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SCI-FI COMBAT ROLEPLAYING

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#### **ABOUT FUDGE**

FUDGE is a role-playing game written by Steffan O'Sullivan, with extensive input from the Usenet community of rec.games.design. The basic rules of FUDGE are available on the internet at <http://www.fudgerpg.com>, and in book form from:

**Grey Ghost Games, Inc.**

**P.O. Box 838**

**Randolph, MA 02368**

They may be used with any gaming genre.

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Some of the FUDGE system tweaks that we used for F9 were shamelessly stolen from Alpha Station, a homegrown sci-fi setting for FUDGE. Check it out at:

<http://www2.southwind.net/~seeker/alphastation.html>

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Book layout and design by Jonathan Elliott.

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#### **FORCE 9 SOURCES**

F9 is obviously inspired by the Alien movies, especially the second. The F9 designers highly recommend watching Aliens just before running your first session. Nothing will put you in the mood better.

What really got us started on this whole "space marine" kick, however, was a very cool roleplaying session with Jason Werner, one of the designers of Biohazard Games' BLUE PLANET. Jason ran a tournament-style mission for us called "Deep Sh\*t" in which a squad of Colonial Marines have to investigate an underwater science station that has stopped communicating with the surface. We lost the everyone in the squad to the last man. It was a blast.

Their website is at:

<http://www.biohazardgames.com>

And, when Starship Troopers finally hit the big screen, we just couldn't put aside that Bug-stomping feeling any more. So, FORCE 9 was born.

FORCE 9 is a science-fiction roleplaying game set in a galaxy at war with a bug-like alien menace. The Player Characters are part of a special Space Marine unit assigned to combat the bug Hive Mind before it consumes all of mankind. FORCE 9 takes much of its inspiration from the Alien films (especially the second), and more recently, Starship Troopers.

FORCE 9 has been designed as a "pamphlet game" - in other words, only the essentials required for play are included here (spiced up a tad with cool graphics, of course). The hardcopy, plain text version of the game should take up no more than nine letter size pages. Future expansions will be provided, detailing other parts of the setting, more Space Marine missions, new equipment and enemies, etc.

FORCE 9 may have grown a little beyond its origins, but it was initially designed as a "beer and pretzels" game - something simple and fun to play as a break from your regular roleplaying. We think it still works great in this respect. Character creation is fast, the setting and tone are familiar to any sci-fi fan, and missions seem to write themselves. If your gaming group finds itself with a free afternoon, don't pick up those Magic decks, generate some Space Marines and kick alien ass!

## THE FALL OF THE COLONIES

Once, there was a single Bug planet, far beyond Federation Space. Unchecked, the Bugs must have flourished there, by the billions, for unknown millennia.

25 years ago, Federation seeder ships from the Colony Belt found the Bug system, which was perfect

### The Colony Belt:

A large, isolated cluster of systems containing a number of habitable worlds. A series of slingshot jumps are required to get there, and because of the jagged courses the trips were appropriately nicknamed "The Ladders".

When the belt was first discovered, large groups of colonists were sent out to forge their way into the new frontier, taking with them only enough supplies to sustain each colony until it could be effectively self-sufficient.

### The Bug Hive-Mind:

When humans come into a near enough proximity, Bugs can exert Psychic Control over the Humans' will. Several Bugs must be gathered together for this domination to work, though the exact number and distance required is still unknown. Once the Humans' minds are Consumed, they become a part of the Bug hive-mind, and act according to its needs. The Humans do retain skills and memories, which the Bugs can access and use to make the humans carry out commands to the best of their abilities, even if this means using skills or technologies the Bugs themselves do not understand. Only if the consumed humans are isolated, and treated over a period of time will they ever recover.

for supporting human life. The colonists approached, unaware of any danger until it was too late. Without warning, the overwhelming psychic force of the Bug Hive Mind consumed the willpower of all the crews of those first Federation vessels. Their names live on in our memories: Republic, Emissary, Columbia, Mercury, Wayfinder, Pacific.

Once consumed, the Hive Mind used the crews' expertise to send the ships on a return course back into the colony belt, loaded with Bug Warrior Drones. In smaller concentrations, the Hive Mind could no longer consume an entire fleet at once, but still they advanced, relentlessly, consuming unsuspecting outposts and transports. As the Bugs' captured fleet grew, they returned again and again to their homeworld, loading larger vessels with drones. The tiny hyperspace slingshot brought by the first colony ships made this process a slow one.

Even so, the outer colonies fell in a matter of months. Space Force launched a counterattack, based on vague first-hand reports by survivors of an "alien menace". The first wave of Space Force vessels was consumed by the Hive Mind after only a brief exchange of fire.

Through psychic-control and careful deployment of its forces, the Bugs acquired an armed space fleet of roughly 50 ships. The remaining Space Force vessels were ordered to destroy all slingshots in the Belt with enough power to launch a ship back to earth. This they accomplished before being consumed, effectively creating a massive blockade

**The Hyperspace Slingshot:**

The slingshot is a massive magnetic rail-cannon that is designed to accelerate small craft (6-10 crew) to hyperspace velocities, giving them a one-way ride to distant star systems.

against further spreading of the Bugs into human space. This artificial barrier, known as the Quarantine Zone, has remained intact for the past 25 years. No Bug-controlled vessels are known to have escaped the colony-belt in that time.

## **THE HUMAN TELEPATHIC FACTOR**

The Federation Regency of Science has spent decades studying the Enemy and the consuming psychic-control of the Hive Mind. They have discovered, through rigorous experimentation, that the process is reversible if the consumed human is separated from the concentration of Bugs that consumed him or her. The individual's personality will resurface in time, though memories of the Hive experience seem to be totally lost, even to hypno-regression.

In studying the Hive Mind effect, Federation scientists discovered the precise element that allows the Bug to Consume us: the Human Telepathic Factor.

All humans have some capacity for psychic transference. The human mind is constantly giving off and receiving a low-level stream of psychic energy, of which most individuals are not aware. Because of their unique collective-brain quality, the Bug species can focus its psychic force when gathered in large numbers. This force is much greater than the natural psychic threshold of a single human, allowing the Hive Mind to exert its influence. The human loses all willpower and individuality, while retaining most of its memories and skills.

Some humans, however, have a much greater capacity for psychic-transference. This capacity is known as the Human Telepathic Factor, or T-Factor. High T-factor humans are more resistant or totally immune to the Hive Mind. Humans with high enough T-factors can even psychically transfer their consciousness from one body to another, across any

distance.

It is this ability that has allowed the Federation to build a space fleet to strike back at the Bugs. A fleet comprised solely of genetically engineered clone bodies, controlled by expert telepaths, immune to the effects of the Hive Mind. This fleet is known as Federation Space Task Force 9, or FORCE 9 for short.

