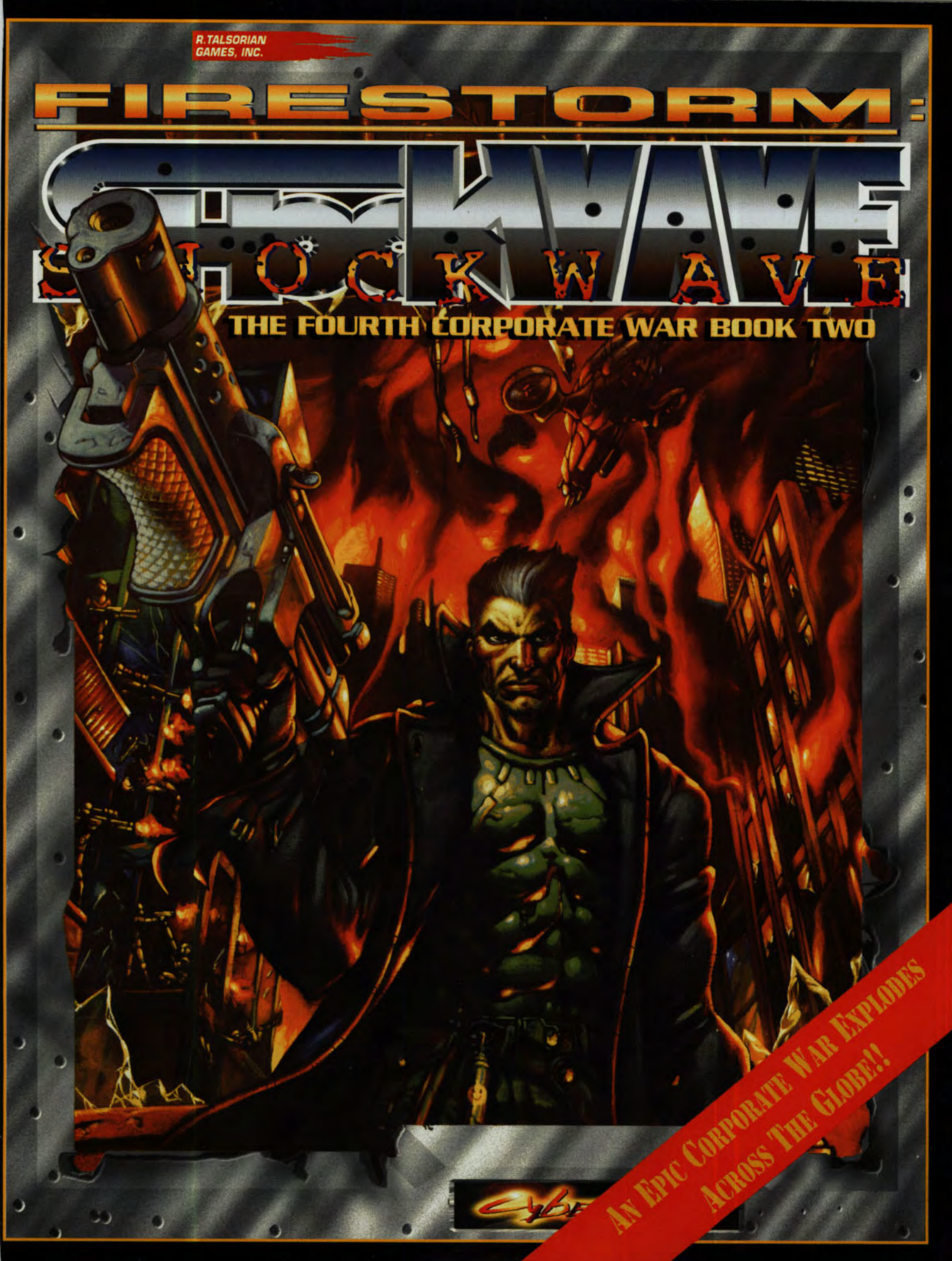
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FIRESTORM:

SHOCKWAVE

THE FOURTH CORPORATE WAR BOOK TWO



AN EPIC CORPORATE WAR EXPLODES ACROSS THE GLOBE!!

SHOCKWAVE

2022: THE END OF THE WORLD — PART 2.

You knew it had to happen: the Big Boys on the Corporate Block, ARASAKA and MILITECH, have pulled off the gloves in a no-holds-barred slugfest for control of the arms market ... and the planet.

Now, as brutal battles turn cities around the globe to rubble, Edgerunners everywhere are being fed into the meatgrinder of full-on corporate war. No "covert, low-intensity, cover-your-tracks" type of operations here—no, we're talkin' howling down the street, guns blazing as enemy fire rips up the pavement missions using state-of-the-art tools of mass destruction.

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- Profiles and equipment for the corporate warriors on both sides—as well as other forces that will help decide the outcome of the war.
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- 7 new vehicles, ranging from air superiority fighters to urban warfare cyberwalks.
- A listing of vehicles and major military hardware, replacing the out-of-print *Maximum Metal™* sourcebook.
- Rules for streamlined vehicle combat and resolving small unit battles.
- Profiles on 5 corporate target sites, each with adventure hooks.
- A climactic mission which leads the characters to the heart of Arasaka—alongside some very familiar faces!

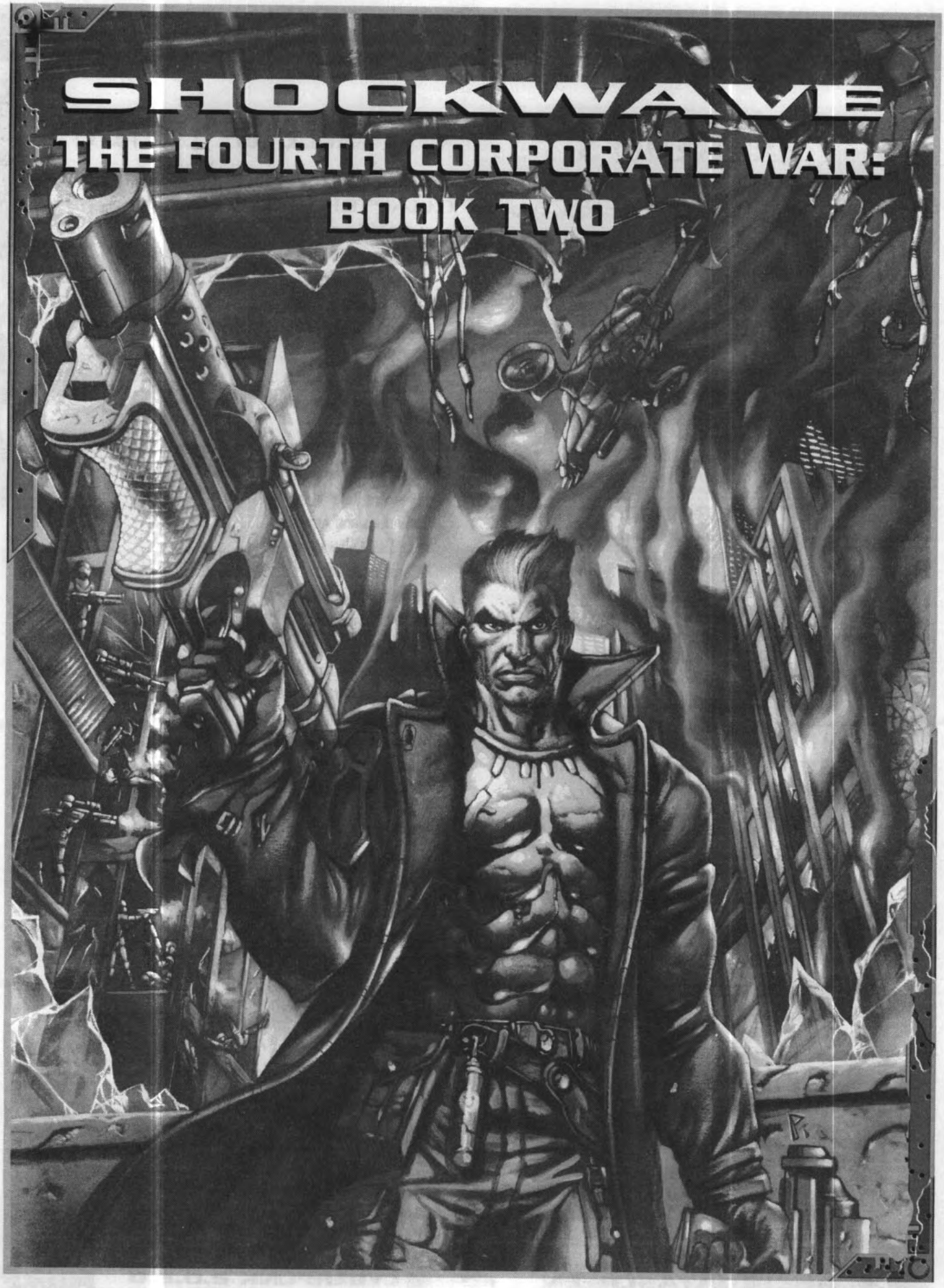
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A CYBERPUNK® SOURCEBOOK

R. TALSORIAN GAMES, INC.


SHOCKWAVE
THE FOURTH CORPORATE WAR:
BOOK TWO

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Dedication from Scott Taylor:
To Julie S.,

For walking beside me through the dark times, and occssionally giving me a push when I needed it.

And Special Thanks to the command staff of the USS Exeter, without whom's generous offer, I'd likely still be writing this.

REFEREE'S INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Shockwave*™, Book Two of Firestorm™, a series of books chronicling a watershed event in the *Cyberpunk*® world: the Fourth Corporate War. Book One, *Stormfront*™, outlined the first two stages of the conflict: the Ocean War and the Shadow War. *Shockwave*™ takes the story to the next level: the Hot War—a full-on corporate conflict consisting of the virtually unrestrained application of force against an enemy corporation on a global scale. What we mean by that is corporate tanks plowing through the streets, squadrons of attack AV's launching smart weapons at apartment buildings, and orbital artillery targeting entire city blocks from their lofty arcs in space. We're talkin' high-tech hell as every killing device developed in the last twenty years gets hauled out to perforate, cook, and generally mangle a lot of human beings and property. All in the name of corporate pride and profit.

In other words, the shit has well and truly hit the fan.

What's Gone Before

In late 2021, two rival aquatech companies, OTEC and CINO, came to fiscal—and then physical—blows over the disposition of a defunct third corporation, IHAG. As the situation escalated, each side brought in heavy muscle to back their play: Militech in the case of OTEC and Arasaka for CINO's corner. The Ocean War was on.

But, as you'd expect when two giants step into a small ring, the war quickly stopped being about OTEC vs. CINO and soon became about Militech vs. Arasaka. By the time the two aquatech corps finally cashed it in and came to terms over IHAG, their security firms were just getting warmed up.

By early 2022, a violent and pervasive Shadow War was in full swing between the two armament companies. Edgerunners around the world were hired on for a breakneck series of vicious—but covert—black operations and strikes. Unfortunately, this giant chest-bumping contest proved inconclusive, and it was only a matter of time before they decided to stop dancing around and take each other head on.

The balloon went up in June 2022—the Hot War had begun.

How Do I Use This Book?

Like *Stormfront*™, *Shockwave*™ is designed primarily as a sourcebook instead of a scenario pack. It focuses on the background, people, places, and things of this phase of *Firestorm*™: the Hot War. New character occupations, lots of new tech, and other chill stuff make this book useful to players as well as referees.

BACKGROUND BRIEFING

We start with an overview of the first month of the war as outlined by the Lazarus Group Staff—the largest private army on the planet. As they decide whether or not to intervene in the hostilities, we show you how the world reacts to this fracas. We also profile the major personalities of the war. All this so you can get a grip on how badly things have gotten out of hand.

TECHNICAL BRIEFING

Chapter Two is an outline of the new technology and equipment being yanked out of the hands of R&D and thrown into the field. We also give you three new occupations—all of them revolving around piloting the new tech. The corporate troops are profiled, as well as the government soldiers they may end up facing.

Next we provide simplified vehicle and squad combat rules to help you handle the scale of battles the Hot War generates. That way you can keep the action adrenal rather than getting bogged down in numbers.

BIG NOTE: We reprint several pages of *Maximum Metal*™ and *Night City*™ stats is this book since our military hardware and corporate city books have been out of print for over a year now. Some of this info is necessary for running *Shockwave*™ effectively, so we placed it in this book for those who don't have and can't get them.

ADVENTURE CHAPTER

This chapter starts with a monthly timeline of the war, then gives guidelines for dealing with the war from a ref's point of view—especially if your players don't want to join in the carnage.

Several "Mission Locales" are profiled: typical battlezones for this urban war with adventure outlines and tips. The last section is a epic adventure describing one of the last actions of the war—with Morgan, Johnny Silverhand, and the old team along for the ride.

Firestorm: Aftershock

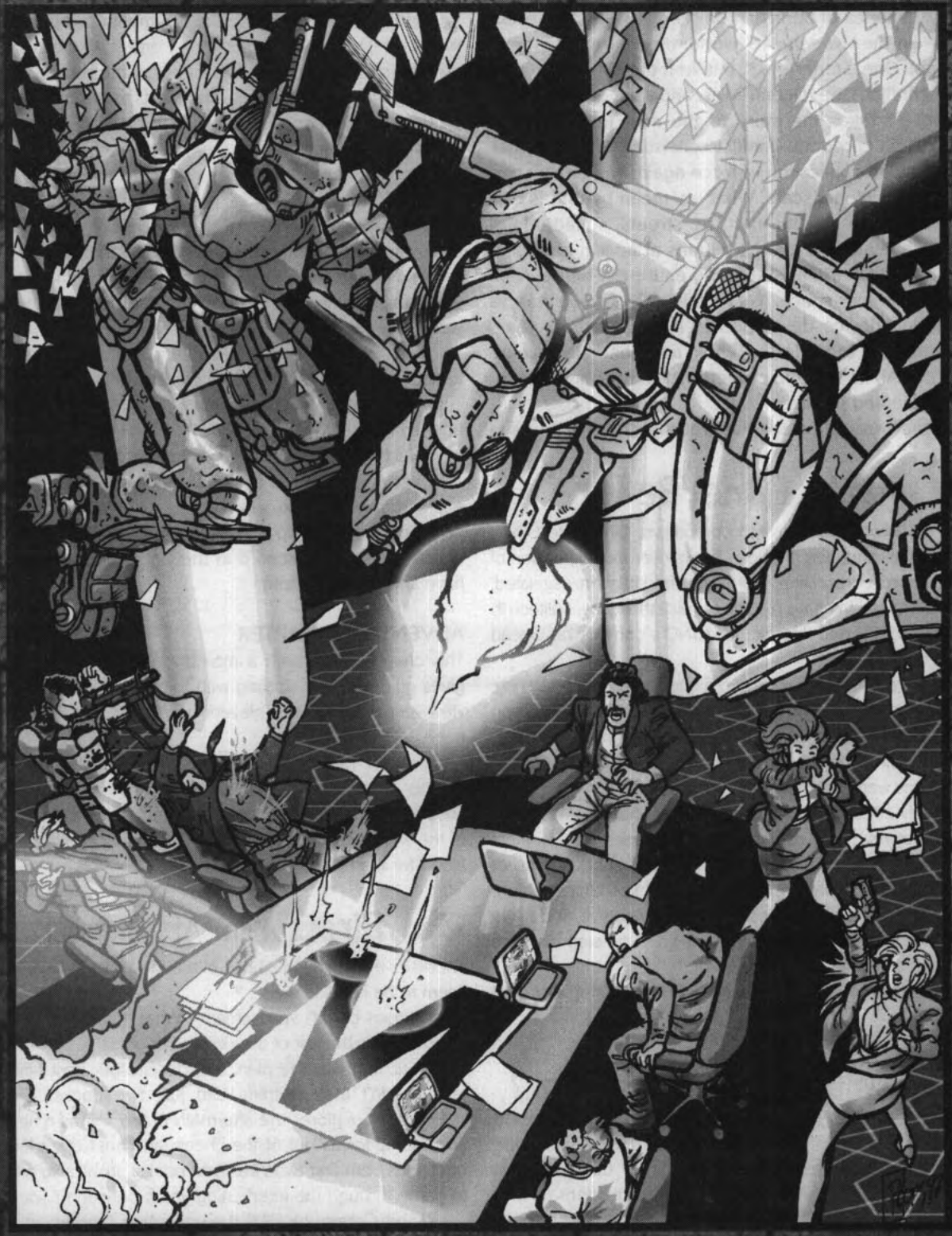
Shockwave is the middle book of the *Firestorm*™ trilogy (trilogies seem to be in these days).

"A third book!", you scream, "What third book? I thought *Shockwave* is the last of the *Firestorm* books!"

Well, that was the plan. But, despite our best efforts, we just couldn't fit everything into just two books. *Firestorm: Aftershock*™ explores the aftermath of the war as a new global dynamic forms out of the chaos (and answers a lot of the questions from first two *Firestorm* books). It will also allow you to game through the intervening years between *Cyberpunk® 2020* and *Cyberpunk V3®*, the upcoming Third Edition.

So, buckle-up and enjoy the ride. *Shockwave* is about to hit.

1: THE HOT WAR



OPENING SALVO



This is C. J. O'Reilly, coming to you from the front. I can't tell you where it is. I can't tell you where I am, or from where I'm routing this report, or whom I'm working for or with; frak, I can barely even mention what I've seen!

So what's going on? As you no doubt know, this whole mess started as a heavy corporate war between OTEC and CINO, wrestling over the remains of another aqua-tech firm. Their security consultants, Arasaka and Militech, got into the action—a little more heavily than their clients thought desirable This was called the "Shadow War", pretty near the first modern war fought completely with covert and special operations.

It started off small, with minor sabotage and info-gathering missions. Then it started escalating to major sabotage and assassinations. By the beginning of 2022, OTEC/Militech and CINO/Arasaka were fighting occasional submarine duels, bombing each others' assets, and even staging small-scale amphibious and airborne assaults. At least the execs didn't have to worry too much about assassinations; all they had to worry about was their office buildings being blown up.

Finally, as I understand it, EuroBank stepped in and stopped the proxy fight between OTEC and CINO, putting paid to that war. Unfortunately, Arasaka and Militech didn't stop as well—I guess once they got up their momentum, they just kept going, running increasing amounts of covert ops on each other, losing personnel and property.

I guess that June 9, 2022 will be the historians' date of the official beginning of the "Hot War." That was the day that the milcorp giants took off the gloves and deployed regular troops in Norfolk, Virginia and Tokyo. That seemed to be the signal for their equivalent of all-out war.

Welcome to the new style of war. I've never seen a whole war of what equates to constant covert ops and commando strikes! That's what it's like, though. Targets are so spread out that there's no chance of a front line; instead, it's a matter of booking from one strike target to the next, hoping you move so swiftly that the enemy can't keep up with you. And hoping even more that you strike before the enemy knows you're there, and get out before he can retaliate.

Which is strangely tougher than it sounds; a shortage of AvGas and aircraft-grade $CHOOH^2$ has relegated most transport to surface stuff—troops being hauled around in trucks, buses, and boats! Only a special-ops war could manage it; a shortage like this would've stalled a large-scale war.

This is serious a nu-tek war; the big boys are emptying their R&D labs for fieldtests. I've seen stuff that gives me nightmares, new junk that I thought was just rumors. And I'm just a reporter! The folks who have to use this stuff are sometimes frankly terrified of it ....

To date, Arasaka and Militech have hit at least 15% of each other's assets; the actual numbers may vary, because it's almost impossible to confirm or deny any combat report. Various factors get in the way of a reporter's search for truth, but then add in that there must be hundred of other corps, large and small, using this war as a cover to engage in their own skullduggery—you can't tell the players without a score card, and there aren't any score cards!

It doesn't look like it's going to end any time soon. Decades of bad blood between Arasaka and Militech have finally come to a head.

I can't find anyone who'll even give me odds on when the war will end; the best guess is when it bleeds the Aras and the Mils dry.

A lot of people are going to die in the meantime. The majority of them won't be the normal corporate workers or average citizens, either. They'll be freelancers and solo operatives, people like you, who have been dragged kicking and screaming into some sort of corporate service by hook or by crook.

That's the other main weirdness of this war: It's largely being fought by covert ops professionals. Militech and Arasaka can barely muster 150,000 fighting troops, and only about 20,000 covert operatives. By best estimate, there are over 50,000 people doing special operations on a daily basis. So where do all the others come from? They're people like you, the Solos and Edgerunners. You're on the front lines in unprecedented numbers, taking bullets in a feud you didn't make.

So when will it end? Who will win; who will lose? I don't know. All I know for certain is that when it's all over, my readership base is gonna be a lot smaller.

—C.J. O'Reilly, reporting for *Solo of Fortune*

BACKGROUND BRIEFING

Officers' Club, Katzadoulos Military and Strategic Studies Foundation, The Lazarus Group Merecenary Corporation.

June 14, 2022, 1038 hours.

A pair of officers walked up to the entrance, intent on a late breakfast after dawn classes. Two guards in the vestibule barred their way, pointing mutely to the sign on the inner door: "Meeting In Progress."

Inside, the enlisted man tending the bar mixed drinks and tried to concentrate on *not* listening to the conversation going on in the main room, a conversation that would decide the fate of the private army of which he was part.

Dr. Robichaud, head of the foundation, renowned military historian and scholar, presided over the assemblage. A harsh-featuerd man in his mid-fifties, he raked his gaze across the people seated before him. There was Major Eddington, the IntelDiv Liaison head, Captain Fairliegh, Ted Manning, and some of the sharpest minds the Lazarus Group had at its disposal. It would need them now.

"Lady and gentlemen, we all know why we're here. Colonel Lazarus and Mr. Katzadoulos are waiting for our report and recommendations on the current crisis, so let's get down to it. Major?"

The wall-sized videoboard lit up as Major Eddington activated it. A half dozen tabletop holotanks around the room echoed its contents. "The first physical signs of the war showed up on November 23rd, 2021, when CINO rented practically an Arasaka army. Within 48 hours, Arasaka and Militech had deployed forces virtually facing each other. A confrontation was inevitable.

"Two weeks later, CINO and OTEC were pulling microstrikes on each other, with professional advisors and support. On the 21st, Militech and Arasaka came into direct combat in a naval engagement. Both sides backed off briefly, until January 5th, when a Militech sub was sunk by unknown hostiles. A Militech operation netted several Arasaka covert operatives, whose testimony indicated Arasaka's involvement in the second sub sinking. When Militech moved in on the saboteurs' base of operations in L.A., Arasaka responded, and both sides ended up openly fighting.

"OTEC and CINO wanted to call it quits at this point. Their 'hired' security firms kept going over the next two months. A series of assassinations, spy-purges, and car bombings throughout Asia damaged Militech's Asian intel net beyond repair; Militech evacuated the rest of it, and retaliated with a bio-bomb that depopulated Arasaka's Chiba office.

"At the end of February, Militech played the insurgency card in Chile, inciting local revolutionaries to attack government security provided by Arasaka. The intelligence war escalated during March, with each side staging commando strikes to grab each other's secrets."

"Don't forget the domestic violence," said Captain Fairleigh, Special Forces liaison. "The Kings of DC war didn't help Arasaka's image at home."



NET NASDAQ: 04/12/21 SHOWS ARASAKA MOVING AHEAD OF MILITECH IN ASIAN MARKET SALES

"True, Mark, but that was small potatoes compared to the Chile situation," Eddington said, calling up another set of figures on the displays. "To continue, what really had Militech in a bind was the Soulkiller problem—which is one reason why we're meeting here in person instead of Netconferencing. They even went so far as to retain Rache Bartmoss to help find and neutralize it." He glanced sideways at John Moody, who was ruefully shaking his head. "You have something to share with us, John?"

The Lazarus Group's chief Net-nerd fingered his unoccupied temple socket. "Using Bartmoss to nullify the Soulkiller problem was like using a nuke to knock out another nuke. Of course, Soulkiller activity did drop off … but then, so did Rache." He almost chuckled.

Almost.

"Agreed," Eddington smiled wryly. "Militech intensified its efforts against Arasaka's programmers in an attempt to destroy the program. These raids sparked off others, and the war took on the aspect of a pair of gangs in a mob war, complete with drive-by shootings and assassinations.

"It all fell apart when an Arasaka team tried to hijack a new Militech spy plane on May 4th. They only succeeded in destroying the prototype, but it opened the way for Militech to start fielding openly-uniformed forces against Arasaka."

"Which they sure did," Captain Fairleigh added. "We tried to keep track of all the actions, and counted over forty that we knew of."

"Are you counting the nineteen ECM incidents? Including the one in Tokyo?" Moody asked, dropping in a chip and overlaying his own data on the room's displays.

"We hadn't been, but I guess they qualify," Fairleigh admitted.

"They do," Eddington said in a clipped tone. "The commando strikes have finally escalated into the synchronous attacks on Militech's Norfolk and Arasaka's Osaka arms works two days ago. And just yesterday Militech made a successful raid on Arasaka's desert training base, destroying its power and water supplies. It is worth noting that during the Norfolk raid, Arasaka made significant use of rocket artillery. Similarly, Militech's raid featured significant air power." Satellite images of the AV-9 strikes of the day before flashed across the big board and its clones on the table. "Both sides have gone past mere commando tactics, people. They're bringing in the heavy artillery now."

"So much for the recap," Dr. Robichaud announced. "Let's hear the intelligence predictions, Patrick." Eddington nodded once. The big board rezzed to a display of a world-wide map of known Militech and Arasaka assets and troop concentrations.

"Yes, sir. Our current projections are based on the past actions of both contestants, and may be completely ruined if one side or the other does something radical," Eddington cautioned. "However, if both sides continue to act as they have, here's what we think will happen.

"Both Militech and Arasaka are spread pretty thin, and both have their headquarters in government territory, leaving the only two real vital spots in the war protected by their environments. So there's not likely to be a lightning stab at ending the war swiftly."

"A real pity," Captain Fairleigh interjected. "One good commando raid ... hell, if it were possible, *we* might consider a dual strike, to end this idiocy! Sorry, Pat." He subsided under Eddington's glare.

"Given this, it's probable that both sides will continue to attack each other's assets, attempting to grind each other into submission." He observed the long faces and shaking heads around the table. "Projections of a long, nasty war aren't good for either corporation. They don't have the resources for it." The displays reinforced his words with facts and informational graphics.

"Hear, hear!" the finance department man said quietly. Eddington continued without acknowledging the interruption.

"Militech has the edge in material. It has immense back stocks of arms, ammunition, war gear, and vehicles of all types. The Militech soldier is likely to be more heavily equipped than ours, or the Army's—and with newer gear. And these stocks are well dispersed—every Militech showroom has enough equipment to outfit a well stocked platoon; some of the bigger ones could outfit a company with weapons, armor, gear, ammunition, and vehicles!

ELECTRONIC WARFARE

Modern warfare is so deadly, with ranged, smart, one-hit kill weapons, that the only way to survive is to "not be seen" (which actually means not being detected). Combat becomes a lethal game of hide-and-seek, with each side attempting to detect the other side while remaining undetected, in order to achieve a firing solution.

Electronic sensors make this goal ever more difficult. With visual sensors straining from the ultraviolet to the infrared spectrum, backed by computer enhancement, even subtle differences between background heat levels and a soldier can be fatal. Any movement becomes suspect as well, with computers watching for the tiniest motions and matching them against perceived environmental background. Active radiations, such as radio, radar, and microwave, are scanned and can be locked onto once detected. Communications gear features ever more elaborate computer-controlled frequency hopping (skipping from one frequency to another in a preprogrammed fashion; when properly done between identically programmed units, it makes for communications that can't be jammed or overheard ... in theory, at least), while commo jammers counter with espionage and superior computer-controlled jamming.

In order to affect the current range of sophisticated sensors and communicators, jamming technology has had to expand drastically. The range, power, and depth of communications jamming have risen to such a point that an ECM pod can blanket enough major frequencies that effective communications become difficult, and radars fill up with interference "fuzz." This effectiveness makes enemy ECM generators choice targets.

It also causes communications havoc among the civilian populace. The jamming isn't strong enough to affect land-lines (cable and fiberoptics), but it does a number on cellular and radio-link calls! Within double the normal ECM jamming radius, all Net-cellular, normal cellular, and civilian radio suffers a 50-100% drop-out rate.

The effects have often been catastrophic. An effectively complete cessation of cellular communications cripples fully 65% of all phone calls and around 32% of Net transactions in most urban areas. Jammed radio waves interrupt broadcasting of all types, including commercial, emergency, and law enforcement. Furthermore, the land-line systems are no longer adequate to handle all the additional communications normally done via cellular, so *they* jam up, too!

In game terms, when there's an electronics battle going on, count on PC military communicators to garble words routinely (make your PCs *write* important communications, and then do some scrambling before you hand them on). Civilian radios, cellular phones, and modems are useless. Think about the effects. No cellular cybermodeming. Radios go bad, and cellular phones shut down. No Trauma Team; they can't hear you through the mess. No taxi calls. Cities with computer-controlled traffic experience mass pile-ups. Admittedly, these jamming periods don't often last more than 15-30 minutes (mass battles notwithstanding), but that's all it takes for businesses to lose millions and to wreak havoc on control in an urban environment.

"Militech's big problem lies in personnel. While the two 'standing' corporate armies are fairly matched, Militech doesn't have a large population of trained soldiers to draw from, while Arasaka can draw from sponsored gangs of all types, and Asian populations. In a pinch, it could even call in its markers with the Japanese Self Defense Force.

"Militech just can't do this. Its equipment and fighting style demand a well trained soldier, not a nine-day wonder. Militech's management knows this, and is already in the middle of a massive edgerunner and mercenary recruiting campaign." There were knowing grins around the table.

"Their netmailing editor needs a bit more discretion," Dr. Robichaud mentioned. "I believe we all received recruiting invitations, even the Professor and myself." Professor McKittrick, the Academy's historian, looked up from his recording monitor and rolled his eyes skyward, smirking.

"Arasaka has countered by attempting to co-opt as many mercenaries as it can," Eddington said. "Although with the Aras, it's 'bring your own gear', because their weakness is a lack of equipment. They have plenty for their own soldiers, but they don't have Militech's massive back stocks. Sure, they've been able to beat Militech out on the Asian arms contracts, but they're stuck now because of them—they *have* to fill those contracts, or they won't have enough capital to pursue this war. Arasaka's manufacturing facilities are going at one-hundred-plus percent capacity, with little down time.

"These facts mark the best targets for both sides. In Arasaka's case, their strikes would be best concentrated on Militech's training facilities. With that eventuality in mind, Colonel Llewellyn has withdrawn all of our troops training at said facilities." The Lazarus Group's executive officer made no response; he just sat, brooding. "Militech, on the other hand, would be smart to sabotage or destroy Arasaka's supplies, either through hitting their factories in Japan, or interrupting their transports somehow."

"Let's hope they try the former," Dr. Robichaud said. "There are too many innocents on the water to go for a World War Two-style interdiction."

Eddington noted his agreement with a sharp nod. "There are other fronts that will draw the attention of both sides. The SouthAm front has already heated up, with the Chilean revolution and reprisal revolutions in the Caribbean. It's possible that one side or the other may try to fan some nationalistic fervor; say, Militech trying to rouse a neighbor against Arasaka-dominated Brazil. If this happens, it'll be a pure mess; once started, these countries will have a devil of a time extracting themselves from international war.

"As for the end of the war, we can't say. But unless someone does something spectacular, our prediction is that both sides will grind themselves to bloody nothings."

"Which is a grim prospect," Dr. Robichaud concluded. "Mr. Manning, I believe there's considerable economic pressure behind this little war. If you'd be so kind?"

Ted Manning stood before the big board, running finance data on it. "As you can see, Militech and Arasaka started the war on an economic basis. Arasaka had long been trying to break Militech's hold on arms sales in China and Indonesia, and they finally managed it, through a combination of salesmanship and price cutting. Although it doesn't look like much at the moment, these figures signal a massive loss for Militech over the next five years, a loss so severe that it'll cut their gross profit margin by 12%.

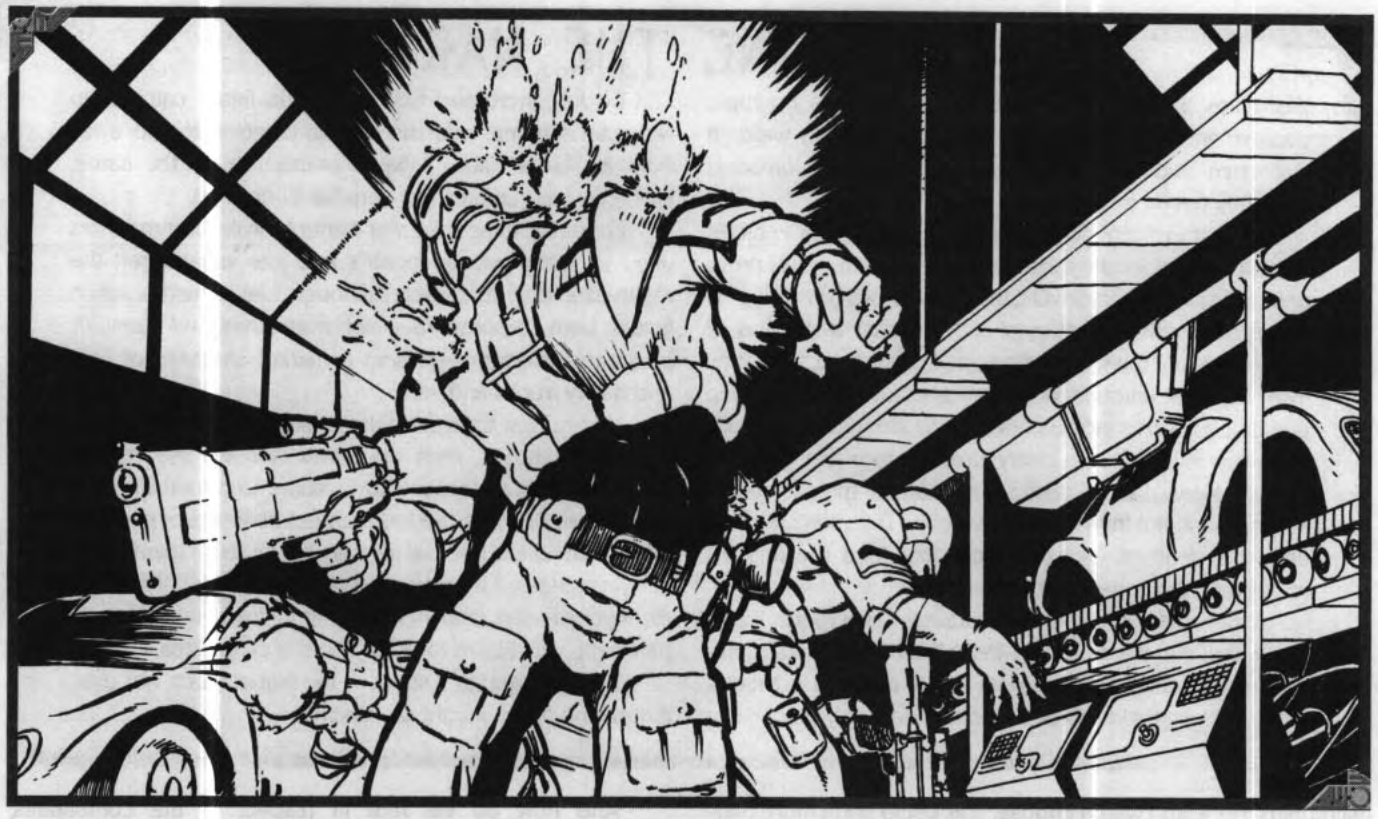
"That's just part of the picture, now. The war effort is having a serious effect on the public stock of both corporations. In order to pursue their war, Militech and Arasaka have been pulling troops off of other duties, such as security and training details. This means broken contracts, and that means a loss of revenues, as well as penalty payments. They're still keeping most of their big contracts—they have to, because if they lose them, they're sunk. But their profits are dropping rapidly, and investors hate low dividends." Manning shook his head dolefully. "End result? Arasaka and Militech supposedly started this war over economics, but their inability to war on each other and make money at the same time will kill them. They're committing financial suicide."

COMMITTING FINANCIAL SUICIDE

The stock market has never been a place with anything in common with the concept of stability. The only surety in the market is that change is constant. Bearing this in mind, many investors were willing to hang on as both Arasaka and Militech stocks began to slide at the beginning of the year. Nothing but a temporary set back; given the Shadow War, it was to be expected. When it was over, both companies would consolidate their expected gains, cover their losses, and their stocks would soar.

EuroBank's ban on IHAG stock on February 1 was the first sign of impending doom; the entire goal of the CINO/OTEC war was now beyond their legal grasp. Five days later, CINO's desperate assault to capture IHAG facilities shocked even the most conservative brokers, and stocks in all four companies (CINO, OTEC, Arasaka, and Militech) began to slide at an alarming rate. They rallied toward the end of the month when the peace accords were signed, and even began to climb.

So much for the past financial history. Further hostilities during March and April destroy all stock gains, and investors begin to divest. With the Hot War starting, Arasaka and Militech stocks plummet as they're unloaded; Arasaka is purchasing most of the sold stock through intermediaries, and the Japanese government is buying the rest. Similarly, the U.S. government is acquiring Militech stock. Both government actions, however legally questionable, are attempts to shore up these two corps, whose futures are directly tied to their respective governments and national economies.



"What can we expect in the way of troop capabilities?" Robichaud looked to Col. Llewellyn. The executive officer stirred after a moment, signaling his aide forward.

"Leftenant Coonrod will give that report."

Lieutenant Coonrod was dark-haired pug of a Scot, his facial rugby tattoos faded with age. He didn't *quite* bow as he stood up. "Lady and gentlemen. As of last November, Arasaka boasted nearly 100,000 troops in its employ. These break down to 20,000 front-line combat troops, 20,000 security specialists, 3,000 special forces, and 57,000 support and maintenance personnel. Militech posted a similar number of troops: 25,000 combat troops, 10,000 security troops, 5,000 special forces, and 60,000 support and maintenance personnel.

"Current figures rate Arasaka at around 24,000 combat troops, 14,000 security troops, 2,500 special forces, and around 49,000 support and maintenance personnel. Militech has 27,000 combat troops, 5,000 security troops, 5,000 special forces personnel—this amount is largely due to the efforts and reputation of Militech's spec ops leader, Morgan Blackhand—and about 50,000 support and maintenance personnel. There have been heavy losses in the special forces category, but both companies are replacing them with formerly nonaligned specialists ... that is, Edgerunners. The Aras and the Mils pulled in every tag they had on the streets; by this time, their armies are over one quarter street operatives. Which does have its advantages; 'runners are usually better trained, more capable of independent action, provide their own gear and maintenance, and are ultimately deniable.

"And this war is one of the few that could be fought by Edgerunners alone! Since both sides are so spread out, moving and supplying large concentrations of troops would be nearly impossible. As it stands, there are few locations where Militech and Arasaka are likely to clash in large battles, and the garrisons are already in place. They are Chicago, Hong Kong, Rio de Janiero, New York, and Night City. Both also have offices in London, Rome, Montreal, Washington D.C., and Los Angeles—although large-scale conflict will trigger government intervention in these locations; it's already happened in L.A. The lion's share of the battles in this war are likely to be small-unit actions; essentially scaled-up versions of the special forces raids we've already been seeing.

"This fact makes this war a favorable environment for anyone with highly trained, professional troops that can haul their own fire support and supplies—the shifting nature of the battles and the inevitable lack of jet fuel means that most artillery and air support gets left behind. We've calculated that the most popular support weapons will be the most easily moved, weapons like multiple rocket launchers, mortars, recoilless rifles, and so on. The heavy artillery will get left behind.

"There's a further reason to ditch heavy equipment and avoid troop concentrations: This inability to move artillery will probably provide incentive for both sides to use their orbital artillery satellites."

"That should be interesting," Professor McKittrick spoke up.

"Indeed, considering that they're supposed to be banned by at least three major treaties," Dr. Robichaud commented, "'inter-

FUELING THE WAR

War takes a lot of fuel. Modern war depends on rapid deployment and equally rapid response—nobody walks! It was once said that armies marched on their stomachs; now they roll/fly on fuel.

While most ground vehicles use $CHOOH^2$, air vehicles depend on a special grade of the stuff, or on petrol products. Petrochem and SovOil, the world's two remaining oil giants, are the source of most of the world's avgas and JP (jet-propulsion) fuels, including the $CHOOH^2$ jet fuel. They produce great amounts of these fuels, but they don't keep much of a reserve stock, preferring to slowly and carefully milk their oil fields for every drop. Before the Hot War came, Militech and Arasaka had bought most of these reserves and put them in *their* reserves. This didn't hurt the oil giants' feelings (or credit accounts), and the pair set about rebuilding the fuel stocks.

When the war heats up, suddenly everybody wants more fuel, and wants it *now*. Petrochem and SovOil's production isn't able to compensate for the demand for weeks, and prices skyrocket. Everyone starts hoarding fuel.

By July, increased fuel production finally catches up with the demand, and the situation begins to slip away from its "crisis" label. Inflated prices remain the same, though (which comes as a surprise to no one).

This crisis affects the war rather heavily. Commanders used to ready access to AV's and jets squandered the reserves swiftly. To preserve enough fuel to field reaction forces, both corporations switch from largely AV transport to ground transport—causing a market shortage of light and heavy trucks and vans.

Indeed, war transport takes a step backward as long-haul trucks, buses, vans, and even cars are used to get strike teams from location to location. Commercial trains and aircraft become the long-range transports of choice—often a single commercial jet has several strike teams from differing sides on board as regular passengers! ("I'm sorry, sir; if your rocket launcher won't fit in the overhead compartment, you'll have to place it in the cargo area.")

So, even though it starts as the highest-tech war ever, it may end being fought on bicycles.

esting' isn't the word I would choose. This could bring more players into the war." His eyes met Eddington's.

"Yes, sir. The ESA, the NSRK, and the USAF, to be specific. As well as various unaligned Highrider groups."

Dr. Shales, the psychology analyst, cleared her throat for attention. "Let's sincerely hope the orbital situation remains stable, gentlemen. The group psychology at the USAF has, if anything, become more mercurial and reactionary since their defeat in the last orbital war. All they'll need is an excuse to go kill-crazy."

"Not to mention tension in the habitats," Eddington added. "Our sources say that there's major trouble brewing between the ESA and the Highriders."

"It seems that Militech and Arasaka have chosen a poor time for their war," Dr. Robichaud mused. "Continue with your report, Lieutenant."

"Yes, sir. We've done an analysis of what will be needed in this war." The big board flickered as images flashed past. "Primary necessities are, of course, ammunition, food, and spares. Additional necessities include transport for these supplies; surface transport is preferred, because of the fuel shortage. The Group is also arming up on the aforementioned light support arms, purchasing them from European suppliers rather than Militech or Asian arms suppliers."

"Wait a minute," Eddington interjected. "This has the sound of war preparation to it. Is this a contingency plan, or has Operations something more in mind?" He frowned suspiciously at Colonel Llewellyn.

The executive officer scowled back. "That's what we're here to decide, Major."

"And how do we rate in respect to the combatants, Lieutenant?" Robichaud asked quietly.

"The Group is primed and ready to go." Colonel Llewellyn answered instead. "We have 60,000 first-rate combat troopers, with firepower support and full TO&E, ready for deployment. Of course, we've another 8,000 personnel on security garrison duties, 7,000 special forces troopers, and 178,000 logistics personnel."

"That's a little low on support, isn't it?" Robichaud's query was softly voiced. Llewellyn answered the unspoken challenge boldly.

"I've taken the liberty to bolster our combat forces in the event that we need them."

"Let us hope that we do *not* have need of them," Robichaud said. "We can always hope that Saburo Arasaka and Donald Lundee come to their senses and call this off. And what would the chances of that be, Dr. Shales?"

The Group's leading psychologist didn't bother to get up.

"We have to consider what we know of the psychologies of the main motivators, Saburo Arasaka and Donald Lundee. Both are extremely strong-willed men who have clawed their way up to power, and are used to getting what they want. They've made a habit of considering each other 'the enemy', and have used this demonization to vindicate their actions in the past and, I think, at the present time." She shrugged. "The trades classify this type of behavior as a 'guy thing.' Pure, raging hormone behavior. Two gorillas engaged in a chest-beating contest." She glanced around the room and smiled slightly. "To be honest, the sort of thing that keeps our soldiers fighting: male ego."

"Thank you for your opinion, Doctor," Robichaud said dryly. "Your point is made. Despite sarcastic asides," he said to the rest of the assemblage, "Dr. Shales' analysis remains as the logical conclusion. As Sherlock Holmes said, 'When you have eliminated the possible, then the impossible, no matter how improbable, must be the truth.'

"Militech and Arasaka are locked in a war over pride and ego."

"Excuse me, Doctor," Lt. Coonrod spoke up. "I was under the understanding that corporate structures made this sort of thing impossible."

"In normal circumstances, yes." Dr. Robichaud sat back, settling naturally into lecture mode. "Most corporate structures are made up of committees, groups of people who are attempting to spread out responsibility among the entire group so that no one of them has to accept responsibility for anything. In addition, these committees usually appoint a person from outside their group as a whipping boy, usually called a CEO—someone who can accept responsibility for success or failure. In the case of success, this prevents an internal fight in the committee for claiming the glory; in cases of failure, it gives the committee someone to punish, diverting any blame from the committee members who are the real power behind the throne.



"Militech and Arasaka, and to some extent the Lazarus Group, have a different structure. Each company has a single man at the top, making decisions without having to obey a committee, thereby avoiding the typical committee conservatisms. Committees exist to quash vision and dynamic action; remember, true democracy means giving everyone a fair and equal chance to mess things up. The Lazarus Group has managed to avoid dictatorial leadership thanks to its partnership ownership structure. Militech and Arasaka, on the other hand, are like little despotic nations, where the word of the leader is law."

"Then we've got to decide which leader we want to win, and ensure it." Colonel Llewellyn stood and placed his hands on the table. "And we've got to decide it now!" He looked around the room. "In case none of you have noticed, there's a war on! The world situation's unstable, and it's going to get worse. If we let it go on, the world's going to smash Militech, and we're likely to get caught in the overkill. I, for one, don't relish the thought of being forcibly integrated into the United States Army, which is what'll happen if we're nationalized."

He spread his hands pleadingly. "We've got a chance to stop it all. We've got more troops than Arasaka and Militech put together, and we've got the logistics to support a blitzkrieg around the world. We can shut any one side down, completely. Whoever wins this war is going to be our future business partner, and I say we should exercise a bit of choice before they're both too smashed to be of any use to us."

The room fell silent as they considered the colonel's words. Ted Manning scowled and shook his head violently; Llewellyn glowered at him. Dr. Robichaud said, "You seem to disagree, Mr. Manning. Speak up; we're all candid here."

"The figures speak for themselves." Manning ran a crawl on the big board. "These are the contracts we've made in the past six weeks. Each and every one of them has been a defense contract, to protect assets from attack—*any* attack. With Militech and Arasaka busy chewing on each other, they can't be relied on to honor security contracts. Clients have been *dropping* Arasaka security contracts, for fear that it makes them a valid Militech target! We're the last trusted mercenary corporation in the world, so long as the other two are fighting. And we've been picking up the pieces."

"If the war gets worse, we'll pick up even more," Captain Fairleigh put in.

"Classic divide and conquer, is that it?" Llewellyn sneered. "I expected that sort of talk from the likes of him," he angled his head at Manning, "but not from you, Mark. I thought you were more of a fighter." Captain Fairleigh flushed red.

"Really, Colonel?" Dr. Shales inspected Llewellyn closely. "I didn't know you had this sort of opinion." Her expression spoke of the kind of calculation that got officers cashiered for psychological reasons.

"Furthermore, governments get very nervous about the sort of 'help' you propose," Eddington added. "Your intervention would draw a lot of attention to the fact that the Group is almost as strong as most world armies, the U.S. and NeoSov militaries notwithstanding. What's to keep them from shutting us down for fear we'll do to them what we did to Arasaka and Militech?"

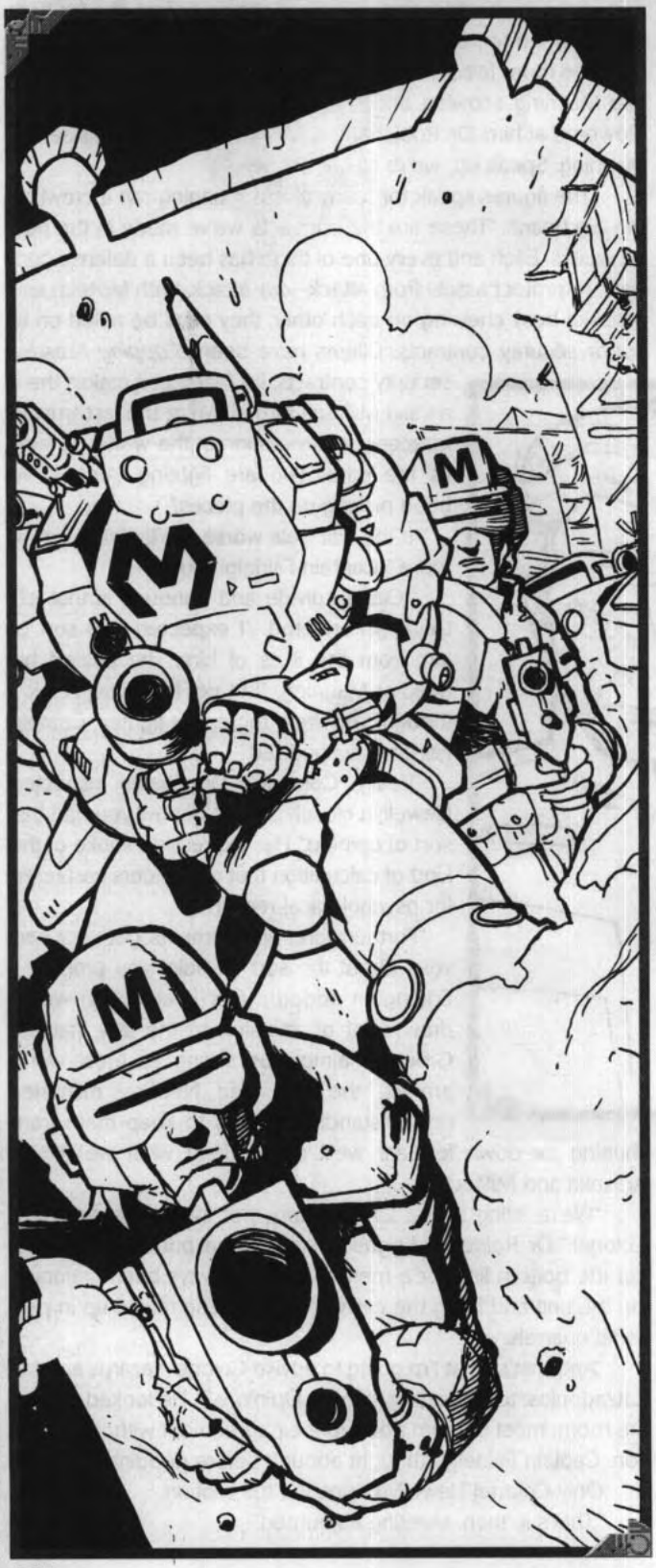
"We're living in the 21st century, not in the Middle Ages, Colonel," Dr. Robichaud sighed. "Professional pride is admirable, but the bottom line for a mercenary has always been maintaining the unit and filling the cashbox, not getting mixed up in personal quarrels.

"And that's what I'm going to advise Colonel Lazarus and Mr. Katzadoulos: to stay out of the war. Opinions?" He looked around the room; most of them nodded their agreement without hesitation. Captain Fairleigh thought about it before nodding.

Only Colonel Llewellyn opposed the motion.

"That's it, then. Meeting adjourned."

WORLD RESPONSE TO WAR



HOT WAR RESPONSE AS OF JUNE, 2022

Around the world, countries are finding that they have to face the war, too. Arasaka and Militech (and their allies and operations) are so intertwined into the world's economic system that there is no country that can afford to stand by and let them slug it out. Arms supply, security contracts and subcontracts, showrooms, ammunition manufacture—both companies do these, and every country has one or more of these within its borders. Thanks to the war, any of these operations have become legitimate targets for hostile attack.

It's not just the shooting war that's bothering governments. The operations of these two megacorporations pump considerable amounts of euro into local economies; for instance, in Night City alone, there's the Militech showroom retail business, the retail ammo and parts business, and the wholesale business done by both corporations, and there are the security contracts held by Arasaka, many of which are filled by subcontractors. With the war on, all of the subcontractors have been summoned to war against Militech, leaving their security contracts hanging. Arms, ammo, and parts sales have plummeted, as Arasaka and Militech conserve their supplies for themselves—yes, it's becoming nigh impossible to procure Militech's special 6.5mm ammo on the street. The effects on local business are not good; Che Guevarra's has practically shut down its back-room business in arms dealing, and the Taco Hut now only offers cheap Mexican knock-offs of good firearms. It's even beginning to be difficult to find ammo on the rack in convenience stores; few people realized that 74% of the ammo sold in Night City was manufactured by Militech.

The Shadow War made it perfectly clear that governments around the world were going to have to do something about the escalating conflict. Logically, the solution would to present a unified front against the warring corps and tell them to stop or face nationalization … but this is politics, the practice of acquiring, maintaining, and wielding power, where logic doesn't have much play, neh? Since Militech and Arasaka are so big, wealthy, and important, efforts have been made on their behalf to let them continue their conflict. Both corporations have had their lobbyists working full-time to mollify the growing tide of anger over the destruction that comes with the war; businesses which are tied to or depend upon one of the twain are lending their lobbying efforts as well. At the moment, neither side is even mentioning anything about government intervention on their behalf, fearful that such actions might provoke either a world war (!) or make a precedent for unilateral intervention ….

SHADOW WAR SIDESHOW

The Shadow War was too good an opportunity for some nations to pass up. OTEC/Militech and CINO/Arasaka were so busy hitting each other that it would be easy to slip some other operations in unnoticed among all the chaos.

That was the reasoning that prompted the EEC to start up an operation in Colombia. The country was one of the few countries that didn't belong to the CAF, and it wasn't dominated by any international corporation—the strongest presence was Militech, and all it had was a second-line office, there to watch Arasaka-dominated Brazil (and to provide support for the Rio office).

As soon as American intelligence agencies caught wind of this, they sent their own agents in to attempt to neutralize the efforts of the EEC's agents and maintain an espionage status quo, hoping to prevent Euro-meddling of the sort that prompted the SouthAm War.

In the middle of Arasaka actions against Militech holdings, the Colombian situation soon turned into an espionage free-for-all, a sort of "spy-vs.-spy-vs.-spy-vs.-spy" mess where agents and counteragents were working for so many agendas that they often lost track of whose side they were on. In short, it was a mess.

In the end, El Presidente authorized Militech counter-intelligence agents to round up anyone who might be a spy and question him in the country's largest spy-sweep. Realizing that their efforts had backfired, the EEC pulled its agents out; American agents fled at the same time.

America

America wasn't idle during the Shadow War; when the EEC attempted to subvert Colombia, the U.S. answered with covert warfare of its own. The Colombian conflict came out favorably, although the CIA lost more men than it had anticipated.

The U.S. and the Free States are deeply caught in the economic consequences of the Hot War. Only Texas is free from Militech's pervasive economic impact, and even the Texans get most of their military arms and equipment from Militech. This, and sizable bribes, has made these governments reluctant to move against the warring corps.

However, the war's chaos is becoming ever more difficult to ignore. When Los Angeles, Chicago, and Night City are burning, and the sound of automatic weapons fire is coming back to the District of Columbia, state and federal governments must respond. To this end, National and State Guard units are on alert across the nation. Regular military units are also on standby alert; the USAF has put its assets on standby, and now features a daily delta sweep patrol through LEO during the western hemisphere's daytime hours. Hawaii and other U.S. possessions are now firmly under military law; anyone caught with weapons will be imprisoned, and resisters will be killed —for the duration of the war, corporate immunity is suspended! It is rumored that the U.S. is considering the European plan—namely, if intervention becomes necessary, the country will seize and shore up the domestic assets of both corporations.

The EEC

The Shadow War has the nations of the EEC on distinct alert. Their peace has already been disturbed by the OTEC/CINO war, and they know that it was only the precursor of a more violent and widespread conflict to come. To that end, most EEC members have their antiterrorist forces reinforced and ready to move at any time, reasoning that the threat to tranquillity and business is more important than angering either Militech or Arasaka. Any military or paramilitary actions will get a quick and deadly response.

At the same time, the ESA is readying its forces to move in case of another orbit war … and selling payload lifting space for putting new satellites into orbit at the same time.

Russia

Russia has the advantage of having very little in the way of Militech and Arasaka assets within its borders. Of course, the fact that the Russian governments have never been on good terms with American and Japanese militaries might have something to do with it. Russia is acting as a neutral country, selling weapons, ammo, and equipment to anyone with the euro. The Neo-Soviet Rocket Korps is doing much the same, selling cheap rocket lifters for small satellites (most often the CH-19 "ortillery" satellite) at rates that undercut the ESA's African Earth-to-orbit railgun cargo lifters … and they're getting plenty of business, as corporations scramble to plant more satellites in LEO. The money, it is theorized, is going to go to completing the Ural Mountain Gun, the NSRK's land-based, alcohol/steam-powered lifting gun (they've *almost* had it done and operational for the last decade …). Of course, that's the good side to the war. On the bad side, there are the effects of the Avgas War (see pg. 105).

China

China is in a strange positio, politically. On the one hand, it's worried about all the recruiting going on in Korea and Taiwan; Arasaka could be planning to use those troops against Militech, or use them to harass China.

On the other hand, the Chinese are making money. Their space program is deeply in the black, selling satellite lifters to Arasaka for their ortillery/killsat web. Their munitions industry is making good money; in the past, China's arms had been considered inferior to Arasaka products. Now, they're still considered inferior, but they're available, and Arasaka products aren't.

China is watching the Hong Kong situation with the deepest concern; they know the island is a powder-keg, and it could blow at any moment.

Japan

Japan has put its Self Defense Force on alert, readying for the inevitable attacks on Arasaka assets. There have already been plenty of clandestine attacks, and the government is ready to respond with overwhelmingly lethal force if they catch anyone making any more attacks. The government has issued orders to the effect that anyone caught with military gear or engaged in sabotage or other paramilitary violence will be shot on sight.

The SDF is also doing anti-invasion exercises, preparing for the possibility of a Militech-sponsored Chinese invasion. The only country taking that line of reasoning seriously is China, which suspects the mobilization excuse is a ploy to cover activities against the Chinese mainland.

Despite invasion worries, the people of Japan are enjoying a period of relative peace—most of the violent *yakuza* and other gangers are gone overseas, hired by Arasaka!



Australia

Western Australia is heavily dominated by international corporations and relies on Arasaka troops to stiffen their police and military forces. The war is a major concern there; if Arasaka pulls out its forces, Western Australia is at the mercy of neighboring Federal Australia, and vulnerable to guerrilla attacks from the Abos (who don't like Arasaka or the corps that have been crushing them for years). In return for continued aid, Arasaka has full access to all Western Australian government facilities … and Arasaka is using them! The port city of Perth is a major Arasaka staging and fleet area. In return, Militech has contacted the government of Federal Australia and the Koorie Nationalist Front, and is providing the former with naval and aerial assets, and the latter with arms and munitions. Australia may suffer its first civil war.

South America

Most of South and Central America is pretty unconcerned about the war, since neither Militech nor Arasaka has any reason to fight there. Chile, Colombia, and Brazil are exceptions.

Chile is still recovering from an insurgency. Despite the fact that it didn't topple the government, the uprising did significantly deplete Militech forces in that country.

Colombia is still smarting over the mess that came with too many foreign meddlers (see the Shadow War, above). Militech supported the government, and enjoys excellent relations with them … so much so that Militech is training Colombian military forces, and is increasing its assets in the country.

Brazil, dominated as it is by Arasaka interests, is eyeing Colombia with apprehension. Brazilian troops are massing to defend their borders as Arasaka attempts to hold onto its main South American asset.

Orbital Habitats

Tensions are rising in terrestrial orbit. The level of satellite combat has reached the point where Orbital Air, the ESA, the Highriders, and the Neo-Soviet Rocket Korps are talking about an alliance to destroy *every* combat-related satellite in orbit—and to do so before U.S. assets are endangered, which would certainly trigger USAF intervention. In addition, the wartime situation and ESA responses have aggravated tensions between the ESA and the Highriders. The ESA wants to keep the Highriders out of potential war zones, which is where the Highriders do their work (and salvage), and rampant orbital smuggling has led to increasing numbers of armed Highrider ships.

CORPORATE RESPONSES

Arms and Armies

The Militech/Arasaka war has had a seismic impact on the corporate world around them. Arasaka held almost 22% of the world's major corporate security contracts and 64% of the minor ones; many of these are in jeopardy, thanks to the fighting and Arasaka's need for the troops. Arasaka and Militech held 71% of the world's armament sales between the two of them. The war has marked an end to dependable service from either company, and the business world is scrambling to compensate.

What would be the worst time to be unable to get weapons and men to use them? During a war! And that's precisely what's happened: Militech and Arasaka are still manufacturing weapons and training men, but they're going directly into the meat grinder of their private corporate war, not out onto the market where there's a huge demand for them. Faced with a need to uparm, the corporate world has pumped money into smaller arms firms, such as Colt, FN, H&K, Stemmeyer, and Federated Arms—the amounts involved have motivated Federated Arms to quintuple their production facilities in order to begin to answer the demand. Even Stolbovoy in Russia has been swamped with orders! (Towa Manufacturing has not been solicited,

since it is virtually a part of the Arasaka *zaibatsu*.) These firearms manufacturers have even resurrected older, cased-ammo designs (using plastic-cased shells) in attempts to keep up. Some nations are taking advantage of the shortage, opening old armories and warehouses and marketing obsolete surplus arms at near-market prices.

At the same time, there's been a corresponding demand for trained personnel to take over those positions previously occupied by Arasaka security, as well as a need for even more people to defend corporate property and assets during the war! There's a frantic recruiting demand at the present; practically anyone who can carry a gun is being hired.

During the Shadow War, multiple incidents occurred that made it clear that CINO and OTEC weren't the only corporations engaging in clandestine hijinks. No, other corps were taking the opportunity to pull some jobs and pin the blame on the two warring companies. As the war progressed, these activities intensified.

The advent of the Hot War has slowed down the sniping a bit; after all, nobody wants to attract the attentions of Militech and Arasaka. It's like being in a room with two crazy homicidal maniacs—no-one wants to appear to be a target.

At the same time, it's clear that the temporary truce isn't long for this world. Everybody is arming up, many companies going into debt to acquire at least a pocket army. Although the stated reason may be fear of being attacked—even accidentally—by Militech or Arasaka, it's almost inevitable that some executive is planning to use his new army to strike at his competition, and blame it on the war.

Of course, there are some companies that are turning quite a tidy profit from the war—anyone who makes or maintains armaments, for instance. And there have been a number of lesser security and mercenary companies that have done their best to step into the void Arasaka has left, and provide at least some corporate security.

Where They're Going

ARASAKA: Arasaka's corporate futures are sliding into oblivion. As one of the two sides of the war, the company's assets are under attack, its troops are being used unprofitably, and its moneys are dwindling. Saburo's only hope is to win.

BIOTECHNICA: Biotechnica is staying out of the fray, but it's making a lot of money by offering complete nanotech bioscans, as well as selling its nanotech. (A complete bioscan scopes the subject for every kind of nanotech made by Biotechnica—the scan data can be programmed directly into emergency nanotech, saving precious minutes of emergency calculation and reprogramming.) In addition, Biotechnica is trading nanotech for samples of unidentified chemical and biological warfare agents.

In order to protect its biosphere assets in the Amazon and African rain forests, Biotechnica made a deal with Militech and Arasaka—as long as they stayed out of Biotechnica's turf, they would continue to receive guaranteed service from Biotechnica.

DIVERSE MEDIA SYSTEMS: DMS is trying to milk the war, like its rival Net 54. Although DMS doesn't have Net 54's news coverage capability, it does have some reporters, and it's using them. In addition, DMS has hit upon a solid ratings property: DMS crews are traveling with selected mercenary units, doing docudramas on them, which are aired in the new show, MERCS!, its top-rated show.

EURO BUSINESS MACHINES: Like IEC, EBM is doing well in the war, too, thank you very much. The NuTek war fits EBM's purposes very well—every smart missile that gets fired means another sale for EBM. By adopting a totally neutral, "first come, first served" policy, EBM is mimicking IEC's neutrality. EBM has recently shifted a large proportion of its manufacturing prowess to making WORM back-up drives; too many systems are experiencing data failure in their drive back-ups.

INFOCOMP: As far as Infocomp is concerned, it is the perennial neutral, offering information to all ... for a price. It has posted protests that the war is creating a lot of data discrepancies throughout the Net, compromising a lot of info well outside of the combat zones. As a result, it's beefed up its security a bit, but that's it. After all, who would want to attack Infocomp?

INTERNATIONAL ELECTRONICS CORPORATION: As usual, the European manufacturing giant is managing to stay neutral, and is therefore not a target. Its unique product lines mean that neither Militech nor Arasaka will be targeting any IEC facility or asset, for fear of having an embargo slapped on them. Indeed, both combatants are spending like crazy, buying stocks of IEC electronics necessary for the manufacture and maintenance of their high-tech weapons. IEC is currently limiting those purchases; it's not raising the price, like Petrochem and SovOil, it's simply making certain that Militech and Arasaka have to keep coming back to IEC. This war has been very, very good to IEC.

MERRILL, ASUKAGA, & FINCH: MA&F are also neutrals in the war. Their action toward both combatants was to drop investments in Militech and Arasaka, precipitating a drop in their traded stock. To date, that has been their only action, but that may change. It has been revealed that both the U.S.A. and Japan have been buying up the depleted stock in their respective arms works, causing a minor rally of the stocks. MA&F may enter the trading fray with a great deal of ready cash, more than the governments can easily muster, and snap up controlling interest in both companies ... which, some conspiracy theorists say, is its intention.

MICROTECH: Microtech's product line is mainframes, and that's all. They're not in great demand during the war, so Microtech has shifted to its almost ignored line of combat cyberdecks, which *are* in great demand! The company has used the profits to hire an entire battalion of Lazarus Group troops to guard its assets, fearful that a larger competitor (i.e., EBM) might attempt to seize bits of Microtech (or the whole company!) during the confusion of war.

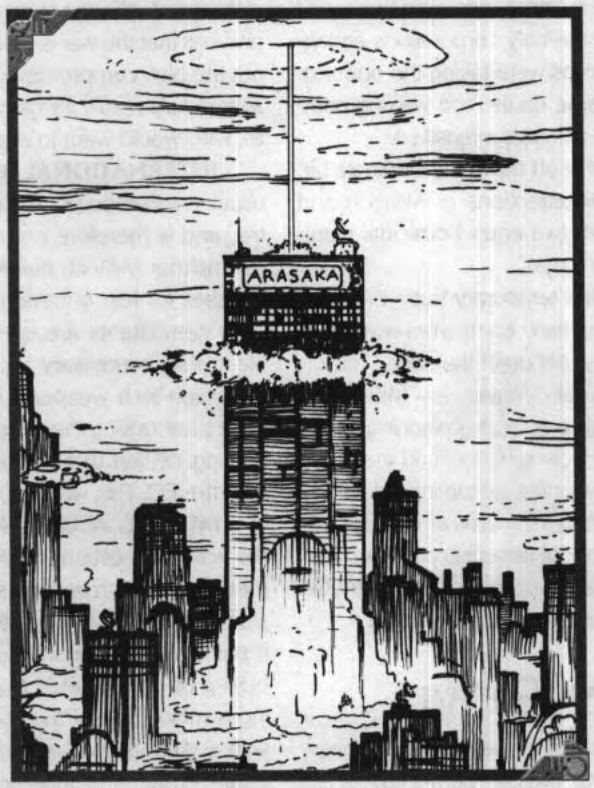
MILITECH: See Arasaka, above.

NETWORK NEWS 54: Talk about cashing in on the war! Net 54 has turned to its roots, and is broadcasting five minute updates on the war every half hour. Net 54 has even hired a large number of freelancers to help cover the war, since they didn't have enough people to cover every potential trouble zone ... and that's just in the U.S. Net 54 is spending a lot of money to acquire foreign correspondents, since it can't use any of the reports that come out of WNS. These foreign correspondents see more than just the Militech-

Arasaka war; WNS is practically offering a bounty on Net 54 people operating outside of the U.S. In response, Net 54 has its bounty hunters out looking to flatline WNS and DMS reporters.

ORBITAL AIR: As noted in the timeline (pages 93-95), Orbital Air is having its own problems with the war. Most of the war's effects don't reach into orbit, but those that do rank from annoying to lethal. Orbital Air is particularly annoyed with the ortillery wars—between the two of them, Militech and Arasaka have turned the lowest orbit zones into a war zone. As much as it would like to just do a complete sweep of all unidentified orbital hardware, Orbital Air can't afford the men, machines, and ill will that would cost. As it stands, the leaders of Orbital Air have to wait and watch the situation deteriorate.

PETROCHEM: Petrochem's futures are booming! The fuel shortage (see pages 13, 105) has played right into the corporation's plans, and it has responded by increasing production—after it raised its prices, of course. However, Petrochem has its own problems to worry about—not only are its far-flung assets vulnerable to attack in this era of high firepower and high prices, but its old adversary, SovOil, is back to plague the American fuel lords. This has resulted in a general mobilization of Petrochem's military assets, including calling in the markers and debts for every gang that the oil giant has ever sponsored. Some have noted that the American Midwest hasn't been this peaceful in three decades, since Petrochem's dirty-work mooks are now nervously patrolling the perimeters of Petrochem's outposts. (Others are looking nervously at Petrochem's growing army, and are wondering what the corporation is going to do with it after the war.) The sniping conflict known as the Avgas War is currently occupying a fair number of Petrochem's new army.



SOVOIL: Like its American brother, SovOil is as busy as it can be, pumping oil for increased weapons manufacture and making fuel as fast as it can. Also like Petrochem, SovOil is increasing its defense troops, in order to deal with its little war with the Texan competition.

TRAUMA TEAM INTERNATIONAL: TTI has gotten even busier during the war; the company's capabilities are stretched to the limits. For a start, TTI declared that they wouldn't respond to any alert from anyone who was a member of Arasaka or Militech. They just couldn't; one battle would tie up every TTI team in an entire city otherwise. Instead, TTI would only respond to civilian requests, and they'd be charging the combat rate if anyone so much as fired a weapon within half a kilometer! Even with those extra costs, TTI is always swamped with calls after every Militech/Arasaka clash.

GAME NOTE: The bigger the battle, the less chance that there is for Trauma Team to show up. If the PCs are working for Militech or Arasaka, Trauma Team won't even respond!

WORLD NEWS SERVICE: When the war broke, WNS went to Net 54 and offered a deal: If they cooperated, they'd both rake in the ratings (and the cash that went with them). Net 54 figured that most of the war would be fought in the U.S. and its environs, which was solidly Net 54 turf, and said no deal. WNS then declared that Net 54 would get *nothing* from WNS, and they have a battalion of lawyers ready to serve if Net 54 took so much as a byline from a WNS report. Since then, it's been a sort of undercover war between the two, with WNS wooing Diverse Media Systems as a supplier of news inside NorthAm.

WORLDSAT COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK: For the first part of the war, WCN didn't have a thing to worry about. They leased some more channels to Arasaka/CINO and Militech/OTEC, but aside from that, all they had to do was watch out for sudden shifts in spy-sat orbits as both sides jockeyed for position. Then the ortillery wars started. As soon as the first orbital artillery barrage was fired, a previously unrevealed killsat destroyed the artillery satellite, turning it into an orbital navigation hazard that would eventually threaten WCN's satellites. A robot work crew had to be sent to clean up the wreckage. And things have only gotten worse since then. WCN has gone as far as issuing coordinates for all of its hardware to the major orbital powers, as well as Militech and Arasaka, with the ultimatum that anyone damaging one of these orbital assets will be stricken from using WCN's satellites!

ZETATECH: Sure, the war has meant steady sales of cybermodems and related gear, but it also means that Zetatech must be on constant alert, in case one of their competitors decides to try a hostile takeover. With that in mind, Zetatech has worked out a product exchange deal with the Lazarus Group; for a lot of Zetatech product, the Lazarus Group considers itself to be on retainer in case Zetatech is attacked, and will send up to a regiment in aid if needed.

THE LAZARUS GROUP: The world's largest mercenary firm has announced its neutrality. This has made it the Swiss bank of the military world; every corporation worried about damage from the war has hired TLG to protect it in case of attack.

WHY IS THERE A WAR?



Arasaka and Militech have been contesting each other for domination of the world's arms market for decades. This competition swiftly became a commercial rivalry, turned to good use in marketing, since most people think in black-and-white, good-or-bad terms. By fostering an "us vs. them" attitude, Arasaka and Militech salespeople could elicit an ancient tribal response pattern in their customers. Patrons of one company could be persuaded to invest emotional capitol in "their side", and would cheerfully buy more products from "their" suppliers. It was a proven sales pattern, and both companies milked it for all that they were worth, painting their rivals as threats to "our way of life."

The darker side of this rivalry was that Saburo Arasaka soon came to irrationally consider Donald Lundee a real enemy, a deadly adversary representing the country, people, and even the military force (the United States Marine Corps) that had stolen his glorious warrior's career from him.

For his part, Lundee soon battened onto the rivalry between the two corporations as a method of distracting fellow board members from his secret goal of total domination of both Militech and the world arms market. He could claim that the actions he ordered were to counteract Arasaka "dirty pool", and sales figures always vindicated him.

The Big Lie

As time went on, Saburo Arasaka came to identify Militech, and Lundee, as the major source of everything holding him back. He harbored the secret suspicion that they were actively blocking his plans for world domination, and were attempting to bring back the 20t- century rule of the United States ... and all the humiliation of his crippling wounds, Japan's losing the war, and the American occupation thereafter, began to gnaw on his mind.

As for Lundee, Arasaka became a foe he could deal with in a primitive and decisive manner—with firepower! He came to regard the corporation as a vast, nebulous octopus with Saburo Arasaka at its center, a sparring partner that could be fought on the battlefield. It was someone he could brag about beating, unlike his occasional triumphs in the boardroom. Whenever Arasaka acted, Lundee was quick to react.

Market Wars

Of course, the real conflict was being fought economically, as Arasaka plunged its assets into weapons merchandising and Militech added an ever-growing line of security subsidiaries. For years, neither company succeeded in significantly penetrating into the other's territory. Finally, in 2021, Arasaka's Asian sales exceeded Militech's, striking a crippling blow to Militech's solvency and morale.



The Shadow War

After years of sniping at each other, the CINO/OTEC conflict provided ample opportunity for Militech and Arasaka to clash. When it finally and inevitably happened, neither Saburo or Lundee were ready to end things indecisively. Each coveted a decisive victory, a smash-up so great that the other side would be forced to back down (Saburo gloated for days about the possibility of forcing Militech into an "unconditional surrender").

Yet neither could accelerate matters too far without risking government and market reprisals; too much war would anger governments worldwide and cause business to abandon both corporations. As the Shadow War wore on, Saburo and Lundee became directly involved in assigning missions and sparring with each other in a sort of complicated live chess game.

(For Lundee, the war represented another chance, that of grabbing ultimate power within Militech. Some of Militech's executive losses during the Shadow War were *not* due to Arasaka actions ....)

The Final Struggle

By the time the Hot War broke out in June, there was no turning back. Saburo Arasaka and Donald Lundee took the gloves off and began directly slugging each other's organization, with the sole intent of defeating each other. In fact, both corporations are so involved that they *daren't* back down or stop the war; if one of them did, they would lose every market they'd ever built up, through a combination of bad publicity and negotiated settlements (not to mention damage suits).

Conspiracy Theory

Some intellectuals can't accept the idea that the whole war's a "tit-for-tat" fight. There have been several theories about who's really behind the war, but the predominant one names the investment firm of Merrill, Asukaga, and Finch as the instigators of the war. The theory goes that MA&F has been monitoring the situation between Arasaka and Militech, and has decided to destabilize the situation into open warfare now, when damage can be localized, rather than waiting for later, when the damage would be greater.

Of course, this is only a theory.

GLOBAL TARGETS FOR THE HOT WAR

Here are the most likely targets of the war. The garrisons listed are the latest unclassified information; the actual numbers may vary. Support is listed as armored (ground tanks), air (fighters and bombers), and heavy (tanks, aircraft, ACPAs, and artillery). See page 77 for explanations of Threat Levels.

MILITECH TARGETS

– Corporate Headquarters –

Washington, D.C., USA. Fortified, urban, 500 Threat Level AA troops. Not suggested as a target, due to proximity to U.S. seat of government.

– Regional Offices –

Chicago Port, Illinois, USA. Fortified, urban, est. 2000-3000 Threat Level AA and A troops, with heavy support.

New York City, New York, USA. Fortified, urban, 150 Threat Level A troops.

San Francisco, NorCal. Fortified, urban, 150 Threat Level A troops.

Los Angeles, SoCal. Fortified, urban, 900 Threat Level A troops, with heavy support.

Night City, NorCal. Fortified, urban, 300 Threat Level A troops, with armored support.

Bogota, Colombia. Fortified, urban, 600 Threat Level B troops, with heavy support. Government troop support of this facility makes it a hard target.

Rio de Janiero, Brazil. Fortified, urban, 450 Threat Level A troops, with heavy support. This location is thought to be a prime target for Arasaka assault.

Tokyo, Japan. Fortified, urban, 450 Threat Level A troops, with heavy support. This facility is likely to undergo a virtual siege, sequestered by Self Defense Force troops in order to "protect" it from attack.

Cairo, Egypt. Fortified, urban, 300 Threat Level A troops, with air support.

– Manufacturing Facilities –

Aircraft plant, San Diego, SoCal. Rural, 500 Threat Level A troops, with air support.

Shipyards, New London, Connecticut, USA. Urban, 150 Threat Level A troops.

Vehicle Works, San Jose, NorCal. Urban, 500 Threat Level A troops, with armored support.

Electronics plant, Night City, NorCal. Fortified, urban, 300 Threat Level A troops, 30 Threat Level AA troops.

Ordnance plant, Manila, Philippines. Fortified, urban, 300 Threat Level A troops with heavy support.

Ordnance plant, Amsterdam, Holland. Rural, 150 Threat Level A troops. Note that the EEC responds swiftly and with force to any attack on their soil.

Small arms plant, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA. Fortified, urban, 300 Threat Level A troops.

Small arms plant, Albstadt, Germany. Urban, 150 Threat Level A troops. Note that the EEC responds swiftly and with force to any attack on their soil.

– Camps and Training Facilities–

Most Militech training camps are too tough for Arasaka to deal with, and destroying them would be a useless exercise, since Militech has routed most of the troops from those camps into field duty. Only two are worth attacking:

Special Operations, Camp Rainey, Georgia, USA. Fortified, rural, est. 2000-5000 Threat Level AA troops. It's the least defended of all Militech camps, and destroying it would do Arasaka the most good.

Special Projects Site and Proving Grounds, New Mexico, USA. Fortified, rural, est. 2000-3000 Threat Level A troops. This installation is spread out and hard to find, as well as being largely underground, but even damaging it would be a victory.

ARASAKA TARGETS

– Corporate Headquarters –

Tokyo, Japan. Fortified, urban, 500 Threat Level A troops, with heavy support. Not suggested as a target, due to proximity to Japan's seat of government.

– Regional Offices –

Hong Kong, China. Fortified, urban, 1000 Threat Level A troops with heavy support. Arasaka has been digging in here; a major assault is expected.

Sydney, Australia. Urban, 250 Threat Level B troops. Arasaka maintains a minimal garrison here. If attacked, the troops will fight to the last and inflict massive damage. They do expect Militech to attack in an attempt to please the government of Federal Australia.

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Fortified, urban, 2000+ Threat Level A and B troops, with heavy support.

New York City, New York, USA. Fortified, urban, 500 Threat Level A troops, with heavy support.

Chicago Port, Illinois, USA. Fortified, urban, 3000+ Threat Level A and B troops, with heavy support.

San Francisco, NorCal. Fortified, urban, 250 Threat Level B troops.

Los Angeles, SoCal. Fortified, urban, 1000 Threat Level A and B troops with heavy support.

– Manufacturing Facilities –

Industrial Complex, Yokohama, Japan. Fortified, urban, 1500 Threat Level B troops, with air support. Not suggested as a target, due to proximity to Japan's seat of government.

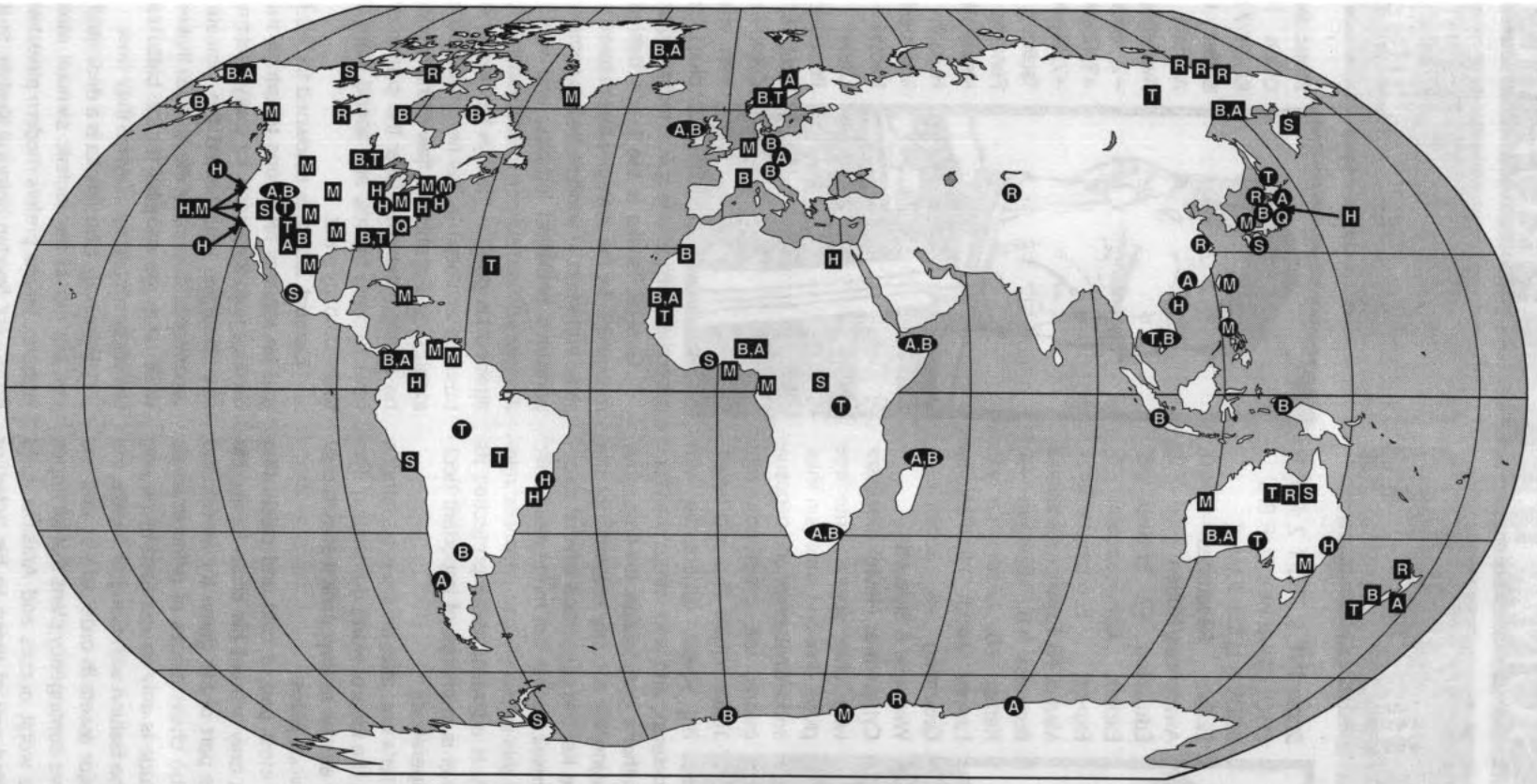
– Camps and Training Facilities–

Jungle Operations School, Brazil. Rural, 1000 Threat Level B troops, with heavy support.

