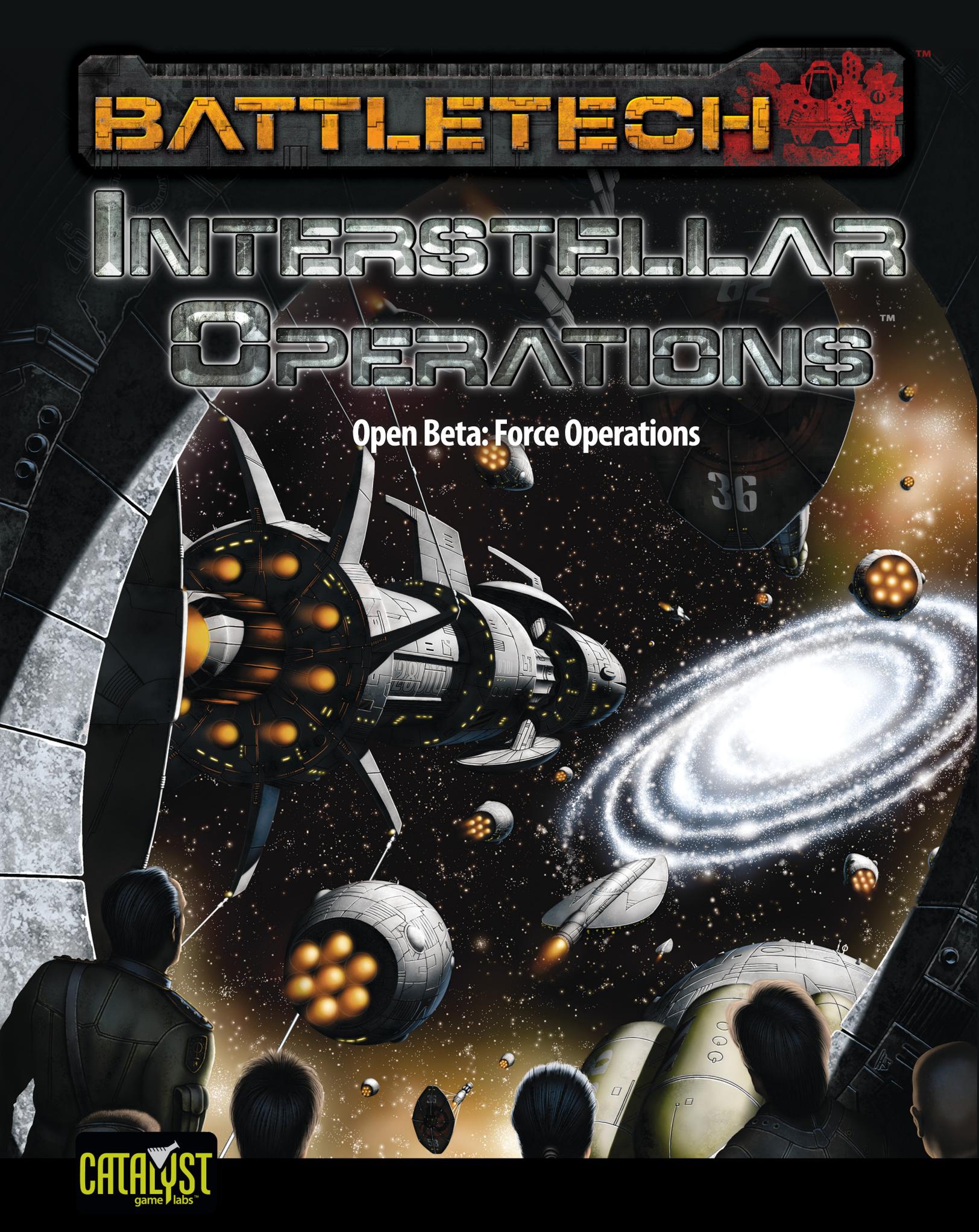


BATTLETECH



INTERSTELLAR OPERATIONS

Open Beta: Force Operations



This chapter details running the force created in Chapter X. It includes several separate sections that address different operational issues. These sections are:

Reputation: This section supports future hiring and campaign choices. While mercenaries have formal force rankings, similar rankings are applied to government and pirate forces so players can determine their government support and employability, respectively. Reputation can rise and fall during campaigns.

Hiring and Campaigns: This section settles the terms of employment and generates missions for a force. It starts with tendering offers, negotiating contracts, and addressing other potential income sources. While government forces are guaranteed employment, a poor reputation can cost them support, and while pirate forces are almost unemployable, they may find contracts from less discriminating employers. This section also supports play through the mission, wraps up costs and addresses changes to reputation. Most of the actual campaign rules are found in the Chaos Campaign chapter, p. XX.

Additional Rules: This section covers other rules applicable to running a force, such as developing specialties.

Terminology: These rules use the same terminology as *Total Warfare*: a “unit” refers to any mobile element that can be fielded in a *BattleTech* game. Meanwhile, a “force” denotes all units of a “named” organization. For example, the Snord’s Irregulars as of 3067 consisted of two battalions, while the Star League Defense Force Second Army as of 2767 consisted of 4 Crops (6 BattleMech Divisions, 17 infantry divisions and 9 independent regiments), yet both are considered a “force”. Regardless of type or size, a “force” denotes all units a player incorporates into the organization he will create and play.

Master Unit List: The Master Unit List is an online resource indexing units found within the *BattleTech* universe. Players can sort through hundreds and hundreds of units, finding their sourcebook location, relevant variants and all their record sheets, and so on. Most importantly for these rules, players can find the C-bill costs of units on that site. The MUL works hand-in-hand with Creating A Force and Force Operations to make building and running your own force as easy and as enjoyable as possible.

Feel free to check it out at: www.masterunitlist.info.

REPUTATION

A force’s reputation is used in many points of force operations, and the score will rise and fall over a force’s history. The various *BattleTech* publications on mercenaries have established the value of force reputation for mercenaries, which obviously benefit from better negotiating positions during

REPUTATION SCORE CALCULATION TABLE

Average Experience Rating	Value
Green	5
Regular	10
Veteran	20
Elite	40
Commander Rating	Value
Positive Trait (each)	+1
Negative Trait (each)	-1
Leadership Skill	As skill rating
Negotiations Skill	As skill rating
Strategy Skill	As skill rating
Tactics Skill	As skill rating
Combat Record	Value
Each Successful Mission	+5
Each Partially Successful Mission	0
Each Failed Mission	-10
Each Contract Breach	-25
Transportation Rating	Value
Excess Transportation Capacity for Combatants (1 – 100% excess)	+5
Excess Transportation Capacity for Combatants (100%+ excess)	+10
Insufficient Transportation Capacity for Combatants (1 – 99%)	-5
Lacks any DropShips	-5
Insufficient Transportation Capacity for Support Personnel	-3
Possesses JumpShips	+10
Possesses WarShips	+10 (+15 after 2800)
Sufficient KF transport capacity for all DropShips	+5
Support Rating	Value
Sufficient Technical Support Personnel	0
Sufficient Administrative Personnel	0
Sufficient Large Spacecraft Crew	0
Insufficient Technical Support Personnel	-5
Insufficient Administrative Personnel	-5
Insufficient Large Spacecraft Crew	-5
Excess Technical Support Personnel (150-175%)	+5
Excess Technical Support Personnel (176-200%)	+10
Excess Technical Support Personnel (201%+)	+15
Financial Rating	Value
Force is in Debt	-10
Crime Rating	Value
Robbery/Looting	-5
Slaughter	-10
Mass Murder	-15
Rape	-10
Kidnapping/Slavery	-10
Unauthorized Mission	-5
Other Reputation Modifiers	Value
Time Spent Without Missions	See text



hiring when they have better reputations. The concept is similarly used here for government and pirate forces. Pirates are occasionally hired by unscrupulous employers, though such employers will (usually) only consider pirates with a reputation for some level of discipline. ("Discipline" as in, "able to fulfill mission objectives," which might involve the most despicable terror, destruction, and mayhem wrought on enemies through the deniable medium of pirates.) And government forces, while not subject to the hiring process for mercenaries, use reputation to determine access to support (such as more equipment upgrades and more plentiful supplies). A government force with a particularly poor reputation, depending on the reason, may be broken up or even see its personnel jailed.

As a convenience, the MRBC-style ratings are used in these rules in any era for any force type whether or not such reputation systems are used "in-universe" for such forces or their era.

FINDING THE REPUTATION SCORE

A force's Reputation Score is found by adding up its Experience Rating, Command Rating, Combat Record Rating, Transportation Rating, Support Rating, and Crimes. These components are recalculated every time the force returns from a mission.

To find the value of each of these ratings, consult the Reputation Score Calculation Table below and add all results that apply to the mercenary force. Any sub-forces within a command that operate independently (such as an individual regiment within a multi-regimental command) should be calculated separately. Sub-forces hired or assigned to the force (such as JumpShips assigned to transport a merc force by their government employer) do not contribute to the Reputation Score.

Average Experience Rating: Players may find a force's average Experience Rating by focusing on the Experience Ratings of the force's combatant units (i.e., anything except JumpShips, administrators, and technical personnel). To determine a combatant unit's (WarShip, tank, BattleMech, etc.) Experience Rating from its skills, find the average of its Piloting and Gunnery (or Gunnery and Anti-Mech Skills for infantry, or Driving and Gunnery for vehicles) and cross reference it against the Skill Average column in the Experience Rating Table below. To then find the average Experience Rating for the entire force, add up the skill averages for all units of the force and divide that figure by the number of units.

EXPERIENCE RATING TABLE

Skill Average	Experience Rating	Force Reputation Modifier
11.00 or higher	Green	5
8.00 to 10.99	Regular	10
5.00 to 8.01	Veteran	20
4.99 or less	Elite	40

Cross-referencing this result against the Skill Average column yields the overall Experience Rating for the main body of the mercenary force.

The final average Experience Rating adds 5 points to a force's reputation score for Green, 10 for Regular, 20 for Veteran, and 40 for Elite.

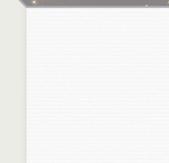
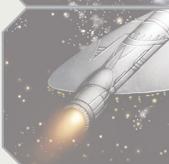
Since Arnold has purchased entirely regular units, this step is quite easy for him: all his combatants are regulars (everyone but his administrators, techs, and Invader crew). This adds 10 points to his Reputation Score, for a total (thus far) of 10.

However, after an extended campaign with seven successful missions (and, conveniently for this example, no changes to the TO&E), Arnold finds the four MechWarriors have their Gunnery and Piloting Skills drop to 3 and 4, 2 and 5, 4 and 3, and 4 and 4, totaling 29. The Bulldog crews have skills of 4 and 4, 4 and 4, 2 and 4, and 4 and 5, totaling 31. The Packrats have hardly changed for lack of combat kills, still having 4/5 skills for all four Packrats: a total of 36. The infantry have Gunnery and Anti-Mech Skills of 5 and 6, a total of 11. The Corsairs have improved somewhat to 3 and 4 each: 14 total. Finally, the skills of the Seeker's crew have remained at 4 and 5, totaling 9. Altogether, the force's skills total 29 + 31 + 36 + 11 + 14 + 9 = 130 for 19 units. 130 / 19 = 6.84. Looking at the chart, Arnold finds his unit has improved to Veteran, which adds 20 to his Reputation Score rather than 10.

Command Rating: To determine a force's Command Rating, simply add up the commander's Leadership, Tactics, Strategy and Negotiation Skill Ratings. Then add 1 point for each positive Trait featured at least once in the commander's character and subtract 1 point for each negative Trait. For purposes of this calculation, positive Traits are: Combat Sense, Connections, a positive Reputation, and Wealth or CHA of 7+. Negative Traits are: a negative Reputation, Combat Paralysis, Unlucky, or CHA of 3 or less.

