DC: 21
Component Weight: 0.25 kg
Kast Check DC: 24
Kasting Time: 1 full round
Range: Extreme (Kast check result x 100 meters)
Target: One kaster kasting a *jumpgate transfer protocol*
Duration: See text
Saving Throw: Will negates, but see text
Sorcery Resistance: Yes

A *jump information protocol* allows the kaster to "slave" onto the coordinates to which the target's vehicle jumps (see *jumpgate transfer protocol*). This drags the kaster's vehicle through the same jumpgate, incidentally forcing the target to overkast the *jumpgate transfer protocol* due to the extra mass involved.

Jump information protocol may be kast at any time during the kasting of the target's *jumpgate transfer protocol*. The target is permitted a Will saving throw at the usual DC; if successful, it allows her to throw off the effects of this protocol entirely. Making that saving throw forces her

to make a Concentration check, however, throwing the outcome of her *jumpgate transfer protocol* into question. Regardless of whether the save succeeds or fails, failure on the Concentration check means her *jumpgate transfer protocol* fails (with potentially disastrous consequences for the vehicle making the jump).

Overkast: Increase the target's Will saving throw by +2 per grade.

Jumpgate Transfer Protocol ("Jumpgate" or JTP)

U.R.R.S. (Deck Kaster, Supply Kaster, Warkaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d10
Component Purchase DC: 22
Component Weight: 1 kg
Kast Check DC: See text
Kasting Time: 1 minute
Range: Touch (must be aboard vehicle)
Target: One vehicle moving at transfer speed (or more vehicles with overkasting; see text)
Duration: One round

This protocol typically employs the combined efforts of numerous sorceresses via a *cooperative reinforcement protocol*. It teleports a vehicle, most often a skyfurnace, after it first accelerates to transfer speed — a speed of at least 100. The destination may be anywhere the kaster knows personally or has been given coordinates for, though if this is an otherworldly location (see **Chapter Eight: The Spiritrealm**), the Kast check DC increases by +40.

Kasting this protocol produces profound atmospheric and sorcerous disturbances around the target vehicle, which are obvious to anyone familiar with the effects of sorcery. A successful DC 10 Spot check notices the disturbances. A successful DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) check will correctly identify the cause as being a *jumpgate transfer protocol*.

Other ships may attempt to "slave on" to the jump coordinates using the *jump information protocol*, making actual transfer more difficult by adding the mass of the second vehicle to the equation. Each additional vehicle successfully "slaving on" in this manner requires the jumpgate's kaster to overkast by one grade (see below) or abandon the jump attempt. The extreme difficulty of kasting a jumpgate is why this protocol is usually kast co-operatively.

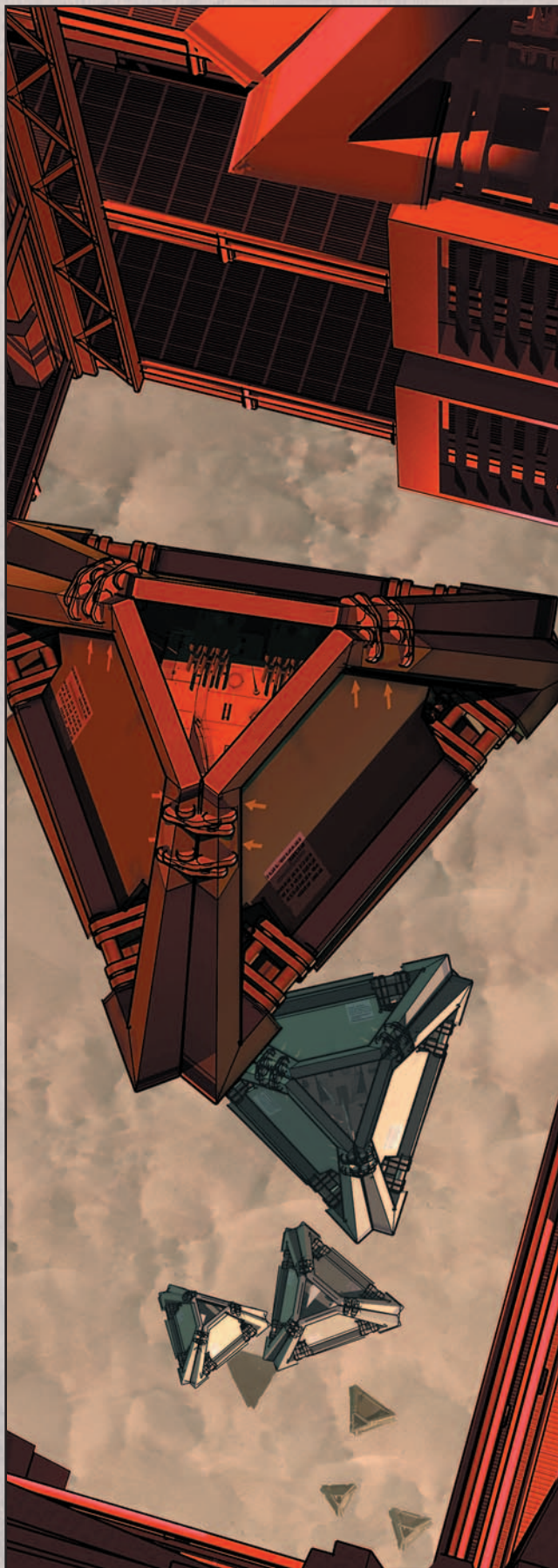
The Kast check DC for the protocol depends on the size of the vehicle.

Jumpgate Transfer Protocol

Vehicle Size	Kast Check DC
Medium or smaller	30
Large	35
Huge	40
Gargantuan	50
Colossal	60

Transferring through a gate of this size always requires one round, hence the duration. The spell requires the kaster's full attention throughout the duration; any lapse in concentration

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results in the jumpgate collapsing, potentially sending the vehicle out of control due to the extreme energy fluctuations involved. The pilot or driver of any vehicle attempting to go through a collapsing jumpgate must succeed DC 25 Pilot or Drive skill check or lose control of the vehicle.

Overkast: An additional vehicle of identical size may be brought through the jumpgate for each grade, so long as it is slaved onto the first.

KRAWL DROP PROTOCOLS (KDPs)

U.R.R.S. (Supply Kaster, Warkaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d4

Component Purchase DC: 15

Component Weight: 0.25 kg

Kast Check DC: 15

Kasting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch (must be aboard vehicle at the time)

Target: One vehicle

Duration: Concentration

This is actually an array of three major and several minor protocols used to drop a krawl safely from a skyfurnace onto a battlefield. The most vital protocols of this group are the *gyro-stabilization protocol* (GSP), which prevents the drop casing from spinning; the *impact protocol*, used to cushion the krawl drop casing on impact, protecting both the vehicle and its crew from serious damage; and the *retro-shock protocol*, which slows the krawl at the very last moment before impact.

For game purposes, these various protocols subsume into one protocol, lasting for the duration of the krawl drop. The kaster must concentrate on this protocol from the moment the krawl is released from the skyfurnace to the moment of impact. Any lapse in concentration could be fatal for both krawl and crew, leaving the vehicle in an uncontrollable spin at terminal velocity for a few seconds until it impacts the Earth with devastating force.

Standard procedure is to allow the krawls to drop at full speed to begin with, only slowing them with the *retro-shock protocol* at the last possible instant. The kaster must continue concentrating on the *krawl drop protocols* for the entire duration of the drop. The GM should determine how long the drop takes using the information below, depending on the height of the skyfurnace when the krawl drops.

KRAWL DROP PROTOCOLS

Drop Height	Drop Duration (rounds)
200m or less	1 round
201-550m	2 rounds
551-900m	3 rounds
901-1250m	4 rounds
1251-1600m	5 rounds
1601-1950m	6 rounds
1951-2300m	7 rounds
2301-2650m	8 rounds
2651-3000m	9 rounds
3001m-3350m	10 rounds
Each additional 350m	+1 round

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If the *krawl drop protocols* fail (usually due to the kaster's failure to maintain concentration), the impact deals 20d6 points of damage to the krawl. If strapped in, the occupants take half of this damage. Those not strapped in may attempt a DC 30 Reflex save to halve this damage.

Depending on the point at which the protocols fail, it may be possible for the same or another kaster to re-kast them, saving the krawl. This may be done at any point prior to impact since most of the krawl's speed is arrested in the final instant in any case. Each kasting of *krawl drop protocols* beyond the first on a single drop is progressively more difficult however, since the krawl goes into an uncontrolled spin when the first protocol fails. Add a cumulative +2 to the Kast Check DC for each additional kasting required beyond the first.

Overkast: This is only regarded as necessary when an initial set of *krawl drop protocols* have failed and the kaster needs to rapidly re-kast in an emergency. Each grade cancels one +2 increase to the Kast Check DC for the protocols being re-kast.

MAP PROTOCOL (MAP)

U.R.R.S. (Infokaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d2

Component Purchase DC: 15

Component Weight: 0.25 kg

Kast Check DC: 14

Kasting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Extreme (Kast check result x 100 meters), or Touch

Area: Sphere of either (Kast check result x 100 meters) or (Kast check result x 20 meters) radius

Duration: (Kast check result) x 1 round

Saving Throw: See text

Sorcery Resistance: No

Map protocols create holographic images of the kaster's surroundings. This protocol can be kast in one of two ways. In either casting of the *map protocol*, characters adjacent to the kaster may observe the effect.

Static Map: A static map is a recording of the area within it, showing large-scale (an area with at least two dimensions measuring at least 2 meters each) inanimate features only. The map does not reveal any moving object within this area, though it does reveal a stationary vehicle of a sufficiently large size. This version of the protocol has a range of Extreme and an area that is a sphere whose radius equals the Kast check result x 100 meters.

Trace Map: A trace map is an instant map whose radius equals the Kast check result x 20 meters, measured outward from the kaster. It includes extremely fine detail and includes a zoom control, allowing the kaster to see everything within its area of effect if desired. She may make Spot and Search checks as though she were anywhere within the map's area, though she takes a -4 circumstance penalty to these checks. Living creatures in the area of the map may attempt a Will save against the Protocols' DC to avoid being shown by the map.

Overkast: Doubles the area of effect at Grade I, triples it at Grade II, etc.

MTK-90 PROTOCOL (MTRP)

U.R.R.S. (Warkaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d8

Component Purchase DC: 20

Component Weight: 0.5 kg

Kast Check DC: 21

Kasting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Personal

Duration: (Kast check result) x 1 round

This protocol conjures a weapon capable of firing high explosive anti-personnel rounds at up to 10,000 rounds per minute, with tracers on variable rounds, depending on the needs of the kaster. The weapon's game statistics are given in **Chapter Two: Personal Weapons and Equipment**, though those statistics are subject to enhancement as follows.

The basic weapon fires at 1,000 bullets per minute, with no tracers. For every rank of Kast skill the Kaster possesses, she may add an additional +500 bullets per minute to the firing rate, gaining a +1 bonus to all damage rolls with the weapon (to a maximum of 10,000 bullets per minute total, for +18 to all damage rolls). Alternatively, she may add one tracer per hundred rounds fired, with each tracer granting a +1 bonus to attack rolls (to a maximum of 20 tracers per hundred rounds, for +20 to all attack rolls).

For example, a 10th level sorceress with 13 ranks of Kast could conjure an MTK-90 capable of firing 5,500 bullets per minute (for +9 to damage) with four tracers per 100 rounds (for +4 to all attack rolls).

As the weapon and ammunition are entirely composed of protocol energy, there is never any concern about running out of bullets.

Tracers can be set to different kinds of vision: human-eye, thermal, night vision, and so on at the kaster's preference.

PARAMEDIC PROTOCOL (PMP)

U.R.R.S. (Medikaster, Nokgorkan Priestess)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d2

Component Purchase DC: 12

Component Weight: 0.25 kg

Kast Check DC: 14

Kasting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (Kast check result x 1 meter)

Target: One creature

Duration: Instantaneous

This protocol instantly stabilizes an injured character. It does not restore lost hit points.

PROTOCOL RESISTANCE SHIELDS PROTOCOL, AREA (PRSP-a)

U.R.R.S. (Supply Kaster, Warkaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 2d6

Component Purchase DC: 30

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Component Weight: 1 kg
Kast Check DC: 30
Kasting Time: 1 full round
Range: Close (Kast check result x 1 meter)
Area: (Kast check result) x 100 meters
Duration: (Kast check result) x 10 minutes

This protocol grants any individuals in the area Sorcery Resistance +4. Any kaster attempting to kast a protocol or spell into, out of, or within the protocol's area adds the appropriate sorcery resistance to her Kast Check DC. The original kaster of this protocol may specify named individuals or those with a particular Allegiance to be unaffected by the *protocol resistance shields protocol* allowing them to kast freely.

Overkast: Increase the Sorcery Resistance by +2 per grade.

PROTOCOL RESISTANCE SHIELDS PROTOCOL, PERSONAL (PRSP-P)

U.R.R.S. (Warkaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d8
Component Purchase DC: 20
Component Weight: 0.25 kg
Kast Check DC: 20
Kasting Time: 1 full round
Range: Personal
Target: Self
Duration: (Kast check result) x 1 hour

This protocol grants the target Sorcery Resistance +4.

Overkast: Increase the Sorcery Resistance by +2 per grade.



PROTOCOL RESISTANCE SHIELDS PROTOCOL, VEHICULAR (PRSP-V)

U.R.R.S. (Deck Kaster, Sorceress Engineer, Warkaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d10
Component Purchase DC: 25
Component Weight: 0.5 kg
Kast Check DC: 25
Kasting Time: 1 full round
Range: Touch (must be aboard target vehicle)
Target: One vehicle
Duration: (Kast check result) x 10 minutes

This protocol grants the vehicle itself, and all aboard it, Sorcery Resistance +4.

Overkast: Overkasting increases the Sorcery Resistance by +2 per grade.

REENACT PROTOCOL (RE PROTOCOL OR REP)

U.R.R.S. (Infokaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d6
Component Purchase DC: 24
Component Weight: 0.5 kg
Kast Check DC: 25
Kasting Time: 1 full round
Range: Close (Kast check result x 1 meter)
Area: Sphere of radius (Kast check result x 2 meters).
Duration: Concentration
Saving Throw: See text
Sorcery Resistance: No

This protocol creates a searchable, holographic replay of history filterable for specific information.

The holograph created is unpleasantly bright, with all the images composing it consisting of blinding white, dark purple, or some shade in between, light. As a side effect of the main protocol, it sometimes dazzles those who watch it if they are unprepared. Any character within the area of effect at the instant the protocol first takes effect, or looking in that direction, must make a Reflex saving throw or be blinded for one round. A character who specifies she is covering or closing her eyes avoids the blinding effect without needing to make a saving throw. After the initial round, it is possible to look at the holograph, with one's eyes gradually adapting to the brightness.

As long as the kaster concentrates, she can observe, search and even request specific information from the protocol. The kaster can "scroll" back and forth through history, viewing events up to a number of years into the past equal to the Kast check result. She can slow down or speed up the "recording," focus in on tiny details at her will. She can use Search, Spot and Listen each with a +4 circumstance bonus to examine specific occurrences and objects that may not be immediately obvious.

The only constraint is the amount of time all this will take — perhaps the best guideline for the GM is to imagine

CHAPTER FIVE: MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL SORCERY

a detective movie, in which the protagonists focus in on details of a photograph or video still to spot a crucial piece of evidence. The more information the kaster wants out of the protocol, the longer it takes.

This is an advanced protocol which must be registered for use with Informnet before ever being actually kast. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary charges brought against the kaster.

Overkast: All the details are clearer and sharper still; the kaster gains an additional +4 bonus to Search, Spot and Listen when examining the protocol, for each grade of Overkasting.

SHIELD REINFORCE PROTOCOL (SRP)

U.R.R.S. (Deck Kaster, Medikaster, Sorceress Engineer, Warkaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d3

Component Purchase DC: 12

Component Weight: 0.25 kg

Kast Check DC: 15

Kasting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (Kast check result x 4 meters)

Target: One *autosield*, *defensive shell protocol*, or *defensive shield protocol*.

Duration: Instantaneous

This protocol adds +20 hit points to the target shield.

Overkasting: The effect is increased by a further +20 for each grade; thus, +40 instead of +20 at Grade I, +60 at Grade II, +80 at Grade III and so on.

SUPPLY PROTOCOL I (SUP-1)

U.R.R.S. (Infokaster, Nokgorkan Priestess, Sorceress Engineer, Supply Kaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d2

Component Purchase DC: 10

Component Weight: 0.25 kg

Kast Check DC: 10

Kasting Time: 1 full round

Range: Extreme (Kast check result x 100 meters)

Target: One inanimate object or container weighing up to 1 kg

Duration: Instantaneous

This protocol allows the supply kaster to teleport a small quantity of material, typically from a base or equipment cache, to troops on the front line.

The origin point of the target must be within 2 meters of the kaster, but the destination point can be anywhere within range, so long as it is either a place that is known personally to the kaster or a dedicated supply receptacle such as a protocolip, protopouch, protopack or crate (see **Chapter Two: Personal Weapons and Equipment**). If the former type of destination is used, the kasting is considerably more difficult; the kast check has a penalty of -2 to -8 to the die roll, depending on how well the kaster knows the location. A dedicated, protocol-enhanced supply receptacle never suffers from this penalty.

SUPPLY PROTOCOL

Kaster's Knowledge of Destination

Kast Check Penalty

Extremely thorough; a very familiar location, perhaps the kaster's home

-2

Thorough; a place the kaster has visited many times, for extended stays

-4

Familiar; a place the kaster has visited several times

-6

Fleeting; a place the kaster has only seen once, and that briefly

-8

Overkast: Grade I: double either the weight of the target, or the maximum range; Grade II: either double both range and weight, or triple either the range or the weight; Grade III: either triple the range and double the weight, double the range and triple the weight, quadruple the weight, or quadruple the range; and so on.

SUPPLY PROTOCOL II (SUP-2)

U.R.R.S. (Sorceress Engineer, Supply Kaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d4

Component Purchase DC: 15

Component Weight: 0.5 kg

Kast Check DC: 15

Kasting Time: 1 full round

Range: Kast check result x 200 meters

Target: One inanimate object or container weighing up to 10 kg

Duration: Instantaneous

This protocol is similar to *supply protocol I*, but may carry more and has a greater base range.

Overkast: Grade I: double either the weight of the target, or the maximum range; Grade II: either double both range and weight, or triple either the range or the weight; Grade III: either triple the range and double the weight, double the range and triple the weight, quadruple the weight, or quadruple the range; and so on.

SUPPLY PROTOCOL III (SUP-3)

U.R.R.S. (Supply Kaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d6

Component Purchase DC: 20

Component Weight: 0.75 kg

Kast Check DC: 20

Kasting Time: 1 full round

Range: Kast check result x 500 meters

Target: One inanimate object or container weighing up to 100 kg

Duration: Instantaneous

This protocol is identical to *supply protocol II*, but may carry more and has a greater base range.

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Overkast: Grade I: double either the weight of the target, or the maximum range; Grade II: either double both range and weight, or triple either the range or the weight; Grade III: either triple the range and double the weight, double the range and triple the weight, quadruple the weight, or quadruple the range; and so on.

SUPPLY PROTOCOL IV (SUP-4)

U.R.R.S. (Supply Kaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d8

Component Purchase DC: 25

Component Weight: 1 kg

Kast Check DC: 25

Kasting Time: 1 full round

Range: Kast check result x 1000 meters

Target: One inanimate object or container weighing up to 1000 kg

Duration: Instantaneous

This protocol is identical to *supply protocol III*, but may carry more and has a greater base range.

Overkast: Grade I: double either the weight of the target, or the maximum range; Grade II: either double both range and weight, or triple either the range or the weight; Grade III: either triple the range and double the weight, double the range and triple the weight, quadruple the weight, or quadruple the range; and so on.

STEALTH PROTOCOL (STP)

U.R.R.S. (Infokaster, Warkaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d4

Component Purchase DC: 15

Component Weight: 0.25 kg

Kast Check DC: 15

Kasting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Long (Kast check result x 10 meters)

Target: Up to one creature per kaster level or up to one vehicle per three kaster levels, or some combination thereof

Duration: Kast check result x 1 minute

Saving Throw: Will negates; see text

Sorcery Resistance: Yes; see text

This protocol allows its targets to move and attack in complete silence. No Listen check can detect them, unless they deliberately speak. The protocol is designed so all sounds other than human speech are silenced, so radio communication is still an option. In most cases, though, a *transpathic signal protocol* is used in conjunction with this protocol, obviating the need for any sound at all.

Overkast: An additional vehicle or three additional creatures can be affected per grade.

STIMULANT PROTOCOL ("STIM SHOT" OR SSP)

U.R.R.S. (Infokaster, Medikaster, Sorceress Engineer)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d4

Component Purchase DC: 25

Component Weight: 0.25 kg

Kast Check DC: 15

Kasting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (Kast check result x 1 meter)

Target: One creature

Duration: Instantaneous

Medikasters use this to rejuvenate otherwise exhausted troops, giving them the equivalent to a good night's sleep. It is not recommended for use on other sorcerers except in dire emergencies. A sorcerer's highly honed will does not respond well to being pushed around by others, and a sorcerer affected by this protocol becomes somewhat befuddled as an unfortunate side effect.

Stimulant protocol has the following effects:

- * A fatigued target is no longer fatigued.
- * A target who is tired receives the equivalent of 8 hours' sleep.
- * A target who has been dealt nonlethal damage heals an appropriate amount as though he or she has had 8 hours' sleep — that is, 8 x character level.
- * A target that has any levels in Kast or Ritual is dealt 1d4 temporary damage to each of Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma.

The target of the kasting must be willing, or the protocol has no effect.

Overkast: Increase the recovery of nonlethal damage by another 4 hours' sleep-equivalent per grade.

TRANSFORMATION PROTOCOL (TPP)

U.R.R.S. (Warkaster)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d6

Component Purchase DC: 12

Component Weight: 0.25 kg

Kast Check DC: 15

Kasting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Target: Self

Duration: One round

This protocol may only be used in an isolator tunnel (see page 81), usually found only on skyfurnaces. In conjunction with the *blast control protocols* it transforms the sorceress into a living weapon: a sun-hot, blasting beam of light that lances out from the side of the skyfurnace she is aboard, destroying everything in its path.

For the duration of the protocol, the sorceress no longer has any of her usual game statistics; in effect, she becomes an isolator tunnel beam (see **Vehicular Weapons**, page 81) for the duration of the protocol. She has no free will at this point; the deck kasters even aim her like a weapon.

On a failed Kast check, the sorceress takes 2d6 points of damage as a side effect of the protocol. Isolator tunnel work has myriad risks, and few survive it to go on to better things.

Overkast: The isolator tunnel beam does +10 damage per grade.

TRANSPATHIC DETONATOR PROTOCOL (TDP)

U.R.R.S. (Nokgorkan Priestess, Sorceress Engineer)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d3

Component Purchase DC: 10

Component Weight: 0.25 kg

Kast Check DC: 14

Kasting Time: 1 full round

Range: Extreme (Kast check result x 100 meters),
but see text

Target: One explosive device of any size

Duration: Until set off

Used in conjunction with standard explosives, a *transpathic detonator protocol* allows a warkaster to trigger the device by mental command (as opposed to a more conventional timer, tripwire or pressure plate). Any explosive device, including a mine or protocol-powered explosive, can be so triggered, but the kaster must touch the device when the protocol is kast. The caster may trigger it at any time thereafter as a free action, so long as the explosive is within range.

TRANSPATHIC SIGNAL PROTOCOL (TSP)

U.R.R.S. (Infokaster, Nokgorkan Priestess)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d6

Component Purchase DC: 12

Component Weight: 0.25 kg

Kast Check DC: 13

Kasting Time: 1 full round

Range: Extreme (Kast check result x 100 meters)

Target: Two willing creatures touched

Duration: (Kast check result) x 1 day

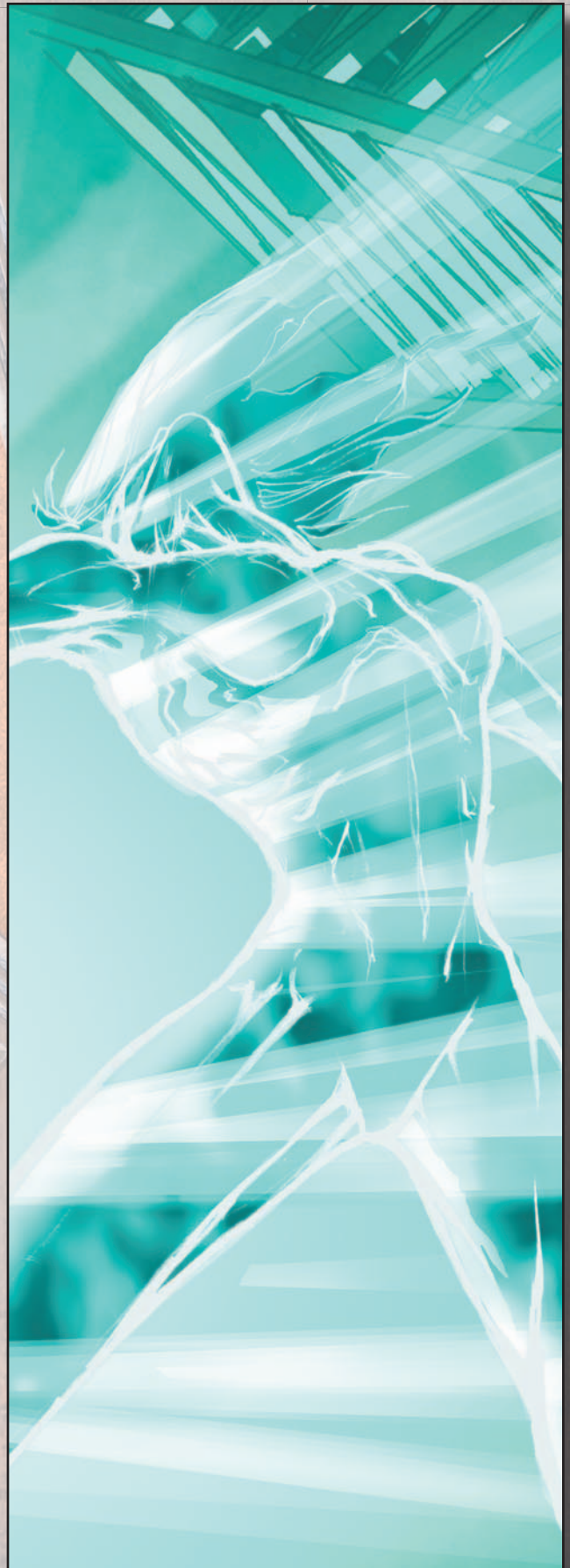
Saving Throw: See text

Sorcery Resistance: No

A *transpathic signal protocol* creates a two-way mental link for battlefield communications. This works in a very similar manner to a walkie-talkie, but is not vulnerable to conventional jamming and allows the transmittal of more information. It does not create telepathy, but a user is capable of sending brief "snapshots" of his or her memory or senses. This might include a "portrait" of an enemy, or the view from a particular building.

One side effect of this protocol is it can give the target a headache. There are no particular game effects of this, though characters are encouraged to roleplay occasional headaches if using TSPs a lot.

Overkast: Up to two additional creatures can be affected per grade, allowing for four-way communication at Grade I, six-way at Grade II, etc.





SECTION III: THE WORLD



CHAPTER SIX: THE UNITED REPUBLICS OF THE RED STAR

The Lands of the Red Star are vast nearly beyond imagining. Stretching from the borders of the frigid Danelands in the west to the near endless plains of the icy Eastern Tundra, there lays a great empire, forged by the dreams of millions of workers and the will of one man. Not so long ago, there was a very different sort of kingdom across that immense land, ruled with a cruel hand by scions of an ancient house. That tyranny lives no longer, however, for no people will endure slavery forever. With Imbohl's Revolution, the Ancient Dynasties were thrown down and the people now rule themselves through the advent of the Red Council. Or so they would like to believe.

THE CHRONICLES

The history of the Lands of the Red Star has always been collected into a vast folio called, "The Chronicles." As each era passes, a new Chronicle is added to the cycle. Exactly what determines when a new Chronicle is to begin is oft subject to scholarly debate, but it is inevitably a great change for the people of the Motherland.

FIRST CHRONICLE

Even in their oldest recorded days, the Reds were a fierce people. They needed to be if they wished to survive the many hardships of their chosen home. They roamed across the mountains and fields of their lands, driving their herds — and often their enemies — before them.

For many long years, there were hundreds of scattered tribes, each one differing from the others, sometimes wildly, especially if they came from entirely different environments. The hill tribes of the southwest had as little in common with the farmers of the central plains as those farmers in turn had with the nomadic ice walkers who roamed over the Eastern Tundra. Still, a man of great vision rose to unite them, setting a pattern that was to recur many times over in the Lands of the Red Star. His name was Urik Koroleva Zimyatov, but the First Chronicle remembers him as Prince Urik I.

Urik was the third son of a tribal warlord. He was gifted, or perhaps cursed, with a ranging mind that ever searched the next horizon. He traveled far in his youth, meeting many different tribes and absorbing their varying cultures, something rare for the time. He was an extraordinarily skilled swordsman, a master of languages, and perfectly content to be the third son. In time, his brave deeds

could not be easily recounted though he always claimed the hardest quests he ever accomplished were the ones his wife set him for the price of her hand.

Urik's wife was a powerful sorceress named Bella Vara. It was widely believed she could read the future as readily as a priest could read a book. While the pair was away on a journey, a pair of Vakir — terrible shape shifting beasts that preyed on the tribes — killed their entire family. Urik soon found out that his people had desperately begged for aid from other tribes in fighting the Vakir, but they had been denied. A force both great and terrible arose within the prince; he was determined that what had happened to his family would never be allowed to happen again while there was breath in his body. With Bella's help, Urik rallied the remains of his people, and hunted down the Vakir.

If Urik's revenge had ended with the shifter's deaths, the history of the Motherland would have been very different. It did not. The prince reasoned that what had happened to his family would continue to happen to others if the current situation of disparate tribes was allowed to continue. If all the tribes were united into one mighty nation, however, their strength would hold all enemies at bay. Furthermore, the vicious intertribal raids that had claimed so many lives over the years would also be ended.

Bella Vara fully endorsed his bold new plan and together they set about conquering the Motherland. Their courage and conviction won them many allies, including the Deathless Seer, Kiril and the legendary General Samsonov. Their numerous deeds fill a large portion of the First Chronicle, but not all they did is pleasant to hear.

**"FROM THE DUST I CAME, AND TO THE DUST I SHALL
ONE DAY RETURN. BUT MY PEOPLE WILL ENDURE AND
THIS LAND WILL ENDURE, YEA, EVEN UNTO THE ENDING
OF THE WORLD, THE RED STAR WILL STILL SHINE."**

-PRINCE URIK I, FIRST CHRONICLE

CHAPTER SIX: THE UNITED REPUBLICS OF THE RED STAR



CHAPTER SIX: THE UNITED REPUBLICS OF THE RED STAR

Urik was indisputably heroic, but he was also ruthless. He ordered entire ruling families that fought against him put to the sword, so they could never rise again to plot revenge. Bella Vera employed terrible forbidden magic to secure her husband's position. On a number of occasions, she used her powers to kidnap or kill children of intractable tribal leaders who would not bow to Urik's persuasion, but were too powerful to attack directly. Because of these and many other dark deeds ascribed to her, true or not, her name remains a curse, a warning to make children behave in the Lands of the Red Star to this very day. In the end, they were triumphant. Urik's empire endured for several centuries after his demise, up until the coming of the Depraved Ones of the Golden Horde and the Great Darkness.

As for Bella Vera, there are those who say that she lives still.

SECOND CHRONICLE

They came from the southeast riding their great steeds over the fields and taking heads like a farmer would scythe wheat. Why they came is the source of long debate, for there is no single answer. Perhaps Urik's aging empire was weak and ripe for the taking. Perhaps it was perceived as strong; in those early years, the Bleak Horsemen loved a challenge. Whatever their reason, the Depraved Ones, the most wicked of all the tribes of the Golden Horde from the Lands of the Dragon, came. Their own people cursed them and whispered dark stories around late fires of their twisted deeds. They fed their horses on the flesh of men and prayed to beings best left unnamed. They came and swept away all that had been before, replacing it with their cruel and capricious dictates.

The Golden Horde passed through many lands, demanding or taking tribute as they went, but even those fell warriors had been unwilling to bear their malevolent kin for long, so they banished them to the north, to the Lands of the Red Star. The Bleak Horsemen found the Motherland suited them, and they set up a system of provinces allowing them to more easily subjugate their massive, newly conquered realm.

The laws of the Golden Horde were seldom just, nor their treatment kind. Anguish was the lot of the dominated Reds, and woe to any daring to raise a fist against one of their new masters. They regularly demanded tribute in crops, in gold, and in blood. They seized children and sacrificed them on basalt altars to their thirsty gods. In the hours when no light shines, they cavorted with creatures they'd called from other planes, setting them to hunt peasants for sport when no other amusement presented itself.

The rest of the riders of the Golden Horde eventually withdrew to their own lands, but not so the Depraved Ones. They found the Motherland too much to their liking by far. The Chronicles name their long and terrible reign, "the Great Darkness."

The nobles of the Reds retained their titles but little real power, mainly so they could supply the Bleak Horsemen with the goods they demanded. Throughout those dark centuries, however, the people always looked to the nobles for guidance, regardless of how little power they actually wielded; this was eventually to be the Depraved Ones' undoing. Still, for nearly three hundred years, the Lands of the Red Star bore the heavy yoke of the Great Darkness. It took the rise of

a mismatched pair of Warrior Kings, one in the west and one in the east, to end their perverse rule forever.

THIRD CHRONICLE

Dmitri Baranova was born on a frozen plain in the middle of the Eastern Tundra, his mother forced to camp down for the night as she traveled from one outlying village to another delivering medicine. She rose the next morning, mere hours after her labor and proceeded onward with her new son in tow. Such was the mother that bore him, and Dmitri lived up to her hard legacy.

In his tenth year, Dmitri slew a full-grown man for an insult. As a teenager, he snapped the spine of a huge wolf using his bare hands when he caught the beast in the midst of stealing a child. He was tactically gifted and so strong of mind he could move objects with the force of his will, a rare but not unknown talent in the Lands of the Red Star at that time. He was famous for hurling javelins by thought alone with such force they could split stone. One year the Bleak Horsemen sent a creature after Dmitri, a creature summoned from some dark plane. He slew it by impaling it with cold iron spears, which was the first time anyone had ever managed to kill one of the things. And thus his legend grew.

As Dmitri came into manhood, he knew the time had come to end the Great Darkness forever. He determined the Depraved Ones had become weak with the years and they were ripe for overthrow. When he raised his banner in the east, men and women flocked to him from across all the Motherland. Within a year, he approached the Ice Wall Mountains with an army at his back. The passes were closed when they arrived, but to the awe of his followers, Dmitri shattered a mountainside with his spears, creating a new route allowing his army to sweep through the few fortresses the Depraved Ones still had manned. They marched down onto the steppes all but unopposed, to where the Grand Duke of the Citadel was waiting for them.

While Dmitri first toddled across the tundra, Prince Ivan Vasilovitch was born to the ruling family of the Citadel. For many years, the Citadel gained in prominence. The seat of Pravda's worship was placed there a century before Ivan's birth, causing the Depraved Ones to avoid the city. Because of this, it was rich enough their taxation never managed to reduce its wealth.

A kindly monk and Ivan's wet nurse raised the boy, for his noble parents had little time for him, embroiled as they were in the battle for political control. Ivan grew up on the heroic tales of the distant past and with his naturally calculating mind and modest training in scheming (learned by observing his family), he grew into an exceptionally clever, idealistic man. Long before he took his place on his father's throne, he laid out his plans.

Within days of becoming Duke Ivan III, he secretly invaded several neighboring cities using highly trained foreign mercenaries and seized their annual tributes before they could go to the Bleak Horsemen. When the Depraved Ones complained about the lack of tribute, he claimed bandits would be bandits and he would do his best to make it up to them in following years. Their reluctance to come near the seat of Pravda's worship greatly aided his plans, naturally

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and after using this and a number of other equally clever ruses, he established a sizable war chest before making his pitch to his fellow nobles — by whom would they rather be ruled: the Bleak Horsemen or one of their own?

They decided unanimously for Ivan, but only after he had made some painful concessions in regards to their control over their provinces. Ivan could order them about, but their control over their people was absolute. With their backing secure, the Grand Duke turned his eyes towards the remnants of the Depraved Ones. Many decades of easy tribute and soft living had taken its toll upon the once mighty Bleak Horsemen. Where once they would have instantly swept in with fire and sword over the missing tribute money, destroying all regardless of guilt, they now sent nothing more than sharply worded demands. They still had terrible allies to draw upon; these allies occupied many of Ivan's thoughts. Before he had decided on any course of action, however, news from the east interrupted him.

It seemed a great army flooded through the Ice Wall, demanding retribution for years of oppression. Ivan stopped only to give thanks at Pravda's shrine for what he knew was more than coincidence before taking a small contingent of his best warriors and riding at once to meet the "Lord of the Tundra," as Dmitri was then called. One would think the two men, so diametrically opposed, would immediately detest one another. In fact, quite the opposite occurred. Both men were superb judges of character, and each found in the other a brother-in-arms he had long sought. Whereas Ivan was cunning and adept at politics, Dmitri was fearless and a master of battle.

Several books of the Third Chronicle are devoted to their epic struggle against the Depraved Ones. Many lives were lost to accomplish it, but after three years the Bleak Horsemen were destroyed and the Great Darkness was lifted at last. For a brief time at least, the people of the Lands of the Red Star breathed easier. Ivan married Dmitri's sister, with Dmitri marrying one of Ivan's cousins in turn. This founded the two first families of what would eventually be referred to as the Ancient Dynasties, in part because both families claimed descent from lines that stretched all the way back to the time of Urik I.

The Ancient Dynasties

For many years, the various families of the Ancient Dynasties and the other noble houses were quite content to maintain the status quo throughout their empire. They continued to demand their peasants produce as much as they did during the years of the Great Darkness, but instead of passing the fruits of their people's labor onto a foreign power, they kept it to themselves. As the rest of the world slowly advanced, the Lands of the Red Star remained mired in their old ways. Their conservative brethren eliminated nobles seeking reform — until the coming of Gregor the Stone, so called because of his knack of outwardly appearing to be emotionless and his skin's uncanny ability to turn assassins' blades.

Gregor traveled throughout the Great Continent in his youth, absorbing the ways and culture of a number of other countries. When he returned from his journeys abroad to assume control of the Citadel and rule a large portion of the west, he forced a number of changes to bring his land in



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line with the rest of the world. He reformed the antiquated bureaucracy, founded technical schools — including the Iron Hall (a school dedicated to sorcery) — encouraged the arts, updated the alphabet, and established military conscription. Gregor's conscription acts were actually the basis for the first incarnation of the Red Fleet.

Though Gregor succeeded, somewhat, in modernizing his country, he did so at the expense of the peasantry. He passed the costs of his changes onto his nobles, who in turn forced them upon their subjects. While the privileged families of the Great Dynasties eventually benefited a great deal from Gregor's reforms (though they complained about them bitterly as they happened), the increasingly impoverished peasants ultimately paid the price.

Most of Gregor's successors made little lasting impression, at least until Lady Niole came to the throne. Niole was a powerful sorceress, a patroness of the arts, and a skilled politician. Under her reign, the Motherland continued to expand in influence on the Great Continent. Niole was also a ruthless classicist and intolerant of dissent, however, caring little for the troubles of her people. Despite this, scholars generally deem her one of the last scions of any of the Ancient Dynasties' lines with any foresight.

From Niole onward, a combination of complacency, insanity, and — so rumor goes — inbreeding plagued the various noble families. A few of the noble lines struggled to retain their ancient dignity, while the rest plunged into decadent madness. Vicious blood sports, drunken orgies, and far worse became commonplace throughout the empire, as the ruling noble house of each province tried to outdo the others in their debauchery. All the while, the peasants suffered long drudging lives the nobles deemed to be worth less than the cost of their tiniest silver spoons. When the Revolution came, unbelievably, the nobles actually had the gall to be surprised.

FOURTH CHRONICLE

There are so many stories about the glorious leader of the Great Revolution it is difficult to separate myth from fact. The active encouragement of differing versions of the tales doesn't make the task any easier.

His name is Imbohl, and depending on which story you believe, he is either the son of an aristocrat, a farmer with a gift for sorcery, or a demon from the Ice Wall. All accounts agree he is one of the most gifted sorcerers to ever be trained in the Iron Hall.

As the Ancient Dynasties entered their last years of existence, a new philosophy swept across the Motherland. Imbohl was one of its chief proponents, though not its actual architect. It was called Internationalism.

Internationalism is generally described to be a belief in the rights and dignity of the common man the world over. Under its tenets, all men are equal, none more important than any other. Through labor, all work to the greatest universal good, and all men and women are comrades in the struggle for a better world.

This then, was the basis of the Revolution. From their muddy fields and dilapidated villages, the long tormented peasants

of the Lands of the Red Star rose, a righteous anger burning in their hearts. Denied so much for so long, their rage once unleashed was all but uncontrollable, save for the will of Imbohl. Imbohl marshaled the conscripted forces of the Red Fleet, long drawn almost exclusively from the peasantry, to rise up against the corrupt noble houses that armed them. Imbohl carefully planned the efforts of the Revolution, miraculous in his ability to accurately guess the movements of his enemies. Imbohl's will could move mountains and his words could topple nations.

It was only a short time before the Revolution swept the Ancient Dynasties away. Most of the ruling families either were put to the sword or exiled to the Eastern Tundra, though a small number who had retained the good will of their people were allowed to join in the Revolution. Victory in hand, Imbohl proposed the foundations of a utopian new government, where all people would help in dictating the will of the state.

The proud comrades of the Revolution strongly supported Imbohl's plan. Their new country was to be named the United Republics of the Red Star, in tacit acknowledgement of the many different provinces that were, essentially, their own independent bodies, but that all had chosen to join a new, and greater, whole. There were some voices of dissent, notably in Nokgorka, but these were soon silenced.

In less than a year, the first Red Council convened, elected from the leaders of the Revolution representing all the varying republics. Imbohl, at his fellows' insistence and reluctantly to all appearances, took his place at their head. Once firmly ensconced in his position and given the power he had fought so long for, Imbohl changed.

At first, the differences were slight. His supporters stated he was merely absorbed in rebuilding the Republics after the destruction caused by the Revolution and he couldn't be pressed for other matters. His detractors... well, therein lay the problem. At first, Imbohl quietly exiled his detractors — even ones not public about their disapproval — to the Eastern Tundra. But within a few years, though, there was nothing quiet about it. Anyone who said anything against the glorious leader of the Revolution was fortunate to merely be sent to the icy east, never to return. Many others were simply executed on the spot.

A courageous few brought to light the fact that many of the Nokgorkan Elders had been "persuaded" to join the Republics of the Red Star with a bullet to the back of the head. Slowly, some of the Reds began to realize they had exchanged a whole group of tyrants for a single one. Any plans directed at removing Imbohl stopped forever as fate, in the form of the Aryan Nationalist Party, intervened. Worrisome news from the Great Continent of the rise of the Volksreich drew off criticism from Imbohl. When the "wise" leader of the Revolution smoothly maneuvered into a brief peace with the Volksreich, his people once again hailed him as a visionary leader.

Imbohl's pact with the Aryan leader, Krieger, was merely a delaying tactic. He could clearly see how Krieger's lust for power rivaled his own. Within hours of walking away from his final meeting with the Aryans, Imbohl quietly passed a law through the Red Council tripling conscription numbers for the new and improved Red Fleet. Long before the Volksreich ever attacked the U.R.R.S., Imbohl planned for the war to come.

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Even Imbohl's great foresight didn't entirely allow him to prepare his country for the sheer impact of the Aryans' army. Still, the dark clouds of the Great Patriotic War held an unseen benefit for Imbohl. Many of his critics, and even a number of less-than-fanatical supporters, were sent to the front lines to be crushed under the Aryans' krawls. Millions fell defending the Motherland, and all the while, Imbohl's position simply grew stronger.

Following the war, Imbohl and the Red Council found themselves exactly where they wanted to be. The only force left in the world that could truly oppose the U.R.R.S. was the Western Transnational Alliance (W.T.A.). Imbohl firmly upheld the idea of establishing the Global Council, telling his fellows on the Red Council it would allow them to keep an eye on the doings of the W.T.A. Actually, Imbohl found the existence of the W.T.A. highly useful to his schemes. Imbohl was known to privately joke the Westerners had done him a big favor, for if the W.T.A. hadn't have existed, he would've needed to create something exactly like the Ironhold without them.

Having an enemy to divert their people's attention was to prove extremely useful many times over the years for Imbohl and the Red Council. It allowed them to both further their militaristic agenda and to suppress all opposition, all for the cause of "the Motherland." Money for programs the people of the Republics might have insisted upon to benefit all comrades, such as decent health care and improved social services, found its way in military research. There was always another conflict somewhere in the world that attention could be diverted to, inevitably a country needing assistance from the corrupt decadence of the West.