Winter Operations School, Colorado, USA. Rural, 500 Threat Level A troops, with air support. This is likely to be a prime Militech target.

R&D, Honshu, Japan. Fortified, rural, 500 Threat Level AA troops. A valuable target, but it's so secret that locating it is the major difficulty.

ARASAKA AND MILITECH SITES



Ⓐ Arasaka Air Base Ⓑ Arasaka Army Base Ⓜ Arasaka Manufacturing Ⓡ Arasaka R&D Ⓣ Arasaka Training Facility
Ⓢ Arasaka Space Facility Ⓠ Arasaka Headquarters Ⓡ Arasaka Regional Offices
Ⓐ Militech Air Base Ⓑ Militech Army Base Ⓜ Militech Manufacturing Ⓡ Militech R&D Ⓗ Militech Training Facility
Ⓢ Militech Space Facility Ⓠ Militech Headquarters Ⓗ Militech Regional Offices

PERSONALITY PROFILES

Kei Arasaka
Defacto CEO of Arasaka



Stats: INT 9 TECH 2 REF 6 COOL 10 ATTR 8 EMP 8/5 BODY 8 LUCK 3 MA 7
Skills: Resources +10, Awareness/Notice +2, Education +7, English +6, Expert: Administration 5, Expert: Economics/Stock Market +8, Expert: International Business +8, Handgun +4, Karate +3, Leadership +6, Library Search +5, Personal Grooming +5, Social +4, Wardrobe & Style +8.
Cyberware: Neural processor with chip socket, interface plugs, data and smartgun links, subdermal armor and nanosurgeons, left cyberoptic with Times Square Plus and targeting scope, cyberaudio with phone splice, scrambler, bug detector, and voice stress analyzer.

Kei Arasaka runs his father's corporation full-time now. Saburo is reported "in seclusion for security reasons" for the duration of the conflict. While Kei has presented several directives directly from Saburo himself, he has not made any public appearances. Many consider this incredibly bad for public relations, but the Arasaka family is adamant about protecting its patriarch. In the meantime, Kei is in charge of important decisions as well as day-to-day operations.

He is fully behind his father's war; after all, Kei is his father's son, and has been raised on the idea of world domination. The fact that the war is not going as well as they think it should only motivates him to more ingenious plans.

Kei Arasaka is, for the most part, a cold and calculating individual, showing emotion only around his close family. He sees the war as just another part of the game for power, and considers everyone in it to be chess pieces of different levels rather than people. This attitude is only encouraged by playing out war scenarios in wargame fashion with General Tanaka. He is fully willing to sacrifice major assets in order to win, and has done so already. He does have contingency plans that he hopes will save the *zaibatsu* if the worst occurs and Arasaka loses (although he has not revealed any of these to his father or General Tanaka).

Ubo Tanaka
Arasaka Chief General



Stats: INT 9 TECH 3 REF 5 COOL 10 ATTR 4 EMP 7/5 BODY 7 LUCK 9 MA 5
Skills: Combat Sense +8, Archery +2, Athletics +4, Awareness/Notice +7, Driving +2, Education +8, Endurance +3, English +5, Expert: Logistics +7, Expert: Strategy +9, Expert: Tactics 8, Expert: Wargames +8, Fencing +5, Handgun +4, Heavy Weapons +2, History +5, Human Perception +5, Interrogation +3, Interview +2, Karate +5, Leadership +9, Library Search +3, Persuasion/Fast Talk 4, Rifle +4, Social 5, Wardrobe & Style +5.
Cyberware: Neural processor with chip socket, interface plugs, data and smartgun links, cyberaudio with phone splice, radio link, and scrambler.

General Tanaka is the brains behind Arasaka's war. He is responsible for the strategies that determine where Arasaka troops strike and when. In addition, he has complete oversight on the corporation's battlefield logistics, and works tirelessly to allocate Arasaka's limited support to best assist the progress of the war. (He attained his position through his martial skills; he has almost no business acumen.) In this he is assisted by Kei Arasaka, whose insights into the ebb and flow of the financial world help Tanaka in his strategic planning. Over the course of the war, Ubo and Kei have become friends, and spend many hours together plotting their company's war.

General Tanaka is renowned for his fierce defensive tactics, and he requires his troops to extract the maximum amount of damage from the enemy for every centimeter of retreat. His offensive strategies tend toward the intricate maneuvers of classic Japanese battle (one of the qualities that endeared him to Saburo); while often too complex for the battlefield, Tanaka's battle plans are wildly successful ... when they work.

Personally, Ubo Tanaka is a dedicated soldier and tireless officer, but not in the archaic samurai mold cultivated by Saburo Arasaka. Tanaka prefers modern pleasures and comforts over his employers' Spartan historical lifestyle; thus, he lives in an Arasaka troop compound near Osaka rather than in the family compound.

General Donald Lundee
USMC (Ret.) CEO of Militech



Stats: INT 8 REF 5 TECH 8 COOL 7 ATTR 6 LUCK 2 MA 5 BODY 6/8 EMP 7/5

Skills: Resources +10, Brawling +5, Education +5, Expert: Executive +5, Expert: Military Weapons +7, Expert: Politics +5, Expert: Soldier +5, Expert: Strategy +5, Handgun +8, Intimidate +6, Leadership +7, Melee +3, Rifle +4, Social +1, Sock Market +2, Wardrobe & Style +5, Weaponsmith +6.

Cyberware: Neural processor with chip socket, muscle & bone lace and nanosurgeons, right cyberoptic with Times Square Plus, targeting scope, low lite.

General Donald Lundee retired from the USMC as the Collapse was just beginning, helping to reorganize Armatech/Luccessi into the Militech Arms company. Since then, he has remained CEO and one of the most, if not the most, influential persons on the board of directors. Although he doesn't own enough stock to control the corporation, his force of personality, allies, and success record have kept him on top, despite internal struggles.

Lundee is half of the equation that culminated in this war. He's set himself and Militech up against Arasaka so often and for so long that he's personally involved; it's become a matter of pride to defeat the Japanese and their attempt to take over the world's arms market (which is what *he* wants to do!).

He's not an easy man to get along with. Possessed of a fiery temper, he's made more enemies than friends. This same temper and self-assuredness has resulted in a dogged determination to see the war through to the bitter end.

Lundee's convinced that he's still a good general (and, in truth, he's not bad). His mercurial temper and impulsiveness have resulted in some defeats for Militech (like the opening assault on the Osaka arms works) and plenty of headaches for his top soldier, General Kutz.

"WE'RE COMMITTED TO ENDING ARASAKA INFLUENCE IN OUR TRADITIONAL MARKETS ... EVEN IF IT MEANS ENDING ARASAKA ITSELF."
—DONALD LUNDEE

General Frank Kutz
Commander of Militech



Stats: INT 6 REF 8 TECH 5 COOL 7 ATTR 4 LUCK 6 MA 7 BODY 8/10 EMP 6/5

Skills: Combat Sense +5, Athletics +8, Awareness/Notice 6, Brawling +5, Driving +2, Education +5, Endurance +7, Expert: Strategy +7, Expert: Tactics +6, First Aid +8, Handgun +5, Heavy Weapons +5, Human Perception +3, Intimidate +6, Interrogate +2, Interview +2, Karate +6, Leadership +7, Melee +4, Persuasion & Fast Talk +5, Rifle +5, Strength Feat +6, Swimming +6, Teaching +5.

Cyberware: Neural processor with chip socket, interface plugs, smartgun link, muscle & bone lace and nanosurgeons, cyberaudio with amplified hearing, radio, tight-beam radio, and cellular links, scrambler, and level dampers.

Frank Kutz was practically made to be a Marine. He got disgusted with the Corps and quit once the civilian government was reestablished, and joined up with his former general, Donald Lundee, in going over to Militech. Lundee made Kutz the corporation's chief of training, in view of his talents as a former drill instructor. Kutz took to it immediately, to the point of accompanying his troops on training and real exercises. This brought out a flair for leadership and an unexpected knack for strategy. A short stint at the Katzadoulos Military and Strategic Studies Foundation refined these skills, and Lundee began grooming him as the direct commander of Militech's combined military forces.

Kutz is still a Marine through and through: big, overly healthy, combative, and decisive. He's still got the top kick/drill instructor's mannerisms and views, and is noted for his tenacity. He doesn't back down, and he won't take lip from anybody, not even his boss and commanding officer, Lundee. Still, he's bright enough to realize that he's still a subordinate, so he's practiced at being able to persuade Lundee into abandoning stupid plans.

Strategically, Kutz isn't a brilliant mind, but he's dogged and relentless on attack, and wary on defense. His plans tend toward the "blunt instrument" school of attack, with large mobile reserve forces to compensate for the inevitable multiple-force battle plans that Arasaka favors (he still thinks like a soldier, and has trouble coping with the intricacies of classic Japanese strategies).

Adam Smasher Combat Cyborg



Stats: INT 4 REF 15 TECH 4 COOL 7 ATTR NA LUCK 4 MA 20 BODY 18 EMP Yeah, right...
Skills: Combat Sense +7, Athletics +4, Awareness/Notice +6, Brawling +6, Dodge & Escape +4, Driving +2, Handgun +5, Heavy Weapons +7, Intimidate +6, Melee +5, Panzerfaust +2, Rifle +6, Stealth +4, Submachinegun +4, Weapons Tech +2.
Cyberware: Full cyborg body, two sets of interface plugs, chip slot, pain editors, link set (smartgun, vehicle, data), optics suite (low-lite, thermograph, Times Square Plus, targeting scope, anti-dazzle), cyberaudio (radio, tight-beam radio, and cellular links with scrambler, scanner, enhanced range, amplified hearing, sound editor, level damper), wolvers in both arms, quick-change mounts, radiation shielding, biopod. Adam is built on a heavily modified Samson frame, and typically wears SP 20 armored coveralls when he's on the job (giving him a total SP of 42).

Adam Smasher was a fairly typical punk, a worthless New York mook who moved into the Army when they wiped out his gang. After several years in uniform, he was discharged for bad conduct and took up being a contract gun-boy in New York.

It was a good life for Adam: His lack of squeamishness and sadistic thoroughness brought in enough jobs to keep him in guns, gear, drugs, and brutal one-night stands. But he finally went on that one job where everything fell apart. A couple of rockets turned him into a meatloaf. His buddies backpacked what was left of him out of the zone and back to the Big Apple. A mysterious corporate benefactor took note and made him the classic offer he couldn't refuse: corporate service in a metal body, or death. As if thoughts of lost humanity would bother Adam ....

That was seven years ago. Since then, the new Adam Smasher, cyborg, has made quite a name for himself along the eastern seaboard. He'll hire out for almost any mission, as long as it's not an obvious suicide or double-cross. He does have one stipulation: Collateral damage and civilian casualties are a must. He has developed a quiet rivalry with Morgan Blackhand along the way, seeing the classic Solo as a threat to his metal-is-better-than-meat worldview. Adam has repeatedly tried to challenge him to a face-off, but Morgan has only ignored him. Naturally, this snubbing has simply stoked the cyborg's psychopathic rage higher.

Meanwhile, his secret benefactors have allowed him plenty of time for freelancing. That has changed with the war; now, Adam is somewhat fully employed by his patrons, who turn out to be a branch of Arasaka security. All this is fine with him, especially since he knows that Morgan is currently working for Militech ....

General Patrick Eddington Sr. U.S. Army



Stats: INT 8 REF 5 TECH 4 COOL 6 ATTR 5 LUCK 5 MA 4 BODY 5/7 EMP 5/4
Skills: Combat Sense +4, Accounting +2, Athletics +3, Awareness/Notice +6, Brawling +3, Driving +2, Education +6, Expert: Intelligence Analysis +6, Expert: Logistics +6, Expert: Military History +7, Expert: Strategy +8, Expert: Tactics +5, Handgun +5, Heavy Weapons +2, History +3, Human Perception +3, Interrogate +2, Interview +2, Leadership +7, Melee +2, Oratory +3, Persuasion & Fast Talk +3, Rifle +2, Social +2.
Cyberware: Neural processor with chip socket, interface plugs, and datalink, muscle & bone lace and nanosurgeons.
General Eddington started his military career in college, going into the Army as an ROTC grad. He switched over to intelligence analysis in the CIA for a time, but left that agency after he blew the whistle on a cover-up concerning chemical warfare during the Gulf War.

His military career took off again when the Collapse came. Eddington joined a unit out of Fort Leonard Wood, moving up through the ranks until he was in charge of one of the Midwest divisions. His competence would have landed him the post of military governor, but he refused, saying that he'd had a lifetime of power politics in the CIA, and would rather remain in the still political but less complex world of military life.

Still, his political fortunes soared as one of the most effective generals of Operation Big Stick, the campaign to destroy the Mantoga Corporation. When the post of overall COG commander became vacant, General Eddington was promoted to it.

At the present time, this leaves him as the person in charge of the Army's intervention campaign, Operation Pest Control. He's got the unenviable job of destroying Militech and Arasaka's ability to make war in the continental United States, while preserving their economic operations (which are vital to the U.S. economy!) and coordinating efforts with military commanders from the Free States and neighboring countries.

His only son is Chief of Intelligence in the Lazarus Group.

RECRUITMENT

"THEY CALL THIS WAR A MEAT-GRINDER. WELL, YOU'RE THE MEAT, AND I'M THE GRINDER, BABY!"
—ADAM SMASHER

In this war, Arasaka and Militech are calling in all their markers, and are preparing to use all their assets. Because of this, they need every deniable, er, Edgerunner that they can get. That includes the player characters! And the Hot War is best "experienced" (if that's the right word) by those who are in it, on one side or the other. Lord knows, there's nowhere to run; even LEO and Orbitsville are in the middle of "interesting times."

Maneuvering the PC's into one of the two camps is the first big job the referee faces—unless you want to let them try to sit it out (see pg 102). The following treatise is advice on how to move your players in the right direction.

• **A CHANGE IN ASSIGNMENT:** If you've played through *Stormfront* then there's a good chance your characters have already sold out, er, signed up to one side or the other. This means that the corps already have their hooks in them. Placing them in the middle of the action can be as simple as a change of assignment to Special Operations (see pgs. 24-25).

Now, it's entirely possible that your PC's may take issue with being pushed straight into the trenches. *Screw 'em.* Both Arasaka and Militech need every trained body they can field, so neither are playing straight with their Edgerunner contracts at this point. They'll either point out the fine print that obligates the PC's "for the duration of the hostilities," or create some other contractual pretext for keeping the PC's in corporate colors—they've got whole legal departments that specialize in this sort of thing.

Of course, the PC's might just bug out rather than go to war, breach of contract or no. This is not a good idea. First, the characters will ruin their reps on the Street and probably not be able to get another corp contract for the next ten years. Second, the corps have squads of covert hit people who specialize in dealing with this sort of thing as well. Heh.

• **PULLING IN FRESH MEAT:** Militech and Arasaka are using their best connections and fixers to recruit their crack corps of deniables. The recruiter that comes to "draft" the PC's is going to have scary levels of knowledge on how the player characters feel about the two warring corporations, and will know a lot of what the player characters have done to and for both corps.

For ease of game play, the recruiting attempt should come from the one of the two corporations for which the player characters have the most sympathy (or the least antipathy!)—in short, the one they're most likely to join.

There are three ways to induce the PC's to join: bamboozle them (blarney), buy them (bribery), or blackmail them. Read the explanations below and select the one which is most likely to succeed in roping the PC's into service of your chosen corporation.

• **BLARNEY:** This is a purely persuasive attempt to recruit the PC's. The recruiter vilifies the opposing corporation while pumping up his own. The effort is to make the PCs *want* to join up!

Appeal to player-character biases. If they've a grudge against one of the two corps, fan it. For instance, if the group has been hunted by Arasaka, then the recruitment will come from Militech, and the recruiter will know about the problems that Arasaka's caused them. Appeal to their desire for revenge, or for justice. They'll be paid to do what they'd do free; whatta deal!

If the group is greedier than they are smart, tell 'em that the side that wins is going to be the new world order ... and this is their chance to get in on the ground floor. Naturally, the recruiter's parent corporation is going to be the winner, neh? Spin the PC's vague promises of reward, power, and prestige when the dust settles.

• **BRIBERY:** Okay, the player characters don't buy the appeal to bias and the "new world order" bit sounds like smoke. So go for the bank account, always a sore spot with Edgerunners. After all, everyone has a price (and it's often disappointingly low). If they've worked for the recruiting corporation, mention this and emphasize the success (and the fact that they know they can trust the corp). If they've worked for the opposition and gotten double-crossed, use it! Offer combat wages (roughly 25% more than normal Edgerunner fees). Tell them that this time they get more support—transport, new weapons and gear, neat toys they couldn't get otherwise.

If they're difficult, dicker with them; go up to double their normal price if necessary. If they don't take it, mention that there'll be no other work from anyone else for the duration—a lie, but since when has lying been a problem for a corp? In addition, anyone running against a corporation now is in deep trouble. The Net is full of black ice, the Street is full of machine guns. There's nowhere to hide from the war; if the PC's don't join it, it'll find them. If you're going to get shot at, you might as well be well paid and supported. Right? So whaddya say?

• **BLACKMAIL:** If the player characters haven't fallen for the emotional appeal and are too paranoid to be bribed, then go for the choke. It's a rare PC group that hasn't done something blatantly illegal or otherwise punishable. Dredge up as many incidents as needed to convince them that the corporation controls their fates (be fair; don't use incidents that no-one outside the group knows about). Give them a chance for a clean slate, or just mention what happens if it gets out.

If the player characters are too squeaky clean to have any dirt, then find what or who they prize and take hostages. This is less risky than you might think! Sure, it makes for resentful agents, but anyone that clean is likely to be too honest to double-cross you and threaten what they love. (It's also a great plot point for the referee!)

THE USE OF EDGERUNNERS

"UNIFORM? MY BODY IS MY UNIFORM. YOU DON'T PAY ME ENOUGH TO WEAR ANY OTHER. NOW SIT DOWN AND TELL ME THE ASSIGNMENT."

—SHAITAN, FULL CYBORG SOLO

This is an introduction to how Edgerunner player characters might be utilized by each side. You can let your players scope it out as an article in the *Solo of Fortune* datazine—after they've signed up, of course. It just might make them paranoid enough to survive. Or you can just let them learn all of this the hard way ....

IN THE ARMY NOW

So you signed up, huh? Gave the old thumbprint on the datapad and sold your life for a few ducats. Well, welcome to the war, boys and girls. This is C. J. O'Reilly, coming to you about a subject near and dear to you all: Being sucked into the meat grinder of corporate conflict.



And you have been. The big boys are turning all the screws and calling in all their markers to swell their military ranks. You're pulling duties you've dreaded or dreamed of: front-line duty, garrison grunt, or "special ops."

Grunt Duty

If you're on front line duty, you are in trouble. You're designation is "expendable." If you're skilled, you're probably part of a strike team; if not, you're on guard duty somewhere. Either way, your a corporate grunt—a statistical soldier—and it's not fun.

Strike teams do the same sort of things that national soldiers do, except that you usually have heavier firepower, and are facing heavier firepower ... which doesn't say much for your survival rate. In addition, you're on the go all the time, moving from strike to strike. Your supplies aren't as reliable as special ops teams (see below); after all, they're the glory boys, and you're the grunts. You'll get adequate supply and medical care—hopefully. You should have good fire support on your missions—hopefully. Take care of your equipment, because there's a good chance nobody else will, and if your equipment goes, your caboose usually follows. And you do all of this under strict military discipline, as good little corporate grunts.

So you wanna be on guard duty instead? Well, it does have the advantages of stability—you're likely to be stationed in one place and left there. And it doesn't matter whether you're in Paris or Pago Pago, your life will be dull. You won't be allowed off post—too much danger of your being nabbed and pumped for information, or just plain replaced by an infiltrator. Life on post will suck, too—constant alerts, very few recreational facilities, and a life of paranoia, making certain that the employees and your fellow guards are who they say they are. At least your supply situation will be stable—as long as your post has supplies, so do you. It might run out, in which case the emergency stash you squirreled away (and you did make a stash, didn't you?) must sustain you until supplies are restocked.

Then there's the fun of waiting for that inevitable strike, the whole reason you're there. You know all those special ops guys who get all the real nice equipment? Or the strike teams who get all the big guns? That's who you're waiting for! (It does seem silly to stick the least-trained people where they have to guard assets from the most-trained people, but that's the way it is.) Hope you're ready. And remember, the more heavily fortified the position you're guarding, the heavier the hit that'll be directed against it. Just remember, darn few guards ever get medals for heroism..

Bodyguard duty is the worst. Some executroid determined that you're worth more to him as a bullet-catcher than as a combat soldier. Right now, bodyguards don't last long. There are just too many frightful sniper weapons, ranging from hand-held gauss guns to shoulder-fired lasers to orbital bombardment satellites. If you're doing your job right, you're in the way of said superweapons, and are therefore going to get spattered. At least you'll have the luxury of not having to wear hot, uncomfortable body armor—first, it looks terrible when everyone else is wearing a suit, and second, it won't stop the stuff coming at you anyway, so why bother?

So what to do if you're slapped with the bodyguard gig? Live it up while you can. Order expensive room service, flirt with the boss' mistress, act irrational and irritable. Maybe, if you're lucky, he'll "demote" you to something safer—like strike team duty.

Special Operations

Of course, if you're really good, they may not slot you into the regular T.O. & E. Skilled Edgerunners represent valuable—but unpredictable—factors to the military mind. So both Arasaka and Militech have formed special ops teams, mostly of elite corporate troops, but some of mixed freelancers with trusted corporate officers or non-coms assigned as commanders (i.e. to ride herd on you). While you're under their authority, they tend hold looser reins than with front line troops. They know top Edgerunners work best given

a little leeway. This might seem like a chill gig: the best gear, good logistical support—and a lot less military discipline and protocol.

But special ops is the serious "hot zone." Your designation has been moved from "expendable" to "expendable *and* deniable." You'll be assigned to a team of strangers, have a lot of new equipment thrown at you (some of it experimental, still in the packing case, with instructions that read "this way toward enemy" and "do not use in areas where the humidity exceeds 80%," etc. Scarry), and be sent off to war without even getting acquainted.

Sure, you'll get the best supply, support, and transport available, because you're doing most of the work in this war. You'll be hitting enemy assets in a war of hit-and-git strikes … four to five times a week or more, to be exact. And you'll take casualties, because you'll get shot at, a lot. Yeah, I know, that's not the way ops are supposed to work. Well, the normal *covert* operation has about a week of prep time. Here, you're gonna be lucky to get half a day's prep time … so things are going to go wrong, and people will end up hurt.



Don't worry: As soon as you take casualties, you're hauled off to a hospital and newbies thrown in to take your place. If you get hit, as long as you're in one major piece, you'll be patched up and ready to fight again in a week or two. Enjoy your physical therapy; it's the only vacation time you'll get!

And your missions! Deep penetration missions to secure data or extract people, assassinations, bombing strikes, pre-strike incursions on enemy sites, recons-in-force, full-on assaults on hard targets, and even the occasional counter-special ops ambush, waiting for another special ops team that's just as heavily armed and experienced to come along and have a nice, cozy firefight.

Combat Netrunners

Combat netrunning is a little out of my league, but I've been around enough of them to know that it's like special ops, but worse. You guys and gals get missions that resemble deep penetration, only you go in alone or with a bodyguard or two. Sometimes you go in with more than one 'runner, but that's rare.

What you have to do when you get there gives me the creeps: You sneak into the target installation, plug in, and go limp, while you creep around inside the target's computers, trying to grab or burn whatever you came for, and trying to avoid the defenses—which defy description in appearance and frightfulness, let me tell you—but then I don't have to, do I? The big problem is that most of the time, 'runners end up triggering every alarm in the whole installation, and your location has usually been well pin-pointed by the defensive software, so the mooks know just where to go. And then you're on the run, trying to get out before they close all the doors and seal your fate.

Take this piece of advice: Always go in with a back-up. Even with the flip-switch options, you can't keep track of what's going on around you as well as in cyberspace. A second pair of eyes is invaluable.

Staying Alive

The best advice I've found from anyone: Cover your behind. Keep at least ten separate sets of your own paperwork and records. Develop a safety net, somehow, even if it's only a deep hole with some supplies. Bottom line? Don't be a hero; that'll get you killed. Just do your job and try to cultivate friends in high places, so you get assigned the easy jobs.

Here's a weird suggestion: Becoming a double agent for the government of your choice isn't the world's worst idea. As the war grinds on and things get worse, you could consider it a sort of insurance policy—if you need a safety net, a good stable government looks better than the corporations right now. Most still think government service stinks—the Long March will always stay in mind—but it's better than the current alternative, particularly when it looks like Militech and Arasaka are locked into a mutual suicide pact. It's not much worse than normal corporate service; it just doesn't pay as well, and the people aren't as nice. Just don't let your current employers find out about it, right?

Remember: War isn't about natural selection; *anyone* can get killed in one. The stupid just tend to do it first.

— C.J. O'Reilly, reporting for *Solo of Fortune*

GAME NOTE: If any characters are new to their mercenary corp (i.e. didn't sign up in *Stormfront*), and don't have adequate military skills, they can be given a basic training course. It takes only two weeks and gives them 20IP to apply to the following skills (max +4): Awareness/Notice, Dodge/Escape, Endurance, Hide/Evade, Rifle, Heavy Weapons, Expert: Squad Tactics, and Wilderness Survival. If they have already had Covert Ops Training, they cannot take this basic training as well.

2. TECHNICAL BRIEFING

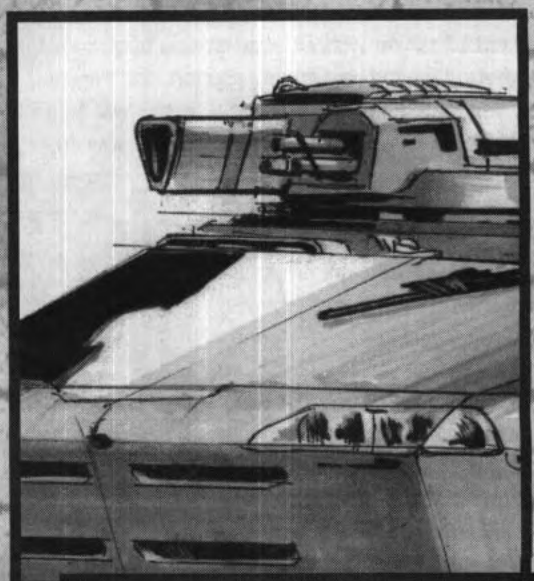
Welcome to the tech section, the guts of the Hot War. These pages contain a lot of the new tech that characterizes this war—new weapons, armor, and personal gear for the modern soldier. They may seem to be excessive, but this war isn't your father's war, fought in steaming jungles against ill-equipped or stupidly restricted foes. No, this is a war of urban jungles, where expertly trained troops with devastating weapons stalk each other through concrete groves beneath an umbrella of electronic warfare.

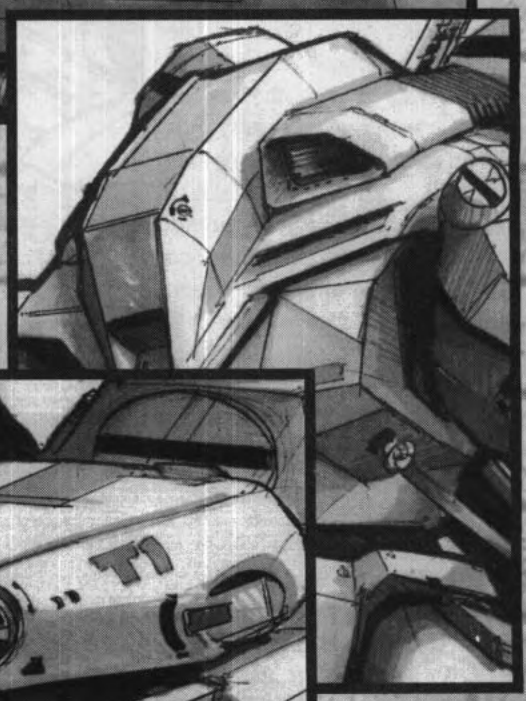
Most of the weapons and gear in the war aren't really new. Most of this conflict's killing tools have been around a while. The weapons and gear in this chapter are either largely experimental—production runs of prototypes shoved into the war to test their effectiveness—or common milspec gear that's now getting media attention.

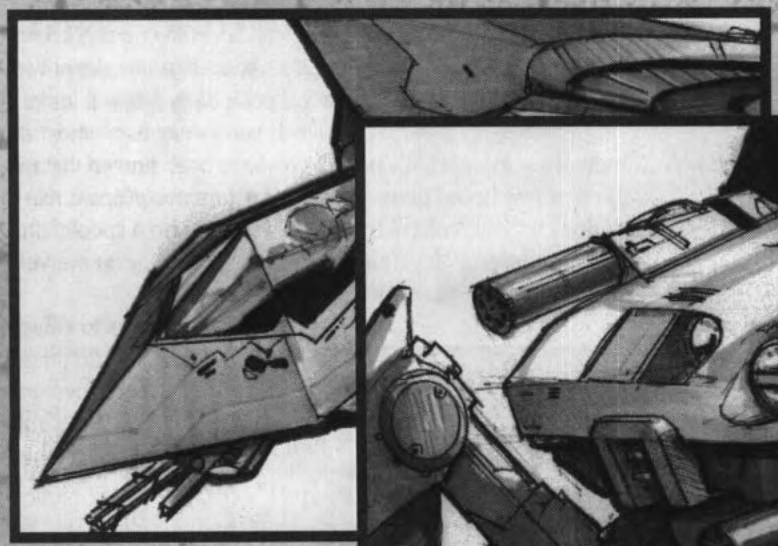
Also included in this chapter are some character roles that are less important to Edgerunner operations, but vital to modern warfare—vehicle crew and pilots, the men and women who work the aerodynes, jets, and armored fighting vehicles of war.

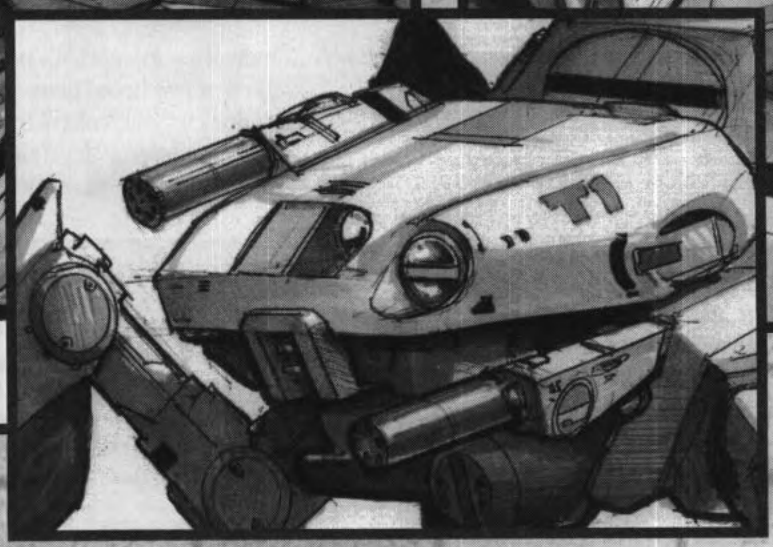
The end of the chapter contains the rules of warfare, the tools the referee needs to run the war. *Squad Tactics* features an abstract combat resolution system for refereeing large combats. *Panzerboy* details quick vehicle combat.

The war awaits.









HOT WAR OCCUPATIONS

PANZERBOY

Let the flyboys have the air. Let the grunts have the cities. Your home is the wide-open spaces and the open road, flying low with a cargo in back and an over powered engine out front.

Before the War, you had a lotta business. Who are you going to rely on to get items from point A to point B? The postal service? Ha! Trains? In Europe and Japan, maybe, but they're not safe anywhere else. Aircraft? Just *thinking* about shipping bulk via aircraft costs money. Nautical transport? That's just fine, unless you want to get your shipment inland—go on, just try moving that standard container to Salt Lake City via water.

Nope, surface transport is the only way, and you're the man (or woman) behind the wheel. It's different than it used to be; with cybernetic linkages, a driver can nearly merge with the machine he's driving. Its sensors become his eyes and ears, its engine and power train his legs and feet, its weapons his handguns. Of course, you need all that, because there are always those who want what you're carrying.

Now you're back where you started: In control of a multi-ton slab of moving armor and weapons. It's not much different; it just means you've got the guns to get your opposition before they get you.

And it means you've got to keep a weather eye out for infantry and weapons teams; you're in a real inviting target (a tank), and you can't duck very well.

You'll have little choice: The War needs you. Good drivers are hard to come by. You'll be involved in three types of missions: assault, recon, and transport. Assault means actually drawing down on a target and pulling the trigger.

Recon means going out—usually without back-up—to scout out enemy positions and so forth. You won't be doing much of this, since air vehicles are much more suited to the task. Sometimes you'll pull transport, which would normally mean easy street, right? Wrong! Anyone as good as you are will be stuck in an APC or IFV, trying to truck infantry into combat through heavy fire!

If you think that's bad, try assault. You're spearheading an attack into the enemy, which means you're out front, drawing fire. (They figure that your armor will make you invulnerable. You know better) And you know that if the tank's M-killed (rendered immobile), get out fast, 'cause a motionless tank is an instant artillery target.



"ME AN' MY GUNNER JAKE WERE SCREAMING UP THE OL' MISS WITH A FULL LOAD OF SOMETHIN', WHEN TH' SENSORS PICK UP AN ARA ON OUR TAIL, TRYIN' T' CLOSE. I HADDA STEP ON TH' THROTTLE WHILE JAKE LAID A LITTLE 20MIKE FIRE TO MAKE LIFE MORE INTERESTIN' FOR 'EM, AND DANGED IF'N THEY DIDN'T EVADE RIGHT INTO A SAND-BAR. TOO BAD. DIDN'T KNOW THAT WAS GONNA BE THE EASY PART OF TH' TRIP."

—WILLIAM SEWARD, PANZERBOY

PANZERBOY
Special Ability: *Vehicle Zen*
Choice of two from: Driving, Awareness/Notice, Operate Hvy. Machinery, Motorcycle, Handgun or Submachinegun
Pilot: Hovercraft
Basic Tech
Brawling
Expert: Navigation (see pg. 28)
Heavy Weapons
Rifle

New Skills

Vehicle Zen (3): Professional vehicle drivers can achieve a state of altered consciousness while driving; it's long been known that racers experience a significant rise in visual response and a spooky drop in reaction times. Driving the vehicle becomes instinctual.

Vehicle Zen is a special skill that allows bonuses to vehicular activity. There are variants (see below), but the basic advantages are enhanced control of ground vehicles and hovercraft (or aircraft or powered armors, as per variant)—the driver may add half his Vehicle Zen skill, rounded down, to rolls for maneuvers and handling—and the addition of full Vehicle Zen skill to Awareness/Notice and Initiative rolls while in ground vehicles/hovercraft. When not driving said craft, a panzerboy is out of his element; Vehicle Zen only adds half skill level to Awareness/Notice and Initiative rolls in this circumstance.

AEROJOCK

You always were addicted to speed and the freedom that flight could bring. You played every air-combat game on your folks' computer and then went to the arcade where you burnt out every full-motion simulator they had.

National (or corporate) service gave you the chance to fly for real: attack AV's, copters, and even multi-mach fighters. You took to the skies like a duck to water. They called you a fighter jock, a hot-shot, and a lot worse.

Of course, you had to fly within the service's rules, which clipped your wings more than you liked. So you finally left and went independent. There' was nothing you couldn't fly (or at least try). Osprey, jet, prop-job, chopper, AV, even delta—they were all your playtoys. And you got paid for playing with other peoples' toys, something you'd do for free!

Of course, the civilian market didn't have the really chill stuff, but at least you could make your own hours. A good, successful, versatile—if slightly crazy—pilot was always in demand.

This didn't mean that what you did was any safer. There was always plenty of danger out there—most of the newer aircraft had the glide ratio of a rock. But safety is for wimps in blimps. You'd disconnect those fail-safes, push the envelope, and go! There was plenty of seat-of-the-pants flying to be done, usually near ground level—but it just wasn't the same adrenaline rush as true combat.

This war seems like a dream come true. Finally, you get to fly the hot birds again, air-superiority fighters and attack craft, as well as transports, AV's, and ospreys. Who cares that your targets fire back? It just makes the game more challenging! And this time, you write your own ticket.

Of course, you're doing the same old missions—recon, where all aerojocks know the first rule of the job: fly past fast, get the pix, and get out before they can react to you. Transport missions mean behind-the-lines supply as well as carrying troops into battle! Sometimes you're assigned to a Special Ops strike team as their chauffeur and on-site support. Even being a "battle-taxi" can range from "milk runs" to "suicide runs."



"...SO I JINKED TO THE RIGHT AND FIRED OFF TWO FLARES FOR THE SIDEWINDERS WHILE VECTORING MY THRUST TO BRING ME TO A DEAD STOP. THE FLARES OVERSHOT AND THE MISSILES KEPT TRACKING ON THEIR THERMALS. THEN I ONE-EIGHTIED THE AV AND BROUGHT THE CANNON UP ON THAT DAMN PINTO BEFORE HE KNEW WHAT WAS HAPPENING. GETTING SOME 30MM DENTAL WORK CONVINCED HIM TO LEAVE MY AIRSPACE. DAMN MILLIE PROP JOCK."

—ROGER "BADGER" NAHJED, ARASAKA PILOT

There's also ground support—Ugly. The worst mission you can have, flying into enemy flak to bomb and strafe. SAM city. Get in low, dust 'em, and get out!

The mission you hope for is air superiority, a chance to fly fighter craft into glorious *mano-a-mano* combat. It's the last arena of true dueling, where a pilot's skills, endurance, and combat ability mean more than his aircraft. Too bad there aren't enough fighters to make these missions common.

So whether you're a regular corporate aerojock or a freelance pilot-for-hire, you've hired on into the thick of it to test your skills against the ruthless odds of war.

Best advice for any mission is to remember that the aircraft you're manning is often incredibly important, both to the mission and to the parent company (often more important than you!). If the mission's going sour, set your pride aside and abort. There's no face in going out in a blaze of glory. This is a corporate war, not the Charge of the Light Brigade.

AEROJOCK

Special Ability: *Aircraft Sense*
Choice of two Pilot skills (Gyro, Fixed Wing, Dirigible, Vectored Thrust Vehicle)
Basic Tech
Awareness/Notice
Choice of Aero or AV Tech
Handgun
Brawling or Martial Arts
Athletics
Expert: Navigation

New Skills

Aircraft Sense (3): This is a variety of Vehicle Zen. A pilot may use up to half his Aircraft Sense (rounded down) as a skill modifier for aerial maneuvers. The full skill level is added to Awareness/Notice and Initiative rolls while in aircraft. It only counts as half (round down) when making Awareness/Notice and Initiative rolls out of aircraft.
Expert: Navigation (2): INT skill. This skill allows the user to navigate from one point to another, using maps or knowledge of the land. Helpful tools include maps, compass, and global positioning systems for those who want to do it the easy way.

PA TROOPER

When the blast doors slide back, your alter ego stands waiting for you. Slip in and link up, and suddenly you're more than a mere human. You're a PA trooper.

It fits you like a second skin. You tread massively across the concrete, knowing that if you're not careful, you'll dent the flooring! You're big, you're massive, you're an invulnerable hulk. You can crush steel girders. You can ignore mere human obstacles like walls; they're no match for your strength, and you can crash right through them. You can leap higher and run faster than any normal man. You're superhuman.

And it feels so right! Other machine jockeys have to worry about thrust, about verniers and drive trains, about gyros and fuel flow. Not you. When you walk, you *walk*. When you run, you really *run*. When you pick up a pen and write, that's what you really do. There's no difference except for having to take a bit more care, 'cause you're bigger.

Of course, there are readouts and sensors and displays to monitor, but what modern soldier isn't burdened with them? Thanks to your interface, it's easier than playing a virtual game. That same interface dulls minor aches and irritations (so much for the old complaint about not being able to scratch that itch!) and lessens your fatigue, so you can keep going after lesser mortals have collapsed. And when you point, destroying beams lash from your fingertips! (Okay, not really. But a load of tracers in your arm-mounted minigun does just as well!) You find it easy to empathize with 'borgs.

The best part is that when the mission's over, you can crawl out of your cocoon and head out for a cold one with the rest of the boys, leaving your alter ego behind for a well earned maintenance period as you head off for some R&R. No nightmarish existence trapped in metal for you! It's an adventure, not a life. (Oh, and you might be a woman, too! There are more female PA troopers than most people imagine. Less mass, better endurance, and faster reaction times make women perfect PA troopers.)

So what does the War mean to you? Welcome to your niche. It's a war of limited forces and engagements, fought fast and furiously, in urban terrain. It's a war where swift use of firepower is paramount. In short, if there was ever a war made for you, this is it! You normally have infantry support to pike off enemy soldiers, there's little in the way of direct support to target you, and the environment is just nasty enough for you to be able to outshoot anything but another PA trooper.

You're going to pick up assault missions, and that's all. No-one's going to use ACPA's for garrison or clandestine duties. Make certain of your target information, and make sure to get a recovery clause in your contract. You're also going to pick up hostile fire, so make doubly sure you've got a maintenance clause in your contract, too! And be warned: a lot of officers think that powered armors are invulnerable, unfeeling robots to be sent in first to draw fire off of the other guys. Make certain that you impress upon such officers that that's not the case, or they'll use you like a 'borg.



"BORGS THINK THEY'RE THE ULTIMATE IN HUMAN WAR MACHINES. UH UH. WHEN I'M WEARING BABY, I CAN TAKE A HIT THAT'D MANGLE A 'BORG, AND RETURN FIRE EVEN WHILE I'M FALLING. I'VE GOT THE FIREPOWER OF A TANK, AND A WHOLE LOT MORE MOBILITY.

"I LOVE IT."

—MELINDA HAMILTON, ACPA PILOT

PA TROOPER

Special Ability: *ACPA Combat Sense*

Melee
Awareness/Notice
Basic Tech Rifle
Athletics
Heavy Weapons
PA Tech
Brawling or Martial Arts
Stealth

New Skills

ACPA Combat Sense (3): This skill is a variety of Vehicle Zen. While in ACPA, a PA trooper uses ACPA Sense as a modifier for Awareness/Notice and Initiative rolls, as well as using it like a normal REF skill for maneuvering and moving in the armor. It also counts as Dodge & Escape for PA troopers in their armor! It's practically useless outside of ACPA; a PA trooper only gets 1/2 (round down) this skill to use as Combat Sense when not in ACPA. Don't go thinking you're a solo.

Pilot PA (2): REF skill. PA Pilot is for other characters who do not specialize in ACPAs, much like someone can learn Streetwise, but not Streedeal. It is used when maneuvering rolls are called for, but does not add to Initiative or Awareness rolls.

PA Tech (3): Tech skill. This is the skill needed for maintaining and repairing Assisted Combat Personal Armors (ACPA).

STANDARD ROLES IN THE HOT WAR

As the wise man says, the smart man avoids the arguments of others, particularly when those others are hauling around autocannons and missile launchers. Most smart streetpunks are going to be doing what the rest of the population is doing during the war: Keeping out of sight and trying to avoid looking like a target.

There are those who see this war as an opportunity. They're right, of course; war is always profitable for business. The trick is making a profit without getting killed.

Solos

Naturally, solos are in great demand in the war. Killing is, after all, their stock in trade. There are plenty of opportunities to hire on with a multitude of participants.

There's a surprising market for guards out there. Most corporations and businesses are not interested in participating directly in the war between Militech and Arasaka. It's too risky to get involved—what happens if your side loses? And no matter who wins, once you enter the war on either side, you make yourself a target! Better to stay neutral. However, that doesn't mean sitting by and letting someone's collateral damage frag a business, so a lot of businesses are looking for good guards to protect their investments.

Of course, there are also the front lines, working for Militech, Arasaka, or one of the mercenary groups working for the pair. It's a nasty business, since you're going up against forces that are just as good as you are, and they're shooting to kill. Have a good medtech standing by!

Finally, just because the war's turned hot doesn't mean that clandestine operations are going to stop. Far from it: Now the covert ops are aimed at enemy supply lines, command centers, and vulnerable propaganda targets (faking enemy involvement to convince others that the enemy is doing something wrong).

A piece of sage advice: This is war, so watch your back. Cover your, um, self when it comes to contract agreements, and keep a weather eye peeled for the double-cross.

Netrunners

A good 'runner can take out an enemy command post or other installation without ever getting close. Or he can simply break in and steal enemy plans and codes, which can turn an enemy attack into a disaster. Netrunners are very popular hirees for information break-ins of all kinds.

Netrunners are also essential guards for all command and communications. The Net is as much a battlefield as the physical battlefield, and information can be dangerous—every command post has to deal with massive streams of data, and it's so easy to code a virus or daemon into the datastream ....

It's not easy work, though. ECM and other forms of EW make cellular commo unreliable, so you have to work through land-lines and direct contact. In addition, it's war, so the gloves have come off, and the Black Ice has come out to play. Watch your step, or you'll get burned.

And the worst part is what separates the combat 'runners from the armchair slugs: You'll have to take your portable modem out onto the battlefield and get "stuck in." Military and other high-security systems are usually isolated from the Net (see page 90-92), which means you have to travel to them to access them ... which means dealing with their defenses. Good reflexes and physical prowess are as essential as good programs, and you'd better know how to use firearms.

For more on netrunner abilities and tactics, see Alt.Battlefield (page 90).

Fixers

Two words: black market. When there is war, there are always items that are in great demand and limited supply. Identifying, locating, procuring, and remarketing said items is the road to success for those with the right connections. You can even be proud of yourself and the job you do; no-one says you have to be a pig and gouge your customers. Providing quality service at a fair price may cut into your profits, but remember that the war will end before your business does (you hope), and customers have long memories—treat 'em well, and they'll be back.

There is a second role for fixers in wartime: information brokerage. True, this is what a lot of fixers do normally, but in time of war, information handling becomes even more frantic and fast-paced (because war information has a shorter shelf life). A lot of fixers can end up as go-betweens, contacts, and even controllers for spies and other agents!

This is a hideously dangerous role to play; be warned that you'll be able to trust no-one. You can't trust even your closest associates, because there's every chance that they'll be a danger to you, whether they know it or not (ever heard the term "spy trap?"). Carefully examine every piece of information that comes to you; false information is everywhere (re: "spy trap"). Know what's false and what's true; knowledge (and paranoia) is your best defense.

Corporates

This war is exactly the sort of "corporate infighting" that most corporates fear. The battlefield is no place for an executive, but that's exactly where many will be, seeing to the interests of their parent corporations.

It's actually a good chance to move up on the corporate ladder. Nothing like a little field experience, some combat, and

several successful missions to brighten one's resume! You might even get a trivial wound, just enough to make a visible scar. Remember that the soldiers under your "command" are a darn sight better at this sort of thing than you are (military corporates notwithstanding), so just follow their lead and look confident. (But don't get cocky! Always remember that your #1 role in this war is *being a target*!)

Medias

"May you live in interesting times." That's the dream of most medias, to live in time of constant change and fast-breaking news.

Welcome to that dream. The war is the best thing that's happened to media in almost a decade. Imagine, a war in every city! All the opportunities for news-gatherers: news reporting, in-depth stories, background research, live interviews, making history documentaries for sale on the Net or via direct mail, gathering material to make docudramas for years and years, etc. Some times you'll just find yourself in the right place at the right time. If your news agency wants coverage of an area, itmight assign you there, so you'll be around when the frack starts to fly.

Remember the old standby for gathering war news: attach yourself to a military unit as a war correspondent. It's the best way to get the news first-hand (and it's safer, because there are other targets besides yourself).

Of course, media's mission in war goes far beyond discovering the news; once you have the raw data, it must be "refined" into something fit to present—that's right, spin-doctoring! As a spin doctor, you'll be figuring out what coverage to use, and when, and where; remember, facts are just tools, and the truth is what you want it to be.

Techies

Techies will find a great deal of employment as maintenance personnel, as well as being babysitters for newtech just hitting the battlefield for the first acid test. Dealing with the battlefield requires skilled hands; the environment is stuffed full of tech that's beyond the average soldier. And what's the enemy got that's new? There's always the job of recovering their newtech, which means crawling out into no-man's land to grab it.

If you're not working with the troops, then there's always scavenging the battlefield for discarded newtech. This goes hand in hand with the black market fixers who'll be happy to pay well for keen toys looted from the dead ....

Medtechs

There are few situations where medics are as well loved and appreciated as during a war. Most weapons are made to mangle and wound rather than kill; body armor can reduce the lethality of most rounds, making the wounding situation even worse.

"OH, THAT'S A GOOD ONE, ALL RIGHT. WENT CLEAN THROUGH THE BICEP, JUST MISSED THE ARTERY, BUT ... BINGO ... IT BLEW THE HUMERUS LIKE A LITTLE GRENADE. BE GLAD IS WASN'T A HIGH EXPLOSIVE ROUND OR YOU'D BE WAVING A STUMP AROUND RIGHT NOW. SO, DO I FIX IT OR REPLACE IT WITH SOMETHING THAT WON'T BLEED?!"

—RIPPERJACK

Most medtechs will be in the thick of the action, acting as corpsmen on the field of battle. Wearing medical identification is a good idea; both Arasaka and Militech respect medics, and neither side will fire on them while they go about their duties.

Rockers

War is no place for rock and roll—at least that's the popular opinion. Popular opinion couldn't be more wrong.

The entertainment professionals know better. Rock and roll, and other forms of popular entertainment, are all about popular opinion and the shaping thereof. Every war of the information age has revolved on opinion and perception.

Rockers have the opportunity to change opinion from the front lines. As callous as it sounds, capitalizing on a local massacre or atrocity can swing opinion rapidly. And, sad to say, corporations are willing to pay a lot for the ability to spin opinion the way they want ....

Nomads

A war zone is a dangerous—but potentially profitable—place for a nomad clan. Discounting the chance of being killed by some stray piece of ordnance, the business opportunities are outstanding. You can drive anything on treads, wheels, or skirts—maybe not as well as a Panzerboy, but close. Plus, who knows the area better than the local nomads? The forces may want to hire you as scouts, irregular troops, logistical support, etc. They'll pay top dollar—if only to keep you from telling the other side where they are.

Just beware. Losing a fully decked-out ACPA trooper while probing the enemy's defenses hurts. Losing a nomad pack doing the same thing doesn't. Don't let your family be used as cannon fodder.

Make sure to keep your eyes open. Often, the way to win a war is to know when to change sides. Remember, he who makes the most Euro off the conflict wins. And you want to be a winner ... right?

WEAPONS AND ARMOR



ARASAKA TROOPER IN FULL KIT

PERSONAL WEAPONS

ARASAKA WCCA "SUSANO-O" GRENADE RIFLE

"A lot of grenade fiends would love to get their hands on one of these. It's lighter than the M-212, more durable, easier to maintain, and has a lot more firepower. It's also fraggin' intimidating when you see it from the business end ...."

—Morgan Blackhand

HVY • +0 • N • P • Varies (25mm) • 9 • 2 • VR • 200m • 450eb

Multiple-shot grenade launchers have been available for decades, but they all have some problem or another—most of them are rotary cylinder designs, which suffer from accumulations of environmental crud in their cylinders. What's more, any revolver has pressure fall-off because of the breach between cylinder and barrel. Militech solved this problem by using a sealed drum in the U.S. Army's M-212.

Still, Arasaka's special forces didn't want to mess with the fussiness and bulk of such designs, and went ahead with their own weapon: a blocky, pepperbox-style grenade launcher named after the mischievous Japanese god of thunder. The all-ceramic construction of this nine-barreled troublemaker keeps it exceptionally lightweight (2.5kg unloaded), utterly reliable, and easy to handle.

The three-by-three layout of the WCCA's barrel array allows any number of barrels to be fired at once, with sequences and load combinations programmed into the weapon's microchip (Smartchipping allows direct neural control of this feature). However, firing all nine barrels at once could injure the firer and will definitely destroy the weapon ... but that's OK, since once all 9 shells have been launched, the weapon's totally disposable.

ARASAKA ELECTROTHERMAL SNIPER RIFLES

"Excellent. Low recoil, deadly accuracy, even a reduced report. However, watch out for the muzzle flash, particularly with the Hiyari—the Wehrmacht-style muzzle brake is super-efficient, but it vents the exhaust up and out. Fire off more than three shots in rapid succession and you'll get a nice 'V' of plasma pointing straight at you!"

—Haruko Kanawa

SETSUKO-ARASAKA WSE "KAJIYA" 7.62MM PLASMATIC SNIPER RIFLE 1000eb (2000eb cyberlinked)
RIF • +1 • N • R • 9d6+3 (7.62mm ETE) • 5 • 1 • VR • 500m • 1000eb (2000eb cyberlinked)

BARRETT-ARASAKA WSSE "HIYARI" 12.7MM PLASMATIC SNIPER RIFLE
RIF • +1 • N • R • 8D10+3 (.50 BMG ETE) • 10 • 1 • VR • 1000m • 2500eb (4000eb cyberlinked)

ARASAKA 12.7MM WSSE/R "DAHIYARI" PLASMATIC SNIPER RIFLE

RIF • +2 • N • R • 9D10 (.50 BMG ETE) • 5 • 1 • VR • 1200m • 2000eb (3000eb cyberlinked)

As soon as electrothermal enhancement technology came out, snipers started clamoring for it. Arasaka, under license from the JSDF, is producing three new sniper rifles for military use. The WSE is a smoothbore variant of classic .308 bolt-action sniper rifles, and the WSSE applies the same concept to the semiauto .50-caliber snipers. The WSSE/R is a bolt-action smoothbore .50 BMG rifle, for that added accuracy.

MALORIAN ARMS ASSAULT CANNON

RIF • +3 • - • N • 7D10+4 • 12 • 2 • VR • 400m

This prototype weapon was given to the legendary solo Morgan Blackhand (see cover picture) by the equally legendary weaponsmith Eran Malour. It's the finalized model of his long-awaited Assault Cannon, which was first unveiled on October 18th, 2020 (see *Night City*, page 163). This massive autoloader fires its .75-caliber smart-grenades from low-pressure steelcased shells, so recoil is modest (about that of a 10-gauge shotgun, although the muzzle flash is impressive). These projectiles are actually rocket-powered, laser-guided micro-missiles (similar to smart bullets, see pg. 34) with fragment-doped explosive-gel warheads (if armor is not penetrated, armor's SP is reduced by 1/2 total damage rolled). Twelve-shot box magazines of this ammuntion feed into a port ahead of the trigger assembly—when no clip is loaded, the foregrip can fold up to seal the magazine well against fouling. Being made of carbon-carbon composites, the weapon is fairly light despite its bulk, but at the moment Morgan owns the only one. Production and sales won't begin till next year.

MILITECH MARK V ASSAULT RIFLE

RIF • +1 • N • P • 9D6 (6.5mm ETE) • 20 • 2/4 • ST • 600m • 1500eb

Considering the hitting power of electrothermal enhancement, it was inevitable that Militech would modify its standard Mk IV assault rifle to use the new technology. It took some doing—the ammunition feeds and firing mechanisms had to be completely changed—but Militech's boffins succeeded! The corporation now has the world's most powerful assault rifle.

There were (and still are) problems, though. The rifle is a lot more complex than the original Mk IV, and the slower cyclic rate of the electrothermal ignition process practically made the rifle into a semiauto. When combined with the necessity for providing special ammo and the powerpack, these factors have relegated the Mark V to use with Militech's special forces instead of going into general issue.

MILITECH XR-1 MAG-PULSE GUN

"First time I saw one of these used was in that affair in Akron. Silent Slim had one, and he popped a Standard-B's chest pod at 500 meters. Wonderfully accurate, and deadly. Kicks like an autocannon, though, and it breaks down if you look at it sideways."
—Morgan Blackhand

RIF • +2 • N • P • 3D10AP (12/5mm EAP) • 20 • 1 • UR • 800m • 8000eb

A couple of years back, Rhinemetall won the race to put out the first man-portable railgun. Their closest competitor, Militech Electronics, was developing a different concept—instead of a monster railcannon, they wanted the next step in the common battlefield firearm, a rifle that could be carried and fired by the normal soldier. They had just begun testing the final prototypes when the war broke out. Suddenly, there was a real market for incredible sniper rifles with high armor penetration, and the prototype went into production without testing.

The XR-1 (like all other railguns) is not silent—the round makes an almighty "crack" as it goes hypersonic. It's not invisible, either. When the round's shock wave pushes atmosphere out of its way as it leaves the muzzle, the air flashes incandescent. In addition, the XR-1 does kick heavily. Its recoil factor is 6 (see recoil rules, *Blackhand's Street Weapons*, page 48—these rules are NOT optional where the Gauss rifle is concerned!).

Note that the XR-1 may be the size of a large rifle (say, an auto shotgun), but its battery is larger than that of a car's requiring a 16kg backpack. The hypervelocity EAP (extra armor penetration) ammo counts all armor as 1/4 SP and halves all damage that penetrates armor.

AMMUNITION

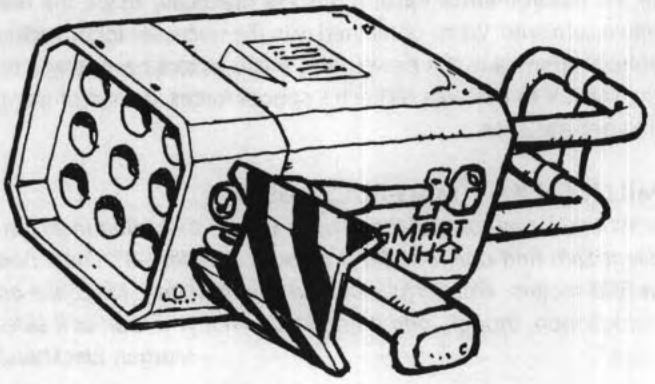
50-caliber BMG: 15eb per round

This is the ammunition used by .50 BMG machine guns and the Barrett M-90.

MILITECH XR-1 MAG-PULSE GUN



WCCA "SUSANO-O" GRENADE RIFLE



50-CALIBER SMOOTHBORE ETE FIN-STABILIZED: 25eb per round

This is ammunition used by the WSSE/R.

50-CALIBER HEX: 30eb per round

This is .50 BMG ammunition filled with as much high-explosive as possible, fitted with a penetrator cap and a microsecond delay impact fuse. This does explosive damage with regular armor penetration; it's built for structural damage, so it does double SDP (after subtracting for armor). However, the delay makes it a terrible antipersonnel round—it frequently passes right through soft targets before detonating! When hitting a soft target with soft armor, the round does only half damage after armor penetration. Likewise, the explosive tends to deform and detonate on heavy vehicle armor (does half damage to hard armors over 25 SP).

GAUSS ROUNDS—20eb per magazine; a full charge for the battery pack costs **10eb**.

SMART BULLETS: x10 cost (SH2)

These are fin-stabilized, thermal targeting, course-correction "seeking" bullets. When fired, they lock on to the thermal signature of the target and correct trajectory by a few degrees in flight. The overall effect is to help compensate for the sniper's flaws (no, they don't follow the target like micromissiles). A seeking round adds +1 WA when fired from a rifled weapon, +2 WA when fired from a smoothbore, at Long and Extreme ranges. They are easy to spoof; roll 3+ on 1D10 for the round to lock on to the target, -4 if there's a flare or other hot heat source within 3 meters of the target, -7 if there's a flare, hot smoke, or scatter grenade cloud between the target and the firer, with additional minuses for IR-shielding (clothing, etc.—see *Chromebook 2,* pages 27-28, for examples of clothing with Infra-Red shielding) as appropriate. These rounds are only available in 12mm/.50 cal and larger rifle calibers. All cannons of 20mm or better size can use them, too.

HAND-FUSING FOR LAUNCHED GRENADES: +5eb

This modification adds a method of hand-fusing 30mm and 40mm launched grenades. It's a fuse ring installed between the round and the casing; to fuse it, the soldier twists the round and casing a quarter-twist in opposite directions. The grenade is then impact fused; as usual, the grenade will not detonate until its inertial fuse has flown 5 meters (which is the minimum range when thrown). The propellant is also detonated when the grenade goes off, adding 1D6 damage to the explosion. Fine for those wanting to ditch hand-throwns in favor of lots of ranged grenades.

AIRFOIL GRENADES: 2x cost

"I can't get over the impression that these look like kids' toys, like some sort of plastic glider." —Morgan Blackhand

These are ring-shaped grenades sculpted into a self-stabilizing airfoil. They can be thrown for twice the normal throwing distance, with +1 WA. The following types of grenades can be used in airfoil form: High Explosive, Chemical, Flash, Flash-Bang, Sonics, Biotech Askari Motion Restraint Bomb, GPz-70 Mini-Grenade, Scatter, Spraypaint, and Stench Bomb.

If desired, Airfoil Grenades can be acquired as "rifle" grenades (same 2x cost). These are lightweight "bullet trap" designs, which means they have a spigot inserted into the barrel of the gun, and the gun can't be fired normally until the grenade is removed or fired off. They have the same effect as normal hand grenades, with a range of 300m and WA -2 (use HVY skill), and can be used from any firearm of at least 5.56mm bore.

PERSONAL ARMOR

"How to separate the veterans from the wannabes? Wannabes talk about the size of their guns. Veterans are more interested in good protection." —Jan "Tesukaya" Brett

INSERTS

SP +5, maximum SP 20; 40eb per location

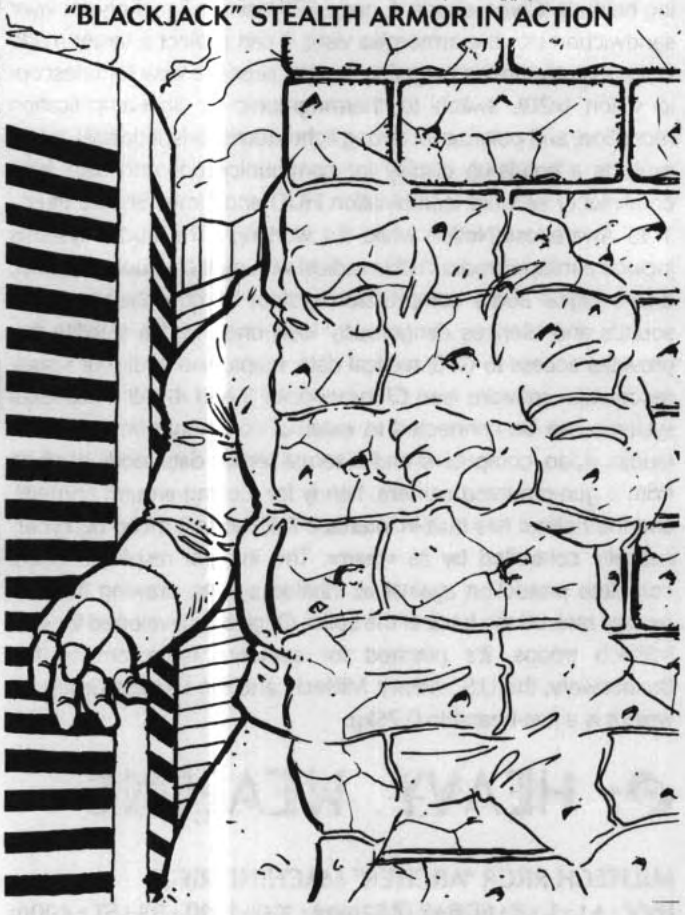
Almost any medium or heavy soft armor can have rigid ceramet inserts added for extra hard armor protection. This adds 5 SP to the appropriate location and makes the soft armor into hard armor at that location. It also adds +0.5 EV for each location so armored (torso and abdomen count as one location for cost and EV).

FULL PLATES

SP 20, 60eb per location; SP 25, 100eb per location

These are full-protection pieces of composite hard armor that cover the majority of an appendage or torso and abdomen. These can be worn over one layer of soft armor and combine normally. The EV is +1 for the torso armor, +1 for armor worn on the arms, +1 for armor worn on the legs, limbs, +0 for the helmet (+3 all together). Pieces must be bought separately for head, each arm, and each leg; torso and abdomen come as one piece. Please note that it's cheaper to purchase MetalGear™ if you want the whole ensemble (and it's better balanced at +2 EV).

"BLACKJACK" STEALTH ARMOR IN ACTION



ARASAKA "BLACKJACK" STEALTH ARMOR

SP16, EV+2, +3 Stealth skill (audio), 4-hour life support (95%), radar invisibility (90%), optics (low-lite, anti-dazzle, targeting scope, and Times Square Plus) • 10,000eb

Ever since Militech came out with the M96 Ghostsuit and Gibson Battlegear came out with the Sneak Suit, soldiers and solos have decried the fact that they're mutually exclusive—that is, you can't wear one with the other. Besides, both suits hardly provided enough armor protection to deter a mallbrat.

Until now. Arasaka has devoted considerable time and effort to stealing, er, improving on both technologies and merging them into one all-purpose suit of armor. The suit is an SP 16 soft armor, made entirely of circuit-embedded Kevlar. An integral hood and breathing mask cover the face (flexible circuitry "sof goggles" woven into the mask give the wearer low-lite, anti-dazzle, targeting scope, and Times Square Plus). "Capillary" cooling tubes run throughout the entire suit, absorbing the wearer's heat and dispersing it through a heat exchanger that minimizes thermal signature and helps power the suit's systems. The suit is a filtered environment (95% immune to airborne gases and agents); a 4-hour rebreather can be fitted to the integral utility backpack (which also houses the batteries, computer, and heat exchanger) to make it a closed system. The backpack has enough room to carry a disassembled assault rifle and three banana clips (or the equivalent). Two holsters come with the suit to carry pistols or other items, and special scabbards can be obtained for knives and short swords (1000eb per scabbard). This is necessary for the chameleon effect, since anything carried externally won't have its appearance altered by the suit!

Stealth armor has the same game effects as the Militech M96 "Ghostsuit" and the Gibson Battlegear "Sneak Suit" (-4 to visual and infrared Awareness checks to spot, increased by -1 per ten meters distance from the viewer; see *Chromebook 2*, pages 27-28, for details). In addition, it's made out of radar-absorbent materials, so it's 90% invisible to radar, and it has integral negative-sound generators, which defeat sonar detectors and add +3 to noise-related Stealth rolls. For an extra 1000eb, it can be outfitted with a fully compatible vest, capable of hauling up to the equivalent of four heavy pistols. The entire ensemble has EV -2.

MILITECH EMA-1 (ENHANCED MOBILITY ARMOR) "SOFTSHELL"

8500eb

Heavy armor usually sacrifices mobility, so the quest for heavy armor that allows you to move without problem continues. Raven Microcyb came very close with its Viper powered armor (See *SOF2*)—Militech's special operatives loved the protection and mobility, but were horrified at the mass (350kg for the lightest suit!) Hardly the sort of thing for stealth.

Thus, Militech's brainiacs went to work. If the Viper could use what was essentially a linear frame as a base chassis, why couldn't an upgraded frame be made lighter? What they made was the EMA series.

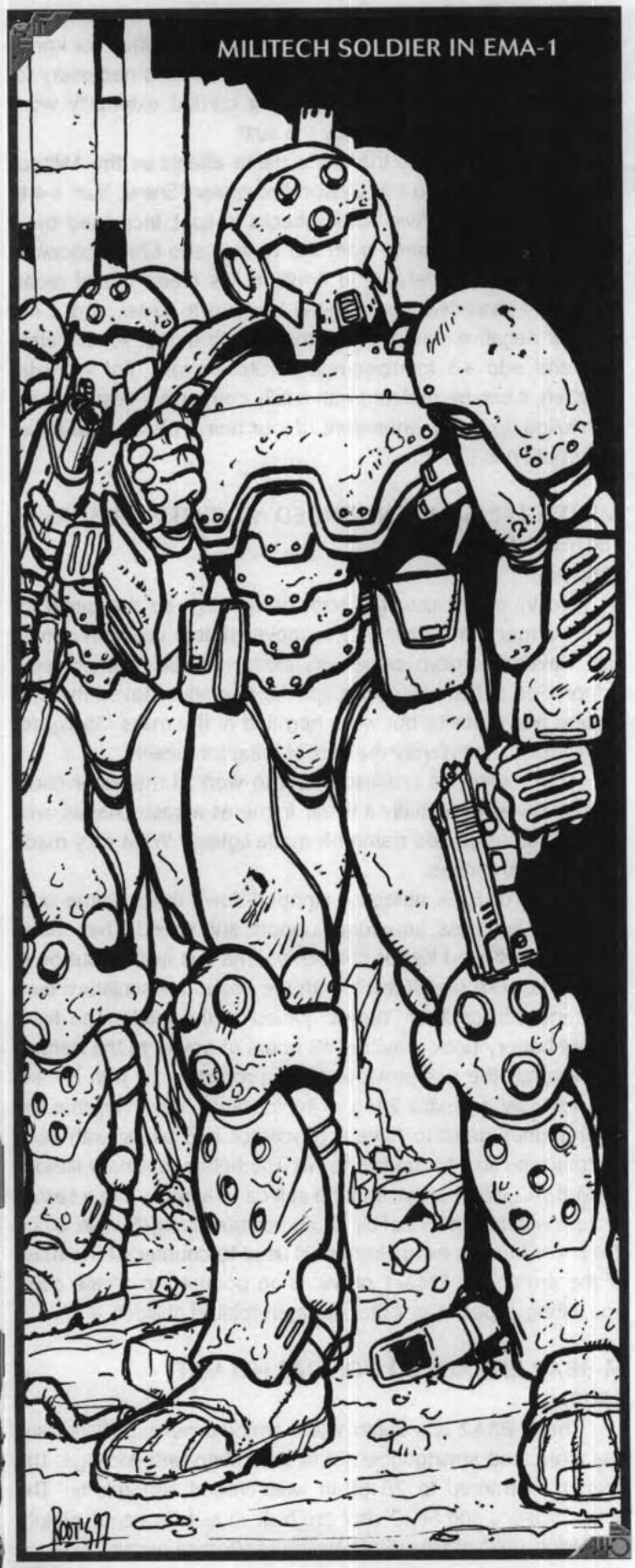
A suit of EMA utilizes a stripped-down linear frame optimized for lightness, structural support, and speed. Over this is layered a stiffened Kevlar composite. The suit itself is put on in stages, just like MetalGear™, with the pseudomusculature bundles and carbon-fiber "bones" joined at the joints. The lightweight battery pack provides 48 hours of power to the frame.

Overall, the suit provides SP25 protection ... with EV +0, and for only an extra 21kg of mass! Note, however, that the wearer does need to have a processor and plugs (with vehicle/machine link) to run the frame. The helmet normally fitted is an M-88A2 (see below), and the suit can be made into a sealed system with four hours of air for an additional 5kg/500eb. Since the linear frame's extra strength is used to counteract the mass of the armor, the EMA-1 provides no bonuses to melee damage, lifting capacity, or other strength-related abilities.

M-88A2 ENHANCED COMBAT HELMET:

2399eb

The M-88A2 is a combination armored helmet, HUD visor, gas mask, and smartgoggle set all rolled into one package. The helmet is armored to 25 SP in wrap-around armorplastic. The audio pick-ups and SP20 visor are built so as to enhance peripheral vision, nullifying the visual Awareness/Notice penalty for wear-


MILITECH SOLDIER IN EMA-1

ing helmets (*Chromebook 4*, page 67). Using a liquid crystal layer sandwiched into the armorplas visor, it can project a target marker for smartweapons (targeting scope), alter the view for telescopic vision (x20), switch to thermographic or light-amplification reception, and polarize for strong light situations (antidazzle). It also projects a heads-up display for communications and data from comlinks or sensors (combination HUD and Times Square Plus; -1 to Awareness/Notice while it's working). The audio systems include a milspec radio (10km radius) with multichannel scrambler, and a digital audio compression system which enhances quiet sounds and silences dangerously loud ones, and a satellite link provides access to GPS, tactical data, maps, and audio- or visual-recognition software (see *Chromebooks 3* and *4*). All audiovisual systems can be connected to external communications sources (audio, video, computers) and external sensor data feeds (such as from a gun-mounted camera, handy for looking around corners), and the helmet has built-in interface links so that it can be cybernetically controlled by its wearer. The integral respirator offers complete protection against all inhaled agents, drawing from an oxygen tank on the back of the collar. Originally developed for elite Militech troops, it's planned for standard issue among the *Bundeswehr*, the U.S. military, Militech, and the Lazarus Group. Its weight is a just-bearable 0.75kg.

HEAVY WEAPONS

MILITECH RRCR "ARCHER" MACHINE-RIFLE

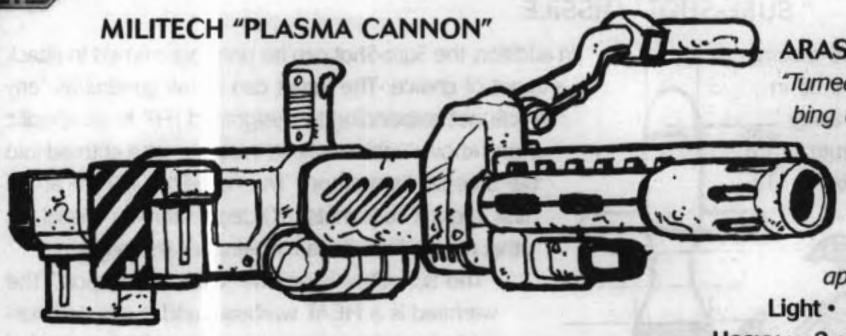
HVY • +1 • L • P • 6D6+2 (7.62mm) • 100~1000 • 33 • ST • 400m • 3300eb

In order to design a super-lightweight, highly portable squad support weapon for its special forces troops, Militech's engineers unearthed an old concept: Russell Robinson's "constant reaction" system. Using a complex arrangement of super-strong, precisely fitted springs, the constant-reaction system could compress a .50-caliber machinegun into a four-foot-long, shoulder-fired weapon—and this was in 1943! Although ingenious, Robinson's theories faded into obscurity due to reliability problems—the springs in the weapon took the force of the recoil directly, and nearly every part of the gun moved in concert during firing. One misalignment would cause a jam or misfire.

Using computerized precision machining techniques, the "Archer" is as soldier-proof as possible, given the quirky design: Its belt-fed 7.62mm rounds have special thermoplastic cases to help minimize heat build-up (they also cost 2x normal), and the unreliable springs have been replaced with super-durable memory-plastic coils which are guaranteed to outlive the all-ceramic barrel. Still, no matter how good the machine is, a soldier in the field will find some way of breaking it, so there's a good deal of reservation among troops about this thing. However, the RRCR is attractive in that it weighs a mere 4kg and is only as long as an assault rifle.

Because the firing chamber and feed assembly mechanisms preclude putting a butt-stock on the weapon, the "Archer" must be

MILITECH "PLASMA CANNON"



fired from the hip. Therefore the weapon comes from the factory with smartchipping as a standard feature, so that it can be used effectively with a gyro-mount harness (which negates the -2 penalty for firing from the hip, as well as penalties for firing while moving). The RRCR accepts 100-round ammo boxes, but its belt-fed nature allows it to feed from a 200-round buttpack or even a 1000-round backpack ammo hopper (EV-1).

MILITECH BMFG 30MM "PLASMA CANNON")

"Finally, someone figured that electrothermal propellant tech could be reversed to make lighter guns. I look forward to the 10kilo .50 caliber sniper rifle …. "

—Dexter Dobbs

HVY • +0 • N • R • 9D10 (30mm ETE) • 5 • 1 • ST • 600m • 4500eb, +2000eb for cyberlink

Advances in electrothermal propellant technology have made a great many guns shoot harder and faster. Militech figured, why not use it to make a big gun shoot just the same, but make the gun lighter? The answer is the BMFG, a truly man-portable 30mm cannon. Of course, it's portable as long as the carrier doesn't mind the 25 kilos of mass for the weapon, an additional 5 kilos for the battery pack, and 5 kilos per clip of extra rounds. But it can be fired by an unassisted man (recoil factor 9). The cannon is, of course, smoothbore. Since the weapon can't be fired from the shoulder, some sort of smartchipping (if nothing else, to a monocle) is highly recommended. Standard rounds cost 90eb apiece; a power pack recharge costs 25eb.

SETSUKO-ARASAKA "NOVA" ONE-SHOT PHOTON CANNON

"The last word in unnecessarily complex sniper weapons. Trust Arasaka to make it."

—Morgan Blackhand

HVY • +4 • N • R • 4D10 • • 1 • 1 • UR • 500m • 50000eb

This is a man-pack, one-shot variant of the powered-armor "Photon" cannon. Using a standard ACPA power pack tied to a stripped-down laser assembly, this 30kg monster is designed for sniper actions against unarmored vehicles and property. Once it is fired, it is burned out and unusable.

Though it's hideously expensive, finicky in the field, and fragile, there are advantages to this weapon: It has practically no signature (only the "crack" of displaced air), and it's really, *really* accurate.

ARASAKA EMF LAUNCHERS

"Turned the siege of Chicago into a fiasco. Aras were bobbing up from behind cover on every street, pasting the Militech armored boys with these dam bombs. Neutralized a platoon of powered armor and half a company of main battle tanks. Utterly humiliating. I've heard that countermeasures are already being applied …."

—Racer Chiba

Light • -2 • L • P • 10D10* • 1 • 1 • ST • 100m • 550eb

Heavy • -2 • N • P • 20D10* • 1 • 1 • ST • 100m • 1500eb

Grenade: 500eb

The Oriental martial arts advise turning your enemy's strengths into weaknesses. Arasaka has taken this to heart. Militech's great strength lies in its heavy metal: tanks and powered armors in numbers too great for Arasaka to fight. The answer was to strike at the enemy's pressure points, to turn the mass of armor from a barrier into a way to damage the foe.

The EMF launcher is little more than a normal antitank rocket launcher; the light is a normal one-shot LAW, while the heavy corresponds to the RPG. The only difference is that the shaped-charge warheads are replaced with special high-energy capacitors tipped with a "super-glue" bonding element. The warhead sticks to the target and discharges polarized electricity into the target's armor, briefly magnetizing that armor and propagating the magnetic field into the vehicle's interior. This field polarizes and damages computer chips and circuits inside the target, rendering them useless. You don't have to blow up an enemy to neutralize him!

Game effects are as follows: If the target is hit by the round, roll damage location and penetration as normal. If over 10 points of "damage" get through the target's armor, the affected location will lose all electronics in that location (count the equipment as "destroyed," except it has no chance of exploding). ACPA's affected in this fashion lose the use of affected limbs and all equipment mounted there; if the torso is affected, the whole armored suit shuts down!

Important note: None of this damage is real! These rounds do NO SDP damage!! (If a live target is struck by one, though, count the hit as 1D6 concussion for light rounds and 2D6 concussion for heavy rounds—and hope you're not magnetic! because if you are, the shock will shunt into you, doing the listed damage *through* your armor—ouchie.)

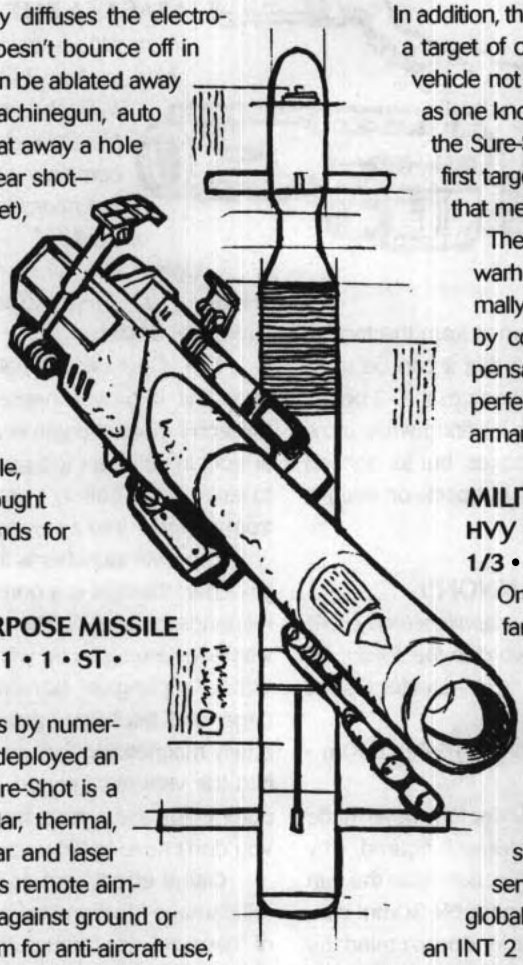
Militech is developing a countermeasure: Nonmagnetic paste laid over a mildly-charged copper grid covering the vehicle's



"NOVA" PHOTON CANNON

exposed surfaces. This quite effectively diffuses the electromagnetic burst, assuming the round doesn't bounce off in the first place. Of course, this coating can be ablated away by normal gunfire (10+ hits with a machinegun, auto grenade launcher, or autocannon will eat away a hole that gives an EMF launcher gunner a clear shot—count it as a called shot at a small target), and it doesn't cover everything (roll 1D10—on vehicles, a roll of 9-10 means rocket missed the protective coating. A roll of 7+ does the same when shooting at ACPA's).

The light launcher is a one-shot, the heavy launcher is reloadable (1000eb per round), and nonlaunchable, potato-masher hand grenades can bought for 500eb (act as Light launcher rounds for damage effects).



MILITECH "SURE-SHOT" ALL PURPOSE MISSILE

HVY • +2 • N • P • 18D10AP (HEAT) 1 • 1 • ST • 3000m • 4m burst rad. • 75,000eb

After decades of abortive attempts by numerous manufacturers, Militech has finally deployed an all-purpose missile in the field. The Sure-Shot is a "brilliant" missile, with fully active radar, thermal, and optic guidance. It can accept radar and laser target painting (see page 73), as well as remote aiming, and adjusts its own speed for use against ground or aerial targets (it reduces its range to 2km for anti-aircraft use, but boosts its speed from its normal 1000kph to 2500kph—which means it travels that 2km in 2.88 seconds!).

The missile is a one-shot throw-away "fire and forget" munition packed into a 1.5m x 60cm diameter tube, massing 60kg. The package includes a small minicam and 200m of fiber-optic cable for remote aiming (it can also be plugged into any smart-gun link that features a targeting scope—including internal smart-gun/cybereye setups as well as the MVS and smart-goggles!).

In order to aim the missile remotely, the user notes the target with the camera or targeting scope and presses the fire button (or orders the missile to fire). The missile will fly to where the target is, look for it, and try to hit it. If the target is a ground target, the missile will "pop up" into the target's top armor. The Sure-Shot always uses the best chance to hit, selecting the most advantageous method of homing (including successful radar or laser illumination).

In addition, the Sure-Shot can be preprogrammed to attack a target of choice. The target can be as general as "any vehicle not responding to designated IFF" to as specific as one known vehicle whose image can be entered into the Sure-Shot's memory. The Sure-Shot will fire at the first target it sees in its 120-degree forward visual arc that meets the criteria for being a valid target.