If the player has not created a leader with the *A Time of War: The BattleTech RPG* character rules, the player can designate one of the combatants on his TO&E as the commander. Roll 1D6 for each of the commander's Leadership, Tactics, Strategy and Negotiations Skills. Add 1 if the commander has a Regular Skill Rating, 2 for a Veteran rating and 4 for Elite. The final result is the commander's Skill Rating in that Skill. Once he has determined all the Skill Ratings, the player adds them up to find the command Rating. Treat any final results of less than 1 as 1.

Arnold's group has three players, including himself, and since all of them wanted their PC to be the commander, none of them got to play the commander. As a result, the second Grasshopper (which was to be piloted by an NPC) is designated as being the commander's ride. The NPC commander for the group is thus a MechWarrior of Regular experience. Arnold rolls 1D6 and adds 1 (for a regular MechWarrior) for each of Leadership, Tactics, Strategy, and Negotiations, getting 4, 2, 2, and 5. Arnold adds those together to get 13 for the Command Rating. That, too, he adds to the force's Reputation Score, for a current total of 23.





Combat Record Rating: To calculate the effects of a force's battle history (after game play starts), use the guidelines below. These rules only apply to government forces (which receive orders) or merc forces (which have contracts to complete). Pirates generally get no reputation bonuses for completing a mission because no one is impressed with their pillaging, though pirates hired as a merc force will get the same bonuses as a merc force.

Simply add 5 points for every mission the command has successfully completed after force creation. (Past missions the controlling player has written into the force's history do not count, except for any bonuses from the Optional Back Story.)

Subtract 10 points from the reputation for each failed mission and subtract 25 points for any breach of contract/mission orders.

To successfully complete a mission, a merc or government force must achieve all the primary objectives defined in the mission contract/orders. If the force achieves none of the primary objectives, the mission has failed. If the force achieves some—but not all—of the primary objectives, the mission is considered a partial success and does not affect reputation.

Every completed non-garrison/non-retainer contract/order, or every three years of uneventful garrison duty/retainer contract/orders, counts as a single completed mission, worth 5 points in the Reputation Rating system regardless of how long the contract actually runs. If a contract or set of orders covers several missions, treat each mission separately for purposes of determining a force's reputation.

Typically, only the gamemaster can determine if a force has committed a breach of contract/orders. If playing without a gamemaster, the players involved should select a neutral judge or panel of judges to decide the matter, present their cases to the judge or panel and then abide by the judge's decision. In either case, when resolving a contract breach, consult the rules under Mission Failures and Contract Breaches, p. XX.

For mercs, a breach of contract on any single mission of a multi-mission contract nullifies the entire contract, and the single contract breach penalty applies in place of any mission completion or failure modifiers. Government forces that breach orders do not have a contract to nullify, but officers and personnel may be court martialed.

The above rules refer only to conventional contracts. Any contracts/missions accepted that include covert operations, because they are less well known and less overtly advertised by employers and mercenaries alike, are worth only half the standard value for success, failure or breach. Note that when pirates are hired for missions, the missions tend to be covert because the employer does not want to be associated with the pirates.

Again, at force creation Arnold's force has no combat experience. (He's written up a great back story of epic battles and heroic victories over the years that led to the current force, but that doesn't count.) So, for now, there's nothing to add or subtract to the starting reputation of 23.

After the aforementioned campaign where the force completed seven successful missions, Arnold is able to add 35 points to the score. With the veteran status, that's a total of 58.

Transportation Rating: To determine a force's Transportation Rating, first determine if the force's own transports (DropShips, JumpShips, and WarShips) are sufficient to convey the force, including its noncombatants (technicians, administrators, specialist infantry, etc.).

Determining whether there is enough transport capacity for the combatants is fairly simple: compare the number of 'Mech, fighter, infantry, small craft, and other transport bays to the number of the corresponding combatant units in the force. The associated personnel get to ride in the quarters associated with those bays, or any spare passenger quarters. If there is excess transport capacity for combatants, add 5 to the force's Reputation Score, or 10 if the capacity is more than double that required for the combatants. Subtract 5 if the transport capacity is insufficient, or 10 if the force lacks any DropShips.

Determining whether enough transport capacity exists for support personnel may take a few more steps. A shortcut is to determine the number of bay personnel the force's transports can carry and compare that to the total number of non-transport personnel (anyone but DropShip, WarShip, and JumpShip crews) in the force. If this is insufficient, include passenger quarters (if any). If still insufficient, subtract 3 from the Reputation Score.

Add 10 points if the force has any JumpShips or WarShips. This is a one-time bonus regardless of the number of JumpShips and WarShips the force possesses. Add 5 more if the JumpShip/WarShip docking collar capacity is sufficient for all the force's DropShips.

The (Obsolete-model) Seeker is a versatile DropShip. Arnold uses the Seeker's option to trade 12 of the light vehicle bays for 4 'Mech cubicles, and trades 6 more light vehicle slots for the 2 fighters. The 4 Bulldogs occupy 8 more light vehicle bays and 4 Packrats use 4, leaving 10 light vehicle bays. The Seeker has 4 infantry platoon bays; its infantry platoon occupies 1, of course. Arnold notes the Seeker had 312 bay personnel. His force, less the 44 DropShip and JumpShip crews, has 166 personnel.

With 10 of 40 light vehicle bays and 3 of 4 infantry bays left, the Seeker has excess capacity, but not enough to carry the force twice over. This nets 5 points for the force's reputation. It can carry all the personnel, too (without touching the bay personnel capacity of the Invader), so that's 3 more points. The force has a JumpShip adequate to carry the Seeker and unused docking collars, for 15 more points. Arnold notes the force's reputation at creation climbs by 23 points, to 46. Being able to easily deploy a force to battle is worth a lot to a force's reputation.

After 7 successful missions and no change in force size or loss of transport, the force's Reputation Score is 81.

Support Rating: To determine a force's Support Rating (SR), refer to its technical and administrative support needs in terms of number of technicians and administrators, and any JumpShip/DropShip crew requirements. If the force has sufficient technicians, administrators, and large spacecraft crew for its needs (not including combatants pulling double duty as technicians or administrators), then no modifier applies to the Support Rating. For each category (technician, administrator, crew) that has an insufficient number of personnel, subtract 5 from the force's reputation.



If the force has excess technical support (often a valuable commodity), it may gain a bonus to its reputation. First, refer to the number of technical personnel required per Creating A Force (p. XX). Then divide the number of technical personnel in the force by the number required and multiply by 100 (to get a percentage), rounding to the nearest whole percent. If the force has 150 to 175 percent of required technical personnel, it gains 5 points. If it has 176 to 200 percent more technical personnel, it gains 10 points. If it has over 200 percent of the required technical personnel, it gains 15 points. (These bonuses for excess technical personnel are not cumulative.)

This isn't a hard calculation for Arnold: he got as many technical personnel as required and asked no combatants to pull double duty. He has no modifier here. It's a thought to acquire some extra technician squads to get a bonus, but that'd be 49 more personnel at a minimum—more to squeeze into the DropShip, and more salaries to pay. The force's starting reputation remains 46 (or 81 after the 7 successful missions.)

Financial Rating: A force's Financial Rating (FR) indicates whether a mercenary command is financially solvent or operating in debt. If a mercenary command's current war chest is below 0 C-bills, the command is considered in debt and loses 10 points from its rating as a one-time penalty. If a mercenary command pays off all its debts at any point, this modifier automatically drops to 0.

Without any starting force drawbacks (see Optional rules in Creation A Force, p. XX) like Indebted, and with some leftover funds in Step 3, Arnold's force has no debt. Its starting reputation remains 46 (or 81 after the 7 successful missions.)

Crimes: This is a difficult modifier to apply, and as a matter of simplicity it is generally either 0 (for non-pirate forces) or -100 (for pirate forces). Generally, the crimes in a force's past (before game start) do not apply unless the Optional Force Back Story rules are used. A pirate force's past misdeeds are factored into the blanket pirate force penalty.

If there is a gamemaster or the players are agreeable, penalties for crimes may be applied to the force's Reputation Score. Generally, crimes by individual members do not reflect on the force. Rather, the crimes below refer to misdeeds performed by some or all of the force's members working in concert. (A key point is that the crimes must be associated with the force by ratings agencies and/or governments. Like covert operations, unsolved crimes do not apply to a reputation.)

Another difficulty in applying these scores is the subjectivity of crimes. One nation's atrocity is another nation's legal military order. For that matter, opinions are likely to differ among players as to whether an action constitutes a reputation-robbing crime or not. The controlling player of the force should keep track of claimed offenses and the points associated with them to address such disagreements.

Finally, the penalties of crimes may no longer apply to a force if the offending member(s) are removed from it. If the offenders re-form a new force, a gamemaster may rule that the new force carries the stigma of the old crime. Pirates will find many of the actions they undertake to survive only continue to depress their Reputation Rating.

Conventional military crimes include the following:

Robbery/Looting: The force has looted a bank, a museum, a military parts depot, or otherwise taken goods outside their salvage rights. Each incident lowers the force's reputation by 5 points.

Slaughter: The force has killed civilians unnecessarily, such as an avoidable battle in a town that was not evacuated. This can be a difficult crime to assess because normal urban combat tends to kill civilians in any case. Generally, this crime applies to deliberately killing civilians in the press of combat when the deaths could have been avoided. The Age of War under the Ares Conventions is particularly strict about this, seeing any civilian deaths as a crime. Each incident of slaughter lowers the force's reputation by 10 points.

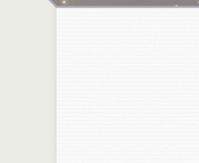
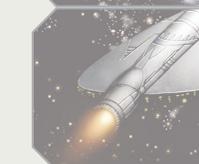
Mass Murder: The force has killed unnecessarily and in a pre-planned fashion, such as executing prisoners who had committed no capital crime or deliberately killing civilians outside of combat. Each incident of mass murder lowers the force's reputation by 15 points.

Violation: The force has participated in the physical or mental violation of one or more victims. Each incident of violation lowers the force's reputation by 10 points.

Kidnapping/Slavery: Outside the bounds of a personnel extraction mission, the force has kidnapped and perhaps enslaved one or more people. This is a 10-point reputation penalty.

Unauthorized Mission: This applies to a mercenary force with a current contract or a government force that launches a mission on their own without approval from their employer/government, such as an unplanned cross-border raid.

At force creation, Arnold has nothing to add here. His force has a spotless record, so its reputation rating is still 46. However, during successful mission #4, the group slipped in an A Time of War roleplaying session. The gamemaster had the force's government liaison officer, portrayed as a sleazebag, drop hints that it'd be very profitable for all concerned if their next behind-the-lines raid detoured a few kilometers to a planetary gold repository. The plan for the mission had been to wrap up the campaign and allow the characters to retire to tropical planets with loose dress codes and no extradition treaties, but the GM noticed the player characters were bragging loudly of their exploits in a bar within earshot of troops from their employer's military. The next roleplaying session entailed the characters turning over all the gold to the employer (except for some they cleverly hid as reactor shielding on their Invader) and narrowly avoiding joining the NPC liaison officer in jail. Accordingly, their Reputation Score was marked down 5 points. After 7 missions, it is 76 (and the Invader has some of the most expensive engine shielding in human space that has become rather radioactive.)



Other Modifiers: Time is also a factor in reputation, as memories of past deeds—good and bad—fade. A force with a positive Reputation Score that sits idle without a combat mission (any mission other than garrison or cadre) loses 5 points per full year spent idle. Similarly, a force with a negative Reputation Score that does not commit any further crimes regains 2 points per full year in which it remains crime-free.

Final Reputation Score: Sum up all the different applicable bonuses and penalties to get the final Reputation Score. A related and important value used in contract negotiations is the reputation modifier, which is equal to the Reputation Score divided by 10, rounded down to the nearest whole number.