After the first two decades of the Ironhold, Imbohl nominally stepped down from being the First Comrade of the Red Council. All Reds with any conception of how their government worked, however, were well aware the old man was still in charge and his will remained intractable. The state labeled dissenters as unpatriotic and anyone speaking out too loudly against the policies Imbohl and the Red Council favored was deemed a spy or subversive from the West, and then exiled to the Eastern Tundra.

As useful as the Ironhold was in some respects, it effectively masked certain truths. Many Reds that might have usefully contributed to their society stayed silent in the face of the conservative regime, leading to stagnation in a number of areas of the Republics. Innovation was often frowned upon to the detriment of all, causing a widening gap in technology and sorcery with the more research-liberal West. The dogma of the Red Council rang increasingly hollow as modern communication devices showed the W.T.A. was definitely improving beyond the means of the U.R.R.S.

Despite this, the state allowed nothing to change. More and more Reds braved exile to the east to voice their belief their country headed towards destruction, yet the Internationalist Party and the Red Council insisted everything was to go on exactly as it was. Internationalism would eventually triumph. All was well with the United Republics of the Red Star, and they would show the world this by sending the invincible Red Fleet to assist comrades in need of aid ...

...to the country of Al'Istaan.

HOPE & FEAR: LIFE IN THE U.R.R.S.

THE LANDS OF THE RED STAR

The United Republics of the Red Star encompass a staggering 18,035,000 square kilometers, stretching over one seventh of the world's land surface. Such a vast amount of terrain covers a variety of environments, including forests, mountains, grasslands, desert, volcanoes, and — of course — a lot of tundra. Unfortunately for the Reds (and occasionally their neighbors as they were forced to expand), a huge portion of their land is unusable for agriculture, due to arid temperatures, bad soil, or extreme cold. Nevertheless, the abundant farms of the Motherland still produce over 90 million tons of grain each year.

The west is a long series of broad plains and low hills, the seat of much of the nation's agriculture. Relatively mild in temperature and somewhat humid compared to the rest of the Motherland, the west is often considered to be the most agreeable place to live, making it no surprise that the Citadel, capital of the Red Star Republics, sits there in the center of a broad plain.

The Ice Wall Mountain range runs through the heart of the western Republics, bisecting the great central plains and east from west. Starting in the North Sea and stretching almost directly south, the Ice Wall is over 2600 kilometers long, the highest peak being the People's Hook, which stands just over 2000 meters. The Ice Wall is a treacherous range, with sheer

sides and loose soil. Fortunately, a number of broad passes mitigate the danger, but historically many lost their lives crossing it, lending to its sinister reputation.

The south is mostly uplands and the beginnings of mountain ranges that find their fruition in other countries. Several large inland bodies of water also lie to the south, including the Sea of Hyrkahn, which dominates a fair portion of the border. Winters are relatively mild in the west and summers pleasantly warm.

Beyond the Ice Wall lies the vast plain of the Eastern Tundra, constituting just over two-thirds of the total landmass of the U.R.R.S. The Eastern Tundra is only partially tundra, despite its name. The western and southern portions are generally swamplands, with a large number of rivers running off the Ice Wall and deep lakes. Moving northwards, the land rises from the wetlands to become taiga — wide coniferous forests running to the horizon in all directions. The taiga ends where the permafrost starts, the true beginning to the enormous tundra dominating the thoughts of nearly every Red — it is there, in the freezing north, that the infamous labor camps dwell.

Winters in the Eastern Tundra can be devastating. A warm day is when the temperature climbs to -26° Celsius. While the Eastern Tundra is rich in mineral resources and lumber, the difficulties in extracting raw materials from that harsh landscape have discouraged any real efforts at development.

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At the end of every summer, "Pravda's Nights" grace a large swath of the Motherland. For a week or so, the sun does not sink below the horizon, leading to brightly lit evenings and a general lack of sleep for those unaccustomed to it. Reds consider it unlucky to start any new ventures other than the opening of more cases of vodka during Pravda's Nights; little is accomplished during this period, other than a great deal of revelry.

COMRADES ALL

Picture a warrior, resolute and bold, who takes on any challenge, faces any enemy, all because he believes in his destiny and in his people. Picture this same warrior as he begins to see the subtle cracks running through the dogma supporting him, as he suspects his bright and shining truths slowly twist into lies, leaving him helpless to change it. Picture this, and you can begin to grasp the character of the Reds of the Republics.

Frustrated and impotent, they sadly look on as the ancient history of their people repeats itself, mangling their utopian dreams. They are trapped, trapped because they so want to believe that the United Republics of the Red Star is the finest country in the world. They desperately deny what their senses tell them, trusting Imbohl and the Red Council know what they're doing. To a people dedicated to Pravda, Goddess of Truth, there is no sin as unforgivable as a deliberate and malicious lie. Because of this, they do not allow themselves to believe their leaders deceive them, and they certainly won't accept they help to further the lie through their inaction. The cycle grows worse with each year, causing a number of social problems the Red Council always blames on other factors. The stress of their chosen course caused a

disproportionately large number of Reds to become fanatics, cynics, and/or alcoholics.

The Reds value strength, endurance and honor, holding individuals with such traits in high favor. A comrade known to be a villain is held favorably if he's a tough and honest villain. Culturally, they commit themselves to excellence, encouraging all of their fellows to strive to be the best at whatever it is they do. The government continually reinforces this notion by rewarding the finest in many fields.

This long-standing practice, however, conflicts with the tendency most Reds have towards being conservative. They are painfully slow to embrace new ideas and concepts. Those gaining distinction typically do so by upholding the old "tried and true" ways in a method superior to their predecessors' efforts. This unusual combination of values produces a number of frustrated visionaries over the years, but those willing to discuss innovation in the last century have dwindled to a trickle under the hard gaze of Imbohl and the frequently unseen menace of the Fourth Hook of the Kommissariat.

The Reds, once widely known as a gregarious people, have become taciturn to ward away an unexpected trip to the east. Comrades are now publicly praised for their "noble stoicism," which serves as a backhanded complement directed at those skilled at keeping their mouths shut. Complete trust is rare among them, making Reds loyal to their true friends and correspondingly bitter to those who they feel have betrayed them. They are not even vaguely forgiving. In fact, the Reds are famed for the lengths they'll go to in order to achieve vengeance for even the simplest slights.

Many of the varied Republics retain their own character quirks, which outsiders find difficult to determine, but fellow Reds note within minutes of meeting a new comrade.

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Those from the south are strongly inclined towards religious convictions, though whether their faith is directed towards Pravda or the One True God depends on the region from which they come. Reds from the west are typically relaxed and given to whimsy, though they are shrewd about politics, more than are their fellows. Reds hailing from the mountains of the Ice Wall and the Eastern Tundra are as hard as they come, for neither of those regions suffers fools gladly. They're also thought to be stern and humorless.

Daily Life

"Do your duty and be content" is one of the mottos of the Republics, though many find it a difficult concept to embrace. The United Republics of the Red Star is nominally a modern country, with all the jobs and tasks that entails, though greatly filtered through the philosophy of Internationalism. Correspondingly, all young citizens take directed classes from an early age preparing them to be productive members of the Republics and utilize their natural skills to the best advantage. They're also subject to a great deal of subtle (and some not so subtle) indoctrination, from the first moment they set foot in a school.

While a regimen of practical classes sounds good in theory, a number of students find that they've been incorrectly pigeonholed into a career that doesn't suit them, long after too much time has passed to do anything about it. This, however, is only the lot of the lower classes, as children of the privileged families have a greater say in their destiny and therefore enjoy flexibility when it comes to changing careers. That, of course, brings up the fact there are advantaged lineages. As the old saying goes, "All comrades are equal, and some are more equal than others."

Fortunate families are inevitably involved with the Red Council, the military, or both. Many are descendants of the founders of the Revolution and the original supporters of Imbohl. Others come from the noble lines that survived the fall of the Ancient Dynasties; a rare few hold their place by sheer talent or genetics (strong psychics or potent sorceresses for example). The only way a "commoner" gets out of their pre-ordained path is by joining the military, which is by far the largest employer in all the Republics. The only other industries coming close are a variety of commonwealth farms.

Over 20 percent of the total population of 200 million workers is either a member of, or support for, the Red Fleet. Indeed, a number of ex-citizens, specifically the Zeks of the Eastern Tundra labor camps, have no choice but to support the Red Fleet as their very lives depend upon it. A Red who shows any aptitude for sorcery, regardless of her social class,

doesn't have a choice whether she joins the military — it is required on penalty of death.

The U.R.R.S. has a number of globally well-regarded institutions of higher learning, the two most prestigious being the Academy and the Iron Hall. The Academy is one of the foremost military academies in the world; the majority of Red Fleet officers are alumni. The great Gregor the Stone founded the Iron Hall and it is more theoretical in its approach to sorcery than the battlefield practicality of the Academy's Sorcery Corps.

Most protocol research is connected to the Iron Hall in one-way or another. Since Imbohl was a graduate of its honors program, entry is a highly sought after prize. Sorcery, once regarded as a spiritual and otherworldly force, is a science according to the official policy of the U.R.R.S. There has been a conscious effort by those in power to strip away any spiritual significance from the casting of protocols. They are

tools, no more, no less. While sorceresses, and the rarer sorcerers, are widely respected, Reds grant them the same due they would any skilled surgeon. The only exceptions to this are Warkasters, who people rightly regard as living weapons, and therefore approach them cautiously.

Agriculture counts for over a third of the Republics' revenues and the majority of citizens not in the military are involved in some way in farming.

The U.R.R.S.'s major industries include oil, gas production, mining, construction equipment, and timber exports. Fish, paper, and textiles are also widely exported. As the government owns the majority of businesses, individual comrades tend to benefit little from their success or suffer from their failures. Most Reds live just above the poverty line.

Luxuries of every sort are rare and expensive. Items from the West are especially favored but are dangerous to own, as showing interest in such goods can bring unfavorable attention from the Kommissariat. The Republics proscribed or censored an extensive list of items and the list changes regularly. A book legal a year ago may be a capital offense now. The list includes the majority of addictive drugs, works in any medium that decry the superiority of Internationalism, and all forms of fantasy fiction depicting sorcery as being magical.

One of the constants Reds have to deal with is losing friends and loved ones to the Eastern Tundra, as no one goes without losing someone they know to exile. Seldom does anyone know why a given comrade was exiled to the East; asking such questions is grounds for following after them. Quiet speculation on the subject is commonplace, of course, and remains a popular topic for discussion. There are as many theories on how citizens are picked for exile as there are Reds. All agree keeping your head down and your mouth

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shut is the best way to avoid trouble, but even this sage advice hasn't stopped people from being sent to the tundra, who were to all observers innocent of any wrongdoing. The most common theory is the Kommissariat developed a protocol capable of reading disloyal thoughts; the most publicly scoffed-at theory is there is a secret lottery where names are drawn at random when lacking true subversives to exile.

Reds wear simple, functional clothing. Very few materials other than plain cloth and wool are affordable on the budget most families have to live on. Even if they can afford to have fineries, Reds automatically dress down in public to avoid undue attention. Members of the Red Fleet wear appropriate uniforms, frequently combat armor in the case of front line troops.

Entertainment

The Reds are avid sports fans, and admire skilled athletes from every sport. They enjoy a wide variety of games, though Handless-style ice hockey is the likely favorite. Players compete using modified hooks, which they cannot grasp while on the rink. Their love of excellence in any endeavor applies here, though, and they appreciate cerebral challenges as well. Chess is a common pastime at all levels of society, and masters achieve wide recognition. Go is profoundly respected at the Academy, as it is believed to hone the minds of its players for strategy on the battlefield.

Reds love a good scrap and they aren't above starting one if bored. Since they are also fond of alcohol, this leads to a regular eruption of drunken brawls in many cities of the Republics. The state sees this as a good "steam valve" for

internal pressure by the government, and only the worst offenders get more than a token slap on the wrist.

The U.R.R.S is famous for its commitment to the arts, though the government prefers works of a non-controversial nature. Correspondingly, the Red Council is swift to praise artists upholding "traditional" Republics' values and censor those that don't.

There remains a large underground of creators daring exile or worse for the sake of their work. Life in the Republics forces the passions of many Reds to run deep. Sometimes, the only way they can safely express their true inner feelings is through art. A number of skilled painters come from the Republics. Their intricately carved religious icons, especially the many depictions of Pravda, are justifiably celebrated. The government sponsors several internationally famous ballet companies, which tour abroad regularly.

Where the Reds truly shine, though, is in their moving literature. Authors fill their books with honorable characters forced to make incredibly hard, and often selfless, choices for the sake of their people, along with a wide variety of subtle philosophical musings. The most famous of all Red authors is the defiant "Goyeskov" — a pseudonym, Imbohl himself wants the author behind the name for high treason by. To own any of his works in the Republics is punishable by exile, yet his epic *Tears in Winter* is the most famous and widely read book in the history of the Lands of the Red Star. It is the story of a young Red Trooper named Vladimir Fyoderov who joins the Great Revolution to fight for the future of his country. As the tale progresses, the harsh realities of war and a wide array of archetypal characters drawn from the entire history of the Motherland strip away his idealism. By the final chapter,

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he becomes one of the greatest heroes of the Revolution, but chooses to commit suicide with his own hook rather than live in the country built on lies he helped create. Naturally, Imbohl objected.

Believers

The official state religion of the United Republics of the Red Star is the worship of Pravda, Goddess of Truth. Pravda's symbol is the Red Star, whose light supposedly pierces into the deepest trenches and the darkest hearts, exposing the lies to which the unjust cling so fiercely. Their doctrine holds that Pravda was imprisoned, some accounts say forcibly exiled, countless planes away from the world of man. This, they claim, is why deceptions are so predominate in modern culture, because Pravda's sister, Krivda, Mistress of Lies, roamed the world unopposed for so long.

Still, her lingering influence manifests in the actions of the just. Pravda's clergy settle disputes, as their impartiality and dedication to truth are regarded as sacrosanct. Several of the most dedicated detectives in the history of the Lands of the Red Star were among Pravda's chosen priests. Followers of Pravda regard "Pravda's Nights" during the summer as a holy time, and restrain themselves from the rampant carousing occupying most Reds during those weeks. State propaganda holds the Red Fleet is Pravda's Army and their mission is to bring the light of truth into the dark places of the world, cleansing them of evil. Because of this, Internationalist ideology states the worship of Pravda is acceptable, but too fervent a faith is inappropriate in a party member. A number of the southern provinces, especially Nokgorka, are devout followers of the One True God and adhere to the teachings of his Law.

The Reds are a superstitious people, prone to reading omens into a number of natural phenomena. While they now benefit from modern educations, the "peasantry" still falls back on the old ways when confronted by forces they don't understand. Many Reds suspect that demons of wind and snow still haunt the lonely passes of the Ice Wall, though one hasn't been seen in generations. When a wolf pack grows too clever, they murmur of the Vakir, the dread Shifters; when a child goes missing, they whisper tales of the Great Darkness and the Bleak Horsemen's fell allies and they shudder. Down all the long years, the legend of Bella Vera never faded, only grown. The official stance of the U.R.R.S. is nothing goes bump in the night without their permission — scant comfort when one hears strange ululating cries echoing over the steppes in the darkness.

Fighting Traditions

If there was ever a time when peace held sway in the Motherland, it is remembered nowhere in the Chronicles. The culture of the Lands of the Red Star has always been a martial one, and the coming of the U.R.R.S. did nothing to change that. In fact, Imbohl and the Red Council encouraged it, as it suited their ambitions.

Early conflicts in the Motherland were always fought over resources, most often arable land. This developed a vindictive habit among the Reds of using "scorched earth" policies in their fighting. In other words, as they gave ground, they're inclined

to destroying what they left to give no succor to the enemy. They burn their own fields rather than let an opponent have them. This actually led to the development of some diplomacy among the early tribes, as they were all aware their opponents would give them nothing. They've since extended this attitude to their conflicts abroad. What the Reds have long regarded as standard practice though, the rest of the world looks on with a slight amount of awe. While some many question their sanity, no one questions their courage or willingness to do whatever it takes to achieve victory. The blood soaked fields of Pravdagrad proved that for all time.

Martial skills were straightforward among the Reds until the arrival of the Depraved Ones. While the Bleak Horsemen certainly didn't intend their conquered foes to learn anything from them, the Reds studied their fighting style with interest. Flashier martial arts never really appealed to the Reds' nature, but they took to using a number of the more practical holds and throws in their grappling, leading to the development of a distinctly Red wrestling style called Bersk. Bersk is a brutal practical form whose sole purpose is to incapacitate an opponent long enough for a killing blow. Regular practitioners have hugely muscled forearms and stern expressions.

The hook is the Red weapon of choice; it is certainly one of the first things non-Reds think of when asked to describe a Red soldier. The core of the standard hook fighting style is attributed to the Warrior King, Dmitri Baranova. The basic thrusts and parries with a hook taught at the Academy are taken from a short treatise he wrote later in life. As more advanced weaponry was introduced to the battlefield, hook use evolved in a number of ways. That a spinning hook could deflect low caliber arms fire was discovered by accident during the Great Patriotic War, where a similar technique was being used to block shrapnel. While the Reds are disinclined towards innovation, their love of efficiency led them to continually expand the hook's repertoire and add on modular components to change its battlefield role. The hailer is less famous, but no less deadly. The limited number of individuals with a will strong enough to wield one, however, effectively limits its use to all but the most elite forces.

The U.R.R.S. believes in a policy of applying overwhelming force against any obstacle. They always deploy more than the maximum number of soldiers they needed for any given situation. Their scores of successes have made many Red commanders arrogant regarding what they believe their troops can accomplish. They underestimate their foes, sending only a handful of the forces at their disposal to wipe out a threat. If the first wave of an attack doesn't succeed, their solution is always to send more troops. While this frequently gets the job done, the attrition rate of Red soldiers is extraordinarily high. Red troopers use the phrase, "He's searching for a gold chest," when referring to a commanding officer who is especially well known for considering his troops to be expendable, as the belief runs a high body count in an engagement leads to more medals for the unit's commander.

A growing number of soldiers suspect the highest-ranking officers in the Red Fleet engage in tactics specifically designed to kill off large numbers of their men. Since that thought seems ludicrous on the surface, of course, they find it hard to credit. Certainly none of their comrades wanted to believe it either, but this quiet misgiving affects morale throughout the Red Fleet.

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The Red Fleet

The nobles of the Ancient Dynasties created the first incarnation of what would one day become the Red Fleet to protect their various fiefs from the aggressions of their neighbors, or to inflict those same aggressions if they so chose. For over a thousand years, all fighting troops in the Lands of the Red Star had been either freemen or mercenaries, for the peasants weren't allowed to carry weapons. Professionals cost money, however, and from the point of view of their rulers, the lives of peasants were free. Thus, they inducted them into small militias, lead by a younger ambitious noble.

Gregor the Stone modified the practice further by requiring each province place a peasant levy at his disposal to form a single, national Red Army, continuing the old tradition of putting an upper class officer over the peasant troops by founding the Academy. Many of the noble houses created their own peasant units, forcing them to perform a number of revolting acts for the nobles' amusement. With the arrival of the Revolution, it was easy for Imbohl to persuade the Red Army and other forces of the Ancient Dynasties to join him, as the greater bulk of them came from such long-abused peasant families.

After the rise of the Aryan Nationalist Party of the Volksreich and Imbohl's meeting with Krieger, he knew the forces of the U.R.R.S. were not nearly large enough to stand against the Aryans. He immediately ordered a staggering increase in the number of recruits and restructured the way the military functioned by creating the Central Command.

Imbohl wanted to create an army larger than any the world had ever seen before, and needed a group capable of

coordinating the efforts of millions of soldiers. He used the Infokasters of the Sorcery Corps as the underlying support for his new command structure, knowing such a group was critical to directing so large a military force. By all accounts, he succeeded. The Red Army was the largest body of fighting troops ever assembled on the planet, and they worked with far more precision than anyone believed was possible. It is true millions of comrades fell in the Great Patriotic War, but there were millions more to take their places and fight for the honor the U.R.R.S. After victory was declared, the Red Council saw no reason to entirely disband their newly formed might, especially in light of their increasingly strained relationship with the West.

As the scope of the Red Army's duties expanded and the number of conflicts rose, the Red Council decided the parameters of its operational capacity had to change. Enter the wildly brilliant sorcerer-engineer Sergei Korolev.

Korolev's revolutionary designs changed the structure of the Red Army forever. His innovations in krawl design and fighter craft haven't been duplicated to this day, but his hallmark was the creation of the mighty skyfurnace. Each one is unique and constructed under different parameters, though all were built with two overriding concerns in mind: moving massive numbers of troops anywhere in the world at a moment's notice, and utterly intimidating the enemies of the Republic. Korolev succeeded beyond anyone's expectations.

The Red Army was literally renamed the Red Fleet because of Korolev's work. Half of the world trembled before the now wide-ranging might of the U.R.R.S. While the W.T.A. can rightfully claim to have troops at their disposal as effective as those of the Red Fleet, they and their allies chose, after the Great Patriotic War, to direct their military into smaller, elite forces with greatly advanced weaponry instead of the massive battalions the Red Fleet favors.

The gigantic number of personnel the Red Fleet asserts they have is subject to a lot of deception, for the bulk of their crewmen are made up of Zeks from the Eastern Tundra's special labor camps. The exiles are trained in how to repair and crew a number of the Fleet's ships, including some of the most dangerous work in the ventral blast chambers of the skyfurnaces. The thin hope of a possible pardon for exemplary service compels many of them to go about their hazardous work with a zeal many freemen never show in the service.

Students of history find it ironic despite all the changes enacted after the Great Revolution, very few things fundamentally changed in the Lands of the Red Star. The Red Fleet is still commanded by the elite, as the greater part of the officer corps are graduates of the Academy and come from privileged families, whereas the average Red trooper comes from the more common ranks of the comrades. In other words, the "nobles" are still in charge of the "peasants" in the military. This isn't all that surprising as the Red Fleet is intimately tied to the Red Council in more uses of the term than one, for a number of Red Fleet personnel are the sons and daughters of Council members. Nearly every deputy of the Council has served time in the Red Fleet, in one capacity or another.



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THE GOVERNMENT OF THE U.R.R.S

The U.R.R.S. is the world's first Internationalist state. It has a constitution of sorts, originally written by Imbohl and some of his comrades near the end of the Revolution. It has been modified on several occasions since then. The largest changes made to the document were enacted after the Great Patriotic War. They mostly consist of adding an expanded mission statement of Internationalist ideology and greater rights for individuals. The constitution holds the collected Republics' governing body, the Red Council, is the supreme executive authority within their union, it is, in fact, greater than the sum of its parts. To put it another way, the Red Council's power allows it to make every single decision of importance for all of its member republics, including whether or not they can "legally" secede from the U.R.R.S.

All true power in the U.R.R.S. lies with the Internationalist Party, commonly called the People's Party (and quietly referred to as "Imbohl's Party"). The Party was formed before the conclusion of the Great Revolution and its leaders were all Imbohl's closest allies. The Party is a hierarchical organization, divided into a series of People's Committees whose members permeate a wide number of other organizations throughout the Republics. Each committee reports to an increasingly larger, more important committee, up to the largest policy-making body, the Internationalist Grand Committee, or IGC, formed by the leaders of a number of the other People's Committees. The IGC elects the Grand Council, the group directly responsible for expressing the will of the Internationalist Party. While there are written provisions for the election of another leader, from its very inception the leader of the Grand Council was, and always has been, Imbohl.

The nominal head of the U.R.R.S. is the First Comrade of the Red Star Republics, usually referred to outside of the country as the President of the U.R.R.S. The First Comrade sits at the head of the Council of Electors, whose job it is to enforce the dictates of the Red Council. Neither the First Comrade nor the Electors make policy; only the Red Council does. Since the Red Council posts the First Comrade and all of the Electors to their positions, they can be removed at any time by a simple vote giving them a great deal of incentive to do exactly what they're told.

The Red Council is the legislative branch of the U.R.R.S., and it consists of two bodies: the Comrade's Council of the Republics and the Red People's Council. Each of these houses consists of 800 deputies elected from a list of approved candidates put forward by the Grand Council of the Internationalist Party. Traditionally, the Comrade's Council consists of regional leaders and military personnel, whereas the Red People's Council is drawn from a wide variety of unions, youth groups, and professional organizations. The Red Council meets twice a year, for two months at a time, during which time they usually enact any policies that the IGC has requested. Thus, the government of the United Republics of the Red Star is effectively the enforcement arm of the Internationalist Party's leader, Imbohl.

The Office of Republics' Security runs the judicial system of the U.R.R.S., whose head, the Prosecutor-General, is

elected by the Comrade's Council for a five-year term. The Prosecutor-General has great power, as he or she places all high-tier prosecutors throughout the Republics and chooses to grant approval or not on all lower-tier prosecutors his subordinates put forth. Traditionally, only individuals of the highest character can hold the office of Prosecutor-General. More often than not, a sorceress held the post.

The Red Council elects the members of the highest court in the Republics, the Red Chamber, for five-year terms. All local courts are structured into tribunals consisting of one formally trained judge, one lay assessor, both of which are popularly elected by local committees, and an assigned prosecutor. The tribunals handle both criminal and civil cases.

Each of the Red Star Republics has their own constitution and legislature, but all of them are subordinate to the Red Council. The Red Council funds all health and welfare services in the U.R.R.S. While all comrades always have some access to decent medical care, hospitals and clinics are short of finances. In theory, the Red Council guarantees all able-bodied citizens a job. In practice, comrades who buck the system and refuse to follow the career path early testing states they are "suited" for have a great deal of difficulty finding employment later in life. Many of these liberal thinkers eventually end up joining the military because they have no other real prospects.

The Kommissariat

The Kommissariat is officially designated as a state committee connected to the Council of Electors, which means, on paper, they are responsible for directing its efforts. In reality, the Kommissariat has the most autonomy of any U.R.R.S. government body and operates with a large degree of independence from both the Electors and the Red Council.

The duties of the Kommissariat are many and varied, but they consist of three large groupings: the uncovering of political and criminal crimes amidst the citizenry of the Republics, the protection of state secrets, and the ongoing struggle against foreign spies and agents — most frequently the operatives of the W.T.A.'s Bureau of Central Intelligence. The Kommissariat has a separate committee of the same name in every republic, all of which report to the Central Office, located in the Citadel.

The Kommissariat's functions are distributed through a number of very different special departments, each with their own area of expertise. The divisions of the Kommissariat are named Hooks, in reference to the standard weapon of the Red Star Republics. All Kommissariat agents are called kommissars, though their duties vary considerably depending on which Hook they serve with. Any given Kommissariat committee has kommissars from multiple Hooks represented in its ranks to give them a broader range of operational capacity.

The First Hook is responsible for foreign operations and intelligence gathering activities. Theirs is the eternal shadow war against the agents of the BCI and other world powers.

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Kommissars from the First Hook have a great deal of latitude in determining where their duty lies, and others give them a wide berth. The First Hook frequently deals with tense situations and some of the finest Zeros are permanently attached to its service. All First Hook kommissars have extensive training in reconnaissance, sabotage and counter-terrorist activities. In other words, they're all spies. Of course, those skills are just as readily turned against citizens of the U.R.R.S. when needed.

The Second Hook deals exclusively with the Red Fleet, including military intelligence and political surveillance of Red Fleet personnel, especially officers with liberal reputations. Kommissars within the Second Hook are all graduates of the Academy and highly familiar with the command structure. They are empowered in certain specific situations to execute Red Fleet officers who act in "traitorous" fashions.

The Fourth Hook deals with dissent of all kinds, including religious and artistic types. They are directly responsible for all censorship in the U.R.R.S. A kommissar from the Fourth Hook is placed at every major government institution with the job of ensuring proper security regulations are followed, while monitoring the political sentiments uttered by employees. The Fourth Hook is widely suspected of recruiting a large number of informants to help them in their duties. They are near universally hated, as most Reds believe it is the Fourth Hook that causes their friends and loved ones to be exiled.

While the Fifth Hook is the smallest branch of the Kommissariat, a number of extraordinary individuals staff it. More than half of the Fifth Hook's kommissars are sorceresses. The rest are specialists in a wide variety of esoteric pursuits. The Fifth Hook deals with "unsolvable" crimes, supernatural disturbances and felonies involving the use of illegal protocols. There are officially no serial killers in the U.R.R.S., but if there were, it would be the Fifth Hook's responsibility to stop them, by any means necessary.

The Sixth Hook provides security for high-ranking Red Council members, International Party heads, foreign dignitaries and the Citadel. The Sixth hook is also involved in protecting communications and decrypting the messages of other nations. Kommissars from the Sixth Hook tend to have a wide variety of skills, but all of them are highly trained bodyguards.

The head of the Kommissariat is the Chairman of Internal Security and holds a seat on the Council of Electors. In theory, the Chairman could be removed from his position by a majority vote of the Red Council, but this has never occurred before. Two first deputies (one of whom is always a protocol user) and a small panel of four to six veteran kommissars assist the

Chairman in his duties. Decisions affecting the Kommissariat are decided by the Iron Circle, a collective leadership body composed of the Chairman, his first deputies, the heads of all the Hooks, and a rotating number of respected leaders from various committees throughout the Republics.

Those outside of the U.R.R.S. often think the Kommissariat is just an arm of the Internationalist Party. It is certainly true the IGC has a large interest in controlling the Kommissariat and that a large number of kommissars are loyal party members. It is also true Imbohl personally chose every single Chairman of the organization, though the Red Council supposedly appointed them. The Kommissariat, however, has always been a bastion of independent thinkers as well. Knowledgeable outsiders say it's the nature of the beast, really. Sometimes, the only

way to catch a rebel is to employ a better rebel. This dichotomy frustrates the hardliners of the Internationalist Party to no end, but there is nothing they can do about it other than be quick about removing kommissars of liberal leanings if they are ever caught screwing up.

THE THIRD DEPARTMENT

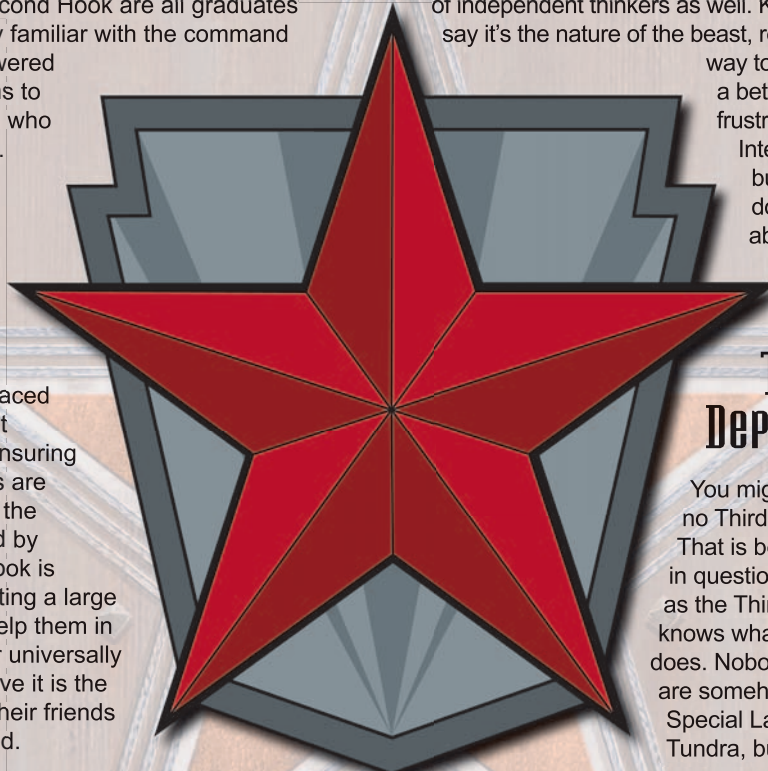
You might have noticed there was no Third Hook in the above listing. That is because the organization in question is always referred to as the Third Department. Nobody knows what the Third Department does. Nobody. Rumor has it they are somehow involved with the Special Labor Camps of the Eastern Tundra, but how, or in what capacity, none can or will say. This isn't very

surprising when you consider kommissars from the Third Department seem to have the legal authority to execute any Red, at any time, without ever having to justify their actions.

An Elector once stopped a Third Department kommissar in the midst of crossing a Citadel street and demanded to know what he was about, as the Elector had recently heard some disturbing rumors about the Third Department. The kommissar calmly drew his sidearm and blew the Elector's head off, then proceeded on his way. The next day, all U.R.R.S. papers reported the tragic death of the Elector due to a traffic accident.

SPECIAL LABOR CAMPS

On the northern plains of the Eastern Tundra lies Imbohl's answer to rebellion: the special labor camps. They are the ultimate destination of almost every exile in the U.R.R.S., and some of the harshest prisons ever conceived of by humanity. The average winter temperature on the Eastern Tundra is -35° Celsius, rising to a "balmy" average of 4.40° Celsius during the short summer. Permafrost, which is permanently



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frozen subsoil, covers the gravel that passes for soil there. The mournful cry of the wind never ends, though the howls of hunting wolf packs roaming over the frozen plain occasionally sound above it.

The camps are scattered across the north, each one serving a different function, as the Red Council decided long ago it was inefficient to "let prisoners off" by giving them nothing to do. Prisoners are called "Zeks" and organized into work groups of twenty, commanded by a penal squad leader. Some of them produce cheap mass-market goods. Others have the "privilege" of being specially educated in ventral blast furnace maintenance and operation so they can serve aboard skyfurnaces and other ships of the Red Fleet. Their life expectancy is very, very short.

The special labor camps do have walls, but they are mostly for protection from the weather and the native wild life. Beyond the camps are wolves that stand out on the ice as large as a man is tall, and polar bears with claws capable of punching a hole through all but the thickest krawl plates. The only reason guards bother to keep track of prisoners that run off, since there is nowhere to go for hundreds of miles, is if too many go missing, the guards might have to take their place.

The consensus among Zeks is the worst thing about exile to the special labor camps is never knowing what you are supposed to have done. Zeks seldom hear what they were accused of; the few that did were typically told they had

been found guilty of "political crimes," and were sentenced without being present for their own trial. New prisoners are often convinced a mistake was made and they will one day be vindicated of their non-existent crime. Old prisoners often don't have the heart to tell them they felt the same way, years before. No Zek has ever been released due to being "incorrectly sentenced," though a few have won their freedom due to battlefield amnesties, which Red Fleet commanders are capable of bestowing for bravery.

The Citadel

The seat of the U.R.R.S.' government is the ancient fortress city known as the Citadel, a massively fortified metropolis that has withstood many a siege in its time. The Citadel lies on the broad plains west of the Ice Wall Mountains, and served as the capital of the Lands of the Red Star for over a thousand years. All branches of the government are headquartered there, and it is where the Red Fleet Academy was built. The Citadel National Cemetery is the largest burial ground in all of the Motherland, so big, in fact, it requires its own rail system. Soldiers are buried according to the battle in which they fell; it takes over a full day to walk across the Great Patriotic War fields. Imbohl's mansion is located at the heart of the Citadel, though he is rumored to travel extensively. The Citadel's famous domed architecture and iconography dedicated to Pravda draws tourists from across the globe, though they are never encouraged to stay for long.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE LANDS OF THE RED STAR

Skyfurnaces having never known the kiss of earth lay burning on the sands of Al'Istaan, and the once invincible Red Fleet was routed from the field: the first heralds of the end for the United Republics of the Red Star. The U.R.R.S.'s defeat at the Battle of Kar Dathra's Gate set off a series of successions and rebellions throughout the Motherland that has not ended to this day. There are those that believe the U.R.R.S.'s collapse was an orchestrated event, brought about by their many enemies. Others claim it was inevitable and the disastrous war with Al'Istaan only brought their inevitable fall about faster. Those blaming the war with Al'Istaan it was only the determined efforts of the Internationalists and Imbohl's ruthlessness that held the Republics together for so long. Whatever the cause, the United Republics of the Red Star are no more, their union crumbled.

The Civil Wars

Even as the Red Fleet retreated from Al'Istaan, a new course for the Motherland's future was laid. A number of the Red Fleet's senior officers realized the U.R.R.S. would never

recover from the defeat they suffered. Instead of following orders and returning home, they took their ships with them to the Republic of their birth. Many soldiers, long weary of the war and the Red Council's dictates, eagerly joined the rebellion.

The exact number of political kommissars executed that day has never been recorded, but even conservative estimates place it in the hundreds. The Republics varied in their responses. Many of the outlying provinces, having long chafed at the Red Council's authority, immediately threw their lot in with their rebellious commanders. Some calmly accepted them back, and then executed them the next day. If it had been just a handful of officers, or the U.R.R.S. had still been at the height of their power, they could've easily managed to hold on for a time, eventually bringing all to

heel. However, Kar Dathra effectively shattered the strength of the Red Fleet for years to come. The troops the Republics would've normally used to crush the multiple uprisings were many of the same ones rebelling.

Multiple Republics that could not be forced to submit declared their freedom

"When a giant falls, there are few places to hide where you will not be crushed. How much worse when the giant was a dream?"

- Goyeskov, Red Author

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and left the rest of the U.R.R.S. to their fate. Imbohl and the Internationalist Party, however, would not accept their dream was over. They insisted the Republic's constitution made it clear the Republics could not secede without the Red Council's permission. Thus, the Civil Wars began on a technicality.

Bitter beyond reason is the fighting between former countrymen, and the Civil Wars were vicious. A case could be made they aren't yet over. The relatively massive battles of the early days ended after three years when the Red Council finally accepted defeat and reconstituted the remaining former Republics into a new government, the Commonwealth of the Lands of the Red Star. There have been a number of brushfire rebellions since, however, though all of them pale in comparison to the conflict raging in the war-torn province of Nokgorka.

The Commonwealth

The Commonwealth is structured like the former U.R.R.S. government, though the Internationalist Party is no longer consulted for who can and cannot be elected to the Red Council's various bodies. The position of First Comrade rotates throughout the Council of Electors, but they are far more than the powerless figureheads they used to be. The Electors include in their number two Red Fleet commanders with elite troops loyal to them, several wealthy businessmen, the former head of the First Hook and one known crime lord. Unfortunately, it is the Electors who are powerful, not the government they supposedly represent. They regularly jockey for position in a near-constant struggle; it could be highly entertaining to watch, if the lives of hundreds of millions of people weren't regularly affected by it.

The Commonwealth has tried desperately to restore some semblance of order to their beleaguered nation, but a number of factors hamper them. Several of the Commonwealth's provinces were forced to join at hook point, and stand poised to rebel at a moment's notice should this new Red Council falter. When the southern province of Nokgorka declared its freedom, the Red Council moved swiftly and as viciously as they could to crush it — not necessarily because they couldn't stand to lose the traditionally rebellious Nokgorkans, but because they secretly feared a domino effect rekindling the Civil Wars.

Seeing the government's weakness, too many individuals made power grabs at the expense of the new administration. While still influential, the Internationalist Party continually loses ground as more and more of its members are forced to accept the all-too-obvious fact their leader's vision failed. Though seldom seen in public, Imbohl became increasingly enraged at the "incompetents" surrounding him. This has served, perversely enough, to push away many of his most competent former allies, many of which have gone into "business" for themselves to the detriment of the Party.

Several of the Hooks of the Kommissariat have been disbanded and the rest are all but uncontrolled, yet still hold a vast number of useful and sometimes terrifying secrets, which many kommissars are now willing to sell to the highest bidder. The Red Fleet resembles its former glory in name alone. Officer cadets are now rushed through the Academy with only

the barest of training in battlefield tactics. The once year-long brutal training regime all Red Troopers had to endure has been reduced to a month, wherein they are taught only the most basic hook fighting. The Commonwealth is barely able to pay its employees — not that the money is worth much anyway — and is forced to resort to issuing pay vouchers. Many Red Fleet personnel work solely for food and board.

Internationally, the Commonwealth is in a precarious position. The U.R.R.S. made many enemies over the years and few mourn its passing or the ending of the Ironhold. The W.T.A. looks on the Commonwealth with an odd combination of smug vindication over their victory and thinly veiled concern over the disposition of the huge number of incredibly powerful weapons the Republics once controlled. In fact, the Commonwealth shares the latter worry, as a number of those weapons went "missing" since the U.R.R.S.' fall, probably into the hands of arms dealers, criminals, and terrorists. The thought of certain weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of the Nokgorkans fills the government with absolute dread.

Life in the Red Star Commonwealth

If there is one constant throughout the Lands of the Red Star at the present, it is need. Food shortage is a daily reality. Most families make due with the little they can grow for themselves on small plots of land. Munitions are difficult to come by, sometimes even for front line troops. The money of the old Republics is near worthless, and barter is the most common form of currency exchange. Almost all social services have collapsed, as the government cannot pay for them. The education and the job training programs originally promised to every Red child by the former regime are no longer sustainable. All public schooling is now done in private homes, usually by parents, though some communities are fortunate enough to have former teachers among them. Even if there was still job training, there are next to no legal jobs to be had; unemployment is near universal. The military remains a favored choice, but only because the Red Fleet offers at least the possibility of regular food.

While a number of their freedoms were limited under the rule of the Republics, life was regimented and usually predictable — which, for many people, made it comfortable. Many Reds fervently wish for the "good old days," having conveniently forgotten the fear of being exiled that used to be a constant threat in their lives. Exiling still occurs, but these days most everybody knows why a given individual disappears.

The mechanisms once used to sort out spies and malcontents, whatever they were, seem to have broken down. Certainly, many of the crimes once leading to incarceration have been removed from the books. Censorship is all but eliminated, though the government still frowns on any truly radical material or media preaching the system should be overthrown.

The Special Labor Camps still exist, but many of their prisoners are in serious trouble, exiled and forgotten by one government, ignored by the next. They lead uncertain lives, never knowing when, or if, they will get free. One story that

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the entire world has heard involves SNK 24601, a camp on the far northern end of the Tundra.

Several years ago, all power, equipment and food was cut off to SNK 24601 due to what is now claimed to be a "clerical error," though a number of commentators suggested it was done on purpose, as a high number of political agitators were known to be incarcerated there. Regardless of the cause, the prisoners and their minds soon faced the unpleasant choice of either starving or freezing to death. After a long series of talks, there was a struggle among the guards and several were killed. The remainder set the prisoners free and all began the long struggle back to civilization. Over ten thousand men set out from SNK 24601, only thirty-two reached the Kyrshan Pass of the Ice Wall. One of these was the infamous, to the Reds at least, Justinas Astakhova, now suspected of being the head of the resistance in Nokgorka. While no other camps have suffered such a dire fate, the condition of the entire system is clearly beginning to disintegrate.

As bad as the situation in the Motherland is, however, the greatest heroes of the Lands of the Red Star always arise when things are at their worst. An entire company of Medikasters from the Red Fleet quietly went AWOL from their posts, leaving only a note stating their comrades needed them. They now travel incognito throughout the Commonwealth, healing all those in need. The valiant former kommissars of the Fifth Hook of the Kommissariat quietly proved they are true heroes. Despite the fact their Hook was formally disbanded, they've continued to struggle against the sinister predators still preying on their fellow Reds, often with little supplies and only the support their comrades can give them. In every walk of life, men and women of extraordinary character encourage their fellows to endure, for they can feel a great change is coming, though they have no words to describe what it is they so dimly perceive. A reckoning is at hand, if they can all just hold on for a few years more....

SHELLS

The War for Al'Istaan left scars on the soldiers of the Red Fleet that, in many cases, time has never healed. During the course of the war, many of them were ordered to commit terrible crimes against the Nistaani, and the honest followers of Pravda found their actions hard to reconcile with the Republics' dogma. Killing warriors on the field of battle is one thing; hunting down teenagers wielding outmoded small caliber arms that can't even penetrate your defensive hook shield, yet being ordered to slaughter them anyway, is something else entirely.

Red troopers were exposed, for the first time, to a number of illicit substances in the black markets of Al'Istaan that they'd never been allowed to encounter under the watchful gaze of the Red Council. Drugs with far more serious repercussions than alcohol spread through the front-line troops, as soldiers sought ways to dull the pain of their memories. Many troopers, once passionately faithful to the propaganda of the Internationalist Party, became unrepentant cynics after their idealism was stripped away by the harshness of the war. Many conscripts (especially those from Nokgorka) felt terribly betrayed by the Red Council when they found they fought against their fellow faithful of the One True God. The Battle of Kar Dathra's Gate wasn't a terrible tragedy to many of these soldiers; it was the inevitable and proper ending to the farce.

After the retreat from Al'Istaan, many of these soldiers found that they couldn't go back to the life they held before; they had seen too much and often had done too much to simply put it behind them. A large number brought their addictions back with them, and the general lawlessness of the Civil Wars allowed criminal cartels to be set up to supply their new needs.