The Sure-Shot is not the "ultimate weapon." The warhead is a HEAT warhead, and is affected normally by composite armor. It can still be spoofed by countermeasures; its limited AI tries to compensate by switching sensor modes, but it's not perfect. And it can still be neutralized by antimissile armaments.

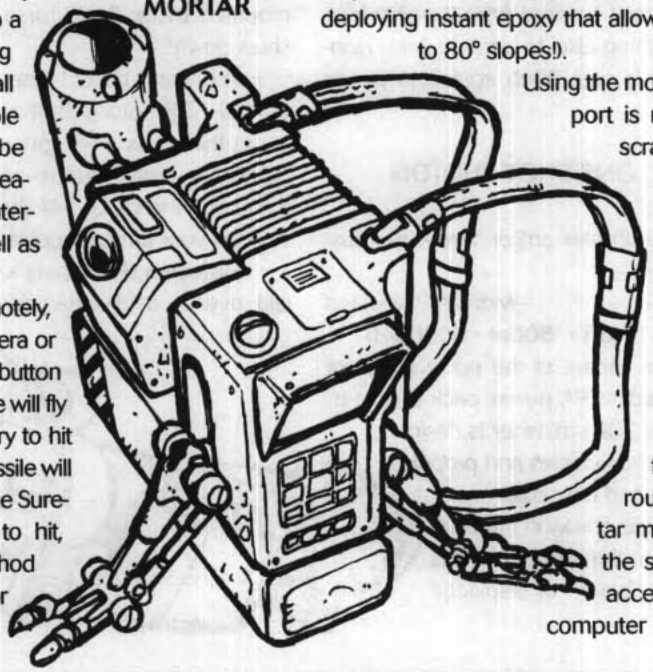
MILITECH BACKPACK MORTAR

HVY • "+17" • N • P • 7D6/3D6 (40mm) 20 • 1/3 • ST • 500m • 5m/10m radius • 1250eb

One of the biggest problems with modern warfare's reliance on very small unit actions is the difficulty of providing support for the troops—when there aren't more than 20-30 troops involved in the entire engagement, there usually isn't time to roll up a battery of artillery or mortars.

The back-pack mortar is a self-contained, short-barreled 40mm mortar with powered servo traverse and elevation, equipped with a global positioning sensor, a scrambled radio, and an INT 2 computer brain, all folded into a back-pack sized unit that weighs 25kg. To operate it, the user sets the unit on the ground and folds out the three stabilizing legs (which ensure stability on uneven surfaces, clutching with the attached claws or even deploying instant epoxy that allows it to stick to sheer surfaces—up to 80° slopes!).

BACKPACK MORTAR



Using the mortar is very simple. When fire support is needed, a soldier with the right scrambler combination (issued individually with the mortar) calls in the request with precise GPS coordinates, and the mortar commences firing. The mortar's effective Heavy Weapons skill of +17 is the only modifier used in the indirect fire sequence, so it's likely to miss often.

The mortar can be reloaded for extended barrages (each 20-round clip weighs 10kg). The mortar may be retrieved by disengaging the stabilizers; when this is done, an access code must be entered into the computer or it wipes its programming,

becoming useless until reprogrammed—and the reprogramming codes are kept at the factory. This feature prevents the mortar from being seized and used against its owners (although there is still a danger of the enemy acquiring the scrambler combination and issuing fire orders to the mortar! This is not likely to happen, though).

MILITECH MAN-PACK ARTILLERY ROCKET

HVY • "15" N • P • 13D10 • 1 • 1 • VR • 2000m • 15m burst • 1500eb

The man-pack rocket is similar to the man-pack mortar, except that it weighs 20kg, has only one shot, and the shot is a 5" artillery rocket. It works the same way as the man-pack mortar, but is destroyed when it's fired. It can use variable shell types (smoke, white phosphorous, antipersonnel bomblet, etc.) but is usually loaded with a simple HE warhead.

MILITECH "4-PACK" MISSILE PACK LAUNCHER

"Militech didn't often have to deal with enemy armor. The one time the Aras rolled out some honest-to-goodness tanks, when they attacked the Militech test range in Heywood, the Mils had a nasty surprise waiting for them: Their staff had just been testing 4-Packs. Five burnt-out tanks later, the Aras called it quits."

—Shaitan

HVY • "+15" • N • P • 20D10AP • 1 • 1 • ST • 3000m • 6m burst • 11000eb

This weapon resembles the old M204 multiple rocket launcher. It's a shoulder-fired nonreloadable box launcher with four missiles. They fire in a one-two-three-four sequence within 1.25 seconds, and the recoil is actually quite startling (recoil rating BOD 8), despite the 22kg mass of the system.

The first missile is an optically tracking "smart" missile (see page 73). If it hits, the other three hit, tracking the first missile on IR follow-up and giving four HEAT hits on the same impact area (thus the high damage capability). If the first missile misses or is damaged or destroyed by anti-missile systems or reactive armor, the other three missiles miss without effect.

RECOILLESS RIFLES

75mm HVY • 0 • N • P • 8D10HEAT • 1 • 1 • VR • 500m • 15000eb

105mm HVY • 0 • N • P • 10D10HEAT 1 • 1 • VR • 800m • 30000eb

Recoilless rifles are lightweight support weapons (the 75mm weighs 15kg; the 105mm is too heavy for personal use, but it can be hauled in the back of a pickup truck). They do kick out quite a visible and dangerous back blast when fired; there's a blast cone behind the gun that does damage that only sealed armor can protect against (6D6 damage; the 75mm has a 8m long by 2m wide blast, and the 105mm blast is 10m long by 3m wide). They can also use HE shells (burst radius 5m). Shells cost 750eb for the 75mm and 1500eb for the 105mm.

HEAVY MUNTIONS

MILITECH "PORCUPINE" MUNITION

Land Mine: 30000eb, Shell: 7500eb, Bomb: 15000eb

HVY • "+15" • N • P • 4D6AP (HEAT) • 1 • 1 • ST • 100m

The "Porcupine" series of munitions are multiple warhead pods that hold hundreds of "Lance" minimissiles. When released/triggered, the missiles home in on human thermal signatures within 100m of the release point. The number of missiles that decide to seek an available target is determined by dividing the number of available targets (that is, targets putting off at least 33% of a normal human thermal signature) by the number of missiles in the pod; programmed maximums will stop this quantity at twenty missiles per target. The missiles have a skill base of 15 and use active thermal targeting. When homing in numbers, roll one attack roll for the entire salvo. If the roll just succeeds, one missile hits. Each point of success over the minimum means 1-3 additional missiles hit the target, and so on up to the total number of missiles aiming at the same target (for example, if Fred is targeted by 13 missiles, the attack roll would have to beat 15 by at least 4 to give all the missiles a chance to hit). Their warheads are HEAT warheads, which means any damage getting through armor is not halved. The missiles have a 1m burst radius, doing 2D6 damage within that radius.

The basic land mine is a 100kg buried mine, holding 400 minimissiles. The artillery shell is a 15cm shell holding 100 minimissiles. The bomb is a 50kg airdropped munition holding 200 minimissiles. Each munition has a thermal sensor and targeting computer that scans the 100m radius area for acceptable targets. If there isn't at least one target per 25 missiles in the area, the round will not detonate—in the case of the shell and bomb, they hit the ground with a 7 in 10 chance of remaining active, in essence becoming land mines.

Like all other mines, "Porcupines" have a bad habit of lingering long after they're deployed. Militech attempts to deal with this through good IFF; failing that, the munitions have a timer, so that they become inert and inactive after an amount of time determined by the user.

ARTILLERY CAPTOR SHELLS: Cost x5 (SH2)

This is an option for artillery shells of 10cm and larger size. It puts a sensor (thermal, radar, or optical) into the shell, along with a hypervelocity rocket with attached kinetic penetrator rod. The shell deploys a drogue chute when it reaches its target area and scans for enemy vehicles (in actual practice, this is *any* vehicle—anything in the target zone is assumed to be an enemy). When it detects one, it fires the rocket penetrator down onto the target (treat the shell as having a skill of +15 for purposes of hitting), attacking its weak top armor. Halve the SP value of the target struck by the shell. This option cannot be combined with Armor-Piercing or HEAT. Nastily, these shells can't be affected by antimissile systems, since they fire from overhead and are usually too high up for the typical small-caliber anti-missile guns to reach.

HOT WAR CYBERWARE

Modern cybernetics development owes its existence to the SouthAm conflict. This research has accelerated, if anything, in the intervening years, and the current field of combat cyberware is a very large one. Here are two developments that represent the newest, untested tech, and some of the oldest, rejected tech.

ARASAKA "DAIONI" POWERED ARMOR CONVERSION

STR 52, SDP 52, SP 80, 1,120kg; 810,000eb

The lessons of the Brushfire Wars (February - October, 2018) were not lost on Kei Arasaka. The embarrassing destruction of an Arasaka installation off the coast of China opened his eyes to the possibilities of combat cyborg full-body replacements; all it took was one Dragoon to do a job that, according to Arasaka's best generals, was impossible with less than a battalion.

Kei began a program to experiment with and recruit combat cyborgs. The program produced some marked successes, including a number of full cyborg spies and assassins.

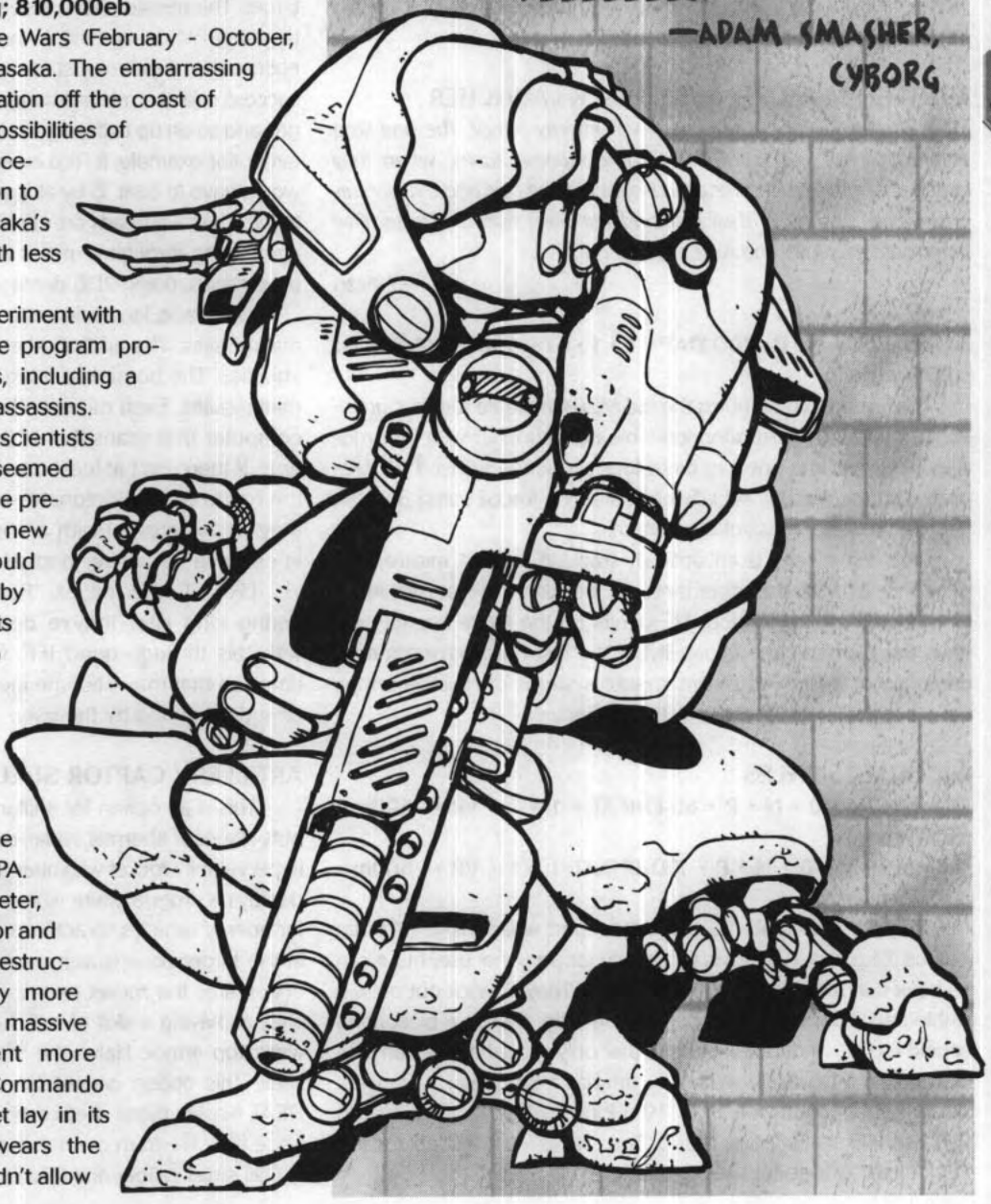
Try as they might, Kei's scientists couldn't better IEC's success. It seemed that the Dragoon would remain the preeminent combat full cyborg until new advances in technology could improve upon it. Disap-pointed by this failure, Kei lowered his sights and ordered his researchers to just produce a better combat cyborg—maybe one that could haul heavier weapons and armor; forget being lighter and faster.

The result was the DaiOni, the first interlocked cyborg body/ACPA. This "Super Demon" is a 3.4 meter, 1.12 ton monster, a block of armor and servos devoted to relentless destruction. Not that its size was any more impressive than Russian Arms' massive Boris 1 suit, or its armament more destructive than many Militech Commando variants. No, the DaiOni's secret lay in its user. No mere human pilot wears the DaiOni. Its internal circuitry wouldn't allow

"OHMAN OHMAN OHMAN. I'VE ONLY HEARD RUMORS OF THIS BEAUTY. IF IT REALLY EXISTS, I WANT ONE. WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO? WHO DO I HAVE TO KILL? I WANT I WANT I WANT!

"HEH HEH. TIME FOR FLESH TO DIIIIIIIE."

—ADAM SMASHER, CYBORG



it; indeed, there's no life support at all! No need for automedics. The user is an Alpha-class full cyborg body, modified for incredibly inhuman reflexes and speed and specialized to run the DaiOni ACPA suit. The actual brains of the operation is a biopod brain, normally kept out of the sanity-smashing environment of the DaiOni's control interface.

The Alpha body is directly wired into the DaiOni suit, converting its myriad sensor scans into direct neural input—the once-human inhabiting the biopod "becomes" the suit when fitted with the Alpha body. It's a heady experience; pain editors, combat programming, and "super-ego" sensor preprocessors combine with the suit's awesome strength and incredible maneuverability to make the 'borg feel like a god, even among his own kind! It's not hard, considering that the DaiOni is as fast as many cars (MA 20), and is actually quicker than the Dragoon (the Alpha's REF 15 is boosted by the suit to a total of 17! And the suit's sensors and boosted power give it +6 to Initiative rolls). All at a mere 16D6+30 Humanity Cost.

To date, Kei's technicians have only produced a handful of these demons. They're a deep Arasaka secret, and their testing has been very hesitant indeed—all they need is for one of these to freak out, neh? So they're not really fully proven. Deploying one would be an act of desperation ... or the critical field test Kei wants so desperately.

Special Equipment: Virtual reality interface, high reflex boost, communications suite (military radio, cell phone, scrambler, laser communicator), sensor suite (back-up visual sensors, TV camera, and two "horn" sensor extensions on the head. These extensions act like 67cm-long "rabbit ear" periscopes for all sensors), IR baffling, ECM and ECCM (in right and left legs, respectively,) 2 EMP capacitors (can absorb magnetic blasts, with only a 50% chance of shorting out), climber claws on each hand and foot (these allow the DaiOni to climb obstacles and buildings, as well as acting as weapons).

Stock Armament: Tsunami GL in the right arm (three extra clips), Oni autoshotgun in the left arm (one extra clip), a retractable mono-sword in each arm, 12.7mm machinegun mounted on the outside of the right arm (two extra belts), light ATGM mounted on the outside of the left arm (two extra shots), and hand-held EMG-83 railgun (two extra clips). Defenses include laser and radar detectors linked to four external ribbon and IR smoke canisters.

LIGHT ATGM
HVy • +2 • 12D10HEAT • 1 • 1 • VR • 1000m • 4m burst radius
EMG-83
HVy • +2 • 5D10+10AP • 10 • 1 • ST • 1000m
MONO-SWORD
MELEE • +1 • 8D10AP • will shatter 30% of the time when fumbled
CLIMBER CLAWS
MELEE • +1 • 7D10 (8D10 kick)

"FEEL GOOD" ENDORPHIN TRIGGER

500eb, 1D6 Humanity, Surg: M

The brain can manufacture a plethora of natural chemicals to affect the body's metabolism and sensory perception. These chemicals are usually many times more effective than artificial chemicals, and have fewer nasty side effects.

Some of the most well known natural chemicals are the painkillers known as endorphins. These drugs are capable of deadening or nullifying pain messages to the brain, as well as producing euphoria in the subject. Numerous attempts have been made to reproduce them artificially ('dorph being one of these), but all have failed.

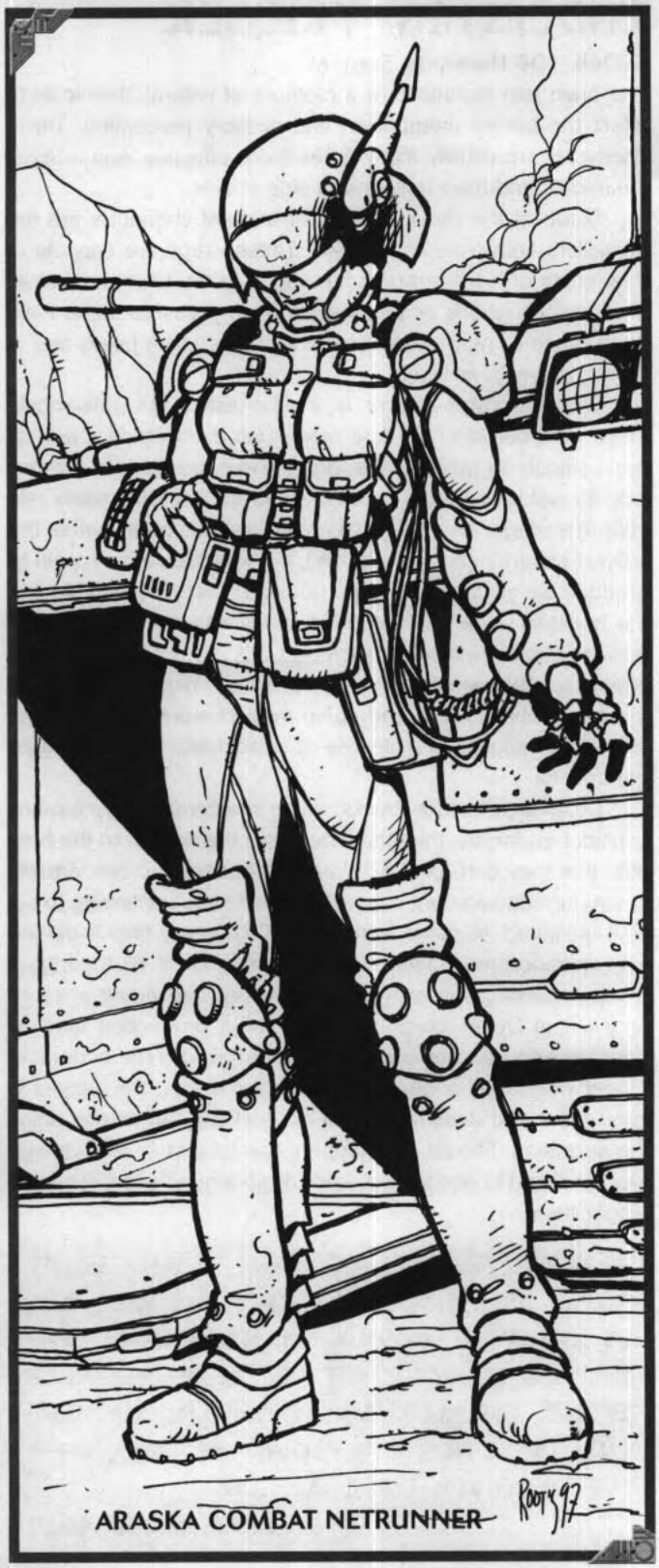
The endorphin trigger is a time-tested but little-known piece of cyberware. It's little more than a booster for normal brain signals to produce the drug. There are several reasons why it's not well known or used: First, it's not particularly reliable. The trigger only has a 30% chance of triggering when the subject experiences pain. Second, the user has to be in pain to produce the signal that is to be boosted. Third, it's possible that the boosted signal will trigger so much endorphin production that the subject will be intoxicated (well, no, not really, but the effects are the same). Last, endorphins are highly addictive. In the past, subjects with endorphin triggers were soon hooked, and had to engage in a lifestyle of masochistic pain-seeking to get their fix.

Despite these drawbacks, some mercenary organizations consider endorphin triggers to be worth the risk, given the benefits that they can give. A human on endorphins can virtually ignore fantastic amounts of pain and suffering, continuing to act as if uninjured. In game terms, roll 1D10 every time a person with an endorphin trigger is injured or hurt. On 8-10, the trigger works, nullifying any pain-based penalties and giving a +3 to Shock/Stun/Death saves. The endorphin production (and its benefits) ends as soon as the pain is removed. If the endorphin trigger works, roll another 1D10; on a roll of 1, the subject is intoxicated and doesn't want to do anything but sit and enjoy the sensation. Should this happen, the subject is also considered addicted to endorphins, and will go around seeking pain to trigger them.

"I'M FINE, JUST FINE, MAN. DON'T SWEAT IT. YEAH, I CAN KEEP UP. HELL, I'M AT LEAST 30 POUNDS LIGHTER NOW, AND THE HOPPING ISN'T AS HARD AS YOU'D THINK. IN FACT, I'M THINKING OF HAVING THE OTHER LEG BLOWN OFF AS WELL—JUST TO EVEN ME OUT ...."

— EDDIE VENTURE, SOLO

COMBAT NETWARE



ARASKA COMBAT NETRUNNER

HARDWARE

"YOU'D JUST BETTER COVER MY MEAT WHILE I'M JACKED-IN OR I SWEAR MY HELLHOUND WILL FIND YOUR FAVORITE E.PORN SITE AND LEAP ON YOUR DEPRAVED BRAIN THE NANOSEC IT SHOWS ITSELF."
—FINDER, COMBAT NETRUNNER

PROTECTED CABLES AND PLUGS
250eb

These are high-capacity, omniversal interface plugs with 1m cables. Their high price (and utility) comes from their internal surge protection—if a 'runner using these plugs/cables is attacked by an anti personnel program that does electrical damage (Firestarter, Hellbolt, Knockout, Sword), the surge protection will prevent any damage 40% of the time—it does cut the connection and log the 'runner off, but there's no damage. There is a -1 Speed penalty while using these plugs/cables.

MICROTECH CRD-5 "SUPER-SOLDIER" ASSAULT DECK
55,000eb

Speed: +4, MU: 30, Data Walls: +6, Options: Flip Switch 3.0, Hardened Circuitry, cellular, chipreader, 12 hours of battery power, manual switch, "Shield" circuitry, 2 XR-10 Chip-Rack external memory modules, gloves and goggles interface ("goggles" are usually the HUD of the soldier's helmet).

The "Super-Soldier" is Microtech's latest combat netrunner deck. It's miniaturized circuitry, packed into a 2cm x 13cm x 25cm case that's armored to SP 20. There's no style to this cybermodem, unless you consider flat black or olive drab to be style. No, it's all business. Like all assault decks, the "Super-Soldier" is water-tight and shock-proof. It's got its own internal battery core and WORM memory for preserving data gathered far from the Net. A manual power switch nullifies Firestarter programs, while integral antishock circuitry acts as a permanent, hardwired STR 5 Shield program, protecting the 'runner from antipersonnel attacks. In the event that black ice is too strong for the Shield, the gloves and goggles interface allows the 'runner to continue the mission without fear of antipersonnel programs (at a -3 to Interface skill).

The "Super-Soldier" lacks the CRD-4 "Commando's" radio uplink: It was proven that the radio link was more likely to reveal 'runner position than on-line defense programs, and with the ever-increasing EW on the battlefield, a radio link would likely be drowned.

ZETATECH PC-4041 "WEARCOMP" PORTABLE WORKSTATION

8500eb

Combat netrunning is a rigorous and dangerous job. It often involves being isolated from the Net at large, physically hacking into individual systems in the middle of no-where. There's no backup, and there's no-where to run if you get in trouble—that's right, the common netrunner trick of tracing a circuitous route into the target just won't work, since you're usually linked directly to the target system! On jobs like this, a simple cybermodem just won't work. You need more memory, you need stronger firewalls, you need more processing power—you need a computer.

Zetatech's PC-4041 is the latest in a relatively new trend, that of hauling a personal computer with you on intrusion missions. In the beginning, before the Net, briefcase personal computers were the tool of necessity for this work. As cybermodems came into existence, the briefcases were dumped. Now, with the advent of truly portable personal computers, they've sort of made a comeback. Stripped down to their equipment essentials, personal computers are turning up in small briefcases and armored backpacks, outfitted for cybermodem interface.

(For anyone asking, "Why personal computers?" check out "Netrunning From Mainframes" in *Rache Bartmoss' Guide to the Net* and *Rache Bartmoss' Brainware Blowout*. The ability to netrun and run more than one program at once should answer any "why?" questions.)

The PC-4041 is the essentials of the PS-4040: an INT 3 processor, a 30 MU memory core, a 10-slot chipreader, cyberlink and landline input ports, four-hour internal power supply, external power supply plug, three expansion slots, and Flip Switch 3. The differences lie in the way it's arranged. The processor, memory core, expansion slots, and power supply are all contained in a slender "backpack" attached to a combat suit-vest (the rear section of the pack has a 3cm x 30cm x 30cm storage space; the computer's guts are in the forward section). The chipreader, cyberlink and landline inputs, and external power plug are all on the front of the vest. This SP 15 vest/backpack combo is worn over an armor jacket (SP 15) that includes a Zetatech D2-3000 armdeck (Speed +2, 15 MU, Datawalls +4, Flip Switch), and allows a gloves-and-goggles array to plug into the sleeves of the jacket. This plugs directly into the backpack computer, allowing the wearer to interface with the computer through the armdeck, or directly through the Glogo controls, at will. The wearer can choose to access the computer alone, typing with the Glogo controls or accessing via cyberlink, or he can access the armdeck alone via cyberlink—or link up to the computer through the armdeck! Thus the PC-4041 carries with it the advantages of a top-flight cybermodem and a personal computer, all rolled into a jacket-backpack/vest combo that both protects the wearer and the computers, and has minimal encumbrance (EV +1).

Few of these are seen unmodified; common modifications include PC backup drives, datashielding, processor speed upgrades, external memory modules, and lots of datawalls (shameless plug: see *Rache Bartmoss' Brainware Blowout* for more details! Move it move it move it!).

MULTI-MAN "POCKET RESIDENCE"

10,000eb

"Multi-man does the impossible! They got all of 'em but the original."

—Finder, Combat Netrunner

Cybermodem and processor technology has made considerable advances in the last decade. The biggest problem facing miniaturization efforts has always been that of the huge human/electronics interface module, which takes up most of the space in a cybermodem. Of course, programs could be compressed to the size of a tiny chip, and another chip the same size could outprocess the megacomputers of a mere decade ago, but this wouldn't solve the business of compressing the user interface. And what usefulness would there be to a program and processor in a calculator-sized package?

The answer came from an unrelated field, that of combat netrunning. In the Net, 'runners could team up and tag-team heavily defended systems, distracting the defenders. Combat netrunning often takes lone netrunners to isolated systems where there's no-one else to help, and defenders can zero in on the intruder as soon as the alarm is sounded. With a miniaturized cybermodem/processor setup, a combat 'runner could simply carry along his own diversions.

That's what the Multi-Man is: a pocket-sized cellular processor/cybermodem (Speed +0, INT 1, MU: 10, Datawalls: +1) housing a hardwired pseudo-AI program, a two-program chip-slot memory, a radio splice, and an EBM XR-10 Chip Rack WORM drive. The program itself counts as an INT 1, Interface +5 netrunner! It's not very bright (hey, it's INT 1), and it usually only follows orders given to it by its controller. The Multi-Man program acts like any normal (if stupid) netrunner, moving 5 spaces and using one of its two programs per turn, etc. Since it's hardwired in, the AI can't be destroyed with antiprogram attacks; a successful Flatline or Poison Flatline attack is needed to destroy it.

The two optional programs, and the Multi-Man's icon, are provided by the controller (usually a combat netrunner). A common gambit is to program the controller's icon into a multitude of Multi-Men, making it appear that there are a horde of the same 'runner (and confusing the defenses and defenders).

The Multi-Man can enter enemy systems via phone line, cellular link, radio, or direct phone tap (anyone with a passable Electronics skill can set up a Multi-Man phone or data line tap; test against Difficulty 10+). The radio splice or cellular capacity can also be used to send new orders to the Multi-Man, or receive data feed in continuous or burst-feed mode.

SOFTWARE

MILITECH "SATCHEL CHARGE"

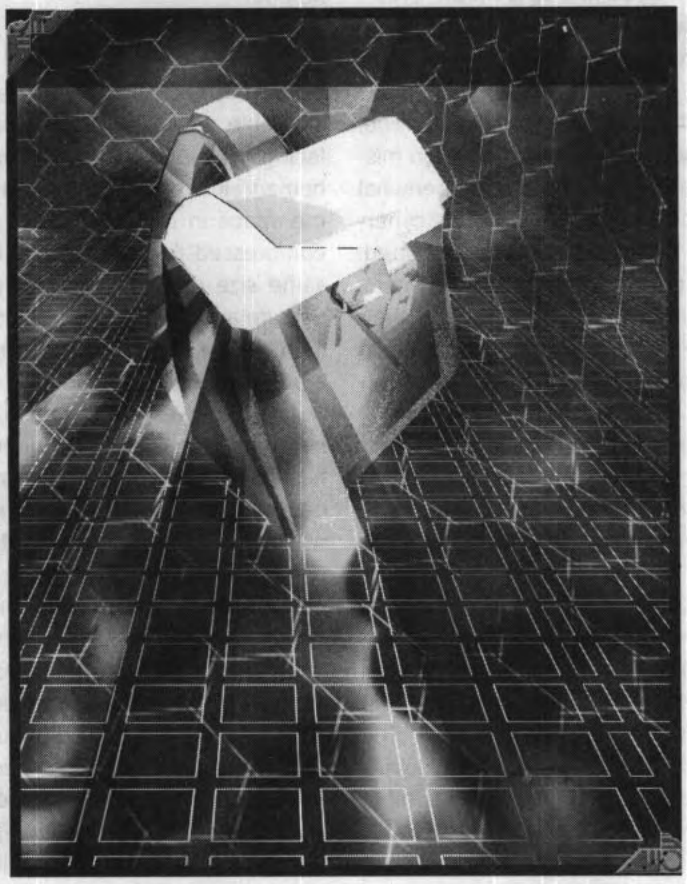
18,500eb

"I'm really glad that Bartmoss hasn't gotten one of these yet. Imagining this in the hands of an anarchic egotist like him is more than I can handle."

—Finder, Combat Netrunner

Class: Antipersonnel/Anti-program/Antisystem
Strength: 8 **MU:** 7
Options: One use, noisy, simple icon

Arasaka isn't the only corporation that's been doing secret program research. The "Milinerds" at Militech have been busy, too. They've developed a virtual explosive, a program bomb that sets off a shock wave of code disruption around it.



The Satchel Charge can only be set off by following its detonation routine. First, the 'runner spends one turn "setting" the bomb. Then the 'runner has a minimum of one turn to move out of the area (or log off!). If desired, the number of turns before charge detonation can be modified upward into infinity (remember, each turn is one second). When the charge detonates, it does 5D6 damage to all programs and personnel within one subgrid (3D6 to Walls and Code-Gates), as well as attacking all systems operating within that sub-grid with a Poison Flatline attack. If the 'runner who set it only sets a one turn detonation lag time, there's not enough time to clear the blast zone! Not to worry: The designers have put in a "cowering" subroutine for the bomber—if the 'runner is at least 5 squares away from the charge, and does nothing on the detonation turn, he can activate the "cowering" program and escape all the effects of the charge.

If set off inside an area bounded by Walls or Gates, the damage to all programs inside is increased to 6D6 (still only 3D6 to Datawalls and Code Gates). This usually applies to a Satchel Charge set off inside of a datafort, and usually nukes the 'fort.

There's some truly lethal copy protection on this program. In order to copy it, the copier's utility program "attacks" Satchel Charge, using copying program STR+1D10 vs. Satchel Charge's STR8+1D10. If the utility program's total beats Satchel Charge's, the copy is made. If it equals or fails to beat the defender's total, the Satchel Charge detonates immediately ...

ICON: A bomb in a backpack.

SUCCUBUS III ("THE REVENGE OF BARTMOSS")

Eb? Hah! Write it yerself!

"Okay, you frothing dweebs, here's your new love idol! Hey, Spider, I know it's cruel, but I couldn't help it ... just the thought of the expression on your face is worth it. 'Specially since I waited until I was dead to release it, so there's no way you can get any revenge on me! Consider it the last 'big brother' prank that I can play on you, okay?"

—Rache Bartmoss

Class: Compiler/Antipersonnel
Strength: 7 **MU:** 4
Options: Movement, Pseudo-Intellect, Interactive, Conversational Ability, Recognition, Memory, Auto Re-rezz, Endurance, Code Optimization, 2D6 antipersonnel damage.

This program file started popping up about the same time as Bartmoss' reputed demise. It's not a complete program, it's simply a set of guidelines for writing the program (with some specific chunks of code thrown in, largely for the icon). Writing this program from the instructions is a Programming Difficulty 43+. If successful, it makes a very compact demon combining the features of Succubus II and Black Dahlia. It can only compile two programs at a time, but its strength and other features make up for the lack.

One interesting point about this program's construction file is that the virus currently wreaking havoc on the Net seems to have been instructed to never modify this construction file! So it always arrives incomplete, but uncorrupted.

ICON: The icon is immutable, and it's always a very close variant on Spider Murphy's Net icon (a busty, curvaceous, super-realistic rendition of a gorgeous redheaded girl, done in *anime* art style and clad in very tight clothing). Sometimes the clothes will change, sometimes the hair color changes, but it's always Spider.

COMBAT GEAR

"LISTEN THE FRACK UP, PEOPLE! I WANT A TRIAGE CENTER SET UP OVER BY THE LOADING DOCK TEN MINUTES AGO. I WANT A PLASMA CART TO THE AV AND GET ME SIX AUTOMEDICS TO STABILIZE THE GUYS WE HAVE LYING ON THE FLOOR IN THE FOREMAN'S OFFICE. JACKSON, GET ME A SAT UPLINK TO DOCTOR'S HOSPITAL—I MAY NEED SOME ADVICE ON SOME OF THE SURGERIES COMING UP.

" AND WILL SOMEONE TAKE OUT THOSE DAMN ANTI-AIRCRAFT BATTERIES SO WE CAN AIRLIFT SOME OF THESE PEOPLE OUT OF HERE?!"

—MIKE MACRAE, MILITECH MEDTECH



BIOTECHNICA "SMART" GAS MASK
50eb

Most gas masks are stuffy, hot, and hard to see out of. Biotechnica's "Smart" mask is none of these. It's a lightweight, transparent, form-fitting mask that allows the wearer to breathe and perspire normally while protecting him from deadly gases.

The mask resembles a clear stocking mask, put on over the head. Its secret is in its materials—the substance of the mask is a reactive bioplastic that allows gases in and out. Whenever harmful gases are going to be drawn in, the inner molecular make-up of the mask prevents the gas particles from going through, trapping them in a protective outer membrane. Based on human biochemistry (particularly blood and digestive systems), the mask is nearly 100% effective against airborne and contact toxins. (It only protects the head and upper neck against contact toxins; for more complete protection, an environment suit is needed.) Because of the toxins trapped in the mask, it must be discarded for safety within twnety-four hours of encountering toxins.

Of course, the mask also stops airborne particles such as pollen, dust, and most pollution! The "Smart" mask was developed from a commercial version that won't stop the super-small globules of nerve toxins, but stops anything larger (which means anything but nerve toxins, including CS and tear gas). This commercial version lasts for twelve hours of use and retails for 5eb.

Please note that a "Smart" mask won't allow you to breathe in completely hostile atmospheres, where there's not enough oxygen to survive.

NIKKON AMERICA GUN-EYE™ CAMERA

200eb

Back in the 1980's, various militaries began experimenting with video camera sighting for infantry weapons—not the classic "gun camera" that takes pictures of what the gun is shooting at, but a video feed that would be lined up along the firearm's sights. The first ones were bulky and temperamental. By the year 2010, electronics had advanced to the point where a video camera could be fitted to any firearm—not cinema quality, certainly, but adequate for sighting and shooting.

In today's military world, these cameras are plentiful and cheap. The Nikkon America is only one of a score of such cameras (but it boasts more options; see below!). As a rule, these cameras weigh .2kg and mount where a telescope would be mounted (this location varies from weapon to weapon, depending on mechanical details). They have 10-30 minutes of recording time, digitally encoded on a memory chip (extra memory chips cost 10eb apiece per 10 minutes of memory). The video feed is routed to a heads-up display, smartgoggles, or monocle, so the firer can see what the camera sees. With this system, the user can actually poke the gun and camera over an obstacle or around a corner and shoot (-3 to hit).

The Nikkon America model has every option available to gun cameras. These include low-lite, IR, antidazzle, and thermograph (+100eb apiece), image enhancement (+150eb), and telescopic gun-sight (+1 to hit, 20x magnification, +150eb). In addition, the Gun-Eye™ may be linked into a cyberoptic (+100eb for cyberlinkage).

AUTOMEDIC

Basic 300eb, Deluxe 1000eb

Automedics are another 21st century military standard. They are small, self-contained autoinjectors linked to diagnostic computers. They're usually carried on an equipment belt, or in a backpack. There are dozens of them on the market, from various companies, but they all pretty much fall into two categories: basic (1kg) and deluxe (2.5kg).

The basic automedic features autoinjectors for up to two doses each of three different drugs or medications. When the wearer is injured, the kit has a 70% chance of triggering a preselected sequence of injections. The basic automedic can be linked to an internal biomonitor (+120eb for the linkage) to improve this percentage to 100%. It also has a simple First Aid database that adds +1 to the First Aid skill of the user. Please note that a normal medkit is needed for additional first aid supplies like bandages and so on.

The deluxe automedic includes more drug storage (up to three doses of five different drugs/medications), and cybernetic linkage is standard. It also includes handy dispensers for surface medications and treatments (bandages, Skinfoam, deep wound disinfectants, and surface anesthetics). These can only be used if someone takes the medkit and places it over the area to be treated.

The real heart of the deluxe automedic is its diagnostics computer. This expert system adds +2 to the First Aid skill of the user (or wearer, if he's treating himself). This assumes the wearer is using a mere biomonitor (deluxe automedics come with their own biomonitor set-up if the wearer doesn't have one). If the wearer has the automedic cyberlinked into a neural processor, the bonus becomes +3. The computer can give instructions via voice, viewscreen, or Times Square Marquee (or through a monocle or heads-up system).

Common injected drugs include Syncomp 15 (anti-toxin; *Cyberpunk 2020*, page 122), Stim, Surge, and Trauma (*Chromebook 3*, page 17). Less common are combat drugs (*Chromebook 3*, page 17), because of their effects, and Toxi-Stoppers, because of their cost.

See also the military Automedic (*Home of the Brave*, page 80). Actually, it's less of an automedic than an automated doctor! Troops tend to refer to it as the "autodoc" to avoid confusing it with normal automedics.

SKINFOAM

100eb

Skinfoam is a surface treatment for wounds. It combines the functions of contact anesthetic, coagulant, disinfectant, and cleanser. The spray can contains ten doses of Skinfoam; one dose will cover a wound of 1-6 points (bigger wounds take more foam. Each 6 points or part thereof of damage takes one dose of foam; bladed weapon wounds take double!). It adds +2 to First Aid and Medtech rolls concerning external wounds.

BONE AND TISSUE GLUES

25eb apiece

The humble beginning of regenerative medicine, bone glue is actually a compound made from a special kind of coral. It's injected into an aligned fracture (it'll even work on compound fractures), where it starts to merge with the bone ends. In five minutes, the damaged bone is no longer fractured; in twelve hours, the damaged bone is stronger than it was before. In two weeks, the fracture cannot even be detected as having ever existed!

For muscle and tissue damage, there is a super glue that replaces sutures - hypoallergenic, fast, and noninvasive. Thanks to this pair of glues, battlefield injuries can be handled in a matter of minutes.

Game notes: Most Serious and Severe wounds to limbs involve fractures (7 in 10). If someone sustains such a limb wound, bone glue can be applied and the victim can use the limb again in 5 minutes. This takes a First Aid roll of Difficulty 15, +1 Difficulty for every point of damage that the limb has taken. If successful, subtract half of the damage that was done to the limb from the from the victim's wound total.

Tissue glue takes the place of a dermal stapler and gives a +3 to First Aid skill when treating wounds (it won't help gas, chemical, or poison damage).

BIOTECHNICA TOXI-STOPPERS
2000eb per dose

Toxi-Stoppers are an antidrug injection. They're actually a heavy hit of anti-chemical nanites. These little silicon bugs are programmed to dismantle any artificial chemical compound found in the subject's bloodstream. They're very efficient, giving the subject a +4 to Body Type saves vs. drugs and gases (and giving a 40% chance of avoiding nerve toxin damage altogether). Their drawbacks include limited life span—about five minutes—and the fact that they're *too* efficient. They'll clean the subject of *all* internal foreign chemicals, including antibiotics, other chemical antitoxins, prescription medications, etc. Toxi-Stoppers don't care whether the unnatural chemical is beneficial or not; if it's not in their database of natural chemicals, out it goes! Furthermore, they won't bother biological entities in the bloodstream. Viruses, cancers, and so on are bypassed.

To most soldiers, Toxi-Stoppers are a case of foolish management spending. Why spend 2000eb on a throw-away shot of nanites when the full treatment of Toxin Binders (from which Toxi-Stoppers are derived) works as well, only has to be administered once, and only costs 50% more? Still, it can't be denied that if you're not swimming with Toxin Binders and you suck some bad chemicals, Toxi-Stoppers are better than nothing.

Note: Toxi-Stoppers will bring a subject down from a dose of any drug, including the recreational stuff. It's pretty harsh, though—instant sobriety, man! They won't neutralize alcohol thought, which is a natural chemical.

BACKPACK SATELLITE UPLINK
1000eb

"Communications always fail as soon as they are needed." Fewer quotes from Murphy's Laws of Combat are more true. In the modern battlefield, communications are vital for the reams of data collected from soldiers, sensors, remotes, vehicles, and satellites—a single piece of information can mean the difference between disaster and success.

Getting that information isn't easy, though. The modern battlefield wears two cloaks: vision-obscuring smoke, and communications-obscuring ECM. If the electronics are up and running, normal radio transmissions become spotty at best (about20% reliability).

The need to overcome this problem has led to the exploration of various communications—microwave and laser communicators, fiber optic networks, even supersonic and subsonic transmitters. None of these are as reliable and/or as lightweight as FM radios.

Microelectronics and satellite communications have stepped in to fill the gap. Most armies and mercenary groups now equip at least one man per two squads with a backpack uplinker. It's a 15kg weight, and replaces a man's normal backpack, but it's more reliable than old PRC's (Portable Radio Communicators). The backpack uplinker has a 72-hour battery life.

THERMAL DECOYS
50eb

"The soldier's friend," the old joke goes. Actually, these decoys are inflatable dummies, although not of the alleged recreational variety. Instead, they look like crude fake soldier, in selected camouflage colors. Each dummy consists of a small plastic container, like a sardine tin, that holds the plastic balloon and a compressed gas canister to inflate the dummy. The gas contains a chemical compound that heats it to approximately the temperature of a human body (the temperature reached can be preselected to simulate soldiers wearing various stages of IR-shielding). This "body heat" lasts about half an hour.

For an additional 50eb, a decoy can be outfitted with a blank IFF transponder—you program in the desired IFF code and it responds like normally (if your own codes have been compromised, it's a good way to fool your enemies).

Please note that these decoys can't move on their own. This is important, because few troopers are going to be fooled by immobile "enemies" for long. Once you inflate the decoys, use them quickly (or put them in a truck).

"OKAY, WE NEED TO SET UP THE DIVERSION, SO GRAB THE DECOYS ... WHAT DO YOU MEAN WE'RE ONE SHORT? WE HAD SIX AT THE DEPOT. WHERE COULD IT HAVE ... WAITAMINUT.

"CHECK MICHELSON'S TENT. SHE'S BEEN LOOKING A LITTLE TOO LONELY THIS TRIP OUT."

—BRYON HARRELSON, ARASAKA SARGENT

SABOTAGE/"BUG" WEAPON CHIPS
50eb for sabotage, 25eb for "bug"

Scavengers have always been a feature of war. In modern times as in ancient ones, they swoop down upon the field of battle to loot the fallen. With the enormous expense of modern weapons, corporations have taken steps to ensure the safety of their expenditures.

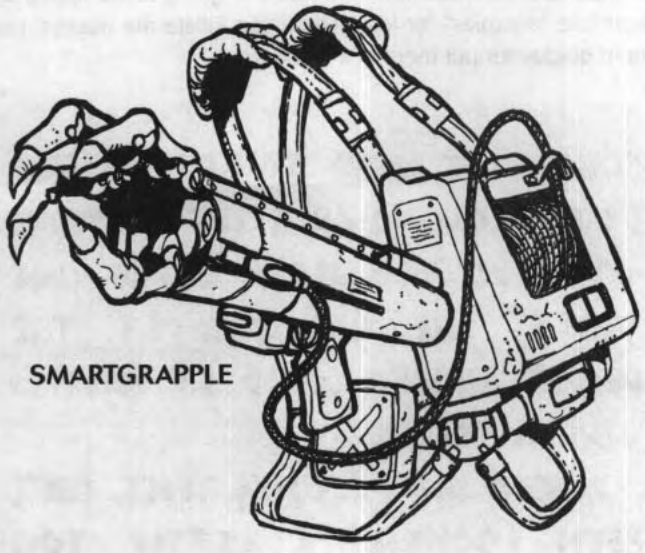
Since nearly everything on the field packs some sort of electronics, it's easy to insinuate a booby-trap chip into the works.

The most common type is the "bug" chip. This is almost identical to the IFF transponders worn by most troops. The tracking chip lies dormant until triggered by the correct radio signal, whereupon it sends out a return radio signal to be tracked.

The sabotage chip requires a piece of equipment that uses computerized control (electrothermal enhanced weapons, any visual enhancement equipment, etc.). The chip contains a program that causes the equipment to malfunction on command (in response to the correct radio signal, like the "bug" chip). These malfunctions can range from simply not working to more destructive acts (like an ETE weapon exploding).

Removing these chips is easy; detecting them is not! It takes a Very Difficult (25+) Electronics roll, and at least five minutes of disassembling an item, to find a sabotage or "bug" chip.

DYNALAR TECHNOLOGIES SMARTGRAPPLE
1500eb



SMARTGRAPPLE

As experts in cyberhand tech, it was no surprise that Dynalar answered the call for a powered grappling hook outfit. They managed to exceed expectations (and budgets) with their smartgrapple.

The outfit consists of a torso harness (like a parachute harness) with two waist-mounted powercells and a backpack winch. The "sharp end" of the grapple looks like a hand-held grenade launcher, and uses launched-grenade propellant charges to launch the smartgrapple and its line up to 100m.

Once the grapple lands, it goes to work. It's actually a strong cyberhand, with a program to grope about its landing area until it finds something strong enough to bear the weight of the user! Once it does, it signals the fact, and the powered motor on the harness draws the wearer up to the grapple (at 3m/second).

The smartgrapple has some additional capabilities for those equipped with a neural processor and a machine link. The grappling hand can be used as a clumsy remote manipulator (REF - 5, minimum 1). It can even be equipped with a remote optical sensor (+500eb, treat as a cyberoptical) for those with Times Square Marquee systems, so the user can see what's at hand.

BATTLEFIELD SENSORS

From the dawn of conflict to the present day, accurate and current information has been essential to warfare. Knowledge of what the enemy's doing and where can be more important than troops or weaponry. The problem is that often there just aren't enough eyes to see or enough ears to hear everything.

That's where battlefield sensors come in. Developed over 60 years ago, they can be placed in remote locations to monitor events electronically. Of course, they've come a long way since the 1960's. Modern battlefield sensors are sophisticated electronics that owe a lot to the cybernetics industry (and vice versa), since they are, in essence, free-ranging cyberoptics and cyberaudio.

There are three basic kinds of battlefield sensors: video, audio, and radio/energy. They all resemble small hemispheres (the video ones look like glass). They all contain various sensors to do their job and a radio transmitter that feeds back to the base station. The base station is a much larger transmitter (about the size of a lunch box) that receives the information from all the sensors it's supposed to monitor and transmits the data in burst form to a distant receiver, where the information is finally presented for analysis.

Deploying a sensor field can be done by hand, from a "sensor tosser" mounted in or on a moving vehicle, by bomb-drop, or even via special artillery shell.

Buying a sensor array depends upon the types of sensors, on the area to be surveyed, and the range of the base station. The basic base station has a 2km monitoring range, a 50km transmission range, and costs 1500eb. Doubling both ranges adds 500eb to the cost; adding a satellite uplink (essentially making the transmission range unlimited) adds 1500eb to the base station cost.

Visual sensors cost 300eb apiec, and can see everything within 50 meters through "fish-eye" hemispherical vision (obscuring terrain notwithstanding). They can add the visual options available to cyberoptics at half cost.

Audio sensors cost 200eb apiece, and have the capabilities of normal human hearing (treat them as having a total audio Awareness/Notice of 10+). They can add the options available to cyberaudio, at half cost. Please note that the enhanced hearing range option makes them capable of hearing subsonics, including movement along the ground (they can detect moving objects—and accurately gauge mass, speed, and whether they're wheeled, legged, or tracked—at a range of 5m per 100kg, rounded down, of object. This means a man can be tracked at 5m, a 1-ton ACPA at 50m, and a 50-ton tank at 2.5km).

Radio sensors cost 200eb and are capable of monitoring radio communications and radar emissions in the area 70% of the time.

HOT WAR VEHICLES

BREAKING OUT THE HEAVY HARDWARE



Aerodyne attack ships screaming in over the conapts, powered armor suits leaping from the rubble as they launch anti-tank missiles into the jaws of enemy APCs, roaring hovertanks with railguns spewing high-velocity death across the countryside: These are the images conjured up when you discuss 21st century mechanized warfare. Some of them are even accurate.

But perception is usually different from reality. And if you think that you are going to see heavy armor running unchecked over the battlefields of the Hot War, you need to take a reality check. Let's face facts, *gato*. Big metal has some serious problems.

This war isn't being fought on the agricultural plains of Europe or the rice paddes and jungles of Viet Nam. It's going on in your back yard. While some of the actions take place in isolated corporate enclaves, the real fight is going on in urbanized civilization. Ever try to find valet parking for your M-20 Superheavy Tank? It ain't happening, snake.

You runners have to understand that it's damned hard to maneuver the really big vehicles around the city streets. Sure, they're fantastic firepower on the battlefield. But if you can't get 'em to the dance without mowing through three or four civilian buildings, they won't do you one bit of good.

Things don't get too much easier with the combat aerodynes. They enjoy a huge mobility advantage over the lumbering tracked or wheeled armored deathboxes, but they still have troubles. Making a tight turn around a corporate skyscraper is a tough move at the best of times. And when you're under heavy missile fire from your target's defenses, it just gets insane. You find yourself parking on the thirtieth floor of SovOil's corporate headquarters. And they aren't the type of cats to forgive or forget.

Sure, there're ACPA's. Those suits seem like the answer to everything. But even they have their troubles in an urban environment. They're expensive to buy, difficult to use, and they often just won't fit inside some of the targets. These things are bigger and wider than a normal person, and that can lead to complications.

Still, if you have to fight in a city, do it in an ACPA. It's small, relatively nimble, and can pack a helluva punch—literally.

Of course, not all your battles are going to happen in cities. There will be plenty of times when you are out in the open. I can just hear you start to call for the big lumber. You're just aching to go out and swing with the heaviest thing you can find, ain't ya?

Punk, you still got troubles. Early on in the war, there was this little blow-up. The AvGas War, between SovOil and PetroChem. Heard of it? Yeah, this little subwar has caused all kinds of problems.

When the Hot War heated up, aviation-quality gas became a valuable commodity. The conflict between the two biggest producers of the stuff just exacerbated this shortage. Actually, a lot of people thought they were just keeping the pressure on in order to keep their AvGas prices "sky-high." Later on in the war, though, there just isn't any AvGas to be found.

Now, military metal just can't hack it on $CHOOH^2$. Chew-Two might be good for powering cabs and other low-class wheels, but your military hardware is like a thoroughbred horse used to be. They require high-class fuel to keep performing. And without this stuff, they are just so much junk.

Now, some of the corps and units still have supplies of AvGas tucked away. In the beginning of the Hot War, all sides were using heavy vehicles like nobody's business. But as supplies got scarcer, the use of those juggernauts became rarer and rarer. Just one of the supply and demand things, pal. Maybe you should have gone to b-school instead of hitting the streets.

That brings us to the last issue with military vehicles. They make damn good targets. If you show up flying your Thundercloud through the middle of the Upper East Side, you're going to attract some serious attention. And it just might be enough to get parties not involved with your scuffle to try to shoot the shit out of you. Trust me; that's the last thing you need.

Let's face it: Big weapons attract big attention. That's always been the way of life. And you don't want some snake to go trying to trump your ace when you're pulling out the really heavy stuff to put the opposition away. That would ruin your whole day. So you got to be a little careful. That's why Militech and Arasaka started to move their troops around in minivans and unmarked buses toward the end of the war. Nobody looks twice at a Armadillo RV parked on a side street.

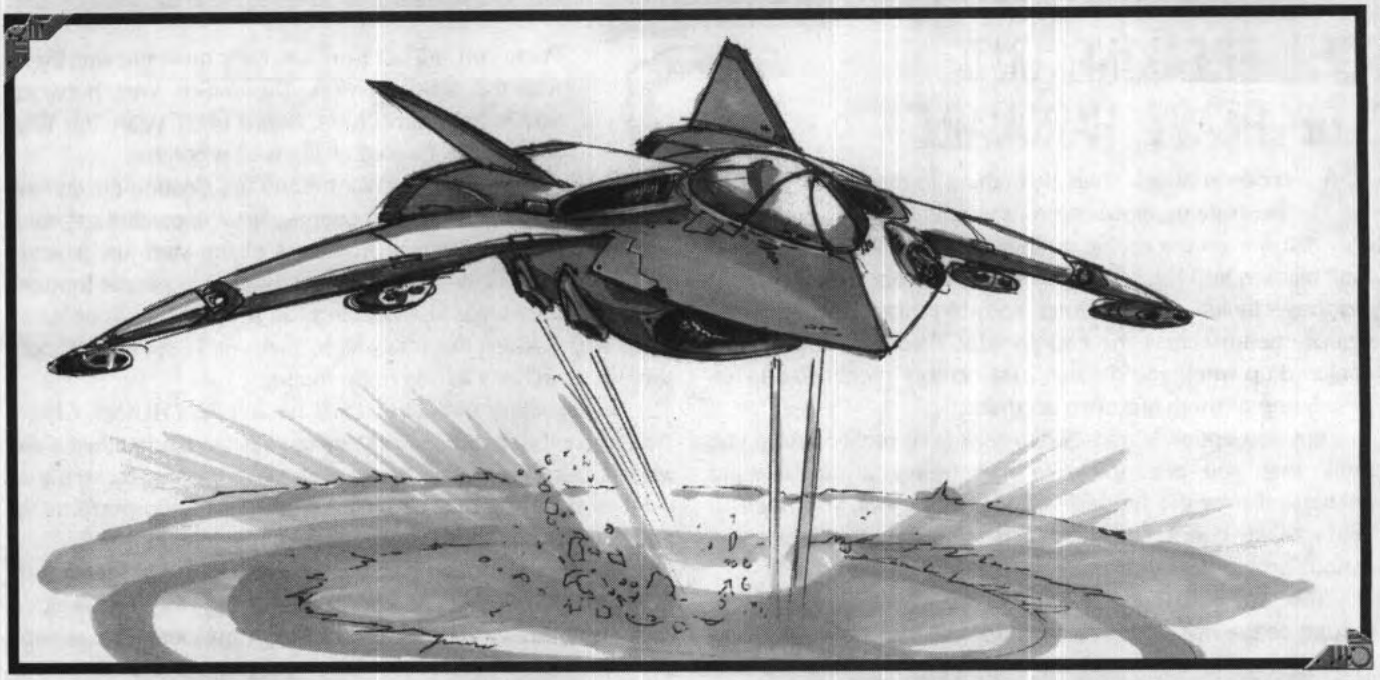
Don't worry, *gato*. You'll still get a chance to strap on the big iron and go to town in the heavy vehicles. Their firepower is just too useful to overlook. In fact, don't be surprised if you get hired to go after someone's cache of AvGas, or other vital supplies. Hey, it all comes down to "he who dies with the most toys wins."

So the military grade vehicles will be around. And you're gonna get your chance to try them out. You just won't be using them every day. Appreciate the opportunities when they arrive. 'Cause each one might be your last.

Of course, that's just life, ain't it?

—C. J. O'Reilly, Reporting for *Solo Of Fortune*

DORNIER F-128 THUNDERCLOUD GROUND-ATTACK JUMP-JET



Providing close air support to the modern battle is a big problem. In the distant past of the 20th century, major powers could afford to establish air superiority and have aircraft and helicopters loitering over the battlefield, ready to swoop down and deliver their payloads on demand.

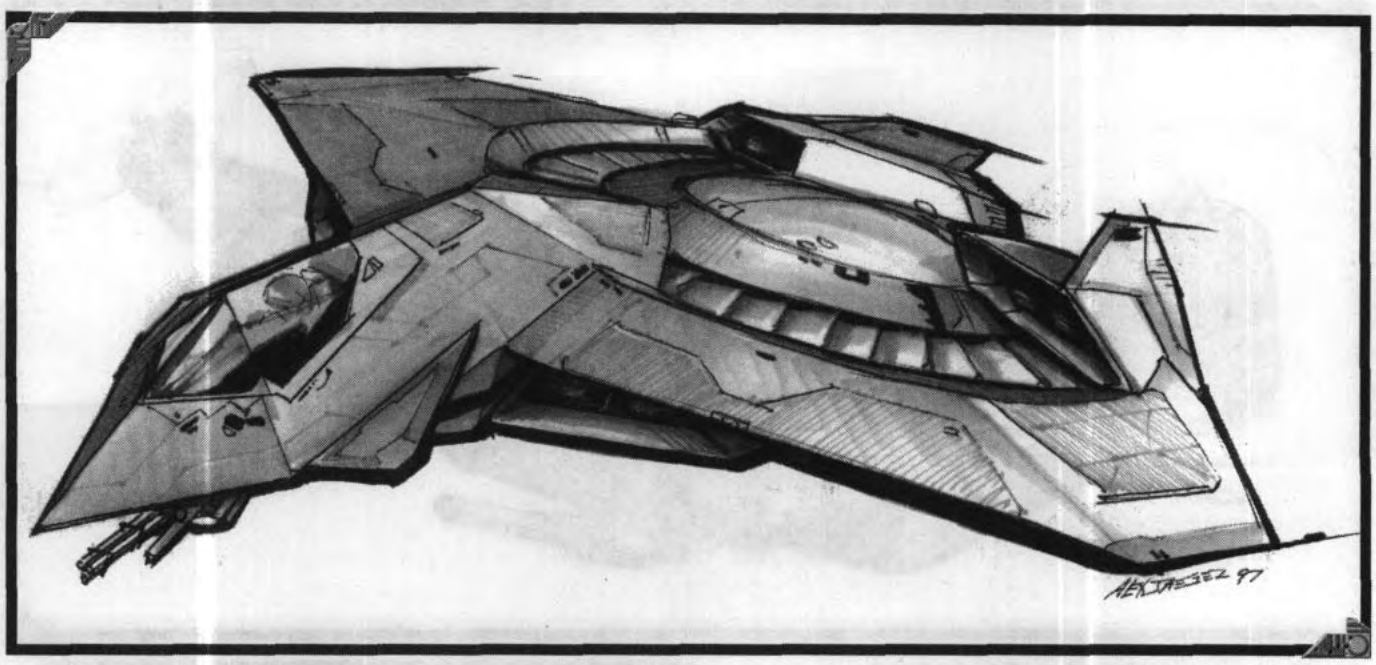
At least, that was the theory. As any soldier could relate, the theoretical and actual availability of air support had nothing to do with one another. You were lucky if you got air support within an hour. Helicopters helped; they could land close to the battlefield and be ready and waiting for quick response. Their problem was that they often weren't fast enough in fast-developing situations; it would take them too long to get from their landing zone to the front.

In the current battlefield, increased anti-aircraft artillery (including guns and surface-to-air missiles) activity has all but done away with loitering aircraft, and it's made life hazardous for helicopters (a single gauss round delivered to the "Jesus Nut" at the top of the rotor hub will destroy almost any heli). What is needed is a VTOL aircraft that can get in fast, evade detection, destroy almost any target, and get away fast.

Dornier has met this mission requirement in their new Thundercloud. Based on a normal jump-jet frame, it's equipped with the latest in radar-fooling stealth surfaces. It's got the speed to flash from hiding to the battlefield and back, and it's got firepower to spare on its hardpoints for oodles of pod-based weapons. The Thundercloud's mission is to get out ahead of an operation and bombard the enemy with its munitions, before they even know it's there! To be sure, it's pricy, but Dornier assures its customers that one Thundercloud can do the work of four other aircraft.

Maneuver Rating: +2 **Acc/Dec:** 20/25mph
SP: 20 **SDP:** 100
Crew: 1 **Passengers:** 0
Mass: 8 tons **Range:** 1100 miles
Top Speed: 600mph **Maneuver Speed:** 300mph
Special Equipment: Military radar with look-down, terrain-following (the aircraft can fly nape-of-the-earth on autopilot), radar detection, and target ID modes (the radar can identify any detected target whose exterior is known after two turns' scanning). Cockpit includes ejection seat, autonavigator and autopilot, scrambled military radio, pressurized cockpit, and cyberlinkage. Sensor systems include image enhancement (+2 to Awareness rolls), light amplification, and thermographic sighting. Stealth systems include antiradar stealth, IR emission baffling, and ECM (see page 73 or 76 for effects). A flare dispenser with 20 flares is included for IR defense. Onboard weapons include a painting laser for laser-guided munitions, and a Militech-made 7-barreled 30mm Gatling cannon firing rocket-propelled depleted uranium shells (HVY, WA+0, 9D10 AP damage, 1000 rounds, ROF 100, VR, range 2000m, 10,000eb). The Thundercloud can carry four weapons pods on each wing (which reduces its maneuverability to +1). A weapon pod can hold a 20mm Gatling, 19 2.75" rockets (13,300eb per pod), 2 Hellfire laser-guided missiles (10,000eb per missile), 2 Adder air-to-air missiles (radar or IR-guided; see page 73), or 2 Extended-Range Sure-Shot missiles (see page 73 for targeting rules, as per heavy anti-tank guided missiles; 80,000eb per missile).
Cost: 25.5 million eb
Note: The Thundercloud is a vectored-thrust aircraft, and can perform maneuvers common to AV's.

LOCKHEED NIMBUS ELECTRONIC STEALTH WARFARE AV



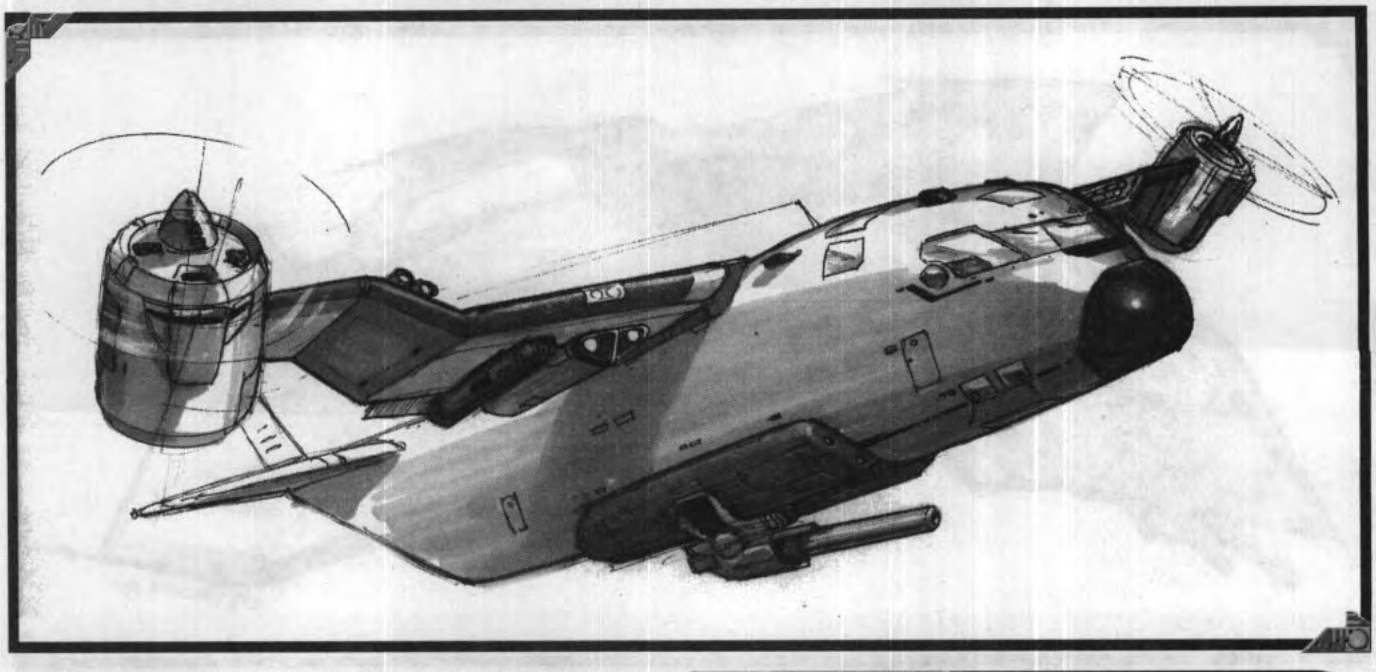
In a battlefield environment of ever-increasing electronic warfare and stealth, weapons are becoming too smart and potent to risk ever more expensive military equipment in action—it's gotten to the point where shoulder-fired weapons are capable of clearing the skies of aerial traffic. Furthermore, increased reliance on RPV's as information gatherers has multiplied the electronic warfare dilemma, because EW frequently jams the RPV's, rendering them useless.

The Nimbus is an attempt to do something about the situation. It's not a combat craft, but a mobile electronic warfare and RPV carrier with limited surgical strike capability. The crew consists of a human pilot and a 'borg brain in a biopod. The 'borg brain takes over the Nimbus as its "body", for the most efficient use of sensors and RPV data transmissions. The human is there as a partner and back-up system (and to keep the 'borg from being overwhelmed by the immensity of managing the ship's systems).

The Nimbus' job is to sneak into enemy territory (a task made easier by its propulsion—instead of noisy, shrieking jumpjets, it has a single central turbofan in the middle of the fuselage. This supports the Nimbus, as well as being as quiet as a moderately noisy car). Once there, the crew deploys the RPV's to scout out the situation. In the event that juicy targets are revealed, Sure-Shot missiles can be fired at them from concealment. Once the Nimbus has relayedits intelligence to HQ via satellite, it sneaks back out again.

Maneuver: +1 **Acc/Dec:** 50/50mph
SDP: 120 **SP:** 30
Crew: 1+1 **Passengers:** 0
Mass: 5 tons **Range:** 800 miles
Maneuver Speed: 165mph **Top Speed:** 330mph
Special Equipment: The Nimbus is full of sensors, including active and passive IR, image enhancement, thermographics, telescopic optics, light amplification, sonar/sonics, a magnetometer, and military radar (with terrain-following and target ID scanning). It's also full of electronic warfare devices, ECM, ECCM, and detectors for lasers, microwaves, and radar (all linked to the chaff launcher so that they trigger it to fire when they detect laser/microwave/radar lock-on or scan). The pressurized cockpit has ejection seats for the pilot and biopod, as well as the communications suite (military radio with scrambler, satellite uplink, laser communicator), auto-navigation and -piloting, and multitargeting computer (capable of tracking up to 50 targets, and targeting missiles for launch at up to 10 separate targets). Full antiradar stealth and IR baffling are integral to the AV (as are cyberlinked controls). Weapons consist of a targeting laser, an EMG-83 railgun (WA +6 due to the electronics) and an AGAMS (Active Gatling Anti-Missile System). All these weapons are mounted in a chin turret with hemispherical traverse. The Nimbus also has an internal launch rack for extended range Ten Sure-Shot missiles (smaller than the aerial versions; only 6km range), and launch space for five medium-sized RPVs. Defensive systems include chaff and flare launchers.
Cost: 10.1 million eb +weapons (800K for missiles, RPV's as cost)

FED-BOEING GYRFALCON GUNSHIP



"I've logged a lot of klicks in Falcons. I've also done a lot of crazy things in 'em ... uh, and with 'em. They fly pretty well, and they're classically Boeing tough. Good thing, too, because the craziest thing I ever did in one involved a Falcon-B that had been gutted and outfitted with the damnedest combination of assault rifles, machine guns, and the odd submachine gun, all fixed to fire out and down port-side, and all linked to a trigger on the pilot's yoke.

"That wasn't the crazy part. The crazy part was doing a strafing run on the target at 30 meters altitude, and at about 50 meters range."

—Else Lewis, Independent Osprey Pilot

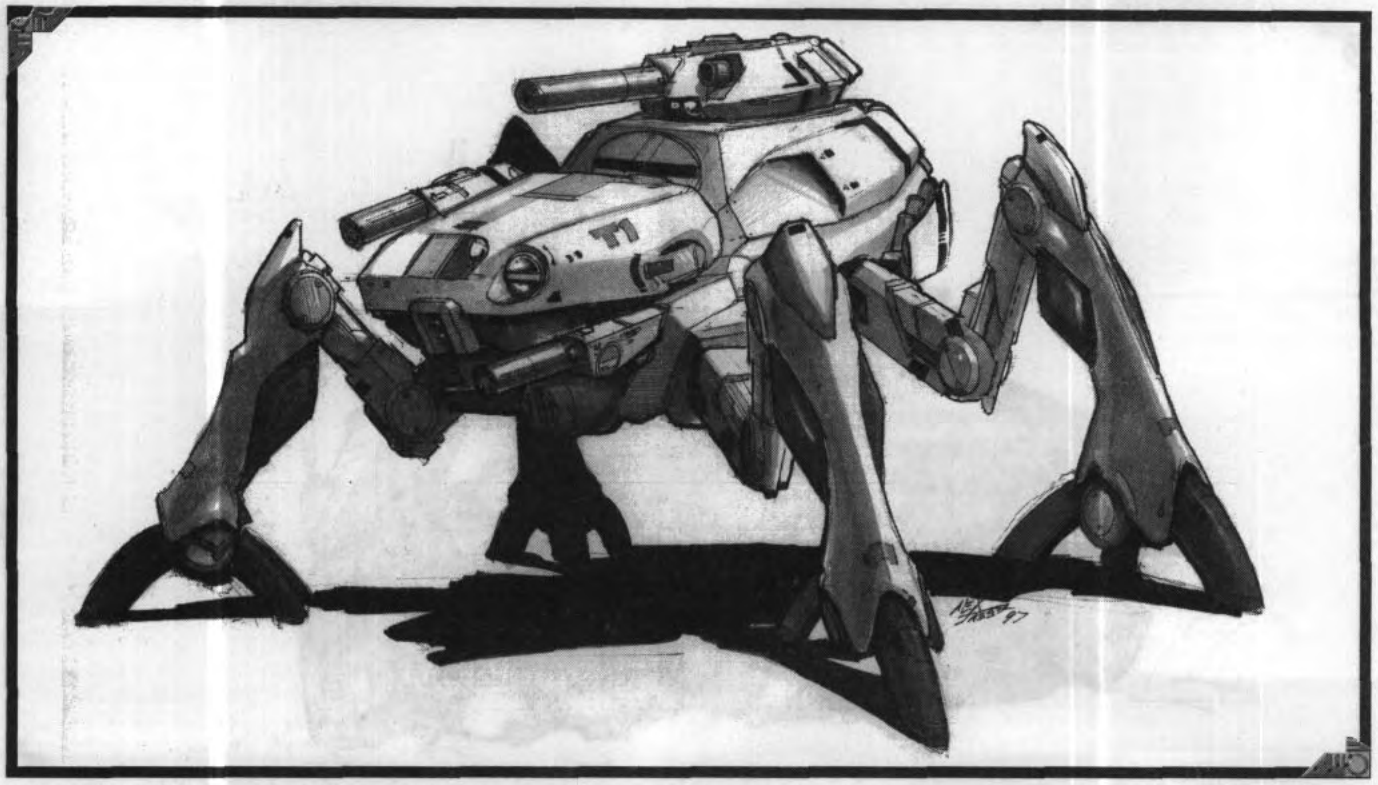
When Boeing teamed with Bell (rather than Federated) to bring out the Falcon-B, they intended it to be used as a small cargo and personnel transport for low-threat areas. However, some enterprising mercenaries came up with other ways to use it—the euphemism is "field modifications", and it means things being done to equipment to make it do something completely different from its intended use. The general gist of "mods" applied to the Falcon-B were to make it into a small-scale "Puff the Magic Dragon" gunship. When word got back to Boeing, the company decided to go back to Federated to give the public what it wanted.

The modular cargo bay proved to be the key to the modifications. Rather than sacrificing the passenger cabin like the unofficial gunships, Fed-Boeing made extended weapons pods that could easily fit into the existing cargo bay. The plane looked a bit pregnant, and wallowed in flight, but it could act as a cracker-jack gunship—and with less operating cost.

Maneuver Rating: -1 **Acc/Dec:** 10/20mph
SP: 20 **SDP:** 100
Crew: 2 **Passengers:** 8
Mass: 12.5 tons **Range:** 1000 miles
Top Speed: 315 mph **Maneuver Speed:** 155 mph
Special Equipment: Radar with look-down, terrain-following (the aircraft can fly nape-of-the-earth on autopilot), and radar detection. Cockpit includes two ejection seats, autonavigator and autopilot, and cabin pressurization. Sensor systems include image enhancement (+2 to Awareness rolls), light amplification, and thermographic sighting. A combination chaff and flare dispenser with 20 rounds of each is included as a defensive system (see page 73 or 76 for effects). Onboard weapons include a painting laser for laser-guided munitions, and the cargo-bay weapon pods. Wing hardpoints can carry six external weapons pods on each wing (reduce the aircraft's maneuverability to -2 if loaded with external pods). A weapon pod can hold a 20mm Gatling (6,000eb), 19 2.75" rockets (13,300eb per pod), 2 Hellfire laser-guided missiles (10,000eb per missile), 2 Adder air-to-air missiles (radar or IR-guided; see page 73., 15,000eb per missile), or an ECM pod (see page 73 or 76 for effects; 500,000eb).
Cost: 600,00 eb plus weapon pods

CARGO-BAY WEAPON PODS COME IN THREE VARIETIES:
Gatling Pod: 3 20mm Gatling guns with 2000 rounds apiece, firing out the port side of the aircraft; 40,000eb.
Barrage Pod: 5 40mm auto-grenade launchers with 350 rounds apiece, firing out the port side of the aircraft; 20,000eb.
Cannon Pod: 90mm cannon (HVY, WA+0, 10D10HE or HEAT, ROF 1, VR, range 500m, HE burst radius 6m, HEAT burst radius 2m) with 6 rounds, firing forward; 150,000eb.

ARASAKA DAISASORI URBAN COMBAT CYBERWALK



"The battle for Chicago has to be one of the looniest actions I've ever been in. Both sides brought out a ton of absolutely silly stuff, experimental junk that shouldn't have ever seen the light of day. That explosive-battery laser cannon the electronics whizzes were so proud of; it vaporized itself and didn't even dent the light tank it was shooting at. So-called 'brilliant' weapons that went awry if you were lucky, and came back at you if you weren't! I must have seen four dozen combat and recon drones crippled by the pervasive EW—or just broken down, victims of their own substandard manufacture. The man-pack fuel-explosive bomb ... ugh. At least the Ara carrying it didn't suffer when he got hit. Can't say the same about the city block he was in.

"Now, the Ara cyberwalk wasn't half bad. I saw the monster take down two Commando PA's from hull-down—and man, could that crab go hull-down! It crouched behind a one-story building with just the turret peeking over the top. It held up an entire combat team of Commandos, troops, and a couple of IFV's for a few minutes ... then a Sure-Shot blew it to bits."

—Morgan Blackhand

The original Daikani ("giant crab") was made as a highly mobile crowd control and patrol vehicle, one that wouldn't be hampered by blockaded and damaged streets and urban rubble. It was a short step to convert it to urban assault use.

The main target that concerned Arasaka commanders was Militech powered armor and aircraft. It was decided that the electrothermal 37mm cannon, with a 12.7mm coaxial gun, would be able to handle both. The Tsunami grenade launchers were put in for anti-personnel, and a pair of AP87 anti-tank missiles were added to deal with vehicles too heavy for the cannon.

So far, the DaiSasori ("giant scorpion") has only seen one engagement, with mixed results. Designers are considering adding an anti-missile system to its armament....

Maneuver Rating: +3 **Acc/Dec:** 15/15mph-20/40 mph
SP: 40 **SDP:** 80
Crew: 2 **Passengers:** 0
Mass: 4 tons **Range:** 200 miles
Top Speed: 36/90mph **Maneuver Speed:** 18/45mph
Special Equipment: Sensors—image enhancement, thermographics, active IR, and light amplification. Cockpit equipment—cyberlinkage, pressurized cabin, military radio with scrambler, and 16 man-hours of life support, ECM and ECCM. Weapons—hemispherical traverse turret with 37mm ETE cannon and 12.7mm machinegun; stabilization allows gunners to disregard modifiers for firing from a moving vehicle, 2 Tsunami 25mm grenade launchers (HVY, WA+0, grenade damage as per page 76, 120 rounds, ROF 20, VR, range 1500m), one front and one at the rear. External launchers carry one AP 87 visual-guidance ATGM per side. Defensive systems include laser and radar detectors linked to a 4-shot hot smoke system (see page 76), and 20 anti-personnel grenades (5 per side; treat as normal HE grenades exploding next to the vehicle).
Cost: 680,000 eb

MILITECH "COMSCAN" MOBILE COMMAND VEHICLE



One of the biggest problems facing modern militaries is that of data evaluation. With every soldier carrying a camera, not to mention recon drones, satellite pictures, and information gleaned from such momentary sources as smart weapons, the problem of data overload is critical—there's so much data coming in, something vital could end up buried under all the information. Yet it can't be really scaled back, or there's the risk of missing that vital bit of intelligence because no-one could see it.

One answer is the increased deployment of C3 (Command, Communication, and Control) vehicles—mobile command centers dedicated to evaluating the information from a single battlefield sector as fast as it comes in. A field officer is in charge of the vehicle so that he can give supplementary orders based on the new info being evaluated by the two intel specialists and the on-board Psl. The information comes in through the ComScan's periscope aerial, which serves as a receiver, transmitter, and sensor extension.

Needless to say, ComScan trucks are prime targets for enemy activity (losing one can scramble the intelligence gathering for an entire battle!,) so they are usually escorted by armored cars or other guards. Even then, they try to stay as far away from the battle as effectively possible.

Maneuver Rating: -2 **Acc/Dec:** 10/30mph
SP: 40 **SDP:** 200
Crew: 4 **Passengers:** 0
Mass: 20 tons **Range:** 300 miles
Top Speed: 70mph **Maneuver Speed:** 35mph
Special Equipment: The ComScan is, principally, a sensor vehicle. It carries the full array of sensors—active and passive IR, image enhancement, thermographics, telescopic optics, light amplification, sonar/sonics, magnetometer, and military radar (with terrain-following and target ID scanning). All sensors have receptors mounted on the periscope, which can elevate to 10m height (the truck itself is only 4m tall) and sustain 20 SDP damage, with 10 SP. It has full electronic warfare capability (ECM and ECCM) and detectors for lasers, microwaves, and radar (all linked to the hot smoke launchers so that they trigger when laser, microwave, or radar lock-on is detected). The cabin is pressurized to avoid hostile atmospheric conditions, and the full communications suite includes multichannel radio and scrambler capability, as well as satellite uplink and multichannel data processing capacity (the ComScan can monitor up to 100 different data-streams simultaneously. This is done by a pseudo-AI residing in an INT 6 miniframe). This data capacity is linked to multiple target-acquisition and remote targeting capability (which can provide coordinates for indirect and smart-missile fire at up to 50 targets at a time). Autopiloting/navigation and full cyberlinkage are standard. Weapons consist of a hemispherical-traverse turret mounting a painting laser, a 12.7mm machinegun, and an Active Gatling Anti-Missile System. A 16-shot Sure-Shot box missile launcher is mounted externally on the rear roof, and stowage for ten medium-sized RPVs takes up the rear of the truck. 4-shot IR smoke launchers are mounted on the truck as defenses (see page 76 for effects).
Cost: 2.7 million eb **Movement Type:** Wheeled

MCDONNELL-DOUGLAS F-39 PHOENIX

It's big, it's expensive, it's the largest fighter in the world (short of a delta), and it's not usually used by anyone but military air superiority wings. It employs stealth technology, an array of pod-mounted weapons, and is so advanced it requires a two-man crew (pilot and electronics officer).

The Phoenix is used for all roles, from ground attack to interception and air superiority. Other fighter craft can claim to be better at specific roles, but only the Phoenix can claim to do a better than average job at *everything*. This lead is maintained by frequent and costly upgrades; the electronics are overhauled almost every six months (there are rumors of an AI or biopod-manned model in the works).

This bird is typical of the type of cutting-edge fighter only governments can afford to field. Militech may have a couple of squadrons of F-33 Wasps or a few Thunderhawks, but the USAF has *hundreds* of them—with better trained pilots. The joke is that once the line is crossed and the Big Boys step in, this is the kind of thing the characters will be up against. Then they can feel what a *real* war is like.

Maneuver Rating: +1 **Acc/Dec:** 20/25mph
SP: 25 **SDP:** 250
Crew: 2 **Passengers:** 0
Mass: 20 tons **Range:** 1600 miles
Top Speed: 1440 mph **Maneuver Speed:** 600 mph
Special Equipment: Sensors: image enhancement, thermographics, telescopic optics, light amplification, and military radar (with look-down, terrain-following and target ID scanning). Cockpit equipment: 2 ejection seats, cyberlinkage, multitargeting computer (can track up to 100 targets and fire missiles at up to 10 simultaneously), radar rangefinder (+2 to hit with all nonmissile weapons), military radio with scrambler, and 16 man-hours of life support, ECM and ECCM. Weapons: stabilized 20mm Gatling (disregard minuses for shooting from a moving vehicle; assisted WA+5), painting laser, and 10 weapons pods per wing (pods take the F-30's maneuver down to -1). Pods include fuel tanks (+400 miles range per), a 20mm Gatling (6,000eb), 19 2.75" rockets (13,300eb per pod), 2 Hellfire laser-guided missiles (10,000eb per missile), 2 Adder air-to-air missiles (radar or IR-guided; see page 73 or 76. 15,000eb per missile), or 2 extended-range Sure-Shot missiles (see page 73 for targeting rules, 80,000eb per missile). Defensive systems include a completely stealthy construction, laser, microwave, and radar detectors linked to a chaff and flare launcher (see page 73 or 76 for effects).
Cost: 10 million eb

CH-19 "CRAZY HARRY" ORBITAL SNIPER SYSTEM

900,000eb (not counting launch vehicle)

The latest in a series of commercial sniper satellites comes from the Neo-Soviet Rocket Korps: the CH-19.