Force 9 troopers are all clones of telepaths back on Earth. The clone bodies are simply lifeless hulks, until motivated by the telepath. While psychically linked, the telepath experiences the world as if he was the clone. The telepaths are given rigorous physical and mental training to make them the most effective fighting force in the galaxy.

When a trooper is killed in action, a new clone body is simply re-grown and shipped to the marine's staging area, where the telepath once again takes control. Some new command frigates even have cloning facilities on board, making transition even easier.

**Clone Death and Telepathic Shock:**

When a clone body dies, the controlling Telepath suffers a nightmarish experience that can mentally scar him or her or even lead to Psychic Death. Telepaths can willingly "disconnect" from their clone at any time. However, to reduce the risk of Telepathic Shock, the procedure must be done over a period of hours, as the telepath carefully severs the links to the clone form.



# FORCE 9 GAME MECHANICS

FORCE 9 uses the Freeform Universal Do-it-yourself Gaming Engine, or FUDGE for short. FUDGE is a free roleplaying system available on the internet. The following chapter will make a lot more sense after you have read through FUDGE, so you might want to go ahead and download a copy from:

<http://www.fudgrpg.com>

Note: There are probably as many dice mechanics for FUDGE as there are FUDGE players. The method preferred by the F9 designers is the classic 2d6 method from the FUDGE rules. Designate one d6 as the "positive" die and one as the "negative" die. Roll both dice and subtract the negative result from the positive result. +5 or -5 results are too extreme for FUDGE, so treat them as "0."

## ATTRIBUTES

As in regular FUDGE, all attributes are rated from -3 to +3 for humans. A rating of Fair (0) is standard for most attributes of a typical human. The Psi attribute has a default rating of Terrible (-3).

As a reminder, the trait levels are:

- (-3) Terrible
- (-2) Poor
- (-1) Mediocre
- (0) Fair
- (+1) Good
- (+2) Great
- (+3) Superb

## PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES

- Strength
- Toughness
- Move
- Speed
- Action

## NON-PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES

- Perception
- Knowledge
- Fortune
- Willpower
- Psi

## ATTRIBUTE DESCRIPTIONS

### STRENGTH

Lifting capacity, base HTH damage.

You might make a STR roll when a character tries to move something heavy or wants to break an object, though most feats of strength should be automatic if the character has the required trait level.

### TOUGHNESS

Resistance to damage.

You might make a TGH roll when the character is exposed to poison or disease, or when the character goes without sleep and must function normally.

### MOVE

How fast you can run, swim, fly, whatever.

Move rolls are rarely necessary unless the terrain being moved over is especially difficult or unusual.

### SPEED

Reaction time, determines who goes first.

SPD rolls are called for at the beginning of each combat round, to determine the order in which everyone acts. You might also call for a SPD roll when two characters are rushing to complete an action (such as a fastdraw contest).

### ACTION

Overall physical coordination, athleticism.

An ACT roll can determine the success of acrobatic maneuvers, jumping, throwing, catching, or dodging attacks.

### PERCEPTION

Awareness, intuition.

Make a PER roll to notice those Bugs lying in wait for you, or sneaking up behind you, or burrowing beneath you, or...

### KNOWLEDGE

How much stuff you know and can remember.

KNO rolls can be made to see if a marine has specific experience for the task at hand. For example, if knowledge of colonial terraforming systems is required, the marine can roll his or her KNO to see

how much they remember. KNO rolls are made to recall obscure details and trivia; there is no need to roll to see if a marine can remember their mission assignments or how to load their weapon.

#### **FORTUNE**

Luck. The good kind. You may spend a level of Fortune to get a +1 bonus to one roll. Only one level may be spent at a time. Fortune levels return at the end of each Mission.

#### **WILLPOWER**

Ability to perform under pressure, endurance.

WIL rolls are most often made in combat, when the character attempts to resist the effects of damage and fight on. Cruel GMs will call for WIL rolls whenever there is a chance for the characters to lose their cool. Kinder GMs know that F9 troopers are psychologically hardened for warfare, and seldom break under pressure.

#### **PSI**

Psionic power.

PSI rolls are made to resist the psychic influence of the Bug Hive Mind or the effects of Psi Combat. Telepaths lose a level of PSI every time their clone body dies while they are linked to it. A level of PSI is gained for every mission completed in the same body. More details on PSI are included in the Psi Corps Supplement.

## **SKILLS**

Skills in F9 use the normal trait range of Terrible to Superb, plus one additional level: Expert (+4). The default rating for unskilled attempts is Poor, or even Terrible if the skill is complex or requires special knowledge.

### **SKILL DESCRIPTIONS**

#### **HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT**

Covers all close-quarters combat, both unarmed and armed. HTH Combat can be used to strike, pin, or throw an opponent. See Combat section for more details.

#### **GUN COMBAT**

The use of small arms, from hold-out pistol to assault rifle.

#### **HEAVY WEAPONS**

The use of weapons of mass-destruction, such as incinerators, grenades, and rocket launchers.

#### **GUNNERY**

Covers the operation of crew-controlled weapons on board vehicles, including remote and turret-mounted weaponry.

#### **DEMOLITIONS**

The safe and effective use of explosives, including the ability to set and disarm mines and bombs.

#### **PSI COMBAT**

The dangerous application of personal Psi energy to perform superhuman feats such as mind-control, telepathy, and pyrokinesis. Psi Combat will be covered in a forthcoming game supplement.

#### **ZERO G OPS**

The ability to maneuver effectively in low gravity environments as well as technical expertise with jetpacks and spacesuits.

#### **STEALTH**

The ability to hide, move silently, camouflage, and set ambushes.

#### **PILOT**

The ability to operate a particular class of vehicle, such as Ground Vehicles, Atmosphere Craft, Water Craft, or Space Craft. You may pilot an unfamiliar class of vehicle at -2 levels.

#### **SURVIVAL**

Knowledge of survival techniques in dangerous environments, including the ability to locate and catch food, construct shelter, and conserve resources.

#### **MEDICAL**

This skill is primarily first aid and battlefield medicine, but at high levels it can represent the abilities of a skilled surgeon or medical researcher.

#### **TECHNICAL**

Knowledge of highly technical systems and information, such as electrical engineering, computer operation and programming, communication systems, and sensors.

#### **MECHANICAL**

Ability to maintain and repair complex mechanical devices such as firearms, vehicles, power-generators and robots.

#### **SCIENCE**

Advanced knowledge of a particular scientific field such as Bioengineering, Astrophysics, Hyperspace Theory, Alien Psychology, Xenobiology, or Psionics.

## **CHARACTER CREATION**

All attributes start at Fair. Distribute three levels to Non-Physical Attributes. Physical Attributes are set by the "Clone Body" Gift, below.

All F9 Marines get 3 free gifts (see below). You

may also pick two additional Gifts which represent the special training schools your Marine has completed.