With all the Reputation Score steps complete, Arnold notes his force has a score of 46 at the campaign's start (with a corresponding reputation modifier of 4). After the aforementioned campaign and looting incident, it will be 76 (and a reputation modifier of 7).

HIRING AND CAMPAIGNS

Once the force's reputation is determined, the force may seek employment. The general process for this is:

- Stage 1: Find the number of offers
- Stage 2: Determine the employer behind each offer
- Stage 3: Determine the type of contract (types of missions)
- Stage 4: Negotiate terms (Payment, Length, Command Rights, Overhead Cost, Salvage Rights, Support and Transport Cost. Use the Master Contract Terms Table below.)

Though pirates do not have employers and government units have guaranteed employment, the above four steps often apply to all force types.

STAGE 1: CONTRACT OFFERS

The term "offer" refers to any opportunity for a mission or series of missions, a holdover from force operation rules generally meant for mercenary forces. In the case of pirates, the "offer" is actually an opportunity identified by the pirates' information gathering efforts. Within the game universe, government forces generally aren't given options about their assignments but, as a convenience for gaming, the controlling player may still roll up a series of offers to improve the chance of getting an entertaining mission. How offers are generated differs slightly by force type.

Mercenaries: Mercs (and pirates seeking mercenary-style employment) seek offers on a monthly basis, with each month generating a different number of offers (and sometimes none). Time spent between contracts must be tracked, as forces have salaries to pay, parts to replace, and ammo to use in training regardless of employment status (see *Peacetime Operating Costs*, p. XX).

Hunting for offers is generally done on hiring worlds (or "hiring halls"). The entire force need not journey to a hiring world, only the force's negotiators, though forces between contracts

generally find hiring worlds more tolerant than other planets of large numbers of heavily armed personnel.

To determine how many Contract Offers are available, make 1 Protocol Skill Check per month, and apply the modifiers applicable to the Protocol Skill, and also those applicable to both the Hiring Hall world you're hiring from (if any) as well as the force's reputation modifier. Then compare the Margin of Success (or Failure) to the Contract Modifiers Table below.

The Hiring Hall portion of the table is a generic listing that differs from prior force creation rules because these rules are meant to address any era of game play, and there has been high turnover in hiring halls in the 31st century alone. "Questionable" hiring halls are the likes of Antallos (Port Krin) and Astrokaszy; minor halls are like Fletcher, Heroditus, and Solaris VII; standard halls are like Arc Royal; and great halls are like 3025-era Galatea and 3060-era Outreach. In many eras, there are no examples of hiring halls, so players will need to improvise.

CONTRACT MODIFIERS TABLE (3085)

Hiring Hall	Offers	Employers	Missions
Questionable Hall	0	-2	-2
Minor Hall	+1	0	0
Standard Hall	+2	+1	+1
Great Hall	+3	+2	+2
No Hall	-3	-2	-2

Pirates: Pirates, as noted above, do not seek offers per se. Instead, they are looking for raiding opportunities to make up shortfalls of spare parts, ammunition, salaries, even food and water.

Pirates do not generate these opportunities at hiring halls. Instead, they use the "No Hall" option when rolling like mercs to generate "offers," though they use their leader's Investigation skill instead of Protocol. This number of offers is then taken to the next step to determine what sort of raiding opportunities are available that month.

Government: Government forces also do not generate offers at hiring halls. Instead, they roll for opportunities as if using a Great Hall (generally, governments have no trouble finding missions for their militaries).

Within the universe, the characters and their government force will not actually be given a selection of missions; governments rarely provide their military forces with a menu of missions in which they might be interested. Instead, this roll for opportunities is strictly "out of character" between the players and, if present, the gamemaster to give government forces a more entertaining range of missions. The mission may even be an opportunistic raid that the government force's commander has found without input from higher command.

CONTRACT OFFERS TABLE

Margin	Offers
0 or less	0
1 - 2	1
3 - 5	2
6 - 8	3
9 - 10	4
11 - 12	5
13 or more	6

Unlike pirates and mercs, government forces are not left without income between assignments. By default, a government force is assigned to garrison duty between other missions.

STAGE 2: DETERMINE EMPLOYER

The next step is to determine the employer for each offer received. This step varies markedly between force types.

Mercenaries: Mercenaries (and pirates seeking mercenary work) make 1 Protocol Skill Check per offer, and apply the modifiers applicable to the Protocol Skill, and also those applicable to both the Hiring Hall world (if any), as found on the Contract Modifiers Table, plus the force's reputation modifier. A result of "Independent" requires a second roll on the Independent Employer column.

Connections can be used as well, where the Equip value acts as a modifier to all the Determine Employer rolls for the offers that month.

The "Corporation" result refers to any Inner Sphere or Periphery corporation. Contracts with them are usually prized as they often result in repeat work if performance is satisfactory, and because corporations often pay well to ensure deniability (at the expense of making the mission "covert," and thus worth less to improve a reputation score).

The "Planetary Government" result refers to any planetary government in the Inner Sphere or Periphery that has a problem not being dealt with by their interstellar government.

The "Noble" result refers to missions where a noble or wealthy individual (or family) hires the force.

The "Mercenary" result refers to a contract where another mercenary command is hiring the force as a subcontractor.

[**Note:** The Employer Table is strictly a placeholder and will be replaced when other sections of *Interstellar Operations* are completed.]

Pirates: This step is not so much determining an employer as a victim. Pirates roll in the same manner as a mercenary force with the No Hall modifier, but do not apply their reputation modifier this time and use their leader's Investigation skill instead of Protocol. The result is the victim behind each raid opportunity.

Government: A government force's employer is always their chosen government, no roll necessary.

CONTRACTS EMPLOYERS TABLE

Modified 2D6 Roll	Employer	Independent Employer
2 or less	Independent	Astrokaszy
3	Independent	Antallos (Port Krin)
4	Independent	Planetary Government
5	Independent	Noble
6	Free Worlds League	Mercenary
7	Capellan Confederation	Marian Hegemony
8	Draconis Combine	Magistracy of Canopus
9	Federated Suns	Taurian Concordat
10	Lyran Alliance	Niops Association
11	Corporation	Corporation
12 or more	Corporation	Corporation

STAGE 3: DETERMINE THE MISSION

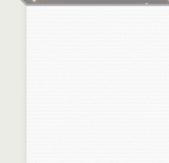
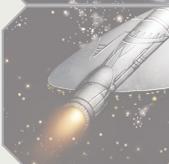
After determining the employer (or victim) for each opportunity, the next step is to determine the mission. Again, the details differ by force type.

Mercenaries: To determine the mission, make 1 Protocol Skill Check per offer and apply the modifiers applicable to the Protocol Skill, and also those applicable to the Hiring Hall. Then roll 2D6 again, and add the MOS of the Protocol Skill Roll to the result to determine the mission, consulting the Missions Table (below).

Connections can be used as well, where the Equip value acts as a modifier to all Determine Mission Rolls for offers that month. If they wish, players may apply the MOS of the Protocol Skill Roll and/or the modifier from the Equip value of any Connections used as a negative modifier to the 2D6 roll for determining the mission. This improves the odds of finding covert assignments.

MISSIONS TABLE

Roll	Inner Sphere/Clan	Independent	Corporation	Special	Covert	Pirate
2 or less	Covert	Covert	Covert	Covert	Terrorism	Recon Raid
3	Special	Special	Covert	Guerrilla*	Assassination	Recon Raid
4	Pirate Hunting	Planetary Assault	Special	Guerrilla	Assassination	Recon Raid
5	Planetary Assault	Objective Raid	Objective Raid	Recon Raid*	Espionage	Recon Raid
6	Objective Raid	Extraction Raid	Extraction Raid	Extraction Raid	Sabotage	Objective Raid
7	Objective Raid	Pirate Hunting	Recon Raid	Retainer	Guerrilla	Objective Raid
8	Extraction Raid	Security Duty	Objective Raid	Recon Raid	Recon Raid	Objective Raid
9	Recon Raid	Objective Raid	Security Duty	Relief Duty	Diversionsary	Objective Raid
10	Garrison Duty	Garrison Duty	Garrison Duty	Diversionsary*	Observation	Objective Raid
11	Cadre Duty	Cadre Duty	Cadre/Garrison Duty	Riot/Garrison Duty	Mole Hunting	Objective Raid
12 or more	Special	Special	Special	Cadre/Garrison Duty	Security	Objective Raid



If the result of the roll is “Covert” and the force is non-Clan, roll again on the Covert column. If the result is “Special”, roll again on the Special column. If the force is Clan, ignore Special and Covert results and re-roll on the Inner Sphere/Clan column.

Pirates: Pirates roll 2D6 on the Pirate column of the Missions Table. Connections can be used as well, where the Equip value acts as a modifier to all the Determine Mission Rolls for opportunities that month. Players may apply the MOS from the Protocol Skill Roll and/or the modifier from the Equip value of any Connections used as a negative modifier to the 2D6 roll. The ability to add or subtract the Connections modifier should aid a pirate force in finding a better target.

Government: Government forces roll like mercenary forces. Use the column appropriate to the government: Inner Sphere/Clan or Independent.

STAGE 4: NEGOTIATE TERMS

After assessing the options, a force then selects one. Mercenaries must negotiate a contract; pirates settle on a target to raid; and government forces determine their level of funding and support (rather like mercs) before going on their new mission. See the Campaign section for a description of mission types.

The process for negotiating a contract (or determining support, or determining the target) differs somewhat by force type.

[**Note:** Definitions of different government types—e.g., “super power”—will be provided in another section of *Interstellar Operations*.]

Mercenaries: Once the employer and Mission Type are known, the specific terms need to be determined. Mercenary contracts (including contracts for pirates operating as mercenaries) address seven payment terms: Base Payment, Length, Operations Tempo, Employer Factor, Reputation Factor, Transport Costs and Final Payment. Most steps produce a number that is added or multiplied together as follows:

$$\text{Final Payment} = (\text{Base Payment} \times \text{Length} \times \text{Op. Tempo} \times \text{Employer Factor} \times \text{Reputation Factor}) + \text{Support Payment} + \text{Transport Payment}$$

In addition to the payment terms, Command Rights and Salvage Rights must also be resolved.

Use the Master Contract Terms and Supplemental Contract Terms tables below for reference in the negotiating process, and refer to the description of each contract term (following the table) for explanations of how to roll each term. In most cases, the default method to determine a contract term is to roll 2D6 against the appropriate column of the Supplemental Contract Terms table, with the rolls modified by values found on the Master Contract Terms table.

For example, command rights for a mercenary command with a final Reputation Rating of 6 hired to stage an objective raid for the Draconis Combine (a major power noted to be stingy and controlling with mercenaries) have a total modifier of -3 (0 for Major Power, -2 for a Controlling Employer, -1 for Reputation 6). If the player then rolls a 6 on the Supplemental Contract Terms Table for command rights, the result becomes 3 (6 + -3 = 3), and thus the mercenary force is offered House command for this mission.

Forces with player characters involved in the negotiating process may modify the dice roll results for several of the terms (Command Rights, Salvage Rights, Support Costs, and Transport Costs) by using a character as a negotiator. After finding the result with the aforementioned 2D6 roll, players should take the following steps:

To negotiate one of those contract terms with PCs, make an Opposed Negotiations Skill Check, modified by all applicable Traits (Attractive, Impatient, Introvert, Patient, Reputation, and Unattractive). Other traits may also have an impact at the gamemaster’s discretion, and circumstances might also require modifiers to be in effect.

Using this PC-negotiated process, a given contract term can be improved by 1 step on the Supplemental Contract Terms Table for every 2 points of Margin of Success, or reduced by 1 per every 2 points of Margin of Failure. For example, if Command Rights had initially been rolled as 5 (House), a MOS of 6 would be needed for it to adjust to 8 (Liaison). If a Margin of Failure of 6 or more occurred, the Command Rights instead would have become 2 (Integrated).

