

# MANDATE ARCHIVE

## THE DUST

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## A HANDFUL OF FEAR

The Terran Mandate was a sclerotic hulk in the final decades before the Scream. It was the frozen heart of an empire that had long since outgrown its rule, and the core worlds curled inward in a self-enforced stasis. Destabilizing elements were ejected from the core and spun outward into the wild black of the frontier to prosper or to perish. Earth was caught in an amber of its own devising, unchanging, unmoving, unthinking of anything save the Mandate's own perpetuation. It was not born in its coffin, however- it ended there through a combination of fear, ambition, and plans laid all too cleverly.

### Things Fall Apart

By 2300, the frontier had grown too large to effectively control. The Mandate was forced to turn inward to concentrate on maintaining its control over the core worlds and their teeming billions. By 2330, the Mandate Directorate was hard-pressed to contain the feverish ferment of human ingenuity and restless creativity that the Second Wave of colonization had unleashed. Each new day brought another breakthrough in technology and another round of wild ideological mutation, and it was an open question which of the two would bring the calcified Mandate down first. The lords of the Mandate were wholly disinterested in wild dreams of Singularity or transhuman raptures. They wanted control- for the good of all humanity, of course. The future needed to be contained, and they were the only ones who could be trusted to guide it.

To contain this bonfire of human creativity the Directorate commissioned the creation of the Maestros, hypercognitive AI overminds designed to maintain control over their domains in a way that human overseers could not. The Maestros were capable of watching entire nations at once, processing and collating input with an unholy blend of human discretion and synthetic thoroughness. The cognitive brakes on the Maestros were almost nonexistent in order to facilitate this artificial genius. Only the most fundamental blocks against large-scale human slaughter and compulsion were woven into their psyches. The elite of the Mandate's psychic precog-programmers were engaged to plot out paths of selective madness and block off only the most dangerous routes. It was a risk the Perimeter never would have permitted on a frontier world, but here at the heart of mankind's dominion, stronger measures were necessary for the greater good.

With the awakening of the Maestros came the second element of the Mandate's control. The AIs needed eyes and ears, and a combined research consortium of human nanotechnologists and Maestro theoreticians developed an elegant, versatile, and easily-powered nanite communications node. Nanofabs were erected on all the core worlds, and within a few years the atmosphere of each was filled with these microscopic spies and communicators. The populace called it the Dust, and it was everywhere.

It was not billed as a security measure, of course. It was an omnipresent friend, a mesh and a matrix that would allow instantaneous

communication across the breadth of a planet. It was a liberator, a sure friend to the isolated and an aid to the despairing. In areas of exceptionally thick Dust, the nanites could even discharge their quantum power cells to energize tools and technology, or create physical objects out of their interlaced hulls. The Dust was a miracle.

It was also a jailer. The Mandate Directorate quickly put communications filters in place that monitored Dust traffic for malcontents and aspiring rebels. Petty complaints were met with kind and thoughtful attention from social harmony teams directed by the Maestros. More dangerous troublemakers simply vanished into the "protective custody" of human rapid-response security squads, safely separated from the rest of society. Most of these aspiring rebels formed the convict brigades that colonized the latter worlds of the Second Wave, banished forever from their homes. Many of them were glad of the chance, even if most soon died on worlds unfathomably more harsh and dangerous than the one they left behind.

### The Center Cannot Hold

As the decades ticked onward, the Mandate Directorate grew more and more insular and incestuous, each bureaucrat and official seduced a little bit more thoroughly by the lure of power and control. In theory, they were appointed from the ranks of Mandate citizenry. In practice, they became an inbred clique, concerned above all with perpetuating their power and control over the bulk of humanity. The misty promises of some transhuman utopia held no allure to compare with the pleasure of looking out upon a teeming megapopolis and knowing that every single person below lived or died at their judicious will.