## GIFTS

### CLONE BODY

(all F9 PCs get this Gift for free)

You are in telepathic control of a genetically engineered clone body, designed for combat. This body is faster, stronger, and more durable than an ordinary human body. You have the following traits:

**Strength:** Superb

**Move:** Great

**Toughness:** Superb

**Speed:** Superb

**Action:** Great

(You may swap STR and ACT for a leaner, more graceful clone body)

#### Damage Capacity

You have 1 extra "Hurt" damage box and 1 extra "Very Hurt" damage box, due to vital organ redundancy and enhanced bone and muscle structure.

#### Heightened Senses

Your clone body has eyes that can see in infrared, ultraviolet, and thermal imaging. You suffer no PER penalties due to darkness.

#### Environmental Adaptations

Your artificial body can operate without difficulty underwater or in vacuum for up to eight hours. You can go without food or water for up to six weeks.

### TELEPATH

(all F9 PCs get this Gift for free)

You have an exceptional T-factor and can shift your consciousness into a clone body. With extensive training, you may be capable of other feats of mind over matter, such as telekinesis or psychometry. You have the following traits:

**Psi: Default:** Fair

**Psi Combat:** Terrible

**Psi Affinity:** Choose Telekinesis, Psychometry, Pyrokinesis, or Mind Control.

### FORCE 9 MARINE

(all PCs get this Gift for free)

You have completed the grueling Space Force boot camp and the even more exclusive Force 9 training facilities. During your extensive schooling, you have aquired the following skills:

**HTH Combat:** Great

**Gun Combat:** Great

**Heavy Weapons:** Fair

**Zero G Ops:** Good

**Stealth:** Good

**Survival:** Superb

**Medical:** Fair

Besides your 3 free starting Gifts, you may pick two more from the list of Training Schools, below. All of the following Gifts have two levels of ability. Each level counts as one full Gift.

## TRAINING SCHOOLS

Marksman

Covert Ops Specialist

Combat Pilot

Heavy Weapons Specialist

Medic

Combat Engineer

### MARKSMAN

**Level 1:** Gun Combat: Superb  
Stealth: Great

**Level 2:** Gun Combat: Expert  
Stealth: Superb

### COVERT OPS SPECIALIST

**Level 1:** Stealth: Superb  
HTH Combat: Superb

**Level 2:** Stealth: Expert  
HTH Combat: Expert

### COMBAT PILOT

You can fly all types of military craft, from dropships to aerospace fighters.

**Level 1:** Pilot: Great  
Gunnery: Great

**Level 2:** Pilot: Superb  
Gunnery: Superb

### HEAVY WEAPONS SPECIALIST

**Level 1:** Heavy Weapons: Great  
Demolitions: Superb

**Level 2:** Heavy Weapons: Superb  
Demolitions: Expert

### MEDIC

**Level 1:** Medical: Great  
Science: Good

**Level 2:** Medical: Superb  
Science: Great

### COMBAT ENGINEER

**Level 1:** Mechanical: Great  
Technical: Good

**Level 2:** Mechanical: Superb  
Technical: Great

(Swap Mech. and Tech. ratings if you want)

Character Creation Notes: Since all PCs will have nearly identical Physical traits and similar Non-Physical traits and skills, it is important to have a strong character concept and personality in order to differentiate between characters. In F9, it's not what your character can do that sets her apart, it's how she does it. We all know why everyone remembers Hudson and Vasquez from Aliens, while few people remember Frost, Crowe, or Spunkmeyer.

## RANK

A FORCE 9 squad is made up of five enlisted men and one officer. One of the enlisted is a sergeant, the rest are usually corporals. The officer is a Lieutenant or a Captain. It's up to the players who gets what rank in the squad. If no consensus can be reached, play rock-paper-scissors or something.

## TAKING ORDERS

Often, one PC will outrank the others. Since this is a fairly strict military-style game, that means that the lower-ranking PCs must shut their traps and hustle when orders are given. However, in most circumstances, direct orders will not be required. Regular group decision-making will still be the norm, but when the CO makes up his mind, that's it. No more room for argument. Good CO's will learn to listen carefully to their troops before going off half-cocked, however. Too many screwed-up missions will bust you down a rank or two, so reign-in some of that ego.

## COMBAT

FORCE 9 combat is very much like the standard FUDGE combat mechanics. For clarity's sake, however, the system is described here, along with minor tweaks.

Combat is fought in rounds, each of which lasts 3 seconds of game time. Characters act in order of their Speed roll. Ties go simultaneously. During one round, a character may:

Make an attack  
Defend against attacks  
Change position (run somewhere, or get up, or jump behind cover, etc.)  
Reload a weapon  
Use a skill (like Medical on an injured companion)  
Use a piece of equipment (like a scanner, welder, remote, etc.)

## COMBINED ACTIONS

Characters can do more than one thing during a combat round. For each extra action they perform, subtract 1 level of ability. For example, a Marine could fire his sidearm once at Great skill, twice at Good skill, or three times at Fair skill. Or, a Bug might smash open a security door (first action) and then attack at -1 skill (second action).

## ATTACK AND DEFENSE

To make an attack, roll your skill and compare it to the minimum level needed to hit. If your skill is equal to or greater than the required level, you hit.

For Gun Combat, the minimum level required is equal to the range to your target:

**Long Range:** Great difficulty

**Medium Range:** Fair difficulty

**Close Range:** Poor Difficulty

For HTH Combat, the minimum level required is Poor.

For thrown weapon attacks (like rocks, thrown knives, etc.) use the Action attribute. Grenades use the Heavy Weapons skill.

If your target is actively defending itself this round, you must equal or beat the opponent's defensive skill roll and beat the minimum difficulty in order to hit. The defensive skill used depends on the type of attack:

### Attack

Gun Combat

HTH Combat

Thrown attacks

Explosions

### Defense

Action -2

HTH Combat

Action

Action, -1 per 2m of effect

## HTH COMBAT

## MANEUVERS

A target may be grabbed with a successful HTH Combat roll. Grabbed characters can take no further actions until they escape the grab. Each round the grab is maintained, roll for the grabbed character and



for the attacker. Strength or (HTH Combat -1) may be used for this roll. If the defender wins, they escape. If the attacker wins, they may inflict damage equal to their Strength (+ relative degree) or throw the defender. Throwing distance is equal to (Strength level) + (relative degree) - (Scale) in meters.

Both the grabbed character and the attacker cannot defend against other attacks while the grab is maintained.

## MOVEMENT

<u>Move Skill</u>	<u>Partial</u>	<u>Max.</u>
Terrible	.5m	1m
Poor	2m	5m
Mediocre	5m	10m
Fair	7m	15m
Good	10m	20m
Great	12m	25m
Superb	15m	30m

Characters can move their Partial Move distance and still do other things during the round with no penalty. If a character moves farther than their Partial Move distance, they suffer a -1 penalty to all subsequent actions that round.

