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MR. EDITORIAL

By Mike Pondsmith

So what do I do with this book anyway?

By now, you've read through enough to get an idea that this isn't the normal kind of "supplement" for a roleplaying game. That's fine—*Cyberpunk* isn't a normal kind of RPG. In this supplement, we've tried to dump you headfirst into the world of 2013 AD by exposing you to a popular (and not all that unfamiliar) magazine of the day. It's the first of a number of 2013 "magazines" you'll see in future releases.

SOLO OF FORTUNE is "distributed" by Fax-Press, a 21st century marketing corporation specializing in digital mail systems. It's subscribers can dial it up via modem on their home PC, pick it up on the newsstand, or even "experience" the articles via a special BBS on the Net which allows them to hear a narrator's voice over selected 3D scenes of battle and warfare. Possibly the ultimate in vicarious thrills, neh?

In addition, *Solo* can be transmitted to a FAXPRINTER, a modern 21st century device that fax-prints and binds the magazine while you wait, from any convenient screamsheet newsbox. Like most things you'll encounter in the *Cyberpunk* universe, the faxprinter is just a little bit ahead of today...probably next week.

But what do I do with it?

In *Solo*, you'll find lots of useful things for the Referee who wants to run a Solo-based campaign. There's Solo history (THE FIRST CORPORATE WAR) to give you an idea of how to run Corporate conflicts. There's background on Solo Types (FOCUS ON SOLOS), including government operatives to give your teams a little heat. MODERN STREET GANGS offers a new and unexplored character Role: the Cyber/Streetpunk, with examples and how-to-play hints. CORPORATE EXTRACTIONS, VEHICLE COMBAT, and even a look at the elusive world of EUROSOLOS are included. Not to mention lots of useful ads with new game equipment and info built right in.

Check out the WORLD SITUATION and HIRING HALL articles. Rather than pasting in a module you won't use anyway, we've given you the framework for literally dozens of adventures in these handy sections. Also, sections like I WAS THERE and LOVE & BULLETS FROM MOSCOW can provide the hooks to hang campaigns in both the Trauma Team and Soviet Union areas.

So what you do with this is expand your campaign. Make it big. Bigger. Bust out of the limits of Night City and take it worldwide. The world is your playground, if you have a 65% boost, a set of plugs and a Stermeyer to jack into them. After all—

You're CYBERPUNK.

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Dedicated to those brave men of
the 20th century who made the
21st century possible.

SOLO OF FORTUNE

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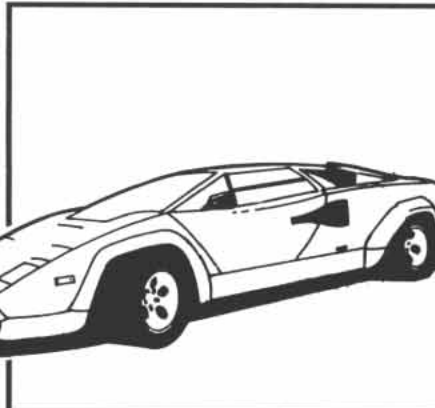
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INSTANT RESPONSE TIME



Sirs:

I have been an active member of an elite European solo team for twelve years now, and I must say that receiving your periodical has consistently been one of the highlights during my busy career. Never before have I found a publication that covers as much material as yours. Although I disagree with your general political outlook and have found several inconsistencies that have cropped up throughout the years, I have remained an avid reader of this magazine. I thoroughly read each issue to gather helpful information for myself and my co-workers.

That is until your issue of February, 2013.

In the course of perusing said issue, I found several things that I either disagreed with, or found to be totally incorrect. The most offensive of your articles was that of "Bubba and Roy go to Bahrain." The article plainly showed that not only had neither of the two men gone to Bahrain, but in their attempt to "fake it," did not even do the basic research to improvise their story.

As not too many people know, Bahrain was one of the only free islands left in Africa after the reorganization. During their valiant struggle for independence against the Pan African Alliance, the city, Al

Muharrag, which your two columnists claimed to have visited, was leveled in an attack on December 28th, 1996. Before the city could be rebuilt, the war known as the Middle East Meltdown occurred. Subsequent winds coated the city of Al Muharrag with radioactive ash from various targets that had been incinerated during the brief exchange of warheads. The "island paradise" that your columnists raved about was contaminated to such a degree that the entire island had to be abandoned. Today, there is nothing left on the island except for a monument to those innocent people who were killed by the fallout.

Had your columnists actually done any amount of research on their subject they would have learned this and more. I find this lack of research, and blatant disregard for the truth to be most disconcerting. I would advise that you not repeat such an error in the future if you wish to maintain your readership.

Sincerely,
Mathias Grüder
Bonn, FDR

Although it is not normally the policy of this, or any other magazine to use

undocumented material, we find ourselves justified in doing so for this particular case. If you had noticed, which you obviously didn't, the article was a simulation of an island attack. Bahrain was used as the example for this purpose even with the knowledge that the island was uninhabitable.

Sirs:

I would like to thank you for Dan Reeves' article "Sowing the Seeds of Revolution: A History of America's Nomad Tribes" in your March issue (2013). As a member of a Family and an avid reader of your magazine, I found the article helpful in understanding my heritage.

I have been on the road since birth and have seen just a lot that America has to offer. Even after spending four years in our armed forces fighting in Columbia and Peru, I still think that there is much that I haven't experienced. I think Mr. Reeves' article showed the true nature behind the Nomadic movement without being malicious, as some reporters tend to be.

Thank you,
Clive Jenkins
The Road to Freedom,
America

Thanks for your support. We feel that the Nomad tribes in America are overly persecuted, often for things they have never contemplated, let alone done.

Sirs:

In reading your review of the Armalite Manufacturing T-14 Shotgun System (March 2013 issue), I found myself asking a couple of questions that I never felt were quite answered.

As far as I can tell, the T-14 is similar to the Stoner weapons systems of the twentieth century, but the first problem I had with it was why someone would want all these attachments for a shotgun that is basically an anti-personnel weapon to be used in close quarters?

The second question I had concerns the interface chip. As far as I can tell, you need a separate chip to interpret different weapons, such as one in a .44 pistol and other for a 5.56 assault rifle. If this is so, then how can you chip into the T-14 without confusing your interface?

Dan Greaveson
San Francisco, Ca

Well Dan, we don't know where you were during the first few paragraphs of the article, but here is a quick reason for having an assault system for a shotgun. You never know what kind of combat you are going to be in.

The T-14 system was designed to modify your shotgun to get the best results in a combat situation. Originally it was tested and used in the Canal Zone where there were so many different types of areas being patrolled that the system saved the United States troops a lot of money, since all they had to do was modify the system for whatever part of it was being used on.

As for your second question, you have the wrong idea about weapons interfaces. They are not specific interfaces that only allow you access to one weapon, but rather a universal interface

that allows you to process signals from your eyes to your trigger finger faster than normal. All they do is tie you into the weapon's optical systems which allow you to react faster.

Got something to say? Get it off your chest with a letter! Write to Instant Response Time, c/o Solo Publications, 1212 Lipmann Drive, Baltimore, MD., USA, 21215 Net/FAX 357-065-2110.



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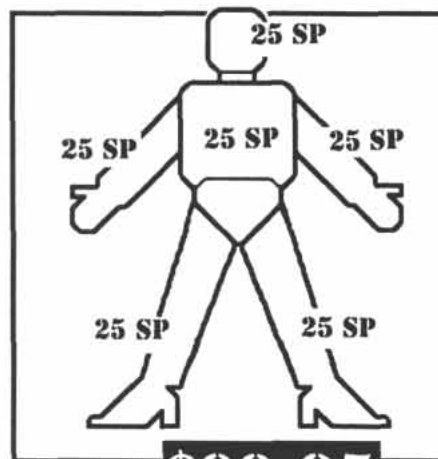
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I WAS THERE

By Rex "Maddog" Burton



The day had been a long one. We were about to come off shift—only two minutes left—when a card broke in the Combat Zone. Dispatcher was full up so she tagged us for the retrieval. Just as the AV-4 was powering up, Smitty, a solo for team three, tossed me a Willy Pete. "For a hot situation," he shouted as I hooked it on my armor jack.

The trip took two and a half minutes at two-fifty clicks per. While we were airborne, I did a quick weapons check: you never know when your life may depend on that one last going over. It's a good thing that I did, too. My "Baby", a special-chipped, customized Remington autoloader, was half up so I slapped in three double oughts, a teflon slug and got ready to rock.

Once over the card, our driver Ace circled in for the best angle to put us between the danger and our patient. I took a quick glance at the situation and saw five guys in street camo, all fully auto, standing over the crumpled form of what looked to be a corp. I wondered what kind of 'dorph head would be stupid enough to try five guys in battle dress and decided that whoever he was, he shouldn't have been there in the first place. Whatever the reason, it was our job to get him out.

Ace layed down a suppressive with the minigun and the solos scattered. Four of them made it to cover: the one that didn't erupted into a volcano of flesh and blood as the 7.62's shredded him.

Jackson and Daniels, our medtech's, got ready to jump as Ace maneuvered the AV between us and the remaining solos. It looked like a routine in and out as they hopped the stiff back to the 4. We were just boosting out when the back deck was all but torn off by minigun fire! Ace tried to bring it down softly, but we slammed in pretty hard. Lead started ricocheting inside the AV—he'd dropped us facing the solos. I jumped out and raced for cover, shots peppering the ground next to my feet.

"I wondered what sort of 'dorph-head would be stupid enough to try five guys in battle dress..."

I jumped between a burned Chevy and a brick wall and took a quick inventory of my available firepower; it always helps to calm me in combat. Now, I desperately needed situational information so I poked my head out and took a five second look.

Two of the solos were advancing at a five yard stagger while another AV-4 hovered overhead, still firing at our downed bird. I ducked back, counted to three and then came back up, ready to fire.

As soon as I caught sight of the two solos, Baby leaped toward

them—that's the chip in action. I pulled her trigger three times and she started to sing. Both went down spurting blood and I jumped behind the wall once again.

Just as I made it to cover, the entire area exploded in flames and shrapnel. My left shoulder was forced back as one of the shards of hot metal slammed into me. I may have been wearing an armor jack, but it still hurt like hell as I ripped the frag from my shoulder. Now I was pissed.

I poked my head out behind the car, only to be shot at again. This time I saw where the shots came from, so I snapped off a couple of blasts in that direction and started to move. I figured that I could get the drop with Baby on whoever it was and that would only leave one solo to deal with.

I was wrong. I found not one, but both of the remaining solos crouched behind an overturned van. I blew one away with Baby, but the other kicked her out of my hands, tearing the plug from my arm. With a shit-eating grin on her face, she popped a pair of rippers.

Well I'm no virgin, so I drop into a combat crouch and pull the machete I took off that colonel while fighting down at the Canal. "Ripper" took two slashes at about thirty percent boost, then went berserk.

I dodged left and right until I got a feel for the rhythm; then I made my move. I stepped in after a backhand slash and made her eat all three feet of cold steel. I wiped my blade on

her body, wrapped a makeshift bandage around my wrist, picked up Baby and started back to the Four.

I was just about to step into the clearing when the second AV

"Now, I'd seen a munitions dump blow in Honduras back in '08, but I swear this explosion was prettier..."

started to land, its open door facing me. On instinct, I grabbed the boomer Smitty had tossed me, twisted the pin and chucked it into the open door.

Now, I'd seen a munitions dump blow in Honduras back in '08, but I swear this explosion was prettier. I would've sat down to watch the show, but I had a crew that needed my attention. Slinging Baby over my shoulder, I started toward our downed AV and my fallen comrades.

Rex (Maddog) Burton is a five tour cybervet of Honduras, Panama (The Canal Zone) and the Colombian Drug Wars. He is currently employed as a "patient retrieval specialist" by Lifeline's Trauma Team.™ Inc. in Night City.

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Guns never really go out of style. Your great-grandfather was probably hunting with his Springfield '03 (that's 1903!) up into the 1970s, while extensions of the German Walther/Luger family of pistols from the 1930's are still dropping men today. In this continuing column, we'll talk about ways in which you can take your surplus retreads (provided they're well maintained) and make 'em the match of the latest alley-sweepers.

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CYBERPSYCHOSIS: IT CAN HAPPEN TO YOU

Rich "Meatball" Cramer, M.D., E.M.T.



You started out with a basic set of plugs, nothing fancy, but it let you jack into the Net and operate your rifle. They also landed you the job at the Company. You worked hard, doing simple assignments. It was enough. You put in a down payment on the new cyberoptics. Now you could do night work. Things started getting rougher. The company forwarded you the money for a set of rippers. In exchange, you started pulling some of the dirtier jobs, not that you seemed to mind as much as you used to. The "real world" has a way of wearing away at your ideals.

Then came your big break, an infiltration job. But first, you had to let them install the audio systems and the chipware. What a rush! You could learn languages and combat skills in the time it took you to jack in the program. It seemed like all of that old "slow" training you did in college was a waste of time... technology could do it a hundred times faster. Your friends didn't see it that way, but hey, what did they know? When your lover walked out on you... well, that didn't matter either. Love is easily bought and sold, but New Tech would always be with you, never letting you down.

The accident was more of a blessing

than a curse; the new arm was better than the old. If you had the money, you might have had the other arm replaced right then and there. You were chromed and ready for action. You had respect, and knew you deserved every bit of it. It didn't matter

Metal is better than meat... One night, you let an entire dance club know, certain that those who survived would get the point..

that your co-workers no longer talked to you...they could go to hell for all you cared. You had plenty of friends. Just throw a mental switch and the audio system would create friends for you, inside your head.

That agricorp almost cashed in your number when they hit you with the gas, but nerves are easily repaired, and with the twin boosters in your spine, you became superhuman. The things you could see, the actions you could take...you quit your job, it had nothing left to offer you.



SAHR
Scott Ruggels

Your new lover ran screaming from your apartment when you broke her arm, just to prove a point: Metal is better than meat. It's the wave of the future, and you're ahead of the pack. You took your philosophy to the streets, letting the friends inside your head guide you. One night, you let an entire dance club know, certain that those who survived would get the point and join you. Then you would have even more friends. The cops didn't see it your way, but they were only meat, and much too slow. Meat law didn't apply to you; you were of a higher order. If only they could understand...someone, anyone.

Then you ran into someone who understood. Someone who had been there much longer than yourself. A man of chrome with wires in his head and voices in his brain. A man with a very large gun. But the metal that mattered the most was his badge. A Cyberpsycho cop with a court order for your termination. He was sending you to Hell, and you didn't even care as he pulled the trigger that cashed in your number...

Self denial is an ugly thing, and far too common among the veteran solos who should know better. Even the best in the business "choke" from time to time, and when they wake up a week later in the hospital and assess the damage, they casually give

the order to slap on more metal. Often, they view their injuries as an asset, an unavoidable, perhaps even expected transition which will make them better for the the experience. No solo thinks that they will be afflicted with cyberpsychosis. The sad fact is, more than 80% of solos who have been in the business more than four years are well on their way to the point of no return. Many feel that as long as they still have all of their limbs, they have nothing to worry about. Metal is a state of mind more than body. Even an all meat body can go over the edge if there is too much wiring inside.

Warning Signs: Detecting the onset of cyberpsychosis is not always easy, and may at first be marked down as combat stress or a passing state of depression. Your best bet is to keep a journal. Record your thoughts and feelings and look for changes. Step back and examine yourself. Have your attitudes changed? How about your friends? What have you given up as "excess baggage" that only six months before was a cherished part of your life?

Your reflexes are another early warning sign. Persons undergoing the early stages of cyberpsychosis tend not to edit their actions before performing them, much in the same way that intoxicated people ignore their own common sense. These conditions become worse as your humanity slips away under the surgeon's knife. You are a professional. You plan your actions carefully. When it begins to look like raw instinct is overriding your common sense, visit a clinic and have them run a "CAT" scan. It is always possible to reverse the process if you can still make the decision for change on your own.

Preventing cyberpsychosis is easier then you think. The problem

most solos have is with their approach to combat injuries. Most solos see serious injury, those requiring major repair or replacement, as an unwritten code calling for cybernetic upgrade. It is more than a matter of professional status. Many solos actually believe that there is no other option in their profession. The truth of the matter is that most injuries can be repaired through tissue grafting and organ replacement.

..make time...to learn it's (New Tech's) advantages, limitations and effects on your mind & body...

Even mangled limbs can be regrown over the course of a few months. With proper therapy, solos can be back on their feet, as good as new, without having to risk cyberpsychosis.

Testing your limits slowly is important when installing new cyberware. Never install more than one new system at a time if possible. Take the time to judge its effects, or have a professional psychologist monitor you before and after installation. Know when you have reached your limits. Do not assume your reactions will be the same as an associate's who has the same hardware. Every person has a different reaction to every option, and these reactions can not be predicted before installation.

Most importantly, know what you are getting yourself into when you install new cyberware. Have a technically inclined associate screen any hardware given to you as part of a corporate contract. Many companies have been known to install "special

options" in their hardware to insure the results they wish from their employees. Trained techies can override many of these back door programs if you give them fair warning and pay them well.

Product Alert: Certain hardware and wetware options are more risky than others. Be wary of modifications to the hands. Hands and fingers are an important focus for all activity, and many solos have felt great unease after exchanging their fingers for artificial casings of plastic and razor steel. Boosterware can be especially dangerous, and many accidents have occurred during the weeks following installation. Reflex boosting solos have been known to overcompensate and injure themselves and their friends. Sensory boosting solos often forget to "tune down" intense reactions and overload their receptors, leading to states of temporary catatonia. A word from the wise for those using reflex chipware. Do not "chip in" your programs until they are needed. Do not keep them running after their usefulness has ended. The cybernetic infusion of reflex skills has a profound effect on the central nervous system and the users psychology, resulting in personality changes to match the new found learning. This can induce a state of schizophrenia if too many programs are running at once, and can lead to unwarranted "impulse" reactions to outside forces. We have all heard tales of nervous corp execs chipped for handguns blowing away their office mates by mistake during a surprise birthday party. Funny—until it happens to you.

When installing New Tech, make time available to learn its advantages, limitations, and effects on your mind and body, *before* charging off into the streets looking for action. The insights you gain could save your life.

PSYCHOSIS TABLES

Although the basics of cyberpsychosis are well documented (see *Cyberpunk, View From the Edge*, pgs. 19-20), you may want to opt for a more precise version of the illness than just a raving killer on the loose. In each of these variations, the eventual result is a blind rage against people; however, these choices will begin to appear as personality flaws at an Empathy 2 or lower. Roll 1D10.

Roll Result

- 1-3 BLIND HATRED OF HUMANITY: (standard cyberpsychosis)
- 4 CATATONIA: You withdraw from all contact with humanity.
- 5 OBSESSION: You become centered on one focussed idea (more cyberwear, money, germs).
- 6 PARANOIA: They're all out to get you. You trust no one. Get them first.
- 7 DELUSIONS: your worldview is totally skewed. You believe something totally unconnected to reality. Roll another 1D6:
 1-2) Immortality (you can't be killed)
 3-4) Fantasy (you live in a complex fantasy world of your own devising).
 5-6) Infallability (You're never wrong).
- 8 HYPERACTIVITY: You can;t sleep. You can't rest. You run around like you're on speed all the time.
- 9 PHOBIC: You are afraid of something— deathly afraid. The sight or thought of it will paralyze you with fear (80% of the time). Pick one: cats, dogs, heights, enclosed spaces, dark, germs, people, open spaces.
- 10 SCHIZOPHRENIC: Your personality fragments, developing into 1D6 different identities. At times of stress, any one of these may take over (roll 1D6, assigning a value for each personality—reroll any unassigned values).

Treatment: Whether you are in the early stages or have gone completely over the edge, there is only one recognized way of treating cyberpsychosis once it is outside of your ability to control.

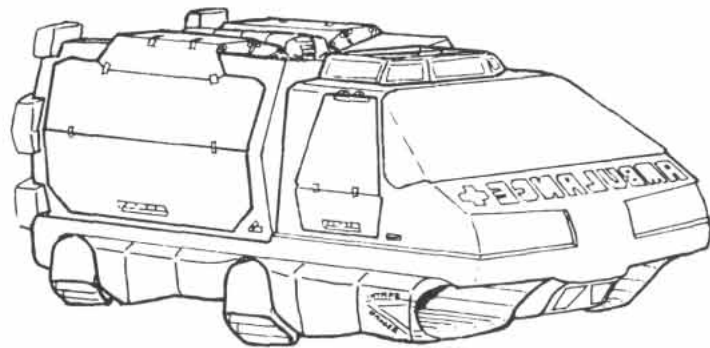
Therapy begins with the removal of all cyberware which is not directly supporting the life of the patient. A combination of euphorics and stimulants are administered over the course of many weeks of therapy, during which the patient is monitored around the clock by a staff of trained psycho biologists. In most cases, the patients "humanity" will slowly return, even in such cases where it appears to have been suppressed entirely. Unfortunately, this therapy has been known to lead to other forms of mental illness, including mania, deep depression, and suicidal tendencies. The treatment has also been known cause "techno shock" in a number of patients, an overall aversion to technology, with phobia like feelings towards any technology which physiologically or psychologically alters the patient. Still, anything is preferable to cyberpsychosis.

Oh yes, there is a second cure for advanced cyberpsychosis, regularly practiced by our nation's law enforcement agencies... Termination.

The Law: Just as the amendments to Roe vs. Wade in the nineties re-defined technical terms for the beginnings of humanity, the cyberpsycho laws have defined the ending of humanity. If your cyberpsychotic state crosses over the line, making you a known danger to society, a court of law, upon reviewing your case without consent, can issue an "Warrant of Termination". Only successful treatment for your cyberpsychosis can remove such an injunction on what is left of your life. Be warned. When you go over the edge, when you no longer consider yourself part of humanity, you will be treated with the same prejudice allotted to faulty, out-of-date machinery. You will be eliminated. The members of law enforcement's Cyberpsycho Squads are the craziest, most heavily armed soldiers you are likely to find outside of a war zone. If you are their target, then it is already too late.

Yes, it can happen to you. It may be happening already. If you are possessed of a good deal of cyberware, then a personal psychologist is as important an asset as good Trauma Team coverage. Be aware of yourself and the world you live and work in. Stay alert, and don't let the metal gain control of the meat.

Dr. Richard Cramer, Lifeline Trauma Inc., © 2013



TK Scott

Focus on Solos

This issue: "The six types of solos."

By Bill Sharpe

Bang! You're dead...

...and some ripperdoc is slicing you up for the spare parts market. If, that is, there's enough of your body left to salvage.

I've seen it happen too many times in my career. A young solo doesn't know his limitations. He overextends himself and operates outside of his specialty. Next thing you know, he runs into a situation he hasn't been trained to deal with and changes from a young solo into a dead one. Naturally, a crusty old solo who's been in the field for twenty years may be able to take on any number of different types of assignments. Enough field experience and you can be a competent bodyguard, pilot, or battlefield soldier. But it takes a long time, a lot of luck, and a pretty good amount of intrinsic brains and talent to build up the necessary repertoire of skills, experiences and scars to be the kind of all-purpose, in-demand solo that most young hotheads dream of someday being. Of course, a solo with a multi-disciplined power resumé can expect to be contracted for the most difficult assignments. But a good resumé and a hot rep brings a high contract price, and if

you survive the assignments, you're set for life.

How is a young solo just breaking into the market to make sense of all this? Well, one has to start small. This issue's column is for all of those youngsters who think they have what it takes to be a professional, but

"The solo who tries to do it all is a dead solo..."

don't quite know how to begin. The first step down the long road towards being an experienced solo begins with knowing how to apply oneself. In order to succeed, a solo has to exploit the skills and cyberwear he or she has in the most efficient means possible. The secret to this is to specialize to some degree or another. The good battlefield soldier will most likely be a poor bodyguard, and the bodyguard a clumsy bounty-hunter.

The inexperienced youngster may not have a good idea of what is en-

tailed in all of the different types of soloing. That's where I propose to help. I have divided the different specialties into six somewhat artificial but appropriate roles. The bulk of my column this issue is will be given over to breakdowns of these six roles. Each breakdown will contain a description of that type of soloing, as well as suggestions on appropriate skills and cyberwear. All the information is based on personal experience, and the input of the knowledgeable *Solo of Fortune* staff. Take the information to heart. Remember, as the great Morgan Stroessner said during the South American wars (before he died in the tragic bombing of Militech's now defunct Buenos Aires office by Columbian drug lords): "The solo who tries to do it all is a dead solo." On the other hand, look how far he went *before* he cashed in.

Before I tackle the separate categories, I'd like to say a little something about the skills and equipment which all solos should invest in. It goes without saying that anyone calling himself a solo should be competent with most types of small arms and some sort of hand-to-hand

combat system. Know your melee weapons too. Chipped skills are fine, but don't rely on them, as chips can become lost or damaged, especially in combat. Also, chipped combat skills are too predictable in a professional environment. Have some sort of marketable talent. You won't get the good jobs unless you stand out in the crowd. As far as cyberwear is concerned, expect to have some boosterwear, be it sensory or reflex, and have interface plugs and at least a couple of chips for your general reference. Our world is complex, and you've got to be able to accommodate diverse situations quickly. Remember, be competitive, but don't overdo it. The worst thing for your career is a one way trip into cyberpsychosis.

With the formalities out of the way, we'll move right along into section I know you've been waiting for: Uncle Billy's solo-type breakdowns. The first category that I'll cover is the **battlefield operative, or cybersoldier**. This is as about as straightforward as it gets. Many solos have already had some form of military experience; the cybersoldier simply makes it his career. The difference is, rather than serving any one government or corporation, the cybersoldier is a mercenary, contracting freelance to the highest bidder. Experience on the battlefield, superior combat skills, and appropriate cybernetics are what make hiring cybersoldiers worthwhile for a government or corporation. Frequently, a squad of cybersoldiers will be contracted to undertake a mission considered too hazardous or difficult for normal soldiers. The older, reknowned, and experienced cybersoldier is usually hired on as mission commander, or as a strategic director, often for a handsome price.

Cybersoldiers can expect to encounter some of the toughest combat conditions in existence...from trench, to

urban, chemical, marine and space combat. Consequently, exceptional stamina and endurance are a must. A good deal of physical strength is recommended (for brute tasks such as climbing and lifting), but not entirely necessary depending on what skills an individual has. Naturally, a high level of competence with *all* small arms types is a prerequisite. Additionally, cybersoldiers should be able to operate many types of exotic personal arms, such as anti-aircraft missiles and demolitions explosives. It's not enough just to be able to use weapons, however. The good cybersoldier also has more than a passing command of strategy and small unit tactics. A squad of solos is no good if you don't know

The value of a cyberlimb in combat is considerable, but the competent soldier can fare just fine without one.

how to use it, and remember, leadership abilities and experience will boost your contract price. Other valuable skills include the ability to operate military vehicles such as tanks and armored cars, and familiarity with military heavy weapons and artillery. If there's a chance you may encounter it on the battlefield, you're better off knowing how to operate it. Furthermore, I would certainly rather face some piece of equipment on a battlefield if I was familiar with its potential and capabilities, than if I'd never encountered or operated it before. Those who plan on becoming involved with covert operations or infiltration should make sure that their stealth, security systems, and infiltration skills are well honed.

That's it for the requisite skills for competent cybersoldiering. Now we move along to the part which I'm sure will excite many of the more hardcore prospective combatmen: the actual cyberwear itself. Most cybersoldiers can expect to have a typical number of interface plugs. Cybersoldiers are, however, more prone to implants and major structural modification than some other types of solos. Limb replacement is not uncommon among those with a good number of combat hours, if only because a fair number of limbs are lost in battle. But, as combat conditions become more and more rigorous, artificial limbs are gaining popularity as a pre-emptive body modification. The value of a cyberlimb in combat is considerable, but the competent soldier can fare just fine without one. If you're going to get a cyberarm, I would suggest getting some kind of weapon in it. I know many a soldier who died for want of a backup weapon. Well, where better to keep one? Especially good for the on-the-go urban combat solo who may find himself suddenly dropped into situations where larger, external weapons are too unwieldy or conspicuous.

The next category we'll cover is for all the glamor boys and girls out there. It's one of the most prestigious areas of soloing, and frequently a lot of fun, but it is one of the most difficult to break into. I'm talking, of course, about **bodyguarding and personal security**. This is high profile work, and it takes a good rep and a considerable resumé to attract the kind of star clients who can make the job such a blast. Many are the personal security specialists who have spent several years nannying two-bit rockerboys and chauffeuring supermarket managers before making it big with celebrity escort contracts. Those who make it quickly usually pay a bloody price...your name has to pop up prominently on the win-



ning side of some high-visibility incident in order to attract the correct people's attention. Better hope you're still alive when they ask for a meeting. Even when achieved, success in this field is an ephemeral thing. All it takes is one dead client, and a reputation years in the making, is trashed for good. Start from square one, do not pass go, do not collect any more celebrity contracts.

Personal security specialists can expect to be contracted as body guards, chauffeurs or house and office security for an individual or group. Contracts can be for a single event or short time, in which case it is rather like a glorified escort service, or services can be retained for indefinite periods of time. Depending on who the client is, visibility can be anywhere from ultra-high to ultra-low. Some solos specialize in either high or low visibility jobs, but it is best to be able to deal with both.

Important skills for the personal security specialist extend beyond combat, as the house or attendant guard must be comfortable and operative in any surroundings frequented by the client. Weaponwise,

body-guards should specialize in concealable small arms and hand-to-hand and melee combat. Awareness skills are at a premium when dealing with potential assassination victims, especially in crowded, urban environments. Be familiar with assassination and small-unit incursion styles. If you take responsibility for someone's life, understand the techniques that may be used against them. In the non-combat direction, solos expected to chauffeur should be excellent drivers, with an in-

I can guarantee you that a dead bodyguard will not have his contract picked up...

depth knowledge of their principal operating areas. In addition, make sure your etiquette and culture are up to snuff. An embarrassed client will most likely not contract you again. Know your residential security systems, and familiarize yourself in advance, if possible, with any

location at which the client will be spending extended amounts of time.

Personal security specialists should stick to the low key when it comes to cyberwear. Remember: two cyber-legs at a celebrity party marks you as a guard, and makes you a target for initial removal if there is an incursion. I can guarantee you that a dead bodyguard will not have his contract picked up. If you must have limb replacements, make them look either natural or stylish. Useful items will be such things as radio splices and telephone links for keeping in touch with the client, or other guards, and the usual boosterware, cyberoptics and chipware.

