

# MERCENARY CAMPAIGNS

Aside from the Sacri Ordines and Corporate forces, there is a third human force on Necropolis—mercenaries. For as long as there has been war, there have been mercenaries, soldiers who fight for money more than political or religious courses. This section looks at playing a mercenary campaign.

A mercenary campaign differs from a regular *Necropolis* game in several ways.

First, the senior officer should always be a player character. Without this, the characters are reduced to simply following orders, which defeats the point of playing a mercenary game, where free choice is the characters' greatest benefit.

Second, the heroes should rarely be forced to undertake a mission. Mercenaries have the luxury of being able to turn down jobs. Again, take this away and it becomes a regular Church or Corporate military game. Related to this is the nature of payment. Mercenaries have no retainer and must purchase their own vehicles, weapons, supplies, and, more importantly, troops.

Third, the game can switch focus between fighting Rephaim to combating the Church or rival Corporations, performing or thwarting espionage, bodyguard duty, and such like. Whatever missions the WM can think of, mercenaries can usually perform.

## CHARACTER GENERATION

Mercenary characters may come from either a Corporate or, more rarely, Church background. While many are former soldiers, a few may be civilians who simply want to be soldiers on their own terms.

Ex-Corporate soldiers must meet all the requirements for a standard military role, as detailed in the *Update*. Civilian characters who sign up to fight for a mercenary outfit have no minimum requirements.

A character who was formerly a Knight, a rare but possible background for a mercenary, must meet all the requirements for an Sacer Ordo role, as per the *Necropolis* setting. He gains the special training as normal, but none of the gear. Unless the WM starts with advanced characters, he may never take Sacer Ordo Edges from the *Update*, having forsaken his vows and left his Ordo.

Such characters are automatically shunned by their former colleagues and Church citizens should their identity become known. If their identity is revealed, they automatically gain the Outsider Hindrance. This is worth no points if taken as part of the character's backstory in character generation, nor does it count toward their Hindrance limits.

Regardless of background, characters begin with no money or gear. This is handled below.

## ARCANE BACKGROUNDS

Arcane Backgrounds should be heavily restricted in a mercenary campaign.

While a character may take the Miracles Edge, he is considered a wanted man by the Inquisition because he has broken Church law by not joining the Inquisition or an Sacer Ordo. He must take a Wanted Hindrance (his choice of which), but this does not give any points during character generation—it is the price he must pay.

Likewise, psions should be rarer than hen's teeth. The Church has branded them heretics and openly hunts them, and those operating in Corporate lands who are detected must either flee or join a Corporation. Again, the hero must take a Wanted Hindrance and should remain firmly in the shadows when dealing with Corporate

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paymasters. In essence, the character cannot get involved with contract negotiations, less he face arrest and lobotomy.

There are no exceptions or loopholes regarding either Arcane Background.

## OUTFIT GENERATION

The most important aspect of a mercenary game is resource management. This section looks at designing a fledgling mercenary outfit.

### OUTFIT SIZE

The initial size of the outfit comprises just the player characters. In order to acquire more men, they must pay a Resource cost. This is detailed below.

If you want to start the game with a larger outfit, then the WM needs to create that outfit. However, unless the heroes are in total command, they lose a lot of freedom, such as picking missions. A mercenary commander could, in theory, split his forces into smaller units and allow each to find their own missions, but why then bother with a bigger outfit in the first place?

### COMMAND STRUCTURE

Unlike formal military outfits, mercenaries are far more relaxed in their approach to ranks in charge of units within the outfit. Ranks are appointed solely by the overall commander, based on experience and skill when a soldier joins a mercenary outfit. However, a tradition has built up that the commander of a squad take a rank no higher than Lieutenant, a platoon commander a Captain, a company CO a major, and colonel for a brigade leader. Lower ranks may always be taken.

The Rank (Senior Knight) Edge can be used for any unit commander, whether he is a sergeant or a colonel. The senior character should have either this Edge or Valhalla Graduate (he need not take both in a mercenary campaign).

No tables for promotions should be used. Instead, promotion falls squarely to the lead character (and his advisors). If he wants to make every player character a lieutenant or promote one after a mission, then that's how it works.