Other Red troopers never really returned from the killing fields of Al'Istaan. The Reds call all of these soldiers "shells"

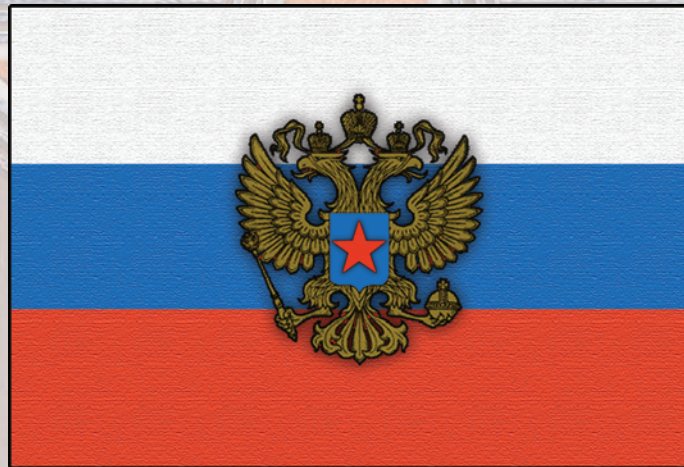
both as a reference to how many of them are only a shadow of their former selves, as well as the concept of how they were spent in the war. These bitter soldiers integrated as best they could throughout the Commonwealth, but their scorn shaped the new generation of Reds. Many believe they are directly to blame for the breakup of the Republics. While probably an unfair charge, shells did not slow the U.R.R.S.' demise. A large number of shells found new meaning in fighting for

their ancestral homelands; many of the Nokgorkan resistance leaders fought, to their present regret, at Al'Istaan.

The Shadow Economy

There is a saying these days in the Commonwealth that has become sadly common: "finding a job is easy, it's finding a legal job that's hard." Ten years ago, the black market in the U.R.R.S. was small and mostly concerned with censored or Western goods. Today, the black market is the single largest section of the Commonwealth's economy and it deals in everything: drugs, medicine, food, weapons, body parts, munitions, slavery — *everything*. If you can conceive of buying it, then it is for sale somewhere in the Lands of the Red Star, though you may not like the price — it is firmly a seller's market.

Many legal goods have become so expensive, due to high governmental tariffs and the expenses of importing that even honest comrades turn to dubiously acquired merchandise.



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Smugglers of all stripes find great success along the Motherland's borders. Since the money of the Commonwealth is near worthless, many citizens sell or barter off whatever they have, be it meager crops, family heirlooms, their bodies, or anything valuable they've managed to steal if they truly need a given item, such as medicine for their children. Almost all transactions between communities and families at a local level moved exclusively to barter.

One of the more unpleasant features of the Commonwealth's troubled present is the rise of war profiteers derisively referred to as "carrion," due to their practice of scouring battlefields after the fighting is done. Some carrion are shells that have lost all sense of purpose, while others are foreign opportunists looking for wealth at the expense of the already poor.

Carrion steal whatever arms and equipment they can get their hands on, selling them off to the highest bidder. In the Nokgorkan conflict, they are quick to pick up stragglers from both armies and ransom them off to whichever side will pay the most for them. Many of the more "professional" carrion have connections to the various criminal cartels that arose in the Commonwealth, the better to move their ill-gotten goods. Numerous soldiers, regardless of the side they're on, despise

all carrion and shoot them at the first opportunity — which has, of course, served to make them extremely bitter.

The shadow trade that worries the government the most — indeed, it worries multiple governments far beyond the Commonwealth — is the underground sale of weapons of mass destruction, specifically fissionable materials and black market protocols. Considering it only takes a single bomb fitting into a small briefcase to level a city, many people become nervous when such items go missing. The chaos of the government has allowed a number of such weapons to go unaccounted for, which causes the Global Council to put pressure on the Council of Electors to clean up their mess.

Rumor has it Yelena Dideleva, who is both the head of the Gorska Syndicate and an Elector, is willing to pay well for such weapons with no questions asked, ostensibly to remove them from circulation. Some suggest she gathers the weapons for her own purposes, but for a crime lord, she's known to be fairly honorable. Black market protocols run the gamut from unstable experimental prototypes to divinatory protocols, such as unregistered re-enactment protocols, capable of revealing secrets the government wants to keep hidden.

A HISTORY OF RESISTANCE — THE LAND OF NOKGORKA

Directly to the south of the Lands of the Red Star lies a mountainous country, of high, rocky hills and deep forested gorges sittin on the edge of the world's largest inland body of water, the Sea of Hyrkahn. The land is named Nokgorka after the native hill tribes, the Gorkas, who lived in the region for over two thousand years. There has seldom been a time in the long history of Nokgorka in which the Gorkas weren't fighting for their freedom against outsiders seeking to control their beloved home, for either its strategic value or its natural resources.

Their ongoing war for freedom, however, has never before burned as hot as it does now. Nor have they ever been so close to achieving this elusive dream.

HYRKAHN THE FIERCE

Centuries before Prince Urik I was born, a hero rose in the highlands of Nokgorka to unite his people and lead them against their enemies. His name was Hyrkahn, and he earned his title, "the Fierce," many times over during the course of his life.

Hyrkahn was so large no horse could easily hold his weight. Legend claims the blood of the ancient Nephelim ran in his veins. He was swift to laugh and swift to anger. He never broke a promise, nor betrayed an ally. He hunted with a pack of snarling wolves that treated him as their alpha; on moonlit nights, the hills echoed with their cries.

In his day, Nokgorka was beset by the ancestors of the monstrous Huan, along with a number of vicious wandering Red tribes continually raided for goods or attempted to

enslave the Gorkas, whom they regarded as little better than animals. Hyrkahn was the first war leader to bring his people down out of the highlands. He conquered a wide swath of the steppes surrounding the mountains, which the Gorkas eventually cultivated into farmlands.

Hyrkahn never built an empire, though his people would have gladly accepted his rule if that was what he wanted. Instead, he saw himself as the champion of Nokgorka: a first among equals when it came to warfare, but he readily gave his ear and support to those whom he deemed wise among the mountain tribe elders. His example laid the foundations of the Gorkas' political system that remains to this day.

When he fell at last, the great sea he had loved was re-named in his honor. Many Gorkas believe he watches over his people still, though according to the Law they've embraced, he would have been a heretic. When questioned on the subject, the Priestesses of the hill tribes smile enigmatically and say he is one of the Righteous, though they never bother to explain what that means to anyone else.

THE DARKNESS IN THE NORTH

The Gorkas were relatively unaffected by the Reds for many centuries, though they did manage to establish some trade with Urik's empire. The coming of the Golden Horde and the rise of the Great Darkness in the Lands of the Red Star, however, were not easily ignored. The Gorkas had little worth stealing; the majority of the Horsemen left them alone, but the Depraved Ones found the fierce hill people to be worthy sport. The eerie cries of their twisted creatures echoed through the hills as the Bleak Horsemen sought prey in the

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highlands. They soon learned, however, incautious hunters in Nokgorka all too frequently become the hunted.

It took the Gorkas decades and a heavy cost in lives, but they eventually drove the Depraved Ones back to the steppes far from the highlands. It remains a point of Gorkan pride that the Bleak Horsemen eventually offered *them* tribute to leave their forces alone.

The Coming of the Law

Nokgorka was a bastion of the Old Faith for a very long time. The Old Faith is a primal animistic religion that looks upon the natural world as a sacred place. To practitioners of the Old Faith, forests are temples and the mountains are holy, which explains in part why it was so prevalent among the Gorkas. Women have always been the caretakers of the Old Faith, as it is believed their ability to create and carry life ties them more closely to nature than men.

As the world changed, the Gorkas' Elders became dissatisfied with the Old Faith, feeling it had less and less bearing on their daily lives. When the first missionaries came from the south bearing the words of the One True God, they found a ready audience in Nokgorka. Within a few years, the Gorkas adopted the Law as their own, though in a fashion unique to them. Seeing they might be supplanted, the Priestesses of the Old Faith publicly embraced the Law, so they could continue to administer to the spiritual needs of their people. They never entirely abandoned their original beliefs, though.

The Gorkan version of the Law is not as severe as that practiced by the Nistaani of Al'Istaan. In fact, their pagan roots are still discernable if one knows where to look. Gorkas use the vows, "I swear on the Bones of the Mountains" and "By the Gleaming Sun," both holdovers from the Old Faith, yet if you accused a Gorka used either of being a heretic who has departed from the Law, he would be deeply offended.

Red Aggressions and Grim Days

When Gregor the Stone undertook his sweeping reforms of the Lands of the Red Star, he knew a number of the nobles would need to be mollified when he took away some of their rights and privileges. He accomplished this by bribing them with new lands and territories — only they weren't his to give. He offered, among a great many other lands bordering his empire, to his allies in the Ancient Dynasties the northern reaches of Nokgorka in exchange for their compliance with his schemes. They were on their own for enforcing sovereignty over "their" new lands, though he offered some assistance with his newly conscripted troops.

The border wars of the era are still talked about among Gorkas as if they only happened yesterday. It was certainly a time of great victories and crushing defeats. The Gorkas fought as they always had: with passion and fury. Ultimately, the Ancient Dynasties were militarily rebuffed. The few noble houses making any headway against the Gorkas eventually drifted apart from their fellows. The Gorkas accepted their honorable foes, all of which went native, adopting the Law as their

**"TO DIE OR LIVE IN FREEDOM IS OUR FATE."
— THE ANCIENT MOTTO OF NOKGORKA,
ATTRIBUTED TO HYRKANN THE PIERCE**

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religion; most stayed on the northern steppes rather than take the forbidding highlands as their home.

The rest of the Reds never completely gave up. Every few decades, a new wave of expansions would be called for, and once again, the Ancient Dynasties would try to bring Nokgorka firmly under their control. They repeatedly failed, though a great deal of blood spilled with each attempt. After realizing force would never get the job done, a few of the more clever nobles decided some judicious bribery might work instead. Unfortunately for the Gorkas, they were correct.

The nobles offered to help the relatively primitive Gorka tribes to modernize by educating their youth and expanding trade in the region. The Nokgorkan elders, realizing the world was indeed leaving them behind, reluctantly accepted the Red overtures. Several rail lines crossed the mountains, and talk began of an oil pipeline stretching from the north to the Sea of Hyrkahn. Gorkas found themselves fighting in foreign wars alongside their new Red allies who, in spite of themselves, were impressed by the Gorkas' tenacity.

The peace didn't last very long. After a century of relative non-interference, the Ancient Dynasties decided the Gorkas had to be "civilized" for the last time. Compulsory education and forced relocations began as the nobles attempted to bring the Gorkas to heel.

Present day Gorkas refer to this period as the Grim Days. Many of their hereditary leaders were slain or exiled far from Nokgorka, never to return. Priestesses were forced to modify their teachings to include ideals the Reds approved of, beyond what was written in the Law. Many of them had to give up the sacred ways of power they had cherished and practiced for centuries. Instead, they were compelled to learn the ways of Red sorcery. It is from this time forward Priestesses were trained as sorceresses; though there are rumors a few tribes in the most inaccessible highlands have Priestesses who still practice in the traditional ways.

Agitators from the north expertly set the mountain tribes against each other; with all the trusted leaders gone, Nokgorka degenerated into chaos. The Reds soon found though, they did too thorough a job of disrupting Nokgorka. Large groups of Gorkan raiders swept across the plains and looted the lands of the bordering nobles. For every voice calling for peace, five called for war, though they were hard pressed to say who or what they truly wanted to fight.

The Grim Days lasted for close to a century and a half, marked by constant civil war and bloodshed. Many believed the old ways could no longer serve them and Nokgorka needed a new form of government to deal with the many problems besetting it. Others stated the traditional ways

could still work if they were structured formally. They tried and rejected a number of different governments. The Gorkas still discussed the matter when they learned of a new philosophy called... Internationalism.

THE GREAT REVOLUTION AND THE GRAND BETRAYAL

When Imbohl's agents first approached the Nokgorkan Elder Councils that still existed in the highlands, the Elders were highly skeptical of the bold, new utopia promised to them. They eventually responded by saying they had already found their paradise, rough though it was, and had no interest in joining any world sweeping community. They also stated, however, they'd be willing to help the Internationalists in exchange for the right to decide their own destiny after Imbohl had won.

The founder of the Revolution readily agreed to the Gorkas' request, as he likely did not intend to ever keep his end of the bargain. Many of the most vicious strikes early in the Revolution happened in the south of the Red Star Lands, as the Gorkas turned their old hatred of the Red nobles to good use. A number of the ancient dynastic lines met terrible ends

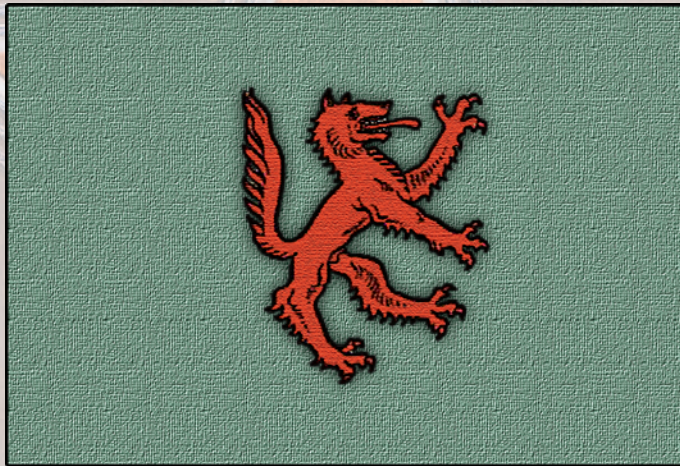
at the hands of Gorka marauders, characterized by the perpetrators as just repayment on old blood debts.

Not long after the fall of the Citadel to the forces of the Revolution, the United Elder Council sent a message to Imbohl congratulating him on his worthy victory and wishing his new country the best of luck in its glorious new future. Imbohl sent back a message stating that the Revolution could not have succeeded without the help of the Reds' Nokgorkan

comrades, and he wished to open discussions with them for the future relations between the two countries. This sounded reasonable enough and they welcomed him to send an envoy. Imbohl sent an agent called "Troika" to negotiate for him.

Troika took two weeks in determining which Elders would be favorable to unification with the soon to be formed Republics and which would not. He assassinated all of the ones that would not in a single night. This was kept secret long enough for the "traitorous" Elders to join Nokgorka into the United Republics of the Red Star.

The truth eventually came out, though it did the Gorkas little good. They did, however, kill every single one of the Elders that agreed to give away their freedom, mostly by stoning them to death. Gorkas call the events surrounding their part in the Revolution and its aftermath, "the Grand Betrayal." Within a year of learning the truth, massive riots spread throughout Nokgorka, which the newly formed Red Council sent the Red Fleet to deal with. Hundreds of thousands of Gorkas were killed or exiled to the Eastern Tundra. It is



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unlikely the Gorkas would have ever yielded, but eventually they ran out of bodies; the number of Red troopers seemed endless. It took close to five years, but finally they could no longer resist — the Grand Betrayal was complete.

NOKGORKA & THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

Nokgorka remained a problem for the Red Council, one they could never seem to be rid of. Every decade or so, separatist movements swept across the province, once again forcing the Reds to take action. The Gorkan councilor rarely publicly addressed the Red Council over the next three decades.

The Internationalist Party always took the Gorkas' "betrayal" of the ideals of the Revolution very personally, seeing it as a condemnation of everything they believed in. When the Volksreich began its grand rise to prominence, Imbohl was convinced the Gorkas harbored sympathies towards the Aryan Nationalist Party and engaging in secret talks with Krieger's subordinates, though he had no real proof of either.

The Red Council planned a massive series of deportations to remove the greater bulk of the population of Nokgorka to the Eastern Tundra when something near miraculous occurred. A greatly respected Elder named Izrador Shatalin was allowed to speak to the Grand Council of the Internationalists before the Gorkas were removed. He passionately pleaded for two hours, finally begging his people to be given a chance to stand at the front of the Red Army and prove their good faith. With a single nod from Imbohl, Nokgorka's destiny was altered and the Gorkas were inducted en masse.

Their courage during the terrible struggle of the Great Patriotic War remains a shining testament to the will of a people who would not be broken. Gorkas units were continually placed at the front of the lines and had to endure far longer than average stretches of combat without relief from the Red Army. Ultimately, a considerable number of the most decorated men and women of the war were from the Gorka regiments. Many W.T.A. and Lionist commanders swore the Gorkas were among the bravest soldiers they'd ever had the honor to fight alongside. By the end of the war, they actively requested various Gorka units by name to assist in delicate operations.

Sadly, their prowess caused them further trouble. When the forces of the Volksreich were finally defeated, the U.R.R.S. banished many Gorkas to the Eastern Tundra, as the Red Council feared what an influx of battle-hardened veterans would do to the situation in already-quarrelsome Nokgorka. The majority of the exiled Gorkas were settled throughout the taiga regions of the east, where the Red Council didn't have to worry about them, though the most "dangerous" were incarcerated in the northern Special Labor Camps. It took decades before the Red Council was willing to allow any of the exiled to leave the east and return to their homeland.

GORKAS AND THE WAR OF AL'ISTAAN

Before the Red Council announced their intention to help their southern comrades in Al'Istaan by liberating them from the tyranny of the West, they quietly asked for the assistance of the Gorka Elders. This obviously made the Elders exceedingly suspicious, as at no time in their history did the

requests of the Reds ever lead to any good. It was, however, near impossible to turn down a chance to travel to Al'Istaan — a land deemed holy by the Gorkas as one of the possible birthplaces of the Law itself.

The Reds were clever enough to use the Nokgorkan's faith against them, painting the whole enterprise as a chance to help fellow faithful of the One True God against the heathen Western oppressors. With a great deal of reluctance, Nokgorka answered the Republics' call.

It was less than a year after deployment in Al'Istaan that the Gorkas learned they'd been duped once again. The Shaman of the Nistaani, so similar to their own Priestesses, whispered to them of the Reds' duplicity when the Gorkas visited marketplaces. Many Gorkas swore they'd never again be a pawn of the Reds, no matter the cost. Some went deserted and a few even joined the Nistaani resistance, the Nasr Kien. The rest though, were trapped with chains of honor and duty. They'd sworn to serve, false pretenses or no, and the principles of the Gorkas run deep. Though their heart was not in it, they stayed until the end, on the sands before Kar Dathra's Gate.

NOKGORKA NOW

The Gorkas watched with no small amount of satisfaction as the United Republics of the Red Star crumbled into oblivion. They quietly cheered from the sidelines as the various republics went to war, remaining carefully neutral to outsiders. While some youths called for instant action, the Elder Councils demanded patience. The Elders took part in the new Commonwealth government, while considering their every action and waiting for an opportune moment.

Outsiders point to the arrival of the legendary guerilla fighter, Justinas Astakhova, as the spark lighting the fires of rebellion, but in truth the Elders were already prepared. Nine long years after the Battle of Kar Dathra's Gate, Nokgorka's leaders withdrew all diplomats from the Commonwealth and declared their nation sovereign once more. The Commonwealth immediately stated they would use all force necessary to safeguard the "integrity of our great nation," the Red Fleet mobilized to bombard the Gorkas into submission. Enormous areas of Nokgorka's countryside were turned to ash by the ventral blasts of skyfurnaces, rendering them near incapable of ever again sustaining crops. Nokgorka's capital, Bahamut, was reduced to a ruin. The Red Fleet, after dropping a payload of 4,000 heavy detonations per hour, every hour of the day, for 40 days, offered terms of surrender. The Nokgorkans gave but one reply:

"To die or live in freedom is our fate."

The final war for Nokgorka's freedom—or ruination—has begun.

Life in NOKGORKA

Nokgorka stretches over 25,000 square kilometers, over three-fourths of which is lightly forested mountainous terrain. The northern portions of Nokgorka are all steppes bordering the Lands of the Red Star. They were once fertile though occasionally dry farmlands, all of which have since been reduced to cinders or land-mined into near-permanent no-man's lands.

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The highlands are a jagged series of uneven peaks, sharp crags, and deep gorges in which it is easy to get lost. Most of Nokgorka's agriculture was in the north, though every mountain village has a small communal plot of land for local farming. The Sea of Hyrkahn borders Nokgorka on the east. It has a surface area around 375,000 square kilometers and all the characteristics of a lake as well as a small sea. Nokgorka's normally hard terrain gives way to lush river valleys and thick forests around the Sea of Hyrkahn. The Hyrkahn Sea's fish are famed for their excellent taste and the high quality caviar they produce. Both fish and caviar are major exports for the region.

ALL BUT LOST

In this section, you would normally be introduced to the ways and honored traditions of the Gorkas.

There aren't any, not any more.

The systematic destruction of generations of Gorkas has taken an enormous toll upon them. Once, they had a rich tradition of tales and songs, some of which were over millennia old. Gone, all gone. Dust on the winds of the Eastern Tundra. Of all their ancient heroes, only the tales of Hyrkahn the Fierce remain. The only legacies the Gorkas pass down to their children now are the hard lessons of their bitter history and the ways of war.

The Reds have much to answer for.

THE ELDER COUNCILS

Nokgorka's government is unique in that it partially embraced democracy over a thousand years before the idea was even considered by other countries. This is due, in no small part, to the many enemies the Gorkas had to deal with. The gruesome Huan regularly preyed on the Gorkas. The Reds have long believed the Vakir originated in Nokgorka — a charge the Gorkas never deny — and in the old days used it as an excuse to kill as many of them as possible.

Even though they have supposedly given up on the old prejudices, many Reds are active in their hatred of Gorkas. The constant skirmishes with their multitude of foes led the Gorkas to become a proud, insular people, with few social and class distinctions among them. All were equal in the eyes of their enemies, and likewise they regarded themselves.

Nokgorka never really had a feudal period the way most of the other countries of the Great Continent did, including the Lands of the Red Star. Thus, Gorkan villages were usually self-ruled communities that controlled their own tribe's traditional lands, under the administration of a group of trusted elders and usually a Priestess or two. A local Elder Council always handled any problems with one's fellows. Decisions affecting Nokgorka as a whole were settled by the United Elder Council, a group made up of the most respected elders of all the different tribes of Nokgorka.

The Gorkas have always preferred to make decisions by consensus, allowing everyone's voice to be heard. Thus they

truly despise tyranny, as it goes against the very nature of their culture. The traditional Elder Councils have been mangled by fighting and for many years, constant exiling, leaving a number of villages with only a bare handful to lead them. Many elders from across Nokgorka gathered in Bahamut to either be part of their people's victory or fall with them.

Despite their tradition of collective decision-making, the Gorkas are well aware in war, there is little time to spare to have strategy meetings. Whenever Nokgorka chose to fight in the past, the United Elder Council always elected a single individual, called the War Chief, to be the commander of their forces. While the War Chief is answerable to the United Elder Council as a whole, he can only be removed from his post by a three-fourths majority vote, which means the elders use great care when choosing their candidate. The present War Chief, head of the Resistance — and in effect, unacknowledged president of Nokgorka — is the legendary Justinas Astakhova.

They say he runs with wolves.

PRIESTESSES

During these troubled times, the Gorkas increasingly turn to their native holy women for comfort; the Priestesses of Nokgorka have been sorely pressed, for they seem to be needed everywhere at once. They are not only the guardians of their peoples' faith, they are also skilled fighters, trained medics, and powerful sorceresses — and every one of their skills is badly needed by the Resistance.

All Priestesses with any talent for sorcery were forced to serve with the Red Fleet in some capacity at one point or another in their lives. If they weren't already indispensable for all their aforesaid expertise, their tactical advice would make them so. Their country's desperate

situation and the lack of alternatives forced a number of Priestesses to become exceptionally adept in the use of black market protocols of all kinds, including some dangerous ones. The Priestesses do the best they can to mitigate the dangers, but they still take enormous risks on a regular basis.

The Priestesses have secret councils of their own, where they discuss a number of subjects: from the state of their people to how they intend to influence the Elder Council to do what they want on issues they believe are important. The Old Faith is alive and well among Priestesses from the highlands, which occasionally causes a bit of friction with the devout followers of the One True God, but they always present a united front to outsiders. The Priestesses quietly asked the Shaman of Al'Istaan for their aid, but the Nistaani Priests were aware of the heretical views many of them held, so they refused their assistance. With the coming of the W.T.A. to their land, it is likely any such aid would've come to a close anyway.

Rumor among the Gorkas has it the Priestesses are also involved in some sort of struggle they will not speak of, leading to a great deal of speculation about their motives. Regardless, most Gorkas would readily lay down their lives to save a Priestess.

**"TO BE BORN ON THIS SOIL
IS TO BE BORN A WARRIOR."
— RUDOV GALILEI, MAKITA'S FATHER**

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Life in the Resistance: Bahamut

To talk about the Gorkan Resistance is to talk about Bahamut, for if one falls, so will the other. Bahamut is both the literal and figurative heart of Nokgorka, as it's the traditional meeting place of the United Elder Council, and sits near the exact center of the country. Bahamut was once a beautiful city, but it is now a broken wasteland filled with corpses and carrion of all kinds. Only one building in twenty is undamaged by bombing. All power, water, electrical and sewer systems are ruined. Any access to such is via either small generators or protocols. It is under near constant attack from the Red Fleet, but not only has this failed to deter the Gorkas, they've used it to their advantage. The Resistance turned the city into a series of traps and perfect locales for ambushes. Their plan is to bleed the Commonwealth dry, making the price of taking Nokgorka so costly they will be forced to abandon it. Outsiders dismissing the Gorkas' chances for success are unaware of just how much experience a large number of the leaders of the Resistance have at this sort of war. Many of them fought during the War of Al'Istaan; some of the most revered elder commanders are the still-living veterans of the Great Patriotic War.

There are literally no civilians left in Bahamut. The entire populace is in the Resistance. This has greatly disturbed a number of Red Troopers, as they regularly find themselves fighting teenagers and sometimes even younger children. Various stress disorders are common amidst the Gorka children, but there is little they can do to combat such problems while fighting a war, short of removing the children completely.

If the underage combatants bother them, the Black Widows are worse. The Black Widows are a group of Gorka women who've lost their loved ones to the war, along with others who feel they have nothing to lose. They are fanatical in their convictions; their willingness to destroy themselves if it takes more of the enemy with them has already become renowned. They regularly use ploys such as playing up the "woman in distress" angle to lure the mostly male Red Troopers closer, then setting off protocol-laced suicide bombs. The Red Fleet instantiating a standard policy to shoot all unknown non-Fleet individuals in Bahamut on sight, but has refrained due to the diplomatic nightmare it would cause if news of the policy leaked out to other countries.

Many Gorkas living outside of Bahamut have either retreated deep into the highlands or abandoned the country altogether. Since their declaration of independence, the Gorkas lost access to outside goods and equipment. Their brethren in the hills manage to move a few needed goods to the Resistance, but they mostly do without or — better yet — steal from the Reds.

Gorka tribesmen from the deep hills are famous for their thick accents and fierce (even for Gorkas) natures. Most of them seem to enjoy the challenge of traveling to and from Bahamut. A few of their Priestesses use protocols that are completely unlike anything the Reds have seen before, or at least, not for several centuries.

Smugglers willing to risk traveling to Bahamut for profit and not patriotism are rare, as it is always a harrowing experience. The Red Fleet constantly monitors the surrounding countryside, there are tons of unexploded munitions strewn throughout the area, and a particularly vicious series of protocol-



enhanced mines, called "Bloodhounds" by the Gorkas, are liberally placed around the city. Unlike conventional mines, Bloodhounds spring up from the ground and actively charge into targets that don't broadcast the appropriate signals to deactivate them. The Gorkas have managed to arrange a few "accidents" during Red Fleet deployments, so their troop's disabling broadcasts to the mines were jammed, resulting in heavy loss of life for the Reds. Central Command has since become very careful in approving new bloodhound placement.

Why?

So why is the Commonwealth so determined to hold on to an eternally rebellious province that regularly saps away their resources and causes them endless political nightmares? In a word: oil.

The Commonwealth's money is near worthless, making the already-valuable commodity even more precious to the insecure government. The oil reserves lying all but untapped under the Sea of Hyrkahn are some of the world's richest. The Commonwealth rightly fears an independent Nokgorka would swiftly find a way to cut them and their pipelines out of the profit loop. There is certainly an element of age-old bigotry against the Gorkas involved in the sheer viciousness of the war, but that alone isn't enough to keep the majority of the Red Fleet deployed in and around Nokgorka.

The Global Council continually repudiated the actions of the Commonwealth, as have nearly all international humanitarian aid organizations. Since the Western Transnationalist Alliance publicly stated the "Nokgorka Affair" was an internal matter, however, best handled by the Commonwealth government as they saw fit, the Gorkas are well aware they're on their own.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE WORLD

Though the Lands of the Red Star are the stage for the comics, they are not the sum of the world. Even though the U.R.R.S. was once one of the most powerful nations in the world, it could not act without challenge from its neighbors. Great powers, like the W.T.A. and the Isle of Lions, actively opposed them since Krieger's fall, with war a looming and present danger. On the other hand, small nations, like Al'Istaan, resisted the U.R.R.S., just as others would the W.T.A., bloodying the nose of one of the greatest empires. Beyond the iron walls of secrecy are other countries, nations, and powers, each with motives and designs of their own. This chapter widens the lens of the Red Star Campaign Setting, to provide critical details of the major nations in the present day arena of international politics.

Al'Istaan

To the southeast of the Lands of the Red Star lies a fiercely beautiful land of windswept mountains, arid plains, and rolling fertile hills. It is home to a proud and ancient people that never willingly bowed to any conqueror, foreign or domestic — the Nistaani. They are a simple folk, many of whom still lead nomadic lives, wandering over the greatly varied terrain of their land singing hymns to the moon, as they herd livestock with their immense beetles. Yet these simple people stood against, and ultimately defeated, one of the strongest armies the world has ever known: the Red Fleet of the United Republics of the Red Star.

A HISTORY in Sand

The oldest legends of the Nistaani state it was Soliman of the Seven Winds who first wrested what was to eventually be Al'Istaan from the hands of the Jinn. The Jinn were beings of air and fire, a capricious race that sped over the mountains and plains, tormenting any unfortunates happening to cross their paths. Soliman's people had been wanderers for a very long time. Upon coming into the Kosa river valley, they knew they'd found the place they wanted to settle. The Jinn's outrages, however, made it impossible.

Soliman was a wise Shaman. After his Chieftain asked him to stop the Jinn, he devised a plan. Knowing the Jinn were arrogant and liked to boast of their abilities, Soliman tricked them, one by one, into a specially crafted vase from which they could not escape. When he managed to capture the greatest of the Jinn's Chieftains, he bargained Al'Istaan for the Jinn's freedom. The Jinn reluctantly agreed.

To ensure their people's compliance, Soliman kept seven Jinn as hostages, and used them to perform many wonders before his death, hence his surname. There are numerous tales about Soliman, and the Nistaani treasure them all. Until recently, modern scholars regarded the tales of Soliman to be apocryphal. After the

rumors of what happened at the Battle of Kar Dathra's Gate, they're no longer certain.

Passing Kingdoms

A kingdom arose on the plains as the Nistaani's ancestors cultivated the fertile soil lying along the Kosa River. They uncovered the secrets of crop rotation and irrigation, making their land prosperous. Various religions from the Land of 10,000 Gods made their way through Al'Istaan, but none took hold for long. Conquerors came and went, each leaving their mark on the region, but none succeeded in ever subduing the Nistaani. Then came the Huan.

Charging down from the North in vast waves, the bestial Huan didn't come to conquer, they came to kill. The Huan shattered the region's civilizations so badly that even after they had passed on, an organized culture didn't rise again for centuries. When it did, it was imitative of the Huan's rather the preexisting culture before the conquerors came.

The Lawless Days

The Huan were a bestial wandering race, caring little for cities or civilization. They slept in tents, forever traveling

in search of pasture for their strange beasts and prey to slaughter. They bowed to many gods, but none exclusively.

The Nistaani became as the Huan, fracturing into nine warrior tribes that roamed over the hills and plateaus of their land, raiding their neighbors at will. Some of the weaker tribes were driven into the great southern desert called the Dusty Sea. Instead of perishing, however, they tamed the massive beetles native to Al'Istaan's deserts, called Susk-Dath, soon letting them travel over the sands at great speed and strike where they willed.

Nistaani tribal leadership inevitably fell to the strongest, changing hands in bloody coups. Many of their leaders dreamed of gathering the nine tribes together under one banner, but even the strongest could never manage more than three before infighting tore their carefully wrought alliances apart.

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"THERE IS BUT ONE TRUE GOD AND KAR DATHRA IS HIS PROPHET."

-Traditional Nistaani Greeting

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The only constant was the tribal Shaman; they deemed the person sacrosanct, though time since eroded this once immutable law. Those who clearly hearing the voices of their ancestors became Shamans, though, on occasion, a cunning claimant could seize the position for a time. Well-taught holy men were steeped in stories and lore from the past, allowing them to impart their wisdom through parables.

Even with the influence of the Priests, however, the tribes all but forgot their identities. The brief lives of the Nistaani were frequently marked with sorrow, for no child born in Al'Istaan during the dark years before the Law ever saw adulthood without losing someone close. And so it was for several centuries, until the coming of the one who would change everything.

THE PROPHET OF AL'ISTAAAN

He was born to the Dusty Sea tribe called the Pashtir, though his birth name has been lost to the pages of history — or perhaps purposefully forgotten, lest it be used as a weapon against him. In his youth, he entered long periods of quiet introspection, after which he would utter odd phrases and occasionally, predictions.

When one of his prophecies occurred, his parents placed him into the care of their tribe's Priest, where he swiftly excelled learning everything the old man had to teach him in less than a year. From there, however, he parted from tradition. Instead of becoming a Shaman's, he left his tribe and wandered over the face of Al'Istaan.

There are many stories of his traveling years, but none are accepted as absolute truth. Some say he was an itinerant healer, succoring all in need. Others claim he was reckless and wild, fighting for coin and raiding with a band of mercenaries. One tale holds a powerful sorcerer captured and forced him to seek out a powerful staff guarded by witches within a hidden city, long ago consumed by the desert sand. All tales agree, though, after an absence of ten years he returned to his people and claimed the Chieftain's seat.

This was unprecedented, for in all the history of Al'Istaan, no Priest had ever before done so. At the time, the Chieftain of the Pashtir was Quratul Battatu, a huge fighter who had built an entire tent from swords he took from defeated rivals. At first, the Chieftain thought the young Shaman was joking, but when the long wandering holy man stripped off his jerkin, revealing a heavily scarred and muscled torso, Quratul realized just how serious he was. Quratul tried to dissuade the young warrior, saying it would be a terrible dishonor for him to fight a Priest, but the young man replied, "All who fight for the honor of Al'Istaan are holy," a phrase destined to be oft-repeated many times in distant years to come. At last, Quratul stepped into the ring, where the young Shaman soundly defeated him. Instead of killing Quratul, as was his right, the new Chieftain honored him by offering a place at his side. The amazed Quratul accepted and became one of his most devoted advocates in the years to come.

The man who would become the Prophet of Al'Istaan ruled his tribe for several years, and word of the first Priest-Chieftain in Al'Istaan's history spread. His reign was just and wise, but his people whispered behind his back. As the years turned, his visions grew in strength; he spent long hours staring out at

the desert or up at the moon and stars without blinking. One day, he announced he would journey, alone, into the heart of the Dusty Sea, to confront the terrible spiritual guardians still holding the ancient Plateau of Sighs. He ignored his tribe's pleas to dissuade him, allowing only Quratul to accompany him part of the way. Quratul later returned to the Pashtir, his hair streaked white from what he saw, though he refused to speak about his experience for the rest of his days.

After six months, when his people had all but given up hope, their Chieftain returned.

He had changed.

In his eyes, burned a fierce light; in his hands, he carried a large tome and a moon-topped staff that blazed with power. He stated he defeated the Jinn of the mountain gate lying beyond the Plateau of Sighs, and thus earned the right to enter the realm of the spirits. There, the Chosen Prophet of the One True God visited him to teach him the living word of the Most High. At the Prophet's feet, he transcribed the Book of Law into the tongue of the Nistaani, which he had brought back with him, to lift his people up out of their barbarous ways and show them the true way to paradise.

In that hour, his people named him Kar Dathra, which means "Great One" in the Nistaani tongue, and the future of Al'Istaan was irrevocably altered. Word of the Prophet of Al'Istaan and the Law of the One True God spread across the land, as tribe after tribe journeyed to the desert to meet him. One by one, they embraced the teachings of the Law.

In just a few years, there were no longer nine tribes, but only one. Kar Dathra held dominion over all the people of Al'Istaan. Using the Law as his guide, he turned them away from their unruly past. He moved his court to the ancient city of Koba, founded in the very first days of Al'Istaan. Under Kar Dathra's leadership, the arts flourished and science advanced. The ancient irrigation systems of the Nistaani once again knew the rush of water, bringing life to the dry plains and allowing a large number of Nistaani to cultivate crops. They erected a great temple at the edge of the Plateau of Sighs, and named the portal to the spirit world guarded Kar Dathra's Gate, to honor the prophet who had risked all for his people.

The Nistaani encouraged Kar Dathra to take a wife. He wed Isha, a woman from the Land's Teeth famous for her sharp wits and her skill as a healer. Nistaani still quote many of Isha's sayings, as well as her commentary on the Law, to this day. Unfortunately, the pair never had offspring, but Kar Dathra always claimed he thought it proper for all of the Nistaani were their children.

After decades of peaceful rule, Kar Dathra passed on and Isha followed him within days. On his deathbed, however, he swore a mighty oath before the One True God that should the Nistaani ever be threatened by a force they could not overcome, he would return and defend them.

THE GREAT MOURNING

Following Kar Dathra's death, Al'Istaan went into a long age of decline and frequent internal upheaval, the Nistaani refer to as the Great Mourning. Their name for the period partly refers to their sorrow over the loss of the Prophet of Al'Istaan, but more specifically, to the loss of unity Kar Dathra had

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granted them. All of Al'Istaan joined peacefully under his rule, and disputes over the Law were always handled in debates he moderated.

With Kar Dathra's demise, various sects arose, each one claiming to have the best interpretation of the Law and the "true word" of the Most High, as well as a willingness to harm others who disagreed with their viewpoint. The most ambitious opportunists among the Nistaani found it advantageous to support whatever faction's beliefs were most useful to advancing their own positions. The shadow of the old ways of tribalism fell over the Nistaani's unity, but this time cloaked in dogma.

When the colossal invading Golden Horde from the Lands of the Dragon came to Al'Istaan they found a country divided, offering little resistance to their rampaging and capable of yielding nothing but a poor tribute to make them leave. The Horsemen destroyed the Nistaani's ancient irrigation systems before they left, eventually causing so much ecological damage large portions of Al'Istaan's most fertile fields were permanently turned into deserts. This, in turn, caused years of deprivation. Hunger makes people desperate, and the desperate are dangerous because they have little to lose.

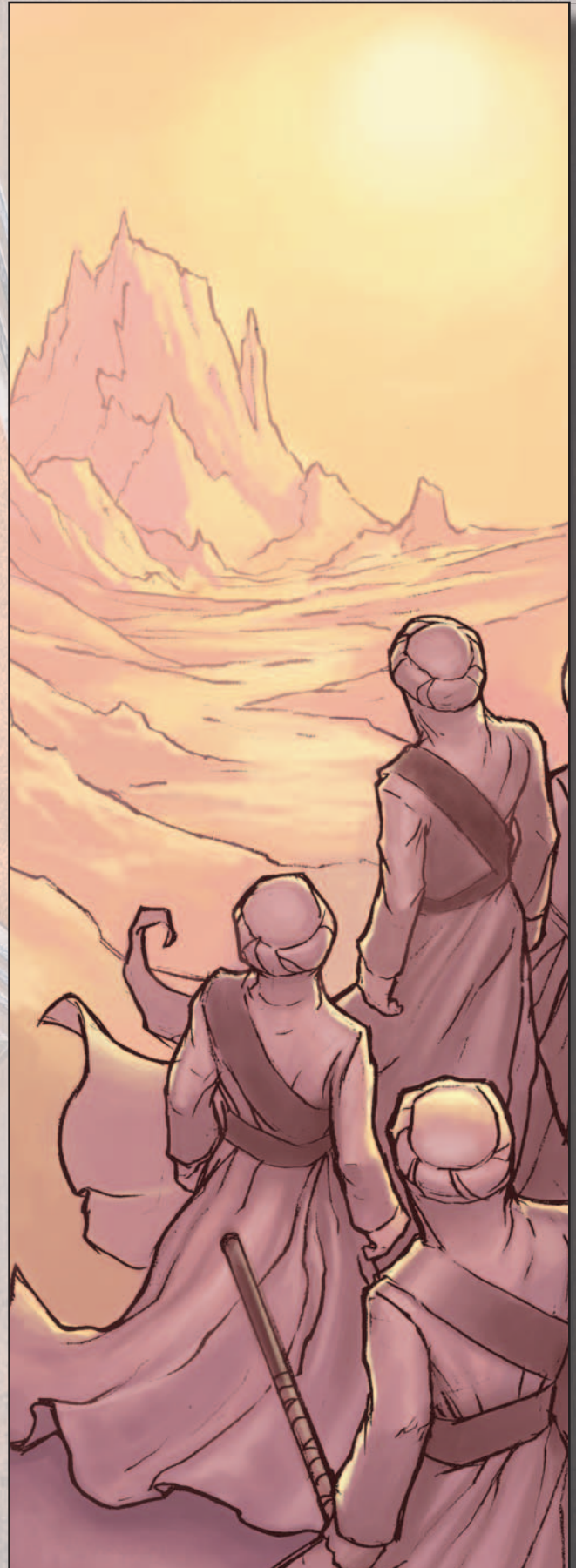
The Lawless Days echoed in Nistaani's many battles both internally and with other countries, many of which were fought under the pretense of being holy wars to spread word of the Law or to enforce a particular orthodoxy on other Nistaani. Various dynasties came to power in the region, but not one eclipsed the reign of Kar Dathra. So it was for several centuries, until the coming of the legendary Chieftain Ribhi Aburia.

In Aburia, the Nistaani found the visionary they needed combined with the political sagacity to stride onto the world stage. Aburia came from one of Al'Istaan's older noble families. He spent much of his early life in court intrigues and dodging assassination attempts. After being approached by a Lionist agent in Dharmai while on a trip to the Land of 10,000 Gods, he agreed to join in the Subtle Dance (see page 140), as the southern advances of the Reds had worried him.

Aburia proved he was no tool for the interests of the West, and skillfully balanced his obligations to his allies with the advancement of the Nistaani. He established a democratic council to moderate the voice of the Chieftains, though he made certain to leave the largest part of the military intact and answerable only to him. He encouraged youths to study abroad, to help bring Al'Istaan into the "modern" world, but at the same time absolutely refused to allow the establishment of any infrastructure, such as railways or telegraphs that might give the West influence over his country. He was a devout follower of the Law and wrote a number of tracts about the subtleties of the text. On his deathbed, he passed on two famous pieces of advice to his eldest son. "The most important thing for the advancement of our people is unity. Unity, and unity alone, can make Al'Istaan great. But my last words to you are these: never trust the Reds."

THE WIND FROM THE NORTH

The Aburia family initiated reforms in Al'Istaan, though several of them fell to assassins in various military coups. When the last of the line was slain, a variety of Chieftains rose and fell every decade or so. Al'Istaan refused to participate in the



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Great Patriotic War, claiming it was not theirs to fight, though they assisted Lionist troops on several occasions.

After seeing the devastation caused by the weapons and protocols of the rest of the world, the Nistaani approached the W.T.A. to sell them old arms in an attempt to bolster their military, but were refused. The Red Councils of the U.R.R.S. on the other hand, greeted the Nistaani with open arms. Imbohl publicly declared his admiration for “our fierce southern comrades.” Ominous as this portent should have been, the Nistaani were in no position to effectively acknowledge it, and as the years rolled on, they became embroiled with the Red Star Republics.

A group of Nistaani youths quietly embraced the political leanings of the Internationalists, and the Red Nistaani Party formed under a man named Golam Maidi, a confidant of Imbohl's. While the ruling Chieftain Elrashidi was away on a trip to the West, Maidi illegally seized power in a bloody coup, declaring the Chieftaincy was no more and that he was the new President of Al'Istaan. Maidi immediately consolidated his position, placing his allies in power and establishing a brutal secret police force to suppress all opposition. Maidi soon offered a friendship treaty to the U.R.R.S., which the Red Council quickly ratified.

Maidi's year in office was one of the darkest in Al'Istaan's long history, but one of the great Nistaani hopes for the future also rose in that year. As mass arrests became common and

the use of torture to coerce “confessions” frequent, many Nistaani felt a call to take up arms and fight for their people. They named themselves “Nasr Kien” or “Bright Eagles,” and they felt it their holy duty to fight for a free Al'Istaan.