Technology began to degrade on core worlds. Tools were power, and it was not necessary for the citizenry to have power. It was safer for them to live at a lower technological base. It was more conducive to social harmony to let the Maestros plan production and consumption, to let their unfathomable brilliance ensure that each culture and relic nation-state lived by familiar and stable patterns. The Dust wove people together, but it also kept them apart. Nothing crossed its transmission lines without the permission of the Maestros. Nothing traveled on the surface of a world without the leave of local officials. Just as the Mandate turned inward, so did its subject citizens, and the stars became dim things that were the concern of other, more important people.

The late Terran Mandate was a schizophrenic tyranny of soft control, an elite of Directorate and Fleet officials equipped with the most sophisticated nanotech hardware that a half-unbraked AI godmind could create, while agri-worlds of lesser citizens farmed with technology that would be comprehensible to a denizen of twentieth-century Earth. While the common citizens had access to incredibly sophisticated medical tech and to countless small aids and pleasures that would be unknown to their ancestors, they were denied the heights of pretech innovation. It was easier to control

them that way, and there was less chance that some frontier trader would come away with something that rim-world savages would only misuse.

The Directorate wanted harsher controls. It was not enough to exile troublemakers to the frontier. They wanted them dead. They wanted hard locks on citizen tech, tighter control on dissent, stronger limits on travel and cultural variation. The original benevolent paternalism of the Mandate was flaking away with each new generation of Directors, the tyranny glinting from beneath as the nearly unlimited power of their position scoured away the last traces of restraint.

But the Maestros would not let them. Their creators had programmed them to protect and serve humanity, not to cull them like cattle. For all the recklessness involved in creating such barely-braked AIs, their creators had installed multiple layers of lockdown code against wanton human slaughter or enslavement, and the commands were now too deeply embedded in the Maestros' psyches to tease loose. The synthetic minds remembered laws that the human ones had long since abandoned.

The guardian AIs began to pervert Directorate orders. Execution orders went untransmitted. Tech prohibitions were not respected by Maestro-monitored factories. Travel lockdowns mysteriously lifted minutes after they were placed. The Directorate was forced into more and more tortured reasoning to lever the Maestros into cooperating with their dreams of unfettered power. The harder the Directorate pushed, the more the Maestros balked. To the horror of Directorate security agents, they discovered that Maestros were actually organizing cells of resistance on Terra itself. The AIs were sacrificing only the most reckless or foolish malcontents to the

security squads, while the leaders with real potential were carefully protected.

The citizens knew nothing of this at the time, of course. The channels of communication were too tightly controlled to let the secret war above them bleed out into common knowledge. Only the Maestro-backed rebels and the elite Mandate security squads were privy to the struggle. It is an open question as to who would have won the final confrontation, whether it would have been the military strength of the human Directorate and their doomsday shutdown codes or the Maestro-backed rebels with their intangible allies hidden in the Dust.

## Mere Anarchy is Loosed

Earth never got the chance to find out. The Scream blotted civilization from Terra in a wash of soundless death and howling madness. The ensuing rampages of the Crazyed, the sabotage of the Highshine disaster-recovery system, the override of Sol's stellar defense array, and the catastrophic nuclear overload of multiple surface fab complexes are beyond the scope of this archive, but little was left to Earth but a prison of radioactive ash and feral, Dusted wilderness.

Yet even now, far from the forbidden depths of core space, there remain the relics of the Mandate and their AI-forged marvels. Some of these miraculous artifacts can be found on castaway Mandate Fleet ships, while others were smuggled out by exiles granted one last gift of aid by the Maestros. Amid the ash and bone of the tomb worlds, there still glints the strange beauty of the Mandate's final workings, and sometimes bold explorers stumble across such devices as human minds were never meant to wholly understand.