The "Crazy Harry" (as it's known to ground operators) is a simple box launcher, loaded with a standard array of missiles. It carries thirty rounds; once they are exhausted, the launcher is useless (except as salvage). There are ten each of three different rounds: "crowbar" (a 5kg kinetic penetrator—it automatically defeats any armor, and has a 40% chance of disabling any vehicle smaller than a naval vessel. Needless to say, it kills any person it hits!), "frag" (a frangible round that does 10D6AP to everything within a 50m radius), and "bomb" (a time-delayed hi-ex charge behind a penetrator cap; used to punch through buildings and explode on a particular floor. It will devastate three floors of most office buildings, doing 5D10 blast damage to everything within 20 meters).

A CzechElec INT 2 computer loaded with a pseudointelligent targeting program, a GPS array, and an optics package complete the unit. Mischievous Czech programmers have given the CH-19 the pseudopersonality of a whacked-out mad bomber, always eager to blow things up. Unfortunately, the pseudopersonality sometimes gets a bit too eager ....

Deployment consists of injecting the satellite into orbit via rocket or ground launcher—the former more than the latter, due to the fact that these launchers are forbidden by international treaty, and lifting them via legal means requires subterfuge. Once in position over a designated area, using the CH-19 is a matter of contacting it via sat-uplink, and giving it the correct access code, the type of round needed, and the target coordinates. The CH-19 does the rest, with 95% accuracy.

Although some consider ortillery to be the answer to every tactical problem, it's far from perfect. First, it's vulnerable to being shot down—sniper satellites have to work in the 100-130 mile orbit range, an altitude that can be reached by interceptor missiles (fired from a climbing fighter plane, the back of a truck, or even out of 20cm ETE smoothbores, boosting into orbit via a special rocket-assisted projectile! Militech manufactures the latter missile, which uses a Sure-Shot as the final stage). Second, ortillery is almost crippled by obscuring its vision (unless you're shooting at stationary targets); moderate cloud cover or heavy smoke reduces ortillery to radio-linked or laser-painting ground observers for targeting. And—since they barely have the visual acuity to see an infantryman even on a clear day—ortillery can be fooled by decoys.

RPVS AT WAR

More than anything, this war has been called the "War of the Robots." In a battlefield filled with increasingly deadly and sneaky firepower, soldiers are less willing to risk themselves. Instead, practically every squad has its own RPV for reconnaissance—and, for once, corporate command backs the troops! Most remotes cost far less than the equipment carried by the average corporate soldier.

The advent of the RDAK Spider (see *Chromebook 2*), and its entire illegitimate family of spy/probe/hacking remotes, has changed warfare somewhat. In this age of highly electronic-based technology and information gathering, combat netrunners have learned to use their drones as remote interfaces. Need the enemy's IFF codes? Slip into a sneak-suit and conceal yourself on the battlefield. When an enemy vehicle rumbles by, pop a Grid Bug onto it, hack into the IFF computer (which isn't usually well guarded), grab the codes, and transmit them back to your HQ—*voila!* Now your soldiers can track every enemy unit. (Or you could get nasty and have your soldiers broadcast friendly IFF codes to the enemy.)

Prepositioned remotes can easily slip behind enemy lines, find command posts, and monitor them or hack into them—just imagine the havoc a couple of hostile netrunners can do to an enemy force by something as minor as slipping a modified Fait Accompli virus (*Rache Bartmoss' Brainware Blowout*, page 85) into a command computer's data input buffer. Or you could even feed in false data of your own to confuse or hinder the enemy.

Remotes and ECM

This war is filled with electronic interference. This interferes with remote operations, both with their radio transmissions and their ill-protected brains. Roll 1D10 every minute a remote is in operation in a high ECM environment; on a roll of 1-2, the remote's operation is interrupted and it returns to base (its normal default programming); -3 if within an active ECM generator's radius, +1 if using an Adrak "animal brain" remote or an R-Brain, +1 if using wire, direct microwave, or laser guidance to work the remote.

Detecting Remotes

Remotes are normally made out of radar-absorbent plastics, with a neutral infrared signature. Some of the bigger ones can have chameleon covering, so the normal method of detecting remotes is visual. Add +5 to the Difficulty of Awareness checks against normal-sized remotes (+10 vs. small-sized remotes).

Programming Remotes

Most RPV's are directly piloted by a live or AI operator. Almost every remote can be programmed to execute a preplotted course, in the event that circumstances preclude an actual operator. If this is desired, the "program" instructions may consist of no more than three sentences, each with only one verb and subject, in ascending order of precedence (think of basic programming—"Fly navigation course A," "Get out of sight of detected enemies," and "Return to navigation course A when detected enemies are evaded"). Referees, feel free to deliberately misinterpret vague orders. See *Chromebook 2*, pg. 30, for rules on handling remotes.

WIRE-GUIDANCE OPTION

A fiber-optic wire-guidance system can be added to any remote control system to defeat electronic warfare problems: This weighs 1kg and 50eb per half-mile of guidance range (the wire reel stays with the operator; the remote doesn't have any mass added to it). If the wire is ever cut, the drone returns to its base immediately.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE "R-BRAIN" MODULE 2,000eb

"Murphy's First Law of Robotics: Any order that can be misinterpreted will be, in the worst possible fashion, at the worst possible time." —Spider Murphy (but not *the* Murphy)

Sometimes, it's not possible to maintain a control link, and programmed routines aren't up to the job. The remote has to be smart enough to do the job on its own. It's no problem to upgrade most drones by adding a complex pseudo-AI chip—the "R-Brain."

The R-Brain gives the remote a simple intelligence (INT 6 for skills, INT 2 for decision-making and evaluation, relevant skills at +6) that can carry out relatively simple tasks without problem. If desired, a pseudopersonality can be added to personalize the drone (no extra charge).

Please note that Adrak drones can't use (and don't need) R-Brains; they have their own built in!

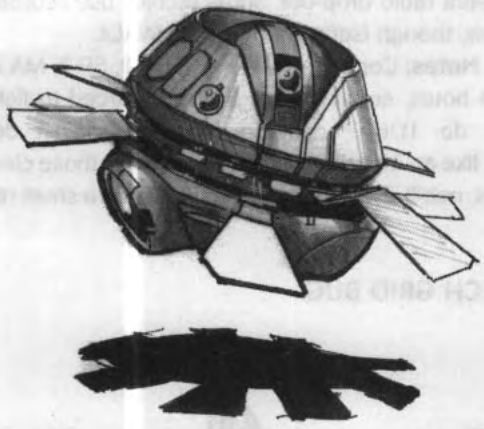
The real problem with R-Brains (and Adrak drone brains) is that they're capable of making silly choices when faced with a decision that isn't covered by their orders. Referees must carefully note the *exact* orders given to such drones. If a situation comes up that isn't covered by the orders (or is partially covered), secretly roll 1D10+2. If the total is 10+, the drone takes the most logical action. Otherwise, misinterpret the drone's orders creatively (but logically. For instance, if a drone is under orders to gather information on enemy troop movements, it might decide to hitch a ride on an enemy APC rather than just lurking and observing).

NEW REMOTES

BELL "MINIBEE" ROTORCRAFT REMOTE

2,500eb

"It's a great delivery system and spy. I use it to carry a Scorpion into target zones." —Finder, Combat Netrunner

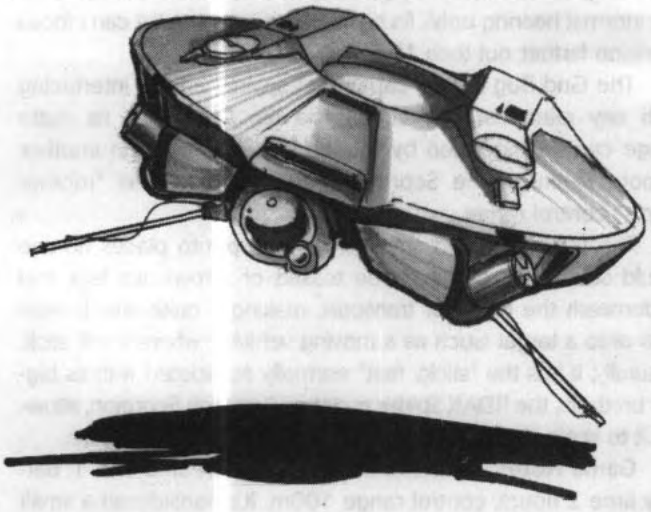


The old "Bumblebee" is a true classic—while it still works, it's not exactly cutting edge. Enter the Minibee: Smaller (30cm tall), lighter (5kg), almost silent. The perfect all-around personal RPV. These are popping up in backpacks, on ACPA's, everywhere! Can be wire-guided or radio-operated. It has no weapons capacity, devoting most of its space to sensors (full IR/thermograph/low-lite/antidazzle, with 10x telescopic optics). It can carry some "cargo"—equipment tacked onto it—as long as the cargo's mass is no more than 1kg. This halves the Minibee's speed.

Game Notes: Control modifier -2, 3 SDP, 0 SP, maximum speed 100mph, operational range 20 miles, considered a normal-sized remote.

MICROTECH REMOTE ATTACK DRONE

3,500eb

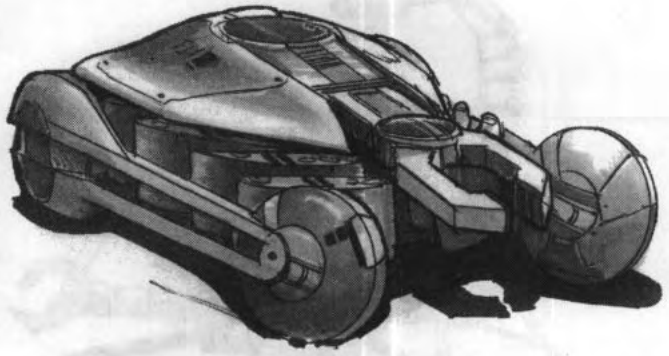


Not to be confused with the Remote Assassination Drone (*Stormfront*, page 98), this is a blatant knock-off by Microtech, made as a way to enter the lucrative military remote market. It's a "flying saucer" aerodyne 1m in diameter, weighing 15kg, mounting a complete visual sensor suite (thermograph/low-lite/anti-dazzle, with 10x telescopic optics), with a pair of one-shot 40mm grenade launchers mounted one per side. Can be wire- or radio-guided. Common deployment doctrine is to locate an enemy, determine which sort of grenade load would work best against the target, load up the RAD, and send it skimming out to attack. The GL's are just cut-down versions of normal underbarrel GL's, and can use any normal 40mm grenade load. Both launchers fire as one at the same target.

Game Notes: Control modifier -2, 5 SDP, 0 SP, maximum speed 40mph, operational range 20 miles, considered a normal-sized remote.

MILITECH M-010 MINELAYER

10,000eb



The M-010 looks like a suitcase-sized box on wheels, weighing in at 10kg (+10kg cargo), with a hamburger-sized sensor turret atop it. It is a self-mobile minelayer, capable of carrying 10 anti-personnel mines (or one large anti-tank mine, or even satchel/demolitions charge) in its cargo bay. Other features are a retractable light servo arm and complete antiradar/IR stealth and chameleon camouflage (like the Militech Ghostsuit; *Chromebook 2*, page 27).

The M-010 is usually programmed to go to a specific area, lay its mine(s), and return to base. It can be programmed to wait for specific people or vehicles to pass before laying its mines. It can also be loaded with a demo charge and sent out as a remote bomb, to blow up structures or vehicles—the servo arm can operate doors and elevators, so it can even enter buildings.

(Anti-personnel mines have the same stats as fragmentation/HE hand grenades. Anti-tank mines do 6D10AP damage to the bottom of the vehicle that sets them off and 6D6 damage to all targets within a 10m radius. The demo charge does 10D10 damage to everything within 50m.)

"THOSE LITTLE REMOTES AREN'T RPV'S; THEY'RE LITTLE, SCALY, SKITTERING, SILVER COCKROACHES! I FRACKING HATE 'EM! ESPECIALLY SINCE ONE LITTLE FREAKIN' SCORPION TOOK OUT MY AV JUST BY SNIPPING SOME WIRES! LITTLE PIECEA S**T"
— RODGER "BADGER" NAHJED, ARASAKA PILOT

MICROTECH "SCORPION" REMOTE

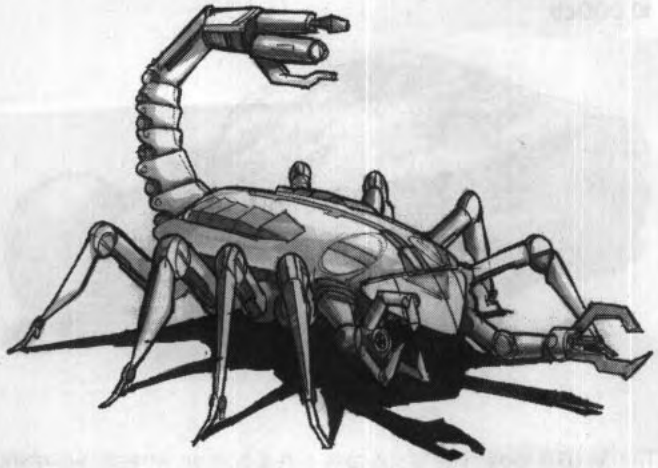
15,000eb

"These are my best friends. I eat, sleep, and play with them. When you're on an isolated run, don't leave home without them."

—Finder, Combat Netrunner

"Even creepier than the 'Spider.'"

—Spider Murphy



Arasaka had no sooner made the RDAK "Spider" than other companies had stolen the design and figured out how to duplicate it. Various modifications exist, but Microtech took the basic "Spider" and produced the "Scorpion."

The Scorpion uses the Spider's main body and legs. A pair of grasping claws are added in the front, and a scorpion tail is added in the rear. The Spider's weapon bay is replaced with a cargo bay. The Scorpion has the Spider's wall-crawling capability. Sensors include cyberaudio (enhanced hearing range, amplified hearing, sound editor, level damper) and cybervisual (IR, low-lite, anti-dazzle, microscopic). The main differences are function, and a complete reliance on electronics, rather than the RDAK bioelectronics.

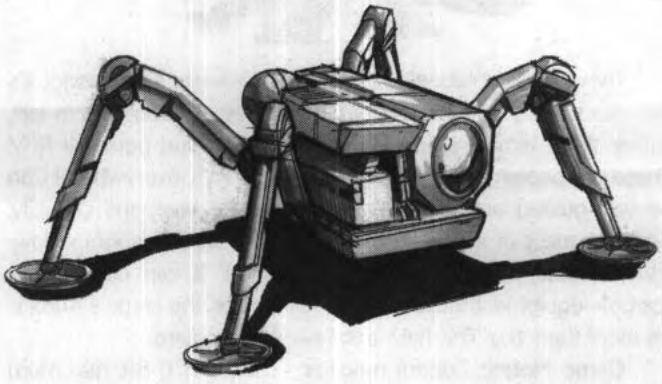
The Scorpion is a netrunner's tool rather than an assassination drone. The claws are specialized for grasping and wire-cutting; they're quite dexterous. The tail doesn't carry a stinger; it carries a powered screwdriver and a minitorch/soldering iron. The cargo bay is normally used for hauling memory chips, a MultiMan decoy (see page 43), up to two Grid bugs, or other tools. Each claw also features a standard interface plug, so the controller can plug into a standard socket via the Scorpion.

Scorpions are most commonly used as a way for netrunners to sneak into isolated installations—once inside, the scorpion hooks into the internal net. This works best with wire control, to prevent radio drop-out. Some techies use scorpions as remote tools, though (sort of a miniature WAD).

Game Notes: Control modifier -1, SDP 8, SP 2, MA 8, battery time 4 hours, control range 300m. If forced to fight, the claws can do 1D6AP damage (doubled against delicate machinery, like an RDAK Spider's legs. After all, those claws are wire-cutters, neh?). The Scorpion is considered a small remote.

MICROTECH GRID BUG

9,000eb



The Grid Bug is a marvel of macronanotech; it is a remote the size of a small tarantula, constructed by nanites (an eerie sight, watching nanites build a giant version of themselves). It's very basic, carrying a single nanocomputer brain, a radio, a cybervisual array (normal, microscopic, and IR vision only) and cyberaudio (normal hearing only). Its sight radius is so small it can't focus its vision farther out than 10m.

The Grid Bug is only capable of spying, and of interfacing with any electrical connection (via leg induction). Its radio range can be extended by routing its signal through another remote (such as the Scorpion), where it uses the "mother ship's" control range.

The Grid Bug is so small, it can creep into places no-one would suspect. It can even be tossed or thrown (its legs fold underneath the body for transport, making it quite shock-resistant) onto a target (such as a moving vehicle), where it will stick. Naturally, it has the "sticky feet" normally associated with its bigger brothers, the RDAK Spider and the Microtech Scorpion, allowing it to scale sheer surfaces and cling on ceilings with ease.

Game Notes: Control modifier -2, SDP 1, SP 0, MA 1, battery time 2 hours, control range 100m. It's considered a small remote (no kidding).

ASSISTED COMBAT PERSONAL ARMOR

Full suits of powered armor are the greatest small-unit military advance made in the last hundred years. Now a single well trained infantryman can carry as much armament as a small tank, while being able to sneak into areas where no tank could ever go.

The combat enhancement is monstrous. A PA suit enables the user to pack weaponry capable of dealing with infantry, hard targets, and tanks, in a package not quite as big as two men. The sensor and computer processing arrays in a PA suit take in the entire environment, combine it with known combat facts (location of enemies and allies, downed friends, possible threat locations, etc.) and synthesize all the information into a single heads-up display readout—sometimes even a virtual reality display. This means that a PA pilot often receives bonuses to Awareness checks and line-of-sight ranged weapon attacks.

Some suits are even designed with reflex enhancement, making the user faster inside the suit than he is outside of it (+1 Reflexes for Low Boost, +2 Reflexes for High Boost). These bonuses are added to actual pilot reflexes, not just initiative rolls).

ACPA enhances movement as well as combat capability. In a suit of powered armor, the user is MA x 3. It's not safe moving at over half speed, though; if the user wants to change direction while moving at over MA x 1.5, he has to pass a PA Combat Sense (or Pilot PA) test at Difficulty 20 (+5 on slippery surfaces). Failure means the suit and user fall down, sliding along at speed.

Besides allowing a trooper to carry the weaponry of a light tank, a PA frame gives the wearer titanic strength. This strength translates into massive punches and kicks (see unarmed damage listings). Furthermore, a PA suit can deadweight lift its STR x 50kg.

The requisite skill for using ACPA is PA Combat Sense, a special ability. The skill encompasses a great deal more than just using the suit, though, since it's actually a vehicle specialization (see page 29 for details). Users who don't have the skill can still use ACPA suits with the Pilot PA skill; since they're not really "married" to the suit like PA Troopers, they only get 1/2 their Combat Sense added to Awareness rolls.

All ACPA suits *require* a Vehicle Link for use! The normal +2 skill bonus for using a cyberlinked vehicle is already subsumed into ACPA bonuses; do not add in the normal +2 skill bonus. Also, no personal armor may worn inside an ACPA (besides Skinwaeve); it *is* your amor.

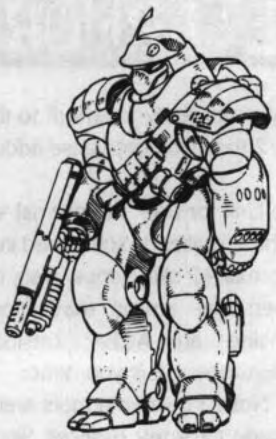


Note: Powered armors aren't made for flimsy surfaces. Since most suits mass in at over half a ton, they're capable of crashing through any flooring that isn't heavily reinforced (even solid concrete is dented if a suit runs across it). If a PA suit moves onto a surface that is less strong than reinforced concrete, the pilot must roll PA Combat Sense (or Pilot PA) vs. Difficulty 20 to avoid crashing through the floor! (Die roll modifiers are +5 for slow, cautious movement—no more than 5m/turn, +5 for strong floors, -5 for weak floors, +5 for massing 300kg or less, -5 for massing 500-700kg, -10 for massing 701-1000kg, -15 for massing over 1000kg).

ACPA LIST

Note: Like the vehicles, the ACPA descriptions that follow refer to weapons and systems listed and detailed on pages 75-76. We have also relisted the suits from *Maximum Metal* since that product is currently out of print.

ARASAKA STANDARD B (MOHANJIN-B)
STR 37, SDP 37, SP 50, 691kg; 89,050eb.
This is Arasaka's normal line model. Not a great suit against other powered armor, but sufficient against civilians (a concept Arasaka tests quite a bit). This is the unit that edgerunners will see in "low-intensity" combat environments and is therefore the one most likely to turn up to squash them flat during a mission. While it has definite weaknesses, such as armor that a LAW can easily pop, most "nudies" won't get the chance to exploit this, unless they come prepared to deal with such heavy equipment.
Special Equipment: ECI HUD interface (gives +1 to Initiative and +2



to direct-fire weapons.), long range radio (300km), Monitor Auto-Doc, 2 EMP sponges, and two plastic obstacle packs (5m area made impassable to non-powered troops, one use only).

Stock Armament: Tsunami GL in right arm (two extra clips), BSS Silicon Spray (a sticky glue pack, one use each) and Auto-Fletchette "Pistol" (with 400 rds) in left arm, carried 12.7mm machine gun (three extra clips). **Unarmed Damage:** Punch: 4d10, Kick: 6d10, Crush: 5d10. Defenses are two smoke canisters and two AP canisters (one forward, one rear).

ARASAKA STANDARD-C (MOHANJIN-C)
STR 37, SDP 37, SP 50, 705kg; 100,000eb.

Arasaka saw powered armor in a different light than Militech. If the Aras needed a fast destruction specialist, they hauled out a combat cyborg, plugged it in, and slipped the leash. For the most part, PA's were treated as oversized soldiers called in for enhanced firepower.

This attitude changed in the early stages of the war, when Commando suits walked through Arasaka troops and Mohanjin-B suits with virtual impunity. PA commanders began clamoring for a suit that would stand up to Commandos and Militech MBT's, and Arasaka delivered swiftly. The new Mohanjin-C's enhanced interface and boosted reflexes, along with the slightly heavier weaponry, make it a much better battlefield unit. They are deployed in four-suit squads, usually with a more skilled squad leader in charge.

Special Equipment: Virtual reality interface (gives +3 to Initiative and direct-fire weapons.), military radio (500km, burst trans. and band jumping), Monitor Auto-Doc, 2 EMP sponges, IR baffling, High Reflex boost.

Stock Armament: Tsunami GL in right arm (two extra clips), Oni autoshotgun in left arm, carried 12.7mm machine gun (three extra clips), carried broadsword, carried ACPA bazooka (three extra rounds). **Unarmed Damage:** Punch: 4d10, Kick: 6d10, Crush: 5d10. Defenses are two smoke canisters and two AP canisters (one forward, one rear).

MEXICAN METAL NEMESIS ASSAULT
STR 45, SDP 45, SP 80, 1481kg; 146,693 eb.



A good heavy suit from a second-rate manufacturer. (They used the engineering expertise of men from MetaCorp's defunct Jacksuit production line.) The Nemesis suffered an unfairly negative reputation because of a tragic accident at its first, much advertised, release. It is tougher than most Russian models even though it uses a Russian chassis—which hasn't endeared them to their Neo-Soviet suppliers. Mexican Metals has developed a reputation for having good technical expertise and terrible business sense. Assuming the company survives, this suit will probably be cropping up in the arsenals of aggressive corps worldwide.

Special Equipment: Virtual reality interface (gives +3 to Initiative and direct-fire weapons), long range radio (300km), and on-board camera. Other equipment includes Repeater Auto-Doc, two EMP sponges, painting laser, and food/filtration system to allow continuous suit use for up to 60 hours.

Stock Armament: Retractable climbing hooks on all four limbs (Kick/Punch+1D10), 5.56 minigun (w/2000 rds) in the left arm, 13.9mm Rifle (plus 160 rds) in the right arm, plus a shoulder-mounted 30mm BHC-G8 Cannon (w/30 rds) and a Mini Roc 15 rocket pod! **Unarmed Damage:** Punch: 5d10, Kick: 6d10, Crush: 7d10. Defenses are an AP canister launcher to the front and two to the rear.

MILITECH COMMANDO
STR 35, SDP 35, SP 65, 945kg; 108,000eb



The name is a little misleading; this is actually Militech's excellent front-line combat suit, utilizing the Highwayman-class chassis. It's frequently seen (and respected) on the battlefield and in urban combat zones. The design focuses on information handling and hard-hitting firepower, making piloting and targeting easy tasks for the operator. While many buyers customize their Commandos with specialized external options, the percentage of factory-standard Commandos in use is higher than any other PA. This suit shows the power of a concept design where ideas are applied without bureaucratic influence.

Special Equipment: Virtual reality interface (gives +3 to Initiative and direct-fire weapons), laser detector, military radio (500km, burst trans. and band jumping), and onboard camera. Other equipment includes a Repeater Auto-Doc, an EMP sponge, IR baffling, and a Command Computer—powered suits equipped with this communicate their sensor views to each other (game benefits are +1 to Initiative and Awareness for those so linked. The unit commander also gets a +1 to Tactics).

Stock Armament: M-31PA in the left arm (two extra clips), BCL-20 in the right arm (three extra clips), carried 40mm auto grenade launcher (three extra clips), carried Spectre ATGM (two extra shots), and a sword. **Unarmed Dam-age:** Punch: 4d10, Kick: 6d10, Crush: 5d10. Defenses are an AP canister launcher to the rear, a chaff canister, and a smoke canister.

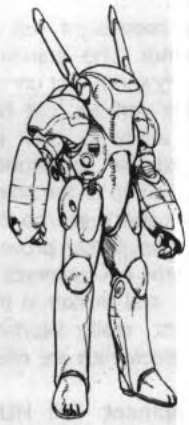
MILITECH WAR COMMANDO
STR 35, SDP 35, SP 65, 951kg; 116,000eb

The War Commando is Militech's fully equipped version of its popular ACPA. Militech typically uses Commandos in groups of four, pairing them up like jet fighters rather than using them in squads like the U.S. Army. In this fashion, the Commandos can cover more ground while providing each other with fire support. The most common mission is to provide heavier firepower for normal infantry units in urban combat situations; secondary missions include airdropped hit-and-run raids and anti-armor search-and-destroy assignments.

Special Equipment: Virtual reality interface (gives +3 to Initiative and direct-fire weapons), laser detector, military radio, external microwave detector (linked to chaff canister), onboard camera, and sensor extension. Other equipment includes a Repeater Auto-Doc, an EMP sponge, IR baffling, and a Command Computer—powered suits equipped with this communicate their sensor views to each other (game benefits are +1 to Initiative and Awareness for those so linked. The unit commander also gets a +1 to Tactics). Interface bonuses give +3 to Initiative and direct-fire weapons.

Stock Armament: M-31PA in the left arm (two extra clips), BCL-20 in the right arm (three extra clips), carried 40mm auto grenade launcher (three extra clips), carried Spectre ATGM (two extra shots), and a PA sword. Defenses are an AP canister launcher to the rear, a chaff canister, a smoke canister, and a Ghost canister. **Unarmed Damage:** Punch: 4d10, Kick: 6d10, Crush: 5d10.

ORBITAL AIR/RAVEN MICROCYB SPIDER
STR 27, SDP 27, SP 40, 620 kg; 789,830 eb.



One of the top-line suits in Orbital Air's aerospace forces, this one is an excellent example of expensive overspecialization. While very effective at the task of orbital assault, the ECM suites jack up the cost to the point of absurdity (there is rumored to be a stealth model as well with a, literally, astronomical price tag). But since Orbital Air makes their own suits, it can be assumed that they give themselves a healthy discount. It is not absolutely certain that these suits have ever seen action, since no eyewitness reports exist, but no one believes that OA would make such a costly piece of equipment just to see it sit idle. Independent orbital workshackers have been stocking up on high-powered "comm" lasers and other such equipment ever since OA announced the Spider's release.

Special Equipment: Virtual reality interface (gives +4 to Initiative and +3 to direct-fire weapons), radar (10km), military radio (500km, burst trans. and band jumping), plus two sensor extensions. Other equipment includes a Repeater Auto-Doc, IR baffling, Hi Reflex boost, ECM and ECCM suites, a sealed environment with five hour life support, zero-G maneuvering jets, and a Command Computer (see the Commando above).

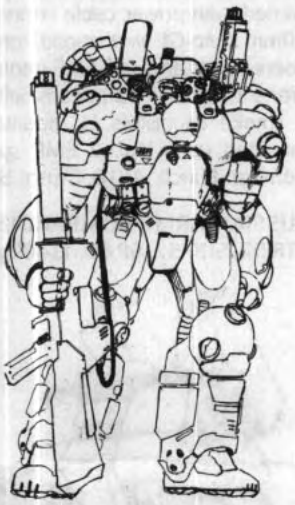
Stock armament: Retractable monosword and an Auto-Fletchette "Pistol" (w/ 200 rds) in the left arm, and a micromissile launcher (w/40 rds) and "Photon" laser cannon in the right arm. **Unarmed Damage:** Punch: 3d10, Kick: 4d10, Crush: 4d10. Defenses are an AP canister launcher to the rear, a chaff canister, and a smoke canister.

RAVEN MICROCYBERNETICS AND TSUNAMI ARMS MAGUS
STR 40, SDP 40, SP 65, 920kg; 1,447,530eb.

The Magus suit is designed as the ultimate in information gathering and command/control, computer, communication and intelligence (C4I) ACPA. Equipped with a full suite of sensory and communication system, a single Magus suit can act as the communications focal point for an entire battalion, although more commonly Magi are deployed with a platoon of Special Forces or another elite unit, where their combination of electronic warfare, remotes, sensor, and communication capability make them a force to be feared.

Magi suits are not designed for heavy combat, although their suite of weapons and heavy armor make them fully capable of it, though they lack weapon endurance. They have an impressive countermeasures battery as well, making them all but immune to missiles. The powerful Deathwind railgun is the most powerful kinetic-kill rifle currently in existence, and debuted on this suit. Though hand-carried, the weapon cannot be fired more than twice without access to the energy stores on board the armor.



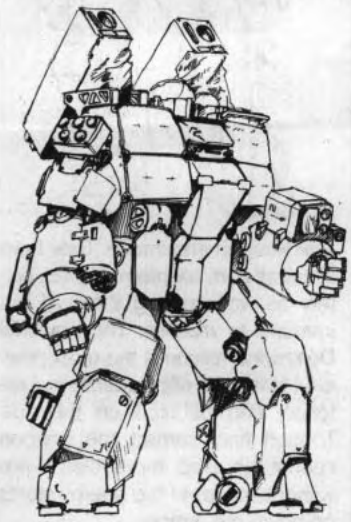


The largest problem with the Magus suit is the cost; with the price tag approaching 1.5 million euro, a single Magus ACPA costs as much as a squad of Nemesis ACPA. On the other hand, it can be argued that a single Magus, properly deployed, is more effective than a squad of any other suit. Another serious problem is power; even with the supplemental power cells and the high-yield engine on board, the Magus is prone to brown-outs when running all of its systems (the EW and railgun are the main draws, although the other electronics consume substantial amounts as well).

Special Equipment: VRI Interface (+4 Initiative,+3 to direct fire weapons, target 4 weapons simultaneously), High Boost (+2 Ref), OrbitalAir Prime Automedic, escape hatch, Sensors (thermal targeting, Low-lite/anti-dazzle, Infra-red, Teleoptics, Image Enhance, Radar (50km range), magnetometer, A/V recorder, amplified hearing w enhanced range), Commo systems (military radio (500km range), Cellular phone link, Laser communicator, Satellite uplink, scrambler (for all 4), Remote Targeting (allows use of DFB with forward observer),laser detector,

microwave detector (tied to smoke, flare, ghosts), ECM, ECCM (both with expanded range; 500m), remote bay holding 2 "Microtech RAD" remotes (pg. 57) and a single Bell Minibee (pg. 57, optional 500m fiber-optic leash) (backpack), Remote bays holding 1 RDAK or Scorpion remote (1 per leg), Remote bays holding 6 Grid Bugs (pg. 58) (1 bay per arm), Command computer, Tactical computer (Tactics +4, Strategy +3, sensor analysis +5, Navigation +3, 21MU remaining), combat cyberdeck (cellular, interface plugs in wrists, Speed +3, MU30, Datawalls +5)
Standard Armament: "Deathwind" railgun: (+3 • 5d10+10AP • 30 • 2 • Range: 1250m • VR • SP: 25 • SDP: 20) Custom designed by Tsunami, the Deathwind makes use of power cells located throughout the torso and legs to give it it's impressive performance. Designed for precision sniper use, it is also a fearsome anti-armor weapon. Hand carried, with power cable connecting to power accumulator in torso. 40mm Auto-GL (w 1 reload, torso mount over left shoulder), Painting lasers (1 per arm), AGAMS (mounted right shoulder, no reloads), EMP grenade launcher (2 reloads, left arm), 4 Ghost cannisters (2 per leg), 2 smoke cannisters (1 mounted each leg), 2 chaff cannisters (1 mounted each leg), 2 EMP sponges, 1 EMP capacitor. **Unarmed Combat:** Punch: 4d10, Crush: 5d10, Kick: 6d10

RUSSIAN ARMS BOMBARDIER
STR 52, SDP 52, SP 80, 1340kg; 208,367eb. (variable with weapon load out)

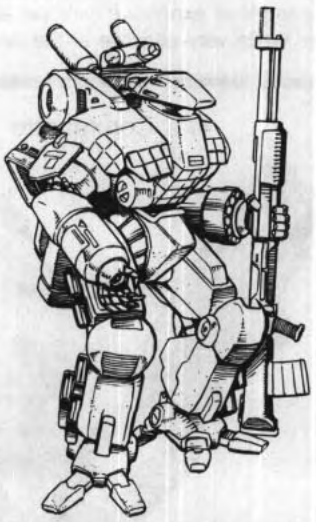


The Bombardier is a heavy suit, designed for artillery support for airmobile and other forces that cannot support vehicular artillery. While not intended specifically for urban/suburban combat, the suit has proven well suited for this role, with it's heavy weapons and heavy armor. Militech and Arasaka both deployed this type of ACPA during the war.

The Bombardier is incapable of duty inside buildings, and even soft terrain can prove troublesome to one that is fully loaded. It's slow speed means that frequently it must rely on it's countermeasures to foil return fire, as it cannot always get far enough away if an enemy counterbattery unit is fast on it's toes.
Special Equipment: VRI Interface (+2 to Initiative, +3 to direct fire weapons, target 4 weapons simultaneously), Low Boost (+1 Ref), Bodyweight Automedic, Sensors (thermal targeting, Low-lite/anti-dazzle, Infra-red, Teleoptics, amplified hearing w enhanced range), military radio (500km range), Remote Targeting (allows use of WA bonus with forward observer),laser detector, microwave detector (tied to smoke, flare shells)
Stock Armanment: 2x60mm breech-loading mortars: (+0 • 8d10 • 6 rnds ea • 2 • VR • range: 2000m • SP:15 • SDP: 35ea) A pair of back mounted, direct-fire capable breech loading mortars. The 6 rounds are loaded in a revolver cradle, allowing access to a variety of rounds (ROF drops to 1 if round selection is changed, or if direct-fire mode is selected). Ammo cradles take 2-4 rounds to change, and weigh 25kg each. 40mm Auto-GL (w single reload, mounted on right arm), BHC-G8 (two reloads, Weapon mounted on left arm), Painting laser (left arm), Super Rakate (no reloads, right arm), 14mm Autopistol (no reloads, left arm), AGAMs (1 mounted each shoulder, no reloads), 4 smoke cannisters (2 mounted each leg), 2 chaff cannisters (1 mounted each leg), 4 anti-personnel cannister launchers on legs (2 front, two back). **Unarmed Combat:** Punch: 6d10, Crush: 7d10, Kick: 9d10

The mortars can be replaced with a variety of weapon systems; versions have been seen with LATGM launchers (3 rounds/launcher), Scorpion-16 launchers (3 shots/launcher), IFAR-6 pods, Miniroc-15c pods, even massive HIVE gun pods and railguns! The mortar equipped version is actually one of the lightest (weighing) versions; The maximum weight the frame will support is 2600kg, although the suit's engine is only rated for a maximum of 2000kg

RUSSIAN ARMS BORIS 1
STR 50, SDP 50, SP 65, 1235 kg., 116,027eb.



The famous overweight suit of powered armor. The standard Boris is actually somewhat underarmed against vehicles, but has the payload ability to pack on hard-hitting external accessories. Most buyers load up on the heavy weapons pods after purchase, but be careful: Its weight can prove a problem in some environments. It has found an avid market in the EEC, where its reality interface and internal electronics are often upgraded.
Special Equipment: Full HUD interface w/thermal targeting (+1 to Initiative and +2 to direct-fire weapons), standard radio (80km), and onboard camera. Other equipment includes a Kwik-fix Auto-Doc, two EMP sponges, winch and grapple.
Stock armament: Super Rakate and 10mm MG (plus 400 rounds) in the left arm, 14.5mm Hvy MG (400 rounds) in the right arm, and a carried BHC-G8 30mm Cannon (six extra clips). **Unarmed Damage:** Punch: 6d10, Kick: 9d10, Crush: 7d10. Defenses are two AP canister launchers to the front and one to the rear.

ZETATECH GRASSHOPPER
STR 25, SDP 25, SP30, 462 kg., 54,742eb.



An early model PA that's a real lightweight. It's really just energized MetalGear™: Tough enough for the street, but don't take it into a real war zone. It has seen some use in police work, however, where its size and weight make for minimal limitations. In truth, this suit did pioneer many of the concepts now taken for granted in ACPA circles and should be given its due. The chassis has excellent capabilities and, because of its light weight, it is the only standard suit on the market that could use a backpack flight system without modification. Not that anyone has thought it was really worth it ....
Special Equipment: Full HUD interface (+2 to Initiative and +2 to direct-fire weapons), standard radio (80km), and onboard camera. Other equipment includes a Bodyweight Medic, an EMP sponge, and unpowered skates on both boots (double MA on good surfaces).
Stock armament: Big Boomer (plus 40 rounds) in the light arm, retractable climbing hooks on both hands (Punch +1D10), and a carried Militech Cyborg Rifle (four extra clips) (see *Chromebook 2*, pg. 36). **Unarmed Damage:** Punch: 3d10, Kick: 5d10, Crush: 4d10. Defenses are two AP canister launchers to the front and one to the rear.

VEHICLES FROM MAXIMUM METAL

For those of you who don't possess our heavy hardware book, *Maximum Metal*™, here we provide the major vehicle listings in short form for use with the *Shockwave* Panzerboy rules (see page 71-74). *MM* is out of print now, so we thought you'd appreciate having access to these stats.

WHEELED VEHICLES

ARASAKA KUMA LAND ROVER

This workmanlike vehicle has been likened to the classic Jeep®, and is becoming about as popular. It's tough, relatively cheap, and small enough to fit in places where a Hummer gets hung up. Arasaka has lots of them, because they get them at manufacturer's prices (15,000 eb.).

Top Speed: 90 mph
Acc/Dec: 15/40
Crew: 1
Range: 400 miles
Passengers: 3
Cargo: 650 kg (internal)
Maneuver: 0
Mass: 2 tons
SDP: 50
SP: 20
Type: Car
Cost: 28,000 eb.
Special Equipment: Pintle mount, off-road capable.

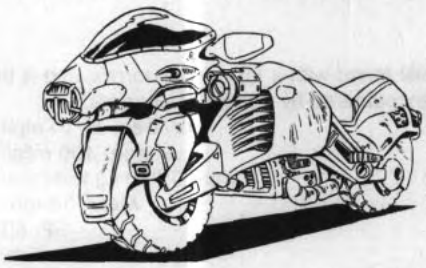
The Kuma is open and only provides SP protection to its personnel 25% of the time. The pintle mount gunner gets no protection when using the weapon.

HMMWV "HUMMER"

The third most well known military wheeled vehicle of all time (behind the Jeep and the Deuce-and-a-Half), the Hummer all-terrain light military truck is made under license by over a dozen manufacturers who all sell to the military as well as to the public. This proliferation accounts for the artificially low price.

Top Speed: 100 mph
Acc/Dec: 15/40 mph
Crew: 1
Range: 400 miles
Passengers: 5
Cargo: 1,250 kg (internal)
Maneuver: -0
Mass: 2.25 tons
SDP: 60
SP: 10
Type: Pickup
Cost: 30,000 eb.
Special Equipment: Off-road capable, pintle mount accessible by hatch in roof over front passenger seat.

DARKWARRIOR ASSAULT MOTORCYCLE



A military variant of the civilian Darkwing off-road bike, the Darkwarrior sports a pair of light machineguns in addition to improved armor.

Top Speed: 100 mph
Acc/Dec: 18/30 mph
Crew: 1
Range: 400 miles
Passengers: 0
Cargo: 45 kg (external)
Maneuver: +1
Mass: 140 kg
SDP: 35
SP: 5
Type: Cycle
Cost: 13,350 eb.
Special Equipment: Off-road capable, radio.
Weapons: 2x 5.56mm machineguns in open mounts fixed forward.

2 1/2 TON TRUCK

This descendant of the legendary "Deuce-and-a-Half" truck has very little in common with its ancestor. It's a modern machine that'll haul 2500 kg over almost any terrain.

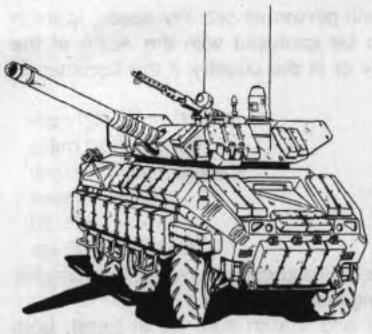
Top Speed: 80 mph
Acc/Dec: 10/30 mph
Crew: 1
Range: 800 miles
Passengers: 1
Cargo: 2,500 kg (internal)
Maneuver: -4
Mass: 5 tons
SDP: 75
SP: 10
Type: Truck
Cost: 60,000 eb.
Special Equipment: Amphibious, off-road capable, radio, pintle mount on top of cab accessible from hatch over passenger seat.

ARASAKA COMBAT 10

The Combat 10 is a sort of battlefield taxi, a wheeled APC that can head into fire and take it. Purchasers should be warned that this is an urban assault vehicle, and should not be deployed in full-scale military situations! One hit from an ATGM or a heavy cannon and it folds up. But if the heavy stuff isn't flying, it's a good deal for the price.

Top Speed: 80 mph
Acc/Dec: 10/30 mph
Crew: 2
Range: 300 miles
Passengers: 10
Cargo: 2.5 tons (internal)
Maneuver: -2
Mass: 25 tons
SDP: 250
SP: 50
Type: IFV
Cost: 965,000 eb.
Special Equipment: Cyber-assisted, smoke dispenser, gas dispenser, satellite uplink, military radio, light amplification, autopilot, navigation system, off-road capable.
Weapons: Turreted 7.62mm minigun with two magazines and a 40mm cannon with 30 rounds. The 40mm is a special gun made for the vehicle: HVY 0 N R 8D6 (40mmHE) 10 1 ST 10,000eb

PANEUROPE GLADIATOR ARMORED CAR



An EEC creation, this armored car is used by a lot of small countries that can't afford full-fledged MBT's. It does a fair job of making like a tank ... until a real tank rumbles onto the battlefield.

Top Speed: 60 mph
Acc/Dec: 10/30 mph
Crew: 3
Range: 300 miles
Passengers: 0
Cargo: 2,000 kg (external)
Maneuver: -2
Mass: 20 tons
SDP: 200
SP: 80
Type: IFV
Cost: 1.1 million eb.
Special Equipment: Off-road capable, reactive armor, fire extinguisher, 8 man-hours of life support, anti-laser aerosol linked to laser detector, four smoke launchers, military radio, radar rangefinder, autopilot, navigation system, light amplification, radar, radar detector.
Weapons: Stabilized 75mm cannon in turret with +2 targeting computer and eight magazines of shells; 7.62mm machinegun with two magazines mounted alongside the main gun. A 12.7mm machinegun is atop the turret on a pintle mount.

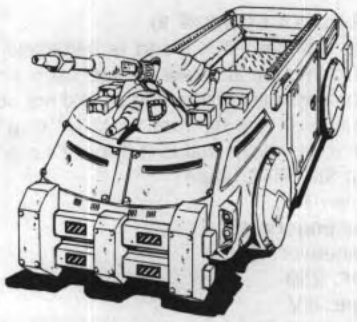
YAKURICH-URAL BTR-15 APC

The BTR-15 is the "Yak-U" entry into the mercenary market. An uprated version of the infamous BTR-70 of last century, it's actually quite popular, used by many third-world countries and SovOil (the main customer). It is not meant to stand up and fight armored vehicles, it's meant to get a squad onto the battlefield safely and cheaply and get them out again if necessary.

Top Speed: 80 mph **Acc/Dec:** 10/30 mph
Crew: 2 **Range:** 300 miles
Passengers: 8 **Cargo:** 1000 kg (external)
Maneuver: -0 **Mass:** 10 tons
SDP: 100 **SP:** 40
Type: APC **Cost:** 310,000 eb.
Special Equipment: Amphibious, fire extinguisher, four man-hours life support, smoke dispenser with IR smoke, two smoke launchers, anti-personnel grenade charges, military radio, autopilot, navigation system, off-road capable.
Weapons: 14.5mm machinegun and 30mm cannon in turret.

ARASAKA RIOT 8

A common sight on troubled streets. The Riot 8 is not a full-fledged combat vehicle, but can become a good facsimile in times of trouble. Carries eight passengers.



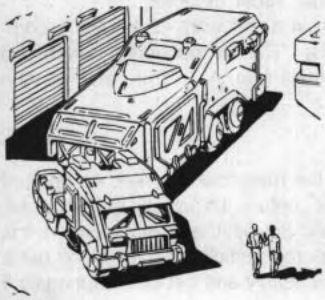
Top Speed: 120 mph
Acc/Dec: 10/30 mph
Crew: 2
Range: 300 miles
Passengers: 8
Cargo: 2,000 kg (external)
Maneuver: -2
Mass: 20 tons
SDP: 200
SP: 30
Type: APC
Cost: 575,000 eb.
Special Equipment: Cyber-assisted, military radio, satellite uplink, autopilot, navigation system, off-road capable.
Weapons: Water cannon in 360° open mount, auto-GL in 180° open mount on cab.
The Riot 8 is open-topped, and troops inside it only receive SP cover 75% of the time.

MILITECH COMMANDO

For the low-budget buyer with anti-personnel security needs, Militech markets the Commando (not to be confused with the ACPA of the same name). At home in the city or in the country, if the Commando can't handle it, get a tank!
Top Speed: 80 mph **Acc/Dec:** 15/40 mph
Crew: 2 **Range:** 300 miles
Passengers: 2 **Cargo:** 1 ton (internal)
Maneuver: -3 **Mass:** 3 tons
SDP: 80 **SP:** 20
Type: Car **Cost:** 60,000 eb.
Special Equipment: Amphibious, off-road capable, radio, light amplification, searchlight, autopilot, navigation system.
Weapons: 7.62mm machinegun and 40mm auto GL in turret; both weapons have an extra magazine in the body.

PETERBILT 2000

This vehicle is representative of the rigs used by nomads and other cross-country truckers, including military convoys. Rough, ready, and rugged, the 2000 is easy to maintain, relatively easy on fuel, and can accept many different kinds of fuel with a little tinkering (a must for military service).



Top Speed: 100 mph
Acc/Dec: 10/30 mph
Crew: 1 **Range:** 960 miles
Passengers: 1 **Cargo:** 36 ton. trailer
Maneuver: -4 **SDP:** 100
SP: 20 **Type:** Truck
Mass: 6.7 tons **Cost:** 110,000 eb.
Special Equipment: Radio, entertainment system, simple security system, radar detector, autopilot, navigation system, bed, minifreezer, microwave. Can be cyber-assisted for an additional 30,000 eb.

GMI WOLVERINE

GMI sells a lot of these armored cars to corporations that have a great deal of territory to patrol and aren't restricted by little things like the legality of shooting trespassers. It's got enough firepower to handle small-arms ambushes and enough speed to outrun big problems.
Top Speed: 110 mph **Acc/Dec:** 15/30 mph
Crew: 3 **Range:** 300 miles
Passengers: 0 **Cargo:** 2500 kg (internal)
Maneuver: -2 **Mass:** 7.5 tons
SDP: 75 **SP:** 35
Type: APC **Cost:** 360,000 eb.
Special Equipment: Amphibious, fire extinguisher, 2 smoke launchers, anti-personnel grenade charges, military radio, scrambler, visual rangefinder, autopilot, navigation system, active IR sensors, light amplification, radar detector, searchlight, off-road capable.
Weapons: Twin 12.7mm machineguns and a reloadable Light ATGM in high-angle traverse turret; four magazines of 12.7mm ammunition (two apiece; each gun has 150 normal rounds and 150 AP rounds) and five extra ATGM rounds. The ATGM rounds have semiactive thermal guidance.

BWW 2020

There are some who consider law enforcement to be a close relative of combat duty. Most inner-city cops consider combat duty to be the lesser hazard. The BMW 2020 Urban Patrol Vehicle's military use is normally confined to security, but its off-road capability makes it useful for field duty.



Top Speed: 100 mph
Acc/Dec: 15/40 mph
Crew: 2
Range: 300 miles
Passengers: 4
Cargo: 1000 kg. (internal)
Maneuver: -1
Mass: 3 tons
SDP: 75 **SP:** 30
Type: Car **Cost:** 90,000 eb.
Special Equipment: Off-road capable, crash control systems, fire extinguisher, military radio, infrared, light amplification, radar.
Weapons: One turreted weapon (7.62mm minigun, 40mm auto-GL, or water cannon).

HOVERCRAFT

NAVY M-40 GEV

The old Navy M-40 is still found with a lot of state forces, and is the patrol craft most often encountered by "panzer" smugglers.
Top Speed: 180 mph **Acc/Dec:** 15/10 mph
Crew: 4 **Range:** 400 miles
Passengers 0 **Cargo:** 3,000 kg (external)
Maneuver: -1 **Mass:** 10 tons
SDP 100 **SP:** 50
Type: Hover **Cost:** 1.89 million eb.
Special Equipment: Composite armor, crash control systems, environment control, fire extinguisher, AGAMS, military radio with scrambler, laser rangefinder, autopilot and navigation system, image enhancement, laser detector, military radar, thermograph.
Weapons: 30mm autocannon and painting laser on articulated mount forward, 2 40mm auto-GLs in articulated mounts right and left (with one magazine apiece), four Hellfire missiles forward on small weapon wings.

GEB DUSTER



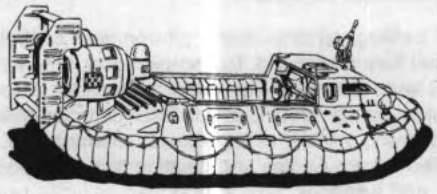
A small hover, the basic Duster (unarmored, without the pintle mount) is a pleasure watercraft on the civilian market. The military Duster is more of a hoverjeep than an armored vehicle, but it serves a great many corporations as a maritime patrol craft; the hovercraft equivalent of the Arasaka-Mitsubishi Kuma.

Top Speed: 150 mph
Acc/Dec: 15/10 mph
Crew: 1 **Range:** 400 miles
Passengers: 3 **Cargo:** 800 kg (internal)
Maneuver: -1 **Mass:** 2.5 tons
SDP: 25 **SP:** 10
Type: Hover **Cost:** 85,000 eb.
Special Equipment: Radio, pintle mount.

GMI HOVERTRUCK

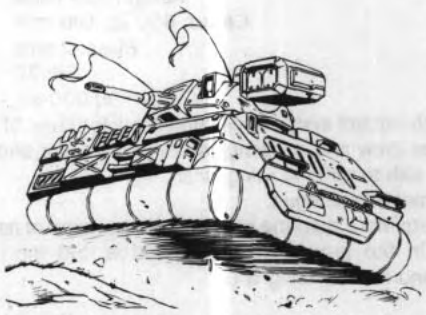
A variant of the U.S.M.C. APC, the hovertruck has been refitted to serve as a combination troop/cargo vehicle.

Top Speed: 100 mph
Crew: 2



Acc/Dec: 15/10 mph
Range: 400 miles
Passengers: 12, no cargo or ...
Cargo: 5 tons (internal)
Maneuver: -2
Mass: 10 tons
SDP: 100 **SP:** 20
Type: Hover
Cost: 220,000 eb.
Special Equipment: Military radio, fire extinguisher, radar.
Weapons: Pintle-mounted auto-GL on the cab, accessed by a hatch over the passenger seat.

MILITECH A-20 ACAV



The "panzer" made famous by Combat Cabb and numerous movies, the A-20 sheds the varied armament of the original Navy model, but is otherwise very similar to the one the Navy still has in service. Like the Arasaka APC's, it's really too lightly armored to slug it out with the Big Boys. The panzer hopes to strike fast with its missiles and cut out before the enemy can respond.

Top Speed: 200 mph **Acc/Dec:** 20/10 mph
Crew: 3 **Range:** 650 miles
Passengers: 0 **Cargo:** 3 tons (internal)
Maneuver: 0 **Mass:** 10 tons
SDP: 100 **SP:** 50
Type: Hover **Cost:** 730,000 eb.
Special Equipment: Cyber-assisted, reactive armor, fire extinguisher, four man-hours life support, ejection seats, radar rangefinder, autopilot, military radio, military radar with terrain-following capability, sonar, military radar detector, autopilot, navigation system, passive IR, thermograph, light amplification.
Weapons: 25mm cannon and light ATGM in stabilized turret. The cannon has two magazines (one loaded with AP), and the ATGM has five extra rounds.

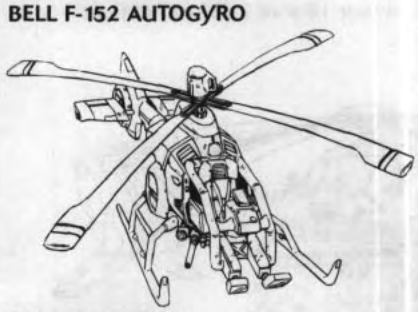
HELICOPTERS

BELL UH-9

The UH-9 is viewed as a more reasonable troop-moving alternative than the SM-Dragon.

Top Speed: 165 mph **Acc/Dec:** 15/15 mph
Crew: 2 **Range:** 600 miles
Passengers: 20 **Cargo:** 2,500 kg (internal)
Maneuver: -1 **Mass:** 8 tons
SDP: 200 **SP:** 40
Type: Heavy Helicopter **Cost:** 2.45 million eb.
Special Equipment: IR baffling, ejection seats for crew, fire extinguisher, chaff and flare dispensers, military radio with scrambler, autopilot and navigation system, image enhancement, infrared, laser detector, military radar with terrain-following, military radar detector, telescopic optics.
Weapons: Turret-mounted 25mm autocannon. Weapon wings support another 16 spaces of pod weapons.

BELL F-152 AUTOGYRO



The ultimate in small aerial combat vehicles, the Bell F-152 is extensively used by police forces and mercenaries. Its lack of protection for the pilot is one of its least popular features.

Top Speed: 195 mph
Acc/Dec: 15/15 mph
Crew: 1 **Range:** 50 miles
Passengers: None **Cargo:** None
Maneuver: +1 **Mass:** 1,500 kg
SDP: 40 **SP:** 0
Type: Light Helicopter **Cost:** 145,000 eb.
Special Equipment: Radio, searchlight.
Weapons: One light weapon on a 180° forward–rotating open mount under the body. Popular options include the 5.56mm minigun, the 40mm auto GL, or 5.56/7.62mm machineguns for low cost versions.

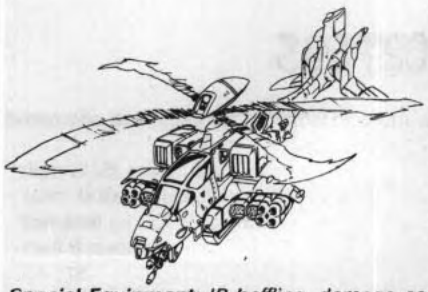
BELL EVIL-EYE 19

The military version of the Spy-Eye 18, the Evil-Eye is designed for light military support and recon duties. It can act as a pocket gunship, but it doesn't have the armor or firepower to fill a proper gunship's role.

Top Speed: 180 mph **Acc/Dec:** 15/15 mph
Crew: 2 **Range:** 400 miles
Passengers: 2 **Cargo:** 2,000 kg (internal)
Maneuver: +1 **Mass:** 6,500 kg
SDP: 65 (Body 3) **SP:** 20
Type: Medium Helicopter **Cost:** 550,000 eb.
Special Equipment: IR baffling, ejection seats, fire extinguisher, chaff and flare dispensers, laser rangefinder, autopilot, navigation system, image enhancement, military radar, military radar detector, searchlight, thermograph.
Weapons: Turret-mounted 5.56mm minigun under the cockpit, targeting laser on rotor hub, and up to 12 spaces of pod-mounted weapons. Typical pod armaments include two 5.56mm miniguns/12.7mm machineguns/40mm auto-GLs and four 19-shot 2.75" rocket pods, or, eight Hellfire missiles and two SAMs.

BELL AH-99 GUNSHIP

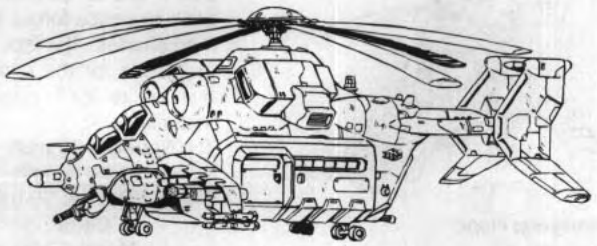
The AH-99 is intended for one use: ground attack. Its array of weaponry is geared to that function, and all its weight capacity is sacrificed to it. Like all helicopters, it's not heavily-armored enough to slug it out with a ground unit, so it relies on long-range firepower to destroy targets from a stand-off position.



Top Speed: 180 mph
Acc/Dec: 10/15 mph
Crew: 2
Range: 600 miles
Passengers: 0
Cargo: None
Maneuver: -2
Mass: 4 tons
SDP: 100 **SP:** 40
Type: Heavy Helicopter
Cost: 2.3 million eb.

Special Equipment: IR baffling, damage control, ejection seats, environment control, chaff and flare dispensers, military radio with scrambler, microwave rangefinder, autopilot and navigation system, cybernetic linkage, ECM, ECCM, image enhancement, laser detector, military terrain-following radar, military radar detector linked to chaff dispenser, telescopic optics and thermograph.
Weapons: Turret-mounted stabilized 30mm autocannon (with two magazines), 40mm auto-GL (with two magazines), and painting laser. Weapon wings hold eight spaces of pod weapons; the normal load is two four-shot Hellfire pods, or four 19-shot 2.75" rocket pods.

SM-DRAGON



Arguably the biggest combat helicopter in the world, the Dragon is a Euro-Soviet child of last century's monster Soviet helicopters. It's huge, it's expensive, but it's so impressive that it sells well, despite the fact that it's not a very good choice for a heavy-combat vehicle. The Dragon's ability to carry lots of troops makes it useful on the battlefield, though. (Revised stats for the Sikorsky-Mitsubishi Dragon from *Chromebook 1*.)

Top Speed: 120 mph **Acc/Dec:** 10/15 mph
Crew: 2 **Range:** 600 miles
Passengers: 30 **Cargo:** 4 tons (internal)
Maneuver: -2 **Mass:** 12 tons
SDP: 300 **SP:** 80
Type: Heavy Helicopter **Cost:** 8.3 million eb.

Special Equipment: Ejection seats for crew, environmental control, fire extinguisher, chaff and flare dispensers, military radio with scrambler, visual rangefinder, autopilot and navigation system, ECM, ECCM, image enhancement, laser detector, microwave detector, military radar with terrain-following, military radar detector, telescopic optics and thermograph.
Weapons: Two turret-mounted stabilized 12.7mm miniguns (with extra magazine apiece), weapon wings for another 12 spaces of pod weapons.

BELL HUEY COP-CHOPPER

Built as a low-cost alternative to AV's, this was marketed to police departments. It has become a popular sight in mercenary units and corporate forces, too. (These are the revised stats for the HUEY PH presented in *Protect and Serve*.)

Top Speed: 150 mph **Acc/Dec:** 15/15 mph
Crew: 2 **Range:** 400 miles
Passengers: 4 **Cargo:** 2,000 kg (internal)
Maneuver: -2 **Mass:** 6.5 tons
SDP: 80 **SP:** 20
Type: Medium Helicopter **Cost:** 420,000 eb.
Special Equipment: IR baffling, fire extinguisher, chaff and flare dispensers, radio with scrambler, autopilot and navigation system, infrared, light amplification, military radar, military radar detector, searchlight.
Weapons: Turret-mounted 7.62mm minigun or 40mm auto-GL.

AERODYNES

AV-6 COMBAT AERODYNE

The standard military AV, the AV-6 is not much more than a truly military version of the AV-4. It handles a little better and has heavier armament.



Top Speed: 495 mph
Acc/Dec: 50/50 mph
Crew: 2
Range: 1,200 miles
Passengers: 10
Cargo: 1300 kg. (internal)
Maneuver: +1
Mass: 4 tons
SDP: 100 **SP:** 40
Type: AV
Cost: 850,000 eb.

Special Equipment: IR baffling, ejection seats, environment control, fire extinguisher, chaff and flare dispensers, four smoke launchers with IR smoke, military radio, laser communicator, visual rangefinder, autopilot with navigation system, image enhancement, laser detector, military radar with terrain-following, military radar detector, thermograph.
Weapons: Turret-mounted 20mm Gatling and painting laser, weapon wings with 1300 kg for pod weapons. Typical pod load includes two 7.62mm minigun pods and two 19-shot 2.75" rocket pods.

AV-3 AEROCOP

A failed military scout vehicle, the Aerocop is unique in the AV field in that it is a dual-mode vehicle—it not only flies, it also has wheels for surface transport. A favorite of cops everywhere.

Top Speed: 350 mph **Acc/Dec:** 50/50 mph
Crew: 2 **Range:** 525 miles
Passengers: 3 **Cargo:** 650 kg. (internal)
Maneuver: +1 **Mass:** 2 tons
SDP: 50 **SP:** 20
Type: AV **Cost:** 90,000 eb.
Special Equipment: Crash control systems, ejection seats for crew, SP 30 armored wall between crew and passengers, radio, autopilot and navigation system, radar with terrain-following, searchlight.
Weapons: Turreted 7.62mm machinegun.
Notes: The Aerocop costs more than the standard AV because of its wheeled transmission. On the ground, its top speed is 150 mph, Acc/Dec is 15/40 mph, and Maneuvering is 0.

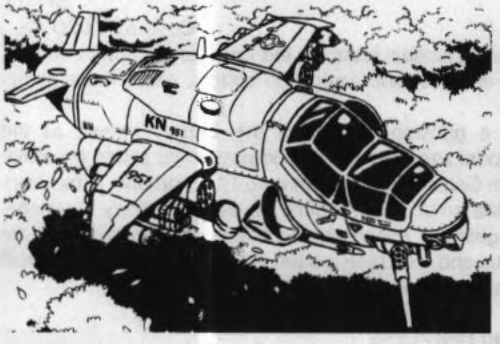
AV-4

The AV-4 is as familiar a sight to the average citizen as CHOOH2 stations. It is ubiquitous, making up over 70% of the world's aerial traffic. It can be outfitted for a variety of missions, from delivery transport to assault. The military version is used as a multipurpose workhorse and has heavier armament.

Top Speed: 350 mph **Acc/Dec:** 50/50 mph
Crew: 1 or 2 **Range:** 800 miles
Passengers: 6 **Cargo:** 1300 kg. (internal)
Maneuver: 0 **Mass:** 4 tons
SDP: 100 **SP:** 40
Type: AV **Cost:** 600,000 eb.
Special Equipment: Ejection seats for crew, military radio, autopilot and navigation system, light amplification, radar with terrain-following, radar detector.

Weapons: 2 turreted 7.62mm miniguns.
Notes: Up to half the AV-4's cargo space can be used as weapons mounting space. All of the cargo space may be used to haul passengers, if desired.

AV-8 ASSAULT AERODYNE

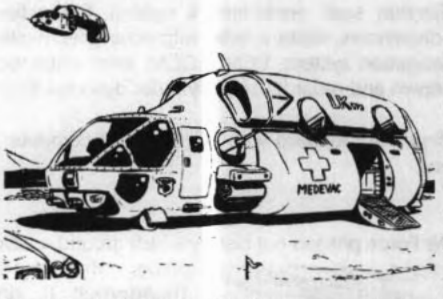


The AV-8 is constructed as the state-of-the-art aerodyne gunship. It does a fair job in that role, although there have been complaints that its loiter time is insufficient.

Top Speed: 495 mph
Crew: 2
Passengers: 0
Maneuver: +1
SDP: 120
Type: AV
Acc/Dec: 50/50 mph
Range: 1,320 miles
Cargo: None
Mass: 4.8 tons
SP: 40
Cost: 2.4 million eb.
Special Equipment: Ejection seats, damage control, 12 man-hours life support, anti-laser aerosol linked to laser detector, chaff and flare dispensers, laser communicator, military radio, autopilot with navigation systems, cybernetic controls, ECM, image enhancement, microwave detector, military radar with terrain-following, military radar detector, thermograph.
Weapons: Turret-mounted stabilized 30mm autocannon and 40mm Auto-GL (autocannon has an extra magazine and auto-GL has two extra magazines). Painting laser in separate turret. Two AAM's, one mounted forward and one aft. Weapon wings can carry 1300 kg of pod weapons.

AV-9 MULTI-PURPOSE AERODYNE

The AV-9 is known as a jack-of-all-trades machine, due to its modular exterior pod design. The basic AV-9 consists of hull and engines. The meat of the AV is the module that fits beneath the framework; the pod can be for assault, troop or cargo transport, command, med-evac or aid station, ECM/EW, etc. The AV-9 is expensive, but its enormous versatility makes it a valuable asset to any force.



Top Speed: 405 mph
Acc/Dec: 50/50 mph
Crew: 2
Range: 800 miles
Passengers: 2
Cargo: 2400 kg (in pod)
Maneuver: 0
Mass: 3.4 tons
SDP: 180 **SP:** 45
Type: AV
Cost: 1.75 million eb.
Special Equipment: Ejection seats, environment control, fire extinguisher, anti-laser aerosol linked to laser detector, chaff and flare dispensers, laser communicator, military radio with scrambler, satellite uplink, autopilot with navigation system, ECM, image enhancement, active/passive IR, military radar with terrain-following, military radar detector, thermograph.
Weapons: Two turreted 40mm auto-GLs, two remote-control 7.62mm Machineguns in separate turrets, two 19-shot 2.75" rocket pods.
Notes: The AV-9 can carry a weapons pod with another 2000 kg of weapons and ammo, or a transport pod with 3600 kg for troops or cargo.

BOEING CITYHAWK UAAV

Boeing has been heavily marketing their Urban Airborne Assault Vehicle to police departments the world over, trying to refute Euro-Asian advertising criticizing American manufacturing. Accusations that the UAAV is built more as a combat vehicle than as a security unit have military buyers looking into the UAAV as a sort of AV interceptor, for anti-AV/helicopter use.

Top Speed: 360 mph
Crew: 2
Passengers: 0
Maneuver: +2
SDP: 85
Type: AV
Acc/Dec: 50/50 mph
Range: 800 miles
Cargo: 1000 kg (internal)
Mass: 3.4 tons
SP: 40
Cost: 920,000 eb.
Special Equipment: Ejection seats, environment control, fire extinguisher, chaff and flare dispensers, military radio, autopilot and navigation system, image enhancement, active and passive IR, military radar with terrain-following, military radar detector, telescopic optics.
Weapons: Two 7.62mm miniguns in separate turrets, two missiles (SAMs or AAMs).
Notes: The proposed "Interceptor" military version has an additional 800kg capacity for missiles, no cargo space, and a top speed of 675 mph. Its proposed cost is 1.45 million eb.

EEC AIRJEEP



The EEC's combined efforts are responsible for the Airjeep. Like most team efforts, the result is a compromise of the lowest common denominator—it's slow, reliable, ugly, functional, and cheap. And why does it bear an uncanny resemblance to Germany's old Kubelwagen?

Top Speed: 150 mph
Crew: 1
Passengers: 5
Maneuver: -0
SDP: 50
Type: AV
Acc/Dec: 50/50 mph
Range: 525 miles
Cargo: 650 kg. (internal)
Mass: 2 tons
SP: 15
Cost: 25,000 eb.
Special Equipment: Crash control systems, radio, radar with terrain-following.
Weapons: One pintle mount.
Note: The Airjeep is open, and riders only receive SP cover 50% of the time.

MI-50

Naturally, SovOil tries to save money any way it can; with a world-wide operation, the bottom line is very important. Also, it prefers to buy Soviet rather than EEC or (yuck!) American. The Mi-50 is not much more than a large, crude version of the EEC Airjeep.

Top Speed: 225 mph
Crew: 1
Passengers: 6
Maneuver: 0
SDP: 110
Type: AV
Acc/Dec: 50/50 mph
Range: 800 miles
Cargo: 1450 kg (internal)
Mass: 4,400 kg
SP: 45
Cost: 650,000 eb.
Special Equipment: Radio, autopilot with navigation system, radar with terrain-following.

Weapons: Two 7.62mm machineguns on door mounts (these count as pintle mounts, but from the sides only. When using the door guns or any time that the doors are open, the Mi-50's armor protection counts only 75% of the time).

MILITECH AVX-9C VIPER

Militech's new Viper isn't meant to replace the AV-8, but instead to act as more of an aerodyne version of a tilt-engine attack plane.

Top Speed: 540 mph — **Acc/Dec:** 50/50 mph
Crew: 2 — **Range:** 800 miles
Passengers: 0 — **Cargo:** none
Maneuver: +2 — **Mass:** 3.4 tons
SDP: 125 — **SP:** 60
Type: AV — **Cost:** 2.76 million eb.

Special Equipment: Ejection seats, fire extinguisher, 12 man-hours life support, anti-laser aerosol linked to laser detector, chaff and flare dispensers, laser communicator, military radio, laser rangefinder, autopilot with navigation systems, cybernetic controls, ECM, ECCM, image enhancement, microwave detector, military radar with terrain-following, military radar detector, thermograph.

Weapons: 7.62mm minigun and painting laser in nose turret. 1600 kg. of internal ordnance stores (bombs or missiles), weapon wings for 1600 kg of weapon pods.

TILT-ROTOR AIRCRAFT

LOCKHEED-CESSNA PINTO

The Pinto is a long-ranged, multipurpose alternative to AV's and attack helicopters. Easy to maintain, the Pinto carries an impressive amount of ordnance into the field, and serves as a cargo transport (cargo carried in special underwing pods) as well.

Top Speed: 450 mph — **Acc/Dec:** 10/20 mph
Crew: 2 — **Range:** 1,600 miles
Passengers: 2 — **Cargo:** 6,250 kg
Maneuver: +2 — **Mass:** 18.75 tons
SDP: 150 — **SP:** 20
Type: Osprey — **Cost:** 2.4 million eb.

Special Equipment: Ejection seats, environment control, fire extinguisher, chaff and flare dispensers, military radio, laser rangefinder, autopilot and navigation system, ECM, image enhancement, laser detector, military radar, military radar detector, thermograph.

Weapons: Two 20mm cannons fixed forward (each has nine magazines), painting laser in articulated mount forward. The Pinto can carry 1400 kg of pod weapons on its wings.

BELL-BOEING FALCON-B

The Falcon is normally a commuter aircraft, intended for corporate and private passenger service. The Falcon-B is the military version, armored and equipped for combat.

Top Speed: 315 mph — **Acc/Dec:** 10/20 mph
Crew: 1 — **Range:** 1,000 miles
Passengers: 9 — **Cargo:** 4 tons (internal)
Maneuver: 0 — **Mass:** 12.5 tons
SDP: 100 — **SP:** 20
Type: Osprey — **Cost:** 600,000 eb.

Special Equipment: Ejection seat for pilot, environment control, fire extinguisher, chaff and flare dispensers, long-range radio, autopilot with navigation system, light amplification, radar with terrain-following, military radar detector.

Weapons: Turret-mounted 7.62mm minigun.

BELL-BOEING V-22B OSPREY

The heavy-lift version of the original model, this is the most common Osprey on Earth. It has been manufactured, by license, all over the world and has acquired a reputation for steadfast service under appalling conditions, joining the legends of the C-47 "Gooney Bird" and the C-130 "Herky Bird." Because of its tilt-rotors, the Osprey's nickname is "Whirly Bird."

Top Speed: 315 mph — **Acc/Dec:** 10/20 mph
Crew: 2 — **Range:** 1,200 miles
Passengers: 20 — **Cargo:** 9 tons (internal)
Maneuver: 0 — **Mass:** 25 tons
SDP: 200 — **SP:** 0
Type: Osprey — **Cost:** 650,000 eb.

Special Equipment: Ejection seats for the crew, environment control, long-range radio, autopilot and navigation system, radar, radar detector.

Notes: There is a gunship version of the Osprey known as the Guillotine. This model sacrifices cargo and passenger space for armament (three 20mm Gatlings, two 40mm auto-GLs, and one 75mm cannon, all on port-side articulated mounts. All weapons carry ten magazines. A laser rangefinder, image enhancement, and thermograph are fitted to assist firing, and the plane is fitted with ECM and flare and chaff dispensers to enhance survivability).

LOCKHEED C-200 UNIVERSE

The Universe, while not the largest airplane in the world (scramjet cargo-lifters are twice its size), is the largest STOL (Short Take-Off and Landing) jet in the world. Because of this, it is one of the most popular fast cargo-lifters in military service, and is used around the globe.

Top Speed: 600 mph — **Acc/Dec:** 20/25 mph
Crew: 3 — Range: 4,000 miles
Passengers: 100 OR — **Cargo:** 42 tons (internal)
Maneuver: -4 — **Mass:** 80 tons
SDP: 200 — **SP:** 5
Type: Large Jet — **Cost:** 6.1 million eb.

Special Equipment: Ejection seats for crew, environment control, fire extinguisher, chaff and flare launchers, military radio, satellite uplink, autopilot and navigation system, radar, military radar detector.

MACDONALD-DOUGLAS F-33 WASP

The F-33 Wasp is MacDonald-Douglas' current market leader in fast interceptors. The Wasp can reach Mach 1.8, has an extended range of 1,000 miles, and carries four air-to-air missiles and other external munitions as well as the internal gun.

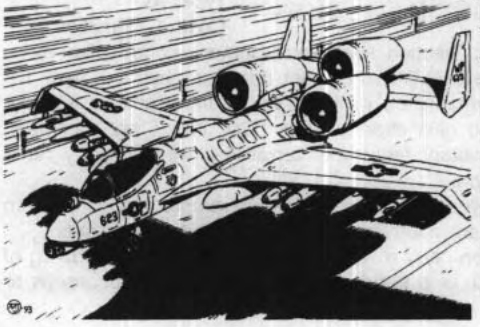
Top Speed: 1,200 mph — **Acc/Dec:** 20/25 mph
Crew: 1 — **Range:** 1,000 miles
Passengers: 1 — **Cargo:** None
Maneuver: +3 — **Mass:** 8 tons
SDP: 100 — **SP:** 20
Type: Small Jet — **Cost:** 4.6 million eb.

Special Equipment: Ejection seat, environment control, fire extinguisher, chaff and flare dispensers, military radio with scrambler, multitarget, autopilot and navigation system, ECM, ECCM, laser detector, military radar with look-down and radar ID, military radar detector, telescopic optics.

Weapons: 20mm Gatling fixed forward with +5 targeting computer, 1300 kg. of pod weapons.

A-01 BLITZ

In the 1990's, the U.S. Air Force phased out history's best ground attack plane, the A-10 Thunderbolt II, on the grounds that it was "obsolete." (The real reason was that the ex-fighter pilots in charge of the USAF wanted nothing to do with any aircraft designed by, and for use with, the U.S. Army.) As soon as the USAF's terres-



trial mission was revoked, the Army commissioned an updated replacement to the A-10. The result was the A-01 Blitz, entering service in 2001. It remains the best single-seat ground-attack aircraft in the world.

Top Speed: 560 mph
Acc/Dec: 10/35 mph
Crew: 1
Range: 1,600 miles
Passengers: 0
Cargo: None
Maneuver: -1
Mass: 20 tons
SDP: 160
SP: 60
Type: Medium Airplane
Cost: 3.7 million eb.

Special Equip-ment: IR baffling, damage control, ejection seat, 12 man-hours life support, two chaff and two flare dispensers, military radio with scrambler, satellite uplink, microwave rangefinder, auto-pilot and navigation system, cybernetic linkage, ECM, ECCM, image enhancement, laser detector, magnetometer, military radar with look-down and terrain-following, military radar detector, telescopic optics, thermograph.

Weapons: 30mm Gatling fixed forward with extra magazine and +3 fire control computer, stabilized painting laser in articulated mount forward. 3200 kg of pod weapons on the wings.

AIRSHIPS

DAYTON OVERLORD AIRSHIP



The Army uses the Overlord to dominate entire battle zones with ECM and jamming. Its multiple ECM generators are set on different frequencies to prevent ECCM from having any effectiveness. Overlords do not operate anywhere near the front lines; they are kept as far away as operationally possible, guarded by several fast-strike combat AV's or air-superiority fighters.

Top Speed: 80 mph
Acc/Dec: 5/30 mph
Crew: 10
Range: 1,500 miles
Passengers: 2
Cargo: 50 tons (on external cargo palettes)
Maneuver: +5
Mass: 50 tons
SDP: 1000
SP: 20
Type: Airship
Cost: 100.6 million eb.

Special Equipment: Stealth, environment control, fire extinguisher, anti-laser aerosol, chaff and flare dispensers, military radio with scrambler, laser communicator, satellite uplink, autopilot and navigation system, two 250 km ECM systems, image enhancement, laser detector, magnetometer, military radar with look-down and radar ID, military radar detector, microwave detector, telescopic optics, thermograph.

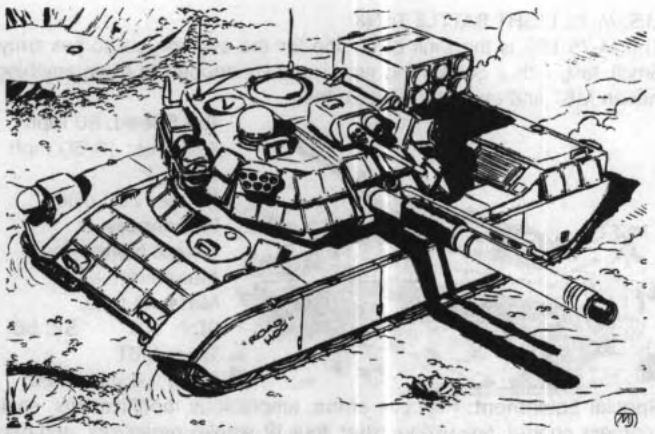
TANKS

U.S. M-11 MBT

The M-11 is the Army's current state-of-the-art main battle tank. Cyber-linked, fast, heavily armored, and extremely expensive, it is supposed to be too costly for the corporations to match or exceed.

Top Speed: 60 mph
Acc/Dec: 10/50 mph
Crew: 3
Range: 300 miles
Passengers: 0
Cargo: None
Maneuver: +2
Mass: 60 tons
SDP: 360
SP: 225
Type: MBT
Cost: 16.4 million eb.

Special Equipment: Composite armor, amphibious modifications, damage control, environment control, 12 man-hours life-support, anti-laser aerosol, chaff and IR smoke dispensers, six IR smoke projectors,



Active Explosive Anti-Missile System (AEAMS) (90% of destroying an incoming missile, 40 charges, the interception chance decreases by 10% for each 4 charges used), military radio with scrambler, laser communicator, satellite uplink, multitarget, microwave and visual rangefinders, autopilot and navigation system, cybernetic linkage, ECM, ECCM, image enhancement, laser detector, microwave detector, military radar, military radar detector, telescopic optics, thermograph.

Weapons: Stabilized LATG, painting laser and 2cm railgun (with extra magazine apiece) in turret, AGAMS and 30mm autocannon in small turret atop main turret, six Hellfire missiles in main turret, 7.62mm machinegun in articulated mount on front hull. +3 fire control computer for railgun, +4 fire control computer for LATG.

U.S. M-20 SUPERHEAVY



This monstrosity has yet to leave the testing field. It is reputed to be the biggest MBT since Hitler's Maus. Experts are already scoffing at it, saying that it's too heavy and too big to operate anywhere except reinforced concrete runways.

Top Speed: 40 mph
Acc/Dec: 10/50 mph
Crew: 3
Range: 200 miles
Passengers: 0
Cargo: None
Maneuver: +2
Mass: 100 tons
SDP: 600
SP: 375
Type: MBT
Cost: 23.5 million eb.

Special Equipment: Composite armor, amphibious modifications, damage control, environment control, 12 man-hours life-support, anti-laser aerosol, chaff and IR smoke dispensers, six IR smoke projectors, AEAMS (90% of destroying an incoming missile, 40 charges, the interception chance decreases by 10% for every four charges used), military radio with scrambler, laser communicator, satellite uplink, multitarget, microwave and visual rangefinders, autopilot and navigation system, cybernetic linkage, ECM, ECCM, image enhancement, laser detector, microwave detector, military radar, military radar detector, telecopic optics, thermograph.

Weapons: Stabilized 3cm railgun with extra magazine in turret. AGAMS in turret atop main turret. 30mm autocannons in articulated mounts (one on each side of the hull), with robotic weapons control. HATGM with 11 active optic/thermal missiles in fixed hull mount forward. +5 fire control computer for railgun; +3 fire control computers for 30mm guns.

U.S. M-75 LIGHT BATTLE TANK

The M-75 LBT is the tank of choice for the average corporate army. Small, fast, with a quick-firing gun, it's nasty enough to do in anything not an MBT and cheap enough to lose.



Top Speed: 80 mph
Acc/Dec: 10/50 mph
Crew: 2
Range: 200 miles
Passengers: 0
Cargo: None
Maneuver: +2
Mass: 14 tons
SDP: 140 **SP:** 60
Type: MBT
Cost: 1.4 million eb.

Special Equipment: Reactive armor, amphibious modifications, environment control, fire extinguisher, four IR smoke projectors, anti-personnel grenades, military radio with scrambler, laser and visual rangefinders, autopilot and navigation system, image enhancement, thermograph.
Weapons: 12.7mm machinegun and stabilized 75mm gun in turret. ten magazines for 75mm in hull. +3 fire control computer for 75mm.
Notes: May have cybernetic linkage added for 134,400 eb. Militech makes a version of this tank called the Destructor. The Destructor uses caseless ammunition for its main gun (ammo cost doubles), so that it holds half again as many rounds (50 rounds).

MILITECH BEHEMOTH APC

Militech doesn't really ascribe to the IFV theory, preferring to use APC's instead. The name is misleading, since most armored cars have better armament than the Behemoth. Such a fearsome name is good for image and morale, though, and Militech sells a lot of them.