## COMBAT MODIFIERS

**Autofire:** 1m area effect per 3 round burst, or +1 against a single target (max bonus+1)

**Target Cover:** For hard cover, ignore hits in locations behind cover.

Attackers can attempt aimed shots at exposed areas at -3.

**Poor visibility:** -1

**Total darkness or other lack of sight:** -4

**Long range:** (more than 2x Medium Range): Minimum Great result needed to hit

**Medium range:** Minimum Fair result needed to hit

**Close range:** (less than 1/2 Medium Range): Minimum Poor result needed to hit

## AREA EFFECT ATTACKS

Make an attack roll against each target in the area, separately. You do not take the penalty for multiple targets.

## MASS ATTACKS

Mass attacks are important in F9, since the Bugs almost always attack in swarms. For clarity's sake, some of the FUDGE rules are reprinted here,

with some minor revisions:

When a group of opponents attacks a single fighter, they have, at least, a positional advantage. To reflect this, the lone fighter is at -1 to his skill for each additional foe beyond the first.

The lone fighter rolls once, and the result is compared with each of the opponents' rolled degrees, one after the other. The solo combatant has to defeat or tie all of the opponents in order to inflict a wound on one of them. If he beats all of his foes, he may hit the foe of his choice. If he ties his best opponent, he can only wound another whose result is at least two levels below his.

Example: Sgt. Capone is facing three corporate troopers in HTH Combat, who have just rolled a Great, Good, and Mediocre result, respectively. Capone takes a -2 penalty and rolls a Great result, tying the best trooper. He hits the trooper who scored a Mediocre result (at least two levels below his result) and is not hit himself (he tied the best trooper).

The lone fighter takes multiple wounds in a single round if two or more enemies hit him. Usually, he can inflict damage on only one foe in any given round -- his choice of those he bested.

A well-armed fighter facing weak opponents can simply concentrate on one foe and let the others try to get through his armor (that is, not defend himself at all against some of his attackers). In this case, the lone fighter can damage his chosen foe even if he is hit by other, ignored foes.

There's a limit to the number of foes that can simultaneously attack a single opponent. Six humans is about the maximum under ideal conditions, while only three or four can attack if using weapons or martial arts that require a lot of maneuvering space. If the lone fighter is in a doorway, only one or two fighters can reach him. Because of their large size, only three Warrior Drones can attack a single human at once.

Mass Attack rules usually only apply to HTH Combat. If several opponents are shooting at a marine during the round, the marine simply takes a -1 to his dodge roll for every attacker after the first. He doesn't have to beat all the shooters' rolls to return fire himself.

## DAMAGE

Again, the F9 damage system is a lot like basic

FUDGE with a few minor changes. Here's a synopsis:

**Total the Offensive Damage Factor:**

Weapon Damage + (STR for HTH attacks) +  
Relative Degree

**Subtract the Defensive Damage Factor:**

Toughness + Armor

The difference is the total damage done. Consult the damage chart (printed on the character sheet for reference) to determine how severe the wound is:

1,2	Scratch	000
3,4	Hurt (-1)	0
5,6	V.Hurt (-2)	0
7,8	Incapacitated	0
9,10	Mortal	0
11+	Instant Death	

Example: If you took a total of 4 damage points, you would be Hurt, and at -1 trait level for all attempted actions. One more point of damage (a total of 5), and you would be Very Hurt, and -2 to all actions.

A result of "Incapacitated" means the character falls unconscious either from pain, shock, bloodloss, or some other trauma. A Great Willpower roll will allow a character to struggle back to semi-consciousness (enough to converse and vaguely sense the world around her). No further actions may be attempted until healed.

A result of "Mortal Wound" means the character is incapacitated and will soon die from his wounds. The character must succeed in a Fair difficulty Willpower roll or die next round, unless healed. Every round the character is left untreated they must make a Fair Willpower roll, +1 difficulty for every minute they have been dying. A Great Medical roll will stabilize a character who is dying.

A result of "Instant Death" means just that. The character is blown apart in a shower of gore.

The boxes next to the wound levels represent how many of each wound type a character can take. When a wound is received, mark off the appropriate box. If there is no open box for a given wound result, the character takes the next highest wound for which there is an open box.

Since clone bodies are exceptionally tough, all Space Marines receive 1 extra Hurt box and 1 extra Very Hurt box.

## CLONE DEATH AND TELEPATHIC SHOCK

When a clone body dies, the controlling Telepath suffers a nightmarish experience that can mentally scar him or her or even lead to Psychic Death. A character loses a trait level of Psi every time their clone body dies while they are connected to it. If a character's Psi rating ever drops below Terrible, they suffer Psychic Death and permanently lose the ability to link to a clone. The character is effectively out of the game.

For every mission completed in the same clone body, add a level of Psi attribute. This level cannot be higher than Superb.

## BUGS AND DAMAGE

For ease of play, Bugs don't take wounds. They are either still fighting, or dead. When a Bug is hit in combat, compare the Offensive Damage Factor to the Bug's toughness rating. A damage total of 8 or more kills the Bug. Anything less and it keeps fighting. Don't forget to describe the hits a Bug takes, even if they have no effect. A Marine might blow off a few legs or shoot out an eye before the creature finally keels over. The more grisly the wounds, the more relentless the Bugs will seem.

Since PCs will be using the same weapons from mission to mission, it's easy calculate the relative degree necessary to drop each type of Bug. In fact, we've included this info in a handy table below. You're welcome.

<u>Weapon</u>	<u>Bug/Relative Degree needed</u>
M250	Warrior Drone: +3 Winged Drone: 0 Spinner: +1
M250 (auto)	Warrior Drone: +2 Winged Drone: -1 Spinner: 0
VX-80	Warrior Drone: +3 Winged Drone: 0 Spinner: +1

## HIT LOCATIONS AND SPECIAL EFFECTS

To determine where a hit lands, roll and consult the table on the next page (these numbers are also printed on the character sheet for easy reference):

-4 head	4 head
-3 left arm	3 right arm
-2 left leg	2 right leg
-1 left arm	1 right arm
0 torso	

Note: With this system, arms get hit more often than legs because they tend to be in the way, not because of actual target size.

Hit locations are normally used just to see whether or not a shot hits the character's armor and/or cover. However, for a more gruesome combat, rule that a result of "Mortal" or "Instant Death" when hitting a limb severs that location. A Great Willpower roll allows the character to tough it out and keep fighting at -2. Death checks must still be made every round, like a normal Mortal wound. A result of "Incapacitated" renders the limb useless until healed.

## COMBAT EXAMPLE

Sgt. Capone is investigating an empty corridor on board the Bug-controlled Cruiser Europa. He has been separated from his team, and is trying to find an operational ship's intercom unit in order to contact them.

Suddenly, from behind, Capone hears the distinctive clicking and whispering of Bugs closing in. He turns to find four Warrior Drones scuttling down the corridor after him.