The Lionists regarded this as one of the most critical movements of their Subtle Dance and convinced the W.T.A. to provide the Nistaani with “advisors” to help train them in guerilla tactics and give them arms with which to fight. The Eagles swiftly made their presence known, removing several of Maidi's allies and destabilizing his government. Rumor spread that the One True God in fact chose some of the Nasr, as their holy powers manifested while they fought. Several Priests joined the Nasr and openly declared that to take up arms against Maidi's government was to engage in Jihad, the Holy War against infidels.

When the Nasr killed over forty of Maidi's “secret” police in a single week, his Northern allies decided they'd had enough of his incompetence and ordered him removed. Maidi was assassinated by his second in command, a U.R.R.S.-raised Nistaani named Farhad Thamir, who then declared himself acting President. His first official action was to ask the Red Star Republics for aid in quelling the Nasr's violent uprisings threatening his new “just and peaceful” government. Three days later, the U.R.R.S. responded — forward elements of the Red Fleet entered Al'Istaan.

The War for Al'Istaan had begun.

THE LAND, THE PEOPLE AND THE LAW: Life in Al'Istaan

The Land

Al'Istaan is widely known for its harsh, mountainous terrain. The long curling line of the Land's Teeth mountain range, running roughly from the northeast to the southwest, and forms a natural barrier between the north and the rest of the country. The Land's Teeth range is over 1,600 kilometers long and nearly 300 kilometers wide. Several dozen mountain peaks throughout the range exceed 7,000 meters high. Below the snowy summits, the Land's Teeth are a maze of bare, jagged stone, nearly incapable of supporting vegetation. The Land's Teeth have always been of great military importance, as they form a natural first line of defense for the Nistaani. They've also always been a prime target for invading armies, however, as the crucial Iron Pass — the legendary gateway to the Land of 10,000 Gods — is situated along their southeastern edge.

The highlands surrounding the Land's Teeth are filled with narrow valleys running in great deep swaths throughout the region. The soil of the area is steppe-like and difficult to cultivate. Koba, the capital city of Al'Istaan, sits on the southern edge of the highlands.

To the south lies an expanse of colossal plateaus and silt deserts called the Dusty Sea. It covers an area of over 130,000 square kilometers. It is a desolate region, nearly lifeless except for the shores of the Huriya River, which runs

down from the Land's Teeth. Violent dust storms regularly sweep through the area, capable of stripping an exposed man down to bone in a little less than a few minutes. The arid plains of the Dusty Sea offer little sustenance to travelers though the Susk-Dath are native to the desert. To the Nistaani, however, the Dusty Sea is the most sacred ground in all of Al'Istaan for it was the birthplace of the Prophet and Kar Dathra's Gate lies deep within it.

The Northern Reach holds the most fertile ground Al'Istaan has to offer. The beautiful Kosa River runs through a region measuring about 100,000 square kilometers. From here originates the greater bulk of Al'Istaan's crops. Nistaani farms are often terraced and multi-tiered to take advantage of the lush sloping hills dominating the north. The Northern Reach also contains a large number of mineral deposits, including gold and silver.

The People

The tribal structure underlying the Nistaani has never entirely disappeared, and it colors a great number of their values. The Nistaani hold blood ties dearly. They typically put their family's welfare before all other considerations except in matters of faith. They also trust people coming from their own tribe before other Nistaani, and other Nistaani before any outsider. This has unfortunately made them insular and close-minded. Change comes slowly to Al'Istaan.

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There is an old expression about the Nistaani, stating, “Know a man’s region, know a man’s character.” There are definitely traits of the Nistaani psyche specific to the province in which they were raised. The mountains are referred to in Nistaani religious texts as a forge to test one’s mettle, and the rare people of the highland tribes invariably are self reliant and hard. The majority of the fiercest warriors Al’Istaani ever produced hailed from the mountains and highlands of the Land’s Teeth, and the bulk of the original Nasr recruits came from there as well. Tradition holds they are a stoic people, but many of those allowed to know them are surprised to find how quick they are to laugh — they’re just well practiced in hiding their mirth from outsiders. “Our home is grim,” they say, “but our hearts aren’t.”

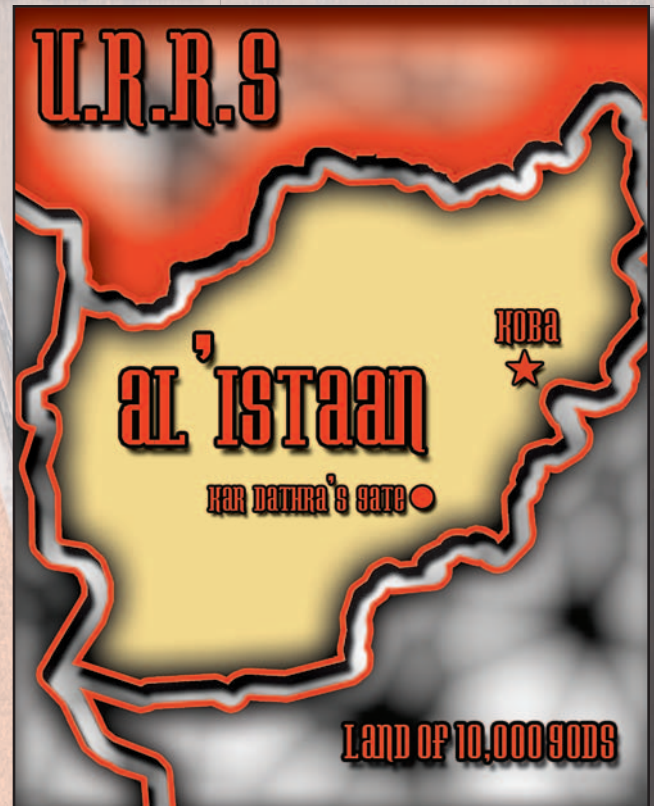
The desert tribes of the Dusty Sea, on the other hand, are a fiercely passionate people. Lavish in their loves, fervent in their hatreds and zealous in their faith, their unforgiving region seems to breed souls of powerful character. “Only the strong can survive the desert,” they claim. They are also quick to point out Kar Dathra came from their stock whenever anyone criticizes their excesses of character. Despite their wild emotions, denizens of the Dusty Sea are also a practical people. Surviving the trials of the open desert gives a body little choice in the matter if one wants to survive.

Nistaani from the Northern Reach have a reserved and wistful character, but their emotions are no less than their southern cousins; they just run deeper. A Nistaani mother of the Northern Reach, upon hearing she had lost a son to battle, would likely shed only a single tear before continuing her work for the rest of her day, seemingly unfazed. That night, though, she would sing a lament that could make a stone weep. Many of Al’Istaani’s most treasured poets hail from the verdant hills of the north. Of all the Nistaani, they are the most inclined to politics, not because they like it, but simply because they’re suited to diplomacy. The northerners’ cool heads have helped to balance their ardent countrymen to the south with their taciturn countrymen to the east, and allowed all sides to focus on important issues without being caught up in petty feuds.

The Dune-Ra

The Nistaani regard themselves as the natives of Al’Istaani, but there is another race with an equal claim. The Dune-Ra have lived on the Dusty Sea and under the Land’s Teeth since before the banishment of the Jinn. They are massive beings, related to the Mountainwalkers of the Roof of the World, stand three meters tall and weighing over two hundred and thirty kilograms. Their skin has the texture of stone, and each of their three fingered hands can crushing a human skull like an egg. They are a simple people, unconcerned with the day-to-day intricacies of other cultures; they are usually devout followers of the Law.

They believe the spirit of Al’Istaani watches over them and speaks to them in dreams. The Dune-Ra taught the Nistaani the secrets of Sha-Moram (see page 133). The Nistaani use Dune-Ra on the battlefield as a form of “living krawl,” for they can easily tote enormous anti-vehicular weapons and rockets. Most Dune-Ra use large, sealed, round pots of boiling lead called “Krevaak” as devastating grenades to burn flesh and melt equipment.



Daily Life

The Nistaani value simplicity in all areas of their lives. Al’Istaani literally translates as “The Land,” and Nistaani in turn means, “The People of the Land.” They are distrustful of complex technology and scorn it as a crutch if traditional ways work better. Because of this they use modern firearms in war, while Nistaani farmers hoe their fields with hand tools.

Very little modern industry is evident in Al’Istaani, though the Nistaani don’t seem to miss it. The majority of the populace consists of either farmers or nomadic herdsmen. Farmers rise with the sun and work through the morning before retiring during the mid-day heat, and then come return for the remainder of the day until sundown. Wheat, fruits, and pistachios are the most common crops, though some farmers expanded into opium production. Herdsmen direct livestock from the backs of their Susk-Dath, staying within a reasonable distance of water sources. The roving tribes all have long established routes they follow, to avoid disputes with their fellows; in lean years, however, they require a Priest to mediate, lest blood be spilt, forcing them to range wider a field.

Tribal leaders negotiate collectively with merchants to sell wool, mutton and sheepskins for a good price, so none of them get undercut and their families go without. Nistaani do not engaging in animal husbandry or agriculture are often involved in textile production, crafting widely famed rugs and carpets. A few of the Land’s Teeth tribes are famous for their skills in cutting precious gems.

Nistaani wear locally produced clothing. Men wear layered wool overcoats and baggy trousers, often topped with a

Dune-Ra

Dune-Ra are the native Mountainwalkers of Al'Istaan. They are primitive but devout followers of the Law. They stand between 3 and 4 meters tall, and have large, three fingered hands, thick trunks and oversized jaws. Most wear fetishes and many of them have tribal tattoos.

Dune-Ra

CR 2; Large giant; HD 4d8+8; hp 26; Mas 15; Init -1; Spd 10m; Defense 11, touch 8, flat-footed 11 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +3 Natural); DR 5/-; BAB +3; Grap +11; Atk +7 melee (2d6+5, Iron-shod club), or +6 melee (1d4+4, slam); or +1 ranged; FS 4m by 4m; Reach 4m; SQ Low-light vision; AL Al'Istaan or The Law of the One True God; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +1; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 19, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6; Wis 10, Cha 9; Climb +8, Listen +2, Spot +4; Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Weapon Focus (Iron-shod club); Adv by character class.

Dune-Ra as Player Characters

In certain Al'Istaan campaigns, a GM may wish to present one of the players with the opportunity to play one of the Dune-Ra. The following traits apply to Dune-Ra PCs:

Size: Large. As Large creatures, Dune-Ra take a -1 penalty to Defense and a -1 size penalty on attack rolls. They gain a +4 size bonus on grapple checks and take a -4 penalty on Hide checks.

Ability Modifiers: +8 Strength, -2 Dexterity, +4 Constitution, -4 Intelligence, -2 Charisma.

Extra Hit Dice: Dune-Ra PCs retain their 4 Hit Dice (4d8 Hit Points) as giants. Con bonus applies to all Hit Dice. They also retain their base attack bonus of +3, their base saves (Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +1), 12+Int modifier skill points, and one feat.

Base Speed: 10 meters.

Special Qualities: Dune-Ra's naturally rocky hide gives them a Damage Reduction 5/-. They can navigate by starlight and have low-light vision.

Fighting Space: Dune-Ra occupy a 4m by 4m space; Dune-Ra have a 4 meter reach.

Allegiance: Dune-Ra must begin play with an allegiance to either Al'Istaan or the Law of the One True God.

Bonus Feats: All Dune-Ra begin play with the Archaic Weapons Proficiency feat.

Level Adjustment: +2.



rounded cloth cap called a Pakol or a turban. Women wear long flowing dresses, and cover their heads and shoulders with shawls. Both sexes may wear a mashur, a thin cloth face-covering veil offering protection from blowing dust (see page 63 for more information on mashurs).

Nistaani use many layers, as the temperatures vary wildly from day to evening in many regions of Al'Istaan. They tend towards brown and white coloring in their clothes: brown because it hides dirt well and white for the religious connotations. Then again, crimson dresses are popular with women, and men often add red accents to their own garb.

Entertainment

Both passion and beauty motivate the Nistaani people. They value poetry and song. Depth of expression and open displays of emotion are common among them, though only the Dusty Sea tribes show this side of themselves to outsiders. Individuals extemporizing poetry suitable to any given occasion find immense favor in Al'Istaan, as do skilled storytellers.

Falconry is a popular pastime for the wealthy, and those who cannot afford the maintenance for those raptors still enjoy a

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good hunt. However, generations of skilled hunters forced the native prey animals to hone their skills in hiding, so much so that being a renowned hunter holds greater meaning here than in other parts of the world.

Nistaani also enjoy gambling, even though the Law frowns upon it. One of their favored wagers is betting on the outcome of Shaihidi fights. Shaihidi are lizards native to the Dusty Sea who sport a frill of brightly colored feathers and nasty venom they accurately spit up to five meters or more. Shaihidi territorial duels are exciting as the combatants employ subtle feints and feats of blinding reflexes. A champion Shaihidi is quite valuable.

All other joys pale in comparison, however, to the Nistaani's national obsession: Suskashren. An ancient sport, literally translated, it means, "hunting from a beetle." There are several different ways to play, but the most common variant is Taba. A circle of riders sitting astride younger, but highly trained Susk-Dath surround a headless goat or sheep carcass. At the signal from a flag, the riders try to sweep up the carcass and move it outside the original starting circle by riding in any direction. Sounds easy? It isn't. Most riders never get close to the "ball" let alone push it outside the ring.

Suskashren competition is extraordinary, and the winner of a bout gains a substantial prize awarded by the sponsor of the match. Riders train for years to compete, as do their Susk-Dath, for communication between the two is crucial to victory. Some of the other variations of Suskashren involve the use of points to carry the carcass around a flag, before depositing it in a specific spot. It is a dangerous sport. Every year, some well-meaning Nistaani politicians try to get it banned, but they never succeed: Kar Dathra himself loved Suskashren, and played it a few times a year.

FIGHTING TRADITIONS

Al'Istaan boasts no great standing armies. It does however have some of the most defensible terrain in the entire world. The Land's Teeth defeated armies for centuries, to say nothing of the crippling effects of the Dusty Sea. Nistaani are naturally suited to guerilla warfare, as it builds on a variety of the strengths they learn as hunters.

The Nistaani have several forms of wrestling that they've long practiced, one of which probably derived from their exposure to the Golden Horde from the Lands of the Dragon. It involves a variety of sweeping kicks along with grappling holds capable of bringing a foe close for a throat cut.

Nistaani favor rifles over pistols, for they have a greater range and uses beyond mere warfare. They use an assortment of different bladed pole arms along with a number of dagger styles, most often katar. Nistaani seldom offer a straight up fight if they can help it, preferring to engage in a series of rapid strikes and feints before swiftly retreating.

Nistaani warriors also practice a fighting technique in which they telekinetically control clusters of short silver pins, they usually carry in a small leather pouch at their side. At a crucial moment in a fight, they hurl a handful at their opponent and direct them into his eyes. This style, Sha-Ask or "Slivers on the Wind," is difficult to master, but devastating to face on the battlefield. Victims seldom live long enough to lament the resulting blindness coming from a particularly accurate attack.

Sha-Ask directly led to another Nistaani practice: "To don the mashur is to go to war," the old phrase runs. Mashur are the face-covering veils that the Nistaani use to protect their eyes from blown sand, which is, in effect, a kind of war, but the mashur Nistaani put on for combat are very different. While originally made from heavy cloth as a protection against Sha-Ask, the modern era has seen war mashur become sophisticated pieces of equipment. Many are technologically advanced instruments laced with protocol enhancement, offering their wearer a broad range of tactical battle information. Some of the more ancient mashur were supposedly woven with powerful rituals, but what they do for their wearers, none can or will say.

No discussion of the Nistaani's fighting traditions would be complete without mentioning their beloved Susk-Dath. The large beetles play a number of roles on the battlefield, depending on their age and size. The Nistaani use the younger and faster Susk-Dath as high-speed cavalry, engaging an enemy's flank before swiftly retreating. The older, massive Susk-Dath have weapons and armor welded to their thick carapaces and function as living tanks.

CHIEFTAINS AND THE GOVERNMENT

The Nistaani have a great deal of loyalty to Al'Istaan itself, but they've had so many governments come and go over the years most of them actively loath of politics. The majority of Nistaani look to their tribal leader first, then to their local Priest and finally to the government, if they want to get anything done.

For over a thousand years, government existed at the local level. A tribal Chieftain and his council of handpicked advisors set policy and made decisions for the area his or her tribe controlled. Actions impinging on aspects of the Law fell to the tribe's Priest for his advice. There was often a "Chieftain of Chieftains" — a King in all but name, whom other Chieftains deferred to, but not necessarily with any formalized structure.

It used to be any tribe member who thought he could do a better job than the current Chieftain could challenge him for the role. As certain families consistently won challenges, chieftaincy eventually became a matter of birthright. The Nistaani never truly forgot the old ways, however; every few decades, a challenge is declared. The last century has seen the rise of a form of democracy in Al'Istaan, often referred to as "Aburia's Legacy" in reference to the great Reforming Chieftain.

Ribhi Aburia created a "People's Council" made up of thirty democratically elected individuals from across Al'Istaan. The only condition of being on the council was that a given individual could never have been a Chieftain, nor related to one in less than three generations. Council members serve a five-year term, spending part of the year at their homes and part at Koba. The Council advised the "King" and his advisors by giving them access to the thoughts of the common people.

In theory, a two-thirds majority of the Council could overturn decisions made by the Great Chieftain. In practice, the People's Council was always hard pressed to get more than ten members to agree on anything. When Golam Maidi seized control of Al'Istaan's government, he ordered



SUSK-DATH

Susk-Dath are massive beetles native to the Dusty Sea region of Al'Istaan. Susk-Dath grow their entire lives, and some of them have lived for centuries. The younger, swifter Susk-Dath serve as fast cavalry, while the eldest are like living krawls, with massive chitin plates reinforced with metal, with weaponry mounted on them.

SUSK-DATH

CR 5; Large vermin; HD 7d8+21; 52 hp; Mas 22; Init +0; Spd 12m; Defense 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14 (-1 size, +5 natural); BAB +5; Grap +15; Atk +10 melee (4d6+9); Full Atk +10 melee (4d6+9); FS 3m by 3m; Reach 4m; SA trample 2d8+3; SQ Damage reduction 7/-, darkvision 30m, smart bug, vermin traits; AL none; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +2; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 23, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 4; Wis 10, Cha 10; Skills: Move Silently +10; Adv 8-10 HD (Large), 11-21 HD (Huge).

Trample (Ex): Reflex half DC 19. Save is Strength based.

Smart Bug (Ex): Despite being vermin, Susk-Dath have an intelligence score.

the People's Council to ratify his Presidency on pain of death. Several of those noble men and women went to their martyrdom, refusing to sanction a despot. Others managed to flee, and a few became some of the first leaders of the Nasr.

Policing in Al'Istaan is also handled at a local level. One of a Chieftain's advisors is usually a Giver of Justice, the person directly responsible for local law enforcement. These men and women are always well versed in the Law, as the greater precepts of Al'Istaan's justice system are all based upon it. It can be a difficult job, especially if he finds the individual responsible for a crime is well connected. One of the stories the Nistaani appreciate, though, is about a Giver of Justice named Khalil Mourad.

Mourad was asked to investigate a series of murders scattered throughout the Land's Teeth. After he determined the guilty party was, in fact, his own son, he confronted him. With tears in his eyes, Mourad killed his eldest boy while the youth resisted arrest. To this day in Al'Istaan, to honor such dedication, individuals known to stop at nothing to achieve their goals are said to have, "Khalil's Will."

The Law

Some say while the Nistaani are relatively uncomplicated, their faith is not. The majority of Nistaani would deny this with a laugh, saying their religion is very simple: it is all about submission to the One True God. The Nistaani believe Kar Dathra was a prophet of the Most High and he transcribed the words of the Chosen Prophet, he that first brought the Law to the world, into the Nistaani language.

The Law is, basically, a series of parables on wisdom, proper doctrine, how and when to worship, daily life and just behavior. It is beautiful with rich multi-layered meanings the Nistaani studied and expounded upon for centuries. They consider the Law to be inviolate; any deviations from the true text are ignored as flawed. The Law states there is but One True God and all other deities are false, though the Most High does have many spiritual servants who are powerful enough they could fool humans into believing they were deities if they so choose.

The Law describes a Judgment Day upon which all thinking beings will be called to account for their actions in life. Those who didn't lead a righteous life according to the tenets of the Law face the Fire. The Law also holds all life forces have a fate awaiting them, a divine predestination the One True God has in mind for them. Paradoxically enough, it also says all creatures have free will. These seemingly opposing tenets are explained simply by stating every individual's choices inevitably lead them to their fate, whatever it is meant to be.

The Law proscribes certain forms of behavior and encourages others, as most religious texts do. Men and women are equal by the Law, with different, but no less important, duties each performs within a family. Traditionally, women are the instructors of children and the directors of daily life, where men earn money. Women can own property and work if they choose to, and many do so without stigma if they are without children, or once their children have grown.

Nistaani faithful identify themselves and regularly proclaim their faith by stating: "There is but One True God and Kar Dathra is his prophet." A proper follower of the Law prays regularly, five times a day. The Law encourages the faithful to

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put money aside to help the needy and unfortunate. Once in the life of every devout Nistaani, if time, circumstances, and resources allow, they make a pilgrimage to the Plateau of Sighs and visit Kar Dathra's Gate. The Nistaani believe they worship their deity best by the way they choose to live their lives. By following the doctrines of the Law in their everyday behavior, they give the greatest praise to their One True God.

Shaman

Outsiders often think of Nistaani Shaman as "Priests of the Law," while there is some truth to that, it misrepresents their actual place in the life and history of Al'Istaan. Priests existed among the Nistaani long before the coming of Kar Dathra. From the oldest times, remembered now only in oral history traditions, come tales of Shaman who bargained with spirits and the shades of their people's ancestors to allow the Nistaani tribes to dwell safely within their lands. Priests were frequently consulted on how to placate angry ghosts and the best way to deal with troublesome spirits. For example, the Shaman Soliman supposedly bound the Jinn for the benefit of all Nistaani.

With the coming of the Prophet of Al'Istaan, the Priests' role changed. The Shaman of Kar Dathra's era swiftly saw the wisdom and truth of the Law. They transitioned from their old roles into new ones as interpreters of the Law, but still the guardians of the spirit of Al'Istaan. Nistaani, following old tribal customs, originally started asking them to intercede with the One True God on their behalf. The Priests, however, firmly corrected their people, stated all were equally valued before the Most High and each Nistaani should feel free to ask what they would of the One True God. The Shaman would be around to advise them whenever they wished, but nothing more.

Priests still play an active role in Nistaani life. The priests play a number of roles, from community leaders to tribal advisors, marriage counselors to politicians, and most commonly, spiritual mentors. When Nistaani are troubled, most inevitably turn to a trusted local Shaman to whom they may unburden themselves. Priests know a great many truths about the world of which others are blissfully ignorant; though it is a heavy burden, they hold those secrets dear. It is their curse to dwell among their people, but always be somewhat apart, never entirely at ease even in the communities their presence helps foster.

Other Beliefs

The Nistaani hold the moon sacred and depict it on many of their mosques. The crescent moon is the first mortal sight Kar Dathra's eyes beheld as he emerged from his long sojourn in the spirit world. It was also the symbol topping his staff. Scholars of Al'Istaan's history suggest the wandering moon is a very old symbol, from long before the time of Kar Dathra, connected to their former status as a nomadic people. Regardless of the symbol's origin, the moon retains its hold on the Nistaani's hearts, evidenced in Nistaani poetry.

Wind also figures prominently in Nistaani tales. They believe the wind is the voice of Al'Istaan, singing to them of the past and present. Some say the wind carries the last vestiges of the Jinn, or that their ancestors can whisper through it. While this is perhaps expected, considering how much the wind affects the sands of the dry region, outsiders disdaining this

simple conviction are often shocked to silence when they learn Nistaani skilled at Sha-Moram or "Harkening to the Wind" can authoritatively speak of old battles, new conflicts and events happening just over the next rise.

Koba

The oldest city in Al'Istaan and certainly the most sacred, Koba was the seat of Kar Dathra's later reign. He chose Koba, in part, because it was the first city founded by the wandering tribes originally making up the Nistaani. When the Chieftain Sharha encountered the smooth promontory overlooking the rest of the highlands, offering views of the distant horizon and the gleaming white caps of the Land's Teeth shining to the north, he knew he found the home for which he long sought.

Koba's position offers an unparalleled view of the surrounding countryside. It is impossible for a large force to get within 100 miles without notice. Koba's broad thoroughfares support a wide variety of traffic, while Koba's extensive assortment of mosques draws tourists, and Koba's infamous markets cater to any taste or desire. The Nistaani dealing in illicit goods rationalize their behavior by declaring if infidels wish to destroy themselves, it's their own affair.

Koba's skyline is a short one. The largest buildings in Koba, other than a few mosques, stand three stories tall. The two most notable structures in Koba are the Chieftain's Palace, which always served as the seat of Nistaani government, whatever its stripe, and the University of Koba. The University is a modern learning institution, using the latest protocol-enhanced relays to teach the arts, sciences and study of the Law.

Kar Dathra's Gate

The holiest site in Al'Istaan and one all faithful are expected to take a pilgrimage to at least once in their lives, the temple surrounding Kar Dathra's Gate is a massive edifice carved from the side of a mountain. Followers of the Law must walk for three days over the Plateau of Sighs to reach the temple awaiting them on the far side. Legend holds no mortal hand actually formed the temple. The precision of the cuts into the surface of a mountain far out into an inhospitable desert go far to further that belief.

The War for Al'Istaan

Incredulous to outsiders as it may sound, the Red Fleet expected to be welcomed into Al'Istaan with open arms. After all, the soldiers of the fleet had been told that they were going to Al'Istaan to defend it from the ambitions of the Western Transnationalist Alliance and its allies, as well as countless horror stories of the atrocities committed upon the Nistaani people by a ruthless group of terrorists. High-level fleet officers upon arrival in Al'Istaan found mass graves filled with the supposed victims of the Nasr by agents of "President" Thamer's administration. It was a year or two before they discovered the greater bulk of the corpses they believed were the Nasr's work were actually the results of Golam Maidi's governance, but by then, even if they had been so inclined, it was far too late to do anything about it. The Red Council would not be denied its "inevitable" victory.

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To the Nasr, the coming of the Red Fleet increased the stakes in the struggle they already fought. Indeed, Lionist agents already informed them in advance of the arrival of the U.R.R.S.' troops. From the very beginning of the war, the Nistaani knew trying to fight in direct combat with the Red Fleet was suicidal. You don't stop an angry Susk-Dath with force; you give it shallow, bleeding cuts and let it eventually drop from its blood loss.

At first, the Nasr Kien were a small group of individuals determined to change the course of their country's future. When the Red Fleet arrived, they secretly numbered well over a thousand. Within 6 months, they'd swelled to ten times that number, and their numbers continued to rise steadily throughout the war. Indeed, recruitment was not the Nasr's problem — logistics was. They had so many recruits they couldn't arm them all, leading to a wide variety of weaponry being pressed into service. The W.T.A. and the Isle of Lions supplied them with shipments of small arms, but never large amounts or regularly, a fact eventually leading the Nasr's leadership to question their allies motives.

The engagements of the war were largely feints, designed for each side to test the other's resolve and strengths. The infantry soldiers of the Red Fleet learned something their government wouldn't listen to or accept until long after the war was over: the Nistaani would never surrender. Time after time, cornered Nasr Kien would fight to the last, even after offered a chance to lay down their arms. Worse, a number of their opponents were children.

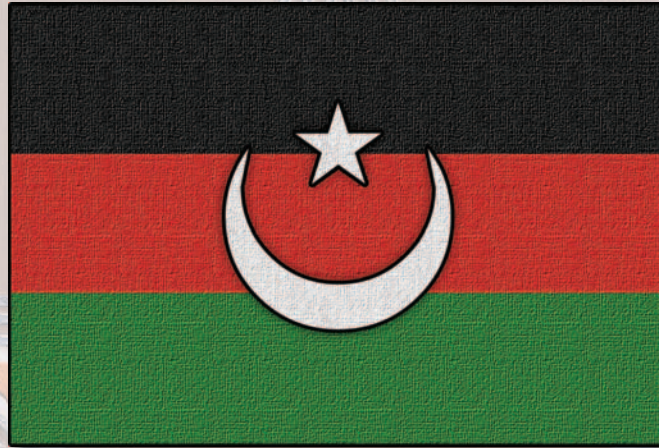
As the war progressed, many soldiers were forced into policing duties they'd never been trained for and were regularly exposed to the brutality and corruption of Thamir's government. Scores of them turned to alcohol or drugs unavailable in the U.R.R.S. but readily accessible through Al'Istaan's black market. Many committed suicide, incapable of reconciling the reality of what they experienced with their country's propaganda.

Finally, some of the Red Fleet troopers, especially the ones from Nokgorka, were devout followers of the Law. When they learned they were not in fact liberating a land they deemed holy from the insidious forces of the West, they were at pains to check their rage. The Nasr were well aware of the Red Fleet's many problems and would sometimes go to ground for months at a time, offering no targets to fight, specifically to give their enemies plenty of time with nothing to do. The deleterious effects these circumstances had on the surviving soldiers' morale was powerful. Only the fact that the Red Fleet was well trained at the time kept it from collapsing altogether.

The Red Star Republics became desperate as the years rolled on as their death toll mounted. The Nasr Kien were

supposedly a small, insignificant force, yet they managed to stymie the U.R.R.S. And though the Red Fleet nominally held all of Al'Istaan, none of it was truly within their control.

As the Red Council demanded more and more ruthless actions from their troops, a vicious cycle of bloody reprisals between the Red Fleet and the Nasr Kien continued to escalate. Civilians and neutral parties both were killed in the crossfire. The U.R.R.S.' actions were almost unilaterally condemned at a meeting of the Global Council some three years after the war began, but the Red ambassador claimed they were helping an ally with an internal affair and it was none of the business of the rest of the world.



This and the continuing violence against Al'Istaan's civilian population actually led to other countries lending their assistance to the Nistaani. The size of the battles in Al'Istaan increased exponentially, as the Nasr Kien grew from a guerilla force into a full-fledged army. This same growth, though, made it difficult to hide their forces from the Red Fleet's surveillance and led to larger engagements.

After nine long years of warfare, the Red Council

decided it was past time to finish the game. Information had been leaked to the Red Fleet concerning the whereabouts of the main encampment of the Nasr Kien. Believed to be hidden in an area the Nistaani considered sacred, around something called "Kar Dathra's Gate". The Red Council demanded a full-scale attack of the entire Red Fleet, including every active skyfurnace, with the purpose of utterly annihilating all trace of the Nistaani resistance and securing their long awaited victory.

The Battle of Kar Dathra's Gate

No spy, or at least, no spy in the Red Fleet's employ, slipped them the information concerning the location of the Nasr. Some believe it was the last of a series of intricate steps in the Subtle Dance of the Lionists, or the manipulations of the W.T.A. Others claim it was just chance. All veterans of the War for Al'Istaan, though, firmly hold to the conviction the Nistaani's Priests purposefully revealed the information to their enemies to draw them in for the final stroke of a long conceived plan. Sacrificing well over twenty thousand faithful warriors to the ventral blasts of the Red Fleet skyfurnaces allowed the Nistaani Priests to summon Kar Dathra the Eternal, the Prophet of Al'Istaan.

Much has been told of this battle elsewhere. Suffice it to say within a minute of Kar Dathra's appearance on the battlefield, the Red Fleet was nearly annihilated. The remaining armed forces of the United Republics of the Red Star withdrew almost completely from Al'Istaan less than twenty-four hours later, leaving only a token presence behind.

The Nistaani resistance had won the war.



THE AFTERMATH & THE PRESENT

The Nistaani paid a high price for their victory. Nearly an entire generation was lost to the carnage and whole family lines became extinct. The lack of farmers to tend the fields of the Northern Reach resulted in widespread famine requiring foreign aid to alleviate even partially the hunger.

The Nistaani's government was in total shambles. Farhad Thamir had been assassinated several years previously, and the "Presidency" of Al'Istaan had been filled with a succession of Red Council appointees. The Nasr Kien publicly executed the latest in the line, one Syed al-Amri, within days of their victory.

The Nasr refused to accept Chieftain Elrashidi back as their leader, stating that as he had stayed out of the entire war as a political exile, he had done nothing for the war effort. Elrashidi's backers claimed he had done a great deal behind the scenes in directing the aid of the West to the Nasr's war efforts. Such claims incensed the Nasr more though, because many of them felt that the West had given aid only with the intention of prolonging the war to weaken the Reds, and that they cared little about the fate of the Nistaani. In addition, the large number of deaths across family lines had all but devastated the old royal bloodlines. The Nasr Kien unilaterally decided for Al'Istaan the time for Chieftains had ended.

They elected Jahal Saleed to be the new President of Al'Istaan, a former member of the People's Council who had been with the resistance from the very beginning of the war. A tense political situation swiftly developed in which countries wishing to aid in the rebuilding of Al'Istaan were unable to assist; the dispute as to which government was actually legitimate took years to resolve.

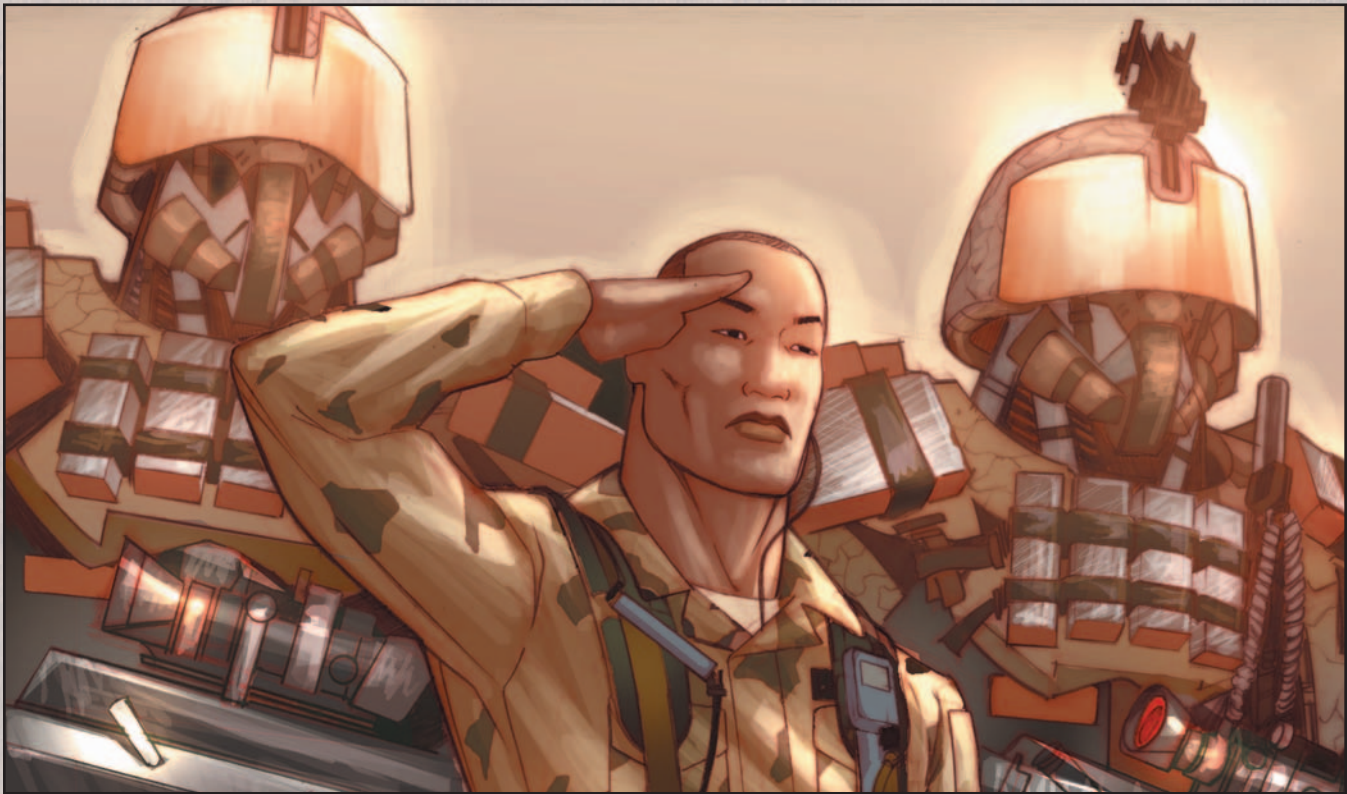
The war also collapsed the Nistaani's economy, and the crippling lack of funds led President Saleed to encourage the farmers of the Northern Reaches to grow opium, saleable to world markets at great profit, but also invoking the ire of some of Al'Istaan's would-be allies. Even more dangerous, a large number of the Nasr Kien refused to lay down their arms. A number of the younger grew up with war and knew no other way. Some of them joined radical groups demanding immediate change, both in their own country and others as well.

Amidst these troubles, there were some bright spots. The appearance of Kar Dathra caused the attendance in mosques and faith in the One True God to soar. Converts from all over the world journeyed to Al'Istaan to take a pilgrimage to Kar Dathra's Gate. After a few hard years, the Nistaani managed to get a hold on their troubles and started to turn their situation around...

...until the Imperial City Bombing.

One of the Western Transnationalist Alliance's largest and most cherished downtowns was nearly leveled in a protocol-laced explosion destroying five square city blocks. The terrorist attack on the Imperial City was linked to a group of radical Nistaani based out of the Land's Teeth, and the W.T.A. demanded the government of Al'Istaan turn them over at once. When the government stated they were unable to do so, the Westerners declared they would come in and take them by force, regardless of the Nistaani's opinion on the subject.

The troops of the West have but newly arrived in Al'Istaan. Whether or not they'll repeat the mistakes of the Red Fleet has yet to be determined.



The Western Transnational Alliance

An ocean away from the Lands of the Red Star lays the terrible might of the last global superpower, the W.T.A. Theirs are the hands now holding the tiller of the world, directing it as they choose. Their armies are as a tidal wave, effortlessly sweeping all before them. Across the globe, the letters “B-C-I” are often whispered with barely concealed terror in dark cloakrooms and late night council chambers. An empire so vast is not easily held though, and many of their enemies would pay any price to teach the arrogant Westerners a lesson. Indeed, some recently moved against them with destructive results.

The Land of the Brave

The Isle of Lions founded the colonies that eventually became the W.T.A. several centuries ago. Then, a series of totalitarian despots, each more conservative than the last, ruled the Lionists. King Aaron the First was similar to his forebears, except he was far more creative than ever were his predecessors.

The King hit upon a plan to seem magnanimous, reduce his woes, and possibly make money all in one maneuver. All

rebels against the crown, every prisoner on the isle, and anyone wanting to escape their life on the Great Continent was offered amnesty, along with passage to the New World in exchange for a modest portion of their crops and a reasonable sum in taxes to be collected once they managed to establish successful outposts. King Aaron didn't really care if they succeeded or not; he really just wanted them gone. When tobacco and respectable amounts of silver began trickling into the royal coffers a decade later, long after he'd easily crushed the few insurgents who hadn't taken up his offer, he declared the entire venture a rousing success.

The Western Colonies grew and expanded outwards from the coast of the New World. The colonists slaughtered natives they encountered with practiced ease, unless they had powers or abilities potentially useful to the colonization, in which case they were “strongly encouraged” to join the rapidly growing colonies.

As the West became more and more self sufficient, it depended on the Isle of Lions less and less.

After a century and a half of rule, they stunned the world by declaring their independence from the Lionists. The various colonies gathered under a single charter dictating their rights and financial

“LET ALL THE WORLD RAGE AS THEY WILL. WE WILL DO WHAT'S RIGHT, REGARDLESS OF THE CONSEQUENCES.”

—GENERAL WADE LATHROP ON THE BOMBING OF CIVILIAN TARGETS WHO MAY HAVE BEEN HARBORING TERRORISTS.

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obligations. The forces of the Isle of Lions swiftly found the colonists were far more deadly than they had ever supposed. The Westerners decimated the Lionist troops sent to quell their rebellion, annihilating entire regiments with their guns and protocols, whose heads they then cast in bronze and sent back to the Lionists' parliament as a warning. The Lionists got the message and peace was declared.

The Western Transnationalist Alliance, as the new nation called itself, redoubled its efforts in securing territory and advancing across the continent. Their philosophers came up with a concept to which they still cling, called the "Next Horizon." Basically, the Next Horizon is an idea rooted in the consciousness of many Westerners telling them they must forever seek the frontier and conquer whatever it has to offer. They learned to thrive on adversity and relish combat with a disturbing intensity.

Empires, kingdoms and tribes of all kinds were destroyed en masse in vicious battles, some lasting decades, as they marched towards the far western shore of "their" land. Even when they finally succeeded in securing their continent, their blood lust was not sated and they fell to fighting among themselves. The infamous Brothers' War raged across their land, killing hundreds of thousands and burning dozens of cities before it ended. They only managed to rebuild from the destruction just a few decades before the Great Patriotic War broke out.

With the memories of the Brothers' War looming large in the Westerners' minds, much of their populace was somewhat dubious about involvement in a war in which they felt they had no stake in the outcome. They ignored the pleas of the many immigrant families making up a large portion of the populace of the W.T.A. who wanted to assist their ancestral homelands. A number of the West's more visionary warriors recognized the Aryan Nationalist Party for the terrible threat to all life it was and demanded their countrymen respond to the danger. It was not morality, however, but cold logic and ambition that finally won the day, as the rulers of the Alliance correctly realized if the Volksreich collapsed the only threat left to their global supremacy would be the United Republics of the Red Star.

The Rise of Transnationalism

After the fall of the Volksreich, the W.T.A. was ideally situated to take the lead in world affairs. The West assented to the formation of the Global Council to use it as a tool to keep others in check, knowing they would never be completely beholden to its dictates.

In the U.R.R.S and the philosophy of Internationalism was an enemy the W.T.A. could rally against. The W.T.A. claims the philosophy of Internationalism seeks to erode all the differences of culture they embrace, turning the world into one homogenous mass devoid of character or individuality. They maintain the viewpoint that Transnationalism embraces the differences and upholds them, while allowing all to equally share in the profits of their collective efforts. Every Westerner is expected to go as far as their will and luck can take them, as they are all equal in the eyes of the state. That, at least, is what their dogma says.

To combat what they perceived as the growing influence of Internationalism and the U.R.R.S, the W.T.A. applied

the ideals of Transnationalism and the principle of the Next Horizon to countries beyond their borders. Soon they commenced propping up governments they favored, including any claiming to be an enemy of the Reds, regardless of how sadistic or corrupt the regime. They asked for only a few "small" favors in return for money, equipment and training, such as exclusive trading rights, lack of customs taxes for Western goods, the ability to establish military bases wherever they liked, and total immunity to local law enforcement for their troops.

Whenever the Red Council chose to back a given party or individual, the Alliance government was swift to help the opposition. The Ironhold, what the world called the two nation's monopolies on world power, allowed the W.T.A. to accuse its unruly citizens of being "Red Sympathizers," effectively silencing them regardless of how fair their criticisms may have been. It also allowed for the escalation of the military's budget, which suited many Western business interests. They poured billions of dollars into military and protocol research, determined to have the most technically advanced forces in the world. Landing on Luna-1 was merely the culmination of something the West was already convinced of: their infallibility.

The increasingly smug attitude shattered nearly three decades after the Great Patriotic War when they were delivered their greatest defeat, not by the U.R.R.S, but by a small jungle country south of the Lands of the Dragon, called the Kingdom of Jade. The Jade Kingdom seemed to have little the W.T.A. wanted, but the Reds were interested in it and that was enough.

At first, they supported the Kingdom of Jade's aging monarch, whom a U.R.R.S. financed opposition group attempted to overthrow, sending in military advisors to aid him. Alliance bureaucrats insisted that ground troops be sent in, but they did not. And not too long after the first W.T.A. advisors were in place, however, assassins eliminated the king, supposedly by Red agents. The whole situation collapsed, and the warmongers of the Alliance had their way. The W.T.A. deployed the first troops.

The Westerners were not prepared for what they found. The Kingdom of Jade thwarted all of their combat training. The jungle corroded their equipment as if it had a will of its own; carefully mapped paths shifted overnight, and their opponents moved through the trees like ghosts. Worse, the Western soldiers discovered the Reds had entirely pulled out. They realized they didn't even know whom they were fighting or what they were fighting for. A large number of them succumbed to insanity as the Jade Kingdom devoured their wills. Drugs became a favored means for dulling the entire experience.

While the upper levels of the W.T.A. government insisted on fighting until they liberated the country from the Reds, the public demanded a satisfactory conclusion to the whole affair, which they eventually received. After five bitter years, the W.T.A. declared victory and withdrew from the Kingdom of Jade. Nobody in the Global Council was fooled by their bravado. In the halls of the Citadel, the Reds laughed with delight to see their great foe cowed by such a little realm.

Irony, it seems, never goes out of style.

STILL STANDING

With the fall of the U.R.R.S., the Western Transnationalist Alliance is the last player in the game — and they know it. The Commonwealth blusters on about their importance, but they fool no one. The Westerners are the de facto rulers of the world, though bringing their might to bear on small targets becomes increasingly difficult.