That wraps up personal security. For the career-oriented types, there is the job of **corporate operative**. Not the most glamorous of solo fields but it's job security, and there are company benefits such as trauma team coverage and access to corporate equipment and heavy weapons. Also, a stint with a reputable corporation (if such there be) can be a good resumé item. Assuming, that is, they ever let you seek other work.

Being a corporate solo is problematic, in that it can encompass battle-field work, corporate security, personal security or all three. Some solos are assigned to one field of work in particular, on the basis of pre-existing skills. Other solos are called on to assume a number of different roles, in which case they may be spread a little thin. That's the corps for you; always trying to get the most for their money. The good side of this is that the company will usually provide training, and a good company can have an excellent training program. The types of assignments corporate solos can receive include company army duty, black operations and extraction work (see this issue's article on extractions), industrial espionage, personal security for company executives, and on-site guard work. Generally, it takes some time doing grunt-work before a new employee is given really exciting assignments, but once you've moved up in the corporate ranks, you may find that there is no shortage of solid work for the dedicated combat specialist.

I can emphasize no particular combat or equipment skills (other than the general ones listed at the beginning of the column) for being a corporate solo. The new recruit will be assigned on the basis of whatever they can do. Check with the different corporate recruiting offices and find out which companies have openings in areas appropriate for you. I would suggest that the prospective company operative be familiar with the bureaucracy, economics and operations of large corporations. Some computer skills may be useful as well. The prospects for advancement are better if you have the kind of white collar skills that corps like to see in all of their employees, even the solos.

Cybernetics for corporation bound solos are in the same nebulous posi-

tion as skills. Choose those which are appropriate to your specialty, or hope that the company will outfit you. Just don't let them overdo it. I've heard some rumors about a couple of the nastier corporations outfitting solos with body-plating and illegal weapons, and then trying to harness, control or cure their cyberpsychosis in order to turn them into robot-like ultrasoldiers. That's one experiment I would advocate not getting involved in. It's not worth the free cybernetics.

For those of you who are a little more solitary and independent, there is the down and dirty field of **bounty-hunting**. There is no polite or academic term for it. It's rarely glamorous. It's always dangerous. The job entails tracking down

...Non-sanctioned bounty hunting is technically illegal, but that doesn't stop anyone with a few Eurobucks and a chip on their shoulder...

people in hiding, or on the run from some individual or organization. The bounty-hunter finds and captures this person, if they're wanted alive, or presents proof of their death in return for payment. Bounty-hunting is freelance by nature, but there are two types of assignments. Open assignments are jobs announced, either generally or selectively, to more than one hunter. The one who succeeds gets paid. A lucrative open assignment can frequently lead to conflict and enmity between competing hunters. The contract assignment is given to one hunter, or to an established team

that works together. It's for a pre-agreed sum of money, usually 33-50% in advance, with the rest upon delivery (or proof of termination) of the target. It takes a good rep and considerable experience before a solo will be offered big contract jobs. Several years on the open circuit are usually necessary to make a good enough name to attract the big business. Naturally, non government sanctioned bounty-hunting is technically illegal, but that doesn't stop corporations, mob chiefs, or just about anyone with a few Eurobucks and a chip on their shoulder from doing it. (Naturally, *Solo of Fortune* does not endorse any extralegal activity, but we do take it upon ourselves to report all information pertinent to any given subject.)

Combat skills for bounty hunting are strictly relative to the methods of the solo in question. Some are the brute force, crack 'em on the head type, some like to neutralize their quarry from a distance. One man pursues and engages the target at whatever opportunity presents itself, another lies in wait in a pre-selected location. Some work in person, some by proxy or traps. The advantages of the different methods are open to interpretation, and heavily dependent upon the situation in which they are used. I advise flexibility. If you are too complacent in one style, you may run into a situation where it is inappropriate, or you may gain a rep for using it. A reputation like that can be a pain if the quarry catches on to you and decides to bite back. Skills which all bounty hunters should have include tracking and shadowing, police or investigative techniques, and a good deal of street-smarts. Undercover skills are good too, as a lot of footwork is often necessary for locating the target. A little psychology doesn't hurt. Get inside the quarry's mind. Know how they're thinking. That kind of hunch work has been

behind the unearthing of many a well hidden target.

Cybernetics for bounty-hunters should also be selected with regards to the individual's methods. I would suggest that, unless you plan to get yourself into hairy situations on a regular basis, bounty-hunting is one of the fields of soloing where major cybernetic enhancement is least useful. The majority of the time spent on the job is devoted to tracking the target. Since most jobs require the target to be returned intact, relatively soft methods should be used in capture and retention. A big, nasty cyberarm with a mondo gun in it will not be appropriate to this kind of task. Your money is better spent on useful memoryware for assuming the undercover roles you'll need for the job, or for calling up skills for tracking situations. Several plugs and a large memoryware library are the most useful cybernetic items I can think of for bounty-hunters. Other than that, the usual boosterware and cyberoptics should suffice.

The last clear cut category we'll cover in this column is the **solo-for-hire**, or *street samurai*. This is the ultimate in freelance solo work. The street samurai does whatever people are willing to pay him or her to do, provided they can do it. They answer to no one, they sign no contracts, they owe no allegiance. It's a proud and lonely calling, good only for those who were meant to live on the mean streets of the city. Some street samurai specialize, it's true, but most of the many I've known would tackle any job they thought they could do. Common jobs are hits, abductions, guard work, infiltration, running or couriering, and theft. It's probably the only type of soloing where this kind of diversity is either desirable or common. This is, of course, exactly what I warned about at the head of the column. I

don't recant my words. Few street samurai die of natural causes. Those who have been alive long enough to be competent in all sorts of jobs are among the most fearsome and respected of solos. Only the unifying, all-pervading environment of the city streets makes this multi-rolled existence possible. As long as the street samurai is in his or her element, anything is possible.

Taking this diversity into account, what skills can we recommend for all street samurai? First and foremost, streetwise. If you're not perfectly at home on the city streets, at any time of day, in any part of town, you have no business in this job. Know the area, know the people, know the places. Make damn sure you're up on your hand to hand combat and melee weapons. Street samurai get into more fistfights and brawls than any other people I know, cyberboxers included. It comes with the territory. Be able to use a pistol fast and accurately. A crowded bar or narrow alley is a bad place for some huge, unwieldy assault rifle. Know the gangs. Form alliances with them when possible, but never trust them. Be able to move in a crowd. Know how to drive. Have contacts. A good source of information can take you farther on the street than a fast gun, if used correctly. Stay tied in to what's happening. A street samurai must be able to feel the pulse of the city. It is their life and breath, their bread and water.

A street samurai's cybernetics are purely a matter of taste. There is no limit on what is appropriate, short of cyberpsychosis. Use your discretion and judgement in deciding what enhancements would be useful. Although *Solo of Fortune* does not officially advocate it, I would suggest that black market cybernetics are more common among street samurai than any other type of solo. The

HOW TO TALK SOLO: Professional Jargon of the "Business"

Bombshell: evacuate quickly, run

Close a Contract: kill, assassinate. Also: neutralize, grease, wax, hose, pop, dust, smoke and vape.

Deniable Person: someone hired so that they can later disavow all knowledge if something goes wrong.

Insertion: delivery of a team close to it's target.

Extraction: the removal of a team from it's operations area. Also: corporate kidnapping.

Firelane: the clear area a weapon can put it's shots into.

Kill Zone: the body areas where a weapon used will kill it's target. Also the area of max destruction in an ambush situation.

Bag Job: surreptitious entry, usually to copy or remove material.

COMINT: communications intelligence.

ELSUR: electronic surveillance.

"Dying of the Measles": a killing that is made to look "natural".

Cut-out: a go-between, used for security in a covert operation.

False Flag: to make an operative think he is working for one person or group, when he is really working for another completely different master.

To get dirty: to be arrested, or come under police harassment.

Landing Hot: a fast landing or landing with a damaged vehicle.

Hot LZ: a landing zone under hostile fire; to make a landing under fire.

Roll up: to capture.

Sanitize: to remove all identifying marks, fingerprints, etc.

Shoes/shoemakers: false IDs and those who make them.

Sleeper: potential operative kept on tap for future use.

Technical Penetration: use of mechanical/electrical information gathering.

Tiger Team: computer experts that test system security by attempting penetration.

Silpup List: methodical collection of possible mistakes that might happen during a mission.

RV: rendezvous point. Also: pickup zone or PZ.

Injun Country: enemy territory. Also: the Sharp End, the AO

IA: Immediate Action drill. A set series of actions performed by a combat team to speed reaction to combat.

SOLO SKILLS

Basic Career Package For All Types

Minimum Stats: INT, STR, REF, CL, +7, EMP at least +6, **Basic Core Skills:** Pistol, Martial Arts, Driving, Athletics at +4 to +6. **Lesser Skills:** Melee Weapons, Rifle at +3 minimum.

Corporate Operative: You are a jack of all trades. **Skills:** basic skill package, plus concentration of skills in Pistol, Martial Arts. Some Specific Knowledge of Corporate Administration useful. **Hardware:** Smartgun, plugs & chips, some cyberlimbs, but subtle. At least one hidden weapon.

Cybersoldier: Trade INT for MA & BOD (you're a grunt). High EMP. **Skills:** Rifle, Heavy Weapons (see pg. 75), Martial Arts. Driving Skills a must. **Hardware:** single cyberarm with as much armor and weapons as possible. Both legs cybered, boosted. Any simple combination of optics, audio. Plugs very useful.

Bodyguard/Personal Security: BOD & REF can be traded for INT & ATT (gotta look good for the client!) or EMP. **Skills:** Pistol, Martial Arts, Melee Weapons, Driving & Pilot for chauffeur. Awareness, Human Percept, Intimidate for spotting and dealing with fans. Tech Skills should include surveillance and security systems (Specific Knowledge). **Hardware:** precision smartguns with plugs, "cutout" options to avoid hitting bystanders. Optics and audio.

Bounty Hunter: INT & CL most important, with REF & LUCK for tight spots. **Skills:** All small arms, at least one non-lethal melee weapon skill to "bring 'em back alive." Notice, Stealth, Disguise, Streetwise, Shadowing, Intimidate. **Hardware:** Two sets of plugs for running chips, equipment. Well hidden cyberlimbs & weapons; you don't want to advertise. Lots of chips for information, particularly specific knowledge chips on your target.

Street Samurai: a jack of all trades. **Skills:** Streetwise is #1! Fast Talk, Intimidate, Wardrobe & Style (style is everything on the Street). Concentrate on Pistol and Martial Arts. **Hardware:** mix and match. Plugs for certain. Lots of new black market tech for flash and the edge. Lots of chips for fast skills on one-time jobs.

Specialist: Any basic package will do. Make sure to concentrate on INT and REF as a strong base. **Skills:** Pick 2 or 3 and build them way up—this is your main gig! Pistol, Martial Arts, etc. **Hardware:** Plugs and lots of chips for jobs. Custom hardware (as the Ref permits).

only firm suggestions I can make are those that I would put forward for all solos (Interface plugs, boosterware, cyberoptics and audio). Other than that, the possibilities are limited only by your imagination, money and sanity. Go for a cyberlimb. Vampires. Glowing eyes. Do it for practicality, or for looks. Remember, style is as important as practicality on the streets. Hell, get a cigarette lighter implanted in your thumb. It'll impress your mates.

Finally, we come to the end of the road. The last, and most enigmatic kind of solo: the **specialist**. This is the solo with that one outstanding quality or skill, the one thing on which their career is based. They may be able to hold their own in a score of different situations, but it is this one trait that is the essence of their career. Truthfully, this is kind of a pseudo-category, since a specialist can operate as any of the other types of solo I have already outlined. But few others will stake so much on one advantage, and that sets specialists apart from all others, and makes them worth mentioning on their own merits. It goes to show that, if you have one spectacular talent but are strictly mediocre with regards to everything else, you can still be an effective solo.

The skills that I have seen capitalized on by specialists are armed or unarmed combat, infiltration, piloting, streetwisdom, marksmanship, strategy and tactics and so on. No matter what your strong point is, make sure you are at least adequate with, if not spectacular at the general soloing skills mentioned at the beginning of this column. As far as what skills are good specialties, use your imagination. Almost anything can be applied to soloing, with a little careful thought. Just make sure you don't get in over your depth. If you have any doubts, take a good, hard look at yourself. It may be that

you would be better off as a technical or corporate specialist, than as a solo who is constantly exposed to combat environments. Don't get killed for a fantasy.

Cybernetics should be treated like skills for specialists. Make sure you have the essentials for soloing, and then whatever is appropriate for your specialty. Don't base your specialty entirely on chipped skills or reflexes, however. You should be effective even if you've been stripped of all of your cybernetics. Enhancement is good. Dependency is bad. Don't be a robot. You'll get killed. Dead specialists are seldom called upon to exercise their talents.

That wraps up my analysis of the different types of solos in today's world. I hope this is of some use to those of you who are just starting out, and may be confused as to how to go about getting your feet wet in the high powered world of professional soloing. The suggestions for skills and cybernetics should be taken as representative examples, not ironclad rules. Remember the prime lesson: don't overextend yourself, especially early in your career. This is an important piece of wisdom. Learn it, know it, live it. If you're going to get yourself killed, wait until you've established yourself, so you can be a legend, instead of just a corpse.

Next issue, for you experienced solos: the pros and cons of international work. Also, how to gloss your resumé and turn a minor incursion into a major battle! Until then, stay ahead of the pack, and do it with style!



MODERN STREET GANGS: THE TRUE CYBERPUNKS

By Gustav "Red Horse" Guttermann

There's not a street samurai breathing that doesn't fear the metroplex's most lethal predators. They're boosted to the max and cruising for blood. Traveling in swarms, they can pick apart the best corp assassin in the space of a heartbeat. Worse, they are completely unpredictable. One moment, your saviors, the next, your worst nightmare.

They're punks, and they're taking over your city.

Many professional mercenaries scoff at the idea of a gang of burnt out 'dorphers posing much of a threat to anything. These people obviously haven't spent much time on the Street, where gangs are a part of everyday life and death. The modern punk, although not the equal of the well trained solo, is an enemy to be reckoned with. Most have access to hardware and combat drugs usually available only through corporate contracts. Their leaders are survivors who know the turf like the back of their hand. A surprising number have seen military service. Ruthless and vengeful,

if you become a gang's target, there are few places in the city where they can't reach you. It's no wonder that many organizations are now negotiating with street gangs for resources and manpower. They get the job done at low cost and they are a renewable resource. For every punk who buys it on an operation, there are two greenies just getting their colors, ready to take their place.

If you intend to work the Street, it's essential you know as much as possible about the Streetpunk style. Although every group follows its own credo, there are some current trends that deserve attention. The time may come when you are forced to confront or cooperate with one of these groups, and knowing their style will get you a lot further than that new smartgun you just chipped in.

Boosters: These are certainly the best known and perhaps the most lethal of the current Streetpunk trends. A Booster who has survived more than five years in his set (or

sub-gang) is probably the combat equal of your average veteran solo. The Booster lives for his next hardware fix. They rob, burn and murder in order to get hardware, or the money to afford it. Status in a Booster gang is measured by how "hardcore" you are, a term which describes a punk's deteriorating humanity. A true hardcore kills his best friend in cold blood, then cuts off the arm that struck the blow and has it replaced, just to prove a point. When dealing with Boosters, do not attempt intimidation or bribery. Peaceful negotiation is a good way to wind up dead in the gutter. Pain is the only language these punks understand. Shooting a few Boosters in front of their leaders is an approach that has been known to work. Shooting *yourself* without flinching works even better. Good luck, and remember, they may be hardcore, but they aren't stupid. Watch your back.

Posers: These are gangs which follow a distinctive style, taking on the personality and looks of a favorite

celebrity, be they actor, politician, or both. Some (known as *sissy gangs* to the hardcores) just wear the clothes and makeup of their idols. Most these days opt for the full bio-sculpt and personality adjustments. It is this second stage which makes the Poser dangerous. "Adjustment" is similar to the programming methods used by most religious cults. The new Poser, out from under the knife, spends weeks in the local "bunk house", having his brain inundated with images of the gang's icon. Old vids and recordings are played constantly. The Poser is deprived of sleep and food, and any mentioning of their former lives is met with quick and brutal punishment. The end result is a brain-washed and psychotic youth, living in a dream world. The Poser is both the most and the least predictable of street punks. Although it 's easy to unscramble the patterns they follow in their daily routines, dealing with them is another matter entirely. Any threat to their lifestyle, whether real or imagined, is quickly met with violence. When two Poser gangs meet, there is almost always bloodshed. Organizations employing Posers usually take special care in programming them first, promising to bring them closer to their idols. It is rumored that some Posers have been employing specially designed 'lich' programs, actually overwriting their old personalities with synthetic ones.

The best way to deal with Posers is avoid them completely.

Chromers: Street gangs which base their style around the latest hard streetrock are known as Chromers. They carry hardware like the Boosters, and follow their idols like the Posers, but overall are less dangerous. Many are just rebellious kids looking to party. Unfortunately, a number of them graduate to Booster and Poser gangs. The Chromer is quick to defend his fellows, and be-

cause he has yet to go completely off of the deep end, he may show more common sense in his actions, which can be both good and bad for anyone trying to negotiate with him. The best way to get in tight with a group of Chromers is to learn as much as you can about their music. Getting to know their favorite rockerboys *personally* is also a big plus.

Dorph Heads: Also known as



'dorphers, these gangs of doped up punks can be completely harmless, standing on street corners handing out flowers, or they can be wacked out killing machines, impervious to pain and fear, as dangerous as a cyberpsycho nutcase. It all depends on what they've been dosing up with recently. To know a Dorph Head's drug is to know the Dorph Head. Most stick to the basics, such as

slam, dorph, and lace, but others will have access to unique designer drugs with unpredictable effects. Usually gangs of dorph heads who experiment end up killing themselves, but not before taking others with them. Most Dorph Heads are off in their own worlds and won't be interested or even capable of working for anyone. However, offering a Dorph Head access to large amounts of his favorite poison will usually yield results.

Puppets: This is the common street term for gangs of punks who've hired out, either overtly or covertly, to a major corporation or criminal organization. There are two types of Puppet gangs. Those who have contracted for money and hardware (usually Boosters), and those who were formed by the corporations themselves. This second class of Puppets is a dangerous one. They are, in effect, corporate terrorists, and will be well armed and well led. If you're assaulted in the streets by a gang of Boosters that seem a little too slick to be believed, chances are you're dealing with the street arm of a corp that wants your head. Dealing with Puppet gangs is close to impossible, as most corporations will be able to beat any offers you could make. If you think you have a Puppet gang after you, your best option would be to put the word on the streets. Most "real" Streetpunk gangs *hate* Puppets, and if you're lucky, perhaps a group of authentic Boosters or Posers will do your dirty work for you.

Guardians: Occasionally bands of concerned youths and reformed(?) punks will come together to form protection gangs, known on the streets as Guardians. These vigilante organizations can be just as ruthless as the gangs they're trying to control, but fortunately for most solos, Guardians are likely to be unconcerned with their affairs. Of

course, if a Guardian gang discovers *you* are behind the actions of a dangerous band of punks, they may see personally to your demise. Guardians follow their own codes of honor, and will not hire out to anyone, for any price. They have been known to work with Cops and Trauma Teams from time to time.

Nihilists: Also known as Zombies, It is fortunate that this new street movement is still small in numbers. The Nihilists have a single minded philosophy. Having decided that there is nothing left in life worth living for, they have banded together to help each other go out in a blaze of glory. The greater the infamy that a Zombie can bring to himself by his death, the more he shall be remembered by his fellows. Making headlines is the ultimate goal. Zombies engage in acts of suicidal terrorism and mass murder. They often go after the rich and famous. The worst of them are trained combat veterans who have too strong a survival instinct to die easily. They may survive a number of "missions" before cashing in their chips. It is impossible to deal with Zombies. They only wish to die. A battle with a gang of Zombies will always be a fight to the death. If you encounter Nihilists, your best bet is to keep a low profile and get as far away as possible. If you are the target of Zombies, be prepared to leave the country or hire a good security team. You're going to need one.

The Streetpunk as a Character Class

Many of the members of street gangs do not fall under the usual class descriptions available to players and referees. If you are running or playing in a campaign taking place on the mean streets, you might want to consider using a member of a street gang as a character or NPC.

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A Streetpunk by his very nature has a number of restrictions as a character type. First and foremost, there is his gang. It is here that he bases his loyalty. Only the top members of street gangs can operate under their own set of rules, and the actions of the gang as a whole can often place the character in dire situations.

The Streetpunk character has his own special ability, known as **Rank**.



This skill is the Punk's status in his gang. It represents a number of factors. First, Rank dictates the Punk's ability to call on the resources of his fellows in times of need. Usually, this will involve getting payback: revenge on a target who has attacked or threatened the character. Rank is also an indication of how much influence the character has on gang actions, ideals and style as a whole. Finally, Rank is also a form of intimidation in the streets. The higher your Rank, the less likely the character will be challenged by citizens and rival gang members. You

can bully your way into exclusive clubs; even get in the cops' faces every so often. The fear of retaliation by the gang will keep people in check.

Going up in Rank: If your gang doesn't know about your accomplishments, using your special skill will amount to nothing. Rank can only be raised by impressing the other members of the gang. In most

cases, street gangs will have strict rites of passage before a Punk can go up in rank. If you are designing a veteran gang member, you must check with the referee to make certain that the character has passed all of the tests to gain his rank. The best bet is for the character to start at level 2, raising his Rank during play.

The following is a list of Ranks for a typical Booster gang. Listed are the rites of passage and the perks for gaining the new Rank.

Level 1,2: Greenie: Initiation consists of mugging an innocent, defac-

ing property with gang colors, and the swearing of oaths. Most initiations are "blood rites" which involve anything from being beaten by senior gang members, to the cutting off of fingers, to serious hospitalization. **Perks:** You now wear gang colors, so ordinary citizens will leave you alone. You have the right to party with the gang, but you had better listen to orders. If you are attacked in the streets and you scream loud enough, chances are nearby members will come to help you out.

Level 3,4: Punk: You have committed major crimes such as armed robbery and arson. You have fought with rival gangs and both drawn blood and have been bloodied yourself. You're always looking for new hardware, and your "boosts" should have cost you at least 15 humanity points. **Perks:** You can open your mouth at meetings without having it shot off, but don't expect anyone to take your advice seriously. You can intimidate local street scum and new recruits from other gangs. You have the respect and fear of ordinary citizens and the animosity of the cops. If you are attacked, you will most likely be able to convince a few of your fellows to help you get revenge.

Level 5,6: Homeboy: You have killed in cold blood. Although this need not have been premeditated, you must have shown yourself to be ruthless. Killing in gang fights and during crimes is acceptable. You must have had run-ins with the cops. No one who hasn't done hard time will make it this far. In all likelihood, you're now addicted to the gang's drug of choice. You should have lost at least 30 points of humanity by this time and be packing the gang's signature hardware. **Perks:** You are now a respected gang member. Your opinion is welcome, but don't step on any toes. If

attacked, the members of your set (sub-group of the main gang) will be more than willing to help you get some payback. Most other gang members will think twice before messing with you on the spur of the moment. You'll be asked to help in the training and teaching of new members, who in turn will have some degree of loyalty to you. If

You lead a deadly army of psychopathic youths who look up to you as a minor god. You are feared by everyone.

arrested, an effort will be made to post bail and help you beat the rap.

Level 7,8: Bloodboy: You are a veteran. You are also a cop killer. In addition, you must have killed or incapacitated high ranking rival gang members (Rank 5 or above) in single combat. To show that you are truly "hardcore", you will be asked to murder a close friend or family member. You should have lost at least 40 humanity points by now and the last of your morals are relegated to the back burner. To gain this position you must have been chosen by a retiring (i.e., moving up) set leader, or you must fight for the spot when it is vacated (by death or injury). You could also attempt to stage a coup. **Perks:** You are one of the inner circle who helps make decisions for the gang. You are Lieutenant to the Gang boss. If your gang is large enough, you will have the opportunity to be in charge of a whole sub-group (set) of the gang, controlling your sets' actions and

missions. People on the street (and rival gang members) will not touch you unless under direct orders. The cops want your butt, but will not go after it without mounting a major operation. If caught, the gang will do everything in their power to help spring you. You are entitled to undertake missions in the gang's name and/or use gang resources and manpower under contract for third parties. Major criminal networks can be organized. You will have access to most of the resources to be found on the streets. If you are attacked or threatened, a small army is yours to command. Within the gang itself, you can pick and choose your friends and relations. Be warned, poor leadership is fatal.

Level 9,10: Ganglord: You are hardwired to the max, with at least 60 points of humanity loss. You directly confront authority, eliminating all in your way. You've fought cyberpsycho squads and won. Having organized the successful extermination of an entire rival gang, you're prepared to challenge the authority of the current Gang Lord directly and if possible, take his place. **Perks:** You are now either the right hand man to the ganglord, or are in charge yourself. You lead a deadly army of psychopathic youths who look up to you as a minor god. Feared by everyone, you know everything that goes on in the City. Major powers fight to win your favor and thus your support. You are also crazy beyond pain and fear; ready to kill on a moments notice, or die trying. Good luck.

Joining a gang during play: It is possible for other character classes to join gangs. In fact, most large gangs will have a number of Fixers, Netrunners, and Med Techies to help them with their operations. However, these members will never be true Streetpunks in the eyes of their fellows. They will have to

work twice as hard to gain Rank, and will never rise above level 5, regardless of their actions. Characters who join gangs in the middle of a campaign will always be looked on with suspicion, and will be the first to be sacrificed when push comes to shove.

Outside missions: It is not expected that you spend 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with your gang. Although most Streetpunks do not work (at a steady job), they will often undertake deals and contracts on their own initiative. Just make sure that you are available when your gang needs you, and most of all, never screw over your own gang!

Running a street gang campaign: There are any number of approaches to running characters in street gangs. Here are just a few.

- 1: Start them off as raw recruits at a rank of 2. Allow them to get the feel of the gang as they work their ways to the top, always sacrificing a little bit more of themselves with every step in true Streetpunk fashion.
- 2: Start the characters as established gang members at a rank of 5 or 6. They are just getting ready to make their big scores. They'll have to handle direct confrontations with powerful rivals, plus the guns of angry cops who want to take them off the street once and for all.
- 3: Have the characters organize a Guardian gang to clean up the streets. They must be prepared to face the wrath of the regular street gangs in the area, but if they're lucky, the cops will lend them a hand.
- 4: Have the players design young Cops, and have them enter the gang undercover. Their job is to work their way up the ranks and destroy the gang from within. This is the most dangerous, but most challenging approach to running a gang campaign.

SOLO OF FORTUNE, MAY, 2013

CYBERPUNKS

'DORPHER

Rank: +1-5, rarely higher than +7
Major Skills: Fast talk, Brawling or Melee Weapons, Thief, Streetwise, at levels of +3 to +6. Usually one or two Specific Knowledge Skills related to drugs, drug procurement.
Common Cybertech: A few MRAM and APTR chips because you're usually too hopped up to study or train. Maybe some optionwear weapons, such as scratchers. Most of the time, you don't care.



POSER

Rank: +3-6
Major Skills: Wardrobe/Style, Disguise, Persuasion, Athletics, Pistol, Melee Weapons or Brawling, Streetwise, at levels of +3 to +6. Usually one or two additional skills related to the role played, at levels of +3 to +4.
Common Cybertech: Lots and lots of MRAM chips to support your role. A few APTRS for temporary skills. Cyberoptics & audio, hidden weapons. No boosted limbs or anything obvious. After all, you have to look like your role-model!



CHROMER

Rank: +2-9, sometimes +10
Major Skills: Wardrobe/Style, Play Instrument, Persuasion, Athletics, Pistol or Blade, Melee Weapons or Brawling, Streetwise, at levels of +3 to +6.
Common Cybertech: Minimum— one set of interface plugs. Cyberaudio with special options, APTR chips for temp skills, MRAM for music-biz related skills. Sensory booster very important!



BOOSTER

Rank: +2-6, sometimes +7-9
Major Skills: Streetwise, intimidate, Pistol, Rifle, Brawling or Martial Arts, Melee Weapons, Awareness, at levels between +4 and +7.
Common Cybertech: Anything on list! At least two pairs of interface plugs. Boosted limbs with lots of chrome and extras. Combat oriented equipment. Rippers or BigKnucks a must! Experimental stuff— the more dangerous the better!

Scott Ruggels

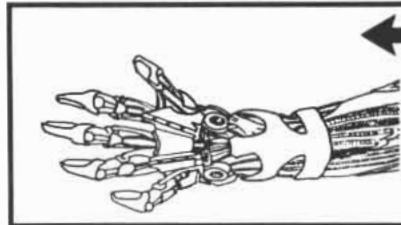
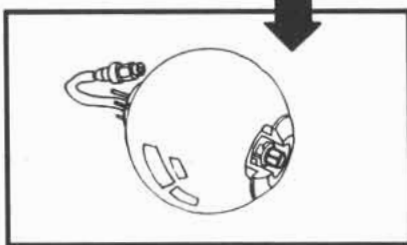
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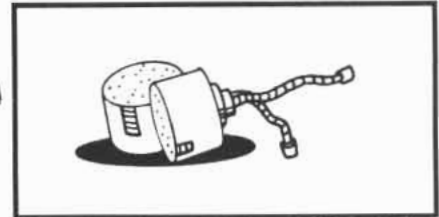
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CORPORATE EXTRACTIONS

BY R.B. TYLER

It's now, it's fast, it's deadly. I'm talking about corporate extraction — today's hot technique for procuring proven talent for an organization. As the popularity of extraction grows, so do the contract opportunities for solos specializing in corporate and covert operations work. But what are the ramifications and legalities? How common is it? What techniques are involved? And what developments can we expect to see in this field in the future? That's the topic of this month's *Solo of Fortune* Special Report.