## ROLES

Mercenary outfits sometimes use similar roles to the Church and Union, in that there are infantrymen, support infantry, assault troops, and so on. How the outfit is organized is left to the players, though. Decisions may be based on previous experience (as noted in character generation), based on skill levels, based on necessity, or even an arbitrary choice.

## RESOURCES

No soldier can fight without equipment. The Sacri Ordines are self-funding, using taxes levied from tenants and businesses and recruitment drives to keep their military machines rolling. The Corporations fund their in-house troops from their own pockets. Mercenaries, however, do not have either luxury. If they want gear, they must work for it.

A starting mercenary begins with just the player characters. However, they have the opportunity to increase the unit's size and gain equipment through spending Resource Points. RPs are an arbitrary game mechanic designed to remove the need to count every Union Dollar in the kitty. The exact value of a Resource Point is completely unimportant—even the Corporations refer to payment just in terms of Resources.

### INITIAL RESOURCES

A starting outfit has a base number of resource points equal to 100 per player character. Additional resources may be gained by characters possessing certain Edges, coming from a certain background, or if they start more experienced.

Edges only count at the start of the campaign, when creating the outfit—once the game begins, taking Edges does not grant automatic RPs.

RP	Reason
+100	Valhalla Graduate in party (single use only)
+50	Per unique Connection Edge in party
+25	Per unique Leadership Edge in party
+20	Per former Knight (must meet minimum requirements)
+10	Per former Corporate soldier (must meet minimum requirements)
+5	Per advancement (5 XPs) per character if starting with experienced heroes

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## SPENDING RESOURCES (GEAR)

Resources may be spent on men, gear, weapons, armor, or vehicles. Costs are detailed on the tables at the end of this chapter. Vehicle costs do not include crew and guns do not come with ammunition—these are separate purchases. Resource costs do not represent the purely monetary value of items, but also their rarity and Union restrictions. Grav tanks are rare beasts, so the RP cost is artificially inflated to reflect this.

Whether a piece of gear is available is up to the WM. If he doesn't want the group to use heavy tanks, then they simply can't find a seller, no matter how hard they look. The Corporations deliberately keep mercenary companies at a manageable level, just in case they need to "remove them from play."

If there are certain restrictions the WM wishes to impose because of the nature of his campaign, it is far better to inform the players early on. Having them save for a heavy tank only to be told when they have the Resource Points they'll never get one isn't fair.

## MAINTENANCE COSTS

As well as new gear, mercenaries must also pay to maintain their men and vehicles. A monthly fee is required to cover all food, accommodation, clothes, personal stipends, transport to and from Corporate offices, advertising, fuel, minor repairs and spares, nights out at a bar to celebrate a successful mission, and other basic necessities. It does not cover anything with an RP cost, such as ammo or repairing wounds inflicted to vehicles.

The basic cost per man in the outfit is 2 RP per month. Vehicles cost 2 RP per month per 100 RP cost or part thereof. For instance, a Sinai costs just 2 points, whereas maintaining a Golgotha costs 10 points. For ease, the players should record their monthly expenditure after creating their outfit and update it when permanent changes to the outfit occur.

Unpaid maintenance costs for Extras result in those mercenary being unavailable until all their "back pay" is coughed up. Likewise, vehicles cannot run efficiently unless all unpaid maintenance is balanced. In some cases, this may mean an outfit has to undertake a mission without valuable men or materiel so it can earn enough to bring them back into the fold.

## MISSIONS

Resources are earned by undertaking missions. The vast majority of missions come from the Corporations, but criminal gangs, private citizens, and even undercover Church agents may employ mercenaries from time to time. Missions are referred to in the trade as "tickets."

Mercenaries have many ways of advertising their services. As well as the direct approach of contacting a Corporation's Mercenary Liaison Officer (every major office has one), outfits also frequent certain bars, take out ads in trade magazines, and operate web sites. Word of mouth is also important.

When designing adventures, use the standard Mission Generator or the alternate tables from the *Update*, but ignore the Allies table and any references to Ordo modifiers—the only help the heroes get is their mercenary outfit.