The GM makes a Stealth roll for the Bugs, and a Perception roll for Capone. Capone wins by one level, so he notices the Bugs' ambush and reacts in time.

The Drones are at the far end of the corridor, but experience tells Capone that it is useless to run. The Drones are faster sprinters than his clone body, anyway. Still, some extra distance couldn't hurt. Capone does a partial move to back another 12m away from the Bugs. At the same time, the Sergeant takes up his M250 and opens fire on full auto. The Bugs rush him as fast as they can.

The GM makes a Speed roll for the Drones as a group. They get a Good result. Capone gets a Superb, which means he goes first.

Capone is shooting 2 bursts on autofire, which lets him attack a

4 meter area with his M250. This is enough to cover the entire corridor. However, the bugs only fit two abreast down the hallway, so Capone can attack only the lead pair. Since he is making an area effect attack with the assault rifle, Capone takes no multiple target penalty for shooting at more than one Bug.

The lead Drones are 50m away, which is Close range for the M250, so Capone needs to get a Poor or better to hit the Bugs. However, the Bugs are trying to avoid the spray of death from the assault rifle, by hunkering down low as they charge forward.

The Bugs make a defensive roll based on their Action attribute - 2 (the penalty is for dodging fast projectiles). They take another -1 penalty since they are covering more than their Partial Move distance this round. They get a Fair result. Capone now needs a Fair or better to hit the Drones. He rolls his Gun Combat skill against each Bug separately, getting a Great result for each.

The damage rating of Capone's M250 assault rifle is 6, +2 for his relative degree, for a total Offensive Damage Factor of 8. The Drones have a Defensive Damage Factor of 1 which drops the overall damage down to 7. A damage total of 8 is required to kill a bug, however.

The explosive shells from the M250 tear into the charging Bugs, blasting off limbs and chunks of exoskeleton. The Bugs do not stop. At the end of the round, the Bugs have moved 30 meters and Capone has moved 12. There are now 32 meters between the Marine and the Bugs. If Capone repeats his performance from last round, he can retreat for two more rounds before the Drones overtake him. He manages to do this, dropping two of the Bugs in the

process. It's not enough, though. On round 4, the Bugs come into HTH combat range and tear the unfortunate Sergeant to pieces. Better luck next clone.

## HEALING

Wounds are healed with the Medical skill.

A Scratch is too insignificant to require a roll. Scratches are usually erased after a battle, provided the characters have five or ten minutes to attend to them.

A Good result heals all wounds one level (Hurt to healed, Very Hurt to Hurt, etc.). (Scratches do not count as a level for healing purposes. That is, a Hurt wound that is healed one level is fully healed.) A Great result heals all wounds two levels, and a Superb result heals three levels.

The use of an AutoDoc (a portable first-aid robot) adds +1 to the Medical skill roll. Using a fully operational medical suite (such as those aboard large starships or at military outposts) adds +2 to the roll.

Wounds heal on their own at one wound level per week of rest. That is, after a week of rest, an Incapacitated character becomes Very Hurt, etc. Mortal wounds never heal naturally.

Sometimes, you're going to have to give more than you want to give. And sometimes, that will mean your life.

- Sr. Drill Instructor Sgt Nansk

Abatement in the hostility of one's enemies must never be thought to signify they have been won over. It only means that one has ceased to constitute a threat.

- SC4 Quentin Crisp

Their strategy in coming after us was very simple. First they cut us off, and then they killed us.

- 2nd Lt. Powell

I can only see bugs and more bugs, till the horizon is black and swollen with bugs.

- PFC Lawrence

# FORCE 9 MISSIONS

The primary mission of Force 9 is to re-take the Human Colony Belt, which has been overrun by Bugs for 25 years. Consumed humans are to be extracted and removed to Earth for rehabilitation. The Bugs are to be killed until there are no more left to kill. No diplomats will be sent to negotiate treaties.

Force 9 Missions are scored on a 0-4 point threat scale:

**Grade 0:** Intel estimates no Bug involvement. You get hypership backup, satellite intel, multiple squad drops, and/or orbital assault, as needed. Grade 0 missions are usually fought against corporate military or renegade militias, never against Bug worlds.

**Grade 1:** Negligible Bug involvement. You get all of the above, minus the hypership. You do get a hypership outside the system on standby, however.

**Grade 2:** All Bug-controlled planets are Grade 2 missions or higher. You still get limited orbital assault and intel sat placement. No hypership on standby until the mission Grade is reduced.

**Grade 3:** Bug controlled with planetary defense systems. As above, with no orbital assault, no intel sat. Single squad only.

**Grade 4:** No current intel. Site hasn't even been looked at since colonial days. You get to make first contact, all by yourself.

## GM STUFF

Here's some stuff that the GM might want to think about before running an F9 mission:

### THE THEME:

Is the war winnable? Is F9 an adventure game where man dominates nature, or is it a horror game, where he slowly gets eaten by the massive alien menace?

### THE MISSION:

Only play key missions. If it takes six months of intel gathering and raids to soften a world up for F9 to take it, just skip right to the crucial engagement. If

Space Force could take the world without F9, there's no need to play any of those missions, now is there?

What happened to bring this mission about? How many squads went before you? Did they leave anything of value? (an intel satellite, perhaps?)

What is the tactical value of this mission? Are you killing Bugs, destroying technology or vehicles used by the Bugs, or extracting consumed colonists?

Why is full-scale engagement not possible? This one is important. Most F9 missions should be maximum risk, single-squad affairs (this is what F9 is for after all). Why must F9 be used for this mission rather than a one-death unit?

## THE BUGS

It is now known that the three types of Bugs encountered so far are actually the same organism that undergoes several metamorphoses during its life cycle (similar to an earth caterpillar).

### STAGE ONE: THE SPINNER

Spinners are small (roughly 1/2 meter long) arachnoids, with black fibrous bodies. They have the



unique ability to spin monofilament from an orifice in their thorax. This monofilament is typically woven into dense strands that are used for the construction of webs and nests, or for wrapping egg sacks. The monofilament may

also be laid out in extremely fine threads, which the Bugs use for traps. This mono-thread can slice through all kinds of ceramics, plastics, and metals.

Note: Bug monostrands are extremely fine and hard to spot. They require a Great Perception roll to notice. Coming into contact with monofilament does 8 damage per strand (armor has no effect). A ship corridor or doorway is typically covered with up to 6b strands.

Mass Scale: 0 (human)

**STR:** Poor    **TGH:** Mediocre    **MOV:** Fair  
**SPD:** Good    **ACT:** Superb    **PER:** Mediocre  
**KNO:** Terrible    **FOR:** Poor    **WIL:** Great  
**PSI:** Terrible/Superb

Throw Webbing: Great (Ensnares a human-sized target at Superb strength. Range: 30m). Spinners have enough webbing for two attacks like this.