First, what exactly is corporate extraction? In legalese, it is the illegal removal via conspiracy or abduction of the duly contracted employee of a corporation by a competing organization, where resignation or transfer of that employee would normally entail a breach of employment or contract conditions. In layman's lingo, this means that a corporation has some kind of wunderkind working for them, whom they wish, at all costs, to retain. Frequently this entails a heavy guard, and/or prisonlike conditions for the target. (Although they may still draw a hell of a salary.) Another corporation also wants this person's talent, but since the first corporation will not let them resign, or switch jobs, the second corporation must resort to extralegal means. Depending on the circumstances, the target may or may not be a willing participant in all of this. Extractions are usually carried out on scientists or researchers working on extremely

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hot projects, or upper level corporate executives with access to proprietary information. All large corporations carry out extractions constantly. In fact, in a recent issue of *The Corporation Monthly*, one industry analyst cited it as tending towards epidemic proportions. Indeed, counter-extraction is one of the most rapidly expanding facets of corporate security. (See the article on corporate security in this issue.)

Governmentally speaking, extraction is illegal, but since when does the government have a say in anything anymore? The fact of the matter is that large corporations do as they please, and are accountable only to each other for their actions. Solos who carry out extractions violate kidnapping, trespassing, assault and vandalism laws. Murder also becomes a factor, if anyone is killed during an extraction. An individual who conspires to defect, or willingly participates when extracted can be found guilty of conspiracy and breach of contract.

All of this means diddly. You have nothing to worry about from the government. You have a lot more to worry about from the corporation you extract the target from. Large corps are notoriously sore losers, and an extraction can eas-

ily serve as the precipitator of a spate of revenge killings, or even a corporate war. Consequently, I would suggest that any solos considering careers in freelance extraction take pains to protect their identities at all costs. Corporations backing extractions also go to extreme measures to remain anonymous. The reason why extraction is open to freelance work at all is because corps frequently fear using in-house teams to carry them out. Frequently, an extracting team doesn't know what corporation it's working for. This can lead to complications, if there are corps you specifically don't want to work for. Extracted personnel almost always undergo a complete cosmetic and identity change in order to keep them from being recognized and associated with their new employer, and to prevent counter-extraction. One thing to watch out for: some corporations have been known to attempt to liquidate the extracting team after completion of the mission in order to prevent them talking. Do a little research and find out what corporations have a reputation for doing this. If possible, avoid working for them. (Brilliant advice, eh?)

Frequently, an extracting team doesn't know what corporation it's working for...

One problem often encountered in corporate extractions is the extractee's family. If someone is considered worthy of extraction, their family is usually either under guard, or held hostage as a preventive measure. Since many targets will refuse to cooperate with their

new employers without a guarantee of safety for their kin, a generous corporation may extract the family at the same time as the target. Not-so-generous corporations will ignore the family, and resort to lies or psychological conditioning to convince the target of their safety. Supremely nasty corporations will ensure the death of the family, and through the use of conditioning and twisting the facts, use the tragedy as a technique for winning over the victim. If you have a conscience, don't work for corporations known to use this technique.

Another problem recurrent in extraction work are so called "sour grapes killings." There are two types: offensive and defensive. In a defensive killing, if the success of an extraction appears imminent; the corp losing the extractee shifts it's tactics from attempts to retain the target to attempts to "render the target unsuitable for extraction." That's a euphemism for filling him full of holes. Beware of this, if you're carrying out an extraction. A dead target will not fulfill the contract conditions. In an offensive killing, (and this is where the sour grapes moniker comes from) the extracting team will have orders to kill the target if successful extraction is not possible. The guiding philosophy is, of course, "if we can't have him/her, neither can you". If you plan a career in extraction, make sure you have the guts to implement this kind of order.

The future of corporate extraction is somewhat hazy. Since it is growing in popularity, corporations are taking sterner and sterner measures to protect their top level personnel. This makes extraction more and more difficult, and teams will need to be increasingly specialized to deal with these defenses. I believe extraction will continue to be a common tool for corporate recruitment,

but that its popularity will be cyclical. As it becomes more frequently used, greater defensive measures will be implemented, and it will consequently become more difficult and costly. This will cause a drop in popularity, which will last long enough for corporations to start becoming complacent. When this

Supremely nasty corporations will ensure the death of the family, and through the use of conditioning...use the tragedy as a technique for winning over the victim...

happens, extraction will become easier again and its popularity will resurge.

Time will confirm or discredit my theory. Either way, I'm sure we all look forward to seeing how this interesting technique develops. For now, it's a field of soloing just waiting to be properly exploited. To those of you who are interested, I say good luck, and watch your back!

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LOVE & BULLETS FROM MOSCOW

Fun Times in the Big Soviet

By Francis "Jersey" Witherspoon

Corps are so typical.

After a two week operation in Alaska (pulling V.I.P.'s out of an experimental military research lab outside of Fairbanks), popping caps, slinging shrat, and generally sticking it to the opposition, I found myself rewarded with a measly 15% bonus to salary, my tapes for the media confiscated, and an all expense paid vacation on the Black Sea to get me out of the execs hair for a month or so.

'The Black Sea?' I thought. 'Give me a friggin break!' Then I reconsidered. I've put in my time and seen a lot of this rock we live on, but in all that time, I've never seen any action in the heartland of the iron curtain. Now I had the opportunity to see how our fellow professionals in Mother Russia worked their special kind of magic. I talked to the folks down in Recreation and Covert Operations and managed to haggle a Visa that would get me into the Soviet capital. Next, I contacted SOF, told them what I was about, and was sent a gift wrapped set of press passes and other official-looking documents, and a small stash of those most worthless of paper products, Rubles, just in case I needed to grease a few palms to get the inside story.

Within a week, I was set. My wounds from Alaska were all

patched up, and my arm was rewired and working properly. Although I had to send my gear via the diplomatic bag to the U.S. embassy, my arm and eye would serve me well enough should their be any unexpected trouble along the way, not that I expected any. Not many corporate hits in Moscow these days.

Upon landing, I got my first taste of the Soviet Cybersoldier. There were two of them working in customs, placed there specially to check out foreigners like myself who had metal grafted to their meat. These were *big* gentlemen. I mean it. The short one was six foot four and looked like he could bench press a tractor. Both were in uniform, poker faced, and armed to the teeth with Kalishnakov smart rifles. I followed the cable back to the plug.

Their hardware bordered on nostalgia! That plug looked like something that should have been attached to the back of an old kitchen appliance. I panned down, looking for additional cyberware. That's when I noticed that the guard's pants were four sizes too big and his legs, what I could see of them, looked like a junkyard. I thought I could hear the gears whirring when he shifted on his feet. The second guard was no better off, with a gun-metal arm and cables visible through the plates in the wrist and fingers. They noticed

my attention to their hardware and spoke with admiration. Their appraisal of their gear was better than their English.

"Boris and I, highly regarded heros. Many battles in Middle East. Only the best for us. You like, huh?"

I shook my head in disbelief. "You actually like that gear? Isn't it a bit clumsy for your line of work?"

Boris laughed heartily ... "Not pretty like American arms and legs, but not important when kicking hole in tank, yes?"

The big guy, Boris I suppose, laughed heartily. "Not pretty like American arms and legs, but not important when kicking hole in tank, yes?" He stamped his foot for emphasis, and I'd swear on the grave of my aunt Matilda that the whole airport shook with the impact. I decided to change the subject.

"So where does a Russian solo go when he's got the time and is looking for a little action?"

Cont. Pg 78



EUROSTYLE:

EuroStyle: It's A Whole Different Ball Game on the Other Side of the Atlantic

By Lars Svedberg, SOF Euro-Correspondent

You are a contractor for Euro Business Machines and you are looking for the right operative for a touchy extraction. What you are looking for is one of the elite in the business. If you were in America, you would put the word out on the Net and in the street, let "the best" beat their way to your door, fighting for your lucrative contract. But this is not America.

You take off your skis and catch a sled at the lodge, the coachman weaving his way through the winding, story book streets of beautiful St. Moritz. The streets are lined with Porches, Jags, and Royces. Vacationing shoppers dressed in coats of mink and ermine glance at you with fashionable polychromed eyes. Above you, ospreys float through the

air like dragonflies, transporting the rich to private chalets on mountain summits.

You arrive at the club, a one story construction in post-modernist Gothic. One look at your EBM gold card and you are through the door. Your suit and tie alone would cost an average American corp a months salary. You are underdressed.

These are the beautiful people you read about in the screamsheets, whose images are flaunted nightly in the vids. They dance under pulsating chromatic lights, moving to a common rhythm; ignoring you.

The hostess leads you to a back room. You kick in your optics, for the darkness is total. Strains of Beethoven's Ninth play in the background. There, by an alcove in the wall. They lounge on silk pillows, sipping cognac and slivovitz, dining on fine Viennese cuisine. Their clothes are silk, all custom designed. The cool fire of gem stones the size of walnuts glitter on fingers, necks, and ears. Lips edged with a hint of

scorn laugh at private jokes. Chromed limbs waver under infrared light. You take your seat. They have been expecting you. They are the elite.

Welcome to the world of the professional European mercenary. They have never lived in the streets. They have never fought in the wars or done time. They are the best in the world and know it.

We are not talking about the solos you find walking the streets of Great Britain, who, much like our own professionals, have clawed their way up to the top. The GBR has had second class status in the Euro Economic Community since the nineties.

The cities of the ECC are clean and well patrolled. There are no "free fire zones" to transform kids into veterans. Since the Euro Space Agency put up the orbitals, the remaining soldiers have been stationed in home guard positions, quietly earning their pensions. There is only one breeding ground for solos



ON THE EDGE WITH EUROPE'S ULTIMATE WARRIORS.

in Europe, and that is the corporations themselves.

You start off like any other college graduate, looking for a niche in the

They have never lived in the Streets. They have never fought in the wars or done time. They are the best in the world and know it.

real world. If they think you qualify, you have the option of training. After a few simple missions, perhaps some hardware. Even in civilized Europe, corporate conflicts are rampant, and there is work aplenty for those with talent. However, unlike America, most black operations

are done "in house" by company professionals. The pay is first rate, and the benefits enable most covert operatives to enjoy an enviable lifestyle. Those incapacitated in the service of their companies are covered for life.

But these EuroCorp jockeys are unimportant. For the first tier jobs: vital extractions, infiltrations, and "wet" operations, the companies of the ECC turn to the free agents, those solos who became good enough to buy their way out of lifetime contracts and go freelance, selling their services to the highest bidders on the common market.

This is a select group, consisting a maybe a few hundred individuals. To find them (and they never go looking for work), you will need to search the casinos in Monte Carlo, the beaches in Southern France, and the slopes in Switzerland. The elite are rich. The elite are beautiful. They can pick and choose the work they like, for they are always in demand. Between jobs, they can be

found enjoying life in the playgrounds of Europe, rubbing elbows with their compatriots, trading stories and brokering information, keeping track of who is on top; who is the best.

The accumulation of wealth and prestige are the only things important to these elite EuroSolos. They are shrewd businessmen (and women) who would give any state-side fixer a run for their money. They consider themselves members of a civilized profession, many times refusing contracts which would bring them into conflict with their friends and relations. Although death is always a factor, the EuroSolos know they can expect fair treatment when bested by their fellows. The tarnished reputation of the loser is often punishment enough. These high tech mercenaries look down upon their American and British counterparts, much in the same way that you would sneer if a Booster tried to force his way into your health club. They especially dislike Soviet

operatives, who they consider barbaric, and most feel that Japanese and Korean solos are crazy.

Before you turn your nose up at these seemingly overbearing young aristocrats, you should know exactly what you are up against. EuroSolos are rich, but they are no less professional. Many have private training facilities, and devote as much time to training as they do to spending their money. They have friends in many corporations, and are known to carry exotic, deadly, often unique hardware and wetware. If your average American Street Samurai is a bar room brawler, then the EuroSolo is an Olympic trained boxer. They are confident and self assured, and utterly ruthless when dealing with their enemies. If you are not a member of their inner circle, expect no mercy. EuroSolos have access to the most advanced medical facilities in the world, and many have accounts at the "black medicine" clinics of Sweden and Denmark. Cyberpsychosis is virtually unknown among EuroSolos, and the secrets of their health are closely guarded. Fortunately, it is unlikely that most American operatives will ever run into a member of this elite club, as most EuroCorps prefer to hire locally for jobs in the states.

The Cybercircle: What does a EuroSolo with time on his hands and money to burn do for entertainment? If they are looking to build their reputations, and they have the talent to survive, many register their names on the EuroNet with the Cybercircle. Only a rumor years ago, the Cybercircle is now a known organization throughout Western Europe. The Cybercircle is a way for the Elite to hone their skills against the most challenging opponents they can find: Each other. A freelancer with a reputation will eventually uncover information on registration and the rules. When a solo is "active", i.e., between jobs, they put the word out

on the Net. They are given a single name and a location. The rest is up to them. This is not a contest of assassins. The rules of the game stipulate that a participant must seek out their target and challenge them to single combat. Back stabbing is frowned upon. At the issue of the Challenge, either solo has the option of conceding without a major loss in reputation. If a challenge is accepted, the combatants agree to any personal rules. A fight will either continue until first blood, first major injury, or on rare occasions, to the death. Opponents will fight at the

The Cybercircle is a way for the Elite to hone their skills against the most challenging opponents they can find: Each other.

location of the challenge, using whatever weapons they have at their disposal. Preparation both on the part of the hunter and the hunted is of utmost importance, and all EuroSolos active in the Cybercircle travel heavily armed. Crossing swords with a EuroSolo on holiday can be deadlier than facing one on assignment.

How the ratings system of the Cybercircle works is a closely guarded secret. No buttonhead has ever hacked his way into the Cybercircle Net files and lived to tell about it. It is suspected that many European and some Asian corporations receive copies of the Cybercircle standings and use these for the basis of selecting freelancers for important assignments.

Rumor has it that a few "famous"

American solos have managed to gain a spot on the Cybercircle. If this is true, none of them have seen fit to talk about it. Europe is a dangerous place for the uninitiated, and any readers who are beginning to get delusions of glory should deeply reconsider making any attempts to register in the Circle.

The Angels are in a class by themselves. Perhaps you have heard mention of them in the shadowy recesses of some corporate board room. Even the best of the freelance EuroSolos speak of the Angels in tones of respect. These are the "High Riders", the best of the best. There are rumored to be no more than a dozen of these "enlightened combat masters." Their names are a mystery. No Euro Solo can recall a friend who has become one, although all of the rich elite secretly wait for their invitations. It is said that the Angels live in glittering towers in the Euro Crystal Palace at L-5, low Earth orbit. Their assignments are as elusive as their names. No company has yet to admit to hiring one of the Angels, or to having been one of their targets. No doubt a company targeted by the Angels would quickly see its stock value drop through the floor.

Ask the EuroSolos and they will tell you that the Angels "Move in a blur, silently and with an unimaginable grace." Their weapons are advanced and lethal. Their trademark, a gold halo on a field of stars is well known, but has never been seen planet-side. Are these combat legends a myth, invented by the EuroCorps to maintain a level of mutual respect and fear among the freelancers? No one is certain. Some say that the Angels created the Cybercircle to recruit new members into their fold. One thing is certain... If you meet an Angel while on assignment, it's probably the last assignment you will ever take...

Working in Europe: Opportunities abound for the high tech professional mercenary in Western Europe. The hard part is getting your foot through the door. This is not to say that the task is insurmountable, but the typical American solo will need to expect the worst while job hunting in the ECC.

If you do not have a college degree, you might as well stick to Britain or Greece while working overseas. You will need to familiarize yourself with EuroCorporate custom, and the variations of culture from region to region. If you are not already chipped for memoryware, you should consider it. Most airports and travel agencies can supply you with the information and languages you will need.

Before flying to Europe to enhance your career, consider working for an American branch of a EuroCorp. Successful missions in America do not count for much in "Civilized Europe", but it is better than going in cold, especially if your resume notes that you saved a Euro Corp a good deal of capital investment while completing your assignment.

Know where to look. Many American solos make the mistake of flying directly to West Germany to seek their fortunes. Homeguard industries, especially in major ECC contributors like Germany are very touchy when it comes to hiring for big jobs. They will usually pull their forces from the EuroSolo elite, preferring the past loyalty of old alumni who have moved up in the world. Your best bet is to hit the crossroads, the unilateral industrial centers formed at the border junctures. The largest, and most open to opportunity contracts is the France/Belgium/Luxemburg industrial zone. This "neutral ground" for European corporate competition is often the launching point for full scale industrial espionage, if not out and out warfare. Avoid the French side,



Rob Caswell

where the solos take national pride in landing the home contracts. Try the cities of Athus in Belgium and Rodange in Luxemburg, just outside of the zone. Often, major operations by French, German, and Swedish companies in the zone will draw off a good portion of the local talent, leaving openings for the foreign born solo to work on smaller, but oftentimes lucrative assignments.

When in Rome... Remember that the Europeans play by a different set of rules. Stepping out of line will get you frowned upon. Stepping on the toes of the elite EuroSolos can get you dead. Honor and sportsmanship are qualities reserved for the rich veterans dining on caviar in St. Moritz. They are not above eliminating a "brutish American" who interferes with their livelihood. If you expect to some day hob nob with the elite, be prepared to work in Europe for a long time. Who knows; after five years of successful contracts and a few big scores you might be able to relax with your fellow profes-

sionals at the lodge or casino and wait for the contracts to come to you. Just don't count on it.

S.O.F. EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW: KENNET SKÖLD, EUROSOLO ELITE

Kennet Sköld is a Swedish born solo who began his career with degrees in international relations and computer science from the University of Stockholm. He was hired by Orbital Air, where he entered the covert operations training program on the basis of his success as a college pentathlete. He credits "low visibility, high yield" operations in Eastern Europe for his financial and professional success. He has been working freelance for three years, and owns property in Sweden, Switzerland, Monaco, Liechtenstein, and the Bahamas. He refrains from

statements concerning his finances, but claims he "need not work again" to enjoy the pleasures of his lifestyle.

SOF: You and your comrades-in-arms refer to each other as members of the elite. How would you define this?

Sköld: We have the highest levels of professional success in the business. We are paid well to complete assignments that those beneath us could not accomplish. That we were able to break lifetime contracts with our companies shows that we have earned enough respect to be considered dangerous to cross.

SOF: Dangerous? Surely not to a major corporation.

Sköld: We could be killed, yes. It is more a matter of professional considerations. We belong to a select group whose members are well known to each other. An affront against any of us by an unscrupulous company would reverberate through our profession. That company would not gain our services again.

SOF: And it is the companies that seek out your services, not the reverse.

Sköld: Correct. We need not look for work. Contracts find their way to our doors.

SOF: And how do the Corporations determine the right solo for the job?

Sköld: Our resumé's are well known in certain circles.

SOF: You own homes in many nations, shares in resorts, even a private beach in the Bahamas. Your contracts must pay very well.

Sköld: Of course.

SOF: How do the Corporations justify these rates of pay, when there are other competent solos in the international field who would work for much less?

Sköld: Success. Be assured, as soon as we fail, the contracts dry up. In my case, as with many of my friends, this has yet to happen.

SOF: So you claim to have never botched an assignment?

Sköld: I have always completed the "letter" of the contract.

SOF: Do you work exclusively for EuroCorps, or have you been hired by other international business interests?

Sköld: Firstly, you are under the assumption that Freelance European solos are like their lower counterparts with life contracts in the corporations. This is hardly the case. There is a great deal of money to be made in the profession outside of corporate dealings. The current wealth of the ECC has led to a new generation of young corporate aristocracy, rich businessmen who feel the need for personal protection. In addition, the old money of Europe feels more and more threatened by the advance of technology. They are willing to pay a hefty price for security.

SOF: So by mingling with the elite, you become the elite.

Sköld: We are not mere soldiers. With our profession comes an obligation to quality and culture which is preferred to the services of professionals from other regions. We are trusted by the civilized classes of Europe, and they are willing to pay for that trust.

SOF: This gives you access to a great deal of confidential information.

Sköld: Many grateful clients have pointed us in the right directions. Brokering other interests is part of the profession as well.

SOF: You refer to power brokering, such as sales of arms and information?

Sköld: Whatever viable interests come our way.

SOF: You speak in the plural. How many members of the elite would you say there are and how many do you know personally?

Sköld: That is hard to say. Perhaps a few hundred, of which a handful are the true elite. My friends are

many, and not all are solos by profession.

SOF: Have you ever run into conflicts with friends working for conflicting interests?

Sköld: It is avoided when possible, but it has been known to happen. We play to win, but respect the lives of the losers, should they still be in possession of them.

SOF: Have you ever needed to eliminate a friend, one of the elite, during a contract?

Sköld: I would prefer not to say.

SOF: What about the Cybercircle?

Sköld: What about it?

SOF: Do you participate?

Sköld: I am currently active.

SOF: Can you tell us more about it?

Sköld: No.

SOF: How about the Angels? Corporate legend or deadly reality?

Sköld: Most certainly reality. I have worked for Orbital Air and have traveled many times to L-5. They most certainly exist, but you will never see one on Earth, or at least, never know it.

SOF: Do you think you will ever become one?

Sköld: That is not for me to decide.

SOF: What is the greatest satisfaction you derive from your profession?

Sköld: The sense that I live among the greatest individuals our planet has to offer. The men and women who make up the elite of Europe in my profession are far more than well paid mercenaries. Most are artists of one sort or another. They are well bred with refined tastes and judgments. They are as close to the top of achievement as is possible in our international society. Unlike the self destructive solos in America and Britain, we do not intend to "burn brightly for an instant and go out in a blaze of glory". We intend to be around for a long time. Our children shall inherit all that we achieve.

SOF: That's quite a heavy statement.

Sköld: Perhaps, but until someone

better proves us wrong it will continue to hold true.

The EuroSolo in Cyberpunk is somewhat better trained than your average operative from Night City. What they are lacking in street savvy, they more than make up for in precision of skill.

The typical corporate run EuroSolo has a Combat Sense between 4 to 6. On the Lifepath, they start with a normal childhood, and then spend their first four years on the Higher Education path. Upon graduation, they are inducted into a corporation and spend a number of years in intense covert training. For this, the EuroSolo uses a special education path, unavailable to normal characters. This reflects the advanced training facilities available in most large EuroCorps.

Add +3 to any eight skills of your choice: Athletics, Drive, Basic Tech, Infiltration, Shadowing, Seduction, Pistol, Rifle, Melee Weapons, Martial Arts, Driving, Helicopter Pilot, AV-4 Pilot, Awareness, General Knowledge, Specific Knowledge, Simple Language, Complex Language, Disguise, Med Tech, Thief, Persuasion, Interrogation, Human Perception, Wardrobe & Style, Culture, Corporate Policy (see sidebar).

Of these skills, Corporate Policy must be chosen. In addition to combat skills, Culture, Languages, and Persuasion are highly recommended.

In addition, a EuroSolo gains the standard number of pick-up skills.

A member of the EuroSolo Elite will have taken the above education path twice. They will have Combat Sense skills between +7 and +8, if not higher. They are all very wealthy, and will generally have equipment which adds an additional +1 to what ever rolls they modify. Most will have boosted reflexes and cyber optics with infra-red capabilities. Many will have an Attractiveness of 10 due to biosculpting, and

Reflexes never lower than 8. Experience will have raised many of their skills beyond the initial levels gained by Lifepath. In spite of a good deal of hardware, most will have high Empathy stats. An elite EuroSolo can afford the most advanced clinics, and will only suffer half of the normal humanity loss from their customized cyberware. They will have good skills in areas such as Business Sense, Persuasion, Seduction, Wardrobe & Style, and Culture. In

emergencies, the EuroSolo can usually call upon any available resources that money can buy.

Running a group of Euro Solos can be an interesting diversion for a referee with a flair for the international and a knack for "high powered" roleplaying. For the most part though, referees should not let players control Euro Solos, as they will tend to overshadow all other characters.

EUROSOLOS

CHRISTIEN LASALLE

| | | | |
|------------|-------|------------|---|
| INT | 8 | TECH | 5 |
| REF | 9/11* | CL | 8 |
| LUCK | 8 | ATT | 9 |
| EMP | 8/6* | BOD | 7 |

*after HL and boost adjustments

Skills: Athletics (+7), Awareness(+5), Persuasion (+3), Seduction (+4), Wardrobe/Style(+5), Gen. Knowl. (+4), Culture (+3), Language (+4), Corporate Policy (+4), Gambling (+3), Drive (+6), Rotorwing Pilot (+4), AV-4 Pilot (+3), Pistol (+7), Melee (+6), Martial Arts-Savate (+6), Basic Tech (+2). **Combat Sense +6**

Hardware: Reflex boost, Cyberaudio, Radio splice, Phone link, cyberoptics (2) with Targeting, Antidazzle, Thermograph, Image enhance. Interface plugs (3 sets, one for vehicles, two for weapons & chips).

Background: 32 year old male. Spent 1st four years after childhood touring Europe, 4 yrs. college, then 8 yrs basic corp service with EBM. Last 4 yrs., freelancing part time while preparing to break with Corporation.

ACADY NOIRÉ

| | | | |
|------------|------|------------|---|
| INT | 9 | TECH | 6 |
| REF | 7/9* | CL | 8 |
| LUCK | 5 | ATT | 9 |
| EMP | 6/4* | BOD | 5 |

*after HL and boost adjustments

Skills: Athletics (+4), Awareness (+5), Persuasion (+3), Seduction (+6), Wardrobe/Style (+8), Gen. Knowl. (+6), Culture (+4), Language (+6), Gambling (+3), Drive (+6), Pistol (+9), Melee (+7), Martial Arts (+8), Shadowing (+6).

Combat Sense +6.

Hardware: Reflex & sensory boost, cyberaudio, Radio splice, Phone link, cyberoptics (2) with Targeting, IR, Times Square. Interface plugs (2 sets).

Background: 28 year old female. Entered college from high school in Switzerland. Did freelance while in college as INTELLEX body-guard.



Three New Skills

Culture: knowledge of jet set fads, habits & hangouts. Cool based.

Business Sense: knowledge of how to invest, running businesses, spotting business opportunities. Modified by Ref. Int based.

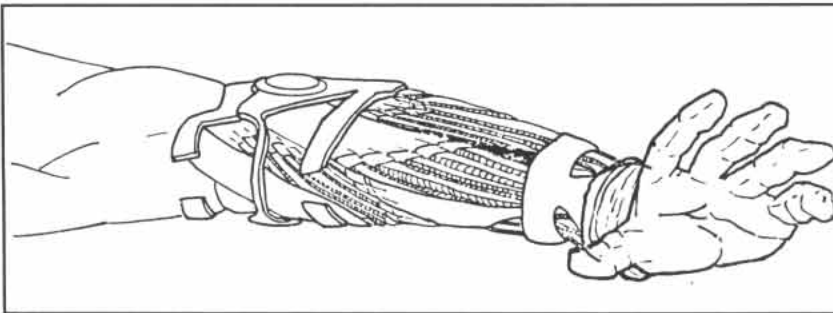
Corporate Policy: knowledge of company rules and how to select key personnel. Int based.

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HAMMERHAND

\$1150 HC=3D6

Increase your close combat abilities with this new design from CYBERMATRIX. Hydraulic ram-fist is constructed of rugged alloy, with a patented piston action that allows you to punch right through the strongest wall (1D10 killing damage!) Plus handy second bodyframe allows you to mount up to a .357 automag in the upper forearm.



BUZZSAW

\$2199 HC=3D6 +4

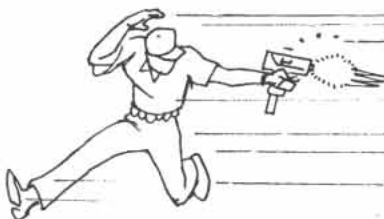
If you're the type who likes to get up close and personal, this is your weapon. The removable cyberhand can be pulled back to extend a 1 foot, highspeed chainsaw with molecular wire blade (2D6+2 damage). Secret bicep compartment stores knives, grenades, etc.



SPEEDING BULLET

\$2499 per pair HC=2D6

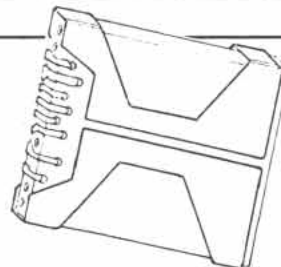
Now, get the sort of performance you once could only see on TV. This cyberleg package links directly to the hips, replacing weak muscles with unbreakable myomar plus spine reinforcement. MA is increased to 16, while leaps can be made up to 10 meters! Pairs only.



BOOSTMASTER

\$650 HC=1D6/2

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CYBERWARRIOR

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guards, anti-infiltration systems, access control, automated weapons systems and so on. Information security involves protecting computer information and computer managed transactions. It is normally entirely computer based, and consists of early warning systems, coded access, and intrusion countermeasures such as legitimate and black programs. This is usually monitored and overseen by net-runners and non-interfaced operatives.

The key to the entire security system of the modern corporation lies in the computerized information security division. Once you've gained control of a corp's computers, you've gained control of everything: finances, records, proprietary information, and command of property security. It is this computer control of site security which can be the attacking solo's boon, and the defender's curse, or vice versa, if you're clever!

What this means, is that solos should always treat their netrunner friends with the utmost respect, because ultimately it's their help which will keep you from getting killed. It's difficult to just charge in, guns blazing, these days. Any solo with infiltration experience will tell you how much easier it is to penetrate an installation once a friendly netrunner has access to the on-site computer system. This is the very reason why modern computer systems are so difficult and deadly to gain unauthorized access to. They are the nerve center of the modern corporation. There is a twofold lesson inherent in this, depending on whether you're offense or defense. Only by knowing both angles will you be an effective solo when it comes to dealing with corporate security. Incidentally, when I speak of offense in this article, I mean physical infiltration or attack by a solo, or team of solos against a pro-



The State of Corporate Security: Penetration and Defense.

By Solo of Fortune
Security Specialist
Kenzaburo Watanabe

Corporate security is one of the most important topics in the world today. It is also one of the biggest businesses. Witness the rise of the Arasaka Corp., whose entire, vast conglomerate is built on the foundation of the world's most successful corporate security division. But what bearing does modern corporate security have on solos? Plenty, when we consider the jobs of many

solos entail the augmentation or penetration of it. Thus, it benefits all solos to be aware of the state of modern corporate security.

There are two types of corporate security: property and information. Property security is responsible for protecting buildings, money, personnel and tangible resources. It usually encompasses human

tected site. Since purely information-level penetration of a corporate security system is the realm of the netrunner, and not the solo, we will not cover that.