## FINDING WORK

Ideally, the WM should create multiple missions in advance, to give the heroes an idea of what available tickets involve and because mercenaries can request specific jobs.

**General:** Each month, one character, typically the commander or his liaison officer, may make a Streetwise roll. This can be a Cooperative roll. With success, he learns of a ticket. On a raise, the outfit strikes lucky and receives word of two tickets, giving them a choice of which to take (or possibly doing both if time or manpower allow). A failure means no work. Maintenance costs must still be met, however.

**Specific:** If the outfit is searching for a particular type of ticket, such as a rescue operation, or wants to work for a specific Corporation, say Asgard, the Streetwise roll is made at  $-2$ . Should it seek both, a rescue mission offered by Asgard, for instance, there is a  $-4$  penalty. A hero with a Connection to the Corporation receives a  $+2$  bonus thanks to his many contacts. Individual Corporate offices are licensed to hire mercenaries, so it is still possible for a raise to result in two missions of the exact type being sought.

The WM is always free to offer a ticket, regardless of the Streetwise rolls. Such tickets are called "rejects," because chances are the mission is so dangerous it has been turned down by other outfits already.

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## TICKET DETAILS

A ticket should contain all the pertinent information, in the same way as a mission briefing for Knights does. The nature of the mission, location of objectives, timescales involved, and enemy troop numbers and type (as known to the hirer) are all standard bits of information the heroes can expect to be briefed on during contract negotiations.

Remember, though, that sometimes the hirer doesn't want to give everything away in advance. For instance, a Corporation who wants a very valuable object stolen is likely to downplay its value. In this way, the mercenaries have no chance to plan a double cross and find an alternate buyer in advance. Paranoia is a healthy trait when dealing with men whose overriding motive is cash.

Tickets should also detail rewards in terms of Resource Points. Most rewards are on a dual scale, with a value for success and a lower value (typically just 25%) for failure. Some tickets offer bonuses for speedy execution, though these should put the characters under pressure to achieve the bonus.

The exact value of the reward is left to the WM to determine. When picking a reward level, he should bare in mind the outfit's monthly maintenance bill (constantly depriving the heroes of gear they've bought will ruin the game), the importance of the mission, the location, likely difficulties, the nature and size of the enemy, the size of the outfit (tickets are never paid by the person, so taking along 50 Extras on a simple bodyguard job won't earn them more money), and so on.

A quick, simple, and relatively safe mission in friendly territory might be worth just 50 RPs. A small outfit would likely profit from such a mission and at minimal risk. A lengthy (multiple adventure) engagement requiring a company of men battling against overpowering Church or Rephaim forces could earn as much as 2000 RPs, but the adventure should be very difficult to warrant such a reward.

It is far better to be tight with rewards for the first few missions until you get a feel for things. A mercenary outfit which wants a heavy tank should feel like it earned the vehicle when it finally gathers enough RPs together to buy one. Handing out enough rewards to buy a heavy tank every mission will likely lead to the end of the campaign as the heroes crush everything in their path.

## CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

Once the details of the ticket are known, the negotiations begin. These should be roleplayed, as they are a core part of mercenary life. The hirer lays out the mission parameters as defined on the ticket and then states the reward. Of course, haggling over details is important, as most hirers always give a low starting reward in order to save money.

WM's should start their reward at around 75% of the true value they were thinking of offering and let the heroes haggle up. When the heroes name price close to the true reward, the hirer accepts the terms. Haggling can involve not just upping the final reward, but also getting money in advance to hire more men or buy more gear.

When both sides are happy, the deal is concluded. Criminals may simply shake on the deal, but Corporations, unless conducting a mission they wish to deny was their doing, present the mercenaries with complex legal papers. The vast majority of these are standard forms, with no hidden clauses or nasty surprises. Only rarely, possibly just once during an entire campaign, should a Corporation shaft the mercenaries over with a hidden clause.

Tickets are legally binding agreements, even if there isn't a paperwork trail. Hirers look very badly on mercenaries who renege on deals or screw up missions through their own actions or inactions. As well as simply blacklisting repeat offenders, many have their own troops (and assassins) with which to punish mercenaries who screw them over.