Bite Attack: Fair, Damage: 4

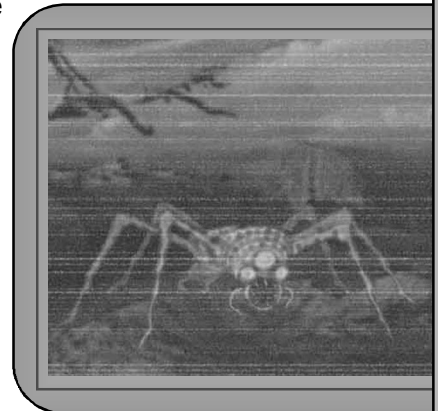
Cunning: Fair

Stealth: Great

### STAGE TWO: WARRIOR DRONE

After a four-month cocoon cycle, the Spinner emerges more than five times its original size, covered in an armored exo-skeleton, and bristling with piercing claws and rending mandibles. This is the Warrior Drone. Drones are roughly 2.5 meters long, weighing over 250 kilos, yet they can still outrun the best human sprinters. Their primary claws can rend through ceramic or titanium armor with ease.

Drones are fearless fighters, willing to sacrifice themselves by the dozens to protect egg-layers or territory. The Hive Mind link allows the drones to coordinate much better than human fighters, giving them a nearly flawless tactical ability.



Mass Scale: 3

**STR:** Great(5)    **TGH:** Poor(1)    **MOV:** Superb  
**SPD:** Superb    **ACT:** Great    **PER:** Superb  
**KNO:** Poor    **FOR:** Poor    **WIL:** Superb  
**PSI:** Terrible/Superb

Claw Attack (2 per round): Superb, Damage: 8 (if both attacks hit, target is Grabbed)

Rend To Pieces (only after Grab): Damage: 12

Tail Pincers (free attack on any target behind the Drone): Good, Damage 6

Cunning: Good

Stealth: Great

Figure Out Simple Technology (how to open doors, use an elevator, etc.): Good

Figure Out Advanced Technology (read a scanner, use a comlink, etc.): Terrible

## STAGE THREE: WINGED DRONE

After another four month cycle, the emerging bug is armor free, emaciated, and winged. Roughly 1.5 meters long, its wingspan twice that, the flier makes up for the lost sturdiness with a newfound speed. When facing a swarm of these fliers, the marine's best hope is to pray, for they can descend,



tear a squad to pieces, and fly away before anyone knows what happened.

Primarily, the fliers attack in groups, as individually they are much less affective. These swarms are often labeled with the age old term

"death from above", as their agility and erratic flight patterns make it nearly impossible to kill enough of them to reduce the swarm's lethality.

Mass Scale: 0

**STR:** Good **TGH:** Poor

**MOV:** FlySuperb+2(5)

Ground: Poor

**SPD:** Superb **ACT:** Superb **PER:** Superb

**KNO:** Poor **FOR:** Poor **WIL:** Superb

**PSI:** Terrible /Superb

Move Distance per round while flying: Partial:30, Max:60

Claw Attack: Great, Damage:6

Winged Drones usually attack in swarms of 6-10 creatures, so use the mass attack rules when dealing with them.

Cunning: Fair

Stealth: Great

## STAGE FOUR: EGG LAYER

No bug at this stage has ever been seen. Presumably because the droves of insects which must undoubtedly be protecting the lair, create enough of a hive mind effect to overcome even Force 9 marines.

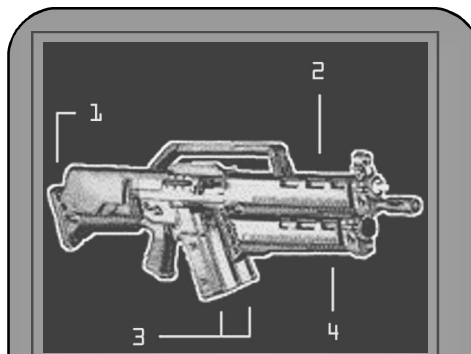
Space Force scientists can only hypothesize about the nature of this bug. It is hoped that one day, a defense against the hive mind effect can be found, and that a live "queen" specimen can be obtained. If this were to happen, it could possibly lead to development of a poison which would kill larvae inside the eggs before hatching.

## MARINE WEAPONS AND ARMOR

### WEAPONS

#### M250 ASSAULT RIFLE

Fires 7.62mm explosive round. An electromagnetic charge accelerates the bullet, rather than a chemical reaction, allowing the weapon to function in vacuum or underwater. Unlike the



#### Nomenclature:

1. Collapsable shoulder stock.

2. Gas-vent recoil suppression system.

3. Primary and secondary ammunition magazines.

4. Modular weapon (grenade launcher).

VX-80 laser (next page), the M250 is safe to use aboard starships, due to its relatively low penetration. Accepts standard MOD secondary weapon system (which may be a shotgun, grenade launcher, or incinerator -- designated M250-S, M250-G, or M250-I, respectively).

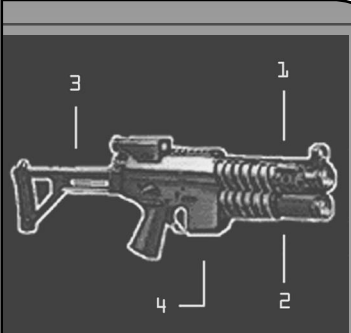
Damage: 6  
 ROF: single / auto  
 Medium Range: 500m  
 Durability: Superb  
 Capacity: 30

**MOD Weapons**

**AutoShotgun:** 6  
 (area effect 1m)  
 ROF: single / auto  
 Medium Range: 100m  
 Durability: Superb  
 Capacity: 12

**Grenade:** 9  
 (area: 5m)  
 ROF: single  
 Medium Range: 200m  
 Durability: Great  
 Capacity: 12

**Incinerator:** 5  
 (area: 5m)  
 ROF: single  
 Medium Range: 100m  
 Durability: Good  
 Capacity: 20



**Nomenclature**  
 1. Narrow beam optics.  
 2. Wide beam optics.  
 3. Removable shoulder stock.  
 4. Battery pack.

**VX-80  
 "SABER"  
 VARIABLE-BEAM  
 LASER  
 RIFLE**

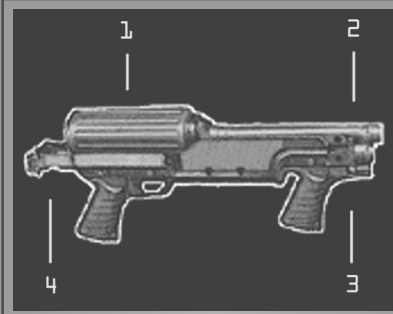
The beam on this laser weapon may be adjusted from a tight beam to a wide cone of light. The Saber is perfectly silent, making it ideal for covert ops.