The lessons are as follows:

First: If you're overseeing site security in a sensitive area, keep a close watch on your computer. It will frequently be the initial site of invasion. At the first sign of suspicious activity, get a netrunner on line. Don't trust the computer's own defenses; they may have already fallen. A human netrunner is always your best line of defense against another netrunner. Once you've confirmed intrusion, beef up your manpower security and go on alert. It may just be a computer incursion, but it may also be the precursor to a physical attack. Also, if an assault commences, maintain direct contact with your security forces, as computer transmitted directives might be intercepted or altered.

Now the flip side for an attacking solo or team of solos. Note one: if possible, always have a netrunner on-line or standing by. With modern corporate security so computerized, you must work from the inside out to attain maximum efficiency and effectiveness. Note two: if your netrunner is sussed, *they will be expecting you!* I know of more solos who've gotten killed in corporate incursions because their netrunner was detected, and yet they went right on in like nothing had happened. Naturally, they were all mowed down as soon as they were inside the compound. If you can't adapt your tactics, better no netrunner at all than a failed netrun.

Now that I've put forth these two strategies, offensive and defensive, it's up to the inventive solos out there to figure out how to anticipate and defuse them. Don't operate under the assumption that blindly

following what I've said is the key to success. Any good attacker or defender will be able to anticipate textbook defenses or offenses based along the lines I have illustrated. You have to dare to be different. Attackers must learn to undermine computerized defense systems and the intelligent defender's inherent mistrust of them. Defenders must learn to override the computer in times of crisis, falling back on purely physical security methods.

I know of more solos who've gotten killed in corporate incursions because their netrunner was detected, yet they went right on in...

For offense, clever strategy twists are such things as baiting the defense. Prior to the attack, have a netrunner tweak the target's computer system a few times over the course of several hours or days. After it's put down to a glitch, or harmless hacking, you may get a second chance if your netrunner is detected during the actual assault infiltration (Its a "cry wolf" tactic). Alternatively, don't have the netrunner go in at all until the initial assault is underway, and defending forces have taken some damage. Once an attack is under way, it's too late for pre-emptive defensive countermeasures, and your netrunner can roam at will without needing to worry about the repercussions of detection. You will, however, give up some of the tactical advantage in having your netrunner go first. It is up to the team commander to decide

if the situation merits the sacrifice.

Defensive twists include relying more on "primitive" methods. Put out more foot patrols. Use human instead of computer eyes to monitor sensitive areas. Have a command structure and communications net which can operate independently of the site computer. Be able to disable computer controlled defense systems in case of netrunner penetration. There are few things worse than having your own guns turned against you. If your computer has been harmlessly infiltrated a number of times in a short period, *don't get complacent!* Treat every incident as if it's known to be the precursor to an attack.

All of this information can be a little difficult to digest unless you have a framework or context within which to visualize the concepts that I've illustrated. For those of you who may be unfamiliar with what an actual corporate security layout is like, I've blocked out the breakdown of a typical site security arrangement. Several years ago, I was contracted as a consultant to the Arasaka Corporation. I worked on the upgrade of their Los Angeles office's security system. That system is representative of what you can expect from many modern corporations in the way of tough site security, and so, serves as my model. This will be useful to those planning incursions, and those designing security systems.

Arasaka L.A. is a sixty-story building, and as a result, employs a correspondingly high number of human guards and automated devices. At any given time, there are two-hundred guards on duty, armed with pistols, submachine guns or shotguns. The guards are ranked military style so as to retain cohesiveness in battle. Fifty of these are stationed in groups of two or more

at certain places, such as the loading docks, entrances to the building and restricted areas. One hundred of the troops walk on patrols consisting of one to five men. Of these, half are assigned to pre-set patrol routes which take no longer than ten minutes to complete. Sensitive areas may have a patrol route as short as two minutes or less. The other half are free roamers, who patrol randomly and may be summoned instantly to any site where they are deemed necessary. External patrols may be on foot or in vehicles. The remaining fifty troops are on call in ready areas should they be needed. These troops have instant access to personal armor and heavy weapons and are generally used only in emergencies. The individual guards are rotated between different types of duty every week.

All guards, whether stationed or patrolling, are equipped with headset radios and computer cardkeys which report their position if used at a door, computer terminal, or security station. Position and status reports from radios or cards are required every ten minutes from stationary and free-roaming guards, and at regular points not further than five minutes apart along patrol routes. In addition, all Arasaka guards have an implanted bi-monitor which immediately reports any unusual body conditions or trauma to the central computer. This can serve as early warning if a team of guards is ambushed.

All guard movement is monitored and controlled by computers with human overseers. The computer tracks guard movement by position reports and security cameras. Arasaka protected buildings have cameras in all major rooms and corridors, and at all major hallway intersections. Only cameras in areas of high security, suspicious activity, and/or immediate combat are con-

stantly monitored by people. All Arasaka security cameras can image infrared, and the computers are programmed to detect combat heat signatures.

The computer is also responsible for the discharge of automated defense and detection systems. These systems can be over-ridden or manually activated by human operators. External detection and defense systems on the site grounds are usually laid out as such: first, an electrified perimeter fence with detectors and cameras. Next comes a lawn overlying a series of computer monitored pressure plates. These plates will report any object or person on the lawns. If the object is computer or camera-verified as hostile, the plates can be armed to discharge explosives, various gasses, smoke and/or to enable robotic guns. Any indus-

If you can deal with Arasaka, you can deal with anything...

trialized or obstacle filled area, such as a tree-line, will also be monitored with electronic eyes and listening devices. Radar and computer controlled anti-aircraft guns are emplaced on the roof for defense against airborne attack.

Interior layout includes computer and remote control of doors and elevators, cameras, pressure plates and electronic eyes. Extensive detection systems operate only in large corridors, entranceways and sensitive areas. Except in these areas and during attacks, interior weapons systems are usually disabled, but detectors always function under computer supervision. The computer decides what may be worthy of

human attention. Interior weapons systems are usually electricity or gas based to minimize property damage. Some robotic guns may be used.

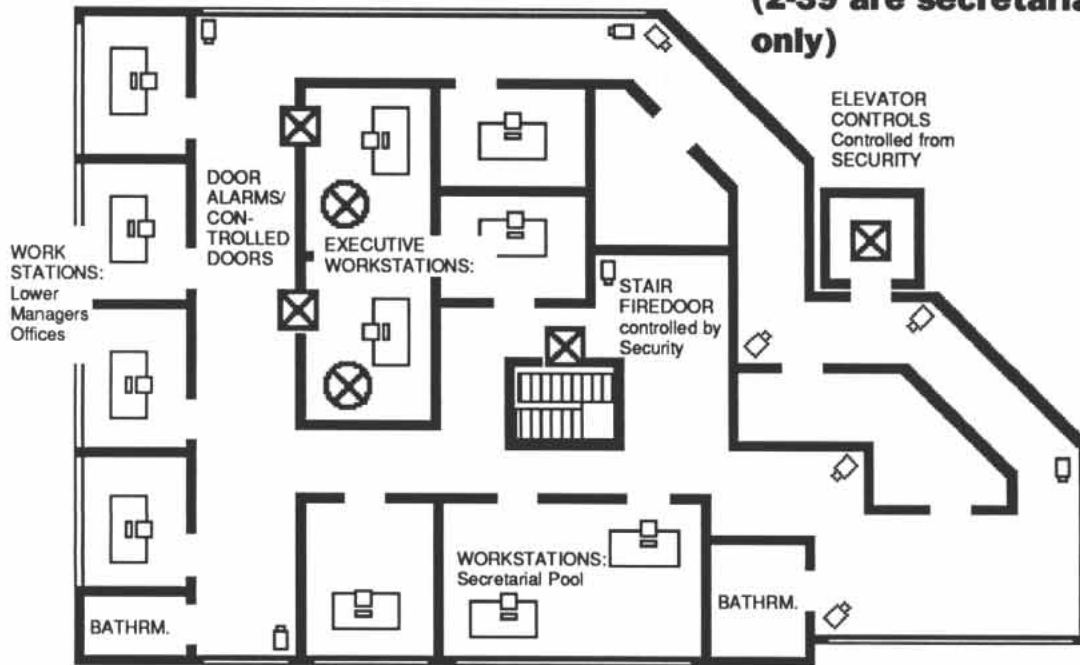
The computer itself and its operators are well ensconced in a secure armored area (encompassing several floors), deep in the heart of the building. Access to the computer's control, security and data systems is well protected by several layers of legitimate and "black" defense programs. Arasaka is a prime user of illegal black programs, employing several extremely nasty ones, many potentially fatal to intruding netridders. Once control of the site computer is gained, however, an Arasaka facility becomes much easier to penetrate. Of course, your team netrider may become somewhat overworked, and consequently sloppy. This can cause problems, as Arasaka also frequently has a human netrider on line in order to provide extra defense against incursion. Wisely, they do not place sole trust in their computer.

This summarizes a typical Arasaka layout. I would suggest that as a security based company, Arasaka's measures exceed those of most, if not all, other corporations. Of course, once you can deal with Arasaka, you can deal with anything.

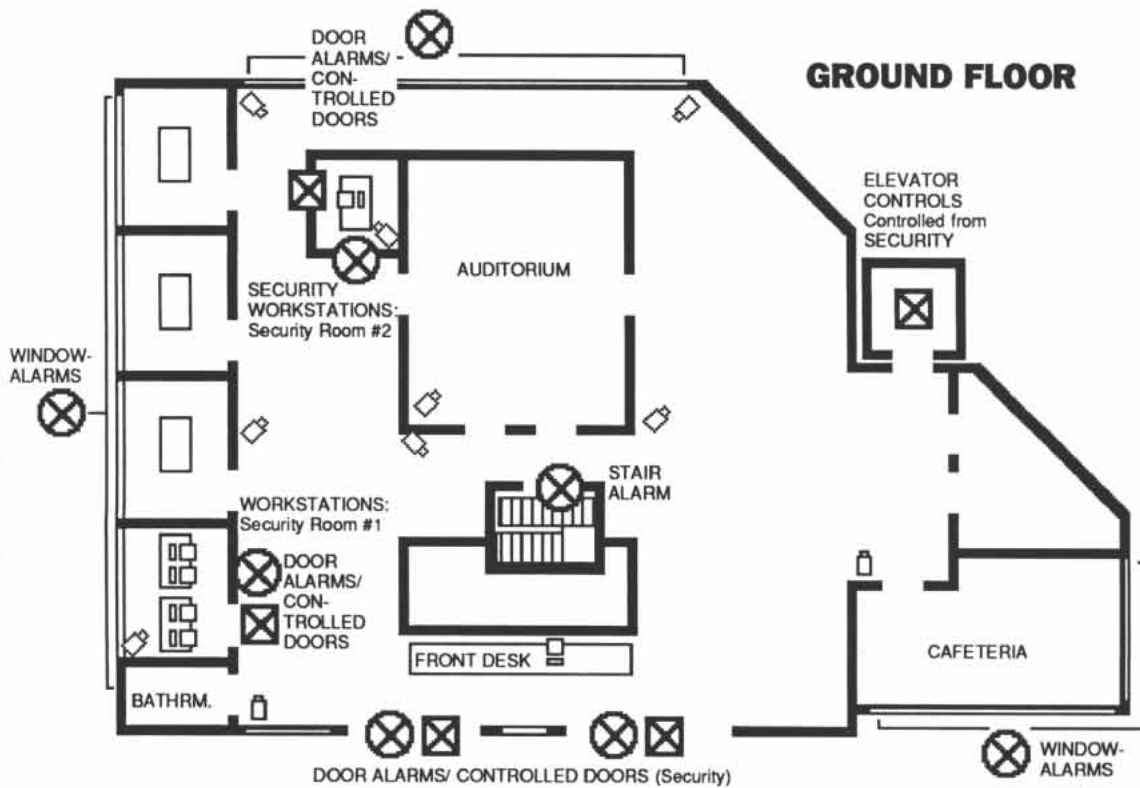
I have only scratched the surface of an immense body of modern strategy and tactics, and from the difficult viewpoint of both sides. It's up to you, as the solos responsible for maintaining or circumventing corporate security, to take the limited information that I've offered in this article and add to, improve and improve upon it. Good luck, and here's hoping the guy you're up against hasn't read this article!

CORPORATE SECURITY LAYOUT

**FLOORS 40 thru 60
(2-39 are secretarial only)**



GROUND FLOOR



BUBBA AND J.T. TEST THE STERNMEYER M-95A2

Plus: The Fabrica M2012 and the Budgetarms C-41



It has been said that the U.S. Army's personal weapons have gone downhill since the M-1 Garand was phased out. The M-14 was a heavy, stopgap measure that, while accurate, was costly to manufacture. The M-16 was a dangerous toy. The M-16A1 and A2 were small steps on the way to turning the toy into a real weapon. The M-95 was developed after the Special Forces reported favorably on the performance of the Heckler & Koch G-11. But Special Forces should never be confused with the rank and file. Now weapons makers from around the world have answered the call for a new personal weapon.

Not that the M-95 was a bad weapon, but it did have certain drawbacks in its design. It began as a well researched copy of the G-11 system, and royalties were paid to the original patent holders, Heckler & Koch. However the G-11 was engineered for a war in a temperate climate, specifically for the defense of western Europe. When the United States became involved in the unpleasantness south of the border, many of the theaters of operation were jungle environments. The shortcomings of the sealed, watertight casing of the G-11 and M-95 became rapidly apparent. The humid air of the jungle would

condense on the metal parts inside the case at night. Only daily airing out and a thorough cleaning would prevent the action from turning into a bright orange armorer's nightmare within a month. And in a tactical situation, weapons care is uncertain.

The M-95A1 was a stopgap in the best army tradition. The casing was even more sealed (well enough to float) and the barrel bushing was fitted to such close tolerances that fieldstripping was a royal pain. A silicone drying agent similar to the ones found packed with new camera equipment was taped to the in-



At the Range

side of the casing, above the action. After 18 months, a better thought out measure was introduced with the production of the M-95A2. Field stripping was much easier, and a ceramic coating on the barrel, similar to shuttle tiles, was introduced to manage heat build up and reduce the IR signature. What wasn't hardchromed was stainless steel, and the silicone bag was retained. The M-95A2 wasn't a bad weapon, so the announcement of a weapons trial by the Army was only a small surprise.

Soon after it was announced, our offices received a call from two of the manufacturers participating, inquiring if we'd be interested in the chance to test their candidates. Having previously scheduled a trip to our private range to test the C41 pistol, we jumped at the chance.

The weapons received were the Sternmeyer CG-13, basically a re-engineered M-95A2 with the special Sternmeyer touch; The Fabrica Militar de Argentina M2012, an En-

field-like bullpup; and the Budgetarms C-41 pistol. To test the weapons, we brought up our usual assortment of targets: a watermelon to test organic damage, an old army PASGT vest to test penetration, an NRA 100m Centerfire rifle target to check accuracy, and an IPSC silhouette to test the handling capability in burst and full auto fire.

We arrived at Anderson Quarry early in the morning, after our customary breakfast at Mosely's Diner, and began setting up the targets. We loaded the magazines and started our tests.

STERNMEYER CG-13

The Sternmeyer weapon is a light weapon, weighing in at six pounds (2.8 kilos) empty, but that weight rises by two pounds when fully loaded. It holds 90 rounds of 5.56x30mm caseless in its integral magazine. This is standard for the G-11 format. The ammo is stored in a thin plastic box with a pulltab. To reload, one rips the top off of the box

and feeds the ammo in nose down. Then the box is discarded. The CG-13 has a very comfortable heft and point, and it was demonstrated on numerous occasions that the M-95 family can put out a horrendous volume of fire in trained hands.

The fixed plastic scope mount on the M-95 series has been replaced with an older style dovetail rail. The scope mounting rings are sturdy, parkerized alloy, and the scope barrel is made of a thick aluminum that is more than adequate to fulfill its secondary role as a carry handle. The mounting system is adaptable enough to mount a wide variety of military and commercial sighting devices. While the mounting may be conventional, the adjustment is not. Instead of the standard side knobs or set screws in the base, the Sternmeyer scope is adjusted by two stainless steel, ratchet screw heads, flush mounted on the objective mount ring. 1 click moves the point of aim 1cm at 100 meters. The eyepiece ring holds the rear of the scope in a yoke arrangement, allowing no



Above: Tight 3 round bursts

lateral or rotational movement. This arrangement *looks* like it can take a lot of punishment. Several different powers of optical scopes can be fitted to these rings, but others can be purchased so as to mount particular specialized sighting systems. This particular CG-13 sported a x4 power scope, a type used for hunting or sniping, so the accuracy results should be regarded with this in mind.

The rifle came sighted in for 150 meters, and Bubba fired two test shots at the N.R.A. targets. Bubba is chipped and wired, so his performance should be average for elite cybersoldiers. He got half inch groups (all in the 10 ring) at 150 meters, firing five rounds per target at three targets, in semiautomatic mode (in 8 seconds!). Performance like that is a sobering thing to see. Bubba is also not the most complimentary of folks, but he must have been somewhat impressed with the

rifle as he was heard to say, "s'okay, I guess". I liked the piece, managing 1 inch groups offhand, and rivalling Bubba's half inch groups while bench rested. It's pleasant to shoot, the recoil is only a slight nudge. Since the barrel is on line with the buttstock, there's no muzzle climb. In full auto mode, the recoil was sufficient to deliver an urgent push, but J.T. was able to make a Zorro "Z" with a little effort. However, emptying the magazine will cause the casing to smoke despite the barrel's ceramic cladding. The weapon was not meant for the squad automatic role. Bursts were quite manageable, the accuracy suffering only minimally (it tended to walk randomly around the target instead of moving in a specific direction). The rate of fire is quite high, and the bursts sound like one long report. The rate of fire is listed in the specs as being 900 rounds per minute.

In the target tests the rifle performed within the expectations of the 5.56x30mm caseless round, but Sternmeyer is planning simultaneous release of its new Composition "R" rounds with the introduction of this rifle (see sidebar). The watermelon sported a 4 inch wide exit wound when using standard military ball, which I would call respectable, but the burst mode ate the watermelon away in a messy spectacle. Okay, so it was easy to fire and aim, but was it easy to clean?

Like the M-95A2 it was designed to replace, the CG-13's interiors are hardchromed or stainless steel. Contrary to custom, the barrel is a proprietary alloy and chromed in the bore. I have recognized the value of chrome lined barrels since owning a 7.7mm Japanese war trophy rifle that I had as a boy. Chrome lined barrels can get by with less maintenance than stainless. With the M-95 family the action and receiver were removed from the rear, leaving the barrel to be cleaned in place. On the Sternmeyer weapon, the action is removed after the barrel is removed. It is removed using a special "T" wrench that is stored in the buttstock. Pressing in and giving it a one-third turn clockwise disengages the barrel from the receiver, and it can be removed easily for inspection. From the rear, a catch inside was slid forward, disengaging the trigger group, which is slid forward and off the casing. Due to the heat build up, dry lubricants were used whenever possible and many bearing surfaces were teflon coated. The action, while looking like a shiny Chinese puzzle, is also easily disassembled for cleaning. Bubba almost cracked a smile cleaning it.

The main selling point of this rifle is its price. \$695.00 list for a reliable weapon, manufactured by machines is quite reasonable. It's as

SOLO OF FORTUNE, MAY, 2013

cheap, or cheaper than other weapons of its type. An M95-A2 on the civilian market lists for \$750.00. It takes the standard 5.56x30mm caseless and Sternmeyer is planning simultaneous release of new "Composition R" rounds, which we tried out (see sidebar). All in all, a nice package.

FABRICA DE ARMES DE ARGENTINA M-2012

The M-2012, despite its model number, is a nostalgic look back to the way guns used to be made. The M-2012 is a bullpup configured battle

rifle, firing a 6.5x45mm caseless round; its only concessions to modernity. It is constructed of machined steel parts, sheet steel stampings, and plastic furniture, harkening back to the designs of the late 50's—early 60's. Not only is the construction of the weapon somewhat archaic, but a lot of the subassemblies have been derived from other designs. To look at it, one is strongly reminded of its Enfield lineage, the internal workings owe something to the basic Kalashnikov designs, but the gas piston is a short stroke like an M-1 carbine, or an M-14. The designers chose a nice set of features that

maximize comfort, reliability, and cleanliness, with a fit and finish nearly up to Swiss standards.

The weapon weighs 3.7 kilos empty, and a full magazine only adds 1.2 kilos for a sturdy box holding 30 rounds. This weapon is chambered for a proprietary Argentine cartridge, the 6.5x45mm [use stats for the 7.62 Sov.] caseless though the weapon is easily remanufactured for 7.62x39 Soviet, 7.62 NATO, or 7.5 French short. Adaptability may be a selling point for this rifle.

(Cont. pg. 42)

CASELESS AMMUNITION: A SPECIAL REPORT

Caseless ammunition seems to have achieved legitimacy. Once considered a technical curiosity, it has now achieved the status of "standard military ammunition". It takes more production to make a brass casing than it does to make a ball point pen. Production being money spent, the militaries of several nations have adopted the cost-cutting measure of caseless alternatives. Without the brass, a significant amount of weight is saved, allowing the soldier to carry more ammunition. A promotional poster put out by the old Heckler & Koch company compared what 7.5 kilos would get you. A HK G3 rifle and sixty rounds of 7.62 NATO ammunition weighed 7.5 kilos. An M-16A1 and one hundred and fifty rounds of 5.56NATO weighed 7.5 kilos. HK's (then) new G-11 with five hundred rounds of 4.5mm caseless weighed 7.5 kilos. It is clear which is the better price per pound. With the adoption by the U.S. of the M-95, a clear signal was sent around the world that caseless ammunition had been recognized. This does not mean that "cased" ammunition is automatically obsolete. There are a couple of problems that caseless

and cased ammunition do not share.

First, since there is no casing, the propellant is exposed to the elements. The oxidizers in the propellant do not combine with the propellant until combustion. However, the oxygen in the atmosphere is free to do so. The rounds are then said to be stale. This can be checked by looking for whitish or light grey deposits on the outside of the round. A stale round will most likely fire, but the more stale it is, the higher the percentage of inert substances will be left behind when the bullet leaves, causing fouling and a baked on build up in the chamber. With less propellant available, the performance of the round is also degraded.

A related problem is moisture. While not combining with the propellant, it may attack the binder on some brands of ammo, causing it to become somewhat chalky and crumbly. A remedy for this has been to coat the outside of the round with a thin phenolic laquer that is consumed by combustion (and may aid it).

Many of these problems can be avoided by using fresh ammunition

from factory sealed containers, and keeping it dry after it is broken out. The manufacturers are constantly working on improvements. Sternmeyer sent along two boxes of its "Composition R" ammunition for us to try. It is reported to be waterproof, and has the aforementioned laquer coating. It performed well as can be seen by the ballistic report. But we also tested the CG-13 with old "stale" ammunition. It fed and fired without difficulty, despite a potential for fouling in this ammo. This spoke well of the designers of the weapon.

Don't throw away your old guns yet, though. Cased ammunition has the advantage of being able to be stored for long periods. The oldest ammunition I have ever fired was minted in 1915, and I regularly run across large cased lots of ammo from the 40's, 50's, and 60's. Weapons using cased ammo have an installed user base of hundreds of millions if not billions, so cased ammo will be with us until the end of the next century at least. Caseless ammo, though, is the wave of the future, or at least a strongly viable alternative. ■



Fabrica De Armes M-2012

RIF 2 N P 6.5 caseless (7.62Sov) 30 4VR
 Argentine assault rifle, based on bullpup designs of late 1990s.
 Good reliability, easily rechambered for other common round
 types. Squad Auto has a RIF of 30. \$1400

The sighting systems are standard, if expensive, military. In this specimen's case, it sported a Knopfler & König 2x power laser reflex scope. This system works by painting a target with the laser, and then using microprocessor-controlled liquid lenses, determines the range, and the proper elevation to hit a target at that range by moving the aimpoint, causing the shooter to bring it to the correct angle. Some scopes of this type can be fussy and fragile, but we had no problems with this particular unit. A cyberoptical triangulation system would be even more effective, but at \$5000 to \$10,000 a piece, only the most trusted or financially solvent would have these. The unit on the gun goes for \$1200 and is quite adequate for most uses.

J.T., having some experience with the Enfield style, was the first to try out this Argentine product. He had a

slight problem getting the first couple of rounds to feed, but it was a brand new, unfired piece, and needed a little breaking in. After that initial stickiness, we encountered no other problems with the weapon. J.T. was able to get 2cm groups at 150 meters offhand, just taking his time. He said he liked the scope. Bubba emptied the magazine, with no rounds outside the 10 ring (about 4cm), but made a cryptic negative comment about the shouldering spot on the buttstock. I found the weapon to have a nice balance and point. Since most of the weight was to the rear of the pistol grip, my shoulder supported most of it. I felt that I could have held the ready position all day. Recoil was a different matter.

The cartridge, nicknamed "El Lapiz" due to its dimensions, is a very accurate and powerful round.

But its power, when combined with the light weight of the rifle, gives a somewhat unpleasant kick. During the days of the last fighting south of the border, most of the local troops used a dizzying array of longarms chambered for 7.62NATO. The felt recoil reminded me strongly of the short barreled, paratrooper stocked lightweights that the indigs favored most. There must have been some cultural connection between Cojones and recoil, although the recoil was nothing compared to that of the afore-mentioned Japanese war trophy, it was mildly unpleasant. The muzzle flash was quite pronounced, even in daylight, prompting me to believe that the Lapiz round was developed for a longer barrel.

The rifle had no full auto mode, only single shot or a four round burst could be selected. Supposedly there



is a squad automatic version, that comes with a 100rnd. drum and a 31 inch ceramic-clad H barrel, so this would explain some of the design considerations of the weapon. The Lapiz round would be very suitable for a squad automatic.

The watermelon was devastated, but only two rounds landed on target, the other two went wild over the target into the backstop. The burst feature seemed only effective at ranges of 5 to 20 meters. The IPSC sillhouettes show the results. The round puts out a lot of damage, and the rifle will guide it accurately. It showed very good penetrating power versus the vest, and I have no complaints about its performance. In the semiauto mode it would almost qualify for the sniper's role, while the weapon's short overall length and burst capability would

make it well suited for house to house actions. Again, adaptability is a strong point.

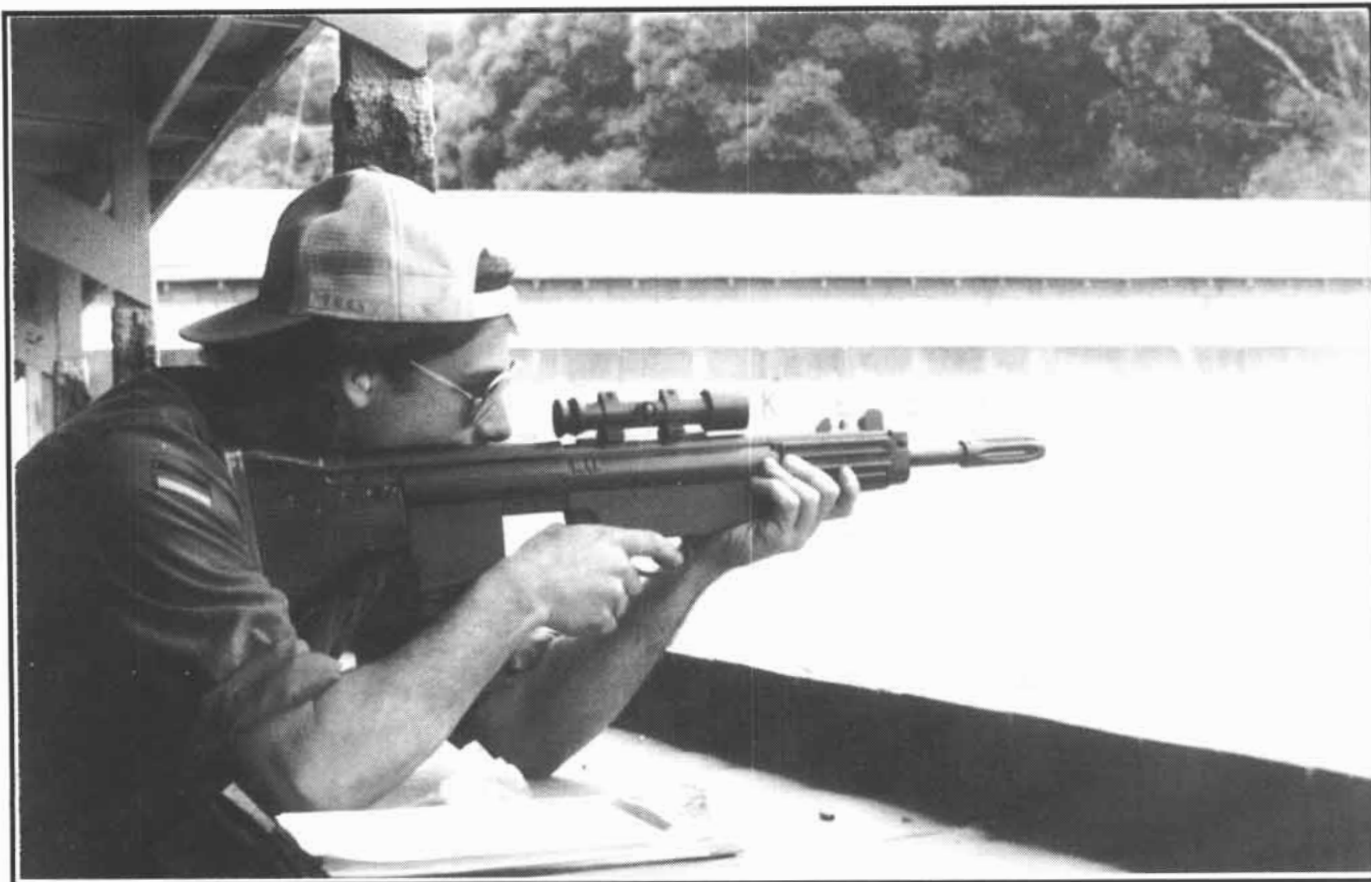
Cleaning is straightforward; most of the parts are hardchromed. This version has a fluted barrel for heat dissipation. First, the top cover is removed, then the buttstock is slid off the rear, by depressing two studs on the opposite sides, and removed. The bolt and bolt carrier assembly are removed from the rear of the rails just by sliding it off the rear. Since the action is initiated by a disconnected piston, very little propellant gas finds its way into the receiver. Field stripping is easy, and the only tool needed is a flat steel combo-key that is stored in the buttstock, or on a keychain. There are six subassemblies, each accessible, removable and easy to clean.