Many believe the rise of terrorism correlates to the West's power, as few of their many opponents are suicidal enough to even attempt to resist the W.T.A. in open warfare. Their choice to specialize in smaller, elite forces has served them well as fissionable deterrents and other weapons of mass destruction, though still a threat, are seldom seen as viable by any but the most insane of antagonists. Unfortunately for the Westerners, some of their opponents are desperate and fanatical. And the devastating loss at the Imperial City Bombing proved what their enemies are prepared to do to hurt the West.

ARMED AND VERY DANGEROUS: THE CULTURE OF THE W.T.A.

The Westerners embrace many lofty ideals. They uphold courage, honor, devotion, loyalty, and doing one's duty, reserving their greatest praise for those who can hold to such beliefs in the face of hardship, when it would've been easier or convenient to ignore their principles. They are famous for maintaining their humor, despite adversity. They are at their best when a situation is at its worst. They give their aid freely wherever a natural disaster strikes anywhere in the world. They take the best of what many cultures have to offer and blend them all into a whole greater than the sum of their parts. Their scientists are the forefront of new breakthroughs in medicine and technology. Their Deterrents have become some of the most advanced sorcery users in the world, continually developing more powerful, efficient and useful protocols. There is a lot to admire about the West.

On the other hand, they praise the strong for being strong. They are far too quick to believe, consciously or not, might makes right. They are convinced theirs is the greatest country the world has to offer, thus entitling their citizens to special privileges even when they travel abroad. They are naïve, often believing what their leaders tell them without questioning too closely or considering the full ramifications of what they've been told. They are often arrogant, cocky as hell, and have a great deal of difficulty living up to the morals they regard so highly. Many of their corporations indulge in the most awful aspects of Transnationalism, absolutely consumed with the need to make money, pushing all other considerations aside in their pursuit of wealth and success. The worst of them happily level entire nations to increase their profit margins. Their researchers in both technology and sorcery are often ordered to leave morality behind if it would impede their progress.

DUELS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Violence is an intrinsic part of the West's culture, interwoven at every level of their society. It pervades the bulk of their amusements. Few of their sports are non-violent.

Professional gladiators are worshiped nearly as gods, second only to movie stars in the West. Their gladiatorial arenas draw massive crowds, who come to appreciate the bloodletting with expert eyes. Criminals participating in death matches are offered pardons if they can manage to win, a rare but not unknown prospect.

Tourists from the Great Continent claim Westerners are obsessed with weapons, especially firearms. Not only are the majority of Westerners swift to agree with this assessment, they will often produce a favored sidearm to help prove the point. Many of them can quote the characteristics of weapons the world over from memory. They can talk for hours about the relative merits of a Mark 16 versus a RKG-75, expounding upon the virtues of differing munitions and the quality of their stopping power. They've greatly admired hooks in secret for some time; with the fall of the U.R.R.S, such appreciation is now publicly acceptable, which has lead some Westerners with a talent for telekinesis to take up hook fighting as a hobby.

The West has a long tradition of honor dueling stretching back to its early foundation. Westerners feeling they've been insulted or belittled may demand satisfaction with a duel. They have a strict series of rules of etiquette, regarding what weapons can be used and how long the duel is meant to last. They fight most duels with either fists or knives, ending with unconsciousness or the first serious injury. Duels to the death are a serious matter, and a judge must sanction them. Westerners regard dueling as a spectator sport; particularly serious fights can draw gigantic crowds who will pay top dollar for admission. Refusing a duel is acceptable, but it is also social death. Most Westerners would sooner be dead than thought of as a coward.

THE WEST'S MILITARY

The first image that comes to the mind of non-Westerners when asked what they think of the W.T.A. is that of the ominous faceless soldiers of the West, the Centurions and their nearly unstoppable STRIFE armor. The W.T.A. spared no expense in training their troops to be the finest in the world and equipping them with all the latest enhancements their highly advanced technology has to offer. Even the lowest ranking soldier has weapons and field equipment laced with protocols. Their backup support includes continuous global-wide information feeds, satellite positioning, and readily available transfer protocols. Centurions can call down coordinated protocol strikes at a moment's notice nearly anywhere in the world when drawing upon the might of their infamous Deterrents, powerful kasters who are more machine than they are women. Their krawls are whisper silent and have armor plates capable of actually regenerating combat damage. Their air carriers can level mountains, docking in phenomenally large floating fortresses the size of small cities, which never leave the sky.

Armies daring to stand against the West usually do so only as delaying tactic. To face them on the field is to lose.

THE ALLIANCE GOVERNMENT

The W.T.A. boasts the first democratically elected republic consisting of a large number of affiliated states bound together by a common charter. Each territory has a

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constitution and way of handling their internal affairs, but is nominally subsidiary to the overall charter. The Charter of the West dictates their basic rights and laws, as well as the obligations each territory has to the overall government, such as providing taxes and troops.

One of the main reasons behind the Brothers' War was a struggle for control between the Alliance government's ability to dictate policy versus the individual territories right to self-governance. The damage caused was so great the war ended before the issue was truly decided. In time, the individual territory governments determined all local affairs for themselves, though they all hold to the basic principles of the Charter of the West. The central government handles all international policy and can supersede the authority of a territory government if a security threat to the stability of the nation as a whole is involved. Outsiders are often surprised the Alliance government hasn't taken more direct control, but it isn't all that mysterious — Westerners are swift to assassinate overly ambitious bureaucrats.

The President of the West, the Alliance's senior executive, is often considered the most influential figure in world politics, especially since he is the ultimate authority in directing the West's military. His power is muted, however, both by the limited duration of his office — a six-year term that can only be held once — and the structure of the Alliance's charter. While the President can put forth a new policy, the Council of Territories must ultimately decide whether to vote any new laws into place.

The Council of Territories is a combination of officials from every local territory government and elected Councilors who come from all walks of life, though the majority are wealthy or ex-military. There are Councilors who have been in office for decades, for they have no term limits; they hold the true power in the Alliance government. It is reasonable to assume an elected republic should be subordinate to the desires of its electorate, but it is seldom the case with the W.T.A.

The Alliance is infamous for ignoring the will of its people and proceeding on whatever course of action assisting the corporate financial backers of the various Councilors and politicians who are in office at any given time. They are experts at directing the fury of their people outwards, so the people don't notice the underhanded dealings that regularly occur on the Council Floor.

The Bureau of Central Intelligence

While the Centurions of the West's armies are among the most feared soldiers in the world, the agents of the Bureau of Central Intelligence tend to cause the worst nightmares. The B.C.I. is the wing of the Alliance government handling

national security, counterespionage, and inter-territorial crimes of all kinds. They have a directorate dedicated to each aspect of their duties.

Agents of the Investigation Directorate are among the only operatives of the B.C.I. ever openly welcomed outside of the W.T.A., as their abilities with forensic evidence and divinatory protocols are legendary worldwide. In addition to their law enforcement duties in the W.T.A., they freely assist the Global Council in catching the most elusive criminals, whether psychotics or terrorists.

Agents of the Counter Espionage Directorate are never publicly welcomed anywhere at anytime. Called "Ghosts" by the Reds and a variety of other colorful names by everyone else, agents from the C.E.D. are spies, one and all. The Ghosts of the C.E.D. are responsible for a number of atrocities in world affairs. During the Ironhold, the Ghosts

were the liaisons between the Alliance and the various dictators they supported. While they've taken a less public approach in recent years, their duties are unlikely to have changed. U.R.R.S propaganda always painted the Ghosts as the absolute worst of all Westerners, stating they would happily kill a child if it would advance their nation's agenda. Disturbingly enough, the party line wasn't far from the grim truth.

The final in the triumvirate of divisions is the Internal Affairs Directorate, or I.A.D. The

I.A.D. handles organized crime within the Alliance, security for government personnel, and border patrols. Agents of the I.A.D. have an agent from the Investigation Directorate assigned to their teams, and the two groups work together well. Both directorates regard the arrogant Ghosts of the C.E.D. with a great deal of distaste and avoid working with them whenever possible.

The Imperial City Bombing

The terrorist attack on the Imperial City has sent shockwaves through the Western Transnationalist Alliance. Until the bombing, the Westerners firmly believed they were unassailable. A significant majority of the their populace had so bought into their government's propaganda they could not even understand why other groups would wish them harm for any reason other than mere jealousy. Questions were asked that made a number of groups in the W.T.A. very nervous. In order to forestall any real answers, they announced they'd tracked the culprits to a group of fanatical Nistaani operating out of the highlands of Al'Istaan. The Alliance government was very careful to avoid mentioning the Ghosts of the C.E.D. taught a number of those same Nistaani how to fight a decade and a half earlier. The Centurions of the West have deployed in Al'Istaan, but to the government's chagrin, the questions have not stopped. What will happen next is not yet written.



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THE REST OF THE WORLD

While the U.R.R.S and the W.T.A. have certainly played the leads in recent world history, the rest of the Ironhold's chessboard is not without interest. Not all of the listed countries are necessarily less significant than the big two, but they presently lack the resources or power needed to affect world affairs without pooling their efforts with others.

THE ISLE OF LIONS

"For once he roared and all did cower, or tremble before his guile. Now when he cries it's the kitten's whimper, the sun has set on the Lion's Isle."

-Lucinda Graham, Poetess

As unlikely as it seems, a small island off the western coast of the Great Continent once held the world's largest empire within the silken contours of its fist. The placement of the Isle of Lions turned out to be fortuitous, as the Lionist monarchy emerged relatively unscathed from the Burning Times sweeping across the rest of the Great Continent with fire, sword and protocol.

The Lionists were not the first to turn their eyes outward to find prizes for conquest, but they were ultimately the most successful. Their magi-crafted hulls helped make their navy the finest in the world. They sailed around the globe, cowing a number of more primitive cultures to their will and establishing colonies to further the wealth of their country. The Lionist monarchy eventually gave way to their Grand Parliament, which managed their assets with a fair amount of grace for close to two centuries before changing times finally caught up with them.

The first of their holdings to break away occurred with the rebellion of the Western Colonies. While that setback eventually led to reconciliation with their wayward "child" giving them a powerful influence in world affairs, at the time it was a blow to both their coffers and their pride. Their defeat at the hands of the fledgling W.T.A. rankled so much they redoubled their efforts in enforcing their will on their other colonies. This proved to be a mistake, as their increasingly harsh treatment brought about revolutions all the quicker.

Their frayed empire was well on its way to dissolution when the Great Patriotic War struck. Krieger's obsession with annihilating the Lionists is well documented, though no one has ever been able to discover why. Regardless, their steadfast courage in the face of the Aryan Nationalist Party was a shining example during dark days. Ironically enough, a mere five years later, the legendary Sakhadari of the Land of 10,000 Gods defied the Lionists in a similar fashion, though

he was brave enough to "fight without weapons." It took the Grand Parliament another decade, but they finally accepted their place in world affairs was now to advise and not to direct. The last of their colonies went in peace.

The Lionists have accomplished a great deal in their time, but historians frequently rank the Subtle Dance as their finest achievement. When the Ancient Dynasties of the Lands of the Red Star fell to the Revolution, the Grand Parliament became more than a little concerned about the spread of the Internationalist philosophy and the widening borders of the U.R.R.S. Their spies told them Imbohl planned to seize large portions of the Great Continent; he was especially interested in the Land of 10,000 Gods, their greatest holding at the time.

Lionist agents quietly initiated what they called the Subtle Dance, a long series of maneuvers and intrigues specifically designed to thwart the expansion of the U.R.R.S. Due to the clandestine nature of the Subtle Dance, there is no way to know which of the setbacks the Reds suffered were planned for and which were bad fortune. However, most present historians believe the War of Al'Istaan and the subsequent disillusion of the Republics were somehow related to the last triumphant movement of the Subtle Dance.

Within the Global Council, the Lionists took to playing "Good Cop" to the W.T.A.'s "Bad Cop." Their dry wit can prevail with the Westerners when all other forms of persuasion failed, and they typically council patience. Those attempting to take advantage of the Lionists' outwardly affable nature usually do so just once, however, for the some of the most dangerous hand-to-hand troops in the history of the world await their summons at all times.

Called the "Claws of the Lion" by friends and foes alike, the Ghuri come from the high mountain villages of the Roof of the World. When they enter the service of the Isle of Lions, they join what they consider a sacred band of warriors. All Ghuri give up their names, retaining only an alphanumeric call sign to identify themselves by, until (or if) they leave the service. Even the Centurions of the W.T.A. pause at the thought of having to fight one of the Lion's Claws.

THE LAND OF 10,000 GODS

Through the renowned Iron Pass sitting on the southeastern edge of the Land's Teeth of Al'Istaan is a country often referred to as the "Crucible of Religions" due to the extraordinary number of influential faiths migrating outwards from its fertile river valleys. The Land of 10,000 Gods is actually a subcontinent of its own, with the Roof of the World marking the border where it touches the Lands of the Dragon.

The Dustani are a faithful people, often fervently so, which has caused more than a few civil wars over their long history. They have had a strict caste system in their society for millennia that has only begun to break down in the last two decades, due to the influence of other countries and their own modernization. Their capital city, Dharma, has recently become the center of a great deal of technological research

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and innovation, as a number of global corporations have taken advantage of the Dustani's poverty relative to the rest of the world to pay them less for their labor. The Land of 10,000 Gods suffers terribly from overpopulation and frequent droughts that lead to widespread famine. The recent influx of wealth, however limited, allowed a number of their young people to study methods of using advanced protocol research to help with their country's troubles — at least the ones caused by nature.

As one of the world's first civilizations, the Dustani had a very long time to consider just what it is that they believe. Their largest religion holds there are a great many gods, hence their namesake, but also states all such beings are merely separate facets of a single deity called Ahtman, as are all living beings. Dustani priests and devout warriors draw upon the Fire of Ahtman to channel the aspects of various deities through their flesh, invoked in a number of greatly varied ways. Calling upon Porama the Healer, for instance, produces a very different effect indeed than calling on, say, Dinanath the Man-Flayer.

The ritual practices needed to correctly call upon the Fire of Ahtman require complete concentration, beyond what most humans are capable of achieving. The Dustani mystics develop the required will by undergoing long fasts and practicing a series of body modification rituals involving multiple piercings of an intense nature. The various shoots of the Dustani's faiths uphold or emphasize different teachings their countless holy priests have imparted down the centuries, but all of their religions acknowledge the existence of the myriad gods — save one.

This has, unfortunately, been one of the causes of the greatest schisms amidst the Dustani, as the lone exception

is belief in the One True God and his Law. Since followers of the Law hold all deities other than the One True God as false, Dustani upholding that faith scorn the rest of their countrymen as infidels. This led to massive tension and the flare-ups of holy wars on a number of occasions, which the Lionists always ruthlessly suppressed. With their former rulers now decades gone, however, the strain has mounted on this matter yet again. Dustani on both sides of the issue claim the only way there will ever be peace is for the followers of the Law to be granted their own country, which the Dustani government always emphatically rejected.

While the Dustani have a rich spiritual life, they were slow to develop any advanced technology, which allowed the Isle of Lions to conquer them with relative ease when their empire first expanded. The Dustani were long subjected to Lionist rule, which grew increasingly harsh until the rise of an extraordinary leader during the Great Patriotic War. His name was Sakhadari, and his philosophy of passive resistance literally changed the world.

Sakhadari's idea of non-violent struggle against oppression was even more amazing considering just how powerful he was with the Fire of Ahtman. He asked, not ordered, his followers to accept Lionist abuse without fighting back, assuring them eventually their resolve would break the Lionists. Observers that laughed at him fell silent as his peaceful ways won out where violence had not. Eventually the Dustani came to regard him as a living saint regardless of their religion, but even Sakhadari could never reconcile the followers of Ahtman with the believers of the Law. He died while using his power to hold back a flash flood, saving over three hundred thousand lives with his final sacrifice for his beloved people, regardless of their respective religions.

THE ROOF OF THE WORLD

The aptly named Roof of the World is the largest mountain range on the globe. From west to east, it arcs for just over 2500 kilometers and covers a staggering 615,320 square kilometers, most of which consists of perpetually snow clad peaks. The Roof of the World is so massive it stretches over multiple countries, from the Land of 10,000 Gods to the Lands of the Dragon, with several small mountain kingdoms in between. Despite having one of the most difficult and dangerous environments to live in on the planet, millions of natives make their homes amidst the high peaks.

The varied peoples of the region have all been influenced by religions from the Land of 10,000 Gods. A large number of them, however, retained their ancient animistic beliefs — with good reason, as spirits of wind and ice haunt the high places of the world, harming those who cannot or will not appease them.

Of the many cultures existing along the Roof of the World, two are famous far beyond the mountains' borders. The People of the East Wind dwell on the lowest slopes of the tallest mountain in the world, the Great Sky Mother, who stands 8,850 meters above sea level. The East Wind People consider the Great Sky Mother to be holy, and claim you can see the stars at all times from her upper reaches. They are some of the greatest natural mountaineers in the world, and

can navigate wide swaths of the entire range from memory. Their shamans sing to the spirits of the snow and supposedly know rituals that can start an avalanche or stop one in mid-motion if need be. Outsiders seeking to travel through the Roof of the World should always hire a member of their tribe as a guide, if they wish to survive their journey.

The People of the East Wind have long coexisted with the Mountainwalkers of the Shir-ora tribe. Mountainwalkers are towering humanoids related to the Dune-Ra of Al'Istaan, and those native to the World's Roof range are covered in thick white fur. They are naturally gentle creatures, though their wrath can be terrifying to behold when angered. Though rarely seen by outsiders, they always keep watch over the mountain passes. A number of expeditions owe their lives to the Mountainwalkers, who became experts at saving the foolhardy from danger.

Not long after the Isle of the Lions took control of the Land of 10,000 Gods, they heard many tales of the riches of the mountains and the people living there. The Dustani referred to a group of tribes they said named themselves as the People of the Yak. The Yak People seldom came down from the high places or their small kingdom, which they called Manaphotse, but when they did, they inevitably brought diamonds or small ingots of gold with them for trading. The

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Lionists, intrigued by the strange tales, decided to take several companies of troops along and see for themselves whether the mysterious mountain kingdom was worth seizing. As they trekked up into the Roof of the World, they met a number of Dustani merchants who confirmed the stories, some even producing diamonds the size of a robin's egg to prove it.

The Lionists decided they would add the Kingdom of Manaphotse to their conquests and proceeded to search for it. It only took them a few weeks to find the first outlying village of the tiny kingdom. When the Lionists marched into the settlement and announced to the nearest locals they were taking over, the villagers actually laughed at them. The Lionists were taken aback; they had never encountered that particular reaction before and it didn't exactly sit well with their pride. They proceeded, as they often did in those days, to make an example of those mocking them by killing a third of the village's population. They were more than a little bit disturbed by the villager's reaction to their violence. Instead of running in fear or reacting with anger for that matter, the village's shaman simply shook his head and began singing prayers for the Lionists' souls. The faintly disturbed soldiers bivouacked for the night several miles south of the village. By dawn, all of the Lionists save one.

The only survivor, Spencer Talcott, tried to stop his fellows from killing the villagers, but his fellows ignored him. Talcott lived so he could deliver a message to his superiors. He stumbled out of the mountains weeks later, barely alive with a story that seemed absurd. Talcott claimed a small band of warriors, who moved so fast they couldn't have been human, decimated his fellow soldiers while wielding strange curved blades made of either ice or diamonds. Talcott was court-martialed and more companies were sent

to discover what "really" happened. None of them returned. It took several years and a number of wasted lives before the Grand Parliament realized there might have been some truth to Talcott's story. He was taken from prison and offered a chance at a pardon, on the condition he present himself to the court of the King of Manaphotse as the Isle of Lions' ambassador. Talcott accepted the commission and headed into the Roof of the World with a small expedition.

Unlike his predecessors, Talcott eventually returned; at his side stood ten of the warriors of the Yak People who formally swore themselves to the service of the Isle of Lions to bring peace between the two nations. Talcott stated the warriors were "Ghuri" which literally translates from their language as "Yak Protector". At first, the Lionists were uncertain exactly what they should do with the seemingly primitive tribesmen, but while the matter was still under debate in the Grand Parliament, an uprising occurred in the Land of 10,000 Gods. The Ghuri quelled it with a single day of bloodshed, and their place as the "Claws of the Lion" was forever secured.

Now well over a century later, the Ghuri still serve the Isle of Lions with distinction. The Ghuri call the weapons that Spencer Talcott first described Kura Wind Blades. They aren't physical weapons, per se; they are the creation of a Ghuri's force of will. Each Ghuri learns to mold his own Kura from the elements surrounding him, typically wind, snow and ice, though the most experienced eventually learn to form it from nothing but their thoughts. The Ghuri only accept the hardest of Yak People fighters into their ranks and even their raw recruits can create a Kura that can cut through stainless steel as if it were paper, to say nothing of flesh and bone. The eldest among them can summon up blades capable of laying open the side of a krawl as though it were made of tinfoil.

THE LANDS OF THE DRAGON

If there is a country that rises to challenge the W.T.A.'s supremacy in the coming century, it is sure to be one of the Lands of the Dragon. This large collection of loosely affiliated nations covers over 30 percent of the world's landmass, from the Roof of the World to the Sea of Fire. The mountains of the World's Roof have always formed a natural barrier across the west of the Dragon Lands, while providing them with a great number of rivers from the melting snows. Thus, the Lands of the Dragon have historically been difficult to approach or leave, leading to an insular population, disdainful of outsiders.

Their cultures are some one of the world's eldest, with histories stretching back many thousands of years. Farming and silk production are the largest industries of the region, though the last decade or so has seen great strides forward in modernizing their relatively outdated technologies. The West is very interested in developing their markets, but they have (probably wisely) delayed the Westerners from becoming too involved in their internal affairs.

The history of the Lands of the Dragon is an epic series of civil wars lasting centuries and grand empires lasting longer still. The mighty Golden Horde and its fierce Horsemen originally came from the desert plains of the northern Dragon Lands, to which their southerly neighbors managed to push only after generations of warfare. The rich culture of the

Lands of the Dragon gave rise to a large number of unusual philosophies, many of which were affected by, and influenced in turn, religions coming from the Land of 10,000 Gods over the Roof of the World.

The most widely held faith is simply "the Way." Believers in the Way teach all aspects of the world have spirits, which both guard and help define whatever it is they are attached to. They believe all humans when they die can also become such spirit guardians, so they are always careful to venerate their ancestors, even the ones they didn't particularly like in life.

One of the most dangerous philosophies in the Lands of the Dragon is Fei Han Nai, a violent sect who believes if every law were absolute in its application, there would be no need for any governments. They acknowledge neither circumstances nor justice, only law. They will happily cut down a child for stealing a piece of candy, convinced they are completely within the right. All of the governments of the Dragon Lands despise the Fei Han Nai and brutally crush them at every opportunity, but they always return.

The world-renowned martial arts of the Lands of the Dragon are all esoteric combinations of spiritual, mental and physical foci. Over the years, they developed over a hundred schools of fighting, a number of which have ancient lineages devout

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practitioners can quote from memory. Some of the styles are actually dedicated to meditation or physical conditioning, not violence. However, the spectacular schools of the Raging Spirit are what most foreigners think of first when anyone mentions the Dragon Lands.

Students of the various Raging Spirit styles harness their wills to channel their body's energy in amazing displays of mystic power and control. Their flesh warps and twists at their command, as they assume their school's fighting stance in preparation for combat. For example, fighters from the

House of Laughing Waves charge forward into their enemies, their bodies twisting around their foes' weapons as if their bones were made of water, whereas masters of the Steel Skin School wait calmly for their opponents as even 7.62mm rounds deflect harmlessly off their shining metal limbs. The grandfather school to all the others has many names, though its monk practitioners call it Burning Forest. When they fight — which is seldom, for they are pacifists — their fingers extend into terrible hooked claws, scintillating scales writhe across their features, and their breath is the fire of a dragon.

The Kingdom of Jade

The name of this small jungle nation came from both its lush vegetation and its exquisitely carved statuettes, which many claim bring good fortune. By all accounts they work, as the Jade Kingdom was the cause of the Western Transnationalist Alliance's only defeat — not its soldiers mind you, though they don't lack courage, but the land itself.

The Kingdom of Jade is alive, brimming with an inexplicable sentience giving visitors the feeling they are watched at all times. The natives of the Jade Kingdom, known as the Cai, claim the jungle whispers to them and helped them defeat the

W.T.A.'s soldiers. It took the Cai many years to rebuild their home after the war, and only in the last few years have they started to prosper once again. Enough time has passed for diplomatic relations with the W.T.A. to resume, offering bright prospects for the Kingdom of Jade's future.

The Jade Kingdom is a beautiful realm sharing a long border with the sea. Tourists the world over travel there every year in the spring to see the wonderful Dance of Shifting Leaves, a traditional Cai puppet show featuring dolls made from protocol shaped water.

The Volksreich

The central Great Continent nation that once made the world tremble has finally managed to gain the goodwill of its neighbors, after decades of well-earned distrust. After the Great Patriotic War, the rest of the world was determined to ensure the Aryan Nationalist Party would never again rise. The Volksreich was carved up piecemeal into different sections e all nominally under the control of the victors of the war. After decades of peace, rebuilding, and the collapse of the U.R.R.S, they finally reintegrated.

The modern Volksreich strives in all ways to be an exceptionally forthright country. They are always one of the first to encourage a peaceful solution to any diplomatic problem between other nations. Despite all that occurred, however, there are still those who cling to the ideologies of the Aryan National Party in the Volksreich. The government of the

Riverland has no tolerance for the Aryans in their midst and uses every legal means to suppress them, as well as not-so-legal means whenever they think they can get away with it.

The Volksreich was once a land of impressive rivers and dark forests that held a great many ancient secrets. Krieger's grim factories, however, and the destruction of the war all but leveled the Volksreich's natural resources. After years of careful husbandry and the use of specialized protocols, though, the land has been able to rejuvenate itself.

The citizens of the Volksreich were once famous for their stern demeanors, fierce natures and their love of strong beer. The people of the modern Volksreich have strived to retain only one of those character traits —and they still brew some of the strongest beer the Great Continent has to offer.

OTHER NATIONS OF THE GREAT CONTINENT

To the north of the Volksreich and west of the Lands of the Red Star stretch the Danelands, a series of imposing countries, each one colder than the last. While the other Danelands all fell to the Volksreich's army, the monarchy of ancient Fryslân defied the Aryans to the last during the Great Patriotic War. Fryslân's famed Ice Skalds called down cold so intense they turned the metal of the Aryans' krawls brittle to a point even a thrown rock could shatter their armor.

The Danelands have been slow to modernize, but their efforts redoubled since the fall of the U.R.R.S. South of the Volksreich, the land rises to the beautiful snow capped mountains of Helvetia, where the Unterlon Halberdiers dwell. Throughout the Great Patriotic War, the courageous

Halberdiers helped refugees escape from the Volksreich and held the Aryans at bay with their widely famed Thermal Pikes. Helvetia has since become one of the playgrounds of the Great Continent, and its choice skiing slopes draw enthusiasts the world over.

South of Helvetia the land drops to the Tuscan Peninsula and the Holy See, center of worship for the Risen Son. West of the Volksreich lies the nation of Gallia, which suffered greatly during the war as the Gauls had long been the bane of the Aryans. Gauls are famous for their love of life and their carefree manner, though when it comes to global politics they can be deadly serious. South of Gallia lies the troubled but beautiful land of Aragón, whose Dons struggle in a protracted civil war for control over their homeland.

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE SPIRITREALM

All you have read in the World of the Red Star is basically correct, but told in half-truths. There is another world, a deeper world, lying beyond the senses of most beings. Its once-human denizens, known as Immortals, call it the Spiritrealm: an infinite collection of other planes of reality that make up the rest of all that is.

The closest layer, commonly referred to as the Mirror Land, overlaps the world of flesh, though it is nearly invisible to mortal vision. When a person dies, their spirit crosses to the Mirror Land. All too often now, it becomes currency in an epic struggle for control of the planet, for the more souls a being or country can bind, the greater their influence on the corporeal world.

THE EYES OF IMBOHL

There was not always a war in the Spiritrealm to have power over the physical world. Indeed, the war is recent, being little over a century old. Souls coming to the afterlife used to go about their separate destinies unhindered, some heading on to planes of reward or punishment, others going back to be reborn, and a few slipping into oblivion, the final dissolution of an individual spirit's consciousness. There have always been beings that trafficked in souls, and others capable of using sorcery could make use of such energy, but never on a large scale — not until the coming of Imbohl.

The father of the Great Revolution is a mighty sorcerer, but there have been others before him greater still. Imbohl has a magnificent gift, however, nearly all of his predecessors lacked: the ability to perceive clearly the beings of the Spiritrealm. When Imbohl came to understand the visions he experienced since childhood were actually true glimpses of the Spiritrealm, he immediately realized their potential. His vision coupled with his will to dominate others, his undeniable charisma, and a series of protocols he developed in secret allowed him to force souls to do his bidding. Had Imbohl been born in a different era, his story may have ended sooner, but destiny and technology both were on his side.

From the foundation of the Revolution, Imbohl played his comrades false. He chose the darkest souls he could find as his minions, correctly reasoning by offering to bind them to his service instead of sending them on to their richly deserved torments, he would receive as much loyalty as such beings would be capable of giving. He recruited the shades of executed killers, twisted butchers, and madmen.

With these "perfect" spies, whose comings and goings no other mortal could perceive, Imbohl easily out-planned his enemies. His legendary foresight in guessing the movements of the Revolution's opponents didn't involve the slightest guesswork at all. In some cases, he literally had perfect copies of their plans, transcribed by his Spiritrealm agents for his convenience.

As the Revolution spread, Imbohl tested the limits of his power. He used an ancient ritual on three of his most loyal followers, who volunteered to undergo it so they could better serve him. Imbohl fused their three spirits into a single entity named Troika, which he bound into a construct body forged from protocol-laced Spiritrealm metal called soul iron. Troika swiftly became his chief agent, especially after "it" discovered with enough soul energy, or Humanitas as it was known then, it could take on a physical form for a brief time.

Imbohl found an unexpected sideeffect to his manipulations of the Spiritrealm — the more entities he controlled, the more personally powerful he became. His protocols grew increasingly potent, his words more convincing; everything

about him became larger than life, for he was in fact drawing on the energies of many spirits to advance himself and his agenda. After the Revolution succeeded and he had taken absolute control of the Lands of the Red Star, Imbohl and his followers set about conquering the Mirror Lands of the U.R.R.S. In fact, his increasing involvement with the Spiritrealm was the only reason why he and the Red Council didn't attempt to seize larger portions of the Great Continent sooner.

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In this, however, Imbohl suffered his first true defeat. A number of the Spiritrealm's elder entities were not easily overthrown, nor susceptible to his sorcery. The demons of the Ice Wall laughed at his attempts to control them, and the spirits of the Nokgorka Elders he had ordered assassinated by Troika were aware of the cause of their demise. Not only was their rage unassailable, to Imbohl's dismay, he swiftly learned their resistance to his expansion into their domains was led by no less a champion than the legendary Hyrkahn the Fierce himself.

While Imbohl never entirely abandoned expanding his dominion over the Spiritrealm, he increasingly turned towards experimenting over what he did control. To acquire more Humanitas, he created the Special Labor Camps and set Troika to harvesting the souls of the dead for his use. His Spiritrealm spies provided regular lists of active dissenters throughout

"YOU SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU MAD."

—ALDOUS HUXLEY

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE SPIRITREALM



GREAT WAR VETERANS

Veterans of the Great Patriotic War seldom openly talk about all they experienced, and true accounts of the war aren't recorded in the majority of history books. The war's more supernatural elements are always downplayed, or referred to as the doings of sorcery. This isn't accidental.

A number of the spirits involved in the war consciously tried to erase their existence from the memories of those around them, believing positive proof of an afterlife would unduly influence humanity's faiths. If you allow one of your PCs to be a Great War Veteran (see page 166), allow them to make Will Checks with a DC 15 if they are ever exposed to stimuli that could trigger some of their supernaturally buried memories of the war.

the Republics, though some of those malicious entities used their position to continue the murder of innocents by filing false reports. Imbohl was aware of their transgressions but didn't care in the slightest.

After a decade of intensive research, he discovered three important facts: the greater an individual becomes in life, the more powerful the soul they bear; a soul consigned to oblivion gives off an insignificant amount of Humanitas when compared to how much can be regularly harvested from an imprisoned soul; his aging process had been tremendously slowed by his work. Imbohl reasoned with enough Humanitas, he could make himself ageless permanently. He implemented the construction of a series of small penitentiaries called "soulprisons" throughout the portions of the Spiritrealm he controlled uncontested, all of which were designed to channel "Post Human Energy" (P.H.E.) to himself.

He barely started benefiting from his new plan, however, when interrupted by a continuous stream of reports from his farther-ranging spirit minions concerning strange events in the Mirror Lands of the Volksreich. Imbohl entered into talks with Krieger to find out just how much he knew about the Spiritrealm. Even Imbohl, as callous as he was, was not prepared for the depths of Krieger's insanity. Imbohl wasn't just concerned when he left the final round of talks with the Aryans; he was frightened, for he had correctly discerned that Krieger had every intention of murdering the entire world.

THE TRUE FACE OF THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

The arrivals of the Volksreich's armies were always heralded by freak lightning storms that would scour the terrain, laying waste to entrenched fortifications and exploding uncovered ammo dumps. Skies blacker than any pitch hurled rain down onto every battlefield, leaving them mud-covered hells that infantry struggled to cross, while the Aryans' krawls drove over them smoothly. Strange and terrible figures raged across the clouds of the storm-drenched skies and the thunder echoed with their war cries.

During some of the most crucial struggles of the war, soldiers from other times of history literally appeared on the field and fought alongside those opposing the Aryans, for Krieger and his Inner Circle were not interested in merely taking over the Great Continent; they were trying to bring about Der Weltundergang—the Ending of All Things. According to

ancient Daneland prophecies, Krieger believed he and his chosen followers would survive the ending of the world to be the founders of a new "golden age" the old tales stated would follow the world's destruction.

The sorcerous furnaces Krieger designed before the war came to him in demented visions, and he bargained with otherworldly entities for the designs to a number of his other weapons. All of them were intended to draw the Humanitas off murdered humans. Many of the Aryans' death factories had both corporeal world and Spiritrealm components, and required enormous sacrifices of all kinds to be kept operational. The more beings Krieger's Lightning Guard sacrificed, the closer they came to succeeding, which is why in the later years of the war they seemed more intent on their butchery than on fighting their opposition.

Krieger's determination to destroy the Isle of Lions was based on his Inner Circle's interpretation of a counter-prophecy that spoke of the rise of a "past and future" king who could disrupt his plans. Imbohl's Spiritrealm minions and a group of gifted mystics destined to be instrumental in the founding of the Western Transnationalist Alliance's Bureau of Central Intelligence all managed to ascertain what Krieger was up to, which was one of the primary reasons why they all allied against the Aryans.

Both sides learned a considerable amount about the Spiritrealm and the powers of Humanitas as they sought a way to stop Krieger. The vast number of Red deaths significantly increased Imbohl's power, but only on a fleeting basis, as the greatest surges happened immediately after battles, then swiftly faded. The Westerners referred to the souls of the dead as "Post Human Energy" in their covert war dispatches. They soon began using a shortened version of the formal title, the acronym "P.H.E.," when discussing the measuring of a given soul's Humanitas. Both sides' efforts were greatly assisted by a number of famous souls from their own country's past, many of whom physically manifested at decisive battles at great risk to themselves to fight against Krieger's forces.

Their studies revealed Krieger had all but doomed himself. A number of the entities he had dealt with, or perhaps his own insanity, had played him false; the bulk of his devices were designed to fail. Within an hour of his Spiritrealm defenses collapsing, he was eliminated, for it was no "suicide protocol" that destroyed the Aryan leader.

The W.T.A. and the U.R.R.S. immediately moved to seize as many of Krieger's engines as they could for study, along

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with the sorcerer-engineers who had been involved in their design. Imbohl had the ones he didn't exile to the Eastern Tundra tortured to death to discover all they knew, whereas the W.T.A. set their "recruits" up with labs in various choice locations throughout their continent and pampered them, while they were watched at all times. It isn't difficult to predict which group began to produce the most useful technology for their new country.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE IRONHOLD

The Ironhold was a struggle for control of the world's post-human energy — the only power, as all parties had discovered during the war, which truly mattered. The secret behind Krieger's meteoric rise to power was based in his control over others, both the living and the dead. Krieger had effectively "squandered" the vast majority of his power by using the P.H.E. his furnaces harvested during the sadistic liquidation of those he deemed undesirable, by using it to fuel his apocalyptic schemes. When P.H.E. is effectively managed, it allows for greater control over the physical world and the Spiritrealm.

The knowledge wrested from the Aryans allowed both Imbohl and the West to greatly expand their research into the Spiritrealm. Their practical applications of that knowledge were the foundations of the Ironhold. All of the political maneuvers and petty conflicts across the globe, the constant sparring between the two great nations, were merely the outward reflections of the true battle. The agendas and modus operandi of the two groups were wildly at odds,

though. While Imbohl was far more concerned with direct personal power, the Westerners used the designs of their Volksreich sorcerer-engineers to advance an agenda directed at global supremacy.

Imbohl spent three years designing a series of incredibly complex protocols, which were to be his masterpiece. When ready, he summoned up the most terrible northern winter imaginable, slaying over 70% of those exiled to the Eastern Tundra along with countless other Reds. Using the P.H.E. Troika and his loyal thralls gathered from their souls, he shattered the Mirror Lands of the Red Star, twisting a massive piece into a shard-plane of his own devising, secure from both his enemies and his own people. On this plane, he built his mightiest edifice in the Spiritrealm — a massive fortress-soulprison named Archangel.

Imbohl was ever mindful of the results of his early experiments. He wanted to imprison the post-human energy of *all* Reds, allowing them neither peace nor oblivion, for either way they would no longer be of use to him. As his Spiritrealm soulprison network expanded and Troika's soul-harvesting duties increased, Imbohl's influence over the people of the Republics extended until only the most exceptional Reds could even think of defying his will, and he became all but immortal. The system was not efficient, however; Imbohl trusted no one to carry out the collection of souls other than Troika. His absolute reliance on a single agent, no matter how powerful that agent was, hampered his plans.

While Imbohl was inwardly focused, the Westerners looked outward for their post-human energy. The Ghosts of the "Counter Espionage Directorate" of the B.C.I. were well, if ironically, named, as a fair number of them are involved in



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directing and monitoring the control of P.H.E. for the West.

Unlike the U.R.R.S., the West chose to draw its post-human energy from the souls of the nations it subjugated. The West has become highly efficient at building spectral soulprison work camps within the Mirror Lands of their conquests, allowing the souls of the native populations to pay off the debts the W.T.A. believes they accrued by “forcing” the West to act as a police force for the rest of the world.

The spirit of the Jade Kingdom is very powerful, however, and one of the main reasons why the West was completely thwarted when they tried to use their standard tactics against the small nation. Customary procedure is for Ghosts from the C.E.D. to slip into a nation well in advance of an invasion and “soften” the territory by influencing the living natives towards cooperation with the West. A large number of the Western Spiritrealm agents who entered the Mirror Lands of the Jade Kingdom never returned, their fate unknown. Bereft of any Spiritrealm support (though the bulk of them are unaware that there is such a thing), the Centurions of the West were easy prey for the spirit of the jungle.

The influence the control of post-human energy grants is greatly affected by the manner in which it was taken. Souls willingly give off a portion of their energy to a cause they believe in foster a very different feel in the world of the flesh than imprisoned ones do. In other words, immediately after the Great Patriotic War, both the U.R.R.S. and the W.T.A. were well regarded as nations of heroes. The ever-increasing anger and distrust the West is currently experiencing, though, will only grow worse as they continue to spiritually impoverish the dead of other nations.

Most of the world's governments are unaware of the existence of the Spiritrealm, which is precisely what the greater powers want. The few aware countries lack either the interest or the resources to do anything with the information. In addition to the souls of some very powerful heroic knights from their history, the Isle of Lions has a number of ocean spirit allies, but the changing face of world politics eventually rendered them obsolete, especially when all of the Lionists' enemies attacked from the sky. Since the Dustani mystics of the Land of 10,000 Gods believe all spirits are part of one being, abusing them would be like inflicting torture upon their own persons and they act accordingly. The Lands of the Dragon have been aware of the Spiritrealm for a very long time, but interfering with ancestor spirits is utterly blasphemous to followers of “The Way” as well as to a number of their other philosophies. Which brings us to Al'Istaan....

The War of Al'Istaan

The Nistaani Shaman have always spoken with their ancestors' spirits. In fact, Nistaani ritual magic is basically an invocation into the Spiritrealm, asking for an Immortal to help the Priest maintain a mystical effect in the physical realm. The holy men of Al'Istaan had known what an abomination Imbohl was for several generations before the invasion of their land, but the secrets of the Istamoiran — The Land Beyond Life — are not for even the faithful to know, so they kept silent. This became increasingly

difficult for them as their county's Chieftains became more involved with the Reds, which they knew could only end in disaster. When some of their youths spouted Internationalist philosophy, they decided the time had come to act. To the farthest holy realms of the One True God, they sent word, asking for guidance; they were answered.

Kar Dathra the Eternal returned from one of the Far Realms to the Mirror Lands of Al'Istaan. He helped inspire the foundation of the Nasr Kien from the Spiritrealm and destroyed any Thralls of Imbohl daring to cross into his domain. The Red Fleet's constant stream of difficulties in Al'Istaan was due, in no small part, to their Spiritrealm forces being completely overwhelmed by the Nistaani's.

Kar Dathra gracefully “allowed” the presence of a few Ghosts from the West he considered honorable, but even the noblest were aware of having every action they took noted. The battle before his sacred gate was planned years before it actually occurred. Over thirty thousand Nasr willingly sacrificed their lives, and thus their P.H.E., to Kar Dathra so he could show the Reds the wrath of the One True God.

Troika's Fall

The situation in the Mirror Lands of the United Republics of the Red Star had deteriorated for a long time before the Red Council ever decided to invade Al'Istaan. Imbohl's increasing age, coupled with his total unwillingness to accept the world was changing, was causing rifts throughout the U.R.R.S., reflected in the Spiritrealm. The mounting populations of the Republics made Troika's duties increasingly difficult, but its troubles with soul harvesting were nothing when compared to the problems caused by one damnably elusive Immortal: the Red Woman.

Once a Sorceress Commander in the Great Revolution, she was allegedly executed after murdering her husband, a fellow Commander, who tried to stop her from defecting to the West, or so one story goes. Others claim she started a vicious counter-Revolution, attempting to put one of the remaining scions of the Ancient Dynasties back on the throne. However she ended her life, Pravda, the Goddess of the Lands of the Red Star, chose the Red Woman to be her Champion in death and entrusted her with the legendary Sword of Truth, an ancient relic of the Reds.

The Red Woman succeeded in liberating a number of the smaller outlying soulprisons of the Republics' Mirror Lands and continually tried her hardest to make Imbohl's life miserable. She and Troika clashed several times over the decades, which were terribly bitter for her, as during the Revolution all of the men who made up Troika had been her trusted subordinates.

The Red Woman's fame spread far through the Spiritrealm, long before the War of Al'Istaan. It was Kar Dathra himself that sent word to her that some of his fellow Priests had given one of the troopers of the Red Fleet, not one, but two sacred marks of their people — an unprecedented feat, especially for an infidel. What is more, the High Priest of Al'Istaan stated he believed the soldier could see the denizens of the Spiritrealm without the aid of sorcery.

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The night following the Battle of Kar Dathra's Gate, the Red Woman searched the blasted battlefields of Al'Istaan for the warrior who could see the Spiritrealm, the first man to achieve the Eyes of Imbohl in many, many generations. She barely found him in time to save him from Troika's deadly scythe. With the help of her goddess, the Red Woman defeated Troika, consigning the creature to a just imprisonment for its many crimes. Then, with the Immortal honor guard of Prince Urik I, she escorted the fallen warrior into the Spiritrealm.

The repercussions of Troika's destruction have been widespread; the loss of his most valued agent has certainly wounded Imbohl. As the smooth flow of P.H.E. was disrupted, so to was the cohesiveness of the U.R.R.S., which soon broke apart, reflecting the diminishing of Imbohl's power in the Spiritrealm. Imbohl's difficulties in both worlds are one of the primary reasons that the Gorkas have made a play for their freedom.

Imbohl retains a massive amount of power, as many of his soulprisons still stand, including the mightiest. He is not, however, the nearly omnipotent being he once was. Countless Thralls are still fanatically devoted to his service, as well as a few select Spiritrealm-briefed kommissars from the First Hook, but none are Troika's equal. Even if they were, Imbohl doesn't completely trust any of them.

In this, Imbohl is wise. During the Civil Wars, a number of kommissars who were aware of the Spiritrealm sold their information to the highest bidder. The rise of the Commonwealth hasn't changed their lot much, really. A considerable number of the more knowledgeable kommissars, present and former, are strictly out for

themselves. They are always cautious in their dealings, though, as they know exactly what will happen to them if they die on the Motherland's soil.