Punishments should fit the nature of the organization and the degree to which the mercenaries have offended them. A Corporation may blacklist the outfit for a defined period, such as a year (or maybe for life if the mission is totally boned), but a criminal gang may elect to strike back at the mercenaries. The Corporations can also take legal action against mercenaries, demanding reparations for loss of status, payment up front, and so on.

## RESOURCES

Gear, weapons, and vehicles presented in this section which do not appear in the *Necropolis 2350* setting will be detailed in the *Necropolis 2351-55 Update*.

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## MEN

A raw recruit has a d4 in every attribute, no skills or Edges, and no gear. He costs 5 RP and counts as a Novice. Improving the Extra costs RPs as shown below.

Using this system allows the characters to create Extras for a given role, without paying for “unnecessary” skills or Edges. On Salus, it represents the hiring process and picking the right man for the job. Remember, though, that Necropolis is, despite its military bent, a roleplaying game. There is no reason why an Extra cannot have skills like Intimidation, Investigation, or Persuasion—even mercenary groups need intelligence officers.

Item	RP
Per Rank above Novice	10
Attributes (above d4)	2 per die
Skills (up to linked attribute)	2 per die
Skills (over linked attribute)	3 per die
Edges	2 per Edge

Attributes and skills are per die step for each individual attribute or skill. Buying Fighting d4 and Shooting d6 would cost 6 points (assuming the Extra had Agility d6).

With Edges, all requirements must be met as normal, including paying for other Edges. For instance, buying Improved Frenzy requires Frenzy be purchased first.

Extras generally don't have Hindrances, but a roll should be made on the Personality table for each recruit.

## ARMOR

Item	RP
Ablative vest	20
HARD armor	36
Infantry battle suit	17
Light armor	8
Light armor, advanced	10
Medium armor	12
Medium armor, advanced	15
Paladin helm, light	4
Paladin helm, medium	6
Paladin helm, heavy	8
Shield	3
Tabernacle	75

## WEAPONS, MELEE

Item	RP
Baton	1
Corpse catcher	2
Heartbreaker	10
Molecular knife	4
Molecular sword	10
Sledgehammer	4
Spear	4

## WEAPONS, RANGED

### CHURCH DESIGN

Item	RP
Regular	
Bolt rifle	13
Disc thrower	24
MG, flechette	29
MG, laser	40
Pistol, flechette	11
Pistol, laser	16
Rifle, flechette	26
Rifle, laser	30
Rifle, laser, advanced	45
Shotgun	13
SMG, flechette	15
SMG, microflare	10
Sniper rifle, flechette	21
Stunner	8
Tangle gun	4

### SPECIAL WEAPONS

Item	RP
Demolition charge	2
Dove AT/A-2	125
Dove AT-1	80
Flamethrower	25
Grenade launcher (Brimstone)	4
Hand flamer	30
LAW 66mm	50
Levant field mortar	20
Maximus RGL	9
Mine, AP	16 per 10
Mine, AT	70 per 10
Mine, filament	60 per 10

### SUPPORT ARTILLERY

Item	RP
Jericho cannon	70
Maximus HGL	20
Megiddo mortar	25
SBAC 25mm	25
SBAC 50mm	45

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## CORPORATE DESIGN

Item	RP
ACR, 12mm	25
ACR, 6mm	20
MG, 12mm	24
MG, 6mm	20
MG, laser	44*
Pistol, 12mm	10
Pistol, 6mm	10
Pistol, laser	20*
Rifle, laser	36*
SMG, 12mm	15
SMG, 6mm	14
Sniper rifle, 12mm	24
Sniper rifle, laser	36*
Stun pistol	7

\* -3 discount if a character has a Connection (Ravendell) Edge

## AMMUNITION

Unless ammo is listed below, it is assumed to be free. With only three basic types of firearm ammo available (flechette, 6mm, and 12mm conventional), mercenary units can easily scavenge ammunition from fallen foes. The same applies to common vehicular ammo such as autocannon rounds and railgun shells.