\$1400 for a weapon of this type may

be a little steep, even given its quality, but if the squad automatic version is less than \$200.00 more, it would make a fine addition to any fireteam. The weapon can be ordered direct from F.M.A. or through any number of import firms. It gets a recommendation from us.

BUDGET ARMS C-41 SEMI-AUTOMATIC

This was the pistol we were up here to test, originally. This is a 1 kilo, ten shot, semiauto pistol. It fires a 10 x 25mm caseless (termed .41 caseless in the 'states). It has roughly the outline of the old Government .45, but the square triggerguard, the knobs below the sights, and the lack of an ejection port identify this as a C-41. The finish is a fine glossy blue/black, rather like the finish on old Smith and Wesson pistols, shiny enough to use as a mirror. Budge-



tarms really puts a lot of work into their fit and finish. The weapon has a good weight, heft and balance. The cycling is a cam delayed blowback action with a very positive lock up.

The sighting system is why Bubba was here. It was a Nikon Cyberoptic Triangulation unit (or COT). Bubba was very curious about the rig, so he was first up. Wired courtesy of Uncle Sugar's Green Machine, Bubba has a Magnetic Induction type interface. They look like a pair of metal dots on the inside of his wrist. The disadvantage of this type is a lower communication rate than a direct connect interface, so they are not suitable for aircraft or cyber-modems, not that this bothered Bubba any. The advantages of this type are that they keep up the skin's integrity against infection, they are waterproof, and with the right chipware, they can be used as a field

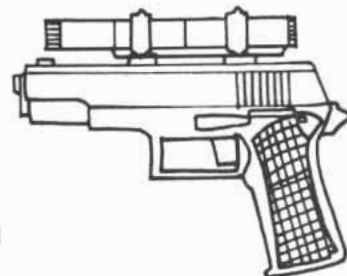
expedient phone tap. The pistol came rigged for that type of plug so Bubba just strapped it on.

He spent about a minute adjusting the wristband until the contacts lined up with his "spots". Accord-

forms a pattern-matching routine between what the sight's optical sees, and what the shooter's cybereye sees. For accurate long range shooting, there is a function that will open a "window" in the lower half of the reticle, and feed an image

BUDGETARMS C-41

P 1 J E .41 caseless (9mm) 10 3 VR
Ten shot, high caliber pistol with good reliability.



ing to Bubba, he "sees" a thin cyan sight reticle that follows where he points the gun. Contrary to normal shooting practice, the COT benefits from being away from the eye. The microprocessor in the scope per-

forms a pattern-matching routine between what the sight's optical sees, and what the shooter's cybereye sees. For accurate long range shooting, there is a function that will open a "window" in the lower half of the reticle, and feed an image from the scope into it, allowing the shooter to match upper and lower halves of his target for very good accuracy. The scope also supports cybereye zoom routines, matching its rate of zoom. The window can be



Above: Bubba's "spots"

expanded to fill the reticule. This function can allow you to fire around corners, but only with the accuracy of iron sights; less if the scope is misaligned. Still I would prefer losing a hand to a head. Hands can be replaced.

So how did it perform? Well, Bubba fired at a sheet of six 8 inch NRA targets from 25 meters. He swept the pistol back and forth, and shot all six targets in as many seconds. While not all bullseyes, they were sufficiently close to the center. Against an IPSC target at 25 meters, they're all in the 10 ring. Very accurate, as expected. The penetration of the vest was poor, but it's just a pistol. The watermelon came apart nicely. Bubba said this was all nice and well, but targets are no challenge for a COT-rigged Firearm. He wanted to try a different test.

The following was not planned by

us, or the editorial staff of *Solo*. It was Bubba's idea alone. Anyone who objects can take it up with him. Personally. He would enjoy the practice. He brought from his van a large airline animal carrier. Inside was some feral-looking canine, a coyote or some such. We all got kind of quiet when he told us what he wanted to do. He told us the best way to test a COT unit, or any cyberscope, was to use it against a moving, heat generating target. He asked one of us to release the animal. J.T. did, but it needed a little encouragement before it bolted from the carrier. Bubba let it run for about 30 meters before he popped off two rounds. The critter tumbled to a stop in the bush. Bubba then trotted over to the body and took some notes (see sidebar "Bubba's Notes").

The weapon performed very well. We all tried the pistol, but without the enhancements that Bubba pos-

sessed, we couldn't enjoy the benefits of the weapon. I liked it. J.T. thought it was above average, but he prefers revolvers.

Its elliptical barrel made cleaning a breeze. The action is well engineered and simple, like all Budgetarms products. But, like all Budgetarms products, it's manufactured by machines. To disassemble the weapon, make sure the magazine is out. First the slide is drawn back. Second, both safeties are engaged. Third, one must rap the left hand with the rear of the slide to remove any chambered round. A visual inspection is difficult, but must be performed to insure there is no round in the gun. Otherwise, it follows basic Browning take down procedures, with some differences. Because of the compensation extension, removing the barrel bushing is an operation that must be performed twice. The recoil spring

is removed. Then the link pin is pushed out through the side, and the slide and barrel are slid off the front of the grip assembly. The barrel should drop out into your hands. This is all that needs to be done. Any further disassembly should be performed by a competent gunsmith.

The basic pistol is \$600.00, and a good deal for a computer manufactured handgun of this quality. The finish, as we said before, is superb. The Nikon COT costs only \$4000, and is well worth it if you can use it, and expect trouble on a daily basis. A pistol and COT, mated and checked can be ordered from Budgetarms. It is a good, if expensive system, especially if you're hunting coyotes.

UNSPEAKABLE TRASH

On this trip, J.T. brought up his collection of Polymer one-shots. It was a large cardboard box full of this cheap trash. J.T. confessed that it was a guilty pleasure of his to collect these things. Everything from "Fashion Gun" brand to plastic near look alikes of famous types. They were generally automatics, basically injection molded plastic over a metal frame (cast aluminum or inferior aluminum alloy) with few springs or moving parts. They cycled poorly as a rule, but there were one or two reliable ones in the box. How long those would remain reliable, with their actions permanently sealed in plastic, was a mystery. Trigger pull ranged from 2 to 5 pounds, with the "Magnum Lux" registering a whopping 8 pounds, and the "Surprising Stranger" having only a button to initiate an electrical detonation.

Most of the current crop were made for the teen collector market, the interior parts remaining the same year after year; the exterior changing sea-

sonally. Once upon a time, it was only the most respected arms companies that used plastic in the construction of their guns. Pistols such as the Glock 17, and the HK VP70Z contained large amounts of plastic, but were exemplary weapons. Then in the late 90's, Far East manufacturers tried to move in on the profitable arms trade spawned by the south of the border war and the various coups in Africa. Their AKM's were well recieved, but their plastic pistols with the brightly colored grips and inserts only generated mild interest at first, and that was due to the microscopic cost. Then Diego Martín Salazar was seen (a lot) with a Kang Tao type 97 stuffed in his belt. Pretty soon it was fashion. Anyone who wished to appear *más macho* stuffed one of these twenty dollar specials down their pants. They didn't remain twenty dollars for long.

Pretty soon these companies tried to outdo themselves in the decorative tastelessness department: shiny black pistols with white, or "Pearlite" dragons wrapped around the grip. Soon other designs were introduced in even more outré shapes: "Sci-fi" sidearms, fake flintlocks sold as "Pirate Gun", and decorative sculptures (like a serpentine monster that wraps around your hand, with the barrel protruding from the mouth). These, or poor copies of existing arms, are what you run across most of the time. The futuristic looking weapons are the most popular, but occasionally some offbeat design catches the public's fancy.

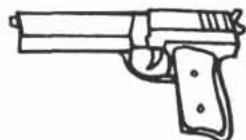
Internally, they consist of: a smooth-bore aircraft-grade stainless steel barrel, a sealed metal cylinder with the firing pin and spring within, and a metal frame in the shape of the grip with the hammerspring and trigger-group sealed in a stamped aluminum capsule from which only the hammer and trigger emerge,

screwed or spotwelded in place, with the lower receiver and slide molded around them in an injection molding process. The magazines are usually made from a hard, somewhat brittle polystyrene plastic, with a simple coil spring driving the follower. Usually the makers have the courtesy to mark on the exterior of the piece the type of ammunition it takes, but occasionally the round is totally inappropriate for the construction involved. I can just see some poor fool carrying a loaded "Dai Lung Magnum 357" when he's surprised by some enemies. He draws his weapon and fires. Then the fight ends because the slide broke off the grip and entered the fool's skull through his eye. Most are chambered for .22, .25ACP, .380, 9mm Parabellum, 9mmR, .38 Special, or 8.5mm Caseless. Just look on the slide to find out what it takes.

The aforementioned "Surprising Stranger" was made of a particularly tough plastic. It had very few metal parts and was styled strictly functionally. It looks like a four shot pepper box. It is one of the more dangerous weapons. To load it, one must obtain four 10mm caseless rounds, then pry the primers out of them with a knife (dangerous to do). Next, one must thumb the rounds into the muzzle of the gun, then seat them against the electrical spikes in the back of the chamber with a ramrod provided with the gun. A nine volt battery is then inserted into the grip. It is now ready for use. The basic wiring seems to be taken from a stun gun, and there isn't enough metal in it to trigger airport detectors. It is small and very concealable. As I said, a very dangerous weapon.

The "Fashion Gun 9" has a thirteen round magazine and as the name says, takes 9mm Parabellum. Emptying the magazine will cause the barrel shroud to melt and slough off

POLYMER ONE SHOTS



Dai Lung Magnum

P 1 J E .357 caseless 10 2 UR
 Automag Copy commonly used by cheap hoods. About \$60.



Espinoza One Shot

P 1 J E 50cal caseless 1 2 UR
 One shot, heavy caliber. Tends to explode or misfire (60% chance). \$75
 *PB&CL= 2D6+2, M&L=1D6+3, E=1D6+2



Fashion Gun 9

P 1 J E 9mm 13 2 UR
 Lightweight pistol, common to many of the Poser set. About \$40.



Surprising Stranger

P 1 J E 10mm caseless (use 9mm)
 4 2 UR
 Four shot, pepperbox design. About \$15.



Sci Fi Starrior 4

P 1 J E 9mm 12 2 UR
 Blaster copy from 20th century movie called Star Trek Wars. \$60



Kang Tao Type 97

P 1 J E 9mm 12 2 UR
 Famous 9mm Beretta copy. \$35.

like cheese off a hot, fresh pizza. At this point, the gun jams permanently. The plastic is truly inferior, and inappropriate for the job it was used for. You get what you pay for, as this only costs \$35.00 new.

The sights on these weapons are rudimentary at best, and non-existent on some. One would be hard pressed to hit a stationary target at 12 meters with one of these. These are some of the most inaccurate pieces of machinery ever to be mislabeled firearms. But it gets worse. When I was in Thailand a few years ago, I saw a wannabe Yakuza brandishing a \$15 mauve-colored handgun that looked like a robot's leg, and he had taped a \$7000 cyberscope to it. These were unbalanced, scary, people.

In the 1970's, many U.S. municipalities passed laws against a type of revolver known then as a 'Saturday Night Special'. Mostly it was a fictitious gun, but some these were un-

safe pistols made predominantly out of pot metal, smuggled in through Mexico. The apocryphal price for these was somewhere in the \$40.00 to \$80.00 U.S. range. In the late 1980's, there was an attempt by U.S. lawmakers to ban the sale of so called "Plastic Guns" citing that they were undetectable by the airport detectors of the time. This was false as the plastic used in the construction was dense enough for it to show up on X-ray machines, and the metal contained in the magazine and the barrel was enough for it to trigger detectors. Import restrictions were enacted, but even some police departments adopted these same guns for departmental use. But in the late 1990's during the heating up stages of the second conflict, a lot of the first generation polymer one-shots crossed the border and wound up in the hands of the San Diego and East L.A. Guerillas. The city councils of both municipalities didn't know how to deal with the flood of Asian imports,

because no gunstore sold (or admitted to selling) these weapons, and the only people found with them tended to be illegals. Some laws were enacted that dealt with the possession of these weapons as something like felony smuggling. However, most other cities have ignored the problem. Only California, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and the District of Columbia consider them to be a felony to possess. Other states consider it to be misdemeanor smuggling, and tax the offending party. Texas does nothing. The governor said that anyone using them got what they deserved.

These weapons often find their way into the country in shipments of toys and camera equipment. I don't think they should be legislated against, but I think good, common sense and a healthy dose of self-preservation should keep people from trusting their lives to these badly engineered and produced

More gems from J.T.'s Collection:



Teen Drem

P 1 J E 9mm 10 10 UR

Ten shot pistol with full auto capacity. Tends to melt under fire (60%). About \$36.



Federated Arms X-22

P 1 J E .22 10 10 R

Ten shot pistol with .22 caselessload. About \$25. Comes in 13 colors.



Federated Arms X-38

P 1 J E .38 10 10 R

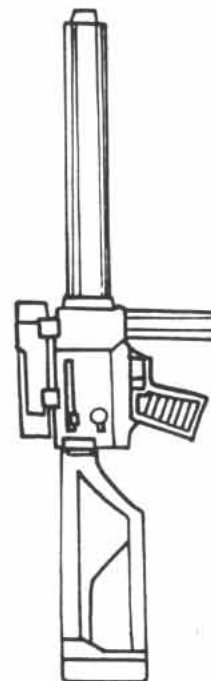
Inexpensive .38 caseless automatic. \$35



Federated Arms Impact

P 1 J E .22 10 10 VR

Ten shot, low caliber pistol with good reliability. \$60.



Federated Arms Tech-Assault

SMG 1 J E .22 10 10 UR

Thirty shot SMG with full auto capacity. May melt under full autofire (10%). \$160.

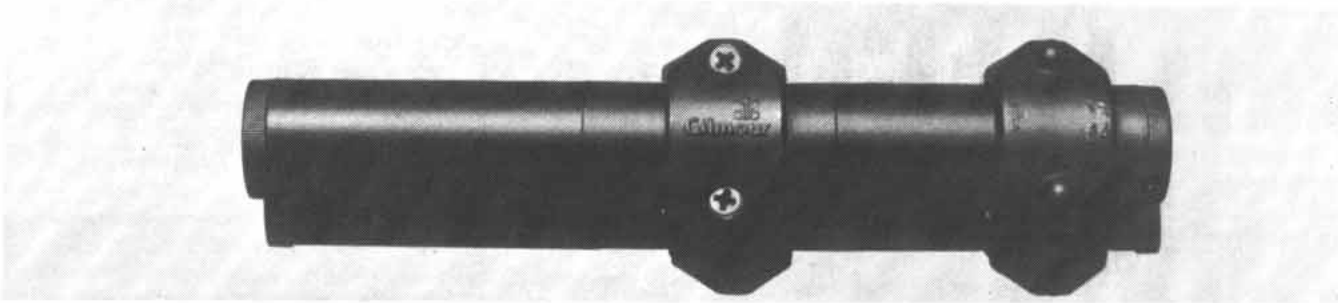
pieces of trash. I watch the trade of them with morbid amusement, J.T. even moreso than me. He doesn't shoot the things he collects. He just piles them in the box, looking like childrens' toys in a toy chest. Can somebody answer my question of why the manufacturers of the hammerless versions insist on putting an LCD time display on the back of the slide? The design ethics of these weapons I find strange and confusing, like velvet Elvis paintings.

To add insult to injury an American firm, Federated Arms, is entering this market. Their X-22 and X-38 pistols, while acceptable firearms, were not meant to have a dayglo pink and green zebra pattern all over them. It accentuates the toylike

image of these guns. However, given the strict product liability laws of this country, they cannot take the same shortcuts as their Asian counterparts, hence safer weapons. But with American companies entering the market, it will just add legitimacy to this product that violates all sense of taste and user safety. It's an unfortunate development.

Aside from the previous section, the trip was a success, as we now have a better appreciation of some of the competition involved in the trial. I don't know what the trial will determine, but it looks like some stiff competition. Next month, we'll test the Millitech offering (the M-95A3),

the Budgetarms AW-2, and possibly the Daiwoo M-470. This month I think that the laurels go to the Sternmeyer CG-13, for its ease of use and general idiot-proofing. I think that the M-2012 would make a great squad automatic. If FMA follows through, they'll have a certifiable hit on their hands. The C-41 is a fine handgun. There is nothing wrong with it that a more general sighting package wouldn't cure for me, but its performance with our resident chipped and wired expert convinces him that it's an excellent package. I am waiting for what the upcoming months will hold, if they're as good as this one.



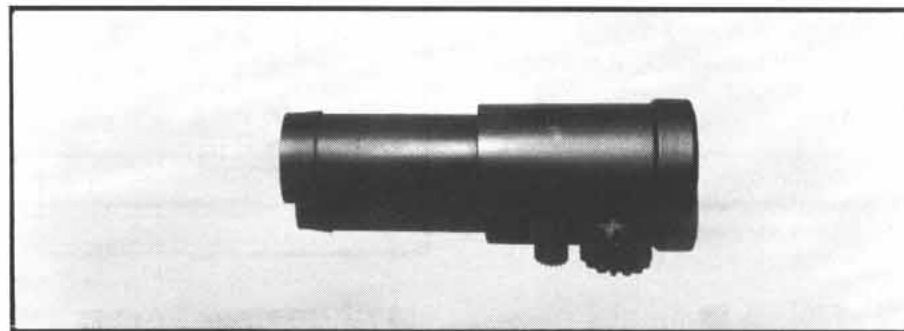
Above: The COT (\$4000 / Wt.6oz. / +3 to WA)

BUBBA'S SCOPE NOTES

This trip was originally for testing the Budgetarms C-41 pistol and the Nikon COT scope. I had agreed to test and review the package after talking with a Budgetarms rep I'd mentioned I was wired and he asked if I wanted to test it. I agreed, as I usually find Budgetarms products to be well made and reliable pieces of equipment. The C-41 pistol was no disappointment. The Nikon scope was something surprising and new.

tional pattern matching method, it can also do it by offering the user a split window, where he can match upper and lower halves of his target. On a simple mental command, the range figure is displayed below. The farther you hold the gun from your cybereye, the more accurate is your reading. The full windowing capability inside the reticule image was a very happy surprise.

This feature would allow the user to



Now obsolete: the Bushnell Interlock 553A (\$7000 / Wt.4oz. / +1 to WA)

For only \$4000.00, the Nikon scope is one of the cheapest of the Cyber-optic Triangulation units on the market. The older systems went from \$7000 to \$10,000 and offered less. Most COT systems will paint a reticle in your field of view. The more expensive ones will list range, or shots fired. Only the most expensive will do both. The Nikon COT only lists range, but it does it in a novel way.

Aside from doing it in the tradi-
SOLO OF FORTUNE, MAY, 2013

shoot around corners. It would only be as accurate as iron sights, but could still be effective, especially for law enforcement in need of a periscoping tool. Another function of this scope that Royce and J.T. didn't find out about until press time, was that I had drawn a bead on them several times without facing them. The reticle follows the gun to the edge of vision, where it stops, but the view through the window continued to pan with the gun. Effectively it provides you with an extra eye on the

top of the gun. Rear-view mirror anyone?

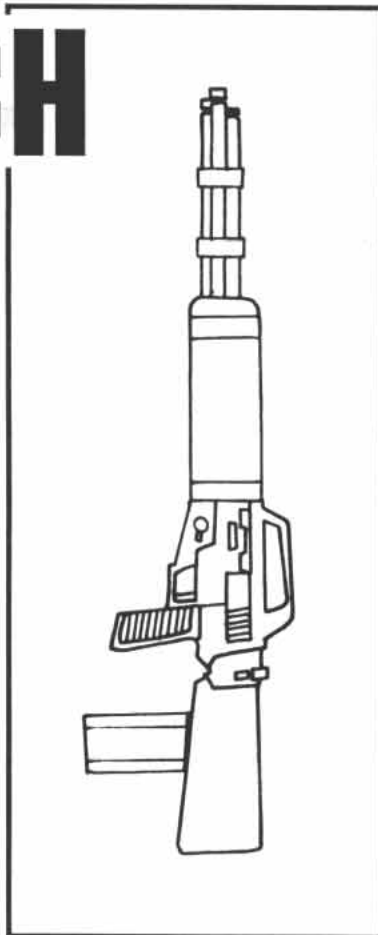
The static test were just warm ups for the coyote test. This is the only effective way to test a firefight system like the COT. I suppose one could mount one of these on a paintball gun, but the ballistics would probably throw the programming off, and paintballs move through the air so slowly. The sight performed well against the coyote; I saw no appreciable flutter or lag in the window image. I tracked the coyote through many of the zig zags along its path with no loss of true tracking, and then killed it at precisely 32.004 yards. I like accuracy like that.

The pistol itself performed well. The compensating extension virtually eliminated muzzle climb, but the recoil could still be described as "stiff". The piece was not designed for lightweights. The coyote received some impressive wounds from the hollowpoints I was using. There was sufficient penetration and collateral damage from the first round, that I didn't need to fire the second. The second round hit a vertebra and mushroomed greatly, sending bone fragments all over the soft tissues. I like this round; it should generate good first round stops. I recommend this package to the pros in the audience.

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High Power 15

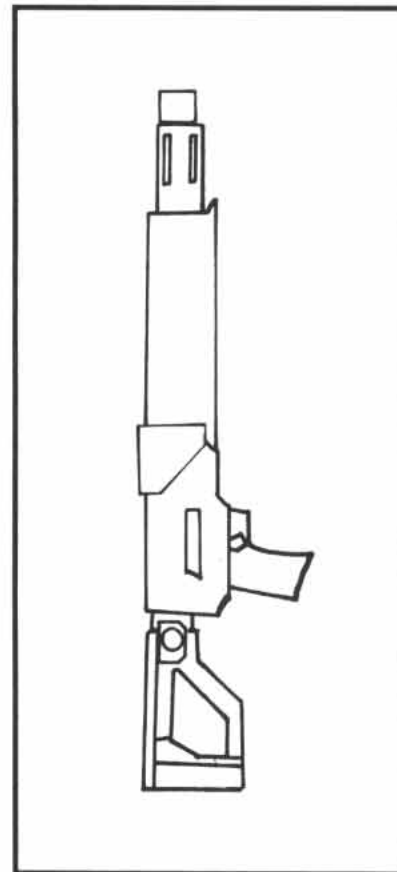
RIF 2 N E 9mm long caseless*
180 10 R

A three chambered, tri barrelled, high speed autocannon for personal use! Belt or drum fed alley sweeper has a firing rate of nearly 5,000 rounds per minute (cyclic). \$1600. * Add 1D6/2 to 9mm damage at all ranges.

Ninja

RIF 1 N E .22 30 30 VR

A highly reliable caseless design with no moving parts and an integral silencer. A fully plastic magazine and electrical firing pin makes this assault weapon incredibly quiet. Perfect for black operations! In grey, camouflage or black. \$650-700.

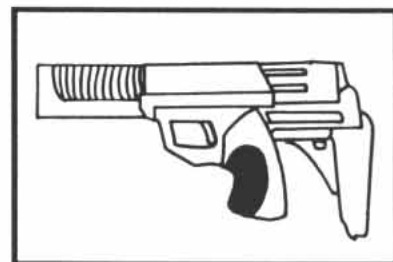


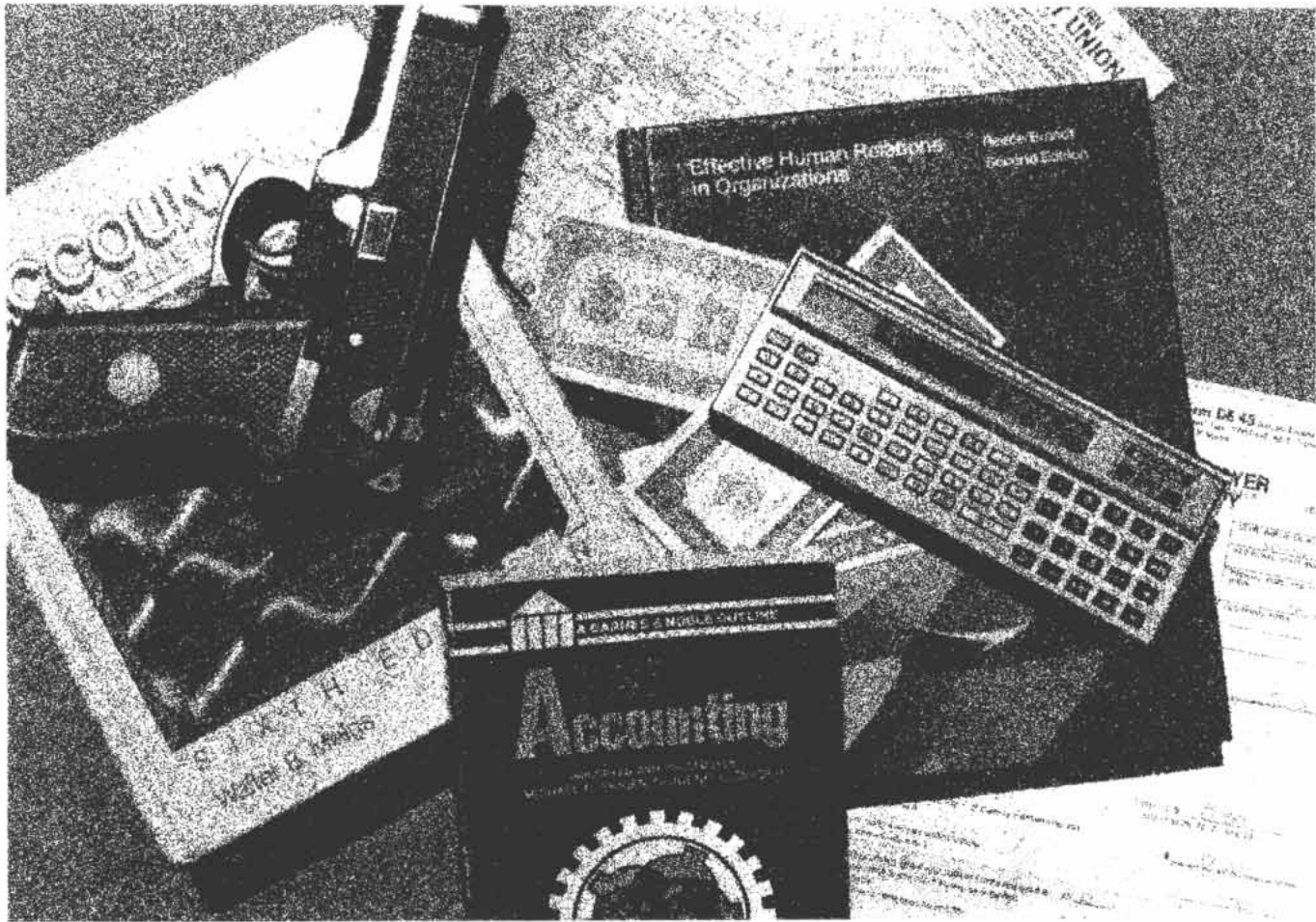
.477 Boomer Buster

R 1 N E .477* 4 2 VR

Now, a close in support weapon that can stop a cyberpsycho cold! Nearly an express rifle in design, with a folding arm brace for support! \$450.

*PB&CL= 5D6, M&L=3D6+4, E=2D6





THE SOLO HISTORY PART 4:

THE FIRST CORPORATE WAR

2004: The aging American transportation giant, Transworld Air, is staggering in its tracks. Persistent strikes from pilots, mechanics and attendants unions have brought its extended Pacific Rim flights to a stop. A bitter war between middle management and Transworld's controversial CEO, corporate rob-

ber baron Michael Victor Durant has resulted in endless boardroom proxy fights and interoffice sabotage. Only its lucrative East coast shuttle lines and SST-based Euro-runs remain intact, and even these are endangered as mismanagement and corruption tear Transworld apart.

In this grim scenario, the corporate vultures of the World Stock exchange can see easy pickings. Transworld has absorbed the intercoastal traffic of several huge American air-carriers, as well as control of two major U.S. airports, (Dulles in Washington D.C., and Kennedy in New York). With proper expansion, both sites can become critical to the deployment of the new suborbital shuttle, while the east coast shuttle services make "feeder" flights to the suborbital ports possible. As the powers of the megacorporations close in on the floundering trans-

first and most decisive of the corporate conflicts.

August, 2004: Transworld Air, the largest air carrier in the United States, is suffering a massive cash-flow crisis. Hamstrung by treacherous management and constant strikes, Transworld is preparing to file a Chapter 11 bankruptcy when a new factor enters the equation.

EuroBusiness Machines, the German-based computer giant, has been watching Transworld hungrily for several years prior to the

chute" offer to Michael Victor Durant of an additional 2.6 million Euro and a partial share in EBM stock.

The deal is almost assured to become reality, until a sudden, major development occurs. On September 25th, 2004, a combined block of shareholders, including members of the Pilot's and Mechanics unions, force a proxy battle at Transworld's Miami headquarters. By midnight, the surprise overthrow has removed M.V. Durant from the CEO position and caused a massive

AT A GLANCE



Multirole Computer & Electronics Mfg.

Main Office: Hamburg

Regional Offices: Berlin, Rome, Madrid

Major Shareholder: Dr. Rudolph Muller of Bremen, Germany (20.8%)

Troops: 7,254 **Covert Operatives:** 820

Equipment (as of 2004): 24 AV-4's, 18 AV-6 attack craft, 12 Osprey attack craft, four heavy cargo planes.

Allies: WeltGeschaft Bank, Drakon Fund, Militech (arms only), TTA Properties, Bronliegh Development, Mamoru-Nakimura LTD

AT A GLANCE



Space Transport & Orbital Facilities

Main Office: Nairobi, Kenya

Regional Offices: New York, Washington, Dallas

Major Shareholder: Antoine DuBois of Paris (15.2%)

Troops: 6,521 **Covert Operatives:** 335

Equipment (as of 2004): 10 AV-4's, 6 AV-6 attack craft, 4 Osprey attack craft, 9 heavy cargo planes, 18 Heremes II spaceplanes, access to Tycho Massdriver.