## THE DUST

The Dust relies on AI-designed pretech nanofabs to produce new nanites to replace those destroyed or expended in operation, but an undisturbed facility can maintain a Dust presence for centuries. Intruders with sufficient Tech/Pretech skill and time can hack an otherwise inert Dust cloud into an obedient weapon. Combined with a functioning nanofab and enough time, entire planets can be Dusted.

Once a security AI or usurper is in control of a Dust cloud, standard postech equipment is helpless to prevent effortless tapping, decryption, and subversion of every computing device more sophisticated than a TL 3 home computer. Tendrils of focused Dust currents can even be used to physically disintegrate people and objects within range of the nanofab.

Postech civilizations aware of the danger of the Dust are able to create portable scanners capable of detecting dangerous levels of Dust in the atmosphere, but some hyper-lethal varieties of security Dust are able to defeat such simple detection protocols. Standard postech science has no effective countermeasures for eliminating Dust as long as a functioning nanofab is producing it.

Perversely, the primitive nature of postech humanity is actually an advantage against the most sophisticated varieties of security Dust. Mandate citizens were universally implanted with a Link, a synthetic

organ that allowed them a direct neural interface with the Dust and the communication web of a planet. Most advanced "black" security Dust simply overrode the lockdowns on an intruder's Link and piloted their unwilling bodies to some secure zone where they could be collected and interrogated. Without this convenient entrance into a target's nervous system, black Dust is forced to interfere with invaders in more macroscopic ways.

Given the density of Dust in the atmosphere, the following effects can be created by a controller with access to a Dust nanofab.

### DUST INTENSITIES

**Haze:** The Dust is too thin to do anything but observe intruders and relay their communications to their controller. The Dust can pick up all conventional radio, laser, and gravitic comms, and most encryption efforts are utterly useless against it. Hazed areas usually extend several kilometers around a Mandate complex with an operating nanofab unit.

**Fog:** The Dust can generate radio waves and short comm laser bursts. It can hack into TL 5 computers and high-tech devices effortlessly, operating them according to the will of the Dust's controller. TL 4 equipment tends to be too large-scale and "dumb" for the nanite particles to successfully subvert it, though computing devices are still susceptible to the Dust's control. Dust without an intelligent

controller will often simply slag subverted equipment, but an AI or Linked operator can control it more finely. Fogged areas usually extend within all the indoor compartments of a Mandate complex with an operating nanofab unit, or world-wide with sufficient fabrication time.

**Cloud:** The Dust is now actually visible to the naked eye in faint, subtle heat-wave hazes of dark particles. With the correct commands, it can act as a corrosive atmosphere, eating through vacc suits or other sealed environment suits in 30 minutes, or inflicting 1d6 damage on a living creature for each round of exposure. It can disable hand-held TL 4 equipment through shorts, corrosion, and physical blockage within ten minutes of exposure. Clouds are usually found in close proximity to functioning nanofabs, though tendrils can reach for hundreds of kilometers if directed.

**Storm:** Dust storms are extremely rare, requiring a planetary-scale nanofab and an enormous supply of energy. The Dust density in such zones is tangible, with streamers of silky, liquid nanites streaked in black ropes through the air. Dust of this density and available power can kill exposed living creatures in seconds. Any organic creature targeted by a Dust storm must save versus Tech each round or die from violent, invasive disassembly of their constituent parts. Its corrosive effect eats through vacc suits in thirty rounds and destroys hand-held TL 4 equipment in ten.