Most employers take care to staff or hire skilled negotiators, and in most cases a Soldier-level negotiator NPC is appropriate (see pp. 336-339, *ATOW*). In some cases, the employer will have gone to the expense of making a negotiator available that qualifies as a Savant or Boss NPC. This is rarely done without some ulterior motive, or else an Enemy has exercised some resources to make life more difficult.

Pirates: The process for arranging a pirate raid is basically the same as setting up a mercenary contract. However, instead of negotiating terms, the rolls made to build the contract represent the pirates’ process of locating a target (competing against security and intelligence agencies rather than negotiating), and the value recovered from it.

Pirates automatically retain 100 percent of all salvage and have “independent” Command Rights, but must provide their own transport and cover their own pay and supplies. Pirates must hope that their raids are profitable; no one will reimburse them, regardless of the outcome.

Government: The government process is the same as the mercenary process, differing only in superficial terminology (“determining support” versus “negotiating a contract.”) Between other missions, a government force is automatically assigned to garrison duty at a payment per month equal to 100 percent of their peacetime operating cost.

Base Payment

The Base Payment for a mission is 75 percent of 1 month of the force’s peacetime operating cost, plus 5 percent of the total cost of combat units in the force. This base payment is paid for each month of the contract.

Length of Mission

The Master Contract Terms Table reflects the typical base duration of the mission. After determining the base duration, add in the length of time required for the force to redeploy to the mission site (see the Campaigns section to determine location).

Unless the mission is on the same planet, deployment time is calculated as 2 weeks plus 1.1 weeks per jump to reach the site of the mission. Divide the number of transit weeks by 4 and round up to the nearest whole number to determine the number of transit months for the mission.

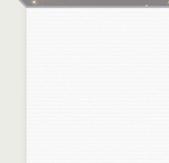
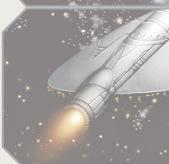


MASTER CONTRACT TERMS TABLE

Mission Type	Op. Tempo Multiplier	Base Length	Command Modifier	Salvage Modifier	Support Modifier	Transport Modifier
Assassination	1.9	3 months	+2	+1	-1	-3
Cadre Duty	0.8	12 months	0	0	+1	0
Diversionary Raid	1.8	3 months	0	+2	+2	+1
Defensive Campaign	1.2	6 months	-2	+2	+2	+1
Espionage	2.4	12 months	-1	+4	-3	-2
Extraction Raid	1.6	3 months	-1	-1	+2	+1
Garrison	1.0	18 months	+1	0	+1	0
Guerrilla	2.1	24 months	-2	+3	-2	-1
Mole Hunting	1.2	6 months	-3	0	+2	+1
Objective Raid	1.6	3 months	-1	0	+1	+2
Observation Raid	1.6	3 months	-1	-2	+1	-1
Pirate Hunting	1.0	6 months	+2	+2	-1	-1
Planetary Assault	1.5	9 months	-2	0	+2	+3
Recon	1.6	3 months	-1	-2	+1	-1
Relief Duty	1.4	9 months	-1	+1	+1	+1
Retainer	1.3	12 months	-2	0	+2	+1
Riot Duty	1.0	4 months	-2	+1	+2	0
Sabotage	2.4	24 months	-1	+4	-3	-2
Security Duty	1.2	6 months	-3	0	+2	+1
Terrorism	1.9	3 months	+2	+1	-1	-3
<i>High Risk</i>	+0.5	As mission	-1	-2	+1	0
<i>Covert Operation</i>	+0.3	As mission	+1	+1	-1	-1

Employer Modifiers Employer	Employment Multiplier	Command Modifier	Salvage Modifier	Support Modifier	Transport Modifier
Super Power	1.3	0	0	+1	+2
Major Power	1.2	0	-1	0	+1
Minor Power	1.1	0	-2	0	0
Independent World	1	0	-1	-1	0
Mercenary/Corporation	1.1	-1	+2	+1	+1
Typical Employer	0	0	0	0	0
Stingy Employer	-0.2	0	-1	-1	-1
Generous Employer	+0.2	0	+1	+2	+1
Controlling Employer	0	-2	-1	0	0
Lenient Employer	0	+1	+1	0	0
Pre-Succession Wars	0	0	-12	0	0
Post-Clan Invasion	0	0	-2	0	0

Unit Reputation Trait Reputation	Payment Multiplier	Command Modifier	Salvage Modifier	Support Modifier	Transport Modifier
0 (Unrated)	-1.0	-2	-1	-1	-3
1	-0.5	-1	-1	-1	-2
2	1.0	-1	0	0	-2
3	1.2	-1	0	0	-1
4	1.6	0	0	0	-1
5	2.0	0	0	0	0
6	2.4	-1	+1	0	0
7	2.7	-1	+1	0	0
8	3.0	-1	+1	+1	0
9	3.5	-2	+2	+1	+1
10+	4.0	-3	+2	+2	+2



SUPPLEMENTAL CONTRACT TERMS TABLE

2D6 Roll Result	Command Rights	Overhead Compensation	Salvage Rights	Support Rights	Transport Terms
1 or less	Integrated	None	None	None	None
2	Integrated	None	Exchange	None	20%
3	House	Half	Exchange	Straight/20%	25%
4	House	Half	10%	Straight/40%	30%
5	House	Half	20%	Straight/60%	35%
6	House	Half	30%	Straight/80%	45%
7	House	Full	40%	Straight/Full	50%
8	Liaison	Full	50%	Battle/10%	55%
9	Liaison	Full	60%	Battle/20%	60%
10	Liaison	Full	70%	Battle/40%	Full
11	Liaison	Full	80%	Battle/60%	Full
12	Independent	Full	90%	Battle/80%	Full
13 or more	Independent	Full	Full	Battle/100%	Full

The default number of jumps is calculated by plotting a straight line between the force's current location and the mission's location, then dividing by 30 light-years, multiplying by 1.2 to reflect course deviations to stick to inhabited systems, and rounding up to the nearest whole number. If such a straight course is patently unwise (for example, it requires passing through a hostile nation), the controlling player (and gamemaster, if present) must calculate the course that covers the next least distance.

The final length of the contract is a major factor in calculating payment (and a force's expenses), as it is multiplied by the force's base payment and multipliers discussed below.

Finally, the length of the Mission Period and Transport Period should be noted separately. Some reimbursement calculations only apply to the length of the mission, not the period in which a force is moving to the mission site.

Operations Tempo

This is a basic multiplier of the peacetime operating cost for the anticipated level of risk and effort a force must put into a mission. The multiplier is found on the Master Contract Terms Table.

This cost multiplier is often handy for providing the force with some additional cash prior to expensive combat operations. Reimbursement for combat expenses is handled separately, and often received at the end of a mission.

Employer Multiplier

Certain employers pay more than others, and some pay less. This generally depends on how wealthy and powerful the nation is, but that varies.

The Employment Factor is also found on the Master Contract Terms Table. At the discretion of the gamemaster or all the players involved, the employer may be considered stingy or generous with the type of force (mercenary, government, or pirate). For factions commonly in play (that is, the Houses of the 31st century), this is usually determined from descriptions of how a faction treats mercenaries or its own troops in the appropriate

Handbook or Field Manual sourcebooks. (The Lyrans, for example, are often considered generous employers.) More obscure factions (for example, the Chesterton Trade League) should leave this value as 1.

Reputation Factor

This is based on the force's final Reputation Rating. It is equal to 20 percent of the final Reputation Rating plus 0.5, not rounded. This reflects a bonus to a force's payment for those with an excellent reputation, and a penalty for those forces with a poor reputation. Pirates working as mercenaries will find themselves hard-pressed to earn any funds.

Transport Payment

When a force does not have its own DropShips and JumpShips, employers customarily offer to reimburse the force for a certain percentage of the cost (which may represent the employer's vessels or vessels the force leases on its own.)

When using the Contract Terms tables, the percentages shown on the Supplemental Terms Table reflect the total cost of using DropShips and JumpShips for which the employer will compensate the force in payment. The number represents the amount paid for chartered transportation, where the mercenary force does not have its own vessels and the employer does not offer any. Both of these numbers are presented to the force in the initial contract offer and are generated on a single roll.

The typical transport costs for military forces are 0.5 percent of a DropShip's purchase price per month or fraction of a month, and 100,000 C-bills per docking collar per jump on JumpShips.

Additional prices may apply for this transportation. Skilled DropShip crews are valuable in combat situations and thus command a premium; multiply the rental cost of a DropShip by 1.5 for Veteran crews and by 2 for Elite crews. (Green crews do not offer cost savings, as they still operate an invaluable asset and charge for it.) JumpShips, meanwhile, profit from jumping as often as possible with as many DropShips as possible, and



thus will charge a hiring force for any unused docking collars. JumpShips will also charge for all docking collars at the rate of 200,000CB per two weeks per docking collar when kept idle, waiting for a military force to complete its mission.

These charges may also be used as price guidelines for a military force with excess transportation capacity looking for profit on the side.

Wilma's Wabid Wombats are a company-sized combined arms force hired on a "short and simple" (so the employer says) raid on a star system one jump from the Wombats' current garrison. Lacking a DropShip or JumpShip, the Wombats have to contract both. The mission is short: a week to reach the JumpShip, the instantaneous jump, a week to the target planet, two weeks of raiding mayhem, then a week back to the JumpShip, and finally a week to the garrison planet. To Wilma's delight, she finds another military force on her garrison planet (Arnold's Avengers, or something silly like that, who are currently on R&R) that is willing to loan the Wombats their idle Seeker and Invader.

The mission requires six weeks of use of the Seeker-class DropShip (crew of average skill) for the round trip, so Arnold bills the Wombats for 1.5 months at 0.5 percent of the Seeker's 225,829,968CB purchase price: 1,693,725CB. The Wombats are conducting the raid alone and the JumpShip is in use for two jumps over six weeks (from the time the Seeker launches to the time it lands and the Invader is recharged to take on a new client DropShip). Arnold accordingly bills the Wombats for three docking collars on two jumps (1,200,000CB), plus four weeks of enforced idleness while the Wombats are transiting the target system and raiding the planet (1,200,000CB). The total transport bill handed to the Wombats is 3,093,725CB, which Wilma will carry to her employer in negotiations.

Support Payment

Support denotes how much of the force's combat operations costs the employer will reimburse above and beyond peacetime operating costs. Support costs include the cost of replacement parts and materiel as well as outside technical assistance. Customarily, employers offer either straight support or battle-loss compensation. The level of support is rolled from the Supplemental Contract Terms Table after the negotiation roll.

Under a **straight support** arrangement, the employer agrees to pay a percentage of the command's monthly peacetime operating expenses as a bonus for the period of the mission (not counting transport time). When combat is expected, a straight support arrangement usually benefits the employer, as the expenses of repairing battle damage can quickly exceed normal maintenance costs. On cadre missions and other light duty, such as garrison posts in "safe" zones, the arrangement usually benefits the mercenary force.

With a **battle-loss compensation** arrangement, the employer agrees to cover a percentage of the cost of repairing or replacing the command's battlefield losses and damage. Customarily, the employer is required to compensate the force

within six months of the date of loss. This compensation is cumulative, so if a particular piece of equipment is destroyed and replaced four times over the course of several battles, the employer might owe a percentage of four replacements. Compensation can be paid in C-bills or a combination of C-bills and equipment, but a replacement item must exactly match the destroyed item.

Withholding battle-loss compensation constitutes a breach of contract and exposes an employer to severe fines. Understandably, mercenaries expecting battle will push for battle-loss compensation, while their employers prefer straight-support terms (an employer will gladly agree to pay all of a force's regular maintenance expenses rather than be responsible for replacing a handful of 'Mechs, which may be worth millions of C-bills).