Allies: Transworld Air, ARC, Advanced Development Research, First Continental Bank, TechnoStations Inc., Xoma Corp, Militech (arms only), Applied Technisystems.

portation giant, a scenario is created that will inexorably lead to corporate war.

Corporate War. Although the term is constantly thrown about in the media, few people on the street really know what it means. Spanning continent-wide operations with millions of employees, a full scale corporate conflict is fought in boardrooms and stock exchanges as much as in battlefields and tactical operations. In this segment of SOLO OF FORTUNE'S ongoing history of the Solo profession, we explore the

crisis (in fact, some corporate historians suspect that EBM may have precipitated the crash of Transworld by calling Transworld's loans in several Euro-banks in which the computer firm holds control). Chief among EBM's goals is the leveraged buyout of Transworld, with an eventual break-up and sale of its assets. In September of 2004, EBM, through its intermediaries in the WeltGesellschaft Bank of Switzerland, makes an offer to Transworld of 126 million Eurodollars. This deal is sweetened by an under-the-table "golden para-

shakeup of Transworld's governing Board. Believing that the restructured company might survive, the new CEO refuses EBM's offer.

At this point, EBM begins an unfriendly takeover of Transworld's stock position, offering an increase of almost fifteen Euro a share over the current market value of Transworld stock. As investors rush for the gold, Transworld begins to flail wildly for a "white knight"; a rival corporation to counterbid EBM's offer and undermine the computer giant's move.

Enter Nairobi-based Orbital Air. At this point, Orbital Air (a splinter company originally formed from the five nation consortium which built the Kilomonjaro massdriver), has just secured an exclusive 8 billion Euro deal to buy eighteen Hermes II spaceplanes from the EuroSpace Agency. With investors from five of the most powerful nations in the EuroMarket on it's Board of Directors, Orbital Air can well afford to relieve Transworld's dilemma. In exchange, Transworld will transfer rights to it's key airport facilities in the U.S., as well as devoting a large part of it's feeder flights to servicing Orbital Air's spaceplane ports.



Scott Ruggels

The Orbital Air-Transworld deal is well on it's way to consummation when EBM makes a critical bungle. Hoping to disrupt the negotiations, EBM attempts to kidnap the OA deal team enroute, using a front group recruited out of the Union Corse (the infamous Gallic Mafia of "French Connection" fame). However, tragedy strikes when the would-be kidnapers bungle the job and accidentally kill most of the OA negotiators.

One member of the Corse team is taken alive; under extreme persuasion, EBM's complicity is revealed. With this and other evidence, OA moves into action. Contacts are made with ARC (a Euro software firm involved in designing the spaceplane programming), and Zetatech (designers of the Hermes' navigational computers). A full-spectrum database attack is launched in Europe using virus and capture programs designed by both firms and implemented by Zeta's netrunners and other off-the-Street hackers.

Massively assaulted inside all eight continental European offices, EBM's response is equally swift.

Drakon Worldwide Fund is brought in to carry out takeover procedures against ARC. Stepped up computer and communications security and a freezeout of European business connections is used to blunt Zeta's attack. A series of "accidents" and work slowdowns at OA facilities in Europe and Asia begins. Under heavy assault by EBM's counter-programming action, Zetatech pulls out of the battle in October of 2004.

Tragedy strikes when the Union Corse kidnappers bungle and kill the OA negotiations team.

However, ARC, sensing a rich profit and facing obliteration by EBM, signs a secret alliance agreement with OA.

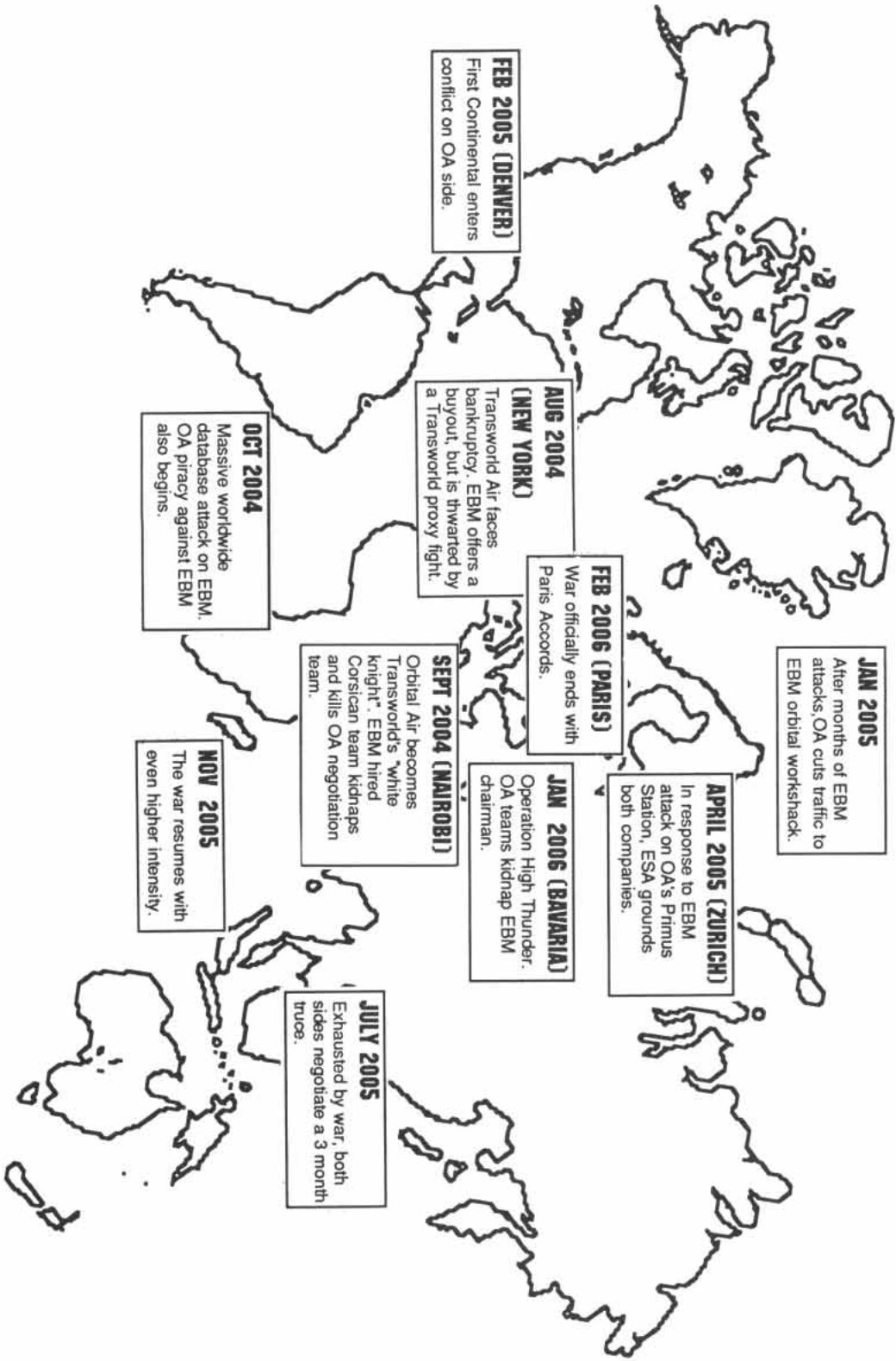
January, 2005: Orbital Air, operating out of it's England and North

Sea spaceports, cuts all travel to EBM's orbital workshack. Security is beefed up in OA facilities, and labor is pacified with a 2% raise. Dangling Transworld's shares as a carrot to attract allies, OA is frustrated by repeated EBM-sponsored terrorist attacks on Transworld resources. Both EBM and OA begin heavy lobbying with the EuroSpace Agency to control space traffic in their favor, culminating in OA solos directly engaging in "piracy": hijacking and diverting EBM shipments to South America, Africa and other lonely places. This stolen material is used as an inducement to persuade Chicago-based Advanced Developed Research to provide technical support. As a civil contractor to the U.S. Government, ADR represents the first entry of a national government into the conflict.

February, 2005: The banking combine, First Continental, joins the OA side, enticed by a chance to grab some of EBM's more loosely held affiliate branches. Blocking Drakon Fund's attack on ARC with a speedy loan, First Continental brings it's own security up to speed.

March, 2005: The Wave—a massive

MAP OF WAR



security force attack on OA's South American and African pirate operations. A combo of independent "hired guns" and Third World proxy troops, led by EBM solos, battle a mix of local crime gangs, corrupt customs cops and OA solo leaders. This draws worldwide notice in the media, and World News Service begins specific bureau coverage of the actions.

April, 2005: EBM solos attempt a temporary hijacking of an OA workstation to trade for its blockaded EBM facility. Through use of mercenaries from Militech, OA takes the EBM station in an ugly battle with high non-combatant casualties. For this action, the EuroSpace Agency calls both sides on the carpet, threatening the immediate grounding of all corporate space traffic if hostilities continued in orbit. The remainder of the war is fought on the ground.

May, 2005: Fuelled by the latest reports from WNS, governments in Europe, North America and Africa begin to investigate the open conflicts and terrorist actions against both sides. Orbital Air, trying to maintain the moral high ground, immediately hires outside media groups to form a public relations/propaganda campaign. Infocomp offers its services as a go-between for both sides. During this time, TTA Properties and Bronleigh Development (both development and land corps), join the action on EBM's side, starting acquisition proceedings against vital OA land holdings in the U.S. and Europe. As ADR comes under extreme pressure from the U.S. government to pull out of the war, OA offers major concessions to the Administration. Meanwhile, ARC and U.S.-based TechnoStations switch the hacker attack to Drakon Fund in an attempt to undermine EBM's main backup

money source. As terrorist and economic attacks mounted, the war grinds on.

With help of the U.S. government, OA blocks EBM's attempt to sidestep the orbital blockade by using Chinese lift vehicles. With supplies and manpower running low, both sides begin overtures to PetroChem, the chemical/oil megacorp. While choosing to remain neutral, PetroChem does suggest its lesser partner, Xoma Corp (a pharmaceuticals subsidiary).

April, 2005: OA takes the EBM space station in a ugly battle with high casualties.

By July of 2005, EBM has the upper hand, but barely; its overseas shipments are secure, but at a horrendous cost of men and material. Orbital Air's banking partner (First Continental) is almost dry, and OA's public relations/confidence is at an all-time low.

Up to now, by using hired proxies, cadres (action groups led by corporate agents), and "hacker" warfare, the direct and public engagement of opposing forces has been prevented, thereby keeping the national governments out of the picture. But an increasingly beleaguered OA management is finally forced to authorize "full participation". The result: harassment of personnel and attacks on offices of Bronleigh and TTA Properties in

order to counter their acquisition actions. At the same time, OA ne-trunners are able to loot a good deal of assets from Drakon, which offsets First Continental's dropping out of the war due to low resources. EBM steps up its lobbying of world governments on one hand to break the OA blockade, while countering with attacks on OA offices worldwide. Finally, exhausted by the struggle and stretched to breaking, both sides approach Infocomp, which negotiates a three month truce while the combatants regroup and seek new financing.

November, 2005: With both sides refuelled and rearmed, everyone comes out swinging. In skirmishes all over Europe and Africa, EBM solos find a match in OA's men, thanks to an alliance with Applied Technisystem (a bio-enhancement firm). Orbital also receives monetary support from Dynamic Media, Inc (a mustang news/entertainment corp out to make a name for itself by covering the conflict) and a new, hot-running Caribbean Metals combine: the Orbital Metals Partnership of Jamaica.

On the other side, EBM receives a huge influx of cash from Mamoru-Nakamura LTD, an offshore investment firm in Hawaii (rumored to have zaibatsu connections). Euro-Business Machines' agit-prop efforts are so successful that local governments in North America and Africa prepare to "temporarily" nationalize Orbital Air's ground equipment and assets in their areas.

January, 2006: With the other megacorps grumbling about both players, and EEC pressure on their backs, Orbital Air decides on a bold stroke. Taking two months to prepare, the aptly named *Operation High Thunder* is the biggest purely corporate solo operation up to this

time, with over one hundred solos on each side. With unspecified help from certain European governments (who want to see EBM's monopoly broken), OA launches an assault against the sumptuous living compound of EuroBusiness CEO Ulf Grünwalder, nestled in the mountains of Bavaria. Objective: capture or kill the brains behind EBM's corporate war machine.

OA's government agent help is somewhat offset by Militech mercs augmenting EBM's defense force.

The compound is destroyed and the wounded Grünwalder captured. Confronted by this fait d'accompli, and faced with a growing government and megacorp determination to put both sides out of business, EBM breaks and relinquishes full and uncontested control of TransWorld to Orbital Air in exchange for Grünwalder and other minor concessions. By February of 2006, EBM and Orbital Air have worked out a permanent peace agreement. This final agreement does not sit well with some of EuroBusiness' allied corpo-

rations; there follows a further three months of sporadic conflicts as the computer giant turns on its erstwhile partners, absorbing two or three of them in the end. So ends the first major conflict between the megacorporations; a sorry monument to waste, stupidity and corporate greed.

Next Month: The Second Vietnam—PetroChem and SovOil in the South China Sea.



SOLOS!

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ON THEIR MAJESTIES' SECRET SERVICE

The World of Government Solos by Eric Wells

When you think "solo", you think of a highly paid professional corporate soldier, right? But long before the megacorps were hiring, there was another class of solo. These well-trained pros worked in one of the most exacting and dangerous corporate environments in history—the national governments.

Recently, *Solo of Fortune* sent writer Eric Wells to dig out the background on the modern day "operatives" of the national arena. In his special report, he fills in the gaps on who's who, who's still in operation, and more importantly, whose side you want to be on when things get internationally hot.

C.I.A.

Central Intelligence Agency

The Agency, reorganized after the disaster of '96, is now truly central, dealing with domestic counter intelligence, foreign drug trafficking into the United States, and foreign polit/economic intelligence and/or covert action. Since 1999, the National Security Council (NSC) has been abolished, with remnants of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) blended into one powerful entity responsible only to the Execu-

tive Branch. In assuming much of the FBI's law enforcement role, the Agency has been given broad and sweeping powers of arrest; whether they can make 'em stick in a U.S.-hostile world is another matter.

Thanks to the NSA (National Security Agency, responsible for signal intelligence and gov't communications security) and DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) the U.S. retains the lead in

...one of the most exacting and demanding corporate environments in history— national governments.

intelligence gathering equipment and espionage gadgets. Most cyberwired agents have eventually gone freelance (except those in the covert action departments), but newcomers pride themselves on what they can do with drugs, devices, and training alone.

Primary Target— The Euro Economic Community (EEC). The



CIA

Common Skills: Pistol, Driving, Athletics, Martial Arts or Brawling, Notice, Specific Knowledge (criminology), Stealth, Shadowing, Basic Tech. Most of these skills are at level +5 or above.

Additional Skills: Interrogation, Research, Streetwise, Rifle, Disguise, Language (simple, usually French, German or Spanish), Human Perception, Gunsmithing (fixing or modifying guns. Tech based).

Cyberware: 1 set of interface plugs, 1-2 cyberoptics, with possible audio. Rarely: cyberlimbs, reflex or sensory boosters.

Hardware: Surveillance gear, mini weapons, at least one heavy caliber, highly accurate automatic pistol, combat dorphs, brain & reflex boosters, medical gear for battlefield repair.



KGB

Common Skills: Pistol, Driving, Athletics, Brawling, Notice, Thief, Intimidation, Stealth, Shadowing, Basic Tech. Most of these skills are at level +5 or above.

Additional Skills: Interrogation, Language (complex, usually Arabic, Japanese), Rifle, Disguise, Language (simple, usually French, German or Spanish), Human Perception, Specific Knowledge (Torture).

Cyberware: 1 set of plugs, maybe. single cyberoptic, with IR, camera or dartgun. If cyberlimbs, they are heavy, slow and massive, with heavy caliber gun in arm. Phone link only.

Hardware: Same drugs as CIA. Many miniweapons disguised to resemble common harmless items. Thief tools.

Note: GRU operatives stress more Demolitions skills (setting, disarming explosives. Tech based), Heavy Weapons, more cyberlimbs with strength boost, limited body plating on torso.

Agency specializes in economic disruption, political sabotage against corporations on the EuroCouncil, and industrial theft (the DIA, military intelligence, would tackle orbital sabotage). There is little or no cooperation with the Soviets, and only limited cooperation with the remnants of Britain's DI-6 organization. They are (mutually) cool in their relationship with Mossad, and get along well with the Japanese via the zaibatus. There is Chinese support for Soviet monitoring and possibly full concerted action against Triads and Golden Triangle warlords. Taiwan is now a target nation because of Triad problems and the new U.S. alliance with China.

K.G.B.

(Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopastnosti /Committee for State Security)

After 1992, with the "Gorby revolution" at high tide (one or two EuroSocialist opposition parties, a "peoples senate" half full of reformers, and a decentralized agricultural operation), the remaining old-line Krushev-Breznev Communists

The (KGB) revolt was played out in a series of firefights within the Moscow area...

were reduced to sulking, semi-obscure. They left behind though, hundreds of "apparatchniks"; supporters in low and middle-level posts, who could still wield varying amounts of influence. The apparatchniks covered for their former mentors and bosses until the day the great wheel of internal Party struggle turned their way again. This opportunity came with the U.S. collapse in the aftermath of the Great Crash of

'94, followed by the Mideast Melt-down in 1997. Some old-liners had been "rehabilitated" and allowed back in the govt. From this position, they criticised the regime's reluctance to take advantage of the U.S. situation plus its loss of useful surrogate states in the Mideast. With these crises to cast doubt on the new ruling clique of Andreyev Gorborev (Gorbechev's successor) a "political direct action" was decided on.

The KGB, with its party membership entrance requirement and duty of maintaining internal political correctness, was a major haven for the apparatchniks and so became the chosen instrument of change. Its middle-road director (replacing an old-liner who mistakenly was allowed to live) could be bypassed and the organization was in perfect position to isolate strategic portions of the country and seize or kill the supreme Soviet. They were stopped in the nick of time by the personnel of the GRU, alongside airborne troops under their command.

Being *Army* intelligence [with the armed forces' dedication to the defence of the Rodina (motherland) and its determination to stay apart from intracene Party struggles], the GRU commander saw how the Gorborev regime had changed the country. With social and economic reforms came the slack needed to streamline and modernize the army; this progress *must* be preserved at all cost. The revolt was played out in a series of intense firefights within the Moscow area and two other Russian cities. All across the continent, individual acts of sabotage and assassination erupted.

Following the attempted coup was a year of purge/reorganization similar to that undergone by their rivals, the CIA. Apparatchniks were removed, being replaced by administrators
SOLO OF FORTUNE, MAY, 2013

sympathetic to change. A certain number of GRU men were transferred over to "enliven" the defunct service, though this practice was not followed in all cases, as it tended to heighten the rivalry and hatred between the organizations.

Primary Target—It's still the U.S. The United States now threatens the Soviet's economic resurrection with its anti-EEC actions. As a result, the Soviet intelligence community cooperates closely with the Euromarket in keeping security on space and tech projects. This doesn't rule out the possibility of subversion of select Euro-corps to gain more leverage. The GRU (Glavnoye Razvedyvatelnoye Upravleniye/Army intelligence and special action) handles middle-scale raids/sabotage, especially in near orbit. The Soviet's secondary theatre of ops is what remains of Near and Middle East, with regards to Islamic tensions within the southern Soviet Republics. China and Japan are closely watched (Japan more because of its role as a major U.S. ally and technical innovator), but no major action is taken as long as they do not threaten Sino-Pacific access at Vladivostok (or to a lesser extent Cam Rahn bay).

Spy tech expertise is still behind the U.S. capability, except in the field of unusual killing devices and interrogation procedures. Technical aid from the Europeans will remedy this in the long run.

Important note: Both "superpowers" (and to an extent the EEC) consider Africa to be an important, but secondary theatre of ops. The struggle is to maintain sources of strategic materials and secure prime space launch or space oriented manufacturing sites. This is carried out by secret influence of standing gov'ts and covert takeover of others. Information gathering and "special actions", i.e. sabotage, kidnapping, **SOLO OF FORTUNE, MAY, 2013**

"wet" work, is also carried out against competitors. The needs of the moment can move Africa up to primary target status.

INTERPOL

Between the formation of the EEC in '92 and the Second Corporate war in 2007, the Euros were dropping internal barriers and tightening external ones (especially against U.S. "Gang of Four" chaos, but later against USSR infiltration due to Euro-technical high-handedness). With no passport controls and weak conspiracy laws, there was an even greater mixing of political terrorist forces

The U.S. threatens the Soviet's economic resurrection with its anti-EEC actions...

(IRA/Ireland+ETA/Basques in Spain+Breton Revolutionary Army/France +Lotta Continua/Italy+RAF/W.Germany) along with reorganizing native European crime groups such as the Union Corse (Southern France & Corsica), Union Sicilano (original Mafia in Sicily & Napoli), plus local vice/smuggling/strongarm gangs in Spain & England. By the advent of the Second Central American war in '03, foreign criminal refugees were battling native mobs and terrorism had swung from left to right with the infamous *Europe For Euro-workers* Movement.

Prompt action had to be taken, and so an old idea was revived. The *International Criminal Police Organization* (Interpol) had been an information sharing bank since the 1920s, but had no enforcement or investigation powers (and had been abused for political purposes by



Interpol

Common Skills: Pistol, Driving, Athletics, Martial Arts, Notice, Specific Knowledge (criminology), Stealth, Shadowing, Interrogation, Research, Streetwise, Basic Tech. Most of these skills are at level +6 or above.

Additional Skills: Rifle, Disguise, Language (simple, usually French, German or Spanish), Human Perception, plus usually an aircraft or Shuttle Pilot Skill.

Cyberware: Usually 2 interface plug sets, twin cyberoptics, with full audio, often one cyberlimb with knife or gun in compartment. Chipped for Martial Arts, Eurotheatre Law.

Hardware: Surveillance gear, medical gear for battlefield repair, thief tools, usually chipped for 9mm full auto handgun (gyrojet).



MOSSAD

Common Skills: Pistol, Rifle, Driving, Athletics, Martial Arts, Notice, Heavy Weapons, Stealth, Demolition, Shadowing, Interrogation, Intimidation, Streetwise, Basic Tech, Survival (Desert). Most of these skills are at level +7 or above.

Additional Skills: Disguise, Language (simple, usually French or German), Human Perception, Gunsmithing, Forgery, Fast Talk, Thief Skills.

Cyberware: 1 interface plug set, cyber optics or audio only for replacement of lost body parts, cyberlimbs very rare. Occasional sensory or reflex boost.

Hardware: Surveillance gear, medical gear for battlefield repair, booster and dorph drugs. Usually chipped for mini UZI, Galil.

Germany in the 1930s-40s, Taiwan in the 80s, and the U.S. in the early 90s). West Germany and Italy, hardest hit by terrorism (and with the reluctant help of France, who, with the Low Countries, had the worst organized crime problem), pushed to update and expand the responsibilities of the organization while narrowing its focus. And so, the new Interpol was born.

With the U.S. out of the picture, and with Russia and China never signatories to the agreement, it was relatively easy to push out the other small countries worldwide and bring the former East Bloc nations back into the fold. By absorbing the informal discussion/cooperation groups on terrorism and utilizing shared manpower/data resources, Interpol

Pushed to the wall, the Israeli response is to become tougher, more ruthless—to the point of fanaticism, if need be.

could now meet the duties of policing a unified Europe and maintaining a security watch on her enemies.

Interpol today investigates crimes against, and enforces the laws of the EEC where they pertain to interaction among members, or action from outside against the membership as a whole. Far more than in America, this counterbalances the fixer/solo forces of the corporations. Manpower for internal security purposes is primarily drawn from personnel of the former DST and BfV (French and W.German equivalent of FBI). Because of their former repressive

reputations, East Bloc countries are asked only to contribute technical and informational assistance for security operations. Interpol is also the major law enforcement arm of the EuroSpace agency, and maintains extensive facilities in orbit.

A paramilitary intervention capability vs political terrorists and "black ops" saboteurs is provided by men of the GSG9 (the anti-terror department of the West German police), the GIGN (a French equivalent), and a special unit of Italian Carabinieri (Italy's para-military state police). Foreign Intelligence and C.I. can be handled in many different ways; corporate solos and fixers can be hired on a contract basis, information or technology can be traded with a host country adjacent to the target in return for the intelligence, or agents of the members' former spy agencies (because the EEC Council was to handle foreign affairs, member countries were asked to mothball the majority of their espionage apparatus) can be employed. Former operatives of DGSE (France) and MfS/HUA (East Germany) are preferred for their ruthlessness and efficiency. In terms of espionage technology, the Europeans are behind in Elint/Elsur (electronic intel/surveillance), but their agent/solos carry the latest in cyberware, usually with minor spy gear built in.

Primary Target— Interpol has no primary target; it feels it has its hands full just keeping Europe and the Mediterranean basin clean. It is also the main law enforcement agent in the L5 and Luna colonies, where it's power is akin to that of the U.S. Texas Rangers of the late 1800's.

Special note concerning Great Britain: Britain is the poor relative of the EEC, with a rampant crime and unemployment problem almost equal to America's. Because of its

relationship with the American "cousins" in the Gang of Four, and repressive reactions at home, both DI5 and DI6 are disorganized, demoralized, and in disfavor among the other European security and intelligence organizations. Individual British agents will help American solos for their own reasons, but the majority are busy fighting their rival services at home. The GCHQ (British equivalent of America's NSA) supports Interpol, and is usually looked down upon by the other services as a result. SAS was the inspiration and/or teacher for the United States' (and many of the European) counter-terror paramilitary groups, and is still the best special intervention group in the world. This puts SAS in a rather delicate position between the "cousins" and EEC. The British govt (for monetary reasons) has put them "on hire" to the EEC council to assist their forces, but will discreetly loan them, free of charge, to the U.S..

MOSSAD

Still emphasizing the tough minded, individual initiative that characterized it in the mid 20th century, the Mossad tempers it's daring operations with expedient practicality. After the "Mid East Meltdown" of 1997, the Shin Bet (Israeli Security Service) took control over the Mossad, as Israel moved to occupy immediate cross-border areas to provide a buffer zone. By the early 2000's, the Mossad re-emerged as teams were sent to the devastated Arab Zones for recon and "salvage". (in the manner that the Russians and Allies confiscated Nazi Germany's archives and remaining industrial capacity after WWII.)

Between widespread U.S. espionage activity by the Israelis and their own internal problems, the United States intelligence community al-

lowed the once close relationship between the two nations to die a quiet (and both sides hoped, amicable) death. Hopefully, the Israelis might help out their mentor at some future time, but no one was willing to bet on it, particularly in the wake of the Second Central American and First Corporate Wars ravaging the West.

With the Arab Jihad's formation in the first decade of the 2000's and the EEC's growing cultivation of the Soviets, Israel became more and more isolated. This isolation was not helped by the loss of it's South American client states and the destruction of a favored customer in South Africa. Pushed to the wall, the Israeli response is to become tougher, more ruthless—to the point of fanaticism, if need be.

Professionalism is the Mossad keyword; they are as proficient as the best the EuroTheatre has to offer and strongly motivated by national patriotism. Equipped with a mixture of U.S. and European equipment, relying on gadgets and drugs over cyberware, the Mossad specializes in teamwork. A standing rule is if you see one Mossad agent, there are at least *four* more as backup somewhere. Only the most astute and daring operatives work without a team. The Mossad style combines careful training with a hefty dose of innovation and improvisation; almost all Israeli agents are Fixers or Techies on the side. An increase in Orthodox religious sentiment has inhibited cyberwear use among most operatives, except for those recruited (usually for "strongarm" work) from the Army Paratroops; they will happily be chipped and enhanced to handle anything.

Primary Target—As the Jihad gathers force, Shin Bet is challenging Mossad's importance once again. Many of the most vocal pro-

ponents of "a greater, secure Israel or nothing" are part of the former intelligence service. With it's main operations base in the Mid East and the Mediterranean Basin (where an uneasy protocol exists with Interpol), Mossad must strike a balance between pacifying the Shin Bet faction (which is demanding a full out break with Interpol and a realliance with the remnants of the South African apartheid state) and pursuing an active intelligence war with the EEC's individual corporations. Expect the Mossad to be operating selectively against particular corporate targets in the EEC (especially those with clients in pro-Jihad states), Arab terrorist groups and agents of the Jihad in the Mideast, and gathering intelligence in the U.S. for use elsewhere.



A Special Report From the SOLO OF FORTUNE Staff

Singapore, Hong Kong, Osaka, Kyoto, Bangkok, Madrid, Rome, Geneva, Helsinki, The Hague, London, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Kyoto, Bangkok, Baghdad, Sydney, London, Helsinki, The Hague, Rio de Janeiro, Montreal, Los Angeles, Chicago, Honolulu, Singapore, Sydney, London, Hamburg, Paris, Madrid, Jerusalem, Montreal, New York, Washington, Honolulu, Singapore, Hong Kong, Osaka,

WORLD SITUATION

This month marks the anniversary of the signing of the Costa Rica accords, ending formal government involvement south of the border. With the cessation of hostilities, the U.S. deactivated a significant portion of its ground forces. But for all those Nightstalkers, Grunts, Wireheads, T.V's, Cat Cultists, Salvo Savors, Brick Pilots, Head Flyers, Jungle Jammers, and assorted Chipped Beef, the employment opportunities never looked better. Many of our fellow comrades in arms have found lucrative employment around the world, in hot spots neglected by the superpowers, and even the media. These are small places where fighting skills are rewarded.

We are presenting a list of the world's active combat zones that we know about. This is by no means a comprehensive list, nor a detailed one. We are just telling you what's up, and where to get more information. If you find a place of interest, find out as much about it as you can. Use the addresses provided for more detailed information. Do your own mission pre-planning. Find out if the climate and resources available are adequate for you. Some of these places may be hellholes no matter how good the pay, and no one likes to be the losing side. Most of the organizations here, unless otherwise noted are good for at least half up front, but this magazine offers NO guarantees.