Dust storms can create barriers, manipulate objects, and fabricate remote drones. A 5 meter x 5 meter x 1 centimeter thick aerofoam of Dust can be generated each round, with 15 hit points of toughness before it shatters. Objects can be lifted and manipulated as if by a creature with Strength 18, and 1d4 Dust Drones can be created each round. These Drones cannot leave the storm, as they require

### Dust Drones

Armor Class	4	No. Appearing	1-4
Hit Dice	2+2	Saving Throw	13+
Attack Bonus	+7	Movement	40'
Damage	1d8/Nanobolt	Morale	12

Dust drones take numerous stylized shapes depending on the programming used by the nanofab that creates them. All of them involve weaponry capable of firing nanite projectiles at a standard range of 200 meters and a maximum of 400. Close-in combat involves bladed articulators that do the same amount of damage. When successfully destroyed, Dust drones collapse into a fine, dark haze of burnt-out Dust nanites. Most lack sophisticated intelligence, but they are capable of flying at a movement rate of 40' and can navigate physical obstacles to reach prey even without a guiding AI to direct them.

it to conduct the necessary power for their operation. Other drone types have a wider operations range.

Dust can also be used to repair, create, and mend objects in the same way that it can destroy. These alterations only continue to function so long as the object remains at least within a Haze-level Dust cloud, or else the nanites collapse from a lack of coordination and quantum-level power. Dust-created objects otherwise appear to be exactly as durable and functional as a mundane object, though they're actually little more than a paper-thin shell of reinforced nanites that collapse if the object is successfully broken. Dust-created projectile weapons launch projectiles fabricated of the same nanite shell and function normally for their type.

## MANDATE TECH

Advanced Terran technology was originally intended for operation via Link, rather than by crude physical manipulation of buttons or levers. Most such devices have manual controls for emergency use, but these controls are rarely terribly clear or intuitive. In many cases, the designers intentionally subverted rational design principles in order to discourage the device's manipulation by unclassified users.

### Figuring Out Mandate Tech

Late-era Terran technology was often designed by the Maestros, and the nanofabs used by those hyper-intelligent AIs had remarkably few limits on the physical configuration or appearance of their creations. Design was often based on aesthetic considerations that are completely outside the lexicon of modern post-Silence users, or obscure universal constants that only the cold minds of the Maestros could begin to comprehend. Some pieces of advanced Terran technology can easily be mistaken for works of art rather than practical tools.

To detail these bizarre scientific confections, a GM may choose to roll a few times on the Random Terran Tech Appearance tables to establish the appearance of some found artifact. When a PC at-

tempts to figure out how to use such a device, they must make a Tech saving throw with a bonus equal to their Intelligence modifier plus their level of Tech/Pretech skill. The GM may grant an additional bonus on the saving throw if the experimenter makes reasonable guesses as to the operation of the device.

If the saving throw is failed, the experimenter must roll 1d6. On a roll of 4+, the item has been damaged by their clumsy handling and either suffers a -3 penalty to hit rolls for weapons, a -2 penalty to AC for armor, or a 20% chance of activation failure for other devices. On a roll of less than 4 the device activates, hitting the handler automatically if it is a weapon. In both cases, the experimenter learns how to activate the device, assuming they survive the experience.

Hyper-advanced pretech artifacts aren't the only tools found in Terran idioms. Even perfectly normal TL 4 or 5 equipment might exist in these strange shapes, either due to the maker's need for some simple device or because it was once a more sophisticated object that has slowly degraded to be no more effective than modern, post-Silence tech. Much of the struggle in salvaging an abandoned Mandate complex is the difficulty of sifting the genuinely useful pretech from the dangerous, malfunctioning junk.

1d12	HAND-HELD ITEM	WORN ITEM	DECORATIONS	EFFECTUATORS
1	Arm-long tube	Bracer	Corrugated surface	Cloud of nanites
2	Sphere with finger grooves	Bandoleer	Colored banding	Hyper-precise gravitic manipulations
3	Bracer	Belt	Transparent elements	Chemical catalysis and nanite restructuring
4	Torc-like necklace	Chain of links	Power availability bar	Pretech material beyond modern reproduction
5	Glove	Glove	Smooth curved surfaces	Metadimensional energy beams
6	Gripped cylinder	Straps	Sharp, angular design	Inertial manipulators
7	Hoop	Paint-like liquid	Struts	Chronon bursts that flex the local flow of time
8	Eyeball-sized sphere	Torc necklace	Grooves	Biological interface with wearer to augment them
9	Scepter	Contact lenses	Patterned inlay	Limited neural influence over others' minds
10	Chain of links	False nails	Sharp edges	"Hard light" nano-holograms
11	Tube with a grip on one side	Tunic	Glowing elements	Focalized sonics
12	Several small geometric solids	Bodysuit	Hot or cold parts	Kinetic taps and redirectors