Final Payment

Final Payment for a mission by a mercenary or government force is calculated as stated above:

$$\text{Final Payment} = (\text{Base Payment} \times \text{Mission Period} \times \text{Op. Tempo} \times \text{Employer Factor} \times \text{Reputation Factor}) + (\text{Base Payment} \times \text{Transport Period} \times \text{Employer Factor} \times \text{Reputation Factor}) + \text{Support Payment} + \text{Transport Payment}$$

Most of these terms are calculated in advance of the mission, so the force will know the profit or loss from the mission. The Support Payment is only determined afterward based on what the employer is required to reimburse for battlefield activities.

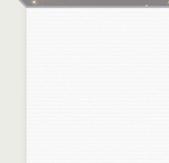
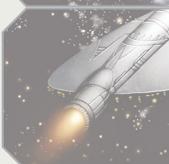
Command Rights

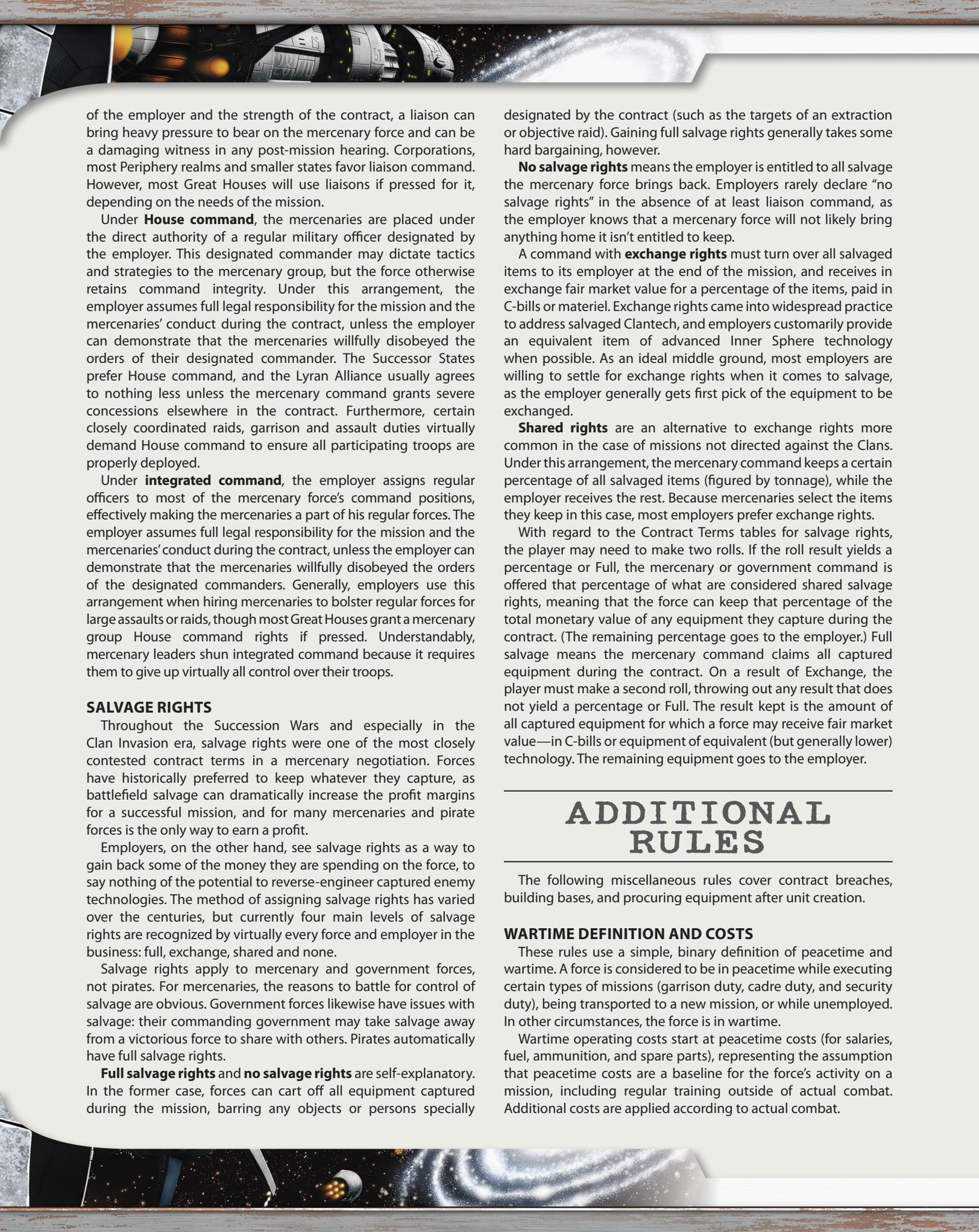
Command rights fall into four categories: independent, liaison, House and integrated. Only mercenaries (and pirates under a merc contract) roll for command rights. Pirate forces are otherwise automatically independent commands, while government forces are automatically integrated commands.

When rolling for command rights, players should first consult the appropriate Handbook or Field Manual for an employer to determine if the employer has a reputation for being lenient or controlling toward mercenary commands. If that can't be determined, use a typical command.

Independent command allows a force full battlefield autonomy, with no interference from the employer, the employer's troops or an employer's representatives (though the mercenary force remains bound to explain any questionable actions to the employer and any outside authority or arbitrator after the contract expires). Particularly during covert missions, employers grant independent command rights because doing so shields them from any legal responsibility for the mercenaries' actions under the contract.

Under **liaison command**, the mercenary force accepts a liaison that represents the employer and accompanies them during the mission. In exchange, the employer assumes limited legal responsibility for the actions of the mercenary force during the length of the contract. The liaison—usually a regular officer, or mercenary veteran—monitors all mercenary command decisions and generally watches out for the employer's interests. Depending on the power





of the employer and the strength of the contract, a liaison can bring heavy pressure to bear on the mercenary force and can be a damaging witness in any post-mission hearing. Corporations, most Periphery realms and smaller states favor liaison command. However, most Great Houses will use liaisons if pressed for it, depending on the needs of the mission.

Under **House command**, the mercenaries are placed under the direct authority of a regular military officer designated by the employer. This designated commander may dictate tactics and strategies to the mercenary group, but the force otherwise retains command integrity. Under this arrangement, the employer assumes full legal responsibility for the mission and the mercenaries' conduct during the contract, unless the employer can demonstrate that the mercenaries willfully disobeyed the orders of their designated commander. The Successor States prefer House command, and the Lyran Alliance usually agrees to nothing less unless the mercenary command grants severe concessions elsewhere in the contract. Furthermore, certain closely coordinated raids, garrison and assault duties virtually demand House command to ensure all participating troops are properly deployed.

Under **integrated command**, the employer assigns regular officers to most of the mercenary force's command positions, effectively making the mercenaries a part of his regular forces. The employer assumes full legal responsibility for the mission and the mercenaries' conduct during the contract, unless the employer can demonstrate that the mercenaries willfully disobeyed the orders of the designated commanders. Generally, employers use this arrangement when hiring mercenaries to bolster regular forces for large assaults or raids, though most Great Houses grant a mercenary group House command rights if pressed. Understandably, mercenary leaders shun integrated command because it requires them to give up virtually all control over their troops.

SALVAGE RIGHTS

Throughout the Succession Wars and especially in the Clan Invasion era, salvage rights were one of the most closely contested contract terms in a mercenary negotiation. Forces have historically preferred to keep whatever they capture, as battlefield salvage can dramatically increase the profit margins for a successful mission, and for many mercenaries and pirate forces is the only way to earn a profit.

Employers, on the other hand, see salvage rights as a way to gain back some of the money they are spending on the force, to say nothing of the potential to reverse-engineer captured enemy technologies. The method of assigning salvage rights has varied over the centuries, but currently four main levels of salvage rights are recognized by virtually every force and employer in the business: full, exchange, shared and none.

Salvage rights apply to mercenary and government forces, not pirates. For mercenaries, the reasons to battle for control of salvage are obvious. Government forces likewise have issues with salvage: their commanding government may take salvage away from a victorious force to share with others. Pirates automatically have full salvage rights.

Full salvage rights and **no salvage rights** are self-explanatory. In the former case, forces can cart off all equipment captured during the mission, barring any objects or persons specially

designated by the contract (such as the targets of an extraction or objective raid). Gaining full salvage rights generally takes some hard bargaining, however.

No salvage rights means the employer is entitled to all salvage the mercenary force brings back. Employers rarely declare "no salvage rights" in the absence of at least liaison command, as the employer knows that a mercenary force will not likely bring anything home it isn't entitled to keep.

A command with **exchange rights** must turn over all salvaged items to its employer at the end of the mission, and receives in exchange fair market value for a percentage of the items, paid in C-bills or materiel. Exchange rights came into widespread practice to address salvaged Clantech, and employers customarily provide an equivalent item of advanced Inner Sphere technology when possible. As an ideal middle ground, most employers are willing to settle for exchange rights when it comes to salvage, as the employer generally gets first pick of the equipment to be exchanged.

Shared rights are an alternative to exchange rights more common in the case of missions not directed against the Clans. Under this arrangement, the mercenary command keeps a certain percentage of all salvaged items (figured by tonnage), while the employer receives the rest. Because mercenaries select the items they keep in this case, most employers prefer exchange rights.

With regard to the Contract Terms tables for salvage rights, the player may need to make two rolls. If the roll result yields a percentage or Full, the mercenary or government command is offered that percentage of what are considered shared salvage rights, meaning that the force can keep that percentage of the total monetary value of any equipment they capture during the contract. (The remaining percentage goes to the employer.) Full salvage means the mercenary command claims all captured equipment during the contract. On a result of Exchange, the player must make a second roll, throwing out any result that does not yield a percentage or Full. The result kept is the amount of all captured equipment for which a force may receive fair market value—in C-bills or equipment of equivalent (but generally lower) technology. The remaining equipment goes to the employer.

ADDITIONAL RULES

The following miscellaneous rules cover contract breaches, building bases, and procuring equipment after unit creation.

WARTIME DEFINITION AND COSTS

These rules use a simple, binary definition of peacetime and wartime. A force is considered to be in peacetime while executing certain types of missions (garrison duty, cadre duty, and security duty), being transported to a new mission, or while unemployed. In other circumstances, the force is in wartime.

Wartime operating costs start at peacetime costs (for salaries, fuel, ammunition, and spare parts), representing the assumption that peacetime costs are a baseline for the force's activity on a mission, including regular training outside of actual combat. Additional costs are applied according to actual combat.



Salaries will change from the point personnel are killed or hired. As a simplification, the dead personnel will still be paid in full for the month in which they die.

Fuel consumption starts at the peacetime baseline. Units that explicitly track fuel points as a function of movement (spacecraft and fighters; see p. 34, *Strategic Operations*) add fuel expended in combat missions to the peacetime baseline. Other units follow the guidelines on page 35 of *Strategic Operations* to determine the mass of fuel expended in addition to the peacetime baseline.

Maintenance costs add repair and replacement costs above the peacetime baseline. The cost to replace a component in a unit is equal to the price listed on pages 274-286, *TechManual*. Component repair costs are 1/5 of the component purchase cost.

Ammunition costs also start at the peacetime baseline. Additional combat costs are simple: track ammunition expended in combat.

CONTRACT BREACHES AND MISSION FAILURES

Sometimes, regardless of the players' best efforts, a military force fails to complete a mission or perhaps even violates the terms of its contract, resulting in a breach. Players with mercenary forces should avoid events like these whenever possible, as their outcome can seriously harm a mercenary command's standing (see *Reputation*, p. XX).

Pirates are exempt from contract breaches and mission failures (unless operating under contract to an outside employer). A pirate force that fails its mission may, at the players' or gamemaster's discretion, face the wrath of its commander or Bandit King.

Finally, government forces suffer negative results from mission failure and contract breach just like mercenary forces, though the terms for contract breach are different (dereliction of duty and disobeying orders being common examples). The final results also differ. Whereas a mercenary force will lose reputation and may be fined and/or face hiring bans, a government force usually sees punishment of its personnel (such as court-martials of its officers, who will then likely be removed from the force).