Damage: 5\* (1m area effect for each extra shot expended. Max: 4m)  
 ROF: single  
 Medium Range: 1000m  
 Durability: Fair  
 Capacity: 5 (recharges 1 per round when not firing)

\*ignores armor/toughness and cover

**MKII FUSION  
 INCINERATOR**

Rifle-like design with canister magazine of fusion material. Weapon projects a highly destructive spray of superheated plasma up to 40m. This weapon will work underwater or in a vacuum. A modular version (MKIIB) mounts to the M250 assault rifle.



**Nomenclature**  
 1. Plasma canister.  
 2. Distance barrel.  
 3. Modular attachment / short range "spray" barrel. Can be affixed to the M250.  
 4. Modular attachment lock release.

Damage: 5  
 (area effect up to 10m) (target takes damage for 1d6 rounds)

ROF: single  
 Medium Range: 100m  
 Durability: Good  
 Capacity: 40

**P110 MARINE SIDEARM**

10mm autoloader handgun. Like the M250, the P110 can fire underwater or in vacuum.

Damage: 4  
 ROF: single  
 Medium Range: 250m  
 Durability: Superb  
 Capacity: 20

**ARMOR**

Full Suit protects: All locations. -1 Action, Move, and Speed penalties. Partial Suit protects: Head, Torso. No penalties.

**CERAMIC-COMPOSITE ARMOR:** 2 points

**NON-COMPOSITE ARMOR:** 1 point

FORCE 9 Troopers typically wear a partial suit of composite armor, though occasionally, the mission requires something different.

# THE CORPORATE SECTORS

While all may be fine and dandy in that squeamish little socialist society known as the Federation, there are those who have to do real work to survive. It's a cat and mouse existence where if they can't hunt, they will be eaten. If someone can't find a way to make a credit, they make themselves a bed in the gutter with the rest of the trash.

There are two kinds of people out there - those who order, and those who perform. If it's the latter, life sucks. Twelve hour shifts at the factory barely begin to cover your living expenses, let alone give you any kind of credit for fun. The only solution... sell your soul to the corp. The larger your tab, the longer you work. Health insurance? Who do think you are, an exec? You screw up, there are ten million other starving waifs who would kill for your position. You have aspirations? The best you can hope for is a janitorial service working the top floors. At least you won't lose any limbs there.

As an exec, this is your world. The crumbs all those rats are looking for down there are yours. The greatest challenge is to make your crumbs more luscious than the other corp's. And the motivation for that is good, because you wouldn't want to be



crawling around out there too, would you? Well, there are several way to insure that you stay on top - lying, cheating, smuggling, killing... the list goes on. But one thing is certain, you're not about to let any Space

Force laws stand in your way, because the higher up you are, the further you get from the street.

## CORPORATE LIFE

While Space Force became its self-sufficient machine, the corporations only became more fanatical in their quest for monopolization. With an effective fifty percent of the population no longer in the market economy, any institution not diverse enough to cover its losses went under, or was

devoured by one of the mega-corps. Since the majority of the remaining population were unskilled in any trade, productivity dwindled almost to nothing.

All corporations still standing realized quickly that it was necessary to change course, and since Space Force, now exclusively claiming ninety percent of all habitable worlds, had wiped their hands of the non-federation populace, required measures were drastic. The most intelligent were given first pick of the upper-middle class positions. They were trained, and all input was taken into account as the re-structure took place. Anyone not of a quotient able to fill these positions was put to work in a factory, creating products that had previously been machine made, working for wages barely enough to keep their families alive.

Banks more or less found their way into a corporation of choice and merged. With all currency now corporately controlled, loans became an issue of service rather than currency. Contracts were written up indenturing the lives of families, their children, and children to come.

True middle class now became the entertainers, bartenders, janitors, and anyone not directly involved in production. Though not affiliated with the corporations, there were favorites chosen, as the need to keep their important employees happy was understood by executive management.

Eventually, a fragile balance was achieved between the different industrial giants. No one corporation could support itself, and similar production in any field was shared by no more than three. They needed each other to survive. When the issue of intergalactic expansion arose, it was realized that there must be an agreement if anyone was to succeed. Since crime rates were immense, corporate securities being of little effect against the overwhelming masses of unemployed, desperate people, it was suddenly apparent how to put many of them to use.

## THE VINDICATOR GUILD

Though there were no real laws in the corporate sectors, the penalty for theft, assault, murder, and vandalism was death. Court hearings were swift and harsh. Anyone not able to afford a corporate liason was given no defense, and only two witnesses were required for conviction in such a case.

It was no surprise then, when many of the unemployed masses leapt at the opportunity presented before them. There was to be a council



formed, in charge of an armed force which would regulate intergalactic travel and trade, protect corporate shipping lanes from piracy, and provide swift justice to those corporations that would break the settled treaty. The Vindicator Guild, as it came to be called, was broken into two sections. The power of the administrative section was absolute, the purpose being not to create a military power, but a force of universal jurisdiction. They would have direct control over the armed force, and combat ranking guild members would have no control over force distribution. While some of the newly recruited were put to work in the administrative section, the majority were trained to become soldiers.

## VINDICATOR SOLDIER RANKS

### GUARD TROOPER

Guard troopers make up the majority of the Vindicator forces. They are grouped together into squads of no less than six, and no more than ten. Once a squad is formed, it stays together for a four year tour. Then it is broken down, and the soldiers are re-assigned elsewhere into new squads. While most troopers have had training with all field weapons, there are specialized personnel in each squad.



### SQUAD LEADER

A minimum of one full tour is mandatory before promotion to squad leader is possible. They have immediate control over all members of their squad. It is the duty of the squad leader to insure that all soldiers' gear is maintained and kept in working order, and that the squad is kept in a state of physical and mental readiness should the need for combat arise.



### SHIP COMMANDER

A minimum of three full tours is mandatory before promotion to ship commander is possible. In addition, the individual must have been involved in ship-to-ship combat, no less than three hostile boardings, and no less than five ground assaults - peacekeeping or aggressive. By information passed to him by the squad leaders, it is



the responsibility of the ship commander to process all administrative work required to keep his ship and contained forces at peak standards. Pay, meals, ammunition, and maintenance orders all fall under this responsibility.

### PILOT

A minimum of one full tour is mandatory before promotion to pilot is possible.



The reason for this is so the pilot will have the experience of feeling stress from the soldier's perspective, before being placed in control of a ship. While not the primary maintenance technician, the pilot must know how to repair damages to her ship in the field. Any decisions save retreat which concern the safety of the ship proper are the sole decision of the pilot.

## ADMINISTRATION

The Executive Council was made up of 21 members, each from a different corporation. Regulations were charted, stating that no council member could treat the corporation from which they came any differently than the rest when it came time to cast votes. First allegiance was now to the council, and no-one else. This was the way it must be if progress was to be made. The Vindicator Guild could not afford to play favorites if long term progress was to be made.