Before leaving make sure your medical information, discharge papers and I.D. are up to date. It is best to provide your prospective employer with hardcopy, as computers are rare in a lot of these more underdeveloped nations. Be considerate of local customs when you get there, Forgetting your manners may make you a conspicuous target, or at least mark you. Notoriety is not a survival trait. Make your credit arrangements with a multinational like Suisse Bank, American Express, or Sumitomo. Trusting local financial institutions is not advised due to the instability of currency in a wartime situation. If possible, take your payment in multinational stocks or precious commodities. At the least ac-

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Baghdad, Sydney, London, Hamburg, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, Montreal, New York, Washington, Honolulu. Singapore, Hong Kong, Osaka, Hamburg, Paris, Madrid, Rome, Geneva, New York, Washington, San Francisco, Hong Kong, Osaka, Kyoto, Bangkok, Baghdad, Rome, Geneva, Helsinki, The Hague, Rio de Janeiro, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Kyoto, Bangkok, Baghdad, Sydney, London,

CONFLICT AND CRISIS WORLDWIDE IN 2013

cept only stable currencies like the Eurodollar, the Soviet Ruble, or the Australian Dollar. Check with your employer for weapons arrangements. Often your prospective employer will be working at cross purposes to the people in charge of customs. You will be lucky if you get to use your own weapons and equipment. Try to be inconspicuous. It doesn't take much detective skill to figure out where a tall Anglo with milspec shoes, shiny spots on his wrist, a predilection for dark or mirrored shades and baggy, informal clothing is going, but try to hide the Cat Cult tattoo and the chromed cyberarm. Equipment like that does not go over well in the more primitive, or strongly Catholic countries. In

some cases they are grounds for arrest.

What are the prospective employers looking for? Mostly they need small groups of chipped and wired soldiers for long duration surgical counter-insurgency (COIN) ops. A lot of them need drill instructors and training cadre, either for the formation of elite units, or beefing up the defensive ratings of their outlying villages by training the villagers how to fight. A few are requesting Rangers (read: Cat Cultists) for long duration, Salvo style, anti guerilla operations in the hinterlands. Specific, short duration missions come up from time to time as these are cost effective for the employers, but they are not long

term employment, and often at the completion you will be without support. Often it is government forces looking for elite forces to back their sovereignty (like in the case of the Phillipines). Often these governments fight against Marxist guerrillas, oppressed minority liberation movements, other countries, internal strife, multinationals, or sometimes combinations of the above. The multinationals are represented here as often they need uniquely qualified contractors for specific tasks. Again, this is by no means a complete list.

What is going on? Well, globally speaking, there are no major wars happening. The northern hemi-

sphere is basically calm. Only a few hot spots here and there, usually some nationalist uprising with little or no money. As always, it is the monsoon belt that is hopping the most. Africa has cooled down a bit in just the past few years. Only the occasional tribal conflict, resource disagreement, or coup disturbs the countryside. The K. M. D. C. has been working to bring the benefits of space exploration (in the form of profits) and prosperity to Africa. The question is: will the rising population in the poorer areas choke off Africa's economic hope, and cause the whole continent degenerate into a myriad of tiny little guerrilla actions as they fight over food and dwindling resources? That would not be a meat and potatoes war, folks.

"..But try to hide the Cat Cult tatoo and the chromed cyberarm...Equipment like that doesn't go over well in the more primitive countries."

Central America is somewhat stable, the terms of the Costa Rica Accords still holding. There are some corporate conflicts over resource management and port facilities, but these are of very low intensity, and are great fodder for the *Telenovelas* broadcast down there. Uncle Sam's Southern Command can still use warm bodies to defend the canal zone, but that is for the terms of employment that you all know about. A lot of the large land owners in that area would like guards for their estates, and they are known for their generous terms of employment.

South America is considerably worse. Peru, Bolivia, Columbia, western Venezuela, and northern Ecuador have almost fractured into warlord states due to the fighting between the new and former members of the Andes cocaine cartels. The beleaguered governments of these countries are begging for experienced "yanqui" help. Argentina is assembling an elite unit of border guards to deal with the problems on its northern border. Chile has returned to an inquisitional mode under the current military junta. Lucky Brazil is only now feeling the beginnings of an economic pinch. Jamaica and Cuba are still agents of instability in the Carribean and the northern coast of South America.

The independence movements of the native populations of the Pacific ruined their chances of fully participating in the twenty first century. Now the more ambitious of them have again had feelings of conquest as they had in the days of the ancient island kings.

The Phillipine conflicts that have waxed and waned throughout the last century continue to this day. The Australians continue to pour money into the Phillipines. The Indonesians and Singapore continue to disagree violently over border and jurisdiction disputes. The large Moslem populations of Indonesia and Malaysia refuse to back down, and even consider themselves the center of Moslem thought in the world. This does not bode well for the Phillipines if and when the Moslems cry *Jihad* against this predominantly Catholic nation. In what must be supreme irony, the Republic of Vietnam has hired American mercenaries to deal with its border problems with Laos and China.

Near Space remains calm— what looked like a possible conflict on the Moon was averted by furious diplo-

matic action, but tensions between Armstrong Base and Tycho City remain high. There are always the occasional raids on orbital pharmaceutical labs, but these are between the corporates and the criminals, though these stations and the corporations are hiring security to guard them.

That, in a nutshell, is the world situation. Lets go to specifics, shall we?

Capsule Situations

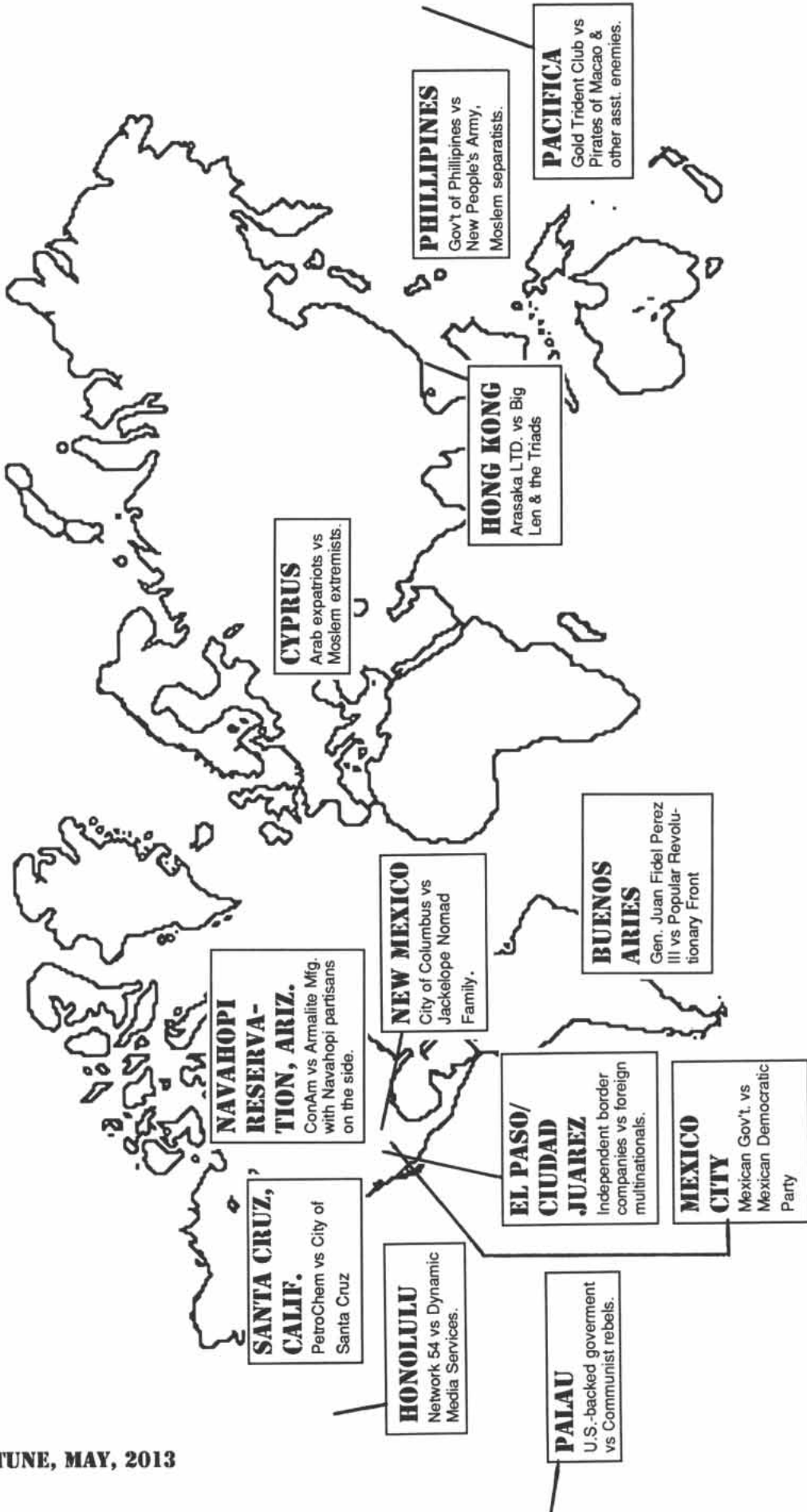
The following are a number of capsule updates on world situations in which professional mercenaries seeking employment might find their fortune.

The Phillipines

The Moslem tribesmen of the southern islands and the New People's Army continue to fight government forces and the corporations. The conflict is very low intensity and is very seasonal, depending on the monsoons.

Side A: The Government of the Phillipines. General Manuel "Tony" Tiapon has been authorized to form a "Foreign Legion" of elite cyber-soldiers, especially veterans of Central America. The goal is to hire a full battalion before the campaign season of 2014. There will be little political interference in the unit's mission of Rapid Deployment and "killing our enemies". There are also several Euro-corps seeking security forces for Phillipine-based operations. Both corporations and government will provide plenty of background support (travel expenses, steady supplies and permanent barracks). All fighting is long-duration COIN-ops. The Phillipines government has the confidence of the city-dwellers and is trying to

AT A GLANCE



soldify the rural community. Against the NPA, Tiapon's position is, "no retreat, no surrender". Against the independent Moslems, his government would like to contain their military activities so that a limited-autonomous state can be negotiated.

Pay is \$4000 a month for Top NCO with the pay grades for enlisteds following the usual step down to a minimum of \$2500 a month for the lowest enlisted ranks. Officer's pay is subject to negotiation. Facilities are at the Aquino Barracks. Fax your service records and resumé to the Aquino Barracks before booking your trip. The number is (45)-137-6384-021.

Side B: The NPA (New People's Army). The NPA, a homegrown communist group and a separatist coalition of Moslem tribes are fighting the same war against the government for different goals. The NPA wants a reformed Chinese-style collective state with all corporations removed or nationalized. They seek weapon-smiths for maintenance and modifications of their current stock, plus commo experts for secure coordination of their scattered forces. The NPA is rather mercurial in organization and flighty in action, so secure your pay and your own line of withdrawal. They prefer ex-government mercs and freelancers, preferably from Eastern hemisphere nations. Corporate solos need not apply.

The Moslem faction is fighting for semi autonomy and religious freedom in the Islamic southern islands. They'll take almost anybody, although co-religionists are preferred, for a variety of training cadre and "point man" jobs. At least a working knowledge of Islamic practices and prejudices is required, but once a steady bond has been forged between employer and employee, they are quite reliable. Expect less in the way of background support and re-

member, if serving with the NPA, that the Government has a "no mercy" policy towards them.

Side C: Manong/Anderssohn A.G. The Negros Island Facilities of Anderssohn A.G. are in need of specialized corporate security. Their Salt refinery in the town of Bacolod and the plantation in the town of La Carlota are being harassed by units believed to be, or attached to the NPA. Specifically, the company would like to hire solos with enhanced perceptive capabilities and familiarity with long range sniping to be posted on swing and grave shifts. Opponents are usually non-enhanced, but well trained indigenous rebels with a small amount of support in the countryside. They possess no heavy weapons, and maybe the occasional RPG. Pay is \$2500 to \$3000 a month in Australian dollars with a second track benefits package guaranteed by Anderssohn A.G. Finances are handled by the Chartered Bank of Sydney. There is also free transport into Manila on your off days. Please contact the Manila offices of Anderssohn. Voice: (45) 146-2124-773, Faxed: (45) 146-2126-928.

Palau

The island nation of Palau is undergoing a struggle for control of the ailing government. In the wake of closures of U.S. bases due to agreements with the Soviets, this island chain south of the Philippines is up for grabs. The two major forces in the conflict have been hiring mercenaries to do the dirty work that their untrained troops cannot handle.

Side A: The former U.S.-backed government is fighting for survival. The nation's people were never very happy to be under the wing of the United States, and are loathe to enlist in the government's battle against the rebel forces. The gov-

ernment would like to see the rebels crushed in any way possible, so that they can go about the business of forming an independent government and establishing trade relations with other western nations.

Side B: Communist rebels, supported by socialist Philippine forces with the help of Cuba, wish to overthrow the current government and set up a socialist state. Their numbers are small, but they have outside help and are well stocked with Cuban supplied Soviet weapons. They have sought the help of the people, but have had little success.

Jobs: Work on either side is of a hit and run nature. Both sides seek specialists trained in recon and counter insurgency tactics. The Palauan government officials need body guards to protect against assassination, while the rebel forces seek assassins trained to circumvent the governments precautions.

Solos should have little trouble finding pilots with amphibious planes in the Philippines willing to transport passengers to Palau for the right price. Be warned that a large number of Australian solos have already undertaken contracts for both sides in the conflict, and are wary of outside competition. Be prepared for a cold reception from the native population, and above all, keep an eye open for large scale intervention by U.S. and Soviet forces, predicted to occur at any time.

El Paso/Ciudad Juarez

There is fierce competition for control of the remaining independent border companies in the impoverished industrial zone running between these two adjacent cities. The lure of pre-established factories and an endless supply of cheap labor

has made the border companies hot properties. Although the troops of the Mexican Socialist Republic do their meager best to defend the companies' interests, industrial espionage and sabotage are widespread.

Side A: The owners of the independent border companies have put aside their differences in order to pool their resources to fight the hostile take-overs of their businesses. They are supported by the Mexican government, but the aid is all but useless against trained operatives.

Side B: There are any number of European, American, and Japanese companies vying for control of the border companies and their labor. They have resorted to threats, kidnapping and murder of officers of the companies, the intimidation of the local work pool, bribery of government officials, undercutting wages, and sabotaging production lines.

Jobs: Most sources have given up the border companies as a loss. In spite of this, they fight on, and are desperately seeking professionals to counter the agents of the foreign companies. They are willing to pay salary (about \$1000 mo.), or on a "per kill" basis for major operatives (\$400 ea.). The pay is not the greatest, in spite of the pooling of company resources, but the work is considered low risk, at least for the next few months, as the opposition is not expecting well trained resistance.

Alternately, you may wish to apply to one of the invading corporations. Most of them are using "in house" operatives, but they have been known to hire from the outside for special assignments. Be prepared to face the ill will of an entire section of the Southwest if your role with the corporations is discovered.

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Cyprus

When the majority of the Middle East was consumed in the fires of numerous holy wars, a small handful of rich Arab businessmen and aristocrats escaped the carnage and set up shop elsewhere. The Grecian territory on the island of Cyprus is one of the areas resettled by these post modern sheiks and sultans. Unfortunately for them, and for the island's residents, the enemies of these people have long memories. Numerous terrorist attacks by the remnants of bands of "holy warriors", have led the Arabs and the government on Cyprus to seek outside help.

Side A: The wealthy sons and daughters of former Arab ruling class live in fear for their lives and are willing to pay handsomely to protect themselves. They have drawn their forces from all over the world.

Side B: The numerous crazed terrorist organizations launching themselves towards martyrdom in their zeal to destroy their accursed enemies do not hire outside of their circles. Their goals are simple: destroy the infidels. Many of the terrorists are seasoned veterans, although most traces of reason have long since boiled away.

Side C: The Greek government on Cyprus is trying to defuse an explosive situation. They do not like the wealthy Arabs who have set up shop in their country, but the money they bring to the economy is not to be passed up. Besides, it makes the Turks on the other side of the border envious.

Jobs: On Cyprus you can find some of the highest paying security work in the world, but it can also be some of the most dangerous. They say that if you intend to die, you can do any-

thing and the opposition is not above going out in a blaze of glory so long as they can take you with them. In addition to security work, there are always "special assignments". Be prepared to have an impressive resume, as there will be highly trained European solos competing for your job opportunities. Salaries: \$5-6000 month.

Honolulu

Job opportunities have recently opened on this island of Hawaii when Network 54 announced "recurring troubles" on and near the set of "Hardman and Grace", their ratings grabbing series, filmed on location on the island. Sabotage by rival Dynamic Media Systems Inc. is suspected. Incidents have included the bombing of sets as well as two reported attempts on the lives of actors and actresses in the series.

Side A: Network 54 is looking for freelance Solos to hire on indefinitely to act as body guards, combat drivers, security guards, and counter terrorist forces. They suspect leaks of inside information, and for this reason, they do not maintain in house security at the film site.

Side B: Operatives from Dynamic Media Systems are seeking to shut down "Hardman and Grace" once and for all. The series has hurt the ratings of their own action adventure shows, and they are willing to risk a corporate war to get it off the air.

Jobs: As listed, most jobs pertain to security. Solos should be capable of handling themselves in overt situations, i.e., they should have some social graces, as they will be seen at the side of famous Vid stars. Solos will be up against other freelancers, hired by D.M.S.. It is also rumored that Network 54 is hiring a team to strike back at high ranking D.M.S. programs, but sources refuse to elaborate. Salaries: \$4-6000 mo.

Buenos Aries

Another revolution is underway, the fourth so far this year in a country that is in the grip of 78% unemployment and 2000% inflation. As usual, both sides are looking for outside help and promising the moon and the stars to anyone aiding them on the climb to the top.

Side A: This month's ruling party, led by Juan Fidel Perez the Third is offering a bounty (\$1000 ea.) for the head of each terrorist brought to him at the palace. He also needs couriers to help bring in the new shipments of currency (bearing his likeness), from the printing presses in Europe. The rebels have made it their personal goal to stop these shipments.

Side B: The revolutionary front needs trained Solos to counter the superior (at least in numbers) government forces. Their main goal is the capture of the palace and the deaths of Juan Fidel Perez the Third and his chief staffers. They have promised a share of "the riches of the national treasury" to all "friends" who help them into power.

Jobs: How many times must we point out the sheer lunacy of working freelance in South America? Still, there are those who like the challenge. Of course, neither side is to be trusted, and you will be considered expendable at all times. Be prepared to take the rewards of your labors by force. Exercise caution when "sneaking" into the country, and be ready to bug out at any time should the whimsies of these insane would be dictators turn against you.

Southern New Mexico

The city of Columbus is under siege by a roving Nomad gang calling itself The Jackelopes. They have staged a number of raids on the city in the last few months, and with the state forces tied up on the border, the city planners have decided to turn to outside help for their troubles.

Side A: The city of Columbus is looking for daring individuals with a mind for civic responsibility. They know that only a small army could stop an entire Nomad gang, but they feel that "trained vigilantes" would be able to deal with the leaders of the Jackelopes, and thus discourage further attacks.

Side B: The Jackelopes number close to three hundred members, traveling throughout New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona in a rag tag fleet of stolen greyhound buses and battered recreational vehicles. Most dangerous are their armed scouts, who raid local townships with motor cycles and flatbed trucks. They are ruled by an extended criminal family, and take their new blood from the dregs of society, raiding local prisons to strengthen their ranks. The city of Columbus has become a favorite target, due to their isolation from other cities and their undermanned police forces.

Jobs: As stated, the city wishes the "removal" of the leaders of the Jackelopes, as well as defensive forces to protect against the armed scouts. The pay is not the greatest (wages equal to salary for local police officers of captains rank—about \$2000 a month), but solos would be aiding in the continued existence of an American city and their people, a perfect assignment for those who still believe in causes. Covert

operation experience would be helpful, as infiltration of the Nomad gang will most likely be required for removal of the ring leaders.

Pacific Ocean (location varies)

Members of the Gold Trident Club, the wealthy and prestigious owners of the majestic "super yachts" that dot the oceans and harbors of the world, have been having trouble across the Pacific with attacks on their supposedly isolated domains. Individual owners of these super yachts, as well as charter members of the Gold Trident organization, have been hiring Solos for protection.

Side A: Owners of super yachts, the sleek 100 to 200 foot, high tech wonders which have become a symbol of "the ultimate in lifestyles", come from all walks of life. The majority are ultra-rich corps and power brokers, semi-retired netrunners who made it big and wish to remain obscure, wealthy inheritors of America and Europe's "old money", and of course, the most powerful of crime bosses and fixers. People of this stature always have enemies, and many of these enemies have the resources to locate and assault the floating castles on which they live. Salaries: \$5-6000 month.

Side B: The enemy ranges from organized groups of high tech pirates to personal enemies with equal resources. Occasionally, there are conflicts between the owners of these super yachts, resulting in spectacular and expensive sea battles. Corporate black teams and drug lords with gangs of well armed boosters have also been known to attack members of the Gold Trident Club.

Jobs: Owners of super yachts ex-
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pect only the best from everyone under their wings, and Solos hired for protection are no exception. Security personnel must be well versed in the use of small arms and heavy weapons, especially ground to air defenses. Combat pilots are preferred, but not the rule. As Solos will be working and living among members of the highest social classes, they will be expected to be well cultured and capable of attending to the needs of a wide variety of guests. The actual work varies, but can range from simple guard duty to out-and-out warfare with enemy naval forces. Be prepared for anything.

Contacting the Gold Trident membership is best accomplished by sending your resume through the Net, or by Fax directly to the yachts owner. If you are hired, you will given their location at sea or current port of call. FAX (20) 176-591-0331

Navahopi Reservation, Arizona

Consolidated Agri-Mining (ConAm) has and is using a government sponsored licence to mine uranium on the Navahopi Reservation in eastern Arizona. Armalite Manufacturing, the next highest bidder on the project, invaded the mines with the hope of gaining control.

Side A: Consolidated Agri-Mining is looking for combat experienced solo's, especially those with experience in close quarters combat, heavy vehicle operations, sabotage and anti-insurgency. Contact Margaret Atwater at the ConAm offices in Zurich. FAX (41)-01-331-5252

Side B: Armalite Manufacturing is

hiring combat experienced mercenaries with expertise in close quarters combat, demolition, sabotage and infiltration. Interested parties should contact David Jester at the Armalite headquarters in Vienna.

History: On July 10, 2012, Consolidated Agri-Mining received a key contract to mine the uranium from the Navahopi mines in eastern Arizona. Armalite Manufacturing, the other firm that had bid for the job, accused ConAm of paying off certain officials and demanded that the mining be halted until a formal investigation could decide the validity of these claims.

While the two corporations were legally battling over the contracts, a group of Native Americans on the reservation seized the mines for thirty days, demanding that both corporations get off their land. This was, however, perceived to be an Armalite plot which insured ConAm of the contract, which was reinstated on September 8, 2012.

On December 25, 2012, acting on company orders, a group of Armalite technicians and solos seized the mining control room. Following the seizure, 125 solos were sent into the mines and began to execute every ConAm miner.

Since that first attack, ConAm has regained control of the mines, but there are repeated attempts at sabotage by Armalite and the reservation residents.



Santa Cruz, California

The west coast town of Santa Cruz is fighting to remove the Petrochem drilling rigs for their bay.

Since the Gang of Four came into power, there has been ongoing oil drilling in the Santa Cruz/Monterey Bay. Initially, the residents of Santa Cruz resorted to petitions and sometimes denial of harbor use to prevent the drilling. Unfortunately for the residents, Petrochem took over the drilling operation on Dec. 5, 2008. Petrochem had the influence to keep their operation running without having to worry about the citizens and how they felt about the drilling.

On March 27, 2010, the citizens of Santa Cruz along with a local nomad gang (The Rabid Lefties) managed to take over and completely destroy the operation. It was not until this year that Petrochem has finally been able to overcome the sabotage that has plagued the reconstruction of their rigs.

The city of Santa Cruz is has offered a bonus of sixty thousand eurobucks for each rig destroyed. In addition, they are offering five thousand eurobucks for each confirmed destruction of a vehicle or ship assigned to the project.

Side A: Petrochem is looking for anti-insurgency experts along with solos experienced in naval personal combat. Contact Julie Marks at the Petrochem office in Night City for more information.

Side B: Santa Cruz is hiring solos with experience in sabotage, infiltration and underwater demolitions. Interested parties should apply at the Santa Cruz City Hall, Santa Cruz, California, USA.

Hong Kong, People's Republic of China Trade Zone

After a small disagreement concerning a shipment of weapons to one of Arasaka's enemies, relations between the mighty corporation and the powerful weapons dealer have deteriorated into all out war.

Side A: Arasaka corporation is hiring: specialists in undercover work and gun running, solos specialized for urban combat and solos specializing in the Hong Kong theater of operations. Individuals familiar with Big Len's operation are especially desired. Salaries: \$2-3000 mo.

Side B: Big Len is hiring anybody willing to fight against Arasaka's regional office in Hong Kong. Arasaka veterans and defectors with inside information especially desired. Pay by job (usually \$5-7000).

Additional Background: This is a sticky one. It seems that Big Len trod on Arasaka's toes when he forwarded some major weapons shipments to a group of terrorists involved in a local war with one of Arasaka's South American offices. Arasaka staged a punitive raid on one of Big Len's Hong Kong Harbor warehouses, without reckoning on the arms merchants retaliatory capabilities. Len is well tied in with the Triads, and has a sizable private army. Subsequently, several raids were carried out on properties leased to or protected by Arasaka in the Hong Kong area. The tit-for-tat battles have degenerated into all out urban warfare.

Tactics: Both sides are employing typical urban combat techniques. Both covert and over operations are being run, and there have been several black operations carried out by

both sides, as well as full scale urban battles at several sites. Specialists in urban combat, infiltration and covert activities would do well to inquire. Commercial flights available to Hong Kong from most major cities. Contact Arasaka at their regional headquarters. Contact Big Len's organization via street operatives. Be aware: unusual environment. Ethnic differences may be involved. There will many non-english speakers, and traditional methods will be common.

Mexico City, Mexico

South of the border, the entrenched, repressive Mexican government wages its ongoing war against liberal democratic rebels. It's guerilla warfare at its nastiest, both urban and rural.

Side A: The Mexican Government is hiring solos specializing in counter-terrorism and anti-guerilla warfare, plus specialists in urban and rural combat and potential infiltrators.

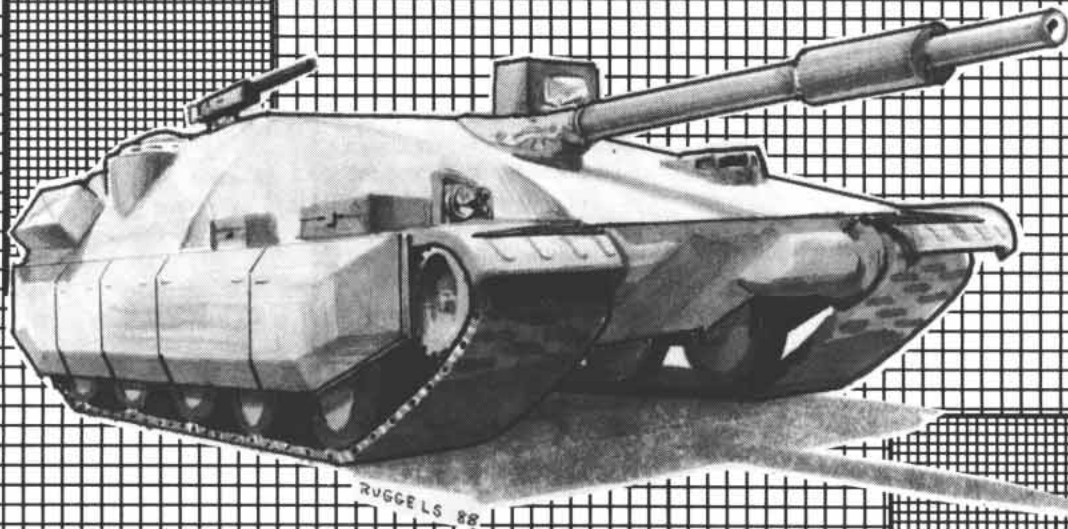
Side B: The Mexican rebels are hiring absolutely anyone who is willing to work for them, and who can convince them that they are not a government plant.

Background: The Mexican government, ostensibly a republic (but long suspected of lapses in human rights and democratic policy) has been involved in a war with dissatisfied guerillas for several years. The guerillas claim that they wish to overthrow the government, and install a truly democratic, liberal government. The government claims that the rebels are vicious insurrectionists interested only in their own power. Although quick victory was originally predicted by the government because of its superior weapons and manpower, the tenacious

rebels have resisted all attempts at destruction.

Jobs: Straight guerilla/counter-guerilla warfare, with both urban and rural theaters. The guerillas need people with the ability to knit their forces into a cohesive fighting group, and enable them to take the capital. They also desire assassination and demolitions or bombing experts. The government needs solos who are experts at tracking and destroying insurrectionist cadres in urban and rural environments. Solos versed in infiltration and interrogation will be able to contract as well. Contact the Mexican government at any embassy. To get in touch with the rebels, send a card with information on how to contact you to PO Box 387, Night City, 94887.

Scott Ruggels



THE OPEN ROAD

A new profile of vehicles and vehicle combat statistics
By Solo Staff Writer Mikuru Ponsumisu

SOLO OF FORTUNE, MAY, 2013

In 2011, *Solo of Fortune* was hired by the Mirage Corporation, an information brokerage, to help compile information on choosing vehicles for use in grey or black operations. *Solo*, using vehicles "donated" by various corporations and sophisticated computer models from Microtech's Image and Reality Modelling Division, created a report for Mirage's use. Excerpts of this two year study are reprinted here.

In testing the vehicles selected, *Solo's* testing staff looked at:

1) Speed: How fast was the vehicle in comparison to others of it's class? As important, how rapidly could the vehicle increase or decrease speed, particularly under combat situations? A multi-levelled test track at Arasaka's Otokome Training Facility, using mined and wired fire simulations was used in this test.

2) Maneuverability: How easy was it for *Solo's* test pilots to perform certain selected maneuvers with the vehicle, relative to other vehicles in it's class (ground or air)? These tests

generated the raw data used to determine the vehicle's overall handling ability.