Mission Failure

In broad terms, mission failure occurs whenever a force fails to achieve its stated primary objectives despite a serious effort to do so. Heavy losses or a forced withdrawal in the face of overwhelming enemy reinforcements are the most common causes of mission failure. Another frequent cause is a scorched-earth policy by a defender, denying an attacker the objective when a mission calls for capture. In any case where a force has failed its mission despite putting in a credible effort (meaning the force did not retreat at the first sight of the enemy or put up only token resistance), the force suffers a 10-point loss in its Reputation Rating.

Government and pirate forces do not suffer any further penalties. Mercenary forces that suffer mission failure do not receive any remaining payment or support, and their contracts may be considered terminated upon the day of mission failure.

Contract Breach

Forces that do not even try to achieve the mission goals, or forces that try to flee with an employer's funds, or that deliberately violate the terms of their obligations to the employer, are guilty of contract breach. By the same token, employers who misrepresent a mission's parameters, or who lure a command into a compromising position that might force its members to violate the current rules of war (Ares Conventions or Outreach Accords), may also be found guilty of a contract breach. In either case, a contract breach is a serious offense and often requires legal action to resolve to anyone's satisfaction.

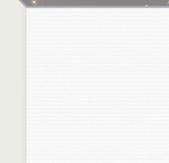
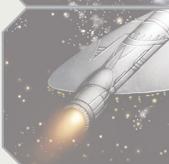
In the case of mercenary contracts, charges of contract breach are submitted to a panel of the appropriate mercenary review board of the era (such as the MRBC). Disputes without a neutral reviewer are often left unresolved, but have been known to drive mercenary forces to defection or even piracy against employers they come to perceive as an enemy. To avoid this potential outcome, along with the bad publicity of poor employer-mercenary relations, some non-review board contract disputes are settled through a third-party arbitrator—for example, a ComStar representative—who judges the matter in a formal hearing.

In the case of government forces, the government usually resolves the matter internally via a court-martial by higher-ranking military personnel or political leadership.

Resolving Mercenary Contract Breaches

Contract breach hearings may be handled by assigning negotiators for both sides, similar to the contract negotiation process. In a non-gamemastered campaign, the opposing player may decide to invoke contract breach proceedings on behalf of the employer, but only if the mercenary command has failed in its mission or committed some war crime (see *Crimes*, p. XX). To resolve the charge of contract breach, both negotiators must roll 2D6 (adding Negotiation Skill modifiers, if using ATOW rules). The gamemaster (if any) must then assess a -3 modifier against the party that violated any terms of the contract. This modifier does not apply in the absence of a gamemaster, or when fault is unclear. An additional -2 penalty applies to the mercenary negotiator's roll if the contract was not handled through the MRBC (or other recognized mercenary review board appropriate to the era). A +1 bonus applies to the mercenary negotiator's roll if the mercenary command has a Dragoons Rating of B or higher, while a -1 applies to F-rated or unrated mercenary commands. Compare the results of each negotiator's roll to determine the outcome of the hearings, based on which side is leveling contract breach charges against the other.

If the employer accused the mercenary command of contract breach, and the employer's roll result (or Margin of Success) exceeds that of the mercenary command, the mercenary force has been found guilty of contract breach. The force automatically loses 25 points from its Dragoons Rating along with all remaining payment under the contract. Furthermore, for every point by which the employer negotiator's roll exceeds that of the mercenary command, the mercenary command must pay a 10,000 C-bill fine, and is placed under a one-month hiring ban.





If the mercenary negotiator's roll succeeds, the mission is considered complete; no Dragoons Rating loss occurs, and the mercenary command receives all remaining contract pay due. If the mercenary negotiator's roll succeeds by a margin of 5 or more, the employer is found in violation of contract, and the money due the mercenary command is multiplied by half of this Margin of Success. A success by less than 5 means only that the contract is considered null and void and is rated on the command's record as a successfully completed mission.

If the mercenary command levels contract breach charges against an employer, the employer's negotiator must succeed by a margin of 5 in order to declare the mercenary command in breach of contract instead, with all fines and hiring bans (plus the 25-point Dragoons Rating reduction) occurring per the rules given above. The mercenary negotiator wins full payment multiplied by half his Margin of Success (rounding up) if he succeeds in his contract breach roll.

After a disagreement with an assigned liaison officer who attempts to order his mercenary command into a suicide mission, Damon Kirkpatrick declares the Lyran Alliance in breach of contract. Both the employer and the mercenary command bring veteran negotiators before the MRBC, which handled the original contract negotiations. Because Kirkpatrick's Invaders are a B-rated mercenary force, a +1 bonus applies to the mercenary negotiator's roll, bringing the negotiator's bonus to +6 (+5 for Veteran, +1 for B-rated command).

The gamemaster, ruling that the liaison officer overstepped his bounds, applies a -3 modifier to the Lyran negotiator's roll, leaving the Lyran negotiator with a +3 bonus (+5 Veteran, +1 Lyran, -3 employer at fault). The final 2D6 roll results for the Invaders and the Lyrans are 13 and 10, respectively. The Invaders' negotiator has won with a Margin of Success of 3 (13 - 10 = 3), which means the Invaders' mission was declared a success and the remainder of the contract is nullified. If the Invaders' negotiator had rolled a 16, the Margin of Success would have outdone the employer's roll by 6, and the employer would have been found guilty of a contract breach. The employer would then be forced to pay three times the remainder of the money due under the contract (6 / 2 = 3).

Resolving Government Contract Breaches

Contract breach hearings may be handled by assigning negotiators for both sides, similar to the contract negotiation process. In a non-gamemastered campaign, the opposing player may decide to invoke contract breach proceedings on behalf of the government, but only if the government force has failed in its mission or committed some war crime (see *Crimes*, p. XX). To resolve the charge of contract breach, both negotiators must roll 2D6 (adding Negotiation Skill modifiers, if using *ATOW* rules). The gamemaster (if any) must then assess a -3 modifier against the party that violated any terms of the contract. This modifier does not apply in the absence of a gamemaster, or when fault is unclear. A +1 bonus applies to the force negotiator's roll if the government force has a Dragoons Rating of B or higher, while a -1 applies to F-rated or unrated government commands. Compare the results of each negotiator's roll to determine the outcome

of the hearings, based on which side is leveling contract breach charges against the other.

If the government employer accused the command of contract breach, and the employer's roll result (or Margin of Success) exceeds that of the command, the force has been found guilty of contract breach. The force automatically loses 25 points from its Dragoons Rating. Furthermore, for every point by which the employer negotiator's roll exceeds that of the command, the command loses 1 of its personnel (starting with the highest ranking) to court-martials, reflecting officers being stripped of command, loss of rank, imprisonment, and/or execution (depending on the government and breach in question).

If the force negotiator's roll succeeds, the mission is considered complete; no Dragoons Rating loss occurs. If the force negotiator's roll succeeds by a margin of 5 or more, the employer is found in violation of contract. However, in most cases this has no measurable impact. (If a high-ranking officer or politician outside the force is court-martialed or stripped of office, this rarely matters to the government at large or the force. However, a gamemaster may use this as an opportunity to remove a rival or enemy of the force.)

If the government force levels contract breach charges against the government, the government's negotiator must succeed by a margin of 5 in order to declare the force in breach of contract instead, with all reputation loss and removal of personnel occurring per the rules given above. If the force's negotiator wins, the result is the same as victory described in the above rules: likely nothing other than sparing the force a loss of reputation.

CHANGING FORCE TYPE

A force can change types over the course of its existence. The most common examples are a force turning to piracy or a mercenary force becoming a government force, but other changes are possible.

Turning to piracy is accomplished through actions. A mercenary or government force simply ceases to obey orders from its employer/government and begins performing pirate missions. After completing the first pirate mission, the force is considered a pirate force. Its prior reputation score is erased and the force recalculates its reputation as a new pirate force per page XX. An advantage is that any debt the force carries is essentially wiped out, though an enterprising gamemaster may make a campaign of a determined lender's efforts to collect collateral from the wayward force.

While turning into a pirate force is simple, shedding the piracy designation is much more difficult. It is usually accomplished by restoring the force's reputation rating through years of good behavior and successful missions without backsliding into more piratical actions. If the reputation rating exceeds 0, then the force may be treated as a mercenary force under these rules. Due to the difficulty of restoring a reputation, a pirate force more often has to be liquidated and reconstituted as an all-new force (likely mercenary) with the most-wanted pirate personnel left out of the new force, but this is not likely to work if the entire pirate force was often involved in highly objectionable crimes like slavery or mass murder of civilians. A gamemaster, or the agreement of all participating players, is required to determine if such a recreation of the pirate force works.



Mercenary forces may transition into permanent government service. This most often happens at the extreme end of “company store” abuse, when the mercenary force can no longer pay its large debts to a government employer. (This point is usually reached when a force’s potential monthly income from a mission is smaller than its debt payments, and also usually when the force’s military equipment is being used as collateral.) Sometimes mercenary forces that have served with a specific nation for a long time (typically decades) will also accept a permanent relationship with that government, usually on much better terms than a force trapped through “company store” practices. Unlike transitioning to piracy, becoming a government force does not (necessarily) change the force’s reputation, though it is usually accompanied by elimination of debt, which may modify the reputation rating. The exact details of the transition into permanent government service are best addressed by roleplaying, though for gamers not using *A Time of War*, the transition may be handled with the agreement of all players involved in the game.

A rare transition of force types is a government force becoming a mercenary force. This is rare because governments rarely allow military forces to walk away with valuable and dangerous military hardware. Governments usually regard an attempt to do so as desertion and theft, and thus regard the force as a pirate rather than a mercenary force. The best known cases of such transitions into mercenary service occurred at the end of the first Star League, when a quarter of the SLDF did not follow Kerensky on the Exodus. With the collapse of the Terran Hegemony, those forces that did not join one of the Houses became mercenary forces, some of which remained in operation centuries later. As with mercenary forces turning into government forces, there are no hard rules for this sort of transition. A gamemaster, or the agreement of all participating players, is required to mediate the details, including the impact on reputation. A government-turned-mercenary force may face legitimate charges of theft and breach of contract, lowering reputation significantly.

DEBT DURING A CAMPAIGN

Sooner or later, it’s likely to happen. Through severe damage, overextended loans or other disasters, financial and otherwise, a military force may find itself operating constantly beyond its means. Indeed, many new mercenary forces are often built only by the grace of credit, with founder/commanders forced to pay off the command’s start-up debts with whatever funds remain after paying their own troops. To whom this money is owed often varies wildly. Some commands owe these massive sums to banks, while others may owe them to the noble family that was gracious enough to invest such a hefty sum in the force’s creation. Because debt can occur for many different reasons, how and to whom the debt is owed are questions best handled by a gamemaster.

Debt is largely handled similarly for each type of force, be it government, mercenary, or pirate. However, there are some nuances in taking on loans and payback between the different force types.

Loans

Given the nature of their work, most mercenary commands find obtaining loans from financial institutions difficult at best, and often come away with enormous interest rates, strict repayment deadlines or even a forced surrendering of expensive assets. Mercenaries are often transient and easily classified as high-risk, and so many banks require collateral to assure the loan will be repaid eventually. This collateral may include any number of the command’s most expensive assets, from BattleMechs to DropShips or even JumpShips.

Pirates are in an even worse situation, as the only lenders available to pirates are usually loan sharks or their meaner cousins (such as Bandit Kings). Such people are typically willing to resort to violence (or tipping off a nearby House pirate-hunting force) to collect on their debts, and so terms for loans to pirate forces are typically merciless.