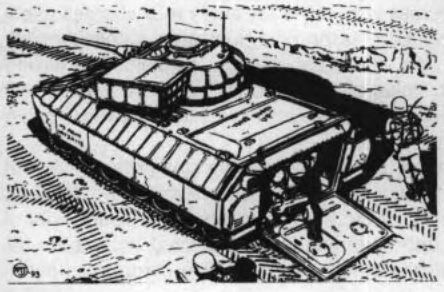


Top Speed: 60 mph
Acc/Dec: 10/50 mph
Crew: 2
Range: 300 miles
Passengers: 10
Cargo: 2 tons (external)
Maneuver: +2
Mass: 12 tons
SDP: 120 **SP:** 40
Type: APC
Cost: 480,000 eb.

Special Equipment: Reactive armor, amphibious modifications, environment control, four IR smoke projectors, anti-personnel grenades, military radio with scrambler, visual rangefinder, autopilot and navigation system, cybernetic linkage, image enhancement, thermograph.
Weapons: Turret-mounted 20mm autocannon or 40mm auto-GL.

U.S. M-15 INFANTRY FIGHTING VEHICLE

The term "Infantry Fighting Vehicle" is applied to an armored personnel carrier that carries enough weaponry to operate in support of the infantry it carries. While this does increase the organic firepower of an armored infantry unit, it also increases the cost, and IFV's can't carry enough armor for a slugfest with anything more powerful than very light vehicles. In practice, the best use for IFV's is at a distance, behind the troops as fire support. Unfortunately, this means that the troops have to disembark at a distance from their objective, nullifying the advantage of armored transport. Furthermore, the U.S. Army still can't seem to get an IFV that can float!



Top Speed: 80 mph
Acc/Dec: 13/50 mph
Crew: 2
Range: 300 miles
Passengers: 8
Cargo: 6 tons (external)
Maneuver: +2
Mass: 20 tons
SDP: 200
SP: 100
Type: IFV
Cost: 1.6 million eb.

Special Equipment: Reactive armor, amphibious modifications, environment control, fire extinguisher, four IR smoke projectors, anti-personnel grenades, military radio with scrambler, laser and visual rangefinders, autopilot and navigation system, image enhancement, thermograph.
Weapons: HATGM with seven active optic/thermal missiles and stabilized 30mm autocannon in turret.

U.S. M-50 TANK HUNTER

The U.S. Army believes in tank hunters that can survive. Based off the M-15 chassis, this missile-toting killer is designed to engage the enemy from long range, preferably totally behind cover.



Top Speed: 80 mph
Acc/Dec: 13/50 mph
Crew: 2 **Range:** 300 miles
Passengers: 0
Cargo: 4,500 tons (external)
Maneuver: +2
Mass: 14 tons
SDP: 140 **SP:** 40
Type: IFV
Cost: 1 million eb.

Special Equipment: Reactive armor, amphibious modifications, environment control, fire extinguisher, four IR smoke projectors, anti-personnel grenades, military radio with scrambler, visual and laser rangefinders, autopilot and navigation system, cybernetic linkage, image enhancement, thermograph.
Weapons: Turreted 25mm autocannon, painting laser and five Hellfire missiles, HATGM launcher with 19 teleguided/thermal semiactive missiles.

MILITECH MT-4 MBT

Militech is the foremost commercial arms manufacturer in the world. Their entry into the MBT field is well respected—it has decent armament, good range, good serviceability, and is light enough to be transported by airship.



Top Speed: 60 mph
Acc/Dec: 10/50 mph
Crew: 4
Range: 200 miles
Passengers: 0
Cargo: None
Maneuver: +2
Mass: 41 tons
SDP: 250 **SP:** 160
Type: MBT
Cost: 9 million eb.

Special Equipment: Composite armor, amphibious modifications, environment control, fire extinguisher, 12 man-hours life-support, anti-laser aerosol and IR smoke dispensers, four IR smoke projectors, AEAMS, military radio with scrambler, laser communicator, laser and visual rangefinders, autopilot and navigation system, image enhancement, laser detector, military radar, military radar detector, thermograph.
Weapons: Stabilized 1cm railgun in turret with +3 computer, 25mm autocannon in small turret atop main turret. HATGM fixed forward with seven active optical/thermal missiles.
Notes: The MT-4 can be equipped with cybernetic linkage for an additional 300,000 eb.

PANZERBOY VEHICLE COMBAT RULES

Movement and Maneuver

Most battlefield maneuvering is a straightforward proposition. The average edgerunner knows a lot more about actual maneuvering than most combat drivers; this is because driving a vehicle in crowded, narrow city streets is a lot tougher than simply maneuvering a vehicle into or out of firing positions. These rules cover both battlefield maneuvering and chases, and the more complex but still abstract art of aerial dogfighting.

Movement is largely defined in abstract terms; for those who want to be more specific, it's easy to take a calculator and see how far a vehicle moves in 3 seconds—to get the speed in meters per combat turn, divide kph speeds by 1.2 or multiply mph speeds by 1.33.

CHASES AND RACES

A chase is defined as a situation where the pursuer wants to catch the pursued; a race is when one vehicle wants to reach a location before others. The real difference between the two is that in the former, the pursued can make an effort to lose its pursuers, while a driver isn't normally going to be able to do much to slow his competition during a race.

The game procedure is simple: Each turn, the referee sets travel condition difficulties. Each participant makes a vehicle operation roll (appropriate skill + Reflexes + modifiers + D10); if the roll equals or exceeds the Difficulty level, the piloted vehicle suffers no mishap, and gains distance as per its current speed. If the roll fails, then the vehicle may lose control and "Crash!"

During a chase, the pursued may attempt to make a maneuver that will cut off one or more pursuers (depending on the circumstances of the chase and the maneuver). The pursuer announces the maneuver, and all participants that wish to follow must attempt the same maneuver. Everyone who attempts the maneuver must use the maneuver's Difficulty rating for driving/piloting rolls. (A driver/pilot may, with the referee's permission, attempt a maneuver during a race, simulating the driver/pilot taking a risky short-cut, or some such action. The referee decides the maneuver difficulty, as appropriate.) Those failing their driving/piloting rolls "Crash!" During a chase, if the pursued succeeds at the maneuver, those pursuers that didn't attempt and succeed at the maneuver have been evaded and lose the pursuit (which might be re-established, depending on the situation—say, with communications from someone still following the pursued).

CHASE/RACE TRAVEL CONDITIONS

For ground vehicles: Totally open terrain (salt flats, open plains, huge parking lots, etc.) is Difficulty 10. Hazardous terrain (mostly empty city streets, two-lane highways, soft-soiled turf) is Difficulty 15. Very Hazardous terrain (woods or forest, crowded urban streets, etc.) is Difficulty 20.



For aerial vehicles: Open sky (nothing to crash against) is Difficulty 10. Hazardous terrain (flying within 300m of the ground, poor visibility such as clouds or fog) is Difficulty 15. Very Hazardous terrain (flying within nape of the Earth, or through really tight confines) is Difficulty 20.

CHASE/RACE MANEUVERS

Difficulty 20: For ground vehicles, these include hard turns (trying to turn up to 45 degrees), emergency stops* (doubles the vehicle's deceleration rate for that turn), and controlled skids* (turning the vehicle sideways and skidding to a stop; vehicle comes to a complete stop). For aerial vehicles, these include rapid dives and climbs, hard banks (turning up to 45 degrees), loops (reversing direction), and emergency braking (doubles the vehicle's deceleration rate for that turn).

Difficulty 25: For ground vehicles, these are nigh-impossible turns* (46-60 degrees) and bootlegger reverses* (allowing them to reverse direction at the cost of half their current speed). For aerial vehicles, this also means turns from 46-60 degrees. Helicopters and vectored-thrust vehicles may go straight up or down.

Hazardous and Very Hazardous conditions add +5 and +10 Difficulty to these maneuvers, respectively (for instance, it's a lot more dangerous making a 45 degree turn at speed in cluttered urban terrain than it is on a salt flat).

**Hovercraft can't do these maneuvers, which require ground traction.*

COMBAT MANEUVERS

This section lists movement actions more often seen in combat, and in other stress situations not related to chases and races.

Jinking: Jinking is evasive maneuvering. It reduces the chances of being hit by fire (see page 73). It's Difficulty 20.

Stress Take-offs and Landings: Taking off or landing while under fire, or in some other imminent danger, isn't easy. Taking off is Difficulty 10; landing is Difficulty 15.

Rapid Direction Changes: These include hard turns, loops, controlled skids, and bootleggers, which are all listed above. Moving pivots are a specialty of vehicles which can hover (AV's, hovercraft, helicopters, ospreys), allowing them to turn any direction they want. When done while moving, these are Difficulty 15.

Rapid Stops: Ground vehicles (but not hovercraft) can do bootleggers, emergency stops, and controlled skids. Aerial vehicles can use emergency braking; see above for these maneuvers.

MANEUVER DIFFICULTY MODIFIERS

+1	Every 10% of vehicle's speed over 50% of top speed
+10	Driver/Pilot can't see and has no sensors
+5	Driver/Pilot doing something else besides driving/flying (unless cyberlinked to vehicle)

CRASH!

If you failed your maneuver check, you have a chance of crashing (aircraft may spin out of control). Total up the amount by which you missed the Driving/Piloting roll, and apply below:

MISSED POINTS	
1-5	Vehicle slews briefly out of control. All weapon fire from this vehicle is at -5 this turn.
6-9	Vehicle slews completely out of control. All weapon fire from this vehicle is at -10 this turn and next turn. The driver/pilot must make a Difficulty 20 roll to regain control of the vehicle on the next turn, or crash (aerial vehicles spin).
10+	Vehicle crashes (aerial vehicles spin). No weapon fire from this vehicle at all this turn.

In a crash, the vehicle skids its current speed in meters forward, hitting anything in the way (1D10 damage per 5mph/9kph of vehicle speed. This damage is assessed against the vehicle, and whatever it hits!). If two vehicles crash into each other, add their relative speeds to each other to determine damage (a pair of vehicles in a head-on smash at 50 and 30 mph would do 16D10 damage to each other. A pair of vehicles that hit each other while going the same direction at the above speeds would only do 4D10 damage to each other's sides). The driver has to succeed at a Driving roll vs. Difficulty 20 to regain control in the following turn, -5 Difficulty per successive turn (20 the first turn, 15 the second turn, etc.). This assumes, of course, that the vehicle hasn't been trashed by the crash. Some AFV's are more than tough enough to survive almost any normal collision.

In a spin, the air vehicle plummets down 25m per turn. If this loss of altitude brings it to ground level, it crashes, destroying the vehicle. The pilot must succeed at a Piloting roll to regain control (see above).

Weapon fire is not possible while the vehicle remains out of control or in a spin.

DOGFIGHTING

This requires lots of open space in air/ground/water. The contestants circle for advantageous position. Each contestant declares the Difficulty of the dogfighting maneuvering he wishes to do that turn (in order of initiative) and which particular target he's dogfighting. Then all contestants make appropriate skill tests. Those who fail may "Crash!" (see above). For all contestants, count the difference between the skill roll and the declared difficulty (failed rolls will have negative differences). Compare them below, subtracting lower differences from higher ones:

DIFFERENCE	
TOTAL -10 OR MORE:	**Disadvantaged.** You can't shoot.
TOTAL -9 TO -2:	**Disadvantaged.** You can only use turret weapons at a -5WA (the minus

to WA for missing a maneuver takes precedence).

TOTAL -1 TO +1: **Normal.** You can shoot at normal WA.

TOTAL +2 TO +9: **Advantaged.** You are at +3WA to shoot at your chosen target this turn.

TOTAL +10 OR MORE: **Advantaged.** You are at +5WA to shoot at your chosen target this turn.

Firing

Shooting at a vehicle is the same as shooting at a normal target at the specified range, with regular modifiers. The modifiers below are either variations on the normal modifiers or new modifiers:

MODIFIER	SITUATION (VARIATIONS)
+4	Firing at a large target (vehicle)
-4	Firing at a small target (exposed weapon or person)
-6	Firing at a tiny target (nonexposed weapon)
+2	Firer has vehicle link/cybernetic controls
-2	Firer turning weapon to face target in same action
-3	Darkness or target is obscured ("soft cover")
+2	Using a turret-mounted weapon
variable	Targeting computer

MODIFIER	SITUATION (NEW MODIFIERS)
+4	Target is stationary
-1	Per 20mph of target movement (per 40mph if vehicle is moving directly towards you)
-2	Target is making an evasive maneuver
-2	Firer is making an evasive maneuver
-2	Target vehicle is out of control
-3	Firer is moving, using nonstabilized weapon
+4	Heat-seeking missile fired at an AV or Jet
-2	Rocket salvo (deviates 1m on the Grenade Table for each point the die roll misses, times range To Hit/10. Burst radius is the rocket radius times the number of rockets.)

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

• **"Paint" Missiles:** With these missiles, the spotter hits the target with a laser or radar gun and the missile homes in on it. If the spotter has a successful hit with the "painting" gun (usually at +3WA), then the missile hits on a D10 roll of 3+.

• **Smart Missiles:** These missiles have their own sensors and actively seek their targets; when you fire the missile, use its "skill" to see if it hits. Sensors and "skills" are: *Thermal* (+15), *Radar* (+20), and *Optical* (+15).

Some missiles have combinations of these, and use the system which is best able to avoid the countermeasures used against the missile.

• **Countermeasures:** These systems add difficulty to missile shots. With the exceptions of Stealth and IR baffling, it counts as an action to use any of these.

Chaff systems add +10 Difficulty to radar and laser guidance.

Flares add +10 Difficulty to thermal/IR guidance.

IR baffling adds +5/+10 Difficulty to thermal/IR guidance (+5 for AV's and jets, +10 for all other vehicles/aircraft).

IR smoke adds +15 Difficulty to thermal/IR and optical guidance; cannot be used except from ground vehicles moving below 50mph/80kph.

Smoke adds +15 Difficulty to optical guidance, and has the same limitations as IR smoke.

Jamming/ECM adds +15 Difficulty to radar guidance.

Stealth adds +15 Difficulty to radar guidance.

• **Indirect Fire:** This process requires that you have someone who can tell you where the target is, and you have an indirect fire weapon in range (artillery, grenade launchers). The Difficulty is 25; if you miss, the round deviates on the Grenade Table (*Cyberpunk*, page 99) in (meters = 1/10 x range fired at x number of points the shot missed by). The requisite skill is the average of the spotter and firer's INT+Heavy Weapons skill, +3 per subsequent turn of fire at the same target spot. When firing multiple rounds (like an auto-GL), multiply the burst area times the number of rounds fired.

Damage

ARMOR

Once the target is hit, roll the weapon's damage and subtract the target's armor SP. Vehicle armor SP is modified according to the weapons used, the type of armor, and the facing hit:

CONDITION	SP
Weapon damage is D6 instead of D10	x2
HEAT round	x1/2
HEAT round vs. composite armor	x1
Non-HEAT AP round	x1/2
Optional Facing Conditions *	
Vehicle hit in front	x1
AV/Helicopter hit in front or bottom	.x1
Vehicle hit in side	x3/4
Vehicle hit in rear, bottom, or top	x1/2

**Do not use the Facing Conditions against ACPA's.*

These conditions are cumulative—if firing a 9D6AP round at the side of a vehicle with 40 SP, the SP is x2 (D6 damage weapon) x1/2 (AP weapon) x 3/4 (firing at vehicle side) for a total of 40 x 3/4 = 30 SP versus the weapon's damage for penetration.

LOCATION

If any damage gets through the target's armor, roll on the appropriate hit location table to determine what was hit:

CIVILIAN GROUND VEHICLE

D10	Location
1-4	Tire/GE Skirt/Track

5	Engine
6	Driver or crew
7-10	Vehicle body

MILITARY GROUND VEHICLE

D10	Location
1-3	Tire/GE skirt/track
4	Engine
5	Driver or crew
6-8	Vehicle body
9-10	Turret/weapon (body if none present)

AIRCRAFT

D10	Location
1-2	Engine
3	Pilot or crew
4-5	Wings/rotors/fans
6-10	Fuselage (body)

WALKER

D10	Location
1-3	Legs
4	Engine*
5	Pilot or crew
6	Weapon
7-10	Vehicle body

*If the hit location roll indicates a result that's patently impossible—such as hitting a rear-engine vehicle's Engine when you're firing at the front of the vehicle—move the result to the next higher location that's logically possible.

ACPAs use the human hit location chart on the *Cyberpunk®* Character sheet. Any damage that penetrates th e suit's SP is divided in half: One half goes to the suit's SDP and the other to the pilot. An ACPA arm has SDP equal to 1/4 the suit's total SDP and the legs 1/3. When the arm or leg has taken damage to all its SDP, it is rendered inoperable, along with all weapons mounted on it.

EFFECTS

Compare the amount of damage that got through to the specific location's SDP and find the effects below.

Vehicle Body: This is the vehicle's full SDP; ALL damage subtracts from this total. It is listed as a location simply to indicate that the hit did not strike anything specific. When the vehicle has taken its total SDP in damage (from any combination of locations, since all damage subtracts from the total SDP), the vehicle is rendered inoperable. It stops working and must have major repairs to even leave the field on its own power.

Tire/GE Skirt/Track, Wings/Rotors/Fans, Legs: These have SDP equal to 1/3 of the vehicle's total SDP (for instance, a 120 SDP vehicle's motive systems have 40 SDP). When the motive systems have sustained 1/2 of their SDP, the vehicle's top speed is halved, and its maneuverability suffers a -3 modifier. When the motive systems have taken damage to all of their SDP, the vehicle is immobilized (aerial vehicles tend to crash when this happens).

Engine: This has SDP equal to 1/3 of the vehicle's total SDP. When the engine takes over half its SDP, the vehicle's top speed is halved and its maneuverability suffers a -1 modifier. When the engine has taken damage to all of its SDP, it is immobilized (see above for effects on aircraft; aircraft may glide and try to make a controlled crash). In addition, there is a chance of the fuel exploding; once the engine has taken over 50% of its SDP in damage, there is a 1 in 10 chance of a fuel explosion—roll this each time the engine takes damage after it's lost over 50% of its SDP! If the fuel explodes, the vehicle is destroyed.

Pilot or crew: Roll randomly for the crewman hit; if there are no other crew, then the pilot is automatically hit. Apply the damage to the person, subtracting personal armor SP from the damage (and don't forget armor-piercing effects vs. personal armor). An unconscious or dead crew member can't operate the vehicle or any equipment; most vehicles tend to crash when the driver is incapacitated (although some may have autopilots that will take over when this happens).

Weapon: Weapons have 10 SDP. When a weapon has taken damage to all its SDP, it is destroyed. When a weapon is destroyed, there's a 1 in 10 chance that it will explode, doing the full damage of one shot to the part of the vehicle to which it is attached.

Turret: Turrets have one third the vehicle's total SDP. When the turret loses any SDP, there's a 2 in 10 chance that one of the weapons mounted there will be rendered useless (randomize for multiple turret weapons). When the turret takes damage to all its SDP, it and all equipment in it are no longer functional.

MAKING IT DEAD SIMPLE

If you want damage resolution to be even simpler, you can ignore the armor facing conditions (they're optional anyway) and hit locations. Just assume the same SP rating all around the vehicle and all hits subtract from the total vehicle SDP until it is destroyed.

To add a *little* variety to this, when the vehicle is reduced to 1/2 its total SDP, there's a 5 in 10 chance that it will stop working. Each time the vehicle sustains damage after it's taken over half its SDP in damage, roll the 5 in 10 chance of a shutdown again. When it has taken all its SDP in damage, it is destroyed.

WEAPONS AND SYSTEMS

Here are the stats for the most common and important vehicle weapons and systems for ease of reference. The vehicle and ACPA descriptions and the Panzerboy rules all refer to these stats.

VEHICLE WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT

VEHICLE WEAPONS

CANNON

7.62mm Minigun
HVY • +0 • P • 6D6+2 (7.62mm) • 2000 • 100 • VR • 500m

12.7mm Machinegun
HVY • +0 • R • 6D10 (12.7mm) • 100 10 • VR • 600m

14.5mm Machinegun
HVY • +0 • P • 7D10 (14.5mm) • 100 10 • VR • 550m

20-25mm Autocannon
HVY • +0 • R • 8D10 (20-25mm) • 100 • 10 • VR • 500m

27-30mm Autocannon
HVY • +0 • R • 9D10 (27-30mm) 100 10 • VR • 600m

20mm Gatling
HVY • +0 • R • 8D10 (20mm) • 1000 100 VR • 500m

30mm Gatling
HVY • +0 • R • 6D10AP (30mmDPU) • 1200 30 • VR • 600m

37mm LATG
HVY • +3 • R • 6D10AP (37mmDPU) • 10 • 1 • VR • 800m

37mm ETE LATG
HVY • +3 • P • 9D10AP (37mmETEDPU) 10 • 1 • ST • 1200m

40mm Auto Grenade Launcher
HVY • +0 • R • Var (40mm, see pg.76) • 50 • 20 • VR • 1600m

75mm Cannon
HVY • +0 • R • 8D10 (75mm) • 10 • 2 • VR • 750m, 5m burst

90mm Cannon
HVY • +0 • R • 9D10 (75mm) • 10 • 2 • VR • 750m, 6m burst

105mm Cannon
HVY • +0 • R • 11D10 (75mm) • 10 • 2 • VR • 1km, 6m burst

12cm Cannon
HVY • +0 • R • 12D10 (75mm) • 10 • 2 • VR • 1250m, 6m burst

RAILGUNS

EMG-83
HVY • +2 • R • 5D10+10AP • 100 • 1 • ST • 1200m

EMG-84
HVY • +1 • R • 5D10+10AP • 500 • 10 • UR • 1000m

EMG-85
HVY • +3 • R • 5D10+10AP • 10 • 1/2 • ST • 1500m

1cm
HVY • +2 • R • 10D10AP • 50 • 2 • ST • 1000m

2cm
HVY • +1 • R • 1610AP • 50 • 1 • ST • 1500m

3cm
HVY • +0 • N • R • 20D10AP • 50 • 1/2 • ST • 1500m

MISSILES

AP 87 visual-guidance ATGM
HVY • +2 • 12D10HEAT • 1 • 1 • VR • 1000m

Light Anti-Tank Guided Missile
HVY • +2 • P • 12D10HEAT 1 • 1 • VR • 1000m, 4m burst

Heavy Anti-Tank Guided Missile
HVY • +2 • P • 18D10HEAT 1 • 1 • VR • 3000m, 4m burst

Hellfire Laser-Guided Missile
HVY • spec • P • 20D10HEAT 1 • 1 • VR • 3000m, 4m burst

Surface-To-Air Missile
HVY • -1 • P • 7D10 • 1 • 1 • VR • 1000m, 6m burst

Adder Air-To-Air Missile
HVY • var • P • 15D10 • 1 • 1 • VR • 15km, 12m burst

2.75" Rocket Pod
HVY • -2 • P • 8D10 • 19 • 19 • VR • 500m, 6m burst

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

AGAMS: (Active Gatling Anti-Missile System) • 90% chance of detecting incoming missiles; roll 1D10 for each incoming detected missile, -1 to the roll for each missile coming in on the same turn. On a roll of 4+, the missile is destroyed. On a roll of 1-3, the missile blows up close to the vehicle, doing 1/2 damage. On a modified roll of 0 or less, the missile slips through the AGAMS and hits the vehicle.

Chaff: Foil and other rader reflective debris that add +10 Difficulty to radar and laser-guidance.

Composite Armor: Layered, hi-tech armor designed to defeat shaped-charge (HEAT or HEAP) rounds. Negates such rounds armor-piercing ability (no AP).

ECM: Electronic counter measures that jam enemy radar and radio (60% chance) and add +15 to the hit Difficulty of radar-guided missiles used within the effect.

ECCM: Has a 50% change of counteracting the effects of ECM.

Flares: Add +10 Difficulty to thermal/IR guidance.

IR Baffling: Adds +5/+10 Difficulty to thermal/IR guided wepoans (+5 for AV's and jets, +10 for all other vehicles/aircraft).

Painting Laser: HVY • +3 • N • P • None (see below) • — • 1 • VR • LOS

"Paint" Missiles: With these missiles, the spotter hits the target with a laser or radar gun, and the missile homes in on it. If the spotter has a successful hit with the "painting" gun (usually at +3WA), then the missile hits on a D10 roll of 3+.

Smart Missiles: These missiles have their own sensors and actively seek their targets; when you fire the missile, use its "skill" to see if it hits. Sensors and "skill" are: *Thermal* (+15), *Radar* (+20), *Optical* (+15). Some missiles have combinations of these, and use the system which is best able to avoid the countermeasures used against the missile.

Smoke Launchers: Fires smoke grenades that add +15 Difficulty to optical guidance. Cannot be used except from ground vehicles

moving below 50mph/80kph. *IR smoke* adds +15 Difficulty to thermal/IR and optical guidance as well.
Stealth: adds +15 Difficulty to radar guidance.

ACPA WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT

ACPA suits use weapons typically mounted on vehicles. These weapons are often modified to fit onto (and into) the suits. Here are some of the more common weapons.

ACPA WEAPONS

Auto-Flechette "Pistol"
P • +2 • 1D6x1D6AP • 100 • 3 or 30 • ST • 200m
.477 Big Boomer Pistol
P • +1 • 5D6 • 8 • 1 • VR • 50m
14mm Pistol
P • 0 • 6D6 • 20 • 2 • ST • 75m
Militech M-31PA Assault Rifle
RIF • +2 • 4D6 • 300 • 3/30 • ST • 400m
Oni Autoshotgun
RIF • +0 • 4d6+3 • 180 • 5/20 • VR • 75m
5.56mm Minigun
HVY • + • 5D6 • 1000 • 100 • ST • 450m • Has a large, separate ammo hopper
10mm Caseless MG
HVY • +0 • 8D6 • 200 • 20 • VR • 600m
12.7mm Machinegun
HVY • +1 • 6D10 • 100 • 5/10 • VR • 550m
13.9mm Rifle
HVY • +2 • 6D10+5 • 60 • 3 • ST • 600m
14.5mm Heavy MG
HVY • +0 • 7D10 • 100 • 3 or 5 • ST • 550m
BCL Light 20mm Cannon
RIF • +1 • 8D10 • 20 • 2 • VR • 550m
BHC-G8 30mm Cannon/Rifle
HVY • +0 • 9D10 • 10 • 1 • ST • 600m
Micro-missile Launcher
HVY • +2 • 4D6 • 8 • 2 • ST • 200m • Burst area 2m
Super Rakate Rocket Launcher
HVY • +0 • 5D6 • 8 • 1-8 • ST • 300m • Burst area 3m
"Photon" Assault Laser Cannon
EX • +2 • 1-10D6 (variable) • 30D6 • 2 • UR • 300m
Tsunami 25mm Grenade Launcher
HVY • +0 • var. • 20 • 1/3/5 • ST • 1500m • 25mm grenades: HE: 5D6/3m rad., Frag: 3D6+1/5m rad., HEP: 5D6 (1/2 armor)
40mm Automatic Grenade Launcher
HVY • +1 • var. • 50 • 3/20 • ST • 1600m • 40mm grenades: HE: 7D6/5m rad., HEP: 7D6 (-5 SP armor), HEDP: 4D10 Heat.
Mini-Roc 15C Rocket Pod
HVY • +2 • 6D10 • 15 • ST • 500m • Burst area 3m
Militech Spectre Anti-Tank Guided Missile
HVY • +1 • 18D10 HEAT 1 • 1 • VR • 3000m • Burst area 4m
Arasaka ACPA Bazooka
HVY • -1 • 20D10 HEAT • 1 • 1 • VR • 350m • Burst area 4m
ACPA Broadsword or Retractable Mono-PA Sword
WA+1, 4D6AP+Punch Damage

ACPA SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

AGAMS: An expensive micro-version of the vehicle system (see pg.75). Same rules, but only has 30 shots and 100m range.
Anti-Personnel Canister Launcher: Treat as a claymore mine (*Cyberpunk* pg. 110) aimed in the direction specified (front or back). One shot.
Chaff Canister Launcher: Treat as one turn of chaff (see page 86) in an 10m x 10m area. Also blocks sight as a smoke grenade. Three shots.
Command Computer: powered suits equipped with this communicate their sensor views to each other (game benefits are +1 to Initiative and Awareness for those so linked. The unit commander also gets a +1 to Tactics).
Smoke Canister Launcher: Treat as a smoke grenade that covers a 15m x 15m area. Six shots.
Ghost Canister: Gives the armor ECM for 60 seconds. One use.
EMP Sponge: A battery pack that has a 50% chance of nullifying the armor from the effects of high electrical charges, like the Arasaka EMF launcher. One use only.
EMP Capacitor: Acts like a reusable EMP Sponge, but still has a 50% chance of frying out per use.
Microwave Detector: Detects targeting radars and microwaves pinpointing the armor 90% of the time.
Sensor Extension: A two-foot-long periscope that allows the armor to use its sensors around corners.
ECM Suite: Electronic countermeasures that jam enemy radar and radio (60% chance) and add +15 to the hit Difficulty of radar-guided missiles used within the 100m radius effect.
ECCM Suite: Electronic counter-countermeasures that "burn through" enemy jamming (60% chance) when directed against a specific target.
HUD Interface: IR and low-light vision with 20x teleoptics, image enhancement and anti-dazzle. Amplified audio. Ranged weapons +2 WA.
Virtual Reality Interface: Thermographic, IR, and low-light vision with 20x teleoptics, image enhancement and anti-dazzle. Amplified audio and enhanced hearing range. Ranged weapons +3 WA.
Laser Detector: Detects targeting lasers pinpointing the armor 90% of the time.
Microwave Detector: Detects targeting radars and microwaves pinpointing the armor 90% of the time.
Sensor Extension: A two-foot-long periscope that allows the armor to use its sensors around corners.
Autodocs: Computerized medkits buitl inot the armor. These are rated by the number of different drugs they can apply and the First Aid skill they can apply to the pilot. *The Repeater*: seven medicines and First Aid skill of +10 (total), *Bodyweight Medic*: five drugs and First Aid +8, Monitor: four drugs and First Aid +6, *Kwikfix*: three drugs and First Aid +5.

THE CORPORATE WARRIORS

THREAT LEVELS, THREAT CODES, & SECURITY RATINGS

Threat Level is a 2020 term used by military and law enforcement agencies to define the level of deadliness of an opponent. It is rated from AA to E, AA being rated the most deadly and E being the least. Along with the threat level rating, *Cyberpunk®* uses a code that uses a combination of letters and numbers to designate the combat capabilities of an opponent. This code is called a Threat Code.

When dealing with building security and defensibility, each building is assigned a Security Level. The Security Level is a 0-4 digit code, corresponding to the level of stationary security measures a building or compound will have available.

THREAT LEVELS

Threat Levels and Threat Codes are used to profile some of the many armed opponents in *Cyberpunk®*. The Threat Level and Threat Code system is a compact and simple way to create mass gangs and other organizations for *Cyberpunk®*

AA: Special combat troops, elite solos and elite corporate troops, Psycho Squad.
A: Military troops, SWAT, corporate high security troops.
B: Corporate security troops, corporate bodyguards, experienced solos.
C: Armed corporate guards, average solos, city police.
D: Boosters, novice solos, noncorporate security guards.
E: Unarmed door guards, street thugs.

THREAT CODES

After the basic Threat Level of an opponent is assigned, the next step is to designate a three character alphanumeric code, representing in order Skill, Availability of Weapons and Type of Armor the opposition has access to. To determine the code characters, use the following tables.

1. OPPONENTS SKILL
Note: This table assumes an 8 REF and a 7 Body Type
E: Novice (2 pts. in weapon skill)= skill roll of 10
D: Average (4 pts. in weapon skill)= skill roll of 12
C: Above Average (6 pts. in weapon skill) = skill roll of 14
B: Experienced (8 pts. in weapon skill) = skill roll of 16
A: Veteran (10 pts. in weapon skill)= skill roll of 18

2. WEAPONS AVAILABILITY
5: Bare hands, improvised weapons.
4: Melee weapons, small pistols.
3: Large handguns, bolt-action rifles, etc.
2: Automatic weapons.
1: Assault weapons, exotic weaponry (monoblades, lasers, etc.)

3. ARMOR AVAILABLE
E: Normal clothing (SP 0-3)
D: Leather to Kevlar vest (SP 4-10)
C: Light armor jack to heavy armor (SP 10-20)
B: Door gunner to Metal Gear™ (SP 25)
A: Power-assisted armor (SP 30-40)

Thus a boostergang whose members have a Weapon Skill roll of 10, use small handguns, and are armored with Kevlar vests would be represented by the Threat Code E4D.

SECURITY LEVELS

The basic security level of a building or buildings is based on a combination of the Threat Level of the guards, combined with the type and number of security systems the location possesses. This is expressed as a 0 to 4 value, as in 2-Corporate Standard Security for example. Numbers in parentheses (next to locks or other traps) represent the Difficulty Number needed to bypass that particular alarm, trap or lock.

0-PERSONAL SECURITY
Locks: Mechanical locks (10)
Traps: Alarms (15)
Monitors/Sensors: None
Guards: None
Patrol Size: None
Vehicles: None

1-PRIVATE SECURITY
Locks: Simple electronic passkey (20)
Traps: Alarms (20)
Monitors/Sensors: Recording cameras
Guards: Threat Level C guards
Patrol Size: 1-2
Vehicles: None

2-CORPORATE STANDARD SECURITY
Locks: Complex electronic locks and/or traps (25)
Traps: Alarms (25)
Monitors/Sensors: Monitor cameras checked every five minutes
Guards: Threat Level B guards, dogs
Patrol Size: 2-6
Vehicles: PatrolcCars, autogyros, AV-4

3-CORPORATE HIGH SECURITY
Locks: Highly sophisticated locks and/or traps (30)
Traps: Incapacitating (25)
Monitors/Sensors: Monitor cameras checked constantly
Net Security: Black Programs only
Guards: Threat Level A guards
Patrol Size: 5-10
Vehicles: Vehicles up to AV-6 level

4-CORPORATE MAXIMUM SECURITY
Locks: Top security (35)
Traps: Fatal (30)
Monitors/Sensors: Cameras + IR sensors checked constantly
Net Security: Black programs netrunner guard
Guards: Threat level AA guards, mobile robotic systems
Patrol Size: 7-15
Vehicles: Vehicles up to AV-9 level

ARASAKA COMBAT TROOPS



"We are building a fighting force of extraordinary magnitude."
—Saburo Arasaka

Until the war, few people knew much about Arasaka's combat troops. Sure, everyone had some knowledge of the corporation's security troops, but the combat troops were a different matter, stationed only in "hot" areas to guard military assets or engage in military operations. Saburo Arasaka insists that his troops are every centimeter the equivalent of the elite naval assault troops he knew during World War II. Well trained, well equipped, and highly motivated, Arasaka fields troops that are the equal of any other army or mercenary corporation. They've seen few of the stand-up battles that characterize Militech troops, however, tending to be employed as static troops (or for special missions; see below).

On the defensive, Arasaka troops excel, due to their steadfastness, and the fact that they bring with them a huge technical capability for security and sensor systems: It takes real professionals to sneak up on an a target defended by Arasaka troops.

"STAND AND FIGHT"

One key to Arasaka's troop success is the mental conditioning given to the troops, from highest levels of command down to the lowliest private. Saburo Arasaka remembered the last of the true samurai, charging into American guns to do or die trying. His men would be samurai, or at least aspire to that level of dedication.

Saburo's troops will stand their ground and hold their positions in the face of overwhelming odds, fighting until given orders to retreat, never daring to break and flee. Still, colonels and generals are trained to covet their troops like pearls rather than spending them like water; a commander who wastes his troops could depend on being "invited onward" (ordered to commit *seppuku*), while those who accomplished their objectives with low casualties can expect reward. At the individual level, this training produces troops that fight on despite casualties. To outsiders, Arasaka troops seem to be berserkers, uncaring automatons that have to be killed to stop them.

Similarly, Arasaka morale training fosters an obedience to orders: Arasaka field officers are not likely to defy directives unless they are certain that their actions can vindicate their defiance ("There is only one excuse for disobedience: success"). In the field, this means Arasaka formations tend toward more conservative moves—but if an officer spots an opening, he'll jump at it, and his men will follow him without question!

Saburo Arasaka is equally insistent that his officers lead by example; they are to fight better than the soldiers in their command, and spend a great deal of time honing their combat skills. This—and the high mortality rate produced by constantly taking the lead—means Arasaka officers aren't as tactically adept as their counterparts in other armies, but woe to the western officer who faces his Arasaka double in hand-to-hand combat! Thanks to their training, Arasaka troops will continue on even if their officer is killed, unwilling to sully their officer's heroic death by failing.

Tactics and Organization

"Tactics? Arasaka uses tactics? I thought all they did was charge."
"Don't be stupid. If they charge, it's because they know they can get close with reasonable casualties. And once they get in to mix it up mano-a-mano, you're sushi, Collins—even in a PA suit!"
—Col. Bentley Collins and Col. Reginald Brickton, Militech

Arasaka tactics are, like most other armies, based on the ten-man squad and its fire-team subgroups. The difference is that Arasaka squads tend to work more as a large group rather than the two smaller groups; in battle, the squad tends to stick together rather than separating. These squads rarely operate in fire teams except when using "bounding overwatch" (see page 87). This practice allows the squad to generate more firepower, centralizes command (reducing reliance on radios, which can be jammed or intercepted), and adds punching power when executing the concerted charge (erroneously called the *banzai* charge by westerners).

Of course, this charges is seldom the futile last gasp suicides seen in holo productions. It is a wave attack, with entire platoons of Arasaka troops running straight at the enemy, firing as they go. The intent is to close to *wakizashi* range, where most enemy forces are not prepared to fight; a good sword-thrust makes a mockery of all but ACPA armor.

First, the troops keep their heads down and infiltrate to close range: within 100m, usually. Then, for every combat unit that charges, there are one to two others that are behind, providing covering fire and visual impairment (smoke). If available, artillery lashes the enemy front during the charge; the shrapnel probably won't stop the Arasaka troops, and it'll keep enemy heads down. Of course, a set defender has ways to counter this charge, so Arasaka troops use it only in fluid situations.

Arasaka commanders have kept the classic Japanese battlefield strategy of multiple maneuver forces. Often, these complicated plans fall flat when faced with actual battlefield conditions ... but when one works, it works brilliantly, since few enemies can anticipate the subtleties of the plan. Militech has a good record in these cases; they reduce frontage troops and maintain a strong mobile reserve to deal with unexpected Arasaka thrusts. Even so, Arasaka commanders have taken advantage of this counterplan by engaging in mock battles with reduced troops, paralyzing Militech commanders as they hoard their reserves to deal with the "main attack."

Defensive strategies are much more simple: Dig in, fortify, and develop ambushes and fall-back positions. Saburo was deeply impressed with the tactics developed for the defense of Iwo Jima and Okinawa, and so far they've worked very well for the urban defense jobs where his troops are placed.

These strategies have earned Arasaka troops a reputation for unpredictability on attack and dogged immobility on defense.

DEPLOYMENT

Arasaka troop deployment depends on the mission. For defense missions, they've been posted in numbers as small as a single squad. On offensive missions, the minimum unit size is a company (four 35-man platoons plus a ten-man command squad). Arasaka forces work in close concert with each other whenever possible; the recommended frontage for a platoon is 150m.

Arasaka doesn't have a lot of transport for its troops (in comparison with other militaries), so transport is usually done via truck (or AV when possible). Arasaka field commanders are not above commandeering civilian vehicles for transport when necessary. They do not care about the lack of protection; if their army's strategies require them to be mobile, then they will be!

SUPPORT

Arasaka troops usually can't rely on the kind of support available to their enemies. They have adequate aerial forces, and ample numbers of AV's for transport and fire support, but their ground armor falls far behind most of the foes they're arrayed against (including Militech, and especially wealthy militaries like the U.S. Army). Ground armor tends to be the domestic equivalent of M-75s, stiffened with armored car (similar to the GMI Wolverine) flanking forces acting as light cavalry. Troop transport and antitank duties are performed by Combat-10's (see page 63; antitank Combat-10's replace the 75mm cannon and minigun with a heavy ATGM and 15 shots).

Arasaka doesn't really have air support as such. Instead it relies on aerodynes for ground support and surface-to-air missiles for taking out enemy aircraft, reasoning that an AV-4 loaded with a quartet of dogfight missiles is more maneuverable and cheaper than a dedicated air superiority fighter, and packs the same firepower. Because of this philosophy, each Arasaka squad carries a couple of SAM's with it. (At least the fuel shortage hurt Militech more than Arasaka; Militech's aerial superiority was nearly neutralized when most of its aircraft were grounded for lack of fuel!)

Arasaka's also behind on the artillery front: Arasaka forces use mortars rather than depend upon heavy, clumsy self-propelled artillery. The dependable Riot-8 can be fitted with a 12cm mortar (range 6km, 13D10 damage, 6m burst radius) and 70 shells, making a cheap mortar carrier. For quicker deployment and smaller size, the Arasaka Kuma "jeep" (see page 63) can also be fitted with a 6cm mortar (HVY, WA +0, 8D10 damage with a 5 meter radius, range 2000 meters) and 50 shells. With a crew of two, this self-propelled minimortar can pump 40 rounds per minute downrange.

Finally, Arasaka commanders have finally been cleared for use of the orbital artillery satellites that have been carefully built up over the decades ... .

SPECIAL FORCES

Arasaka special forces bring in the lion's share of offense-related revenues. They are justifiably feared and respected throughout the mercenary community. Arasaka operatives are highly trained in their area of specialization, with very little cross-training. The rest of the team is supposed to make up for any deficiencies. There are, of course, operatives who are multirole capable, but these have usually learned these skills through vast expe-

rience, and are therefore some of Arasaka's most valued special forces assets.

Two special forces groups merit mention: the ninja and the ACPA troopers. Saburo still sponsors hereditary ninja, and their training from birth makes them dangerous agents and saboteurs. They are taught the classic ways of stealth and sabotage, and are fully versed in modern methods as well (treat as skill level +3 in all relevant tech skills). Fortunately, they are rare, and are used with great care. Most of the time, their targets are not even aware that they have been targeted by ninja, for the stealthy ones do their business via subterfuge and infiltration whenever possible—Arasaka has plenty of other operatives to call upon when more overt methods are needed.

ACPA troopers are selected from the most worthy warriors and are trained for fearlessness and combat prowess; their training and their hitting power make them coveted battlefield troops. In many ways, they are the antithesis of the ninja—where the ninja are proud to accomplish their missions without notice, the ACPA troopers think of themselves as the new *hatamoto,* special troops of their lord Arasaka. Their attitude as invulnerable supermen often gets them into trouble, because they are loath to retreat unless ordered. They are particularly fond of closing to melee combat with other ACPA's, to prove their mettle in single combat—seeing that most other ACPA pilots aren't as well trained in such fighting.

Threat Ratings

The average Arasaka combat force has an A or B rating, depending on the quality of troops being faced—A rating troops are older, more experienced units. Arasaka vehicle crews are rated B. Arasaka ACPA troopers and elite special forces units are distinctly AA rating. Arasaka security guards are rated B.

ARASAKA COMBAT TROOPER

INT 6 REF 8 TECH 5 COOL 8 LUCK 5 ATTR 5 MA 7 BODY 8 EMP 7/6

Skills: Combat Sense +5, Awareness/Notice +5, Athletics +3, Driving +1, Endurance +1, Fencing +4, First Aid +3, Handgun +4, Heavy Weapons +2 (support weapons troopers have Heavy Weapons +4), Karate +4, Rifle +4, Stealth +4, Submachinegun +5.

Cyberware: Neural processor with plugs and smartgun link. Officers have cyberaudio with radio and scrambler.

Equipment: Combat armor (hard SP 18 on torso and arms, hard SP on the head, soft SP 4 on legs, EV +1, helmet has 20x vision, low-light, anti-dazzle, gas mask, 1km radio), standard auto-medic with anti-pain and various combat drugs, WAA assault weapon with under-barrel grenade launcher, 4 hand grenades (3 HE, 1 smoke), 4 launched grenades (3 HE, 1 HEDP), wakizashi, bayonet. Two troopers in each squad carry a Skorpion 16 missile launcher. The heavy trooper has one of the following instead of the assault weapon: M-5A SAW, WCAA assault shotgun.

Specialists: Arasaka vehicle drivers have Driving +4, Operate Heavy Machinery +4; pilots have the appropriate Pilot skill at +4. Both have Heavy Weapons +4. Netrunners have Interface +4 instead of Combat Sense, and have Electronic Warfare +2. Arasaka commanders have INT 8, Tactics +3, Fencing +6, Karate +6, and Leadership +5 (very important; see the squad combat rules on page 87). They also carry full-sized katanas.

ARASAKA SPECIAL OPERATIONS TROOPER

INT 8 REF 9 TECH 5 COOL 10 LUCK 5 ATTR 5 MA 7 BODY 8 EMP 7/?

Skills: Combat Sense +6, Awareness/Notice +6, Athletics +5, Driving +3, Endurance +3, Fencing +6, First Aid +3, Handgun +6, Heavy Weapons +4 (ACPA troopers have Heavy Weapons +6), Karate +6, Rifle +6, Stealth +6, Submachinegun +5, plus two specialty skills at +8.

Cyberware: Neural processor and interface plugs with smartgun link (ACPA troopers add vehicle link) and pain editors. May have other cyberware.

Equipment: Armor might be worn; usually nothing more than soft SP 14, with no EV! Smartgoggles are common, as are smart gas masks (see page 45). Weapons range from pistols and monokatanas/monowakizashis to sniper rifles, as appropriate to the mission. Grenades are very common, and usually varied. ACPA troops get Arasaka Standard-B or -C armors, with normal weapons.

Variations: ACPA troopers have PA Pilot instead of Combat Sense, and add Melee at +7 so they can use their swords effectively (no, not Fencing; wielding an ACPA sword bears more resemblance to hitting someone with a sharpened I-beam).

ARASASKA WEAPONS

Field Swords: Saburo feels that swords are still effective combat weapons, and learning the art of kendo teaches many virtues he desires in his troops. His swords are grown in orbit, their crystalline matrices aligned to make a sword that's stronger and sharper than any terrestrial metal—these swords won't break on a mere fumble; you have to *work* to break one! In addition, they are made with special armor-piercing "wedge" tips; a thrust with one of these swords treats hard armor as 1/2 SP. They are not for sale! When an Arasaka guard is promoted to the level of field soldier, he is given his *wakizashi* as a symbol of his honor; when promoted to officer, he receives his *katana*, completing the *daisho*. Arasaka soldiers are very proud to own them, and don't like people that didn't earn them possessing them. **Wakizashi:** WA+1, 2D6+3 damage; **katana:** WA+2, 3D6 damage.

Arasaka WAA Assault Weapon (smartgun)
RIF • +1 • N • C • 5D6 (5.56mm) • 30 • 30 • VR • Range 400m

Under-barrel Grenade Launcher
HVY +0 • L • R • varies (40mm, see pg 76) 1 • 1 • VR • Range 200m

Arasaka WCAA Assault Shotgun
RIF -1 • N • C • 4D6 (12ga.) • 20 • 10 • ST • Range 50m

Stemmeyer M-5A Squad Assault Weapon
RIF -1 • N • R • 6D6+2 (7.62mm) • 200 • 20 • ST • range 400m

Bayonet: Does 1D6 damage; 3D6 when attached to rifle! Use knife rules regarding soft armor.

MILITECH COMBAT TROOPS

"Gold may not get you good soldiers, but good soldiers can always get you gold."

—H. Beam Piper, *Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen*

Militech is the largest self-contained mercenary corporation in human history. It has a "standing army" that is larger than the standing armies of most of the countries of the world (superpowers like SovOil and the U.S.A. notwithstanding). Its troops have achieved an impressive 71% success rate over the last 20 years. Its arms and military hardware production account for most of its real prosperity, since most citizen weapons have some connection to the arms company, but its army is a tidy source of profit.

Militech's mercenary operations are based on the ancient mercenary soldier principle that the best operation is one that accomplishes the goal with the lowest costs—including materiel, personnel, consumables, property damage, and civilian casualties. Although many military minds decry this as "combat accountancy", emphasis on doing the job right with minimal cost has produced some brilliant tactics and truly inventive initiative among Militech officers.

In addition, this attention for detail brings more mercenary business! Clients know that they can count on Militech to capture objectives swiftly and intact, if at all possible, and they're willing to pay a little more for the operation in order to save money in the long run.

In order to better serve their customers, Militech insists that its troops follow strict ethical guidelines for behavior on and off the battlefield. Atrocities are not allowed; no mass killings, lootings, or rapes have ever been proven to be caused by Militech troops. Something about all of the above carrying the penalty of court-martial and death deters that sort of behavior ....

Militech troops are severely professional. They have been likened to Spartans or Prussians, imbued with *esprit de corps* and charged with completing their mission if at all possible, but remaining cognizant of their value to the company. The troops know that if they're beaten, it is better to retreat or even surrender (if necessary) than to die needlessly—they're mercenaries, not zealots. Mind you, every Militech commander makes up plans for contingencies such as being grossly outnumbered, or outmaneuvered, or even outfought, all in order to complete the mission if possible.

This has translated into a reluctance to stand and soak casualties, unless there's a really good reason. Instead, they're likely to retreat when taking casualties (to preserve their force). Of course, this means penalty payments for not fulfilling the mission, but this also means that the Militech forces may well try at the mission again—sometimes at no additional cost, if the contract is important enough. (In game terms, Militech troops will bug out 75% of the time once they reach 25% casualties.)

As mentioned above, Militech commanders are masters of the flexible plan. They'll have contingency plans thought out well in



MILITECH SOLDIER IN FULL KIT WITH CAPTURED ARASAKA EMF LAUNCHER

advance, and will execute them with necessary ad-libbed modification if the need arises. This gives Militech forces a reputation for cleverness and flexibility in combat; even if you think you've got a Militech force beaten, they might steal a march on you.

DEPLOYMENT

Militech doesn't like to deploy its troops in "penny packets", and the minimum hiring size for a Militech unit is a company (three 40-man platoons and a 20-man command section). This does not take special operations into account; these are normally hired in teams of squad size or smaller.

Like the regular army from which it came, Militech's basic troop unit is the ten-man squad, which is split into two five-man fire teams. Militech teaches its teams to work semi-independently for maximum flexibility, so Militech covers more ground with its troops—up to 500-600 meters with a single platoon. They rely on superior communication for fire-team coordination; if one team comes under fire, the other team will come running.

Militech believes in troop transport—mobility has been the central key to its success. Therefore, every squad of soldiers has some sort of transport vehicle assigned to it. Combat line units merit AV-4/6 transport, or Behemoth APC's. Support and non-combat transport is usually handled by trucks. With the fuel shortage problem, Militech's AV fleet has been practically grounded, with the remaining fuel being hoarded for the mobile reserve. This has put a premium on ground transport, so much so that Militech has been forced to actually purchase BMW 2020's and BTR-15 "Yak-Us" to transport its troops into battle!

SUPPORT

Without a doubt, the masters of massive support are the U.S. Army and SovOil's huge land forces. Both of them embody the "juggernaut" style of warfare, rolling over their opponents with waves of tanks and smashing them with artillery and air power. Militech can't afford to play in that league.

Why would it want to? The big leagues are no place for Militech's low-cost philosophy—it is a fact that if you give a soldier a weapon he will find (or invent) the opportunity to use it. By restricting the amount of firepower available to the field commander, Militech forces the commander to plan use of support as a luxury rather than as a staple. The end result is surgical support, rather than the hammer used by other armies.

With this in mind, Militech support is of the highest quality. Sure, the corporation can't outspend the U.S. government in its selection of main battle tanks, but the MT-4 (see pg. 70) is more than adequate for fighting anything but the Army's M-11—and it's a lot less expensive. The very fact that Militech owns state-of-the-art battle tanks says a lot for Militech's forces.

Not that Militech's air force lags behind. Sure, it doesn't buy F-33's and F-53's, but it has good air superiority fighters, and the AV9 is every bit a match for the AV-8. Furthermore, Militech does have a squadron of A-01 Blitzes.

Artillery tends to be deployed in four-gun batteries, and is either self-propelled or airmobile. Militech's clever backpack mortar is revolutionizing the light artillery market, and if a one-shot saturation barrage is needed, Militech employs disposable multiple rocket launchers—a group of one-use tubes firing artillery rockets at the target. The indiscriminate barrage capability even fits into Militech's inexpensive, surgical philosophy—they're cheap, and are usually chemical (smoke or gas) or anti-personnel rather than building blasters. One of these disposable MRLs can be hauled in the bed of a regular pickup truck, and two men can deploy it in a quarter hour. To ensure that its artillery is used well, Militech trains every soldier in the skill of indirect fire. No other army does this.

Militech also has some artillery in orbit, along with their spy and surveillance satellites. The former are used with great caution; the latter are almost essential to intelligence and communications.

Threat Ratings

Militech combat troops are typically rated A—including their vehicle crews, ACPA troopers, and pilots. Their special forces are rated AA, of course.

MILITECH COMBAT SOLDIER

INT 7 REF 8 TECH 5 COOL 8 LUCK 6 ATTR 5 MA 7 BODY 8 EMP 7/6

Skills: Combat Sense +5, Awareness/Notice +4, Athletics +4, Driving +2, Endurance +1, Expert: Soldier +3, First Aid +3, Handgun +5, Heavy Weapons +3 (support weapons troopers have Heavy Weapons +4), Rifle +4, Stealth +2, Submachinegun 5, Wilderness Survival +4, Wrestling +4.

Cyberware: Neural processor with plugs and smartgun link, biomonitor.

Equipment: Combat armor (hard SP 18 on torso, soft SP 14 on arms and legs, hard SP 20 on head, EV +1; helmet has low-lite, IR, anti-dazzle, targeting scope, amplified hearing, level damping, and 1km radio with scrambler. Armor is NBC-sealed), standard automedic, Mk IV assault rifle with under-barrel mini-grenade launcher, Avenger pistol, knife/bayonet. Heavy weapons troops carry the Renegade or the U-55 "Cowboy" grenade launcher.

Specialists: Vehicle crew/pilots have appropriate Vehicle Zen variant instead of Combat Sense, Driving and Operate Heavy Machinery/appropriate Pilot +5, Heavy Weapons +5. ACPA troopers have PA Combat instead of Combat Sense, Heavy Weapons +5, and Melee +5. Officers have Combat Sense +6, Tactics +5, and Leadership +4 (very important; see the squad-combat rules on page 87).

MILITECH SPECIAL OPERATIONS SOLDIER (SH2)

INT 8 REF 9 TECH 5 COOL 8 LUCK 6 ATTR 5 MA 7 BODY 8 EMP 7/6

Skills: Combat Sense +6, Aikido +5, Awareness/Notice +4, Athletics +4, Driving +2, Endurance +1, Expert: Soldier +3, First Aid +3, Handgun +6, Heavy Weapons +2 (support weapons troopers have Heavy Weapons +4), Leadership +3, Rifle +4,

Stealth +5, Submachinegun +5, Tactics +4, Wilderness Survival +4, plus four specialty skills at +5.

Cyberware: Neural processor with plugs and smartgun link, biomonitor. They often have other cyberwares (cybervisual, cyberaudio, and biowares are popular).

Equipment: Various. Special ops soldiers prefer to use lighter armor (soft SP 14, EV +0) and silenced weapons (including the Viper SMG). Specialty equipment is issued as necessary.

Officers: Militech special ops teams rarely have officers as leaders; instead, they are so highly trained that the unit acts as its own "officer" for Tactics and Leadership rolls as per the combat rules on pages 87.

MILITECH WEAPONS

Militech Arms Avenger
P • +0 • J • E • 2D6+1 (9mm) • 10 • 2 • VR • range 50m

Militech Mk IV Assault Rifle
RIF • +1 • N • C • 6D6-1 (6.5mm hybrid) 35 • 3/30 VR • range 400m

Militech Renegade Squad Assault Weapon
HVY • +0 • N • R • 6D6-1 (6.5mm hybrid) 200/35 • 20 • ST • range 400m

Militech Arms Mini-Grenade Launcher
HVY • -1 • L • C • var. (25mm) • 4 • 2 • ST • range 150m

U-55 Cowboy Grenade Launcher
HVY • +0 • N • P • var. (25mm grenade) • 12 • 1/3 • ST • range

GOVERNMENT TROOPS OF NORTH AMERICA

As noted in the timeline, local and national governments are finally going to get really fed up with all the tax losses, er, pain and suffering that the war is causing. When they do, they send in the troops.

The troops detailed in this section are those of America (both federal and state). They're pretty generic, though, and can be used for troops from other parts of the world—just change the uniforms and weaponry a bit to fit the locale (Euro forces tend to be equipped with FN and German equipment; SouthAm forces use Militech, FN, and Arasaka guns. Chinese and Japanese forces use the weapons and equipment detailed in the *PacRim Sourcebook*).

Troop tactics are really quite universal, particularly when dealing with mobile, scattered foes (which are all that this war offers): If the troops are attempting to secure an objective, they'll surround it and move in room by room. If they're clearing an area, they'll form a battleline and move across, sweeping it clean of opposition (grinding all opposition underfoot, more likely). This will be done by variations of the bounding overwatch tactic (others are not applicable in this sort of small unit action). Whenever possible, they'll use heavy weapons and artillery support to "soften up" the opposition before they move in.

Player characters facing this military juggernaut have the following options: They can run, trying to leave diversions or smoke screens to protect their backs as they bug out. They can hide, lying doggo and hoping against hope that they aren't discovered. They can surrender and hope to negotiate a deal. They can even ditch their weapons and gear and claim protection as civilians caught in the crossfire! (As good a reason as any to carry mufti with you.) Or they can stand up and fight, and probably get massacred.

Yes, massacred. Government forces may not be as well trained or equipped as corporate troops, but they are legion. Picking a fight with them is sort of like prodding a bee hive; they pour out and eventually overwhelm you with numbers. The best you can hope for is to drive them back for a bit, and then run while they're regrouping.

If the player characters are too cocky, and think that they're going to beat up on "th' Man", then let them try. Let them ambush a squad or two. Then let them deal with the other squads that come in as reinforcements. Then let them deal with the next *platoon* that arrives a minute or so later! Then let them deal with the company (if they're causing that much trouble), with all its support. If the players haven't gotten the idea by now, it's time for their characters to "buy the farm."

THE NATIONAL GUARD

The first government troops that will be called into mass action are the National Guards. These troops are capable of being deployed by a state's government (usually the governor) in response to crises. Indeed, in the independent states, and in those federal states that don't contain a COG base, the National/State Guard is all that a state leader has.

National Guard orders will be to stop armed action wherever it is encountered, and to refrain from doing more damage... However, many troops won't worry too much about that second directive if someone's shooting at them! Please note that the first directive gives them a lot of leeway when choosing targets—to wit, if you're not one of them, and you're packing, then you're a valid target to be obliterated. *Particularly* if you're shooting at them.

The Guardsmen will also take pot-shots at looters and other lawbreakers that they see; this is a hold-over from their normal civil disaster training.

Guard tactics won't be very flashy or esoteric. They'll use the standard bounding overwatch whenever they can, and they'll stick in squad organization—that is to say that the two fire teams of the squad will normally be in visual contact with each other.

GUARD DEPLOYMENT

Guard units will be deployed in a minimum of company size—that is, three platoons and a command section (a half-platoon), for a total of 140 troopers. They'll usually have a truck, or, if very lucky, an APC, for each squad's transport. Platoon elements will work very closely with each other—where the Army covers a half-kilometer front, the Guards won't spread out their squads farther than 50 meters from each other, covering a 200-300 meter front. Support vehicles and APC's (if any) come up behind the infantry, providing distant fire support.

What this means to anyone bumping into a Guard squad is that their buddies are going to be within grenade shot, and can easily be rushed to assist any squad that gets in trouble. If you thump on a Guard squad, figure that you've got 30-40 seconds before their reinforcements will be shooting at you—less time than that if there are any APC's around.

A Guard squad consists of two five-man fire teams. Each fire team consists of four riflemen and a heavy weapons trooper.

GUARD SUPPORT

Guard support tends to be more hodge-podge than regular Army support. Since the Guards get leavings, hand-me-downs, and the occasional oddball vehicle, they have an immense variety of second- and third-rate equipment to use (often in varying stages of repair). Guard units could be found with modern APC's or IFV's, or with Arasaka and Militech "police" equipment, or even with ancient, refurbished M113 APC's (tracked, amphibious, 150 SDP, 20 SP, top speed 40mph, 2 crew, 8-10 really cramped passengers. Normally armed with an M2 12.7mm machine gun).

Believe it or not, the Guards do have some tanks—not many, but some! These tend to be M-75's (page 70), with the odd M1 thrown in (tracked, 300 SDP, 200 SP composite armor, top speed 60mph, four crew. Armed with 12cm gun and 25mm cannon). They have plenty of helicopters, such as the Bell UH-9 and old Apache attack choppers (80 SDP, 40 SP, top speed 160mph, two crew. Armed with a 25mm cannon and missiles or ATGM's), as well as some AV-4s, but lack of jet fuel has most of these held in reserve for dire emergencies. If you create a dire emergency, expect to see some of them!

Remotes are confined to the platoon level; each platoon's command squad has one to two remote operators to work the platoon's three to six recon remotes. These tend to be old Bell Bumblebees (*Chrome 2*, page 31), rather than the new types.

Artillery support normally comes in the form of mortars and self-propelled artillery (a typical mortar or artillery barrage covers a 25m radius, doing 10D6 shrapnel damage). This, too, is limited, due to transport problems, lack of supplies, and relative scarcity of said support. If it's needed, though, count on a shelling. The best way to avoid one of these barrages is to hole up in some place expensive, and hope that the Guard commander will be afraid of blowing it down (then escape before he changes his mind...).

NATIONAL GUARD TROOPER

INT 4 REF 6 TECH 4 COOL 6 LUCK 5 ATTR 5 MA 5 BODY 6 EMP 5/5

Skills: Combat Sense +3, Awareness/Notice +2, Brawling +1, Driving +1, Endurance +1, First Aid +1, Heavy Weapons +2 (support weapons troopers have Heavy Weapons +4), Melee +2, Rifle +4, Stealth +2

Cyberware: None for normal troops. Officers and netrunners have neural processors and interface plugs.

Equipment: Standard armor (overall soft SP 14, SP 20 on the head, EV +0, helmet has 20x vision, low-light, anti-dazzle, 1km radio; armor is sealed and NBC-protected), Militech Ronin assault rifle with M205 grenade launcher, one LAW, four hand grenades (three HE, one smoke), four launched grenades (three HE, one HEDP), bayonet. The heavy trooper has one of the following instead of the assault rifle/M205 GL combo: M-232 SAW, M-60D, M-12 CAW, or M-212 GL.

Specialists: National Guard vehicle drivers have Driving +4, Operate Heavy Machinery +4; pilots have the appropriate Pilot skill at +4. Both have Heavy Weapons +4. Netrunners have Interface +4 instead of Combat Sense, and have Electronic Warfare +2. Guard commanders have INT 5, Tactics +4, and Leadership +3 (very important; see the combat rules on page 87).

THE REGULAR ARMY

"Once upon a time, Johnny Silverhand mentioned something about governments and corps all being the same, when their boots were on your head. I told him that some have bigger boots than others.

"Welcome to those king-size boots ...."

—Morgan Blackhand

The Army is a bigger and more complex foe than the Guards. It includes normal forces, heavier armor, special forces, ACPA units, heavy support, and even Marine shock units and aircraft.

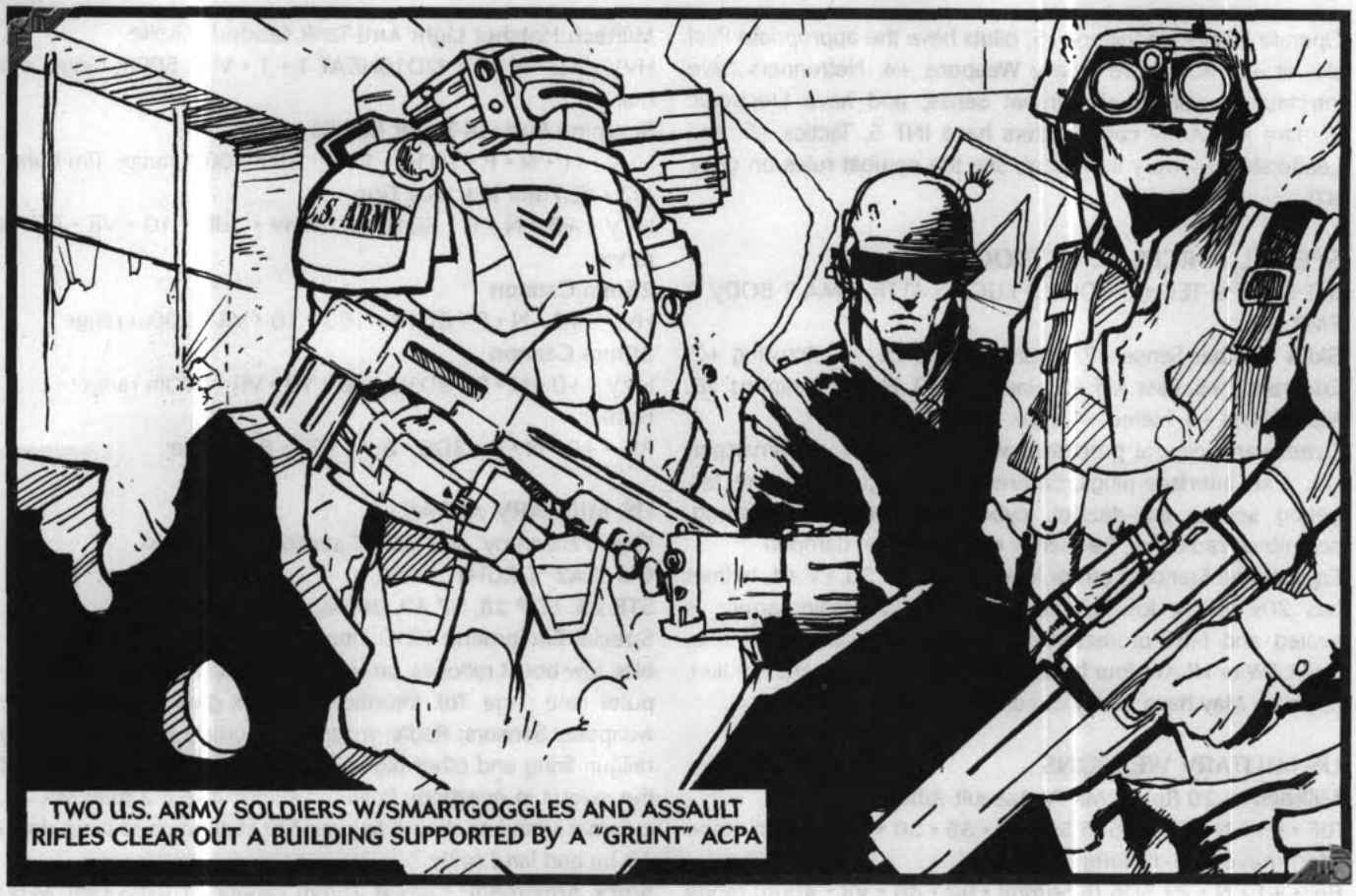
By the time the Army is called in, the situation has deteriorated to mass combat. Missions will be typically military, with little or no restriction on the amount of force to be used. They'll happily blow up an office block to silence a lone sniper.

Overkill isn't an option, it's a way of life.

Army troops are going to be well supplied with lots of ammo, and a willingness to use it. Expect "probing fire"—if someone spots something that might be threatening, the whole unit will level fire against the *area* to preemptively nullify the suspected threat. And they'll do this at maximum range.

"Better safe than sorry," you know.

Like their Guard counterparts, Army troops use bounding overwatch (but you already knew that, didn't you?), although they spread out a lot farther, to minimize the danger of friendly fire.



TWO U.S. ARMY SOLDIERS W/SMARTGOGGLES AND ASSAULT RIFLES CLEAR OUT A BUILDING SUPPORTED BY A "GRUNT" ACPA

ARMY DEPLOYMENT

The Army deploys its units in battalions, breaking them up into their three companies as needed. Army squads tend to operate in company, as normal, at a distance of 100m between squads. Each squad has transport, either AV or APC/IFV (most likely the latter, due to the fuel shortage). The M-15 is the transport of choice for the armored infantry which is spearheading Army attacks.

The Army has special forces groups, of course. Few people are ever going to run into them, since they're usually operating well "behind" the lines. These are deployed in small squad-level groups.

Army ACPA squads will also be showing up in quantity—the Army has nearly a battalion of these (plus another four companies of USMC PA jocks), and they're in great demand for this war. An Army ACPA squad consists of four Grunts and one Pigman, all piloted by Elite Troopers.

ARMY SUPPORT

The Army uses a great deal of support, and can command the entire lot of tanks, support AFV's, mobile artillery, aircraft, and ACPA's. Expect to see all the nasty stuff: AV-6 and -8 aerodynes, F-33 Wasps, F-50 Super Eagles, A-01 Blitzes, APC's and IFV's. They also have the top-of-the-line remotes and artillery support, including ortillery. M-11 main battle tanks and M-75 tanks will appear in equal numbers, with the M-11's escorting the M-75's! (The 75mm gun has greater anti-troop/urban combat capabilities; the M-11's are there to take out enemy armor that dares attack the lighter tanks.)

Full information on the Army and U.S. military forces can be found in *Home of the Brave*.

REGULAR ARMY TROOPER

INT 4 REF 6 TECH 4 COOL 6 LUCK 5 ATTR 5 MA 5 BODY 6 EMP 5/5

Skills: Combat Sense +3, Awareness/Notice +2, Brawling 1, Driving +1, Endurance +1, First Aid +1, Heavy Weapons +2 (support weapons troopers have Heavy Weapons +4), Melee +2, Rifle +4, Stealth +2

Cyberware: None for normal troops. Officers and netrunners have neural processors and interface plugs.

Equipment: Standard armor (overall hard SP 20, EV +1, helmet has 20x vision, low-light, anti-dazzle, 1 km radio; armor is sealed and NBC-protected), Militech Mk IV assault rifle with M205 grenade launcher, one LAW, four hand grenades (three HE, one smoke), four launched grenades (three HE, one HEDP), bayonet. The heavy trooper has one of the following instead of the assault rifle/M205 GL combo: M-232 SAW, M-60D, M-12 CAW, or M-212 GL.

Specialists: Army vehicle drivers have Driving +5,

Operate Heavy Machinery +5; pilots have the appropriate Pilot skill at +5. Both have Heavy Weapons +4. Netrunners have Interface 4 instead of Combat Sense, and have Electronic Warfare +2. Army commanders have INT 5, Tactics +5, and Leadership +4 (very important; see the combat rules on page 87).

SPECIAL FORCES/ELITE TROOPER

INT 6 REF 9 TECH 5 COOL 9 LUCK 5 ATTR 5 MA 7 BODY 9 EMP 7/4

Skills Combat Sense +7, Awareness/Notice +5, Brawling +2, Endurance +5, First Aid +2, Handgun +3, Heavy Weapons +6, Martial Arts +4, Melee +4, Rifle +6, Stealth +5.

Cyberware: Neural processor with Kerenzikov +2, smartgun link, 1 set interface plugs, cybereye (thermograph, low-lite, targeting scope, anti-dazzle), cyberaudio (amplified hearing, scrambler, radio link, frequency changer, level damper).

Equipment: Standard armor (overall hard SP 20, EV +1, helmet has 20x vision, low-light, anti-dazzle, 1km radio; armor is sealed and NBC-protected), Sternmeyer CG-13 assault rifle, one LAW or HLAW, four hand grenades (three HE, one smoke), bayonet. May have heavy or support weapons.

US MILITARY WEAPONS

Militech M-20 Ronin/Mk IV Assault Rifles
RIF • +1 • N • C • 5D6 (5.56mm) • 35 • 30 • VR • 400m range

Sternmeyer CG-13 Rifle
RIF • +1 • N • P • 5D6 (5.56mm) • 90 • 48 • VR • 400m range

Bayonet: • Does 1D6 damage; 3D6 when attached to rifle! Use knife rules regarding soft armor.

M-205 Grenade Launcher
HVY • +1 • L • P • Varies (40mm) • 1 • 1 • VR • 200m range (HE does 7D6 damage, 5m radius. HEDP does 4D10HEAT damage to the target and 4D6 damage to everything else in a 1m radius.)

Militech M-232 Squad Assault Weapon
RIF • +0 • N • P • 5D6 (5.56mm) • 100/35 • 20 • VR • 400m range

M-60D Medium Machine Gun
HVY • +1 • N • P • 6D6+2 (7.62mm) • 100 • 20 • VR • 500m range

M-12 12ga. Close Assault Weapon
RIF • +0 • N • P • Var. (12ga) • 20 • 10 • VR • 50m range

M-212 Grenade Launcher
HVY • +1 • N • P • Var. (40mm) • 8 • 2 • VR • 200m range (The M-212's firer can select which kind of round to fire; this reduces the ROF to 1.)

Light Anti-Tank Weapon
HVY • -2 • L • P • 4D10HEAT • 1 • 1 • VR • 100m range, 2m burst

Heavy LAW
HVY • -2 • N • P • 11D10HEAT 1 • 1 • VR • 100m range, 4m burst

Militech Hotshot Light Anti-Tank Guided Missile
HVY • +2 • N • P • 12D10HEAT 1 • 1 • VR • 500m range, 4m burst

Scorpion Surface-To-Air Missile
HVY • -1 • N • P • 7D10 • 1 • 1 • VR • 500m range, 6m burst

M2 • 12.7mm Machine Gun
HVY • +0 • N • P • 6D10 (12.7mm) • 100 • 10 • VR • 600m range

25mm Cannon
HVY • +0 • N • P • 8D10 • 100 • 10 • VR • 500m range

30mm Cannon
HVY • +0 • N • P • 9D10 • 50 • 10 • VR • 600m range

Flamer
RIF • +0 • N • P • 3D6 • 8 • 1 • ST • 8m range

US MILITARY ACPAS

(See "Panzerboy" and "ACPA" sections for details)

GU-12A2 "GRUNT" ACPA
STR 25, SDP 25, SP 40, 885kg; 139,400eb.

Special Equipment: HUD interface, military radio with scrambler, low-boost reflexes, on-board camera, and command computer (see page 76). Interface bonuses give +2 to direct-fire weapons. Sensors: Radar, magnetic anomaly detector (detects railgun firing and other high-gain magnetics at 3x the range of the railgun in question). Powered skates give it a road MA 35; external jump jets allow it to jump 5m straight up or jump down 100m and land softly.

Stock Armament: Carried 25mm cannon (1 extra clip), M-60 machine-gun (one extra clip) and mono-sword in right arm, flamer and 40mm auto grenade launcher in left arm, shoulder-mounted ATGM (two shots). Defenses include two smoke and two chaff canisters linked to laser and microwave detector.

Unarmed Combat: Punch: 3D10, Crush: 4D10, Kick: 5D10.

PGU-10D "PIGMAN" ACPA
STR 40, SDP 40, SP 40, 1566kg; 246,700eb.

Special Equipment: HUD interface, military radio with scrambler, low-boost reflexes, on-board camera, and command computer (see page 76). Interface bonuses give +2 to direct-fire weapons. Sensors: Radar, magnetic anomaly detector (see above), telescopics, laser communicator. Powered skates give it a road MA 35; external jump jets allow it to jump 5m straight up or jump down 100m and land softly.

Stock Armament: Carried 30mm cannon (two extra clips), 12.7mm machine-gun and flamer in right arm, painting laser and 40mm auto grenade launcher (one extra clip) in left arm, head-mounted AGAMS, shoulder-mounted 75mm recoilless rifle (two clips), one HLAW on each leg. Defenses include four smoke and two chaff canisters linked to laser and microwave detector, and an EMP capacitor.

Unarmed Combat: Punch: 4D10, Crush: 5D10, Kick: 7D10.

SQUAD COMBAT RULES

Despite media buildup, this is a war of small units—few battles have had more than a company of men and machines on each side. Because of this small scale, there has been less reliance on heavy support, artillery, air and orbital strikes, and big guns than was previously planned for in military theory. Instead, the conflict has magnified the importance of good squad and small unit tactics!

There's not enough space in this book to really go into the study of squad tactics, but here are the basics:

• **Squad:** This is a basic unit of 8-10 soldiers, which is further divided into two 4-5 soldier fire teams. The squad's fire teams work together as two halves of a whole, providing mutual support in combat—without that support, they're swiftly neutralized.

• **Bounding Overwatch:** Whenever possible, squads work in pairs, with one squad providing suppressive fire while the other moves forward to take up a position from which *it* can provide cover fire while the first squad moves up, whereupon the process is repeated over again. It's called bounding overwatch because the two units move as a team, with one half bounding forward while the other remains on overwatch. Please note that if a squad doesn't have another to pair up with, it usually splits into fire teams.

• **Firepower:** Each fire team usually has one soldier who is equipped with a higher-firepower weapon (a machinegun, grenade launcher, automatic shotgun, or even missile/rocket launcher). This weapon is central to the firepower each team can deliver, and the team is usually deployed to allow this weapon to fire while protecting the operator. Ideally, these heavy weapons can be tailored to the mission—for instance, if you're expecting infantry, exchanging the LMG for an ATGM isn't a good idea.

• **Cover:** One of the first things a soldier is taught is that when you start taking fire, get under cover! If you haven't got cover, make it—that's what smoke grenades are for.

• **Concentrated Fire and Diversions:** This classic tactic involves using a small diversion force to draw off enemy forces, then using a larger force to blast a selected section of enemy defenses until a breakthrough is achieved. The diversionary force pulls a fast fade while the main force exploits the breakthrough.



SMALL UNIT COMBATS

Eventually, the player characters are going to get caught up in combat—this is war, after all. Some referees may prefer to get out a map and counters to simulate the engagement; others might go as far as figurines. For those who prefer a simpler and faster combat resolution, try this:

Use an opposed skill contest, pitting the Tactics skill of each side's commander against one another (after all, it's not what you've got, but how you use it). Add applicable Tactics modifiers from the tables below, add the D10 roll, and check results on the Combat Outcome chart. Make another roll every fifteen seconds or so (5

combat turns). Since small combats (no more than 10-20 men on a side) won't last that long, roll every 9 seconds (3 combat turns).

Player characters and important NPC's can, of course, continue to fight normally during the combat, getting their normal 2 actions per 3 seconds, etc. This quick combat resolution is to see what's going on around them, not what's happening directly to them!

TACTICS MODIFIERS

TROOP THREAT LEVEL

+3	AA
+2	A
+1	B
+0	C
-1	D-E

ODDS (ratio of bigger side's total "squads" to the other's; round down!) Add to larger side:

+5	5-1 or more
+4	4-1
+3	3-1
+2	2-1
+1	1.5-1

SUPPORT UNITS per 10-man squad (round off)*

+0	**Low to no support** (just the troops)
+1	**Light Support** (no more than one combat vehicle of 10> tons, or one mortar or portable artillery weapon per squad)
+2	**Medium support** (two 10> ton combat vehicles, or two mortars/portable artillery weapons, or one ACPA, 11+ ton combat vehicle, large artillery piece, or aircraft, per squad)
+4	**Heavy support** (more than one ACPA, 11+ ton combat vehicle, large artillery piece, or aircraft, per squad)
+1	Per two **heroic player-characters** or **important NPCs** fighting

**If no infantry, count the most numerous unit type as the squad base. Each single vehicle or two ACPA's counts as a squad! See example below.*

TERRAIN

Open Terrain (plains, desert)

+2	Vehicles only
+1	Vehicles and infantry
+0	Infantry only
-1	Infantry and ACPA's
-2	ACPA's only

Close Terrain (urban, woods, etc.)

+3	Infantry and ACPA's
+2	Infantry only
+1	ACPAs only
+0	Infantry and/or ACPA's and vehicles
-2	Vehicles only

SITUATION

+5	Attacker making ambush/surprise attack
+1	Defender entrenched in hasty defenses
+3	Defender entrenched in well prepared defenses

CASUALTIES SUFFERED (percentage of original force)

-1	Light (10-19%)
-2	Heavy (20-39%)
-5/-8*	Extreme (40+%)

**Militech troops use the -8; they're more likely to withdraw in self-preservation.*

COMBAT OUTCOME

Once you've compared modified Tactics rolls, refer to the appropriate chart below. Some of the results need explanation:

May retire: This means that the side may withdraw from the battle without routing. If a side withdraws in a rout, it adds 2D6% additional casualties.

May close the range 100m: In some cases, it may be preferable to close the range. If the result indicates, a side may close the range by up to 100m.

ND6% casualties: Keep a running total of the percentage of the force that is considered casualties (yes, a force of fewer than ten men can still accrue percentile casualties, representing lesser wounds, etc.). Casualties caused by player character/important NPC actions also count toward the total (divide 100% by the number of opponents to see how many casualty percentiles each is worth).

Heroic PC's: Heroic player characters are heroically (foolishly?) refusing to take good cover and are exposing themselves to danger. The advantage to this is that they often contribute disproportionately to the battle! Of course, it's not easy—player characters wanting to be heroes must overcome their survival instincts; make a Cool/Will + Combat Sense (or variant) test vs. the last combat resolution's Morale Difficulty level (minimum 10+), or they hunker down and act like normal troops. Please note that PC's never have to test this if they don't want to be heroic.

Morale*: If a side fails its Morale Leadership test, it retires from the battlefield, if possible.

xxxxx/oooo: The first information applies to the winning side, and the second set applies to the losing side.

OUTCOME DIFFERENCE

0-4	**Inconclusive**
Casualties	Each side suffers 1D6% casualties.
Maneuver	Both sides may retire or may attempt to close the range 100m (suffering a -3 to the next Tactics test).
Morale	*Each makes an Easy (10+) Leadership test.
PC's	Each player character might be hit on a D10 roll of 1 (1-4 if being heroic). Suffer one hit from an appropriate weapon (small arm if infantry,

light AT weapon if in ACPA, heavy AT weapon if in vehicle).

5-9 **We're Winning/You're Losing**

Casualties	Suffer 1D6% casualties/suffer 2D6% casualties.
Maneuver	May retire or close the range 100m/may retire or close the range 100m (suffering a -3 to next Tactics test).
Morale*	No test/Difficult (15+) Leadership test.
PC's	As "Inconclusive" above/each player character might be hit on a D10 roll of 1-2 (1-5 if being heroic).

10-14 **We're Thumping You/You're Taking A Beating**

Casualties	Suffer 1D3% casualties/suffer 2D6% casualties.
Maneuver	May retire or close the range 100m/may retire.
Morale*	No test/Very Difficult (20+) Leadership test.
PC's	As "Inconclusive" above/each player character might be hit on a D10 roll of 1-3 (1-6 if being heroic).

15+ **We've Won/You're On The Run**

Casualties	Suffer 1D3% casualties/suffer 2D6% casualties.
Maneuver	May retire or close the range 100m/must retire or rout.
Morale*	No test/Very Difficult (20+) Leadership test to avoid routing.
PC's	As "Inconclusive" above/each player character might be hit on a D10 roll of 1-4 (1-7 if being heroic). PC's may test Cool/Will + Combat Sense vs. Difficulty 20+ to avoid fleeing, if desired.