The greatest threat to Imbohl's power by far is the Red Woman, who redoubled her efforts since the Battle of Kar Dathra's Gate. An entire army of souls she liberated from Imbohl's prisons now fights to save the beloved Motherland, as do a number of Immortal heroes from the earlier Chronicles of the Lands of the Red Star.

The Red trooper she saved before Kar Dathra's Gate occasionally travels at her side; the warrior's name is Marcus Antares, whom the Thralls of Imbohl name "Wanderer." They whisper not only is he unstoppable in battle, but he, like their master, can see the denizens of the Spiritrealm with living eyes.

THE COUNTER ESPIONAGE DIRECTORATE'S NEW PLAN

Since the fall of the U.R.R.S. the Ghosts of the C.E.D. both living and Immortal, discussed how they wish to proceed, now their country has effectively won the Ironhold. They recently concluded implementing a plan not unlike Imbohl's is an excellent notion, as long as it is skillfully managed. They intend to construct a series of modified soulprisons within the Mirror Lands of the W.T.A. with the express purpose of enslaving their own population for their P.H.E., in addition to the foreign souls they have already dominated. Their arrogance will have repercussions they do not even dream of, but that story is not yet told.

THE SPIRITREALM - What Lies Beyond

The Spiritrealm is vast beyond reckoning; even a dozen lifetimes worth of travel wouldn't reveal more than a portion of what it has to offer. There are terrible dimensions that can scour the minds of Immortals who dare to traverse them, and places of such beauty they can break the hardest heart. The Spiritrealm is home to a myriad of beings other than the souls of humanity, most of which are perilous in one way or another, though not necessarily unfriendly.

THE MIRROR LANDS

Most souls find it difficult to leave the Mirror Lands for many long years after their deaths, as it is hard to give up one's ties to life. Those that presently fall under Imbohl's control have little to no choice in the matter.

The Mirror Lands are coterminous with the physical world and are similar in many ways. Everything existing in the mortal world can be seen from the Spiritrealm, though none of it is solid to an Immortal's touch. Immortals that enjoy emotional pain can follow their loved ones around for years, observing all that they do if they wish. Affecting the corporeal world, however, is difficult. Physically affecting it is nigh impossible and incredibly dangerous.

Most Immortals eventually content themselves with looking in on their loved ones on special occasions, but otherwise leaving them to live their own lives. Mirror Lands, as befits their name, imitate the character of the nation with which they are coterminous. A country of suffering people has a distorted

reflection in the Spiritrealm, whereas a prosperous nation has an idealized reflection.

There are structures in the Mirror Lands mortals cannot see, as they exist entirely within the Spiritrealm. Such buildings are often constructed from pure energy held in place by protocols, or from Spiritrealm materials such as soul iron, permanently infused with P.H.E. to make it solid to Immortal touch. Many of the buildings once served as way stations, where Immortals could congregate to talk with their fellows. All too often now, they are bunkers and various fortifications designed by the Immortals of a given nation to defend their people against enemies who would prey on their dead. Most Mirror Land structures are simple, though the W.T.A. Ghosts have centers constructed within physical buildings, causing jarring spatial distortions to Immortal onlookers not prepared for their bizarre geometry.

SHARD-PLANES

Shard-planes are pocket dimensions created by sorcery, or sometimes belief. The Mirror Lands are difficult to shape, as they always eventually shift back towards reflecting the physical world. Shard-planes, on the other hand, are almost extensions of their creators' will. At the most, shard-planes are the size of a football field; the majority, though, are far smaller. The sacrifices needed to create a larger one are beyond most beings' resources and willpower.

Shard-planes don't necessarily have a fixed entrance, which makes them so useful. For example, a shard-plane can be placed in some hidden spot and the entrance could be keyed to a specific phrase, allowing an owner to enter it from almost anywhere. They're also handy for rapid transit, as two doors in a single shard-realm could be placed in Mirror Lands on opposite sides of the globe, allowing an Immortal to walk into one in the Eastern Tundra, down the hall, and out the other, which leads to the eastern seaboard of the W.T.A. Shard-planes are typically well guarded, but their owners seldom spend a great deal of time in them; getting caught in a collapsing shard-plane can very well become a trip to oblivion.

IMBOHL'S LEGACY & THE STORM OF SOULS

Through the blood sacrifice of millions of his own people, Imbohl shattered the Mirror Lands of the U.R.R.S. to create one of the most massive shard-planes ever conceived. Crafted as a prison plane designed with the purpose of holding the soul of every Red, it is a dreary, quiet place full of mist and shadow. Imbohl's Thralls roam through the darkness, seeking for new Immortals and escapees. The landscape is desolate, filled with sharp crags and the broken remains of soulprisons destroyed by the Red Woman and her allies. What little of the sky that can be seen through the haze roils with an unending tempest, punctuated with lightning-like



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energy flares. The Storm of Souls, as it is called, teems with the damned, free of Imbohl's soulprisons but bound to his dreadful realm. When a soulprison falls, its occupants have few options: join the resistance against Imbohl, seek out another soulprison and return to slavery, or take refuge in the storm. Most choose the storm.

The Far Realms

Beyond the Mirror Lands of the world lie the countless planes of the Far Realms. If you can conceive of a concept; if you can picture something, no matter how strange or wondrous, then it exists somewhere in the Far Realms, as do many things beyond mortal comprehension. The majority of Immortals once traveled to the Far Realms soon after their death, but the troubles the Mirror Lands experienced of late has not only caused many to stay, but also brought back heroes of old who left the physical world behind centuries ago. The following are but brief examples of what the Spiritrealm has to offer.

Far Kathon

An archipelago of islands on a brilliant opal sea, Far Kathon is reached by means of winged vessels that dock on the edge of the plain. The native inhabitants are creatures of great light and purity, though they welcome Immortals who seek a peaceful afterlife among them.

Ishundra

Once a beautiful realm of shining fields and flowing rivers, Ishundra was the dwelling place of many of the native spirits of the Western Transnationalist Alliance's continent. The

systematic destruction of their people warped Ishundra, though, and it is now a place of darkness. Rivers sluggish with blood feed grass that slice a soul to ribbons. Twisted, bitter Immortals and nature spirits whose domains have been corrupted to a point where they exist in constant agony, plot from here to destroy the Western government by any means necessary.

Lacaris

A lightless plane of evil and torment, Immortals choose or are forced to dwell in Lacaris are damned in every sense of the term. Its "natives" chose to settle their dispute millennia ago; in the lands of humans, they are known as demons.

The Eternal Citadel

A holy fortress plane of shining white walls and silver domes set against a perfect azure sky, the Eternal Citadel is the dwelling place of a large number of the Ancients, heroes from the Chronicles of the Lands of the Red Star. For a very long time, they had refrained from involving themselves in the struggle against Imbohl, but the courage of Marcus Antares has acted as a clarion call upon them. Many emerged from their stronghold armed for war.

Paradise

The promised land of the faithful of the One True God is simply Paradise. There are no descriptions of it beyond that which is written in the Law, for no words can truly hold its perfection. The faithful of the One True God believe it is near heresy to even try. Devout Immortals earning the right to venture there seldom return for any but the most important of causes.

Immortal (Template)

The spirits of the dead are as much a part of the World of the Red Star as the earth and sky, though they are all but unseen by the living; the chasm between the worlds is far too great. Their presence can be felt in the form of unexpected hope and courage in dark hours, or dread and hopelessness on a beautiful summer day.

Immortals appear as they did in life, though those skilled in illusions can show any appearance they choose. Their eyes, however, lack both pupil and iris, instead resembling pools of glowing energy, with the intensity of the radiance varying with their moods. Their forms are somewhat translucent, allowing light to pass through their bodies, though they can take on an opaque presence if they so choose.

Not every soul becomes an Immortal. Humans lacking "spirit" in life seldom acquire it in death. Their souls usually become Shades, sad quiet beings devoid of personality. The Deterrents of the West euphemistically refer to the souls of the departed as post-human energy, a term many Immortals despise, though it is an essentially accurate description.

All Immortals can learn to use their own energy, once referred to as "Humanitas" but since been relegated to "P.H.E.," to produce an incredible number of effects. The amount each Immortal can safely draw upon varies with the strength of

the soul in question. Those willing to take risks with their continued existence can use the dangerous practice of "soul burning," which transforms their core energy into more directly useful ambient P.H.E.; to do so, however, is to court oblivion.

The souls of the fallen are Immortals because they are both ageless and enduring. Their energy can be disrupted to a point where it permanently loses all cohesiveness, a state they refer to as "oblivion" — you have to be alive to be "killed." Immortals have an unusual relationship with time. When they are actively involved in human affairs, they experience the passage of time as mortals do, but when left to their own devices, decades can pass them by without their notice. Immortals know all that they did in life, though some recollections, generally the ones without emotional weight, are dimmer than others.

Creating an Immortal

"Immortal" is a template that can be acquired by any sentient races (hereafter referred to as the base creature). An Immortal has all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

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Size and Type: The creature's type changes to undead. Do not recalculate base attack bonus, saves, or skill points. Size remains unchanged.

Hit Dice: Same as base creature. Immortals have no Constitution score; use their Charisma modifier in place of Con for Hit Die bonuses.

Defense: The quicksilver nature of Immortals gives them a natural +2 Defense Bonus.

Attacks: An Immortal retains all the attacks of the base creature.

Special Attacks: The base creature retains any extraordinary or supernatural attacks upon gaining this template.

Special Qualities: The Immortal retains all the base creature's special qualities and gains all of the ones described below.

Damage Immunity (Su): Immortals are completely unassailable by mortal weapons. P.H.E. Infused weapons can affect them normally.

Darkvision: Immortals have darkvision with a range of 20 meters.

Extraordinary Healing (Ex): The lost core energy of Immortals (their hit points) continually replenishes, regardless of any other factors. Immortals recover twice their character level in hit points every 12 hours.

Immunities: Immortals are immune to all mind-based mystical effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns and morale effects), poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, and necromantic effects. They are not subject to critical hits, non-lethal damage, ability drain, or energy drain. They are immune to fatigue, exhaustion, and the effects of massive damage.

Out of Phase (Su): Immortals are beings of pure energy, no longer bound to the physical world. They are therefore are completely invisible and incorporeal in regards to

the human world. They can move through solid objects, including living creatures, as if they were not there, though they cannot see through them. An Immortal can affect other incorporeal beings as if they were both material. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, none of their abilities can touch the mortal world.

P.H.E. Pool (Su): All Immortals gain a P.H.E. Pool. See the following section for details.

Unturnable (Ex): Despite being a form of undead, Immortals cannot be turned. Some places can be mystically warded to bar their entrance.

Ability Scores: Immortals have no Constitution score and therefore substitute Charisma for Concentration checks and hit die bonuses.

Allegiances: Same as base creature, though many Immortals either have their beliefs reinforced or strongly altered once they get acclimatized to the Spiritrealm.

Skills: Immortals received a +4 species bonus to Move Silently checks.

Feats: Same as base creature.

Advancement: By character class.

Challenge Rating: Same as base creature.

IMMORTAL PROTOCOLS

Immortals do not take nonlethal damage and they lack a Constitution score, the two mechanical traits from which kasting draws. Living sorceresses actually draw energy through their own souls to bring about their effects in conjunction with a protocol's components, however, explaining why they take damage. Immortal sorcery users spend two points of P.H.E. to kast a protocol and six points if they have no components. Each level of Overkasting forces a modified soul burn; an Immortal sorceress spends 1 extra P.H.E. and 2d8 Hit Points for each level of Overkasting.

SPIRITREALM ADVANCED CLASSES

Free Spirit

Free Spirits are Immortals dedicating their existence to a cause or ideal. Regardless of what they believe, they are passionate beings who struggle towards achieving their goals in the face of all opposition.

EXAMPLE FREE SPIRITS

The Red Woman, Kar Dathra the Eternal, and Troika are all Free Spirits.

Requirements

To qualify to be a Free Spirit, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Species: Immortal Template

Base Attack Bonus: +3.

Skills: Knowledge (any one) 6 Ranks.

Required Allegiance: Every Free Spirit must have an Allegiance of some kind.

Game Rule Information

Hit Die: 1d8.

Action Points: 6 + 1/2 character level, rounded down, every time the Free Spirit attains a new level in this class.

CLASS SKILLS

The Free Spirit's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are as follows.

Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Investigate (Int), Kast (Int)+*, Knowledge (Any) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Navigate (Int), Profession (Wis), Ritual (Cha)+*, Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak

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Post-Human Energy (P.H.E.)

The acquisition and control of post-human energy drives most conflicts in the world of the Red Star, though the number of living beings aware of that fact is but a tiny fraction of the whole. Imbohl's control over hundreds of millions of souls allowed him to hold half the world in his grasp, though his grip is now slipping, even as the West's seems to be growing tighter. The purpose of Imbohl's soulprisons is to channel their prisoners' P.H.E. to him, whereas the W.T.A.'s Spiritrealm work camps often direct P.H.E. toward their government in general.

Souls and the energy they hold are the currency of the Spiritrealm. When a being states they have post-human energy to trade, they mean they actually have sentient Immortals or Shades within their possession, usually held in a form of containment known as a Bond. In other words, souls they've enslaved, though Shades typically have no thoughts on the subject. If they say they wish to deal in P.H.E., they specifically mean the ambient energy all souls produce, which can be held in various containers, typically ones crafted from soul iron. Obviously, "post-human energy" is made up of P.H.E. — but one is an ever-renewing resource, and the other is a "fixed" commodity. Not every soul is equal, and there are otherworldly creatures that specially collect certain types of souls.

All Immortals have a pool of P.H.E. they can draw upon to power Immortal Feats and a few other abilities from the two following advanced classes: Free Spirit and Soul Thief. Immortals can continue to progress in the character class they had in life, in which case they have access to Immortal Feats as bonus feats during their standard level progression.

Calculate an Immortal's P.H.E. Pool by using the following formula:

Character Level + the sum of all positive ability modifiers for Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma + class bonus + miscellaneous modifiers derived from certain Immortal Feats = Total P.H.E. Pool

P.H.E. recovers very slowly. Immortals recover only a half of their Character Levels, rounded down, in P.H.E. per day.

Immortals who desperately need P.H.E. can attempt the dangerous practice of soul burning, which is the conversion of their core energy (hit points) to P.H.E. Immortals do this by stating how many P.H.E. they need, then rolling an equal number of d8s, which they take as damage. If they haven't just sent themselves to oblivion, they can use the P.H.E. garnered in the usual way.

Soul burning is excruciatingly painful for an Immortal. If they have a choice in the matter, and they still have P.H.E. in their pool, they must succeed a DC 20 Will Check to practice it. Soul burning is a free action (though not often regarded as a sane one).

Language (none), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), and Telekinesis (Wis)*.

†These are only Class Skills if the Immortal had them in life.

*See page 39 for details on these new skills.

Skill Points at Each Level: 7 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the free spirit advanced class.

Dedicated

The free spirit chooses two skills, one of which must be a Knowledge skill. All checks on the chosen skills receive an insight bonus equal to her class level in free spirit. In addition, the free spirit can always Take 10 on the chosen skills.

Chosen Tool

At 2nd level, the free spirit acquires a tool, most often a melee weapon, by which they come to be identified. The free spirit's chosen tool automatically counts as an Infused (see page 158), capable of harming Immortals and creatures only vulnerable to magic weapons. As a free action, the free spirit can expend 1 P.H.E. to empower their

chosen tool for a round, giving it an enhancement bonus to hit and damage equal to one-half their free spirit level rounded down. If the chosen tool is a kasting aid, it adds +2 to all Kast checks.

At 5th level, the Free Spirit's chosen tool grows in power. A single P.H.E. empowers their chosen tool for five rounds. If the tool is primarily a weapon, its threat range is increased by one and it counts as armor piercing if it wasn't before. In addition, by expending 1 point of P.H.E. the weapon deals an additional +2d6 points of damage. Do not multiply this extra damage on a critical hit. The source of the extra damage should be worked out between the player and GM, e.g. it bursts into flame, becomes like liquid metal slipping past armor, screams with deafening unholy joy, and so on. If the tool was a kasting aid, it instead adds a bonus of +5 to all Kast checks and allows one level of overkasting without causing any automatic soul burn.

At 8th level, the free spirit's chosen tool reaches its apex of power. The chosen tool is permanently empowered. If the tool is primarily a weapon, its increased threat range doubles and by expending a point of P.H.E. the weapon deals +4d6 points of damage. This extra damage supercedes and does not stack with the extra damage gained at 5th level. Do not multiplu this additional damage on a critical hit.

Table 12-1: The Free Spirit

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus	P.H.E. Bonus	Class Features
1st	+0	+0	+1	+1	+1	+1	+5	Dedicated
2nd	+1	+0	+2	+2	+1	+1	+10	Chosen tool
3rd	+2	+1	+2	+2	+2	+1	+10	Bonus feat
4th	+3	+1	+3	+3	+3	+2	+15	Synchronicity
5th	+3	+1	+3	+3	+3	+2	+15	Chosen tool II
6th	+4	+2	+3	+3	+3	+2	+20	Bonus feat
7th	+5	+2	+4	+4	+4	+3	+20	Awe inspiring
8th	+6	+2	+4	+4	+4	+3	+25	Chosen tool III
9th	+6	+3	+4	+4	+5	+3	+25	Bonus feat
10th	+7	+3	+5	+5	+5	+4	+30	Unbound

Example: Ayele bears the sacred Nistaani sword Moon Shadow that started with a threat range of 18–20. At 5th level, her sword caused threats on a 17–20. At 8th level, in Ayele's hands, Moon Shadow causes threats on a 13–20.

If the tool was a kasting aid, it instead adds a bonus of +10 to all Kast checks and allows two levels of overkasting without causing any automatic soul burn. In addition, regardless of the type of chosen tool, it acquires a single special ability determined by the GM with the player's input. For example, it could kast a single protocol once per day as if it had a Kast check result of 40 and 4 levels of overkasting, or the ability to summon a powerful outsider for a single service once per week.



Synchronicity

The free spirit's continuing defense of her ideals affects the Spiritrealm in subtle ways. Events conspire to put the free spirit where he needs to be to uphold his cause; useful information finds its way to him, seemingly by accident. Whenever the Free Spirit is in need of information or allies, even if not entirely aware of whom or what she might need, she can spend 1 action point to encounter someone or something useful. Synchronicity should always help advance the plot of an adventure, though how may not be immediately apparent at the time.

Awe Inspiring

The free spirit's dedication to her cause inspires her allies and frightens her enemies. The free spirit can give a rousing speech or threatening oratory to those around her. At the end of a full round, the free spirit must make a successful DC 10 Charisma check. On a successful check and if attempting to inspire allies, the free spirit grants a +3 morale bonus to all saving throws, attack rolls and damage rolls for a number of rounds equal to half the character's free spirit levels, rounded down. If the free spirit successfully threatens her foes, they must succeed a Will Save against a DC equal to 10 + the free spirit's total character level + the free spirit's charisma modifier. On a failed save, the subjects take a –3 morale penalty to all saving throws, attack rolls and damage rolls for a number of rounds equal to half the character's Free Spirit levels, rounded down.

A Free Spirit is unaffected by her own Awe Inspiring ability. She can inspire or intimidate a number of beings equal to one-half her character level, rounded down, within hearing. Any given individual can only be affected by this ability once per hour.

Unbound

The free spirit progresses to a point where only his own ideals can hold him back from his chosen course. The free spirit can automatically break any Bond placed upon him. Incarcerating an Unbound soul is impossible. Locks open before such a Free Spirit and chains simply fall away. Note this ability will not allow a free spirit to walk *into* a soulprison, but if they were somehow forcibly transported to one, they could walk right out.

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE SPIRITREALM

Bonus Feats

At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, the free spirit gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the free spirit must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Agile Riposte, Attentive, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Energy Shield, Frightful Presence, Great Cleave, Heroic Surge, Immortal Illusions, Improved Initiative, Improved Soul Burn, Infuse, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Living Influence, Low Profile, Mobility, Power Attack, Precise Strike, Pure of Heart, Quick Draw, Renown, Righteous, Siphon, Spring Attack, Strength of the Damned, Sunder, Telekinetic Warrior, There Is No Gravity, Track, Trustworthy, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus, Whirlwind Attack.

Soul Thief

Soul Thieves are Immortals who aid the flow of Spiritrealm commerce. They range from streetwise scholars, cagey diplomats, to dubious rogues. The best of them steal innocent Immortals out from under Imbohl and the W.T.A. The worst sell post-human energy to the same.

Example of a Soul Thief

Iakos from *Run Makita Run* is a Soul Thief.

Requirements

To qualify to be a Soul Thief, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Species: Immortal Template

Base Attack Bonus: +2.

Skills: Diplomacy 6 ranks, Gather Information 6 ranks, Knowledge (arcane lore, business, current events, history, or streetwise) 6 ranks.

Game Rule Information

Hit Die: 1d6.

Action Points: 6 + 1/2 character level, rounded down, every time the Soul Thief attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Free Spirit's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are as follows.

Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Cha), Craft (Bonds) (Int)*, Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gamble (Wis), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Investigate (Int), Knowledge (arcane lore, business, current events, history, streetwise) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Navigate (Int), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Research (Int), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), and Tumble (Dex).

*See **Immortal Skills and Feats** starting on page 157 for details.

Skill Points at Each Level: 9 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the soul thief advanced class.

In the Know

Soul thieves make a point of knowing everything of interest that goes on in the Spiritrealm. If they don't know something, they know who does. Through contacts, spies, eavesdropping on the living and assorted other avenues, a soul thief keeps track of whatever might lead to profit.

The soul thief can make a Gather Information check on general or specific information instantaneously, and spends only an hour making a Gather Information check for restricted information. Retries may be made under normal rules. Protected information still requires 1d4+1 hours for a check. The purchase DC for using Gather Information is reduced by 10.

Favors

The soul thief has the ability to acquire minor aid from anyone he meets. By making a favor check, a soul thief can gain important information without going through the time and trouble of doing a lot of research. Favors can also be used to acquire access to certain shard-planes, the loan of equipment, or to receive other minor assistance over the course of an adventure.

A soul thief spends 1 action point to activate this talent. To make a favor check, roll 1d20 and add the character's favor bonus, equal to the character's soul thief level + Charisma modifier. The GM sets the DC based on the scope of the favor being requested. The DC ranges from 10 for a simple favor to as high as 30 for formidable and highly dangerous, expensive, or illegal favors. A soul thief can't take 10 or 20 on this check, nor can the character retry the check for the same (or virtually the same) favor.

Favors should help advance the plot of an adventure. A favor enabling a character to avoid an adventure altogether should always be unavailable to the character, regardless of the result of a favor check. The GM should carefully monitor a soul thief's use of favors to ensure this ability isn't abused. The success or failure of a mission should never hinge on the use of a favor, and getting a favor shouldn't replace good roleplaying or the use of other skills. The GM should disallow any favor deemed too disruptive to the game.

At 7th level, a soul thief's fame and influence grows to encompass a wide variety of unusual Spiritrealm denizens. A Soul Thief at this level can make Favor requests of a number of otherworldly entities with the expectation of having them granted. The soul thief's ability and reputation for repaying favors grows, allowing a Soul Thief to lower the DC of a favor by anywhere from 5 to 10, depending on what he sort of Favor he is willing to take on himself to reimburse his benefactor.

Elusive

At 4th level, the soul thief gains the ability to suppress her loyalties, if she has any, from any and all protocols, spells or supernatural abilities that can detect allegiances. In cases where such divinations are made, the soul thief may attempt a Will Save (DC 10 + the character level of the prying

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Table 12-2: Soul Thief

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus	P.H.E. Bonus	Class Features
1st	+0	+0	+1	+1	+0	+2	+2	In the know
2nd	+1	+0	+2	+2	+1	+2	+4	Favors
3rd	+1	+1	+2	+2	+1	+2	+6	Bonus feat
4th	+2	+1	+2	+2	+1	+3	+8	Elusive
5th	+2	+1	+3	+3	+2	+3	+10	Dealmaker
6th	+3	+2	+3	+3	+2	+3	+12	Bonus feat
7th	+3	+2	+4	+4	+2	+4	+14	Extended favors
8th	+4	+2	+4	+4	+3	+4	+16	Master of doors
9th	+4	+3	+4	+4	+3	+4	+18	Bonus feat
10th	+5	+3	+5	+5	+3	+5	+20	Shard plane

individual) to negate the attempt. Negated attempts reveal nothing, making her effectively appear as a blank slate.

Dealmaker

The soul thief is well known in the Spiritrealm, though whether well regarded or feared varies by his reputation. Regardless, he is known as a being that shouldn't be crossed, gaining a circumstance bonus equal to his Reputation when making Diplomacy or Gather Information skill checks.

Master of Doors

The soul thief's extensive knowledge of the Spiritrealm's denizens and their secrets allow access to places where most can never go. The soul thief can cross the world using shard-plane back doors, secret mystic paths and the occasional short cut.

The soul thief and a number of compatriots equal to one-half his character level rounded down can get from anyplace in the Spiritrealm to any other place in the Spiritrealm within a single hour. The soul thief can use master of doors once a week, as Immortals get wise, and new routes continually have to be researched.

Shard Plane

The soul thief acquires a Spiritrealm bolthole. The shard-plane is approximately 10 meters squared and the interior resembles anything the soul thief can dream up. The soul thief must determine where the shard-plane resides with GM approval. The shard-plane has one fixed and one floating portal. The floating one will always be keyed to the soul thief and cannot be connected to a place where he is not.

Example: Lothar the soul thief has a shard-plane in the Mirror Lands of Nokgorka, set in the hills just east of Bahamut's reflection. The shard-plane's fixed portal leads to the Isle of Lions. Wherever Lothar travels, save a few exceptions like Imbohl's shard-plane, he can always call up the portal to his refuge. After he enters his domain, until he closes the floating portal, it opens to wherever he just came from; once he closes it, however, he cannot reopen it to or from some other place else until he travels there, and can only leave his shard-plane via the fixed portal to the Isle of Lions.

Fixed portals can be relocated, but the process is esoteric and takes a few months to accomplish. Shard-plane portals cannot be seen by the living and are concealed from the dead, requiring a DC 30 Search check to find. There are some legendary protocols capable of collapsing a shard-plane, but they are extremely rare and guarded. If for some reason a soul thief should lose his shard-plane, the GM should let him acquire a new one within an adventure or two.

Bonus Feats

At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, the soul thief gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the soul thief must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Alertness, Attentive, Deceptive, Educated, Immortal Illusions, Improved Soul Burn, Infuse, Lightning Reflexes, Living Influence, Low Profile, Lucky Soul, Meticulous, Mortal Coil, Quicksilver Dodge, Read Destiny, Renown, Siphon, Stealthy, There Is No Gravity, Trustworthy, Windfall.

Spiritrealm Currency Issues

The rules for Wealth allow one to "gloss over" the unpleasantness of what many Spiritrealm denizens regard as currency. Heroically minded players may feel uncomfortable playing an individual whose wealth comes from "slavery." Not to worry: ethical Immortals strictly deal in P.H.E., ingots of soul iron, and various knick-knacks that have value to other Immortals and various outsiders. Morally flexible individuals, like most soul thieves, deal in shades, which are basically mindless husks of souls and not sentient Immortals. Others may not care in the slightest.

IMMORTAL SKILLS AND FEATS

SKILLS

CRAFT (BONDS) (Wis) Trained Only

This skill allows you to build mystic Bonds — metaphysical devices that can hold an Immortal or Shade imprisoned or at bay. The complexity of a Bond determines what it can hold or protect and the difficulty for breaking it. Bonds have a variety of different appearances. Bonds meant to hold post-human energy within them appear as a container of some sort such as a small clay pot, but others are heavy, linked soul iron chains. Bonds sealing a location from entrance or exit are often referred to as Wards.

“Bonds” is a generic term; every culture has their own name for them, from soul cages to spirit locks. Making a Bond is not an intrinsically evil act, but individuals regularly producing them for enslaving Immortals are not well regarded in a number of places in the Spiritrealm.

Bonds can hold Immortals in a small area, to which their energy-based bodies conform. If an Immortal fails the initial Will Save, they cannot make another one for 6 hours; it takes a great deal of effort to break a Bond.

Immortals exposed to a Bond and who fail their Will saves have the P.H.E. drawn by the Bond's holder automatically. A number of Bonds have further protocols placed on them, making them invisible or causing damage to beings trying to break them. There are even rumored to be W.T.A. Bonds built using advanced electronics projecting Bonds in the form of energy fields. Note that unlike most Craft skills, this skill is Wisdom based rather than Intelligence based.

IMMORTAL ILLUSIONS (Cha)

You can fool the senses of others by creating illusions out of P.H.E.

Required: Immortal Illusions Feat

Skill Check: You make an Immortal Illusions check with a DC based on the complexity of the illusion. If successful, an illusion appears where you specify. It is no more difficult to create a small illusion than a huge one.

IMMORTAL ILLUSIONS

Complexity	Will Save DC
Illusion affects a single sense	10
Illusion affects two senses	15
Illusion affects all senses	20
Simple (random noise, static image, etc.)	+0
Complex (coherent sound, moving images, etc.)	+5
Very Complex (multiple overlapping sounds or images)	+10

You may Take 10 when creating an Immortal Illusion, but not 20. Immortal Illusion is a full round action which requires Concentration to maintain. It costs the illusion's DC divided by 5 in P.H.E. every round maintained. The Will save against believing an Immortal Illusion is equal to 10 + half the Immortal's ranks in Immortal Illusion + their Charisma modifier.

Since the illusion isn't real, it cannot produce any real effects. It cannot cause damage, support weight, provide nutrition, illuminate darkness, or provide protection from the elements. Characters encountering an illusion do not get a saving throw unless they have cause to think something is amiss, or they interact with it in some fashion. For example, characters passing by an illusory wall concealing an ambush would only get a saving throw if they stopped and leaned against it.

A successful saving throw against an illusion reveals it to be false, but a translucent afterimage remains, showing where the illusion was placed. Failing to save against the illusion means the character cannot see anything amiss. A character faced with incontrovertible proof that an illusion isn't real doesn't need a saving throw. A character who communicates that something is wrong to others gives them a +4 bonus on saving throws against that illusion.

Retry: No. You can attempt to affect the same targets after time has passed, but not in the same encounter or scene.

READ DESTINY (Wis)

By studying the soul of a mortal, you can make inferences as to what their fate will be.

Table 12-3: CRAFT (BONDS)

Type of Bond	Purchase DC	Craft DC	Time	Will Save
Simple (sufficient for holding a single Shade)	8	15	2 hr.	8
Moderate (capable of holding an Immortal)	12	20	24 hr.	12
Complex (capable of holding several Immortals or warding a small building from entrance)	20	24	72 hr.	20
Advanced (Spiritrealm fortress, Soulprison walls)	40	40	6 Months	30
Increased DC of Will Save	+2	+1	+1 hr, Adv. +1 wk	+2

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE SPIRITREALM

Required: Read Destiny Feat

Skill Check: You must study the mortal's spirit for a minute (10 rounds) then make a Read Destiny Check against the following chart. You may take 10 when Reading Destiny, but not 20. There is no save against Read Destiny.

Read Destiny

DC	Result
10	A vague vision of the subject's future over the next 24 hours. Not necessarily accurate.
15	A vision of subject's future over the next 48 hours. Accurate, but not very detailed.
20	A vision of a specific critical event in the subject's future and exactly how long before it occurs.
25	A series of visions touching upon the subject and all others involved in the critical event.
30	Total awareness of the likely course of the subject's life over the next decade, including time, place, subject and other participants in several critical events.
35	Perfect knowledge of the subject's destiny including the day he will die. Total clarity on any significant event, including death, and all parties directly involved with the subject at the time.

Retry: No. The tangled skein of that particular mortal's fate is beyond your ability to discern.

Immortal Feats

Energy Shield

You can form your soul's energy into an effective, albeit temporary, shield.

Prerequisites: Immortal Template

Benefit: By spending 1 action point and a variable number of P.H.E. you can form a barrier that grants a damage reduction 5 for each point spent. There is no limit to the number of points you can spend, but the shield only lasts for a single round. Thus, an Immortal knowing she was about to be attacked by, say, the burning hull of a skyfurnace could spend 1 action point and 15 P.H.E. to put up a damage reduction 75 shield. Energy Shield is used as a reaction, meaning you may use this feat even when it is not your turn.

Eyes of Imbohl

You are destined for greatness, but your life is unlikely to be easy.

Prerequisites: GM's approval, Wisdom 15.

Benefit: You can see into the Spiritrealm. You perceive Immortals despite being alive yourself and interact with them. You acquire a P.H.E. Pool as if you were an Immortal and you can take feats that have the Immortal prerequisite. All of your personal weapons count as being infused.

Special: The Eyes of Imbohl either must be taken at 1st level or alternatively, after the character has entered or glimpsed the Spiritrealm while at 0 to -9 Hit Points.

Immortal Illusions

You have the ability to learn the Immortal Illusions skill.

Prerequisites: Immortal template

Benefit: Immortal Illusions is a class skill for you.

Normal: Characters without this feat cannot learn the Immortal Illusions skill.

Improved Soul Burn

You have the strength of will and the skill to efficiently convert your form's energy.

Prerequisites: Immortal template, base attack bonus +10, base Will save +5.

Benefit: You roll a 1d4 for every point of P.H.E. you wish to generate; you need never make a Will Check to do so.

Normal: Characters roll 1d8 for each point of P.H.E. for soul burning and have to make a Will Save if they have any P.H.E. in their pool in order to do so.

Infuse

You have the ability to saturate equipment with P.H.E., allowing its use by and against Immortals. You have the ability to create soul iron.

Prerequisites: Immortal template, Wisdom 13.

Benefit: By placing your hand on an object, you can inundate it with P.H.E. It takes 5 P.H.E. per kilogram of material. The material becomes usable by Immortals. If a melee weapon, it becomes capable of cutting Immortals. If armor, it can be worn for its full defensive value. Infused equipment must be continually handled or worn by an Immortal, or it loses its "charge" within an hour, though the individual who infused the item doesn't have to be the one who maintains it. Soul iron is a Spiritrealm metal that has been eternally infused. It takes 30 points of P.H.E. to permanently infuse 1 kilogram of soul iron. A kilogram of soul iron has a Purchase Value of 12 in the Spiritrealm.

Kast in Iron

You gave your soul up to be forged into a weapon designed to enforce the will of the state.

Prerequisites: Immortal template, Allegiance to Imbohl, Siphon

Benefit: You become one of Imbohl's Thralls, a soul iron construct designed to collect souls for your ageless master. You are incapable of betraying him. You take on a Thrall template, as follows.

- You acquire damage reduction 10/-. This damage reduction cannot be reduced by armor piercing attacks.
- You gain +10 Hit Points, and all of your attacks count as Infused.
- You also gain variety of natural bladed attacks dealing 2d8 points of slashing damage, with a critical threat range of 19-20.
- Your P.H.E. pool is permanently reduced to one-quarter its previous total, rounding down. Any further gains to P.H.E. are similarly quartered, rounding down.

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE SPIRITREALM

Living Influence

You can reach over the gulfs separating the mortal world from the Spiritrealm.

Prerequisites: Immortal template, 3rd level in an Immortal advanced class, Wisdom 13, Wisdom 13.

Benefit: Spend 1 action point and 1 P.H.E. to speak to the spirit of a mortal. While he does not consciously hear you, his soul may. The mortal makes a Will Save (DC 10 + Immortal advanced class level + Charisma bonus). If the mortal succeeds, she can ignore the compulsion at the GM's discretion. If the target fails, she automatically reacts as below. The effect lasts for the Immortal's advanced class level + Charisma bonus in rounds.

Despair: The mortal suffers a -2 morale penalty on saving throws, attack and damage rolls, and ability and skill checks. Despair dispels the effects of hope.

Fear: The mortal flees from the object of its fear (chosen by you). Fear dispels rage.

Friendship: The mortal's attitude shifts toward the next more positive reaction. Mortals involved in combat continue to fight back normally, however. Friendship dispels hatred.

Hatred: The mortal's attitude shifts toward the next more negative reaction. Hatred dispels friendship.

Hope: The mortal gains a +2 moral bonus on saving throws, attack and damage rolls, and ability and skill checks. Hope dispels fear.

Rage: The mortal gains a +2 bonus to Strength and Constitution scores, a +1 morale bonus on Will saves, and a -1 penalty to Defense. They are compelled to fight, heedless of danger. Rage will not stack with any other similar effects. Rage dispels fear. The Immortal can influence more mortals at once by spending more P.H.E. Each extra point of P.H.E. spent doubles the amount affected; so 2 P.H.E. affects two mortals, 3 P.H.E. affects 4 mortals, 4 P.H.E. affects 8 mortals, and so forth. In would take 15 P.H.E. to affect 16,224 mortals — the crew of the Konstantinov, for example. Living Influence is a full round action that requires the utmost concentration. An Immortal attempting it counts as being flatfooted.

Normal: Characters without this feat cannot affect the living in any way.

Lucky Soul

You are famous in the Spiritrealm for succeeding against impossible odds.

Prerequisites: Immortal template, Reputation +5.

Benefit: Once per day, after you failed an attack roll, saving throw, or skill check, you may spend a number of P.H.E. equal to the difference between the target number and the actual roll to succeed the attack, save, or check.

Mortal Coil

For short times, you can take on a physical form.

Prerequisites: Immortal template, 7th level in an Immortal advanced class.

Benefit: You gain a body mortals can perceive, allowing you to interact with the corporeal world. In order to gain a mortal form, you must spend 25 points of P.H.E. The body created is not a true human form, but only a simulacrum. While it appears like a human body to all senses, it is only a shell. While using Mortal Coil, an Immortal loses 1 P.H.E. every five minutes in the simulacrum. You do not regain P.H.E. or Hit Points while in this form. Using Mortal Coil takes a full round action, both to take on a Coil and to allow one to dissipate. If an Immortal "dies" while using Mortal Coil, they're consigned to Oblivion.

Pure of Heart

Your soul shines with clarity of purpose.

Prerequisites: Immortal template, allegiance to a noble cause (GM's discretion).

Benefit: Add +10 to your P.H.E. pool.

Quicksilver Dodge

You move with blindingly inhuman speed, dodging blows, hooks, bullets and even protocols.

Prerequisites: Immortal template, Reflex Save +6.

Benefit: For a single round, you can avoid all forms of attack, even ones supposedly unavoidable — such as protocols allowing no saving throws. Spend 3 points of P.H.E. for each attack, making a successful DC 20 Reflex save for each one. Success means you suffer no adverse effects at all, regardless of the attack's description. Quicksilver Dodge is a full round action.

Read Destiny

You have the ability to learn the Read Destiny skill.

Prerequisites: Immortal template.

Benefit: Read Destiny is a class skill for you.

Normal: Characters without this feat cannot learn the Read Destiny skill.

Righteous

Yours is a soul that knows only the path of honor; those around you can sense this with ease.

Prerequisites: Immortal template, no sinister allegiances (GM's discretion).

Benefit: You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Charisma-based skills when dealing with others that have any kind of belief system other than unrepentant evil.

Normal: Only when a character shares an allegiance with another do they get a Charisma bonus. There are beings in the world of the Red Star who are unlikely at best to deal with others that do not share their views — for example, those faithful to the Law of the One True God.

Siphon

A feat only possessed by those willing to enslave others, siphon allows you to trap another soul in a Bonded vessel rather than destroying them.

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Prerequisites: Immortal template, base attack bonus +5, Weapon Focus.

Benefit: As long as you have an empty soul cage or other kind of containment unit ready, you may force a soul into that Bonded vessel. In order to use this feat, you must deliver a final blow to an Immortal foe with any weapon for which you have taken the Weapon Focus feat. Instead of inflicting hit points that would send them to oblivion, the blow automatically forces them into your Bonded vessel. It costs 3 points of P.H.E. per soul captured to use siphon, and is a free action.

STRENGTH OF THE DAMNED

You have learned to channel the energy through your spirit to enhance your grace or power.

Prerequisites: Immortal template, Engine Pull Champion.

Benefit: For every point of P.H.E. you spend up to a total of five, you add a bonus of +2 to either your Strength or Dexterity for a number of rounds equal to one-half your character level, rounded down. Thus, a 10th level Immortal, who spent 4 P.H.E. to raise his Dexterity, gets a bonus of +8 to the attribute for 5 rounds. Using Strength of the Damned is a move equivalent action. You can enhance both attributes simultaneously for the appropriate cost in P.H.E.

THERE IS NO GRAVITY

As a being made of soul energy, you've realized the forces of earthly gravity need no longer affect you.

Prerequisite: Immortal template.

Benefit: You can move in any direction at will.

NISTAANI INVOCATIONS

The shamans of the Nistaani spoke to the spirits of their ancestors long before there was an Al'Istaan. Theirs is the terrible burden of knowing many truths of the world, but being unable to speak them, sworn to secrecy to safeguard the faith of their people. They are well aware of the war in the Spiritrealm and many of them pity the Reds for their ignorance.

Nistaani Invocations, or "spells," as infidels call them, are not protocols (though they are mechanically similar). Rather, they are ancient prayers that cross between the mortal world and the Spiritrealm to ask an Immortal ancestor for aid.

As noted earlier in this chapter, it is difficult for Immortals to affect the corporeal world. The strength of a Nistaani Priest's faith, however, coupled with the power of the prayer, allows an Immortal to direct ambient Spiritrealm energy into the conduit a properly kast invocation creates. The more powerful the kasting, the stronger is the call, and therefore the greater the Immortal coming to assist. The greatest rituals can summon legendary heroes out of Paradise itself to assist a worthy shaman, and the power they direct is immense.

Unlike protocols, invocations do not require components. Invocations also cannot be overkast. Most invocations have greatly expanding effects, depending on the result of a successful kast.

CLAWS OF STONE

Shaman Invocation (Nistaani)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d6

Kast Check DC: 16

Kasting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (Kast check result in meters)

Target: Up to one creature per kaster level + 1 for every point over the Kast Check DC

Duration: Kast check result x 1 minute

Saving Throw: N/A

Sorcery Resistance: No

Nistaani shamans use this invocation to great effect in areas where weapons are forbidden. *Claws of stone* has two

versions; a shaman must choose which one while kasting the invocation. Recipients can be affected by just one of the effects at a time.

The first version turns bare fists into lethal weapons, though there is no outward change in appearance. All targets increase their unarmed attack damage to 1d6 points of lethal damage. On a Kast check result of 40 or more, they do 1d6+1 lethal.

The second version grants the melee weapons of all targets held at the time of the invocation to deal +2 points of damage on a successful attack. If the Kast check was 40 or more, the damage bonus is +3.

DANCE OF THE DESERT

Shaman Invocation (Nistaani)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d12

Kast Check DC: 25

Kasting Time: 1 full round

Range: Medium (Kast check result x 4 meters)

Target: Number of creatures equal to Kast check result; if Kast check is 50 or more, the number of targets becomes 10 times the Kast check.

Duration: Kast check result x 1 round; see text

Saving Throw: Will negates

Sorcery Resistance: Yes

The spirits of Al'Istaan shield the faithful as they race along the border of the Spiritrealm, flickering in and out of the mortal world. During the war with the U.R.R.S. the Nistaani used this invocation to disrupt the Reds' battle lines by attacking both rear and flank positions. All targets "blink" in and out of the battlefield, appearing and disappearing as they move. All attacks against those under the effects of Dance of the Desert have total concealment (granting a 50% miss chance). Affected individuals also suffer half damage from area attacks.

Affected creatures strike as invisible creatures, with a +2 bonus to attack rolls, and their opponents are denied their Dexterity bonus to Defense.

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Using *dance of the desert* counts as a move action. It is impossible to attack with ranged weapons while using the Dance. Affected individuals must remain in contact with the land of Al'Istaan at all times. If an individual loses contact with the ground while under the effects of the Dance, the invocation ends for that person or creature only, though others affected retain the effects of the spell.

FURY OF THE SANDS

Shaman Invocation (Nistaani)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d10

Kast Check DC: 18

Kasting Time: 1 full round

Range: Extreme (Kast check result x 100 meters)

Area: 1/2 kilometer x Kast check result

Duration: 10 Minutes x Kast check (D)

Saving Throw: No, see text

Sorcery Resistance: No

The shaman calls up a fierce sandstorm to scourge his enemies or obscure an area he wants undisturbed. The storm forces all living creatures within its path to succeed a DC 15 Fortitude check or be unable to move forward into it.

Within the storm, ranged attacks are impossible. All beings within the storm take 1d3 nonlethal damage for each round they remain in the open without shelter. The storm's passage leaves dust a meter or taller in its wake.

If the result of the Kast check was 40 or more, the shaman may increase the severity of the storm, at his discretion. Such a storm deals 1d6 points of nonlethal damage every round and requires a DC 20 Fortitude check to advance.