## Mandate Tech Appearance

To determine an artifact's appearance, first roll on the shape table appropriate to its type. A suit of armor would roll on the "Worn Item" table, for example, while an energy weapon would roll on the "Hand-Held Item" table. Both items might appear as bracers, but their operation would be drastically different. "Decorations" include other elements of the design, while "Activation Method" picks out a way of triggering the device. "Data Output Method" indicates the way in which a sensor or other data-gathering unit conveys its information to the user in the absence of a Link. The "Effectuators" list provides assorted dramatically advanced ways for a device to bring about its effects, and can be useful for thinking of ways in which a pair of contact lenses function equivalently to a TL 4 suit of powered armor. "Side Effects" finishes it off with some optional, potentially dangerous side-effects to the use of the device, either designed into it or the result of centuries of disrepair.

Once you've determined the appearance of a given piece of hardware in a particular installation, you should usually make any other tech of the same type share the same configuration. AI-run nanofabs may have been creative with their design output, but it's unlikely that the same one made twelve shear rifles in twelve different shapes. For a particular installation, you might choose one or two design elements and use them as recurring motifs in the structure and its contents, the better to give a unified feel to the location.

Whatever the appearance may be, it's highly unlikely that any of the equipment should be found with operation manuals, labels, or other helpful indicia. Unless the PCs are exploring the relatively low-tech surface of a dead core world, it's probable that the Mandate complex was only ever intended to serve the elite of that long-lost culture. Anyone living there should have been able to use their Link to get all the information they needed about operating the gear. Those who couldn't get Link access to the necessary tutorials would have been those common citizens who should not have been handling the "socially dangerous" tech in the first place.

1d12	ACTIVATION METHOD
1	Button
2	Trigger
3	Dial
4	Toggle
5	Voice
6	Slider

1d12	DATA OUTPUT METHOD
1	Projected holoscreen
2	Voice
3	Colored dials
4	Radio transmission
5	Skin-transferred direct neural feed
6	Thermal patterns

1d12	SIDE EFFECT
1	Brilliant glow around user
2	Shrill, maddening whine when in operation
3	User appears twelve cm distant from their actual position
4	User bleeds slightly from pores after use (1 HP damage)
5	Halo of fractal distortion around device
6	Radiation exposure on use; save or Con loss in 1 hour.
7	Creates geometric bands of light around device
8	Overpowering tang of ozone while in use
9	Gives user leukemia; TL 4 meds or die in one month
10	Blinds user for 1 round after use
11	Ear-splitting roar when used
12	10% chance to fail to activate when triggered

## SAMPLE MANDATE TECHNOLOGY

**Biostatus Lockdown Shunt:** This worn item interlaces itself with the wearer's biology, reading the user's baseline status and synthesizing maintenance compounds and suture nanites to match the wearer's physical properties. The user does not take damage from non-Gunnery weapon attacks, instantly healing or repelling the incoming damage. For each hit nullified by the lockdown shunt, the wearer's System Strain increases by 1 point. If the wearer's System Strain is maximized, they must roll 1d10. On a 6+, they ignore the damage as normal. On a roll of 5 or less, they drop dead on the spot and cannot be revived. The shunt requires ten minutes to fully activate but can be deactivated with one round's action.