Item	RP
12mm AP	5 per 200 rounds
12mm gel rounds	3 per 200 rounds
12mm HE	2 per 200 rounds
12mm LEAP	7 per 200 rounds
AP pack (vehicular)	11 each
Dove AA/AT-2 rocket	25 each
Dove AT-1 rocket	15 each
Passover missile, 6cm	35 each
Passover missile, 9cm	50 each

## GRENADES

Item	RP
Baton	2 per 5 grenades
Canister	3 per 5 grenades
Filament	5 per 5 grenades
HEAP	5 per 2 grenades
Incendiary	4 per 5 grenades
Smoke	1 per 5 grenades
Starshell	1 per 5 grenades
Stun	2 per 5 grenades

## GEAR

Unless listed below, mundane gear costs 1 RP per item.

Item	RP
Binocular	2
Cold weather clothing	2
Comm Relay	6
Cutter/welder	18
Electronic lockpicks	6
Field surgery kit	10
Ghillie suit	3
HARD air tanks	5
ID scanner	25
Jammer	5
Medical supplies	1 per 5 units
Medikit	5
Mine detector	6
Mobile Command Center	15
MRE	2 per 45 units
Minefield, AP	72
Minefield, AT	148
Minefield, filament	112
Portable aide	14
Rations	Covered in maintenance costs
Remote detonator	Free with mines or explosives
Satellite radio	40
Shelter	10
Shelter, HARD	40
Thermal suit	9
Toolkit	4

## TRANSPORT ACROSS SALUS\*

Men	1 RP per 8-man squad (anywhere in world)
Vehicles	1 RP per 100 points or part thereof (anywhere in world)

\* This includes transportation by ship, air, or driving (the latter only for more than a few hundred miles)

## VEHICLES

### REPAIRS

Repairing a vehicle costs one-quarter of the vehicles' RP cost per wound (rounded down).

This includes the repair of any associated Critical Hits.

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## HEAVY TANKS

Item	RP
Cavalry	605
Golgotha	535
Lucifer	540
Mjolnir	625
Thor	490

## MEDIUM TANKS

Item	RP
Brigand	315
Judea	300
Scorcher	250
Striker Tank Destroyer	525

## LIGHT TANKS

Item	RP
Assassinator	290
Equalizer	240
Morningstar	225
Nazareth	265
Nazareth II	366
Proverb	190
Purifier	325
Shredder	130
Walrus	210

## APCS AND VARIANTS

Item	RP
Eloi	165
Ezekiel	165
Flagellant ISV	215
HARD Prophet	80
Job	160
Kutiel	75
Nazareth III	300
Peacemaker	110
Prophet APC	170
Roadrunner APC	160
Samaritan	120

## LIGHT VEHICLES

Item	RP
Armored limo	40
Daniel with flechette MG	65
Equalizer	90
Gethsemane	55
Sinai	100
Sinai w/Church laser MG	110
Sinai w/Union laser MG	130
Sinai w/Maximus HGL	90

## AIRCRAFT

Item	RP
Angel	260
Cherub	500
Nightwing	300

## WATERCRAFT

Item	RP
Freighter	700
Galilee	310
Skipper Hydrofoil	175

## NEW RULE: CREATING MINEFIELDS

A group of 10 mines (called a “set”) can create either a Large Burst Template minefield of light density or a Medium Burst Template of medium density. Each additional set placed in the same locale increases the density one step, to a maximum of very heavy.

Where minefields overlap, the density of shared areas automatically increases one level, to a maximum of very heavy. For instance, three Large Burst Templates could be arranged as shown, creating three levels of minefield. Level 1 is a light field, level 2 medium, and level 3 creates a heavy density.

For mixed minefields incorporating two different mines, half a set of each is required to achieve the base density. For a three-mine minefield, use three mines from each set (the leftover mine is kept in stores for later use). When a mine in a mixed minefield is triggered, determine the type randomly using a d6.

In a dual field, a 1–3 indicates one type of mine and a 4–6 the other. For three mines, rolls of 1–2, 3–4, and 5–6 differentiate the mines.