Government forces are usually in a better position than mercenaries or pirates with respect to taking on debt. Government forces are backed by large, usually stable governments; rarely need to worry about seeing salaries paid even when deep in debt; unlike mercenaries, they have no investors demanding profits from their military operations; and unlike pirates, they usually can depend on sufficient supplies to keep their vital equipment running (such as getting enough food so their personnel don’t starve). All together, this usually means government forces can acquire loans at generous rates, without collateral. Technically, the loans may not even be on the force’s accounts but rather taken by the government, but for convenience the loan is tracked on the government force’s balance sheet.

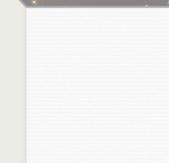
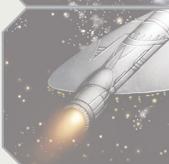
There are four steps to taking a loan: determining its value, collateral, and annual interest rate, and establishing a payment plan.

Generally, without a gamemaster’s agreement, a loan’s value cannot be larger than the total value of a force’s equipment (unless personnel in the force can offer collateral worth more than the entire force). This original value of the loan becomes the initial principal.”

Collateral is a guarantee for the loan—that is, monies or items that will be taken by the creditor if the force cannot repay the loan. This is typically equipment from the force, though characters in the force may be able to offer other collateral, such as personal estates, businesses, or even private cash holdings. Collateral is determined as a percentage of the loan from the Loan Table.

A loan’s annual interest rate is a percentage of the principal. Interest is determined by modifying the Base Interest Rate given in the Loan Table according to the Interest with Reduced Collateral or Interest with Increased Collateral columns, as appropriate. As a simplification, final interest is calculated at the beginning of a year, including the first year in which a loan is taken out.

Establishing a payment plan consists of setting a payback period (the period by which the loan must be fully paid off or collateral is collected), a payment interval (how often the force makes payments on the loan), and a payment value. The Payback Period column of the Loan Table sets the maximum period to repay debt available to each force type, and players



LOAN TABLE

Force Type	Base Annual Interest	Base Collateral	Interest with Reduced Collateral	Interest with Increased Collateral	Minimum Interest	Maximum Payback Period
Government	5%	0%	N/A	-1% per +10%	0%	10 years
Mercenary (Reputation 14+)	7%	15%	+1% per -1%	-1% per +10%	4%	5 years
Mercenary (Reputation 10-13)	10%	25%	+1% per -1%	-1% per +10%	5%	3 years
Mercenary (Reputation 5-9)	15%	40%	+1% per -1%	-1% per +10%	5%	2 years
Mercenary (Reputation 1-4)	20%	60%	+2% per -1%	-1% per +15%	10%	1 year
Mercenary (Reputation 0 or less)	35%	80%	+2% per -1%	-1% per +15%	15%	6 months
Pirate	50%	100%	+2% per -1%	-1% per +20%	25%	6 months

may select any period from one day to the maximum payback period. Generally, mercenary and pirate forces have only short lives (mostly under 2 years) and thus lenders set short payback periods. The payment intervals may be biweekly, monthly, or quarterly at the player's preference, though the interval must always be shorter than the payback period. Lenders usually prefer to start getting payments well before the end of the loan to build confidence in their investment.

The payment value of a loan is simple for loans of one year's length or less: it is the principal of the loan plus one year's interest (even if the loan is less than a year), divided by the number of payment intervals within the payback period. For loans over a year in length, the total value must be calculated in advance, and the interest compounds annually. For example, a 2.5-year loan of 1,000 C-bills with 10 percent interest would calculate its total value as: $1,000 + 1,000 \times 0.1$ (first year's interest) + $1,100 \times 0.1$ (second year's interest) + $1,210 \times 0.1$ (third year's interest, calculated for a full year) = 1,331 C-bills. Then, as for shorter loans, the payment value is calculated by dividing the total loan value by the number of payment intervals in the payback period.

Players will probably note this interest and payback system is both simpler and harsher than what they encounter in real life. This is to keep the calculations simple and reflect the fact that most lenders view military forces as risky investments. Players are welcome to set up more realistic payment schemes if they can convince their gamemaster or other players in the group.

Arnold's mercenary force is between employments and is looking at several months of downtime while the force relocates to a planet with a hiring hall and finds a sufficiently lucrative contract. His peacetime cost is (per the force creation example, p. XX) 9,310,080 C-bills per month. Deciding to be better safe than sorry, Arnold and his fellow players take out a loan for a year of operating costs: 111,720,960 C-bills, rounded up to 112,500,000CB. If that's more than they need (hopefully work will come soon), they can return the excess to accelerate loan payoff.

With a reputation modifier of 7 after several campaigns, Arnold's force must come up with collateral at least equal to 40 percent of the value of the principal. After looking through the

TO&E and player characters' personal assets, Arnold decides to put up the force's Seeker-class DropShip as collateral. With a value of 225,829,968CB, this is 202 percent of the value of the loan and 162 percent more than the minimum collateral. The extra collateral allows the base interest rate of 15 percent to be lowered by 16 percent ($162 / 10$, rounding down), though at Reputation 7 the lowest annual interest rate Arnold's force can find is 5 percent.

Having the DropShip be repossessed would be a painful loss, but a mercenary force with a JumpShip and BattleMechs is still in a good negotiating position with employers, unlike a force that put its JumpShip or, worse, BattleMechs up as collateral.

With a reputation modifier of 7, Arnold could find a loan with a payback period of up to two years (or as little as one day). Two years gives room for disaster, so he selects that, and a payment interval of a quarter (three months) based on the hope of having secured a sizable contract within three months that will allow him to return most of the loan unspent. With a two-year payment plan, Arnold has to deal with two years' annually compounded interest: 5 percent of 112,500,000 C-bills on the first year (5,625,000 C-bills) plus 5 percent of 118,125,000 C-bills on the second year (5,906,250 C-bills), for a total payment of $112,500,000 + 5,625,000 + 5,906,250 = 124,031,250$ C-bills. A two-year payment plan and a quarterly payment interval give 8 equal payments on the loan of 15,503,906.25 C-bills.

Failure to produce the required C-bills on time may result in confiscation of the assets put up as collateral, or legal action (treated as a contract breach, with the lender substituting as the employer). Military forces that rack up truly egregious debts in this fashion may even be hounded by bounty hunters or mercenary groups hired by their creditors, with orders to take the overdue balance from the truant debtors by force of arms—including the costs of hunting them down.

"Company Store"

Mercenary commands in debt may suddenly find their current employer eager to lend a hand, supplying badly needed equipment and even support personnel at a substantial discount, possibly even below list prices. The terms of these equipment loans often include a stipulation that extends a mercenary command's

retainer or forces it to accept subsequent contracts that may feature less-favorable terms than it would otherwise draw were finances not so low, requiring the mercenary force to work off its debt. This particular form of employer-to-mercenary debt is widely known as the “company store” syndrome, and while often regarded as despicable, is nonetheless an arrangement that remains common, as it allows floundering mercenaries to tread water until their “next big break”.

“Company store” is not applicable to government or pirate forces.

Repaying Debts by Shorting Salaries

The following rule for reducing salaries to pay debts primarily applies to mercenaries. Pirate forces do not expect regular salaries, being more concerned with keeping their vital equipment operating and staying fed, and thus are not subject to these rules. Government forces, meanwhile, rarely have trouble providing regular salaries because of their guaranteed employment, but if the forces are shortchanged salaries, these rules apply.

Debts are commonly paid off from any profits for missions after all combatants, support staff, travel expenses and any other operating expenses are covered. Some more desperate forces, however, may sell off equipment to pay back a debt, and in more extreme cases may even cut staff to reduce expenses. Other forces may try to pay off debt by skimping on expenses, including personnel salaries.

Though certainly risky, in desperate times shortchanging the force’s personnel by a small percentage may be one way to clear just enough C-bills to make a payment. Skimping in this fashion, however, can cause a breakdown in morale if sustained long enough (typically more than one month), resulting in penalties during combat or repair as the troops and staff grow less motivated. If sustained too long, mutinies may even occur, with a band of lesser officers and staff deliberately undermining or usurping the commander’s authority (and that of any loyal subordinates). When or whether these events occur should be up to a gamemaster or a neutral third party player. If neither is available, the controlling player may determine the amount of personnel lost to mutinies and defections in the following manner.

For each month that the command’s personnel go without pay, the commander must make a Leadership Roll against a Target Number of 6 (3 for government forces), with a cumulative +1 penalty per month of non-payment. If the roll result falls below the modified target number, a number of personnel are lost to mutiny or resignation equal to the Margin of Failure times the number of lances or platoons employed by the force. The nature and positions of these lost personnel should be determined randomly across all unit types and technical support personnel. The number of people lost to this result varies by unit type selected and accounts for one combat unit (infantry squad, vehicle crew, MechWarrior, technician, or administrator). If the initial roll’s Margin of Failure exceeds 6 (9 for government forces), the departing units mutiny as well, with a random number acting against the mercenary command as their last, bitter stab at

the commander they feel has wronged them. Mercenary commands that are in debt also suffer from a poorer overall business position than financially solvent forces, and have trouble recruiting, purchasing new equipment and landing good contracts. Negotiations with potential employers also suffer, as a poverty-stricken force simply cannot afford to turn down too many offers; this is reflected in the force’s Reputation Rating.

PROCURING EQUIPMENT AND PERSONNEL DURING A CAMPAIGN

Equipment procurement during a campaign involves two parts. The first is rolling to see if the equipment can be found and procured, which is handled through Force Construction Rules, Stage 3: Procure Equipment and Hire Personnel. As in Stage 3, a force looking to acquire new personnel and equipment must roll to see if the equipment is available and pay for it. Unlike Stage 3 of Force Construction, large spacecraft must be purchased with cash in addition to the Availability Roll. The price of large spacecraft may be found with *Tech Manual* and *Strategic Operations* construction rules. Each new unit purchased requires a separate Availability Roll.

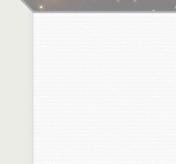
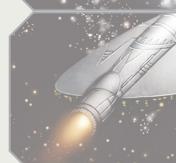
The second step is determining how long the procured equipment takes to arrive. Once ordered, equipment and personnel take $[7 - (1D6 + Availability)] \div 4$ months to arrive, as determined by the Availability values in Stage 3 of Force Creation. No matter the dice roll result, it takes at least a month to acquire the equipment and personnel.

Ammunition, spare parts, and fuel are handled differently because they are not addressed in Stage 3.

Ammunition has a procurement Availability target number based on the Tech Rating in *Tech Manual* and *Tactical Operations* equipment lists. If the ammunition is Tech Rating A, the Availability target is 2. Tech Rating B ammunition has an Availability target of 3; Tech Rating C ammunition has an Availability target of 4; Tech Rating D ammunition has an Availability target of 6; Tech Rating E ammunition has an Availability target of 8; and Tech Rating F ammunition has an Availability target of 10. The target for the roll is lowered by 2 if the ammunition is tournament-legal equipment, by 1 if the ammunition is advanced equipment. (Minimum Availability Value is 2 and applies to delivery time.) Each 5 tons (or fraction thereof) of ammunition is procured separately. Arrival time is the same as for other equipment.

Fuel is usually widely available if the force is not on a combat mission. Any fuel type may be procured with a lead time of 3 days at list price with no Availability rolls if the force is not on a combat mission. If the force is on a combat mission, the price is the same and no Availability rolls need be made, but there is a delivery delay. The delivery time is the same for other equipment, treating fuel as having an Availability of 2.

Spare parts are procured as if the force were purchasing the original vehicle, but at a -2 Availability modifier. Spare parts must be purchased individually for each unit. Like ammunition, Availability rolls are made for each 5-ton lot (or fraction thereof) for a specific unit.





DEVELOPING FORCE SPECIALIZATIONS DURING A CAMPAIGN

Typically, force specializations take the form of Initiative bonuses or similar bonuses a force receives when it fights in a specific terrain type (such as mountains or forest), in a general terrain type (restricted or open), under particular conditions (night or zero-G) or using particular tactics, though specific disadvantages—such as an Initiative penalty—may be applied for overspecialization at a gamemaster's discretion.