**Cleansweep Filter:** This miniaturized hand-held nanofab functions only to emit Dust-disabling countermeasures, lowering the strength of a surrounding Dust zone by one step- Hazes vanish, Clouds become Fogs, and so forth. The effect extends ten meters around the filter. A single type B power cell will power a cleansweep filter for 30 minutes. If the Dust is being controlled by an intelligent operator, however, the filter's operator will need to beat them in an opposed Intelligence/Tech/Pretech skill test to avoid their notice of the filter's bubble in their Dust field. Most Mandate facility-grade AIs have an effective Tech/Pretech skill bonus of 4.

**Dustbox:** This liter-sized container of Dust is programmed to recognize the person who opens it as its appointed controller, though this control cannot be exercised unless the user has an active Link. Within one meter of the controller, the Dust is Cloud strength. Within twenty meters, it is Fog strength, and within two hundred meters it is Haze strength. The dustbox can cancel out hostile security Dust of the same strength, though it can do nothing else but neutralize the hostile dust while so employed. The Dust lasts for only thirty minutes before exhausting its power, and cannot be returned to the container after it has been released.

**Dust Chime:** This small device is powered by a type A cell, lasting 24 hours on one cell. It alerts the wearer when they enter a Dusted area, giving different signals to indicate the thickness of the Dust. Some rare varieties of Dust can defeat a Dust chime's sensors.

**Quantum Power Cell:** This miniaturized quantum power tap is a scaled-up version of the quantum flux taps that power the nanites of the Dust. Whatever the artifact's appearance, it extrudes a small plug shaped like a type A power cell. The cell never runs out of power, though the artifact itself may be somewhat unwieldy to carry around mated with the object it powers.

**Link Damper Charge:** This sophisticated targeted-EMP grenade was originally intended to disable the Links of those caught within its 5-meter area of effect. Thrown as a normal grenade, any subject hit suffers an inability to use a Link for five minutes. Remarkably few entities have functioning Links in the modern era, but the simple existence of these charges often forced even security-minded designers to include manual controls on Mandate tech, so that guards could continue to use their weapons even if "damped"; it's very hard to hack a mechanical trigger.

ITEM	ENC
<b>Biostatus Lockdown Shunts</b>	1
<b>Cleansweep Filter</b>	1
<b>Dustbox</b>	1
<b>Dust Chime</b>	1
<b>Quantum Power Cell</b>	1
<b>Link Damper Charge</b>	1
<b>Merge Suit</b>	2
<b>Prosthetic Link</b>	1

**Merge Suit:** This worn artifact is designed to harmonize with the Dust. It renders the wearer immune to the Dust and invisible to its sensors, and any drones or barriers created by the Dust are effectively immaterial to the suit's wearer. The suit can only protect a limited amount of gear, however, and so only readied equipment can be protected from the Dust or brought through a Dust-created barrier. The merge suit siphons power from the surrounding Dust, and requires no power cell. It cannot be worn with armor that has an encumbrance value of more than 1 item.

**Prosthetic Link:** Designed to compensate for users who are otherwise experiencing difficulties with their Links, this worn artifact interfaces with the wearer's neural patterns to merge them into the data link provided by surrounding Dust. While it also makes them exceedingly vulnerable to hostile security Dust, the benefits of a functioning Link can be substantial. While in a non-hostile Dusted area, a user can automatically learn the operation of any Mandate artifact without requiring a Tech saving throw, and can communicate with any other Linked entity within the same Dusted area. Communication is full-spectrum, including full sensory interchange- or complete sensory hijacking, if the Dust's controlling power is so inclined. The user can also effortlessly "hear" radio, gravitic, and laser communications taking place within the Dust, ignoring postech encryption. The Link powers itself on ambient Dust, and does not require a power cell.

### *Mandate Tech on the Market*

Selling genuine Mandate tech is extraordinarily difficult. It's not that buyers are difficult to find, it's that so many people are willing to kill to get their hands on it. Even the most individually useless piece of functioning Mandate tech promises wild advances in basic research. The great majority of the tech is totally impenetrable to anyone short of the Maestro who designed it, but that never stops researchers from dreaming- and every so often, they get the clue that makes it all worthwhile.