GRASPING EARTH

Shaman Invocation (Nistaani)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d10

Kast Check DC: 17

Kasting Time: 1 full round

Range: Long (Kast check result x 10 meters)

Area: Kast check result x 10 meter radius circle, centering on spot of Kaster's choosing

Duration: Concentration

Saving Throw: Reflex negates for individuals; no save for vehicles

Sorcery Resistance: Yes

The shaman asks Al'Istaan to thwart infidels by slowing their passage. The land transmutes into mud, absorbing feet and treads. All affected creatures in the area of effect can take a single move action or a standard action each turn, but not both. All creatures suffer a -1 penalty on attack rolls, Defense and Reflex saves while in the area. *Grasping earth* also slows vehicles to their Alley speed.

On a Kast check result of 50 or more, Al'Istaan truly shows its anger. Large portions of the land turn into quicksand. All characters in the area of effect must succeed a Reflex save, or sink. On the following round, they must succeed a DC 15 Swim check or start drowning as per the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*. An unaffected character can pull a comrade out of the quicksand by succeeding a DC



15 Strength check. A failed Strength check requires the sinking character to make a DC 20 Swim check or go under completely. All vehicles in the quicksand halt and cannot move, but they do not sink.

MANTLE OF STONE

Shaman Invocation (Nistaani)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d10

Kast Check DC: 19

Kasting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: One creature

Duration: 1 round x Kaster level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Sorcery Resistance: Yes

When this invocation is cast, the target's skin becomes as hard as the core of the Land's Teeth. Visible mottling appears on the recipient's skin, reminiscent of marble or granite. The spell bestows damage reduction 10/-, stacking with other forms of armor. The target's base speed slows by 10 meters and they take a -1 penalty to attack rolls and Reflex checks.

BASIS OF FAITH

Shaman Invocation (Nistaani)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d6

Kast Check DC: 16

Kasting Time: 1 full round

Range: Medium range (Kast check result x 4 meters)

Area: Kast check result x 4 meters

Duration: 1 minute x Kaster Level

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Targets: All kaster allies with the allegiance "The Law of the One True God" within the area of effect

Saving Throw: Will negates

Sorcery Resistance: Yes

The shaman beseeches the One True God to watch over his faithful warriors. All eligible subjects gain a +1 sacred bonus to attack rolls, Defense and saving throws. In addition, all affected subjects may re-roll one missed attack roll. On a Kast check result of 40 or more, all present know the Most High stands with them on the battlefield, increasing the sacred bonus to +2.

The *Oasis* lasts for the duration of the entire battle.

SHAIHIDI'S KISS

Shaman Invocation (Nistaani)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d6

Kast Check DC: 20

Kasting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (Kast check result in meters)

Area: Line-shaped burst

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Reflex negates

Sorcery Resistance: Yes

The shaman borrows the infamous breath of Al'Istaan's native Shaihidi lizard and spits forth a stream of corrosive venom. *Shaihidi's Kiss* deals 2d6 points of damage + 1d6 points for every 5 full points of Kast check result.

SHA-MORAM

Shaman Invocation (Nistaani)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d4

Kast Check DC: 20

Kasting Time: 3 full rounds

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: No

Sorcery Resistance: No

With this invocation, a shaman listens to the wind and hears what news it has to bring him. The wind carries information regarding two topics from the following list: the ground or terrain, plants, minerals, bodies of water, people, animals, environmental erosion, the destruction wrought by machines, or unnatural creatures. *Sha-Moram* stretches out for the Kast check result in kilometers. A shaman has to continuously travel for half a day to not get the same result when kasting *Sha-Moram* again, unless he waits a week before kasting it again.

SHIELD OF BURNING FAITH

Shaman Invocation (Nistaani)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d8

Kast Check DC: 17

Kasting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: 1 creature with the allegiance "The Law of the One True God"

Duration: 1 round x Kaster level

Saving Throw: No

Sorcery Resistance: Yes

This invocation wreathes a faithful warrior of the One True God in flames of devotion. Any creature attacking the subject with a melee weapon can deal normal damage on a strike, but they simultaneously take 1d8 points of damage +1 point for every character level the subject has in the following classes: Nistaani shaman, Nistaani warrior, and Nokgorkan resistance fighter. *Shield of Burning Faith's* damage acts as armor piercing damage.

SPIRIT OF THE DUNE-RA

Shaman Invocation (Nistaani)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d8

Kast Check DC: 25

Kasting Time: 1 full round

Range: Touch

Target: One creature

Duration: 1 round x Kaster level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Sorcery Resistance: Yes

The fighting spirit of the mighty Dune-Ra fills the target, but so does a portion of its recklessness.

The target gains a +8 bonus to Strength, a +4 bonus to Constitution, and a +2 bonus on Will saves, but takes a -2 penalty on Defense. The increase in Constitution increases the target's hit points by 2 points per character level, but these hit points go away at the end of the invocation when their Constitution score drops back to normal. These extra hit points are not lost the way temporary hit points are.

While gripped by the *spirit of the Dune-Ra*, the target must charge the first available enemy and cannot use any ranged attacks. The target cannot use any Charisma-, Dexterity-, or Intelligence-based skills (except for Balance, Escape Artist, Intimidate, and Ride), the Concentration skill, or any abilities that require patience or concentration. The subject of this spell can use any feat possessed except Combat Expertise. When the invocation ends, the target becomes exhausted (taking a -6 penalty to Strength, a -6 penalty to Dexterity, and they move at half speed, and may not charge or run).

TRACKLESS STEPS

Shaman Invocation (Nistaani)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d6

Kast Check DC: 18

Kasting Time: 1 full round

Range: Medium (Kast check result x 4 meters)

Target: Up to one creature per kaster level + 1 for every point over the Kast Check DC

Duration: 10 minutes x Kast check result

Saving Throw: Will Negates

Sorcery Resistance: Yes

As they honor the land, so does Al'Istaan protect the Nistaani.

At the shaman's request, the land moves to conceal its defenders. All targets gain a +5 circumstance bonus to Hide checks—+10 bonus if they stand still. In addition, as long as they

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move over the natural landscape of Al'Istaan, subjects leave no trace at all; neither footsteps nor scent betrays them. Tracking the subjects cannot be done without powerful protocols.

On a Kast check result of 50 or more, Al'Istaan shrouds the targets with haze, granting concealment (20% miss chance in combat) for the duration.

Tremor Wave

Shaman Invocation (Nistaani)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d10

Kast Check DC: 35

Kasting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Long (Kast check result x 10 meters)

Area: Radiates out from Kaster in all directions to maximum range; cannot be sculpted

Duration: 1 round

Saving Throw: See text

Sorcery Resistance: No

An invocation shamans rarely use as it breaks Al'Istaan itself, Tremor Wave rips the land apart in a brutal shockwave radiating out from the kaster. Though the kaster is immune, assistants can be affected if *tremor wave* is kast as a ritual.

All creatures in the area of effect must succeed a DC 15 Reflex save or fall prone. Huge fissures rip over the surface in the area and every creature on the ground has a 25% chance of falling into one (DC 20 Reflex save negates), as do vehicles (no save). At the end of the invocation, all fissures grind shut, killing any creatures within them and crushing all vehicles as well.

The Wanderer's Well

Shaman Invocation (Nistaani)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d6

Kast Check DC: 15

Kasting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (Kast check result in meters)

Effect: Kast check result x 1 liter of water

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: N/A

Sorcery Resistance: No

In the desert, water is everything. The *wanderer's well* produces the Kast check result x 1 liters of fresh water before drying up. Water so created may be Kast inside containers, or bubble up from the ground, but it may not be kast inside a target.

Whispering Winds

Shaman Invocation (Nistaani)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d6

Kast Check DC: 16

Kasting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Extreme (Kast check result x 100 meters)

Target: 1 creature

Duration: Kast check result x 1 minute

Saving Throw: Will negates

Sorcery Resistance: Yes

The winds of Al'Istaan carry the shaman's words to his allies. The communication is two-way, though whispering winds cannot be used to contact indoor targets.

On a Kast check of 30 or more, the shaman can direct his message to any number of allies within the invocation's range.

Wisdom of the Ancients

Shaman Invocation (Nistaani)

Nonlethal Damage: 1d8

Kast Check DC: 20

Kasting Time: 1 full round

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: No

Sorcery Resistance: No

This invocation allows a shaman to ask his Immortal ancestors for guidance. Unfortunately, Immortals don't know everything. The nature of the invocation is such that answers are often somewhat cryptic as well. With a Kast check result of 20, there is a base 60% chance for the summoned Immortal to know something useful. The percentage chance increases proportionally with the Kast check, increasing by +1% for every point of 20 on the check. Thus, a 45 Kast check results in an 85% chance of getting a usable answer.

Answers are always couched in poetry or obscured in some other way, regardless of the Kast check result. A shaman should heed the advice of whatever Immortal does come to his aid, as it is unwise to insult them by not doing so. Word swiftly travels through the Spiritrealm of a "rude" Shaman. This invocation is highly taxing, and after casting it, a Shaman counts as fatigued.

The Wrath of the One True God

Shaman Invocation (Nistaani)

Nonlethal Damage: 2d10

Kast Check DC: 40

Kasting Time: 1 full rounds

Range: Extreme (Kast check result x 100 meters)

Area: Spread centered on the caster equaling Kast check result x 100 meters

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: See text

Sorcery Resistance: No

This is an invocation of last resort, called upon only when Al'Istaan itself is threatened. The sky blackens as the shaman calls out the words of the Law, directing the One True God to destroy the heretics who defile the Nistaani's holy land.

An energy wave ripples out from the shaman striking all targets, living creatures and vehicle, which do not have the allegiance "The Law of the One True God." *The Wrath of the One True God* deals 1d6 points of damage for each point above a Kast check result of 40. At 60 or more, the damage deals x 10 to vehicles.

No form of armor, damage reduction, or protocol can completely stop the damage caused by this invocation. At the GM's discretion, targets at the edge of the wave may be able to avoid the full impact with a successful Reflex save.

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The *Red Star Campaign Setting* allows the possibility for a variety of campaign styles, focusing on different aspects of this richly complex world. The following are just a few of the many possibilities that await.

Red Fleet Campaigns

In the most typical campaigns in *The Red Star Campaign Setting*, characters are members of the U.R.R.S. military forces, battling the enemies of the Republics and advancing the Internationalists' creed. This approach follows the style of the comics closely, making it immediately familiar for readers.

Skyfurnace Campaign

This may involve a mixed group of characters, like Marcus, Maya and Alexandra, all nominally aboard the same skyfurnace but with very different roles in the Fleet. This type of approach rewards a narrative approach to mass battles along with plenty of non-combat interaction, since the characters will rarely be in precisely the same location on a combat mission (though see *The Red Star* #1-3 for ways to bring them together, even then).

Alternatively, the campaign may revolve around the command crew of the skyfurnace, with all the characters being Red Fleet officers or high-ranking sorceresses. The pressures of such a command are high, and officers must forever mind their tongue around the resident Second Hook kommissar.

This style allows for tactical missions with a high potential for resource management, where characters must determine precisely how many of their several hundred deck kasters to assign to kasting *shield reinforce protocols*, *blast control protocols* and other combat sorcery. Alternatively, it could be a game of crafty political maneuvering and scheming for the best way to advance in rank.

In any case, the skyfurnace is a vast and intriguing environment by itself. At three kilometers long and ten decks high, it has a sufficient amount of space for internal politics and feuds, with hidden places and unusual personalities to make for a rewarding adventure location, even without the prospect of being sent to Al'Istaan or Nokgorka to suppress the rebels, or mutinying against the Red Fleet authorities and *jumpgating* off to the Spiritrealm.

Krawl Campaign

The characters form a krawl crew. This can be an excellent campaign style, since it allows the group to be transported by skyfurnace (touching on the skyfurnace campaign above), while giving them a self-contained vehicle for their own use.

Krawl crews don't merely stay inside their krawls all the time. They are also expected to leave their krawls from time to time, typically in response to one of the following scenarios. They may conduct reconnaissance on foot to scout the topography before a planned assault. They may defend, repair, hide or destroy their krawl after it becomes damaged behind enemy lines. Furthermore, when a krawl is destroyed in battle, with any NPC crew left for dead — some of the PCs may be captured by the enemies and taken from the krawl by force. The remainder, injured, might then have to carry out a rescue before their comrades are tortured to death....

Slight variants of the krawl campaign focus on other vehicles, such as a Dragunov SPG crew game, for example, or a Special Forces campaign revolving around a Nomad half-track.

Infantry Campaign

Hailers and Red troopers form most of the characters in this campaign, perhaps commanded by a Red Fleet officer and accompanied by a Warkaster. The infantry are very much at the sharp end of Red Fleet combat activities, going up against the ferocity of the Nistaani or stubbornness of the Nokgorkans armed with little more than hooks and hailers. This is a great campaign to illustrate the uncaring nature of high command, with the

PCs abandoned behind enemy lines or even burned by their own side's ventral blast furnaces if it furthers the strategic aims of their leaders. For players who revel in close-quarters violence in a high-sorcery, high technology setting, this can be the perfect campaign.

Zek Campaign

Though all the characters are zeks, they often have radically different backgrounds. This campaign is in the style of *The Red Star* #5, often even down to commencing within a gulag as characters strive for recognition as fit for the honor of military service. Expected, even encouraged to die for the glory of the motherland and atonement of their supposed crimes, the zeks soon find themselves wishing for the cold and relative security of their punishment camps after they

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The Last of Their Kind

It can be worthwhile to allow a player wishing to try something different to play a veteran of the Great Patriotic War. Great Patriotic War veterans should be 5th level at the very least. The youngest inductees into the war were 15 at the time, so during a War of Al'Istaan game such veterans would be in their mid-50s. The same characters could be in their mid-60s during a Commonwealth era game. Remember to apply the appropriate age modifiers from the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*. All Great Patriotic War Veterans also have the following ability.

Living Inspiration

Great Patriotic War veterans are legends to their younger comrades. Once a day as a full-round action, a veteran can inspire his or her fellows with a story from the old days or a show of bravado. All allies get a +1 insight bonus to attack rolls, Defense, and saving throws for a number of rounds equal to the veteran's character level.

serve a watch, overwhelmed by the heat of a skyfurnace's reactor chambers in a battle. Zeks are faceless to ranking members of the Red Fleet, and any zek campaign should have themes of prejudice, regaining or reshaping lost identity, pursuing personal freedom, and the politicization of even the lowest levels of U.R.R.S. society. Remember, all are equal in the U.R.R.S.; some are just more equal than others.

Other Campaign Styles

Moving away somewhat from the purely military campaign, the following options are possible among many others. Some of the best campaigns can mix-and-match several styles.

Kommissars of the Fifth Hook

They struggle in the darkness so their comrades may live in the light. Though the Commonwealth government officially disbanded them, the threats they regularly faced haven't suddenly gone into retirement. If anything, the shadows have grown longer with the general lawlessness befalling the Lands of the Red Star.

The (former) kommissars of the Fifth Hook are outnumbered, outgunned, and low on supplies. The only thing they have in abundance is courage. They regularly face twisted predators, gruesome monsters, and ruthless criminals, yet there are neither medals nor ticker tape parades for their deeds. The only reward they get is the ability to look in the mirror and be proud of what they see, with the occasional quiet adoration of different communities of Reds as the all-too-infrequent bonus.

A Fifth Hook game is a wonderful bridge campaign for a GM with more traditional fantasy oriented players, who may be somewhat dubious about this "odd" setting with telekinetic guns and sorcery. They still get to play heroes that go off on adventures where others fear to travel, only with higher stakes. It isn't gold that's in the offing, but the lives of innocents who have no one else willing or able to protect them.

A creative GM can use quite a few d20 threats from a variety of other settings with only a little tweaking in a Fifth Hook game, providing a vast array of unusual foes to beset the valiant PCs — to say nothing of the human criminal cartels dominating the modern nation.

Scavengers All

Occasionally it's darkly entertaining to let one's inner villain run loose. In this campaign, the characters are all carrion: war profiteers, looters, zeks that know exactly what they did wrong, fallen Shell veterans, and black market protocol kasters. This game isn't about valor, it's about profit. Some of the most powerful stories, however, are those of redemption. Maybe along the way, these supposedly black hearted rogues do a medicine run into Nokgorka "on a dare" just to prove they can do it. Sometimes heroism can be just as slippery a slope as villainy.

Immortals

All the characters are immortals, from the start of the campaign, rather than just having characters attain this status as they die during play. This makes for a truly grim campaign, with the PCs having to escape from the torture of a soulprison

Death is Just a Beginning

The Red Star Campaign Setting presents players with a unique opportunity: the ability to play characters beyond the point of death. The general presumption most other games is when a PC dies, either they are raised, or the player generates a replacement character. In *The Red Star Campaign Setting*, the reverse is true.

Unless a PC specifically requests otherwise, or the GM regards it as inappropriate or unwieldy for the campaign, a death merely means the acquisition of the Immortal template. PCs are already heroes of such magnitude that their souls will move to the Spiritrealm on death, even at 1st level. What they do there is up to the player concerned.

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to head across the damaged landscape of the Spiritrealm, in search of The Red Woman or a similar hero to lead them. Alternatively, it could be a high-powered campaign, with the PCs taking on roles analogous in power to The Red Woman and Iakos the Soul Thief, influencing the mortal world and striving to destroy Imbohl and Troika's tyranny over the Spiritrealm. Heroes continuously face off against the relentless Thralls of Imbohl, Immortals who've had their souls Kast in Iron to prove their absolute loyalty to the state.

The Enemy

The characters are the enemy of the Red Fleet, but freedom fighters to their own people. A campaign centering on Nokgorka or Al'Istaan, with the players portraying the locals, can attain heights of heroism and depths of tragedy just as much as any other game set in *The Red Star Campaign Setting*. What can be more heroic than defending one's homeland, after all?

The ruined cityscapes of Nokgorka are some of the grimmest images of the comics, with every Nokgorkan resistance fighter or Priestess having a dreadful tale of sacrifice and loss. Al'Istaan can be almost as gritty, but the heroism of desert-dwellers always seems sharper and immediate than that of city-based guerrilla warriors, even though they fight much the same kind of war against the exact same enemy. Campaigns based around Nistaani warriors and shamans take on the tone of a desperate but noble struggle against overwhelming odds, as a race of born warriors battles the might of the Red Fleet with centuries-old tactics and stolen weapons. Occasionally a renegade Red trooper, Red Fleet officer, or hailer may find their way into a Nistaani or Nokgorkan force, grudgingly accepted on the grounds of fighting ability and willingness to swear allegiance to the faith of the One True God, or a zek may flee the harsh life of the reaction chambers to go native.

Epic Campaigns

All *The Red Star Campaign Setting* games should strive for an epic feel. This is a larger-than-life game, with larger-than-life heroes. Yet if they are to be true to the protagonists of the comics, they must have human loves, losses, and loyalties; even the extraordinary Maya Antares and Urik Antares are still torn open by grief when Marcus is lost to them at the Battle of Kar Dathra's Gate. The players should be encouraged to form bonds and shared histories of similar intensity between their characters, allowing for emotional gaming when PCs start dying.

An epic campaign can incorporate aspects of several others, even including character classes that might otherwise be inappropriate. You can achieve this by giving the campaign roots set in the past along with hints of the future. It might feature several short, connected adventures, separated by years of time, perhaps commencing before the U.R.R.S. invasion of Al'Istaan and ending with the liberation of Archangel and defeat of Imbohl's forces on the Spiritrealm, before passing through the Battle of Kar Dathra's Gate, the decline of the Red Fleet, the breakup of the Republics, and the Nokgorkan conflict along the way.

By reflecting the storytelling of the original comics, which brings together members of most of the character classes at

one time or another, the GM can skillfully weave together the lives of apparently incompatible characters. For example, in a Red Fleet campaign, a Nistaani warrior could act as a contact of the other PCs when they are on a pre-invasion, peaceful mission to Al'Istaan; then spend years fighting them — mostly “off-camera” during downtime between adventures (though if you have the *Duel* one-shot from *The Red Star* comic, contact between the two forces is possible without them breaking out into open warfare given the right circumstances).

He may see them once more at the Battle of Kar Dathra's Gate; perhaps contact one of them for some reason (a reason of similar magnitude to connections between Makita, Alexandra and Maya concerning Makita's delivery of the letter from the Spiritrealm). Likewise, a Nokgorkan resistance fighter could start out as a Red Trooper among the PCs during the Al'Istaan sequence, then fight them during the Nokgorkan sequence.

Red Star Campaign Setting games need not start at 1st level. Many of the campaign styles we've suggested require higher-level characters to run properly. With that said, epic isn't any arbitrary level — it's a feeling. Characters in epic campaigns come together for moments of destiny, often on opposing sides. The minutiae of day-to-day life is ignored for years at a time, if need be; what is important is those moments of destiny, when connections are strengthened for good or ill, when tragedy or victory are equally likely.

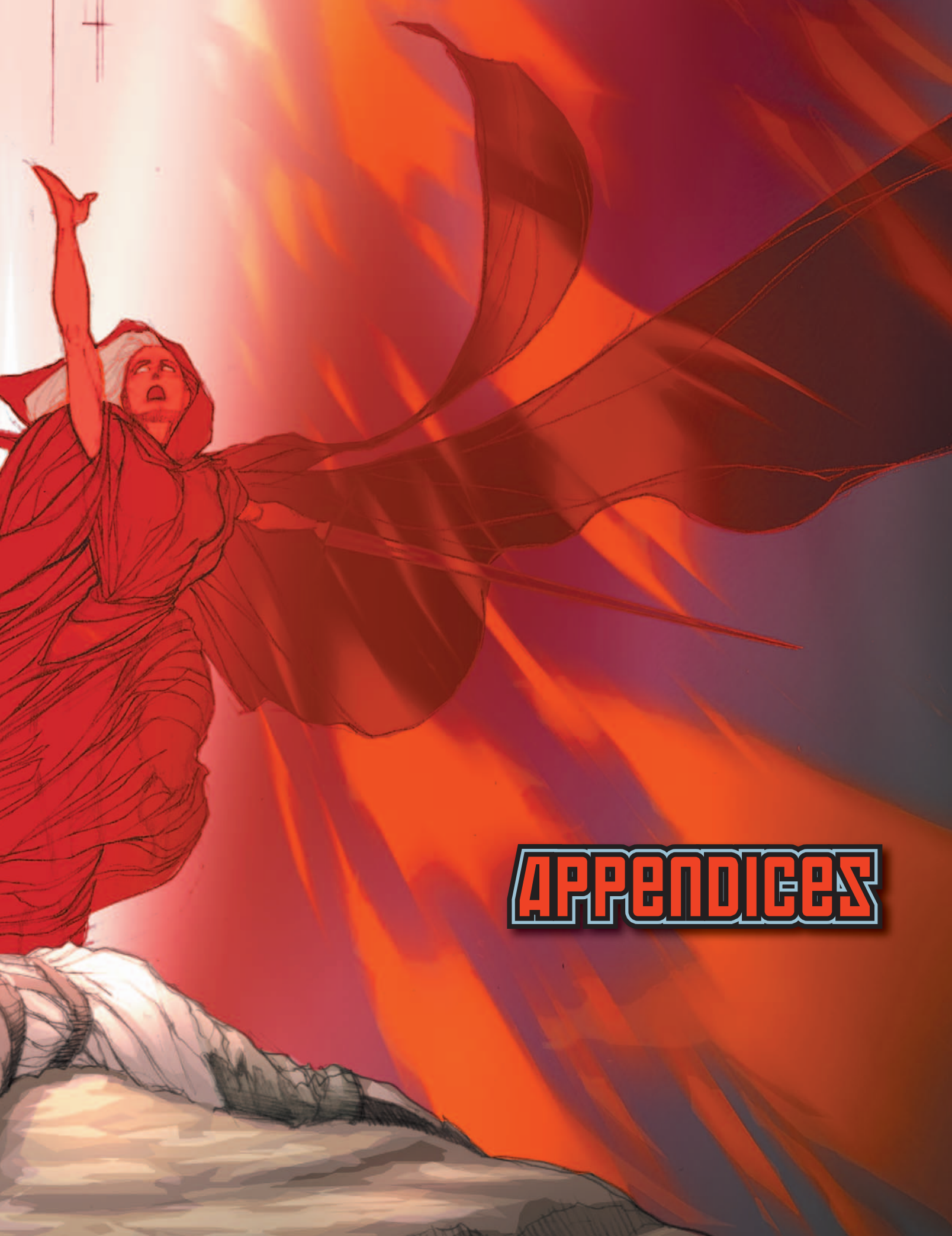
If one of them falls, Immortality is always a possibility, even a likelihood. Old enemies can still have mutual respect for one another, especially if all discover one side was played for fools. Eventually, the true villains — Imbohl and his minions — will be revealed for all their evil.

We actively encourage you to take the world we've placed before you and make what you will of it.

Do svidanja.







APPENDICES

Heroes of the Red Star

Krawl Captain Alexandra Goncharova

Alexandra was the commander of the 8th Krawl Column attached to the skyfurnace RSS Konstantinov, but died on the streets of Nokgorka. Tough, capable, loyal, and determined, she was one of the few Red Fleet survivors of the Battle of Kar Dathra's Gate and the last person to see Marcus Antares alive. Alexandra graduated from the same military academy as Maya, Marcus, Kyuzo and Urik. She first met Maya there, and their friendship and comradeship continued to build throughout their service in the Red Fleet, even after Marcus' death. Alexandra's first posting after leaving the Academy was to Bahamut in Nokgorka, where she met and married a native, Rudov Galilei. They had a daughter, Valentina, who grew up not knowing her mother. Soon after the War of Al'Istaan ended, Alexandra fled Nokgorka, following death threats from Galilei's tribe during the growing anti-Red sentiment that led eventually to the Nokgorkan crisis. Alexandra would only see her daughter once — in battle, on opposing sides of the war.

Alexandra Goncharova

Female human Red Fleet Officer (staff) 10; CR 10; Medium Humanoid; HD 10d8; hp 45; Mas 10; Init +3; Spd 10m; Defense 16, touch 16, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +3 defense bonus); Base Atk +7; Grp +12; Atk +12 melee (1d8+3 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +9 ranged (2d8+2 API, Kuvalda shotgun); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d8+3 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +9/+4 ranged (2d8+2 API, Kuvalda shotgun); SA +2 to attack rolls with vehicular weapons, tactical aid, tactical superiority; SQ +2 to Drive and Pilot checks, damage reduction 4/—, education, rank (Captain); AL Maya Antares, Alexandra's krawl column crew, Marcus Antares, the Red Fleet; AP 85 max.; Rep +3; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +8; Str 16, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 14;

Skills: Computer Use +17, Concentration +14, Drive +21, Knowledge (history) +17, Knowledge (tactics) +17, Intimidate +16, Navigate +17, Profession +15, Repair +17, Search +17, Spot +15, Treat Injury +15.



Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Bersk Wrestling, Brawl, Combat Martial Arts, Drive-by Attack, Gunnery, Improved Brawl, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Surface Vehicle Operation: krawls, Vehicle Dodge, Vehicle Expert

Gear: Crew vest, Kuvalda assault shotgun (with Damage Enhancement I) and three magazines API.

Guardsmen Kyuzo

Kyuzo is another graduate of the Red Fleet Academy, where he was part of the same circle of friends as Maya and Marcus. He fell deeply in love with Maya when he first met her, but by that time, she had just started seeing Marcus. Out of respect for the two, and his own personal honor, he kept his feelings secret, never acting on them even after Marcus' death. He now serves as Maya's personal bodyguard and a leading non-commissioned officer in the RSS Konstantinov's hailer division.

As Maya's bodyguard, Kyuzo is utterly steadfast and determined. Even if he were not still secretly in love with her, his strong sense of duty and honor would mean he would die rather than allow her to be harmed. He shows no mercy to any who might wish to do her injury.

After the RSS Konstantinov rebelled against the Fleet, Kyuzo befriended Makita in his own gruff way, recognizing that her small frame concealed a warrior spirit as tough as his own.

Kyuzo

Male human Hailer 10; CR 10; Medium Humanoid; HD 10d12+30; hp 104; Mas 16; Init +4; Spd 8m (armor); Defense 16, touch 16, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, – armor, +4 defense bonus); Base Atk +10; Grp +16; Atk +15 melee (1d8+4 AP/19–20, hailer longknife), or +15 ranged (2d10, hailer); Full Atk +15/+10 (1d8+4 AP/19–20, hailer longknife), or +15/+10 ranged (2d10, hailer); SA hailer training: enhanced range (50 m), hailer training: armor piercing, telekinetic burst fire, telekinetic strafe, weapon specialization (hailer); SQ hailer link, rank (Guard), armor mastery (+1/1, speed 8); AL Maya Antares, Marcus Antares, the Red Fleet; AP 85 max; Rep +2; SV Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 19, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 9.

Skills: Climb +13*, Intimidate +12, Hide +15*, Knowledge (tactics) +10, Listen +18, Move Silently +15*, Profession +7, Spot +20, Telekinesis +16.

Feats: Alertness, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Armor Proficiency (heavy), Bersk Wrestling, Bersk Wrestling Pin, Bersk Wrestling Strike, Combat Martial Arts, Improved Critical (hailer), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Stealthy, Telekinetic Autofire, Telekinetic Firearms Proficiency, Weapon Focus (hailer), Weapon Focus (hailer longknife).

Gear: Hailer bodyguard armor (armor penalty –4, already applied to asterisked skills; helmet has a special protocol



enhancement granting +4 to Spot checks), hailer and close assault drum, Molot backup shotgun and two magazines buckshot, hailer longknife.

Makita

Fierce as the mythic “wolf princess” of Red folklore that her parents named her after, Makita is one of the most dangerous of the younger generation soldiers in the Nokgorkan Resistance. Only a few years into her teens, Makita already has years of combat experience and a burning hatred of the Reds. Her bright green eyes often shine with a feral light as she stalks through the ruins of Bahamut, hunting for Red stragglers to pick off. Occasionally, in rare moments of calm, her buried youthful nature reasserts itself and she’ll hum or skip until she realizes what she’s doing. The love of Makita’s life, Proto, fights alongside her in the Resistance. Her father, Rudolf Galilei, was a well-respected Gorka veteran of the Red Fleet who survived the Battle of Kar Dathra’s Gate. He taught his daughter everything he knew about war, indoctrinating her in the ancient martial traditions of the Gorkas. Valentina Galilei, embittered by her mother’s abandonment and the Red Invasion, took up arms in defense of her homeland. She took the name Makita, after the mythical Wolf Princess of Nokgorkan Lore. Rudolf’s final request of his daughter was to make her swear to carry a very special letter to a woman named Maya Antares; a letter he said could change the course of their people’s future. Makita agreed to do so; unaware at the time that Maya was a Red Sorceress.

Makita

Female human Nokgorkan Resistance Fighter 6; CR 6; Medium Humanoid; HD 6d8+12; hp 45; Mas 15; Init +4; Spd 10m; Defense 17, touch 17, flat-footed 13 (+4



Appendices

Dex, +3 defense bonus); Base Atk +4; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, masterwork sickle or 1d8+1, masterwork hammer) or +8 ranged (2d6+2, Model 79 Samsonov or 3d6+3, Samsonov 79-G); Full Atk +2/+2 melee (1d6+1 and 1d8+1, masterwork sickle and hammer) or +8 ranged (2d6+2, Model 79 Samsonov or 3d6+3, Samsonov 79-G); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ area knowledge +1, contacts, evasion, orphan, uncanny dodge; AL Proto, Father's memory, the Nokgorkan Resistance; AP 45 max.; Rep +1; SV Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 15.

Skills: Balance +9, Bluff +7, Climb +5, Demolitions +7, Gather Information +7, Hide +16, Jump +5, Knowledge

(history) +5, Knowledge (streetwise) +7, Knowledge (tactics) +7, Listen +8, Move Silently +16, Repair +7, Search +7, Spot +13, Treat Injury +8, Tumble +14.

Feats: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Exotic Firearms Proficiency: SWORD, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Shot on the Run, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Stealthy, Two-Weapon Fighting.

Gear: Twinned Model 79 Samsonov protocol machine pistols with under slung 79-G protocol grenade launchers and triple protoclips, mastercraft sickle and hammer.

Infantry Captain Marcus Antares



An exceptional man and a champion all his life, Marcus Antares is what all Red Troopers are supposed to aspire to be: honorable, strong and brave. Marcus is the second son of the legendary Great Patriotic War hero, Antares. He and his beloved elder brother Urik always knew they were destined for greatness and a "glorious" life in the Red Fleet. They joined the Academy, where Marcus first espied his future wife, Maya from afar. Their deep love is the cornerstone of Marcus' life and the pair spent almost the entirety of their marriage fighting in the War of Al'Istaan. Captain Antares fought in a number of legendary engagements, often against incredible odds. Such is his nobility in combat that Nistaani Shaman twice decorated Marcus for his actions during the

war. It is rare for any foreigner to be so honored and unheard of for Reds. Marcus has had visions all his life that he cannot explain. He catches glimpses of images and ghosts that others cannot see, but he has always managed to conceal this from all others, even Maya.

Future history will name Infantry Captain Marcus Antares as the greatest hero of the Fifth Chronicle, but for the moment, he's just a soldier who wants to survive until the end of the war. The following statistics represent Marcus circa the Battle of Kar Dathra's Gate.

Marcus Antares

Male human Red Fleet Officer 7/Red Trooper 5; CR 12; HD 7d8+28 plus 5d10+20; hp 112; Mas 18; Init +5; Spd 8m (armor); Defense 19, touch 19, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dex, +6 defense bonus); Base Atk +10; Grp +14; Atk +20 melee (2d6+6, hook) or +15 ranged (2d6+2, hook); Full Atk +20/+15 melee (2d6+6, hook) or +15/+10 ranged (2d6+2, hook); SA tactical aid, tactical superiority, weapon specialization (hook); SQ damage reduction 6/—, improved reaction, rank (Captain); AL Maya Antares, Urik Antares, the Red Fleet; AP 108 max; Rep +3; SV Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +10; Str 19, Dex 17, Con 18, Int 15, Wis 18, Cha 14.

Skills: Balance +13, Climb +6*, Demolitions +10, Diplomacy +9, Drive +8, Intimidate +12, Jump +8*, Knowledge (current events) +8, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (popular culture) +7, Knowledge (tactics) +18, Navigate +10, Profession +15, Read/Write (Western), Sense Motive +12, Spot +14, Survival +12, Swim +5*, Telekinesis +24, Treat Injury +10.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Cleave, Combat Hook, Defensive Rotation Shield, Engine Pull Champion, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency (hook), Eyes of Imbohl, Great Cleave, Gunnery, Improved Combat Hook, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Power Attack, Precise Strike, Weapon Focus (hook).

Gear: Hook, Red Trooper armor (armor penalty —4, already applied to asterisked skills).

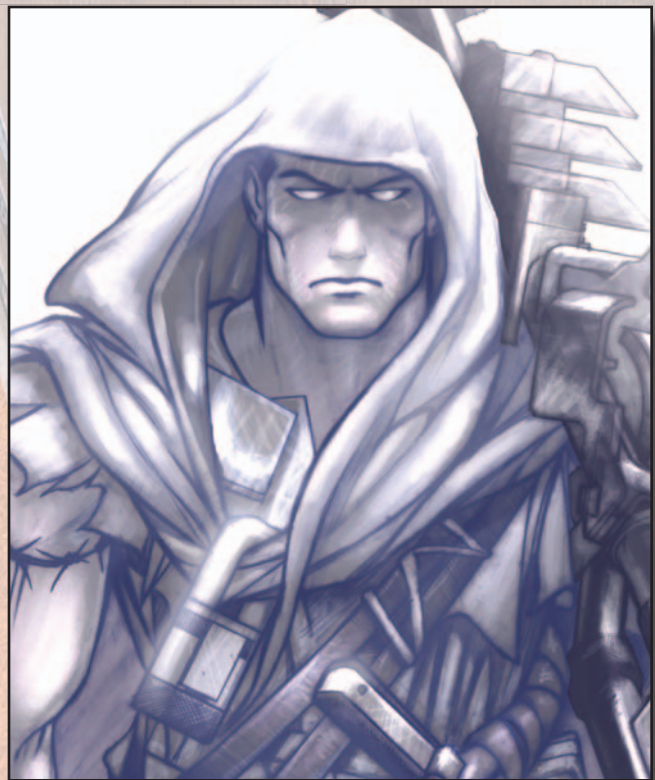
The Wanderer Antares

How much do you love your people and your country? Enough to leave your one true love behind, never knowing if you will ever see her again? Enough to spend a decade of your life fighting in a place you never knew existed for a cause you were unaware of? The Red Woman saved Marcus' life from the soul collector Troika at the conclusion of the Battle of Kar Dathra's Gate and told him of her struggle to free their people from Imbohl's tyranny. Marcus willingly walked into the Spiritrealm to learn how to use the "Eyes of Imbohl" that he had been gifted with. Marcus has been fighting at the Red Woman's side for ten years, and Imbohl's Thralls fear him as no other. The pair searched for a way to break the mighty sorcerous Bonds holding the souls of countless Reds imprisoned within Imbohl's massive fortress-soulprison, Archangel. As the final assault upon Archangel approaches, Marcus prepares himself not only for the fight, but also for a reunion with his wife and brother he was never certain would happen. The following statistics represent the Wanderer circa the Storm of Souls.

Antares

Male human Red Fleet Officer 7/Red Trooper 12; CR 19; HD 7d8+28 plus 12d10+48; hp 185; Mas 18; Init +5; Spd 10m; Defense 22, touch 22, flat-footed 19 (+3 Dex, +9 defense bonus); Base Atk +17; Grp +21; Atk +29 melee (2d6+6/19–20, hook) or +24 ranged (2d6+2/19–20, hook); Full Atk +29/+24/+19/+14 melee (2d6+6/19–20, hook) or +24/+19/+14/+9 ranged (2d6+2/19–20, hook); SA hook training (trip), tactical aid II, tactical superiority, weapon specialization (hook); SQ improved reaction; AL Maya Antares, Urik Antares, the Red Woman, his people (Reds); AP 204 max; Rep +4; P.H.E. 28; SV Fort +12, Ref +11, Will +13; Str 19, Dex 17, Con 18, Int 15, Wis 19, Cha 14.

Skills: Balance +19, Climb +16, Concentration +11, Demolitions +10, Diplomacy +9, Drive +8, Intimidate +22, Jump +12, Knowledge (current events) +8, Knowledge (history) +16, Knowledge (popular culture) +7, Knowledge (tactics) +21, Navigate +16, Profession +17, Read/Write



(Western), Sense Motive +22, Spot +19, Survival +17, Swim +9, Telekinesis +31, Treat Injury +10.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Cleave, Combat Hook, Defensive Rotation Shield, Diehard, Endurance, Engine Pull Champion, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency (hook), Eyes of Imbohl, Great Cleave, Greater Weapon Focus (hook), Gunnery, Improved Combat Hook, Improved Critical (hook), Lucky Soul, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Power Attack, Precise Strike, Renown, Weapon Focus (hook).

Gear: Hook

Sorceress-Lieutenant Maya Antares

Maya Antares was something of a romantic and mystic as a student at the Academy, constantly reading banned books of mythology and folk tales, waiting for her own personal knight in shining armor to sweep her off her feet. Marcus did just that, and their love for one another is legendary. That love did not diminish with Marcus' death at the Battle of Kar Dathra's Gate, and though it made Maya something of a tragic figure it never prevented her doing her duty.

In her own way, Maya is as strong and determined a warrior-woman as her great friend Alexandra Goncharova, though she fights with protocols and brilliant strategic insights rather than her fists or her krawl. Maya's mystical streak makes her potentially one of the most powerful sorceresses the Red Fleet has ever seen, if she could ever open her eyes to the

truth and leave behind the strictures of military-industrial sorcery. It seems likely that in the Spiritrealm, united once more with her now-Immortal husband, she will do just that.

Maya Antares

Female human Sorceress (warkaster) 10; CR 10; HD 10d6; hp 38; Mas 10; Init +0; Spd 10m; Defense 12, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 defense bonus); Base Atk +5; Grp +4; Atk +4 (1d3–1, unarmed strike), or +4 ranged; SA +2 bonus to all attack rolls with protocol weapons and protocol-enhanced weapons, protocol mastery (*armor-piercing protocol — personal, burst voltage protocol, gate transfer protocol, transformation protocol*); SQ rank

Appendices

(Lieutenant), reduced protocol cost (-2); AL Marcus Antares, Alexandra Goncharova, the Red Fleet, Urik Antares; AP 85 max.; Rep +3; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +12; Str 9, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 19, Wis 17, Cha 18.

Skills: Concentration +13, Kast +17, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Knowledge (current affairs) +12, Knowledge (history) +19, Knowledge (religion) +19, Knowledge (tactics) +19, Profession +16, Research +13, Navigate +17, Search +13, Spot +16.

Feats: Diehard, Educated x2 (arcana, religion, history, tactics), Endurance, Iron Will, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Protocol Gunnery, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Sorcery Expert (x2).

Protocols: *Armor-piercing protocol — personal, autoshields protocol, burst voltage protocol, drop protocol, jumpgate transfer protocol, krawl drop protocol, MTK-90 protocol, re-enact protocol, shield reinforce protocol, stealth protocol, transformation protocol.*

Gear: Uniform greatcoat (not protocol-enhanced), protocol case, protocol components: *armor-piercing protocol — personal (x2), drop protocol, gate transfer protocol, shield reinforce protocol (x4), transformation protocol (x3).*



The Red Woman



Beautiful, stern and proud, the Red Woman is the Champion of Pravda, Goddess of Truth. She is an Immortal, dedicated to stopping Imbohl's atrocities in death, though she served him in life. For decades, she sought for some meaningful way to confront Imbohl or his minions. She liberated many soulprisons over the years and slew countless thralls, but her victories barely advanced her cause as Imbohl's power continued to grow. With the coming of Marcus Antares and the hope his vision gives her, she believes Pravda has at last given the Reds the champion they desperately need, and she dedicated herself to preparing Marcus for the trials awaiting him. The Red Woman wears her Rose necklace as a constant reminder of past loves and past sins.

See **Chapter Eight: The Spiritrealm** for more details on the Red Woman's history.

The Red Woman

Female Immortal Sorceress 8 / Red Fleet Officer 4 /

Free Spirit 8; CR 20; HD 8d6+40 plus 4d8+20 plus 8d8+40; hp 194; Mas —; Init +2; Spd 10m; Defense 21, touch 21, flat-footed 21 (+2 Dex, +7 defense bonus, +2 immortal bonus); Base Atk +13; Grp +14; Atk +22 melee (2d6+5/15–20, Sword of Truth) or +15 ranged; Full Atk +22/+17/+12 melee (2d6+5/15–20, Sword of Truth) or +15/+10/+5 ranged; SA +3 to attack rolls with protocol weapons and protocol-enhanced weapons, protocol mastery (*drop protocol, protocol resistance shield protocol — personal*), Chosen Tool III (Sword of Truth);

Appendices

SQ awe-inspiring, dedicated (Knowledge: tactics, Gather Information), immortal qualities, synchronicity; AL Pravda, her people (Reds), Marcus Antares; AP 220 max.; Rep +9; P.H.E. 67; SV Fort +5; Ref +9; Will +20; Str 12, Dex 15, Con —, Int 16, Wis 18, Cha 21.

Special Qualities (Immortal Qualities): Damage Immunity (normal weapons). Darkvision (20m); Extraordinary healing. Immunities: all mind-based mystical effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns and morale effects), poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, and necromantic effects, fatigue, exhaustion, and the effects of massive damage; not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability drain, or energy drain. Out of Phase. Unturnable.

Skills: Concentration +25, Diplomacy +12, Gather Information +30, Intimidate +14, Investigate +20,

Immortal Illusions +24, Kast +23, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (history) +17, Knowledge (religion) +18, Knowledge (tactics) +30, Move Silently +14, Navigate +19, Profession +13, Read/Write (Western, Old Tongue), Search +20, Sense Motive +16, Spot +14.

Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Defensive Martial Arts, Educated x2 (arcana, history, religion, tactics), Elusive Target, Energy Shield, Immortal Illusions, Iron Will, Living Influence, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Precise Strike, Pure of Heart, Renown, Righteous, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Weapon Focus (Sword of Truth).

Protocols: *Accelerated healing protocol, armor-piercing protocol — personal, drop protocol, map protocol, protocol resistance shield protocol — personal, re-enact protocol, stealth protocol, transpathic signal protocol.*

Gear: The Sword of Truth, Rose Necklace.

SKYMARSHALL URIK ANTARES

The older brother of Marcus Antares, Urik knew from the time he was a boy he would one day join the Red Fleet and serve as an officer on a skyfurnace. He expected to be at Marcus' side as the forces of the U.R.R.S. finally triumphed over the deceptions of the Western Transnationalist Alliance.