**If on the losing side, an Arasaka commander gets a +2 to his Leadership roll to avoid withdrawing/routing (Arasaka soldiers are trained to fight to the last man).*

FLESHING IT OUT

The numbers seem pretty dry, don't they? Here's how they come alive: An "Inconclusive" result means a sort of stand-off, where both sides are sniping and firing at each other, but neither seems to be doing much good. "We're Winning/You're Losing" and "We're Thumping You/You're Taking A Beating" show the battle definitely swinging in favor of the winning side; the losers are sustaining more damage and the winners are surging forward, buoyed with confidence. "We've Won/You're On The Run" means that the battle is really over, and the losers are retreating in disarray.

EXAMPLE: A Militech force attacks an Arasaka position. The Militech leader is INT 7, Tactics 5. He has a Threat Level A force of 3 squads of infantry, three Behemoth APCs, 4 Commando ACPAs, and an AV-9 flying support (heavy support, +4). They're mixed vehicles, ACPAs, and infantry in close terrain (+0), and they outnumber the five "squads" of Standard-Cs by 9 to 5 (1.5-1 odds, +1) for a grand total of 12+7+1D10.

The Militech commander studies his situation graphics readout. The Aras have a mess of powered armor holed up in a large mall, and it's his job to clear them out to make room for another advance force. He's got armored infantry, a Commando attack group, and an AV in support. It's still not going to be easy.

The Aras know they're going to be attacked, and their commander (INT 6, Tactics 5) has ten Standard-C ACPAs (Threat Level A, +2) waiting in defense. The Standard-C's have prepared defenses (+3) and are ACPAs in close terrain (+1), for a grand total of 11+5+1D10.

The Arasaka commander evaluates his remote sensor reports. The Mils are moving in with a mixed bag of infantry, APCs, and ACPA's, and they may have air support. Not good. Still, his own troopers are fortified in a large, open building, with solid floors. All he has to do is avoid bunching where a single air strike can destroy multiple troopers, and they should be able to keep the Mils from seizing the mall.

In the first 15 seconds, the Militech commander rolls a 4 and the Arasaka commander rolls a 6; 23-22 means an inconclusive round. Both sides roll 1D6 for their casualty percentage (Arasaka 5%, Militech 4%). Both sides pass their Leadership tests.

The Mils move forward, with the APC's launching hot smoke to screen the infiltrating troops. The Aras fire at any target they can detect, and lay fire along lanes which they've calculated to have the best chance of enemy activity. They take care not to stay in one position for too long, lest they draw anti-tank fire. One Militech fire team is caught and pinned, and one Standard-C receives minor damage.

In the second 15 seconds, it's Militech 27 to Arasaka 19 for a difference of +7. Militech takes another 4% casualties (total 8%). Arasaka takes another 8% casualties (total 14%), but holds firm! The Militech troops close the range, trying to infiltrate the ACPA positions.

The Mils surround the mall and start moving in. The Aras can't be everywhere at once, and while the pinned Mil fire-team is destroyed, a Commando sneaks into the building and severely damages an Ara ACPA.

45 seconds have passed. A Militech 26 beats Arasaka's fumbled roll (16). Militech casualties are at 10%; Arasaka losses stand at 19%. The Arasaka commander can't hold anymore, so he and his men withdraw (his Leadership roll total was 20, so they withdraw rather than routing)—probably leaving two Standard-C's behind. Want to see what Militech lost? They lost 1/10 of nine "squads"; a D10 roll (rerolling 10's) of 1 indicates it's the first one listed—a squad of infantry was mangled.

The Ara commander falls into the trap, rushing troopers forward to contain the Mils' flanking maneuver. A Militech soldier relays an Ara trooper's exact coordinates to the AV, which destroys the trooper with a smart bomb. The Aras pull out from their now hopeless position, rather than losing another valuable ACPA.

ALT. BATTLEFIELD

What do most people see of the War? They see the news reports of the day's attacks and casualties, they hear the commentaries and media evaluations; they might even be unlucky enough to experience one of the war's commando actions firsthand.

What they don't know is that there's another aspect to this war, one with fewer casualties, but with more effect on the way the world works: the destruction of the Net.

The Role of the Net in the War

While the Net was of critical importance in the Covert War, its importance drops as the war gets hotter, and as the Net gets weirder. While it's always an important tool, Net combat is less common simply because both sides take everything important offline to enhance security. This, of course, helps restrict access to those netrunners capable enough in the physical world to attempt a break in (physically or by remote), or smart enough to have placed circuits and code to force the sites back onto the Net when they want to get in.

As a result, many netrunners involved in the war get inventive. Many work as communication officers and electronic warfare experts. Others content themselves with working against military tactical and strategic planning systems, attacking them in the rare instances that they come on-line long enough to be attacked. Many are employed controlling remotes and other RPV systems. Many others hire on as researchers and trouble-shooters, trying to double-check the information strike teams receive for accuracy, working against the effects of enemy disinformation.

This Corp war may not be as profitable as the third was for netrunners, but there's still plenty to do.

COMMUNICATIONS AND THE NETWAR

The modern world functions on the strength of its communications network. At any given nanosecond, there are billions of people, and more billions of machines, talking to each other via landlines, cellular, radio, microwave, sonics (underwater), lasers, and satellite transmissions. Most communications don't even involve the I-G algorithms that define the Net.

That's okay for most people. The vast majority of the world's population doesn't truly use the full potential of the Net. Sure, they uplink though their vidscreens, VR visors, or temple 'trodes, but they don't immerse themselves like true Net-junkies. Maybe it's something about the fact that you might get a black ICE virus that can turn your brain into mush that discourages people ....

Most people and machines use simple data-link communications to do their business. Once upon a time, this communications form was simply called telephone; today, it also encompasses radio, microwave, fiber-optic, and satellite commo. These communications are usually isolated from the world-wide virtual reality of the Net, either because they don't involve computers that can support access by the I-G algorithms (most phone and data calls), by the possibility that they don't involve computers at all (radio-to-radio commo fits in this category), or by active attempts to isolate data-lines from the Net (the classic example being SAC's isolated phone lines). These formats make up the vast bulk (over 80%) of humanity's communications.

The fact is that modern, technological society depends on the rapid and secure flow of information. Without it, concepts like modern speculative trading, decentralized global banking, and, indeed, any ability to trade services and goods without direct contact (i.e., barter) become impossible ... this means *money* in every form.

Sadly, the Net and the Comnet (communications network) are some of the most vulnerable targets in this war—they're so spread out that they're practically impossible to defend. A primary part of the Hot War is the disruption of the electronic comnet to isolate the battlefield. Netrunners and EW specialists now use EMP bombs, ECM, ECCM, and intrusion software to run roughshod over most communications without breaking stride. They aren't looking for plunder; they just want to deny use of the system for the duration of the battle. Of course, this means whole city districts can be rendered nonfunctional for days at a time.

What this means to the average citizen is that his daily life keeps getting seriously interrupted. The transactions on the Comnet are so interconnected that a destructive run on a subsidiary office can disrupt dataflow in the entire company as it adjusts to the loss (or alteration) of data. Their important customers will also be disrupted, and so on. Normally, it wouldn't be so bad, but there are so many hits each day that the business world is struggling to catch up. So money transactions are delayed or mishandled, your daily 'fax might come through garbled, and even phone conversations go down.

It's worse on the Net. There are so many 'runners on both sides running around using heavy artillery that the Net is thick with disruptions and Black ICE. It's so bad that some 'runners have taken to knocking the Net down in some locations (see below)!

Tactics of Electronic Destruction

This is the most savage war the Net has ever seen. There are many novel methods of Net destruction, and innocents are being caught in the overkill. Watch for these gambits; foreknowledge might save your brain:

- **"Runners (or corps) releasing Black ICE:** Sometimes idiots set off mobile ICE and Black ICE, typically dog programs, as a sort of "Alpha Strike." Keep a powerful, up-to-date anti-dog program

ready; alternatively, have a good Killer. Or you can shut down the dog at the source: if a 'runner releases it, knocking the 'runner's deck off-line will terminate the ICE. Unfortunately, this tactic doesn't work so well against well defended corporate mainframes ...

• **IG Interface Traps:** Some 'runners hack into the local IG interface repeaters (these are PC-equivalent substations scattered around to maintain the Net; the more complex the Net in an area, the more repeaters there are) and bollix the program to disrupt the Net in a specific repeater's area of effect (usually one repeater per grid square). Any pursuers caught in the disruption are either knocked back to where they entered the grid, or dropped off-line (50% chance of either). There's no defense but vigilance; watch for IG interference.

(And how to manage this gambit yourself? First, break into one of the interface repeaters ... they're part of the Internet, protected by level 10 Code Gates. Any unsuccessful attempt to breach the Gate sends an alarm signal to Netwatch (or worse; Internet), so have your diversion ready! Once inside, you've got to use your Programming skill to insert a disruption command; it's a Difficulty 20 skill roll, and takes 2 turns. Hope Netwatch isn't on the way ....

• **Knocking the Net Offline:** A very tough trick, but irresistibly effective. Anyone caught in the area of effect is automatically dropped offline. There is usually no defense, and no warning. All you can do is wait for the Net to come back up (back-ups usually accomplish this in 1D10+1 turns).

(Theoretically, you could accomplish this by physically cutting all Net-using communications in an area. However, there are so many commo modes and backups that it's practically impossible in most areas. It's easier to do it electronically, which means hacking into all the IG interface repeaters in an area and rigging them to go down. Considering how hard it is to do just one, you'll need an army of 'runners ... or a functional back-door access code.)

• **Satchel Charges:** Leave it to the military to develop the anti-Net bomb. This highly destructive program (page 44) frags anything in its path, and even disrupts IG algorithms temporarily! If you detect someone setting one of these in your area, jack out. This goes triple if you're in a datafort and someone sets up a charge inside the fort's walls!



Messing With The Phone Company

As noted earlier, there are a lot of communications going on that don't go via the Net. However, they have to go through the phone company's switching computers ... "Net communications is nothing more than one computer talking to another." All you have to do is get to those switching computers!

Easier said than done. Local phone companies are justifiably paranoid, and have excellent defenses, supplied by Internet and Netwatch. Typically, they've got level 10 Data Walls and Code Gates, some of which have offensive capability (*Guide to the Net*, page 104, or *Brainware Blowout*, pages 67-68). Inside, they're full of dog alarms (some of them invisible) and Monitors, with banks of nasty ICE ready to take on intruders ... and at least one "goalie" (defending netrunner) on call. Once again, the best way in is with a stolen password, neh?

Once you're in, it's easy to access the switching computers. Wow, all you need is the origin or destination phone number and *voila:* you're tapped into the conversation/ dataflow, and you can listen, interrupt, or alter it. (Isn't it interesting that all these abilities are standard features in the phone company's computers?) If you don't have either of these numbers and you're looking for a voice conversation, a voice-print of one of the participants and the *Soundmachine* controller have a 20% chance of locating the right conversation in 2D10 turns.

You can also run traces through these computers, same as Netwatch does ... it's so easy! You get to add your INT to the Netwatch standard STR 10 trace program.

Or if you don't want to tackle the local phone company's defenses, you can try to hack into the signal boosters that riddle every phone system. These are defended just like the I-G repeaters (see above). If you get in, you'll need the *Phone Home* controller and your Programming skill to use them (*Phone Home's* STR + Programming + INT + D10). Locating a transmission when you have origin or destination number is Difficulty 15. Locating a transmission with *Soundmachine* and a voiceprint is Difficulty 25. Locating a transmission otherwise is a Luck

roll to beat 25 ... that's right, it takes a critical success to locate one transmission out of thousands (or more). Running a trace on a known transmission uses the tracing program's STR + your INT vs. the standard trace value + 5.

Please note that you're messing with the local phone company, which means Internet, whenever you do this. Be prepared to accept the consequences.

"YOU KNOW HOW TOUGH ARASAKA'S TOKYO MAIN IS? WELL, ARASAKA STILL PAYS ITS MONTHLY BILL TO INTERNET."

"I AIN'T GONNA TALK ABOUT INTERNET. JUST DO AS THEY SAY. THEY DON'T OWN THE NET; THEY ARE THE NET."

—RACHE BARTMOSS

Combat Netrunners

The combat netrunner is more of a covert technician than a net-nerd (for more information on the Covert Tech with Network specialty, see *Stormfront*, pages 95-96). They live in the real world, not in the Net, because they often have to go to places to get into systems not physically connected to the Net. This means that they have to be physically fit and skilled in evasion, self-defense, and electrical knowledge.

This lifestyle usually means less Net skill than a net-nerd, but does have its advantages. For one thing, net-nerds also don't fully realize the advantages of remotes. Combat netrunners know that these devices can act as familiars, extending their electronic reach, acting as remote connections to enemy hardware.

And you definitely don't see net-nerds pulling stunts like the following.

NETRUNNING IN COMBAT

This does *not* mean Net combat! It means netrunning while shells are bursting around you and bullets fly overhead. While it may seem suicidal, the modern battlefield is so ruled by computers that it's a natural arena for those 'runners brave (or foolhardy) enough to go there. Here are some of the things that a battlefield 'runner can do:

Information Transmissions: Modern battlefields are alive with data transmissions, usually via radio or microwave. A 'runner can simply tap these transmissions (using the ELINT skill; see *Stormfront,* page 96) and relay their information to his own side ... such transmissions include orders to units and battlefield intelligence. Imagine knowing where every one of your enemies is! And imagine garbling orders to advance, to retreat, or to target indirect fire. Just follow a transmission into someone's command computer, and you can disrupt an entire battle (provided that you can get past the defenses, and the on-line netrunner that's defending the system ...). Actually, it's simpler and safer to mess with one-man/vehicle computers; they're only defended by a password (Code Gate).

Playing with Perceptions: On the modern battlefield, things happen too swiftly to play it by eyeball, so most warriors rely on IFF to help clarify the situation. Imagine hacking into a unit's targeting computer and changing its IFF to identify its friends as enemies. This means getting onto the target's (usually only a single soldier or vehicle) transmission frequency, defeating the computer's Code Gate (password, STR 7-10), and substituting your IFF codes for his. Of course, creating a code set the system will accept may be tricky (Very Difficult Programming check, which can be made easier if your spies have inside info).

Taking Control: Some battlefield units have enough computer control in them to make them vulnerable to control programs. RPV's are the largest lot of these, although large vehicles, such as AFV's, have some vulnerability. The trick with an RPV is to jam or overpower the controller, and replace his control signal with your own. Such control signals usually include an encoded password (ELINT skill vs. Difficulty 20-30, depending on the complexity of the signal). The trick with an AFV is to piggy-back in on its com-link, and make a quick run into its computer network. These networks are usually only defended by a Code Gate; there's not enough space for defensive programs!

Once you have control of an RPV, you can operate it as one of your own. However, its controller is likely to want it back, and you'll have to battle for it—and the controllers usually have a back-door access code. Controlling an AFV is different; the computer systems only help control it, and only do one function at a time (such as driving, or aiming and firing a servo-controlled weapon). You won't have long; all AFV computers have manual over-rides, and the crew can regain control quickly.

Cyber-controlled vehicles, and all ACPA's, are special cases. Their computers are occupied by human intellects, and taking control of them means beating out the mind inside the machine. For game purposes, treat the struggle as a Net combat, with the 'runner using program STR + Interface + D10, vs. the operator's COOLx2 + D10. If the vehicle has a multiple cyber-linked crew, they can combine their COOL stats and then double them for their resistance. Anti-personnel programs can affect cyber-linked crew members, but they can retaliate by turning off the com-link and dumping the 'runner out of the vehicle's system (crew's COOLx2 + D10 vs. 'runner's INT + Interface + D10 to succeed at this tactic).

Dealing with background: During all of this, cellular cybermodems are practically useless. You need a special frequency-hopping radio modem (at least 5000 eb) to keep the background electronic interference from knocking you off-line. Alternatively, you can use remotes connected by fiber-optic cables, with magnetic induction taps. The remote is armed with something like a kid's dart gun, shooting a magnet-tipped tap at the target. The tap is connected to the remote via fiber-optics. Such taps can be fitted to any remote but the Grid Bug. (250eb, tap range 10m.)

3: HOT WAR ADVENTURES

HOT WAR TIMELINE

APRIL 2022

Wednesday/13th–Insurgent activity begins in several Caribbean countries which (with the cooperation of wealthy American tourism companies) have retained Militech security forces.

Monday/25th–Miller Johns, an Arasaka executive at its San Francisco office, is killed at his desk by an unknown sniper firing a high-powered, armor-piercing rifle. The main mystery is how he was targeted, since the office windows are reflective to visible and IR light. Arasaka puts all its facilities on full alert.

MAY 2022

Wednesday/4th–An Arasaka ops team tries to hijack a Militech prototype spy plane from its Stockholm test facility. The team fails, but escapes after destroying the prototype.

Friday/6th–Militech reprises with a series of bombings which kill over sixty Arasaka employees. In addition, Arasaka puts out a web of operatives assigned solely to locate Rache Bartmoss.

Late May–Net rumor has it that Rache Bartmoss is officially dead. A new coruption effect is discovered attaching itself to a large number of Net communications in North America. Already stung by months of Net warfare, computer operators the world over intensify their efforts to back everything up on noncorruptable WORM drives. There is a run on the supply of this hardware.

JUNE 2022

Thursday/9th–"The Third Battle of Bull Run." Arasaka special forces troops attack Militech's Norfolk, VA, factory, shutting it down for two days. On the same day, Militech-equipped mercenaries attack Arasaka's factory at Yokohama and are massacred.

Friday/10th–Militech special forces attack Arasaka base in Colorado, stealing valuable information and crippling the base for a week.

Friday/17th–Rache Bartmoss seems to return with a vengeance, hitting several dataforts belonging to both Militech and Arasaka nearly simultaneously. His actions are even more erratic and crazed than before.

Tuesday/21st–Militech special forces attack Arasaka offices in Chicago and Rio de Janiero, seeking to disrupt command and communications; they are bloodily repulsed. Arasaka stages an attack on Militech's German factories; production is slowed by three days. During the battle, a a number of Arasaka troops are surrounded by militech forces, and surrender to EEC authorities. The EEC protests, and intensifies restrictions on the activities of both corporations.



Wednesday/22nd-Thursday/July 14th–Special forces strikes occur on a daily basis around the world (sometimes several times a day). Targets include Militech offices in Rio de Janiero, Night City, Chicago, Bogota, Nairobi, and Paris, lots of Militech showrooms worldwide, Arasaka's offices in Tokyo, Hong Kong, Sydney, Hamburg, Stockholm, Rio de Janiero, New York, and Chicago; and lots of debilitating hits on Arasaka's Japanese factories. Experts are confused by the large numbers involved in these strikes; it is later revealed that the quantity of special forces personnel were inflated by adding significant numbers of free-lancers and other mercenaries wearing corporate uniforms (i.e., recruited Edgerunners).

The situation in orbit continues to worsen as Arasaka and Militech orbital assets engage in a not very subtle war of tit-for-tat. Many corporates and nations with orbital assets order a slowdown in launches and orbital traffic, as several "accidents" occur. Many people are stuck in orbit, and many more are turned into refugees by damage to workshacks and Orbital Transfer points.

JULY 2022

Friday/15th–An Arasaka battalion attack on Militech's Los Angeles office succeeds in seizing the facility. Militech responds with a manufactured riot at Arasaka's Paris office; it is only a diversion to access the building's air conditioning. A strike team pumps in a short-lived aerosol toxin, killing all within.

Sunday/17th–A major riot destroys Arasaka's Mexico City office. It is later found that Militech agents incited the riot, claiming that the nerve gasing of the Paris office was only a field test eliminating Arasaka's hold in Mexico, and advising the locals to do the job themselves and avoid the dangers of toxin spillover.

Monday/18th–Avgas hoarding hits a new high; Militech and Arasaka Edgerunner forces clash over a simultaneous attempt to seize a secret Petrochem fuel depot. Later, it turns out that the "fuel depot" was really a chemical sludge detoxification facility, and that both forces were dispatched there by false data.

Thursday/21st-Saturday/30th–Arasaka and Militech stage an encore performance of last month's special forces raids, only this time they're using regular troops in platoon-to-company strength, as well as special forces raids and Edgerunner assaults. Only assets in tightly controlled areas are safe (such as Japan, England, Hawaii, and near national capitals. Many governments have called out troops to defend their main assets in case of attack).

At this time, evidence of massive Net tampering shows up. At first, it is thought to be deliberate misinformation planted to further the war–a small number of special forces missions on both sides end up attacking targets that have nothing to do with the assigned targets! As more misinformation appears, some stop routing any important data through the Net.

AUGUST 2022

Wednesday/3rd–Arasaka's Night City branch stages the one and only Arasaka armored blitzkrieg on Militech's Heywood testing grounds, south of Night City. The assault ends in disaster when the tanks run into a field test of a new anti-tank missile system.

Monday/8th–Militech and Arasaka launch a small war from their research facilities in Chicago. Both sides have enough men and machines to field rump regiments (just over two battalions apiece), using every new product development that can roll, clank, or walk out of the secret labs. The battle begins at dawn, with Militech and Arasaka forces infiltrating toward each other's operations depots. Construction workers for the Meta and Folk Nations (nomad construction metafamilies) spot the impending attack and vacate the city center. Before 1000 hours, battle is joined, with full aerial, light artillery, and orbital artillery strikes. By 1300 hours, the battle has devolved into street fighting and house-to-house assaults with ACPA's and shock troops. At 1500 hours, the battle ends abruptly with the sudden demolition of major portions of the Arasaka and Militech offices–nomad workers infiltrated beneath both buildings, using the forgotten 150+ year old infrastructure, and wired them to blow. Both corporations ignored the nomads' ultimatum, so the Nations decided to stop the battle before it destroyed everything they'd been building.

Wednesday/10th–Militech launches an offensive on Arasaka's Hong Kong holdings. In order to get enough troops, Militech uses Chinese reservists dressed in corporate uniforms. Fears of Chinese invasion spark a complete disintegration of order as everyone hauls out all their heavy weapons and every feud turns lethal. Within hours, Hong Kong is being compared to Beirut.

Friday/12th–A Militech-sponsored Indonesian pirate group besieges Perth, Australia (which is being used by Arasaka), blockading the port with several submarines and attacking sporadically with "Mad Max"-style mobile raiders on land.

Sunday/14th–EuroSpace Agency, backed by OrbitAir, issues a warning to the world concerning the use of orbital artillery (ortillery). Said use constitutes a violation of several arms limitation pacts, and any detected ortillery will be confiscated. The U.S. and NeoSoviet authorities claim right of salvage as well ("first come, first served"). Since an ortillery strike occurs every other day, there's a lot to salvage.

Tuesday/16th: Arasaka and Militech troops clash in Nairobi. Although the numbers involved are small, casualty figures are abnormally high, due to locals killing soldiers from both sides to steal their equipment.

Wednesday/17th: After a "missed" Arasaka air strike destroys several outbuildings belonging to ESA at the Nairobi launch site, OA and ESA move several of their Delta squadrons to help defend ground-based launch facilities, severely weakening their space-based forces.

Friday/19th–Colombian troops, under the command of Militech, stage a waterborne submarine invasion of the Brazilian city of Santos, 260km south of Rio de Janiero. Arasaka-directed Brazilian troops are dispatched to block them.

Sunday/21st–Under the command of Captain Travis, Militech-backed Colombian paratroops invade Rio de Janiero. They are

soon isolated and besieged by Arasaka-trained Brazilian troops. Later that day, three SLC's (submarine landing craft) emerge off the beach, firing masses of smoke rockets into the city, and disgorge two battalions of Colombian troops to reinforce their paratroop assault. This is the signal for the revelation of dozens of Militech partisans, previously secreted in Rio, to appear and begin their assault on Arasaka's installations and government puppets. Arasaka calls out their reserves to meet the attack.

SEPTEMBER 2022

Monday/5th–Hong Kong battle escalates as both Militech and Arasaka move troops onto the island–Arasaka uses Taiwanese mercs, and Militech is actually hiring Chinese "volunteers" (Peoples' Liberation Army reservists)! The once-proud trading city is steadily reduced to rubble between warring factions; all the remaining corporations and triads flee.

Sunday/11th–The Rio de Janiero battle rumbles on, as sporadic heavy weapons sniping destroys chunks of the city's buildings and ruins the tourist trade.

Wednesday/14th–Arasaka targets an ortillery strike on Militech's home office. It is thwarted by a Militech killsat.

Saturday/17th–Two Militech-sponsored nomad troupes seize Arasaka's Colorado training base. Heavy casualties.

Sunday/18th–Six Militech research scientists are slain during a computer test; Arasaka black ice projects are suspected. Rumors abound regarding the legendary "Soulkiller" program.

Tuesday/20th–A SovOil tanker, laden with AV/jet fuel, is sunk off the coast of Japan. Arasaka blames Militech; most suspect that this might have been the work of Petrochem, using the war as cover.

Tuesday/27th–A killsat firing at an ortillery sat boosts kinetic penetrators into the Crystal Palace's trajectory. Three Highriders die intercepting the projectiles before they can hit the Palace. No-one knows why the killsat missed so catastrophically ….

Thursday/29th–The Seven Hour War. The Highriders at O'Neill Two declare their independence. The ESA launches their two remaining active Delta squadrons (the others are still down-well at Nairobi), supported by four shuttles loaded with space troops in ACPA's, against the rebelling O'Neill. The Highriders fight back, using weapons, ACPAs, and Deltas gained from unknown sources (and at least partially scratch-built). While severely underequipped, Highrider forces far outnumber the ESA/OA forces, and the initial attack is repulsed. The government of L-5 recognizes the new leaders at O'Neill Two after the inital attack.

October 2022

Sunday/2nd–The United States and Japan acknowledge the new independent government of O'Neill Two. The U.S. promises emergency supplies and support.

Tuesday/4th–SoCal government calls in state guard troops to restore order to Los Angeles, and declares all Militech and Arasaka holdings within SoCal to be nationalized.

Wednesday/5th–Texas follows suit, enforcing peace with Texas Guard and Petrochem troops.

Friday/7th–USAF gunship *Agamemnon* placed on alert and moved from cislunar orbit to a geostationary orbit above the American eastern seaboard. At the same time, the nearly complete Russian gunship *Komsomolsk* is moved into position over the Bering Strait.

Thursday/13th–The Third Orbital War. The NeoSoviet Rocket Korps ship *Komsomolsk* opens fire on a number of non-Soviet satellites in close orbit over Asia. Within seconds, the USS *Agamemnon* follows suit, vaporizing 15 non-U.S. satellites over the Earth's western hemisphere. The ESA begins scrambling Deltas from the Crystal Palace, focusing their efforts on destroying nonaligned workshacks and other suspicious orbital hardware.

The USAF and NSRK scramble their Deltas in reaction (just to be on the safe side, you understand). All three of the powers attempt to avoid coming too close to each others' possessions, but accidents do occur … two USAF Deltas are destroyed when IFF codes are confused. Likewise, an American killsat vapes four Deltas (three ESA and one Soviet) before it can be shut down. This leads to all three powers ordering general shut-down of all unmanned orbital assets, to prevent more accidents.

It doesn't prevent an unidentified killsat from badly damaging the *Agamemnon* with an Alpha Strike. It is suspected that the killsat was controlled by a planet-bound corporation, not an orbital power. This starts a literal feeding frenzy of mutual destruction as the manned ships start blasting everything in orbit owned by anyone who hasn't managed to bribe one of the triad into providing IFF codes that mark items as non-targets. When the carnage is over, LEO is cleared of practically every piece of non-communications or pure science corporate hardware. Lloyds of London suspends billions in orbital insurance, citing an "act of war" clause.

Sunday/16th–EEC nations declare that any further hostilities of any sort within their boundaries will be an excuse for nationalizing all Militech and Arasaka holdings within those boundaries.

Tuesday/18th–A raid on a Militech showroom in Milan sparks mass nationalization, as per the declaration. Militech and Arasaka protest that neither of them had anything to do with it, and that the raid was a set-up to legitimize the nationalization drive.

Thursday/20th–Japanese authorities announce that they are nationalizing Arasaka assets in Japan and the Far East: They apologize that they can claim no authority over Arasaka assets in other countries, and insist that they are trying to work out a deal with Arasaka management to stop the war.

Saturday/22nd–U.S. federal government reactivates Gen. Lundee's reserve status, making him subordinate to the federal government. He orders all Militech personnel to cease offensive operations and comply with all local governments in assisting the peace.

Friday/28th–Government intervention brings a temporary ceasefire (after several battles between government and corporate troops). But few believe that it's all over.

THE FOURTH CORPORATE WAR

A WAR FOR EVERYONE



The Fourth Corporate War is the first truly global corporate Hot War. (The 2nd Corp War was restricted to the South China Sea for the most part; in other areas of the world, SovOil and Petrochem actually had offices in the same corporate tower without hostilities breaking out.) It will change not only the face of corporate interaction and politics, but of warfare itself.

Until now, wars were still fought much as they had been in the past, with battle lines, "fronts", and clear-cut areas of conflict. It was easy to tell which side was winning, and which was losing, merely by looking at who had achieved which objectives.

The Hot War is nothing like this. Attacks are sudden, savage, and usually unexpected. Targets can be anywhere on the globe. Attack forces are highly mobile; fast "hit and fade" tactics make it nearly impossible to stop and engage a force. AV's, panzers, and other highly mobile units make up the majority of the attacking forces, at least at the beginning (this grows less true during the midpoint of the war, as AVgas reserves dwindle, then abruptly more true, as new production becomes available, albeit at highly inflated prices). ACPA's and combat cyborgs are fielded for the first time in large numbers, with entire companies of them deployed on both sides. Battlefields are transformed into high-tech nightmares as remotes, battlefield robots, and infantry clash for the first time.

The war starts out slowly, as both sides try to find out how much they can get away with without getting slapped down by the governments of the world. Raids are common, mostly targeted at the other side's military assets. As both sides grow more confident in their abilities, and in the realization that no one is going to rein them in, their attacks get more bold and more brutal. By July, both sides are fielding units of company and even battalion strength in some raids, and in parts of the Third World set piece battles are becoming common.

As the war enters its fifth month, both sides begin to show signs of wear. Neither side planned for the war to last this long, and vital supplies like spare parts, weapons, ammunition, and medical supplies are starting to grow scarce. Vehicles, especially those that are traditionally "hangar queens" like AV's and panzers, show the stress of near-continuous use without proper maintenance, as do ACPA's and cyborgs. Soldiers also show signs of the stress of the fast-moving war. With little time to relax, or even sleep, there's little chance for soldiers to put the fighting behind them, and desertions and disciplinary problems grow increasingly common, especially among hired mercenaries and independents. (See "Little Time to Relax").

By October, governments begin to shut things down. Local governments start taking action first, by cutting off access to basic utilities and services, and by ruthlessly enforcing rules and regulations that the corporations previously have been allowed to flaunt. Neither side retaliates directly to this kind of activity: By this point, both sides need the cash brought in by their service contracts too much to be able to default on them. The major governments also start to protest the war, first with words and later with actions. At the same time that the war would seem to be winding down, it reaches its most fevered and savage pitch. Attacks become far more brutal, including massive attacks against each side's employees and facilities.

When the government moves in with troops, the war ends quickly, at least in the civilized world. In America, it lasts a little longer, as clean-up operations are more disjointed and units more prone to fight. In the Third World, some Arasaka and Militech units continue fighting (without support from either side) well into 2023 before exhausting themselves.

Little Time to Relax

Strike units are almost always on the move; a unit that stands still is targeted for obliteration. Because every important location needs to be defended, a large portion of each side's forces are actually devoted to static defensive roles. Thus, the actual number of strike forces is lower than many presume; they make up for this with high mobility and near continuous activity. Many units engage in four or five raids a week, stopping only long enough to resupply and drop off wounded. Most aren't at their theoretical strength after the first week of combat; a company might have as few as 100 soldiers. When a unit drops too far in strength, its combined with another unit, or moved to replace one on defensive duty and given a chance to recover. Some Special Operations team are never on relaxed status, although they're usually kept at full strength.

"WHERE'S THE GAS STATION? DAMN, THEY AIN'T GETTIN' IT. ANYBODY GOT A CHIP FOR PORTUGESE? AND WHY DON'T THESE DAMN BRAZILIANS SPEAK ENGLISH LIKE THE REST OF THE WORLD?" — EDDIE VENTURE, SOLO

The Net

Strangely, the Hot War treats the Net less as a strategic front than a tactical battleground. During the Shadow War, Militech, worried that the Arasaka netrunners and Soulkiller program would bury it in virtual turf, conducted a series of hits (some virtually headed up by Rache Bartmoss himself) to "whittle down" the Arasaka Net cadre. It was more successful than it knew—if at a price (see *Stormfront*). As a result, neither side has the resources to conduct broad offensives in the Net (at least, not at first). As a result, most Net combat is restricted to localized battles around strike sites to deny the Net to the enemy. While even this small-scale Net warfare disrupted business and databases citywide, the mass-attack Net runs or virus bombs many theorists have feared have yet to materialize.

Still, the cumulative effects of the electronic warfare may be having an unforeseen side effect: Databases worldwide seem to be suffering minor data errors—usually simple number transpositions or file misplacement, but the numbers are growing. No agent has currently been found, but many powers-that-be are looking into it. Both primary combatants deny launching any virus that could account for these problems—and evidence is that they are both equally affected. So far nothing irreparable has been corrupted, and public knowledge of the problem is limited. The question is: Can an answer be found before the media get hold of the story and create a Net panic? An irrational panic concerning Net confidence might make the Collapse look like a cakewalk.

The War Heard Round the World

While most Corp Wars are global in nature, none is as egalitarian in its targeting as the Hot War. Strikes can occur on every continent, and there's almost no country unaffected by the war. But some are more affected than others.

It can definitely be said that the United States is probably the center of activity, if not the country most affected by the war. Raids are common in almost every major city, and some (like Night City) become practical war zones. In the Midwest, whole towns are depopulated or destroyed. Both companies have major assets in the U.S., and strong interests in seeing the other company as damaged as possible.

In South America, the conflict spins out into a full-fledged war between Colombia and Brazil. At first unaware the war is over due to the effects of the misinformation and the massive EW war going on, and then unable to safely disengage from combat without being slaughtered by the other side (or their allies), Arasaka and Militech forces continue to fight in Brazil until the middle of 2023.

In Europe, the war never really escalates beyond the covert level, due to poor relations with the EuroCorps and the EU, and the EU's assertions that any sort of open warfare will be met with prompt retaliation by government forces. The attacks that do happen (for example, the attack on the Paris Arasaka Tower) are brutal, and most often conducted by (deniable) freelancers. In Russia, the war never really happens at all. Neither side has much in the way of influence or holdings in Russia, so neither has much reason to conduct operations there, aside from fuel, which is more readily acquired elsewhere.

This is not the case in the PacRim. While strikes on Japanese soil are on the same scale as those in Europe (though much more numerous), parts of Southeast Asia turn into war zones. Hong Kong is nearly leveled by fighting that will, as in Brazil, last months after the war is ostensibly over, and that nearly results in a war between (Militech-backed) China and (Arasaka-backed) Taiwan. The city of Darwin in Australia is devastated by an ocean blockade that cuts off contact for weeks. Brunei is savaged by multiple attacks by Militech forces against the Arasaka forces there.

Africa is only spared devastation because there's little worth fighting over that's not either firmly sewn up by ESA or Orbital Air, or already ruined by years of warfare and plague. What fighting that occurs is horribly injurious, as both sides are subjected to near continuous attacks by native forces, desperate for the weapons and technology deployed by both sides.

While Luna is spared much of the horrors that occur Downwell (thanks to a combination of the relatively small resources both sides have on Luna, the general hostility of the environment, and of Loonies toward corp goons), the Orbitals, especially those in Near Earth Orbit, were not so lucky. Between deliberate attacks by both sides on orbital facilities (some of which were rented, or which shared space with other corporations) and weapon platforms, and the effects of the increasingly erratic behavior of the Net (which not only caused erroneous fire commands to be sent to orbital weapons, but also fouled basic life support and attitude correction systems), LEO and NEO became very dangerous places to live. Many Highriders evacuate to "higher ground" in the O'Neills, which rapidly approach, then exceed, their rated capacity. At the same time, OA and the ESA begin restricting flights Upwell, especially after an ESA shuttle is dropped into the Atlantic Ocean. Highriders protest that they need resupply and evacuation for the many tourists stranded in orbit, but ESA claims it's impractical due to the hazards in space flight. In September, things come to a head with the Seven Hour War (see Timeline, pg. 93-95).

Orbital Artillery

Orbital artillery ranges from small "Crowbar" penetrators used in the American "Thor" battlefield anti-armor system to multiton "rocks" fired by the ESA massdriver, little more than a normal reentry vehicle loaded with crushed lunar stone. One common unit's the "Crazy Harry" CH-19 launcher, built by CZechElec. (see pg.55), a relative-

WHO GAVE THEM THE GUNS?

The Highrider revolt that sparks the Seven-Hour War is an organized and planned event. It's also surprisingly well armed, with the Highriders deploying ASATs, particle beam cannons, lasers, railguns, and even kit-bashed Deltas and ACPA suits! A question that will plague many after the war is, "Where did they get the weapons, knowledge, and training to deploy such weapons?"

The answer is: No one knows. While both Arasaka and Militech has the means, neither side truly has the motive; the revolt hurts the ESA far more than it does either side. None of the weapons used are clearly of any particular origin, instead coming from a number of sources. Some are obvious kit-bashes, but others show a surprising sophistication or are identifiable as being produced by any of several corporations.

While it's possible Arasaka or Militech instigated the revolt for unknown reasons, other possible culprits include Orbital Air, the Highrider government of L-5, and even NASA and/or the USAF (both of which have little love for the ESA). There are rumors floating around that massive AI's are responsible, although these are given little credence.

Hook: The characters might be hired by "anonymous parties" to help shepherd the supply runs Upwell, or to provide the Highriders with technical support and training (especially if the players have training in space combat, technical expertise with advanced weapons, or practical experience in revolution-building). Or they might be hired, after the fact, to try to figure out who supplied the Highriders with the weapons and technology.

ly cheap, multipurpose unit designed for the "export" market.

The availability of ortillery makes many of the attacks of the Hot War possible. Conventional artillery is bulky, and can take time to set up and fire. It's also vulnerable to counter-battery fire, either from local artillery or by air strikes.

An ortillery unit, on the other hand, is almost immune to counter-battery fire (prototype battlefield ASAT launchers began to show up in the later stages of the war), can be arranged for long before hand, and can be accurately targeted even into the middle of a city. Its kinetic energy and attack speed virtually ensure the destruction of its target, and make engagement with any sort of active countermeasures difficult.

The downsides of ortillery are the time it takes to arrive (usually around five minutes from the launch call), its signature (everyone knows you've started using ortillery once the first round arrives), and the fact that you have to have a launcher orbiting above you to use it (which may be hard to arrange). During the Hot War, it's also very vulnerable to sabotage and appropriation; as soon as a launcher reveals itself, it's only a matter of time (ranging from minutes to a few days) before an orbital power destroys or "commandeers" it.

It's nonetheless commonly used. Both sides spent years placing dozens of launchers in orbit, and spent considerable effort to place systems designed to take command of launchers belonging to other corporations and governments. A single ortillery launcher allows an infantry commander to annihilate an enemy tank battalion, or destroy even the most heavily fortified facility. Ortillery is too powerful a weapon to be ignored.

The Intervention Question

One of the big questions during the war, and after, is why it takes so long for the governments of the world to respond. One reason is that a government rarely reacts quickly to anything that isn't a direct threat to it or its members. Governments are rarely monolithic organizations with a unified purpose. Rather, they are collections of individuals, representing varied political blocs and interests, with sometimes vastly different goals.

There's a belief in many parts of the government that the war will blow over quickly, with little or no impact to the populace. Legislators misinterpret the information given them by their intelligence agencies, and ignore the recommendations of their generals and security analysts, who can recognize the signs of a real war. Many are simply unable to admit that they've allowed corporations to grow so powerful.

There's also a very real fear of reprisal if governments take action. At a policy level, there's the knowledge that Arasaka and Militech are a vital part of municipal services in many cities, providing not only police (and, in some cases, military) protection, but also such varied services as trash collection, building maintenance, and even administrative and data collection services through subsidiaries. If direct interference results in either corp pulling those services, it could cripple many cities across the world, resulting in even further chaos.

On a personal level, many politicians become aware, for the first time, of the vipers they had invited into their homes and their lives—vipers bearing titles like "Personal Security Specialist" and "Military Affairs Advisor", with eyes that miss nothing, and mouths that, till now, have said nothing. Vipers wearing a silver chrysanthemum, or a gold M on their lapels. Overt cases of blackmail are rare; they aren't needed. The unspoken message is clear: Mess with us, and you commit political suicide, for we know everything about you.

Corporations also have direct influence in how governments operate. While few governments are as corrupt as the U.S. (where one-third of the legislative branch is corporate representatives appointed based on tax payments, with disproportionate numbers of them Arasaka and Militech employees), almost all countries allow the corps great say in what they do.

Some say there's a darker reason. There's a very real possibility that some governments simply waited for both sides to exhaust themselves, using up valuable resources, forces, and ace cards. Then, after they felt the two couldn't put up enough of a fight to matter, they moved in to clean up the remains.

NOT MONEY, BUT BLOOD: REFEREEING THE WAR

Unless you've been running your players through a military campaign, the Hot War is likely to be a different situation for you. It's a place and time where instant-kill weapons are common, and where one hit means bye-bye.

IT'S DANGEROUS. If the players are targeted, they're in trouble. The best way to stay alive is to hide; barring that, misdirection, hard cover, and swift retreats mean survival. Player-character armor is not going to be enough to save them, and Trauma Team won't come, either for insurance reasons or lack of AV fuel! If your players don't understand their danger, fudge a few dice rolls at first—wound them rather than vaporizing them. If they don't catch on, well ….

IF YOU HAVE BIG GUNS, SO DO THEY. Players may get big heads to go along with their big new toys. Make sure their opponents are also displaying equal guns. The players have got to understand that they're not king of the hill, or they're dead quickly (and you'll be wasting playing time generating new characters).

ARE THEY PARANOID YET? If not, give them a smart opponent! One that won't sit still and be shot. Have them spied on and attacked by remotes and through the Net. Make the attacks crippling rather than deadly; taking out player-character equipment with remotes will neutralize them as effectively as killing them.

EMPHASIZE THE MISSION. These scenarios are wartime missions; the player characters must keep their attention on completing the missions they get with a minimum of fuss and ammo use. Getting distracted usually leads to mission failure.

KEEP THEM ON THEIR TOES. Wartime conditions should also extend to chance encounters with enemy troops that have nothing to do with the mission at hand, not to mention unrelated forces (gangs, other Edgerunners, police, other corporate troops). Most of these forces will have no compunction about shooting at whatever they consider a target (which usually means the player characters).

SCARE 'EM. Sure, there's a lot of stress on emphasizing the paranoia angle, but war is scary business, and most soldiers survive by learning to keep their heads down and not attract undue attention (one of Murphy's Rules of combat is "Never share a foxhole with someone braver than you are"). Have something rumble across the group's path, something they can't handle—main battle tanks, or a full group of ACPA's, or too many troops, or full combat 'borgs … you get the picture. Give the players a hard moment wondering if this murder squad is there for them. Then make them sweat as the heavies get ever closer … unless the player characters do something stupid (like start shooting), then the heavies should swerve aside at the last moment.

KEEP THE ACTION GOING! This isn't Willie and Joe sitting in a foxhole in WWII; this is the frenetic pace of future warfare. Everything happens fastfastfast, and gives no time to think. When running combats, if you ask, "What are you doing?" and the player takes more than a moment to reply, tell him, "Okay, you're keeping your head down," and move on. Don't give them time to ruminate, and don't give them time to rest until the mission's over. Be prepared to discard any cumbersome rules that are in the way of fast action; see the combat section in *Listen Up, You Primitive Screwheads!* for pointers.

YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR. Make a note of the reliability ratings of the weapons your player characters use. When they fumble in combat (they always do, although some more than others), enforce the jamming and malfunction rules! That'll show 'em why professional soldiers prefer reliability over everything else.

BE PREPARED TO LOSE A PLAYER CHARACTER OR TWO. This is war, and it's the big time. Consider the guns going off; these things routinely throw around 5D10 or more damage ratings! Someone's going to be blown away eventually; have some backup characters prepared for just such an emergency. This keeps play from bogging down as someone needs to make up a new character, and then have it integrated into the group.

THIS IS NUTEK WAR. Toss in every neat, high-tech piece of silliness imaginable. There are going to be troops carrying microwave guns, gauss rifles, brilliant missiles, seeking rounds, and more. (And they'll use them, too!) This is the biggest testing ground for nutek in the last decade. Even if the players are attempting to stay as far away from this stuff as possible, make sure they see it all around them.

New Missions

You should have *Stormfront;* there's a section there on clandestine missions that translates over perfectly to the full-scale military missions. Here are a couple of things that weren't covered:

HEAVY WEAPONS STRIKES: These are missions where your job is to get something destructive into range to destroy a specific target. Or you have to find a hidden target for something destructive (like an orbiting bomb-sat). They're fairly straightforward. The trick is avoiding the enemy until you're ready to blast, and then get out fast.

DIRTY INSERTIONS: Often you won't have the luxury of being able to sneak into situations. No, there's a good chance lead might be flying. The trick here is to sneak when you can, and smoke when you can't. If the enemy doesn't know about you, then stealth is wealth; keep down and try to remain undiscovered for as long as possible. Have a nice diversion whenever possible: smoke bombs, explosions, decoy remotes, drones—anything to get the enemy's attention off you. If you're spotted and there's nothing you can do about it, then start tossing smoke bombs—what they can't see, they're going to have a hard time hitting! Blanket the area in smoke and *move out fast,* because the enemy will start fragging the general area in hopes of catching you in the blast radius.

One neat trick: If you can fake being the enemy and not get shot at by your own side, more power to you! See the RPV section about grabbing enemy IFF codes; these codes can then be transferred into your own IFF transponders (or fakes procured for the purpose).

Mission Patterns

While many Edgerunner ops can be violent, few indulge in the kind of wholesale destruction that the paramilitary missions of *Shockwave* engender. Thus they follow as slightly different pattern from the covert ops of the Shadow War and operate on a larger scale than the hard strikes of the Ocean War (see *Stormfront*). Here is a basic sequence of events for a "typical" Hot War mission (i.e. assault).

1. MOBILIZATION: In this war, getting your force to the target unnoticed is half the battle. Moving around company-sized mechanized units is tough even in a regular war. Doing it under the scrutiny of the media as well the enemy's unrestricted gaze requires talent and planning. Nomad convoys move everywhere in the U.S. (with similar groups on other continents). Hire a few nomad outriders and drivers—they make the perfect camouflage for moving heavy equipment into place. Mobile Supply Depots (MSDs, see pg 106) often use this masquerade. Infantry can be moved in any number of civilian vehicles, from cars to buses, by simply trundling into the target city as part of the regular traffic pattern. The more forces you can smuggle into an area without alerting the enemy (or the media), the better your chances of hitting them before they prime their defenses.



Of course, not every operation has the time for such staging; too many are in the works. Some simply consist of a massive—if obvious—build-up intended to overwhelm the target's defenses, no matter how much warning they get. In other words, when preparation is forgone, be ready to pay for it in blood.

2. RECON/INCURSION: Just as in a covert op, you have to scout the terrain, to see what the enemy defenses are like. This phase often moves parallel to Phase One. It may be a few plainclothes observers staked out near the target, a basic netrun for the building's floorplans, or an entire covert incursion mission to scope out the inside layout and disable various defensive systems in preparation for the attack—"sending in the sappers" in military parlance. Needless to say, Edgerunners are ideal for this stage of the operation.

Even after the recon, you have to maintain a set of eyes onsite to report any unusual enemy activity and to act as forward observer for any planned artillery strike. A low profile is essential during this phase as not to reveal the coming attack.

3. ARTILLERY BARRAGE: Many assaults begin with an artillery attack to soften up the area and take out key defensive installations. The target is hit with surgical precision designed to render the enemy disorganized and without command and control. Well, that's the theory, anyway

The artillery in this war is usually of the light-weight, highly mobile variety, such as mortars, recoilless rifles and rocket launchers. AV- and aircraft-based strikes are common as well, although AvGas shortages limit these to key sites. A new variation, discussed elsewhere, is ortillery: orbital satellite weapons which can drop rounds anywhere under their arc—assuming the timing's right. Ortillery windows often determine a strike's time as much as enemy activity.

Simultaneous to the artillery attack is the electronic assault, as netrunners work to disable the local net and telecommunication systems to cut the target area off from the rest of the world. EMP devices, black ice, and specialized netgear are all devoted to containing or confusing enemy communications. It also delays local police response as they have a harder time locating the exact site (again, in theory). This combat can have a much collateral damage as an artillery barrage, since whole sections of city grids can be taken down for hours at a time and a fair amount of data scrambled or lost.

4. ASSAULT: After the physical and virtual softening up, the actual assault begins. The exact nature of the assault force will depend on the target and the available forces. A hardened site such as a corporate tower or factory will often require mechanized infantry with some light armor support (if available). A simple corporate conapt strike may only require a platoon of regular infantry with a heavy weapons squad.

The assault should be fast and hard, breaching the sites defenses within ten to fifteen minutes and breaking through to the objective. This might be securing a computer mainframe, an important executive, or simply destroying the main interior facilities and causing as much expensive damage as possible. Each squad should know their particular part in the assault as well as their primary (and possibly secondary) objectives for the attack.

This part is true combat, pure and simple. Neither side is intentionally vicious at the outset of the war, although few punches are pulled. Prisoners can be taken, civilians (at least of non-aligned companies) should be spared, and terror weapons (such as gas and chemical agents) should be avoided. Unfortunately, by October, even these scruples may well be cast aside.

5. POLICING THE AREA: After the mission objectives are accomplished, a brief "clean-up" of the area is typical: tending your wounded, picking up extra equipment, and scavenging for anything worthwhile in the wreckage. This is done quickly and efficiently as enemy (or government) response is no doubt en route.

If the site is to be held (as in South Am and Hong Kong), then this would be when defenses would be re-established, communica-

tions restored (under new management), and the enemy dead and wounded handed over to the local authorities for disposal or treatment. Basically, you get to prepare for any possible counterattack.

Sometimes, enemy wounded and prisoners might be held hostage against such an attack; a "human shield" to prevent a rapid counterstrike. This is considered a criminal act by most governments … if such a thing matters to you.

6. EXTRACTION: If the site is not to be held, or if a breakthrough could not be made within the designated amount of time, the assault force should withdraw to the MSD or a predesignated zone for extraction via helicopter, aircraft or ship. This is most problematic with armor units, since easy extraction is impossible. Either they must leave under their own power (and invite enemy target practice the entire time) or be loaded into ships, trans, or huge trucks or aircraft for transport—assuming time permits. More than one failed strike team may find itself abandoning some very expensive hardware simply to make it onto the last plane home.

When Enough is Too Much: Determining Government Intervention

Eventually, local, state, and national governments will intervene to stop the loss of tax revenues. They have to; the people that support them are swiftly moving toward panic … not really because of the carnage, but because of the lack of societal stability. It's almost impossible to do business when there's a war on your doorstep, and when there's no business, there's no economy. Where there's no economy, there's no society.

The War Timeline (page 93) only tells when the worldwide governments really started cracking down. You, the referee, decide when government forces intervene in the player characters' business! You know it's going to happen eventually, and some of your players may suspect it, too, so play it for maximum impact. Do you want it to come as a shock? Then hit them with intervention right after the Rio debacle, when they're still riding high and think they're invincible (if they've survived that long). Want to grind their spirits into dust? Then have the war on their front peter out, devolving to desperate missions without support, fresh supplies, or medical assistance, all to try to win the war or at least break even. The Feds will look like saviors at this point.

SO WHAT HAPPENS TO THEM?

This is the time where payment comes due for past actions. If the player characters have been saints, they'll come out pretty well. If they've been atrocity-prone scum, well ….

YOU WORK FOR ARASAKA: Arasaka is the loser in this war; Saburo and company can't even cut and run. Of course, loosing doomsday weapons like the Soulkiller campaign doesn't help matters. If you're associated with Arasaka, you're in trouble when the Feds come rolling in. If you've been straight arrows and arranged for media coverage to paint you as heroic paladins, then you'll probably be offered a chance to renounce Arasaka and join the forces against your former employer. You might even be given a chance to head for parts unknown ("We never saw you"). If you kept a neutral rep, you'll be allowed to surrender and turn state's evidence against the Aras (what atrocities did you see, etc.). You might even get a chance to infiltrate against them. If you were atrocity-prone scum, you'll be lucky to be allowed to surrender; if you're very persuasive, you might be allowed a chance to prove yourselves by backstabbing Arasaka on a suicide mission.

YOU WORK FOR MILITECH: Lundee knows when to cash in his chips, and he's renouncing his evil ways and joining up with the powers that be as fast as humanly possible. As operatives, you're given the choice of joining up with him … or being branded war criminals. Some choice, neh? If you've been heroes, you'll end up on the front lines with a spin-doctor media campaign that'll make you international heroes (and create good karma for Militech). If you've been regular joes, you'll still be fighting Arasaka, just this time you'll actually have some real support from your local government! If you've done things that make hard-core Nazis shudder, you're on the front lines, all right—on suicide missions, with government and Militech guns pointed at your back to make sure you come through. Welcome to the Iranian mine-clearing squad ….

DON'T SHOOT THE GOOD GUYS!: When the States do finally come marching in, shooting back at them is a sure way to get a bad rep (and the worst results above). You'll have to have a lot of people to speak on your behalf (and do a lot of begging yourself) to keep from being shot as war criminals or spending the rest of your lives as brainwiped drones on chain-gangs.

SO WHO'S GOING TO STICK AROUND?: Even the most clueless player might figure that this is a good time to disappear, to cut and run. Believe it or not, this is *not* a good idea! Taking a powder on Arasaka brands you as traitors to Saburo and son. These people take treason seriously; even though the corporation will be practically crippled after the war, there's nothing to stop them from putting out an hit on you. And it won't take very much of a price to hire an assassin, either … there'll be plenty of unemployed killers after the war.

Likewise, running out on Militech is a bad idea. Militech has to look good for its new government allies, and it looks bad when operatives head for the high hills. Fleeing is paramount to an admission of guilt; people will start wondering what you've done that's got you so scared … and with data being goofed up, there's no telling what they're going to find in your files, now is there?

SO WHEN DO THE GOVERNMENT TROOPS ARRIVE?

As you can see from the timeline on page 93, governments around the world start stepping in and intervening as early as October 16, 2022. The Free States of California officially call in their state Guards on October 4th (although NorCal's weren't activated until the next day). U.S. government forces start moving on October 22nd.

These are the *official* dates. When government intervention actually reaches your campaign is easily adjusted according to your plans and, ideally, your player characters' success rate. After all, it's a good idea to give them an additional reward for success. If they've done well, set the intervention back where they are. If

they've goofed up and caused the sort of casualties and collateral damage normally only found in comic books, Hollywood action films, and *anime,* intervention will come more swiftly, if for no other reason than to get them out of the picture!

Just as a general guideline, here are some suggestions for adjusting the advent of intervention:

Scenario	Flying Colors	Blew Up Real Good
Jumping the Gun	+2 days	-3 days
Under the Gun	+1 week	-1 week
Gun Violence	+1 week	-2 weeks
Gun Control	+2 days	-2 weeks

The scenario outcomes are based on the group's performances during these scenarios. "Flying Colors" means the group did a sterling job, with minimal or no casualties and no civilian casualties/collateral damage. The definition of "Blew Up Real Good" means the team caused immense and unnecessary collateral damage. The time lengths listed beneath each are additions to or subtractions from the "official" date of government intervention.

Note: In the "Gun Violence" scenario, where the object *is* mass destruction, "Flying Colors" would be defined as not being caught on camera/not being identified as having taken part in the atrocity. "Blew Up Real Good" would be if the PC's committed extra and gratuitous atrocities, such as wanton murder, rape, mutilation, etc.)

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTIONS

While many Edgerunners will be caught up directly in the fighting (both Arasaka and Militech pay very well), others won't be directly aligned with either side, for whatever reason. Even so, the War will provide plenty of opportunity for Edgerunners to make a killing … literally.

The war creates vast opportunities for nonaligned teams. From theft to settling vendettas to working for one of the nonaligned corps, Edgerunners of all types are in demand, and can almost name their price.

• **KEEP YOUR FOOL HEAD DOWN, WILL YA?:** Some Edgerunners will opt to sit this one out. Who's to say they aren't the smart ones? But that doesn't mean it's easy. There's almost no major city on Earth that won't be affected by this war. Even the Orbitals aren't immune; they're quickly swept up into the middle of it as well. The only safe place is Mars, and they've got troubles of their own (being dependent on resupply from Earth).

It's possible to find safer places to hole up for a while. It just isn't easy. Make the players work at getting their characters somewhere where they feel a little more secure. Running out of the city as a Militech battalion races in. Run-ins with military patrols and Raffen Shiv raiders on the highways. Make sure their route takes them through a battle or two. Maybe then they find a lodge somewhere in the Washington mountains. A nice, quiet town.

Then let them find out about those trucks that keep driving up to an old logging camp outside of town—unmarked trucks full of men with funny accents in black jumpsuits ….

• **THEFT:** There's a lot of high-tech hardware in use out there. Some folks are deciding that it's better off in their hands than in those of the corps. What about the characters?

This is a war where all the stops have come out: Arasaka and Militech are using resources and deploying weapons and tools they were saving for a very rainy day. A lot of these weapons are traveling in convoys (see Jumping the Gun, pg. 106) that would be considered under-defended under other circumstances. While there's a lot of risk, the profits to be made by stealing corporate resources are vast.

Not just weapons and ammo—food, fuel, medical supplies, cyberware, electronics, software, information: All of this is available, and very valuable. All it takes is planning, guts, and the willingness to go up against two of the largest corps that exist when they're on a wartime footing. Your players are up for that, neh?

They should keep in mind that stealing the stuff is only the start. Many weapons and systems are equipped with booby-trap circuits designed to prevent their unauthorized use. These circuits were rarely used till now, as the weapons were commercially available. As more classified and experimental devices are brought into use (and stolen, or absconded with by deserters), these circuits are activated (for more information, see pg. 47).

• **SETTLING THE SCORE:** Your players got a problem with the Covert Ops officer at the local Arasaka tower? Now is the time to get even. With most of their forces working on each other, Militech and Arasaka executives are underprotected at many times. Of course, a lot of them know this, and will be in the market for freelancers who are willing to take a bullet for them. Which, of course, could put the players right where they want to be—or right where the executive wants them to be ….

The players won't be the only ones looking to reap some vengeance, either. Everyone is taking advantage of the chaos to get back at people he thinks has wronged him. Assassination and bodyguarding are growth industries during the Hot War. The streets are falling apart as gangs, crime families, even rival mercenary and Edgerunner unit/teams take advantage of the chaos to put paid on old accounts.

Your characters may have hacked anyone off at one point or another. Now might be the time for an old "long-dead" enemy to come back to haunt them, even if they're working for Arasaka or Militech—in fact, especially if they are.

• **FEELING HOT HOT HOT!:** Players are going to find the jobs they get, even if they aren't going up against Arasaka or Militech, are going to be rough. Well paying for the most part, but rough. Everyone's in a state of high alert: hiring on extra guards, pumping up the readiness of those who are already on duty. Paranoia is more than a survival trait now, it's a way of life. Get ready for some rough going, folks.

• **HEY, WHERE IS EVERYBODY?:** Casualties are going to hit the Edgerunner community, and hit it hard. Of course large numbers of solos and nomads are going to get their tickets punched, but it doesn't stop there. Characters will find fixers gone missing, corporate contacts and patrons dead or defected, friendly (and hostile) cops iced by the gangs, and contacts of all kinds either taking a vacation, or pushing up daisies.

Of course, some of them may be friends—even though true Cyberpunks don't have friends, just contacts and targets ... right?

• **YOU SAY YOU WANT A REVOLUTION?:** If your players have been a part of an organized revolution (whether the predecessor to the CyberRevolution found in *CyberGeneration*, or some revolt of your own making), there may be no better time than the Hot War to launch the Big One. The devastation caused by the War, and the chaos caused by the aftermath, are fueling great amounts of unrest and dissatisfaction with the corporates, and with the governments who seem unable (or unwilling) to do anything about their depredations.

Alternatively, the Revolution might make use of the events to do some house cleaning, eliminating government and corporate officials they find noxious; gathering supplies and support; placing assets (weapons and gear caches, hidden backdoors in systems, placing agents and personnel in key positions who will be able to help them later. They might, if ruthless enough (or desperate enough), working to make things even worse; the more they can influence public opinion against the corps and the govers, the better their chances when they finally strike.



Of course, even if there isn't any massive, preternaturally organized Revolution capable of taking advantage of the situation, there'll be plenty of disgruntled groups who will start revolutions, or at least revolts. Sure would be awful if the players happened to get caught up in one, eh?

• **SHERWOOD FOREST IS MINE:** Maybe your players have a conscience. Maybe they won't take blood money. Maybe they actually like helping people. Well, they'll have plenty to do as well. Someone has to stand up for the helpless targets (err, victims) who live in the buildings and cities that Arasaka and Militech fight over. The downtrodden masses are looking for a hero; all they're gonna get, though, is your players.

Players don't have to save the world; protecting a single neighborhood from devastation would be plenty. Helping some folks by getting them water and food, making sure they get medical treatment, teaching them how to fight for their own.

Of course, they may decide to do more. They could steal from the corps and give to the folks. Not just cash: food, weapons, medicine, autofactories, technology, and information are all things that the people on the streets need, and that they can never afford.

But the corps are leaving the doors open for those with some initiative and willingness to take a few risks, aren't they?

And hey, even Robin kept 15% percent, didn't he?

• **WE'RE FROM THE GOVERNMENT:** Even though the world's governments don't get directly involved in the war until late in the game, various agencies get involved much earlier. Intelligence agencies swing into action even during the Shadow War (see *Stormfront),* and while their activities often don't interfere with those of the combatants, the combatants don't always see it that way. As time goes on (and more damage is done), many covert agencies take a more active role against both sides, seeking to minimize the damage (often without their superiors' direct approval).

Even some major agencies (like NASA) start to take an interest in the war (especially after the situation in orbit starts to break down). While they can't directly take action without the approval of Congress, there are still things they can do to make the lives of the aggressors more difficult, and they frequently do.

Towards the end of the war, many covert units from a wide variety of organizations are pressed into service to put more combat capable ops units in the field to support the military. Players with even indirect government sponsorship may find themselves dragooned into service as strike or reconnaissance forces.

• **AND TODAY IN THE NEWS:** Even if you decide not to directly or indirectly embroil your players in the war, it can still add atmosphere and tension to an ongoing game. Economics, politics, day-to-day life: The war is everywhere.

Indeed, it's impossible to completely ignore the effects of the war. Air transport is going to get very expensive, and some kinds halt altogether in some areas (for instance, aerocab service in most cities will cease as the companies running them run out of cash to fuel their AV's.) Even ground transport gets dangerous, not so much because of an Arasaka or Militech strike team mistaking Edgerunners for the opposition, as for the fact that many people will automatically assume that strangers (especially well armed strangers) are a covert operations unit working for one side or the other.

Anything requiring orbital construction or materials will get scarce around August, and will be almost impossible to find after September. Many other things also get more scarce, or simply more expensive, as the war begins to impact the shipping infrastructure (not necessarily directly; while Arasaka and Militech have to pay their own damages, many smaller corps are filing massive insurance claims, which in turn are causing insurance companies to file bankruptcy or hike rates immensely. And shippers need insurance on their cargoes).

Power stations (or at least transformer substations) are frequent targets, usually hit just as an attack happened, to at least

force the opponent to go to back-up power systems. It's called a "Denial of Service" attack, and can happen to power, the Net, sewage, water, even communication. Sometimes they aren't even intended; the high levels of electronic warfare and jamming used in the war could interfere with, or even damage, almost any system that depends on broadcast radio (cellphones, cellular modems, radios, many security systems), infrared (used in many buildings for communication between laptops, pocket computers, and desktop systems), and microwaves (long-range communication uplinks, LDL's, and, again, some security systems).

Players may well, on returning to an old haunt, find it demolished or damaged, a victim of collateral fire or of incidental damage caused by rioting or other after-effects of the war. Or their neighborhood may be embroiled in a gang war caused by injuries to a formerly dominant gang (see C. J.'s story below).

WAR HITS THE STREET: AN SOF:ONLINE EXCLUSIVE

I'm standing in downtown Night City as I dictate this. Well, not standing per se; I'm huddled behind the remains of a Kuma armored truck, as, once again, Arasaka and Militech try to prove who has the bigger sword. The damage to the surrounding city is frightful. "Surgical Warfare": what a joke.

In previous corporate wars, it was almost possible to ignore the fighting if you weren't directly involved in it. Sure, there was a chance, if you were allied with one of the combatants, that you would find yourself a target, but in general, the war could be avoided. This simply isn't the case anymore. The war has hit the streets with a vengeance, and the Edgerunner community may never be the same.

Since *<Those Japanese Fascist Weenies>* and the over-arrogant *<Mindless Minions of Lundee>* began this war *<atrocity>* last November, they've both been hiring Edgerunners, gangers, nomads, and mercenaries like there was no tomorrow; and for many of those hired, there hasn't been. Casualties in the Edgrunner community have been terrifyingly high, especially in those groups not used to fighting in a high-threat military environment like this one. Whole gangs and nomad packs have been wiped out to a person, and many others have been reduced to mere shadows of their former selves.

<When you're wounded and left on Afghanistan's plains,
And the women come to cut up what remains,
Jest roll to your rifle and blow out your brains
An' go to your Gawd like a soldier>

This has caused a power vacuum in many cities, as once-powerful gangs are either destroyed or crippled after having hired themselves out, and rivals rush in to try and take their place. As if the chaos caused by the war itself wasn't bad enough, we also have a hundred miniwars sparking up around the world.

< "Let there be light!" said God, and there was light!
"Let there be blood!" says man, and there's a sea!>

Nor are the effects limited to death and destruction. Many things that we have come to take for granted are scarce. Ammunition, small arms, and supplies, especially those produced by the combatants, have become harder and harder to procure. Production is up, but much of it is being snatched up not only by Arasaka and Militech, but also by government, corporate, and local forces that are upgrading their forces in case they get swept into the fray. Supplies of orbital materials, technology, and nanotechnology are getting especially scarce, as the conflict in orbit causes Orbital Air and the ESA to restrict travel up and down the Well.

<The sinews of war: A limitless supply of money.>

Attacks on shipping, the simple economics of scarcity, fluctuations in the stocks and commodities markets, and the damage caused to infrastructure by the war have had an effect on the cost and availability of many things.

Fuels, especially AVgas and other petrol-based fuels, are getting hard to buy, if not to find. AVgas is available, but at prices ranging as high as 400eb/gallon, not many are buying. Scavenging fuel has become a favorite pasttime of almost everybody who flies. And many aren't; REO Meatwagon has stated that it is discontinuing AV ambulance service in over a dozen cities, as it needs to conserve fuel supplies for the cities with major problems.

On the other hand, weapons that have traditionally been restricted to the military are finding their way onto the streets. Ironic; I have trouble feeding my Derringer, but not my grenade launcher. Heavy anti-tank missiles, railguns, Scorpions, and brilliant ammo are all being seen on the streets in supplies never before dreamed of. Even PA battlesuits, once almost exclusively the domain of the military, are starting to hit the streets in the hands of gangers and edgers, mostly deserters and battlefield scavengers. All t his has combined to make the average gang rumble a thing to be feared.

We're actually seeing a backlash against this heretofore unimagined level of violence. Here in Night City, the gang known as the Metal Souls was nearly obliterated after using an FAE bomb on the Lake Park. Similar instances of overkill being punished have been reported elsewhere.

So maybe, just maybe, we have a chance after all.

—C.J O'Reilley, reporting for *Solo of Fortune*

This article was posted on August 17th, from Night City. We don't know where the random quotes came from, but we've been having some data purity problems. Since then, we have had no contact from C. J., including two missed check-ins. We hope that nothing has happened, to him and ask that anyone with any knowledge as to his location please contact us here at *Solo Of Fortune:OnLine* immediately. E-mail us at: Solo/artech.pacifica.net

SUBPLOTS IN THE HOT WAR

Here are a couple of sideline bits to confuse and confound your players. At least they can provide a break from the heavy weapons fire.

1. THE AVGAS WAR: he war within the war, it's been called. It all started with the Shadow War, when Militech and Arasaka simultaneously realized that they were headed for a major clash, and began squirreling away more and more fuel to prepare for it. Both Petrochem and SovOil cheerfully sold these corporations almost their entire reserves of aviation fuel, realizing that doing so would cause the appearance of a shortage and allow massive price increases to be employed without fear of bad publicity.

During May 2022, sixteen of Petrochem's Texas sites were attacked or infiltrated. Each time, the main target of the strike seemed to be the installation's AvGas tankage. Although some theories were raised that the raiders were wildcatters and locals looking to grab some valuable materials, Petrochem's media allies claimed that the evidence was proof of a clever ploy to disguise corporate-sponsored internal terrorism. The corporation in question had to be SovOil, of course.

Texan and corporate pride mandated some sort of response, so SovOil tankers now find themselves being shadowed at a discreet and legal distance by Petrochem combat aircraft and attack submarines. Petrochem goes to great lengths to ensure that its saber-rattling maintains righteous innocence … while it secretly export arms and funds to anti-SovOil groups in the Baltics and Kazakhstan, with specific emphasis on attacking SovOil's oil fields and refineries.

With Petrochem turning up the heat, it is inevitable that SovOil will do something to vindicate Petrochem's claims. In late June, a Petrochem Arctic deep drilling team is massacred by frangible round bombing. Petrochem makes a great deal out of the fact that the bombs are the same kind of ordnance that SovOil used in its attacks against Islamic terrorists in Russia, and that SovOil has a large stock of such bombs. SovOil protests that there was no evidence of its involvement: The bombs were common, sold by Soviet munitions makers to many customers. SovOil's management claims corporate innocence and obliquely warns against "hasty or foolish actions arising from anger and grief over the tragedy."

That was the signal for more of the same, only in a more covert fashion (the "Second Shadow War"). The AvGas War continues in the background of the Hot War.

The effects of the AvGas shortage on game play might become crucial. Player characters are going to find jet fuel ranging from 190-250eb per gallon (1D6+18 x 10eb), if they can find it at all. Even regular ground-vehicle $CHOOH^2$ costs 1D3+3eb per gallon, thanks to the scare.

Military jet fighters/AV's/tracked AFV's get 1 mpg, helicopters 7+ tons/Ospreys get 3mpg, lighter helicopters get 4 mpg, jets/wheeled AFVs/hovercraft get 5 mpg, light airplanes get 10 mpg, heavy trucks get 15 mpg, light trucks get 25 mpg, most cars get 30 mpg, and motorcycles get 50mpg.

2. THE DATA PROBLEM: War brings with it its favored companion, chaos. Supply depots run out of the ammo you just used up, fire support doesn't, reinforcements show up late, and mission briefings frequently contain either outdated, useless, or misleading information.

One of the most insidious problems in the Hot War, however, is that many databases suddenly seem to contain erroneous—or flat out ridiculous—information. Briefings might contain hotlinks to dissertations on microbiology, or exaggerate or underestimate force strengths by a factor of pi. There might be one slipped digit, or transposition of responses on an ID verification, or fire control data that would drop a battery's shells in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. Other times, briefings include whole chapters from novels or the formula for Classic Coke.

Nor is the data chaos limited to briefings. Paychecks are deposited to the wrong account, or multiplied by a factor of ten, or divided by a thousand. Units in El Salvador are shipped parkas, and units serving in Antarctica get sun screen. Living soldiers are reported dead and dead soldiers somehow reappear on payrolls. Computer maps include buildings or landmarks that never existed and omit others. GPS navigation systems become questionable.

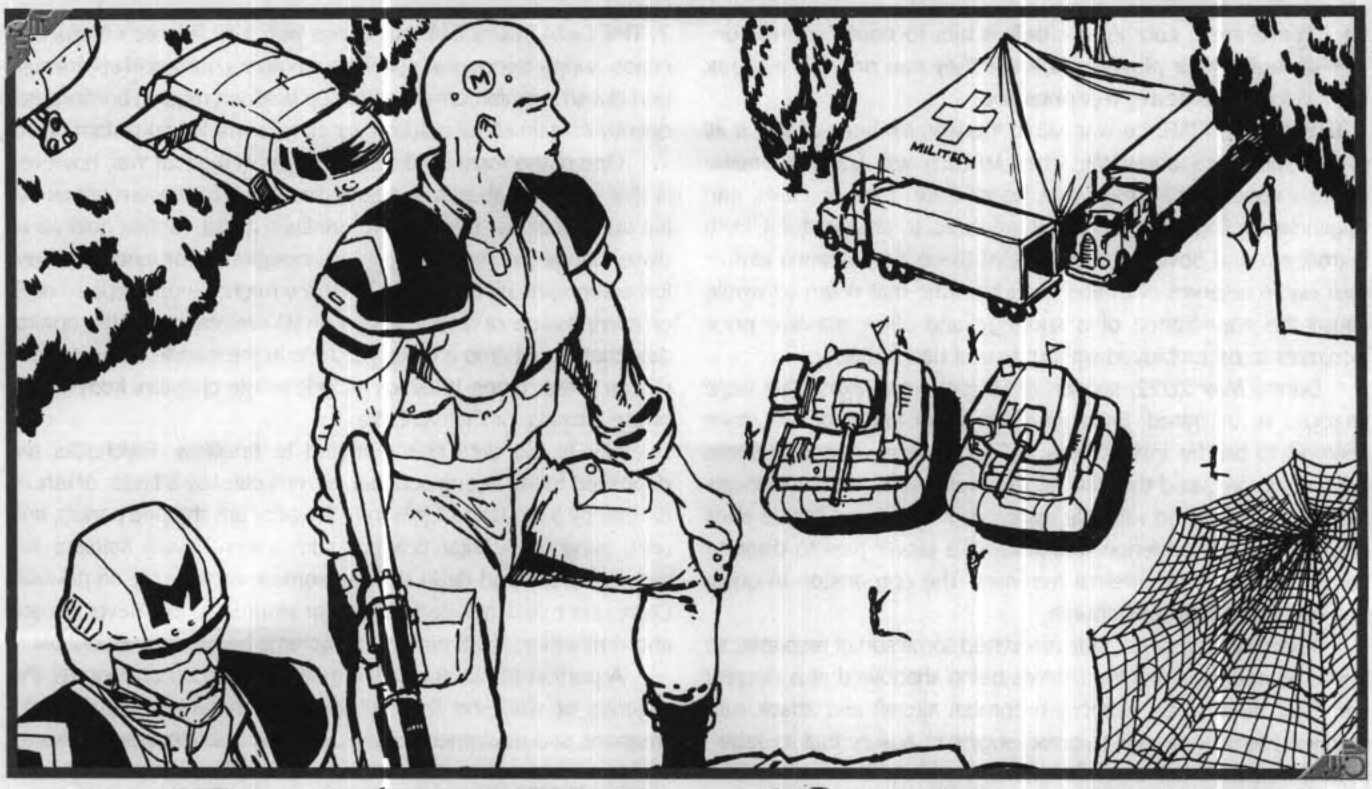
A portion of this sort of thing can be blamed on Murphy, the vagaries of war, and the high-tech/experimental nature of the weapons and equipment being used. Most soldiers expect some of this … but not to these levels. At first, both sides suspected pranks from hostile netrunners (either in the employ of the other side, or merely venting their rage at the death of Rache Bartmoss). It rapidly becomes clear that this is affecting everyone, however, not merely the combatants.

As the Referee, you have the option of inserting erroneous or misleading information in the team's mission briefings—or in their lives, for that matter. Not every briefing, datafile, or information exchange should be corrupt, especially at first. In the beginning, any alterations should be subtle, but as the war progresses, more and more data turns up inaccurate, and in more outrageous ways.

Not all alterations will directly affect the characters, and not all should be harmful. Most are, at best, annoyances (misspellings, false or broken hotlinks, text files translated into Igpay Atinlay, erotic pictures substituted for team photos, file attachments containing the complete works of Shakespeare, etc.). The effect appears to be random and sometimes its effects may help the characters. Enemy fire support may miss, opposition force strengths could be exaggerated (so that the characters end up bringing serious overkill to the party), records of past misdeeds may get lost. Do anything you need to keep life … interesting.

These problems can plague players that don't actively participate in the Hot War as well. In fact, the problems the military ran into were minor compared to those suffered by the civilian world, where the lack of hardened datasystems and rock-solid back-ups sometimes resulted in real problems. As 2022 nears its end, it becomes obvious to most of the powers-that-be that something is very wrong ….

HOT WAR LOCALES



JUMPING THE GUN

This section profiles five likely target types for Hot War assignments. Each locale includes a description of the area, the likely inhabitants, and how both attackers and defenders would deal with the environment in the event of an assault (which is the point, right?). Thus each has both a location profile and adventure ideas. They are intentionally generic in nature, allowing the referee to use them for either side (or neither as the case may be) or place them anywhere in the world you want to take the war.

LOCALE ONE:

A Mobile Resupply Depot/ Nomad Camp

BACKGROUND

The Hot War is a highly mobile operation; so are its resupply bases. While most corp facilities have at least limited stocks of commonly needed ammo and parts, and each corporation has a number of supply bases on each continent—sprawling facilities converted from warehouses and shipping docks, with heavy defenses—these facilities are restricted by the fact that they usually aren't where the action is. After the early stages of the war, most of the supply functions are based out of wide-ranging MSD's, as it becomes obvious that there is no way that strike units can be resupplied reliably from fixed sites. These MSD's vary widely in form; some are based on blimps, submarines, surface ships, and flights of cargo planes. Most make use of the rails and roads: Trains running on the remnants of the world's rail network, and convoys of 18-wheelers, supply trucks, and even road trains.

The majority of road-mobile MSD's are deployed on the American continents, though a fair number are also deployed in Australia. Asian forces rely more on ship, submarine and air mobile MSD's, as the Asian continent frequently lacks the road and rail infrastructure necessary to quickly move the large amounts of supplies needed by a raiding unit. European attacks are never large enough to require MSD's; strike teams can easily resupply from supplies stored at various corporate towers and other facilities.

MOBILE SUPPLY DUMP

Term used to refer to the highly maneuverable, fast-moving supply and support units set up during the Hot War to resupply and support combat units. First coined by Militech. Most were deployed on the American continents, but air mobile and even ship- and submarine-based units were deployed by the end of the war in 2022.

—*Jane's Military Dictionary,* 2025, Pacifica Ed. (verified)

Many of the road-mobile MSD's in America try to disguise themselves as nomad clans, with varying (usually low) levels of success. Others, centering themselves out of truck stops and small towns, disguise themselves as carriers for shipping firms.

While MSD's try to use stealth and mobility to prevent attack, they are also fairly heavily armed. Everyone knows that the measures taken in the (relatively quick) rate that they were set up would be flimsy at best, so MSD's are designed to be able to fight their way out of an ambush or attack, at least until reinforcements arrive.

While MS'Ds are designed as resupply sites, they are also used as launch points for attacks. An MSD will rendezvous with a strike unit, then act as a rallying and resupply point for a number of strikes in the same general area. These are incredibly dangerous missions for MSD's, as it's not uncommon for the enemy to discover the MSD and retaliate.

At first, MSD's are treated much like other corporate facilities, as assets to be destroyed when found, but as the war drags on, most of the attacks against MSD's shift priority. As fuel grows more expensive and harder to find (AvGas in particular), it becomes common for units to prey upon the opposition's MSD's, to try to keep down costs (and help offset the effects of corp penny-pinchers who are often very conservative in allocating resources).

One constant risk in attacking an MSD is that many of the strike forces are moved in convoys that look almost identical looking; a number of wideload 18-wheelers escorted by outriders. These convoys, however, are loaded with crack combat troops, ACPA's, combat borgs, aerodynes, and light artillery like mortars and rocket pods.

TYPICAL CONVOY ASSETS

Vehicle Type	Armament	Role	#	found in
Peterbilt 2000's	12.7mm gatling	see below	8	See pg. 64
	40mm auto-GL		8	
Wolverine GMI's	light armor	n/a	2	See pg. 63
Hummers	ATGM launcher	anti-armor	2	See pg. 63
	4 Scorpion tubes	anti-air	2	
	7.62 minigun	support	1	
	40mm auto-GL	support	1	
NAA Armadillos	7.62 MG	officer country	2	*CBook3*, pg. 49
NAA Vulture	20mm autocannon	APC wrecker	1	*CBook3*, pg. 50
Kundalini Bedouin	7.62mm MG	cmd. vehicle	1	*CBook4* pg. 38
HEMTT hvy. Trucks	25mm chaingun	mobile gen.	1	*NeoTribes* pg. 62
HEMTT hvy. Trucks	40mm auto-GL	workshop	1	*NeoTribes* pg. 62
Motorcycles	varies	outriders/patrol	20	various

Almost any motorcycle can be found in use. Armed cycles, like the Darkwarrior (see pg. 63), Ares (see *ChromeBook3*, Pg. 54), and Torpedo (see *ChromeBook*, Pg. 47), are preferred, but unarmed commercial designs are also in use.

Arasaka forces will often use Japanese equivalents; Kuma scout cars (see Pg. 63) and Japanese equivalents of the Wolverine and other vehicles.

The Installation

This fairly large unit has pulled aside in a clearing a kilometer or so off of a main road, concealed by rock outcroppings and trees. They've set up a defensive perimeter and cleared out an area for landing AV's and Ospreys/VTOL's. The road up to this point has been mined with command-detonated mines, and is watched at all times. A variety of sensors have been deployed to make it more difficult for opposing units to sneak up on the unit.

The unit has a reinforced company of troops (five platoons and an oversized command unit), including a platoon of technicians, a medical platoon (including surgeons and nurses), and a platoon of drivers for the vehicles. The remaining two platoons are mechanized infantry equipped with standard weapons for the most part, but they won't hesitate to break out weapons and ammo provided for resupply if necessary. One platoon is trained to ride the unit's motorcycles, and have Motorcycle: +4 in addition to their other skills.