To gain a specialization or advantage, at least half of the force must spend time developing it. For example, a force that wants to specialize in mountain fighting must fight in mountainous terrain and experiment with tactics appropriate to that environment.

Whatever bonus the force is trying to gain is first applied as a penalty. After five campaign victories in which the penalty hampered the force, the penalty is eliminated. Another five victories generate the lowest bonus possible. If the force wishes to increase this bonus further, another five victories increase it by 1 point (see example, below). A force may develop multiple advantages at one time, but only if they logically go together. The maximum bonus a force can obtain for any given ability (typically Initiative, weapon attacks, physical attacks or piloting) is +3. After attaining this bonus, a force may exchange it for a special advantage—such as offboard movement or forcing the Initiative—so long as the advantage goes with the other advantage bonuses and no disadvantages exist that directly oppose the ability.

Disadvantages are acquired in the same fashion. If the force demonstrates a marked distaste or ineptitude in the presence of a given battlefield condition, enemy force type or other cause, that common factor may be identified as a disadvantage. This negative condition need not cause the force any battlefield defeats; the shortcoming may instead be represented by the consistent loss of 25 percent or more of the force's starting strength when they take the field. If this shortcoming can be identified over three consecutive missions, an additional -1 penalty applies against the force (to a maximum of -3). If a gamemaster is available, a special disadvantage (such as modified withdrawal rules, a special Low Morale Check and so on) may be exchanged for a -3 penalty. Gamemasters may also determine that a marked refusal to fight under given conditions is cause for a penalty, but only if the force maintains such behavior for five straight contracts.

After gaining an advantage, a mercenary force must use it at least once during every five campaigns or else the advantage is lost.

After deciding to specialize in counter-Clan operations, the Kirkpatrick's Pack company of Kirkpatrick's Invaders spends the next five campaigns fighting Clan forces exclusively at a -1 Initiative penalty. After surviving that crucible, they fight their next five campaigns against the Clans with no Initiative modifier. With ten successful campaigns against the Clans

under its belt, the Pack finds itself so familiar with Clan tactics and rules of engagement that the company enjoys a +1 Initiative bonus in its next five campaigns against the Clans.

Throughout all this, the Pack's gamemaster has noticed the mercenaries' intense refusal to fight in any kind of inclement weather or darkness. Instead, the mercs insist on waiting for daylight and clear skies before engaging the enemy. To reflect this apparent inflexibility, the gamemaster imposes a -1 Initiative penalty for every five consecutive campaigns in which the Pack refused to fight in such bad conditions.

Because this occurred during at least ten straight campaigns, the gamemaster applies a -2 Initiative penalty against the Pack whenever the mercenary company must fight in bad weather or darkness.

CHAOS CAMPAIGN CONVERSIONS

One Chaos Campaign SP converts to 10,000 C-bills.

HOUSING AND BASE BUILDING

For basic housing and shelter, most forces tend to rely on the provisions of their employers or—if fortunate—the facilities in their own DropShips. Neither option, however, is particularly convenient for larger forces or those operating between missions. Thus, many forces have been known to invest in bases—whether temporary or permanent—to house their equipment, personnel, and dependents.

Bases vary with their roles, sizes, and other considerations. Outfits working in the field for short durations tend to settle for a simple series of large tents and/or enviro-bubbles with a comm center and a perimeter of hastily strung barbed wire. Forces assigned a more permanent multi-year garrison or those that are simply large and brimming with dependents, on the other hand, need a base that roughly equates to a small city of barracks and administrative buildings, perhaps even including a miniature spaceport, weapon emplacements, and independent power stations. With the above in mind, the process for building bases for a force (and its dependents) can take as long and cost as much as the force's needs dictate. The following rules provide a rough guide to the process.

Step 1: Obtain Land

For some forces, the land area needed for a base may already be within reach if the owner, commander, or other key officer has significant property (see *ATOW*, p. 123). For others, a tract of land may be the first stage of the force's beachhead on a planet they have been sent to conquer. Still others may be given a designated area as part of their garrison contract, an out-of-the-way place provided to park the outfit's equipment and ships in lieu of employer-owned facilities. If none of the above applies and the force is in friendly or neutral territory, the mercenaries may instead opt to lease or buy a parcel of land for the purpose of base building.



Doing so can be as difficult or as easy as the gamemaster desires. The cost of land can vary based on its area and value. In RPG campaigns, this can be resolved by whatever means the gamemaster wishes. Indeed acquiring the necessary land may be an adventure in itself. Alternatively, the process may be abstracted into two dice rolls, modified as the gamemaster sees fit. For the first—the roll to locate suitable land—the force spends a week of searching, at the end of which the force's controlling player rolls 2D6 against a Base Target Number of 8 (modified as necessary for negotiation skills or employer/landowner conditions, at the gamemaster's discretion). If the result is equal to or higher than the modified target number, the force has found a suitable tract of land within that week. Failed rolls simply mean that an extra week of searching and negotiations is spent for every point by which the roll misses its modified target. The cost of the land is then determined by rolling 3D6 and subtracting the previous roll's Margin of Success (or adding the Margin of Failure). The result of this second roll, multiplied by 10,000 for every square half-kilometer of land desired (or portion thereof), represents the monthly cost to lease the land, in C-bills. Quadruple this cost result if the force is buying the land instead of leasing. A square half-kilometer roughly equates to the area of a standard CBT mapsheet (about 250 hexes).

However the land is secured, the controlling player continues on to Step 2: Base Construction once this step is completed.

Step 2: Base Construction

Under these rules, base construction is not a hit-or-miss affair but a simple matter of investing the C-bills and time to construct the facilities the force needs. Full advanced building construction rules are provided in *Tactical Operations*, pages 114-143.

The Construction Table below provides the basic formulae for each structure that may be constructed on a base, which are then multiplied by any applicable options chosen from the Structural Modifiers Table. Finally, the buildings can be outfitted with any desired equipment and power sources using the Additional Equipment and Power Generators tables, respectively.

For simplicity's sake, these rules use the standard Classic BattleTech map scale of 30-meter hexes and 6-meter levels, as well as Construction Factors (CF) that denote the relative strength and damage capacity of structures. Remember to note the purpose of each structure when constructing a base, as each has its own features and special rules.

The time involved in construction represents the labor that may be performed by the force's support personnel or (if on a friendly/neutral world) by local hires. Costs are provided in *TO*, page 418, and for simplicity's sake are assumed to include a 7-man construction crew (if on a friendly/neutral world). Construction times can be reduced by supplying

extra labor per hex of building, either performed by the force's personnel—meaning they are not available for their normal duties—or (if on a friendly/neutral world) by local hires. Each additional 7-man team comprised of the force's personnel multiplies the construction time by 0.95, while each additionally hired professional team multiplies the construction time by 0.80, rounded up to the nearest whole day. Regardless of whether they are hired or not, the maximum number of work teams that may be added to construct a given hex of buildings is five. For example, a base constructed using the integral construction team requires 36 days to complete. Hiring one additional construction team reduces the construction time to 29 days. Adding another team reduces the construction time to 23 days. Adding a further two teams comprised of the force's staff reduces the construction time to 21 days.

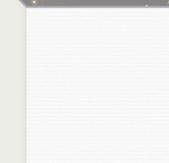
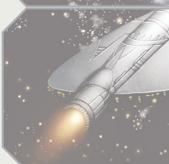
The first additional construction crew hired increases the cost of the project by 5 percent, and each additional crew adds a further 1 percent to this value, reflecting mounting inefficiencies in adding additional crews. For example, the first crew would add 5 percent to a project's cost. A second crew would add 6 percent, a third crew would add 7 percent and the fourth crew would add 8 percent.

The use of appropriate engineering equipment installed on vehicles or IndustrialMechs (such as backhoes, bulldozers, drills, dumpers, hoists, pile drivers, saws, rock cutters, and wrecking balls) can reduce the manpower needed to clear land, build structures, and such. Even standard BattleMechs that have at least one hand actuator can carry loads and support construction processes. Only a single vehicle, BattleMech or IndustrialMech may work on a particular hex of a building project. When in doubt, allow a gamemaster or other neutral party to determine whether a support vehicle or IndustrialMech qualifies as an appropriate engineering unit. The benefits vary: a BattleMech with two hand actuators or an engineering vehicle multiplies construction times for its hex by 0.90; an IndustrialMech multiplies construction times by 0.85, and a BattleMech with one hand actuator multiplies construction times by 0.95.

For example, a base construction project building a 1-hex hardened hangar in a rush uses 5 hired construction crews and an IndustrialMech. The construction time is 4 days multiplied by 0.8 four times and 0.85 for the IndustrialMech, for a total of 1.39 days, which rounds up to 2 days.

Units operating on a hostile world, and not wanting the expense of carrying trained building teams with them into combat, may construct the base using only their support personnel but suffer modifiers (x1.25) to the time required to construct the base.

Finally, enterprising gamemasters should feel free to add other modifiers to the construction times based on local conditions such as terrain, atmospheric types and weather conditions.



BASE CONSTRUCTION TABLES

CONSTRUCTION MODIFIERS

Unit	Multiplier
BattleMech (2 hand actuators)*	X0.9
BattleMech (1 hand actuator)*	X0.95
Extra Construction Team\$~	X0.95
Engineering Vehicle*	X0.90
IndustrialMech*	X0.85
Extra Hired Construction Team\$	X0.80
No Trained Construction Team	X1.25

* Maximum of one BattleMech, engineering vehicle or IndustrialMech per hex.

\$ Maximum of 5 teams per hex

~ Combat Engineers count as Hired Crews for time multipliers

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

Item	Day per Item
Weaponry	
Light / Medium	20 weapons / day
Heavy	20 tons of weapons / day
Turret	2 tons of turret / day
Capital	20 tons of weapons / day
Ammo	25 tons ammo / day
Heat Sinks	50 heat sinks / day
Armor	1 / hex
Capital Armor	10 / hex
Large Door	7 doors / day
Industrial Elevator*	5 levels / day
Other Equipment	10 tons / day

POWER GENERATOR INSTALLATION

Generator Type	Days per level of building
Steam	1 day per ton of generator
Internal Combustion	1 day per ton of generator
Fuel Cell	1 day per ton of generator
Solar	1 day per ton of generator
Fission	3 day per ton of generator
Fusion	2 day per ton of generator
External Source	0.5 days per ton of generator

STRUCTURAL MODIFIERS

Modifier	Multiplier
Environmental Sealing	X2
Heavy Metal superstructure	X1.25
High/Low Ceilings	X1.1
Open-Space Construction (e.g., Hangar)	x0.8
Subsurface (underwater or underground)	X5

CONSTRUCTION TIME TABLE

Structure Type	Days Per Hex and Per Level	Structure Type	Days Per Hex and Per Level
Road/Pavement/Rail line	5 hexes / day	Bridge	
Tent*	10 hexes / day	Light	4
Hangar\$		Medium	11
Light	1	Heavy	18
Medium	2	Hardened	25
Heavy	3	Rail	32
Hardened	4	Gun Emplacement	
Standard Building		Light	7
Light	2	Medium	11
Medium	5	Heavy	18
Heavy	9	Hardened	32
Fence**	25 hexsides / day	Fortress	
Wall**		Medium	11
Light	5 hexsides / day	Heavy	18
Medium	3 hexsides / day	Hardened	32
Heavy	1.5 hexsides / day	Castle Brian	
Hardened	1 hexside / day	Heavy	179
		Hardened	321

* Tents are purchased without a construction team, but suffer no penalties for being erected without one.

\$ Hangars constructed as Tunnels multiply the construction times by 3.

** Wall and Fence Man Hours are per hexside, rather than per hex/level.