Dues were to be paid by any corporation wishing to keep license for open trade, production, and sale of product. If a corporation chose not to purchase license, any activities regarding the open market were prohibited to them. Any corporation caught involved in such illegal practices was to be frozen, dismantled, and distributed amongst license holders.

Every licensed corporation was required to have at least one senior corporate liason on site. This liason was to work with the corporate execs to insure that all policies were adhered to strictly. This of course meant that the position of senior corporate liason was the most desired, even if not the highest ranking position outside of the council itself. The SCLs' salaries were paid by the corporations for which they acted, and general bribes were automatically figured in. Anything above and beyond standard operations was worked out between the SCL and CEO themselves.

Only when the first news of the bug threat was heard did the guild become important to Space Force as well.

## **THE CARTMAN/ FENSWORTH TREATY**

Space Force very quickly realized the dangers of allowing corporate trading routes to continue travel to and from the quarantine zone. While it was no problem for them to stop their own forces from entering the zone, short of an all out war there was no way for them to make such restrictions for the corporate sectors. Even then, there wasn't near the manpower to continually monitor every sector.

Seeing an opportunity of a lifetime, the guild stepped in. Until then, there had been nothing to stop Space Force from claiming any new territory found by a corporation. Only two out of ten useful planets found were granted to non Space Force ownership, regardless of the initial staking team. Now, no such behavior would be tolerated.

A contract was written up between Space Force and the Vindicator guild stating that one out of two planets in any class would be granted for corporate ownership, the second going to Space Force. All newfound materials were to be divided evenly. Technology not deemed classified was to be shared with all corporations in the interest of improving the standard of living for all of the corporate sectors.

In return, no corporate vessel was to be allowed into any part of the quarantine zone. Any assets inside were to be written off and forgotten about. Should the time come when there was no longer a bug threat, everything would then be restored to the original claimholder. Any corporate vessel caught going past the zone markers would result in the immediate dismantling of the corporation to which it belonged. Any valuable assets would be distributed among corporations dealing in the same class of goods, the rest would be given away to the firstcoming populace of the planet on which the corporation had its headquarters.

To maintain such a militant state would require a massive upgrade in the technology employed by the Vindicator Guard. Space Force would render needed military technology, which was deemed by their standards at least one model outdated, to the Guild for Guard forces only. Such technology was to be controlled with the highest classification codes, and under no circumstance was it to leave the confines of the Guild. In return for this technology, the Guard would supply twenty-five percent of the manpower needed to patrol marked quarantine space borders along with Space force.

## **ROLEPLAYING WITH THE CORPORATIONS**

It is abundantly clear, that due to the very nature of greed, there will not be a single rule of the treaty which will not be broken in some underhanded way. The trick is for the corporations to not make it obvious as to just who is breaking the rule, should their cohorts be caught, thus leading to the use of mercenaries. Here are some of the events transpiring in the corporate sectors that may give you some ideas for a game.

### **ALIEN RESEARCH**

This is the obvious one. What corporation doesn't want to be the one to find the aliens' weakness. Once a toxin is found that can stop the bugs dead in their tracks, the resources of the colony belt can be exploited to the fullest extent, not to mention the profit that would come from manufacturing the only known bug poison. Surely research such as that would be bound to impress Space Force, and who knows the benefits that could result from such.

Of course it would have to look like an accident. A small ship of bugs must have gotten through the zone somehow. Fortunately this prototype syrum we were developing worked like a charm. And it can be yours... for a price.

In reality, many corporate ships travel to and from the quarantine zone. This does require a great deal of planning to avoid the border patrol, but these missions are almost always successful. The patrols are routine and scheduled, so once one figures out the windows of opportunity, bingo. Unfortunately, Force 9 missions are not scheduled at all. Who's to say when one of their covert missions will cross paths with a pirate vessel in quarantined space...

### **TELEPATH RESEARCH**

With such an abundance of unemployed people, no one is going to miss a few. If Space Force can have telepaths, so can the corporations. At first, it appeared that Space Force had found some magical missing link, without which, absolutely no progress could be made. But as time goes on, all secrets make themselves heard. And in the telling spawn secrets of their own.

What I have to offer you today ladies and

gentlemen, is not what you may expect. You may have heard rumor of clone or telepath development. Phah! Worthless! One man, controlling one man, such a waste of effort. What I am speaking of is an individual who can not only control their own single counterpart, but two, or even three. The perfect weapon. Imagine group tactics where there is no need for communication between the members. Instant, precise, flawless.

It needn't be said what response Space Force would give to such research.

## COLONIST RETRIEVAL

Space Force isn't the only interested party when it comes to abandoned colonists. Anyone who could have survived on a bug infested planet, especially scientists, would have more than a wealth of knowledge in their head. And since the general attitude toward Space Force from the colonists is hostile, well, the enemy of my enemy...

## BUG INCUBATION

Bug eggs. They'd probably fetch a hefty price on the black market. Imagine a pet bug for your little girl. It'd be better than a guard dog. Sure you can train them, they're smarter than dogs you know.

This is the worst fear of Space Force realized in the flesh. Once bugs are brought into human space, there will be no effective quarantine zone, and it will be impossible to stop the resulting conquest. That is the lie that Space Force tells the rest of humanity. Fortunately there are those who know the truth. That the bugs don't really want conquest, they want to live in harmony with humankind. They know we are the superior race, and they are smart enough to yield to our graces. Their initial hostility was only the result of hostility toward them.

It is no disadvantage to the corporations that there are very wealthy people willing to fund little projects to see this brought about.

## CREATING CORP/GUILD NPC'S AND GEAR

It's pretty basic, really. Since all the best people are working for Space Force, corporations are going to have second best, and the Guild a close third. A good rule of thumb is to visualize what you would think to be an average Space Force troop, and

reduce everything by one.

The same can be said for any equipment. The corporations don't have the luxury of changing everything because they feel like it. They still adhere to the "we have to make what people will buy" mentality. Even when they don't, they're limited by the red tape that accompanies any "for profit" organization. More or less, any gear owned by the corporations will also be one level less effective than that of Space Force's (for the Guild this is due to the SF hand me downs being obsolete).

This is not written in stone however, just a general guideline. The corporations exist so that a factor of unpredictability can be thrown into Force 9. Anything goes. The one underlying motive to any corporate action, however, is always going to be personal gain. They care nothing for the little man, furthering humanity, or any nonsense like that. It's all about greed. Keep that in mind and everything will be just fine.

The life-fate of the modern individual depends only upon the corporation in which he spends the most alert hours of his best years.  
- C. Mills, Machinist's Apprentice

A population weakened and exhausted by battling against so many obstacles whose needs are never satisfied and desires never fulfilled is vulnerable to manipulation and regimentation. The struggle for survival is, above all, an exercise that is hugely time consuming, absorbing, and debilitating. If you create these anti-conditions, your rule is guaranteed for a hundred years.  
- CEO Kapuscinski