Mission Ideas

ATTACKING

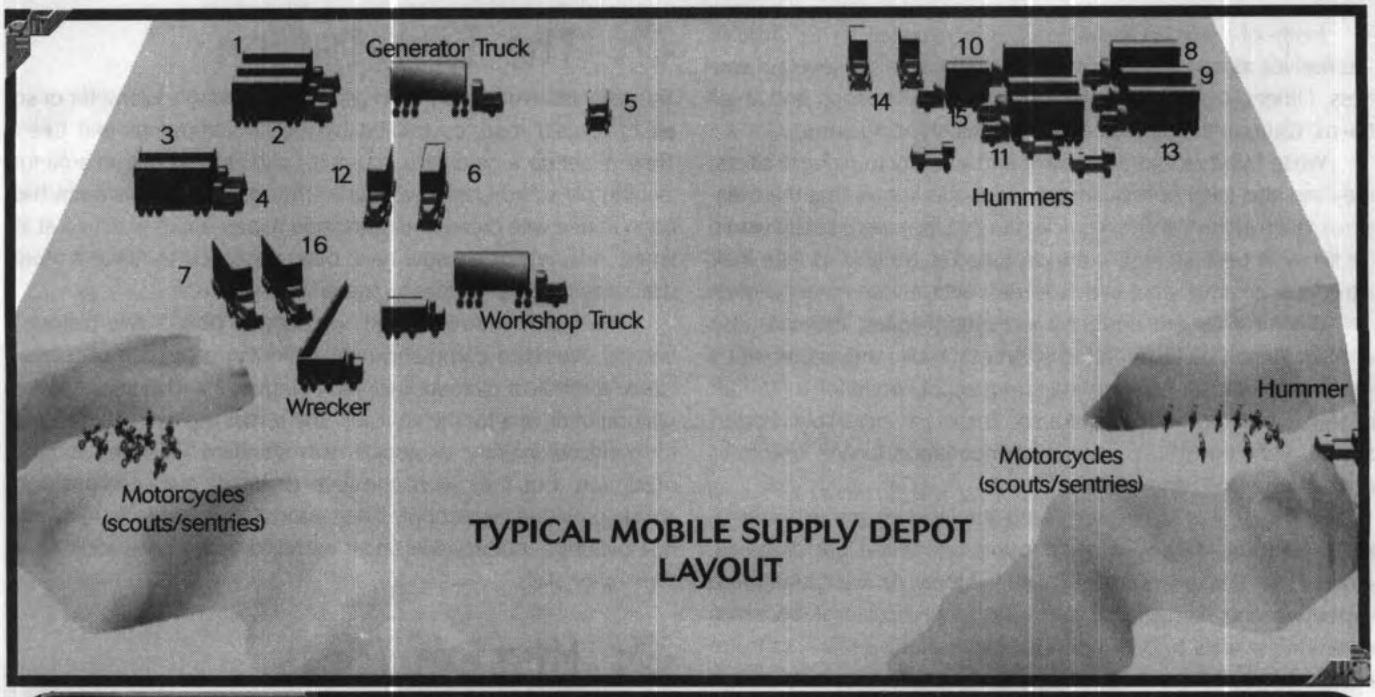
During the early days of the War, the attacking force will simply be out to destroy as much of the MSD as it can: fading in with maximum force, striking hard, and fading out before the forces in the area can respond, the kind of tactics that typify the war. As the war progresses, it becomes more important to capture MSD's with a minimum of damage (especially the trucks carrying fuel).

Mobile forces such as air mobile infantry or cavalry are obviously the best for tracking down an MSD on the move. Company-sized units with some anti-tank/vehicle weapons are usually the minimum assigned to any overt assault, although special forces units as small as a squad may make raids for fuel or basic demolition.

A sneaky team might masquerade as an opposition strike force; a really sneaky one will be able to pull off the masquerade well enough to resupply and leave. Of course, it'll need the other side's uniforms, weapons, and insignia. Speaking the appropriate language, and a knowledge of their call signs, recognition codes, IFF codes, and secret handshakes would be an advantage; how are the characters' Social Engineering and Programming skills?

Assets on this kind of mission include heavy weapons, AV's, and heavy armor (including ACPA's). It can also include a number of less than lethal weapons on raiding missions (to disable enemy soldiers without harming the vital supplies), including Arasaka Nauseators (*ChromeBook* 2, Pg. 43), gas grenades, web guns, restraint bombs, etc.

Toward the end of the war, there are a limited number of attacks on MSD's by their own sides! Theft of supplies has always been a problem in the military; units are often not issued enough of something, or not issued it at all. While creative bookkeeping on the part of the unit quartermaster can provide for some of this, in



TYPICAL MOBILE SUPPLY DEPOT LAYOUT

PLANES, TRAINS, AND PETERBILTS

MAP KEY: TRAILER MISSIONS
Each trailer on the map above has a different purpose, as listed below
Trailer 1-5: Fuel tanker (25,000 liters AvGas)
Trailer 6-7: Fuel tanker (25,000 liters high quality CHOOH2)
Trailer 8: MASH facility (box w two surgical units)
Trailer 9: Recovery (recovery for six patients)
Trailer 10: Command center (facility for command/control, four operators)
Trailer11: Ammunition hauler/small arms repair (small armory and lots of ammo)
Trailer 12: Ammunition hauler (ammo for cannons and missiles)
Trailer 13: Support (mobile kitchen, showers)
Trailer 14-15: Living Qqarters (air-conditioned box w bunks for troops)
Trailer 16: Repair center (commonly needed parts and repair tools/workshop)

Additional trailers in a larger convoy add more fuel and ammo, allowing the convoy to run longer without resupply. Ammo and small arms carried depend on the side it belongs to; most will be for their primary weapons, but there will be ammo for most weapons, and a variety of specialty weapons (flame-throwers, incendiary devices, etc.) available as well.

Refs should feel free to substitute their own sites; as stated above, this is only a sample convoy. Some convoys (especially later in the war) are better armed, others much smaller. They are also based on planes, ships, submarines, even a Dayton Sky Queen (*Chromebook2* Pg. 100)! There are also semi-fixed locales, based out of abandoned warehouses and corporate facilities, that are used to resupply not only the MSDs, but also strike units. So there are plenty of different places that this mission could happen in.

PETERBILT 2000 (see pg. 64), modified for military use
SP: 30, SDP: 100, **Crew:** 1, **Pass:** 1, **Man:** -4, **Top Speed:** 100 mph, **Range:** 960 mph, **Acc/dec:** 10/30 mph
Equipment: Military radio w/ scrambler, stereo, simple security, radar detector, autopilot, nav system, cyber-control, bed minifreezer
Weapons: Remote high-angle turret mounting a 12.7mm gatling or 40mm auto-GL, with two spare magazines.

some cases units have resorted to out-and-out theft to get what they need. This kind of attack was very rare on both sides, but more common to Militech than to Arasaka (Arasaka troops are, in general, too fatalistic and well [even over-] disciplined to consider something like this).

While most attacks are made while the convoy is stopped (since, once stopped, it's several hours before it can get moving again in anything other than a rout), a few nomad packs try attacking them while they are in motion, a task with mixed blessings: While the unit's fixed defenses and sensors haven't been deployed, it's a lot harder to steal stuff while the convoy's in motion!

Of course, assault units can be used as diversions, attacking an MSD while their teammates strike at the unit the MSD is supporting. And these units might have the bad fortune to attack an MSD while one of the units it's supporting is in getting resupplied and refueled ….

DEFENDING

Most of the roles with defending teams involve the full-time members of the convoy. In this case, the players are actually part of the supply team (solos can be outriders or platoon leaders, techies work in the repair bays, medtechies are part of the surgical team, etc.) and will be called upon to help defend the convoy when it's attacked.

This is a great way to do a "road" game, visiting all of the U.S. (or different parts of Centram and South America, or Australia, or, on an air mobile or submarine-based MSD, various cities of Asia), with different adventures and problems in every city. Of course, somone might use the cover of an employee in an MSD to forward his own agendas ....

MSDs might occassionally be used as diversions, attracting enemy attention and forces while a strike's happening elsewhere. Or, just as the characters get used to a soft gig, they could be called upon to actually conduct raids themselves. Hope they're ready.

An MSD can be used as background, or a place for the players to rest up between raids, or somewhere to recover (or be held prisoner at).

INDEPENDENTS

An MSD is a big target for independents, and only the most skilled, well organized, and well equipped Edgerunner or mercenary team can take one on unassisted, although some nomad families might take a crack at it. An alliance of groups (sure opportunities for strife) might be able to successfully attack an MSD and make off with much of its supplies. The players may be hired (or drafted) to lead such a strike, or may be members of the assault team.

As time goes on, and more corporations feel the pinch caused by the war, they may be more tempted to hit an MSD up for fuel (though each MSD could only fuel a small number of military strikes, one could fuel a small aero corp for a week or two of constant operation). A corp may well hire a large group of "expendables" to help itself out.

MSD's are a favorite target for nomads after the Rape of Chicago, and they frequently use their hard-earned cash to hire Edgerunners who have particular talents they need to pull such a strike off. Mercenary units, and even some semirogue National Guard units, find MSD's a handy place to resupply, if rather dangerous to attack.

Fixers may be there dealing with a quartermaster up for a little "trading" with people who have supplies he needs, or even wholesale theft for profit (more likely at Militech dumps than Arasaka ones). Of course, there's a chance that the opposition might attack while they're there ....

Edgerunners can even run into an MSD accidentally, such as while running from the war, or merely traveling, and, deserters can always happen onto one by accident.

LIVING IN AN MSD

Working in the typical MSD is far from boring. While units assigned to MSD's tend to see less action than front-line units, they have plenty of other things to worry about.

An MSD will start with the outriders finding a suitable place to set up camp for a week or so. This is always a challenge; places that can be easily defended, are road-accessible (but not too close to the road, to prevent observation of the resupply mission), and are not already taken by someone else (or built upon) can be difficult to find. Sometimes the outriders have to resort to intimidation, bribery, or violence to secure a site.

After that, the company goes to work. A landing site has to be cleared, tents set up, trailers locked down and set up, communications antennas and arrays configured, medical center activated, and the generator truck warmed up and power lines strung. At the same time, the defensive perimeter is set up; ground radar and other sensors (IR cameras, automated guns, tripwires) are placed, landmines laid on the main route in (with a second route out carefully planned and guarded), and gun emplacements marked and set up.

Camouflage and secrecy are paramount, as the MSD has to be invisible both to the enemy and to the local law enforcement (if any) and to any passersby. Most cities aren't thrilled with the idea of a strike base being set up in their back yard and may blow the whistle on the site to the enemy just to force it to leave. Anyone wandering too close may need to be detained until the mission is completed—meaning that someone may find himself babysitting some civilians when the action hits.

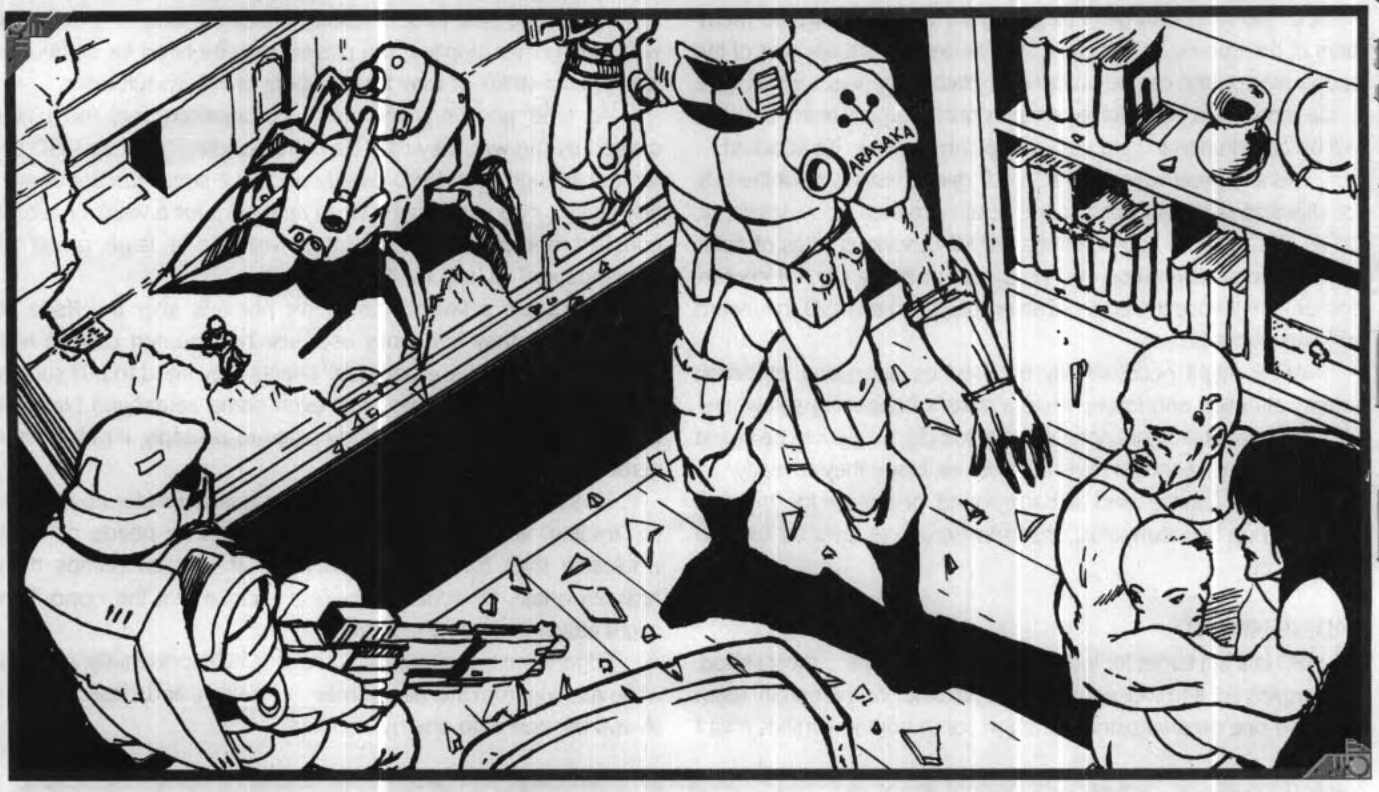
After that, there's a short time to rest before the first of the strike teams come in for resupply. Then the camp erupts into a whirlwind of activity, as the intact vehicles are refueled and re-armed, damaged vehicles repaired (if possible) or arrangements made for their disposal/evacuation (if not), and injured soldiers treated or slapped into cryotanks and evaced out to a more impressive medical facility. After that, the strike teams are usually fed, allowed to shower, gotten a fresh change of clothes, and given, in some cases, a chance to catch a few hours sleep in something resembling a bed before being sent out again.

Between resupplies, teams are kept busy with their other role; reconnaissance. Although not strictly recon units, outriders are frequently sent out to perform observation not only on local hostile forces, but also on other nearby corporate facilities, and frequently on the local military. Even so, most units get a chance to get in some soccer or football ... unless someone intrudes.

Attacks are not uncommon, ranging from concerted attacks by the enemy, to curious (or hostile) nomads, to attacks (investigations in force) by local military units or even pirates.

An MSD might stay in place for a week, if nothing goes wrong, and might resupply three to five units in that time. An MSD can go a month between resupplies itself, checking in at a major facility to refuel and resupply, topping off its provisions so it can head out again.

UNDER THE GUN



"YOU NO PARK HERE! YOU NO PARK HERE!"
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
"OKAY! YOU PARK! TAKE MY SPACE!"
—CONAPT RESIDENT NGYEN LO PAK TO ARASAKA ASSAULT APC

LOCALE TWO: A Combat Zone ConApt

The Meyers Building was built in 2007, during a craze in modular buildings (see sidebar). With a ten-story main section and three wings, it rose above most of the cityscape where it was built and was a fairly popular building for about five years, until the area it was in, an experiment in "gentrification", suffered a relapse. Now it's teetering on the edge of the Combat Zone, the property of Mr. David Allen. The expansion of the building that was begun in 2010 was never completed, leaving unfinished the secondary wings that were to connect the three main wings. Now, skeletal frameworks shroud the wings, and the secondary wings rise only two stories. No parking is available, though there is a public garage about two blocks away.

The main section of the building has a number of shops (mostly abandoned) and apartments on the first floor, and much of the core is open on the upper floors, with a balcony overlooking the large glass expanse at the front.

BACKGROUND

This particular building houses a secret satellite control station for controlling and suborning Ortillery sats (Thor, Crazy Harrys, etc.). Both sides had similar control centers built, spread out throughout the world, and both sides beef up security and try to knock out the other's centers during the War. Thus, teams from either side can fulfill either the defender or attacker role in this mission, and a number of third parties are interested in the building as well. A facility like this could be almost anywhere, but European and Japanese sites are likely to be a lot harder to hit (and require a lot more stealth). They are more likely to be located closer to the equator, to enhance their communication range.

Urban combat is possibly the most common form of fighting in the Hot War. Most corporate assets are in or near cities, and fighting revolves around them, to the detriment of the neighborhoods nearby. While both sides are using "precision" munitions, their gunners are not always concerned about their backdrops, and concentrated cannon fire will ruin a building as easily as a laser-guided bomb will. In addition, the prevalence of anti-air/anti-missile defenses at corp facilities and vehicles frequently means that damage is not confined to any given area of a city; 20mm proximity-fused HE rounds that miss a missile or AV land somewhere.

Keep this in mind when describing the aftermath; civilian casualties are frequent, and whole blocks can be smashed by a hard target strike. There were more than a few small corps utterly destroyed, totally by accident.

As always, the real losers in this kind of fight are the bystanders ....

The Corporate Defenses

The building's security is unremarkable: locking doors, Plexiglas windows (SP12, SDP 15/meter), reinforced main structure (since it was the primary load-bearing structure), and a number of cameras on each floor (some of which work).

The phone system (including public phones in each elevator/stairwell lobby) is rigged with the equivalent of an Omega tap (Very Diff task to tap into without authorization) and acts as an intercom. The elevators and fire and external doors can be controlled from the command center, as can the ventilation and lighting (even in the stores and apartments).

The building has a single ADA gun (20mm Vulcan, HVY +0 N R 8d10 2000 100 VR 500m 14+d10 automated attack) located on the roof in a concealed mount, and a missile launcher (six tube-mounted Scorpions, controlled from the Command Center) was emplaced recently. In addition to any agents (i.e., the PCs), there's a team of twelve security officers who normally serve in the command center (treat as regular infantry, but armed with either Bulldogs or Rapid Assault-12's; they have assault rifles, SAW's, and some light rockets in the armory.)

The Residents

Most of the residents are ordinary joes, and will do their best to vacate the premises if the building is attacked. (Although some may fight if someone breaks into their apartment, most will merely cower. Wouldn't you?) Of course, the sheer mass of people leaving the building could make things difficult for all sides involved. As always, there are some who are decidedly not normal ....

THE CHROMERS

Recently, a Chromer gang took over the right wing of the building. The building owner hasn't screwed up the courage (or the Euro ...) to kick them out, and the control center operators haven't had a chance yet. They're fairly average Chromers, with no specific affiliation in terms of a band (which, of course, just makes them more rowdy, as fights break out within the gang as to whose band is better). These guys may well decide to make life difficult for the players, no matter whose side they are on. (Refs are, of course, free to substitute their favorite Chromer (or Booster) gang if they wish). There should be enough Chromers to be a serious nuisance, but not a real threat unless ignored.

MODULAR BUILDINGS

Modular buildings were popular between 2002 and 2015, but fell out of favor in California after the Quake of 2016, when several were leveled in a (relatively minor) quake. They are still in use in a number of areas, including (more stable) parts of the U.S., Africa, and South America, where their cost and ease of manufacture make them popular.

The principle is fairly simple. Modular buildings generally consist of a central core containing HVAC systems, a phone/data networking panel, water, sewage, and power hook-ups, and offices, security, and other vital systems. To this core are added a number of additional modules. Some systems build these modules as multistory single-mission enclosures, while others are built on a room by room basis. In any case, each module has integral plumbing, wiring, and HVAC conduits, and is designed to be easily assembled with neighboring units in a variety of configurations. Many can be assembled with a minimum of tools, and some of the smaller designs require little more than assembling the modules, snapping in some bolts, and tightening connectors on various conduits.

The advantages include expandability (many designs are made to be easily capped off, and whole wings or floors can be added on later with little effort), cost (since units are either mass-produced, or built on a limited number of designs, costs are lower than custom construction), and the speed with which a building can be built. The disadvantages are primarily repetition and structural strength. While modular buildings can be built as strong as custom designs (and stronger than some), most aren't as resistant to shock or stress. They also can't be built as large without preplanning; few extend up above 10-12 stories or so. Since each room or module of a given type is identical, monotony can be something of a problem.

Modular buildings are normally used for functions like office buildings, apartment complexes, dormitories, and barracks. There are housing tracts built along the same plan (so buyers purchase a central utilities module, then tack on bedrooms, bathrooms, lounges, offices, etc. as desired), but, though cheap, they aren't popular. Modular buildings are also ill-suited for warehousing or manufacturing (although associated offices and other facilities might be modular in design).

AVERAGE CHROMER

STATS: INT: 5 REF: 7 TECH: 6 COOL: 7 ATT: var LUCK: 4 MA: 6 BOD: 8 EMP: 7/4

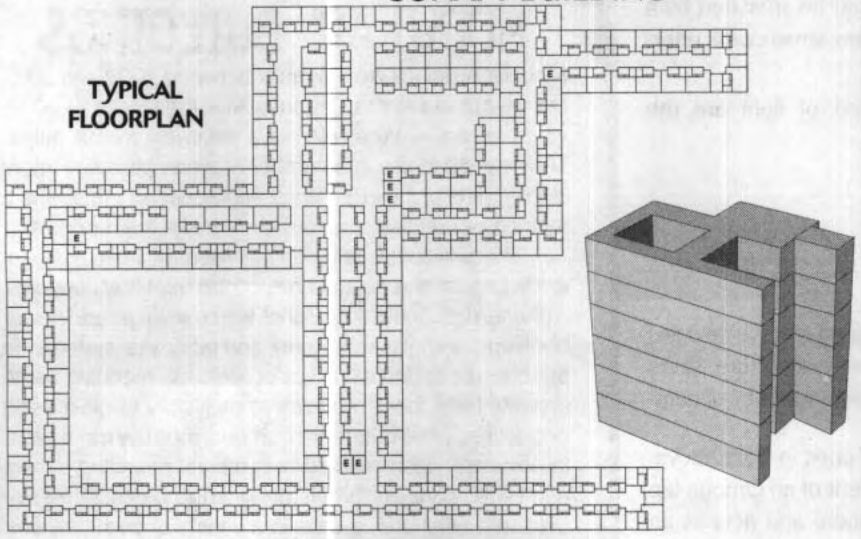
Skills: Handgun +3, Melee +3, Brawling +6, Awareness +2, Athletics +3, Play Instrument +4, Perform +4, Basic Tech +5, Stealth +2, others

Cyberware: Interface plugs, Cyberaudio w Enhanced Range and Level Damper, some others (nothing major)

Weapons/gear: a mix of pistols, shotguns and light SMGs, a vari-

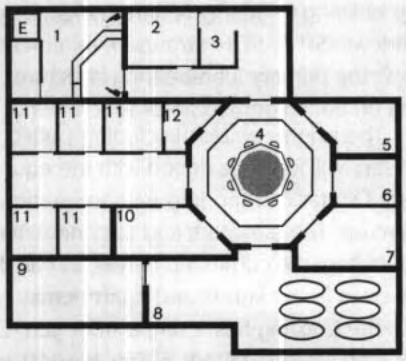
CONAPT BUILDING

TYPICAL FLOORPLAN



SAMPLE STUDIO APARTMENT





BASEMENT COMMAND CENTER FLOORPLAN

COMMAND CENTER MAP KEY

1: entry foyer
2: conference room
3: kitchen
4: command center
5: communication systems
6: store room
7: computer systems
8: aux. generator and air circulation
9: store room
10: bathroom
11: emergency living quarters
12: office

ety of melee weapons, and musical instruments. Most have some sort of armor (usually SP10 armor-tees or SP14 light Armor Jackets), and will have a variety of tech tools and miscellany.

THE SOLO

In Apartment 119, there lives a guy named Robinson. Quiet, unassuming … lethal. Robinson is really Jacques Robinton, a famed Eurosolo on the run from just about everybody. He's holed up here, and is trying to keep very quiet, but if he thinks, say, that the players are a mercenary team come to collect the sizable bounty on his head, he's likely to do something about it ….

JACQUES ROBINTON

STATS: INT: 8 REF: 8/10 TECH: 4 COOL: 6 ATT: 9/5 LUCK: 4 MA: 8 BOD: 9/11 EMP: 7/2

SKILLS: Combat Sense +8, Handgun +7, Melee +8, Fencing +6, Awareness +6, Athletics +5, Hvy Weapons +4, Demolitions +4, Electronic Security +6, Stealth +5, Karate +6, others

CYBERWARE: Neural Processor, Interface Plugs, Chipware Sockets, Orbital Reflex Augment (REF +2), Adrenal Gland, Muscle/Bone Lace, Nano-optical rebuild, Nano-auditory rebuild, Neural bridge, Replitech toxin screen, SkinWeave (SP12), Bonespike (both arms)

WEAPONS/GEAR: Two customized Constitution MAP revolvers (P +2 J P 4d6+1DP 6 3 VR 50m) w six speedloaders and some loose specialty rounds, three Gpz-78 mini-grenades (1d6+3 damage, 3m blast), two UrbanTech Lance mini-missiles (HVY •+2 • P • C • 4d6 HEAT • 1 • 1 • UR), SP14 trenchcoat, variety of surveillance countermeasures, lots of cash.

THE INTERNET RELAY

When this building was first constructed, Internet received permission to erect a satellite uplink/signal-relay booster on the roof. It's still there, and still in use as a back-up array. It just happens to be in use right now, as Internet is working on the main uplink for this city. If damaged in any way, it will knock out all Net access for a few minutes (while systems reroute around it), and drop all nonlocal access (except over landlines; -4 to all rolls) for a half hour or more … very bad karma. If players manage to wreck the relay, the very least they can expect is a quick reassignment to guard duty at some Antarctic research base; that's assuming Internet doesn't get hold of them first. Of course, Internet may still go after their electronic shadow … hope they keep a lot of cash on them.

ORTILLERY

Ortillery:/Or–til–a–rê/Abbr. Short for orbital artillery. Specifically used to refer to orbital weapons used to attack ground targets of a tactical or strategic nature. First popularized in 1865 by the famous French general, J. Verne.

— *New American Dictionary*, 2023 Atlantis

Mission Ideas

ATTACKING

The attacker's first goal is to locate the conapt facility. Tracking (either through the Net or through the transmissions the facility uses to control the satellites) the base to a general area (like, say, "the Night City Combat Zone area") isn't too difficult, but locating it closer than that will be difficult given the wide-band, split spectrum, highly specialized communications array it's using. Surveillance teams will have to be sent in (PC parties can do this, or this can be handled off screen). Zoning records, power consumption, and other records may prove useful for this.

Once they have found the facility, they must then plan on an avenue of attack. There are a number of civilians in the building, so merely blowing it up is right out. (Or is it? How desperate if the attacking corp?) The players (or their superiors) might decide to go in quietly, with stealth being their objective, or they may go in guns blazing, trusting in luck to keep casualties down.

A platoon of infantry with a support squad of ACPA's would be a typical assault force applied to this kind of building strike—they can be moved in via trailer trucks and deployed with a minimum of fuss and notoriety. Of course, if the attackers are in a hurry, they may just pile the platoon onto some AC-20's (see pg 65) and come barreling in, using the panzers as fire support for a full-on blitz. Or they may use stealth, sending in an Edgerunner infiltration squad to scope things out and disable the defenses so the infantry can simply walk in with a minimum of collateral damage.

While destruction is a likely objective, capture may also be a goal. From this facility, they could then hijack satellites, transferring command to one of their own facilities. Truly devious groups might want to load in a custom program that causes the ortillery to go rogue, randomly firing off its ammo at almost anything (a Crazy Harry will be more than happy to oblige. See pg. 55 for details on the CH19).

One problem, once the attackers get in the building, is finding the command center. It doesn't need to be big: enough for some super-computers, operators, and security. Thus, the total footprint is fairly small—the size of two small rented office sections, or four apartments. So while we've provided maps for a subterranean command center, accessed through one of the subwings by a hidden elevator, that facility may not exist, or could even be a simple decoy, while the real facility is elsewhere in the building.

Defenders are likely to rig some makeshift defenses that aren't likely to be noticed, and have well trained, well equipped guards. If the players are taking the role of the attackers, the Ref should add two squads of infantry, or a covert team of his own devising to the defensive team. If the attackers aren't careful, defenders may well be notified of the attack. They will have had time to set up a variety of traps and fire positions and could well lead the PC's on a merry chase away from the command center. They may also have reinforcements standing by, or may have already moved.

DEFENDING

The sponsoring corporation has beefed up security at this complex. Because the sleeping quarters available to the control and support team are already occupied, security team members will be split up in a number of different apartments throughout the building. It's hoped that this will help prevent detection, while the building's defenses and guards will be able to slow an attack long enough for the team to respond.

The team can outfit themselves pretty much as they wish, although they should keep in mind the urban environment.

If possible, the unit must avoid revealing the command center. Failing that, they must make sure the center is protected long enough for it to hand off control of its assets to another site (depending on what's going on at the time, this might take anywhere from 5-20 minutes).

If the underground command center is nothing more than a decoy, then it will likely be the job of the PCs' to make the attackers think the facility is real; in fact, they might not be told it isn't ....

INDEPENDENTS

The potential for non-aligned Edgerunners are vast. They may be out to steal as much stuff as possible before, after, or (for the brave) during the attack (from the command center, the few shops left, parked vehicles the attackers are using, or from the various residents). They may attack the site to take it over or destroy it before anyone else finds it. They may be working for a "neutral" Corp, for an Orbital, or for themselves for some reason (maybe they want to sign their name on the Mojave desert or something).

Edgerunners might be hired to clean out the Chromers by the building's owner (they don't pay rent, see ...), by the corporation that runs the command center, or by the attackers (as a diversion). They might be hired by the tenants (who are getting the idea they're living on a great big bullseye) to help protect them from both sides. They might even be Chromers, resisting attacks from all sides with the power of Rock & Roll (and help from Smith, Wesson, and Minami).

Of course, the chances of the characters' attack coinciding with the attackers' strike are, well, actually pretty good, aren't they?

Speaking of tenants, we've kept exactly who lives here pretty vague. If Refs want, they could locate one (or more) of the players' major connections, sources, family, or love interests in the building; "Hey guys! I just moved to this real swank place!" If the contact (or the players) gets wind of an attack, well, they are going to do something about it, aren't they?

One or more of the characters might live in the building. Aren't they going to think it odd when all these clean-shaven guys who don't seem to have jobs start moving in and spending a lot of time in the halls and out in the entry foyer, pretending to do the *Times* crossword puzzle? What're they gonna do about it?

GUN VIOLENCE



LOCALE THREE:
A Corporate Living Center

Corporate living centers are engineered communities, bearing only a superficial resemblance to the tract housing of the last century. Although designed, like tract housing, to accommodate as many people as possible in as small an area as possible (without going to apartments or condominiums), they are also designed with comfort, utility, and a sense of community in mind. Life in a CLC is what many salarimen in 2022 aspire to, and will work their fingers to the bone to achieve. An offer to join one is a mark of distinction among middle-level management and technical personnel. They are the epitome of Beaverville.

CLC's are usually built as fairly small units; if more population is desired, several CLC's are clustered together, sharing larger facilities (like sports facilities, schools, etc.). The small size helps foster a sense of community, adding to the image of the corporation not as faceless employer, but as part of the employee's life, of his community. Each CLC is normally built around a central core, or town square, around which are located small shops and stores, an arcade, and community offices. In addition, there is a small office complex, allowing telecommuting workers access to offices, video conferencing facilities, VR chambers, and mainframe computers when needed; studies have found that even VR conferencing doesn't obviate the need for team members to occasionally meet in person. In the evenings and on weekends, this facility doubles as town hall, church, and general meeting center.

This area is well groomed and landscaped, with shade trees, shrubbery, and oftentimes running brooks or small ponds.

Around this central town square are built a number of rows, rings, or clusters of houses (the actual design will vary by location and terrain). Each home, regardless of its design (there are always a number of different designs, each having several variants, to help prevent the monotony that pervaded housing complexes of the last century), is required to have a front porch; many have white picket fences. This is carefully designed to enhance that sense of community. The back lots are used as one large shared lot, with each family helping in the maintenance and upkeep. Many have pools (usually under an awning or in an enclosure, to prevent damage or contamination).

Cars and other vehicles are discouraged (and frequently banned) inside of the CLC's limits. Instead, the CLC is kept small, so it's easier to simply walk where one needs to go. A number of electric cars (enclosed golf carts really, with a top speed of only 20 kph or so) are used for transport when necessary, and security and maintenance have electric vans and motorcycles available. Parking is provided at the edge of the CLC. Delivery vans and trucks are usually allowed, although some security-conscious CLC's require that deliveries be unloaded outside, and then brought in by employees of the living center.

Security iappears low-key but is actrually very strong. While most CLC's don't spy on their employees on a regular basis (though

they can, if the employee is suspected of something), almost all public areas are continuously monitored on audio and video. Security guards are normally lightly armed and armored (handguns and armor-tees) in public, unless there's a disturbance, in which case heavy armor and weapons are available. Often, the security guards live in the community (giving them more reasons to fight). Area defense is usually provided by walls and gates, and by a ring of perimeter sensors. People are routinely screened on entering, especially visitors. There's usually some kind of hidden air defense (normally missiles, rarely guns) present as well. Reinforcements are rarely very far away.

BACKGROUND

The end of the war sees a rising sense of desperation on both sides. Up till now, most attacks have been against targets that could be at least loosely defined as corporate assets. Though there are many casualties among noncombatants, both sides have avoided attacking the other's employees directly (except, of course, their soldiers). This ends in September.

On September 17th, Arasaka soldiers driving mock delivery vans and trucks, led by the infamous 'borg solo Adam Smasher, storm the Devonshire Ponds Estate outside of Waterbury, Connecticut. They disembark and proceed to slaughter the inhabitants of this small Militech CLC. Twenty minutes later, moments ahead of Militech reinforcements, they're exfiltrated by AV-4, leaving dozens dead and hundreds wounded.

Militech responds in kind four days later, using Wingman piloted AVX-9C's and AVD's to bomb and strafe an Arasaka CLC in Longueuil, a suburb of Montreal. Over a hundred Arasaka employees, and 37 innocent Canadians visiting for a rugby match, are killed. Militech suffers no losses, despite stiff resistance.

The war entered its last, and most brutal, phase.

Mission Ideas

ATTACKING

The goal of an attack on a CLC is simple: to strike fear into the hearts of the employees of the opposite side, to cause them to lose faith in their company's ability to defend them. It's hoped that the employees will reconsider working for a company that cannot protect their children.

Both sides engage in these activities at the end of the war, although using somewhat different tactics.

Arasaka's attacks are normally as personal as possible. While Devonshire is the only time it was able to simply drive in, Arasaka missions mostly involved infantry, ACPA troopers, and borgs armed with anti-personnel weapons, including grenades, shotguns, grenade launchers firing flechette canisters, Splatshells filled with acid balls, and white phosphorus, flamethrowers, Militech (Arasaka troops enjoyed the irony) mini-Gats firing explosive rounds, Nauseators, and gas grenades; if it's something people will be scared of, or more likely to injure than kill (fatalities were not actually the point), then it's likely someone on the attack squad will be carrying it. The ACPA's carry heavy weapons in case of stiff resistance, and to blow up buildings. Adam Smasher (see pg. 22) is frequently the leader of these missions, as his ... unique mindset makes him perfect for this kind of mission.

Militech's missions, on the other hand, tend to involve artillery missions and air strikes. A typical mission might involve a platoon or two of heavy weapons infantry armed with mortars and disposable MLRS units (see pg. 120), and a squad of forward observers in sneak suits, or a unit of infiltrators using social engineering to distribute radio beacons for seeking rounds (door to door salesmen?). Another might use a flight or two of AV's and helicopters, or Falcon or F-126 Thunderclouds (see page 50) with some fighters providing air cover. A third, more major, attack would use panzers, with AV's flying cover.

Both sides also use stealth: teams armed with sneaksuits, EW, and a small vial of biotoxin to slip into the water treatment center, or a truck loaded with explosives disguised as a delivery vehicle. These types of attacks are actually the most risky, as they pitt a very small unit against a large number of defenders. But they are perfectly suited for a small unit.

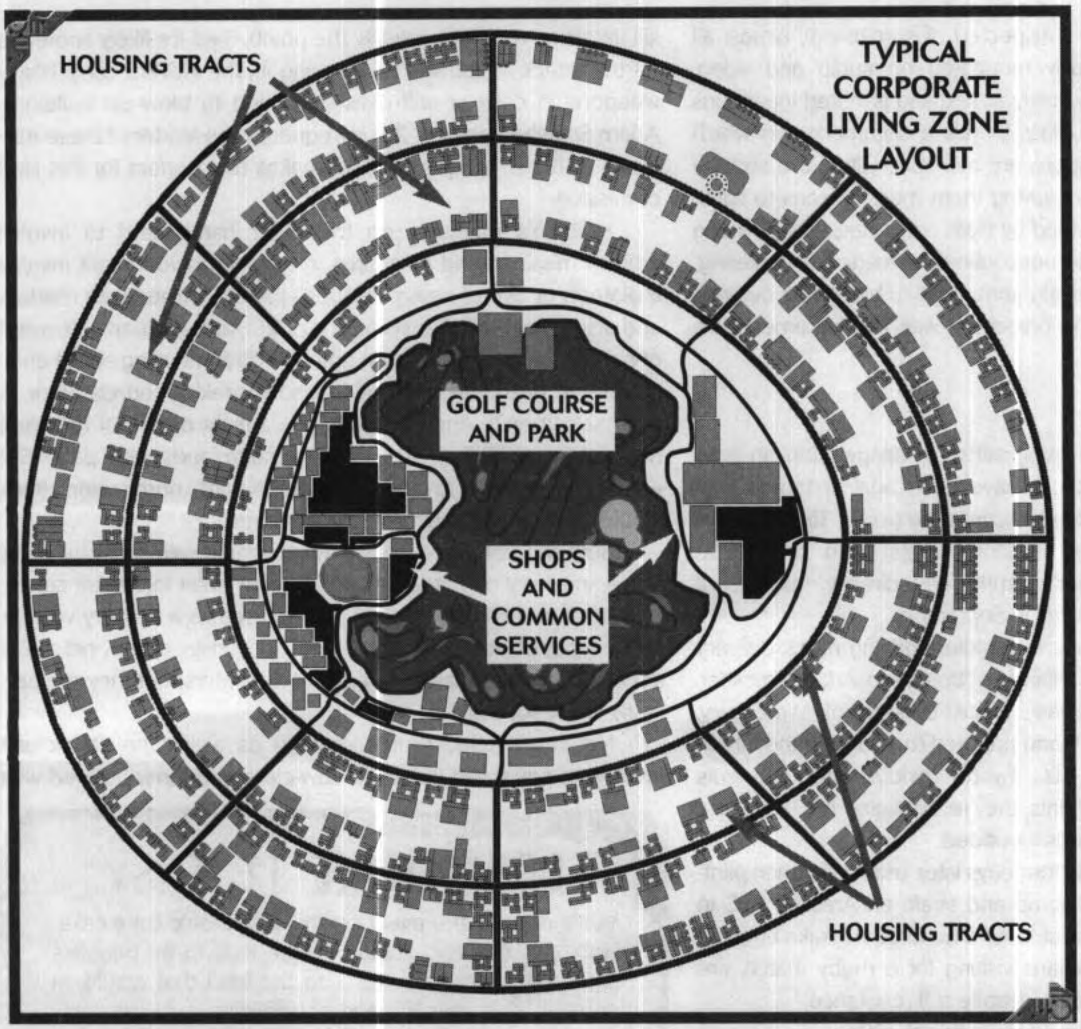
Net-based attacks are common as well. One attack unit involves a panel van filled with low-class netrunners armed with

DON'T MAKE IT EASY

While none of the events in this war should be a cakewalk, this scenario should be the kind to try people's souls, on both sides. It's also the kind that results in criminal trials after the end of hostilities.

Make no mistake: This is not a walk in the park, and shouldn't be, especially if the players end up as the attackers! The attackers are out to kill people and break things; unlike most jobs, the people they are killing aren't even combatants. We recommend you have the characters play defenders unless you're looking to push them to mutiny against their corporate masters ... or they are one truly sick pack of 'punks. If they're the latter, their actions here should come back to haunt them later.

So be sure to hammer home the brutality of the attack (keep your players in mind, of course, when determining how graphic to be). Make sure that the players understand that what they are participating in (or defending against) is one of the most heinous and brutal acts of the war. If on the attacker's side, even the most hard-bitten and ruthless assassins should be shaken. If defending, even the most callous and cynical mercenary should be filled with a cold rage at what is happening. Even independents who are just passing through should be outraged. Only a sociopath would be left untouched by what is happening.



cellular cybermodems loaded with anti-personnel Reaper-class Demons. The truck is parked in an area, the netrunners let loose the Reapers and let them do their work. When there isn't anyone alive in that section of the Net anymore, the truck simply drives away. This attack is sometimes combined with a ground strike, adding to the mayhem by driving people out of their homes using Gremlin programs. One example of such a vehicle is the Hearse (see sidebar, pg. 117, for both).

DEFENDING

The defenders are going to have the worst of it. Most sites started with about a platoon or two of security forces (equipped equal to infantry squads, although not as skilled, nor as battle-hardened [reduce all skills by 1-2 points, and reduce COOL to 5-6]). These forces, equipped with emplaced anti-air defenses, and with reinforcements not far away, were sufficient for most circumstances, but not for all-out war. Up to now, both sides have been counting on the other side's reluctance to attack such obviously nonimportant facilities. It's impossible for either corporation to adequately defend every CLC; there are far too many, and each requires a fairly sizable deployment of troops and assets.

Militech tries a general upgrade of each site, bolstered with highly mobile "Q-Teams" that are moved from site to site on a random overlapping pattern (so any given site might have as many as three Q-Teams at it on any given day). Since no person knows the plans of all of the Q-Teams, it's impossible for an Arasaka plant or traitor to reveal their location, ensuring that there will always be an element of uncertainty in their deployment. Each Q-Team is a mix of netrunners, solos, pilots, and heavily armed ACPA troopers and infantry, usually one to two platoons in strength, with a platoon of PsyOps, technical support, medical, and other support personnel detailed to help strengthen security, calm fears, and ferret out trouble makers.

Arasaka, with typical ruthlessness, performs triage. While most CLC security forces receive reinforcements, only those judged particularly valuable get singled out for heavy upgrades. Those sites receive as much as a company of troops, usually formed by combining remnants of units already ravaged by casualties. By this point in the war, Kei Arasaka is more interested in causing Militech casualties than in defending his people.

Alternative Missions

Attack and defense are just two possible missions. Players from either side could be sent in to retrieve someone from the site before (or during) an attack. For an interesting twist (and especially appropriate for groups who are on the "attacking" side, but won't want to participate in wholesale slaughter) the players could be members of the attacking sides' forces, sent in (or going in against orders) to rescue someone: an intelligence agent, a former employee, or a friend.

Militech uses "spoof" extractions to hurt Arasaka financially. Arasaka has had a long-standing policy of insuring its clients against extractions. It pays off the insurance policy on extraction (or assassination, though at a reduced rate), and

Militech is taking advantage of this. Militech units are sent to extract scientists, executives, etc. protected by Arasaka security teams, and then hold them for 72-96 hours, until Arasaka pays off. Then the victim is released to the original corporation (sometimes for a "finder's fee") or to a company willing to pay more.

Players might also be sent in to record the attack, either from a news agency, or from either side (to use as propaganda). Of course, journalists aren't supposed to get involved, no matter how justified—right?

INDEPENDENTS

Not all of the attacks on CLC's are undertaken by the combatants. There are incidents of terrorist attacks (nothing new, although rare), attacks undertaken by other companies (usually performed to attempt to hide the extraction of skilled techs or theorists), and, in at least two cases, by nomad packs trying to exact vengeance for the "Rape of Chicago."

Independents could be hired by the inhabitants of a CLC, who, fearing an attack, want to add on some "extra insurance" of their own. Of course, independents aren't going to run into any problems from local security, not at all. Security won't see the Edgerunners as an insult to their capability, not at all ....

They may also be friends with people who live there (hey, it could happen!), and might want to help out. Or they could simply be visiting when an attack happens; they might even be living there.

Then again, either side might hire some Edgerunners, under false pretenses, to dress up appropriately, and either attack or defend some site (their own, someone else's) to shift blame, or simply to throw some chaos into the other side's intelligence reports. And neither would anyone else ....

NET WEAPONS

THE HEARSE

A modified van or delivery truck, designed as a mobile killing machine on the Net. Filled with cellular cybermodems and EW gear, the Hearse is sort of a nuclear bomb on the Net. The idea is that you drive it into a location, turn on the cybermodems, and let the Reaper and Gremlin demons (see below) free to do their work. When they are done (or destroyed), just drive away.

Hearse (based on a Spinelli Autotech Shiltron Twin Cab)

Stats

Top Speed: 60 mph **Acc/Dec:** 15/50 mph
Crew: 2 **Range:** 300 miles
Pass: 11 **Cargo:** 0
Maneuver: -3 **Mass:** 3200 kg
SDP: 80 **SP:** 20
Type: Pickup **Cost:** 265,000 eb (plus software)

Special equipment: Military radio, nav system, autopilot, cybercontrols, stereo, light amplification optics, simple security, two Shocker units (lethal), flare/chaff unit (10 rounds each), AP grenades (16, 4/side), laser comm, satellite uplink, scrambler, 20 cell phones, 20 cybermodems (Speed +3, 20 MU, Datawall +4, cell capable), ECCM

GREMLIN

Cost: .....**3500 eb**

Stats

Class: Compiler
Strength: 5
MU: 5

Options: Movement, Pseudointellect, Conversational Ability, Recognition, Tireless, Photorealistic ICON

Programs: Dee-2, Genie, Hotwire, Soundmachine, Vidmaster, and either Pile Driver, Portal, Sledgehammer, or Worm (see *Brainware Blowout* for specifics)

Akin to its namesake, Gremlin is a nasty little program designed to raise chaos. The Demon is inserted into a data fortress (or it can insert itself), where it then proceeds to glitch anything it will find. Vidboards and terminals spout garbage or show porn flicks to the kids when mommy isn't looking, heating systems go berserk, robots run amuck, and let's not even think about what goes on in the kitchen or the elevators. Not usually lethal (although it certainly will be if it can), Gremlin can (and does) drive people out of their homes or buildings. The ICON resembles a large-eared reptilian demon, with a hideous cackle.

REAPER

Cost: .....**12,500 eb**

Stats

Class: Compiler
Strength: 5
MU: 7

Options: Movement, Pseudointellect, Conversational Ability, Recognition, Tireless, Photorealistic ICON

Programs: Anti-personnel (1d6), Anti-Program (1d6)

A custom-written Demon designed for one purpose; killing weefles and users. It doesn't have defenses to survive an attack by a real netrunner, but it isn't supposed to. Its job is to seek out and destroy every user in a predefined area (within this datafort, within this local area network, etc.). A vicious piece of terrorist software. The Icon is of the classic Grim Reaper, complete with flaming sickle and a cloak that looks like it's made of outer space (with stars). It doesn't normally speak, except to pronounce, in sepulchral tones, melodramatic phrases like, "Your time has come."

GUN CONTROL



LOCALE FOUR: Corporate Tower

The massive corporate towers that dominate the skyscape in 2022 are as much symbols of a corporation's status as they are practical means of centralizing production and business assets in a city. Looming over most other buildings in a city, they are reminders of the influence the megacorps have in every aspect of life in 2022.

The average tower ranges from 75 to 150 stories in height, and may be as much as 100 or more meters wide at its base, as large as a football stadium. Designs, of course, vary widely, and the younger a tower is, the larger it's likely to be, as corporations engage in a not at all subtle game of architectural one-upsmanship.

Most towers are far larger than actually needed to house all of the corporation's business offices, public spaces, and other facilities needed for a major city. Often portions of the tower are devoted to rental property. The lower floors may consist of an open mall or concourse, filled with small shops, stores, and restaurants, as well as a number of public relations spaces for the company (museums, tours on the history of the corporation, and other "feel-good" attractions designed to engender good will in the populace of the city). Above this are floors full of rented office space. Above this, the corporation maintains its own offices, secretarial bays, research labs, cafeterias, and other facilities.

Some larger towers approach the status of arcologies, though few hold up to the standard of being completely self-contained/sufficient. In the larger towers however, a person never needs to leave to get all of life's necessities (and quite a few of its pleasures as well). Some corporate employees live in their towers, never leaving except for brief excursions into the city that surrounds it, business trips, and rare vacations (at corporate-approved vacation sites, often surreptitiously owned by the corp).

Towers frequently duplicate assets found at other sites; in a sort of distributed control, each tower acts as a backup for the others, so that control of the entire corporation can be wielded from any tower. (Some corps actually go so far as to move the actual locus of control on an [ir]regular basis, so that no one can determine when a given tower is actually important.) While adding expense to each tower, it also adds flexibility; even if one (or a section of one) is wrecked, operations can quickly be moved to another, and resumed as if nothing had happened.

Tower defenses are very good. They usually have enough troops on hand to quell a good-sized riot (or fight a small war), equipped with attack AV's, helicopters, and heavy weapons. The building's defenses will include lots of bullet-proof glass, reinforced structure, riot-control systems (ranging from gas grenade launchers to miniguns on the ground level in armored bunkers), sophisticated air defenses (usually including 20mm Gatling Phalanx systems on each corner, as well as SAM batteries), and limited anti-tank

capabilities (ATGM's in retractable launchers). These buildings are tough nuts to crack, and with good reason.

BACKGROUND

The end of the war brings with it harried attempts to destroy as much of the enemy's resources as possible before the world's governments come down upon each side and put an end to it.

It isn't hard for both sides to tell that the end is coming, even before the governments unleash military force. Most sites see public services, electricity, and even Net connections cut off as local city administrators try to force individual locations out of the war by rendering them unusable (or at least unliveable). Some cities even place corporate facilities under virtual siege, setting up police-manned roadblocks and forcing that corp's air traffic down in an attempt to put a stop to the violence.

Instead of causing the two sides to back down, as is hoped, this instead spurs both into further excesses and orgies of violence against the enemy. Both know it's merely a matter of time and are determined to see that, if they can not come out as victors, they will at least make the other side hurt more than they are going to. Attacks against these massive towers, symbols of the corporations' presence, and even dominance, in a city, were conducted by both sides throughout the war, but never quite with this savagery.

Other than Japanese and European towers, any of the major Arasaka and Militech towers might be targeted for this kind of attack (see the map on pg. 19 for possible locales). Details on Arasaka and Militech Towers can be found on pages 106-109 of *Stormfront*.

Mission Ideas

ATTACKING

This is not a subtle raid; this is a blitzkrieg. The attacking force will have to penetrate the city past local police and conduct a full-on, hyperaccelerated siege against a postmodern castle. Trying to be low-key about it is pretty pointless.

The attackers have put together a pretty massive force for this attack: a reinforced battalion of mechanized/airmobile infantry, combat engineers, ACPA troopers, combat cyborgs, attack AV's, and vectored thrust panzers. The precise make-up of this force should vary according to the Ref's needs, but should include enough hardware to level a small city because, in a way, that is what they plan to do. These forces are hidden in various abandoned warehouses, factories, and parking garages around the city within easy access of the target, and have been readying for several days, being snuck in by rail and heavy cargo carriers. Their goals are to cause as much damage as they can, destroying the tower if possible. The idea is to injure the rival corp as badly as possible, to make them spend money on rebuilding (and insurance payoffs).

The attack will be preceded by an ortillery launch five minutes before hand, timed to strike the building just as the first forces become visible. Four conventional "bomb" rounds (see the CH-19 on pg. 55), aimed at the building's command and control centers, will be fired. (That's all the sat can get off before it's destroyed by alert killsats.) Then strike forces will be delivered by AV's and IFV's, while the panzers knock out any armor the defenders may have on the ground and clear any police or National Guard barricades that remain. The combat engineers will be moved in to set demolition charges. The idea is to perform some highly aggressive urban renewal; if everything goes according to plan, the attackers will be able to collapse the building in on itself, costing their enemy tens of millions of Euro in a single attack—without destroying too much of the surrounding real estate.

The players may take one of several roles in this force, depending on their skills. Archetypal Edgerunner teams may be dispatched ahead of time to emplace MLR artillery batteries (see sidebar pg. 120) on the rooftops around the Tower. They may be sent in as a sniper team, set to knock out a particular target ahead of time. They may be there to divert police (and possibly military) roadblocks and forces away from the tower, to try to minimize their casualties (not

MILITECH TOWER STATS

(for more information, see *Stormfront*, pg. 106-107)

Size: 60 to 85 floors
SDP: 150SDP per floor
SP: **Outer walls:** SP50
Inner Walls: SP25
Vehicle Complement: 14 AV's (usually 6 AV-4, 3 AV-7, and 5 AV-6), 1 private VTOL jet, 2 helicopters, 2 Osprey II's, assorted cars and trucks
Defensive Systems: 4 30mm multipurpose cannon in roof bunkers, APEX automated gun turrets located strategically throughout building and exterior, 2 anti-air missile batteries (4 shots, Skill-20, range 2000m 8d10), 2 anti-tank launchers in forward area
Security Level: 4 (300 troops, NetSec includes isolated security computers and black ice.)

ARASAKA TOWER STATS

for more information, see *Stormfront*, pg. 108-109)

Size: 100 to 150 floors
SDP: 120SDP per floor
SP: **Outer walls:** SP40
Inner Walls: SP20
Vehicle Complement: 5 AV-4's, 3 AV-7's, 2 AV8's, 2 AV11's (Japanese knock-offs of the AV-9) and 4 AV-6's, 1 private VTOL jet, several assorted helicopters, 3 Osprey IIs, 10 Kuma jeeps, 4 Riot-8 APC's, 3 Riot-10 APC's, assorted cars and trucks
Defensive Systems: 6 30mm multipurpose cannon in roof bunkers, WXA automated guns located throughout building and exterior, 4 anti-air missile batteries (4 shots Skill-20, range 2000m 8d10), 3 anti-tank missile launchers
Security Level: 4)260 troops, heavy Black Ice on all net accessible systems.)

out of altruism, merely practicality). Or they may be acting as the guidance team for the ortillery strike that starts the attack.

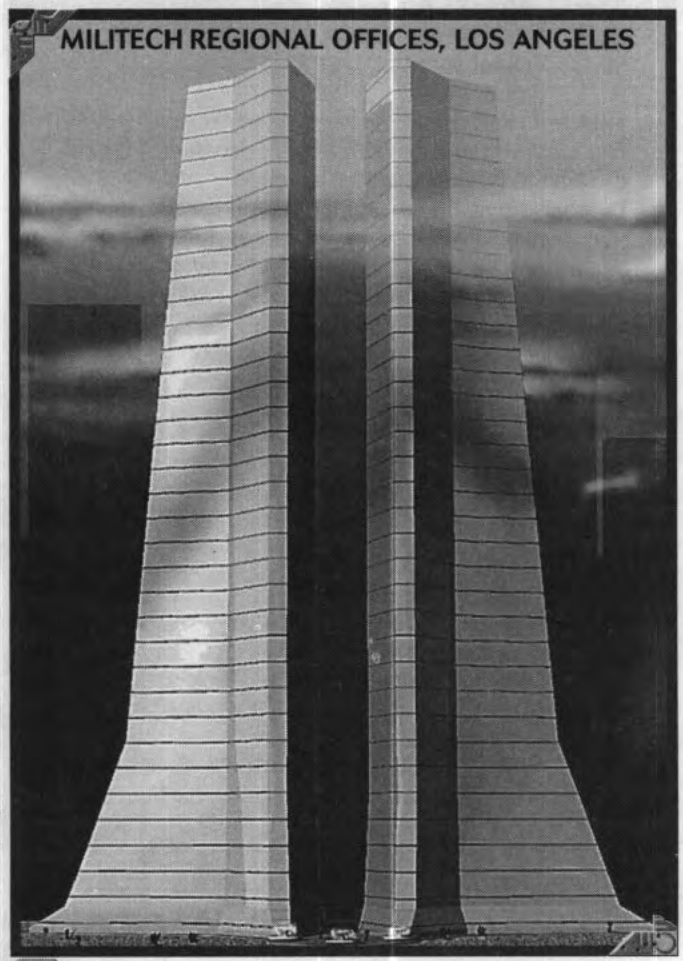
More dangerous missions might include covert missions to knock out advanced sensor systems designed to detect attacks by land or from orbit, or even to destroy the building's (highly experimental) anti-Thor interceptor system. Or they may be sent in to exfiltrate intelligence assets or kidnap enemy researchers before the attack. Of course, this is exactly what the enemy expects ....

The players may take a more conventional role, acting as heavy strikers equipped with ACPA's, or may be in command of a strike team of elite troops, in which case they'll see the brunt of the fighting, savage, door-to-door combat in the heart of an enemy tower.

Then there's always the chance that the defenders will find out about the attack ahead of time, and launch a pre-emptive counter-attack ....

DEFENDING

The defense team is no slouch unit. A battalion of infantry, reinforced with ACPA's and borgs, makes up the primary defensive unit, aside from the building's natural defenses. In addition, a number of special operations units are stationed here (including, perhaps, the players.) while waiting to be assigned to an attack force or strike mission. They have limited mobile assets, other than AV's; most of the building's armor units have been moved elsewhere, but they do have some Wolverine GMI's and combat cars (BMW-2020's, Arasaka Combat 10's) and APC's.


MILITECH REGIONAL OFFICES, LOS ANGELES

The defenders' main role will be to fight off the attackers, of course. Alternately, they may be assigned the role of trying to evacuate as many noncombatants as possible, or damage control inside the building. They may be sent out as an advance attack group, if they find out about the attack ahead of time, to try to neutralize the attackers' command and control center. They could be assigned to guard a particular executive or researcher, or smuggle out some highly sensitive data or battle plans.

MLR Artillery

70mm artillery rockets
HVY • -3 • N • P • 8d10 • 40 • spc • VR • 6m burst • 500m

A heavy (240kg) disposable rocket launcher designed to add a heavy one-shot punch to an assault, or to give an infantry unit on the defensive some on-call artillery when tubes (gun based artillery) are unavailable. Each unit is designed to be man portable (with hand grips conveniently placed), or can be carried by a single ACPA or Borg One can be strapped on the back of an ACPA (in non-firing mode), usually costing the unit -2 in reaction penalties (it's bulky). Any number of rounds (up to the maximum) can be ripple-fired from the launcher in a single round. Laser guided and armor piercing (HEAT) rockets are available at a substantially higher cost. Cost: 9500eb for base unit, +250 for each laser-guided rocket, +150 for each HEAT rocket

Complications

CONDITIONS AT THE TOWER

The tower has been under a state of virtual siege for almost a week. The local government got tired of the strife (and loss of revenue), and has done its best to isolate the tower from the outside world. The Mayor is trying to punish the corp and at the same time, prevent further violence; she hopes that by shutting the tower down, she makes it a less attractive target (since it will be out of the war). In addition to the roadblocks set up in the area around the tower, preventing traffic in and out, the city has also cut off power and water/sewage service, making life in the building unpleasant at best. Net access is still available (hard to shut down, and Internet won't cooperate yet), but subject to frequent attacks by "unaligned" netrunners (who are likely police or Netwatch officers in disguise). There are signs of a riot at the base of the tower, evidence of the hostility felt by the locals toward the corp.

POLICE

Police have set up roadblocks around the tower "for the corporation's protection", diverting traffic and trying to isolate the tower.



Each roadblock consists of a group of Jersey Barriers (SP40, SDP 120) set up to form a speed trap (preventing high-speed rams of either the check point or the building), four BMW 600 patrol cars (SP20, SDP50, w/police radios and M134 miniguns), and a 2 1/2 ton truck (see pg. 63). The police have 10 patrol officers and 20 riot/SWAT officers at each position, in riot armor (SP25 torso, SP20 limbs, SP25 helmet, -3EV) and carrying assault rifles and some anti-armor rifles (just in case).

The police also have AV's and/or CityHawk interceptors in the air, to interdict any (corporate) air traffic.

Of course, the cops are unlikely to be expecting an attack of this magnitude (or, at least, they would have brought bigger guns). They can make trouble for the players before the actual attack, but the main strike force will almost certainly take them flatfooted. While they may not scatter completely, they aren't going to try to stop panzers with pea-shooters; they'll take cover and call for back-up.

THE BACK-UP

At some point in the attack, the National Guard will show up, after having been (hastily) called up by a harried call from the Mayor to the Governor. They are underequipped (most of their heavy weapons will be stored at the local COG base), and have had little time to assemble, but they're all that's available.

There will be at least one company of Guardsmen. It's possible that units will trickle in as they become battle-ready (in which case it's likely that the first units will show up with little more than rifles, armor, and Deuces, while later units, having had time to break out the weapons, will show up with increasing amounts of heavy weapons).

As the fight continues, they'll be able to get more and more of their heavy weapons online, including air assets and artillery.

In terms of threat, these guys are more than just an insect sting; it's likely they can make the lives of both sides difficult (as well as those of all the neighbors) at the very least. They have no compunctions about leveling all of downtown if they have to in order to stop the fighting.

Why Not Nuke It From Orbit?

If you just want to destroy the building, why not have ortillery or aircraft bomb it to rubble? Why risk men and material in a ground assault?

1. Air and orbital forces may not always be able to do the job. Ortillery sats are being actively sought by LEO inhabitants by this point. An ortillery sat usually only has a few seconds to fire its payload before a nearby killsat identifies and plugs it. Also, a couple of ortillery sats have demonstrated severe computer targeting flaws, resulting in some embarrassing—and nearly tragic—misses.

Aircraft are more flexible and reliable, but to field enough AV's or strike craft with the speed and payload capability to take out a tower on the first strike would require a LOT of AvGas, something that is in short supply by this point. Also, a tower's anti-aircraft defenses are usually far more effective than its ground defenses—so count on some heavy losses.

The one time a joint ortillery/air strike was tired (in Chicago), the aircraft timing was off by two minutes. They arrived early—right as the first ortillery rounds came down. A few made it back.

2. Total destruction is not always the sole objective. There's a lot of stuff in these towers worth grabbing: datafiles, hard copies, some equipment (whatever survives the assault), and—most importantly—hostages. Many high-level execs and others are trapped by these assaults and can be taken prisoner (even Arasaka execs. aren't usually willing to simply die for their corp) Some of this is done in the hopes of using the hostages as bargaining chips in any future peace settlements. Such plans prove fairly futile.

3. There's something about the sight of raw, armed might grinding your property to dust that has a greater impact than the Hand of God smiting you from orbit. It's also more satisfying to implement.

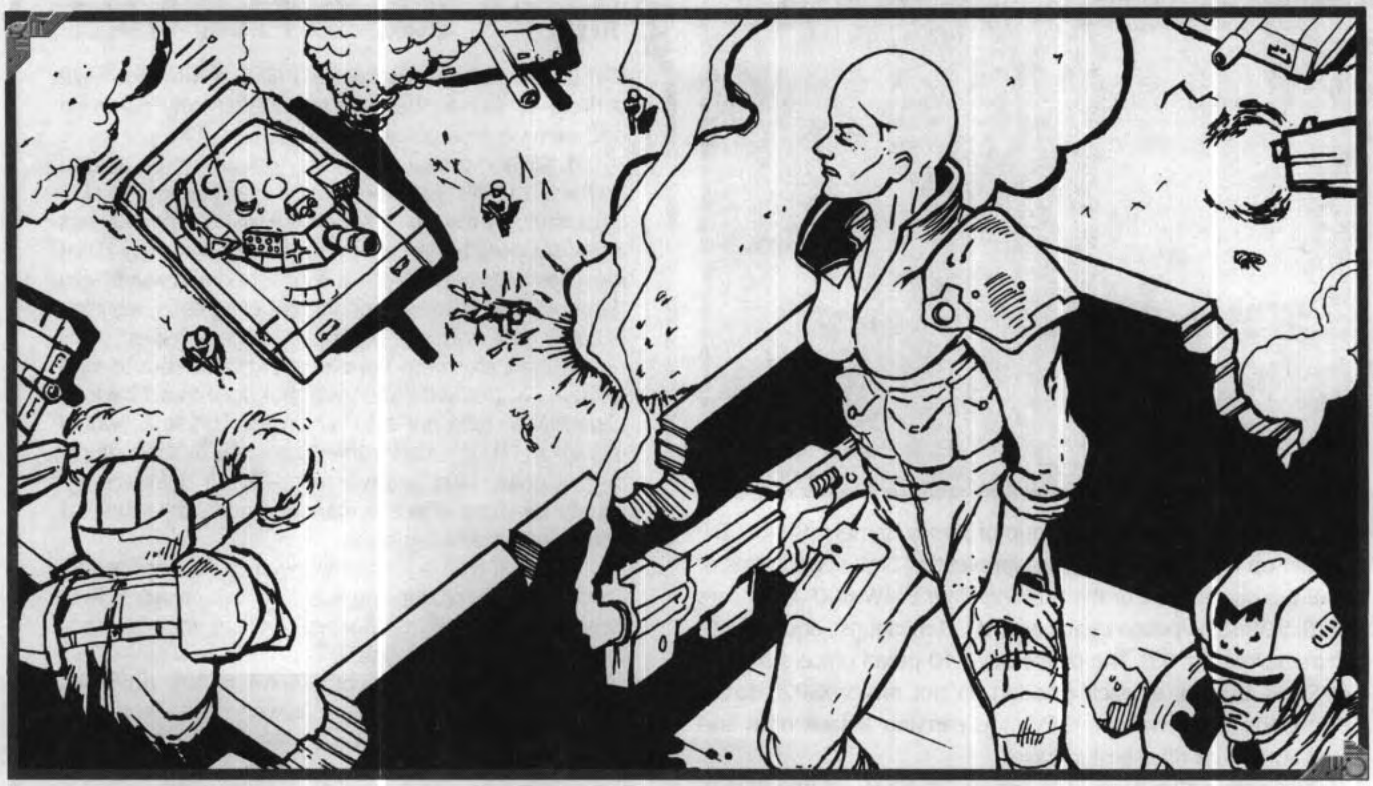
Call it a guy thing.

Collateral Damage

While up till now both sides have been relatively careful about trying to limit damage to structures and corporations not directly involved in the fighting (at least in the First and Second world, and usually in America), they just aren't bothering anymore.

So don't be afraid to blow things up in whatever city you base this adventure. Got a building you've never liked? Hit it with an artillery or mortar barrage; it's amazing what a high-explosive facelift will do to a place. Players got a really kicking apartment downtown? Let some IFAR rockets go wild in its general area (even if you don't blow it up, your players will sweat bullets). For a climax, let the attackers (or the National Guard) let loose with an artillery barrage that literally topples the building into it's neighbors. Go ahead, play Godzilla—it's fun.

THE BIG GUNS



"IN THE NAME OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, I ORDER YOU TO SURRENDER YOUR ARMS AND PLACE YOURSELVES INTO THE CUSTODY OF THE U.S. ARMY ... OR WE WILL BE FORCED TO TOTALLY BLOW THE CRAP OUT OF YOU."

—COL. JANICE CARDIFF, U.S. ARMY

LOCALE FIVE: A Reinforced Munitions Factory

The end of the war comes quickly. As atrocities grow in number and scope on both sides, the governments of the world take stock of the situation, decide that enough is enough, and act.

Government responses vary. Even as the gunships *Komsomolsk* and *Agamemnon* cleanse the skies of anything that looks even remotely hostile, the governments of the EU begin to nationalize all Arasaka and Militech holdings in Europe.

Japan publicly nationalizes Arasaka's holdings, and gives Militech very little time to evacuate its holdings. Privately, business seems to go on as usual at Arasaka; there is no change in management structure, and little else seems to change, other than the fact that Arasaka Japan no longer provides support for their soldiers overseas ... at least publicly.

In the United States, as usual, things aren't quite so simple ....

BACKGROUND

Even before Militech allies itself with the U.S. government, there are a number of strikes performed by National Guard and U.S. regulars against both Arasaka and Militech facilities.

Most of these attacks are made by ad hoc units, combined from whatever is available and can be quickly mobilized. Because of the typically urban setting in which many corporate facilities are located, an emphasis is placed on infantry and Special Operations units, with ACPA units often being the heaviest armor deployed. Other facilities, located in more rural areas, are subjected to massive attacks by mechanized infantry and armor, however.

Army and Marine tactics are relatively simple; if the site does not surrender when first invited to, it's leveled to the ground, especially Arasaka facilities. Only a small handful of facilities thought too important or too expensive to replace are spared this treatment, for instance the Militech nuclear munitions facility at Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

The initial targets of these attacks are fortified strongholds; munitions factories, supply depots, research sites, and other facilities that had been used as staging grounds and way sta-

tions for strike units. Corporate living communities (see pg. 114) and towers (see pg. 118) are exempted from the first round of strikes; there are too many civilians at these sites, and their roles are more economic than military.

Not all Militech units surrender immediately upon the alliance with the U.S. government. Some, convinced by propaganda put out by Lundee's enemies on the Board of Directors, continue to fight on. Thus, either Arasaka or Militech units can be used as the defenders.

Facility Particulars

Before being turned into an ersatz fortress, this base was a well defended munitions factory, located a number of miles from the nearest city for safety and security reasons. Many of the employees lived on the factory grounds, and most of the shipping was also centralized here. As a result, the facilities were larger than they might otherwise be.

The facility itself is located behind a 3m tall wire rim fence, topped with six strands of razor wire (canted 90° in two rows, with three strands of monowire in between them). The fence is normally charged with a low-level charge (no damage, but any break in the line, or any substantial drop or increase in resistance will set off an alarm) but can be instantly pulsed with a lethal charge (4d6 damage, nongrounded armor does not protect).

Just past the fence is a 3m deep, 10m wide ditch. The walls of the ditch are very steep, making it very difficult (Diff 25) for even motorcycles to drop down one side and scale the other. It would be nearly impossible for tanks or other vehicles, and the anti-tank and anti-personnel mines that line the floor of the trench don't help. Of course, this won't slow AV's down at all.

Which is why air defense, in the form of six separate SAM missile launchers (four emplaced, and two towed) are available. The emplaced sites have ten Scorpion rounds, while the towed units have four VSAMs. There are also four anti-tank emplacements, each with four HATGMs and eight Hellfires.

At each corner of the fence is a 5-meter tall guard tower, normally manned by four soldiers. The towers are moderately armored (SP50, SDP 150), and equipped with 7.62 MG's, searchlights, grenade launchers, and a laser designator for anti-tank rounds. At the base of the tower is an armored squad car for patrols.

A small strip of clear space, and another fence, separates this kill zone from the actual facility, helping to keep people from accidentally getting mulched.

The grounds are patrolled by fire teams, and there's plenty of activity, making it hard to sneak around (unless, of course, the players thought to bring some uniforms ...). Lights are plentiful on the outskirts of the facility, but many of the streets and houses on the inside of the facility are dark, a power-saving measure.

One place that is well lit is the small air strip and its facilities. The control tower acts as a kitbashed command center. Security is very tight around the strip, and much of the site's armor is located there.

Because of the number of "civilians" still located at the base, most soldiers have been quartered in the large warehouses near the main gate. The gate itself has been reinforced with what spare materials are available, and is protected by a platoon of troops equipped with heavy weapons. The approach to the gate is riddled with tire piercers, vehicle blockades, and tread breakers, and is angled so that vehicles can't get a running start at the gate; there are too many turns to get up to ramming speed.

In addition to the gate and the emplaced missiles, there are also plenty of local defenses set up. Fire positions are set up at strategic positions. Rolls of razor wire and tank traps are set up to try and funnel enemy attacks into kill zones. There are no mines set up, however (too much legitimate traffic).

FIGHTING IT OUT

Okay, here's the deal. We're gonna let you in on a little secret: There isn't a chance in hell the defenders are going to win. Just so you know. It just isn't going to happen.

This battle, in fact, is way beyond the scope of anything like the *Cyberpunk* scale. There are whole battalions of troops in action here, and more heavy tanks, AV's, ACPA's, combat borgs, and other military gear than most 'Punks would want to see in a dozen lifetimes.

So don't even worry about the battle. If it comes down to it, your players are more likely to be heading for the high hills than worrying about whether or not their side is winning.

Concentrate on all of the role-playing that can be done instead. Set up the players as assassins, sent in by the army to kill off the fanatical garrison command staff so the rest can surrender (or make them junior officers, put in the position of having to kill their lunatic commanders who refuse to bow before the hurricane). Send them in as negotiators (on either side) trying to get the garrison to stand down without a (costly) fight, or making sure that the defending troops will be treated with honor. Sow strife between unit commanders and sections in the garrison, as tempers fray and doubts as to who lost the war for the defender grow. Suggest that one of the players is really a spy for the defending corp, working to undermine the attackers' position (maybe the players really are spies ...). Have the players be a troubleshooting team in the attackers' encampment, detailed with trying to smooth feathers among the widely disparate forces arrayed against the corporation

Don't worry about the big battle. Concentrate on all the small skirmishes, the stuff where the players might actually be able to make a difference.

Questions of Loyalty

Whether the players are long term employees of the Corp in question, or are relatively recent hirees, the question of loyalty should definitely have come up by now (if the atrocities and crimes they've been asked to commit in the name of the Holy Corp and the Mighty Dollar haven't caused them to question it before now). After all, at this point, they are being asked to lay down their lives for… what?

The players should have no doubt that, if they fight, the military is likely to kill them all (having them intercept military communications, or a message from another site that was attacked earlier might be a good idea).

So the question becomes whether their sense of loyalty, honor, and commitment to a contract are stronger than their sense of self preservation, and the knowledge that running from a fight will likely have a strong impact on their reputation (not to mention the likelihood of earning them some pretty powerful enemies).

And let's not even think about all of their compatriots, wounded in the infirmary, determined to go down fighting. Don't give them a second thought.

Mission Ideas

ATTACKING

The attacking unit will normally be units of U.S. Army or Marine regulars, anywhere from a light battalion (two companies with extra platoons tacked on) to a regiment in size. They may be reinforced by National Guard, Militech forces (likely to be used as point units), or even MetaCorp regulars or Seven Nations nomads. It's possible for SpecialOps units from various government agencies or corporations (Infocomp, Tsunami, and others that have a grudge against Arasaka are likely to want a chance to kick them when they're down.) to be present. These units would be tasked with reconnaissance and other special missions. The exact unit make-up is up to the Ref.

In terms of deployment, most of the units that perform these attacks are motley at best. They're made up of units that can be rapidly deployed; as a result, there are a disproportionate number of special forces in many forces. Cybergrunt and ACPA units are also present in numbers, as they have been kept in a state of heightened readiness due to their utility in urban situations. The rest are usually infantry, although military police, signal, and other units are all drafted into service as combat units in the rush to deploy combat ready troops.

What's often missing is heavy armor. Beyond the time it takes to mobilize armor units, there is the question of their vulnerability. Though USAF and NeoSov SRC forces are cleaning the skies, there's a very real worry that either corp might still have a few CH-19 units in orbit, or might find a way to reactivate weapons shut down by the government. Instead, the government relies on man-portable heavy weapons and ACPA, supported by AV and helicopter gunships.

PC's working for the attacking side might be Army SpecOps, Militech operatives, assassins on loan from the NSA, or nomad outriders that have volunteered to help in the attack. They might be a group of agents from another corp looking to settle old scores, or even traitors from the corp that's being attacked! Their job could be almost anything from setting up a diversion to a near suicidal head-on rush into the jaws of death. They might be part of a negotiation team, sent in to try to get the corp forces to surrender without bloodshed. Or they may be sent in as a recon and sabotage unit, to break in and scout out the opposition, and break as much stuff as they can without getting caught.

DEFENDING

The defenders for this facility are worn out. They have little power (the on-site generators are mostly used for the defenses and internal communications), no running water, and no sewage. The only contact they've had from the outside world in over a week is Rachmaninoff blaring over the loud speakers the Army has set up outside, and the occasional negotiation team.

There is probably about a battalion and a half of combat-ready soldiers here, of mixed units. They have AV's (about half of which fly), some ACPA suits (mostly heavies, but they are low on ammunition, and in ill repair), and a number of ground vehicles (ranging from armed motorcycles to light tanks).

There are also substantial wounded here as well. As a major supply depot, this site was also used as an infirmary and recovery area for the area, and a pretty impressive surgical suite and field hospital has been set up in one of the outbuildings. There are also still a number of corporate employees here. They were staying to help the soldiers, and are now trapped.

Questions of Mercy

The Army is committed to either complete surrender or complete annihilation of the enemy. This may place some stress on any players on the attacking side. With the large number of freelancers on both sides, it's quite likely that the players are going to know someone on the other side. They may be friends, allies, mentors, ex-partners, or ex-lovers. Whatever their relationship, the Army isn't going to care; more accurately, the Army's feelings on the subject are irrelevant, as their orders are clear.

This could place the players in the position of being assigned to kill or contain people they care for, admire, or love. Not obeying orders in wartime is either mutiny or treason, and we know how the Army handles both: Ready, Aim, Fire!

War sucks, huh?

Players may be playing a number of roles here at the site. While setting them up as low-level grunts sweating out whether or not to desert can be loads of fun, think of the potential of letting them play company commanders or other higher ranked/more influential officers, serving under a dictatorial martinet determined to go down fighting (think *The Caine Mutiny*; got some fresh strawberries?).

They could be members of a SpecOps unit, assigned to sneak out at night and gather intelligence and sabotage enemy equipment (perfect chance to go walkabout, if they feel a pressing need to get the heck outta there ...).

The PC's may be assigned to evacuate the wounded while the rest of the unit holds off the Army, or, conversely, may be part of a distraction aimed at keeping the Army occupied long enough for most of the unit to escape to fight another day.

Players might even be members of a unit of reinforcements (!) who have to decide if fighting a lost cause is worth it.

INDEPENDENTS

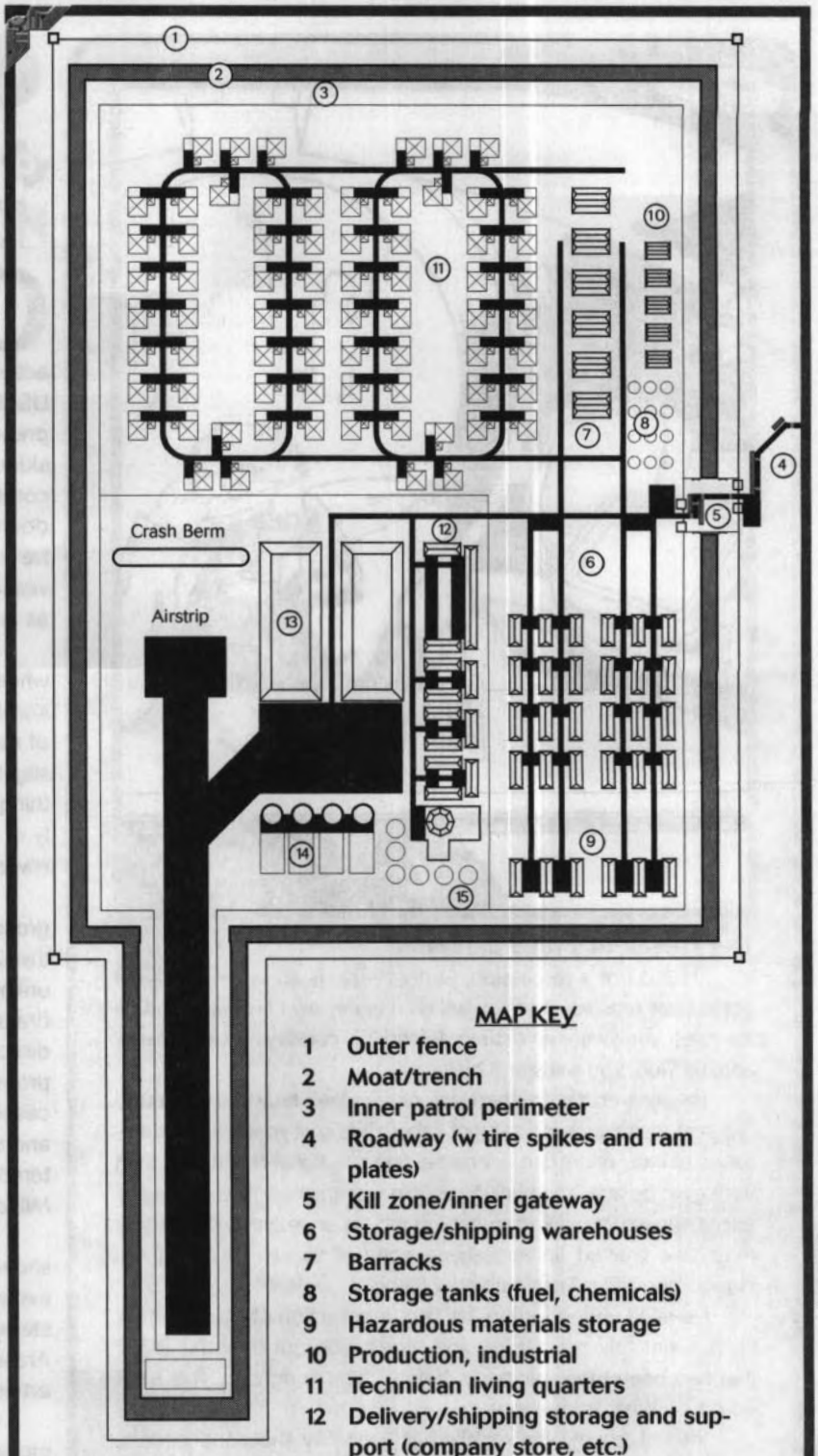
Independent characters are most likely trying to get out of the way! There are, however, a few reasons why nonaligned characters might be present on the battlefield.

Characters may have been hired by some concerned parents to extract a son or daughter before the attack takes place (for, of course, a very hefty fee). They may be there as observers from another corp, gaining intelligence on government tactics and capabilities. Or they may be there to make sure someone (on either side) is most definitely killed in the fighting.

While there's not much opportunity for theft, a clever party might be able to make off with some loot by posing as an attacking Medivac team, and then stripping the bodies. (Note that most soldiers take an amazingly dim view of people desecrating or looting bodies, even the opposition's).

The players may have holed up near where the battle is taking place, and got caught up in it (on either side, or neither) whether they wanted to or not. They may also want to get the hell away from the battlefield (not an easy task, of course).

Of course, they may have no choice. It's possible they could have been taken captive and held by the defenders as hostages, in which case they really want to get away before government troops stomp all over them just because they happen to be there.



MAP KEY

1 Outer fence
2 Moat/trench
3 Inner patrol perimeter
4 Roadway (w tire spikes and ram plates)
5 Kill zone/inner gateway
6 Storage/shipping warehouses
7 Barracks
8 Storage tanks (fuel, chemicals)
9 Hazardous materials storage
10 Production, industrial
11 Technician living quarters
12 Delivery/shipping storage and support (company store, etc.)
13 Airplane hangars
14 AV hangars
15 Offices and flight tower



The President's face darkened.

"This is not a discussion, *General*—this is an order. You'll still get to beat Arasaka—but you will do it under my command and by *my* rules. You swore an oath to defend this country and its citizens, and, by God, you will stand by it!"

She ignored the enraged look on Lundee's face and continued "Your vendetta against that bigot Saburo has cost your country thousands of lives, and more economic and emotional heartbreak than we'll ever be able to count. Your little war may be the undoing of everything we've worked so hard to rebuild since the Collapse. You may have created an apocalypse none of us can recover from. How's your faith in your oath now, General Lundee?"

Donald Lundee turned, his face a collection of warring emotions. Ultimately, resignation and regret won out over the anger that had been there moments before. "You're right. ... This can't go on. ... What have I done?"

"At last count, you've killed at least fifty thousand people, destroyed your company, and nearly wrecked the economies of several nations." She replied bitterly. Then her face softened. "Donald, you can still salvage something out of all this, but you'll have to do it my way."

Lundee stared blankly at the phone screen for several seconds, then quietly said, "What are your orders, Madam President?"

END GAME

THE GOVERNMENTS MOVE IN

On October 12, 2022, the world's governments began to take action to shut the war down. In the United States, President Kress activated the armed forces, and authorized the USAF to take "any steps necessary to remove the presence of hostile corporate satellites from our skies." The USAF gunship *Agamemnon,* in its first combat role, began systematically attacking and destroying anything its commander thought could be a Thor launcher or ASAT weapon, while her sister vessel, the *Achilles,* was positioned over Tycho City as a clear warning to the Europeans.

The Euros and Soviets, however, were busy elsewhere. Using their own Deltas, and the SRC gunship *Komsomolsk,* they proceeded to assist in the cleansing of near orbit. Some believe the Euros may have been slightly overzealous; they seem to have attacked anything that they didn't themselves own, and wasn't clearly of American possession, as they tried to gain some revenge on the Highriders for the fiasco at O'Neill-2.