MANEUVERING

In order to compare the relative capacities of most modern vehicles in combat, our SOLO staff broke all possible movements into a series of distinct maneuver actions. These maneuvers were then factored into the basic maneuverability of the vehicle type and compared by vehicle class (ground or air) between vehicles in a combat situation. Each maneuver was given a difficulty rating—a total ability to perform the maneuver.

THE MANEUVERS

TIGHT TURN or BREAK

This action allows the vehicle to make turns tighter than 45° in one action. In aircraft, this is known as a break.

SWERVE

This action allows the vehicle to move laterally around obstacles in its path, then return to the previous line of travel at high speed. Used to avoid obstacles (like pedestrians, mines, etc.).

HARD BRAKE

The action of bringing the vehicle to a complete stop in a shorter space than is normally safe. It is usually used when a crash is imminent.

REVERSE

Straight line movement backwards.

TAKE OFF/LAND

This is the action of getting a vehicle airborne or putting it back on the ground.

VERTICAL DROP/CLIMB

This maneuver is possible for AV-4s, Ospreys, airogyros and helicopters only. In this action, the vehicle can move up or down up to its maximum vertical climb/dive rate per phase.

HOVER

This maneuver is possible for AV-4s, Ospreys, airogyros and helicopters only. The vehicle may hold position in one place, balanced by its thrusters or rotors.

ROTATE

This maneuver is possible for AV-4s, Ospreys, airogyros and helicopters only. It is much like a hover, but has the added component of allowing the vehicle to rotate on its center up to 90° in either direction (see illustration). Airos, Ospreys, and helicopters rotate by rotor pitch; AV's by shifting their fans. The vehicular version of this is called a "bootlegger turn". It is performed by rotating the vehicle 180° and moving it four vehicle lengths along the original direction of travel (see illo).

PULL AWAY

The maneuver allows the vehicle to pull back in reverse from an obstacle, combining the rearwards movement with an upwards motion. This maneuver is possible for Ospreys, airogyros and helicopters only. The AV-4 version of this is called "viffing", and is possible only by AV's. "Viffing" uses the vehicle's fans to push it back and over.

MANEUVER ROLL

To make a maneuver, consult the Maneuverability Table on page 77. Cross reference the type of maneuver with the type of vehicle. The result is the Maneuver Difficulty.

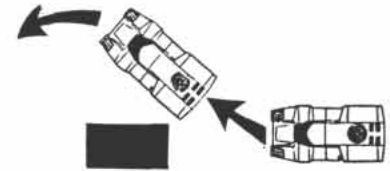
If piloting a flying vehicle, add +2 for every 50mph over the maneuver speed (pg.77, Movement Data Table) If driving a ground or water vehicle, add +2 for every 10 mph over the listed maneuver speed.

Add the maneuver difficulty and your speed modifiers. The total is the number you must roll greater than in order to perform what maneuver you've chosen. A failed roll means you have lost control of the vehicle.

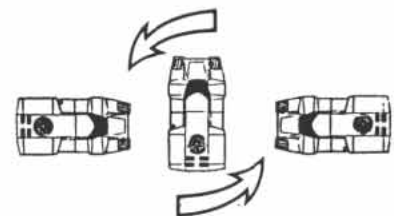
Example: I am driving a sports car at 90 mph. I decide to make a tight turn (+10). Because 90 mph is 30 mph faster than the car's maneuver speed, I add an additional +6 to the Maneuver Difficulty. I must roll a value higher than 16 in order to keep control of the car.

Make a Maneuver Roll when:

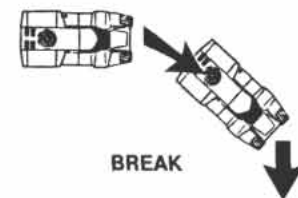
- A maneuver is made while the vehicle is moving faster than its listed maneuver speed.
- When the driver has been wounded.
When the vehicle takes a hit.
- Under dangerous road conditions, such as ice, gravel roads or fog.



SWERVE



ROTATE



BREAK



PULL AWAY

Note: in most cases, you will not need to require players to make maneuvering rolls. The rolls should come into play at any time when the player is trying to accomplish a feat more difficult than the normal operational use of the vehicle (a car chase, using an unfamiliar vehicle, or maneuvering while under fire).

MODIFIERS

These are listed on page 77, and may be added to the basic difficulty of the maneuver when applicable.

LOSING AND REGAINING CONTROL

Compare the total amount by which you have failed your Maneuver roll. Compare the result to the table for your particular vehicle (below).

The base Roll required to regain control is 15, plus the amount by

vehicle will take 1D10 in damage. If two moving vehicles collide head on, average both speeds together and assign the total amount of dice damage to both vehicles, rounding uneven values down.

Example: Derek still can't pull his AV-4 out of the fatal nosedive it has taken. He hits the deck moving at 200mph. The AV takes 10D10 worth of damage.

Meanwhile, Mike skids his Toyo into the front of his opponent's Mustang V. The 'Stang is moving at 50, while the Toyo is moving at 60. The average is 55. 55 divided by 20=2.75; rounded down, this equals 2D10 to each vehicle.

PASSENGER DAMAGE

All passengers within a crashing vehicle will automatically take one half as many dice as their vehicle

would (round odd values down.) *Example: Mike's Toyo takes 2 dice of damage. However, Mike will only*

armored and relatively unmaneuverable, ground cars can easily be penetrated by small arms fire alone. Occasionally, boostergangs or nomads will mount hand weapons on a vehicle, usually with duct tape and spring triggers, but again, this is rare—it's too easy to steal a vehicle-mounted weapon while the owners' away. When encountered, these "jury rigged" weapons will fire with a -2 penalty to their basic accuracy.

Example: Derek mounts an M-16 in the front of his Toyo. Normally, the M-16 has an accuracy of 2. In this case, because it is fastened to a harder-to-aim vehicle, it's accuracy is reduced to 0.

On those rare occasions where military-class ground vehicle weapons are encountered on the street, expect to find swivel mounted machineguns and turrets, firing the equivalent of squad light machine guns (such as the Soviet RPK or US M-60), or grenade launchers. These types of light machineguns can commonly be found on Corporate security jeeps and light troop carriers, usually in a dorsal mount or turret.

Aircraft, particularly AV's and rotor-wing vehicles have a three dimensional volume of space to work in, allowing machineguns to be used with far greater effectiveness. It is here that a solo will encounter a full range of heavy anti-vehicle weapons, including heavy machineguns, rockets and missiles.

AV's and airogyros are most often armed with the M-134 7.62 minigun, as most of their work is anti-personnel in nature. The M-134 is effective against lightly armored AV's and unarmored airogyros, and is usually nose-mounted. In most AV-4 combat, however, TOW missiles or modified AIM-9S "Sidewinders" are used for their longer range and ef-

CONTROL ROLL RESULTS

| ROLL | GROUND | AIRCRAFT |
|------|----------------------|--|
| 1-3 | Minor Skid | Slew, aircraft lurches |
| 4-6 | Major Skid | Stall, go into spin, lose 500 ft. alt. per turn. |
| 7+ | Roll vehicle, crash. | Stall, go into tumble, lose 1,000 ft. alt. per turn. |

which you have failed your original Maneuver Roll. If the Regain Control attempt fails, you must add the amount by which you failed the previous attempt to your next attempt. You may attempt to regain control once per turn.

Example: Deke misses his Maneuver roll by 4 points. To regain control, he must roll greater than 19 (15+4=19). Let's assume that he fails this roll by 5 points. He must now roll higher than 24 (19+5=24) to regain control of his tumbling AV-4.

CRASHING

Whether a vehicle hits the ground, a wall or another vehicle, it will take damage based on it's speed. For each 20mph increment of speed, a

take 1 die of damage.

Damage to passengers must be located by using the random hit tables from Friday Night Firefight.

VEHICLE COMBAT

Contrary to most "postholocaust" genre films, the modern corporate mercenary rarely encounters machineguns or other projectile arms in ground vehicles; unless swivel mounted, these weapons are nearly impossible to track on a moving target.

On the "street level", it is far easier to lean out of a window and track a target with shoulder arms. Lightly

fectiveness. These are mounted in two hardpoints to either side of the aerodyne vehicle.

Helicopters (such as the Apache and Cobra) are armed with a variation of the Hughes M230B-2 30mm automatic cannon or a scaled down version of the 20mm Vulcan machine cannon. These aircraft are somewhat less common than AV-4's (they are military vehicles exclusively), and carry the heavier AGM 114A "Hellfire" or Euromissile HOT anti tank missiles. On rare occasions when in the Eastern EuroTheatre and the Soviet Bloc, the huge and heavily armed MIL Mi-24 "Hind" can be encountered, with its four barrelled 20mm nose cannon, four side-mounted rocket pods and anti-tank missiles.

Using vehicle mounted weapons requires the use of a new skill:

Heavy Weapons: Heavy weapons are defined as grenade launchers, autocannon, heavy machine guns and missile and rocket launchers. The skill gives the user the ability to use any or all of these weapon types. Heavy Weapons Skill can only be acquired through the Military Education Path. Extra IP Cost=+5.

In order to use vehicle mounted weapons, a target must be in the forward fire arc of the attacker's vehicle (the exception to this are turret mounted weapons, which may fire in any direction). This requires that the target be passing in front of you or that you be in a tailing position relative to the target. If using figures or models, position will be fairly obvious. If working from descriptions (more common in a roleplaying context), the Referee will have to tell you the relative positions of your vehicles.

LIGHT MACHINEGUNS & GRENADE LAUNCHERS

M-60 Squad Light Machinegun

RIF 1 P 7.62 N 100 10 ST

A standard U.S. military machinegun since the late 1950s, the M-60 is belt fed. It is readily available to most corporate forces in 2013.

RPK Soviet Squad Machinegun

RIF 1 P 7.62 SOV 40-75(drum) 5 VR

A modified AK-47 without belt feed capacity. Instead, 75 round drum magazines are available. Commonly used in the EuroTheatre.

Mk19 Grenade Launcher

GRL 0 R (see rifle-mounted grenades) 50 20 ST

Designed to fire belt fed 40mm high explosive grenades. The effective range is @ 1600 feet/500 meters, making this a very dangerous weapon to use in urban areas.

HEAVY MACHINEGUNS

M-134 Minigun

RIF 0 N P 7.62 NATO 2-4000 rounds 320 VR

Developed as a scaled down version of the Vulcan cannon, this "gatling-type" weapon has a phenomenal rate of fire. Damage: P/B & Close: 11D6 Med & Long: 8D6 Extreme: 3D6

Hughes M230B-2

RIF 0 N P 30mm 1,200 rounds 30 VR

A heavy firepower autocannon used in helicopter warfare. Damage: P/B & Close: 18D6 Med & Long: 9D6 Extreme: 6D6

20mm Machine Cannon

RIF 0 N P 20mm 2,3000 rounds 30 VR

A lighter duty machine cannon also used in helicopters. This version is a "generic" type, for use in both Soviet and NATO aircraft (the Soviet version has four cannon in one mount). Damage: P/B & Close: 16D6 Med & Long: 8D6 Extreme: 4D6

MISSILES

Missiles are self propelled, self-controlled weapons. As a result, they roll separately to destroy targets. Each missile listed has a base Percentage To Hit for its type. This percentage is reduced if chaff (metallic strips designed to confuse radar homing missiles), flares (to confuse heat seekers) or ECM (electronic jamming) are used. Subtract the Defense percentage for each countermeasure from the missile's Percentage to Hit

to determine the value the missile must roll below.

AIM-9S Sidewinder (75%)

All-angle heat seeker. Can be confused with flares. Damage: 5D10.

TOW Missile (75%)

Wire-guided anti-tank missile. Optically tracked. Can be confused by ECM or flares (which blind the operator's optical sight). TOW missiles can be launched from a shoulder weapon against air or ground targets. Damage: 6D10

AGM 114A Hellfire (80%)

Laser guided air to ground missile. Cannot be confused by conventional countermeasures. Damage 6D10.

Euromissile "HOT" (75%)

Wire-guided anti-tank missile. Optically tracked, wire guided. Can be confused by ECM or flares (which blind the operator's optical sight). Damage: 5D10.

Rockets (20%)

Aimed at target. Cannot be confused by countermeasures. Damage 4D10.

COUNTERMEASURES

Chaff (-30%)

Aluminized metal flakes or strands to confuse radar guided missiles.

Flares (-15% per flare)

Extremely hot and bright magnesium flares, usually with a parachute or shroud to keep the flare airborne. Used to attract heatseekers or dazzle optically sighted missiles.

ECM (-30%)

Electronic and radar jamming impulses to confuse control signals to missiles from an external director.

DAMAGE

In our overview, our *Solo* staff found

SPS OF COMMON VEHICLE WALLS

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| Bell F-52 Airogyro | 40 SP |
| Bell Boeing Osprey (military) | 20 SP |
| Cessna Swingswing | 5 SP |
| Helicopter (armored) | 50 SP |
| Helicopter (unarmored) | 15 SP |
| Douglass AV-4 Tactical Aero | 40 SP |
| Lear-Douglass AV-6 Aerodyne | 60 SP |
| Douglass AV-7 Aerodyne | 10 SP |
| Unarmored automobile | 10 SP |
| Armored automobile | 40 SP |
| Speedboat | 10 SP |

it difficult to exactly delineate the amount of damage a vehicle could take in a combat situation. This made comparisons quite impossible. Eventually, two scales were used. The first, called Stopping Power (SP), is related to the scale on which we have previously measured armorjacks and flack vests (see *Solo*, March, 2012), and is a measure of the vehicle's effectiveness as cover.

Example: Derek throws himself behind the armored door of a Trauma Team AV-4. The door has an SP of 40. A hail of assault weapon fire follows him—although a 7.62 slug would normally cause an average of 20 or 30 points of damage, the heavily armored door stops the bullets in their tracks. Scott isn't so lucky—he dodges behind a car door with an SP of 10. The 7.56 slugs tear through the light door and shred Scott.

The second scale, Structural Damage Points (SDP), is a relative measure of how much firepower can be poured into the vehicle before it is unable to function as designed. Using a baseline in which a NATO 5.56

SDPS OF COMMON VEHICLES

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| Bell F-52 Airogyro | 40 SDP |
| Bell Boeing Osprey (military) | 200 SDP |
| Cessna Swingswing | 60 SDP |
| Helicopter | 90 SDP |
| Dougllass AV-4 Tactical Aero | 100 SDP |
| Lear-Dougllass AV-6 Aerodyne | 85 SDP |
| Dougllass AV-7 Aerodyne | 50 SDP |
| Unarmored automobile | 50 SDP |
| Bike | 30 SDP |
| Speedboat | 60 SDP |
| Truck/Van | 80 SDP |

steel-jacketed slug causes thirty two SD points at point blank range, the number of shots required to totally destroy the vehicle in question was generated via computer modelling, using field data from various military sources. The 5.56 was selected as a standard round in use throughout

SOLO OF FORTUNE, MAY, 2013

the US and EuroTheatres, with it's civilian equivalent in the ubiquitous Colt AR-15 used by many corporate Solos and police departments. Our profiles produced this information:

Locating Damage: When attacking vehicles, you first must locate where you've hit. It is nearly impossible to make aimed shots with vehicle-mounted weapons. However, you may elect to make aimed shots using hand-held weapons. Each vehicle has a random damage location table, much like those used on human targets, listed on page 76.

Critical Hits: SDP is a measure of sheer physical volume of the vehicle. However, every vehicle has critical areas which, if damaged, can incapacitate it completely. These critical hits areas are wings, engines, tires or rotors. Damage done in these areas are automatically tripled.

Example: Derek fires at an airogyro, doing 20 points. Normally, this would reduce the airogyro's SDP to 20. However, his hit slams into a main rotor—a critical hit. The damage triples to 60 points—20 more than the airogyro can take. It goes out of control and crashes.

Control Rolls: If a vehicle takes a critical hit, it automatically reacts to the damage as if it has failed it's Control roll. Roll 1D10 and add 3. This is the amount by which the roll has been failed. *Example: The airogyro Derek plugged back in a previous example is going down in flames. The pilot rolls 1D10+3 to determine how bad he's lost it. He rolls a 5—a total of 8! The airogyro drops 1000 feet in an uncontrolled tumble. Unfortunately, it's only 600 feet up at the time. Splat.*

Meanwhile, Mike's Plymouth Toyo takes a hit in the tires. He rolls the

1D10. His total is 4. The Toyo goes into a spin. Mike still has time before he hits the up coming wall. In the next turn, he rolls to regain control. He needs to beat 15. He scores an 18 and pulls out.

When a vehicle reaches one half of it's SDP, it must automatically make a Control Roll as if it has taken a critical hit. At 0 SDP, the vehicle automatically crashes if flying, and stops moving if on the ground.

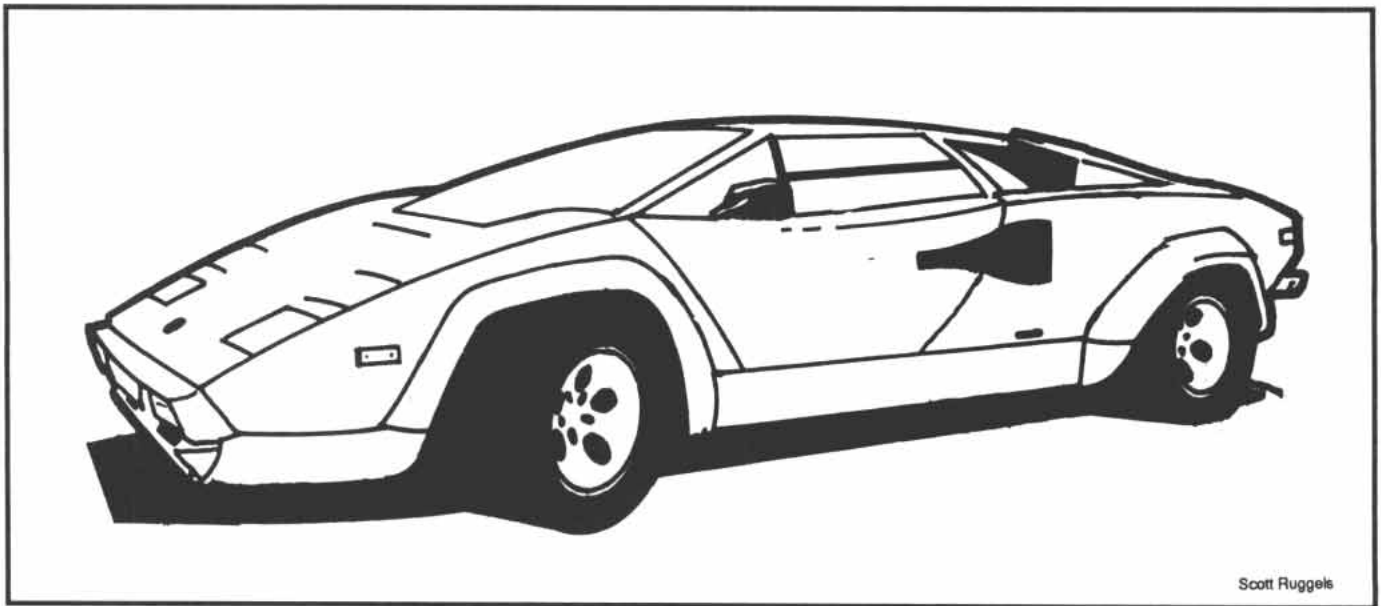
Crashing aircraft automatically take damage based on the last speed of the aircraft before the loss of control.

Armoring Critical Areas: If you are attacking a vehicle directly, you may still use it's SP to blunt the effects of damage. For example, an AV-4's heavy armor will usually blunt most attacks before they can cause critical damage to the aircraft. Rotors, thrusters, engines and tires can all be armored up to an SP of 15.

Example: Once again, Derek fires at an airogyro. This one has armored rotors and hubs (SP 15). His 20 points of damage are reduced to 5 (20-15), which, when the critical location rule is applied, is only 15 total. The airogyro turns, levels it's minigun, and reduces Derek to snail snot.

Hits on Humans Using Vehicle Weapons: Most of the time, a human taking damage from a vehicle type weapon will be reduced to paste. The firepower is just too overwhelming. In general, if you're not interested in calculating the impact of every bullet from a minigun spray (up to 200 bullets in some cases), we suggest you use the following rule of thumb.

1) All miniguns and autocannon have an automatic modifier of +5 to hit. Add this to the attackers REF stat + Heavy Weapons Skill + 1D10 ver-



Scott Ruggels

sus the Defender's REF Stat + Athletics Skill +1D10.

2) Roll 2D10 to determine how many bullets the target took. Usually by the third or fourth hit, it's academic. These weapons were designed to stop tanks and armored cars. Locate damage as in Friday Night Firefight.

CALCULATING SPEED

In most cases, vehicles (particularly aircraft) will be moving far too fast to accurately use models in scale. To

calculate a vehicles's actual scale movement, multiply the given speed by 1.5. To make this simpler, we have included a table with common speeds on page 77. When a speed is not listed, add the values for the nearest combined speeds together:

Example: you are moving at 350 mph. On the table, 300mph=450meters per phase. 50mph=75 meters per phase. Your total movement is 450+75=525 meters per phase.

Vehicles are also rated on three other factors, found in the Table. These are:

Acceleration/Deceleration: this is how fast the vehicle can gain or lose speed per phase.

Maximum Speed: this is the fastest speed the vehicle can achieve.

Maneuver Speed: this is the fastest the vehicle can perform a maneuver without requiring special driving/piloting skills.

DAMAGE LOCATION TABLE

| ROLL | AV-4 | AV-6 | AV-7 | Bike | Ground Vehicle | Osprey | Helicopter | Airogyro | Boat |
|------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------------|----------|------------|----------|--------|
| 1 | L.Fan* | L.Fan* | L.Fan* | F.Tire | LF.Tire | L.Engine | Engine | Engine | Engine |
| 2 | R.Fan* | R.Fan* | L.Fan* | F.Tire | RF.Tire | R.Engine | Engine | Engine | Pilot |
| 3 | Pilot | Pilot | R.Fan* | R.Tire | LR.Tire | L.Engine | Pilot | Engine | Body |
| 4 | Body | Body | R.Fan* | R.Tire | RR.Tire | R.Engine | Rotor | Pilot | Body |
| 5 | Body | Pilot | Engine | Engine | Engine | Pilot | Rotor | Pilot | Body |
| 6 | Body | Body | Pilot | Engine | Driver | L.Wing | Body | Pilot | Body |
| 7 | Body | Body | Body | Driver | Body | R.Wing | Body | Rotor | Body |
| 8 | Body | Body | Body | Driver | Body | Body | Body | Rotor | Body |
| 9 | Body | Weapon | Body | Driver | Body | Body | Body | Body | Body |
| 10 | Weapon | Weapon | Body | Body | Body | Body | Body | Body | Body |

* Attacker chooses location

VEHICLE DATA

| MOVEMENT DATA TABLE | | | |
|---------------------|----------|---------------|-------------|
| VEHICLE | Max spd. | Manuever spd. | Acci/Decel. |
| AV-4 | 350mph | 150mph | 50p/phase |
| AV-6 | 375mph | 200mph | 100p/phase |
| AV-7 | 200mph | 100mph | 50p/phase |
| Osprey II | 350mph | 150mph | 50p/phase |
| Airogyro* | 100mph | 50 mph | 50p/phase |
| Helicopter | 200mph | 150mph | 50p/phase |
| Sports car | 180mph | 60mph | 10p/phase |
| Bike | 120mph | 50mph | 10p/phase |
| Compact | 100mph | 40mph | 5p/phase |
| Sedan | 100mph | 30mph | 5p/phase |
| Truck/Van | 100mph | 30mph | 2p/phase |
| Speedboat | 30mph | 15mph | 5p/phase |

*corrected from View From the Edge. p/phase=mph per phase

| SPEED TABLE | | | |
|-------------|-----|--------|------|
| 10mph | 15m | 70mph | 105m |
| 20mph | 30m | 80mph | 120m |
| 30mph | 45m | 90mph | 135m |
| 40mph | 60m | 100mph | 150m |
| 50mph | 75m | 200mph | 300m |
| 60mph | 90m | 300mph | 450m |

| MANUEVER MOD TABLE | |
|--------------------------|------------|
| •Add to Difficulty Roll | |
| Road Hazards | MOD |
| Wet road | +3 |
| Gravel, dirt | +2 |
| Ice | +5 |
| Downhill grade | +1 |
| Conditions | MOD |
| Heavy fog,rain | +3 |
| Insufficient light | +3 |
| Driver wounded | +2 to +6 |

MANUEVER TABLE

| MANUEVERS | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|------------|--------|------------|---------|---------------|---------------------|-------|-----------------|----------|
| VEHICLE | Tight Turn | Swerve | Hard Brake | Reverse | Takeoff /Land | Vertical Climb/Dive | Hover | Rotate/ Bootleg | Pullaway |
| AV-4 (Transport) | 15 | 10 | 10 | 20 | 15 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 |
| AV-6 (Assault) | 12 | 10 | 10 | 18 | 15 | 10 | 15 | 18 | 20 |
| AV-7 (Private) | 12 | 10 | 10 | 19 | 15 | 10 | 15 | 19 | 22 |
| Osprey II | 15 | 10 | 10 | 20 | 15 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 |
| Airogyro | 12 | 10 | 10 | 18 | 15 | 10 | 15 | 18 | 20 |
| Helicopter | 123 | 10 | 10 | 19 | 15 | 10 | 15 | 19 | 24 |
| Bike | 15 | 10 | 15 | NA | NA | NA | NA | 20 | NA |
| Sports car | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | NA | NA | NA | 20 | NA |
| Compact | 12 | 12 | 12 | 10 | NA | NA | NA | 25 | NA |
| Sedan | 15 | 15 | 15 | 12 | NA | NA | NA | 28 | NA |
| Van/Truck | 20 | 20 | 20 | 15 | NA | NA | NA | 30 | NA |
| Speedboat | 15 | 10 | 15 | 20 | NA | NA | NA | 20 | 20 |

NOTE: You may only make ONE manuever per phase.
 AV's, Ospreys & Rotorcraft: Add +2 to difficulty for every 50mph over manuever spd.
 Groundvehicles, boats : Add +2 to difficulty for every 10mph over manuever spd.

SOV CYBERWARE CONT FROM PG.25

Boris' face paled. "We are soldiers in elite guard. We do no such things. In big cities, younger boys, bad children, buy on underground and do things for money and goods. They have been a problem for some time." He shook his head sadly, and his partner nodded in agreement.

Well, at least there was a hint of action. Maybe the younger generation had found the time to lighten up and make a profit for itself. I was beginning to look forward to my stay in Moscow.

I made it past Boris and his pal without them discovering the .177 explosive tipped caseless rounds concealed in the arm. They didn't even bother to examine the eye. I guess they have never seen a one shot optic before. I caught a cab into the city and made my way to the U.S. embassy. After filling out too many forms, I acquired my gear and a rented car. I also picked up a tail. It looked like the old style government paranoia was still in effect.

This would never do. The American rental, designed for visiting Dips, was equipped for plugs, and I quickly jacked in and lost my frustrated follower. Moments later, cruising through the back streets, looking for signs that Moscow had something to offer me, I was rewarded by sirens. Two red and white police vans screamed by, sirens wailing, four heavily armed soldiers hanging onto the running boards for dear life. Acting on a hunch, I gave chase. I was richly rewarded.

To make a long story short, I found what I was looking for. The police had surrounded one of the city's newer ferro-concrete apartment blocks and had heavy weapons trained on the front doors. I worked my way around the barriers, flashing fake Pravda credentials to a pair of soldiers who were too stressed to argue. I unpacked my Nikkon and waited.

The second story exploded and a metal monstrosity plummeted to the street, cracking the pavement. The Sovs opened up like it was Christmas, but the walking battleship waded right through their 7.62 rounds and decked one of the vans like it was a pencil-necked prize fighter.

The hardware was hopelessly crude, almost a parody, but there was no denying what I was seeing. A borged-out Russian, five blocks from Red Square!

My respect for the bulky Soviet cyberware increased geometrically with every passing second. It may not look nice, but it sure can kick the hell out of everything that gets in its way.

Lightly armed, I ran for cover. Behind me, there was a sound like two trains crashing. I chanced a look over my shoulder.

The big Russian borg was on his back, a dent the size of a basketball in his chest. Standing over him was a young man with three blades the size of garden shears poking out of his forearm. Behind him, a woman jacked in to a .50 anti-tank rifle was in a ready crouch. The borg staggered to his feet and launched himself at the two young Russians. They danced out of the way and let him have it from both sides. The girl shoved the rifle barrel through the chest plates and held down the trigger. The guy with the blades delivered an expert wheel kick that caved in the side of the 'borg's armored head. They were suicidal moves, and I waited for the 'borg to clamp its paws down on the both of them, but the action never came. The pair rolled out of the way as something deep inside the cyberpsycho maniac gave way, and blood and smoke poured out of lethal wounds. The borg was finished.

You would expect that the police would have dashed out and kissed those two for saving their Bolshevik

behinds. Instead, they began to close in, and I could see they were calling for the youth's arrests. But it was too late. The pair were winging their way down the block, and there must have been some feelings of gratitude amongst the grunts, because they never opened fire.

Walking through the carnage, I was drafted into helping evacuate the wounded. I helped an young injured officer to his feet and introduced myself as a reporter working for the London Times. Fortunately, he spoke passable English and after he got over his initial surprise, I was able to ask him about the two apparent Solos we had just seen in action.

"There are a few," he began. "Mostly younger men and women. They like Western things; music, food. There are places to buy everything. There are doctors who smuggle cybernetic parts in from Europe and America." He grimaced, showing his displeasure. "They are young and reckless. They replace things that do not need replacing. Interfere with business which is not their own. It is most illegal."

I pointed out that their interference had probably kept his butt out of the intensive care ward. That produced the hint of a smile.

"The children these days. Who can understand them?"

Who indeed?

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SOLO OF FORTUNE, MAY, 2013

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SOLO OF FORTUNE, MAY, 2013

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Solos

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T.C. We met down at the canal in the 21st Infantry. The Rat PAck is having a reunion and we'd like to see you. Call Butch at Rick's Bar on the 29th.

SOLO OF FORTUNE, MAY, 2013



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