With Marcus dead, Urik is wracked by grief, though he rarely lets it interfere with his considerable abilities as skyfurnace commander and strategist. Occasionally when the pain becomes too much he turns to strong liquor, but for the most part he grieves silently. He was powerless to stop his brother's death, but he does all within his power to ensure the same fate does not meet Maya and the rest of the crew of the RSS Konstantinov. Still, he is prepared to put those concerns aside and betray his country when he has a chance to find Marcus again.

URIK ANTARES

Male human Red Fleet Officer 13; CR 13; HD 13d8+39; hp 101; Mas 17; Init +1; Spd 10m; Defense 15, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex, +4 defense bonus); Base Atk +9; Grp +12; Atk +15 melee (1d4+3, unarmed strike), or +10 ranged (2d6+2, Model 79 Samsonov); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d4+3, unarmed strike), or +10/+5 ranged (2d6+2, Model 79 Samsonov); SA tactical aid I (standard action), +2 to attack rolls with vehicular weapons; SQ damage reduction 5/—, education, rank (Skymarshall); AL Marcus Antares, Maya Antares, any troops or vessels Urik is serving with, the Red Fleet; AP 120 max.; Rep +4; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +11; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 15.

Skills: Computer Use +9, Diplomacy +21, Gather Information +21, Knowledge (popular culture) +21, Knowledge (tactics) +21, Intimidate +19, Navigate +19, Pilot +20, Profession +20, Research +19, Sense Motive +20, Telekinesis +16.

Feats: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Aircraft Operation (skyships), Armor Proficiency (Light), Burst Fire, Combat



Martial Arts, Defensive Martial Arts, Educated (popular culture, tactics), Engine Pull Champion, Gunnery, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Shot on the Run, Trustworthy.

Gear: Officer greatcoat (*autosield*: 125 hp), Model 79 Samsonov protocol machine pistol and a triple protoclclip, protopouch (Model 79 Samsonov clips).

Common Characters

Use the following characters for generic opponents and allies.

Red Fleet Hailer

Red Fleet Hailer, male or female human Hailer 1; CR 1; HD 1d12+2; hp 8; Mas 14; Init +1; Spd 6m (armor); Defense 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex, – armor); Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d8+2/19–20, hailer longknife) or +3 ranged (2d10, hailer); Full Atk +3 melee (1d8+2/19–20, hailer longknife) or +3 ranged (2d10, hailer); SQ damage reduction 9/–, hailer link, rank (Guard); AL Red Fleet, Unit comrades; AP –; Rep +0; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Intimidate +4, Knowledge (tactics) +3, Profession +5, Spot +5, Telekinetics +5.

Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Armor Proficiency (heavy), Bersk Wrestling, Combat Martial Arts, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Telekinetic Autofire, Telekinetic Firearms Proficiency, Weapon Focus (hailer).

Gear: Hailer armor (armor penalty –7), hailer + general purpose drum, hailer longknife.

Red Fleet Veteran Hailer

Red Fleet Hailer, male or female human Hailer 3; CR 3; HD 3d12+6; hp 25; Mas 14; Init +1; Spd 6m (armor); Defense 12, touch 12, flat-footed 11 (+1 Dex, – armor, +1 defense); Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d8+2/19–20, hailer longknife) or +6 ranged (2d10, hailer); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+2/19–20, hailer longknife) or +6 ranged (2d10, hailer); SA hailer training: enhanced range (40 m), telekinetic strafe; SQ damage reduction 9/–, hailer link, rank (Guard); AL Unit comrades, Red Fleet; AP –; Rep +0; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Intimidate +6, Knowledge (tactics) +3, Profession +9, Spot +7, Telekinetics +9.

Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Armor Proficiency (heavy), Bersk Wrestling, Bersk Wrestling Strike, Combat Martial Arts, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Telekinetic Autofire, Telekinetic Firearms Proficiency, Weapon Focus (hailer).

Gear: Hailer armor (armor penalty –7), hailer and general purpose drum, hailer longknife.

Red Fleet Elite Hailer

Red Fleet Hailer, male or female human Hailer 5; CR 5; HD 5d12+10; hp 42; Mas 14; Init +2; Spd 6m (armor); Defense 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, – armor, +2 defense); Base Atk +5; Grp +7; Atk +8 melee (1d8+3/19–20, hailer longknife) or +8 ranged (2d10+2, hailer) or +7 ranged (2d8, Molot backup shotgun); Full Atk +8 melee (1d8+3/19–20, hailer longknife) or +8 ranged (2d10+2, hailer) or +7 ranged (2d8, Molot backup shotgun); SA hailer training: enhanced

range (40 m), telekinetic strafe, weapon specialization (hailer); SQ armor mastery (+1/1), damage reduction 9/–, hailer link, rank (Guard); AL Unit comrades, Red Fleet; AP –; Rep +1; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills: Intimidate +8, Knowledge (tactics) +5, Profession +10, Spot +9, Survival +5, Telekinetics +10.

Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Armor Proficiency (heavy), Bersk Wrestling, Bersk Wrestling Strike, Combat Martial Arts, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Telekinetic Autofire, Telekinetic Firearms Proficiency, Weapon Focus (hailer).

Gear: Hailer armor (armor penalty –6), hailer and general purpose drum, hailer longknife, Molot backup shotgun, and two magazines of buckshot.

Holy Warrior of Al'Istaani

Holy Warrior, male or female Nistaani Warrior 1; CR 1; HD 1d8+2; hp 6; Mas 14; Init +2; Spd 10m; Defense 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11 (+2 Dex, +1 defense); Base Atk +1; Grp +0; Atk +0 melee (1d12–1, hawk talon) or +3 ranged (2d8, RKG-41 assault rifle); Full Atk +0 melee (1d12–1, hawk talon) or +3 ranged (2d8, RKG-41 assault rifle); SA righteous fury (1/day); SQ region origin (land's teeth); AL The Law of the One True God, Al'Istaani; AP –; Rep +0; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 8, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Bluff +5, Gather Information +5, Hide +6, Knowledge (religion) +5, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Navigate +5, Profession +4, Spot +4, Survival +4.

Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Diehard, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (hawk talon), Far Shot, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Gear: Hawk talon, RKG-41 Assault Rifle, and an extra clip.

Veteran Holy Warrior of Al'Istaani

Veteran Holy Warrior, male or female Nistaani Warrior 3; CR 3; HD 3d8+6; hp 19; Mas 14; Init +2; Spd 10m; Defense 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 defense); Base Atk +3; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d12–1, hawk talon) or +5 ranged (2d8, RKG-41 assault rifle); Full Atk +2 melee (1d12–1, hawk talon) or +5 ranged (2d8, RKG-41 assault rifle); SA righteous fury (1/day); SQ region origin (land's teeth), specialization I: holy warrior (smite infidel); AL The Law of the One True God; AP –; Rep +0; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 8, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Bluff +5, Gather Information +5, Hide +6, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (religion) +5, Knowledge (tactics) +5, Listen +4, Move Silently +10, Navigate +5, Profession +4, Spot +8, Survival +8.

Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Diehard, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (hawk talon), Far Shot, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Track, Weapon Focus (hawk talon).

Gear: Combat mashur, Hawk talon, RKG-41 Assault Rifle, and an extra clip.

Nasr Kien Soldier

Nasr Kien Soldier, male or female Nistaani Warrior 5; CR 5; HD 5d8+10; hp 32; Mas 14; Init +3; Spd 10m; Defense 16, touch 16, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +3 defense); Base Atk +5; Grp +4; Atk +6 melee (1d12–1, mastercraft hawk talon) or +8 ranged (2d8, RKG-75 assault rifle); Full Atk +6 melee (1d12–1, mastercraft hawk talon) or +8 ranged (2d8, RKG-75 assault rifle); SA righteous fury (1/day); SQ child of sand and rock, region origin (land's teeth), specialization I: holy warrior (smite infidel), specialization II: holy warrior (aura of courage); AL The Law of the One True God, the Nasr Kien; AP –; Rep +1; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will+3; Str 8, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 12.

Skills: Bluff +5, Gather Information +5, Hide +6, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (religion) +5, Knowledge (tactics) +10, Listen +4, Move Silently +10, Navigate +5, Profession +4, Spot +10, Survival +10, Treat Injury +5, Telekinesis +4.

Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Diehard, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (hawk talon), Far Shot, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Track, Weapon Focus (hawk talon).

Gear: Combat mashur with night vision, mastercraft hawk talon, RKG-75 Assault Rifle, and two extra clips.

Resistance Recruit

Resistance Recruit, male or female Nokgorkan Resistance Fighter 1; CR 1; HD 1d8; hp 4; Mas 10; Init +1; Spd 10m; Defense 12, touch 12, flat-footed 11 (+1 Dex, +1 Defense); Base Atk +0; Grp –1; Atk +0 melee (1d6–1 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +1 ranged (2d8, RKG-41 assault rifle); Full Atk +0 melee (1d6–1 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +1 ranged (2d8, RKG-41 assault rifle); SQ area knowledge +1, contacts +2, origin (citizen); AL Nokgorka; AP –; Rep +0; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Skills: Bluff +5, Climb +3, Drive +5, Gather Information +5, Jump +3, Knowledge (current events) +6, Knowledge (pop culture) +6, Listen +8, Profession +8, Search +6, Spot +8.

Feats: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Alertness, Brawl, Exotic Firearms Proficiency: SWORD, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Gear: Battered RKG-41 assault rifle and an extra clip.

Resistance Operative

Resistance Operative, male or female Nokgorkan Resistance Fighter 3; CR 3; HD 3d8; hp 13; Mas 10; Init +1; Spd 10m; Defense 13, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+1 Dex, +2 Defense); Base Atk +2; Grp +1; Atk +2 melee (1d6–1 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +4 ranged (2d8, RKG-41 assault rifle); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6–1 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +4 ranged (2d8, RKG-41 assault rifle); SA sneak attack +1d6; SQ area knowledge +1, contacts +4, origin (citizen); AL Nokgorka; AP –; Rep +0; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 13.



Skills: Bluff +5, Climb +3, Demolition +8, Drive +5, Hide +6, Gather Information +5, Jump +3, Knowledge (current events) +6, Knowledge (pop culture) +6, Knowledge (streetwise) +7, Knowledge (tactics) +4, Listen +8, Move Silently +5, Profession +6, Search +6, Spot +8.

Feats: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Alertness, Brawl, Exotic Firearms Proficiency: SWORD, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Streetfighting.

Gear: Random grenade assortment (4), RKG-75 assault rifle and an extra clip.

Black Widow

Black Widow, female Nokgorkan Resistance Fighter 5; CR 5; HD 5d8; hp 22; Mas 11; Init +1; Spd 10m; Defense 14, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+1 Dex, +3 Defense); Base Atk +3; Grp +2; Atk +3 melee (1d6–1 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +4 ranged (2d6, Model 17 Samsonov); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6–1 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +4 ranged (2d8, Model 17 Samsonov); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ area knowledge +1, contacts +6, origin (avenger); AL Memories of lost family, the Nokgorkan resistance; AP –; Rep +0; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 13.

Skills: Bluff +5, Climb +3, Demolition +8, Drive +5, Hide +6, Gather Information +5, Jump +3, Knowledge (current events) +6, Knowledge (pop culture) +6, Knowledge (streetwise) +10, Knowledge (tactics) +4, Listen +8, Move Silently +10, Profession +6, Read/Write (Red), Repair +7, Search +6, Spot +8, Treat Injury +6, Tumble +9.

Feats: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Alertness, Black Market Connections, Brawl, Exotic Firearms Proficiency:



SWORD, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Streetfighting.

Gear: A CSPEC, Model 17 Samsonov and an extra clip, random grenade assortment (3).

Red Fleet Infantry

Red Fleet Infantry, male or female Red Fleet Trooper 1; CR 1; HD 1d10+2; hp 7; Mas 15; Init +1; Spd 8m (armor); Defense 12, touch 12, flat-footed 11 (+1 Dex, +1 Defense); Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (2d6+2, hook) or +3 ranged (2d6, hook); Full Atk +4 melee (2d6+2, hook) or +3 ranged (2d6, hook); SQ damage reduction 6; AL Red Fleet, unit comrades; AP –; Rep +0; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills: Intimidate +4, Knowledge (current events) +1, Knowledge (pop culture) +3, Knowledge (tactics) +3, Profession +5, Spot +5, Telekinetics +5.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Combat Martial Arts, Exotic Melee Proficiency (hook), Power Attack, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Weapon Focus (hook).

Gear: Red Trooper armor (armor penalty –4), hook.

Veteran Red Trooper

Veteran Red Trooper, male or female Red Fleet Trooper 3; CR 3; HD 3d10+6; hp 22; Mas 15; Init +1; Spd 8m (armor); Defense 13, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+1 Dex, +2 Defense); Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (2d6+2, hook) or +5 ranged (2d6, hook); Full Atk +6 melee (2d6+2, hook) or +5 ranged (2d6, hook); SQ damage reduction 6; AL Unit comrades, Red Fleet; AP –; Rep +0; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills: Balance +3, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (current events) +1, Knowledge (pop culture) +3, Knowledge (tactics) +3, Navigate +2, Profession +6, Spot +5, Survival +4, Telekinetics +8.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Cleave, Combat Hook, Combat Martial Arts, Defensive Rotation Shield, Exotic Melee Proficiency (hook), Power Attack, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Weapon Focus (hook).

Gear: Red Trooper armor (armor penalty –4), hook.

Elite Red Trooper

Elite Red Trooper, male or female Red Fleet Trooper 5; CR 5; HD 5d10+15; hp 42; Mas 16; Init +3; Spd 8m (armor); Defense 14, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+1 Dex, +3 Defense); Base Atk +5; Grp +7; Atk +8 melee (2d6+4, hook) or +7 ranged (2d6+2, hook); Full Atk +8 melee (2d6+4, hook) or +7 ranged (2d6+2, hook); SA weapon specialization (hook); SQ damage reduction 6, improved reactions; AL Unit comrades, Red Fleet; AP –; Rep +1; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 9, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills: Balance +3, Demolitions +3, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (current events) +1, Knowledge (pop culture) +3, Knowledge (tactics) +3, Navigate +2, Profession +9, Spot +6, Survival +5, Telekinetics +11.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Cleave, Combat Hook, Combat Martial Arts, Defensive Rotation Shield, Exotic Melee Proficiency (hook), Power Attack, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Weapon Focus (hook).

Gear: Red Trooper armor (armor penalty –4), hook, three assorted grenades.

Weapons & Equipment

Ranged Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Type	Range Increment (Area of Effect)	Rate of Fire	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
<i>Handguns (requires the Personal Firearms Proficiency feat)</i>										
Bronson Home Defense Cannon (12 mm autoloader)	2d10	20	Ballistic	8m	S	7 box	Med	2 kg	19	Lic (+1) ²
Caso Security Pistol (9mm autoloader)	2d6	20	Ballistic	6m	S	12 box	Small	1 kg	15	Res (+2) ²
Model 17 Samsonov (9mm autoloader)	2d6	20	Ballistic	6m	S	11 box	Small	1 kg	17	Mil (+3)
Model 79 Samsonov (10mm protocol machine pistol)	2d6+2 ^{4,7}	20	Ballistic	8m	S, A	20 box	Med	1 kg	24 ⁶	Mil (+3)
— Sam-79-G (protocol grenade launcher)	3d6+3 ⁷	20	Slashing	10m (2m)	S ³	Protocol Energy Buildup ³	—	+0.5 kg	24 ⁶	Mil (+3)
Munny Dueling Pistol ¹ , pair (10mm revolvers)	2d6	20	Ballistic	6m	S	6 cyl	Med	1 kg	19	Res (+2) ²
Officer Personal Sidearm ¹ (OPS) (10mm autoloader)	2d6	20	Ballistic	10m	S	20 box	Small	1 kg	20	Mil (+3) ²
<i>Longarms (requires the Personal Firearms Proficiency feat)</i>										
Caso Assault Gun, Mark 16 (5.56mm assault rifle)	2d8	20	Ballistic	30m	S, A	30 box	Large	4 kg	16	Mil (+3) ²
Caso Personal Weapon, Mark 20 (protocol assault rifle)	2d12+2 ^{4,7}	20	Ballistic ³	100m	S, A	Protocol ³	Large	6 kg	25 ⁶	Mil (+3) ²
— CPW-200 (protocol grenade launcher)	5d6+5 ^{4,7}	19–20	Adaptable ³	100m (4m)	S ³	Protocol ³	—	+1 kg	25 ⁶	Mil (+3) ²
Dragunov Sniper Rifle (15mm rifle)	2d12 ⁴	20	Ballistic	40m	S	12 box	Huge	15 kg	22	Mil (+3)
<i>Hook Variants</i>										
— Hook sniper rifle (12mm rifle)	2,10	20	Ballistic	36m	S	5 box	—	+3 kg	18	Mil (+3)
Kuvalda Assault Shotgun (12-gauge shotgun)	2d8 ⁴	20	Ballistic	10m	S, A	20	Large	4 kg	21	Mil (+3)
Molot Backup Shotgun (12-gauge shotgun)	2d8	20	Ballistic	6m	Single	8 box	Large	3 kg	16	Mil (+3)
RKG-41 Assault Rifle (7.62mm assault rifle)	2d8	20	Ballistic	16m	S, A	40 box	Large	5 kg	15	Res (+2)
RKG-75 Assault Rifle (5.56mm assault rifle)	2d8	20	Ballistic	20m	S, A	50 box	Large	4.5 kg	18	Mil (+3)
— RKG-75-G (protocol grenade launcher)	3d6+3	20	Slashing	30m (2m)	S ³	Protocol Energy Buildup ³	—	+1 kg	23	Mil (+3)
RKS-81 Submachine gun (10mm submachine gun)	2d6	20	Ballistic	10m	S, A	30 box	Large	2.5 kg	17	Mil (+3)
<i>Heavy Weapons (each requires a specific Exotic Firearms Proficiency feat)</i>										
Dragunov Anti-Krawl Gun	5d10 ^{3,4}	20	Ballistic	30m	S	1 shell	Huge	22kg	18	Mil (+3)
<i>Hook Variants</i>										
— hook machine gun (7.62mm machine gun)	2d8	20	Ballistic	30m	A	50 box	—	+4 kg	18	Mil (+3)
MTK-90 Cannon ¹ (protocol machine gun)	2d8+2 ⁷	19–20	Concussion	30m	A ³	Protocol ³ (2m burst radius)	Large	—	Special	—
SWORD System Mil (+3)	6d10 ⁴	19–20	Concussion	20m	1	1	—	Large	5kg	19
<i>Telekinetic Weapons (requires the Telekinetic Firearms Proficiency feat)</i>										
Dragunov 60mm Autocannon ⁵	4d12	20	Ballistic	60m ³	A	Linked	Large	50 kg	22	Mil (+3)
Hailer (telekinetic squad support weapon) ⁵ — basic machine gun mode ¹	2d10	20	Ballistic	30m ³	A	250 drum compartment ³	—	—	—	—

Appendices

Ranged Weapons (cont'd)

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Type	Range Increment (Area of Effect)	Rate of Fire	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
— exp. beam weapon mode	5d8	—	Fire	30m ³	S	20 drum compartment ³	—	—	—	—
— flamethrower mode	3d6	—	Fire	(2m x 2m x 50m) ³	—	18 drum compartment ³	—	—	—	—
— grenade launcher mode	By grenade type	—	By grenade type	30m ³	S	50 drum compartment ³	—	—	—	—
— mortar mode	12d6	19–20	Concussion	100m ³ (12m burst radius)	S	5 drum compartment ³	—	+5 kg	—	—
— rocket-propelled grenade launcher mode	4d10 ⁴	19–20	Concussion	30m ³	A	20 drum comp. ³	—	+2 kg	—	—
Hook Variants										
— hook mortar ⁵	10d6	19–20	Concussion	100m (10m burst radius)	1	1	—	+15 kg	18	Mil (+3)

¹ This mastercraft weapon grants a +1 bonus on attack rolls. ² Western Transnationalist Alliance weapon; add +5 to DC if purchased outside W.T.A. or an allied country. ³ See the description of this weapon for special rules. ⁴ This weapon does armor-piercing damage. See p. 57. ⁵ Telekinetically powered weapon. See p. 46 for special rules. ⁶ Ultra-modern weapon; only available for campaigns set during or after the Nokgorkan conflict. ⁷ Protocol-enhanced damage; damage dealt includes +1 per damage die for protocol enhancement.

Ammunition

Ammunition Type (Quantity)	Purchase DC	Object	Weight	Purchase DC
5.56mm (20)	4	Bolt cutter	1.5 kg	4
7.62mm (20)	4	Fire extinguisher	1 kg	8
9mm (50)	5	Monocular, standard	0.5 kg	6
10mm (50)	5	Monocular, night vision	0.5 kg	16
12mm pistol (50)	6	Monocular, rangefinding	0.5 kg	13
12mm rifle (20)	6	Monocular, electro-optical	1 kg	17
15mm (20)	7	Zero options	4 kg	15
60mm (20)	11			
12-gauge buckshot (10)	4			
12-gauge armor piercing incendiary (10)	9			
Dragonov Anti-Krawl shell (5)	8			
Hook mortar shell (5)	10			
Hailer Drum, any non-experimental	15			
Hailer Drum, experimental	25			

Hook Accessories

Ammunition Weight

Damage	Weight per Number of Rounds					
	10	20	30	40	50	100
2d6	0.25 kg	0.25 kg	0.25 kg	0.5 kg	0.5 kg	1 kg
2d8	0.25 kg	0.25 kg	0.25 kg	0.5 kg	0.5 kg	1 kg
2d10	0.25 kg	0.5 kg	0.5 kg	0.75 kg	0.75 kg	1.5 kg
2d12	0.5 kg	1 kg	1.5 kg	2 kg	2.5 kg	5 kg

Special Ammunition

Mortar Shell, 1	Weight
Hailer Drum, any	1 kg 15 kg

Grenades and Explosives

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Burst Radius	Reflex DC	Range Increment	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Aralov Blade-Jaw	10d10	—	Piercing	—	—	—	Med	10 kg	18	Mil (+3)
Bloodhound	6d6	—	Slashing	2m	16	—	Med	4 kg	14	Mil (+3)
Concussion grenade	3d6	—	Concussion	4m	18	8m	Small	0.5 kg	12	Mil (+3)
CSPC	2d6x10	—	Concussion	10m	20	—	Large	25kg	17	Mil (+3)
Fragmentation grenade	4d6	—	Slashing	6m	15	8m	Tiny	0.5 kg	15	Mil (+3)
Smoke grenade	—	—	—	See text	—	4m	Small	1 kg	10	—
Tear gas grenade	See text	—	—	See text	—	4m	Small	1 kg	12	Res (+2)
Thermate grenade	4d6	—	Fire	2m	12	4m	Small	1 kg	17	Mil (+3)
White phosphorus grenade	2d6	—	Fire	16m	12	4m	Small	1 kg	15	Mil (+3)
Render mine	5d10	—	Slashing & Piercing	4m	15	—	Small	6 kg	17	Mil (+3)

Appendices

Melee and Archaic Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
<i>Simple Weapons (requires the Simple Weapons Proficiency feat)</i>								
Club	1d6	20	Bludgeoning	4m	Med	1 kg	4	—
Knife	1d4†	19–20	Piercing	4m	Tiny	0.25 kg	7	—
Pistol whip	1d4	20	Bludgeoning	—	Small	—	—	—
Red Fleet knife	1d6†	19–20	Slashing	2m	Small	0.5 kg	8	—
Rifle butt	1d6	20	Bludgeoning	—	Large	—	—	—
<i>Archaic Weapons (requires the Archaic Weapons Proficiency feat)</i>								
Bayonet (fixed)*	1d6@/1d6	20	Piercing or Bludgeoning	—	Large	+0.5 kg	7	—
Hailer longknife	1d8@	19–20	Slashing	—	Med	1 kg	9	Mil (+2)
Hammer	1d8	20	Bludgeoning	—	Small	2 kg	4	—
Sickle*	1d6†	20	Slashing	—	Small	0.5 kg	5	—
Spear*	1d8†	20	Piercing	—	Large	2 kg	6	—
<i>Exotic Melee Weapons (each requires a specific Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency feat)</i>								
Arc Cutter*	2d10	20	Slashing and Fire	—	Large	25 kg	9	Mil (+2)
Engineer Ace	2d6†	20	Slashing	—	Large	4 kg	8	—
Greatsword	2d6†	19–20	Slashing	—	Large	2 kg	12	—
Hawk talon*	1d12†	20	Slashing or Piercing	—	Large	2.5 kg	10	—
Hook*~	2d6†	20	Slashing or Piercing	Telekinetic*	Large	2.5 kg	8	Mil (+2)
Nistaani sword	1d10†	18–20	Slashing	—	Large	2 kg	11	—
Scythe*	1d10†	20	Slashing	—	Large	1.5 kg	6	—
<i>Exotic Ranged Weapon (requires the Slivers on the Wind feat)</i>								
Sha-Osk pins, handful	2d4*	—	Piercing	Telekinetic*	Diminutive	0.05 kg	8	—

* See the description of this weapon for special rules.

~ Telekinetically powered weapon; see page 46 for special rules.

† This weapon deals armor-piercing damage; halve any damage reduction from armor, rounding down.

Armor

Armor	Type	Damage Reduction	Nonprof. Bonus	Maximum Dex Bonus	Armor Penalty	Speed (10m)	Weight	Acquisition DC	Restriction
<i>Light Armor</i>									
Crew Vest	Tactical	4	1	+5	−1	10	2.5 kg	18	Military (+1)
Bronja Vest	Tactical	4	1	+5	−2	10	3 kg	14	None
Officer Greatcoat*	Concealed	5	1	+6	−1	10	2 kg	25*	Military (+1)
<i>Medium Armor</i>									
Railsuit	Tactical	7	2	+4	−3	8	7 kg	24	Military (+1)
Red Trooper Armor	Tactical	6	2	+3	−4	8	6 kg	17	Military (+1)
<i>Heavy Armor</i>									
Hailer Armor	Tactical	9	3	+1	−7	6	12 kg	19	Military (+1)
Hailer Bodyguard Armor	Tactical	8	3	+1	−5	6	10 kg	24	Military (+1)
Reactor ShIELDSUIT	Tactical	5	3	+0	−9	6	15 kg	16	None
STRIFE Armor*	Tactical	15	3	+0	−9	6	20 kg	30	Military +1
<i>Extras</i>									
Steel Plates	Tactical	+2**	+1**	−3**	−3**	8	+3 kg	17	Military (+1)

* Protocol enhanced armor – see text for special rules.

** These game statistics are cumulative with those of the original armor.

Appendices

Weapon Enhancements

Protocol Enhancement	Purchase DC	Restriction	Benefit
Damage Enhancement I	25	Mil (+3)	Damage increases by +1 per damage die
Damage Enhancement II	30	Mil (+3)	Damage increases by +2 per damage die
Damage Enhancement III	35	Mil (+3)	Damage increases by +3 per damage die
Armor Piercing I	30	Mil (+3)	Weapon gains the armor piercing quality
Armor Piercing II	35	Mil (+3)	Weapon gains the armor piercing quality, but its targets' damage reduction is divided by three against it (round down) rather than halved
Protocol Piercing I	27	Mil (+3)	(Available for ammunition only, and bought by the bullet.) On a natural roll of 16–20, this bullet bypasses the target's autoshields, if any. Further more, this bullet deals double damage to all autoshields if it does not bypass them
Protocol Piercing II	35	Mil (+3)	(Available for ammunition only, and bought by the bullet.) This bullet bypasses all autoshields

Ammunition Supply Enhancements

Ammunition Supply	Benefit Enhancement	Range	Wealth	Restriction DC
Ammo pouch	Refills with new, identical clip as soon as one is removed	10 km	25	Mil (+3)
Crate, 50 kg ammo content	Crate weighs only 5 kg	100 km	20	Mil (+3)
Crate, 100 kg ammo content	Crate weighs only 10 kg	100 km	25	Mil (+3)
Crate, 150 kg ammo content	Crate weighs only 15 kg	100 km	30	Mil (+3)
Protoclip, double	Double ammunition capacity	—	20	Mil (+3)
Protoclip, triple	Triple ammunition capacity	—	25	Mil (+3)
Protoclip quadruple	Quadruple ammunition capacity	—	30	Mil (+3)

Autoshields

Name	Hit Points Reduction	Damage DC	Purchase	Officer Greatcoat Rank
Light Autosield	100	—	25	Major
Medium Autosield	125	—	27	Lieutenant-Colonel
Heavy Autosield	150	—	30	Colonel, Major-General
Ultra-Heavy Autosield I	150	4	35	Lieutenant-General, Colonel-General
Ultra-Heavy Autosield II	150	8	40	General
Ultra-Heavy Autosield III	150	12	45	Marshall, Senior Marshall
Ultra-Heavy Autosield IV	150	16	50	Marshall of the Red Star

Sorceress Equipment

Sorceress Equipment	Purchase DC	Weight	Notes
Protocol Component Case	10	0.5 kg	Holds 3 kg of protocol components
Protocol Enhancement Station, Portable	15	10 kg	Enhances appropriate protocols that are either sent from, or arrive at, a location within 10 meters
Protocol Enhancement Station, Outpost	20	500 kg	Enhances appropriate protocols that are either sent from, or arrive at, a location within 500 meters
Protocol Enhancement Station, Headquarters		10,000 kg	Enhances appropriate protocols that are either sent from, or arrive at, a location within 10 km.

Mashurs

Object	Benefit	Weight	Purchase DC
Mashur, combat	+4 deflection bonus vs. Sha-Osk pins only	0.25 kg	2
+ radio communicator	As basic walkie-talkie	+0.25 kg	8
+ military communicator	As professional walkie-talkie	+0.25 kg	16
+ night vision enhancement	As night vision goggles	+1 kg	18
+ flash protection	As flash protection goggles	+0.5 kg	16
+targeting sorcery	+1 circumstance bonus to all ranged attacks	+0.25 kg	22

Military Vehicles

Military Vehicles, Table A

Name	Crew	Pass	Cargo	Init	Maneuver	Top Speed	Defense	Damage Reduction
<i>Skyships</i>								
Overstriker	500	100	10,000 tons	-8	-8	200 (20)	2	40 (+8)*
Skybarge	750	500	15,000 tons	-8	-8	150 (15)	2	30 (+6)*
Skyfurnace	10,000	15,000	150,000 tons	-8	-8	150 (15)	2	60 (+12)*
<i>Other Aircraft</i>								
Bullpup MiG (fighter)	1	0	20 kg	-2	-2	1400 (140)	8	10
ZIK Zero Inertia Kraft (fighter)	1	0	10 kg	1	1	1500 (150)	9	5
ZIK Zero Inertia Kraft Bomber	2	0	50 kg	0	0	1000 (100)	8	5
<i>Krawls</i>								
Hammer Class Krawl (tracked tank)	5	0	500 kg	-4	-4	90 (9)	6	30 (+6)*
Hydra Class Krawl (tracked tank)	24	90 (+20*)	2000 kg	-8	-8	70 (7)	2	50 (+10)*
Invasion Class Krawl (tracked tank)	10	0	750 kg	-4	-4	80 (8)	6	40 (+8)*
<i>Other Land Vehicles</i>								
Armored Personnel Karrier (tracked APK)	3	12	250 kg	-4	-4	95 (9)	6	20
Dragunov SPG (tracked self-propelled gun)	8*	0	100 kg	-4	-4	80 (8)	6	20
Hoverkraft	4	7	2000 kg	-2	-2	120 (12)	8	15
Hydra Class Krawl Track (tracked APK)	2	30	400 kg	-4	-4	70 (7)	6	50 (+10)*
Kleaver Half-Track (tracked APK)	5	20	500 kg	-2	-2	100 (10)	8	15*
Nomad Half-Track (tracked APK)	5	8	750 kg	-2	-2	110 (11)	8	15*
<i>Extras</i>								
Krawl Drop Casing	—	—	*	—	—	*	—	10*

* See text for special rules

Military Vehicles, Table B

Name	Hit Points	Size	Weight	Hardpoints	Purchase DC	Restriction
<i>Skyships</i>						
Overstriker	300	C	30,000 tons	100 (0)	54	Mil (+3)
Skybarge	400	C	40,000 tons	75 (0)	54	Mil (+3)
Skyfurnace	1500*	C	300,000 tons	1450 (29)	56	Mil (+3)
<i>Other Aircraft</i>						
Bullpup MiG (fighter)	35	H	20 tons	4* (0*)	51	Mil (+3)
ZIK Zero Inertia Kraft (fighter)	25	L	10 tons	@* (0*)	52	Mil (+3)
ZIK Zero Inertia Kraft Bomber	30	H	25 tons	5* (0*)	53	Mil (+3)

Appendices

Military Vehicles, Table B, Continued

Name	Hit Points	Size	Weight	Hardpoints	Purchase DC	Restriction
Krawls						
Hammer Class Krawl (tracked tank)	80	G	50 tons	3* (0*)	48	Mil (+3)
Hydra Class Krawl (tracked tank)	150	C	500 tons	5* (0*)	50	Mil (+3)
Invasion Class Krawl (tracked tank)	100	G	150 tons	6* (0*)	49	Mil (+3)
Other Land Vehicles						
Armored Personnel Karrier (tracked APK)	60	G	20 tons	1	43	Mil (+3)
Dragunov SPG (tracked self-propelled gun)	65	G	50 tons	1	44	Mil (+3)
Hoverkraft	30	H	10 tons	2	44	Mil (+3)
Hydra Class Krawl Track (tracked APK)	150	G	50 tons	1*	—	—
Kleaver Half-Track (tracked APK)	60	H	15 tons	3	42	Mil (+3)
Nomad Half-Track (tracked APK)	50	H	10 tons	2	40	Mil (+3)
Extras						
Krawl Drop Casing	20	*	10%	—	12	Mil (+3)

Military Vehicles, Table C

Name	Weapons	Extras
Skyships		
Overstriker	Markov truss cannon (10); heavy DSHK deck gun (25); BHX Rykov hook missile (10); medium Shadow anti-aircraft missile (15)	Protocol-reinforced armor, protocol shielding systems, Crypsis systems
Skybarge	Markov truss cannon (2); heavy DSHK deck gun (50); BHX Rykov hook missile (6); Katyusha 600mm (3)	Protocol-reinforced armor, protocol shielding systems, Crypsis systems
Skyfurnace	Markov truss cannon (20); heavy DSHK deck gun (1 000); BHX Rykov hook missile (87); KGT Sickle drop missile (132); medium Shadow anti-aircraft missile (112)	Protocol-reinforced armor, protocol shielding systems, Crypsis systems
Other Aircraft		
Bullpup MiG (fighter)	Model MK-132 25mm self-ranging burst gun; medium Shadow anti-aircraft missile (3)	Crypsis systems
ZIK Zero Inertia Kraft (fighter)	Model MK-132 25mm self-ranging burst gun; BHX Rykov hook missile	Crypsis systems
ZIK Zero Inertia Kraft Bomber	KGT Sickle drop missile (5)	Crypsis systems
Krawls		
Hammer Class Krawl (tracked tank)	Forward cannon, 221mm; arc-firing protocol mount; Katyushas, 500mm	Protocol-reinforced armor, protocol shielding systems, Crypsis systems
Hydra Class Krawl (tracked tank)	Forward cannon, 2000mm (3); arc-firing protocol mount; Katyusha rocket battery (1000mm)	Protocol-reinforced armor, protocol shielding systems, Crypsis systems
Invasion Class Krawl (tracked tank)	Forward cannon, 315mm; composite Zhukov capacitance cannon (2); arc-protocol firing mount (4)	Protocol-reinforced armor, protocol shielding systems, Crypsis systems
Other Land Vehicles		
Armored Personnel Karrier (tracked APK)	Model MK-132 25mm self-ranging burst gun	Crypsis systems
Dragunov SPG (tracked self-propelled gun)	Howitzer, model MK-132 25mm self-ranging burst gun	Crypsis systems
Hoverkraft	Model MK-132 25mm self-ranging burst gun, BHX Rykov hook missile	Crypsis systems
Hydra Class Krawl Track (tracked APK)	Model MK-132 25mm self-ranging burst gun	Protocol-reinforced armor, protocol shielding systems, Crypsis systems
Kleaver Half-Track (tracked APK)	Model MK-132 25mm self-ranging burst gun; R5-K close defense lance-protocol batteries (2)	Crypsis systems
Nomad Half-Track (tracked APK)	Heavy hailer; arc-protocol firing mount	Crypsis systems
Extras		
Krawl Drop Casing	—	—

Appendices

Conventional Vehicular Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment (Area of Effect)	Rate of Fire	Magazine	Hardpoints	DC	Purchase Restriction
BHX Rykov Hook Missile	2d8x10 ³	19-20	Concussion	500m (10m radius) ³	1	1	1	25	Mil (+3)
Composite Zhukov Capacitance Cannon	1d4x10 ³	20	Fire	50m	S	30 ³	1	25	Mil (+3)
Forward Cannon,									
221mm	1d6x10	20	Ballistic	80m	S	120 int.	Structure ⁴	—	Mil (+3)
315mm	1d8x10	20	Ballistic	100m	S	88 int.	Structure ⁴	—	Mil (+3)
2000mm	3d8x10	20	Ballistic	200m	S ³	1 int.*	Structure ⁴	—	Mil (+3)
Heavy DSHK Deck Gun	1d6x10	20	Ballistic	50m	A	Linked	1	24	Mil (+3)
Heavy Hailer ¹	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	22	Mil +3
machine gun mode	4d10	20	Ballistic	30m	A	500 box	—	—	—
flamethrower mode	4d6	—	Fire	(3m x 2m x 50m) ³	1	20 box	—	—	—
rocket-propelled grenade launcher mode	8d10 ⁴	19-20	Concussion	30m ³	A	40 box	—	—	—
Howitzer									
315mm	2d4x10	19-20	Concussion	50m/500m ³ (30m radius) ³	S ³	40 int.	Structure ⁴	—	Mil (+3)
Katyusha									
400mm	1d8x10	19-20	Concussion	50m ³ (2m radius) ³	A	18 rack	1	21	Mil (+3)
500mm	1d10x10	19-20	Concussion	100m ³ (4m radius) ³	A	12 rack	2	22	Mil (+3)
600mm	1d12x10	19-20	Concussion	150m ³ (6m radius) ³	A	6 rack	3	23	Mil (+3)
1000mm	1d20x10	19-20	Concussion	200m ³ (8m radius) ³	S	1	4	24	Mil (+3)
KGT Sickle Drop Missile	8d6 ²	20	Slashing	250m ³ (20m radius) ³	1	1	1	20	Mil (+3)
Markov Truss Cannon ¹	2d6x10	20	Ballistic	200m	A	1000 int.	5	30	Mil (+3)
Medium Shadow Anti-Aircraft Missile ^{1,3}	1d4x10	19-20	Concussion	1000m (10m radius)	1	1	1	26	Mil (+3)
Model MK-132 25mm Self-Ranging Burst Gun ¹	3d10	20	Ballistic	150m	A	1000 int.	1	22	Mil (+3)
Ventral Blast Furnace Coil	10d6 ²	—	Fire	0m (300m radius) ³	S	1 ³	Structure ⁴	—	Mil (+3)

¹ This mastercraft weapon grants a +1 bonus on attack rolls. ² This weapon does special damage. See the weapon description. ³ See the description of this weapon for special rules. ⁴ This massive weapon must be built into the structure of the vehicle at the time of manufacture; it takes up no hardpoints per se, and cannot usually be left off the vehicle.

Protocol Vehicular Weapons

(REQUIRES THE PROTOCOL GUNNERY FEAT)

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment (Area of Effect)	Rate of Fire	Magazine	Hardpoints	DC	Purchase Restriction
Arc-Firing Protocol Mount	4d10+4	—	Electricity	40m	S	—	1	25	Mil (+3)
Isolator Tunnel Beam	10d10+10	—	Force	Kaster levels x 10	S	—	Structure ⁴	—	Mil (+3)
R5-K Close Defense Lance-Protocol Battery	6d10+6	—	Fire	10m	A	—	1	24	Mil (+3)

¹ This mastercraft weapon grants a +1 bonus on attack rolls. ² This weapon does special damage. See the weapon description. ³ See the description of this weapon for special rules. ⁴ This massive weapon must be built into the structure of the vehicle at the time of manufacture; it takes up no hardpoints per se, and cannot be left off the vehicle.



Isolator Tunnel Malfunctions

Die Roll	Malfunction
1	Assembly Problem: DC 15 Fortitude save or be dealt 8d6 damage due to incorrect reassembly
2-3	Coolant Fluid Malfunction: The warkaster is drowning (see d20 Modern Roleplaying Game). She will drown in coolant fluid unless rescued, or unless she somehow frees herself.
4-6	Biofeedback Shock: The caster is dealt 2d6 damage, with a successful DC 20 Will save halving the damage.

Vehicle Options

Option	Purchase DC	Weight
Crypsis Systems	+1	—
Advanced Crypsis Systems	+2	—
Inertialess Protocol Engine	+2	200 kg
Protocol-Reinforced Armor	+5	—
Salamander		
Self-Regenerative Armor	+10	500+ kg; see text

Table 4-6: Vehicular Weapon Ammunition

Ammunition Type (Quantity)	Weight	Purchase DC	Notes
Forward Cannon, 221mm (10)	500 kg	20	—
Forward Cannon 221mm high explosive armor piercing (10)	500 kg	25	Gains critical multiplier 19-20 and the armor piercing quality (but no burst radius)
Forward Cannon, 315mm (10)	1000 kg	22	—
Forward Cannon, 315mm high explosive armor piercing (10)	1000 kg	27	Gain critical multiplier 19-20 and the armor piercing quality (but no burst radius)
Forward Cannon, 2000mm (1)	2000 kg	27	—
Forward Cannon, 2000mm high explosive armor piercing (1)	2000 kg	32	Gains critical multiplier 19-20 and the armor piercing quality (but no burst radius)
Heavy DSHK Deck Gun (1000)	500 kg	23	—
Heavy Hailer (full box)	50 kg	16	Contains full ammunition loads for all three weapon modes
Howitzer, 315mm (10)	1000 kg	24	—
Markov Truss Cannon (10)	1500 kg	25	—
Model MK-132 25mm Self-Ranging Burst Gun (100)	50 kg	12	—



Movement & Combat

Carrying Capacity

Strength	Light Load	Medium Load	Heavy Load
1	up to 1 kg	2–3 kg	4–5 kg
2	up to 3 kg	4–6 kg	7–9 kg
3	up to 4 kg	5–9 kg	10–14 kg
4	up to 6 kg	7–12 kg	13–18 kg
5	up to 7 kg	8–15 kg	15–23 kg
6	up to 9 kg	10–18 kg	19–27 kg
7	up to 10 kg	11–21 kg	22–32 kg
8	up to 12 kg	13–24 kg	25–36 kg
9	up to 14 kg	15–28 kg	29–42 kg
10	up to 15 kg	15–30 kg	31–45 kg
11	up to 17 kg	18–34 kg	35–51 kg
12	up to 20 kg	21–40 kg	41–60 kg
13	up to 23 kg	24–46 kg	47–69 kg
14	up to 26 kg	27–52 kg	53–78 kg
15	up to 30 kg	31–60 kg	61–102 kg
17	up to 38 kg	39–76 kg	77–114 kg
18	up to 45 kg	46–90 kg	91–135 kg
19	up to 53 kg	54–106 kg	107–159 kg
20	up to 60 kg	61–120 kg	121–180 kg
21	up to 70 kg	71–140 kg	141–210 kg
22	up to 80 kg	81–160 kg	161–240 kg
23	up to 91 kg	92–182 kg	183–273 kg
24	up to 106 kg	107–212 kg	213–318 kg
25	up to 121 kg	122–242 kg	243–363 kg
26	up to 139 kg	140–278 kg	279–417 kg
27	up to 157 kg	158–314 kg	315–471 kg
28	up to 182 kg	183–364 kg	365–546 kg
29	up to 212 kg	213–424 kg	425–636 kg
+10	x4	x4	x4

Encumbered Speeds

Previous Speed	Current Speed
8m	6m
10m	8m
12m	10m
14m	12m

Heavily Encumbered Speeds

8m	4m
10m	6m
12m	6m
14m	8m

Hampered Movement

Condition	Additional Movement Cost
Difficult terrain	x2
Obstacle ¹	x2
Poor visibility	x2
Impassable	—

¹ May require a skill check

Indirect Fire Modifiers and Effects

Modifier	Effect
All indirect fire	–10 modifier
Each shot after the first	Cumulative +1 modifier
Previous direct hit	+4 modifier
Miss at 2–3 range increments	Deviation by 1 2-meter square
Miss at 4–5 range increments	Deviation by 2 2-meter squares
Miss at 6–10 range increments	Deviation by 1d6+3 2-meter squares
Miss at 11–15 range increments	Deviation by 2d10+3 2-meter squares
Miss at 16–20 range increments	Deviation by 3d20+3 2-meter squares

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THE RED STAR

VOLUME 2
"PRISON OF SOULS"
TRADE PAPERBACK

**THE TRIUMPHANT
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