Meanwhile actions against the corps on the ground moved into high gear. Donald Lundee woke on the 22nd to find himself confronted with an almost unknown, seldom used reactivation clause: The USMC drafted him back into service, placing him under the direct command of the President. The President promptly ordered Lundee to stand down his troops and cease all hostile activities at once or be court martialed and executed, with a speech that, by all accounts, blistered paint on buildings three miles away from the Militech Tower.

In Europe, a (possibly staged) raid on a Militech show room in Milan gave the EU government the excuse it needed to move against both sides, and they started nationalizing (by force when necessary) all Arasaka and Militech holdings, subsidiaries, and properties in Europe.

By October 23rd, U.S. military forces had begun moving against Arasaka holdings on the Continental U.S. In some cases they backed up Canadian regulars; in others, they were backed up by Canadian special forces, by Militech regulars, even by nomad packs. While overt assistance from other corporations was slim, there was a great deal of covert help, in the forms of intelligence and even, in some rare cases, the use of corporate facilities as staging areas.

The Fight for Militech

Lundee was in the middle of the most important battle of his life. Regretting many of his actions over the last fourteen months, Donald Lundee was determined to try to make things right. To do that, he needed full control of the company he had created.

Over the next week, dozens of Militech stockholders signed their stocks over; others had their stocks bought out by the corporation after their death, using clauses built into every employee and board member's contract. By the end of this rampage (thought to have been assisted by federal resources) Donald Lundee was CEO, majority stockholder by a comfortable margin, and Chairman.

Lundee, to the consternation of those few on the Board who opposed him, spun off many of Militech's subsidiaries into their own corporations. Indeed, some at Militech stated that, in his efforts to make up for his actions, Lundee went too far, divesting Militech of assets it sorely needed to remain competitive. Many thought he had become unbalanced with regret, and there was talk of revolt. Some units in the field refused his orders, and others simply deserted en masse, but little violence erupted.

The Temporary Quiet

Late November finds the war nearly over. Throughout the U.S., Militech and Army units are mopping up after the blitzkrieg they unleashed. For most of the country, life is trying to return to normal ... without much success.

Night City is still in the midst of the conflict, however. Long known informally as "Arasakaville", Night City is Arasaka's last bastion. Escaping Arasaka troops from all over the country have gathered here as Kei Arasaka tries to negotiate some sort of settlement; negotiations are complicated by the fact that he is dealing not only with the NorCal governor, Denise De La Vega, but with the U.S. President, Elizabeth Kress, who is much less willing to make concessions. Kei's goals are nothing less than extraterritoriality for all of Night City, giving Arasaka a free city to work from.

Meanwhile, Night City is ringed with troops. The vast majority are highly trained members of the NorCal Guard, but, despite her reservations, Governor De La Vega has allowed Kress to move in a division of elite special forces and air mobile troops from the U.S. Army (and Militech) to take up positions in the highlands outside the city.

Arasaka is not exactly bargaining from a position of weakness. An attack on Night City would inflict massive casualties on the civilian population, and large amounts of property damage on a city that De La Vega relies upon for a large portion of her tax revenues.

In addition, rumors have begun to circulate of a new threat. It's said that Arasaka has once again resurrected the infamous Soulkiller program and plans to turn it on the populace and military forces that surround them if a truce is not agreed upon.

At the same time, the problems with the Net have gotten worse. Rumors abound about some vicious new virus/effect that no one is able to detect or counteract, some relic of the Hot War that both sides are denying (and these denials seem to be true, given the amount of damage being done to all sides). Others furtively mutter darker, more sinister theories ....

Meanwhile, the war has devolved into a waiting game, each group standing guard until one or the other's negotiators blink.

MILITECH IN THE EYE

"This is Myron Hatayama in New York. Leading today's news are the startling actions taken by the armaments monolith Militech earlier this morning."

"This morning, Donald Lundee, CEO and recent appointee as Chairman of Militech, announced that the corporation, long known for its military and civilian weapons, would be spinning off a number of its subsidiaries. Current shareholders were given favorable buying positions for all of these corporations.

"Most surprising was the creation of a new corporate entity—or rather, the return of an old one. Lundee announced that he was recreating the company which grew into the mighty Militech giant, Armatech-Lucessi. The new company, which is returning to its original home in New Hampshire, will be bringing with it a number of its best technicians and researchers, including, surprisingly, Antonio Lucessi, widely regarded as one of the keys to Militech's early success and continued growth.

"Not surprisingly, a powerful contingent of security is also being ceded to the fledgling company, and control of its stocks are rumored to be firmly in the control of Margaret Ellen Goldstein, a member of the Board of Directors at Militech. Goldstein, long thought to be one of the primary contenders for the position of chairman before Lundee's startling ascension to the position after the former chairman's murder ten days ago, is said to already hold nearly a majority option in the new company."

"Many on Wall Street and the Nikkei market continue to wonder at the seemingly suicidal actions of the new chairman, even while stock prices continue to rise ...."

– INN (Instant News Now), a Channel54 subsidiary, October 29, 2022.

THE GUNS. . . SILENCED



INTRODUCTION

In the last few days, people have been disappearing; or, rather, their minds have. A number of high-ranking individuals, congressmen, state senators, etc., have been found jacked into the Net, their minds blank. Three of the first victims of this attack were two major Militech stockholders and a U.S. senator. Some posit strange effects of the data-altering virus that seems to be sweeping the Net, others suggest a Netrunner gone berserk with a copy of Zombie. But many have come to a much more frightening conclusion:

Soulkiller is back.

The players have been summoned (by whatever means appropriate) to the theater headquarters of General Patrick Eddington (see page 22), commander of the American and Militech forces around Night City. They aren't sure what's up, or what he wants, but they know it isn't likely to be good news.

For them, the war is far from over.

NIGHT CITY IN TWILIGHT

Throughout the war, Night City is the center of Arasaka activity. More than any other corp, Arasaka dominates Night City, and their tower acts as the nerve center for all activity on the North American continent. While a constant target for overt and covert Militech attacks, Night City becomes extremely hostile for them; gangs, edgerunners, police, the city government, even the Mafia all seem to be arrayed against Militech (who withdraw from their own downtown facilities in favor of the safer Proving Grounds in July). When the mayor, Mbole Ebunike, protests Arasaka's actions, he "suffers a nervous breakdown", steps down, and is replaced with a much more compliant and obedient Gavin Haakensen. By August of 2023, Arasaka rules Night City, and the city is placed under what is essentially martial law "for the duration of the crisis." A number of corporations abandon their facilities, which are quickly bought up by Arasaka.

Note: This adventure could, of course, be set in any city in which Arasaka has major influence. Night City is just the most logical, and makes for a sort of poetic justice, don't you think?

PART I: A GATHERING OF HOSTS: 2022

The door of the trailer swings open, and a young man in dark leathers, still dusty from the road, hauls himself up into the air-

SOULKILLER V 3.0

Soulkiller 1.0 was supposedly destroyed in early 2013 (see "Never Fade Away", pg. 180 in *Cyberpunk 2020*). However, Kei Arasaka never stopped dreaming of a mobile killer that could roam the net lobotomizing his opponents and reactivated the project, using his own funding, at the new Night City Tower (then under construction) and in a small lab in the Catskills.

Research into the fragments of code that remained, Alt's notes, and small amounts of research material recovered from off-site storage (which suffered a mysterious fire only weeks after the first tower was destroyed, destroying most of the data) was slow and tortuous, but by late 2020, a new version of Soulkiller, v2.0, was ready for beta testing.

Initial testing was in controlled environments; Kei did not want the Net public to become aware of Soulkiller until the time was right. After proving Soulkiller's capabilities, the project was put to bed, archiving the program at the Night City site, and using the Catskills site as the primary operation center. With only a handful of exceptions, Soulkiller v2.0 was kept under wraps.

Until the Shadow War started. In the early days of the war, Arasaka, though keeping some hot netrunners under contract, found itself outclassed in the Net. Militech was able to physically take out several of Arasaka's top-flight netrunners, and the co-opting of Rache Bartmoss further helped its position. Arasaka responded by unleashing Soulkiller 2.0 against Militech's Netwar infrastructure, killing several Netrunners, and crippling others by attacking their support people.

Rache responded by recruiting a team of Netrunners to track down and destroy Soulkiller's base of operations. Unfortunately, while he nailed one of the facilities, Rache slipped up during the operation. Arasaka was able to capture Alt, and later kill Rache (see *Stormfront:* "Dark Errand"). Meanwhile, Kei brought the Night City facility back on-line, with orders for a crash development course on a new, upgraded version of Soulkiller. Alt was forced by various means (AI's are particularly vulnerable to certain forms of persuasion) to assist in the development of the new version.

Soulkiller V3.0
Class: Anti-personnel/Demon
Strength: 7 **MU:** (see below)
Programs: Soulkill (1d6 INT loss per successful attack)
Hellblast (1d6 versus datawalls)
Anti-program (1d6 damage versus software)
Protection (stops 3 points even if attack succeeds)
Stealth (-4 to be detected when it wants)
Options: Disguise ability, Auto Re-rezz, Multi-task, Pseudo-Intellect, Interactive, Recognition, Trace, Movement, Memory, Endurance, Conversation, Icon (superrealistic), Speed
Description: The most fearsome version yet, V3 is nearly an AI in its own right, with a cunning and intellect that rival some Netrunners. Its disguise ability allows it to take almost any form it wishes (restricted to about a dozen carried at any one time), and its ability to multi-task is just like that of a netrunner running through a mainframe (i.e., up to 3 actions, at a -1 to speed for each; up to -2 can be offset by the program's Speed function). Still confined to large mainframes with massive memory buffers, Soulkiller v3.0's mobility and power make it perhaps the most feared program on the planet—so feared even its creator, Alt, wants it destroyed.

Soulkiller requires a minimum of an INT 9, processor speed 18 computer, with 45 MU of memory devoted just to the program. In addition, Soulkiller needs a massive memory buffer (over 4000 MU) to "store" its victim's engrams in while it works on compressing them down to a more suitable size for storage; its compression algorithms are much more effective than those of the Emergency Self-Construct program (pg. 92, *Rache Bartmoss' Brainware Blowout*); think of the ESC program as the "Poor Netrunner's Do It Yourself Soulkiller."

The Ref should use the rules for the ESC for determining the fate of anyone unfortunate enough to be the victim of the Soulkiller. However, due to the breakthroughs in Just-In-Time compression/decompression and advances in mimicking the holographic nature of human memory, divide all of the memory costs by 10. (ESC brute-force copies information, while Soulkiller v3.0 will maintain the holographic links, copying a given "chunk" only once.

conditioned command truck. Humor glints from his eyes as light glints from the conchas on his hat and gunbelt. A corned beef on rye wilts uneaten, clenched in his gunmetal gray fist.

"Evening *gatos y senorita*. Santiago, he sends his regrets, but he has much to do, now that the war is over. Many contracts for construction, many wounded—and dead—to look after, including some family. But he has sent we Lobos to help in any way we can."

"Well, well. Almost like old times, eh Johnny?" Thompson runs the diagnostics on his FN-RAL one last time as he speaks. Camouflage green combat armor sits next to him, his camera already chipped into the helmet's control port.

"Not quite. We've got a lot better support than a thousand screaming fanboys this time." Rogue's grin quirks as she looks out at Shaitan's camouflaged form leaning against the massive self-propelled artillery unit parked next to their trailer.

"And the stakes are a lot higher this time. A lot higher." Johnny's eyes are calm, but the Hand clenches and unclenches like it's possessed.

"Tonight, Arasaka Tower falls. For the last time."

Because it's possible for the characters to have come from a diverse set of backgrounds, we're leaving it up to you Refs as to how to get them all in General Eddington's office. They might be a unit already formed, veterans of the fighting, or a group of specialists gathered from different units and even corporations. Some might be brought in chains, others flown in from far away.

LOYAL SOLDIERS OF ARASAKA ...

are going to find themselves in big trouble. But it could still be very interesting to play some of the last holdouts, striving valiantly to hold off the onslaught until they can muster up a counterattack.

Players could be elite black ops soldiers, charged with defending the Soulkiller, Alt, and the databases at any cost, or destroying them if capture seems inevitable. Or they could be grunt troopers, thrust into a fight against seriously superior forces. Either way, their end will be glorious ... assuming they don't turn and run.

Of course, it's very possible by this point that the players will have defected to the side of the government, willingly or not. Expatriate Arasaka operatives could very well be brought in because of their understanding of Arasaka culture and security protocols, their familiarity with the Night City tower, and their raw skill. Of course, that doesn't necessarily mean they'll be trusted ...

Regardless, they'll be treated equally once they're in the General's office. Also present are Morgan Blackhand, the Solo known as Rogue (a bioplastic cast still covering one arm), a hardened nomad with an easy smile (Izzy Lobo), Johnny Silverhand, and a small, mildly attractive woman whose eyes speak of pain and a burning desire for revenge (Spider Murphy).

Eddington will tell them that the rumors they've heard are true: Arasaka has developed a new, more powerful version of Soulkiller. Agents have ferreted out the design specs, and not only is the new version completely mobile, it can attack multiple targets simultaneously. And, with its powerful pseudo-AI routines, it's much more capable of defending itself than any Demon. Worse, Kei has its original programmer, Alt, captured and stored, and is forcing her to work on the improved version.

They have to go in and destroy the program; left in the hands of Arasaka, it is far too powerful a bargaining chip. So, he explains, Johnny and a team of operatives are going to go in and take out the program.

The secondary objective is what the characters have been brought in for. Arasaka has kept a database of all of its intelligence files, information gathered over many years of operations. As far as is known, the last complete copy of this file is located here. He wants the characters to go in as a diversion, steal the database, and then set off a demolition charge to ruin the underground complex where the file is stored.

Regarding pay

This kind of mission is the kind that mere money can't really pay for, so Refs should be thinking in terms of services Militech or the government can render that will be meaningful to the players. Maybe they need to get someone off of their back, or some charges dropped, or ... well, the gratitude of the U.S. government will be nearly (but not completely) boundless. One thing the characters will be assured of is a complete identity rework after this is all over, courtesy of LeDiv (These ID's will be almost completely airtight, taking a master sleuth and weeks of work to punch holes in).

If the players want money (or also want money) ... well, it is the government, after all; they do print the stuff. You can pretty much settle on whatever amount you feel comfortable with (as long as it's a lot), but don't be afraid to slather them with it.

After all, by the end of this, they'll have earned it.

PART II: EVERYONE NEEDS A PLAN

The overall structure is pretty simple: Johnny's team (Strike Team Alpha) consists of Johnny Silverhand, Spider, Rogue, Thompson, the full-borg solo Shaitan, and a small number of Militech SpecOps soldiers and Lobo warriors and outriders (as well as a couple of out and out Solos; this is an opportunity for the Ref to resurrect old enemies or friends thought dead, but really "retired" and now part of the Lobo tribe). Their job will be to infiltrate the building, get to the Soulkiller lab on the 120th floor, rescue Alt, and destroy the Soulkiller system, all of the back-ups, and the lab (they have a firebomb for this, carried by one of the solos).

The second team (Strike Team Beta) will consist of the player characters and whatever help they want to bring along. There really isn't any time to recruit further freelancers. Refs may make exceptions if they want, especially if Night City is the characters normal stomping ground. Just remember that many Edgerunners are dead, injured, in hiding, or working for Arasaka by this point (especially in Night City), so most of what they can get will be Militech or U.S. Army Special Forces; they can also recruit warriors and outriders from the Lobo nomad pack if they want.

The last team (Strike Team Omega) is Morgan's operations unit (see *Stormfront*, Pg. 114-116), with support from Militech's elite ACPA and Combat Borg units if necessary. Morgan's team will act as a "fire brigade", used as reinforcements, a rescue squad, or interference should something go wrong.

As soon as they get the go-ahead from the President, Eddington and Morgan will authorize a full-fledged attack on the tower. They expect authorization in about twelve hours. The idea is to provide a distraction so that the strike teams can get in and out without running into too many problems. Other than that, Morgan says, the plan is pretty much up to the characters. "After all, you're the ones walking into the dragon's den," he says with a grim smile.

Eddington and Morgan will offer advice, and Johnny and crew will be sure to speak up if they think they're being thrown to the wolves, but in general, the planning is up to the players. Only if a plan seems truly suicidal or involves the slaughter of civilians, the needless slaughter of Eddington's troops, or needless property damage (other than the Arasaka Tower; they sort of plan that it will get a little wrecked) will Morgan or Eddington refuse to sign off on it..

The characters can pretty much get any equipment they think they will need, as long as Morgan or Eddington (i.e., you) approves, and it's something that can be gotten in twelve hours or less. Anything the military types can't get (certain drugs or chemicals, "street" weapons, etc.) Izzy, negotiator for the Lobos and a former fixer, may be able to arrange for acquisition.

The characters will also be provided with two specialized pieces of equipment: a combined data storage unit and computer infiltration system, and a nuclear demolition charge. They will be told that the database is deep underground, in a bunker built to withstand even a nuclear strike. The entire facility needs to be destroyed to ensure it is never used again. If the characters complain about setting off a nuclear device in downtown Night City, they'll be informed that there's no radiation hazard, and the device will be down deep enough to prevent any damage to the surrounding city. (This is a lie: Eddington knows that the device is powerful enough to wreck the foundations of the building, and destroy the tower.)

GETTING IN

The first thing the characters have to worry about, of course, is getting into the tower in the first place. They have three options; sneaking in, bluffing their way in, and busting in. Both have their advantages and their problems.

Breaking In

The massive strike on the tower can be timed to coincide with (or occur slightly before) the players' insertion, allowing them to take advantage of the massive chaos that will ensue. Troops will have been diverted from their positions, casualties will be streaming in, and many security features will be shut off to allow forces to move around quickly.

Of course, the players will also be under direct or indirect attack from the moment they enter the grounds. All chances of them avoiding combat are thrown out of the window, so they should expect to take casualties.

Lots of casualties.

Sneaking In

The players may decide to use the chaos to steal their way into the facility (or they may schedule the attack so that it occurs as they're on the way out, to ease their escape). Using sneak suits and lots of Electronic Security rolls, they may be able to infiltrate their way into the command center, place the charge, steal the database, and then get out, all without firing a shot.

But not likely. It's probable that at some point someone or something will detect them, and at that point a fierce firefight will break out. Since they are trying to be quiet, the characters will have to leave most of their heavy weapons behind.

REALITY CHECK

So why are the players being given so much latitude? They're planning the mission (other than the overall structure), they get everything they want in terms of weapons and manpower, they're being treated like kings—at least in terms of premission resources.

The fact is that Johnny and his team are the diversion, although only Morgan and Eddington know that. The primary goal of the job is not to destroy Soulkiller, although that's an important goal. The fact is that, like a bad penny, Soulkiller keeps popping up, and no-one, not even Johnny, is convinced they can destroy it forever. He's here to free Alt, since he feels responsible for her being a "ghost in the machine" in the first place (see *Cyberpunk*, pgs. 190-203). He has no intention of abandoning her again. He and his high-profile group are intended to draw the most flak and keep the security forces busy on the upper floors while the player characters make their way down to the basements levels.

The true primary target of the mission is the retrieval, or at least destruction, of the Arasaka database, and the destruction of the tower (although only Eddington knows that; Morgan suspects Eddington wants to wreck the tower, but he isn't sure).

Why? Well, since Saburo Arasaka took over the company and sent it on its current path, Arasaka Industries has been acting as a massive intelligence gathering group. This information is not usually used directly; blackmail and extortion are tools of last resort for Arasaka. Rather, it's been used to manipulate policy, predict outcomes, and shape the path that Arasaka would take.

There are hundreds of MU of information in the main database, ranging from information easily obtained from Infocomp databases, to passwords to get into Cheyenne Mountain from 1979-2005. There's information in here that could topple governments, shatter corporate alliances, and change the world as we know it. At this point, there's only one completely intact copy left. Arasaka: Night City took its main computers offline in the early days of the war, determined to keep its systems secure despite the cost in efficiency.

Such a knowledge base could allow Arasaka to regain, or even surpass, its old status, especially if everyone else's data is suspect due to the strange corruption effect that's working its way through the Net. Although only the Big Boys know how bad the corruption is getting, they can see the writing on the wall. In the conflict for hard data that they know is coming, such a pristine database could be the most powerful weapon of all.

And you wonder why Militech and the U.S. government don't want Arasaka to have it?

"BADGES? WHAT BADGES? WE DON' NEED TO SHOW YOU NO STEENKING BADGES."

"SIR I'M AFRAID I HAVE TO INSIST ON SEEING YOUR BADGES TO ALLOW YOU ACCESS."

"BUT I JUS' TOLD YOU ... AWW SCREW IT!" (SCRAPE OF BARRELS ON LEATHER) BLAM! BLAM! BLAM BLAM BLAM!

Bluffing their way in

While there are a (limited) number of ways for characters to bluff their way in (negotiators or representatives from the governor, "visitors" from the home office, supply deliveries, etc.), the most likely plan will involve masquerading as Arasaka troops.

This is certainly doable. The Army has plenty of captured equipment and hardware. Rifles, uniforms, even ACPA's and vehicles—the characters can be provided with pretty much whatever they need, although in certain cases they may be slightly glitchy (hastily repaired ACPA's, for example).

Current passwords and codes are another problem. If the players have enough troops, they may be able to stage a "breakthrough", smashing through the NorCal lines and racing their way into the city, under fire from NorCal and Army AV's until the tower opens up in their defense. Of course, Kei will want to meet and congratulate the leader of such a daring unit; this might be a good role for an expatriate Arasaka soldier with a flair for acting.

In any case, once in the tower, they will have to be careful not to slip up; after all, paranoia is a survival trait in the Arasaka forces. Fluent Japanese, familiarity with the culture, and knowledge of Arasaka methods and practices are all vital to the success of this plan.

PART III: THE ATTACK

The attack on the tower is two pronged. A massive flight of AV's, helicopter gunships, and air-assault troops (including large numbers of ACPA's or cyborg forces) is launched into the city center to strike at the downtown forces and pin them down, while the less mobile units are assigned to pin down (preferably without fighting) the Arasaka forces on the outer perimeter of the city. Overwatch is provided by a flight of F-38 fighters from the North Oaks COG.

Both teams are going to have a tough time of it. The aerial force will face gunfire and ground-to-air missiles most of the way in, as well as attack by Arasaka's (limited, but still excellent) air defenses (mostly AV's and helicopters, with a handful of VTOL fighters spread out throughout the city). The ground forces will be walking a thin line between keeping the Arasaka forces from redeploying to help their brothers in the city, and inciting either them or the NorCal Guard units into attacking.

The U.S. Army is going whole hog. Eddington knows that he hasn't really got nearly as large a force as he would like, especially if he ends up fighting both Arasaka and the NorCal Guard (which is a possibility). So there isn't a heck of a lot of tactical reserve built up: a few rapid deployment units in AV7's, and some small units of Air Assault forces and Marines from North Oaks, but not much more.

RIDE OF THE VALKYRIES

If your players aren't the types to enjoy an infiltration mission (or their characters aren't of the caliber to be able to pull it off believably), you may want to use them as soldiers, attacking the tower while the infiltration teams go in.

This is a major conflict, likely one of the largest single fights in the war. As such, the players will likely be issued plenty of body armor, heavy weapons, and other gear for a direct assault. Or they may be sent in ahead of time to place radio beacons for drop zones, scout out Arasaka defenses, and make contact with sympathizers in the city. They may also be sent in to disable ADA guns, radar emplacements, or otherwise pave the way for the attack.

And this way, they get to see all the action, instead of having to sneak around underground.

EVENTS (OR, "THINGS THAT GOTTA HAPPEN")

"The Guns ... Silenced" is not just an adventure, it's also a story. This final assault on Arasaka Night City marks a climactic chapter in several major NPC's' careers, and we know how we need their stories to proceed. While you don't have to follow our storyline, we present it nonetheless, so you can see how these characters fare in this tremultous beginning of a new era.

Thus, at various points in the adventure, there are sections labeled "Event." These are things that occur in the "main" timeline of the mission and affect the major NPC's in some major ways. Since they largely happen "off screen" from the player characters' activities (with Strike Team Alpha and Omega), we've written them out to give you a sense of the drama unfolding elsewhere during the mission. It's up to you and your players to write the other half of the story. Some of your players could even go with Strike Team Alpha or Omega and participate in some of this part of the story first hand, but the final resolutions of each event should be maintained. If you aren't necessarily following the timeline, feel free to ignore these events, but realize that they set up situations that develop in the third book, *Firestorm: Aftershock*.

THE TOOLS

THE MEMORY UNIT

The memory unit is stored in three armored briefcases (there are straps available to modify them into backpacks). The first two are nearly identical to Whitegate Data cache units (*Chromebook 4*, pg. 47) (400 MU storage each, SP 30, SDP 15). The third is a combination datastore/intrusion system; the datastore holds 200mu, and the intrusion system is a [INT 3 Speed +4 MU 50 Datawalls +7; Options: flip switch, dead man's handle (optional; can be switched off), hardened, smartlock, optical/power cables for link up to the other cases] PC/cyberdeck combination (note that it does not have cellular capability; there wasn't room. The PC netrunner will have to haul his own unit along). The intrusion system comes preloaded with Multitasker (see *Rache Bartmoss' Brainware Blowout*, pg. 19), and can be loaded with pretty much whatever software the PC netrunner wants, even stuff from Spider's personal stash (if he asks nicely ...). Spider's team has a similar unit, but designed to hold Alt's AI construct.

THE NUKE

Cost: A lot more than you've got
Availability: What? Are you kidding?
This is a nuclear demolition charge, designed to remove major underground facilities, wipe out small sections of cities, or otherwise induce large amounts of mayhem. Loonies and spacers use similar devices for mining and excavation, although they keep very close eyes on them. The unit uses a laser-net ignition system to set off a very small, uncontrolled, deuterium charge; it's essentially a miniature fusion reactor without any safeties or controls. The unit's packed in a kevlar and plastic armored case (SP 25, SDP 20) and has a separate trigger/control unit that can set the unit to detonate (on timer or by scrambled radio signal) from up to 5 km away (significantly less if the radio signal has to pass through steel or rock; the techies estimate no more than a few hundred meters underground). (there are actually three triggers. The players, Morgan, and Eddington all have the ability to set off the device, and Eddington has the ability to abort a destruct code. He can also tell where the device is by means of an on-command tracker).

When the nuke is set off, it will wipe out the command complex and much of the rock and structure around it, including the massive support pillars that hold up the tower. Between the weakening and destruction of the pillars, and the sudden vaporization of much of the bedrock on which the tower stands, there is no way the tower can remain standing.

The building will give a sudden lurch, as if kicked up from below. Then the North Tower slowly collapses out, obliterating everything in its path: Marshall's department store, a night club, the 10th St. Center. The East Tower will teeter for a moment, balanced on some impossible mathematical combination of gravity, mass, and acceleration, then totter over, crushing the Night City Stock Exchange, some abandoned Militech facilities, and the West Plaza Executive Tower. Debris from the crash will cause severe damage to buildings in the area, including the U.S. Federal Building and the Japanese Consulate. The two smaller wings collapse into the Microtech and WNS towers, causing amazing amounts of damage to both buildings.

PART IV: THE TOWER

There's no way we can really do a building as huge as the Arasaka Tower justice in an adventure like this: Describing a corporate tower would take a book all to itself (hmm ...).

So what we've done is isolate those floors the players are most likely to find themselves on: the rooftop, Kei's offices and living quarters, and, of course, the underground bunkers.

Unfortunately, if your players go off somewhere we haven't detailed, you'll be pretty much on your own. Some information on the layout of an Arasaka tower can be found on pg. 108 of *Stormfront*, and some information about the Night City tower in particular is available on pg. 103 of the *Night City Sourcebook*.

Overall description

The Arasaka Tower in Night City is located at #4 Corporate Plaza. 130 stories tall (with a number of underground levels as well), it's the tallest building in the city, and its shadow falls over most of the northern sections of the city as the day passes.

Security is very tight. All doors are tied into an alarm system, alerting security if an area is entered without authorization. Laser webs are used in many hallways to detect movement, and many enclosed areas are equipped with air pressure sensors. Door locks are normally Diff: 20, while secure areas have at least a Diff: 25 system, and frequently require voice print authorization or retina scans in addition. See the sidebar for information on internal construction.

Open areas often have a WXA system scanning them (these are not usually on unless a security alert is in progress, to prevent accidental discharge). Secure areas are guarded by a man-trap system; if the door refuses authorization, the interloper is locked in, unable to escape. (See *Blackhand's* pg. 6 for details on the WXA.)

Security response is hampered somewhat by how spread out the forces are, and how tall the tower is. Immediate security response is designed to pin a security risk down, holding it there until heavier forces can be brought to bear. Typical response is about 1-5 minutes, but will be by as many as 50 security guards or soldiers (they gather on a lower floor), unless the floor's forces are in threat of being overwhelmed, in which case reinforcements will arrive as available, from both directions.

During the Siege

As Arasaka facilities came under attack, the word went out that the official fall-back point was Night City. As a result, almost every survivor of the government's onslaught is here—literally thousands of

troops, many stationed here at the tower. As a result, there are soldiers housed almost anywhere they will fit; the apartments and barracks are long since overflowing, and soldiers are sleeping in offices, in labs, in executive suites, and in hallways in some cases. Whole floors have been turned over to the medics as treatment and recovery wards, and parts of the basement/parking garage have been converted into a makeshift triage/field hospital.

As a result, there are plenty of troops available for guard duty. Referees shouldn't hesitate to increase the strength of guard teams, substitute soldiers for "security guards", and in general adjust the threat level of the run to be a real serious challenge to the players.

After all, one thing Arasaka has plenty of right now is soldiers—there are hundreds taking refuge near the tower. Arasaka may not be able to feed them for much longer, but it has them.

THE GROUNDS

The grounds around the tower have been fortified and heavily secured since the war started. Heavy anti-ram barriers are set up to prevent suicide bombers, mobile checkpoints have been set up at every access point, and anti-tank launchers and machine gun nests have been emplaced in positions overlooking every approach. The checkpoints usually have six soldiers posted at them, four armed with WAA assault rifles (two with underbarrel 40mm grenade launchers, loaded with a mix of flechette, flashbang, and HEDP grenades, pg. 80), one with a Sternmeyer M5a LMG (pg. 80), and one with a WSSX sniper system (*Stormfront* pg. 96) or a Barrett-Arasaka Light 20 (*Blackhand's Weapons* pg. 30) (25%/75% chance of either). All also have WMA SMG's (*Blackhand's Weapons* pg. 18) or WSA autopistols (*Blackhand's Weapons* pg. 10) as sidearms. Anti-tank launchers are typically Arasaka AP-87 light anti-tank guided missile launchers with five reloads (+2 • 24d10 HEAT • 1(6) • 1 • VR • 1000km).

Most of the guard positions are pre-emplaced units, on hydraulic rams that lift the units out of the ground. These heavy concrete bunkers are used for the anti-tank positions, as they have a heavier structure and construction. a second perimeter of well-constructed machinegun nests was set up during the siege. Made of sand bags and some prefab concrete slabs, they are effective gun positions, but not as heavy.

There are WXA machinegun systems (with surveillance cameras, to allow remote targeting and fire) on four of the corners of the building, and surveillance cameras give security a 360° degree view of the grounds at all times.

The grounds are patrolled continuously by fire-teams (two men with WAA rifles, one w/grenade launcher).

ROOFTOP

The tower's landing facilities are on the rooftop. There are cameras watching each roof corner, and a heavy array of ADA guns and missiles located on each corner. The East Tower has landing pads for a pair of AV's or small helicopters, while the West Tower has a single pad suitable for landing an Osprey (barely), corporate VTOL, or larger helicopters. The pads are mounted on hydraulic lifts, to allow vehicles to be brought into the hangars below. The back-up laser is mounted on the East Tower in a heavily fortified bunker. The two superstructure buildings on the towers contain flight control, a pilots' lounge, and elevators to the lower levels, as well as a security/fire control station. There are normally ten guards stationed on each rooftop, armed with WAA rifles, and anywhere from 5-20 "noncombatants", depending on the situation.

ADA guns have (+0 • 12d10 HE • 1200 • 30 • VR • 600m • 14+d10 computer targeting), while the missile launchers are (-1 • 7d10 • 8 • 2 • VR • 500m • 6m blast • 12+d10 computer targeting). There are a total of six ADA guns and two Scorpion launchers on the roof.

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION/SYSTEM RATINGS

Item	SP	SDP	Notice	Rating
Standard (office) wall	5	15/m		
Reinforced wall	20	60/m		
External wall	50	150/m		
External windows	25	75/m		
Office door	5	15		20
Concealed security door	15	45	20	25
Security door	20	60		25
Often equipped w/voice print or retina scan security system				
Laser web	0	2	20	20
Air pressure sensor	0	2	15	30
Thermal sensors	0	2	25	20
Voice Print	5	10		20
Jersey barriers	40	120		
Weapon emplacement	30	90		
(Ratings presume proper tools and skills, typically Electronic Security or Lockpicking)				

Event: The Uplink

"Sir?"

"Yes, Tai-Sa? What is it?"

"We think they may be headed for the Soulkiller project, but we aren't sure. There also seems to be a group of their forces headed for the command center; they could be aiming for the database."

"Interesting. Send Adam and two squads to deal with the force at the Soulkiller Lab, and detach an additional platoon of troops to the command center."

Kei Arasaka hesitates for a moment, then turns to the young captain waiting there.

"Tai-Sa, in addition, ready the laser uplink for a back-up to Honshu, and turn on the nearest commsat for reception. And Tai-Sa?"

"Yes, Sir?"

"Ready my AV, and have the *Sea Viper* standing by ... just in case."

Elsewhere:

"Guys, this is Morgan. We have a problem. Listen up, and don't talk; I don't want anyone to lock onto your position if you reply. We think they've found you out; there are forces redeploying back to the tower, and comm chatter's different.

"Worse, they've just opened up that hardened bunker on the roof. It looks like a laser uplink system; apparently, they wanted to make sure that they had a way of running a back-up even if we knocked out their LDL's and microwave gear. I'm leading a strike force in to knock it out, but that's going to force our hand. Looks like things are going to get rough. Sorry."

Johnny swears under his breath. "Things just keep getting better and better, don't they?" Then he raises his voice.

"You heard the man. Let's get this damn door opened; we aren't going to have a lot of time."

At some point in the attack (either when the main attack goes down, or when Arasaka determines that the characters are after the database, Kei will order that a back-up be made of the main database. The back-up data laser on the roof will be deployed, and they will begin the back-up. At this point, Morgan will break in on the characters' radios and let them know this, and let them know that he is going in to knock out the laser.

FLOOR 127-130: HANGARS

These four floors are pretty much identical, with the exception of the back-up laser on the 130th floor. These oversized floors (ceiling clearance; 6m) house the tower's various AV's, helicopters, jets and Ospreys. The East Tower has facilities on each floor for up to four AV's or light helicopters (with three in storage and one on call or being repaired), while the West Tower can accommodate a single Osprey or light jet, or two larger helicopters (with the blades stowed) on each floor. Floor construction is heavily reinforced, and can withstand the tread of very heavy machinery. Each floor has a small arsenal for storing munitions, and a parts store and tool room for minor (and not so minor) repairs. The northern most part of each tower contains fuel pumps and hosing to draw fuel from the tanks on the 126th floor up to the roof and each floor. The small office has a restroom in the back. Stairs and two elevators lead down to more "civilized" areas of the tower. There are usually no guards here, but there will be three to ten armed technicians here working on vehicles. Floor 130 on the east side houses the power circuits and other components for the backup laser.

Floor 126 is almost completely taken up with fuel tanks, exhaust vents, fire suppression systems, and other support gear. The only human-inhabited areas are the showers and lockers for the techs and pilots, located around the elevator core.



FLOOR 120: KEI'S APARTMENT/SOULKILLER LAB

Reserved for Kei (or his sister Hanako, on the rare occasions that she leaves Osaka), this floor contains the palatial residences built for them (their father's residence, overall very similar, is a floor above, while quarters for their personal guard and servants are on the floor below). Also located on this floor are the main research labs and computer room for the Soulkiller project (the storage databases are in the underground bunker).

Only the elevators in the East Tower will stop on the floor from elsewhere; the other elevators will come if summoned, however. The elevators open into a large foyer, monitored by a security team

(ten officers on the floor) and two WXA guns. The double doors that lead into the apartment can only be opened by a control at the security station (Electronic Security: Very Difficult to bypass).

The Soulkiller research lab and computer room are both behind a security door (protected by a man-trap system; Near Impossible to bypass the door lock, plus retina scan, finger print, and voice code ID tests.). The lab itself is scanned continuously by an active WXA gun; anyone entering without a coded badge (possessed only by the design team and a select number of guards and Kei) will be fired on immediately. In the remainder of the Soulkiller complex are cubicles for the programmers, an office for the project leader, a conference room, and a lounge with fridge, stove and three bunks. The bathrooms include showers for all night programming sessions.

The apartment is palatious, and includes a gym, dojo, mammoth living room and a kitchen worthy of a master chef (and living quarters for the chef, two bodyguards and an honored guest), a separate conference room equipped with the latest in technology, swimming pool, whirlpool, and sauna, and a separate room for holding tea ceremonies. There is also a small rock garden. The decor is a pleasant mix of traditional Japanese and modern styles. Kei will likely be here, conducting business in the conference room, and his guards will be with him. There will also be six elite soldiers (as per normal, but +1-2 to all skills and +1 to INT, REF, BOD, and MA) stationed in the foyer.

EVENT: DUPLICITY

"Well?"

"Johnny? I have a request: Would you stop pacing, stand still, and stop asking 'well' every minute! Shaitan and I will have the door open when we have it open. This isn't like popping the lock on a QwickieMart." Spider goes back to work on decrypting the access codes on the door alarms while Shaitan bypasses the physical systems. Johnny sits on his haunches, waiting.

"And ... we've ... got it! All right. The door's bypassed."

Johnny stands up, the Gun ready. "Okay! Shaitan, you drew short straw, so you're first in."

The borg nods and lifts his gun pod. "Right. See you in Valhalla if they've been lying to us."

Shaitan cracks open the door, scanning it with a remote extension, then flings the door open, whipping his gun pod up in a smooth motion and firing off two quick shots from the grenade launcher.

"Sorry about that. Autogun in the far corner, camera in the other. Taken care of."

"Well, if that's all, let's get to work. Spider, the computers are in the next room. Everyone else, secure the perimeter, and let's get those demolitions charges set up." Johnny strides into the room as if it were a stage and not a secret lab.

***Of course, it's probably all the same to him*, Spider thinks to herself as she jacks her heavily shielded deck into the console before her.**

<Hello Alt>

<What, who's there ... Spider?>

<Yep. 'My name's Luke Skywalker. I'm here to rescue you.'>

<What??>

<Sorry. Flatvid Rache made me watch one day. >

<Where's Rache? I thought he'd be riding point on any rescue.>

<Rache is dead, Alt. Arasaka found the conapt ... and dropped a rock on it.>

<Oh my god. Spider, I'm so sorry>

<Yeah, me too.>

***And Arasaka will be too*, Spider silently vows.**

"Spider, are you almost done? Is she there? Is she okay?"

"Chill, Johnny. Yes, I've found her and I've dumped her into the memory core. Now I'm releasing a recursive virus to wipe out all mention of the Soulkiller program."

"And?"

"Well, it should remove every trace of evidence, at least electronic, that the Soulkiller ever existed. It's sort of like what Facemen use to erase an identity, only more general. Now give me some space. "

"Make it fast. They've got to know we're here. "Johnny steps back out to the outer lab, scanning for signs of trouble, which gives Spider time to walk over and download the last of the datachips. Then she closes down her deck and joins him outside talking to that media, Thompson.

"What're those?" Thompson asks, his cyberoptic scanning the datachips Spider tucks into a pocket.

"Information on the development team, records on external Net access from the router, basic stuff. So we can track down the bastards who wrote this, and check for any offline storage sites."

It isn't, she reflects, completely a lie. After all, she does have that information, tucked away on the first chip.

It's the other ones that contain her ace in the hole.

As Strike Team Alpha hits the lab, they are slowed down by the security systems, but manage to accomplish their objectives of purging Soulkiller and downloading Alt. Unfortunately, they take a little too long ....

FLOOR 100: OFFICE SPACE

This is a pretty typical office floor in the tower. It has been chosen because it is the floor where the elevators and stairwell from the roof bottom out. At this height, only the two main spires of the building are occupied. There is no bridge between the two towers (a security precaution). During the day up to 100 people may work on this floor; at night, there will still be 10-20 people here, including the security forces.

Each side of the floor has a total of four security officers on duty at all times: two on duty at the security station (location 1), and the other two patrolling the floor). The security station has monitoring systems and a small arms locker with WCAA shotguns and WMA SMG's. Unified floors (floors with bridges, every 15 floors)

have 14 officers on duty (four per station, six on patrol). Normally these are normal Arasaka Trooper (see pg. 80 for stats), but in this crisis they could be almost anyone. The various offices normally have standard doors, but high security offices may have concealed security doors. Area 5 is a variable duty area; on different floors it may be a lab, large conference room, secondary computer room, large office, store room, or set of offices for a project team.

FLOOR 1: GROUND FLOOR

The first floor is really five stories tall (15m), and is a single large, open space. The entire area is a landscaped indoor park, with small trees, a goldfish pond with an artificial waterfall, even a small island. Daylight is pumped in through optical pumps from the roof, and at night pinpoint lamps in the ceiling provide light equivalent to a bright starry night, complete with constellations. This is the only floor open to the public, and is designed to impress. Entry is through the south doors; the doors at the north are for emergency exit only. There are standard checkpoints at both entrances.

The northern section of the floor consists of two large arboretums filled with rare and expensive flowers and plants. Both arboretums are open to the public (or were before the troubles began), but are heavily monitored by cameras and guards (usually four each).

The first feature you see as you enter is the security/visitors station. Two undercover Arasaka security officers greet everyone as they enter. Employees are asked to sign in (most employees enter through the underground car park), and guests are asked to wait in the small waiting area in front while their escort is called down (no one's allowed into the building unescorted). The guard station conceals two WXA machineguns, and cameras are discretely placed so as to overlook the entire floor. There are normally six soldiers working inside the station, and there will usually be a few more wandering the grounds. During the siege, two machinegun nests are set up, each manned by three soldiers (two with rifles, one with an M5a).

EVENT: JOHNNY'S DEAD, BABE, JOHNNY'S DEAD

"Going somewhere?" Adam's voice cuts through the silent offices like a bullet crack.

Someone screams, "Cover!" as machinegun and shotgun fire from Arasaka troopers spray through the narrow hallway, cutting three of the team's SpecOps troops in half. Spider scrambles behind a heavy pillar, as Rogue and Johnny take up position behind office furniture wholly inadequate to the job of stopping heavy fire. Spider watches Shaitan simply fade into near invisibility against a wall.

Rogue pops off a burst from her rifle, then fires two grenades. The Aras seem to want the lab intact and aren't using heavy weapons. Team Alpha is under no such constraint. Shaitan fires off blast after blast from the portable cannon he calls a shotgun, but is tagged by an autogun burst that sends him rolling. People on both sides spasm and fall as high-velocity death fills the entire floor of the building.

Somewhere, Spider hears Thompson scream in pain. Things are bad. There are too damn many of them—plus that borg. Time to make a decision. Bullets chip at her cover while she hurriedly links her cyberdeck into the heavy suitcase memory stash carrying Alt. No time to double-check, no time to confirm links or space available. She launches herself into the Net dragging the linked ICONs that represent Alt's personality, memories, and whatever else it is that makes her different from an expert system. All Alt has, she thinks to herself, is a hope and a prayer. Here goes nothing.

With a virtual "toss", Spider fires the various portions of Alt out into the Net, tagging them with a marker so that she can maybe retrieve them someday and, if she gets lucky enough, re-rezz them back into her second-best, now first-best, friend.

On the other side of the room, Johnny crouches under a desk, fighting with his past between bursts of gunfire.

***I left Alt last time. Just abandoned her. Not again. Not ever. Better to burn out,* says the Hand.**

***Yeah,* he says to himself—and he knows what he has to do.**

Spider spends just a few seconds in the Net—an eternity and never enough time. She comes back to find her cover still getting powdered, although the cacophony has diminished. She sees Rogue discarding her empty rifle and pulling two heavy pistols. Spider draws her own flechette pistol, its heavy weight somehow comforting in her hand. Suddenly, Johnny's voice rings out, not in song but in challenge.

"Hey, Steelhead! Let's Rock and Roll!" Johnny is standing in plain sight, a Militech SMG in one hand, the Malorian in the Other. He begins pumping out rounds at Adam.

Adam turns but hesitates, astonished at the audacity of the rockerboy, challenging him with weapons that won't even crease his armor. An arm comes up. The autoshotgun in it opens fire. APDS rounds cut the young rocker in half. Johnny spins and falls to the ground, a surprised look on his face, the Malorian still smoking in his Fist. It only takes a second.

But a second is all Shaitan needs. He suddenly seems to emerge from the wall behind Adam and grapples with him. Seeing an opening, Rogue and Spider react as one. Rogue stands, bullets streaming from her pistols like tears, raking down Arasaka troopers. Spider sits up and fires, picking Ara targets and putting them down, one shot after another. *It's all just a V-sim*, she says, *just a game. Just a game. Just a game.*

Adam lurches around, but Shaitan's grip is that of desperation. Spider sees that Shaitan' s right arm hangs shattered and limp at his side, blasted by a grenade. It's only matter of seconds before Adam gets free and takes them all down.

"Get out of here! I've got him!" Shaitan's hollow voice bellows at the two women. The rest of the Aras are down, but so are the SpecOps. Rogue, Spider, and a crippled Thompson are alone with the two battling borgs. They can hear more soldiers coming. They know they have no choice. As Spider moves to the rockerboy's mangled form, Rogue grabs her arm, her hard eyes boring into Spider's own.

"Johnny's *dead*, Spider. Help me get Thompson out of here."

Rogue's eyes speak of certainty and incredible pain, all slammed away behind an iron will to survive. Keep the meat baggage light, Rache used to say. Spider reaches for the data suitcase, but sees that it, too, has been savaged by gunfire; it's wrecked. She quietly wishes Alt good luck.

"Spider, *now!*"

But Johnny will be avenged, **Spider thinks to herself as she and Rogue drag the wounded Thompson to the elevator. She softly touches the datachips in her pocket.** *And so will Rache.*

As Team Alpha makes its escape, it will be pinned down by Arasaka elite troops, led by Adam Smasher. Most of the Militech red-shirts will get cut down in the first volley, and they take refuge in a lab. Spider tries to data-dump Alt through her cyberdeck, with unknown results (she doesn't have time to confirm the transfer). Johnny buys the group the opening to take down the Arasaka troops but gets shot and killed by a burst from Adam's autocannon; he never has a chance. Shaitan grabs Adam from behind as Rogue and Spider escape with Thompson from the lab.

If any players are with Team Alpha, they can participate, but Johnny must die, and Adam and Shaitan must be left alone to battle at the end.

SUBBASEMENT 1: PARKING LOT

Other than the concealed entrance to the command center, the loading docks (replaced with more warehousing space), and the exit out to the street, the first three floors of the basement are almost identical.

Getting into the basement parking lot involves passing by a pair of hardened gun emplacements and an automated checkpoint. Once in, the driver finds himself in a large underground parking garage, well lit and heavily monitored. Against the back wall are loading and unloading docks and warehousing spaces. On the left side is the top level of a small underground minimall (three levels), with shops of various Arasaka subsidiaries (the mall is not open to the public). The right set of elevators on this floor has a concealed control panel that will allow travel down into the Command Center. On the right side are several apartments for Arasaka technical personnel who choose to live on base.

Part of the parking lot has been converted into a makeshift mobile surgical hospital; there are raised flooring, sterile curtains, etc. to cut down on infection, and several mobile air purifiers have been moved in to help, as well as several "neutral sound curtains" to cut down on noise from the rest of the garage. There are two recovery wards, several surgical suites, and a triage/prep area, as well as parking for ambulances. Most of the rest of the parking garage is being used as a garage for a variety of military vehicles; many are undergoing maintenance or repair.

The left warehouse in the loading docks area is unused. Concealed behind a false panel (Very Difficult: Awareness to notice) is an airlock-style system that leads to an elevator core that has access to the main Command Center. Bypassing the locks on the doors is (Very Difficult: Electronic Security), and both doors must be bypassed separately; worse, the back door must be closed before the front one will open! If the task to open the second door fails, the first will not reopen… until security comes to investigate.

EVENT: BETA TEAM TROUBLE

"Haruko."

"Yes, Lord?"

"I need you to lead the tactical team sent to protect the database … and our remaining guest."

"Immediately, my lord."

"And Haruko …"

"Yes, Lord?"

"No prisoners … not even family."

"Understood, my Lord."

Alpha Team isn't the only one to face trained professionals with a score to settle. Kei sends Haruko Kanawa, leader of his Covert Ops Team, to head the tactical unit deployed to intercept Beta Team. If she has faced the characters in *Stormfront*, she will have a score to settle with them. And woe betide any Arasaka expatriots in the party ….

Haruko will try to set up an ambush in the command center, probably near the elevators (this is where a vicious crossfire can be set up). Or she may catch the team just as they finish in the datatbase room and force their exit through the submarine escape tunnel (see pg. 140). Nothing like a little pressure, right?

HARUKO KANAWA ———————————— SOLO

STATS: INT 10 REF 10/12 TECH 7 COOL 10 ATTR 10 LUCK 7 MA 10 BODY 8/11 EMP 9/6 Save 11 BTM -5

SKILLS: Combat Sense +9, Athletics +7, Aikido +5, Awareness/Notice +7, Driving +4, Education & Gen. Know +3, Electronic Security +4, Fencing +4, Handgun +6, Hide/Evade +5, Languages (Japanese native, English +6), Leadership +2, Melee +7, Rifle +5, Seduction +6, Shadow/Track +3, Stealth +7, Submachine Gun +5, Swimming +3, Weapons Tech +3.

CYBERWARE: Light tattoo, basic processor with level 2 Kerenzikov boosterware, interface plugs, smartgun and dataterm link, chipware socket, nasal filters, contraceptive implant, improved muscle & bone lace, rippers, and a single cyberoptic with colorshift, target scope, image enhancement, and Times Square Plus.

WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT: SP 18 hard combat armor (-1EV) w/ SP20 hard helmet, smartchipped Arasaka WSA pistol, smartchipped Arasaka WAA Assault Weapon w/ grenade launcher, wakazashi, three clips for each gun, smartgoggles with low-lite, antidazzle, and thermograph, headset radio, 1 flash-bang grenade.

NOTES: Haruko was withdrawn for "special ops" when the Hot War broke out. She has performed several assassinations in the last six months, but has been withheld from pure combat. She's itching for fight. If Haurko was killed in your Shadow War game, use another Arasaka NPC with approximate skill levels. If you want to use other members of the Covert Ops Team, feel free. Just be aware of what your players can handle.

SUBBASEMENT 14: COMMAND CENTER

There are only two ways the players will be able to get into the Command Center; the right set of elevators in the minimall or the concealed elevator core in the warehouse. The Ref will have to find some way of getting this information to the players (it is likely the Army will be aware of the concealed elevator core, though they will have no particulars on it other than its existence).

The command center is used to coordinate and track Arasaka Special Operations throughout North America; it was pressed into service during the Hot War to act as a nerve center for Arasaka's military operations. Its existence is theorized, but never confirmed; certainly few know its true scope, even in Arasaka.

The command center has living quarters for over 100 guards, technicians, special operations personnel, operators and strategists located along the top of the facility. Support facilities include a mess hall, library, firing range, gymnasium, and dojo.

Power for the facility is provided by a nuclear reactor (a type similar to those Arasaka builds for submarines) and turbine; access to the reactor is restricted and well marked (Near Impossible: Electronic Security to access). The area around the access lock is devoted to a number of labs and offices for the small research team located here.

A large circular command center houses small offices for a number of analysts, computer operators, and team commanders, as well as mission status screens, video displays, and other systems vital to the command group. The centerpiece of the room is a massive holotank in which floats a real-time update of the Earth and NEO. This display can be zoomed in or out to highlight or focus on almost anywhere in the world; even floorplans can often be displayed. Flanking the command center are the computer room and a machinery room that holds air and water circulation systems.

The database archive is located in a room opposite the command center behind a locked door (Near Impossible: Electronic Security). Located in here are massive storage systems, and a computer core to run the database archiving software.

Also here, in an adjacent room, is the storage core for the Soulkiller program; If the players check this room, they will find a video monitor that seems to be showing them a slightly surreal version of Yorinobu Arasaka, Saburo's youngest son! A check on the datafile name shows a file: Arasaka, Yorinobu—09/24/2022.

It shouldn't take brain surgeons to realize that Kei had his rebellious brother brain-sucked and placed in here. So what are they going to do about it? Yorinobu's engram set is totally complete, and takes up a little over 1000 MU when fully compressed. The netrunner of the group (or a skilled techie) might be able to run the program to "amputate" some memories or skills, or rig up a supplemental link to his deck (jettisoning his own programs) or other memory DB; figure another 45 MU are necessary to get everything, Programming, Cyberdeck Design, CyberTech, Jury Rig and Interface might all be appropriate skills, with difficulties in the 20-25 range.

Next door is what appears to be some sort of cloning facility, with something that a medtech might (Very Difficult: Medtech) be able to identify as some kind of neural uploading system hooked into the Soulkiller storage core. The equipment seems to have been used (if the players investigate, they will find tissue samples labeled Alt: 02/17/2013 and Yorinobu Arasaka: 09/23/2022, as well as several others).

Additional facilities include a small firing range and three large rooms for storing supplies and other materials. One is filled with supplies for the base, another with various odds and ends. The third is currently being used as barracks; there could be as many as a company of troops in here, though currently only two platoons are

YORINOBU WHO?

For those of you who don't have *Stormfront* or *Corpbook One*, this 27-year-old son of Saburo has always despised what his father's company represented. Yorinobu "ran away" from the family at 21 and formed the *Kotetsu no Ryu*—the "Steel Dragons"—bike gang. They have sworn to expose or destroy Arasaka and have been a thorn in Kei's side for years. Yorinobu maintains tenuous but loving contact with his younger sister, Hanako, who still lives in the family compound.

The characters may have met Yorinobu during the war—he refused to side with Militech, but did supply info to the Japanese government that helped in their nationalization of Arasaka's native offices. Certainly they would have heard of him, since the screamsheets love to play up "the rogue son of Arasaka" story.

In return for what he saw as Yorinobu's betrayal, Kei made him one of the first targets for the new Soulkiller. Now Kei has his little brother where he can do no harm—and he doesn't even have to dishonor himself by killing him. Except Yorinobu has been found by the characters ....

THE SOULKILLER PRISON

The players will face a dilemma. They have enough memory storage to either pull the database or to save Yorinobu. Saving Yorinobu will have major repercussions; as a male heir of the Arasaka fortune, he stands to inherit the mantle of power should Kei and Saburo be "incapacitated" (Arasaka still works more like a dynasty than a corporation). The characters will, conveniently, be unable to make contact with anyone during this time (too deep, too much ECM, whatever). So it's up to them: save Yorinobu, an innocent human and possible ally, or save the database.

One question that may be on everybody's mind is: Where did all the other engrams of individuals attacked in the latest Soulkiller campaign go? After all, the storage core in Night City only has space for a very few individuals, ten at most, less than a third of those known to have been taken. So where is everybody?

The answer is: Nobody knows. None of the technicians will have any answers; they only know that most of the pattern dumps were redirected to some offsite location.

stationed here. There are also a number of rooms that are meant as multipurpose areas, to be used as needed. Refs should feel free to customize these areas for whatever purpose they want.

There is normally close to a company of troops here, although many of them are sleeping or otherwise engaged (by the airborne attack). They are standard Arasaka soldiers (see pg. 80) armed with WAAs and WCAA shotguns, although there is a limited supply of heavy weapons, including WSSX sniper rifles, light rockets, several grenade launchers, and an EMG-85 railgun (just in case ...). All of the doors here have secure locks (Very Difficult Electronic Security roll), and important doors (storerooms, the arms locker, the storage core, the nuclear reactor, all escape tunnels, and the command center) are monitored by the computer for unscheduled access.

Scattered along the outer walls are a number of access ways to safe houses, concealed exits, even concealed entrances to other towers and facilities in the local area. All of them are locked, and can only be opened from the inside (they can be remotely opened from the command center).

There is a "small" sub pen that berths a single Orca class attack sub (see *Stormfront*), used as a getaway vehicle for the most important personnel. Any of your characters know how to pilot a sub?

So What About The Database?

There are five possible results regarding the database:

1. The players opt to save Yorinobu and then blow the bomb. This will likely save a lot of people a lot of heartache, and be largely a good thing.

2. The players grab the database, but end up leaving it behind in the quest for speed. This is a valid option; they've been told that capturing the database is secondary to destroying it.

3. They retrieve the database. In this case, they will find that the database has been corrupted by whatever is infecting the Net, which apparently was infecting the software used in the dump.

4. They are unable, for whatever reason, to retrieve the database at all, and end up merely destroying it.

5. For whatever reason, they are unable to retrieve the database or destroy it, in which case the self-destruct device in the tower blows it up.

In any case, the database should not survive intact. It's just too big, and too important. Somehow, the information should be destroyed, altered, or rendered unusable.

EVENT: DUEL ON THE ROOFTOP

"Oh Morgan—"

"What the—" Morgan snaps around and down in a roll out of the AV's open hatch, the heavy assault rifle cradled in his arms. *Aww, damn. Adam. And what the Hell is he wearing?*

One of the massive arms of the powerframe Adam is wearing waves a jaunty hello, the biopod clutched in it shaking about like a child's toy.

"Oh, I'm sorry. You probably don't recognize him from this angle, but this is your friend Shaitan ... or what's left of him. I'm afraid Silverhand is in even worse shape. At least the borg's still alive in here. I'd give him another good ... ohh ... ten minutes 'fore the pod's battery dies. But to get him, you're gonna have to get me. "

Morgan turns to the AV. "Get the hell out of here! Now!"

"Chief, we ain't leaving you here!"

"You sure as hell are. You have to make sure Spider and the others get out. Now go! I'll be along ... in a minute."



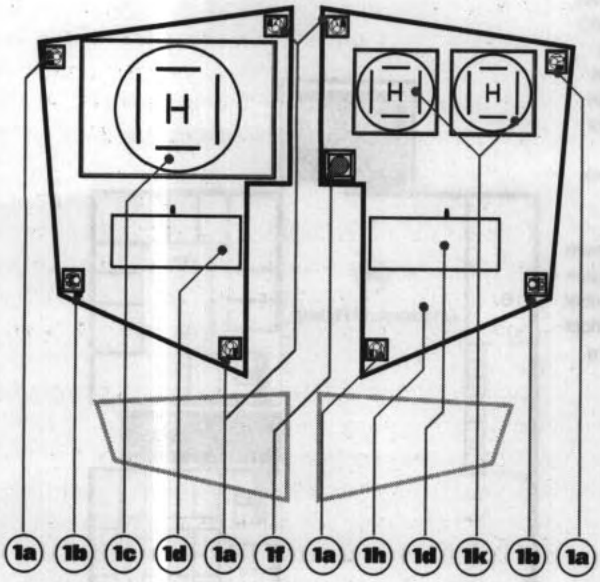
He watches the AV lift off, then turns back around. Cocking the rifle, he intones, "All right pip-squeak, time to see if Metal really *is* better than Meat.
"Let's dance."

As Morgan's group begins its evac after taking out the rooftop laser, Adam Smasher, in the Dai-Oni battlesuit, confronts him on the roof. Threatening to destroy Shaitan's biopod, Adam forces Morgan into a one-on-one combat on the rooftops of the tower, a running gunfight as Morgan tries to get Adam to drop the pod so he can scoop it up, and Adam tries to get Morgan to sit still long enough to be squashed. As the building begins to shake from the detonation of the nuke, the two, from opposite roofs of the tower, launch themselves at each other in a last desperate attempt to kill their nemesis ....

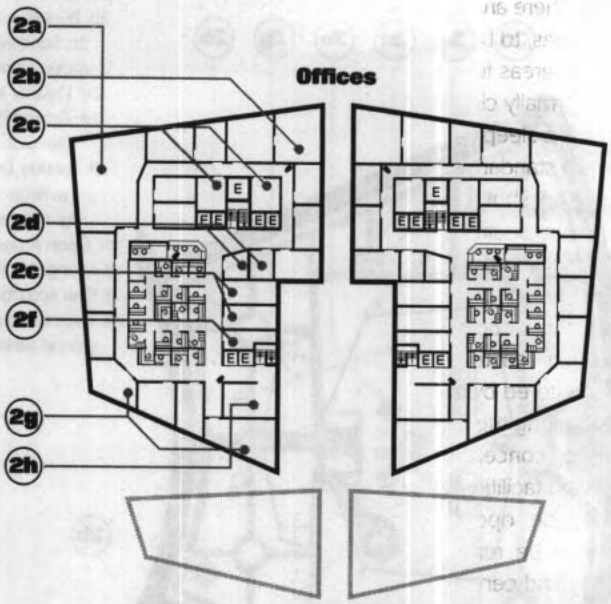
The player characters could certainly see this (since they had better be out of the building by this time). If they try to interfere, Adam will wave them off ... with an ATGM. If the players try to rescue Morgan as he plummets into the wreckage below, they can try, and may get very close (even getting hold of his arm), but will ultimately fail: Morgan may lose his grip, or Adam (also falling to his death) may put a burst of railgun fire severing Morgan's cyberarm, or an Arasaka AV or ground unit may throw up enough flak to cause the players to break off. They can, however, save Shaitan, whose biopod will also be flung about by the collapse of the tower. Can they catch it? If not, his pod can be found in the rubble, amazingly intact despite the fall. But the dueling duo's fate is left uncertain.

ARASAKA TOWER MAPS

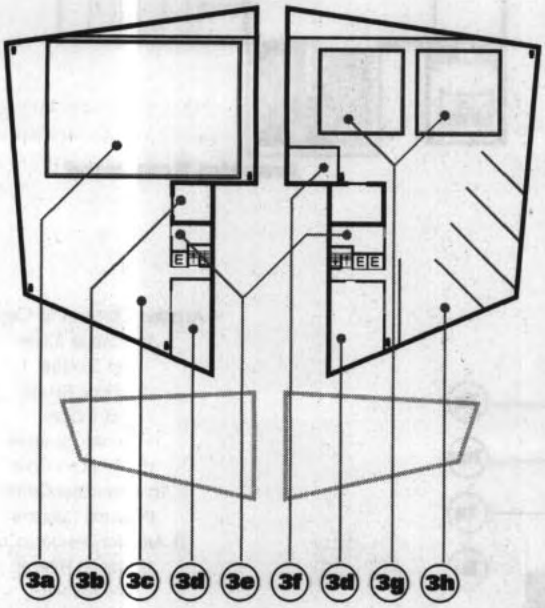
Heli-pad



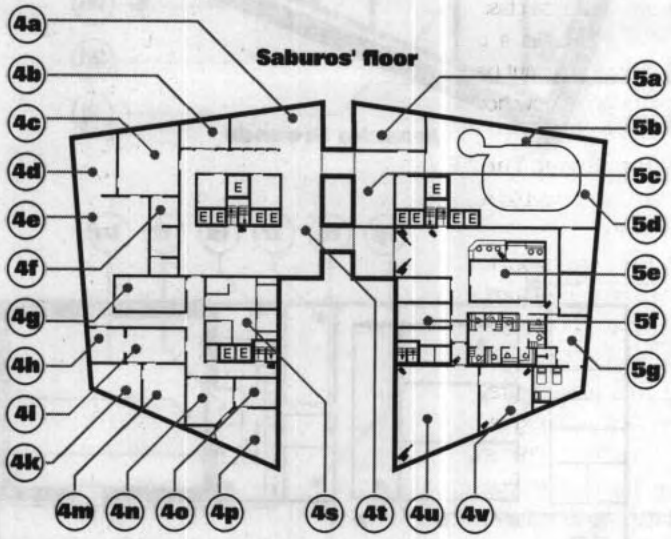
Offices



Hanger



Saburos' floor



– Helipad –

1a: 30mm ADA gun pod w/Radar
1b: Scorpion Missile Launcher
1c: Osprey Pad
1d: Roof facilities (Control Tower)
1f: Up-link Laser
1h: Antenna Farm
1k: AV Pad

– Hangar –

3a: Osprey Pad
3b: Arsenal
3c: Osprey/Large Helicopter
3d: Parts stores/Machine Shop
3e: Hangar Office/Lounge
3f: Laser Power Systems
3g: AV Pad
3h: AV/Helicopter Slip

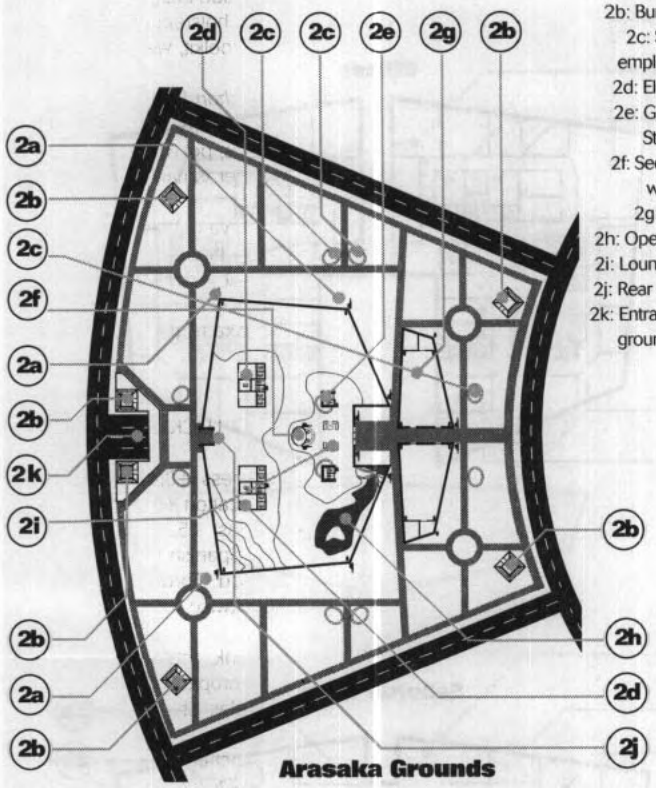
– Offices –

2a: Multipurpose Room
2b: Executive Office
2c: Restroom
2d: Storage/Coat Closet
2f: Janitor's Closet
2g: Conference Rooms
2h: Kitchenette

Note: Assume each half of the building is a mirror image of the other. Also, unmarked rooms are standardoffices.

– Saburo's Floor –

4a: Rock Garden
4b: Tea Ceremony Room
4c: Kitchen
4d: Dining Room
4e: Living Room
4f: Chef's Quarters
4g: Kei's Conference Room
4h: Entryway (main suite)
4i: Study (main suite)
4k: Restroom(main suite)
4m: Bedroom (main suite)
4n: Study (second suite)
4o: Restroom (second suite)
4p: Bedroom (second suite)
4s: Bodyguards' Quarters
4t: Foyer
4u: Research Lab
4v: Soulkiller Chamber
5a: Dojo
5b: Swimming Pool
5c: Gymnasium
5d: Shower
5e: Conference Room
5f: Restroom
5g: Researchers' Lab

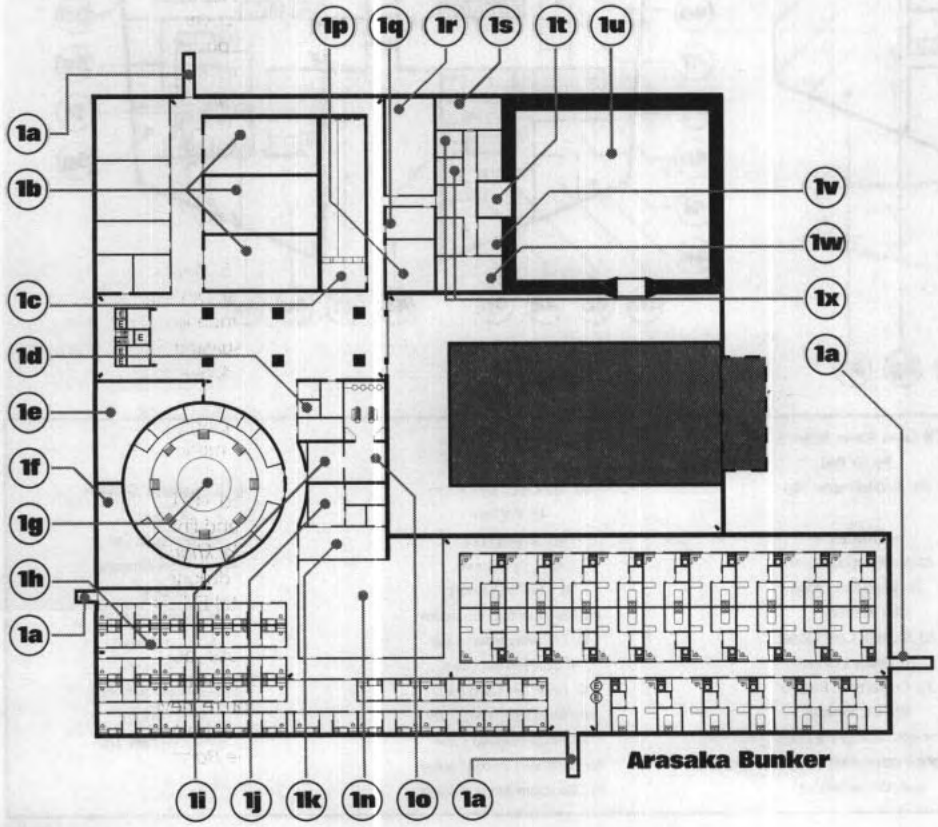


Arasaka Grounds

–Araska Grounds–
2a: Camera w/MG
2b: Bunker w/MG
2c: Sandbag emplacements
2d: Elevator bay
2e: Groundfloor Stairwell
2f: Security Desk w/MGs
2g: Offices
2h: Open Arboretum
2i: Lounge/reception
2j: Rear security door
2k: Entrance to underground parking



Arasaka Basement



Arasaka Bunker

– Araska Command Center –
1a: Escape Tunnel
1b: Storage
1c: Firing Range
1d: Offices
1e: Cooling Systems
1f: Computer Core
1g: Command Center
1h: Living Quarters
1i: Arasaka Database Core
1j: Walk-in Freezer
1k: Kitchen
1n: Cafeteria
1o: Soulkiller Storage Core
1p: Storage Closet
1q: Small Arms Locker
1r: Gym
1s: Lab
1t: Reactor Core Access
1u: Reactor Core
1v: Decontamination Room
1w: Uninterrupted Power System
1x: Offices

PART V: DRAMATIS PERSONA

TEAM OMEGA – See *Stormfront*, page 114.

TEAM ALPHA

JOHNNY SILVERHAND **Alpha Team Leader** **Rockerboy**
STATS: INT 7 REF 7/9 TECH 5 COOL 10 ATTR 9 LUCK 9 MA 7 BODY 7 EMP 7 SAVE 7 BTM -2
SKILLS: Charismatic Leader +10, Aikido +6, Athletics +9, Awareness +9, Basic Tech +3, Composition +10, Driving +8, Dodge +9, Education +6, Electronics +5, Endurance +3, First Aid +5, Guitar +9, Handgun +9, Heavy Weapons +3, Hide/Evade +7, Perform +10, Persuasion +4, Pilot Vectored Thrust +7, Rifle +6, Seduction +8, Shadow/Track +5, Stealth +5, Streetwise +7, SMG +7, Swimming +4, Wardrobe & Style +7.
CYBERWARE: Neural processor, Sandevistan boost, interface plugs, chipware socket, two cyberoptics (low-lite, infrared, enhancement), chromed left cyberarm (w/digital recorder), smartgun link, nanosurgeons.
EQUIPMENT: Malorian Arms 3516 pistol (*Chromebook 1*, pg. 52; P -1 J R 6D6 (14mm) 6 1 VR) (smart, eight clips with AP ammo). Hand grenades: three HE and at least one of every other kind. SP 24 vest, SP 18 bodysuit (total EV -4) or Arasaka trooper uniform (if they went in under cover.). Headset radio, first aid kit.
NOTES: Famed anti-corporate rocker and musical chart-topper, Johnny has a tremendous cult following, especially in the edgerunner community. An ex-soldier, he has not hesitated to go "into the field" for a cause he feels strongly about. And there's nothing he feels more strongly about than Alt.

ROGUE **Solo**
STATS: INT 7 REF 10/12 TECH 6 COOL 9 ATTR 8 LUCK 7 MA 10 BODY 8 EMP 7/4 SAVE 8 BTM -3
SKILLS: Combat Sense +10, Athletics +10, Awareness +10, Basic Tech +7, Brawling +9, Driving +8, Education +4, Endurance +3, First Aid +4, Handgun +10, Heavy Weapons +3, Hide/Evade +6, Intimidate +4, Melee +8, Pilot Boat +5, Pilot Vectored Thrust +6, Rifle +10, Seduction +8, Shadow/Track +5, SMG +10, Stealth +8, Streetwise +4, Swimming +6, Tactics +7, Tae Kwon Do +7, Weapons Tech +4, Wilderness Survival +3.
CYBERWARE: Neural processor, Sandevistan boost, smartgun and vehicle links, interface plugs, chipware socket (ambidexterity chip), two cyberoptics (independent targeting, low-lite, infrared, anti-dazzle), nanosurgeons.
EQUIPMENT: Two custom SAS-Model "Spitfire" pistols with cyberoptic triangulation, gas compensation, custom grips (+1 fast draw), and frag flechette ammo (P • +4 • J • X • 4D6+1 [1/2 armor] • 20 • 3 • VR • 50m), smartchipped Militech M31a1 with three extra clips, 24 minigrenades. SP 24 vest, SP 18 bodysuit (total EV -4) or Arasaka trooper uniform (if they went in under cover.) Headset radio, first aid kit.
NOTES: Rogue is one of the best—and lowest profile—street solos of the past decade (she didn't even get mentioned in any Ten Best Solos lists). She has a checkered history with both Johnny and—even less publicized—Morgan. When both these men put themselves on the line for this assault, Rogue knew she had to be there, if just to cover their backs.

SHAITAN **Full Borg Solo**
STATS: INT 8 REF 15 TECH 8 COOL 9 ATTR N/A LUCK 6 MA 20 BODY 12 EMP 9/3/7 SAVE 8 BTM -5
SKILLS: Combat Sense +9, Aikido +8, Athletics +10, Awareness +10, Basic Tech +8, Cybertech +4, Demolitions +6, Driving +7, Education +4, Tactics +5, First Aid +5, Handgun +9, Heavy Weapons +9, Hide/Evade +9, Intimidate +7, Melee +10, Pilot Boat +4, Pilot Fixed Wing +6, Pilot Vectored Thrust +7, Rifle +10, Shadow/Track +8, Stealth +10, Strength Feat +2, SMG +8, Swimming +6, Weapons Tech +7, Wilderness Survival +6.
CYBERWARE: Eclipse Covert Operations Full Conversion (*Chromebook 2*, pgs. 71-72), with added +2 REF (total of 15), +7 MA (total of 20), Shielding, +5 SP (total of 30 all-around), +10 SDP (total of 30 all-around). audio add level damper, sound editing. Optics add image enhancement, and tele-optics. Legs add heavy pistol (hidden holster), and MML. Arms add digital recorder, techscanner, electronics toolkit, weapons toolkit. A LOT of therapy.
EQUIPMENT: United Armaments CLAW (*Blackhand's Weapons*, pg. 39) with four clips of mixed of APFSDS and HEAT rounds, Militech "Cowboy" U-55 Grenade Launcher (*Blackhand's Weapons*, pg. 35) with 36 rounds of mixed frag and concussion. Militech Avenger (smart with eight clips) for soft targets. Emergency cybertech tool kit.
NOTES: Shaitan has single-mindedly pursued a vendetta against Arasaka for most of his life. No one is sure what made him turn his body into a weapon against the Chrysanthemum Corp, but his skill and tactics are legendary. All it took was a phone call for Johnny Silverhand to convince him to join in on this final assault against Arasaka Night City. See *Solo of Fortune 2* for more on Shaitan.

THOMPSON **Media**
STATS: INT 8 REF 8 TECH 7 COOL 7 ATTR 7 LUCK 5 MA 8 BODY 8 EMP 8/6 SAVE 8 BTM -3
SKILLS: Credibility +9, Athletics +6, Awareness +8, Basic Tech +3, Brawling +5, Composition +8, Driving +6, Education +5, Endurance +3, First Aid +4, Handgun +4, Heavy Weapons +5, Hide/Evade +5, Interview + 9, Intimidate +6, Language: Spanish +5, Melee +8, Persuasion and Fast Talk +5, Pilot Vectored Thrust +2, Rifle +7, Shadow/Track +7, SMG +3, Stealth +5, Streetwise +8, Weapons Tech +4, Wardrobe and Style +2.
CYBERWARE: Neural processor, smartgun link, interface plugs, one cyberoptic (infrared, lowlite, targeting), one cyberoptic (teleoptics, lowlite, microvideo), cyberaudio (radio splice, scrambler, chip recorder), extra chips for the microvideo.
EQUIPMENT: FN-RAL (smart and grenade launcher) with eight clips and ten grenades. Colt Enforcement 10 sidearm (*Blackhand's Weapons*, pg. 11) (smart, 4 clips), Hand grenades: three HE & at least one of every other kind. SP 18 bodysuit (total EV -3). Headset radio, first aid kit. (or Arasaka trooper uniform (if they went in under cover.)
NOTES: Thompson has been an investigative reporter for the last twelve years. His tour in the CAW left him with the skills and desire to walk on the wild side, and he specializes in covering edgerunner activities—usually first hand. He and Johnny go back almost nine years, and he used this friendship to level a slot for himself on this raid.

SPIDER MURPHY **Netrunner**
STATS: INT 10 REF 8 TECH 8 COOL 9 ATTR 7 LUCK 6 MA 4 BODY 4 EMP 6 SAVE 4 BTM -1
SKILLS: Interface +10, Aikido +6, Athletics +5, Awareness +9, Basic Tech +6, Composition +5, Cyberdeck Design +9, Driving +5, Dodge +5, Education +8, Electronics +6, Exotic Weapons (non-lethal) +5, Handgun +6, Hide/Evade +4, Library Research +10, Persuasion +2, Programming +10, Rifle +2, Stealth +4, Streetwise +7, SMG +4, Swimming +6, System Knowledge +10.
CYBERWARE: Neural processor, 2x interface plugs, chipware socket, cybermodem link, pain editor, memory chips, motion detector, digital recorder, voice synthesizer, nanosurgeons.
EQUIPMENT: Personal cyberdeck (80MU, Speed +6, Datawalls 11) built-into a buttpack and arm unit. One datastorage and link unit as per Team Beta. Malorian Arms Heavy Flechette Pistol (*Blackhand's Weapons*, pg. 14) (smart, eight clips with psychotropically drugged ammo). Hand grenades: three concussion. SP 18 bodysuit (total EV -3). Headset radio, first aid kit.
NOTES: Top-flight netrunner and Rache Bartmoss' best friend (if Rache ever admitted to having friends), Spider worked with Rache during his hunt for Soulkiller 2.0. His apparent death (you're never too sure with Rache) at the hands of Arasaka brought her into the Militech camp and she insisted on being on this mission. See *Rache Bartmoss' Guide to the Net* for more on Spider.

EPILOGUE

22 HOURS AFTER THE FALL OF THE TOWER

Kei Arasaka awakes with a start. The *Sea Viper's* engines are off. *Very strange,* he thinks, *I gave no orders to stop.* Have they arrived at the submarine rendezvous so soon?

"Takashi? Noriko?"

No answer. He slides his hand into the secret panel in the bulkhead above and withdraws his pistol and *wakizashi.*

As he opens the door, Kei notices his guards, slumped in the alcove. He checks their pulses: alive, but unconscious. No sign of a struggle. A smell of ozone. Some kind of tazer or EMP pulse?

Kei makes his way through the ship, checking for someone, anyone, or some cause for the intrusion. Even Tai-Sa Ogawa, the converted Samson, is down, covered in some form of plascrete, his electronic systems garbled. Everyone else is missing or slumped over at their station; there isn't even a sign of a fight.

He comes to the forecastle. Stops. There are lights in the special room used for the Tea ceremony.

He draws his pistol from his sash.

The door slides open. Inside, the soft lights cast an amber glow over a low table, on which are set a massive handgun, some kind of computer gear, and a dozen caseless rounds. On the far side is a young, somewhat pretty woman, sitting *seiza,* dressed in a kimono. Her face seems unaccustomed to the grim look on it. He flips through his memories and makes an association. His pistol comes up.

"Spider Murphy. An unexpected pleasure. You are, however, uninvited."

"I invited myself. Your guards didn't seem to mind."

"I do. And I believe I have the power to enforce my will." He waved his gun.

"You need bullets to use that, if I remember correctly. But I could be wrong. After all, I'm just a datathief." Her lips form a smirk.

Kei, shocked, stares in disbelief at the rounds on the table. Dumbfounded, he pops the magazine of his handgun to find it empty. He draws his *wakizashi.*

Spider is nonplused. "Mine, of course, is loaded. Your people are fine; some will need medical attention. It's amazing what you can do with less than lethal technology these days ... and a few talented friends." Kei sees two figures step out from behind a painted screen: one an Alphaborg he does not recognize, the other a woman whose demeanor says *solo.* While they do not brandish their weapons, their presence ends his plan to rush the girl.

"So now what?"

"Now," Spider says as she picks a bottle up from beside her, "you are going to share some sake with me, and then I am going to plug you into this little box. When I do, a Soulkiller system will wipe your mind, and place it in a prison Rache set up a long time ago. It was intended for your father, but I don't think Rache would disapprove of your occupancy."

"I see. And if I choose not to?"

"You have no choice. You have lost everything your father built. Your nation has turned its back on you. You have dishonored yourself and your family. It has all turned to ash, Kei. You must make amends."

Spider pours the sake with a steady hand. She passes a cup over to Kei, who takes it with a steady hand. They drink.

He nods to the computer link and the cable that is coiled next to it.

"You would have me execute myself?"

"I could force you, but I have no wish to. It is inevitable. It is the only honorable thing for you to do. Think of it as *seppuku.* You are *samurai,* are you not?"

Her words are honed blades slicing away the shield he had built in his mind: His attempt to deny his failure, the utter totality of his clan's collapse, his part in all of it as first son. His karma. As ruthless as he is, he *is* still samurai.

"You are not my first choice of a *kaishakunin,* but ...", he says. Spider nods.

He nods back, and solemnly jacks in.

As the Soulkiller rushes upon him, he speaks through the interface;

"The ocean waves swell
Stare into Death's eyes, laughing
The Seagulls cry above"

Spider watches as the twitching subsides, then ceases. Five long minutes later, she kneels by him, checking the pulse of her victim. She shakes her head and mentally sends a brief flurry of commands. The interlink on the table begins to smoke, as the last Soulkiller system dies thousands of miles away in a fiery blast.

She stands, walks out on the deck, Rogue and Shaitan beside her, and stares out into the night sky. Far away, a satellite traces a silent course around the earth.

Spider finally speaks, " Sleep well, Johnny. Morgan. ... Rache." Her voice breaks. A long moment passes. Finally, she can bring herself to speak again.

"Rogue, call for pick-up, will you?" she says quietly, all emotion seared out of her.

She feels clean.

She feels empty.

She feels dead.

"I need to go home."

Two days later, the end of the world begins.