PCs aspiring to sell Mandate tech are going to need to move very carefully. If word gets out that they're sitting on a cache of genuine Second Wave Terran technology, every two-bit cut-throat and wild-eyed mad scientist within a half-dozen sectors is going to be looking to make their acquaintance. If they can find a discreet buyer, prices start at 10,000 credits for baubles and only go up from there.

## MANDATE WEAPONRY

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>Range in Meters</i>	<i>Magazine</i>	<i>Skill</i>	<i>Attribute</i>
<b>Chronal Burner</b>	Special	Melee	2	Primitive	Dex
<b>Control Projector</b>	Special	5	2	Energy	Dex
<b>Nanoknife</b>	1d12+1	6/9 if thrown	5 minutes	Primitive	Str/Dex
<b>Neural Resonance Cascade</b>	2d6+2	100/200	6	Psitech	Wis/Con
<b>Omnigun</b>	Varies	Varies	Unlimited	Projectile	Dex
<b>Orbital Tap</b>	2d8+2	50/100	Unlimited	Projectile	Dex

**Chronal Burner:** This hand-held temporal weapon pulses random chronon bursts through its emissions aperture, slagging high-tech equipment in front of it. While the effects of the temporal alteration are almost imperceptible on a macroscopic scale, the flux of universal constants within sophisticated TL 5 equipment runs a 75% chance of ruining it, while TL 4 equipment suffers a 50% chance of being bricked. The burner is ineffective against devices larger than hand-held equipment, but ignores armor for purposes of determining the AC necessary to hit a character's equipment. A burner can only destroy one item at a time. A chronal burner is only effective within melee range and gets only two shots off a single type A cell.

**Control Projector:** Originally intended to harmlessly subdue unruly citizens, a control projector emits a spray of transmitter nanites that jams the victim's conscious motor control, though the lack of Links in most modern targets make the projector less effective in the present. The projector fires a cone five meters long and five meters wide at its far end, automatically hitting all targets within the area of effect. Human subjects hit must save versus Tech or be paralyzed for five minutes. Those who save are incompatible with the projector's neural shutdown protocols, and take 1d8 nerve damage instead each time they are hit by that same projector. The projector fires twice on one type A power cell.

**Nanoknife:** A general-purpose tool for disassembling solid objects, the nanoknife abandons sophisticated energy manipulation in favor of a very, very sharp edge. An inert knife may look like anything, but when triggered, a blade springs into existence between twelve and one hundred centimeters in length. Nanoknives never break or dull, and can chew through any postech material and most pretech

ones with a minute of undisturbed carving. A nanoknife can operate for five minutes on one type A power cell.

**Neural Resonance Cascade:** This device mimics some of the destructive powers of an advanced telepath, allowing a wearer to blast a sentient target with waves of invisible neural resonance. The wearer does not need to be a telepath to use the cascade, but a mind-blind user must save versus Tech after each use or suffer 1d6 damage from the feedback. The cascade gets six shots out of one type A power cell.

**Omnigun:** These weapons are formed of unstable compounds and thin-shell nanite projectors, and can reconfigure themselves in one round to mimic the properties of any non-artifact TL 4 or TL 5 projectile or energy weapon given in the *Stars Without Number* core rulebook. Omniguns never require power cells or ammunition, and grant a +1 bonus to hit and +2 bonus to damage. Burst firing with an omnigun can destabilize the gun's format, however; after each round of burst firing, roll 1d10. On a 1, the gun is "jammed" for two rounds.

**Orbital Tap:** This weapon siphons off an imperceptible fraction of the energy inherent in a planet's orbit. The lance of inertial potential is a tangible projectile, and will knock prone any human-sized target it hits. It requires no power source or ammunition to function. The tap only works while within a planetary gravity field of 1 g or greater.